

Domestic services

Join the team and
make a difference

As a member of the domestic services team, you will have a vital role in helping to care for hospital patients. You'll work in one of three key areas – catering, cleaning or laundry services. A pleasant, hygienic environment combined with nutritious meals makes a hospital stay as comfortable as possible. The domestic staff can play an important part in helping to speed up patients' recovery.

What will you do?

Catering manager/assistant catering manager/catering assistant

As a junior catering manager, you might be in day-to-day charge of catering on the wards or in staff/visitor restaurants, supervising a team. You will ensure that patients' food is appetising, well presented and prepared with the strictest hygiene. You will also deal with individual patient's concerns about food, working with nurses and dietitians.

At a senior level, you could be responsible for the trust's entire food and beverage operation. As a catering assistant you could be helping to ensure the kitchen is clean and tidy, serving food to staff and visitors or taking food from the kitchen up to the wards.

Chef/head chef/assistant chef

A head chef's job will put you in charge of the kitchen team. You will also work alongside the catering manager to manage budgets, menus and staff. As a chef you will



be responsible for cooking appetising, nutritious meals, including food for patients on special diets. You will also supervise assistant chefs, who do a range of different tasks, such as preparing vegetables and sauces.

As an assistant you will spend all of your time in the kitchen but the more senior roles involve some ordering, budgeting and planning. You are unlikely to have any contact with patients.

Domestic services manager/domestic services supervisor/ domestic assistant

Hygiene standards are paramount in today's hospitals so the domestic services team is crucial to patient care. As a manager you will be responsible for planning a hospital

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cleaning operation and organising the teams responsible. At a senior level, you might also be in charge of other areas, such as laundry services, across the trust. Supervisors make sure that our high standards are met, while assistants carry out the day-to-day work. When working as an assistant on a ward you will have a lot of contact with patients and their visitors. You will probably work some weekends.

Housekeeper

As a housekeeper you will work with senior nurses to make sure that your ward is properly run for the benefit of patients and the staff caring for them. Your responsibilities will include seeing that the catering and cleaning are up to standard and that essential ward equipment is in good working order.

Depending on how your ward is organised you might also oversee the patient transport, clerical and linen services. As a senior housekeeper, you might run a group of wards.

Laundry manager/assistant

The hospital laundry is a huge, non-stop operation, supplying sheets, towels and staff uniforms. As a laundry manager, you'll be responsible for helping to run this vital service, essential to patients' comfort, well-being and health. You'll ensure that all wards and departments have the constant supplies of clean linen they need.

As an assistant you will help with the day-to-day laundry work, which is usually done using a computer. You might also go on to the wards to deliver the clean, folded items and to collect the bags of used linen.



As a laundry manager, you'll be responsible for helping to run a vital service, essential to patients' comfort, well-being and health

Role	Where will you work?	What skills and qualities will you need?
Catering assistant	You will be based in a kitchen supplying patients' meals, or in a restaurant that serves staff and visitors. You'll probably work shifts, including weekends.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • awareness of hygiene issues and, in catering, of nutrition • discretion – you must respect patients' rights to privacy and dignity • a pleasant manner
Catering manager or assistant catering manager	You will divide your time between the kitchen and restaurant areas and an office. At a more junior level you will probably work shifts, while senior managers tend to work normal office hours.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • awareness of food hygiene and nutrition issues • management and organisational skills
Chef, head chef or assistant chef	You will be based in the kitchen working on a shift basis with the other members of the kitchen team. As a head chef you will also spend some time in an office.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • excellent cookery skills • awareness of food hygiene and nutrition issues • management and organisational skills
Domestic assistant	You will work in a ward and any other area of the hospital as part of the cleaning team. You will work shifts, including some evenings and weekends.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • awareness of hygiene issues • discretion – you must respect patients' rights to privacy and dignity • a pleasant manner
Domestic services manager or supervisor	You will spend part of your time moving around the hospital. You will also do some office work, more in the senior roles. Supervisors might work shifts but managers are likely to work normal office hours.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • awareness of food hygiene and nutrition issues • management and organisational skills
Housekeeper	You might have an office on a ward or close to a group of wards. You will spend part of your time on paperwork and part on the ward. You might work normal office hours or some evening shifts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • efficiency • administration skills • discretion – you must respect patients' rights to privacy and dignity • a friendly, sympathetic manner
Laundry assistant	You will be based mainly in a laundry department with a supervisor and other assistants but you'll also go on to the wards to collect and deliver linen. You will work some evenings and weekends.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • awareness of hygiene issues • discretion – you must respect patients' rights to privacy and dignity • a pleasant manner
Laundry manager or supervisor	You will divide your time between the laundry, the wards, hospital departments and an office. You will probably work shifts, including some evenings and weekends.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • awareness of hygiene issues • management and organisational skills

What entry routes are available?

If you are joining the NHS domestic services at a management or supervisory level, you'll need a degree or a specific skill or vocational qualification, such as a relevant City and Guilds, depending on the employer.

Catering managers need membership of the Hotel & Catering International Management Association (HCIMA).

Head chefs and chefs usually need a City and Guilds certificate or a relevant NVQ. Laundry managers normally need an NVQ level 3 or 4 in management, or equivalent. There are no minimum qualifications for assistant roles.

For more information on the range of opportunities available in the wider healthcare team, 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?

You can come into domestic services as an assistant with no formal qualifications. Then, after experience and training, you can move up into a supervisory and perhaps a management role. You could progress from laundry assistant to laundry services manager or housekeeper, for example. The NHS hotel services development programme is there to help you develop your career.

If you join the NHS with a qualification – for example as a chef with a City & Guilds certificate 7061/2/3 or a relevant NVQ – you could go on to take a degree or an equivalent HND/BTEC. You will then be eligible for HCIMA membership, the professional qualification. Catering managers normally have a degree, an HND/BTEC/EDEXEL or the HCIMA

After experience and training, you can move up into a supervisory and perhaps a management role

qualification. You might also need training in food hygiene. With further business and management training, you could go on to head a trust's entire domestic services or facilities operation.

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

A new national pay system – Agenda for Change (AfC) – was introduced across the NHS in October 2004. 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: domestic support worker (Band 1); domestic team leader (Band 2); linen/laundry supervisor (Band 3).

For more information, please 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