

Patient Transport Service (PTS) call handler

Patient Transport Service (PTS) call handlers (sometimes called controllers) have a key role in ensuring patients who are frail or vulnerable or have no other means of transport get to their health appointments safely and on time.

Working life

Based in a central office, you'll book the vehicles that take patients to and from local clinics, daycare centres and non-emergency hospital admissions.



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Handling requests for transport from patients and their relatives and also from healthcare professionals such as nurses, you will record patients' details accurately, usually using a computer.

PTS call handlers may speak to the patients themselves. They may also deal with GPs, medical and non-medical health centre staff, PTS crews, voluntary ambulance car drivers, hospital departments and other healthcare professionals.

You will then decide which type of vehicle is appropriate for each patient, depending on their mobility and state of health, and plan the trips to make the most efficient use of the vehicles and drivers.

You will work under pressure a lot of the time, thinking fast and multi-tasking, and keeping a running check on the service and location of all vehicles in your charge. You may work shifts involving some early mornings and evenings.

Training and development

When you join an ambulance service as a PTS call handler, your training will be classroom-based and on the job.

The training includes how to use the IT and call centre equipment and software as well as customer care and communication skills.

Want to learn more?

- [Find out more about the entry requirements for a PTS call handler](#) ^[1]

- Pay and conditions

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- Where the role can lead

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You could progress to become a team leader or supervisor. You would be in charge of a team of call handlers, 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 train to become an [emergency call handler or emergency medical dispatcher](#) ^[2], dealing with calls to the emergency ambulance service.

You could take further training to become an [emergency care assistant](#) ^[3]. With more experience, you could apply to train as a [paramedic](#) ^[4]. You would have to pass entrance exams and meet other requirements before being accepted onto a paramedic course.

- Job market and vacancies

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Most NHS trusts advertise their vacancies on [NHS Jobs](#) [5]. Some advertise on their own websites. You can find a list of NHS organisations on [NHS Choices](#) [6].

If you're applying for a role either directly in the NHS or in an organisation that provides NHS services, you'll be asked to show how you think the NHS values apply in your everyday work.

[Find out more about NHS values](#) [7].

Other roles that may interest you

- [Experienced paramedic](#) [8]
- [Emergency care assistant](#) [9]
- [Clinical informatics](#) [10]
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