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volkswagen commercial vehicles at ambex 2008

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Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles is showcasing two ambulance conversions based on its Transporter and Crafter models at AMBEX 2008, the international conference and exhibition for the emergency and urgent care sector, which runs from 24 to 26 June at the Harrogate International Centre, North Yorkshire.

The ambulance conversion on a Transporter panel van was carried out by UV Modular Limited, and thought to be the first of its kind in the UK. It is one of 12 specifically designed for the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) to be used on Scottish islands on the west coast, the Shetlands and Outer Hebrides.

With a working life expectancy of between seven to 10 years in some of the UK's remotest locations and harshest weather conditions, durability, reliability and low maintenance were critical requirements for the SAS. Accessibility was also an important reason for choosing the Volkswagen Transporter as it was one of the few vans available with all-wheel drive and is a more practical size for narrow island roads than a conventional, full scale ambulance.

Based on a long wheelbase, high roof Transporter panel van with a five cylinder, 2.5-litre 130 PS TDI PD diesel engine, the bespoke specification for the SAS's unique requirements includes Volkswagen's 4MOTION all-wheel drive transmission for superior traction off-road and in poor weather, plus a towbar for special equipment trailers used for major incidents.

Inside, the SAS did not require a bulkhead in its Transporter ambulances so they can be operated by a single or double crew. There is also a rotating passenger seat and seat for an attendant, plus a removable stretcher and medical equipment to aid transferring a patient to another ambulance on the mainland, if necessary, and also to be able to load wheelchairs so the vehicles can be used for patient transport services.

Michael Jackson, from the SAS said: 'We are over the moon with our new Volkswagen Transporter ambulance. It handles the tough conditions it has been designed for remarkably well, and will also be more cost effective than conventional ambulances.'

The second ambulance Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles is exhibiting is based on a Crafter CR50 long wheelbase panel van converted by Oughtred & Harrison (Facilities) Limited for the East Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust (EMAS) which serves a population of 4.6 million people across the counties of Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Leicestershire and Rutland.

The vehicle is equipped with mobile lifting gear and an extendable stretcher to handle heavier or less mobile patients and will be used by EMAS as a multi-purpose, non-emergency patient transport service vehicle.

Full details of AMBEX 2008 are available from www.ambex.net. For further information of the Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles van range, please visit www.volkswagen-vans.co.uk.

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The Transporter

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