

Signwriter

Signwriters (or signmakers) design and make signs and write the lettering for them. They may also install them on the fronts of shops, offices, restaurants, pubs, hotels, on the sides of vehicles and by the sides of roads.

Most signs are now designed on computer and made by machine. There is less demand for traditional hand painted signs.

The Work

You could be:

- designing and making signs on a computer, using signmaking computer-aided design (CAD) software
- taking designs printed on vinyl and applying them to vehicles, known as vinyl wrapping
- making 3D letters from moulds or cutting them out from materials such as vinyl, perspex, plastic, metal, wood and glass fibre
- using solvent-based inks, paints and adhesives
- writing signs by hand, measuring and calculating the letter size, preparing the background and writing the lettering by way of hand painting, engraving, screen printing and spray painting
- meeting clients to discuss their needs, working out costs and measurements, preparing planning application forms and drafting contracts
- cutting glass neon tubes and carrying out minor electrical work if the sign is illuminated
- installing, repainting or repairing signs on location, in line with health and safety and planning regulations.

Pay

Pay rates vary, depending on:

- where you work
- the size of 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 2024 the National Minimum Wage is £6.40 an hour for workers under 18, £8.60 an hour for workers aged 18 to 20. The National Living Wage for those aged 21 and over is £11.44 an hour.

After a year or two of experience you might earn around £18,000 a year, rising to around between £20,000 to £25,000 a year or more. Some signwriters run their own business. They charge a fee for each sign they make and their income can be irregular and variable.

Conditions

- You would work in a factory or workshop.
- You may have to travel to different sites, to install or repair signs.

- You might have to work at heights on a ladder or on scaffolding.
- You may have to work outdoors in all weather.
- There could be heavy lifting and a lot of standing.
- You might wear protective clothing such as a hard hat, face mask and overalls.

Getting In

- You do not always need formal qualifications but some employers prefer you to have English and Art and Design at National 4 or 5.
- You could take a full time course at NC or NQ (SCQF Levels 4-6), HNC (SCQF Level 7) or HND (SCQF Level 8) level, in a subject such as art and design or visual communication, before applying for a job.
- You may need a portfolio of artwork.
- You could take the Modern Apprenticeship in Signmaking at SCQF Level 5 or 6.
- You usually need a driving licence.
- You should be fit as you would have to lift heavy signs.

You may find jobs advertised through your local Jobcentre Plus office or on the [Find a Job](#) website.

What Does It Take

You need to have:

- good drawing skills
- IT skills to use design software
- a neat and accurate approach
- good practical skills
- an eye for detail and colour
- knowledge of typefaces and fonts
- a good head for heights
- an awareness of health and safety.

You need to be:

- creative and imaginative
- willing to follow instructions from clients or supervisors
- accurate at spelling and punctuation
- good with numbers, for calculating spacing
- interested in technical processes
- adaptable, to keep up with changing methods
- able to work in a team.

Training

If you are installing signs on site you might need to hold a Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) Card (either Sign Installer – Illuminated or Sign Installer – Non-illuminated). You may also need to obtain working at height qualifications.

Getting On

- You could work for a large or small signwriting company.
- In larger companies, you would probably be able to specialise, perhaps as a sign designer, manufacturing technician or site surveyor.
- You might get a supervisory job or become a manager.
- With experience you might set up your own business, perhaps taking up a franchise for making signs.

Contacts

International Sign Association UK

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Email: ask@uksigns.org

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Twitter: @BSGAUK

Facebook: www.facebook.com/isaukbsga

Statistics

Employment Status UK %

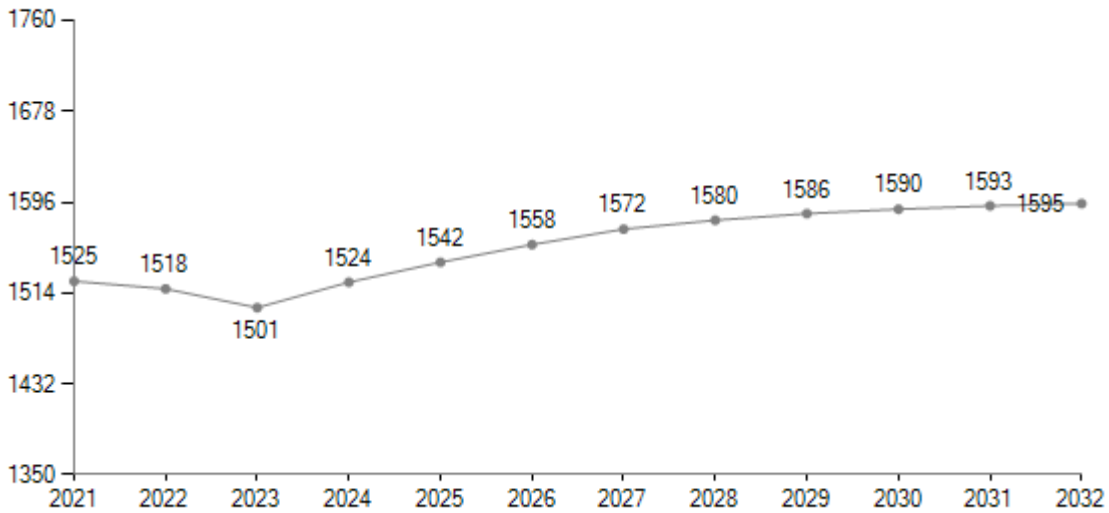


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

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

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [Lightcast](#)