

# 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 2021
- Claimants as % of the working population March 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 May 2021.

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
Boston	Urban with Significant Rural (rural including hub towns 26-49%)	1.08
Enfield	Urban with Major Conurbation	0.93
Preston	Urban with City and Town	0.84
Corby	Urban with City and Town	0.83
Peterborough	Urban with City and Town	0.82
Burnley	Urban with City and Town	0.81
Wolverhampton	Urban with Major Conurbation	0.80
Haringey	Urban with Major Conurbation	0.80
Cambridge	Urban with City and Town	0.78
Stoke-on-Trent	Urban with City and Town	0.77

Only Boston, which is classed as Urban with Significant Rural, saw more people signing on to claim for an unemployment related benefit than there were leaving the register in May 2021. All other authorities in the list of ten saw more people leaving the register than joining it, and they were all classed as Predominantly Urban. No authorities have remained in this list from the February 2021 analysis.

Table showing the 10 best performing Local Authority areas:

Authority	Categorisation	Flow
Rochford	Urban with City and Town	0.40
Hambleton	Mainly Rural (rural including hub towns >=80%)	0.42
Runnymede	Urban with Major Conurbation	0.43
Rushcliffe	Largely Rural (rural including hub towns 50-79%)	0.43
Harborough	Mainly Rural (rural including hub towns >=80%)	0.45
Southend-on-Sea	Urban with City and Town	0.46
High Peak	Largely Rural (rural including hub towns 50-79%)	0.46
Blaby	Urban with City and Town	0.46
Wealden	Mainly Rural (rural including hub towns >=80%)	0.46
Elmbridge	Urban with Major Conurbation	0.47

5 of the best performing authorities when looking at claimant flow ratio are classed as being Predominantly Rural, and 5 are classed as Predominantly Urban. All authorities saw a decrease in their claimant count compared to the February 2021 analysis where only one saw a decrease in claimant count. No authorities have remained in the group of 10 best performing authorities since the previous 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 (March 2021) :

Local Authority	Categorisation	LEP	Alternative claimant count as proportion of working population%
Blackpool	Urban with City and Town	Lancashire	16.3%
Birmingham	Urban with Major Conurbation	Greater Birmingham and Solihull	16.0%
Brent	Urban with Major Conurbation	London	15.8%
Barking and Dagenham	Urban with Major Conurbation	London	15.6%
Middlesbrough	Urban with City and Town	Tees Valley	15.4%
Haringey	Urban with Major Conurbation	London	14.2%
Newham	Urban with Major Conurbation	London	14.2%
Wolverhampton	Urban with Major Conurbation	Black Country LEP	13.8%
Enfield	Urban with Major Conurbation	London	13.7%
Thanet	Urban with City and Town	South East LEP	13.7%

There has been very little movement in the list of authorities with highest proportion of claimants. Enfield has entered the list, taking the place of Waltham Forest, and some movement between places in the list. Claimants as a percentage of working population for authorities with the highest levels have continued to increase since the December 2020 analysis, with every authority having a higher proportion of claimants than they did in December 2020.

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

Local Authority	Categorisation	LEP	Alternative claimant count as proportion of working population%
City of London	Urban with Major Conurbation	London	1.8%
Ribble Valley	Mainly Rural (rural including hub towns >=80%)	Lancashire	3.7%
Hambleton	Mainly Rural (rural including hub towns >=80%)	York and North Yorkshire	3.9%
South Northamptonshire	Mainly Rural (rural including hub towns >=80%)	South East Midlands LEP	3.9%
East Cambridgeshire	Mainly Rural (rural including hub towns >=80%)	Greater Cambridge & Greater Peterborough	4.0%
Harborough	Mainly Rural (rural including hub towns >=80%)	Leicester & Leicestershire	4.0%
Guildford	Urban with City and Town	Enterprise M3	4.0%
Waverley	Largely Rural (rural including hub towns 50-79%)	Enterprise M3	4.1%
Test Valley	Urban with Significant Rural (rural including hub towns 26-49%)	Solent	4.1%
Vale of White Horse	Largely Rural (rural including hub towns 50-79%)	Oxfordshire	4.2%

7 authorities in the top ten are classed as Predominantly Rural, 1 is classed as Urban with Significant Rural, and 2 are classed as Predominantly Urban. Craven, Eden and South Lakeland have been replaced within the list by East Cambs., Harborough and Waverley. City of London, Guildford, Ribble Valley and South Northamptonshire continue to be authorities with low levels of

claimant relative to other authorities, which has been the case since March 2020.