

Forest Worker

Forest workers do a range of practical work to help develop, maintain and protect forests. They plant, trim, thin and fell trees and protect them from pests, diseases and harmful wildlife. Within Forestry and Land Scotland they are also called forest craftspeople or specific titles such as harvester or tractor driver.

The Work

You could be:

- using a special plough to prepare ground and planting young trees
- clearing scrub and weeds so that young trees can grow
- spraying young trees with fertiliser or insecticides and protecting the forest against disease and pests
- thinning densely wooded areas, cutting down trees or removing their branches
- loading felled timber for transport
- erecting and mending fences, digging ditches and making roadways
- maintaining fire equipment and sometimes fighting fires
- using heavy machinery such as tractors and harvesters, power tools such as chainsaws and hand tools such as axes and billhooks
- carrying out site risk assessments and ensuring all work complies with health and safety rules.

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.

Pay rates for new entrants to the job of forest worker in Scotland vary. At Forestry and Land Scotland, a skilled forest worker is paid on band 6a which is approximately £28,000 to £30,000 a year. You may get lodgings as part of your job.

Conditions

- You would normally work 37 hours a week, but at certain times overtime will be required, including evenings and weekends.
- The work is almost all outdoors.
- Working conditions can be wet, cold, windy and muddy.
- You may have to walk long distances and do a lot of bending and lifting.
- You may have to climb trees, using safety equipment.
- You would wear protective clothing such as boots, hard hat, gloves and ear defenders.
- You may have to live in the country, sometimes in a remote area.

Getting In

- A good general education is useful. In addition, subjects at National 4 or 5 in English, Maths and a science subject may be helpful.
- You may get in through a two-year Modern Apprenticeship in Trees and Timber run by Forestry and Land Scotland and will gain a recognised qualification at SCQF Levels 5 and 6 from the Scottish School of Forestry. They also expect apprentices to hold, or plan to hold, a full driving licence within six months of their start date.
- Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) offers a Certificate in Forestry (SCQF Level 5) at the Barony Campus. Entry requirements are National 5 in a science subject plus 3 subjects at National 4, preferably including English and Maths. They also offer a Modern Apprenticeship in Trees and Timber at SCQF Level 5 at various locations. Entry requirements are National 4 English and Maths.
- Inverness College also offer a Forestry Certificate. Entry requirements are 3 subjects at National 4.
- Previous work experience on the land is useful. You could consider doing voluntary work with organisations like the [National Trust for Scotland](#), the [Woodland Trust](#) or [The Conservation Volunteers \(TCV\) Scotland](#).
- You need to be fit as there is a lot of lifting, carrying, digging, bending and other physical work.
- You may be expected to obtain a UK driving licence.

You could work for Forestry and Land Scotland, a forestry company or private estate, a forestry consultancy or contractor, a local authority, a government agency or a conservation organisation.

What Does It Take

You need to be:

- interested in looking after the environment
- keen to work outdoors
- practical and have good hand skills
- agile and have a good head for heights
- fit and strong
- observant, to spot signs of disease in trees
- able to follow instructions
- aware of health and safety rules when climbing and using equipment
- able to work on your own as well as part of a team.

Training

- Training is normally on the job through an employer's training scheme.
- You may also do a part time college course to get a Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ).
- There is a Modern Apprenticeship in Trees and Timber at SCQF Levels 5 and 6.
- You may do short practical courses in operating and maintaining specialist equipment, and in health and safety topics.

Getting On

- With experience, you could apply for a supervisory job, with responsibility for other workers.
- You may be able to become a forest or wildlife ranger, helping to conserve wildlife in the forest.
- You may eventually be able to set up your own business as a contractor.
- If you take advanced qualifications, you may be able to move up to forest officer level.

More Information

Forestry and Land Scotland is the biggest employer of forest workers in Scotland. They recruit for their apprenticeships at different times throughout the year depending on where and when an opportunity comes up.

Vacancies are posted on the [Forestry and Land Scotland](http://www.forestryandland.gov.scot) website.

Contacts

Conservation Volunteers

Tel: 01786 479 697

Email: scotland@tcv.org.uk

Website: www.tcv.org.uk/scotland

X: @TCVScotland

Facebook: www.facebook.com/TheConservationVolunteers

Forestry and Land Scotland

Tel: 0131 370 5541

Email: enquiries@forestryandland.gov.scot

Website: forestryandland.gov.scot

X: @forestryls

Facebook: www.facebook.com/forestryandlandscotland

Lantra Scotland

Tel: 024 7669 6996

Email: scotland@lantra.co.uk

Website: www.scotland.lantra.co.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/lantrascotland

Royal Forestry Society (RFS)

Tel: 01295 678588

Email: rfshq@rfs.org.uk

Website: www.rfs.org.uk

X: @royal_forestry

Facebook: www.facebook.com/RoyalForestrySociety

Royal Scottish Forestry Society (RSFS)

Website: www.rsfs.org.uk

X: @RSFS1854

Facebook: www.facebook.com/Royal-Scottish-Forestry-Society-1629037513991659

Scottish Forestry

Tel: 0131 370 5250

Email: Scottish.Forestry@forestry.gov.uk

Website: forestry.gov.scot

X: @scotforestry

Woodland Trust Scotland

Tel: 01738 635544

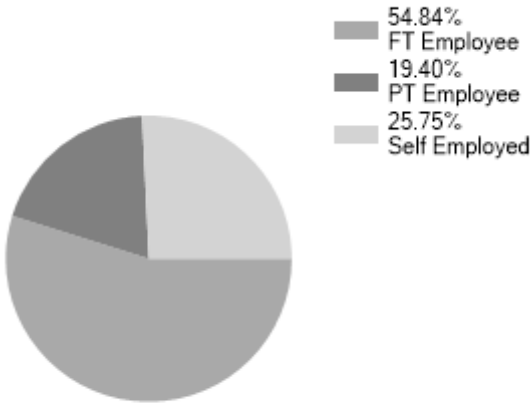
Email: scotland@woodlandtrust.org.uk

Website: www.woodlandtrust.org.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/thewoodlandtrust

Statistics

Employment Status UK %

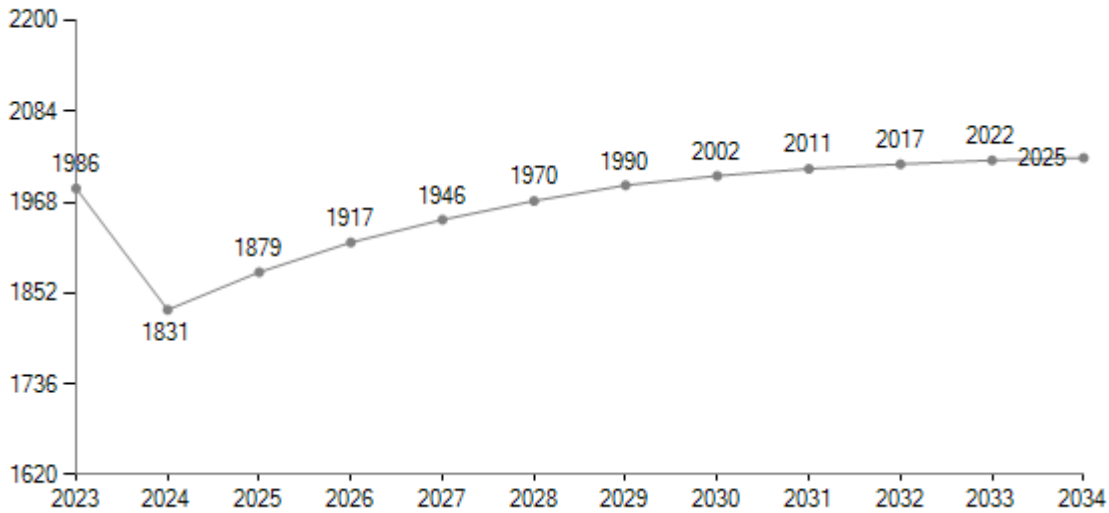


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

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

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [Lightcast](#)