

Porter

Porters move people and items around a hospital site.

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

Working life

As a porter, you could be moving

- patients on trolleys or in wheelchairs
- stores and equipment
- samples of patients' blood
- linens
- post and parcels
- waste
- cylinders of gas
- trolleys of food and drink



Depending on where you work in a hospital, you may have other duties including

- cleaning and tidying outside areas and gritting in cold weather
- cleaning indoors
- replacing curtains round beds in wards

Your job title will usually reflect your duties, for example



- catering services porter
- security/porter
- dirty linen and waste porter
- operating theatre porter
- kitchen porter
- assistant housekeeper [1]/porter

Some porters may drive an NHS vehicle around an NHS site or between sites.

Who will I work with?

You'll usually be a part of the portering services team within an estates department and will have contact with clinical and non-clinical staff. Depending on you are are based, and your precise role, you could work with nurses [2], operating department practitioners [3], healthcare science staff working in the life sciences [4], healthcare assistants [5], housekeepers [1], security staff [6] or catering staff [7].

Entry requirements

There are no set entry requirements. Employers expect a good standard of numeracy and literacy. They may ask for qualifications such as GCSEs in English and maths.

Employers usually expect porters to have some relevant healthcare experience. This could be from voluntary or paid work in, for example, care work. Customer service skills are useful, too.

Some employers may ask for a driving licence.

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Skills needed

Porters in the NHS have to be

- friendly and helpful
- calm and reassuring
- physically fit for lifting, walking, pushing, etc
- reliable
- willing to work with staff and patients of all ages and from all walks of life
- health and safety aware
- able to follow instructions carefully
- communication skills
- organisational skills

Training and development

There are no formal training courses/programmes, but most porters will have an induction course when starting in their position. This generally covers information about the hospital, health and safety, lifting techniques etc. Further training is then given on the job

'I get to know the patients and vice versa, just having a chat and a laugh can make them feel better.' - Stephanie Ferris, porter, Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust

[Read Stephanie's real-life story](#) [8]

- Pay and conditions

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Porters working in the NHS are paid on the [Agenda for Change \(AfC\) pay system](#) [9]. You would typically start on [AfC](#) [10] band 2. With further training and experience, you could apply for more senior positions at higher points on band 2. Team leaders of porters are typically on [AfC](#) [10] band 3.

Porters work standard hours of around 37.5 a week. Some may work shifts including early starts, evenings, nights and weekends.

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

- Where the role can lead

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With experience, you could move into a specialist porter role, working in a particular clinical department, with more responsibility. You could become a team leader, supervising the work of other porters. With further experience, you could become a manager, responsible for portering and other services across an NHS site or trust.

You may be able to move into other areas in the wider healthcare team such as [estates services](#) [11].

- Job market and vacancies

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Most NHS trusts advertise their vacancies on [NHS Jobs](#) [12]. Some advertise on their own websites. You can find a list of NHS organisations on [NHS Choices](#) [13].

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.](#) [14]

- Further information

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For further information about opportunities for portering, contact your local health organisation.

Other roles that may interest you

- [Experienced paramedic](#) ^[15]
- [Emergency care assistant](#) ^[16]
- [Clinical informatics](#) ^[17]
- [Receptionist](#) ^[18]

Source URL: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/support-services/porter>

Links

- [1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/domestic-services/housekeeper>
- [2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing>
- [3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/operating-department-practice>
- [4] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/life-sciences>
- [5] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/clinical-support-staff/healthcare-assistant>
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- [7] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/domestic-services/catering-manager>
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- [10] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#AfC>
- [11] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/estates-services>
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