

WHAT CLEANING AND LAUNDRY STAFF EARN: LONDON VS NEW YORK

Hourly pay for cleaners, housekeepers and laundry operatives in London and New York, reconciled across two national statistics systems and converted at a dated central-bank rate.

Hassam Rafkey · APXXO Data — labour · 15 September 2026

DATA AS AT	LAST CHECKED	MEASURED IN	ROWS
2025 (provisional) · BLS	2026-09-15	US dollars per hour	3
2025 · FX 2026-09-15			

83.7%

LONDON HOUSEKEEPERS EARN THIS SHARE OF NEW YORK'S

\$20.29 against \$24.25 — the widest gap of the three.

94.2%

LONDON LAUNDRY OPERATIVES ARE MUCH CLOSER

\$17.18 against \$18.24. The gap narrows as the work gets more specialised.

1.3483

US DOLLARS TO THE POUND

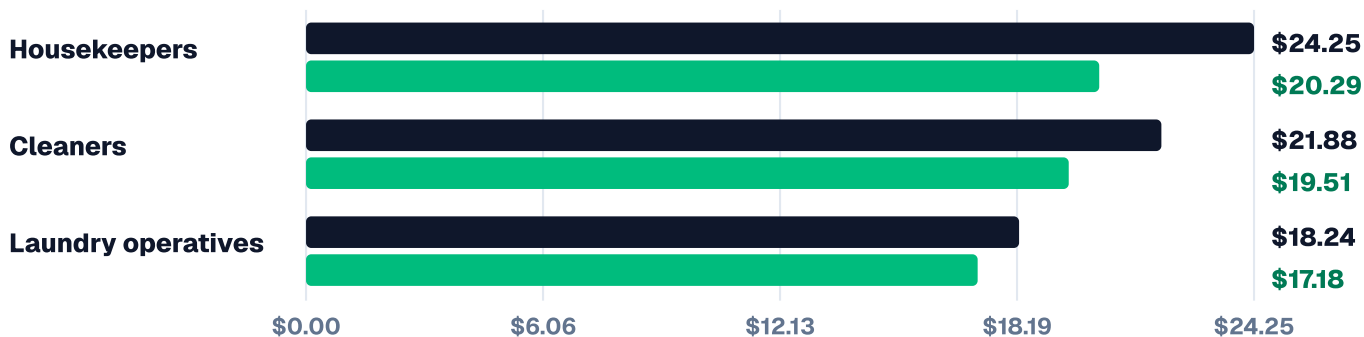
A cross-rate of the European Central Bank reference rates for 2026-09-15, not a rate of our own choosing.

AT A GLANCE

TOP 3 OF 3

The same three occupations in both cities, converted at a dated central-bank rate. The gap closes as the work gets more specialised.

■ NEW YORK (\$/HOUR) ■ LONDON (\$/HOUR)



WHAT THE FIGURES SHOW

The gap narrows as the work gets more specialised

London housekeepers earn 83.7% of what their New York counterparts do. London laundry operatives earn 94.2%. That is a spread of 10.5 percentage points across three occupations that sit within a few dollars of each other.

The pattern is consistent: the closer the work is to a specific trade, the closer the two cities get. Whatever is pushing New York ahead is operating on the general end of the labour market rather than the specialised end.

Across three occupations a few dollars apart, London runs from 83.7% of New York to 94.2%. The gap closes as the work gets more specific.

Three things had to be reconciled before these numbers could sit together

The classifications differ. The United States uses SOC 2018 and the United Kingdom uses SOC 2020, and they do not map onto each other officially. Each row here states the pair it has matched, and that mapping is a judgement rather than a concordance.

The definitions of "hourly pay" differ. BLS reports a mean hourly wage that excludes overtime premium, so this page uses the ONS series that also excludes overtime rather than the headline gross figure, which would have quietly overstated London.

The currencies differ. Sterling is converted at 1.3483 dollars to the pound, a cross-rate of the European Central Bank reference rates for 2026-09-15. A different day would give a slightly different answer, which is why the date is on the page.

What a wage comparison cannot tell you

These are gross wages, not the cost of employing someone. National Insurance in the United Kingdom and payroll taxes in the United States do not sit at the same rate, and neither do statutory holiday, sick pay or pension obligations. The employer-side gap is not the same as the employee-side gap shown here.

Nor is this a comparison of living standards. A dollar in New York and a converted pound in London do not buy the same thing, and nothing on this page adjusts for that.

How reliable the underlying figures are

ONS publishes a coefficient of variation with every estimate, and the three used here are well inside what it treats as precise. That matters because a small occupational cell in a single region can be noisy, and these are not.

The two surveys are also taken at different times of year, which is a genuine limitation rather than a rounding issue. Read the direction and the size of the gap, not the second decimal place.

These are wages paid to employees, not the cost of employing them. Payroll taxes, holiday and pension sit on top, and they are not the same in the two countries.

HOW WE WORKED THIS OUT

New York figures are the mean hourly wage from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics, for the New York-Newark-Jersey City metropolitan area.

London figures are the mean hourly pay excluding overtime from the ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, Table 15, 2025 (provisional), for the London region.

Overtime is excluded from the London figures on purpose: the BLS mean hourly wage excludes overtime premium, so the ONS "gross" series would compare unlike things and overstate London.

Sterling is converted at 1.3483 US dollars to the pound, a cross-rate of the European Central Bank reference rates for 2026-09-15 (USD/EUR 1.1539, GBP/EUR 0.8558).

The two countries use different occupational classifications. Each row maps one to the other: Cleaners = US 37-2011 "Janitors and cleaners, except maids and housekeeping cleaners" and UK SOC 9223 "Cleaners and domestics"; Housekeepers = US 37-2012 "Maids and housekeeping cleaners" and UK

SOC 6231 "Housekeepers and related occupations"; Laundry operatives = US 51-6011 "Laundry and dry-cleaning workers" and UK SOC 9224 "Launderers, dry cleaners and pressers". The definitions are close but not identical, and the mapping is a judgement, not an official concordance.

ONS publishes a coefficient of variation for every estimate; these three are Cleaners 0.9%, Housekeepers 5%, Laundry operatives 2.3%. ONS treats 5% or below as precise.

The two surveys are taken at different times of year and neither is adjusted for cost of living, tax or non-wage employment costs. These are gross wages, not the cost of employing someone.

THE NUMBERS					
3 ROWS - AS AT 2025 (PROVISIONAL) - BLS 2025 - FX 2026-09-15					
REGION	US DOLLARS PER HOUR	LONDON (\$/HOUR)	LONDON (£/HOUR)	LONDON AS % OF NEW YORK (%)	US NATIONAL AVERAGE (\$/HOUR)
Housekeepers	\$24.25	\$20.29	15.05	+83.7%	\$17.83
Cleaners	\$21.88	\$19.51	14.47	+89.2%	\$18.64
Laundry operatives	\$18.24	\$17.18	12.74	+94.2%	\$16.79

WHAT TO TAKE AWAY

Measured properly — same definition of hourly pay, a dated central-bank rate, and a stated occupational mapping — London cleaning wages run between 83.7% and 94.2% of New York's. The gap is real but narrower than the headline cost of the two cities suggests, and it closes as the work gets more specialised.

WHERE IT CAME FROM

US Bureau of Labor Statistics — Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS) (<https://www.bls.gov/oes/>)
US federal government — public domain · published annual

Office for National Statistics — Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, Table 15 (<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/datasets/regionbyoccupation4digitsoc2010ashtable1>)

5)

Open Government Licence v3.0 — attribution required · published annual

European Central Bank — euro foreign exchange reference rates (https://www.ecb.europa.eu/stats/policy_and_exchange_rates/euro_reference_exchange_rates/html/index.en.html)

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WHEN THIS PAGE CHANGES NEXT

Both surveys publish annually — BLS OEWS in the spring, ONS ASHE in the autumn — and the exchange rate is read fresh on every run. This page changes when either survey publishes a new year. The pipeline checks every week.

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Hassam Rafkey, "What cleaning and laundry staff earn: London vs New York", APXXO, 2026.
<https://apxxo.com/en-us/data/cleaning-wages-london-new-york/>

MORE DATA FROM APXXO

AS AT 2026-06

What commercial electricity costs, by US state

Updated monthly. Free to download.

(</en-us/data/commercial-electricity-cost/>)

AS AT AUGUST 2026

What cleaning and laundry have actually cost

January 2016 to August 2026. Free to download.

[\(/en-us/data/cleaning-laundry-cost-index/\)](/en-us/data/cleaning-laundry-cost-index/)

AS AT 2025

What cleaning labour costs, by US state

Updated annually. Free to download.

[\(/en-us/data/cleaning-labour-cost-by-state/\)](/en-us/data/cleaning-labour-cost-by-state/)

ALL DATA PAGES → [\(/EN-US/DATA/\)](/EN-US/DATA/)