

Dietitian

Dietitians give advice on diet to patients. They work out what foods and drinks are suitable for individual patients, to keep them healthy and to treat or prevent certain illnesses.

The Work

You could be:

- running a clinic to advise patients on nutrition
- working with patients with conditions such as diabetes, obesity, eating disorders or food allergies
- visiting patients on the hospital wards, discussing their needs with health colleagues
- collecting information on diets and analysing results
- giving general advice on healthy eating to individuals or groups
- keeping up to date with new theories and research on dietetics
- preparing educational promotional materials for use in schools or community centres
- keeping records of patients and writing reports
- specialising in one area such as paediatrics (children) or renal (kidney) dietetics.

Pay

Starting off as a dietitian with the NHS you would be on the Agenda for Change salary scales. The current pay scales are from April 2025. You would start on Band 5, £34,494 to £42,977 a year. With experience and specialisation you could move on to Band 6, £43,169 to £52,603 a year or Band 7, £52,769 to £61,377 a year.

Outside the NHS your income would vary according to who your employer was.

Conditions

- Work is usually in a hospital or health centre but you may sometimes visit patients at home.
- You may need to travel to visit patients.
- You may be part of a research team, working in a laboratory.
- Working hours are normally regular but there may be occasional weekend and evening work.

Getting In

To become a dietitian you need a degree (SCQF Level 9-10) approved by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).

- In Scotland Glasgow Caledonian, Queen Margaret and Robert Gordon universities offer relevant degrees (SCQF Level 10) leading to a career in dietetics. Check individual institutions for entry requirements.
- You can take a degree in a biological subject (biochemistry and human physiology), followed by a postgraduate course (SCQF Level 11) in dietetics at Queen Margaret University.
- After training you must register with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) before starting work.
- 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 may have to undergo an occupational health check and provide evidence of immunisation.
- Relevant experience is helpful.

Most dietitians work in the NHS. You might also find work with local authorities, in the food industry, education, the pharmaceutical industry, research, sports nutrition, health promotion or in the private health sector.

What Does It Take

You should be:

- interested in food, health and science and using your knowledge to help people
- able to get on well with people from all backgrounds and of all ages
- a good communicator
- able to work with people without judging them
- aware of cultural or religious needs which affect diet
- patient, tactful and persuasive – to support patients in changing their eating habits
- confident making decisions
- able to work well in a team.

Training

- Once you have gained HCPC registration, training is on the job, with short courses to keep your skills and knowledge up to date.
- The British Dietetic Association (BDA) runs appropriate training courses on a variety of different subjects.

Getting On

- You might move into a senior post or into management.
- You might specialise in a particular area such as work with older people or work in sports dietetics.
- During your career, you must complete continuing professional development (CPD) to keep up to date with new developments and meet the HCPC CPD Standards to remain registered.
- You could become self-employed and do a variety of work including writing for the press.
- You might work in research or teaching.
- If you work in the food and drink industry you may be able to move into product development or marketing.
- You might be able to work abroad, but you may need further qualifications.

More Information

Visit this great resource [NHS Education Scotland Virtual Tour](#) to learn more about this job.

Contacts

British Dietetic Association
 Tel: 0121 200 8080
 Website: www.bda.uk.com

X: @BDA_Dietitians
Facebook: www.facebook.com/BritishDieteticAssociation

Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)

Tel: 0300 500 6184
Email: education@hcpc-uk.org
Website: www.hcpc-uk.org
X: @The_HCPC
Facebook: www.facebook.com/hcpcuk

NHS Scotland Careers

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

Statistics

Employment Status : Not available this career.

Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

Predicted Employment Statistics : Not available this career.