



Department for the
Economy
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CAREERS IN RETAIL

**Industry
Fact
Sheet**



What is it?

The retail sector is one of Northern Ireland's biggest employers. It covers supermarkets and corner shops, fashion, electrical, butchers through to florists, opticians, market traders and even undertakers.

A large number of people within the sector work in store operations, sales or customer service roles.

The jobs within the industry include buying and visual merchandising, sales and marketing, and finance.

Did You Know

The sector employs over 100,000 people; 12 % of Northern Ireland's entire workforce.

What do I need?

Employers look for good numeracy and literacy skills but formal qualifications may not be necessary for new entrants.

Employers place enthusiasm, commitment and being a team player above academic achievements.

For senior positions, relevant experience is often the most important requirement.

The most common skills that employers require are:

- customer handling
- planning and organisation
- strategic management
- problem solving

These skills are often lacking in applicants.

What are the opportunities?

Around 1 in 10 of retail businesses have vacancies.

Nearly 1 in 4 businesses have vacancies which they consider difficult to fill (e.g. sales and customer service staff).

With the rise of online and multi-channel retailing, many retailers are struggling to fill IT and e-commerce roles. Other specialist skills such as visual merchandising are also in high demand.

The sector gives people the opportunity to rise quickly up the career ladder from sales assistant right through to international buyers and chief executives.

The growth in online retail has led to a high demand for employees with good IT skills.

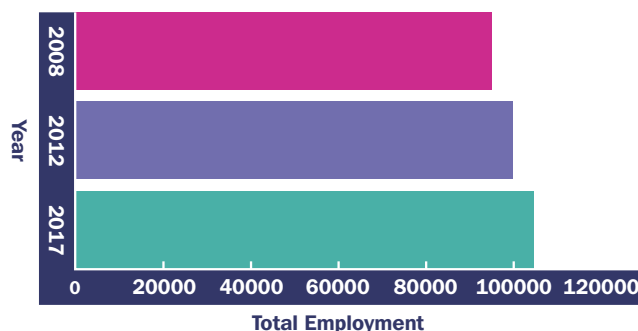
What are the wages?

Store Managers/ Owners	£37,200 per year
Sales Assistants	£16,300 per year
Shelf Fillers	£16,300 per year
Cashiers and Check-out Operators	£14,500 per year

Did You Know

2 out of every 5 employees within the sector, work on a part-time basis.

Current and future trends



Things to consider

Whilst there are 9.00am to 5.00pm jobs, others will require you to work outside normal working hours (e.g. weekends and evenings).

Shift / split shift work is common in some businesses.

There are a lot of part time positions which allow you to be flexible in the hours you work.

Those who show commitment are often rewarded with promotion within the industry.

The sector offers a wealth of job roles, not just those on the shop floor.

What to do next

If you need help on choosing a career, going to college or university, training opportunities or finding a job contact the Careers Service:

Online: www.nidirect.gov.uk/careers

E-mail: csni@delni.gov.uk

Telephone: **0300 200 7820**

Useful links

www.people1st.co.uk

Provides information about skills development across the sector.

www.nsaforretail.com

National Skills Academy for Retail.

www.retailmoves.com

Provides details of retail recruitment.

www.retailchoice.com

Provides details of retail recruitment.

Did You Know

Employees require a high level of customer service skills for work in the retail sector.