



## ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET

# Scotland's Labour Market Trends October 2021

### About this publication

This publication is updated monthly and summarises employment, unemployment and economic inactivity estimates sourced from the Labour Force Survey (ONS) for Scotland and the UK. These are classed as National Statistics.

Labour Force Survey (LFS) responses for periods Jan-Mar 2020 to Feb-Apr 2021 were reweighted on 15 July 2021 to new populations derived using growth rates from HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) Real Time Information (RTI), to allow for different trends during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The reweighting gives improved estimates of both rates and levels. This weighting methodology will be used for subsequent time periods.

When the recent weighting methodology for the LFS was applied, there was a small error in the implementation. When calculating three-month averages for the PAYE real-time information (RTI), the months used were the previous three month average. For example, for the October to December period, the RTI data used was that for September to November. ONS analysis shows the impact on the population levels and headline labour market level estimates is very small with the published headline labour market rates unchanged. The impact on LFS estimates for employment, unemployment and economic inactivity level at UK level is mostly below 0.1% and the impact on rates is less than 0.02 percentage points.

This publication also contains claimant count information and HMRC PAYE Real Time Information (RTI) on median monthly earnings and payrolled employees. These are classed as Experimental Statistics.

This release follows the ONS monthly releases of [Regional Labour Market Statistics in the UK](#) [Earnings and employment from Pay As You Earn Real Time Information, UK: October 2021](#)

## Source of data

The information included in this publication are from three separate sources covering the time periods shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Labour market data source reference periods**



## Comparisons over time

Comparisons with the latest data over the year have been retained in some parts of the commentary in the publication. However, comparisons with the last data reference point prior to the pandemic have also been provided i.e. employment, unemployment and inactivity rates from the Labour Force Survey are compared with December 2019 to February 2020, HMRC payrolled employee estimates and median monthly earnings are compared with February 2020 and DWP claimant count level and rates are compared with March 2020, to reflect changes in the labour market following the pandemic.

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## **NATIONAL STATISTICS STATUS**

National Statistics status means that our statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value and it is our responsibility to maintain compliance with these standards.

These statistics were reviewed, as part of a [compliance check](#), against the [Code of Practice](#) in March 2020 and therefore continue to be designated National Statistics.

## Key points

Labour Force Survey estimates are presented for the 3 months to August 2021, compared with the quarter before (March to May 2021) and pre-pandemic (December 2019 to February 2020). Please note percentage point changes are based on unrounded data.

**Furloughed employees** - Employees who are furloughed will be classed as employed but temporarily away from work in the Labour Force Survey and also included in payrolled employee estimates from HMRC (see page 21 for further details).

- The latest Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimates for June to August 2021 indicate that over the quarter, the unemployment rate stayed the same, while the employment rate increased and economic inactivity rate decreased.
- The estimated unemployment rate (16+) in Scotland was 4.4 per cent, up 0.6 percentage points since December 2019-February 2020 (pre-pandemic) but stayed the same over the quarter. Scotland's unemployment rate was slightly below the UK rate of 4.5 per cent.
- The estimated employment rate (the proportion of people aged 16-64 in work) in Scotland was 74.3 per cent, down 1.1 percentage points since December 2019-February 2020 (pre-pandemic) but up 0.3 percentage points over the quarter. Scotland's employment rate was below the UK rate of 75.3 per cent.
- The estimated economic inactivity rate (the proportion of people aged 16 to 64 years who were not working and not seeking or available to work) in Scotland was 22.2 per cent, up 0.6 percentage points since December 2019-February 2020 (pre-pandemic) but down 0.4 percentage points over the quarter. Scotland's economic inactivity rate was above the UK rate of 21.1 per cent.
- Early estimates for September 2021 from HMRC Pay As You Earn Real Time Information indicate that there were 2.38 million payrolled employees in Scotland, a decrease of 0.5 per cent (12,000) compared with February 2020 (pre-pandemic). This compares with the UK where the number of payrolled employees has increased by 0.4 per cent over the same period.
- The experimental Claimant Count includes Jobseeker's Allowance Claimants and those claimants of Universal Credit who were claiming principally for the reason of being unemployed. In September 2021, there were 161,700 claimants in Scotland, a decrease of 4,800 (-2.9 per cent) over the month but an increase of 48,600 (43.0 per cent) since March 2020 (pre-pandemic). The claimant count rate in September 2021 was 5.1 per cent, compared with 5.2 per cent for the UK as a whole.
- Early estimates for September 2021 from HMRC Pay As You Earn Real Time Information indicate that median monthly pay for payrolled employees in Scotland was £2,009, an increase of 7.4 per cent compared with February 2020 (pre-pandemic). This is slightly lower than the growth in median monthly pay for the UK over the same period (7.5 per cent).

# 1. Summary of labour market statistics

Employment, unemployment and economic inactivity estimates are presented for the 3 months to August 2021, compared with the quarter before (March to May 2021) and compared with a year before (June to August 2020).

Information are obtained from a sample survey and are therefore subject to some error.

**Table 1: Labour Market Statistics, Scotland and UK, June to August 2021**

	Rate (%)	CI	Percentage point				Level (000's)					
			Change on quarter	CI	Change on year	CI	Level ('000)	CI	Change on quarter	CI	Change on year	CI
<b>Employment<sup>1</sup></b>												
Scotland	74.3	(± 1.7)	0.3	(± 2.2)	0.2	(± 2.5)	2,641	(± 57)	7	(± 75)	5	(± 82)
UK	75.3	(± 0.4)	0.5	(± 0.4)	-0.1	(± 0.6)	32,416	(± 191)	235	(± 166)	-49	(± 268)
<b>Unemployment<sup>2</sup></b>												
Scotland	4.4	(± 0.9)	0.0	(± 1.3)	-0.1	(± 1.4)	121	(± 26)	0	(± 35)	-3	(± 39)
UK	4.5	(± 0.2)	-0.4	(± 0.3)	-0.1	(± 0.4)	1,510	(± 83)	-126	(± 92)	-33	(± 122)
<b>Economic Inactivity<sup>3</sup></b>												
Scotland	22.2	(± 1.6)	-0.4	(± 2.1)	-0.1	(± 2.3)	760	(± 67)	-13	(± 88)	-8	(± 95)
UK	21.1	(± 0.4)	-0.2	(± 0.4)	0.2	(± 0.6)	8,715	(± 170)	-91	(± 151)	50	(± 237)

Source: Labour Force Survey, seasonally adjusted, ONS

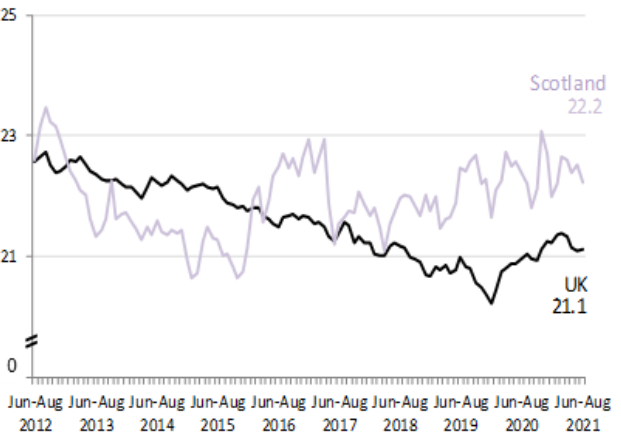
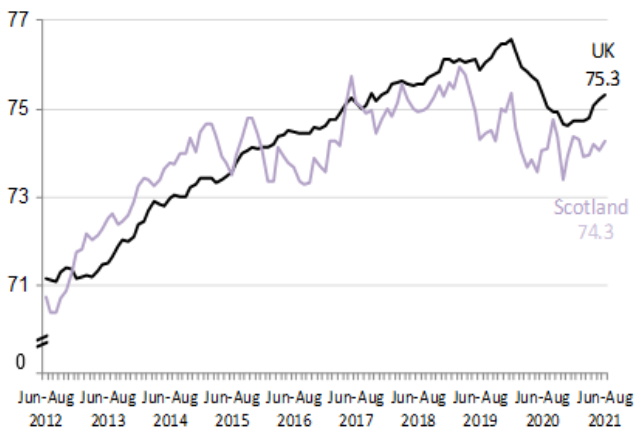
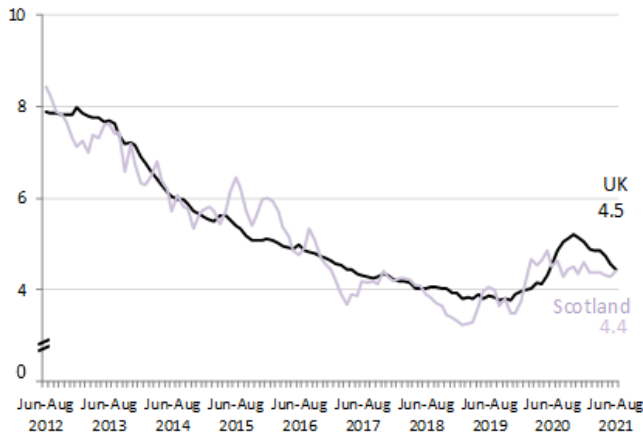
Note: Levels: 1,2: All persons aged 16+; 3: All persons aged 16-64. Rates: denominator: 1,3: all persons 16-64 years; 2. economically active 16+.

# June to August 2021

**Unemployment 4.4%**

**Employment 74.3%**

**Economic Inactivity 22.2%**



<b>Quarterly Change</b>	Scotland	0.0	↔	UK	-0.4	↓
		%pts			%pts	
<b>Annual Change</b>	Scotland	-0.1	↓	UK	-0.1	↓
		%pts			%pts	

Scotland	0.3	↑	UK	0.5	↑
	%pts			%pts	
Scotland	0.2	↑	UK	-0.1	↓
	%pts			%pts	

Scotland	-0.4	↓	UK	-0.2	↓
	%pts			%pts	
Scotland	-0.1	↓	UK	0.2	↑
	%pts			%pts	

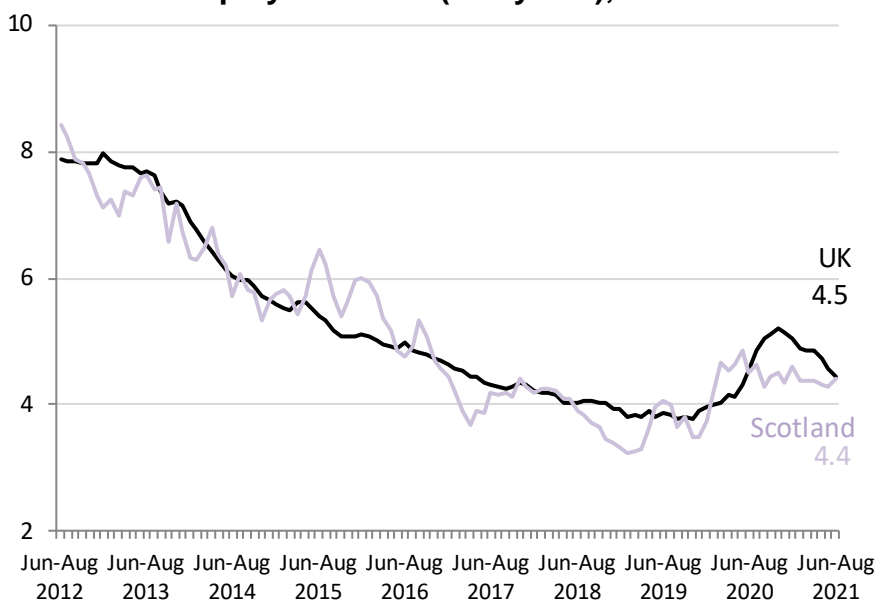
*% pts=percentage points*  
 Source: Labour Force Survey, seasonally adjusted, ONS  
 12<sup>th</sup> October 2021

## 2. Unemployment estimates

The estimated unemployment rate for people aged 16 years and over in Scotland was 4.4 per cent in June to August 2021. This is 0.6 percentage points up on December 2019-February 2020 (pre-pandemic) and no change on the quarter.

The estimated UK unemployment rate was 4.5 per cent in June to August 2021. This is 0.5 percentage points up on December 2019-February 2020 (pre-pandemic) but 0.4 percentage points down on the quarter.

**Chart 1: Unemployment rate (16+ years), Scotland and UK**



Source: Labour Force Survey, seasonally adjusted, ONS

Compared with the UK countries, Scotland's unemployment rate was the 2nd highest.

The estimated unemployment rate for people aged 16 years and over in Scotland was 0.1 percentage points lower than the year before (June to August 2020), while the estimated UK unemployment rate was also 0.1 percentage points lower than the year before.



## Chart 2: Unemployment Rate (16+ years), annual change: UK countries



Source: Labour Force Survey, ONS  
Annual change shown in percentage points

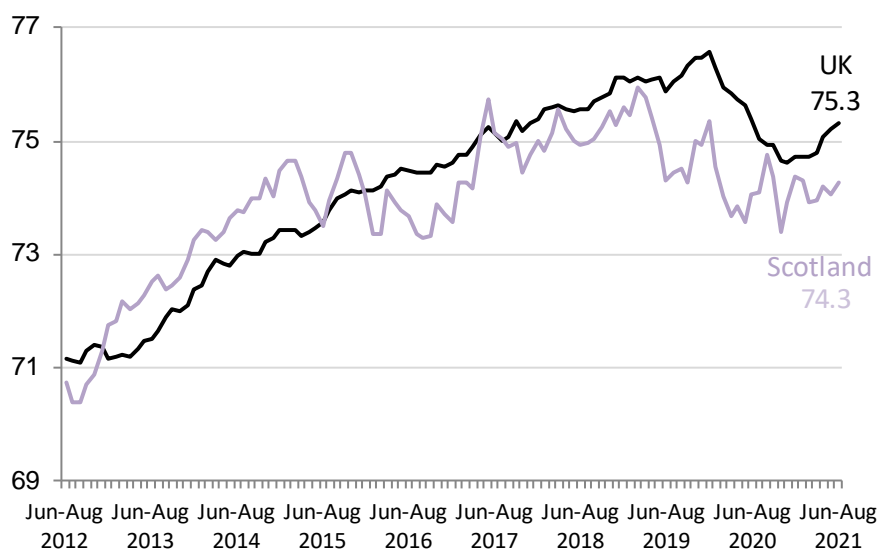
### 3. Employment estimates

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The estimated employment rate for people aged 16-64 years in Scotland was 74.3 per cent in June to August 2021. This is 1.1 percentage points down on December 2019-February 2020 (pre-pandemic) but 0.3 percentage points up on the quarter.

The estimated UK employment rate was 75.3 per cent in June to August 2021. This is 1.3 percentage points down on December 2019-February 2020 (pre-pandemic) but 0.5 percentage points up on the quarter.

**Chart 3: Employment rate (16-64 years), Scotland and UK**



Source: Labour Force Survey, seasonally adjusted, ONS

Compared with the UK countries, Scotland's employment rate was the 2nd highest.

The estimated employment rate for people aged 16-64 years in Scotland was 0.2 percentage points higher than the year before (June to August 2020), while the estimated UK employment rate was 0.1 percentage points lower than the year before.

#### Chart 4: Employment rate (16-64 years), annual change: UK countries



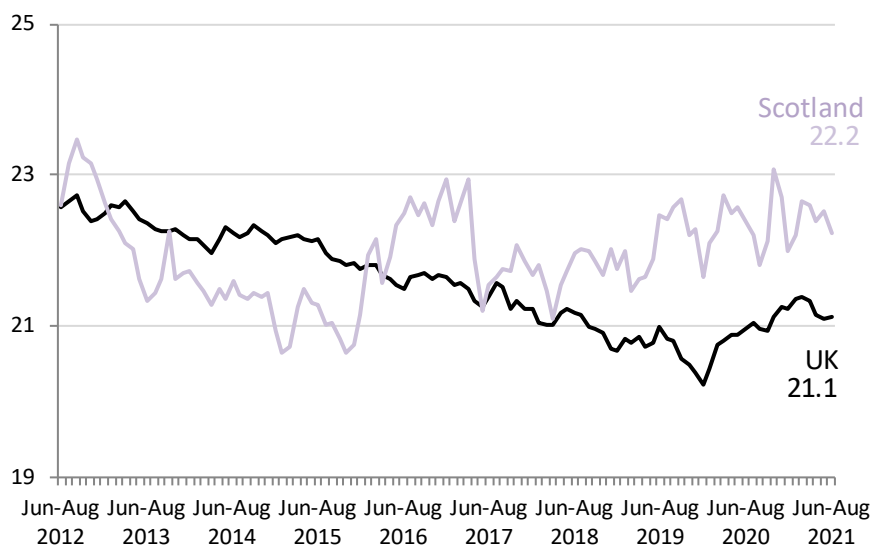
Source: Labour Force Survey, ONS  
Annual change shown in percentage points

## 4. Economic Inactivity estimates

The estimated economic inactivity rate for people aged 16-64 years in Scotland was 22.2 per cent in June to August 2021. This is 0.6 percentage points up on December 2019-February 2020 (pre-pandemic) but 0.4 percentage points down on the quarter.

The estimated UK economic inactivity rate was 21.1 per cent in June to August 2021. This is 0.9 percentage points up on December 2019-February 2020 (pre-pandemic) but 0.2 percentage points down on the quarter.

**Chart 5: Economic Inactivity rate (16-64 years), Scotland and UK**

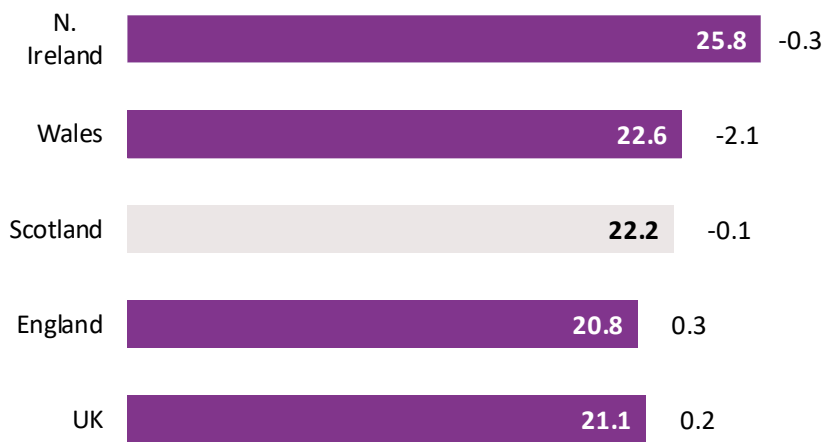


Source: Labour Force Survey, seasonally adjusted, ONS

Compared with the UK countries, Scotland's economic inactivity rate was the 2nd lowest.

The estimated economic inactivity rate for people aged 16-64 years in Scotland was 0.1 percentage points lower than the year before (June to August 2020), while the estimated UK economic inactivity rate was 0.2 percentage points higher than the year before.

**Chart 6: Economic Inactivity rate (16-64 years), annual change: UK countries**



Source: Labour Force Survey, ONS  
Annual change shown in percentage points

## 5. Labour market estimates for women and men

**Table 2: Labour Market Statistics for Women, Scotland and UK, June to August 2021**

	Rate (%)	Percentage point Change		Level (‘000)	Level (000's) Change on	
		on quarter	Change on year		quarter	Change on year
<b>Employment<sup>1</sup></b>						
Scotland	72.2	-0.2	0.9	1,303	-10	8
UK	72.1	0.5	0.2	15,464	95	-6
<b>Unemployment<sup>2</sup></b>						
Scotland	4.1	0.3	-0.2	56	4	-3
UK	4.3	-0.5	0.1	689	-83	24
<b>Inactivity<sup>3</sup></b>						
Scotland	24.6	-0.1	-0.8	431	-2	-16
UK	24.7	-0.2	-0.4	5,111	-35	-89

Source: Labour Force Survey, seasonally adjusted, ONS

Note: Levels: 1,2: All women aged 16+; 3.: All women aged 16-64. Rates: denominator: 1,3: All women 16-64 years; 2. economically active 16+.

**Table 3: Labour Market Statistics for Men, Scotland and UK, June to August 2021**

	Rate (%)	Percentage point Change		Level (‘000)	Level (000's) Change on	
		on quarter	Change on year		quarter	Change on year
<b>Employment<sup>1</sup></b>						
Scotland	76.4	0.8	-0.5	1,339	17	-3
UK	78.6	0.5	-0.4	16,951	140	-44
<b>Unemployment<sup>2</sup></b>						
Scotland	4.7	-0.3	0.0	65	-4	0
UK	4.6	-0.3	-0.3	821	-43	-57
<b>Inactivity<sup>3</sup></b>						
Scotland	19.7	-0.6	0.5	330	-11	8
UK	17.5	-0.3	0.7	3,605	-57	139

Source: Labour Force Survey, seasonally adjusted, ONS

Note: Levels: 1,2: All men aged 16+; 3: All men aged 16-64. Rates: Denominator: 1,3: All men 16-64 years; 2. economically active 16+.

## 6. HMRC payrolled employees (experimental)

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.

Pay As You Earn Real Time Information shows that there were 2.37 million payrolled employees in Scotland in August 2021.

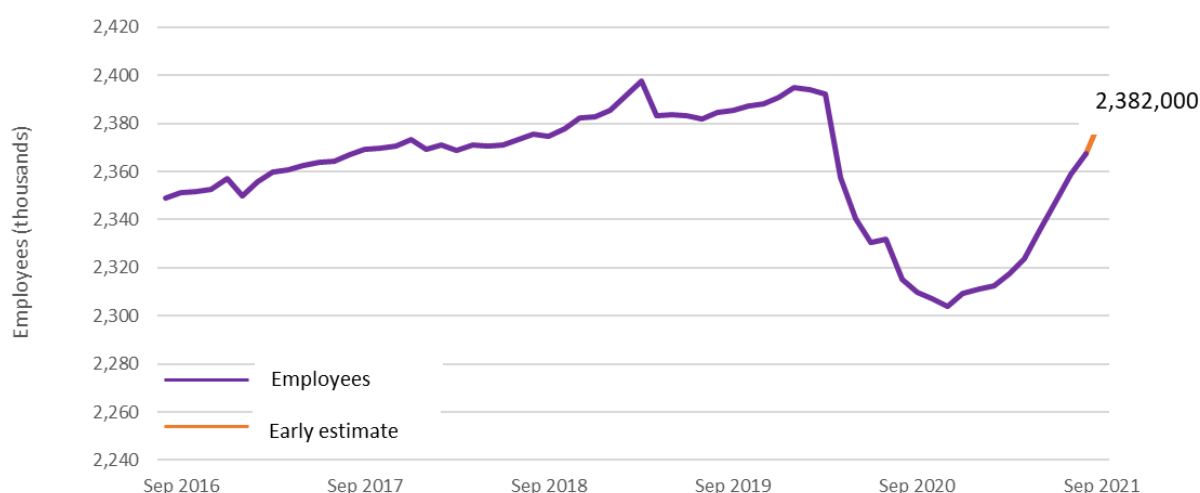
Compared with the same period the year before, the number of payrolled employees in Scotland increased by 2.3 per cent (52,000). This compares with a rise of 2.6 per cent for the UK over the same period.

The latest early payrolled employee estimates for September 2021 indicate that there were 2.38 million payrolled employees in Scotland. Compared with the same month the year before, the number of payrolled employees had risen by 3.1 per cent (73,000). This compares with a rise of 3.6 per cent for the UK over the same period.

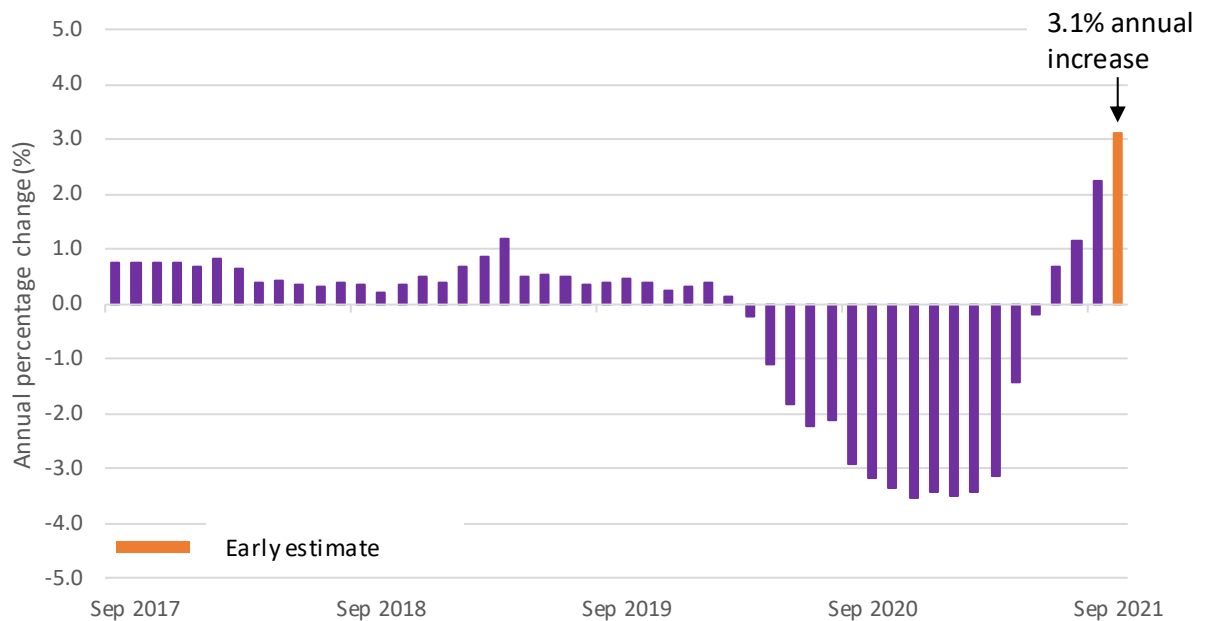
In November 2020, the lowest point following the start of the pandemic, there were 90,000 fewer payrolled employees in Scotland than prior to the pandemic (February 2020). However the estimated number of payrolled employees has been increasing since November 2020.

The estimated number of payrolled employees in Scotland in September 2021 fell by 0.5 per cent (12,000) compared with February 2020, the last month prior to the pandemic. This compares with a rise of 0.4 per cent for the UK over the same period.

**Chart 7: Payrolled Employees, Scotland, August 2016 to September 2021, seasonally adjusted**



**Chart 8: Annual Percentage Change in Payrolled Employees, Scotland, August 2017 to September 2021**



Source: PAYE RTI, all industries, seasonally adjusted, HMRC

Notes:

1. Early estimates for September 2021 are provided to give an indication of the likely level of employees as well as median pay in the latest period. The figures are based on around 85% of information being available. They are considered of lower quality and may be subject to revision in next month's release when between 98% to 99% of data will be available.
2. Annual percentage change rates for September 2021 are compared against September 2020, and so the reduction in employees seen following the beginning of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is no longer contributing to the annual percentage change rate. Annual percentage change rates are now compared against this lower baseline.



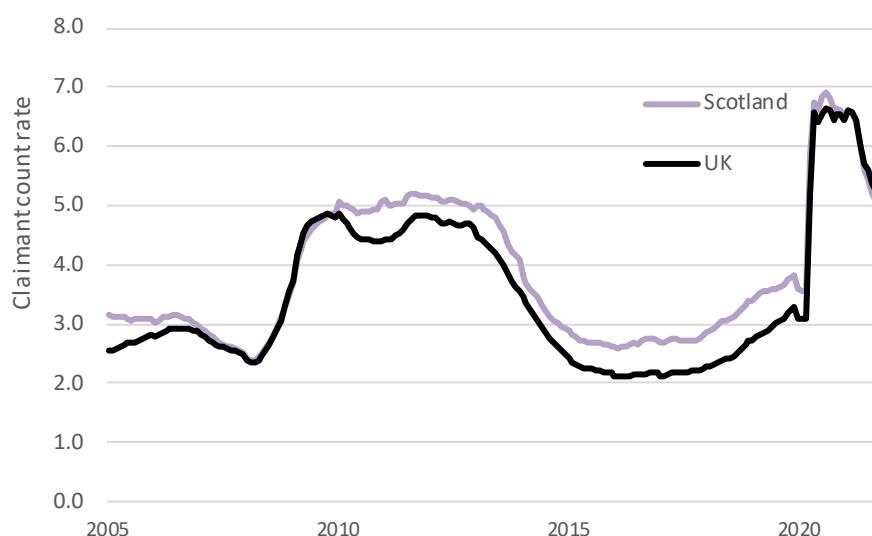
## 7. Claimant Count (experimental)

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The experimental Claimant Count includes Jobseeker's Allowance Claimants and those claimants of Universal Credit who were claiming principally for the reason of being unemployed (those in the "searching for work" conditionality regime). Those claiming such benefits may be wholly unemployed and seeking work, or may be employed but with low income and/or low hours, that make them eligible for unemployment-related benefit support. As part of the response to the pandemic, the rules about who can claim Universal Credit have changed, meaning an increased proportion of those claiming may actually still be in some kind of work. Therefore, changes in the Claimant Count over time will not be wholly because of changes in the number of people who are unemployed.

In September 2021, there were 161,700 claimants in Scotland, a decrease of 4,800 (-2.9 per cent) over the month but an increase of 48,600 (43.0 per cent) since March 2020 (pre-pandemic). The claimant count rate in September 2021 was 5.1 per cent, compared with 5.2 per cent for the UK as a whole.

**Chart 9: Claimant Count rate, Scotland and UK**



Source: Claimant Count (experimental), seasonally adjusted, ONS and DWP

## 8. HMRC earnings (experimental)

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.

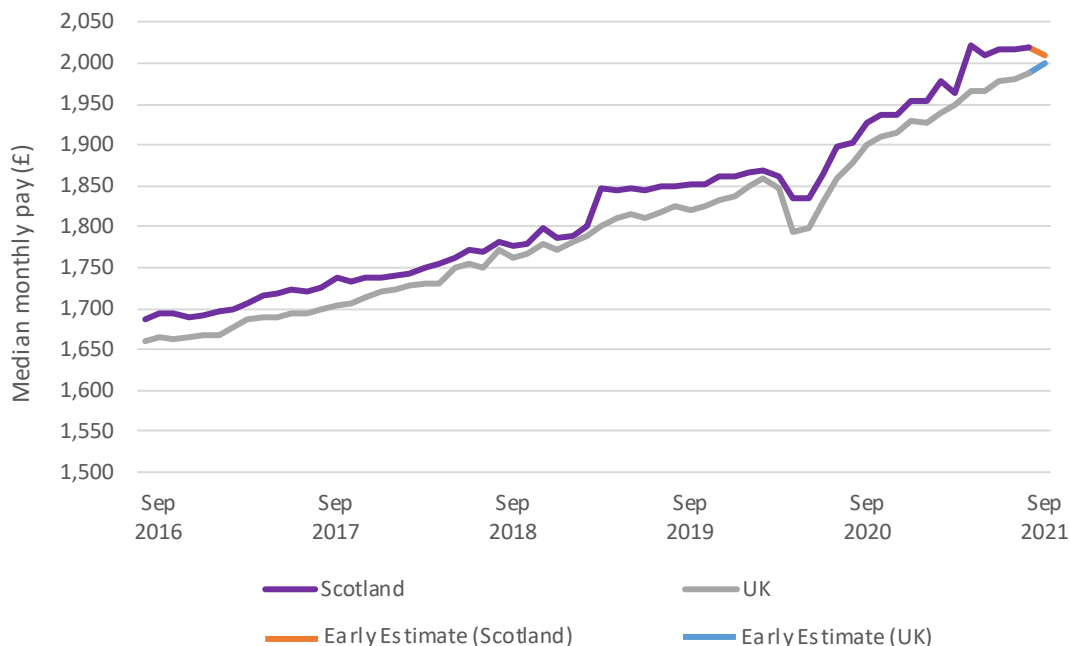
Earnings from Pay As You Earn Real Time Information show that median monthly pay, seasonally adjusted, for payrolled employees in Scotland in August 2021 was £2,020. Median monthly pay fell sharply between February 2020 and April 2020 but has been recovering since June 2020.

Compared with the same period the year before, median monthly pay for employees in Scotland increased by 6.1 per cent, above the UK increase of 5.7 per cent and above the pre-Covid peak annual growth of 5.5 per cent in March 2019.

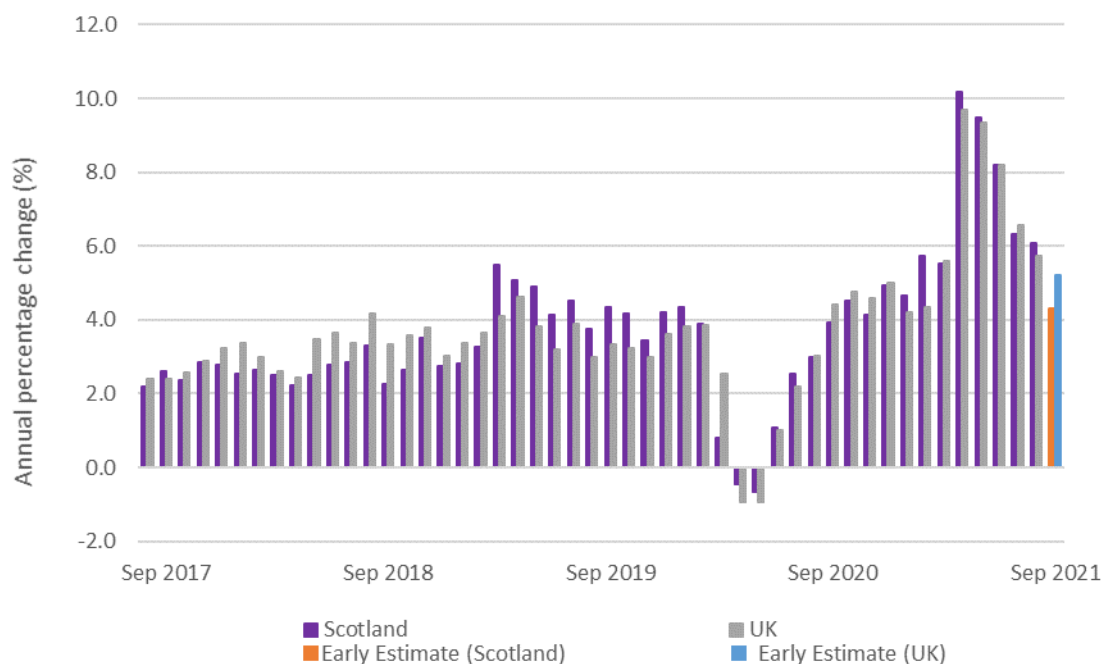
The latest early estimates for September 2021 indicate that median monthly pay for employees in Scotland increased to £2,009, an increase of 4.3 per cent compared to the same period the previous year. This is lower than the annual growth in median monthly pay for the UK over the same period (5.2 per cent).

The estimated median monthly pay for employees in Scotland in September 2021 increased by 7.4 per cent compared with February 2020, the last month prior to the pandemic. This is below the UK increase of 7.5 per cent over the same period.

**Chart 10: Median Monthly Pay, Scotland and UK, August 2016 to September 2021, seasonally adjusted**



**Chart 11: Annual Percentage Change in Median Monthly Pay, Scotland and UK, August 2017 to September 2021**



Source: PAYE RTI, all industries, seasonally adjusted, HMRC

Notes:

1. Early estimates for September 2021 are provided to give an indication of the likely level of employees as well as median pay in the latest period. The figures for September 2021 are based on around 85% of information being available. They are considered of lower quality and may be subject to revision in next month's release when between 98% to 99% of data will be available.
2. Annual percentage change rates for September 2021 are compared against September 2020, and so the reduction in median pay seen following the beginning of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is no longer contributing to the annual percentage change rate. Annual percentage change rates are now compared against this lower baseline.

HMRC have [reported](#) for the UK that the high level of pay growth in April 2021 is attributed to the record high in median pay in April 2021, combined with the suppressed level of median pay in April 2020 at the onset of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The advantage of considering median pay over a 12-month period is that the monthly variations are less volatile compared with the annual level. However, where there are shocks to the labour market like this, it may be useful to consider median pay growth over shorter time periods.

## 9. About the Labour Force Survey

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All estimates are sourced from the labour force survey with exception of those in section 6, 7 and 8.

### **Sources of information**

Information presented are sourced from the Labour Force Survey, a survey of households collected and published by the Office for National Statistics. Information are obtained from a sample survey and are therefore subject to some error.

### **Unemployment:**

The ILO definition of unemployment covers people who are: not in employment, want a job, have actively sought work in the previous 4 weeks and are available to start work within the next fortnight, or, out of work and have accepted a job which they are waiting to start in the next fortnight.

### **Unemployment rate:**

The number of unemployed people expressed as a percentage of the relevant economically active population.

### **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. People aged 16 or over are classed as in employment (as an employee or self-employed) by the LFS, if they have done at least one hour of paid work in the week prior to their LFS interview or if they have a job that they are temporarily away from. People who do unpaid work in a family business and people on Government-supported training and employment programs are also included according to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) convention.

**Employment rate:** The number of people in employment expressed as a percentage of the relevant population.

### **Economically inactive:**

Economically inactive people are not in employment, but do not satisfy all the criteria for unemployment. This group is comprised of 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 and those who do not want a job. For example, students not working or seeking work and those in retirement are classed as economically inactive. It can be useful for some purposes to consider only those who are both economically inactive and not of state pension age.

### **Economic inactivity rate:**

The number of economically inactive people expressed as a percentage of the relevant population.

## Reliability of these estimates

When estimates are based on a sample of the population, confidence limits can be used to assess the range of values that the true value lies between. 95% confidence intervals are included in Table 1. ONS publish these in the following tables for [Scotland](#) and [UK](#).

### What does the 95% confidence limit mean?

If, for example, we have an LFS estimate and confidence limit of 63% +/- 0.27%, this means that 19 times out of 20 we would expect the true rate to lie between 62.73% and 63.27%. Only in exceptional circumstances (1 in 20 times) would we expect the true rate to be outside the confidence interval around the LFS estimate. The smaller the confidence limits, the more reliable the estimate.

### What is statistical significance?

To determine whether a change is statistically significant, we first calculate the difference between 2 quarters or over the year. The difference between 2 quarters for a rate is measured in 'percentage point' terms. The confidence interval around this difference is published by [ONS](#). If the calculated change is greater than the sampling variability of the change, the change was determined to be statistically significant.

### Further links to information on reliability

Further information on reliability can be accessed in the ONS publication at [link](#). ONS note that regional estimates for the unemployment rate are quite volatile, which needs to be allowed for when considering the pattern of change over time. Sampling variability information is published at [link](#).

### Impact of the Coronavirus on the measurement of the labour market

ONS have published a summary at this [link](#) where full definitions are provided. In summary:

In response to the coronavirus pandemic, both the UK government and devolved administrations have implemented a wide range of policies. The interventions that are likely to be most significant in terms of the direct impact on the labour market are the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) from 20<sup>th</sup> April 2020 and the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) from 15<sup>th</sup> May 2020.

Applying the guidance on measuring labour market statistics, employees who are furloughed will be classified as employed, but temporarily away from work. This will mean that, all things being equal, furloughed workers will not reduce the number of people in employment (or the employment rate). However, the scheme will lead to an increase in the number of employees working no hours and an overall reduction in the number of hours worked. There may be a compensating effect if employees on furlough take other employment, which can be detected from the number of people with second jobs.

The expected impact of the SEISS in labour market statistics is that people will remain as self-employed, but may class themselves as temporarily away from work and record no hours of employment. However, as under the terms of the scheme, they can continue to work or take on other employment, their labour market status and number of hours worked may change during the scheme's lifespan.

Further information on sources is also published by ONS at:

[Understanding the impact on jobs and pay- how the ONS is now measuring the labour market](#)

## 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 via the following link:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/bulletins/earningsandemploymentfrompayasyouearnrealtimeinformationuk/previousReleases>

## Claimant Count

The experimental Claimant Count consists of claimants of Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) and some Universal Credit (UC) Claimants. The UC claimants that are included are 1) those that were recorded as not in employment (May 2013-April 2015), and 2) those claimants of Universal Credit who are required to search for work, i.e. within the Searching for Work conditionality regime as defined by the Department for Work & Pensions (from April 2015 onwards). The denominator for the claimant count rate is the claimant count plus workforce jobs. Estimates included in this publication are seasonally adjusted.

# 10. Other labour market statistics for Scotland

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## **Where can labour market data for Scotland be accessed**

Labour Force information for Scotland is also published on **nomisweb**

This release follows the ONS monthly release of [Regional Labour Market Statistics in the UK](#)

A range of Labour Market Statistics for Scotland are also published by the [Office for National Statistics](#)

## **Scottish Government Labour Market Statistics**

### **Labour Market [Monthly Brief](#)**

This additional monthly brief, published soon after Scotland's Labour Market Trends contains the latest key statistics for Scotland from the Labour Force Survey, Annual Population Survey, alternative claimant count and the claimant count. These cover topics including:

Labour market outcomes for equality groups

Latest alternative claimant count and claimant count by age and local authority, for Scotland and the UK

### **Youth labour market data (16-24 years) for Scotland**

Labour market information for young people (16-24 years) in Scotland, sourced from the Annual Population Survey (July 2020 to June 2021), is published in a [quarterly release](#) (15<sup>th</sup> September 2021).

### **Other SG labour market publications from the Annual Population Survey**

[Scotland's Labour Market: People, Places and Regions 2020/21](#)

[Scotland's Labour Market: People, Places and Regions – background tables and charts](#)

### **Information on characteristics of the workforce by sectors were published in a tool**

[Scotland's Labour Market - People Places and Regions - Industry Tables - 2019](#)

### **Other SG labour market publications**

[Quarterly Public Sector Employment Q2 2021](#)

[Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2020](#)

Other topical publications can be found at:

<https://www.gov.scot/collections/labour-market-statistics/>

# A National Statistics publication for Scotland

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