

Joiner or Carpenter

A joiner or carpenter makes and repairs wooden structures or objects, such as stairs, doors, window frames, items of furniture or kitchens, on a building site, in a workshop or commercial and residential properties.

The Work

You could be:

- studying drawings and calculating angles and dimensions
- choosing a suitable piece of wood for the job, measuring, cutting and shaping it
- using hand tools, specialist power tools and cutting machines
- fitting and fixing the shaped pieces of wood into place
- working on building sites
- visiting domestic, industrial or commercial premises to repair or replace wooden items or fittings.

There are four specialisms:

- **bench joiners** make prefabricated parts in a workshop: doors, staircases, roof timbers, skirting boards
- **fixers** work on a building site, fitting prefabricated parts into the structure of the building
- **shopfitters** (see the [Shopfitter](#) job profile) produce the interiors and fronts of shops, restaurants and offices
- **formwork joiners** (see the [Formworker](#) job profile) make moulds for concrete structures such as pillars for overpasses, motorways and multi-storey car parks.

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.

As of June 2025 the Building and Allied Trades Joint Industrial Council (BATJIC) recommends the following rates for a 4-year apprenticeship in Scotland based on a 39-hour week are:

Year 1 – £303.28 (£7.78 an hour)

Year 2 – £401.70 (£10.30 an hour)

Year 3 – £490.48 (£12.58 an hour)

Year 4 – £490.48 (£12.58 an hour) (without SCQF Level 6)

Year 4 – £546.71 (£14.02 an hour) (with SCQF Level 6).

Please note these rates may vary if the Apprentice is 21 years old or over and has completed the first year of their apprenticeship. National Minimum Wage (NMW) and National Living Wage (NLW) will apply.

Once qualified you may earn from around £13 an hour up to £25 an hour or more. Self-employed joiners can earn more than this.

Conditions

- If you are working indoors there can be wood-dust, although extractor systems usually get rid of most of it.
- When work is outdoors it can be cold, wet and windy.
- You may have to work at height on scaffolding.
- You will have to lift and carry tools and materials.
- On sites you wear protective headgear and footwear and, sometimes, goggles, gloves and ear-protectors.
- The working day begins early, and often depends on hours of daylight. Work can be seasonal, with shorter hours and some lay-offs in winter.
- Working hours can be between 39-45 hours a week. You may have to work overtime some evenings and weekends, particularly where you have a deadline to meet.
- You might have to travel to different sites and sometimes live away from home.

Getting In

- The normal entry route is by a Modern Apprenticeship in Construction: Building at SCQF Level 6.
- You do not always need formal qualifications, but some employers may ask for subjects at National 4 or 5 including English, Maths and a technological subject.
- You could study the Foundation Apprenticeship in Construction (SCQF Level 4 or 5) in S3-S6, which can help to get into a relevant Modern Apprenticeship.
- You usually have to sit an aptitude test as part of the application process.
- A driving licence can be useful, and may be necessary.
- You should be fit enough to do a physical job.
- You must hold a Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) card or equivalent to work on building sites. You must pass a health and safety test to qualify for this scheme.

There are jobs in construction, with demolition firms and with local authorities. You might also find work in furniture-making, shopfitting or restoration of old furniture.

What Does It Take

You need to have:

- practical skills
- a methodical approach and the ability to pay attention to detail
- maths skills for measuring and calculating
- an awareness of safety issues
- physical strength to lift and carry wood and tools
- a head for heights and a good sense of balance
- a pleasant manner with members of the public.

You need to be able to:

- follow technical plans and drawings
- work accurately and meet deadlines
- work alone and as part of a team.

Training

- Training during a Modern Apprenticeship is mainly on the job with off the job training. You would work towards a Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) in Carpentry and Joinery (Construction) at SCQF Level 6 and PDA Carpentry and Joinery, or the SVQ Carpentry and Joinery (Construction): Site Carpentry plus the Diploma in Site Joinery at SCQF Level 6.
- After completing the SVQ, you could go on to study for a Advanced Craft Carpentry and Joinery part time at college.

Getting On

- With experience you can move on to a supervisory role.
- You might move into building inspection, craft instruction, sales and management.
- Many carpenters and joiners set up in business for themselves, advertising their services for commercial or domestic jobs.

More Information

For more information please see organisations listed below:

- [Construction Industry Training Board](#) (CITB)
- [Scottish Building Federation](#)

Contacts

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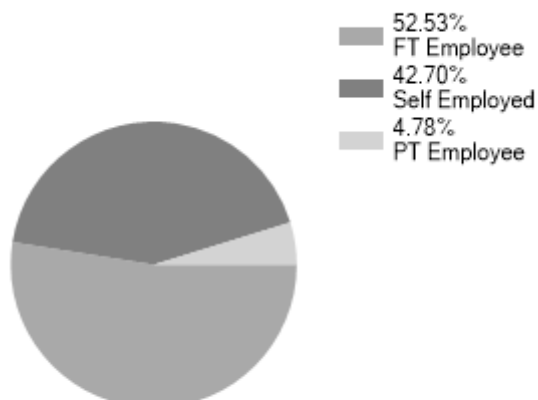
Website: www.goconstruct.org

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Statistics

Employment Status UK %

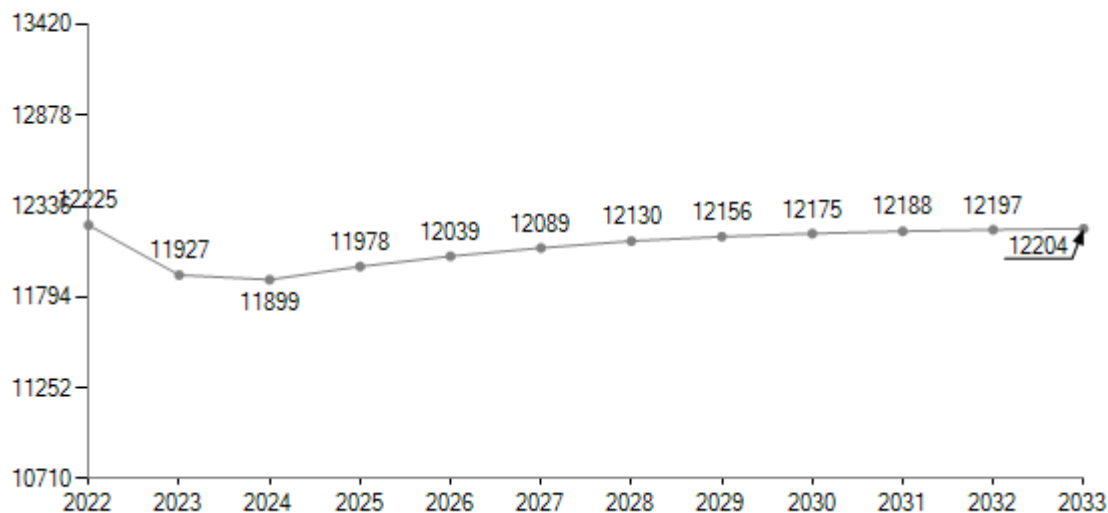


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

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

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [Lightcast](#)