

## Music Therapist

Music therapists use music to promote positive changes in health and wellbeing. They work with individuals or with groups of clients of all ages and abilities, encouraging them to interact with others, relieve stress and anxiety, and help build confidence.

### The Work

You could be:

- listening to and discussing problems with your clients
- using music to stimulate or relax clients
- helping clients who have addiction problems, challenging behaviour, eating disorders, emotional and behavioural difficulties or mental health problems
- encouraging your client to use musical instruments, for example percussion instruments, to sing, compose, improvise, move to music or listen to music
- supporting clients as they listen to or play music, which may release distressing feelings, to help them understand their problems, develop greater self-awareness and move on positively
- supporting clients to build their confidence and enhance their self-esteem
- working with other healthcare, social services or education professionals, to help diagnose emotional or psychological disorders, identify problems and work out treatment plans.

### Pay

As a music therapist with the NHS on the Agenda for Change salary scales, you would start on Band 6, £41,608 to £50,702 a year. Senior therapists are on Band 7, £50,861 to £59,159 a year.

Outside the NHS your income would vary according to whether you were freelance or employed.

### Conditions

- You would work across a range of health, social care and educational settings.
- Working hours are normally regular, but you may need to do some evening work.
- You could do part time or sessional work.

### Getting In

- You need a degree (in any subject) (SCQF Level 9-10) followed by a postgraduate qualification in music therapy (SCQF Level 11) accredited by the British Association for Music Therapy (BAMT).
- In Scotland there is a two-year postgraduate MSc in Music Therapy at Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh. Entrance requirements include a degree and a high level of musicianship on at least one instrument (this includes voice).
- Some prior experience or involvement with children or adults with mental health or learning disabilities is required.
- Entry requirements for a degree course in music are usually 4-5 Highers including Music.

- 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.
- When you complete your postgraduate course you gain UK state registration with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), which you must have to work in the National Health Service (NHS) or with a local authority.
- For some entrants it is a second career, after working in the performing arts, teaching or social care.
- A driving licence can be useful and may be necessary.

This is a small profession and self-employment is common. Some music therapists work in the NHS but some work for local authority social work departments or voluntary organisations. Others are freelance and are paid fees rather than a regular salary.

## What Does It Take

You should have:

- excellent musical skills and a good sense of rhythm
- a friendly, caring and empathetic manner
- good communication skills
- patience and sensitivity
- the ability to put clients at ease and to encourage them
- a non-judgemental approach
- willingness to persevere, as not all clients will respond quickly to treatment
- the ability to cope with clients who may be depressed or anxious.

## Training

- Once you have gained state registration you can join the BAMT.
- Training is on the job alongside an experienced music therapist.
- Throughout your career you will undertake a continuous professional development (CPD) programme by attending training courses and seminars. This is required to stay on the state register.
- You will have to undergo regular supervision with senior music therapists throughout your career.

## Getting On

- With experience and further training you could specialise in a particular area such as neuro-disability or palliative care.
- You may move on to lead a team of music therapists.
- You might do research work.
- You might become a teacher of music therapy.
- You could take further training to become a psychotherapist.

## Contacts

**British Association for Music Therapy (BAMT)**  
Tel: 020 7837 6100

Email: [info@bamt.org](mailto:info@bamt.org)  
Website: [www.bamt.org](http://www.bamt.org)  
X: [@musictherapyuk](https://twitter.com/musictherapyuk)  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/BritishAssocMusicTherapy](https://www.facebook.com/BritishAssocMusicTherapy)

**Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)**

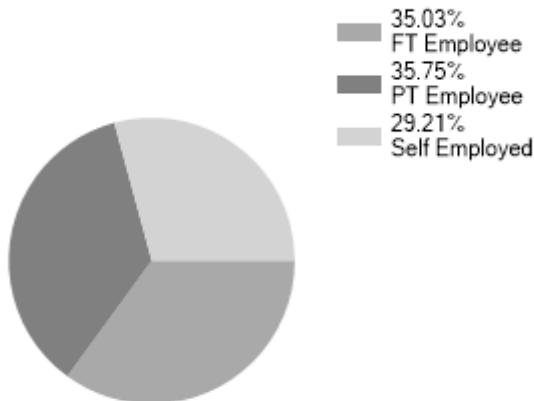
Tel: 0300 500 6184  
Email: [education@hcpc-uk.org](mailto:education@hcpc-uk.org)  
Website: [www.hcpc-uk.org](http://www.hcpc-uk.org)  
X: [@The\\_HCPC](https://twitter.com/The_HCPC)  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/hcpcuk](https://www.facebook.com/hcpcuk)

**NHS Scotland Careers**

Website: [www.careers.nhs.scot](http://www.careers.nhs.scot)  
Website (2): [jobs.scot.nhs.uk](http://jobs.scot.nhs.uk)

## Statistics

Employment Status UK %

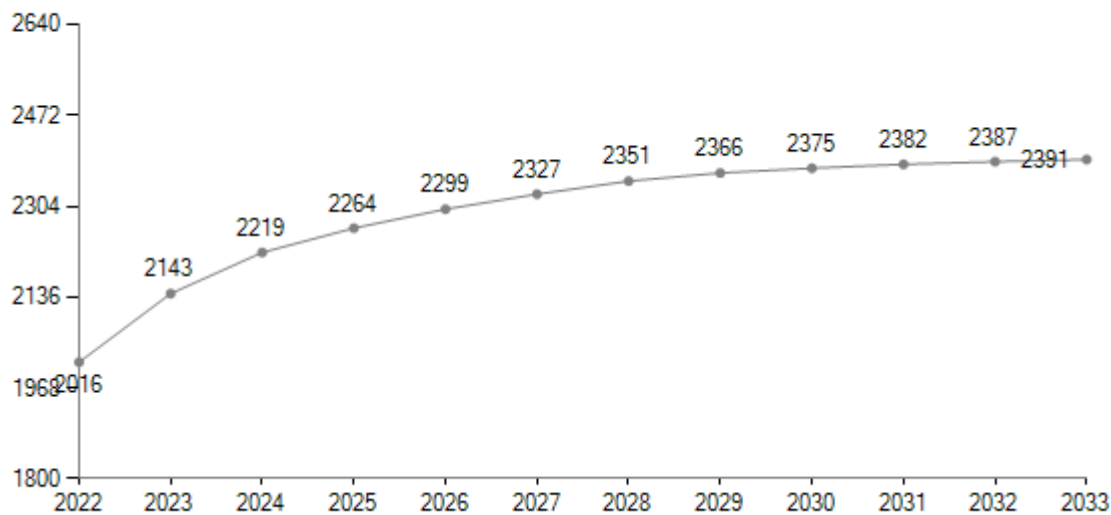


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

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

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [Lightcast](#)