

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 May 2020
- Claimants as % of the working population March 2020

You can click your authority on the drop down box on the spreadsheet to see the quartile 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.

We will update this analysis on a quarterly basis.

Alternative Claimant Count Flow Commentary

The graph in the attached analysis shows the claimant flow up to the period May 2020.

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
South Buckinghamshire	Urban with Significant Rural (rural including hub towns 26-49%)	6.43
Kingston upon Thames	Urban with Major Conurbation	6.42
Maldon	Mainly Rural (rural including hub towns >=80%)	6.39
Epping Forest	Urban with Significant Rural (rural including hub towns 26-49%)	6.35
Newham	Urban with Major Conurbation	6.18
Wycombe	Urban with Significant Rural (rural including hub towns 26-49%)	6.18
Bromley	Urban with Major Conurbation	6.12
Elmbridge	Urban with Major Conurbation	6.09
Surrey Heath	Urban with City and Town	6.05
Epsom and Ewell	Urban with Major Conurbation	5.99

1 of these local authority areas is classed as Predominantly Rural, 3 are classed as Urban with Significant Rural, and 6 are classed as Predominantly Urban. The flow ratios have increased significantly from previous analyses due to the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Table showing the 10 best performing Local Authority areas:

Authority	Categorisation	Flow
Ryedale	Mainly Rural (rural including hub towns >=80%)	1.64
Great Yarmouth	Urban with Significant Rural (rural including hub towns 26-49%)	1.66
Darlington	Urban with City and Town	1.67
North East Lincolnshire	Urban with City and Town	1.75
South Tyneside	Urban with Major Conurbation	1.75
Harrogate	Urban with Significant Rural (rural including hub towns 26-49%)	1.76
Torridge	Mainly Rural (rural including hub towns >=80%)	1.77
Scarborough	Urban with Significant Rural (rural including hub towns 26-49%)	1.77
Teignbridge	Largely Rural (rural including hub towns 50-79%)	1.79
Gateshead	Urban with Major Conurbation	1.81

3 of the best performing authorities when looking at claimant flow ratio are classed as being Predominantly Rural, 3 are classed as Urban with Significant Rural and 4 are classed as Predominantly Urban. All authorities in this quarter saw an increase in their claimant count.

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 (March 2020) :

Local Authority	Categorisation	LEP	Alternative claimant count as proportion of working population%
Birmingham	Urban with Major Conurbation	Greater Birmingham and Solihull	10.1%
Blackpool	Urban with City and Town	Lancashire	9.6%
Middlesbrough	Urban with City and Town	Tees Valley	9.3%
Wolverhampton	Urban with Major Conurbation	Black Country LEP	9.0%
South Tyneside	Urban with Major Conurbation	North Eastern	8.3%
Kingston upon Hull	Urban with City and Town	Humber LEP	8.1%
Thanet	Urban with City and Town	South East LEP	8.1%
Bradford	Urban with Major Conurbation	Leeds City Region LEP	7.9%
Sandwell	Urban with Major Conurbation	Black Country LEP	7.8%
Hartlepool	Urban with City and Town	Tees Valley	7.8%

Table showing local authorities with the 10 lowest levels of claimants (March 2020) :

Local Authority	Categorisation	LEP	Alternative claimant count as proportion of working population%
City of London	Urban with Major Conurbation	London	1.1%
Hart	Urban with Significant Rural (rural including hub towns 26-49%)	Enterprise M3	1.3%
Guildford	Urban with City and Town	Enterprise M3	1.4%
Fareham	Urban with City and Town	Solent LEP	1.5%
Mid Sussex	Urban with City and Town	Coast to Capital	1.5%
South Northamptonshire	Mainly Rural (rural including hub towns >=80%)	South East Midlands LEP	1.5%
Surrey Heath	Urban with City and Town	Enterprise M3	1.5%
Ribble Valley	Mainly Rural (rural including hub towns >=80%)	Lancashire	1.5%
Mole Valley	Urban with Significant Rural (rural including hub towns 26-49%)	Coast to Capital	1.5%
Harborough	Mainly Rural (rural including hub towns >=80%)	Leicester and Leicestershire LEP	1.5%

Claimant levels will have changed significantly since March 2020 due to the economic effect of the pandemic. Future analyses will demonstrate both the effect the pandemic has had and which local authority areas have shown most resilience in the face of this global challenge.