



Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) claims by occupation

A TUC analysis

Introduction

Between July 2008 and July 2009 the claimant count¹ increased by 700,065. This TUC analysis looks at the relative increases in claimant unemployment among different occupational groups.²

JSA claims by occupation

The analysis shows that while workers from every sector have been affected by the downturn, 50 per cent of the increase in claimant unemployment has been borne by workers from just 17 occupational groups.

Sales and retail assistants have been affected most, with an annual increase of 76,230 in the number of claimants who had previously worked in this area. This group is followed by other goods handling and storage occupations (an annual increase of 47,420) and general office assistance (an annual increase of 46,330).

The full breakdown of the 25 occupations that have seen the largest numbers of claimants is provided below. A full list of the increases in claimant unemployment for all occupations can be downloaded here:

<http://www.tuc.org.uk/extras/occupationdata.xls>

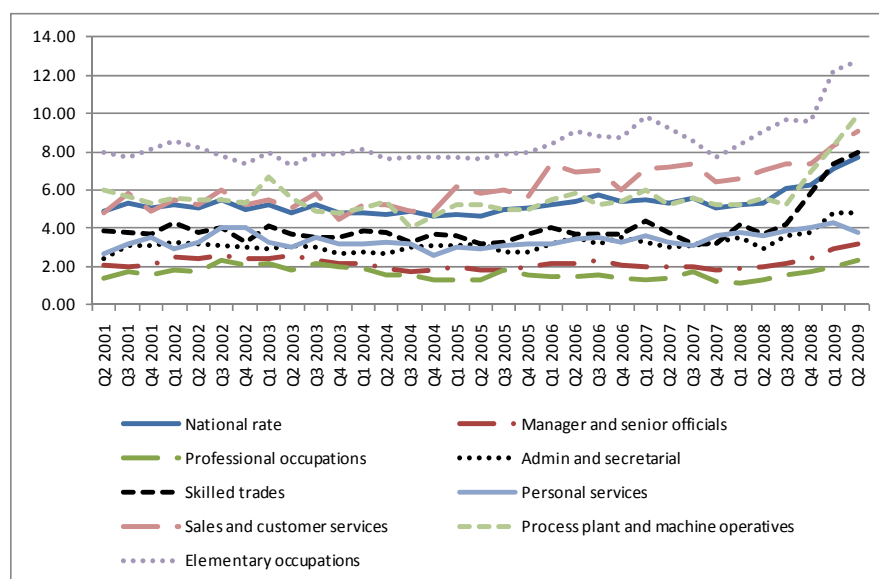
25 occupational groups that have experienced the greatest increases in JSA claims, July 2008 and July 2009, occupation defined by 'usual occupation'

	Jul-08	Jul-09	Annual increase
Total claimant count	867,825	1,567,890	700,065
Sales and retail assistants	184,995	184,995	76,320
Other goods handling and storage occupations n.e.c. ³	123,945	123,945	47,420
General office assistants/clerks	105,775	105,775	46,330
Van drivers	58,610	58,610	26,855
Labourers in building and woodworking trades	48,995	48,995	17,880
Carpenters and joiners	23,555	23,555	15,335
Labourers in process and plant operations n.e.c.	53,735	53,735	14,925
Labourers in other construction trades n.e.c.	40,195	40,195	14,495
Cleaners, domestics	37,220	37,220	13,275
Care assistants and home carers	28,135	28,135	12,055
Bar staff	26,740	26,740	11,815
Customer care occupations	24,470	24,470	10,790
Fork-lift truck drivers	22,670	22,670	10,035
Kitchen and catering assistants	26,195	26,195	9,245
Marketing and sales managers	13,835	13,835	8,835
Heavy goods vehicle drivers	11,940	11,940	8,605
Painters and decorators	19,195	19,195	8,505

Total claimant numbers among 17 worst hit occupations		352,720 (50% of total increase in claimant count)
	499,040	850,105
Electricians, electrical fitters	3,990	12,025
Bricklayers, masons	5,880	13,650
Packers, bottlers, canners, fillers	22,880	30,625
Assemblers and routine operatives n.e.c.	10,780	18,115
Gardeners and groundsmen/groundswomen	12,540	19,255
Plumbers, heating and ventilating engineers	4,560	11,250
Retail cashiers and check-out operators	4,610	10,410
Plasterers	4,205	9,985
Total claimant numbers among 25 worst hit occupations		408,590 (58% of total increase in claimant count)
	566,930	975,520

The larger numbers of claimants from these groups can partly be explained by the larger number of jobs in these areas across the economy. However, it is also true that many elementary occupations are experiencing higher *rates* of unemployment than professional occupations. This can be seen in the following chart:

ILO unemployment rates by previous occupation, Q2 2001 – Q2 2009



While the ILO unemployment rate for workers in elementary occupations is 12.7 per cent, and has risen 3.6 percentage points on the year, the rate for those in professional occupations is 2.3 per cent, and has risen by 1.2 percentage points.

JSA claims in relation to overall occupational workforce sizes

Combining total employment by occupation with the total number of people claiming JSA for that occupation⁴ gives an approximate measure of the total size of the workforce for each occupational group. It also allows analysis of the proportion of people within each overall occupational group who are claiming JSA. Our analysis shows that some occupations have disproportionately large numbers of claimants relative to the overall size of their occupational workforce. For example, 37 per cent of those who usually work in elementary administrative occupations are currently claiming JSA, as are 30 per cent of those who usually work in elementary process plant occupations and 20 per cent of those who usually work in elementary good storage occupations. In contrast, 1 per cent of those who usually work as financial institution and office managers and legal professionals are claiming JSA. The full table can be seen below.

Employment (Labour Force Survey, April – June 2009) and claimant count (July 2009) levels by occupation

Occupation	In employment ⁵ (April – June 2009)	Claimant count (July 2009) ⁶	Proportion of total occupational workforce claiming JSA ⁷
Elementary Administration Occupations	215,214	124,930	37%
Elementary Process Plant Occupations	206,085	89,190	30%
Elementary Goods Storage Occupations	361,168	88,530	20%
Mobile Machine Drivers & Operatives	149,178	27,095	15%
Administrative Occupations: General	637,885	105,775	14%
Building Trades	233,432	33,865	13%
Sales Assistants and Retail Cashiers	1,531,329	202,385	12%
Construction Operatives	142,223	18,530	12%
Assemblers and Routine Operatives	248,389	28,635	10%
Metal Forming Welding and Related	130,913	12,900	9%
Animal Care Services	50,570	4,600	8%
Customer Service Occupations	391,088	35,320	8%
Construction Trades	855,895	67,860	7%
Transport Drivers and Operatives	997,461	77,310	7%
Elementary Personal Service Occupations	892,662	65,505	7%
IT Service Delivery Occupations	189,725	13,765	7%
Process Operatives	270,174	17,200	6%
Agricultural Trades	347,829	21,725	6%
Design Associate Professionals	156,976	9,800	6%
Printing Trades	57,298	3,550	6%
Elementary Cleaning Occupations	728,979	43,975	6%
Plant and Machine Operatives	182,411	10,960	6%
UK total	28,772,325	1,567,890⁸	6%

Elementary Sales Occupations	195,368	11,120	5%
Elementary Security Occupations	321,165	17,620	5%
Vehicle Trades	252,335	13,805	5%
Draughtspersons & Bldng Inspectors	67,603	3,515	5%
Electrical Trades	438,404	22,365	5%
Elementary Agricultural Occupations	91,602	4,240	4%
Food Preparation Trades	333,091	15,055	4%
Sports and Fitness Occupations	120,926	5,295	4%
Artistic and Literary Occupations	214,831	9,375	4%
Media Associate Professionals	210,411	8,355	4%
Hairdressers and Related Occupations	214,874	8,495	4%
Textiles and Garment Trades	35,492	1,370	4%
Conservation Associate Professionals	34,918	1,345	4%
Metal Machining Fitting Instr Making	277,342	10,240	4%
Sales & Related Assoc Professionals	413,072	14,630	3%
Housekeeping Occupations	136,252	4,550	3%
Engineering Professionals	466,481	15,330	3%
Skilled Trades n.e.c	88,041	2,855	3%
Legal Associate Professionals	51,250	1,655	3%
Leisure & Travel Service Occupations	195,573	6,305	3%
Elementary Administration Occupations	215,214	6,905	3%
Science and Engineering Technicians	240,078	7,385	3%
Healthcare & Related Personal Services	1,039,826	31,070	3%
Sales Related Occupations	184,601	5,440	3%
Research Professionals	82,751	2,390	3%
Administrative Occupations: Records	534,272	15,005	3%
Secretarial and Related Occupations	786,743	21,080	3%
Corporate Managers & Senior Officials	136,445	3,610	3%
Architects Town Planners Surveyors	193,607	4,925	2%
Managers in Hospitality and Leisure	319,369	7,990	2%
Social Welfare Assoc Professionals	291,165	7,030	2%
Mangers in Distribution Storage and Retail	567,086	13,560	2%
Childcare & Related Personal Services	835,801	18,250	2%
Administrative: Government & Related	526,213	10,795	2%
Quality and Customer Care Managers	142,878	2,805	2%
Info & Communication Technology	475,556	9,315	2%
Functional Managers	1,429,346	27,335	2%
Production Managers	644,909	11,725	2%
Business & Finance Assoc Professionals	521,136	9,330	2%
Administrative Occupations: Finance	741,701	12,730	2%
Mangers in Farming Horticulture Forestry etc	48,759	820	2%
Librarians and Related Professionals	51,338	830	2%
Public Service Professionals	206,966	3,170	2%
Legal Professionals	171,978	2,555	1%
Administrative: Communications	47,017	680	1%
Personal Services Occupations n.e.c	25,456	360	1%
Public Service and Other Assoc Prof	469,172	6,590	1%
Financial Institution and Office Managers	424,585	5,955	1%

Science Professionals	145,581	2,030	1%
Business & Statistical Professionals	420,989	5,145	1%
Managers in Other Service Industries	487,480	5,270	1%
Protective Service Officers	72,802	735	1%
Therapists	155,598	1,440	1%
Transport Associate Professionals	66,922	585	1%
Teaching Professionals	1,346,224	11,255	1%
Protective Service Occupations	335,707	1,810	1%
Health and Social Services Managers	206,733	1,000	0%
Health Professionals	350,194	960	0%
Health Associate Professionals	694,212	1,835	0%

It is not possible to determine whether those occupations with high proportions of unemployed workers are those where workers have a high risk of not being able to *leave* unemployment – in many elementary occupations it may be that the occupations claimants are seeking differ from those they were previously undertaking, and there will be variation in the numbers of vacancies available in each occupation. But the analysis does show that the *risks* of experiencing unemployment are extremely high for workers in some elementary occupational groups. And the recession has significantly increased these risks: in the five worst affected occupations the proportion of workers in the occupational groups who are unemployed has doubled over the year.

Employment (Labour Force Survey, April – June 2009) and claimant count (July 2009) levels for the five occupational groups⁹ with the highest proportions of the overall workforce claiming JSA

	In employment ¹⁰ (April – June)	Claimant count (July 2009)	Claimant count as a proportion of total occupational workforce
2008	1,770,000	219,690	11%
2009	1,569,530	435,520	22%

Claimant unemployment of over six months by occupation

It is also possible to consider duration of claimant unemployment by occupation.¹¹ We have looked specifically at the proportion of claimants who are unemployed for over 26 weeks. This analysis shows that workers from some occupational groups are likely to spend far longer on JSA than others. For example, 41 percent of those in elementary sales positions, 40 per cent of those in elementary process plant occupations and 40 per cent of those in housekeeping occupations have been unemployed for over six months. In contrast, 20 per cent of legal professionals, 17 per cent of architects, town planners and surveyors and 19 per cent of business and statistical professionals have been out of work for over a six month period.

Claimant unemployment by occupation and duration, July 2009

Occupation	Percentage of claimants unemployed over 26 weeks	Total number of claimants, July 2009
Elementary Sales Occupations	41%	11,120
Elementary Process Plant Occupations	40%	88,530
Housekeeping Occupations	40%	4,550
Agricultural Trades	39%	21,725
Elementary Administration Occupations	37%	6,905
Mobile Machine Drivers And Operatives	37%	27,095
Elementary Agricultural Occupations	37%	4,240
Elementary Cleaning Occupations	36%	43,975
Personal Services Occupations n. e. c.	36%	360
Elementary Goods Storage Occupations	36%	124,930
Building Trades	36%	33,865
Assemblers And Routine Operatives	36%	28,635
Elementary Construction Occupations	35%	89,190
Transport Drivers And Operatives	35%	77,310
Process Operatives	35%	17,200
Administrative Occupations: Communications	35%	680
Elementary Security Occupations	35%	17,620
Administrative Occupations: Records	34%	15,005
Skilled Trades n. e. c.	33%	2,855
Textiles And Garments Trades	33%	1,370
Plant And Machine Operatives	33%	10,960
UK total claimant count	30%	1,567,890
Social Welfare Associate Professionals	30%	7,030
Construction Operatives	30%	18,530
Construction Trades	29%	67,860
Artistic And Literary Occupations	29%	9,375
Food Preparation Trades	29%	15,055
Librarians And Related Professionals	28%	830
Printing Trades	28%	3,550
Corporate Managers And Senior Officials	28%	3,610
IT Service Delivery Occupations	28%	13,765
Metal Forming, Welding And Related Trades	28%	12,900
Elementary Personal Services Occupations	28%	65,505
Animal Care Services	28%	4,600
Managers In Farming, Horticulture, Forestry And Fishing	27%	820
Conservation Associate Professionals	27%	1,345
Vehicle Trades	27%	13,805
Sales Related Occupations	27%	5,440
Managers And Proprietors In Other Service Industries	26%	5,270
Sales Assistants And Retail Cashiers	26%	202,385
Electrical Trades	26%	22,365
Science And Engineering Technicians	25%	7,385
Information And Communication Technology Professionals	25%	9,315
Metal Machining, Fitting And Instrument Making	25%	10,240

Trades		
Managers In Distribution, Storage And Retailing	25%	13,560
Healthcare And Related Personal Services	25%	31,070
Administrative Occupations: General	25%	105,775
Managers And Proprietors In Hospitality And Leisure Services	25%	7,990
Design Associate Professionals	24%	9,800
Customer Service Occupations	24%	35,320
Administrative Occupations: Government And Related Organisations	24%	10,795
Media Associate Professionals	24%	8,355
Research Professionals	24%	2,390
Sales And Related Associate Professionals	24%	14,630
Public Service Professionals	24%	3,170
Production Managers	23%	11,725
Therapists	23%	1,440
Leisure And Travel Service Occupations	23%	6,305
Childcare And Related Personal Services	23%	18,250
Secretarial And Related Occupations	23%	21,080
Draughtspersons And Building Inspectors	22%	3,515
Science Professionals	22%	2,030
Sports And Fitness Occupations	22%	5,295
Quality And Customer Care Managers	22%	2,805
Teaching Professionals	22%	11,255
Health And Social Services Managers	22%	1,000
Financial Institution And Office Managers	21%	5,955
Functional Managers	21%	27,335
Administrative Occupations: Finance	21%	12,730
Engineering Professionals	21%	15,330
Legal Associate Professionals	21%	1,655
Public Service And Other Associate Professionals	20%	6,590
Protective Service Occupations	20%	1,810
Business And Finance Associate Professionals	20%	9,330
Health Associate Professionals	20%	1,835
Protective Service Officers	20%	735
Transport Associate Professionals	20%	585
Legal Professionals	20%	2,555
Business And Statistical Professionals	19%	5,145
Hairdressers And Related Occupations	19%	8,495
Health Professionals	17%	960
Architects, Town Planners, Surveyors	17%	4,925

Proportional increases in JSA

There has been much discussion about the recession's impacts for those in professional jobs. There is no doubt that those in professional jobs have been affected by the recession, and although the incidence of unemployment among many professionals before the recession was low, some groups have experienced some of the largest *proportional* rises in claimant unemployment. For example,

architects have seen a 649 per cent increase in unemployment, quantity surveyors a 462 per cent increase and taxation experts a 411 per cent increase. But the actual numbers have been relatively low. Our analysis shows that in total the 25 occupations that have seen the largest *proportional* rises in claimant numbers only account for 5 per cent of the total *number* of new claimants over the year.

Although there may be higher rates of underclaiming of JSA among professional groups, who may have higher household incomes and be less likely to qualify for income based JSA, this variation will not account for the very large discrepancies in claimant levels between many elementary and professional jobs.

25 occupational groups that have experienced the greatest *proportional* increases in JSA claims, July 2008 and July 2009, occupation defined by 'usual occupation'.

Occupation	July 2008	July 2009	Increase	Percentage rise
Total claimant count	867,825	1,567,890	700,065	81%
Architects	265	1,985	1,720	649%
Quantity surveyors	230	1,295	1,065	463%
Architectural technologists and town planning technicians	230	1,275	1,045	454%
Water and sewerage plant operatives	90	460	370	411%
Taxation experts	45	230	185	411%
Town planners	65	290	225	346%
Managers in construction	1,435	6,360	4,925	343%
Civil engineers	545	2,410	1,865	342%
Air traffic controllers	15	55	40	267%
Heavy goods vehicle drivers	3,335	11,940	8,605	258%
Metal machining setters and setter-operators	1,000	3,575	2,575	258%
Chartered surveyors (not quantity surveyors)	380	1,355	975	257%
Draughtspersons	580	2,060	1,480	255%
Metal plate workers, shipwrights, riveters	255	895	640	251%
Planning and quality control engineers	220	770	550	250%
Design and development engineers	440	1,530	1,090	248%
Building and civil engineering technicians	265	910	645	243%
Solicitors and lawyers, judges and coroners	595	2,030	1,435	241%
Tool makers, tool fitters and markers-out	250	850	600	240%
Mechanical engineers	1,295	4,355	3,060	236%
Quarry workers and related operatives	130	420	290	223%
Chemical engineers	70	225	155	221%
Production and process	405	1,285	880	217%

engineers				
Engineering professionals n.e.c.	630	1,940	1,310	208%
Engineering technicians	650	2,000	1,350	208%
Total number of claimants among 25 occupations with largest proportional increase	13420	50500	37080 (5% of total increase in claimant count)	

¹ The claimant count is not the same as the ILO measure of unemployment, as it only includes unemployed people who claim Jobseekers Allowance. Those who are not entitled to claim, for example those without adequate Class 1 National Insurance contributions, those who have claimed six months of contributory JSA and are not entitled to income based JSA, and young people aged 16-17, are not therefore included.

² JSA claims can be analysed by 'usual' or 'sought' occupations of claimants. We have used 'usual occupation' as it gives the best indication of the jobs that people were undertaking prior to claiming JSA.

³ 'n.e.c.' stands for 'not elsewhere classified'.

⁴ When referring to the total number of people claiming JSA for each occupation we have used data for 'usual occupation'.

⁵ The data include all employees in full or part-time work or self-employed.

⁶ The claimant count is disaggregated by the 'usual' occupation of claimants.

⁷ The base for this calculation is the total claimant count + the total number of employees in each occupation.

⁸ The total claimant count includes the total number of claimants + the 5,270 claimants whose occupations are unknown to Jobcentre Plus.

⁹ The five occupational groups are elementary administration occupations, elementary plant process occupations, elementary good storage occupations, mobile machine drivers and operatives and administrative occupations: general.

¹⁰ The data include all employees in full or part-time work or self-employed.

¹¹ Data by occupation and duration are only available by three digit occupational code.