

FIFE LABOUR MARKET UPDATE

MAY 2024

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).

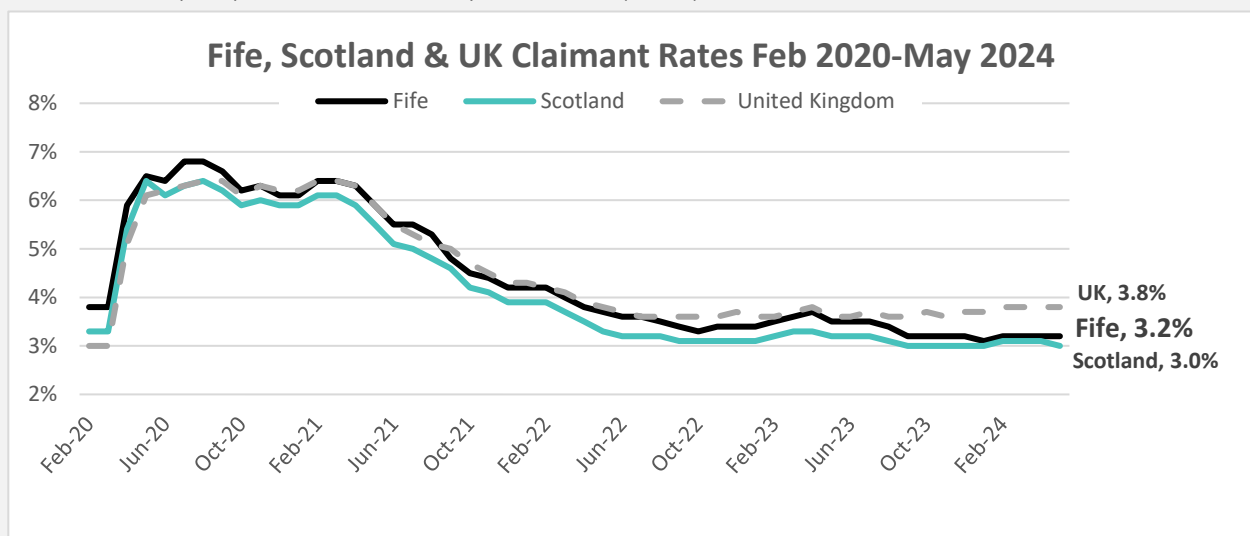
1.1 CLAIMANT RATE

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

May 2024	Claimant Rate	Monthly Change	Annual Change	Change Feb 2020-May 2024
Fife	3.2%	0.0 ▬	-0.3 ↓	-0.6 ↓
Scotland	3.0%	-0.1 ↓	-0.2 ↓	-0.3 ↓
United Kingdom	3.8%	0.0 ▬	+0.2 ↑	+0.8 ↑

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 May, **Fife’s claimant rate remained unchanged at 3.2%** although the number of people claiming out-of-work benefits in the region increased by 25 from 7,335 to 7,360. Fife’s May claimant rate was 0.3 percentage points lower than a year ago in May 2023 (3.5%), 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 Apr 23 – Mar 24	Annual Change (2022/23 – 2023/24)		Change pre-pandemic 2019/20 – 2023/24	
Fife	3.4%	-0.5	↓	-0.7	↓
Scotland	3.7%	+0.2	↑	+0.4	↑
Great Britain	3.9%	+0.3	↑	0.0	—

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 March 2024, Fife's unemployment rate fell slightly from 3.5% recorded during the previous period (Jan- Dec 2023) to 3.4%. An estimated 6,200 people aged 16 and over were unemployed. Over the same period, unemployment rose in both Scotland and Great Britain overall and Fife's employment rate (75.4%) was higher than the Scottish rate (74.2%).

1.3 ECONOMIC INACTIVITY

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

	Economic Inactivity Rate Apr 23 – Mar 24	Annual Change (2022/23 – 2023/24)		Change pre-pandemic 2019/20 – 2023/24	
Fife	21.9%	-1.0	↓	-2.9	↓
Scotland	22.9%	+0.3	↓	-0.1	↓
UK	21.5%	-0.2	↓	+0.4	↑

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 49,600 people or 21.9% of Fife's working age population were 'economically inactive' in the year ending March 2024. This is the same as during the previous period (21.8% of the working age population (WAP) in the 12 months to December 2023), less than the record high of 60,900 people (26.9% of the WAP) who were economically inactive in the year ending June 2022 and is lower than prior to the Covid pandemic. Long term ill-health was the reason given for not being in employment or seeking work by 31.1% of those who were economically inactive in Fife (an estimated 15,400 people). An estimated 13,400 people – 26.9% of those who are economically inactive - 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

May 2024	Claimant Rate	Claimant Count	Claimant Count - monthly change		Claimant Count - annual change	
People on Universal Credit who are searching for work	3.0%	6,862	+46	↑	-673	↓
Jobseeker's Allowance claimants	0.2%	499	-20	↓	-29	↓

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.

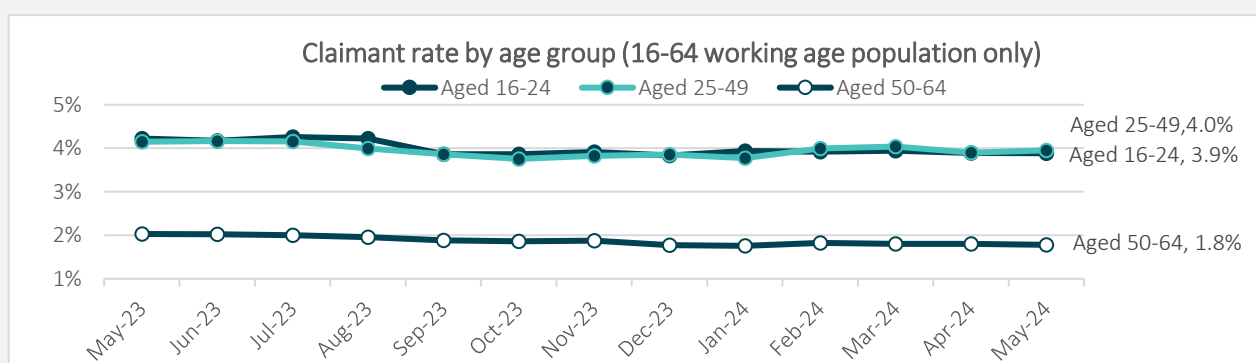
46 more people claimed Universal Credit while searching for work in Fife compared with the previous month but 673 fewer than a year ago in May 2023. There were 20 fewer Job Seeker's Allowance claimants compared with the previous month and 29 fewer than a year ago.

2.2 Breakdown by Age

May 2024	Claimant Rate	Claimant Count	Claimant Count - monthly change		Claimant Count - annual change	
16-24 year olds claiming benefits	3.9%	1,550	-5	↓	-90	↓
25-49 year olds claiming benefits	4.0%	4,255	+55	↑	-390	↓
50-64 year olds claiming benefits	1.8%	1,455	-15	↓	-185	↓
65+ year olds claiming benefits	0.1%	105	-5	↓	-30	↓

Source: ONS Claimant Count

All age groups (apart from the 25-49 years age group) saw the number of people claiming out-of-work benefits fall compared with the previous month, claimant numbers in all age groups were lower than a year ago.



Source: ONS Claimant Count

2.3 Breakdown by Gender

May 2024	Claimant Rate	Claimant Count	Claimant Count - monthly change		Claimant Count - annual change	
Female claimants	2.5%	2,950	+45		-190	
Male claimants	3.9%	4,410	-20		-515	

Source: ONS Claimant Count

There were 45 more women claiming out-of-work benefits than in April, but 20 fewer men.

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 [Area Committees](#). For the claimant rate, the change represents the difference in percentage points between the previous and current claimant rate.

May 2024	Claimant Rate	Monthly change	Annual change	Claimant Count	Monthly change	Annual change
Cowdenbeath	4.2%	0.0	-0.3	1,070	-10	-75
Dunfermline	2.6%	0.0	-0.3	1,000	+5	-80
Glenrothes	3.0%	0.0	-0.2	925	+15	-60
Kirkcaldy	4.9%	0.0	-0.6	1,805	+20	-195
Levenmouth	4.4%	0.0	-1.0	990	-10	-220
North East Fife	1.7%	0.0	0.0	820	-15	-5
South & West Fife	2.5%	+0.1	-0.2	750	+15	-65

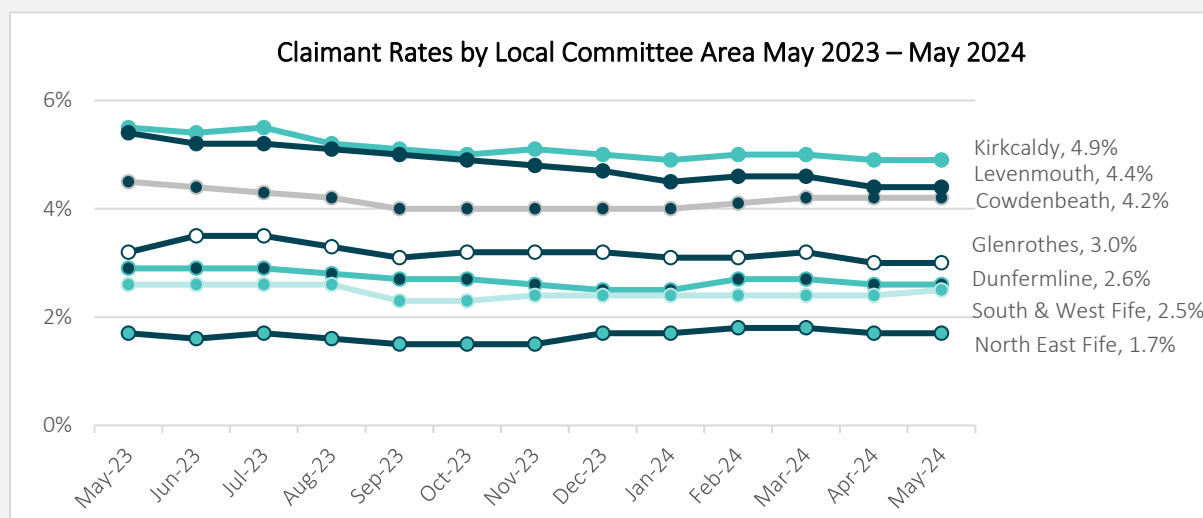
Source: ONS Claimant Count

Between April and May the number of people claiming out-of-work benefits fell in the Cowdenbeath Area, Levenmouth and North East Fife; all other committee areas saw claimant numbers rise.

All committee areas had fewer people claiming out-of-work benefits than a year ago.

The Kirkcaldy Area, Levenmouth and Cowdenbeath had the highest numbers and rates of people claiming out-of-work benefits and North East Fife and South & West Fife had 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

May 2024	Female Claimant Count	Female Claimant Rate	Male Claimant Count	Male Claimant Rate
Cowdenbeath	425	3.2%	645	5.3%
Dunfermline	405	2.1%	595	3.2%
Glenrothes	370	2.4%	555	3.7%
Kirkcaldy	705	3.8%	1,100	6.2%
Levenmouth	350	3.0%	640	5.9%
North East Fife	355	1.4%	465	2.0%
South & West Fife	345	2.3%	405	2.6%

Source: ONS Claimant Count

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

The greatest differences were in **Levenmouth**, where the male claimant rate was nearly twice as high as the female rate, followed by the **Cowdenbeath and Kirkcaldy Areas**. The difference was lowest in **South & West Fife**.

2.6 Breakdown by Electoral Ward (May 2024)

WARDS WITH THE HIGHEST CLAIMANT RATES		WARDS WITH THE LOWEST CLAIMANT RATES	
Kirkcaldy Central	6.8%	Tay Bridgehead, East Neuk & Landward, Cupar	2.2%
Kirkcaldy East	6.1%	Inverkeithing & Dalgety Bay	1.9%
Buckhaven, Methil & Wemyss Villages	5.8%	St Andrews	0.6%

Source: ONS Claimant Count

Kirkcaldy Central, Kirkcaldy East and Buckhaven, Methil & Wemyss Villages 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



	Apr 2024	May 2024	Monthly change	Annual change
City of Edinburgh	2.4%	2.4%	0.0	+0.1
East Lothian	2.4%	2.4%	0.0	+0.1
Fife	3.2%	3.2%	0.0	-0.3
Midlothian	2.2%	2.2%	0.0	-0.1
Scottish Borders	3.0%	3.0%	0.0	0.0
West Lothian	2.6%	2.6%	0.0	-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 the previous month.

3.2 Tay Cities Region

Claimant Rate by Local Authority and Fife Council Local Committee Area



	Apr 2024	May 2024	Monthly change	Annual change
Angus	2.7%	2.7%	0.0	-0.2
Dundee	4.0%	4.0%	0.0	-0.4
North East Fife	1.7%	1.7%	0.0	0.0
Perth & Kinross	2.2%	2.2%	0.0	-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 the previous month.

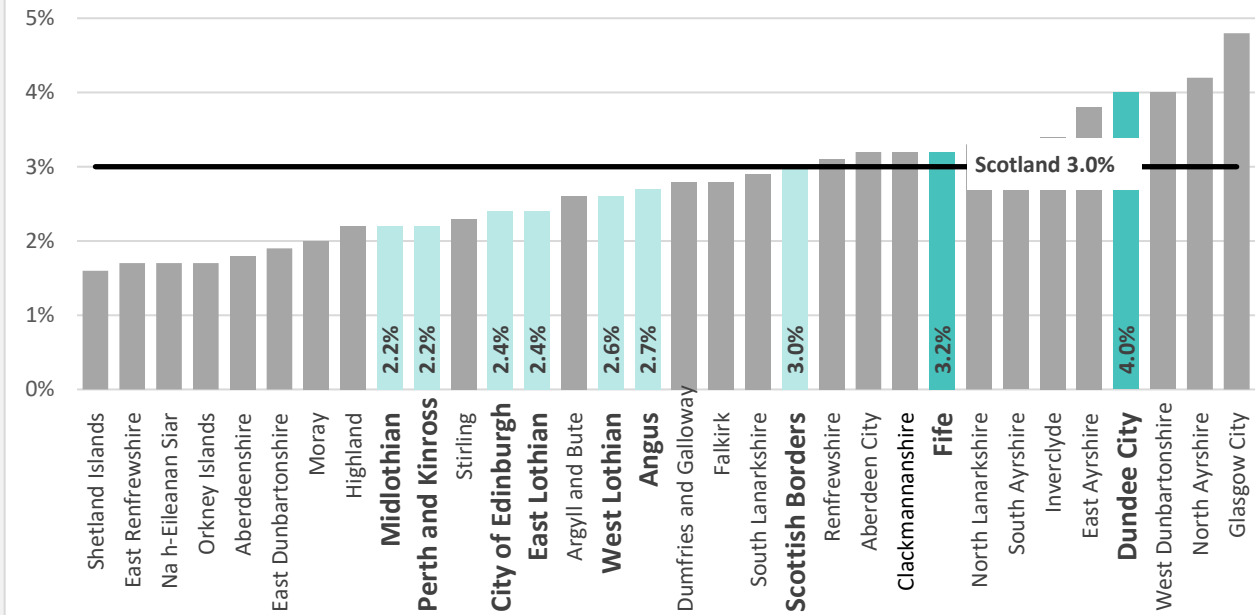
In May, claimant rates remained the same as the previous month in **all parts of the Tay Cities and Edinburgh & SE Scotland City Regions**.

Edinburgh, East Lothian and North East Fife were the only parts of both city regions where the claimant rates were not lower than a year ago.

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 - May 2024



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. These figures are also not seasonally adjusted so that each month's figures will be influenced by seasonal effects. 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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