



Career of the week

Healthcare Assistant

Healthcare assistants look after patients in hospitals or sometimes at a patient's home

Average salary (a year): £22,000 (starter) to £28,000 (experienced)

Typical hours (a week): 37 to 40 a week (evenings/weekends/bank holidays, on a rota)

You can get into this job through:

College

You could do a college course, which may help you when looking for work. Courses include:

- level 2 Diploma In Preparing for Further Study in Health, Social Care and Social Work
- level 2 Diploma in Health and Social Care
- level 3 National Extended Diploma in Health and Social Care
- T Level in Health

Most health and social care courses include work placements which is a good way to get experience.

Entry requirements

You may need:

- 2 or more GCSEs at grades 9 to 3 (A* to D), or equivalent, for a level 2 course
- 4 or 5 GCSEs at grades 9-4 (A* to C), or equivalent, for a level 3 course
- 4 or 5 GCSEs at grades 9-4 (A* to C), or equivalent, including English and maths for a T level

Apprenticeship

You can get into this job through an intermediate apprenticeship as a healthcare support worker.

Entry requirements

You'll usually need:

- some GCSEs, usually including English and maths, or equivalent, for an intermediate apprenticeship

Work

You could work as a trainee care assistant in a residential home or care home while you complete a qualification.

You'll find it useful to get some paid or voluntary experience in care. This will help when you apply for jobs or training.

You can also find volunteering opportunities through The National Council for Voluntary Organisations and Do IT

Skills and knowledge

You'll need:

- patience and the ability to remain calm in stressful situations
- sensitivity and understanding
- to be thorough and pay attention to detail
- the ability to work well with others
- the ability to accept criticism and work well under pressure
- the ability to work well with your hands
- excellent verbal communication skills
- customer service skills
- to be able to carry out basic tasks on a computer or hand-held device

Restrictions and Requirements

You'll need to:

- pass enhanced background checks knowledge of maths

Day-to-day tasks

In this role you could:

- help patients shower and get dressed
- help people eat
- make beds
- use equipment to lift and move patients
- talk to patients and reassure them
- help patients to use the toilet
- tidy the ward or patients' homes
- take patients' temperature or pulse
- attend meetings with other healthcare professionals

Working environment

You could work in an NHS or private hospital, at a client's home, at an adult care home or at a hospice.

You may need to wear a uniform.

Career progression

Healthcare assistant roles can be a stepping stone to other health careers.

With training, you could become an assistant practitioner in chiropody or podiatry, occupational therapy, radiography or physiotherapy.

With experience you could train new healthcare assistants.

You could also apply to train as a nurse, radiographer, dietitian, midwife or social worker.