

Piano Tuner

Piano tuners maintain and repair pianos to keep them in tune. They are sometimes called piano technicians.

The Work

You would:

- tune the middle C or A note on the piano, followed by all other notes in the central octave (scale) and then working through the other notes
- use a range of tools such as a tuning fork, tuning hammer, screwdrivers and electronic tuning instruments to adjust the tension of the strings inside the piano so that they make the right sounds (pitch)
- adjust other parts of the piano's playing mechanism (action) to improve the quality of the sound it produces
- tune both acoustic instruments and the acoustic parts of electronic instruments
- replace parts and repair any damage to the piano keyboard, the case and other parts, such as strings
- understand how to work with pianos of different ages and types (upright or grand)
- prepare pianos for recording sessions or public performances like live concerts and TV or radio broadcasts
- give advice to owners on how to look after their pianos.

Pay

Because piano tuners are generally self-employed, it can take time to build up their business. Most tuners charge between £50 and £100 for each tuning, depending on what needs to be done, and if successful in building up a business, can expect to tune between four and six pianos a day.

Expenses such as equipment and transport need to be paid out of any money made.

On very rare occasions, a piano technician post may arise with a music college or university. The most recently advertised post at a conservatoire offered around £25,000 a year.

Conditions

- You travel around to different premises: concert halls, theatres, schools, colleges, TV and radio studios, hotels and people's homes. For those with visual impairment, you may get help with taxi fares through the Access to Work scheme.
- You might have to work evenings and weekends to suit the customer.
- You might be standing, sitting or kneeling on the floor.
- You could probably tune about four to six pianos in a day, including travelling time.
- If you are self-employed you would have to buy your own tools and equipment.

Getting In

- There are no full time courses in Scotland.
- Lincoln College (Newark Campus) offers a BA (Hons) degree in Musical Instrument Craft (Piano Tuning and

Repair), which is a full time 3-year course. For entry you need one Higher plus at least one Advanced Higher, or a relevant BTEC National Diploma.

- Good eyesight is not important — some piano tuners have a visual impairment. The degree course at Lincoln College is recognised as accommodating visually impaired students.
- Experience in woodwork or metalwork is useful.

This is a small profession. Most piano tuners are self-employed or freelance — they either take over an existing business or build up their own through advertising and personal recommendation.

What Does It Take

You need:

- an excellent ear for music pitch and quality
- the ability to find and solve problems
- excellent manual dexterity
- an interest in music — the ability to play the piano is an advantage
- patience and the ability to focus and concentrate
- attention to detail
- willingness to learn new skills
- good communication skills
- business skills, for self-employment.

Training

To be a member of the PTA you must have:

- trained in a reputable workshop for at least 3 years or have completed an approved course (such as the one at Lincoln College)
- earned a living as a pianoforte tuner or technician for at least 2 years in addition to your training period
- passed the PTA practical and oral tests – these may differ depending on the type of membership you apply for.

Getting On

- Progress mainly depends on establishing a good reputation and gaining more customers.
- You could move on to buying and selling pianos.
- You may be able to work abroad and there will be more opportunities available if you are willing to move for work.

Contacts

Association of Blind Piano Tuners (ABPT)

Website: www.piano-tuners.org

Twitter: @BlindPianoTuner

Facebook: www.facebook.com/BlindPianoTuners

Pianoforte Tuners' Association (PTA)

Tel: 0845 602 8796

Email: secretary@pianotuner.org.uk

Website: www.pianotuner.org.uk

Statistics

Employment Status UK %

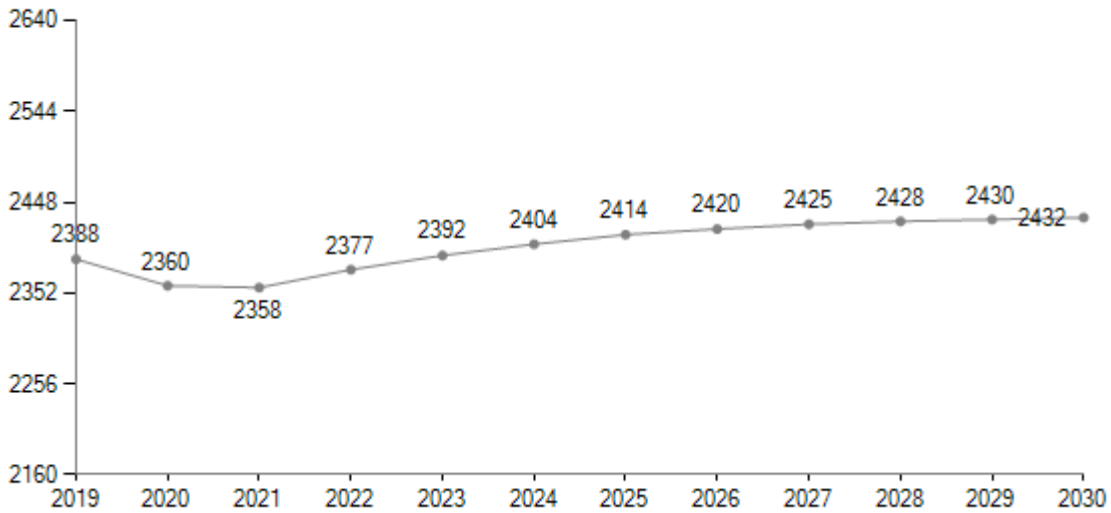


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

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

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [EMSI UK](#)