

Fairground Worker or Theme Park Attendant

A fairground worker or theme park attendant works in a fairground or theme park, usually supervising a particular ride or stall.

A fairground usually travels to different locations, while a theme park remains in the same place all year.

The Work

You could be:

- helping set up a stall, perhaps on a new site
- selling fast food and drink, sweets, or toys and novelties at a stall
- running a stall, calling out to attract passers-by, adding up scores and giving prizes to winners
- setting up a ride, including any heavy machinery, helping clean and maintain the ride and perhaps doing minor repairs
- doing safety checks before the ride starts, starting and stopping a ride, collecting money and giving out change and tokens
- making sure height and weight restrictions are followed and rides are not overloaded
- checking that passengers are sitting securely and taking responsibility for safety throughout ride, stopping the ride if there are any problems
- dealing with disputes and troublemakers
- if the fair moves on, dismantling and packing equipment, including heavy machinery.

Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Actual salaries vary a lot, depending on whether you are a casual worker, a permanent worker or working for your own family.

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.

As a supervisor you could perhaps earn up to £400 a week.

Conditions

- Fairs and theme parks open 7 days a week, often until 10 or 11pm, so you would probably work shifts.
- Part time work is common.
- You might get casual work, over holiday periods, perhaps only in summer, or at weekends.
- You would often work outdoors – if you work indoors it will be noisy and crowded.
- There might be a lot of heavy lifting and some risk of accidents.
- As a fairground worker you may live on site in a mobile home and travel with the fair.

Getting In

- You do not need formal qualifications but a good general education is useful. Personality is more important than qualifications.
- You normally have to be 18 to operate machinery but may be allowed to start on children's rides at 16.
- A Large Goods Vehicle (LGV) driving licence is useful.
- You must be fit and it helps if you are strong – this is a very active job.
- You would require a satisfactory PVG (Protecting Vulnerable Groups) check to show you are suitable for this type of work. Contact Disclosure Scotland for details.

Most permanent fairground workers have family connections with the fairs – if you do not, it can be difficult to get a job. A family may own one or more rides, stalls and sideshows and provide work for several members of the family.

Attendants in theme parks or amusement arcades work for large organisations, usually in towns but sometimes in rural areas.

What Does It Take

You need to be:

- able to relate to children and young people
- able to follow set instructions
- reliable and responsible – you must follow safety procedures carefully
- calm in dealing with any emergencies
- able to work in noisy conditions
- observant, energetic and enthusiastic
- assertive – to deal with troublemakers
- able to handle money and give correct change
- good with your hands.

Training

Training is usually on the job and includes health and safety, fire training, customer care and emergency evacuation procedures.

Getting On

- In a fairground many workers are self-employed or members of the family, so there is little or no promotion structure.
- It is difficult to become self-employed as pitches on fairgrounds usually go to established families.
- In a theme park, you might be able to progress to become a supervisor or manager.
- Moving to a larger, better known theme park or amusement arcade may lead to higher salary and better prospects of promotion.

More Information

At present in the UK there are around 50 theme parks. The majority of theme parks in the UK close for the winter season, opening around March to October each year.

Jobs for theme park attendants are normally advertised in jobcentres or filled by word of mouth.

Contacts

British Association of Leisure Parks, Piers and Attractions (BALPPA)

Tel: 020 7403 4455

Email: information@balppa.org

Website: www.balppa.org

X: @BALPPA

Showmen's Guild of Great Britain

Tel: 0141 613 3131

Email: office@scottishshowmensguild.org

Website: www.scottishshowmensguild.org

Statistics

Employment Status : Not available this career.

Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

Predicted Employment Statistics : Not available this career.