










# FIFE LABOUR MARKET UPDATE

## OCTOBER 2023

This monthly update reports on the number of people in Fife claiming out-of-work benefits ([the claimant count and claimant rate](#)). It also provides data on the area's latest unemployment rate (people without a job but who are seeking work) and economic inactivity rate (people who are neither working nor seeking work). All data shown are provisional and subject to revision.

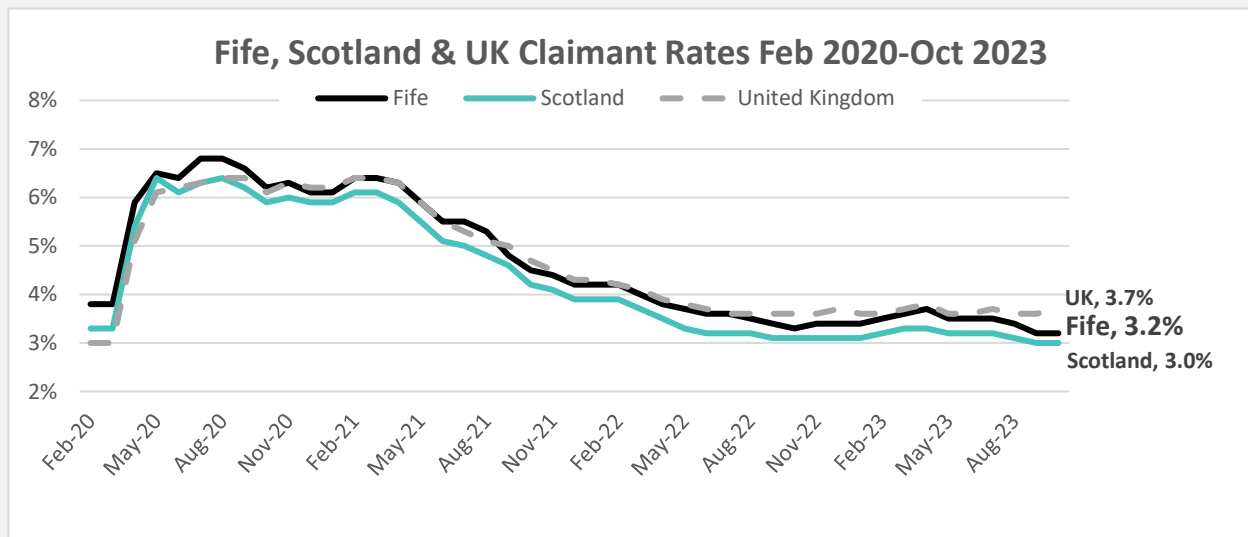
### 1.1 CLAIMANT RATE

% of working age (16-64) residents claiming out-of-work benefits (Jobseeker's Allowance or Universal Credit)

October 2023	Claimant Rate	Monthly Change	Annual Change	Change Feb 2020-Oct 2023
Fife	3.2%	0.0 	-0.1 	-0.6 
Scotland	3.0%	0.0 	-0.1 	-0.3 
United Kingdom	3.7%	+0.1 	+0.1 	+0.7 

Source: ONS Claimant Count. The changes shown represent the difference in percentage points between this month's claimant rate and the rate for the previous periods.

In October, **Fife's claimant rate remained unchanged** while the estimated number of people claiming out-of-work benefits fell slightly from 7,460 to 7,400. Over the same period, while the Scottish claimant rate also remained unchanged, the UK rate rose. Fife's October claimant rate was 0.1 percentage points lower than a year ago in October 2022 (3.3%), and 0.6 percentage points lower than its pre-pandemic February 2020 rate (3.8%).



Source: ONS Claimant Count

## 1.2 UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

% of economically active residents aged over 16 who are without a job but are actively seeking or waiting to start a job

	Unemployment Rate July 22 - June 23	Annual Change (2021/22-2022/23)		Change 2019/20 - 2022/23	
<b>Fife</b>	<b>3.4%</b>	<b>-0.5</b>	<b>↓</b>	<b>-0.6</b>	<b>↓</b>
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>-0.2</b>	<b>↓</b>	<b>-0.1</b>	<b>↓</b>
<b>United Kingdom</b>	<b>3.7%</b>	<b>-0.1</b>	<b>↓</b>	<b>-0.2</b>	<b>↓</b>

Source: ONS Annual Population Survey (the Fife unemployment rate is a model-based estimate). The changes shown represent the difference in percentage points between the latest rate and the rates for previous periods.

In the 12 months to June 2023, Fife's unemployment rate fell to a new record low (3.4%). An estimated 6,100 people aged 16 and over were unemployed, 900 fewer than the previous period (Apr 2022-Mar 2023). In the same period, Fife's employment rate increased from 74.1% to 76.2% - a record high and a higher rate than that for Scotland as a whole (74.8%).

## 1.3 ECONOMIC INACTIVITY

% of working age (16-64) residents who are neither working nor seeking or available to work

	Economic Inactivity Rate July 22 – June 23	Annual Change (2021/22 – 2022/23)		Change 2019/20 – 2022/23	
<b>Fife</b>	<b>21.0%</b>	<b>-5.9</b>	<b>↓</b>	<b>-2.9</b>	<b>↓</b>
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>22.6%</b>	<b>-0.3</b>	<b>↓</b>	<b>-0.5</b>	<b>↓</b>
<b>United Kingdom</b>	<b>21.5%</b>	<b>-0.1</b>	<b>↓</b>	<b>+0.6</b>	<b>↑</b>

Source: ONS Annual Population Survey. The changes shown represent the difference in percentage points between the latest inactivity rate and the rates for previous periods.

Around 47,000 people or 21.0% of Fife's working age population were 'economically inactive' in the year ending June 2023. This is less than the record high of 60,900 people (26.9%) economically inactive a year ago (the year ended June 2022) and is **lower than prior to the Covid pandemic three years ago**. Long term ill-health was the reason given for not being in employment or seeking work by 32% of those who were economically inactive in Fife (an estimated 15,100 people). **An estimated 6,100 people – 13.1% of those who are economically inactive - want a job**. This is a significantly fewer number of people than a year ago when an estimated 11,700 or 19.2% of economically inactive people wanted a job.

## 2.0 PROFILE OF FIFE'S OUT-OF-WORK BENEFIT CLAIMANTS

### 2.1 Breakdown by Type of Claimant

The number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance or Universal Credit who are required to seek work

October 2023	Claimant Rate	Claimant Count	Claimant Count - monthly change		Claimant Count - annual change	
People on Universal Credit who are searching for work	3.0%	6,934	-63	↓	-218	↓
Jobseeker's Allowance claimants	0.2%	466	+4	↑	-126	↓

Source: Department for Work & Pensions; ONS Jobseeker's Allowance

Note: claimant count data may not precisely add to the sum of the number of people claiming JSA and the number of people claiming Universal Credit required to seek work due to independent rounding.

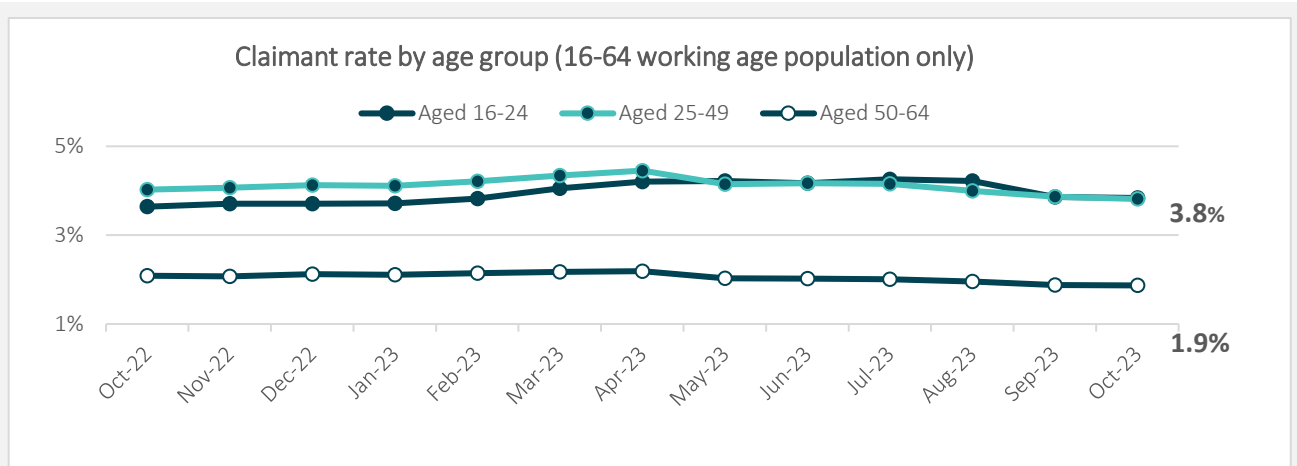
Over 60 fewer people claimed Universal Credit while searching for work in Fife compared with the previous month and 218 fewer than a year ago in October 2022. There were 4 more JSA claimants compared with the previous month, but 126 fewer than in October 2022.

### 2.2 Breakdown by Age

October 2023	Claimant Rate	Claimant Count	Claimant Count - monthly change		Claimant Count - annual change	
16-24 year olds claiming benefits	3.8%	1,490	-10	↓	+75	↑
25-49 year olds claiming benefits	3.8%	4,270	-55	↓	-235	↓
50-64 year olds claiming benefits	1.9%	1,510	-10	↓	-175	↓
65+ year olds claiming benefits	0.2%	130	+10	↑	-10	↓

Source: ONS Claimant Count

Claimant numbers fell in all age groups apart from the over-65s. The 16-24 year old age group was the only group where the number of claimants was higher than a year ago in October 2022.



Source: ONS Claimant Count

## 2.3 Breakdown by Gender

October 2023	Claimant Rate	Claimant Count	Claimant Count - monthly change		Claimant Count - annual change	
Female claimants	2.5%	2,950	-15	↓	-15	↓
Male claimants	3.9%	4,450	-45	↓	-330	↓

Source: ONS Claimant Count

The number of women claiming out-of-work benefits fell for a third month (after increasing in June and July) and is now lower than the number of female claimants a year ago.

Although the number of men claiming out-of-work benefits has consistently fallen since April 2023, the male claimant rate (3.9%) still remains significantly higher than the female rate (2.5%).

## 2.4 Breakdown by Fife's Local Committee Areas

In this areal breakdown, the monthly and annual change is given for the claimant count and rate for each of Fife Council's seven [Local Area Committees](#). For the claimant rate, the change represents the difference in percentage points between the previous and current claimant rate.

October 2023	Claimant Rate	Monthly change	Annual change	Claimant Count	Monthly change	Annual change
Cowdenbeath	4.1%	+0.1 ↑	0.0 →	1,055	+15 ↑	-5 ↓
Dunfermline	2.6%	-0.1 ↓	-0.3 ↓	975	-20 ↓	-85 ↓
Glenrothes	3.2%	+0.1 ↑	0.0 →	965	+15 ↑	-20 ↓
Kirkcaldy	5.0%	-0.1 ↓	-0.2 ↓	1,845	-30 ↓	-65 ↓
Levenmouth	4.9%	-0.1 ↓	-0.2 ↓	1,110	-15 ↓	-35 ↓
North East Fife	1.5%	0.0 →	-0.1 ↓	695	-5 ↓	-35 ↓
South & West Fife	2.3%	0.0 →	-0.3 ↓	710	-15 ↓	-85 ↓

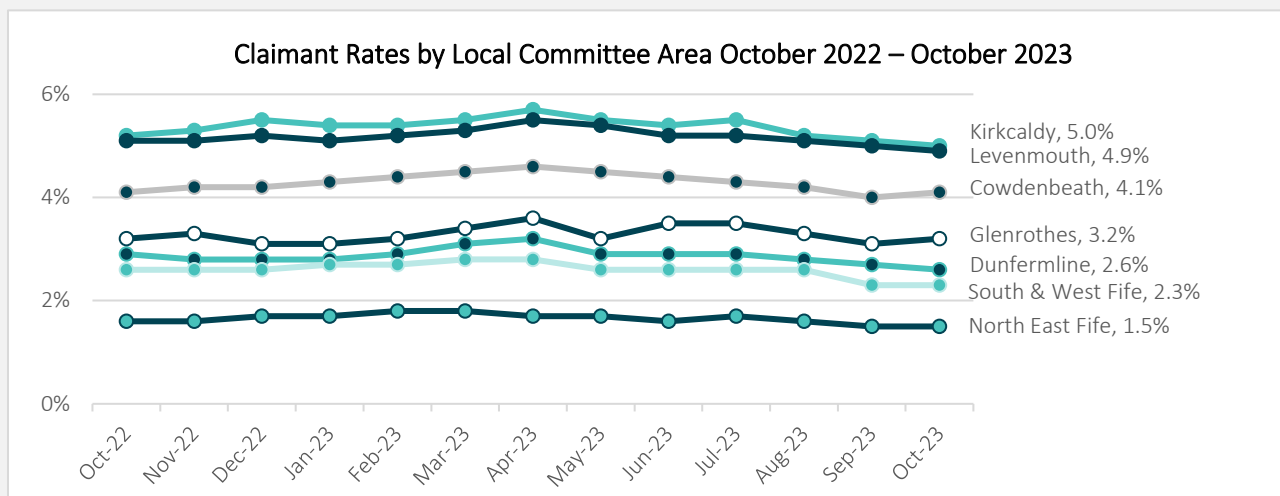
Source: ONS Claimant Count

Cowdenbeath and Glenrothes were the only committee areas where the number and rate of people claiming out-of-work benefits increased compared with the previous month.

In all committee areas claimant numbers were lower than a year ago.

The Kirkcaldy and Levenmouth Areas had the highest numbers and rates of people claiming out-of-work benefits and North East Fife the lowest.

## 2.4 Breakdown by Fife's Local Committee Areas (continued)



Source: ONS Claimant Count

## 2.5 Breakdown by Gender and Local Committee Area

October 2023	Female Claimant Count	Female Claimant Rate	Male Claimant Count	Male Claimant Rate
Cowdenbeath	415	3.1%	640	5.1%
Dunfermline	405	2.2%	570	3.1%
Glenrothes	400	2.6%	565	3.8%
Kirkcaldy	725	3.9%	1,120	6.3%
Levenmouth	400	3.4%	710	6.5%
North East Fife	290	1.2%	405	1.8%
South & West Fife	300	1.9%	410	2.6%

Source: ONS Claimant Count

In all areas of Fife, the number and rate of men claiming out-of-work benefits was higher than the number and rate of women.

The greatest differences were in **Levenmouth** where the male claimant rate was 91.2% higher than the female rate, and the lowest in **South & West Fife** where the male rate was 36.8% higher.

## 2.6 Breakdown by Electoral Ward (October 2023)

WARDS WITH THE HIGHEST CLAIMANT RATES		WARDS WITH THE LOWEST CLAIMANT RATES	
Kirkcaldy Central	7.0%	Howe of Fife & Tay Coast	2.0%
Buckhaven, Methil & Wemyss Villages	6.5%	Inverkeithing & Dalgety Bay	2.0%
Kirkcaldy East	6.3%	Tay Bridgehead	1.6%
Lochgelly, Cardenden & Benarty	4.6%	St Andrews	0.6%

Source: ONS Claimant Count

**Kirkcaldy Central**, **Buckhaven, Methil & Wemyss Villages** and **Kirkcaldy East** remain the electoral wards with the highest claimant rates in Fife.

### 3.0 CLAIMANT RATES IN FIFE'S CITY REGIONS

Fife is part of two City Region Deals – the [Edinburgh & SE Scotland City Region Deal](#) and the [Tay Cities Region Deal](#). This section shows the percentage of working age residents claiming out-of-work benefits in each of the local authorities that make up the two City Regions.

#### 3.1 Edinburgh & South East Scotland City Region



Claimant Rate by Local Authority						
	Sept 2023	Oct 2023	Monthly change		Annual change	
City of Edinburgh	2.3%	2.3%	0.0	—	0.0	—
East Lothian	2.2%	2.3%	+0.1	↑	+0.1	↑
Fife	3.2%	3.2%	0.0	—	-0.1	↓
Midlothian	2.3%	2.2%	-0.1	↓	0.0	—
Scottish Borders	2.8%	2.8%	0.0	—	0.0	—
West Lothian	2.6%	2.5%	-0.1	↓	-0.1	↓

Source: ONS Claimant Count. The changes shown represent the differences in percentage points between this month's claimant rates and the rates for previous periods.

#### 3.2 Tay Cities Region



Claimant Rate by Local Authority and Fife Council Local Committee Area						
	Sept 2023	Oct 2023	Monthly change		Annual change	
Angus	2.7%	2.7%	0.0	—	0.0	—
Dundee	4.1%	4.1%	0.0	—	0.0	—
North East Fife	1.5%	1.5%	0.0	—	-0.1	↓
Perth & Kinross	2.3%	2.2%	-0.1	↓	0.0	—

Source: ONS Claimant Count. The changes shown represent the differences in percentage points between this month's claimant rates and the rates for previous periods.

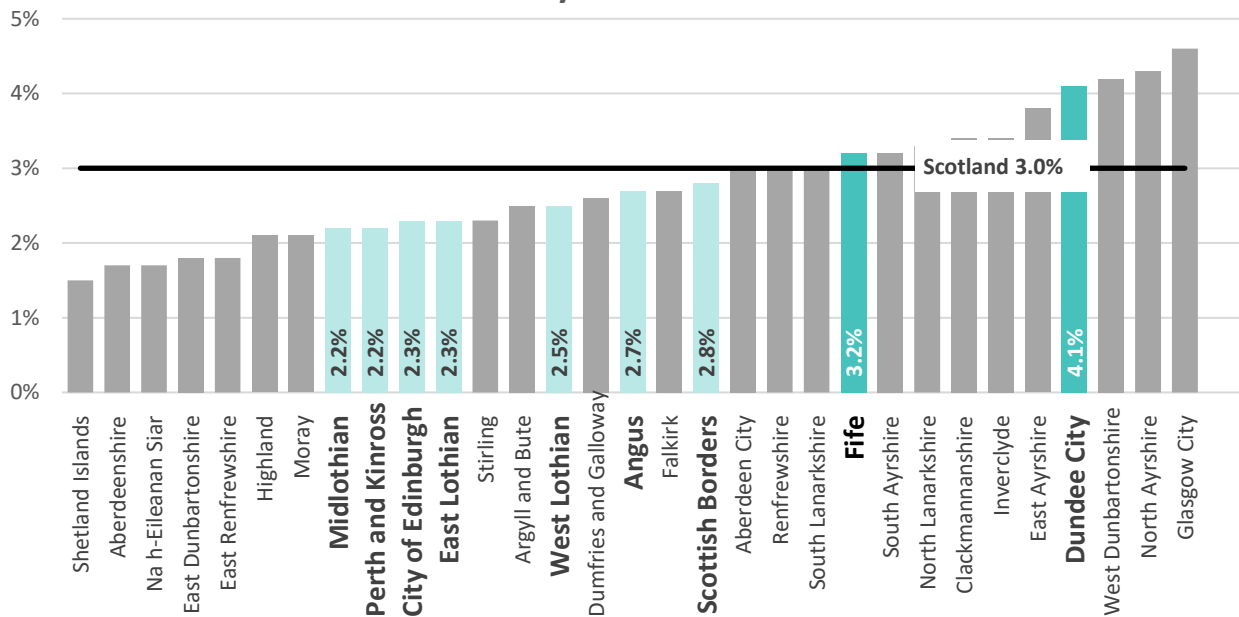
In October, **East Lothian** was the only area where claimant rates were higher than both a month and a year ago. Claimant rates fell or remained the same in all other parts of both City Regions

As in previous months, **Fife's** claimant rate (3.2%) was the second highest after **Dundee** (4.1%).

As shown in the graph below, **Fife and Dundee** were the only City Region Local Authorities whose claimant rates were above the Scottish rate.

Note: The Tay Cities Region captures North East Fife only, and the Edinburgh & South East Scotland City Region covers an area in the South and West of Fife as indicated on the maps. Care should be taken when using these geographies.

### Scottish Local Authority Claimant Rates - October 2023



Source: ONS Claimant Count

## CLAIMANT COUNT STATISTICS

The claimant counts and claimant rates given in this update are based on experimental data collected by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). The claimant count represents the number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance plus the number of people on Universal Credit who are required to search for work and are available for work.

Universal Credit replaces six legacy benefits and tax credits (including Jobseeker's Allowance and Income-related Employment and Support Allowance) and was fully introduced in Fife on 6 January 2017 after initially going live in the region in April 2016.

Universal Credit requires more people to look for work than was the case for legacy benefits; new claimants who are waiting on or appealing Work Capability Assessments are also required to look for work.

The claimant count dataset is still classified by the ONS as experimental statistics. Please note that care should therefore be taken when analysing and interpreting the figures.

Claimant Count, Jobseekers Allowance and Universal Credit statistics are provisional on their date of release and are subject to revision.

For more information and to access all the labour market statistics from official sources for the UK visit [www.nomisweb.co.uk](http://www.nomisweb.co.uk).

For further information about the content of this publication, or to request any bespoke economic information, please contact:

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