



UNEMPLOYMENT BULLETIN FOR HERTFORDSHIRE

OCTOBER 2005

QUARTERLY

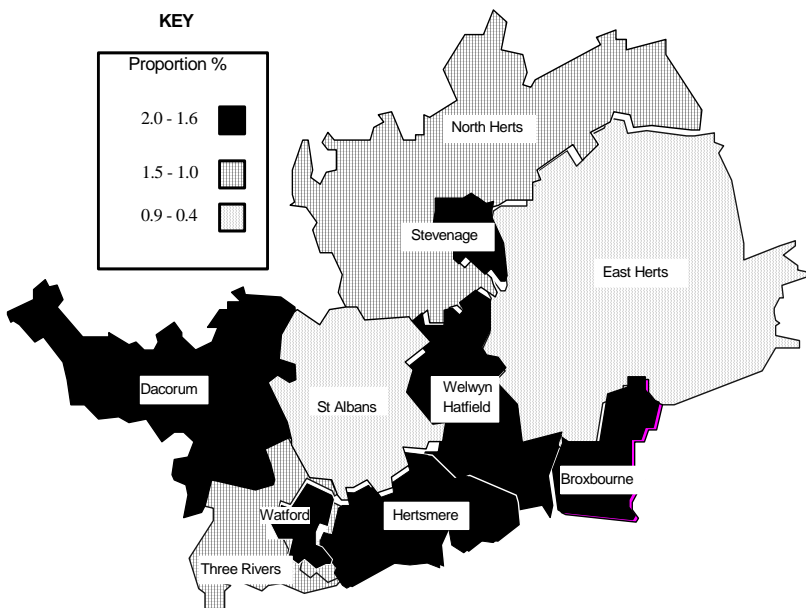
- The official unemployment rate for UK (using the ILO rate) is 4.7% for the period July - September 2005. The quarterly average rates for Hertfordshire, 3.3%, and East of England, 3.7%, have not been updated since the previous quarter as figures will come from the as yet unpublished Annual Population Survey data. (See Appendix).
- Claimant count unemployment in Hertfordshire for October 2005 stands at 9,258 a proportion of 1.4%.
- During the last quarter there has been a decrease in claimant unemployed of 83 (0.9%).

CLAIMANT COUNT IN HERTFORDSHIRE

DISTRICT	OCT 2005				SEP 2005				AUG 2005			
	Male	Female	Total	% proportion	Male	Female	Total	% proportion	Male	Female	Total	% proportion
BROXBOURNE	665	317	982	1.9	672	322	994	1.9	659	340	999	1.9
DACORUM	1,019	448	1,467	1.7	1,018	477	1,495	1.8	1,020	472	1,492	1.8
EAST HERTS	521	236	757	0.9	530	248	778	0.9	544	249	793	1.0
HERTSMERE	628	272	900	1.6	622	264	886	1.6	622	274	896	1.6
NORTH HERTS	643	265	908	1.2	652	262	914	1.2	707	284	991	1.4
ST ALBANS	551	226	777	0.9	559	234	793	1.0	550	242	792	1.0
STEVENAGE	694	209	903	1.8	724	225	949	1.9	732	229	961	1.9
THREE RIVERS	432	183	615	1.2	459	203	662	1.3	475	206	681	1.3
WATFORD	729	276	1,005	2.0	785	293	1,078	2.1	779	298	1,077	2.1
WELWYN/HATFIELD	667	277	944	1.6	665	275	940	1.6	693	282	975	1.6
COUNTY	6,549	2,709	9,258	1.4	6,686	2,803	9,489	1.5	6,781	2,876	9,657	1.5

Not seasonally adjusted

**TOTAL UNEMPLOYED CLAIMANTS
IN COUNTY = 9,258 (1.4%)**



- Since July 2005, although the overall number of unemployed claimants in the county has fallen, this has not been reflected in all of the districts.
- Five of the districts experienced increases in the actual number of unemployed claimants; four districts saw decreases and in Broxbourne the number of unemployed remained the same.
- During this period North Herts had the largest decrease in the number of unemployed, 100, and also the highest percentage decrease of 9.9%.
- East Herts had both the largest increase in the number of unemployed claimants, 51, and the highest percentage increase of 7.2% since the last quarter.
- The number of males unemployed fell by 88 since July 2005, while there was a slight increase of 5 in the number of females unemployed.

Total Unemployed DISTRICT	OCT 2005	OCT 2004	OCT 2003	Change 2003-2005 Nos	%
BROXBOURNE	982	849	828	154	18.6
DACORUM	1,467	1,284	1,342	125	9.3
EAST HERTS	757	624	649	108	16.6
HERTSMERE	900	815	881	19	2.2
NORTH HERTS	908	915	1,032	-124	-12.0
ST ALBANS	777	666	821	-44	-5.4
STEVENAGE	903	798	865	38	4.4
THREE RIVERS	615	572	614	1	0.2
WATFORD	1,005	891	865	140	16.2
WELWYN/HATFIELD	944	762	767	177	23.1
COUNTY	9,258	8,176	8,664	594	6.9

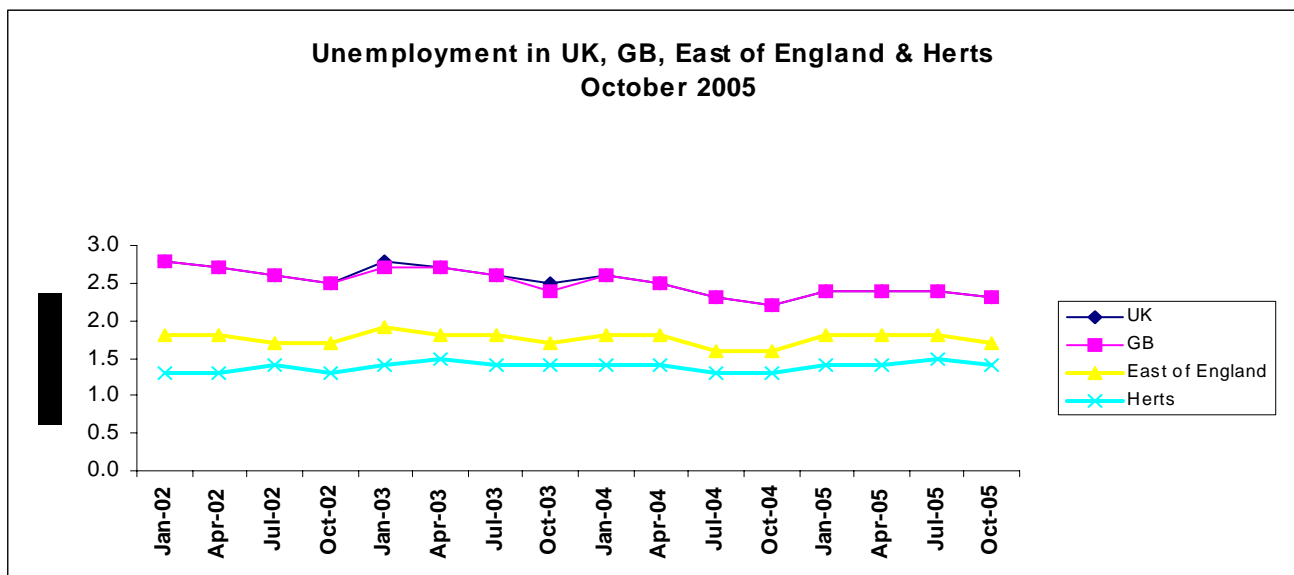
- Claimant unemployment in Hertfordshire has increased by 6.9% (594 claimants) since October 2003.
- Welwyn Hatfield had the largest increase of 177 in the number of claimants and the largest percentage increase (23.1%) during this period.
- The smallest increase in the number of claimant count unemployed, of 1, was in Three Rivers since October 2003.
- During the same period, two of the districts experienced decreases in the number of claimants, North Herts by 124 (12.0%) and St Albans by 44 (5.4%).

CLAIMANT COUNT COMPARISONS

- Since July 2005 the number of unemployed claimants has fallen both nationally and regionally. However, in the Greater London area the number of claimants increased by 3,013 (1.8%).
- During the last quarter, in the majority of Counties / Unitary Authorities surrounding Hertfordshire unemployment has fallen, the largest decrease of 878 was in Suffolk. The largest percentage decrease of 13.9% was in Oxfordshire.
- Four of the Counties / Unitary Authorities experienced increases in the number of unemployed claimants during this period, the largest was 456 in Essex. The largest percentage increase of 6.8% was in Southend.

October 2005 REGIONS	Nos Unemployed	% proportion	COUNTIES / UNITARY AUTHORITIES	Nos Unemployed	% proportion
			LUTON	3,615	3.1
EAST OF ENGLAND	58,313	1.7	BEDFORDSHIRE (remainder)	3,909	1.6
SOUTH EAST	71,779	1.4	MILTON KEYNES	2,625	1.8
GREATER LONDON	166,441	3.4	BUCKINGHAMSHIRE (remainder)	3,168	1.1
GREAT BRITAIN	837,100	2.3	PETERBOROUGH	2,540	2.6
UNITED KINGDOM	864,827	2.3	CAMBRIDGESHIRE (remainder)	4,682	1.3
			SOUTHEND	2,746	2.9
LONDON BOROUGHS			THURROCK	2,213	2.4
BARNET	5,426	2.6	ESSEX (remainder)	12,716	1.6
ENFIELD	6,381	3.6	HERTFORDSHIRE	9,258	1.4
HARROW	3,285	2.4	NORFOLK	10,313	2.1
HILLINGDON	3,929	2.5	OXFORDSHIRE	3,505	0.9
			SUFFOLK	6,321	1.6

Not seasonally adjusted



LONG TERM UNEMPLOYED CLAIMANTS IN HERTFORDSHIRE (more than 1 year)

- There are 1,005 long-term unemployed (LTU) claimants in Hertfordshire, representing 10.9% of all unemployed, compared to 945, 10.1% in July 2005.
- The increase in the number of LTU in the county has not been reflected throughout the different age groups, there was a slight decrease of 5 LTU in the 55+ age group.
- In the 35 - 44 year old age group the total number of LTU remained the same as last quarter.
- The largest increase of 35 in the total number of LTU during this period was in the 18 - 24 year old age group.

October 2005 Age	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	% of All Unemployed	October	2004
					% of All Unemployed	Total
18 - 24	55	30	85	3.6	2.0	40
25 - 34	150	35	185	9.4	7.4	135
35 - 44	170	65	240	11.8	11.2	200
45 - 54	210	85	295	16.6	17.4	265
55+	150	55	205	22.2	22.6	200
TOTAL	740	270	1,005	10.9	10.2	835

Data rounded to nearest 5 (disclosure control)

Not seasonally adjusted

Column totals may not sum due to rounding

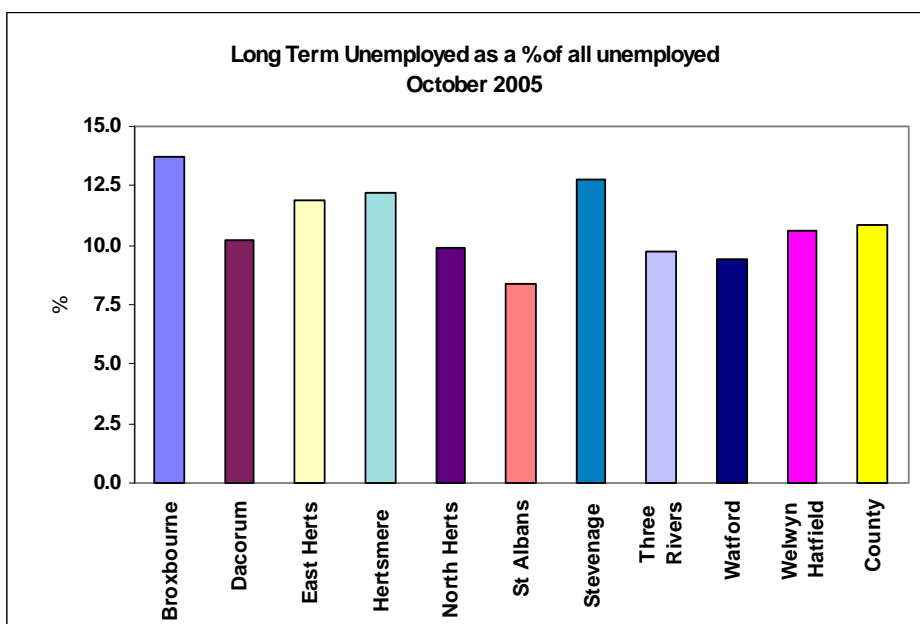
LONG TERM UNEMPLOYED CLAIMANTS (LTU) IN THE DISTRICTS

District	Males 18-24	Males 25+	Males Total	Females 18-24	Females 25+	Females Total	Total LTU	% of all Unemployed
Broxbourne	10	80	90	5	40	45	135	13.7
Dacorum	5	100	105	5	40	45	150	10.2
East Herts	10	60	70	5	15	20	85	11.9
Hertsmere	10	70	80	5	25	30	110	12.2
North Herts	5	65	70	0	20	20	90	9.9
St Albans	5	40	45	0	20	20	65	8.4
Stevenage	5	95	100	0	15	15	115	12.7
Three Rivers	5	40	45	0	15	15	60	9.8
Watford	5	60	65	5	25	30	95	9.5
Welwyn Hatfield	0	75	75	0	25	25	100	10.6
County	55	680	740	30	240	270	1,005	10.9

Data rounded to nearest 5 (disclosure control)

Not seasonally adjusted

Column totals may not sum due to rounding



- Both the percentage of LTU and the actual number of LTU claimants in the county have increased since July 2005, by 0.8% and 60 respectively.
- The largest percentage increase of 2.3% has been in St Albans during the last quarter, although it remains the district with the lowest percentage of LTU, 8.4%.
- East Herts had the highest increase of 20 in the actual number of LTU during this period.
- However, there have been decreases in the actual number of LTU claimants since the last quarter. North Herts had the largest fall of 15, while Broxbourne and Welwyn Hatfield both fell slightly by 5.

NEW MONTHLY JOBCENTRE PLUS NOTIFIED VACANCIES (INFLOWS) BY OCCUPATION

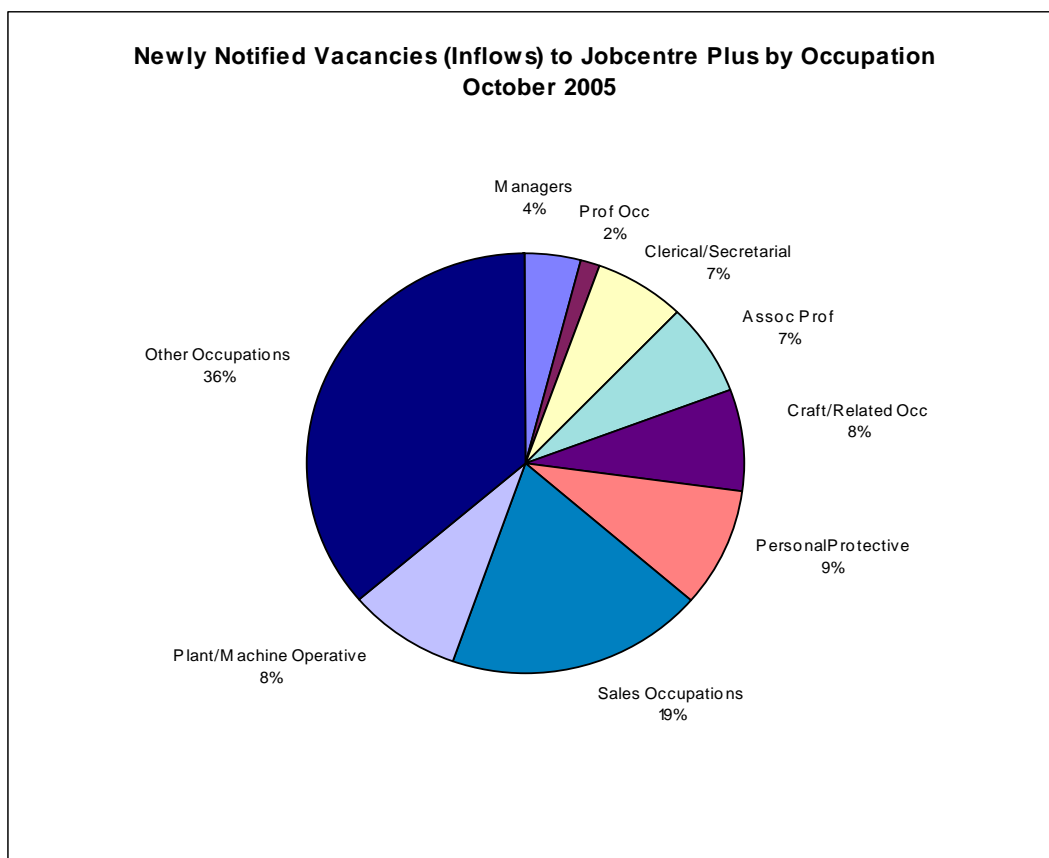
NB This dataset is only new inflows not stock and gives an indication of the types of occupational vacancies being notified.

- In Hertfordshire (plus Stansted Airport) a total of 5,992 vacancies were notified during October 2005, this was an decrease of 8.9% since October 2004.
- The highest number of vacancies by occupational sector in Hertfordshire (plus Stansted Airport) is within "Other Occupations" with 2,180 newly notified vacancies, which accounts for 36% of the total. Hertford Jobcentre Plus had the largest number of vacancies in this group, with 446.
- Overall the Hemel Hempstead Jobcentre Plus had the highest total of newly notified vacancies, 1,010.

OCCUPATIONS

District	Occupational definitions (see bottom of page)									Oct 2005 Total	Oct 2004 Total	% change
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9			
Bishop's Stortford	7	7	23	8	52	29	19	30	71	246	345	-28.7
Borehamwood	6	2	19	64	6	21	57	32	60	267	273	-2.2
Hertford	66	17	51	36	26	39	36	44	446	761	334	127.8
Hemel Hempstead	58	13	54	15	65	44	289	124	348	1,010	638	58.3
Hitchin	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	355	-99.7
Hatfield	0	1	1	2	2	2	5	1	14	28	421	-93.3
Letchworth	23	12	57	84	62	95	86	70	161	650	356	82.6
St Albans	18	8	43	90	82	103	180	35	268	827	1,038	-20.3
Stevenage	13	6	26	62	44	88	202	29	394	864	739	16.9
Watford	40	23	58	37	97	59	135	49	231	729	971	-24.9
Waltham Cross	11	3	33	29	23	16	78	46	84	323	650	-50.3
Welwyn Garden City	1	0	2	1	2	2	5	2	5	20	253	-92.1
Stansted Airport	5	0	25	3	2	57	41	36	97	266	202	31.7
TOTAL	248	92	431	392	463	555	1,133	498	2,180	5,992	6,575	-8.9

- Refer to appendix for details of Vacancy data



Definitions of occupational sectors:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Managers 2. Professional Occupations 3. Clerical / Secretarial 4. Associated Professional 5. Craft Related Occupations | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Personal and Protective 7. Sales Occupations 8. Plant / Machine Operatives 9. Other Occupations |
|---|---|

NEW MONTHLY JOBCENTRE PLUS NOTIFIED VACANCIES (INFLOWS) BY INDUSTRY

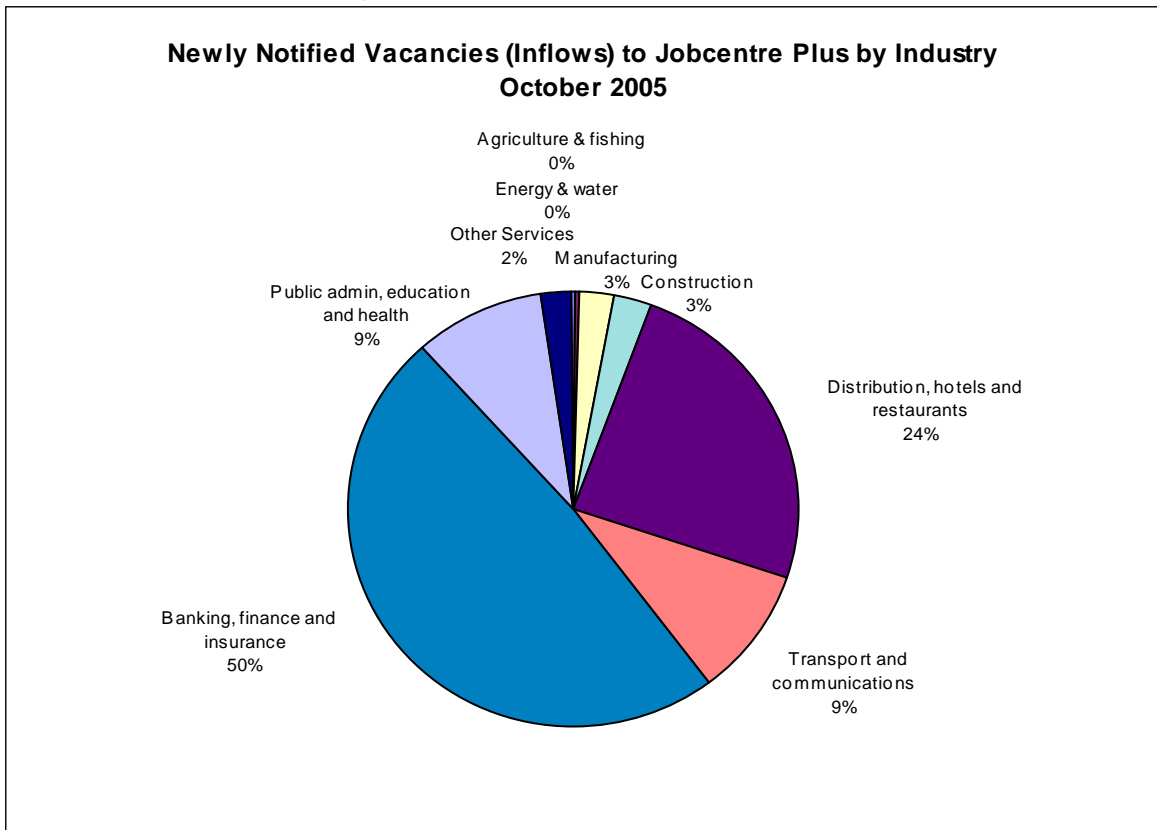
NB This dataset is only new inflows not stock and gives an indication of the types of industrial vacancies being notified.

- The sector with the highest number of vacancies by industrial sector in Hertfordshire (plus Stansted Airport) is Banking, Finance and Insurance with 2,923 and represents 50% of the total.
- Hemel Hempstead Jobcentre Plus, with 639, has the largest number of vacancies in the Banking sector.
- The Distribution, Hotels and Restaurants sector is the second largest in the county (plus Stansted Airport) with 1,461 newly notified vacancies and together with the Banking, Finance and Insurance sector, accounts for 74% of vacancies.

INDUSTRY

District	Industrial definitions (see bottom of page)									Oct 2005 Total	Oct 2004 Total	% change
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9			
Bishop's Stortford	0	3	6	9	59	19	127	21	2	246	345	-28.7
Borehamwood	3	0	12	4	42	4	168	25	9	267	273	-2.2
Hertford	0	0	20	8	66	101	544	21	1	761	334	127.8
Hemel Hempstead	2	5	10	14	202	75	639	40	23	1,010	638	58.3
Hitchin	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	355	-99.7
Hatfield	0	4	0	0	11	0	8	5	0	28	421	-93.3
Letchworth	2	2	39	21	205	9	212	137	23	650	356	82.6
St Albans	0	1	12	19	266	22	413	88	6	827	1,038	-20.3
Stevenage	2	0	15	13	238	208	233	132	23	864	739	16.9
Watford	1	4	26	56	208	20	343	49	22	729	971	-24.9
Waltham Cross	1	2	14	17	101	7	124	37	20	323	650	-50.3
Welwyn Garden City	0	0	3	0	10	1	4	2	0	20	253	-92.1
Stansted Airport	0	0	2	0	53	95	107	9	0	266	202	31.7
TOTAL	11	21	159	161	1,461	561	2,923	566	129	5,992	6,575	-8.9

- Refer to appendix for details of Vacancy data

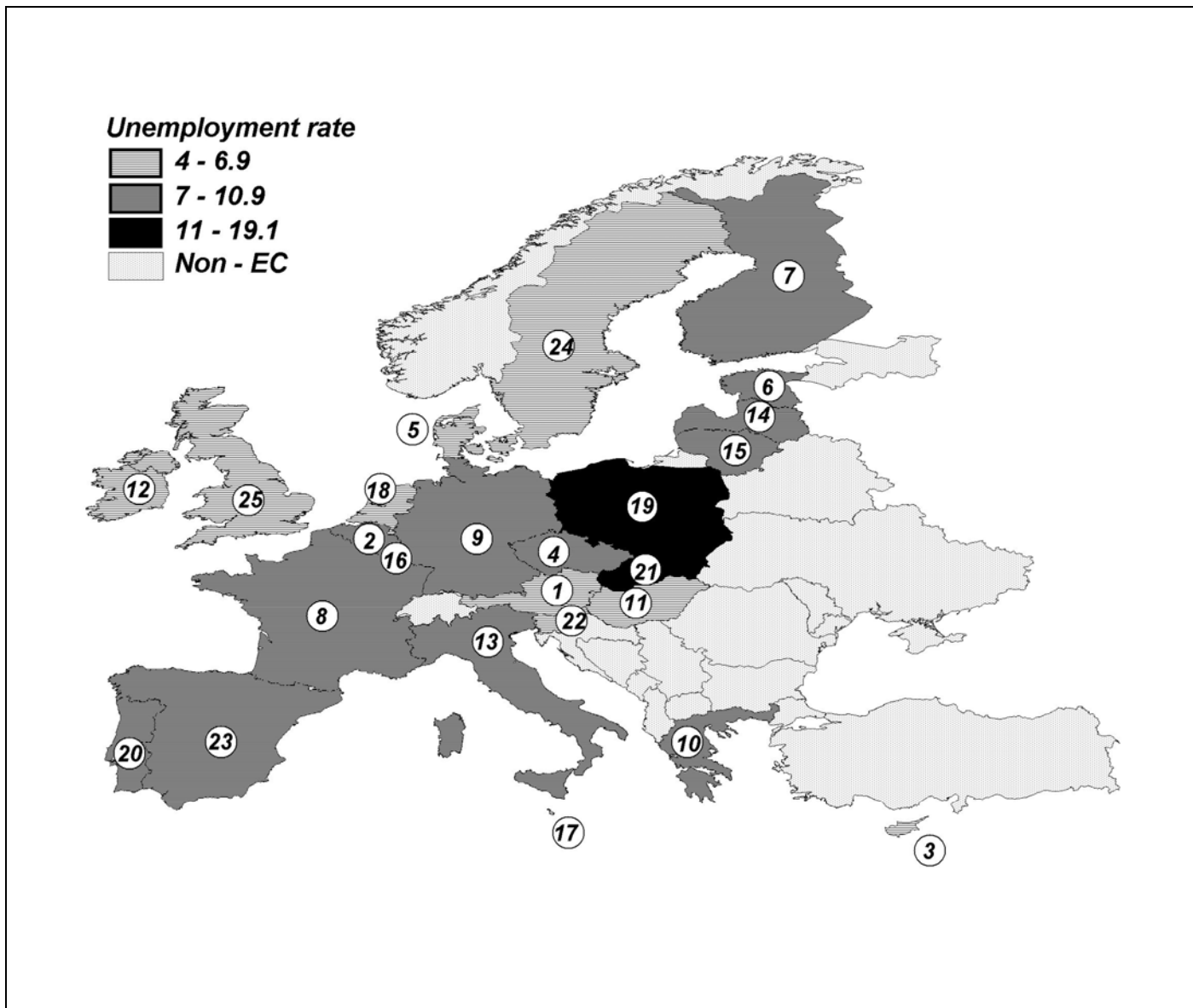


Definitions of industrial sectors:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agriculture and fishing 2. Energy and water 3. Manufacturing 4. Construction 5. Distribution, hotels and restaurants | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Transport and communications 7. Banking, finance and insurance, etc 8. Public administration, education and health 9. Other Services |
|---|--|

EUROPEAN UNION

- The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the European Union stands at 8.7% in August 2005. Poland continues to have the highest unemployment rate in the European Union at 17.5%.
- During the last quarter the unemployment rate has fallen in 16 of the countries in the European Union, the largest decrease being 0.6% in Lithuania, followed closely by Estonia and Spain both by 0.5%.
- However, during the same period, the unemployment rate rose in 6 of the EU countries, the largest increase of 0.8% was in Luxembourg.
- The unemployment rate in Germany (9.6%), Portugal (7.2%) has remained static since May 2005 and in Sweden (6.3%) since March 2005.



Country	% rate	Country	% rate	Country	% rate	Country	% rate
1. Austria	5.2	8. France	9.6	15. Lithuania	7.5	22. Slovenia	5.8
2. Belgium	8.0	9. Germany	9.6	16. Luxembourg	5.5	23. Spain	9.4
3. Cyprus	5.5	10. Greece	***9.9	17. Malta	6.4	24. Sweden	***6.3
4. Czech Republic	7.7	11. Hungary	6.4	18. Netherlands	4.7	25. United Kingdom	*4.7
5. Denmark	4.8	12. Ireland	4.3	19. Poland	17.5		
6. Estonia	7.4	13. Italy	**7.7	20. Portugal	7.2	Union Average	8.7
7. Finland	8.2	14. Latvia	8.8	21. Slovakia	15.2		

Source: Labour Market Trends

* Jul 2005

** Jun 2005

*** Mar 2005

The unemployment rates used are seasonally adjusted using a standardised ILO rate.

PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES

- During the last quarter unemployment has fallen in the majority of Constituencies with the Hitchin & Harpenden Constituency having the largest decrease, of 63, in the number of unemployed claimants.
- However, in four of the Constituencies there have been slight increases in the actual number of unemployed since July 2005; Hemel Hempstead (35), Hertford & Stortford (54), Hertsmere (9) and Welwyn Hatfield (15).

Parliamentary Constituencies	Numbers of Unemployed October 2005	Unemployment % Proportion October 2005
Broxbourne	1,005	1.8
Hemel Hempstead	1,210	2.1
Hertford & Stortford	629	1.0
Hertsmere	900	1.6
Hitchin & Harpenden	540	1.0
North East Hertfordshire	607	1.1
South West Hertfordshire	687	1.1
St Albans	609	1.1
Stevenage	974	1.7
Watford	1,176	1.8
Welwyn Hatfield	921	1.6

JOB DENSITIES

NOTES:

- Job density is defined as the number of filled jobs in an area divided by the working-age population resident in that area. High job densities are where there is at least one job for every working-age resident.
- Annual job density is a new local area labour market indicator. On the demand side of the labour market are the numbers of jobs and vacancies in an area. Job density is a labour demand indicator; employment and unemployment rates are measures of labour supply.
- Whilst areas with relatively high job densities clearly offer potential job opportunities for residents in the area, it may be the case that there is a mismatch between the type of jobs in an area and the skills of the people living there. In such cases both inward and outward commuting may occur. Job densities must be considered along with other labour market indicators in order to make an overall assessment of local area labour market conditions.

Area	2003	2002	2001	2000
Broxbourne	0.79	0.72	0.66	0.67
Dacorum	0.88	0.89	0.89	0.90
East Hertfordshire	0.84	0.88	0.80	0.81
Hertsmere	0.95	0.98	1.14	0.98
North Hertfordshire	0.82	0.80	0.82	0.78
St Albans	0.83	0.79	0.86	0.83
Stevenage	1.00	0.90	0.93	0.98
Three Rivers	0.75	0.71	0.74	0.72
Watford	1.12	1.25	1.25	1.27
Welwyn Hatfield	1.09	1.13	1.11	1.10
Hertfordshire	0.90	0.90	0.91	0.89
East of England	0.83	0.81	0.81	0.80
Great Britain	0.83	0.83	0.83	0.82
United Kingdom	0.83	0.83	0.83	0.82

- There were 0.90 jobs per person of working age in Hertfordshire in 2003, slightly higher than the densities for the East of England and Great Britain, both at 0.83.
- Watford has the highest job density in the county at 1.12, while also having relatively high unemployment. This suggests that the high labour demand is not being satisfied by the resident population and possibly indicating a mismatch of skills.
- By contrast in Three Rivers there were only 0.75 jobs per person of working age; below county, regional and national averages. However, unemployment in Three Rivers is relatively low at 1.2%. In this instance out-commuting could well be meeting the imbalance.

TOWN CLAIMANT UNEMPLOYMENT

Claimant unemployment ranked in descending order by unemployment % Proportion

RANK	TOWN	DISTRICT	NUMBERS OF CLAIMANT UNEMPLOYED October 2005	% PROPORTION*
1	Waltham Cross	Broxbourne	162	3.9
2	Borehamwood	Hertsmere	498	2.4
3	Hemel Hempstead	Dacorum	1,123	2.2
4	South Oxhey	Three Rivers	212	2.2
5	Cheshunt	Broxbourne	435	1.9
6	Watford	Watford	1,067	1.9
7	Welwyn Garden City	Welwyn Hatfield	475	1.9
8	Hatfield	Welwyn Hatfield	350	1.8
9	Stevenage	Stevenage	903	1.8
10	Hoddesdon	Broxbourne	208	1.7
11	Letchworth	North Herts	335	1.7
12	Broxbourne Town	Broxbourne	136	1.5
13	Hitchin	North Herts	288	1.5
14	Abbots Langley	Three Rivers	78	1.4
15	Baldock	North Herts	86	1.4
16	Rickmansworth	Three Rivers	142	1.4
17	Potters Bar	Hertsmere	161	1.3
18	Berkhamsted	Dacorum	122	1.2
19	Hertford	East Herts	197	1.2
20	St Albans	St Albans	506	1.2
21	Ware	East Herts	125	1.2
22	Bushey	Hertsmere	115	1.0
23	Radlett	Hertsmere	55	0.9
24	Bishop's Stortford	East Herts	183	0.8
25	Tring	Dacorum	67	0.8
26	Croxley Green	Three Rivers	52	0.7
27	Chorleywood	Three Rivers	32	0.6
28	Harpenden	St Albans	98	0.6
29	Royston	North Herts	59	0.6

* Proportions for wards have been calculated using the mid-2001 resident working age population, by ONS.

NB: The town unemployment statistics have been revised to take into account new town definitions resulting from the 2001 Census.

This dataset cannot, therefore, be compared to town unemployment statistics before April 2004. However, revised figures for April and July 2004 have been calculated and can be found in the October 2004 bulletin.

- Waltham Cross continues to have the highest unemployment rate in the county, 3.9%.
- 15 of the main towns in the county have experienced decreases in unemployment since July 2005. Hitchin, with 51, had the largest decrease of the actual number of unemployed, while the highest percentage decrease of 18.1% was in Royston.
- During the same period Hatfield, with 40, had the largest increase in the actual number of unemployed, while the highest percentage increase of 25.7% was in Rickmansworth.

Source: National Statistics (NOMIS)

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APPENDIX: A comparison between Unemployment Statistics

ONS Statement: "Better Jobless Data"

Following a recent quality review of its labour market statistics, the Office for National Statistics has implemented three of the most significant improvements recommended in the review.

1. **Labour Force Survey** - The monthly unemployment figures from the LFS, will be relabelled "unemployment" rather than "ILO unemployment". This will emphasise that the LFS figures provide the official, and only internationally comparable, measure of unemployment in the UK.
2. **Claimant Count** - Claimant count data will be continued to be published monthly to provide further information about the labour market, but these will not be presented as an alternative measure of UK unemployment.
3. **Claimant Count Rates** - Workplace-based claimant count rates for local areas will be withdrawn and replaced with resident-based claimant count rates for local areas as the proportion of the population of working-age resident in each area that are claimants. (See back page for details).

LFS: Labour Force Survey

ILO: International Labour Organisation

The Annual Population Survey (APS), which was introduced earlier this year, is a new survey and supercedes the existing two LFS data sets: Local Area LFS and the LFS - quarterly: four quarter averages.

The APS data is published quarterly with each publication covering a year's data. The next range of data (July 2004 to June 2005) is due to be published in December 2005 and will be included in the next Quarterly Bulletin. Although the figures will be less current it is expected the APS will provide better quality data particularly at a local level.

June 2004 - May 2005 (Not seasonally adjusted)

000's

All Persons	In Employment			ILO Unemployed	Total Econ active	Econ Inactive
	Employees	Self-employed	Total ¹			
Great Britain	23,796	3,463	27,467	1,355	28,822	16,916
East of England	2,350	364	2,732	106	2,838	1,505
Hertfordshire	458	76	538	19	557	264
London	2,892	519	3,440	259	3,699	2,104
South East	3,454	591	4,074	157	4,231	2,202

All Persons	All aged 16 & over ²	Economic Activity rates (%) ³		Employment rate (%)	ILO Unemployment rate (%) ⁴
		all age 16+	16 - 59/64	16-59/64	all 16+
Great Britain	45,738	63.0	78.7	74.9	4.7
East of England	4,343	65.4	82.0	78.9	3.7
Hertfordshire	821	67.8	84.6	81.7	3.3
London	5,803	63.7	74.7	69.4	7.0
South East	6,433	65.8	81.9	78.8	3.7

Source: "Labour Force Survey" National Statistics © Crown copyright 2005.

NOTE: Estimates are only presented for the regions, counties, metropolitan districts and the 335 largest unitary and local authorities (according to the 16+ resident population estimates).

Sampling errors are proportionately greater the smaller the estimate. An estimate of 10,000 (the smallest released) has an approximate 95% confidence interval of +/- 4,000.

(1) Including people on government-supported training and employment programmes and unpaid family workers.

(2) Population in private households, student halls of residence and NHS accommodation.

(3) Total economically active as a percentage of all persons aged 16 and over.

(4) Total unemployed as a percentage of all economically active persons.

(5) Due to slight methodological differences between the way the national and regional LFS estimates have been interim adjusted for the 2001 Census, there may be small differences between the UK totals and the sum of the regional components.

A comparison between Unemployment Statistics

National Statistics publish two regular and complementary measures of unemployment. One is based on results from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) which is a sample survey of Households in the United Kingdom; the other uses information on unemployment from the count of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA).

The different sources each have their own advantages and are useful in different circumstances. The following is a brief indication of advantages and disadvantages of each source.

Labour Force Survey: The LFS is very useful for providing an articulated view of the labour market on the basis of internationally agreed ILO concepts and definitions. The ILO definition draws in some people who are either ineligible for JSA or who choose not to register a claim. Examples include people whose spouses are working and do not qualify for benefit. The ILO definition is particularly useful for making international comparisons. Because the LFS is a sample survey, it is subject to sampling error and is therefore **limited in what is available at a local level ie district and below**.

Claimant count: The claimant count is a timely and regular indicator of the number claiming JSA. It is particularly useful as an up-to-date indicator of latest unemployment trends. Since it covers all those claiming benefits (as opposed to the LFS, which is only a representative sample) it is also able to **provide unemployment figures for very small areas**. The disadvantages of the claimant count are firstly; being an administrative by-product, the coverage of the count can change whenever there is a change to the benefit system upon which it is based, and secondly; it is not internationally comparable.

Jobcentre Plus Vacancies

New monthly Jobcentre Plus notified vacancies (inflows) at national, regional and local level, with breakdowns by industry and occupation are available from 16 October 2002. These give data from June 2002 onwards. Note that these figures do not yet have National Statistics status.

The new data are not directly comparable with the previous data series available up to April 2001. Previous tables had shown stock of notified vacancies. Publication of Jobcentre Plus vacancy statistics was deferred from May 2001 onwards due to distortions in the data. These distortions resulted from the introduction of Employer Direct, which involved the transfer of vacancy taking from local Jobcentres to regional Customer Service Centres. Employer Direct has now been fully implemented and it has always been the intention to reintroduce appropriate series as soon as possible.

Changes in vacancy taking procedures as a result of Employer Direct have caused a substantial discontinuity in the notified series. Under new practices, more vacancies are recorded than under the previous system. This does not affect the service provided to employers or jobseekers, but means that the statistics give a more accurate reflection of the labour market.

In using these data it is important to acknowledge this step change in recording. Also, as well as reflecting the economic climate, the figures inevitably reflect any shifting market share of notified vacancies that Jobcentre Plus attracts. The propensity to notify vacancies to Jobcentre Plus is known to vary across occupational and industrial sectors, and there is likely to be considerable variation between areas.

Jobcentre Plus stocks and outflows data are still not being published at present. Further consideration is being given to the influences of changes in vacancy handling procedures, the susceptibility of the series to internal flows of administrative work and to a number of data quality issues.