

Children's nurse

Child nursing involves everything from nursing a sick newborn to an adolescent road accident victim. You'll need to consider the care and support needed by the wider family, including parents and carers.

Why choose children's nursing

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

"To be able to go into that situation and be able to help calm the child down and assure the parent that everything was ok was incredible." Ewout, a student children's nurse.

[Read Ewout's story in full](#) ^[1]



Working life

Nursing a child is not just a question of caring for a small adult. Children have very specific health needs and you need to understand how a healthy child develops towards adulthood to minimise the impact of illness. This involves working in closely with the parents or guardians.



Communication is also factor when treating children. Adults can express their feelings and can identify the severity and nature of pain. A child may not be able to communicate this in such detail and the nurse needs to interpret child's behaviour and reactions. Children's nurses need to be able to spot when a child's health takes a turn for the worse, which can often happen rapidly.

Where will I work?

A child's care can take place in a range of settings:

- hospitals

- day care centres
- child health clinics
- child's home

Across all fields of nursing, more care is being delivered in the community.

Children's nurses are part of multidisciplinary teams that look after patients. You will be at the centre of teams that include [doctors](#) [2], [hospital play staff](#) [3], [healthcare assistants](#) [4], [newborn hearing screeners](#) [5], [psychologists](#) [6] and [social workers](#) [7].

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'I've been well guided and supported in my career choices to date, and the job I now do is one-of-a-kind'. Katie Ryan, practice educator

[Read Katie's story](#) [8]

How to become a children's nurse

To become a children's 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 a child nursing course to suit you using our [Course Finder tool](#) [9].

Want to learn more?

- [Find out about the entry requirements for children's nursing](#) [10]
- [Find out about the personal characteristics and skills needed for children's nursing](#) [11]
- [Find out about the training and development opportunities in children's nursing](#) [12]
- 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. Children's nurses will start at band 5 but will be able to move through their bands as their career progresses.

Children's nurses in the NHS will usually work standard hours of 37.5 per week. Terms and conditions can vary for employers outside of the NHS.

- Where the role can lead [Expand / Collapse](#)
Once you have qualified as a children's nurse, there are a wide range of opportunities. You could specialise in a certain field such as health visiting or school nursing. You may want to move into [management](#) [14], [teaching](#) or [clinical research](#) [15].

[More information on training and development.](#) [12]

- **Job market and vacancies** Expand / Collapse
There are more than 16,000 child nurses in today's NHS and the need for high-quality staff is growing with over 2,400 degree places commissioned in 2016, an increase of 161 compared to 2014. Increasing delivery of patient care in community settings will mean more and more child nursing jobs being outside of a hospital environment.

Most NHS organisations advertise their job and apprenticeship vacancies on [NHS Jobs](#) [16], including those who run NHS services. Some advertise on their own websites. You can find a list of NHS organisations at [NHS Choices.](#) [17]

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](#) [18] apply in your everyday work. [Find out more about the NHS Constitution.](#) [19]

- **Further information** Expand / Collapse
 - [Royal College of Nursing](#) [20]
 - [Nursing and Midwifery Council](#) [21]
 - [UCAS](#) [22]

Other roles that may interest you

- [Neonatal nurse](#) [23]
- [Health play staff](#) [24]
- [Health visitor](#) [25]
- [Healthcare assistant](#) [26]

Partner logos



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[20] <http://www.rcn.org.uk/>

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[27] <https://www.rcn.org.uk/>