

Alternative Claimant Count as an Indicator of Economic Performance

Introduction

One powerful and easy way of looking at fluctuations within economies at local authority level is to consider the trends around the number of people claiming unemployment related benefits and flows on and off the register. This information is available from the Department for Work and Pensions.

This analysis is provided as part of the RSN Economic Profiling service. The RSN also offers a wide range of analysis and information for rural areas.

- How does it work?

The analysis includes benchmarked information for our member authorities. There are two spreadsheets attached to this analysis:

- Claimant Flows February 2022
- Claimants as % of the working population December 2021

You can click your authority on the drop down box on the spreadsheet to see the trend for your authority. You can also compare how it performs against categories of authority by using the box below, for example the district average, or Mainly Rural authorities.

Alternative Claimant Count Flow Commentary

The graph in the attached analysis shows the claimant flow up to the period February 2022.

Where the flow of claimants is 1, there is no net change in the total number of claimants. Figures greater than one mean that there are more people signing on to claim for an unemployment related benefit than there are leaving the register. A figure less than 1 shows that more people are leaving the register than joining it. You can use these figures to help gauge the relative dynamism of the labour market in each local authority.

Table showing the 10 worst performing Local Authority areas:

Authority	Categorisation	Flow
Isles of Scilly	Mainly Rural (rural including hub towns >=80%)	1.43
Eden	Mainly Rural (rural including hub towns >=80%)	1.39
Coventry	Urban with City and Town	1.39
North Warwickshire	Mainly Rural (rural including hub towns >=80%)	1.36
Stafford	Urban with Significant Rural (rural including hub towns 26-49%)	1.35
Lewes	Urban with Significant Rural (rural including hub towns 26-49%)	1.35
Boston	Urban with Significant Rural (rural including hub towns 26-49%)	1.35
Newark and Sherwood	Largely Rural (rural including hub towns 50-79%)	1.32
Oldham	Urban with Major Conurbation	1.31
Thurrock	Urban with Major Conurbation	1.30

The list comprises 4 Predominantly Rural authorities, 3 Urban with Significant Rural, and 3 Predominantly Urban authorities. Only Newark and Sherwood remains in the list from the previous analysis (August 2021). Isles of Scilly and Eden have both moved from being in the list of best performing authorities in the last analysis to now being in the worst performing. As in the previous analysis, all authorities in the list saw a net on flow of claimants.

Table showing the 10 best performing Local Authority areas:

Authority	Categorisation	Flow
Rutland	Mainly Rural (rural including hub towns $\geq 80\%$)	0.55
Forest of Dean	Mainly Rural (rural including hub towns $\geq 80\%$)	0.81
Hart	Urban with Significant Rural (rural including hub towns 26-49%)	0.84
Barnsley	Urban with Minor Conurbation	0.84
Rossendale	Urban with City and Town	0.86
Braintree	Largely Rural (rural including hub towns 50-79%)	0.88
South Kesteven	Largely Rural (rural including hub towns 50-79%)	0.88
West Devon	Mainly Rural (rural including hub towns $\geq 80\%$)	0.88
Epping Forest	Urban with Significant Rural (rural including hub towns 26-49%)	0.89
Sevenoaks	Largely Rural (rural including hub towns 50-79%)	0.89

6 of the best performing authorities when looking at claimant flow ratio are classed as being Predominantly Rural, 2 are classed as Predominantly Urban and 2 are classed as Urban with Significant Rural. West Devon remains in the group of 10 best performing authorities from the previous analysis. Rutland moves from being the worst performing in the previous analysis to the best performing area in this analysis.

Alternative Claimant Count Commentary

We have also analysed Alternative Claimant Count to give RSN members a simple overview of how their authority can be benchmarked with other authorities. They can also see trends which can help provide a fuller picture of economic performance and the direction of travel.

Table showing local authorities with the 10 highest levels of claimants
(December 2021) :

Local Authority	Categorisation	LEP	Alternative claimant count as proportion of working population%
Birmingham	Urban with Major Conurbation	Greater Birmingham and Solihull	12.1%
Barking and Dagenham	Urban with Major Conurbation	London	10.6%
Newham	Urban with Major Conurbation	London	10.4%
Blackpool	Urban with City and Town	Lancashire	10.3%
Wolverhampton	Urban with Major Conurbation	Black Country LEP	10.2%
Oldham	Urban with Major Conurbation	Greater Manchester LEP	10.1%
Middlesbrough	Urban with City and Town	Tees Valley	10.0%
Thanet	Urban with City and Town	South East LEP	9.8%
Brent	Urban with Major Conurbation	London	9.8%
Rochdale	Urban with Major Conurbation	Greater Manchester LEP	9.5%

There has been very little movement in the list of authorities with highest proportion of claimants. Rochdale has entered the list, taking the place of Haringey, and some movement between places in the list. Claimants as a percentage of working population for authorities with the highest levels have for each position on the list decreased since the June 2021 analysis.

Table showing local authorities with the 10 lowest levels of claimants
(December 2021) :

Local Authority	Categorisation	LEP	Alternative claimant count as proportion of working population%
City of London	Urban with Major Conurbation	London LEP	1.2%
Harborough	Mainly Rural (rural including hub towns $\geq 80\%$)	Leicester & Leicestershire LEP	2.1%
Hart	Urban with Significant Rural (rural including hub towns 26-49%)	Enterprise M3 LEP	2.2%
Ribble Valley	Mainly Rural (rural including hub towns $\geq 80\%$)	Lancashire LEP	2.2%
York	Urban with City and Town	Leeds City Region LEP	2.2%
Craven	Mainly Rural (rural including hub towns $\geq 80\%$)	Leeds City Region LEP	2.2%
Wokingham	Urban with City and Town	Thames Valley Berkshire LEP	2.3%
Mid Sussex	Urban with City and Town	Coast to Capital LEP	2.3%
Rushcliffe	Largely Rural (rural including hub towns 50-79%)	Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire LEP	2.4%
Richmondshire	Mainly Rural (rural including hub towns $\geq 80\%$)	York and North Yorkshire LEP	2.4%

5 authorities in the top ten are classed as Predominantly Rural, 1 is classed as Urban with Significant Rural and 4 are classed as Predominantly Urban. Craven, Ribble Valley, Harborough, Richmondshire, Rushcliffe and Wokingham remain in the list with lowest claimant rate from the previous analysis (June 2021) with now only Ribble Valley having consistently maintained their position since the March 2020 analysis.