



London Ambulance Service **NHS**  
NHS Trust

## **Policy and Procedure on Ambient Listening**

**DOCUMENT PROFILE and CONTROL.**

**Purpose of the document:** is to set out the specific circumstances when Ambient Listening may be implemented, the procedures that must be followed and the checks that will be used to ensure that it is not operated outside of authorised use. Ambient Listening is the ability for control staff to remotely listen to a terminal without the user's knowledge. The policy is designed to ensure crew safety, which will ensure that the most appropriate support be sent to a crew who needs assistance

**Sponsor Department:** Operational Support

**Author/Reviewer:** Assistant Director of Operations (Control Services). To be reviewed by June 2011.

**Document Status:** Final

Amendment History			
Date	*Version	Author/Contributor	Amendment Details
05/05/09	0.6	Operational Business Change Manager	Minor – revised monitoring, training
24/04/09	0.5	Operational Business Change Manager	Minor – 2., added responsibilities and definitions, monitoring, and training, 4.1.3, 4.1.4, 4.2b and e, 4.3 s
23/03/09	0.4	Records Manager	Minor – reformatted, 1, 2., 3., 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, implementation plan
27/02/09	0.3	Operational Business Change Manager	Minor – definitions added
19/09/08	0.2	Head of Records Management	Minor – Comments made through-out. Introduction, objectives, procedure, implementation plan. added details supplied by Operational Business Change Manager, Introduction, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 2.1b, 2.3, guidance, forms
19/09/08	0.1	Operational Business Change Manager	Minor – first draft

**\*Version Control Note:** All documents in development are indicated by minor versions i.e. 0.1; 0.2 etc. The first version of a document to be approved for release is given major version 1.0. Upon review the first version of a revised document is given the designation 1.1, the second 1.2 etc. until the revised version is approved, whereupon it becomes version 2.0. The system continues in numerical order each time a document is reviewed and approved.

For Approval By:	Date Approved	Version
SMG Diary Meeting	22/06/09	1.0
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The Pulse	23/06/09	Records Manager	GDU

<b>Links to Related documents or references providing additional information</b>		
<b>Ref. No.</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Version</b>

Document Status: This is a controlled record as are the document(s) to which it relates. Whilst all or any part of it may be printed, the electronic version maintained in P&P-File remains the controlled master copy. Any printed copies are neither controlled nor substantive.

## 1. Introduction

The London Ambulance Service NHS Trust (LAS) is committed to protecting its staff, its property and the public. There exists within the Airwave and Integrated Computer Communication System (ICCS) a facility which allows the audio of Airwave terminals to be listened to remotely. The facility is designed to ensure crew safety and provide appropriate support to a crew requiring assistance. However, it is recognised that it may impact on the personal privacy of staff and therefore needs to be rigorously controlled. .

## 2. Scope

This policy sets out the specific circumstances when Ambient Listening may be implemented, the procedures that must be followed and the checks that will be used to ensure that it is not operated outside of authorised use. It applies solely to the Airwave Digital Radio System (ADRS).

## 3. Objectives

1. To establish a de facto standard for instigation of necessary Listening.
2. To establish the level of authority required to approve Listening.
3. To establish routes for authorisation.
4. To ensure automatic safeguards are built into the use of Ambient Listening.
5. To identify the procedures necessary to be followed to ensure abuse does not occur.
6. To create a method of identifying the parties involved where Listening has been instigated.
7. To develop a transparent and necessary audit trail to ensure staff, are safe from misuse of the system.

## 4. Responsibilities

- 4.1 Control Services Ambulance Operations Manager (AOM)) area responsible for ensuring the Ambient Listening policy is followed.
- 4.2 Digital Radio in Life team will ensure use of the system is properly utilised

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## 5. Definitions

The Digital in Life team are employed by the London Ambulance Service and look after ADRS.

## 6. Policy and Procedure

### 6.1 Procedure for Listening to a Terminal

6.1.1 The ICCS operator selects the terminal to be listened to; the ICCS software provides a challenge to ensure the operator actually wishes to listen. The operator has the option to agree or disagree, a further challenge is provided on screen to which the operator needs to agree or disagree.

6.1.2 This procedure ensures that only a deliberate action can call a terminal to Ambient Listen.

6.1.3 The control services network will identify the ICCS workstation and the identity of the last known log in operator. It is imperative that the person listening is the person that is logged into the ICCS terminal. EOC will verify this during the training of the ICCS system.

6.1.4 The exact time of the commencement of Ambient Listening; the location of the request and the requester are all logged by the person accessed the Ambient Listening. The logs will be maintained at two separate locations. These locations will be on the ICCS position and the data recorder. The "Requester" in these circumstances refers to the ICCS position.

6.1.5 The resultant audio being listened to will be recorded.

6.1.6 Only permanent login IDs should be utilised by the person listening.

### 6.2 Authorised Uses

6.2.1 The permitted scenarios for instigating Ambient Listening are:

- a) On the written authority of the on-call 'Gold' officer, who has been requested in writing by a police officer, or other authorised enforcement officer in possession of a court issued and signed warrant, which identifies an individual member of staff (or a group of staff), and where the identity of the staff member(s) carrying specific identified hand terminal(s) can be identified, who are under police investigation or where ambient listening is reasonably believed will be of assistance in the course of investigating a serious offence.

- b) On the written authority of a control services Ambulance Operations Manager (AOM) or above, where staff safety may be compromised and the staff member(s) have remained uncontactable for a significant period and all other methods exhausted, the police can ask for Ambient Listening to be turned on when they approach the last known location to ensure safety of their own staff.
- c) On the written authority of a control services AOM or above, where a member of control services indicates that a handset that is no longer in the possession of the LAS is present on the network. The Ambient Listening will continue until the handset is recovered, or its signal is no longer present, or it is clear that the terminal will not be recovered by conventional means.
- d) On the written authority of a control services AOM or above, following the activation of the crew emergency button, until such time as it is identified that the staff member(s) who are in trouble and had called for help are safe. In this instance listening may be commenced immediately, and must be sanctioned and noted with written authority, as soon as possible after the event.
- e) Within control services there will be groups of staff that need to be trained in the use of the Ambient Listening functionality. Their training will allow them to understand the reasons behind tightly managing the ability to listen, how they may actually listen, when authorised to, and who may authorise the Listening. An exemption exists for Listening in the training environment when it is covered by form LA32 and limited to unused and itemised talk groups (TG) and identified in the day training plan. It will still be necessary to submit supporting documentation to Digital Radio in Life team to indicate this has occurred.
- f) If a member of staff believes they could be at risk prior to attending a call, they can request the use of Ambient Listening, which will be authorised by a control services AOM or above.

6.2.2 Unauthorised Ambient Listening, including casual listening to radios, will result in an investigation followed by disciplinary procedures and possible suspension from duties considered. Disciplinary investigation will be instigated if ambient listening is conducted without written authority.

6.2.3 Except as in 6.2.1.e a copy of the written appropriate authorisation to listen will be handed to the operator tasked with listening by the authoriser, and should be retained by them. The authorisation document is restricted and must be stored safely. The original when completed will be forwarded to Digital Radio in Life team for retention against the document storage policy. Written authority in this form can be said to include an email from the necessary officer.

6.2.4 Digital Radio in Life team will cause the form to be electronically captured, for retrieval as required. This will be available for up to twenty five years.

6.2.5 Form retrieval is limited to the identified Ambient Listening staff, Operational Control Manager (OCM) and above, or a member of staff authorised in writing who is undertaking a disciplinary or grievance investigation.

### **6.3 Requirements of Individuals Permitted to Listen**

- The person listening will not routinely be the authoriser.
- The person listening will not be the person raising concern over missing staff, unless as the result of an emergency activation. Where an emergency activation is initiated, control staff must not immediately 'Ambient Listen' as their Talk Group status change will override the emergency call.
- The person being listened to should not be related to or the partner of the Listener, unless as the result of an emergency activation, and should be replaced by another member of staff as soon as possible.
- An exception may be valid in the case of 6.2.1.d above, and will need subsequent authorisation and validation.

### **6.4 Audit**

6.4.1 A log is created every time Ambient Listening is initiated. This log appears electronically encoded in:

- DS2000: Call logger
- DS2000: Play back device / voice recorder
- Data recorder

6.4.2 After every instance of Ambient Listening, completed authorisation paperwork will be sent to Digital Radio in Life team for identification and storage.

6.4.3 After every instance of Ambient Listening, and at the most appropriate time, an AOM from EOC, or representative, will inform the member of staff that Ambient Listening has taken place; this will be followed up with a letter to the member of staff, explaining the reasons for use. The exception for this is when 6.2.1.a of this document has been instigated.

6.4.4 On the First Tuesday of every month, the Digital Radio in Life team will access the Call logger data and search electronically for instances of Ambient Listening.

6.4.5 The search will then be compared against the known sessions of recorded Ambient Listening.

- 6.4.6 Where discrepancies are found, all details of the listening will be collated and identified to the Deputy Director of Operations by the first Wednesday of the month, for investigation.
- 6.4.7 Where all instances of Ambient Listening are accounted for, an email will be sent to the Deputy Director of Operations by the first Wednesday of the month to the effect that checks are negative.
- 6.4.8 Inaccuracies of recording, or incomplete authorisation forms should be notified as well.

<b>IMPLEMENTATION PLAN</b>	
<b>Intended Audience</b>	Control Services
<b>Dissemination</b>	Available to all staff on the Pulse
<b>Communications</b>	Revised Procedure to be announced in the RIB and a link provided to the document
<b>Training</b>	<p>Ambient Listening instigated as part of training, will be regulated.</p> <p>Training will be delivered to new starters through the inductions training that they receive. Current staff will be updated by team leaders in team meetings, more substantial changes will implemented through group training sessions.</p> <p>Control staff will be taught this through the normal training of the radio system and through the update training provided by Department of Education and Development.</p> <p>See Training Needs Analysis (TNA)</p>
<b>Monitoring</b>	<p>The digital radio In life team will monitor the use of the policy and will make recommendations for change.</p> <p>The Digital radio Life team will monitor the use of the policy by running monthly reports on radio usage. Inappropriate uses of the radio will be followed-up with the individual involved first by interview and then training, or disciplinary if appropriate. A report on usage will be given on a quarterly basis to the Radio Committee. Recommendations for change to the policy will be made with these reports and fed back to staff through team meetings and revised training sessions.</p>
<b>Equalities Impact Assessment</b>	An equalities Impact assessment has been completed and submitted to the Diversity team and once authorised will be published in accordance to the Diversity Policy.

Ambient Listening Form EOC - RESTRICTED

LA031

Log reference:	Date:	20
I, <input type="text" value="Name"/>	Rank	
do hereby authorise(d) <input type="text" value="Personnel Number / Name"/>	at terminal	ID
to Listen at ISSI(s) <input type="text"/>	at this time	: hrs

for the reason(s) I indicate below:-

a.) I am in receipt of a warrant from constable or authorised enforcement officer

Name

of Police Service or organisation i.e. SOCA/ NCIS/ Security Service/ HMRC/ ETC

<input type="text"/>	date	<input type="text"/>	ref
	d		

Attached to , has requested of the London

Ambulance Service NHS Trust that

be Listened to for the following reason

<input type="text"/>
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b.) That CS member  has identified that a member of staff  utilising terminal ISSI

may have safety compromised and have remained un-contactable by all other methods, Police have requested Ambient Listening to enable them to investigate crew

safety.

Last Seen time	Phone time	Point to Point time	Point to Point time
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c.) That CS member  has identified that an unexpected / unknown ISSI has appeared on the ICCS on talk group

d.) I,  commenced Ambient Listening on receipt of personnel emergency alarm activation from  at

Listening continued until  I am satisfied that the call is genuine and the crew have been located / that this is an accidental activation

Received at Digital Radio in Life team by ..... Printed .....

Date Stamp applied →

This completed form, and attachments must be sent to Digital Radio in Life team for storage. A copy of this form must be provided to the member of staff undertaking Listening; this document may not be made available to anyone under the rank of OCM or without the written authority of an OCM. The information contained herein is privileged and may not be divulged.

**Ambient Listening form – RESTRICTED LA032**

**Control Services EDUCATION and DEVELOPMENT**

Log reference:		Date: 20	
I, <input style="width: 80%;" type="text" value="Name"/>  do hereby authorise	Personnel Number / Name	at terminal	Rank
	Personnel Number / Name		ID
	Personnel Number / Name		ID
	Personnel Number / Name		ID
	Personnel Number / Name		ID
	Personnel Number / Name		ID
	Personnel Number / Name		ID
	Personnel Number / Name		ID
	Personnel Number / Name		ID
	Personnel Number / Name		ID
	Personnel Number / Name		ID
	Location of Training		

To listen to the following un-utilised talk groups to aid their education and development.

Talk Group	ID	ID	ID	ID	ID
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Members of Education and Development, and staff under training will broadcast, and listen on the talk groups identified in full knowledge this is being done.

Session Commencement	Time	Concludes	Time
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This completed form, and attachments must be sent to Digital Radio in Life team for storage. A copy of this form must be provided to the member of staff undertaking Ambient Listening. This document may not be made available to anyone under the rank of AOM or without the written authority of an AOM. The information contained herein is privileged and may not be divulged.