

The chance to work in Scotland
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Key points

- The availability of good work is a key determinant of health and health inequalities, yet both the number of adults lacking paid work and the number of children living in workless households remains high in Scotland.
- There are several theories as to why we have unemployment:
 - a flawed benefit system
 - a deviant 'culture of worklessness'
 - low individual employability
 - personal circumstances which prevent work
 - lack of labour market flexibility
 - excessive wage costs
 - lack of demand for workers in the economy
- Current policy focus is based on the first four of these theories.
- There is good evidence that personal circumstances (e.g. health, caring responsibilities) and individual employability (e.g. lack of work experience, low literacies, lack of qualifications) are important barriers to finding work.
- A complex and inflexible benefits system may also prevent some people from moving into employment.
- The concept of a 'culture of worklessness' is not supported by the evidence.
- Encouraging labour market flexibility may conflict with desires to create sustainable employment opportunities and a highly skilled workforce.
- There is little evidence of an association between the minimum wage and unemployment.
- In 2008, even using the most generous measures of job availability, and the most conservative measures of unemployment, demand for labour was insufficient:
 - for skilled trades, sales and customer services, machine operatives and elementary occupations
 - overall in Tayside, West Central Scotland and Dumfries and Galloway
- Even before the recession (in 2004, 2006 and 2008), the number of job seekers was consistently greater than the number of jobs available in Scotland.
- The ratio of unemployed to vacancies has risen sharply since the recession began, from 114 per 100 in 2008, to more than 310 per 100 in 2011.
- Using more realistic measures of the number of people available for work and the number of vacancies makes it clear that a lack of demand for workers in the economy is a very important contributor to unemployment and underemployment in Scotland.

Introduction

Work, along with education and income, is one of the key social determinants of health.¹ Mortality rates and morbidity (including mental ill health) increase among those who suffer from unemployment, and reduce among those who gain good work.²⁻⁴ Inequalities in the availability of work are one of the factors which lead to health inequalities. Figure 1 compares the percentage of adults aged 25–59 years in the Scottish Health Survey in 2008, with a GHQ-12 score of 4+ (measuring general health and indicating a possible mental health problem), by SIMD quintile and whether or not they were in paid employment. On this measure, inequalities in mental health between deprivation quintiles are not evident among the employed population. In contrast, for those not in paid employment, in 2008, for every 100 non-employed adults aged 25–59, 48 had a common mental health problem in the most deprived quintile, compared to 25 in the middle quintile and 32 in the least deprived quintile (Figure 1). Reducing inequalities in employment, and improving access to decent work, can make an important contribution to narrowing inequalities in health.^{5,6}

A large number of people in Scotland are affected by worklessness. In May 2012, 474,000 working-age Scottish adults were claiming 'out of work' benefits.⁷ The majority of these claimed Incapacity Benefits (Incapacity Benefit, Severe Disability Allowance or Employment and Support Allowance), though substantial numbers also claimed Jobseeker's Allowance or Income Support for Lone Parents. These figures exclude dependents: in 2011, more than 130,000 children in Scotland were living in households where no adults were in paid employment.⁸ Nor is this simply a problem of the recession. Although the number of working-age Scottish adults claiming benefits fell steadily between 2000 and 2008, there were still nearly 440,000 working-age people claiming 'out of work' benefits before the economic downturn began (Figure 2).

Policymakers stress the role of work in achieving multiple social and economic objectives. As well as protecting and improving health, raising employment rates is seen as a route to reduce the fiscal burden on taxpayers and the state and levels of poverty for individuals and families. Giving people the chance to work is seen as a major justification for welfare reform. These multiple aims may sometimes be in conflict. Not all people finish a benefit claim because they have found a job: in 2011, only 60% of benefit leavers did so, with 20% moving on to other benefits and the rest ceasing to claim for other reasons.⁹ And work is not a panacea. In 2010/11, 320,000 people in Scotland were living in poverty despite having at least one household member in paid employment¹⁰ – and poor quality, poorly paid work can be almost as damaging to health as no work at all.¹¹ These issues are beyond the scope of this briefing, which is concerned with a much more fundamental question. If employment is so beneficial, why do so many working-age people in Scotland lack a job?

This briefing will outline the various explanations for worklessness and the associated possible policy responses. We then look at the available evidence and data on employment availability in Scotland. In doing so, NHS Health Scotland hopes to contribute to a richer debate on how work, welfare and income might reduce health inequalities.

Figure 1 – Percentage of adults aged 25–59 years with a GHQ-12 score of 4+, by employment status and SIMD quintile (Source: *Scottish Health Survey, 2008*)

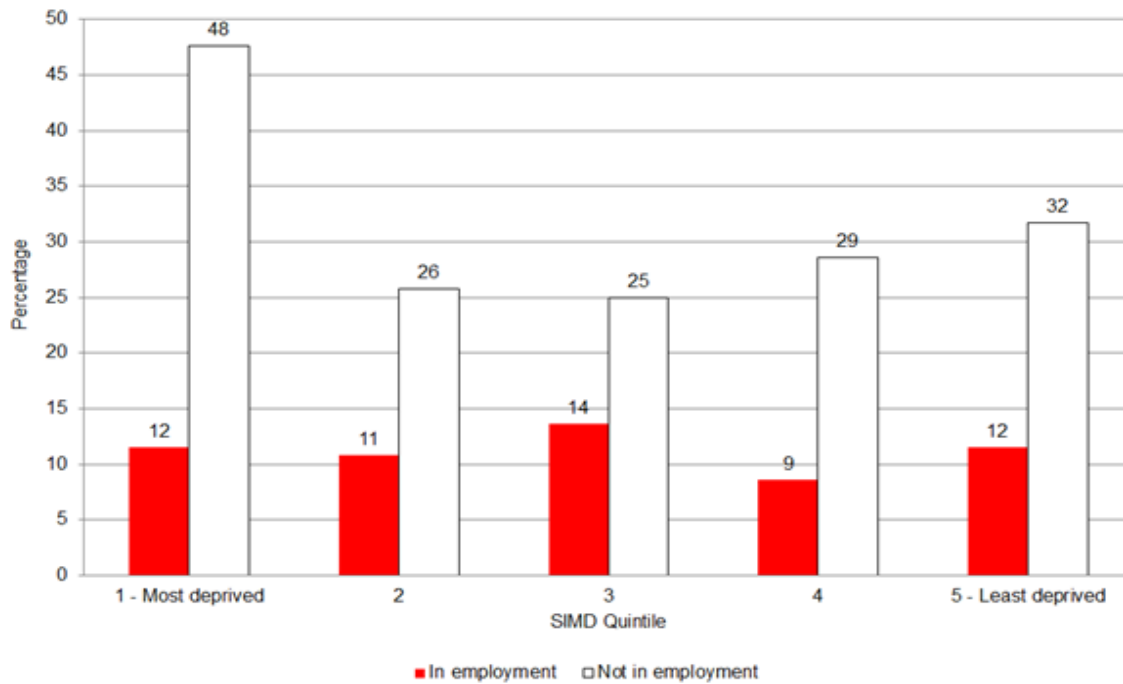
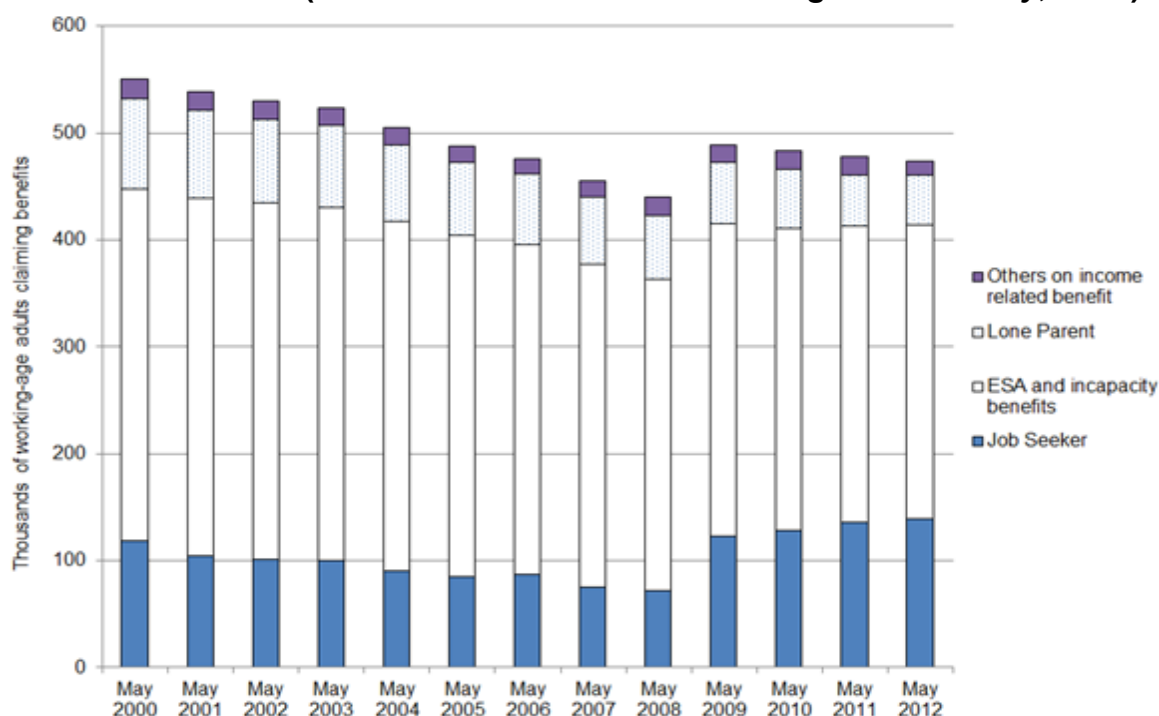


Figure 2 – Number of working-age adults claiming out of work benefits, Scotland 2000–2012 (Source: *Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study, DWP*)



The key issue

A range of explanations have been proposed to explain the scale of worklessness in Britain, including Scotland. These include: flaws in the design of the benefit system; ‘supply-side’ problems, such as ‘cultures of worklessness’, individual employability (e.g. lack of basic and soft skills, job search behaviour, lack of formal qualifications or work experience) and personal circumstances (e.g. health and wellbeing, caring responsibilities); lack of labour market flexibility; high wages relative to productivity; and ‘demand-side’ deficiencies (a lack of jobs available in the right quantities, in the right places and of the right type, and employer recruitment practices and attitudes).

These explanations are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Appropriate responses to worklessness are likely to require a mixture of ‘supply-side’ and ‘demand-side’ measures.^{12–14} Recent policy has tended to emphasise the role of the benefits system, cultural explanations and some aspects of employability, with limited and partial consideration of personal circumstances. Policymakers have argued that worklessness is not primarily caused by a lack of employment opportunities. The 2006 Employability Framework for Scotland, for example, stated that while some parts of Scotland have very low employment rates ‘many of these areas can be found in, or alongside, locations where there are a large number of jobs.’¹⁵ It is a view shared by a large proportion of the Scottish public. In 2010, 46% agreed with the statement that ‘around here, most unemployed people could find a job if they really wanted one’.¹⁶

Instead, the concern has been with improving the 'employability' of the jobless, focusing on basic skills (literacy, numeracy and IT), attitudes and motivations, providing help with personal circumstances and addressing flaws in the benefits system. Conditions attached to claiming benefits have also been made tougher over time.^{17,18} These initially focused on those claiming unemployment benefits but have since been expanded to other groups. Medical tests for 'fitness to work' for those on Incapacity Benefits have been tightened three times since the mid-1990s. For almost all those claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), participation in the Work Programme (a programme run by private providers who are paid for every participant who finds sustained employment) is now mandatory.¹⁹ There has also been a long-term desire to keep actual benefit levels as low as possible and to make work financially attractive (through a minimum wage and tax credits), a process which the UK government argues will be further strengthened with the introduction of Universal Credit.

The next section considers the plausibility of the main explanations for worklessness in more depth.

Diagnosing the problem

A flawed benefits system. The DWP argues that the benefits system is too complex, creates perverse financial incentives for claimants to remain on benefits and increases the risk of fraud.²⁰ It is true that the benefits system is complex. In 2011/12, £1.3bn was underpaid due to official or claimant error and £0.8bn overpaid due to official error²¹ and a study in West Central Scotland revealed many families with children were unaware of their legal entitlements to benefits.²² It is also the case that for some, the sharp withdrawal of benefits (especially Housing Benefits and tax credits) and the lack of flexibility in the system can act as a genuine barrier to taking up job opportunities. Some of these disincentives will be addressed through the introduction of Universal Credit.²³

It is much more debatable whether the relative generosity of benefits is *'preventing many in our society for seeing work as the best route out of poverty.'*²⁴ Only one in every 100 IB claimants reported that they were not working because they would be *no better off/didn't need the money,*²⁵ while nearly nine out of ten repeat JSA claimants reported they thought they would be *better off* financially in work.²⁶ Although lone parents on benefits were more likely to be concerned about potential financial losses associated with moving into work (74% thought this was a barrier), concerns about fitting any job around their caring responsibilities were seen as more important.²⁷

Deviant cultures of worklessness. The idea of cultures of worklessness embedded in neighbourhoods or families is not supported by the evidence. Residents in deprived communities²⁸ and young people looking for entry-level jobs²⁹ exhibited a strong commitment to finding and keeping work, despite its poor quality, fragility and the lack of long-term progress it offered. In particular, while popular: *'the notion of three or even two generations of families where no one has ever worked is ill-founded as an explanation for contemporary worklessness in the UK. Such families account for a vanishingly small fraction of the workless.'*³⁰ Only about 1% of households in the UK contain two generations where both are currently workless, and less than 0.1% contain two generations where both are workless and have never worked. In addition, an attempt by the DWP to 'segment' benefit claimants found that around 60% wanted to be in paid work in the next three months – and only 11% believed they were 'better-off on benefits'.³¹

Individual employability. Looking at the work history of claimants, nine out of ten Incapacity Benefit claimants³² and repeat job seekers,³³ and three out of four lone parents not currently in work,³⁴ have held down a job in the past. However, benefit claimants were more likely than the working-age population as a whole to have experience in low-skilled occupations. Around a third had previously worked in elementary occupations (such as cleaning or labouring),³⁵⁻³⁷ and only one in 10 in professional, associate professional or managerial jobs, compared to 10.9% and 43.6% respectively for the employed labour force.³⁸

In May 2012, more than six of out 10 Incapacity Benefit claimants, and a quarter of lone parents on benefits in Scotland had not worked for at least five years.³⁹ These long spells out of the labour market are likely to have a detrimental impact on their confidence about working. Employers may interpret long spells of worklessness as a signal that individuals' motivation and skills have decayed (or were deficient to begin with), and be less likely to recruit them as a result.⁴⁰ For job seekers, the challenge is more closely related to young adults who have not managed to gain a foothold in the labour market, and are therefore unable to demonstrate a work history.

For many workless people lack of qualifications and (for a smaller group) lack of basic literacy skills may prove a further barrier to employment. Benefit claimants are less well-qualified than the rest of the workforce: around 60% of IB claimants, 31% of lone parents⁴¹ and 23% of job seekers⁴² reported having no formal qualifications, compared to 11.6% for the Scottish working-age population as a whole. While qualifications *per se* are seen as less important by employers when recruiting, they may use a lack of them to 'screen out' applicants.⁴³ Unemployed people and benefit claimants are also more likely to have only the most basic literacy and numeracy skills. A 2009 survey of Scottish adults aged 16–65 found that around one in five unemployed people in Scotland scored at the lowest ability level of prose, document or quantitative literacy, compared to one in 20 of the employed population.⁴⁴

Lastly, we can also consider employability from an employers' perspective. In 2008, around half of vacancies in Scotland were characterised by employers as 'hard-to-fill' by employers, but this varied by occupation. Administrative, elementary and personal service vacancies were less likely, and machine operatives, skilled tradespeople, managers and senior official vacancies more likely, to be hard-to-fill.⁴⁵ The percentage of hard-to-fill vacancies in Scotland fell sharply in the recession, to 22% in 2011.⁴⁶ When questioned about the causes of recruitment difficulties in 2011,⁴⁷ Scottish employers were most likely to mention a lack of applicants with the skills (33%) or work experience (25%) to do the job. Poor attitude, motivation or personality, a low number of applicants, lack of interest in the type of job and lack of qualifications were mentioned less frequently.

Overall, the main challenge for employability is that many benefit claimants cannot demonstrate a recent work history or, where they can, their experience is disproportionately in low-skilled occupations, most of which employers find few difficulties in filling.

Personal circumstances. These include factors which are only partly within the control of individuals – for example, long-standing health problems or caring responsibilities. A recent attempt by the DWP to 'segment' benefit claimants highlights this. When asked about their main reason for being out of work at the moment, 35% mentioned mental or physical disability or impairment/signed off work by GP and 19% mentioned they were at home looking after children under the age of

16 as a lone parent.⁴⁸ For those on Incapacity Benefits, the most common reason for claiming was mental health problems.

An inflexible, poorly skilled labour force. The UK government has argued that investing in skills and encouraging labour market flexibility (by reducing labour market regulation and tightening the conditions attached to benefit receipt) are important components in encouraging employment growth.⁴⁹ However, these objectives are not necessarily compatible. Compelling benefit claimants to compete for low-paid, low-skilled work is unlikely to raise the skills (and productivity) of the workforce, and may encourage some employers to compete on price and not quality.⁵⁰ Furthermore, some forms of labour market flexibility may not create sustainable employment opportunities if they offer few opportunities for employees to progress or develop their skills. Too narrow a focus on increasing flexibility by minimising labour market costs is unlikely to reduce unemployment and may, in some circumstances, increase its persistence.⁵¹

Excessive wage costs relative to productivity, especially for the young and low-skilled. Some have argued that the relatively high cost of labour, including the minimum wage, deters employers from creating jobs and can partly account for unemployment.⁵² Although the UK government has confirmed its support for the existence of a minimum wage, it remains concerned that the actual levels paid may discourage employers for taking on workers, particularly in a recession.⁵³ In 2012, minimum wage levels were frozen for young people aged 18–20 for the first time. However, it should be noted a review of the evidence by the Low Pay Commission found that while the minimum wage had a small negative impact on the number of hours worked for certain groups (e.g. young adults and women working part-time), it had little or no impact on unemployment.⁵⁴ Furthermore, earnings tend to be lowest in occupations with highest levels of unemployment.^{55,56} This suggests that wage costs may not be a strong explanatory factor for worklessness.

Lack of demand. Demand is the extent to which workers are required (demanded) in the economy. A lack of demand for workers was explicitly rejected as a causal factor in worklessness by New Labour when they were in power^{57,58} and continues to be rejected by the present UK Conservative–Liberal Democrat Coalition Government.⁵⁹ Even in recession, this view continues to be highly influential. In 2011, the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Iain Duncan Smith, commented that *'It's not the absence of jobs that's the problem – it's the failure to match the unemployed to the jobs there are.'*⁶⁰ While investment to create and protect jobs (for example, through infrastructure projects and the Regional Growth Fund) has taken place since 2008, these are seen as responses to mitigate the impact of the recession or in increasing the relative share of private sector jobs in certain parts of the country, including Scotland. But how credible are these claims? Are demand-side problems a short-lived and temporary issue for the recession?

A simple measure of labour market demand – the number of job seekers per 100 vacancies – was used to test this proposition. Where this is fewer than 100, there are more vacancies than job seekers and the chance to work is stronger; where it is more than 100, there are more job seekers than vacancies and the chance to work is weaker.

Throughout, **comparisons are made between the most generous measure of vacancies available (from the Scottish and UK Employers Skills Surveys) with the most conservative measure of unemployment (claimant count unemployment)**. Results are shown for Scotland by occupation, by sub-region and over time. Details on the sources used are shown in Appendix A.

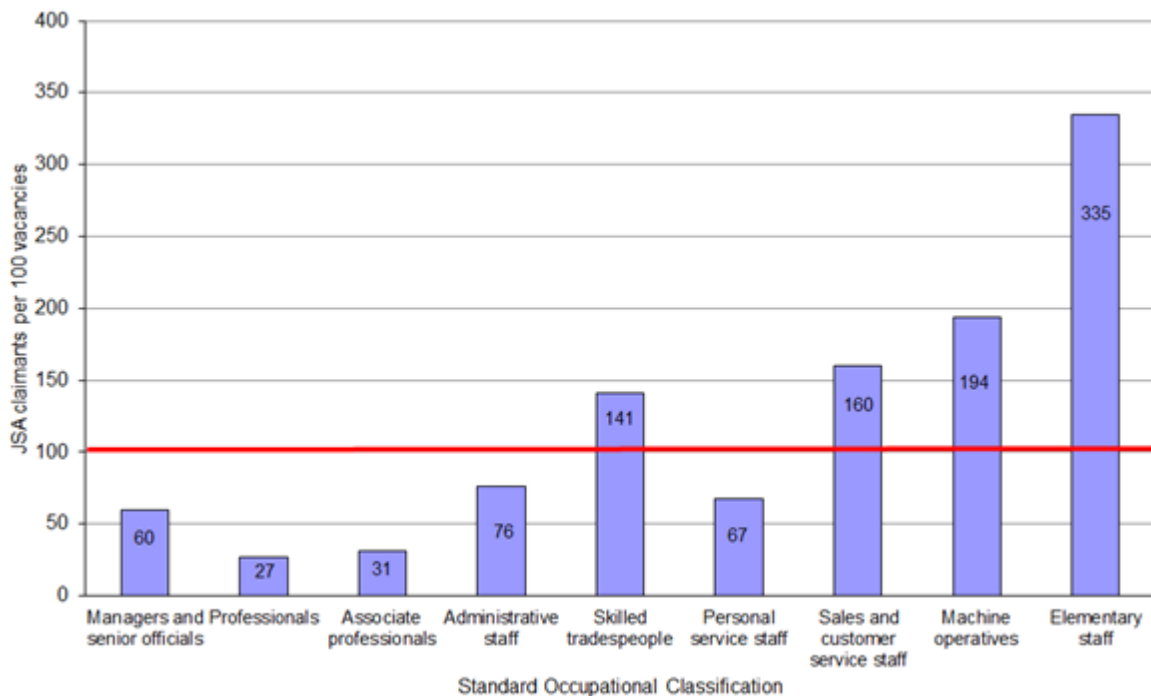
By occupation

As discussed above, the majority of benefit claimants with previous work experience were skewed towards lower-skilled occupations, with the largest number (around a third) in elementary occupations. Figure 3 compares the occupations sought by job seekers with the number of vacancies in each occupational category, for Scotland in 2008. They show that:

- The chance to work was lowest for elementary staff (335 job seekers per 100 vacancies and unfavourable for those seeking work as machine operatives (194 per 100), sales and customer services (160 per 100) and skilled trades (141 per 100).
- Vacancies exceeded job seekers – indicating strong demand – for professionals and associate professionals, managers and senior officials, administrative staff and those in personal services.

While ‘low demand’ occupations can continue to offer opportunities through replacement demand – i.e. the need to fill vacancies as workers retire or change occupations – this is less plausible for elementary occupations.

Figure 3 – Number of job seekers per 100 vacancies by job type in Scotland (Source: 2008 Scottish Employer Skills Survey; claimant count, January–December mean)



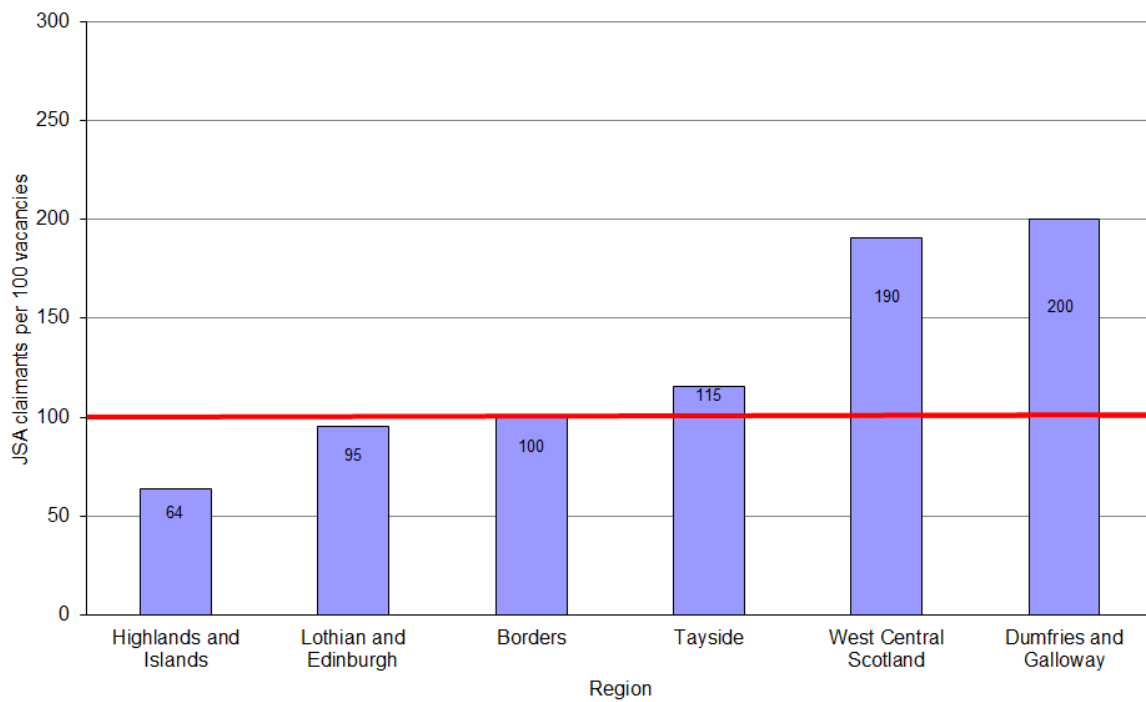
By sub-region

In most regions of the UK (except London and the South East), people travel relatively short distances to work. This is especially the case for people working in elementary, sales and customer service occupations.⁶¹ Any realistic assessment of the labour market needs to take this into account.

The 2008 Scottish Employers Skills Survey provides robust estimates of vacancies for nine Local Economic Forum (LEF) areas and Highlands & Islands Enterprise. To more accurately reflect commuting patterns, the Glasgow LEF was combined with the Dunbartonshire, Renfrewshire, Lanarkshire and Ayrshire LEFs.

Comparisons of claimants and vacancies for six Scottish sub-regions in 2008 are shown in Figure 4. There is a spatial divide in the chance to work between the South West of Scotland (where the claimant count exceeds vacancies and demand is weaker) and the East and North of Scotland (where vacancies are equal to, or exceed, claimant unemployed). In West Central Scotland and Dumfries and Galloway, there were 190–200 claimant unemployed per 100 vacancies. By contrast, the chance to work was stronger in Lothian and Edinburgh (95 per 100) and Highlands & Islands (64 per 100).

Figure 4 – Number of job seekers per 100 vacancies in Scotland (Source: 2008 Scottish Employer Skills Survey; claimant count, January–December mean)



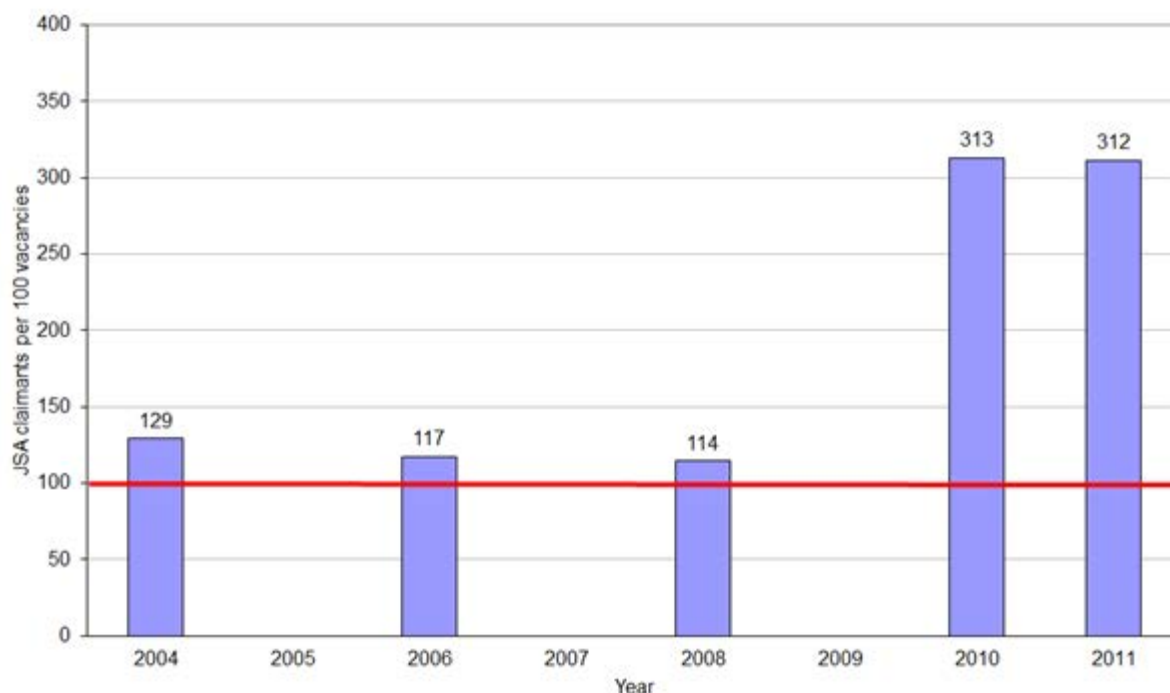
Note: Estimates of vacancies for Grampian, Forth Valley and Fife LEF were not considered robust enough to publish by Scottish Government.

Over time

Figure 5 compares the rate of JSA claimants per 100 vacancies in Scotland between 2004 and 2011. It shows that:

- Even in the 'good times' (2004, 2006 and 2008), at no point did the number of vacancies exceed the number of job seekers in Scotland.
- The ratio of unemployed to vacancies has risen sharply since the recession began, from 114 per 100 in 2008 to more than 310 per 100 in 2011.

Figure 5 – Number of job seekers per 100 vacancies in Scotland from 2004 to 2011 (Sources: *Scottish Employer Skills Surveys and UK Employers Skills Survey*; claimant counts, January–December mean)



These comparisons illustrate the gap in the chance to work, with the number of people looking for work exceeding the number of opportunities available, even before the current recession began. This was especially true for the low-skilled and those living in West Central Scotland and Dumfries and Galloway. Lack of labour market demand remains an important factor in explaining worklessness in Scotland.

The recession and the impact of welfare reform

In Spring 2008, Scotland, along with the rest of the UK, entered recession, triggering a rise in unemployment and a collapse in employment opportunities. The impact on labour market prospects is likely to have been most severe for young adults, those with health problems and the least skilled.^{62,63} There was also an increase in the percentage of workforce who are in temporary employment or who are working in part-time employment because they cannot find full-time work.⁶⁴

Welfare reform, especially the reassessment of all Incapacity Benefit claimants by 2014, is likely to exacerbate these difficulties. In Scotland, an estimated 36,000 people are expected to be moved on to Jobseeker's Allowance and a further 65,000 people pushed out of the benefits system altogether over the next two years.⁶⁵ This is compounded by the fact that many former IB claimants are likely to be competing for entry-level jobs and in those regions of Scotland where demand for labour was weakest, even at the height of the boom. The increased exposure to long-term

worklessness, poverty and insecurity are likely to have a detrimental impact on health.

Conclusions

Access to decent work can contribute to improving population health and reducing health inequalities in Scotland but a substantial number of individuals are excluded from the labour market, with negative consequences for them and their families. The most plausible explanations for worklessness in Scotland are:

- Lack of recent work experience
- Personal circumstances, especially mental health problems and caring responsibilities
- Lack of labour market demand, especially for those with a work history in elementary occupations and those living in South-West Scotland
- Lack of formal qualifications

Second-order explanations include lack of basic skills and the benefits system.

Crucially, for many benefit claimants in Scotland, the chance to work was a remote one even before the recession began. The economic downturn has made things worse. Welfare reform and a narrow focus on 'core employability' are, by themselves, unlikely to make substantial inroads into these problems.

Policy implications

There are a number of implications for policymakers who want to reduce worklessness and contribute to reducing health inequalities. The overall approach should be to combine targeted economic regeneration (the demand-side) with more intensive personalised support to build individuals' employability (the supply-side). This is entirely consistent with recommendations made elsewhere on worklessness.^{66,67} In practical terms, this suggests the following:

First, the most helpful components of current approaches to addressing worklessness should be maintained and refined. These include building basic skills (including confidence), practical support for personal circumstances (e.g. childcare, money advice) and improved matching to employer opportunities. All employability programmes should also support the health and wellbeing of benefit claimants on their journey to work, through physical and mental rehabilitation programmes. Given the complex factors that can create or destroy mental health,⁶⁸ a holistic approach (e.g. looking at issues of poverty, housing, support from family and friends, quality of work on offer) should be taken when engaging with ESA and ex-IB claimants.

Second, cultural explanations for worklessness and those which focus largely on the attitudes and behaviours of the jobless are unconvincing and should be abandoned, since they divert attention (and resources) from more effective policies.

Third, concerns about wage costs and lack of labour market flexibility should be considered alongside the evidence base. There is a tension between a desire to create a highly skilled workforce on one hand and to increase competition for low-skilled jobs (where unemployment is already high) on the other. Indeed, while wage costs and burdensome legislation are mentioned as barriers to growth by business, lack of demand in the economy is seen as a much more pressing issue.^{69,70}

Finally, given that many claimants have work histories in low-skilled occupations which are not in high demand, there is a role for economic regeneration and expanding education and training programmes which offer routes to occupations in demand. Beatty et al. (2011) propose a scheme modelled on the Future Jobs Fund which could form an important element of this. As an illustration, they show that the cost of creating 100,000 jobs across Britain would be £1.2 billion, though the net cost after benefits and taxes would be around £440m.⁷¹ There may also be a role for programmes which combine paid work experience with the chance to gain formal qualifications, for example Intermediate Labour Market programmes.⁷² Both approaches could build on the lessons from the Community Jobs Scotland programme.⁷³ If policymakers and the public want to reduce poverty and improve health, and they believe paid employment can contribute to achieving these goals, they should be prepared to ensure that everyone has a chance to work.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix A: Measuring unemployment and vacancies

Unemployment in Scotland can be measured in a number of ways. The narrowest measure is the **claimant count** which includes all those claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA).⁷⁴ A broader measure of unemployment, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) measure, counts people as unemployed if they are:

- without a job, have actively sought work in the last four weeks and are available to start work in the next two weeks or;
- out of work, have found a job and are waiting to start it in the next two weeks

The **ILO measure of unemployment** is the preferred, official measure of unemployment. It is estimated from the Labour Force Survey and is independent of benefit status.

However, there are many people not included in the claimant count and not counted as unemployed by the ILO measure either, many of them on Incapacity Benefits. Beatty et al. (2012) have produced estimates of the level of '**real unemployment**', which also include those on Incapacity Benefits '*who might reasonably be expected to have been in work in a fully employed economy*'. Finally, the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) counts people as '**employment deprived**' if they are of working-age and claiming either JSA, Incapacity Benefits/Employment and Support Allowance or Severe Disability Allowance.

Table A1 compares these four measures of unemployment in Scotland in 2008 (close to the peak of national employment) and in 2011. On every measure, unemployment increased sharply between these dates, but in both periods, many more people were 'employment deprived' than were claiming JSA. Welfare reforms, especially the reassessment of all IB claimants for their fitness to work by 2014, are likely to increase the numbers claiming JSA and included in the ILO category. For now, though, the focus is on the **narrowest measure of unemployment** – the claimant count – where the official pressure to work is greatest and where lack of a job is, in theory, the main reason for people being out of work.

Table A1: Selected measures of unemployment in Scotland, 2008 and 2011

Measure	2008	2011
Claimant count	79,900	142,748
ILO unemployed	129,500	214,100
'Real' unemployment*	268,000	340,000
SIMD Employment deprived**	373,040	423,110

Sources: Annual Population Survey (Jan–Dec 2008 and 2011); Claimant count (Jan–Dec average 2008 and 2011); SIMD 2009 and 2012; Beatty et al (2007, 2012).

*Beatty et al. estimates are from January 2007 and April 2012. **SIMD estimates based on 2008 and 2011 DWP data.

Vacancies can also be measured in several ways. Since 1998, **Jobcentre Plus** (JCP) has published a monthly count of the number of live unfilled vacancies (i.e. those that job seekers can actively apply for) notified to Jobcentre Network. The data can provide a detailed breakdown of vacancies by occupation and fine-grained

geography. However, they only count a limited proportion of vacancies available (since employers are under no obligation to notify the Job Centre of available opportunities) and as an administrative measure may produce not provide a consistent picture of trends in labour market demand.

Since 2001, the **Office for National Statistics (ONS) Vacancy Survey** has also asked a random sample of 6,000 employers to report how many vacancies they had, grossing up the figures to produce an estimate at UK-level. The survey is run monthly and provides a breakdown by industry and business size: but unfortunately, small sample sizes mean it cannot provide a breakdown of data by vacancies by geography, while the survey does not collect details of the occupations of vacancies.

Finally, there are the **Employers Skills Surveys**, which collect a range of information on the level of demand and skill requirements of employers. In 2011, a UK-wide ESS was run for the first time: prior to this, the four nations ran separate ESS at varying intervals. Historic Scottish ESS results are available biennially for the period 2002–2010. The ESS allows more accurate estimates of the level and trends in the number of Scottish vacancies and for a breakdown of vacancies by occupation and (for 2008) regions of Scotland.

Table A2 compares these measures of vacancies in Scotland in 2008 and in 2011. Only around 30–40% of vacancies are notified to Job Centre Plus, so the source of vacancies adopted is the more generous Employers Skills Survey.

Table A2: Selected measures of vacancies in Scotland, 2008 and 2011

Measure	2008	2011
JCP live, unfilled vacancies	27,624	16,646
ONS Vacancy Survey	Not available at Scotland level	Not available at Scotland level
SESS/UK Employers Skills Survey	69,800	45,800

Sources: **SESS/UK Employers Skills Survey; DWP Jobcentre Plus.**

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