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A Profile of Moray

Moray is the 8th largest Council area in Scotland, covering an area of 2238 square kilometres [1], from the Cairngorm Mountains in the south to the coast of the Moray Firth in the north. However, in terms of its population, it ranks 26th out of 32 with a population of just 87770 [1]. Over 27% of Moray is covered by woodland [2]. The average population density is low at just 39 people per square kilometre, compared with 66 people per square kilometre nationally [1]. However, approximately 56% of the population live in the 5 main towns of Elgin, Forres, Buckie, Lossiemouth and Keith [3], where the population density is approximately 2500 people per square kilometre [4].

Overall, Moray is one of the least deprived areas in Scotland, as defined by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), having no data zones in the 15% most deprived in Scotland and just 2 in the 20% most deprived areas, both of which are in Elgin. This represents just 1.7% of Moray's data zones, the lowest in Scotland with the exception of the three island groups. However, the rural nature of Moray means that 27.6% of its data zones are within the 15% most access deprived in Scotland, due to the financial cost, time and inconvenience of travelling to basic services [5].

Prosperity

Although categorised as one of the least deprived local authority areas in Scotland, the median gross weekly wage in Moray is the lowest in Scotland, at £388.40 compared with £461.80 nationally [6]. The SIMD states that 9.3% of Moray is income deprived, which accounts for 8,169 residents. However, the level of income deprivation in Moray varies greatly across the area, from 1.5% in Kinloss to 22.7% in one area of Buckie [5].

The working age population accounts for approximately 61% of the total population of Moray, with around 85% of the working-age population (around 54% of the total population) being economically active. Nationally, about 63% of the population are of working age, 80% of whom are economically active (about 50% of total population). In Moray, 81% of the working-age population is in employment, around 13% of whom are self-employed, compared with 76% & 10% respectively for Scotland as a whole. Almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of employee jobs are in the service industry, a further 15% are in manufacturing and 7% are in construction. Nearly 10% of employee jobs are tourism-related but this includes jobs that are also part of the service industry. Equivalent figures for Scotland show the main differences to be in the proportions of employees in manufacturing and the service industry, which are about 6% lower and 8 higher respectively [6].

Of the working-age population that is economically inactive, approximately 73% report not wanting a job and over 60% of these are female. The picture is very similar nationally. During 2008, 3.8% (1,800) of the economically active population in Moray were unemployed, compared with 4.9% nationally. However, there were a further 2,100 people within the economically inactive (4.1% of the working age population) in Moray who wanted a job. They are not classed as unemployed because they have either not sought work in the last four weeks or are not available to start work. The equivalent figure for Scotland is 5.6% [6].

In February 2009, 10.7% of the working age population in Moray were key benefits claimants (claiming one or more key DWP benefits¹), a 1.3% decrease since August 2008 compared with 15.1% in Scotland (16% in August 2008). The most common main benefit in Moray was Employment and Support Allowance / Incapacity Benefit, claimed by 3360 (59%) of key benefits claimants, while 1480 or 26% of key benefits claimants were claiming job seekers allowance. The number of claimants of both of these benefits has increased by 5% since August 2008. The split nationally was very similar to Moray [6].

In total there were 1,354 JSA claimants in August 2009, 71% of whom were male. Approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ of all claimants were aged 25-49yrs and a further 34% were aged 18-24yrs, an increase of 3% since June 2009 although the overall total of claimants has reduced by almost 2% in this time (from 1379 to 1354). The majority of claimants, 76%, had been claiming for 6 months or less, a further 16% between 6 and 12 months, and 7% over 12 months [6].

The SIMD identifies no data zones in Moray that are in the 15% most employment deprived [5].

Health

General health in Moray is reported as being slightly better than nationally with nearly 93% of Moray's population reporting good or fairly good health and just 7% reporting not good health. This compares with 90% and 10% respectively for Scotland [7]. The percentage of the population that has a limiting long-term illness is approximately 3% lower in Moray than nationally, at 17% of the population compared with 20% [7].

The relationship between health and tenure indicates that a smaller proportion of occupants of social rented accommodation report good or fairly good health than occupants of owned or privately rented/rent free accommodation, at 88% compared with 94%. This is reflected in the incidence of limiting long-term illness, which is 10% higher for occupants of social rented accommodation, at 24%, than for occupants of owned or privately rented/rent free accommodation. The spread across age groups is comparable, with 65-84yr olds representing the largest proportion having a long-term illness for each tenure type. The national picture is similar with 82% of those in social rented accommodation reporting good or fairly good health, 93% of those in owned and 89% of those in private rented/rent free. The proportion of those living in social rented accommodation with a limiting long-term illness is twice that of those living in owned accommodation. As with Moray, spread across age groups is comparable, with 65-84yr olds again representing the largest proportion of each tenure type having a limiting long-term illness [7].

¹ Key DWP (Department of Work & Pensions) benefits include: bereavement benefit, carer's allowance, disability living allowance, incapacity benefit, severe disablement allowance, income support, jobseeker's allowance, and widow's benefit.

The standardised death rate in Moray is slightly lower than nationally at 9.8 per 1,000 population compared with 10.7 per 1,000 population. The main cause of death in Moray in both females and males is diseases of the circulatory system, accounting for approximately 1/3 of all deaths in both genders in 2008. This was closely followed by cancers, which accounted for a further 26% of all female deaths and a further 31% of male deaths. The picture is almost identical nationally [8]. The SIMD identifies just 1 data zone, 0.9% of the total in Moray that is within the 15% most health deprived; this is in Elgin [5].

Mid-2008 population estimates suggest that 17.5% of the population of Moray is aged under 16yrs, 60.5% is of working age and 22% is of pensionable age. This translates as 15365 under 16s, 53158 of working age and 19247 of pensionable age [1]. The age split is very similar nationally. 2006-based population projections for Moray, suggest that the under 16 population will reduce by 9% by 2011, the working age population will increase by 1% but the pensionable population will increase by 10% [9]. This would mean 2011 population numbers of 14627 under 16s, 53114 of working age and 20029 of pensionable age. These changes will mean that the proportion of the population that is of pensionable age will increase by around 2% from approximately 20% to nearly 23%. National figures are again very similar although the projected proportion of the population of pensionable age in 2011 is lower at 20%. Both in Moray and nationally, nearly 2/3 of the pensionable age group is female.

Education

In Moray in 2008 there were 6759 primary school pupils and 5735 secondary school pupils, an overall drop of around 10% since 2003 (comprising a 9% drop in primary pupils & a 1% drop in secondary pupils). The number of pupils over 16yrs has increased over the same period by 59%. The number of pupils from ethnic minority groups has increased from 171 in 2004 to 231 in 2008. There have been comparable changes nationally in primary school pupils and in pupils over 16yrs. Although there has been a fall in secondary pupils nationally, this was much greater than in Moray, at 4% [10]. There are 2 data zones in Moray, 1.7% of the total, that are within the 15% most education deprived in Scotland, both of which are in Elgin [5].

In primary schools, absence figures for 2004/05 to 2007/08 are very consistent, accounting for around 4.5% of half days, of which an average of 14% is unauthorised. These figures are slightly lower than nationally [11].

In secondary schools, the absence rate has risen slightly, from 7.6% of half days in 2004/05 to 8.1% in 2007/08. Of this, the proportion of unauthorised absence has increased from 22% to 31%. Conversely, the national absence rate has fallen slightly over the same period although Moray is still slightly lower than nationally. The proportion of unauthorised absence nationally has remained fairly constant at around 21% [11].

Further breakdown of absence figures is not possible as the Scottish Government national Statistics have amalgamated absence figures due to ongoing concerns over the quality and consistency in the recording of the reasons for absence.

Between 2003/04 and 2006/07, the rate of exclusions in Moray's primary schools was fairly constant at 12 per 1000 pupils, falling to 9 per 1000 in 2007/08. Although initially similar, the national rate has risen steadily from 11 per 1000 in 2003/04 to 15 per 1000 in 2007/08. In Moray's secondary schools, the rate has increased slightly from 59 per 1000 pupils in 2003/04 to 76 per 1000 pupils in 2007/08. Scotland's rate rose from 105 per 1000 pupils in 2003/04 to 120 per 1000 in 2006/07, falling back to 106 per 1000 in 2007/08. However, it remains much higher than in Moray. The vast majority of exclusions in both Moray and nationally are temporary. In Moray between 2003/04 and 2007/08, excluding 2006/07, about 6 pupils were removed from the register each year – approximately 1% of total exclusions. In 2006/07 just 2 pupils were removed, representing 0.4% of total exclusions. The level nationally has been around 0.5% every year since 2003/04 [12].

Of 1231 school leavers in Moray in 2007/08, 89.5% went on to positive destinations², 9% were unemployed but seeking employment and the remainder were either unemployed and not seeking employment or their destination was unknown. The numbers going on to further education and employment have both risen by about 4% since 2005/06, while numbers in all other categories have either remained fairly consistent or fallen over the same period. Nationally, a slightly smaller proportion has gone on to a positive destination and the split within the positive destinations category was slightly different, with a higher proportion going into higher education and training, and less into employment. The proportion going into further education was about the same [13].

Housing

The total number of dwellings in Moray in 2008 was 41,649, a rise of 6% since 2003, slightly higher than the rise nationally of 5% [10]. In Moray, and nationally, approximately 64% of the population live in owner-occupied accommodation. However, Moray has a smaller proportion of people living in social rented accommodation, at 20% compared with 24%, but a higher percentage renting privately, 11% compared with 6%. A smaller proportion of Moray's population lives in lone parent families – 8% compared with 13% nationally, and a slightly smaller proportion of people living alone, at 12% compared with 14%. However, the same proportion of people aged 65yrs and over lives on their own, in both Moray and Scotland as a whole, at 5.7% [7].

Between 2001 and 2007, the mean house sale price rose by 144% in Moray, from £58,584 to £142,956. The equivalent national figure is 104%. Over the same period, the number of house sales in Moray rose by 22%, from 1,899 to 2,312. The number of house sales also rose nationally, by 28%. The median house sale price in Moray more than doubled, from £47,000 in 2001 to £116,226 in 2007 and a similar, though slightly smaller, increase was seen nationally. The median price being lower than the mean price is reflective of the large proportion of band A-C dwellings in Moray, approximately 68%, slightly higher than Scotland as a whole at 62%. Correspondingly, the proportion of dwellings in bands F-H is small in Moray, at approximately 6%, half that of Scotland. Between 2003 and 2008 in both Moray and Scotland, the proportion of dwellings in bands A-C fell slightly, while the proportion of dwellings in bands F-H rose slightly [10].

There are no data zones in Moray that are within the 15% most housing deprived in Scotland. However, 4 of Moray's data zones (3.4% of the total) are within the 20% most housing deprived in Scotland, 2 in Elgin, 1 in Forres and 1 in Lossiemouth [5].

Recorded crime in Moray

In Moray in 2007/08 the total number of crimes recorded reduced by 10% from 2006/07 compared with an 8% decrease in Scotland. The rate of crimes in Moray in 2007/08 was lower than nationally, at 609 per 10,000 population compared with 749 per 10,000 population. The total number of crimes recorded in each of the last 11 years shows a marginally increasing trend in Moray, compared with a reducing trend for Scotland as a whole [14].

The percentage of crimes cleared up in Moray rose by 4% to 45% in 2007/08, compared with a 1% rise to 48% for Scotland as a whole. The trend in Moray over the last 11 years is virtually level compared with a slightly increasing trend in Scotland as a whole [14].

Within Moray there are 12 data zones in the 15% most crime deprived, representing 10.3% of data zones in Moray [5]. Of the 12, 1 is in Keith, 3 are in Forres, 5 are in Elgin and 3 are in Buckie.

Overall for 2007/08, Moray was ranked 21st out of 32 local authority areas in Scotland for total recorded crimes per 10,000 population (where 1 has the highest rate and 32 the lowest). Moray's highest ranking of 2nd was for the crime category crimes of indecency, while their lowest ranking was for non-sexual crimes of violence for which they ranked 25th out of 32. In all crime categories

² **Positive:** includes higher education, further education, training, voluntary work and employment. This is in line with the definition of positive destinations set out in Indicator 10 of the Scottish Budget Spending Review 2007: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/11/30090722/18>

except crimes of indecency for which they ranked higher than Scotland, Moray's ranking was better than Scotland's.

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