

Compare roles in health

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• **Plumber** ^[1]

Heating systems and water supply is crucial for a successful NHS. Plumbers in the NHS make sure these are safe and in good working order.

Training and qualifications required

There are no set entry requirements but employers expect plumbers to have a qualification and experience in plumbing and/or heating and ventilation. To train as a plumber, you usually need at least three GCSEs (or equivalent) including maths, English and science. Employers may ask for some experience in construction or other practical work. An apprenticeship in an estates support role can provide this. Employers may ask for a driving licence. When you start as a trainee plumber, your training will include health and safety, how to use the tools and equipment and all aspects of plumbing, drainage and heating work. You'll be expected to study for vocational qualifications and may be encouraged to become multi-skilled by training in, for example, painting and decorating or tiling.

Expected working hours and salary range

Estates staff working in the NHS are paid on the Agenda for Change (AfC) pay system. As an estates support worker, you would typically start on AfC band 2. As a qualified plumber, 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. Plumbers in the NHS work standard hours of around 37.5 a week. The job may involve shifts including early starts, evenings and weekends. Plumbers may be part of an on-call rota for emergency cover. Terms and conditions will usually be different for plumbers working outside of the NHS.

Desirable skills and values

Plumbers need to be interested in practical work and repairs, able to follow technical instructions, accurate and methodical, health and safety aware, willing to work at heights where necessary and able to use tools. They also need good manual (hand) skills, organisational skills and time management skills.

Prospects

Once fully qualified and with experience, a plumber can become a team leader, supervising the work of others. With further experience you could progress to manager, responsible for maintenance and repair services in a hospital, area or trust. Plumbers may be able to move into other estates services roles. They can apply to train as engineers. There are opportunities outside the NHS. Some plumbers become self-employed by setting up a business, either on their own or with one or more colleagues.

Related roles

- [Painter and decorator](#) [2]
- [Carpenter/joiner](#) [3]
- [Tiler](#) [4]
- [Estates technician](#) [5]

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