

Gardeners and grounds staff

Gardeners and grounds staff keep grounds attractive and tidy.

This page has information on the role of gardeners and grounds staff in the NHS, including entry requirements and skills needed.

Working life

Many NHS hospitals and other sites are surrounded by outside areas, making them pleasant places for staff, patients and visitors.

gardener and patient

Working as a member of the grounds staff, your work can include

- mowing lawns
- planting and weeding borders
- trimming trees and bushes
- sweeping paths and car parks
- landscaping
- clearing snow and ice

As well as maintenance work, you may be involved in creating new garden areas in the grounds of a hospital, hospice or clinic. This could be to provide

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- a peaceful space for patients and visitors
- a quiet place of remembrance
- somewhere for children to play
- relaxation for those with mental health issues or dementia

Who will I work with?

You'll usually be part of the wider estates team which looks after buildings and premises. As a gardener or other member of the grounds staff, you may work alone, particularly in a small building such as a clinic or health centre. Your role may be combined with other duties, for example as a [caretaker](#) ^[1] or estates maintenance. At larger sites, there may be a team of

grounds staff, supervised by a team leader.

Gardeners and grounds staff may work at more than one NHS site. If this is the case, you'll usually travel between sites in an NHS vehicle or their own van.

You might be employed as a gardener or do grounds maintenance work employed by a company providing services to the NHS.

Entry requirements

There are no set entry requirements. Employers usually expect a qualification in horticulture or landscaping, such as an NVQ, certificate or diploma. They may also expect some experience of horticulture work. This could be from paid or voluntary work, including during a course or apprenticeship ^[2] or through experience at home.

Employers may ask for a driving licence.

You could be providing an area of relaxation for those with mental health issues or dementia.

Although gardeners and grounds staff often join the NHS fully qualified and experienced, it may be possible to train in gardening and grounds maintenance. Employers usually ask for GCSEs (or equivalent) including English and maths.

Skills needed

Gardeners and grounds staff need to be

- interested in gardening and horticulture
- willing to work outside in all weathers
- able to use tools, including power tools
- physically fit for digging, lifting, carrying, etc
- have an eye for design and colour
- able to work flexibly, according to seasons and weather
- working in a team
- communication skills
- practical skills

Training and development

When you start work in gardening or grounds maintenance, you will get the training you need. This will include

- health and safety
- manual handling
- using tools and equipment
- working with plants

You will be encouraged to take further qualifications. Your employer will expect you to keep your skills up to date by going on short courses. These could include topics such as handling pesticides, using tractors or using cutting tools.

• **Pay and conditions**

Estates staff working in the NHS are paid on the [Agenda for Change \(AfC\)](#) ^[3] pay system. As a gardener/estates support worker, you would typically start on [AfC](#) ^[4] band 2. As a qualified craftsperson in estates maintenance, you will typically start on [AfC](#) ^[4] band 3. With further training and experience, you could apply for more senior positions at bands 4 and above.

Gardeners and grounds staff in the NHS work standard hours of around 37.5 a week. The job may involve early starts and weekend working.

Terms and conditions will usually be different for gardeners and grounds staff working outside of the NHS.

• **Where the role can lead**

With experience, you could become a team leader overseeing the work of other gardeners and grounds staff. With further experience, you could become a manager, responsible for the gardening and grounds service for a hospital, area or trust.

There are opportunities outside the NHS.

Some gardeners and grounds staff become self-employed by setting up a business, either on their own or with one or more colleagues.

• **Job market and vacancies**

Most NHS trusts advertise their vacancies on [NHS Jobs](#) ^[5]. Some advertise on their own websites. You can find a list of NHS organisations on [NHS Choices](#) ^[6].

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.](#) ^[7]

• Further information

- [British Association of Landscape Industries](#) [8]
- [Grow Careers](#) [9]
- [Professional Gardeners Guild](#) [10]
- [Royal Horticultural Society](#) [11]

Other roles that may interest you

- [Estates manager](#) [12]
- [Estates technician](#) [13]
- [Facilities management](#) [14]
- [Emergency care assistant](#) [15]

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Links

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/estates-services/caretaker> [2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/secondary-school-or-fe-college/apprenticeships-traineeships-and-cadet-schemes> [3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/careers-nhs/nhs-pay-and-benefits/agenda-change-pay-rates> [4] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#AfC> [5] <http://www.jobs.nhs.uk/> [6] <http://www.nhs.uk/aboutnhs/howthenhsworks/authoritiesandtrusts/Pages/Authoritiesandtrusts.aspx> [7] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/working-health/nhs-constitution> [8] <http://www.bali.org.uk> [9] <http://www.growcareers.info> [10] <http://www.pgg.org.uk> [11] <http://www.rhs.org.uk> [12] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/management/roles-management/estates-manager> [13] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/estates-services/estates-technician> [14] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/management/roles-management/operational-management/facilities-management> [15] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/ambulance-service-team/roles-ambulance-service/emergency-care-assistant>