

KS3 Teacher guidance booklet

Engaging resources and competition for year 7-9 students with great prizes



**Competition closes
30 April 2026**



What students will achieve by taking part

A chance to explore a wide range of careers using the NHS as a case study

PSHE and career-related learning to grow career aspirations

Increased awareness of NHS career opportunities and improved job-seeking skills

Opportunity to develop core transferable skills such as creativity, teamwork and research

Most importantly, students will have a lot of fun creating their entries. Our national winner will also have the chance to see their entry displayed in their local community!

Together we can
make a difference!

stepintothenhhs.nhs.uk/secondary

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Welcome to the Step into the NHS competition!

As England's biggest employer, we're excited to tell you about our nationwide KS3 competition which supports careers learning. It encourages young people to think about the breadth of opportunities open to them in the world of work, and more specifically the NHS, so they are inspired and motivated to fulfil their potential.

The NHS is also the largest employer in Europe, and one of the largest in the world, with more than 350 different careers available. With that many careers on offer, there's a job to suit all your students no matter what their interests and skills are. In England, approximately one in 40 people works for the NHS; that means someone in every class is likely to work for the NHS in the future!



The competition brief

The competition challenges students to create an innovative job advert showcasing an NHS role of their choice. After exploring a range of NHS careers, they will research the key responsibilities of their chosen role, along with any qualifications, skills and experience needed. The national winner will have the chance of seeing their entry displayed in public for everyone to see. Students can enter individually or in teams of up to four.

This pack provides you with all you need to take part.

Forming part of your careers guidance

Taking part in this competition can help you meet several aims of the Department for Education's careers strategy by:

- giving students the information they need to understand the job and career opportunities available
- encouraging higher education aspirations
- developing job seeking skills

The competition also helps schools work towards the following Gatsby benchmarks for Good Career Guidance:

- ✓ **Benchmark 2:** Learning from careers and labour market information
- ✓ **Benchmark 4:** Linking curriculum learning to careers
- ✓ **Benchmark 5:** Encounters with employers and employees

Our free, curriculum-linked resources provide information about NHS careers and what it's like to work in the health service. They are also flexible enough to be built into your existing plans and schemes of work and be differentiated for pupils with SEND.

One lesson launch

With the '[one lesson launch](#)' resource, you can deliver all the learning needed to enter the competition in just one hour.

You can either complete the lesson in one session and have students start their entries on the same day, or break it into smaller activities throughout the week during tutor time, allowing pupils to work on their entries at home. One of the benefits of the competition is the flexibility you have to integrate it within your current PSHE curriculum.

Step 1: The discovery phase	Step 2: Understanding the job	Step 3: The job advertisement
Students use online tools to discover a variety of roles within the NHS.	Students begin researching their chosen job role to fully understand the responsibilities.	Students begin thinking about how they will create their competition entry.
🕒 Time required: 25 mins	🕒 Time required: 25 mins	🕒 Time required: 10 mins

And don't forget Step 4, which is to send us your entries! Remember there's no need for the school to shortlist entries before sending.





Extra resources

If your students would like to spend more time exploring the NHS and its various roles, you can choose to provide them with these [optional extra resources](#) which support them with the activities in the One Lesson Launch.



Student briefing sheet

Provide your students with all the key information about the competition in a written format.

Employee portraits activity

Use these PowerPoint slides and differentiated practice sheets to help your students discover more NHS roles.

Glossary

This resource will help students understand common terminology in job descriptions.

Supporting resources

The [supporting resources](#) help teachers differentiate learning for all students and help you judge and celebrate their entries as a class, should you wish. Contains: guide for families, differentiation grid, a judging score sheet and a certificate for participation.



Entering the competition

Once you have delivered the learning to your students through the one lesson launch or the optional extra resources, your students are now ready to create their entries for the chance to win up to £50 worth of Amazon vouchers, a goody bag and see their entry displayed in their local community!

The challenge: create an NHS job advertisement

We're asking students to create an innovative job advert showcasing an NHS role of their choice. They will need to research the career's key responsibilities along with any qualifications, skills and experience needed.



How to enter

- 📅 Entries must be received no later than **30 April 2026**.
- 👥 Students can enter individually or in teams of up to four.
- 🌐 To submit your students' entries online, [visit the entry page](#) on our website.
- ✉ To enter by freepost, fill out the [Teacher Postal Entry form](#) and follow the instructions on there. One form needs to accompany every batch/parcel of entries. Students will need to fill out a [Student Postal Entry form](#). For group entries, only one entry form per team is needed.
- 📷 If sending a photograph of the entry, make sure all the information can be read clearly.
- 😊 **There's no need for the school to shortlist entries before sending.** We will enjoy looking through all of them!

Guidance on preparing entries

- 📁 Students can select any media they like, for example: film, poster, presentation, leaflet or website. It is the responsibility of the school and its students to ensure web addresses are clearly and accurately written and electronic files are saved correctly. Advise them against the use of copyrighted material, and to seek permission if others are appearing in their work.
- 📁 We would recommend using programs and formats that are widely used and available without passwords or specialist software. Encourage students to check their files can be opened by others. For example, Google Docs cannot always be shared and .wimp files are particularly unsuitable.
- 📁 Students can include any materials they feel will enhance their entry such as mood or story boards.
- 🌐 Where possible, entries should be submitted online via our website. Postal entries should only be limited to models which may be harder to judge from a photograph.

Judging criteria

Our expert panel of NHS judges are looking forward to seeing your students' fantastic competition entries. They will be looking for evidence that students have learnt about NHS careers using the resources or independent research. They want to see students' creativity shine through.

If your student(s)' entry is chosen as a regional winner, they will have the opportunity to present their entries to NHS judges at our virtual Winners' Day, where the overall national winner will be crowned! This is a breakdown of what the judges will look for:

30%: Student appeal

- 😊 Fun, lively and appealing to peer group
- 📺 Was the idea/solution showcased appropriately? Does it have clear structure and presentation?

30%: Creativity

- 🎨 Are there any creative ideas shown?
- 💡 Is there anything innovative in its execution?
- 🌀 Have the student(s) created something different?

40%: Understanding of the chosen role

- 👤 Understanding of role in job advertisement and what it involves such as duties and tasks
- 🏠 Understanding of entry routes to chosen career including qualifications and skills needed

Online gallery

Our [online gallery](#) shows previous winning entries for inspiration!



Competition rules

For full guidance on the competition rules and prizes and please visit stepintothens.nhs.uk/secondary-schools

Prizes and recognition

The prizes are designed to reward the winning students for all their hard work. The overall national winner(s) will win vouchers as well as other fantastic prizes. Whether students enter individually or as a group, each of them will receive a prize if their entry is chosen.

- 🏆 Overall national winner(s) will see their entry displayed in public for their local community to see. They'll also receive Amazon vouchers worth £50, a goody bag and a prize for their class!
- 📺 Regional winners will each receive an Amazon voucher worth £25 and a goody bag.
- 📁 All winners will receive certificates and have their entry featured on our online gallery.
- 🏆 One highly commended certificate per entry will be awarded to the top entries per region.
- ★ A digital 'well done' certificate will be sent to those who weren't chosen as a national or regional winner, or as highly commended.

The Step into the NHS Day

Our online event, **'The Step into the NHS Day'** offers students the unique opportunity to meet NHS staff members live and engage in an range of activities that will boost careers learning.

Date: Thursday 5 March 2026

[Register now](#) to join our virtual event.



**Please contact us for
more information**

Visit our website:

**[stepintothenhhs.nhs.uk/
secondary-schools](https://stepintothenhhs.nhs.uk/secondary-schools)**

Call our helpline advisers:

0345 60 60 655 between 9am
and 5:30pm Monday to Friday

Or contact us via email at:

advice@healthcareers.nhs.uk

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**Competition closes
30 April 2026**



If you need this booklet in an alternative format, such as large print, a coloured background or Braille, please contact us on 0345 60 60 655 or email **advice@healthcareers.nhs.uk**