

"Knowing I have made a positive difference to a person's life also makes the job worthwhile."

Emma has always enjoyed the buzz of being a paramedic but wanted to develop her skills, so jumped at the chance to train as a critical care paramedic.

Emma Relf

Critical care paramedic

Employer or university

South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust

Salary range

£20k-£30k



How I got into the role

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I always wanted to do something medical and exciting which involved helping others, so becoming a paramedic seemed like the perfect career for me.

I started my career in the NHS as a call operator in the control room at my local ambulance service head quarters, but as soon as I was 21 and eligible, I started to pursue my career on the frontline.

For the last 10 years, I've worked in a range of roles. I trained as an ambulance technician before becoming a qualified paramedic. I've also worked as a clinical team leader, providing support to other clinical staff and managing a team. However, I was keen to widen my skills and wanted further responsibilities and training.

At the time, the trust had just developed a new critical care paramedic role, which specialises in managing acutely ill and critically injured patients affected by a wide range of conditions, such as trauma. I successfully applied for the post, and, after seven months of training, I gained my postgraduate qualification. I am now studying for my Master's degree in Paramedic Science.

What I do

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As well as carrying out the full range of usual ambulance duties and responsibilities, I also respond to life-threatening calls, such as cardiac arrests, serious falls and road traffic collisions. My specialist role allows me to assess and diagnose injuries and use more powerful drugs and equipment on the scene that, up until now, were only used in hospital.

I also work closely with our air ambulance service, medical director and local hospital departments, such as theatres, A&E and intensive care ^[1] units to maintain my skills when I'm not working in the normal ambulance environment.

Best bits and challenges

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I work 12-hour shifts which are long and tough but I love the lack of routine and the fact that every day is different. Knowing I have made a positive difference to a person's life also makes the job worthwhile. The emotional and physical highs and lows of the job can be challenging but I work within a supportive team with a great sense of humour which sees me through those difficult days.

Source URL: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/ambulance-service-team/roles-ambulance-service/specialist-paramedic/real-life-story-emma-reif>

Links

[1] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Intensive_care