

Local Councillor

Councillors decide how to run the council services. The people of a local area, known as a ward, elect councillors to represent them on the council. Most councillors are members of a political party, but some are independent.

The Work

You could be:

- reading reports and preparing for council and committee meetings
- making speeches in a council meeting
- answering questions from other councillors
- voting on council policies and services
- discussing how to improve the area, or how best to spend the budget
- holding regular meetings, called surgeries, to personally talk to residents about their problems and try to help them, or replying to residents' letters
- speaking at public meetings and events
- going on visits, locally or abroad
- campaigning for yourself or your political party.

Pay

Pay will vary depending on your local authority. Basic salary for a councillor in Scotland is £16,893 a year.

Conditions

- You have to go to meetings of the whole council.
- You also have to go to committee meetings dealing with particular topics.
- Your hours could be long and irregular.
- There would be a lot of evening and weekend work, speaking to local residents and community groups.
- Councillors often live or work in the area which they represent.

Getting In

- You do not need formal qualifications.
- Entry is very competitive, and by local election.
- If you want to represent a political party, the party must approve you and the local branch must choose you, before you can stand for election. You usually need to have worked voluntarily for the party for several years.
- If you are standing as an independent you should contact your local council for advice.
- You must either live or work within the boundary of the local authority.
- You must be eligible to vote in local elections.

What Does It Take

You must be:

- a good public speaker
- able to 'think on your feet'
- ambitious
- confident
- able to talk to people from all backgrounds
- willing to stick by unpopular decisions
- able to work under pressure and to meet deadlines.

You should have:

- good communication skills
- a good memory for facts, figures, faces and names
- an enquiring mind
- a lot of stamina
- a smart appearance.

Training

Most parties run training courses on subjects such as election law and procedures, public speaking and personal presentation.

Getting On

- If you serve as a councillor for a lengthy period, you may be selected to be a Bailie (magistrate) or a Justice of the Peace.
- If your party controls the council, you might become a committee chairperson, Council Leader or Provost.
- You might further your political career by election as a Member of the Scottish Parliament (MSP), a Member of Parliament (MP) or a Member of the European Parliament (MEP).
- You could lose your job as a local councillor at any election, but if you do, you will probably have contacts to help you find another job.

Contacts

Be a Councillor

Tel: 020 7664 3000

Email: info@local.gov.uk

Website: www.beacouncillor.org.uk

X: @beacouncillor

Scottish Conservatives

Tel: 0131 524 0030

Website: www.scottishconservatives.com

X: @ScotTories

Facebook: www.facebook.com/ScottishConservatives

Scottish Green Party

Tel: 08700 772 207

Website: greens.scot
X: @scotgp
Facebook: www.facebook.com/ScottishGreens

Scottish Labour Party

Tel: 0141 572 6900
Email: scotland@labour.org.uk
Website: www.scottishlabour.org.uk
X: @scottishlabour
Facebook: www.facebook.com/ScottishLabourParty

Scottish Liberal Democrats

Tel: 0131 337 2314
Website: www.scotlibdems.org.uk
X: @scotlibdems
Facebook: www.facebook.com/ScotLibDems

Scottish National Party (SNP)

Tel: 0800 633 5432
Email: info@snp.org
Website: www.snp.org
X: @theSNP
Facebook: www.facebook.com/theSNP

Solidarity SSM

Website: solidarity.scot

UK Independence Party (UKIP) Scotland

Website: www.ukip.scot
Facebook: www.facebook.com/UKIPInScotland

Statistics

Employment Status : Not available this career.

Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

Predicted Employment Statistics : Not available this career.