

Salary Intelligence

NHS Band 7 Salary Guide 2025/26

Pay scales, take-home figures, required skills and certifications drawn from 576 Band 7 roles tracked across 24 NHS domains.

£47,810	£54,710	576	24
Starting salary	Top of band	Roles tracked	Domains

OVERVIEW

What is NHS Band 7?

Band 7 is a senior specialist or managerial grade within the Agenda for Change pay framework, the structure that covers the vast majority of NHS staff across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. It sits above Band 6 and below Band 8A, making it the critical gateway into NHS leadership and strategic roles.

Most professionals reach Band 7 after three to five years at Band 5 or 6, having built domain expertise and demonstrated the ability to manage workstreams, lead teams and engage senior stakeholders. It is not typically an entry-level grade, and NHS employers are increasingly specific about the combination of formal qualifications, technical skills and leadership behaviours they expect.

Based on Career Co-Pilot's analysis of 576 Band 7 roles, this grade is the most widely distributed senior level in NHS non-clinical hiring, appearing in 24 out of 25 tracked career domains. Project and Programme Management accounts for the largest share with 196 roles tracked, but data analytics, leadership, clinical research and digital transformation all show significant volume.

PAY SCALE

2025/26 Agenda for Change pay in England

Pay step	Annual salary	Monthly gross	What this means
Less than 2 years	£47,810	£3,984	New to Band 7, first appointment at this grade
2 to 5 years	£50,273	£4,189	Mid-band, reviewed against performance and conduct
5 years or more	£54,710	£4,559	Top of band, gateway to Band 8A progression

All figures are gross annual salary. Take-home pay varies based on income tax band, NHS pension contribution tier and any salary sacrifice arrangements. Source: NHS Employers Agenda for Change pay scales 2025/26. New pay rates for 2026/27 take effect from 1 April 2026. This guide will be updated when confirmed figures are published.

London weighting

NHS staff working in inner London receive a High Cost Area Supplement of 20 percent of basic salary, with a minimum of £4,551 and a maximum of £6,549 on top of the national Band 7 rate. Outer London attracts a 15 percent supplement with a minimum of £3,851 and a maximum of £4,960. A Band 7 professional starting in inner London can expect a total package above £57,000 from day one.

Band 7 hiring across 24 NHS domains

One of the most important findings from our job pack database is how widely Band 7 is distributed across NHS non-clinical careers. Of the 25 domains tracked by Career Co-Pilot, 24 have recorded at least one Band 7 role. Only Early Careers sits outside this, given its structural focus on entry-level grades. The table below shows the full picture ranked by total volume.

Project and Programme Management stands well apart from the rest, accounting for 196 of the 576 total Band 7 roles in our database, roughly one in three. Data Analytics and Business Intelligence is a clear second with 55 roles, reflecting the NHS investment in data infrastructure and reporting. Leadership and Service Management, Clinical Research and Change and Transformation round out the top five.

Domain	Total	Active	Historical
Project and Programme Management	196	5	191
Data, Analytics and Business Intelligence	55	5	50
Leadership and Service Management	36	1	35
Clinical Research and Trials	35	3	32
Change and Transformation	33	1	32
Digital Transformation	32	1	31
Clinical Safety and Patient Safety	27	0	27
Business Analysis	22	3	19
Education, Training and Workforce Development	21	1	20
Clinical Systems and Applications	18	1	17
Communications and Engagement	13	0	13
Clinical Informatics and Decision Support	10	0	10
Quality Improvement	9	0	9
Software Development and Engineering	9	1	8
Procurement, Commercial and Contracts	9	0	9
Clinical Governance, Audit and Compliance	8	0	8
Product Management	8	1	7
Applications and Systems Support	7	0	7
Information Governance and Data Protection	6	0	6
AI, Machine Learning and Data Science	6	0	6

Domain	Total	Active	Historical
Business Development and Partnerships	5	1	4
PMO and Project Support	4	0	4
Public Health and Population Health	3	0	3
Cyber Security	2	0	2

Total = all Band 7 roles ever tracked, both active and expired. Active = live on NHS Jobs at time of publication. Historical = expired or filled roles retained for trend analysis.

Skills extracted from Band 7 job packs

The skills data below comes directly from job pack text, the detailed person specifications NHS employers publish alongside each vacancy. We extract and classify skills as essential or desirable, then count how many job packs each skill appears in. The result is a frequency ranking that reflects real employer demand rather than a generic competency framework.

Stakeholder management tops the list across every domain, appearing in 18 Band 7 job packs as an essential requirement. This is not a soft skill any more. At Band 7, NHS employers expect a demonstrable track record of managing upwards, influencing without authority and aligning diverse groups around shared goals. Communication follows closely at 17, and Project Management at 16, the latter appearing even in domains not traditionally associated with project work, reflecting the NHS-wide shift to programme-based delivery.

No.	Essential skill	Freq.	What this means in practice
1	Stakeholder Management	18	Managing up, across and externally with evidence of influence without authority
2	Communication	17	Written and verbal across board papers, presentations and briefing notes
3	Project Management	16	Applies across all domains, not just PPM. Structured delivery is expected.
4	Data Analysis	11	Interpreting performance data and presenting evidence-based recommendations
5	Negotiation	10	Procurement, contracts and stakeholder agreements requiring commercial awareness
6	Problem Solving	10	Structured analytical approach expected in governance and service roles
7	Risk Management	8	Risk registers, issue escalation and mitigation planning
8	Budget Management	8	Financial accountability covering spend monitoring and cost forecasting
9	Microsoft Office	8	Excel for reporting, PowerPoint for governance, commonly listed for BI roles

Frequency = number of Band 7 NHS job packs listing this skill as an essential requirement.

QUALIFICATIONS

Certifications NHS employers ask for at Band 7

A degree remains the baseline qualification for most Band 7 roles. PRINCE2 is the most cited professional certification at this level, appearing across multiple domains and not confined to project management roles. It signals general competence in structured delivery and is increasingly expected in change, governance and analytics positions. Masters-level qualifications are becoming more common, particularly in data, clinical informatics and research domains.

Qualification	Freq.	Where it appears most
Degree (any discipline)	15	Baseline across all domains, minimum threshold
PRINCE2 (any level)	10	PPM, Change, Governance and Analytics across domains
Masters Degree	4	Data, Clinical Informatics and Research domains
PRINCE2 Practitioner	4	Full practitioner level preferred at Band 7 and above
MSP Managing Successful Programmes	4	Programme-level roles, often listed alongside PRINCE2
Postgraduate Diploma	3	Clinical governance and education domains
ITIL Foundation	2	IT service management and applications support

Frequency = number of Band 7 NHS job packs in the Career Co-Pilot database listing this qualification as required or desirable.

CAREER PROGRESSION

How to progress to Band 7

Band 7 is almost never an entry point. The overwhelming majority of professionals who reach it arrive from Band 5 or 6 roles after building domain expertise, formal qualifications and a track record of delivery. Based on what 576 Band 7 job packs tell us employers actually require, here is the evidence-based pathway.

1. Build genuine domain expertise

Every Band 7 person specification we have analysed expects demonstrable experience in the specific domain, not just adjacent experience. Whether that is project delivery, data analysis, clinical research or change management, employers want to see at least three years of hands-on work at Band 5 or 6.

2. Get PRINCE2 or equivalent

PRINCE2 appears in one in ten Band 7 job packs across every major domain. It has become a proxy signal for structured thinking and delivery competence. If you are targeting Band 7 in the next 12 months, PRINCE2 Foundation and Practitioner is the single highest-return qualification investment you can make.

3. Build a stakeholder evidence bank

Stakeholder management is the most frequently cited essential skill at this band. At Band 7, NHS panels will probe hard on this. Prepare specific examples of managing upward by influencing executives, laterally across organisational boundaries, and externally with commissioners, suppliers or regulators.

4. Develop data literacy

Data Analysis appeared in 11 Band 7 job packs as an essential requirement. This does not mean becoming a data scientist. It means interrogating performance dashboards, interpreting statistical outputs and presenting evidence-based recommendations to senior audiences.

5. Target the right domains

Project and Programme Management has the highest Band 7 volume with 196 roles tracked, followed by Data Analytics with 55 and Leadership and Service Management with 36. These three domains account for nearly half of all Band 7 hiring in our database.

SUMMARY

Key takeaways

This guide draws on 576 real NHS Band 7 roles, both active and historical, tracked across 24 non-clinical NHS career domains. Three things stand out from the data.

Takeaway 1

Band 7 spans nearly every NHS domain. 24 out of 25 tracked domains have recorded Band 7 roles. It is not a grade confined to management or project work. It appears in data, clinical safety, communications, IT support and procurement as much as in leadership or transformation. The NHS is a broad employer at this level and the opportunities are wider than most people realise.

Takeaway 2

Stakeholder management and PRINCE2 are the non-negotiables. Across all domains, stakeholder management is the most cited essential skill and PRINCE2 is the most cited professional qualification. These two credentials will differentiate a Band 6 candidate from a competitive Band 7 applicant in most NHS interview processes, regardless of the specific domain.

Takeaway 3

Project management is the highest-volume pathway. With 196 tracked roles, Project and Programme Management is the single largest Band 7 domain by a significant margin. If you are making a career pivot and want the broadest range of Band 7 opportunities, building project delivery credentials is the most evidence-backed route available.

For the most current picture of what NHS employers require at Band 7, the live domain intelligence pages on Career Co-Pilot reflect the latest job pack extractions as new roles enter our database.

Track your Band 7 readiness on Career Co-Pilot

Compare your skills against what Band 7 employers actually require. Browse live Band 7 roles across all 25 NHS domains. See your domain readiness score. Free to access with no payment required.

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