

Hairdressing, Beauty and Wellbeing

Would you enjoy helping people to look and feel good? Are you interested in developing your practical and creative skills? If so, this career area may be what you're looking for.

Fashion trends and the development of new cosmetic, beauty and hair care products are important factors for change in the industry. The use of barber shops has been growing due to the trend for male grooming with beard grooming being very popular.

What areas can I work in?

This career area includes: hairdressing, barbering, salon management, beauty therapy, nail therapy, spa therapy, aromatherapy, reflexology, make-up artistry and body art (tattooing and piercing).

Related work is also available in other areas such as: reception (although online booking is growing in popularity in larger salons and salon chains), sales, marketing, and hospitality and tourism (in health spas and holiday resorts).

To see the routes to getting into each of these sectors, take a look at our [Career Pathway](#).

What kind of companies can I work for?

Possible employers include:

- hairdressing salons (some also offer beauty treatments)
- barber shops
- beauty therapy salons
- nail bars
- health and beauty spas and centres
- tanning salons
- beauty therapy salons or related services in other businesses (such as large department stores, hotels, cruise ships, airlines, leisure centres, wedding consultants, film/TV studios and theatre companies)
- colleges and training centres (for well qualified tutors and lecturers)
- tattoo and piercing studios.

What's the job market like?

The Health and Wellness spa industry in the UK currently has a revenue of £7.9 billion. Due to a rise in international tourist numbers and a greater focus on wellbeing this is expected to grow. Through to 2029-30, industry revenue is anticipated to grow at a compound interest rate of 3.2% to reach £9.3 billion. ¹

Over the five years through 2029-30, hairdressing and barbering revenue is anticipated to rebound at a compound annual rate of 2.5% to reach £6 billion. ²

In 2024 in Scotland, there were 13,200 people working in this industry, with 8,700 hairdressers and barbers, and

4,600 beauticians and related occupations. ⁴

The total hair, beauty and barbering UK workforce declined again by 16,628 (7.5%) in 2023 with declines in both male and female employees. However, the number of hair & beauty businesses in the UK increased by 1,240 (2.5%) last year. ⁴

Levels of self-employment in the industry are high. Around 58% of people working in hairdressing and beauty are self-employed. ⁴

According to an industry survey, 75% of businesses said that it is more difficult to recruit compared to 12 months ago. There continues to be a lack of experienced staff and a drop in apprenticeship starts. ⁵ However, hair and beauty businesses remain resilient, with survival rates for businesses across all categories remaining more or less stable. ⁴

Facts and figures

- The UK hair and beauty industry generated £5.8bn in turnover in 2023-2024. ⁴
- In 2024, there were 13,500 people working as hairdressing and beauty salon managers and proprietors in the UK. ⁶
- Over 85% of the hairdressing and beauty workforce is female. ⁴
- 46% of the workforce are aged 16-34. ⁴
- Nail care services generate £954.6m (15.5%) of industry revenue and is second only to hair cutting services in segment size. ⁷

Want to find out more?

You will find useful information on careers and qualifications in the industry on the [Hair and Beauty Industry Authority \(Habia\)](#) website.

Sources

¹ [Market Report: Beauty Therapy](#), Business Gateway, (May 2025)

² [Market Report: Hairdressing Salons and Barber Shops](#), Business Gateway, (September 2024)

³ [Annual Population Survey - Occupation by sex, employment status and full/part-time - Scotland](#), NOMIS, (January - December 2024)

⁴ [2024 Industry Statistics for Hairdressing, Barbering and Beauty](#), National Hairdressing and Beauty Federation (NHBF)

⁵ [State of the Industry Survey Summary – January 2025](#), National Hairdressing and Beauty Federation (NHBF)

⁶ [Annual Population Survey - Occupation by sex, employment status and full/part-time - UK](#), NOMIS, (January - December 2024)

⁷ [Market Report: Nail Technician](#), Business Gateway (February 2025)

