

Unemployment Bulletin

Issue 210 January 2026

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Note on claimant count rates:

In Feb-26, ONS updated ward, local authority, regional and national population estimates, used to calculate rates, to the most recent 2024 mid year estimates. This change has been back dated to the whole time series presented in this edition of the unemployment bulletin and in those going forward.

Produced by:

Data, Analysis & Insights Team
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Gloucestershire County Council
February 2026

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 2.6% in January 2026. The South West rate increased to 2.8%, whilst the UK rate increased to 3.8%. Gloucestershire's rate was 0.2% lower than the South West average of 2.8%, and 1.2% lower than the UK average of 3.8%.

The claimant count in Gloucestershire in January 2026 increased by 255 people. The amount of people claiming in January was 2.5% higher than the number in December. This compares to a 3.6% increase in the South West and a 2.5% increase in the UK.

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 January 2026

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

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

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

CHELTENHAM BOROUGH

Claimant count:	2,010
Claimant count change on previous month:	1.0%
Claimant rate:	2.6%
Highest claiming ward(s)	Hesters Way (5.6%)

GLOUCESTER CITY

Claimant count:	3,135
Claimant count change on previous month:	1.3%
Claimant rate:	3.5%
Highest claiming ward(s)	Westgate (5.6%)

COTSWOLD DISTRICT

Claimant count:	1,060
Claimant count change on previous month:	6.5%
Claimant rate:	2.0%
Highest claiming ward(s)	Watermoor (3.8%)

STROUD DISTRICT

Claimant count:	1,555
Claimant count change on previous month:	4.0%
Claimant rate:	2.1%
Highest claiming ward(s)	Stroud Central (4.3%)

FOREST OF DEAN

Claimant count:	1,365
Claimant count change on previous month:	2.6%
Claimant rate:	2.6%
Highest claiming ward(s)	Cinderford West (5.1%)

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH

Claimant count:	1,435
Claimant count change on previous month:	2.9%
Claimant rate:	2.4%
Highest claiming ward(s)	Tewkesbury South (4.5%)

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

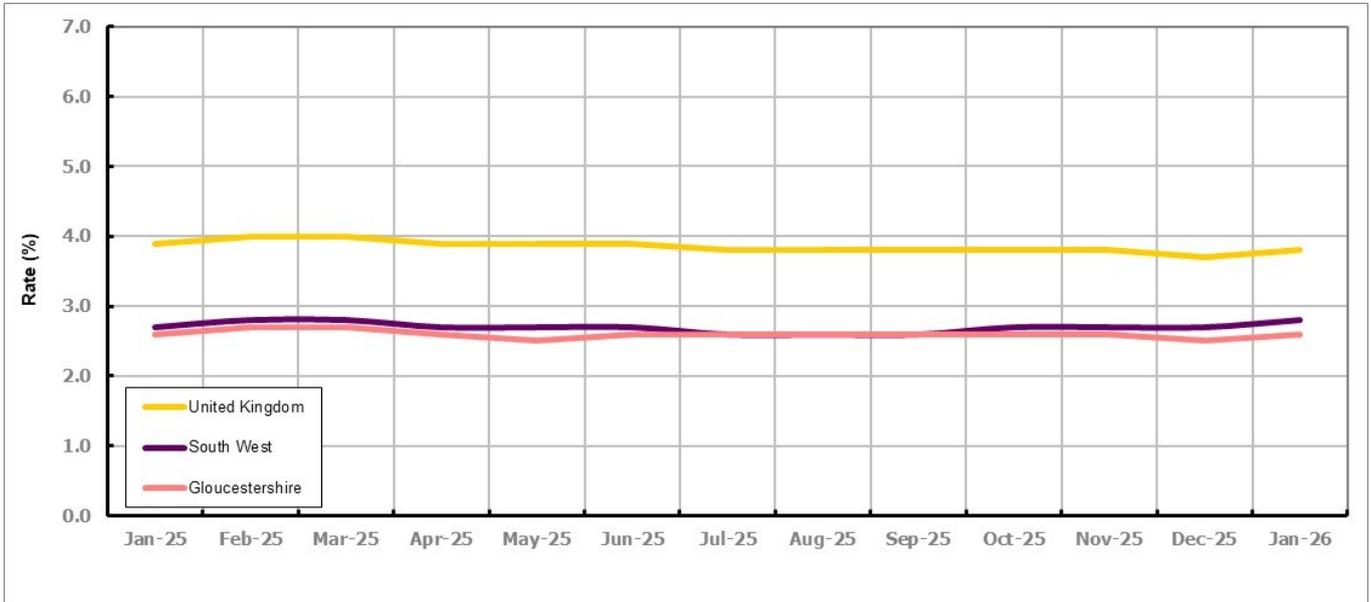


Figure 1 shows the claimant rate for Gloucestershire at 2.6% in January 2026. The Gloucestershire rate has been lower than the South West average since October 2025. On average, it has been approximately 1.3% lower than the UK average since the same month of the previous year.

Claimant Count

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

Area	Claimant Count in January 2026	% change on December 2025	Consecutive months increasing
UK	1,666,985	2.5%	0
South West	98,765	3.6%	4
Gloucestershire	10,555	2.5%	0

Table 1 shows that in January 2026, the number of claimants in Gloucestershire was 2.5% higher than the number in December 2025.

PART 3: LOCAL AUTHORITY DISTRICT ANALYSIS

Claimant Rate and Claimant Count

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

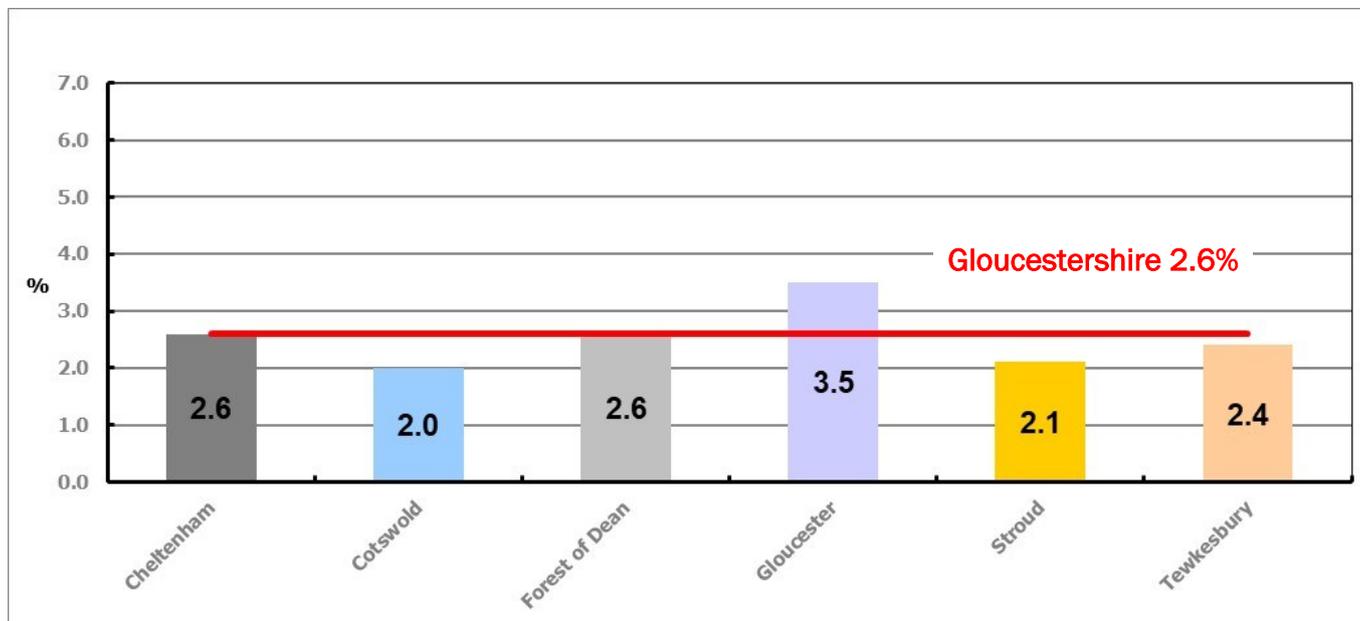


Figure 2 shows the claimant rate for January 2026 in Gloucestershire. Between December 2025 and January 2026 the rate increased in all districts, except Cheltenham and Gloucester which were unchanged.

Table 2: Analysis of Gloucestershire and District Claimant Counts

Total	Jan 26 Number	Jan 26 Rate	Dec 25 Number	Dec 25 Rate	Monthly change	% monthly change	Monthly change of rate
Gloucestershire	10,555	2.6	10,300	2.5	255	2.5%	0.1
Cheltenham	2,010	2.6	1,990	2.6	20	1.0%	0.0
Cotswold	1,060	2.0	995	1.9	65	6.5%	0.1
Forest of Dean	1,365	2.6	1,330	2.5	35	2.6%	0.1
Gloucester	3,135	3.5	3,095	3.5	40	1.3%	0.0
Stroud	1,555	2.1	1,495	2.0	60	4.0%	0.1
Tewkesbury	1,435	2.4	1,395	2.3	40	2.9%	0.1

Table 2 shows the change in the claimant count in January 2026 compared to December 2025. All districts saw an increase in the number of claimants.

Table 3: Analysis of Male Gloucestershire and District Claimant Counts

Male	Jan 26 Number	Jan 26 Rate	Dec 25 Number	Dec 25 Rate	Monthly change	% monthly change	Monthly change of rate
Gloucestershire	5,870	3.0	5,725	2.9	145	2.5%	0.1
Cheltenham	1,170	3.1	1,145	3.0	25	2.2%	0.1
Cotswold	550	2.2	505	2.0	45	8.9%	0.2
Forest of Dean	730	2.8	730	2.8	0	0.0%	0.0
Gloucester	1,835	4.1	1,810	4.1	25	1.4%	0.0
Stroud	805	2.2	780	2.1	25	3.2%	0.1
Tewkesbury	780	2.7	750	2.6	30	4.0%	0.1

Table 3 shows the change in the male claimant count in January 2026 compared to December 2025. All districts saw an increase in the number of male claimants, except Forest of Dean which saw no change.

Table 4: Analysis of Female Gloucestershire and District Claimant Counts

Female	Jan 26 Number	Jan 26 Rate	Dec 25 Number	Dec 25 Rate	Monthly change	% monthly change	Monthly change of rate
Gloucestershire	4,680	2.3	4,575	2.2	105	2.3%	0.1
Cheltenham	835	2.2	845	2.2	-10	-1.2%	0.0
Cotswold	510	1.9	490	1.8	20	4.1%	0.1
Forest of Dean	635	2.4	595	2.2	40	6.7%	0.2
Gloucester	1,300	2.9	1,280	2.9	20	1.6%	0.0
Stroud	750	2.0	715	1.9	35	4.9%	0.1
Tewkesbury	655	2.1	650	2.1	5	0.8%	0.0

Table 4 shows the change in the female claimant count in January 2026 compared to December 2025. All districts saw an increase in the number of female claimants except Cheltenham which saw a decrease.

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

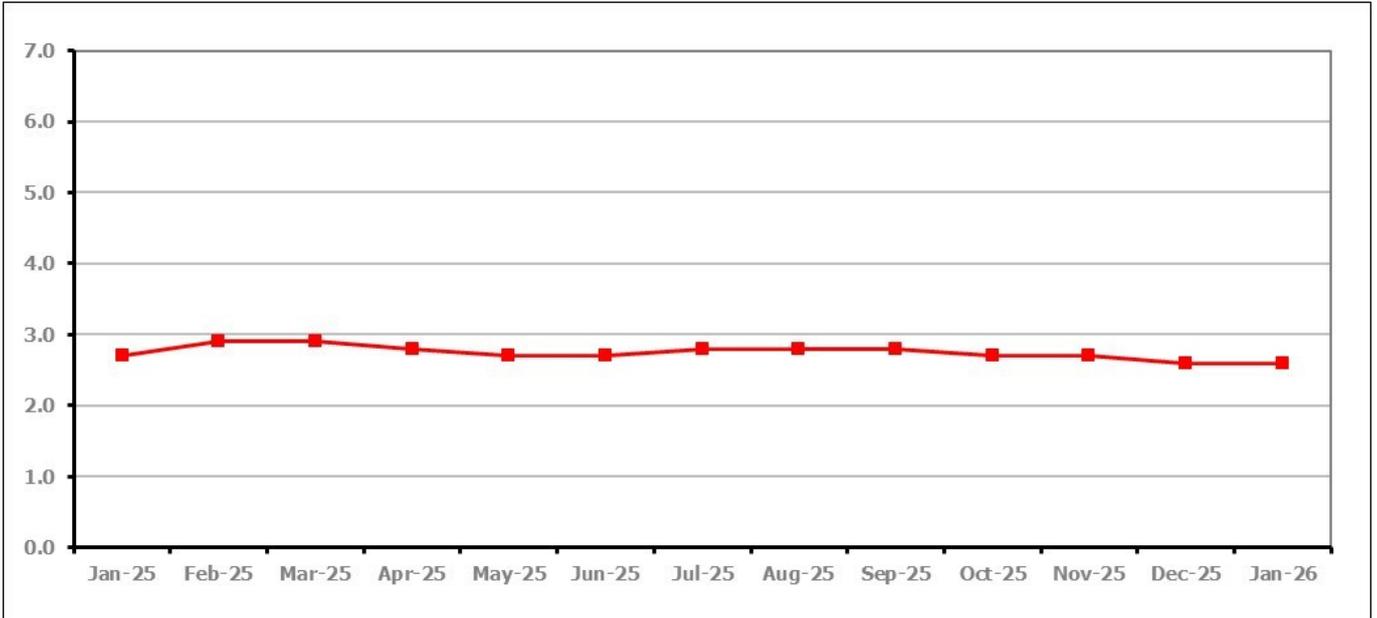


Figure 3 shows the claimant rate in Cheltenham remained at 2.6% in January 2026.

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

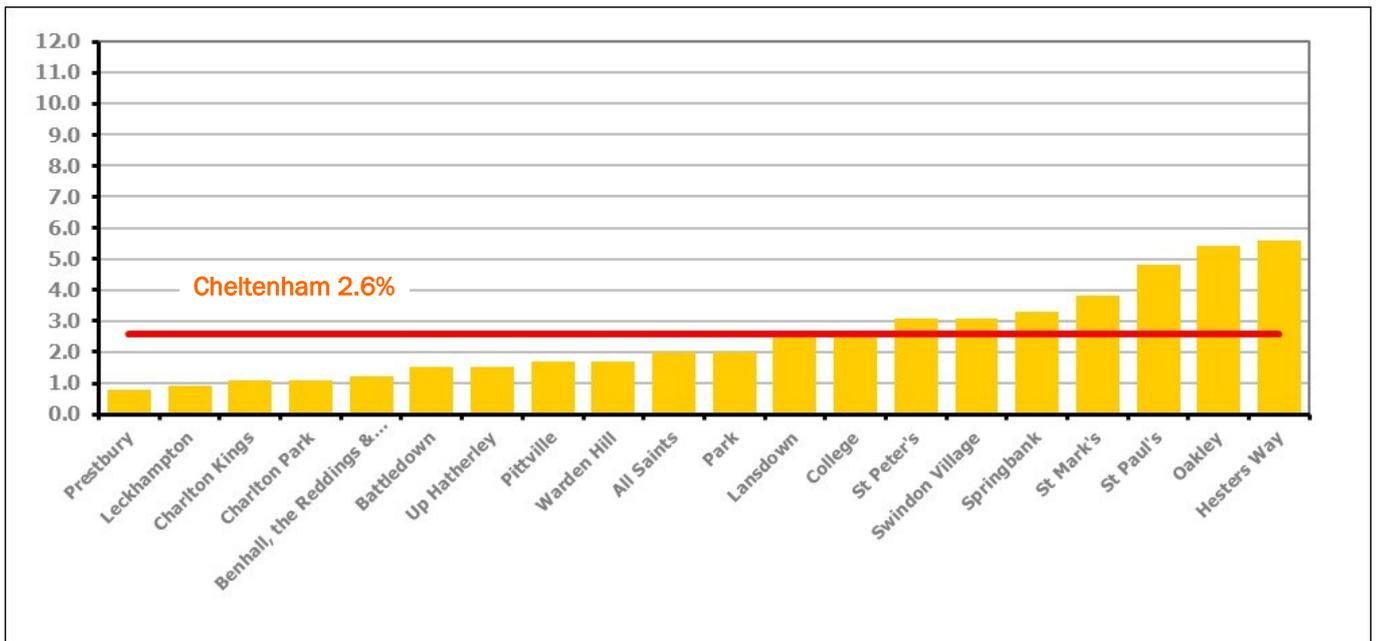


Figure 4 shows the claimant rates for Cheltenham Borough wards. The red line represents the average claimant rate across the Borough of 2.6%. Seven wards lie above the average.

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

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

District	Ward	Rate	Rank*
Cheltenham	Prestbury	0.8	2
Cheltenham	Leckhampton	0.9	5
Cheltenham	Charlton Kings	1.1	9
Cheltenham	Charlton Park	1.1	9
Cheltenham	Benhall, the Reddings & Fiddler's Green	1.2	14
Cheltenham	Battledown	1.5	27
Cheltenham	Up Hatherley	1.5	27
Cheltenham	Pittville	1.7	36
Cheltenham	Warden Hill	1.7	36
Cheltenham	All Saints	2.0	54
Cheltenham	Park	2.0	54
Cheltenham	Lansdown	2.5	90
Cheltenham	College	2.6	93
Cheltenham	St Peter's	3.1	110
Cheltenham	Swindon Village	3.1	110
Cheltenham	Springbank	3.3	117
Cheltenham	St Mark's	3.8	122
Cheltenham	St Paul's	4.8	130
Cheltenham	Oakley	5.4	135
Cheltenham	Hesters Way	5.6	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

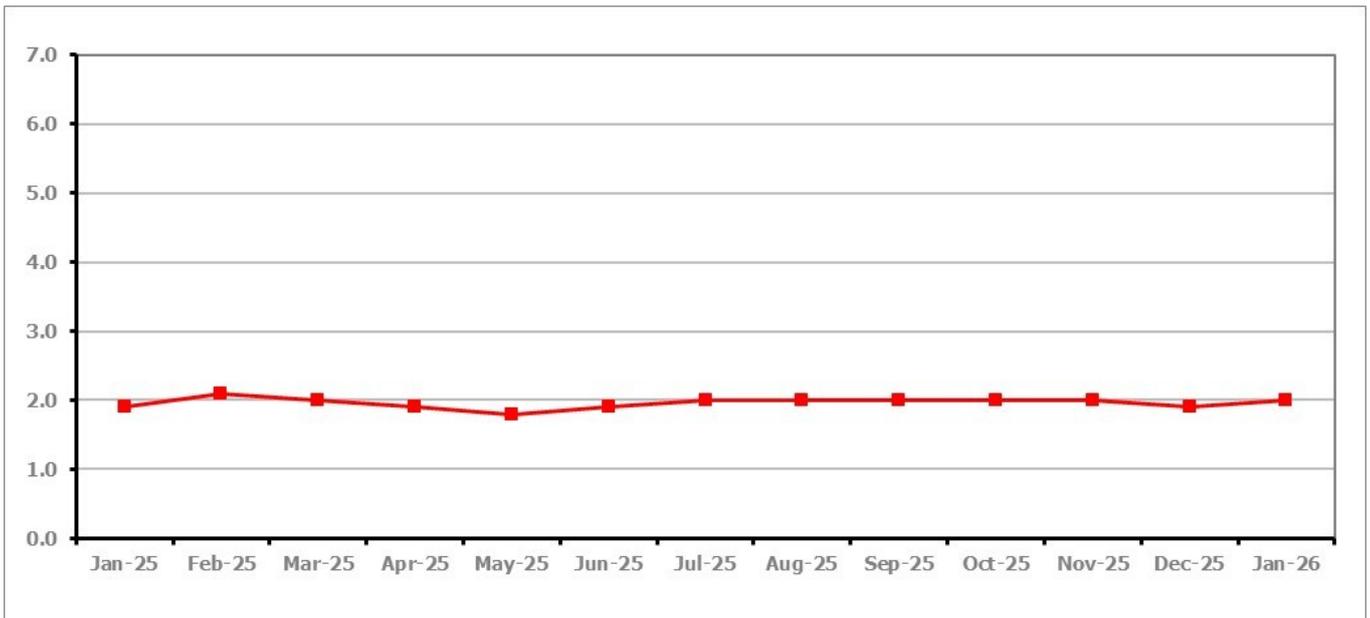


Figure 5 shows the claimant rate in Cotswold District increased to 2.0% in January 2026.

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

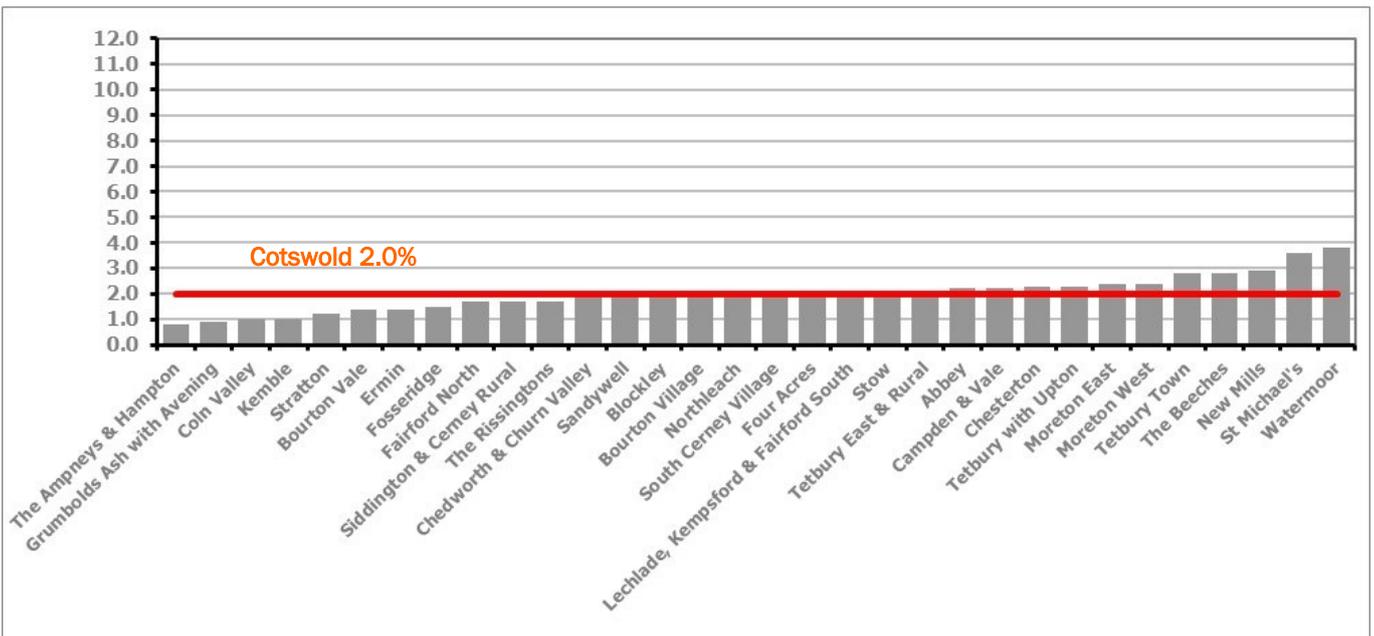


Figure 6 shows the claimant rates for Cotswold District wards. The red line represents the average claimant rate across the District of 2.0%. Fifteen wards lie above the average.

PART 4: LOCAL AUTHORITY DISTRICT AND WARD ANALYSIS

4.2 Cotswold District continued...

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

District	Ward	Rate	Rank*
Cotswold	The Ampneys & Hampton	0.8	2
Cotswold	Grumbolds Ash with Avening	0.9	5
Cotswold	Coln Valley	1.0	7
Cotswold	Kemble	1.0	7
Cotswold	Stratton	1.2	14
Cotswold	Bourton Vale	1.4	22
Cotswold	Ermin	1.4	22
Cotswold	Fosseridge	1.5	27
Cotswold	Fairford North	1.7	36
Cotswold	Siddington & Cerney Rural	1.7	36
Cotswold	The Rissingtons	1.7	36
Cotswold	Chedworth & Churn Valley	1.9	48
Cotswold	Sandywell	1.9	48
Cotswold	Blockley	2.0	54
Cotswold	Bourton Village	2.0	54
Cotswold	Northleach	2.0	54
Cotswold	South Cerney Village	2.0	54
Cotswold	Four Acres	2.1	61
Cotswold	Lechlade, Kempford & Fairford South	2.1	61
Cotswold	Stow	2.1	61
Cotswold	Tetbury East & Rural	2.1	61
Cotswold	Abbey	2.2	71
Cotswold	Campden & Vale	2.2	71
Cotswold	Chesterton	2.3	77
Cotswold	Tetbury with Upton	2.3	77
Cotswold	Moreton East	2.4	84
Cotswold	Moreton West	2.4	84
Cotswold	Tetbury Town	2.8	96
Cotswold	The Beeches	2.8	96
Cotswold	New Mills	2.9	102
Cotswold	St Michael's	3.6	121
Cotswold	Watermoor	3.8	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

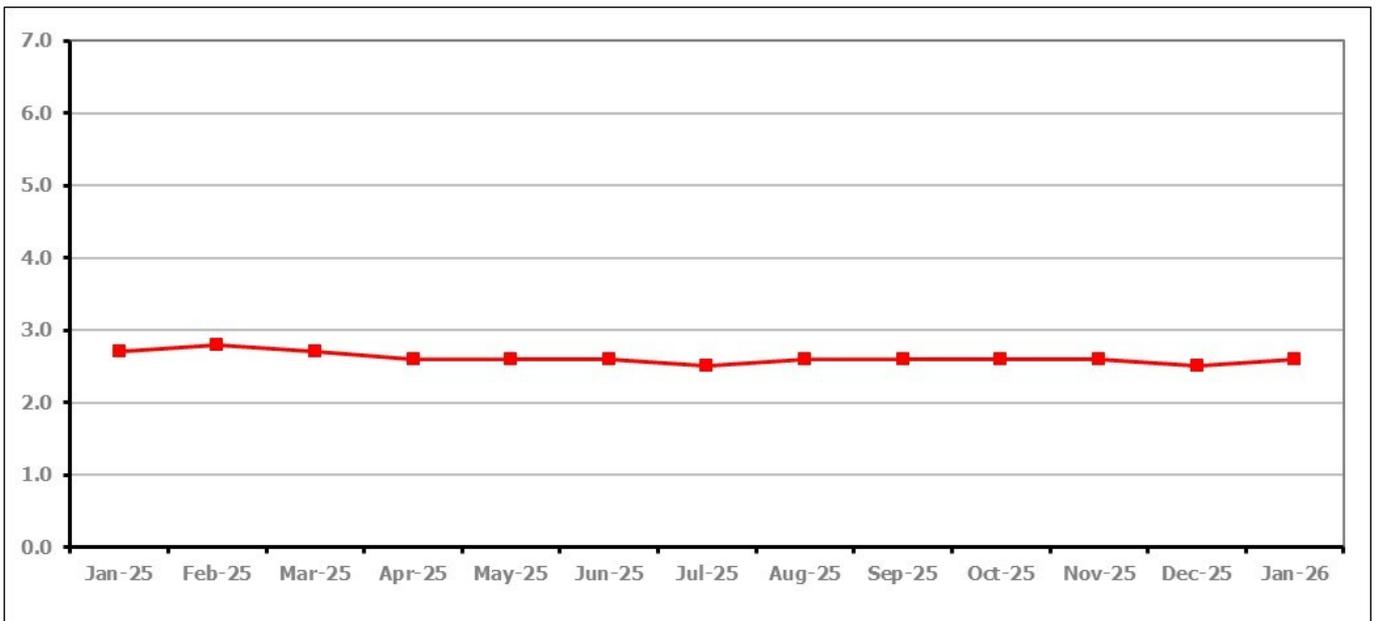


Figure 7 shows the claimant rate in the Forest of Dean increased to 2.6% in January 2026.

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

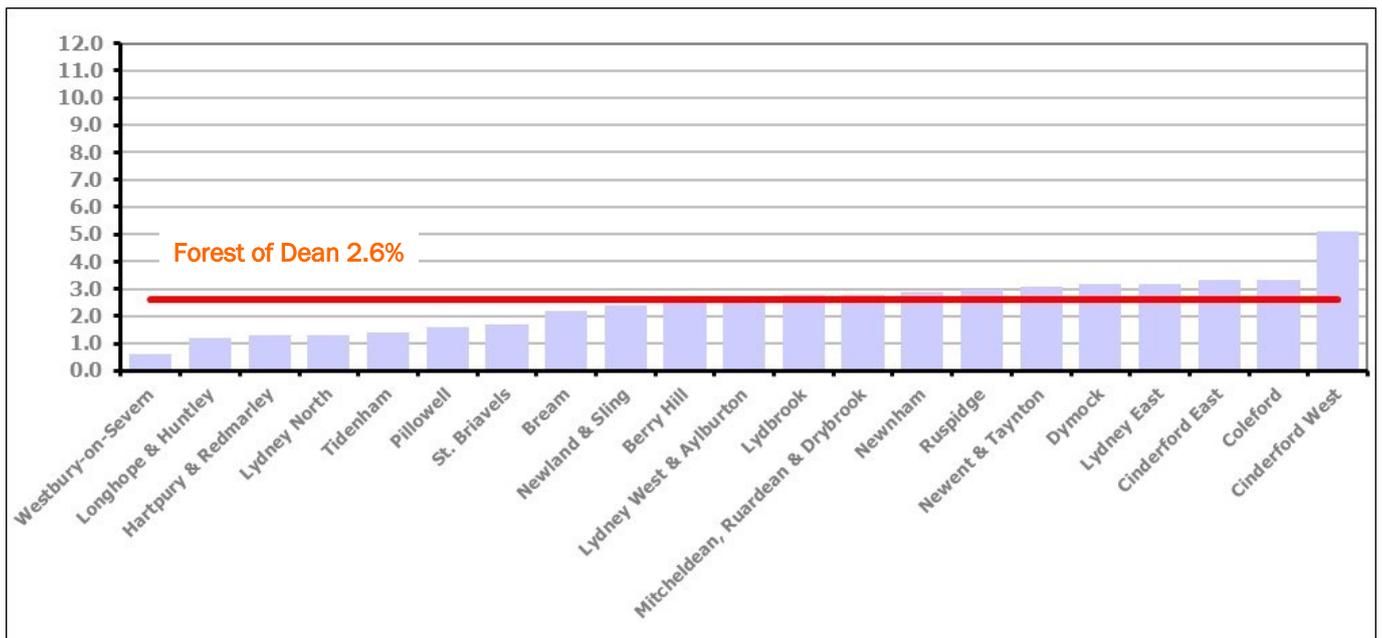


Figure 8 shows the claimant rates for the Forest of Dean District wards. The red line represents the average claimant rate across the District of 2.6%. Ten wards lie above the average.

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 - January 2026*

District	Ward	Rate	Rank*
Forest	Westbury-on-Severn	0.6	1
Forest	Longhope & Huntley	1.2	14
Forest	Hartpury & Redmarley	1.3	18
Forest	Lydney North	1.3	18
Forest	Tidenham	1.4	22
Forest	Pillowell	1.6	33
Forest	St. Briavels	1.7	36
Forest	Bream	2.2	71
Forest	Newland & Sling	2.4	84
Forest	Berry Hill	2.5	90
Forest	Lydney West & Aylburton	2.6	93
Forest	Lydbrook	2.8	96
Forest	Mitcheldean, Ruardean & Drybrook	2.8	96
Forest	Newnham	2.9	102
Forest	Ruspidge	3.0	107
Forest	Newent & Taynton	3.1	110
Forest	Dymock	3.2	113
Forest	Lydney East	3.2	113
Forest	Cinderford East	3.3	117
Forest	Coleford	3.3	117
Forest	Cinderford West	5.1	134

	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

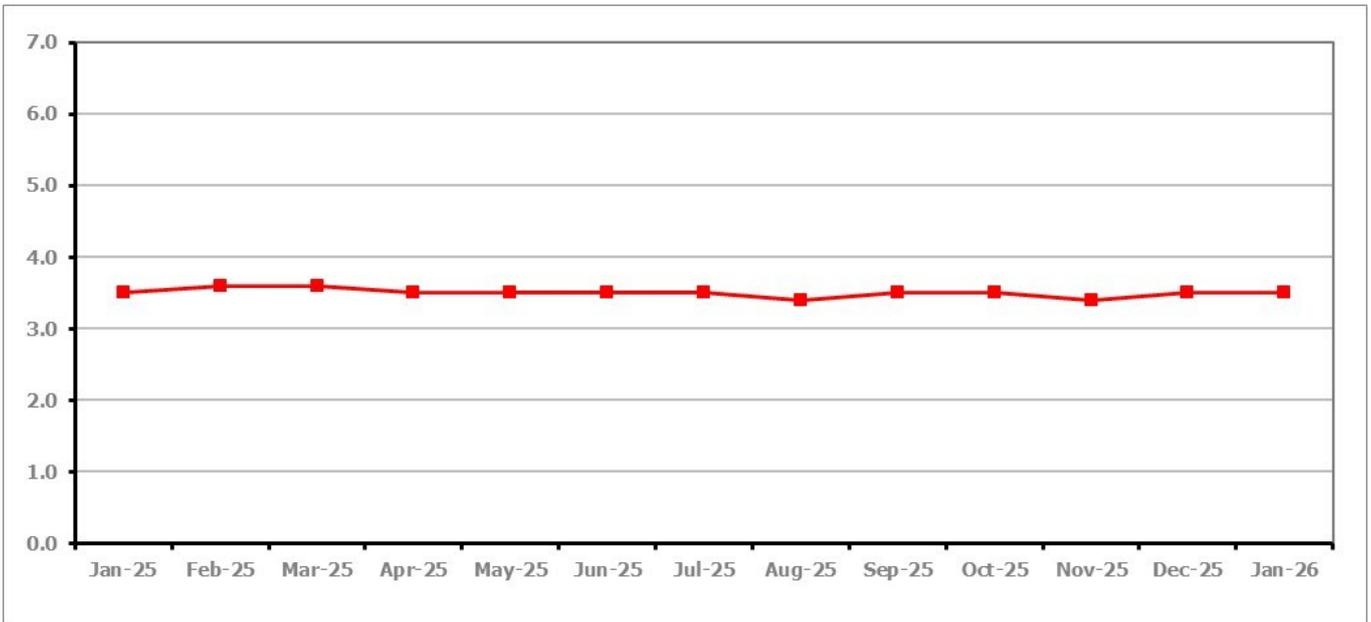


Figure 9 shows the claimant rate for Gloucester City remained at 3.5% in January 2026.

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

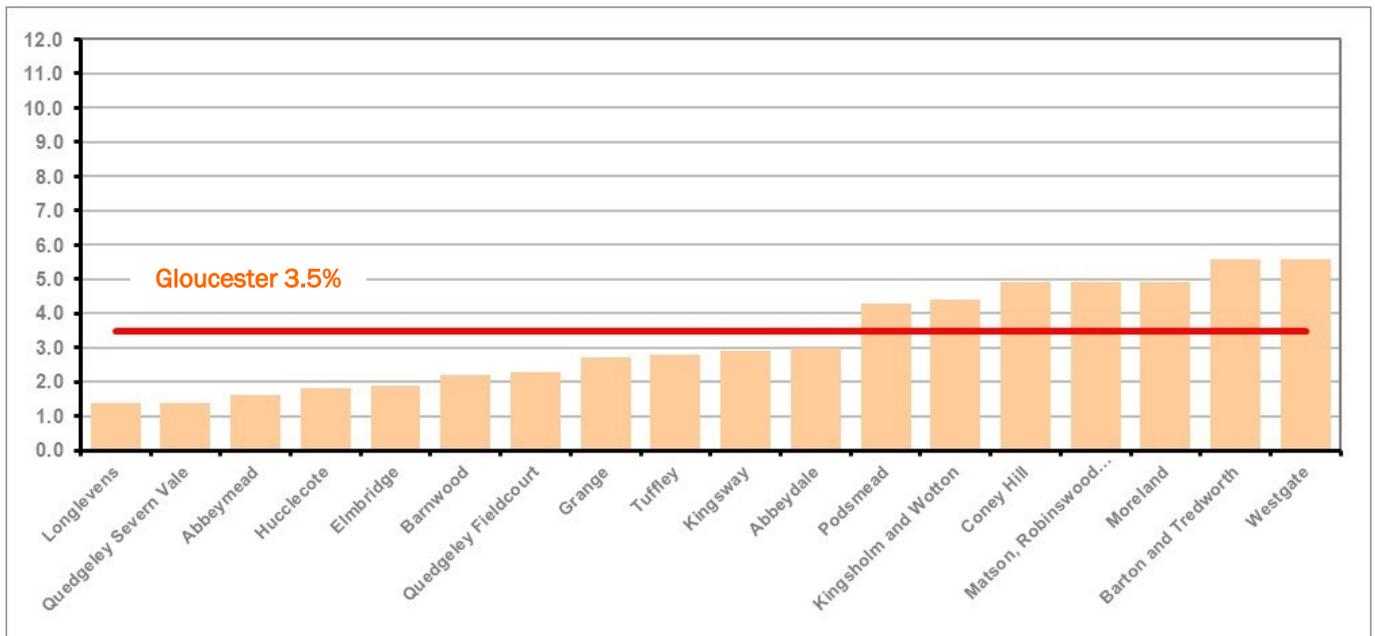


Figure 10 shows the claimant rates for Gloucester City district wards. The red line represents the average claimant rate across the City of 3.5%. Seven wards lie above the average.

PART 4: LOCAL AUTHORITY DISTRICT AND WARD ANALYSIS

4.4 Gloucester City continued...

Table 8: Analysis of Claimant Count at Gloucester City ward level - January 2026

District	Ward	Rate	Rank*
Gloucester	Longlevens	1.4	22
Gloucester	Quedgeley Severn Vale	1.4	22
Gloucester	Abbeymead	1.6	33
Gloucester	Hucclecote	1.8	43
Gloucester	Elmbridge	1.9	48
Gloucester	Barnwood	2.2	71
Gloucester	Quedgeley Fieldcourt	2.3	77
Gloucester	Grange	2.7	95
Gloucester	Tuffley	2.8	96
Gloucester	Kingsway	2.9	102
Gloucester	Abbeydale	3.0	107
Gloucester	Podsmead	4.3	126
Gloucester	Kingsholm and Wotton	4.4	128
Gloucester	Coney Hill	4.9	131
Gloucester	Matson, Robinswood and White City	4.9	131
Gloucester	Moreland	4.9	131
Gloucester	Barton and Tredworth	5.6	136
Gloucester	Westgate	5.6	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 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

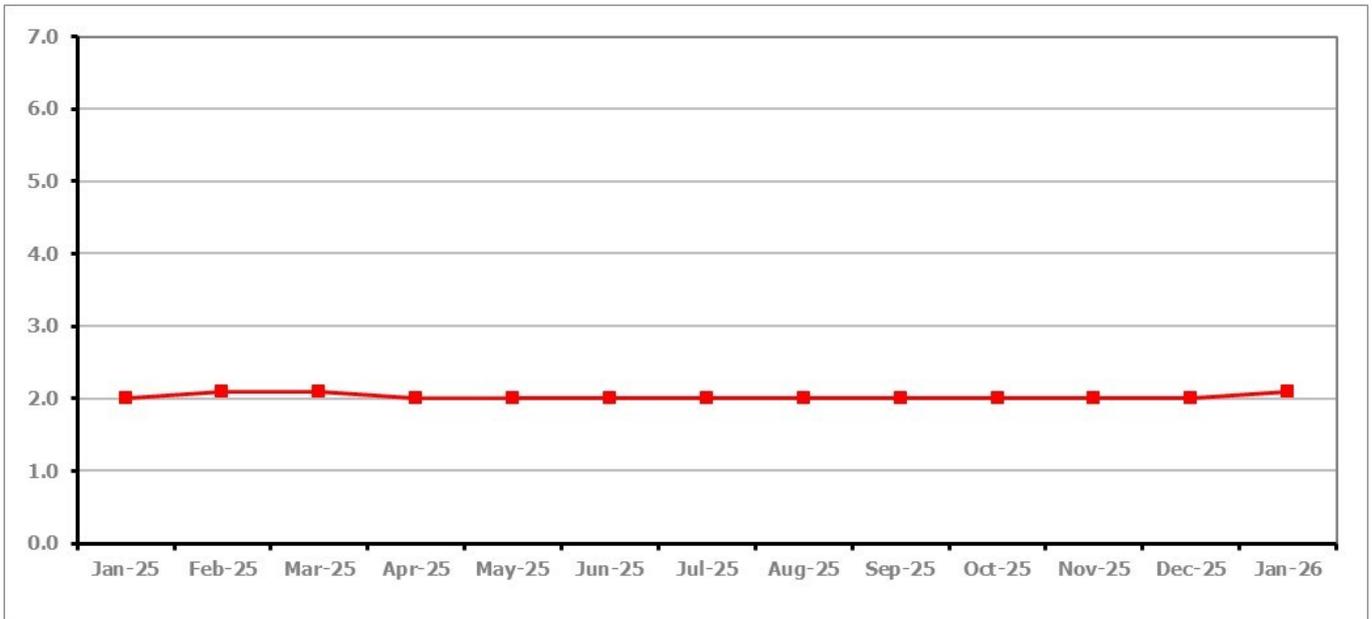


Figure 11 shows the claimant rate for Stroud increased to 2.1% in January 2026.

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

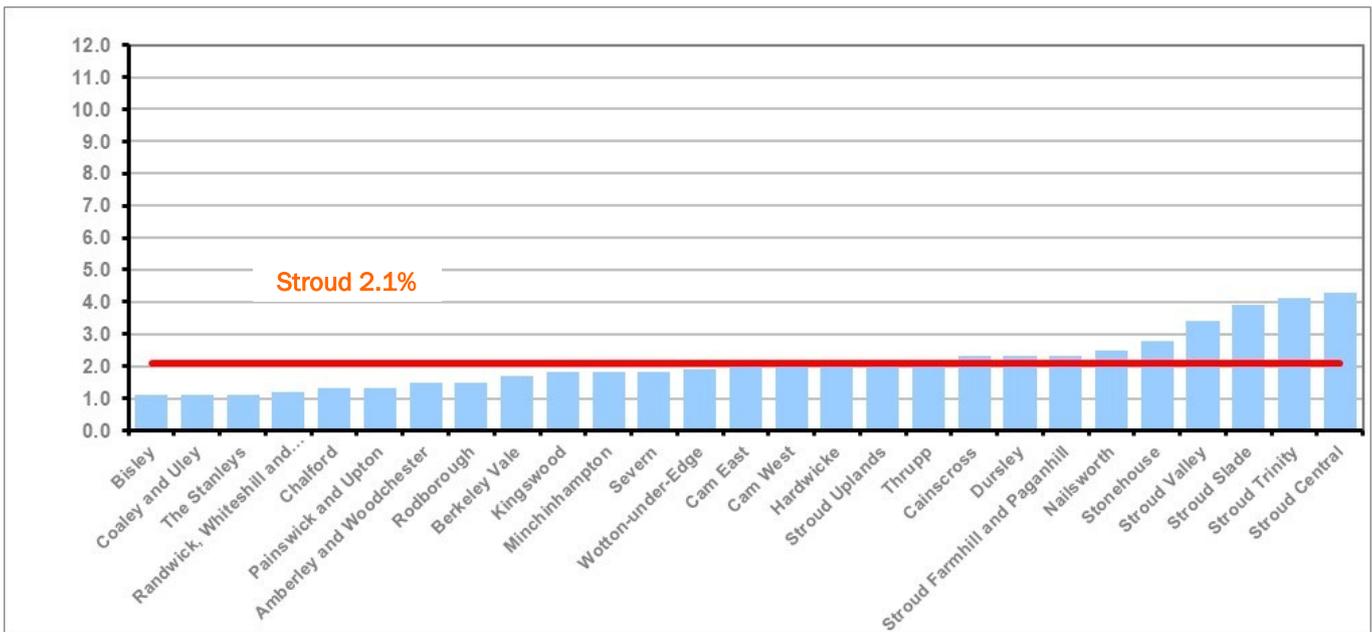


Figure 12 shows the claimant rates in Stroud District wards. The red line represents the average claimant rate across the District of 2.1%. Ten wards are above the average.

PART 4: LOCAL AUTHORITY AND DISTRICT ANALYSIS

4.5 Stroud District continued...

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

District	Ward	Rate	Rank*
Stroud	Bisley	1.1	9
Stroud	Coaley and Uley	1.1	9
Stroud	The Stanleys	1.1	9
Stroud	Randwick, Whiteshill and Ruscombe	1.2	14
Stroud	Chalford	1.3	18
Stroud	Painswick and Upton	1.3	18
Stroud	Amberley and Woodchester	1.5	27
Stroud	Rodborough	1.5	27
Stroud	Berkeley Vale	1.7	36
Stroud	Kingswood	1.8	43
Stroud	Minchinhampton	1.8	43
Stroud	Severn	1.8	43
Stroud	Wotton-under-Edge	1.9	48
Stroud	Cam East	2.1	61
Stroud	Cam West	2.1	61
Stroud	Hardwicke	2.1	61
Stroud	Stroud Uplands	2.1	61
Stroud	Thrupp	2.2	71
Stroud	Cainscross	2.3	77
Stroud	Dursley	2.3	77
Stroud	Stroud Farmhill and Paganhill	2.3	77
Stroud	Nailsworth	2.5	90
Stroud	Stonehouse	2.8	96
Stroud	Stroud Valley	3.4	120
Stroud	Stroud Slade	3.9	124
Stroud	Stroud Trinity	4.1	125
Stroud	Stroud Central	4.3	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 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

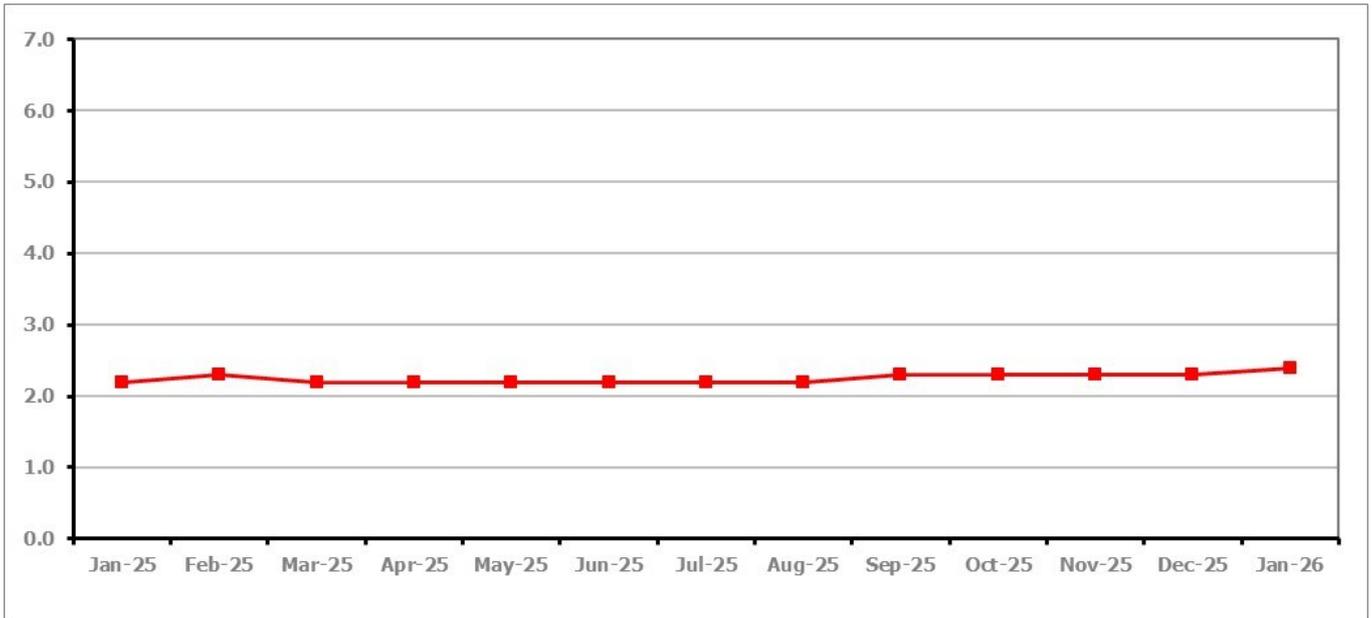


Figure 13 shows the claimant rate for Tewkesbury Borough increased to 2.4% in January 2026.

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

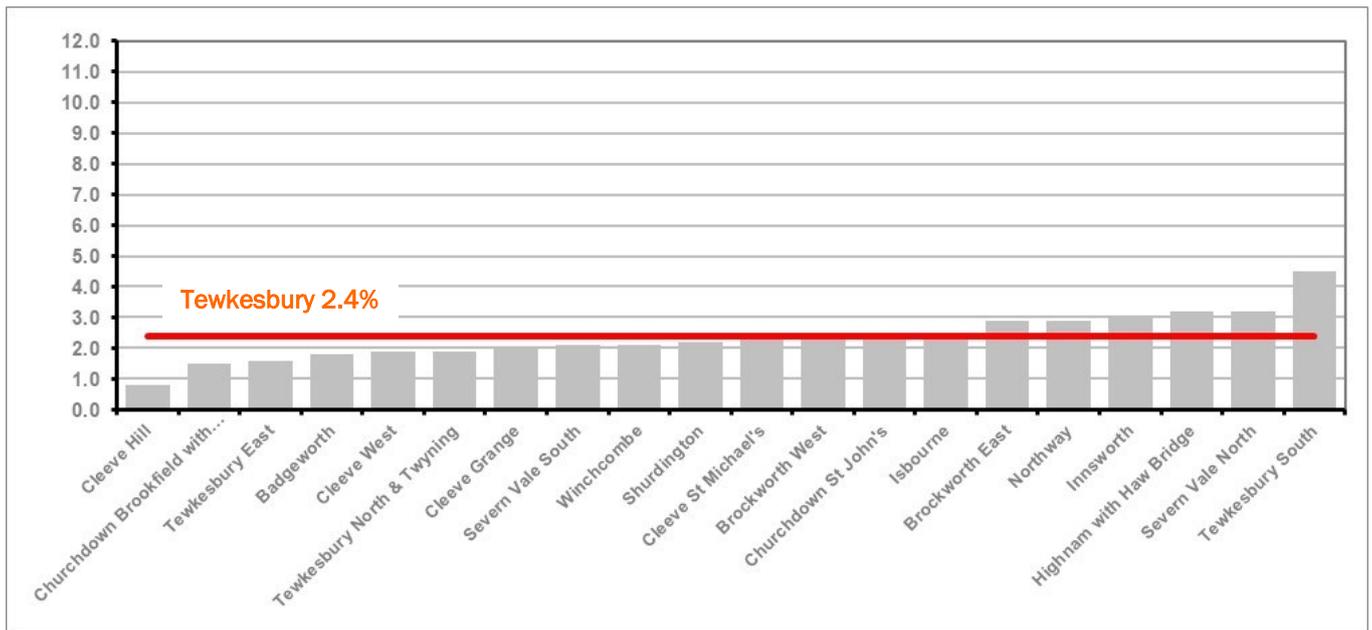


Figure 14 shows the claimant rates in Tewkesbury Borough wards. The red line represents the average claimant rate across the District of 2.4%. Six wards are above the average.

PART 4: LOCAL AUTHORITY AND DISTRICT ANALYSIS

4.6 Tewkesbury Borough continued...

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

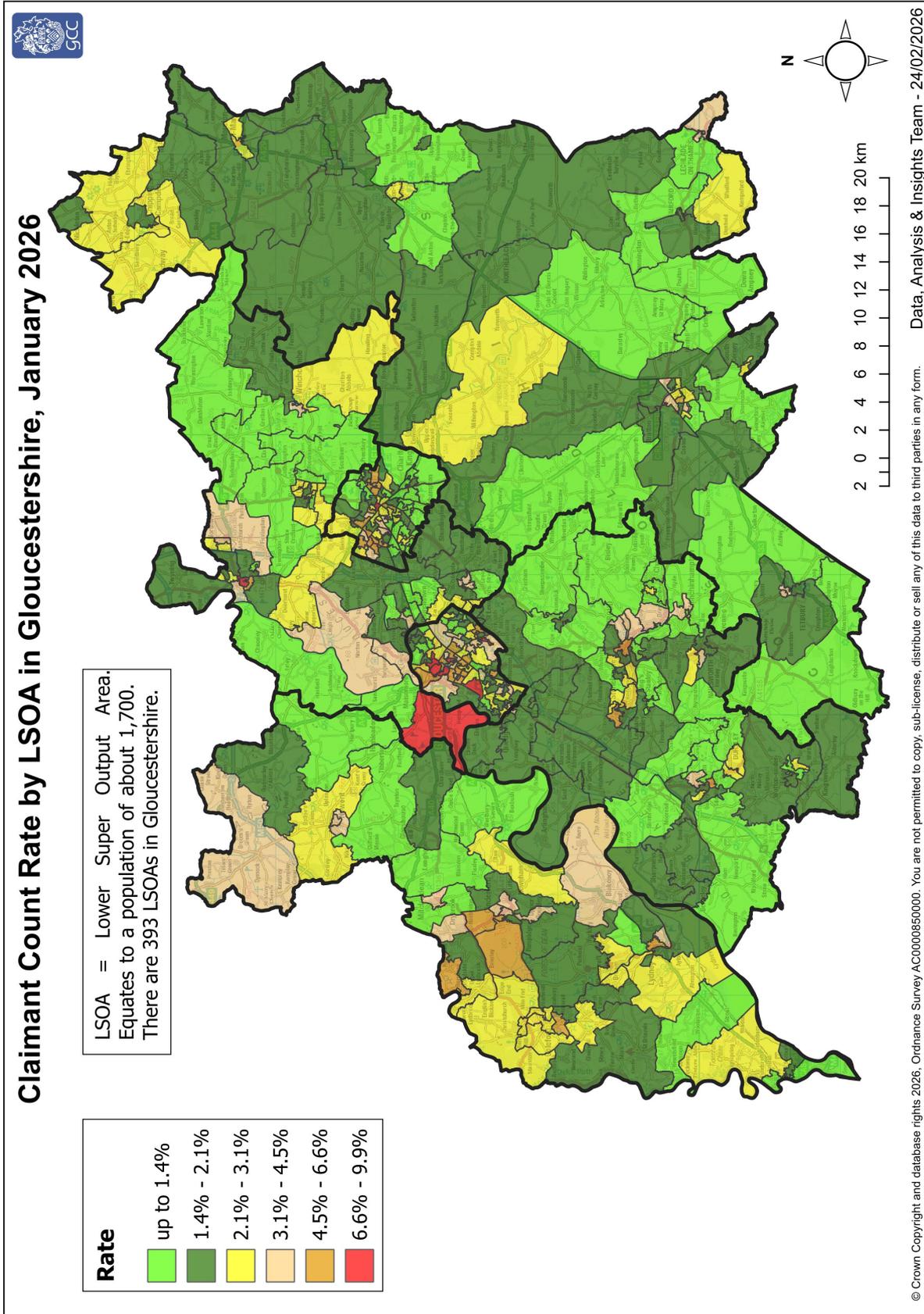
District	Ward	Rate	Rank*
Tewkesbury	Cleeve Hill	0.8	2
Tewkesbury	Churchdown Brookfield with Hucclecote	1.5	27
Tewkesbury	Tewkesbury East	1.6	33
Tewkesbury	Badgeworth	1.8	43
Tewkesbury	Cleeve West	1.9	48
Tewkesbury	Tewkesbury North & Twynning	1.9	48
Tewkesbury	Cleeve Grange	2.0	54
Tewkesbury	Severn Vale South	2.1	61
Tewkesbury	Winchcombe	2.1	61
Tewkesbury	Shurdington	2.2	71
Tewkesbury	Cleeve St Michael's	2.3	77
Tewkesbury	Brockworth West	2.4	84
Tewkesbury	Churchdown St John's	2.4	84
Tewkesbury	Isbourne	2.4	84
Tewkesbury	Brockworth East	2.9	102
Tewkesbury	Northway	2.9	102
Tewkesbury	Innsworth	3.0	107
Tewkesbury	Highnam with Haw Bridge	3.2	113
Tewkesbury	Severn Vale North	3.2	113
Tewkesbury	Tewkesbury South	4.5	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.

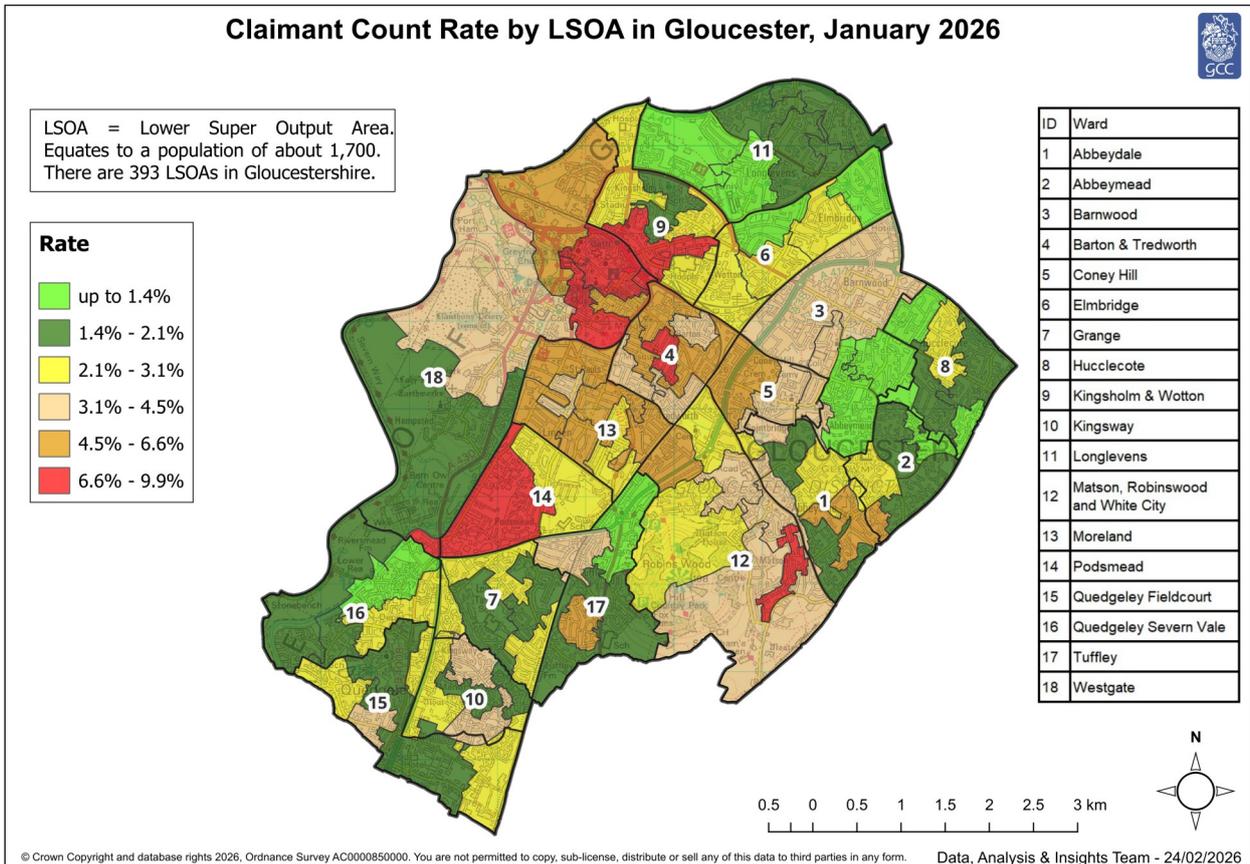
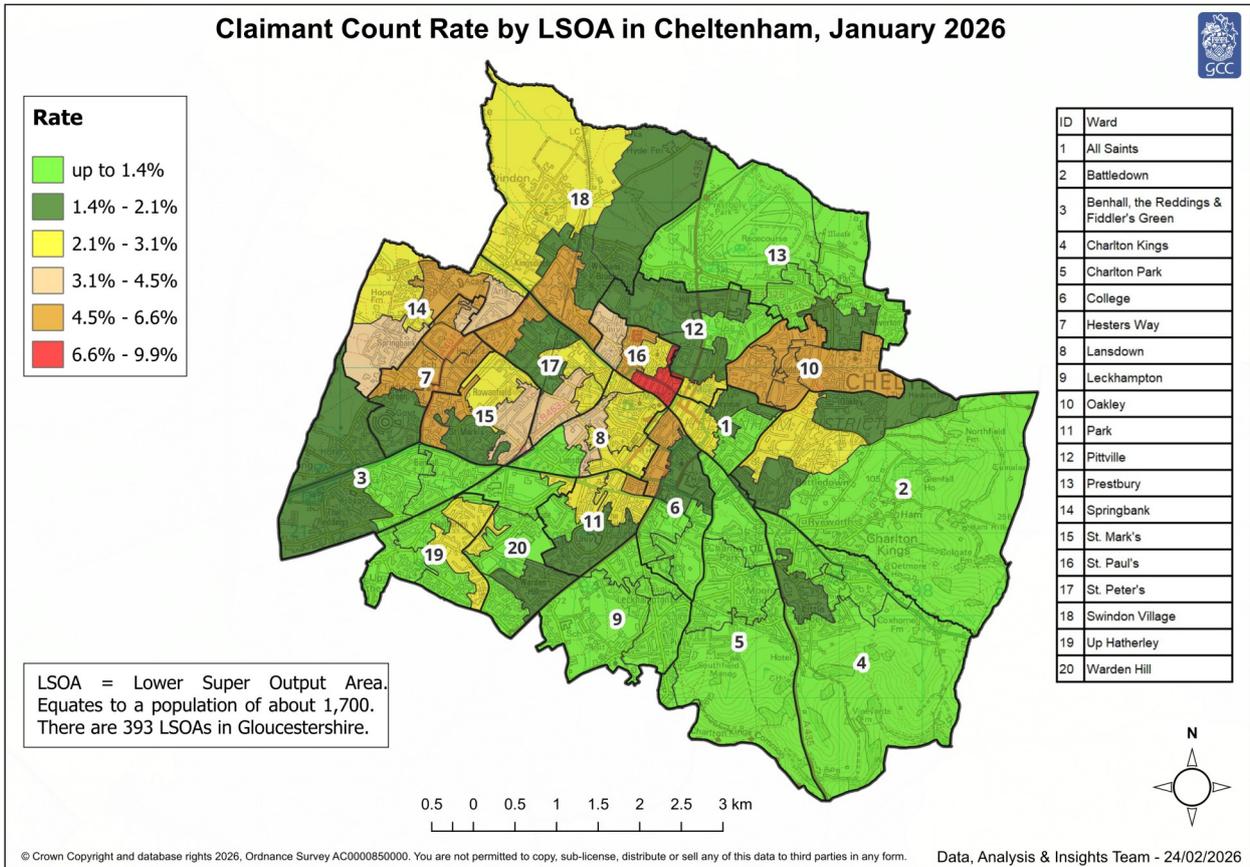
PART 5: MAP SHOWING DISTRIBUTION OF CLAIMANT RATE ACROSS GLOUCESTERSHIRE



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

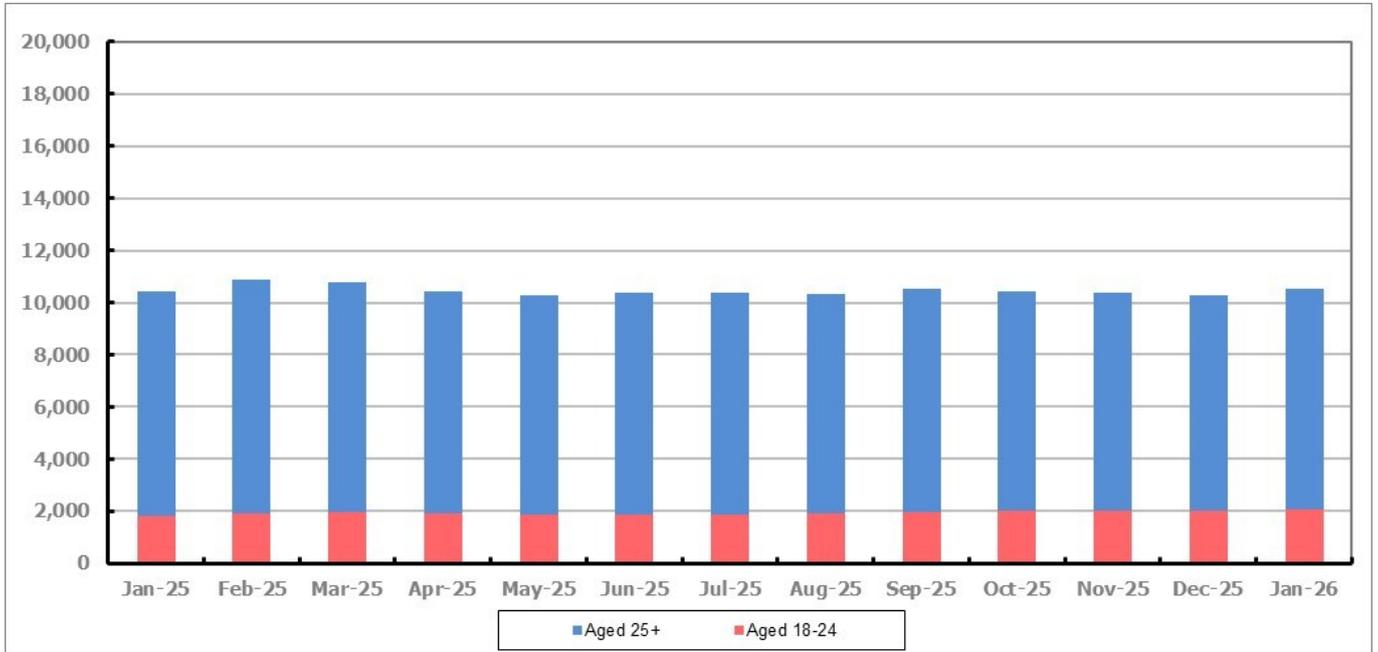


Figure 15 shows that in January 2026, 2,040 people aged 18-24 were claiming Job Seekers Allowance and Universal Credit who were not in work in Gloucestershire, this represents 19.3% of total working age claimants.

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) January 2026

Academic Year 12-13 Summary

	NEET	Cohort	%
Cheltenham	88	2521	3.49%
Cotswold	49	1792	2.73%
Forest	73	1773	4.12%
Gloucester	203	3679	5.52%
Stroud	72	2889	2.49%
Tewkesbury	65	2265	2.87%
Total	550	14919	3.69%

16-18 Age Summary

	NEET	Cohort	%
Cheltenham	126	3209	3.93%
Cotswold	70	2330	3.00%
Forest	91	2297	3.96%
Gloucester	283	4722	5.99%
Stroud	97	3670	2.64%
Tewkesbury	80	2842	2.81%
Total	747	19070	3.92%

16-18 Adjust NEET*	4.12%
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Monthly Change **	12	-14	0.08%
Previous Month	538	14933	3.60%

Monthly Change **	-12	-655	0.07%
Previous Month	759	19725	3.85%

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.