

Dry Cleaning or Laundry Worker

A dry cleaning or laundry worker uses chemicals and equipment such as a steam press, washing machine or a dry cleaning machine to clean clothes and other items.

The Work

You might:

- take the items from the customer, tag them, take the customer's contact details and give them a collection ticket
- check the items for damage and separate them by colour and type of fabric
- remove individual stains by spotting with chemicals before dry cleaning
- load garments into the machine and add the specialist cleaning fluid
- hang, press or hand-iron the cleaned items, putting in pleats if needed and taking care with delicate fabrics
- wrap the items in plastic and store them for collection
- give back the clean items to the customer and take payment
- in laundrettes, do service washes, loading and unloading machines, drying items and pressing or folding them
- help the customers use the machines and fill up soap powder and gel dispensers.

Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Actual pay rates may vary, depending on:

- where you work
- the size of the 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. This may rise to £8.00 an hour with experience.

Salaries for dry cleaning or laundry managers range from £15,000 to £30,000 a year.

Conditions

- Laundries and dry cleaning plants can be hot, humid and noisy.
- Modern dry cleaning machines usually stop too much of the smell from escaping.
- In dry cleaning shops the environment is comfortable and clean.
- In laundry plants you will usually work regular hours, although there might be shifts.
- In some jobs you may have to work evenings and weekends.

- You will lift, bend, stretch and be on your feet a lot.

Getting In

- A good general education is useful.
- You might have to sit a test in basic reading, writing and maths skills.
- If you have allergies to chemicals then this work may not be suitable for you.
- A driving licence may be required as some companies offer a delivery service.

There are jobs in dry cleaning shops, dry cleaning or industrial laundry plants or in small laundries attached to hospitals, care homes, prisons or hotels.

What Does It Take

You need:

- the ability to learn new skills as technology changes
- a good eye for detail
- a polite, friendly and helpful manner
- the ability to follow instructions
- to be able to operate machinery
- number skills for handling cash
- to be willing to do repetitive work
- an understanding of health and safety regulations.

Training

- Training is usually on the job from an experienced member of staff.
- The Guild of Cleaners and Launderers run a Qualification Star scheme which can include separate practical certificates and theoretical exams. They have a number of accredited training agencies in Scotland.
- The UKFT (UK Fashion and Textile Association) offer the Textile Care Operative Apprenticeship.
- You can do an SVQ in Textile Care Services at SCQF Level 5.

Getting On

- With experience, you could become a leading hand, senior assistant, supervisor, assistant branch manager, branch manager.
- Some of the larger companies may run management training schemes.
- You could set up your own business.

Contacts

Guild of Cleaners and Launderers

Tel: 01698 322669

Email: enquiries@gcl.org.uk

Website: www.gcl.org.uk

Society of Hospital Linen Service and Laundry Managers

Tel: 01253 869968

Email: info@linenmanager.co.uk

Website: www.linenmanager.co.uk

Textile Services Association (TSA)

Tel: 0203 151 5600

Email: tsa@tsa-uk.org

Website: www.tsa-uk.org

X: @TextileServices

Facebook: www.facebook.com/TextileServicesUK

Statistics

Employment Status : Not available this career.

Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

Predicted Employment Statistics : Not available this career.