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# **Evaluation of the Paramedic Specialist in Primary and Urgent Care Core Capabilities Framework**

February 2020



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# Introduction

The Paramedic Specialist in Primary and Urgent Care Core Capabilities Framework describes advanced clinical practice for the paramedic specialist in primary and urgent care. This includes the knowledge, skills and behaviours to safely and effectively manage service users across the lifespan, recognising the need to be adaptable and working in often quite challenging situations, whilst retaining responsibility and accountability for those service users.

The framework was commissioned by Health Education England and can be downloaded on their website<sup>1</sup>. Skills for Health led the framework development working with a project management group comprising Health Education England, NHS England, College of Paramedics as well as several paramedics working in practice in primary care at an advanced level.

Skills for Health was subsequently commissioned by Health Education England to carry out an evaluation of the Paramedic Specialist in Primary and Urgent Care Core Capabilities Framework. This evaluation aims to better understand the users of the framework and how it has been utilised so far to inform further developments.

## Methodology

A survey was created to capture a snapshot of the utilisation and value of the framework with feedback from experts involved in the development of the framework and the funder. The evaluation was initiated in November 2019, almost a year after the launch of the framework, and invited service users, workforce planners and practitioners to voice their opinion and experience with the document.

The framework is hosted on the Health Education England website and does not monitor the number of downloads; therefore, Skills for Health contacts were invited to participate. In total 38 responses were collected.

This report outlines the main findings from the survey in order to draw relevant conclusions.

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<sup>1</sup> The framework can be downloaded here: <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/paramedics>



# Key Findings

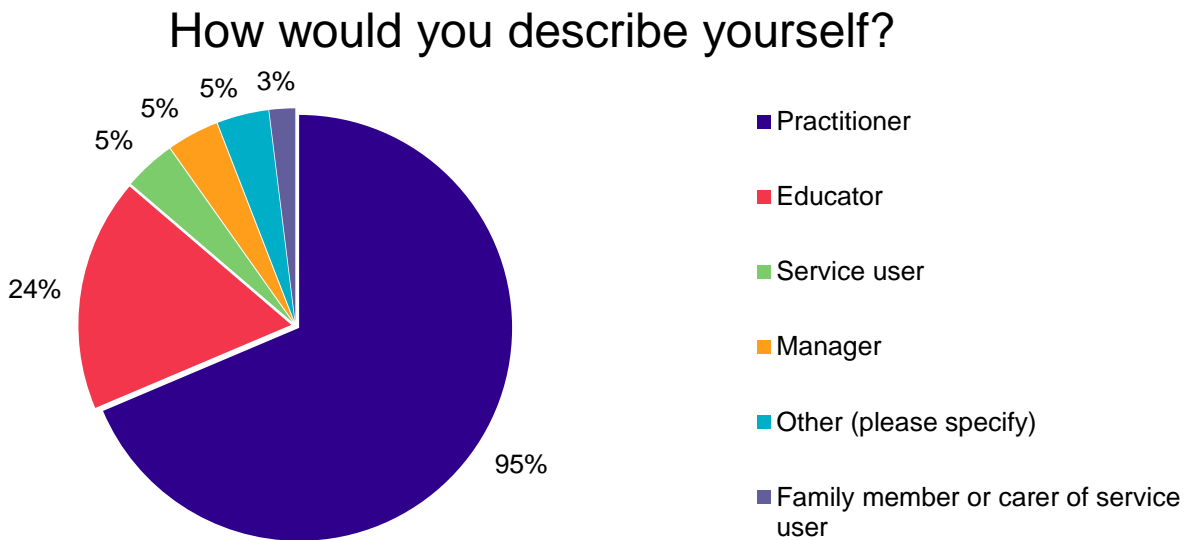
- 38 people responded to the survey.
- Almost all respondents were practitioners (95%).
- 68% of respondents worked in primary care or community services and 21% in emergency services.
- Access to the framework was mainly through direct email (42%) and social media / website (29%).
- Overall, the framework received a score of 4 out of 5 in terms of usefulness, and all respondents indicated that the framework had some level of use. Most respondents stated that the framework is very or quite useful (76%).
- Some people who responded to the survey had not used the framework yet. Their main reasons being lack of time or opportunity to do so, believing it is not relevant for their role, and believing the framework's language is too vague.
- 81% used the framework for their own personal interest, 69% within their team, and 63% used it within their organisation.
- The main uses of the framework included: identify training needs (91%), identify existing capabilities (88%), support service transformation (38%), and support workforce planning and development (31%).
- The framework has helped to increase awareness (88%), widen (69%) and deepen (63%) knowledge and skills. It has also been attributed to improving quality care (44%) and enabling skills mix (31%).

# Evaluation Results

The evaluation gathers the opinion and experiences of 38 people who responded to the survey.

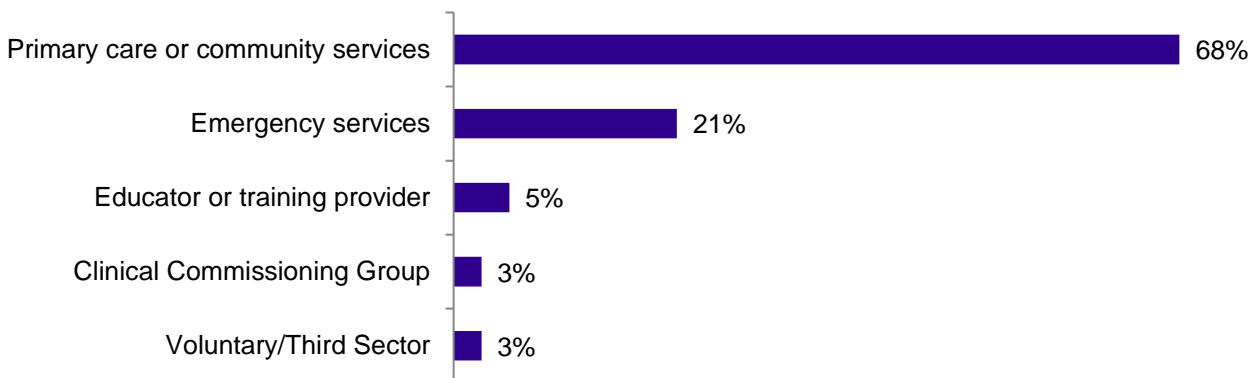
## Respondents' profile

Most of the respondents were practitioners (95%), followed by 24% educators.



Over half of the respondents work in primary care or community services (68%), followed by people in emergency services (21%). This aligns with the target audience of the framework.

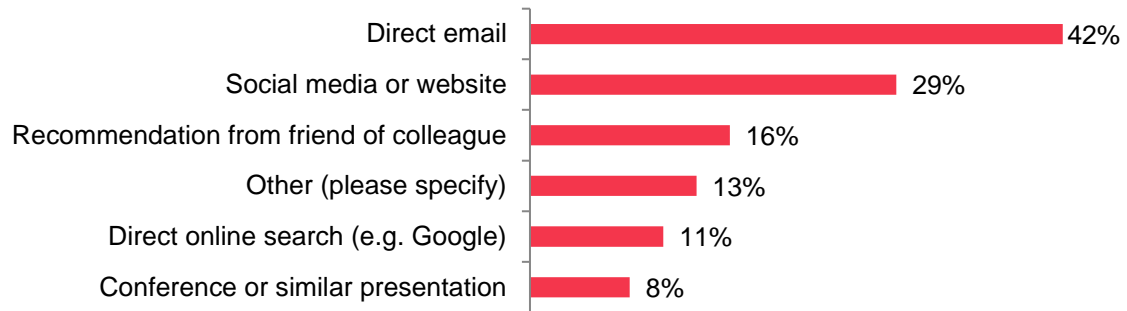
## Which of the following best describes the type of organisation you work for?



## Access to the framework

Nearly half of respondents indicated that they learned of the framework through direct email (42%), whilst 29% knew about it via social media or through the website (29%).

### How did you hear about the Paramedic Specialist in Primary and Urgent Care Framework?

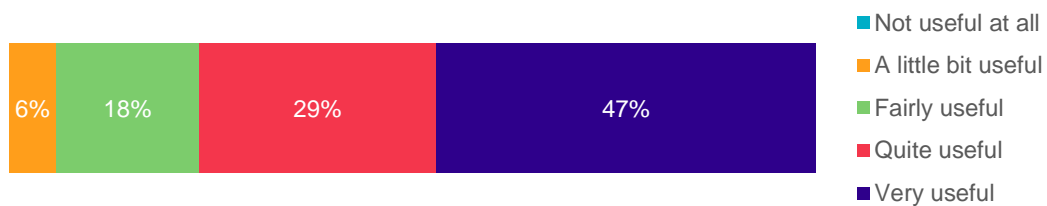


The framework does not require registration nor introduction of contact details to download it, which has the advantage of increasing overall user friendliness of the website, and it facilitates access. However, unlike other frameworks hosted on the Skills for Health website following an older model by which users had to introduce their contact details to gain access, limited data exists on the interest of the framework over time. However, the advantages of facilitating access to information are greater and a similar approach to Health Education England's is being adopted by Skills for Health.

## Use of the framework

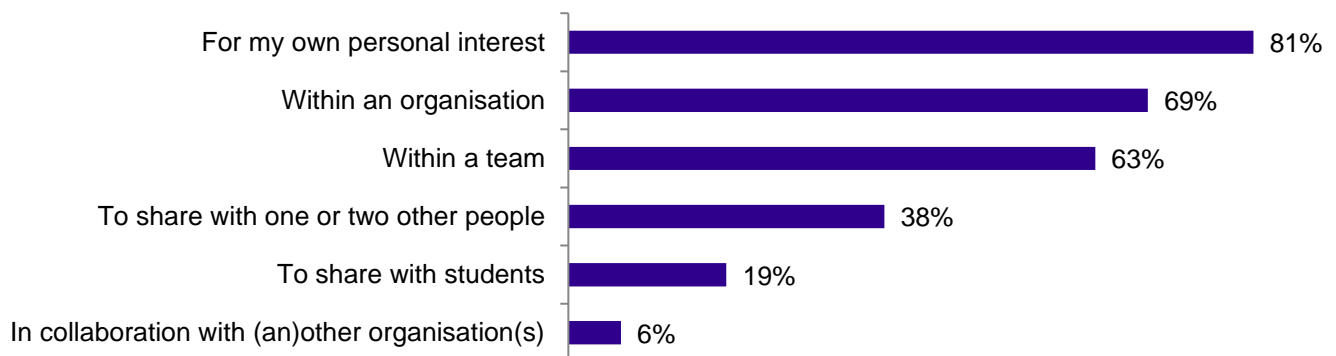
Weighted results of the survey state a rate of 4.18/5 in a scale of overall usefulness. Most respondents indicated that the framework was very or quite useful (76%), whilst 24% found it fairly or a little bit useful. None of the participants indicated the framework to be not useful at all.

### How useful has the Paramedic Specialist in Primary and Urgent Care Core Capabilities Framework been so far?



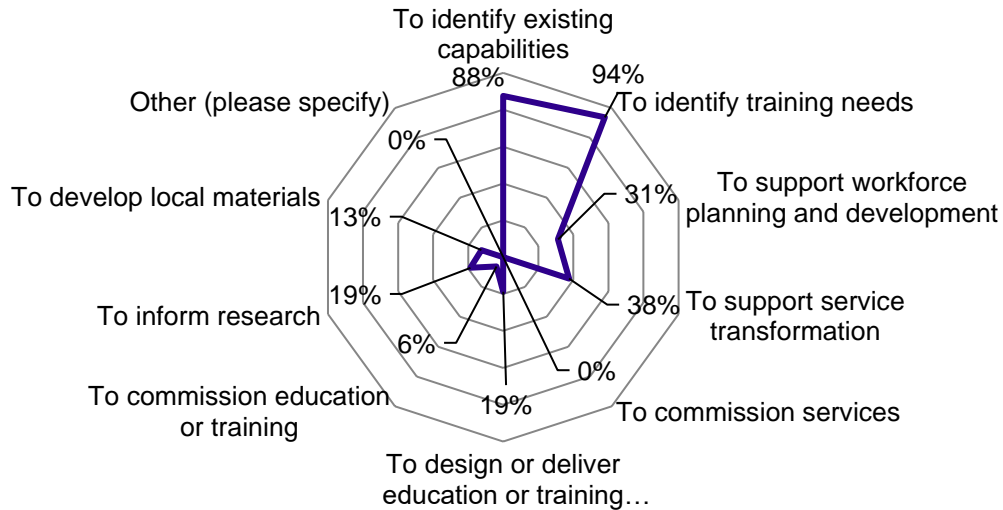
Regarding how the framework has been used, the majority of respondents usually use it to satisfy their own personal interest (81%), but also use it and share it within their organisation (69%) and within their team (63%).

### At what scale have you used the framework?



Results show that the framework is being used in two major ways: To *identify training needs* (94%), and to *identify existing capabilities* (88%). Other uses also include *support service transformation* (38%) and *support workforce planning and development* (31%).

## In what way have you been using the framework?



There are also 15 respondents who downloaded the framework who had not used it. Their main reasons being:

1. Not having enough time.
2. Believing it is not relevant for their role.
3. Considering the document to be too vague or not provide clear direction for specialist paramedics.

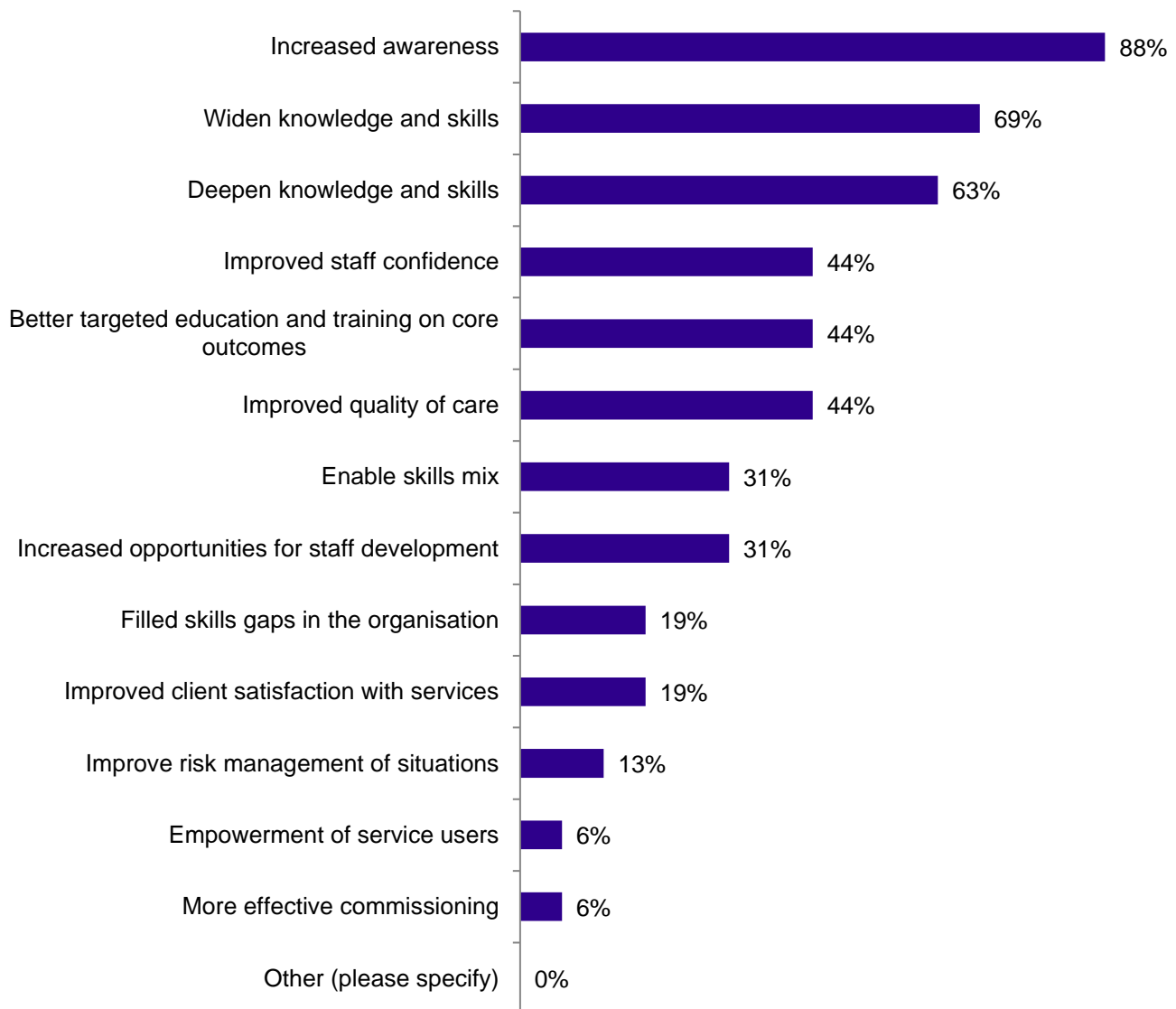


## Impact of the framework

In terms of the impact that the framework has had so far, and considering it was launched only a few months after the framework was made public, 88% of respondents stated that the framework has helped to increase awareness, and over half state that it has helped to widen (69%) and deepen (63%) knowledge and skills.

Results indicate that the most common use of the framework, identifying training needs, has already shown impact with 44% of respondents stating they have accomplished better education and training on core outcomes. Additionally, 31% have noticed that it has enabled skill mix in their organisations.

### What has been the impact so far?



The overall reviews of the framework have been positive, yet the survey has been able to gather some accounts of people experiencing difficulties. Beyond common technical difficulties when the document is downloaded using outdated digital systems, the main difficulties respondents encountered were:

1. A lack of support from managers and/or clinicians to implement.
2. Unclear how the competencies included in the framework differ from those in standard Paramedic care.
3. The framework being not tied enough to primary care practice.

*“Very “wordy” and lots of content that is a basic requirement of non-specialist Paramedics, e.g. Domain A 1st element is “Convey information and address issues in ways that avoid jargon and assumptions and respond appropriately to questions and concerns.”.*

*“Individual GP surgeries seem to be developing the role based on their requirements. I’m not sure a “one size fits all” framework is in the best interests of either the surgery’s or patients.”*

Finally, the survey has gathered numerous accounts of benefits shared by respondents. A few themes have emerged from their responses:

1. Provide a base to monitor and map current workforce skills.
2. Provide guidance for role development.
3. Provide reassurance to current practitioners on the quality service they are providing.

*Initially used to compile core competencies for our organisations slightly unique Practitioner role*

*Recruitment of Senior Paramedics into A&E*

*Allowed me to align my training against the agreed competencies and identify potential disparity*

Overall, respondents viewed the framework as a comprehensive document that highlighted the importance of the role of paramedics. A few specific areas for improvement were suggested, particularly on translating the framework into everyday practice, and the specific core competencies that differ from standard paramedic practice. However, the framework has had broad meaningful impact, raising awareness and it has started to influence workforce development and training opportunities.




Report prepared by Adela Sobrepera, February 2020

Skills for Health ©



 **Skills for Health**  
Head Office  
4th Floor  
1 Temple Way  
Bristol  
BS2 0BY

 0117 922 1155

 [office@skillsforhealth.org.uk](mailto:office@skillsforhealth.org.uk)

 [skillsforhealth.org.uk](https://skillsforhealth.org.uk)