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Catering manager

NHS catering managers make sure our patients and staff have highly nutritious, high quality food and drink when they need it.

Working life

As a catering manager, you'll:

- recruit, train and manage staff
- make sure all services meet health and safety and food hygiene standards
- plan menus to take into account nutritional standards and medical requirements, such as low fat, gluten free, vegetarian, etc
- arrange staff rotas
- control budgets
- order and control stock
- supervise catering staff to make sure that meals are prepared and served correctly and that supplies are available and carefully used.
- liaising with dietitians [1] and dietetic assistants [2] to plan meals for patients on special diets.
- work with chefs and cooks [3] to plan menus.



Pay and benefits

You'll typically be paid at band 4 on the NHS Agenda for Change (AfC) [4] pay system. You could apply for posts as a catering manager at AfC [5] bands 5 and 6 with experience and training. You'll work standard hours of around 37.5 a week which may include shifts including early starts and evenings.

You'll also have access to our generous pension scheme and health service discounts, as well as 27 days of annual leave, plus bank holidays, which increases the longer you're in service.

Lynn Keeling

Catering zone supervisor

For me, though, the best part is getting that elderly lady the egg roll that she really wants or some toast for a patient who's quite ill and just doesn't fancy anything else.

[Read Lynn's story \[6\]](#)

Entry requirements

Catering managers in the NHS have a relevant qualification, usually a degree or HND. This could be in, for example



- hospitality management
- hotel and catering management
- culinary arts management

To get onto a degree or HND course you usually need

- two or three A levels, along with five GCSEs (grades A-C [7]), including English language and maths

or alternative qualifications, including

- BTEC or HNC
- relevant NVQ
- access course
- equivalent Scottish or Irish qualifications

However, each institution sets its own entry requirements, so it's important to check carefully.

Plan menus to take into account nutritional standards and medical requirements

Skills needed

Catering managers have to be

- interested in food and drink
- flexible and adaptable
- able to plan ahead and prioritise
- keen to provide good customer service
- organised
- able to manage people and budgets
- able to solve problem
- be able to communicate

Training and development

If you join the NHS as a catering manager you will be given the training you need to introduce you to the department and its systems and procedures. You are likely to have opportunities to take further qualifications which may include apprenticeships. You may also be expected to go on short courses in particular topics such as special diets.

Catering managers can become members of the Hospital Caterers Association [8] or the Institute of Hospitality [9].

Where the role can lead

With experience, catering managers can progress by being responsible for larger department and could become the head of an NHS trust's catering service.

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Other roles that may interest you

- Chef/cook [10]
- Facilities management [11]
- Hotel services management [12]
- Housekeeper [13]

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Links

- [1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/dietitian>
- [2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/clinical-support-staff/dietetic-assistant>
- [3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/domestic-services/chef-cook-and-assistant>
- [4] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/careers-nhs/nhs-pay-and-benefits/agenda-change-pay-rates>
- [5] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#AfC> [6] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/domestic-services/catering-manager/real-life-story-lynn-keeling> [7] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Grades_A-C [8] <http://www.hospitalcaterers.org/>
- [9] <http://www.instituteofhospitality.org/> [10] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/domestic-services/chef-and-cook>
- [11] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/management/roles-management/operational-management/facilities-management> [12] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/management/roles-management/operational-management/hotel-services-management> [13] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/domestic-services/housekeeper>