

Cleaner

A cleaner does cleaning and general housework duties, usually inside a building, although some clean inside buses, trains or aeroplanes. You usually specialise in cleaning a particular type of place such as a domestic cleaner in a private home, an industrial cleaner in an office or public place, or a hospital cleaner.

The Work

- **Domestic cleaner** – you clean private homes, usually on your own. You might also wash and iron clothes, empty the washing machine and dishwasher and make beds.
- **Industrial cleaner** – you clean offices, shops, factories, schools, airport terminals and other large buildings, often as part of a team. You will use industrial cleaning equipment such as mechanical floor scrubbers and polishers, and concentrated chemicals.
- **Hospital cleaner** – you clean wards, operating theatres, public areas and offices, using antiseptic chemicals to sterilise surfaces.

You could be:

- scrubbing, mopping, sweeping, vacuuming or polishing stone, wooden, carpeted or lino floors
- dusting, waxing or polishing furniture and windows, washing surfaces, cleaning ovens, cleaning toilets and emptying bins
- using items such as brushes, mops, dusters, vacuum cleaners and floor polishers
- choosing the correct cleaning product for the job
- carrying out basic maintenance on equipment
- following health and safety procedures
- checking cleaning product stock levels and re-ordering fresh supplies
- moving furniture around to clean underneath
- specialising in thorough cleaning of houses which have not been lived in for a while.

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 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 £8.00 an hour for workers under 18, £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.

You may be able to earn more by doing overtime or night shifts. As a supervisor you could earn around £15.00 an hour.

Someone with their own cleaning business would charge between £20.00 and £30.00 an hour.

Conditions

- You have to bend, stretch, climb stepladders, carry buckets of water and cleaning equipment, scrub surfaces and move furniture.
- In industrial or commercial cleaning your shifts would mostly be early morning or late evening.
- The work can be messy and dusty.
- Many jobs are part time and some jobs involve night shifts.
- You wear protective overalls and sometimes gloves.
- You might work alone or in a team.
- The job is physically demanding.

Getting In

- You do not need formal qualifications but a good general education is useful.
- You should be physically fit.
- You should not have allergies to dust or chemicals.

Jobs are found with contract cleaning companies, domestic cleaning agencies and local authorities or you could be self-employed.

What Does It Take

You need to be:

- methodical and conscientious
- able to follow health and safety rules
- honest and reliable
- able to work unsupervised and to a high standard
- observant with a good eye for detail
- willing to learn about different cleaning equipment and products
- able to follow written and spoken instructions
- willing to do repetitive tasks
- able to work in a team.

Training

- Training is mainly on the job.
- You may work with an experienced cleaner first.
- You can work towards SVQ Cleaning and Support Services at SCQF Levels 4 and 5.
- The British Institute of Cleaning Science (BICSc) offers a range of online training courses, including the Licence to Practice (LTP).
- You may also complete courses in manual handling and general health and safety.

Getting On

If you are working for a large agency you can apply for promotion to a supervisory position. Many cleaners are self-employed.

Contacts

British Institute of Cleaning Science

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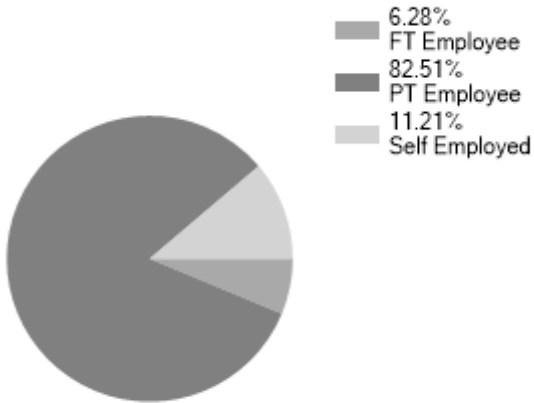
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Statistics

Employment Status UK %

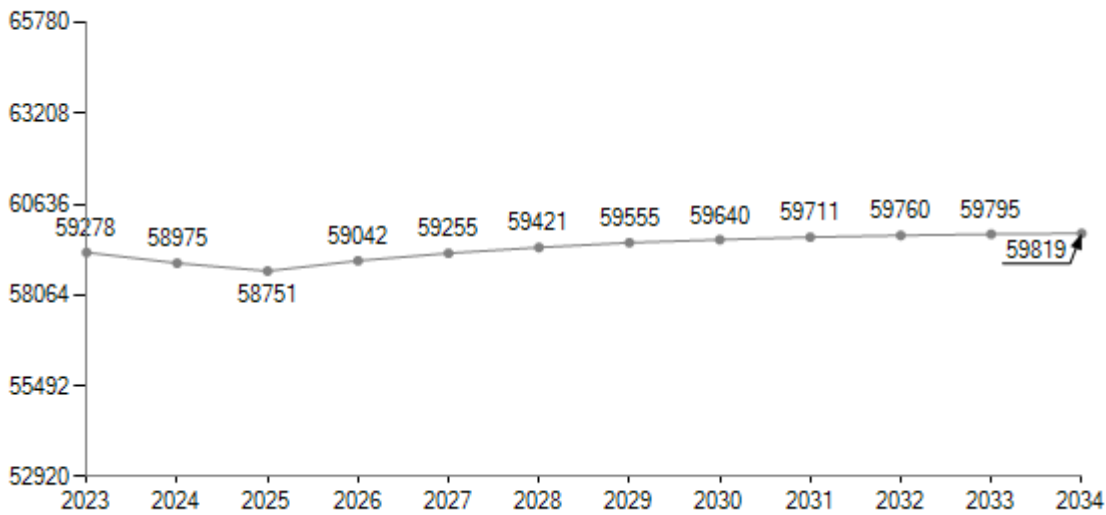


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

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

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [Lightcast](#)