

Bar Worker

A bar worker serves customers in licensed premises - pubs, hotels, nightclubs, social clubs, restaurants, sports clubs, leisure centres and holiday parks.

The Work

You could be:

- serving a range of drinks and snacks including sandwiches and hot food
- taking orders, mixing and pouring drinks using special measures, perhaps carrying trays of drinks over to tables
- collecting and washing glasses and keeping the bar and tables clean and tidy
- helping stock up with drinks, ice and other items
- chatting to customers to make them welcome
- using tills and taking cash, card and digital payments
- asking customers who look underage for proof of identification
- dealing with rowdy, drunken or difficult customers, perhaps by refusing to serve them
- helping to organise and run events such as quiz nights and live music events.

Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Actual pay rates may vary, depending on:

- where you work
- the size of the 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 £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. In addition you will usually have a share of the tips.

Conditions

- You work shifts involving long and unsocial hours, often in the evenings and at weekends.
- You might have to lift heavy barrels or crates of beer or wine.
- Busy periods can be stressful as many people make demands on you at the same time.
- Conditions can be crowded and noisy - sometimes there is loud music.

Getting In

- You do not need formal qualifications but a good general education is useful.
- You might get in through the Modern Apprenticeship Hospitality Team Member and work towards SVQs.
- You could study the Foundation Apprenticeship in Hospitality (SCQF Level 4 or 5) in S3-S6, which can help

to get into a relevant Modern Apprenticeship.

- You must be over 18 to serve alcohol and work in a bar.
- You may be able to get a job before turning 18 as a glass collector and washer.

There are plenty of openings for bar workers, particularly in cities and larger towns. In rural areas work may be seasonal, according to the busy tourist times.

What Does It Take

You should be:

- polite
- honest and reliable
- able to chat easily to a wide range of people
- assertive to deal with difficult customers or situations
- able to remain calm under pressure
- quick and accurate with numbers
- able to multitask.

You should also have:

- stamina, for working long, busy shifts
- a smart appearance
- an enthusiastic and friendly nature
- a good sense of humour
- the ability to memorise orders.

Training

- Training is usually on the job.
- There are SVQs in Hospitality Services at SCQF Levels 4 and 5, Beverage Service at SCQF Level 5 or Food and Beverage Service at SCQF Level 5.
- Under the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 all staff serving or selling alcohol **must** receive at least two hours of basic training before they can sell or serve alcohol. Employers are expected to provide the training.
- ServeWise, part of the national alcohol charity Alcohol Focus Scotland, runs various courses for the licensed trade. This includes courses that meet the staff training requirements of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005. Pubs, hotels and bars usually book the courses to run in-house, or buy into the ServeWise online staff course (www.servewiseonline.co.uk/).
- The [Wine and Spirit Education Trust](#) also offer a range of relevant courses.

Getting On

- With experience, you can become a supervisor, a deputy bar manager and, eventually, a bar manager.
- You could consider buying a freehold pub or applying for a tenancy.
- You might move to hotel management.

Contacts

Springboard

Email: info@springboarduk.org.uk

Website: careerscope.uk.net

Website (2): springboard.uk.net

X: [@CareerScope_](https://twitter.com/CareerScope_)

Facebook: www.facebook.com/SpringboardUKCharity

Statistics

Employment Status : Not available this career.

Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

Predicted Employment Statistics : Not available this career.