

FIFE LABOUR MARKET UPDATE

SEPTEMBER 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.

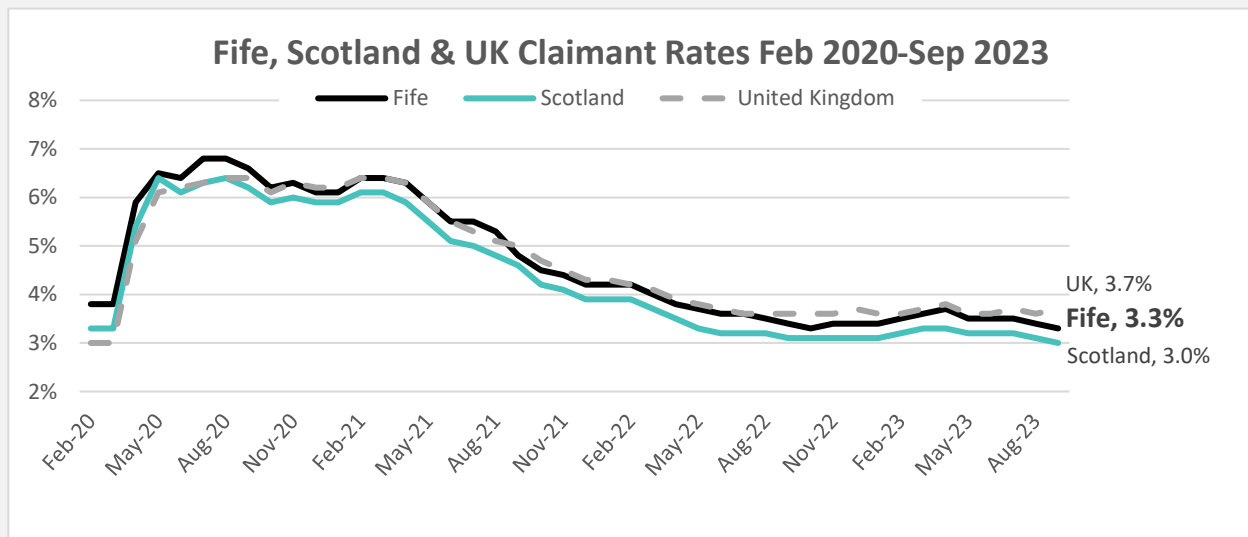
1.1 CLAIMANT RATE

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

September 2023	Claimant Rate	Monthly Change		Annual Change		Change Feb 2020-Sept 2023	
Fife	3.3%	-0.1	↓	-0.1	↓	-0.5	↓
Scotland	3.0%	-0.1	↓	-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 September, Fife's claimant rate fell by 0.1 percentage point as the estimated number of people claiming out-of-work benefits dropped from 7,820 to 7,615. Over the same period, while the Scottish claimant rate also fell, the UK rate rose. Fife's September claimant rate was 0.1 percentage points lower than a year ago in September 2022 (3.4%), and 0.5 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	
Fife	3.4%	-0.5		-0.6	
Scotland	3.2%	-0.2		-0.1	
United Kingdom	3.7%	-0.1		-0.2	







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 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	
Fife	21.0%	-5.9		-2.9	
Scotland	22.6%	-0.3		-0.5	
United Kingdom	21.5%	-0.1		+0.6	

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.

Fife's latest economic inactivity rate (21.0% of the working age population) is still lower than the record high rate (26.9%) recorded in the 12 months to June 2022 and is **lower than 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 the region (an estimated 15,100 people). **An estimated 6,100 people – 13.1% of those who are economically inactive - want a job**. This is 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

September 2023	Claimant Rate	Claimant Count	Claimant Count - monthly change		Claimant Count - annual change	
People on Universal Credit who are searching for work	3.1%	7,153	-161	↓	-39	↓
Jobseeker's Allowance claimants	0.2%	462	-41	↓	-121	↓

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.

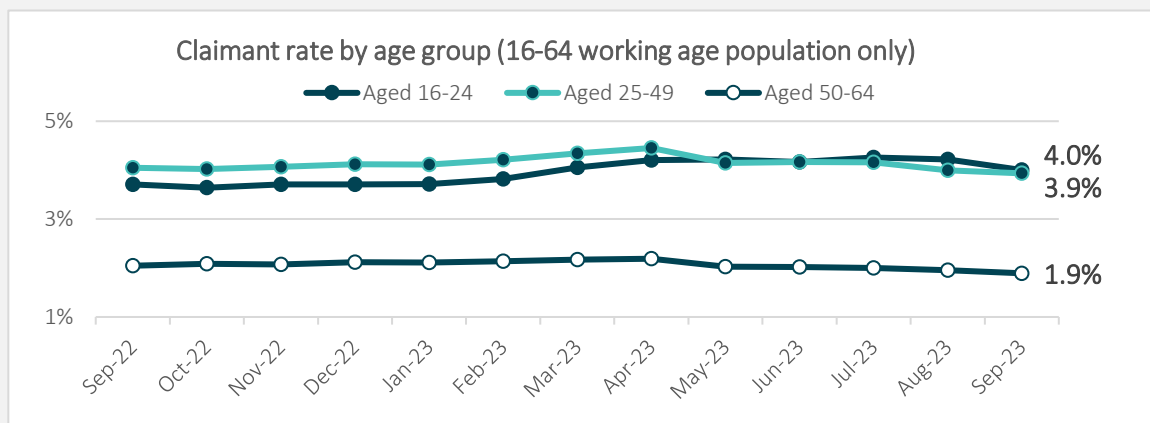
Over 160 fewer people claimed Universal Credit while searching for work in Fife compared with the previous month and 39 fewer than a year ago in September 2022. There were 41 fewer JSA claimants compared with the previous month, and 121 fewer than in September 2022.

2.2 Breakdown by Age

September 2023	Claimant Rate	Claimant Count	Claimant Count - monthly change		Claimant Count - annual change	
16-24 year olds claiming benefits	4.0%	1,555	-85	↓	+115	↑
25-49 year olds claiming benefits	3.9%	4,405	-70	↓	-130	↓
50-64 year olds claiming benefits	1.9%	1,530	-50	↓	-125	↓
65+ year olds claiming benefits	0.2%	125	0	→	-15	↓

Source: ONS Claimant Count

Although the 16-24 year old age group saw claimant numbers fall after they rose in July and August, it remained the age group with the highest claimant rate. This was also the only age group where the number of claimants was higher than a year ago in September 2022.



Source: ONS Claimant Count

2.3 Breakdown by Gender

September 2023	Claimant Rate	Claimant Count	Claimant Count - monthly change		Claimant Count - annual change	
Female claimants	2.6%	3,045	-95	↓	+25	↑
Male claimants	4.0%	4,570	-110	↓	-180	↓

Source: ONS Claimant Count

The number of women claiming out-of-work benefits fell for a second month (after increasing in June and July), though was still slightly higher 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 (4.0%) still remains significantly higher than the female rate (2.6%).

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.

September 2023	Claimant Rate	Monthly change		Annual change		Claimant Count	Monthly change		Annual change	
Cowdenbeath	4.1%	-0.1	↓	0.0	→	1,070	-25	↓	0	→
Dunfermline	2.7%	-0.1	↓	-0.2	↓	1,005	-35	↓	-85	↓
Glenrothes	3.2%	-0.1	↓	+0.1	↑	965	-30	↓	+20	↑
Kirkcaldy	5.2%	0.0	→	0.0	→	1,910	-5	↓	+10	↑
Levenmouth	5.1%	0.0	→	0.0	→	1,150	-5	↓	+5	↑
North East Fife	1.6%	0.0	→	0.0	→	720	-30	↓	-5	↓
South & West Fife	2.4%	-0.2	↓	-0.3	↓	740	-70	↓	-105	↓

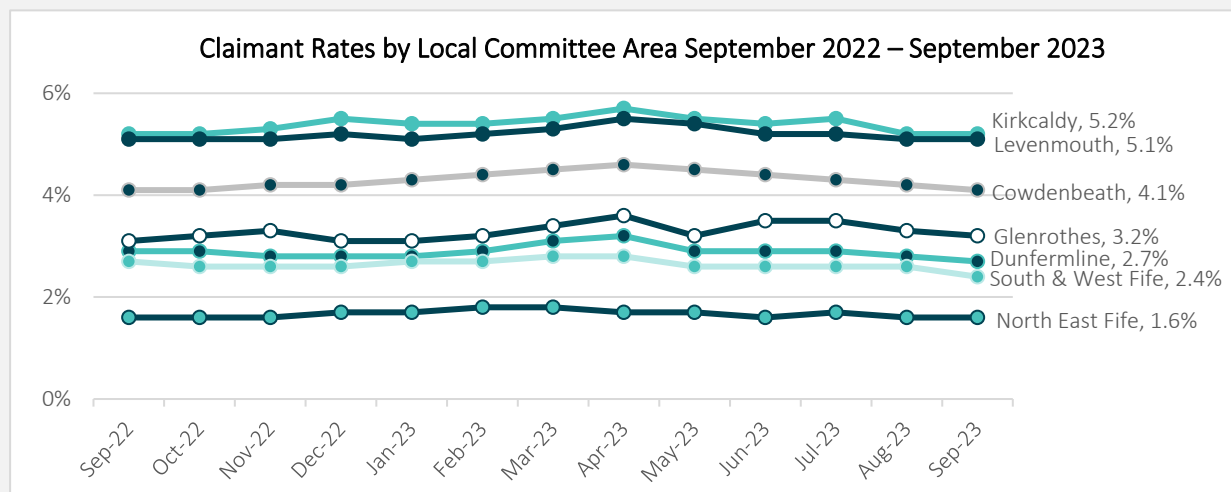
Source: ONS Claimant Count

In all of Fife Council's Committee Areas the number of people claiming out-of-work benefits fell compared with the previous month.

In Levenmouth and the Glenrothes and Kirkcaldy Areas claimant numbers were higher than a year ago; Glenrothes was the only area with a higher claimant rate than in September 2022.

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

September 2023	Female Claimant Count	Female Claimant Rate	Male Claimant Count	Male Claimant Rate
Cowdenbeath	405	3.0%	665	5.4%
Dunfermline	415	2.2%	590	3.2%
Glenrothes	400	2.6%	570	3.8%
Kirkcaldy	755	4.0%	1,155	6.5%
Levenmouth	430	3.6%	720	6.6%
North East Fife	300	1.3%	420	1.9%
South & West Fife	325	2.1%	415	2.7%

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 83% higher than the female rate, and the lowest in **South & West Fife** where the male rate was only 29% higher.

2.6 Breakdown by Electoral Ward (September 2023)

WARDS WITH THE HIGHEST CLAIMANT RATES		WARDS WITH THE LOWEST CLAIMANT RATES	
Kirkcaldy Central	7.2%	Howe of Fife & Tay Coast	2.1%
Buckhaven, Methil & Wemyss Villages	6.8%	Inverkeithing & Dalgety Bay	2.0%
Kirkcaldy East	6.5%	Tay Bridgehead	1.6%
Lochgelly, Cardenden & Benarty	4.8%	St Andrews	0.7%

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						
	Aug 2023	Sept 2023	Monthly change		Annual change	
City of Edinburgh	2.3%	2.3%	0.0	—	0.0	—
East Lothian	2.3%	2.3%	0.0	—	+0.1	↑
Fife	3.4%	3.3%	-0.1	↓	-0.1	↓
Midlothian	2.3%	2.3%	0.0	—	0.0	—
Scottish Borders	2.9%	2.8%	-0.1	↓	-0.1	↓
West Lothian	2.7%	2.6%	-0.1	↓	-0.2	↓

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						
	Aug 2023	Sept 2023	Monthly change		Annual change	
Angus	2.9%	2.7%	-0.2	↓	0.0	—
Dundee	4.4%	4.2%	-0.2	↓	0.0	—
North East Fife	1.6%	1.6%	0.0	—	0.0	—
Perth & Kinross	2.4%	2.3%	-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.

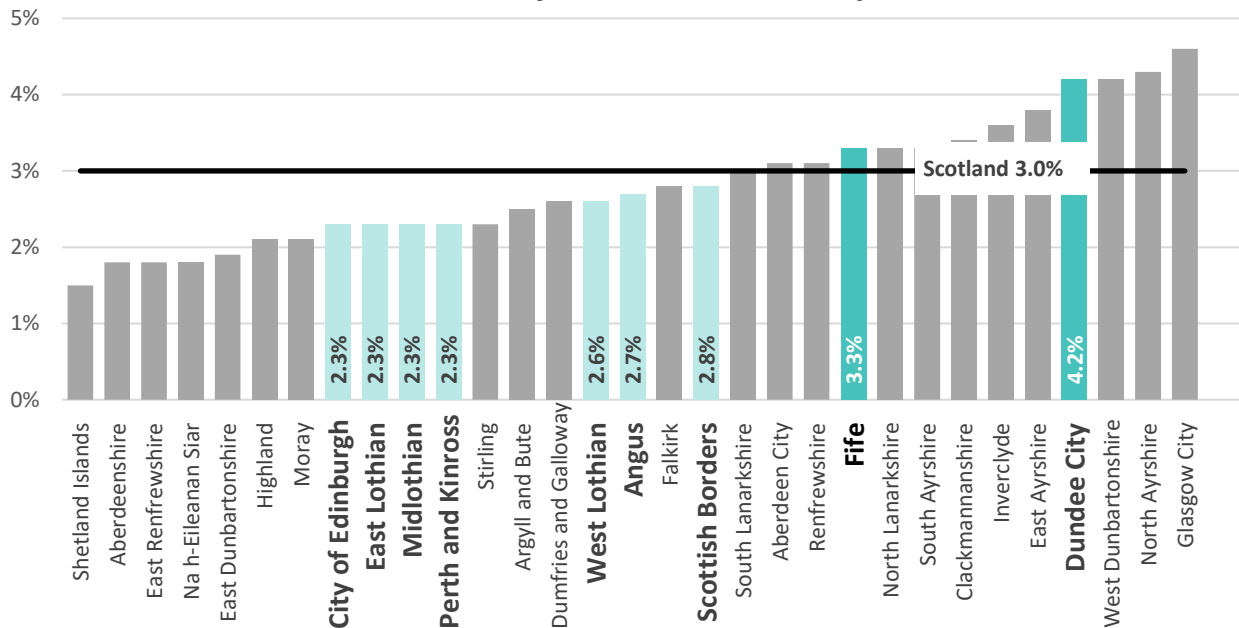
In September, claimant rates fell or remained the same in all parts of both City Regions. **East Lothian was the only areas where claimant rates were higher than a year ago in September 2022.**

As in previous months, **Fife's claimant rate (3.3%) was the second highest after Dundee (4.2%).**

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 - September 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.

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

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