

Osteopath

Osteopaths believe that abnormalities in the structure or movement of the body can cause long term problems such as tension or headaches. Through massage, physical manipulation or touch they treat a range of problems including back pain, migraine, repetitive strain injury, sports injuries and arthritis.

The Work

You could be:

- taking details of medical history, lifestyle and diet from new patients
- assessing the patient's posture and how they move
- using your sense of touch to feel for damaged bones, ligaments, muscles, nerves and joints (known as palpation)
- taking patient's blood pressure
- interpreting images from MRI scans and x-rays
- carrying out manual treatment including stretching, soft or deep tissue massage and manipulation
- treating each patient on average over two to six sessions
- giving advice on posture, exercise and lifestyle to maintain health
- advising your patient to see a doctor or other therapist.

Pay

Most osteopaths are self-employed and charge rates per session, so their earnings will vary with the number of patients they see. A 30-minute session typically costs between £45 and £60. Osteopaths with well-established practices could earn up to £65,000 a year.

Conditions

- You work in a consulting room in a clinic, health centre or hospital.
- You might work from your own home.
- You may have to travel to visit patients in their homes, or at a sports club.
- You may have to work early mornings, evenings or weekends to suit your clients.

Getting In

- By law, you must be registered with the General Osteopathic Council (GOsC) to work as an osteopath.
- To register you must have completed a course accredited by the GOsC – at present there are no courses available in Scotland. Courses are listed on the GOsC website.
- Courses are mostly 4 years full time and 5 years part time.
- Entry requirements are 4-5 Highers, usually including Biology or Human Biology and another science subject.
- If you have a degree (SCQF Level 9-10) in medicine or a healthcare profession such as physiotherapy, you can take a shorter course.
- Many enter osteopathy as a second career.

- You should be physically fit.
- 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 would start as an assistant to an established osteopath. Although growing numbers work in the National Health Service (NHS), most osteopaths run their own practices. Others work within occupational healthcare in public bodies and private companies.

What Does It Take

You should be:

- able to communicate with people from all backgrounds
- understanding and empathetic
- a good listener
- able to decide on suitable treatments
- practical
- reassuring and able to inspire confidence.

You should have:

- strong observational skills
- a lot of stamina
- well developed dexterity and touch, to carry out the work.

Training

- Accredited degrees include at least 1000 hours of clinical training.
- Once you have gained your qualification, training is on the job.
- You will attend short courses to keep your skills and knowledge up to date, through a programme of Continuing Professional Development (CPD). The GOsC requires all registered osteopaths to complete 90 hours of CPD (including at least 45 hours learning with others) over three years.

Getting On

- With experience you might be able to increase the size of your practice.
- You might specialise in a particular area of work such as sports injuries.
- You can train in other branches of complementary medicine such as naturopathy.
- You might combine your work with teaching, research or journalism.
- It might help if you can move around the country.

Contacts

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Statistics

Employment Status UK %

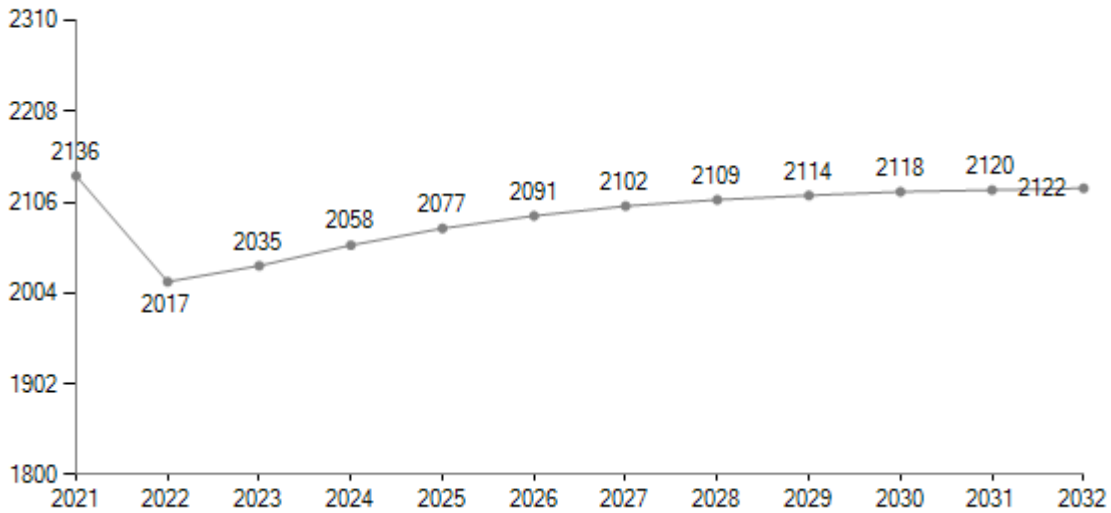


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

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

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [Lightcast](#)