



From: Rosie Byrne, Director of Operations, NIAS

Date of Issue: 10 November 2020

Communique re cancellation of low acuity outpatient clinic ambulance transport

Like much of the wider health service, the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service HSC Trust is currently under significant pressure. Apart from significant staff abstractions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, operationally we are experiencing long turnaround delays in acute hospitals due to wider system pressures. Delays subsequently impact on our ability to respond to 999 calls in the community in a timely manner.

Given the heightened Covid-19 alert status and ongoing pandemic management arrangements, alongside annual winter pressures, we have reluctantly concluded that we need to focus our resources on high acuity, urgent and emergency workload. The impact of this decision is that we are ceasing delivery of low acuity outpatient transport services and transferring the associated Patient Care Service (PCS) ambulances to A&E Support work.

Apart from the low acuity outpatient activity that we are ceasing, we will **continue** to provide:

- Emergency Response
- HCP Urgent booked admissions
- Inter-Hospital Transfers
- Acute Hospital Discharge
- Renal activity including outpatient appointments for dialysis
- Red Flag diagnostic referrals
- Oncology related activity
- Paediatrics

The clinics we will cease to provide a transport service to are shown on the page below.


To allow time for HSC Trusts to consider alternative arrangements for face-to-face appointments, and for the NIAS PCS Booking team to contact individual patients to inform them of this decision, the date of implementation will be:

23rd November 2020

NIAS has not taken this decision without careful consideration of the range of challenges to be addressed and options available to us and we remain committed to providing the best ambulance services we can, in the circumstances. There may be a very small number of patients for whom a Health Care Professional (HCP) is aware of an essential medical requirement for non-emergency transport for a critical appointment or procedure, and they can contact us through the usual channels to arrange for an appropriate NIAS response, or acceptable alternative.

In respect of this decision, NIAS PCS booking team will cease to accept new bookings for transport requests dated after 23rd November 2020 that do not match the essential activity listed above, with immediate effect.

Thank you for your patience and understanding at this time.



Ms Rosie Byrne, Director of Operations



Clinics for which NIAS transport will be cancelled	
Audiology	Movement & Disorder Clinic
Brain Injury Unit	Neurology
Breast Clinic	Neurophysiology
Cardiac Investigations Unit	Nuclear Medicine (CT & MRI)
Cardiology	Occupational Therapy
Central Plaster Unit	Ophthalmology
Colposcopy & Laser	Oral Surgery
Critical Care	Physio Therapy
Day Hospital Clinics	Plastics & Maxillo Facial
Day Procedure	Podiatry
Dermatology	Pre Assessment Clinic
Diabetic	Primary Care Clinic
Dietetics	Psychiatric
ECG	Regional Disability Services
Ent	Regional Respiratory Centre
Footwear & Orthopaedics	Rheumatology
Fracture Clinic	Spinal Injuries Unit
Gynae	Urology
Heart Failure Clinic	Vascular
Immunology Day Centre	Warfarin Clinic
Limb Reconstruction Clinic	X-ray
Macular Clinic	