

Staffing of main roles in GWAS

Current as of 10th April 2008

Headline summary of main ambulance service roles and the current number in position within GWAS. The number of each grade currently within the trust and the target number we want to achieve, is shown by the title in brackets. A full breakdown for each grade, by sector, is enclosed.

Unfortunately union membership cannot be given as many staff no longer pay subscriptions through the employer.

Clinical team leader (68, target 77)

Ambulance staff are arranged in self-managed teams. Each team has a clinical team leader who is responsible for ensuring all positions within their rota are filled, taking into account leave and sickness. Their clinical role includes the normal duties of a paramedic but also a training and mentoring role within the team to ensure staff are up to date with improvements and changes in their operational role.

Emergency care practitioner (28, target 93)

The work of an emergency care practitioner crosses the traditional boundaries of paramedics and nurses. Based operationally in a rapid response vehicle, they will assess patients with a wide range of symptoms and conditions, such as suspected fractures or chest pain. They will take a medical history; examine the patient and order tests and scans as necessary. They might then decide to give treatment themselves or to refer on to another healthcare professional. They have great scope for extending the role even further, with more training and higher academic qualifications.

Paramedic (324, target 386)

A paramedic is the senior healthcare professional at an accident or a medical emergency. Working either on their own or with an ambulance technician, they assess the patient's condition and then give essential treatment. They use high-tech equipment, such as defibrillators and electro-cardiographs, spinal and traction splints and intravenous drips, and as well as administering oxygen and drugs.

Ambulance technician (330)

An ambulance technician is a member of the accident and emergency ambulance crew, answering 999 calls. Usually working alongside a paramedic, they give patients potentially lifesaving care at the scene and then get the patient to hospital. Often on call in the middle of the night and in all weathers, they need to deal with a wide range of different people and situations. They have all the skills of a paramedic apart from invasive procedures and the use of certain drugs. Current technicians working for the trust are being offered development as ambulance practitioners to become fully trained paramedics

Emergency care assistant (103, target 280)

The emergency care assistant is a new role being developed to replace the technician role. The future emergency ambulance crew will be an ambulance practitioner (ECP or Paramedic) and an emergency care assistant trained to drive and give support to the practitioner

Emergency medical dispatcher (31)

As an emergency medical dispatcher you receive details of 999 calls requesting an ambulance on a computer screen. The information will have been collected by a call handler. Using your training to assess the type of emergency, you'll determine what response is needed and, if appropriate, send the nearest ambulance, rapid-response car, or even paramedic helicopter to the scene. Some employers combine the roles of call handler and emergency medical dispatcher.

Call handler (66)

A call handler will answer 999 calls from the public and GPs. Working quickly and calmly, they take the essential details about the patient's condition and the exact location, logging them on to the computer system. This information is then passed on to an emergency medical dispatcher and then used to make important decisions about how best to handle the situation. A senior call handler may have to talk a member of the public through procedures to resuscitate an unconscious patient or deliver a baby while the ambulance is on its way.

Ambulance care assistant (162)

An ambulance care assistant will drive patients to and from routine hospital admissions and other non-urgent healthcare appointments. They are responsible for looking after the patient on the journey and while they are being transferred to and from the vehicle. Because many of the passengers will be in poor health, care assistants require training in moving and handling and may need lifesavings skills in case there is a medical emergency.

Patient transport services (PTS) controller (24)

A PTS controller is responsible for organising transport to take patients to and from outpatient clinics, routine hospital admissions and other non-urgent appointments. They will record information accurately and also plan journeys and make the best use of NHS vehicles and drivers.