

## Options @ 16 - Factory Work

These are some of the jobs that may be found in factories:

**Assemblers** fit parts together to form completed products, for example, furniture, radios, cars or washing machines. They usually work on a conveyor system in a factory, where they add a part, or parts, to the item as it goes past them. Sometimes, assemblers only make a certain piece of a product, which then goes to another factory for fitting into completed products.

**Food Processing Operatives** are involved in the production and packaging of the food products. The job typically involves some or all of the following tasks:

- assembling, packaging and labelling
- checking and weighing raw materials
- ensuring that machine settings are correct and completing simple maintenance
- maintaining a clean production environment
- running quality checks

**Furniture Manufacturing Operatives** make items of furniture by hand, or by using machines. Using electrical and hand tools, and sometimes computer-controlled machines, they make items such as chairs, tables, chests of drawers, fitted furniture and cabinets for storage or display. Furniture manufacturing operatives:

- add handles and hinges, and upholster the furniture if required
- assemble the pieces together
- cut and shape the item
- finish the item with polish or varnish
- smooth the surface of the item

**Metals Industry Production Operatives** work involves carrying out cleaning, repair and maintenance work on the machinery

- collecting materials, weighing them and preparing them
- fitting and assembling components such as jigs and tools
- preparing machines to begin the manufacturing process
- taking measurements and samples to provide accurate production data
- working with and assisting engineers, workshop staff and technicians

**Packers** of light goods pack all types of products, such as clothing, food and drink, electrical and electronic equipment, pharmaceutical products and small engineering parts. These items are packed:

- to protect them from damage
- to keep them fresh
- for display in presentation packaging
- so that products can be sold in convenient numbers or amounts.

The packer's work depends on the type of product and manufacturing process. Many packers work on production lines and pack products as they are made.

Packers of heavy goods work with items that need to be packed to protect them from damage during transportation. Depending on the product, a variety of packaging is used: such as boxes, crates, cases, drums and sacks.

Packers use all types of lifting equipment, including forklift trucks and overhead cranes, to move goods such as heavy engineering units.

**Paper Manufacturing Operatives** operate the specialised equipment that turns wood pulp and recycled material into paper of all kinds.

Operatives at a paper mill may take on specific roles. These relate to different parts of the papermaking process, such as:

- feeding the pulp, dyes and chemicals into the papermaking machine for mixing with water
- monitoring the process that dries the paper
- operating the machinery that breaks down the raw materials into paper pulp
- overseeing as the finished paper is made into large reels, and sometimes cut into sheets
- testing the quality of the paper as it is made

**Plastics Process Operatives** operate the machinery that produces plastic products, ranging from bottles and packaging to cases for TVs and computers, components for cars and aircraft, and medical devices.

**Quality Control Inspectors** make sure that products meet quality and safety standards. To do this, they may measure and weigh products, examine samples and test them. They make sure that everything from raw materials to finished products meets quality and safety standards. All production processes, whether large or small, require elements of quality control.

Quality control inspectors work in a wide range of industries, including food and drink, pharmaceuticals and electronics. They normally work in a laboratory, workshop or office. They visit the factory floor to take samples of products and inspect production, and to discuss problems with colleagues.

## Additional Information

### What will the job be like?

This depends very much on the type of factory involved. The series of tasks is mostly simple and repetitive but sometimes, it may be necessary to follow sets of instructions and diagrams. Some factories may work shifts on a 24 hours basis or in the evenings, nights or weekends. Others may begin early in the morning. The hours of work may be quite long compared with some other industries. The work in some cases is very routine. In some

factories, a clean, dirt-free environment is needed to protect electronic components or food. Workers are expected to wear protective clothing. Other factories may be cold, noisy or hot and the job could mean standing for long periods.

### Skills checklist:

- Able to do repetitive tasks
- Able to operate machinery
- Be good with your hands for packing work
- Be physically fit and active as the work involves heavy lifting and carrying
- Concentration skills to stay alert while working
- Good close eyesight
- Good practical skills
- Have good co-ordination to control lifting machines
- High level of hygiene (particularly if working with food)
- Neat and methodical
- Pay attention to safety
- Reliable and punctual

### How much will I get paid and what are the opportunities?

In the Humber sub-region there are factories that deal with products in:

- Caravan Manufacture
- Chemicals
- Engineering
- Food
- Paper and Packaging
- Pharmaceuticals
- Plastics and Ceramics
- Plumbing and Heating
- Textiles and Clothing
- Wood and Furniture

### Assemblers

Assemblers usually work 39 hours, Monday to Friday. Shift work and early morning starts may be required. Part-time work and overtime may be available. Temporary, casual and seasonal work is often available.

Employers throughout the UK are manufacturers (mainly in the electrical and electronics industry) and companies that supply parts and assemblies to them.

Opportunities are continuing to decline as more assembly processes are automated and as firms increasingly buy in assembled units from overseas.

These figures are only a guide, as actual rates of pay may vary, depending on the employer and where people live.

- Salaries may start at around £10,500 a year, although apprentices may earn less.
- With experience, this may rise to around £15,000 a year.
- Shift leaders and supervisors may earn between £18,000 and £20,000.

It is an expanding sector so there are good opportunities available throughout the UK.

## Furniture Manufacturing Operatives

These figures are only a guide, as actual rates of pay may vary, depending on the employer and where people live.

- The starting salary for a furniture manufacturing operative is from around £12,000 a year.
- Experienced operatives earn around £15,000 a year.
- Highly-skilled operatives may earn up to £20,000, or more.

Working overtime and shifts may increase pay.

Around 130,000 people work in the furniture manufacturing industry in the UK. There are over 7,500 furniture manufacturing businesses. Most of them are small or medium-sized companies, with a few large manufacturers.

## Metals Industry Production Operatives

These figures are only a guide, as actual rates of pay may vary, depending on the employer and where people live.

- Starting salaries may range from around £15,000 to £17,000 a year.
- With some experience, this may rise to around £20,000.
- Highly experienced operatives may earn up to £27,000 a year.

There are around 30,000 companies in the UK metals sector employing 471,000 people in the UK (one out of every eight jobs in UK manufacturing). There are metals companies throughout the UK, although the greatest concentration is in Yorkshire, Humberside and the West Midlands. The UK metals industry is the country's fourth largest manufacturing exporter and it exports almost 50 per cent of its production to around 200 countries.

While some technologies in the industry are well established, new ones are also emerging, and the trend is for companies to produce specialised products such as medical equipment or systems aimed at particular markets.

## Packers

Packers usually work a 39-hour week, which may include shift work and work at weekends. Employers throughout the UK are manufacturers in a wide range of industries.

These figures are only a guide, as actual rates of pay may vary, depending on the employer and where people live.

- The starting salary for a packing operative may be around £9,000 a year.
- Experienced staff and supervisors may earn between about £11,000 and £18,000.
- Managers may earn anything from £20,000 to £60,000 a year, depending on their responsibilities.

These rates may be increased by working shifts and overtime. Some packing operatives are paid according to the number of items they pack. Others receive an hourly rate.

The UK logistics sector employs around 73,000 people as storage and warehouse managers, and about 378,000 in other goods handling and storage operations, including packing. The job sector is generally stable and there are good opportunities in the area.

Employers of packing staff include manufacturers, retailers, mail order companies, distribution and storage organisations, shipping companies, removals firms and export companies.

## Paper Manufacturing Operatives

These figures are only a guide, as actual rates of pay may vary, depending on the employer and where people live.

- A trainee operative may start on around £12,000 a year.
- A newly qualified paper manufacturing operative may earn around £16,000 a year.
- With experience, salaries can rise to £22,000 a year.

Around 14,600 people work as manufacturing or maintenance operatives in the UK papermaking industry.

There are more than 370 paper manufacturing centres. These are concentrated in the North West, Yorkshire and Humberside, East Midlands and the South East.

Some mills are very large, with up to 750 employees; others are relatively small and may carry out more specialised work.

There is also a large overseas paper industry and there may be opportunities to work abroad.

## Plastics Process Operatives

These figures are only a guide, as actual rates of pay may vary, depending on the employer and where people live.

- The starting pay for plastics process operatives may be between £11,000 and £13,000 a year.
- Average earnings for experienced operatives may be around £19,250 a year.
- Operatives at the highest levels may earn around £25,000 a year.

Shift allowances and overtime payments may increase income.

There are opportunities for plastics process operatives throughout the UK. Employers range from large companies that produce a wide range of goods, to smaller organisations manufacturing specialised products. Plastics are more widely used than ever before, and opportunities are likely to increase as the industry grows.

## Quality Control Inspectors

These figures are only a guide, as actual rates of pay may vary, depending on the employer and where people live.

- Salaries for quality control inspectors may start at around £20,000 a year.
- With some experience, an inspector may earn around £24,000 a year.
- Inspectors with wider responsibilities may earn up to £30,000, and in certain industries (such as the aerospace sector), as much as £35,000 a year.
- Inspectors who work freelance may earn from £40,000 to £60,000 if they are specialists in a High-Technology discipline.

Shift and overtime work may carry extra payments.

Employers include manufacturers in many sectors, including:

- aerospace
- automotive
- building and construction
- electrical
- food and drink
- medical devices
- pharmaceutical
- steel.
- textiles

There may be opportunities to work abroad in some sectors.

The number of quality control inspector posts has been falling, as more sophisticated equipment has been developed which is better able to pick up inconsistencies. Most companies also now aim to make sure that all employees - from directors to process operators - act to ensure quality products and service.

### **Apprenticeships/Advanced Apprenticeships – Employer Led**

Some employers will employ young people on an apprenticeship programme, however this is a competitive area. Apprenticeships (NVQ Level 2) is the starting point for most young people. Achievement of Level 2 enables progression to Advanced Apprenticeships (Level 3). Apprenticeships are 'Employer Led' and therefore the trainee is employed and will be paid a wage. Apprenticeships last between 2-3 years depending on the person's progress.

#### **Apprenticeships – Programme Led**

Sometimes 'Employer Led' apprenticeships are not immediately available therefore it may be possible to start training in an off-the-job setting where the person will undertake job skills and training prior to moving onto employment and an Employer Led Apprenticeship.

Locally there are few opportunities available in this area of work via this route. Competition is fierce and GCSEs in English and Mathematics (mostly grades A-C) are required.

**For further information look in the Work Based Learning Handbook, and ask your Personal Adviser for details of vacancies and how to apply.**

### **Qualifications**

#### **Assemblers**

You do not usually need any educational qualifications to enter this work. However, you may have to take a test that measures how quickly and accurately you can work.

#### **Food Processing Operatives**

There are no formal educational requirements, although employers may look for basic numeracy and literacy skills. Some jobs may specify a minimum age of 18. Some GCSEs grades, or equivalent, may be needed to progress into a supervisory role. Apprenticeships may be available.

#### **Furniture Manufacturing Operatives**

There are no specific entry qualifications, although GCSEs grades (A-E) may be required by some employers. Apprenticeships may be available for young people.

#### **Metals Industry Production Operatives**

There are no set entry requirements for work as a production operative. For entry to an Apprenticeship, employers look for young people with ability in Maths, English and Science. For an Advanced Apprenticeship, four GCSEs grades (A-C), including Maths and English, are usually required.

#### **Packers**

You do not usually need qualifications to enter this work.

### **Paper Manufacturing Operatives**

There are no formal entry requirements, but it is an advantage to have GCSEs grades in maths, English and science. Young people can start straight from school, or train as apprentices. It is also possible to take an HNC/HND in an area such as engineering, and start work at a higher level.

### **Plastics Process Operatives**

It is possible to become a plastics process operative without any formal qualifications, although some employers prefer candidates with some GCSEs. Some people enter this career through Apprenticeships.

### **Quality Control Inspectors**

Many quality control inspectors are experienced production line or shop floor workers. Entry is possible, however, as a trainee or quality control assistant, with mainly on-the-job training. Vacancies may be advertised under several different titles, including quality tester, faultfinder and quality assurance inspector.

Some posts in quality control require only on-the-job training. Other positions require technicians who have a qualification in their discipline.

## Useful Addresses

### British Furniture Manufacturers Association (BFM)

Wycombe House  
9 Ambersham Hill  
High Wycombe  
Bucks  
HP13 6NR

☎ 01494 523 021

🌐 [www.bfm.org.uk](http://www.bfm.org.uk)

### Food and Drink Federation (FDF)

6 Catherine Street  
London  
WC2B 5JJ

☎ 020 7836 2460

🌐 [www.fdf.org.uk](http://www.fdf.org.uk)

### The British Plastics Federation

5 - 6 Bath Place  
Rivington Street  
London  
EC2A 3JE

☎ 020 7457 5000

🌐 [www.bpf.co.uk](http://www.bpf.co.uk)

### The Chartered Quality Institute

12 Grosvenor Crescent  
London  
SW1X 7EE

☎ 020 7245 6722

🌐 [www.thecqj.org](http://www.thecqj.org)

### Confederation of Paper Industries

1 Rivenhall Road  
Swindon  
SN5 7BD

☎ 01793 889 600

🌐 [www.paper.org.uk](http://www.paper.org.uk)

### SEMTA The Sector Skills for Science, Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies

14 Upton Road  
Watford  
WD18 0JT

☎ 01923 238 441

🌐 [www.semta.org.uk](http://www.semta.org.uk)

### Institute of Operations Management

CICT (UK)  
Earlstrees Court  
Earlstrees Road  
Corby  
Northants  
NN17 4AX

☎ 01536 740 105

🌐 [www.iomnet.org.uk](http://www.iomnet.org.uk)

### The Paper Industry Technical Association

5 Frecheville Court  
Bury  
Lancashire  
BL9 0UF

☎ 0161 764 5858.

🌐 [www.pita.co.uk](http://www.pita.co.uk)

## Useful websites:

Available as free downloads at [www.connexions-direct.com](http://www.connexions-direct.com)

For further information look in your Connexions library under classification

## Manufacturing and Production



## Connexions Centre Addresses

### Beverley Connexions Centre

3 North Bar Within  
Beverley  
HU17 8AP

 01482 862741

### Bransholme Connexions Centre

76 Goodhart Road  
North Point Shopping Centre  
Bransholme  
Hull  
HU7 4EF

 01482 835780

### Bridlington Connexions Centre

20 Blenheim Road  
Bridlington  
YO16 4LD

 01262 678943

### Goole Connexions Centre

71-73 Boothferry Road  
Goole  
DN14 6BB

 01405 608810

### Grimsby Connexions Centre

Queen Street  
Grimsby  
DN31 1JA


 01472 355303

### Hessle Connexions Centre

1st Floor  
Library Building  
Southgate  
Hessle  
HU13 0SN

 01482 647127

### Holderness Connexions Centre

To make an appointment to be seen in Hedon, Hornsea or Withernsea please call Beverley Connexions on  01482 862741 or your local Customer Service Centre.

### Hull Connexions Centre

84-86 Paragon Street  
Hull  
HU1 3QA

 01482 223081

### Pocklington Connexions Centre

Pocklington Youth Centre  
25 New Street  
Pocklington  
YO42 2QA

 07824 486538

### Scunthorpe Connexions Centre

60 Oswald Road  
Scunthorpe  
DN15 7PQ

 01724 282200

[www.connexions-humber.co.uk](http://www.connexions-humber.co.uk)

[info@connexionshumber.co.uk](mailto:info@connexionshumber.co.uk)

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**080 800 13 2 19**

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