NHS Recruitment Starter Kit

A practical workbook for choosing a role, building your evidence and preparing for an interview.

01 CHOOSE

02 EVIDENCE

03 REHEARSE

04 ACT

Use your own experience. Follow the vacancy instructions. Take one useful step at a time.

MY TARGET ROLE / EMPLOYER

MY NEXT DEADLINE

Independent guidance from Intelligent HQ. Not an official NHS publication and not endorsed by the NHS.

Free practical workbook | Choose. Evidence. Rehearse. Act.

01 / CHOOSE YOUR ROUTE

Start at your current stage

Use one vacancy as your working example. Complete the pages you need now, then return to the rest.

My stage	Useful next step	Pages
Exploring roles	Choose a realistic vacancy and check its requirements.	3-4
Preparing an application	Match criteria to evidence, then draft and check.	4-7
Invited to interview	Build relevant stories and practise aloud.	8-11
After a decision	Use feedback or organise the offer and starting steps.	12-13
Looking for more help	Use the guide directory and official sources.	14-16

A useful working route

Research > Application > Shortlisting > Interview or assessment > Offer and checks > Starting work. This is a planning map. Employers may combine stages, use additional assessments or set a different sequence.

Use the vacancy as your source of truth

The job description explains the role. The person specification sets out the criteria. The advert and application form tell you how to apply. Save all three, together with the job reference and closing date.

My current stage and the next action I will take

Source notes: 1, 2. References and scope on page 16.

01 / CHOOSE YOUR ROUTE

Check the vacancy before you write

Record the facts that will shape your application. A title or pay band alone cannot tell you whether a role suits you.

Vacancy detail	My notes
Role, employer and job reference	
Location, hours, shifts and contract	
Pay information and closing date / time	
Essential qualifications or registration	
Experience, knowledge and skills required	
Application format, limit and contact	

Decide what needs checking

- ☐ I can point to evidence for the essential criteria, or I know which criteria I need to clarify.
- ☐ I have checked the working pattern, location and practical requirements.
- ☐ I will ask the named recruitment contact about any unclear eligibility or application requirement.

One question to resolve before I apply

Source notes: 1, 2. References and scope on page 16.

02 / BUILD YOUR EVIDENCE

Turn the person specification into a plan

Copy the exact criteria from your vacancy. Mark each as essential or desirable, then identify your strongest relevant evidence.

Criterion + E / D	My evidence and my own action	Gap / next step

Do not turn a gap into an invented claim

A transferable example can demonstrate a skill, but it cannot replace a required qualification or professional registration. If you are unsure whether your background meets a criterion, ask the employer.

Print this page again for a longer person specification. Keep the full criteria beside your draft so that no essential point disappears during editing.

Source notes: 2, 5. References and scope on page 16.

02 / BUILD YOUR EVIDENCE

Find evidence in what you have done

Relevant examples may come from employment, study, volunteering or other responsibilities. Explain the link to the vacancy rather than assuming the reader will make it.

Experience to explore	What could it demonstrate?	My example
Helping someone understand information	Listening, clear communication and checking understanding.	
Working with other people on a shared task	Co-operation, dependable handovers and respecting different contributions.	
Managing competing responsibilities	Organisation, asking for help and agreeing priorities.	
Responding to feedback or a mistake	Honesty, reflection and a specific improvement.	

One example I can explain clearly, including what I personally did

Keep examples honest and anonymous

Remove names and details that could identify patients, service users or colleagues. Do not record confidential workplace information in this workbook. Describe only actions you actually took and responsibilities you actually held.

Source notes: 2. References and scope on page 16.

03 / WRITE YOUR APPLICATION

Build a focused supporting statement

Use this structure as a drafting aid. If the application uses separate evidence boxes or questions, answer those directly instead of forcing one long statement into the form.

Part	What to include	My notes
Opening	Why this role and this employer interest you, with a specific reason.	
Relevant criteria	Evidence against the essential criteria, grouped under clear themes or the employer's headings.	
Your contribution	What you personally did, the outcome and how it relates to the advertised role.	
Desirable criteria	Relevant additional evidence, where you have it.	
Closing	A concise link between your suitability, motivation and readiness to learn.	

Check the form before you paste

- ☐ Use the word or character limit shown in your own application. There is no single limit for every vacancy.
- ☐ Follow any anonymisation instructions. Check dates, qualifications, spelling and required sections.
- ☐ Save a copy, confirm that you have submitted successfully and keep the confirmation.

Want help with your own application? Compare membership options.

Source notes: 1, 2, 5. References and scope on page 16.

03 / WRITE YOUR APPLICATION

See how a specific example works

This short example is entirely fictional. It illustrates one communication and organisation paragraph for an administrator application. It is not a complete statement or a model of a particular vacancy.

Fictional example: Alex, an administrator applicant

During a volunteer session at a community centre, a visitor was unsure which room their appointment was in. I listened to the details they were comfortable sharing, checked the session list with the co-ordinator and gave clear directions. I then asked whether the directions made sense rather than assuming they did. After the session, I suggested clearer room labels to the co-ordinator. The labels were updated for the following week. This example shows how I communicate respectfully, check information and contribute a practical improvement. I would bring the same care to administrative work while learning the employer's systems and procedures.

What makes the paragraph useful?

- ☐ It gives a specific setting and need.
- ☐ It explains Alex's own actions, including checking with the right person.
- ☐ It identifies a modest, credible outcome.
- ☐ It connects the example to relevant skills without claiming clinical competence.

My equivalent experience, in my own words

Do not copy Alex's story or present it as your experience. Change the structure as needed so that your own evidence answers the actual criterion.

04 / PREPARE FOR INTERVIEW

Prepare one clear STAR story

STAR is a planning framework: Situation, Task, Action, Result. Add what you learnt. Use brief notes so you can adapt your answer to the question instead of reciting a script.

Question or person specification criterion this example could answer

S / Situation: what was happening, with only the context the panel needs?

T / Task: what was your responsibility or aim?

A / Action: what did you personally do, and why?

R / Result: what changed, and how do you know?

Reflection: what did you learn or what would you improve?

Source notes: 2. References and scope on page 16.

04 / PREPARE FOR INTERVIEW

Connect values to everyday behaviour

Read the employer's own values and consider how you have demonstrated them. The six named values below are from the NHS Constitution for England. Other UK nations and employers may use different frameworks.

Value in England	A prompt for your own evidence
Working together for patients	When did you work with others to improve someone's experience?
Respect and dignity	How did you listen carefully and respect a person's preferences?
Commitment to quality of care	When did you check your work, use feedback or improve a process?
Compassion	When did you respond to someone with patience and kindness?
Improving lives	How did your contribution make a practical difference?
Everyone counts	When did you help someone take part or avoid excluding them?

Questions to prepare for the panel

Choose two that will help you understand the role: What would a good first three months look like? How is induction organised? What learning and support are available? How does the team work together day to day?

The employer's value I want to illustrate, and my example

Keep within your knowledge and responsibilities

If asked about a situation beyond your experience, be honest about the limit of your knowledge. This workbook provides recruitment preparation, not clinical procedures or professional authorisation.

Source notes: 2, 3. References and scope on page 16.

04 / PREPARE FOR INTERVIEW

Use the week before your interview

Adapt the timing to your invitation, work and caring commitments. These are suggested preparation tasks, not employer deadlines.

When	Preparation task	Done / my note
7 days before	Re-read the invitation, job description, person specification and your application. Confirm the format.	
6 days before	Research the employer and team using their own website. Note two reasons the role interests you.	
5 days before	Select examples for the main criteria and values. Use page 8 for your strongest stories.	
4 days before	Practise aloud. Ask a trusted person to notice whether your action and outcome are clear.	
3 days before	Check any presentation, test or document instructions. Resolve questions with the recruitment contact.	
2 days before	Refine weak examples. Test travel or video arrangements and plan a back-up.	
1 day before	Use page 11, organise what you need and leave time to rest.	

The one preparation task that would help me most

Source notes: 2. References and scope on page 16.

04 / PREPARE FOR INTERVIEW

Make the day feel manageable

Keep the invitation and recruitment contact details easy to find. Follow the employer's instructions for documents, arrival times and any tasks.

The day before

- ☐ Confirm the date, time, venue or meeting link, and the expected format.
- ☐ Prepare requested documents, your questions, suitable clothing and essential travel items.
- ☐ Check your route, accessibility arrangements or video connection, sound and camera.
- ☐ If you need adjustments or clarification, contact the employer as early as possible.

On the day

- ☐ Allow time for travel, finding the room or connecting online.
- ☐ Listen to the whole question. Pause to choose a relevant example.
- ☐ Ask for clarification if you need it, then explain your own actions clearly.
- ☐ Note any next steps or outcome timescale the employer gives you.

Arrival / connection plan and back-up

Two questions I want to ask

Afterwards, write down what went well and one answer to develop while the experience is still fresh.

Source notes: 1, 2. References and scope on page 16.

05 / USE THE OUTCOME

Turn a setback into a next step

An unsuccessful application or interview gives you a decision about one vacancy. Use any available feedback to choose a specific improvement. Feedback detail and availability will vary.

A short feedback request you can adapt

Send it through the employer's stated contact route

Thank you for considering my application for [role and job reference]. If feedback is available, could you share one or two areas where I could strengthen my evidence or interview answers? I would appreciate any guidance to help me prepare for future vacancies.

What I was told or noticed	What I will change	By when

One thing I did well and want to keep doing

My next realistic vacancy or learning step

Separate direct feedback from your own guesses. If no feedback is offered, compare your application with the person specification and rehearse one answer you found difficult.

05 / USE THE OUTCOME

Organise an offer and your first days

Read the written offer and ask the employer about any unclear conditions. A conditional offer may depend on satisfactory checks. Let the recruitment team confirm the requirements and next steps.

Offer and checks

- ☐ Check the role, location, pay details, hours, contract and any conditions in the offer.
- ☐ Respond through the official recruitment route by the stated deadline.
- ☐ Prepare the identity, right-to-work, qualification, registration or reference information the employer requests.
- ☐ Complete any relevant health or criminal-record process through the employer's specified route. Requirements depend on the role.
- ☐ Ask what remains outstanding and obtain confirmation of the agreed start arrangements.

Getting ready to start

- ☐ Confirm the start date, reporting location, named contact and induction plan.
- ☐ Ask what to bring, what to wear and how to access any required systems or training.
- ☐ Discuss any support or adjustments you need with the appropriate employer contact.
- ☐ Keep an organised record of the information you have sent and the next action.

My employer contact, outstanding action and agreed next date

Use the employer's secure process for personal documents. You do not need to write identity numbers, health details or other sensitive records in this workbook.

Source notes: 4, 6, 7. References and scope on page 16.

06 / FIND THE RIGHT GUIDE

Your guide directory / 1-50

Browse by title. Each entry is clickable and opens a guide on nhs-careers.co.uk. Guide availability may change; use the site navigation if a page is not yet available.

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003 Administrator Jobs
004 Administrator Supporting Statement
005 Apprenticeships
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008 Band 4 Interview Questions and Answers
009 Band 5 Interview Questions and Answers
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011 Band 7 Interview Questions and Answers
012 Dental Nurse Interview Questions and Answers
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018 Dietetic Assistant Interview Questions and Answers
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024 Domestic Assistant Interview Questions and Answers
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027 Healthcare Assistant Interview Questions and Answers
028 Healthcare Assistant Jobs
029 Healthcare Assistant Supporting Statement
030 Hospital Porter Interview Questions and Answers
031 Hospital Porter Jobs
032 Hospital Porter Supporting Statement
033 How to Get an NHS Job
034 Interview Preparation
035 Interview Presentation
036 Interview Process
037 Interview Questions and Answers
038 Interview Scoring System
039 Jobs Near Me
040 Jobs With No Experience
041 Medical Laboratory Assistant Interview Questions and Answers
042 Medical Laboratory Assistant Jobs
043 Medical Laboratory Assistant Supporting Statement
044 Medical Secretary Interview Questions and Answers
045 Medical Secretary Jobs
046 Medical Secretary Supporting Statement
047 Nursing Careers
048 Nursing Interview Questions and Answers
049 Nursing Supporting Statement
050 Occupational Therapist Interview Questions and Answers

06 / FIND THE RIGHT GUIDE

Your guide directory / 51-100

Browse by title. Each entry is clickable and opens a guide on nhs-careers.co.uk. Guide availability may change; use the site navigation if a page is not yet available.

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055 Occupational Therapy Assistant Supporting Statement

056 Operating Department Practitioner Interview Questions and Answers

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091 Supporting Statement

092 Supporting Statement Examples for Healthcare, Admin and Nursing Roles

093 Supporting Statement With No Experience

094 Therapeutic Radiographer Interview Questions and Answers

095 Therapeutic Radiographer Jobs

096 Therapeutic Radiographer Supporting Statement

097 Values Interview Questions and Answers

098 Ward Clerk Interview Questions and Answers

099 Ward Clerk Jobs

100 Ward Clerk Supporting Statement

07 / KEEP MOVING

Choose the support that fits

Ready to turn your preparation into a stronger application or interview? Choose an organised resource library, or add personal recruitment guidance.

Both plans include the full NHS member library

Access the NHS-related guides, templates, courses and preparation resources from How2Become, PassMyInterview and CareerVidz Talent. Your public free guides and interview scorecard stay free.

NHS Recruitment Success

£9.99

per month, including UK VAT

For preparation at your own pace.

The full member library, with application resources, interview preparation, editable templates, courses and practical planning tools.

NHS Recruitment Success + Expert Support

£59

per month, including UK VAT

For personal recruitment support.

The full library, plus WhatsApp and email recruitment guidance. Each paid billing month, choose ONE custom supporting-information document OR ONE tailored interview-answer package.

Compare plans and see what is included

Choose the expert task that matters most in that billing month. The brief and deadline are agreed before work begins. Read the current availability, subscription and guarantee terms on the comparison page before joining.

Official sources and further help

[1] NHSBSA applicant help

[2] Health Careers: applications and interviews

[3] NHS Constitution for England

[4] NHS Employers: employment standards

[5] NHSBSA: supporting evidence

[6] NHSBSA: responding to an offer

[7] NHSBSA: pre-employment details

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