



**Welsh Ambulance  
Service**

**Wish**





# Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust and Palliative Care Wales Wish Ambulance Guidelines

## Overview:

The Wish Ambulance has been developed to enable people near the end of their life to have a meaningful journey. The service is provided by volunteer staff from Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust (WAST) with support from the patient's Specialist Palliative Care Team (SPCT). Although every effort will be made to facilitate a Wish journey, WAST is unable to guarantee availability of the service due to all staff being volunteers.

## Patient Identification:

Patients suitable for the Wish Ambulance will be identified by the senior palliative care clinician with overall responsibility for the care of the patient. Identification is most likely to happen following discussions between a patient/relative and a palliative care team member, where it has been identified that the patient wishes to go to a specific location that has personal meaning to them.

The focus of the Wish Ambulance is to support patients who need transport by ambulance as other forms of transport are not appropriate. The patient may also need clinical support whilst away from their car setting. The service is aimed at patients that are considered to be in their last weeks of life, or where it is considered that the patient needs to travel prior to this due to deterioration preventing future travel.

The Wish Ambulance is not intended to be a service that is offered prior to a patient identifying a meaningful journey, offering out the service may attract journey requests that otherwise would not have been thought of. This has the potential to produce a volume of requests that the volunteer staff will be unable to fulfil, this may then result in the service being unable to fulfil the meaningful journeys that the service has been put in place to support.

When considering a patient for the Wish Ambulance it is recommended that you discuss the case with senior colleagues in your team. Queries can be emailed to; [AMB\\_WishAmbulance@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:AMB_WishAmbulance@wales.nhs.uk) Alternatively if you wish to discuss over the telephone, you can call during office hours; Edward O'Brian 07808 869 832.

## Restrictions:

All journeys must be completed within the same day, volunteer crew are unable to complete journeys requiring an overnight stay. The crew or the Trust cannot incur additional costs such as entrance fees or ticket costs.

## Wish Ambulance Crew

The pool of volunteers operating the Wish Ambulance includes all clinical grades of WAST staff, the expected clinical needs of the patient during the Wish will determine the grade of staff that will be asked to volunteer for a specific journey.



## Referral to the Wish Ambulance:

Following identification of a potentially suitable journey for the Wish Ambulance, it is recommended that the senior clinician inform the patient that they can make enquires regarding their journey request. This then allows you to gain consent for the referral, it should not be communicated to the patient or their family that a journey can be done at this stage.

### Step 1

Refer the patient to the Wish Ambulance by either completing the Wish Ambulance Referral Form and emailing it to [AMB\\_WishAmbulance@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:AMB_WishAmbulance@wales.nhs.uk) or by filling in the online MS form

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=uChWuyjgkCoVkM8ntyPrplbwOcRydxBleOURQwZZuFUMFcxTDY2WTc5VU9LV1hDODBITzVGTlozSy4u>

### Step 2

Following receipt of a referral, a member of the Wish team will contact the referrer within 24 hours to discuss viability and next steps.

### Step 3

A request for a volunteer wish ambulance crew will be made and a reconnaissance report (if required) will be compiled by a WAST member of staff, this is to ensure access, safety and ability to provide patient comfort. The journey is still not guaranteed at this stage.

### Step 4

Once a volunteer crew has been confirmed and the reconnaissance report (if required) completed, the referrer will be contacted to enable both parties to establish a plan for the day, this plan is recorded on a journey schedule by WAST and shared.

### Step 5

Following completion of the journey schedule the request then requires senior clinical and operational approval from WAST prior to being confirmed. Once approval has been confirmed the referrer will be advised, at this stage the patient and relative may be informed that the journey will take place.



Scan QR code for online referral form



# Wish Ambulance FAQs for referring staff

## What is the Wish Ambulance Service?

The Wish Ambulance is a service that enables people near the end of their life to have a meaningful journey; this is provided by volunteer staff from the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust (WAST) with support from the Specialist Palliative Care Teams (SPCT) within Wales.

## What is meant by a meaningful journey?

As people approach the end of their life, patients may report that they wish they could visit a specific place of meaning before they die. Examples of previous wishes include;

- A patient wanting to visit her local beach one last time with her children, the crew conveyed the patient via stretcher so that she and her family could watch the waves and share time together.
- A patient that had always wanted to see a particular music artist with her daughters, the patient had bought tickets prior to becoming ill, the last wish of this patient was to attend the concert. The volunteer crew conveyed the patient via stretcher to the music venue with her daughters, they remained with the patient throughout to provide support and administer necessary medication.

## How does The Wish Ambulance service work?

The Wish Ambulance service relies on WAST volunteers and is not intended to be a service that is offered out prior to a patient identifying a meaningful journey, offering out the service may attract journey requests that otherwise would not have been thought of. This has the potential to produce a volume of requests that the volunteer staff will be unable to fulfil. The trigger for a referral to the Wish Ambulance Service should be following identification of the Wish during patient consultation.

## Is there a dedicated WAST vehicle?

No, the Wish Ambulance utilises vehicles not used operationally on the day of the wish, most likely a Non-Emergency patient Transport Service (NEPTS) stretcher vehicle. NEPTS vehicles also attract less attention from members of the public than emergency ambulances, so it helps us to protect patient privacy.

## Is this service available throughout Wales?

Yes, it is available for use by patients across Wales. A referral can be made by a clinician such as a palliative medicine doctor, a palliative care nurse or the patients GP.

## Can a member of the public contact WAST to arrange a wish?

No, the current model for the Wish Ambulance is that referral of patients can only be done by the patients clinical team. This ensures appropriate referrals and full support can be provided.

## What is the role of SPCT in the Wish Ambulance Service?

SPCTs primarily have the role of identifying appropriate patients for whom a journey with the Wish Ambulance Service would be important. To facilitate this, it is crucial that SPCT understand the benefits and limitations of the service and what preparation is required to ensure a successful outcome (see below). Clinical leads for SPCTs also have a role in supporting WAST staff undertaking the Wish journey should they require clinical advice.



### **How do I identify appropriate patients?**

- Patients and their families need to understand the role of the Wish Ambulance Service.
- Patients will likely be in the last few weeks of life, such that ambulance conveyance is the ONLY realistic means of making the meaningful journey happen.
- There needs to be open, honest dialogue between the patients/family and healthcare regarding possible complications.

### **Do all patients need to have a DNACPR to use this service?**

This will depend on the clinical grade of the crew, however wherever possible a DNACPR form should be available to the crew.

### **If my patient requires medications whist out on a Wish, is this possible?**

Yes, all grades of staff can facilitate a journey where the patient has a syringe driver running or where the patient needs oxygen. Paramedic staff can administer anticipatory or just in case medications and oral PRNs.



# Wish Ambulance FAQs for WAST Staff

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## How is it decided what crew gets chosen for the journey?

Selection is likely to be on a first come first served basis.

## Are the journeys for adult patients only?

No, the journeys can be for adults or children. Although we anticipate that there will be far more requests for adults than children.

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## What grade of WAST staff can apply to volunteer?

All front line WAST staff members are invited to apply; this includes ACA1, ACA2, EMT and paramedic. Volunteers need to have been trained to drive a WAST vehicle and to operate the equipment contained within a WAST vehicle, i.e. tail lift operation, stretcher operation, as well as be trained in patient manual handling techniques, this is the reason we cannot open it up to other roles at this time.

## As a volunteer what grade of staff will I be working with?

This may vary dependent on the level of clinical need of the patient; it will also vary dependent on the volunteers available on that day. If there is a high clinical need for a patient i.e. an expectation that Just in Case medicines will be required and there are no EMS volunteers available, a double NEPTS crew could not facilitate this journey.



**Will I be expected to administer medications whilst out on a Wish?**

Potentially yes, but only within your usual scope of practice.

**Do EMS staff need to complete an ePCR when volunteering on a Wish?**

Should the paramedic need to administer medication, a record of this must be kept, and therefore an ePCR must be completed. Only basic information is needed though, there is no requirement for obs recording.

**If I volunteer, will I need my own indemnity insurance?**

No, WAST will provide WAST staff with the same level of cover that it provides when you are on your own shift. You must operate within your normal scope of practice for this to apply, this includes completion of an ePCR (paramedic administering medication only). Essentially, if you operate to the same standard that is expected of you whilst on shift, then you are covered by the Trust in the same way. Non WAST clinical staff accompanying a patient will need to ensure their usual indemnity insurance is applicable.

**If I volunteer on a Wish can I mention it on social media?**

All staff should be fully aware of the NHS policy with regards to social media, specifically 'Staff should never divulge or share confidential or personal identifiable or sensitive information in relation to patients carers or staff, nor should they post any material that represents an invasion of patient or staff privacy.'

**If I'm volunteering, am I covered on the vehicle insurance?**

Yes. WAST staff are covered to drive the WAST vehicle whilst volunteering on a Wish ambulance journey.

**How do I sign up to be a volunteer?**

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=uChWuyjigkCoVkM8ntyPrnZO-pRPq51DkU1bM5ASwuZUOUNUNEIdIMzZCQjdJMTFPUU5CUkxZR0JZRC4u>

**Once I'm signed up as a volunteer, how will I know when I'm needed?**

When a Wish application is received and processed, we will send out a text message and email to all volunteers in that Health Board area stating the day, times and grade of crew required. Once a crew has accepted and confirmed they are available for that day, you will then be contacted and given details of the wish and the next steps required by you.

**Can I claim overtime for the day of the wish?**

No, all support given to the Wish ambulance must be done on a voluntary basis.

**If I am injured whilst doing a wish, will the Industrial Injury Policy apply?**

Yes, the Industrial Injury Policy will apply when completing Wish journeys.

**Can I access support if I need to following on from volunteering on a wish?**

Yes, the full range of support that is available to staff whilst in work is available to staff volunteering for the Wish Ambulance. Palliative care colleagues will also be more than happy to sit down and talk with you directly after the wish to help you debrief and answer any questions that you may have.