

Home > Explore roles > Wider healthcare team > Roles in the wider healthcare team > Administration > Health records staff

Health records staff

Health records make sure that vital patient information is recorded and stored accurately so their frontline colleagues can access it at any time and at any place.



Working life

Each NHS patient has a record of all their treatment and care which has to be accurate and up to date. Health records staff (sometimes known as medical records staff) are responsible for organising, updating and storing records. This can be either a physical (paper) record or stored electronically - or a mix of both

Records about patients have to be kept safely and confidentially. They have to meet government and legal requirements for data protection etc. If you work in health records within the NHS, you could be based in:

- hospital wards
- specialist departments or clinics, including cancer centres or accident and emergency units
- GP surgeries and health centres
- the headquarters of an NHS trust
- health records department

In addition, health records staff prepare for storage any records no longer needed. Some health records clerks have other duties such as answering phones or in a reception area.

While many clerks will have a lot of contact with patients, their relatives, carers and healthcare professionals, other clerks may not, for example, if you work in health records departments or headquarters. You'll work closely with other administrative staff and other members of the wider healthcare team. You'll work closely with other admin staff and members of the wider healthcare team.

Isma Khatoon

Clerical officer, health records

I like the fact that we're a small team – if anyone gets too busy, we help one another out until we are through it.

[Read Isma's story \[1\]](#)

Entry requirements, skills and interests

There are no set entry requirements for health records staff. Employers usually expect good literacy, numeracy and IT skills. They may ask for GCSEs or equivalent qualifications. For some jobs, employers may ask for other skills or qualifications such as word processing or data entry.

Employers often ask for relevant work experience. Even where this is not specified, it would be an advantage if you have worked in an admin or customer service role.



There are often apprenticeships in administrative roles, including some in health records.

[Find out more about apprenticeships and traineeships \[2\]](#)

Much needed skills

Health records staff need to be:

- accurate and methodical
- able to work in a team but use their own initiative
- willing to follow instructions and procedures
- able to work with all types of people
- confident using the phone

- organisational skills
- IT skills
- customer service skills

Training and development

You will get the training you need to do the job. This includes an introduction to the department, how to use the IT and phone equipment and the procedures to follow. You may also have training in customer care. You may be offered the chance to take qualifications such as NVQs or those from:

- Association of Medical Secretaries, Practice Managers, Administrators and Receptionists (AMSPAR) [3]
- Institute of Health Records and Information Management (IHRIM) [4]

Some health records staff become members of AMSPAR, BSMSA or IHRIM. These organisations offer training, online forums and newsletters so health records staff can network with others doing the same type of work.

Health records staff work across the NHS, in clinical and non- clinical areas .

Pay and benefits

You will usually be paid on the Agenda for Change [5] pay system. Your banding will depend on the position but entry roles are usually at band 2 or 3. You'll work a standard 37.5 hours a week and may work shifts, which could involve early starts, evenings 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.

Where the role could lead

With experience, you could become a team leader, coordinating the work of a team of health records staff. With further experience, you could become a manager, responsible for the work of a health records department.

You could move into more specialist roles such as medical secretary or PA or other areas such as finance or HR. You may also have the opportunity to move into health informatics [6], specialising in electronic data, or IT.

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- Medical secretary/personal assistant [9]
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Links

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/health-records-staff/real-life-story-ismaa-khatoun> [2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/secondary-school-or-fe-college/apprenticeships-traineeships-and-cadet-schemes> [3] <http://www.amspar.com> [4] <http://www.ihrim.co.uk> [5] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/working-health/working-nhs/nhs-pay-and-benefits/agenda-change-pay-rates> [6] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Informatics> [7] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/management/roles-management/operational-management/administrative-management> [8] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/corporate-services/human-resources-staff/human-resources-staff> [9] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/administration/medical-secretarypersonal-assistant> [10] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/healthcare-science/roles-healthcare-science/life-sciences/cellular-sciences>