

# employment



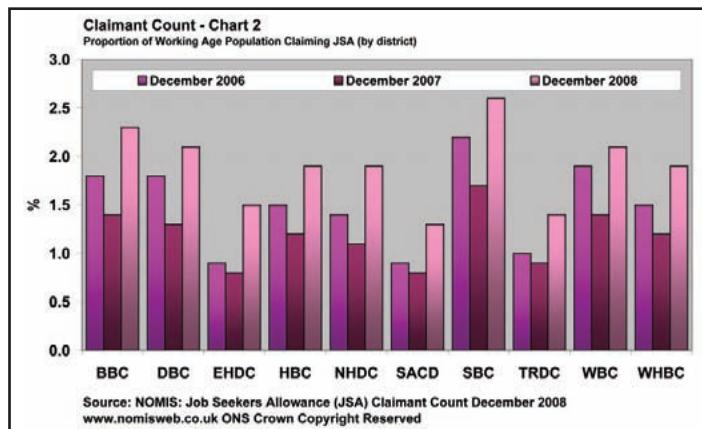
## County experiences rises in unemployment not seen for ten years

Employment statistics help us understand the condition of the labour market that, for the year ending December 2008, has seen an overall fall in demand for labour. This reflects a slowing down of the economy during the period reported which, for this year, has been extended from August until the end of the year to include major changes not seen for more than ten years.

The ONS<sup>1</sup> publishes the UK's official unemployment estimates from the Annual Population Survey (APS) using the International Labour Organisation (ILO) definition. Statistics are also published monthly for those claiming unemployment related benefits; principally the Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA). Analysis of claimant counts is available in some detail at local level and there is a large degree of overlap between the ILO unemployment level and the claimant count, although the former is usually higher.<sup>2</sup>

### Job Seekers Allowance Claimant Counts 2005-07

In December 2008, the county's claimant count was 12,306. At 1.9% as a proportion, this comprised of 8,811 males (72%) and 3,495 females (28%). The working age unemployment rate, calculated from the APS, however, was far greater; 3.8% and 20,300 for the year ending June 2008. The county's claimant count rose significantly over the year, from 7,465 and 1.1% in December 2007 to 12,306 in December 2008. Although Hertfordshire's proportion remains lower than both the East of England region and country rates (at 2.4% and 3.0% respectively), the rate of increase in unemployment of 64.8% (4,841) is far higher than both of these at 52.1% and 45.6%. Increases this great have not been seen for more than ten years.

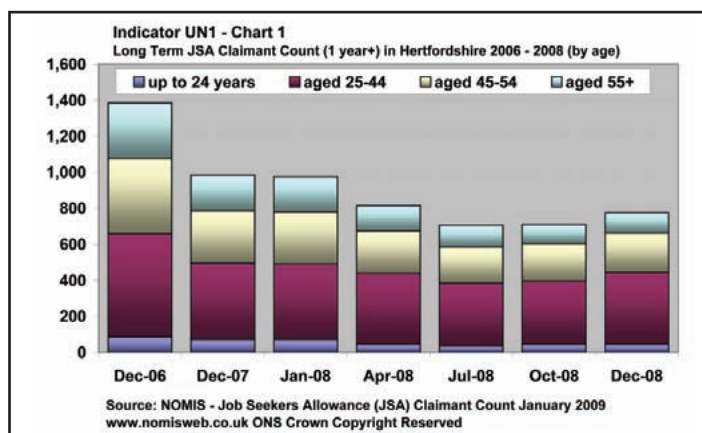
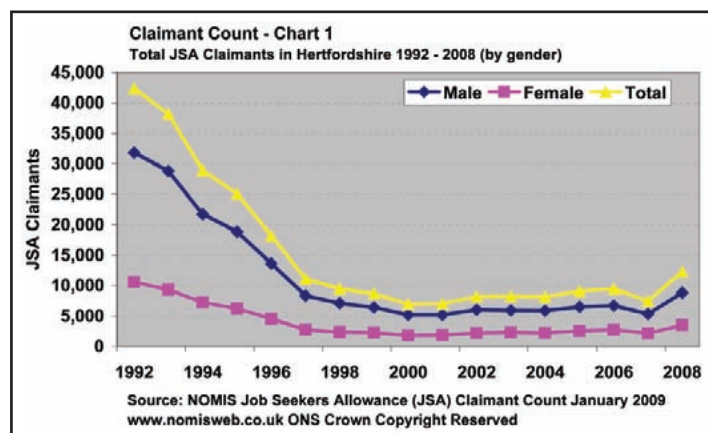


Claimant count proportions rose significantly in the past two years across all the districts. At 2.6%, Stevenage continued to have the highest claimant count proportion in the county, followed by Broxbourne at 2.3% and then Dacorum and Watford, at 2.1%, which are all above average for the county.

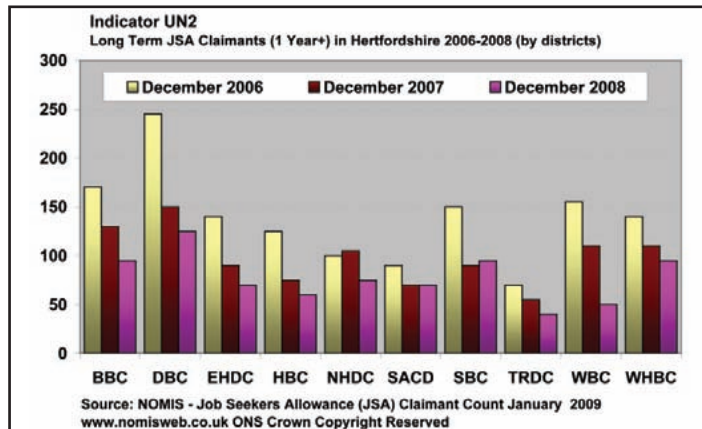
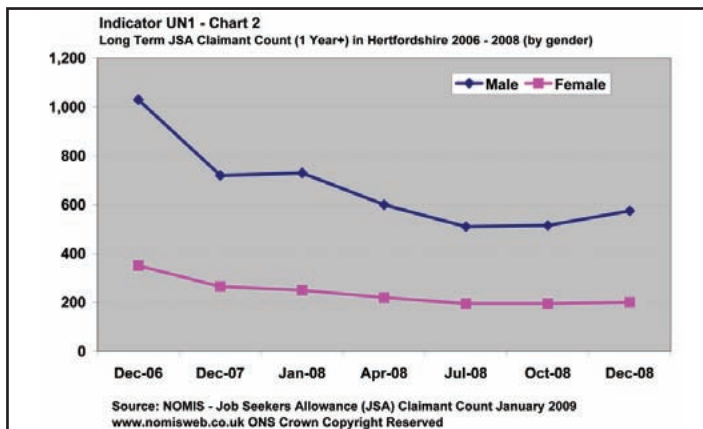
### Indicator UN1 – Long term JSA claimants (more than one year) by age and gender

At December 2008 the total number claiming JSA for over a year was 775 or 6.3% of all claimants. Although there was a decline in every age band over the previous two years, the number in this category is growing. This is most evident in the 25-44 age group, which has risen by 14% in the period between October and December 2008.

By definition, the long term JSA claimant count excludes new claimants and those unemployed who have not continuously claimed JSA benefit for over twelve months. These figures will still therefore reflect the low number of new claimants in late 2007. In December 2008, 575 males and 200 females had claimed long term. The increase since October 2007 consists almost entirely of males.



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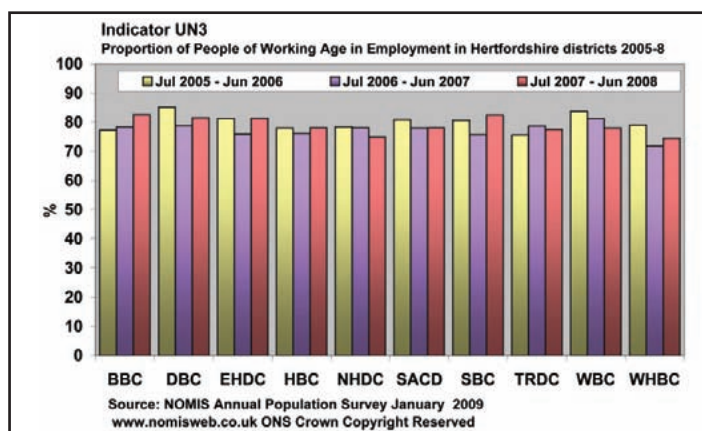


## Indicator UN2 – Long term JSA claimants (more than one year) by district

Although there appeared to be a relatively high number of JSA long term claimants in Dacorum, 125, this is mainly due to the district's size. In fact it only represents 7% of all claimants. Whilst this is slightly above the county's 6.3% rate, it is still lower than Broxbourne's 95, which is 7.6% of all claimants and Stevenage and Welwyn Hatfield's 7.3%.

## Indicator UN3 – The proportion of people of working age in employment

Residence-based APS estimates indicate that in the periods July 2005 - June 2006 and July 2007 - June 2008 the proportion of employed people of working age fell in Hertfordshire from 80.2% to 78.8%. This was most noticeable in Watford, where there was a fall from 83.6% to 77.9%. In contrast, Broxbourne, Three Rivers and Stevenage all showed slight rises.



## Indicator UN4 – Proportion of JSA Claimants who have been out of work for more than a year

In December 2008, 6.3% (775) of JSA claimants were in receipt of benefits for more than 12 months.

## Indicator UN5 – The percentage increase or decrease in local employment

The latest annual population data available showed that Hertfordshire had an employed working age population of 516,700 for the year July 2007 - June 2008. This reflects a decline of 0.6% (3,200) during the two year period between 2006 and 2008. The working age employment rate stood at 78.8% for the twelve months ending June 2008. The working age employment rate, however, does continue to be higher than the national 74.5% rate and lies just above the East of England 77.7% rate.

**Indicator UN4 - Proportion of JSA Claimants out of work 1 year+**

	Total Long Term JSA Claimants	Total Long Term JSA Claimants as a % of all JSA Claimants
Dec 06	1,385	14.6
Jan 07	1,430	14.2
Apr 07	1,360	14.5
Jul 07	1,265	14.2
Oct 07	1,165	14.2
Dec 07	985	13.2
Jan 08	980	12.3
Apr 08	820	9.9
Jul 08	705	8.1
Oct 08	710	7.0
Dec 08	775	6.3

Source: NOMIS - Job Seekers Allowance Claimant Count Jan 2009

- 1 The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is the UK government agency responsible for collecting and publishing official statistics about the UK's society and economy. Website: [www.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.gov.uk)
- 2 "How exactly is unemployment measured?" (September 2007) [http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme\\_labour/unemployment.pdf](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_labour/unemployment.pdf)