

Demolition Operative

A demolition operative knocks down or dismantles buildings and other structures safely and clears debris from the site.

The Work

You could be:

- preparing and clearing the demolition site
- dismantling roof structures and cladding
- cutting steel framework
- stripping out fittings, doors and windows
- using tools such as hammer drills or operating plant machinery
- sorting the bricks, slates, stone and other materials according to their grade or use
- preparing structures for explosive demolition
- specialising in work like removing asbestos.

Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Pay rates vary, depending on:

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

As of June 2025 the Building and Allied Trades Joint Industrial Council (BATJIC) recommends the following rates for a 2-year apprenticeship in Scotland based on a 39-hour week are:

Year 1 – £303.28 (£7.78 an hour)

Year 2 – £401.70 (£10.30 an hour).

Please note these rates may vary if the Apprentice is 21 years old or over and has completed the first year of their apprenticeship. National Minimum Wage (NMW) and National Living Wage (NLW) will apply.

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 £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. With experience this can rise to around £15.00 an hour. If you have to live away from home you may get a lodging allowance.

Conditions

- You work outdoors in all weathers.
- The environment can be dirty, noisy and dusty.

- You work at heights and face hazardous situations.
- Jobs are often on a contract basis, for a few weeks or months at a time.
- You travel to different sites and live away from home.
- The working day starts early and depends on the hours of daylight.
- You often work overtime, including evenings and weekends.
- There is heavy lifting.
- You wear safety gear: hard hat, protection goggles, safety boots, gloves, respirators and ear defenders.

Getting In

- There are no formal entry requirements, although some employers ask for subjects at National 4 or 5 including English, Maths and a science or technological subject.
- If aged under 18, you are likely to start by working on a building site as a labourer or general construction operative. (See the [General Construction Operative](#) job profile).
- You must be over 18 to work on site as a demolition operative.
- Many people enter through a Modern Apprenticeship in Construction Specialist at SCQF Level 5.
- You could study the Foundation Apprenticeship in Construction (SCQF Level 4 or 5) in S3-S6, which can help to get into a relevant Modern Apprenticeship.
- You may have to sit an aptitude test as part of the application process.
- You need a Certificate of Competence for Demolition Operatives (CCDO) which is linked to the Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) to work on a demolition site.
- A driving licence is useful and is sometimes necessary.

There are opportunities with large building contractors, specialist demolition firms and local authorities.

What Does It Take

You need:

- to be able to follow strict health and safety rules
- a head for heights, good co-ordination and balance
- the ability to follow instructions
- an understanding of construction methods
- team working skills
- good practical skills
- to be reliable.

Training

- Training during an apprenticeship is mainly on the job with off the job training at college. You would work towards SVQ Construction Specialist: Demolition or Demolition Plant at SCQF Level 5.
- You would normally complete health and safety training covering: preventing accidents, manual handling, noise control and fire prevention and control.
- You have to pass a health and safety test in demolition or demolition and plant.

Getting On

- After the SVQ and at least two years' experience, you could progress to demolition topman. Your extra duties would be preparing the site, stripping out windows, fixtures and fittings, cutting steel frameworks at heights, and showing others safe demolition practices.
- With further experience and training, you can move up to demolition chargehand, which is a management level position.
- You could study part time for an HNC in Construction Management.
- You could then progress to site supervision or management with further study.
- You could do a short course to specialise in asbestos removal or explosives.

More Information

For more information please see the list of organisations below:

- [Construction Industry Training Board](#) (CITB)
- [National Demolition Training Group](#) (NDTG)
- [National Federation of Demolition Contractors](#) (NFDC)
- [Scottish Building Apprenticeship and Training Council](#) (SBATC)

Contacts

GoConstruct

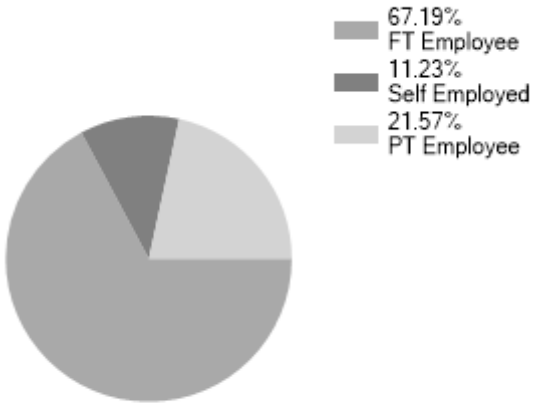
Website: www.goconstruct.org

X: @GoConstructUK

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Statistics

Employment Status UK %

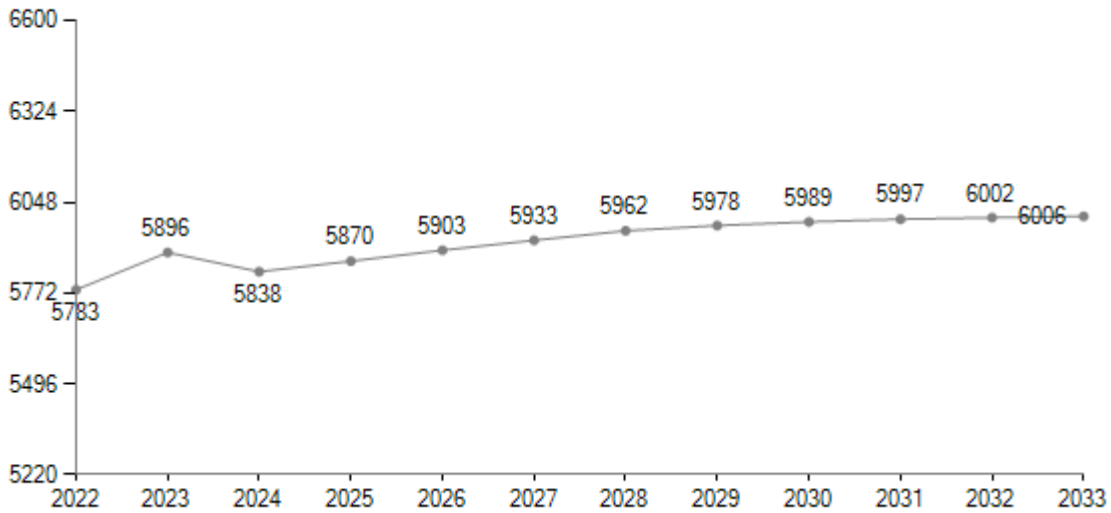


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

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

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [Lightcast](#)