

Pharmacy Assistant

Pharmacy assistants work either in a community or retail pharmacy or in a hospital or clinical pharmacy.

The Work

Community or Retail

You could be:

- dealing with enquiries from customers, face to face and on the phone
- giving basic health advice to customers and selling over the counter medicines
- taking in and handing out prescriptions
- packaging and labelling prescribed items
- checking stocks and ordering supplies
- referring customers to the pharmacist if need be
- keeping records of customers and stock
- handling cash.

Hospital or Clinical

You could be:

- delivering medicines to other departments or wards
- checking stock, ordering and storing supplies
- keeping records as required.

Pay

Within the NHS Agenda for Change scales, pharmacy assistants' salaries are usually on Band 2, £18,600 to £20,606 a year. The current pay scales are from April 2020.

Many dispensing or pharmacy assistants work outside the NHS. The starting salary is often based on the National Minimum Wage (NMW).

As of 1 April 2021 the National Minimum Wage is £4.62 an hour for workers aged 16 to 17, £6.56 an hour for workers aged 18 to 20 and £8.36 an hour for workers aged 21 to 22. The National Living Wage is £8.91 for workers aged 23 and over. With experience hourly rates can reach up to £9.50 an hour.

Conditions

- In community and retail pharmacy you work in shops, where hours are regular and may include weekends or evenings.
- In hospitals and clinics you work in laboratories or dispensaries or in health centres and may have to work shifts.

- Pharmacy assistants usually wear a white lab coat or uniform.

Getting In

- A good general education is necessary including National 4 English and Maths.
- Many employers will put you through the training and qualification.
- You might get in through a Modern Apprenticeship in Pharmacy Services at SCQF Level 5.
- Previous experience in a hospital or community pharmacy would be an advantage.

Jobs are available with the NHS, private healthcare providers, retail pharmacy chains and pharmaceutical companies.

What Does It Take

You should be:

- interested in science
- numerate and good at calculations
- accurate when keeping records
- able to explain information clearly
- a good organiser
- discreet in dealing with confidential information
- patient and empathetic when dealing with members of the public.

You should have:

- excellent attention to detail
- good communication skills for dealing with a wide range of people
- good customer care skills
- the ability to follow instructions and procedures.

Training

- In line with the General Pharmaceutical Council's rules, you must work towards a Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) in Pharmacy Services at SCQF Level 5, which has to commence within 3 months of starting a job.
- If working in a hospital setting, you would also complete the Mandatory Induction Standards for healthcare support workers.
- Buttercups Training Ltd offers a full range of training courses for pharmacy assistants.

Getting On

- You will be required to keep your skills and knowledge up to date by undertaking continuous professional development (CPD) courses throughout your career.
- You may be able to apply for a pre-registration trainee pharmacy technician post.
- As a pharmacy technician you could work in quality control in a hospital.

- In larger retail pharmacies, you could specialise in marketing or sales.
- There is a graded promotion scheme in the National Health Service (NHS).

Contacts

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General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC)

Tel: 0203 713 8000

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Website: www.pharmacyregulation.org

Twitter: @TheGPhC

Facebook: www.facebook.com/TheGPhC

National Pharmacy Association (NPA)

Tel: 01727 858687

Email: npa@npa.co.uk

Website: www.npa.co.uk

Twitter: @NPA1921

Facebook: www.facebook.com/Supportyourlocalpharmacy

NHS Scotland Careers

Website: www.careers.nhs.scot

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

Twitter: @NHSScotCareers

Facebook: www.facebook.com/NHSScotlandCareers

Royal Pharmaceutical Society Scotland

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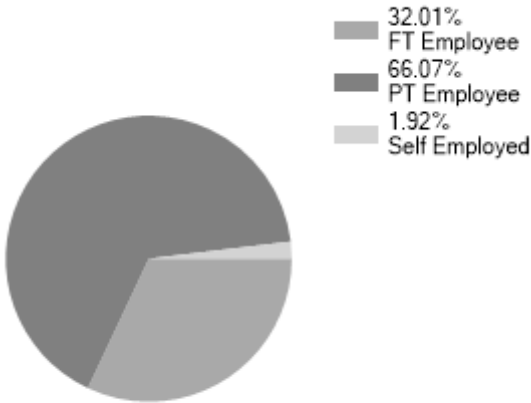
Website: www.rpharms.com

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Statistics

Employment Status UK %



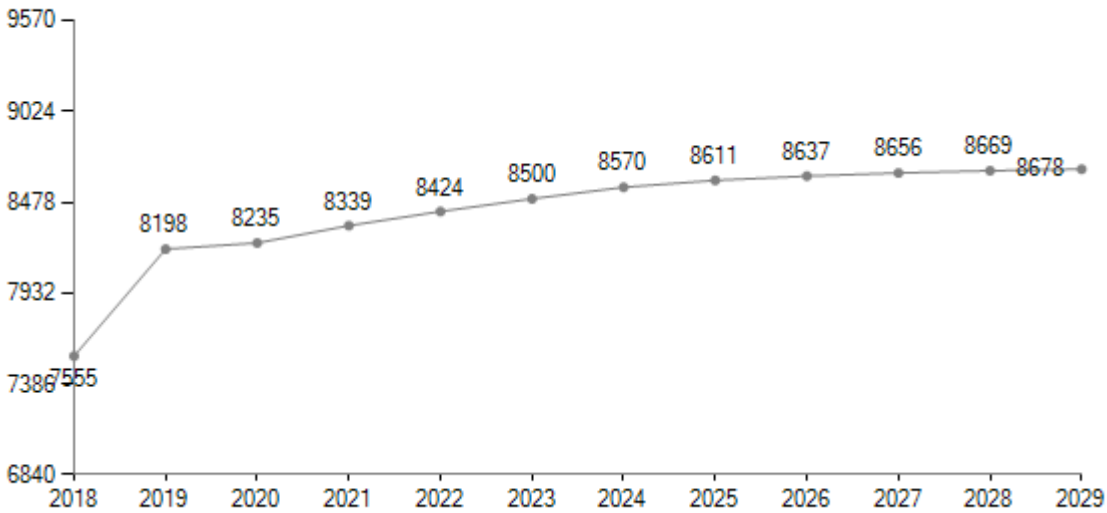
Past Unemployment - Scotland

Date	Unemployed
Dec 2018	8.86%

LMI data powered by [EMSI UK](#)

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

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [EMSI UK](#)