

Meet Nicky

Estates Officer (Operations)

Hi, my name is Nicky. I am an Estates Officer (Operations) and I work in the Estates team at the Royal United Hospitals Bath. Find out more about me and what I do below.



What do you do?

I work in the Estates team which maintains the hospital buildings and grounds. There are four elements to the Maintenance team: Mechanical, Electrical, Building and Estates Maintenance Workers. Maintenance issues are reported on an internal system and the work co-ordinators in the team allocate jobs to the various **trades**, for them to attend and fix.

I am in charge of the day-to-day running of the hospital maintenance and I oversee these teams. I do this job alongside another colleague. In this role, I have built up relationships with other teams across the hospital and I act as a point of contact for wards and departments, assisting them with any queries they may have about maintenance works.

See a word in **bold** and not sure what it means? Check out the glossary on the [last page](#)

Describe a typical day

I work weekdays, 7.30am – 4.00pm. When I get into work, I catch-up with any developments from the night before, for example if there was a **call-out** to fix an urgent issue. I also check in with the maintenance teams and the work co-ordinators. I might work on other tasks such as updating **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)**, **Method Statements** and **appraisals**. I also assist the team when and where needed.



How did you get into this role?

After leaving school, I began an apprenticeship in **mechatronics** to train as a technician. Unfortunately, I was made **redundant** and so I moved into the **installation** and maintenance side of engineering. During this time, I gained a number of different qualifications and became an Electrical Engineer.

I began working at the RUH about 5½ years ago and have had a number of roles during this time. I was working as a Team Leader within the Electrical team, repairing issues across the hospital site, when I became aware of a six-month **secondment** for the Estates Officer role. I applied and got the job.



When I started, it was a steep learning curve. I found it hard to leave my old job. I went from walking around site, fixing things, to working in an office and managing a team that I once worked alongside. However, my previous experience with the Maintenance team helped me and I also received management and **service development** training. I worked hard over the six months and after the **secondment** finished, I took up the job on a permanent basis.

What qualities should somebody have to become an Estates Officer?

I work with a wide range of staff members, of all different backgrounds and ages. Therefore, you must have good people skills. This includes being able to adapt your communication style to suit people's personalities.

I manage other staff so it is important to be a good listener and to be **empathetic** towards colleagues. It also helps to be able to take on board other people's comments or suggestions and to be prepared to admit when you are wrong.

What is the favourite part of your job?

I really enjoy coming into work. I believe that the Estates team feels a real sense of pride being part of the hospital. They go the extra mile for colleagues, particularly during the pandemic.



I like supporting my team. I always want to be available for them so they know that I am there to help them when they need it. I encourage the team to look after each other and to work together. I also ensure they get enough rest and take their leave.

Think back to when you were at secondary school. What do you wish you had known at that age to help you with your career?

I considered a range of post-16 options. I looked at studying business at sixth form and media studies at college as well as doing an apprenticeship at a travel agent and an apprenticeship in **mechatronics**.



I am very practical and can turn my hand to most things so doing the **mechatronics** apprenticeship suited me. It was hard though. I was the only female on my course and I had to fight to be heard but I think it is important to do what suits you and not follow the crowd.

Since working at the RUH, my self-confidence has grown and although it has not been easy, I think that I made the right decision as I am really happy where I am today.

What are your next steps in your career?

I have recently returned from **adoption leave** and that gave me some time to reflect on my career.



I really enjoyed spending time with my family but I did miss my job. The next step in my career would be to take on a more senior role and move away from day-to-day management to focus on policy and **service level agreements**, along with bigger and more detailed tasks. In the past, I felt intimidated about taking this step but my time away has helped me understand that it is important to challenge myself.

What advice or tips would you give somebody interested in becoming an Estates Officer?

I think it is important to explore job roles so that you can understand what is involved. You can do this by speaking to staff members – get to know them and ask questions. I understand that it is currently more difficult to shadow staff or have a site tour due to the pandemic but if you get the opportunity, it can give you an idea of the work environment.





Royal United Hospitals Bath
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Want further information?

- ⇒ Visit the **Health Careers** website (bit.ly/3hYAR8i)
- ⇒ Visit the **Step into the NHS** website (www.stepintothenhs.nhs.uk)
- ⇒ Visit **NHS jobs** to search and apply for vacancies at the RUH (www.jobs.nhs.uk)
- ⇒ If you have any other questions or you need this document in an alternative format, please contact us at ruh-tr.careersengage@nhs.net or call **01225 824281** or **01225 821542**

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Glossary

Adoption leave	Time away from work to look after a child
Appraisal	Annual review of an employee's performance and progress at work
Call-out	When somebody has to deal with a problem which must be resolved urgently, outside of usual working hours
Empathetic	Ability to understand what somebody is experiencing and how they are feeling
Installation	The act of fixing equipment into place so that it can be used
Mechatronics	The combination of electronics and mechanical engineering
Method Statement	A document which outlines how a specific task will be completed
Secondment	A period of time where an employee will temporarily work in a role in another department or organisation
Service development	The act of improving relationships with each other and wider teams
Service level agreements	A contract between a provider and a client which sets out what will be delivered by the provider
Standard Operating Procedure (SOPs)	A document which sets out the process for carrying out routine operations
Redundant	When a company no longer needs an employee, they let them go and make them redundant
Trades	A worker with specific skills, for example plumber