

Mental health nurse

Your role is to promote and support a person's recovery, helping them live independent and fulfilling lives.

Why choose mental health nursing

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



GET STARTED

Join our nursing team

Get practical advice and everything you need to know in your inbox.

[Sign up](#) ^[1]

Working life

Your role is to build effective relationships with people who use mental health services, and also with their relatives and carers. You might help one person to take their medication correctly while advising another about relevant therapies or social activities.

Success comes from being able to establish trusting relationships quickly and to help individuals understand their situation and get the best possible outcome. You'll be trained about the legal context of your work and also be able to identify whether and when someone may be at risk of harming themselves or someone else.

You'll usually be based in hospitals, for example on a psychiatric ward or specialist unit, or in the community where you could work in a community health centre or in someone's home. If you work in a residential setting, you may do shifts and provide 24-hour care.

You'll work as part of a team which includes GPs, psychologists, social workers, psychiatrists, occupational therapists, arts therapists and healthcare assistants.

Cherie Lawrence

Mental health nurse and clinical team leader

I also love that I have a guaranteed job for life, which I enjoy – a lot of my friends are jealous!

[Read Cherie's story](#) ^[2]

Entry requirements

To become a mental health nurse the main route is through a degree course at university. Entry requirements for these courses can vary depending on where and how you'd like to study so it's important to check with universities. You can find a mental health nursing courses at the bottom of this page.

Typically you'll need a minimum of five GCSEs at grade 4/C or above, possibly in English language or literature and a science subject, plus two A levels or equivalent level 3 qualifications, such as a T level or BTEC for an undergraduate degree. Some universities may ask for three A levels or equivalent. If you already have a degree, you might be able to study for a postgraduate qualification.

Apprenticeships logo

There are other routes into mental health nursing such as [nurse degree apprenticeships and nursing associate apprenticeships](#).

Annual payments

If you're eligible, you'll receive at least £6,000 a year towards your studies while at university. Your personal circumstances may mean you could receive more. And the good news? You'll never have to pay it back. [Find out more.](#) ^[3]

Other routes into mental health nursing

Nursing degree apprenticeships are available with some employers and numbers are expected to continue to grow. Increasing opportunities to apply for [nursing associate apprenticeships](#) ^[4] are also expected. This can lead to nursing degrees or nurse degree apprenticeships.

Must have skills

Don't forget - academic qualifications aren't everything. Communication and interpersonal skills are crucial, as well as strong judgement, be able to teach advise and manage people.

If you're applying for a role either directly in the NHS or a university course, you'll be asked to show how you think the values of the [NHS Constitution](#) ^[5] apply in your everyday work.

Training and career development

Once you have qualified as a mental health nurse, there are a wide range of opportunities. You could specialise in working with children and adolescents, as a primary mental health worker; or women or in a field such as transcultural psychiatry, looking at how mental disorders and their treatment can be influenced by cultural and ethnic factors. You may want to work or move into management, teaching or clinical research.

Pay and benefits

Your standard working week will be around 37.5 hours on shift pattern which can include nights, early starts, evenings, weekends and bank holidays. As a mental health nurse, you'll be paid on the [Agenda for Change \(AFC\) pay system](#) ^[6], typically starting at band 5.

You'll also have access to our generous pension scheme and health service discounts, as well as 27 days of annual leave plus bank holidays.

• Find your course to become a mental health nurse

Region	Type of qualification	Full or part time
- Any - ▼	- Any - ▼	Search ▼

Displaying 161 - 165 of 185 matches

MSci Nursing combined Adult and Mental Health

University of Exeter

[View course](#) ^[7] Opens in a new window

- Qualification
MSci
- Study mode
Full-time
- Duration of the course
4 years
- Leading to a career in
Nursing (Adult), Nursing (Mental Health)
- Contact details
nursing@exeter.ac.uk ^[8]
01392 725500
- Region
South West
- Admissions address

Northcote House
The Queen's Drive
Exeter
EX4 4QJ

Mental health nursing (pre-registration)

Manchester Metropolitan University

[View course](#) ^[9] Opens in a new window

- Qualification
MSc
- Study mode
Full-time
- Duration of the course
2 years
- Leading to a career in
Nursing (Mental Health)
- Contact details
<https://www.mmu.ac.uk/contact/course-enquiry/> ^[10]
+44 (0)161 247 2000
- Region
North West
- Admissions address
Manchester Metropolitan University
All Saints Building
Manchester
M15 6BH

Pre-registration nursing: mental health nursing

University of Cumbria

[View course](#) ^[11] Opens in a new window

- Qualification
MSc
- Study mode
Full-time
- Duration of the course
2 years
- Leading to a career in
Nursing (Mental Health)
- Contact details
enquirycentre@cumbria.ac.uk ^[12]
0845 606 1144
- Region
North West

Mental health nursing MSc

University of Dundee

[View course](#) ^[13] Opens in a new window

- Qualification
MSc
- Study mode
Full-time
- Duration of the course
2 years
- Leading to a career in
Nursing (Mental Health)
- Contact details
contactus@dundee.ac.uk ^[14]
01382 383838
- Region
Scotland
- Admissions address
City Campus
11 Airlie Place
Dundee
DD1 4HJ

Postgraduate Diploma in Nursing (Mental Health)

University of South Wales

[View course](#) ^[15] Opens in a new window

- Qualification
PGDip
- Study mode
Full-time
- Duration of the course
2 years
- Leading to a career in
Nursing (Mental Health)
- Contact details
admissions@southwales.ac.uk ^[16]
03455 76 77 78
- Region
Wales
- Admissions address
University of South Wales
CF37 1DL
Pontypridd
- [Load more Load more results](#) ^[17]

• Live vacancies

If you can't find a vacancy in your area, visit [NHS Jobs](#) ^[18] where you can find a more detailed search.

Find a vacancy

Enter your location or postcode

Show results within

Search

Other roles that may interest you

- [Learning disability nurse](#) ^[19]
- [High intensity therapist](#) ^[20]
- [Social worker](#) ^[21]
- [Counselling psychologist](#) ^[22]

Source URL: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing/roles-nursing/mental-health-nurse?page=32>

Links

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/we-are-the-nhs/registration?career=nursing-guide> [2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing/roles-nursing/mental-health-nurse/real-life-story-cherie-lawrence> [3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/career-planning/study-and-training/considering-or-university/financial-support-university> [4] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing/roles-nursing/nursing-associate> [5] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#NHS_Constitution [6] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/working-health/working-nhs/nhs-pay-and-benefits/agenda-change-pay-rates> [7] <http://www.exeter.ac.uk/undergraduate/courses/nursing/nursingmsci/> [8] [mailto: nursing@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:nursing@exeter.ac.uk) [9] <https://www.mmu.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/course/msc-mental-health-nursing-pre-registration> [10] https://www.mmu.ac.uk/contact/course-enquiry/ [11] <https://www.cumbria.ac.uk/study/courses/postgraduate/msc-pre-registration-nursingregistered-nurse-mental-health-nursing/> [12] [mailto: enquirycentre@cumbria.ac.uk](mailto:enquirycentre@cumbria.ac.uk) [13] <https://www.dundee.ac.uk/undergraduate/mental-health-nursing-msc> [14] [mailto: contactus@dundee.ac.uk](mailto:contactus@dundee.ac.uk) [15] <https://www.southwales.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate-diploma-in-nursing-mental-health/> [16] [mailto: admissions@southwales.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@southwales.ac.uk) [17] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/printpdf/300?page=33> [18] <https://www.jobs.nhs.uk/> [19] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing/roles-nursing/learning-disability-nurse> [20] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/psychological-therapies/roles/high-intensity-therapist> [21] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/clinical-support-staff/social-worker> [22] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/psychological-therapies/roles/counselling-psychologist>