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## Use of police vehicles as ambulances

Version 4

### 1. Policy statement

PFEW believes that members of the public who are ill or injured should be cared for by appropriately trained NHS staff and, where necessary, transported to hospital in an ambulance. A police officer and police vehicle are not an appropriate resource to care and transport members of the public to hospital. While PFEW understands and appreciates only too well the strain that the Government's public service reforms have placed on all emergency services, any time spent by officers transporting casualties to hospital is time they are not preventing or investigating crime. It is officers' duty of care to the public that results in them taking casualties to hospital when they are left with no other option.

Officers called to incidents where emergency medical care is needed can be left waiting for long periods of time for paramedics to arrive, often only to be told that there are none available. Officers may then have no choice but to convey the casualties to hospital themselves. The issue can be particularly prevalent at peak times such as busy town and city centres during weekends – a time when all emergency services commonly find themselves stretched to capacity. Figures from nine forces in England and Wales revealed that officers took sick and injured people to hospital 2,012 times in 2015, an average of 223 times per force.

### 2. Responsibility

The National Board is responsible for all policy formation.

### 3. Summary

PFEW believes that the National Health Service in England and Wales should be appropriately resourced to deal with members of the public who are in medical need. Too often, however, in recent years the Police Service has been left to fill the gap when professionally trained NHS resources are unable to attend an incident within appropriate timescales. At a time of decreasing officer numbers and an increase in demand on police services, the deployment and continued use of police resources to incidents involving members of the public who are ill or injured is adding to the strain on an already stretched and burdened service.

PFEW agrees with the advice given by the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives (AACE) that officers should not convey members of the public who are ill or injured to hospital. A police vehicle is not an appropriate resource to care and transport members of the public. PFEW supports the work

being carried out by Association of Ambulance Chief Executives (AACE) and the National Police Chief Council (NPCC) to eliminate occasions where officers convey members of the public to hospital.

PFEW believes that members of the public who are ill or injured should be cared for by appropriately trained NHS staff and, where necessary, transported to hospital in an ambulance. Officers accept that a primary function of their role is to preserve life and to act in the wider interests of the public, with this being the case an officer dealing with a member of the public who is ill or injured is duty bound to 'do the right thing'. Those officers who act in the best interest of the medical needs of a member of public in the absence of appropriate NHS resources, should not be subject to undue investigation.

PFEW believes that officers should be trained to an appropriate level to deliver immediate and effective first aid to members of the public.

#### 4. Procedures/implementation

PFEW will work with the NPCC, AACE, Home Office, Welsh Assembly, NHS England and NHS Wales to ensure that incidents involving a member of the public who is ill or injured receive a timely response from the NHS to eliminate the occasions when officers convey members of the public to hospital.

We will work with the Independent Office for Police Conduct to ensure that officers, who act in the best needs of a member of the public, in the absence of appropriate NHS resources, are not subject to undue investigation.

We will press Chief Officers and the College of Policing to provide first aid training to all officers so that they can deliver immediate and effective first aid to members of the public.

Responsibility is delegated to the National Secretary and/or the appropriate sub-committee.

	Author	Date	Review date	Change
Version 1	KP/EP	June 2015	June 2016	
Version 2	KP-EP	June 2016	June 2017	Minor change
Version 3	KP-EP	June 2017	June 2018	Included figures for 2015 from FOI request by Mirror Group newspaper
Version 4	KP	January 2019	June 2020	Minor changes

**Signed by:**



National Chair



National Secretary