

Bookmaker

Bookmakers (also known as bookies) take bets on the outcomes of various events, such as horse and dog races or other sporting events, royal babies, election results, and even the weather. They do it at racetracks (on-course), within bookies' shops (off-course) or on the internet (remote). Bets can relate to a simple win or lose situation, or how close the customer's guess is to an actual result (spread betting).

The Work

You could be:

- working out, on a computer, the continually changing odds on which contestant will win, or on the chances of an event actually taking place
- taking money for bets before the event starts — face to face, over the phone, or online
- paying out on winning bets after the event
- keeping the shop clean and tidy, making sure that counters are tidy and stocked with betting slips
- checking that the satellite and video systems are working and the digital display shows the up to date odds
- reporting any suspicious betting patterns, underage gamblers or other illegal activity to the manager
- balancing the till at the end of the day
- training and managing new staff.

Pay

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

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

Starting pay is often based on the National Minimum Wage (NMW) or the National Living Wage (NLW).

As of 1 April 2026 the National Minimum Wage is £10.85 an hour for workers aged 18 to 20. The National Living Wage for those aged 21 and over is £12.71 an hour.

As a manager you could earn £18,000 to £25,000 a year, possibly more. Retail Area Managers might earn between £40,000 and £45,000. There are no set salaries for self-employed bookmakers.

Conditions

- Increasingly, betting takes place online. As an online bookmaker you would spend most of your time at a computer.
- You might work in a bookmaker's shop (a licensed betting office), which might be independent or part of a large chain. Modern betting shops are usually bright and airy, with comfortable seating, snacks and refreshments. There are live broadcasts of races on TV screens.

- You might work on a racecourse or dog track — in which case you could be outside in bad weather and might sometimes spend nights away from home. Bookmakers working on-course are called turf accountants.
- You will probably work about 40 hours a week, including some evenings and weekends. Betting shops are open 7 days a week and the busiest day is Saturday.

Getting In

- You could start off as a betting shop assistant or cashier. You do not normally need formal qualifications for this but a good general education is useful.
- You might enter as a management trainee if you have an HNC (SCQF Level 7), HND (SCQF Level 8) or degree (SCQF Level 9-10), particularly in business studies. For entry to an HNC or HND you normally need 1-2 Highers, and for a degree, 4-5 Highers.
- If you have previous experience in customer service management, you might be able to enter directly as a betting shop manager.
- In any of these cases, you might have to sit a numeracy based entry test.
- By law, you must be at least 18 to do this work.
- Many people get in through personal contacts.

For jobs in traditional betting shops look for job vacancies in the local press, local betting shops, in a specialist publication such as Racing Post, or online. Many large chains, such as Coral and Ladbrokes, advertise jobs on their websites.

What Does It Take

You need to have:

- an interest and knowledge in sport
- knowledge of any other subject you accept bets on
- good communication skills
- an honest and polite approach when dealing with customers
- an awareness of the need for good security
- an understanding of complex forms of wagers such as spread betting
- good teamworking skills
- IT skills.

You need to be able to:

- work out sums quickly and accurately either mentally or on the computer
- get on well with a wide range of customers
- help create a relaxed atmosphere in the shop
- deal confidently with difficult people
- work accurately under pressure.

Training

- At first, training will be on the job.
- If you work for a large company you might attend a training centre with staff from other shops.
- You might gain SVQs (SCQF Levels 4-11) in a subject such as Customer Service at SCQF Levels 5 and 6.
- If you become a manager you might take SVQ Management at SCQF Level 7.

Getting On

- Promotion opportunities are generally better in a large organisation.
- If you start as a betting shop assistant or cashier you might gain promotion to assistant manager, then to manager.
- You might move on to manage a number of betting shops.
- You could become regional manager.
- You might decide to become self-employed and open your own shop.

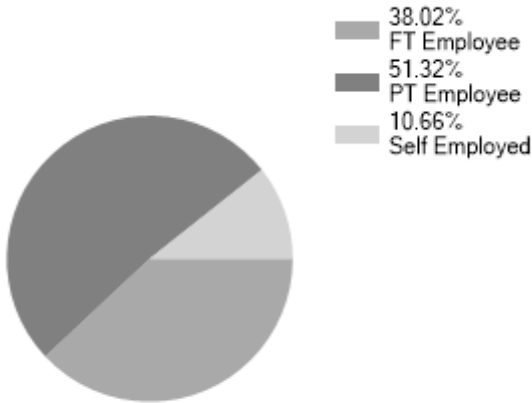
More Information

Traditional betting shops must hold a licence from the [Gambling Commission](#) and a premises licence from the local authority. The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) is in charge of regulating the practice of spread betting, which is the fastest growing form of betting.

Contacts

Statistics

Employment Status UK %

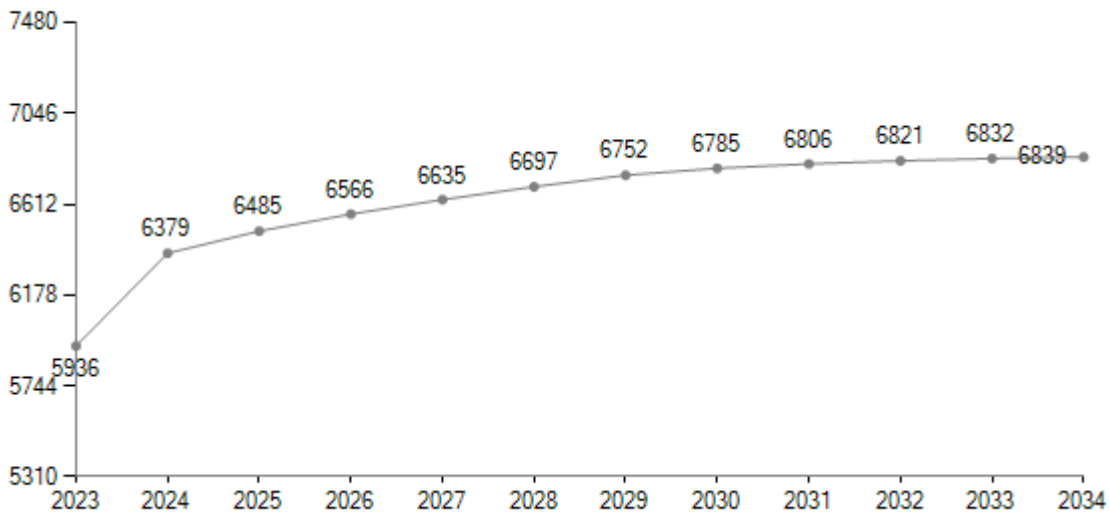


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

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

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [Lightcast](#)