

Painter and Decorator

A painter and decorator applies finishes to the outside or inside surfaces of industrial, commercial or domestic buildings, using either paint, varnish, wallpaper or other coverings. Surfaces might be wood, plaster or metal. Jobs could include walls, ceilings, fences, boats, bridges or oil rigs and platforms.

The Work

You could be:

- measuring surfaces and calculating how much paint or wallpaper you need
- preparing the work area, covering with dust sheets and setting up any ladders, scaffolding or cradles
- washing old paintwork and removing old paint and wallpaper using a blowtorch, liquid paint remover and a scraper or a steam stripper
- smoothing the surface with sandpaper and filling in cracks with plaster or other suitable material
- measuring and mixing colours to the required shade, by hand or using a computer, then applying the paint using brushes, rollers or a spray
- carrying open paint pots up a ladder or scaffolding and balancing them while painting
- cutting wallpaper to size, spreading paste over each piece of wallpaper, hanging it on the wall, matching patterns and trimming around doorways and windows; applying wallpaper to ceilings
- applying ornamental decoration such as coving or ceiling centre pieces, or creative textured finishes such as marbling
- clearing up as you go and once the job is finished.

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.

A qualified painter and decorator earns £15.00 to around £22.00 an hour. From this you may have to buy your

own ladders, brushes and other equipment. You can earn extra through overtime and bonuses. You may get travel and lodgings allowances. If you are self-employed you will negotiate your own rates.

Conditions

- You might work outside at heights where it could be cold and windy.
- When working indoors there may be strong fumes.
- You would wear protective clothing including overalls.
- You might have to buy your own brushes and equipment.
- You would work around 40 hours a week, often doing evening or weekend overtime.
- You would sometimes travel between work sites.
- Outdoor work can be seasonal, with shorter hours and sometimes lay-offs in winter.

Getting In

- The normal entry route is through a Modern Apprenticeship.
- You do not always need formal qualifications, but some employers ask for subjects at National 4 or 5 including English, Maths and a science or 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 is useful and may be necessary.
- You must be physically fit.
- You must hold a Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) card or equivalent. You must pass a health and safety test to qualify for this scheme.

Look for jobs with private firms and local authorities.

What Does It Take

You need to have:

- good practical skills
- a head for heights and a good sense of balance
- an awareness of health and safety matters
- an eye for colour and design
- numeracy skills to measure and calculate amounts of paint and wallpaper
- a careful and neat method of working
- honesty and reliability
- a pleasant manner with the public.

Training

- Training combines on the job experience and off the job training on block release study.
- You would work towards SVQ in Painting and Decorating (Construction) at SCQF Level 6 and PDA in Painting and Decorating.

- On completion of the SVQ you could study part time for the Advanced Craft Painting and Decorating at college.

Getting On

- With experience you might move on to a supervisor job, or become a craft instructor.
- You could move into specialist work in, for instance, historic buildings.
- You might move into management or decide to set up your own business.
- You could take more qualifications to improve your skills and promotion prospects.

More Information

For more information please see the organisations listed below:

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

Contacts

GoConstruct

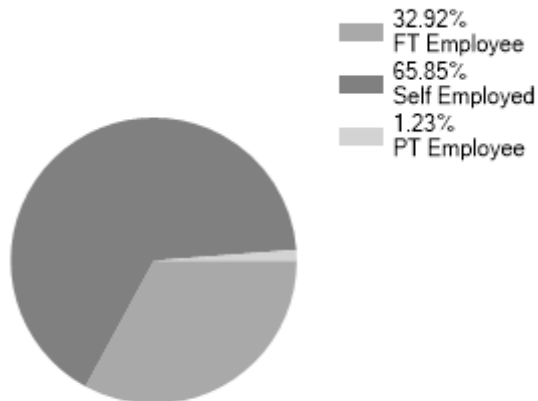
Website: www.goconstruct.org

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Statistics

Employment Status UK %

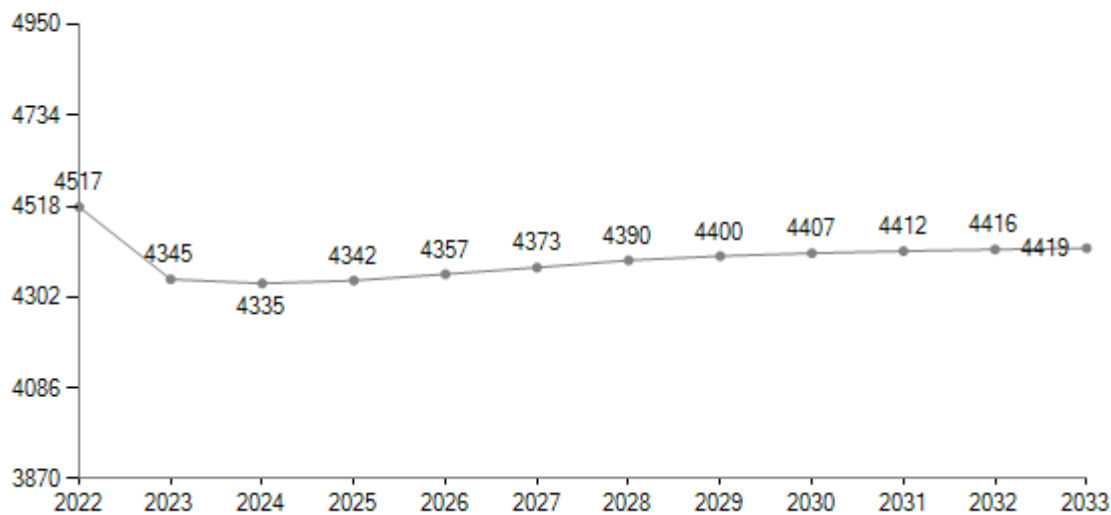


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

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

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [Lightcast](#)