

# Adult nurse

Adult nursing is a rewarding career where you have a real chance to make a difference to people's lives. As part of your training, you can expect to learn new skills and procedures that help patients.

## Why choose adult nursing

There are many reasons why you should consider a career as an adult nurse. It offers you the chance to make a difference, a high degree of flexibility and a career with excellent employment prospects.

*'That's one of the best things about choosing nursing, the fact that there are so many different options I can take and it's so flexible.'* Aisha Thabet, adult nurse

[Read Aisha's story in full](#) <sup>[1]</sup>

## Working life

[From the start of your training](#) <sup>[2]</sup> and into your first job, you will learn how to observe patients and assess their needs. You'll learn to plan and deliver the most appropriate care for them, and evaluate the results.



Your nursing career will mean working with adults of all ages. They may suffer from one or more long or short-term physical health conditions. This could include heart disease, injuries from an accident, pneumonia, arthritis, diabetes or cancer.

Building a trusting relationship with each patient is essential. Your aim is to improve your patients' quality of life, whatever their situation. You'll need to take lots of factors into account and juggle many priorities to get the best possible results for your patients.

*'In A&E I was shown how to cope with absolutely anything, and did things I never dreamed of.'* Paul Malone, triage nurse.

[Read Paul's story.](#) <sup>[3]</sup>

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## Where will I work?

You might be working in:

- hospital wards, outpatient units or specialist departments
- the community eg patient's home, a clinic, GP surgery, walk-in centres or nursing homes.
- the prison service
- the police
- the voluntary or private sector

Adult nurses are a key part of the multidisciplinary teams that look after patients. You will be at the centre of teams that can include occupational therapists, <sup>[4]</sup> pharmacists <sup>[5]</sup>, radiographers <sup>[6]</sup> and healthcare assistants <sup>[7]</sup>, <sup>[8]</sup> You'll also work closely with patients' families and carers.

## How to become an adult nurse

To become an adult nurse you'll need to train and study at a degree level. Entry requirements vary depending on where you'd like to study. You can find an adult nursing course to suit you using our Course Finder tool <sup>[9]</sup>, <sup>[9]</sup>

## Want to learn more?

- Find out about the entry requirements for adult nursing <sup>[10]</sup>
- Find out about the personal characteristics and skills needed for adult nursing <sup>[11]</sup>
- Find out about the training and development opportunities in adult nursing <sup>[12]</sup>
- Pay and conditions [Expand / Collapse](#)

Most jobs in the NHS are covered by the [Agenda for Change \(AfC\) pay scales](#) [13]. This pay system covers all staff except doctors, dentists and the most senior managers. Adult nurses in the NHS will usually start at band 5 and work standard hours of 37.5 per week. With further experience, training and qualifications, they can apply for posts up to band 9 in the most senior roles. Terms and conditions can vary for employers outside of the NHS.

- **Where the role can lead** Expand / Collapse  
Once you have qualified as an adult nurse, there are a wide range of opportunities. You could specialise in a certain field such as operating theatres, care for the elderly or [intensive care](#) [14]. You may want to work in public health, or move into [management](#) [15], teaching or [clinical research](#) [16].

[More information on training and development.](#) [17]

- **Job market and vacancies** Expand / Collapse  
Adult nurses make up the largest part of the NHS workforce with over 176,000 working in just acute settings. The number of places on degree courses have also been increasing year on year. In the future, more and more adult nursing jobs will be based in the community rather than hospitals as more care is delivered outside of acute settings.

Most NHS organisations advertise their job and apprenticeship vacancies on [NHS Jobs](#) [18], including those who run NHS services. Some advertise on their own websites. You can find a list of NHS organisations at [NHS Choices](#) [19].

If you're applying for a role either directly in the NHS or in an organisation that provides NHS services, you'll be asked to show how you think the values of the [NHS Constitution](#) [20] apply in your everyday work. The same will be true if you are applying for a university course funded by the NHS.

[Find out more about NHS values.](#) [21]

- **Further information** Expand / Collapse
  - [Royal College of Nursing](#) [22]
  - [Nursing and Midwifery Council](#) [23]
  - [UCAS](#) [24]

## Other roles that may interest you

- [Children's nurse](#) [25]
- [General practice nurse](#) [26]
- [District nurse](#) [27]
- [Learning disability nurse](#) [28]

## Partner logos

**Source URL:** <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing/roles-nursing/adult-nurse>

### Links

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- [2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/EXPLORE-ROLES/nursing/studying-nursing>
- [3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing/roles-nursing/adult-nurse/real-life-story-paul-malone>
- [4] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/roles-allied-health-professions/occupational-therapist>
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- [8] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/clinical-support-staff/healthcare-assistant>
- [9] [http://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/career-planning/course-finder?field\\_leading\\_to\\_a\\_career\\_in\\_tid=162&field\\_qualification\\_type\\_tid=All&field\\_study\\_mode\\_tid=All&](http://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/career-planning/course-finder?field_leading_to_a_career_in_tid=162&field_qualification_type_tid=All&field_study_mode_tid=All&)
- [10] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing/roles-nursing/adult-nurse/entry-requirements-adult-nursing>
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- [13] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/careers-nhs/nhs-pay-and-benefits/agenda-change-pay-rates>
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- [25] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing/roles-nursing/childrens-nurse>
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- [29] <https://www.rcn.org.uk/>