Health Improvement Officer

Health improvement officers make people aware of the importance of good health. They run campaigns and produce materials to encourage people to change to a healthier lifestyle. They deal with matters such as smoking, drug and alcohol misuse, diet, exercise, immunisation, sexual health, care of mothers and children, and older people's health.

The Work

You could be:

- planning health education policies and putting them into practice
- working with doctors, dentists, nurses, teachers, social workers, community workers and others to promote good health
- writing leaflets and posters and commissioning videos
- giving talks and arranging exhibitions and events
- producing teaching materials to be used in schools, workplaces and communities
- advising health professionals and community leaders
- giving information through newspapers, television, or by speaking to schools and community or voluntary organisations
- managing projects and budgets and writing reports
- undertaking and participating in research projects.

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.

Health improvement officers who are working for the NHS are on the Agenda for Change pay scale. The current pay scales are from April 2026. They would usually start on Band 5, £34,494 to £42,977 a year.

Those in a senior position are on Band 6, £43,169 to £52,603 a year. Those with managerial responsibilities can be on Band 7, £52,769 to £61,377 a year.

Conditions

- You would work in a range of locations such as health centres, hospitals, leisure centres, charities or local authority buildings.
- Working hours are usually 9.00am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday. However, evening and weekend work may be involved.

Getting In

- You need a degree (SCQF Level 9-10), usually in a health, social or behavioural science subject, or a relevant postgraduate qualification (SCQF Level 11).
- Robert Gordon University offers the MSc in Public Health and Health Promotion.
- You may also enter with a professional qualification and experience in nursing, health visiting, teaching, environmental health, social work or medicine.
- If you are a new entrant, it may help to get some voluntary experience first.
- A driving licence is useful and may be necessary.

Most health promotion officers work in the National Health Service (NHS), local authorities, in the community or for health related charities.

What Does It Take

You should be:

- keen to promote healthy living
- able to work with people from all backgrounds
- able to motivate, encourage and influence
- sensitive to different cultures
- accurate and methodical – to do research on health matters
- able to analyse results of research and decide what is important
- imaginative – to think up strategies.

You must have:

- excellent communication skills
- good organisational skills
- the confidence to speak in public.

Training

- Training is on the job.
- The Open University offers a Certificate in Public Health.
- You can study for a postgraduate qualification while you are working.
- You would take short courses throughout your working life, to keep up to date.
- The Royal Society of Public Health (RSPH) offers a range of relevant courses.

Getting On

- You may work for a health board or for local government – in each case you could move on to a senior post or into management. A relevant postgraduate qualification is likely to be required for promotion to a senior level.
- If you work for a voluntary organisation, there would be fewer chances of promotion.
- You could move into research work or training.

Contacts

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

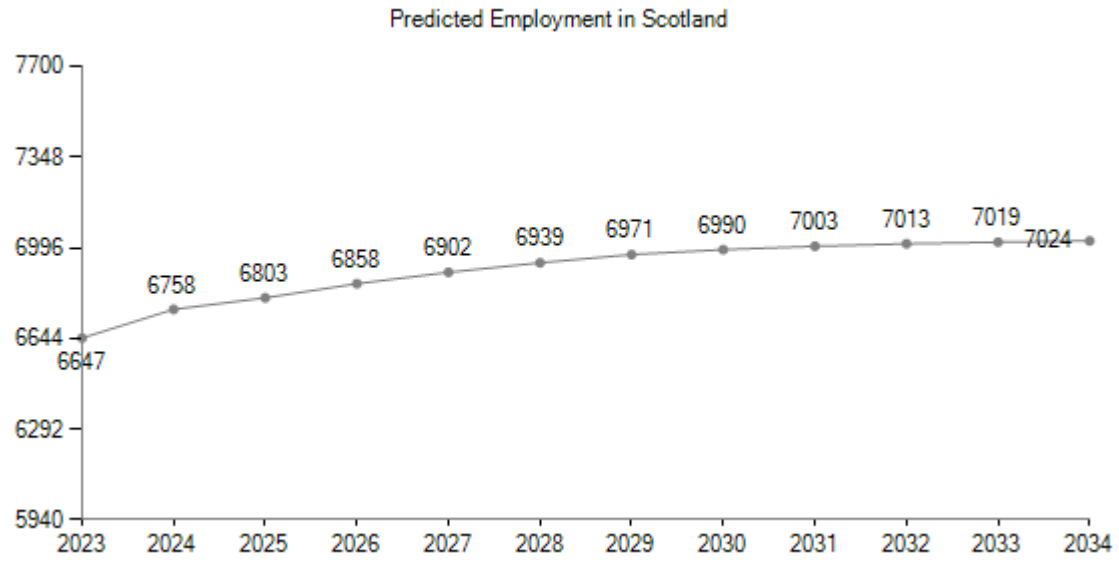
Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH)
Tel: 020 7265 7300
Website: www.rsph.org.uk
X: @R_S_P_H
Facebook: www.facebook.com/royalsocietyforpublichealth

Statistics

Employment Status : Not available this career.

Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.



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