



# Paramedic – Scope of Practice Policy

## College of Paramedics

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1** The aim of this document is to provide clear and definitive information on the scope of practice for paramedics at the point of registration.
- 1.2** The title “Paramedic” is protected in law, and can only be used by individuals who have successfully completed an approved programme of education, and are registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).

## 2. Definition of the Paramedic Profession and Practice

- 2.1** Paramedics are autonomous first contact practitioners who undertake a wide range of diagnostic and treatment activities as well as directing and signposting care.
- 2.2** The role of Paramedics is to treat patients who experience health problems; either as the result of injury, illness, or an exacerbation of a chronic illness.
- 2.3** There are also important roles and responsibilities in health promotion and admission avoidance, both of which reflect the context as a “health”, as well as an “illness” service.
- 2.4** Paramedics work in a multitude of environments and settings, including the public, private and military sectors, ranging from providing care to a single individual, to providing care to a number of those involved in major incident situations.

## 3. Scope of Practice for Paramedics

- 3.1** Professional and legal frameworks define the way in which the profession must practice. Of particular importance are the following documents;
- Health and Care Professions Council (2014) Standards of Proficiency – Paramedics,
  - Health and Care Professions Council (2008) Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics.
- 3.2** Responding to patient needs, making sense of complex and high pressure situations, and providing high-quality care (safety, outcomes, experience [Department of Health, 2008]) is central to the scope of paramedic practice (College of Paramedics, 2015).

## 4. Definition of Scope of Practice

### 4.1 The Health and Care Professions Council defines a registrant's scope of practice as;

*"Your scope of practice is the area or areas of your profession in which you have the knowledge, skills and experience to practise lawfully, safely and effectively, in a way that meets our standards and does not pose any danger to the public or yourself. We recognise that a registrant's scope of practice will change over time and that the practice of experienced registrant's often becomes more focused and specialised than that of newly registered colleagues. This might be because of specialisation in a certain area or with a particular client group, or a movement into roles in management, education or research".*

### 4.2 The College of Paramedics define a Paramedics' scope of practice as;

*"A paramedic is an autonomous practitioner who has the knowledge, skills and clinical expertise to assess, treat, diagnose, supply and administer medicines, manage, discharge and refer patients in a range of urgent, emergency, critical or out of hospital settings".*

### 4.3 Newly registered paramedics are expected to provide care across all practice areas (see section 2).

The under-graduate curriculum is designed accordingly to ensure that paramedics have effective core skills in their generalist role.

### 4.4 The College of Paramedics supports further opportunities for paramedics to develop and expand their scope and area of practice, both of which are anticipated to increase in future in order to respond to changes in patient demand and workforce planning, and currently includes paramedics delivering care in the following settings:

- Primary Care;
- Urgent Care;
- Emergency Care;
- Emergency Departments;
- Urgent and Emergency Care Centre's;
- Minor Injury Centres;
- Walk-in Centres
- GP Out-of-Hours Services;
- 111 Systems;
- NHS Ambulance Trusts;
- Telephone Triage Systems;
- Mental Health;
- Community Settings;
- Higher Education;
- Military;
- Research;
- Management;
- Offshore & Remote;
- Hazardous Area Response Teams (HART);
- Special Operations Response Teams (SORT) (In Scotland);
- Helicopter Emergency Medical Services.

These areas are not exhaustive and additional settings may be identified as the role of paramedics, and the demands on the profession develops.

## 5. Key Principles

- 5.1** Managing complex and dynamic care requires the highest level of leadership and managerial skills as well as excellent clinical skills: the professional workforce is essential to the provision of strong and innovative leadership and management of these services, plus new roles and new ways of working.
- 5.2** Members of the paramedic workforce are engaged in research and development to continue to expand the knowledge base necessary for evidence-based practice. Others are also responsible for educating, training and mentoring within the profession so that patients receive the highest quality of care, which focuses on patient safety, clinical outcomes and patient experience (Department of Health, 2008, 2013).
- 5.3** In order to continue to support and develop paramedic practice, the profession also needs innovators and role models to take the profession forward. They will be drawn from across the occupational roles, particularly from those in advanced and consultant positions and the profession's leading managers, educators and researchers.

## References

- College of Paramedics (2015) *Paramedic Curriculum Guidance*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (Revised). Bridgwater. Published by The College of Paramedics.
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- Department of Health. (2013) *The NHS Outcomes Framework 2013/14*. Available at: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/213055/121109-NHS-Outcomes-Framework-2013-14.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/213055/121109-NHS-Outcomes-Framework-2013-14.pdf). Accessed 24.09.2014.
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