

## 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 unemployment<sup>1</sup>. The following is a summary of the key information from **October 2007**. All figures are unadjusted for seasonal variation unless otherwise stated.

- 1,347 people were unemployed and claiming benefit in Herefordshire during October 2007. This is a decrease of 58 people from the previous quarter, July 2007 (1,405), and lower than numbers seen a year ago in October 2006 (1,521).
- 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 October 2007 was 1.3%, which is down slightly from 1.4% for the last quarter, and lower than the level recorded in October 2006 (1.5%). Unemployment rates for the West Midlands region are much higher (3.0%) in comparison to Herefordshire. However, this figure has decreased from both the last quarter (3.1%) and this time last year (3.3%). Rates for England, 2.1% show a fall from last quarter, July 2007 (2.3%) and from October 2006 (2.5%). Table 1 shows a brief summary of current unemployment numbers and rates.
- In October 2007, 69% of unemployment claimants in Herefordshire were male, with the unemployment rate amongst males falling steadily to 1.7% in October 2007, from 1.8% in July 2007 and 1.9% in October 2006. Female unemployment rates are lower and have remained the same over the last year (0.9%).
- The overall number of claimants in Hereford City decreased, dropping from 690 last October to 532 claimants in October 2007. Of the market towns, Ross-on-Wye and Leominster have the highest levels of unemployment (145 and 119 claimants respectively), however Leominster has seen the largest decrease in claimants (25 fewer claimants than this time last year), whereas Ross-on-Wye has experienced an increase (10 further claimants than this time last year). Unemployment in Kington was low and has remained at a similar level over the last year (19 claimants in October 2007).
- Numbers claiming unemployment benefits in the Hereford Parliamentary Constituency have decreased over the last year, falling from 989 in October 2006 to 829 in October 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 (1.5% compared to 1.1%).
- The majority of all claimants have been unemployed for less than 6 months (75%) and just over half of all claimants are aged between 25 and 49 (54%) (See Table 3).

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<sup>1</sup> 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).

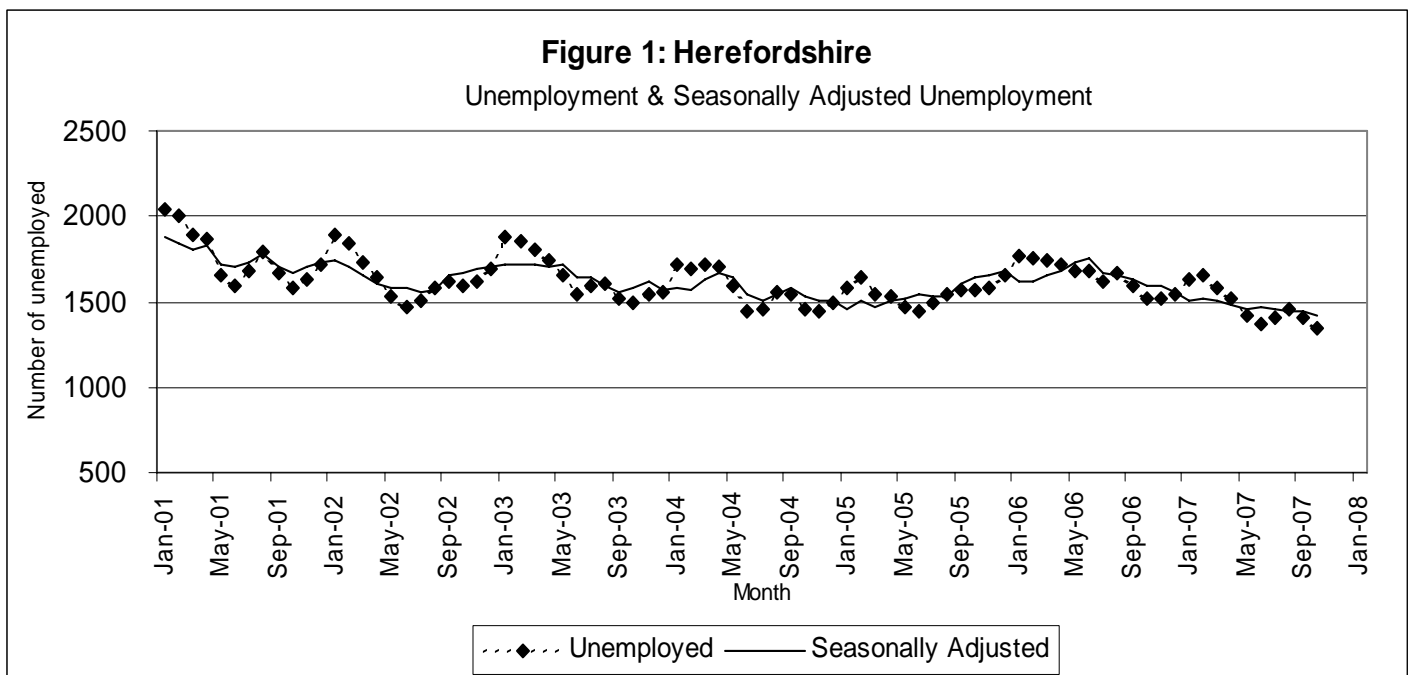
**Table 1: Unemployment – October 2007**

Area		Total October 2007	Male October 2007	Female October 2007	Previous Month September 2007	Previous Quarter July 2007	Previous Year October 2006
Herefordshire	No.	1,347	930	417	1,408	1,405	1,521
	%	1.3	1.7	0.9	1.4	1.4	1.5
West Midlands	%	3.0	4.1	1.7	3.0	3.1	3.3
England	%	2.1	2.9	1.3	2.2	2.3	2.5
<b>Main Towns</b>							
Hereford City		532	358	174	574	591	690
Bromyard & surrounds		60	48	12	53	48	52
Kington & surrounds		19	12	7	22	25	20
Ledbury & surrounds		49	31	18	49	61	41
Leominster		119	84	35	139	134	144
Ross-on-Wye		145	100	45	148	153	135
<b>Parliamentary Constituencies</b>							
Hereford	No.	829	564	267	878	898	989
	%	1.5	2.0	1.0	1.6	1.6	1.8
Leominster	No.	569	401	168	586	563	588
	%	1.1	1.4	0.7	1.1	1.1	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

**Table 2: Unemployment for Wards for October 2007**

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

2003 Wards	October 2007		October 2006		Change
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	
Aylestone	56	1.6	49	1.4	---
Backbury	11	0.7	13	0.8	---
Belmont	113	1.9	164	2.8	↓
Bircher	5	0.3	7	0.5	---
Bringsty	15	0.8	10	0.6	---
Bromyard	60	1.8	52	1.6	---
Burghill, Holmer & Lyde	15	0.8	22	1.2	↓
Castle	15	0.8	11	0.6	---
Central	43	2.7	59	3.7	↓
Credenhill	14	0.7	16	0.8	---
Frome	19	1.0	17	0.9	---
Golden Cross with Weobley	24	1.4	22	1.3	---
Golden Valley North	23	1.4	23	1.4	---
Golden Valley South	12	0.7	14	0.8	---
Hagley	26	1.2	22	1.0	---
Hampton Court	16	1.0	16	1.0	---
Hollington	13	1.1	17	1.4	↓
Hope End	27	0.8	30	0.9	---
Kerne Bridge	23	1.3	15	0.9	↑
Kington Town	19	1.1	20	1.1	---
Ledbury	49	0.9	41	0.8	---
Leominster North	54	1.7	70	2.2	↓
Leominster South	65	2.1	74	2.4	↓
Llangarron	22	1.2	15	0.8	↑
Mortimer	9	0.5	22	1.2	↓
Old Gore	11	0.6	15	0.8	---
Pembridge & Lyonshall with Titley	17	1.0	13	0.7	↑
Penyard	10	0.6	11	0.6	---
Pontrilas	11	0.6	17	0.9	↓
Ross-on-Wye East	49	2.0	45	1.8	---
Ross-on-Wye West	96	3.0	90	2.8	---
St Martins & Hinton	145	2.3	177	2.8	↓
St Nicholas	66	1.7	73	1.9	---
Stoney Street	17	1.1	18	1.1	---
Sutton Walls	17	0.9	15	0.8	---
Three Elms	68	1.1	106	1.7	↓
Tupsley	41	0.8	62	1.1	↓
Upton	17	1.0	15	0.9	---
Valletts	18	0.9	28	1.5	↓
Wormsley Ridge	16	1.0	15	0.9	---

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 October 2007, 12 of the 40 wards experienced a decrease in unemployment rates since October 2006. Only 3 wards have seen an increase and the remaining 25 wards show little change in their unemployment rates.

Ross-on-Wye West has the highest unemployment rate at 3.0%, followed by Hereford's Central ward (2.7%). The latter, however, possesses relatively low numbers of unemployed (43 claimants) and the relatively high rate is 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 (2.3%) and Leominster South (2.1%) 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. Both the St Martins & Hinton and Leominster South 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 1.2% and 4.2% of all claimants.

The highest numbers of unemployment claimants occur in Ross-on-Wye, John Kyrle area (56 claimants, 4.2% of all claimants) followed by Golden Post – Newton Farm in Hereford City South of the river (39 claimants, 2.9% of all claimants) and Bishops Meadow – Hunderton also part of South Wye, south of Hereford City (36 claimants, 2.7% 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 and a SOA labelled 'Fairfields' which includes the parishes of Blakemere, Moccas, Preston-on-Wye, Peterchurch and Tyberton.



**Table 3: Age & Duration of Unemployment – October 2007**

DURATION		AGE			Totals	
		Under 25 years	Between 25 & 49 years	50 years and over	No.	%
Less than 6 months	No.	315	520	165	1,000	75.2
	%	23.7	39.1	12.4		
Between 6 & 12 months	No.	35	110	30	175	13.2
	%	2.6	8.3	2.3		
More than 12 months	No.	10	90	55	155	11.7
	%	0.8	6.8	4.1		
Totals	No.	360	720	250	1,330	100
	%	27.1	54.1	18.8		

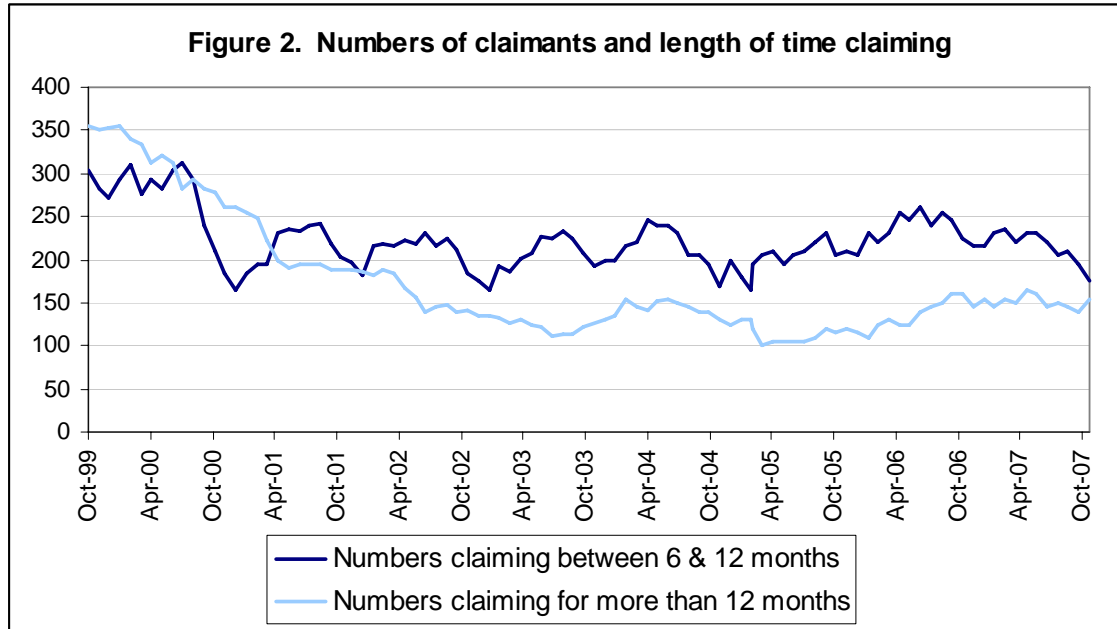
Source: Office for National Statistics Monthly Unemployment Claimant Counts (NOMIS).

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

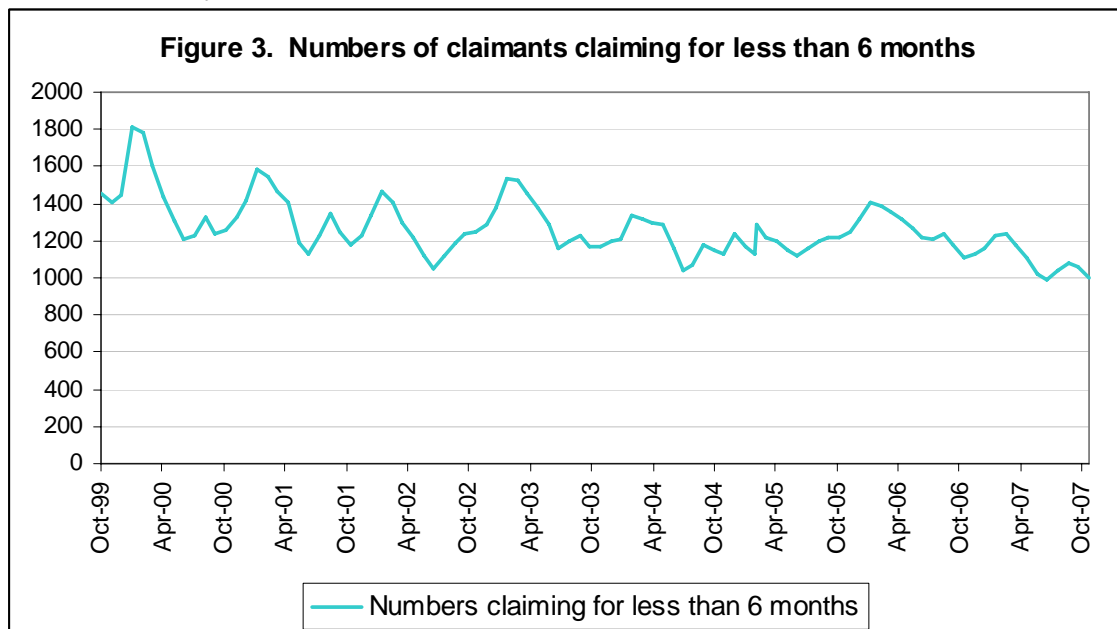
- The highest proportion of unemployment claimants were those aged between 25 and 49 years who have been unemployed for less than 6 months (39%), similar to the figure for the last quarter, July 2007 (38%) and to this time last year, October 2006 (also 39%).
- The majority of claimants have been unemployed for less than 6 months (75%), which is similar to October 2006 (74%).
- A little over half of all claimants are aged between 25 and 49 years (54%), showing little variation on the previous quarter (53%) and this time last year (55%).
- Nearly 12% of all claimants in October 2007 have been claiming unemployment benefits for over a year, 155 people. 90 of which are aged between 25 and 49 years (58% of longer term claimants).
- In October 2007, 27% of unemployment claimants were classed as 'youth unemployment' (those aged under 25 years), the same figure recorded for last October (2006).

Figure 2 ~~and~~ 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 115 in October 2005 to 155 in October 2007.



Numbers claiming for less than 6 months have been falling since January 2006, from 1,405 claimants to only 1,000 in October 2007.



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](mailto:researchteam@herefordshire.gov.uk)**