

Choosing a career as a Paramedic

Why become a paramedic?

Paramedics are now recognised as highly skilled health professionals who provide care to patients in a wide range of circumstances. The care that paramedics provide can make a real difference to the lives of the thousands of people treated by paramedics every day.

"I became a paramedic because I wanted to help people. I haven't enjoyed everything I've had to do during my career but I can't recall many shifts where I haven't been able to use my skills to help someone"

Paul, Paramedic

"You never forget the first time you successfully resuscitate someone. One minute you are faced with a dead body the next with someone who is trying to sit up"

Cal, Paramedic

Some of the benefits of working as a paramedic are listed below.



Varied workload

Paramedic work could never be described as boring. Although it is true to say that the majority of the calls attended by paramedics are fairly routine, paramedics still have to be ready to deal with almost any kind of medical emergency. Many of the incidents seen by paramedics are unique to the pre-hospital environment.

"Working as a paramedic is anything but dull! You simply never know what is coming next. I've dealt with all sorts of patients in all sorts of places – from a farm worker unconscious in a pigsty to a violinist collapsed in the orchestra pit at the Royal Opera House"

Eric, Paramedic

Team work and responsibility

Most paramedics work as part of a small, tight knit team of pre-hospital care providers, all dedicated to delivering the best possible care to patients. Increasingly, paramedics will be the senior clinician at the scene of an emergency and will be responsible for leading the care team.

"I work with a great bunch of people who really care about the job. I know I can trust them when it matters"

Carol, Paramedic

Increasing scope of practice

Paramedics now undertake a wide range of clinical procedures and interventions, many of which used only to be available in hospital. This change in the skills available to paramedics has had a direct effect on patient outcome. If anything, this trend to increasing levels of skills is going to increase in the future.

"I'll never forget the first time I went to someone with a bad MI (heart attack). My crew mate and I did a 12 lead ECG in the ambulance to diagnose the MI. I decided he met the criteria for thrombolysis so I cannulated him (put a needle into a vein in his arm) and gave him a number of IV drugs, including a powerful pain killer and a thrombolytic. Within an hour he had gone from being desperately ill to almost fully recovered.

Julia, Paramedic

Employment prospects

Most paramedics work on ambulances or single person response cars. However, the range of opportunities available to paramedics is increasing all the time. For example, paramedics may now choose to work in a number of specialist roles. These new roles can include critical care helicopter work, marine rescue, urban search and rescue or CBRN (chemical, biological radiological, nuclear) response. Despite these opportunities most paramedics choose to remain working in a normal A&E role, perhaps completing additional training to become a clinical team leader. For those who would like to take their career to the highest level, a number of advanced clinical leadership roles up to Consultant Paramedic are now emerging.

"I've done some amazing things in my time with the ambulance service. The high point for me was a six month secondment to the helicopter where I got to specialise in critical trauma care. I've also done a secondment to HART (hazardous area response team) and I'm still a CBRN responder. At the moment I'm a team leader responsible for a team of technicians and paramedics"

Ged, Paramedic

"I'm a keen cyclist so working as a cycle response paramedic is my dream job"

Ged, Paramedic

Next steps

If you think you would like the challenges a career as a paramedic offers then please contact:

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