

Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) in Scottish Borders: 2019 Update

A Scottish Borders Insight produced by the Corporate Performance and Information R&I Team

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NOMIS, the Official Labour Market Statistics platform for the UK-wide Office for National Statistics, published 2018 and 2019 updates to the Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) in November 2020.

This insight presents some initial analysis on the evidence for Scottish Borders.

About NOMIS and BRES

BRES publishes employee and employment estimates at detailed geographical and industrial levels. BRES is regarded as the definitive official government source of employee statistics by industry.

NOMIS provides two-tier access to labour market statistics to the public:

1. Open Access – with rounded estimates for disclosure control purposes, so they can be used, downloaded and published by anyone
2. Safeguarded Access – with stricter controls on what the data can be used for; cannot be published in the public domain.

This insight contains Open Access information, meaning it can be published and shared in public.

Figures are for Persons. Data are available for areas in Great Britain between 2015 and 2019.

“Employment” includes employees aged 16 and over, plus working owners. BRES therefore includes self-employed workers as long as they are registered for VAT or Pay-As-You-Earn (PAYE) schemes. Working owners are typically sole traders, sole proprietors or partners. Self employed people who are not registered for VAT, along with HM Forces and Government Supported trainees, are excluded.

BRES uses the 2007 Standard Industrial Classification of Economic Activities (UK SIC 2007) for classifying industrial activities. There are 21 sections, coded A to U, and some of these are joined together further, into broad industrial groups. Within each section there is a hierarchy of codes representing every VAT-registered profession recorded.

Key Findings for Scottish Borders from the 2019 BRES Update

- Scottish Borders was the 17th- largest economy in 2019 out of the 32 Local Authority areas, with 46,400 people in employment.
- The largest economies were in Glasgow City, with 419,125 people in employment, followed by City of Edinburgh and Aberdeen City.
- The smallest numbers of people in employment were in Orkney Islands (13,300), followed by Clackmannanshire and Shetland Islands.
- The most important industrial group in Scottish Borders is Group Q: the Health sector, which accounts for 17.2% of employment in the region, or over 8,000 jobs. The Health sector is a prolific employer in Scotland which provides over 400,000 employment jobs, spread over the 32 Scottish Local Authority areas.
- The second most important industrial group in Scottish Borders is Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing, which provides 10.8% of employment, or over 5,000 jobs. Scottish Borders has the sixth-highest dependency on agriculture, forestry and fishing out of the 32 Local Authority areas and well above the Scottish average of 3.3% overall, which is to be expected in a rural area.
- The third-most important industries in Scottish Borders are Group C: Manufacturing and part of Group G: Retail, which each account for 9.7% of all employment in the region.
- Scottish Borders is well-known for its textile manufacturing industry, which famously employed a third of the region's labour force in the 1940s. Manufacturing of any kind is still important in the region, providing over 4,500 jobs which are often better-paid and higher-skilled than service sector jobs.
- A similar number of jobs are provided by the Retail sector in Scottish Borders. This sector is seen as increasingly fragile, particularly in the already-marginal rural economy of Scottish Borders towns.
- The fifth biggest employment sector in Scottish Borders is Accommodation and Food Services. Tourism is important to the region and this industrial group provided 8.6% of the employment in 2019, or 4000 employment jobs
- The top four most under-represented industrial groups in Scottish Borders, in terms of how small a proportion of the workforce that they employ compared to the Scottish average, are: Business Administration /Support Services, Public Administration/ Defence, Financial/ Insurance, and Professional/ Scientific/ Technical.
- Although not as big an employer as the retail and public sectors, these jobs provide sought-after high-value, graduate-level employment which can encourage local graduates to return to the region.

Percentage of all Employment by Broad Industrial Sector (SIC 2007), 2019.

Source: BRES/ NOMIS

