

Title Page

Name: Rushina Johnson

Student Number: 2015969

Module Code: LCHS4003

Module Title: Introduction to Health and Social Care

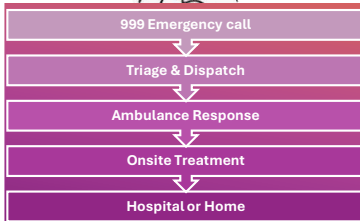
Tutor Name: Mumtaz Goolam

Assignment Title: Portfolio – Two Tasks



FUNCTIONING OF SERVICE

- ◆ 999 Emergency Calls — Life-threatening or urgent conditions
- ◆ 111 and Non-Emergency Services — For less critical help or transport
- ◆ Highly Trained Staff — Paramedics, EMTs, and specialist units
- ◆ Tech-Enabled — GPS tracking, electronic patient records, real-time hospital links



The earliest ambulance services set up in the **19th century** often run by volunteers or charitable organisations

One of the first organised services began in **1867** in London horse-drawn carriages were used to carry patients to hospital

By the World Wars, ambulances had become more common, for treating and transporting injured soldiers.

After **World War II**, the National Health Service (NHS) was founded in **1948**, and ambulance services became part of the new public healthcare system.

HISTORY

In the early days of the NHS, local councils often ran their own ambulance services, but this changed over time.

By the **1970s**, services began to be centralised and better coordinated. Over the years, ambulance crews became highly trained paramedics, capable of providing advanced care at the scene

Today's ambulance service uses the latest technology, including **satellite navigation**, **real-time communication**, and **life-saving equipment**, making it a vital part of emergency healthcare in the UK.



CHALLENGES FACED BY SERVICE

Rising Demand & Slower Response Times

One major challenge is the increased demand for ambulance services, which puts pressure on resources and impacts response times. For example, in **December 2024** the ambulance services in England answered **935,950 calls** to 999, averaging **over 30,000 per day** — a **4% increase** compared to **December 2023**.

Correspondingly, response times for the most urgent "Category 1" calls (life-threatening) are missing the target: between **April 2023** and **March 2024** the average response time was **8 minutes 27 seconds**, against the target of **7 minutes**.

In **November 2024**, the average for Category 1 incidents rose to **8 minutes 38 seconds**.



Workforce & Retention Pressures

As of **June 2022**, there were **17,847 full-time** equivalent professionally qualified ambulance staff in England (of whom about **16,900** were paramedics).

However, **around 1 in 10 paramedics** (**1,760** individuals) left active service in the year to **June 2022** — this exceeded the number of joiners (**1,650**) in that period.

Turnover rates and staff leaving have risen sharply: for example, in **2022-23**, **6,968** ambulance service staff left, up from **4,609** in **2019-20** (an increase of over 50%).

AMBULANCE SERVICE

The Origins and Current Structure of the NHS

The National Health Service (NHS) is one of the most significant social institutions in the United Kingdom. It was founded on 5 July 1948 with the aim of providing comprehensive healthcare to all citizens, with treatment free at the point of delivery. To determine its origins, one must consider the social, political, and economic context of post-World War II Britain.

Before the NHS, Britain's healthcare was a mixture of private, charitable, and municipal services, and access to healthcare often depended on the individual's ability to pay. Medical treatment was beyond the means of many, particularly the working population. During World War II, the government took more control of hospitals and services in the interests of the war effort, which showed the benefits of an organized system (Webster, 2002).

The NHS grew out of the 1942 Beveridge Report, which included "disease" among the five "giant evils" of society. The report proposed a full welfare state to tackle the problems, and this met wide public acceptance (Beveridge, 1942). The Minister of Health in the Labour government, Aneurin Bevan, was the chief architect of the NHS. His goal was a universal, free, and tax-funded health service. This represented a major shift both in the role of the state and in public expectations of health (Timmins, 2012).

It met with fierce resistance from the British Medical Association and from some political quarters, founded on anxieties about state control over medical practice. However, he managed to achieve compromises, with physicians permitted to retain their private patients while working in the NHS (Rivett, 1998). The NHS was finally founded on three principles: that it would meet the needs of everyone, be free at the point of use, and be based on clinical need rather than ability to pay (NHS England, 2023).

The NHS has evolved significantly over the years. It now covers four devolved systems in England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, with different administration and funding arrangements in each (The King's Fund, 2023). The Department of Health and Social Care, for example, presides over the English NHS, and NHS England is tasked with its daily

management and distributes funding to Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), now replaced by Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) after the Health and Care Act 2022 (NHS England, 2022).

These ICSs are a step in the direction of more integrated, place-based care in which health services, local authorities, and community organisations work together to improve health outcomes. The focus has moved from treatment of illness to social determinants of health and prevention (The King's Fund, 2022).

Despite these reforms, there are significant challenges for the NHS. Staff shortages, rising demand, an ageing population, and financial pressures have all been taking their toll in the shape of rising waiting times and over-stretched resources (Unison, 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic also exposed systemic weaknesses and increased health inequalities, making calls for more sustainable funding and better workforce planning.

Critics lament that while the founding principles of the NHS remain relevant, the system must accommodate the needs of the contemporary age. There remains a debate about the balance between the public/private sector, the application of digital health, and equality of access for different regions and groups.

In short, the NHS was founded on the progressive ideal of healthcare for all, and it has become central to British life. Its shape has changed over the decades, and it is currently under intense pressures, but its founding values have remained widely popular. In the years ahead, reforms must balance innovation and fairness in order to allow the NHS to continue to deliver for the generations to come.

Reference List

Beveridge, W. (1942) Social Insurance and Allied Services (The Beveridge Report). London: HMSO.

British Red Cross (2025) Calling 999 [image]. Available at: <https://firstaidchampions.redcross.org.uk/en/primary/safety/calling-999/>

(Accessed: 18 October 2025).

Care Quality Commission (2024) The state of health care and adult social care in England 2023/24. Available at: <https://www.cqc.org.uk/publications/major-report/state-care/2023-2024/access/secondary>

(Accessed: 18 October 2025).

England.nhs.uk (2025) Monthly operational statistics – January 2025. Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/monthly-operational-statistics-january-2025>

(Accessed: 19 October 2025).

Liberal Democrats (2024) Ambulance staff leaving up by a half to almost 7,000 last year. Available at: <https://www.libdems.org.uk/news/article/ambulance-staff-leaving-up-by-a-half-to-almost-7000-last-year>

(Accessed: 19 October 2025).

London Ambulance Service NHS Trust (2022) History of the Service. Available at: <https://www.londonambulance.nhs.uk/about-us/history/>

(Accessed: 18 October 2025).

London Ambulance Service NHS Trust (2022) What we do. Available at: <https://www.londonambulance.nhs.uk/about-us/what-we-do/>

(Accessed: 17 October 2025).

National Health Service (NHS) England Digital (2025) Digital – NHS England. Available at: <https://digital.nhs.uk/>

(Accessed: 18 October 2025).

NHS (2023) When to call 999. Available at: <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/urgent-and-emergency-care-services/when-to-call-999/>

(Accessed: 19 October 2025).

NHS England (2022) The Health and Care Act 2022. Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/health-and-care-act-2022/>

(Accessed: 19 October 2025).

NHS England (2023) The Ambulance Service. Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/urgent-emergency-care/nhs-ambulance-services/>

(Accessed: 19 October 2025).

NHS England (2023) The NHS Constitution for England. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-nhs-constitution-for-england>

(Accessed: 18 October 2025).

NHS Providers (2025) Ambulance sector: January 2025 tracker. Available at: <https://nhsproviders.org/resources/nhs-activity-tracker-202425/january-2025/ambulance-sector>

(Accessed: 19 October 2025).

North West Ambulance Service (2024) Our History and Development. Available at: <https://www.nwas.nhs.uk/about-us/our-history/>

(Accessed: 17 October 2025).

Nuffield Trust (2022) Ambulance staff strikes: Facts and figures on the UK ambulance workforce. Available at: <https://www.nuffieldtrust.org.uk/resource/ambulance-staff-strikes-facts-and-figures-on-the-uk-ambulance-workforce>

(Accessed: 19 October 2025).

PVL UK (2021) Bevan HART WAS Ambulance Livery [image]. Available at: <https://www.pvluk.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Bevan-HART-WAS-46-1024x687.jpg>

(Accessed: 17 October 2025).

Rivett, G. (1998) *From Cradle to Grave: The First Fifty Years of the NHS*. London: King's Fund.

The Guardian (2022) NHS ambulance in operation [image]. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/jan/24/nhs-ambulance-pressures-rise>

(Accessed: 19 October 2025).

The King's Fund (2022) *Integrated Care Systems Explained*. Available at: <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/integrated-care-systems-explained>

(Accessed: 19 October 2025).

The King's Fund (2023) *The NHS in a Nutshell*. Available at: <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/projects/nhs-in-a-nutshell>

(Accessed: 19 October 2025).

Timmins, N. (2012) *The Five Giants: A Biography of the Welfare State*. London: HarperCollins.

Unison (2022) *An Emergency for Ambulance Services*. Available at: <https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2022/10/An-emergency-for-ambulance-services.pdf>

(Accessed: 19 October 2025).

Webster, C. (2002) *The National Health Service: A Political History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wikimedia Commons (2014) *WMAS Ambulance* [image]. Available at: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/c6/WMAS_Ambulance.jpg

(Accessed: 19 October 2025).