

Compare roles in health

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• Gardeners and grounds staff ^[1]

Gardeners and grounds staff keep grounds attractive and tidy.

Training and qualifications required

Although gardeners and grounds staff often join the NHS fully qualified and experienced, it may be possible to train in gardening and grounds maintenance. Employers usually ask for GCSEs (or equivalent) including English and maths. Where employers are seeking qualified staff, they usually expect a qualification in horticulture or landscaping, such as an NVQ, certificate or diploma. They may also expect some experience of horticulture work (eg from paid or voluntary work, an apprenticeship or through experience at home). When you start work in gardening or grounds maintenance, you will get the training you need and be encouraged to take further qualifications. Your employer will expect you to keep your skills up to date by going on short courses. These could include topics such as handling pesticides, using tractors or using cutting tools. Employers may ask for a driving licence.

Expected working hours and salary range

Estates staff working in the NHS are paid on the Agenda for Change (AfC) pay system. As a gardener/estates support worker, you would typically start on AfC band 2. As a qualified craftsperson in estates maintenance, you will typically start on AfC band 3. With further training and experience, you could apply for more senior positions at bands 4 and above. Gardeners and grounds staff in the NHS work standard hours of around 37.5 a week. The job may involve early starts and weekend working. Terms and conditions will usually be different for gardeners and grounds staff working outside of the NHS.

Desirable skills and values

Gardeners and grounds staff need to be interested in gardening and horticulture, willing to work outside in all weathers, able to use tools, including power tools, physically fit for digging, lifting, carrying, etc; have an eye for design and colour and be able to work flexibly, according to seasons and weather. They also need to be good at working in a team and have good communication and practical skills.

Prospects

With experience, you could become a team leader overseeing the work of other gardeners and grounds staff. With further experience, you could become a manager, responsible for the gardening and grounds service for a hospital, area or trust. There are opportunities outside the NHS.

Related roles

- [Estates manager](#) [2]
- [Estates technician](#) [3]
- [Facilities management](#) [4]
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