

Business support and labour market update

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to update the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Board on the work of the Economic Development & Regeneration Service, with a particular focus on targeted business support and employability.

2. Recommendations

The CPP Board is asked to:

- To note the updates on the local labour market, the range of impacts made by the Business Gateway team, progress through the Jobs Task Force, and closer partnership working with Heriot-Watt University
- Request a further report on outcomes in mid-2022.

3. Discussion

This report focuses on the diverse and complementary areas of work by the Business Gateway team within the Economic Development & Regeneration Service.

3.1 Monitoring the local economy and labour market

The Board will be aware that headline unemployment doubled to 6,500 local residents out of work in August 2020, following the initial Covid lockdown. Also, at that time, more than 29,000 local jobs were being maintained through the furlough scheme.

Local unemployment has reduced to 4,680 local residents, a rate of 4.0%. In context, the Scotland rate is 4.6% and UK-wide is 5.0%. The bulk of current unemployment, almost 3,700 local residents is concentrated in people aged 25 and older.

Furlough is currently protecting approximately a further 2,700 local jobs across most sectors, with hospitality, tourism and food services understandably the most impacted.

Finally, there is evidence of emerging skills mismatches in the local and wider economy. Against a backdrop of rising unemployment, we are aware of sectors struggling to find candidates for vacant posts. This is principally in distribution, engineering, life sciences, technology and hospitality (restaurants).

For full details, please see Appendix 1 "ESES Claimant Count"

3.2 Scrutinise the work of Business Gateway

The Business Gateway team is part of the Economic Development & Regeneration Service. Business Gateway provides confidential and impartial support to residents looking to start-up in business, local firms, new and existing 3rd sector organisations and our major employers.

All engagement with Business Gateway is client-led. Support is provided to individual clients and business owners/decision makers. Business Gateway also work closely with the West Lothian Social Enterprise Network to ensure network members receive the business support they need.

The team's key outcomes include helping residents to start their own business, enabling local firms to grow in a sustainable and inclusive manner and providing a single point of contact for our strategic employers.

At the onset of the pandemic, the Business Gateway team moved seamlessly to remote working. Clients were supported via video calls, web-based platforms, emails and telephone. The team responded to client needs by providing extra support in the evenings and weekends. Economic challenge has always been considered as a driver of new start businesses. In the year to March 2021, more than 260 new businesses started trading with help from Council's Business Gateway advisers.

The vision and commitment of local people to start their own business, especially in such challenging circumstances, is remarkable. The advisers delivered the range of start-up services to clients remotely. In terms of productivity, over 260 starts were achieved from only 352 initial meetings. This shows a determination to progress on the part of the customers; and it shows enhanced customer focus on the part of the advisers. These new start firms have created over 315 new jobs. The main business sectors are personal, professional and local services. 20% of all early stage firms go on to take premises, employ staff and grow the scale of the business. New starts are worth over £9.55 million to the local economy every year.

The Business Gateway team includes advisers who deal with existing, growing and relocating firms to West Lothian. The advisers supported over 1,300 local firms in the year to March 2021. In previous years, that figure would have been closer to 450 firms. Our priority sectors include Life Sciences, Manufacturing, Engineering, Construction and enabling technologies. Of the 1,313 businesses who engaged with us, almost 900 were understandably focused solely on Covid issues.

It is testament to their resilience and entrepreneurialism that 425 firms were also exploring issues around premises, new markets, working capital, Research &

Development, export regulation, digital marketing and carbon reduction projects. Council's Business Gateway advisers support firms who have combined annual sales in excess of £1.41 Billion per annum. While these firms employ over 8,300 staff, it is only 11% of total jobs in West Lothian. However, these firms account for more than 30% of the annual gross value add (GVA) of the West Lothian economy.

3.2.1 West Lothian Council Discretionary Fund

Over January/February 2021, the Scottish Government awarded West Lothian Council a total of £3.51 million to provide grant support to businesses through a Discretionary Fund. We deployed the funds in a targeted and proportionate manner. There was a smaller award of £5,000 to the 515 businesses who had not received any other COVID-19 response funds. This cohort is characterised by sole traders and/or firms without premises.

In addition, there was a higher one-off award of £15,000 - £30,000 to 54 slightly larger firms. This cohort is characterised as firms who have suffered lost sales/cashflow/profits but who may not have been required to close/restrict their operations. They will help drive economic recovery in West Lothian. They represent some of our best sectors including aerospace, engineering, renewables, food & drink, technology, manufacturing, construction and software development. This cohort of firms prioritised for the higher level of grant has combined sales of £253 million per annum. They employ over 2,200 staff, the majority of who are local residents. These firms are committing to recovery based on a number of indicators including reskilling/upskilling, improved productivity, environmental sustainability, and social inclusion.

In the three months to the end of June 2021, the Business Gateway team helped 60 new businesses to start trading. Over the same timescale, the team engaged with 260 established firms. This included 38 social enterprises, in particular the West Lothian Community Food Hub and the West Lothian Mental Health Forum.

In summarising the work to date of the Business Gateway team, it is not all about sales and wider economic impacts. The advisers have the trust of local people, some of whom pre-Covid had stable and established businesses. Covid-19 has damaged the economic wellbeing of some local firms. The Business Gateway advisers try to find solutions in complex circumstances. This is sometimes when businesses cannot see a viable way forward. The Board is asked to note the Business Gateway team's empathy and compassion in dealing with our local firms.

3.3 Update on the Jobs Task Force (JTF)

The West Lothian Jobs Task Force (JTF) brings together key partners to support the development and inclusive growth of the West Lothian economy. This collaborative working is a key element in achieving its priority outcomes of new jobs, enhanced skills and more life chances.

West Lothian's labour market faces severe challenges from rising unemployment, skills shortages and the end of furlough. The financial resources provided to the JTF help it to stimulate demand in local firms through new-job grants. New resources will support grants for lower-skill jobs at fair wages, and so divert some residents from unemployment. Support also enables firms to address skills shortages by supporting their investment in training/upskilling. JTF retains its core focus of supporting higher-value jobs.

Since its launch in June 2018, the JTF has supported projects with a value of over £8.23 million. This targeted support has created 460 new jobs. In response to high levels of unemployment and unfilled job vacancies across key sectors, further funding has been allocated to the JTF.

On 22 June 2021, West Lothian Council Executive agreed a further £1 million to help create an extra 300 jobs in 2021/22. Working with Finance colleagues, this gives JTF a current budget of £5.91 million to support new jobs, retraining and upskilling. This funding will provide local businesses with an incentive to recruit an unemployed resident. Each grant will average £3,500 per job for 300 new jobs, with a typical starting salary of £21,000. A fair uplift above the real living wage of £9.50 per hour/£18,500+ per annum.

In addition, we will continue to support higher-value new jobs. Local firms in key sectors can apply for £7,500 per new job. This will help create a further 500 new jobs and safeguard 1,750 jobs.

In June 2021, the Jobs Task Force approved funding of £512,500 to be targeted at delivering the following 5 project areas: -

(i) 30 high-value jobs in key sectors

Working with schools, College and universities we will offer local firms a job grant averaging £10,000 per job. This is towards minimum starting salaries of £25-£30,000 for cyber graduates from West Lothian College; for under/unemployed STEM graduates of 2019 onwards; for low-carbon Champions; and life sciences graduate apprenticeships.

(ii) 15 Enhanced productivity projects

We will enable firms to commit to enhanced productivity through product/process improvement.

(iii) 15 SMART carbon-reduction projects

We will work with 15 local firms to begin step-change reductions in their carbon footprint. Each business will develop a plan for enhanced sustainability across their trading operations.

(iv) Support 150 local people with training

There is an emphasis on entry-level training in to sectors struggling to recruit currently, particularly healthcare. In addition, low-carbon will be supported through wall-insulation training. And the third element of the training is in leadership and business improvement.

(v) Divert 35 young people at risk of criminality

Early intervention designed to prevent some of our most at-risk young people from lifestyles which, without intervention, could lead to Young Offenders Institutions/Prison.

The Board is asked to note that that these project areas develop the medium/longer-term work of the JTF around opportunity, inclusion, progression and prevention.

3.4 Links with Heriot-Watt University

Economic Development & Regeneration and West Lothian College are prioritising closer working with Heriot-Watt University (HWU). Existing links built-up over the years, have enabled a strong photonics cluster of businesses on Kirkton Campus, Livingston. The cluster includes Alter Tech, Helia Photonics and Techcomp. All these firms were started by alumni from Heriot-Watt University.

To help address skills gaps/productivity issues in local firms, we will work with HWU on placing STEM graduates, as part of the Communities Renewal Fund project. In the medium-term, we can help firms address skills gaps by encouraging them to offer Graduate Apprenticeships. HWU offer a wide range of Honours Apprenticeships incl. BEng Electrical Engineering, BSc Data Science and MA IT Management.

A further update on progress will be provided at a future meeting of the Partnership.

See Appendix 2 – Graduate Apprenticeships

4. Summary of Implications

Relevant LOIP outcome (s)	All
Relevant LOIP performance indicator (s)	All
Resources	This work has been undertaken within existing resources.
Link to prevention/community engagement	Support for businesses and residents helps create capacity for economic growth and higher-value job opportunities for local residents. Good entry-level roles for our young people help them avoid negative outcomes.
Impact on inequalities	A diverse and resilient local economy helps create more opportunities, this contributes to reduced inequalities.
Key risks	None identified at present.

5. Consultations

There is close working across the range of key partner agencies to inform and develop better support for businesses and residents.

6. Conclusions

The Business Gateway team continues to deliver value-added services to clients, businesses and communities. Performance is very good and the team remains highly motivated to deliver quality business support.

Report written by/contact details/date

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References

N/A

Appendices

Appendix1 – Labour market update

Appendix 2 – Graduate Apprenticeships

Edinburgh and South East Regional Claimant Count September 2021 Summary Update

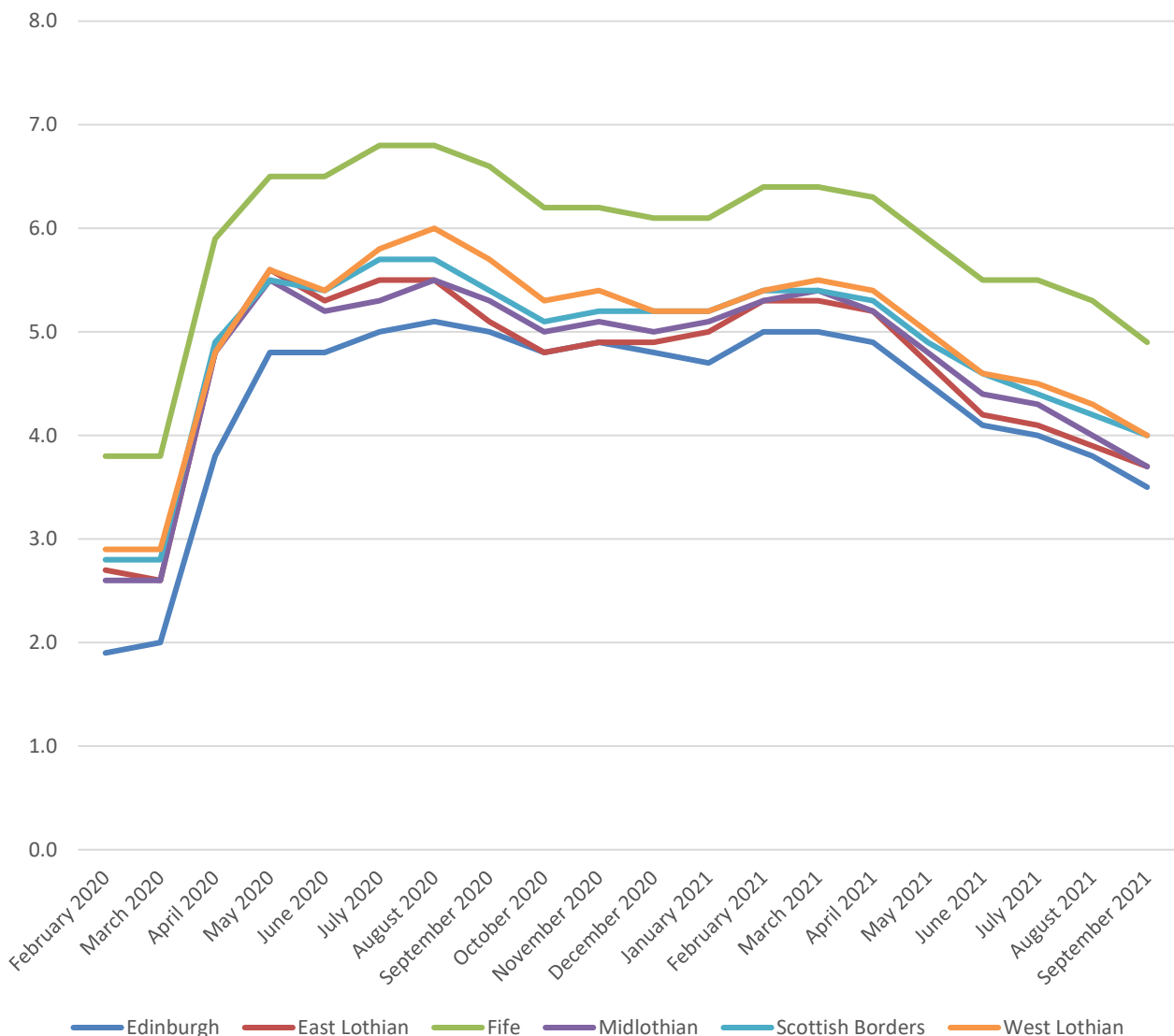
Between February 2020 and September 2021:

- ↑ UK Claimant Count increased by 66%
- ↑ Scottish Claimant Count increased by 39%
- ↑ Edinburgh Claimant Count increased by 84%
- ↑ City Region Claimant Count increased by 50%

Between August 2021 and September 2021:

- ↓ UK Claimant Count decreased by 3%
- ↓ Scottish Claimant Count decreased 5%
- ↓ Edinburgh Claimant Count decreased by 6%
- ↓ City Region Claimant Count decreased by 6%

City Region Local Authorities Claimant Count Rate



City Region Summary

1. In September 2021 the claimant count for the City Region was 36,465. Of these
 - a. 6,530 were 16-24 year olds
 - b. 21,485 were 25-49 year olds
 - c. 8,455 were 50 or older
2. The overall claimant count in the Region is now 50% higher than it was in February 2020.
3. In September 2021 there were 22,140 male claimants and 14,325 female claimants. This represents an increase of 49% for males and 51% for females.
4. The ward with the greatest claimant count is Forth in Edinburgh with 1,280 claimants in September 2021.
5. The ward with the lowest claimant count is North Berwick Coastal in East Lothian with 165 claimants in September 2021
6. In August 2021 there were 43,904 working individuals claiming Universal Credit in the Region.

Edinburgh Summary

1. In September 2021 the claimant count for Edinburgh was 13,080. Of these
 - a. 1,925 were 16-24 year olds
 - b. 8,125 were 25-49 year olds
 - c. 3,030 were 50 or older
2. The overall claimant count in Edinburgh is now 84% higher than it was in February 2020.
3. In September 2021 there were 8,180 male claimants and 4,900 female claimants. This represents an increase of 84% for both males and females since February 2020.
4. The Edinburgh ward with the greatest claimant count is Forth with 1,280 claimants in September 2021 and a claimant rate of 6%.
5. The Edinburgh ward with the lowest claimant count is Corstorphine/Murrayfield with 265 claimants in September 2021.
6. In August 2021 there were 14,694 working individuals claiming Universal Credit in Edinburgh

East Lothian Summary

1. In September 2021 the claimant count for East Lothian was 2,435. Of these
 - a. 445 were 16-24 year olds
 - b. 1,410 were 25-49 year olds
 - c. 580 were 50 or older
2. The overall claimant count in East Lothian is now 38% higher than it was in February 2020.
3. In September 2021 there were 1,415 male claimants and 1,020 female claimants. This represents an increase of 41% for males and 34% for females since February 2020.
4. The East Lothian ward with the largest claimant count is Musselburgh with 660 claimants in September 2021 and a claimant rate of 5.2%.
5. The East Lothian ward with the lowest claimant count is North Berwick Coastal with 165 claimants in September 2021.
6. In August 2021 there were 3,648 working individuals claiming Universal Credit in East Lothian.

Fife Summary

1. In September 2021 the claimant count for Fife was 11,465. Of these
 - a. 2,245 were 16-24 year olds
 - b. 6,555 were 25-49 year olds
 - c. 2,655 were 50 or older
2. The overall claimant count in Fife is now 31% higher than it was in February 2020.

3. In September 2021 there were 6,920 male claimants and 4,545 female claimants. This represents an increase of 26% for males and 38% for females since February 2020.
4. The Fife ward with the greatest claimant count is Buckhaven, Methil and Wemyss Villages with 1,080 claimants in September 2021 and a claimant rate of 9.8%.
5. The Fife ward with the lowest claimant count is St Andrews with 175 claimants in September 2021.
6. In August 2021 there were 12,838 working individuals claiming Universal Credit in Fife.

Midlothian Summary

1. In September 2021 the claimant count for Midlothian was 2,105. Of these
 - a. 395 were 16-24 year olds
 - b. 1,270 were 25-49 year olds
 - c. 440 were 50 or older
2. The overall claimant count in Midlothian is now 43% higher than it was in February 2020.
3. In September 2021 there were 1,275 male claimants and 825 female claimants. This represents an increase of 47% for males and 36% for females since February 2020.
4. The Midlothian ward with the largest claimant count is Dalkeith with 420 claimants in September 2021 and a claimant rate of 4.7%.
5. The Midlothian ward with the lowest claimant count is Midlothian West with 285 claimants in September 2021.
6. In August 2021 there were 3,368 working individuals claiming Universal Credit in Midlothian.

Scottish Borders Summary

1. In September 2021 the claimant count for Scottish Borders was 2,700. Of these
 - a. 540 were 16-24 year olds
 - b. 1,410 were 25-49 year olds
 - c. 750 were 50 or older
2. The overall claimant count in Scottish Borders is now 45% higher than it was in February 2020.
3. In September 2021 there were 1,590 male claimants and 1,110 female claimants. This represents an increase of 42% for males and 50% for females since February 2020.
4. The Scottish Borders ward with the greatest claimant count is Galashiels and District with 540 claimants in September 2021 and a claimant rate of 5.5%.
5. The Scottish Borders ward with the lowest claimant count is Mid Berwickshire with 180 claimants in September 2021.
6. In August 2021 there were 3,290 working individuals claiming Universal Credit in Scottish Borders.

West Lothian Summary

1. In September 2021 the claimant count for West Lothian was 4,680. Of these
 - a. 980 were 16-24 year olds
 - b. 2,715 were 25-49 year olds
 - c. 990 were 50 or older
2. The overall claimant count in West Lothian is now 37% higher than it was in February 2020.
3. In September 2021 there were 2,760 male claimants and 1,925 female claimants. This represents an increase of 40% for males and 32% for females since February 2020.
4. The West Lothian ward with the largest claimant count is Whitburn and Blackburn with 780 claimants in September 2021 and a claimant rate of 5.7%.
5. The West Lothian Ward with the lowest claimant count is Linlithgow with 200 claimants in September 2021.
6. In August 2021 there were 6,061 working individuals claiming Universal Credit in West Lothian

Edinburgh and South East Regional Claimant Count September 2021 Full Update

Introduction

On the 31st September 2021 the Job Retention Scheme, furlough, ended. From the last available data, it can be seen that as at the 31st August there were around 23,100 people still benefiting from the scheme within the city region. The Table below breaks this down by Local Authority.

	Female	Male	Total
East Lothian	900	800	1,800
Edinburgh	4,800	5,300	10,100
Fife	2,500	2,800	5,300
Midlothian	800	800	1,500
Scottish Borders	900	800	1,700
West Lothian	1,200	1,500	2,700

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/coronavirus-job-retention-scheme-statistics-7-october-2021>

It will take some time before some (if any) of these clients start to show up in the claimant count data, and it will be impossible from NOMIS to determine if any clients who move onto a benefit in October had been on furlough the previous month.

Institute of Employment Studies

On the 12th October IES published a briefing note¹ in which they indicated that labour supply isn't keeping up with labour demand. Based on the UK as a whole, they reflected on the fact that unemployment has fallen back to 4.5% while vacancies have reached a new peak of 1.1 million. They found that there are now 1.45 unemployed people per vacancy – the lowest figure in at least half a century, making this likely to be the tightest labour market that we have seen in modern times.

They comment on economic activity overall (i.e. those either in work or looking/ available for work) which is now nearly one million (980,000) below pre-crisis trends. The IES estimate that approximately one third of this 'missing million' is explained by a smaller population, mainly due to lower migration, while two thirds is due to higher 'economic inactivity' – with 310,000 fewer older people in the labour market than we would have expected (especially older women), and 210,000 fewer young people (especially younger men). The fall in youth participation has been offset entirely by higher student numbers; but the fall in participation for older people has coincided with a large increase in the number of people out of work due to long-term ill health – which has reached its highest level since 2010, at 2.2 million – and more people retiring early. In total, 6.2

¹ https://www.employment-studies.co.uk/system/files/resources/files/IES%20briefing%20paper.1%20-%20Labour%20Market%20Statistics%20October%202021.pdf?utm_source=IES+emailing+list&utm_campaign=d7f9ea9ff5-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_05_14_03_45_COPY_04&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_f11585705b-d7f9ea9ff5-364968444

million people are not looking or available for work due to caring, long-term ill health or being students – with 1.3 million of these saying that they want to work.

Fraser of Allender Reports

The FAI published a report at the end of September² which provides a commentary on quarter 3 economic data. In this they suggest that the Scottish economy is set to recover to pre-pandemic levels three months earlier than previously thought, predicting growth of 6.5% in 2021 and 4.8% in 2022. The economy is now predicted to get back to pre-pandemic levels in April 2022. The FAI director Mairi Spowage did raise a note of caution saying “...there are several reasons that growth could stall. If new public health restrictions need to be imposed, or if the end of the furlough scheme and the Universal Credit uplift lead to an easing off in consumer spending, or supply chain disruption and shortages continue, the recovery could flatten off or even go into reverse.”

Business Insights and Conditions Survey

On the 15th October the latest (publication number 28) Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) were released for Scotland³. The key findings from this report are as follows;

- In the period 20 September to 3 October 2021, the share of businesses 'currently trading' was estimated at 99.5% - up from 99.4% in the previous period and the highest rate since comparable estimates began in June 2020.
- All businesses in the Arts, Entertainment & Recreation and Accommodation & Food Services industry sectors were 'currently trading'.
- The share of the workforce on furlough leave was estimated at 4.8% in the period 6 September to 3 October 2021 - down from 5.9% in the previous period.
- In the latest period, the Arts, Entertainment & Recreation industry sector continued to have the highest share of the workforce on furlough leave - estimated at 15.8%.

Office for National Statistics

On the 12th October ONS released data that looked at the national UK labour market⁴. This reported that:

- The number of payroll employees showed another monthly increase, up 207,000 to a record 29.2 million in September 2021, returning to pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic (February 2020) levels.
- The number of job vacancies in July to September 2021 was a record high of 1,102,000, an increase of 318,000 from its pre-pandemic (January to March 2020) level; this was the second consecutive month that the three-month average has risen over one million. All industry sectors were above or equal to their January to March 2020 pre-pandemic levels in July to September 2021, with Accommodation and food service activities increasing the most, by nearly 50,000 (59%). The experimental single-month vacancy estimates recorded almost 1.2 million in September 2021, which is a record high.

² <https://fraserofallender.org/fraser-of-allender-institute-economic-commentary-2021-q3/>

³ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/bics-weighted-scotland-estimates-data-to-wave-40/>

⁴

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/uklabourmarket/october2021>

Overall Claimant Count

On the 12th October NOMIS released claimant count data for September. Looking in detail at the claimant count, it can be seen that whilst every area of the UK experienced an increase in the number of claimants, the peak claimant count was recorded at different times depending on the geography, the gender and the age of the claimant. In this issue of the claimant count report the tables will reflect this so that the 'peak' claimant count will reflect when the actual variable did peak rather than taking a figure for August 2020 to reflect all areas.

Table 1 looks at the 12 regions and countries of the UK and indicates

- claimant count February 2020
- the month that the peak claimant count was recorded
- what that was
- the percentage increase between February 2020 and this 'peak claimant count'
- claimant count September 2021
- the percentage fall between 'peak claimant count' and September 2021

From Table 1 it can be seen that the North West hit its highest claimant count very early in the pandemic and it had grown by 95% between February and May 2021. Compare this to the West Midlands where the peak claimant count didn't materialise until February 2021. The majority of regions and countries hit a peak in August 2020 and since then the claimant count has been falling, albeit in an irregular manner, but overall the trend has been down.

Table 1: National Claimant Count Picture

Area	February 2020 Count	Claimant Count Peak		Percentage Change	September 2021 Claimant Count	Percentage Change
		Month	Count			
United Kingdom	1,255,770	Aug 2020	2,688,110	114%	2,079,275	-23%
East	89,890	Aug 2020	213,715	138%	158,125	-26%
East Midlands	80,915	Aug 2020	170,220	110%	129,810	-24%
London	184,765	Sep 2020	478,165	159%	397,320	-17%
North East	75,560	Aug 2020	123,720	64%	95,440	-23%
North West	167,055	May 2020	326,490	95%	255,520	-22%
Northern Ireland	29,910	May 2020	63,860	114%	48,120	-25%
Scotland	114,605	Aug 2020	224,840	96%	159,095	-29%
South East	119,620	Aug 2020	300,975	152%	221,580	-26%
South West	75,595	Aug 2020	180,915	139%	122,625	-32%
Wales	60,375	Aug 2020	118,905	97%	86,075	-28%
West Midlands	141,095	Feb 2021	269,985	91%	223,045	-17%
Yorkshire & Humber	116,390	Nov 2020	219,515	89%	182,515	-17%

Source: NOMIS 12/10/2021

In London and the South East there had been a 159% and 152% increase in the claimant count respectively. Compare this to the North East where the claimant count 'only' increased by 64%. The claimant rate in London is, in September 2021, 3 percentage points higher than it was pre pandemic. For every other area of the UK the rate tends to be between 1 and 2 percentage points higher.

Table 2 looks specifically at the situation in Scotland and focuses on Scottish Local Authorities. Once again it is clear that different areas peaked at different times ranging from a May 2020 peak for East

Lothian and Argyll and Bute through to a February 2021 peak for Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. With the exception of Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire most Scottish Local Authorities recorded their highest claimant counts around summer 2020. Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire are very likely to be charting a slightly different course due to the importance of the oil industry to the local economy there.

Table 2: Claimant Count - Scottish LAs

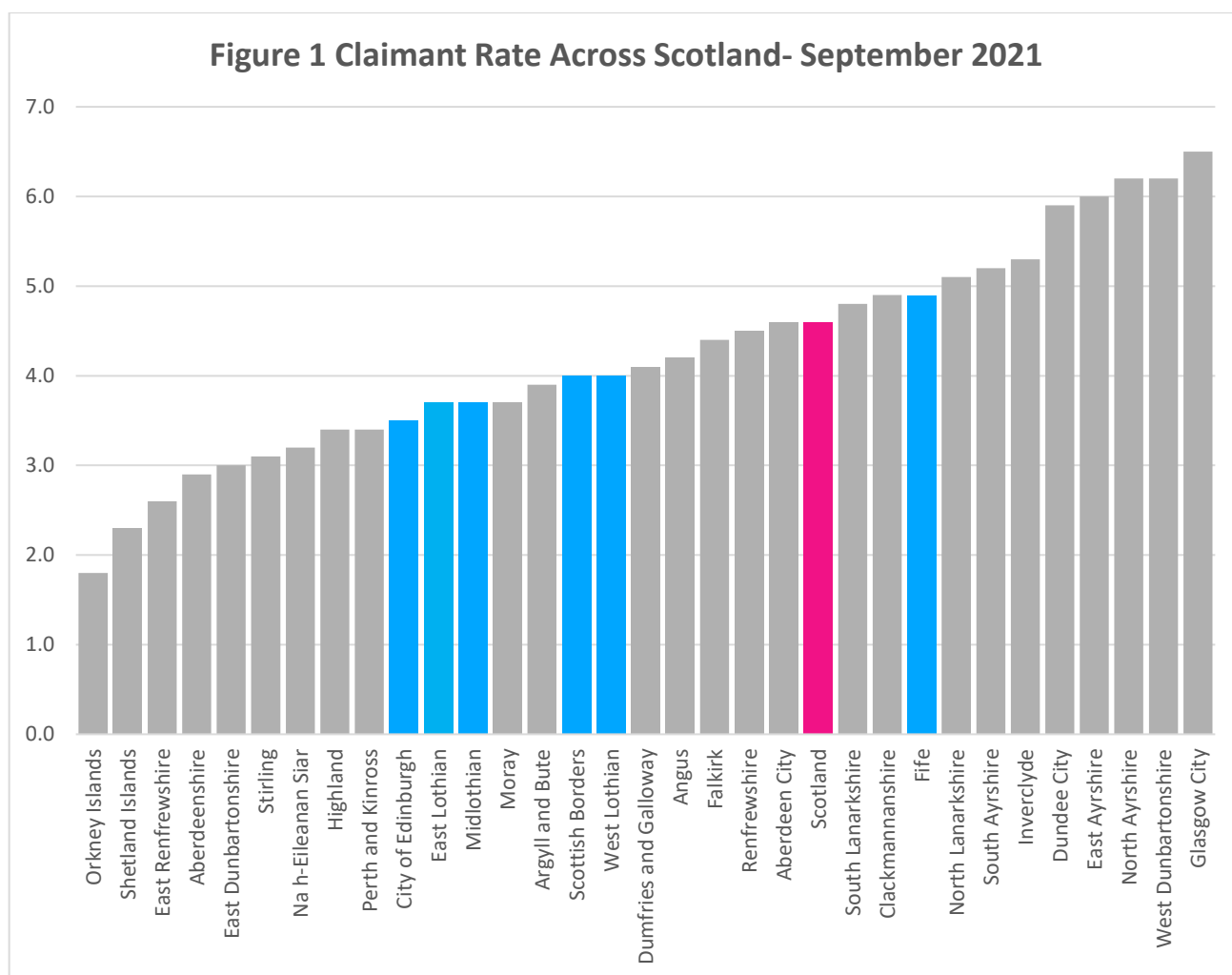
Area	Feb 2020	Peak Claimant Count		Percentage Change Feb 2020 to Peak	Sep 2021	Percentage Change Peak to Sep 2021
		Month	Count			
Aberdeen City	4,150	Feb-21	9,725	134%	7,225	-26%
Aberdeenshire	2,975	Feb-21	6,655	124%	4,715	-29%
Angus	2,040	Jul-20	3,960	94%	2,865	-28%
Argyll and Bute	1,530	May-20	3,290	115%	1,955	-41%
City of Edinburgh	7,105	Aug-20	18,840	165%	13,080	-31%
Clackmannanshire	1,390	Aug-20	2,255	62%	1,550	-31%
Dumfries and Galloway	2,950	May-20	5,115	73%	3,530	-31%
Dundee City	4,530	Aug-20	7,490	65%	5,800	-23%
East Ayrshire	3,685	Aug-20	6,280	70%	4,540	-28%
East Dunbartonshire	1,230	Aug-20	2,985	143%	1,940	-35%
East Lothian	1,765	May-20	3,680	108%	2,435	-34%
East Renfrewshire	950	Jul-20	2,415	154%	1,460	-40%
Falkirk	3,300	Jul-20	6,335	92%	4,440	-30%
Fife	8,765	Aug-20	15,840	81%	11,465	-28%
Glasgow City	20,055	Aug-20	38,205	91%	29,240	-23%
Highland	3,715	Jul-20	8,430	127%	4,805	-43%
Inverclyde	2,255	Jul-20	3,275	45%	2,530	-23%
Midlothian	1,470	Aug-20	3,145	114%	2,105	-33%
Moray	1,550	Aug-20	3,030	95%	2,140	-29%
Na h-Eileanan Siar	465	Aug-20	880	89%	495	-44%
North Ayrshire	4,600	Jul-20	7,290	58%	5,045	-31%
North Lanarkshire	8,230	Aug-20	15,870	93%	11,070	-30%
Orkney Islands	195	Aug-20	420	115%	245	-42%
Perth and Kinross	1,865	Aug-20	4,595	146%	3,115	-32%
Renfrewshire	4,025	Aug-20	7,780	93%	5,205	-33%
Scottish Borders	1,860	Jul-20	3,835	106%	2,700	-30%
Shetland Islands	265	Sep-20	545	106%	320	-41%
South Ayrshire	2,790	Aug-20	4,960	78%	3,450	-30%
South Lanarkshire	7,015	Aug-20	13,725	96%	9,590	-30%
Stirling	1,540	Jul-20	3,125	103%	1,875	-40%
West Dunbartonshire	2,930	Jul-20	4,865	66%	3,475	-29%
West Lothian	3,425	Aug-20	7,005	105%	4,680	-33%
Scotland	114,605	Aug-20	224,840	96%	159,095	-29%

Source: NOMIS 12/10/2021

The data highlights that whilst Scotland recorded a 96% increase in the claimant count, this varies from a 45% increase in Inverclyde through to a 165% increase in Edinburgh. Generally, those that recorded the higher increases have also recorded relatively large falls in the claimant count. For example, whilst Edinburgh recorded a 165% increase between February 2020 and August 2020, a fall of 31% has been recorded since then.

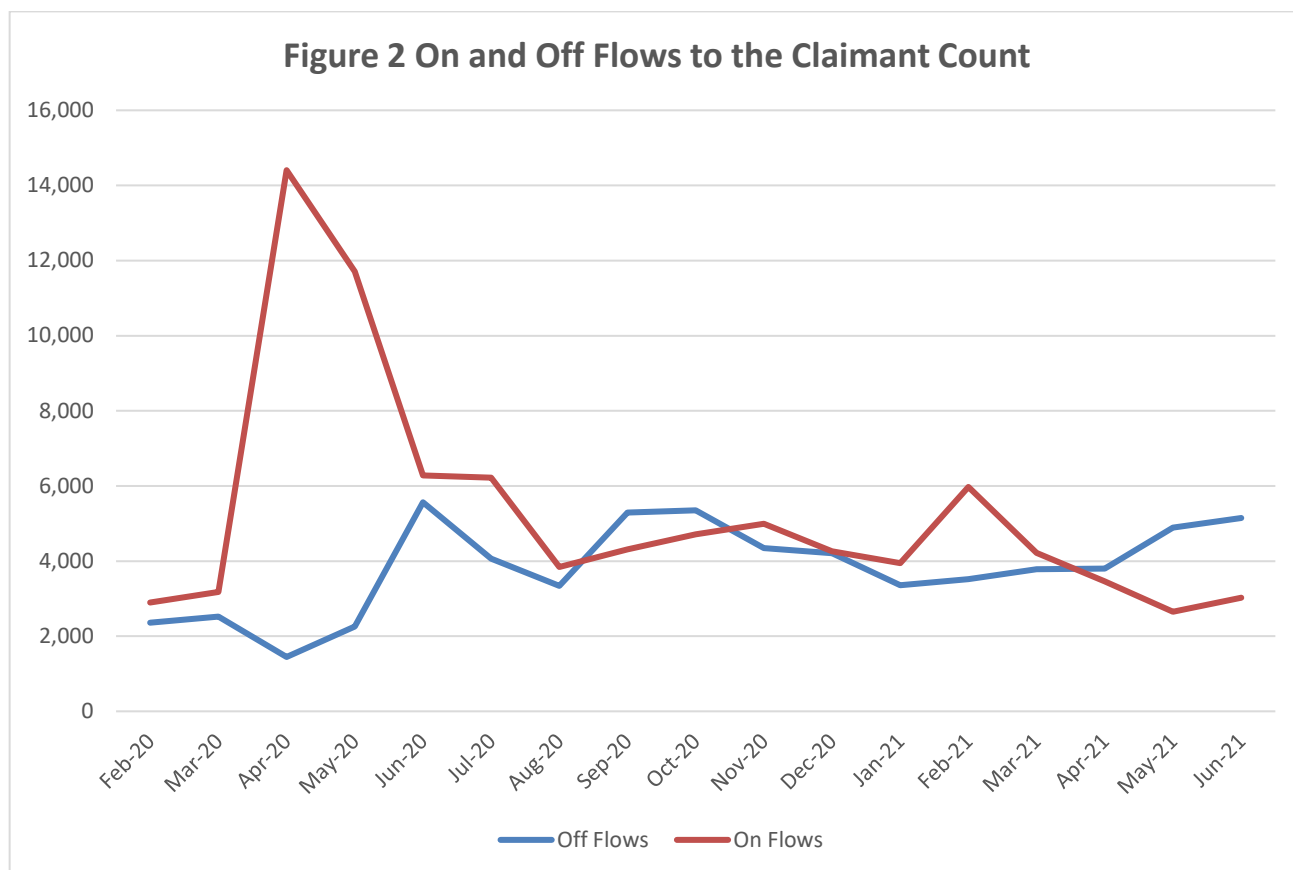
However examining the data further suggests that it isn't as simple as those that had the greatest increase in the claimant count have also recorded the greatest falls, and it can be seen that for some areas the claimant count has fallen faster than it had risen, suggesting that these areas may well return to a pre-pandemic situation sooner. Local Authorities where this is the case include Na h-Eileanan Siar, Highlands and Orkney.

Figure 1 below looks at the claimant rate by Local Authority across Scotland as a whole. From this it can be seen that, except for Fife, every Local Authority in the City Region has a rate that is lower than the Scottish average.



Source: NOMIS 12/10/2021

Figure 2 below looks at the on an off flow data for the claimant count in the City Region. It can be seen that there was an increase in the number of people moving onto the claimant count in the spring and early summer of 2020 and another in February 2021. Over the course of the pandemic there was a period towards the end of 2020 when more individuals were leaving the claimant count than were moving onto the benefit. This balance has returned this year and since April 2021 every month more people have been leaving the claimant count than moving onto it.



Source: Stat-xplore 14/10/2021

Gender Profile

Turning now to look at the gender profile of the claimants in the City Region. Table 3a and 3b look at the number of claimants of each gender as of February 2020, and compares this with the peak claimant month for each gender and for each LA- these are highlighted in yellow in the tables below.

Two points are worth highlighting. Firstly, in three LA areas the female claimant count recorded a higher percentage increase than that of males and this is reflected in Table 3a whilst Table 3b looks at the three LAs where the increase has been greater for male claimants. This difference could be due to differences in the type of jobs available in particular areas or if particular sectors – especially those that have been worst affected by the pandemic- are more likely to employ females than males. One additional point to make is that in some instance there is a difference in when the claimant count by gender peaks. It tends to be that across the region the number of female claimants don't peak until a month or two after the male claimant count has recorded a peak level. This difference is worth considering as it indicates that the position for female claimants continued to get worse after the claimant count for males had peaked.

The second point is that the percentage increase from February through to when the claimant count peaked wasn't followed by similar falls- ie largest increases didn't necessarily lead to the largest falls. For example, in Edinburgh whilst the claimant count for females increased by 14 percentage points more than it did for males at the height of the pandemic, it has so far only fallen by 4 percentage points more. In Scottish Borders whilst the claimant count for females increased by 11 percentage points more than for males, so far there is **no difference** in how the claimant count is falling. This could all be a result of lags, possibly linked to sectors reopening and it may just take the claimant count for females longer to return to the same position as it was pre-pandemic. However,

there is the concern that in these LA areas some of these women may be finding it more difficult to return to the labour market.

**Table 3a: Change in Gender Split Across the City Region
-LAs where Female Claimants Increased Most**

Date	Edinburgh		Scottish Borders		Fife	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
February 2020	2,665	4,435	740	1,120	3,290	5,475
July 2020	7,010	11,275	1,565	2,275	5,970	9,760
August 2020	7,315	11,530	1,585	2,240	6,070	9,770
September 2021	4,900	8,180	1,110	1,590	4,545	6,920
Increase	174%	160%	114%	103%	84%	78%
Decrease	-33%	-29%	-30%	-30%	-25%	-29%

Source: NOMIS 12/10/2021

Table 3b below looks at the other 3 LAs. In these cases, the male claimant count rose faster, but it has been balanced by the fact that the claimant rate for males then fell faster, maybe not by much, but by a difference that is noticeable.

Table 3b: Change in Gender Split Across the City Region- Male Claimants Fastest Rise

	Midlothian		East Lothian		West Lothian	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
February 2020	605	865	760	1,005	1,455	1,970
May 2020	1,190	1,970	1,505	2,180	2,590	4,050
July 2020	1,195	1,865	1,470	2,145	2,665	4,130
August 2020	1,220	1,920	1,510	2,125	2,785	4,225
March 2021	1,245	1,845	1,490	1,995	2,615	3,910
September 2021	825	1,275	1,020	1,415	1,925	2,760
Increase	106%	128%	99%	117%	91%	114%
Decrease	-34%	-35%	-32%	-35%	-31%	-35%

Source: NOMIS 12/10/2021

Age Profile

There has been some concern over how different age groups have been affected differently by the economic restrictions imposed to tackle covid. Initial statistics saw a significant increase in the number of younger claimants and as will be highlighted latter, an increase in claimants from areas that had relatively small claimant numbers prior to February 2020. The general conclusion is that the sectors worst affected (hospitality, retail, leisure, etc.) has a younger workforce and as these sectors closed many of the employees who happened to be young found that they became unemployed. The next set of tables look at this by broad age groups and again will focus on when the claimant count for these age groups peaked.

Previous tables had indicated that there had been differences in when the claimant count peaked, either by geography or by gender. Table 4 highlights that this is also the case in terms of age bands. The number of 16-24 year olds claiming peaked in July 2020 and this was the case across the region with the exception of West Lothian. For 25-49 year olds the peak in the claimant count was generally a month later in August 2020. Again, there is one exception and that is Scottish Borders that saw the highest recorded claimant count in July 2020. Compare this to the situation of those aged 50 or over. Overall, it is similar to that for the other age groups with peaks in 4 of the 5 LAs being recorded in July or August, However, there does appear to be a lag in Edinburgh where the

peak wasn't reached till November 2020 and in Midlothian where the claimant count for those aged 50 or over wasn't recorded till February 2021.

Table 4: Change in Claimants by Age Across the City Region (All)

16-24 Year Olds-All	Edinburgh	East Lothian	Fife	Midlothian	Scottish Borders	West Lothian	City Region
Feb 2020	1,065	315	1,740	325	415	735	4,595
July 2020	3,290	795	3,555	695	885	1,550	10,770
Aug 2020	3,225	755	3,500	685	880	1,570	10,615
Sep 2021	1,925	445	2,245	395	540	980	6,530
Increase	209%	152%	104%	114%	113%	114%	134%
Decrease	-41%	-44%	-37%	-43%	-39%	-38%	-39%
25-49 Year Olds-All	Edinburgh	East Lothian	Fife	Midlothian	Scottish Borders	West Lothian	City Region
Feb 2020	4,310	1,020	4,990	865	975	1,965	14,125
July 2020	11,250	1,995	8,715	1,735	1,960	3,840	29,495
Aug 2020	11,715	2,015	8,775	1,795	1,955	3,940	30,195
Sep 2021	8,125	1,410	6,555	1,270	1,410	2,715	21,485
Increase	172%	98%	76%	108%	101%	101%	114%
Decrease	-31%	-30%	-25%	-29%	-28%	-31%	-29%
50+ All	Edinburgh	East Lothian	Fife	Midlothian	Scottish Borders	West Lothian	City Region
Feb 2020	1,730	430	2,030	280	470	725	5,665
May 2020	3,710	875	3,450	645	1,020	1,410	11,110
Aug 2020	3,900	865	3,565	665	995	1,495	11,485
Nov 2020	3,985	815	3,365	635	960	1,425	11,185
Feb 2021	4,115	885	3,505	675	965	1,395	11,540
Sep 2021	3,030	580	2,665	440	750	990	8,455
Increase	130%	101%	76%	141%	117%	106%	103%
Decrease	-24%	-33%	-25%	-35%	-26%	-34%	-26%

Source: NOMIS 12/10/2021

Looking at the increase and decrease statistics for nearly all Local Authorities the claimant count for 16-24 year olds increased the most of all age groups. There were two exceptions. In Midlothian whilst 16 -24 year old claimants increased by 114% between February 2020 and July 2020, claimants aged 50 or over increased by 141% between February 2020 and February 2021. In Scottish Borders 16-24 year old claimants increased by 113% between February 2020 and July 2020 compared to a 117% increase in the claimant count for those aged 50 or over.

In terms of falls, the claimant count across the region has fallen by 39% for 16-24 year olds since the peak, for 25-49 year olds it has fallen by 29% and for those over the age of 50 it has fallen by 26%. Again, there are differences depending on the Local Authority that is examined. For example, the number of 16-24 year old claimants in East Lothian has fallen by 44% compared to a 24% fall in the number of claimants aged over 50 in Edinburgh.

Tables 5 and 6 below look at the 6 Local Authorities and the City Region in terms of age and in these two tables it is broken down further by gender. This highlights gender differences in

- when the claimant count peaked
- the degree to which the claimant count increased
- the degree to which the claimant count has decreased

Table 5: Change in Claimants by Age Across the City Region (Male)

16-24 Year Olds-Male	Edinburgh	East Lothian	Fife	Midlothian	Scottish Borders	West Lothian	City Region
Feb 2020	630	185	1,120	205	245	435	2,820
Jul 2020	1,910	475	2,215	425	510	940	6,475
Aug 2020	1,885	445	2,155	430	495	950	6,360
Sep 2021	1,225	265	1,370	235	320	575	3,990
Increase	203%	157%	98%	110%	108%	118%	130%
Decrease	-36%	-44%	-38%	-45%	-37%	-39%	-38%
25-49 Year Olds-Male	Edinburgh	East Lothian	Fife	Midlothian	Scottish Borders	West Lothian	City Region
Feb 2020	2,680	575	3,105	495	580	1,115	8,550
May 2020	7,040	1,235	5,445	1,170	1,185	2,355	18,430
Jul 2020	7,000	1,195	5,445	1,050	1,175	2,365	18,230
Aug 2020	7,200	1,180	5,435	1,095	1,155	2,415	18,480
Sep 2021	5,050	820	3,955	765	815	1,605	13,010
Increase	169%	108%	75%	121%	104%	117%	116%
Decrease	-30%	-31%	-27%	-30%	-31%	-34%	-30%
50+ Male	Edinburgh	East Lothian	Fife	Midlothian	Scottish Borders	West Lothian	City Region
Feb 2020	1,125	245	1,250	170	300	420	3,510
May 2020	2,350	510	2,110	400	615	845	6,830
Aug 2020	2,445	500	2,180	400	590	860	6,975
Feb 2021	2,545	500	2,105	405	555	810	6,920
Sep 2021	1,905	335	1,595	275	455	575	5,140
Increase	126%	108%	74%	138%	105%	105%	99%
Decrease	-25%	-34%	-27%	-32%	-26%	-33%	-26%

Source: NOMIS 12/10/2021

When Tables 5 and 6 are compared it can be seen that regardless of age, across the region the claimant count for males tended to peak in around the same month as that for females. The one age group where this was different was those aged 50 and over. The number of claimants in this group peaked in August 2020 for Males but continued to grow for females until the peak was reached in February 2021 – 7 months after the male group.

These differences become more widespread when we look at geographies. Of the 18 different groups (3 age bands and 6 Local Authorities) it can be seen that in 9 cases the claimant count for females peaked after that of males – essentially the number of out of work females continued to grow even when the situation for males was improving. In 7 cases both genders peaked at the same time and for 2 the male claimant count peaked after the female count.

Looking at the percentage increase and the percentage decrease, it can be seen that the claimant count for 16-24 year old females in Edinburgh increased by 221% between February and July 2020. This is the largest increase of any age group or gender in the city region. It has since fallen by 49% but still has some way to go before it is back to pre-pandemic levels. Generally, the claimant count for 16-24 year old females has been falling the fastest of all categories regardless of the local authority.

Table 6: Change in Claimants by Age Across the City Region (Female)

16-24 Year Olds-Female	Edinburgh	East Lothian	Fife	Midlothian	Scottish Borders	West Lothian	City Region
Feb 2020	430	130	620	120	170	295	1,765
Jun 2020	1,265	305	1,220	270	340	575	3,975
Jul 2020	1,380	325	1,340	270	375	610	4,300
Aug 2020	1,340	310	1,345	260	385	620	4,260
Sep 2021	700	180	875	160	215	400	2,530
Increase	221%	150%	117%	125%	126%	110%	144%
Decrease	-49%	-45%	-35%	-41%	-44%	-35%	-41%
25-49 Year Olds-Female	Edinburgh	East Lothian	Fife	Midlothian	Scottish Borders	West Lothian	City Region
Feb 2020	1,630	445	1,885	370	395	855	5,580
May 2020	4,215	860	3,130	695	770	1,480	11,150
Aug 2020	4,520	835	3,340	700	800	1,530	11,725
Sep 2020	4,460	790	3,230	700	745	1,435	11,360
Mar 2021	4,370	825	3,180	730	770	1,455	11,330
Sep 2021	3,075	590	2,600	505	595	1,110	8,475
Increase	174%	93%	77%	97%	103%	79%	110%
Decrease	-31%	-31%	-22%	-31%	-26%	-27%	-28%
50+ Female	Edinburgh	East Lothian	Fife	Midlothian	Scottish Borders	West Lothian	City Region
Feb 2020	605	185	780	115	170	305	2,160
Aug 2020	1,455	360	1,380	260	405	635	4,495
Feb 2021	1,570	385	1,395	270	410	585	4,615
Sep 2021	1,125	245	1,070	165	300	415	3,320
Increase	160%	108%	79%	135%	138%	108%	114%
Decrease	-28%	-36%	-23%	-39%	-26%	-35%	-28%

Source: NOMIS 12/10/2021

The conclusion to draw from this is that there are differences in how different genders, ages and localities are recovering. These differences can be disguised in the overall statistics and by the fact that across the board the claimant count is falling, it is the differences in these rates of reduction that should be monitored as this will indicate if there are any groups or localities that are finding it harder to reengage with the labour market. This leads onto the next focus which is small localities represented by the ward data.

Ward Profile

As with the other data in this report, each of the following tables provides a claimant count for February 2020 to provide a pre pandemic baseline, a figure for September 2021 to illustrate what the current position is. Where it differs from previous reports is that for each ward there is also the figure for when the claimant count peaked- highlighted in yellow and italics. The final inclusion in these tables is the percentage increase and decrease in the claimant count and ward claimant rate, both pre-pandemic and now.

In Table 7 it can be seen that generally, in East Lothian, the claimant count peaked in the summer of 2020. The one area where this was not the case was Preston, Seton and Gosford. The wards with lower claimant rates pre-pandemic had the lowest claimant rates in the county in September 2021. North Berwick coastal recorded the largest percentage increase in the claimant count (+253%) but has also recorded a 45% fall between August 2020 and September 2021.

Table 7 East Lothian Claimant Count by Ward

						Claimant Rate			
2017 electoral wards	Feb 20	May 20	Aug 20	Feb 21	Sep 21	Feb-20	Sep-21	% Increase	% Decrease
Dunbar and East Linton	200	460	425	385	275	2.3	3.1	130	-40
Haddington and Lammermuir	260	555	545	520	355	2.3	3.1	113	-36
Musselburgh	455	905	930	895	660	3.6	5.2	104	-29
North Berwick Coastal	85	290	300	255	165	1.2	2.2	253	-45
Preston, Seton and Gosford	310	605	605	630	415	2.8	3.7	103	-34
Tranent, Wallyford and Macmerrie	450	865	825	795	570	3.2	4.0	92	-34

Source: NOMIS 12/10/2021

The Midlothian position is presented in Table 8. As with East Lothian, wards with a high claimant rate in February 2020 are still the wards with a high claimant rate in September 2021. Bonnyrigg stands out for two reasons. Firstly, the claimant count in this ward only peaked in March 2021, 6 months after the rest of the authority. Secondly whilst it is the ward that recorded the highest percentage increase, 164%, the level of decrease has not been as dramatic and two other wards have seen the claimant count fall faster than Bonnyrigg.

Table 8 Midlothian Claimant Count by Ward

						Claimant Rate			
2017 electoral wards	Feb 20	May 20	Aug 20	Mar 21	Sep 21	Feb -20	Sep -21	% Increase	% Decrease
Bonnyrigg	180	435	455	475	310	1.6	2.7	164	-35
Dalkeith	295	645	590	605	420	3.4	4.7	119	-35
Midlothian East	255	575	570	545	395	2.6	4.0	125	-31
Midlothian South	300	565	565	535	390	3.4	4.3	88	-31
Midlothian West	210	480	490	475	285	2.2	3.0	133	-42
Penicuik	225	460	475	460	305	2.7	3.7	111	-36

Source: NOMIS 12/10/2021

In West Lothian the claimant count peaked in August 2020 with the exception of one ward - Broxburn, Uphall and Winchburgh- where it peaked a couple of months earlier in May 2020. One thing to note in West Lothian is that, with 2 exceptions, the claimant increase is consistent across the authority ranging from an 87% increase through to 120%. There are two 'outliers' which saw a rise of 148% and 134% and these are Linlithgow and Livingston North. As with other areas the wards where the claimant count was higher to start with tend to be those that recorded a lower percentage increase and have so far recorded a lower decrease.

Table 9 West Lothian Claimant Count by Ward

					Claimant Rate			
2017 electoral wards	Feb 20	May 20	Aug 20	Sep 21	Feb-20	Sep-21	% Increase	% Decrease
Armadale and Blackridge	310	580	610	400	3.2	4.1	97	-34
Bathgate	470	915	945	625	3.0	4.0	101	-34
Broxburn, Uphall and Winchburgh	365	760	760	490	3.0	3.9	108	-36
East Livingston and East Calder	380	800	835	545	2.7	3.8	120	-35
Fauldhouse and the Breich Valley	405	730	765	540	4.0	5.3	89	-29
Linlithgow	135	305	335	200	1.3	2.0	148	-40
Livingston North	325	685	760	500	2.1	3.3	134	-34
Livingston South	450	835	900	600	2.9	3.8	100	-33
Whitburn and Blackburn	585	1,030	1,095	780	4.3	5.7	87	-29

Source: NOMIS 12/10/2021

Table 10 looks at the position in Fife. Firstly, it is clear that July and August last year was the period when the claimant count was at its highest in the Kingdom with the exception of St Andrews where it didn't peak until January 2021. Buckhaven, Methill and Wemyss villages is the ward that had the highest claimant rate pre pandemic and has the highest claimant rate in September. As with other areas where there was a high claimant rate to start with the increase was relatively low and the decrease since the claimant count peaked is relatively low. More positive is that for this ward the number of claimants has fallen by 240 since July 2020.

Table 10 Fife Claimant Count by Ward

						Claimant Rate			
2017 electoral wards	Feb 20	Jul 20	Aug 20	Jan 21	Sep 21	Feb-20	Sep-21	% Increase	% Decrease
Buckhaven, Methil and Wemyss Villages	900	1,320	1,315	1,205	1,080	8.2	9.8	47	-18
Burntisland, Kinghorn and W. Kirkcaldy	380	650	645	575	465	4.2	5.3	71	-28
Cowdenbeath	610	1,110	1,080	1,000	815	4.5	5.9	82	-27
Cupar	210	440	445	375	275	2.5	3.2	112	-38
Dunfermline Central	395	725	745	655	535	3.4	4.6	89	-28
Dunfermline North	415	690	685	615	465	3.9	4.3	66	-33
Dunfermline South	450	885	880	765	640	3.0	4.2	97	-28
East Neuk and Landward	185	425	440	375	260	2.6	3.7	138	-41
Glenrothes Central and Thornton	370	665	665	595	495	3.9	5.2	80	-26
Glenrothes North, Leslie and Markinch	355	635	655	575	435	3.1	3.8	85	-34
Glenrothes West and Kinglassie	350	690	700	640	485	3.5	5.0	100	-31
Howe of Fife and Tay Coast	175	380	410	380	270	2.2	3.4	134	-34
Inverkeithing and Dalgety Bay	230	510	540	480	320	2.2	3.0	135	-41
Kirkcaldy Central	580	1,000	1,000	920	825	6.6	9.5	72	-18
Kirkcaldy East	640	1,025	1,055	995	835	6.9	9.0	65	-21
Kirkcaldy North	390	685	670	590	490	4.0	5.0	76	-28
Leven, Kennoway and Largo	495	830	820	730	585	4.2	5.0	68	-30
Lochgelly, Cardenden and Benarty	685	1,150	1,145	1,065	890	5.9	7.6	68	-23
Rosyth	305	595	610	510	415	3.0	4.0	100	-32
St Andrews	105	250	250	255	175	0.7	1.2	143	-31
Tay Bridgehead	190	390	410	300	235	1.9	2.4	116	-43
West Fife and Coastal Villages	355	680	680	615	470	3.7	4.9	92	-31

Source: NOMIS 12/10/2021

Again Fife, through the St Andrews ward, indicates that the areas which had lower claimant count to start with, recorded the highest percentage increase. Inverkeithing and Dalgety Bay has seen the claimant count fall by 41% since August 2020 and the actual claimant count is now, September 2021, 'only' 90 individuals higher than it was pre-pandemic.

Table 11 looks at the situation in Edinburgh. Forth ward is the area where the claimant rate is currently highest at 6.0% and there are currently 1,280 people claiming. On a positive note this is a fall of 26% since the claimant count peaked in this ward in March 2021. Edinburgh is slightly at odds with the other areas in so far as the wards reached peak claimant count at a range of different times. For example, 1 ward reached its highest claimant count in May 2020, for 10 of the wards it was August 2020, 1 peaked in November 2020 and for 5 wards the peak wasn't reached until 2021 – 3 in February and 2 in March.

Six of seventeen wards in the city recorded claimant count rises of over 200% - In the other 5 LAs only North Berwick Coastal recorded a claimant count increase over 200%. Whilst still higher than it was pre-pandemic 3 of these wards now have a claimant rate of below 2%. To put this in context across the whole City Region there is only one other ward with a claimant rate below 2%. Based on the Edinburgh data it would appear therefore that the areas that experienced the worst economic shock when the pandemic began have recovered fastest and are approaching more 'normal' levels. As seen elsewhere it is the areas where claimant counts were higher to start with that are looking more sluggish at recovering.

Table 11 Edinburgh Claimant Count by Ward

2017 electoral wards	Feb 20	May 20	Aug 20	Nov 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	Sep 21	Claimant Rate		% Increase	% Decrease
								Feb-20	Sep-21		
Almond	495	1,130	1,160	1,090	1,120	1,115	785	2.2	3.5	134	-32
City Centre	490	1,145	1,245	1,265	1,270	1,255	920	1.8	3.4	159	-28
Colinton/Fairmilehead	175	480	515	500	515	515	340	1.1	2.2	194	-34
Corstorphine/Murrayfield	120	390	390	390	380	375	265	0.8	1.7	225	-32
Craighentenny/Duddingston	550	1,430	1,490	1,440	1,445	1,435	1,000	2.7	4.8	171	-33
Drum Brae/Gyle	225	660	660	695	690	685	460	1.5	3.0	209	-34
Forth	720	1,605	1,690	1,655	1,730	1,735	1,280	3.4	6.0	141	-26
Fountainbridge/Craiglockhart	205	565	610	590	585	635	440	1.2	2.5	210	-31
Inverleith	220	735	775	725	700	695	435	1.0	1.9	252	-44
Leith	630	1,370	1,405	1,370	1,370	1,405	955	3.5	5.2	123	-32
Leith Walk	550	1,495	1,605	1,515	1,520	1,520	1,070	2.0	3.8	192	-33
Liberton/Gilmerton	540	1,405	1,475	1,405	1,485	1,470	1,060	2.4	4.7	175	-29
Morningside	150	495	590	535	490	500	360	0.6	1.5	293	-39
Pentland Hills	625	1,295	1,365	1,330	1,380	1,345	1,020	3.0	4.8	121	-26
Portobello/Craigmillar	625	1,480	1,555	1,495	1,535	1,535	1,070	3.2	5.2	149	-31
Sighthill/Gorgie	550	1,395	1,500	1,440	1,480	1,495	1,080	2.2	4.2	173	-28
Southside/Newington	230	700	800	735	720	710	545	0.8	1.9	248	-32

Source: NOMIS 12/10/2021

Table 12 looks at Scottish Borders. The first point to make is that with maybe three exceptions generally the claimant count increase wasn't as high as in some other areas of the region and overall, the percentage falls have been around the 30-40% mark. Again, areas that recorded higher increases appear to be ones where the higher claimant count falls have also been recorded. One possible concern is that the claimant rate is still over 3.0% across the Scottish Borders even in areas where it was low pre-pandemic.

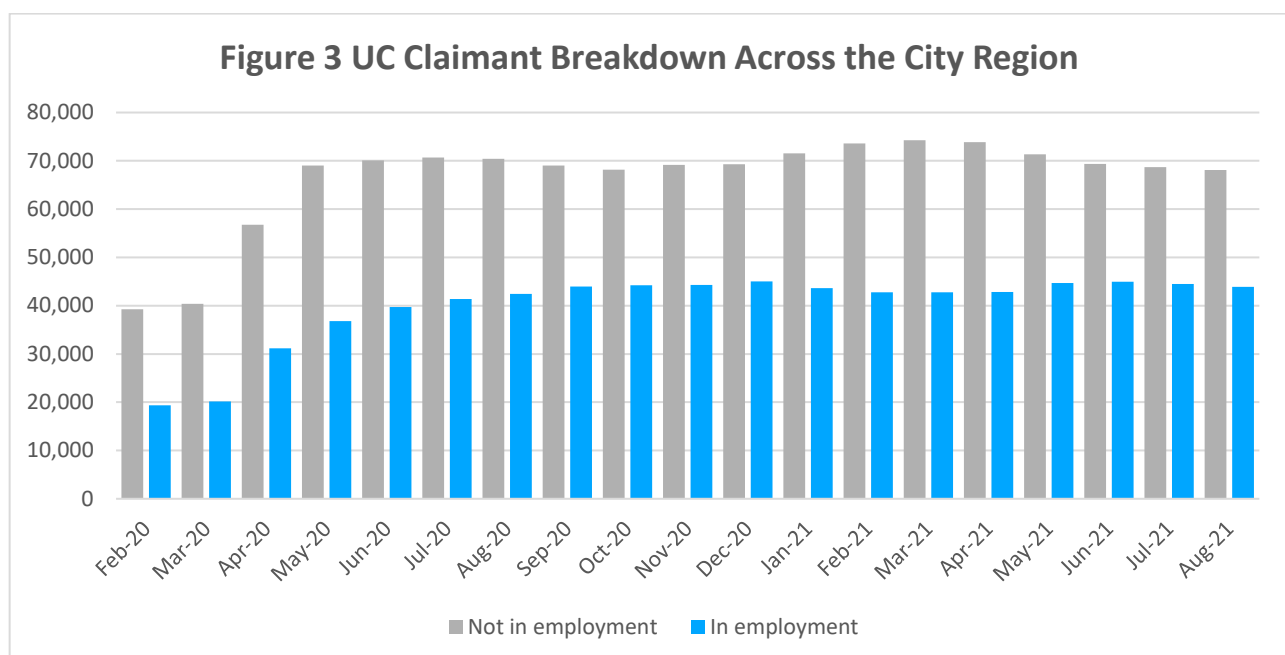
Table 12 Scottish Borders Claimant Count by Ward

2017 electoral wards	Feb 20	May 20	Jul 20	Aug 20	Mar 21	Sep-21	Claimant Rate		% Increase	% Decrease
							Feb -20	Sep-21		
East Berwickshire	160	345	340	330	315	205	2.7	3.4	116	-41
Galashiels and District	385	665	685	685	625	540	3.9	5.5	78	-21
Hawick and Denholm	235	390	400	400	420	310	4.3	5.8	79	-26
Hawick and Hermitage	180	330	335	340	340	235	3.6	4.7	89	-31
Jedburgh and District	130	290	305	300	315	235	2.5	4.5	135	-23
Kelso and District	140	295	300	300	270	205	2.4	3.6	114	-32
Leaderdale and Melrose	115	280	315	320	270	190	1.8	3.0	178	-41
Mid Berwickshire	140	300	290	300	290	180	2.3	3.0	114	-40
Selkirkshire	165	310	315	310	275	215	2.9	3.8	91	-32
Tweeddale East	105	270	280	275	250	195	1.6	3.1	167	-30
Tweeddale West	105	265	275	270	260	185	1.7	3.0	162	-33

Source: NOMIS 12/10/2021

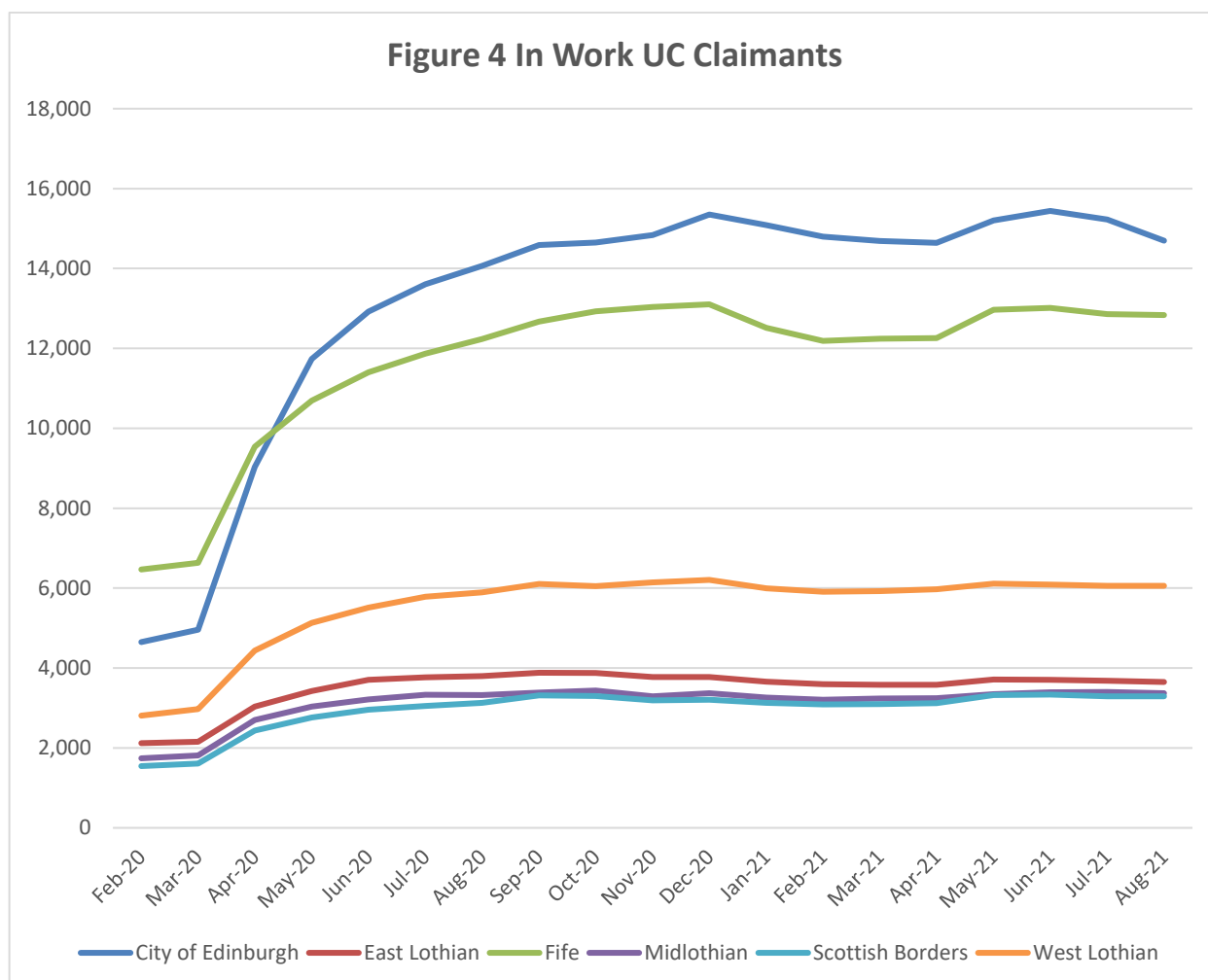
Universal Credit

Universal Credit makes up part of the claimant count looked at already in this report, however it also includes data on those who are in work but need support as their wages alone don't provide enough income. It is a benefit which was designed to replace a range of benefits including support for those on low income (income support) and benefit for those out of work (Job Seekers Allowance).



Source: StatXplore 14/10/2021

Figure 3 above looks at the increase across the region in the number of in-work and out of work universal credit claimants since February 2020. September data for UC claimants is available, however it isn't split into in and out of work categories, and as a result the August 2021 data is the most up to date that allows such a split.



Source: StatXplore 14/10/2021

Figure 4 above simply looks at those claiming UC who are in work. Whilst the more populous LAs will have higher claimant numbers, the key finding from this is that in each LA the number hasn't really gone down. It increased quickly at the start of the pandemic and then has generally risen month to month. For example, across the City Region there are now 6% more in work UC claimants than there were in July 2020 which is after the initial surge. This ranges from 8% difference in Edinburgh, Fife and Scottish Borders through 5% higher in West Lothian and 1% higher in Midlothian. East Lothian is the only LA where there has been a decrease in the in work universal credit claimants and a fall of 3% between July 2020 and August 2021 has been recorded.

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**UNLOCK THE POTENTIAL
OF YOUR WORKFORCE**

GRADUATE APPRENTICESHIPS

BE FUTURE MADE



“ As an employer we gain the benefit of a more knowledgeable, competent and motivated employee who can contribute to the business whilst studying and upskilling. It's a win-win in terms of benefit to both the employee and employer.

Jackie Archer
Head Of HR, Balfour Beatty.



UNLOCK THE POTENTIAL OF YOUR WORKFORCE

Most, if not all, sectors of the Scottish economy have been hit hard by the pandemic. As the focus turns to economic recovery, companies are beginning to look at ways to make the recovery period as short as possible.

Key areas undoubtedly include making sure that businesses continue to attract new talent *plus* identifying new ways to upskill and reskill existing employees – as cost effectively as possible.

Graduate Apprenticeships are a unique learning initiative creating degree qualified employees with key skills tailored to the needs of your business. They are ideal for both new talent and existing employees.

WHAT ARE GRADUATE APPRENTICESHIPS?

Graduate Apprenticeships (GAs) are aimed at anyone over the age of 16 who lives and works in Scotland. GAs enable employers to develop their workforce to meet the growing demands of business, allowing them to gain degree-level qualifications whilst remaining in paid employment.

The programmes have been created to address skills needs in wide range of growth sectors in the Scottish economy and they have been designed by working hand in hand with industry and employers. And importantly GAs are fully funded, meaning there are no additional fees for the business **OR** the employee (programmes are fully funded for those who meet the eligibility requirements).

THE BENEFITS OF GAS

Research has shown that GAs are proven to deliver tangible business benefits. Here are some of the key ways they can help an employer and the employee:

- **Cost effective** – the learning costs are fully funded meaning there are no additional costs to the employer or the employee. GAs are also an excellent way to recover the Apprenticeship Levy that your company may already be paying
- **Flexible learning** – we're providing learners with the flexibility to attend campus or access learning remotely
- **Boost business performance** – GAs can deliver real business benefits, including increased productivity, talent development and retention, improved service delivery and staff engagement
- **Meet your skills needs** – fill critical skills gaps with new or existing employees working toward a nationally recognised and accredited degree while developing skills tailored to the needs of your business
- **Diversify your workforce** – apprenticeships can support you to recruit and develop a diverse workforce
- **Reduce recruitment costs** – by accessing a new and sustainable talent pipeline of skills for your business
- **Fast-track your talent development** – recruit and develop high-calibre future leaders who are likely to want to remain with the organisation after graduating
- **Work-based learning** – approach ensures practical application in the business environment
- **Support young talent** – provide the first step towards a career in your industry.

HOW IT WORKS

GA is a combination of 80% work-based learning with 20% university learning. Work-based learning is basically agreed activities in the workplace that count towards the degree in terms of learning and assessment. The balance between work and study is about 4 to 1. But, importantly, because the two activities are integrated, the degree can be completed on the same timescale as a traditional undergraduate degree.

We've created additional flexibility for employers and students by making sure that all our programmes will remain accessible remotely. Learners will have the option to attend the campus (depending on any restrictions in place) or to access learning from their workplace or home.

Depending on the Graduate Apprentice's previous skills, qualifications and experience, they may qualify for flexible entry points on to the programme. The immersive nature of the apprenticeships means that candidates are adding value to their companies from day one by bringing academic knowledge back into the workplace.

WHAT GA PROGRAMMES ARE AVAILABLE AT HERIOT-WATT?

We currently offer the following courses:

- BEng (Hons) Engineering Design & Manufacture (Electronic or Mechanical)
- BEng (Hons) Instrumentation Measurement & Control
- BSc (Hons) Construction and the Built Environment
- BEng (Hons) Civil Engineering
- BSc (Hons) Data Science
- BSc (Hons) Software Development
- MA (Hons) IT Management for Business
- MA (Hons) Business Management
- MA (Hons) Business Management: Financial Services

WHY HERIOT-WATT UNIVERSITY?

We are a world-leading university with 5 campuses around the globe, educating leading professionals of tomorrow and generating pioneering research.

Our degrees are highly regarded for their professional relevance and we have an excellent record of preparing students for successful careers with employers like you.

We also offer a number of other added value services related to our GA programmes, including:

- Mentor skills training
- Maths diagnostics

WHAT TO DO NEXT

If you'd like to discuss any aspect of our GA programmes, including hiring a new employee or upskilling an existing employee, you can either:

Visit **WWW.HW.AC.UK/GA** and complete the Contact Form

OR

Email the team directly on **GA@HW.AC.UK**

A member of the team will get straight back to you.

WHAT DO EMPLOYERS THINK?

You don't just have to take our word for it. The Skills Development Scotland Employer Survey (2020) demonstrates how highly employers rate the benefits of GAs.

GRADUATE APPRENTICESHIPS

EMPLOYERS

100%

would take on a Graduate Apprentice again in the future



EMPLOYER BENEFITS



87%

"Improved workforce sustainability"



72%

"Filled skills gap"



70%

"Increased retention and loyalty"



65%

"Gained new thinking and ideas"



“Our industry faces daily challenges, and we need a highly trained and motivated workforce to improve productivity and maintain quality on our projects. The graduate apprenticeship model offers us a way to grow and sustain our business, develop a talented workforce, and prevent future skills gaps.

David Lannigan
Senior Operations Manager, Morgan Sindall.



Thornton Tomasetti



“

Graduate Apprentices are a key part of our Early Talent strategy at CALA. We've seen first-hand through our partnership with Heriot Watt, the value in combining formal study with work-based learning, and how this can help to build the skills and knowledge that businesses like CALA need.

Rod Pearson

Head of People & Organisational Development, CALA Group.

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

HOW DO I ADVERTISE A GA POSITION?

New GA roles can be advertised on www.apprenticeships.scot. We're happy to help with the wording for the job ad.

Once you have completed your recruitment process you should introduce your candidate to the University, and we will assess their suitability on a case by case basis. You may want to consider asking the university to assess your preferred candidate(s) before you make an offer.

WHAT ARE THE ENTRY REQUIREMENTS?

The exact entry requirements depend on each specific GA programme. Entry qualifications should be at SCQF level 6 or above. Foundation Apprenticeships are accepted in combination with other relevant qualifications. Employees may be able to gain advanced entry to the GA programme, depending on their prior learning, their previous work experience or if they have completed a Modern Apprenticeship (e.g. with HNC/HND qualification).

HOW IS THE GA DELIVERED?

We work with you to ensure that the learning experience of your apprentices develops them into the graduates you need. We will do this through an initial programme design and regular update meetings to ensure that your apprentices meet all of the required outcomes over the 4-year programme.

We help to devise projects and identify your desired outcomes for the mutual benefit of the individual and business while meeting the outcomes of the apprenticeship framework.

HOW CAN I AFFECT THE GA PROGRAMME CONTENT?

Each apprentice has an individual learning agreement (ILA) forming the basis of their learning. The ILA is individual to each apprentice and designed and discussed with both the apprentice and their employer. Formally the ILA is agreed each year but is reviewed quarterly to address any changes due to business requirements.

HOW DOES HERIOT-WATT SUPPORT THE APPRENTICE?

Heriot-Watt provides a Personal Tutor for each apprentice. You should also provide workplace mentors for your apprentices and we will provide training for mentors if required. This may also count towards CPD for your employees. The combination of Personal Tutor and Workplace Mentor provides the majority of the support for your apprentices throughout the programme, although apprentices can also get support from university staff and their colleagues in the workplace throughout.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE EMPLOYER?

Employers participating in the Graduate Apprenticeship programme must:

- consider whether a candidate has a reasonable chance of achieving the selected programme during the selection process – this includes not only the course content but the acquisition of wider graduate attributes. We will help with this
- provide agreed information to support the candidate's application to the degree course
- provide apprentices with suitable opportunities for the type of experience in the workplace that will support their learning and skills acquisition

- provide each apprentice with a nominated mentor who must be readily accessible by the apprentice and to the university
- liaise with the university on the content and practical activities in the apprentice's individual learning and training plan
- provide information that will support the individual apprentice and their assessment

WHICH COMPANIES CAN TAKE ON A GRADUATE APPRENTICE?

There is no restriction on the size of organisation, industry or location (in Scotland).

WHAT IS THE DEADLINE FOR APPLYING?

The deadline for applications is in August, but please apply as soon as possible once you are certain you want to enter the programme, so that we can reserve a place for you.

PARTNER WITH US TODAY

VISIT WWW.HW.AC.UK/GA
EMAIL GA@HW.AC.UK

AND FOLLOW US ON



BE FUTURE MADE