

# Paramedics

are the senior members of accident and emergency ambulance crews.

Paramedics are trained to use advanced life support techniques and can administer a range of drugs for the emergency treatment of a number of medical and trauma conditions

Paramedics treat and stabilise patients at the scene of their accident or illness, while ensuring that they get to hospital as quickly as possible. They are trained to use a range of emergency treatment and monitoring equipment, such as heart defibrillators, spinal and traction splints, intravenous drips and pulse oximeters, and also administer oxygen and many drugs. An ambulance crew usually consists of a paramedic assisted by an ambulance technician.

## Case study

'I joined first as a technician and then applied to be a paramedic. It took me about 18 months to qualify. It meant acquiring new skills and taking on more learning, but being a paramedic opens up such a lot of other avenues. For example, I'm now doing a part-time honours degree in paramedical science.

Like most people, I suppose, I had this vision of what accident and emergency work involved, but it's not always like that. Of course, you do get called to the huge emergencies and that's an important part of the job, but there is another side to it. For example, an old lady might have a fall, be unable to get up and lie on the floor for two days before she is discovered: you are basically going out to get her back on her feet. This is the quieter, less publicised aspect of the work.

We also get called to quite a few domestic disputes and to other situations where people just feel that they have nowhere else to turn. You sometimes have to be a bit of a social worker as well as everything else.'



### Further Information

**The Ambulance Service  
Association  
Friars House  
157-168 Blackfriars  
Road  
London  
SE1 8EZ**

### Qualifications and progression routes

In England, requirements differ between local ambulance services but may include GCSEs or alternative qualifications.

Vocational qualifications in health and social care or science would be appropriate.

Physical fitness is important. Recruitment is via a post as a trainee ambulance technician or an ambulance care assistant.

Experience in the health professions shadowing or in paid or voluntary work is useful.

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