



## STATISTICAL PRESS RELEASE

**16 September 2009**

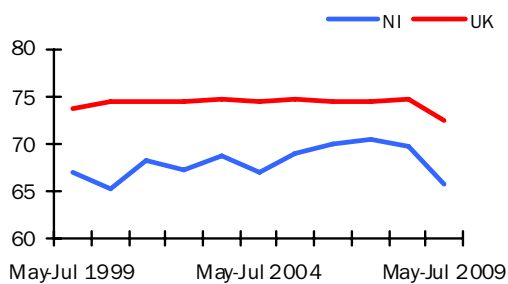
**Coverage**

Northern Ireland, unless otherwise stated

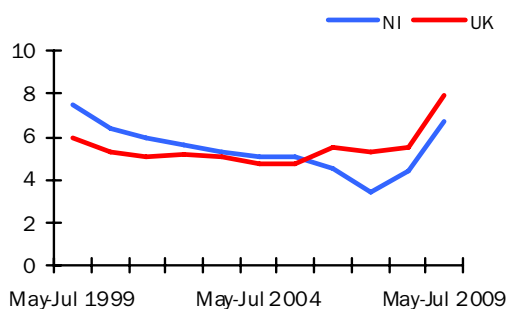
**Theme**

Labour Market

**Seasonally Adjusted Working  
Age Employment Rate**



**Seasonally Adjusted  
Unemployment Rate**



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### Labour Market Statistics – September 2009

Seasonally adjusted Labour Force Survey (LFS) data for Northern Ireland for the period May - July 2009 indicated an increase in the unemployment and economic inactivity rates, whereas there was a fall in the employment rate. The August increase in the Claimant Count was the 18th consecutive monthly increase since February 2008.

In the latest reference period, the working age employment rate was estimated at 65.7%, down 0.8 percentage points over the quarter.

The unemployment rate was 6.7%, up 0.5 percentage points over the quarter and up 2.3 percentage points over the year. However, the NI rate remained below the UK rate of 7.9% and was also lower than the European Union (8.9%) and Republic of Ireland (12.2%) rates for June 2009.

The working age economic inactivity rate increased by 0.4 percentage points over the quarter and by 2.6 percentage points over the year to 29.5%. The NI working age economic inactivity rate (29.5%) remained the highest of the UK regions (UK rate was 21.1%).

The LFS is a sample survey with an associated degree of sampling error (see table 1 overleaf for details).

The more recent claimant count measure for August was 52,700, up 1,600 over the month and up 24,400 over the year. This represented a year on year percentage increase of 86.2%. The increase for the last two months was also 1,600.

There were 247 confirmed redundancies in August 2009. This was higher than in July 2009 (143) and higher than August 2008 (120). The total number of confirmed redundancies in the last twelve months was 4,816, up 184% from the previous year (1,693).

The total number of employee jobs in Northern Ireland at June 2009 was 709,040 (Quarterly Employment Survey), down 5,470 jobs (-0.8%) over the quarter and 25,450 jobs (-3.5%) over the year.

**NI seasonally adjusted data**

|                                    | Reference period | Levels  | Rates (%) | Levels            | Rates (pps) |
|------------------------------------|------------------|---------|-----------|-------------------|-------------|
|                                    |                  |         |           | Change on quarter |             |
| Employment <sup>1</sup>            | May-Jul 2009     | 746,000 | 65.7%     | -5,000            | -0.8        |
| Unemployment <sup>2</sup>          | May-Jul 2009     | 53,000  | 6.7%      | 4,000             | 0.5         |
| Economically Active <sup>1</sup>   | May-Jul 2009     | 800,000 | 70.5%     | -1,000            | -0.4        |
| Economically Inactive <sup>1</sup> | May-Jul 2009     | 582,000 | 29.5%     | 4,000             | 0.4         |
| Employee Jobs <sup>3</sup>         | Jun 09           | 709,040 | -         | -5,470            | -           |
|                                    |                  |         |           | Change on month   |             |
| Claimant Count <sup>4</sup>        | August 09        | 52,700  | 6.1%      | + 1,600           | 0.2         |
| Redundancies <sup>5</sup>          | August 09        | 247     | -         | -                 | -           |

For footnotes, see 'Definitions' section (back page)

# Labour Market

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Seasonally adjusted Labour Force Survey (LFS) data for Northern Ireland for the period May - July estimated increases over the quarter in the number of unemployed and economically inactive persons, while there was a decrease in the number of employed. The seasonally adjusted claimant count in August 2009 increased by 1,600 over the month to 52,700 and the Department was notified of 163 proposed redundancies in the latest reference period and 247 confirmed redundancies in August 2009.

### Employment

The number of persons in employment in the period May - July was estimated at 746,000. This estimate represented a fall of 5,000 over the quarter and a decrease of 39,000 over the year. The working age employment rate was estimated at 65.7%, down 0.8 percentage points over the quarter and 4.1 percentage points over the year. NI's working age employment rate remained well below the UK average (72.5%) and was the lowest of the UK regions.

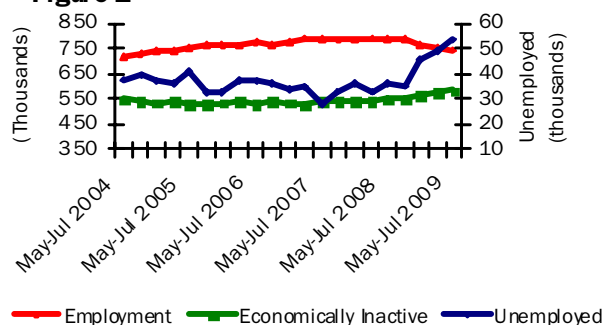
### Unemployment

The unemployment rate for the period May - July was estimated at 6.7%. The latest figure showed an increase of 0.5 percentage points over the quarter and 2.3 percentage points over the year. The number of unemployed persons was estimated at 53,000, up 4,000 over the quarter and 18,000 over the year.

Unadjusted figures show that 30.6% of the unemployed have been unemployed for 1 year or more – a decrease of 0.3 percentage points over the year. They also estimate the unemployment

### Seasonally Adjusted Labour Market Summary of Northern Ireland

Figure 1



rate for 18-24 year olds at 18.6% – an increase of 6.5 percentage points over the year.

### Economically Inactive

The seasonally adjusted number of economically inactive persons in the period May - July was estimated at 582,000. This figure has increased by 4,000 over the quarter and by 35,000 over the year.

The working age economic inactivity rate for NI stands at 29.5%. This is significantly higher than the UK average rate (21.1%) and is the highest of the 12 UK regions.

Unadjusted figures show that while 92% of the inactive do not want work, the remaining 8% want employment but do not satisfy the full ILO job search criteria (by actively seeking work and being available to start a job). The number of economically inactive persons that want a job (49,000) is similar to the number officially

### Northern Ireland Labour Market Summary (seasonally adjusted)

Table 1

|                                       | Period       | Estimate | Sampling Variability of estimate | Change over year | Sampling Variability of change |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|----------|----------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| Employment                            | May-Jul 2009 | 746,000  | +/-22,000                        | -39,000          | +/-27,000                      |
| Unemployment                          | May-Jul 2009 | 53,000   | +/-10,000                        | 18,000           | +/-12,000                      |
| Economically inactive                 | May-Jul 2009 | 582,000  | +/-20,000                        | 35,000           | +/-25,000                      |
| Unemployment rate                     | May-Jul 2009 | 6.7%     | +/-1.2pps                        | 2.3pps           | +/-1.5pps                      |
| Employment rate <sup>1</sup>          | May-Jul 2009 | 65.7%    | +/-1.8pps                        | -4.1pps          | +/-2.2pps                      |
| Economic inactivity rate <sup>1</sup> | May-Jul 2009 | 29.5%    | +/-1.7pps                        | 2.6pps           | +/-2.1pps                      |
| Claimant Count                        | August 2009  | 52,700   |                                  | 24,400           |                                |

Note: pps = percentage points, <sup>1</sup> Rates based on working age population (16-59/64), see Definitions for details.

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classified as unemployed.

Estimates from the LFS have an associated degree of statistical error as they are based on a sample of the population. The annual changes for the main LFS categories of employment, unemployment and economic inactivity were tested for statistical significance. The results showed that the annual change in each of these categories was statistically significant i.e. the recorded change exceeded the variability expected from a sample survey of this size and was likely to reflect a real change (see table 1 and 'Definitions' for further details).

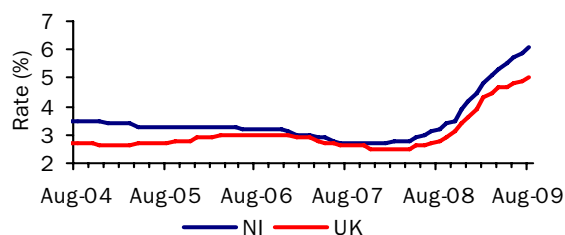
## Regional

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in NI (6.7%) remained below the UK average rate (7.9%) and was the equal second lowest rate among the UK regions. The NI rate also compared favourably to the European Union rate of 8.9% and the Republic of Ireland rate of 12.2% for June 2009.

## Claimant Count

The more recent seasonally adjusted claimant count increased by 1,600 over the month to August 2009 to 52,700 (6.1% of the workforce). The monthly increase was the same as the previous two monthly increases (1,600) totalling 4,800 for the three month period. The percentage increase over the month to August in Northern Ireland (3.1%) was higher than the equivalent UK increase (1.5%). There has been an increase of 86.2% (24,400) since August 2008. This yearly increase was larger than that recorded for the UK (75.9%). Over the last twelve months the rise in the unemployment claimant count rate has been at least 0.2 percentage points each month and currently stands at 6.1% of the workforce. This compares to the UK rate of 5.0%. This month's increase is the eighteenth consecutive monthly increase since the lowest level of 23,500 in February 2008 (also reached in November 2007).

**Seasonally Adjusted Claimant Count Monthly Rates**  
**Figure 2**



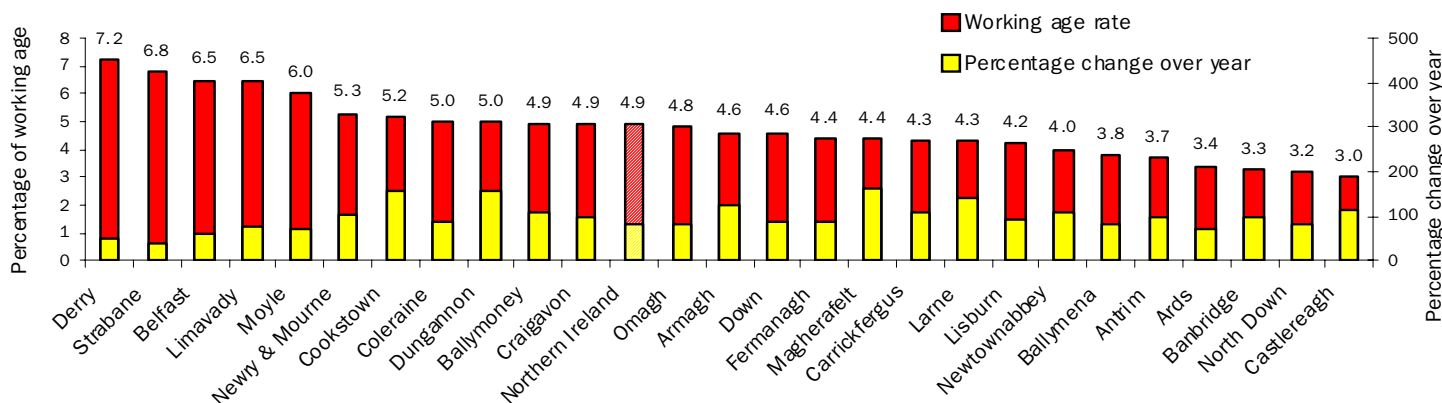
## Claimant count rates for District Council Areas

Figure 3 (unadjusted numbers as a percentage of the resident working age population) show that the highest rates at August 2009 were in Derry (7.2%), Strabane (6.8%), Limavady (6.5%) and Belfast (6.5%). Those that showed the highest percentage increase in levels over the year to August 2009 were Magherafelt (161.7%), Dungannon (156.7%) and Cookstown (154.9%), but their unemployment rates were still in the region of the Northern Ireland rate (4.9%).

## Employment and Training Measures

The Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) provides a number of services and programmes to help jobseekers find work. In September 2008 Steps to Work, the Department's new flexible approach to helping people to find work, was introduced in Northern Ireland and subsumes the main New Deal programmes. Overall, there has been an increase of 121.3% (4,438 persons) to 8,096 over the year to August 2009 in the number of those claimants who are eligible for mandatory participation on Steps to Work. However anyone over 18 years old (or lone parents aged 16 years old or over) who is not working (or working less than 16 hours each week) is eligible. New Deal statistics are currently accessible via the DEL web link below - Steps to Work statistics will be published when data is available.  
[www.delni.gov.uk/index/statistics-and-research/labour-market/new-deal-statistics.htm](http://www.delni.gov.uk/index/statistics-and-research/labour-market/new-deal-statistics.htm)

**Unadjusted Claimant Count Rates By District Council Area**  
**Figure 3**



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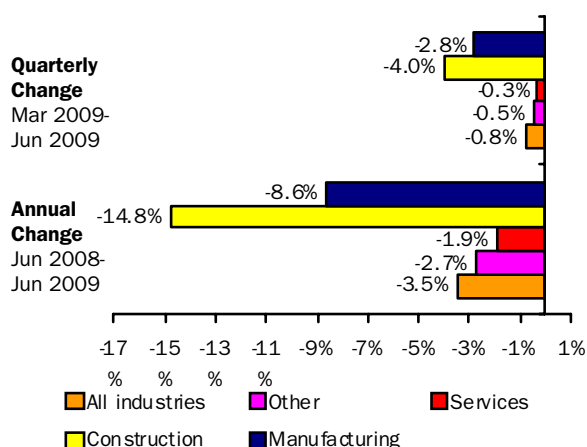
## Redundancies

The Department was notified of 163 proposed redundancies over the period mid August 2009 to mid September 2009. This compares to 568 proposed redundancies notified to the Department in the previous monthly period. There were 247 confirmed redundancies in the month of August (Figure 5). Over the twelve monthly period there were a total of 4,816 confirmed redundancies, an increase of 184% from the previous year (1,693). The highest number of confirmed redundancies took place in Belfast District Council area which had 24.0% (1,157) of all redundancies over the year. Over the twelve monthly period there were a total of 6,237 proposed redundancies, an increase of 112% from the previous year (2,945). Since the start of 2009 to mid September there were a total of 4,704 proposed redundancies. Note that since all proposed redundancies do not actually take place, the confirmed total provides a better indication of real job losses.

## Quarterly Employment Survey (QES)

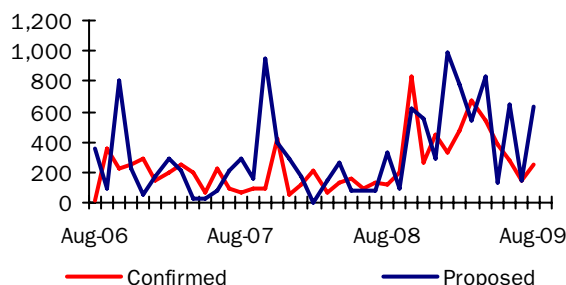
The QES provides an estimate of the number of jobs (rather than persons in employment) and is the preferred measure of change in employee jobs. The estimated seasonally adjusted employee jobs total in Northern Ireland at June 2009 was 709,040. This represents a decrease of 5,470 over the quarter and a decrease of 25,450 over the year.

**Annual and Quarterly changes in employee jobs (seasonally adjusted)**  
**Figure 4**



The seasonally adjusted quarterly change consisted of decreases in Manufacturing (-2,190), in the Service sector (-1,600) and in Construction (-1,580).

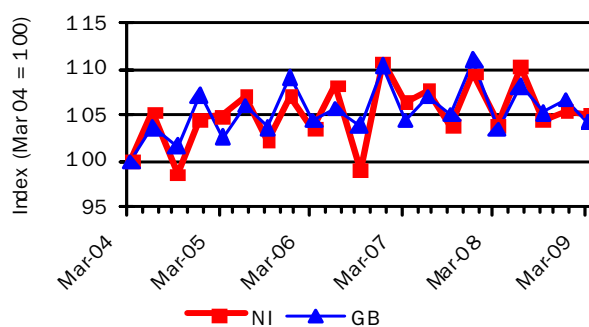
**Confirmed and Proposed Redundancies August 06 - August 09**  
**Figure 5**



## Hours Worked

The total workforce hours worked per week in Northern Ireland in March 2009 was estimated at 26.1 million hours, representing an increase of 1.1% over the year (compared with an increase of 0.6% in GB). Between March 2004 and March 2009, NI's total workforce hours worked per week increased by 5.1%, compared with a 4.2% increase in GB (Figure 6). In the three months to June 2009, the average actual weekly hours worked in NI was 34.3 hours, compared with 31.9 hours in the UK.

**Index of total workforce hours worked per week, NI & GB**  
**Figure 6**



Source: Employment, Earnings and Productivity Division, ONS

## Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE)

Earnings results for April 2008, which were released on 14th November 2008, show that yearly growth in median gross weekly earnings for all employees (i.e. both full- and part-time) in NI was 5.1% (to £346.5) compared to 3.3% in the UK (to £388.4). NI full-time employees' gross weekly earnings in April 2008 were £417.6, which was approximately 87% of the figure in the UK (£478.6). NI full-time earnings increased by 4.3% over the period, which was relatively similar to the increase in the UK (4.6%).

Full-time private sector gross weekly earnings in NI were £377.1, or 82.0% of the figure in the UK (compared to 82.7% in April 2007), reflecting a slight widening of the NI/UK private sector pay gap.

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**Labour Market Structure – Seasonally adjusted  
Table 2**

(Thousands)

|                          | Total aged 16 and over | Total persons of working age 16-59/64 | All aged 16+              |                     |            |                       | All working age 16-59/64 |                            |                              |
|--------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
|                          | A                      | B                                     | Total economically active | Total in employment | Unemployed | Economically inactive | Unemployment rate (%)    | Activity rate 16-59/64 (%) | Employment rate (%) 16-59/64 |
|                          | A                      | B                                     | C                         | D                   | E          | F                     | G                        | H                          | I                            |
| <b>ALL PERSONS</b>       |                        |                                       |                           |                     |            |                       |                          |                            |                              |
| May-Jul 2006             | 1,337                  | 1,067                                 | 808                       | 772                 | 37         | 529                   | 4.6%                     | 73.4%                      | 70.0%                        |
| May-Jul 2007             | 1,355                  | 1,080                                 | 814                       | 786                 | 28         | 541                   | 3.4%                     | 73.1%                      | 70.5%                        |
| May-Jul 2008             | 1,369                  | 1,087                                 | 821                       | 786                 | 36         | 547                   | 4.4%                     | 73.1%                      | 69.8%                        |
| Aug-Oct 2008             | 1,372                  | 1,089                                 | 823                       | 788                 | 36         | 549                   | 4.3%                     | 73.2%                      | 70.0%                        |
| Nov-Jan 2009             | 1,376                  | 1,091                                 | 811                       | 765                 | 46         | 565                   | 5.7%                     | 72.2%                      | 68.0%                        |
| Feb-Apr 2009             | 1,379                  | 1,092                                 | 800                       | 751                 | 49         | 578                   | 6.2%                     | 71.0%                      | 66.5%                        |
| May-Jul 2009             | 1,382                  | 1,094                                 | 800                       | 746                 | 53         | 582                   | 6.7%                     | 70.5%                      | 65.7%                        |
| <b>Change on Quarter</b> | <b>3</b>               | <b>2</b>                              | <b>-1</b>                 | <b>-5</b>           | <b>4</b>   | <b>4</b>              | <b>0.5</b>               | <b>-0.4</b>                | <b>-0.8</b>                  |
| <b>Change on Year</b>    | <b>13</b>              | <b>7</b>                              | <b>-22</b>                | <b>-39</b>          | <b>18</b>  | <b>35</b>             | <b>2.3</b>               | <b>-2.6</b>                | <b>-4.1</b>                  |
| <b>MALES</b>             |                        |                                       |                           |                     |            |                       |                          |                            |                              |
| May-Jul 2006             | 647                    | 550                                   | 446                       | 421                 | 24         | 201                   | 5.5%                     | 79.4%                      | 75.0%                        |
| May-Jul 2007             | 656                    | 556                                   | 447                       | 430                 | 17         | 209                   | 3.7%                     | 78.5%                      | 75.5%                        |
| May-Jul 2008             | 663                    | 560                                   | 450                       | 425                 | 25         | 213                   | 5.5%                     | 78.7%                      | 74.2%                        |
| Aug-Oct 2008             | 664                    | 561                                   | 451                       | 424                 | 27         | 214                   | 6.0%                     | 78.6%                      | 73.9%                        |
| Nov-Jan 2009             | 666                    | 562                                   | 444                       | 409                 | 35         | 223                   | 7.8%                     | 77.3%                      | 71.1%                        |
| Feb-Apr 2009             | 668                    | 563                                   | 437                       | 403                 | 34         | 231                   | 7.8%                     | 75.7%                      | 69.6%                        |
| May-Jul 2009             | 670                    | 564                                   | 436                       | 398                 | 39         | 233                   | 8.8%                     | 75.2%                      | 68.4%                        |
| <b>FEMALES</b>           |                        |                                       |                           |                     |            |                       |                          |                            |                              |
| May-Jul 2006             | 690                    | 517                                   | 363                       | 350                 | 12         | 328                   | 3.4%                     | 67.0%                      | 64.6%                        |
| May-Jul 2007             | 699                    | 523                                   | 367                       | 356                 | 11         | 332                   | 3.0%                     | 67.2%                      | 65.2%                        |
| May-Jul 2008             | 706                    | 527                                   | 372                       | 361                 | 11         | 335                   | 3.0%                     | 67.2%                      | 65.1%                        |
| Aug-Oct 2008             | 708                    | 528                                   | 373                       | 364                 | 8          | 335                   | 2.3%                     | 67.4%                      | 65.9%                        |
| Nov-Jan 2009             | 709                    | 529                                   | 367                       | 356                 | 11         | 342                   | 3.1%                     | 66.8%                      | 64.7%                        |
| Feb-Apr 2009             | 711                    | 529                                   | 364                       | 349                 | 15         | 347                   | 4.2%                     | 66.0%                      | 63.2%                        |
| May-Jul 2009             | 712                    | 530                                   | 363                       | 349                 | 15         | 349                   | 4.1%                     | 65.5%                      | 62.9%                        |

Relationship between columns: A=C+F; C=D+E; G=E/C, H=economically active of working age/total population of working age, I=in employment of working age/total population of working age, \* **A and B are underlying population estimates and are therefore not seasonally adjusted.**

Figures may not sum due to rounding.

Figures for 2006 onwards have been revised to incorporate the latest mid year population estimates.

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## DEFINITIONS

### Notes to Table on Front Page

pps=percentage points

<sup>1</sup> Levels for all persons aged 16 and over, rates for working age (16-59 females, 16-64 males)

<sup>2</sup> People aged 16 and over. Unemployment rate=total unemployed as a proportion of the economically active

<sup>3</sup> Quarterly Employment Survey

<sup>4</sup> Seasonally adjusted. Rates are as a percentage of the total workforce.

<sup>5</sup> Confirmed redundancies in the calendar month.

### ILO Definition

The definition of unemployment used in the Labour Force Survey (LFS) is in accordance with that promulgated by the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The ILO unemployed include those without a job who were able to start work in the two weeks following their LFS interview and had either looked for work in the four weeks prior to interview or were waiting to start a job they had already obtained.

The definition of ILO employed applies to anyone (aged 16 or over) who has done at least one hour's paid work in the week prior to interview, or has a job they are temporarily away from (e.g. on holiday).

The ILO measures are particularly useful for examining short term and long term trends over time and key LFS time series data are available both seasonally adjusted and unadjusted. The key time series data also incorporates the latest mid year population estimates, however the more disaggregated 'microdata' has yet to be re-weighted to these totals (see link below for further details).

### Sampling variability

The LFS is a sample survey, and as such, estimates obtained from it are subject to sampling variability. If we drew many samples each would give a different result. The ranges shown for the LFS data in table 1 represent 95% confidence intervals i.e. we would expect that in 95% of samples the range would contain the true value. These confidence intervals have been calculated using data that is unadjusted for seasonality, with the relevant sampling errors produced applied to the seasonally adjusted data.

If the 'annual change' for an estimate has increased or decreased by more than the 'sampling variability of the change', this change would be statistically significant. The annual changes in the main LFS categories of employment, unemployment and economic inactivity were all statistically significant at the 95% level in May – July 2009.

Please see attached link for further LFS notes and definitions.

[Labour Force Survey Notes and Definitions](#)

### Claimant Count Definition

Claimant Count figures are derived from records of claimants held at Job Benefit Offices. The term 'claimants' in the claimant count is used to include those who claim Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) and National Insurance credits. The figures include severely disabled claimants, but exclude students seeking vacation work and the temporarily stopped. The Claimant Count is a very up-to-date measure of those eligible to claim a specific unemployment related benefit and data are available for a range of geographical sub-regions (e.g. District Council Areas, Parliamentary Constituency Areas, Travel-to-Work Areas and Wards). It also provides seasonally adjusted and unadjusted data and as a result is a useful measure for examining both short-term and long-term trends.

[Background Notes to the Quarterly Employment Survey \(QES\)](#)

[Definitions for the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings ASHE](#)

### For Further Information:

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