



Careers in Nursing

Your guide to nursing careers, including children's (paediatric) nursing

Liverpool & Merseyside | Level 1 to Level 3 | SEND-friendly options may be available



Why Choose a Career in Nursing?

- Make a real difference every day — helping people feel better and keeping them safe
- A job for life — the NHS always needs nurses, so job security is excellent
- Four fields to choose from: adult, children's (paediatric), mental health and learning disability nursing
- Liverpool is a brilliant place to train — Alder Hey is one of Europe's biggest children's hospitals
- Clear step-by-step routes for everyone, from Level 1 college courses to a degree
- Earn while you learn options — nursing apprenticeships pay you a salary while you train



Skills and Personal Qualities

- Kindness, care and compassion — wanting to help people
- Good communication — listening carefully and explaining things clearly
- Teamwork — working with doctors, healthcare assistants and families
- Being observant — noticing when someone's health changes
- Staying calm when things are busy or upsetting
- For children's nursing: being playful and friendly, reading body language (babies can't tell you where it hurts), and reassuring worried families



Useful School Subjects

- English — needed for every nursing course (usually grade 4 or above)
- Maths — needed for every nursing course, and used for measuring medicines
- Science / Biology — understanding the body and health
- Health & Social Care — a direct introduction to caring careers
- Psychology — understanding people and behaviour



Local Courses (Levels 1 to 3)

Courses are available at local colleges across Merseyside. Many courses accept students without GCSEs.

Step 1: College Courses (Levels 1 to 3)

- City of Liverpool College — Health & Social Care Level 1-3, plus T-Level in Health (Supporting the Adult Nursing Team)
- Hugh Baird College — Health & Social Care Level 1-3 and T-Level Supporting Healthcare, taught at their £8 million Healthcare Campus in partnership with Mersey Care NHS Trust

- Knowsley Community College — Health & Social Care Level 1–3, with a Hospital Simulation Ward built with the NHS
- St Helens College — Health & Social Care Level 1–3, plus T-Level Health
- Riverside College, Widnes — Health & Care Level 1–3 including a Health Professionals Extended Diploma

Step 2: Getting to a Nursing Degree

- All registered nurses complete a nursing degree approved by the NMC (Nursing and Midwifery Council)
- Level 3, a T-Level or A-Levels get you there straight from college
- Aged 19+ without A-Levels? A one-year Access to HE (Nursing/Health) Diploma at City of Liverpool College or Riverside College leads to university — CoLC students are guaranteed an interview at LJMU
- Children's (paediatric) Nursing degrees locally: Liverpool John Moores University, Edge Hill University and University of Chester
- Adult Nursing degrees: University of Liverpool, LJMU, Edge Hill and Chester
- Financial help: the NHS Learning Support Fund gives nursing students a £5,000-per-year training grant you never pay back

Children's (Paediatric) Nursing in Liverpool

- Alder Hey Children's Hospital — one of Europe's biggest children's hospitals, caring for over 300,000 children a year and training 400 nursing students
- Liverpool Women's Hospital — home to the UK's largest neonatal (newborn) unit, caring for over 1,000 babies a year
- Children's community nurses — visiting children at home, in clinics and in schools across Merseyside

SEND-Friendly & Supported Provision

- Supported study options may be available — speak to your careers adviser about what could work for you

Apprenticeships and Training

- Healthcare Support Worker Apprenticeship — Level 2 (a paid caring job, no formal qualifications needed to start)
- Senior Healthcare Support Worker Apprenticeship — Level 3
- Nursing Associate Apprenticeship — Level 5 (two years, NMC-registered role, can count towards a nursing degree later)
- Registered Nurse Degree Apprenticeship — four years, ending with a full nursing degree and NMC registration
- Local NHS employers: Alder Hey, University Hospitals of Liverpool Group and Mersey Care all run these routes
- Search live vacancies: www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk
- Supported Internships (for students with an EHCP) are run by local colleges with their selected employer partners — ask your careers adviser whether this route could suit you

Jobs, Volunteering and Work Experience

Nursing careers follow the NHS pay bands, and many nurses start as healthcare assistants and work their way up while being paid. All roles need a DBS check.

Role	Where You Work	Starting Qualification
Healthcare Assistant	Hospitals, community, care homes	No formal qualifications — training given
Senior Healthcare Support Worker	Hospitals, community	Level 3 Apprenticeship
Nursing Associate	Hospitals, GP practices, community	Level 5 Apprenticeship (NMC registered)
Registered Nurse — Adult	Hospitals, community, GP practices	NMC-approved Nursing degree
Registered Children's Nurse (Paediatric)	Alder Hey, children's wards, community	NMC-approved Children's Nursing degree
Neonatal Nurse	Liverpool Women's Hospital neonatal unit	Registered nurse + neonatal training
Health Visitor	Community, family homes, clinics	Registered nurse + specialist qualification

Specialist / Advanced Nurse (career goal)	Hospitals, community	Registered nurse + advanced training
---	----------------------	--------------------------------------

NHS pay bands (2026): Healthcare Assistant around £25,000 (Band 2) | Nursing Associate £28,000–£31,000 (Band 4) | Registered Nurse £32,000–£39,000 (Band 5) | Health Visitor £40,000–£48,000 (Band 6) | Advanced Nurse £49,000–£56,000 (Band 7). Extra pay for nights and weekends.

Work Experience & Volunteering

- Alder Hey runs a volunteer programme (currently ages 18+) — younger students can ask about work experience and the Health Careers Passport scheme
- St John Ambulance Cadets (ages 10–17) — learn first aid and caring skills, a classic route into healthcare
- Volunteer with care charities such as Age UK Merseyside or at care homes to build experience

Next Steps and Contact Information

- Visit college open days and websites
- Search for local jobs: www.indeed.co.uk | www.notjustjobs.com
- Find apprenticeships: www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk

TAGS Careers	www.tags.careers — local careers information and resources
Explore Nursing	NHS Health Careers: www.healthcareers.nhs.uk Nursing & Midwifery Council: www.nmc.org.uk
Local NHS	Alder Hey careers: www.alderhey.nhs.uk/careers NHS Jobs: www.jobs.nhs.uk
Study	UCAS: www.ucas.com LJMU: www.ljmu.ac.uk Edge Hill: www.edgehill.ac.uk Colleges: www.liv-coll.ac.uk , www.hughbaird.ac.uk
More Support	Your careers adviser can provide additional guidance tailored to your needs
Apprenticeships	www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk www.indeed.co.uk www.notjustjobs.com