

Scottish Borders Picture of Poverty (2024)

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Executive Summary

Life Expectancy in the Scottish Borders is higher than the Scottish average and is improving, contrary to the Scottish average. Women in the Tweeddale West Area can expect to live 15 years longer than women in Langlee. Men in Lauder and Area can expect to live 12 years longer than men in Central Hawick.

The most multiply-deprived Datazones in the region are in Burnfoot, other parts of Hawick, Langlee and Bannerfield.

Wages in the Scottish Borders have always been below the Scottish average. The **average pay gap** is **improving for residence-based workers** and **getting worse for workplace-based workers**.

Residence-based wages are always higher than **workplace-based wages**, and the gap is getting bigger. This is likely to affect people with less “**workforce mobility**” due to not having a car or not being able to afford train fares.

The proportion of Scottish Borders workers earning less than the **Real Living Wage** has decreased sharply in the past 2 years but is still higher than the Scottish average.

Scottish Borders has an average proportion of “**Low paid occupations**” such as elementary service jobs in caring, leisure, cleaning, catering etc.

Following the rapid increase in claimants during the Covid-19 pandemic, the rate of **Universal Credit Claimants** is currently at its highest level ever, albeit slightly below the Scottish Average. Claimants are typically aged 25-44 and slightly more likely to be out of work.

The rate of **in-work Universal Credit claimants** is higher in the Scottish Borders than the Scottish average, and the age profile is slightly older.

Over a quarter of Universal Credit claimants live in **persistent poverty**, slightly lower than the Scottish average. The highest rates within the region are in Langlee, Burnfoot and East Berwickshire.

The highest rates of any kind of Universal Credit claiming are in Selkirk and North Galashiels. The distribution shows that **poverty is more endemic throughout the region’s towns and less confined to deprived areas than it used to be**.

The rate of Universal Credit claimants being **sanctioned** has increased slightly in the past year. Being sanctioned correlates highly with rent arrears, homelessness, foodbank use and other signs of financial crisis, particularly amongst younger working-age claimants.

The rate of people living in **employment deprivation** is slightly below the Scottish average. The rate of **Out-of-work Benefit Claimants** increased dramatically during the pandemic but has since started to improve and is now at slightly above pre-pandemic levels.

There were 1,294 referrals to **Fair Start Scotland (FFS)** in the Scottish Borders between 2018 and 2023, with mixed outcomes: only 109 FSS starts (11%) sustained their employment for 12 months or more, and around half of FSS starts left the scheme before three months.

There were 559 participants in **No One Left Behind (NOLB)** between April 2019 and September 2023 in the Scottish Borders.

The **2022 Workforce Mobility Deprivation Index (WMDI)** found that the Scottish Borders had more areas with higher levels of workforce mobility deprivation than elsewhere in the Edinburgh & Southeast Scotland City Region. The highest WMDI was found in the more isolated Borders rural areas and areas with highest Multiple Deprivation.

Official measures of **Child Poverty** show it has **remained high and above target levels** in Scotland and has **shown little change in recent years**.

The proportion of **children in relative poverty before housing costs (BHC)** is at its **highest ever level in the Scottish Borders** (at 19.7% in 2021-22) and has increased sharply (from 14.6%) since the previous year. The rate follows a similar trend to the Scottish average but at a lower level.

The proportion of **children in relative poverty after housing costs (AHC)** was 23% in 2021-22, slightly below the Scottish average. This had been starting to come down after the pandemic but **is now rising again**. The proportion at Scottish level has remained persistently at around 24%.

The proportion of **children in absolute low income BHC** has **risen sharply in the Scottish Borders** from 14.4% in 2020/21 to 18.5% in 2021/22. This mirrors the Scottish trend but at a slightly lower rate. It is now **at its highest ever level**. Most of the children living in relative poverty BHC are also in absolute poverty, meaning that **their income standards have not materially improved since 2010**.

5.4% of households were claiming the **Child Entitlement of Universal Credit** in November 23. This is below the Scottish average but has **more than doubled since the start of the pandemic and is now at its highest ever rate**.

Any household that has welcomed a third or more child since April 2017 has not been able to claim Child Entitlement for the youngest child(ren), thus missing out on at least an extra £269.58 per month. This is a similar restriction to the controversial “Two Child” **Child Benefit cap**. **This makes larger families with at least one child under 6 particularly vulnerable to Child Poverty**.

The proportion of households claiming the Child entitlement element of Universal Credit is **highest in Burnfoot and Langlee** but is **relatively high in at least parts of all of the Scottish Borders main towns**. This shows that **child poverty post-Covid is widespread**, and not confined to the known areas of Multiple Deprivation.

The proportion of Scottish Borders **children living in households where all adults are in employment** dipped during the pandemic but has now shot up to an above-average 78.6% in 2022. This suggests that **there is a new post-pandemic trend of former stay-at-home parents entering the workplace**, whether through choice or through obligation.

Over three quarters of children in the Scottish Borders live in SIMD Quintiles 3, 4 and 5 (areas with around-average or below-average Multiple Deprivation). **Only 8% of children live in Quintile 1 (the most-deprived areas) but these children are, as expected, disproportionately represented in the child poverty statistics**. There is evidence that child poverty is **spilling over into the “less deprived” areas**.

There were 5,910 children in the Scottish Borders receiving **Scottish Child Payment (SCP)** in December 2023. **17% of these live in SIMD Quintile 1 neighbourhoods, which have only 8% of the region’s children**. This over-representation is **less extreme than the Scottish average**, where 41% of all SCP recipients live in Quintile 1 neighbourhoods, which have 17% of Scotland’s children.

The **Scottish Borders Child Poverty index** 2022 update showed that 27 Datazones (neighbourhoods) in the Scottish Borders had the highest levels of Child Poverty and another 60 had high levels. This is a **large increase from the previous year and shows that child poverty is widespread in the region**.

There is a continued **“education deprivation gap”** in the proportion of P1, P4 and P7 achieving their expected levels for literacy and numeracy. **This gap increased during the pandemic to its highest ever level**. It has reduced since then, but it is **still worse in the Scottish Borders than in other “comparable” Local Authority areas**.

68% of pupils in the Scottish Borders attained **5 or more awards at National 5 level** in 2021-22. By contrast, only **33% of pupils from Deprivation Quintile 1** attained this level. **Quintile 1 pupils from the Scottish Borders performed worse than Quintile 1 pupils from other “comparable” Local Authority areas** and elsewhere in Scotland.

42% of pupils in the Scottish Borders attained **5 or more awards at Level 6 (Scottish Highers)** in 2021-22. Again, **only half that proportion (20%) of pupils from Deprivation Quintile 1** attained this level. The disparity between Quintile 1 pupils from the Scottish Borders and those from elsewhere in Scotland is less clear at Higher level than at National 5 level.

There is a **clear deprivation gap in average tariff scores of Scottish Borders school leavers**. The average tariff score for the relatively small numbers of pupils in **SIMD Quintile 1 (most-deprived)** is **less than half that of pupils from Quintile 5 (least-deprived)**. **Most pupils in the Scottish Borders live in Quintiles 3 (average deprivation) and 4 (below average deprivation)** but even here there is an average tariff score gap of 145 points. **Average tariff scores in all deprivation quintiles have gone down since 2021-22**, showing generally **lower attainment since the previous year**.

Around 8.5% of Scottish Borders pensioners claim **Pension Credit**, which is lower than the Scottish average. This has remained **unchanged since the previous year**. **Hawick stands out as having higher pensioner poverty**. Almost all pension credit claimants are single pensioners, particularly in Galashiels and District. **Pensioner poverty in the region is on the lower end of the scale by Scottish standards, but those who are worst affected are particularly vulnerable**.

Scottish Borders householders are more likely to report that they are **managing well financially** than elsewhere in Scotland, **but this is on a downward trend**.

The proportion of survey respondents **who said they had no savings** was **already rising sharply pre-pandemic** and is likely to have become worse as the post-pandemic cost-of-living crisis takes effect on **financial resilience**. **Older people are more likely to have more financial resilience than younger people**.

The percentage of **households in receipt of Universal Credit** rose sharply during the pandemic and has **remained high**. It is currently **at its highest ever rate**, although lower than the Scottish average. The proportion of households claiming UC is **highest in Burnfoot and Langlee** but is high in parts of many towns in the region, except in Tweeddale.

There were 3,580 applications to Scottish Borders Council for the **Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF)** in 2022-23, the **highest ever number**. 73% of them were successful. An average of £380 was awarded per claimant, **higher than the Scottish average**. This adds up to a Scottish Borders SWF bill of £986,866 in 2022-23.

There have been 470 applications and 285 payments for **Funeral Support Payments (FSP)** between September 2019 and September 2023 in the Scottish Borders, worth over £500,000. Applications peaked in 2021/22, and were also high in 2020/21 and 2022/23, possibly due to the pandemic.

5,554 households (9.3% of households) in the Scottish Borders received the **Housing Entitlement of Universal Credit** in November 2023. This rate is below the Scottish average and always has been. The rates in the Scottish Borders and Scotland were **already rising before the pandemic but rose sharply during the pandemic and are now at their highest ever levels**.

The highest claim rates of Housing Entitlement are in **Burnfoot and Langlee**, but rates are high in towns throughout the region, except in Tweeddale.

The **“benefit cap”** is more likely to affect households with larger families or higher housing costs.

There has been a **steady increase** in the number of applications and awards for **Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs)** in the Scottish Borders since 2017-18. There were 2,390 applications in 2022/23, the

highest ever number. The average award was £583 per claimant, a total DHP bill of over £1 million to SBC. According to Scottish Government research, the **rise in DHP awards is partly due to the removal of the Spare Room Subsidy (“bedroom tax”)**, meaning that Local Authorities have continued to make up the shortfall in tenants’ weekly rents through the use of DHPs.

Council Tax Reduction (CTR) awards spiked in April 2020 and were highest in 2020-21 but have since come down although remaining at a higher level than before the pandemic. CTR in Scottish Borders resulted in **£5.6 million worth of forgone Council Tax payments in 2022-23.**

In March 2023, **13.4% of Scottish Borders Council Tax-payers received CTR.** This is lower than the Scottish average. 42% were “passporting”, i.e. they were in receipt of certain benefits which automatically qualified them for full exemption CTR. The remaining 58% were on a low income, usually because they were out of work. 79% lived in Band A or B properties.

Survey estimates in 2017-19 estimated that 28.6% of households in the Scottish Borders were living in **fuel poverty.** This is **above the Scottish average and is unchanged. Almost half of these are also in Extreme Fuel Poverty,** which is reducing but has **always been above the Scottish average.**

Scotland-level updates for 2022 indicate that average fuel poverty in Scotland could now be as high as 31% of households in Scotland, meaning that **the rate in the Scottish Borders could be as high as 35%.**

Respondents are **more likely to be fuel-poor** if they **live in the social rented sector, have electric heating, have a prepayment meter, have a low energy-efficiency rating or have a low income.**

The number of **homeless applications** to Scottish Borders Council has **reduced slightly since 2019/20,** which is against the Scottish trend.

The proportion of **households claiming the “Limited Capability for Work/ Work-Related Activity” (LCW/LCWRA) entitlement of Universal Credit** has **steadily increased since 2019,** although at a lower rate than the Scottish average. As many as 10% of households in **Burnfoot and Langlee** had an active claim for LCW/LCWRA in November 2023. Rates are also higher than average in parts of many other towns and villages in the region.

The proportion of **households claiming the Carers Entitlement of Universal Credit** is small but has **steadily increased** since 2019, although at a lower rate than the Scottish average. Claimants have to demonstrate significant poverty in order to claim the benefit. The highest claimant rates of Carers Entitlement are in **Burnfoot and Langlee.** Rates are also higher than average in towns and villages throughout the region, including rural areas, except in Tweeddale.

There were only 349 claimants of the **Disabled Child Entitlement of Universal Credit** in the Scottish Borders. However, the rate has steadily increased since 2019, albeit at a lower level than the Scottish average. By far the highest rates of Disabled Child Entitlement of Universal Credit are in **Burnfoot and Langlee.**

The **Trussell Trust** reported that its **distribution of food parcels** in Scotland in the 2022-23 financial year had reached its **highest ever level, a 30% increase on the previous year.** The Trussell Trust’s only Borders foodbank is in Peebles.

Access to fixed Broadband is an essential prerequisite to measuring uptake, in order to enumerate “**digital inclusion.**” 90% of premises in the Scottish Borders were able to receive **Superfast Broadband** in September 2023, which is short of the average coverage for Scotland (95%) and has **missed the Scottish Government’s target for 100% Superfast Broadband Coverage by 2021.** Within the Borders, Superfast Broadband coverage ranges from 100% in the main towns to **as little as 15.7% in the Teviothead and Hermitage Area Datazone.** The neighbourhoods with less than 75% coverage are **mostly remote rural communities, which already have the highest Access Deprivation in Scotland.**

In 2022-23, the three Scottish Borders **Citizens Advice Bureaux (CABx)** helped 3,863 clients claim £3.6 million by offering free support and advice for benefits entitlement, debt and consumer issues, an average of **£932 per client**. Around **65% of clients needed help with benefits, debt and accessing finance and charitable support**. An **increased minority** needed help with **energy price increases on their fuel bills**. The highest proportion of clients were **employed** and could be from **any Deprivation quintile**, although there was a **slight over-representation from Quintiles 1 and 2** (the more-deprived neighbourhoods).

Context

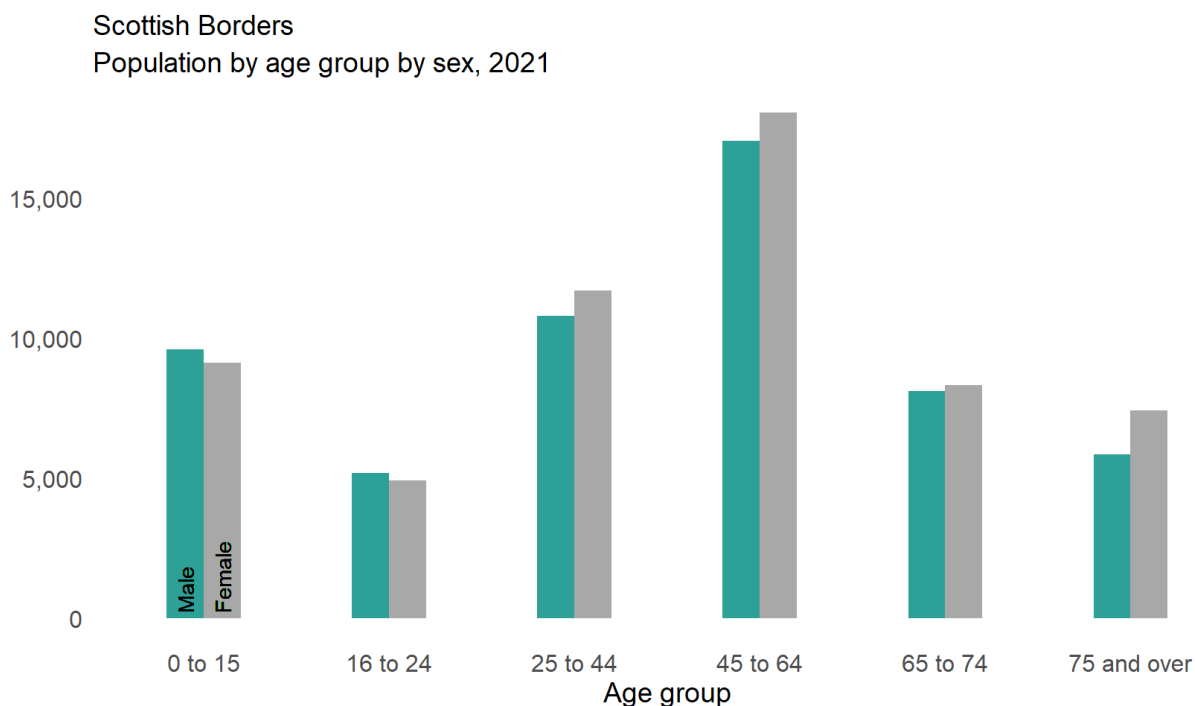
Population

On 30 June 2021, the population of the [Scottish Borders](#) was 116,020. This is an increase of 0.7% from 115,240 in 2020. Over the same period, the population of Scotland increased by 0.3%.

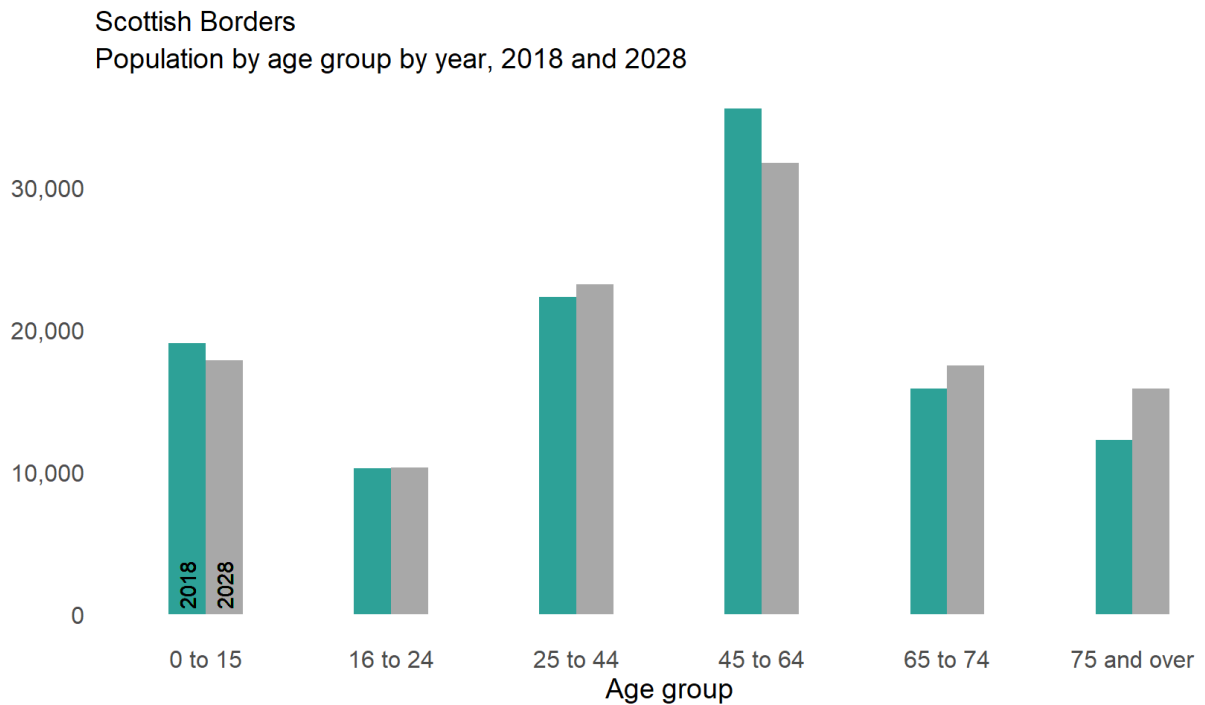
Between 2001 and 2021, the population of the Scottish Borders has increased by 8.5%. This is a faster than average percentage change out of the 32 council areas in Scotland, in the past 20 years. Over the same period, Scotland's population rose by 8.2%.

The bar chart below summarises the age-sex distribution of the Scottish Borders population in 2021 from a different point of view. It shows that:

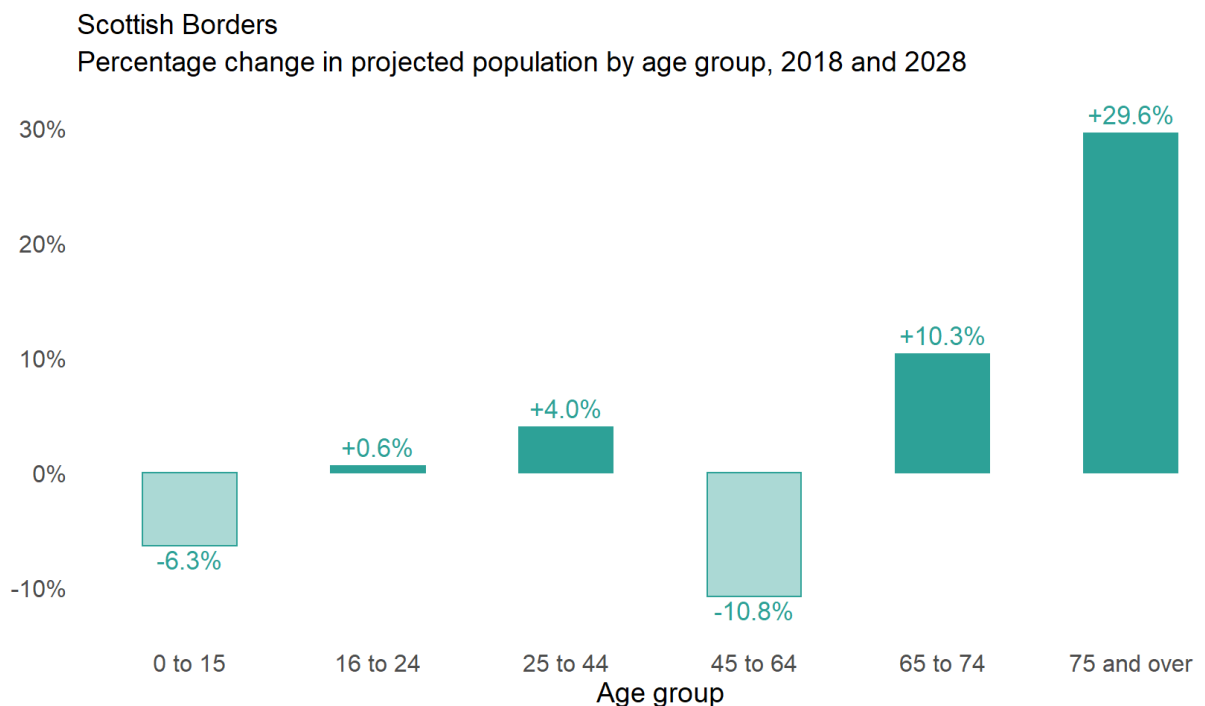
- Slightly more boys than girls are born in the Scottish Borders, in line with the national average.
- In 2021, more females than males lived in Scottish Borders in 4 out of 6 age groups. This may be because slightly more working-age men than women tend to leave the region in search of work and also because female life expectancy is higher than male life expectancy. This is the same throughout Scotland and means that women slightly outnumber men in the overall population.



The bar chart below shows the same information from a different perspective. It shows that there will be fewer children by 2028 than now, a slight increase in the number of younger working-age people, a slight decrease in the number of older working-age people and an increase in the number of pensioners, particularly those over 75.

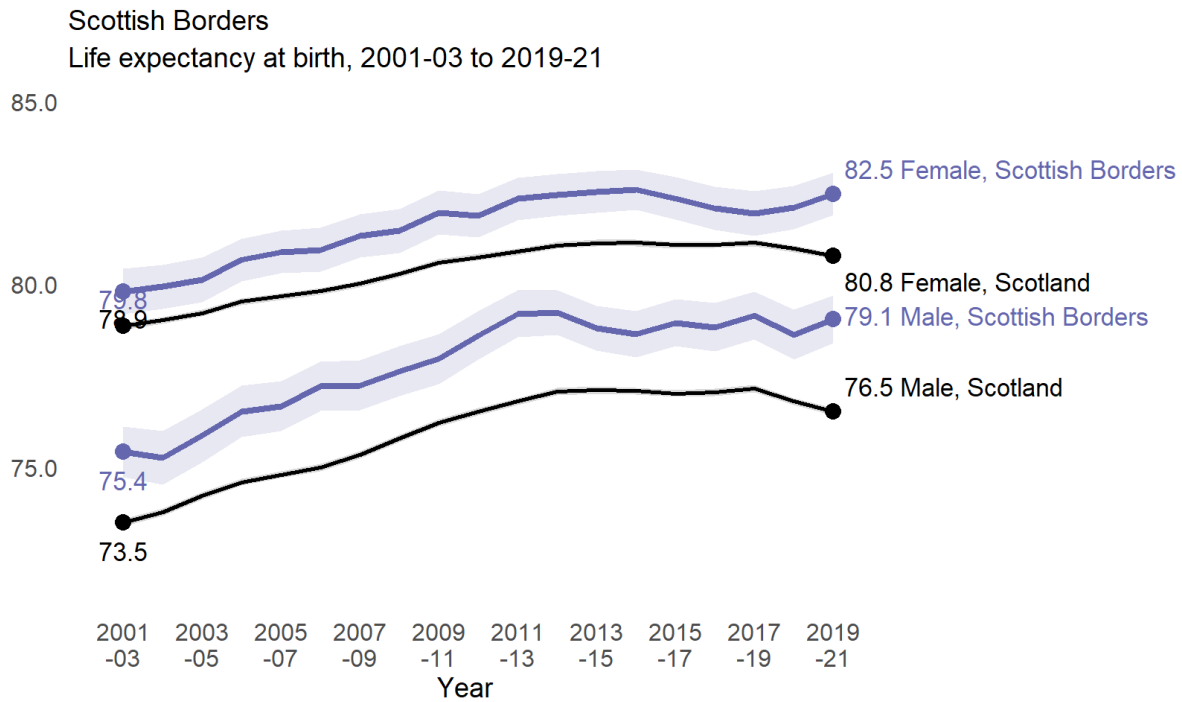


The bar chart below shows another view, focusing on population change. The paler bars show the age groups where there will be a population loss, and the darker bars show the age bands which are expected to increase in population by 2028.



Life expectancy

[Life Expectancy at Birth \(LEB\)](#) is the standard indicator used to measure the average number of years a person born in the given year can be expected to live. Male and Female LEB is measured separately, due to the difference in life expectancy between males and females.



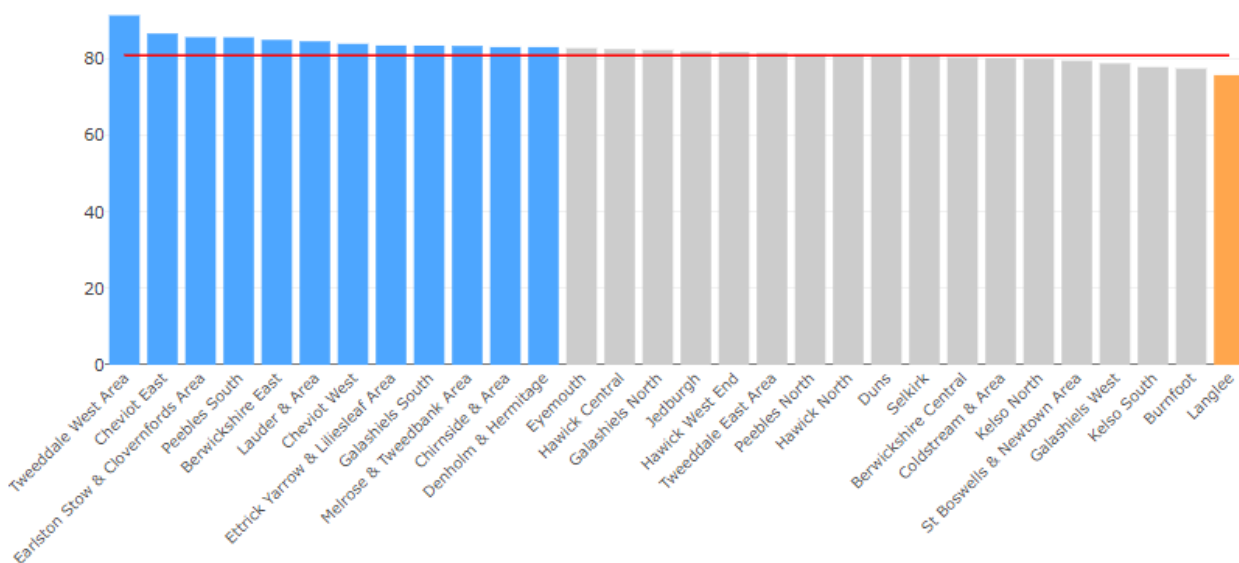
The chart above shows that male and female life expectancy has generally improved in Scotland and in the Scottish Borders since 2001. Life Expectancy is better in the Scottish Borders than on average for Scotland. The average Life Expectancy at Birth, averaged over the 2019-2021 three-year period, is currently 79.1 years for males and 82.5 years for females. This is better than 76.5 years for males and 80.8 years on average for Scotland in the same period.

Within the Scottish Borders the life expectancy for both females and males vary. The graphs extracted from the [Public Health Scotland's Profile tool](#) shows the variance across the Scottish Borders.

The graphs below show that many Intermediate Zones in the Scottish Borders have higher life expectancy at birth for both females and males compared to Scotland. However, there are a couple of Intermediate Zones where the life expectancy at birth is significantly below Scotland, these are Hawick Central for males and Langlee for females.

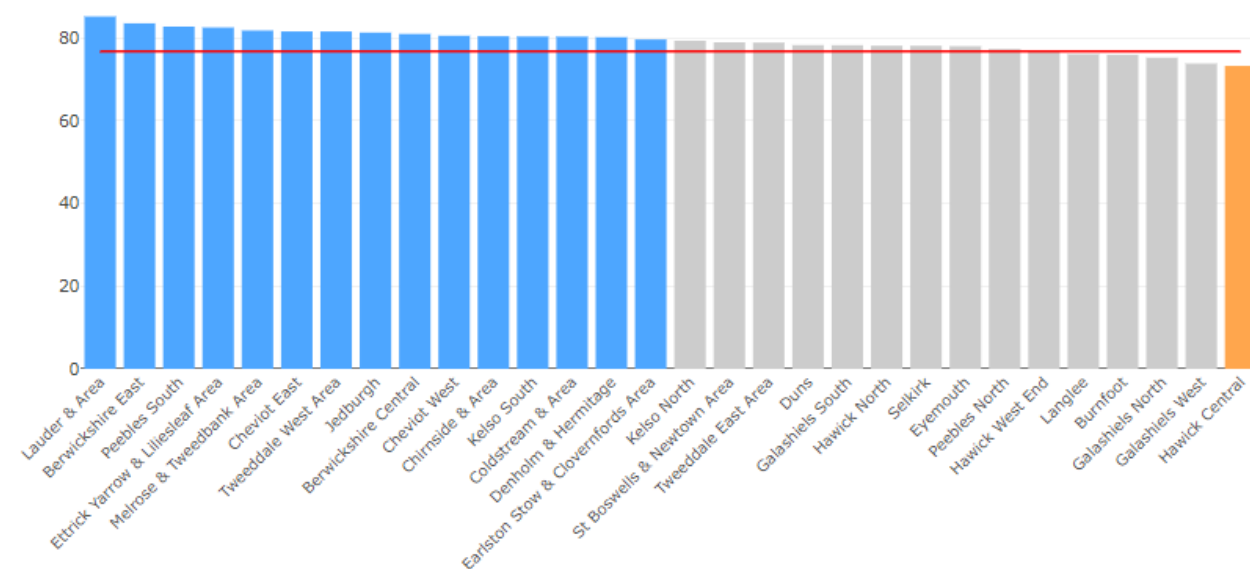
Life expectancy, females

Intermediate zones compared against Scotland - 2019 Midpoint



Life expectancy, males

Intermediate zones compared against Scotland - 2019 Midpoint

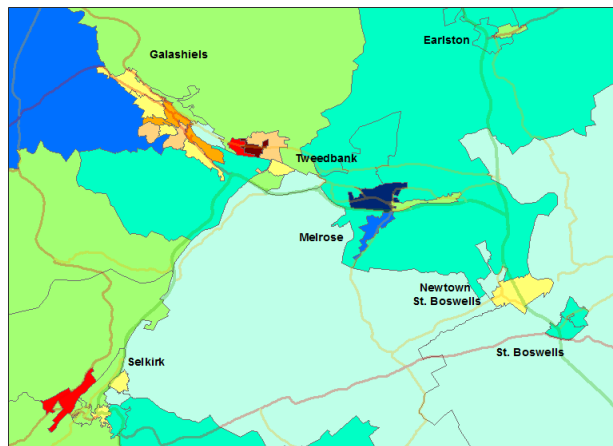
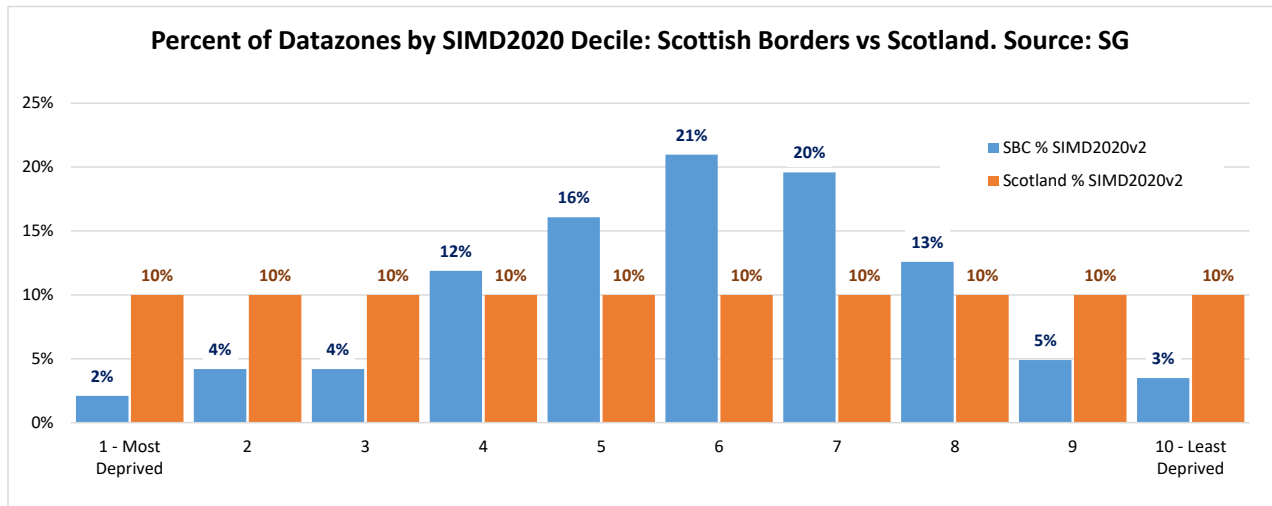


Areas with lower life expectancy are usually areas where more people are living in poverty.

Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) is the official tool for finding the most deprived areas in Scotland¹. The [SIMD2020](#) consists of over 30 indicators across 7 Domains: Employment, Income, Education, Health, Access, Crime and Housing.

The SIMD2020 shows that 6% (9) of the 143 data zones in the Scottish Borders are within the 20% most deprived of all of Scotland, known as “SIMD Quintile 1”. A further 17% (24) of the data zones in the Scottish Borders are amongst the 21-40% most deprived in Scotland (Quintile 2). The distribution of the 143 data zones in the Scottish Borders can be seen in the graph and map below.



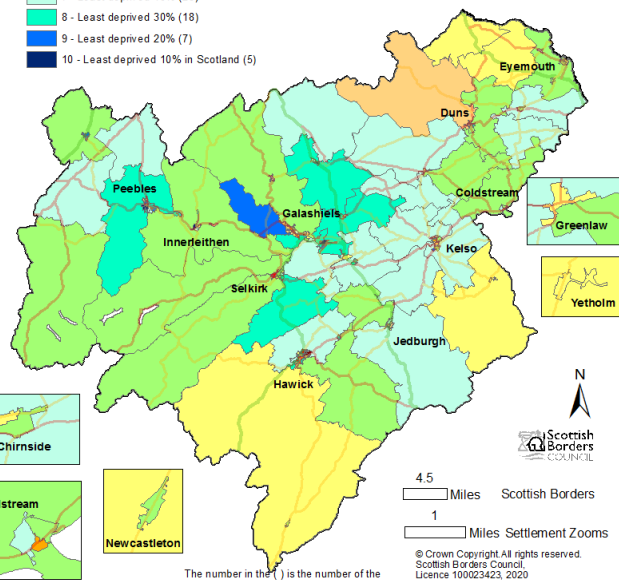
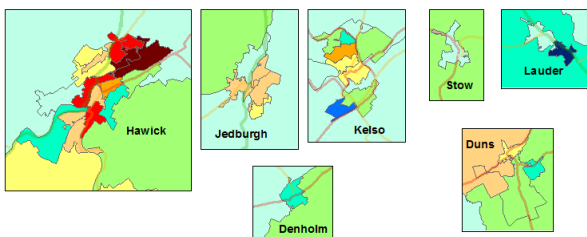
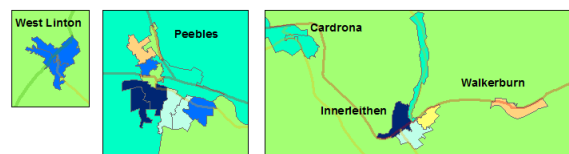
SIMD2020 for Scottish Borders Data Zones

Roads

- Trunk Road
- A Road
- B Road

SIMD2020 Decile

- 1 - Amongst the most deprived 10% in Scotland (3)
- 2 - Most deprived 20% (6)
- 3 - Most deprived 30% (6)
- 4 - Most deprived 40% (17)
- 5 - Middle decile (23)
- 6 - Middle decile (30)
- 7 - Least deprived 40% (28)
- 8 - Least deprived 30% (18)
- 9 - Least deprived 20% (7)
- 10 - Least deprived 10% in Scotland (5)



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The number in the () is the number of the 143 datazones (2011 based) in the group.

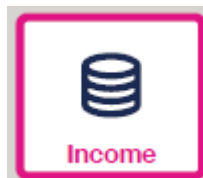
¹ <https://www.gov.scot/collections/scottish-index-of-multiple-deprivation-2020/>

When specifically looking at the income and employment domain 9% of the Scottish Borders population is income deprived compared to 12% for Scotland. 8% of the Scottish Borders working age population is employment deprived compared to 9% for Scotland.

Within the domains of the SIMD the proportion of data zones that are in the 20% most deprived of Scotland varies.



9 (6%) of the 143 data zones in the Scottish Borders are part of the 20% most deprived of all of Scotland



8 (6%) of the 143 data zones in the Scottish Borders are in the 20% most income deprived data zones in Scotland.



10 (7%) data zones in the Scottish Borders are in the 20% most employment deprived.



8 (6%) data zones in the Scottish Borders are in the 20% most education deprived.



9 (6%) data zones in the Scottish Borders are in the 20% most health deprived.



46 (32%) data zones in the Scottish Borders are in the 20% most geographically access deprived.



20 (14%) data zones in the Scottish Borders are in the 20% most crime deprived.

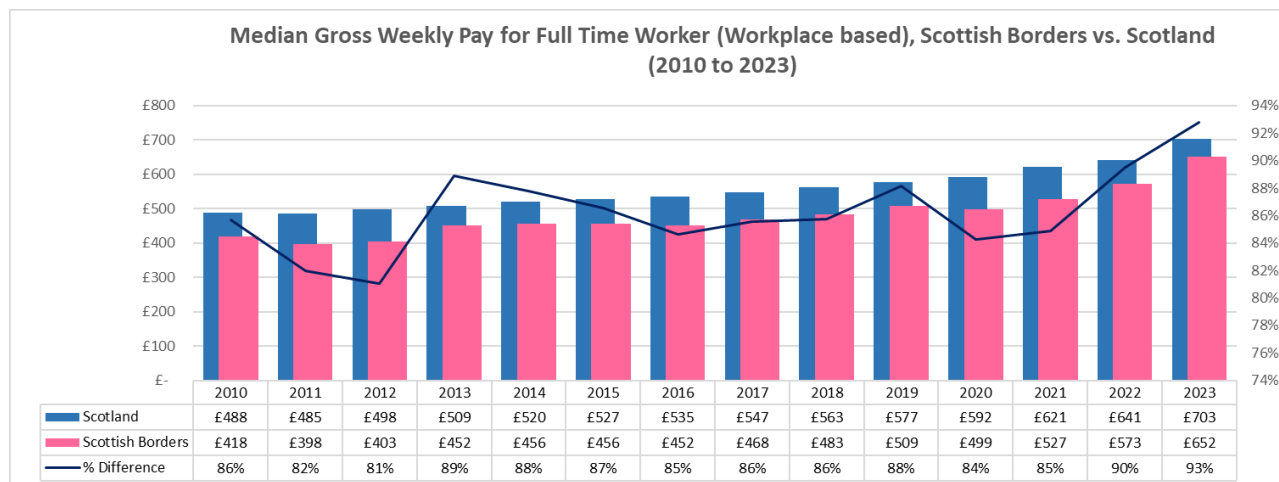


3 (2%) data zones in the Scottish Borders are in the 20% most housing deprived.

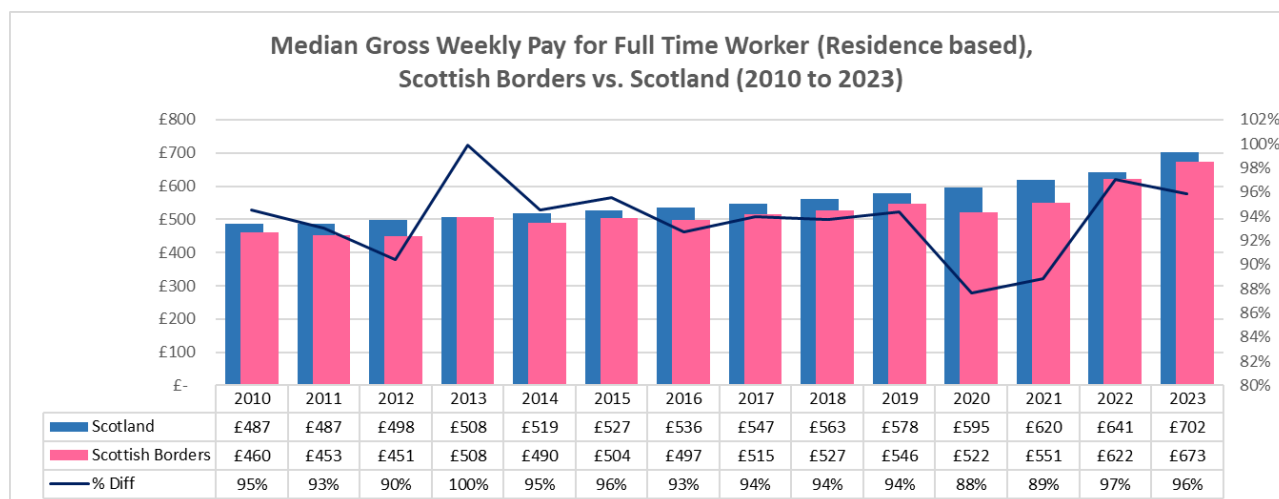
Working Age People Poverty

Wages

The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings produced by ONS and published on NOMIS² contains information on wages. The median gross weekly pay (workplace based) for full time workers in the Scottish Borders has consistently been below the level for Scotland. Although since 2020 the median workplace based wages in the Scottish Borders have been getting closer to the Scottish level, from 84% in 2020 to 93% in 2023. However, there is still more than £50 difference per week.

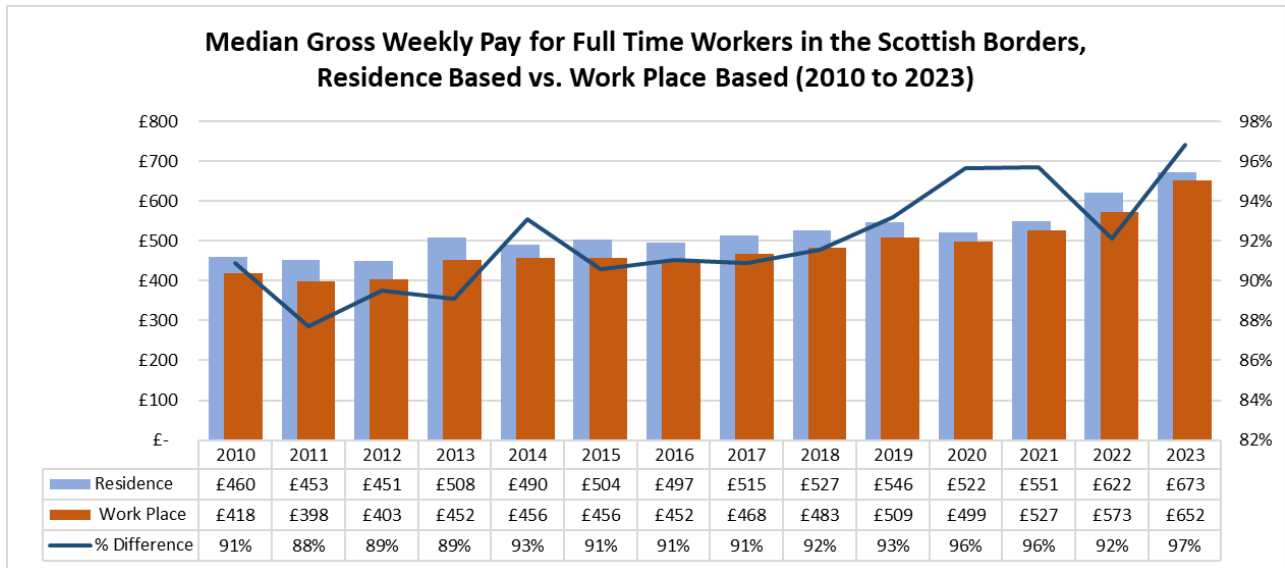


The same pattern can be seen in residence based weekly pay, although not to the same degree. In 2020 the median gross weekly pay (residence based) for full time workers in the Scottish Borders was 88% of Scotland's, and that rose to 96% for 2023.

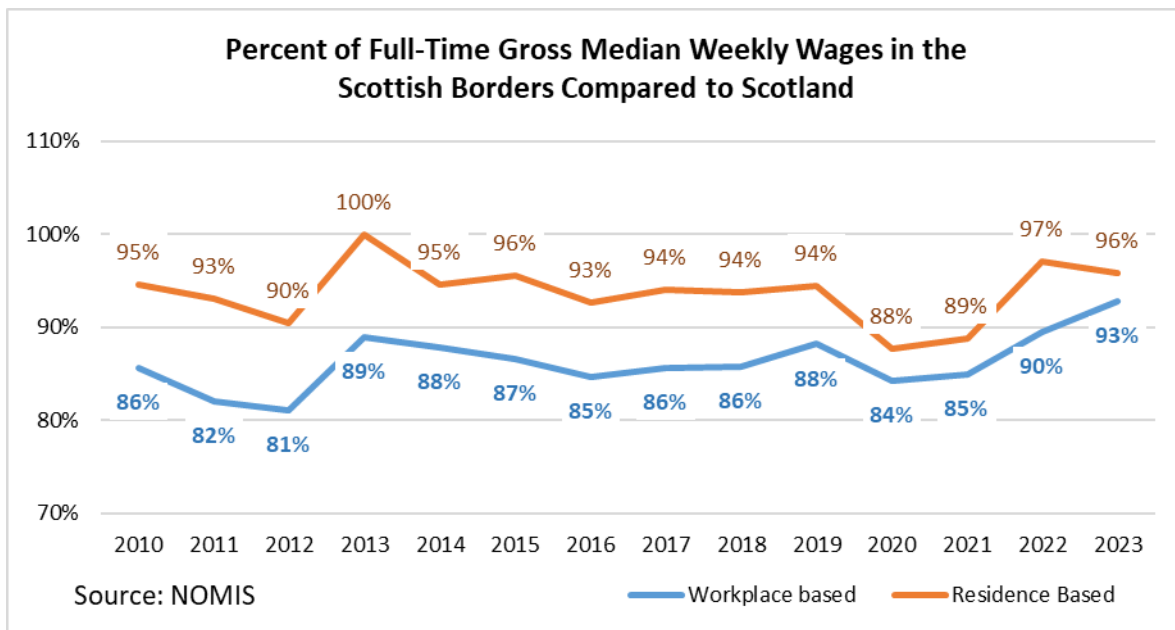


² <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>

Within the Scottish Borders workplace-based wages have consistently been below those that are residence based. This shows there are a proportion of people who live in the Scottish Borders but earn their wages elsewhere. Those who earn their wages in the Scottish Borders are more likely to also live in the Scottish Borders.



Prior to 2022 the workplace based wages in the Scottish Borders were less than 90% of Scotland's. Since then, the gap between workplace based wages in the Scottish Borders and Scotland appears to be getting narrower.



Living Wage

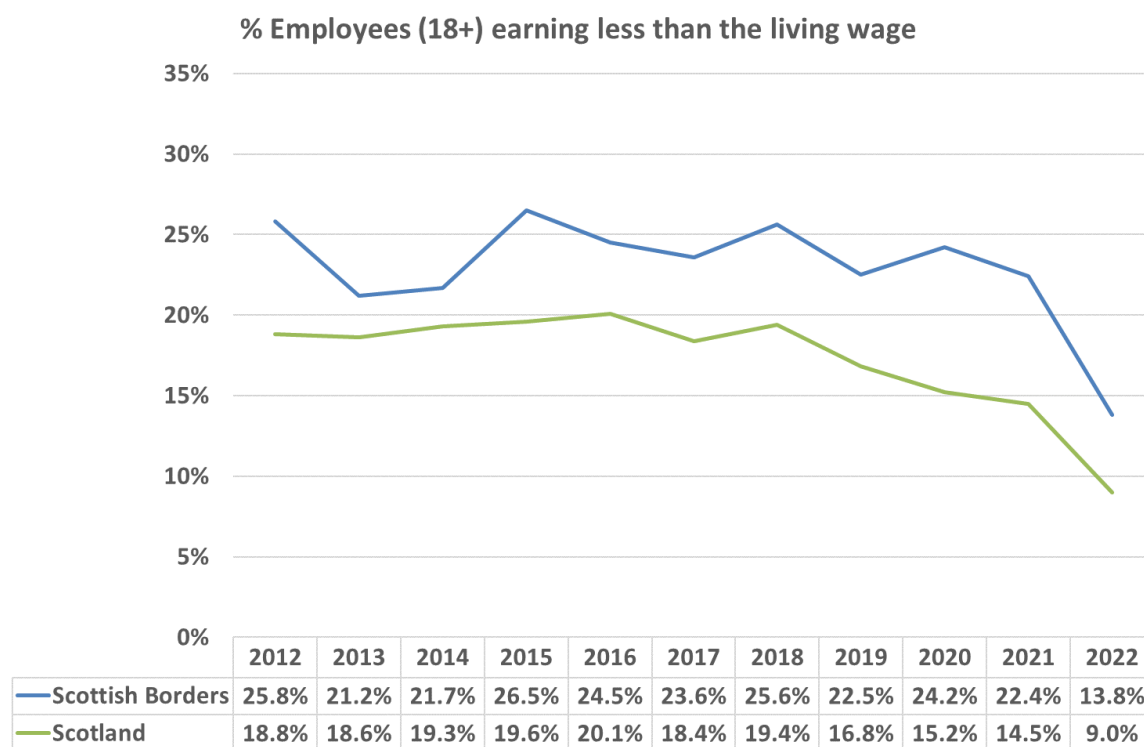
The Living Wage, also known as “the Real Living Wage”, refers to the hourly salary that is deemed by the [Living Wage Foundation](#) to be the minimum necessary for an employee’s basic needs to be met.

The current Real Living Wage is £12 per hour for the UK (£13.15 for London). **The Real Living Wage is not compulsory** but is paid by over 14,000 businesses in the UK who call themselves a “Living Wage employer”.

It is not to be confused with the **National Living Wage, which is the compulsory Government minimum for over 23s** and is currently £10.42 per hour. The statutory National Living Wage is calculated as a percentage of median earnings, whereas the voluntary Real Living Wage is calculated according to the cost of a basket of household goods and services at current prices. Therefore, the **Real Living Wage better represents the cost of living** during times of high inflation.

Figures are workplace-based, so include all those who work in the region, regardless of where they live.

The data in the chart below were sourced from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) for [Scottish Government’s December 2023 Local Child Poverty Dashboard](#).



The above chart shows why the Scottish Borders is often referred to as a “low wage economy.” The proportion of full-time workers who are paid less than the Real Living Wage has always been higher than the Scottish average. Out of the 17 Council Areas which provided valid data to the 2022 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), Scottish Borders had the second-worst rate of low-pay, with only South Ayrshire having a worse rate. Rates of low-pay are lowest in the city Council areas, where salaries are more competitive.

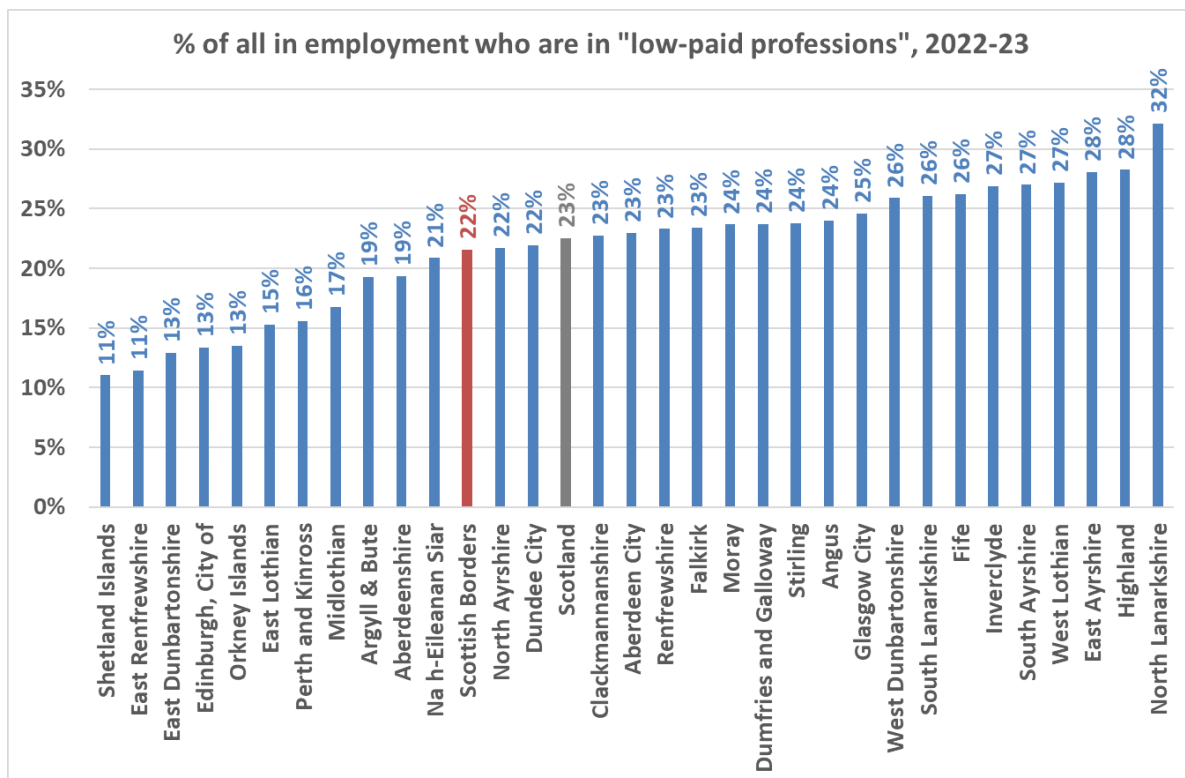
More encouragingly, there has been a significant increase in wages in 2021-22 across Scotland in response to the cost-of-living crisis and this has benefitted the region substantially. The proportion of over 18s who are paid less than the Real Living Wage in the region is at its lowest ever level.

Employees in Lower-paid professions

“Lower paid” professions are defined as those in occupational groups 6, 7 and 9 of the SOC 2010 Socio-economic Occupational Classification Index, which are more likely to be minimum wage jobs:

- 6: caring, leisure and other service occupations
- 7: sales and customer service occupations
- 9: elementary occupations including cleaners, kitchen and catering assistants

The data were collected from ONS Annual Population Survey (Nomis) for [Scottish Government’s December 2023 Local Child Poverty Dashboard](#).



The data show that there were around 11,700 employees in these lower-wage occupations in the Scottish Borders in 2022-23, which is about 22% of the 54,200-strong workforce. This is around average for Scotland. It shows that, whilst low pay is an issue for the region, the labour market is not by any means dominated by the sort of low-wage service and care jobs that are measured by these occupational categories. If anything, there is a shortage of living-wage jobs in the region, including part-time and entry-level occupations.

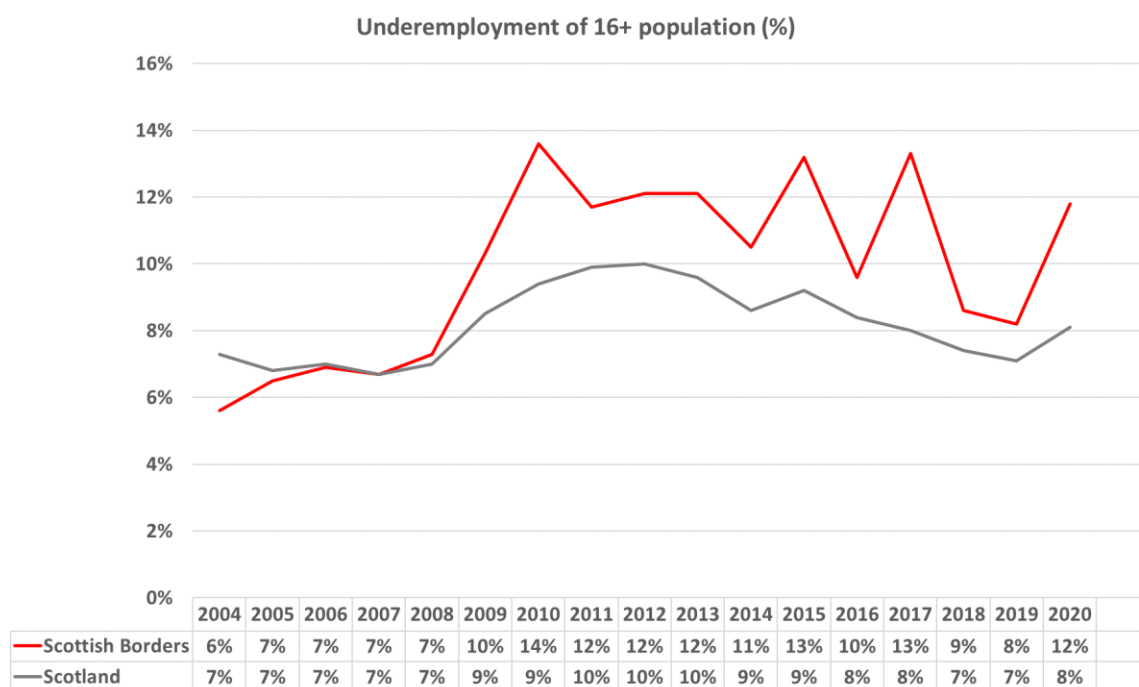
The issue for the region is more of a higher dependence on self-employment and agricultural work, which is also notoriously insecure and low-paid. The agricultural sector has been particularly badly hit by a shortage of seasonal workers since 2020.

Underemployment

Underemployment refers to labour market statistics where survey respondents have stated that they would like to work longer hours, given the opportunity. This may be:

- Additional hours in their existing role at the same rate of pay
- An additional job to supplement their existing job
- A different job with more hours

These figures should be used only as a rough guide, due to small sample sizes which may make year-on-year trends appear more volatile than they are. The figures were sourced from the ONS Annual Population Survey (APS) for [Scottish Government's December 2023 Local Child Poverty Dashboard](#). They were last updated in February 2022; the 2023 update is not yet available.



The above chart provides evidence that a higher proportion than average, of people aged 16 plus in the Scottish Borders feel they would like to take on more work than is currently available to them. This reflects a general shortage of part-time job opportunities in the region. The most recent update was provided during the Covid-19 pandemic, and post-pandemic figures are not yet available.

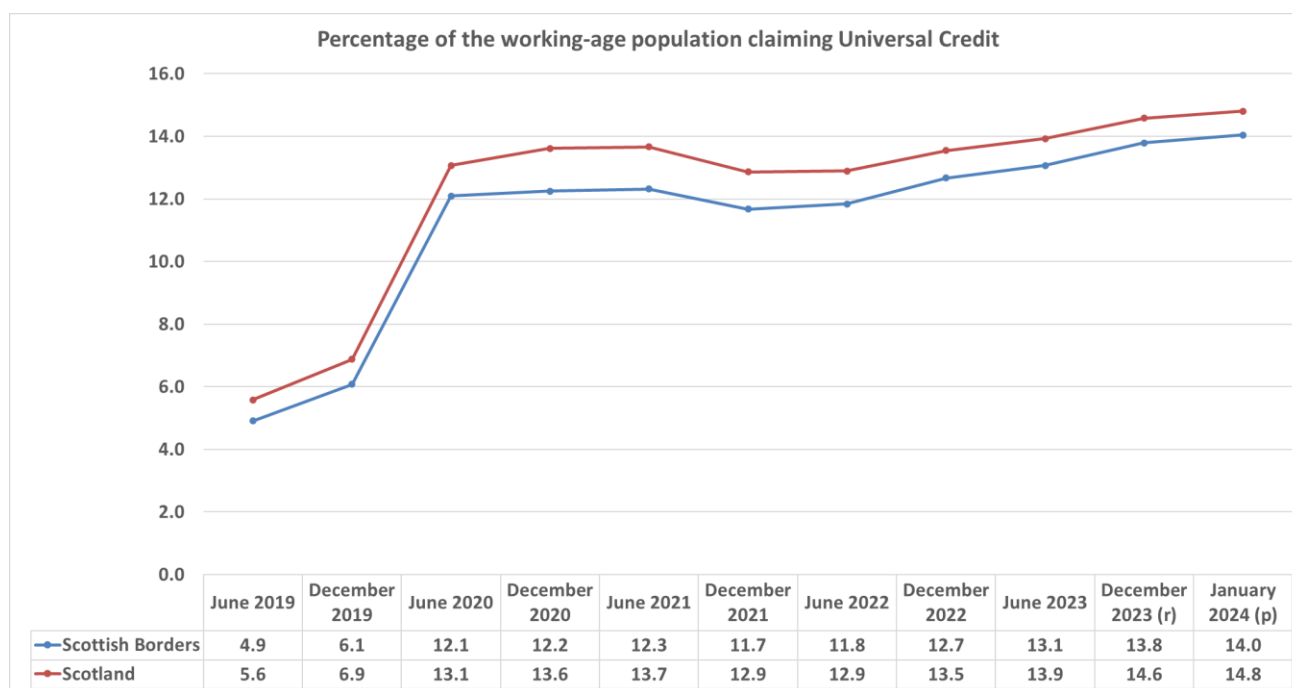
Working Age people Claiming Universal Credit

Universal Credit is a welfare benefit paid to working-age people on a low income who need help with living costs, due to being out of work, or on a low salary, or unable to work for a valid reason. Universal Credit is the first port-of-call for people who find themselves with no or low income, so it is a good measure of individual poverty for working-age people.

The conditions for being accepted for Universal Credit are strict and can be harsh, particularly for those whose income varies month-to-month or who have recently lived through a period of rapid change in their circumstances. There may be many more people whose application was unsuccessful and are living in crisis as a result but are unmeasurable because they are not documented.

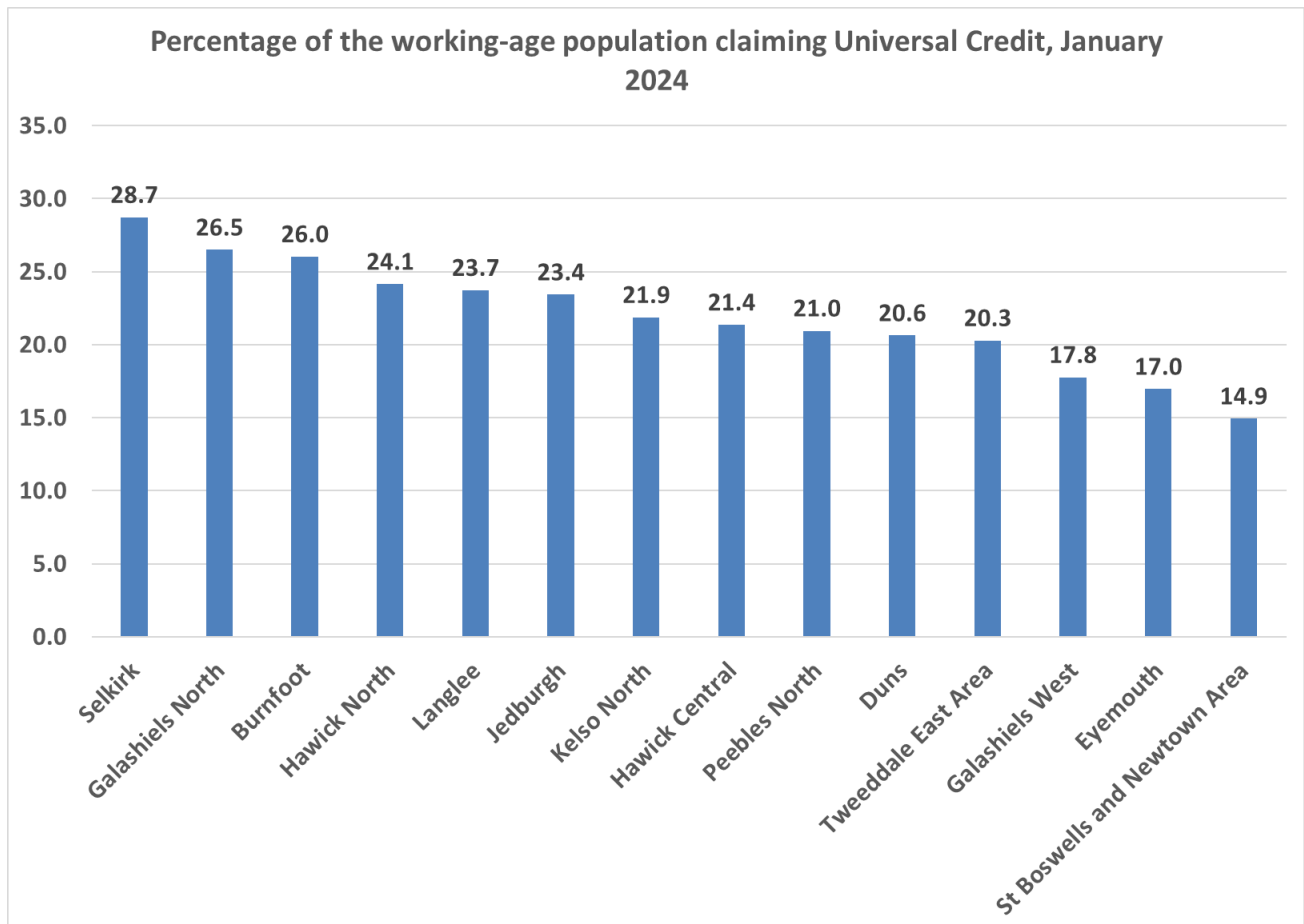
The chart below shows the timeline of individual claimants of Universal Credit, up to January 2024. The rapid increase between December 2019 and June 2020 was due to the Covid pandemic but the claimant rate has stayed high ever since and is currently at its highest ever rate. The rate in the Scottish Borders has always been slightly lower than the Scottish average but follows a similar pattern.

The information in this graph was sourced from DWP (Stat-Xplore) and NRS (Mid-year population estimates for 16-64 year olds). The 2021 MYEs are the most recent population data available.



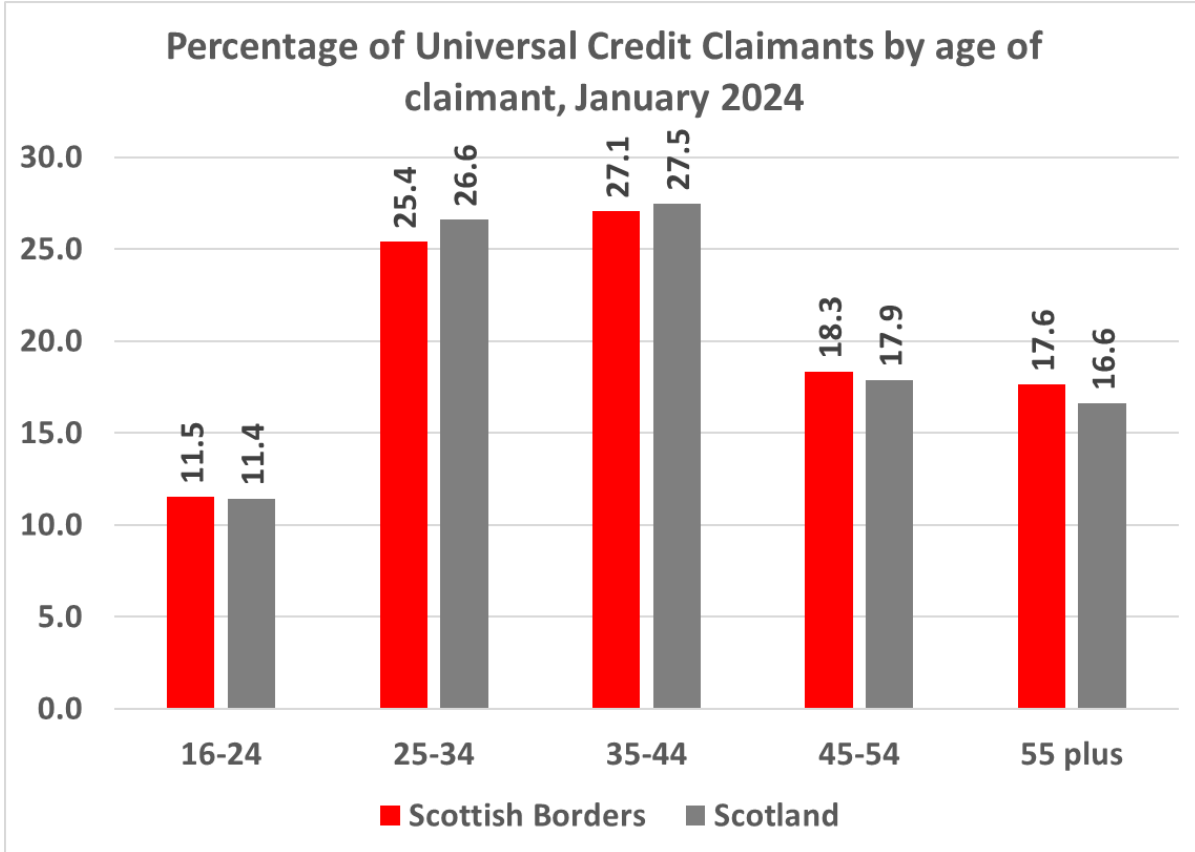
The graph below shows the Intermediate Datazones within the Scottish Borders where the rate of working-age people claiming Universal Credit is higher than the Scottish Borders average.

The two areas with the highest individual claim rates per head of the working age population are not the areas with the highest rates of Multiple Deprivation. This indicates that poverty amongst working-age individuals is endemic in Scottish Borders towns, not contained in the areas that were previously known about. It records that between 1 in 5 and 1 in 4 working-age people in parts of all of the main towns in the region currently need some sort of welfare support, due to living in poverty.



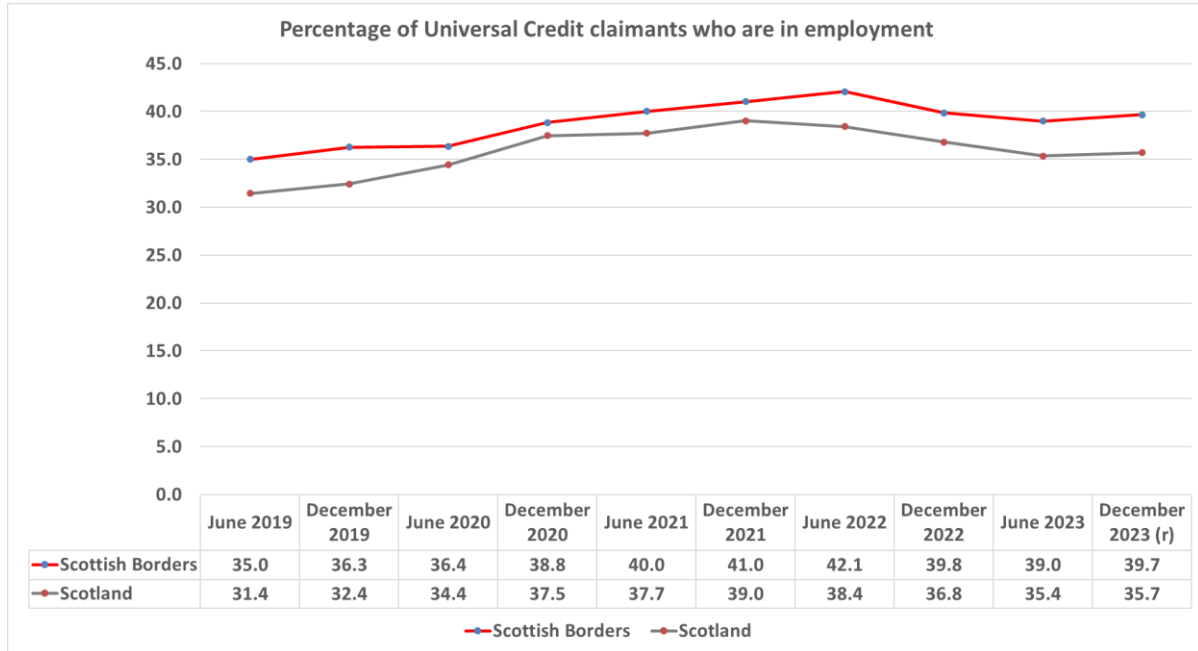
Age of Universal Credit Claimants

More than half of Universal Credit claimants are aged 25-44. The Scottish Borders has a slightly higher older claimant profile than the Scottish average but not significantly. The proportion of youth claimants is similar to the Scottish average. Younger adults aged under 25 are more vulnerable to poverty because they are more likely to be working for lower wages and less likely to have financial resilience in the form of property or savings.



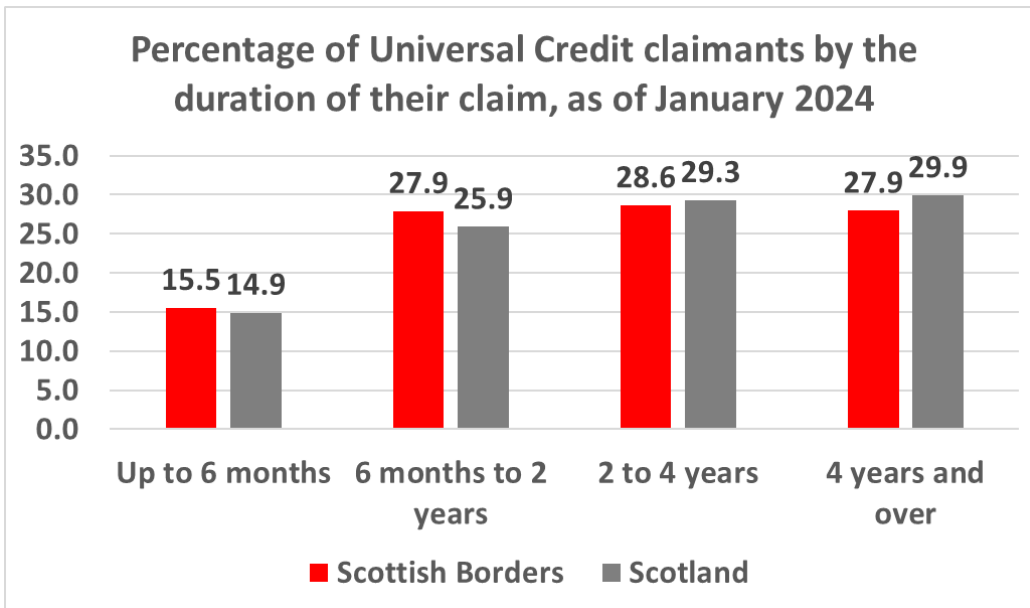
Employment status of Universal Credit Claimants

In Scotland, 35% of Universal Claimants are in work and 65% are not working, due to being out of work or having a valid reason for not working. The proportion of claimants who are in “in-work poverty” is higher in the Scottish Borders than the Scottish average, due to the lower wage economy and the smaller range of available jobs. In-work poverty reached a high point in summer 2022 but has since reduced slightly. However, it remains higher than before the pandemic.



Universal Credit Claimants by the Duration of their claim

30% of Universal Credit claimants in Scotland have been claiming Universal Credit (or its legacy equivalent) for over 4 years, which meets the official definition of “persistent poverty”. Claimants in the Scottish Borders have had a shorter claim journey on average, than is typical for Scotland. The graph below shows that 28% of current claimants in the Scottish Borders (2,654 people) are living in persistent poverty.



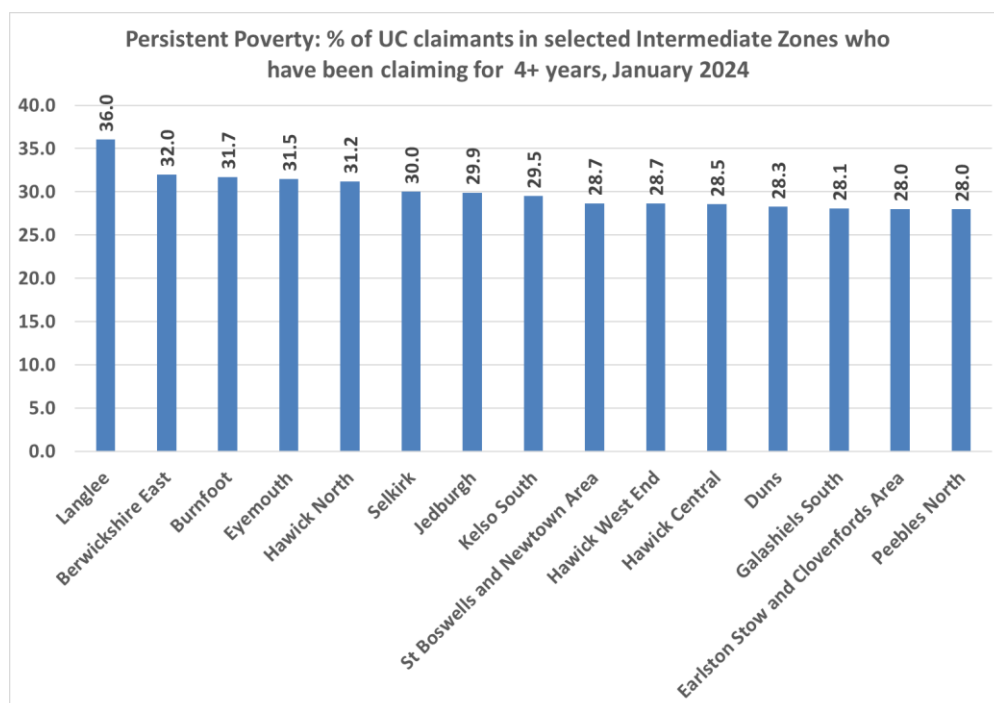
Areas of Persistent Poverty within the Scottish Borders

Scottish Government defines “persistent poverty” as the number of individuals living in relative poverty for three or more of the past four years. [Scottish Government data from the Understanding Society survey](#) estimates that 12% of the Scottish population of all ages was living in persistent poverty in 2021. This information was extrapolated from a fairly small sample size of 2,078 people.

The number of Universal Credit claimants who have been claiming for the past four years is not an exact equivalent but can provide a useful proxy measure of “persistent poverty” amongst working-age people, given that the individual needs to be living in poverty in order to claim. The Universal Credit dataset also uses a complete sample of all individuals who have successfully claimed assistance with living costs, due to being in poverty.

154,701 people in Scotland have been claiming Universal Credit for more than 4 years, which is 4.4% of the working age population.

2,442 people in the Scottish Borders have been claiming UC for 4 or more years, which is 3.6% of the working age population.



The graph above shows the Intermediate Datazones where the proportion of Universal Credit claimants who have been claiming for more than 4 years is above the Scottish Borders average of 27.9%. Six areas are above the Scottish average of 29.9%.

The proportion of claimants who have been claiming for more than 4 years is highest where we would expect it to be highest, in the region’s known areas of Multiple Deprivation, which have been relatively deprived ever since the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation began. 36% of claimants in Langlee and 31.7% in Burnfoot have been claiming for more than 4 years, as of January 2024.

Berwickshire East (not including Eyemouth) is a large, rural area with a dispersed population and a much lower SIMD ranking. 32% of Universal Credit claimants in this isolated part of the region have been claiming Universal Credit for more than 4 years.

Universal Credit: Advanced Payments and Hardship Payments

Universal Credit claimants experiencing acute financial difficulties can ask for an advance payment or a hardship payment if:

- They do not have enough to live on whilst they are waiting for their first payment
- They cannot pay for rent, heating, food or hygiene because they have been sanctioned

Advance and Hardship Payments are a loan and are recouped through future Universal Credit payments.

In order to apply for a hardship payment, the claimant has to show that they have tried to find the money from somewhere else and also show that they have tried to only spend money on essentials.

Universal Credit Sanctions

A sanction is a temporary reduction or stoppage of Universal Credit payments. According to [CPAG](#), the welfare rights organisation, claimants can be sanctioned for a wide variety of reasons, such as missing meetings, not doing enough to look for work, leaving their previous job voluntarily or failing to comply with any specific action required of them under their “claimant commitment” without good reason.

Sanctions can last up to 3 months, depending on the reason for the sanction. If the claimant receives another sanction within the space of a year, they can be sanctioned for up to 6 months at a time.

Reporting from [DWP](#) states that, in November 2023:

- 7.1% of UC claimants in the UK, who were in a regime where sanctions can be applied, were undergoing a sanction
- This equates to 134,628 people out of a total of 1,886,022 UC claimants in the UK.
- The rate of people being sanctioned in the UK has increased slightly in the past 12 months
- Failure to attend interviews accounted for 95.8% of all adverse sanction decisions in the past year
- The majority of sanctions are in the 4 week - 13 week duration bracket
- Being sanctioned more than once is not uncommon. In rare cases, some UC claimants have been sanctioned up to 8 times

Experimental DWP statistics from Stat-Xplore show that there were 3,760 sanctions in Scotland in October 2023, but reliable figures are not available in more detail.

There were 9,498 Universal Credit claimants in the Scottish Borders in January 2024. A modelled estimate would suggest that we should allow for around 674 claimants in the region to be experiencing a sanction.

[Scottish Government research](#) has found a high correlation between benefit sanctions and homelessness. Falling into rent arrears is usually the first consequence of being sanctioned, followed by food poverty and other financial difficulties. Being sanctioned also has a detrimental effect on mental health. Sanction rates are higher for younger claimants, who are particularly prone to rent arrears.

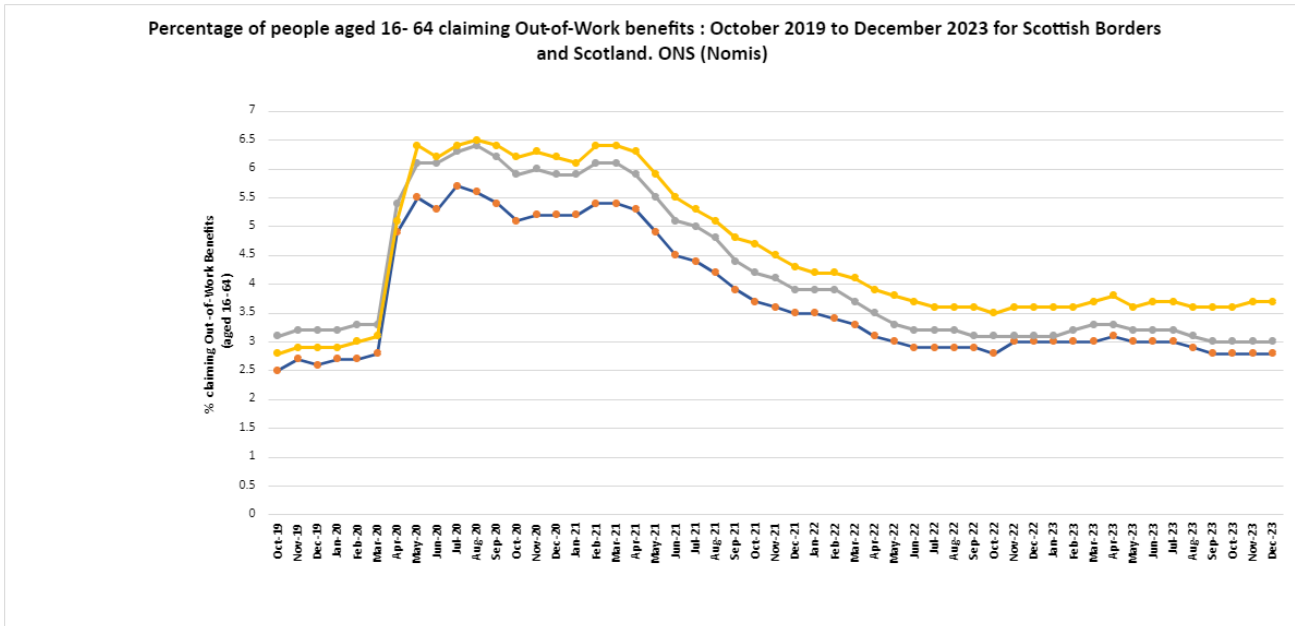
Employment Deprivation- Claimant Count of Out-of-Work Benefits

The Claimant Count is a measure of the numbers and rates of working-aged people claiming Universal Credit (and residual Jobseekers Allowance) primarily because they are out of work. It is not quite the same thing as the official Unemployment Rate but is a useful measure for gauging the general trends in unemployment.

OOWB Long-term trend

The timeline below shows the long-term trend of Out-of-work Benefits (OOWB) claimants from before the Covid-19 Pandemic up to December 2023. It shows that:

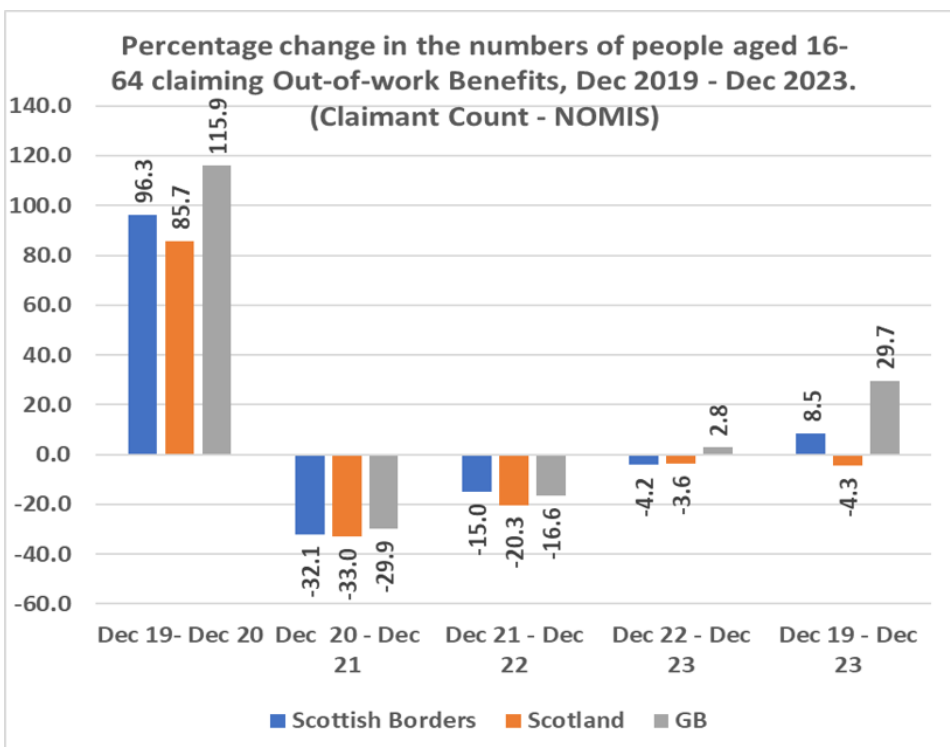
- The most recent data shows that 2.8% of people aged 16 – 64 in the Scottish Borders claimed Out of Work Benefits in December 2023. This compares with 3% in Scotland and 3.7% in Great Britain
- The final dataset before the onset of the pandemic, in February 2020, showed that 2.7% of 16 – 64s claimed OOWBs in the Scottish Borders, compared with 3.3% in Scotland and 3% in GB.
- The Scottish Borders has always had a lower rate of OOWB claimants than the Scottish and the British averages
- The Scottish Borders was affected by the Covid-19 pandemic as severely as Scotland and Great Britain in March/ April 2020 with a dramatic increase in OOWB awards
- The situation in the Scottish Borders began to improve from May 2021 onwards, and rates slowly began to come down, again mirroring similar trends as in Scotland and Great Britain
- OOWB claimant rates have now returned to slightly above pre-pandemic levels in the Scottish Borders and have stabilised.



Change in OOWB claimants (Claimant Count) Dec 2019-2023

The graph below shows how much the numbers claiming Out-of-work Benefits have changed since before the pandemic.

- During the first year of the pandemic, the numbers of OOWB claimants approximately doubled throughout the UK.
- In the two years that followed, the numbers fell by a third and then again by a sixth
- The numbers levelled out in 2023, with the Scottish Borders and Scotland recovering faster than GB as a whole.
- Claimant numbers are continuing to fall in Scotland and are 4.3% lower now than before the pandemic started. However, in the Scottish Borders, numbers of claimants are 8.5% higher than before the pandemic. This shows that unemployment in the Scottish Borders has not recovered from the pandemic as well as Scotland has done.
- The Scottish Borders is nevertheless recovering better than GB as a whole, where claimant numbers are almost 30% higher now than they were before the pandemic started.



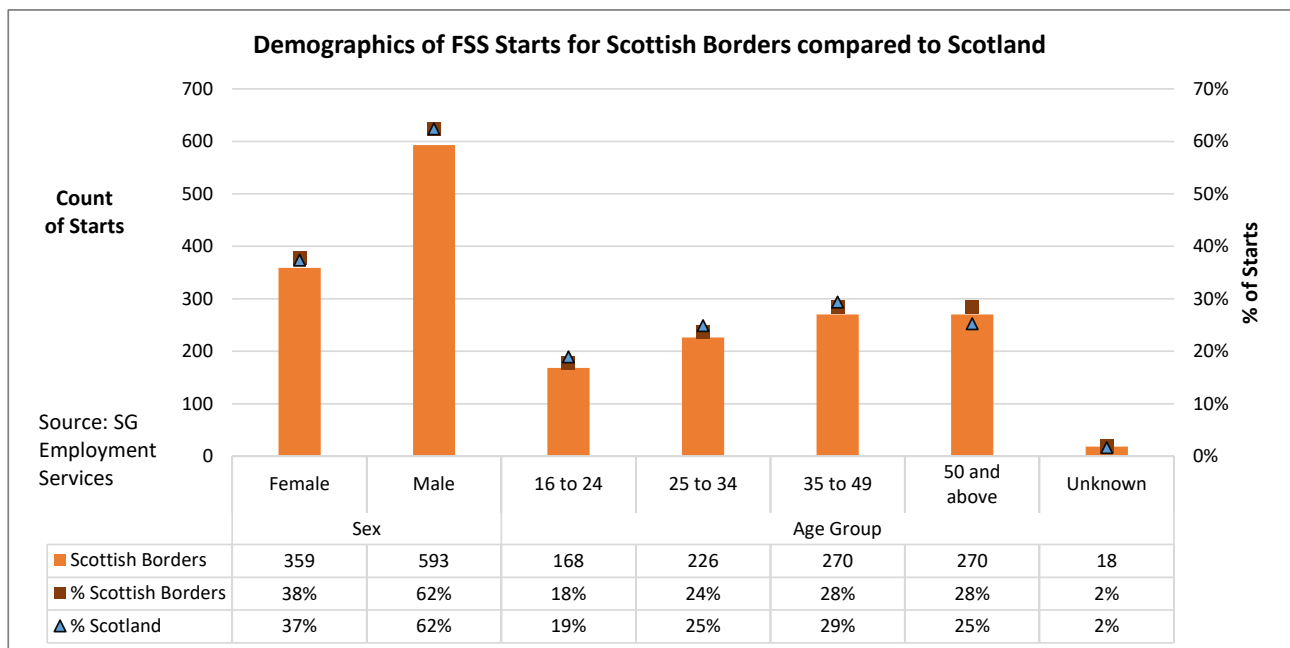
Scotland's Devolved Employment Services

In Scotland, the devolved employment services are Fair Start Scotland (FSS) and No One Left Behind (NOLB). Detailed statistics can be found at [Scotland's Devolved Employment Services statistics - gov.scot](https://www.gov.scot/Scotland's%20Devolved%20Employment%20Services%20statistics%20-%20gov.scot) (www.gov.scot).

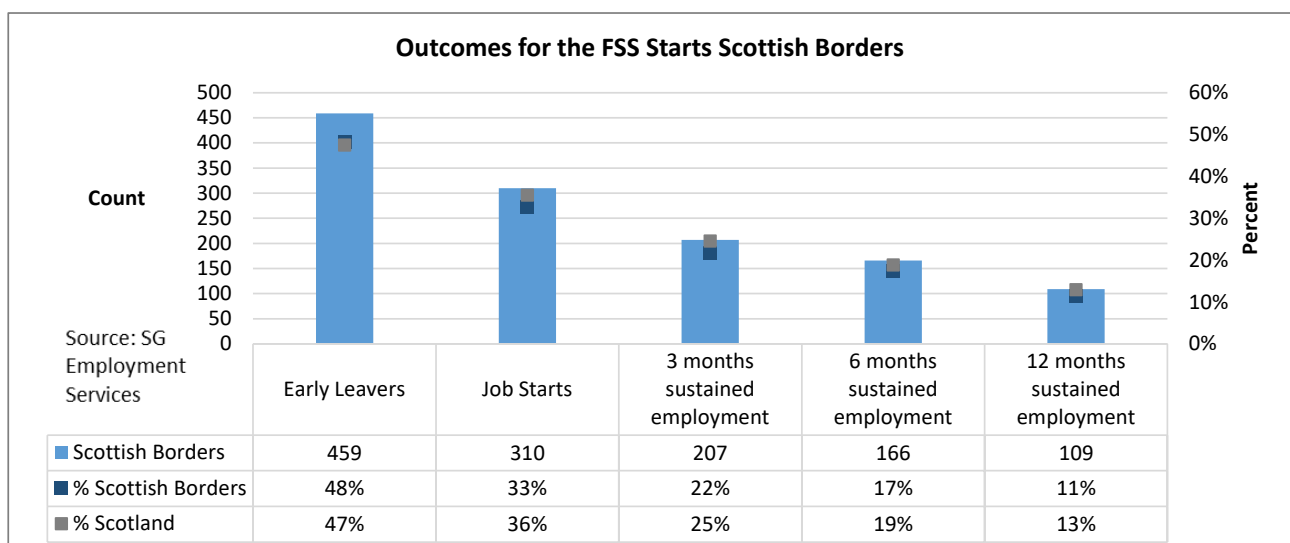
Fair Start Scotland

Fair Start Scotland (FSS) is Scotland's devolved employability support service which aims to help those further from the labour market move into and sustain fair work. FSS launched on 3 April 2018.

Between April 2018 and September 2023 there have been 1,294 referrals to FSS in the Scottish Borders with 952 (74%) starting, a higher start rate compared to the 67% for Scotland. The graph with table below shows that the demographics of the FSS starts in the Scottish Borders is similar to Scotland.



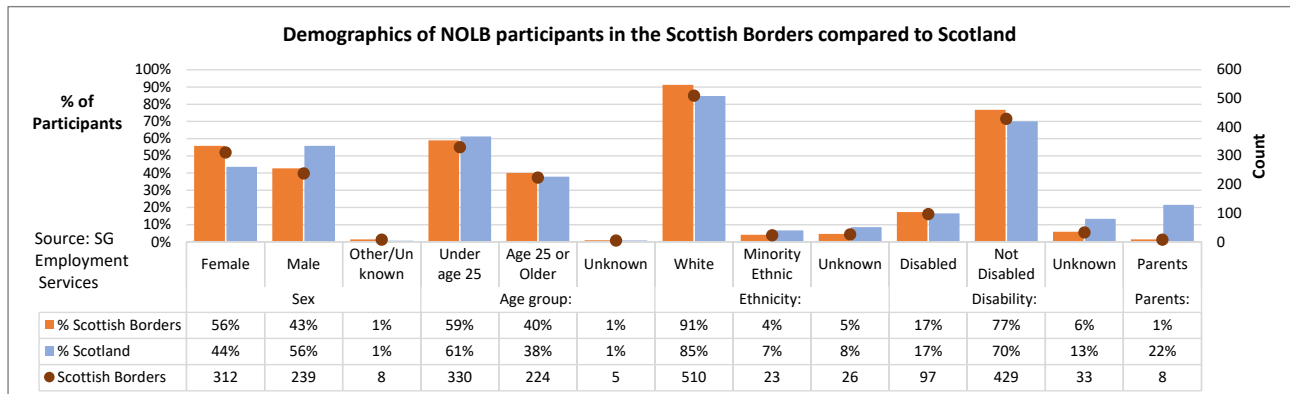
The outcomes for the FSS starts in the Scottish Borders are similar to Scotland with 33% of FSS starts in the Scottish Borders starting a job and 11% sustaining their employment.



No One Left Behind

No One Left Behind (NOLB) is a strategy for placing people at the centre of the design and delivery of employability services. Between April 2019 and September 2023 there were 559 participants in No One Left Behind in the Scottish Borders. The graph and table below show the demographics of the NOLB participants in the Scottish Borders compared to Scotland.

- More women participants in the Scottish Borders
- Slightly more people aged 25 and older in the Scottish Borders
- More ethnicity white in the Scottish Borders
- Slightly fewer people disabled in the Scottish Borders
- Fewer parents are NOLB participants in the Scottish Borders



Workforce Mobility

In the '[Workforce Mobility: Transport Barrier Survey Baseline Reports – August 2022](#)' the Workforce Mobility Deprivation Index was presented to the [City Region Deal Edinburgh & South East Scotland](#). The Workforce Mobility Deprivation Index (WMDI) was developed to provide a context by which to identify areas where there are challenges for workforce mobility.

The components used in the Workforce Mobility Deprivation Index (WMDI) are detailed in the table below.

Component	Definition	Year
People living in 15% most 'access deprived' areas	Number and percentage of population living in 15% most 'access deprived' areas (data zones) in Scotland. Source - SIMD2020 via ScotPHO profiles	2018/2019
Population income deprived	Number and percentage of total population classified as income deprived within SIMD income domain. Source - SIMD2020 via ScotPHO profiles	2017
Working age population employment deprived	Number and percentage of working age population (16-64 years) classified as employment deprived within SIMD income domain. Source - SIMD2020 via ScotPHO profiles	2017
Educational attainment of school leavers	The score is based on school leavers' highest level of qualification, averaged across all leavers within a data zone. Source: Scottish Government via Statistics.gov.scot	2016/17-2018/19

Each intermediate zone is given a WMDI score based on the allocated points for the values of each component in the area. The table below shows the point allocation based on the results for each component. Note that point structure for access deprivation is slightly different to the other three components. The points for educational attainment run opposite to the other three components the higher the value in the component the lower the WMDI point allocation.

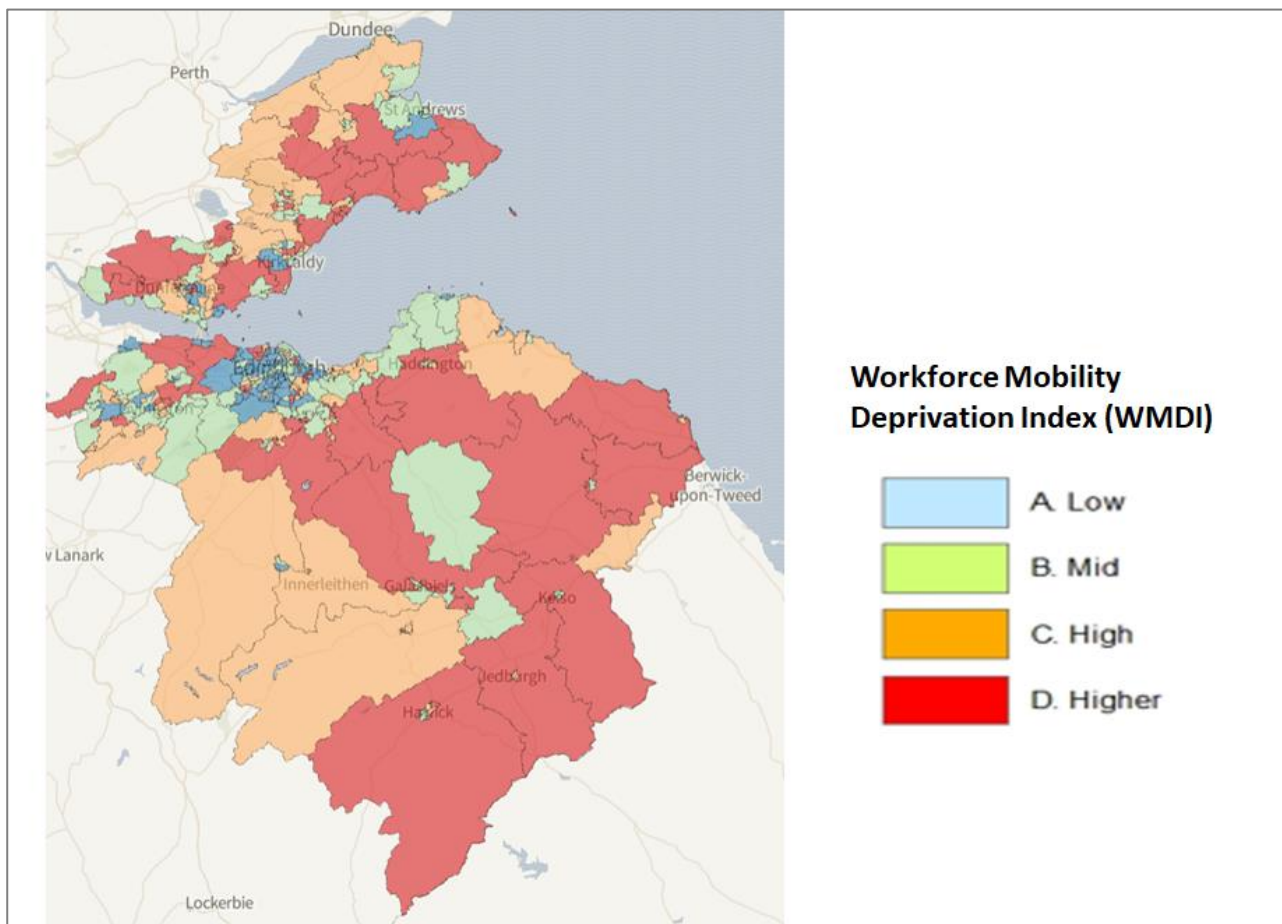
15% Access Deprived	Income Deprived	Employment Deprived	Education Attainment	WMDI / Score
A. None (0%) : 0 Points	A. Under 5%: 1 Point	A. Under 5%: 1 Point	A. Under 5: 4 Points	A. Low / 3 to 5
B. Under 25%: 2 Points	B. 5% to Under 10%: 2 Points	B. 5% to Under 10%: 2 Point	B. 5 to Under 5.5: 3 Points	B. Mid / 6 to 8
C. 25% to Under 50%: 4 Points	C. 10% to Under 15%: 3 Points	C. 10% to Under 15%: 3 Points	C. 5.5 to Under 6: 2 Points	C. High / 9 to 10
D. 50% or More: 6: Points	D. 15% or More: 4 Points	D. 15% or More: 4 Points	D. 6 or Higher: 1 Point	D. Higher / 11 to 18

The table below shows the number and percent of Intermediate Zones in the Scottish Borders by their WMDI level, compared to the Edinburgh & South East Scotland region. Most notably, the Scottish Borders has:

- More areas with higher levels of workforce mobility deprivation compared to the region,
- Fewer areas with low levels of workforce mobility deprivation compared to the region.

WMDI / Score	Intermediate Zone Count		Intermediate Zone Percent	
	Scottish Borders	Region Total	Scottish Borders	Region Total
A. Low / 3 to 5	1	75	3%	23%
B. Mid / 6 to 8	10	102	33%	31%
C. High / 9 to 10	10	80	33%	25%
D. Higher / 11 to 18	9	69	30%	21%
Area Total	30	326	100%	100%

The map below shows the Intermediate Zones for Edinburgh & South East Scotland with their Workforce Mobility Deprivation Index level. It is not surprising that many of the rural Intermediate Zones in the Scottish Borders have a WMDI level of high or higher.



The tables below show the count and percent of Intermediate Zones in the Scottish Borders and Edinburgh & South East Scotland by the different WMDI components.

15% Access Deprived	Intermediate Zone Count		Intermediate Zone Percent	
	Scottish Borders	Region Total	Scottish Borders	Region Total
A. None (0%)	17	252	57%	77%
B. Under 25%	1	23	3%	7%
C. 25% to Under 50%	3	24	10%	7%
D. 50% or More	9	27	30%	8%
Area Total	30	326	100%	100%

Income Deprived	Intermediate Zone Count		Intermediate Zone Percent	
	Scottish Borders	Region Total	Scottish Borders	Region Total
A. Under 5%	4	81	13%	25%
B. 5% to Under 10%	13	95	43%	29%
C. 10% to Under 15%	11	80	37%	25%
D. 15% or More	2	70	7%	21%
Area Total	30	326	100%	100%

Employment Deprived	Intermediate Zone Count		Intermediate Zone Percent	
	Scottish Borders	Region Total	Scottish Borders	Region Total
A. Under 5%	6	107	20%	33%
B. 5% to Under 10%	15	109	50%	33%
C. 10% to Under 15%	7	75	23%	23%
D. 15% or More	2	35	7%	11%
Area Total	30	326	100%	100%

Education Attainment (Highest Level of Qualification for School Leavers- Area Average)	Intermediate Zone Count		Intermediate Zone Percent	
	Scottish Borders	Region Total	Scottish Borders	Region Total
A. Under 5	1	37	3%	11%
B. 5 to Under 5.5	9	111	30%	34%
C. 5.5 to Under 6	19	132	63%	40%
D. 6 or Higher	1	46	3%	14%
Area Total	30	326	100%	100%

Child poverty

Types of Child Poverty

The Child Poverty Act 2017 contains four income-based targets to reduce child poverty in Scotland by 2030, according to [Scottish Government Child Poverty](#) statistics. These are:

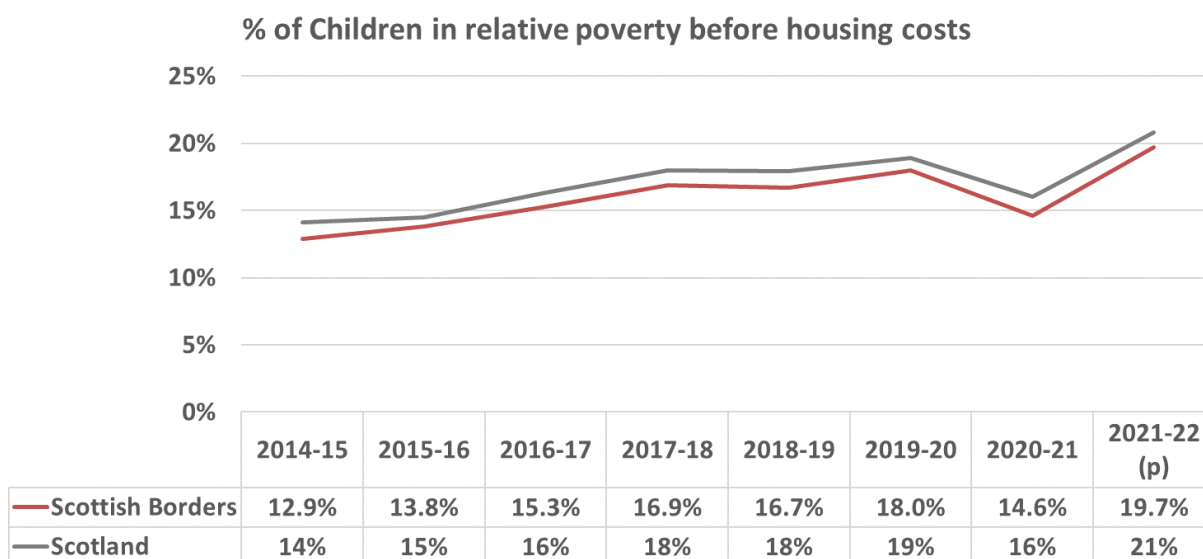
- **Relative poverty** – measures low income relative to the rest of society (below 60% of the median)
- **Absolute poverty** – measures low living standards relative to 2010/11 (below 60% of that median)
- **Low income and material deprivation** – measures whether unable to afford basic necessities
- **Persistent poverty** – measures whether a child has lived in relative poverty for the past 4 years

The “official” measure of child poverty is Households Below Average Income (HBAI), taken from the Family Resources Survey (FRS), which is released at Scotland and UK level only. The FRS showed that both relative and absolute child poverty have been higher than their target levels and have shown little change in recent years, in Scotland and the UK. Material deprivation has changed very little, but it has always been higher than the interim target.

We can use a range of statistics from Scottish Government and other sources to provide a useful set of proxy measures at Local Authority level and below to measure child poverty. These may differ slightly from the FRS but are more appropriate at a local level.

Relative Child Poverty Before Housing Costs

The chart below shows the proportions of children under 16 living in families either in receipt of out-of-work benefits or in receipt of tax credit, where their reported income is less than 60% of UK median income. The data were sourced from DWP/HMRC (Stat-Xplore) for [Scottish Government’s December 2023 Local Child Poverty Dashboard](#).

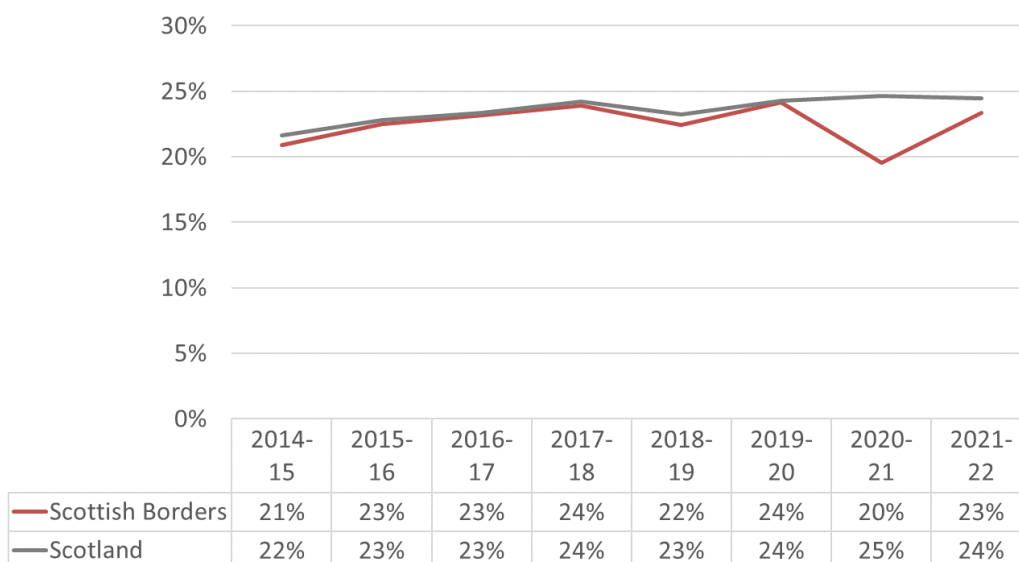


The above figures show that child poverty before housing costs has always mirrored the Scottish trend, but at a slightly below average rate.

Relative child poverty After Housing Costs

The figures in the chart below estimate the proportion of children falling under an income threshold which is broadly in line with the relative low income threshold in HBAI. These Local Authority-level estimates are based on modelled data and were produced by the End Child Poverty Coalition for [Scottish Government's December 2023 Local Child Poverty Dashboard](#).

% of children in relative poverty after housing costs



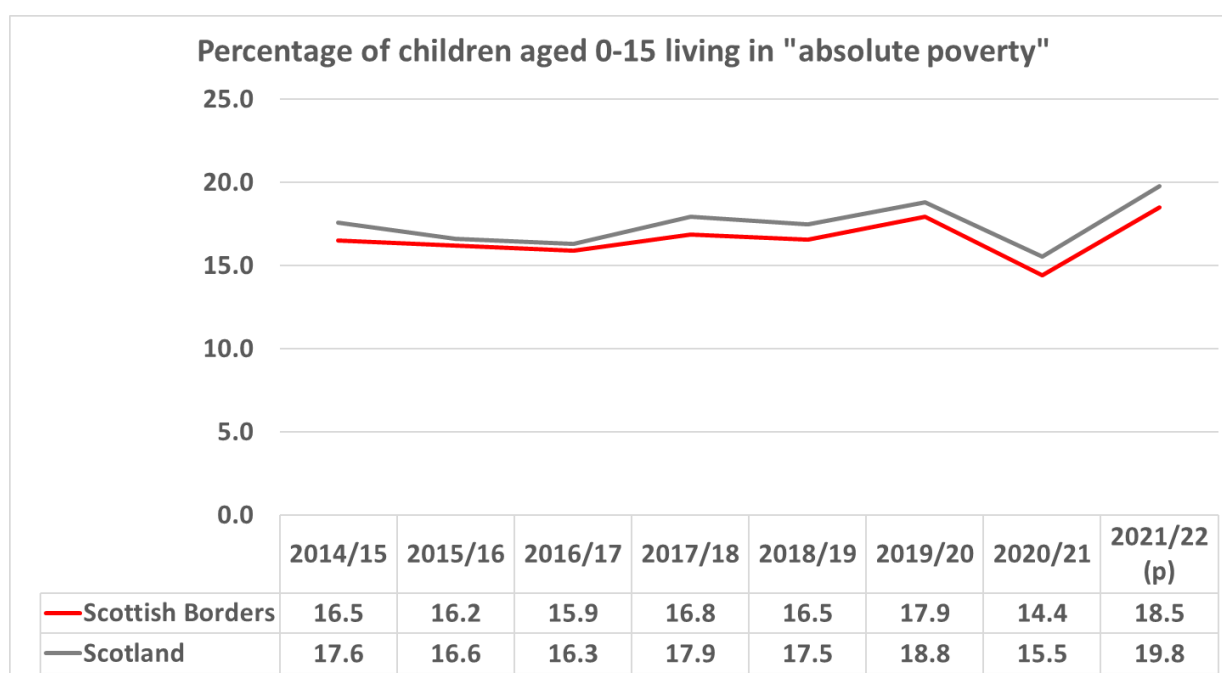
The chart shows that relative child poverty after housing costs remains stubbornly high in Scotland. Rates in the Scottish Borders were beginning to come down just before the pandemic but are currently increasing.

Children in Absolute Poverty

The Children in low-income families' local area statistics (CILIF), provides information on the number and proportion of children living in Absolute low income.

Absolute low-income is defined as a family in low income Before Housing Costs (BHC) in the reference year in comparison with incomes in 2010/11. A family must have claimed Child Benefit and at least one other household benefit (Universal Credit, tax credits, or Housing Benefit) at any point in the year to be classed as low income in these statistics. Gross income measure is Before Housing Costs (BHC) and includes contributions from earnings, state support and pensions.

Figures are published by DWP (Stat-Xplore), calibrated to the Households Below Average Income (HBAI) survey regional estimates of children in low-income households, but provide Local Authority level information not available from the HBAI. Numbers of children are sourced from NRS Mid-year Estimates.



The chart above shows that an estimated 18.5% of children in the Scottish Borders live in “absolute poverty,” i.e. they are living in poverty even by the income standards of 2010. This is slightly below the Scottish average and always has been. It is clear that absolute poverty increased markedly during 2020/21 and is now at its highest rate ever recorded, both in Scotland and the Scottish Borders.

The rate of children in absolute poverty in the Scottish Borders (18.5%) is just over one percentage point below the rate of children in relative poverty before housing costs (19.7%). This means that almost all of the children living in relative poverty are also in absolute poverty, and their household income has not improved, relative to the poverty level of the given year, since 2010.

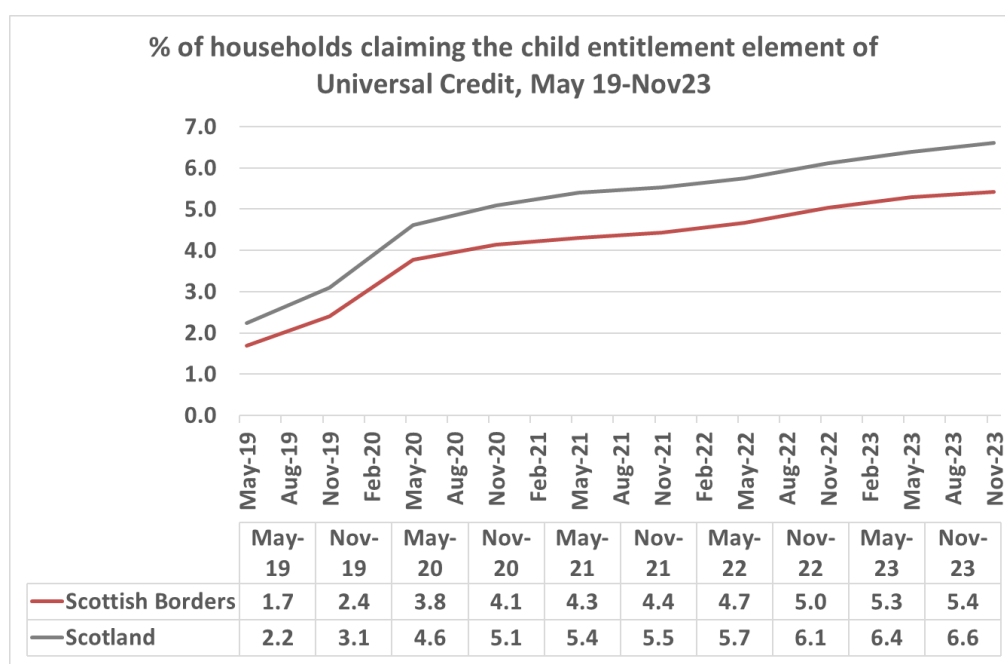
Households claiming the Child Entitlement element of Universal Credit

Universal Credit is a welfare benefit paid to working-age people on a low income who need help with living costs. An extra payment is made to qualifying parents of children under 16 (or under 19 if in full time secondary education) on top of their basic UC allowance. This is the “child entitlement.”

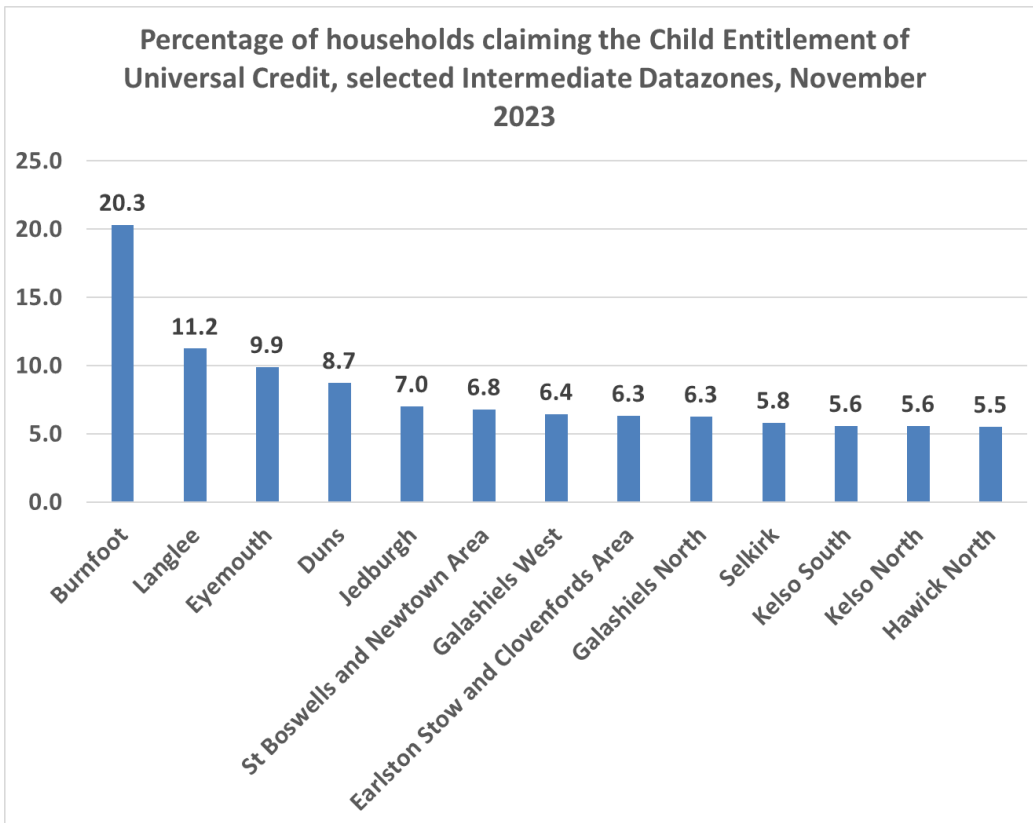
The amount of the Child Entitlement payment alone is £315 per month for the first child if born before 6 April 2017 and £269.58 if the first child was born after that date. Second children are entitled to £269.58 per month.

Before April 2017, a payment was made for each child regardless of the number of children in the family. Since April 2017, any subsequent children who were born after that date have not been eligible for Child Entitlement. This makes families with three or more children, if any were born since April 2017, particularly vulnerable to child poverty. Despite this, this measure is a useful proxy metric for child poverty – at least for smaller families.

The figures in the following graphs are sourced from DWP (Stat-Xplore) and NRS Household Estimates.



The proportion of households claiming Child Entitlement in the Scottish Borders has always been lower than the Scottish average, but it has increased substantially, both during and since the pandemic, and is continuing to rise. The most recent figure show that it is at its highest ever rate.

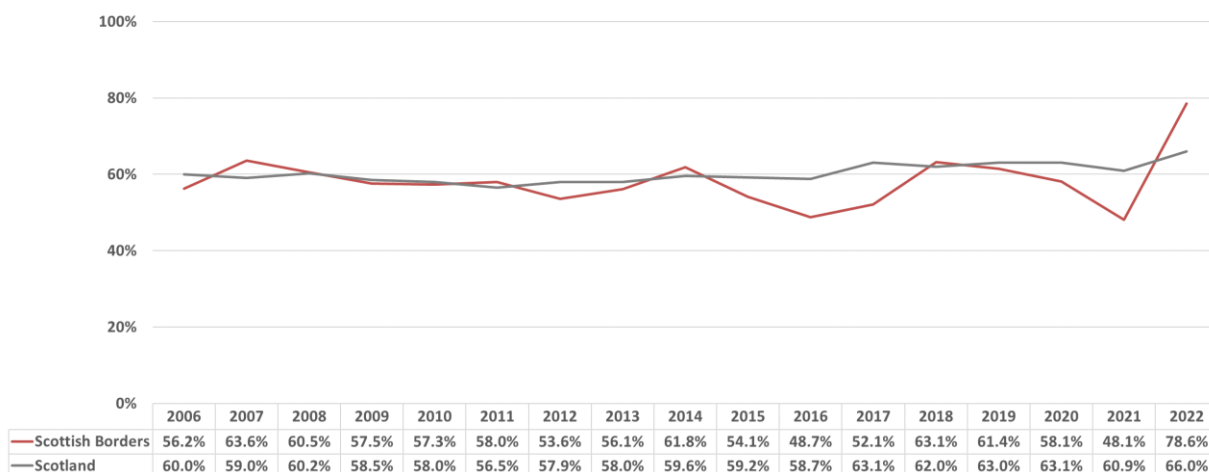


The above graphic shows whereabouts, within the Scottish Borders, this measure of child poverty is the highest. The areas shown were selected because they are all above the Scottish Borders average of 5.4%. Six parts of the Scottish Borders are above the Scottish average of 6.6%, including areas of known Multiple Deprivation, which are noticeably higher. The Earlston, Stow and Clovenfords Area is likely to be included because it takes in a new part of Galashiels, where the town boundaries have not yet been updated.

Children in working households

The chart below shows the proportions of children under 16 who live in households where all adults aged 16-64 are in employment. It was sourced from the ONS Annual Population Survey, household economic activity status, for [Scottish Government's December 2023 Local Child Poverty Dashboard](#).

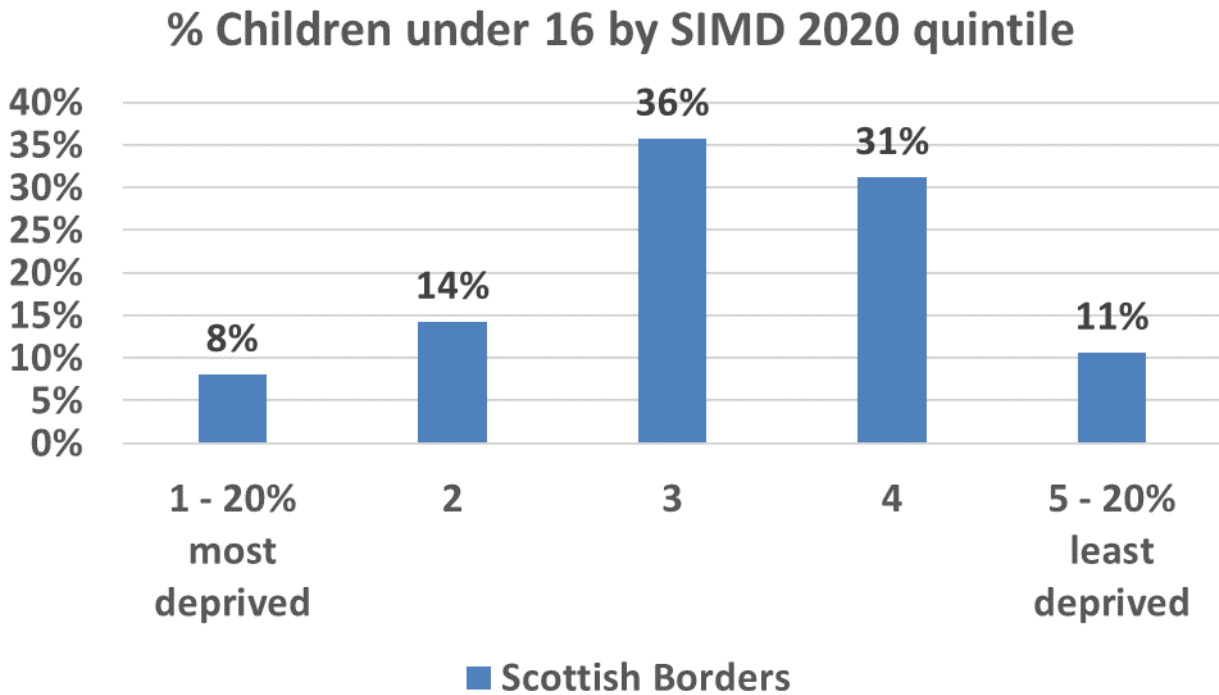
% of children living in households where all adults are in employment



The above chart shows that the percentage of children living in all-employed households has generally always been around or below the Scottish average. We already know that Scottish Borders families with dependent children are slightly more likely to have one stay-at-home parent than the Scottish average. However, since the pandemic, there has been a surge of second-parents taking on new work. This could be either a free choice or a forced lifestyle change caused by post-pandemic financial hardship.

Proportion of children by Multiple Deprivation Quintile

The chart below shows the proportion of children in each SIMD Quintile. Quintile 1 represents the proportion of children in the 20% most-deprived data zones and Quintile 5 represents the 20% least deprived. If Multiple Deprivation in the Scottish Borders was the same as the Scottish average, each quintile would contain equal proportions, with 20% in each bar. This information was sourced from Scottish Government data, for [Scottish Government's December 2023 Local Child Poverty Dashboard](#).



The chart shows that a higher proportion of children in the Scottish Borders live in SIMD quintiles 3 and 4, which represent around, or below, average Multiple Deprivation. The proportions of children who live in the 20% most-deprived and the 20% least-deprived neighbourhoods are the smallest.

Scottish Child Payment

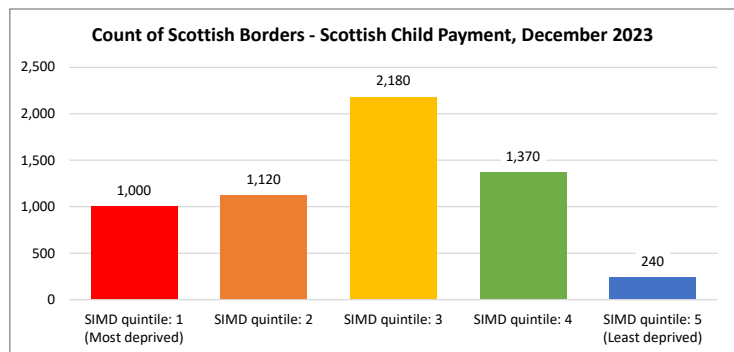
Scottish Child Payment (SCP) is a payment to help low-income families with children under 16, administered by [Social Security Scotland](#). To get SCP the client must live in Scotland. Either the client or their partner must be responsible for a child, they might be the child's kinship carer. To be eligible for SCP the client or their partner must also get one of the following benefits:

- Child Tax Credit
- Universal Credit
- Income Support
- Pension Credit
- Working Tax Credit
- Job Seeker's Allowance (income based)
- Employment Support Allowance (income related)

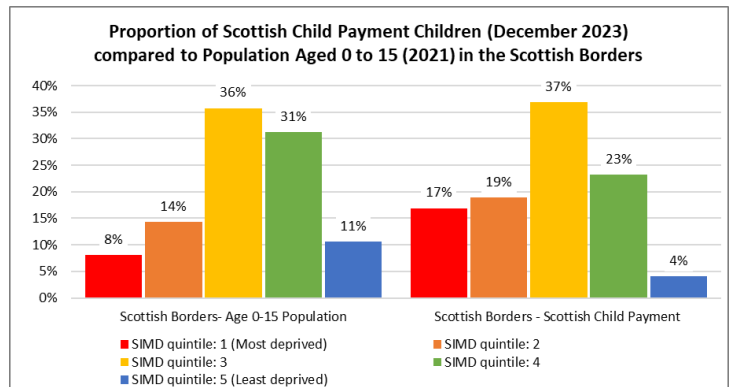
Eligibility for Scottish Child Payment began on 15 February 2021. It was extended to under 16s on 14 November 2022.

The information presented below is from the [Scottish Child Payment: high level statistics to 31 December 2023](#) report, published 27 February 2024.

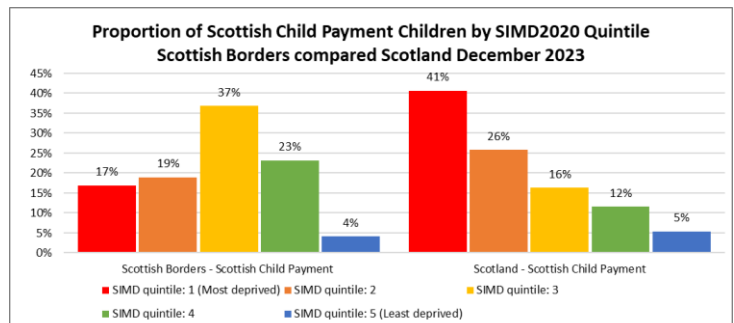
On 31 December 2023 there were 5,910 children in the Scottish Borders benefitting from Scottish Child Payment representing 1.8% of the 327,650 in Scotland. The graph with figures, right, shows the distribution of the children by SIMD2020 quintiles.



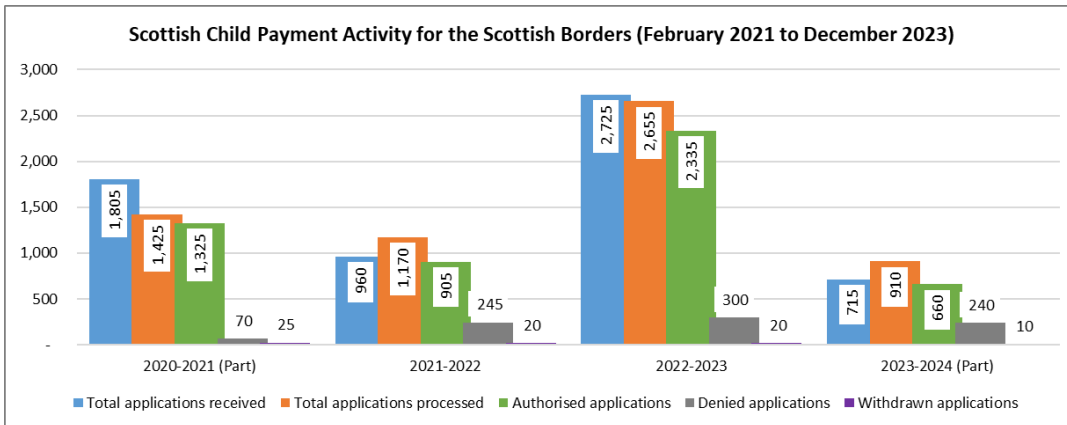
The graph, right, compares the population distribution by SIMD2020 quintile to the count of children benefitting from Scottish Child Payment. It is clear to see that proportionally more children benefit from SCP living in Quintile 1 (most deprived) compared to the proportion of children that live in Quintile 1 areas.



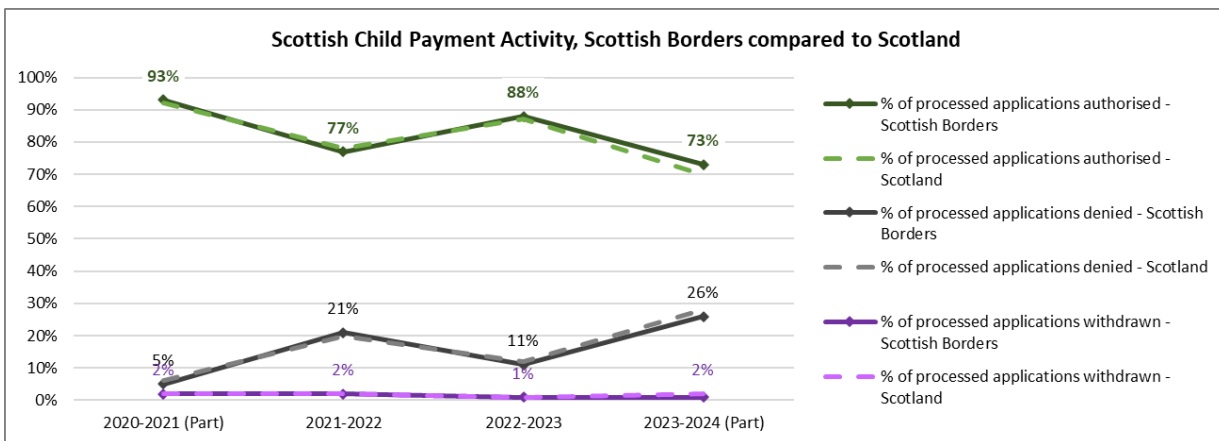
The distribution of SCP by SIMD2020 quintiles in the Scottish Borders differs from the distribution for Scotland, as seen in the graph to the right. Notably, a higher proportion of children living in Quintile 3, reflecting the Scottish Borders population.



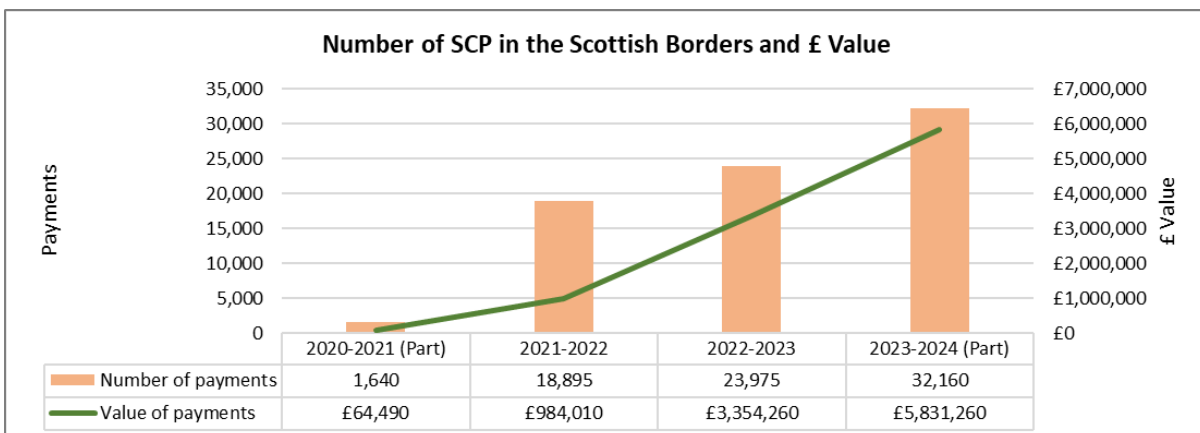
The Scottish Borders SCP applications represent about 2% of all applications in Scotland. The total SCP applications from the Scottish Borders (between February 2021 and December 2023) was 6,205. The graph below shows the applications by financial year and the SCP activity. 44% of the SCP applications for the Scottish Borders were made in 2022-2023.



The graph below shows the outcome of the SCP applications for the Scottish Borders and Scotland. The outcomes for the Scottish Borders applications are similar to those for Scotland.



Over time there have been 76,670 Scottish Child Payments for the Scottish Borders which has a value of £10,234,020. The graph below shows the number of payments and value over the years for the Scottish Borders.



Scottish Borders Child Poverty Index

SB CPI: Purpose and Scoring

The purpose of the Scottish Borders Child Poverty Index (SB CPI) ³ is to provide additional insight into Child Poverty in the Scottish Borders. It is an experimental tool that may be used as a proxy for understanding the level of child poverty within the Scottish Borders.

The SB CPI was also created to work alongside the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. SIMD provides a way of looking at deprivation in an area, covering the whole population and does not specifically reflect child poverty.

The SB CPI is a tool to help inform the Local Child Poverty Action Plan and which is a requirement of the Child Poverty Act (Scotland) 2017. The SB CPI is a summary of two components, which are:

- **Children in Low Income Families (CiLIF)** – Source is DWP/HMRC⁴. Relative low-income is defined as a family whose equivalised income is below 60 per cent of contemporary median income. Gross income measure is Before Housing Costs (BHC) and includes contributions from earnings, state support and pensions. The SB CPI uses the most recent available year's data, currently there is a one-year lag e.g. for SB CPI 2023 uses the CiLIF data for 2022-23.
- **Clothing Grant (CLG)** - Source is SBC. The proportion of pupils recorded for Clothing Grant of all pupils in area for school year.

For the Scottish Borders Child Poverty Index the 'points' allocated to the proportion of children in low-income families and the proportion of children receiving clothing grant for each data zone (143) are combined to give an index score. The index scores are then grouped into child poverty levels from Lower to Higher.

Children in Low Income Families (DWP)	Clothing Grant (SBC)	SB Child Poverty Index (revised)	
		Points	Level
0: None	0: None	0 to 2	1: Lower
1: Under 10%	1: Under 5%	3 to 4	2: Low
2: 10% to Under 20%	2: 5% to Under 10%	5 to 6	3: Mid
3: 20% to Under 30%	3: 10% to Under 15%	7 to 8	4: High
4: 30% to Under 40%	4: 15% to Under 20%	9 to 11	5: Higher
5: 40% or More	5: 20 to Under 30%		
	6: 30% or More		

³ Scottish Borders Child Poverty Index (revised) - November 2023

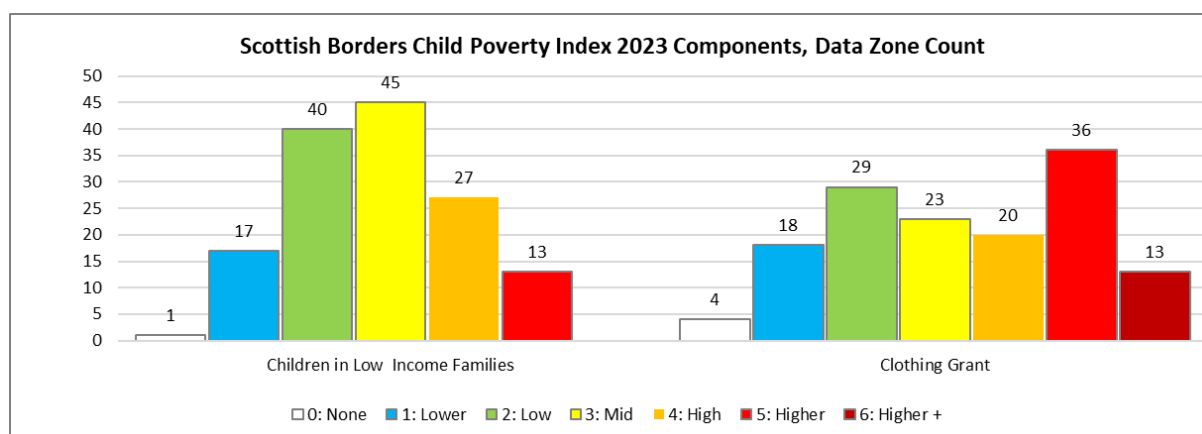
⁴ *The calculation of proportion of Children in Low Income Families for the purpose of the Scottish Borders Child Poverty Index differs to 'official statistics' due to the availability of the data from Stat-Xplore. The children in Stat-Xplore are defined as dependent individuals aged under 16; or aged 16 to 19 in full-time non-advanced education or in unwaged government training. (Not just those aged under 16 – unable to group into age bands). The figure for all children is then expressed as proportion of those aged 0 to 15 as published by NRS. It is recognised that this calculation is imperfect, but practical for the purpose of the SB CPI.

Scottish Borders Child Poverty Index 2023 Components

The table below shows the allocation of data zones in the Scottish Borders for each of the components by count and proportion within each grouping.

Component Points	Children in Low Income Families		Clothing Grant	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
0: None	1	1%	4	3%
1: Lower	17	12%	18	13%
2: Low	40	28%	29	20%
3: Mid	45	31%	23	16%
4: High	27	19%	20	14%
5: Higher	13	9%	36	25%
6: Higher +		0%	13	9%
SBC Data Zones	143	100%	143	100%

The graph below shows the count of SBC data zones by each of the child poverty index component group for the SBCPI2023.

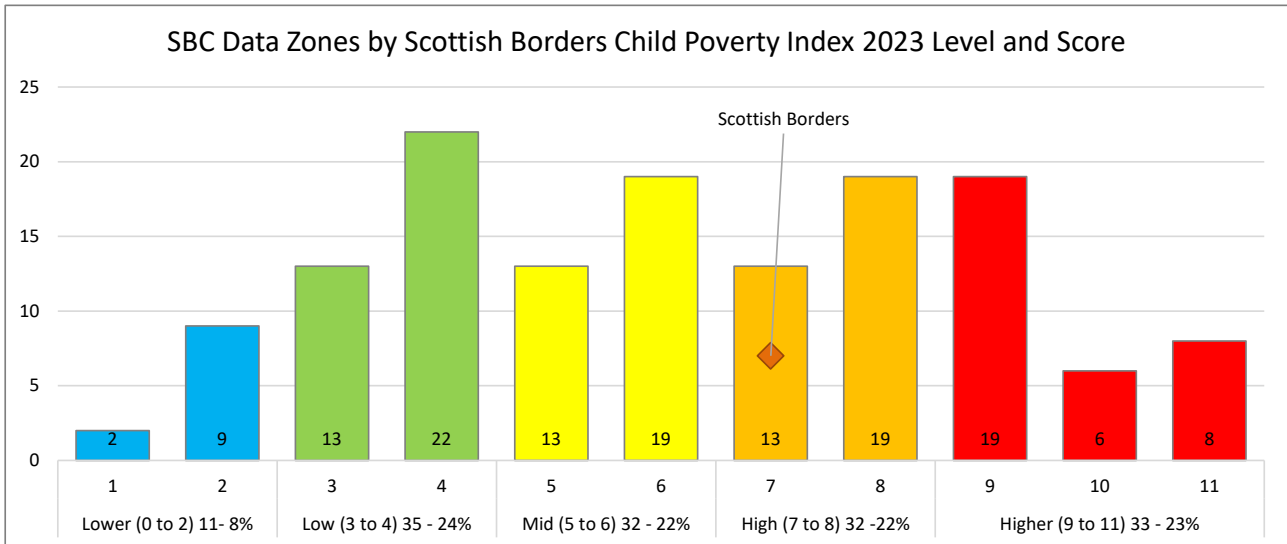


The table below shows the proportion of data zones by their Children in Low Income Families group and Clothing Grant group for SBCPI2023.

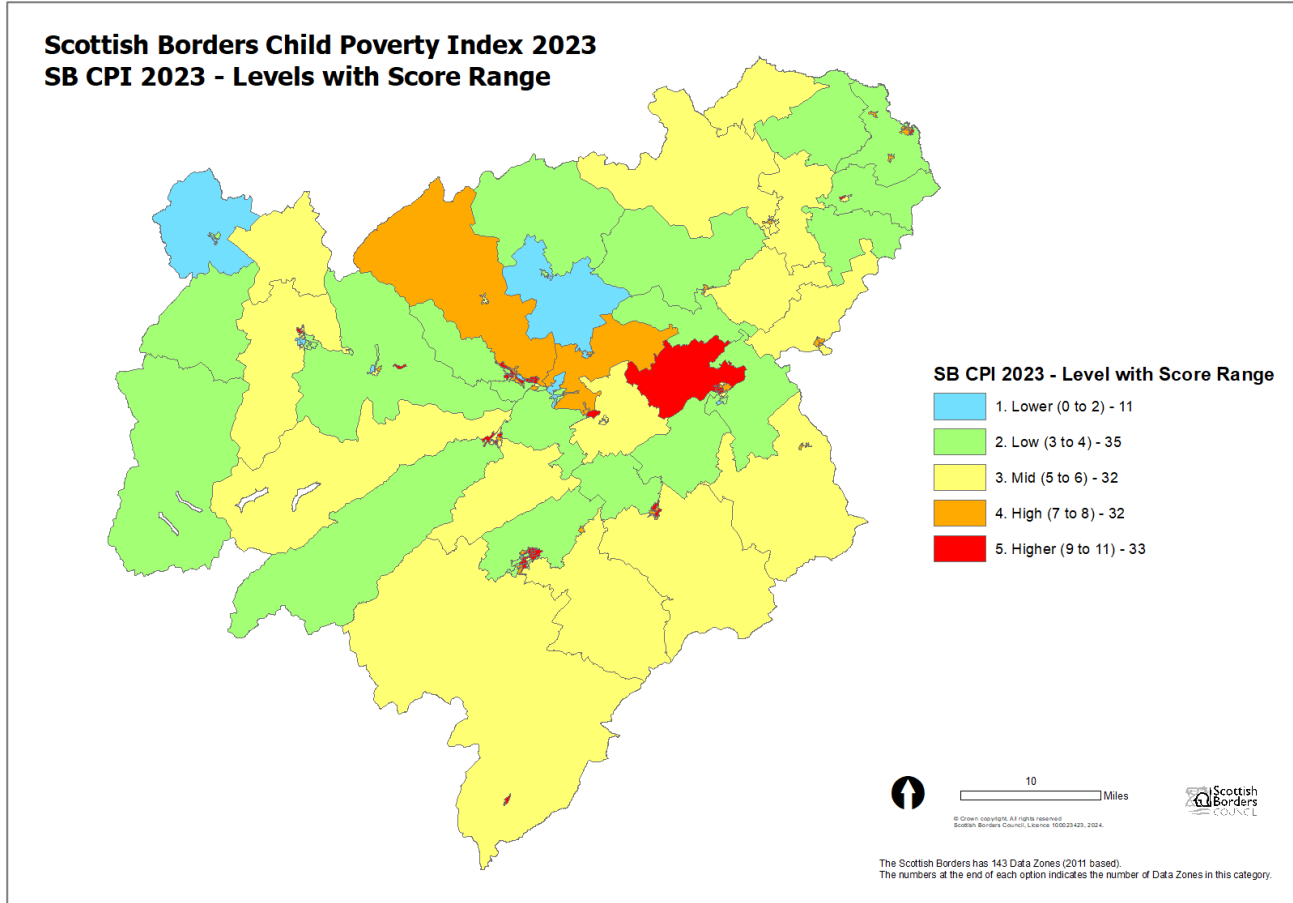
		Children in Low Income Families Group						
		0: None	1: Lower	2: Low	3: Mid	4: High	5: Higher	Scottish Borders
Clothing Grant Group	0: None		1%	1%				3%
	1: Lower		5%	5%	1%	1%		13%
	2: Low		4%	12%	4%			20%
	3: Mid		1%	3%	8%	2%	1%	16%
	4: High	1%		5%	6%	2%	1%	14%
	5: Higher			1%	10%	11%	2%	25%
	6: Higher +				1%	2%	6%	9%
	Scottish Borders	1%	12%	28%	31%	19%	9%	100%

Scottish Borders Child Poverty Index for 2023 Results

The points associated with each component are added together to get a Scottish Borders Child Poverty Index number. The graph and map below show the Scottish Borders data zones based on the SB CPI score, grouped into levels of Child Poverty. Higher level (33 data zones) has a score of 9 to 11; High level (32 data zones) have a score of 7 or 8; Mid level (32 data zones) have a score of 5 or 6; Low level (35 data zones) have a score of 3 or 4; and Lower level (11 data zone) has a score of 0 to 2. Every data zone in the Scottish Borders has some element of child poverty. The Scottish Borders SB CPI score for 2023 was 7 in the High level.

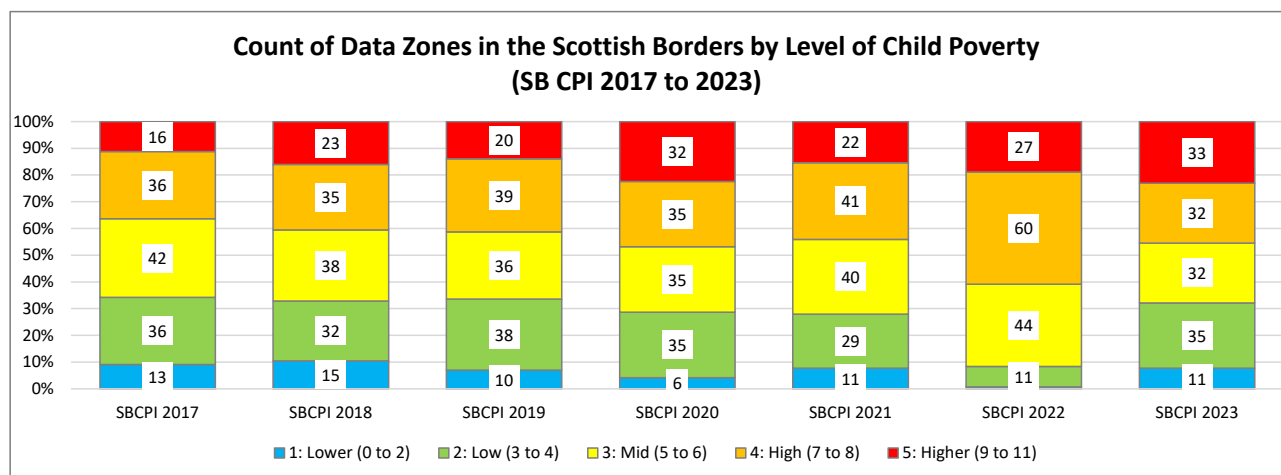


The map below shows the SBCPI 2023 level for each of the data zones in the Scottish Borders.



Scottish Borders Child Poverty Index Over Time

The graphs below show the change over time with the count of data zones in each Scottish Borders Child Poverty Level between 2017 and 2023. The impact of Covid19 and the cost-of-living crisis can be seen in the number / proportion of data zones in the Mid/High/Higher level of child poverty. 66% of the data zone had a Mid/High/Higher level in 2017, that increased to 71% in 2020 and then to 92% in 2022, reflecting the impact of the cost-of-living. However, for 2023 the proportion of data zones with Mid/High/Higher levels of child poverty return to pre-covid level with 68%.



Scottish Borders Child Poverty Level Change Over Time 2017 to 2023-Wards

The table below shows the Scottish Borders Child Poverty Index level (SBCPI) for the Scottish Borders and each ward between 2017 and 2023.

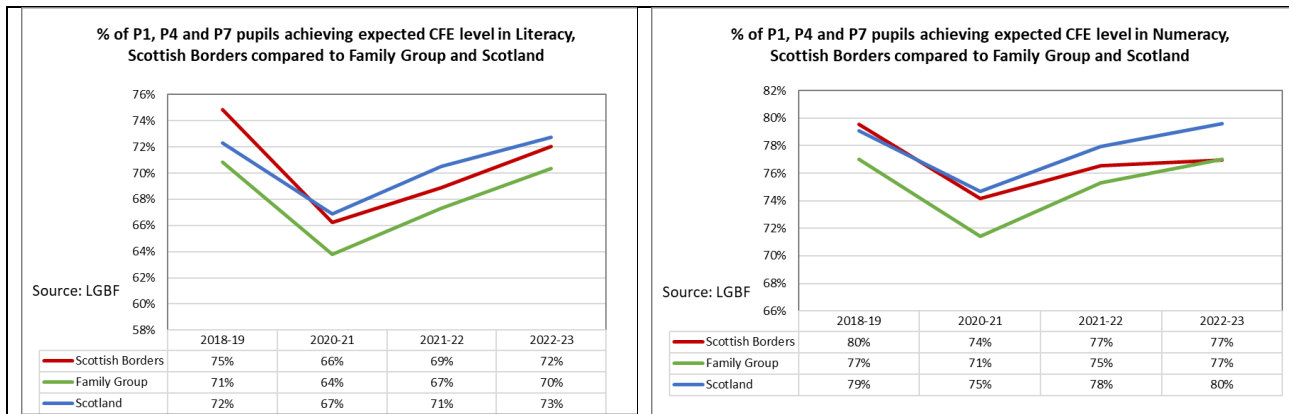
Area	SB CPI 2017 Level	SB CPI 2018 Level	SB CPI 2019 Level	SB CPI 2020 Level	SB CPI 2021 Level	SB CPI 2022 Level	SB CPI 2023 Level
Scottish Borders	3. Mid	4. High	4. High	4. High	3. Mid	4. High	4. High
East Berwickshire	4. High	4. High	4. High	4. High	3. Mid	4. High	4. High
Mid Berwickshire	3. Mid	3. Mid	3. Mid	3. Mid	4. High	4. High	3. Mid
Jedburgh and District	3. Mid	3. Mid	4. High	4. High	4. High	4. High	4. High
Kelso and District	3. Mid	3. Mid	4. High	4. High	4. High	4. High	4. High
Galashiels and District	4. High	4. High	4. High	4. High	4. High	4. High	5. Higher
Leaderdale and Melrose	2. Low	2. Low	2. Low	2. Low	3. Mid	3. Mid	2. Low
Selkirkshire	4. High	4. High	4. High	4. High	4. High	4. High	4. High
Hawick and Denholm	4. High	5. Higher	5. Higher	5. Higher	4. High	5. Higher	5. Higher
Hawick and Hermitage	4. High	4. High	4. High	4. High	4. High	4. High	4. High
Tweeddale East	2. Low	2. Low	2. Low	2. Low	3. Mid	3. Mid	2. Low
Tweeddale West	2. Low	2. Low	2. Low	3. Mid	3. Mid	3. Mid	3. Mid

Education Outcomes

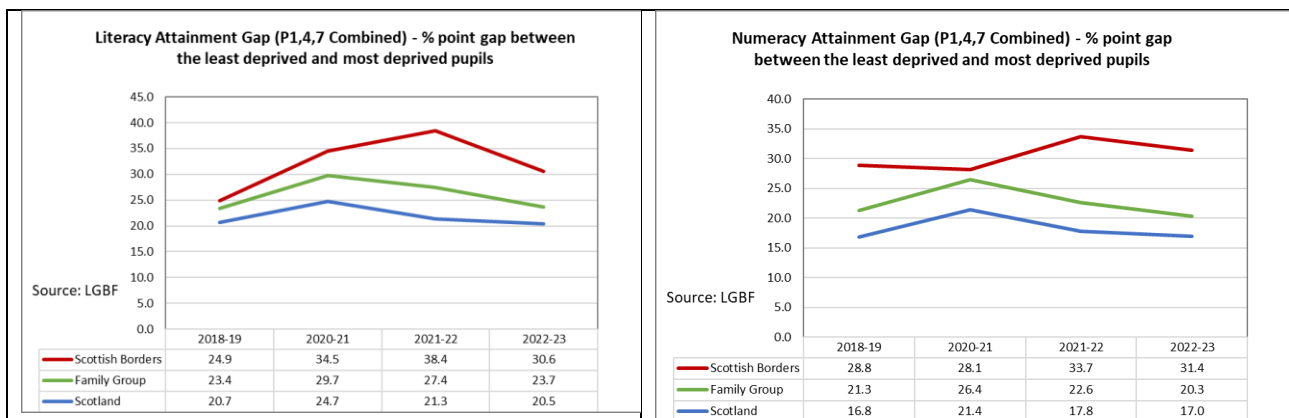
The link between poverty and educational attainment is complex. The aim is for educational attainment for those in the most deprived areas to be similar to those in the least deprived areas. The Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) has several indicators that highlight the attainment of those pupils from the most deprived areas.

Literacy and Numeracy

Pupils in the Scottish Borders are achieving the expected CFE⁵ level for literacy and numeracy, similar to the levels for the family group and Scotland, as seen by the graphs with tables below.



However, when looking at the % gap between the least deprived and most deprived pupils there is a bigger gap in the Scottish Borders compared to the family group and Scotland. In the most recent years the gap for both literacy and numeracy in the Scottish Borders has reduced but is still bigger than the family group and Scotland.

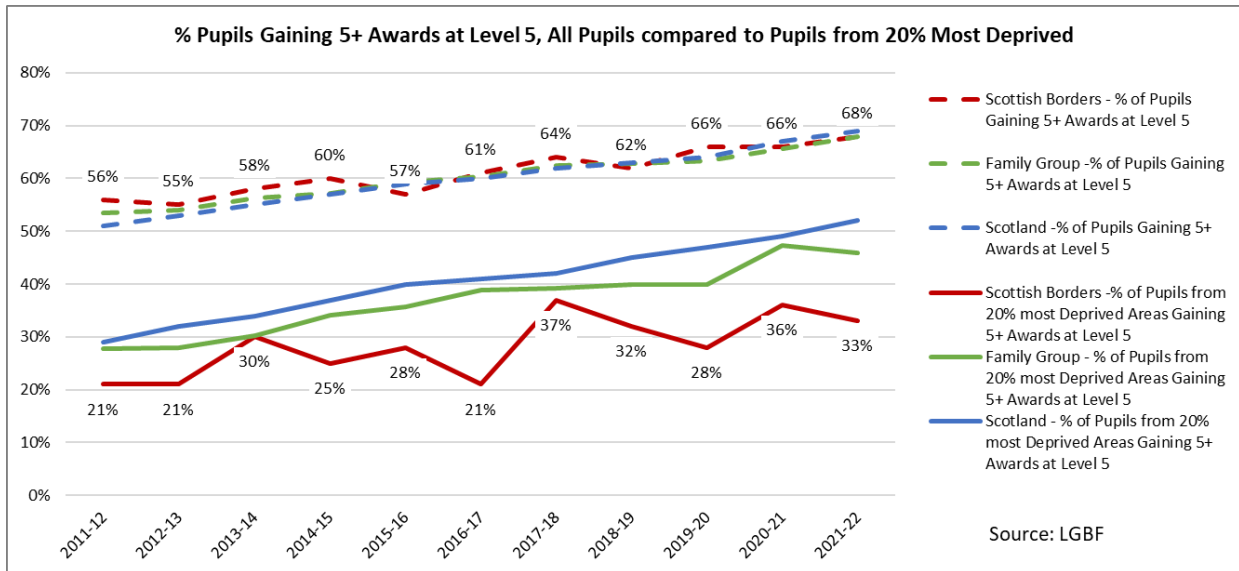


⁵ CFE = Curriculum for Excellence

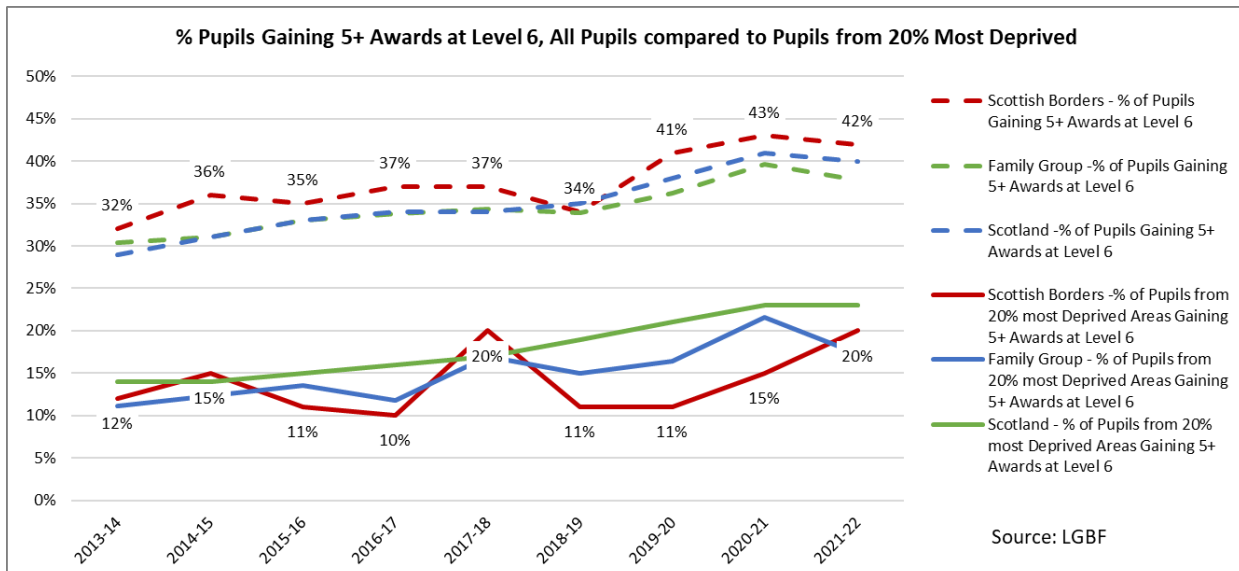
Gaining 5+ Awards at Level 5 and Level 6

Performance at level 5 (National 5) and level 6 (Scottish Higher) or greater show the breadth and depth of pupil attainment and shows the attainment gap between all pupils and for those from more deprived areas.

The graph below shows the proportion of pupils gaining 5+ awards at level 5 for all pupils and those from the 20% most deprived areas for the Scottish Borders, family group and Scotland. The graph clearly shows the difference between the 20% most deprived and all pupils. This is more pronounced for the Scottish Borders with a gap of 35% compared to a 22% gap for the family group and a 17% gap for Scotland.



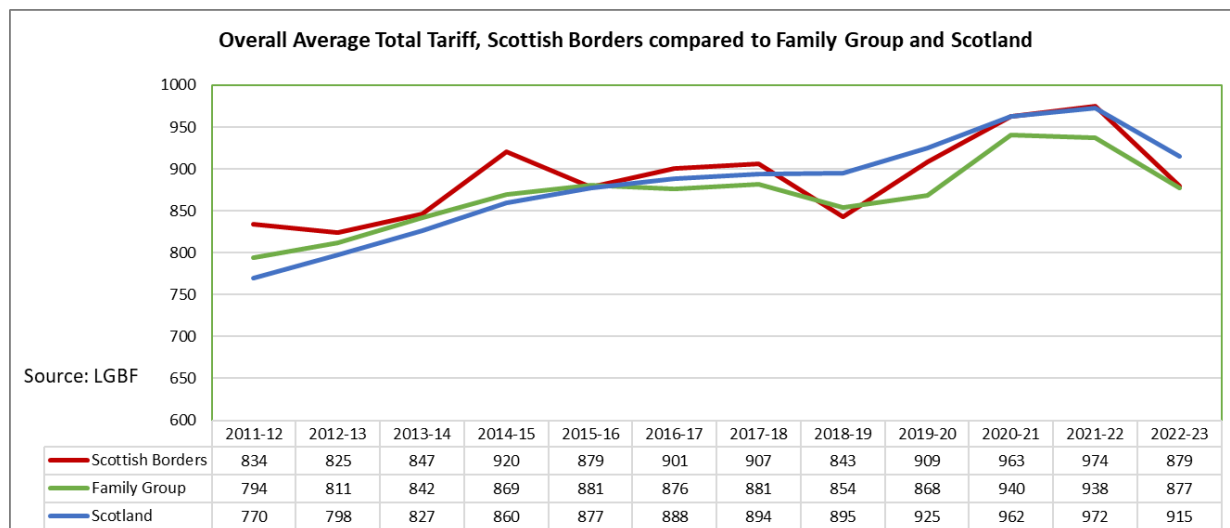
Although a lower proportion of pupils gain 5+ awards at level 6 compared to level 5, the pattern comparing all pupils to those from the 30% most deprived areas is similar.



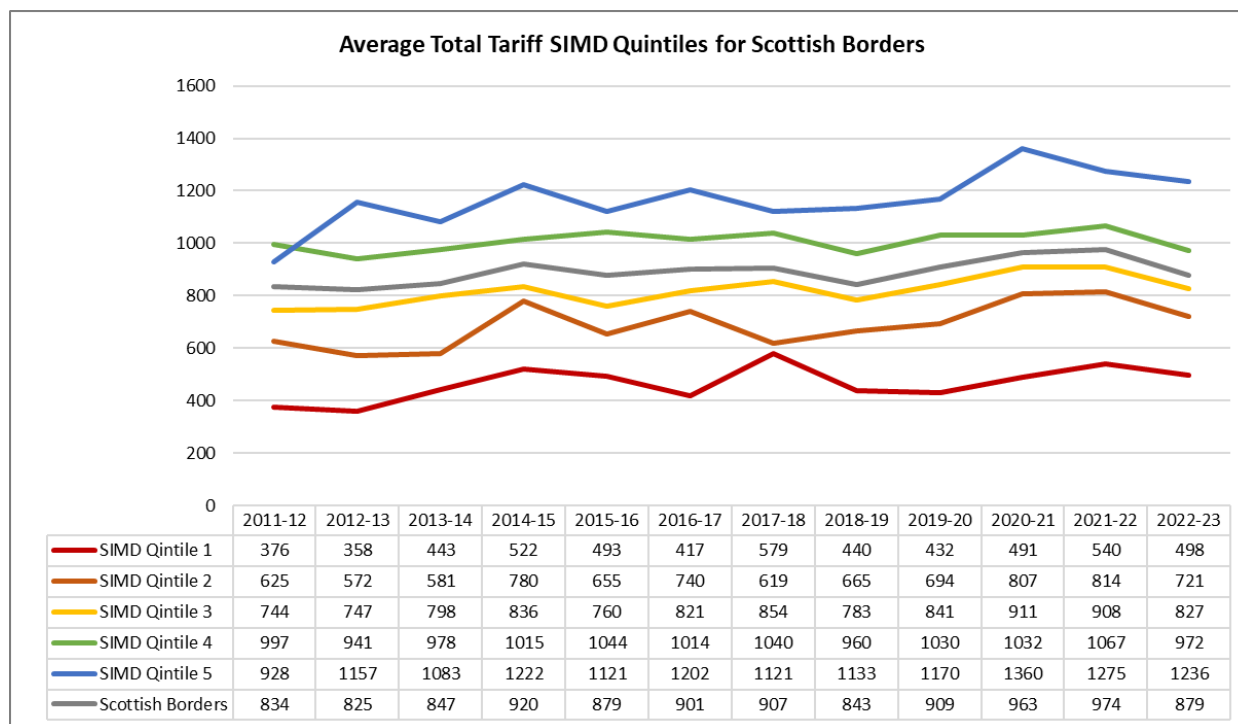
Average Tariff Score

The tariff score is a summary measure calculated from all academic achievement of pupils during senior phase (S4-S6) across a range of awards. The tariff reflects the number of awards that a pupil achieves, the SCQF level at which each award is assessed, and the grade of the award achieved (for any of these awards which are graded). The measure reflects cumulative attainment either to the point of leaving or to the end of S6.

The graph with table below shows that the average total tariff for the Scottish Borders is similar to family group and Scotland.



Within the Scottish Borders there is a marked difference in average total tariff for pupils in the different SIMD quintiles. For 2022-23 there was a 738 gap between the average total tariff for those in the most deprived and those in the least deprived areas in the Scottish Borders.



Older People Poverty

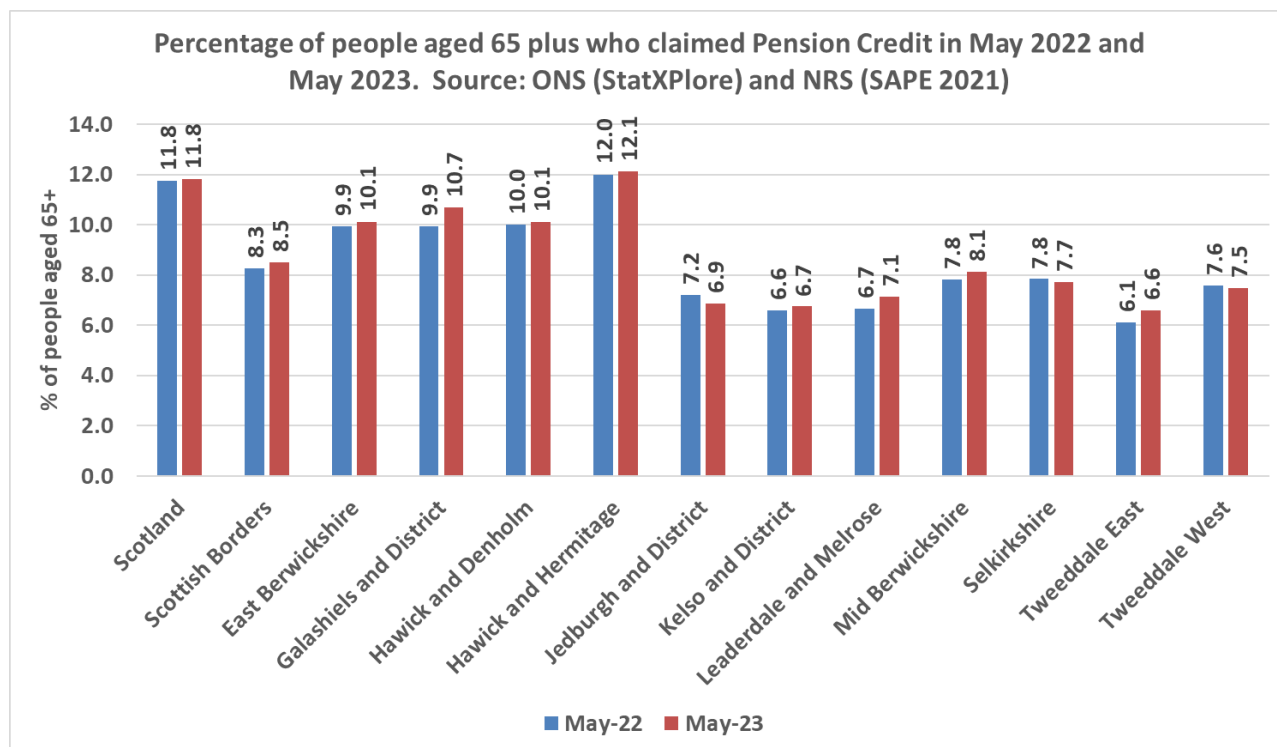
Proportion of the population claiming Pension Credit

Pension Credit (formerly known as the “minimum income guarantee”) is a benefit which is usually paid to people aged over State Pension Age if they are on a low income. It provides a safety net to guard against pensioner poverty.

Guarantee Credit “tops up” the incomes of pensioners whose weekly income is below a minimum standard, currently £201.01 for single pensioners or £306.85 per couple. It is paid separately from their pension payment. Guarantee Credit accounts for around 80% of Pension Credit claims.

Savings Credit is a discontinued benefit that rewards pensioners who have some savings or have an income on top of their state pension. It is only available to pensioners who retired before April 2016, who would now mostly be in their early 70s or older. It is possible to claim both Guarantee Credit and Savings Credit.

- **Overall, around 8.5% of the population aged 65 plus in the Scottish Borders claimed Pension Credit in May 2023, equivalent to 2,523 people.** This is lower than the Scottish average of 11.8%.
- The **proportion of pension credit claimants has not changed significantly**, if at all, since the previous year.
- **The Hawick and Hermitage Ward** has a level of pension credit claiming that is above the Scottish Borders and Scottish average.
- Three more Wards have rates of pension credit claims that are above the Scottish Borders average: these are East Berwickshire (main town Eyemouth), Galashiels and District and Hawick and Denholm. The latter two wards cover areas of known Multiple Deprivation. This means that **all of Hawick has a higher proportion of pensioners living with poverty.**

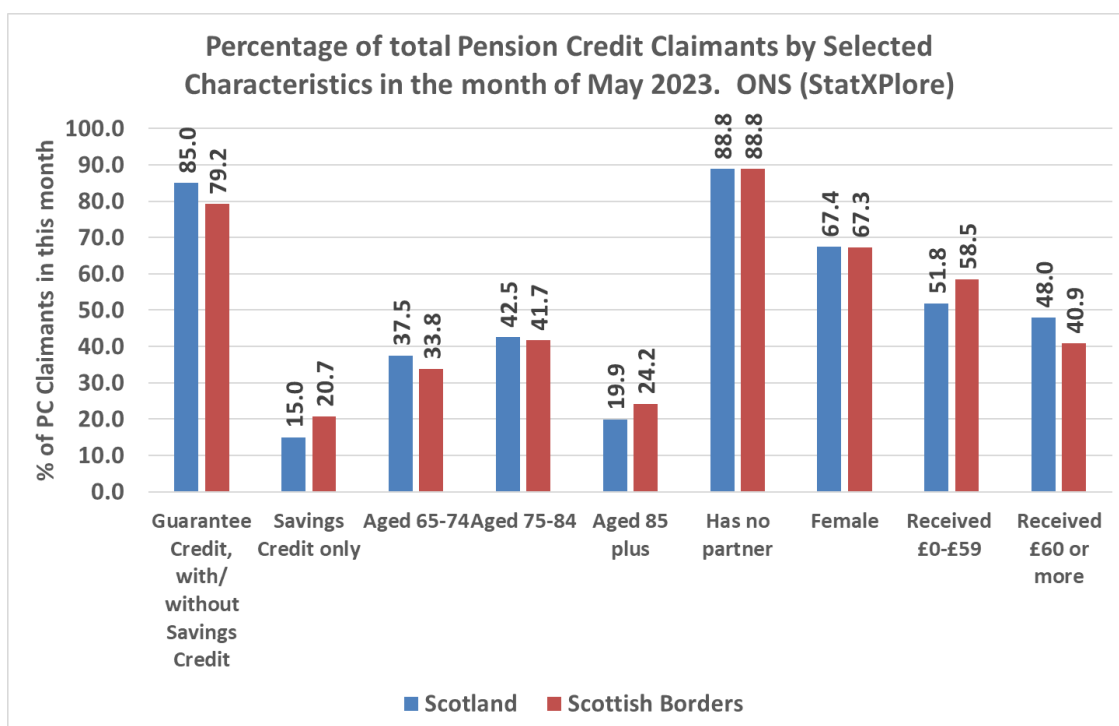


Characteristics of Pension Credit claimants

The typical Scottish Borders Pension Credit claimant in May 2023 was aged 65-74, female, single (or widowed), claimed Guarantee Credit on the lower end of the payment scale and could be living anywhere in the region.

Out of the 2,523 people in Scottish Borders who claimed Pension Credit in May 2023:

- **79% claimed Guarantee Credit**, indicating that they are **living with a low income**, whether or not they also had savings. This is slightly lower than the Scottish average. The highest rates are in **Jedburgh and District** (81.5%, 145 claimants)
- 21% claimed **Savings Credit only**, indicating that they are **more affluent older pensioners** with savings of over £10,000 or an additional income. This is above the Scottish average of 15%. The highest rates are in **Tweeddale East** (26.7%, 46 claimants) and the lowest are in Selkirkshire (18%, 37 claimants)
- **33.8% were aged 65-74**, slightly below Scottish average. These would be **almost entirely Guarantee Credit for low income**, due to the age cut-off for Savings Credit
- Scottish Borders has a **higher proportion than the Scottish average of very elderly claimants, aged 85 plus**. By far the highest proportion of claimants in this age group are in **Kelso and District** (35.5%, or 75 claimants)
- Almost 9 in 10 claimants are **single pensioners**, a household type which is considered vulnerable. Proportions of single claimants are particularly high in **Galashiels and District** (92.1% of claimants, or 304 persons)
- Around **two thirds of claimants are female**, similar to the Scottish average.
- 58.5% of claimants in Scottish Borders receive top-ups on the lower end of the scale, indicating that **pensioner poverty in the Scottish Borders is on a slightly lower scale than the Scottish average**. Of those in the region who receive the higher end of the payment scale, the highest rates are in Leaderdale and Melrose, where 63.2% of claimants are topped up by more than £60 per week. However, given that this is a more affluent area with an older age profile, it may be supposed that some of these may be Savings Credit claimants, who are not considered financially vulnerable.



Types of Poverty (All Ages)

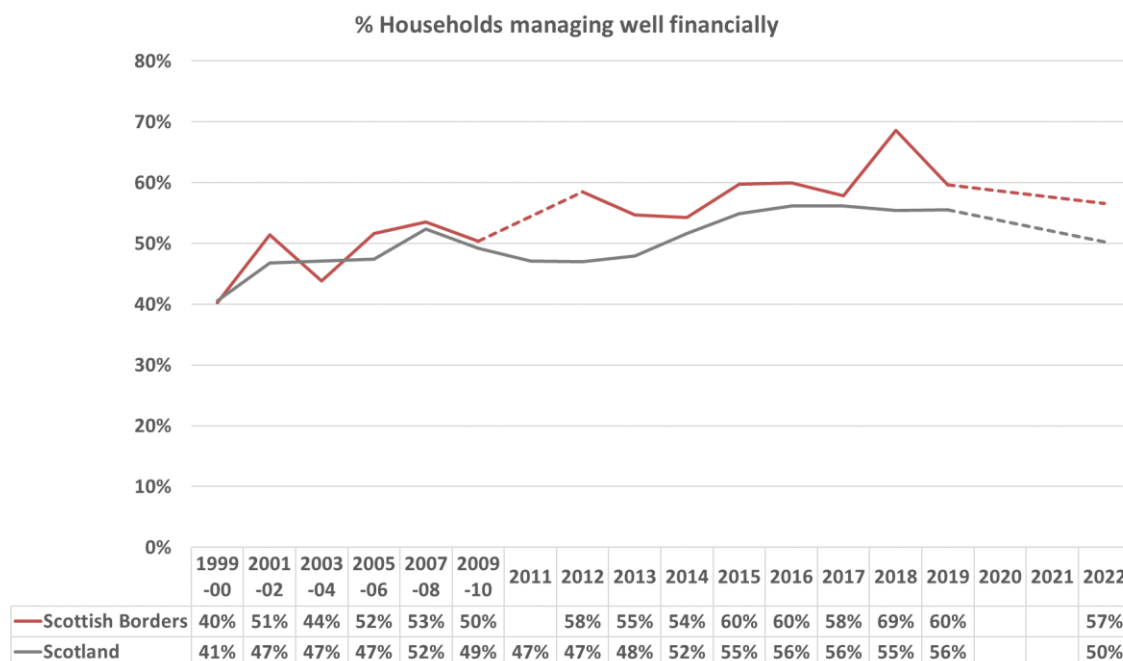
Income Deprivation

It seems obvious that poverty is driven by low income, but poverty manifests itself in different ways. A person can survive brief periods of low income as long as they have the social capital, financial resilience, mental toughness and practical resourcefulness to cope with it. The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation defines “income deprivation” as social exclusion driven by low income, which excludes a person from taking part in things that others take for granted, such as being free to take a job, or fulfil their potential, or enjoy good health and wellbeing, or give their children the best start in life, or feel safe and secure, due to being trapped in their circumstances by lack of money. Income deprivation is more than just about being in poverty, but measuring poverty is a good starting point to begin evidencing the issue.

The following section is the best evidence we have to measure income deprivation (and poverty in general) and the impact it has, not just on the individual but on the whole household and on people of all ages in the family.

Householders who are managing well financially

The chart below shows the proportions of adults reporting in the Scottish Household Survey that they were managing either well or very well financially. This measure can be used as a proxy of financial resilience of households. Dotted lines indicate years for which data are not available. The estimates were projected for [Scottish Government’s December 2023 Local Child Poverty Dashboard](#).



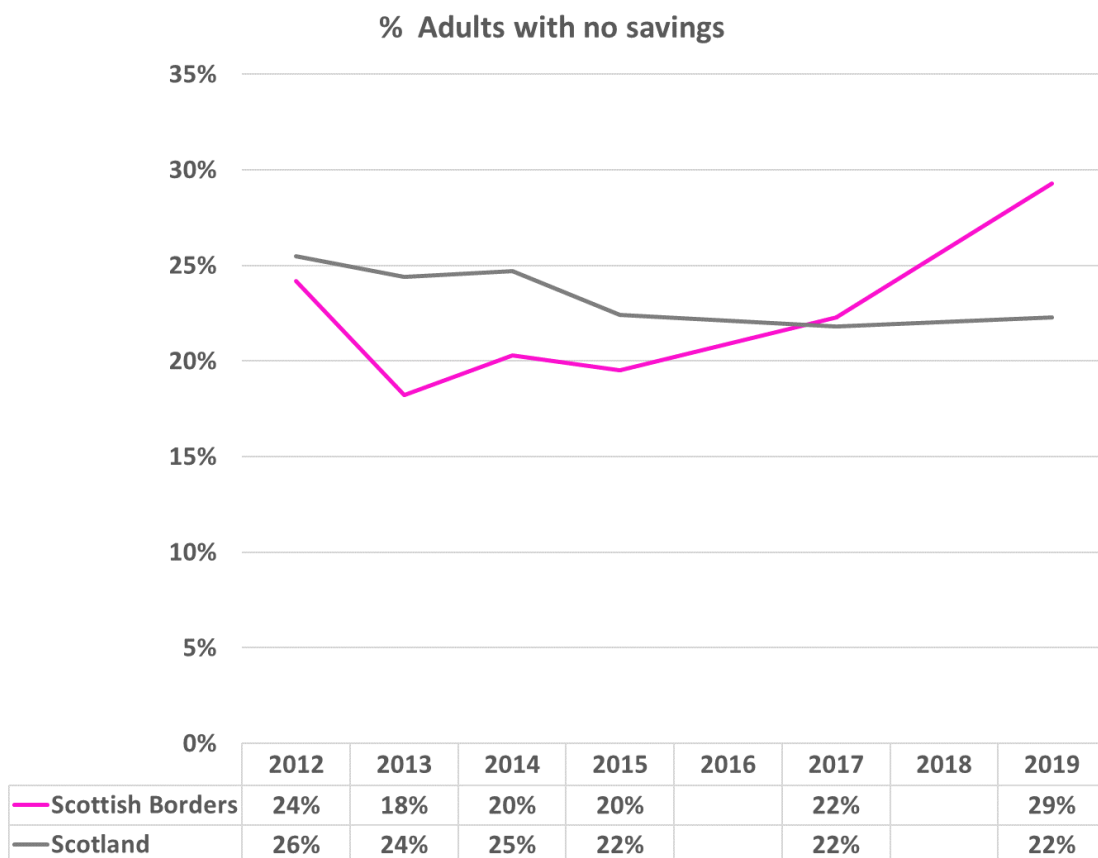
The chart above shows that adult SHS respondents in the Scottish Borders have generally tended to say that they are managing better than the Scottish average. The Scottish Borders has an older age profile than average for Scotland, which tends to indicate better financial resilience. Older people are more likely to have their own property owned outright and savings than younger respondents. However, the SHS uses a small sample size which paints only a broad-brush picture of poverty and is not granular enough to identify smaller areas where families are struggling.

Adults who have no savings

The chart below shows the proportion of adult respondents in the Scottish Household Survey (SHS) who reported they had no savings or investments. Savings act as a buffer against difficult times and are an indicator of financial resilience.

This question is asked every 2 years in the SHS. No data has been available since 2019 due to low response rates during the Covid pandemic.

This information was collected from the SHS for [Scottish Government's December 2023 Local Child Poverty Dashboard](#).



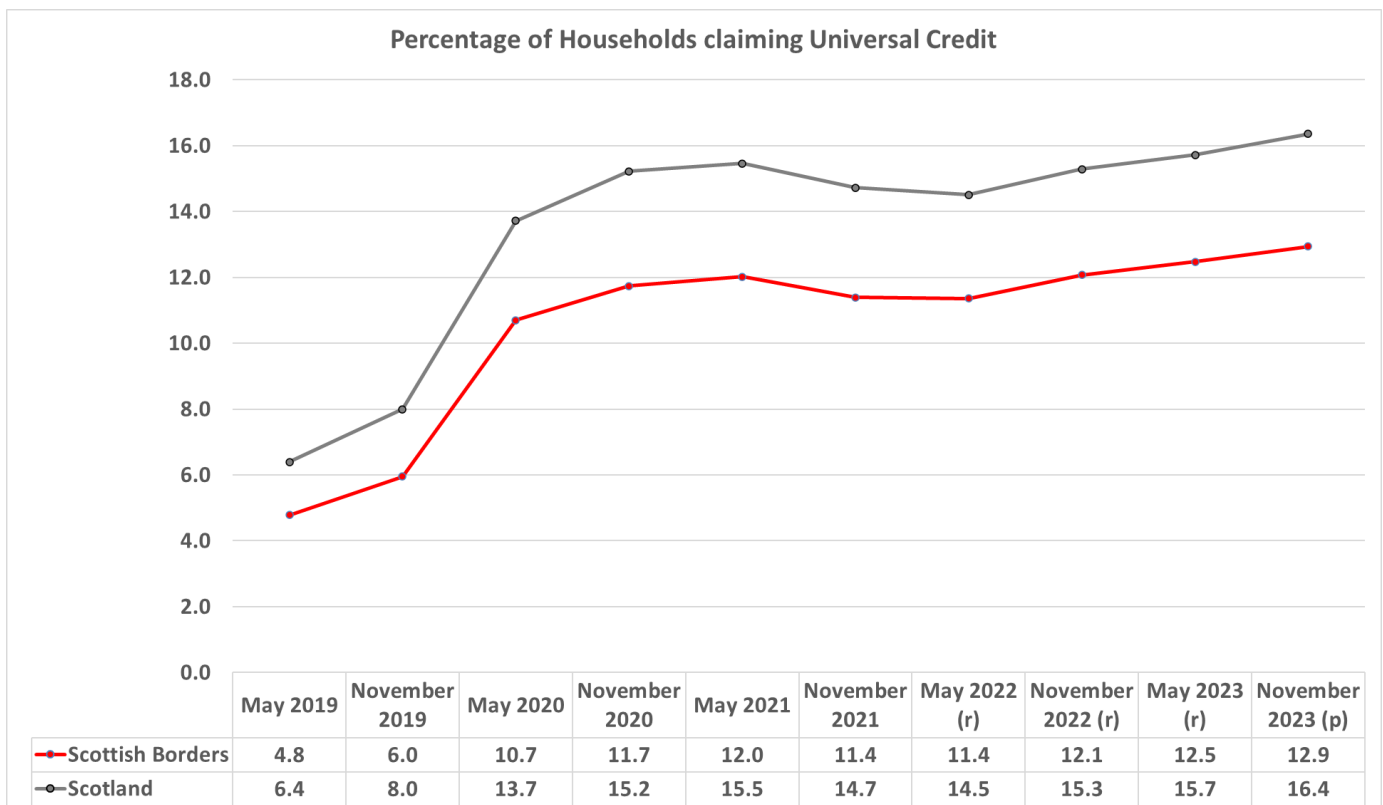
The limited data from this measure indicates that a well above average 29% of Scottish Borders respondents said that they had no savings or investments in 2019, which is the equal second-highest rate out of all the Scottish Council areas (after Glasgow City, with 34%). This was before the pandemic, which put Borderers in a much more vulnerable position to face what they would shortly have to endure in 2020 and 2021. We are not expecting an update to this indicator until 2026.

Households Claiming Universal Credit

Universal Credit is a single Welfare Benefit that replaces the six main previous Welfare Benefits. Working-aged individuals can apply for Universal Credit if they do not have enough money to live on, due to being out of work, unable to work for a valid reason, or in work but not earning enough to support themselves.

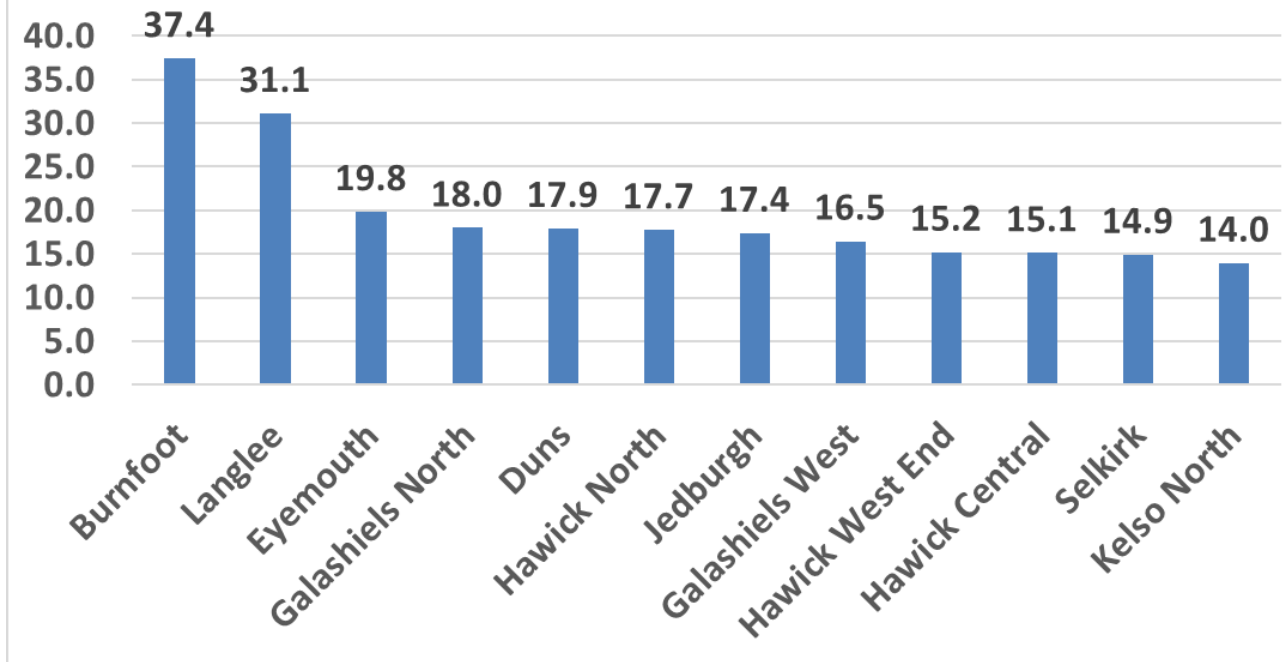
The data in this section were sourced from DWP (Stat-Xplore) and NRS Household Estimates. This measure, “Households on Universal Credit,” measures claimants in terms of their household, regardless of whether any other adults in the household are also claiming. This helps give a different view of the data in terms of their household composition and the kind of help to which they are entitled. It is particularly useful for identifying households in poverty with children, as a much-needed measure of child poverty.

The graph below shows the overall rate of households in the Scottish Borders and Scotland which claimed Universal Credit between May 2019 and the most recent data release in November 2023.



The graph above shows that claimant rates in the Scottish Borders and Scotland increased suddenly during the Covid-19 pandemic, then levelled out a little, and are currently increasing again. The rate in the Scottish Borders has always been lower than the Scottish average. The most recent data release shows that 12.9% of households in the region currently have an active claim for Universal Credit.

Percentage of households claiming Universal Credit, November 2023

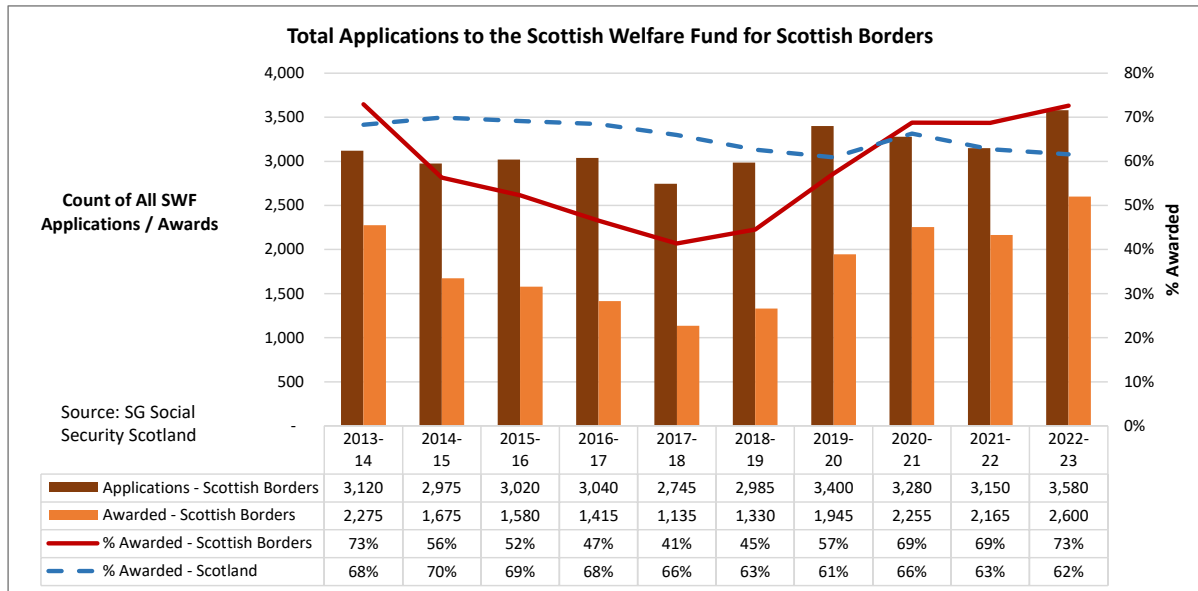


The above chart shows Intermediate Datazones within the Scottish Borders where Universal Credit claims are above the Scottish Borders average of 12.9%. Two thirds of the Intermediate Datazones are also above the Scottish average of 16.4%. The two Intermediate Datazones that stand out the most are already known as areas of Multiple Deprivation. In Burnfoot, almost two in every five households has a current claim for Universal Credit.

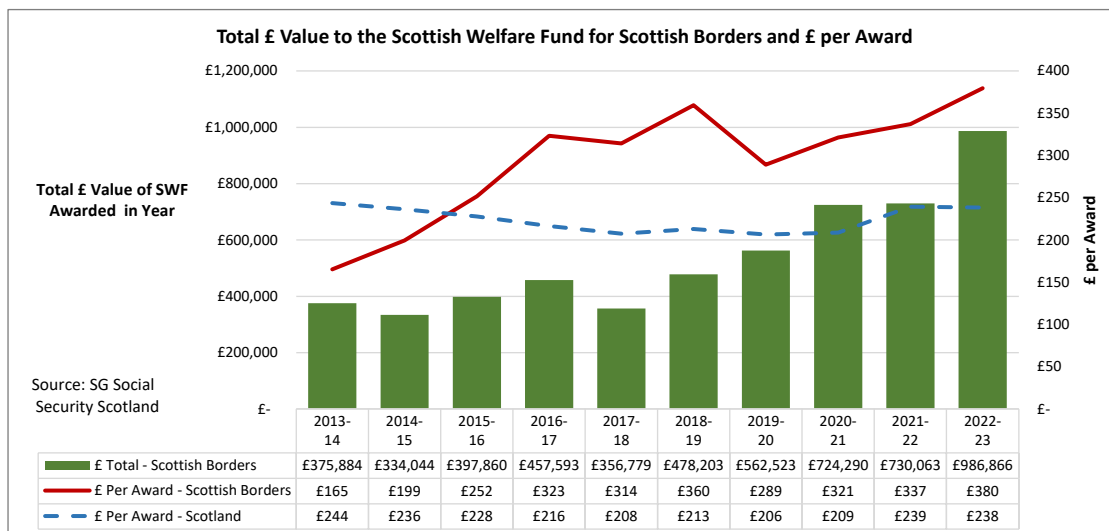
Scottish Welfare Fund

The Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) comprises of Community Care Grants – which help people to live independently – and Crisis Grants, which provide a safety net in a disaster or emergency. SWF awards are made by the Local Authority to adults of any age who receive certain benefits.

There were 15% (460) more SWF applications in the Scottish Borders in 2022-23 compared to 2013-14. It is interesting to note that 73% of applications in both years were awarded. For Scotland there were 121% increase in applications but a decrease of 10% in application being awarded.



The total £ value awarded in the Scottish Borders from the SWF increased by 163% from £375.9k to £986.9k between 2013-14 and 2022-23, compared to a 95% increase for Scotland. The £ value per award in the Scottish Borders increased by 130%, from £165 in 2013-14 to £380 in 2022-23.

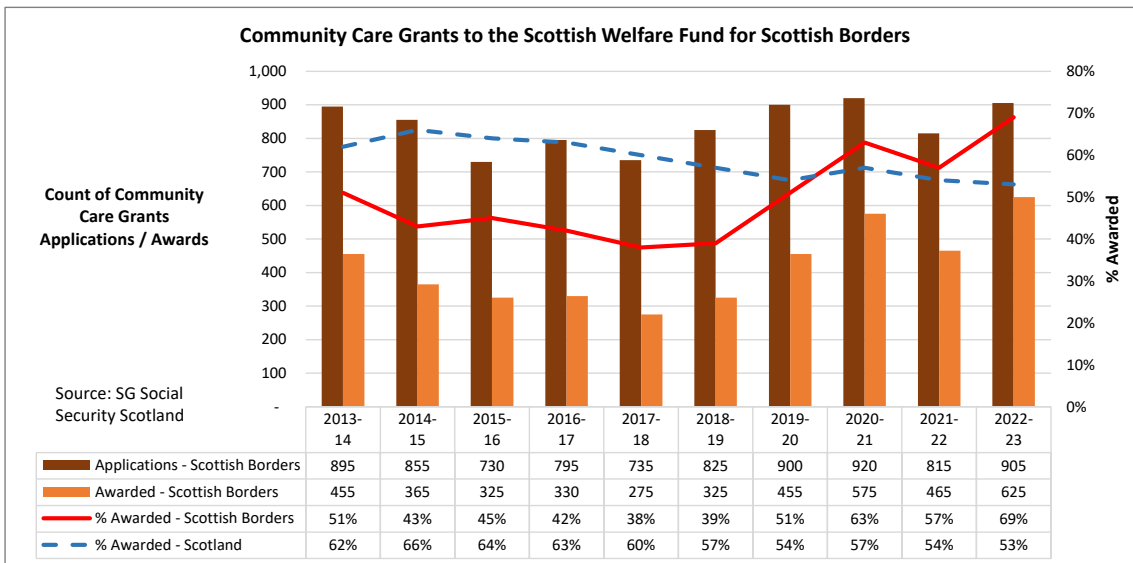


The number of applications to the SWF in the Scottish Borders increased (15%) between 2013-14 and 2022-23, but the £ value amount has increased by significantly more (163%).

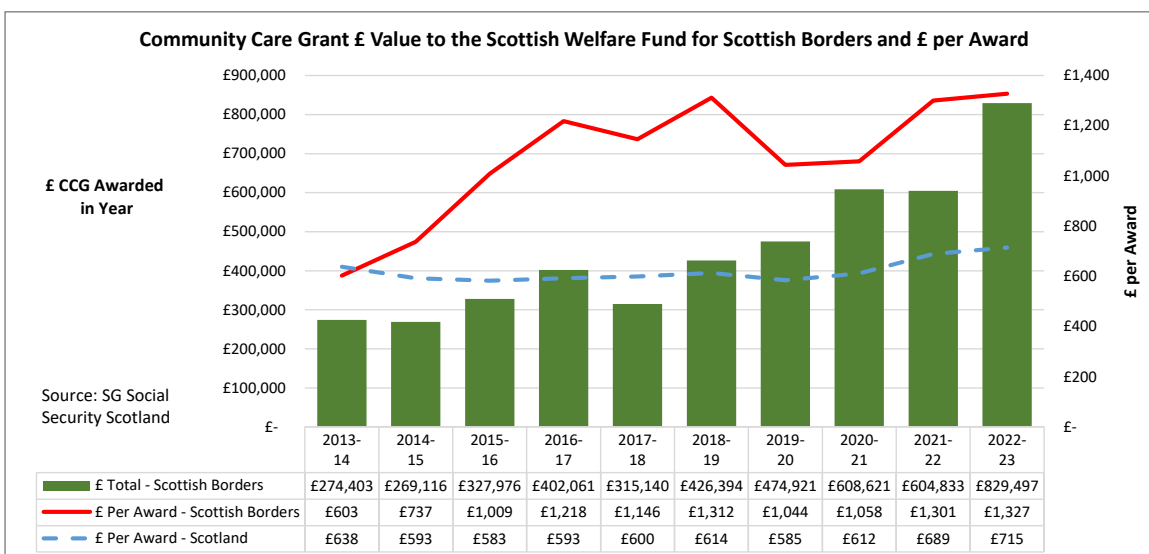
Community Care Grants

Community Care Grants help people live independently, or continue to live independently, preventing the need for institutional care. The items awarded through community care grants include appliances, flooring, furniture, soft furnishings, and kitchen supplies.

Between 2013 -14 and 2022-23 the number of Community Care Grant (CCG) applications increased by 1% (10), in contrast, the number of CCG awarded increased by 37% (170). Since 2020-21 more CCG has been awarded in the Scottish Borders compared to Scotland.



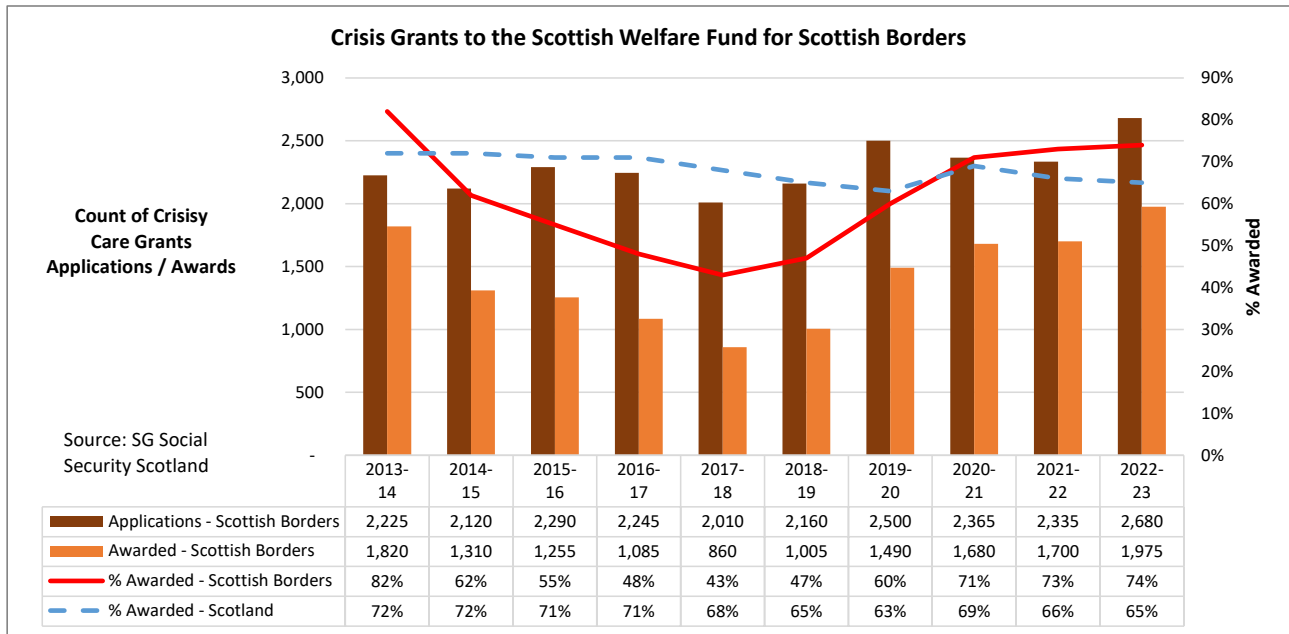
The CCG £ value awarded in 2022-23, for the Scottish Borders, was 202% (£555, 094) more than in 2012-13. The £ value per CCG award in the Scottish Borders has consistently been higher than the £ value per CCG award for Scotland.



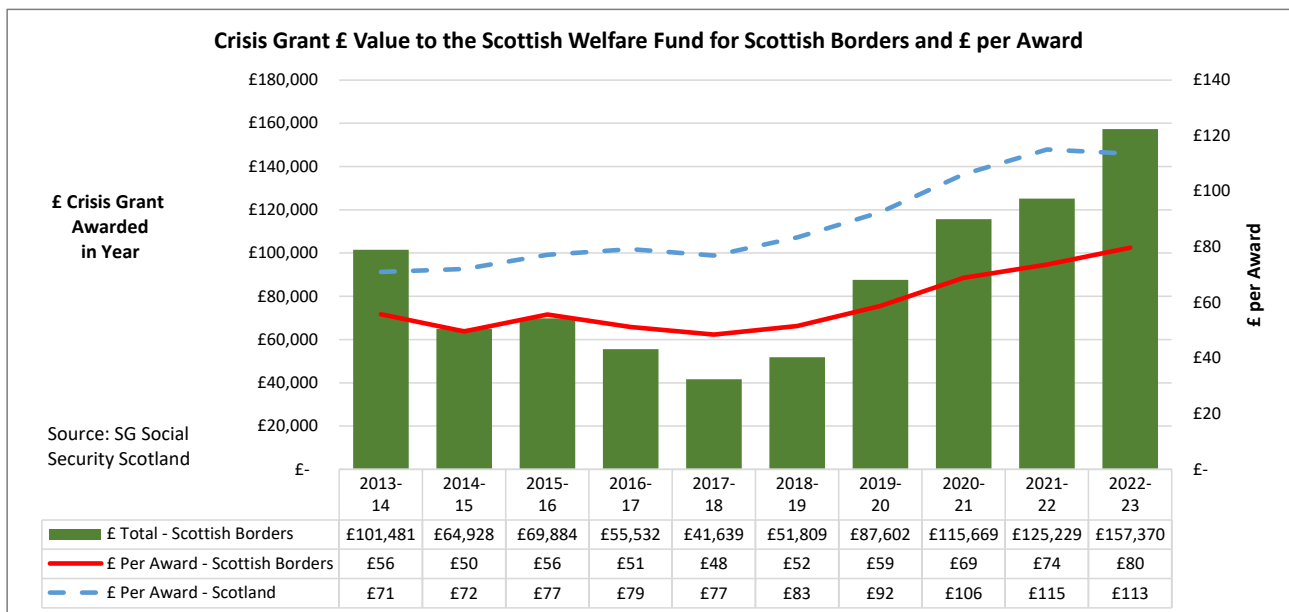
In the Scottish Borders although the number of applications for CCG remained steady the proportion awarded increased as did the £ value.

Crisis Grant

Crisis Grants are provided as a safety net in a disaster or emergency. Items awarded through crisis grants include food, essential heating cost, personal household items (e.g., nappies), and other living expenses.



The £ value amount provided through Crisis Grant in the Scottish Borders increased by 55% between 2013-14 and 2022-23. Although there was a decrease in the £ value between 2013-14 and 2017-19, the £ value for Crisis Grant in the Scottish Borders has increase since 2018-19. Compared to Scotland the £ per award in the Scottish Borders has consistently been lower.



Since 2018-19 the number of Crisis Grants awarded and the £ value has increased, perhaps reflecting the impact of Covid-19 lockdowns and the cost of living situation.

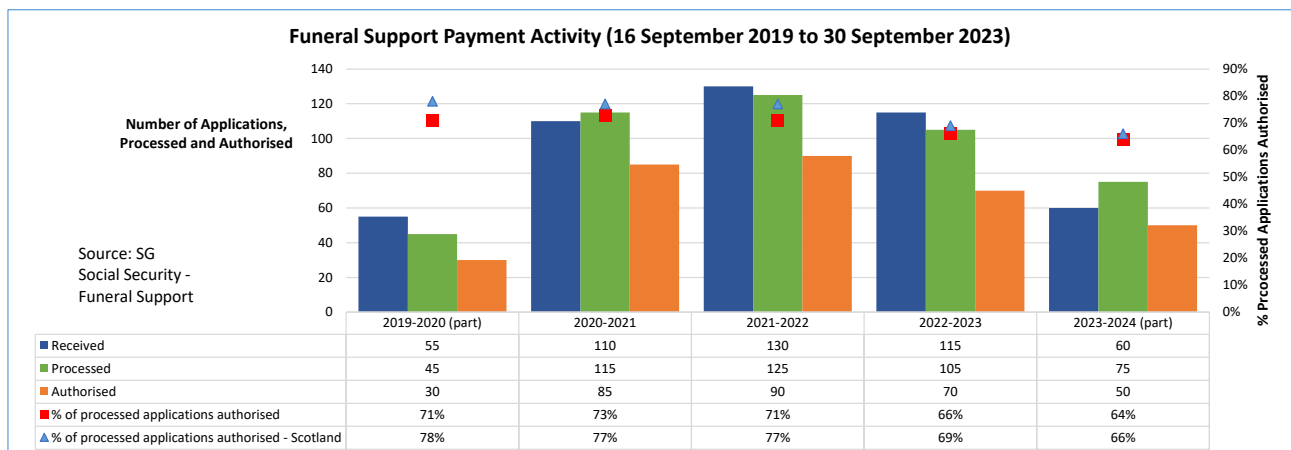
Funeral Support Payments

In September 2019 Social Security Scotland began the Funeral Support Payment System. It's a payment available to people in Scotland, who are getting Universal Credit, tax credits or other qualifying benefits, and need support to help pay towards the costs of a funeral.

The information in this section is based on Funeral Support Payment from 16 September 2019 to 30 September 2023 as published at [Funeral Support Payment: high level statistics to 30 September 2023 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/funeral-support-payment-high-level-statistics-to-30-september-2023/pages/10-introduction-to-the-statistics.aspx).

Between 16 September 2019 and 30 September 2023, for the Scottish Borders, there have been 470 applications for Funeral Support Payment (FSP) with 285 payments worth £523,047, about 1% of all FSP activity for Scotland.

The graph and table below show the number of Funeral Support Payments received, processed and authorised applications for the Scottish Borders between 16 September 2019 to 30 September 2023. It also shows the percent of processed applications that were authorised for the Scottish Borders and for Scotland. There has been a slightly higher rate of authorisation for Scotland compared to those for the Scottish Borders.



Housing Poverty

Households claiming Housing entitlement (Universal Credit)

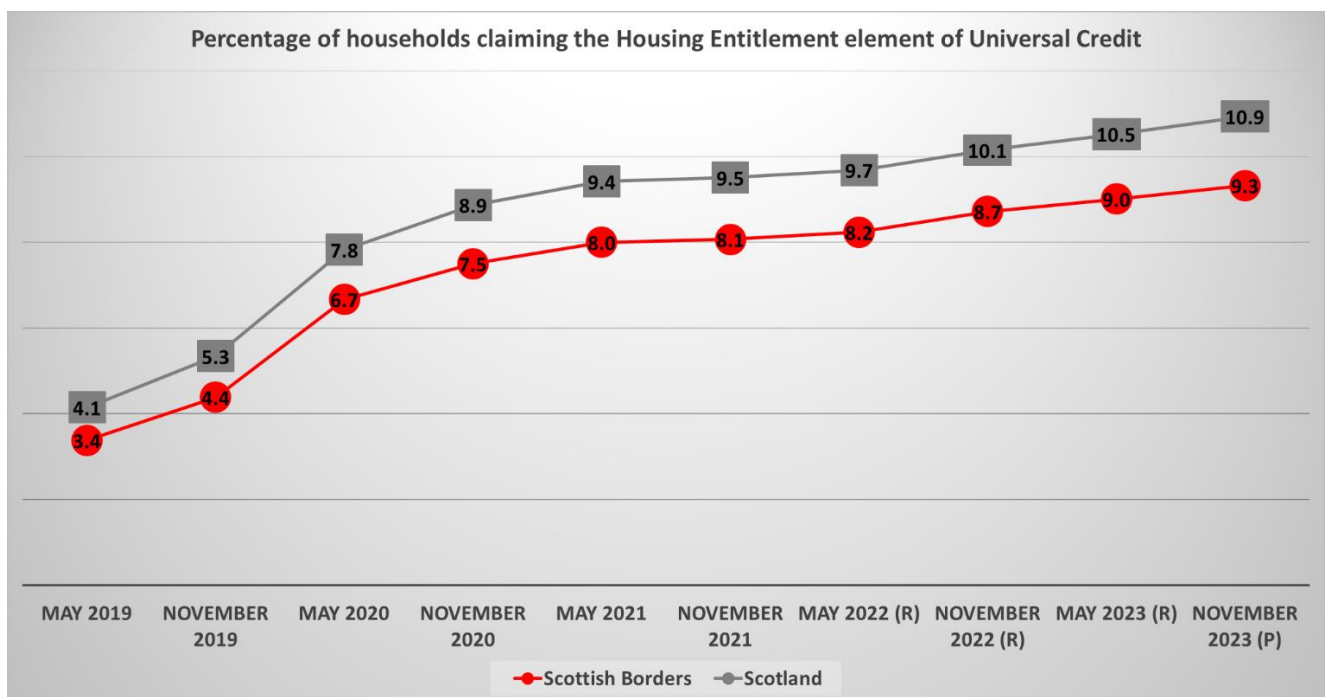
Universal Credit is a welfare benefit paid to working-age people on a low income who need help with living costs. Eligible claimants can get extra money to help towards housing costs. This is the Housing Entitlement, which replaces Housing Benefit.

The Housing Entitlement can be paid whether the property is rented or owned, or if the claimant is living in supported or sheltered accommodation. Claimants who cannot receive housing entitlement include those who are:

- already receiving “care, support or supervision”
- in temporary accommodation because they are homeless
- living in a refuge for survivors of domestic abuse

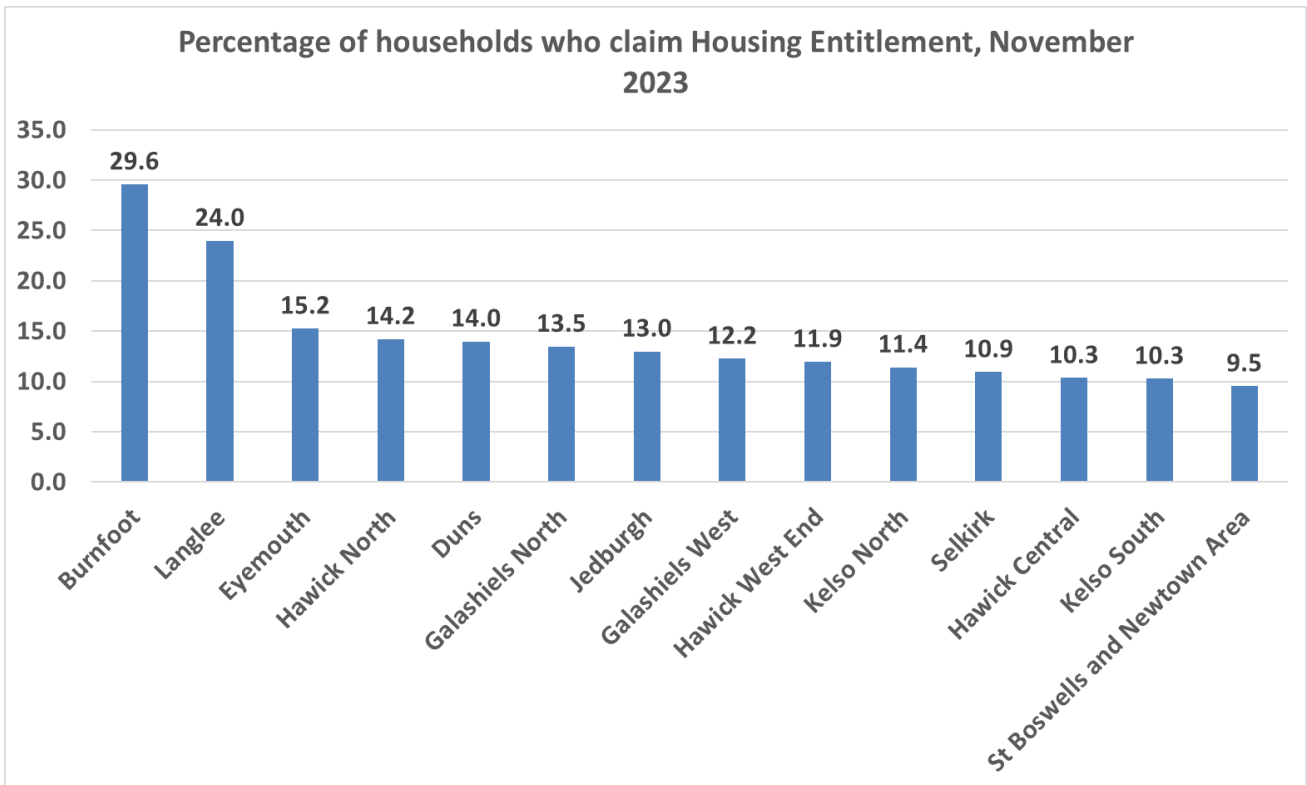
Claimants are likely to receive a reduced payment if their Housing Entitlement claim takes them over the “benefit cap,” which is currently (from April 2023) £14,753 per annum for single people and £22,020 per annum for couples or families. The Benefit Cap is more likely to affect households with more children or higher housing costs.

Successful Universal Credit claimants can also claim other help with housing costs, such as Council Tax Reduction.



Source: DWP (Stat-Xplore)/ NRS Household Estimates.

Universal Credit Claimants of Housing Entitlement increased substantially during the pandemic and are still rising, in the Scottish Borders and Scotland. The Scottish Borders has always had a lower rate of Housing Entitlement claiming than the Scottish average, but it is rising in line with the Scottish average and is currently at its highest level yet recorded. The most recent figures show that 9.3% of households in the Scottish Borders currently claim the Housing Entitlement of Housing Benefit, which is 5,554 households.



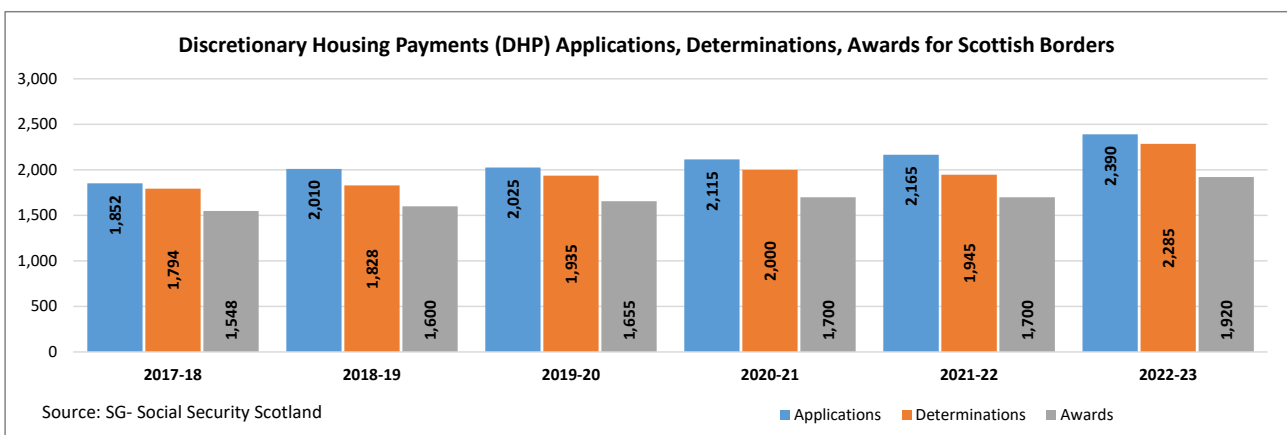
The above chart shows Intermediate Datazones within the Scottish Borders where the rate of UC Housing Entitlement claiming is above the Scottish Borders average. Most of the Intermediate Zones shown above also have a rate that is above the Scottish average of 10.9%.

The two Scottish Borders residential areas in Hawick and Galashiels with known Multiple Deprivation issues stand out as having noticeably higher rates than the others. It is also clear that housing poverty affects many parts of Hawick and Galashiels, not just the “most-deprived” areas, and that many of the main towns are (at least in part) affected by a higher percentage of households who are struggling with their housing costs. Housing poverty is endemic in many parts of the region, at the highest rate yet recorded.

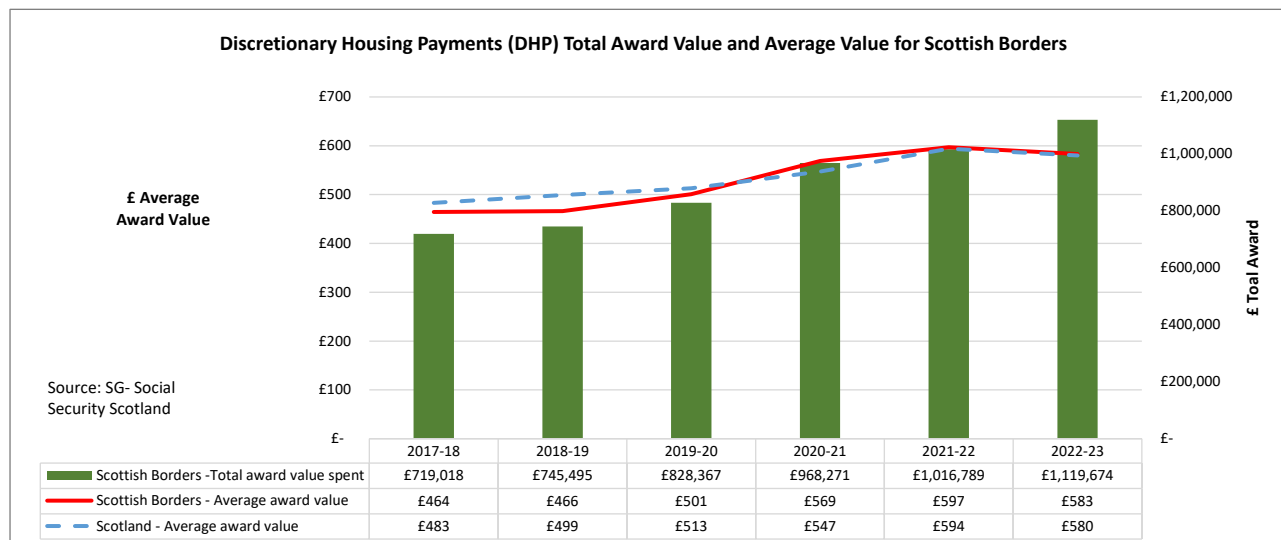
Discretionary Housing Payments

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) are administered in Scotland by the 32 Scottish local authorities. DHPs may be awarded when a local authority (LA) considers that a housing benefit or Universal Credit (including the housing element) claimant requires further financial assistance towards housing costs.

Between 2017-18 and 2022-23 there has been an increase in the number of DHPs applications (29%), determinations (27%) and awards (24%) in the Scottish Borders.



The total £ value of DHPs in the Scottish Borders increased by £400,656 (56%) from £719,018 in 2017-18 to £1,119,674 in 2022-23. The average £ amount per award in the Scottish Borders has consistently been similar to the £ amount per award for Scotland.



In the Scottish Borders, the number of Discretionary Housing Payments awarded in the Scottish Borders increase by 24% compared to a 56% increase in the £ award value between 2017-18 and 2022-23.

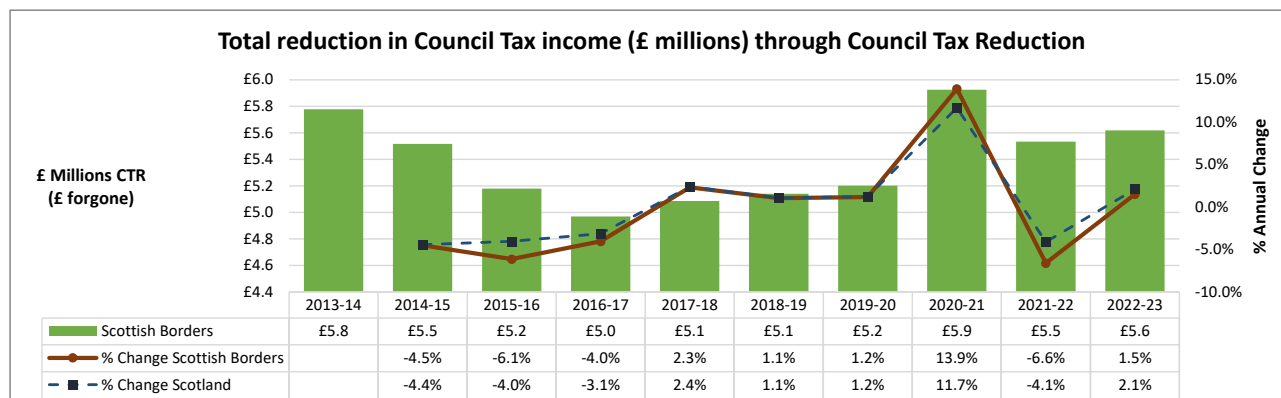
According to [Scottish Government research](#), the rise in DHP awards can be partly attributed to the Removal of the Spare Room Subsidy (RSRS, a.k.a. “bedroom tax”), where Local Authorities have continued to make up the shortfall in tenants’ weekly rent through the use of DHPs. Scottish Government, as of November 2019, was committed to reimbursing Local Authorities for the impact of RSRS.

Council Tax Reduction

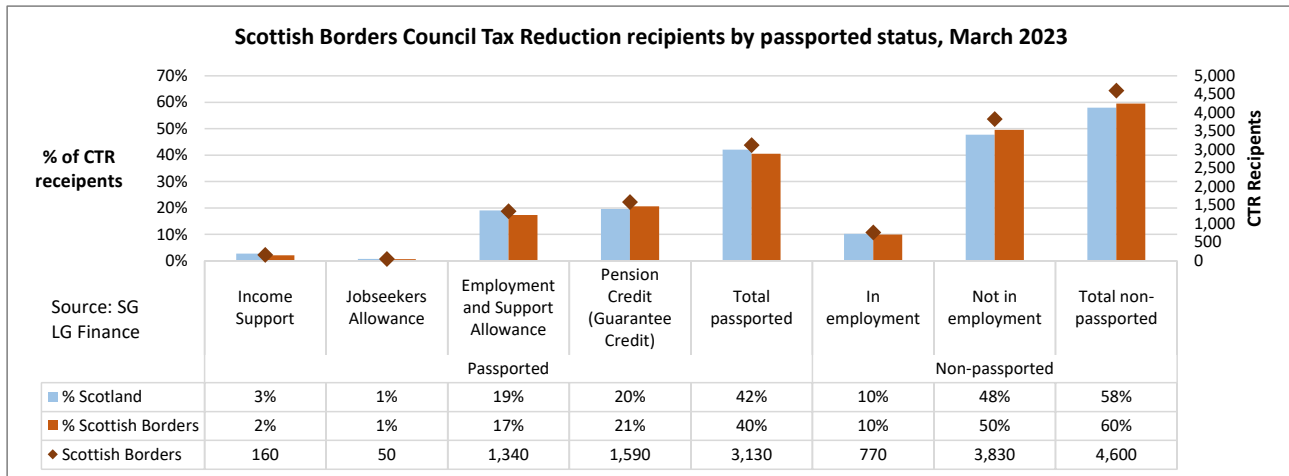
The Council Tax Reduction (CTR) scheme reduces or eliminates council tax liability for low-income families if they meet certain conditions. It is administered by the Local Authority. The information in this section is sourced from [Local government finance statistics - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot).

In March 2023 there were 7,730 (13.4%) recipients of Council Tax Reduction in the Scottish Borders, a lower proportion to the 17.7% for Scotland.

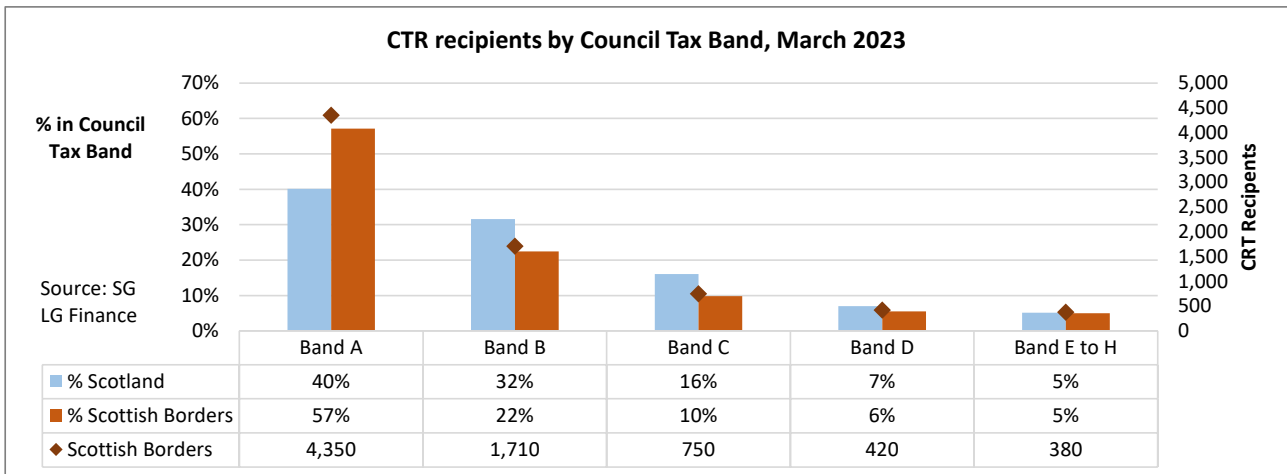
The graph and table below show total reduction of Council Tax income for the Scottish Borders between 2013-14 and 2022-23. The pattern of change in CTR in the Scottish Borders has been similar to the change for Scotland. It is interesting to note that the total CTR reduction for the Scottish Borders in 2022-23 (£5.6m) is less than the £5.8m in 2013-14. The year with the most CTR reduction was 2020-21, in line with Covid19 lockdown and pandemic.



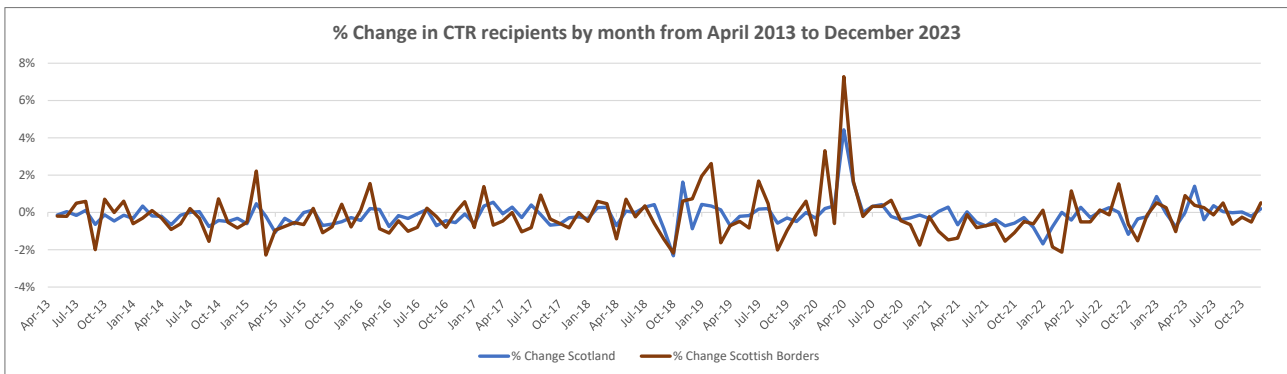
The Scottish Borders CTR recipients in March 2023 were similar to those for Scotland, with only slightly proportionally more non-passported compared to Scotland. Recipients who are passported are those receiving a benefit for those on lower income and has the practical effect of automatically qualifying the recipient for full CTR.



In March 2023, a higher proportion of the CTR recipients in the Scottish Borders lived in Band A (57%) properties compared to Scotland (40%).



When looking at the % change in Council Tax Reduction recipients by month the pattern for the Scottish Borders has been similar to Scotland.



Fuel Poverty

According to research carried out for [the 2021 Scottish House Conditions Survey](#), a household is in fuel poverty if, in order to maintain a satisfactory heating regime, total fuel costs necessary for the home are more than 10% of the household's adjusted net income (after housing costs) and the household's remaining adjusted net income is insufficient to maintain an acceptable standard of living – the so-called "heating or eating" debate.

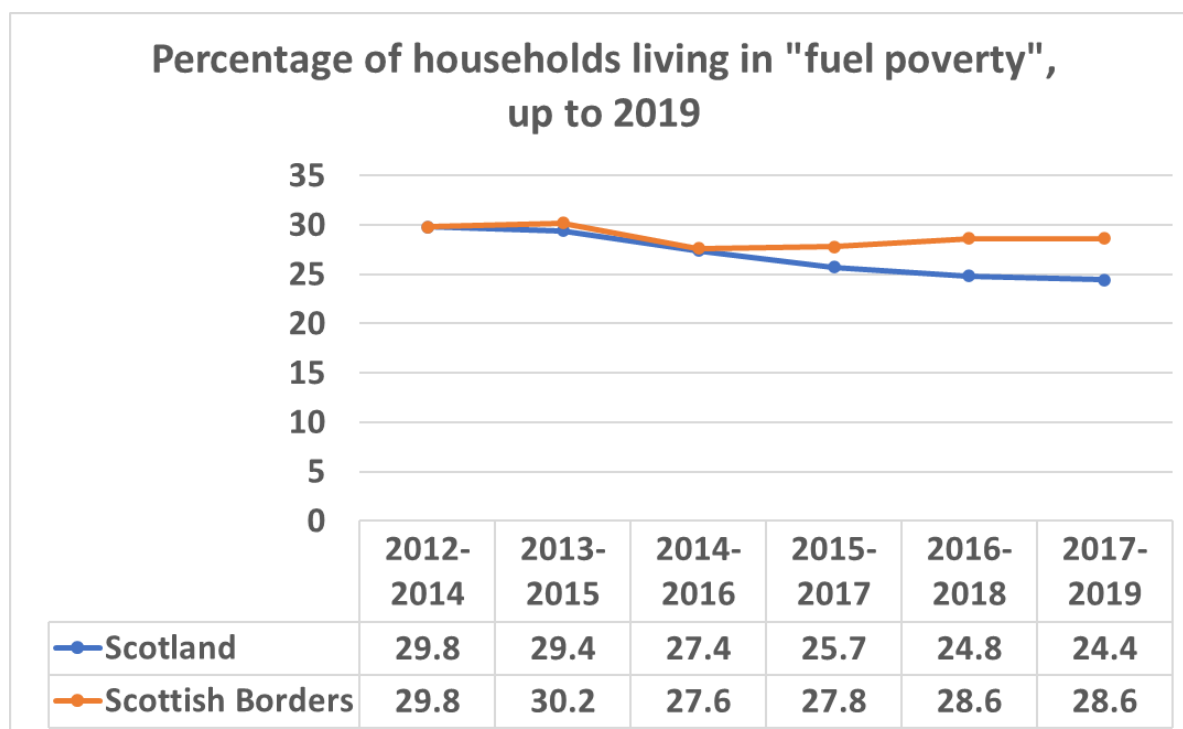
Where a household is in fuel poverty, the "fuel poverty gap" is the annual amount that would be required to move the household out of fuel poverty.

Definitions of all these terms, and exclusions to what is counted as income, are set out in the Fuel Poverty (Scotland) Act 2019.

The Fuel Poverty (Scotland) Act 2019 also set targets to eradicate fuel poverty. The 2040 targets are that:

- no more than 5% of households in Scotland would be in fuel poverty
- no more than 1% of households in Scotland would be in extreme fuel poverty
- the median fuel poverty gap of households in Scotland in fuel poverty would be no more than £250 at 2015 prices (adjusted to take account of changes in the value of money).

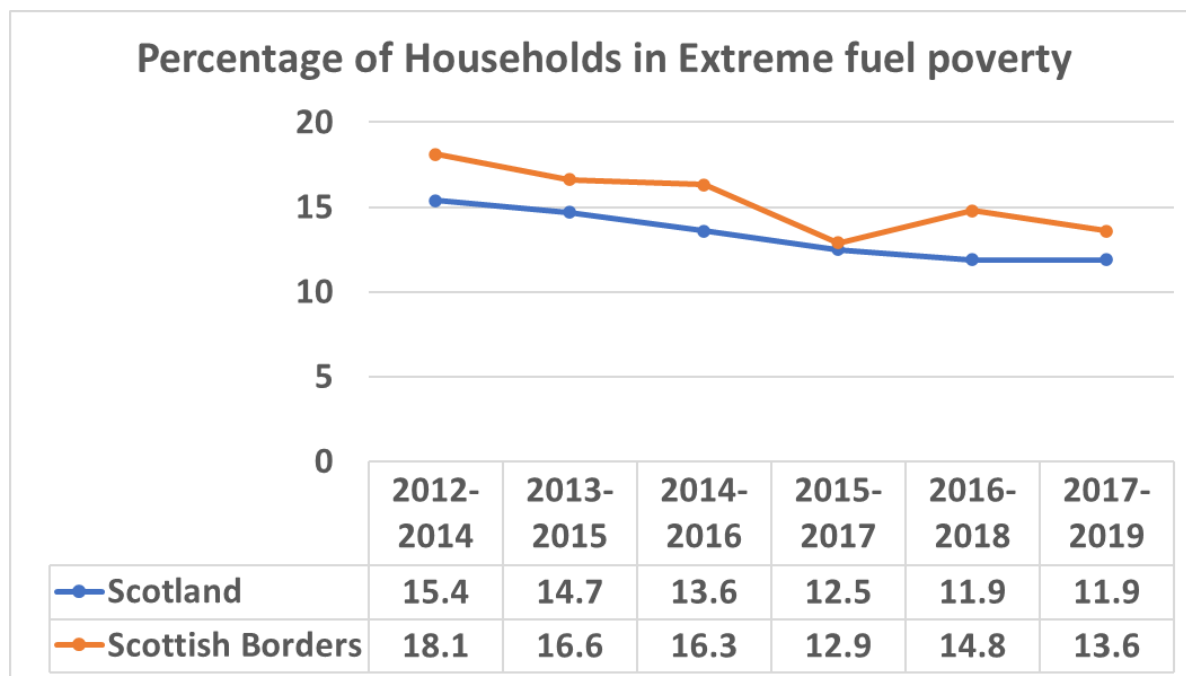
Tools for measuring this well-legislated aspect of poverty are currently very poor. Estimates of fuel poverty rates are available up to 2019 for Local Authority areas. The Covid-19 pandemic forced temporary changes in the way that the SHCS was gathered, meaning that 2020 and 2021 data are missing for Council Areas and that the Council Area measure for fuel poverty will not return to normal until after the 2022-24 three-year averages are produced, which will be in 2026.



The chart above shows that fuel poverty in Scotland was gradually decreasing up to 2019, but it remains higher in the Scottish Borders. There has not been any change since the previous set of figures.

Extreme fuel poverty

Extreme fuel poverty follows the same definition as fuel poverty except that a household would have to spend more than 20% of its adjusted net income (after housing costs) on total fuel costs to maintain a satisfactory heating regime, rather than 10%. For the purpose of the statistics, extreme fuel poverty is a subset of fuel poverty and is not mutually exclusive.



The previous chart showed that 28.6% of Scottish Borders households are estimated to be in fuel poverty. Just under half of these are estimated to be in extreme fuel poverty, according to the most recently available figures. Extreme fuel poverty is estimated to affect 13.6% of households in the Scottish Borders, although this does seem to be coming down since the previous set of figures.

The 2021 and 2022 Scottish updates on fuel poverty

The 2021 SHCS update found that 19.6% of households in Scotland were estimated to be in fuel poverty, but that was very likely to be an underestimate. The initial observations from the 2022 data show that the fuel poverty rate has risen to 31% in Scotland, which is a more credible increase on the 24.6% 2019 revised figure for Scotland. We would expect the rate in the Scottish Borders to be about 4 percentage points above the Scottish average, meaning that it could now be as high as 35% in the Scottish Borders.

The median fuel poverty gap for fuel poor households was estimated to be £690 in 2021 but is likely to be higher now. This is the additional annual amount that the average fuel-poor householder would need to bring them out of fuel poverty.

Respondents were more likely to be fuel poor if they:

- Lived in the social rented sector
- Used electricity as their primary heating fuel
- Had a prepayment meter
- Lived in a property with a low energy efficiency rating
- Had a low income

Some of these correlations might seem obvious, but it is stressed in the SHCS that low income is not the only cause of fuel poverty.

The 2022 initial observations showed that the long-term trend in energy efficiency of housing stock continues to show improvement, as do the levels of critical disrepair observed for the survey.

Homelessness

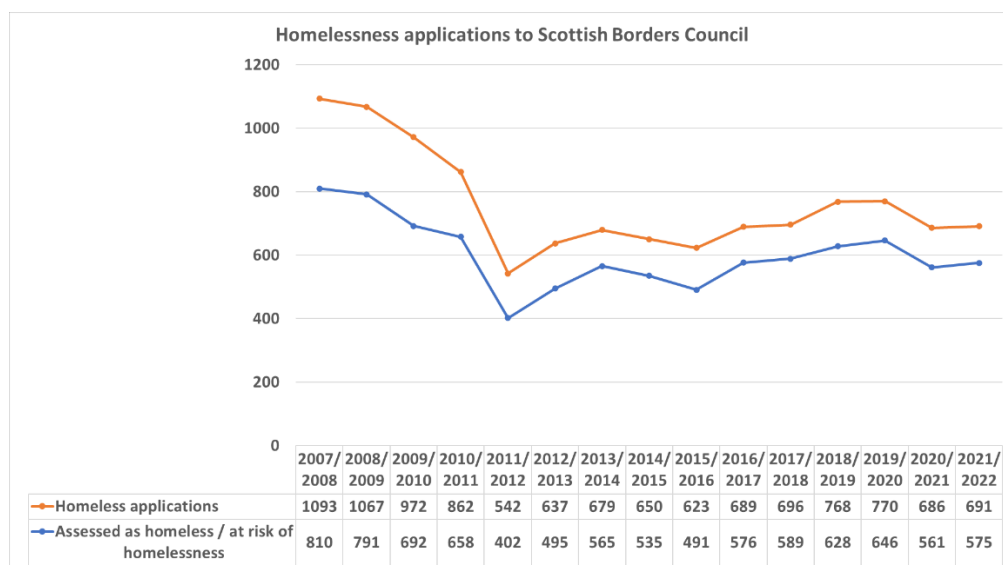
Any person who finds themselves homeless or threatened with homelessness will normally apply to the Local Authority in the first instance. The Local Authority has a duty under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 to:

- Prevent homelessness
- Provide free advice to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness
- Support people to find housing solutions
- Provide housing support
- Provide temporary or permanent accommodation

To be eligible for homelessness services, the person must:

- Not have any other house anywhere in the UK or beyond in which they are entitled or permitted to live UNLESS they can no longer live there for a good reason – e.g. due to threats of violence or because the house is not fit to live in
- Not be intentionally or culpably homeless e.g. due to their financially irresponsible, reckless or antisocial behaviour in their previous home
- Have an appropriate connection to the Local Authority area, e.g. have lived or worked there previously, or have family or a person they normally care for in the area.

Scottish Local Authorities submit statistics on the number of homeless applications they receive each year to Scottish Government. These are used to monitor the effectiveness of Scottish homelessness legislation and are then rounded to the nearest 5 and released as official statistics.



[Scottish Government Homelessness research for the period up to 30 September 2023](#) reports that there has been a 3% increase in homelessness applications and an 8% increase in children in temporary accommodation in Scotland since the previous year.

The chart above shows that the number of applications and the number of successful applications to Scottish Borders Council has come down in recent years and, in particular, reduced during the pandemic, as people were forced to postpone their homelessness applications and Local Authorities pushed to accommodate rough sleepers during the emergency.

The Cost of Living (Tenant Protection) (Scotland) Act 2022 was introduced in October 2022 to protect tenants from increases in rent and from eviction, in response to the Cost of Living crisis.

Poverty due to ill health / limited capability for work/ caring responsibilities

The Scottish Index of Deprivation refers to “Health Deprivation” as describing the cycle of poverty and multiple deprivation that is triggered by the ill-health of an individual or someone they care for, which makes them unable to change their circumstances or improve their wellbeing themselves.

People who are unable to work due to ill-health or disability have several options, depending on how recently they became unwell, their household income and the level of their incapacity.

Universal Credit is a welfare benefit paid to working-age people on a low household income who need help with living costs. Eligible claimants can get extra money if they have limited capability for work due to a disability or a health condition. This is the **LCW/ LCWRA entitlement of Universal Credit**, which replaces Incapacity Benefit.

Employment Support Allowance (ESA) is a benefit paid to people who had been working but are currently unable to, due to a health condition or disability. Applicants are eligible for “New Style” ESA if they meet certain conditions, e.g. they must have paid enough NI contributions in the two years before they became unwell and they must be currently unable to work at all. The applicant does not need to be living in poverty in order to apply.

Adult Disability Payment (ADP) is a Scottish benefit to help working-age people who have a disability or long-term health condition that affects their everyday life or mobility. As of July 2023, it is replacing **Personal Independence Payment (PIP)** in Scotland, as social security benefit claimants in Scotland are being moved from DWP to Social Security Scotland. Scottish claimants of PIP or DLA are being automatically transferred to ADP.

Attendance Allowance is a non-contributory benefit paid to elderly disabled people as an alternative to PIP, to support them living at home when they might otherwise need to go into residential care.

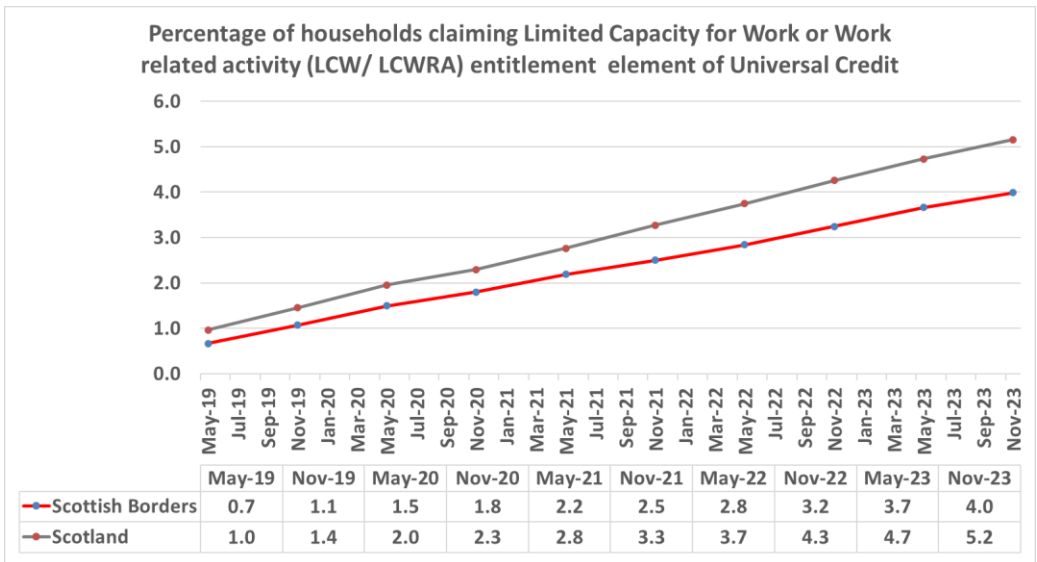
Applicants to Universal Credit and ESA must undergo a Work Capability Assessment (WCA). They must complete a questionnaire and provide regular medical evidence to support their claim. The WCA can have three outcomes:

- Be declared fit for work
- Be expected to work in future but have limited capability for work (LCW)
- Have limited capability for work or any work-related activity (LCWRA)

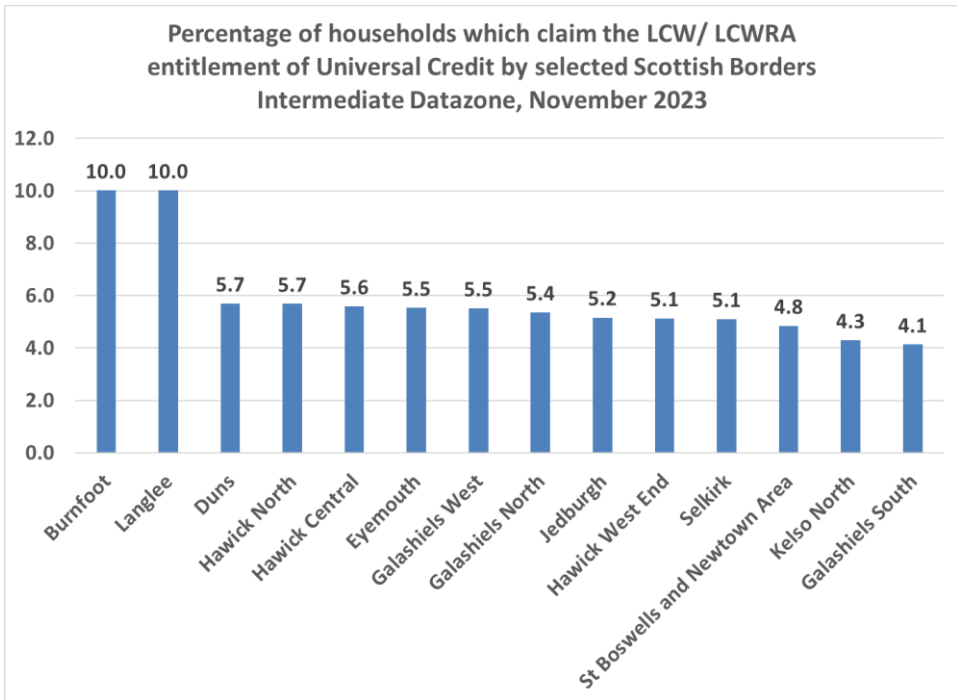
Applicants with a successful WCA outcome will be considered for ESA or UC or both.

It is possible to claim both Universal Credit and “New Style ESA,” but the amount of the UC payment is reduced accordingly.

Applicants with less than 12 months to live are not expected to complete a WCA and, in Scotland, are referred for Adult Disability Payment.



As shown in the graph above, the proportion of households claiming the LCW/LCWRA entitlement of Universal Credit has steadily risen over the past few years, at a slightly lower rate in the Scottish Borders than on average for Scotland.



The chart above shows the parts of the Scottish Borders where LCW/LCWRA claim rates are higher than the Scottish Borders average of 4%. Just over half of the areas are also above the Scottish Borders average of 5.2%. Health-related poverty is highest in the two parts of Hawick and Galashiels with known Multiple Deprivation issues. However, most parts of Hawick and Galashiels are affected by health-related poverty, as are several other of the main towns in the region.

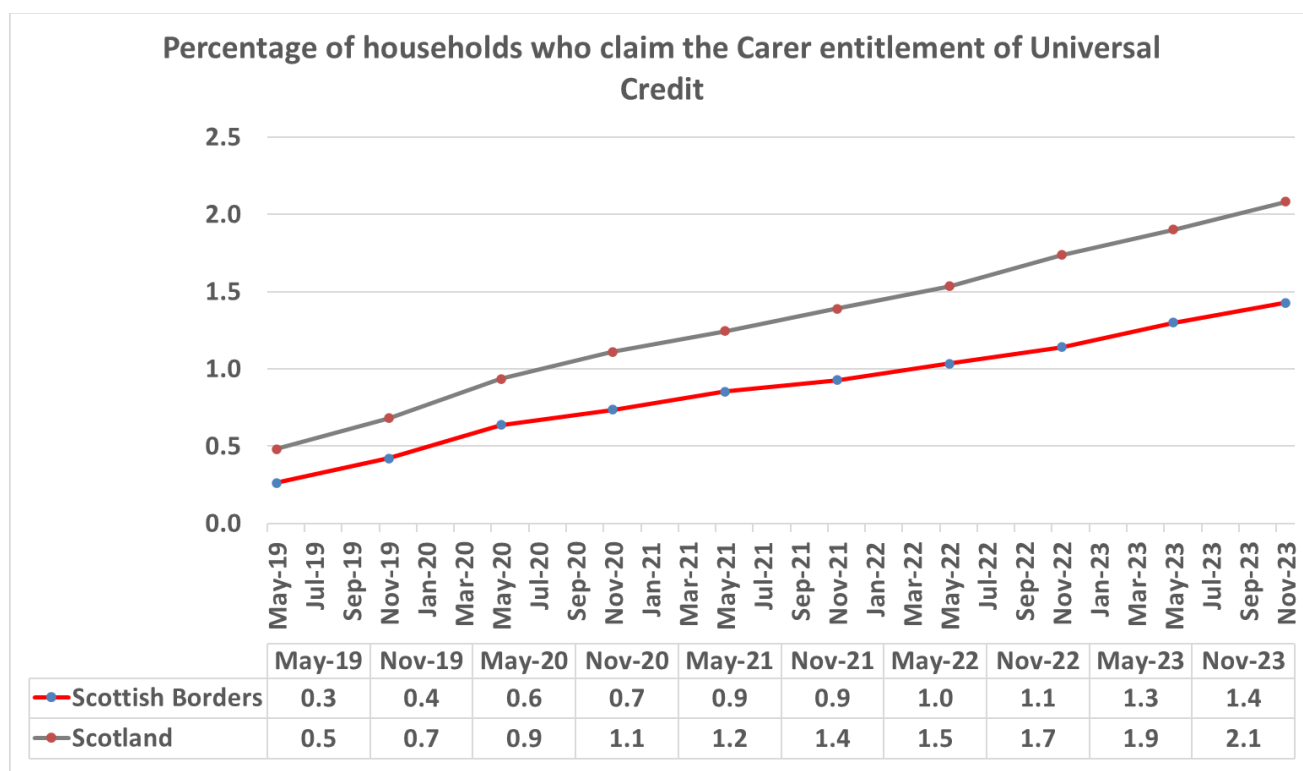
There have been many changes to the way health-related welfare benefits have been administered since 2015, in an attempt to reduce the welfare bill and to get claimants with health conditions into the workplace. Measuring the LCW/LCWRA entitlement of Universal Credit currently appears to be a reasonable indicator of measure some aspects of poverty due to poor health, a factor which can spiral into Health Deprivation.

Measuring other health-related benefits is currently complicated, due to the transfer of administration from DWP to Social Security Scotland. The real number of families who are living in poverty due to the ill-health or disability of themselves or a family member is likely to be higher, once the other benefits and the number of unsuccessful Work Capability Assessment outcomes are factored in.

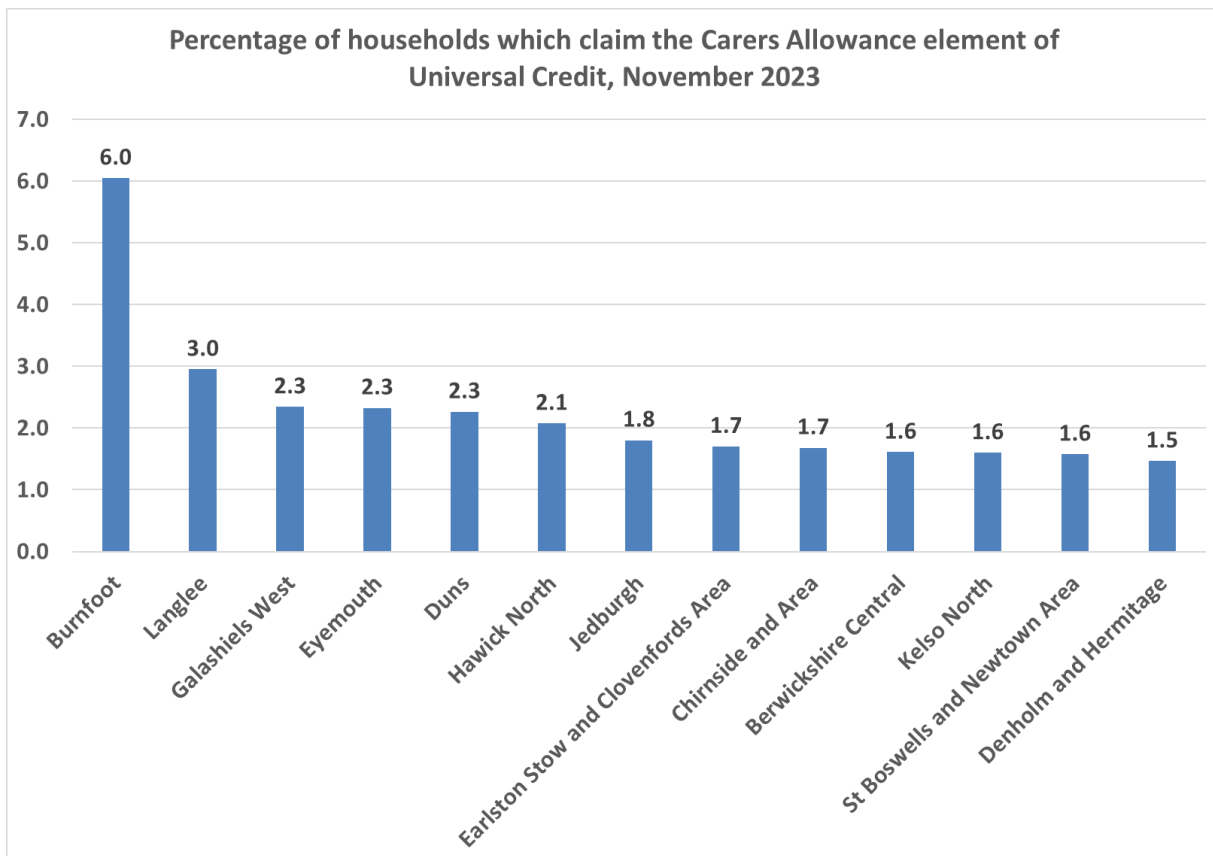
Carers Living in Poverty

Universal Credit is a welfare benefit normally paid to working-age people on a low household income who need help with living costs. Eligible claimants can get extra money if they spend at least 35 hours per week caring for someone who receives a disability benefit such as Personal Independence Payment, Disability Living Allowance or Attendance Allowance. This is the Carers Entitlement, or Carers Allowance and it can be claimed by anyone aged over 18, without an upper age limit.

Like other welfare benefits, Carers Entitlement can have an effect on the claimant’s other benefits, and those of the person they are caring for. For example, they may get less Universal Credit if they claim Carers’ Entitlement. Likewise, the claimant may not be eligible for Carer’s Allowance if they claim a state pension or other benefits, such as Pension Credit, above a certain threshold. This complex system of benefit interdependency means that the rate of successful claims of Carers’ Allowance are probably just the tip of the iceberg and the real needs of people who are living in poverty and/ or unable to work because they are caring for someone are probably underestimated.



The proportion of households that claim Carers Allowance is relatively small but has steadily increased in recent years. Claimants have to demonstrate that they have earnings of £139 or less per week after deductions in order to claim the allowance, so this small proportion of households represents a minority living in significant poverty.

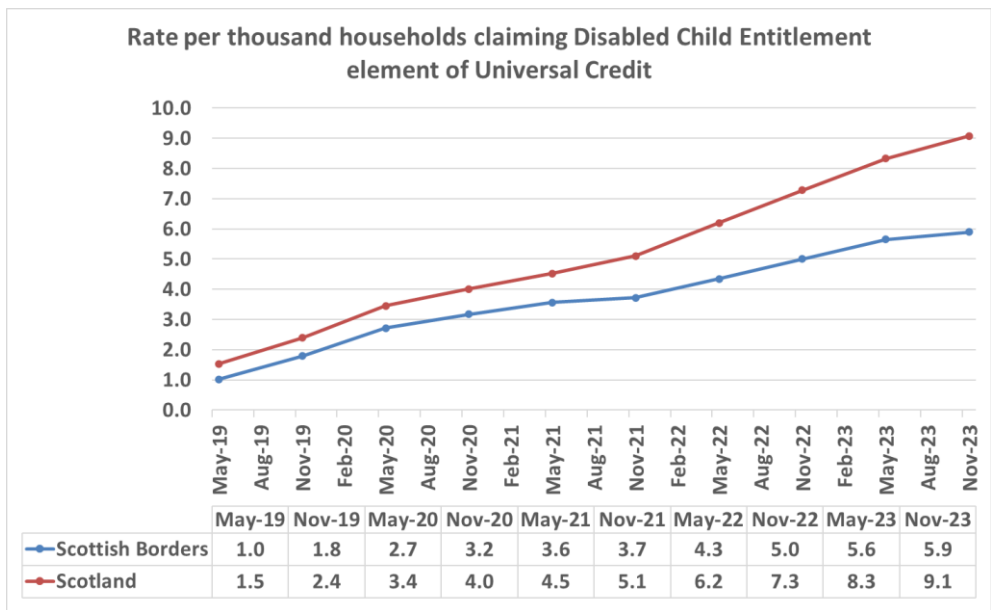


The above chart shows the proportion of households in selected Intermediate Datazones in Scottish Borders that have an above average (1.4%) claim rate for Carers’ Allowance. The two areas of Hawick and Galashiels with high levels of Multiple Deprivation stand out significantly. Five of the areas are also above the Scottish average of 2.1%. The Earlston, Stow and Clovenfords area includes areas of new housing in Galashiels, where the town boundary has not yet been updated.

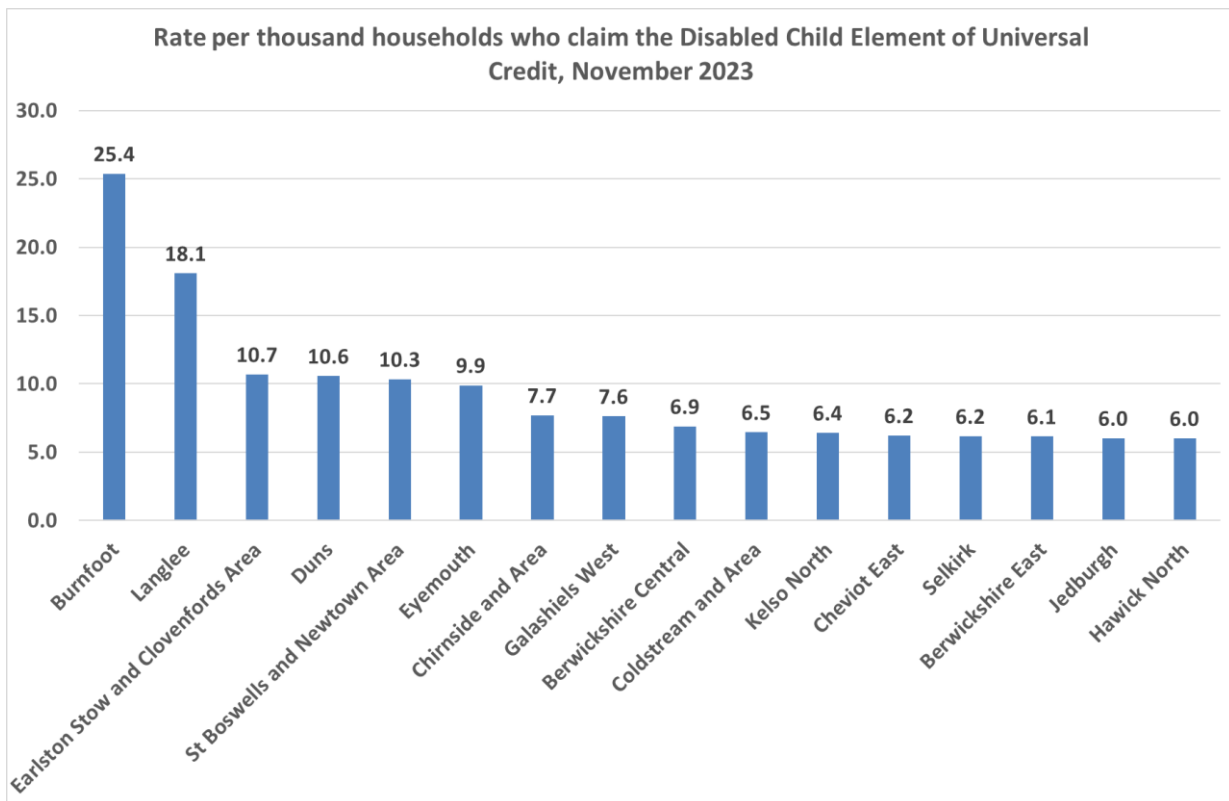
Carers of disabled children living in poverty

Parents or guardians of a child who has a disability or a long-term health condition can claim the Disabled Child Element as part of their Universal Credit payment. The rate will depend on the rate of DLA or PIP they receive but ranges from £146.31 to £456.89 per month. The amount of PIP or DLA the parent receives for their child may affect their Universal Credit payment.

Rates of child disabled element claiming are very low, so the rate is calculated as a rate per 1,000 households rather than per 100. There were only 349 claimants in the Scottish Borders in November 2023. Nevertheless, the rate has steadily increased since May 2019.



The chart below shows the Intermediate Zones within the Scottish Borders where claimant rates of the Disabled Child element of Universal Credit is above the Scottish Borders average. The two areas with the highest rates are the areas of known Multiple Deprivation.



Child Disability Payment

Child Disability Payment provides support for the extra costs in terms of care and mobility that a disabled child might bring. Child Disability Payment replaces Disability Living Allowance for children and young people living in Scotland. Payments range from £26.90 - £101.75 per week depending on the level of care need and disability the child has. Anyone with parental rights can apply on behalf of their child, without needing to be in poverty themselves. Statistics for this new benefit are not yet available.

Food Security

There are 43 food banks in the [Trussell Trust's](#) network in Scotland, distributing parcels at over 120 venues, and in 26 local authorities. The Trussell Trust's only outlet in the Scottish Borders is the Peeblesshire Foodbank at County buildings, Rosetta Road, Peebles.

Between 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, the 43 Trussell Trust food banks in Scotland distributed 259,744 emergency food parcels, including almost 90,000 parcels for children. This is the most food parcels ever distributed in Scotland, and a 30% increase compared to the same period last year.

This rising need reflects the impact that the rising cost of living is having on people in Scotland, with many reporting going hungry or cold in the winter of 2023/24.

The [Trussell Trust 2022/23 report](#) reported the following key facts from the 2022/23 statistics:

1. Food banks in the Trussell Trust network in Scotland have seen the highest levels of need ever.
2. The Scottish Child Payment may have had an impact on need, but it is still not enough.
3. Winter was particularly challenging for people, with December seeing a similar level of need to the first month of the COVID-19 pandemic in Scotland.
4. The November 2022 Cost of Living Payment appears to have offered some short-term protection for people on low incomes, however levels of need increased shortly after.
5. 62,000 people used a food bank in the Trussell Trust network in Scotland for the first time in 2022/23.
6. The increase in need for emergency food parcels in 2022/23, in comparison to last year, has been seen across the UK, not just in Scotland.
7. Food banks are not just facing a change to operations due to an increase in food parcel distribution, they are also supporting people facing deepening hardship and distress.
8. The majority of people in Scotland think that food banks should not be needed in the UK.

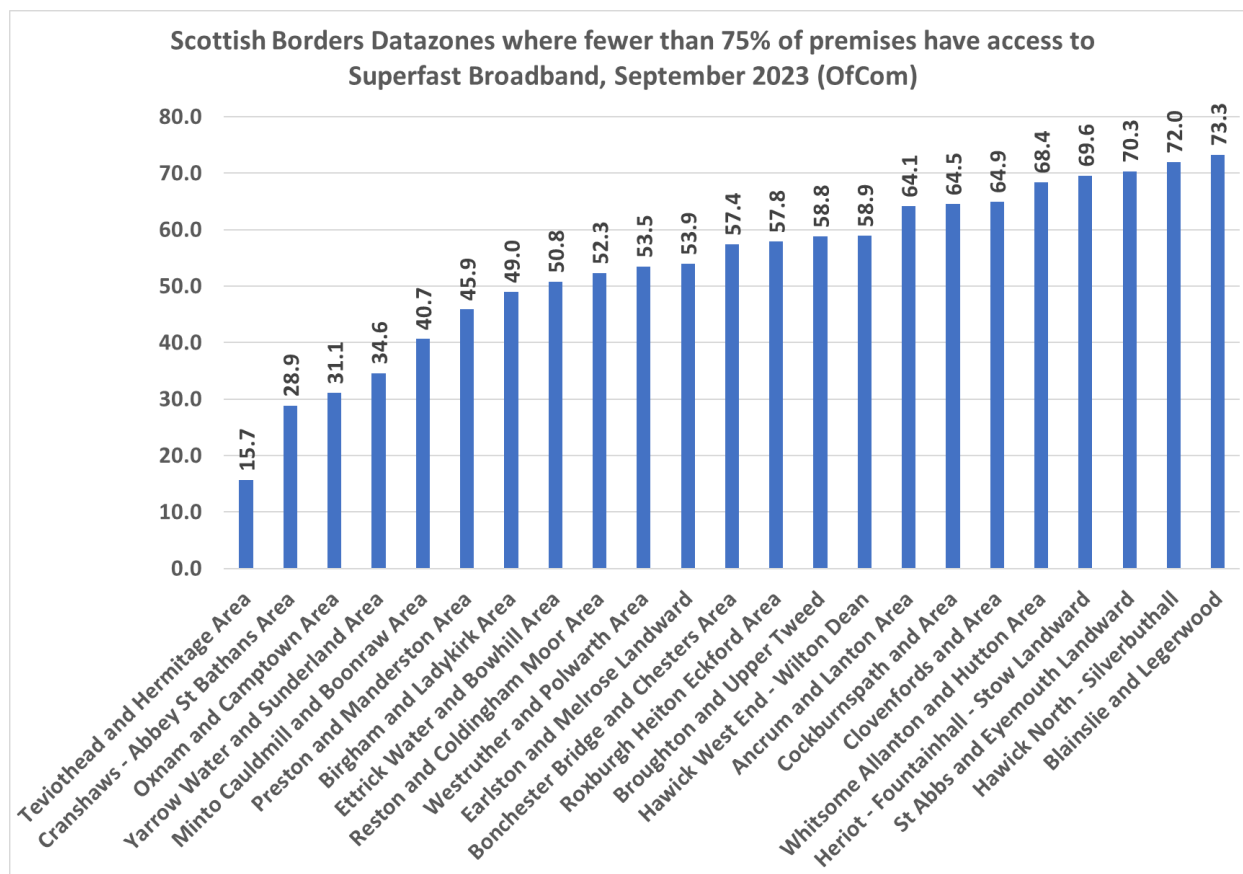
Superfast Broadband Coverage

Superfast Broadband (SFBB) is the type of internet connection that uses fibre-optic cables to deliver broadband speeds ranging from 30 Mbps to 300 Mbps, usually to a green cabinet in the street (Fibre to The Cabinet, or FTTC), with a copper wire completing the connection to the premises. Superfast Broadband rollout began over 15 years ago as part of Digital Scotland’s Superfast Broadband (DSSB) programme.

Many of these cables are now being replaced by Full Fibre (Go Fibre) broadband directly to the premises (FTTP), eliminating the need for copper wires and delivering internet speeds up to 18 times faster than Superfast Broadband. However, many premises still rely on Superfast Broadband, which is the minimum standard for secure, best-value, fixed internet provision that **all** households and businesses in Scotland have been entitled to expect since 2021. OfCom records that, as of September 2023, an average of 95% of premises in Scotland are able to receive Superfast Broadband.

The Scottish Borders is slightly behind the Scottish average, with 90.3% of premises having access to Superfast Broadband in September 2023, according to data from [OfCom Connected Nations](#). This varies a great deal between rural and urban areas. The main Scottish Borders towns had between 90% and 100% access to SFBB but the more remote rural parts of the region had less than half of that.

It should be noted that this metric measures **access** to SFBB, rather than **uptake**. Uptake is difficult to measure, due to the many ways in which consumers can get connected, whether by fixed broadband or mobile (roaming) internet access and with many different private providers. All have cost and contractual obligations for the consumer. Poor **uptake** of fixed broadband and/or mobile services is known to vary with Multiple Deprivation and with the age and the skills level of the consumer. Obviously, households without **access** to SFBB do not have the choice to take it up, meaning that it is an access deprivation issue rather than a poverty issue *per se*. As of September 2023, an above-average proportion of premises in the region’s “most deprived” neighbourhoods have **access** to fixed Superfast Broadband.

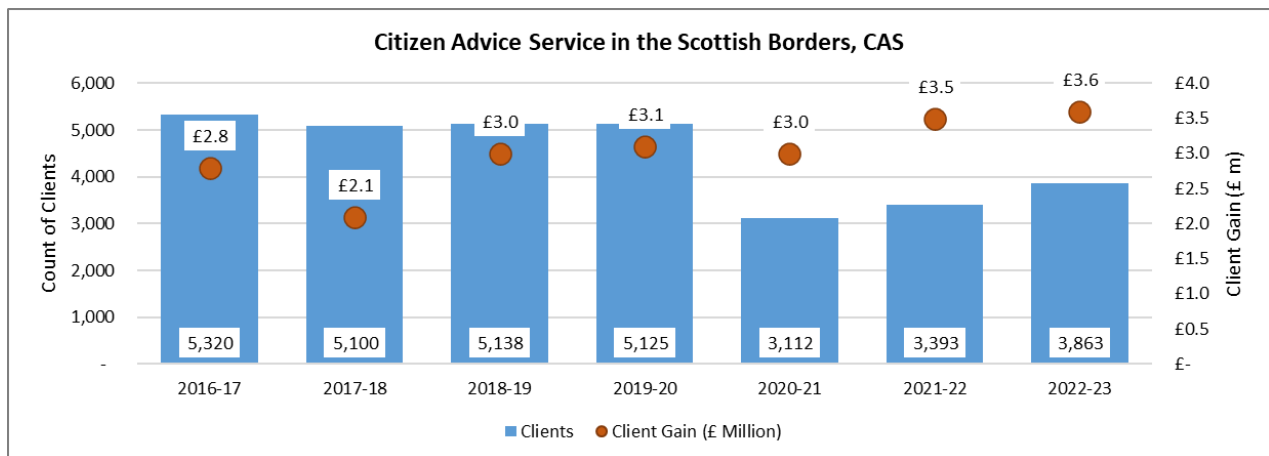


Citizen Advice Activity

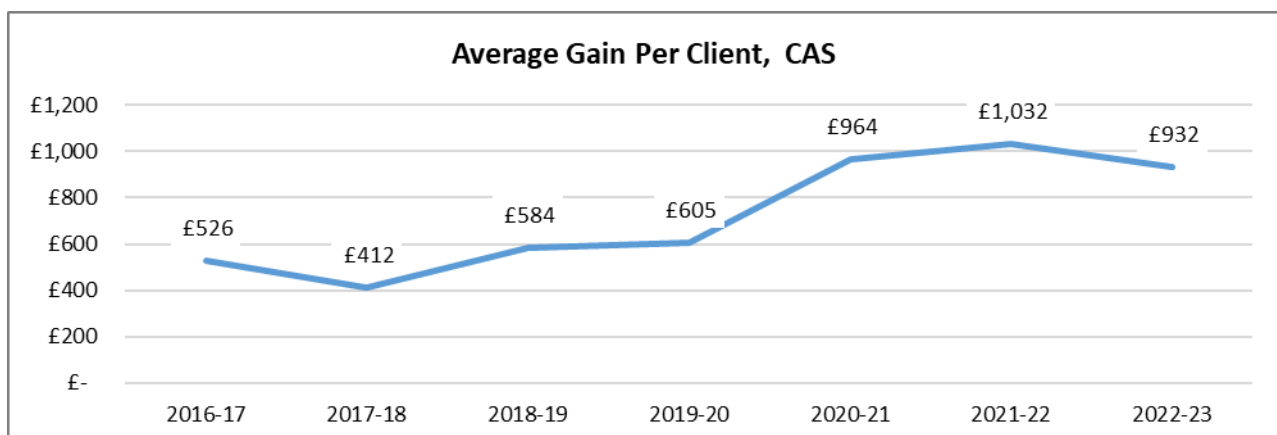
In the Scottish Borders⁶ there are 3 Citizen Advice Bureaux: Central Borders CAB, Peebles CAB, and Roxburgh and Berwickshire CAB. Citizens Advice Bureaux are local, independent charities that provide free and confidential advice and information to whoever needs it, whatever the problem. The common areas of inquiry include:

- **Benefits** – entitlements, support with applications and appealing decisions
- **Debt and money advice** – how to manage debts, improve your financial situation and maximise your income
- **Consumer issues** – from used cars to difficulties with gas and electricity suppliers
- **Work-related problems** – terms and conditions, dismissal, redundancy and intimidation
- **Housing** – from renting through to homelessness
- **Relationships** – splitting up, children and bereavement

The graph below shows the number of clients and the financial gain for Scottish Borders clients between 2016 and 2022-23. It is clear to see the impact of Covid19 with the reduction of clients. However, the financial gain in 2020-21 was similar to 2019-20 with an increase for 2021-22 and 2022-23.

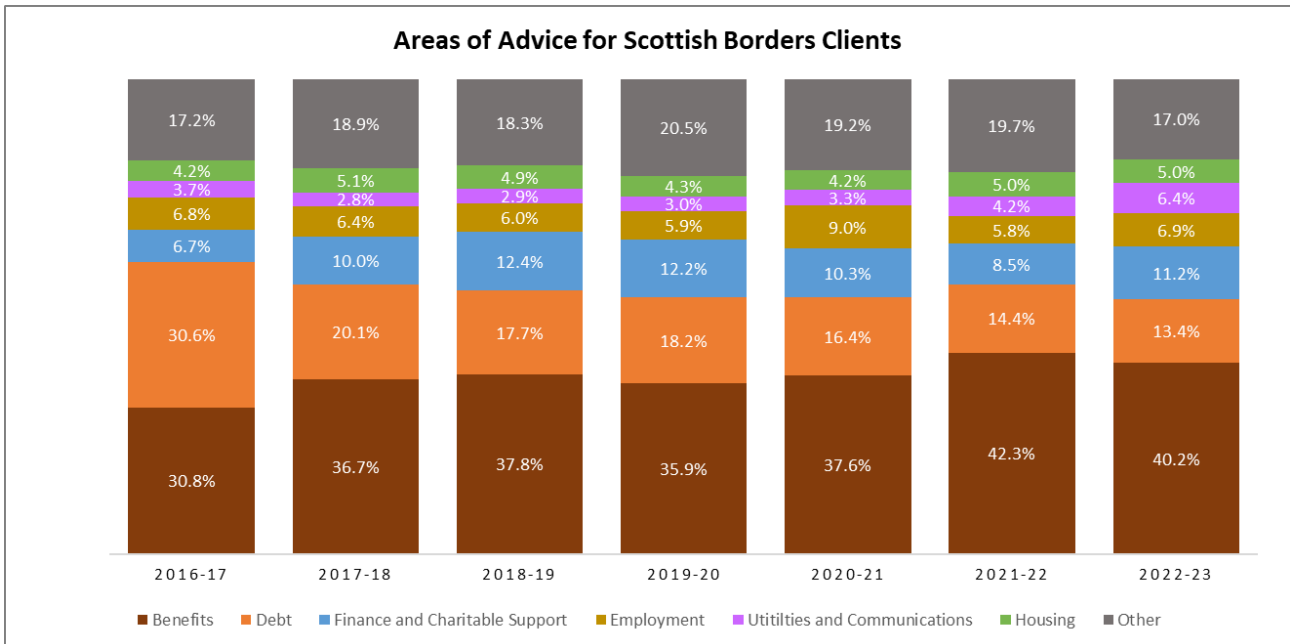


When looking at average financial gain per client in the Scottish Borders there was a big increase between 2019-20 and 2020-21 as seen in the graph below.

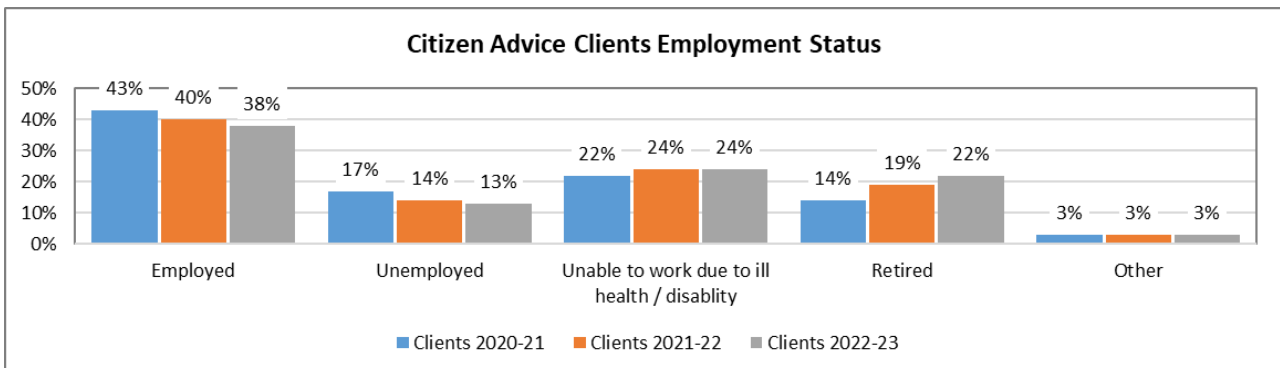


⁶ [Local Authorities | Citizens Advice Scotland \(cas.org.uk\)](https://cas.org.uk)

The graph below shows that the areas of advice most common were related to benefits, debt, finance and charitable support and employment. It is interesting to note that the proportion related to utilities and communications was 6.4% in 2022-23 a higher proportion than any previous year; this may relate to the cost-of-living and cost of energy.



When looking at the employment status of Citizen Advice clients in the Scottish Borders there has been a decrease in the proportion that are employed over the last three years and an increase for those retired and those unable to work due to ill health / disability.



The Citizen Advice clients in the Scottish Borders have a different distribution within the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (2020) compared to the base Scottish Borders population. Proportionally, Citizen Advice in the Scottish Borders advises more people from the most deprived area, Quintiles 1 and 2, as seen in the graph below.

