

## Pharmacist

Pharmacists work either in a community or retail pharmacy or in a hospital or clinical pharmacy.

### The Work

#### Community or Retail Pharmacist

You could be:

- supplying over the counter and prescribed medicines to the general public
- making sure that medicines are stored securely and correctly labelled
- checking that dosages and instructions on prescriptions are accurate and clear
- referring back to a doctor if there is a problem, for example a conflict with other medication the person is taking
- preparing prescriptions and advising people how to use medicines properly
- managing and training other pharmacy support staff
- advising customers on a range of health matters and referring them to their doctor or dentist if needed
- carrying out cholesterol and blood pressure checks and diabetes screening
- keeping records and business accounts up to date and handling cash.

#### Hospital or Clinical Pharmacist

You could be:

- making sure that drugs and medicines are stored securely and correctly labelled
- checking the quality of medical products
- preparing drugs and medical products and arranging for them to be delivered to various hospital departments
- maintaining and ordering supplies
- advising and informing staff and patients on the best drugs to use
- making rounds of the wards with other medical staff to see patients and discuss medication
- training and supervising pharmacy support staff
- keeping records and completing forms.

### Pay

Pay rates can vary depending on whether the pharmacist works with the National Health Service (NHS), with a private practice, or is self-employed.

Pharmacists working within the NHS are on Agenda for Change scales. The current pay scales are from April 2025. Pre-registration pharmacists are normally on Band 5, £33,247 to £41,424 a year. After registration pharmacists are on Band 6, £41,608 to £50,702 a year. Clinical and specialist pharmacists are on Band 7, £50,861 to £59,159 a year. Senior pharmacists and team leaders are on Band 8a, £60,681 to £67,665 a year and Band 8b, £74,003 to

£79,164 a year.

Salaries for community pharmacists range from £23,000 to £50,000 a year depending on experience and size of pharmacy.

## Conditions

- Community or retail pharmacists work in shops including chain stores and supermarkets – they may visit people at home.
- Hospital or clinical pharmacists work in laboratories or dispensaries and may visit patients in the wards or in residential homes – they may sometimes work in health centres.
- All types of pharmacists usually work regular hours although retail pharmacists may have to work at weekends or in the evening, and hospital pharmacists sometimes have to work shifts.
- Flexible or part time hours are possible.
- Pharmacists usually have to wear a white lab coat or other protective clothing.

## Getting In

- You need a degree (SCQF Level 10) in pharmacy. In Scotland, the University of Strathclyde and Robert Gordon University offer a Master of Pharmacy (MPharm) degree course.
- Entry to Robert Gordon is 4 good Highers including English and Chemistry, plus two further science subjects or Maths.
- Entry to Strathclyde is for 2nd year and you need Advanced Highers plus 4 good Highers.
- To work as a pharmacist you need to register with the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC). You can do this on completion of the necessary qualifications and one year pre-registration training (see 'Training' below).

## What Does It Take

You need to be:

- methodical and pay close attention to detail
- accurate and precise – mistakes could be fatal
- a good organiser
- willing to take responsibility
- able to get on well with people, both colleagues and customers
- able to explain detailed and sensitive information to the public
- patient and understanding when dealing with the public.

You should have:

- IT skills
- a professional manner
- a good memory
- business skills if working as a retail or community pharmacist.

## Training

- After completing your MPharm degree, you would complete a paid Foundation training year and pass a registration assessment to gain GPhC registration to become a qualified pharmacist.
- Most hospital pharmacists go on to take a postgraduate certificate or diploma in clinical pharmacy.
- You need to keep up to date with research and development of new drugs.

## Getting On

- You will be required to keep your skills and knowledge up to date by undertaking continuous professional development (CPD) courses throughout your career.
- You could be self-employed, either as a locum or running a high street pharmacy.
- You can train as a supplementary prescriber, to work in a Primary Health Care Trust.
- There are opportunities to teach or do research.
- There are also opportunities in general management and advisory or consultancy work.
- You can take specialist postgraduate courses.

## Contacts

### General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC)

Tel: 0203 713 8000

Email: [info@pharmacyregulation.org](mailto:info@pharmacyregulation.org)

Website: [www.pharmacyregulation.org](http://www.pharmacyregulation.org)

X: @TheGPhC

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/TheGPhC](https://www.facebook.com/TheGPhC)

### National Pharmacy Association (NPA)

Tel: 01727 858687

Email: [npa@npa.co.uk](mailto:npa@npa.co.uk)

Website: [www.npa.co.uk](http://www.npa.co.uk)

X: @NPA1921

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/Supportyourlocalpharmacy](https://www.facebook.com/Supportyourlocalpharmacy)

### NHS Scotland Careers

Website: [www.careers.nhs.scot](http://www.careers.nhs.scot)

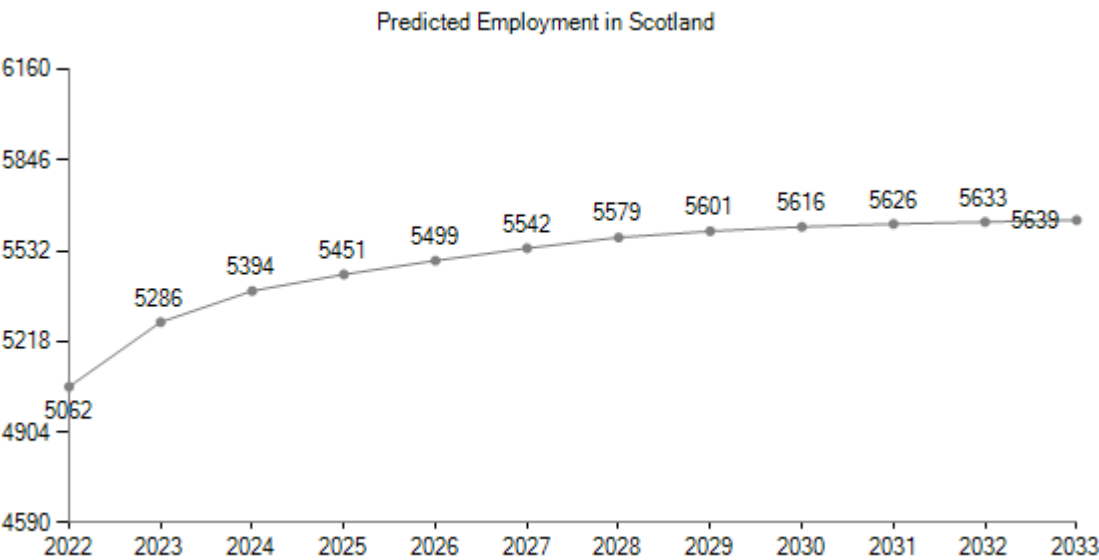
Website (2): [jobs.scot.nhs.uk](http://jobs.scot.nhs.uk)

Statistics

Employment Status : Not available this career.

Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.



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