

UNEMPLOYMENT DIGEST

MARCH 2017

HIE Research and Economics Team



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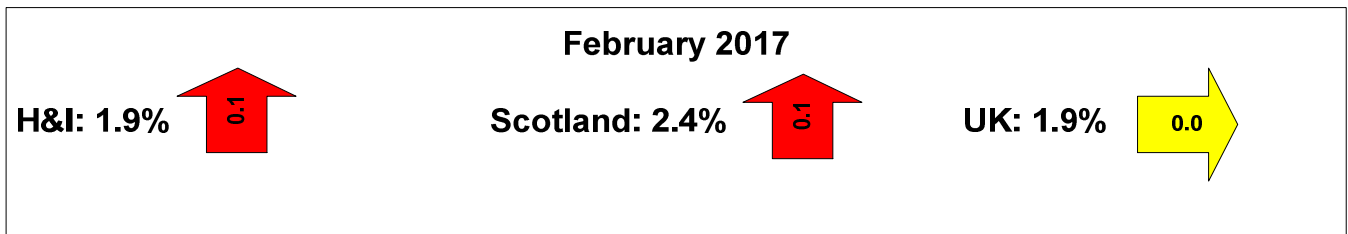
The Information contained in this report is based on Claimant Count and Universal Credit figures rather than job seekers allowance.

Since 1996, unemployment has been measured as a count of the number of people claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA). However, the UK Government introduced a new benefit, Universal Credit, in May 2013 which has had a phased introduction across the country. The Claimant Count will now be a measure of all those in receipt of Universal Credit who are out of work, including income based JSA claimants. Contribution based JSA claimants will be measured separately.

JSA figures continue to be published, although they now form a subset of the new Claimant Count data, which the ONS believe to be the best measure of the number of people claiming unemployment related benefits.

The February 2017 claimant count figures were released on 15th March 2017.

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

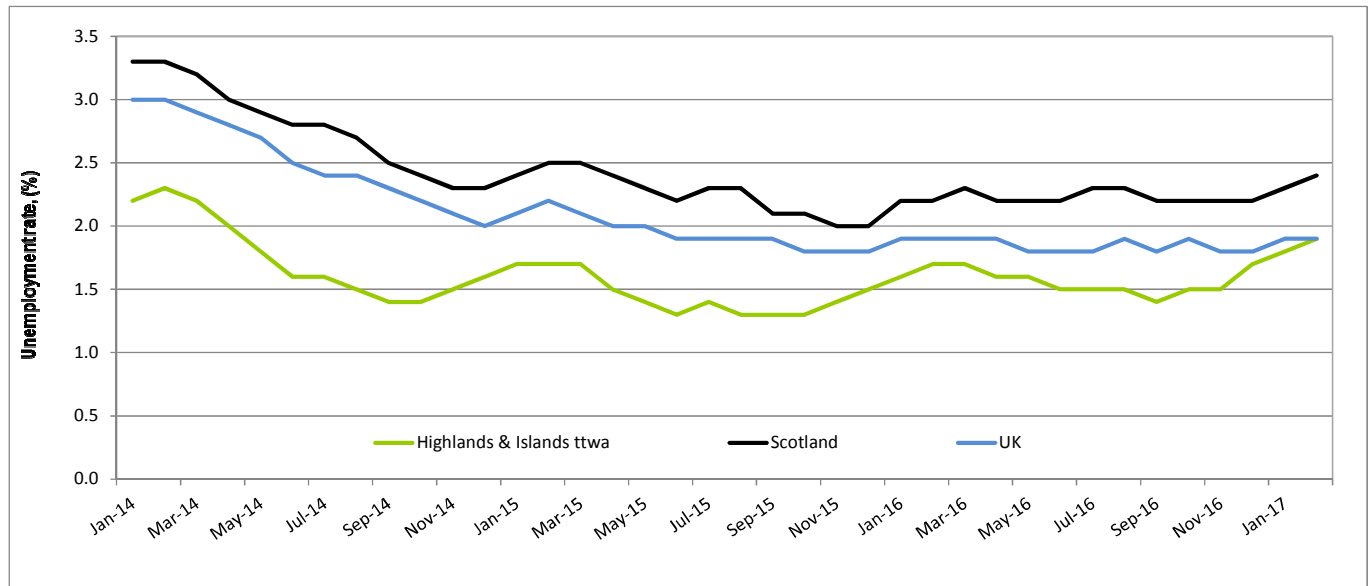


In February 2017, the average claimant count and universal credit unemployment rate for the 19 Travel to Work Areas (TTWAs) that comprise the Highlands and Islands was **1.9%**, which was below the rate for Scotland (**2.4%**) but in-line with that for the UK. The region's rate was higher than that of the previous month (1.8% in January 2017), and that of a year earlier (1.7% in February 2016).

The TTWAs whose rates exceeded the Scottish average in February 2017 were Alness & Invergordon (3.1%); Dunoon & Rothesay (3.0%) and Wick (2.7%). Ten TTWAs in the Highlands and Islands had rates in February 2017 lower than the Highlands and Islands average (1.9%) – Broadford & Kyle of Lochalsh and Lochgilphead (both with 1.7%); Ullapool and Fort William (both with 1.6%); Oban and Aviemore & Grantown on Spey (both 1.5%); Portree (1.2%); Orkney Islands (1.0%); Shetland (0.9%) and Mull & Islay (0.8%).

The total number of people claiming unemployment related benefits in the HIE area in February 2017 was 5,535. Out of the total, 1,075 were claimants aged 18-24.

Figure 1 - Unemployment in the Highlands and Islands, Scotland and the UK (2014-2017)



* Based on Claimant Count and Universal Credit and, produced monthly by ONS.

^ As defined by Scottish datazones.

Table 1 below illustrates the claimant count and universal credit allowance rates for each of the 19 TTWAs in the Highlands and Islands.

Table 1 - Unemployment by TTWA

Travel to Work Area	February 2017		January 2017	February 2016	Monthly change		Annual change	
	number	rate	rate	rate	number	rate	number	rate
Alness & Invergordon	420	3.1	3.2	2.7	-10	-0.1	55	0.4
Dunoon & Rothesay	340	3.0	2.7	3.4	30	0.3	-50	-0.4
Wick	205	2.7	2.4	2.5	20	0.3	15	0.2
Golpsie & Brora	125	2.3	2.2	1.9	5	0.1	25	0.4
Campbeltown	90	2.1	2.1	2.3	0	0.0	-10	-0.2
Thurso	195	2.1	2.1	2.3	0	0.0	-10	-0.2
Elgin	1,290	2.0	1.9	1.7	95	0.1	235	0.3
Eilean Siar	315	2.0	1.9	2.3	10	0.1	-50	-0.3
Inverness	1,490	2.0	1.8	1.5	105	0.2	380	0.5
Broadford & Kyle of Lochalsh	70	1.7	1.6	1.9	0	0.1	-10	-0.2
Lochgilphead	100	1.7	1.6	1.5	10	0.1	20	0.2
Ullapool	70	1.6	1.6	1.8	5	0.0	-5	-0.2
Fort William	200	1.6	1.6	1.9	0	0.0	-50	-0.3
Oban	150	1.5	1.5	1.4	0	0.0	15	0.1
Aviemore & Grantown on spey	125	1.5	1.4	1.0	5	0.1	40	0.5
Portree	60	1.2	1.0	1.5	10	0.2	-10	-0.3
Orkney Islands	135	1.0	1.0	0.8	0	0.0	25	0.2
Shetland	135	0.9	0.9	0.9	0	0.0	0	0.0
Mull & Islay	35	0.8	0.8	0.8	0	0.0	0	0.0
Highlands and Islands TTWA	5,550	1.9	1.8	1.7	285	0.1	615	0.2
Scotland	82,200	2.4	2.3	2.3	3,475	0.1	2,405	0.1
United Kingdom	803,580	1.9	1.9	1.9	29,240	0.0	2,805	0.0

Table 2 shows the total claimant count and universal credit unemployment, by number and rate over the month and year and youth unemployment by HIE area office.

Table 2 - Unemployment by Area Office - February 2017

HIE Area Office	Total Unemployment		Monthly change		Annual change		Youth Unemployment (18-24)
	number	rate*	number	%	number	%	number
Caithness and Sutherland	550	2.4	25	4.8	25	4.8	105
Inner Moray Firth	2,050	2.1	105	5.4	475	30.2	360
Argyll and the Islands	770	2.0	35	4.8	-45	-5.5	155
Moray	1,220	2.0	95	8.4	230	23.2	300
Innse Gall	315	1.9	10	3.3	-50	-13.7	40
Lochaber, Skye and Wester Ross	360	1.5	10	2.9	-70	-16.3	45
Orkney	135	1.0	0	0.0	25	22.7	35
Shetland	135	0.9	0	0.0	0	0.0	35

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