

Unemployment Bulletin

Issue 214 May 2026

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The Claimant Count is a measure of the number of people who are unemployed and claiming benefits. From 1996 until the recent introduction of Universal Credit, this was based on the number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance. However, since its introduction some unemployment benefit claimants will be claiming Universal Credit instead. **To reflect this change, the Claimant Count has been expanded to include people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance plus those who claim Universal Credit and who are searching for work.**

Since 2016 Gloucestershire has been transitioning to full Universal Credit with the process due to be completed in 2025. This means a broader span of claimants will be required to look for work than under Jobseekers Allowance. As more people are brought within the coverage of Universal Credit, the Claimant Count is set to rise. In addition, in May 2024 the DWP rolled out an increase in the administrative earnings threshold (AET) for full work search conditionality. This means a cohort of claimants who are in work but on an income below the AET will now be required to search for work. This change is likely to affect around 180,000 claimants across the country over around 6 months, increasing the Claimant Count over that time. More information about Universal Credit please see the [ONS website](#).

INTRODUCTION

The Unemployment Bulletin provides a monthly update on unemployment data for Gloucestershire, the South West region and the United Kingdom. It is produced by the Data, Analysis & Insights Team in the County Council's Planning, Performance and Insight function. The data are sourced from the Office for National Statistics via Nomis (www.nomis.co.uk). All data are rounded to the nearest 5 and may not precisely add to the sum of the number of people claiming JSA, and the number of people claiming Universal Credit required to seek work, due to independent rounding.

PART 1: SUMMARY

The claimant rate in Gloucestershire increased to 2.7% in May 2026. The South West and UK rates remained at 2.8% and 3.9% respectively. Gloucestershire's rate was 0.1% lower than the South West average of 2.8%, and 1.2% lower than the UK average of 3.9%.

The claimant count in Gloucestershire in May 2026 increased by 205 people. The amount of people claiming in May was 1.9% higher than the number in April. This compares to a 0.5% increase in the South West, and a 1.8% increase in the UK.

Note on claimant count rates:

From Jan-26 data onwards, ONS have updated local authority, regional and national population estimates, used to calculate rates, to the most recent 2024 mid-year estimates.

Produced by:

Data, Analysis & Insights Team
Planning, Performance and Insight
Gloucestershire County Council
June 2026

DISTRICTS AT A GLANCE

At a glance unemployment information grouped by district. Includes:

Claimant count: Total number of people claiming Job Seekers Allowance and Universal Credit who are not in work in May 2026

Claimant count change on previous month: How much larger/smaller May's claimant count is compared to April expressed as a %

Claimant rate: The % of working age population claiming Job Seekers Allowance and Universal Credit who are not in work in May 2026

Highest claiming ward: The ward with the highest claim count in that district and the rate

CHELTENHAM BOROUGH

Claimant count:	2,175
Claimant count change on previous month:	5.3%
Claimant rate:	2.8%
Highest claiming ward(s)	Hesters Way (5.9%)

GLOUCESTER CITY

Claimant count:	3,200
Claimant count change on previous month:	1.9%
Claimant rate:	3.6%
Highest claiming ward(s)	Barton and Tredworth (6.1%)

COTSWOLD DISTRICT

Claimant count:	1,055
Claimant count change on previous month:	1.9%
Claimant rate:	2.0%
Highest claiming ward(s)	Watermoor (4.0%)

STROUD DISTRICT

Claimant count:	1,605
Claimant count change on previous month:	2.6%
Claimant rate:	2.2%
Highest claiming ward(s)	Stroud Central (6.0%)

FOREST OF DEAN

Claimant count:	1,295
Claimant count change on previous month:	-3.0%
Claimant rate:	2.5%
Highest claiming ward(s)	Cinderford West (4.4%)

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH

Claimant count:	1,445
Claimant count change on previous month:	1.0%
Claimant rate:	2.4%
Highest claiming ward(s)	Tewkesbury South (4.7%)

PART 2: UK, SW AND GLOUCESTERSHIRE INDICATORS

The unemployment situation in Gloucestershire compared to the South West and the UK.

Claimant Rate

Figure 1: Claimant Rate for Gloucestershire, the South West and UK over the past year

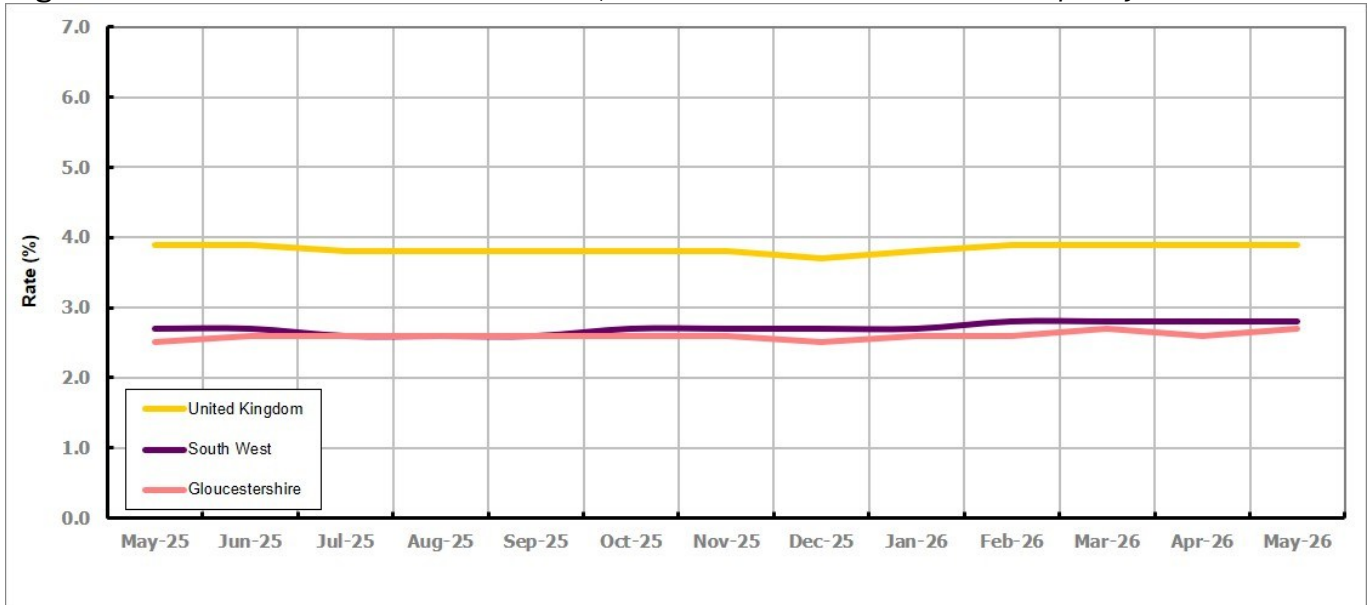


Figure 1 shows the claimant rate for Gloucestershire at 2.7% in May 2026. The Gloucestershire rate has been lower than the South West average since October 2025. On average, it has been approximately 1.2% lower than the UK average since the same month of the previous year.

Claimant Count

Table 1: Analysis of UK, South West and Gloucestershire Claimant Counts

Area	Claimant Count in May 2026	% change on April 2026	Consecutive months increasing
UK	1,709,200	1.8%	0
South West	99,045	0.5%	0
Gloucestershire	10,775	1.9%	0

Table 1 shows that in May 2026, the number of claimants in Gloucestershire was 1.9% lower than the number in April 2026.

PART 3: LOCAL AUTHORITY DISTRICT ANALYSIS

Claimant Rate and Claimant Count

Figure 2: Claimant Rate (%) across Gloucestershire - May 2026

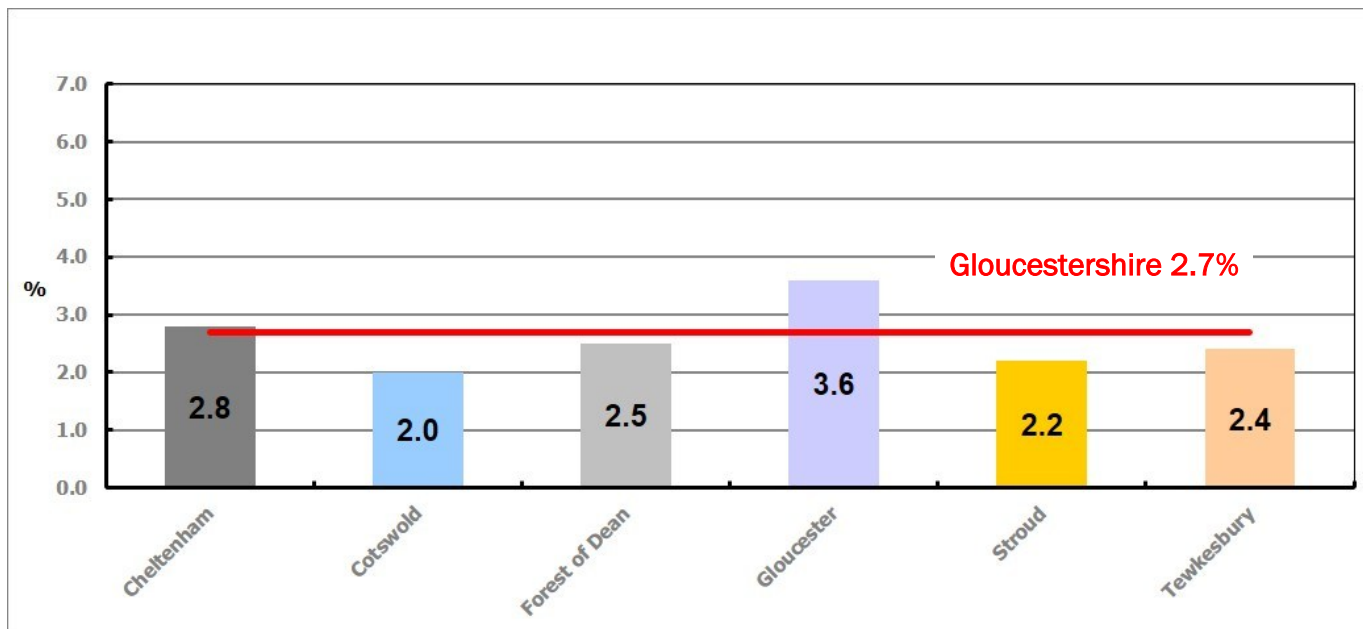


Figure 2 shows the claimant rate for May 2026 in Gloucestershire. Between April and May 2026 the rate remained the same in all districts except Forest of Dean which saw a decrease, and Cotswold and Tewkesbury which saw no change.

Table 2: Analysis of Gloucestershire and District Claimant Counts

Total	May 26 Number	May 26 Rate	Apr 26 Number	Apr 26 Rate	Monthly change	% monthly change	Monthly change of rate
Gloucestershire	10,775	2.7	10,570	2.6	205	1.9%	0.1
Cheltenham	2,175	2.8	2,065	2.7	110	5.3%	0.1
Cotswold	1,055	2.0	1,035	2.0	20	1.9%	0.0
Forest of Dean	1,295	2.5	1,335	2.6	-40	-3.0%	-0.1
Gloucester	3,200	3.6	3,140	3.5	60	1.9%	0.1
Stroud	1,605	2.2	1,565	2.1	40	2.6%	0.1
Tewkesbury	1,445	2.4	1,430	2.4	15	1.0%	0.0

Table 2 shows the change in the claimant count in May compared to April 2026. All districts saw an increase in the number of claimants, except Forest of Dean which saw a decrease.

Table 3: Analysis of Male Gloucestershire and District Claimant Counts

Male	May 26 Number	May 26 Rate	Apr 26 Number	Apr 26 Rate	Monthly change	% monthly change	Monthly change of rate
Gloucestershire	6,015	3.0	5,870	3.0	145	2.5%	0.0
Cheltenham	1,245	3.3	1,195	3.1	50	4.2%	0.2
Cotswold	530	2.1	510	2.0	20	3.9%	0.1
Forest of Dean	710	2.8	720	2.8	-10	-1.4%	0.0
Gloucester	1,930	4.3	1,880	4.2	50	2.7%	0.1
Stroud	830	2.3	795	2.2	35	4.4%	0.1
Tewkesbury	770	2.6	770	2.6	0	0.0%	0.0

Table 3 shows the change in the male claimant count in May compared to April 2026. All districts saw an increase in the number of male claimants, except Forest of Dean which saw a decrease, and Tewkesbury which saw no change.

Table 4: Analysis of Female Gloucestershire and District Claimant Counts

Female	May 26 Number	May 26 Rate	Apr 26 Number	Apr 26 Rate	Monthly change	% monthly change	Monthly change of rate
Gloucestershire	4,755	2.3	4,695	2.3	60	1.3%	0.0
Cheltenham	925	2.4	865	2.3	60	6.9%	0.1
Cotswold	520	1.9	525	2.0	-5	-1.0%	-0.1
Forest of Dean	585	2.2	615	2.3	-30	-4.9%	-0.1
Gloucester	1,270	2.9	1,255	2.8	15	1.2%	0.1
Stroud	775	2.0	775	2.0	0	0.0%	0.0
Tewkesbury	675	2.2	660	2.1	15	2.3%	0.1

Table 4 shows the change in the female claimant count in May compared to April 2026. All districts saw an increase in the number of female claimants, except Cotswold and Forest of Dean which saw a decrease, and Stroud which saw no change.

PART 4: LOCAL AUTHORITY DISTRICT AND WARD ANALYSIS

This section covers the six districts and a comparison of their constituent wards.

4.1 Cheltenham Borough

Claimant Rate and Claimant Count

Figure 3: Cheltenham Borough claimant rate over the last year

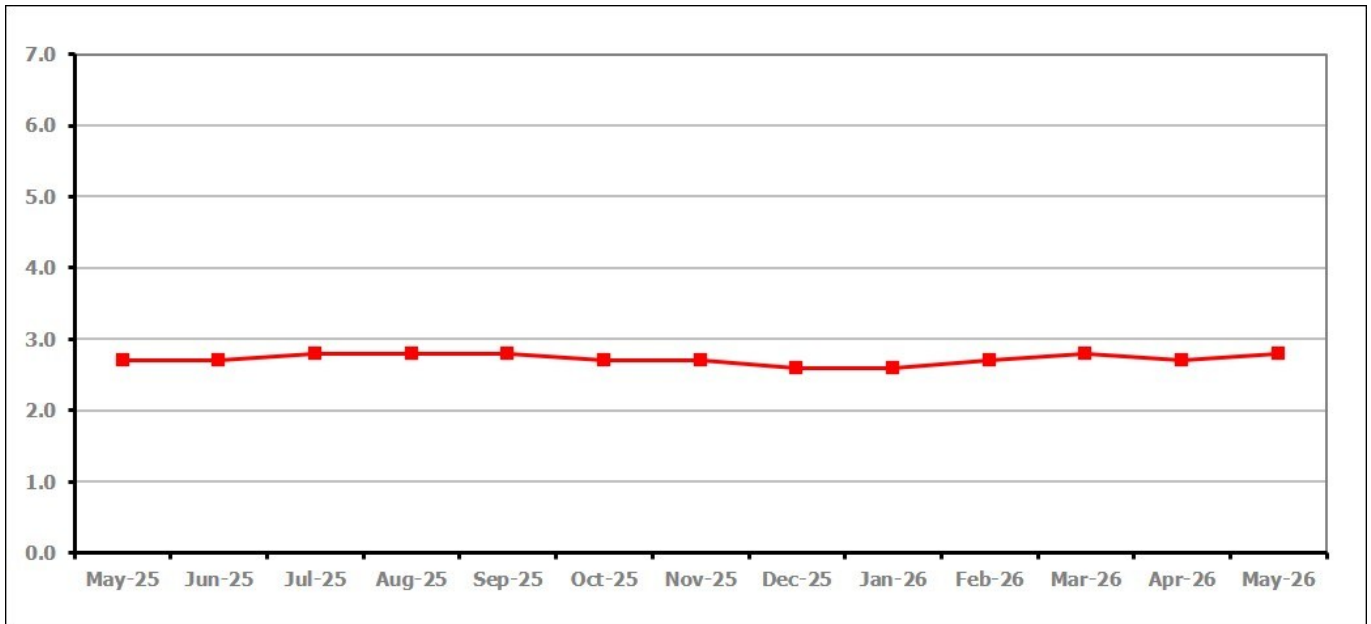


Figure 3 shows the claimant rate in Cheltenham increased to 2.8% in May 2026.

Figure 4: Claimant rates across Cheltenham Borough wards - May 2026

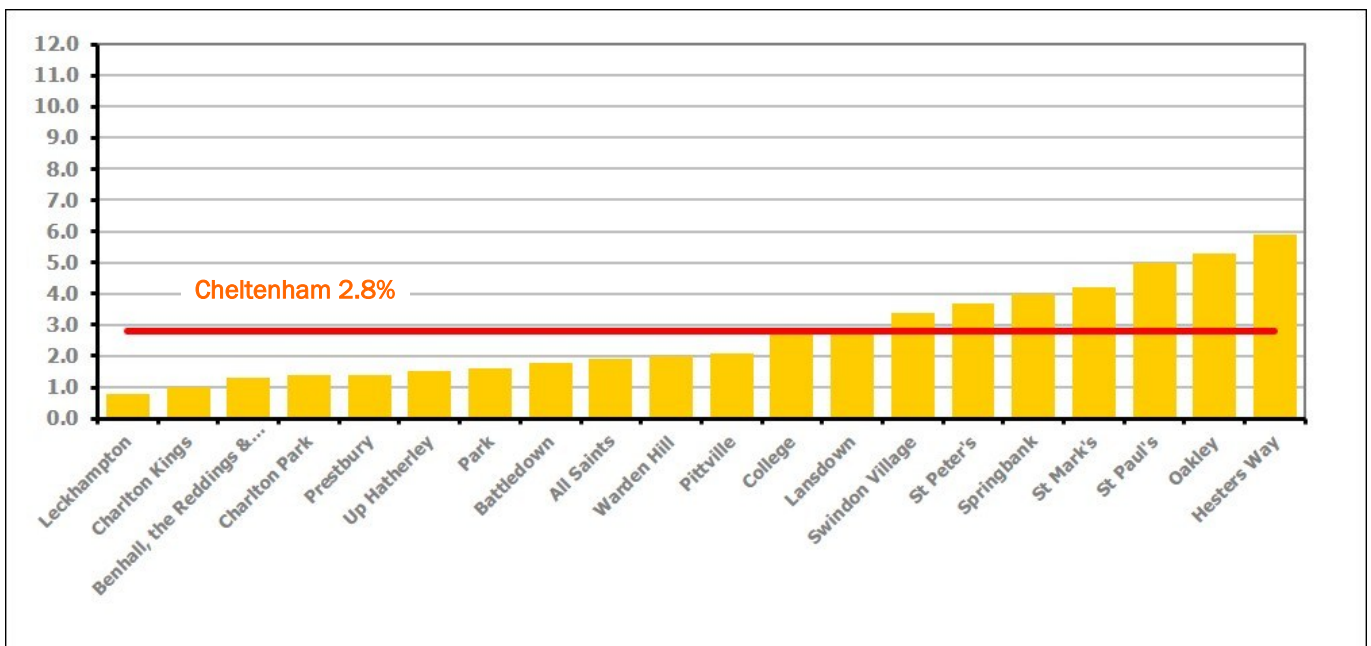


Figure 4 shows the claimant rates for Cheltenham Borough wards. The red line represents the average claimant rate across the Borough of 2.8%. Eight wards lie above the average.

PART 4: LOCAL AUTHORITY DISTRICT AND WARD ANALYSIS**4.1 Cheltenham Borough continued...**

Table 5: Analysis of Claimant Count at Cheltenham Borough ward level - May 2026

District	Ward	Rate	Rank*
Cheltenham	Leckhampton	0.8	1
Cheltenham	Charlton Kings	1.0	6
Cheltenham	Benhall, the Reddings & Fiddler's Green	1.3	12
Cheltenham	Charlton Park	1.4	16
Cheltenham	Prestbury	1.4	16
Cheltenham	Up Hatherley	1.5	22
Cheltenham	Park	1.6	31
Cheltenham	Battledown	1.8	44
Cheltenham	All Saints	1.9	49
Cheltenham	Warden Hill	2.0	56
Cheltenham	Pittville	2.1	63
Cheltenham	College	2.7	96
Cheltenham	Lansdown	2.9	102
Cheltenham	Swindon Village	3.4	118
Cheltenham	St Peter's	3.7	120
Cheltenham	Springbank	4.0	122
Cheltenham	St Mark's	4.2	124
Cheltenham	St Paul's	5.0	131
Cheltenham	Oakley	5.3	134
Cheltenham	Hesters Way	5.9	136

	lowest 10% of county
	first quartile of county
	second quartile of county
	third quartile of county
	fourth quartile of county
	highest 10% of county

* 1 = "best" and 138 = "worst"

Table 5 shows overall claimant rates for Cheltenham Borough wards and their position relative to all wards in Gloucestershire.

PART 4: LOCAL AUTHORITY DISTRICT AND WARD ANALYSIS

4.2 Cotswold District

Claimant Rate and Claimant Count

Figure 5: Cotswold District claimant rate over the last year

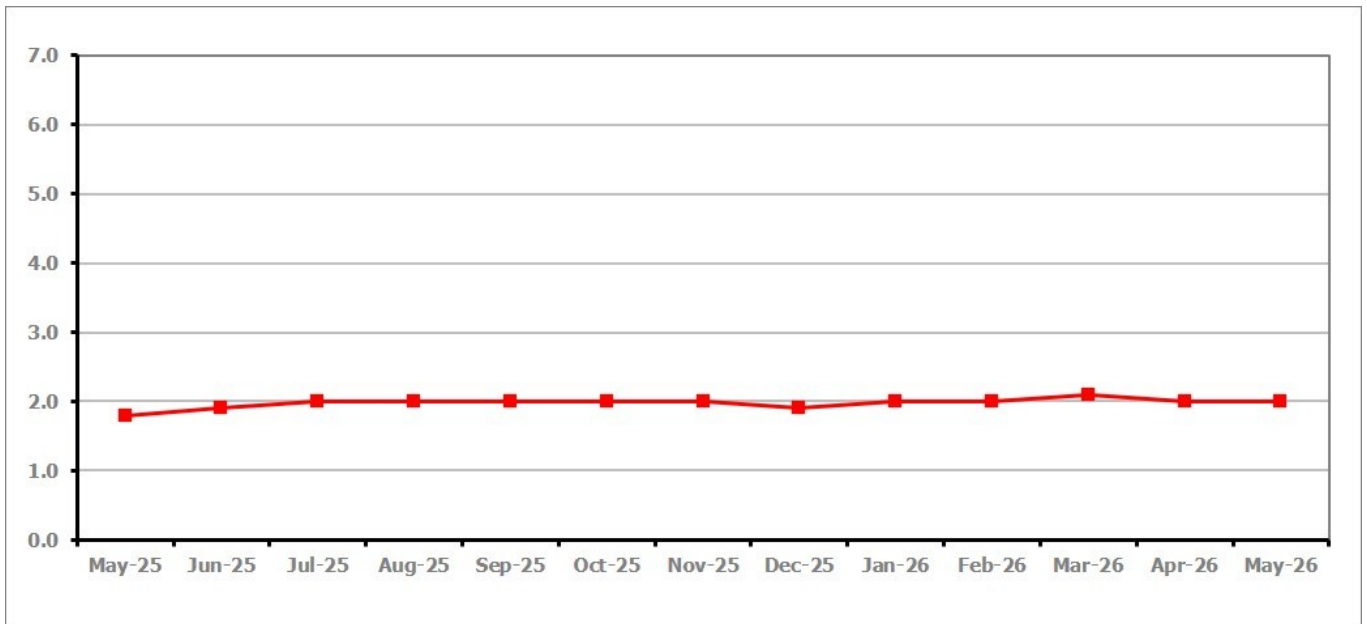


Figure 5 shows the claimant rate in Cotswold District remained at 2.0% in May 2026.

Figure 6: Claimant rates across Cotswold District wards – May 2026

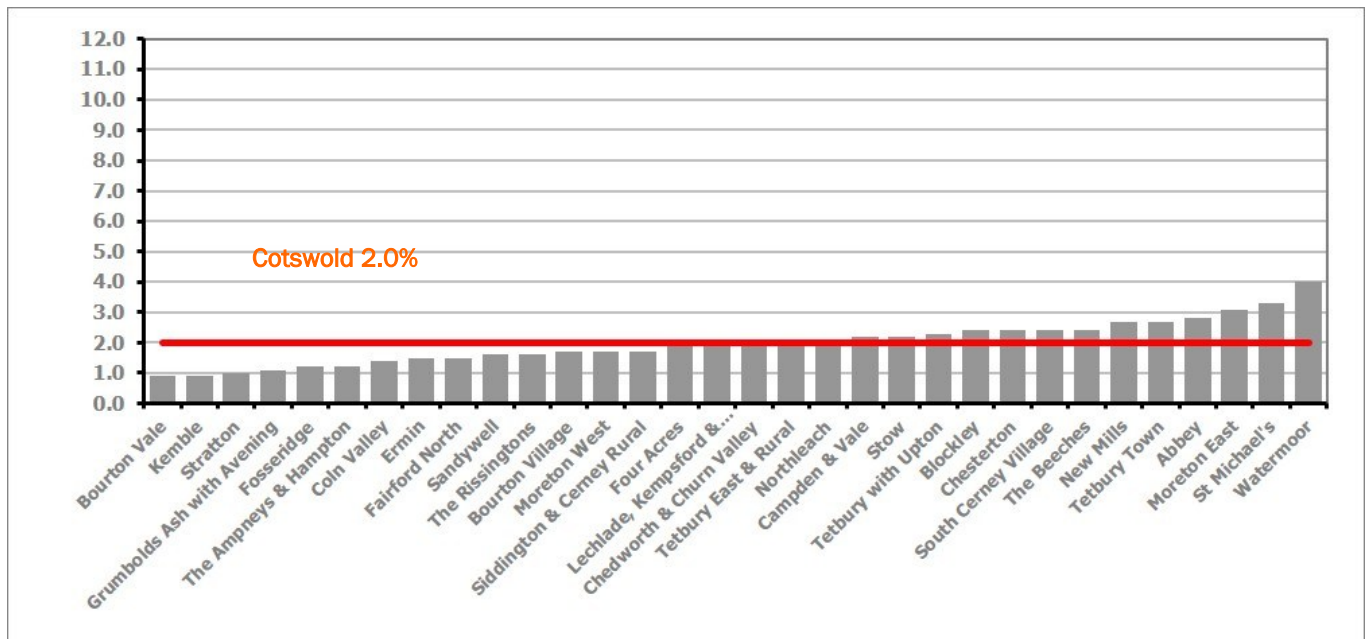


Figure 6 shows the claimant rates for Cotswold District wards. The red line represents the average claimant rate across the District of 2.0%. Fourteen wards lie above the average.

PART 4: LOCAL AUTHORITY DISTRICT AND WARD ANALYSIS**4.2 Cotswold District continued...**

Table 6: Analysis of Claimant Count at Cotswold District ward level - May 2026

District	Ward	Rate	Rank*
Cotswold	Bourton Vale	0.9	2
Cotswold	Kemble	0.9	2
Cotswold	Stratton	1.0	6
Cotswold	Grumbolds Ash with Avening	1.1	8
Cotswold	Fosseridge	1.2	9
Cotswold	The Ampneys & Hampton	1.2	9
Cotswold	Coln Valley	1.4	16
Cotswold	Ermin	1.5	22
Cotswold	Fairford North	1.5	22
Cotswold	Sandywell	1.6	31
Cotswold	The Rissingtons	1.6	31
Cotswold	Bourton Village	1.7	38
Cotswold	Moreton West	1.7	38
Cotswold	Siddington & Cerney Rural	1.7	38
Cotswold	Four Acres	1.9	49
Cotswold	Lechlade, Kempsford & Fairford South	1.9	49
Cotswold	Chedworth & Churn Valley	2.0	56
Cotswold	Tetbury East & Rural	2.0	56
Cotswold	Northleach	2.1	63
Cotswold	Campden & Vale	2.2	69
Cotswold	Stow	2.2	69
Cotswold	Tetbury with Upton	2.3	76
Cotswold	Blockley	2.4	81
Cotswold	Chesterton	2.4	81
Cotswold	South Cerney Village	2.4	81
Cotswold	The Beeches	2.4	81
Cotswold	New Mills	2.7	96
Cotswold	Tetbury Town	2.7	96
Cotswold	Abbey	2.8	99
Cotswold	Moreton East	3.1	111
Cotswold	St Michael's	3.3	116
Cotswold	Watermoor	4.0	122

	lowest 10% of county
	first quartile of county
	second quartile of county
	third quartile of county
	fourth quartile of county
	highest 10% of county

* 1 = "best" and 138 = "worst"

Table 6 shows overall claimant rates for Cotswold District wards and their position relative to all wards in Gloucestershire.

PART 4: LOCAL AUTHORITY DISTRICT AND WARD ANALYSIS

4.3 Forest of Dean District

Claimant Rate and Claimant Count

Figure 7: Forest of Dean District claimant rate over the last year

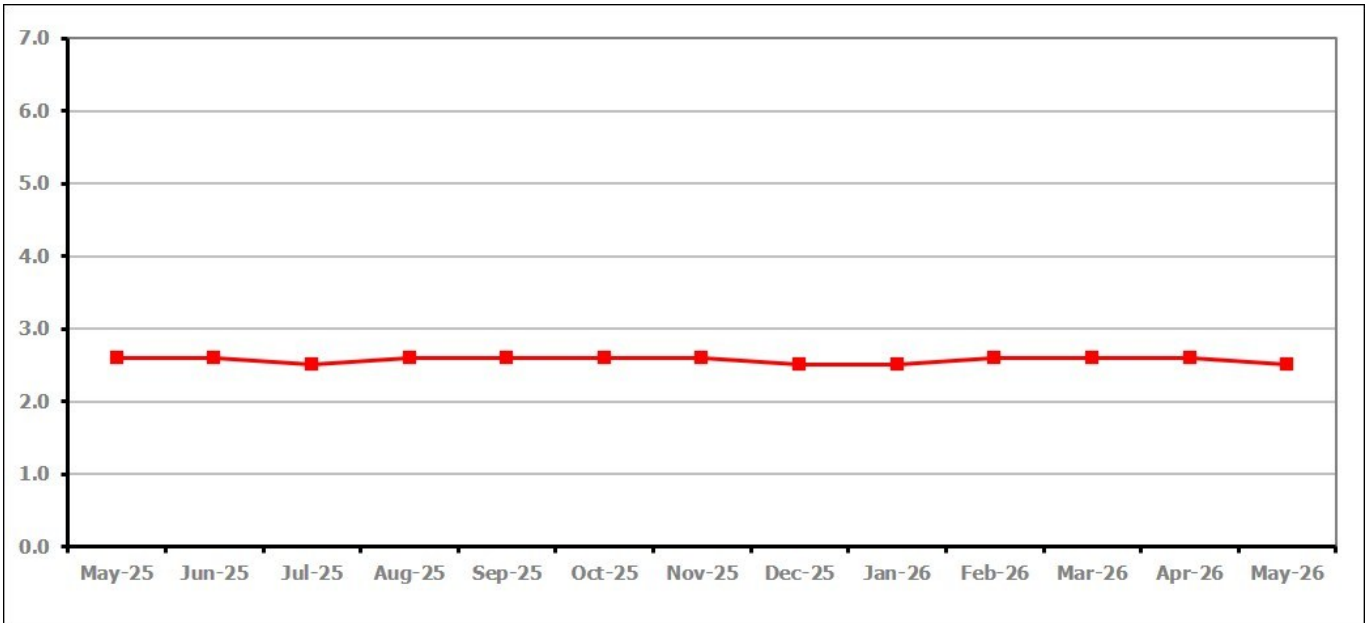


Figure 7 shows the claimant rate in the Forest of Dean decreased to 2.5% in May 2026.

Figure 8: Claimant rates across Forest of Dean District wards – May 2026

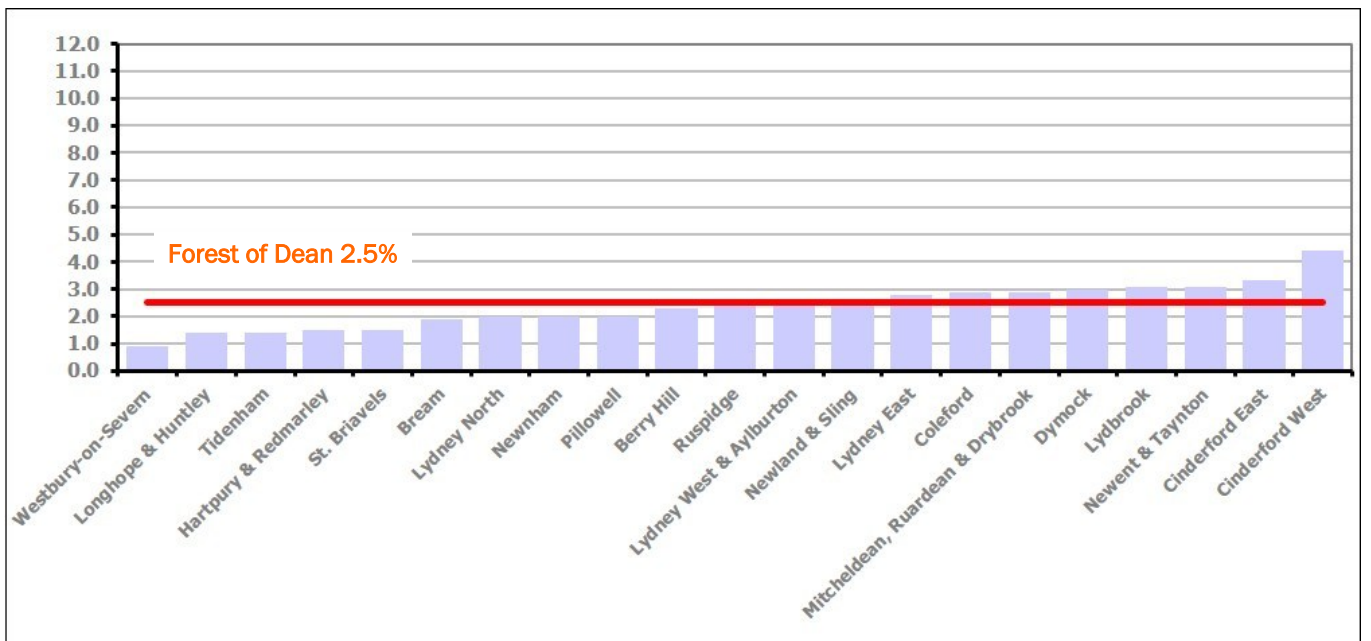


Figure 8 shows the claimant rates for the Forest of Dean District wards. The red line represents the average claimant rate across the District of 2.5%. Ten wards lie above the average.

PART 4: LOCAL AUTHORITY DISTRICT AND WARD ANALYSIS**4.3 Forest of Dean District continued...***Table 7: Analysis of Claimant Count at Forest of Dean District ward level - May 2026*

District	Ward	Rate	Rank*
Forest	Westbury-on-Severn	0.9	2
Forest	Longhope & Huntley	1.4	16
Forest	Tidenham	1.4	16
Forest	Hartpury & Redmarley	1.5	22
Forest	St. Briavels	1.5	22
Forest	Bream	1.9	49
Forest	Lydney North	2.0	56
Forest	Newnham	2.0	56
Forest	Pillowell	2.0	56
Forest	Berry Hill	2.3	76
Forest	Ruspidge	2.5	86
Forest	Lydney West & Aylburton	2.6	91
Forest	Newland & Sling	2.6	91
Forest	Lydney East	2.8	99
Forest	Coleford	2.9	102
Forest	Mitcheldean, Ruardean & Drybrook	2.9	102
Forest	Dymock	3.0	110
Forest	Lydbrook	3.1	111
Forest	Newent & Taynton	3.1	111
Forest	Cinderford East	3.3	116
Forest	Cinderford West	4.4	126

	lowest 10% of county
	first quartile of county
	second quartile of county
	third quartile of county
	fourth quartile of county
	highest 10% of county

* 1 = "best" and 138 = "worst"

Table 7 shows overall claimant rates for the Forest of Dean District wards and their position relative to all wards in Gloucestershire.

PART 4: LOCAL AUTHORITY DISTRICT AND WARD ANALYSIS

4.4 Gloucester City

Claimant Rate and Claimant Count

Figure 9: Gloucester City claimant rate over the last year

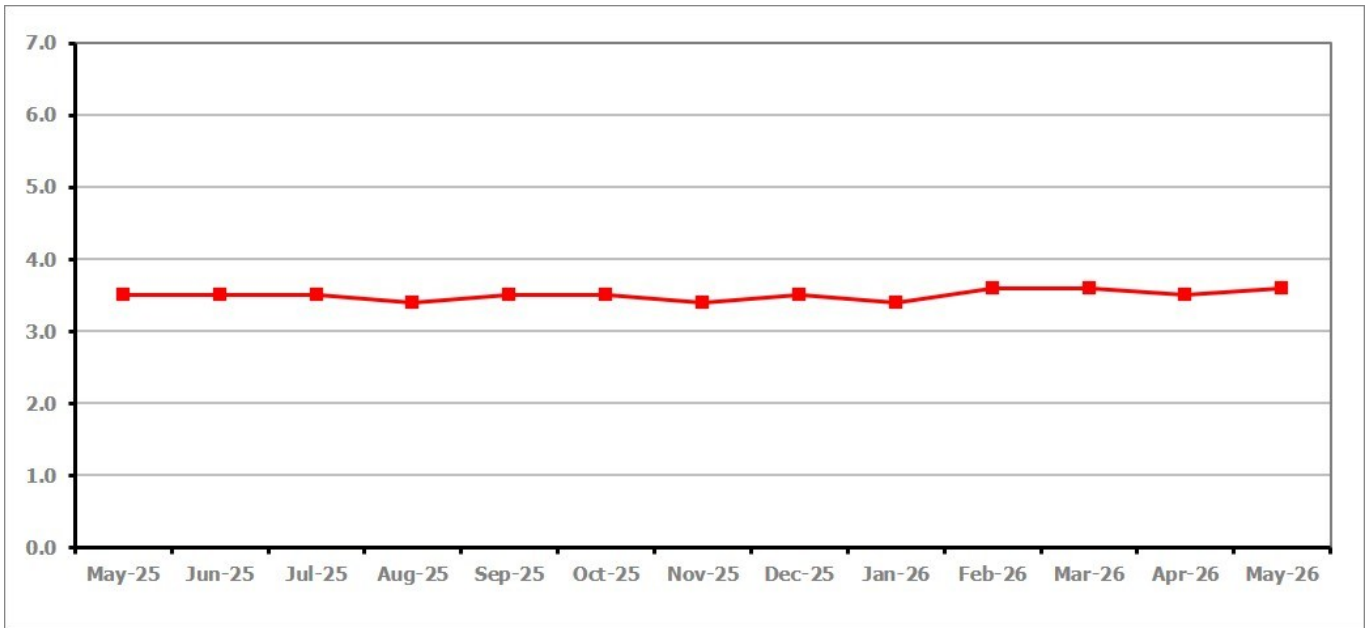


Figure 9 shows the claimant rate for Gloucester City increased to 3.6% in May 2026.

Figure 10: Claimant rates across Gloucester City wards - May 2026

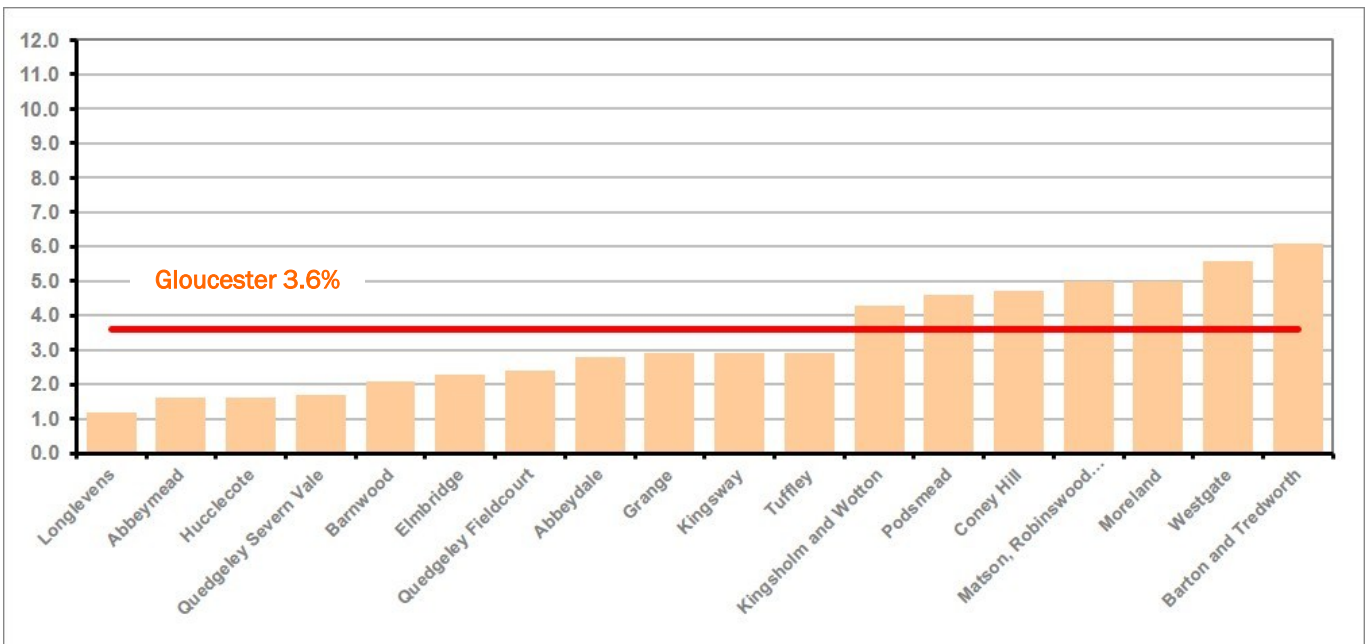


Figure 10 shows the claimant rates for Gloucester City district wards. The red line represents the average claimant rate across the City of 3.6%. Seven wards lie above the average.

PART 4: LOCAL AUTHORITY DISTRICT AND WARD ANALYSIS**4.4 Gloucester City continued...***Table 8: Analysis of Claimant Count at Gloucester City ward level - May 2026*

District	Ward	Rate	Rank*
Gloucester	Longlevens	1.2	9
Gloucester	Abbeymead	1.6	31
Gloucester	Hucclecote	1.6	31
Gloucester	Quedgeley Severn Vale	1.7	38
Gloucester	Barnwood	2.1	63
Gloucester	Elmbridge	2.3	76
Gloucester	Quedgeley Fieldcourt	2.4	81
Gloucester	Abbeydale	2.8	99
Gloucester	Grange	2.9	102
Gloucester	Kingsway	2.9	102
Gloucester	Tuffley	2.9	102
Gloucester	Kingsholm and Wotton	4.3	125
Gloucester	Podsmead	4.6	128
Gloucester	Coney Hill	4.7	129
Gloucester	Matson, Robinswood and White City	5.0	131
Gloucester	Moreland	5.0	131
Gloucester	Westgate	5.6	135
Gloucester	Barton and Tredworth	6.1	138

	lowest 10% of county
	first quartile of county
	second quartile of county
	third quartile of county
	fourth quartile of county
	highest 10% of county

* 1 = "best" and 138 = "worst"

Table 8 shows overall claimant rates for Gloucester City wards and their position relative to all wards in Gloucestershire.

PART 4: LOCAL AUTHORITY DISTRICT AND WARD ANALYSIS

4.5 Stroud District

Claimant Rate and Claimant Count

Figure 11: Stroud District claimant rate over the last year

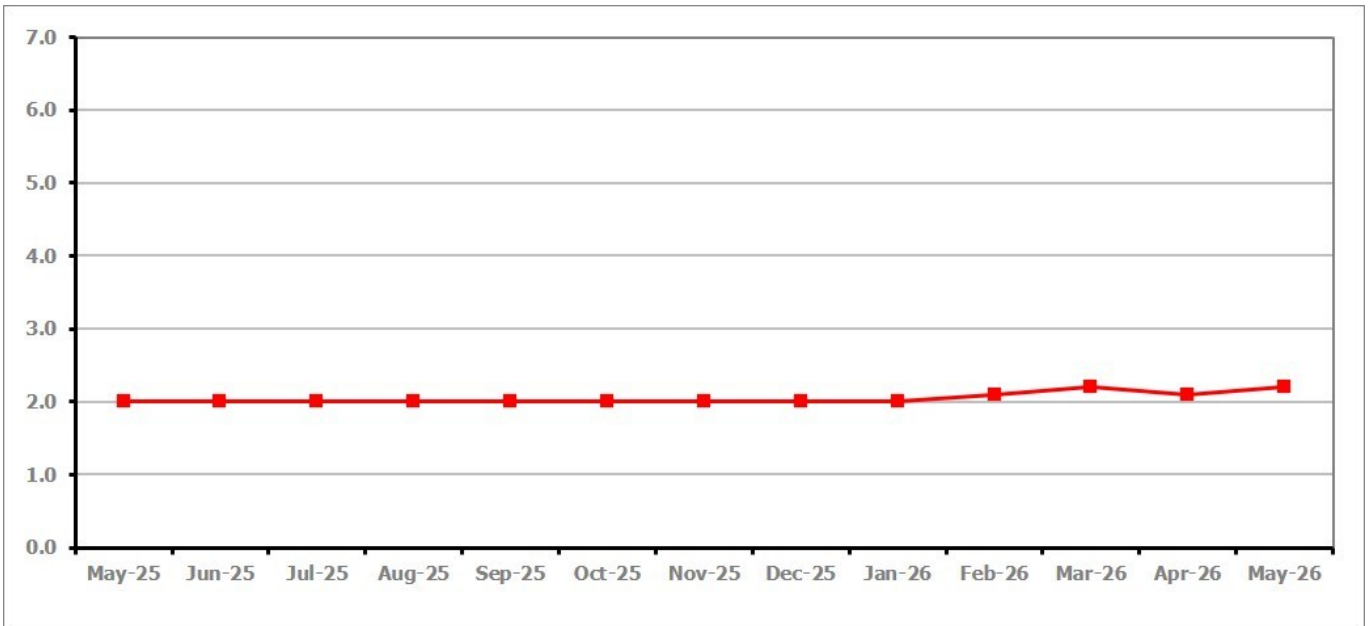


Figure 11 shows the claimant rate for Stroud increased to 2.2% in May 2026.

Figure 12: Claimant rates across Stroud District wards - May 2026

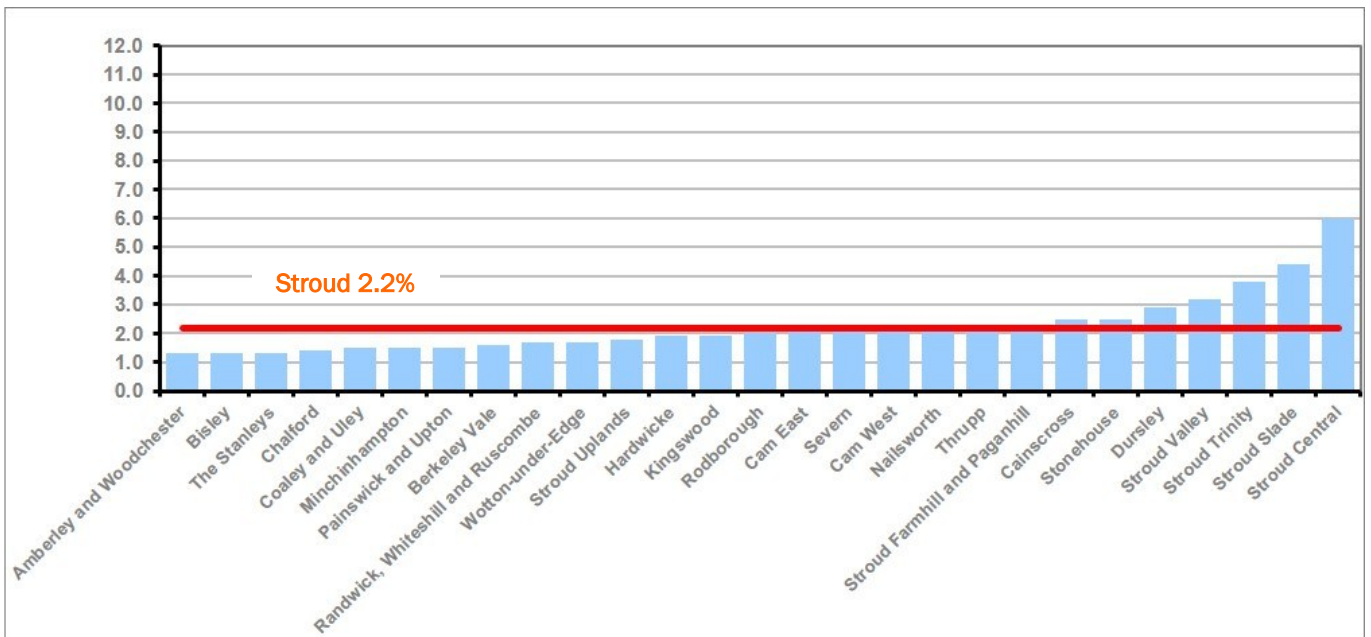


Figure 12 shows the claimant rates in Stroud District wards. The red line represents the average claimant rate across the District of 2.2%. Eight wards are above the average.

PART 4: LOCAL AUTHORITY AND DISTRICT ANALYSIS

4.5 Stroud District continued...

Table 9: Analysis of Claimant Count at Stroud District ward level - May 2026

District	Ward	Rate	Rank*
Stroud	Amberley and Woodchester	1.3	12
Stroud	Bisley	1.3	12
Stroud	The Stanleys	1.3	12
Stroud	Chalford	1.4	16
Stroud	Coaley and Uley	1.5	22
Stroud	Minchinhampton	1.5	22
Stroud	Painswick and Upton	1.5	22
Stroud	Berkeley Vale	1.6	31
Stroud	Randwick, Whiteshill and Ruscombe	1.7	38
Stroud	Wotton-under-Edge	1.7	38
Stroud	Stroud Uplands	1.8	44
Stroud	Hardwicke	1.9	49
Stroud	Kingswood	1.9	49
Stroud	Rodborough	2.0	56
Stroud	Cam East	2.1	63
Stroud	Severn	2.1	63
Stroud	Cam West	2.2	69
Stroud	Nailsworth	2.2	69
Stroud	Thrupp	2.2	69
Stroud	Stroud Farmhill and Paganhill	2.3	76
Stroud	Cainscross	2.5	86
Stroud	Stonehouse	2.5	86
Stroud	Dursley	2.9	102
Stroud	Stroud Valley	3.2	114
Stroud	Stroud Trinity	3.8	121
Stroud	Stroud Slade	4.4	126
Stroud	Stroud Central	6.0	137

	lowest 10% of county
	first quartile of county
	second quartile of county
	third quartile of county
	fourth quartile of county
	highest 10% of county

* 1 = "best" and 138 = "worst"

Table 9 shows overall claimant rates for Stroud District wards and their position relative to all wards in Gloucestershire.

PART 4: LOCAL AUTHORITY DISTRICT AND WARD ANALYSIS

4.6 Tewkesbury Borough

Claimant Rate and Claimant Count

Figure 13: Tewkesbury Borough claimant rate over the last year

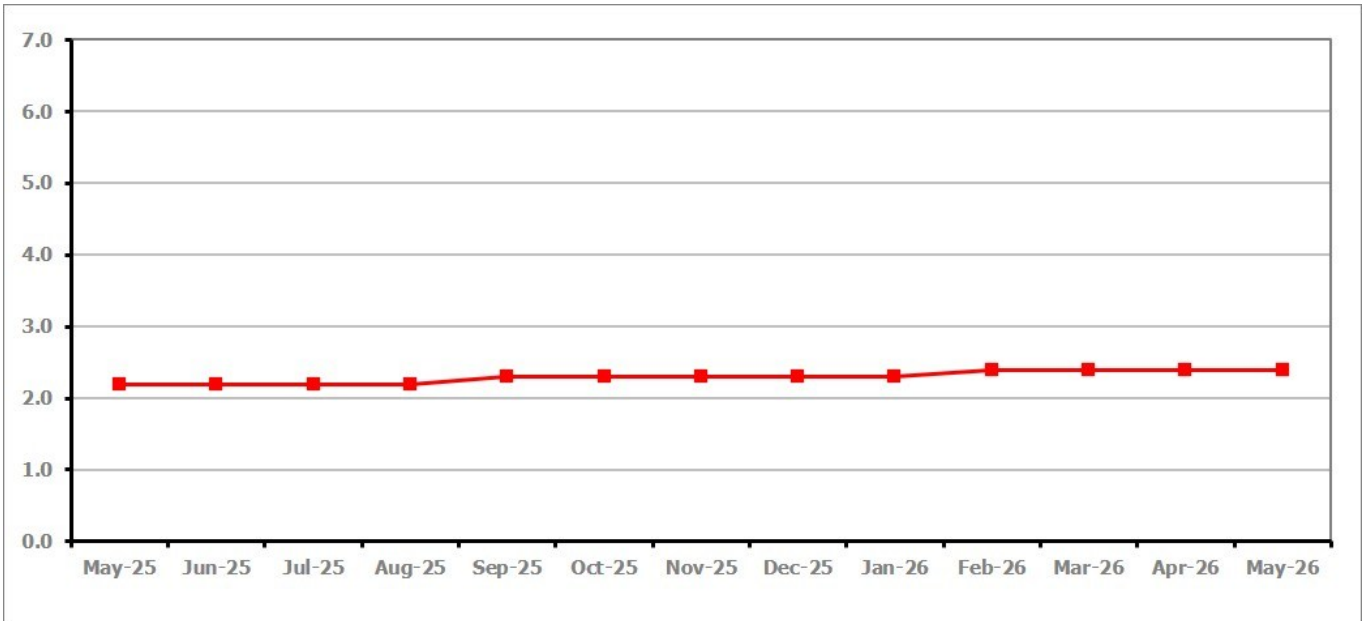


Figure 13 shows the claimant rate for Tewkesbury Borough remained at 2.4% in May 2026.

Figure 14: Claimant rates across Tewkesbury Borough wards - May 2026

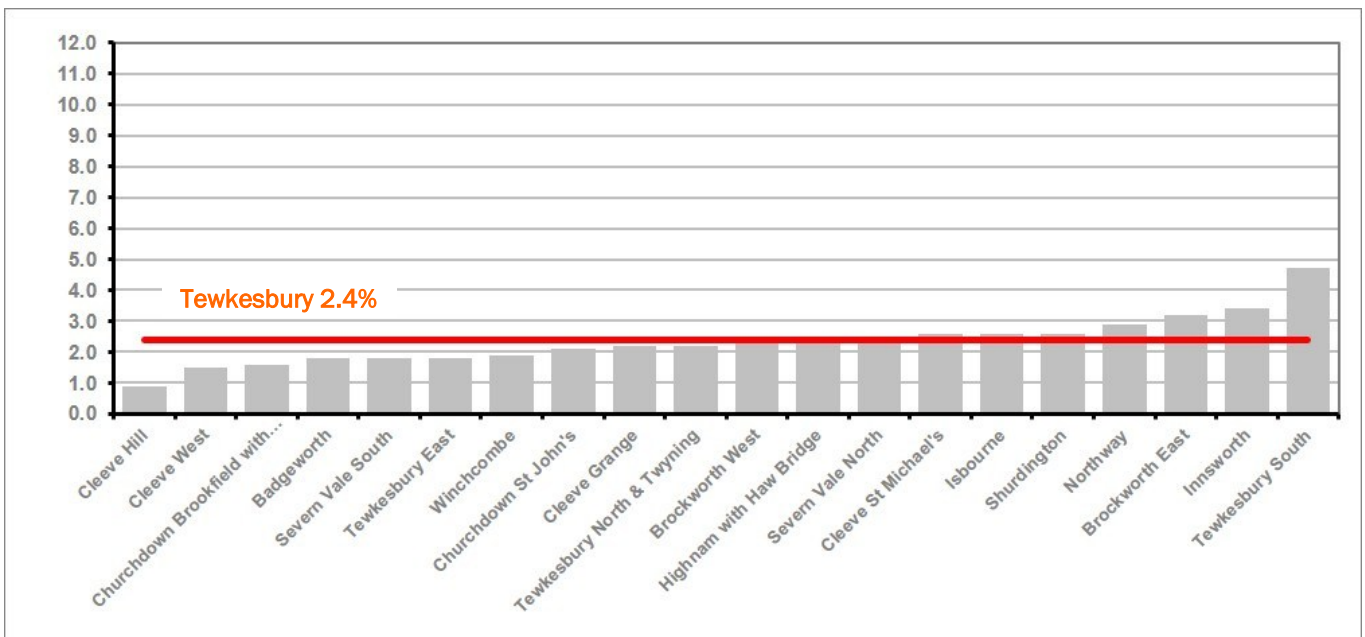


Figure 14 shows the claimant rates in Tewkesbury Borough wards. The red line represents the average claimant rate across the District of 2.4%. Nine wards are above the average.

PART 4: LOCAL AUTHORITY AND DISTRICT ANALYSIS

4.6 Tewkesbury Borough continued...

Table 10: Analysis of Claimant Count at Tewkesbury Borough level - May 2026

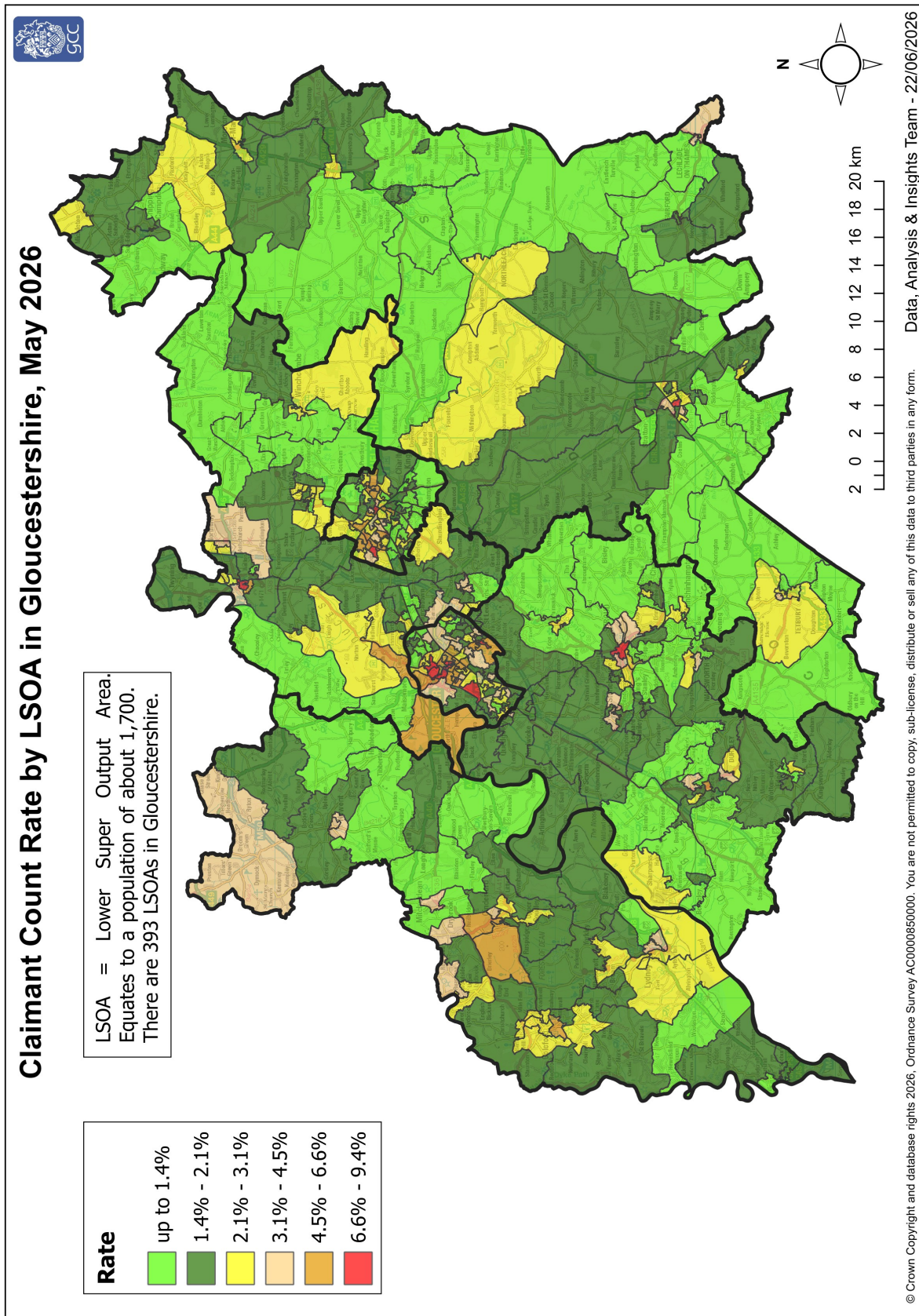
District	Ward	Rate	Rank*
Tewkesbury	Cleeve Hill	0.9	2
Tewkesbury	Cleeve West	1.5	22
Tewkesbury	Churchdown Brookfield with Hucclecote	1.6	31
Tewkesbury	Badgeworth	1.8	44
Tewkesbury	Severn Vale South	1.8	44
Tewkesbury	Tewkesbury East	1.8	44
Tewkesbury	Winchcombe	1.9	49
Tewkesbury	Churchdown St John's	2.1	63
Tewkesbury	Cleeve Grange	2.2	69
Tewkesbury	Tewkesbury North & Twynning	2.2	69
Tewkesbury	Brockworth West	2.3	76
Tewkesbury	Highnam with Haw Bridge	2.5	86
Tewkesbury	Severn Vale North	2.5	86
Tewkesbury	Cleeve St Michael's	2.6	91
Tewkesbury	Isbourne	2.6	91
Tewkesbury	Shurdington	2.6	91
Tewkesbury	Northway	2.9	102
Tewkesbury	Brockworth East	3.2	114
Tewkesbury	Innsworth	3.4	118
Tewkesbury	Tewkesbury South	4.7	129

	lowest 10% of county
	first quartile of county
	second quartile of county
	third quartile of county
	fourth quartile of county
	highest 10% of county

* 1 = "best" and 138 = "worst"

Table 10 shows overall claimant rates for Tewkesbury Borough wards and their position relative to all wards in Gloucestershire.

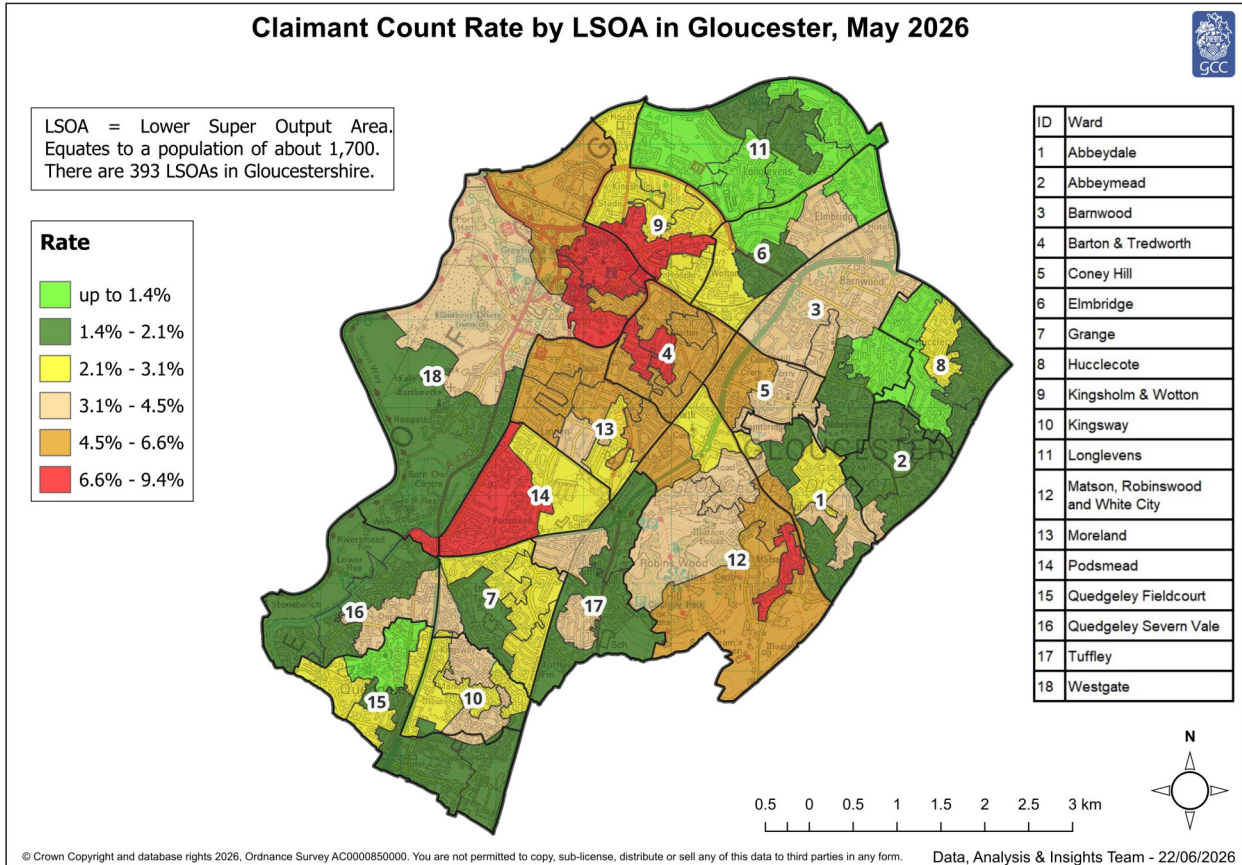
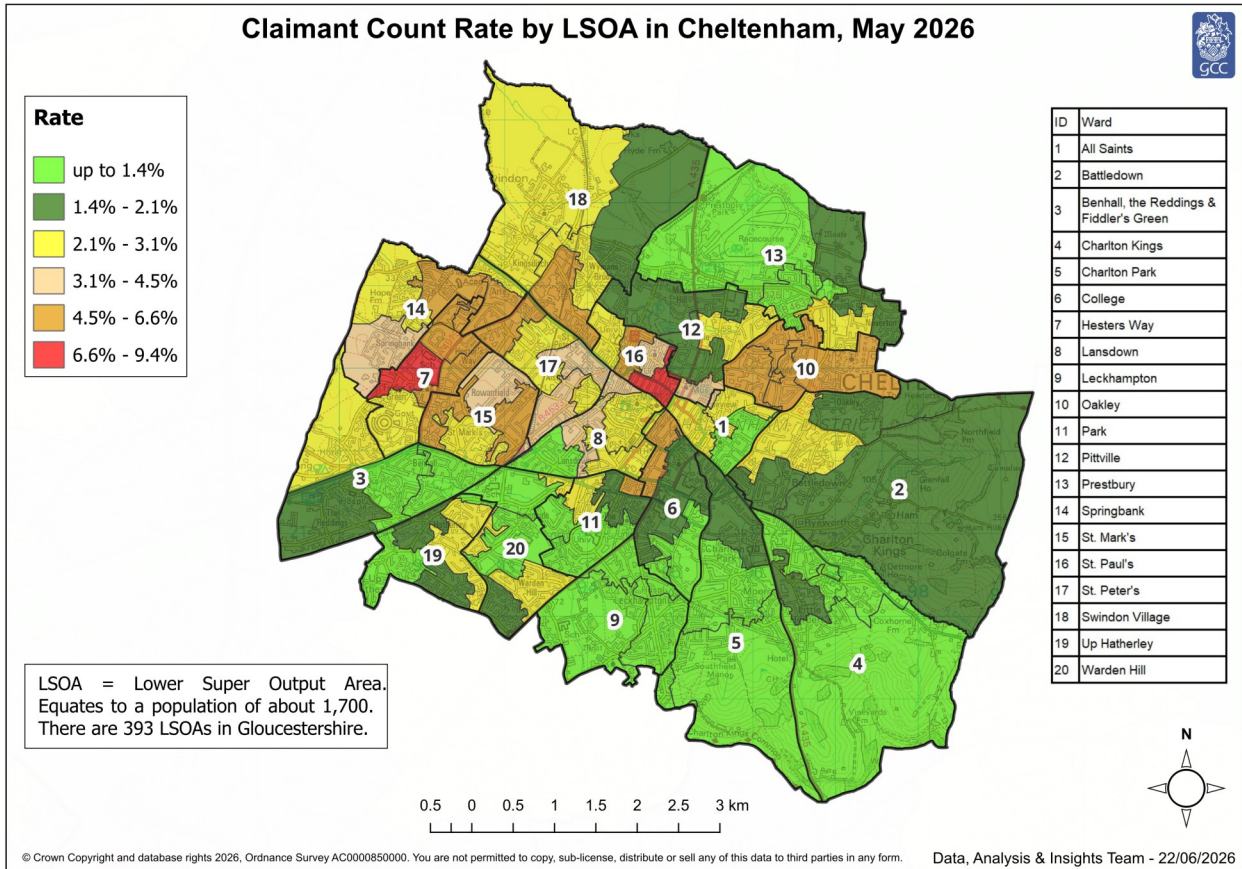
PART 5: MAP SHOWING DISTRIBUTION OF CLAIMANT RATE ACROSS GLOUCESTERSHIRE



From January 2026, these maps show the 2021 LSOA boundaries. Rate category ranges have been reset in January 2026, and will remain fixed for subsequent months to allow month on month claimant count rate comparisons.

Rates calculated by applying Lower Layer Super Output Area Population Estimates Mid-2024, Office for National Statistics

PART 5: MAP SHOWING DISTRIBUTION OF CLAIMANT RATE ACROSS GLOUCESTERSHIRE



From January 2026, these maps show the 2021 LSOA boundaries. Rate category ranges have been reset in January 2026, and will remain fixed for subsequent months to allow month on month claimant count rate comparisons.

Rates calculated by applying Lower Layer Super Output Area Population Estimates Mid-2024, Office for National Statistics

PART 6: YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT(18-24 year olds)

Youth Claimant Rate and Claimant Count

Figure 15: Claimant Count for Gloucestershire over the past year

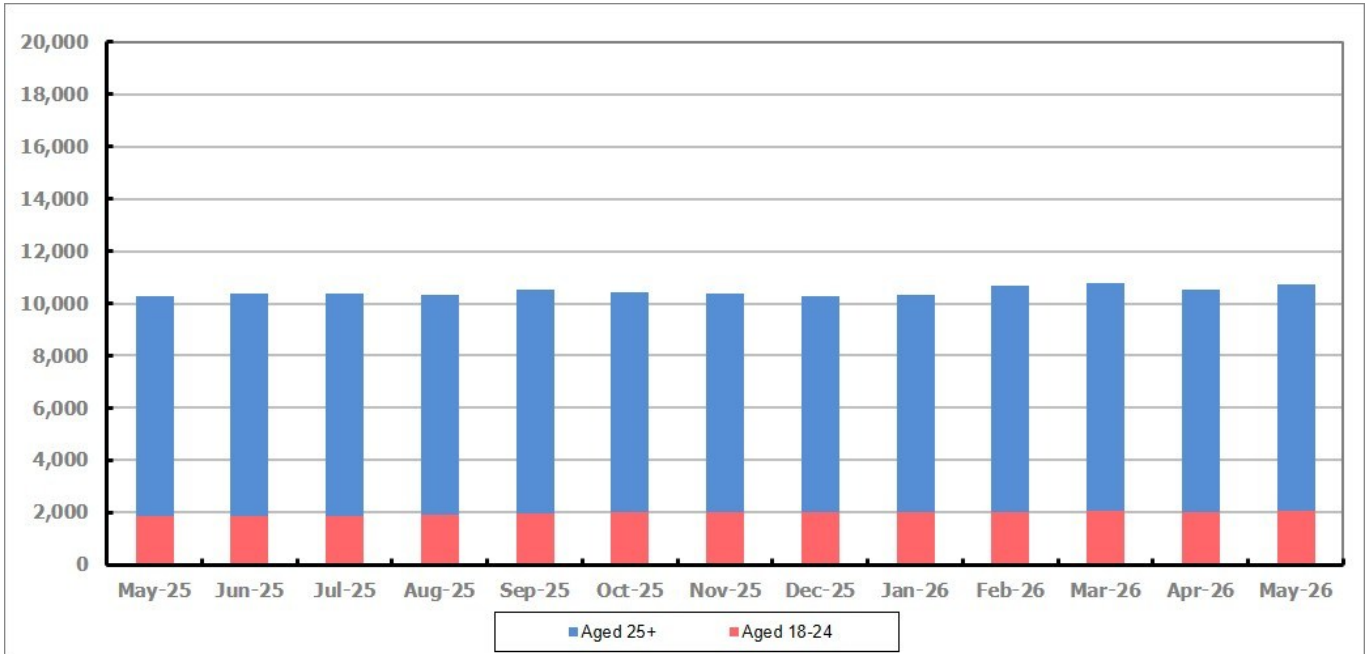


Figure 15 shows that in May 2026, 2,045 people aged 18-24 were claiming Job Seekers Allowance and Universal Credit who were not in work in Gloucestershire, this represents 19.0% of total working age claimants.

PART 7: YOUNG PEOPLE NOT IN EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT OR TRAINING (NEET) IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Data provided by Gloucestershire Youth Support Team on the situation of young people (16-18) in Gloucestershire who are not in education, employment or formal training.

Gloucestershire Youth Support Team is required to report performance on the Academic Year 12 and 13 (16/17 age) against nationally defined criteria for counting the NEET group to the Department for Education (DfE) on a monthly basis. The NEET group includes young people actively seeking education, employment or training as well as those young people who are either not yet ready or who are unable to access these opportunities because of their personal circumstances. The figures quoted below include young people in both of these categories.

(End of) May 2026

Academic Year 12-13 Summary

	NEET	Cohort	%
Cheltenham	79	2537	3.11%
Cotswold	50	1797	2.78%
Forest	64	1779	3.60%
Gloucester	205	3704	5.53%
Stroud	73	2892	2.52%
Tewkesbury	73	2272	3.21%
Total	544	14981	3.63%

16-18 Age Summary

	NEET	Cohort	%
Cheltenham	94	2854	3.29%
Cotswold	55	2031	2.71%
Forest	73	2024	3.61%
Gloucester	238	4206	5.66%
Stroud	84	3241	2.59%
Tewkesbury	80	2540	3.15%
Total	624	16896	3.69%

16-18 Adjust NEET*	3.84%
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Monthly Change **	1	3	0.01%
Previous Month	543	14978	3.63%

Monthly Change **	-43	-613	-0.12%
Previous Month	667	17509	3.81%

The academic year 12-13 group contains a proportion of young people who turn 18 in the academic year but were 17 on the 31st August the previous academic year so are entitled to learning through RPA (raising participation age).

Please note all figures quoted above are subject to change before the submission date to the DfE which usually happens in the second or third week of the month for the previous month.

If you would like to receive any further information on Gloucestershire's NEET strategy, then please contact lynne.speak@gloucestershire.gov.uk.

(*) Adjustment includes a proportion of young people aged 16-18 whose outcomes are not-known to Gloucestershire Youth Support Team.

(**) Change in monthly rate.