

Parliamentary Assistant

Parliamentary assistants carry out research and office work for one or more Members of the Scottish Parliament or UK Parliaments, or sometimes for think tanks and pressure groups. They are often active members of a political party who have ambitions to become full time politicians. They are sometimes called politician's assistants or political researchers.

The Work

You would provide a range of support services for one or more members of the Scottish or UK Parliaments.

You could be:

- dealing with mail and answering phone calls from the press and public
- making appointments for them, possibly weeks or months ahead
- checking newspapers, TV and radio, to draw their attention to important news
- researching matters to be debated in parliament and giving material to them
- interpreting policy and giving advice to members of the public
- interviewing constituents about their problems and writing letters to officials on their behalf
- writing reports, memos, minutes, press releases and other public relations materials, and drafting replies to questions
- writing speeches for politicians and keeping their websites up to date
- producing a newsletter of their activities for members of the local party.

Pay

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

- where you work
- the political party and member of parliament you work for
- the demand for the job.

Starting salary for a parliamentary assistant in Scotland is around £21,000 a year, rising to around £32,000 with experience.

Senior parliamentary assistants with considerable experience can be paid between £30,000 and around £44,000 a year.

Conditions

- You would be based in an office – in local party offices or parliamentary offices in Edinburgh or London.
- You would work regular hours, around 37 hours a week.
- You would be expected to work overtime (often unpaid) as required, in evenings and at weekends.
- You may be able to work part time.
- You may have to travel about the country, or even abroad, attending meetings and conferences.

Getting In

- Entry can be very competitive for a small number of vacancies.
- There are no set formal qualifications, but most entrants have a degree (SCQF Levels 9-10) Politics, social or public policy, law, history, economics and sociology are particularly useful subjects.
- Entry requirements for a degree are normally 4-5 Highers.
- A postgraduate qualification may be useful, especially if your first degree is not in a relevant subject.
- You should have IT and internet skills for doing research.
- It is not essential that you are a member of a political party, but you are unlikely to get in unless you have several years' experience of voluntary work for the party or pressure group which is going to employ you.

What Does It Take

You should be:

- very interested in current affairs
- keen and reliable
- able to meet deadlines
- patient and attentive to detail
- able to think analytically
- able to work well on your own and in a team
- willing to listen sympathetically to constituents' problems
- able to deal tactfully with confidential issues.

You should have:

- good research skills
- a clear understanding of politics
- knowledge of local and regional issues
- good IT skills
- an understanding of the media, and social media
- a good memory for names, faces, facts and figures
- excellent communication skills and the ability to deal with senior politicians and the media.

Training

- Political parties normally run training courses or make use of courses provided by external bodies. Some of these would be relevant to your work.
- The [Chartered Institute of Public Relations](#) (CIPR) offers the Specialist Diploma (Public Affairs), which involves 20 hours of tuition and 4 assessments.

Getting On

- You could use the knowledge you gain to develop your own career in politics.
- You might become an adviser to a senior member of the party or a government minister.

- You might move on to be elected as a member of parliament in Edinburgh or London.
- You could use the contacts you have made to become a political consultant (a lobbyist).
- You could move into political journalism.

More Information

You can find jobs advertised in the [UK Parliament website](#), the [Working for an MP](#) website or [Scottish Parliament Careers](#) website.

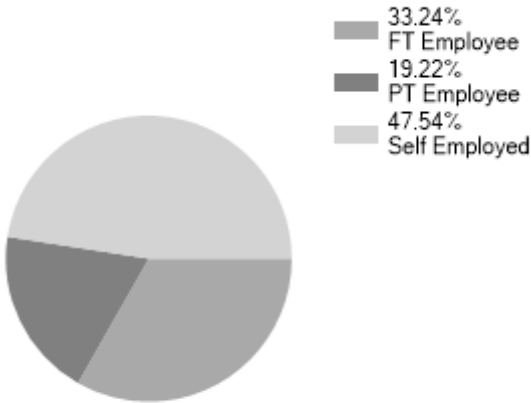
Below you will find a list of Scottish Political Parties.

- [Scottish Conservatives](#)
- [Scottish Green Party](#)
- [Scottish Labour Party](#)
- [Scottish Liberal Democrats](#)
- [Scottish National Party](#)
- [Scottish Socialist Party](#)
- [UK Independence Party \(UKIP\) Scotland](#)

Contacts

Statistics

Employment Status UK %

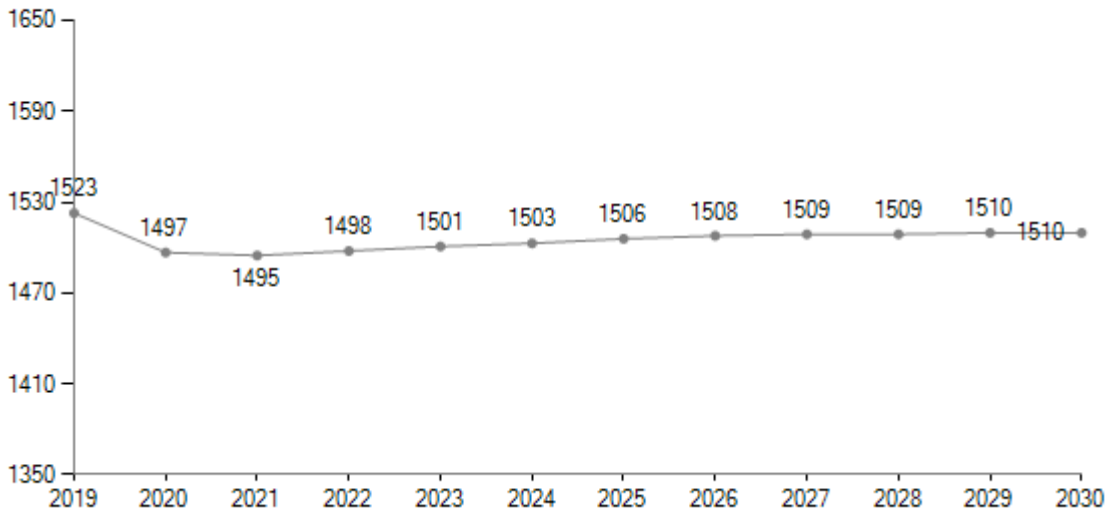


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

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

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [EMSI UK](#)