

Information and communication technology (ICT)

Join the team and make a difference

Healthcare professionals, managers and support staff in the NHS all depend on computers working effectively to do their job. That's why the work of ICT teams, who manage and develop the internal and external computer systems and networks are so important. With the NHS introducing the biggest civil computer programme in the world, they are also an essential part of the way we are modernising the service.

What will you do?

Application analyst and systems developer

Your job is to provide expert advice and support so that computer systems work smoothly for users. You will work on the systems to detect problems, find solutions and suggest ways they can be developed and improved.

Your role will be to work on the development and introduction of new computer systems. You will need to test both the system and new software releases, along with monitoring user feedback and local changes. You may specialise in one system, for example you could work on the development of electronic patient records.

As a system expert, you will provide a focal point for users, making sure they have password control and user accounts that give them appropriate access. You may also create and deliver training on the system for clinical and other staff.



ICT project manager

Project managers, also known as liaison managers, bring together all the parties involved. With a large ICT development budget in the NHS, they play a pivotal role in making sure national plans are translated into local success stories on the ground.

Your main role is to successfully manage ICT projects of all sizes and budgets within your trust. As a project manager, you will play an important role in making sure they suit local needs, and support the practice of the healthcare professionals and others so that patient services ultimately benefit.

You will typically be managing projects that equip organisations with modern IT systems, such as high-speed network connections. You will make sure all parties communicate clearly so the project succeeds.

An important part of the work is to make sure that the parameters of national projects are adapted to fit local requirements. This means meeting all staff who are going to be affected so that you develop a thorough understanding of their business needs.

ICT trainer

As the use of computers rapidly expands throughout the NHS, the ICT trainer has a pivotal role in making sure organisations gain the maximum benefit from ICT to ensure staff can provide the best patient care.

You will manage, develop and deliver high-quality IT training so that healthcare professionals and other NHS staff benefit from the use of new systems and software in their daily work. You will contribute to a strategy that covers ICT training, clinical systems training and e-learning. As part of that you will design and deliver a range of scheduled and bespoke training that meets the needs of individuals and the organisation they work for.

You will be involved in delivering the NHS Essential IT Skills programme, including organising workshops, supporting candidates, administering the internet portal and testing.

A key part of your job will be to gain a thorough understanding of the way organisations work, and their training needs, from large acute trusts to GP practices. You will frequently be involved in this detailed and complex task, known as training needs analysis. You will then train staff to ensure they are confident and competent in the use of their local ICT systems.

As well as the hands-on aspects of the job, you will work as part of a team, and may even represent the ICT training department at local and national meetings.

Network manager and support desk engineer

As a **network manager**, you will provide technical support and advice, to maintain a trust's IT network. You will take a proactive approach to developing users' skills and you may also spend time visiting different departments, correcting faults and installing new equipment.

As a **support desk engineer**, you will provide first-line ICT support to staff in an NHS organisation, dealing with computer problems over the telephone. Working as part of the ICT service desk team, you will take calls and provide instructions and advice to IT users, referring to manufacturers and suppliers on any problems you cannot resolve.

You will work as part of a team, contributing ideas on how to improve the way the service desk works, maintain and update your team's databases, and you may help with ICT development projects as part of an ad hoc project team.

What entry routes are available?

Application analysts and systems developers in the NHS need to be educated to either A level or degree standard, and have experience of supporting systems, ideally in the health service.

To join as an ICT project manager, you will have built up some experience in both a technical role and project management. You are likely to have a project management qualification, such as PRINCE 2.

ICT trainers will need specialist knowledge and expertise to degree level, and hold formal training and ICT qualifications.

There are also opportunities to join the ICT department of a PCT or hospital trust in a more junior role, such as support helpdesk engineer, if you have some GCSEs or

Role	Where will you work?	What skills and qualities will you need?
Application analyst and systems developer	<p>You could do the job in many different parts of the NHS, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the information management and technology department of a hospital • a health informatics service shared across several trusts • a national agency, such as the National Treatment Agency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interest in IT • ability to work at a demanding pace at times • ability to prioritise workload and meet tight deadlines • excellent communication skills
ICT project manager	<p>You will have an office base within your organisation, but it is likely you will visit various hospital, primary or community care sites, depending on the trust you work for.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an understanding of how IT benefits an organisation, its staff and patients • ability to take an overview of an entire project • a certain level of technical knowledge, as you will liaise with ICT departments • excellent communication skills • ability to get on with people, to negotiate and reassure
ICT trainer	<p>You could work in a training department in a hospital or in primary care. You will have an office base within your organisation, but you will have to visit various hospital, primary or community care sites.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interest in IT • good communication and presentation skills • ability to liaise effectively with people at all levels • interest in teaching complex information and technical skills to a range of people • good problem-solving skills • ability to get on with people
Support desk engineer	<p>You will join the service desk team in a trust. You will spend most of your time on the helpdesk, but you may also visit different departments in the trust to diagnose computer problems and help install and fix equipment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an interest in PC hardware and software • good organisational skills • ability to prioritise workload • ability to communicate technical issues to staff at all levels • ability to get on with people
Network manager	<p>You will work as part of the IT team in a trust and will be based in an office. You are likely to spend time visiting parts of the hospital, which might be on more than one site.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an interest in PC hardware and software • good organisational skills • able to work to tight deadlines • good communication skills

equivalent. You can work towards computing qualifications while in the job and may be able to apply for more senior roles when you have the necessary experience.

For more information on the range of opportunities available in health informatics, please visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/qualifications. This gives more specific details about what qualifications are necessary for each role.

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

How can you develop your career?

With experience, application analysts and systems, developers could manage a department or move into systems development.

ICT project managers can progress with their careers within the NHS. See our *Careers in Management* booklet.

ICT trainers could eventually become education, training and development managers. With experience and knowledge, network managers or support desk engineers could take a computing qualification and apply for other computer support or analysts' roles within the ICT team.

As well as moving to more senior and specialised roles within this area, you will also have the chance 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 Health Informatics* booklet.

Pay

The national pay system in the NHS is called Agenda for Change (AFC). This applies to all staff in health informatics except the most senior managers. These are examples of roles and the AfC bands at which they may be paid: information management and technology (IM&T) analyst entry level (Band 3); IM&T analyst higher level (Band 5); IM&T section manager/team manager (Band 7); IM&T service manager (Band 8a-c).

For more information, visit

www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/payandbenefits

To find out more about careers in health informatics, please visit
www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/working

For contact details, including professional bodies, visit
www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/contacts