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.

- **Air transport** includes jobs in the air but also on the ground.
- **Distribution** handles goods in storage before they are sent out, while they are being moved and after they arrive.
- **Rail 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?

As of the first quarter of 2026, there were 1.91 million people employed in the UK transportation and storage industry. [4]

There were 28 million air passengers at Scottish airports in 2024, an increase of 8% from 2023. There was 50,000 tonnes of freight carried by air in 2024. [2]

334 million journeys were made by bus in 2024-25, an increase of 2% from previous year. [2]

There were 85 million passenger journeys on Scotrail services in 2024-25, an increase of 4% from previous year. [2]

During 2024 8 million passengers and 3 million vehicles travelled by ferry within Scotland and 1.7 million passengers and 0.45 million vehicles between Scotland and Northern Ireland. [2]

In 2025, there were an estimated 24,550 active UK seafarers, a 2% increase from the previous year. UK nationals accounted for 14,510 of the 42,920 certificates issued by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA). Figures for 2025 show there was an estimated 11,120 certificated Officers, 1,540 uncertificated Officers and 10,510 Ratings active at sea, with a further 1,380 Officer Cadets in training at sea. [1]

Facts and figures

- In 2025, 80% of UK seafarers were male. [2]

Scotrail has over 5,000 employees based across Scotland 3 and 363 stations. [2]
73% of public transport journeys are made by bus, 19% by rail, 6% by air and 2% by ferry. [2]
In 2024-25 4.3 million tonnes of freight was lifted by rail, 5% more than the previous year. [2]
In 2024, 121 million tonnes of goods were transported by HGV within Scotland and 18 million tonnes were delivered to destinations elsewhere in the UK. [2]
In 2024 over 50 thousand tonnes of freight were carried by air. [2]
52 million tonnes of freight were handled by Scottish ports in 2024. [2]

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] Seafarers in the UK Shipping Industry 2025, Gov.UK (February 2026)

[2] Scottish Transport Statistics 2025, Transport Scotland (March 2026)

[3] Scotrail website (May 2026)

[4] UK Workforce Jobs: Transport and Storage, Office for National Statistics (June 2026)