



Regional Skills Assessments
Rural Scotland
March 2021

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Regional Skills Assessments (RSAs) are a single, agreed evidence base created to inform investment in skills. This infographic is for Rural Scotland, based on the 15 local authorities set out in the [Skills Action Plan for Rural Scotland](#), and provides the latest Labour Market Intelligence as of March 2021. It uses a range of trusted sources to show current and future economic contribution as well as current and future skills demand. Further disaggregation of Oxford Economics forecast data is available in the updated [RSA Data Matrix](#).

The Economy and Labour Market pre-COVID-19

The economy & productivity



Scotland has had long term challenges in terms of increasing economic growth and productivity. Both have been experiencing slow growth, behind that of the UK.

Demographic Change



Scotland's birth rate is lower than the rest of the UK, it has an ageing population and there are potential changes to the pattern of inward migration due to Brexit, which create a significant strategic driver.

Inclusive Growth



It is recognised that in Scotland 'deep inequalities still exist in our society'¹. Inclusive growth seeks to deliver 'growth that combines increases in prosperity with greater equity, creates opportunities for all and distributes the dividends of increased prosperity fairly'².

Automation



Advances in technological developments, such as automation, artificial intelligence and digitisation, will impact the world of work in the future. To give a sense of scale in Scotland around 46 per cent of jobs have a high potential for automation³.

Climate Change



Scotland aims to achieve a net-zero target by reducing carbon emissions across all sectors of the economy by 2045. The labour market is expected to be affected as the economy moves towards greater sustainability⁴.



Skills Shortages and Skills Gaps

Data for Rural Scotland is unavailable, however please visit the following Regional Skills Assessments for the regional picture: Aberdeen City and Shire, Ayrshire, Tayside, Scottish Borders, Dumfries and Galloway, Highlands and Islands and Edinburgh, East and Midlothian.



Brexit is a further factor that is expected to exacerbate economic and labour market challenges



Rural Scotland Population 2018-2043



Total population 2018:
1,673,800

Forecast change 2018 to 2043:
Rural Scotland: -35,800, (-2.1%)
Scotland: 136,700, (2.5%)
United Kingdom: 5,982,400 (9.0%)

Working age population 2018:
1,014,500

Forecast change 2018 to 2043:
Rural Scotland: -71,400, (-7.0%)
Scotland: -7,300, (-0.2%)
United Kingdom: 2,644,500 (6.4%)

Population by age (2018 and 2043) Scotland and Rural Scotland



Dependency Ratio 2018 and 2043



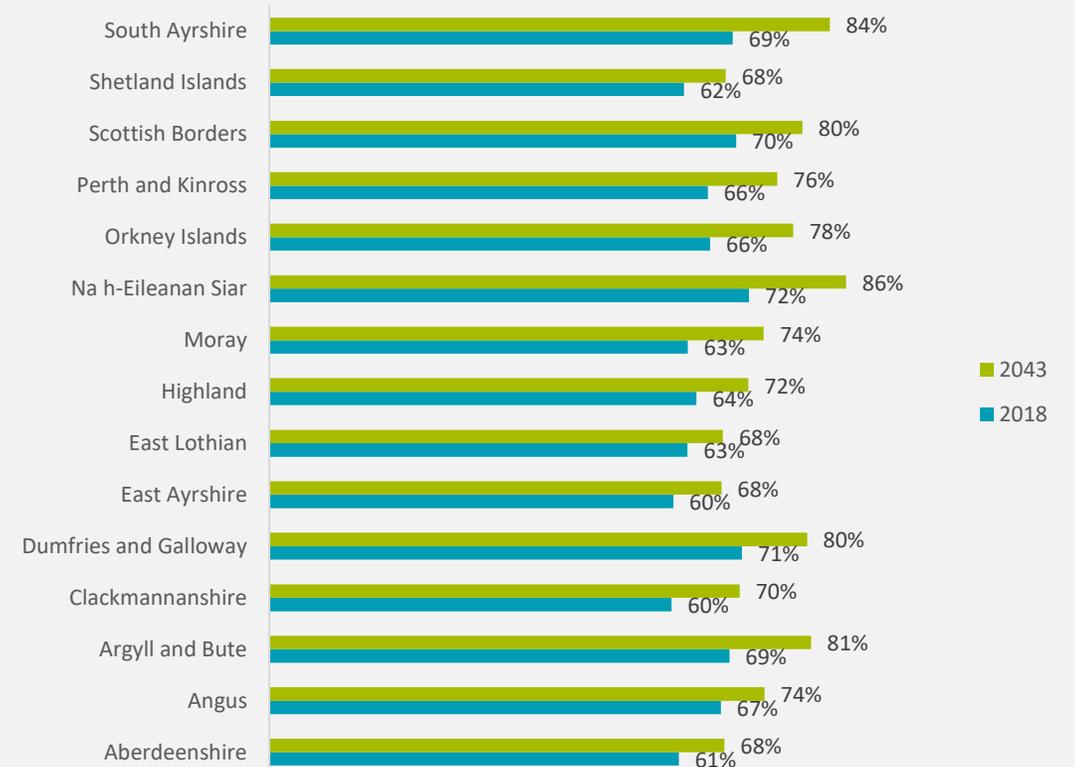
Dependency ratio for **Rural Scotland**:
2018: **65%** 2043: **74%**



Dependency ratio for **Scotland**:
2018: **56%** 2043: **60%**

The dependency ratio considers the non-working age (0-15 years and 65+) population compared to those of working age. A ratio of 65% would mean that for every 1,000 people of working age there were 650 of non-working age. The dependency ratio is important when considering the demand for public services and the funds available to provide these services - the income from taxes and National Insurance.

Dependency Ratios (2018 and 2043) by Local Authority



Scotland

Reflecting the impact of new restrictions, Scotland's GDP is estimated to have **fallen by 2.3% in January 2021**. This is the third month where output fell following six months of growth. **GDP remained 8.4% lower in January 2021 compared with February 2020** (prior to the onset of the pandemic) ^{7a}. Across Q4 2020 the Scottish Government has estimated that GDP increased by 2.0%, with growth having slowed considerably in comparison with the 15.8% increase in quarter three ^{7b}.



Across the whole of 2020 the Scottish Government has estimated that GDP fell by 9.6% ^{7b}. Forecasts released by the Scottish Fiscal Commission in January 2021 estimated that **Scottish GDP would not return to pre-pandemic levels until the beginning of 2024** ^{7c}. However, **newer forecasts released by Fraser of Allander** following the UK budget announcement in March **suggest a return to pre-pandemic GDP in Scotland by Autumn 2022 in their central scenario** ^{7d}.

The Regional Economy



Gross Value Added (GVA)⁸

Total **Rural Scotland** GVA 2020:
£33,506m and **26%** of total Scottish output



From 2010-2020, GVA in **Rural Scotland**:
decreased by 1.0% or £343m



Forecast average annual growth (2020-2030):
Rural Scotland: 1.9%
Scotland: 2.2%
United Kingdom: 2.4%



Productivity⁹

Rural Scotland productivity 2020:
£43,700, in **Scotland** it was **£45,500**



From 2010-2020, Productivity in **Rural Scotland**:
decreased by 4.2% or £1,900



Forecast average annual growth (2020-2030):
Rural Scotland: 1.9%
Scotland: 1.9%
United Kingdom: 2.0%

The greatest contributing factor to each region's economic recovery will be their sectoral footprint, however other place based factors will also influence their recovery. This includes the persistence of COVID-19 in the community and greater levels of homeworking altering demand for services – particularly in urban areas – as well as factors less specific to COVID-19, such as levels of deprivation and the number of highly skilled/educated workers in the region.¹⁰

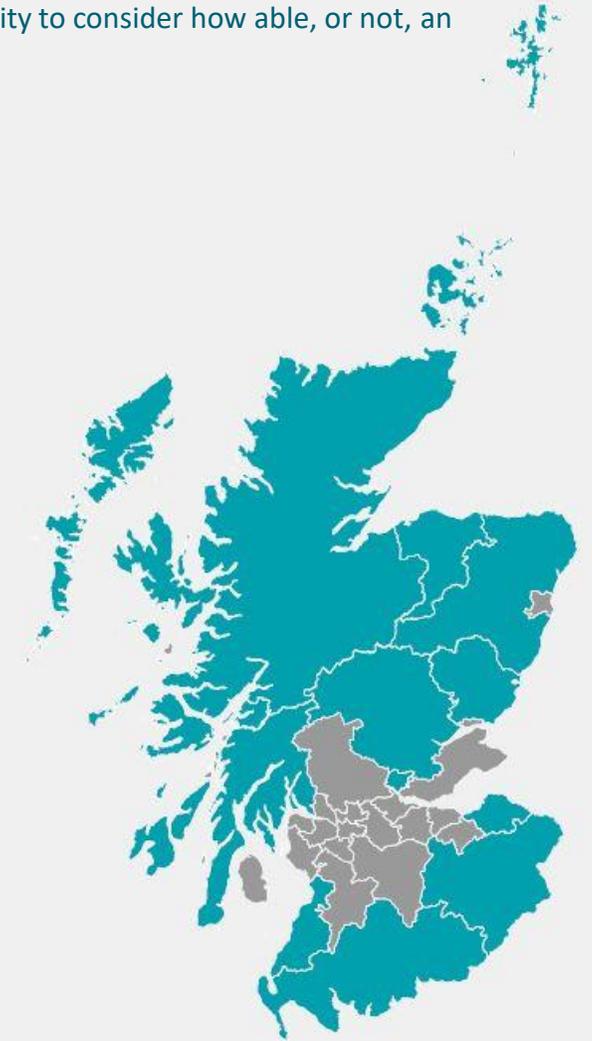


Resilience of Rural Scotland to COVID-19 Impacts

The Oxford Economics Vulnerability Index¹¹ considers a local authority's economic diversity, business environment and digital connectivity to consider how able, or not, an area is to withstand and respond to the economic shock resulting from COVID-19.

A score above 100 on the index means an area is more vulnerable than the Great Britain average.

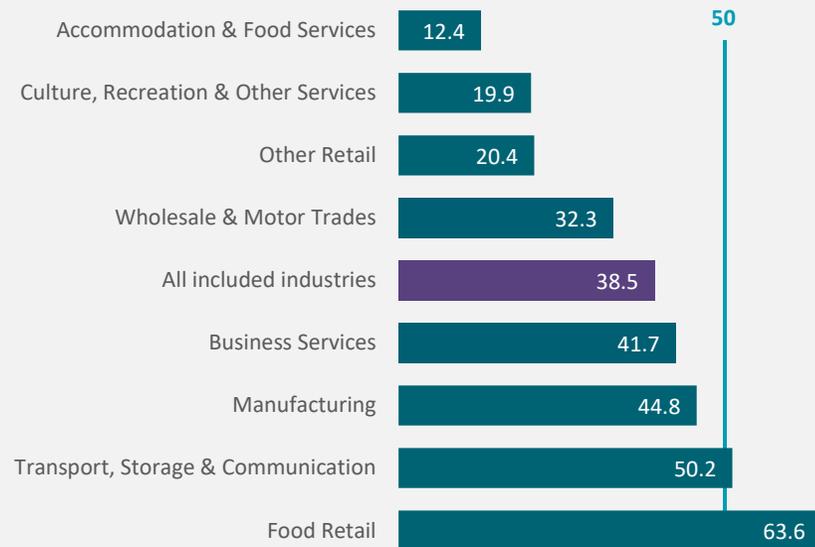
Rural Scotland	Ranking	Total	Economic Diversity	Business Environment	Digital Connectivity
Argyll and Bute	1st most vulnerable	150.6	140.9	131.9	193.8
Orkney Islands	2nd most vulnerable	142.6	78.4	168.4	201
Scottish Borders	3rd most vulnerable	140.3	89.4	164.5	180.9
Aberdeenshire	4th most vulnerable	138.3	96.5	148.7	186.4
Dumfries and Galloway	5th most vulnerable	133	132.4	95.9	190.5
South Ayrshire	6th most vulnerable	132.1	152.8	94.1	158.3
Angus	7th most vulnerable	131.8	130.6	96.2	187.8
Moray	8th most vulnerable	131.6	119.4	102.4	194.7
Shetland Islands	9th most vulnerable	128.6	107.1	104	198.8
Na h-Eileanan Siar	11th most vulnerable	125.6	90.2	115.8	194.4
Highland	12th most vulnerable	124.5	128.1	75.8	193
Perth and Kinross	13th most vulnerable	116.6	97.9	95.2	177.9
East Lothian	14th most vulnerable	115.8	91.8	120.7	145.1
East Ayrshire	15th most vulnerable	112	100.8	85.4	169.6
Clackmannanshire	7th most resilient	93.3	88.9	90.8	103.8



“The majority of the Scottish districts are more vulnerable to the coronavirus pandemic compared with the GB average, with urban districts being more resilient.”

Business Turnover Index January 2021¹²

The Monthly Business Turnover Index provides an early indication of business activity in Scotland, covering around half of the economy. It reports the net balance of firms reporting increased or decreased turnover, in real terms, compared to 12 months ago. Values below 50 indicate that more companies are showing decreased turnover.



- Scotland's Business Turnover Index was 38.5 in January, indicating a decrease in business activity compared to the same month last year. The index remains considerably below pre-pandemic levels, with most businesses reporting lower sales than the previous year.
- Turnover remains lower in all reported industries compared to 12 months ago, except for Food Retail and Transport, Storage and Communication.

Job Postings in Rural Scotland¹³

In Rural Scotland there were 22% fewer job postings in Week 10 2021 (March) compared to 2020

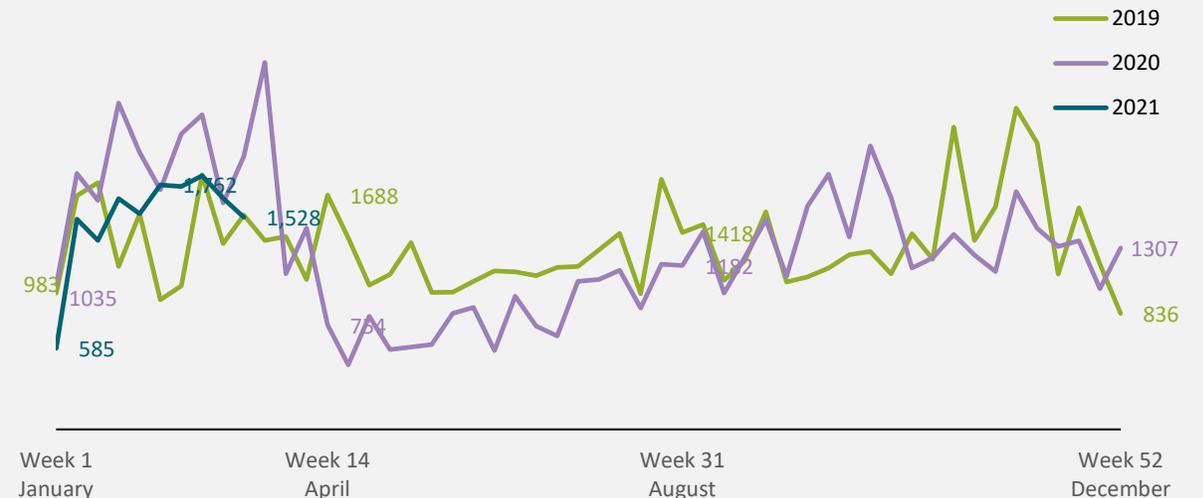
In Rural Scotland new postings increased by 103% between Week 14 2020 (beginning of April) and Week 10 2021



In Scotland there were 15% fewer job postings in Week 10 2021 (March) compared to 2020

In Scotland new postings increased by 91% between Week 14 2020 (beginning of April) and Week 10 2021

Weekly job postings in Rural Scotland for 2019, 2020 and 2021



Week 1 refers to the first Saturday in January (e.g. 4th January 2020)

Furloughed Jobs by Region

The UK Government have announced that the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme will be extended to September 2021. The rules allow individuals made redundant before 23rd September to be re-hired and placed on furlough leave. There are concerns that continued weak economic performance could mean furlough is a precursor to redundancy¹⁴.

Number of jobs furloughed in Rural Scotland at 28th February**:

112,100

accounted for **30.8%** of Scotland's furloughed workforce

Females: **60,300**

Males: **51,900**



**Figures may not sum due to rounding



Number of jobs furloughed at 28th February in Scotland:

364,100

Females: **189,600**

Males: **174,500**

Fully furloughed: **255,300**

Partially furloughed: **108,800**

*Figures at 28th February 2021 are provisional and will be revised in the future.

Redundancy¹⁵

Partnership Action for Continuing Employment (PACE) aims to help minimise the impact for people and businesses facing redundancy. Data is for 1st April – 31st July 2020 and 1st April 2020 – 28th February 2021.

PACE information provision (Individuals):

Rural Scotland:

Apr-Jul: **4,280** Apr-Feb: **7,820**

Scotland:

Apr-Jul: **13,935** Apr-Feb: **33,222**

PACE engagement (Employers):

Rural Scotland:

Apr-Jul: **120** Apr-Feb: **285**

Scotland:

Apr-Jul: **355** Apr-Feb: **954**

PACE information provision for individuals in Rural Scotland 1st April 2020 – 28th February 2021

Sectors with the greatest information provision for individuals:



Mining & Quarrying:

1,920



Manufacturing:

1,320



Accommodation and Food Services:

1,260



Wholesale & Retail Trade:

1,020

* Sub-Scotland data is rounded to the nearest 5

Modern Apprenticeship Redundancies

MA **in training** (1st January 2021):

Rural Scotland: 12,047

Scotland: 34,725

MA **redundancies** (1st April 2020 – 1st January 2021):

Rural Scotland: 228

Scotland: 834

* Rural Scotland MA redundancy figure does not include Na h-Eileanan Siar and Shetland Islands as this data is suppressed

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme is likely to be masking the full economic impact of the pandemic. We may see an increase in the number of MA redundancies when furlough is no longer an option for businesses.





Regional and national unemployment

COVID-19 has led to increased unemployment in **Scotland**. There were **114,000** people unemployed in Scotland aged 16+ over the period November 2020 to January 2021. Whilst this was **4,000** less than the previous three-month period (August – October 2020) there were an additional **18,000 people** unemployed compared to the same point last year (November 2019 – January 2020)¹⁶.

Comparable regional data is not available for November 2020 to January 2021. However, we can report unemployment data for those aged 16 and over and those aged 16-24 between October 2019 and September 2020. Data showed the unemployment rates for the 16+ and 16-24 population in **Rural Scotland** were lower than Scotland¹⁷.

Unemployment 16+ population:
Rural Scotland: 24,000 (2.9%)
Scotland: 96,400 (3.5%)

Unemployment 16-24 population:
Rural Scotland: 7,000 (7.7%)
Scotland: 36,400 (11.1%)

Rural Scotland Universal Credit

Data on Universal Credit claimants¹⁸ is a useful and timely barometer and from it we can see a sharp rise in claimants, suggesting an immediate number of job losses since the outbreak of COVID-19.



Since March 2020, across Scotland the number of Universal Credit claimants has increased by 224,400, from 264,100 to 488,600 in February 2021 (provisional).

Regional Unemployment Scenarios

The trajectory of Scotland's recovery from COVID-19 is uncertain. Forecasts suggest unemployment may begin to reach pre-pandemic levels towards the end of Q1 2025.

We have modelled some possible unemployment scenarios based on data from the Annual Population Survey (2020 denominators)¹⁹. They provide an indicative sense of scale to the possible unemployment challenges ahead (rate and number of people).

Scale of potential unemployment levels in Rural Scotland

8% = 66,700
 10% = 83,400
 12% = 100,100
 15% = 125,100
 20% = 166,900



Scale of potential unemployment levels in Scotland

8% = 218,300
 10% = 272,800
 12% = 327,400
 15% = 409,300
 20% = 545,700



Annual Participation Measure²⁰

Percentage of young adults (16-19 year olds) participating in education, training or employment.

Percentage of 16-19 year olds Participating in 2020

93% of 16-19 year olds were participating in education, training or employment in **Rural Scotland**, compared to **92%** in **Scotland**:

 Education:
Rural Scotland: 71%
Scotland: 72%

 Employment:
Rural Scotland: 20%
Scotland: 18%

 Training and Development:
Rural Scotland: 2%
Scotland: 2%

Percentage of 16-19 year olds Not- Participating in 2020

2% were not participating in **Rural Scotland** compared to **3%** in **Scotland**:

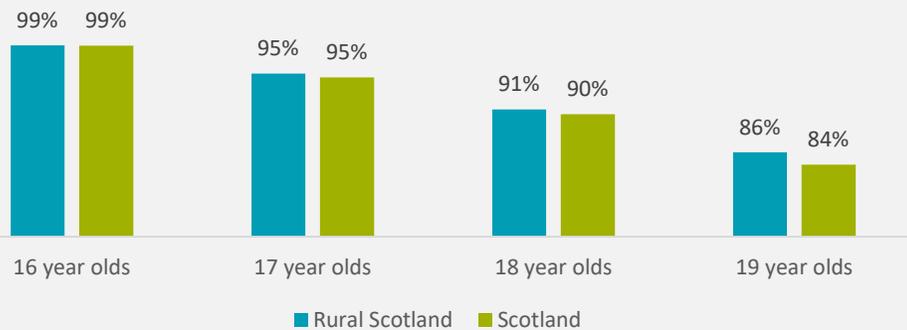
 Unemployed Seeking:
Rural Scotland: 1%
Scotland: 1%

 Unemployed Not-Seeking:
Rural Scotland: 1%
Scotland: 2%

Percentage of 16-19 year olds Unconfirmed in 2020

5% with an unconfirmed status in **Rural Scotland** compared to **5%** in **Scotland**

Percentage of participation in education, training or employment by Age Group



Of the total of those participating in **Rural Scotland**:



Females: **49%**



Males: **51%**

College and University Qualifiers in Rural Scotland

Successful full-time College qualifiers, 2018/19²¹

Rural Scotland: 8,200
Scotland: 48,625

Of the successful college qualifiers in the region, **88%** went on to positive destinations and **37%** left the college sector.

* This is based on the Skills Action Plan for Rural Scotland definition of rural colleges, which included those who received additional rural and remoteness funding in 2018/19 (Highlands & Islands region, North East Scotland College, Dumfries & Galloway College, SRUC and Borders College)

Successful University qualifiers, 2019/20²²

Rural Scotland: 4,700
Scotland: 75,700

15 months post-graduation, **86%** of 2017/18 undergraduate graduates from universities in the region were in employment/further study.

* This is based on institutions with main campuses in local authorities defined as Mainly rural/Islands and Remote and therefore includes University of the Highlands and Islands and Queen Margaret University

* Due to small sample sizes data is unavailable for 16 and 17 year olds participating in East Lothian and Shetland Islands. Data is also unavailable for 16 and 19 year olds in Eilean Siar and 19 year olds in Shetland Islands.

Rural Scotland Employment



Workforce size 2020:

694,200 people



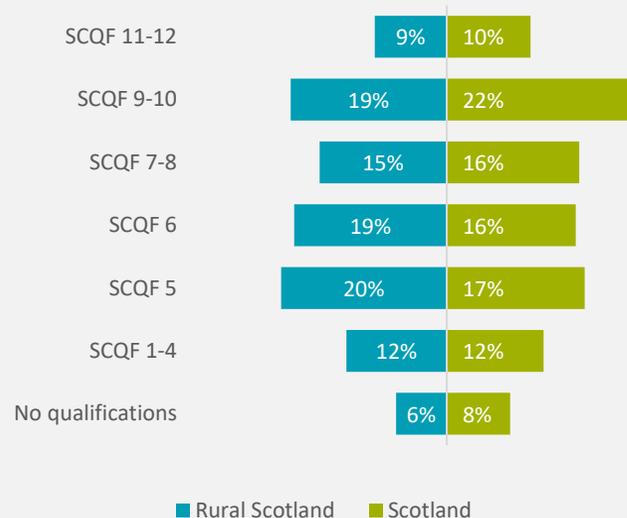
The workforce was expected to shrink between 2019 and 2020, as a result of COVID-19:

down by 1.5% or 10,300 people

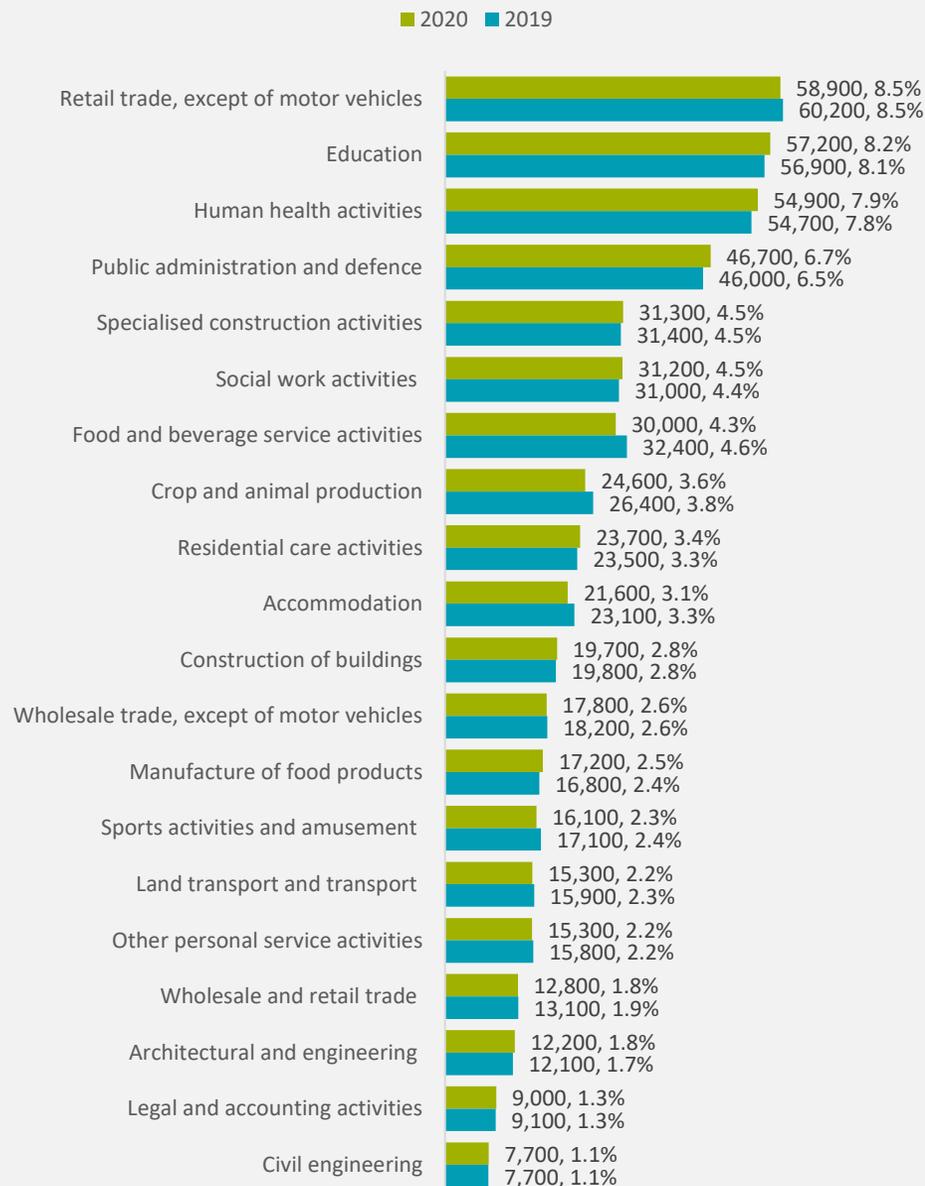


Compared to a **Scottish** decrease of **0.8% or 22,200 people**

Qualification profile, 2020



Top Employing Industries, Rural Scotland, 2020



Top Employing Occupations, Rural Scotland, 2020



Job Postings 2020

Online job postings data provides a useful barometer for the health of the jobs market alongside the insight on the previous page. It can help us to understand a wide range of factors including in-demand roles and skills sought by employers in real-time.

It is however important to note that the data does not capture all activity, so it should be considered as an estimate of activity only.



Job Postings in Scotland

Following a 68% decrease between March and April 2020, job postings more than doubled between April 2020 and February 2021. While this indicates the return of some recruitment activity, there were around 19% fewer job postings in February 2021 compared to the same point last year. This suggests that employment activity has not fully recovered to pre-pandemic levels of recruitment.

The composition of job postings was similar in February 2021 compared to February 2020, with the highest demand for Information Technology and Telecommunication Professionals. In February 2021 occupations with the highest number of job postings included Caring and Personal Services and Business, Research and Administrative Professionals.



Job Postings in Rural Scotland



Number of job postings from 1st February 2020 to 28th February 2021:

77,900

Within **Rural Scotland**, the locations with the most jobs advertised were:

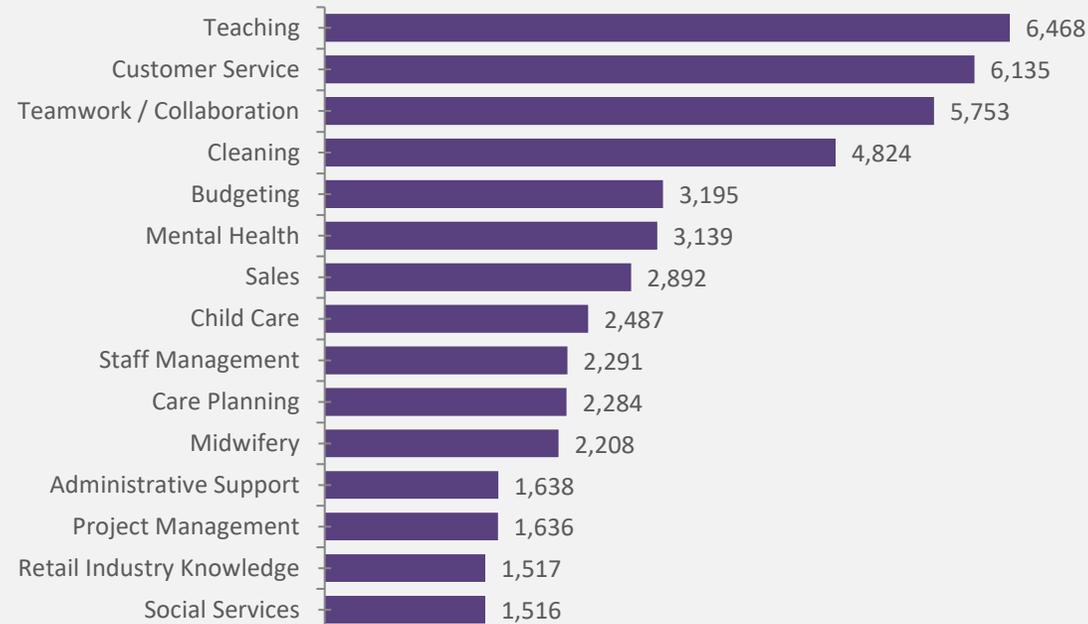
Inverness
7,600 postings

Perth
5,900 postings

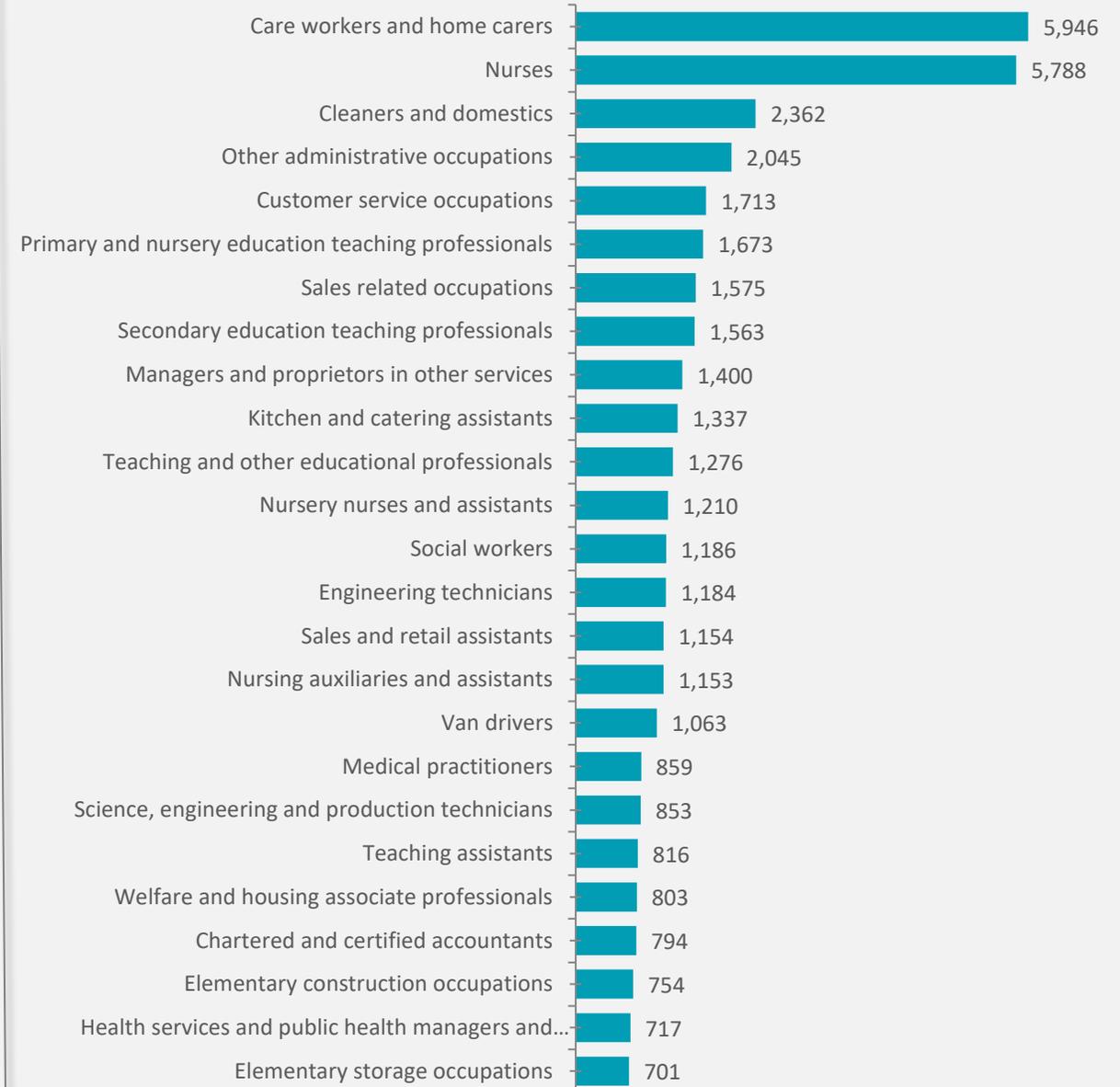
Dumfries
4,100 postings

* Job postings data rounded to the nearest 100

Not all job postings specify the skills required for the role, likewise the detail varies between adverts. Based on information from approximately 49% of job postings in **Rural Scotland**, the most requested specialised skills were:



The jobs with the greatest number of postings in **Rural Scotland** were:



Future Demand for Skills – Job Openings in the mid-term (2020 - 2023)²⁶

In **Rural Scotland**, the labour market is forecast to face some challenges in the immediate term. The forecasts for the mid-term (2020-2023) however suggest there could be some jobs growth and opportunities created as a result of the need to replace workers leaving the labour market due to retirement and other reasons.

Whilst positive, caution is needed as there are still a wide range of unknowns concerning Scotland's recovery from the pandemic. The jobs market could also be competitive, with the number of people seeking jobs outnumbering the opportunities available, skills mismatch and job quality will also be important factors to consider.

Rural Scotland

▼ **6,500** people Expansion Demand

71,700 people
Replacement Demand

78,200 people to fill Job Openings,

with the greatest requirement for people with higher education level qualifications:

SCQF 11-12	SCQF 7-10	SCQF 6	SCQF 5	SCQF 1-4	No quals.
4,400 (6%)	35,500 (45%)	10,900 (14%)	17,800 (23%)	3,500 (4%)	6,100 (8%)

Scotland

▼ **40,400** people Expansion Demand

297,400 people
Replacement Demand

337,800 people to fill Job Openings,

with the greatest requirement for people with higher education level qualifications:

SCQF 11-12	SCQF 7-10	SCQF 6	SCQF 5	SCQF 1-4	No quals.
23,400 (7%)	158,800 (47%)	44,200 (13%)	70,400 (21%)	15,000 (4%)	26,000 (8%)

Rural Scotland is forecast to account for 23% of Scotland's total number of job openings in the mid-term (2020 – 2023)



Rural Scotland Total Employment 2020-2023



Workforce size 2023:

700,700 people

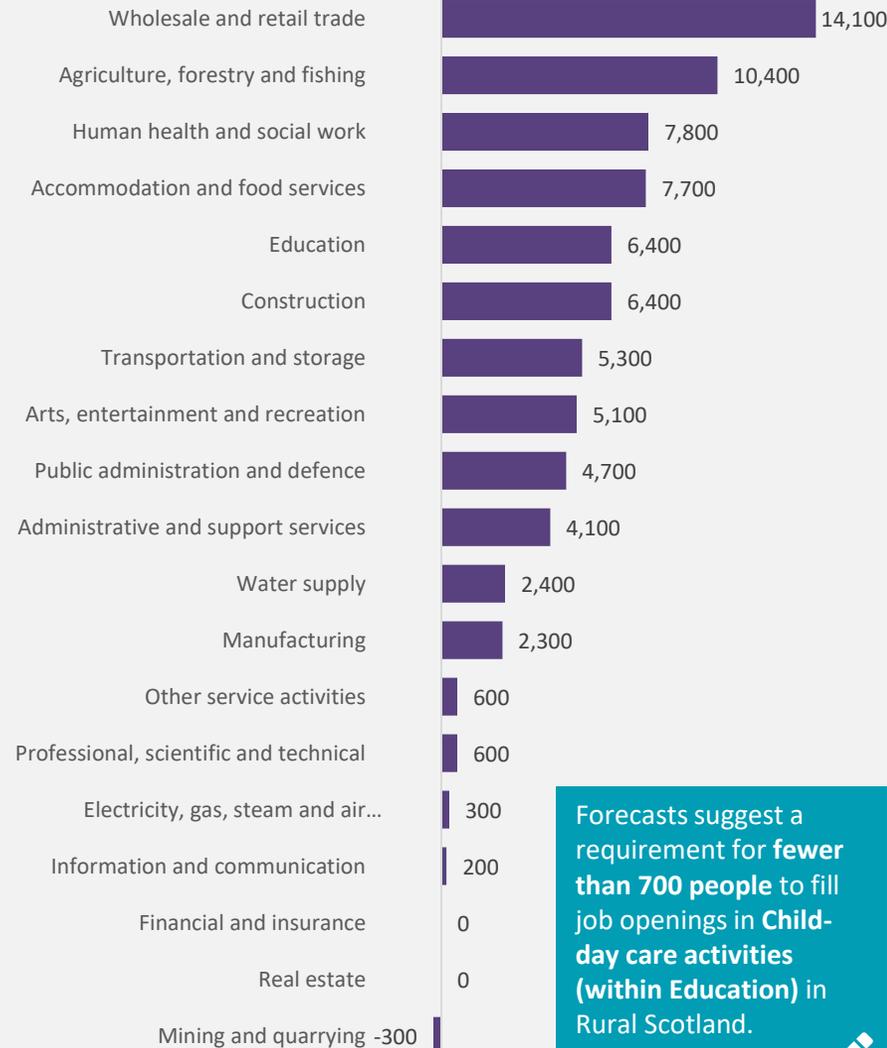
The workforce is forecast to grow between 2020 and 2023, as the labour market bounces back and growth returns:
up by 0.9% or 6,500 people

Compared to a **Scottish** increase of **1.5%** or **40,400 people**

Underpinning this growth is the anticipated bounce back that in Rural Scotland is forecast to occur between 2021 and 2022, it is not expected to be a long-term growth rate.



Total Requirement by Industry, Rural Scotland, 2020-2023



Forecasts suggest a requirement for **fewer than 700 people** to fill job openings in **Child-day care activities (within Education)** in Rural Scotland.

Employment Growth by Occupation, Rural Scotland, 2020-2023



Skilled Agricultural Trades

Expansion Demand: **1,200**

Greatest requirement for qualifications: SCQF 7-10



Caring Personal Service Occupations

Expansion Demand: **1,000**

Greatest requirement for qualifications: SCQF 7-10



Managers, Proprietors in Agriculture and Services

Expansion Demand: **700**

Greatest requirement for qualifications: SCQF 7-10



Skilled Construction and Building Trades

Expansion Demand: **700**

Greatest requirement for qualifications: SCQF 7-10



Elementary Occupations: Trades, Plant and Storage

Expansion Demand: **600**

Greatest requirement for qualifications: SCQF 5



Corporate Managers

Expansion Demand: **600**

Greatest requirement for qualifications: SCQF 11-12



Culture, Media and Sports Occupations

Expansion Demand: **500**

Greatest requirement for qualifications: SCQF 7-10



Business and Public Service Professionals

Expansion Demand: **500**

Greatest requirement for qualifications: SCQF 7-10

Future Demand for Skills – Job Openings in the long-term (2023 - 2030)²⁸

The forecasts for the long-term (2023-2030) highlight that strong jobs growth is not forecast to continue in Rural Scotland. However it is expected that there could be an ongoing requirement for skilled people to fill opportunities created by people leaving the labour market. This feature of the labour market, known as the replacement requirement, is a symptom of the demographic change strategic driver.

The long-term forecast is changeable and could be influenced by a range of factors both related and not to Scotland's post COVID-19 recovery. National and local policy, investment and initiatives could all influence the long-term outlook presented.

Rural Scotland

▼ -6,600 people Expansion Demand



143,000 people to fill Job Openings,

with the greatest requirement for people with higher education level qualifications:

SCQF 11-12	SCQF 7-10	SCQF 6	SCQF 5	SCQF 1-4	No quals.
7,300 (5%)	68,600 (48%)	18,600 (13%)	35,300 (25%)	3,000 (2%)	10,300 (7%)

Scotland

▼ 30,300 people Expansion Demand



683,900 people to fill Job Openings,

with the greatest requirement for people with higher education level qualifications:

SCQF 11-12	SCQF 7-10	SCQF 6	SCQF 5	SCQF 1-4	No quals.
45,600 (7%)	331,900 (49%)	84,600 (12%)	153,400 (22%)	19,600 (3%)	48,800 (7%)

Rural Scotland is forecast to account for 21% of Scotland's total number of job openings in the long-term (2023 – 2030)



Rural Scotland Total Employment 2023-2030



Workforce size 2030:

694,100 people



The workforce is forecast to shrink between 2023 and 2030, with the contraction occurring from 2024: **down by 0.9% or 6,600 people**

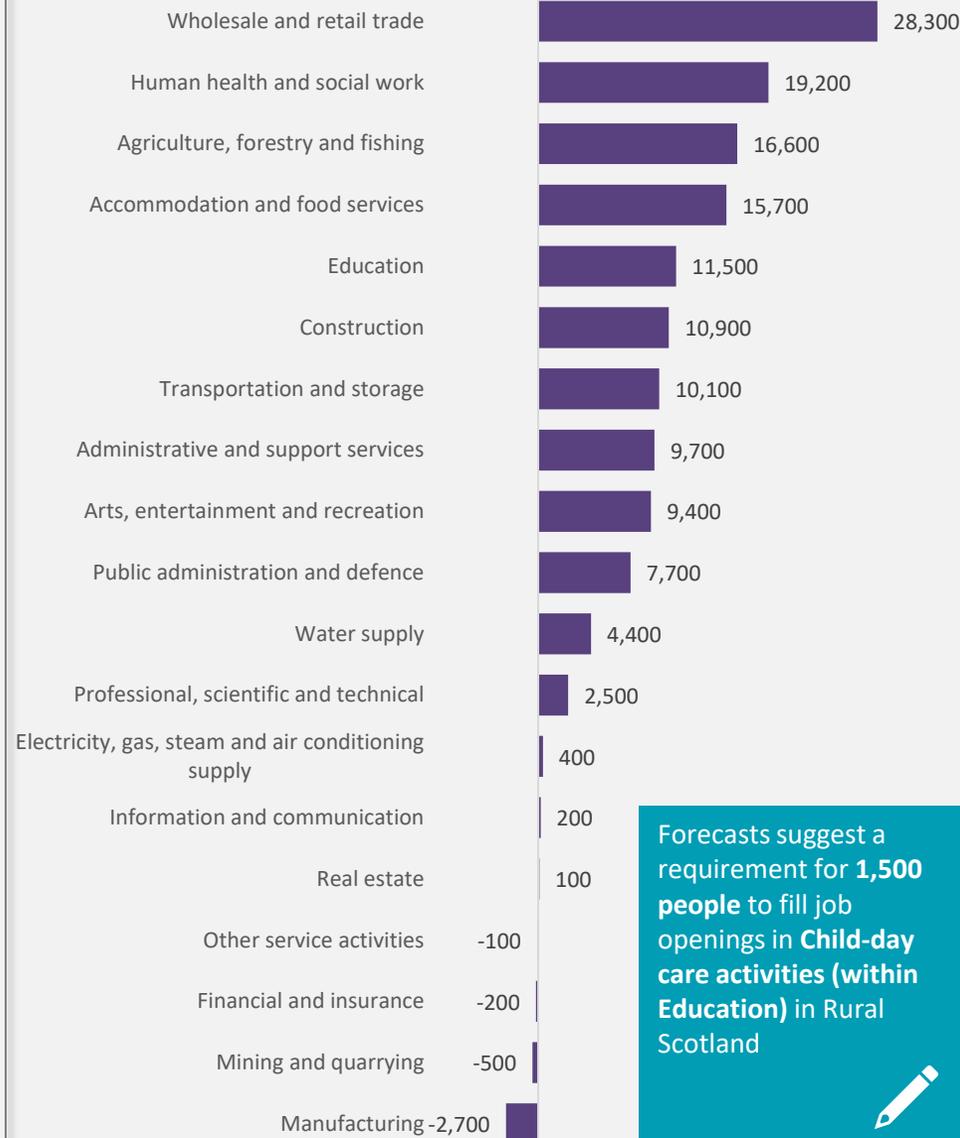


Compared to a **Scottish** increase of **1.1%** or **30,300 people**

The economic impacts of COVID-19 are not being felt equally by all groups in society.³⁰ People living on low incomes, women, disabled people, people from ethnic minority groups, lone parents, children, young people and older people are more likely to be disproportionately affected.



Total Requirement by Industry, Rural Scotland, 2023-2030



Forecasts suggest a requirement for **1,500 people** to fill job openings in **Child-day care activities (within Education)** in Rural Scotland

Expansion Demand by Occupation, Rural Scotland, 2023-2030



Caring Personal Service Occupations

Expansion Demand: **3,000**
Greatest requirement for qualifications: SCQF 7-10



Health professionals

Expansion Demand: **1,200**
Greatest requirement for qualifications: SCQF 7-10



Business and Public Services Professionals

Expansion Demand: **700**
Greatest requirement for qualifications: SCQF 7-10



Culture, Media and Sports Occupations

Expansion Demand: **700**
Greatest requirement for qualifications: SCQF 1-4



Managers/Proprietors in Agriculture and Services

Expansion Demand: **500**
Greatest requirement for qualifications: SCQF 7-10

Spotlight on the Public Sector³¹

In Rural Scotland, Public Sector employment accounts for just under one third of total employment in the region. The forecasts for the mid-term (2020-2023) and long-term (2023-2030) suggest this will continue as it is expected that there could be an ongoing requirement for skilled people to fill opportunities created by people leaving the labour market.

The long-term forecast is changeable and could be influenced by a range of factors both related and not to Scotland's post COVID-19 recovery. National and local policy, investment and initiatives could all influence the long-term outlook presented.

Public Sector Employment (people), Rural Scotland, 2020



Human health and social work activities: **109,800**



Education: **57,200**



Public administration and defence: **46,700**

The Public Sector accounted for 31% of total employment in Rural Scotland in 2020.

In Scotland the Public Sector accounted for 33% of total employment in 2020



Public Sector Job Postings

Rural Scotland

Number of Public Sector job postings up to 28th February 2021:

34,000



Scotland

Number of Public Sector job postings up to 28th February 2021:

105,200



Public Sector Job Openings in Rural Scotland in the mid-term (2020 – 2023)

▼ 100 people Expansion Demand

18,700 people
Replacement Demand

18,800 people to fill Job Openings

Public Sector Job Openings in Rural Scotland in the long-term (2023 – 2030)

▼ 200 people Expansion Demand

38,100 people
Replacement Demand

38,300 people to fill Job Openings

The Public Sector in Rural Scotland is forecast to account for 18% of Scotland's total number of Public Sector job openings in the long-term (2023 -2030)

* Job postings data rounded to the nearest 100

Summary



It will take some time to fully understand the economic impact of COVID-19 due to time lags in the data and initiatives like the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme that has provided some temporary shelter for the workforce in affected sectors. However, we expect there to be challenges ahead as fiscal support is gradually withdrawn and we move into the restart and recovery phases. As a result, SDS is committed to updating the RSA evidence base to support all partners and stakeholders with skills planning as we learn more about the new normal.



Rural Scotland appears to be a more vulnerable region, and challenges may be more acute than those that occur elsewhere. **The workforce is expected to shrink by 1.5 per cent (or 10,300 people) between 2019 and 2020**, as a result of COVID-19. The data suggests that **job losses are likely to have occurred in businesses associated with the Hospitality and Tourism and Retail sectors**. Oxford Economic Forecasts suggest that a greater decrease in employment will occur in the first half of 2020 as a result of COVID-19, with **some employment growth in the second half of the year** as Scotland is phased out of lockdown.



Up to 28th February 2021, there were **77,900** job postings with **Care Workers and Home Carers, Nurses and Cleaners and Domestic**s being the most numerous. This provides an indication of the occupations most in demand and shows that for some roles recruitment activity is ongoing despite COVID-19 or boosted as a result of increased demand arising from the pandemic.



Job postings data highlights that **employers within the region are seeking softer skills as well as technical skills**. Skills such as customer service and teamwork/ collaboration feature, as do job specific skills such as teaching, cleaning and budgeting.



COVID-19 has highlighted the importance of digital skills and this could benefit Rural Scotland. The increase in the uptake of homeworking could enable more opportunities for those who live in rural areas if connectivity was strengthened. As this is an area of opportunity that could extend beyond COVID-19, **this could bring a number of societal and economic benefits to the region and reduce the carbon footprint** as commuting activity decreases. 'Green jobs' to support Scotland's aspirations on carbon reduction are another area of opportunity.



The forecasts for the mid-term (2020-2023) suggest there will be some jobs growth and opportunities created as a result of the need to replace workers. The greatest requirement for workers is expected to be in **Wholesale and Retail Trade and Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing**. Over the longer term (2023-2030) Rural Scotland labour market is forecast to contract, however replacement requirement is expected to create opportunities. The occupations forecast to have the greatest growth due to new job creation are **Caring Personal Services, Health Professionals and Business and Public Services Professionals**.



Over the mid and long term **the greatest requirement is forecast to be for skilled workers with higher education level (primarily SCQF 7-10) qualifications**. However provision at lower SCQF levels will be needed for some occupations so aligning provision not just to areas of demand, but also at appropriate qualification levels will be important.

Rebuild/ Recover

The report by the Enterprise and Skills Strategic Board sub-group on Measures to Mitigate the Labour Market Impacts from COVID-19³² highlights the challenges facing Scotland's labour market, existing measures, and identifies and assesses potential labour market options. The group identified four top priorities for action: assistance to support employee retention; assistance for those facing redundancy; training to enable unemployed people to transition into employment; and helping vulnerable people into employment.

In its Programme for Government 2020-2021³³, the Scottish Government outlined its plans to ensure Scotland's economic, health and social recovery from COVID-19. Specific commitments around employability and skills support included: support for apprenticeships, a new Youth Guarantee, a National Transition Training Fund, support for those affected by redundancy through the PACE initiative and a Jobs guarantee and Fair Start Scotland fund to help those facing the greatest barriers find work.

By committing to update our RSA insight over the coming months, our aim is to support partners and stakeholders with skills planning, whatever the horizon, and support the acceleration of *'reform in the enterprise and skills system to drive greater collaboration and alignment.'*³⁴

Skills Action Plan for Rural Scotland – A Partnership Approach

The Skills Action Plan for Rural Scotland seeks to focus on developing the skills required for the jobs in rural areas – both now and in the future.

The plan is built around the following five priority areas:

Priority A – Better understand the skills rural employers need and align provision to support this

Priority B – Provide individuals with accessible education and skills provision to secure, sustain and progress in their careers in rural areas

Priority C – Develop the current workforce in rural areas through upskilling and reskilling

Priority D – Build a secure pipeline of talent for the future

Priority E – Take a coordinated, strategic approach to tackling skills in rural areas

The implementation of the plan is overseen by an [Implementation Steering Group](#) which brings together a broad range of skills and expertise from both regional and sectoral spheres.

The group has agreed that the five priority areas identified in the plan continue to be the right foundations to develop skills and support recovery in rural areas but recognises that there are areas of priority within this, such as supporting young people, maximising opportunities presented by the transition to net zero and the role of strong digital skills.

There is also a need to reflect all of the new activity that is underway across the partnership to support individuals and employers across rural Scotland.

Rural Scotland is particularly exposed to significant impact to the pandemic because of a number of factors including a dependency on sectors which have been hardest hit by the pandemic. Partners will continue to work together through the Implementation Steering Group to support the development of people and skills across rural Scotland.



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Appendix 1

Occupational group	Job description	Occupations within this group include:
<p>Corporate Managers and Directors</p> <p>Other Managers and Proprietors</p>	<p>Job holders in this sub-major group formulate government policy; direct the operations of major organisations, local government, government departments and special interest organisations; organise and direct production, processing, maintenance and construction operations in industry; formulate, implement and advise on specialist functional activities within organisations; direct the operations of branches of financial institutions; organise and co-ordinate the transportation of passengers, the storage and distribution of freight, and the sale of goods; direct the operations of the emergency services, revenue and customs, the prison service and the armed forces; and co-ordinate the provision of health and social services.</p> <p>Job holders in this sub-major group, either as employees or proprietors, manage agriculture related services; manage and co-ordinate the operations of health service general practices, residential and day care establishments and domiciliary care services; co-ordinate and direct the activities of businesses such as restaurants, hotels, entertainment establishments, sports and leisure facilities, travel and property agencies, independent shops, garages, waste disposal and environmental services, hairdressing establishments, and agencies providing services outsourced by other organisations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Executives and Senior Officials • Production Managers and Directors • Functional Managers and Directors • Financial Institution Managers and Directors • Managers and Directors in Transport and Logistics • Senior Officers in Protective Services • Health and Social Services Managers and Directors • Managers and Directors in Retail and Wholesale • Managers and Proprietors in Agriculture Related Services • Managers and Proprietors in Hospitality and Leisure Services • Managers and Proprietors in Health and Care Services • Managers and Proprietors in Other Services
<p>Science, Research, Engineering and Technology Professionals</p>	<p>Professionals in this sub-major group undertake research and consultancy activities within the physical and social sciences and in the humanities; technically supervise the development, installation and maintenance of mechanical, chemical, structural and electrical systems; advise upon and direct the technical aspects of production programmes; provide consultancy and development services in the provision and utilisation of information technology and telecommunications; direct and advise upon the conservation and protection of the environment; and direct and advise upon the research and development operations of an organisation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural and Social Science Professionals • Engineering Professionals • Information Technology and Telecommunications Professionals • Conservation and Environment Professionals • Research and Development Managers
<p>Health Professionals</p>	<p>Health professionals provide medical treatments and diagnosis for people and animals, conduct research into treatment and drugs, dispense pharmaceutical compounds, provide therapeutical treatments for medical conditions, and administer nursing and midwifery care.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Professionals • Therapy Professionals • Nursing and Midwifery Professionals
<p>Teaching and Educational Professionals</p>	<p>Teaching and educational professionals plan, organise and undertake teaching and research activities within educational establishments; plan, organise, direct and co-ordinate the administrative work and financial resources of these establishments; and inspect and advise schools and training establishments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching and Educational Professionals
<p>Business, Media and Public Service Professionals</p>	<p>Jobholders in this sub-major group advise and act on behalf of clients in legal matters, preside over judicial proceedings, collect and analyse financial information, perform accounting duties, advise on business and management matters, and perform a variety of other professional occupations within the public, welfare, regulatory and voluntary sectors, and within the media.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal Professionals • Business, Research and Administrative Professionals • Business and Financial Project Management Professionals • Architects, Town Planners and Surveyors • Welfare Professionals • Librarians and Related Professionals • Quality and Regulatory Professionals • Media Professionals

Appendix 1

Occupational group	Job description	Occupations within this group include:
Science, Engineering and Technology Associate Professionals	Science, engineering and technology associate professionals perform a variety of technical support functions to scientists, technologists, engineers and architects, prepare technical drawings, undertake building inspections, provide technical support for IT operations and users.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science, Engineering and Production Technicians • Draughtspersons and Related Architectural Technicians • Information Technology Technicians
Health and Social Care Associate Professionals	Health and social care associate professionals provide a variety of technical support functions and services for health professionals in the treatment of patients to assist physical and psychological recovery, and provide social care and related community services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Associate Professionals • Welfare and Housing Associate Professionals
Protective Service Occupations	Workers in protective service occupations serve in the armed forces, the police force, fire service, prison service and perform other protective service roles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protective Service Occupations
Culture, Media and Sports Occupations	Workers in this sub-major group create and restore artistic works; write, edit and evaluate literary material; perform in acts of entertainment; arrange and perform musical compositions; produce television, film and stage presentations; present television and radio broadcasts; operate camera, sound and lighting equipment; design commercial and industrial products; compete in sporting events for financial reward; and provide training and instruction for sporting and recreational activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artistic, Literary and Media Occupations • Design Occupations • Sports and Fitness Occupations
Business and Public Service Associate Professionals	Business and public service associate professionals command and control the movement of air and sea traffic; organise the administrative work of legal practices; perform specialist financial tasks; purchase goods and materials; provide technical sales advice to clients; undertake market research; arrange for the trading and leasing of property on behalf of clients; organise conferences and related events; undertake recruitment, training and industrial relations activities; promote and maintain areas of the environment; perform administrative functions in government; and undertake statutory inspections of health and safety.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport Associate Professionals • Legal Associate Professionals • Business, Finance and Related Associate Professionals • Sales, Marketing and Related Associate Professionals • Public Services and Other Associate Professionals
Administrative Occupations	Workers in this sub-major group undertake administrative and clerical work in national and local government departments and non-governmental organisations; perform specialist clerical tasks in relation to financial records and transactions, the administration of pension and insurance policies, the storage and transportation of freight, the activities of libraries and of human resources operations; and perform other general administrative tasks. They also coordinate and oversee the day-to-day running of offices and supervise office staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative Occupations: Government and Related Occupations • Administrative Occupations: Finance • Administrative Occupations: Records • Other Administrative Occupations • Administrative Occupations: Office Managers and Supervisors
Secretarial and Related Occupations	Secretarial occupations perform general secretarial, clerical and organisational duties in support of management and other workers, and provide specialist secretarial support for medical and legal activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secretarial and Related Occupations

Appendix 1

Occupational group	Job description	Occupations within this group include:
Skilled Agricultural and Related Trades	Skilled agricultural and related trades cultivate crops, raise animals and catch fish for consumption, grow plants and trees for sale, tend gardens, parks, sports pitches and other recreational areas, and maintain areas of forestry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural and Related Trades
Skilled Metal, Electrical and Electronic Trades	Workers in this sub-major group shape and join metal, erect and maintain metal structures and fixtures; set up and operate metal working machinery and install and repair industrial plant and machinery; assemble parts in the manufacture of metal goods; make and calibrate precision instruments; install, test and repair air conditioning systems; maintain and repair motor vehicles; and install, test and repair industrial, domestic and commercial electrical and electronic equipment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metal Forming, Welding and Related Trades • Metal Machining, Fitting and Instrument Making Trades • Vehicle Trades • Electrical and Electronic Trades • Skilled Metal, Electrical and Electronic Trades Supervisors
Skilled Construction and Building Trades	Skilled construction and building trades erect steel frames, lay stone, brick and similar materials, construct and repair roofs, install heating, plumbing and ventilating systems, fit windows, doors and other fixtures, and apply coverings and decorative material to walls, floors and ceilings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction and Building Trades • Building Finishing Trades • Construction and Building Trades Supervisors
Textiles, Printing and Other Skilled Trades	Workers in this sub-major group weave fabrics, make articles of clothing, soft furnishings and leather goods, upholster vehicle interiors, set and operate printing machines, prepare meat, poultry and fish, bake bread and flour-based confectionery products, prepare food and manage catering and bar operations within hotels, restaurants and other establishments, and perform a variety of other skilled trades.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textiles and Garments Trades • Printing Trades • Food Preparation and Hospitality Trades • Other Skilled Trades
Caring Personal Service Occupations	Workers in this sub-major group assist health professionals in the care of patients; undertake caring personal services within the community; supervise the activities of pre-school age children and assist teachers with non-teaching duties; provide technical assistance to veterinarians and provide other services in the care of animals; provide funeral services; and control pests hazardous to public health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childcare and Related Personal Services • Animal Care and Control Services • Caring Personal Services
Leisure, Travel and Related Personal Service Occupations	Workers within Leisure, Travel and Related Personal Service Occupations provide services and facilities for sporting and recreational activities; make travel arrangements for clients and provide ancillary services for travellers; provide hairdressing and beauty services; undertake domestic and care-taking duties in private households, public buildings and other establishments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leisure and Travel Services • Hairdressers and Related Services • Housekeeping and Related Services • Cleaning and Housekeeping Managers and Supervisors
Sales Occupations	Workers in this sub-major group sell goods and services in retail and wholesale establishments, accept payment in respect of sales, obtain orders and collect payments for goods and services from private households, replenish stocks of goods in stores, create displays of merchandise and perform other sales related occupations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sales Assistants and Retail Cashiers • Sales Related Occupations • Sales Supervisors

Appendix 1

Occupational group	Job description	Occupations within this group include:
Customer Service Occupations	Customer service occupations receive and respond to enquiries regarding products or services, deal with customer complaints and perform a variety of tasks in the provision of additional services to customers after the point of sale; operate switchboards and receive and direct calls in a variety of establishments; operate telecommunications equipment to transmit and receive messages; conduct market research interviews; and perform other customer service tasks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Service Occupations • Customers Service Managers and Supervisors
Process, Plant and Machine Operatives	Process, plant and machine operatives operate and attend machinery to manufacture, process or otherwise treat foodstuffs, beverages, textiles, chemicals, glass, ceramics, rubber, plastic, metal, synthetic and other products, operate plant and machinery to produce paper, wood and related products, extract coal and other minerals from the earth, attend and operate power generation and water treatment systems, perform routine operations in the manufacture of motor vehicles, metal goods, electrical and electronic products, clothing and other goods, and perform a variety of tasks in relation to the construction and repair of buildings, public highways, underground piping systems, railway tracks and other structures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process Operatives • Plant and Machine Operatives • Assemblers and Routine Operatives • Construction Operatives
Transport and Mobile Machine Drivers and Operatives	Transport and mobile machine drivers and operatives drive motor vehicles to transport goods and people; drive trains and guide and monitor the movement of rail traffic; operate mechanical equipment on board boats, ships and other marine vessels; assist in the boarding, fuelling and movement of aircraft at airports; operate lifting, earth moving and earth surfacing equipment, agricultural equipment and other mobile machinery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road Transport Drivers • Mobile Machine Drivers and Operatives • Other Drivers and Transport Operatives
Elementary Trades and Related Occupations	Occupations in this sub-major group perform agricultural, fishing and forestry related tasks, undertake general labouring duties, assist building and construction trades workers, and perform a variety of duties in foundry, engineering and other process plant related trades.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elementary Agricultural Occupations • Elementary Construction Occupations • Elementary Process Plant Occupations
Elementary Administration and Service Occupations	Workers in this sub-major group collect, sort and deliver written correspondence, undertake elementary clerical tasks within offices, undertake elementary cleaning tasks, protect and supervise people and property, perform elementary sales related tasks, assist in the storage and transportation of goods, and perform a variety of carrying, preparation and serving tasks within hospitals, catering, domestic and other establishments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elementary Administration Occupations • Elementary Cleaning Occupations • Elementary Security Occupations • Elementary Sales Occupations • Elementary Storage Occupations • Other Elementary Services Occupations