

Corporate services

Join the team and
make a difference

As part of the NHS corporate services team, you could work in one of many areas, all of them making a vital contribution to the running of the health service. The choice is wide – from human resources and finance to library services, health education and more. Whatever your background or interests, there is something here for you.

What will you do?

This section tells you the main aspects of each role in NHS corporate services, and where you are likely to spend most of your time. While many of the roles below are associated with normal office hours, the NHS can offer you a range of flexible working opportunities.

Chaplain

As a chaplain you will be on hand to help people come to terms with life-changing events and ethical dilemmas. You will probably work in a small team with other chaplains from the same or different faith backgrounds, or you might work on your own. You will support patients and their friends and relatives through some of the most traumatic life events and share people's joy when a worrying situation ends well – in a patient's recovery for example. You will give pastoral care to staff, some of whom see sad or horrific events or face tough ethical problems. You will probably be based at a hospital but might work in a hospice or ambulance headquarters.



Finance

Finance is a key issue for the NHS. We have to ensure that our funds are properly controlled and wisely spent. In the finance team, you are likely to be managing budgets and making key decisions on spending. You might be in the payroll department, making sure all employees get their salaries, or in accounts, handling payments for goods and services. Alternatively you could be using computer-based systems to track financial activity or to audit expenditure and income. You could be based in a finance department at a hospital, a trust headquarters, primary care trust or strategic health authority.

Health promotion specialist

In this increasingly pivotal position, you will take important messages about healthy lifestyles into hospitals and the community. Part of your role will be to give advice and training to the public and to NHS staff. You might run sessions on giving up smoking or weight loss and take part in local events to promote healthy eating and exercise. You will find new ways to get across information that helps prevent illness and early death. You could be based at a hospital clinic or in the community. You may work some evenings or possibly at weekends.

Hospital play staff

Children can find hospitals frightening and unsettling places. As a key member of the team looking after children and young people, you will work with other hospital play staff and also with healthcare professionals. You will use play to help young patients overcome their fears and cope with medical procedures. You will organise art and craft activities, hold parties and special events and encourage friendships between children. You will also help to support families.

You will work in a hospital playroom or play space attached to a children's or adolescent ward or an outpatient clinic. You'll work normal hours and perhaps some weekends.

Human resources (HR)

Our staff are the greatest asset of the NHS. In HR, you'll deal with all the key issues relating to the employment of our wide range of staff, from doctors and nurses to librarians, gardeners, accountants and many more. You will work closely with health unions and with professional bodies. You'll also be involved in staff recruitment and in seeing that complaints and grievance procedures are properly handled, as well as introducing new local and national employment policies. You will be based in the HR department at the trust's central office, perhaps within a hospital.

Librarian

Library staff provide an essential service for healthcare professionals and health service managers in keeping them up to date with research and new developments. You will track down journals and academic papers and help library users with their own projects, sourcing and evaluating the latest research evidence in their specialist area. You will increasingly use the internet and other forms of new technology, and may also help train non-library staff in skills such as literature searches. You will work at a central library or information service, probably in a large teaching hospital or a postgraduate centre.

Procurement

As one of the largest organisations within Europe, the NHS has a responsibility to purchase quality goods and services at the best possible price, ensuring value for money. Many goods and services are purchased from nationally agreed contracts. These are continually changing and need communication to and from managers while other services and goods are purchased through local contracts. Your skills will be used to work with managers within the organisation to ascertain their requirements, giving advice and where appropriate, develop and amend local purchasing specifications.

Staff training and development

Ensuring NHS staff have the right skills to perform their work professionally and safely while meeting legal and organisational obligations is core to delivering quality services to patients. As part of this team your skills could be used to deliver in-house training and developing new training programmes. Many NHS organisations offer NVQs, foundation programmes, cadet and apprenticeship schemes that need supporting and managing. In delivering and supporting this varied range of training you will work with NHS managers and liaise with schools, college, higher education as well as commercial training providers.

Role	Skills and qualities required	Entry route
Chaplain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • empathy • listening skills • pastoral skills 	You might need to be ordained in the Anglican or Roman Catholic church, or the equivalent for other denominations or faiths but previous experience of chaplaincy may be considered.
Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accuracy • numeracy • attention to detail 	You might come in with no qualifications through the administration route, as a clerk for example, and study for a qualification. For more senior roles you will need a qualification recognised by the Association of Accounting Technicians or the Consultancy Committee of Accountancy Bodies. For the most senior levels you will be a professional accountant.
Health promotion specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • professionalism • friendly manner • good communication skills 	Postgraduate diploma or masters degree in health promotion. You might come into the NHS with a first degree in a relevant subject such as biology, or as a qualified health professional, and train for the postgraduate qualification or equivalent.
Hospital play staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rapport with children and young people • friendly manner • good communication skills 	You need a Nursery Nurses Examination Board (NNEB) qualification or NVQ level 3 in child care or equivalent.
Human resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good communication skills • interest in people • ability to implement policies 	You might come in with no qualifications through the administration route and study for a qualification. For more senior roles you will need a professional qualification recognised by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.
Librarian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • patience • initiative • investigative ability • computer skills 	Library assistants are likely to need GCSEs or the equivalent. Librarians and assistant librarians need a degree in library or information services.
Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good communication skills • negotiation skills • attention to detail • computer skills 	You might come in with no formal qualifications through administration route and study for a formal qualification. For more senior roles you will need qualifications with the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply.
Staff training and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good communication • interest in people • friendly manner • presentation skills 	You might come in with no formal training and development qualification but via a professional area of expertise. Many of the roles require knowledge of NVQs and foundation programmes and assessor qualifications are advantageous.

How can you develop your career?

If you come in with a qualification in finance or human resources, you can develop your career in these areas, gaining experience and qualifications. In all corporate areas, you can move across into senior management in general healthcare.

Equally, if you join without formal qualifications and wish to progress, you'll be encouraged to take the necessary training for your chosen career path. For example, in finance you may be able to work towards an Association of Accounting Technicians qualification – based on NVQs levels 2 to 4 – or one leading to chartered, certified or management accountant status.

The NHS offers four dedicated streams into graduate management – finance, HR, informatics and general management. They are open to graduates from inside or outside the NHS. For more information, see our *Careers in management* booklet.

If you join corporate services at a junior level, you might decide that one of the healthcare professions is for you. If you don't have the necessary academic qualifications, there may be other routes available. For example, some trusts offer traineeships providing a special route into careers such as nursing and physiotherapy.

Find out more about what training is open to you, and how you can develop your career, at

www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/training

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 the wider healthcare team* booklet.

Pay

The national pay system in the NHS is called Agenda for Change (AfC). This applies to all staff in the wider healthcare team except the most senior managers. These are examples of roles and the AfC bands at which they may be paid: human resources advisor (Band 5) with managerial posts attracting higher bandings; finance team manager (Band 5). For more information, visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/payandbenefits

To find out more about careers in the wider healthcare team, please visit

www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/working

For contact details including professional bodies, visit

www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/contacts