

## CASE STUDY

Ambulance Trusts

# NHS Professionals recruits call handlers for seven ambulance Trusts

- ✓ 24,660 applications processed
- ✓ 471 offers
- ✓ 299 call handlers recruited, exceeding target of 250

### The Situation

From March 2022 to January 2023, NHS Professionals worked with NHS England to recruit '111' and '999' call handlers for ambulance Trusts across England. The collaboration aimed to ensure a consistent and safe level of staffing for call handlers in line with demand, while reducing wait times and improving patient outcomes.

The Trusts engaged with the project included:

- London Ambulance Service NHS Trust
- South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust
- South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust
- East Of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust
- East Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust
- Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust
- North East Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust

We were asked to recruit over **250** whole time equivalent call handlers across the seven Trusts, working quickly in order to get this much-needed resource in post and provide support as soon as possible.



#### The Solution

We began by working with the ambulance Trusts to fully understand the requirement and to co-develop a targeted recruitment campaign. Our team worked collaboratively with the service to design a flexible workforce solution to suit the individual Trusts' unique requirements. We took a modular approach, adjusting our solution to cater for some Trusts requiring end-to-end recruitment support, and others that only required support with candidate attraction and shortlisting.

We held weekly team meetings and service review calls with the Trusts to foster strong working relationships - giving the Trusts increased insight and control over prospective candidates - and collaborated by using Sharepoint software as a central joint resource to encourage transparency.

*“ We had a positive experience working with NHS Professionals to recruit health advisors. We were kept informed regarding candidate pipelines and any issues were resolved as quickly as possible. ”*

**Nicola Couley,**  
Recruitment Business Partner,  
People and Development Directorate, North East  
Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust

#### The Result

Our recruitment campaign advertising generated over 24,000 applications, all of which we pre-screened. As of January 2023, 471 offers had been made, with 299 of these call handlers successfully appointed and starting their roles across the seven Trusts.

To manage the volume of applicants and ensure candidates were of the right quality with the right values, we worked with key stakeholders at the Trusts, and developed recruitment questionnaires for

asynchronous interviewing; this allowed candidates to record their responses to pre-set questions in their own time, giving greater flexibility for both applicants and the Trust. By fostering positive relationships and keeping candidates informed throughout the recruitment process, we were able to address any queries about applications and pre-empt potential barriers.

Our work on this bespoke recruitment campaign has led individual Trusts to continue collaborating with NHS Professionals to recruit additional roles for the future. In May 2023, we launched an individual campaign for the East Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust encompassing additional roles such as:

- emergency medical advisor
- ambulance support crew
- clinical assessment team
- health advisor (111)
- senior clinical advisor (111/integrated urgent care)
- newly qualified paramedic
- paramedic (qualified)
- advanced clinical practitioner

As of September 2023, these latest recruitment campaigns are already yielding positive results with 35 offers made for these niche areas and 18 candidates already starting in their roles.

*“ There was a strong level of communication between NHS Professionals and EEA, and this has been a huge reason why we have seen a successful recruitment partnership. NHS Professionals has made a difference in a number of ways, most significantly by ensuring candidates are always of great quality. Thanks to this project, we have established a good working relationship with NHS Professionals as a proactive recruiter and hope we can work with them again on another opportunity soon. ”*

**Rob Hazell,** Recruitment Specialist,  
EOC (Bedford, Chelmsford & Norwich),  
East Of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust

