Health Visitor or Public Health Nurse

Health visitors or public health nurses are qualified nurses who advise people in the community on how to prevent illness and remain healthy. They mostly deal with families with young children. They do not usually give clinical nursing care.

The Work

You could be:

- giving advice and support to the parents of babies and young children on subjects as feeding, diet or sleep
- checking the development of babies by regular visits and clinic sessions
- advising on mental health problems such as postnatal depression or agoraphobia
- advising individuals and families on problems such as violent relationships, bereavement or giving up smoking
- running "well woman" clinics or childcare clinics for mothers and babies
- giving talks at health centres or schools – a key role is promoting healthcare in the community
- watching for environmental factors which affect health such as damp housing or poor hygiene
- working closely with GPs, midwives, social workers and housing officials.

Pay

Under the National Health Service (NHS) health visitors are paid on the Agenda for Change pay scale. The current pay scales are from April 2026. You will start on Band 6, £43,169 to £52,603 a year. Team leaders/managers are on Band 7, £52,769 to £61,377 a year.

Conditions

- You work from a medical practice, health centre, clinic or school.
- Most of the time you are travelling about visiting people at home or in schools, day centres or care homes.
- You usually work normal office hours but there may be some evening and weekend work.
- You may be able to work part time or job share.
- In rural areas you may also do the work of a midwife and district nurse.

Getting In

- You must first qualify as a registered nurse (See Nurse: Registered - Adult for details).
- After qualifying as a registered nurse you must register with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC).
- After gaining around two years' experience you can then apply for an approved health visitor training programme.
- Glasgow Caledonian, Queen Margaret, Robert Gordon, Stirling and West of Scotland universities all offer postgraduate courses (SCQF Level 11) approved by the NMC.
- You will require a satisfactory criminal record check from Disclosure Scotland to show that you are suitable for this type of work. Contact Disclosure Scotland for details on the type you would need.

- You must undergo health screening.
- You should have a driving licence.

What Does It Take

You should be:

- able to work alone
- able to communicate with people from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures
- observant
- a good listener
- confident
- a good motivator to help people change their lifestyles
- patient and tactful.

You should have good judgement.

Training

- You would normally be sponsored by your employer while you train.
- Courses last between 32-52 weeks, half in university and half doing supervised work in the community.
- To continue working as a nurse you must renew your registration with the NMC every three years.

Getting On

- To renew your NMC registration you must keep your skills and knowledge up to date, by undertaking at least 35 hours of relevant study and 450 of practice hours every three years. This is known as Continuing Professional Development (CPD).
- You could gain promotion to become a team leader/manager.
- You could take further courses in special aspects of public health nursing.
- After working as a public health nurse, you could take a further course to train student nurses or public health nurses.
- You could take courses leading to work as a health service manager.

More Information

The Scottish Government runs the One Year Job Guarantee (OYJG) Scheme for newly qualified nurses and midwives to help improve their chances of finding work as well as developing their skills. The positions are one-year fixed term contracts at 22.5 hours a week, set at grade 5 on the NHS Agenda for Change pay scale. For further details contact NHS Education for Scotland.

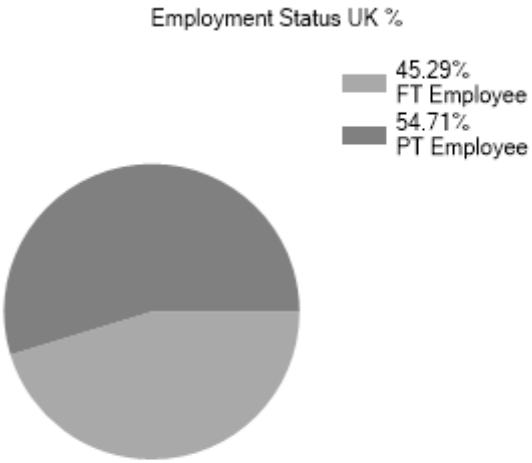
Contacts

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

Nursing and Midwifery Council
Tel: 020 7637 7181
Email: UKenquiries@nmc-uk.org
Website: www.nmc.org.uk
Facebook: www.facebook.com/nmcuk

Royal College of Nursing Scotland
Website: www.rcn.org.uk/scotland
Facebook: www.facebook.com/royalcollegeofnursing

Statistics



Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

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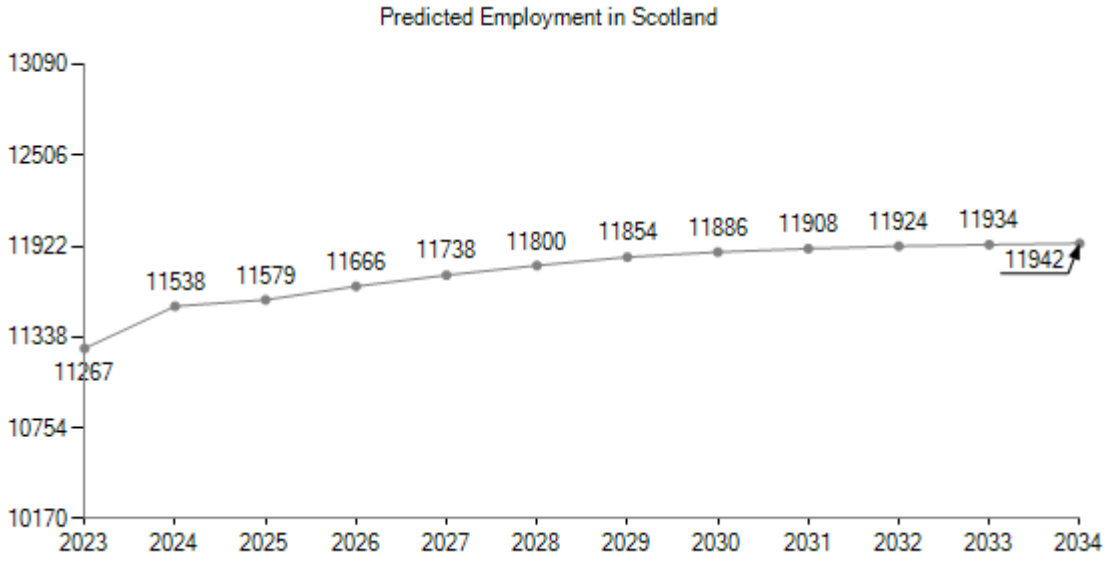

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