

Although the term 'paramedic' is traditionally associated with emergency ambulance, prehospital care, the role has undergone enormous development in recent years and paramedics now work in a variety of settings.

Paramedics are often Health and Social Care Services' first point of contact with service users. Paramedics encounter patients in a wide variety of emergency and nonemergency settings, providing high quality and compassionate care for a broad range of conditions, illness and injury. By its nature, the work is varied, diverse, can be unpredictable and involve 24/7 response.

Paramedics assess, diagnose, treat and manage patients, as well as conveying them, when necessary, to further care. The work may be as part of an emergency ambulance crew, as a solo rapid responder, on the helicopter air ambulance or as part of a hazardous area response team. Paramedics also work in control centres, providing telephone advice to callers or referring them to an appropriate point of care. Paramedics involved in advanced practice can also work in primary care practices or emergency departments.

Working on their own or with one colleague, paramedics make clinical decisions for which they are accountable. As well as direct contact with patients, paramedics also deal with relatives, friends and members of the public, often in distressing situations. Work can involve close liaison with other teams, such as doctors and nurses in hospital emergency departments, GPs, other AHPs, mental health teams or working alongside the police, fire and rescue services.

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