

You can be an

# Allied health professional (AHP)



Explore our careers

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

**NHS**  
SCOTLAND

# Welcome to the world of allied health professions!

Allied health professionals (AHPs) assess, diagnose, and treat people of all ages to enhance their health, wellbeing, and quality of life. We also signpost people to other services to help them access additional care and support they may need.

We're the third largest clinical workforce in NHSScotland. A career as an AHP is varied. We also work in health and social care, housing, education, prison services, and the third and independent sectors to ensure the best outcomes for service users.

Thank you for considering a career in one of our 14 professions. I hope to welcome you to our workforce in the future.



**Carolyn McDonald**

*Chief Allied Health Professions Officer*

## AHP roles

### The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)

sets education, training, and professional practice standards for all allied health professions. AHPs must be registered with the HCPC to protect the public and work in the UK.

**AHPs use their unique skills and knowledge to improve people's lives.**

You'll find a rewarding career as an AHP if you like helping and interacting with people of all ages.

You may already have heard of a physiotherapist, a dietitian, or a paramedic. Let's explore all AHP job roles in the NHSScotland workforce.

## Top skills for a career as an AHP



## Innovative and diverse roles

You could be an AHP working in **clinical practice**, in a wide range of environments, including:

- + community settings
- + GP practices
- + hospitals
- + patients' homes
- + prison services
- + schools

### AHP's also work in:

- + evidence, research, and development to inform practice and improve services
- + roles that facilitate learning to support the learning and development of others
- + leadership roles to lead teams and manage services

**Find out more**  
about AHP careers  
on the NHSScotland  
Careers website



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

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## Arts therapists

**Art, music, and dramatherapy** are forms of psychotherapy. Arts therapists use art, music, or drama activities to help people address emotional issues, which may be confusing or distressing. They encourage positive changes in people's communication and emotional wellbeing.

If you enjoy creative arts activities and can see how the creative process has therapeutic value for people, you can be:

- + **an art therapist**
- + **a music therapist**
- + **a dramatherapist**



**Find out** how you can be:

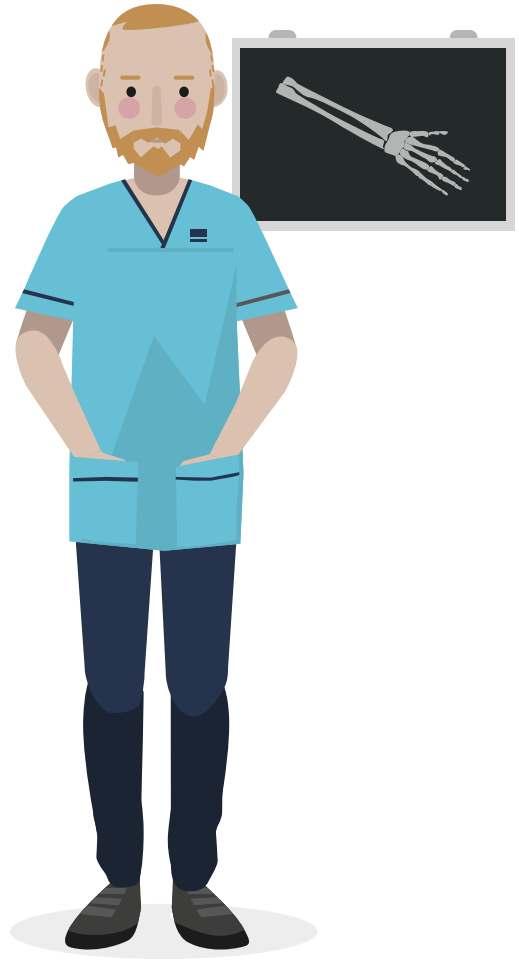
an art therapist [www.careers.nhs.scot/art-therapist](http://www.careers.nhs.scot/art-therapist)  
a music therapist [www.careers.nhs.scot/music-therapist](http://www.careers.nhs.scot/music-therapist)  
a dramatherapist [www.careers.nhs.scot/dramatherapist](http://www.careers.nhs.scot/dramatherapist)

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## Diagnostic radiographers

**Diagnostic radiographers** use the latest imaging technology to take high-quality images of the inside of the body. These images are used to diagnose and monitor illnesses or injuries, so patients receive the correct treatment.

A career as a diagnostic radiographer could be right for you if you like biology, physics, and using technology.



**Find out** how you can be a diagnostic radiographer:  
[www.careers.nhs.scot/diagnostic-radiographer](http://www.careers.nhs.scot/diagnostic-radiographer)

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## Dietitians

**Dietitians** give practical advice about food and diet to people with nutritional problems. They help people to improve their health and wellbeing, by making good lifestyle and food choices.

Choose a career in dietetics if you're interested in:

- + health and nutrition
- + communicating with people



**Find out** how you can be a dietitian:  
[www.careers.nhs.scot/dietitian](http://www.careers.nhs.scot/dietitian)

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## Occupational therapists

**Occupational therapists** help people overcome the challenges that prevent them from doing everyday tasks they need and want to do. Making changes to a person's environment or helping them find new ways to do things is one way an occupational therapist can provide support.

Ultimately, occupational therapists help people to live their lives with meaning and purpose. They make sure people, families, and communities have access to and engage in activities that help them stay healthy.

If you're creative, a problem-solver, and have good communication skills, this is the role for you.



**Find out how you can be an occupational therapist:**  
[www.careers.nhs.scot/occupational-therapist](http://www.careers.nhs.scot/occupational-therapist)



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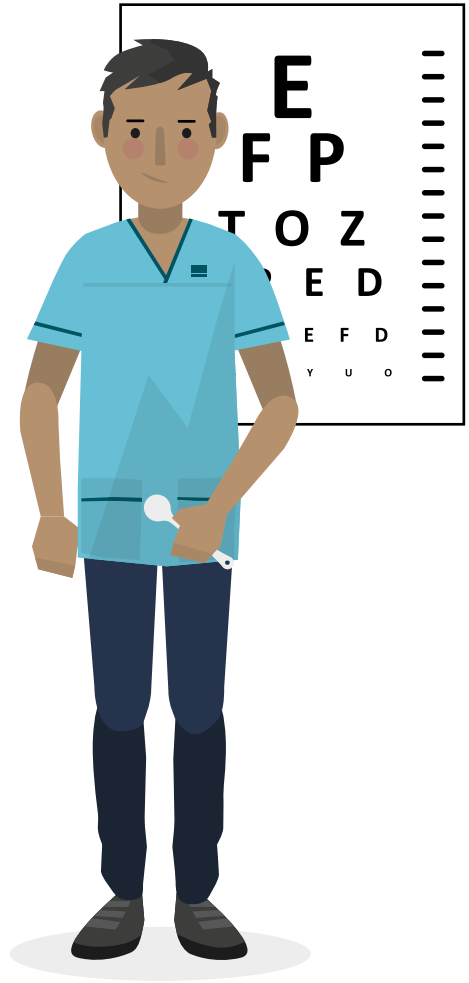
## Orthoptists

**Orthoptists** diagnose visual impairments related to eye movement and how the eyes interact with the brain, such as blurred or double vision.

They are trained to offer treatments for these conditions, including eye patches, eye exercises, or glasses.

Orthoptists also help people to manage the visual symptoms of neurological conditions, such as stroke, multiple sclerosis, or brain tumours.

This is a career to consider if you have good observational skills and enjoy the practical side of science and anatomy.



**Find out** how you can be an orthoptist:  
[www.careers.nhs.scot/orthoptist](http://www.careers.nhs.scot/orthoptist)

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## Orthotists

**Orthotists** treat, support, and care for people with weakened joints or mobility problems caused by accident, injury, or disease. They design and fit splints, braces, or special footwear to help patients improve their movement and to reduce pain.

If you're a problem-solver, like making things, and are interested in technology, this is an excellent career to consider.



**Find out** how you can be an orthotist:  
[www.careers.nhs.scot/orthotist](http://www.careers.nhs.scot/orthotist)

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## Paramedics

**Paramedics** working in the 999 system provide an immediate response to accidents and medical emergencies. They are also trained to assess and manage less serious illnesses or injuries, often caring for people in their own homes.

Paramedics work in various settings, including health centres, emergency departments, music festivals, and sporting events.

You could be a paramedic if you like working with people and are good at problem-solving, decision-making, and working under pressure.



**Find out** how you can be a paramedic:  
[www.careers.nhs.scot/paramedic](http://www.careers.nhs.scot/paramedic)

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## Physiotherapists

**Physiotherapists** help people affected by injury, illness, or disability.

They use their knowledge and skills to improve conditions affecting different systems of the body through:

- + movement
- + exercise
- + manual therapy
- + education
- + providing advice

If you enjoy science, anatomy, problem-solving, and exercise science, a career in physiotherapy could be good for you.



**Find out** how you can be a physiotherapist:  
[www.careers.nhs.scot/physiotherapist](http://www.careers.nhs.scot/physiotherapist)

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## Podiatrists

**Podiatrists** diagnose and treat problems affecting the feet, ankles, and legs. They aim to improve their patient's mobility, independence, and quality of life.

This is a career to consider if you have good communication and practical skills, as well as an interest in anatomy and science.



**Find out how you can be a podiatrist:**  
[www.careers.nhs.scot/podiatrist](http://www.careers.nhs.scot/podiatrist)

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## Prosthetists

**Prosthetists** design, make and fit artificial limbs for people who need them.

They treat, support, and care for patients who have arms or legs missing from birth or through accident, injury, or amputation.

This is a career to think about if you're interested in science, design, and technology.



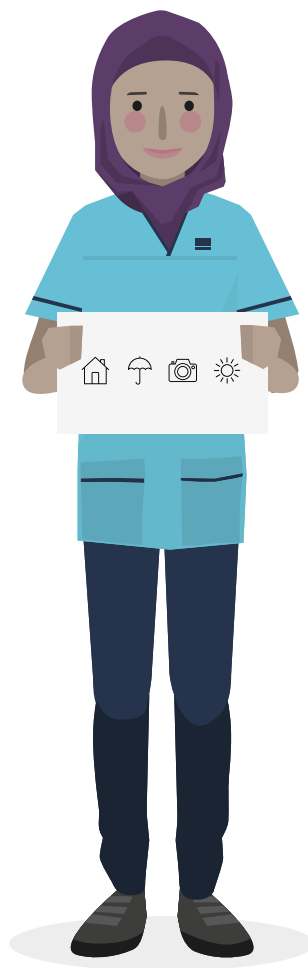
**Find out** how you can be a prosthetist:  
[www.careers.nhs.scot/prosthetist](http://www.careers.nhs.scot/prosthetist)

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## Speech and language therapists

**Speech and language therapists** provide treatment and care for people of all ages with communication, eating, drinking, or swallowing problems.

This is a promising career if you're interested in languages and science, have good communication skills, and enjoy problem-solving.



**Find out** how you can be a speech and language therapist:  
[www.careers.nhs.scot/speech-and-language-therapist](http://www.careers.nhs.scot/speech-and-language-therapist)

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## Therapeutic radiographers

Therapeutic radiographers use high-energy radiation to treat cancer and tumours. They are involved at all stages of a patient's cancer journey.

You could become a radiographer if you enjoy digital technology and science.



**Find out** how you can be a therapeutic radiographer:  
[www.careers.nhs.scot/therapeutic-radiographer](http://www.careers.nhs.scot/therapeutic-radiographer)



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# Starting your AHP career

There are lots of ways to start your career as an AHP.

## Pre-registration degree programmes

Getting the knowledge and skills to become an AHP requires training and studying at a degree level. The pre-registration degree programme you choose must be HCPC-approved. When you graduate, you'll be able to register with the HCPC and work in the NHS.

## Undergraduate degrees

Although entry requirements vary, you'll need 3 to 4 SQA Highers for most undergraduate degree programmes.

## Postgraduate degrees

A postgraduate degree is the only available route if you want to become an art therapist, dramatherapist, or music therapist.

In Scotland, postgraduate-level degree programmes are also available for:

- + Diagnostic Radiography
- + Dietetics
- + Occupational Therapy
- + Physiotherapy
- + Podiatry
- + Speech and Language Therapy

Entry requirements include a related undergraduate level degree.

## Scottish Wider Access Programme (SWAP)

If you're an adult with few or no qualifications, you could get into higher education through SWAP. Many universities also provide access programmes to help you get the degree entry qualifications you need.

## Other qualifications

If you're a healthcare support worker or thinking about a career change, gaining qualifications can help you access higher education in healthcare. Entry requirements include evidence of academic ability or related experience.

## Return to practice

This process is for you if you're a qualified AHP who wants to return to practice after a break of more than 2 years.

You'll be supported through a supervised practice and study programme, so you can return to the HCPC register and continue your professional career.

## Healthcare support workers

Healthcare support workers assist AHPs to deliver high-quality care. You don't need a university degree to apply for these roles.

**Find out more** about a career as a healthcare support worker:

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

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## Useful links

NHSScotland Careers website – [www.careers.nhs.scot/ahp](http://www.careers.nhs.scot/ahp)

### Regulator and professional bodies

Health and Care Professions Council - [www.hcpc-uk.org](http://www.hcpc-uk.org)

British Association of Art Therapists - [www.baat.org](http://www.baat.org)

British Association for Music Therapy - [www.bamt.org](http://www.bamt.org)

British Association of Dramatherapists - [www.badth.org.uk](http://www.badth.org.uk)

The Society of Radiographers - [www.sor.org](http://www.sor.org)

British Association of Prosthetists and Orthotists -  
[www.bapo.com](http://www.bapo.com)

British Dietetic Association - [www.bda.uk.com](http://www.bda.uk.com)

Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists -  
[www.rcslt.org](http://www.rcslt.org)

College of Paramedics - [collegeofparamedics.co.uk](http://collegeofparamedics.co.uk)

Chartered Society of Physiotherapy - [www.csp.org.uk](http://www.csp.org.uk)

Royal College of Podiatry - [www.rcpod.org.uk](http://www.rcpod.org.uk)

Royal College of Occupational Therapists - [www.rcot.co.uk](http://www.rcot.co.uk)

British and Irish Orthoptics Society - [www.orthoptics.org.uk](http://www.orthoptics.org.uk)

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