

## Compare roles in health

Not sure where to start with the hundreds of NHS careers? Use our compare roles section to get bite-size information on the entry requirements and training, pay and conditions, prospects and skills needed of up to three roles. If there is something that you think you could do, then get more in-depth information on the role.

Don't forget, you can also save your role comparisons by registering with us.

### • **Call handler/emergency medical dispatcher** <sup>[1]</sup>

You'll deal with emergency calls from the public and make sure that the right help reaches people as soon as possible.

#### Training and qualifications required

There are no set entry requirements to become an emergency medical dispatcher or call handlers but employers expect good standards of literacy, numeracy and IT skills. Some may ask for qualifications such as GCSEs, NVQs or equivalent.

#### Expected working hours and salary range

Most jobs in the NHS are covered by the Agenda for Change (AfC) pay scales and emergency medical dispatchers and call handlers are usually at bands 2 or 3. Although emergency medical dispatchers and call handlers work standard hours of around 37.5 a week, these are on a shift pattern. Shifts cover 24 hours a day, 7 days a week throughout the year. So an emergency medical dispatcher or call handler's work pattern includes evenings, nights, early starts, weekends and bank holidays. Terms and conditions can vary for employers outside of the NHS.

#### Desirable skills and values

Emergency medical dispatchers and call handlers need to stay calm under pressure, have a reassuring manner, deal with people who might be highly distressed or aggressive, use their initiative while following procedures, good communication skills and excellent keyboard skills

#### Prospects

You could progress to become a team leader or supervisor. You would be in charge of a team of call handlers or dispatchers, responsible for allocating work and drawing up schedules. With further experience you could become a duty manager, responsible for the call centre

during a shift. You could take further training to become an emergency care assistant. With more experience, you could apply to train as a paramedic. You would have to pass entrance exams and meet other requirements before being accepted onto a paramedic course.

## Related roles

- Ambulance care assistant and Patient Transport Service (PTS) driver <sup>[2]</sup>
- Telephonist/switchboard operator <sup>[3]</sup>
- Patient Transport Service (PTS) call handler <sup>[4]</sup>
- Paramedic <sup>[5]</sup>

---

**Source URL:**[https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/compare-roles-health?field\\_field\\_role=70](https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/compare-roles-health?field_field_role=70)

## Links

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/ambulance-service-team/roles-ambulance-service/emergency-medical-dispatchercall-handler> [2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/ambulance-service-team/roles-ambulance-service/ambulance-care-assistant-and-patient-transport-service-pts-driver> [3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/administration/telephonistswitchboard-operator> [4] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/ambulance-service-team/roles-ambulance-service/patient-transport-service-pts-call-handler/patient-transport-service-pts-call-handler> [5] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/roles-allied-health-professions/roles-allied-health-professions/paramedic>