

# Plumber

Plumbers in the NHS make sure that plumbing and heating systems are safe and in good working order.

This page has information on the role of a plumber in the NHS, including entry requirements and skills needed.?

## Working life

The NHS relies on water supplies, drainage and heating. They are all essential to keep hospitals and other NHS buildings safe and working efficiently.

As a plumber in the NHS, your work includes

- planned maintenance
- repairing equipment that is broken or faulty
- testing equipment and systems
- improvements and installations

## Who will I work with?

You'll often work alongside other estates services staff such as electricians [1], carpenters [2] and bricklayers [3]. You may travel between sites in an NHS vehicle or your own van.



While plumbers are working inside a building, staff and patients may be there, but they do not have direct contact with healthcare staff or patients.

Plumbers may work for building services contractors which are providing services to the NHS.

# Entry requirements

There are no set entry requirements but employers expect plumbers to have a qualification and experience in plumbing and/or heating and ventilation.

To train as a plumber, you usually need at least three GCSEs (or equivalent) including maths, English and science. Employers may ask for some experience in construction or other practical work. An apprenticeship in an estates support role can provide this.

Employers may ask for a driving licence.

You'll often work alongside other estates services staff such as electricians, carpenters and bricklayers

# Skills needed

Plumbers need to be

- interested in practical work and repairs
- able to follow technical instructions
- accurate and methodical
- health and safety aware
- willing to work at heights where necessary
- able to use tools
- good manual (hand) skills
- organisational skills
- time management skills

# Training and development?

When you start as a trainee plumber, your training will include

- health and safety
- how to use the tools and equipment
- all aspects of plumbing, drainage and heating work

You will be expected to study for qualifications such as NVQs. You may also be encouraged to become multi-skilled by training in, for example, painting and decorating or tiling.

Plumbers can join the Chartered Institute of Plumbing and Heating Engineering [5] and apply for chartered status.

- Pay and conditions

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Estates staff working in the NHS are paid on the Agenda for Change (AfC) [6] pay system. As an estates support worker, you would typically start on AfC [7] band 2. As a qualified plumber, you will typically start on AfC [7] band 3. With further training and experience, you could apply for more senior positions at bands 4 and above.?

Plumbers in the NHS work standard hours of around 37.5 a week. The job may involve shifts including early starts, evenings and weekends. Plumbers may be part of an on-call rota for emergency cover.

Terms and conditions will usually be different for plumbers working outside of the NHS.

- Where the role can lead

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Once fully qualified and with experience, a plumber can become a team leader, supervising the work of others. With further experience you could progress to manager, responsible for maintenance and repair services in a hospital, area or trust.

Plumbers may be able to move into other estates services roles [8]? They can apply to train as engineers. [9]

There are opportunities outside the NHS.

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

- Job market and vacancies

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Most NHS trusts advertise their vacancies on NHS Jobs [10]. Some advertise on their own websites. You can find a list of NHS organisations on NHS Choices [11].

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 [12].

- Further information

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- Association of Plumbing and Heating Contractors [13]
- Chartered Institute of Plumbing and Heating Engineering [14]
- Construction Industry Training Board [15]

## Other roles that may interest you

- Painter and decorator [16]
- Carpenter/joiner [17]
- Tiler [18]
- Estates technician [19]

team/estates-services/plumber

## Links

- [1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/estates-services/electrician>
- [2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/estates-services/carpenterjoiner>
- [3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/estates-services/bricklayer>
- [4] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/secondary-school-or-fe-college/apprenticeships-traineeships-and-cadet-schemes>
- [5] <http://www.ciphe.org.uk/>
- [6] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/careers-nhs/nhs-pay-and-benefits/agenda-change-pay-rates>
- [7] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#AfC>
- [8] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/estates-services>
- [9] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/estates-services/engineer>
- [10] <http://www.jobs.nhs.uk/>
- [11] <http://www.nhs.uk/aboutnhs/howthenhsworks/authoritiesandtrusts/Pages/Authoritiesandtrusts.aspx>
- [12] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/working-health/nhs-constitution>
- [13] <http://www.aphc.co.uk>
- [14] <http://www.ciphe.org.uk>
- [15] <http://www.citb.co.uk>
- [16] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/estates-services/painter-and-decorator>
- [17] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/estates-services/carpenterjoiner>
- [18] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/estates-services/tiler>
- [19] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/estates-services/estates-technician>