

# Administration

NHS administrative staff provide business support to clinical and non-clinical staff.

The NHS has to be well-organised and keep detailed records of patients and staff. Patients and other organisations need to be able to contact the NHS, to see or speak to the right person who can give them the help they need. That could be booking an appointment, getting advice or paying an invoice.



Administration roles include:

- [clerk](#) <sup>[1]</sup>
- [health records staff](#) <sup>[2]</sup>
- [receptionist](#) <sup>[3]</sup>
- [secretary/typist](#) <sup>[4]</sup>
- [medical secretary/personal assistant](#) <sup>[5]</sup>
- [telephonist/switchboard operator](#) <sup>[6]</sup>

For any admin role you need a good standard of literacy and numeracy. Employers usually ask for GCSEs (or equivalent) in English and maths. IT skills and qualifications are useful too as so many NHS systems are IT-based now. You'll be using your skills in time management, organisation and communication in any admin role.

There are plenty of opportunities to take further qualifications and move on in your career. You could stay in administration, perhaps by becoming a team leader or supervisor. You could go on to become an administration manager. You could also move into other wider healthcare roles, too. If you like figures, you could use your skills and experience to move into finance. Or if you're keen on IT you could move into [informatics](#) <sup>[7]</sup>.

Some administrative staff, such as [ward clerks](#) <sup>[1]</sup> or [receptionists](#) <sup>[3]</sup>, have a lot of contact with patients. Other staff such as [switchboard operators](#) <sup>[6]</sup> are based in headquarters buildings and work mainly with other administrative staff. [Typists](#) <sup>[4]</sup>, [secretaries](#) <sup>[5]</sup> and [PAs](#) <sup>[8]</sup> may be based in hospitals and have contact with healthcare staff, but little or no contact with patients.

- **Clerk/health records staff**

Clerks do whatever administrative tasks are needed in the department where they work. They could be filing, inputting data, answering phones or collecting and storing files. Some clerks have very specific duties such as finance clerk or clerk/receptionist. Clerks need to be flexible and willing to take on a range of tasks in different departments.

Doctors, nurses and other health professionals need to see what treatment a patient has had, so health records staff make sure that letters and reports are kept up to date and are attached to the right file. Files can be paper-based, although more and more are now electronic so they can be accessed from different places. Clerks use systems and follow procedures to make sure that information about a patient is only seen by those who need to see it.

[Find out more about clerks](#) <sup>[1]</sup>

[Find out more about health records staff](#) <sup>[2]</sup>

- **Receptionist**

A receptionist is the first point of contact for people who visit NHS buildings. They may be patients attending an appointment, visitors to a patient on a ward, official visitors arriving for a meeting or a business making a delivery. Each one needs a friendly, helpful welcome from the receptionist who directs each one to where they need to go. Receptionists may have other duties such as typing or filing or answering phones.

[Find out more about receptionists](#) <sup>[3]</sup>

- **Secretary/typist/PA**

Secretaries and typists create documents using their word processing skills. The letters, reports and case notes they create must be well-presented and accurate. Some typists work from digital recording devices, other work from written notes. Secretaries may work for one person or for a team, managing diaries, creating spreadsheets, inputting data and arranging meetings.

[Find out more about secretaries and typists](#) <sup>[4]</sup>

Medical secretaries and PAs are highly skilled and experienced. They work for one or more senior staff typing up reports and notes with a lot of medical or other specialist terminology. They take minutes at meetings, arrange travel and organise meetings.

Some supervise teams of administrative staff such as typists.

Find out more about medical secretaries and PAs [8]

## • **Telephonist/switchboard operator**

When anyone contacts the NHS by phone, they are likely to speak to a telephonist/switchboard operator. The telephonist puts the caller through to the right person or department. Sometimes callers don't know who they need to speak to, so the switchboard operator has to know the departments and staff well so they can direct the caller correctly.

Find out more about telephonists/switchboard operators [6]

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