

HOW MUCH DOES EVENT STAFF COST IN THE UK IN 2026?

The honest answer is an hourly rate per person, multiplied by hours and headcount, plus anything unusual. Here is how our published rates work, what sits inside the hourly figure, and three worked examples you can copy for your own budget.

Core, ex VAT	£25.00/hr
Skilled	£28.00/hr
Lead	£34.00/hr
Minimum booking	4 hours

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Written quote within 60 minutes, 8am to 8pm.

— THE SHORT ANSWER

Most event staff are charged by the hour, per person.

Agencies in the UK charge a client hourly rate for each person, usually with a minimum number of hours per booking. Ours are published: Core staff (bar, waiting, runners, kitchen porters, cloakroom) are £25.00 an hour ex VAT, Skilled staff (cocktail bartenders, silver service, chefs de partie) are £28.00, Leads who run a team on the night are £34.00 and senior chefs are £40.00. Every booking is a minimum of 4 hours per person.

On top of the hourly rate, some dates and places cost more everywhere, because people are harder to find. Our uplifts are £3.00 an hour inside the M25, £3.00 an hour from 1 December to 2 January and on bank holidays, and £6.00 an hour on New Year's Eve. There is no surge pricing beyond that, and no booking fee.

— WHERE THE MONEY GOES

What a £25 hour actually pays for.

The person working your event is paid £14.00 an hour plus 12.07% holiday pay, which is well above the National Living Wage. On top of their pay sit employer National Insurance, a workplace pension, insurance, vetting, training such as Level 2 food safety and allergen awareness, uniform, payroll and the time it takes to brief everyone twice before your event. What is left is our margin, and it is deliberately small.

That is the trade-off we chose. Paying people properly is how we keep the good ones, and good people are why you need fewer of them. A cheaper hourly rate usually means a lower wage, higher turnover and more people on the night to cover the gaps.

— WORKED EXAMPLE ONE

A 100-guest wedding with a plated meal.

A plated wedding breakfast usually needs one waiting staff member for every 10 to 12 guests, plus a bar team and someone running the floor. For 100 guests over an 8-hour day that is 9 waiting staff and 2 bar staff at Core, and 1 Lead.

Staff line: 11 people × 8 hours × £25.00, plus 1 Lead × 8 hours × £34.00 = **£2,472.00 ex VAT**. Our quotes also show a 20% contingency line (£494.40) that is only charged if the day runs long, and if the job finishes under the quoted total we refund 5%.

WORKED EXAMPLE TWO

A standing drinks reception for 250.

Receptions are drinks-led, so the bar and the floor matter more than courses. A sensible team for 250 guests over 5 hours is 4 bar staff, 4 floor staff for canapés and glass collection, and a Lead at the bar.

Staff line: 8 people × 5 hours × £25.00, plus 1 Lead × 5 hours × £34.00 = **£1,170.00 ex VAT**.

WORKED EXAMPLE THREE

A December office party for 60.

December dates carry the festive uplift of £3.00 an hour. For 60 guests with a buffet and a bar over 6 hours, 5 Core staff and a Lead is usually enough.

Staff line: 5 people × 6 hours × £28.00, plus 1 Lead × 6 hours × £37.00 = **£1,062.00 ex VAT**.

BUDGET CHECKLIST

Five things that change the price.

Hours, not guests. Staff are paid from arrival to departure, so include set-up and clear-down, usually an hour either side of the guest times.

Service style. Plated and silver service need more people than buffet or sharing.

Distance. There is no travel charge within 15 miles of the person's base. Beyond that, travel and a £20 a day meal allowance are shown on their own line at cost.

Short notice. We do not charge more for it, but the sooner you ask, the more choice you have over who comes.

Cancellation. Free more than 48 hours before the start, 50% between 24 and 48 hours, and 100% inside 24 hours.

Try the [instant estimate on our rate card](#), or send your dates for a written quote within 60 minutes.

QUESTIONS

Straight answers.

What is the minimum booking?



Are your prices shown with or without VAT?



Why is your hourly rate higher than some agencies?



Do you charge a booking fee?



What does the contingency line mean?



How quickly can I get a price?



RELATED

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