



November 2020

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Dear colleague

### **Non-emergency Patient Transport Service (PTS) Update**

As we all face significant demand and capacity challenges brought about by the second peak of COVID-19, we are keen to work with you to support patients most in need of our services. As such, we would like to update you with changes to booking non-emergency patient transport with Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust.

#### **Requests for transport to and from outpatient appointments can now only be booked up to three working days prior to the scheduled appointment.**

Journeys for renal and oncology patients, and on-day discharges can continue to be booked at any time and all journeys can be booked by patients as well as healthcare representatives throughout Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire.

The change to booking journeys for outpatient appointments allows us to:

- More effectively manage the volume of bookings in line with the PTS resources available.
- Support our A&E ambulance colleagues, who are experiencing significant reduction in available capacity, by providing transport to suitably triaged 999 patients who do not need a paramedic on their journey.
- Ensure we have the flexibility to support the rapid discharge of medically fit patients and contribute to efficient hospital flow.

As well as managing capacity, this change will support our efforts to reduce the spread of the virus. By ensuring that the patient's symptoms and test history are as up to date as possible prior to the journey, we can more accurately assess the infection risk of those travelling with us. Crews will check this information by continuing to make on-day calls before collecting the patient.

Communication and escalation networks have been established with NHS Acute Trusts across the region to ensure that patients who have the most important outpatient appointments will be prioritised should our capacity to transport all patients be exceeded. This arrangement will continue to be utilised if the need arises.

Please continue to encourage patients to make their own way to hospital if they are able to do so. This will help us to ensure that transport is available for those who need it most - often these are patients who are most vulnerable and with the highest health and mobility needs. Due to the extensive human-to-human transmission of the virus, the safest and most efficient way for patients to reach their appointments is to drive themselves or travel

with a member of their household, a friend or a family member (in line with government guidance).

For eligible patients who require our services, we continue to take steps to ensure that our Patient Transport Service is able to convey patients as safely as possible. We support social distancing measures by seating patients away from crews and from each other, asking patients to wear protective face masks and transporting only one patient in a vehicle at a time.

To make a booking within three working days of a scheduled appointment, call 0300 330 2000. The PTS reservations team is available Monday to Friday between 7:00am and 7:00pm, and weekends from 8:00am to 6:00pm.

Yours sincerely



Chris Dexter  
Managing Director of PTS