

## Waiter or Waitress

A waiter or waitress works in a bar, restaurant, hotel or for a catering company taking customers' orders, carrying the meal from the kitchen to the table. They may work in a specialised area such as silver service or wine service.

### The Work

You could be:

- setting the tables with cloths, napkins, cutlery and decorations such as flowers
- welcoming the diners and showing them to a table, answering questions about the menu and recommending wine
- writing down or remembering orders for food and drink and taking the order into the kitchen
- carrying each course of the meal from the kitchen to the table
- in silver service, serving food onto diners' plates from a platter balanced on your arm
- watching the diners to see when they are ready for the next course and collecting dirty plates
- printing off the bill, taking payment by cash, debit or credit card and giving change and the receipt
- cleaning and setting the tables for the next diners
- dealing with several tables at once, each at a different stage of the meal.

### 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 for a waiter or waitress is often based on the National Minimum Wage. The starting salary is often based on the National Minimum Wage (NMW).

As of 1 April 2019 the National Minimum Wage is £4.35 an hour for workers aged 16 to 17, £6.15 an hour for workers aged 18 to 20 and £7.70 an hour for workers aged 21 to 24. The National Living Wage is £8.21 for workers aged 25 and over.

With experience and depending on the type of establishment, you could earn up to £8.50 an hour or more. Tips can boost your earnings.

### Conditions

- You work shifts, including early mornings, evenings and weekends.
- Part time work is common.
- Kitchens are often hot, crowded and noisy.
- You are on your feet the whole time.
- You have to carry several heavily laden plates at once, balancing them on your arms or on a tray.

- You may have to wear a uniform.

## Getting In

- You do not need formal qualifications but a good general education is useful.
- You might get in through a Modern Apprenticeship in Hospitality (Food and Beverage pathway) at SCQF Level 5.
- Excellent customer service skills are more important than formal qualifications.
- Licensed restaurants want you to be over 18 as you may be serving alcohol.

Jobs are in restaurants, hotels, works canteens, hospitals, nursing homes and catering companies. Because turnover is high there are usually a lot of vacancies in jobcentres both for experienced and inexperienced waiters or waitresses.

## What Does It Take

You should have:

- a smart appearance
- a good understanding of hygiene
- a friendly, helpful, polite manner
- good communication skills
- a good memory to remember orders for different tables
- a steady hand - for carrying piles of hot and cold dishes
- energy and stamina.

You need to be:

- patient and tolerant
- alert - to react to customers' needs
- aware of health and safety
- able to multitask
- calm when things get busy.

## Training

- Once you have had some basic experience you can go on to train in specialist skills, such as silver service, hygiene, health and safety or knowledge of wines and spirits.
- If doing the Modern Apprenticeship, you would work towards the Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) in Hospitality Services (Food and Beverage pathway) at SCQF Level 5.
- There are SVQs in Food and Beverage Service at SCQF Level 5.

## Getting On

- Promotion prospects are better in larger restaurants or hotels. You can move into specialist posts, such as wine waiter or waitress.

- After experience and some training you can move on to head waiter or waitress, assistant restaurant manager, restaurant manager.
- You might move into another area of restaurant work such as purchasing, stock control, or accounts.

## Contacts

### People 1st - Hospitality Guild

Tel: 0203 074 1222

Email: [eqa@people1st.co.uk](mailto:eqa@people1st.co.uk)

Website: [www.hospitalityguild.co.uk](http://www.hospitalityguild.co.uk)

Website (2): [www.people1st.co.uk](http://www.people1st.co.uk)

Twitter: @p1stgroup

### Springboard

Tel: 020 7921 0420

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

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

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

Twitter: @Springboard\_UK

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

### Wine and Spirit Education Trust (WSET)

Tel: 020 7089 3800

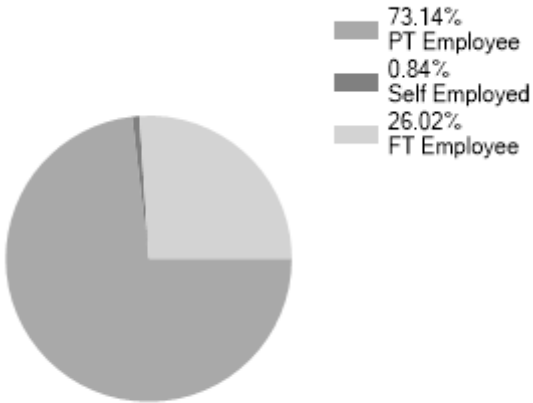
Website: [www.wsetglobal.com](http://www.wsetglobal.com)

Twitter: @WSETglobal

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

Statistics

Employment Status UK %



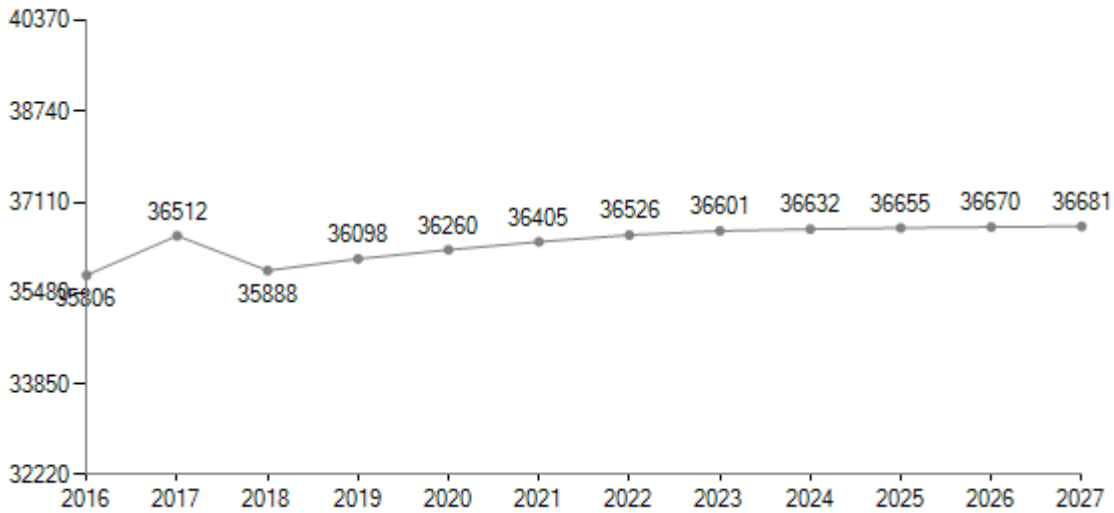
Past Unemployment - Scotland

Date	Unemployed
Dec 2016	0.36%
Dec 2018	0.09%
Mar 2019	0.08%

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

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [EMSI UK](#)