

## 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

### **British Grooms Association**

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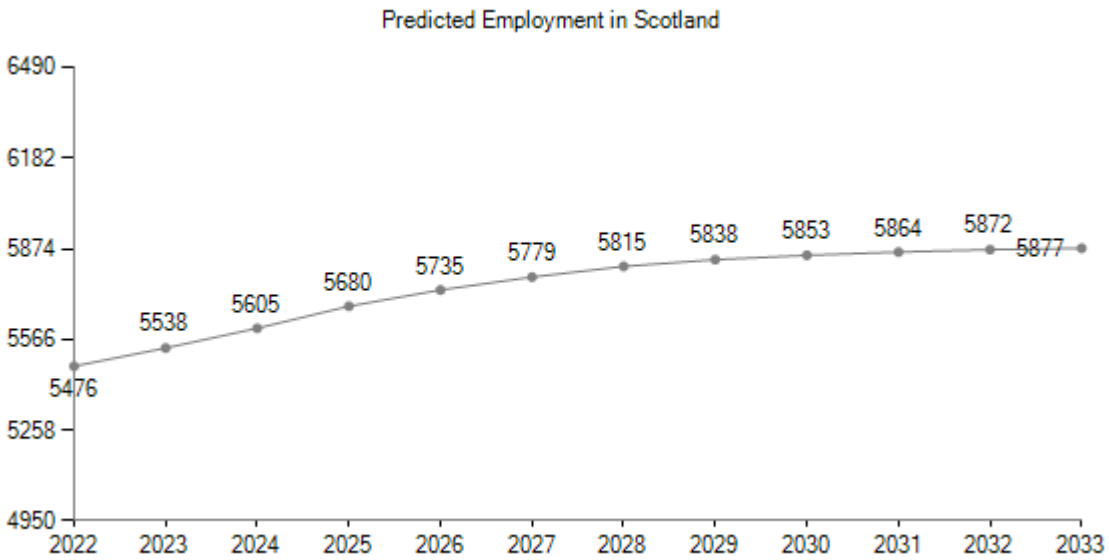
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/lantrascotland](http://www.facebook.com/lantrascotland)

Statistics

Employment Status : Not available this career.

Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.



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