

## Prison Officer

Prison officers supervise people who have been convicted of a crime, or who are 'on remand' and waiting to go on trial, in prisons and young offenders' institutions.

### The Work

You could be:

- on gate duty, monitoring security of the gate including vehicles and pedestrians entering and leaving the prison
- meeting visitors, logging them in and out, making sure they have permission to enter and supervising visits
- meeting new prisoners, giving them relevant information and issuing clothing
- supervising prisoners in cells, at work and in recreation areas and responding to any disruptions or security issues
- monitoring security systems in the electronic control room, including closed circuit television (CCTV) and alarm systems
- patrolling all areas of the building and its surroundings
- supporting vulnerable prisoners and helping prepare prisoners for release through rehabilitation programmes
- writing reports and completing forms.

Officers of both genders serve in both male and female prisons. You could work your way up to the post of residential officer within the prison service (see the **Getting On** section).

### Pay

The starting salary for a newly recruited operations officer working for the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) is £29,634 a year rising to £33,569 over a three year period.

The salary for a residential officer starts at £36,268 a year rising to £42,587 within three years.

### Conditions

- You will work within the prison, mainly indoors. However, you will supervise outdoor activities.
- The work can be physically and emotionally demanding. You will deal with the prevention and management of challenging behaviour.
- You will work shifts over a 37-hour week, including nights and weekends.
- You will wear a uniform, which is provided.
- You might have to move to get a job.
- You may be able to work part time.

### Getting In

- You must be a UK National, a Commonwealth Citizen, a British Protected Person or a national of the European Economic Area. For some posts you must have been resident in the UK for at least 3 years.
- There are no formal entry requirements, however, it is essential that you have some experience working directly with the public.
- You must be aged over 18 to apply.
- Check the Scottish Prison Service website for vacancies.
- Apply direct using the online application procedure.
- If your application meets the required standard you will be invited to attend a testing and awareness session which includes numerical and verbal reasoning tests and an application form assessment.
- If you pass this stage you are invited to an assessment day which involves a competency based interview and fitness test.
- SPS then expect successful candidates to go through pre-employment checks which include character and employer references and a medical examination, including substance misuse testing.
- You will require a satisfactory criminal record check from Disclosure Scotland to show that you are suitable for this type of course. Contact [Disclosure Scotland](http://Disclosure.Scotland) for details on the type you would need.

## What Does It Take

You need to have:

- excellent communication skills
- common sense and a mature approach
- a sense of duty and responsibility
- confidence and assertiveness
- honesty and trustworthiness
- a fair and impartial attitude
- patience and understanding
- a supportive, positive and encouraging attitude.

You need to be able to:

- work with a wide range of people
- adapt to different needs and circumstances
- work well as part of a team and individually
- follow and enforce strict procedures
- cope with pressure whilst staying calm.

## Training

- As a new officer in Scotland, you will spend one week in the prison where you work, followed by a 7-week Officer Foundation Programme at the Scottish Prison Service College, Polmont, near Falkirk.
- You will be on probation for 12 months.
- You then return to the prison to continue with work based learning, gain experience and complete assessments for Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) Custodial Care at SCQF Level 7.
- You would be expected to complete the SVQ within 2 years of joining the service.

## Getting On

- There is a set promotion structure within the SPS.
- You start as an operations officer and after completing the SVQ in Custodial Care at SCQF Level 7 you can apply to become a residential officer or officer instructor/vocational training instructor, or a first line manager.
- A residential officer works within the residential areas of the prison, and works in partnership with external agencies to support those in their care, become more responsible citizens.
- Officer instructor/vocational training officers develop the knowledge and skills of offenders in particular crafts or disciplines, such as painting and decorating, joinery, catering, plumbing, bicycle maintenance, hairdressing and IT skills.
- For an officer instructor role you need to be fully qualified in the relevant trade and have or be willing to work towards an Assessor Award.
- With experience and ability you may be able to progress to middle or senior management positions such as unit manager or governor.
- For promotion, you may have to do further training and assessment. You may get this training through the SPS or through courses offered by other agencies.
- It is helpful if you are willing to move to gain promotion.

## More Information

The Scottish Prison Service:

- has 15 publicly managed prisons and 2 privately managed prisons
- employs over 4,000 staff
- deals with an average daily prison population of around 8,000.

In Scotland, all prisons, including privately managed prisons, are part of the SPS estate so all prisoners are in government care.

## Contacts

### Scottish Prison Service (SPS)

Tel: 0131 330 3500

Email: [gaolinfo@prisons.gov.scot](mailto:gaolinfo@prisons.gov.scot)

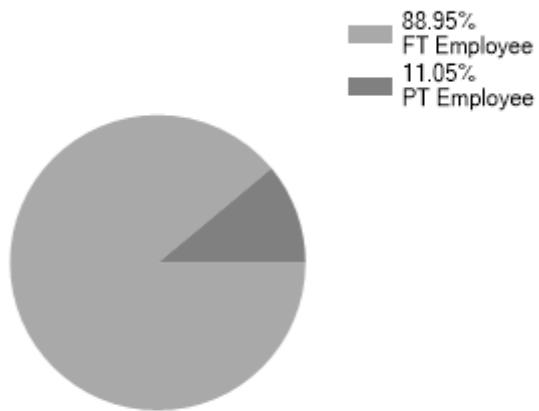
Website: [www.sps.gov.uk](http://www.sps.gov.uk)

X: [@scottishprisons](https://twitter.com/scottishprisons)

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

## Statistics

Employment Status UK %

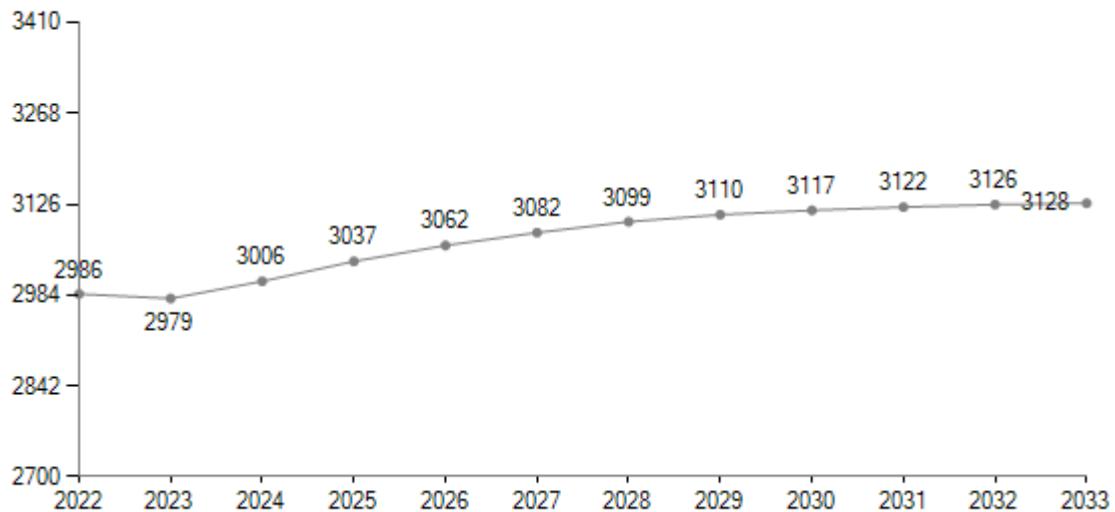


### Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

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

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [Lightcast](#)