

Nursery nurse and nursery assistant

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

Working life

As a nursery nurse or a nursery assistant, you'll work with our young patients and their families primarily on children's wards. Some will also work in hospital nurseries looking after children of NHS staff. If you're a nursery assistant, you'll work under the supervision of a qualified nursery nurse.

girl looking at camera

The work of nursery nurses and nursery assistant includes:

- making sure that children are safe, happy and stimulated
- communicating information to children using play
- supporting children during clinical procedures
- encouraging children's development
- using play to maintain a child's level of development during illness
- creating a child friendly environment
- maintaining toys and play equipment
- finding ways to stimulate children particularly those with special and sensory needs
- supporting carers in the parenting of their children

In addition, qualified nursery nurses may

- supervise staff
- coordinate a programme of activities for children
- set up a daily routine for the nursery
- attend meetings
- work with other professionals within and outside the NHS
- support children who have been abused
- promote public health and parenting

Where will I work?

You could work in hospitals or in the community. In hospitals, this could include children's wards, nurseries and outpatients departments. In the community, you may work in health centres, community centres or children's centres. You might visit families at home, on your own or with [health visitors](#) [1]

Apprenticeships logo

Who will I work with?

As a nursery nurse or nursery assistant, you'll work closely with parents and carers. As well as [health play staff](#) [2], you'll work with healthcare professionals such as [nurses](#) [3], [health visitors](#) [1] and [midwives](#) [4]. You may also work with [social workers](#) [5]

Entry requirements

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. They 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. [Find out more about apprenticeships](#) [6].

Nursery nurses have qualifications in childcare or early years. This could be, for example,

- NCFE CACHE Level 3 Diploma in Child Care and Education
- BTEC National Diploma in Children's Care, Learning and Development
- NVQ Level 3 in Children's Care, Learning and Development

To get onto a childcare course you need GCSEs, including English and maths, or equivalent qualifications.

The Department for Education's [Early Years Qualifications list](#) [7] sets out the qualifications needed at each level of childcare.

If you're a nursery assistant, you'll work under the supervision of a qualified nursery nurse

Employers may also ask for qualifications in first aid or food hygiene.

Skills and personal characteristics

Nursery nurses and nursery assistants 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
- aware of child protection and safeguarding
- excellent communication skills, including listening, with adults and children
- good organisational skills
- good observational skills

Training and development

You will get the training you need when you start the job including an introduction to the department and its procedures. Your training is likely to include food hygiene, first aid and safeguarding.

Nursery staff need to keep their skills and knowledge up to date. You will be able to attend ongoing training, sometimes on specific topics such as special needs.

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.

• Pay and conditions

Nursery staff working in the NHS are paid on the Agenda for Change (AfC) ^[8] pay system. As a new entrant you would typically start on AfC ^[9] band 2 as a nursery assistant. 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.

• Where role can lead

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. Nursery nurses and nursery assistants can apply to train as a [nurse](#) ^[3] or [midwife](#) ^[4].

There are opportunities in childcare outside the NHS.

• Job market and vacancies

If you're applying for a role either directly in the NHS or in an organisation that provides NHS services, you'll be asked to show how you think the NHS values apply in your everyday work. [Find out more about NHS values.](#) ^[10]

Most NHS trusts advertise their vacancies on [NHS Jobs](#) ^[11]. Just some of the current vacancies are below.

Find a vacancy

Enter your location or postcode

Show results within

Search

○ Nursery Assistant

Redhill, RH1 5RH

Salary:

£24169.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Nursery Assistant job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[12]

○ Nursery Assistant

Manchester, M13 9WL

Salary:

£24169.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust
[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Nursery Assistant job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[13]

- **Nursery Nurse**

Middlesbrough, TS4 3BW

Salary:

£24625.00 to £25674.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Nursery Nurse job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[14]

- **Nursery Nurse**

Battersea, SW11 2LN

Salary:

£31944.00 to £34937.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Central London Community Health Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Nursery Nurse job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[15]

- **Community Nursery Nurse**

Cirencester, GL7 1UY

Salary:

£26530.00 to £29114.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Gloucestershire Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Community Nursery Nurse job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[16]

- **Community Nursery Nurse**

Matlock, DE4 2JD

Salary:

£26530.00 to £29114.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Derbyshire Community Health Services NHSFT

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Community Nursery Nurse job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[17]

- **Bank Nursery Assistant**

Sutton, SM2 5PT

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Bank

Employer:

The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Bank Nursery Assistant job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[18]

- **Community Nursery Nurse - SCPHN**

Amersham, HP7 0JD

Salary:

£26530.00 to £29114.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Community Nursery Nurse - SCPHN job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[19]

- **Band 3 Nursery Assistant**

Reading, RG30 2BA
Maidenhead, SL6 6DU

Salary:

£13.13 to £13.79

Type:

Bank

Employer:

NHS Professionals Limited

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Band 3 Nursery Assistant job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[20]

- **Band 3 Nursery Nurse**

Romford, RM7 0AG

Salary:

£29176.00 to £30225.00

Type:

Permanent
Employer:
Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust
[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Band 3 Nursery Nurse job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[21]

- **Bank Early Years Nursery Practitioner**

Manchester, M20 4BX

Salary:

£24169.00

Type:

Bank

Employer:

The Christie NHS FT

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Bank Early Years Nursery Practitioner job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[22]

- **Public Health Advisor/Nursery Nurse**

Norton Canes, WS11 9SE

Salary:

£26530.00 to £29114.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Public Health Advisor/Nursery Nurse job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[23]

- **Early Years Nursery Nurse Practitioner**

Ipswich, IP4 5PD

Salary:

£24169.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Early Years Nursery Nurse Practitioner job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[24]

- **Nursery Nurse Infant Feeding Support**

Stevenage, SG1 4AB

Salary:

£26530.00 to £29114.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

East and North Hertfordshire Teaching NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Nursery Nurse Infant Feeding Support job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[25]

- **Nurseries - Join our Talent Pool!**

Reading, RG30 2BA

Maidenhead, SL6 6DU

Slough, SL1 2BJ

Salary:

£23615.00 to £26958.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Nurseries - Join our Talent Pool! job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[26]

- **Level 3 Qualified Nursery Practitioner**

Southampton, SO16 6YD

Salary:

£24937.00 to £26598.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

University Hospital Southampton NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Level 3 Qualified Nursery Practitioner job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[27]

- **CYP Public Health Nursery Nurse 0-11yrs**

Poole, BH14 0DJ

Salary:

£15918.00 to £19797.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Dorset HealthCare University NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for CYP Public Health Nursery Nurse 0-11yrs job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[28]

- **Early Years Practitioner, First Steps Nursery (SPH)**

Chertsey, KT16 0PZ

Salary:

£26240.00 to £27928.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Ashford & St. Peter's Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Early Years Practitioner, First Steps Nursery \(SPH\) job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[29]

• Further information

- [CACHE](#) ^[30]
- [Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years](#) ^[31]

Other roles that may interest you

- [Children's nurse](#) ^[32]
- [Health play staff](#) ^[33]
- [Paediatrician](#) ^[34]
- [Emergency care assistant](#) ^[35]

Source URL: <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>

Links

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/public-health/health-visitor> [2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/corporate-services/health-play-staff> [3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing> [4] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/midwifery/midwife> [5] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/clinical-support-staff/social-worker> [6] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/secondary-school-or-fe-college/apprenticeships-traineeships-and-cadet-schemes> [7] <http://www.education.gov.uk/eypqd> [8] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/careers-nhs/nhs-pay-and-benefits/agenda-change-pay-rates> [9] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#AfC> [10] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/working-health/nhs-constitution> [11] <http://www.jobs.nhs.uk/> [12] <https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9326-25-0373> [13] <https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9349-25-1848> [14] <https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9328-25-0693> [15] <https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9824-25-0864> [16] <https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9327-25-0572> [17] <https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9842-25-0260> [18] <https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9282-25-0566> [19] <https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9434-25-0690> [20] <https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/M0042-81215D> [21] <https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9162-25-0473> [22] <https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9413-25-0439> [23] <https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9301-25-0822> [24] <https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9432-25-0846> [25] <https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9361-25-0408> [26]

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