

## **London Ambulance Service NHS Trust**

### **Framework for consideration of requests to move to alternative duties (“Step Down”)**

#### **1. Statement of Policy and Principles**

All employees may encounter circumstances or situations where they need to explore the possibility of a move from their contracted role to alternative, less demanding duties. This may be a relatively short-term need, or could be a permanent consideration.

This is termed “step down”.

There may be any number of reasons for a staff member seeking to explore the possibility of “stepping down”. These could be due to physical capability, health, domestic situation, working pattern or simple personal preference. Whilst every attempt will be made to accommodate staff needs it is not the intention of the Trust to apply any value judgement or priority to a request for consideration of “step down”.

As a matter of principle and best practice, London Ambulance Service NHS Trust undertakes to consider any such requests for “step down” based upon the following principles:

- availability of alternative opportunities (vacant established/funded posts)
- posts will not be created to accommodate personal need
- no guarantee of redeployment can be given
- “Step down” will usually involve a permanent redeployment and contractual change, but short-term secondments to support a staff member through a period of particular need will be considered
- suitability of the individual for the role in question will determine whether an appointment is appropriate
- appropriate health clearance will be required
- satisfactory attendance (subject to any consideration of any long-term condition which may be mitigated by a change of duties) and disciplinary records must be maintained both in order to be considered for step down and in the new role.
- there can be no protection of salary where a lower graded post is considered
- since these are voluntary moves, there can be no payment of excess travel expenses

Any “step down” redeployment will be offered on the basis of accepting the duties, location, job title, rank/grade, salary and terms and conditions for the new post.

Opportunities for retirement and re-engagement, including on reduced hours, may also be explored depending upon individual circumstances and personal choice, at all times governed by the regulations of the NHS Pension Scheme.

This framework has been produced in partnership to ensure that there is a consistent method of undertaking such requests, and that all criteria which need to be considered by both staff and management, are taken into account. These arrangements replace and supersede any previous “White Work” or Urgent Care Service arrangements.

## **2. Procedure and Arrangements - General**

The Trust already maintains a redeployment list for staff whose employment is deemed to be at risk due to organisational change, performance or capability. Those on this list must always be given priority consideration over and above any request for a voluntary change of role or status.

However, any staff member may request to be added to the redeployment list for consideration of “step down”. They should clearly state this, and an interview with a member of the Human Resources Directorate will be arranged to confirm aspirations and preferences as well as to prepare a skills profile. Where suitable vacancies arise, these will be brought to the attention of the staff member and, if the skills profile matches, an interview will be offered.

Alternatively, any member of staff may apply directly for an advertised alternative post, stating in the application that they wish to be considered for “step down”. At this point, the same arrangements will be made as for a request to join the redeployment list in terms of an interview with a representative of the Human Resources Directorate etc.

Where a staff member is deemed, following assessment and interview, to meet the requirements of the role, they will be appointed ahead of any external applicant. Where there is a greater number of suitable step down applicants than posts available, an assessment of individual need will determine the priority consideration. If all other matters appear equal, it may be necessary to refer to length of service to determine who should be offered the initial opportunities, with other successful candidates placed in reserve against other similar vacancies arising.

If a similar vacancy (essentially the same job) arises within a period of no more than 12 months subject to continued satisfactory attendance (including consideration of any long term condition which may be mitigated by a change of duties) and a continuation of a satisfactory disciplinary record, this will be offered to the next step down candidate as determined by length of service. If no vacancy arises within 12 months then any recruitment and selection process must begin again, including health screening.

## **3. Procedure and Arrangements – Accident and Emergency Staff and UCS**

Due to the unique nature of ambulance work, and the number of staff employed on front-line duties, although opportunities are not exclusively restricted to the Urgent Care Service, it is envisaged that the greatest demand for “step down” will come from this group of staff.

Traditionally, opportunities for redeployment to alternative duties have been limited. However, as new types of delivering ambulance care, new ways of managing operational demand, and new care pathways themselves develop this situation is changing.

This is particularly the case with the increase in Clinical Telephone Advice (CTA) and the development of the Urgent Care Service (UCS). Where operational staff wish to be considered for these areas, the following will apply:

**Clinical Telephone Advice:** This is a band 5 post. Paramedics and EMT 4 staff who apply to CTA and are successful will retain their existing base salary. Team

Leaders or others in a higher band must take the salary for the post, with any reduction mitigated by placing the individual on the spine point nearest to the existing base salary. High Cost Area and unsocial hours payments will be determined by place of work and shift pattern.

**Urgent Care Service:** UCS now incorporates the former “White Work” initiative. Existing “White Work” staff will continue to undertake their existing role and function within UCS. UCS deployment regimes cover only “white” and “green” calls, and it is to these calls that UCS staff will routinely be deployed.

Although direct entry to UCS will involve the appointment of A&E Support staff (pay band 3), and it is intended to introduce the generic job title for all UCS staff in due course, it is possible to accommodate different skill levels with UCS provided that:

- Paramedic and EMT staff appointed to UCS maintain their skills
- Should EOC identify a red call and an appropriately qualified UOC crew (i.e. a crew which includes paramedic or EMT staff) is available they will be deployed to that call and will assist the patient to the full extent of their skills, training, knowledge, equipment and any vehicle constraints.
- Any operational UCS member will work with any other UCS irrespective of base grade, and work to the highest skill level (as above).

Posts will be offered on this basis and staff must accept on these terms if they are to retain their existing base salary, with High Cost Area and unsocial hours payments being determined by work base and shift pattern.

**It is important to recognise and acknowledge that the Urgent Care Operations Centre does not scan “red” calls, and paramedic or EMT staff would not be routinely deployed to “red” calls.**

**However, in accordance with HPC code of conduct and the general duty of care towards patients it must be accepted that qualified staff will work to their skill level on any call, the only exceptions being as stated above.**

Should any individual not wish to accept an appointment on these terms, for example should a paramedic wish to surrender their status as a paramedic, the consideration may still be given to appointment to UCS but at the salary appropriate to a reduced role and job description.

#### **4. Review**

Should a request for “step down” be refused on grounds other than suitability for the post in question, the staff member may seek a review of the decision from a manager senior to the recruiting manager. That manager will seek a full statement of the grounds for the request and the reason(s) that it cannot be accommodated. The manager will take HR advice, and also discuss the matter with a staff representative before reaching a decision. There is no further review.

February 2008