

Personal Assistant

Personal assistants work closely with senior managers and executives, supporting them and carrying out a range of tasks for them. They help managers to make the best use of their time by dealing with administrative tasks. They are also known as PAs.

The Work

You could be:

- reading and replying to emails and postal mail and taking phone calls for your manager
- deciding which matters to deal with yourself and which to pass on to your manager
- managing the diary, making appointments and booking travel tickets and accommodation
- organising meetings or conferences, booking rooms and arranging refreshments
- accompanying your manager to meetings and welcoming the people attending
- preparing papers for meetings and IT equipment for presentations and making sure copies of all papers are sent to the right people
- taking minutes at meetings, typing them out afterwards and sending them to all who were present
- collecting information, doing research and writing reports.

You could also be:

- managing an office, supervising clerical staff
- dealing with budgets and accounts
- buying or hiring new office equipment, updating computer systems or arranging office moves.

Pay

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

- where you work
- the size of company or organisation you work for
- the demand for the job.

Starting salaries for personal assistants in Scotland tend to be in the range of £18,000 to around £26,000 a year. With experience this can rise to over £35,000 a year.

Conditions

- You would work at a desk in an office.
- Your basic hours would normally be Monday to Friday, 9.00am-5.00pm.
- However, you may have to travel to meetings, possibly in other parts of the country.
- Your hours could then be long, including evenings and weekends.
- You might have to spend some nights away from home.
- You would usually work for people who have very demanding jobs and who are often under pressure.

Some of that pressure could also affect you.

Getting In

- You are unlikely to get into this job straight from school.
- You might be able to work your way up from an administrative or secretarial job, with part time study for an SVQ in business and administration or a similar subject.
- You could take an NC or NQ (SCQF Levels 4-6) or an HNC (SCQF Level 7), HND (SCQF Level 8) or a degree (SCQF Levels 9-10) in administration or business before applying for a job.
- There are often no formal entry requirements for an NC or NQ, but you need 1-2 Highers for an HNC or HND and 4-5 Highers for a degree.
- You need previous work experience in an office.
- You must have good IT skills including word processing and spreadsheet packages.
- It may help if you can speak another language.

What Does It Take

You need to be:

- confident with good judgement
- reliable, trustworthy and loyal
- able to use your initiative
- flexible and adaptable
- able to remain calm under pressure and deal with the unexpected
- discreet, as you may have to deal with confidential information.

You need:

- excellent written and spoken communication skills
- a good understanding of English grammar, spelling and punctuation
- excellent computer and administrative skills
- good organisational skills
- a good memory, particularly for names and faces
- a professional attitude to your work.

Training

- Much of your training will be on the job.
- This may include attendance at short courses in company policy, procedures and office systems.
- Depending on the nature of your work, you may attend other courses such as managing budgets, new computer software or time management.
- If you do not already have an HNC or a degree in relevant subjects, you could study for one part time while you are working.
- [The Institute of Administrative Management](#) (IAM) provides a continuing professional development (CPD) programme for their members.

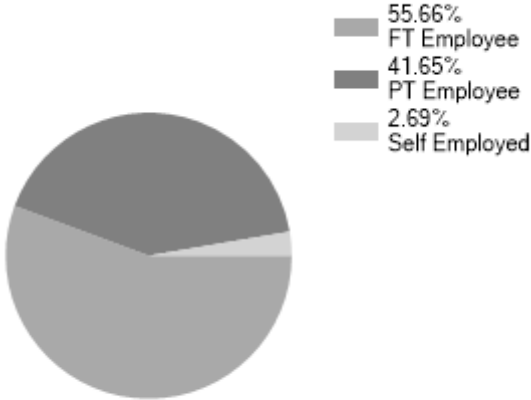
Getting On

- You might become personal assistant to a more senior executive, or to a managing director, perhaps in a larger company. You could be called an executive secretary.
- You might be able to move into general administration and become an office manager.
- It is sometimes possible to move to another role in the organisation and develop your career in a different direction.
- Some personal assistants with substantial experience work freelance or on a self-employed basis, as virtual assistants, working for various employers online from home.

Contacts

Statistics

Employment Status UK %

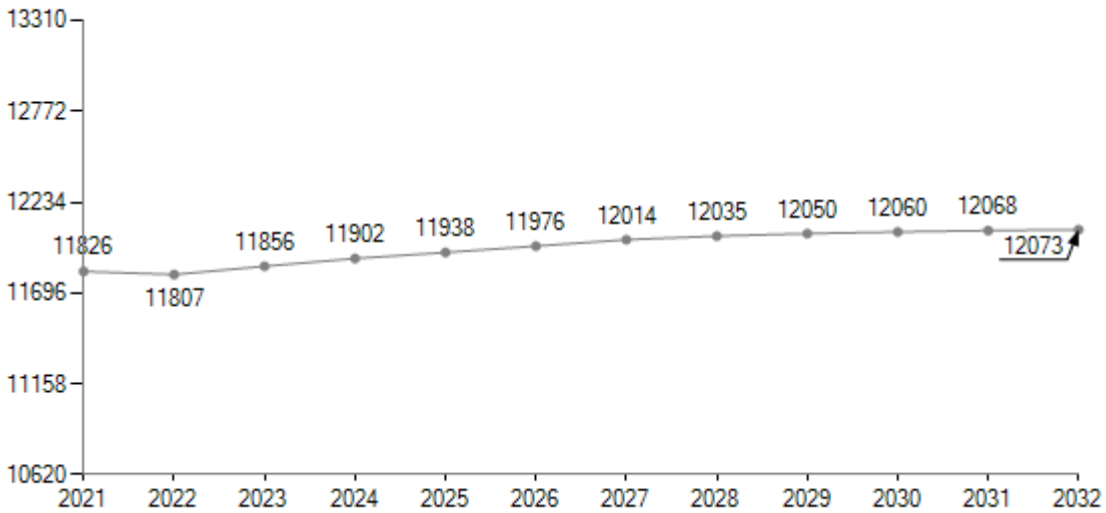


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

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

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [Lightcast](#)