

## Kitchen Assistant

A kitchen assistant helps the cook or chef by doing basic kitchen work in hotels, restaurants and other catering facilities. They are also called kitchen porters.

### The Work

You could be:

- carrying in food deliveries and putting them into store
- cleaning ovens, dishes, pans and other equipment
- cleaning the floor and disposing of kitchen waste and rubbish correctly
- keeping kitchen walls and work surfaces clean
- bringing food in from the storeroom
- checking sell-by dates and rotating stock
- peeling and cutting vegetables and cleaning and preparing meat and fish
- preparing simple food
- using machinery such as grinders, mincers, slicers and mixers.

### 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 around £13.00 an hour with experience.

### Conditions

- You work shifts, including split shifts (working in the morning and evening with time off in the afternoon), early mornings, evenings and weekends.
- Part time work is common.
- Work can be seasonal with more vacancies in summer.
- The kitchen can be hot and noisy.
- There may be some heavy lifting.
- You will usually have to wear protective clothing such as apron, gloves, hairnet or hat.

### Getting In

- You do not need formal qualifications but a good general education is useful.
- You could study the Foundation Apprenticeship in Hospitality (SCQF Level 4 or 5) in S3-S6, which gives you an introduction to working in the hospitality industry.
- You must be physically fit to do this job.
- You need to be over 18 to handle certain kitchen equipment, such as meat slicers.
- You must be aware of any allergies that you have and discuss these with the employer to assess risks.
- Jobs are in a wide range of places including restaurants, hotels, works canteens, hospitals and nursing homes.
- There is often a high turnover of staff, and so there are usually a lot of vacancies, which are advertised in jobcentres and online.
- For some jobs, for example in care homes, you may require a satisfactory criminal record check from Disclosure Scotland to show that you are suitable for this type of work. Contact Disclosure Scotland for details on the type you would need.

## What Does It Take

You should be:

- energetic and hard-working
- able to follow instructions
- able to multitask
- a fast worker
- a good team worker
- able to stay calm under pressure.

You should have:

- excellent communication skills
- an awareness of health and safety, food hygiene and allergens
- attention to detail.

## Training

- Training is on the job.
- Anyone with a job involving the handling of food must complete a relevant food safety and hygiene course.
- There are also SVQs in Food Production and Cooking at SCQF Level 5.

## Getting On

- After experience as a kitchen assistant you might get promotion within a big restaurant to the post of head kitchen assistant.
- Otherwise you might be able to go on to complete a Modern Apprenticeship in Production Chef or Professional Cookery to become a commis chef.
- Or you could move into bar work or table service work and work up from those jobs.

## Contacts

### Springboard

Email: [info@springboarduk.org.uk](mailto:info@springboarduk.org.uk)

Website: [careerscope.uk.net](http://careerscope.uk.net)

Website (2): [springboard.uk.net](http://springboard.uk.net)

X: [@CareerScope\\_](https://twitter.com/CareerScope_)

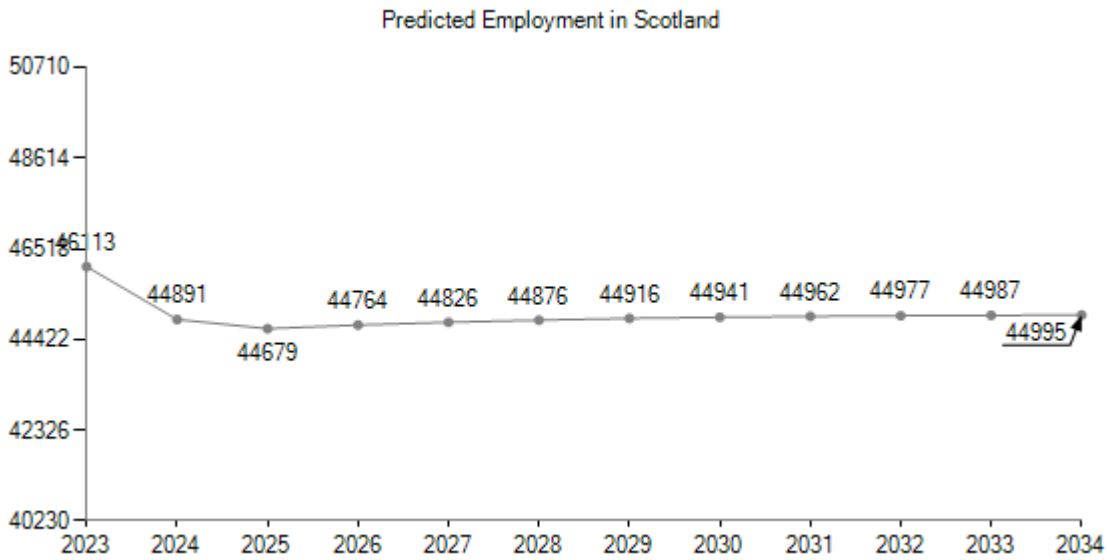
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/SpringboardUKCharity](http://www.facebook.com/SpringboardUKCharity)

Statistics

Employment Status : Not available this career.

Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.



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