West Lothian Key Economic Indicators

West Lothian Economic Partnership

June 2010

An update from West Lothian Economic Partnership to help you understand the local economy.

Compared to the previous month, the May unemployment rate in West Lothian dropped by 0.1% to 4.6%.

- The number of JSA jobless in West Lothian for May is 4,953. This is a decrease of 88 on the previous month.
- West Lothian's unemployment rate of 4.6% is higher than both the Scottish (4.2%) and Great Britain (3.9%) rates. West Lothian's unemployment rate ranks joint 10th highest with South Lanarkshire.
- Youth unemployment (18-24 year olds) in West Lothian for May is 1,545. This is a decrease of 20 on the last month.
- There were 711 notified Jobcentre vacancies in May - a net decrease of 7 from April 2010.
- The ratio of jobseekers to jobcentre vacancies stands at 7 jobseekers for every vacancy advertised in West Lothian jobcentres. In comparison, Scotland's ratio is 5.0:1, Great Britain is 3.8:1 with North Ayrshire having the highest ratio of 12.2:1 (12 jobseekers for every vacancy) of claimants to vacancies of Scottish local authorities.

Jobs and Investment

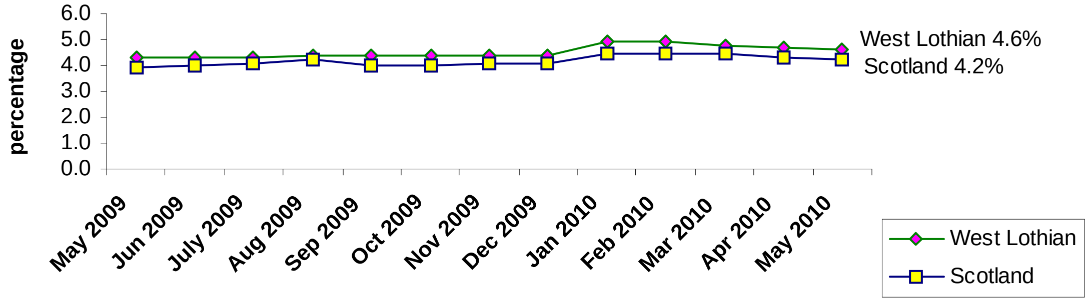
Here are some positive jobs, investment and business news items for the West Lothian area:

- A bionic hand which can be programmed using wireless technology has been unveiled by West Lothian-based **Touch Bionics**. The i-Limb Pulse offers users an "unparalleled degree of flexibility".
- **Weight Angel Limited** has relocated from Edinburgh to a 5,000 sq ft manufacturing unit at Oakbank Industry Park in Livingston. Weight Angel is an award-winning system that warns of overloading in commercial vehicles.
- Home improvement firm **1st Choice Glazing** has expanded into new, larger premises at Glasgow Road, Bathgate.
- **Visit West Lothian** has launched a new campaign and website to highlight West Lothian's hidden gems. The destination marketing company is aiming to raise West Lothian's profile and attract more people to explore its many beauty sites, places of historical significance and leisure attractions.
- Blackburn based removals firm **Matt Purdie & Sons** have won the prestigious Domestic Mover of the Year Competition 2010 from the British Association of Removers.
- **Livingston FC's** Almondvale ground has been renamed the Braidwood Motor Company Stadium after the Second Division club struck a three-year naming rights deal with the Pumpherston based firm, which runs until the end of the 2012-13 season.
- Boghall butcher **Paul Doyle**, a two-time World Scotch Pie champion, has added British Pie Champion to his titles. He beat off the competition in the Fish and Vegetarian categories.
- **Livingston Autoparts**, one of the largest independent distributors of motor components in Scotland, has launched a new e-shop to support its expansion into retail parts & accessories sales.

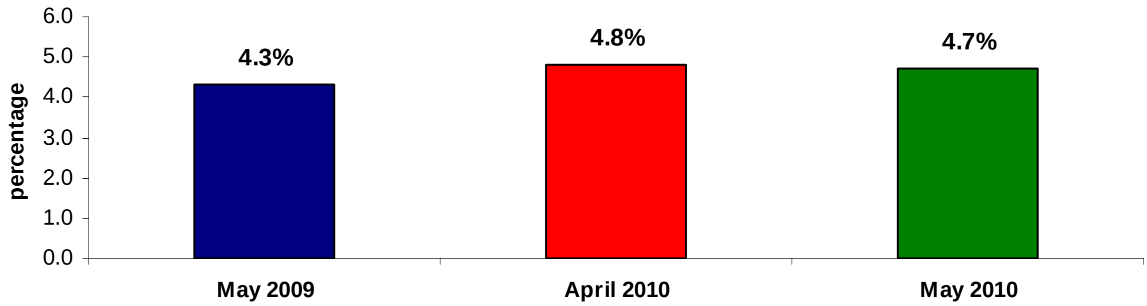
Unemployment

Unemployment in West Lothian stands at 4.6% (% is a proportion of resident working age people) in May 2010. The latest JSA claimant count figure shows a decrease of 88 on the previous month and now stands at 4,953. West Lothian's unemployment rate of 4.6% is higher than both the Scottish and Great Britain rates of respectively 4.2% and 3.9%.

Unemployment May 2010 (% JSA Claimants as a proportion of resident working age people)



West Lothian unemployment - % of claimants as a proportion of resident working age people)



Source: ONS claimant count rates

Unemployment - total JSA claimants (May 2010)			
	Males	Females	Total
West Lothian (numbers)	3,644	1,309	4,953
West Lothian (%)	6.6%	2.5%	4.6%
Scotland (%)	6.0%	2.3%	4.2%
Great Britain (%)	5.4%	2.3%	3.9%

Source: ONS claimant count with rates and proportions
Note: % is a proportion of resident working age people

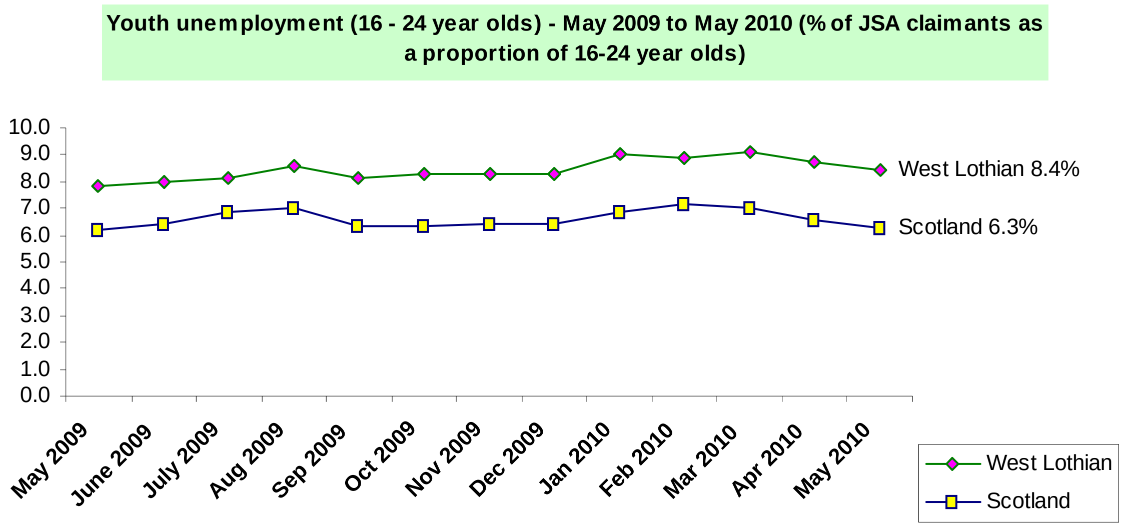
Included on page 9 is a breakdown of unemployment by local area within West Lothian based on the former 32 Scottish local authority wards. This shows that those wards with the highest rate of unemployment are Armadale Central (8.9%), Craigshill (8.3%) and Boghall (7.8%). Those with the lowest are Kingsfield (1.8%), Preston (2.0%) and Murieston (2.1%). In general, unemployment is higher in the southwest of West Lothian and lower in Linlithgow and the southeast of the area.

The latest unemployment data for the UK based on the preferred government measure, is for the three months to April. The number of people unemployed increased by 23,000 to 2.47million (a rate of 7.9%) in comparison to the previous quarter (November 2009 to January 2010). When compared with the figures for the three months to March 2010, unemployment has fallen from 2.51 million. However, the total number of people claiming JSA in May was 1.48 million a drop of 30,900 from last month.

N.B. JSA based unemployment figures do not provide the full picture. The headline JSA figure, however, does help to indicate the latest trend or change at a national or local level and whether the economic down turn is beginning to bite. The Government's favoured method of measuring unemployment - the ILO method - does not readily translate into up to date local area estimates.

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Youth unemployment - 16 to 24 year olds includes the MC,MC group and it is therefore important that it is tracked. The following graph shows youth unemployment as a percentage of all 16 to 24 year olds, comparing West Lothian with Scotland. West Lothian has a higher proportion (8.4%) for May than Scotland (6.3%) of youth unemployment. Although both have followed a parallel trend in the last two years.



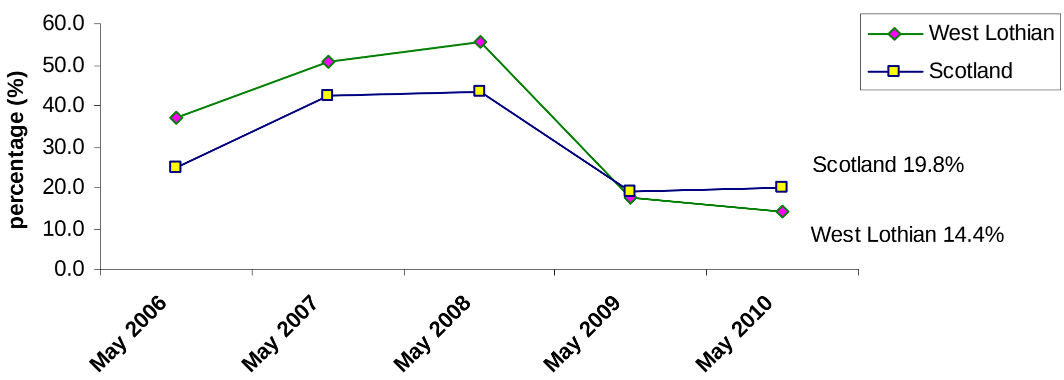
Source: ONS claimant count

N.B. Between 400 and 500, 16 to 17 year olds were registered unemployed with Skills Development Scotland most of whom will not be claiming JSA. Therefore, it is estimated that the total level of unemployment for 16 to 24 year olds is about 2,000.

Job Vacancies

The number and type of Jobcentre Plus vacancies also provide a snapshot of the local labour market. It is estimated that Jobcentre Plus vacancies account for about a third of all available employment opportunities. In West Lothian the most common type of vacancies tend to reflect the main employment sectors e.g. business services, retail and manufacturing.

Job vacancies as a % of JSA claimants

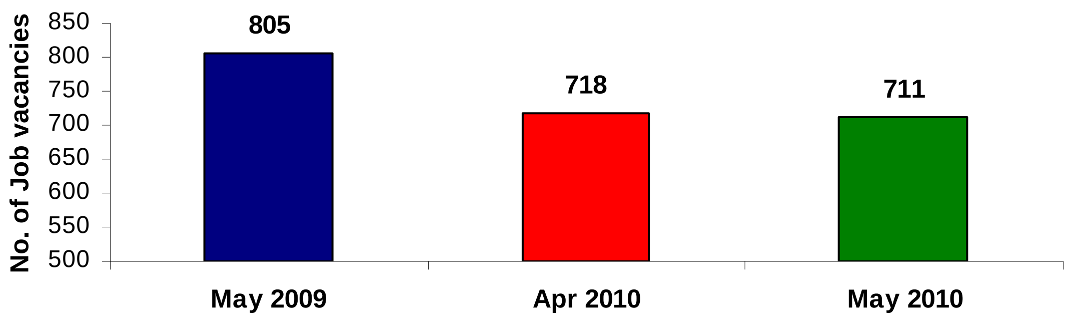


Source: ONS annual business inquiry employee analysis

The graph above compares the rate of job vacancies expressed as a percentage of the number of JSA claimants for both West Lothian and Scotland. West Lothian's rate for May 2010 stands at 14.4% and Scotland's at 19.8%. This means there are currently 7 jobseekers for every vacancy advertised in West Lothian jobcentres.

The actual number of West Lothian job vacancies for this May is 711. This is a net decrease of 7 vacancies on the previous month.

Job vacancies notified to Jobcentre



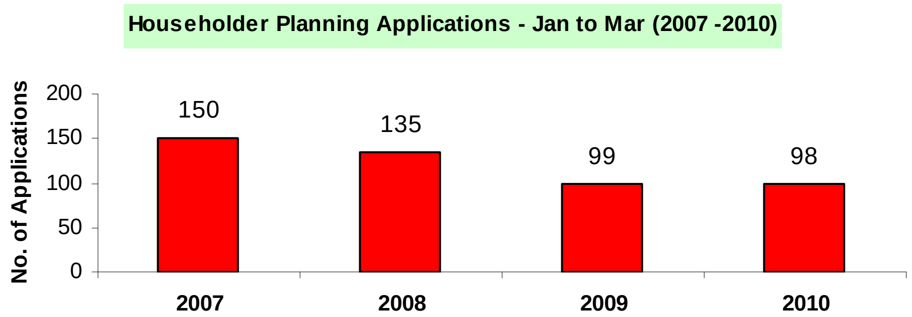
Source: Jobcentre Plus vacancies

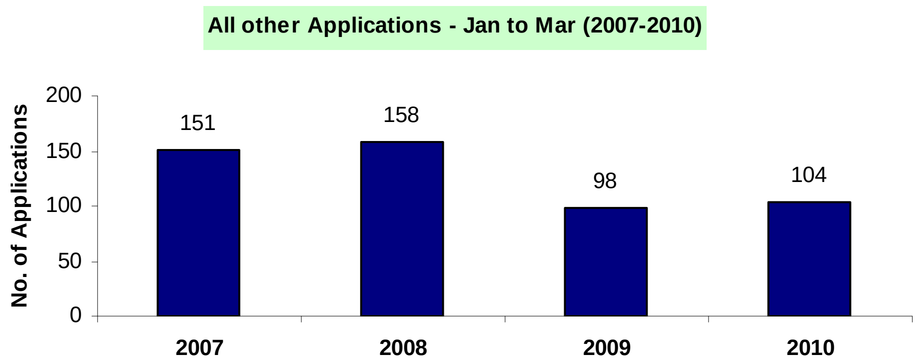
Planning Applications

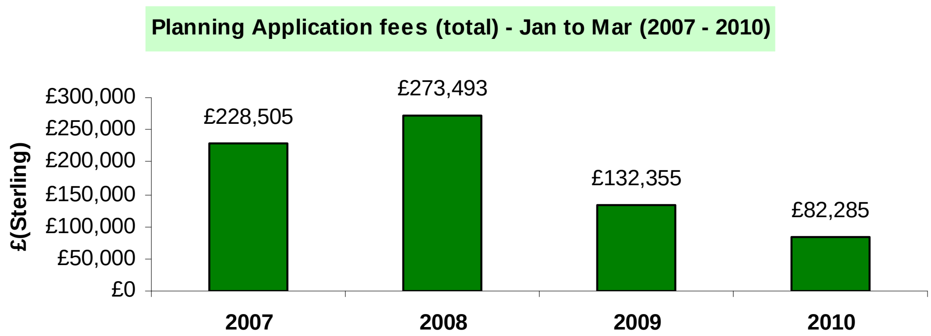
Planning applications provide another measure of the health of the local economy. The numbers of planning applications received indicate levels of business and consumer confidence, economic growth, development investment and development change.

The following charts split planning applications into two categories: householder and all other planning applications. Householder applications include house extensions, conservatories and garages. All other application types include listed building applications, advertisement consent, small-scale individual developments and applications by business and industry.

Because there is seasonal variance in development applications, the charts below focus on change over the period January to March for the last three years. Both the number of householder planning applications and all other planning applications received have fallen but appear to have stabilised in the last year. Application fees received over the period January to March show a marked decrease over the last two years. Notably, fees have halved in 2009 in relation to the previous year due to less planning applications being received; the result of recession.



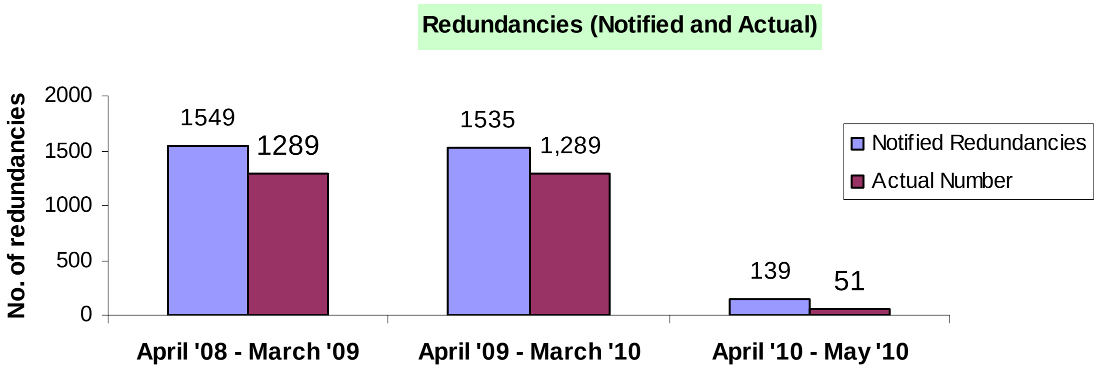




Source: West Lothian Council, March 2010

Redundancies

The level and rate of redundancies are important measures of the business situation. In the first two months of the new financial year (2010/2011) there were 139 notified redundancies of which there were 51actual or confirmed redundancies.



Source: Skills Development Scotland

N.B. Notified redundancy figures are gathered from firms legally obliged to notify BERR (Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform) when proposing to dismiss 20 or more employees as redundant and from those firms who voluntarily notify redundancies of less than 20 employees.

Shop Occupancies

The table below shows the number of shop units occupied (excluding charity shops) as a percentage of total stock for each of West Lothian's six town centres. The percentage of charity shop units in each town is shown separately. A comparison is made between June 2010 (latest information available) and June 2009.

Shop unit occupancy comparing June 2010 and June 2009 - expressed as percentage of total town centre shop units

Town Centre	June 2010 (%)		June 2009 (%)	
	Overall occupancy	Charity shops	Overall occupancy	Charity shops
Armadale	94.1	0.0	89.7	0.0
Bathgate	91.4	3.2	93.4	3.3
Broxburn	91.8	0.6	89.9	0.6
Linlithgow	98.0	2.0	96.0	2.0
Whitburn	84.4	0.6	87.6	1.7
Almondvale	88.4	0.6	91.6	0.6

Source: West Lothian Council, June 2010

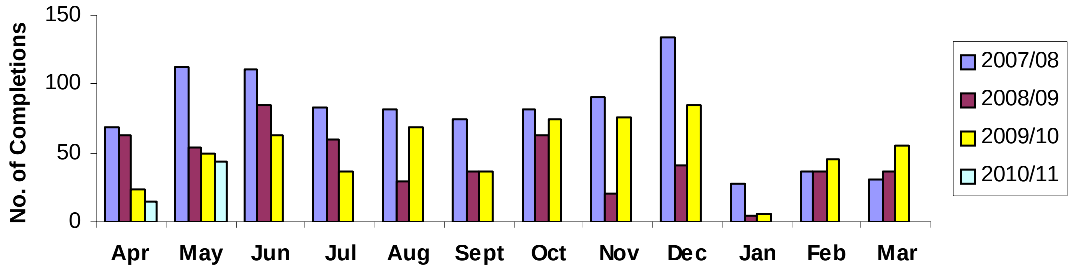
Armadale, Broxburn and Linlithgow town centres have increased their overall shop occupancy in relation to this time last year (increases of respectively 4.4%, 1.9% and 2.0%). Bathgate, Whitburn and Almondvale experienced a decrease in shop occupancy in June 2010 when compared to their own benchmark figure for the same month in 2009.

House Completions

The number of house completions in the local economy is a useful barometer for measuring the house-building industry's sensitivity to changing economic conditions. Comparing monthly house completions over the financial years 2007/08, 2008/09, 2009/10 and 2010/11, numbers have been smaller during 2008/09 compared to the previous period up until January 2009 - when notably there were only five, the lowest number of completions since records began in April 2006. However, monthly completions have rallied to an extent since February 2009. Indeed in March 2009, the number of completions exceeded the previous March by five.

Encouragingly, in the last seven months of the previous financial year (2009/10) the number of house completions has exceeded that of the same period in the previous financial year. For example, there were 84 completions in December 2009 compared with 41 the previous December. In context, however, the previous financial year experienced the onset of recession.

House Completions 2007/08, 2008/09, 2009/2010 and 2010/11



Source: West Lothian Council, June 2010

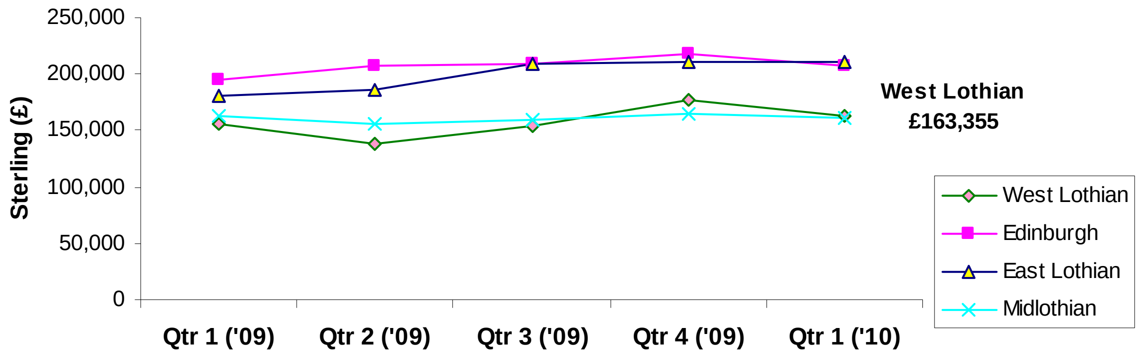
House Prices

House prices and the housing market are also seen as a barometer to the state of the economy. Housing is the biggest component of most household's wealth. Therefore it has a big impact on the economy. For example, a fall in house prices will reduce consumer confidence. This leads to lower levels of spending; people will be more reluctant to undertake risky investments and borrowing.

House prices continue to show annual rises in most areas during the first three months of 2010. However, in the first quarter (Jan - Mar) of 2010 the average house price in West Lothian dropped by £13,934 to £163,355 compared to the previous quarter. Nevertheless, this was still an annual rise of 5.1% from £155,498 in Quarter 1 2009.

Average house prices in West Lothian and Midlothian have not experienced the same level of growth as Edinburgh and East Lothian. Notwithstanding, prices in the West Lothian and Midlothian have remained steady over the last year and a half with the forecast that it is likely this pattern of stability will continue in the months ahead.

Average House price comparison Quarter 1, 2009 to Quarter 1, 2010



Edinburgh Solicitors Property centre (ESPC), April 2010

Comparator Indicators

MONTHLY COMPARATOR INDICATORS

A number of monthly key indicators have been chosen to compare with a number of benchmark local authorities. Both national areas of Scotland and Great Britain have also been included to set comparisons in context. The following table includes indicators on unemployment, youth unemployment and job vacancies.

	JSA Claimants as a % of working age residents (1)	% of 16 to 24s claiming JSA (2)	Ratio* of jobseekers to job vacancies (3)
Clackmannanshire	5.3%	8.8%	8.6:1
Edinburgh, City of	3.4%	4.4%	3.2:1
Falkirk	4.3%	7.1%	4.1:1
Fife	4.4%	6.3%	5.3:1
Midlothian	3.9%	7.7%	6.0:1
North Lanarkshire	5.6%	9.0%	8.8:1
South Lanarkshire	4.6%	7.3%	5.6:1
West Lothian	4.6%	8.4%	7.0:1
Scotland	4.2%	6.3%	5.0:1
Great Britain	3.9%	5.7%	3.8:1

Sources:
(1) ONS claimant count
(2) ONS claimant count/ONS mid-year (2009) population estimates
(3) ONS claimant count/Jobcentre Plus vacancies

***** for example**,** there are seven jobseekers for every vacancy (7.0:1) advertised in West Lothian jobcentres.

ANNUAL COMPARATOR INDICATORS

Similarly, a number of annual indicators have been chosen to compare with the same local authorities and Scotland and Great Britain. The following tables include indicators on population, earnings and VAT registered firms.

	Population (2009)		Earnings (2009)	
	Number	% change on previous year	Gross weekly pay (£)	% change on previous year
Clackmannanshire	50,540	0.1	427.4	0.5
Edinburgh, City of	477,660	1.3	518.3	2.2
Falkirk	152,480	0.6	462.8	1.0
Fife	363,460	0.4	465.0	-0.2
Midlothian	80,810	0.3	425.9	6.1
North Lanarkshire	326,320	0.2	430.1	-1.2
South Lanarkshire	310,930	0.3	498.3	5.0
West Lothian	171,040	0.9	424.7	0.8
Scotland	5,194,000	0.5	472.2	2.0

Sources:
ONS Claimant Count/ONS mid year (2009) population estimates
ONS annual survey of hours and earnings—resident analysis

	VAT registered firms		
	Stock at end of year (2007)	% change on previous year	Per 10,000 of population
Clackmannanshire	945	5.6	189
Edinburgh, City of	13760	4.1	294
Falkirk	2950	6.7	196
Fife	7500	3.1	208
Midlothian	1820	2.8	229
North Lanarkshire	5710	6.0	176
South Lanarkshire	7265	4.8	235
West Lothian	3630	7.1	216
Scotland	141895	3.6	276
Great Britain	1964920	3.0	332

Sources: BERR - VAT registrations/deregistrations by industry/ONS mid year (2007) population estimates

WARD UNEMPLOYMENT (May 2010)

The following table is a breakdown of unemployment by ward, and the area of West Lothian covered by each ward, and based on the old 32 ward scheme (up to date data for the current Multi-member Wards is not yet published by DWP).

WARD AREA		Male JSA claimants	Female JSA claimants	Total JSA claimants	
	Area covered by ward	number	number	number	rate
Armadale Central	Armadale	171	68	239	8.9
Craigshill	Livingston	190	65	255	8.3
Boghall	Bathgate	138	58	196	7.8
Polkemmet	Whitburn	161	59	220	7.8
Blackburn	Blackburn	176	50	226	6.9
Ladywell	Livingston	159	47	206	6.6
Fauldhouse	Fauldhouse, Breich	141	67	208	6.5
Croftmalloch	Whitburn	140	54	194	6.4
Almond	Whitburn, East Whitburn	133	42	175	6.0
Dedridge	Livingston	162	49	211	6.0
Durhamtoun	Bathgate	106	41	147	6.0
Newland	Bathgate	113	52	165	6.0
Armadale West	Armadale and Blackridge	151	34	185	5.7
Breich Valley	Stoneyburn, Addiewell and Longridge	144	44	188	5.6
Howden	Livingston	140	37	177	4.9
Limefield	West Calder	104	41	145	4.9
Deans	Livingston	117	52	169	4.8
Oatridge	Winchburgh and surrounding area	107	30	137	4.6
Easton	Bathgate/Armadale	85	42	127	4.4
Knightsridge	Livingston	115	52	167	4.3
Middleton	Broxburn	104	26	130	4.3
Strathbrock	Broxburn	85	39	124	4.2
Houstoun	Uphall, Pumpherston	94	28	122	4.0
Carmondean	Livingston	102	38	140	3.8
Linhouse	Kirknewton, Wilkieston	82	35	117	3.5
St Michael's	Linlithgow	66	30	96	3.3
East Calder	East Calder	74	21	95	3.0
Kirkton	Livingston	66	26	92	2.6
Calderwood	Mid Calder	66	19	85	2.5
Murieston	Livingston	51	22	73	2.1
Preston	Linlithgow	51	24	75	2.0
Kingsfield	Linlithgow, Philpstoun	48	17	65	1.8
West Lothian		**3,642**	**1,309**	**4,951**	**4.9**

Source: ONS claimant count - May 2010

West Lothian Economic Partnership operates as the economic development arm of the Community Planning process.

West Lothian Key Economic Indicators is produced by West Lothian Council on behalf of West Lothian Economic Partnership

West Lothian
Economic Partnership

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