

Porter

Porters are the heartbeat of NHS hospitals, making sure crucial goods and items are delivered where they are needed most. They are also make sure patients are at the right place at the right time to get the treatment they need.

'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](#) ^[1]

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

porter pushing person in wheelchair

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

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.

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

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 where you are based, and your precise role, you could work with nurses, operating department practitioners, healthcare science staff working in the life sciences, healthcare assistants, housekeepers, security staff or catering staff.

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 and some employers may ask for a driving licence.

Must have skills

Porters must 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/programme but most porters will have an induction course. This generally covers information about the hospital, health and safety, lifting

techniques etc. Further training is then given on the job.

With experience, you could move into a specialist porter role with more responsibility and working in a particular department,. 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 such as estates [2].

Pay and conditions

Porters working in the NHS are paid on the Agenda for Change (AfC) pay system [3]. You would typically start on AfC [4] band 2. Team leaders of porters are typically on AfC [4] band 3. Porters work standard hours of around 37.5 a week. Some may work shifts including early starts, evenings, nights and weekends.

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.

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Other roles that may interest you

- Housekeeper [5]
- Electrician [6]
- Estates technician [7]
- Estates manager [8]

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Links

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/support-services/porter/real-life-story-stephanie-ferris>

[2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/estates-services> [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] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/domestic-services/housekeeper> [6]
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