Nursing

If you want a career that’s interesting, rewarding and challenging, nursing will give you plenty of scope to do exactly that.

Nurses work with people of all ages and backgrounds in a variety of settings, such as patients’ homes, communities and hospitals.

People from all walks of life and with all types of health problems depend on the professional skills and care of nurses. A combination of people skills and initiative is essential for the hands-on care that all nurses are required to provide.

Where you'll work

More nurses than ever are now working in community settings such as a GP practices, clinics, and schools and community hospitals. As more care is moved out of hospitals into the community, this will only increase.

Opportunities continue to exist in acute hospital settings; outpatient services, accident and emergency, operating theatres, neonatal care or neurology will always need highly trained and specialist nurses.

Training and qualifications

Some nurses begin their career in support roles, where vocational training is available through a Care Certificate, and go on to do a nursing degree at a university or a nurse degree apprenticeship.

Whether you take a nursing degree, apprenticeship or apply direct to university, the degree involves undertaking clinical learning in a hospital, in people’s homes and other community care settings.

You'll train in one of the four fields of nursing:

- adult  [1]
- child   [2]
- learning disability  [3]
- mental health  [4]

After gaining employment, you'll find there are lots of opportunities to progress your career
and to specialise. Many of these opportunities will require experience and/or further training.

**Find out more**

As well as the information on this page, you'll also find:

- [FAQs](#)
- [the roles in nursing](#)
- [studying to be a nurse](#)
- [working as a nurse from overseas](#)
- [returning to nursing](#)
- [our booklet on careers in nursing](#)

- **Adult nursing**
  Adult nurses work with old and young adults with a range of health conditions. They use caring, counselling, managing, teaching and interpersonal skills to improve the quality of patients' lives. Work may be based in hospital wards, clinics or community settings and you may do shift work to provide 24-hour care.

  [Further information on adult nursing](#)

- **Children's nursing**
  Children's nurses work with patients in a range of situations e.g. babies born with heart complications, teenagers who have sustained broken limbs and child protection issues. As well as working with children, children's nurses work with the family or carers to ensure that he or she does not suffer additionally from the stress of being ill or in hospital.

  [Further information on children's nursing](#)

- **Learning disability nursing**
  People with learning disabilities often have a wide range of physical and mental health conditions. Learning disability nurses provide specialist care in partnership with clients and their carers. Their main aim is to support the well-being and social inclusion of people with a learning disability by improving or maintaining their physical and mental health. For example, teaching someone the skills to find work can helping them lead a more independent and healthy life.

  [Further information on learning disability nursing](#)

- **Mental health nursing**
  One in three people has a mental health problem at some point in their life. The wide range of conditions treated includes depression and schizophrenia, as well as personality and psychological disorders. Mental health nursing is a complex and demanding area. They work with GPs, psychiatrists, psychologists, and other professionals to help people with mental ill health.

  [Further information on mental health nursing](#)

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