

December 2012

Public sector workforce in Scotland

The latest Scottish workforce statistics have been published for the third quarter (Q3) of 2012. This briefing also looks at long term job losses since the high point of 2008/9. Some of the key points are as follows: (based on headcount not full time equivalent):

- In Q3 2012 there were 552,100 people employed in the public sector in Scotland (581,300 including financial institutions), 22.3% of the total workforce, **a decrease of 8,700 (1.5%)** since Q3 2011. **51,700 jobs have been lost** in the public sector since the 2009 high point.
- Of the total 581,300 people employed in the public sector in Scotland, 486,000 (83.6%) is accounted for by public sector employment devolved to Scotland and 95,300 (16.4%) relates to reserved public sector employment.
- Total employment in the devolved public sector has decreased from 491,700 in Q3 2011 to 486,000 in Q3 2012, a **decrease of 5,700 (1.2%)** over the year. **40,000 lost since 2008**.
- The decrease in employment in the devolved public sector has been driven by a decrease in total local government employment **decreased by 5,300 (1.9%)** over the year to Q3 2012. **34,500 jobs have been lost** in local government since the 2008 high point. Local government makes up 57.3% of workforce but has taken 66.7% of the workforce cuts. This confirms the view that councils and their workers have taken the brunt of the cuts.
- Employment in further education colleges **decreased by 900 (6%)** in the last year. **2700 jobs have been lost** since 2008/9. This is the biggest cut in proportional terms.
- There were increases in the NHS, **up 700 (0.5%)** in the last year although 1491 staff transferred from Highland Council to NHS Highland. However, **4500 jobs have been lost** since 2009. The real figure is closer to 6,000 when transfers are taken into account.
- **NDPBs up 100 (0.7%)** and public **corporations up 200 (2.5%)** in the last year. The new public body Scottish Canals is now included in these statistics from Q3 2012 onward. However, **1300 jobs have been lost** in these sectors since 2008.

In summary, 51,700 public sector jobs have been lost as a consequence of the financial crash and austerity economics. A 6.7% cut in devolved jobs. Local government (11%) and FE colleges (16%) have taken the brunt of these cuts. These cuts have also been a factor in the length of the recession as shown in the latest Scottish Economy Watch analysis.

Useful links

- [Workforce statistics](#)
- [Scottish Economy Watch](#)

UNISON Scotland's key campaigns

- [Public Works](#)
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