

# Roles and Careers in Health and Social Care

A guide to future careers.



Developing people  
for health and  
healthcare

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**Aim**

The aim of this guide is to provide information about potential health and social care roles and career pathways.

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**ROLES**

There are over [350 careers in the NHS](#). Each person in the NHS works for patients, their families, carers and the public but everybody contributes in different ways. The NHS has one of the most competitive and supportive benefits packages offered anywhere in the UK, including the length of the working week, holidays, careers progression, and pension scheme.

**Everyone counts**

We maximise our resources for the benefit of the whole community, and make sure nobody is excluded, discriminated against or left behind. We accept that some people need more help, that difficult decisions have to be taken – and that when we waste resources we waste opportunities for others. .

**Compassion**

We ensure that compassion is central to the care we provide and respond with humanity and kindness to each person's pain, distress, anxiety or need. We search for the things we can do, however small, to give comfort and relieve suffering. We find time for patients, their families and carers, as well as those we work alongside. We do not wait to be asked, because we care.

**Respect and dignity**

We value every person – whether patient, their families or carers, or staff – as an individual, respect their aspirations and commitments in life, and seek to understand their priorities, needs, abilities and limits. We take what others have to say seriously. We are honest and open about our point of view and what we can and cannot do.

**Working together for patients**

Patients come first in everything we do. We fully involve patients, staff, families, carers, communities, and professionals inside and outside the NHS. We put the needs of patients and communities before organisational boundaries. We speak up when things go wrong.

**Commitment to quality of care**

We earn the trust placed in us by insisting on quality and striving to get the basics of quality of care – safety, effectiveness and patient experience – right every time. We encourage and welcome feedback from patients, families, carers, staff and the public. We use this to improve the care we provide and build on our successes.

**Improving lives**

We strive to improve health and wellbeing and people's experiences of the NHS. We cherish excellence and professionalism wherever we find it – in the everyday things that make people's lives better as much as in clinical practice, service improvements and innovation. We recognise that all have a part to play in making ourselves, patients and our communities healthier.

**Registered Nurse****The role****1. Adult nurses:**

Adult nurses learn how to observe patients and assess their needs in order to plan and deliver the most appropriate care for them. Adult nurses work with adults of all ages suffering from acute and chronic physical health conditions. Adult nurses work in hospital wards, the community, the prison service, and the police.

More information can be found here: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing/roles-nursing/adult-nurse>

**2. Children's nurses:**

Child nurses care for children of every age, from new-born to adolescent. Children's nurses must consider not only the care and support needed by the child but also the care and support required by the wider family, including parents and carers. Children have very specific health needs and children's nurses must work closely with parents and guardians to ensure the impact of illness on the child's development is minimised. Children's nurses work in hospitals, the community, day care centres and child health clinics.

More information can be found here: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing/roles-nursing/childrens-nurse>

**3. Mental health nurse:**

Mental health nurses promote and support a person's recovery; enabling the person to have more involvement and control over their condition. Mental health nurses build effective relationships with the people in their care, and their

**Registered Nurse**

wider family. These effective relationships build trust that enables individuals to better understand their situation and results in the best possible outcome. Mental health nurses are usually based in hospitals or in the community (e.g. GP surgeries, prisons, and residential care).

More information can be found here: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing/roles-nursing/mental-health-nurse>

#### 4. Learning disability nurse;

Learning disability nurses provide specialist healthcare and support to individuals with a learning disability and their families. Learning disability nurses work across the whole life span in both health and care settings. The main roles of learning disabilities nurses are improving or maintaining a person's physical and mental health, minimising barriers and supporting the person to live a fulfilling life often by helping people to learn the skills needed to find work.

More information can be found here: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing/roles-nursing/learning-disability-nurse>

Registered nurses in the NHS will usually work 37.5 hours a week and they may work shifts depending on their field and setting. Registered nurses typically start at AfC Band 5 (starting salary around £24,000).

#### Entry requirements

Registered nurses must train and study at a degree level, either through a university course or a nursing degree apprenticeship. Entry requirements vary depending on where and how the applicant studies. For most courses, A-levels are required in related subjects or equivalent experience is required.

Individuals in other healthcare roles, such as healthcare assistants, nursing associates, and assistant practitioners, can undertake further training to become a registered nurse.

#### Where can the role lead

Once qualified as a registered nurse, there are a wide range of opportunities for example specialising in a certain field, working in public health, moving into management and teaching or clinical research.

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## Nursing Associate

#### The role

Nursing associate is a relatively new role within the nursing team. Nursing associates work with healthcare assistants and registered nurses to deliver care for patients. Nursing associates bridge the gap between healthcare assistants and registered nurses.

Nursing associates work across the four fields of nursing: adult, children's, mental health, and learning disability. Nursing associates work with people of all ages in a variety of settings in health and social care.

The work varies depending on the field of nursing but will include:

- Acting in the best interests of people, putting them first and providing nursing care that is person-centred, safe, and compassionate; using their knowledge and experience to make evidence-based decisions and solve problems.
- Promoting health and preventing ill health.
- Providing compassionate, safe and effective care and support to people in a range of care settings.
- Actively collaborate and communicate to interdisciplinary teams of nurses, healthcare assistants and doctors.
- Improving the quality of care by continuously monitoring people's experience of care.
- Contributing to the provision of care for people, including those with complex needs.



Nursing Associate

The role of nursing associate is a registered role. The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) is responsible for registering and regulating nursing associates.

Nursing associates work 37.5 hours a week and they may work shifts. Nursing associates typically start at AfC Band 4 (starting salary around £21,000).

More information can be found here: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing/roles-nursing/nursing-associate>

#### Entry requirements

To begin training as a nursing associate, you'll need GCSEs grade 9 to 4 (A to C) in maths and English, or Functional Skills Level 2 in maths and English as a minimum. Applicants will also need to demonstrate their ability to study to level 5 foundation degree level and commitment to completing the Nursing Associate training.

Trainee nursing associates will either need to complete an apprenticeship or a degree. Applicants accepted onto courses through a direct application to universities will need to fund their own training.

#### Where can the role lead

The nursing associate role is employed across health and care services. Qualified nursing associates can go on to train as a registered nurse by putting their training towards a shortened nursing degree or completing a degree-level nurse apprenticeship. This is funded by their employer and will only take 2 years to complete.

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## Healthcare Assistant (HCA)

#### The role

Healthcare assistants work in hospitals or community settings, such as GP surgeries, under the guidance of a qualified healthcare professional.

The work varies depending on where you're based. In hospitals, the responsibilities of healthcare assistants will likely include:

- Washing and dressing patients
- Serving meals and helping to feed patients
- Helping people to move around
- Toileting
- Making beds
- Talking to patients and making them comfortable

Monitoring patients' conditions by taking temperatures, pulse, respirations and weight

HCAs have a lot of contact with patients but also work closely with nurses, doctors, midwives and other healthcare professionals.

HCAs need to demonstrate being caring, kind, cheerful, friendly, and be hands-on with patients. HCAs must be willing to do personal care tasks and be able to follow instructions and procedures.

Training as an HCA includes basic nursing skills and you'll work towards the Care Certificate.

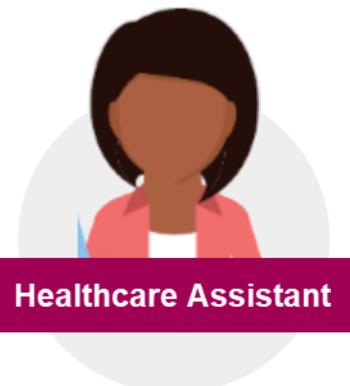
HCAs work 37.5 hours a week and they may work shifts. HCAs typically start at AfC Band 3 (starting salary around £19,000).

More information can be found here: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/clinical-support-staff/healthcare-assistant>

#### Entry requirements

There are no set entry requirements to become a HCA. Employers expect good literacy and numeracy and may ask for GCSEs (or equivalent) in English and maths. They may ask for a healthcare qualification, such as BTEC or NVQ.

Employers expect you to have some experience of healthcare or care work which can be paid or voluntary work.



Healthcare Assistant



## Assistant practitioners

### Assistant Practitioner (AP)

#### The role

Assistant practitioners are experienced staff working in support roles, alongside qualified healthcare professionals. APs have skills and experience in an area of clinical practice. They are not registered practitioners, but they have a high level of skill through their experience and training. APs work in hospitals, clinics and in the community e.g. GP surgeries.

APs work across the NHS in most departments including respiratory medicine, occupational therapy, rehabilitative care, dietetics, mental health services, emergency medicine, GP surgeries etc.

APs always work under the direction of a health professional such as a nurse, dietitian, physiotherapist, podiatrist, or biomedical scientist. APs may mentor healthcare assistants, trainee assistant practitioners and student nurses.

APs need to be:

- Caring and kind.
- Confident with using lifting equipment.
- Willing to be hands-on with patients.
- Able to follow instruction and procedures.
- Able to work in a team but use their own initiative.
- Able to explain procedures to patients.
- Careful and methodical.

APs usually follow a therapy or nursing training pathway and undertake a level 5 two-year foundation degree in health or social care; this may be available as an apprenticeship programme.

APs work 37.5 hours a week and they may work shifts. APs typically start at AfC Band 4 (starting salary around £21,000).

More information can be found here: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/clinical-support-staff/assistant-practitioner>

#### Entry requirements

To train as an AP, applicants must work in the NHS, often in a clinical support role such as a healthcare assistant, dietetic assistant, or maternity support worker.

Trainee APs have a healthcare qualification, usually at level 3.

#### Where can the role lead

With experience and training, APs can become senior assistant practitioners.

### Allied Health Professional

The allied health professions are a collection of 14 professions. Allied health professionals are an important part of the NHS team providing treatment to help rehabilitate adults and children.

More information can be found here: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals> and <https://www.england.nhs.uk/ahp/role/>



## Allied Health Professional

### The professions

#### 1. Art Therapist

Art therapy is a form of psychotherapy that uses art media as its main mode of expression and communication. Art therapists use art to help people to process and deal with complex emotions which are often too distressing to discuss with words. Art therapists work with people of all ages with a range of difficulties such as emotional or behavioural problems as well as mental health, learning or physical disabilities. In the NHS, art therapist posts typically start at a band 6 (starting salary around £30,000).

More information can be found here: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/roles-allied-health-professions/art-therapist/psychotherapist>

**Entry requirements:** To become an art therapist, individuals need professional experience in an area of therapy or health care. To practice as an art therapist, individuals have to be registered with the Health and Care Professions Council which requires completion of an approved Masters degree in art therapy. This requires a first degree in art or a relevant subject. The Masters degree can also be completed as a level 7 apprenticeship; this will require individuals to apply for an apprenticeship position with a health care provider.

#### 2. Dietitian

Dietitians translate nutritional science into practical guidance to help individuals make informed decisions about food choices. Dietitians assess, diagnose, and treat dietary and nutritional problems as well as teaching and informing the public and health professionals about diet and nutrition. Dietitians promote good health and help to prevent disease. In the NHS, dietitians usually start at a band 5 (starting salary around £24,000).

More information can be found here: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/roles-allied-health-professions/dietitian>

**Entry requirements:** To practice as a dietitian, individuals have to be registered with the Health and Care Professions Council which requires completion of an approved degree in dietetics. Courses usually require two or three A-levels, including a maths or science, along with five GCSEs (grades 9-4 (A\*-C) or equivalent).

#### 3. Drama Therapist

Drama therapy uses role play, voice work, and storytelling to help clients process and solve personal and social problems. Through the use of drama and theatre as a medium for psychological therapy, drama therapists help people to explore their feelings, providing opportunities to change by experimenting with different ways of thinking and feeling. In the NHS, drama therapist posts typically start at a band 6 (starting salary around £30,000).

More information can be found here: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/roles-allied-health-professions/dramatherapist>

**Entry requirements:** To become a drama therapist, individuals need professional experience in an area of therapy or health care. To practice as a drama therapist, individuals have to be registered with the Health and Care Professions Council. This requires completion of a postgraduate qualification in drama therapy. For entry onto an approved course, individuals will require a degree-level qualification in a related field.

#### 4. Music Therapist

Music therapy aims to facilitate change in emotional wellbeing through engagement in live musical interaction between the client and the music therapist. Music therapy is particularly powerful when the client's emotions are difficult to express verbally either because of communication difficulty (e.g. non-verbal people with autism) or a lack of words to express feelings. In the NHS, music therapist posts typically start at a band 6 (starting salary around £30,000).

More information can be found here: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/roles-allied-health-professions/music-therapist>

**Entry requirements:** Individuals need professional experience in an area of therapy or health care. To practice as a music therapist, individuals have to be registered with the Health and Care Professions Council which requires completion of an approved Masters degree in music therapy. For entry to an approved course, individuals will require a degree-level qualification in a related field.

## 5. Occupational Therapist

Occupational therapist work with people with a wide range of problems resulting from physical, mental, social, or developmental difficulties. Occupational therapists aim to support people to be able to return to usual life or optimising participation in all the things that they do. People may have difficulties carrying out everyday activities due to disability, illness, trauma, and ageing. Occupational therapists positively impact on physical and psychological health by enabling people to care for themselves, work, learn, play, and interact with others. Occupational therapists in the NHS typically start at Band 5 (starting salary around £24,000). With experience, further qualifications and training, individuals can progress to bands as high as 8A or 8B (salary around £50,000).

More information can be found here: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/roles-allied-health-professions/occupational-therapist>

**Entry requirements:** To become an occupational therapist, individuals need to complete an undergraduate degree. Entry requirements differ depending on the university but usually consist of two or three A-levels, along with five GCSEs or equivalent. People who already have an undergraduate degree can complete a 2-years Masters accelerated programme.

## 6. Operating Department Practitioner

Operating department practitioners support patients of all ages during each stage of a person's operation: anaesthetic, surgical, and recovery. Operating department practitioners are responsible for providing specialised care to the patient as well as preparing the operating theatre and providing the link between the surgical team and other parts of the hospital. In the NHS, operating department practitioner posts typically start at a band 5 (starting salary around £24,000).

More information can be found here: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/roles-allied-health-professions/operating-department-practitioner>

**Entry requirements:** To become an operating department practitioner, individuals will need to train and study at degree or diploma level. Entry requirements will vary dependent on where individuals study but will usually require a minimum of five GCSEs at grades 9-4 (A\*-C) or equivalent plus A-level qualifications. A degree standard apprenticeship has also been approved.

## 7. Orthoptist

Orthoptists specialise in diagnosing and managing eye conditions that largely affect eye movements, visual development or the way the eyes work together. Orthoptists have a very varied role working with different patients and teams to provide high quality healthcare. Orthoptists usually start on band 5 (starting salary around £24,000) in the NHS.

More information can be found here: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/roles-allied-health-professions/orthoptist>

**Entry requirements:** To become an orthoptist, individuals need to train and study for an undergraduate degree. Entry requirements will vary depending on the location of study but usually are at least 5 GCSEs (grade 9-4 (A\*-C)) plus A-levels or equivalent.

## 8. Osteopath

Osteopaths view the structure and function of the body as integrated entities to diagnose and treat a wide variety of medical conditions. Osteopaths use non-invasive treatments such as massage and stretching to treat patients. Osteopaths mainly work as self-employed practitioners in private practice but there are opportunities to work in the NHS. The average income for an osteopath is £46,500.

More information can be found here: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/roles-allied-health-professions/osteopath>

**Entry requirements:** All osteopaths must be registered with the General Osteopathic Council to be able to practice in the UK. Osteopaths are trained to degree level attaining either a Bachelor's or Masters of Science. Courses typically last 4 to 5 years with a combination of academia, research, and over 1000 hours of hands-on patient facing clinical training. Usually, A-levels and GCSE are required to gain entry onto the course.

## 9. Paramedic

Paramedics are the senior ambulance service healthcare professionals at an accident or medical emergency. Paramedics are responsible for assessing patients' conditions and then giving essential treatment. Paramedics start at band 5 (salary around £24,000), progressing to band 6 after two years of experience (salary around £30,000).

More information can be found here: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/roles-allied-health-professions/paramedic>

**Entry requirements:** To practise as a paramedic, individuals must be registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). To register this requires successful completion of an approved qualification in paramedic science. This can be completed as a full-time degree or a degree-standard apprenticeship. Entry requirements will include two or three A levels, including a science, along with 5 GCSEs.

## 10. Physiotherapist

Physiotherapists work with people to restore movement by using exercise, massage, and other physical techniques. Physiotherapists see human movement as central to the health and wellbeing of individuals. People may have movement issues caused by illness, injury, disability, or ageing. As well as treating individuals, physiotherapists also promote wellbeing. Most physiotherapists work within the NHS, starting at band 5 (starting salary around £24,000) with opportunities to progress with more experience.

More information can be found here: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/ambulance-service-team/roles-ambulance-service/paramedic/entry-requirements-and-training-paramedic>

**Entry requirements:** To practice as a physiotherapist, individuals must be registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). This requires completion of an approved degree level qualification in physiotherapy. This may be a full or part-time course or a degree apprenticeship in physiotherapy. To get onto a physiotherapy degree course, individuals usually need two or three A-Levels, including a biological science and/or PE, along with five GCSEs (grades 9-4 (A\*-C)) or equivalent.

## 11. Podiatrist

Podiatrists provide essential assessment, evaluation and foot care to patients, many of which fall into high risk categories such as patients with diabetes or cerebral palsy where foot care is vital to ensure patient wellbeing. In the NHS, starting salary will be band 5 (around £24,000).

More information can be found here: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/roles-allied-health-professions/podiatrist>

**Entry requirements:** To become a podiatrist you'll need to train and study at a degree level. Entry requirements vary depending on where the individual chooses to study but usually require two or three A-Levels, including a science, and at least 5 GCSEs (Grades 9-4 (A\*-C)) or equivalent.

## 12. Prosthetist/orthotist

Prosthetists provide an artificial replacement for patients who are missing a limb whereas orthotists provide a range of aids to correct problems or deformities in people's nerves, muscles, or bones. Both treat patients with a wide range of conditions including military personnel with amputations, people with diabetes, and people who have had strokes. In the NHS, prosthetists and orthotists typically start on band 5 (starting salary around £24,000). Many prosthetists and orthotists often work in private practice as well.

More information can be found here: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/roles-allied-health-professions/prosthetistorthotist>



**Entry requirements:** To become a prosthodontist or orthotist, individuals will need to train and study at a degree level; either through a full-time course or a degree apprenticeship. For full-time courses, entry requirements will vary depending on the university but likely will require two or three A-levels plus at least five GCSEs (Grades 9-4 (A\*-C)).

### 13. Radiographer

There are two different types of radiographers; diagnostic and therapeutic. Diagnostic radiographers use a range of techniques including X-ray to diagnose an injury or disease. Diagnostic imaging is a component of the majority of care pathways. Therapeutic radiographers play a vital role in the treatment of cancer as they are the only health professionals qualified to plan and deliver radiotherapy whilst also providing care and support for patients throughout their treatment.

More information can be found here: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/roles-allied-health-professions/diagnostic-radiographer> and <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/roles-allied-health-professions/therapeutic-radiographer>

**Entry requirements:** To train to become a radiographer, individuals will need study for an undergraduate degree or postgraduate diploma. Entry requirements will vary depending on different universities but usually will require two or three A-levels plus at least five GCSEs (Grades 9-4 (A\*-C)).

### 14. Speech and Language Therapist

Speech and language therapists work with both children and adults to help patients overcome or adapt to disorders of speech, language, communication, or swallowing. Patients range from children whose speech is slow to develop to older people whose ability to speak has been impaired by illness or injury such as a stroke. Speech and language therapists also work with patients who have difficulty swallowing or eating. Speech and language therapists in the NHS typically start at band 5 (starting salary around £24,000) but can also work in private practice.

More information can be found here: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/roles-allied-health-professions/speech-and-language-therapist>

**Entry requirements:** To become a speech and language therapist, individuals will need to train and study at degree or diploma level. Entry requirements will vary dependent on where individuals study but will usually require a minimum of five GCSEs at grades 9-4 (A\*-C) or equivalent plus A-level qualifications. A degree standard apprenticeship has also been approved.

## Doctor

### The role

A career in medicine offers people the chance to improve patients' lives. Doctors work in all areas of health care including:



Doctor

- Emergency medicine: Doctors working in emergency medicine carry out the immediate assessment and treatment of patients with serious and life-threatening illness and injuries. Emergency doctors often have limited information about the patients they treat and have to rely heavily on their clinical skills to prioritise tasks to save their patients.
- General practice: GPs treat all common medical conditions and refer patients to hospitals or other medical services for urgent and specialist treatment. GPs approach the health of a person as a whole; combining physical, psychological, and social aspects of care. GPs are the first point of contact for most patients, playing an important role in looking after patients in their homes and within the community rather than a hospital setting.
- Paediatrics: Paediatricians are doctors who work with infants, children, and young people. Their patients can have a wide range of health conditions meaning the work is highly varied.
- Pathology: pathology provides an understanding of the process of disease. A pathology career offers a

- Psychiatry: mental illness is extremely common and ranks as one of the nation's biggest health problems. Psychiatric doctors work with patients with mental health problems to help improve their wellbeing through a combination of medication and therapy.
- Surgery: Surgeons perform operations on patients. There is great variation between different surgical specialities which means that surgeons have to complete complex training. This makes surgery a demanding and challenging career and it is a very competitive area of medicine.

To find more information on these areas of medicine and other areas, visit <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors>.

As a doctor in training, trainee doctors earn a basic salary of £27,689 to £32,050. Doctors starting specialty training earn £37,935 to £48,075. Doctors working as a specialty doctor earn a basic salary of £40,037 to £74,661. Consultants earn a basic salary of £79,860 to £107,668 per year, depending on their length of service. The pay range for salaried GPs is £58,808 to £88,744.

### Entry requirements

The entry requirements to be accepted into a medical school are usually high, reflecting of the hard work and talent required to be a doctor. Minimum entry requirements for medicine courses are usually three As at A-level

## Psychological professions

### The role

Psychological professionals use the study of psychology to help people with mental health problems. Psychology is the study of how people think and behave. There are many different psychological professions. More information can be found here: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/psychological-professions>



Psychological professions

These are just some of the psychological professions:

### 1. Clinical Psychologist

Clinical psychologists deals with a wide range of mental and physical health problems including addiction, anxiety, depression and learning difficulties. Clinical psychologists aim to reduce distress and enhance psychological well-being by drawing on their scientific knowledge to bring about positive change. Treatments include cognitive behavioural therapy. During training, clinical psychologists are paid at band 6 (starting salary around £30,000) and after completing their training will be paid at band 7 (starting salary around £38,000).

More information can be found here: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/psychological-therapies/roles/clinical-psychologist>

**Entry requirements:** To practice as a physiotherapist, individuals must be registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).

### 2. High Intensity Therapist

High intensity therapists equip people with the techniques they need to overcome complex problems related to anxiety and depression. This most often improves people's wellbeing and quality of life. Cognitive behavioural therapy is the most common intervention offered but there are other psychological interventions such as mindfulness-based cognitive therapy. Trainees are appointed at band 6 or band 7 (starting salary around £30,000 to £38,000), depending on their psychological therapy expertise.

More information can be found here: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/psychological-therapies/roles/high-intensity-therapist>

**Entry requirements:** To become a trainee cognitive behaviour therapy high intensity therapist, individuals need to apply for a trainee post within an Improving Access to Psychological Therapies service. If successful, they will be offered a job and a training place. To be successful, individuals usually need a degree in psychology as well as experience working in a healthcare profession.

## Midwife

### The role

Midwives provide care and support to mothers-to-be and their families throughout their pregnancy, labour, and the period after a baby's birth. Midwives provide vital professional support and advice to pregnant women based on evidence to help mothers-to-be make informed choices about their options during pregnancy. Midwives are the medical experts on childbirth.

Midwifery is a challenging profession due to the emotional, physical and psychological processes of pregnancy and birth. Some pregnancies do not go to plan and midwives offer essential support and advice after stillbirths, miscarriages, terminations, and neonatal deaths. Despite this, midwifery is an incredible rewarding career as midwives are present at some of the most important moments of their patients' lives.

Midwives employed directly by the NHS will usually start on band 5 (starting salary around £24,000). There are opportunities to progress to positions at bands 6 to 8b.

More information can be found here: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/midwifery/roles-midwifery/midwife>

### Entry requirements:

To become a midwife, individuals need to train and study for an undergraduate degree or postgraduate diploma. Entry requirements differ depending on where individuals would like to work or study. There are no national minimum entry requirements for entry into pre-registration midwifery degrees as each university set their own criteria. Typically, universities require a minimum of five GCSEs at grade 9-4/A\*-C and either two or three A-levels or equivalent.

Alternatively, there is a midwifery degree apprenticeship. To get onto a degree apprenticeship, individuals will need to apply for an apprentice position with a healthcare provider. There are no nationally set entry requirements but applicants will typically need level 3 qualifications (A-level or equivalent).

### Where can the role lead

Once qualified as a midwife, there are a wide range of opportunities. Midwives can undertake further training to become a health visitor or move into management, teaching, or clinical research. Some midwives choose to specialise in a particular area of study for further qualifications.

## Porter

### The role

Porters play a vital role moving frail, and often very ill, patients between departments in comfort and safety. Porters are also responsible for transporting valuable and complex equipment in a safe and secure manner. Depending on where the porter works in the hospital, they may also be responsible for some cleaning duties and grounds work.

Porters typically start on band 2 (starting salary around £17,600).

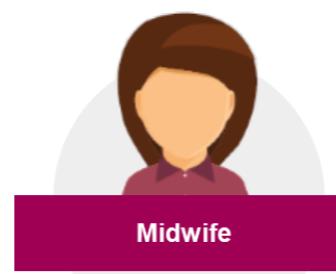
More information can be found here: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/support-services/porter>

### Entry requirements:

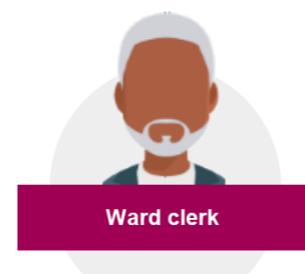
There are no formal entry requirements to be a porter with training given on the job. Porters must be physically fit and able to walk long distances as well as being friendly with good communication skills when interacting with the patients they are moving. Employers expect a good standard of numeracy and literacy and they may ask for qualifications such as GCSEs in English and Maths.

### Where can the role lead

With experience, porters can move into a more specialist role with more responsibilities and even managerial roles. Porters may also be able to move into other areas in the wider healthcare team such as estates services.



Midwife



Ward clerk

## Clerk

### The role

Clerks are part of the wider healthcare team, supporting professionals in hospitals and health centres by completing administrative work. Clerks work in hospital wards, specialist departments, GP surgeries, and health records departments. Clerks book appointments for patients, file reports, order stationary, answer the phone and may help to cover a reception area.

Clerks need to have good organisation, communication, customer service, and IT skills as well as being accurate, methodical, a good team worker and confident on the phone. Ward clerks have lots of contact with patients, their relatives and carers. This means that they have to be friendly, helpful and demonstrate compassion.

Clerks tend to start on AfC Band 2 (starting salary around £17,600). With further training and qualifications they can progress to Band 3 or 4.

More information can be found here: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/administration/clerk>

### Entry requirements:

There are no set entry requirements to become a clerk with training given on the job. Employers expect good literacy, numeracy, and IT skills and may ask for GCSEs or equivalent qualifications. All training needed to be a clerk will be given on the job.

There are often opportunities to enter administrative roles in the NHS through an apprenticeship route.

### Where can the role lead

With experience, clerks can become team leaders coordinating a team of clerks. With further experience, clerks can become managers, responsible for the staff in the department.

## Pharmacist

### The role

Pharmacists are experts in medicines and their use. Pharmacists are increasingly becoming the first port of call for patients, offering advice to patients on issues such as blood pressure, diabetes, and giving up smoking.

Pharmacists use their knowledge of medicines and the effect they have on the human body to successfully manage every type of medical condition.

Newly qualified pharmacists will usually start in the NHS on AfC Band 6 (starting salary around £30,000). With further study and training, pharmacists can progress to band 7 to 9.

More information can be found here: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/pharmacy/roles-pharmacy/pharmacist>

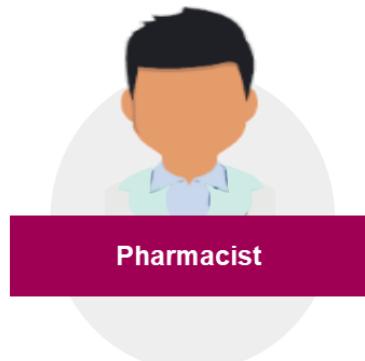
### Entry requirements:

Pharmacists must be registered with the General Pharmaceutical Council in order to practise. To register, individuals must study for an accredited Masters degree in pharmacy which takes 4 years to complete. To be accepted onto a Master's course in pharmacy, individuals generally need three A-B grade A-levels in chemistry and biology, maths or physics along with at least five GCSEs grades 9-4 (A-C).

After graduation, pharmacists must work for a 1-year pre-registration period under supervision and pass a registration exam to become a fully qualified pharmacist.

### Where can the role lead

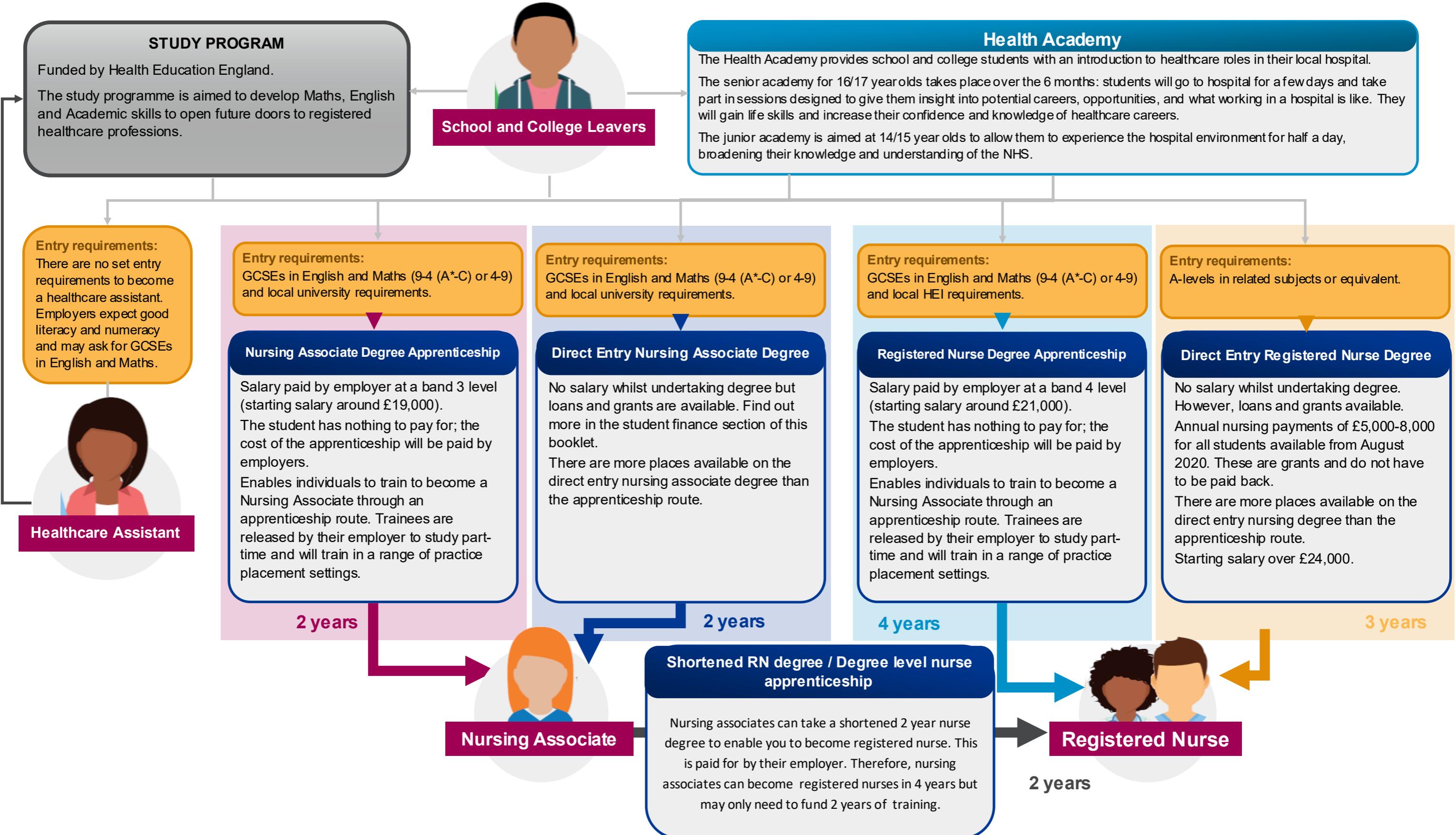
Pharmacists may specialise in a specific area or can move into management.



Pharmacist

## ROUTES INTO HEALTHCARE

### Routes into nursing careers



## Routes into psychological professions



**School and College Leavers**

### Health Academy

The Health Academy provides school and college students with an introduction to healthcare roles in their local hospital.

#### Entry requirements:

Entry requirements for psychology degree courses vary because each university sets its own entry criteria. Successful candidates will need at least two, usually three, A-levels or equivalent qualifications at level 3 plus at least 5 GCSEs at grade 9-4 (A-C). Most universities do not have specific A-levels but some either require or prefer a science subject.

Due to the high level of applicants to psychology degree, entry is competitive so high A-level grades are often expected.

Any relevant work experience is also helpful.

### BSc or BA honours degree in psychology

The first step to becoming most psychological professionals is to take a degree in psychology that is accredited by the British Psychological Society. This gives graduates Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership of the British Psychological Society. Graduate Basis for Chartered Membership is necessary to progress in training to other areas of psychology and to practise as a psychological professional.

Applications are made through UCAS.

Psychology degree courses last for three or four years. British Psychological Society-accredited courses must meet certain standards but programmes vary widely in their content so it is important to pick the right course. Student finance is available to students taking undergraduate degree. *Find out more in the Guide to Student Finance section.*

**3/4 years**

### Recognised Counselling Qualification

To become a counsellor, individuals will likely need a recognised counselling qualification. There are different types and levels of course available including at diploma, degree, and postgraduate level. These qualifications will enable individuals to join a professional register. For some counselling roles, employers may also ask for a clinical/professional qualification, such as being a registered nurse, occupational therapist or social worker.

### Accredited Increased Access to Psychological Therapy (IAPT) training course

All psychological wellbeing practitioners (PWPs) will need to complete an accredited IAPT training course. These courses typically consist of 45 days of academic work and four days supervised practice over an academic year. In training, PWPs are employed by an IAPT service. These courses are available for those who already have a degree (post-graduate route) and those without (apprenticeship route). IAPT courses are accredited by the British Psychological Society.

After two years practicing as a PWP, PWPs can go on to train as high-intensity therapists.

**Assistant psychologist**

### Postgraduate course in clinical psychology

To become a clinical psychologist, individuals need to undertake postgraduate professional training. After training, people must register with the Health and Care Professions Council to practice in the NHS.

**Clinical psychologist**

### Postgraduate course in counselling psychology

To become a counselling psychologist, individuals need to undertake postgraduate professional training. After training, people must register with the Health and Care Professions Council to practice in the NHS.

**Counselling psychologist**

### Postgraduate course in health psychology

To become a health psychologist, individuals need to undertake postgraduate professional training. After training, people must register with the Health and Care Professions Council to practice in the NHS.

**Health psychologist**

### Postgraduate diploma in cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)

To become a trainee CBT high intensity therapist, individuals must apply for a trainee post within an Improving Access to Psychological Therapies service. Once offered a post, individuals will have a job and a training place on a British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies-accredited post graduate diploma in CBT.

**High Intensity Therapist**

### Recognised training in psychotherapy

To practise as a psychotherapist, individuals need to undertake appropriate recognised training. Training usually takes four years, combining studying with intensive clinical training of patients under supervision.

**Psychotherapist**

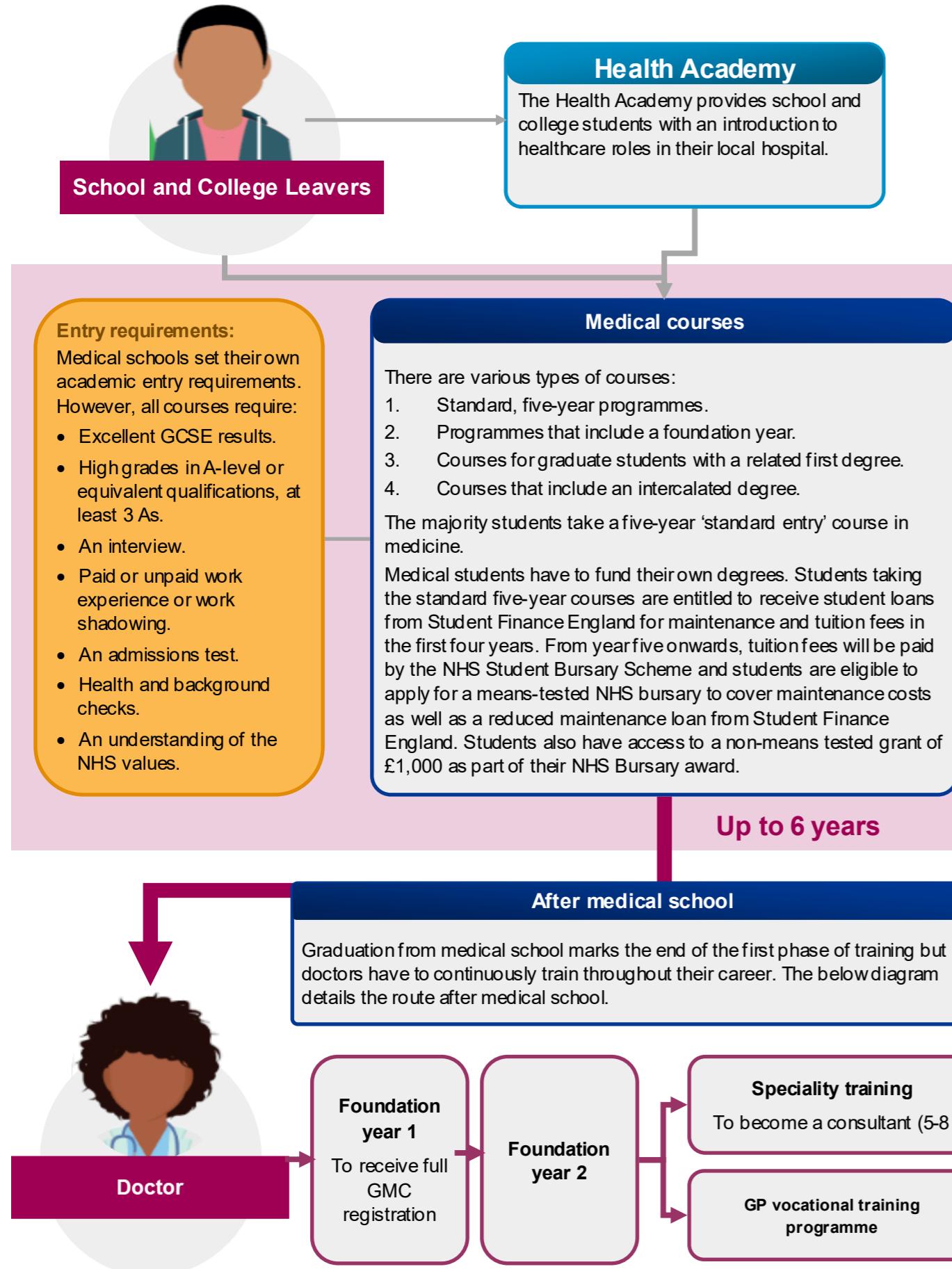
**Counsellor**

**Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner**

**Psychological professions**

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### How to become a doctor



### Degree or Apprenticeship?

Deciding what to do after school or college is a big decision. If you decide to continue with education, you need to decide whether you complete a degree or an apprenticeship. There are benefits to both routes and only you can know which is right for you. Outlined below are the benefits to help you decide.

#### Degrees

There are thousands of degree courses to choose from and this variety can be useful because it can leave your career choices more open. University study is primarily focused on education and research with less hands on experience. This means that graduates have lots of theoretical knowledge about their subject.

Individuals with degrees are highly employable and have more open career choices than apprentices if they are not certain on their career at 18 years old.

University students have to pay for their own education. However, student finance is available.

#### Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships provide an opportunity for school and college leavers to leap straight into a career whilst learning. Candidates work for an employer and attend university at the same time. Apprenticeships provide an alternative route into higher education.

All apprentices earn a salary and do not pay university tuition fees—costs are covered by the government and their employer.

Apprentices are highly employable graduates because they have hands-on experience in their chosen field.

Apprenticeships are available for the following health and care careers:

- Clinical Trials Specialist (Level 6)
- Diagnostic Radiographer (Level 6)
- Dietitian (Level 6)
- Laboratory Scientist (Level 6)
- Midwife (Level 6)
- Occupational Therapist (Level 6)
- Operating Department Practitioner (Level 6)
- Paramedic (Level 6)
- Physiotherapist (Level 6)
- Podiatrist (Level 6)
- Prosthetist / Orthotist (Level 6)
- Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner (Level 6)
- Public Health Practitioner (Level 6)
- Nursing (Level 6)
- Sonographer (Level 6)
- Speech and Language Therapist (Level 6)
- Therapeutic Radiographer (Level 6)
- Advanced Clinical Practitioner (Level 7)



## SOCIAL CARE

### What is social care?

It can be said that **healthcare need** is the treatment, control or prevention of a disease, illness, injury or disability, and the care or aftercare of a person with these needs. Whereas **social care need** is focused on providing assistance with activities of daily living, maintaining independence, social interaction, and enabling individuals to play a fuller part in society, protecting them from vulnerable situations, helping them to manage complex relationships and providing access to care homes or other supported accommodation.

Social care in England is defined as the provision of social work, personal care, protection or social support services to children or adults in need or at risk, or adults with needs arising from illness, disability, old age or poverty.

Social care is support for people to live with independence and dignity. It can include help with washing, dressing and getting people out of bed and help with medication and housework. Good social care is about keeping people well, preferably in their own homes.

Social care is becoming more important as the population is becoming older. In the next 20 years, the number of people who are over the age of 85 will double.

Local government has the main responsibility for social care including:

- Information and advice
- Assessment
- Short-term support
- Safe-guarding of children and vulnerable people
- Commissioning of care for a large range of organisations.

Adult social care is part of a complex system of services and support—including the NHS.

Types of social care and support include:

- Help at home from a paid carer.
- Meals on wheels.
- Home adaptions: changes to the home to make it safer and easier to move around and do everyday tasks. Local councils offer services to assess homes and make recommendations of changes to help people to move around their home more safely. Home adaptions include stairlifts, bath lifts, widening doorways, adding an outdoor ramp, and security.

### Roles in social care

There are lots of different careers in social care depending on interests. Everyone working in social care needs English, maths, digital and employability skills including team work and problem solving.

For social care roles, it is very important that individuals have the right values, behaviours and attitudes to work effectively with people who need care and support. Some of the values needed to work in social care include:

- **Dignity and respect:** demonstrated through actively listening to people and respecting people's right to make their own decisions.
- **Learning and reflection:** incorporating and reflecting upon feedback to learn and improve.
- **Working together:** commitment to working as part of a team to improve other's lives.
- **Commitment to quality care and support:** giving people attention, kindness, and compassion.

Information on all roles can be found here: <https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Careers-in-care/Job-roles/Job-roles-in-social-care.aspx>. Below is information about some of the roles in social care.

#### Activities worker

##### The role

Activities workers organise social activities for people who need care and support them to take part. Activities workers are usually based in care homes. The role will likely include:

- Talking to people about the type of activities that they would like to do.
- Organising activities that are tailored to the abilities of the group.
- Organising trips out.
- Assisting people to take part in activities.

More information can be found here: <https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Careers-in-care/Job-roles/Roles/Activities-worker.aspx>

##### Entry requirements

There are no required qualifications needed to work as an activities worker. Employers may ask for GCSEs in English and maths and it may be advantageous to have a Level 2 or 3 Diploma in Health and Social Care.

To be an activities worker, individuals need to demonstrate the ability to motivate people, good organisational skills, digital skills, and excellent time management.

##### Where can the role lead

Activities coordinators can complete vocational qualifications such as a Diploma in Health and Social Care or continuing professional development qualifications. There may be opportunities to progress into more senior roles relating to activities or the option to move into other social care roles.

#### Care worker

##### The role

Care workers support people with all aspects of their day-to-day living; this includes social and physical activities, personal care, mobility, and meal times. Care workers work in a variety of settings including care homes, people's own homes, or in the community.

### Entry requirements

There are no required qualifications needed to work as a care worker. Employers may ask for GCSEs in English and maths and it may be advantageous to have a Level 2 or 3 Diploma in Health and Social Care.

To be a care worker, individuals need to be able to work on their own initiative and prioritise workload, be good at listening and communication, must be able to follow policies and procedures, and have good writing skills to fill in care plans.

### Where can the role lead

Care workers can complete vocational qualifications such as a Diploma in Health and Social Care or continuing professional development qualifications. There may be opportunities to progress into more senior management roles or the option to move into other social care roles.

## **Advocacy worker**

### The role

Advocacy workers support vulnerable people to make decisions and have their voice heard when decisions are being made about their lives. Advocacy workers secure people's rights and ensure that all people are involved in their own care and support planning.

Working as an advocacy worker is a varied role which may include supporting people with decisions around housing, disability living allowance, care planning, medical decisions, financial planning, and hospital admissions. It is important that advocacy workers support individuals to express their views, wishes, and choices regarding the services they receive.

Advocacy workers provide support to a wide range of people. Local authorities must arrange access to advocacy for:

- Children who are receiving services under the Children Act 1989.
- People who lack capacity to make decisions about serious medical treatment or long term change of accommodation and have no-one appropriate to represent them.
- People who are subject to the Mental Health Act 1983.
- People thinking about using the NHS complaints procedure.
- People undergoing the care and support planning processes within the Care Act 2014.

More information can be found here: <https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Careers-in-care/Job-roles/Roles/Advocacy-worker.aspx>

### Entry requirements

For statutory advocacy roles, advocacy workers are required to complete the Level 3 Certificate in Independent Advocacy Qualification. However, this is not needed in order to start working as an advocate. Most advocacy workers complete the Level 3 certificate whilst working with the support of their employer once they are in post.

Knowledge of local government and other public services and policies may be helpful when applying for advocacy roles.

To be an advocacy worker, individuals need to demonstrate the ability to develop good working relationships, have good communication skills and be able to stand up and challenge decisions. Advocates must be able to research information and people's rights and have good English skills to understand complex policies and procedures.

### Where can the role lead

Activities coordinators can complete vocational qualifications in their posts to progress to higher levels. There may be opportunities to progress into more senior advocacy roles or the option to move into other senior social care roles.

## **Welfare rights officer**

### The role

Welfare rights officers usually work in a public advice centre or for a charity or housing association. The role may include:

- Checking that people are claiming all the benefits that they can.
- Helping people fill in forms to claim benefits.
- Working with benefits agencies and other organisations.
- Learning about relevant welfare laws and welfare reforms.
- Enabling people to represent themselves, or speaking on their behalf.

Find out more here: <https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Careers-in-care/Job-roles/Roles/Welfare-rights-officer.aspx>

### Entry requirements

There are no required qualifications needed to work as a welfare rights officer. Employers may ask for GCSEs in English and maths and it may be advantageous to have a Level 2 or 3 Diploma in Health and Social Care but not necessary.

### Where can the role lead

Welfare rights officers tend to be employed by local authorities, community groups or housing associations. The employer may fund welfare rights officers to complete a vocational qualification such as a Level 2 or 3 Diploma in Health and Social Care or a qualification in policy or community support. Welfare rights officers can specialise for example disability benefits, or progress into management roles.

## **Housing support officer**

### The role

Housing support officers support people who need care and support to help them live independently, find housing and maintain their tenancy. Housing support officers can work in sheltered accommodation, supporting living services, or hostels for the homeless.

Depending on the specific role, housing support officers can be residential wardens responsible for managing a housing scheme or can provide advice and support about housing in the community. The role may include helping individuals to understand the benefits available to them, carrying out health and safety assessments, or filling in financial records.

More information can be found here: <https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Careers-in-care/Job-roles/Roles/Housing-support-officer.aspx>

### Entry requirements

To become a housing support officer, people usually need experience of working in social care and health or have a housing background. Entry level roles such as an administrator or assistant do not require experience but employers may ask for qualifications to show good English and number skills such as GCSEs in English and maths (grades 9-4, A-C),

There are also apprenticeships available to become housing support officers.

### Where can the role lead

When in role, there are opportunities to complete vocational qualifications such as a Level 2 or 3 Diploma in Health and Social Care or a Certificate in Housing Practice. There are also opportunities to progress into further management roles.



## Find more information at:

<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/>

<https://www.ucas.com/>

<https://www.jobs.nhs.uk/>

<https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/health-care-academies>

Developing people  
for health and  
healthcare

[www.hee.nhs.uk](http://www.hee.nhs.uk)