

UNEMPLOYMENT DIGEST

MARCH 2015

HIE Research and Economics Team

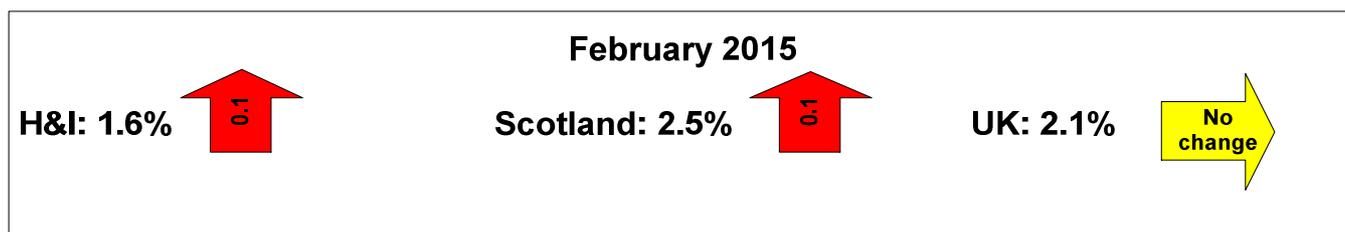


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The Information contained in this report is based on Claimant Count figures. The Claimant Count measures the number of people claiming benefits principally for the reason of being unemployed. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) introduced a new benefit, Universal Credit, in April 2013. At present Universal Credit benefit is not included in the Claimant Count figures. Office for National Statistics (ONS) and DWP are working to include jobseeker Universal Credit claims in the Claimant Count as soon as possible.

The February 2015 claimant count unemployment figures* were released on 18th March 2015.

As illustrated by the chart below, the Highlands and Islands continues to have significantly lower unemployment than either Scotland or the UK - a trend which has been fairly constant since the recession.

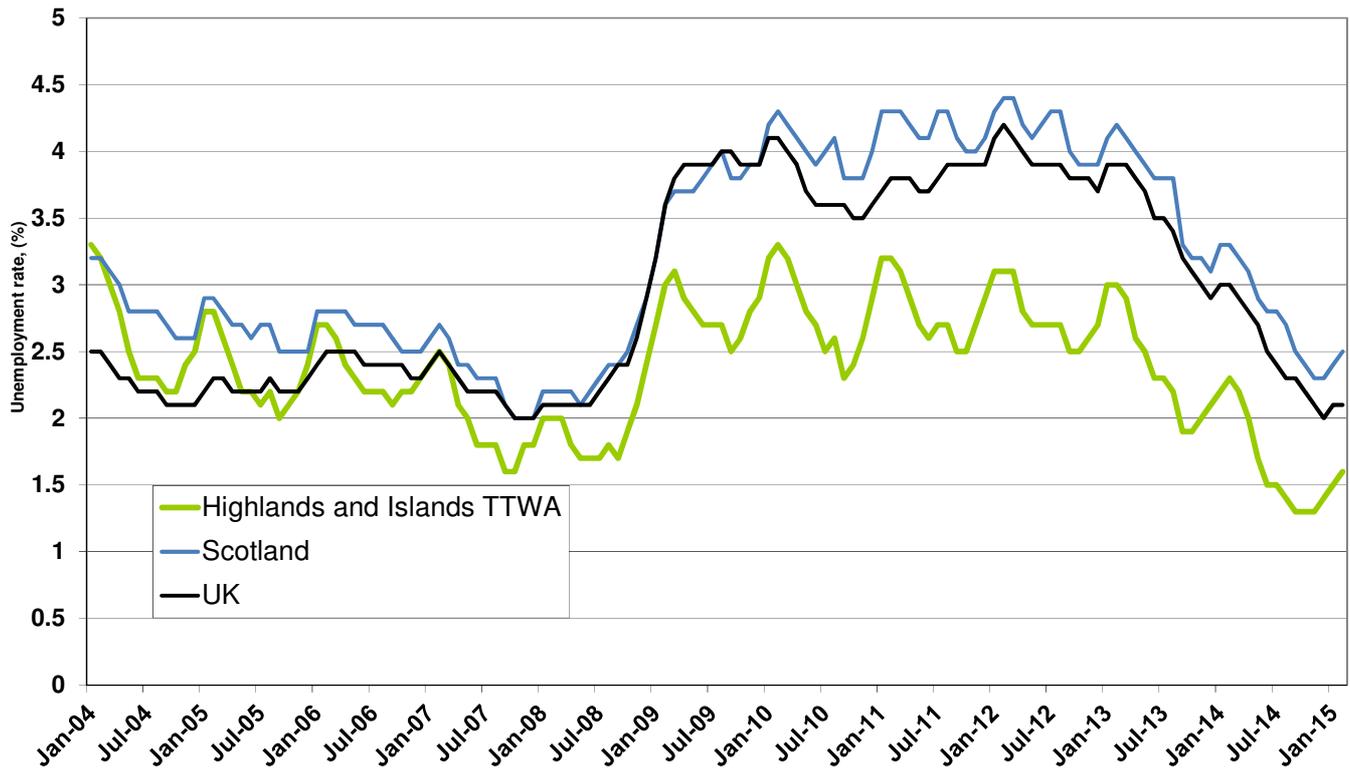


In February 2015, the average claimant count unemployment rate for the Travel to Work Areas (TTWAs) that comprise the Highlands and Islands was **1.6%**, which was below the rates for both Scotland (**2.5%**) and the UK (**2.1%**). The region's rate was higher than the previous month but lower than a year earlier (2.2% in February 2014).

The TTWAs whose rates exceeded the Scottish average in February 2015 were Dunoon & Bute (2.9%) and Wick and Invergordon (both with 2.7%). Six TTWAs in the Highlands and Islands had rates in February 2015 lower than 1.6% – Ullapool & Gairloch and Mull & Islay (both with 1.2%); Inverness & Dingwall (1.0%); Badenoch (0.9%); Orkney Islands (0.8%) and Shetland Islands (0.6%).

The total number of people claiming unemployment benefit in the HIE area^ in February 2015 was 4,624. Out of the total, some 1,495 were long term unemployed** and 935 were claimants aged 18-24.

Figure 1 - Unemployment in the Highlands and Islands, Scotland and the UK (2004-2015)



* Based on Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) Claimant Count figures, produced monthly by ONS.

^ As defined by Scottish datazones.

**1 For the purpose of this analysis, long-term unemployment (LTU) is defined as 'all those who have been unemployed and claiming benefit for over 6 months'.

Table 1 below illustrates the claimant count rates for each of the 18 TTWAs in the Highlands and Islands.

Table 1 - Unemployment by TTWA

Travel to Work Area	February 2015		January 2015	February 2014	Monthly change		Annual change	
	number	rate	rate	rate	number	rate	number	rate
Dunoon & Bute	361	2.9	2.7	4.3	34	0.2	-172	-1.4
Wick	205	2.7	2.8	3.8	-12	-0.1	-87	-1.1
Invergordon	377	2.7	2.7	3.4	0	0.0	-94	-0.7
Campbeltown	114	2.5	2.6	4.1	-4	-0.1	-74	-1.6
Skye & Lochalsh	190	2.3	2.3	3.0	3	0.0	-58	-0.7
Eilean Siar	384	2.3	2.2	2.9	6	0.1	-97	-0.6
Thurso	209	2.2	2.1	2.9	10	0.1	-70	-0.7
Dornoch & Lairg	124	2.2	2.0	3.0	13	0.2	-48	-0.8
Lochaber	250	2.0	2.0	2.5	5	0.0	-68	-0.5
Lochgilphead	101	1.7	2.0	2.8	-13	-0.3	-63	-1.1
Oban	185	1.7	1.8	2.3	-2	-0.1	-60	-0.6
Moray	932	1.6	1.5	1.9	67	0.1	-167	-0.3
Ullapool & Gairloch	62	1.2	1.0	2.0	9	0.2	-40	-0.8
Mull & Islay	55	1.2	1.0	1.7	10	0.2	-20	-0.5
Inverness & Dingwall	728	1.0	1.0	1.6	-8	0.0	-499	-0.6
Badenoch	75	0.9	0.8	1.3	10	0.1	-39	-0.4
Orkney Islands	104	0.8	0.9	1.2	-11	-0.1	-52	-0.4
Shetland Islands	96	0.6	0.6	0.8	5	0.0	-26	-0.2
Highlands and Islands TTWA	4,552	1.6	1.5	2.2	122	0.1	-1,734	-0.6
Scotland	86,620	2.5	2.4	3.3	2,316	0.1	-27,789	-0.8
United Kingdom	858,344	2.1	2.1	3.0	5,410	0.0	-385,090	-0.9

Table 2 shows the total claimant count unemployment, by number and rate over the month and year, long-term unemployment (LTU) and youth unemployment by HIE area office.

Table 2 - Unemployment by Area Office

HIE Area Office	Total Unemployment		Monthly change		Annual change		LTU	Youth Unemployment (18-24)
	number	rate*	number	%	number	%	number	number
Innse Gall	384	2.4	6	1.6	-97	-20.2	180	55
Caithness and Sutherland	562	2.4	15	2.7	-218	-27.9	260	115
Argyll and the Islands	888	2.1	30	3.5	-396	-30.8	350	190
Lochaber, Skye and Wester Ross	478	2.0	13	2.8	-153	-24.2	110	70
Moray	932	1.7	67	7.7	-167	-15.2	245	265
Inner Moray Firth	1,180	1.3	2	0.2	-632	-34.9	305	190
Orkney	104	0.8	-11	-9.6	-52	-33.3	30	25
Shetland	96	0.7	5	5.5	-26	-21.3	15	25

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