

Scotland's Labour Market Insights

July 2024

Key Points

The Scottish Government's [Labour Market Trends](#) mainly reports on headline Office for National Statistics (ONS) Labour Force Survey estimates for Scotland.

This Scotlands Labour Market Insights report contains more detailed estimates describing those who are employed, unemployed or economically inactive as well as vacancy and business insights sources. A range of official sources are presented.

People in work

- an estimated 74.4 per cent of those in employment aged 16 and over in April 2023 to March 2024 worked full-time, while 25.6 per cent of those in employment worked part-time
- in April 2023 to March 2024, a higher proportion of men were in full-time employment than women (87.1% of men compared to 61.4% of women)
- an estimated 306,200 people were self-employed in April 2023 to March 2024
- in April 2023 to March 2024, an estimated 127,200 employees were employed on temporary contracts
- in January to December 2023, an estimated 5.9 per cent of those in employment were underemployed (those who are in employment but who want to work more hours). The joint lowest rate in the series.
- the 65 and over age group has seen the largest percentage growth in payrolled employees over the year to June 2024
- adjusted for inflation (using the [Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs \(CPIH\)](#)), real median earnings for payrolled employees have grown by 2.4 per cent over the year to June 2024

People not in work

- the majority of people aged 16 and over who are unemployed have been unemployed for less than six months
- “long-term sick or disabled” was reported as the main reason for being economically inactive in Scotland. In April 2023 to March 2024, an estimated 32.7 per cent of those people aged 16 to 64 who were inactive gave their reason for being inactive as “long-term sick or disabled”, the highest percentage in the series
- in April 2023 to March 2024, an estimated 16.5 per cent of people aged 16 to 64 who were inactive reported that they wanted to work, the lowest percentage in the April to March series

People moving into work

- Adzuna online job adverts in Scotland in the week to 12 July 2024 decreased by 1% when compared with the previous week
- ONS' Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) data for May 2024 show that an estimated 26.8% of businesses reported experiencing difficulties in recruiting employees
- No One Left Behind (NOLB) and Fair Start Scotland (FSS) are Scottish Government funded employability support services. So far, there have been a combined 132,443 starts between FSS and NOLB, with 70,513 starts for FSS from April 2018 to March 2024 and 61,930 starts for NOLB from April 2019 to March 2024

The Labour Force Survey is not a large and robust enough sample to produce reliable estimates for smaller groups of the population. There has also recently been increased volatility in Labour Force Survey estimates, further information is available in the ONS [Labour Force Survey: planned improvements and its reintroduction estimates methodology](#) article.

The ONS Annual Population Survey (APS) provides a larger sample and more robust estimates for smaller groups of the population. The data in this report is drawn from the APS unless otherwise stated. The latest published APS estimates are for April 2023 to March 2024. Estimates are obtained from a sample survey and are therefore subject to some sampling variability.

Unlike the LFS estimates, ONS Annual Population Survey (APS) estimates have not been reweighted to new population estimates.

For further information, please see the ONS [Impact of reweighting on Labour Force Survey key indicators article](#).

APS estimates remain accredited official statistics at this time. However, ONS are carrying out analysis to assess the impact of falling sample sizes on the quality of APS estimates.

Contents

Key Points	1
People in work	1
People not in work	1
People moving into work	2
People in work	5
ILO Employment rate (LFS).....	5
Full time/Part time Employment (APS)	5
Self Employment (APS).....	8
Temporary/Permanent Employment (APS)	9
Public Sector Employment.....	10
Public/Private Sector Employment (APS).....	11
Underemployment (APS).....	13
Payrolled Employees (HMRC PAYE RTI)	15
Payrolled employees by age (HMRC PAYE RTI).....	15
Median earnings for payrolled employees (HMRC PAYE RTI)	17
People not in work	18
ILO Unemployment rate (LFS)	18
Unemployment rate by length of time unemployed (APS).....	18
ILO Economic Inactivity rate (LFS)	20
Economic Inactivity rate by reasons for inactivity (APS)	20
Economically Inactive people who want to work (APS).....	22
People moving into work	23
Online Job Adverts (Adzuna).....	23
Difficulties recruiting employees (BICS)	24
Employability Support Services (NOLB and FSS).....	25
Further Labour Market Information	26
Data and Methodology	28
Where can labour market data for Scotland be accessed	29
Data sources	30
ONS Labour Force Survey	30
ONS Annual Population Survey	30
Labour Market Transformation	30
Other sources	31
HMRC RTI	31
Adzuna Online Job adverts	31

Reliability of estimates	32
Confidence Intervals	32
Statistical Significance	32
Quality Assurance.....	33
Glossary	34
Tell us what you think	36

People in work

ILO Employment rate (LFS)

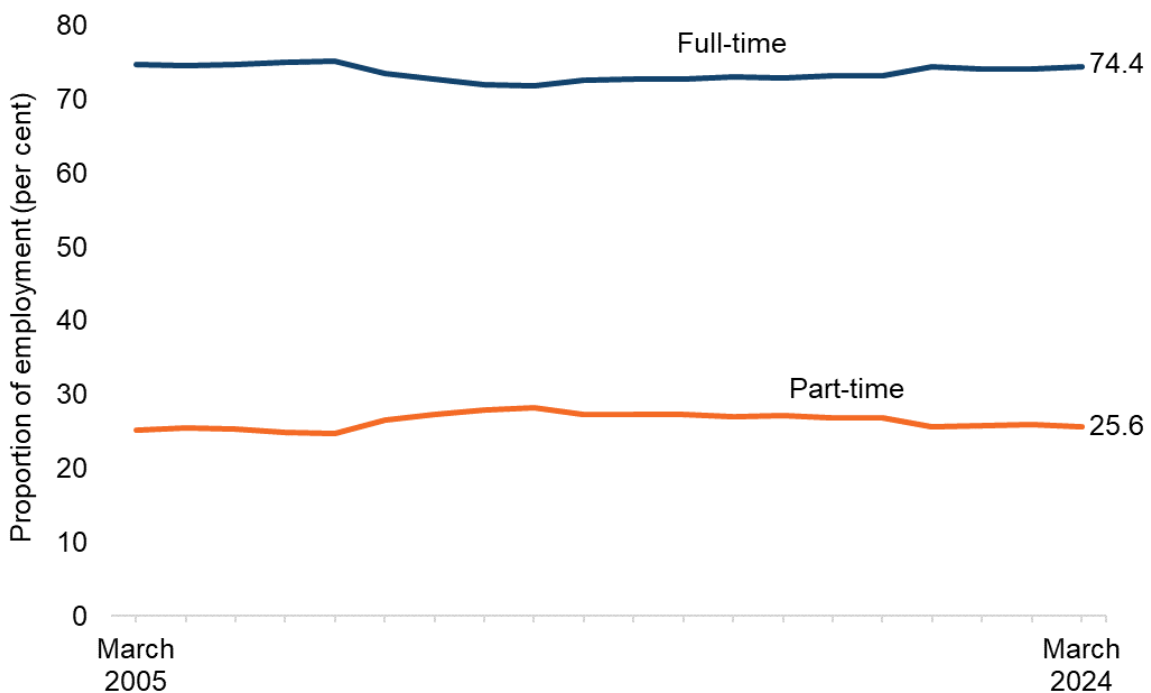
The employment rate (the proportion of people aged 16 to 64 in work) in Scotland based on the ONS Labour Force Survey was estimated at 72.9 per cent in March to May 2024. Scotland's employment rate was below the UK rate of 74.4 per cent.

Full-time/Part-time Employment (APS)

In April 2023 to March 2024, an estimated 1,968,100 people aged 16 and over were in full-time employment while 677,600 worked part-time. Since April 2004 to March 2005, full-time employment as a percentage of all employment had typically been decreasing until April 2012 to March 2013, but has increased again since then being broadly similar from April 2020-March 2021 onwards.

Figure 1: In April 2023 to March 2024, an estimated 74.4 per cent of those in employment worked full-time, while 25.6 per cent of those in employment worked part-time.

Proportion of employment for persons aged 16 years and above by work pattern, Scotland, year ending March 2005 to year ending March 2024



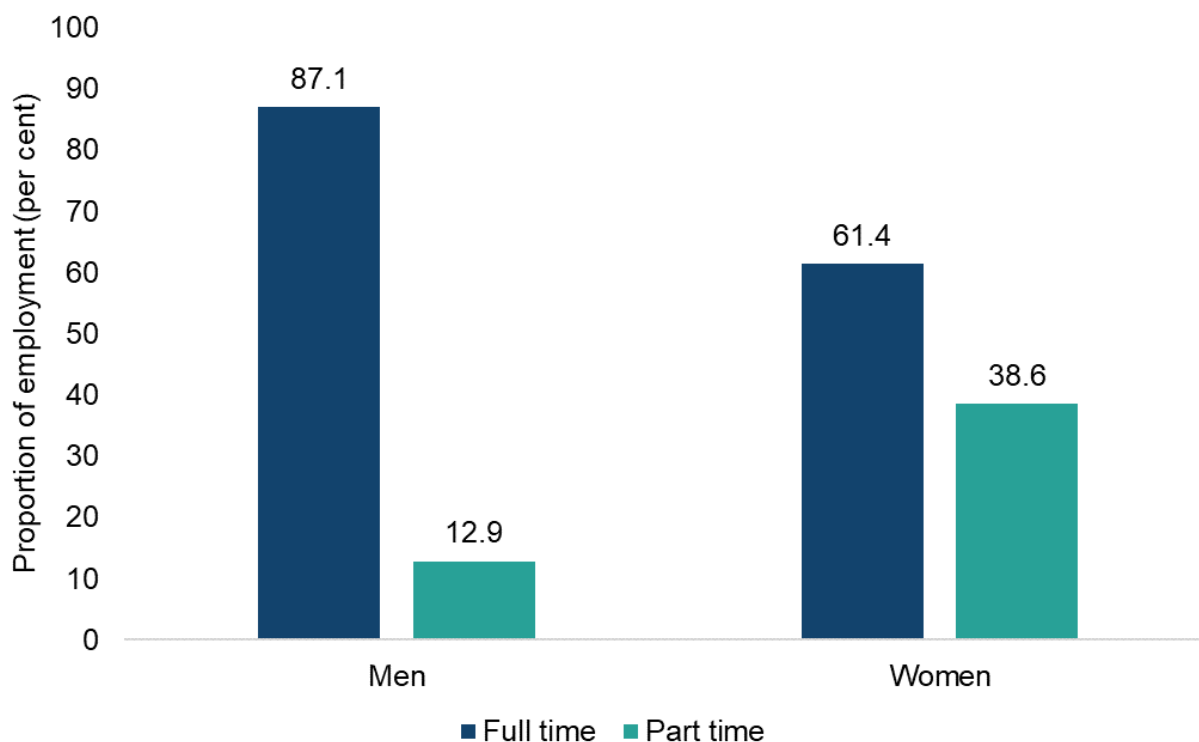
Source: Annual Population Survey, April to March datasets, ONS

Note that these percentage estimates are based on those who responded to the survey question on whether they worked full-time or part-time.

Since April 2004 to March 2005, full-time working as a percentage of all employment has decreased for men but increased for women.

Figure 2: In April 2023 to March 2024, a higher proportion of men are in full-time employment than women (87.1% of men compared to 61.4% of women). A higher proportion of women worked part-time compared to men (38.6% compared to 12.9%).

Proportion of employment for men and women aged 16 years and above by work pattern, Scotland, April 2023 to March 2024

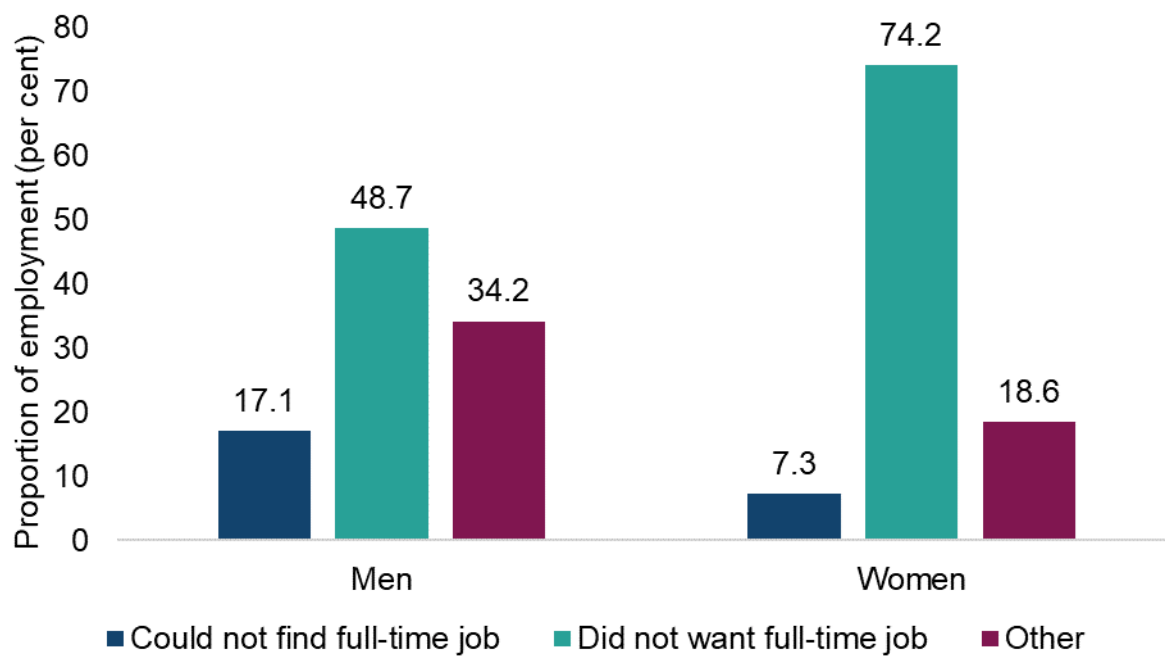


Source: Annual Population Survey, April 2023 to March 2024, ONS

Note that these percentage estimates are based on those who responded to the survey question on whether they worked full-time or part-time.

Figure 3: In April 2023 to March 2024, the most common reason given for working part-time was that respondents did not want a full-time job. This was reported by almost three quarters of women and almost half of men who worked part time.

Reasons for part-time working for men and women aged 16 years and above, Scotland, April 2023 to March 2024



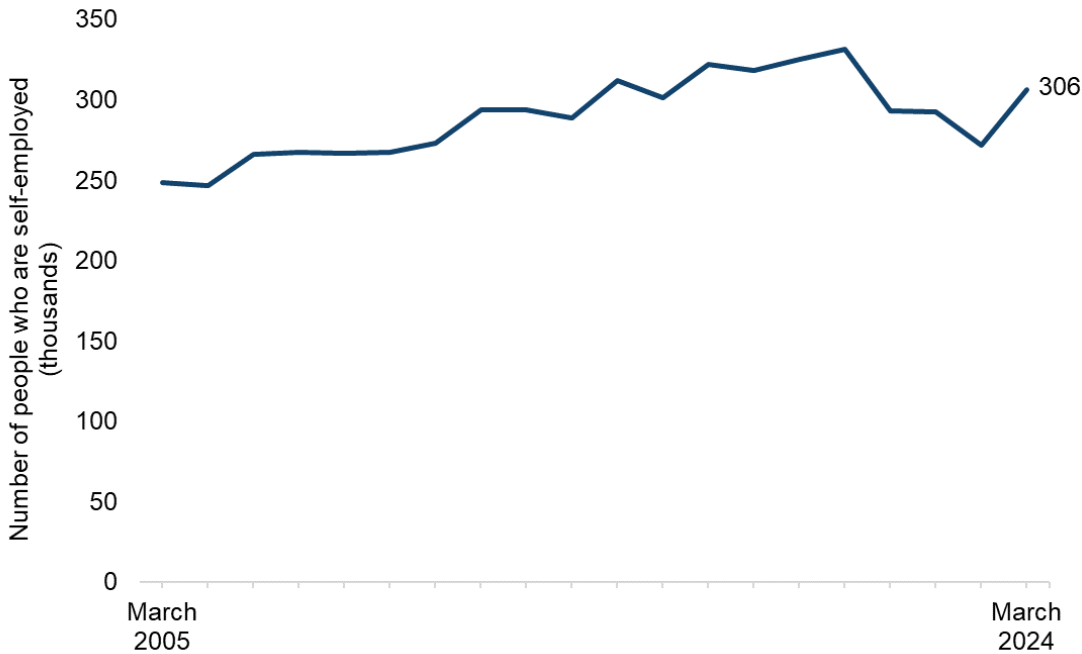
Source: Annual Population Survey, April 2023 to March 2024, ONS

Note that these percentage estimates are based on those who responded to the survey question on their reason for working part time.

Self Employment (APS)

Figure 4: In April 2023 to March 2024, an estimated 306,200 people aged 16 and over were self employed.

Self-employment levels for persons aged 16 years and above, Scotland, year ending March 2005 to year ending March 2024



Source: Annual Population Survey, April to March datasets, ONS

Although it has increased in the latest period, the number of self-employed people is estimated to have fallen since the pandemic. Scotland and the UK have both seen falls in the levels of self-employment since the pandemic.

However, as data sources rely on self-reported employment status from individuals responding to the survey, it is difficult to identify whether this reflects a genuine change in behaviour or simply a change in reporting. There are a number of factors that may have led self-employed workers to change their reported status without significant changes to their working patterns, including the introduction of the furlough scheme during the pandemic and tax changes in April 2021.

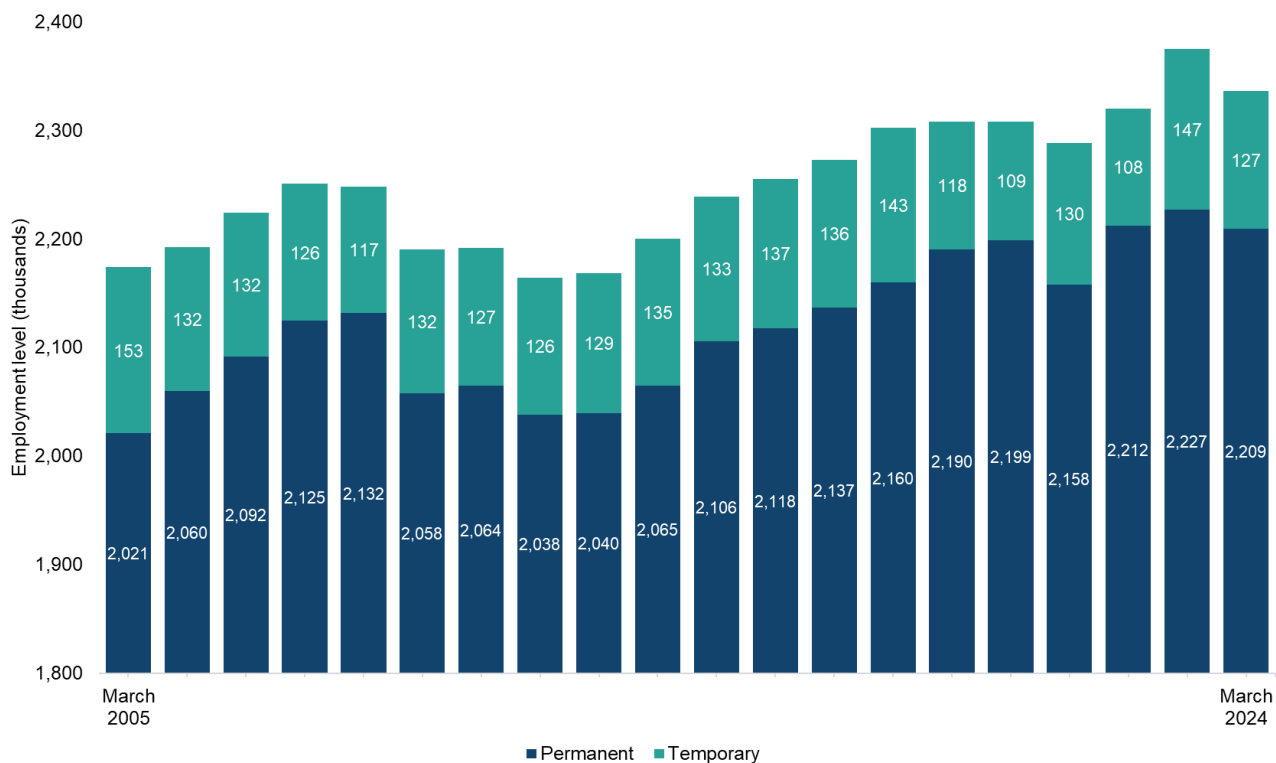
The number of people self-employed is estimated to have increased in the last year, however it remains lower than before the pandemic.

Since the start of the series consistently more men than women have reported being self-employed. In April 2023 to March 2024, an estimated 13.9% of men in employment were self-employed, compared to 9.2% of women.

Temporary/Permanent Employment (APS)

Figure 5: In April 2023 to March 2024, an estimated 127,200 employees were employed on temporary contracts.

Employee level for persons aged 16 years and above by contract type, Scotland, year ending March 2005 to year ending March 2024



Source: Annual Population Survey, April to March datasets, ONS

Public Sector Employment

An estimated 605,600 people were employed in the public sector in Scotland as of March 2024. Employment in the public sector accounts for over one fifth of total employment in Scotland (23.3%).

For further information, and the latest official estimates of public sector employment in Scotland, please visit: [Public Sector Employment in Scotland Statistics for 1st Quarter 2024 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/economic-overview-public-sector-scotland/)

The Scottish Government recently published further economic analysis on the Scottish public sector, considering how this has changed over time and how it compares to other parts of the UK and internationally:

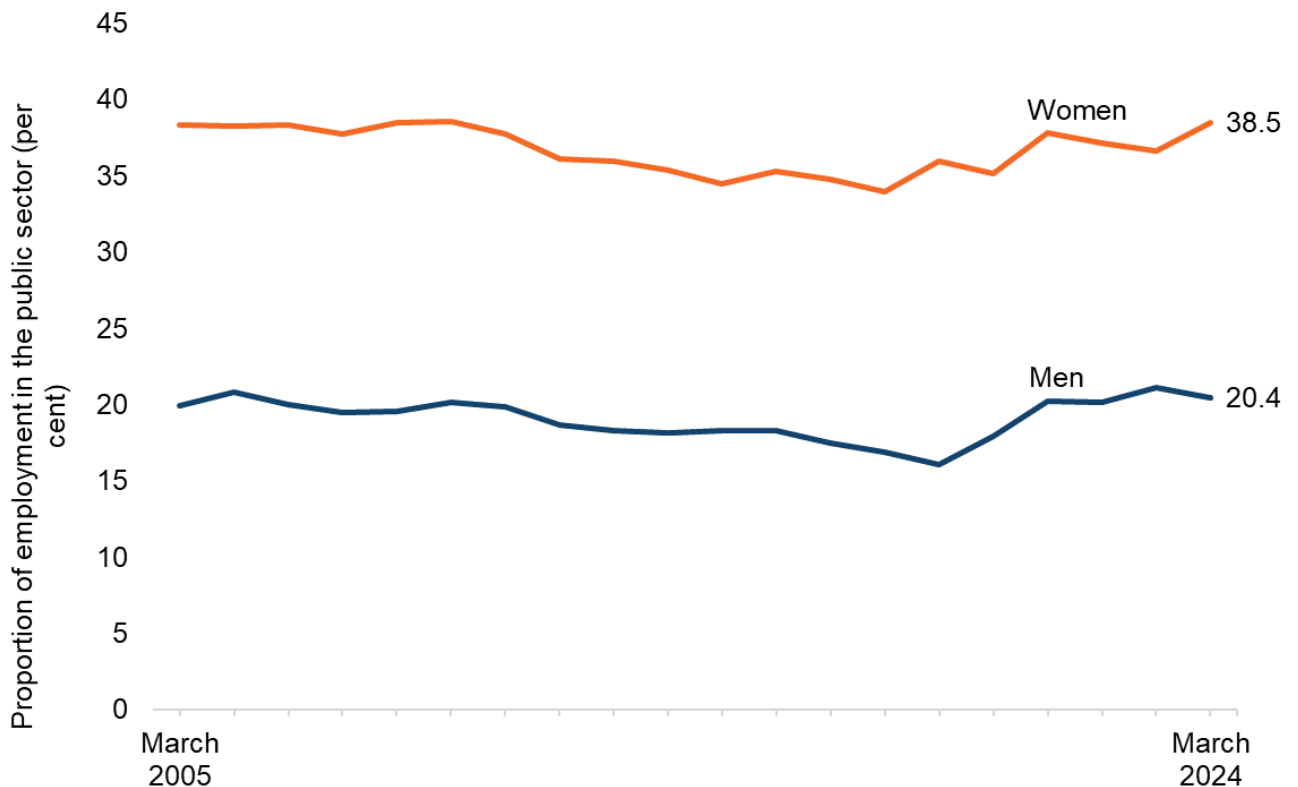
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/economic-overview-public-sector-scotland/>

Public/Private Sector Employment (APS)

Note that the APS is not the official source for estimates of public sector employment, as this tends to overestimate the level of employment in the public sector due to self-reporting. However, the APS can be used to provide estimates for the characteristics of people employed in the public sector.

Figure 6: In April 2023 to March 2024, an estimated 38.5% of women in employment were employed in the public sector, a higher proportion compared to 20.4% of men. This proportion has been consistently higher for women than men over the time series.

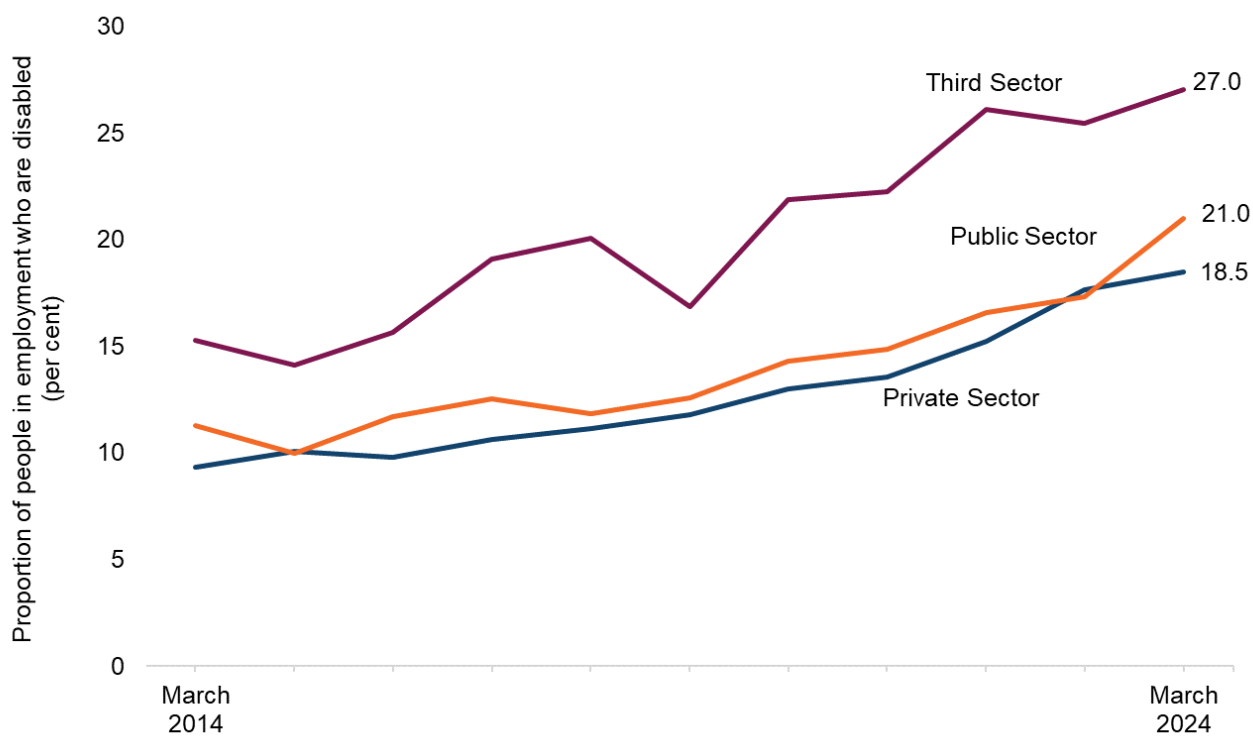
Proportion of men and women who are employed in the public sector, people aged 16 years and above, Scotland, year ending March 2005 to year ending March 2024



Source: Annual Population Survey, April to March datasets, ONS

Figure 7: In April 2023 to March 2024, an estimated 27.0% of people employed in the third sector were disabled, higher than 21.0% in the public sector, and 18.5% of those in the private sector. The proportion of people employed in all three sectors who are disabled has been generally increasing since 2014.

Proportion of people in employment who are disabled by sector, people aged 16 to 64, Scotland, year ending March 2014 to year ending March 2024



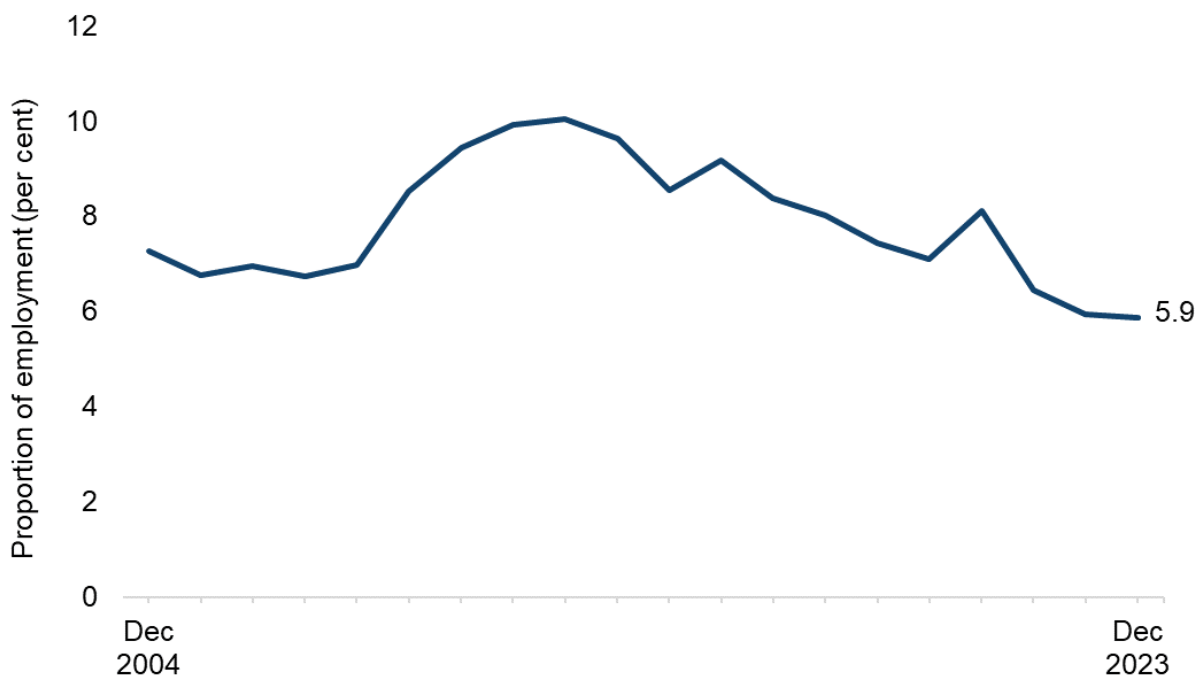
Source: Annual Population Survey, April to March datasets, ONS

Underemployment (APS)

Underemployment refers to those who are in employment but who would prefer to work more hours in their current job (at their basic rate of pay), in an additional job or in a new job with longer hours to replace their current job. This provides a measure of underutilisation of labour.

Figure 8: In January to December 2023, an estimated 5.9 per cent of those in employment were underemployed. This proportion has been generally decreasing since 2012 and is now the joint lowest in the series.

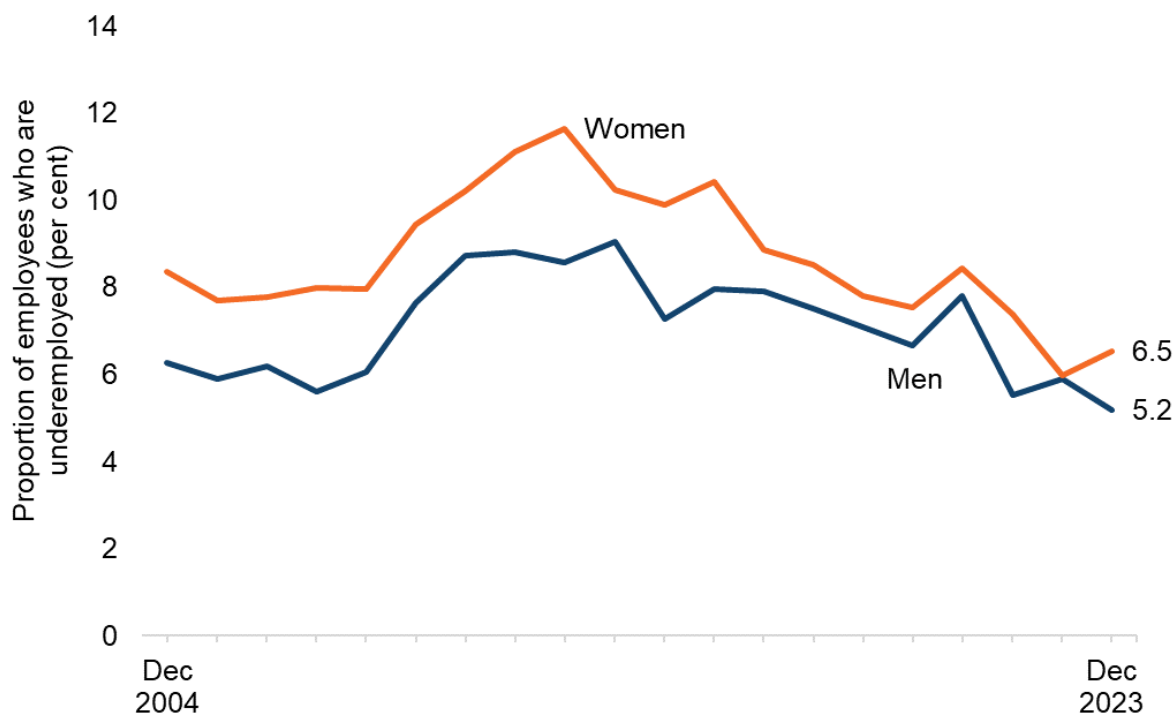
Proportion of employment for persons aged 16 years and above by underemployment status, Scotland, year ending December 2004 to year ending December 2023



Source: Annual Population Survey, January to December datasets, ONS

Figure 9: In January to December 2023, an estimated 6.5% of women were underemployed, compared to 5.2% of men. The proportion of women who are underemployed has been consistently higher than the proportion of men over time, however this gap has narrowed in recent years.

Proportion of men and women in employment who are underemployed, for persons aged 16 years and above, Scotland, year ending December 2004 to year ending December 2023



Source: Annual Population Survey, January to December datasets, ONS

Payrolled Employees (HMRC PAYE RTI)

This information is based on experimental monthly estimates of paid employees and their pay from HM Revenue and Customs' (HMRC's) Pay As You Earn (PAYE) Real Time Information (RTI) data.

Early seasonally adjusted estimates for June 2024 indicate that there were 2.47 million payrolled employees in Scotland, an increase of 0.6 per cent (14,000) compared with June 2023.

Payrolled employees by age (HMRC PAYE RTI)

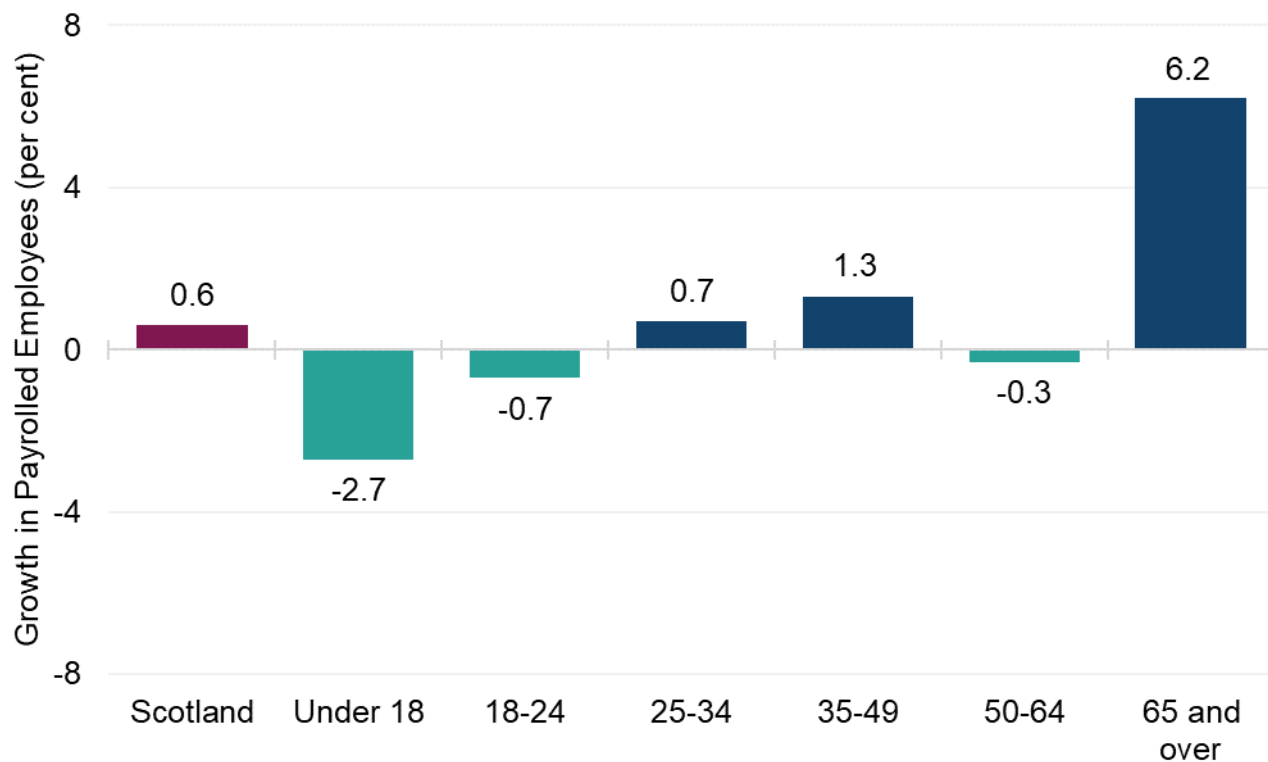
The latest available HMRC data published in July 2024 shows that payrolled employee growth varies by age.

Of the 2.47 million payrolled employees in Scotland in June 2024, the 35-49 and 50-64 age groups had the highest numbers of people employed. The under 18 age group had the lowest number of people employed.

The 65 and over age group has seen the largest percentage growth in payrolled employees over the year to June 2024. The under 18 age group has seen the largest percentage decrease over this period.

Figure 10: The 65 and over age group has seen the largest percentage increase in payrolled employees since June 2023

Annual Percentage Change in Payrolled employees by age, Scotland, June 2023 to June 2024



Source: PAYE RTI, all age groups, seasonally adjusted, HMRC

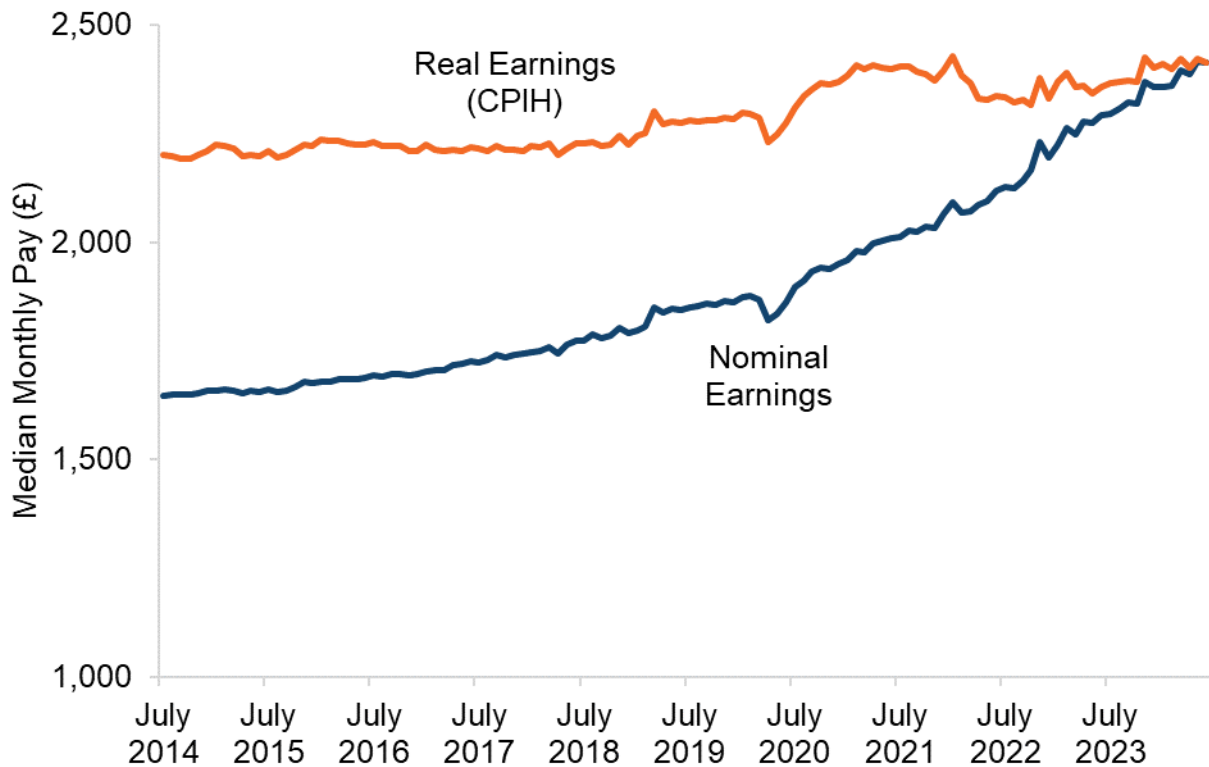
Median earnings for payrolled employees (HMRC PAYE RTI)

The latest early estimates for June 2024 indicate that median monthly pay for payrolled employees in Scotland was £2,413, an increase of 5.2 per cent compared to the same period the previous year.

Adjusted for inflation (using the [Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs \(CPIH\)](#)), real median earnings for payrolled employees have grown by 2.4 per cent over the year to June 2024.

Figure 11: Real pay for payrolled employees had remained relatively constant up until the pandemic. However, real pay in June 2024 is higher than at the start of the coronavirus pandemic

Median Real and Nominal Monthly Pay for payrolled employees, seasonally adjusted, Scotland, July 2014 to June 2024



Source: PAYE RTI, all industries, seasonally adjusted, HMRC and CPIH, ONS

People not in work

ILO Unemployment rate (LFS)

ILO Unemployment measures those who are available for and actively seeking employment.

The unemployment rate for people aged 16 years and over in Scotland based on the ONS Labour Force Survey was estimated at 4.9 per cent in March to May 2024. Scotland's unemployment rate was above the UK rate of 4.4 per cent.

Unemployment rate by length of time unemployed (APS)

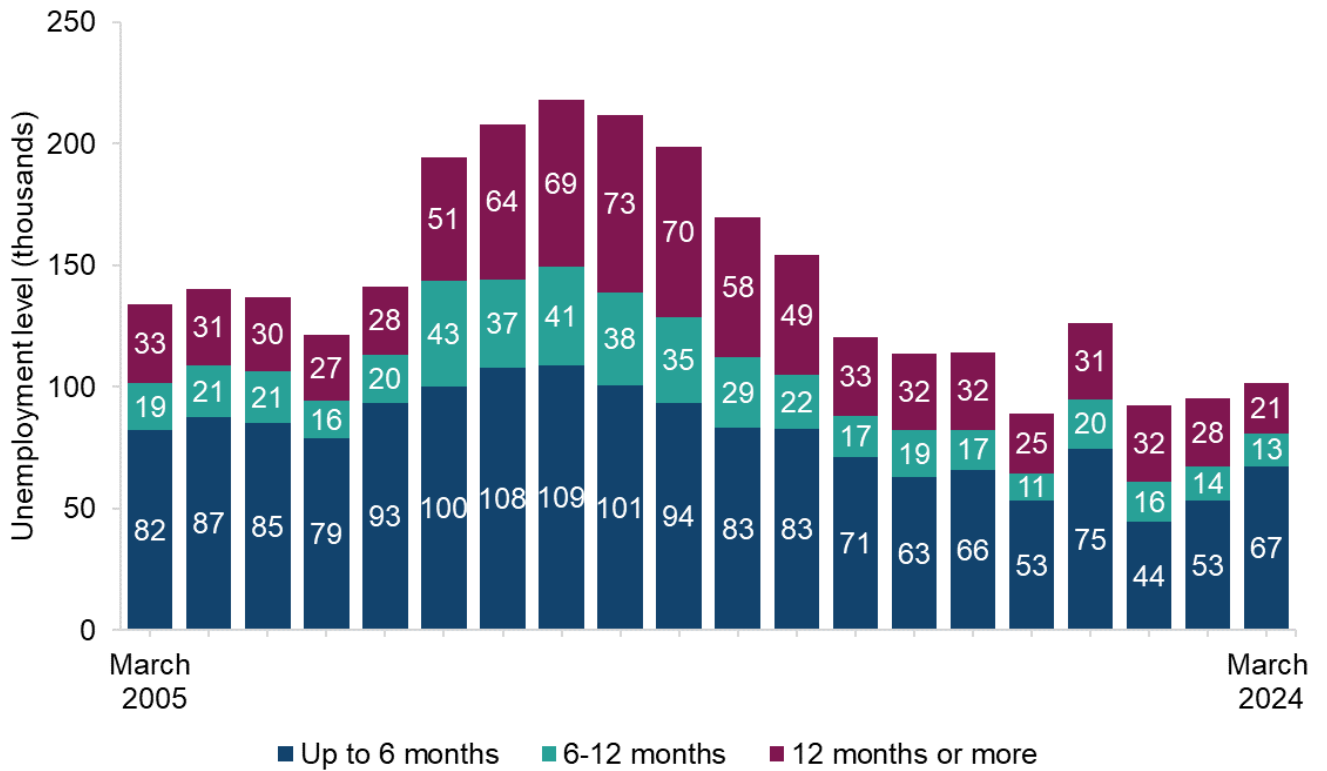
In April 2023 to March 2024, an estimated 101,400 people aged 16 and over were unemployed in Scotland.

The majority of those were unemployed for a duration of less than 6 months (66.5 per cent). This proportion decreased during the pandemic to 48.0 per cent in April 2021 to March 2022, indicating that at that time there were more people unemployed for longer durations.

Being unemployed for 12 months or more is often considered long-term unemployed. 20.3 per cent of unemployed people in April 2023 to March 2024 were estimated to be long-term unemployed.

Figure 12: The majority of people aged 16 and over who were unemployed have been unemployed for less than six months. In April 2023 to March 2024 the level unemployed for 12 months or more is the lowest in the series.

Unemployment levels for people aged 16 and over, by duration of unemployment, Scotland, year ending March 2005 to year ending March 2024



Source: Annual Population Survey, April to March datasets, ONS

ILO Economic Inactivity rate (LFS)

Economic inactivity measures those who are neither in work, available for work or actively seeking work.

The economic inactivity rate for people aged 16 to 64 years in Scotland based on the ONS Labour Force Survey was estimated at 23.3 per cent in March to May 2024. Scotland's economic inactivity rate was above the UK rate of 22.1 per cent.

Economic Inactivity rate by reasons for inactivity (APS)

In April 2023 to March 2024, an estimated 791,300 people aged 16 to 64 were economically inactive in Scotland.

“Long-term sick or disabled” was the main reason given for being inactive in Scotland. In April 2023 to March 2024, 32.7 per cent of inactive people aged 16 to 64 gave their reason for being inactive as “long-term sick or disabled”, the highest proportion in the series. This is higher than the UK proportion of 27.6 per cent.

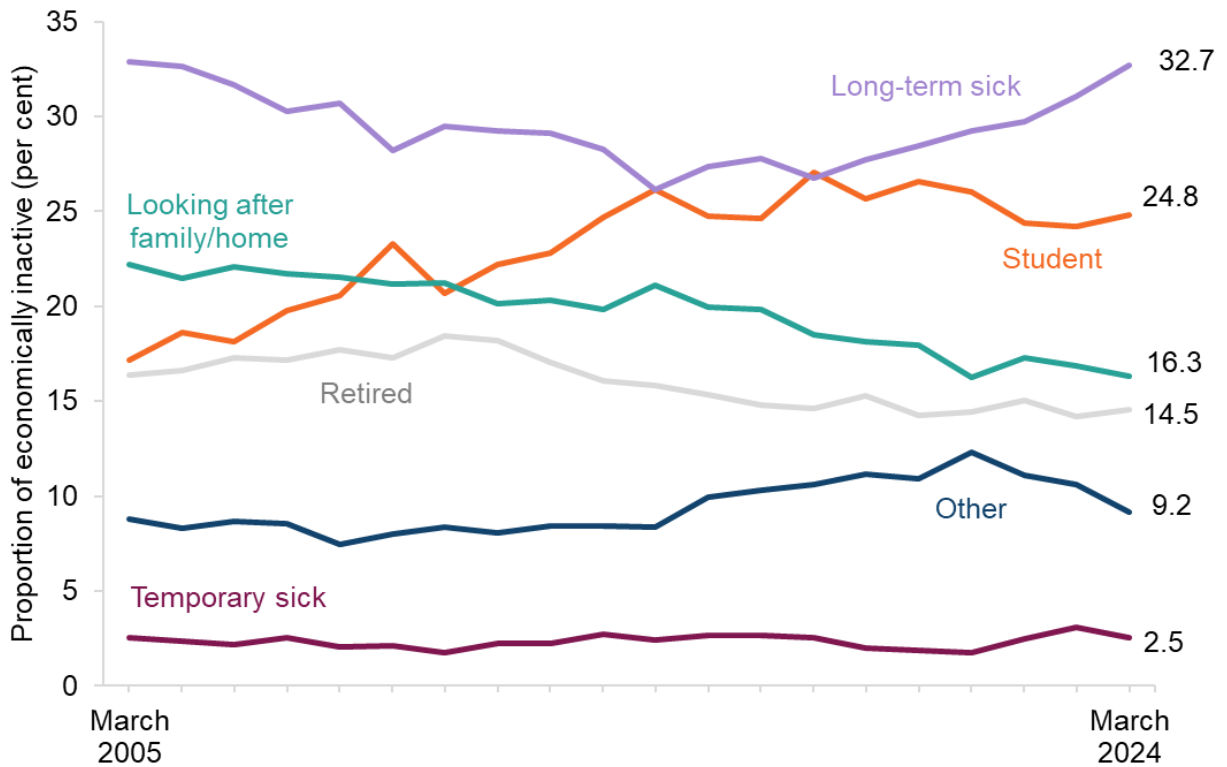
The proportions of inactive people who were long-term sick or disabled had been gradually decreasing over time. However, it has been increasing in recent years for both Scotland and the UK.

Being a student is the second most common reason for being inactive (an estimated 24.8 per cent of inactive people in April 2023 to March 2024). The proportion had been gradually increasing over time but has remained relatively constant in recent years.

“Looking after family/home” is the third most common reason reported for inactivity and has typically been decreasing over time.

Figure 13: Proportion of people aged 16 to 64 who are inactive and gave their reason for being inactive as long-term sick or disabled had generally been decreasing over time while the proportion of students had been gradually increasing. Since April 2017 to March 2018, the proportion of students was relatively constant while long-term sick or disabled had been gradually increasing

Economic Inactivity for persons aged 16 to 64 by reason for inactivity, Scotland, year ending March 2005 to year ending March 2024



Source: Annual Population Survey, April to March datasets, ONS

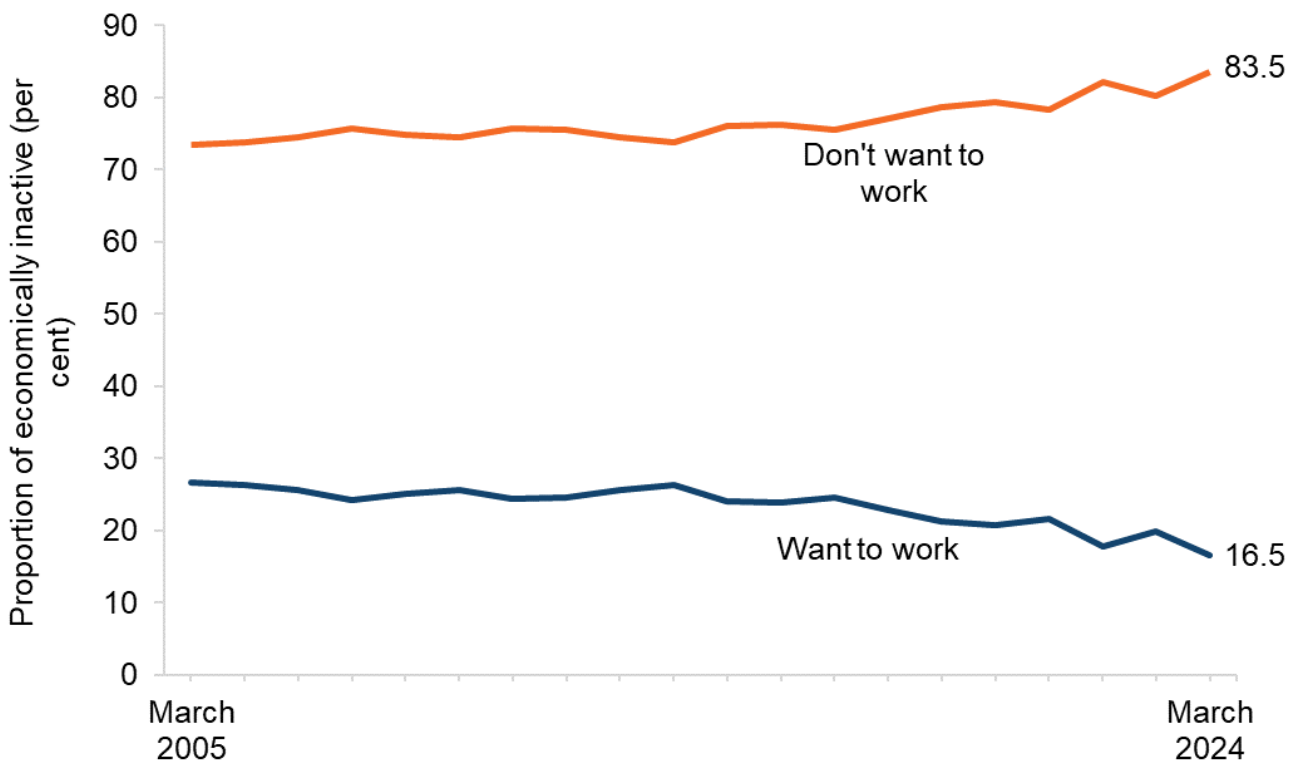
Note: 'Other' reason for being inactive includes those who are discouraged.

Economically Inactive people who want to work (APS)

The proportion of inactive people aged 16 to 64 who want to work had been relatively constant over time but has decreased in recent years. In April 2023 to March 2024, an estimated 16.5 per cent (130,700) of inactive people aged 16 to 64 reported that they wanted to work – the lowest proportion in the April to March time series.

Figure 14: Proportion of inactive people aged 16 to 64 who want to work had been relatively constant over time. However since April 2016 to March 2017, the proportion has been gradually decreasing

Economic Inactivity for persons aged 16 to 64 by whether they want to work, Scotland, year ending March 2005 to year ending March 2024



Source: Annual Population Survey, April to March datasets, ONS

People moving into work

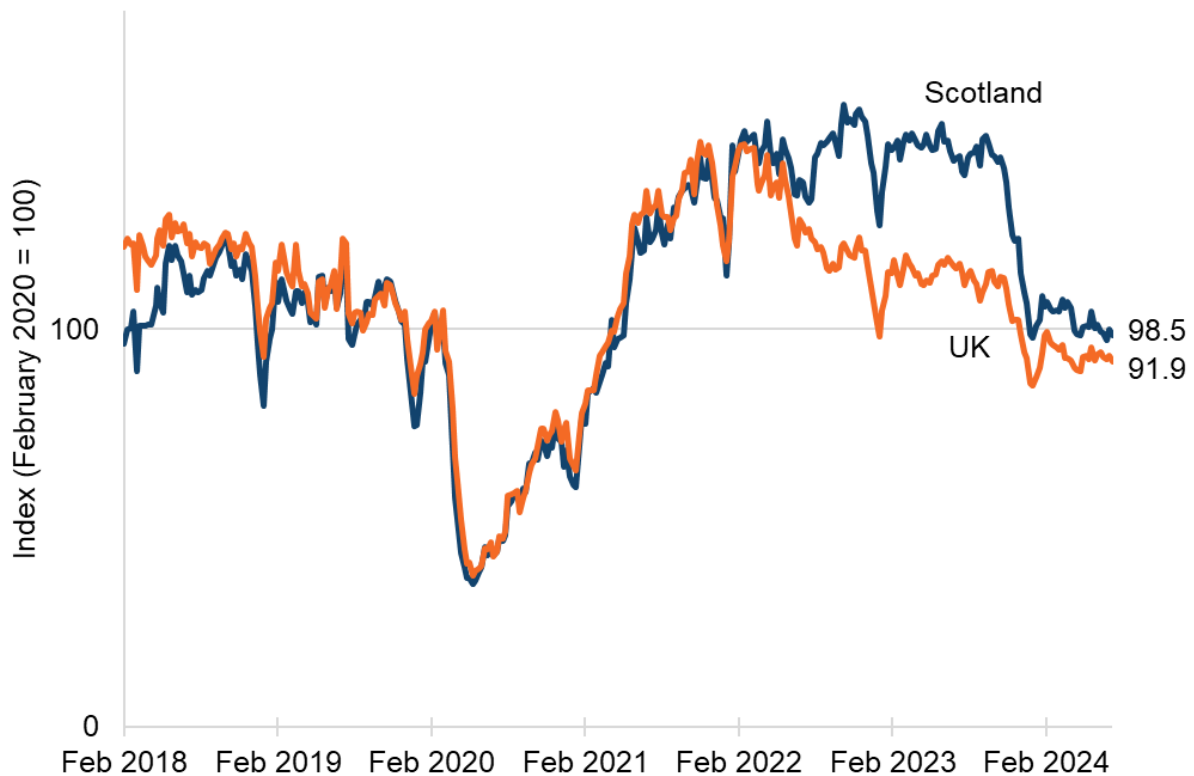
Online Job Adverts (Adzuna)

These figures are innovative estimates of online job adverts provided by Adzuna, an online job search engine. The number of job adverts over time is an indicator of the demand for labour.

The total number of online job adverts in Scotland in the week to 12 July 2024 decreased by 1% when compared with the previous week and is 31% below the level seen for the equivalent period of 2023 (week ending 14 July 2023).

Figure 15: Online job adverts in Scotland have recently returned to pre-Covid volumes

Online Job Adverts (Index February 2020 weekly average = 100), Scotland and UK, week ending 7 February 2018 to week ending 12 July 2024



Source: Adzuna weekly online job adverts, ONS

Note: Week-on-week changes in online job advert volumes are outlined as percentages, rather than as percentage-point changes. Percentage change figures quoted in the commentary will therefore not necessarily match the percentage-point changes observed in the chart and the ONS [Online job advert estimates dataset](#).

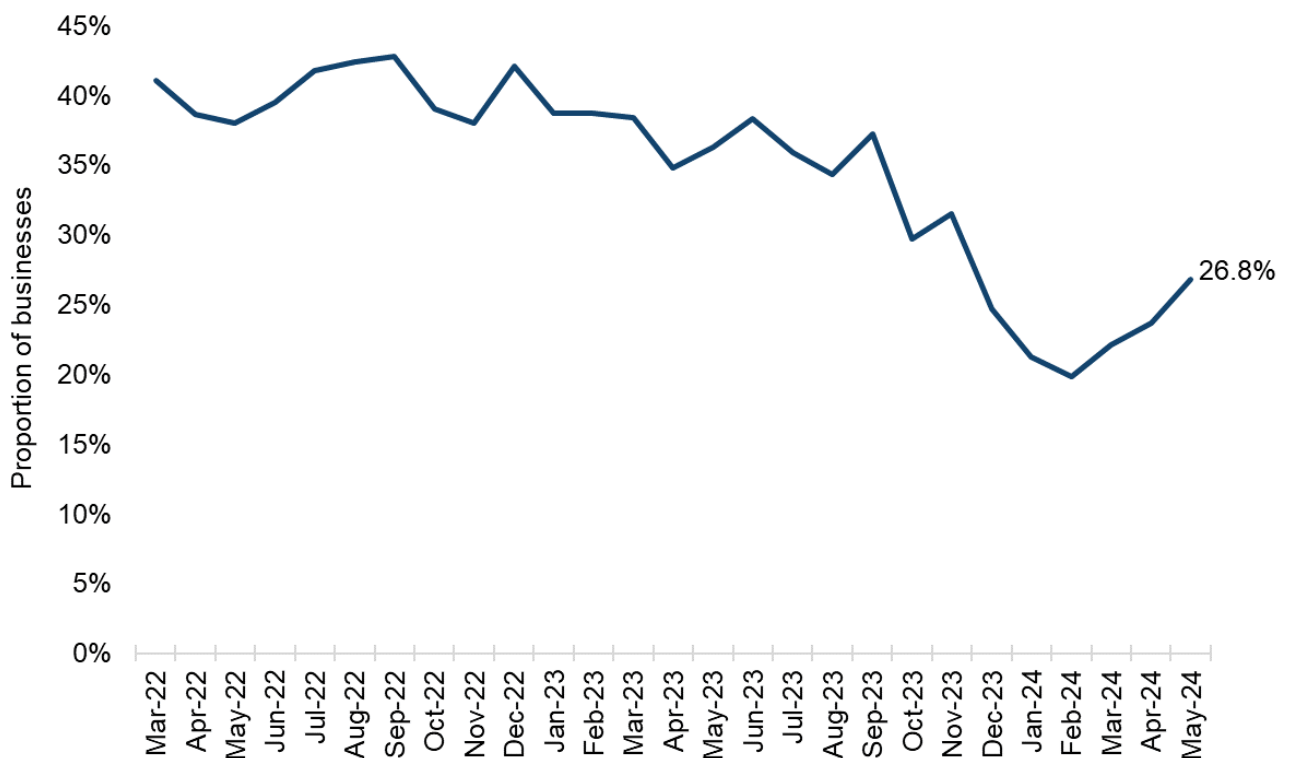
Difficulties recruiting employees (BICS)

The ONS' Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) is a voluntary fortnightly business survey, which captures businesses' responses on how their turnover, workforce, prices, trade and business resilience have been affected by current conditions.

In June 2024, businesses not permanently stopped trading were asked if they had experienced any difficulties recruiting employees in the previous calendar month (i.e. May 2024).

Figure 16: An estimated 26.8% of all businesses reported experiencing difficulties in recruiting employees in May 2024. The proportion was generally decreasing until February 2024 but has been increasing since then.

Estimated share of businesses experiencing recruitment difficulties. All businesses not permanently stopped trading, with 10+ employees and a presence in Scotland. Applicable waves 55 - 110.



Source: BICS Weighted Scotland Estimates - Wave 111 from the Scottish Government.

In the latest period, the industry sector with the highest proportion of businesses reporting recruitment difficulties was Construction (39.6%).

For further information, including breakdowns by industry sector and business sizeband, please see the latest BICS weighted Scotland estimates: [BICS weighted Scotland estimates: data to wave 111 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/data-to-wave-111)

Employability Support Services (NOLB and FSS)

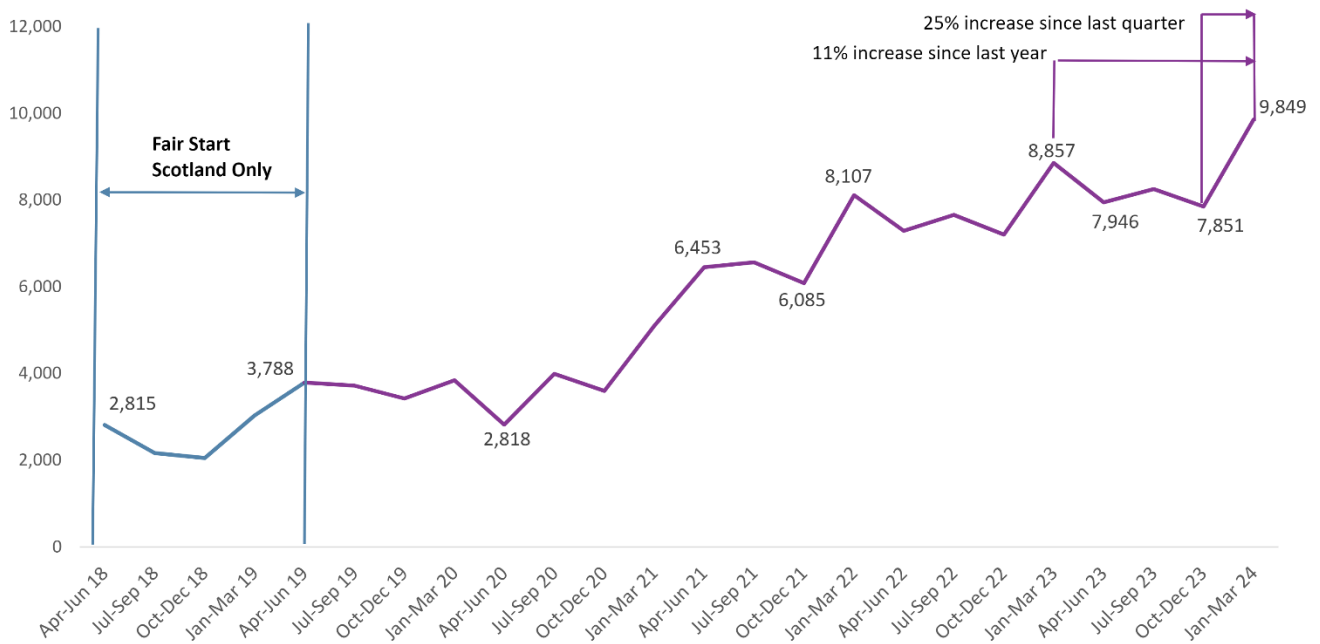
No One Left Behind (NOLB) and Fair Start Scotland (FSS) are Scottish Government funded employability support services. Both are distinct approaches to employability support, varying over time in support offered and groups targeted.

So far, there have been a combined 132,443 starts between Fair Start Scotland and No One Left Behind.

There have been 70,513 starts for FSS from April 2018 to March 2024 and 61,930 starts for NOLB from April 2019 to March 2024.

Figure 17: Starts on employability services in Scotland increased this quarter

Starts on No One Left Behind and Fair Start Scotland, by Quarter, April 2018 to March 2024



For more information, and breakdowns by equality characteristics, please see the latest Scotland's Devolved Employment Services publication: [Scotland's Devolved Employment Services: Statistical Summary July 2024 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/devolved-employment-services-statistical-summary-july-2024/pages/1-to-100.aspx)

Further Labour Market Information

We will continue to review the content of this publication for future releases, focussing on the main points of interest.

For further information relating to the labour market in Scotland, please find below a table which includes other Scottish Government labour market statistics publications.

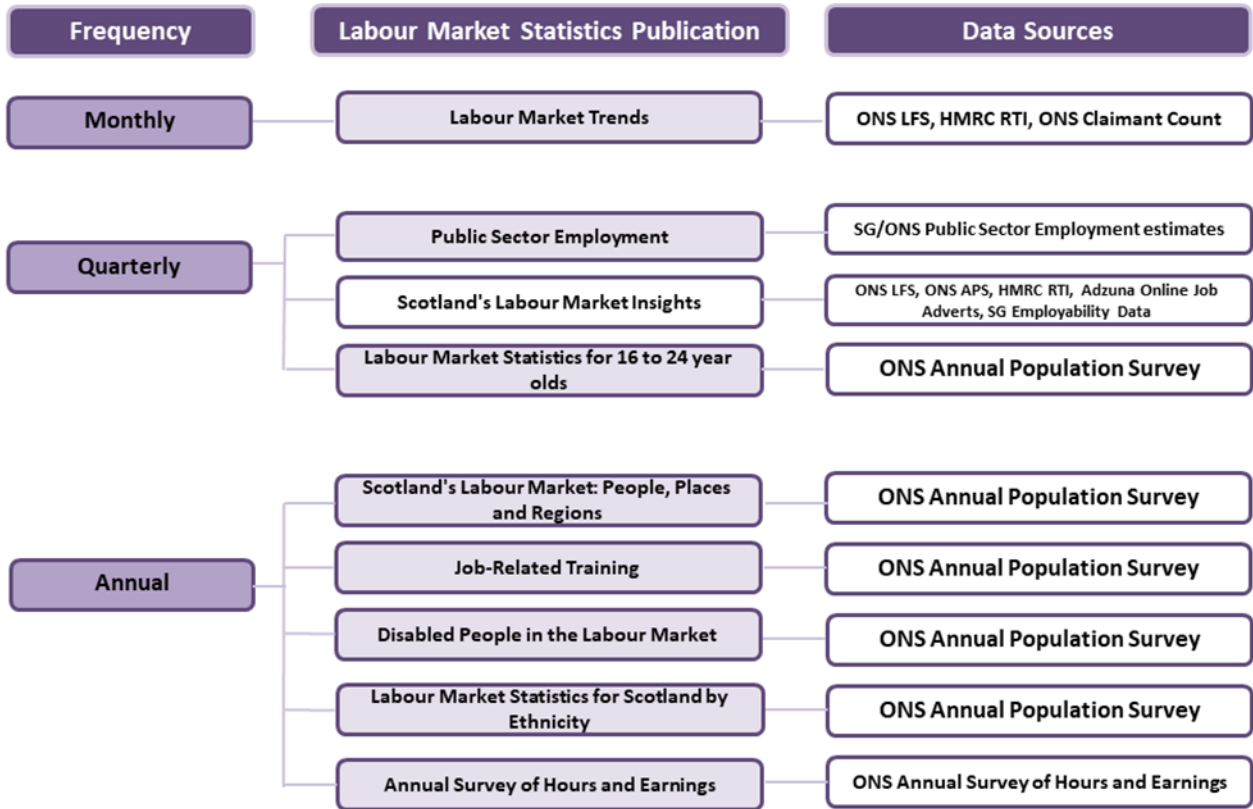
Table 1: Table of Scottish Government Labour Market Statistics publications

Publication	Link to publication
Labour Market Trends	Labour Market Trends: July 2024 - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)
Labour Market Statistics for 16 to 24 year olds: Scotland and the United Kingdom	Labour Market Statistics for 16 to 24 year olds: Scotland and the United Kingdom - April 2023 to March 2024 - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)
Labour Market Statistics for Scotland by Disability	Labour Market Statistics for Scotland by Disability: January to December 2022 - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)
Quarterly Public Sector Employment in Scotland Statistics	Public Sector Employment in Scotland Statistics for 1st Quarter 2024 - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)
Annual survey of hours and earnings	Annual survey of hours and earnings: 2023 - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

For more in depth economic analysis and insight on the Scottish economy as a whole, please see the latest Scottish Economic Bulletin: [Scottish economic bulletin: May 2024 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

Figure 18: Scottish Government Labour Market Statistics publications

Inforgraphic showing Scottish Government Labour Market Statistics publications, frequency of each release and sources of data



Data and Methodology

Further to the [Labour Market Trends publication](#) that was released on 18 July 2024, this publication provides more detailed trends and analysis for topics of interest from a wider range of labour market data sources for Scotland. Trends are shown for Scotland with some comparisons provided with the UK.

Figure 19: Measures and data sources presented in this publication

Infographic showing measures and data sources included in this publication for people in work, people not in work and people moving into work.



Note that the majority of participants receiving employment support were unemployed or inactive before joining No One Left Behind, however a small proportion were employed when starting.

The statistics in this release are Accredited Official Statistics or Official Statistics in Development. Information on the data sources is given in the [Data sources](#) section.

Where can labour market data for Scotland be accessed

The data contained in this release can be obtained from the following sources:

Table 2: Table of data sources and where the data can be accessed

Data Source	Where data can be accessed
ONS Regional Labour Market publication	Labour market in the regions of the UK Statistical bulletins - Office for National Statistics
Quarterly ONS Annual Population Survey	Regional labour market: headline indicators for Scotland - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)
Monthly HMRC Pay As You Earn (PAYE) Real Time Information (RTI) – Payrolled employees and median pay	Earnings and employment from Pay As You Earn Real Time Information, UK Statistical bulletins - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)
Weekly Adzuna Online Job Adverts	Online job advert estimates - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)

Further labour market information for Scotland from the ONS Annual Population Survey is also published on [Nomis](#)

Data sources

ONS have published a [Comparison of labour market data sources methodology](#) document which compares data sources and discusses some of the main differences.

ONS Labour Force Survey

The Labour Force Survey is a survey of UK households collected and published by the Office for National Statistics. Information are obtained from a sample survey and are therefore subject to some error. LFS estimates are currently badged as official statistics in development until further review.

ONS Annual Population Survey

The APS combines results from the ONS Labour Force Survey (LFS) with the English, Welsh and Scottish LFS boosts. This provides a larger annual sample of households. Compared with the quarterly LFS, the annual data is statistically more robust. Estimates for local areas and smaller populations (including those aged 16 to 24 years) are more accurate as a result.

The APS is the Accredited Official Statistics source for labour market indicators by region and smaller groups of the population.

The population totals used for the latest APS estimates use projected growth rates from Real Time Information data for UK, EU and non-EU populations based on 2021 patterns. The total population used for the APS therefore does not take into account any changes in migration, birth rates, death rates, and so on, since June 2021, so level estimates may be under- or over-estimating the true values and should be used with caution. Estimates of rates will, however, be robust.

ONS Annual Population Survey (APS) estimates have not been reweighted to the new population estimates used for the LFS. Consequently, all APS estimates remain weighted to the previous population totals, which will be inconsistent with those used for ONS Labour Force Survey (LFS) in the latest periods.

APS estimates remain accredited official statistics at this time. However, ONS are carrying out analysis to assess the impact of falling sample sizes on the quality of APS estimates.

Labour Market Transformation

On 2 November 2023, ONS published an article on the [Labour Force Survey: planned improvements and its reintroduction](#). The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has been facing the challenge of falling response rates for household surveys, as have other comparable countries. ONS have therefore developed a comprehensive plan to address these concerns and to re-introduce the Labour

Force Survey. The Annual Population Survey is partly composed of Labour Force Survey estimates.

ONS are transforming the LFS. They are publishing [Labour market transformation articles](#) providing updates on the transformation of labour market statistics.

ONS also welcome any feedback on this latest update and their plans. Please email them at labour.market.transformation@ons.gov.uk to tell them what you think.

Scottish Government are stakeholders in the transformation of the labour force survey. To provide any feedback on labour market statistics for Scotland please feedback to LMStats@gov.scot

Other sources

This publication also contains HMRC PAYE Real Time Information (RTI) on median monthly earnings and payrolled employees. These are classed as Official Statistics in Development.

HMRC RTI

This release covers people paid through the HMRC's Pay As You Earn (PAYE) system where their pay is reported through the Real Time Information (RTI) system.

Information presented in this release are experimental monthly estimates of the number of payrolled employees and their median earnings. It includes UK and geographical regions (NUTS1) early estimates of payrolled employment and median pay for the most recent month.

Statistics in this release are based on people who are employed in at least one job paid through HMRC's PAYE system and the monthly estimates reflect the average for each day of the calendar month.

The publication and background information can be accessed on the [ONS website](#).

Adzuna Online Job adverts

Adzuna is an online job search engine who collate information from thousands of different sources in the UK. These range from direct employers' websites to recruitment software providers to traditional job boards thus providing a comprehensive view of current online job adverts. Adzuna is working in partnership with ONS and have made data available for analysis including online advert job descriptions, job titles, job locations, job categories and salary information. The data provided are a point-in-time estimate of all job adverts indexed in Adzuna's job search engine during the point of data extraction. For more information see:

[Online job advert estimates publication, ONS](#)

Reliability of estimates

Estimates from the ONS Annual Population Survey for April 2004 to March 2005 through to April 2023 to March 2024 are presented. For the latest time period, the sample size is around 8,300 households in Scotland.

The ONS Labour Force Survey (LFS) and Annual Population Survey (APS) are sample surveys. As such, these estimates are subject to an associated sampling error that decreases as the sample size increases. It is the nature of sampling variability that the smaller a group is the (proportionately) less precise an estimate is. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) have published a detailed guidance note on this. Shading is one method used by ONS to indicate where estimates should be used with caution. The Accredited Official Statistics marking for the APS reflects the larger sample size for headline estimates of Labour Market indicators for smaller groups of the population for Scotland.

Employees who were furloughed between April 2020 and the end of September 2021 were classed as employed, but temporarily away from work. This is consistent with labour market definitions [outlined by ONS](#).

Confidence Intervals

Confidence limits can be used to assess the range of values that the true value lies between. 95 per cent confidence intervals for rates are included in all tables and charts.

What does the 95 per cent confidence limit mean?

If, for example, we have an APS estimate and confidence limit of 63 per cent \pm 0.27, this means that 19 times out of 20 we would expect the true rate to lie between 62.73 per cent and 63.27 per cent. Only in exceptional circumstances (1 in 20 times) would we expect the true rate to be outside the confidence interval around the APS estimate. Thus the smaller the confidence limits, the more reliable the estimate is.

The confidence limits use a design factor of 1, which may not be likely in some cases but given the lack of further information an average design factor of 1 is assumed to be reasonable. Further information on estimating confidence intervals can be found in the [LFS user guidance](#).

Statistical Significance

Statistical significance is based on 95 per cent Confidence Intervals. Statistical significance means that the change was large enough that it is unlikely to have resulted only from the variable nature of the sample.

Quality Assurance

Annual Population Survey microdata is collected and produced by the ONS. Scottish Government statisticians receive early access to perform quality assurance checks.

When producing estimates for this publication, Scottish Government statisticians conduct in-depth quality assurance.

These checks include:

- analysis of the sample size obtained in the collection process
- production of estimates from the microdata using statistical software and relevant coding
- cross checking of coding between team members

Further checks relate to:

- crosschecking historical time series data with previously published results
- benchmarking the results against other relevant data sources

Glossary

Economically active: The population who are either in employment or unemployed.

Economically inactive: People not in employment and who do not meet the criteria for unemployment. This group includes:

- those who want a job but who have not been seeking work in the last 4 weeks
- those who want a job and are seeking work but not available to start
- those who do not want a job

For example, students not working or seeking work and those in retirement.

Employment: There are two main ways of looking at employment: the number of people with jobs or the number of jobs. These two concepts represent different things as one person can have more than one job. The number of people in employment is measured via the Labour Force Survey and consist of those aged 16 and over. Employment measures the number of people who did at least one hour of paid work or had a job they were temporarily away from. People who do unpaid work in a family business and people on Government-supported training and employment programs are also included. This is in accordance with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) definition.

Unemployment: The ILO definition of unemployment covers people who are 16 years and over:

- without a job, have been actively seeking work in the past four weeks and are available to start work in the next fortnight

or

- out of work, have accepted a job and are waiting to start it in the next two weeks

Employment rate: The proportion of people aged between 16 and 64 years who are in employment.

Unemployment rate: The proportion of economically active people aged 16 and over who are employed.

Economic inactivity rate: The number of economically inactive people expressed as a percentage of the relevant population.

Sex: Sex is self-reported by respondents participating in the Annual Population Survey (APS). No documentation is asked for by the interviewer or provided by the respondent. Hence, analysis is based on 'sex' rather than 'gender'.

Disability: From 2014, the definition of disability is based on the 2010 Equality Act definition. This harmonised definition is based on self-reported health conditions. A condition will have lasted 12 months or more and have a substantial impact on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. The 2010 Equality Act superseded the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995, for Great Britain but not Northern Ireland. The DDA was the basis of the published APS estimates prior to 2013.

Underemployment refers to those who are in work but who would prefer to work more hours for the same rate of pay and provides a measure of underutilisation of labour.

Median earnings: The median measures the amount earned by the average employee, i.e. the level of earnings at which half the population are above and half the population are below.

Rates: Rates represent the proportion of the population or subgroup with a certain characteristic. They allow changes in the labour market to be interpreted in a wider context by accounting for changes in the population or the number of people who are economically active. Rates can be calculated for different age groups.

For headline employment, economic activity and economic inactivity, the reference population is those aged 16 to 64. For unemployment, the reference population is the active population aged 16 and over. Thus, people aged 65 and over who continue to be economically active are included in the base while those who are economically inactive will not.

Percentage point change: Percentage points are used when comparing two percentages. The abbreviation is pp. For example, if a rate was 10% and it increased to 15%, then it increased by 5 percentage points.

Tell us what you think

We are always interested to hear from our users about how our statistics are used, and how they can be improved.

Feedback survey

We'd appreciate it if you would complete our short [feedback survey](#) on this publication.

Enquiries

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