

The impact of blame culture on paramedic practice: A qualitative study exploring English and Finnish paramedic perceptions.

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College of Paramedics – Definition

“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”.

College of Paramedics (2017) Curriculum Guidance. 4th Edition. Available at:

https://www.collegeofparamedics.co.uk/downloads/FINAL_Paramedic_Curriculum_Guidance_Handbook_Sept_2017.pdf

Edge Hill University Paramedic Programmes

Undergraduate

- BSc (Hons) Paramedic Practice - 3 Years

Post registration – Topup

- BSc (Hons) Clinical and Professional Paramedic Practice
Senior Paramedic Team Leader – Part time

Post Graduate

- PgCert/PgDip
- MSc Advanced Practice –
*Advanced /Community
Specialised Paramedic – Part
time*
- PhD *Consultant Paramedic.*

YEAR 1	HEA1090	Development of Study Skills in Paramedic Practice
	HEA1091	Bioscience for Paramedics
	HEA1092	Fundamentals of Professional Paramedic Practice
	HEA1093	Principles of Assessment and Management in Paramedic Practice
	HEA1094	Clinical Practice & Simulation 1
YEAR 2	HEA2300	Assessment, Decision Making and Management
	HEA2301	Pathophysiology & Pharmacology for Paramedic Practice
	HEA2302	Research & Evidence Based Practice
	HEA2303	Clinical Practice & Simulation 2
YEAR 3	HEA3300	Professional Paramedic Practice
	HEA3301	Paramedic Practice in Primary & Urgent Care
	HEA3302	Exploring the Scope of Paramedic Practice
	HEA3303	Clinical Practice & Simulation 3

Investigating the reasons

- Registered Paramedics in the UK - 24,455 (02/10/17)
- More than 1,500 paramedics left the ambulance service between April 2014 and March 2015, compared to just 845 between 2010 and 2011
- 75 per cent of paramedics are considering leaving.
- 8 / 10 paramedics feel stressed in the UK
(GMB, Unison & Unite Unions - 2015)



Andrew Kirk is the Associate Head of Allied Health Professions at Edge Hill University. He has a breadth of experience both as an operational paramedic and academic in pre-hospital practice in the UK. Andrew is responsible for programme development and design, and plays a key role in developing programmes and supporting research within the Allied Health Professions department.

Kevin Armstrong is the Programme Lead for undergraduate paramedic education at Edge Hill University . He is responsible for leadership in the day to day management and organisation of all pathways relating to the programmes.

He is a paramedic by background and has extensive experience working in frontline, out-of-hospital care as a community paramedic and student mentor.

He has represented Edge Hill whilst visiting international partners in Finland and South Africa, including presenting at international conferences.





Niina Nurkka (PhD) is working as a Principal Lecturer in the Faculty of Health Care and Social Services in the Saimaa University of Applied Sciences . She is teaching research methods and statistics both in Bachelor's and Master's Degree studies. She is also working as a researcher in many different projects in Health Care, such as the Safety of Paramedics Work.

Annette Jinks is an Emeritus Professor of Nursing at Edge Hill University. She is also a Visiting Professor at Staffordshire University. She has been a healthcare researcher at professorial level for 20 years. Prior to this she was a healthcare educator and clinical practitioner in community nursing.



Purpose:

Studies indicate a rise in complaints against healthcare professionals with many reporting use of defensive medicine as part of professional care in emergency medicine. Paramedics' perceptions of the healthcare complaint culture and impact on care delivery however, are under-reported.

Design/Methodology

- Semi-structured focus groups and interviews involving twenty English and Finnish paramedics.

Why Finland?

- English and Finnish ambulance services have similar organisational and professional scopes of practice.
- English and Finnish paramedic education follow similar undergraduate and post graduation pathways.

Themes

Three major themes identified in the thematic analysis included:-

- **Blame culture and its influences**
 - *Social media sub-theme*
- **Impact of complaints against paramedics**
- **The use of defensive practice within their roles.**

Social Media - *Example*

UK Ambulance crew involved in an RTC under normal driving conditions. Claimants alleged the ambulance 'jumped' a red light causing a collision with their vehicle.

Focus Group Participant Comment:

'Almost like a kangaroo court where we are judged as being guilty (of neglectful care) regardless'.

Conclusion

- The study makes an important contribution by exploring the factors that impact on paramedics' lives and their practice, within two European countries.
- The inappropriate use of *social media* by some members of the public in both countries was a disturbing issue for many participants and was identified as an area for further research.