

Sales Representative

A sales representative, or sales rep, travels about showing goods to individuals or businesses and trying to sell them. They can also be known as sales executives.

The Work

The work varies from company to company, and involves either business-to-business (B2B) or direct sales, business-to-consumer (B2C). Main areas include:

- **selling to shops** – which could include shoes, jewellery, stationery, food and a wide range of other goods
- **technical sales** – selling industrial goods to manufacturing companies
- **services** – selling a service such as advertising space
- **pharmaceutical and medical** – selling medicines and equipment to hospitals and health centres. (See the [Medical Representative](#) job profile).

You could be:

- 'cold calling' possible customers, phoning or visiting them without prior contact
- demonstrating new goods to customers, describing the features and encouraging them to buy
- persuading past customers to take out repeat orders
- discussing and agreeing on a price
- developing business relations and managing customer accounts
- trying to increase sales figures in your area and meeting sales targets
- doing administrative work including accounts
- monitoring which items sell well and collecting customer feedback.

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 pay without commission can range from £17,000 to £25,000 a year. Commission or bonuses can sometimes bring it up to between £30,000 and £55,000 or more a year. Some jobs pay only commission. You may be provided with a company car, mobile phone and laptop.

Conditions

- You will spend most of your time travelling and meeting customers.
- When not on the road you will probably be based in an office or at home.
- You work long and varied hours and may spend some nights away from home.
- You may have to work on a self-employed basis, arranging your own National Insurance and tax

contributions.

Getting In

There is no single route into this job.

- Some people progress to sales rep after working for a company in administration or retail sales.
- Many companies nowadays want a degree (SCQF Level 9-10) or at least an HND (SCQF Level 8). Useful subjects include business, management or marketing.
- For technical or medical sales you usually need a degree or HND in a relevant subject.
- To get on to a degree course, you need 4-5 Highers.
- Some fashion retail companies have a direct entry scheme for graduates.
- You need a full, clean driving licence.

What Does It Take

You should be:

- confident when talking to people
- persuasive and a good negotiator
- well organised
- smartly presented
- able to build up good business relationships
- patient
- decisive
- motivated and driven
- able to work under pressure to meet sales targets.

You need:

- excellent communication skills
- good networking skills
- to be able to deal with rejection
- good IT and number skills
- business awareness
- in-depth knowledge of the items you sell.

Training

- Training is on the job.
- You can study for industry recognised qualifications awarded by the [Institute of Sales Management Education \(ISM Education\)](#).
- The SVQ in Retail (Sales Professional) is available at SCQF Level 6.

Getting On

- You might go on to become an area sales manager, organising a team of sales reps.
- You could move into the popular area of Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) such as food, drink or alcohol, or in packaged goods.
- You could move into business development or marketing.
- You could possibly become a company director.

Contacts

Statistics

Employment Status UK %

100.00% FT Employee

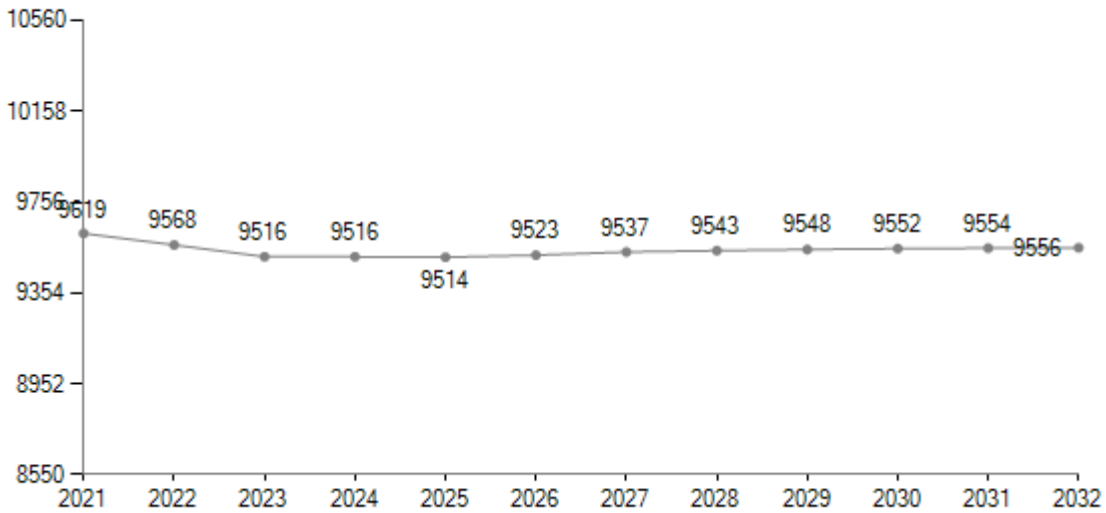


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

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

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [Lightcast](#)