

Unemployment digest



Summary

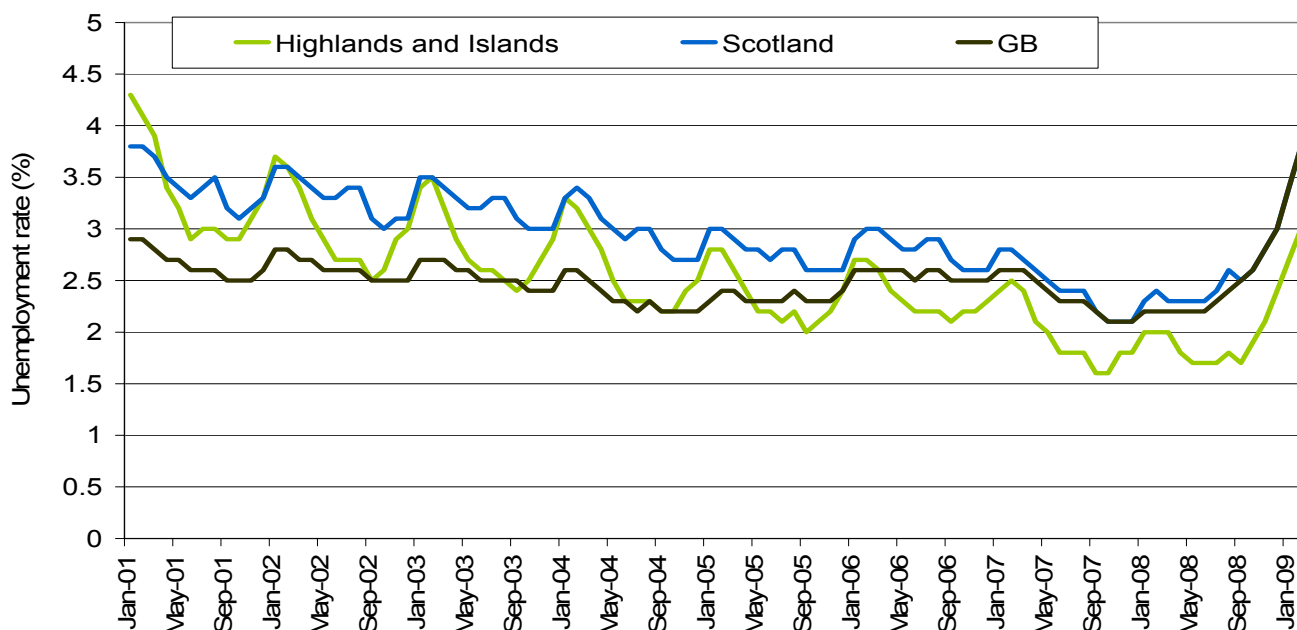
There has recently been a change made to Income Support for Lone Parents which will have some impact on the Jobseeker's Allowance Claimant Count figures. Since November 2008, lone parents with a youngest child aged 12 or over do not qualify for Income Support solely on the grounds of being a lone parent. It is anticipated that a number of them, while looking for paid work, will claim JSA. This is expected to have an impact on the level of people in the Claimant Count. It will not be possible to directly measure the impact on the Claimant Count. However, it is important to bear in mind that this change will have some impact on the claimant count figures reported below.

The March 2009 unemployment figures were released on 22nd April 2009. During the month, February to March 2009, the number of people claiming unemployment benefit in Great Britain rose by 4.4% from 1,416,213 to 1,478,196 claimants. This figure is 80.6% higher than the same period last year, where the number of claimants stood at 818,295 an increase of 659,901 claimants.

The number of people claiming unemployment benefit in Scotland also rose over the month, rising by 3.7% (4,522 claimants) from 121,930 to 126,452 claimants. This figure is higher than the same period last year, where the number of claimants stood at 75,249, an increase of 68.0% (51,203 claimants).

The HIE area also saw an increase in the amount of people claiming unemployment benefit during the month, February to March 2009, rising by 2.4% (190 claimants) from 7,980 to 8,170 claimants. This figure is higher than the same period last year, where the total number of claimants stood at 5,063, an increase of 61.4% (3,107 claimants).

Figure 1 - TTWA Unemployment rates (%): 2001-2009



Source: Claimant Count (NOMIS)

Table 1 – Unemployment rates by TTWA

Table 1 below illustrates the claimant count rates for March 2009, using the 2001 TTWAs (Travel-To-Work-Areas). The claimant count rates are compared with February 2009 and March 2008 to highlight the monthly and annual changes. The TTWAs are ranked in descending order by the March 2009 figure.

Area	March 2009	February 2009	March 2008
Dunoon & Bute	5.1	5.0	3.3
Wick	4.6	4.2	3.3
Invergordon	4.4	4.4	2.8
Eilean Siar	4.3	4.1	2.5
Campbeltown	4.2	4.1	3.4
Skye & Lochalsh	3.7	3.9	2.8
Thurso	3.2	3.1	2.1
Lochaber	3.1	3.0	1.6
Dornoch & Lairg	3.0	3.2	2.3
Inverness & Dingwall	3.0	3.0	1.4
Moray	2.8	2.8	2.0
Ullapool & Gairloch	2.6	2.5	2.0
Oban	2.5	2.6	1.8
Lochgilphead	2.5	2.2	1.8
Badenoch	2.3	2.1	1.1
Mull & Islay	2.3	2.0	1.7
Orkney Islands	1.5	1.4	1.0
Shetland Islands	1.4	1.3	1.0
HIE TTWAs	3.1	3.0	1.9
Highland	3.2	3.1	1.8
Scotland	3.9	3.8	2.3
Great Britain	4.0	3.8	2.2

Source: Claimant Count (NOMIS)

During the month, February to March 2009, the claimant count rose in 12 TTWAs, fell in 3, and was static in the remaining 3 – Invergordon, Inverness & Dingwall and Moray. Wick had the greatest increase over the month, rising 0.4% from 4.2% to 4.6%. Dornoch & Lairg and Skye & Lochalsh shared the greatest decrease over the month, both falling by 0.2%.

Over the year to March 2009, the claimant count rose in all 18 TTWAs. Dunoon & Bute and Eilean Siar shared the greatest increase over the year, both rising by 1.8% from 3.3% to 5.1% and 2.5% to 4.3% respectively.

Table 2 – Number of unemployed by Area Office

Table 2 below traces changes in the numbers (not rates) of unemployed people claiming benefits in the Highlands and Islands Area Offices (AOs) between February 2009 and March 2009. A yearly comparison between March 2008 and March 2009 is also provided. The AOs are ranked in descending order by the size of the annual change in the number of unemployed, displayed in the right hand column.

Area Office	Number claiming unemployment benefit (Mar 2009)	% change in number claiming unemployment benefit (Feb 09-Mar 09)	% change in number claiming unemployment benefit (Mar 08 - Mar 09)
Inner Moray Firth	2,724	2.4	96.1
Innse Gall	658	2.8	70.9
Lochaber, Skye & Wester Ross	717	0.1	56.2
Orkney	173	6.1	50.4
Shetland	191	9.1	49.2
Moray	1,506	3.5	44.8
Argyll and the Islands	1,404	0.5	43.9
Caithness and Sutherland	797	3.0	39.6
HIE Area	8,170	2.4	61.4
Highland	4,238	2.1	75.2
Scotland	126,452	3.7	68.0
Great Britain	1,478,196	4.4	80.6

Source: Claimant Count (NOMIS)

Over the month, February to March 2009, the number of people claiming unemployment benefit rose in all 8 area offices. Shetland had the greatest increase over the month, rising 9.1% from 175 to 191 claimants.

The number of people claiming unemployment benefit over the year to March 2009, also rose in all 8 area offices. Inner Moray Firth had the greatest increase over the year, rising 96.1% from 1,389 to 2,724 claimants. The number of people claiming unemployment benefit in Innse Gall, Lochaber, Skye & Wester Ross and Orkney also all rose by over 50.0% over the year.

Table 3 – Long-term unemployment by Area Office

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 3 below shows the number of people who are long term unemployed in March 2009 in each of the AOs. It also highlights the percentage change in the number of those claiming long term unemployment benefit over the month (February 2009 to March 2009) and over the year (March 2008 to March 2009). The AOs are ranked by the right hand column, which contains the size of the annual percentage change in numbers of LTU.

Area Office	% Change in number of LTU		
	March 2009	(Feb 09 - Mar 09)	% Change in number of LTU (Mar 08 - Mar 09)
Shetland	40	14.3	166.7
Inner Moray Firth	375	8.7	70.5
Moray	265	10.4	35.9
Argyll and the Islands	385	6.9	30.5
Lochaber, Skye & Wester Ross	130	13.0	30.0
Innse Gall	140	3.7	21.7
Orkney	30	20.0	20.0
Caithness and Sutherland	205	2.5	10.8
HIE Area	1,570	7.9	36.5
Highland	715	8.3	41.6
Scotland	28,285	8.3	45.9
Great Britain	329,505	9.4	42.1

Source: Claimant Count (NOMIS)

During the month February to March 2009, the number of long term unemployment benefit claimants rose in all 8 area offices. Orkney had the greatest increase over the month, rising 20.0% from 25 to 30 claimants.

The number of LTU claimants also rose in all 8 area offices over the year to March 2009. Shetland had the greatest increase over the year, rising 166.7% from 15 to 40 claimants. Inner Moray Firth also had a significant increase over the year, rising 70.5% from 220 to 375 claimants.

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Further economic information and previous factsheets can be accessed on the HIE Website: <http://www.hie.co.uk>

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