

## Window Cleaner

A window cleaner cleans the windows and glass panels of houses, offices, factories, shops, hospitals, schools and other buildings.

### The Work

You could be:

- using a bucket of cold or warm water and detergent, with wash leathers, brushes, sponges and rubber blades to wash and dry windows
- lifting your ladder over garden walls and fences, propping it against house walls, moving aside garden furniture and climbing up carrying the bucket of water
- using a ladder or long-handled brush to reach ground floor shop windows
- using a safety cradle (mechanical platform) or ropes and harnesses when cleaning windows in high-rise buildings
- using a long water-fed pole to clean high windows
- working alone on smaller buildings, but as part of a team on larger buildings
- cleaning some windows using a jet hose
- carrying out other jobs such as cleaning guttering on roofs or washing paintwork
- collecting payment from customers.

### Pay

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

- where you work and whether you are self-employed
- the number of windows on your round
- the demand for the job.

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.

Self-employed earnings vary depending on rates charged and the amount of business.

### Conditions

- You spend most of the time on your feet and at heights.
- You work regular hours, but may have to start early in the morning and may have to go out again to collect the money in the evenings or weekends.
- You must work outside, high up, in cold, windy and wet weather, using water which may be cold.
- You may have to carry a heavy ladder and lift it over walls.
- You travel to each client's premises.

- You might wear protective clothing and gloves. For some companies, you have to wear a uniform.

## Getting In

- You do not need formal qualifications but a good general education is useful.
- A driving licence is useful and may be essential for some jobs.
- Most Scottish councils require window cleaners to have a licence. See [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) for more information.
- Your licence has to be renewed after a period of time, usually 3 years.
- You will require a satisfactory criminal record check from Disclosure Scotland to show that you are suitable for this type of work. Contact Disclosure Scotland for details on the type you would need.

Most window cleaners are self-employed. Those that are require liability insurance.

## What Does It Take

You need:

- a good head for heights
- a good sense of balance
- a good level of fitness
- awareness of health and safety
- a willingness to work outside in all types of weather
- a polite and confident manner with customers
- the ability to work alone
- business skills if you are self-employed
- to have an honest, reliable and trustworthy nature.

## Training

- While working you can study for Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) Cleaning and Support Services at SCQF Level 5. This includes units in working safely at heights and using a water-fed pole system to clean windows and facades.
- For rope access you have to do special training. The Industrial Rope Access Trade Association (IRATA) certifies courses. The IRATA website has more details.

## Getting On

- If you are working for large firms you could gain promotion to a supervisory post.
- Most window cleaners become self-employed.

## Contacts

### British Institute of Cleaning Science

Tel: 01604 678710

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

Website: [www.bics.org.uk](http://www.bics.org.uk)

X: @BICSc\_UK

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

**Federation of Window Cleaners**

Tel: 0161 432 8754

Email: [info@f-w-c.co.uk](mailto:info@f-w-c.co.uk)

Website: [www.f-w-c.co.uk](http://www.f-w-c.co.uk)

X: @FWC1947

**Industrial Rope Access Trade Association International (IRATA)**

Tel: 01233 754600

Email: [info@irata.org](mailto:info@irata.org)

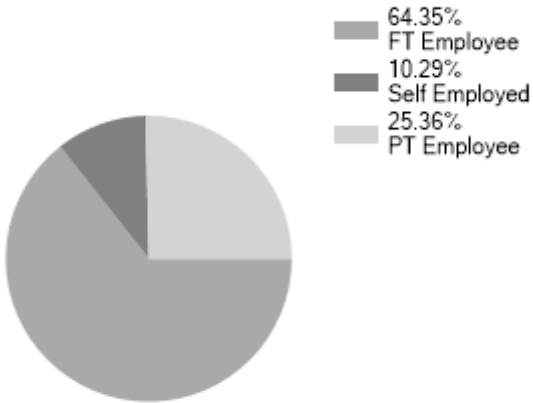
Website: [www.irata.org](http://www.irata.org)

X: @IRATARopeAccess

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

Statistics

Employment Status UK %

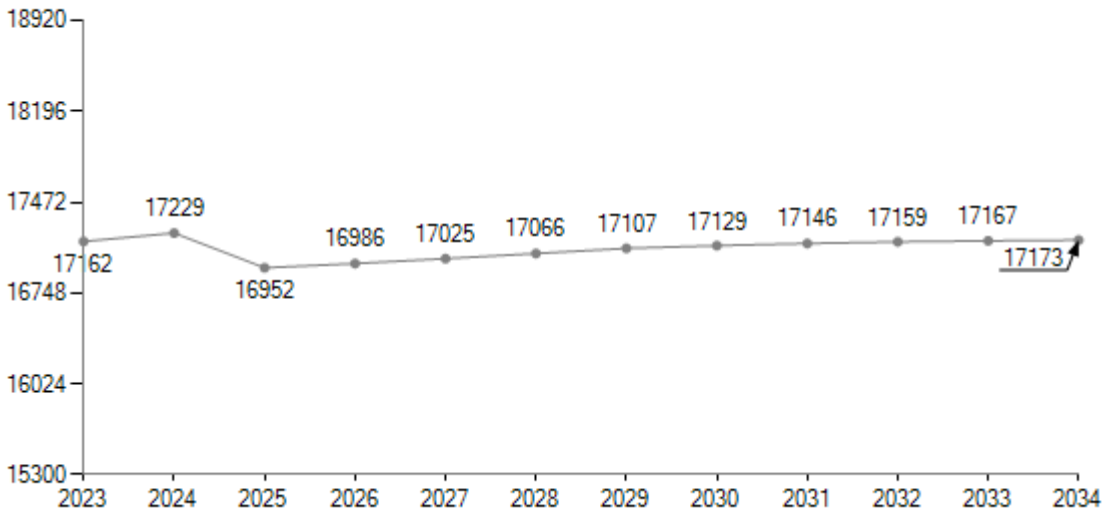


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

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

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [Lightcast](#)