

Occupational Therapist

Occupational therapists help people of all ages and backgrounds overcome a range of disabilities, which may be caused by accident, ageing, or physical or mental health conditions. They work out programmes of activities to help their patients to lead a more independent life.

The Work

You could be:

- talking to patients and health care staff to work out the patient's needs
- developing rehabilitation programmes to meet the patient's needs
- helping patients to regain their confidence and rebuild skills
- planning domestic, social and work activities for the patient – which could include shopping, cooking, going to a cinema or restaurant, travelling on a bus or train, or using work tools or other equipment
- helping the patient with day to day activities, such as washing and dressing
- listening to patients, their families and carers and perhaps giving advice
- advising on equipment which would make things easier for the patient, perhaps at work or home
- managing a caseload, writing reports and recording progress made by patients.

Pay

Pay rates can vary depending on whether you are working with the NHS, with a private practice, or are self-employed. The current pay scales are from April 2025.

Within the NHS Agenda for Change scales occupational therapists' salaries are on Band 5, £34,494 to £42,977 a year, specialist occupational therapists are paid on Band 6, £43,169 to £52,603 a year and advanced occupational therapists are paid on Band 7, £52,769 to £61,377 a year.

Conditions

- You may work in a hospital, a GPs surgery or in a clinic in the community.
- You may visit schools, day centres, patient's homes, prisons, care homes and social care settings.
- You may have to travel to see patients at different locations.
- Hours are usually regular, but you might sometimes need to do weekend or evening work.
- You would wear a uniform.

Getting In

- You need a degree in occupational therapy (SCQF Level 10) – the entry requirements are 4 good Highers, usually including English and sometimes a science subject, preferably Biology. National 5 Maths is also required.
- In Scotland three universities offer degree courses in Occupational Therapy: Glasgow Caledonian University, Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh and Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen.
- If you are already a graduate with a good Honours degree in a related field you could qualify by taking an

approved accelerated postgraduate programme (SCQF Level 11), such as an MSc or PgDip in Occupational Therapy (Pre-Registration). These are usually two-year full time courses. In Scotland they are offered by Edinburgh Napier University, Glasgow Caledonian University and Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh.

- You could complete the HNC (SCQF Level 7) in Occupational Therapy Support at Glasgow Clyde College. Successful completion of this course leads to entry to one of the universities mentioned above. Entry to the HNC requires 2 Highers, preferably including English and a science subject, or a relevant NC (SCQF Level 6).
- 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.
- It helps if you have some work experience, often voluntary.
- When you complete your course, you register with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), which you must have to work in the National Health Service (NHS).
- A driving licence is useful, and may be necessary.
- There is a shortage of occupational therapists in some areas.

Most occupational therapists work in the NHS. There are also jobs with social work departments and in private practice.

You can find NHS job vacancies in Scotland by visiting [NHS Scotland Recruitment](#).

What Does It Take

You should have:

- excellent observation skills
- excellent communication skills
- good practical skills
- a creative approach to problem solving
- good organisational skills
- a patient, caring and understanding nature – to build and keep the patient's trust.

You should:

- enjoy helping people and solving problems
- want to help people to have the best quality of life they can
- be resourceful and imaginative
- be flexible to respond to a patient's needs
- enjoy responsibility and have good decision making skills.

Training

- Once you have gained state registration, training is on the job.
- You will keep your skills and knowledge up to date by undertaking continuous professional development (CPD). This is required for you to stay on the state register.
- The Royal College of Occupational Therapists (RCOT) offers short courses including interactive learning to help with your CPD.

Getting On

- You might specialise in a particular client group, such as children and young people, elderly people, brain injuries or learning disabilities.
- You could move into a senior post or into management.
- You might take further qualifications, perhaps for teaching or research work.
- You may be able to work abroad.

More Information

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

Contacts

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

Royal College of Occupational Therapists (RCOT)

Tel: 020 3141 4600

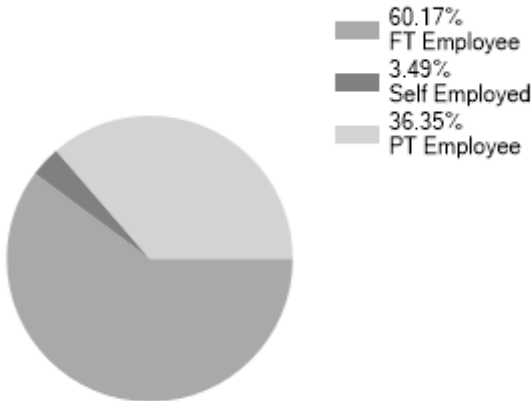
Email: hello@thercot.co.uk

Website: www.rcot.co.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/thercot

Statistics

Employment Status UK %

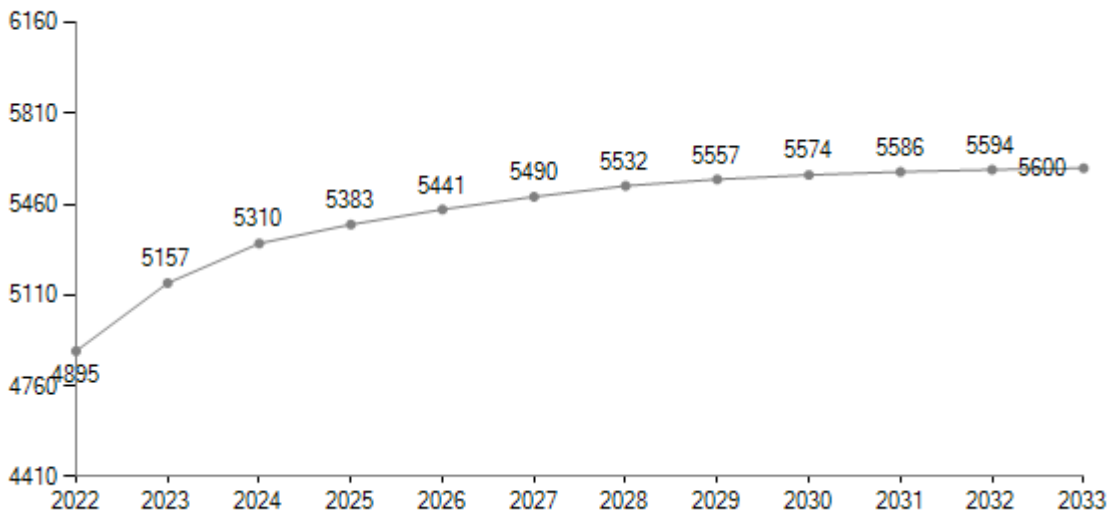


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

LMI data powered by [LMI for All](#)

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [Lightcast](#)