

Statistical bulletin

Regional Labour Market: May 2015

Regional, local authority and parliamentary constituency breakdowns of changes in UK employment, unemployment, economic inactivity and other employment-related statistics.



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17 June 2015

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1 . Main points

- The employment rate in Great Britain was highest in the South West (77.6%) and lowest in the North East (69.3%)
- The unemployment rate in Great Britain was highest in the North East (7.5%) and lowest in the South East (4.2%)
- The inactivity rate in Great Britain was highest in Wales (25.4%) and lowest in the South West (18.9%)
- The headline Claimant Count rate in Great Britain was highest in the North East (3.9%) and lowest in the South East and the South West (1.3%)

2 . In this bulletin:

This bulletin shows the latest main labour market statistics for the regions and countries of Great Britain, along with statistics for local authorities, travel-to-work areas and parliamentary constituencies.

[Data for Northern Ireland](#) are available separately.

Updated this month

Labour Force Survey estimates for the period January 2015 to March 2015. Claimant Count for April 2015.

Also in this release

Annual Population Survey estimates for the period January 2014 to December 2014. Workforce Jobs estimates for December 2014. Public and private sector employment for December 2014.

3 . Overview of regional labour market published 13 May 2015

The employment rate estimates for those aged 16 to 64, for the three months to March 2015, compared to the three months to December 2014, showed a mix of increases and decreases across the regions and countries of the UK.

The largest increases in the employment rate estimates were for the South West, at 1.7 percentage points and the North West, at 0.9 percentage points. The large increase in the estimate for the South West is partially due to an unusually low estimate for the three months to December 2014. However, the latest estimate is higher than other recent estimates. It is not yet clear whether this estimate is going to be the start of a series of increasing estimates. The increase in the North West is part of a general pattern of increasing estimates, although the general rate of increase has been steadier than suggested by the latest estimates.

The largest decreases in the employment rate estimates were for the North East, Yorkshire and The Humber and the East Midlands, which all decreased by 0.7 percentage points. In each of the cases the pattern prior to the latest estimates has been for gently increasing employment rates and it is not yet clear whether the latest estimates are going to be the start of a downturn in the general pattern.

For all other regions the general pattern is still for flat or gently increasing employment rates. With the exception of Wales, the latest employment rate estimates are higher than the same period one year ago.

The three regions with the highest employment rates continue to be the South West, at 77.6%, the South East, at 77.2% and the East of England, at 76.7%.

The employment levels for the North West, West Midlands, East of England, South East and South West are all at record highs, with most other regions close to record highs.

Regional estimates for the unemployment rate are quite volatile, which needs to be allowed for when considering the pattern of change over time.

The largest increase in the unemployment rate estimates for the three months to March 2015, compared to the three months to December 2014 was for Scotland, at 0.7 percentage points. This is partially due to an unusually low estimate for the three months to December, although may suggest that the unemployment rate is starting to level off after a sustained period of decrease.

The largest decrease in the unemployment rate estimates was for the North West, at 0.8 percentage points.

For all regions, the general pattern is for flat or gently falling unemployment rates. All regions are showing decreases in the unemployment rate compared with a year ago.

The unemployment rate for the North East remains the highest in the UK, at 7.5%.

The Claimant Count for April 2015 compared with March 2015, is showing decreases in the count for both men and women across all regions of the UK. However, the rate of decrease for many regions has slowed compared with recent months.

4 . Employment

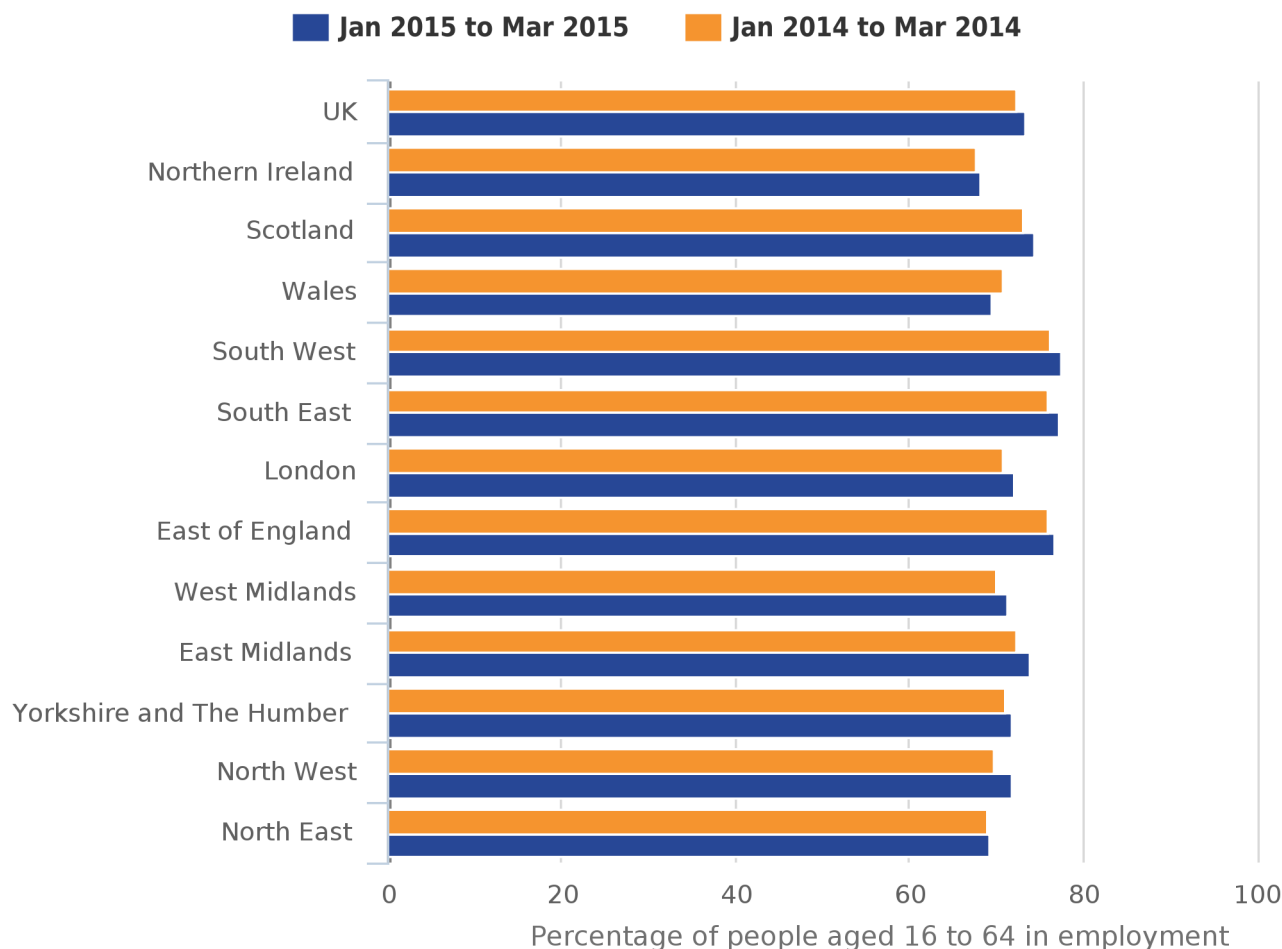
The employment rate for people aged from 16 to 64 for the UK was 73.5%, for the period January 2015 to March 2015.

The regions with the highest rate in Great Britain were the South West, at 77.6%, followed by the South East, at 77.2% and the East of England, at 76.7%. The regions with the lowest rate were the North East, at 69.3%, followed by Wales, at 69.4% and the West Midlands, at 71.2%.

The regions with the largest increase in the employment rate on the previous period (October 2014 to December 2014), were the South West, with an increase of 1.7 percentage points, followed by the North West, with an increase of 0.9 percentage points and the South East, with an increase of 0.7 percentage points. There were 3 regions with a decrease in the employment rate; the East Midlands, Yorkshire and The Humber, and the North East, all with decreases of 0.7 percentage points. The West Midlands remained unchanged. The UK employment rate increased by 0.3 percentage points.

Figure 1: Employment rates by region and comparison year on year, January to March 2015, seasonally adjusted

UK regions



Source: Labour Force Survey - Office for National Statistics

Over the year, the regions with the largest increase in the employment rate were the North West, with an increase of 2.0 percentage points, followed by the South West, with an increase of 1.5 percentage points. The only decrease in the employment rate was in Wales, at 0.4 percentage points. The North East had the smallest increase, of 0.2 percentage points.

5 . Unemployment

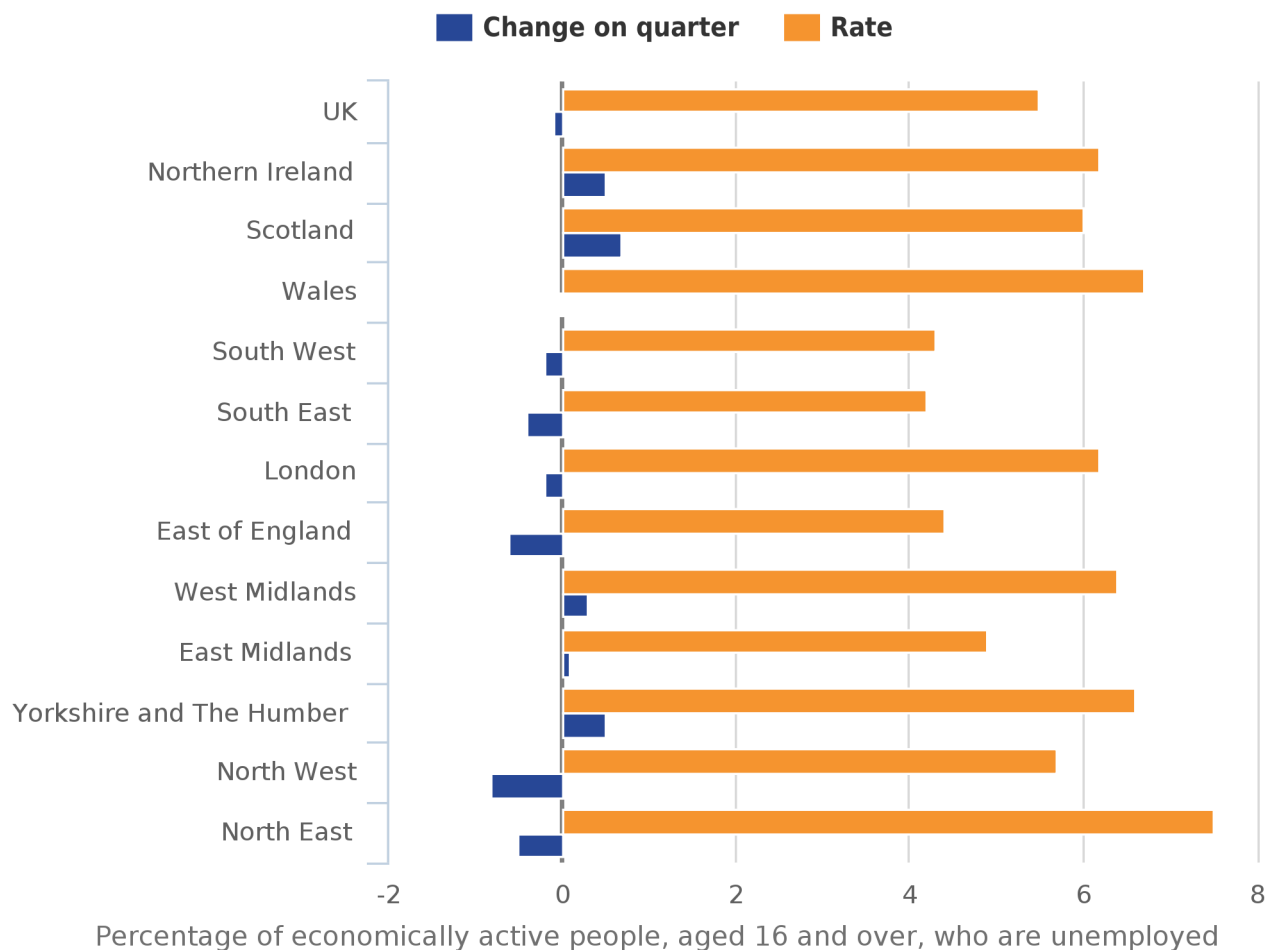
The unemployment rate for people aged 16 and over for the UK was 5.5%, for the period January 2015 to March 2015.

The regions with the highest rate in Great Britain were the North East, at 7.5%, followed by Wales, at 6.7% and Yorkshire and The Humber, at 6.6%. The regions with the lowest rate were the South East, at 4.2%, followed by the South West, at 4.3%.

The regions with the largest decrease in the unemployment rate on the previous period (October 2014 to December 2014), were the North West, at 0.8 percentage points, followed by the East of England, at 0.6 percentage points and the North East, at 0.5 percentage points. Scotland had the largest increase in the unemployment rate, at 0.7 percentage points followed by Yorkshire and The Humber, at 0.5 percentage points. The unemployment rate in Wales remained unchanged. The UK rate decreased by 0.1 percentage points.

Figure 2: Unemployment rates by region, January to March 2015, seasonally adjusted

UK regions



Source: Labour Force Survey - Office for National Statistics

Over the year, all regions showed a decrease in the unemployment rate. The largest decreases were in the North East at 2.4 percentage points, the North West, at 1.9 percentage points and the East Midlands and London, both at 1.6 percentage points. The smallest decrease in the unemployment rate was in Wales, at 0.1 percentage point.

An interactive chart showing [regional unemployment rates](#) over time is available on our website.

6 . Workforce jobs (first published on 18 March 2015)

Workforce jobs increased in 7 of the 11 regions of Great Britain between September 2014 and December 2014. The largest increase of 40,000 was in the South East, followed by the South West, which increased by 30,000. The largest decrease of 14,000 was in Yorkshire and The Humber, followed by the East of England and Scotland, which both decreased by 10,000.

The East Midlands had the highest proportion of jobs in the production sector, at 13.7%, whilst London had the lowest proportion, at 2.9%. For the service sector, London had the highest proportion, at 91.8%, whilst Wales had the lowest proportion, at 78.0%.

Figure 3: Workforce jobs by broad industry group, by region and comparison year on year, December 2015, seasonally adjusted

UK regions



7 . Jobseeker's Allowance

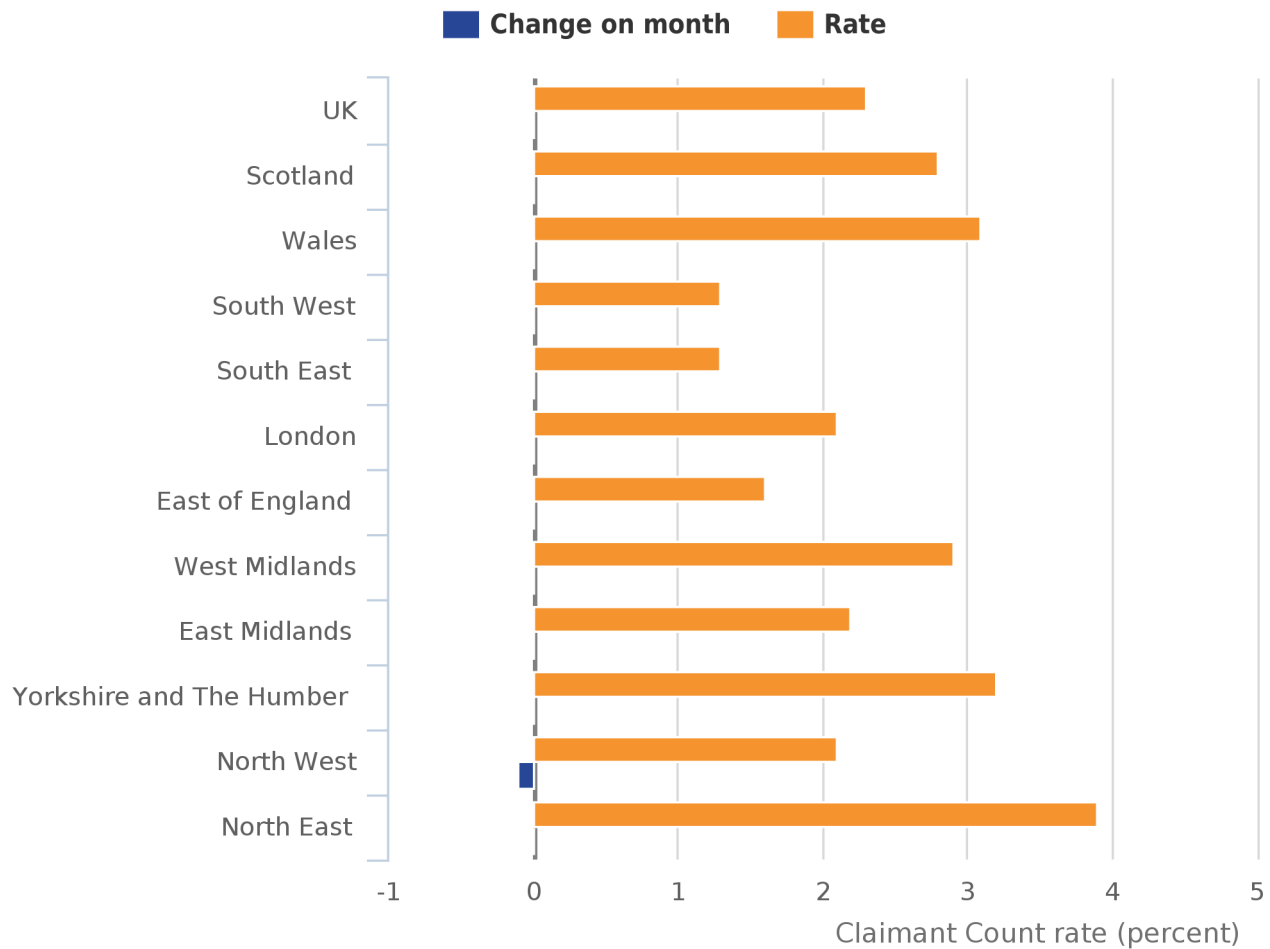
The seasonally adjusted headline Claimant Count rate for the UK was 2.3% in April 2015; unchanged from March 2015, with the level down 12,600.

The region with the highest rate in Great Britain was the North East, at 3.9%, remaining unchanged from the previous month. The next highest rates were in Yorkshire and The Humber, at 3.2% and Wales, at 3.1%.

The regions with the lowest rates were the South East and the South West, both at 1.3% and the East of England, at 1.6%.

Figure 4: Claimant Count rates by region, April 2015, seasonally adjusted

UK regions



Source: Department for Work and Pensions

8 . Local authority labour market indicators

Indicators from the Annual Population Survey

For the period January 2014 to December 2014, the local authorities with the highest employment rate in Great Britain, were the Orkney Islands, at 89.3%, East Northamptonshire, at 86.4%, and Oadby and Wigston, at 85.9%. Liverpool is now the only local authority with an employment rate lower than 60%; at 59.2%.

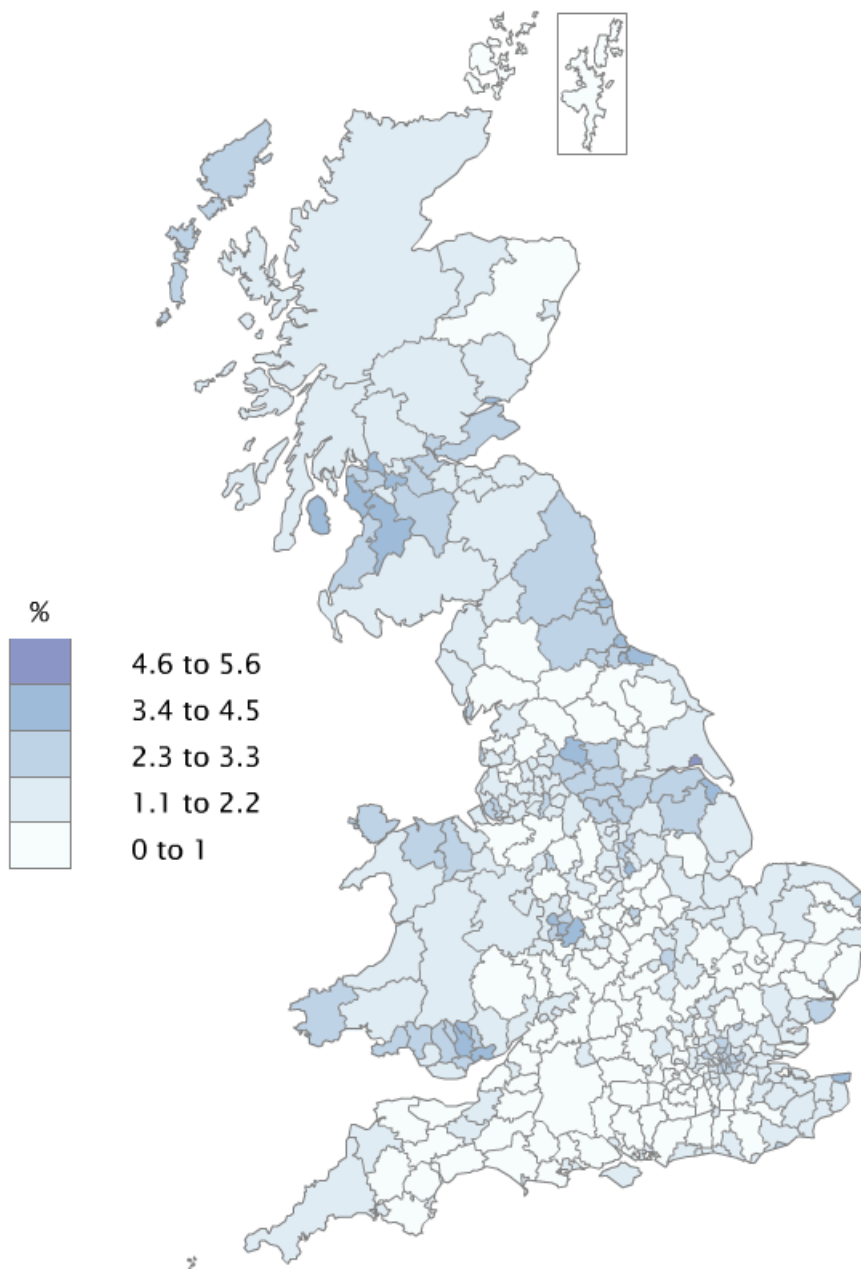
For the period January 2014 to December 2014, the local authority with the highest unemployment rate in Great Britain, was Middlesbrough, at 12.5%, followed by Liverpool, at 12.0% and Kingston upon Hull, at 11.7%. The local authorities with the lowest unemployment rate were South Northamptonshire and Stratford-on-Avon, both at 2.4%, followed by the Orkney Islands, at 2.7%. These were followed by 3 local authorities, all at 2.8% and a further 10 local authorities, all at 2.9%.

Indicators using Jobseeker's Allowance data

In April 2015, the local authorities with the lowest proportion of the population aged from 16 to 64 years claiming Jobseeker's Allowance in Great Britain, were Harrogate, Stratford-on-Avon and the Isles of Scilly, all at 0.4%, followed by 13 local authorities, all at 0.5%. There were a further 89 local authorities, with a proportion of less than 1.0%. The proportion was highest in Kingston upon Hull, at 4.7%, followed by Wolverhampton and Birmingham, both at 4.7% and Blaenau Gwent and Middlesbrough, both at 4.3%. There were a further 2 local authorities in Great Britain, with a proportion of more than 4.0%.

Figure 5: Claimant Count map, April 2015

Proportion of people aged 16 to 64 claiming jobseeker's allowance in authorities of Great Britain



Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2015.

An interactive version of this map showing [Claimant Count proportions by local authority](#) over time is available on our website. This map also shows Claimant Count proportions for males, females, 18 to 24 year olds and those claiming for over 12 months.

Job densities

The job density of an area is the number of jobs per head, of resident population, aged 16 to 64. In 2013, the highest jobs density in Great Britain was the City of London, at 81.79 and the lowest was East Renfrewshire, at 0.40. Westminster (4.35), Camden (2.15) and Islington (1.36), all in London, were the next highest jobs densities. The highest jobs density outside London was Watford, at 1.32. After East Renfrewshire, the lowest jobs densities were Lewisham, at 0.41, followed by Barking and Dagenham, at 0.44 and East Dunbartonshire, Waltham Forest, Redbridge and Haringey, all at 0.45.

9 . Index of tables

LFS headline indicators (Employment, unemployment and inactivity):

[Headline Indicators for All Regions \(HI00\) \(7.46 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)

LFS headline indicators (Employment, unemployment and inactivity); employment and workforce jobs estimates; Claimant Count; and economic activity and inactivity estimates for each region are available in the following tables:

[Headline Indicators for North East \(HI01\) \(2.27 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)

[Headline Indicators for North West \(HI02\) \(2.04 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)

[Headline Indicators for Yorkshire and The Humber \(HI03\) \(2.46 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)

[Headline Indicators for East Midlands \(HI04\) \(2.61 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)

[Headline Indicators for West Midlands \(HI05\) \(2.43 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)

[Headline Indicators for East of England \(HI06\) \(2.4 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)

[Headline Indicators for London \(HI07\) \(2.05 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)

[Headline Indicators for South East \(HI08\) \(2.03 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)

[Headline Indicators for South West \(HI09\) \(2.02 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)

[Headline Indicators for Wales \(HI10\) \(2.26 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)

[Headline Indicators for Scotland \(HI11\) \(2.44 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)

The following tables contain local labour market indicators for all regions:

[Local Indicators for Unitary and Local Authorities \(LI01\) \(246.5 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)

[Local Indicators for Parliamentary Constituencies \(LI02\) \(311.5 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)

[Local Indicators for Constituencies of the Scottish Parliament \(LI02.1\) \(115.5 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)

[Local Indicators for Travel-to-Work Areas \(LI03\) \(176.5 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)

[Local Indicators for NUTS3 areas \(LI04\) \(175 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)

[Local Indicators for Local Enterprise Partnerships \(LI05\) \(101.5 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)

The following tables contain local Claimant Count data for all regions:

[Claimant Count by Unitary and Local Authority \(JSA01\) \(256.5 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)

[Claimant Count by Parliamentary Constituency \(JSA02\) \(622.5 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)

[Claimant Count by Constituencies of the Scottish Parliament \(JSA02.1\) \(123.5 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)

[Claimant Count by Local Enterprise Partnership \(JSA03\) \(102.5 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)

Other tables:

[Summary of Headline Indicators \(S01\) \(72.5 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)

[Sampling Variability and Revisions Summary \(S02\) \(61.5 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)

[Claimant Count Denominators \(S03\) \(69 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)

[Model Based Estimates of Unemployment \(M01\) \(2.81 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)

[Estimates of Employment by Age \(Experimental Statistics\) \(X01\) \(6.86 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)

[Estimates of Unemployment by Age \(Experimental Statistics\) \(X02\) \(6.82 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)

[Estimates of Inactivity by Age \(Experimental Statistics\) \(X03\) \(6.84 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)

[Regional public and private sector employment \(RPUB1\) \(215 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)

10. Background notes

1. This month's bulletin

There are no changes to this month's bulletin.

2. Next month's bulletin

The headline measure of the Claimant Count will be changed in next month's release to include claimants of Universal Credit. See Background Note 3 for further details. There will also be revisions to the Claimant Count back to 2012 resulting from the annual review of the seasonal adjustment process, and revisions to Claimant Count rates back to 2001 resulting from the updating of denominators to take onboard the latest revisions to Workforce Jobs.

From next month we also intend to change the format of the Regional Labour Market Statistical Bulletin. The changes we have planned will bring the text more in line with the format of the current UK Labour Market Statistical Bulletin. At the same time, we intend to expand the inclusion of Northern Ireland to more of the bulletin. This does not extend to the inclusion of a set of Headline Indicator (HI) tables for Northern Ireland, but will see the inclusion of a Northern Ireland figure within other appropriate tables. Northern Ireland will also be covered in some of the text and graphs of the release.

Except for the changes relating to the Claimant Count detailed above and the introduction of Northern Ireland to some tables, it is not intended to make any other changes to the format of reference tables.

3. Introduction of Universal Credit

On 29 April 2013, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) started a Pathfinder for Universal Credit which created the first jobseeker Universal Credit claimants. This has been extended to further Jobcentre Plus Offices (JCP) across Great Britain. [A list of Jobcentres where Universal Credit is available](#) can be found on the GOV.uk website.

Universal Credit will replace a number of means-tested benefits including income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA). It will not replace contributory-based JSA.

The Claimant Count measures the number of people claiming benefits principally for the reason of being unemployed. Between October 1996 and April 2013, it has been a count of the number of people claiming JSA.

Following a consultation in 2012, it was agreed that, with the introduction of Universal Credit, the Claimant Count would include:

- people claiming contribution-based JSA (which is not affected by the introduction of Universal Credit)
- people claiming income-based JSA during the transition period while this benefit is being gradually phased out
- people claiming Universal Credit who are not earning and who are subject to a full set of labour market jobseeker requirements, that is, required to be actively seeking work and available to start work

Since July 2014, we have published two measures of the Claimant Count:

- a measure that only includes JSA claimants (this National Statistic is currently the headline measure)

- a new experimental indicative adjusted Claimant Count which includes some claimants of Universal Credit

The number of Jobcentre Plus offices introducing Universal Credit has increased substantially over the last few months. Consequently we have concluded that the experimental measure of the Claimant Count is becoming the best estimate of the number of people claiming unemployment-related benefits. The experimental measure will therefore become the headline measure of the Claimant Count from next month's release to be published on 17 June 2015. It will not initially be possible to produce estimates of inflows and outflows or an age or duration breakdown for the new headline measure of the Claimant Count.

From 17 June 2015, table 7 of the Headline Indicators (HI) for each region will be replaced with a new table taking account of Universal Credit. Tables and series that do not take account of Universal Credit will still be published, but relabelled to reflect their coverage of claimants of JSA only.

Mock up versions of the new tables are available on request from Bob Watson, Labour Market Division, Office for National Statistics:

- Phone: +44(0)1633 455070
- Email: bob.watson@ons.gsi.gov.uk

4. Publication policy

A list of the job titles of those given [pre-publication access](#) to the contents of this statistical bulletin is available on our website.

5. Quality issues

One indication of the reliability of the main indicators in this bulletin can be obtained by monitoring the size of revisions. These summary measures are available in the [Regional labour market sampling variability spreadsheet \(61.5 Kb Excel sheet\)](#) available with this bulletin and show the size of revisions over the last 5 years. The revised data itself may be subject to sampling or other sources of error. Our standard presentation is to show 5 years worth of revisions (that is, 60 observations for a monthly series, 20 for a quarterly series).

Further information on the quality of and methods for Workforce Jobs estimates can be found in the [Summary Quality Report. \(295.4 Kb Pdf\)](#)

6. Other quality information

[Quality and methodology information papers](#) for labour market statistics are available on our website. Further information about the Labour Force Survey (LFS) is available from:

- [the LFS user guide](#)
- [LFS performance and quality monitoring reports](#)

7. Definitions and concepts

An article explaining how [unemployment and the Claimant Count \(141 Kb Pdf\)](#) series are defined and measured and the difference between the two series is available on our website, along with an article to help users [interpret labour market statistics](#) and highlight some common misunderstandings. A more detailed [guide to labour market statistics](#) is also available on our website.

8. Sampling variability

Very few statistical revisions arise as a result of "errors" in the popular sense of the word. All estimates, by definition, are subject to statistical "error" but in this context the word refers to the uncertainty.

Some data in the bulletin are based on statistical samples and, as such, are subject to sampling variability. If many samples were drawn, each would give different results. The ranges shown in the [Regional labour market sampling variability spreadsheet \(61.5 Kb Excel sheet\)](#), available with this bulletin, represent "95% confidence intervals". It is expected that in 95% of samples the range would contain the true value.

9. Special events

We have published commentary, analysis and policy on "Special events" which may affect statistical outputs. For full details go to the [Special events page](#) on our website.

10. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available by visiting www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html or from the Media Relations Office email: media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs
- are well explained and readily accessible
- are produced according to sound methods
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.