

CAREER OF THE WEEK: Nurse

What does a nurse do?

Nurses are at the heart of healthcare. They care for patients of all ages, from newborns to the elderly, helping them recover from illness, manage long-term conditions, and live healthier lives. A nurse's day might include checking vital signs, giving medication, dressing wounds, supporting patients with personal care, and offering advice on healthy living. But nursing isn't just about medical tasks — it's also about listening, comforting, and supporting patients and their families through difficult times. Nurses often work as part of a wider healthcare team, alongside doctors, physiotherapists, and healthcare assistants. Some nurses go on to specialise in areas like children's nursing, mental health, or intensive care.



What can I expect to earn as a nurse?

Starting salaries for newly qualified nurses in the NHS are around £31,000 per year. With experience, this can rise to nearly £55,000, depending on your role and responsibilities. Senior nurses, such as nurse consultants or chief nurses, can earn between £55,000 and £105,000. Nurses working in private healthcare or taking on additional shifts may also increase their earnings.

What subjects should I study to become a nurse?

To become a nurse, you'll usually need five GCSEs at grades 9–4 (A*–C), including English, maths, and science. For A-levels or equivalent, subjects such as biology, psychology, sociology, or health and social care are especially useful. Universities look for strong communication skills and an understanding of what nursing involves, so volunteering or work experience in healthcare is a big advantage.

How can I start my career as a nurse?

The most common route is to complete a nursing degree at university. You can choose from four main branches: adult nursing, children's nursing, mental health nursing, or learning disability nursing. Nursing degrees usually take three years and include both classroom study and placements in hospitals and community settings. Tuition fees are supported by the [NHS Learning Support Fund](#), which offers non-repayable grants of £5,000+ to help with living costs.

If university isn't the right path for you, there are other options. You could start as a healthcare assistant or nursing associate and later train to become a registered nurse. Apprenticeships in nursing are also possible, combining paid work with study.

Whichever route you choose, nursing is a career where you can truly make a difference — offering not just medical care, but compassion and hope to people when they need it most.

To research local education and training opportunities that could lead to a career as a nurse, visit our partner website www.logonmoveon.co.uk.

Use the nursing course finder - <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/career-planning/course-finder>.

Other useful websites to find out more about a career as a nurse:

NHS – How to become a nurse <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing/how-become-nurse>

Adult Nurse <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing/roles-nursing/adult-nurse>

Children's Nurse <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing/roles-nursing/childrens-nurse>

Learning Disability Nurse <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing/roles-nursing/learning-disability-nurse>

Mental Health Nursing <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing/roles-nursing/mental-health-nurse>

Royal College of Nursing – Become a nurse <https://www.rcn.org.uk/professional-development/become-a-nurse>

Nursing & Midwifery Council – Becoming a nurse <https://www.nmc.org.uk/education/becoming-a-nurse-midwife-nursing-associate/becoming-a-nurse/>

National Careers Service - Nurse <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/job-profiles/nurse>



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