COLLEGE OF paramedics™
leading the development of the paramedic profession

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Dear Student Paramedics,

I write to you today to address a matter of utmost importance. I know that by now many of you will have seen today's news report by The Independent which further expands on the report from Sky News a couple of weeks ago. No student paramedic should ever have to feel unsafe or vulnerable whilst on placement, and this ideology about it being 'part of the ambulance culture' is simply outdated, unacceptable and nothing short of harrowing.

Whilst we understand and acknowledge that our profession is not solely defined by the ambulance service, with paramedics working in a multitude of fields, we feel it is only right for us, as an organisation to address student paramedics directly.

As such, I write to you today in tandem with our Chief Executive, Tracy Nicholls, so that you are aware of what the College of Paramedics is doing to support change within the 'ambulance culture', as well as offering our support as an organisation with signposting. As the professional body, the College of Paramedics does not have direct influence over how ambulance services are run, yet we explicitly condemn any abusive, racist or discriminatory behaviour which is deemed 'acceptable' as part of the 'ambulance culture'.

The ambulance service rightly plays a vital role amongst society, and the public expect a level of professionalism. I am sure the behaviour detailed by the National Guardian's Speak Up Review of ambulance trusts in England, and further publicised by several news outlets will have come as a shock to many members of the public, however, ultimately, those who have worked in the ambulance service know what it can truly be like.

We all have a part to play in changing the culture. Inappropriate behaviour - as described by the report - needs to be challenged, acknowledging that even if this behaviour is not directed at you personally, you simply cannot stand idly by and go along with 'the joke'.

The College of Paramedics is committed to hosting a number of virtual listening events so you can confidentially voice your concerns, and to ask those of us from the College any questions you may have. We want to work together to create a culture of respect and inclusivity.

We are also putting together a support page for student paramedics on our website (giving guidance on what to do if you witness this behaviour, or if it happens to you), who to speak to, what to expect, and how to escalate concerns if the problem is not being dealt with satisfactorily. We are also committed to working alongside The Ambulance Staff Charity (TASC) who can offer further advice and support to student paramedics.

To any students who have been affected by the report today, I would personally like to say how sorry I am if you have experienced any kind of inappropriate behaviour first-hand, and secondly, as the Chair of the Student Council, I can assure you that the College will do all it can to combat this behaviour. Together, we can create a community where all students feel safe, respected, and valued.

My inbox is forever open if you would like to reach out and talk.

Yours faithfully,

Peter Turner-Wells
Chair of the Student Council

Tracy Nicholls OBE, FCPara
Chief Executive