



Winter Pressures - Focus on the Learner Experience

Background

The Trust continues to work with Emergency Departments and the NHSE Regional Team to do everything possible to reduce the impact of hospital handover delays. Hospital handover delays impact patients waiting to be handed over and patients waiting in the community without a timely ambulance response. They also have the potential to reduce patient exposure and learning opportunities for learners. Placement time is essential to assimilate theoretical knowledge into practice, to enable learners to become competent and confident autonomous clinicians.

The term learner is used within this document to include student paramedics, ambulance nurses, observers, newly onboarded ECAs and NQPs.

This document aims to provide a number approaches to contribute towards a better learner experience and best utilise time to stimulate learning.

Learning from Patients in Other Ambulances

Learners on placement within a hospital environment will routinely shadow clinicians to enable exposure to a wide range of patients. During hospital handover delays, learners are currently often based with a single patient for the entire delay period.

Practice Educators are encouraged to facilitate the movement of students between ambulances. This can be facilitated by HALOs identifying with arriving crews whether their patient would be suitable for a student learning opportunity. In the absence of a HALO, crews are encouraged to identify patients and facilitate learners directly. Patient care remains the responsibility of the clinician crewing the ambulance - the learner is there to learn and does not assume clinical responsibility.

This will provide the following benefits:

- Increased exposure to patient conditions and presentations.
- Increased opportunity to take a patient history and perform patient assessment and observations.
- Increased exposure to patient records, treatment, and handovers.
- Patients who are waiting for long periods of time may enjoy the contact time.

Patient safety and dignity must remain paramount. The clinician responsible for the patient on the ambulance must ensure that:

- The patient is suitable for interaction with a learner.
- All IPC guidance is followed when moving between patients. Students must not be rotated to patients with an infectious disease.
- Consent from the patient must be obtained and documented on the patient record.





The learner and Practice Educator are responsible for:

- Always being aware of each other's location. Students must not leave the ambulance bay with a patient (e.g. when being transferred for diagnostics) without informing the Practice Educator.

Learning from Patients in Pre-ED Cohort Areas

During times of extremis, hospitals may open pre-ED cohorting areas. Cohorting areas can provide a valuable education opportunity in a similar way to patients on other ambulances. The staffing and operation of cohorting areas is covered within SOP OP008 Ambulance Hospital Handovers, Appendix 7.

Where staffing is provided by SWAST, Practice Educators should seek agreement from the Cohort Lead Clinician for learners to be supernumerary within the area. Where run by hospital clinicians, Practice Educators should seek agreement from the hospital clinical responsible for the area.

Student Paramedics must not form a core member of cohort staffing during unpaid placement hours.

Undertaking CPD

During handover delays there may be an appropriate time to step away from the patients and undertake some CPD. This may include completing activities on Parapass, writing a reflection, or listening to a podcast or webinar. SWASFT CPD have some excellent content and all paramedics within the Trust can access Parapass [here](#). Please utilise your iPad and share this with any learners who do not have one.

This will have the following benefits:

- Following up a debrief with a CPD activity will consolidate this learning.
- Often CPD can be a challenge to fit in around our home/work life balance, completing this during worktime is a productive use of time.

To ensure safety, the following must be followed:

- The lead clinician is responsible for overall patient care and must ensure any CPD activity does not compromise this.
- The activity can be undertaken away from the patient in a private environment such as the ambulance cab.
- Anyone undertaking CPD must ensure their whereabouts is known by all involved in patient care, including the HALO.
- If at any point their assistance is required, the CPD activity must be stopped to resume patient care.
- CPD opportunities are shared among the crew so that one person does not take advantage and leave their crewmate to attend the patient for a prolonged amount of time.





Pop up Education

Throughout the winter period the Learning and Development team will be hosting a number of pop-up educational opportunities in hospital bays and virtually. Please keep an eye on local social media, the bulletin and the practice education team's social media for these sessions and encourage learners to engage.

