

## **Paramedic - Profession specific descriptor for registered professionals and support workers**

Paramedics are registered healthcare professionals who have a unique role that crosses healthcare, public health, social care, and public safety, they work autonomously and within multidisciplinary team to providing care in a range of situations. Most well-known for working within Ambulance Services providing immediate and emergency care in response to 999 calls made by the public, Paramedics now also work in other areas of healthcare, for example GP practices, community services, hospital emergency departments and police custody suites.

### **Wider Determinants**

Paramedics in the ambulance service are often the first and only healthcare professional that people in the hard-to-reach group accessed in time of crisis. Paramedics are increasingly aware of the wider factors and inequalities which contribute to the reasons why people call the paramedics in the first place e.g., social isolation, poverty, deprivation. For example, Paramedics work with St John Ambulance to increase accessibility of healthcare and first aid information in some hard-to-reach population such as people who are homeless.

Paramedics can work as disability assessors, where they would typically be subcontracted by the Department of Work and Pensions. In these roles they can look at how they can accommodate individual needs and support them long term from a welfare perspective. This might be support with a living environment, accessing employment/education, or supporting access to universal credit or disability allowance.

### **Health Improvement**

Paramedics integrate Making Every Contact Count (MECC) into practice. They can talk to patients about smoking cessation, alcohol, social isolation and refer to the appropriate services. They are also able to provide further information and guidance specific to the situation they are called out to for example, the importance of not using mobile phones while driving, or speed limits in the area, drug usage and locations to access safer drugs.

Paramedics may be involved with primary care appointments in GPs, managing conditions and treating urgent presentations. They can also work with patients to support them in managing long term chronic conditions.

A copy of the Paramedic's report is sent on to GPs and can draw their attention to key details about the patient or suggest referrals to other services. Furthermore, Paramedics working in primary care also contribute towards health improvement by providing direct health promotion and behaviour change advice as well as signposting/referring individuals to local health improvement services, such as health improvement coaches or substance misuse services.

Paramedics have been involved with public CPR training, and training for the public in how to access and use the public access defibrillators to improve the survival of people who experience out-of-hospital cardiac arrests.

## Population Healthcare

Paramedics act as a gateway and provide access to healthcare. In some cases, they may be the only health care professional that some communities see because they are less likely to access healthcare services prior to the emergency stages for example, homeless populations, some diverse communities/migrant groups who may be used to paying for healthcare, women in refuges who may not want to leave the refuge for their own safety or deprived communities who are more likely to have unmanaged long-term conditions.

Paramedics have been involved with public health campaigns. For example, posters on the sides of ambulances educating the public about heart attacks, stroke symptoms, appropriate use of health services such as 111.

Paramedics are often employed to provide medical coverage at events like festivals or football matches or with the provision of first aid and healthcare in industry, for example, supporting staff on oil rigs with chronic and acute healthcare cases. Paramedics treat patients in the home which can contribute towards preventing avoidable admissions to hospitals.

Paramedics also provide healthcare in remote locations such as coastal or rural communities where it might be difficult for people to access alternative healthcare providers to improve healthcare access to these communities.

## Health Protection

Some paramedics have been involved directly with the COVID-19 vaccination programme by providing the vaccination in the local or large COVID-19 vaccination centres.

Paramedics give infection control advice to patients and family as part of their clinical management. This has been particularly relevant during the COVID-19 pandemic where they have talked to people about the importance of washing hands, wearing masks, and have given vaccine advice.

Paramedics are not specifically involved in screening programmes, however Paramedics in primary care often provide support to various national screening programs by collecting baseline clinical information of the patient for NHS Health check, arranging blood and other pathology samples.

Paramedics in Ambulance Services are involved in emergency planning and direct response to natural and man-made disasters such as extreme weather events, flooding, industrial accidents or terrorist attacks. This often involves working with multi-agency team to develop major incident plans as well as major incident exercises to support the preparation of the health service disaster responses.

## Paramedic – Wider Reading and Case Study Examples

<b>Health Protection</b>	<b>Wider Determinants</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Paramedic – AHP Prescriber Social Prescribing</li><li>• <a href="https://www.paramedicpractice.com/opinion/article/a-paramedic-in-public-health">https://www.paramedicpractice.com/opinion/article/a-paramedic-in-public-health</a> (PDF) Public Health and Paramedics: What does it mean for me? (researchgate.net)</li></ul>
<b>Population Healthcare</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Public Health and Paramedics: What does it mean for me?</li></ul>	<b>Health Improvement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Paramedic – Refer to a link worker Social Prescribing</li></ul>