

Coastguard

Coastguards direct 24-hour search and rescue operations throughout the UK.

The Work

You could be:

- giving ships information about weather, tides and sea conditions
- receiving radio messages, including distress calls, from ships
- handling emergency calls and arranging search and rescue operations
- requesting emergency help from lifeboats, helicopters, other ships and from emergency services including ambulance
- training and supervising rescue teams, which may include coastguard rescue officers (CROs) – volunteers who support the work of their full time colleagues
- maintaining high technology equipment
- giving information on navigation, safety and coastguard matters to individuals (including small boat owners), groups, the media or the government
- observing and recording weather conditions and sea conditions, and keeping logs of daily activities.

Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Actual pay rates may vary, depending on where you work.

You would start as a maritime operations officer (MOO) on £20,855 a year. After experience and promotion to senior maritime operations officer (SMOO), you would earn £25,259 a year. You would also receive a shift allowance (around £5,000 a year).

A maritime operations specialist (MOS) earns £29,832 a year. You might earn more through performance bonuses or if you are based in the islands. Coastguard rescue officer (CRO) is a voluntary role, however you are entitled to claim expenses for training and responding to emergencies.

Conditions

Coastguards work for the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA), a UK government agency. It has 11 HM Coastguard Operations Centres around the coast of Britain from Shetland in the north to Falmouth in the south. Three are in Scotland: Aberdeen, Shetland (Lerwick) and Stornoway.

- You would work mainly indoors at these centres.
- You would have to take part in investigations or search and rescue operations, outdoors in difficult weather conditions. You may have to work at heights, particularly if you are involved in cliff rescue work.
- The work can be hazardous and physically demanding.
- You would work a shift pattern of 4 days on/4 days off, consisting of two 12-hour day watches, two 12-hour night watches and then 4 days off.
- You would wear a uniform and, when necessary, protective clothing.

Getting In

You can start in one of two ways.

- Most entrants start as a maritime operations officer (MOO). There are no set entry requirements although you should have a good standard of literacy, numeracy and IT skills. It helps if you have 3 subjects at National 4 or 5 including English and Maths.
- As a senior maritime operations officer (SMOO) you would need extensive experience of the sea or experience in a professional search and rescue role, together with an acceptable standard of literacy and numeracy.

You could also apply to be a voluntary coastguard rescue officer (CRO) to gain experience, which may be of benefit when paid jobs become available. Find out more about this on [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website.

Whichever level you start at you must note the following information.

- You must be at least 18 years of age.
- You must have a UK driving licence.
- For SMOO posts, the need for experience of the sea or search and rescue means that this is often a second career.
- You must be very fit and pass a medical examination – you need stamina and strength for rescue work.
- You need good eyesight, hearing and a clear voice.
- CROs must live or work within 30 minutes travelling time from the rescue station.
- Previous experience as a coastguard rescue officer may be helpful – contact your nearest [coastguard station](#) for details.

MOOs are recruited locally and you should contact your nearest coastguard station if you are interested.

Vacancies are advertised on the MCA website. SMOO posts are advertised in local Jobcentre Plus offices, on the [Find a Job](#) website (formerly Universal Jobmatch) and on the MCA website.

What Does It Take

You need to have:

- a strong sense of responsibility and reliability
- an awareness of safety issues at sea and in dangerous situations
- a good knowledge of the area.

You need to be able to:

- judge a potentially dangerous maritime situation
- work alone or as part of a team
- make decisions that affect others
- remain calm under pressure
- give clear instructions to others who may be in danger.

Training

- Initial training for MOOs and SMOOs is mainly on the job, together with self-study and periods of attendance at the Coastguard Training Centre at Highcliffe, Dorset.
- MOO training lasts for up to 10 months and SMOO training for between 9 and 12 months depending on whether the officer has already worked as a CWA.
- Coastguards sit an examination on completion of their training.
- There is a probationary period of 12 months.
- CROs are trained in search and rescue techniques including first aid, rope rescue and water rescue.

Getting On

- If you take further MCA training courses it may help you to gain promotion.
- With experience you could be promoted from MOO to SMOO.
- You might then move on to become a maritime operations specialist (MOS).
- You may be able to become a trainer with the MCA.
- It helps if you are willing to move location – sometimes it is essential.

Contacts

Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA)

Email: infoline@mcga.gov.uk

Website: www.civil-service-careers.gov.uk/departments/working-for-the-maritime-and-coastguard-agency

Facebook: www.facebook.com/MCA

Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI)

Tel: 0300 300 9990

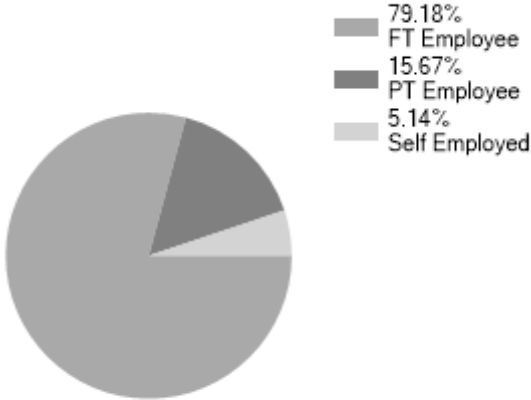
Website: www.rnli.org.uk

Twitter: @RNLI

Facebook: www.facebook.com/rnli

Statistics

Employment Status UK %

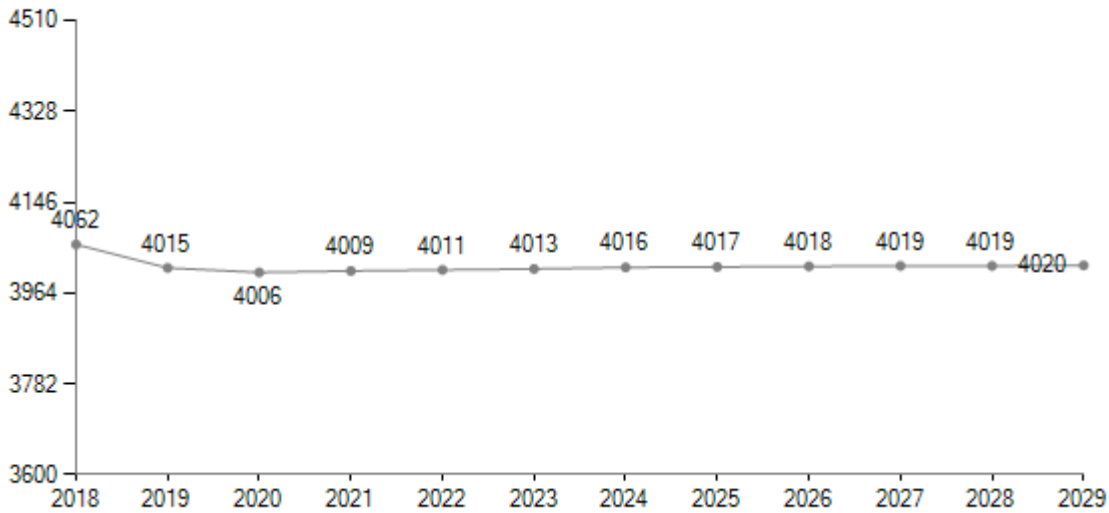


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

LMI data powered by [LMI for All](#)

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [EMSI UK](#)