

# Linen services staff

Linen services staff are the hidden heroes of the NHS. They make sure that hospital departments have stocks of clean uniforms and linen, such as sheets and towels, for patients.

## Working life

Clean linen is an important part of healthcare. It has to be cleaned correctly to reduce the spread of infection.

As a linen services assistant, you may:

- take items of clothing or linen from wards and other patient areas
- deliver clean linen to wards
- sort linen ready for cleaning or washing
- pack linen for storage or delivery
- keep records of stock levels
- issue uniforms to staff

linen in basket

Some linen services staff also use a sewing machine to:

- repair uniforms
- add logos to uniforms

In some hospitals, where there is a laundry on site, linen services staff:

- receive linen from hospital departments
- sort items according to how they will be washed or cleaned
- operate industrial washing and dry cleaning equipment
- dry and finish using steam cabinets, steam and vacuum presses or by hand
- fold and pack linen

If you are a linen services supervisor or team leader, you will oversee the work of a team of linen services assistants.

As a linen services manager, you make sure that laundry services meet quality standards. You'll have other management tasks such as:

Apprenticeships logo

- recruiting and training staff
- arranging staff rotas
- managing absence and discipline
- controlling budgets

## Pay and benefits

Linen services staff working in the NHS are paid on the Agenda for Change (AfC) <sup>[1]</sup> pay system. As a laundry assistant, linen room assistant or sewing room assistant, you would typically start on AfC <sup>[2]</sup> band 2. With further training and experience, you could apply for more senior positions, including supervisor positions at band 3.

Linen services staff in the NHS work standard hours of around 37.5 a week. They may work shifts including early starts and evenings as well as weekends and bank holidays.

Terms and conditions will usually be different for linen services staff working outside of the NHS.

## Where will I work?

Linen services staff also work in residential and care homes and in companies supplying linen services to the NHS. Linen services assistants based in hospitals may have some contact with patients. Managers and staff working in off-site laundries have little or no contact with patients.

## Entry requirements

There are no set entry requirements for linen services assistants. Employers expect a good standard of numeracy and literacy. They may ask for GCSEs in English and maths. Employers may also ask for relevant qualifications such as an NVQ in hotel services or health care.

Employers may ask for some experience of linen or laundry work or healthcare which could be from paid or voluntary work.

Team leaders and managers have usually worked in linen services, either within the NHS or elsewhere.

As a linen services manager, you make sure that laundry services meet quality standards.

## Skills needed

Linen services staff need to be:

- able to follow instructions and procedures carefully
- very health and safety aware
- physically fit for lifting, packing and moving trolleys

- able to use initiative
- willing to take responsibility for their own work
- able to work in a team

You'll also need

- organisation skills
- teamwork skills

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.](#) <sup>[3]</sup>

## Training and development

When you start work as a linen services assistant you will get the training you need. This includes an introduction to the department and its systems and equipment as well as health and safety and manual handling.

You may be offered the opportunity to take qualifications which may include apprenticeships.

## Where the role can lead

With experience, laundry assistants could become team leaders, supervising a team of assistants. With further experience, they could progress to become managers, responsible for a department or area. They could move into other areas such as [facilities management](#) <sup>[4]</sup>.

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- [Housekeeper](#) <sup>[6]</sup>

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### Links

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/careers-nhs/nhs-pay-and-benefits/agenda-change-pay-rates>  
[2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#AfC> [3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/working-health/nhs-constitution> [4] <https://www.healthcareers.lampuat64-3.rroom.net/explore-roles/operational-management/facilities-management> [5] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/domestic-services/domestic-services-staff> [6] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/domestic-services/housekeeper> [7] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/management/roles-management/operational-management/facilities-management> [8] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/support-services/porter>