

## Elective Assessment – Claire Carruthers

### Objectives:

1. Remain calm and learn to deal with any given situation using basic knowledge first. Enhance knowledge and experience of dealing with emergency situations.
2. Assist with practical procedures and be involved if life support is needed to practice advanced skills.

### Report:

Throughout this placement, the LAS were called to numerous different situations, some life threatening and some where their skills were not required. With each call that comes through you need to be prepared to deal with the worst scenario, both physically and mentally. During this placement, we dealt with situations which at first appear serious but stabilise, and situations that seem straight forward but develop and worsen. We dealt with patients without capacity as well as situations where police were called for backup, but most commonly times where paramedics had to think outside their training, and adapt to the given scenario.

One situation which has stuck with me, was a running call, where we came across a man face down in the road banging his head repetitively on the floor, and a pool of blood around the head. On arrival at the scene, although near a bus stop, no one had seen what had happened or how this man came to be as described. Myself and the paramedic went straight to the patient and soon realised the gentleman was fitting. We hastily rolled the patient and protected the head. On initial assessment, the airway was partially obstructed with blood, and teeth were missing. Breathing was spontaneous although with added snoring sounds. And circulation was adequate. Immediately, a jaw thrust and an oropharyngeal airway was placed in the mouth and monitoring equipment attached. At this point, we were unsure why the patient was fitting, how long it had been going on, and whether he had sustained other injuries whilst falling or head banging. We did not know his name or age, any history about the situation or his medical conditions. We could see the blood was coming from the mouth but were unsure whether it was internal or how much blood had been lost. During this primary assessment, the paramedic remained calm and used basic ABC assessment. No matter what you are faced with, always begin with that and take it step by step. Once we stabilised the patient, he eventually stopped fitting and came round, we were then able to clean him up and examine the extent of the damage to missing teeth, and he was able to begin filling us in on all the details. This was a good learning lesson for me, and something I will take with me. This fulfils learning objective number 1, in dealing with any given situation and enhancing knowledge of emergencies. During this scenario, the airway had to be maintained, and as I was at the head, this was initially done with a jaw thrust (to avoid moving the cervical spine) and subsequently a guedel placed in the mouth. These are all part of advanced life support skills which I wanted to practice. This also fulfils learning objective number 2 through assisting and aiding life support.

There were a number of other calls that we attended in the truck. We were faced with medical calls, including an NSTEMI, broad complex tachycardia, possible PE, delirium, fracture, head injury, falls, possible ectopic pregnancy, seizures, and an allergic reaction. All these cases enabled me to witness medical emergencies and try and put book knowledge into practice. Overall it was an exciting and useful elective to help build on my basic understanding and cope with dealing with emergency scenarios. I now feel much better prepared and ready to deal with unexpected and potentially life threatening situations while remaining calm and with a clear head.