

Economic Factsheet: Unemployment and Economic Inactivity

January 2014



Unemployment is an important indicator of the state of the economy. There are several measures which can be used to show levels of unemployment and economic inactivity:

- **Claimant count** – This shows the number of people who are out of work and claiming Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) and is often expressed as a rate. Data is published monthly.
- **Unemployment rate** – Often called the ILO unemployment rate, this measure assesses the number of jobless people who want to work, are available to work and are actively seeking employment. This measure is usually higher than the claimant rate as not all people looking for work are either eligible or choose to claim JSA. Data is published quarterly.
- **Economic inactivity** – This is a broader measure of people who are economically inactive for a range of reasons, including students, people who are unable to work due to illness, retired people and those looking after family/home. Data is published quarterly.

Claimant count (December 2013)

% of residents aged 16-64 claiming Jobseekers Allowance (JSA)

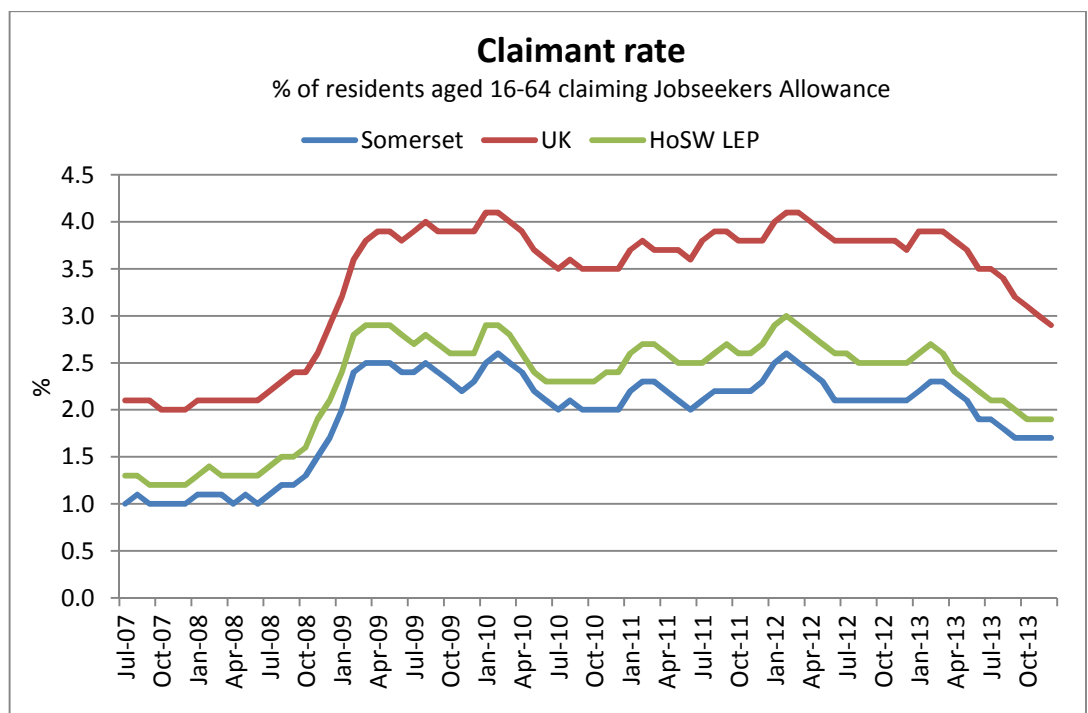
Area	Current claimant rate (%)	Qtrly change Sept-Dec 2013)	Annual change (Dec 2012-2013)
Somerset	1.7	0	-0.4
Mendip	1.4	-0.1	-0.4
Sedgemoor	2.6	0.2	-0.2
South Somerset	1.3	-0.1	-0.4
Taunton Deane	1.8	-0.1	-0.4
West Somerset	1.8	0.3	-0.6
Heart of the South West LEP	1.9	-0.1	-0.6
UK	2.9	-0.3	-0.8

Claimant count unemployment in Somerset has levelled off, with no change since the last quarter. In December 2013, 1.7% of people in Somerset aged 16-64 were claiming Jobseekers Allowance (JSA), compared to 2.1% the previous year. Sedgemoor has the highest claimant rate in Somerset (2.6%) and South Somerset has the lowest (1.3%).

Source: Claimant count with rates and proportions, NOMIS 2014

Somerset has a consistently lower claimant rate than the UK and Heart of the South West LEP area.

The steady decline in Somerset's claimant rate has levelled off whilst the national rate continues to fall.



Source: Claimant count with rates and proportions, NOMIS 2014

Unemployment rate (September 2013)

% of residents aged 16-64 who are unemployed

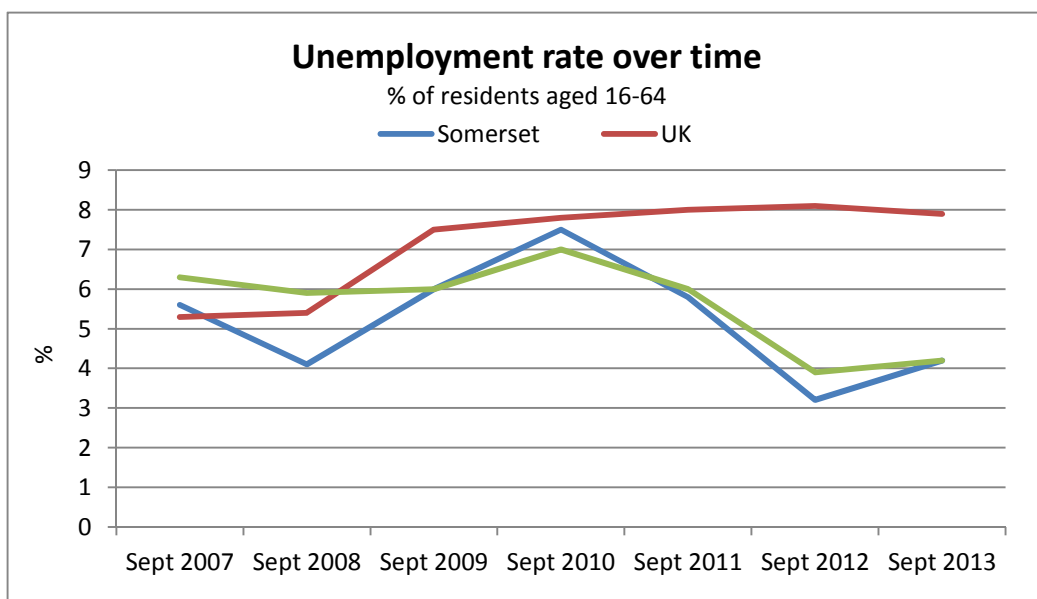
Area	Current unemployment rate (%)	Annual change (Sept 2012-2013)
Somerset	5.6	1.5
Mendip	4.7	-0.8
Sedgemoor	8.3	3.3
South Somerset	5.9	1.1
Taunton Deane	3.3	n/a
West Somerset	n/a	n/a
Heart of the South West LEP	6.3	0.4
UK	7.9	-0.2

ILO unemployment in Somerset stood at 5.6% in September 2013, lower than in the Heart of the South West area (6.3%) and UK as a whole (7.9%). Available data shows that within the County, Sedgemoor had the highest unemployment rate (8.3%).

Source: Annual population survey, NOMIS 2014 (Data unavailable where the sample size is disclosive).

Somerset's unemployment rate is consistently lower than the national level.

After peaking at 7.5% in Sept 2010, Somerset's unemployment rate has been falling steadily until Sept 2013, where a small increase can be seen. Over the same period, the UK unemployment rate remained constant.



Source: Annual population survey, NOMIS 2014

Economic Inactivity (September 2013)

Area	Current economic inactivity rate (%)	Annual change (September 2012-2013)	% of economically inactive who want a job	Annual change (September 2012-2013)
Somerset	18.7	-4.0	25.0	-2.3
Mendip	19.3	-3.1	24.1	-12.6
Sedgemoor	17.6	-7.7	26.6	6.0
South Somerset	18.8	-5.5	25.3	-4.1
Taunton Deane	17.2	-1.1	30.4	4.9
West Somerset	24.9	3.0	n/a	n/a
Heart of the South West LEP	20.4	-1.2	27.6	0.2
UK	22.8	-0.6	24.2	0.1

Source: Annual population survey, NOMIS 2014

Somerset's economic inactivity rate is lower than nationally but there are variations within the County. West Somerset has the highest level of economically inactive residents (24.9%), which reflects the older age profile of the area in terms of more retirees. Taunton Deane has the lowest economic inactivity rate (17.2%) and the highest proportion of inactive residents who want a job (30.4%).