



NATIONAL AMBULANCE COMMITTEE

Emergency Care Assistant Report September 2009

Following the publication of the Emergency Care Assistant pilot site evaluation report, representatives of the Trade Union partners in the National Ambulance Strategic Partnership Forum (the Forum) met with employers' representatives to discuss the outcome.

It was clear at that meeting that there was a difference of opinion over the implications of the report. The UNISON National Ambulance Committee met on 22 September to consider the issues and agreed as follows:

- The ECA role as currently designed is not fit for purpose in that it fails to deliver appropriate levels of clinical care to patients and has adverse effects on staff welfare.
- No staff should be deployed by Ambulance services in a front line capacity who have not been trained as a minimum to standards as set out in the Millar report.
- These minimum standards are not and cannot be reflected in any band 3 or lower graded roles.
- To seek urgent national discussions with English Ambulance trust employers on a timetable of withdrawal of all band 3 roles from front line vehicles and to work with UNISON Ambulance branches in pursuance of immediate implementation of this policy.

This position was endorsed at a meeting of UNISON's Health Service Group Executive on 23 September 2009 and by our partner unions in the Forum that have jointly written to the Employers advising them of the following:

"Staff whose roles have been job evaluated at band 3 or below should not be deployed by Ambulance services in any front line capacity as they will not possess the necessary knowledge, training and experience to deliver the level of patient care expected from an emergency ambulance practitioner. This applies whether or not they are accompanied by a paramedic or technician as it is clear from our members input and the evaluation report that reducing the skill set of one of the emergency ambulance team has a detrimental impact on patient care.

"In the circumstances we are seeking an urgent meeting of the NASPF to discuss a timetable of withdrawal of all band 3 roles from front line deployment. We feel this process can be best achieved through enhancing the training of existing band 3 ECA's to bring their skill set up to the standard as reflected by the National Ambulance Practitioner band 4 job profile and in the North West Ambulance Service Assistant Ambulance Practitioner pack."

UNISON's Ambulance Committee wish to make it clear that the above policy is consistent with the views of our many ECA members. An update will be forthcoming when the employers' response has been received.