

Top tips for applying for a healthcare support worker role in the NHS

This guide includes information and tips to support you in applying for a healthcare support worker (HCSW) role in the NHS in England.

It's designed to be used alongside any information provided in the job advert to support you in producing the best possible application.

You can read more about HCSW roles and what they involve on the [Health Careers website](#).



Before you start writing your application

Learn about the role and organisation

Make sure you have thoroughly read the job description before you start writing your application. This will help you to understand what the job will involve.

It's also a good idea to do some research about the organisation. For example, looking at the organisation's website will give you a sense of its purpose, values and how the job you're applying for fits within the wider organisation. It will also help you understand important details such as the organisation's location and what your commute would be like if you were to work there.

Many NHS organisations share video tours for patients and staff stories on their websites. You may want to watch these before you start your application to get a feel for the organisation and the job.

Identify your transferable skills

Sometimes job descriptions can feel overwhelming and you might not have experience in all of the tasks that are listed. However, your success as a HCSW will be linked to who you are as a person, not your qualifications or experience. Employers will look at your personal values (this is called values based recruitment), and your transferable skills.

It's likely that you will have transferable skills from your life experience or other jobs in different industries. It's a good idea to think about your transferable skills and how they match the skills in the job description before you start writing your application.

For information on how to how to identify your transferable skills. Visit the [Health Careers website](#).



Before you start writing your application

Update your employment history or CV

When you apply for a HCSW role in the NHS, you'll be asked about your employment history and to list what you've done in previous jobs or you'll be asked to submit a CV.

Once you have identified your existing skills and how they match the job description of the HCSW role you are applying to, think about how this applies to your employment history. If you need to submit a CV as part of your application, make sure you update it to include the transferable skills you've identified.

You can find useful advice to help you write a CV, including templates, on [Indeed's website](#). This information can also help you to think about how to talk about your previous jobs and employment history.

Top tip!

How to complete an NHS application

If you're not familiar with the NHS application process, Lancashire Teaching Hospitals online guide takes you through the process step-by-step and has information on how to complete the different sections of the application form.

[Take a look at the guide.](#)

Writing and submitting your application



Have a plan

It's worth spending some time to think about what to include in your application and how you want to structure your supporting statement or covering letter. If you've already identified how your transferable skills match the job description, then this will help.

Often job descriptions list requirements for the role under specific headings, such as education, knowledge and experience, and skills and abilities. You may want to use these same headings as a way of structuring your statement or letter.

You can find more advice on how to write covering letters and supporting statements on Indeed's website.

[How to write a cover letter.](#)

[How to write a supporting statement.](#)

Top tip!

Writing your supporting statement in Microsoft Word

If you're asked to include a supporting statement, we recommend writing this in a Microsoft Word document first, so you can easily edit and proofread it before copying and pasting it into the online application form.

Writing and submitting your application

Show how your personality or values match the organisation's values

Lots of NHS employers will use values based recruitment as part of their recruitment process for HCSWs. This means they will be looking at how your personality and values align with the organisation's values. A personal value is something that is important to you, for example, kindness or empathy. These values influence our behaviours, actions and how we interact with other people.

When you're applying for a HCSW role, it's helpful to look at the organisation's values and point out in your application how they align with your own values. You might want to do this by including examples of how you showed this value in another job. For example, if the job description says you must be "cheerful and friendly", can you think of a time when you have had to be cheerful and friendly in another job, or in your personal life or in a voluntary role?

Recruiting HCSWs whose personal values align with the organisation's values can lead to a positive working environment, better team work and better care for patients.

Keep it simple

When you're writing a job application, it can be tempting to use complicated language. However, the most important thing is to clearly explain your skills, personal attributes and experience to the person reading your application. The best way to do this is to write simply and include examples.

Proofread your application

Before you submit your application, make sure you read through it and check that all the information is correct and that you haven't missed any sections of the application form.

It's always a good idea to ask a friend or family member to read your application, especially your supporting statement or covering letter, to check it makes sense, that there are no spelling mistakes and that you haven't forgotten anything.

Preparing for your interview

Interviews can be nerve racking, but there are plenty of things you can do to prepare and help you feel more confident. You can find lots of interview tips on [Indeed's website](#).

Values based interviewing

As with your written application, the person interviewing you will be looking at how your personality aligns with the organisation's values and the requirements of the role.

Values based interview questions are designed to draw out your personal attributes, based on how you would behave in a specific situation.

One way to prepare for your interview is to spend some time thinking about how your personality, skills and experience, from paid work and your personal life, match with the organisation's values and the attributes noted in the job description. Re-reading the job description and/or person specification and your written application might help with this. Look at the skills, experience and personal attributes asked for in the job description and think about examples of a time when you have done similar tasks or showed similar skills in the past.

An example of a values based interview question which can be used to draw out the values of compassion and empathy could be: "Can you give an example of a time when you helped someone in need?"

You can find more information on values based interviews on [Indeed's website](#).

What makes a good answer to an interview question?

Practising and using the 'STAR' technique can be a helpful way to structure your answers in interviews.

Make sure you cover the following points in your answer:

Situation – set the scene for your answer by explaining what the situation was

Task – describe your role in the situation

Action – explain exactly what you did and why

Result – explain what happened because of your actions.

You can read more about how to use the 'STAR' technique on [Indeed's website](#).

Your application toolkit



A summary of all the resources referenced
in this guide

- [Information on the role of a healthcare support worker](#)
 - [Identifying transferable skills](#)
 - [How to write a CV](#)
 - [How to complete an NHS application](#)
 - [How to write a cover letter](#)
 - [How to write a supporting statement](#)
 - [How to prepare for an interview](#)
 - [Values based interviewing](#)
 - [How to use the STAR interview response technique](#)
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