

## Prosthetic or Orthotic Support Worker

Prosthetic or orthotic support workers manufacture, maintain and repair various types of prostheses or orthoses such as artificial limbs, splints, braces, or special footwear.

### The Work

**Prosthetic support workers** manufacture artificial arms and legs for patients who have either lost a limb or were born missing a limb. Modern prostheses sometimes have a pneumatic, hydraulic or electronic mechanism to allow the limb to move.

**Orthotic support workers** manufacture special orthotic devices such as wrist supports, neck collars, braces and special footwear, to support a patient's limbs or spine or to relieve pain caused by illness or injury.

You could be:

- using cutting-edge tools and materials to manufacture artificial arms, legs, hands and feet from measurements and body casts done by an orthotist
- using digital imaging techniques, computer-aided design (CAD) and computer-aided manufacturing (CAM) to help design orthotic devices
- manufacturing orthoses such as splints, braces or special footwear, using the most suitable materials
- working closely with the prosthetist or orthotist to ensure you understand the patient's needs
- working with a wide range of materials including plastic, metal, leather, carbon fibre and composites
- aiming to design and create a prosthesis that matches as close as possible to the patient's missing limb
- making adjustments and carrying out repairs to the prostheses or orthoses
- using a range of hand tools as well as large free standing machinery including routers, sanders and bandsaws
- maintaining equipment, making sure work areas are kept clean and tidy and ordering materials and equipment.

### Pay

Under the NHS Agenda for Change, qualified support workers can expect to start on Band 4, £31,492 to £34,254 a year. With experience you may progress to Band 5, £34,494 to £42,977 a year. The current pay scales are from April 2025.

A support worker working for a private company can expect to earn around £26,000 a year. Self-employed technicians can earn considerably more.

### Conditions

- A technician would usually work within a lab based in a hospital or factory.
- You may travel to different clinics to meet with patients.
- Working hours are usually regular Monday to Friday.
- You would usually wear protective clothing when working in the lab including goggles, ear-protectors and

dust mask.

## Getting In

- It is useful to have a good standard of education. Useful subjects are English, Maths, Engineering Science or science subjects.
- You can apply direct to the NHS for this role where you would work towards the Modern Apprenticeship in Engineering at SCQF Level 6.
- Alternatively, you could complete a Modern Apprenticeship in Healthcare Support (Clinical) at SCQF Level 6 or 7, combining on the job training and part time study at college.
- This is a four year apprenticeship for 16–24 year olds.
- Some companies take on trainees with experience in engineering or manufacturing.
- 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.

Prospects for prosthetic/orthotic support workers is very good at the moment due to an ageing workforce. You could work in the NHS or for a manufacturing company.

You will find vacancies advertised on the [NHS Scotland Recruitment](#), [NHS Jobs](#), and [British Association of Prosthetists and Orthotists \(BAPO\)](#) websites.

## What Does It Take

You should be:

- able to get on well with people of all backgrounds and ages
- good at science
- practical and able to solve technical problems
- able to work under pressure
- able to design items, many of which are made to individual requirements
- able to work alone and as part of a team.

You should have:

- a good eye for detail
- good manual dexterity
- excellent communication skills.

## Training

- If you are taken on as a trainee for a manufacturing company, training will be on the job.
- For the NHS apprenticeship, you would complete SVQ Performing Engineering Operations Level 2; NC Engineering Practice (SCQF Level 6); and SVQ Mechanical Manufacturing Engineering (Composite Manufacture Engineering) Level 3.
- You could go on to study Rehabilitation Technologies (PDA) at SCQF Level 7 or SVQ Healthcare Support (Clinical) at SCQF level 7.

- Technicians can become members of BAPO, who run courses, conferences and seminars where technicians can update their skills and learn about the latest technology and developments in this field.

## Getting On

- You could work your way up to senior technician level.
- After completing the Modern Apprenticeship, you could go on to study the degree in Prosthetics and Orthotics to become a Prosthetist or Orthotist. This is run at two universities in the UK, University of Strathclyde, and Salford University. See job profile for [Prosthetist or Orthotist](#).
- After many years' experience you could do consultancy work or go self-employed.

## Contacts

### British Association of Prosthetists and Orthotists (BAPO)

Tel: 0141 561 7217

Email: [enquiries@bapo.com](mailto:enquiries@bapo.com)

Website: [www.bapo.com](http://www.bapo.com)

X: @BAPO2

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/BAPO.org](http://www.facebook.com/BAPO.org)

### NHS Scotland Careers

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

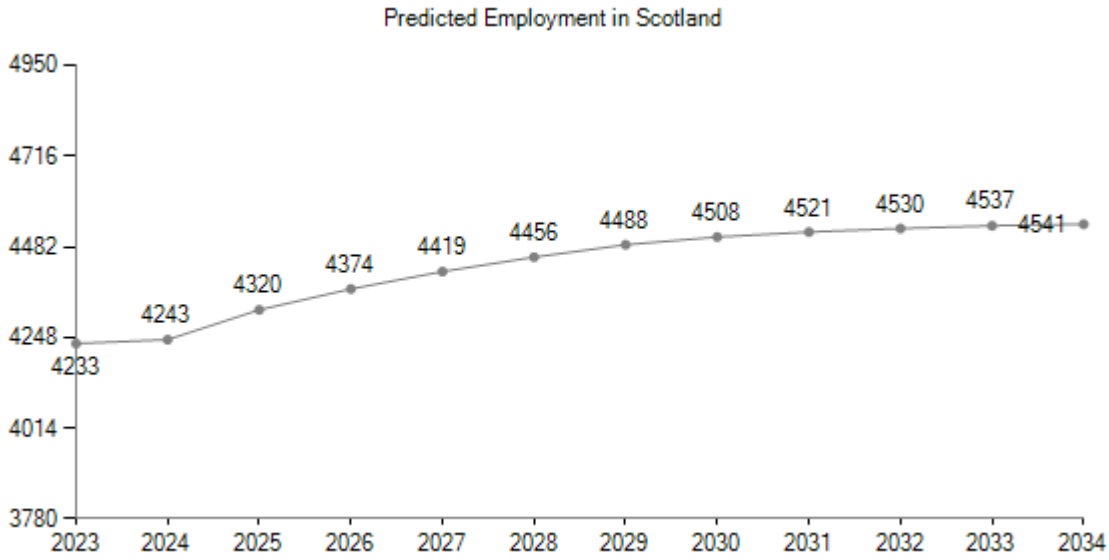
Website (2): [jobs.scot.nhs.uk](http://jobs.scot.nhs.uk)

**Statistics**

Employment Status : Not available this career.

**Past Unemployment - Scotland**

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.



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