

# Differences between DWP published Jobseekers Allowance statistics and ONS Claimant Count statistics

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**Statistical Services**

**Information Directorate**

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## Summary of the differences between the Claimant Count and DWP 100% JSA data sources

### Contents:

Section	Pages
1 Issue	2
2 Conclusions and Recommendations	2
3 The size of the differences	3
4 Reasons for the differences	4
5 Further Information	4

### 1. Issue

Both the Claimant Count and DWP 100% JSA data are measures of the numbers of people claiming Jobseekers Allowance (JSA), however there are differences in the statistics published from these two sources.

This summary report identifies the size of and explains the reasons for the differences. It also gives guidance on when to use each data source.

### 2. Conclusions and Recommendations

The difference in overall numbers claiming JSA recorded on the Claimant Count and DWP 100% is small, usually less than 20,000 (2 per cent) and both data sources follow the same trend over time [see chart 1].

The main reason for the different numbers is because the data sources collect data on different days in the month.

#### Recommendations:

1. Whenever possible use the Claimant Count<sup>1</sup> to obtain JSA statistics.
2. If the information you need is not available on the Claimant Count (e.g. average amounts, partner status, etc.) then the DWP 100% data<sup>2</sup> should be used.
3. If the information required is not available on either the Claimant Count or the DWP 100% data (e.g. split between income-based / contributory JSA claimants, third party deductions, etc.) then the DWP 5% sample data<sup>2</sup> should be used.

<sup>1</sup> Claimant Count data is available from <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk>

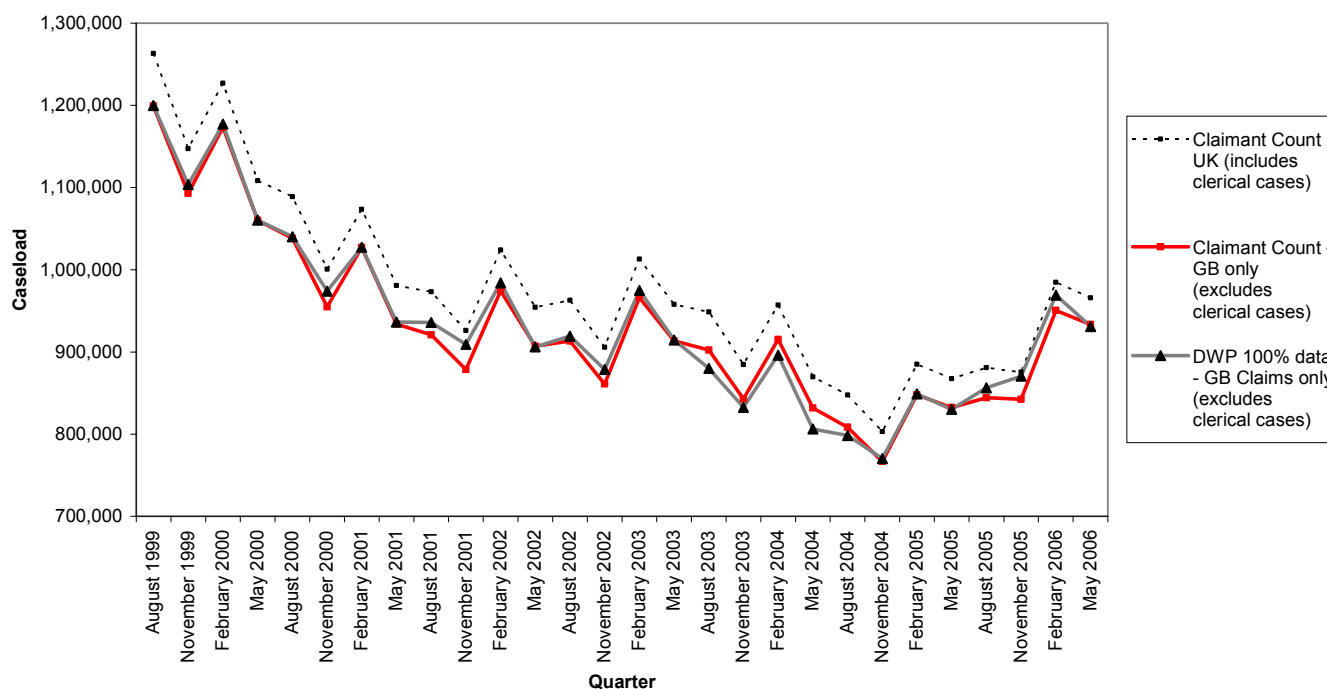
<sup>2</sup> DWP JSA statistics are available at <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/tabtool.asp>

### 3. The size of the differences.

Chart 1 shows the JSA caseloads on each data source each quarter from August 1999.

The Claimant Count data is available monthly from June 1983, but the DWP 100% data is only available quarterly from August 1999.

**Chart 1: Comparisons of JSA Caseloads from the DWP 100% data and the Claimant Count data.**



The two sources follow the same general trend over time. However, there is some variation in the magnitude and direction of the differences.

Comparing just GB computerised claims only (red and grey lines), the difference between the data sources is usually less than 20,000 (2 per cent). The largest difference is 30,440 (3.5 per cent) in November 2001.

#### 4. Reasons for the differences.

The main reasons for the differences in overall numbers reported on the claimant count and 100% DWP data are:

1. **Timing Difference** – this is the main reason. The count day is different for the two data sources – the ONS claimant count includes JSA claims that are live on the second Thursday of each month, the DWP 100% data counts live claims on the last day of the month (approximately 19 days apart). JSA is a benefit with a high rate of on and off flow activity, which will result in a difference in overall numbers reported on the two sources and also a difference in individual claimants that appear on each dataset.
2. **Retrospection** – this includes claims submitted at a later date but backdated to an earlier entitlement date, and also the time taken to process/upload new JSA claims onto the computer system. The Claimant Count allows three weeks to receive these extra cases, whereas the DWP 100% data allows at least three months.
3. **Late Terminations** – this is the time taken to close JSA claims on the computer systems once a person ceases claiming JSA, it would also include any cases where there is a delay between the date a claimant gets a job, or moves onto training/education/another benefit etc. and the date they inform the DWP (incl. processing time). The DWP 100% data will receive more late terminations (which reduces the caseload) as more time is allowed for the computer systems to be updated.
4. **Data extraction rules** – both data sources are extracted from the DWP computer systems, however they are separate scans produced with different specifications, inclusion and exclusion rules.
5. **Coverage** – the Claimant Count data can additionally include those people claiming JSA and living in Northern Ireland as well as a small number of claims held locally on paper (clerical cases). The DWP 100% data only includes JSA claimants living in England, Wales and Scotland and is restricted to computerised claims only.

#### 5. Further Information.

Further work is being carried out on the differences between the two data sources. Results from this work will be published in due course.

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