

ONS figures – unemployment remains low in Scotland

The unemployment rate in Scotland among those aged 16 and over has fallen back slightly to 3.1% for the first quarter of 2023.

The highest unemployment rate in the UK is in the West Midlands where there are 5.1% of people who want a job but are unemployed.

The employment rate in Scotland has reduced to 75.3% and is in the middle range of all the numbers. The highest employment rates in the UK are in the South West and the South East with both regions enjoying a 78.8% employment rate for people between 16 and 64 years old.

The new Office for National Statistics labour market figures from their Labour Force Survey are published today for Scotland and the rest of the UK.

Separate early seasonally adjusted estimates from HMRC Pay As You Earn Real Time Information show 2.43 million payrolled employees in Scotland in April 2023 which is 48,000 more than in February 2020.

Wellbeing Economy Secretary Neil Gray said: “The continued low unemployment rate for those aged 16 and over across Scotland, including a record low unemployment rate for men aged 16 and over are welcome. We are working to create more high-quality jobs and increasing the number of employees earning at least the real Living Wage.

“The Scottish Government is committed to supporting more people into work – including parents, disabled people and those with health and caring responsibilities – through employability and skills support, high-quality early learning and school age childcare provision, as well as improving access to flexible working. Recent ONS data shows that our target to increase the employment rate of disabled people to 50% by 2023 has been met a year early with 50.7% reported to be in work in 2022.

“However, with certain industries still facing recruitment challenges an urgent rethink of UK Government immigration policy is needed to enable increased access to the international labour and skills that Scotland needs for our economy and communities to flourish.

“With devolved powers on migration, Scotland could boost its workforce and tackle the recruitment challenges, many of which have been caused by the end of free movement and the hard Brexit imposed on Scotland by the UK Government.”



Neil Gray Cabinet Secretary for Wellbeing Economy, Fair Work
and Energy