



Image courtesy of High Life Highland

About Inverness and Area

Inverness City and its hinterland include both urban and rural communities that have been interdependent for thousands of years.

The city of Inverness is the only city in the Highlands and the largest settlement that is also considered the capital of the Highlands.

The population of Inverness grew from 40,949 in 2001 to 46,870 in 2012. The Greater Inverness area, including Culloden and Westhill, had a population of 59,910 in 2012. Inverness is one of Europe's fastest growing cities, with a quarter of the Highland population living in or around it, and is ranked fifth out of 189 British cities for its quality of life, the highest of any Scottish city. In the recent past, Inverness has experienced rapid economic growth. Between 1998 and 2008, Inverness and the rest of the central Highlands showed the largest growth of average economic productivity per person in Scotland and the second greatest growth in the United Kingdom as a whole, with an increase of 86%. Inverness is twinned with one German city, Augsburg, and two French towns, La Baule and Saint-Valery-en-Caux.

Inverness College is the main campus for the University of the Highlands and Islands. With around 8,500 students, Inverness College hosts around a quarter of all the University of the Highlands and Islands' students, and 30% of those studying to degree level.

In 2014, a survey by a property website described Inverness as the happiest place in Scotland and the second happiest in the UK. Inverness was again found to be the happiest place in Scotland by a new study conducted in 2015.

Raigmore is the main hospital in Inverness and serves the entire Highland authority. The present hospital opened in 1970, replacing wartime wards dating from 1941.

Raigmore is also a teaching hospital catering for both the Universities of Aberdeen and Stirling. A new Centre for Health Science is located behind Raigmore Hospital. This is funded by Highlands and Islands Enterprise, the Scottish Government and Johnson & Johnson. Phase I of this opened in early 2007, with phase II and phase III housing The Diabetes Institute opening in 2009.

The University of Stirling moved its nursing and midwifery teaching operations from Raigmore Hospital to the CfHS. The UHI also has strong links with the centre through its Faculty of Health.

The Highlands has 17 data zones ranked in the most deprived 15% in Scotland according to the Scottish Government's latest release of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). Several of these are within the city of Inverness including Inverness Merkinch North; Inverness South Kessock; Inverness Merkinch East; Inverness Central and Longman; Inverness Merkinch South; Inverness Hilton West; Inverness Merkinch Telford; Inverness Raigmore North.

Rural Inverness includes, most notably, the iconic Loch Ness a much favoured attraction for visitors to the area. The area extends from the east at Ardersier, Croy and Daviot to Beauly, Cannich and Glen Moriston on the west and then south as far as Fort Augustus.

The main industry is tourism with accommodation providers ranging from small bed & breakfast establishments to 5 star hotels. Culloden Battlefield, Urquhart Castle and

Fort George will be the most notable tourism destinations, each visited by plentiful supplies of cruise ship passengers berthed at Invergordon.

Golf tourism is also increasing with the development of Castle Stuart Golf Course, soon to have a further offering by way of the Arnold Palmer Tribute Course.

Much of the employment on offer in the tourism sector is seasonal, which can cause off-season spikes in unemployment.

Forestry is still a vibrant industry in rural Inverness with large swathes of Forestry Commission estate as well as private forest owners.

The area is also home to several sporting estates, some of which accommodate large wind farms. These provide a reasonable number of construction jobs but very fewer longer term employment opportunities.

Public agencies continue to be the largest employers in the area with SNH now headquartered in Inverness.