

# Secretary/typist

Typists and secretaries use word processing skills to create well-presented documents.

This page has information on the role of typists in the NHS, including entry requirements and skills needed.

## Working life

As a typist, you'll use word processing systems to create documents. These may be reports, letters, case notes, etc. If you work as an audio typist, you'll listen to information dictated onto a tape or digital device and type what you hear, turning it into a well-presented document in the required format.



As a secretary, you'll usually work for a particular senior member of staff or group of staff. Or you may support the work of a particular department. As well as typing, including audio typing, you may:

Secretaries often work for a particular senior member of staff.

- arrange meetings
- take minutes of meetings
- manage diaries
- deal with enquiries
- take phone calls
- order stationery
- keep a filing system
- deal with post and emails
- create and update spreadsheets and databases

Secretaries and typists work across the NHS, in clinical and non- clinical areas such as:

- hospital departments and clinics of all types
- GP surgeries and health centres
- the headquarters of an NHS trust

As a secretary or typist, working on a ward or in a clinic or health centre, you'll have a lot of contact with patients and their relatives and carers. You will also have contact with healthcare professionals including [nurses](#) [1] and doctors, including [GPs](#) [2] or [surgeons](#) [3], for example. Other secretaries/typists may have little or no contact with patients, for example, those in headquarters. They work closely with admin staff and other members of the wider healthcare team.

## Entry requirements, skills and interests

There are no set entry requirements for a secretary/typist. However, employers expect excellent keyboard skills. They are likely to ask for qualifications in typing or word processing. Employers also expect a good standard of literacy, numeracy and IT skills. They may ask for GCSEs or equivalent qualifications. You may be able to enter an [apprenticeship](#) [4] through an administrative role and through further training and qualifications, progress to more senior secretarial or typing role.

## Personal characteristics

As a secretary/typist, you'll need to:

- work accurately and methodically
- meet deadlines
- use medical terminology
- pay attention to detail
- work in a team but use their own initiative
- work with all types of people
- be helpful and reassuring if dealing with patients and their families

## Skills required

- excellent keyboard skills
- IT skills
- good spelling and grammar
- organisational skills

## Training and development

You will get the training you need to do the job. This includes an introduction to the department, how to use the IT and phone equipment and the procedures to follow. You may also have training in customer care.

You may be offered the chance to take vocational qualifications such as those from:

- the Association of Medical Secretaries, Practice Managers, Administrators and Receptionists <sup>[5]</sup> (AMSPAR)
- the British Society of Medical Secretaries and Administrators <sup>[6]</sup> (BSMSA)

Some secretaries/typists become members of AMSPAR or BSMSA. Both AMSPAR and BSMSA offer training, online forums and newsletters so staff can network with others doing the same type of work.

- Pay and conditions

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Administrative staff in the NHS are paid on the Agenda for Change <sup>[7]</sup> (AfC <sup>[8]</sup>) pay system. As a new entrant, working as a secretary/typist you would typically start on band 2 and could progress, with further training and qualifications to posts at bands 3 or 4, for example as a medical secretary <sup>[9]</sup>. Secretaries/typists work standard hours of around 37.5 a week. In some jobs, this could involve early starts, evenings and weekends. Terms and conditions for staff working outside the NHS will vary

- Where the role can lead

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With experience, you could become a team leader, coordinating the work of a team of secretaries/typists. With further experience, you could become a manager, responsible for the staff in a department.

Some secretaries/typists move into specialist roles such as medical secretary or PA <sup>[9]</sup>. Others may move into areas such as finance, <sup>[10]</sup> or health records <sup>[11]</sup>.

You may also have the opportunity to move into informatics <sup>[12]</sup>, specialising in electronic data, or into IT.

- Job market and vacancies

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Most NHS trusts advertise their vacancies on [NHS Jobs](#) [13]. Some advertise on their own websites. You can find a list of NHS organisations [NHS Choices](#) [14].

Jobs in GP surgeries and health centres are often advertised locally.

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 NHS values apply in your everyday work.

[Find out more about NHS values.](#) [15]

- Further information

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- [Association of Medical Secretaries, Practice Managers, Administrators and Receptionists](#) [16]
- [British Society of Medical Secretaries and Administrators](#) [17]

## Other roles that may interest you

- [Medical secretary/personal assistant](#) [18]
- [Human resources staff](#) [19]
- [Finance staff](#) [20]
- [Administrative management](#) [21]

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**Source URL:** <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/administration/secretarytypist>

### Links

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing>

[2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/general-practice-gp>

[3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/surgery>

[4] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/secondary-school-or-fe-college/apprenticeships-traineeships-and-cadet-schemes>

[5] <http://www.amspar.com/>

[6] <http://www.bsmsa.org.uk/>

[7] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/careers-nhs/nhs-pay-and-benefits/agenda-change-pay-rates>

[8] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#AfC>

[9] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/administration/medical-secretarypersonal-assistant>

[10] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/corporate-services/finance-staff>

[11] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/administration/health-records-staff>

[12] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/health-informatics>

[13] <http://www.jobs.nhs.uk/>

[14] <http://www.nhs.uk/aboutnhs/howthenhsworks/authoritiesandtrusts/Pages/Authoritiesandtrusts.aspx>

[15] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/working-health/nhs-constitution>

[16] <http://www.amspar.com>

[17] <http://www.bsmsa.org.uk>

[18] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare->

team/administration/medical-secretarypersonal-assistant

[19] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/corporate-services/human-resources-staff>

[20] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/corporate-services/finance-staff>

[21] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/management/roles-management/operational-management/administrative-management>