

An MSs Guide to Paramedicine in Wales

Paramedics are one of Wales's most flexible and skilled clinical workforces.

Paramedics are **highly trained, registered healthcare professionals** regulated by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). They provide lifesaving, urgent, and specialist care across healthcare, social care, and in the community.

Not everyone who works on an ambulance is a paramedic, but all paramedics are qualified clinicians that have undergone extensive training and are educated to degree-level.

Where do paramedics work?

Wales has approximately 3,000 paramedics working in a wide variety of healthcare settings:

- 999 and ambulance response
- Emergency departments
- GP practices
- Urgent and primary care
- Community and home-based care
- Palliative and end of life care
- Police custody
- Military medics
- Remote, offshore and island settings
- Major events, motorsport and festivals



Paramedics:

- Diagnose and treat patients
- Manage complex conditions
- Decide who needs hospital care, and who can safely stay at home
- Prescribe and administer medicines
- Lead urgent and community-based care
- Play a key role in supporting Emergency Departments, GP services, and hospitals by reducing demand on services

Paramedic programmes are a minimum of BSc delivered over 3 years' combining academic learning with practice-based learning.

Wales has two universities delivering paramedic degrees:

Swansea University



Wrexham University

Both programmes are three years, combining academic learning with practice-based learning. They work with Wales's only national ambulance service, the Welsh Ambulance Service.

Why paramedics matter

A paramedic works autonomously as a generalist clinician across a range of healthcare settings, usually in emergency, primary, or urgent care, and are able to manage an undifferentiated, diverse, and complex case-load of patients, including the critically ill and injured, doing so in environments over which they have limited control. They may also specialise in clinical practice, education, leadership, and research.



Paramedics Delivering in Wales

Case Studies

Swansea – Advanced Paramedic and Palliative Care Team

A team of advanced paramedic practitioners in the Swansea Bay Health Board area have been delivering palliative care for a number of years after an initial pilot in 2021.

The scheme:

- Divides time 50/50 between ambulance service duties and delivering palliative care.
- Is delivered in hospital on occasions, but is mostly community-based.
- Works alongside the team who developed the "Wish Ambulance" where terminally ill patients can fulfil a last wish by travelling to a specific location in an ambulance accompanied by professionals who volunteer their time to fulfil this last wish.

The scheme has been an overwhelming success, and was shortlisted for a Health Service Journal Award for collaboration in 2023.

Rapid Clinical Review in the Welsh Ambulance Service

In 2024 The Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust responded to winter pressures by introducing a Rapid Clinical Review process in its 999 control rooms. After the initial call is answered by a non-clinical handler, paramedics and nurses assess most calls in real time to determine the safest and most appropriate response.

Thirty newly appointed Clinical Navigators, based in St Asaph, Carmarthen, and Cwmbran, lead this work. They can:

- Conduct enhanced triage for non-life-threatening cases
- Provide remote clinical assessment
- Listen to calls live and guide handlers with additional questions
- Stay on calls until a safe decision is reached
- Life-threatening emergencies continue to receive an immediate lights-and-sirens ambulance response

The aim of the model is to:

- Prioritise the most urgent patients faster
- Deliver more tailored care and advice first time
- Reduce avoidable hospital admissions
- Improve patient safety and overall experience
- Better use frontline ambulance resources

The model is part of a series of innovations which also include Community Welfare Responders who gather patient observations locally to inform clinician decisions.

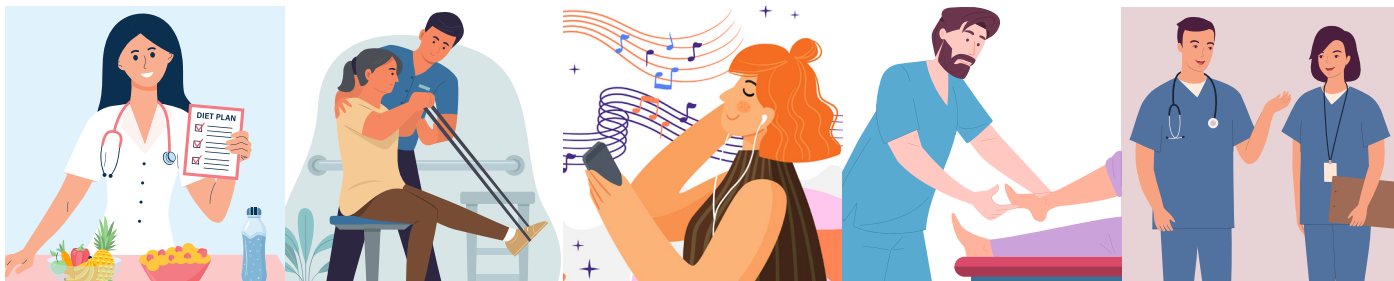
Paramedics are already:

- Treating people closer to home
- Supporting GP and hospital capacity
- Delivering care in rural, island, and remote areas

Paramedics are part of Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) in Wales. AHPs are the third largest workforce within NHS Wales.

AHPs are:

- Art Therapists
- Dietitians
- Dramatherapists
- Music Therapists
- Occupational Therapists
- Orthotists
- Orthotists and Prosthetists
- **Paramedics**
- Physiotherapists
- Podiatrists
- Radiographers
- Speech and Language Therapists.



The Royal College of Paramedics calls on policy makers to:

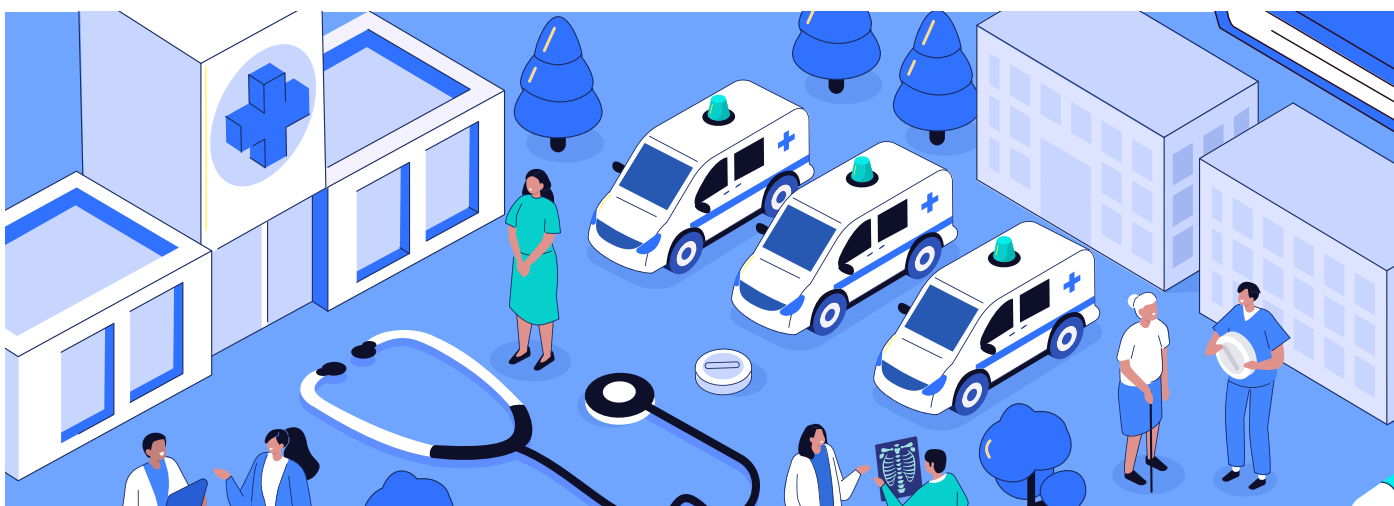
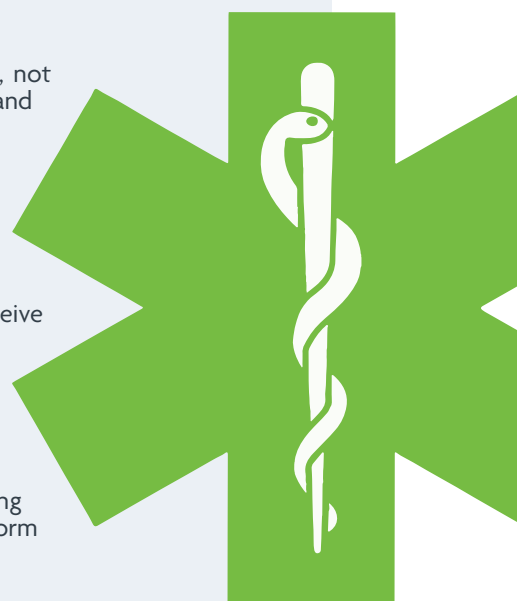
Recognise paramedics as autonomous clinicians within the Welsh healthcare workforce, not solely as ambulance responders, and reflect this in national workforce, primary care and community care planning.

Embed paramedics more fully within primary, urgent and community care services, including GP practices, frailty pathways, palliative care and virtual wards, to support earlier intervention and reduce avoidable hospital admissions.

Invest in advanced and specialist paramedic roles, particularly in rural, island and remote communities, to improve equity of access to healthcare and enable more people to receive care closer to home.

Integrate paramedics into national strategies addressing ageing populations, long-term conditions and preventative care, recognising their ability to manage complex cases and support people safely at home.

Measure and report the system-wide impact of paramedic-led models of care, including reductions in ED pressure, community GP workload and hospital conveyance, to inform evidence-based policy and long-term service design.



The Royal College of Paramedics is the only recognised professional body for the paramedic profession. We support the profession by providing leadership and advice to our members, and to people considering joining the ambulance professions. We provide support and leadership across the four pillars of the profession: research, education, clinical practice, and leadership.

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