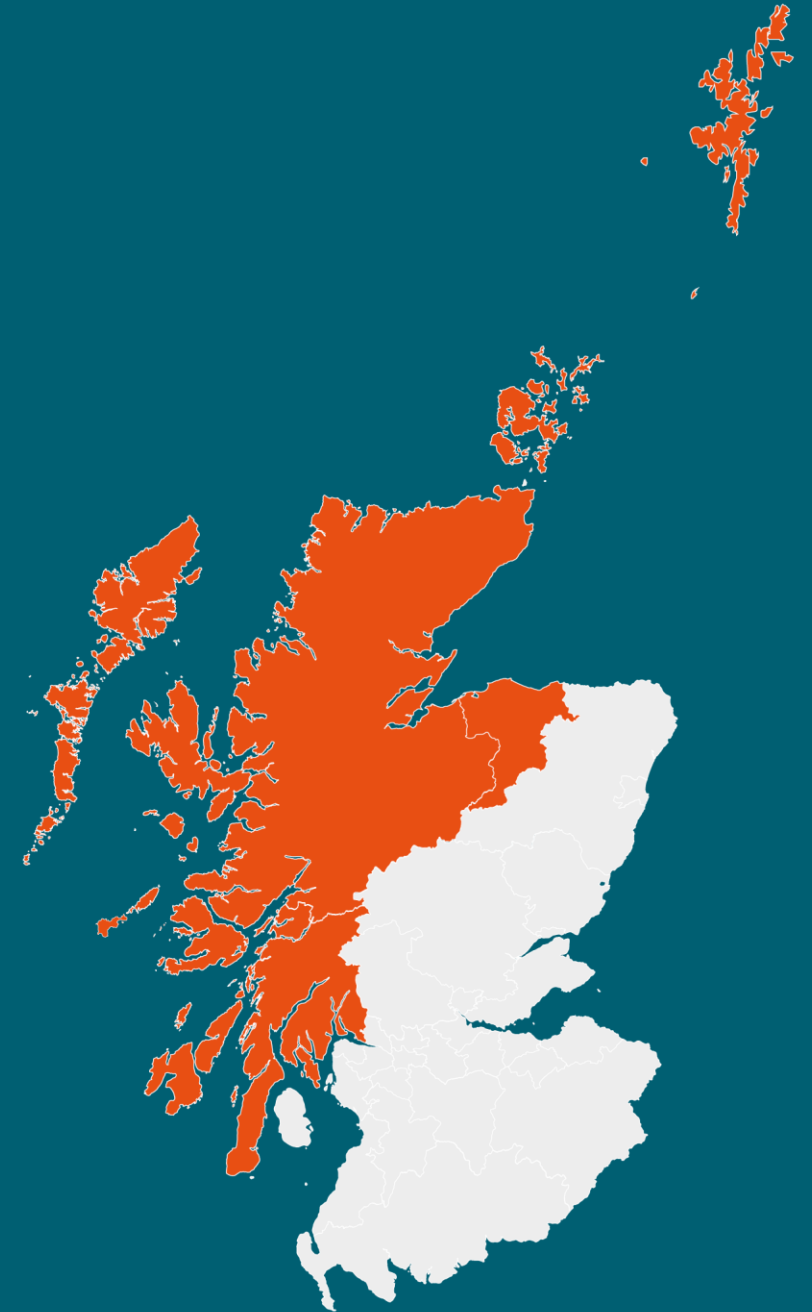


# Regional Skills Assessment Highlands and Islands

October 2023



## Regional Skills Assessments

First launched in 2014, the purpose of the Regional Skills Assessments (RSAs) is to provide a robust evidence base to support partners in strategic skills investment planning. Skills Development Scotland (SDS) has worked with key partners and stakeholders in the production of RSAs to ensure an inclusive approach to their development, dissemination and utilisation.

RSAs include the use of published data sets. Inevitably, when using published data there is a time lag, but the data contained is the most up-to-date available at the time of writing. We have also included a link to the Data Matrix, which is frequently updated.

RSAs also include forecast data that has been commissioned through Oxford Economics. The Technical Note<sup>1</sup> provides full detail on the caveats that must be applied when using forecast data, but broadly, it should be noted that:

- Forecasts are based on what we know now and include past and present trends projected into the future.
- The more disaggregated they become, especially at smaller geographical units, the less reliable they are likely to be.
- Their value is in identifying likely directions of travel rather than predicting exact figures.
- The forecasts do not account for national or regional activities, initiatives or investments that are planned.

Industries and occupations used in the RSAs are defined by standard industrial classifications (SIC) and standard occupational classifications (SOC). The Office for National Statistics have useful SIC<sup>2</sup> and SOC<sup>3</sup> hierarchy tools that can be used to understand the classifications in more detail.

**This RSA report is for the Highlands and Islands**, which covers the Argyll and Bute, Na h-Eileanan Siar, Highland, Moray, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands local authorities.

The RSAs are part of a suite of Labour Market Insight publications by SDS. Other products in the suite include:



**Economy, People and Skills** provides succinct and up-to-date evidence on Scotland's economy, business and people. It is updated monthly.



**Sectoral Skills Assessments** provide updated Labour Market Insight for the key sectors across Scotland. They are updated annually.



The **Data Matrix** is an interactive tool, offering data from a variety of sources in a visually engaging format. It is updated frequently.

**Links to the Data Matrix** are included throughout the report to indicate where Local Authority data is available. Also, '**RSA Summary Infographics**' for local authorities are available through the Data Matrix. The Data Matrix also contains additional data for the region, including data on employment, unemployment, and economic inactivity rates from the Annual Population Survey. These are

available on pages 13,14 and 19 of the Data Matrix.

Alongside the suite of Labour Market Insight publications, SDS also produces a wide range of reports such as statistics on the Apprenticeship Family and the Annual Participation measure for 16-19 year olds. Further information can be found on the [Publications and Statistics](#) section of the SDS corporate website.

For any further information or queries on the RSAs or any of our other products, please contact: [RSA@sds.co.uk](mailto:RSA@sds.co.uk)

***We value user feedback on the Regional Skills Assessments.***

*If you would like to provide feedback on the RSAs please do so [here](#).*



We held a series of regional webinars to complement the publication of the Regional Skills Assessments.



**The recording of the Highlands and Islands webinar can be found on the SDS YouTube Channel [here](#).**

You can also watch the webinars for other regions and key sectors in Scotland [here](#).

# The Context for Scotland's Labour Market

Within the last 10 years, the economy has faced disruption due to events such as the pandemic, Brexit, the war in Ukraine, and the cost of living crisis. In addition to these events, megatrends around demography, technology, and the environment have continued to shape Scotland's economy and labour market.

This section provides an overview of five key drivers of the Scottish labour market, highlighting that an agile and responsive skills system is vital to respond to the challenges and opportunities that exist in the economy, to support and attract inward investment, to increase productivity and to tackle inequality and deprivation.



## The Economy

Scotland and the UK have been hard hit by rising inflation, tight monetary policy, and subdued economic performance. The impact of the war on Ukraine, increased energy prices, and a tight labour market have resulted in inflation reaching a 40-year high in 2022. At the time of writing, inflation has started to fall, but at a slower pace than previously anticipated. By the end of 2023, the Bank of England expect inflation to be 4.9%, falling to within the 2% target by Q2 of 2025.<sup>1</sup>

Interest rates have increased to combat rising inflation, and rates are likely to remain higher for longer than expected as inflation proves challenging to address. This has weighed on economic growth and the outlook for Scotland and the UK remains uncertain, with downside risks.

Forecasts predict Scotland<sup>2</sup> and the UK<sup>3</sup> will see weak economic growth between 2023 and 2026.<sup>3</sup> International growth is also expected to be weak by historical standards, with global growth of 3% forecast for both 2023 and 2024.<sup>4</sup> However, the success of Scotland's economy is not solely based on GDP. There has been growing commentary on the need to evaluate the economy on measures other than GDP growth, such as how the economy serves society and sustains the environment. The Scottish Government's National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET) noted a commitment to a 'Wellbeing Economy' – 'a society that is thriving across economic, social and environmental dimensions'.<sup>5</sup>

## Skills Shortages and Skills Gaps



The **Employer Skills Survey 2022 (ESS)** provides insight on skills supply, skills gaps and training across Scotland and the UK. The published findings are timely; however, they do not capture the very recent cooling of the labour market that has taken place during 2023. The ESS shows:

- **Supply challenges have worsened** across Scotland and the UK, and vacancies have become harder to fill.
- **There has been a sizeable rise in skills shortages**, 10% of establishments in Scotland reported a Skills Shortage Vacancy (up from 6% in 2017).
- **Skills gaps have decreased slightly in Scotland**, 15% of establishments reported a skills gap (-1 pp) while 4.8% of employees in Scotland were not fully proficient, which was the lowest level recorded.
- **Training activity has decreased across Scotland**, access to training offered by employers was at the lowest recorded level since the survey began in 2011.



## Technology and Automation

Technology and automation have been major disruptors and drivers of the Scottish labour market and economy over the past few decades. Ongoing advances and technological change are expected to continue to have a great impact on the global economy, particularly with the prominence of Artificial Intelligence.<sup>6</sup> This will shape consumer behaviour, modify commercial models, and drive innovations in ways of living, working and learning.

While Artificial Intelligence is expected to result in changes to the world of work, many jobs are expected to evolve rather than disappear.<sup>7</sup> However, around a third of jobs may see a large share of their tasks being automated and changed. The technological revolution has highlighted the importance of uniquely human meta-skills around self-management, social intelligence and innovation.<sup>8</sup>

As well as risks to certain jobs, technology may also create new jobs and enhance existing roles to support smarter and more agile ways of working. However, employers are already reporting digital skills gaps in the workforce.<sup>9</sup> The **Digital Economy Skills Action Plan** aims to address the digital economy skills challenge through upskilling and reskilling, to help realise the potential of Scotland's digital economy.<sup>10</sup>

SDS is exploring the potential labour market impact of Automation and Artificial Intelligence through new research. The findings from the research will be published at the beginning of 2024 and will include breakdowns of the risk of automation by gender, income and occupation.



## Climate Change

The Climate Emergency has been recognised by governments across the world, with the Scottish Government being one of the first to do so in 2019. Recognising the gravity of the situation, the Scottish Government has set a target to achieve a net zero carbon economy by 2045.<sup>1</sup>

Growing recognition of the importance of protecting the environment will have a significant impact on the labour market. Changes in legislation and consumer behaviour will mean growing demand in some areas and a fall in others. Demand for green jobs (and green skills) is expected to increase rapidly as a result of policy and legislative drivers, and consumer choice.<sup>2</sup>

Scotland's skills requirements for the Climate Emergency are set out in the **Climate Emergency Skills Action Plan**. It outlined the need for action to ensure that current and future skills investment in support of net zero is strongly evidence based.<sup>3</sup>

The CESAP Pathfinder is a direct response to this, led by Skills Development Scotland (SDS) in collaboration with the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and forms part of the **Shared Outcomes Framework**. The CESAP Pathfinder advances the evidence base used to identify current and future skills demand, establishes a baseline of green skills provision and identifies nine opportunities for action needed across the skills system. A suite of reports to share insights, intelligence and lessons learned is due to be published in Autumn 2023.



## Demographic Change

Scotland's population is ageing. By 2045, the number of people of pensionable age in Scotland is expected to increase, while the working-age population is projected to decline, and migration is expected to be the only source of population gain in Scotland.<sup>4</sup> Demographic change could contribute to a tighter labour market in the future, and increase pressure on the demand for public services and the funds available from tax and National Insurance to provide them.

Whilst it was initially thought that Brexit would lead to falling levels of migration, the Office for National Statistics estimated that net migration to the UK hit a record high in 2022.<sup>5</sup> Migration has been driven by non-EU citizens, while more EU citizens left than arrived in the UK. Migration from outside of the EU has been driven by a number of factors, including humanitarian schemes such as those available to Ukrainians; higher levels of migration for study; and people coming to the UK for work. Changes to migration policy and the UK's points-based migration system could further impact migration flows.

With populations ageing, the global economy is likely to see more people working for longer due to increases in the state pension age.<sup>6</sup> Advances in medicine and technological innovations are expected to enhance the health of the older population, which in turn will likely change working habits and preferences. As a result, some targeted upskilling and reskilling may be required to enhance older workers' experience and knowledge to enable the transition into new and growing careers.<sup>7</sup>



## Scotland's Census 2022 <sup>8</sup>

**Scotland's population was estimated to be 5,436,600 in March 2022**, which marks the highest population ever recorded by Scotland's Census. The Scottish population **increased by 2.7% since the previous census**. This growth rate was slower than the period between 2001 – 2011, when the population grew by 4.6%.

Although Scotland's population increased over the past ten years, this growth was largely driven by migration, as the number of deaths exceeded the number of births. **Without migration, Scotland's population would have declined by around 49,800.**

**There are now more older people in Scotland than ever before.** The number of people aged 65 and over increased by 22.5% between 2011 and 2021, while the population aged 0-14 and 15-64 decreased by 2.5% and 1.1% respectively.

**Local authority data shows a mixed picture of population change in the Highlands and Islands region.** Highland and Orkney Islands both saw a growth in population, while the population declined in Argyll and Bute (-2.4%), Na h-Eileannan Siar (-5.5%) and Shetland Islands (-1.2%). All local authorities in the region had a higher proportion of people aged 65 and above, compared to the Scottish average. This highlights a general trend of a higher proportion of older people living in rural areas.

# The Context for Scotland's Labour Market and Regional Insight



## Inclusive Growth and Equality

Across Scotland, significant economic inequalities exist, especially for disadvantaged groups. For example, more women than men earned less than the Real Living Wage in 2022<sup>1</sup>, the disability employment gap<sup>2</sup> remained high (29.6 percentage points) in 2023, meaning people with a disability are less likely to be employed, and in the same year, the employment rate gap for the ethnic minority population compared with the white population was 9.2 percentage points.<sup>3</sup>

The Scottish Government's commitment to fairness and greater equality is reiterated in the National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET). One of the strategy's key ambitions is creating a fairer society – '*Ensuring that work pays for everyone through better wages and fair work, reducing poverty and improving life chances*'.<sup>4</sup>

A 'Fairer and More Equal Society' is also one of the five programmes of action outlined in the NSET. This programme of action looks to '*reorient our economy towards wellbeing and fair work*' with key aims including higher rates of employment and wage growth, and reducing poverty.<sup>5</sup>

The Scottish Government's targets are set against the challenging backdrop of the cost of living crisis and the pandemic, affecting groups already impacted by inequality the most: low-income households, young people, disabled people, and people from ethnic minority backgrounds.<sup>6</sup> Research from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation found that eight in ten single parents, large families and low-income households in Scotland had to go without one or more essentials (such as food or heating) in spring 2023.<sup>7</sup>



## Regional Insight<sup>8</sup>

The Highlands and Islands Regional Economic Partnership (REP) was established in December 2021. Meeting the regional economy's labour and skills demand is a key focus for the partnership and delivery of any agreed actions is managed through the Highlands and Islands Skills Leadership Forum, which has been aligned to report to the Convention of the Highlands and Islands (CoHI) and the REP.

Highland and Islands Enterprise (HIE) published a new five-year regional strategy in September 2023 which sets out a regional ambition for a greener, fairer and more resilient region. The strategy is guided by the National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET), which calls for a new approach to deliver a green recovery and wellbeing economy for Scotland and all its regions. It takes account of the leading role the Highlands and Islands plays in developing sectors such as energy, life sciences, creative industries, tourism, food and drink, and space. There's also an emphasis on harnessing the natural capital of the region to drive growth across these sectors as well as the wider blue economy – all of which are vital to Scotland's economic transformation.

The UK and Scottish Governments have committed funding for the Inverness and Highland City-Region Deal, Moray Growth Deal, the Argyll and Bute Growth Deal, as well as for the Islands Deal which includes Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands Council regions.

The region continues to develop renewable capabilities in offshore wind (with a particular focus on floating), hydrogen, energy hubs, marine energy (wave and tidal), heat decarbonisation, and local energy systems. Work is underway to understand more about job opportunities, including the impact of the Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport, ScotWind and Innovation and Targeted Oil & Gas (INTOG) leasing by Crown Estate Scotland. Growing investment and innovation in the energy sector is expected to result in increased demand for labour and skills in every area in the region, with rising pressure for adapted and new skills at all levels.

The forecasts used in this Regional Skills Assessment are policy and investment neutral. This means the figures present a baseline outlook that takes into account historical trends and external economic conditions, but the figures do not reflect investment or policy that is unconfirmed or at planning/development stage. For example, the figures presented in this report do not reflect significant levels of investment expected in the region such as:

- Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport
- ScotWind
- Recent commitments in the Oil & Gas sector, such as INTOG leasing and Rosebank Oil & Gas field.

The forecasts should be used in conjunction with other sources, and readers are encouraged to overlay the forecasts with their own local knowledge.

# Economic Performance<sup>1</sup>



**Highlands and Islands** forecast GVA in 2023: **£12,410m**

Highlands and Islands generates 8.4% of Scotland's output. This share of GVA ranks the region in the second highest quartile of RSA regions for GVA contribution to the Scottish economy.

The highest value industries in 2023 were forecast to be:

 <b>Manufacturing</b>	<b>£1,699m</b>
 <b>Real Estate Activities *</b>	<b>£1,605m</b>
 <b>Human Health and Social Work Activities</b>	<b>£1,200m</b>
 <b>Public Administration and Defence</b>	<b>£1,196m</b>



**Mid-term forecast average annual growth (2023-2026)**

**Highlands and Islands: 1.6%**

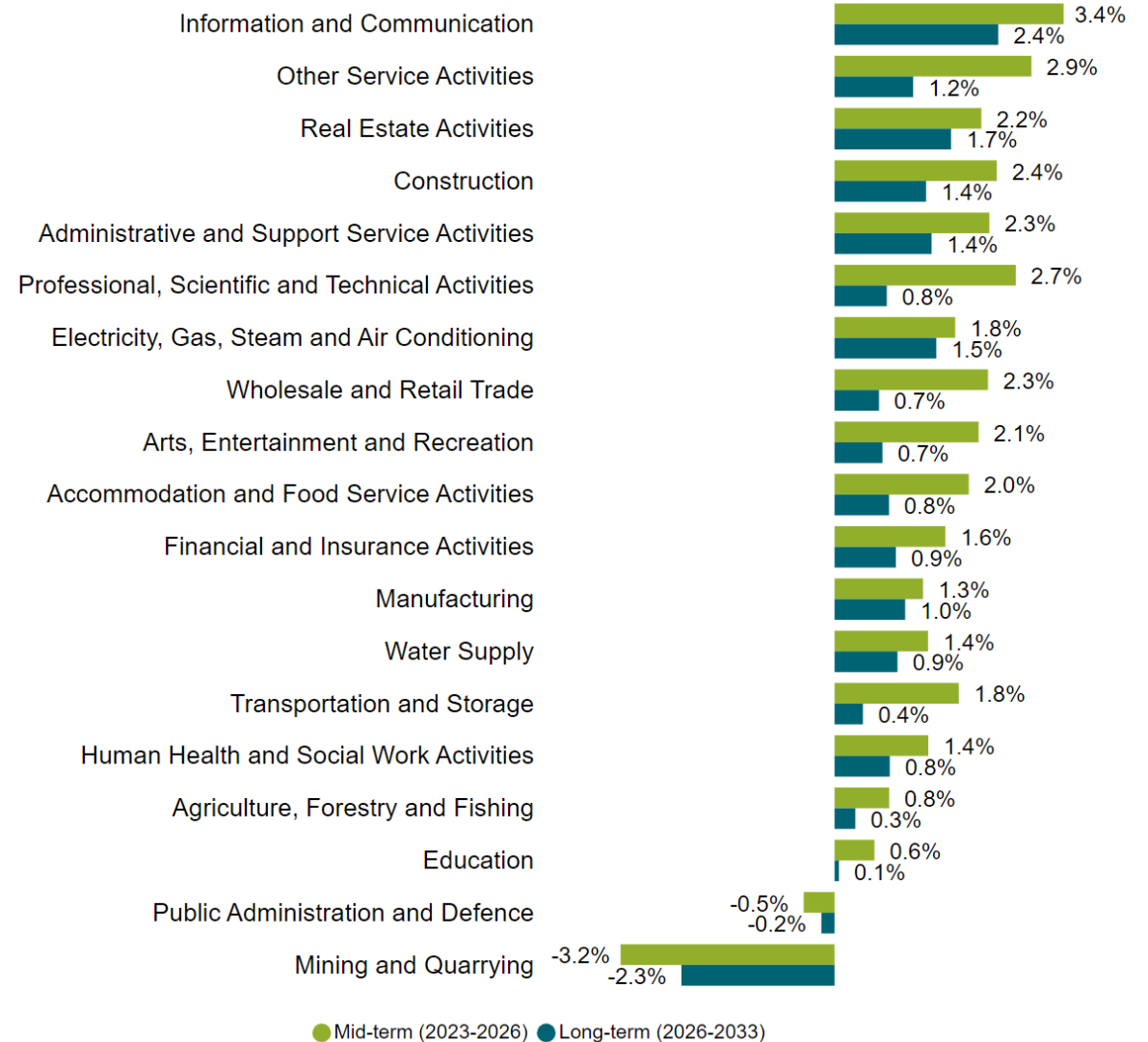
**Scotland: 1.7%**

**Long-term forecast average annual growth (2026-2033)**

**Highlands and Islands: 0.9%**

**Scotland: 1.1%**

## Forecast Average Annual GVA Change by Industry (%), Highlands and Islands



# Productivity<sup>1</sup>

In this report, we have used Oxford Economics' measure of productivity, which is calculated by dividing total regional GVA by total regional employment (measured by jobs). Please note, there are different ways of calculating productivity, and the pandemic has created new challenges in how productivity is accurately measured. Caution is needed when interpreting productivity data presented in this report, and it must be considered in the context of other data and insight.

Productivity in the **Highlands and Islands** was forecast to be **£47,000** in 2023. In comparison, the Scottish average was forecast to be £52,600.



## Mid-term Productivity

From 2023 and 2026, productivity in the Highlands and Islands is forecast to grow by 0.9% on average each year. Over the same period, the Scottish growth rate is forecast to be 1.0%.

**Highlands and Islands** forecast productivity in 2026: **£48,300**

**Scotland** forecast productivity in 2026: **£54,100**



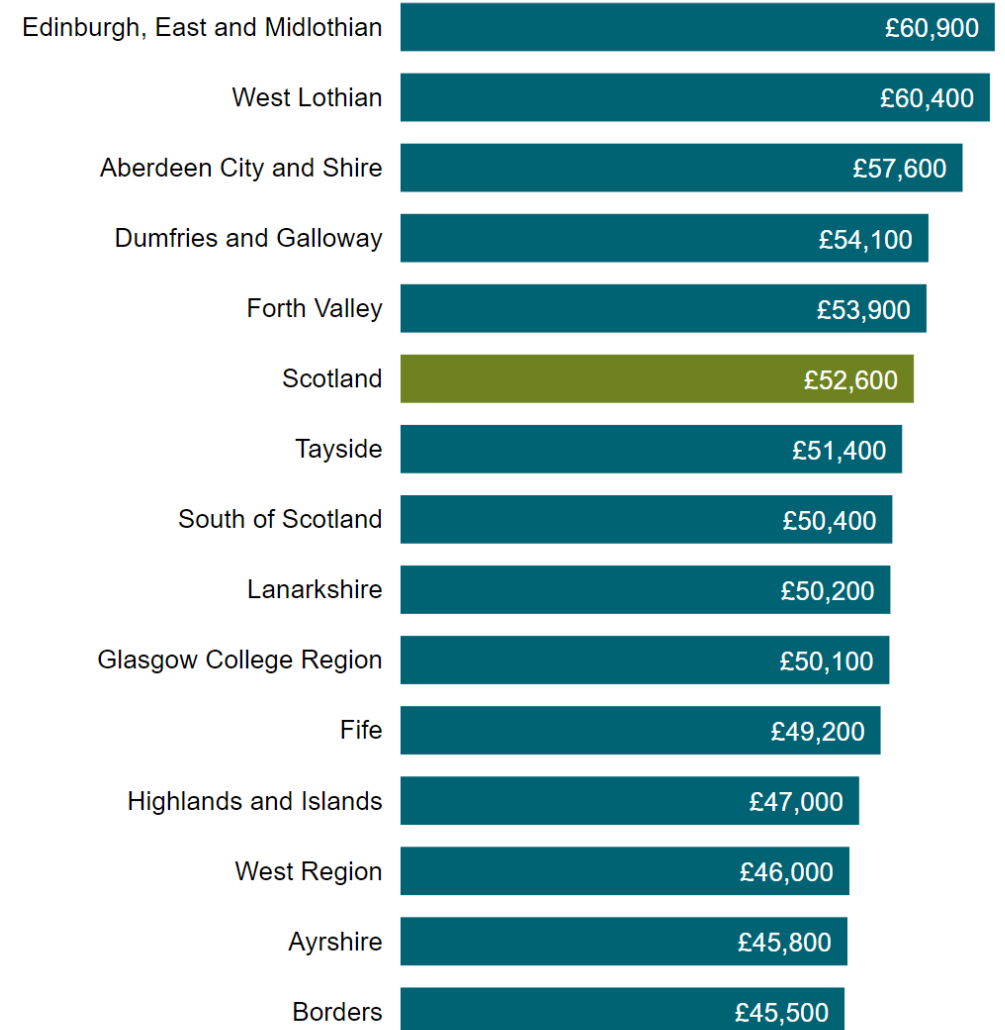
## Long-term Productivity

From 2026 and 2033, productivity in the Highlands and Islands is forecast to grow by 1.1% on average each year. Over the same period, the Scottish growth rate is forecast to be 1.0%.

**Highlands and Islands** forecast productivity in 2033: **£52,100**

**Scotland** forecast productivity in 2033: **£58,200**

## Productivity (2023)



For data on productivity at local authority level please see page 30 of the Data Matrix.

## Regional Employment<sup>1</sup>



**Workforce Size 2023:**  
**220,500 people**

This accounts for **8.5%** of Scottish employment.

Over the last 10 years (2013-2023) employment in the region **declined** by **-5.2%** (**-12,100** people). In comparison, employment in Scotland increased by 4.0%.



**Workforce Size 2026:**  
**224,900 people**

The workforce is forecast to **grow** by **2.0%** or **4,400** people between 2023 and 2026.

Compared to a Scotland-wide increase of **2.2%** or **57,000** people.

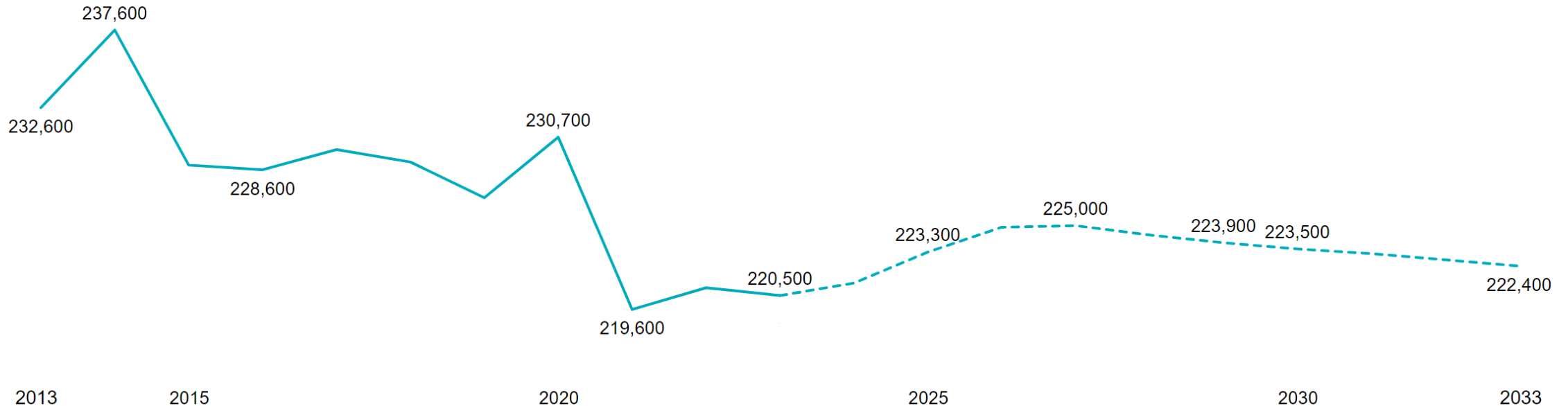


**Workforce Size 2033:**  
**222,400 people**

The workforce is forecast to **decline** by **-1.1%** or **-2,500** people between 2026 and 2033.

Compared to a Scotland-wide increase of **0.9%** or **22,700** people.

### Employment and forecast employment (2013-2033) (people), Highlands and Islands




For data on employment and forecast employment at local authority level please see page 32 of the Data Matrix.



# Employment by Industry<sup>1</sup>

Largest employing industries in 2023 (people):

 **Human Health and Social Work Activities**  
36,800

 **Wholesale and Retail Trade**  
24,500

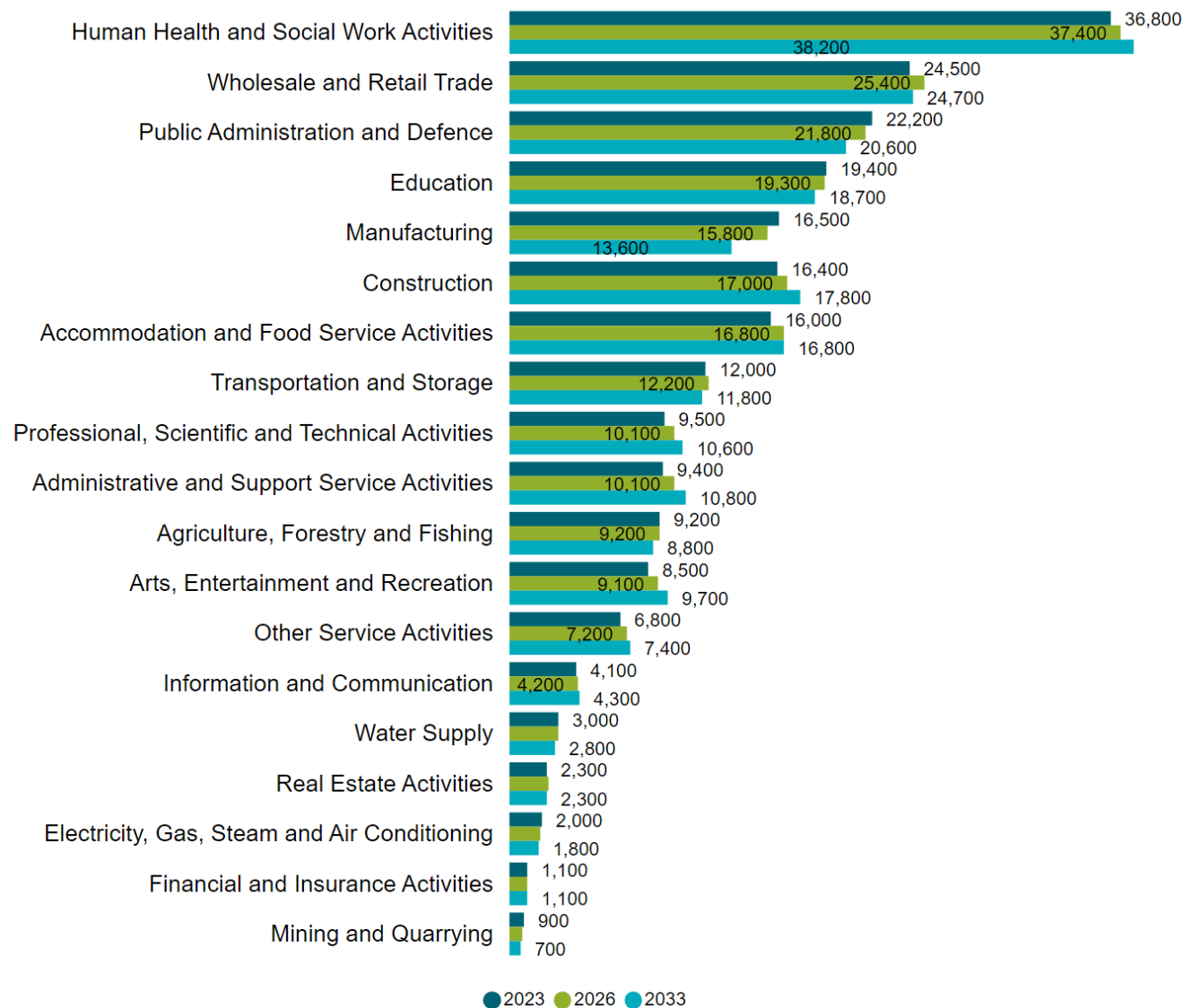
 **Public Administration and Defence**  
22,200

Between 2023 and 2026, employment in the region is forecast to grow, however industries will have varying performance. The greatest employment growth is forecast in Wholesale and Retail Trade, with 900 more people by 2026. While Manufacturing is forecast to have the greatest employment contraction (-600 people) in the mid-term.

Between 2026 and 2033, employment in the region is forecast to decline. The greatest employment growth is forecast in Human Health and Social Work Activities, with 900 more people by 2033. While Manufacturing is forecast to have the greatest employment contraction (-2,200 people) in the long-term.

*Figures may not sum due to rounding.*

## Employment by Industry, Highlands and Islands



# Employment by Occupation<sup>1</sup>

Largest employing occupation groups in 2023 (people):



**Administrative Occupations**

**18,600**



**Caring Personal Service Occupations**

**16,800**



**Elementary Occupations: Clerical and Services**

**16,800**

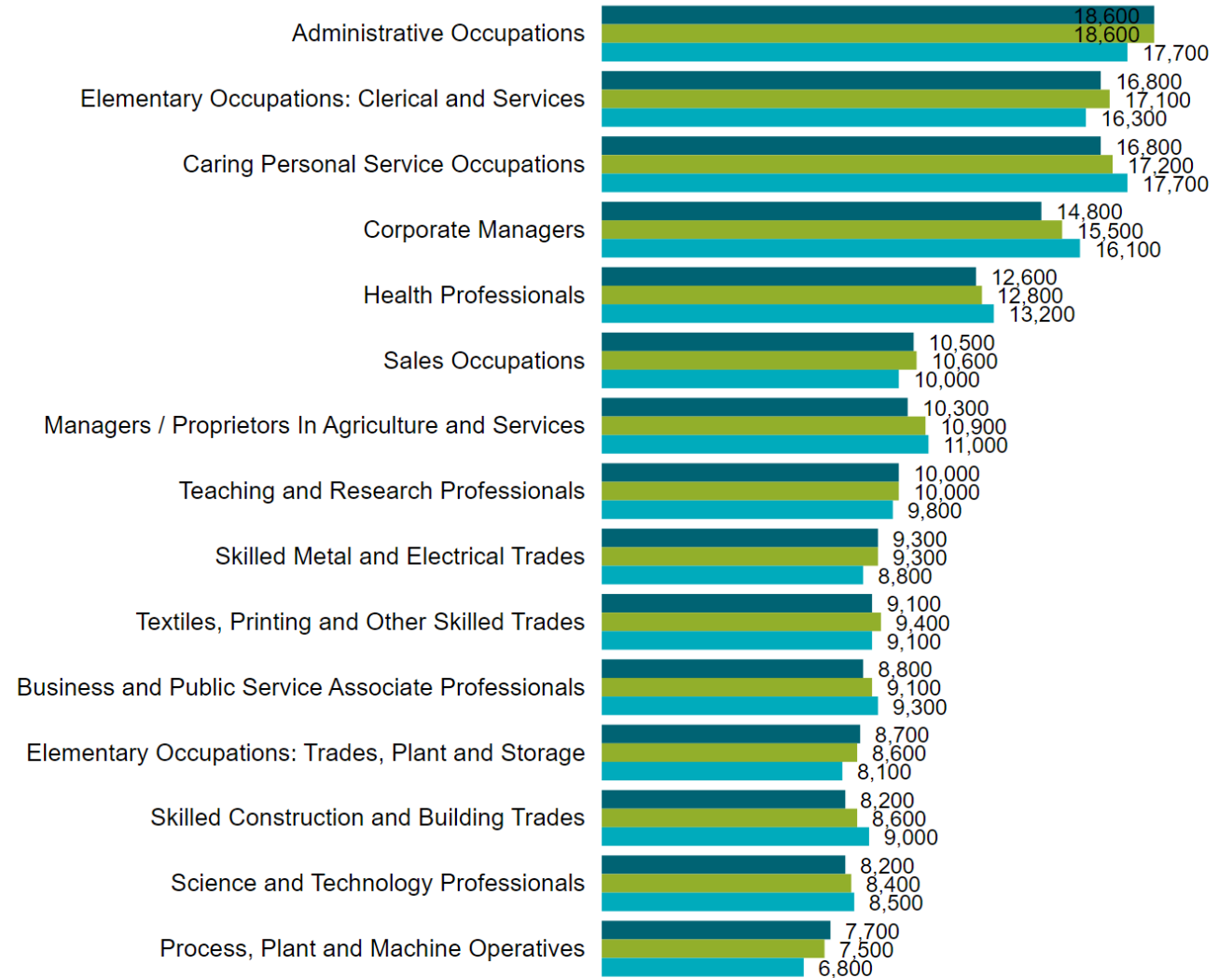
Between 2023 and 2026, the greatest growth is forecast to be in Corporate Managers (700 people). While Process, Plant and Machine Operatives is likely to experience the greatest contraction (-100 people).

Between 2026 and 2033, the greatest growth is forecast to be in Corporate Managers (600 people). While Administrative Occupations is likely to experience the greatest contraction (-800 people).

In 2023, 40.1% of employed people in the region were in 'higher-level' occupations, which was a lower percentage of the workforce than Scotland (47.9%). 'Mid-level' occupations accounted for 34.6% of the workforce, which was a higher percentage of the workforce than Scotland (28.8%). Around 25.3% of people were employed in 'lower-level' occupations, which was a higher percentage of the workforce than Scotland (23.3%).

*Figures may not sum due to rounding.*

## Employment by Top 15 Occupations, Highlands and Islands



● 2023 ● 2026 ● 2033



For data on employment by occupation at local authority level please see page 34 of the Data Matrix.

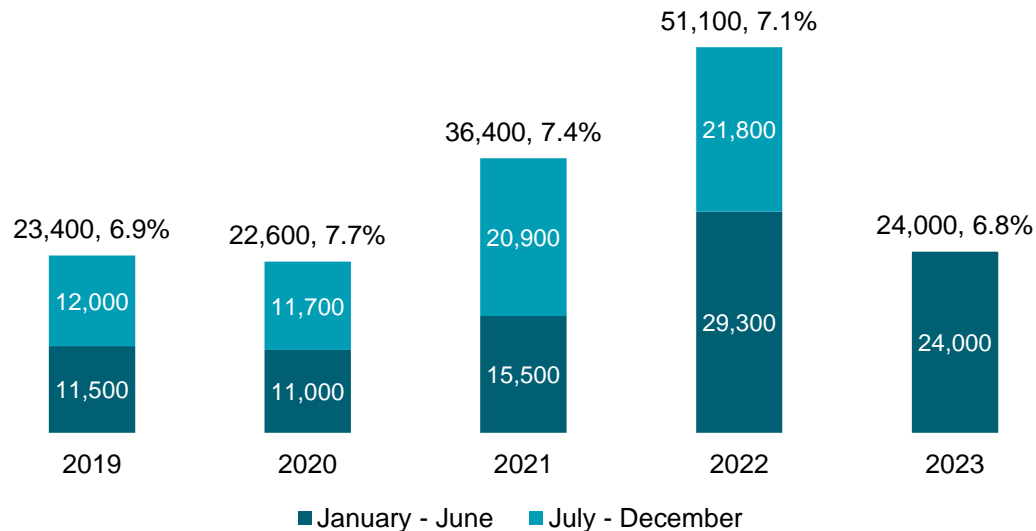
# Job Postings in the Highlands and Islands<sup>1</sup>

Online job postings data provides a useful barometer for the health of the jobs market. It is important to note that the data does not capture all activity, so it should be considered as an estimate only.

In 2021, the number of job postings recovered from the pandemic and surpassed pre-pandemic levels. Postings peaked in 2022 at 51,100 and numbers for the first six months of 2023 indicate a sustained demand for workers in the region.

Job postings in the Highlands and Islands accounted for 6.8% of Scotland's total job postings between January and June 2023.

## Job postings 2019 – 2023 and share of Scotland's total, Highlands and Islands

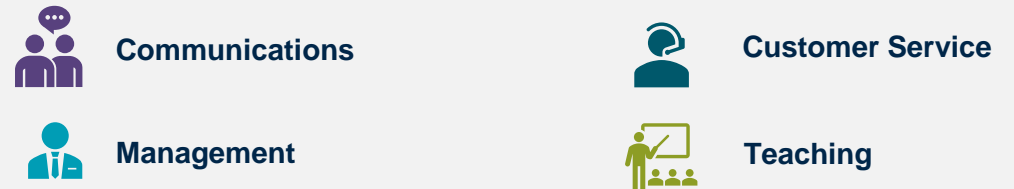


Between January and June 2023, there were **24,000 job postings** in the **Highlands and Islands**, of which:

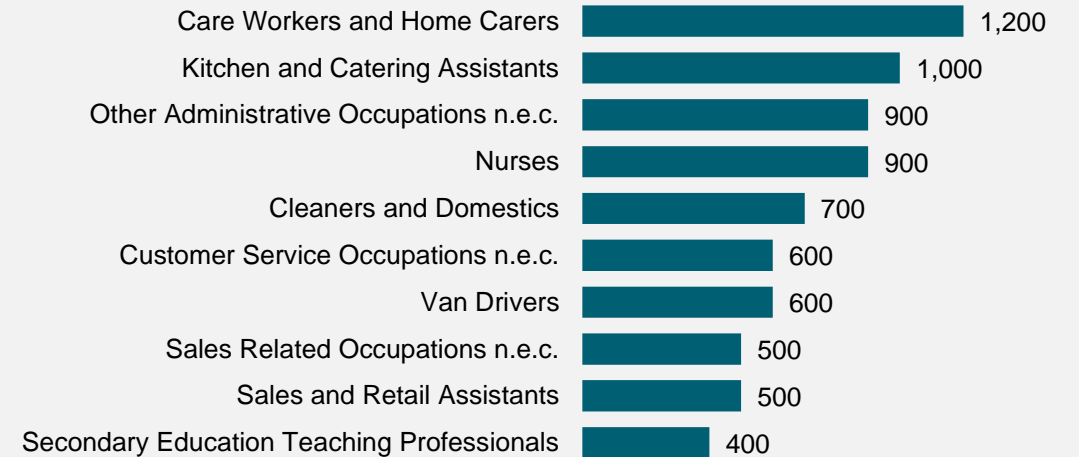
The locations with the most jobs advertised were:



The commonly requested skills and knowledge were:



The top job postings were:



*Figures may not sum due to rounding*

## Future Demand in the Mid-Term (2023-2026)<sup>1</sup>

Oxford Economics' forecasts should be used as guidance only on the overall trends based on current evidence - rather than definitive numbers. There are still a wide range of factors which may impact on the labour market. It is important to note that the forecasts do not account for national or regional activities, initiatives or investments such as those mentioned on page five, which are likely to influence the outlook presented. Users of the RSAs are encouraged to overlay the forecasts with their local knowledge.

In the Highlands and Islands, the labour market forecast for the mid-term (2023-2026) suggests employment is expected to grow, and there could be opportunities created as a result of the need to replace workers leaving the labour market due to retirement and other reasons.

The mid-term forecast suggests there could be a total requirement for **26,000** people in the **Highlands and Islands**. Between 2023 and 2026, replacement demand could create the need for **21,600** people, while **positive** expansion demand is forecast to result in **4,400 additional** workers.

In **Scotland**, there could be a total requirement for **335,600** people in the mid-term. Between 2023 and 2026, replacement demand could create the need for **278,600** people, while **positive** expansion demand is forecast to result in **57,000 additional** workers.

*Figures may not sum due to rounding.*



### Expansion Demand

the number of people required as a result of economic growth or contraction.

**Highlands and Islands: 4,400**  
people

**Scotland: 57,000** people



### Replacement Demand

the number of people required to replace workers leaving the labour market (i.e. retirement, move away, or change jobs).

**Highlands and Islands:**  
**21,600** people

**Scotland: 278,600** people



### Total Requirement

made up of expansion demand and replacement demand to show the total number of people required.

**Highlands and Islands:**  
**26,000** people

**Scotland: 335,600** people

The total requirement by qualifications for the **Highlands and Islands**:

SCQF 11-12	SCQF 7-10	SCQF 6	SCQF 5	SCQF 1-4	No qualifications
1,500	12,000	3,900	5,500	1,100	1,900
6%	46%	15%	21%	4%	7%

The total requirement by qualifications for **Scotland**:

SCQF 11-12	SCQF 7-10	SCQF 6	SCQF 5	SCQF 1-4	No qualifications
26,600	165,200	43,100	66,700	11,800	22,200
8%	49%	13%	20%	4%	7%



For data on future demand for skills at local authority level please see page 35 of the Data Matrix.

## Future Demand in the Mid-Term (2023-2026) by Industry<sup>1</sup>

By industry, the greatest number of people are forecast to be required in:



**Wholesale and Retail Trade**  
4,400



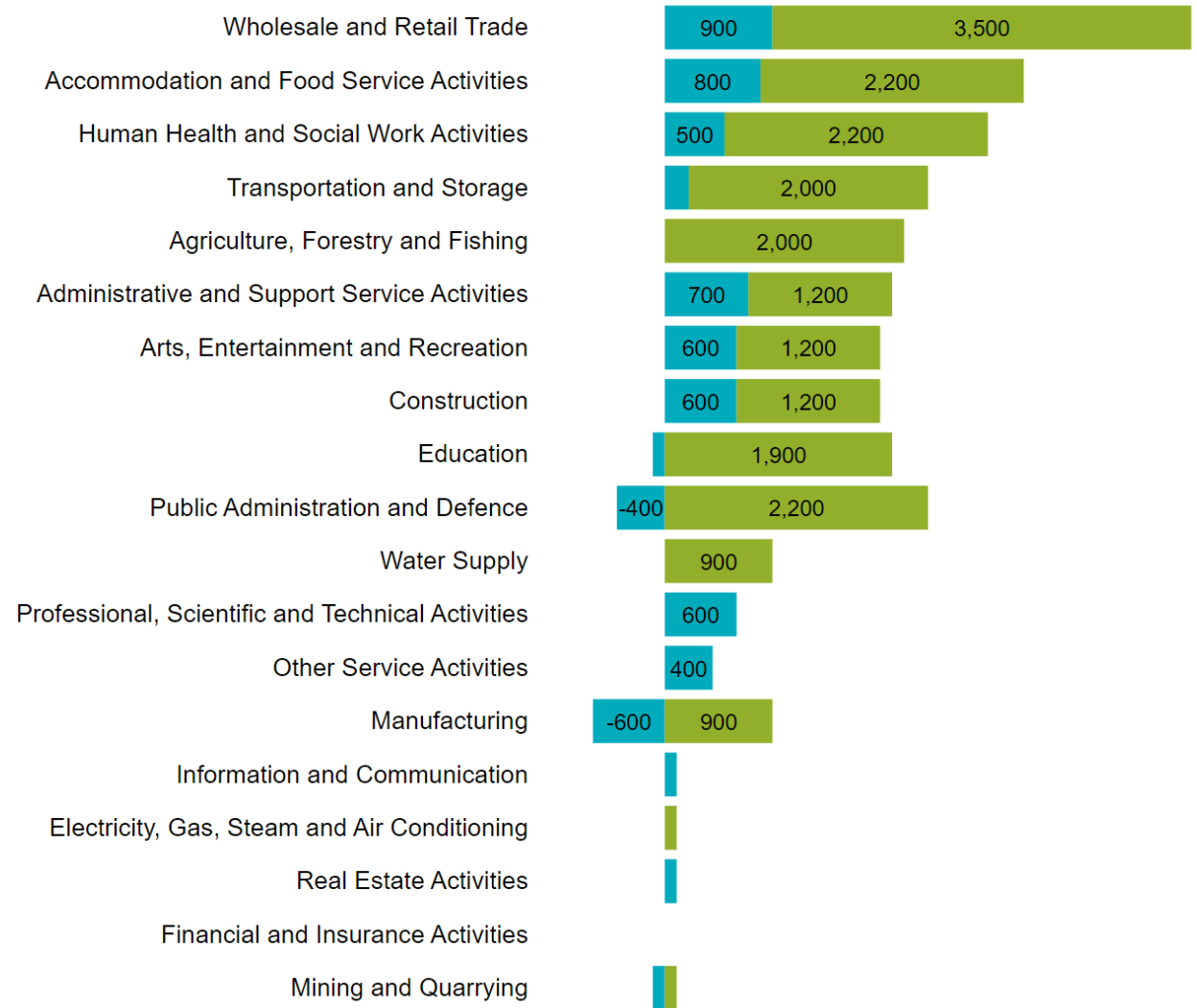
**Accommodation and Food Service Activities**  
3,000



**Human Health and Social Work Activities**  
2,700

Headline figures for each industry do not show how the composition of the industry is changing. Within industries there are changes to operating practices and consumer behaviours driven by automation, digitalisation and the transition to net zero. These shifts are not captured in the aggregated groups. We would encourage readers to bear this in mind when interpreting the data. For further sectoral evidence, please see our Sectoral Skills Assessments.

### Forecast Total Requirement by Industry (2023-2026), Highlands and Islands



Figures may not sum due to rounding.

● Expansion demand ● Replacement demand




For data on future demand by industry at local authority level please see page 36 of the Data Matrix.

# Future Demand in the Mid-Term (2023-2026) by Occupation<sup>1</sup>

By occupation, the greatest number of people are forecast to be required in:

 **Elementary Occupations: Clerical and Services**  
2,800

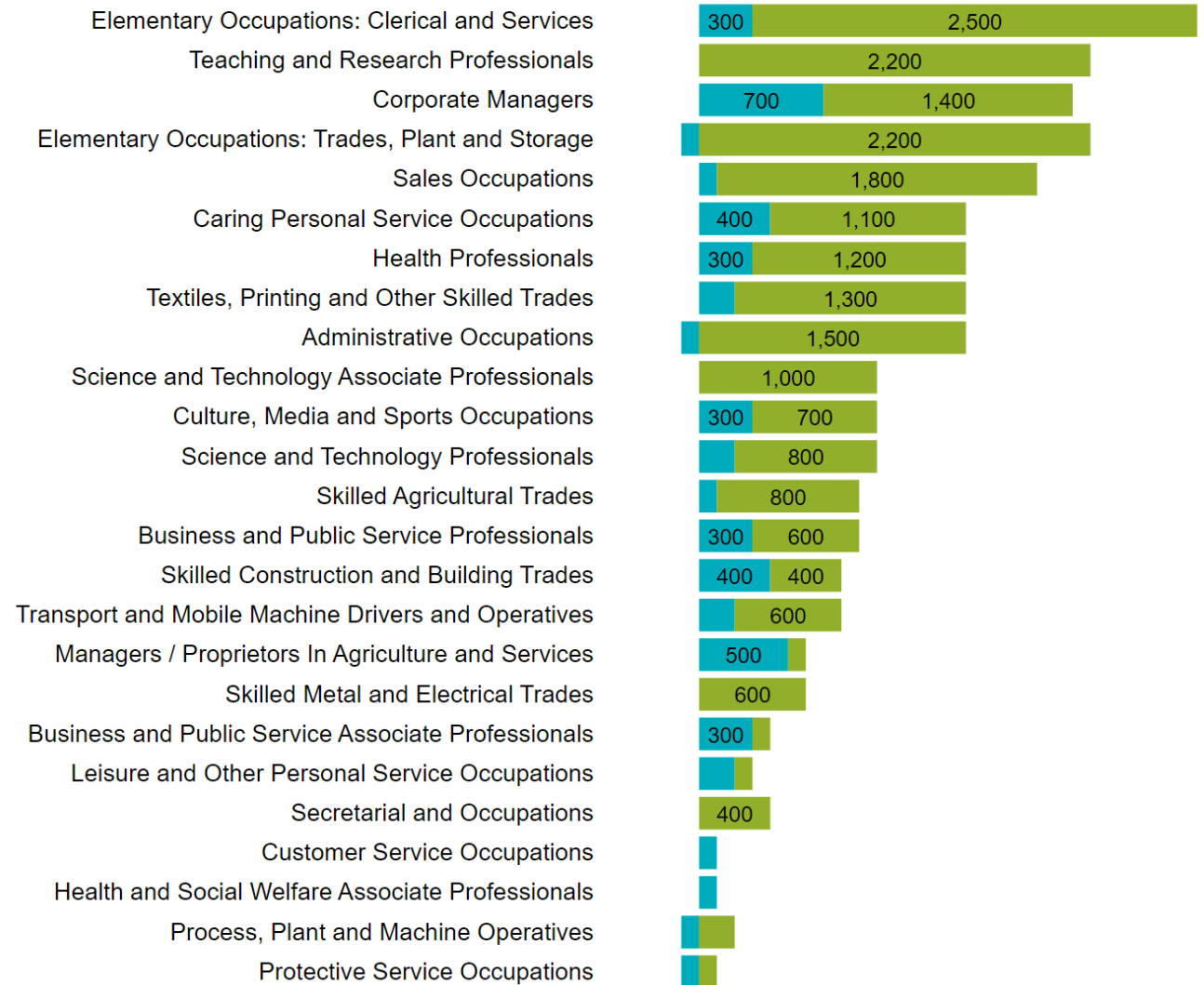
 **Teaching and Research Professionals**  
2,200

 **Elementary Occupations: Trades, Plant and Storage**  
2,100

As mentioned, there is forecast to be a total requirement for 26,000 people in the region over the mid-term. 'Higher-level' occupations are forecast to account for 41.3% of this total requirement, followed by 28.7% in 'mid-level' occupations and 30.0% in 'lower-level' occupations. Across Scotland, 50.1% of total requirement will be in 'higher-level' occupations, 23.2% in 'mid-level' occupations and 26.7% in 'lower-level' occupations.

*Figures may not sum due to rounding.*

## Forecast Total Requirement by Occupation (2023-2026), Highlands and Islands



● Expansion demand ● Replacement demand



For data on future demand by occupation at local authority level please see page 37 of the Data Matrix.

## Future Demand in the Long-Term (2026-2033)<sup>1</sup>

The long-term forecast is more changeable than the mid-term forecasts and could be influenced by a range of factors. It is important to note that the forecasts do not account for national or regional activities, initiatives or investments such as those mentioned on page five, which are likely to influence the long-term outlook presented. Oxford Economics' forecasts should be used as guidance on overall trends based on current evidence - rather than definitive numbers.

In the Highlands and Islands, the labour market forecast for the long-term (2026-2033) suggests there could be a demand for people a result of the need to replace workers leaving the labour market due to retirement and other reasons, while overall employment is expected to decline.

Forecasts for the long-term suggest there could be a total requirement for **50,800** people in the **Highlands and Islands**. Between 2026 and 2033, replacement demand could create the need for **53,200** people, while expansion demand is forecast to result in **-2,500** workers.

In **Scotland**, there could be a total requirement for **729,900** people in the long-term. Between 2026 and 2033, replacement demand could create the need for **707,200** people, while **positive** expansion demand is forecast to result in **22,700 additional** workers.

*Figures may not sum due to rounding.*



### Expansion Demand

the number of people required as a result of economic growth or contraction.

**Highlands and Islands:**  
**-2,500** people

**Scotland: 22,700** people



### Replacement Demand

the number of people required to replace workers leaving the labour market (i.e. retirement, move away, or change jobs).

**Highlands and Islands:**  
**53,200** people

**Scotland: 707,200** people



### Total Requirement

made up of expansion demand and replacement demand to show the total number of people required.

**Highlands and Islands:**  
**50,800** people

**Scotland: 729,900** people

The total requirement by qualifications for the **Highlands and Islands**:

SCQF 11-12	SCQF 7-10	SCQF 6	SCQF 5	SCQF 1-4	No qualifications
2,600	24,900	7,100	11,300	800	4,100
5%	49%	14%	22%	2%	8%

The total requirement by qualifications for **Scotland**:

SCQF 11-12	SCQF 7-10	SCQF 6	SCQF 5	SCQF 1-4	No qualifications
52,700	365,600	91,700	157,700	14,300	47,900
7%	50%	13%	22%	2%	7%



For data on future demand for skills at local authority level please see page 35 of the Data Matrix.

# Future Demand in the Long-Term (2026-2033) by Industry<sup>1</sup>

By industry, the greatest number of people are forecast to be required in:

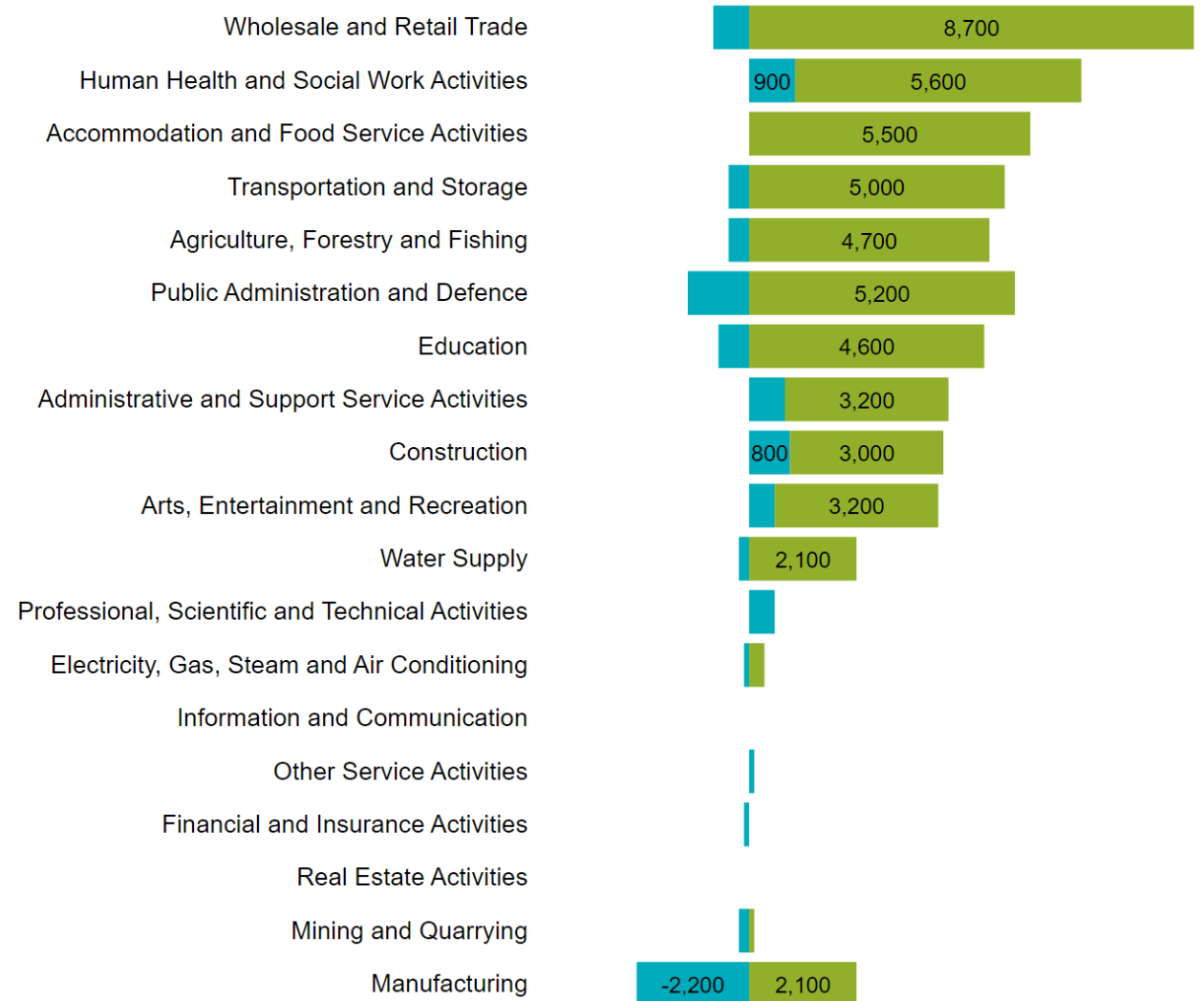
 **Wholesale and Retail Trade**  
7,900

 **Human Health and Social Work Activities**  
6,500

 **Accommodation and Food Service Activities**  
5,500

The mid-term forecast analysis indicated that some industries are experiencing a shift in their operational practices, and this trend is expected to continue in the long term.

## Forecast Total Requirement by Industry (2026-2033), Highlands and Islands



Figures may not sum due to rounding.

● Expansion demand ● Replacement demand



For data on future demand by industry at local authority level please see page 36 of the Data Matrix.



## Future Demand in the Long-Term (2026-2033) by Occupation<sup>1</sup>

By occupation, the greatest number of people are forecast to be required in:



**Teaching and Research Professionals**

5,100



**Elementary Occupations: Clerical and Services**

4,900



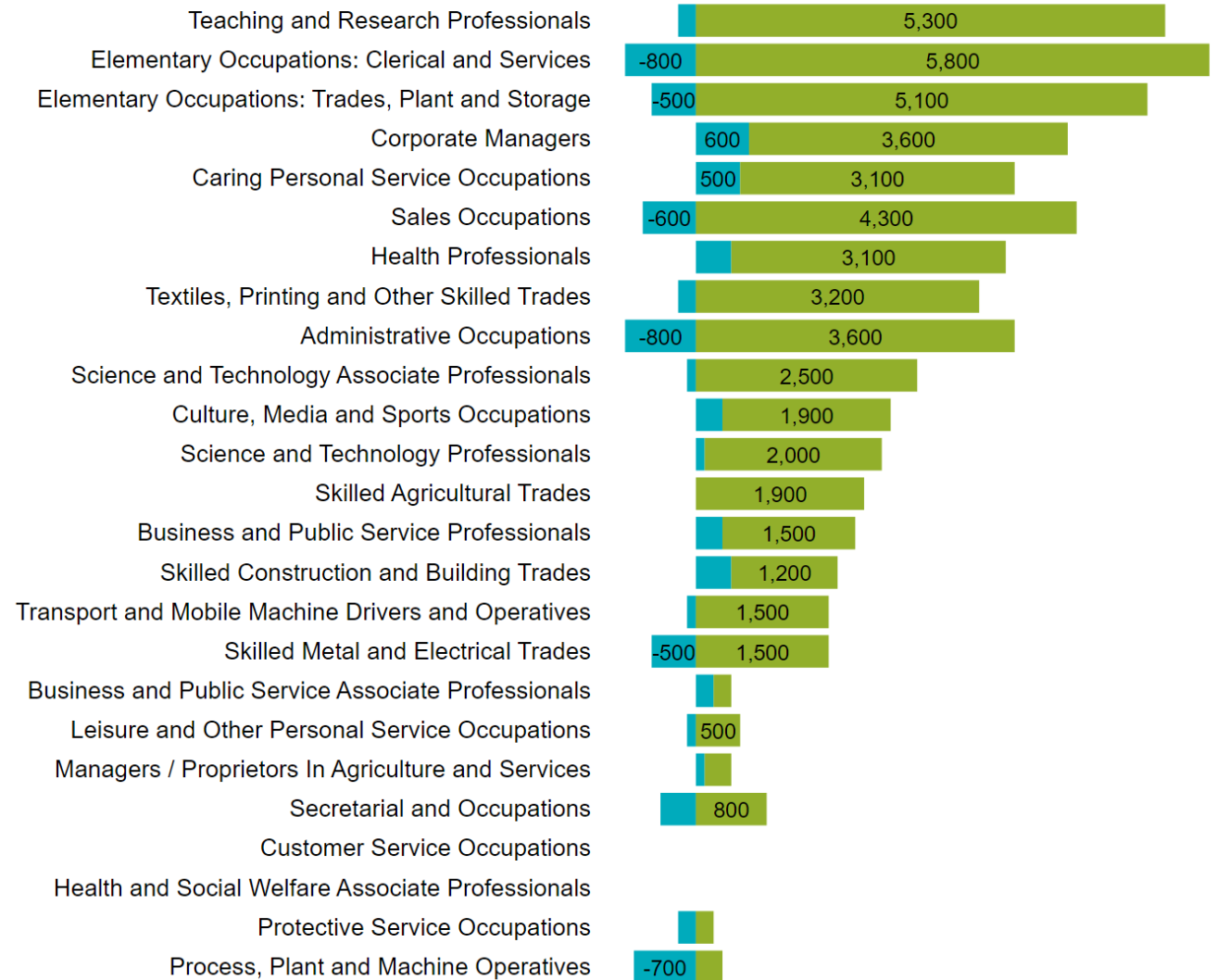
**Elementary Occupations: Trades, Plant and Storage**

4,500

There is forecast to be a total requirement for 50,800 people in the region over the long-term. 'Higher-level' occupations are forecast to account for 43.2% of this total requirement, followed by 28.9% in 'mid-level' occupations and 27.9% in 'lower-level' occupations. Across Scotland, 51.9% of total requirement will be in 'higher-level' occupations, 23.9% in 'mid-level' occupations and 24.2% in 'lower-level' occupations.

*Figures may not sum due to rounding.*

### Forecast Total Requirement by Occupation (2026-2033), Highlands and Islands



● Expansion demand ● Replacement demand



For data on future demand by occupation at local authority level please see page 37 of the Data Matrix.

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