

## Paramedic non-ambulance practice-based learning – advice for education providers (September 2024)

We recognise the current drive for non-ambulance practice-based learning within pre-registration paramedic education and training programmes. We have produced this information sheet for education providers to enable consideration of our regulatory requirements and standards when developing in this area.

### Our standards

Our [paramedic standards of proficiency \(SOPs\)](#) set out safe and effective practice in the paramedic profession. Newly qualified paramedics must meet all of the SOPs to register with us.

The current version of the paramedic SOPs became effective in September 2023. From this date, all education programmes needed to deliver this version of the SOPs to new cohorts of learners.

Emerging areas of practice within paramedic roles are reflected within the current version of the SOPs – namely, there are now references to ‘primary and community care’ within two standards (SOPs 12.10, and 13.13)

Many SOPs in the following areas may also require broader skills, knowledge, and / or understanding, due to the diversification of settings within which paramedics can practice:

- SOP 12 – understand and apply the key concepts of the knowledge base relevant to their profession;
- SOP 13 – draw on appropriate knowledge and skills to inform practice; and
- SOP 14 – establish and maintain a safe practice environment.

Our [standards of education and training \(SETs\)](#) require that the “structure, duration and range of practice-based learning must support the achievement of the learning outcomes and the standards of proficiency” (SET 5.2)

### Views of other organisations

The [College of Paramedics](#) released their sixth [curriculum guidance](#) in April 2024. In the guidance they note that:

- practice-based learning “should enable learning in a variety of environments and settings, ensuring that the learner has extensive exposure to a wide range of service users (and clinical presentations), and environments...” (page 34); and
- “no less than 20% [of practice learning time] is targeted at practice experience in areas that are not front-line traditional ambulance (double crewed vehicle)” (page 35).

Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) require that learners on all commissioned programmes undertake four weeks of '[interprofessional education (IPE)] placements' to meet their commissioning requirements. This may link to this area if a paramedic learner undertakes an IPE placement outside of the ambulance setting, but could also include where a non-paramedic learner is included in ambulance-based practice based learning.

NHS Education Scotland (NES) expect that learners on paramedic programmes undertake 20 weeks of 'cross-sector placements'.

NHS England are currently working on the delivery of the NHS Long Terms Workforce Plan. The Plan proposes that "paramedics have more rotational training placements across hospital, community and primary care settings"<sup>1</sup>, and there is "increased community and primary care preparation [built] into pre-registration training"<sup>2</sup>.

### **Our requirements of paramedic programmes**

We consider that it is best practice for pre-registration paramedic programmes to include non-ambulance practice-based learning. We consider this because:

- There is sector-wide agreement that this type of practice-based learning is beneficial to deliver well rounded paramedics at the point of registration, who meet current professional expectations; and
- Non-ambulance practice-based learning supports deeper knowledge, understanding, and experience for learners linked to the SOPs, particularly those which refer to 'primary and community care' (SOPs 12.10 and 13.13), and those where the setting is relevant.

However, we are **not** setting a formal requirement that all paramedic programmes must include non-ambulance practice-based learning. This is because:

- Our standards are designed to be flexibly delivered, focusing on the outcome (whether someone meets the standards and is fit to practice on completion of a programme);
- Some SOPs can only be delivered through academic learning, meaning these SOPs do not need to be directly supported by practice-based learning;
- The remaining SOPs can all be supported through practice-based learning in the ambulance setting, or simulation (or a combination of the two);
- This means that no SOPs specifically need to be delivered / supported through non-ambulance settings;
- Ambulance and non-ambulance settings are not ubiquitous – there is a range of experience gained depending on the specific setting / employer / geographical location, and the experience gained is dependent of what happens on each shift;
- This means that paramedic learners will always need to gain experience of the SOPs through a blend of academic learning, practice-based learning, and simulation, to ensure all areas are appropriately covered; and
- Where we expect you to 'reflect' curriculum guidance, we do not require adherence (SET 4.3) – this means that you should consider the expectations

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<sup>1</sup> [NHS England » NHS Long Term Workforce Plan](#) (section 2, paragraph 25)

<sup>2</sup> [NHS England » NHS Long Term Workforce Plan](#) (section 2, paragraph 58)

of curriculum guidance, but that you can decide to deviate from this where you consider this is appropriate.

### **What you need to do**

There are two scenarios for HCPC-approved paramedic programmes – you should consider the following points related to whether you already deliver non-ambulance practice-based learning on your programme(s):

You **do not have** non-ambulance practice-based learning:

- Decide whether you will introduce non-ambulance practice-based learning as part of your programme(s), considering how you deliver the revised paramedic SOPs across a range of teaching and learning, and aligning to SET 5.2;
- If you decide to introduce non-ambulance practice-based learning, ensure that this activity aligns with our standards of education and training, particularly the standards in SET 5 (Practice-based learning); and
- Consider the expectations of curriculum guidance, and if you decide to deviate from it, ensure you are clear on your reason(s).

You **have** non-ambulance practice-based learning:

- Consider how you deliver the revised paramedic SOPs across a range of teaching and learning, including practice-based learning in all settings, the academic setting, and simulation;
- Review non-ambulance practice-based learning to ensure it contributes to the delivery of the revised paramedic SOPs, along with your other teaching and learning; and
- Consider the expectations of curriculum guidance, and if you decide to deviate from it, ensure you are clear on your reason(s).

We will then review your approach through your next [performance review](#) submission (from the 2025-26 academic year), and will continue to monitor intelligence and data related to the performance of your institution and paramedic programme(s).

### **Sources of guidance and information**

The College of Paramedics Sixth [curriculum guidance](#) has information about curriculum domains, and approaches to practice-based learning. We suggest using this guidance to inform programme development, to consider what is best practice as defined by the professional body.