

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 21.5m passengers from Scottish airports in 2022. This is an increase of 207% from 2021, but still 26% lower than in 2019 prior to the pandemic. There was 50,000 tonnes of freight carried by air in 2022. 301 million journeys were made by bus in 2022-23, an increase of 29% from previous year. There were 63.7 million passenger journeys on Scotrail services in 2022-23, an increase of 36% from previous year. During 2022 9.3 million passengers travelled by ferry (including traffic with Scotland and to and from Northern Ireland), an increase of 21% on the previous year. ³

In 2023, there were an estimated 24,100 UK seafarers, compared to 21,970 the previous year. UK nationals accounted for 14,960 of the 41,930 certificates issued by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA). Figures for 2022 show there was an estimated 10,930 certificated Officers, 1,540 uncertificated Officers and 10,180 Ratings active at sea, with a further 1,450 Officer Cadets in training at sea. ²

Facts and figures

- In 2023, 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
- In 2022-23 4 million tonnes of freight was lifted by rail. ³
- In 2002, 140 million tonnes of goods were transported by HGV within Scotland and 15 million tonnes were delivered to destinations elsewhere in the UK. ³
- In 2022 over 50 thousand tonnes of freight were carried by air. 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 [Aviation Sector Guide](#) (June 2024), Career Transition Partnership

² Seafarers in the UK Shipping Industry 2023, [Department for Transport](#) (February 2024)

³ Scottish Transport Statistics 2023, [Transport Scotland](#) (March 2024)

⁴ [Scotrail website](#)

⁵ UK Workforce Jobs: Transport and Storage, [Office for National Statistics](#) (June 2024)