

## Tour Leader or Manager

A tour manager or tour leader plans and accompanies a group of holidaymakers on a tour, within the UK or abroad, making sure everything runs to plan. The tour, lasting days or weeks, is usually by coach, but sometimes includes travel by train, plane or boat.

### The Work

You could be:

- designing tours and booking all aspects, such as accommodation and meals
- making deals with hotels and theatres to provide meals, accommodation and entertainment
- assisting with meal preparation and buying supplies on some types of tours
- welcoming groups at the starting point and making sure that everyone has arrived
- pointing out and explaining tourist attractions during the trip
- answering questions and giving advice on language and currency
- making sure travel arrangements and stopovers run smoothly and changing routes or arrangements as necessary
- handling passport or visa problems, emergencies, illness, accidents, lost luggage and any complaints.

### Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Income for tour managers or tour leaders varies considerably, depending on:

- where you work
- the size of the company or organisation you work for
- the demand for the job.

Most tour managers or tour leaders are self-employed and work for tour operators on a freelance basis, charging a fee for each tour.

Starting pay can be between £16,000 and £20,000 a year, which can rise up to around £30,000 with experience. In addition you may get, for the duration of each tour, a daily allowance plus free board and lodgings, plus other relevant expenses.

### Conditions

- You work long hours including early mornings, evenings, and weekends; you are usually on duty day and night for the tour's duration, which can be for a few weeks at a time.
- You work both indoors and outdoors.
- You are away from home, sometimes abroad, for days, weeks or even months at a time.
- Depending on the type of tour you lead, your accommodation could be anything from a hotel or hostel to a tent.
- You might have to wear a uniform.
- The work is seasonal, but it is possible to work all year round if you are prepared to work in different

countries.

- Some tour managers are self-employed.

## Getting In

- Skills and personality are more important than formal qualifications, but a good general education is useful.
- Fluency in a foreign language is usually necessary, especially if working abroad.
- You should have knowledge of and interest in the history and geography of the area you want to work in.
- You should be in good physical condition if the tour involves adventure activities, for example trekking or kayaking.
- A driving licence may be an advantage, particularly a PCV licence as some jobs involve being a driver/tour manager.
- If working as a driver tour leader, you usually need to be at least 25 years of age for insurance purposes.

Vacancies appear in trade journals such as Travel Weekly, Travel Trade Gazette and on websites which advertise travel jobs such as [traveljobsearch.com](http://traveljobsearch.com). Once you have relevant experience you can register with a travel related employment agency such as New Frontiers.

## What Does It Take

You need to be:

- able to communicate with a wide range of people
- able to deal with problems and emergencies in a calm manner
- good at solving problems
- responsible and able to make decisions
- tolerant and resilient.

You need to have:

- leadership skills
- a smart appearance
- awareness of safety issues and first aid
- excellent organisation and time management skills
- a knowledge of foreign languages
- lots of energy and a sense of humour
- good knowledge of the history, culture and geography of the countries you are based in.

## Training

- New tour managers or tour leaders usually attend an induction course covering main destinations, company policies and health and safety. Courses can last a few weeks.
- You may accompany an experienced tour manager for your first few trips.
- You are expected to keep your knowledge of routes, places of interest and accommodation up-to-date.
- The [International Association of Tour Managers \(IATM\)](http://www.iatm.org) offers two certificates to its active members, The

European Tours Managers Certificate and The Tour Manager/Tour Guide's Certificate (TMC/TGC), which identifies you as a professional tour manager. To gain the certificate you must be a member and pass a written and oral exam. The association also organises educational tours and programmes aimed at developing your skills.

## Getting On

You may move on to manage a number of tour leaders.

## Contacts

### Springboard

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

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

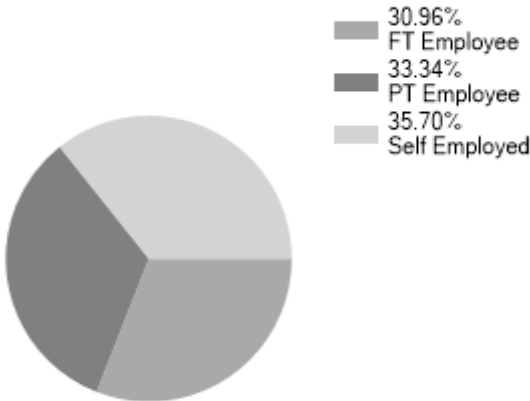
Website (2): [springboard.uk.net](http://springboard.uk.net)

X: @CareerScope\_

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

Statistics

Employment Status UK %

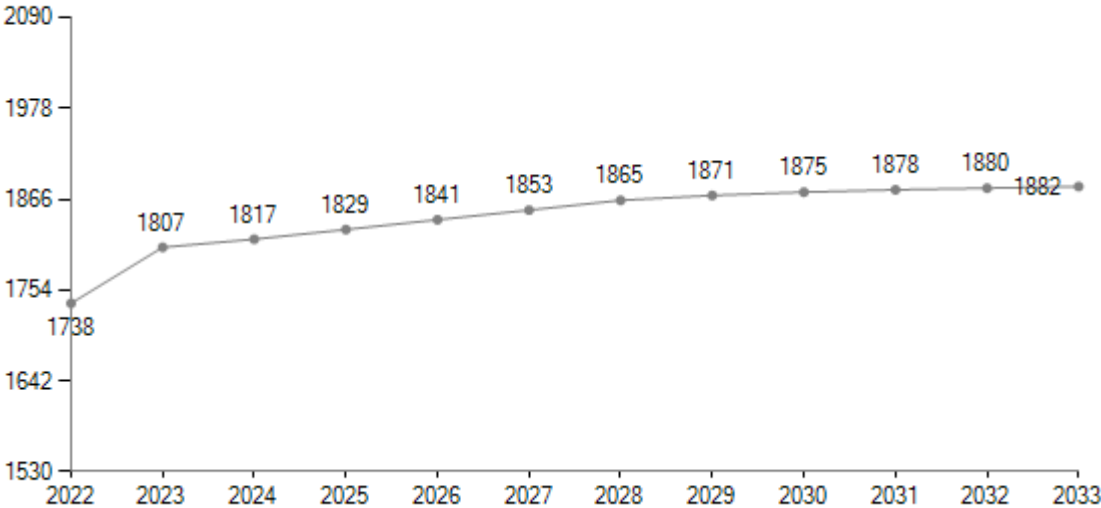


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

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

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [Lightcast](#)