

## Compare roles in health

Not sure where to start with the hundreds of NHS careers? Use our compare roles section to get bite-size information on the entry requirements and training, pay and conditions, prospects and skills needed of up to three roles. If there is something that you think you could do, then get more in-depth information on the role.

Don't forget, you can also save your role comparisons by registering with us.

### • Telephonist/switchboard operator <sup>[1]</sup>

Telephonists/switchboard operators are a key point of contact for our patients in making sure they and their families can speak to relevant departments about their care.

#### Training and qualifications required

There are no set entry requirements to become a telephonist or switchboard operator. Employers usually expect good literacy, numeracy and IT skills. They may ask for GCSEs or equivalent qualifications and often ask for relevant work experience. Even where this is not specified, it would be an advantage if you have worked in customer service or admin. 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 and the chance to take qualifications from organisations including AMSPAR and the BSMSA.

#### Expected working hours and salary range

Administrative staff in the NHS are paid on the Agenda for Change (AfC) pay system. As telephonist/switchboard operator, you'll typically be on AfC band 2. With further training and qualifications, you may be able to apply for team leader or junior supervisory level posts at band 3 for example. Telephonists/switchboard operators work standard hours of around 37.5 a week. Some staff may work shifts, which could involve nights, early starts, evenings and weekends. Terms and conditions will be different for administrative staff working outside of the NHS.

#### Desirable skills and values

As a telephonist/switchboard operator, you'll need to be friendly and welcoming, patient and understanding, follow instructions and procedures, work accurately and methodically, work well in a team but use your own initiative, use IT/communications equipment, work with all types of people, deal with people who may be angry or upset, and be confident using the phone. You'll also need good organisational, IT and communication skills, have excellent customer service skills and a good telephone manner.

## Prospects

With experience, you could become a team leader, coordinating the work of a team of staff. With further experience, you could become a manager, responsible for the staff in a department. Some telephonists/switchboard operators move into specialist roles such as medical secretary or PA. Others move into areas such as finance or HR. You may also have the opportunity to move into informatics, specialising in electronic data, or into IT.

## Related roles

- Call handler/emergency medical dispatcher [2]
- Administrative management [3]
- Medical secretary/personal assistant [4]
- Practice manager [5]

## • Housekeeper [6]

Housekeepers help make sure that hospital wards and other settings are clean, safe and attractive places for patients and staff.

### Training and qualifications required

There are no set entry requirements. Employers expect a good standard of numeracy and literacy and may ask for GCSEs in English and maths. They may also ask for relevant qualifications such in hotel services or health care. When you start work as a housekeeper you will get the training you need to do the job. This includes an introduction to the department and the ward and its systems and procedures. You will also have training in health and safety and manual handling. You may be encouraged to take a qualification in housekeeping.

### Expected working hours and salary range

Housekeepers working in the NHS are paid on the Agenda for Change (AfC) pay system. You would typically start on AfC band 2. With further training and experience, you could apply for more senior positions such as domestic services team manager or senior housekeeper at band 3. Housekeepers usually work standard hours of around 37.5 a week. They may work shifts, which, in some departments, could involve nights, early starts, evenings and weekends. Terms and conditions will usually be different for housekeepers working outside of the NHS.

### Desirable skills and values

Housekeepers need to be physically fit for moving, lifting and cleaning, able to work as part of a team, friendly and caring, understanding of patients' needs, able to take responsibility for their own work, health and safety aware, flexible and adaptable and able to follow instructions and procedures. They also need good organisational skills and good communication skills with staff and patients.

## Prospects

With experience, housekeepers can become team leaders, supervising the work of other domestic services staff. They can progress to become managers, responsible for a department or area. Housekeepers may be able to move into other areas such as facilities management. You could move into a clinical support role, such as healthcare assistant or maternity support worker. Or you could apply to train as a nurse or other healthcare professional.

## Related roles

- [Chef/cook](#) [7]
- [Decontamination science \(sterile services and flexible endoscopy\)](#) [8]
- [Healthcare assistant](#) [9]
- [Hotel services management](#) [10]

---

**Source URL:** [https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/compare-roles-health?field\\_field\\_role=436](https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/compare-roles-health?field_field_role=436)

## Links

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/administration/telephonistswitchboard-operator> [2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/ambulance-service-team/roles-ambulance-service/emergency-medical-dispatchercall-handler> [3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/management/roles-management/operational-management/administrative-management> [4] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/administration/medical-secretarypersonal-assistant> [5] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/management/roles-management/practice-manager> [6] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/domestic-services/housekeeper> [7] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/domestic-services/chef-and-cook> [8] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/healthcare-science/roles-healthcare-science/physical-sciences-and-biomedical-engineering/decontamination-and-sterile-services> [9] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/healthcare-support-worker/roles-healthcare-support-worker/healthcare-assistant> [10] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/management/roles-management/operational-management/hotel-services-management>