

STEP INTO THE NHS

Step into the NHS – communications toolkit



Competition deadline –
30 April 2026

Together we can
make a difference!

stepintothenhhs.nhs.uk



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The Step into the NHS primary and secondary schools' competitions are managed by NHS Health Careers (part of NHS England).

They aim to open students' eyes to more than 350 careers in the NHS and raise their careers aspirations.

Why are we running these competitions?

The NHS is the UK's biggest employer with 1.5 million staff employed in England in more than 350 different roles. This competition engages the future NHS workforce, and highlights NHS has a good place to work.

With so many careers and job roles available within the NHS, from dentists to plumbers and from midwives to pharmacists, the resources and competition are vital in opening young people's eyes to a future career in healthcare.

Whereas the [primary schools' competition](#) (key stage 2, aged 7-11) encourages pupils to explore up to three roles in the NHS and challenge gender stereotyping in NHS roles by using their creativity to tell us what they have learnt, the [secondary schools' competition](#) (key stage 3, aged 11-14) focuses more on raising young people's career aspirations and improving their job-seeking skills by asking them to create a job advert.

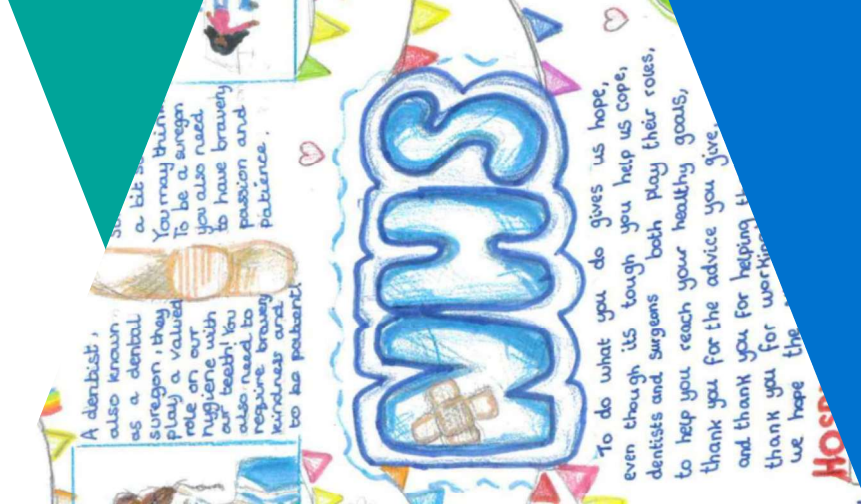
As well as two national winners, there are also regional winners for both primary and secondary schools.

All the details are on the [Step into the NHS website](#). **The closing date is 30 April 2026.**



Why get involved

- Opportunity to engage your future NHS workforce directly.
- Enhance awareness and understanding of the NHS is your local area.
- Highlight your organisation as a good place to work.
- Align your organisation's priorities and projects, such as public health campaigns for young people, apprenticeships or widening participation.
- Talk to young people about local future workforce needs in your NHS locality.
- Showcase your amazing staff and their successes.
- Build relationships with local schools, educators and parents for future community engagement and public health communications.



Getting involved

What can I do:

- Encourage staff to become Step into the NHS ambassadors.
- Share the competition ask on your social media channels (templates found on [slide 9](#)), targeting teachers and parents who will be following your accounts, recognising many have school aged children.
- Sharing more information with your colleagues about the competition, such as in bulletins or physically in trust, with colleagues.
- Organise staff to visit local schools to share more information about the trust/organisation, public health messages and the competition
- Use the initiative as an engaging task which may allow wider messages to be shared.

Where to start:

- Speak to your education, careers, work experience or widening participation teams about any existing relationships with schools.
- Talk to local careers organisations such as the [local career hubs](#).
- Remember you are most likely to be engaging with teachers and parents with this message on social media, so target communications to them.



The following key messages are important information for schools; they are slightly different for each competition.

Feel free to copy and paste these into your emails and social media posts!

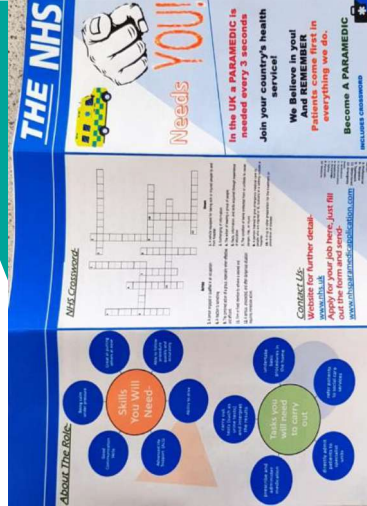
- Introduce your pupils to over 350 NHS careers and help your class learn there's an NHS job for everyone, no matter their background.
- You can deliver the competition in one hour with the '[one lesson launch](#)' resource.
- Winners will have the chance of seeing their entries displayed in public for their local community to see. There are also Amazon vouchers, exciting goody bags and certificates to win.
- The competition has free, engaging teacher resources that align with the DfE careers strategy and KS2 curriculum.
- The NHS will be [beamed LIVE](#) into schools in March 2026. Pupils will have the unique opportunity to ask NHS staff their burning questions.
- An [online gallery](#) showcasing last year's winning entries can be used to inspire this year's entries.



Key messages for primary schools

- Introduce your students to over 350 NHS careers and raise their careers aspirations.
- You can deliver the competition in one hour with the '[one lesson launch](#)' resource.
- There is the chance for winning students to have their entries displayed in public for everyone in their community to see. There are also Amazon vouchers, exciting goody bags and certificates to win.
- The competition has free, engaging teacher resources that align with the Gatsby Benchmarks, DfE careers strategy and KS3 curriculum.
- The NHS will be [beamed LIVE](#) into schools in March 2025. Pupils will have the unique opportunity to ask NHS staff their burning questions.
- An [online gallery](#) showcasing last years winning entries can be used to inspire this year's entries.

Key messages for secondary schools



How can you work with ambassadors?

We have several Step into the NHS ambassadors help share competition messages wider amongst their networks and local areas.

Info on recruiting ambassadors is on [slide 9](#).

Previous ambassador activities have included:

- Visiting schools to share information about their role, their trust and encourage student participation in the competition
- Presenting prizes to national and regional winners at summer award ceremonies
- Promoting the competition through their social media channels, targeting teachers and parents directly
- Being featured on national social media channels and participating in national Step into the NHS days
- Supporting judging activities for the competition
- Aligning their promotion with awareness campaigns such as National Careers Week and National Apprenticeship Week

Support provided to ambassadors:

- Regular drop-in sessions for guidance and networking
- Monthly email updates with key information
- [Promotional toolkits](#) to help ambassadors promote the competition effectively



Recruiting new Step into the NHS ambassadors - email/bulletin template



NHS England are looking for NHS ambassadors to help us shout about the Step into the NHS school careers competition and tell schools about the more than 350 careers in the NHS.

They're looking for people who are passionate about inspiring the future generation to work for the NHS and raising their careers aspirations.

Ambassadors will:

- receive monthly emails from us with ideas on how they can help spread the word to schools
- receive an [ambassador guide](#) to help them reach out to schools, whether this is by email, via their employer, social media or in-person.

Here are some ways our ambassadors can support the competition:

- reach out to schools in their local community about the competitions
- offer to attend a local school to talk about their NHS career during National Careers Week in March 2026
- promote Step into the NHS on your social media channels.

If you know of any NHS colleagues who are interested, [please ask them to fill out this form](#) to become an ambassador.

Please use images from Step into the NHS website or provided to you in emails to support this work ([refer to slide 12](#))



Step into the NHS promotion - newsletter/bulletin template



Step into the NHS Schools' Competitions Now Open

NHS Health Careers is running two exciting competitions to inspire the next generation of NHS workers.

The NHS is England's largest employer, with 1.5 million staff working across more than 350 different roles – from dentists to plumbers, occupational therapists to pharmacists. These competitions open young people's eyes to the amazing range of careers available in healthcare and help them imagine their own future in the NHS. Getting students excited about the health service early on builds understanding and creates stronger connections between the NHS and local communities.

Primary schools (ages 7-11): Pupils explore up to three NHS roles and challenge gender stereotyping through creative projects showcasing what they've learnt.

Secondary schools (ages 11-14): Students raise their career aspirations and develop job-seeking skills by creating a job advert for an NHS role.

Both competitions offer national and regional winners with the opportunity to pupils work to displayed in their local community.

Find full details and enter at the Step into the NHS website. Competition closing date: **30 April 2026.**

Please use images from Step into the NHS website or provided to you in emails to support this work ([refer to slide 12](#))

Audience: careers advisers/school outreach

#StepIntoTheNHS is a fantastic free resource for careers learning in schools. Young people in primary and secondary schools can learn about more than 350 different NHS careers and enter an exciting competition with great prizes.

Download the all the useful competition resources, including a 'one lesson launch' resource for careers learning in just an hour at <https://www.stepintothenhhs.nhs.uk/schools>

Audience: Teachers

Looking to inspire young people to consider a career into the NHS? Our #StepIntoTheNHS competition helps young people to explore over 350 NHS careers available. Start with our free, curriculum-linked 'one lesson launch' teaching resources for KS2 and KS3. Visit <https://www.stepintothenhhs.nhs.uk/schools>

Audience: General Competition Awareness

The #StepIntoTheNHS Competition 2025/26 is back!

Help young people discover amazing NHS careers they never knew existed through creative challenges: 🎨 Key Stage 2: Create artwork showcasing NHS roles 📄 Key Stage 3: Design an inspiring job advert. Pupils can get started in just one hour using our free resources!

#NHS Careers



Audience: careers advisers/school outreach

Inspiring the next generation of NHS workers.

The Step into the NHS competition encourages students to explore over 350 careers in healthcare – sparking curiosity and raising career aspirations early. Dr Desai is an ambassador of the competition and loves how it allows students to showcase their creativity.

Enter by 30 April 2026 → <https://www.stepintothenhhs.nhs.uk/schools>

#StepIntoTheNHS

[Use with Dr Purav Desai quote graphic]

Audience: Teachers

Ready-made lesson plans that inspire future NHS workers!

Teachers like Catherine, love the Step into the NHS resources because they're classroom-ready and require minimal preparation.

Give your students the chance to explore 350 NHS careers through creative activities and the chance to win a national prize.

Enter before 30 April 2026, <https://www.stepintothenhhs.nhs.uk/schools>

#StepIntoTheNHS

[Use with Catherine Miles quote graphic]

Audience: Teachers

Want to inspire your students without hours of lesson planning?

The Step into the NHS competition has everything ready for you – videos, activities, role play ideas and more.

Help your class discover amazing NHS careers, from nurses to engineers, pharmacists to plumbers. Visit the Step into the NHS website to download all the teaching resources, <https://www.stepintothenhhs.nhs.uk/schools>

Competition closes 30 April 2026.

#StepIntoTheNHS

[Use with the download teaching resources graphic]



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Assets – Social Media

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I liked the structure of the lesson plan that was put together; it was very accessible for us. There was a video available, role play, a day in the life activity, it was really easy to take to the class, it didn't require a lot of preparation on my

part.

Catherine Miles, KS2 Teacher
Huddersfield Grammar School

children's amazing hand drawn poster perfectly showcased the different roles and capabilities of the NHS.



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My advice for the competition would be to choose something that you're really interested in and don't really think of it as like a piece of homework, think of it as something to expand your knowledge.

Shreya, KS3 National Winner 2024/25
Rugby High School



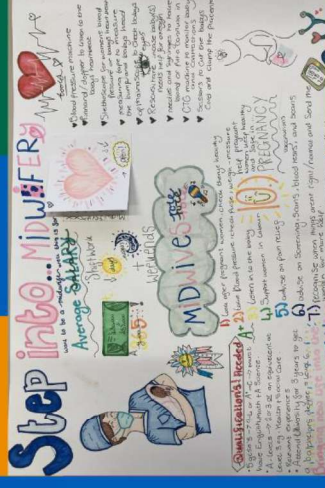
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I found the competition very fun and creatively freeing, I thought it was great to work in a team. It taught me a lot about all the different NHS jobs and gave me some ideas for my future.

Nell, KS3 Student
at Channing School for Girls



All assets can be found [here](#) on the step into the NHS website.

Please use the images on the website or in the communications toolkit pack which can be [found here.](#)

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Thank you and good luck spreading the word!

Let us know (england.healthcareers@nhs.net) if you were able to support this activity and how it performed on your channels.

You can also get in touch if you have questions or need help.