

Census Theme Briefing: Unemployment and Economic Inactivity



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:

- **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.
- **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.

This briefing looks in detail at the theme of unemployment and economic inactivity in Somerset using the 2011 Census data to give a snapshot. Each table is broken down into urban and rural figures, based upon the ONS classification of output areas.

Unemployment by gender and age (2011)

Green = higher than Somerset overall, Red = lower than Somerset overall

Area	Unemployment rate (all residents aged 16-74)	% of unemployed people		Unemployment rate			
		Never worked	Long-term unemployed	Males aged 16-74	Females aged 16-74	All aged 16-24	All aged 50+
Urban city and town	3.5%	12.3%	36.5%	4.3%	2.8%	10.4%	2.5%
Rural town and fringe	2.8%	9.4%	35.0%	3.3%	2.3%	9.3%	2.3%
Rural village	2.2%	9.8%	35.3%	2.5%	2.0%	7.1%	2.0%
Rural hamlets and isolated dwellings	1.9%	7.0%	36.0%	2.3%	1.6%	6.2%	1.6%
Total Rural	2.4%	9.1%	35.3%	2.8%	2.0%	7.8%	2.0%
Total Somerset	3.0%	11.1%	36.1%	3.5%	2.4%	9.3%	2.3%
Total England	4.4%	16.2%	39.3%	5.3%	3.5%	4.7%	1.8%

- Somerset has a lower unemployment rate than the national average (3% compared to 4.4%). Within the County, the unemployment rate is highest in urban areas (3.5%) and lowest rural hamlets/isolated areas (1.9%).
- Compared to the national level, Somerset has low levels of long-term unemployment and proportions of unemployed people who have never worked. However these rates are also higher in urban areas than in rural areas.
- Unemployment rates are consistently higher for men than women, across both urban and rural areas.
- 9.3% of young people aged 16-24 in Somerset are unemployed and this rate is higher still in urban areas (10.4%).

Unemployment by ethnicity (2011)

Green = higher than Somerset overall, Red = lower than Somerset overall

Area	All residents aged 16+	White: Total	White: English/ Welsh/ Scottish/ Northern Irish/ British	White: Irish	White: Other White	Mixed/ multiple ethnic group	Asian/ Asian British	Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British	Other ethnic group
Urban city and town	3.6%	3.6%	3.6%	2.8%	3.3%	5.8%	3.1%	5.3%	3.0%
Rural town and fringe	2.8%	2.8%	2.8%	1.4%	3.5%	7.4%	2.8%	4.3%	2.5%
Rural village	2.3%	2.2%	2.2%	2.0%	2.6%	5.6%	4.6%	5.4%	3.0%
Rural hamlets and isolated dwellings	2.0%	1.9%	1.9%	1.2%	2.3%	3.7%	2.1%	10.6%	0.0%
Total Rural	2.4%	2.4%	2.4%	1.6%	2.9%	5.9%	3.1%	6.2%	2.2%
Total Somerset	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%	2.2%	3.2%	5.8%	3.1%	5.6%	2.7%
Total England	4.0%	3.6%	3.6%	2.8%	3.9%	8.0%	5.0%	9.2%	6.6%

- Unemployment rates in the 'mixed' and 'black' ethnic groups are higher than other groups, almost double the Somerset level at 5.8% and 5.6% respectively. This trend is mirrored at national level.
- Unemployment rates in urban areas are higher than or equal to the Somerset level in all ethnic groups except the 'black' group. 'Black' unemployment is more of a prominent issue in rural areas, with 10.6% of Somerset's black population in rural/isolated areas unemployed.

Economic inactivity (2011)

Green = higher than Somerset overall, Red = lower than Somerset overall

Area	% of economically inactive residents aged 16-74				
	Retired	Student	Looking after home/family	Long term sick or disabled	Other
Urban city and town	53.1%	13.2%	13.4%	14.4%	5.9%
Rural town and fringe	61.9%	10.0%	11.8%	11.9%	4.3%
Rural village	65.3%	11.1%	10.9%	8.4%	4.3%
Rural hamlets and isolated dwellings	63.4%	11.8%	12.6%	7.1%	5.0%
Total Rural	63.5%	10.9%	11.6%	9.5%	4.5%
Total Somerset	58.3%	12.0%	12.5%	12.0%	5.2%
Total England	45.5%	19.3%	14.5%	13.5%	7.3%

- The majority of Somerset's economically inactive residents are retired (58.3%). This proportion is even higher in rural areas with 63.5%.
- Urban areas have a higher proportion of students than rural areas (13.2% compared to 10.9%).
- There are concentrations of people looking after home/family in urban (13.4%) and very sparse rural areas (12.6%).