Nurse - Adult

Registered nurses (adult) care for sick patients aged 16 and over in hospital or the community. They help patients deal with illness, treatment and recovery by assessing patients' needs.

The Work

You could be:

- working out care plans for patients
- recording patients' temperature, blood pressure and respiration rate
- giving injections, cleaning and dressing wounds, fixing drips and blood transfusion equipment, carrying out specific procedures such as cervical smear tests
- assisting at operations and inserting and removing stitches
- doing routine work on the ward, such as making beds
- discussing patients' progress with doctors and with relatives
- keeping records of patients' treatment and progress
- monitoring patients in intensive care and adjusting, when necessary, the machinery which supports them
- carrying out emergency work, such as resuscitation.

Pay

On the NHS Agenda for Change pay scales a newly qualified nurse is on Band 5, £34,494 to £42,977 a year. A senior (charge nurse) or specialist nurse is on Band 6, £43,169 to £52,603 a year.

The current pay scales are from April 2026.

Conditions

- You would work in a hospital, a health centre or a doctors' surgery.
- You might have to work shifts, including evenings, nights, weekends and public holidays.
- You would wear a uniform and sometimes protective clothing.
- There would be some heavy lifting of patients.
- You would have to be able to deal with unpleasant sights and smells.
- You might be able to work part time.

Getting In

- To become a registered nurse you need to take a 3-4 year degree (SCQF Level 9-10) in nursing. Entry requirements are 3-4 Highers plus one or more subjects at National 5, preferably including English and a science subject.
- An Access to nursing course may also give entry. However, always check that the course is accepted by the college or university you want to go to before you apply.
- You could complete the HNC Healthcare Practice (SCQF Level 7) at college before going onto first or second year of an undergraduate degree in nursing.

- 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 should have a good level of physical fitness. You will undergo a health screening.
- When you complete your training you must register with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC).
- Previous experience in a paid or voluntary role in a health care setting would be an advantage.

Most registered nurses work for the National Health Service (NHS). You could also work with a nursing agency, hospice, in a private hospital or nursing home, with the armed services or in a prison. You can find NHS job vacancies in Scotland by visiting NHS Scotland Recruitment.

What Does It Take

You should be:

- able to communicate with people from a wide range of backgrounds
- very observant and able to act on your own initiative
- patient and tactful
- willing to take responsibility
- able to assess what is best for the patient
- flexible and able to multitask
- a good teamworker
- confident in making decisions
- able to remain calm in stressful situations.

Training

- Once you have gained your NMC registration, training is on the job. There are ongoing requirements for education and skills development.
- During your first year as a qualified nurse you would get extra support and guidance through the Flying Start Programme.
- To continue working as a nurse you must renew your registration with the NMC every three years.

Getting On

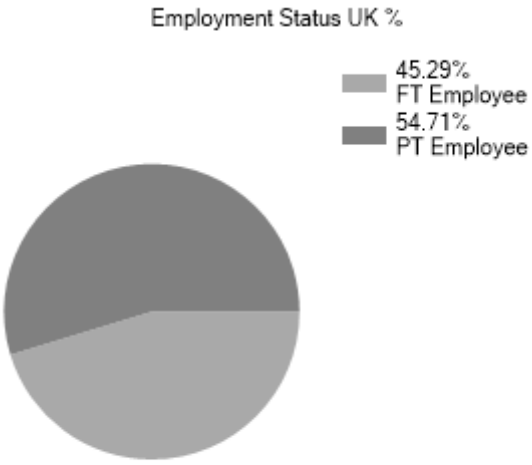
- With further learning and experience you could progress to senior, advanced or consultant level.
- To renew your NMC registration you must keep your skills and knowledge up to date, by undertaking at least 35 hours of relevant Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and 450 of practice hours every three years. Full details can be found on NMC website.
- You could take further courses in a wide range of specialisms, such as orthopaedics, cancer or coronary care, which would lead to more responsible jobs in hospital.
- You could take courses such as health visiting or district nursing, which would lead to more responsible jobs in the community.
- Of all the branches of nursing, adult nursing offers the best chances of employment and so you could work abroad.

Contacts

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

Nursing and Midwifery Council
Tel: 020 7637 7181
Email: UKenquiries@nmc-uk.org
Website: www.nmc.org.uk
Facebook: www.facebook.com/nmcuk

Statistics



Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

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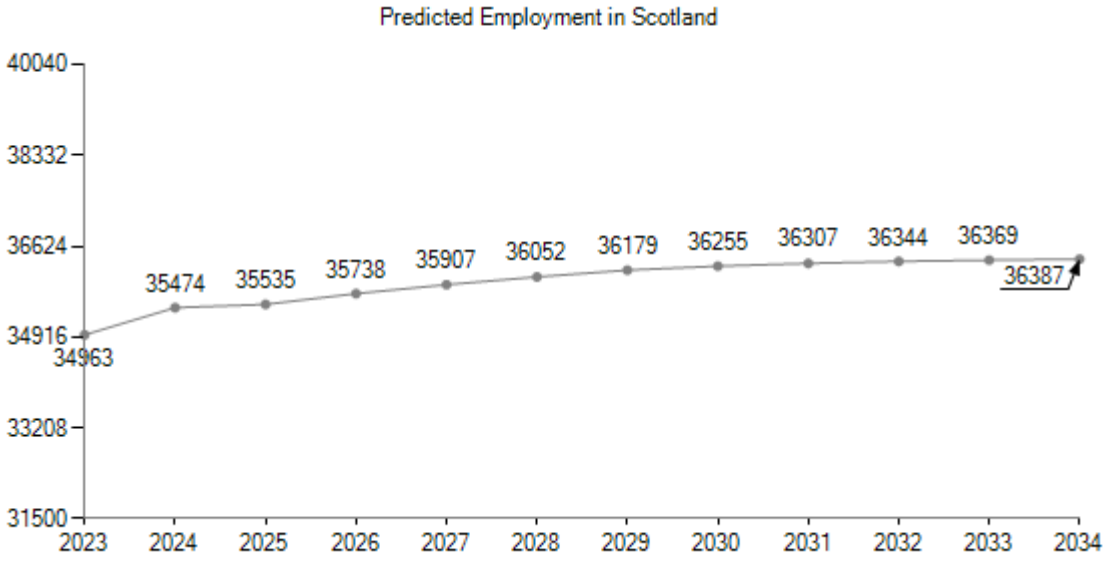

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