

Pharmacy

Join the team and make a difference

Pharmacists play a vital role in all areas of the NHS as key members of the health professional team. Their knowledge of medicines and the effect they have on the human body is critical for the successful management of every type of medical condition.

What will you do?

Your main role would be to ensure patients receive the correct medicine and use it in the right way. However, you will also be involved in the manufacture and purchase of medicines, and help advise on the most effective treatments for certain conditions.



If you work in a hospital, your knowledge of medicines and their effects will form an integral part of patient care and you will be an invaluable member of the team.

You will also enjoy a lot of variation in the work you do, which might include working in the dispensary, providing clinicians and patients with information on medication and managing the purchase of medicines for the hospital.

You would also work with doctors and nurses on the wards, advising on the best medicines for patients. You may also oversee the long term care of patients with conditions such as cystic fibrosis or cancer.

Hospital pharmacists may specialise in particular therapeutic areas (like mental health or paediatrics) or in pharmacy specialties such as medicine information, quality assurance or pharmaceutical manufacture.

Where will you work?

Pharmacists in the NHS might work in a specific hospital – in the pharmacy or wards/clinics, or could work in the community with a range of healthcare professionals, advising on medications.

What skills and qualities will you need?

- excellent and wide-ranging knowledge of treatments and their effects
- attention to detail
- good communication skills
- good IT skills
- ability to work on your own, and as part of a team
- ability to identify and work through problems to find effective solutions

Other pharmacists are based in the community, advising on a variety of healthcare issues such as stopping smoking, healthy eating and family planning. In this case, you could work closely with GPs, practice nurses and other healthcare professionals, such as dietitians, to make sure medicines and medical resources are being put to the best use in the community. You would also work with clinicians at local hospitals.

Wherever you work, you will have a lot of patient contact and it's important that you enjoy working with people.

What entry routes are available?

To qualify as a pharmacist you will need to complete a four-year masters of pharmacy degree. You'll then spend a year in a paid placement while completing your pre-registration training. Finally, you will need to pass the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain's registration exam, after which you'll be eligible to practise as a pharmacist.

For those who don't have a degree, there are opportunities to undertake vocational training to become a pharmacy technician, or to work in assistant and support worker roles.

For more detailed information about the entry requirements for pharmacy, please visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/qualifications. This gives more specific details about what qualifications are necessary for each type of role.

You can search for current vacancies and download job descriptions at www.jobs.nhs.uk

How can you develop your career?

As a pharmacist, you will have the opportunity to work in a wide variety of areas. Some pharmacists choose to specialise in a particular area. This might include managing heart conditions or caring for the elderly.

Many pharmacists combine their professional role with some form of managerial

You'll enjoy a lot of variation – working in the dispensary, providing information on medication and managing the purchase of medicines

responsibility, and will often be involved in monitoring and reporting on expenditure from the budget for medicine usage. To find out what training is available in this area, please visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/training

As well as moving into more senior and specialised roles within pharmacy, you will have the opportunity to take on additional responsibilities and progress within the organisation as part of the Career Framework. For more information about this initiative, please see the *Careers in healthcare science* booklet.

Pay

The national pay system in the NHS is called Agenda for Change (AfC). This applies to all staff except doctors, dentists and very senior managers. These are examples of the roles and the AfC bands at which they may be paid: Entry Level pharmacist (pre-registration trainee) (Band 5); pharmacist (Registered) (Band 6); pharmacist specialist (Band 7); pharmacist advanced (Band 8a-b); pharmacist team manager (Band 8b-c); consultant pharmacist (Band 8b-d); professional manager pharmaceutical service (Band 8c-9). For more information, visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/payandbenefits

To find out more about careers in this area of healthcare science, visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/working

For more information on the professional bodies relevant to healthcare science, visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/contacts