

The PPG would like to introduce you to different teams of clinicians so you can see why your call is triaged and you are given an appointment or telephone call with the person best qualified to help you. We had a discussion with Paul Symonds about the roles of paramedics. Paul is the Team leader of the Acute Care Team and has recently qualified as an Advanced Practitioner. There is also Ben who is a prescribing paramedic and John who has recently joined the team and has 20 years' experience as a paramedic and 5 years in primary care (home visits) as well as Neil, nurse practitioner and Julia who is a physician associate.

Paul has been a paramedic for 17 years who joined the ambulance service in 2002. He qualified as a paramedic in 2005 then joined the Air Ambulance in 2012 and obtained a B.Sc. (Hons) in Emergency Care followed by a Postgraduate certificate in Critical Care. He joined Tamar Surgery in 2017 and in 2022 achieved M.Sc. In Advanced Clinical Practice.

Paul has plenty of medical experience treating a wide range of conditions over the years. As an Air Ambulance paramedic, he has worked under stressful conditions and has had to make quick decisions. He enjoys general medicine and decided to move into Primary Care as he wanted to be more involved with patient care and see their treatment through rather than handing them on to someone else as he did as an ambulance paramedic.

The key message that he wants to give to patients is that Paramedics at Tamar Valley Health are highly trained clinicians trained to work within Primary Care and deal with ailments to work alongside GPs to provide a multidisciplinary approach to healthcare.

He wants to ensure face to face appointments continue when needed but sometimes a phone call with a clinician is all that is necessary. When a patient rings and they are triaged, they are signposted to the person best qualified to treat them. This helps the surgery to run efficiently. There is an acute care hub where all calls are triaged. The on-call doctor is available there for any queries. This doctor is also the person who will ring patients.

The on-call doctor is also available to all clinicians who have any queries, to refer to for advice or run through treatment options. The paramedics and other clinicians are supported by the surgery by it providing a good interactive learning environment. There is clinical safety in being overseen and ensures best practice. Some days are mentally and emotionally challenging but there is a sense of achievement and fulfilment when a patient's treatment improves their health/life.

Paul's next project is to look at the Minor Injury service and organise a training package for the Acute Care Team, where being able to offer this service to the TVH patients may often reduce the need for this patient to be seen elsewhere.

Sharon Trafford. Chair. TVH Patient Participation group.