

## Call Centre Agent

Call centre agents work in a call centre, answering incoming phone calls and keeping records of calls and callers. In some organisations they may 'cold call' (make the phone calls to prospective customers), calling numbers from a list.

### The Work

You could be using the phone to:

- give advice on topics such as financial products and services, legal issues and benefits
- help fix technical problems
- help bank customers with enquiries about balances, bill payments and transfer of money
- take bookings and payments for goods and services
- deal with enquiries and complaints
- ask customers for their details and log them using a computer.

If cold calling you might be trying to persuade people to:

- donate to charity
- buy a product or service, such as insurance or home improvements
- answer questions for a survey.

### Pay

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

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

Starting salaries begin at about £18,500 a year. With experience this could rise to £21,000 a year. You may earn more by shift allowances and bonuses. If you are selling something, your pay might depend partly on commission.

### Conditions

- You sit with other call centre agents in an open plan office.
- You face a computer monitor and keyboard.
- You wear a telephone headset to keep your hands free.
- You might work shifts, perhaps covering 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- You might get little time between the calls to update the records.
- Your breaks away from your desk (for food, toilet) might be strictly monitored.
- Calls may be recorded or monitored to make sure that customer service standards are met.
- Part time work is common.

## Getting In

- You do not usually need formal qualifications.
- Previous experience of dealing with the public is useful.
- You need keyboard skills and a good telephone manner.
- Job interviews normally include telephone and keyboard tests.
- A few jobs demand fluency in a second language or specialised technical knowledge.

There are still plenty of vacancies in jobcentres throughout Scotland. Jobs are in financial services, telecoms, utilities and the public sector. Not all require previous call centre experience.

## What Does It Take

You need to be:

- confident when talking to people from all backgrounds
- able to speak clearly and fluently
- able to understand lots of different accents
- persuasive (especially if you are selling something)
- able to work quickly and to multi-task (for example to key in details while conversing with the customer)
- able to stay calm when working under pressure or when dealing with difficult clients
- able to deal with rejection, especially when cold calling.

You need to have:

- excellent attention to detail for data entry
- a professional attitude.

## Training

- Training is normally on the job and includes telephone skills, data entry and knowledge of products and services.
- Entrants are usually coached by a supervisor to start with.
- You can do part time courses such as relevant Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs)

## Getting On

With suitable experience you might become:

- a supervisor, in charge of a team of agents and dealing with any problems
- a manager, working out the rotas, targets and training programmes.

You could also continue studying to achieve relevant SVQ's.

## Contacts

Call Centre Management Association (CCMA)

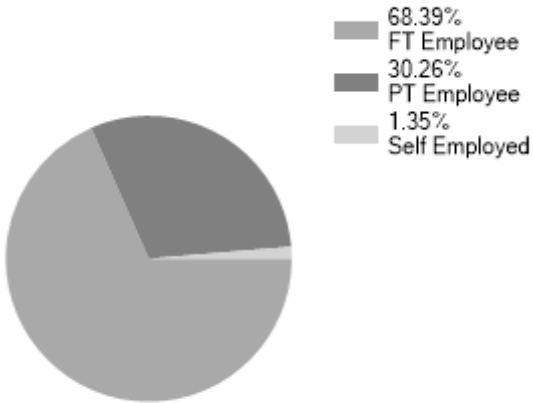
Tel: 0333 939 9964  
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**Institute of Customer Service (ICS)**

Tel: 0207 260 2620  
Website: [www.instituteofcustomerservice.com](http://www.instituteofcustomerservice.com)  
Twitter: @instituteofcs

Statistics

Employment Status UK %



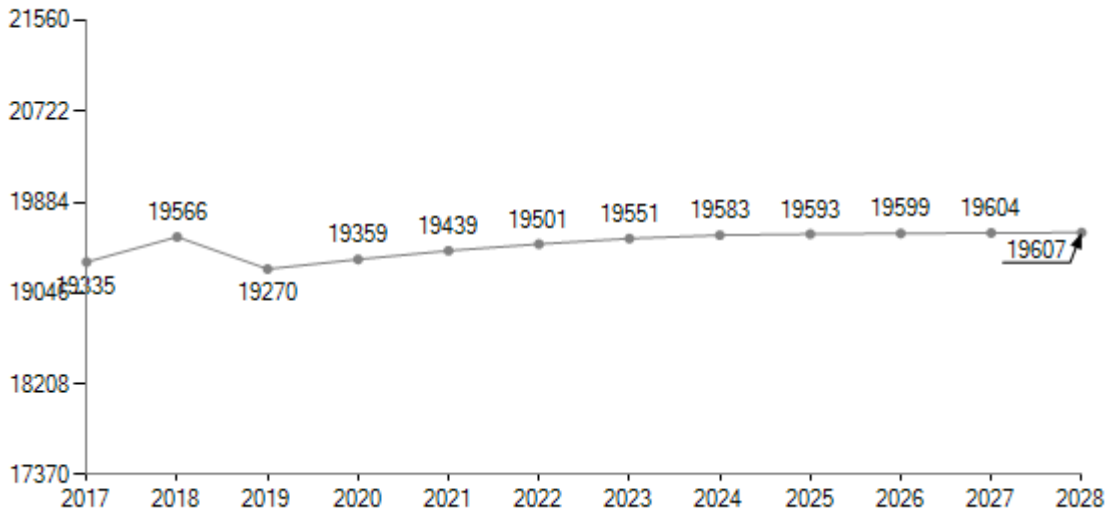
Past Unemployment - Scotland

Date	Unemployed
Dec 2018	0.7%

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Predicted Employment in Scotland



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