

## 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 around 350 roles.

There are over 2.5 million people working in the UK healthcare sector. The largest UK employer is the NHS with more than 1.79 million employees (December 2020), 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.

To see the routes to getting into each of these sectors, take a look at our [Career Pathway](#).

### 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.

You can also work for voluntary or not-for-profit organisations, such as the British Red Cross or Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) UK.

### What's the job market like?

NHS Scotland employs around 178,000 people, the highest number reported to date, and a 6.0% annual increase. 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 practitioners, medical radiographers,

occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, nurses and paramedics.

An ongoing future challenge facing NHS Scotland is the ageing workforce, with the median age at 45. The age distribution varies across job families. In March 2021 11.3% of medical staff were over 55 compared with 42.3% of support staff.

From September 2020 all undergraduate and postgraduate midwifery, nursing and a number of other allied health profession students can access a maintenance grant of between £5,000 - £8,000 that doesn't need to be paid back.

## Facts and figures

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

- The Scottish Ambulance Service has over 5,000 employees. On the frontline of the NHS dispatching immediate medical assistance or clinical advice to over 5 million people across Scotland.
- Almost 80% of the NHS workforce is female. For example, the percentage ranges from 45% in Ambulance Services to 89.9% in Nursing and Midwifery.
- In the UK as of September 2020 there are currently 724,516 nurses and midwives on the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) register, an increase of 18,264 (2.6%) since September 2019.
- There are just over 14,000 Medical and Dental staff in post an annual increase of 5%. Doctors in Training and Consultants account for 43% and 40% of the Medical and Dental workforce respectively.

## 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

Office for National Statistics [website](#) (March 2021)

NHS Scotland Workforce Information – Statistics - March 2021- NHS National Services Scotland Information Services Division (June 2021)

- Prospects [website](#) (March 2020)
- Royal College of Nursing – The UK nursing labour market review (2020)
- Scottish Ambulance Service [website](#) (June 2021)
- Shortage Occupation List [website](#) (May 2021)