Careers in the wider healthcare team

Caring, compassionate, committed
Make a difference with a career in health
A career for you

There are more than 350 roles in health, and many of them are part of a wider team which works alongside other health professionals for the benefit of patients and the public. As well as the NHS itself, a great many large and smaller organisations provide healthcare and work to prevent ill health in the UK. These include public and private sector organisations, community interest companies, social enterprises and charities, and you could work for the NHS or any one of these other organisations in a health role.

Some roles give you direct contact with patients, while in others you are part of a vast support network vital to delivering healthcare and preventing ill health, and good team-working is essential. Some jobs are in hospitals, others are based in the community, and, increasingly health and social care services are integrated or co-ordinated in order to provide a seamless service for people with a range of needs.

We actively recruit people of all ages, backgrounds and levels of experience, including people who have worked in other sectors or who bring life experience from outside the world of work. This helps us to understand the different needs of patients, families and carers, and to provide the best possible service every day.

NHS values and the 6Cs of compassionate care

To apply for any job in the NHS or in an organisation that provides NHS services, or for a course with clinical placements in the NHS, you’ll need to show how you think the values of the NHS Constitution would apply in your everyday work.

The NHS Constitution values are:

- Working together for patients
- Respect and dignity
- Commitment to quality of care
- Compassion
- Improving lives
- Everyone counts

These values may also be promoted as the 6Cs of compassionate care, which are:

- Care
- Compassion
- Competence
- Communication
- Courage
- Commitment

Find out more about the NHS Constitution and the 6Cs at:

- [www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/nhsconstitution](http://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/nhsconstitution)
- [www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/6Cs](http://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/6Cs)
Your career in the wider healthcare team

You may not realise just what a huge range of opportunities exist in health. We rely on people as diverse as painters, caterers, chaplains, healthcare assistants, secretaries and engineers.

You might be interested in cutting-edge technology, caring for the elderly, providing hospitality, administration, estates or human resources, for example.

You may be looking for a high-flying career or a less demanding but still rewarding role. Whatever your situation and strengths, the wider healthcare team has the answer.

If you want to play your part in helping us to look after patients and provide healthcare for the future, you can find a role that is right for you.

Find more information about careers in the wider healthcare team by going to www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles and visiting the wider healthcare team section. NHS organisations in England and Wales advertise their vacancies, including apprenticeship opportunities, at www.jobs.nhs.uk

You can also search for apprenticeships in health at www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship

Or if you have any questions, you can call our helpline on 0345 60 60 655

or email advice@healthcareers.nhs.uk

FAQs

Who works in the wider healthcare team?

There are lots of different roles in the wider healthcare team, including administration, clinical support staff, corporate services, domestic services, estates services and support services.

What do I need and where can I train as a healthcare assistant (HCA)?

You don’t usually need any formal qualifications or training to apply for healthcare assistant posts in the health sector. Some relevant care experience, such as volunteering, can be really helpful.

To find out what sort of qualifications, skills and experience are required, have a look at the person specification for each vacancy. This will give you the details you need to help you decide whether you have what is needed already, or need to do something else first.

How can I train as a phlebotomist?

To train as a phlebotomist, you will usually need to be employed in an appropriate role in the NHS, such as a healthcare assistant or healthcare science assistant/associate, and your employer will support you to do a part time course in phlebotomy/venepuncture while you are working.

What qualifications do I need for administrative posts in the NHS?

There are various roles in administration in the NHS, including medical secretarial and receptionist, as well as those in finance, communications/public relations and human resources, for example. There are also opportunities in management.

For further information see the Getting started in the wider healthcare team section.

Where can I find assistant practitioner courses?

You need to be employed by the NHS to access courses and training relevant to the role of an assistant practitioner. You’ll usually need experience of working in a relevant support role at a fairly senior level. So if you are applying for a vacancy as an assistant practitioner, you will need to make sure that you meet the criteria contained in the person specification for the post before applying.
Which role is right for you?

The wider healthcare team offers you a unique range of career options and each role has one thing in common – they are essential to the running of health services.

It may be the doctor who carries out the life-saving operation and the nurse whose skills help the patient recover, but, to do their jobs, they rely on back-up from a huge team of other staff. This booklet will help you find out how you can become part of this important team.

Members of our wider healthcare team design, construct and maintain healthcare buildings, run the catering, supply the linen, clean the wards, book the appointments and much more. They play a vital part in ensuring that patients receive the best-possible care.

The wider healthcare team is grouped into six main areas:

- administration
- clinical support services
- corporate services
- domestic services
- estates services
- support services

There is more information about each of these in the next section.
Wider healthcare team roles at a glance

You can find more detailed information about all the roles described in the following pages on the Health Careers website at www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles

There are also short videos about some of the clinical support roles on our YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/NHScareers

To search for jobs, go to www.jobs.nhs.uk, and for more information about professional bodies and all other contacts, please visit the individual role page for the careers you are considering at www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles

For job vacancies with other health organisations visit www.gov.uk/jobsearch

For job vacancies in local government, visit www.lgjobs.com

See real-life stories of people working in some of the wider healthcare team roles at the end of this section

Administration

In healthcare, good record-keeping and administration can save lives. Doctors and other healthcare professionals need fast access to patients’ notes to make vital decisions about treatment. If, for example, an unconscious or confused patient is allergic to a particular drug or has a chronic condition such as diabetes, the medical team needs to know.

Administrative staff also have to communicate clearly with patients and outside organisations like social services. Equally, everyone contacting the health service – GPs, patients, relatives and staff – needs a first-class response.

Who will it appeal to?
Those who are organised and calm under pressure and who take pride in attention to detail will like these roles. You’ll need a good general education and basic computing skills. Secretaries and receptionists will need keyboard and switchboard skills.

You can find more detailed information about all the roles described in the following pages on the Health Careers website at www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of work</th>
<th>Main responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clerk</td>
<td>Clerks are employed throughout the health service. In some clerical roles you will have a lot of contact with patients and relatives, in others none at all. You might work in an office, doing general tasks, such as filing and photocopying, in a clinic, arranging appointments and checking patients in, or, on a ward, collating information and helping to admit and discharge patients.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical record-keeper</td>
<td>As we move from paper to electronic records, medical record-keepers are crucial to this process. You will look after highly confidential clinical notes. You’ll have to ensure the records are completely secure but at the same time have them readily available to those treating patients.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For more information about roles in administration, visit [www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/administration](http://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/administration).

### Clinical support services

Clinical support staff work in a huge variety of settings across health. Their role is to assist healthcare professionals, sometimes – but not always – working alongside them. They might be based in a laboratory helping to diagnose different conditions, they might work in a hospital or clinic, or, visit patients in their own homes, assisting with treatment or providing general care.

Some roles involve close contact with patients, others do not. There is a wide range of opportunities for you to choose from and, as you extend your knowledge and skills, you may be able to undertake further training to become a senior healthcare assistant, therapy assistant, assistant practitioner or even start training to become a healthcare professional.

### Medical secretary

In this role you will manage a GP or consultant’s office, dealing with correspondence, making appointments, handling patients’ queries and liaising with other healthcare staff. You’ll develop familiarity with medical terms. Medical secretaries work on their own much of the time and deal with confidential clinical information.

### Receptionist

As part of the front-line team, the receptionist is the first point of contact for many patients and visitors. You could work in one of many different areas, such as A&E, outpatients or a GP surgery. You might make appointments, check patients in and arrange transport, usually using a computer system.

### Secretary/typist

Your role will vary, depending on where you are based and how your office is organised. As well as word-processing, you might use computer spreadsheets and databases, deal with post, emails and phone calls, and manage a filing system.

### Switchboard operator/telephonist

You will be an important first contact for patients and their families, who might be anxious or upset. It may involve being the communications point to alert key staff of any internal emergencies. You will also take urgent calls from GPs and other healthcare staff in the community.

### Dental support worker

In this role, you will play a key part in helping the dental team to treat patients and provide advice. You will work under the supervision of a dentist and/or dental nurse. The job might involve mixing the materials that the dentist uses for filling teeth, assisting with x-rays and sterilising instruments and equipment.

### Dietetic assistant

Working alongside a registered dietitian, you will help to promote good nutrition. In hospital you will support patients on special diets and in the community you’ll be involved in health education.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Type of work</strong></th>
<th><strong>Main responsibilities</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare science assistant and associate</td>
<td>Healthcare science assistants support qualified healthcare scientists in using complex, specialist equipment to diagnose, measure and treat a wide range of different conditions. Your exact responsibilities will depend on the area of healthcare science you work in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternity support worker</td>
<td>This role will give you the chance to be involved in caring for women and their babies through the vital stages of pregnancy, childbirth and the first few days after the birth. In the labour ward, you will help midwives prepare instruments and equipment, and in a maternity ward you’ll assist with caring for mothers and newborn babies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing healthcare assistant</td>
<td>As a healthcare assistant, you’ll be fully involved in routine nursing care. You might be taking and recording temperatures and blood pressures, helping patients with washing, assisting with feeding and toileting, making beds and assisting people who have problems walking. With training, you can undertake extra responsibilities such as taking blood samples and removing catheters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational therapy assistant</td>
<td>Occupational therapy assistants help support clients with physical, mental or social problems to cope with daily activities such as shopping or cooking a simple meal. You’ll play a key part in helping people to carry on leading independent lives in their own homes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physiotherapy assistant</td>
<td>In this role you will help qualified physiotherapists to rehabilitate patients after an injury, surgery, illness or disability. This might involve showing them how to use mobility aids, setting up equipment and working on exercises with them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podiatry assistant (foot-care assistant)</td>
<td>Podiatry assistants give the more routine foot care and treatment under the supervision of a qualified podiatrist. This includes cutting toenails and applying dressings. You might also do some clerical work, such as booking appointments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radiography assistant (imaging support worker)</td>
<td>Working alongside qualified radiographers, you will use techniques such as ultrasound, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), computer-assisted tomography (CAT scans) as well as x-rays. You will help prepare patients for the procedure and ensure equipment is properly maintained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech and language therapy assistant</td>
<td>This role gives you the opportunity to assist a qualified speech and language therapist to treat patients with a range of different speech and language difficulties. You’ll help and encourage patients to carry out exercises, record their progress and liaise with the therapist about any changes to their treatment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Corporate services

Staff in a variety of key areas deliver the core services on which the whole organisation depends. Some, such as chaplains and health play staff, have direct contact with patients and relatives but, more often, corporate staff work behind the scenes in areas such as finance, human resources, staff training or procurement. Together they ensure the modern health service provides the kind of care the public expects to receive.

Who will it appeal to?
Professionals who are attracted to the idea of using and developing their skills in a healthcare setting. An example would be a finance professional who has the responsibility to provide budgetary analysis, or a human resources (HR) professional who sees the unique mix of staff and groundbreaking employment policies in the NHS as the ideal setting for his or her career.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of work</th>
<th>Main responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chaplain</td>
<td>Chaplains offer spiritual care and emotional support to patients and staff. They usually work in hospital-based teams. Most are Anglicans, but chaplains are recruited from across the faith communities, according to the needs of local people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance staff</td>
<td>Qualified and unqualified staff are employed in finance departments. At junior levels you might handle invoices or run a payroll system. As a senior staff member you could be involved in financial analysis, planning and reporting, management accounting and negotiations over funding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health play staff</td>
<td>You will be a key member of the team looking after children and young people in hospital. You will use play and other activities such as art to help children cope with a hospital stay or undergo a medical procedure. You’ll also have close contact with families.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Human resources staff

**Main responsibilities**
The human resources department deals with everything relating to the employment of staff – everyone from doctors and nurses to librarians and gardeners. You will be involved in recruitment, complaints and grievance procedures and in bringing in new local and national employment policies. An increasingly important part of your job will be to help employees benefit from work-life balance policies. You will work closely with health unions and professional bodies.

### Nursery nurse and nursery assistant

**Main responsibilities**
You could work mainly with young patients, although you may work in a nursery caring for children of NHS staff. If you’re a nursery assistant, you’ll work under the supervision of a qualified nursery nurse.

For more information about roles in corporate services, visit [www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/corporateservices](http://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/corporateservices)

---

### Domestic services

**Type of work**

**Main responsibilities**

**Catering manager/catering assistant**
Hospital catering services offer a variety of jobs at all levels. As a catering assistant, you will deliver meals to wards, serve food and maintain high standards of hygiene in kitchens. More senior roles range from the day-to-day running of catering departments to responsibility for a trust’s entire catering operation.

**Chef and cook**
Chefs in the NHS are qualified professionals in charge of preparing nutritious and appetising food. Head chefs are in charge of a hospital’s entire kitchen operation, while chefs and assistants carry out tasks such as preparing and cooking a varied range of foods for patients, staff and internal functions.

**Who will it appeal to?**
Those who enjoy providing hospitality and looking after people’s comfort and wellbeing. It will be a matter of personal pride for you that a patient’s stay in hospital is as comfortable as possible. These roles will appeal to you if you have an aptitude for hospitality and an awareness of hygiene and nutritional issues.

---
### Domestic services staff

As a member of the domestic services team, you will help keep the hospital environment safe and clean for patients, visitors and staff. In a management role, you’ll plan the work and organise the teams responsible, while as a supervisor you’ll ensure that high standards are met. Assistants are responsible for the day-to-day aspects of the work and usually have a lot of contact with patients.

### Housekeeper

Housekeepers work with senior nurses to make sure wards are clean, safe and welcoming for patients and visitors. In this role you will ensure that catering and cleaning meet the demanding standards of the NHS, help to minimise hospital-acquired infections such as MRSA, and that the ward equipment is well maintained. Some housekeepers also supervise patient transport and clerical and linen services.

### Linen services staff

No hospital can function without a first-class laundry service. It is essential for patients’ comfort and hygiene. Laundry managers ensure that supplies of spotlessly clean linen are available when and where they are needed. Assistants see that the laundry is properly washed and presented, minimising the risk of infection. Many NHS organisations have their linen cleaned by external contractors, which means monitoring and checking to ensure that the linen supplied meets standards set by the trust.

For more information about roles in domestic services, visit [www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/domesticservices](http://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/domesticservices)

---

### Estates services

Most hospitals today consist of multiple new and old buildings, many within extensive grounds, while smaller community-based providers generally have smaller properties. What they have in common is that they all need ongoing programmes of maintenance. For this, we depend on an estates team doing many different jobs, such as architects, electricians, gardening, painting and maintaining equipment, but all working together. Patients value and enjoy bright, welcoming surroundings and it can have a positive impact on their wellbeing and recovery. Health staff also need the right working environment to provide the best care for patients.

#### Who will it appeal to?

Some roles in estates will attract those who like practical, hands-on work – both skilled and unskilled. Others will attract people who are interested in designing, problem solving and management. All roles will appeal to those who take pride in improving surroundings for patients, staff and visitors. For the more practical roles, you’ll need attention to detail, awareness of safety issues and some technical or design flair. For management roles, you’ll need to be a good leader and have good project management skills.

The NHS has one of the largest property portfolios in the country and has an ongoing programme of new building developments. These can range from the refurbishment of a ward or local clinic to the building of a new hospital.

Working under the direction of the maintenance or estates manager, many members of staff may have the opportunity to work at several different sites. In the roles we list here, you will work on new buildings, and on extensions and repairs to existing buildings.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of work</th>
<th>Main responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Architect</td>
<td>As an architect in the NHS, you’ll be involved in designing new buildings and extensions to original buildings, as well as renovations. Your expertise will be particularly vital when working with the many listed buildings that form part of the NHS estate. An ambitious building programme is currently underway involving some major projects, funded through partnerships between the public and private sectors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estates maintenance staff</td>
<td>Staff involved in maintaining buildings include bricklayers, carpenters, painters and tilers. You might work on interior and exterior maintenance of buildings within the trust, or be employed in the construction of new buildings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caretaker</td>
<td>As a caretaker, you have a range of key responsibilities. These might include disposing of clinical and other waste, moving furniture and equipment as needed, supervising car parks and helping the skilled maintenance team with their work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrician</td>
<td>As an electrician, you could be involved in construction projects. You will also maintain and repair existing systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>In this role you will manage hospital maintenance programmes – heating systems for example – and repair important machinery. Increased seniority would bring you the opportunity to design systems or move into estates or operations management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estate technician</td>
<td>Estates technicians test and maintain vital specialist equipment, such as sterilisers, fire alarms and intruder alarms. In an emergency, you might be called out to a patient’s home to test or repair an essential medical device.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardener/grounds staff</td>
<td>You will help to keep trust grounds green and attractive for patients, visitors and staff. A hospital garden can be a haven for people, particularly at times of sadness or anxiety. You might also be involved in landscape work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumber</td>
<td>As a key member of the skilled construction team, you might install plumbing and heating systems into new building projects. You’ll also help maintain and repair existing systems and equipment, working under the direction of the maintenance or estates manager.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveyor</td>
<td>As a surveyor, your skills will be important when working alongside architects on new building and renovations, in particular on large-scale projects where major capital expenditure is involved.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information about roles in estates services, visit [www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/estates-services](http://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/estates-services)
**Support services**

Support staff provide essential day-to-day services, often working closely alongside the healthcare team. For example, they move patients, staff and equipment around the hospital site and look after security and car parking. They ensure supplies are available when needed and that surgical instruments are sterilised ready for the operating theatre.

**Who will it appeal to?**
Those with a reassuring manner and confidence in dealing diplomatically with tricky situations - all important skills for roles such as security staff, fire safety officers and porters. Drivers and messengers need flexibility, reliability and good driving skills. And sterile services staff need a keen awareness of hygiene issues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of work</th>
<th>Main responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Audiovisual technician</strong></td>
<td>IT is a growing area with technicians supporting the ever-increasing technical data required and management systems utilised in health. Audiovisual technicians provide resources for the many teaching areas of the health service and help to stage conferences. You will provide support to service users working with a wide range of technical computer equipment both remotely and face-to-face.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Driver</strong></td>
<td>Most trusts now have more than one site and some services, such as pathology, are centralised. Drivers transport essential items, such as pathology samples, blood, drugs and equipment between those sites. You might also drive staff and take patients to and from hospital. And, there are opportunities for drivers in some national health authorities to deliver blood and organs and distribute health service supplies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fire safety officer</strong></td>
<td>As a fire safety officer, you will advise on safe practice and give regular training sessions to all staff on fire prevention and emergency procedures. You’ll also be responsible for ensuring that electrical and other systems are safe and that no part of the premises represents a fire hazard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Porter</strong></td>
<td>You will be an important member of the team moving between the different trust buildings and hospital departments. Porters move frail and often very ill people between departments and wards in safety and comfort. In this role you will also transport supplies and materials as well as complicated equipment that needs expert handling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Security staff</strong></td>
<td>As a member of the security staff, you will ensure that hospitals are safe for patients, visitors and staff. In addition, you will look after valuable equipment, patrol buildings and grounds, monitor CCTV and respond to emergency calls from staff. Your work may include monitoring the security of car parking facilities within the trust.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sterile service/decontamination technician</strong></td>
<td>Sterile services/decontamination units have an essential part to play in fighting infection within hospitals. You will be responsible for decontaminating complicated reusable medical equipment, reassembling and repackaging it to high standards, ready for use in areas such as operating theatres.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Storekeeper</strong></td>
<td>Healthcare relies on a huge range and quantity of supplies and, as a storekeeper, you will ensure these supplies are delivered on time to the right wards and departments. You will also stock-take and use computers to keep track of orders. Your job might be based at a regional distribution centre or equipment loan stores.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information about roles in support services, visit [www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/supportservices](http://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/supportservices)
Real-life stories

Administration

Name
Shamima Akhtar

Job title
Receptionist/health records,
Royal Oldham Hospital

Entry route
A-levels

How I got into the role
I came here on a temporary contract last year and after just a few weeks I was offered a full time job. I was really pleased because by then I’d settled in and was enjoying it.

What I do
I work on the reception desk of the day surgery unit, answering phones and checking patients in. I take a patient’s details, enter the information on to the system and then I take the patient up to the ward with their notes. It’s quite busy here most of the time – in fact it can get hectic – but there’s a great atmosphere and it’s a really friendly place to work.

I work mainly with the other administration staff but I also deal with doctors and nurses as well as the patients and their relatives, so there’s plenty of variety.

The best bits
We get a lot of calls from patients about their appointments and at first I was worried I wouldn’t be able to deal with it. But I have had plenty of support and now I feel confident sorting out their queries. It’s nice to know you’ve helped someone.

“It’s busy here but there’s a great atmosphere and it’s a really friendly place to work.”
Clinical support services

Name
Luke Watson

Job title
Nurse cadet, Gateshead NHS Foundation Trust

Entry route
Healthcare assistant apprenticeship

“I love watching a person progress and improve from admission to discharge.”

How I got into the role
Initially I was interested in being a paramedic after getting my BTEC National Diploma in Sport and Exercise Sciences, but decided to try and get some healthcare experience. I started a healthcare assistant apprenticeship and worked in A&E for 13 months, which gave me a feel for the health sector. I loved every minute!

I decided to pursue a career in nursing and when a new cadetship course started at the trust, I jumped at the chance to get a place as a way to acquire the necessary qualifications and experience to apply for university. The cadetship has allowed me to gain enough UCAS points to apply for a degree in adult nursing, while keeping my practical skills ‘sharp’.

What I do
I help lots of different healthcare professionals with their daily tasks: everyone from nurses, doctors and healthcare assistants to porters. I’ve worked in many different departments and wards around the hospital – medical, haematology, gastroenterology, surgical, orthopaedics, palliative care, and community and day case departments - which means I’ve cared for many different types of patients.

The best bits
Having a direct influence on a person’s health is very fulfilling and I love watching a person progress and improve from admission to discharge. I build a rapport with both the patients and their families, so we can help improve their health, living environment and social circumstances.

Looking ahead, I hope to qualify and register as an adult nurse and progress up the career ladder to a charge nurse role.

Corporate services

Name
Lydia Wager

Job title
Income and costing accountancy assistant, Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust

Entry route
Extended diploma in business studies

“Being able to relate my work to helping someone in the hospital is the driving force for me.”

How I got into the role
I did a course in business studies, book-keeping and accounts part time while working as a hotel housekeeper and waitress, and decided a finance career was for me.

I chose the apprenticeship route because I knew it would provide a gateway to an NHS career. It was an amazing opportunity to gain workplace experience, while achieving a qualification and earning a salary. I won a Learndirect Award for Intermediate Apprentice of the Year in 2013.

I was lucky enough to get a management accounts and income clerk apprenticeship at Royal Cornwall Hospital and then a band 2 permanent role in the income and costing team. I was responsible for preparing the monthly accounts and raising invoices, providing administrative support, inputting, retrieving and collecting confidential data.

What I do
I’m currently working in a band 4 role, covering a colleague’s maternity leave as income and costing accountancy assistant.

Working in finance, the months come around in a similar routine and everyone in the team has their own monthly tasks. I am responsible for costing the non-Payment by Results data each month, which are the ‘high cost’ elements of a patient’s attendance at the trust. I also prepare data for invoices for care provided to patients from outside Cornwall. In short, most of my job is preparing data so that our commissioners (the people who ‘buy’ services from the trust for their patients) pay us each month!

The best bits
I love working in a team but working independently on my own tasks is also very fulfilling. Being able to relate my work to helping someone in the hospital is the driving force for me, and I know that, every day, I am developing a successful career at the same time as making a positive difference.
Domestic services

Name
Lynn Keeling
Job title
Catering zone supervisor,
Wirral Hospital NHS Trust
Entry route
General catering assistant

“If I can help out by talking with the patient, it frees up the nurses to get on with other things.”

How I got into the role
When I was promoted from being a catering assistant, I knew it would be a bit of a challenge but there was no way I was going to turn it down. My new job came about when we moved to a new way of working — we now serve the food ourselves on the wards instead of the nurses. It’s much more hygienic and it saves nurses a lot of time. We had to find our way a bit to see what worked best and it’s turned out brilliantly. I think all of us — managers, supervisors and staff — have done really well.

The best bits
For me, though, the best part is getting that elderly lady the egg roll that she really wants or some toast for a patient who’s quite ill and just doesn’t fancy anything else.

What I do
I’m in charge of 18 staff serving two hot meals a day. I supervise the food service and deal with any queries or problems. I check the food trolleys as they go up to the wards, oversee the cleaning and make sure we’ve got our full stock of cleaning materials, uniforms, cutlery and crockery.

Estates

Name
Chris Willis
Job title
Patient environment manager,
Cambridge University Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust
Entry route
Joined as a qualified electrician

“I was given all the encouragement and financial support I needed.”

How I got into the role
As a qualified electrician, I took the decision to join the NHS as a maintenance assistant because of the excellent career potential on offer. It has turned out to be a great decision!

I had the satisfaction of being promoted twice — to electrical craftsman and then to day technician. I was given all the encouragement and financial support I needed. While I was a day technician, my employer paid for me first to study part time for a BTEC in electrical and electronic engineering and then for an HNC/HND.

The best bits
With the support of the NHS, I have made great progress and I intend to go even further. I could go on to do an MBA in engineering management or choose to join the electrical systems design team or move into project management.

At the moment, I think I’ll probably do the MBA with the aim of becoming an operations or estates manager, but I haven’t quite decided yet. The field is wide open to me.

How I got into the role
When I was promoted from being a catering assistant, I knew it would be a bit of a challenge but there was no way I was going to turn it down. My new job came about when we moved to a new way of working — we now serve the food ourselves on the wards instead of the nurses. It’s much more hygienic and it saves nurses a lot of time. We had to find our way a bit to see what worked best and it’s turned out brilliantly. I think all of us — managers, supervisors and staff — have done really well.

The best bits
For me, though, the best part is getting that elderly lady the egg roll that she really wants or some toast for a patient who’s quite ill and just doesn’t fancy anything else.

What I do
I’m in charge of 18 staff serving two hot meals a day. I supervise the food service and deal with any queries or problems. I check the food trolleys as they go up to the wards, oversee the cleaning and make sure we’ve got our full stock of cleaning materials, uniforms, cutlery and crockery.
How I got into the role

I was working as a carer in the community but was keen to move to a permanent position and thought that portering was the perfect way into an NHS career. I’m motivated and a natural team player which is an important quality in this job. I love meeting the patients and always have their best interests at heart.

What I do

Every day I take and collect patients to and from X-ray or CT scanning and bring them back to their ward or department. Patients are in either a wheelchair or a hospital bed. I also deliver necessary medication and escort patients within the X-ray department if that’s what they need.

I have been working as a porter at the trust for the last six months or so and am learning new things every day. I am also signed up to do an NVQ level 2 in portering and this trust was one of the first to implement the course.

The job’s definitely challenging sometimes, particularly when patients need persuading to go for certain procedures. We have to liaise with other departments to ensure that all the information we have is correct, that the patients are well enough to be transported, and that we’re taking them for the correct procedure at the correct time.

The best bits

In any one day, I encounter a huge variety of people! It’s very rewarding when my team leader hears from staff and patients to say how pleased they are with the service I’m providing. I get to know the patients and vice versa; just having a chat and a laugh can make them feel better. It makes you feel good to know your hard work is appreciated and that you make a difference to the patients.

If you enjoy meeting different people and can relate to and sympathise with them, NHS portering could be the job for you.
Getting started in the wider healthcare team

There is a tremendous variety of opportunity within the wider healthcare team. Whatever role you choose, or level you start at, you will get all the support you need to develop your career. Whatever your qualifications and previous experience, you can learn on the job and you can study if you choose.

Many employers fund special training schemes, such as apprenticeships, traineeships or cadet schemes. Sometimes these are in specific areas, such as business administration for example. On other schemes, you move around to gain experience of different work areas. You’ll usually get the chance to work towards national qualifications and, by training while you work in this way, you earn as you learn.

Your employer will also support your continued development and may fund further training and study.

Some employers offer work placements to help you decide what’s right for you. You can find out about these by contacting the human resources department at your local healthcare provider.

If you wish to develop your career, you will receive support to do so. If you come in at a junior level, enjoy what you do and want to remain in that role, the decision is entirely yours.

Your employer will also support your continued development and may fund further training and study.

Work placements and volunteering

Doing volunteer work or arranging a work placement is the best way to find out if a role is right for you. It will give you experience of the working environment, show you the kind of work you would be doing and the people you would be helping, and let you talk with people who are already doing the job.

The number and type of work placements or volunteering opportunities available vary, depending on where you are in the country. Experience doesn’t always need to be gained in the NHS either, so think about the independent health sector, charities and other organisations where healthcare is provided as a way of gaining experience.

On the next page you will find more information on starting your career in each of the six areas of the wider healthcare team.

Remember that if you’re applying for a role either directly in the NHS or in an organisation that provides NHS services, you may be asked to show how you think the values of the NHS Constitution apply in your everyday work. Find out more at www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/nhsconstitution and www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/6Cs

For more information about opportunities in your area, get in touch with your local trust or healthcare provider or voluntary organisations to find out what is available. You can also find more information on gaining experience at www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/experience

For more information about careers in the wider healthcare team, visit www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles

Speak to your careers adviser, call our helpline on 0345 60 60 655 or email advice@healthcareers.nhs.uk

There is a tremendous variety of opportunity within the wider healthcare team. Whatever role you choose, or level you start at, you will get all the support you need to develop your career. Whatever your qualifications and previous experience, you can learn on the job and you can study if you choose.

Many employers fund special training schemes, such as apprenticeships, traineeships or cadet schemes. Sometimes these are in specific areas, such as business administration for example. On other schemes, you move around to gain experience of different work areas. You’ll usually get the chance to work towards national qualifications and, by training while you work in this way, you earn as you learn.

Your employer will also support your continued development and may fund further training and study.

Some employers offer work placements to help you decide what’s right for you. You can find out about these by contacting the human resources department at your local healthcare provider.

If you wish to develop your career, you will receive support to do so. If you come in at a junior level, enjoy what you do and want to remain in that role, the decision is entirely yours.

Your employer will also support your continued development and may fund further training and study.

Work placements and volunteering

Doing volunteer work or arranging a work placement is the best way to find out if a role is right for you. It will give you experience of the working environment, show you the kind of work you would be doing and the people you would be helping, and let you talk with people who are already doing the job.

The number and type of work placements or volunteering opportunities available vary, depending on where you are in the country. Experience doesn’t always need to be gained in the NHS either, so think about the independent health sector, charities and other organisations where healthcare is provided as a way of gaining experience.

On the next page you will find more information on starting your career in each of the six areas of the wider healthcare team.

Remember that if you’re applying for a role either directly in the NHS or in an organisation that provides NHS services, you may be asked to show how you think the values of the NHS Constitution apply in your everyday work. Find out more at www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/nhsconstitution and www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/6Cs

For more information about opportunities in your area, get in touch with your local trust or healthcare provider or voluntary organisations to find out what is available. You can also find more information on gaining experience at www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/experience

For more information about careers in the wider healthcare team, visit www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles

Speak to your careers adviser, call our helpline on 0345 60 60 655 or email advice@healthcareers.nhs.uk
Administration

For some administration roles, such as typist or telephonist, you will need certain training for the job. In other roles, such as receptionist, a sympathetic and friendly manner and a willingness to learn might be more important.

Employers sometimes want a formal qualification. However, requirements vary and there is a lot of flexibility.

You might start as a clerk and go on to become a medical secretary or move across into one of the corporate areas, such as human resources. With further study and ability you could then progress into management.

Apprenticeships in administrative roles are often available.

Clinical support services

For these roles, personal qualities, such as a mature attitude, commitment and motivation, are the most important requirements. It will help if you can demonstrate your enthusiasm by having done some relevant voluntary work or work experience. Some employers ask for a good general level of education, particularly literacy and numeracy skills.

The clinical support worker route is an excellent way for people to work in the clinical and science areas of health without any formal qualifications. It is also a great way to progress through experience and training, both on and off the job, which could include studying for vocational qualifications or, at more senior levels such as assistant practitioner, a foundation degree. With aptitude and study, it is possible to qualify as a healthcare professional and go even further up the career ladder.

Apprenticeships in clinical support, therapy support, healthcare support and related roles are often available.

Corporate services

There is a wide range of roles in corporate services and it is possible for you to join the health sector at any level. For some of the professional roles, such as chaplain or architect, there is a clear training path leading to a recognised professional qualification. Here, you may have already chosen your career and qualified before opting to move into health. If so, you will come in at a more senior level, either staying within your specialism or progressing to other high-level positions within the health service.

To work in health play, you’ll need to study for a foundation degree with a healthcare play specialism.

Apprenticeships are often available in areas such as finance, human resources and sometimes in nursery work, with opportunities to study part time for professional qualifications.

Domestic services

If you have a relevant qualification in cooking, food hygiene, hotel services or cleaning science, you could join as a chef, head chef, department supervisor or manager. However, employers may accept proven ability and experience instead of formal qualifications.

You could also join as an assistant with no qualifications and then move up into a supervisory or management role. With experience and training you could progress from laundry assistant to laundry services manager or housekeeper, for example.
**Estates services**

Some jobs, for example electrician, plumber or carpenter, need a City and Guilds certificate or vocational qualification. You might also need a vocational qualification to be a gardener or member of the grounds staff, depending on your particular employer.

You could start as an unqualified assistant and work towards your craft qualification. Further experience and part time study could then lead you to a BTEC, HNC/HND or higher-level vocational qualification, which would make you eligible for a post as a technician. You might then set your sights higher – for example, a degree or vocational qualification level 4, and then a postgraduate qualification, which could lead to chartered engineer status (masters degree in engineering or vocational qualification level 5), and a senior post as an estates manager.

**Support services**

As with corporate services, the wide range of positions in support services brings opportunities at all levels. Drivers require experience and an appropriate licence, while fire safety officers are usually former firefighters who have had extra training.

Audiovisual technicians need a relevant City and Guilds qualification or the equivalent.

You could work in sterile/decontamination services with no formal qualifications and go on to train as a technician. You could then study for a professional qualification.

For roles such as porter or security officer, formal qualifications are not required, as you will be given training either on or off the job. Many trusts now offer opportunities up to vocational qualification level 2 or 3. Many of these areas of work offer progression into supervisory and management positions, while developing professional qualifications in the appropriate areas. Personal qualities such as a calm, reassuring manner, and a willingness to learn and be part of a team are important.

If you’ve decided you’d like to work in this area, it’s important to start planning ahead straight away. Find out as much information as you can about the qualifications you need and the opportunities that are available.

If you need a degree, UCAS provides information about which universities offer which courses. Individual universities will be able to tell you what they look for from applicants. For example, getting some relevant experience is an excellent way of showing your commitment and enthusiasm.

If you are already working but thinking about a change of career, consider volunteering in your spare time. This is a great way to find out if you like the work, and can lead to a more permanent position.

Whatever position you’re in now, the Health Careers service can help. Call us on 0345 60 60 655, email advice@healthcareers.nhs.uk or visit our website at www.healthcareers.nhs.uk

To search for jobs, go to www.jobs.nhs.uk, and for more information about professional bodies and all other contacts, visit the role page for the roles you are considering via www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles

For job vacancies with other health organisations, visit www.gov.uk/jobsearch

For job vacancies in local government, visit www.lgjobs.com
### Fulfil your potential

The NHS is committed to offering development and learning opportunities for all full time and part-time staff. If you work for the NHS, no matter where you start, you’ll have access to extra training and be given every chance to progress within the organisation. You’ll receive an annual personal review and development plan to support your career progression.

You will also be encouraged to extend your range of skills and knowledge and take on new responsibilities through the Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF). The KSF is available on the NHS Employers website: [www.nhsemployers.org/SimplifiedKSF](http://www.nhsemployers.org/SimplifiedKSF)

Other organisations that provide healthcare and work to prevent ill health will offer similar development opportunities and the chance to review your work. It’s a good idea to discuss career development with any employer you are considering.

---

### What should you do now?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where are you now?</th>
<th>What should you do now?</th>
<th>Who can help?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Studying for your GCSEs | **As GCSEs, plus:**  
   - Check what your likely exam grades/results will be.  
   - Explore routes into your chosen career – will you need a degree or other qualification before you join, or will the NHS train you on the job?  
   - Are there any particular skills or experience that will improve your chances of getting into your chosen career?  
   - Enquire about volunteering or work experience.  
   - Find out if you need any specific A-levels, or equivalent qualifications.  
   - Consider the option of an apprenticeship.  | Subject teachers  
   Your careers adviser  
   Professional bodies  
   Health Careers  
   National Careers Service |
| Studying for A-levels or another course at your school or a local college | **As A-levels**  
   - If you need to study a particular degree, investigate which universities offer it.  
   - Investigate any further qualifications you might need for your chosen role.  
   - Search the NHS Jobs website at [www.jobs.nhs.uk](http://www.jobs.nhs.uk) and speak to your local trust to get an idea of current vacancies.  
   - Consider the option of an apprenticeship.  | University careers service  
   Health Careers  
   Professional bodies  
   NHS Jobs  
   National Careers Service |
| At university | **As A-levels**  
   - Find out if you will need to retrain before you apply for new roles or if the NHS will train you while you are working.  | Health Careers  
   Jobcentre Plus  
   Professional bodies  
   NHS Jobs  
   UCAS  
   National Careers Service |
| Looking for a new career | **As A-levels, plus:**  
   - Find out if you will need to retrain before you apply for new roles or if the NHS will train you while you are working.  | Health Careers  
   Jobcentre Plus  
   Professional bodies  
   NHS Jobs  
   UCAS  
   National Careers Service |
Benefits of working in the NHS

If you work in the NHS, you will enjoy one of the most competitive and flexible benefits packages offered by any employer in the UK and a wealth of opportunities to develop your career. You will join one of the country’s most respected organisations and one which has the values of compassionate care and staff wellbeing at its very heart.

If you work in the private or voluntary sectors or another public sector organisation, your pay and benefits will vary depending on your employer.

Your pay in the NHS

Most wider healthcare jobs are covered by the Agenda for Change (AfC) pay scales. This pay system covers all staff except doctors, dentists and the most senior managers. The NHS job evaluation system determines a points score, which is used to match jobs to pay bands and determine levels of basic salary. Each pay band has a number of pay points. Staff will normally progress to the next pay point annually until they reach the top of the pay band.

The wide range of career opportunities in the wider healthcare team is reflected in the pay and rewards available. For example, finance assistants or porters are typically paid at AfC band 1, HR advisers at band 5 with managerial posts attracting higher bandings. Other examples of roles in this work area with typical pay bands, include medical secretary (bands 3-4), linen/launder supervisor (band 3) and estate maintenance worker (bands 3-5).

For more information on pay bands and the most up-to-date salary information in your chosen career, visit www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/pay

One of the UK’s best pension schemes

The NHS Pension Scheme is one of the most generous in the UK. Every new employee automatically becomes a member, unless you choose to opt out.

Other employment benefits for NHS staff

Everyone employed under the NHS ‘Agenda for Change’ pay system is entitled to:

- a standard working week of 37.5 hours
- holiday entitlements of 27 days per year, plus eight general and public holidays, rising to 33 days after ten years’ service
- pay enhancements to reward out-of-hours, shift and overtime working
- career and pay progression based on the application of knowledge and skills
- annual personal development review to support career aspirations
- occupational health services
- study leave for sponsored courses

Many of these benefits apply across the whole of the NHS, although local organisations may offer additional benefits, such as cycle to work schemes and nurseries. Many local shops, restaurants and services offer discounts to health staff too, including most gyms and leisure centres. Health Service Discounts is an employee benefit provider for many NHS organisations and offers discounts and deals for NHS staff on shopping, holidays and financial services from well-known brands: www.healthservicediscounts.com

Get more information about the benefits and opportunities offered by the NHS at www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/payandbenefits

Health and wellbeing at work and your work-life balance

The NHS is committed to helping staff to stay well, including serving healthier food, promoting physical activity, reducing stress, and providing health checks covering mental health and musculoskeletal problems.

The NHS will help you combine your work with commitments in your everyday life and at different stages of your career – whether you’re studying for a new qualification, raising a family or have other responsibilities.

The size and diversity of the NHS means we can offer you a range of flexible working and retirement opportunities. Part time roles and job-share opportunities are often available, as well as term-time only, evening and weekend positions. Many people take an extended break to look after young children or other dependants who need special care, or to study full time.

As well as advice and support for people looking after sick or elderly relatives, the NHS provides a range of childcare services for employees, including:

- nursery care
- after-school and breakfast clubs
- holiday play schemes
- emergency care

You can find more information on health and well-being at work at www.nhsemployers.org/healthyworkplaces
Health career framework

This health career framework has been designed to improve career development and job satisfaction for NHS employees. It encourages individuals to learn new skills and take on extra responsibilities that enable them to progress within the organisation. Many people take on additional responsibility within their own area, while others retrain and move in to different roles.

The real-life story on page 29 describes how Chris Willis has progressed within the wider healthcare team. You can follow his career path in the white boxes on the diagram below, alongside other potential paths in the different areas of the NHS. The diagram below gives an illustration of a variety of health careers and where they may fit on the health career framework. It is not exhaustive; details on other careers can be found in the relevant booklets and on the Health Careers website.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial entry level jobs</th>
<th>Support workers</th>
<th>Senior healthcare assistants/technicians</th>
<th>Assistant practitioners/Associate practitioners</th>
<th>Practitioners</th>
<th>Senior practitioners/specialist practitioners</th>
<th>Advanced practitioners</th>
<th>Consultant practitioners</th>
<th>More senior staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ambulance service team</td>
<td>Patient transport service driver</td>
<td>Emergency medical dispatcher</td>
<td>Control room duty officer</td>
<td>Paramedic</td>
<td>Specialist paramedic</td>
<td>Advanced paramedic</td>
<td>Consultant paramedic</td>
<td>Clinical director of service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allied health professionals</td>
<td>Therapy clinical support worker</td>
<td>Occupational therapy rehabilitation assistant</td>
<td>Assistant practitioner in occupational therapy</td>
<td>Occupational therapist</td>
<td>Senior occupational therapist</td>
<td>Advanced occupational therapist (team leader)</td>
<td>Consultant occupational therapist</td>
<td>Director of therapies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental care team</td>
<td>Dental nurse</td>
<td>Student dental technician</td>
<td>Assistant dental technician</td>
<td>Dental technician</td>
<td>Senior dental technologist</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare science</td>
<td>Healthcare assistant (audiology)</td>
<td>Newborn hearing screener</td>
<td>Critical care technologist</td>
<td>Biomedical scientist</td>
<td>Senior biomedical scientist</td>
<td>Specialist respiratory physiologist</td>
<td>Consultant clinical scientist (medical physics)</td>
<td>Director of regional genetics services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health informatics</td>
<td>Healthcare assistant</td>
<td>Support desk assistant</td>
<td>Medical records clerk</td>
<td>Clinical coder</td>
<td>Librarian</td>
<td>Systems analyst</td>
<td>Clinical researcher</td>
<td>Pictures archiving communication manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>Healthcare assistant (maternity)</td>
<td>Maternity support worker</td>
<td></td>
<td>Midwife</td>
<td>Community midwife</td>
<td>Head of midwifery</td>
<td>Consultant midwife</td>
<td>Director of maternity services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwifery</td>
<td>Nurse cadet</td>
<td>Healthcare assistant (nursing)</td>
<td>Senior healthcare assistant</td>
<td>Community care assistant</td>
<td>Neonatal nurse</td>
<td>Community psychiatric nurse</td>
<td>District nurse (team manager)</td>
<td>Nurse consultant in stroke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>Porter</td>
<td>Maintenance assistant: with general duties as part of a team to maintain hospital environments and equipment</td>
<td></td>
<td>Clearance: training and repairing electrical equipment and repairing other hospital electrical fixtures and fittings</td>
<td>Day technician: installing and servicing a range of electrical equipment</td>
<td>Patient environment manager: planning and maintaining safe patient environments and equipment</td>
<td>Chaplain</td>
<td>Head of estates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

42 Careers in the wider healthcare team