

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 **January 2008**. All figures are unadjusted for seasonal variation unless otherwise stated.

- 1,517 people were unemployed and claiming benefit in Herefordshire during January 2008. This is an increase of 170 people from the previous quarter, October 2007 (1,347). The number of claimants is lower than the number seen in January 2007 (1,634).
- 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 January 2008 was 1.5%, which has increased from 1.3% in the last quarter and is lower than the level recorded in January 2007 (1.6%). Unemployment rates for the West Midlands region are much higher (3.0%) in comparison to Herefordshire. This figure has remained static from the last quarter (3.0%) but is lower than this time last year (3.4%). Rates for England, 2.2% show a slight increase from last quarter, October 2007 (2.1%) but are lower than this time last year (2.6%). Table 1 shows a brief summary of current unemployment numbers and rates.
- In January 2008, 71% of unemployment claimants in Herefordshire were male, with the unemployment rate amongst males increasing progressively to 2.0% in January 2008, from 1.7% in October 2007 and is now only slightly lower than in January 2007 (2.1%). Female unemployment rates are lower than those for males and have remained constant over the last year (0.9%).
- The overall number of claimants in Hereford City decreased, dropping from 732 last January to 607 claimants in January 2008. Of the market towns, Ross-on-Wye and Leominster have the highest levels of unemployment (147 and 142 claimants respectively), however Leominster has seen the largest decrease in claimants (16 fewer claimants than this time last year), despite a relatively large increase of 22 over the previous month. Ross-on-Wye, on the other hand, has experienced an increase (20 further claimants than this time last year). Unemployment in Kington was low and has remained at a similar level over the last year (24 claimants in January 2008).
- Numbers claiming unemployment benefits in the Hereford Parliamentary Constituency have decreased over the last year, falling from 1,043 in January 2007 to 939 in January 2008. 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 (1.7% compared to 1.2%).
- The majority of all claimants have been unemployed for less than 6 months (79%) and just over half of all claimants are aged between 25 and 49 (54%) (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).

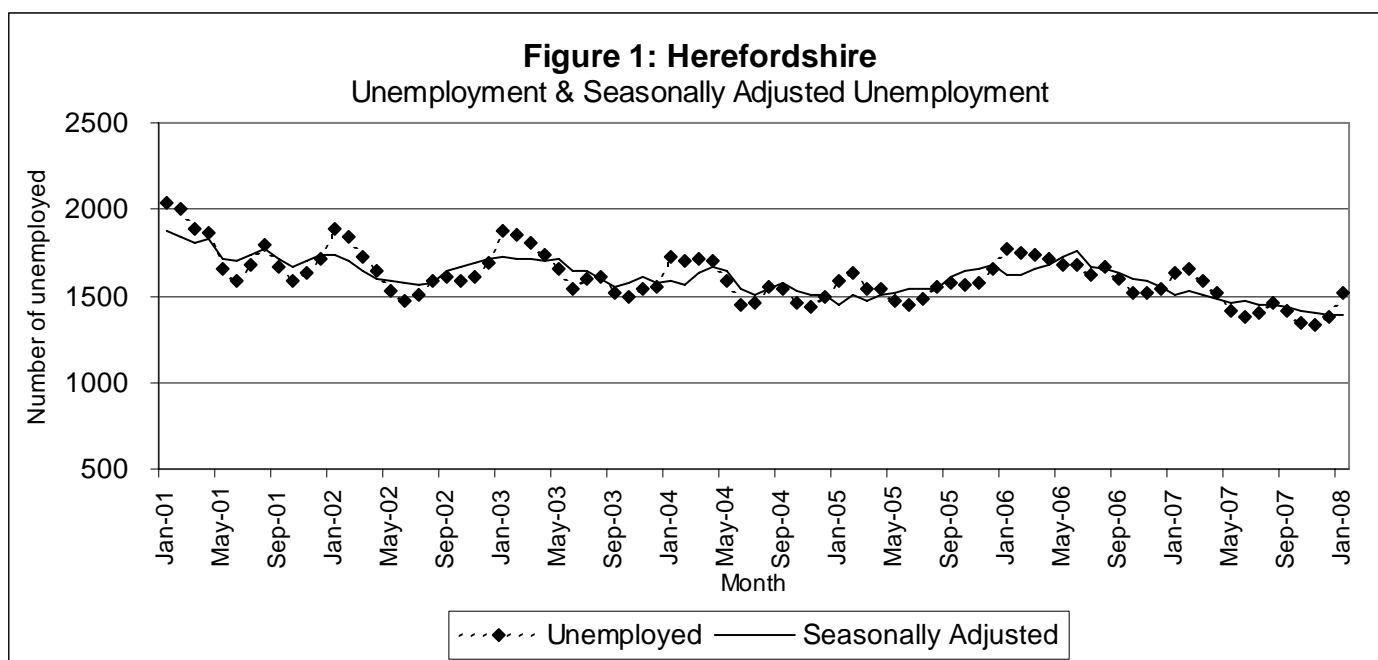
Table 1: Unemployment – January 2008

Area		Total January 2008	Male January 2008	Female January 2008	Previous Month December 2007	Previous Quarter October 2007	Previous Year January 2007
Herefordshire	No.	1,517	1,076	441	1,378	1,347	1,634
	%	1.5	2.0	0.9	1.3	1.3	1.6
West Midlands	%	3.0	4.2	1.6	2.9	3.0	3.4
England	%	2.2	3.1	1.2	2.1	2.1	2.6
Main Towns							
Hereford City		607	434	173	555	532	732
Bromyard & surrounds		59	45	14	58	60	54
Kington & surrounds		24	16	8	28	19	22
Ledbury & surrounds		59	39	20	51	49	48
Leominster		142	89	53	120	119	158
Ross-on-Wye		147	105	42	141	145	127
Parliamentary Constituencies							
Hereford	No.	939	669	270	856	829	1,043
	%	1.7	2.3	1.0	1.6	1.5	1.9
Leominster	No.	635	444	191	577	569	660
	%	1.2	1.6	0.8	1.1	1.1	1.3

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

Table 2: Unemployment for Wards for January 2008

Number of claimants and unemployment rate (% of working age population) for Jan 2008 and 2007

2003 Wards	January 2008		January 2007		Change
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	
Aylestone	46	1.3	47	1.4	---
Backbury	12	0.7	18	1.1	↓
Belmont	138	2.3	177	3.0	↓
Bircher	9	0.6	8	0.5	---
Bringsty	16	0.9	11	0.6	↑
Bromyard	59	1.8	54	1.6	---
Burghill, Holmer & Lyde	19	1	18	0.9	---
Castle	14	0.7	14	0.7	---
Central	54	3.4	67	4.2	↓
Credenhill	14	0.7	21	1.1	↓
Frome	20	1	22	1.1	---
Golden Cross with Weobley	26	1.5	28	1.7	---
Golden Valley North	22	1.3	20	1.2	---
Golden Valley South	14	0.8	22	1.3	↓
Hagley	26	1.2	25	1.2	---
Hampton Court	13	0.8	14	0.9	---
Hollington	10	0.8	18	1.5	↓
Hope End	32	1	34	1.1	---
Kerne Bridge	30	1.8	18	1.1	↑
Kington Town	24	1.4	22	1.3	---
Ledbury	59	1.1	48	0.9	---
Leominster North	71	2.2	79	2.5	↓
Leominster South	71	2.3	79	2.5	---
Llangarron	19	1	18	1.0	---
Mortimer	11	0.6	19	1.0	↓
Old Gore	15	0.8	13	0.7	---
Pembridge & Lyonshall with Titley	19	1.1	17	1.0	---
Penyard	25	1.4	15	0.8	↑
Pontrilas	13	0.7	19	1.0	↓
Ross-on-Wye East	41	1.7	41	1.7	---
Ross-on-Wye West	106	3.3	86	2.7	↑
St Martins & Hinton	139	2.2	193	3.1	↓
St Nicholas	91	2.4	70	1.9	↑
Stoney Street	21	1.3	20	1.2	---
Sutton Walls	18	1	21	1.2	---
Three Elms	88	1.4	120	1.9	↓
Tupsley	51	0.9	58	1.1	---
Upton	14	0.9	19	1.2	↓
Valletts	22	1.2	28	1.5	↓
Wormsley Ridge	25	1.5	13	0.8	↑

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

↑ = An increase in unemployment rate ↓ = A decrease in unemployment rate
 --- = Less than 0.3 percentage point change in employment rate

Summary for 2003 Wards

In January 2008, 13 of the 40 wards experienced a decrease in unemployment rates since January 2007, 6 wards have seen an increase and the remaining 21 wards show little change in their unemployment rates.

Central ward has the highest unemployment rate at 3.4%, followed by Ross-on-Wye West (3.3%). The relatively high rate of the former is, however, due to the low numbers of unemployed (54 claimants) in relation to the low numbers of people living within this ward, as a result of a higher concentration of businesses compared to housing.

Other wards with relatively high levels of unemployment are St Nicholas (2.4%), Belmont (2.3%), Leominster South (2.3%), Leominster North (2.2%) and St Martins & Hinton (2.2%) 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. Belmont, Leominster North, Leominster South and St Martins & Hinton wards have, however, seen a decrease over the last year.

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 1.1% and 4.3% of all claimants.

The highest numbers of unemployment claimants occur in Ross-on-Wye, John Kyrle area (65 claimants, 4.3% of all claimants) followed by Golden Post – Newton Farm in Hereford City South of the river (47 claimants, 3.1% of all claimants) and Whitecross – Sainsbury's in Hereford City (43 claimants, 2.8% of all claimants).

The other areas highlighted on the map as having concentrations of unemployment claimants were in Bromyard, around Leominster Market Town, areas in the north of Hereford City, a SOA labelled 'Fairfields' (which includes the parishes of Blakemere, Moccas, Preston-on-Wye, Peterchurch and Tyberton), a SOA labelled Greater weobly (including the parishes of Weobly and Dilwyn) and several SOAs in the south of the county that include the parishes of Goodrich, Lea, Lindon, Walford, Western under Penyard and Welsh Bicknor.

Table 3: Age & Duration of Unemployment – January 2008

DURATION		AGE			Totals	
		Under 25 years	Between 25 & 49 years	50 years and over	No.	%
Less than 6 months	No.	390	590	200	1,180	78.9
	%	26.1	39.5	13.4		
Between 6 & 12 months	No.	25	120	20	165	11.0
	%	1.7	8.0	1.3		
More than 12 months	No.	10	95	50	155	10.4
	%	0.7	6.4	3.3		
Totals	No.	425	805	270	1,495	100
	%	28.4	53.8	18.1		

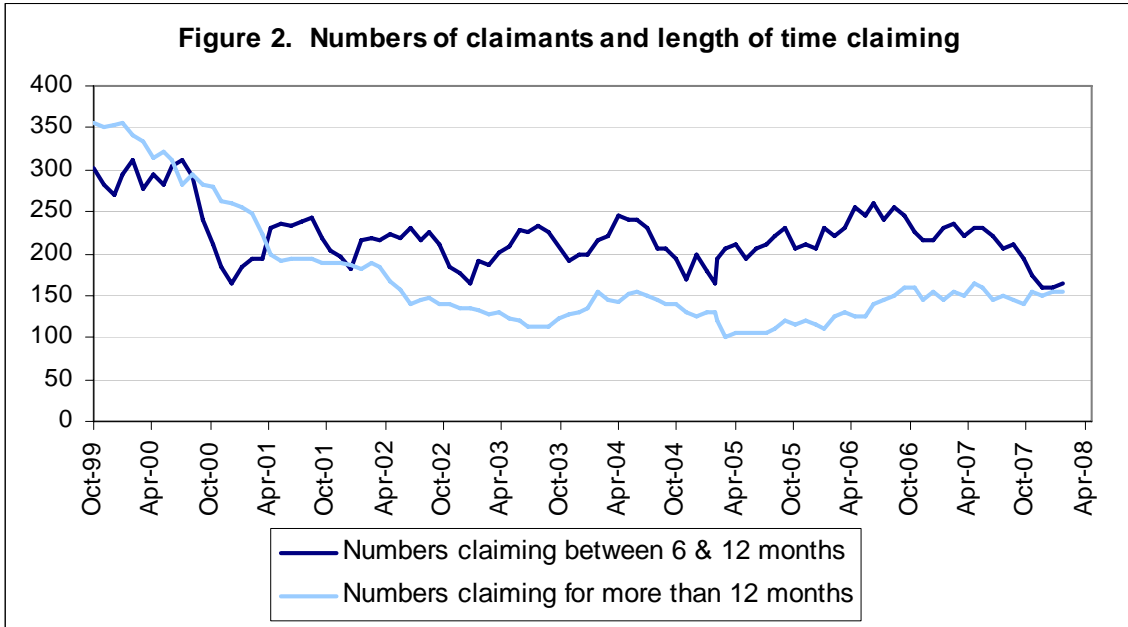
Source: Office for National Statistics Monthly Unemployment Claimant Counts (NOMIS).

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

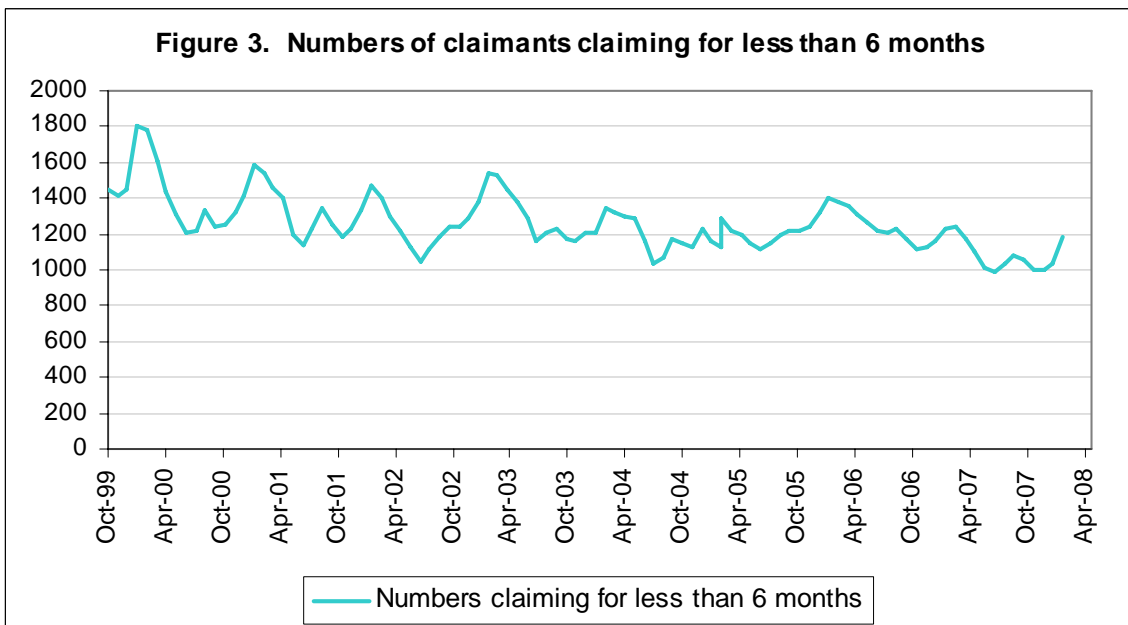
- The highest proportion of unemployment claimants were those aged between 25 and 49 years who have been unemployed for less than 6 months (40%), similar to the figure for the last quarter, October 2007 (39%) and up by 2% on the figure this time last year, January 2007 (38%).
- The majority of claimants have been unemployed for less than 6 months (79%), which is similar to January 2007 (77%).
- A little over half of all claimants are aged between 25 and 49 years (54%), showing no change on the previous quarter and similar to this time last year (52%).
- 10% of all claimants in January 2008 have been claiming unemployment benefits for over a year, 155 people. 95 of which are aged between 25 and 49 years (61% of longer term claimants).
- In January 2008, 28% of unemployment claimants were classed as 'youth unemployment' (those aged under 25 years), similar to the figure recorded for the same time last year January 2007 (29%).

Figure 2 below shows how the number of claimants claiming for between 6 and 12 months and for 12 months or longer has changed over the last 8 years, whilst Figure 3 shows trends for the number claiming for less than 6 months.

The numbers of claimants who are claiming unemployment benefits for 12 months or longer have been increasing over the last 2 years, from 110 in January 2006 to 155 in January 2008.



Numbers claiming for less than 6 months have been falling since January 2006, from 1,405 claimants to only 1,180 in January 2008.



From these graphs and numbers it suggests that it would be worth monitoring the numbers of longer-term claimants, those claiming for 12 months or longer as it appears to be the only category of claimants that are increasing.

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