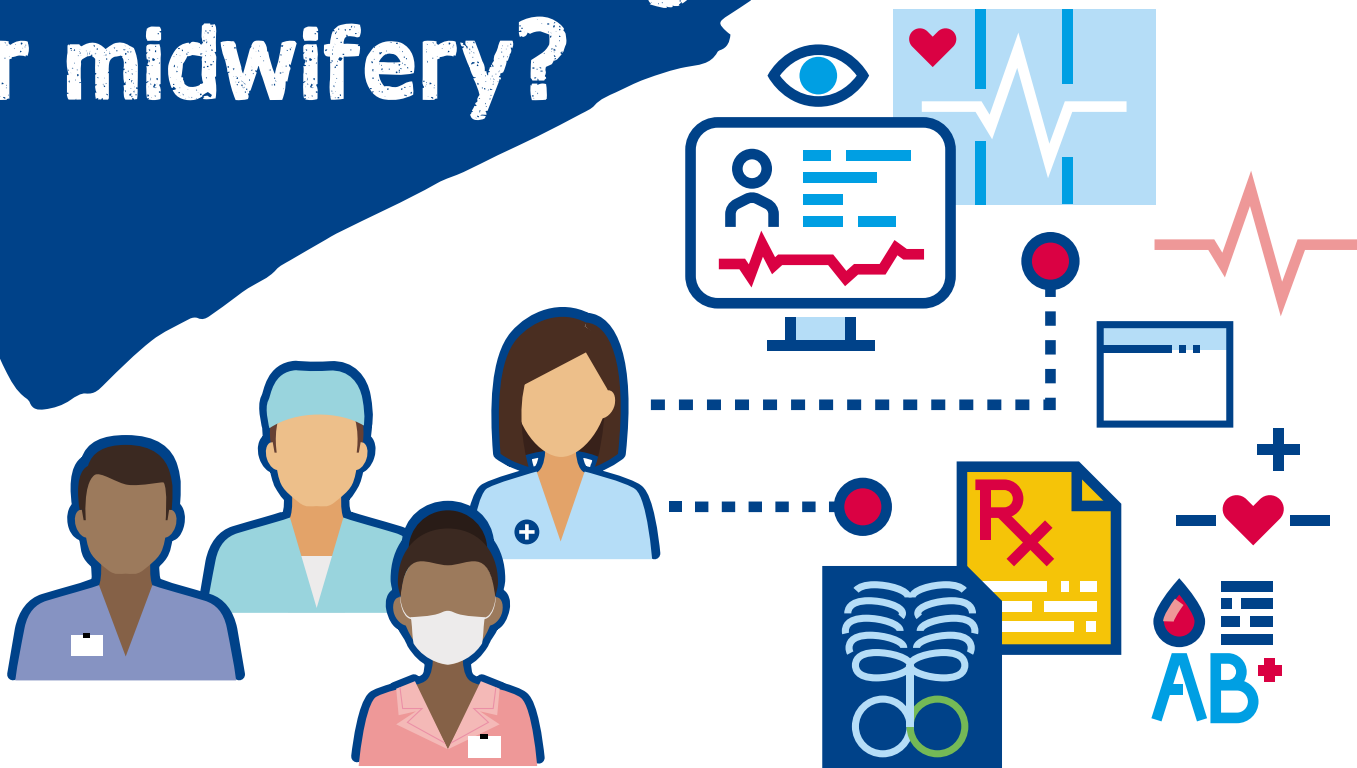
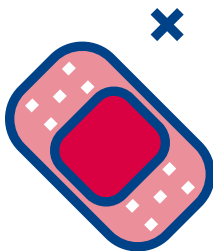
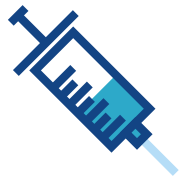
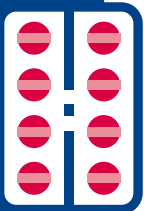


# Thinking about a career in nursing or midwifery?



practice nurse  
cancer nurse  
midwife  
travel health nurse  
infection control nurse  
school nurse



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What is midwifery?**  
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prison  
nurse  
midwife  
infection  
control  
nurse  
**practice nurse**



## What is nursing? What is midwifery?

**Nursing offers a diverse and rewarding career that really makes a difference. Nurses act as leaders, carers and clinicians, taking responsibility for the care they provide to patients.**

Nurses have a very important role in public health - supporting patients to follow advice and recommendations, whether this is making sure they take their medication, follow through with an exercise regime or change something in their lifestyle such as stopping smoking or losing weight.

Experienced nurses find fulfilling careers in positions of responsibility, often running nurse-led clinics, or taking leadership roles at executive level. It is possible to develop your career in clinical, research, education and management roles.

A typical day in nursing is busy and diverse; nurses don't just work in hospitals. There are opportunities to work in GP surgeries, clinics, nursing and residential homes, occupational health services, voluntary organisations, the pharmaceutical industry, or in the military.

All qualified nurses must choose from one of four specialisms as part of their nursing degree (some universities now offer a joint qualification) – adult

nursing, children's nursing, mental health nursing or learning disability nursing. It's possible to change after graduating, so this doesn't mean your career is decided. And you can do a similar course to become a midwife.

### What is midwifery?

Midwives are the key health professionals supporting, guiding and caring for the mother, baby and family through the months of pregnancy, during the birth itself and afterwards in the postnatal period.

As a midwife, you'll work at the heart of the community, as the primary co-ordinator of care for all pregnant, labouring and postnatal women. You will provide support, guidance and care for mother, baby and family.

Being a midwife is a demanding and unique role. You'll be responsible for creating and sustaining a positive relationship with the pregnant woman, to help her to have the best possible birth experience. Many midwives carry their own caseload and work in community settings, while others are based in hospitals. There are lots of opportunities to add to your general midwifery skills by specialising in a particular area such as public health or overseeing teenage pregnancy clinics.

practice nurse  
prison nurse  
forensic nurse  
school nurse  
travel health nurse  
psychiatric nurse

# Nursing specialisms

## Adult

Adult nurses work with patients over 18. They can work in hospitals or in community settings such as people's homes, health centres or nursing homes. Once qualified, they can take extra courses to specialise in areas such as cancer care, women's health, accident and emergency, critical care, practice nursing, health visiting or school nursing.

## Children

Children's nurses work with children and young people up to 19 years old, and can work in a variety of settings, from specialist baby care units to adolescent units. Children react to illness in a very different way to adults, and children's nurses are specially trained to understand their needs. Children's nurses also support, advise and educate parents and carers. Once qualified, they can specialise in areas such as health visiting, school nursing, intensive care, child safeguarding and cancer care.

## Learning disability

Nurses who qualify in this branch of nursing help people of all ages with learning disabilities to live independent and fulfilling lives. They may work with people in supported accommodation, or with those who need more intensive support - for instance, in hospitals or in specialist secure units for offenders with learning disabilities. There is also the opportunity to specialise in areas such as epilepsy management or working with people with sensory impairment.

## Mental health

Mental health nurses plan and deliver care for people living at home, in small residential units or in specialist hospital services. Nurses working in this field need enhanced communication skills to support families and carers. They work with other health care professionals to ensure patients with mental illness get the specialised care they need. They may develop expertise in areas such as rehabilitation, child and adolescent mental health, substance misuse or working in secure settings.



cancer nurse  
midwife  
mental health nurse  
school nurse  
practice nurse



practice  
nurse cancer  
nurse  
infection  
control  
nurse  
midwife  
travel health  
nurse  
school  
nurse

## Course structure

### Nursing and midwifery degree course

Nursing and midwifery courses in England, Wales and Northern Ireland last three years. Some postgraduate courses last two years. Some universities in Scotland run four year courses.

You will study at the university to learn the theory and science of your chosen profession. Some of the practice is also taught via simulation in universities. You will also go out on placement to work within hospitals and community settings and be taught the practical, caring side of nursing and midwifery.

During the first year of a nursing course you will learn lots of practical skills and the essentials of nursing, including: communication and care, the context of health and social care and the foundations for nursing.

In later years you expand on the skills learned in your first year but focus on your specialist area of nursing (adult, children, mental health or learning disability). Some universities offer international exchange schemes for students and also have international students on the courses at undergraduate level.

During the midwifery degree programme students learn the theory and practical skills required to care for pregnant women, deliver babies and

educate and support parents. The social, political and cultural issues affecting maternity care are also covered.

Once you have completed your course, you must register with the Nursing and Midwifery Council so that you can legally practice as a nurse or midwife.

### Nursing associate

The nursing associate role has been introduced across health and social care services in England. This position aims to bridge the gap between the health care support worker and qualified nurse. Upon completing the programme, nursing associates register with the Nursing Midwifery Council (NMC).

The training programme generally takes two years to complete. However, if you have prior learning and experience, you may benefit from Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL), which could reduce the length of your programme.

You will undertake academic learning one day a week and work-based learning the rest of the week. You'll be employed in a specific healthcare setting such as an acute, community or mental health hospital, care home or hospice but also

gain experience other health and care settings and situations. This will mean travelling to placements and working a mix of shifts. A nursing associate can do further training and 'top up' to foundation degree level.

### Nursing degree apprenticeships

This offers a flexible route to becoming a nurse as the programme doesn't require fulltime study at university – although nursing degree apprentices will still need to undertake academic study at degree level and meet the NMC standards.

Most nursing degree apprenticeships will take four years. If you already have prior learning and experience, you may get some recognition of this through APEL and so the nursing degree apprenticeship may take you less than four years to complete.



prison  
nurse  
infection  
control  
nurse  
midwife  
practice nurse



## What qualifications do I need to study?

### Nursing and midwifery

To become a qualified nurse or midwife you will have to study at degree level. The entry requirements vary as they are set by the university.

You will need to:

- demonstrate evidence of literacy and numeracy
- complete a health questionnaire and identify any special needs related to a disability
- declare any past criminal convictions
- allow the university to check whether you have a police record. You will not automatically be barred if you have a criminal conviction or caution. The university will take into account the circumstances and will treat any information in the strictest of confidence.

An example of the requirements in England, Northern Ireland and Wales is around five GCSEs including English, maths and a science (usually biology or human biology), plus two A-levels or equivalent.

In Scotland, one of the following is required:

- 3-5 SQA Highers plus 2 standard grades/ National 5's – this should include English and maths

- Completion of a relevant HNC/HND including English plus maths at Standard Grade/ National 5 level
- Completion of an appropriate Scottish Wider Access Programme (SWAP). Access to Nursing and SWAP programmes have been specifically developed for adults who have no or few qualifications and have been out of education for some time.

### Nursing associates

To begin your training as a nursing associate, you'll need GCSEs grade 9 to 4 (A to C) in maths and English, or key skills level 2 in maths and English. You will also need to demonstrate your ability to study to level 5 foundation degree level and commit to completing the nursing associate programme.

### Nursing degree apprenticeship

In order to undertake an apprenticeship, level 3 qualifications are required as you will be studying to degree level.



# Values and behaviour - the Principles of Nursing Practice

The Principles of Nursing Practice are used by the RCN to describe what everyone can expect from nursing:

## Principle A

Nurses and nursing staff treat everyone in their care with dignity and humanity – they understand their individual needs, show compassion and sensitivity, and provide care in a way that respects all people equally.

## Principle B

Nurses and nursing staff take responsibility for the care they provide and answer for their own judgments and actions – they carry out these actions in a way that is agreed with their patients, and the families and carers of their patients, and in a way that meets the requirements of their professional bodies and the law.

## Principle C

Nurses and nursing staff manage risk, are vigilant about risk, and help to keep everyone safe in the places they receive health care.

## Principle D

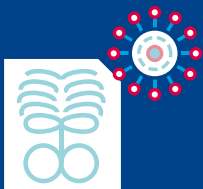
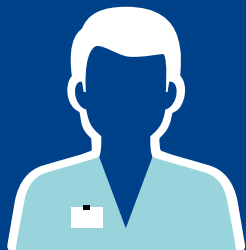
Nurses and nursing staff provide and promote care that puts people at the centre, involves patients, service users, their families and their carers in decisions and helps them make informed choices about their treatment and care.

## Principle E

Nurses and nursing staff are at the heart of the communication process: they assess, record and report on treatment and care, handle information sensitively and confidentially, deal with complaints effectively, and are conscientious in reporting the things they are concerned about.



practice nurse  
prison nurse  
forensic nurse  
school nurse  
psychiatric nurse  
travel health nurse



school  
nurse  
theatre  
nurse  
travel  
health  
nurse  
prison  
nurse  
practice  
nurse  
forensic  
nurse  
mental  
health  
nurse

### Principle F

Nurses and nursing staff have up-to-date knowledge and skills, and use these with intelligence, insight and understanding in line with the needs of each individual in their care.

### Principle G

Nurses and nursing staff work closely with their own team and with other professionals, making sure patients' care and treatment is co-ordinated, is of a high standard and has the best possible outcome.

### Principle H

Nurses and nursing staff lead by example, develop themselves and other staff, and influence the way care is given in a manner that is open and responds to individual needs.

For more information:

[www.rcn.org.uk/professional-development/principles-of-nursing-practice](http://www.rcn.org.uk/professional-development/principles-of-nursing-practice)

## Where can I study?

The NHS Careers website is an invaluable resource if you are looking to work in the NHS. Visit [www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/looking-course](http://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/looking-course) to find a university offering nursing and midwifery degrees in the UK.

Visit [www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/working-in-the-nhs/workingstudying-elsewhere-in-the-UK](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/working-in-the-nhs/workingstudying-elsewhere-in-the-UK) to find a university offering nursing and midwifery degrees in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Visit the university website to learn more about the content of the course and go along to an open day to get a feel of the university and talk to the lecturers and current students. Once you have decided which course and university, you should apply through the UCAS website – [www.ucas.ac.uk](http://www.ucas.ac.uk) Nursing degree courses are also run by the Open University - [www.open.ac.uk](http://www.open.ac.uk)

Vacancies for nursing degree apprenticeships are advertised on the NHS Jobs website ([www.jobs.nhs.uk](http://www.jobs.nhs.uk)) and the Government website ([www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship](http://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship)). You will need to secure a position as a nursing degree apprentice and your employer will then release you to study at university on a part-time basis. You will train in a range of practice placement settings.

Trainee nursing associates are largely recruited from existing roles as health care assistants but a list of vacancies can be found at [www.jobs.nhs.uk](http://www.jobs.nhs.uk)

Join the **Royal College of Nursing** once you are accepted on to your course or programme. Membership gives you access to a range of services, including Europe's largest nursing library and e-library, online learning resources to help with your dissertation and assignments, one-to-one careers telephone coaching and e-books, support during your practice placements and an online discount scheme so you can save on university essentials. The cost of student membership is just 84p per month. [www.rcn.org.uk/join-the-rcn/join](http://www.rcn.org.uk/join-the-rcn/join)



psychiatric  
nurse  
practice  
nurse  
forensic  
nurse  
cancer  
nurse  
orthopaedic  
nurse  
rehabilitation  
nurse  
prison  
nurse  
schools  
nurse



practice nurse  
 cancer nurse  
 midwife  
 travel health nurse  
 infection control nurse  
 school nurse

## How much will it cost to study?

**The financial package available to students varies greatly across England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.**

Please always refer to the relevant funding body or the University you will be attending to check eligibility criteria for awards.

### England

New undergraduate and postgraduate nursing and midwifery students who fulfil the eligibility and residence requirements will be able to access student loans to pay for the cost of course fees and towards maintenance and childcare costs.

In addition to the allowances available from the Student Loans Company ([www.slc.co.uk](http://www.slc.co.uk)), additional support is available from the NHS Business Services Authority ([www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/student-services](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/student-services)) to students whilst attending clinical placements. Support is also available through the RCN Foundation. More information is available at: [www.rcnfoundation.org.uk](http://www.rcnfoundation.org.uk)

The Learning Support Fund ([www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/learning-support-fund](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/learning-support-fund)) makes available a child dependents allowance, additional travel and accommodation costs to clinical placements over their normal daily travel costs and an exceptional

hardship fund of up to £3,000 per student per academic year.

### Wales

Students commencing their studies from September 2017 and commit to work in Wales for the two years following the completion of their course will be able to access NHS Wales Bursary funding to meet the cost of training.

Individuals who do not feel they can commit to this specified period of employment will not be eligible to receive the benefits of the NHS Wales Bursary Scheme. These students can still study in Wales and will have access to the standard student support package available from Student Finance Wales: [www.nwssp.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/documents/1178/FINAL%20Revised%20Bursary%20FAQ.pdf](http://www.nwssp.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/documents/1178/FINAL%20Revised%20Bursary%20FAQ.pdf)

## Scotland

There are no fees payable for eligible first degree students in Scotland and all eligible students can apply for a bursary. The bursary is not income assessed and can include elements for dependants.

Further details can be found at [www.saas.gov.uk/full\\_time/nmsb/funding\\_available.htm](http://www.saas.gov.uk/full_time/nmsb/funding_available.htm)

## Northern Ireland

Students successfully registered on courses commissioned by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety Northern Ireland (DHSSPS) are eligible for full tuition fee support and an annual bursary. Courses take place at Queens University Belfast and Ulster University.

Further details are available [www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/health-professional-courses](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/health-professional-courses)

## The Student Money Guide

The RCN's Student Money Guide brings together the answers to funding, money and accommodation questions – in one place. As well as information on the various student nurse and student midwife funding entitlements for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, it now incorporates funding information on the new nursing apprentice schemes. We have added advice on accommodation issues, including a checklist when considering renting a property, and advice on other common housing issues. There is a section on funding and benefits advice for students with disabilities and a comprehensive guidance for parents. RCN Students have also provided some of their top tips for saving money.

[www.rcn.org.uk/student-money-guide](http://www.rcn.org.uk/student-money-guide)



school  
nurse  
theatre  
nurse  
travel  
health  
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prison  
nurse  
practice  
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forensic  
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health  
nurse

# How much will I earn?

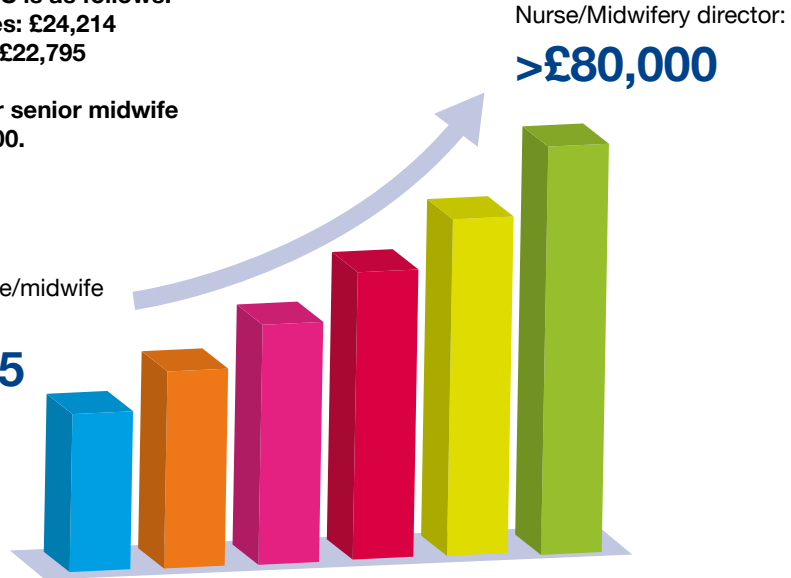
The starting salary for a newly qualified nurse or midwife in the NHS is as follows:

- England and Wales: £24,214
- Northern Ireland: £22,795
- Scotland: £24,670

A nursing director or senior midwife can earn over £80,000.

Qualified nurse/midwife in the (NHS):

**£22,795**



## Nursing associates

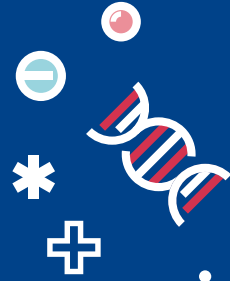
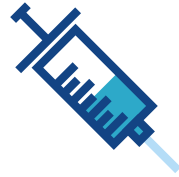
During your training, you will receive a salary from your employer. Once registered with the NMC, the starting salary of a nursing associate in the NHS is £21,089.

## Nursing degree apprenticeships

As you are employed during your programme, you will receive a salary from your employer. Once you complete your apprenticeship, the starting salary is that of a newly qualified nurse.



cancer nurse  
midwife  
mental health nurse  
school nurse  
practice nurse



psychiatric  
nurse practice  
nurse  
forensic  
nurse  
cancer nurse  
orthopaedic  
nurse  
rehabilitation  
nurse  
prison nurse  
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