

Stablehand or Groom

Stablehands or grooms work in stables and look after horses, keeping them clean, comfortable, fed, exercised and groomed. They may take special care of foals.

The Work

You could be:

- feeding and watering horses
- keeping horses clean and grooming them – brushing their coats and oiling their hooves
- mucking out (cleaning) stables and putting down new bedding
- cleaning saddles, bridles and other riding gear ('tack') and fitting them on horses
- riding horses to exercise them
- clipping horses' manes or tails, using clippers and scissors
- checking horses for injuries or illness and following care instructions from vets
- getting horses ready for riding lessons or for sports like eventing or horseracing
- specialising in a certain area, such as racing, breeding, showjumping or trekking.

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.

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.

An experienced or head groom might expect to earn between £19,000 and £25,000 a year or more.

You may get free accommodation and food, a stable for your own horse and perhaps riding lessons.

Conditions

- You could work in a riding school, a trekking centre, a livery stable which keeps other people's horses, or a stable where horses are bred.
- The working conditions can be dirty, muddy and smelly, especially when mucking out stables.
- A lot of your work would be outdoors, sometimes in bad weather.
- There is a risk of injury if a horse bites or kicks you or if you fall off.
- Working hours are long, including early starts, late finishes and weekends.
- Stables may be a long way from towns, sometimes in quite remote areas.

- You might have to live at the stables, perhaps sharing with other stable workers.
- You would sometimes wear protective clothing, such as riding boots, a hard riding hat and body protector.

Getting In

- A good general education is useful. Some employers may prefer you to have a few subjects at National 4 or 5 including English.
- A real interest in and enthusiasm for horses is just as important as formal qualifications.
- You could do a relevant college course before starting work. There are courses in horse care or equine studies at NC (SCQF Levels 4-6), HNC (SCQF Level 7) and HND (SCQF Level 8).
- You normally need up to 4 subjects at National 4 or 5 for entry to the NC and 1-2 Highers, or relevant NC or experience for the HNC or HND.
- You might get in through a Modern Apprenticeship in Equine at SCQF Level 5.
- You might complete the British Horse Society (BHS) Stages 1 - 3 of the Groom Pathway. See [BHS website](#) for details.
- You usually need previous work experience with horses, including voluntary work, and not have an allergy to horses.
- You might need a full, clean driving licence.
- You must be fit enough to carry out physical work.

What Does It Take

You must be:

- self-motivated
- dedicated
- passionate about working with horses
- able to ride safely and well
- observant – to spot injuries or illness
- physically fit with good stamina
- safety conscious and able to follow instructions
- able to work alone and also as part of a team.

Training

- You would train and gain experience on the job with your employer.
- You may study part time for a qualification such as a Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) or an HNC.

Getting On

- With experience you may be promoted to head stablehand or groom.
- You could take the BHS Stage 4 and 5 qualifications to become a stable manager.
- If you take more qualifications you might be able to become a riding instructor.
- In time, you might be able to run your own stable, although it can be very costly to set up stables.

Contacts

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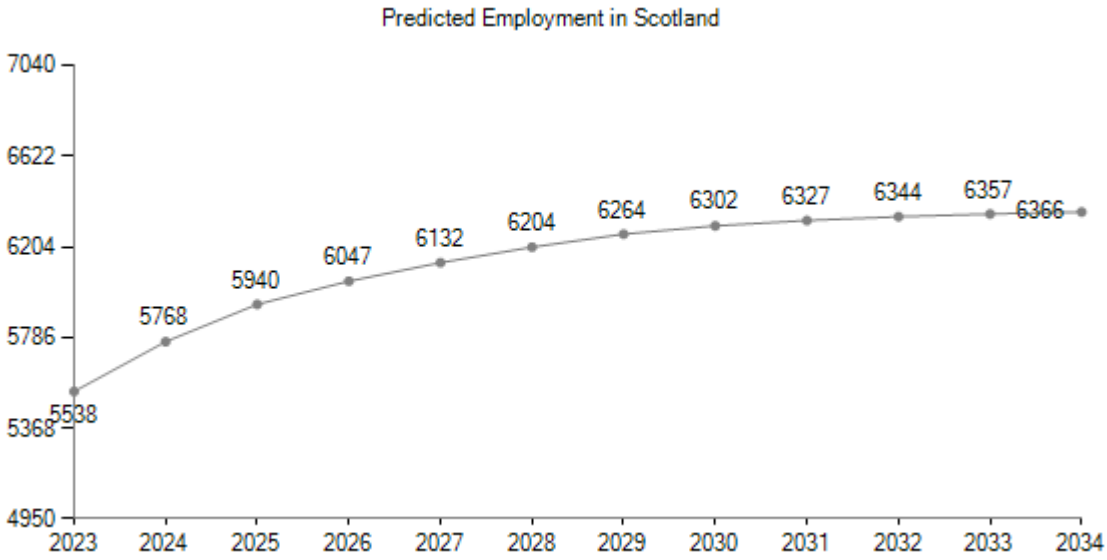
Facebook: www.facebook.com/lantrascotland

Statistics

Employment Status : Not available this career.

Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.



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