

UNEMPLOYMENT

This article shows levels and trends of unemployment in Herefordshire. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) supplies data on numbers and rates of unemployment, the age of those who are unemployed and duration of their unemployment¹. The following is a summary of the key information from **July 2007**. All figures are unadjusted for seasonal variation unless otherwise stated.

- 1,405 people were unemployed and claiming benefit in Herefordshire during July 2007. This is a decrease of 108 people from the previous quarter, April 2007 (1,513), and lower than numbers seen a year ago in July 2006 (1,617).
- In Figure 1, numbers of monthly unemployment claimants have been adjusted to account for seasonal variations to show overall trends in unemployment levels.
- Unemployment rates show the percentage of the working age population claiming unemployment benefits. Herefordshire's unemployment rate for July 2007 was 1.3%, which is down slightly from 1.5% for the last quarter, and lower than the level recorded in July 2006 (1.6%). Unemployment rates for the West Midlands region are much higher (3.1%) in comparison to Herefordshire. However, this figure has decreased from both the last quarter (3.3%) and this time last year (3.4%). Rates for England, 2.3% show a fall from last quarter, April 2007 (2.5%) and from July 2006 (2.6%). Table 1 shows a brief summary of current unemployment numbers and rates.
- In July 2007, 69% of unemployment claimants in Herefordshire were male, with the unemployment rate amongst males falling steadily to 1.8% in July 2007, from 2% in April 2007 and 2.1% in July 2006. Female unemployment rates are lower and have remained the same over the last quarter (0.9%).
- The overall number of claimants in Hereford City decreased, dropping from 750 last July to 591 claimants in July 2007. Of the market towns, Ross-on-Wye and Leominster have the highest levels of unemployment (153 and 134 claimants respectively), however Leominster has seen the largest decrease in claimants (28 fewer claimants than this time last year). Bromyard has seen a small rise of 5 claimants over the year to 48 people claiming unemployment benefits in July 2007. Ledbury has seen the biggest rise in unemployment (an increase of 16 claimants) from 45 in July 2006 to 61 in July 2007. Unemployment in Kington remains at a low level, with there being no difference in the overall number of claimants (25) in July 2006 and July 2007.
- Numbers claiming unemployment benefits in the Hereford Parliamentary Constituency have decreased over the last year, falling from 1,070 in July 2006 to 898 in July 2007. The number of claimants in Herefordshire's other Parliamentary Constituency, Leominster, has also decreased slightly over the year (as shown in Table 1). Unemployment rates remain higher in the Hereford Constituency than in Leominster (1.6% compared to 1.1%).
- The majority of all claimants have been unemployed for less than 6 months (75%) and around half of all claimants are aged between 25 and 49 (53%) (See Table 3).

¹ Unemployment as measured by Claimant Count i.e. those claiming unemployment-related benefits at Employment Service local offices. Rates are the number of claimants resident as a % of the working age population resident in that area (16-64 yr M/16-59 yr F).

Table 1: Unemployment – July 2007

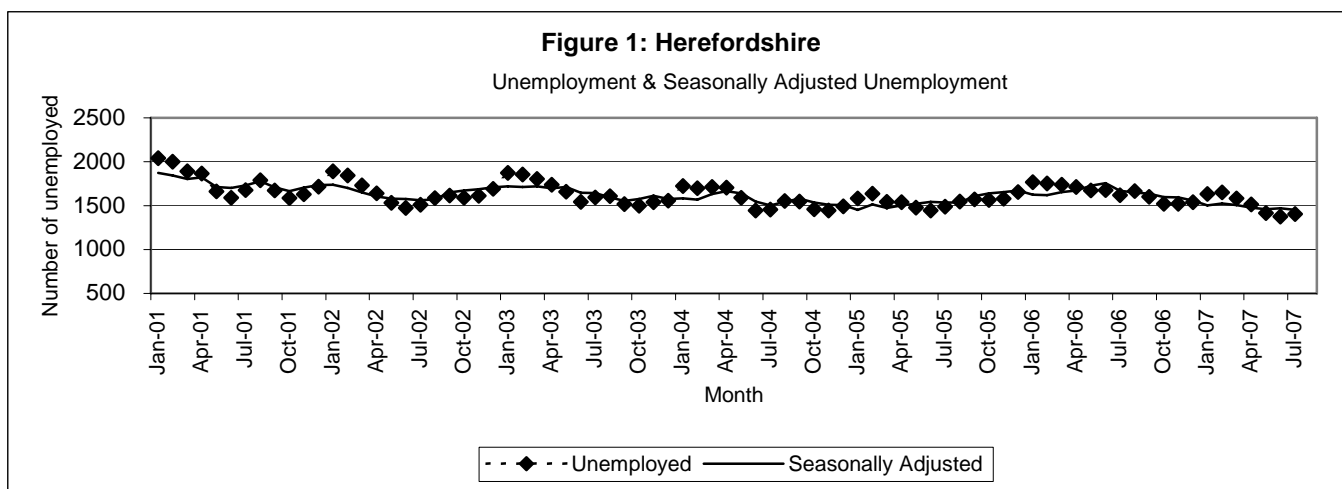
Area		Total July 2007	Male July 2007	Female July 2007	Previous Month June 2007	Previous Quarter April 2007	Previous Year July 2006
Herefordshire	No.	1,405	971	434	1,373	1,513	1,617
	%	1.3	1.8	0.9	1.3	1.5	1.6
West Midlands	%	3.1	4.3	1.7	3.1	3.3	3.4
England	%	2.3	3.2	1.3	2.3	2.5	2.6
Main Towns²							
Hereford City		591	400	191	563	646	750
Bromyard & surrounds		48	37	11	57	60	43
Kington & surrounds		25	17	8	30	25	25
Ledbury & surrounds		61	42	19	51	42	45
Leominster		134	93	41	148	156	162
Ross-on-Wye		153	109	44	141	121	164
Hereford	No.	898	613	285	854	956	1,087
	%	1.6	2.1	1.1	1.5	1.7	1.9
Leominster	No.	563	400	163	572	628	601
	%	1.1	1.4	0.7	1.1	1.2	1.1

Sources: Office for National Statistics Monthly Unemployment Claimant Counts, Herefordshire Council Research Team

- **Bromyard & surrounds** = Parishes of Bromyard & Winslow, Stoke Lacey, Avenbury, Pencombe with Grendon Warren, Ullingswick, Little Cowarne, Felton and Ocle Pychard.
- **Kington & surrounds** = Parishes of Kington, Kington Rural and Lower Harpton.
- **Ledbury & surrounds** = Parishes of Ledbury, Eastnor and Donnington.

Figure 1 shows unemployment figures with those adjusted for seasonal variations, which show that generally the number of claimants has started to fall over the past few months.

Source: Office for National Statistics Monthly Unemployment Claimant Counts (NOMIS). Herefordshire Council Research Team



² Unemployment figures are now produced for 2003 ward boundaries so some of the figures for the market towns include a larger geographic area than those reported previously. See Table 1.

Table 2: Unemployment for Wards for July 2007

Number of claimants and unemployment rate (% of working age population) for July 2007 and 2006

2003 Wards	July 2007		July 2006		Change
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	
Aylestone	46	1.3	51	1.5	---
Backbury	8	0.5	14	0.9	↓
Belmont	144	2.4	185	3.1	↓
Bircher	3	0.2	7	0.5	↓
Bringsty	10	0.6	12	0.7	---
Bromyard	48	1.5	43	1.3	---
Burghill, Holmer & Lyde	15	0.8	19	1.0	---
Castle	13	0.7	8	0.4	↑
Central	56	3.5	53	3.3	---
Credenhill	18	0.9	22	1.1	---
Frome	24	1.2	15	0.8	↑
Golden Cross with Weobley	25	1.5	27	1.6	---
Golden Valley North	24	1.4	19	1.1	↑
Golden Valley South	11	0.7	14	0.8	---
Hagley	21	1.0	25	1.2	---
Hampton Court	15	0.9	16	1.0	---
Hollington	6	0.5	16	1.3	↓
Hope End	29	0.9	26	0.8	---
Kerne Bridge	27	1.6	12	0.7	↑
Kington Town	25	1.4	25	1.4	---
Ledbury	61	1.2	45	0.9	↑
Leominster North	61	1.9	75	2.3	↓
Leominster South	73	2.3	87	2.8	↓
Llangarron	16	0.9	17	0.9	---
Mortimer	9	0.5	18	1.0	↓
Old Gore	18	1.0	16	0.9	---
Pembridge & Lyonshall with Titley	13	0.7	16	0.9	---
Penyard	12	0.7	11	0.6	---
Pontrilas	17	0.9	15	0.8	---
Ross-on-Wye East	52	2.1	61	2.5	↓
Ross-on-Wye West	101	3.1	103	3.2	---
St Martins & Hinton	150	2.4	192	3.1	↓
St Nicholas	68	1.8	80	2.1	↓
Stoney Street	17	1.1	17	1.1	---
Sutton Walls	11	0.6	10	0.6	---
Three Elms	74	1.2	108	1.7	↓
Tupsley	53	1.0	81	1.5	↓
Upton	13	0.8	12	0.7	---
Valletts	11	0.6	23	1.2	↓
Wormsley Ridge	6	0.4	20	1.2	↓

Source: Office for National Statistics Monthly Unemployment Claimant Counts (NOMIS).

↑ = An increase in unemployment rate ↓ = A decrease in unemployment rate
 --- = 0.2 percentage point or less change in employment rate

Summary for 2003 Wards

In July 2007, 14 of the 40 wards experienced a decrease in unemployment rates since July 2006. Only 5 wards have seen an increase and the remaining 21 wards show little change in their unemployment rates.

Hereford's Central ward has the highest unemployment rate of 3.5%, but with relatively low numbers of unemployed (56 claimants). The rate is high due to the low numbers of people who live in the Central ward, resulting from a higher concentration of businesses compared to housing.

Other wards with high levels of unemployment are St Martins & Hinton (2.4%), Belmont (2.4%), Leominster South (2.3%) and Ross-on-Wye East (2.1%) and West (3.1%) as shown by a higher unemployment rate (percentage of working age population in the ward who are claiming), each with over 2% of their working age population claiming unemployment benefit. However the St Martins & Hinton, Belmont, Leominster South and Ross-on-Wye East wards have all seen a decrease over the last year. The unemployment rate in Ross-on-Wye West has also fallen, but only slightly, from 3.2% to 3.1%.

Summary for Lower Super Output Areas (SOA – Lower Level)

Statistics for sub-county have traditionally been released on a ward basis but boundaries change periodically, so monitoring trends over time is difficult. Ward population sizes vary enormously and wards are designed for electoral representation rather than representing the demography of an area, so they are often inappropriate for other use. To overcome these problems, the Office for National Statistics have produced different levels of 'output area geographies', for more information about these see the 'New Output Geographies' article in the May 2004 Quarterly Economic Report.

To show the spatial distribution of unemployment in Herefordshire, lower level 'super output areas' (SOAs) have been used (there are 116 of these, each with a population of about 1,500). Map 1, on the following page, shows the proportion of the county's unemployment claimants in each of these areas.

All SOAs in Herefordshire are grouped depending on the proportion of claimants in that area. There are 4 main groupings;

- the top 20%,
- the bottom 20% and
- the other 60% (split equally into two groups of 30%).

The purpose of the map is to show where there are clusters of unemployment claimants. However it should be noted that the SOAs with the highest proportion of claimants (top 20%) only had between 1.4% and 4.4% of all claimants.

The highest numbers of unemployment claimants occur in parts of Hereford City, Ross-on-Wye, Bromyard, some areas (SOAs) around Leominster and a SOA labelled 'Fairfields' which includes the parishes of Blakemere, Moccas, Preston-on-Wye, Peterchurch and Tyberton. The SOA in Ross on Wye (which includes the John Kyrle area) has the highest proportion of unemployment claimants (with 62 claimants, accounting for 4.4% of all Herefordshire claimants in April 2007).

Table 3: Age & Duration of Unemployment – July 2007

DURATION		AGE			Totals	
		Under 25 years	Between 25 & 49 years	50 years and over	No.	%
Less than 6 months	No.	360	530	145	1,035	74.7
	%	26.0	38.3	10.5		
Between 6 & 12 months	No.	35	130	40	205	14.8
	%	2.5	9.4	2.9		
More than 12 months	No.	10	80	60	150	10.8
	%	0.7	5.8	4.3		
Totals	No.	405	740	245	1,385	100
	%	29.2	53.4	17.7		

Source: Office for National Statistics Monthly Unemployment Claimant Counts (NOMIS).

*Overall figure different from Table 1 due to rounding of smaller data sets.

- The highest proportion of unemployment claimants were those aged between 25 and 49 years who have been unemployed for less than 6 months (38%), a slight increase from the figure for the last quarter, April 2007 (36%), but similar proportions to this time last year, July 2006 (also 38%).
- The majority of claimants have been unemployed for less than 6 months (75%), which is similar to July 2006 (76%).
- A little over half of all claimants are aged between 25 and 49 years (53%), showing a slight increase compared to the previous quarter (51%) and this time last year (52%).
- In July 2007, 29% of unemployment claimants were classed as 'youth unemployment' (those aged under 25 years), the same figure recorded for last July (2006).

For further information on the data in this article, please contact the Research Team on 01432 383634 or e-mail researchteam@herefordshire.gov.uk