Healthcare support worker

Healthcare support workers work across a variety of settings, from mental health to children's services. The choice is yours. As a healthcare support worker, you'll work under the supervision of a healthcare professional, supporting them and helping patients on their journey back to full health.

The opportunities to progress are endless; you can choose to specialise in a particular setting, or train to qualify as a healthcare professional, such as a nurse or midwife. In some trusts, healthcare support workers have slightly different job titles such as healthcare assistant (or HCA), nursing assistant or midwifery assistant, depending on your chosen setting and the healthcare professionals you support.

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Working life

It's a hands-on role – one minute you could be taking blood and the next lending an ear to an anxious patient – but it's one of the most rewarding. Your day-to-day will vary depending on which part of the NHS you're working in. For example, if you're based in a hospital your duties may include:

- helping patients to move around.
- monitoring patients and performing basic health checks
- making patients feel comfortable.
- washing and dressing patients.
- serving meals and helping to feed patients.

If you're based in a health centre or GP surgery, you may:

Apprenticeships logo

- perform health checks

- take blood samples
- process lab samples
- sterilise equipment
- restock consulting rooms
- undertake health promotion and education work

No matter which area you choose to work in, being a healthcare support worker is a key role that's at the very heart of healthcare.

Entry requirements and skills needed

There are no set entry requirements to become a healthcare support worker, but good literacy and numeracy skills are expected, and in some cases GCSEs (or equivalent) in English and maths are required too. You may also need a healthcare qualification such as a BTEC or NVQ for some of our roles.

For some roles, some experience of healthcare or care work may be beneficial – this could be from paid or voluntary work, or through experience you bring in from previous roles.

But academic qualifications aren't everything. You'll also need to be caring, kind and willing to really get stuck into the role – it's a hands-on environment where teamwork, communication and organisational skills are vital.

Training and career development

As a healthcare support worker, you'll have access to world-class training and learn basic nursing skills. You'll also work towards gaining qualifications such as the Care Certificate [4] and may have the opportunity to do an apprenticeship. But that's not all. You'll gain plenty of on-the-job experience and be surrounded by experts who'll support you as you progress through your career. And with regular check-ins to discuss your career aspirations, you'll always be moving forward.

Pay and benefits

Your standard working week will be around 37.5 hours and may include a mix of shifts, such as nights, early starts, evenings and weekends. As a healthcare support worker, you'll be paid on the Agenda for Change (AFC) [5] pay system, typically starting on band 2.

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, which increases the longer you're in service.

A variety of settings

Healthcare support workers typically work in one of seven settings.

- mental health. Helping with the care, treatment and recovery of patients.
- community. Working with GPs and nursing teams to deliver and manage care in a patient's home or community-based healthcare setting.

- primary care [6]. Assessing new patients and supporting the wider GP surgery medical and nursing team.
- acute. A hospital-based role supporting patients and managing daily activities.
- midwifery. Working on the maternity ward, supporting new parents and their babies.
- children's services. Working with nurses to support outpatient clinics and school clinics.
- learning disability. Helping people with learning disabilities or autism to learn new skills and reach a level of independence.

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Other roles that may interest you

- <u>Healthcare assistant</u> [8]
- <u>Maternity support worker</u> [9]
- <u>Nursing associate</u> [10]
- <u>Physiotherapy assistants/support workers</u> [11]

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https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/working-health/working-nhs/nhs-pay-and-benefits/agenda-change-pay-rates [6] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Primary_care [7] https://www.jobs.nhs.uk/ [8] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/healthcare-support-worker/roles-healthcare-support-worker/healthcare-assistant [9] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/healthcare-support-worker/roles-healthcare-support-worker/maternity-support-worker [10] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/node/4139/nursing-associate [11] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/healthcare-support-worker/roles-healthcare-support-worker/physiotherapy-assistantssupport-workers