

## Children's Nurse

Children's nurses work with sick and injured patients up to the age of 18 years. They provide care that is specially tailored to meet the needs of young people.

Their tasks may include:

- writing care plans for patients
- checking and assessing patients' progress
- practical nursing care, eg checking temperatures and blood pressure, giving drugs and injections, and helping doctors with physical examinations
- reassuring young patients who may be frightened or confused
- using dolls, puppets or role play to help children talk about their feelings
- teaching the child's parents and family to provide care wherever possible
- supporting families so that patients' siblings do not become overlooked.



Children's nurses work in GP practices, special children's hospitals, children's hospices and in children's wards in general hospitals. Children are treated in their own homes wherever possible, so many children's nurses work in the community. National Health Service (NHS) nurses work 37.5 hours per week, which may include early, night and weekend shifts. Flexible hours and career breaks are often available.

NHS salaries range from around £18,114 a year for a newly-qualified nurse, to over £50,000 a year for nurse consultants.

Besides having general nursing skills, a children's nurse should:

- enjoy working with children
- be able to gain the trust of children and their families
- have the authority to deal with patients who are in a state of panic
- be open-minded about other people's parenting methods.

Nursing students study towards a degree or a diploma course, or a postgraduate course if they already have a relevant degree. The course starts with a year-long Common Foundation Programme, covering the basic principles of nursing. Students then go on to do a specific programme in children's nursing. They usually have to decide which branch of nursing they wish to specialise in at the beginning of the course. For more general information about becoming a nurse, see **Nurse**. On completing their course, children's nurses must register with the Nursing & Midwifery Council (NMC).

Once qualified, children's nurses can specialise in areas such as burns and plastics, intensive care, child protection and cancer care. They can take further training to work in school nursing, health visiting or community paediatric nursing. They may also move on to general nursing or NHS management.