

Paralegal

Paralegals help qualified solicitors to carry out work on cases and to give legal advice to clients. They will usually specialise in a particular area of law.

The Work

Your work would be supervised by a qualified solicitor. Specific duties would depend on the area of law specialised in.

You could be:

- carrying out research on legal cases
- reviewing and organising case files – in some cases handling your own caseload
- transferring the legal title to private or commercial property
- dealing with civil or criminal court work
- giving legal advice to clients
- preparing legal documents such as contracts, leases and wills
- getting information from clients for court cases
- taking witness statements (precognition)
- assisting in court.

Pay

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

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

Salaries for paralegals are usually around £18,000 to £25,000 a year. Experienced paralegals can earn up to £40,000 a year.

Conditions

- You would work in an office.
- You may also spend time in court.
- You would usually work regular hours, but when you are getting a case ready for court, you may have to work late.

Getting In

There are three main ways to become a paralegal.

You can get in through a Modern Apprenticeship.

- Skills for Justice and the Financial and Legal Skills Partnership have developed a framework for the Scottish Modern Apprenticeship in Paralegal Practice.
- This incorporates the Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) in Paralegal Practice at SCQF Level 7.

You can study full time at college or university and then look for work as a trainee paralegal.

- Increasingly, employers are looking for paralegal trainees with recognised and relevant qualifications at HNC, HND or degree level.
- For entry into an HNC or HND in Legal Services you would normally need 2 Highers including English plus subjects at National 5. A relevant NC or NQ is sometimes accepted.
- For entry into a Law degree you normally need 4-5 Highers, including English. Other subjects, including Maths, may be required at National 5. Entry requirements can vary widely.

You can study part time while working for a law firm in a clerical or administrative role.

- Most employers will look for a good general education, normally a group of subjects at National 5 including English. Some prefer candidates with 1-2 Highers including English, or an equivalent qualification.
- There are several related part time qualifications, including several Professional Development Awards (PDAs). These are offered by a number of colleges as a part time or online course. You may not normally need formal qualifications for a PDA, but may need relevant experience in a legal or administration environment.
- Fife College and South Lanarkshire College offer part time HNC in Legal Services.
- Central Law Training (Scotland) offers the Specialist Paralegal Qualification by distance learning in conjunction with the University of Strathclyde. This is the highest level of course available in the UK.
- The Law Society of Scotland runs the Accredited Paralegal Scheme. This sets out specific standards that paralegals will need to meet in order to be registered. Although registration is voluntary, accredited paralegals are likely to have an improved standing with potential employers.

What Does It Take

You need to have:

- excellent spoken and written communication skills
- good concentration skills
- patience and tact
- excellent organisational skills
- the ability to pay attention to detail
- a good memory
- the ability to work well under pressure and meet deadlines
- good research skills
- the ability to take in large amounts of complex information.

Training

- After completing a formally recognised and assessed qualification, you will undertake an in-office traineeship of one year with an employer.
- By the end of the traineeship, you must demonstrate the skills and knowledge listed in the Law Society of Scotland Registered Paralegal Educational Competencies.
- Members of the Scottish Paralegal Association must do 10 hours of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in each practice year.
- Training will usually be ongoing including company procedures and specialising in a particular area of law.

Getting On

- Paralegals work in private legal practice and in the legal departments of a range of bodies. These include government, local authorities, insurance companies and Sheriff Officer's firms, the Registers of Scotland and voluntary organisations such as Citizens' Advice Scotland.
- Most paralegals specialise in a particular area of law but others may choose to change job to get a broad range of experience.
- Some paralegals choose to move on by qualifying as professional lawyers through the part time LLB degree at the University of Strathclyde or the Open University.

More Information

There are currently 13 areas of practice which paralegals can register in:

Civil Litigation: Debt Recovery, Civil Litigation: Family Law, Civil Litigation: Reparation Law, Commercial Conveyancing, Company Secretarial, Criminal Litigation, Employment Law, Liquor Licensing, Repossession Litigation, Remortgage, Residential Conveyancing, Wills and Executries, and Financial Services: Asset Management.

Contacts

Central Law Training (Scotland) Ltd

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 Website: www.clt.co.uk/scot
 Twitter: @CLTParalegal

Law Society of Scotland

Tel: 0131 226 7411
 Email: lawscot@lawscot.org.uk
 Website: www.lawscot.org.uk
 Website (2): www.lawscotjobs.co.uk
 Twitter: @lawscotjobs
 Facebook: www.facebook.com/TheLawSocietyofScotland

Scottish Paralegal Association

Email: info@scottish-paralegal.org.uk
 Website: www.scottish-paralegal.org.uk
 Twitter: @ScotsParalegal
 Facebook: www.facebook.com/ScottishParalegalAssc

Skills for Justice

Tel: 0117 922 1155

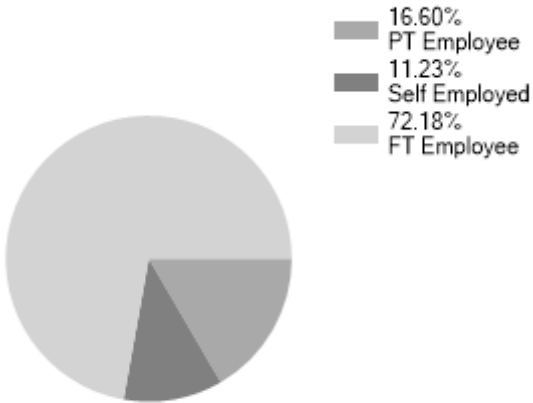
Website: www.sfjuk.com

Twitter: @Skills_Justice

Facebook: www.facebook.com/skillsforjustice

Statistics

Employment Status UK %

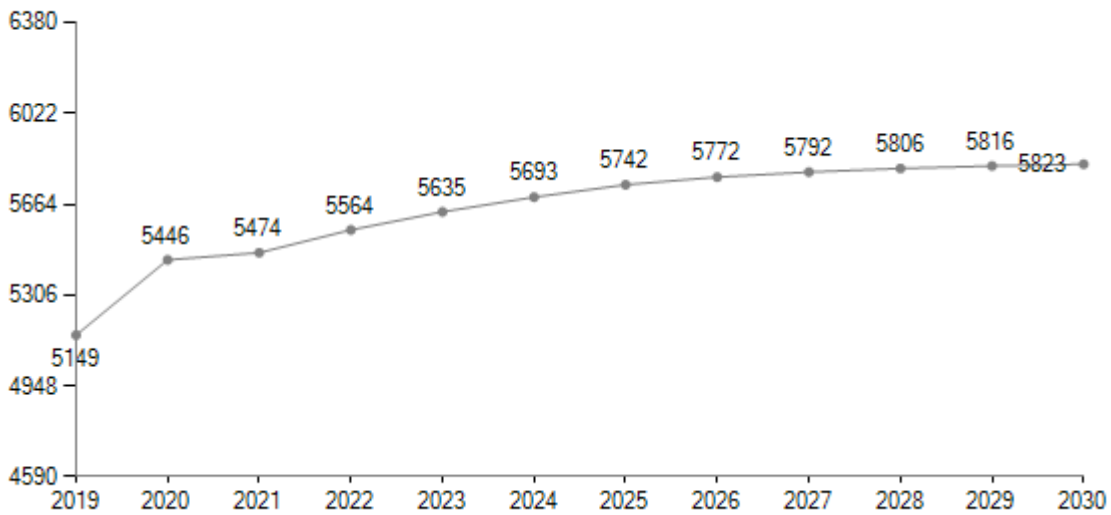


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

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

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [EMSI UK](#)