



## A Day in the Life of an Ambulance Support Worker

### Introduction

Ambulance Support Workers (ASW) play a key role and work with a senior clinician on emergency ambulances, responding to 999 calls.

### Starting the Day

The day begins by collecting the ambulance keys. While some ambulances are pre-checked and stocked, a thorough check is vital to ensure readiness for the day ahead.



**“Mileage travelling between incidents and hospitals can quickly add up, so safety of patients and crew begins with the basic vehicle checks, ensuring you are ready for whatever the day has in store.”**

This includes:

- Stock checking what we call the ‘green bag’ to ensure all necessary equipment is present.
- Testing the vehicle to confirm it is in optimal condition for the road. This involves checking lights, fuel, tyres, and oil levels.

### On the Road

Once the checks are complete, the action starts when the first 'job' is sent to the ambulance screen and personal-issue work phone. ASWs must prioritise safe arrival at the scene before delivering patient care.

**“This could be pretty much anything - anywhere!”**

### Patient Care

A core aspect of the role is patient care:

- Taking baseline observations (temperature, blood pressure, oxygen saturations) to aid diagnosis and ensure appropriate care.
- Communicating with patients and colleagues to gather patient history and determine necessary clinical interventions.
- Providing reassurance and comfort to patients and relatives, which can be crucial.

**“At times the most valuable part of the job can be listening to and reassuring patients, comforting relatives and sometimes the friendly faces of you and your crew mate can be the only people the patients see in a day.”**

ASWs are also involved in transferring patients between hospitals, transporting patients to hospices, and taking discharged patients home.

### **Transferring Patients**

You will transfer patients to different hospitals or hospices for pain management or end-of-life care. Sometimes, you'll be part of a crew taking a patient on their final journey home. Providing comfort and support during these challenging times is crucial for the patient's dignity and the grieving process for families.

**“It is a privilege to be able to facilitate these moments for people and demonstrates the importance and diversity of the role overall.”**

### **Other Daily Tasks**

Beyond patient care, other daily tasks include:

- Booking patients into hospitals.
- Preparing the ambulance for the next patient.
- Liaising with family members and other services such as police, fire, GPs, and social workers.
- Completing paperwork and ensuring patients' belongings are passed on safely.

### **End of Shift**

Each day is varied, and returning to the station can bring mixed emotions, including accomplishment, empathy, pride, and curiosity. ASWs leave work knowing they have made a difference.

Responsibilities at the end of a shift include safely storing radios and keys and cleaning and restocking the ambulance.

**“No matter how small an act or a friendly smile, you will leave feeling that you have made a difference to someone's day and at times their lives. You know you have done your best and who knows where the shift will take you and who you will meet tomorrow!”**



## Challenges and Support

Managing emotions in unpredictable situations can be challenging, and support from colleagues, team leaders and counselling services may be necessary.

**“My initial challenges with the role involved managing my own emotions and response to situations out in practice - you can never predict what you will walk into as a crew which is part of what makes the job so fascinating and varied.”**

Building experience and seeking support are vital for developing resilience and progressing in the role.

**“The most important thing is remembering that you're never alone in any given scenario and building experience is invaluable to the role, especially if also looking to progress and develop skills further down the line.”**

## Joining the Team

The journey to becoming an ASW typically involves:

- Applying for the role through the Yorkshire Ambulance Service website.
- Providing evidence of GCSEs (English, Maths and one other subject at grade C or above) and a personal statement.
- Attending a selection event, which will include an assessment and interview.

This minimum 12-month apprenticeship will provide training and clinical supervision, six weeks of classroom training and four weeks of blue light driving training. There will be operational support to ensure you acquire the necessary knowledge and skills safely with all the support mechanisms that are on offer to all staff.

## Career Progression

Completing the ASW apprenticeship opens doors to many career opportunities, such as moving into roles like an Associate Ambulance Practitioner (who also work alongside a Paramedic on an ambulance). It can also be the start of your journey to



becoming a Paramedic, which you can do as an apprenticeship with one of our partner universities.