

CLAIMANT COUNT NOTES AND DEFINITION

Claimant Count Definition

The Claimant Count records the number of people claiming unemployment-related benefits. The series has been used as a main indicator of labour market activity since the 1970's and figures are derived from records of claimants held at Job Benefit Offices. 'Claimants' include the severely disabled claimants, but exclude students seeking vacation work and the temporarily stopped.

The claimant count consists of all people claiming JSA at Job Benefit offices. They must declare that they are out of work, capable of, available for and actively seeking work during the week in which their claim is made.

Seasonal Adjustment

Seasonally adjusted data is only available at government region level (eg Northern Ireland). The seasonally adjusted series takes account of past discontinuities to be consistent with the current coverage. The seasonally adjusted series relates only to claimants aged 18 and over. Seasonally adjusted totals are subject to an annual update to take account of the latest assessment of trends.

Claimant Count Rates

Working Age Population

Claimant Count Unemployment rates are expressed as a percentage of the working age population and are calculated by expressing the numbers of claimants at that time as a percentage of the resident working age population (16-64). Proportions for Wards, DCA, PCA and NI rates are calculated using the most up-to-date mid-year population estimates. The 'working age' definition, used in the calculation of claimant count rates, was changed in August 2010 to include those aged from 16 to 64 for both men and women.

Workforce Rate

The workplace-based rate is calculated by expressing the numbers of claimants as a percentage of the estimated total workforce (sum of employee jobs, claimants, self-employment jobs, armed forces and participants on work-related government training programmes).

Relationship between claimant count and unemployment

There is a large degree of overlap between the claimant count and unemployment although the latter figures are generally higher. People who are not claimants can appear among the unemployed if they are not entitled to unemployment related benefits. For example:

- (i) people who are only looking for part-time work
- (ii) young people under 18 who are looking for work but do not take up the offer of a Youth Training place
- (iii) students looking for vacation work
- (iv) people who have left their job voluntarily

Some people recorded in the claimant count would not be counted as unemployed. For example, in certain circumstances people can claim Jobseeker's Allowance while they have relatively low earnings from part-time work. These people would not be unemployed.

Geographic Referencing from January 2012

District Council Area (DCA) claimant count is now calculated using Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA). LSOA aggregation more accurately corresponds to the actual DCA. Newry and Mourne and Banbridge, and to a lesser extent Lisburn, small changes will be evident. However, it would be only possible to implement these changes back to October 2004 thus introducing a discontinuity to the data prior to that point in time.

The Parliamentary Constituency Areas are based on the latest geographies which were introduced at 2010 General Election and the 2011 Assembly Elections. The 2008 Parliamentary Constituencies and 2011 Assembly Areas replaced the 1998 Assembly Areas geography. For more details on the impact of the boundary changes click on the link below. Claimant Count by 1998 Assembly Areas geography are available on request.

<http://www.ninis.nisra.gov.uk/mapxtreme/linkedddocs/aawpc%20guidance.pdf>