

Sterile Services Technician

Sterile services technicians follow set procedures to decontaminate reusable surgical instruments and supply hospital workers with sterile equipment and material.

The Work

You might:

- go round wards, clinics and operating theatres collecting used instruments
- sometimes trace a particular tray of instruments which the operating theatre staff need urgently
- check the instruments to see that they are working properly and use washers and disinfectors to wash and disinfect them
- place the instruments, dressings, needles and syringes in packs or on trays, use packing machines to seal and label them
- sterilise the packs and trays in steam machines called autoclaves
- use computers to check and record the decontamination process
- sterilising large items, such as baby incubators, by carefully dismantling and cleaning each piece, then reassembling them
- test machinery and report any defects
- go on the rounds again, delivering the sterile supplies by trolley.

Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Actual pay rates may vary, depending on:

- whether you are on NHS pay rates
- whether you work shifts.

Sterile services technicians are on the Agenda for Change pay scale. The current pay scales are from April 2021. They start on Band 2, £19,609 to £21,615 a year and after experience move up to Band 3, £21,709 to £23,603 a year. Supervisors are on Band 4, £23,709 to £25,982 a year.

Conditions

- You work in the sterile services or decontamination department of a hospital.
- In most hospitals there are shifts around the clock and you will work some weekends.
- You come into contact with contaminated equipment and dangerous sharps.
- You are in a sterile environment and are in contact with powerful chemicals, so you wear a face mask and head covering as well as surgical gloves, gown and shoes.
- This is an active job and you have to lift and carry heavy objects.
- Work gets hectic if you have to urgently prepare a particular set of equipment.

Getting In

- A good general education is useful. Some employers prefer you to have a group of subjects at National 4 or 5.
- You might get in through a Modern Apprenticeship.
- You need clear handwriting for labelling the packs.
- You should have basic IT skills.
- A driving licence is useful when working late or early shifts.

Most jobs are in the National Health Service (NHS), but there are also jobs in private or military hospitals. Vacancies appear within hospitals and in newspapers.

What Does It Take

You should be:

- responsible when it comes to health, safety and hygiene
- observant, with a keen eye for detail
- practical with good manual dexterity
- able to follow instructions and procedures
- good at communicating verbally and in writing
- able to work quickly and accurately
- interested in science and patient care
- able to work as part of a team.

Training

- You might complete the Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) in Healthcare Support (Clinical) at SCQF Levels 6 and 7.
- Basic training involves working through several modules on the job.
- You cover topics such as health and safety, moving and handling equipment and infection control.
- You might complete the Institute of Decontamination Sciences Technical Certificate. For some employers, it's necessary to complete this within your first year of employment.

Getting On

- With further training, you could progress into supervisory or managerial posts.
- You could move into working in the operating theatre as a health care assistant or an operating department practitioner or technician.

Contacts

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NHS Scotland Careers

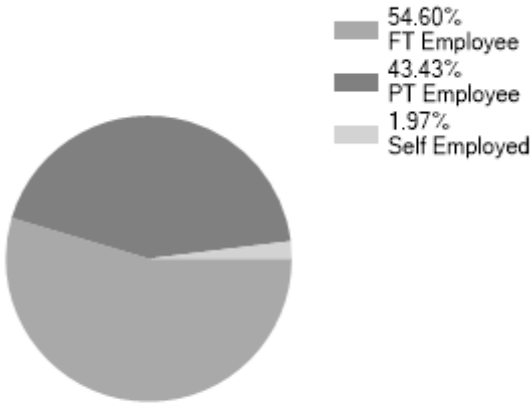
Website: www.careers.nhs.scot

Website (2): jobs.scot.nhs.uk

Twitter: @NHSScotCareers

Statistics

Employment Status UK %



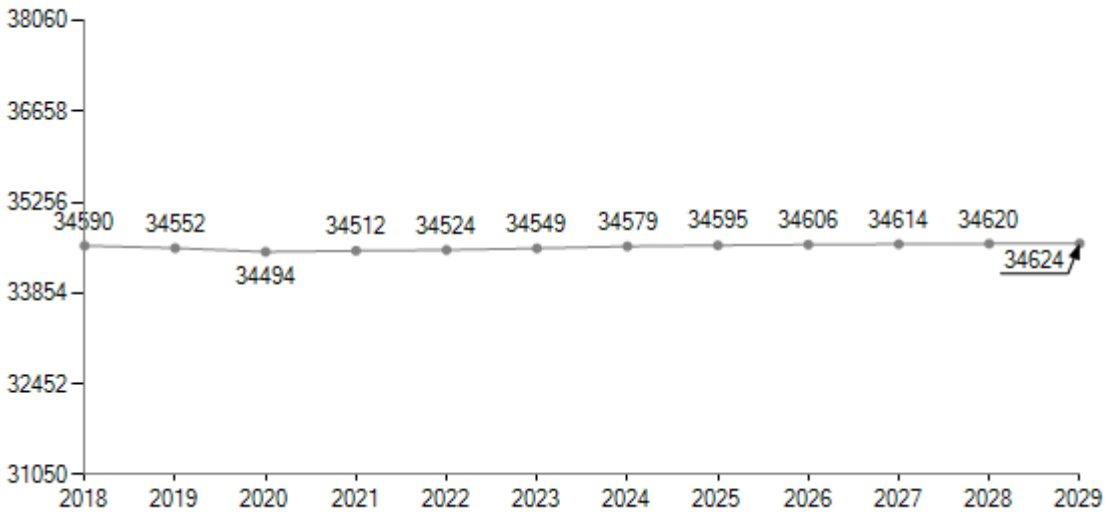
Past Unemployment - Scotland

Date	Unemployed
Dec 2018	0.05%

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Predicted Employment in Scotland



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