

Compare roles in health

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• Nursery nurse and nursery assistant ^[1]

Our nursery nurses and nursery assistants look after pre-school age children in NHS hospitals.

Training and qualifications required

There are no set entry requirements for nursery assistants. Employers expect a good level of literacy and numeracy and may ask for GCSEs or equivalent qualifications. Employers may ask for a childcare qualification such as NVQ or BTEC and usually expect some experience of childcare, which could be voluntary or paid, including experience within the family or babysitting. Apprenticeships in a childcare related role are sometimes available. Nursery nurses usually have level 3 qualifications in childcare or early years. Nursery assistants who do not have a childcare qualification will be encouraged to study for an NVQ, certificate or diploma. Both nursery nurses and nursery assistants may be offered the chance to study for further qualifications.

Expected working hours and salary range

Nursery staff working in the NHS are paid on the Agenda for Change (AfC) pay system. As a nursery assistant, you will typically start on AfC band 2. As a nursery nurse, you would start at band 3 or 4. With further training and experience, you could apply for more senior positions - typically at managerial level - at band 5 or above. Nursery nurses and nursery assistants in the NHS work standard hours of around 37.5 a week. They may work shifts including early starts and evenings. Terms and conditions will usually be different for nursery staff working outside of the NHS.

Desirable skills and values

As a nursery nurse or nursery assistant, you'll need to be caring and kind, interested in working with children, imaginative and fun, approachable and reassuring, willing to work with parents and carers, health and safety conscious and aware of child protection and safeguarding. You'll also need excellent communication skills, including listening, with adults and children, good organisational and observational skills.

Prospects

You could specialise in an area of childcare, such as special needs. With experience and further qualifications, nursery nurses can become managers of a nursery or project. They could progress further to become responsible for childcare provision in an area or NHS trust. Nursery assistants can apply to train as nursery nurses. Provided they have the qualifications required for entry, nursery nurses and nursery assistants can apply to train as a nurse or midwife.

Related roles

- [Children's nurse](#) [2]
- [Health play staff](#) [3]
- [Paediatrician](#) [4]
- [Emergency care assistant](#) [5]

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Links

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/corporate-services/nursery-nurse-and-nursery-assistant/nursery-nurse-and-nursery> [2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing/roles-nursing/childrens-nurse> [3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/corporate-services/health-play-staff/health-play-staff> [4] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/paediatrics/paediatrician> [5] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/ambulance-service-team/roles-ambulance-service/emergency-care-assistant>