

Health and Medicine

If you are going to work in this career area you must have a strong interest in people – in caring for them and keeping them healthy. This area includes a wide range of jobs, with 350 different roles.

There are over 2.5 million people working in the UK healthcare sector, with 270,000 of those working in Scotland.

The largest UK employer in healthcare is the NHS, with more than 1.5 million employees, making it one of the top 5 largest workforces in the world.

What areas can I work in?

Health and medicine covers a huge range of occupations: Alternative medicine, ambulance services, dentistry, dietetics, medical technology, medicine and surgery, nursing and auxiliary work, occupational therapy, ophthalmics and orthoptics, pharmacy, physiotherapy, podiatry, radiography and speech and arts therapy.

What kind of companies can I work for?

Most jobs in this sector are with either the public sector, mainly the National Health Service (NHS) or private healthcare companies and clinics. You can work within:

- general or specialist hospitals
- GP surgeries or health centres
- dental practices
- nursing homes
- private physiotherapy services
- alternative health practices
- colleges and universities
- optician shops or practices
- the Civil Service or government organisations.

What's the job market like?

NHS Scotland employs around 163,000 people in over 70 different occupations. It employs around 80% of the health sector workforce in Scotland, with the remaining 20% employed in the private healthcare sector and in the voluntary sector.

There are shortages in highly qualified professional staff including medical radiographers, and all grades in anaesthetics, paediatrics, obstetrics and gynaecology.

An ongoing future challenge facing NHS Scotland is the ageing workforce, with the median age at 46. The proportion of staff aged 50 and over has increased from 28.6% to 38.5% over the last ten years, with Support services and Personal and Social Care services having the largest proportion.

Facts and figures

Here are a few **workforce facts** about the healthcare sector:

- The Scottish Ambulance Service has over 5,000 employees. Its patient transport service undertakes over 1.1 million journeys every year.
- The nursing profession continues to have a higher female to male ratio, with only 10.7% of men working as nurses.
- In the UK there are currently 693,618 nurses and midwives on the Nursing and Midwifery Council's register, an increase of 3,880 (0.6%) since September 2017.
- The overall new entrants to Nursing in the UK have fallen by 22% since 2016.
- In Scotland the numbers of medical and dental consultants have increased by 3.1% since December 2017.

Want to find out more?

[Skills for Health](#) is the Sector Skills Council for the health sector, their website provides lots of careers information for entry level careers.

Sources

- The Health Sector in Scotland: A Labour Market Intelligence Report, Skills for Health (July - October 2017)
- NHS Scotland careers [website](#) (2019)
- NHS Scotland Workforce Information – Quarterly update of Staff in Post, Vacancies and Turnover at 31 December 2018, NHS National Services Scotland Information Services Division (March 2019)
- Prospects [website](#) (2019)
- Royal College of Nursing – The UK nursing labour market review 2018
- Scottish Ambulance Service [website](#)
- Shortage Occupation List (April 2019) (www.gov.uk)