

Transport and Distribution

This industry is known as the 'logistics' industry – it manages the flow of goods and other resources, including mail and people, from one place to another. One of many careers in this area could be for you if you have good communication, organisation and problem solving skills.

The transport and storage industry is vital to the UK economy, running 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days in the year.

What areas can I work in?

You can work in one of five areas.

- **Distribution** handles goods in storage before they are sent out, while they are being moved and after they arrive.
- **Air transport** includes jobs in the air but also on the ground.
- **Train companies** run passenger and goods services all over the UK and through the Channel Tunnel to Europe.
- **Road transport** carries passengers and goods.
- **Sea transport** includes ferries, cruise liners and Merchant Navy vessels.

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?

There are a wide variety of companies to choose from including:

- airline companies and airports
- warehousing and distribution centres
- the Merchant Navy
- passenger cruise and ferry companies
- train, bus and taxi firms
- freight forwarding and logistics companies.

What's the job market like?

The transportation and storage industry employs around 1.95 million people in the UK ⁵.

There were 26m air passengers from Scottish airports in 2023. This is an increase of 21% from 2022. There was 47,000 tonnes of freight carried by air in 2023. 334 million journeys were made by bus in 2023-24, an increase of 13% from previous year. There were 681 million passenger journeys on Scotrail services in 2023-24, an increase of 27% from previous year. During 2023 8 million passengers and 3 million vehicles travelled by ferry within Scotland and 1.7 million passengers and 0.47 million vehicles between Scotland and Northern Ireland. ³

In 2024, there were an estimated 23,700 UK seafarers, compared to 24,100 the previous year. UK nationals

accounted for 14,550 of the 42,130 certificates issued by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA). Figures for 2024 show there was an estimated 10,620 certificated Officers, 1,700 uncertificated Officers and 9,880 Ratings active at sea, with a further 1,500 Officer Cadets in training at sea. ²

Facts and figures

- In 2024, 84% of UK seafarers were male. ²
- The aviation sector directly employs around 230,000 workers. ¹
- Scotrail has over 5,000 employees based across Scotland and 340 stations. ⁴
- 74% of public transport journeys are made by bus. ³
- In 2023-24 4 million tonnes of freight was lifted by rail. ³
- In 2023, 118 million tonnes of goods were transported by HGV within Scotland and 16 million tonnes were delivered to destinations elsewhere in the UK. ³
- In 2023 over 47 thousand tonnes of freight were carried by air. ³
- 55 million tonnes of freight were handled by Scottish ports in 2023. ³

Want to find out more?

If you are interested in careers with the Merchant Navy, have a look at the website careersatsea.org for lots of useful information.

Sources

¹ [Net zero and the UK aviation sector](#), UK Parliament (December 2023)

² [Seafarers in the UK Shipping Industry 2024](#), Gov.UK (February 2025)

³ [Scottish Transport Statistics 2024](#), Transport Scotland (March 2025)

⁴ [Scotrail website](#) (June 2025)

⁵ [UK Workforce Jobs: Transport and Storage](#), Office for National Statistics (June 2025)