

LCHS4003- Introduction to Health and Social Care

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Name: Demi-leigh Ferncombe Student number: 2435928 Module code: LCHS4003 Lecturer name: Deborah Oben Date of assignment: 20th October 2025	NHS AMBULANCE SERVICE  Introduction The Ambulance service provides emergency medical aid and transportation to patients in need of urgent care. It is a crucial part of the healthcare system, responding to accidents, medical emergencies, and other situations where immediate medical attention is needed. Ambulance services are staffed by paramedics and emergency medical technicians, who are trained to provide on-the-scene medical care. They assess the patient's condition, administer necessary treatments, and transport them to the proper medical facility. Ambulances are equipped with medical equipment and supplies to support life-saving interventions. The Ambulance service runs 24/7, relying on a dispatch system to receive emergency calls and distribute resources effectively. When someone calls for an ambulance, dispatchers gather information about the situations and location to send the closest available ambulance. The goal is to reach patients as quickly as possible to provide prompt medical care.
Challenges of the Ambulance service. The Ambulance service faces many challenges, one of the most challenging of them all is the abuse that paramedics receive on a daily basis, according to the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives (AACE) the UK ambulance service has received its highest amount of reported incidents of verbal and physical abuse ever, according to AACE every single day, at least 55 ambulance staff will be abused or attacked, with reported incidents including kicking, punching, slapping, head-butting, spitting, verbal abuse and sexual assault, and ranging from common assault to significant serious attacks involving a multitude of weapons (AACE Jan 2025). Based upon the current rate of increase, AACE expects to see over 5,000 incidents reported between the key winter months of December, January, and February, with over 2,000 expected in December 2024 alone, the focal month for Christmas and New Year celebrations where alcohol use tends to be more prevalent than usual. (AACE Jan 2025) Assaults against ambulance staff are most associated with alcohol consumption, followed by drug use and situations involving individuals experiencing a mental health crisis. Emerging trends also say that race and sexuality are increasingly cited as aggravating factors in these incidents. Staff shortages are another current challenge that continues to affect the ambulance service. Staff shortages can have a high toll on how the ambulance services work, as low staff means fewer patients are being seen and can cause high waiting times. Alot of times staff shortages can cause increased workload as existing staff must cover more shifts and handle more calls, causing burnout and stress, which affects their performance and wellbeing. Staff shortages can lead to compromised patient care as it can lead to rushed assessments and treatments, potentially compromising the quality of patient care. Another reason the ambulance service is experiencing staff shortages is an aging workforce as many experienced staff are reaching retirement age, and replacements are not keeping pace as budget limitations restrict the number of new hires and affect salary levels, making it harder to attract and keep staff. Rising demand for ambulance services puts more pressure on existing staff, causing burn outs which then worsens the shortages. (A) (B) (C)	History  • The ST Johns ambulance service was founded in 1887, • 1882 – The St John Ambulance Association founded the <i>Invalid Transport Corps</i>, offering free ambulance transport to the poor. • 1887 – The Invalid Transport Corps officially became the St John Ambulance Brigade. • 1912 – Traditional horse-drawn ambulances were replaced with motor vehicles, improving speed and efficiency. • 1918 – At the end of the First World War, military ambulances were released for civilian use, and the idea of a national ambulance service was first proposed. • 1925 – The Public Health Act authorised transport for non-urgent medical cases. Ambulance services began to expand gradually, though growth was slow until the outbreak of the Second World War. • 1937 – The 999 emergency number was introduced, giving the public direct access to urgent help. • 1946 – The National Health Service Act required local authorities to provide ambulance services “where necessary.” Services were initially run by volunteers, but over time professional staff became the norm. • 1964 – The influential Millar Report recommended that ambulance services should focus not only on transporting patients, but also on providing medical treatment at the scene. • 1970s–1980s – A period of modernisation brought major improvements: • Advanced communication systems were introduced. • Helicopters and motorbikes became part of the emergency response fleet. • Portable defibrillators were fitted to all ambulances, enhancing cardiac care. • 1990s – Ambulance staff with extended training were reclassified as paramedics, marking a significant step toward today’s highly skilled emergency medical profession.  References https://www.northamptongeneral.nhs.uk/About/OurHistory/History-of-Ambulance.pdf https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/112259/pdf/#:~:text=Situation,%E2%80%A2,until%20they%20come%20across%20them. https://www.unison.org.uk/news/press-release/2022/04/ambulance-pressures-taking-a-significant-toll-on-staff-says-unison/# https://www.wmas.nhs.uk/ https://history.blog.gov.uk/2023/07/13/the-founding-of-the-nhs-75-years-on/ https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2588994X21000506

3.1- The National Health Service (NHS), a cornerstone of British society, didn't just pop into existence out of nowhere. Its origins are deeply rooted in the socio-political landscape of the early 20th century, a period marked by war, economic upheaval, and a growing awareness of social inequality. Understanding this historical context is crucial to appreciating the key principles that underpinned its establishment.

3.2- The interwar years exposed glaring inadequacies in Britain's healthcare system. Access to medical care was largely determined by one's ability to pay, leaving a significant portion of the population, particularly the working class, vulnerable (Webster, 2002). The Great Depression further exacerbated these inequalities, with widespread unemployment and poverty hindering access to even basic medical services. Simultaneously, the Second World War, while devastating, inadvertently paved the way for the NHS. The war effort necessitated a more coordinated approach to healthcare, leading to the establishment of the Emergency Hospital Service (EHS). This initiative demonstrated the feasibility of a centrally organized healthcare system, providing a blueprint for future reform (Foot, 1973).

Against this backdrop of social need and wartime innovation, key figures emerged who championed the idea of a universal healthcare system. William Beveridge, in his 1942 report, "Social Insurance and Allied Services," laid out the blueprint for a welfare state, advocating for a comprehensive system of social security, including healthcare (Beveridge, 1942). His proposals resonated with a public weary of inequality and eager for social change. Aneurin Bevan, the Minister of Health in the post-war Labour government, played a pivotal role in translating these ideas into reality. Bevan, a staunch socialist, believed that healthcare should be a right, not a privilege (Harris, 1993). He skilfully navigated political opposition and negotiated with various stakeholders, including the medical profession, to bring the NHS into being. The core principles of the NHS – universal access, comprehensive care, and free at the point of use – reflected a commitment to social justice and equality. These principles were enshrined in the National Health Service Act of 1946, which laid the legal foundation for the NHS.

The NHS has seen both successes and struggles in its current operations. It continues to provide equal healthcare access to much of the population through services like emergency care and health promotion campaigns. Its management of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly the mass vaccination efforts, demonstrated its resilience and adaptability (Khan, 2023). However, the NHS faces significant challenges, including funding shortages, staffing issues, and increasing demand from an aging population.

3.3 To conclude the establishment of the NHS in 1948 marked a watershed moment in British history. For the first time, healthcare was accessible to all citizens, regardless of their income or social status. The NHS rapidly transformed the healthcare landscape, leading to improved health outcomes and a reduction in health inequalities (Powell, 2008). While the NHS has faced numerous challenges over the years, its core principles remain as relevant today as they were in 1948. The NHS stands as a testament to the power of collective action and an enduring symbol of Britain's commitment to social welfare.

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