

NHS

Careers

Careers in the allied health professions

Join the team and make a difference



Welcome to the NHS

The NHS offers a huge range of exciting and challenging opportunities for people who are passionate about making a difference.

With more than 350 different careers on offer, there is a job for you no matter what your interests, skills or qualifications.

What's more, you'll be given every opportunity to build on your skills and learn new ones as part of the Career Framework – a system that demonstrates our commitment to skills development. See the centre pages for more information about this.

Scientists, accountants, porters, psychologists, nurses, information technologists and estate managers, to name but a few, are all needed to ensure the smooth running of the NHS. These people, and many more, work together as a team to deliver the very best care for our patients.

To find out more about becoming a member of the NHS team, call 0345 60 60 655, email advice@nhscareers.nhs.uk or visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk

We look forward to hearing from you!

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Foreword

If you are looking for a career that combines a challenge, an excellent employment package and the reward of doing something really worthwhile, the allied health professions offer a wide range of opportunities. As key members of today's healthcare team, allied health professionals provide diagnostics, treatment and rehabilitation that help transform people's lives and help people to remain as independent as possible for as long as possible.

This booklet briefly describes the many different roles within the allied health professions. These range from treating a broken toe to assessing what's going on in someone's mind. Whether you are interested in science or the arts, sport or psychology, you'll find something here that suits you.

Acquiring the knowledge and skills to become a professional involves training and study at degree

or diploma level but there is also a range of vital support roles that require no set academic qualifications.

Once you have joined the NHS, you'll enjoy flexible working conditions, excellent benefits and a wealth of opportunities to develop your career.

The NHS Careers team

For more information about working in the allied health professions, please visit
www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/working

If you have any questions, call our helpline on 0345 60 60 655 or email
advice@nhscareers.nhs.uk



The NHS – a rewarding place to work

There are very few careers that are as rewarding as one in the NHS, or that give you the opportunity to work with such a wide variety of different people.

We actively recruit people of all ages, backgrounds and levels of experience. This helps us understand the different needs of the patients we serve every day and provide the best possible service.

Whichever area you join, you become part of a talented, passionate team of people, committed to providing the best care and treatment to patients. You will also enjoy one of the most competitive and flexible benefits packages offered by any employer in the UK.

Benefits of working in the NHS

Everyone who joins the NHS is guaranteed a salary that matches their ability and responsibilities, and given every opportunity to increase it through training and development.

On top of your basic salary, NHS employees will receive at least 27 days' holiday each year, plus a range of other benefits, including occupational health and counselling services.

Join one of the UK's best pension schemes

The NHS Pension Scheme is one of the most comprehensive in the UK. Every new employee automatically becomes a member and you will get an excellent package of pension benefits.

For more information about the pension, and a full list of the benefits included, please go to www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/payandbenefits

PAY AND CONDITIONS

The NHS pay system, known as Agenda for Change, offers real benefits for all directly employed staff except doctors, dentists and very senior managers, including:

- 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
- new 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.

Other benefits of working in the NHS include training, occupational health services, automatic membership of the NHS Pension Scheme (unless you choose to opt out) and study leave for sponsored courses.

To find out more about the different Agenda for Change pay bands, and to see the most up-to-date salary information, visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/payandbenefits



FULFIL YOUR POTENTIAL

- The NHS is committed to offering development and learning opportunities for all full-time and part-time staff.
- No matter where you start within the NHS, you'll have access to extra training and be given every chance to progress within the organisation.
- You will receive an annual personal review and development plan to support your career progression.
- You will be encouraged to extend your range of skills and knowledge and take on new responsibilities through the Knowledge and Skills Framework.

See the centre pages for more on the Career Framework and an example of how an employee has progressed through the NHS.

CASE STUDY

Name: Tahira Jabeen Razaq

Job title: physiotherapy assistant, Birmingham East and North Primary Care Trust

Entry route: assistant, after working in business administration

I'd been in office work for ten years when I stopped to have my son. I knew I wanted to go back to something different, working directly with people rather than paper pushing.

With a view to getting a health profession qualification, I did an access to higher education course. But then due to financial commitments, I could not afford to do a full-time degree. So I started looking at the NHS Careers website and saw opportunities for assistants in some professions where no specific qualifications were required. I fitted the 'person spec' for a

physiotherapy assistant well, and it was exactly the kind of frontline role I wanted.

I'm a member of the Partners in Health Centre in Birmingham. It's a centre for the management and treatment of long-term conditions such as arthritis, where we work with dietitians and nurses. The physiotherapy team provides a wide range of care through individual treatments and group activities. For example, we guide groups of people through exercises and relaxation techniques to help them manage chronic pain. We also teach patients how to use new walking aids, specifying the fittings they may need to get around safely at home, and run injection clinics for pain relief.

My son is five years old now and the NHS offers me enough flexibility to balance my home and work life. There are three physiotherapy assistants and we plan between ourselves to ensure all the clinic times are properly covered.

Soon I'll start a one-year, day-release BTEC course that will qualify me for promotion to technical instructor. My previous business experience hasn't been wasted – I think it has given me a professional, customer-first approach, which helps with this job.



Helping you find the right work-life balance

The NHS is committed to maintaining a healthy work-life balance for all NHS staff. There is a real focus on specific areas that are designed to make your life easier at certain times during your career.

These include:

- flexible working and flexible retirement
- childcare provision and support for carers in the workplace
- coping with stress
- training and development
- tackling discrimination, bullying and harassment.

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

Manage your commitments in and out of work

The size and diversity of the NHS means we can offer you a range of flexible working opportunities.

Part-time roles and jobshare opportunities are often available, as well as term-time only, evening and weekend positions. We will do everything we can to help you combine your work for us with commitments in your everyday life – whether you're studying for a new qualification, raising a family or juggling other responsibilities.

Many people take an extended break to look after young children or other dependants who need special care, or to study full time.

We will help you combine your work for us with commitments in your everyday life

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

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

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



Your career in the allied health professions

The allied health professions are a diverse group of professionals who deliver high quality care to patients and clients across a wide range of care pathways and in different settings including hospitals, the community, people's homes and schools. They might also work in the independent sector or for charities.

Therapeutic radiographers, for example, play a key part in the treatment of people who have life-threatening cancers. Orthoptists may, for example, be asked to assess the vision and eye movements of young babies with the aim of detecting and correcting problems related to eye or brain development. Occupational therapists can help people regain independence after a serious illness or injury – firstly in hospital but also in their own home. Arts therapists help people come to terms with, and recover from, severe mental conditions such as depression or addiction.

Each of the allied health professions brings specialist knowledge and skills that are unique to their job. Although they are often working alongside doctors and nurses, they are making independent assessments and decisions about treatment. As an allied health professional, it will be important that you can work as part of a team and be able to make your own decisions based on the training and specialist expertise you have acquired.

In the front line of healthcare

All the allied health professions involve working directly with patients, usually one-to-one, but sometimes with groups of people who share similar health problems. However, the kind of work varies according to the profession you choose.



CASE STUDY

Name: Nick Sillett

Job title: paramedic with London Ambulance Service NHS Trust

Entry route: graduate in Paramedic Science from Hatfield University

Nick wanted to be a paramedic from a very early age. In fact, as a young child, he spent more time in the first aid section in his local pharmacy than the toy department. While at school, he also had the opportunity to do some work experience at an ambulance station, which confirmed his choice.

To be a good paramedic you need a variety of skills and attributes as well as the academic knowledge. As the work can be quite strenuous, a good level of physical fitness is important. You'll also need heaps of common sense, good communication skills, a sense of humour and patience. We spend a lot of time on the



road so driving ability and map reading skills are helpful.

In my opinion, a paramedic science degree is more demanding than most degrees, mainly due to the amount of time each element takes. While other students are on holiday, paramedic students are completing placements with the service, advanced driver training, manual handling and lifting assessments. During the summer break, there are several weeks of incident simulation to consolidate the learning throughout the year.

Being a 24 hour, 365 day service, all paramedics are expected to work both day and night shifts, which are generally 12 hours long. My day starts with a cup of tea and it is then a case of waiting for the first emergency call of the day. Working in London, we never normally have to wait long.

The best thing about my job is simple – the ability to help people. And it's not always the serious road traffic collisions or cardiac arrests that make this job so worthwhile. Sometimes it's simply helping an elderly person back into their chair after they have fallen over.

My best day? Easy. The first time I delivered a baby. Bringing new life into this world makes up for some of the ones that you can't save.

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Some of the roles, such as radiographer, involve using complex, high-tech equipment. A range of other jobs, for example prosthetists, will appeal to you if you have an interest in design and technology and how they can be used to improve people's lives. Speech and language therapists and dietitians take complex scientific knowledge and use it to create individual treatment plans for people with eating or communication problems.

Other roles are very hands-on. As a physiotherapist or podiatrist, for example, your specialist knowledge of muscle and bone structure will be needed for treatments that often involve manipulation and guiding people through exercises.

Arts therapies involve listening and working in partnership with your patients to identify ways of overcoming their problems. They use art, drama and music to enable others to live more fully.

What all the roles share is a commitment to the individual patient. These are jobs you'll enjoy if you're interested in people and feel comfortable interacting

There is also a range of assistant roles. There are no set academic requirements but these roles can act as a springboard for further career development

with patients, their families, and other carers as their treatment progresses.

Professionals and assistants

To move into any of these professional roles, you will need to have completed a course of study and training at degree or diploma level or above. Only then will you be qualified to make the kind of clinical judgements on which the health and well-being of your patients may depend. This means you will need good grades at A-level or equivalent to gain a place on a university course, or relevant work experience combined with evidence of academic ability.

However, across most of the allied health professions there is also a range of assistant roles that play an important part in providing treatment to patients. There are no set academic requirements but these roles can act as a springboard for further career development and eventual professional qualification. How far you want to take your career will depend on you but the culture of personal development and continuing learning within the NHS will provide all the support you need.

For information about the qualifications needed to work in the allied health professions, visit
www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/qualifications

CASE STUDY

Name: Alan Cecil

Job title: senior occupational therapist, Colchester Hospital University NHS Foundation Trust

Entry route: entered occupational therapy after 24 years in engineering

Alan's experience as an engineer brought him into contact with the work of occupational therapists (OTs) – and he liked what he saw. After studying while working for several years, he now gets great satisfaction from his role as an OT team leader.

I went straight into engineering from school and after 24 years was getting to the point where I felt I needed a change. It was getting a job as a technical instructor with an occupational therapy department that pointed me in a new direction.



I'd hardly heard of occupational therapy before, but once I saw what OTs actually do – helping people with health problems or disabilities to come to terms with everyday living – I knew it was for me.

First I had to get through the training, which initially meant two years of distance learning and evening classes, alongside my full-time job, to get the academic qualifications for the OT course. Then I did an in-service diploma course over four years, with one-and-a-half days a week in college. I did all this with a young family and a working wife. It was a big commitment but worthwhile. I wish I'd done it years earlier.

Since qualifying I've risen from junior OT to advanced OT and now team leader. Alongside my general work, I am a specialist in hand therapy and use my engineering skills to make splints that help patients get relief from pain and restore function.

Working closely with social workers and physiotherapists, I'm in a position to have a positive effect on people's lives. There's always variety and challenge. Managing to get someone home from hospital, happy and able to cope, is always a good feeling.

Career Framework

The 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 case study on page 9 describes how Alan Cecil has progressed within the allied health professions.

	Ambulance service professions	Allied health professions	Dental care professions	Healthcare science
9 More senior staff	Clinical director of service	Director of therapies		Director of regional genetics services
8 Consultant practitioners	Consultant paramedic*	Consultant occupational therapist		Consultant clinical scientist (medical physics)
7 Advanced practitioners	Advanced paramedic*	Advanced occupational therapist (team leader): teaching patients new ways of doing things to strengthen hand movement when dexterity has been lost		Specialist respiratory physiologist
6 Senior practitioners/ specialist practitioners	Specialist paramedic*	Senior occupational therapist: teaching patients methods to conserve energy for daily living when stamina is reduced	Senior dental technologist	Senior biomedical scientist
5 Practitioners	Paramedic*	Occupational therapist: giving advice on how the home environment can be changed to help patients cope with physical problems following an accident	Dental technician	Cardiac physiologist
4 Assistant practitioners/ Associate practitioners	Control room duty officer	Assistant practitioner in occupational therapy: under supervision, assessing the needs of patients with social problems	Assistant dental technician	Critical care technologist
3 Senior healthcare assistants/technicians	Emergency medical dispatcher	Occupational therapy rehabilitation assistant: producing devices such as tap turners to enable patients to continue day to day activities	Student dental technician	Newborn hearing screener
2 Support workers	Patient transport service driver	Therapy clinical support worker	Dental nurse	Pharmacy dispensing assistant
1 Initial entry level jobs				

*all paramedics are allied health professionals.

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 NHS careers and where they may fit on the Career

Framework. It is not exhaustive; details on other careers can be found in the relevant booklets and on the NHS Careers website.

Visit the NHS Careers website at
www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/working

Health informatics	Management	Midwifery	Nursing	Wider healthcare team
Director of information management and technology	Director of human resources	Director of maternity services	Director of nursing	
Access, booking and choice manager	Maxillofacial laboratory manager	Consultant midwife	Nurse consultant in stroke	
Head of communications	Head of accounts	Head of midwifery	District nurse (team manager)	Head of estates
Special projects manager	Project manager	Community midwife	Community psychiatric nurse	Chaplain
Web developer	Payroll manager	Midwife	Neonatal nurse	Catering manager
Helpdesk adviser	General office manager		Community care assistant	Medical secretary
Medical records clerk		Maternity support worker	Senior healthcare assistant	Security officer
Support desk assistant		Healthcare assistant (maternity)	Healthcare assistant (nursing)	Maintenance assistant
Health records assistant			Nurse cadet	Porter

What opportunities are available?

On the following pages you will find brief descriptions of the allied health professions. They may help you decide which is right for you. You can find more detailed information about all these professions in

the relevant factsheets, or on the NHS Careers website at www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/working

To search for jobs, visit www.jobs.nhs.uk

Type of work	Main responsibilities
Arts therapists	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Art therapists, Drama therapists and Music therapists use their psychotherapeutic training and their artistic skills to work with people who have difficulty communicating and relating to others. Working in hospitals, mental health and disability services and in prisons, arts therapists help clients to express their feelings, explore their potential, and achieve a sense of personal development and fulfilment.• It's a career to consider if you enjoy the visual and performing arts and can see how the creative process could have therapeutic value for a wide range of people. You will need academic qualifications and evidence of your ability as an artist, actor or musician before you start training as a therapist.
Dietitians	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dietitians are experts in how our health is affected by what we eat. They work with people who need special diets as part of their treatment or because of conditions such as diabetes, allergies or eating disorders, or have a serious injury or illness. They also help promote healthy eating choices to the wider population.• You will be working in a wide range of settings, mainly hospitals but also community health centres, specialist clinics and people's homes. You will use your specialist knowledge of nutrition to address complex problems where dietary and other factors may be present.
Occupational therapists	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This is a wide-ranging role that links health with social care and the surroundings in which people live. Occupational therapists help people with physical and psychological problems to be more independent by assessing what they are able to do for themselves and providing appropriate support and encouragement.• It will appeal to you if you have a strong practical streak, and can quickly grasp the day-to-day problems created by someone's state of health and the circumstances in which they live. Working in hospitals, community health centres and in people's own homes, your job will be to help clients achieve as much as possible for themselves.
Orthoptists	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Orthoptists assess and treat patients of all ages who have problems with eye movement and coordination, such as a lazy eye (amblyopia) or squint (strabismus).• A career in orthoptics requires an in-depth understanding to how the eye and brain work, combined with the ability to work with people of all ages, including the very young. You will be working in hospital clinics and community health centres, and you could also go into schools to conduct vision assessments.

Type of work	Main responsibilities
Paramedics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paramedics are the senior ambulance service healthcare professionals at a range of emergency and non-emergency situations. As a paramedic you will use high-tech equipment, such as defibrillators (which restore the heart's rhythm), spinal and traction splints and intravenous drips, as well as administering oxygen and drugs. • A career as a paramedic will be varied and give you the opportunity to be on the frontline of clinical care. You will need to be able to think quickly and remain calm. In non-life-threatening situations, you'll also have to use your professional judgement to make key clinical decisions.
Physiotherapists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether it's a sports injury, back pain or getting strength back after a stroke or long illness, physiotherapists assess the problem and provide treatment using techniques that range from exercise programmes to use of heat and other therapies. • If you enjoy sport and exercise, physiotherapy will give you a deeper understanding of what's involved in movement and how injuries, pain and problems associated with disease can be managed and treated. Many physiotherapists work with patients in hospitals and in outpatient clinics, but there is a wide range of other possible settings.
Podiatrists (chiroprodists)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our feet and ankles are complex structures of bones, skin and soft tissue that are crucial to mobility and overall health. Podiatrists assess, diagnose and treat foot disorders to help keep people on the move. • A career in podiatry will give you a specialist area of professional expertise where you will be making your own clinical decisions and treatment plans. You will need a keen interest in how this part of the body works, and confidence in your judgement. You might be working in hospitals, outpatient clinics, community health centres and people's own homes.
Prosthetists / orthotists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prosthetists design and fit artificial limbs, while orthotists devise aids to help with movement and relieve discomfort. It's putting design and technology to work for people who would otherwise be very restricted in what they were able to do. • If you are interested in designing and making things using a range of advanced materials, prosthetics and orthotics offer you a career where you can develop this talent for the benefit of a wide range of patients. You would be working in hospitals, clinics and community health centres.
Radiographers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using X-rays, imaging and ultrasound technology, diagnostic radiographers capture detailed images from inside the body that can be crucial to the correct diagnosis and treatment of illness and injuries. Therapeutic radiographers use high-energy radiation in the front line of the battle against cancers and other diseases. • Radiography is a large and growing area within modern healthcare, offering you a range of career possibilities if you combine an interest in science with a caring attitude to people. You will be working mainly in hospitals and health centres, operating highly sophisticated equipment.

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Type of work	Main responsibilities
Speech and language therapists	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This role is about helping people who, for physical or psychological reasons, have problems speaking and communicating. Patients range from children whose speech is slow to develop, to older people whose ability to speak has been impaired by illness or injury. It also includes treatment for those who have difficulty with eating or swallowing.• It offers a rewarding career if you are interested in language and communication, and how we produce speech. You will be working in hospitals, outpatient clinics and community health centres.



CASE STUDY

Name: Wayne Hoban

Job title: deputy general manager, radiology, Royal Free Hampstead NHS Trust, London

Entry route: radiography training programme

Wayne's career to date is a great illustration of the opportunities to progress and work in different areas of the NHS. He has also found himself involved in forensic investigations into wars and terrorist incidents.

A year after qualifying as a radiographer, I moved to a big London teaching hospital to get experience with the specialised procedures that were being developed, particularly in trauma services and CT scanning. Radiography was advancing quickly and I was keen to keep up.



As my experience grew, I progressed from radiographer to senior 2, then senior 1. I also became active in the Society of Radiographers as a union representative and council member. It's the part of my career that has always mattered to me – getting involved in the processes that decide how work is organised and how services are delivered.

By then I was a superintendent radiographer in a busy A&E department, which advanced my special interest in trauma. I have since assisted in running and developing a series of postgraduate courses to develop trauma knowledge and skills – the technique and equipment that can now be used in emergency situations is remarkable compared to how it used to be.

I also took an interest in forensic radiography, using the equipment as an investigative tool, and have assisted in the development and delivery of training courses in this area. Since then, my career has taken me in some unexpected directions. I helped set up a trauma imaging group, and then a forensics radiography group that has been assisting war crimes investigations in the Balkans, and provides X-ray services in the wake of incidents like the 2005 London bombings.

Now I'm a deputy department manager, so I don't have the same level of day-to-day clinical involvement with patients, which I miss. However, you have to know when it's time to move on and contribute in other ways.

Getting started

There is a tremendous variety of opportunity within the allied health professions in the NHS. Whatever role you choose, and whatever level you start at, you will get all the support you need to develop your career.

Work placements and volunteering

Doing volunteer work or arranging a work placement is the best way to find out if a healthcare profession 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. For more information about opportunities in your area, please talk to your local trust or voluntary organisations.

Opportunities for assistants

In many of the allied health professions, there are opportunities for people to work as healthcare assistants or clinical support workers. Healthcare assistants help qualified staff to provide a better service to more people – preparing patients for treatment, setting up equipment, and assisting in the therapy itself. There are no set academic requirements for these jobs. Employers will be looking for enthusiasm, willingness to learn and a commitment to working with people.

Clinical support workers have their own vocational qualifications and career paths. Additionally, in some professions – dietetics, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, podiatry, radiography and speech and language therapy – working as an assistant can create a route into study and training for professional qualification. This will normally involve a part-time course, such as a foundation degree, while you continue working as an assistant.

For more information, see the clinical support worker factsheet or visit

www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/working

To search for jobs in your area, visit

www.jobs.nhs.uk

Professional training

In any of the allied health professions you will be working as an independent professional, responsible for the assessment and treatment of your own caseload of patients. Therefore, you must first complete an approved training programme at degree, diploma or postgraduate level (depending on the profession).

Entry to degree/diploma courses will usually require three good A levels. However, universities may recognise other qualifications and work experience. If you already have a degree in a relevant discipline, there are also postgraduate training courses for some professions at diploma, masters or doctorate level.

Each university will have its own admission criteria and course structure, and the length of each course may vary but it is likely to be three years. Make sure your course is recognised by the relevant regulatory body.

For more information on training in the NHS, go to www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/training

For more information about professional bodies and other contacts, visit

www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/contacts

Registration

To begin and continue practising, you must be registered with the appropriate regulatory body. In most cases, this is the Health Professions Council (HPC). You apply for registration once you have successfully completed your training course. Evidence of continuing learning and development will be required in the future to maintain your registration.

Funding

NHS Student Bursaries provides financial support to eligible students taking approved courses in the following allied health professions:

- Dietetics
- Occupational therapy
- Orthoptics
- Physiotherapy
- Podiatry/chiroprody
- Prosthetics and orthotics
- Radiography
- Speech and language therapy.

To be eligible for financial support, you must meet certain conditions. There are different financial arrangements for the other allied health professions.

For more information about student funding, visit the NHS Student Bursaries website at:
www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/students



Pay

Most jobs are covered by the Agenda for Change (AfC) pay scales. This pay system covers all staff except doctors, dentists and very 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. For individual salaries of each pay band, please see the NHS Careers pay leaflet.

Your career as a qualified allied health professional (AHP) would typically start at AfC Band 5, for instance as a physiotherapist or occupational therapist. Some entry level qualified roles would attract higher bandings than Band 5, for instance arts therapy. Clinical support worker roles in this area would typically attract Band 2, rising to Band 3 for higher level roles and Band 4 for technician roles, for instance in podiatry or occupational therapy. Specialist and managerial AHP roles would attract higher bandings such as advanced practitioners (Band 7), an orthoptist specialist (Band 6), a physiotherapy principal (Band 8a) or a radiographer consultant (diagnostic) (Band 8b-c). Clinical directors are usually Band 9.

For more information on pay bands in your chosen career, visit
www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/payandbenefits

Doing volunteer work or arranging a work placement is the best way to find out if a healthcare profession is right for you. It will give you experience of the working environment

CASE STUDY

Name: Liz Muir

Job title: speech and language therapist, NHS North East Essex

Entry route: university degree in speech and language therapy

Liz's work as a volunteer encouraged her to take a degree in speech and language therapy. She now chairs the same type of stroke rehabilitation group for which she once volunteered.

My first experience of speech and language therapy was as a volunteer with a local stroke rehabilitation group. I think my mum came up with the idea that I might like it as a career, so



I volunteered in order to find out more. I enjoyed it and the experience helped with my university application because there's strong competition for places.

The degree course took three-and-a-half years, combining study with work placements. Once I'd qualified, I got a job where I'd spent my last placement. Two years on I'm really happy with the career choice I made.

It's a busy life. You're working closely with the other members of a multidisciplinary team, like physiotherapists and dietitians. Every case is different so you're really kept on your toes. To gain wider experience, I started in a split role, working with people with learning disabilities and patients with acquired disorders through injury or disease.

Now I'm working in hospital, outpatient clinics and in the community with patients who have had a stroke. I work with them and their relatives, assessing their communication and swallowing difficulties, and setting goals for coping with or overcoming their problems. In fact, I now chair the same kind of stroke group that I used to be a volunteer with. It feels like I've come a long way in a short time.

What's your next step?

We hope this booklet will have given you some idea of the many opportunities on offer in the allied health professions.

If you've decided you do want to work in the NHS, 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, you can get a list of the institutions running approved courses leading to registration, by using the NHS Careers coursefinder www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/coursefinder. You will usually need to apply through UCAS for a place.

Each university will be able to tell you what they look for in applicants. For example, getting some work experience is an excellent way of showing your commitment and enthusiasm.

If you are already working but are 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 sometimes lead to a more permanent position.

Here is a checklist of things you should be doing, whether you're still at school, studying for your degree or looking for a change of career:

- Have you explored 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? (There may also be the opportunity to start as an assistant.)
- Are there any particular skills or experience that will improve your chances of getting into your chosen career?
- Have you enquired about opportunities to volunteer or do relevant work experience?
- Have you investigated further qualifications you might need for your chosen role?
- Have you searched the NHS Jobs website or spoken to your local trust to get an idea of the type of vacancies available?

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

To search for jobs visit www.jobs.nhs.uk. To find information about professional bodies, please see www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/contacts

20 Careers in the allied health professions

Here are some other things you can be doing, depending on where you are right now.
For contact details, please visit www.nhs.uk/careers

Where are you now?	What should you do now?	Who can help?
Studying for your GCSEs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit www.stepintothens.nhs.uk and register for more information on chosen careers. • 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? Can you start as an assistant? • 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 a 14–19 diploma. 	Subject teachers Your careers adviser/Connexions service Professional bodies NHS Careers
Studying for A-levels or another course at your school or a local college	As GCSEs, plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you need to study a particular degree, investigate which universities offer it. • Investigate any further qualifications you might need for your chosen role. • Find out if you are eligible for a bursary. • Search the NHS Jobs website at www.jobs.nhs.uk and speak to your local trust to get an idea of current vacancies. • Consider the option of an apprenticeship. 	Subject teachers Your careers adviser/ Connexions service UCAS NHS Student Bursaries NHS Careers Professional bodies NHS Jobs
At university	As A levels, plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you're doing a degree in a subject not relevant to AHP training, investigate your options for switching courses, or going on to do a postgraduate course approved by the relevant professional or regulatory body. 	University careers service NHS Careers Professional bodies NHS Jobs Regulatory bodies
Looking for a new career	As A levels, plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	Careers adviser/ Connexions service (you may have to pay to use these services) NHS Careers Jobcentre Plus Professional bodies NHS Jobs UCAS

FOR FURTHER COPIES OF THIS BOOKLET PLEASE CONTACT:

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