Economic Factsheet: Unemployment and Economic Inactivity

December 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 (October 2014)

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

Area	Current claimant rate (%)	Qtrly change (July-Oct 2014)	Annual change (Oct 2013-2014)
Somerset	1.1	-0.2	-0.6
Mendip	1.0	-0.1	-0.5
Sedgemoor	1.7	-0.2	-0.7
South Somerset	0.8	-0.1	-0.6
Taunton Deane	1.2	-0.2	-0.6
West Somerset	0.8	-0.1	-0.7
Heart of the South West LEP	1.3	-0.1	-0.6
UK	2.2	-0.2	-0.9

Source: Claimant count with rates and proportions, NOMIS 2014

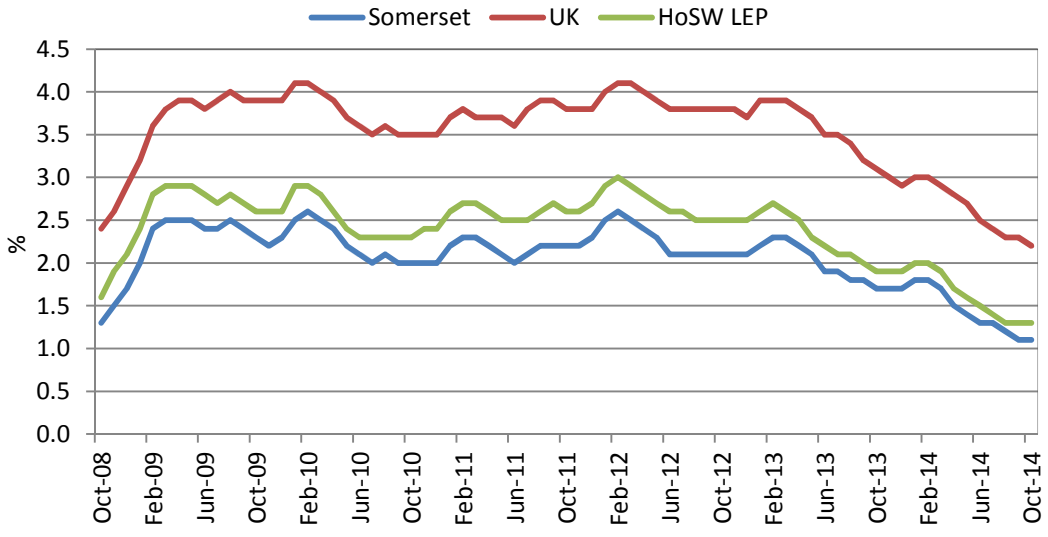
In October 2014, 1.1% of people in Somerset aged 16-64 were claiming Jobseekers Allowance (JSA). Claimant count unemployment in Somerset has decreased by 0.2 percentage points since July 2014 and by 0.6 since October 2013. Sedgemoor has the highest claimant rate in Somerset (1.7%) and South Somerset has the lowest (0.8%). Over the last year, claimant rates have dropped in all Somerset's districts.

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

Somerset's claimant rate is steadily declining and is now similar to the low levels seen before the recession began in 2008.

Claimant rate

% of residents aged 16-64 claiming Jobseekers Allowance



Source: Claimant count with rates and proportions, NOMIS 2014

Report updated quarterly

Unemployment rate (June 2014)

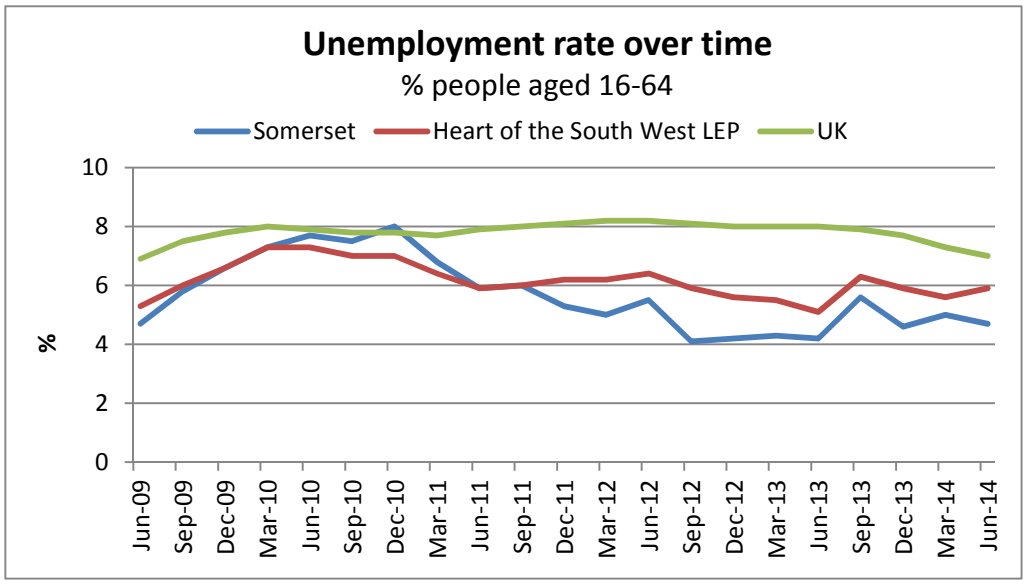
% of residents aged 16-64 who are unemployed

Area	Current unemployment rate (%)	Qtrly change (March-June 2014)	Annual change (June 2013-2014)
Somerset	4.7	-0.3	0.5
Mendip	5.1	-1.0	1.0
Sedgemoor	8.3	0.5	2.9
South Somerset	3.1	0.2	-2.7
Taunton Deane	2.9	-0.5	N/A
West Somerset	N/A	N/A	N/A
Heart of the South West LEP	5.9	0.3	0.8
UK	7.0	-0.3	-1.0

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

ILO unemployment in Somerset stood at 4.7% in June 2014, lower than in the Heart of the South West LEP area (5.9%) and UK as a whole (7%). Unlike claimant rate, Somerset's unemployment rate has increased over the last year. Available data shows Sedgemoor has the highest unemployment rate of all the districts (8.3%).

Somerset's unemployment rate is consistently lower than the national level. After peaking at 8% in December 2010, the general trend has been downwards but fluctuations in the last year show the rate increasing slightly. Over the same period, the UK unemployment rate remained constant, with signs of a declining trend from September 2013.



Source: Annual population survey, NOMIS 2014

Economic Inactivity (June 2014)

Area	Current economic inactivity rate (%)	Qtrly change (March-June 2014)	Annual change (June 2013-2014)	% of economically inactive who want a job	Qtrly change (March-June 2014)	Annual change (June 2013-2014)
Somerset	21.0	0.5	0.6	23.6	0.9	-4.6
Mendip	27.1	1.6	8.9	26.5	2.3	4.6
Sedgemoor	19.7	1.1	-1.7	25.8	1.4	-4.8
South Somerset	17.7	1.0	-2.0	19.4	-1.8	-14.0
Taunton Deane	17.8	0.2	-2.6	27.9	-2.1	-0.8
West Somerset	33.5	-5.9	4.9	13.7	N/A	N/A
LEP	21.1	-0.2	0.2	28.4	0.3	1.3
UK	22.7	0.0	-0.2	24.6	0.3	0.2

Source: Annual population survey, NOMIS 2014. NB. Some data unavailable due to small sample size.

Somerset's economic inactivity rate is lower than nationally but there are variations within the County. West Somerset has the highest proportion of economically inactive residents (33.5%), which reflects the older age profile of the area in terms of more retirees. South Somerset has the lowest economic inactivity rate (17.7%) whereas Taunton Deane has the highest proportion of inactive residents who want a job (27.9%).