

Careers Information

Information for entry-level positions within the sector

Gaining an entry-level job within the health and social care sector requires a combination of education, practical experience and an understanding of the specific role being pursued. Learners should start by researching the various roles available, such as healthcare assistant, support worker, or administrative positions in health and social care settings. Many entry-level roles in health and social care require basic qualifications such as GCSEs or equivalent, particularly in subjects like English and maths. For roles involving direct patient care, some employers may ask for additional qualifications such as NVQs or diplomas in health and social care.

Practical experience is highly valued in the healthcare sector. Volunteering in hospitals, care homes, or even community health organisations can give learners valuable insight into the profession while demonstrating their commitment to the field. Employers often look for candidates with a caring nature and strong interpersonal skills, which can be showcased through voluntary work or previous employment in a customer service or caregiving role.

Crafting a strong CV and covering letter is essential when applying for entry-level roles in health and social care. Applications should clearly highlight skills, experience and qualifications that align with the requirements of the role. CVs should be clear, concise and tailored to the job description, with particular emphasis on the ability to work effectively in a team, adapt to challenging situations and communicate with a diverse range of individuals. Where possible, references from previous employers or supervisors can be included to demonstrate reliability and a strong work ethic.

Networking can also support progression into the sector. Attending job fairs, healthcare seminars and local events can provide opportunities to engage with professionals working in health and social care and gain insight into available roles. Many NHS Trusts and private healthcare organisations advertise vacancies online, and regular monitoring of their websites can help identify suitable opportunities.

Finally, prior to starting work, individuals may be required to complete background checks, such as a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, particularly for roles involving work with vulnerable individuals.

Teaching Ideas:

1. **Guest speaker series:** Organise a series of sessions where professionals from various health care roles (e.g., nurses, paramedics, occupational therapists, midwives) share their career journeys.
2. **Careers fair:** Host a health and social care careers fair in collaboration with local employers (e.g., NHS, private care organisations, charities). Include interactive workshops such as mock interviews, CV writing for health care roles, and practical skill demonstrations (e.g., basic first aid or communication techniques).
3. **Career exploration quiz:** Questions should be related to various occupations within health and social care, such as nurses, social workers, physiotherapists, and radiographers. Include questions about the skills required for each role, career progression opportunities and the impact of these roles on society.