

UNEMPLOYMENT DIGEST

MARCH 2016

HIE Research and Economics Team



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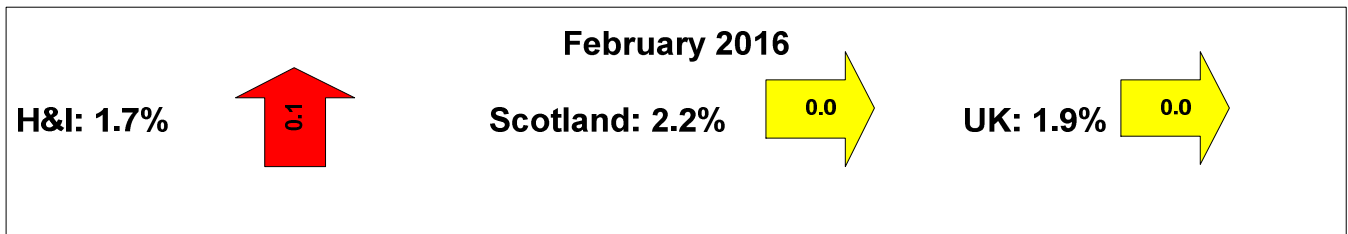
The Information contained in this report is based on Claimant Count and Universal Credit figures rather than job seekers allowance.

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 2016 claimant count and universal credit unemployment figures* were released on 16th March 2016.

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.

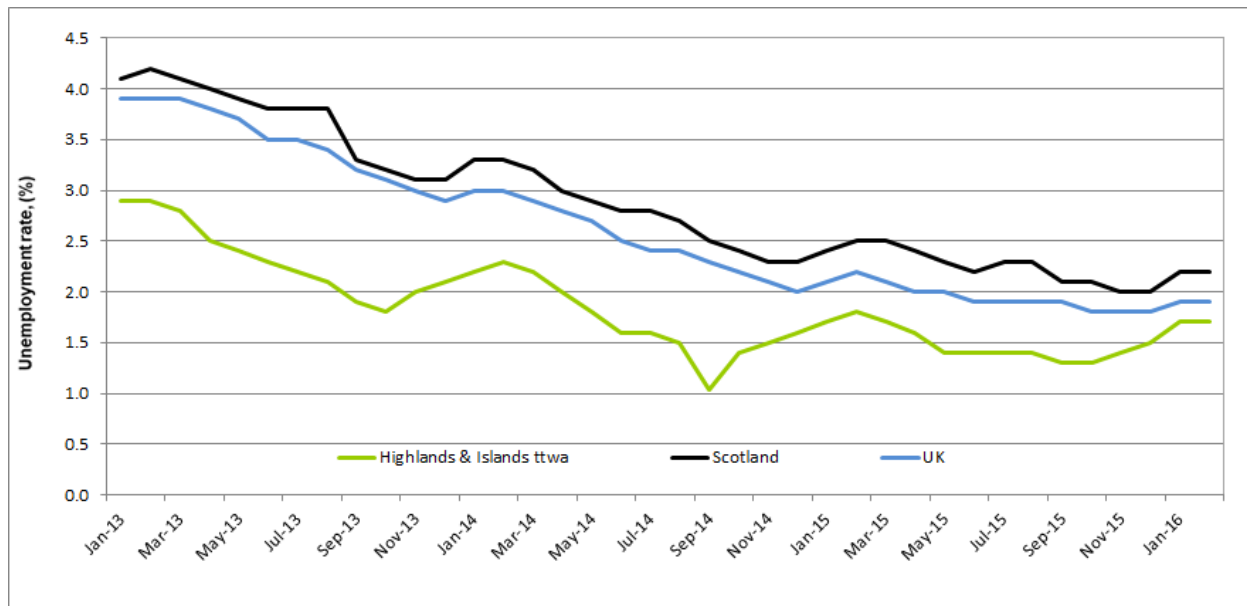


In February 2016, the average claimant count and universal credit unemployment rate for the Travel to Work Areas (TTWAs) that comprise the Highlands and Islands was **1.7%**, which was below the rates for both Scotland (**2.2%**) and the UK (**1.9%**). The region's rate was higher than that of the previous month with an increase of 0.1% and in line with that of February 2015.

The TTWAs whose rates exceeded the Scottish average in February 2016 were Dunoon & Rothesay (3.3%); Alness and Invergordon (2.7%) and Wick (2.5%). Nine TTWAs in the Highlands and Islands had rates in February 2016 lower than 1.7% – Elgin (1.6%); Inverness, Portree and Lochgilphead (all with 1.5%); Oban (1.4%); Aviemore & Grantown on Spey (1.1%); Shetland Islands (0.9%) and Mull & Islay and Orkney Islands (both with 0.8%).

The total number of people claiming unemployment benefit in the HIE area^ in February 2016 was 4,910. Out of the total, 1,005 were claimants aged 18-24.

Figure 1 - Unemployment in the Highlands and Islands, Scotland and the UK (2014-2016)



* 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 18 TTWAs in the Highlands and Islands.

Table 1 - Unemployment by TTWA

Travel to Work Area	February 2016		January 2016		February 2015		Monthly change		Annual change	
	number	rate	number	rate	number	rate	number	rate	number	rate
Dunoon & Rothesay	390	3.3	390	3.2	390	3.1	15	0.1	30	0.2
Alness & Invergordon	355	2.6	355	2.7	355	2.8	-5	-0.1	-20	-0.2
Wick	190	2.5	190	2.4	190	2.8	5	0.1	-25	-0.3
Thurso	200	2.2	200	2.2	200	2.2	5	0.0	0	0.0
Campbeltown	100	2.2	100	2.2	100	2.5	0	0.0	-15	-0.3
Eilean Siar	360	2.2	360	2.1	360	2.3	10	0.1	-25	-0.1
Golpsie & Brora	100	1.8	100	1.8	100	2.3	5	0.0	-25	-0.5
Broadford & Kyle	75	1.8	75	1.7	75	2.3	5	0.1	-20	-0.5
Fort William	235	1.8	235	1.7	235	2.0	15	0.1	-25	-0.2
Ullapool	70	1.7	70	1.6	70	1.6	5	0.1	5	0.1
Elgin	1,030	1.6	1,030	1.6	1,030	1.6	50	0.0	50	0.0
Inverness	1,120	1.5	1,120	1.4	1,120	1.4	90	0.1	50	0.1
Portree	70	1.5	70	1.4	70	2.2	5	0.1	-35	-0.7
Lochgilphead	85	1.5	85	1.4	85	1.8	5	0.1	-15	-0.3
Oban	135	1.3	135	1.4	135	1.8	-5	-0.1	-45	-0.5
Aviemore & Grantown on spey	90	1.0	90	1.0	90	1.3	10	0.0	-20	-0.3
Shetland	125	0.9	125	0.8	125	0.7	5	0.1	30	0.2
Orkney Islands	100	0.7	100	0.7	100	0.8	0	0.0	-5	-0.1
Mull & Islay	35	0.8	35	0.7	35	1.3	5	0.1	-20	-0.5
Highlands and Islands TTWA	4,865	1.7	4,865	1.6	4,865	1.7	225	0.1	-130	0.0
Scotland	77,335	2.2	77,335	2.2	77,335	2.5	2,455	0.0	-9,705	-0.3
United Kingdom	784,005	1.9	784,005	1.9	784,005	2.2	18,760	0.0	-99,865	-0.3

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

HIE Area Office	Total Unemployment		Monthly change		Annual change		Youth Unemployment (18-24)
	number	rate*	number	%	number	%	number
Innse Gall	360	2.2	10	2.9	-25	-6.5	50
Caithness and Sutherland	520	2.2	15	3.0	-45	-8.0	105
Argyll and the Islands	815	2.0	15	1.9	-80	-8.9	150
Lochaber, Skye and Wester Ross	415	1.7	30	7.8	-75	-15.3	65
Moray	975	1.6	55	6.0	45	4.8	225
Inner Moray Firth	1,595	1.6	115	7.8	25	1.6	340
Shetland	130	0.9	10	8.3	35	36.8	40
Orkney	100	0.7	0	0.0	-5	-4.8	30

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