Medical Secretary

Medical secretaries provide administrative and secretarial support for doctors, consultants and other senior staff in hospitals, health centres or GP surgeries.

The Work

You could be:

- dealing with consultants' correspondence and managing their diaries
- working on reception, making appointments and handling patient queries
- filing confidential medical records
- organising patient waiting lists
- typing patient letters or confidential medical reports
- updating patients' medical records
- sending patients' samples for testing
- organising meetings, and associated requirements, and taking minutes at meetings
- booking rooms, audio visual equipment and refreshments for meetings.

Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Actual pay rates may vary, depending on:

- where you work
- the size of company or organisation you work for
- the demand for the job.

Medical secretaries in Scotland are paid on the NHS Agenda for Change Band 3, £29,061 to £31,364 a year. With experience you can go up to Band 4, £31,492 to £34,254 a year. The current pay scales are from April 2026. Secretaries in private hospitals and GP surgeries can earn from £22,000 to £32,000 a year.

Conditions

- You could be based in an office of a department in a hospital, such as cardiology or radiography.
- You could be working in the office of a GP surgery or private practice.
- You would work at a reception desk or workstation using a computer.
- Your hours would normally be 9.00am-6.00pm, Monday to Friday.
- You will have a lot of contact with patients, medical staff and other healthcare staff.
- Opportunities for part time work are good.

Getting In

- A good general education is helpful. Many employers ask for some subjects at National 4 or 5 including English.
- You need good IT and audio typing skills.

- A typing or word processing qualification is useful and sometimes essential. You need a good typing speed.
- You might get in through a Modern Apprenticeship in Business and Administration.
- You could take an NC or NQ (SCQF Levels 4-6) or an SVQ in administration before applying for a job. In many cases, there are no formal entry requirements for an NC, NQ or SVQ.
- Some courses can include medical specialisms.
- You need to develop a good knowledge of medical terms.

You could look for work in NHS or private hospitals or clinics, GP surgeries, health centres, research institutes or universities.

What Does It Take

You should have:

- accuracy and attention to detail
- the ability to take the initiative and make decisions
- good communication skills and a tactful nature
- good organisational skills
- good typing and IT skills
- an interest in health and medicine
- respect for dealing with confidential information
- the ability to work as part of a team.

Training

- Training is usually on the job, perhaps with part time study towards a relevant qualification.
- If you do a Modern Apprenticeship, you would complete an SVQ in Business and Administration at SCQF Level 5 or 6.
- The Association of Medical Secretaries, Practice Managers, Administrators and Receptionists (AMSPAR) offers the Level 2 and Level 3 Awards in Healthcare Administration.

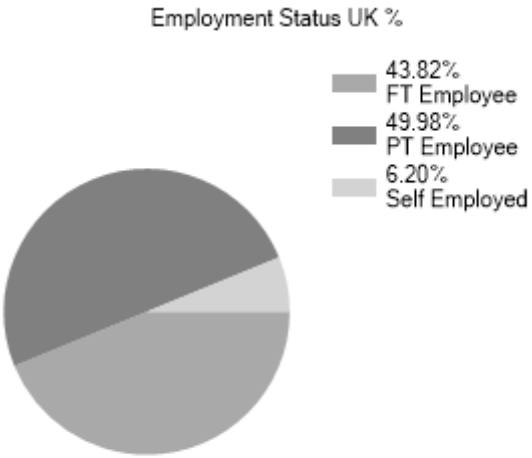
Getting On

With more experience you could move on to the job of practice manager.

Contacts

NHS Scotland Careers
Website: www.careers.nhs.scot
Website (2): jobs.scot.nhs.uk

Statistics



Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

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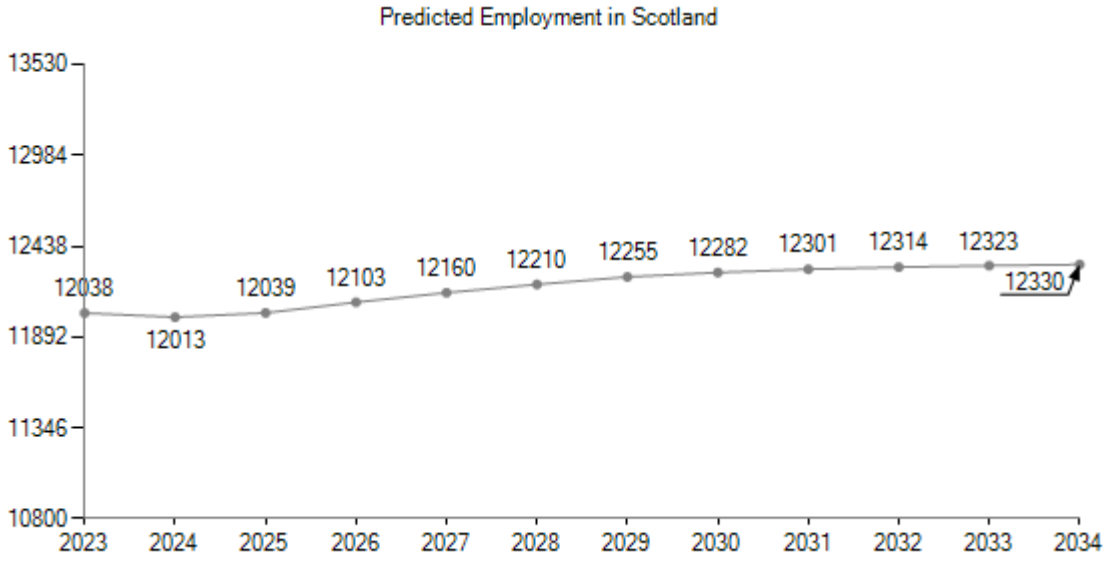

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