

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.

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• Health play staff ^[1]

Health play staff support children through therapeutic play. This helps to make their healthcare experience enjoyable and reduces anxiety and the risk of psychological trauma.

Training and qualifications required

You could enter a role as a play assistant with a relevant childcare qualification at level 3. Experience of working with children will be an advantage. Most employers expect health play specialists to be registered with the Healthcare Play Specialist Education Trust. To register, you need a foundation degree in healthcare play specialism. This is a two-year part-time course. If you are not already working in healthcare play, you need to arrange a placement during the course. A level 5 apprenticeship standard for health play specialists has been approved for delivery.

Expected working hours and salary range

Most staff working in the NHS are paid on the Agenda for Change (AfC) pay system. As a play assistant, you will typically be on AfC band 3. As a health play specialist, you will be on band 4 or 5 (as a senior health play specialist) and with further training and experience, you could apply for more senior positions. Health play staff in the NHS work standard hours of around 37.5 a week. Terms and conditions will usually be different for health play staff working outside of the NHS.

Desirable skills and values

To work in health play, you need to be interested in working with children, imaginative and fun, caring and kind, approachable and reassuring, able to deal with other people's emotions (both children and adults), 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

After working as a play assistant, with further training and experience, you could apply for positions as a health play specialist. You could then apply for posts as a senior play specialist,

responsible for a team. With the appropriate qualifications needed for university study, you could apply to train as a healthcare professional such as a nurse or occupational therapist.

Related roles

- [Children's nurse](#) [2]
- [Neonatal nurse](#) [3]
- [Newborn hearing screener](#) [4]
- [Paediatrician](#) [5]

• [Sport and exercise medicine](#) [6]

Doctors in sport and exercise medicine treat people with sport and physical activity-related injuries and work to improve the health of people through increased exercise, while also preventing and managing non-communicable diseases.

Training and qualifications required

Training usually starts with a five year first degree in medicine. You'll then complete two years of foundation training, two years of core medical training and four years of specialty training (ST3-6). This period of training will include completing your royal college exams. Length of training can vary according to your circumstances.

Expected working hours and salary range

Doctors may work up to 48 hours a week. The working hours may sometimes extend beyond the normal working day to include early mornings, evenings and on call. The basic salary ranges from £29,384 to £34,012. Once you start your specialty training as a doctor in sports and exercise medicine employed by the NHS, you can expect to earn a salary of at least £40,257, which can increase to between £84,559 and £114,003 as a consultant.

Desirable skills and values

You'll need excellent communication skills to manage a wide range of relationships with colleagues, and patients and their families. You'll be emotionally resilient, have excellent problem-solving and diagnostic skills and work well in teams and under pressure. You'll also be very organised for the benefit of patients.

Prospects

There are just nine consultants employed by the NHS in sport and exercise medicine. Opportunities also exist to conduct research and teach. In 2020, there were 32 applications for 11 specialty training places. Once in a consultant post, you could take up a managerial position, for example as the lead NHS consultant for a team, department or NHS trust. You will also supervise junior doctors.

Related roles

- [Rehabilitation medicine](#) [7]
 - [Occupational medicine](#) [8]
 - [General practitioner](#) [9]
 - [Rheumatology](#) [10]
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