

RECESSION BRIEFING
BASELINE REPORT

Produced by Ben Neild

Date: June 2009



CONTENTS

Introduction	4
Summary	4
1. Employment / Unemployment	5
2. Claimants	7
3. Jobs and Vacancies	13
4. Impact on different groups.....	17
4.1 Gender	17
4.2 Age.....	20
4.3 Ethnicity	21
5. impact on areas.....	21
6. impact on sectors & Occupations	24
6.1 Sectors.....	24
6.2 Occupations	26

Table of Figures

Figure 1: SW Unemployment Rate, Sept 07 – March 09.....	5
Figure 2: SW Employment volumes, Sept 2007 to March 2008	6
Figure 3: SW Employment rates, Sept 2007 to March 2008	6
Figure 4: SW Claimant Count Unadjusted, April 2007 to April 2009	7
Figure 5: SW Claimant Count, monthly growth in volume, Jan 2009 to April 2009	8
Figure 6: Regional Claimant Count growth, indexed, April 2008 = 100	8
Figure 7: Regional Claimant Count, % working age pop'n, April 08 – April 09.....	9
Figure 8: Regional growth in Claimant Count growth, % working age population, April 2008 to April 2009	10
Figure 9: South West Claimant Count by duration of claim, indexed,	11
Figure 10: South West Claimant On-flows and Off-flows, April 2008 to April 2009	12
Figure 11: South West Claimant Off-flows, April 2008 to April 2009	12
Figure 12: Civilian workforce Jobs, South West, Dec 2004 – Dec 2008	13
Figure 13: UK Redundancy Rate, redundancies per 1,000 working age people.....	14
Figure 14: South West Redundancy Rate, redundancies per 1,000 working age people.....	14
Figure 15: Notified redundancies per 4 week period, South West, 1st November 2008 to 15th May 2009.....	15
Figure 16: Notified redundancies each week, South West, 1st Nov 2008 to 15th May 2009	16
Figure 17: Live unfilled vacancies, South West, April 2008 to April 2009.....	16
Figure 18: Claimants per Vacancy, South West, April 2008 to April 2009.....	17
Figure 19: Employment Rates by Gender, South West, Indexed, Jan – Mar 08 = 100.....	18
Figure 20: Claimant Count by Gender, South West, March 2008 to March 2009	19
Figure 21: Claimant Count by Gender, South West, indexed, March 2008 = 100.....	19
Figure 22: Claimant Count by Age, South West, March 2008 to March 2009.....	20
Figure 23: Redundancies by Age, South West, Quarter 4 2007 and 2008.....	21
Figure 24: Claimants per Vacancy in South West and Swindon, April 2008 to April 2009	23
Figure 25: % change in notified vacancies by sector, SW, Apr 2008 to Apr 2009.....	25
Figure 26: Notified Redundancies by industry, SW, Cumulative from 1/11/08 to 15/5/09.....	25
Figure 27: Notified Redundancies, 1/11/08 to 15/5/09, % of employment by industry, SW.....	26

Table of Tables

Table 1: South West Claimant Count by duration of claim, number of claimants.....	11
Table 2: Civilian jobs by Gender, South West, March to December 2008.....	18
Table 3: Rise in Claimant Count, Local Authority in SW, April 2008 to April 2009.....	22
Table 4: Decline in Vacancies, Local Authority, South West, April 2008 to April 2009.....	22
Table 5: Claimants per Vacancy, Local Authority, South West, April 2008 to April 2009.....	23
Table 6: Volume of Notified redundancies per County and Notified Redundancies as a % of Working Age Population , SW Counties, 1/11/08 to 15/3/09	24
Table 7: % change in notified vacancies by occupation, April 2008 to April 2009, South West.....	27

INTRODUCTION

This Baseline Report is produced by SLIM as the starting point for series of monthly 'Recession Watch' briefings. While the Recession Watch will track and report on monthly data and change, this report is more detailed, commenting the impacts that the recession has had on the labour market in South West England since the start of the recession.

This report and subsequent briefings have been produced at the request of the People, Employment and Skills Group of the Regional Economic Task Group. They will however also be made available for general circulation and use by partners within the South West region. We hope they are useful.

SUMMARY

Employment – Although the number of people in employment in the South West remains high, LFS / ILO unemployment has been rising since mid 2008 and the rate of the rise shows no sign of slowing down. The proportion of the population in employment is falling.

Claimant Count – Claimant Count numbers continue to rise, although the rate of the rise slowed between February and April 2009. This slowdown was primarily due to a slowdown in the rate of on-flows (new claimants). The number of people who have been claiming for six months or longer is rising fairly rapidly.

Jobs and Vacancies – There was a slight decline in the number of redundancies reported per four week period from 20th February to 15th May 2009. Despite slight increases during January and February, the number of unfilled vacancies available via Jobcentre Plus remains very low. In April 2009 there were 5.5 claimants per vacancy in the region, up from 5.0 claimants per vacancy in the previous month.

Impact on different groups – The data suggests that the recession may be having a greater negative impact on male employment than female employment, due to the sectors and occupations in which men tend to be employed. There is little difference in claimant count growth by age group, although national data suggests that redundancy rates may be higher among younger people. Claimant Count growth among people who are 'white' has been higher than that among people from ethnic minorities.

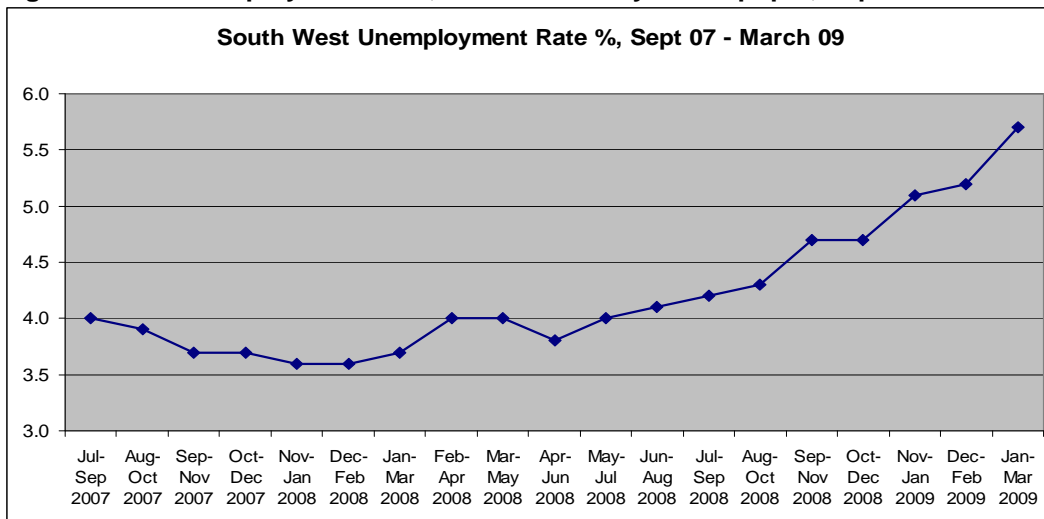
Impact on Areas – Swindon has experienced the largest decline in vacancies and the largest growth in the claimant count in the region. The evidence suggests that the labour market in the northern and eastern parts of the region have been most affected by recession.

Impact on Sectors and Occupations – Since November the largest volume of redundancies notified to Jobcentre Plus have been in Manufacturing and the Wholesale and retail sectors. Manufacturing has experienced a higher rate of redundancies as a proportion of the workforce than other sectors. Vacancies for higher skilled occupations notified to Jobcentre Plus appear have held up better than those for lower skilled occupations.

1. EMPLOYMENT / UNEMPLOYMENT

According to the Labour Force Survey (LFS) the proportion of the economically active population in the South West who report themselves as being unemployed¹ has been rising since early in 2008. From a low of 3.6% in Nov 2007 - Jan 2008, the figure has risen to 5.7% in the three months to March 2009. The rate of the rise shows no sign of slowing down.

Figure 1: SW Unemployment Rate, % Economically active pop'n, Sept 07 – March 09

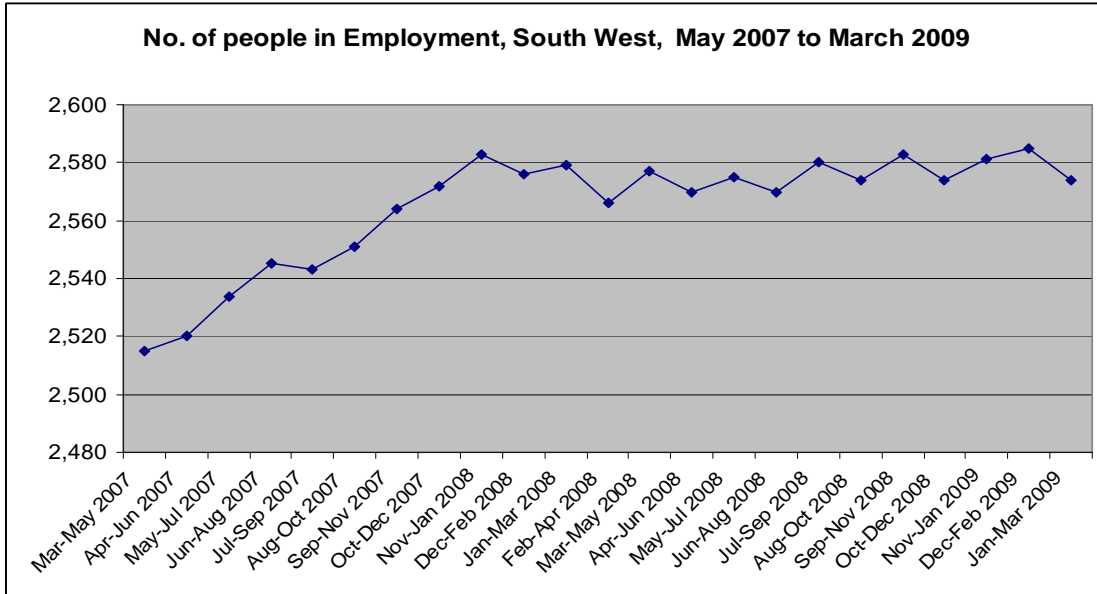


Source: LFS, ONS

Prior to the recession the South West economy had been successful in creating large numbers of jobs, enabling the region to achieve growth in the % employment rate among a growing working age population. Since the onset of the recession, the rise in the overall employment has levelled off, though number of people in the South West who are employed continues to remain near historic highs.

¹ LFS asks a representative sample of the population if they are 'employed', 'unemployed' or economically 'inactive'.

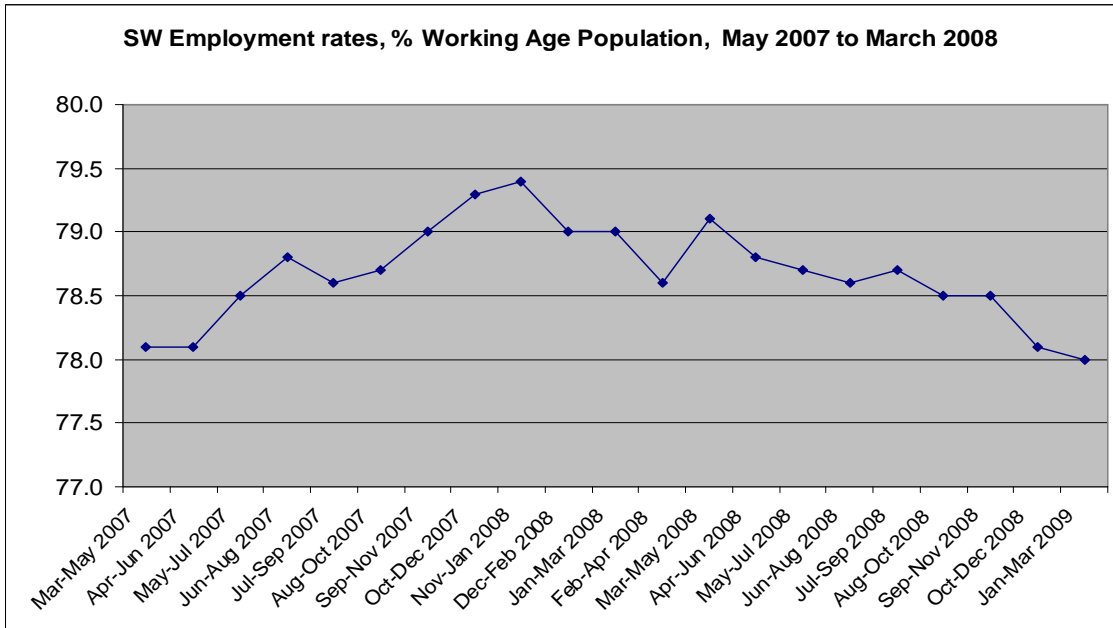
Figure 2: SW Employment volumes, Sept 2007 to March 2008



Source: LFS, ONS

While the number people in employment in the region may still be high, the working age population of the South West continues to grow. Thus the proportion of the people of working age in employment has been in decline since early 2008.

Figure 3: SW Employment rates, Sept 2007 to March 2008



Source: LFS, ONS

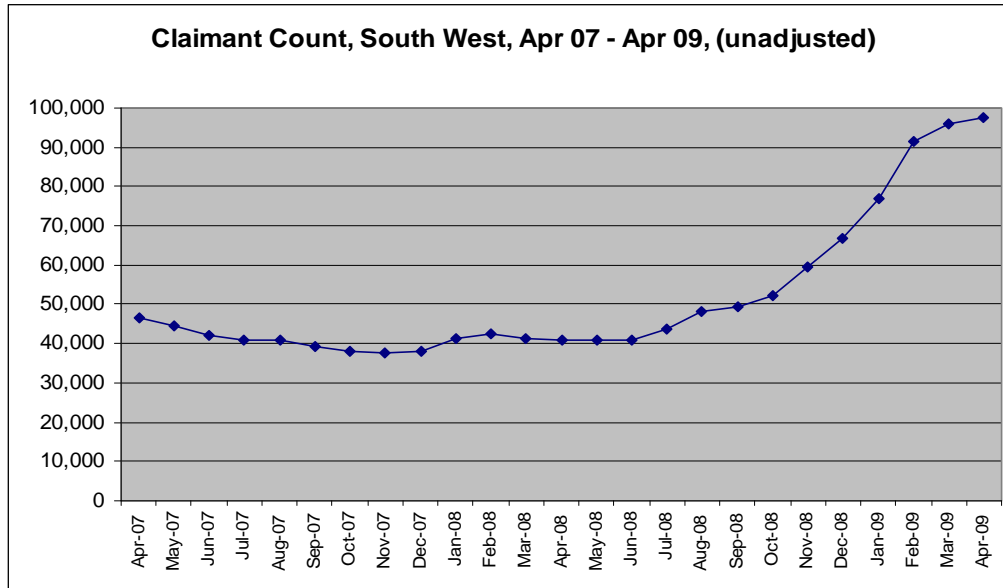
Inactivity levels, among people who either do not want a job or who want a job but are not seeking or are not available for work, have continued a long-term trend of gradual decline through the early part of the recession. This can be seen as positive news, as it suggests that the number of people who may have opted-out of the labour market or who have 'given up trying' remains low.

2. CLAIMANTS

2.1 SOUTH WEST

The number of people claiming Jobseekers Allowance, the 'Claimant Count', has been rising in the South West since mid 2008. Seasonally unadjusted data shows the rate of growth in regional claimant count slowing in March and April 2009.

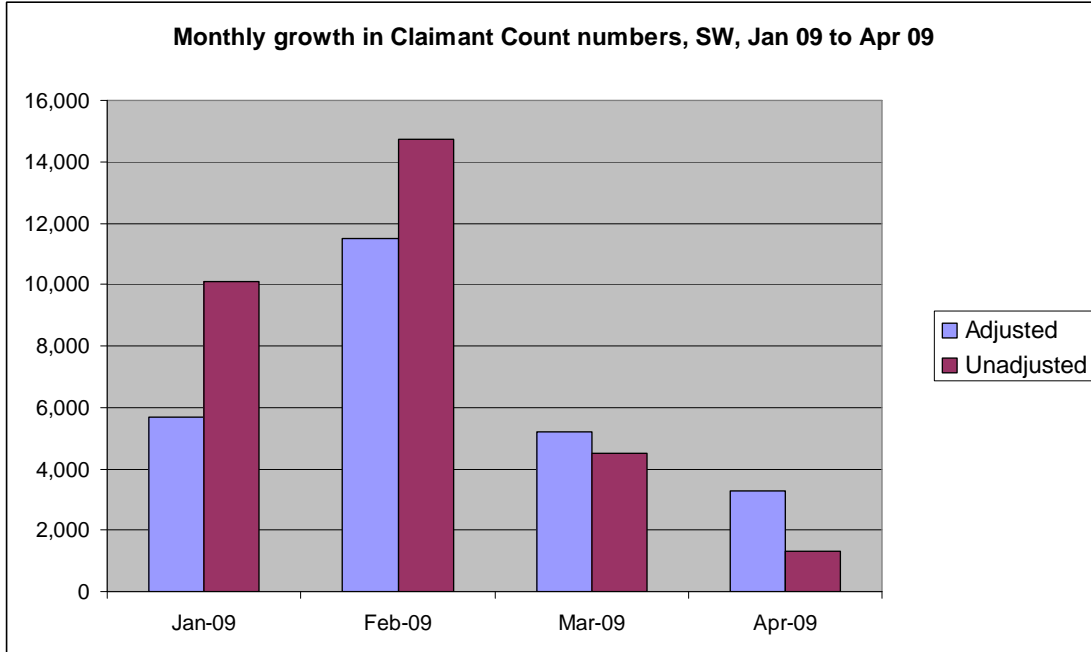
Figure 4: SW Claimant Count Unadjusted, April 2007 to April 2009



Source: JC+ / NOMIS

Seasonally adjusted data suggests the slowdown is partly due to seasonal factors, though the overall pattern of lower claimant count growth in March and April holds true.

Figure 5: SW Claimant Count, monthly growth in volume, Jan 2009 to April 2009

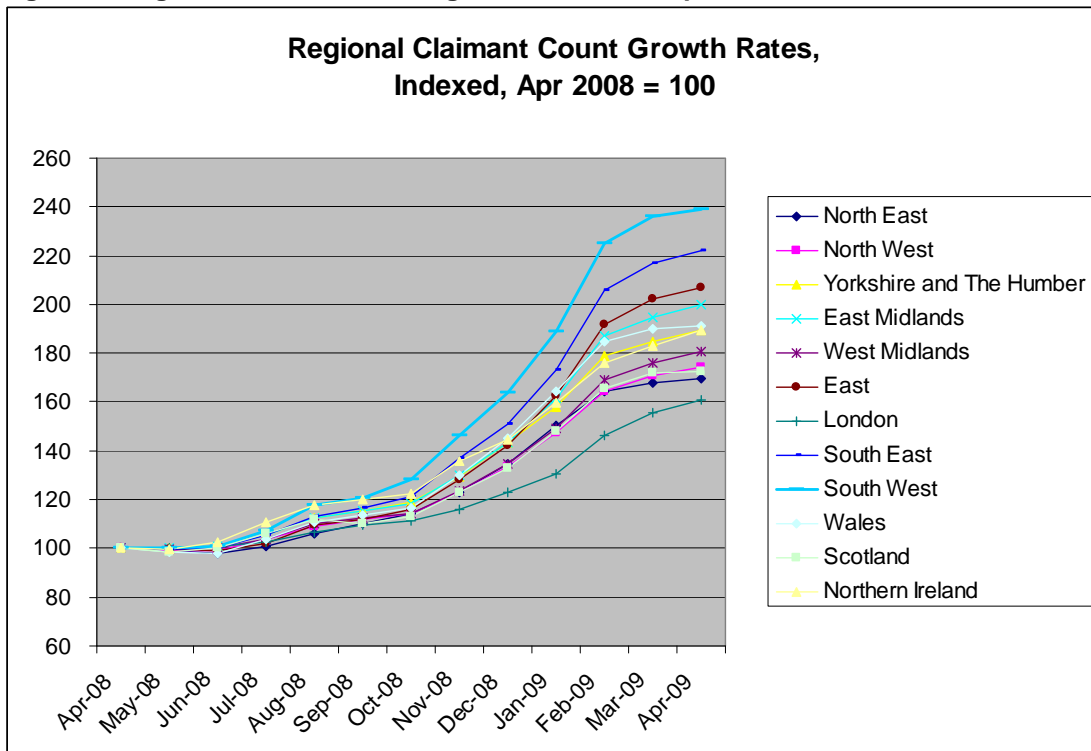


Source: JC+ / NOMIS

2.2 INTER-REGIONAL COMPARISON

The number of people claiming Jobseekers Allowance in the South West grew by 240% between April 2008 and April 2009. This was a faster rate of growth than any other region.

Figure 6: Regional Claimant Count growth, indexed, April 2008 = 100

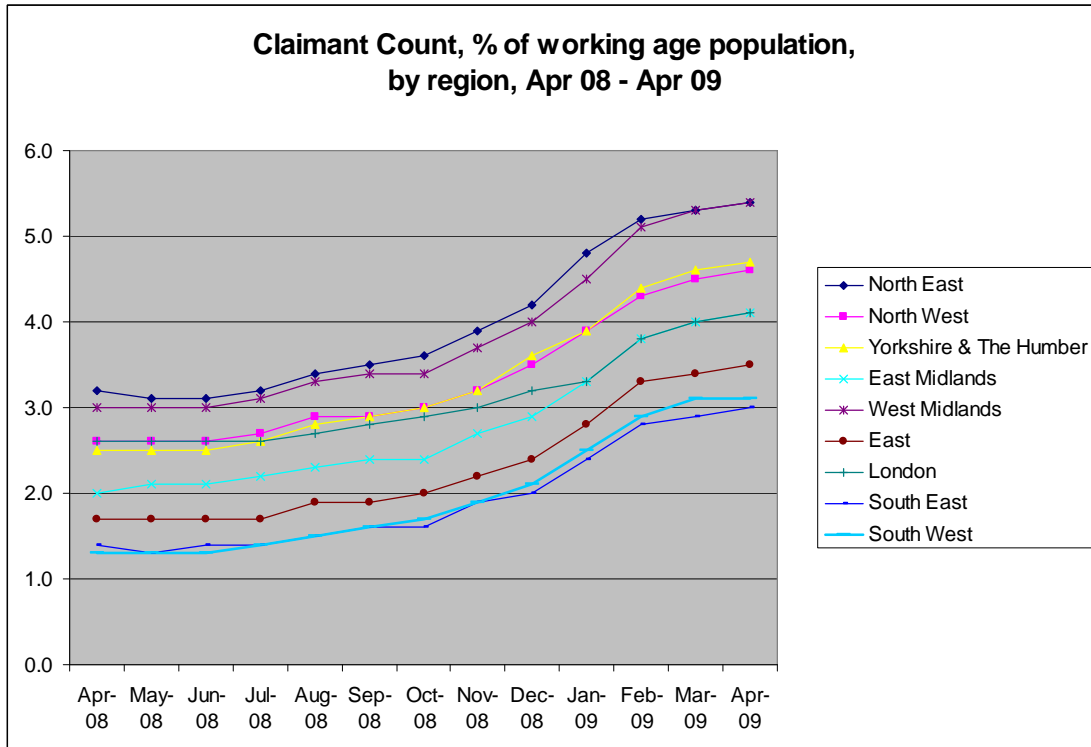


Source: JC+ / NOMIS

However, the South West started from a baseline of lower unemployment in April 2008 than any other region, which produces a higher proportional effect for each additional person added to the count.

If one looks at the change in the claimant count within the South West, expressed as a proportion of working age population, the region follows a similar trend to that in many other regions.

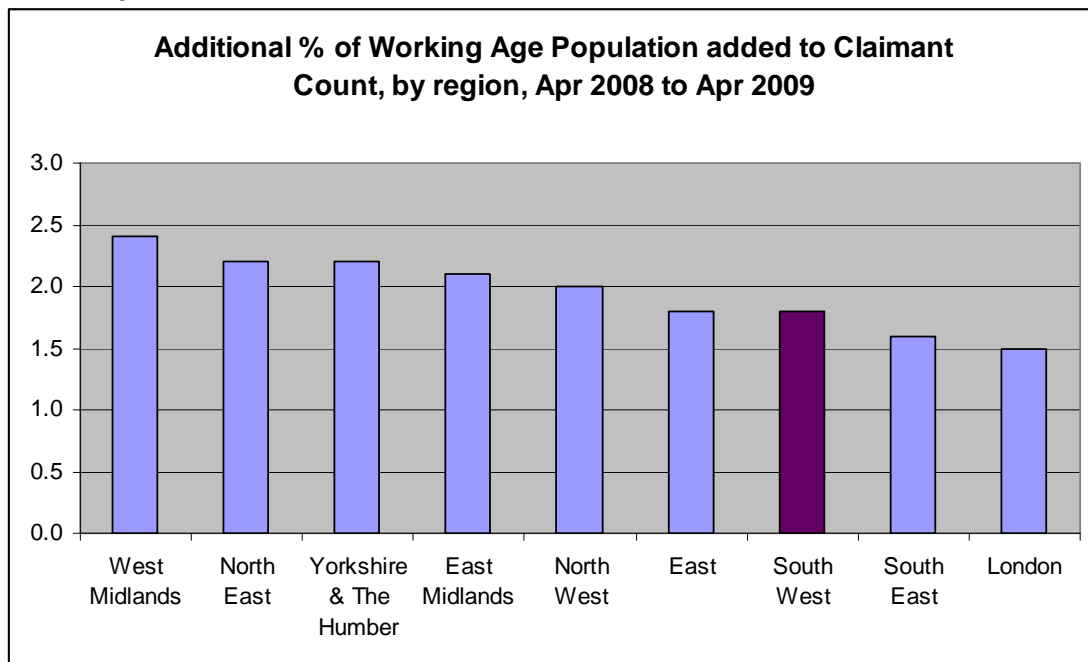
Figure 7: Regional Claimant Count, % working age pop'n, April 08 – April 09



Source: JC+ / NOMIS

If one looks solely at the percentage of the working age population added to the Claimant Count in each region over the last year (regardless of the starting point), the South West appears to be less hard hit than some other regions.

Figure 8: Regional growth in Claimant Count growth, % working age population, April 2008 to April 2009



Source: JC+ / NOMIS

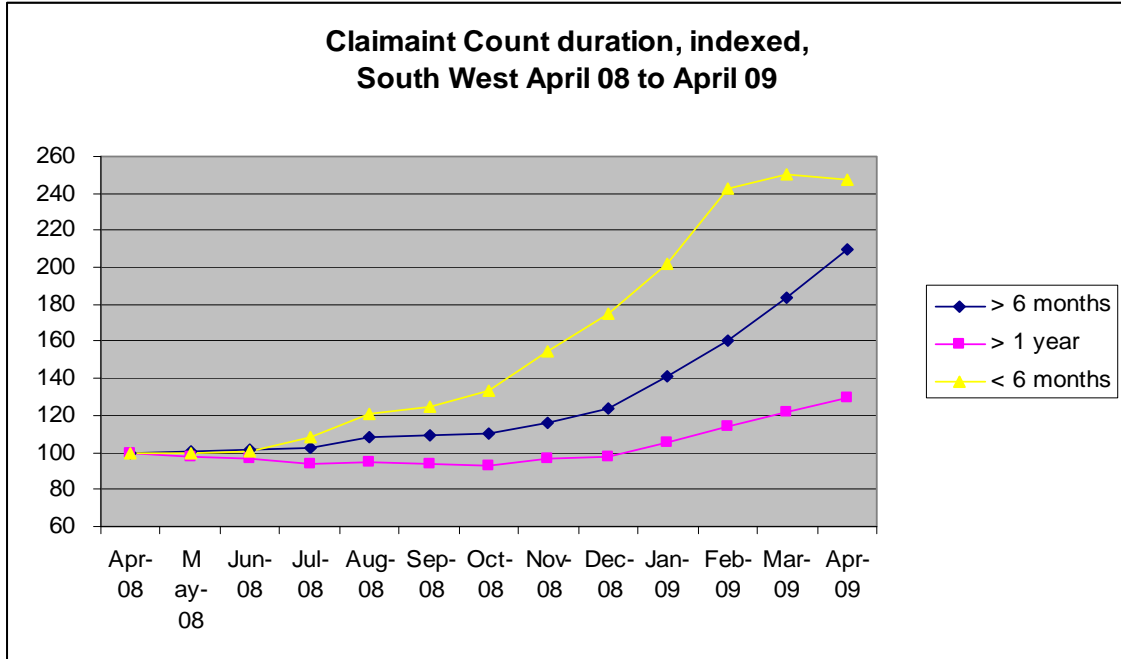
2.3 CLAIM DURATION

Figure 9, shows changes in the duration over which South West JSA claimants have been in receipt of benefits. Two features stand out in this graph.

Firstly, at the outset of recession, from October to February, there was a sharp rise in the number of new claimants (those claiming for 6 months or less); and that the rise in the number of people claiming for six or twelve months plus has lagged behind and has been picking up in the last few months.

Secondly, that the recent slowdown in regional Claimant Count growth (seen in Figure 4) is the result of a levelling off in the number short-term JSA claimants, while the number of long-term claimants has continued to rise. This suggests a 'hardening' or shift towards long-term unemployment, which is not unexpected.

Figure 9: South West Claimant Count by duration of claim, indexed,



Source: JC+ / NOMIS

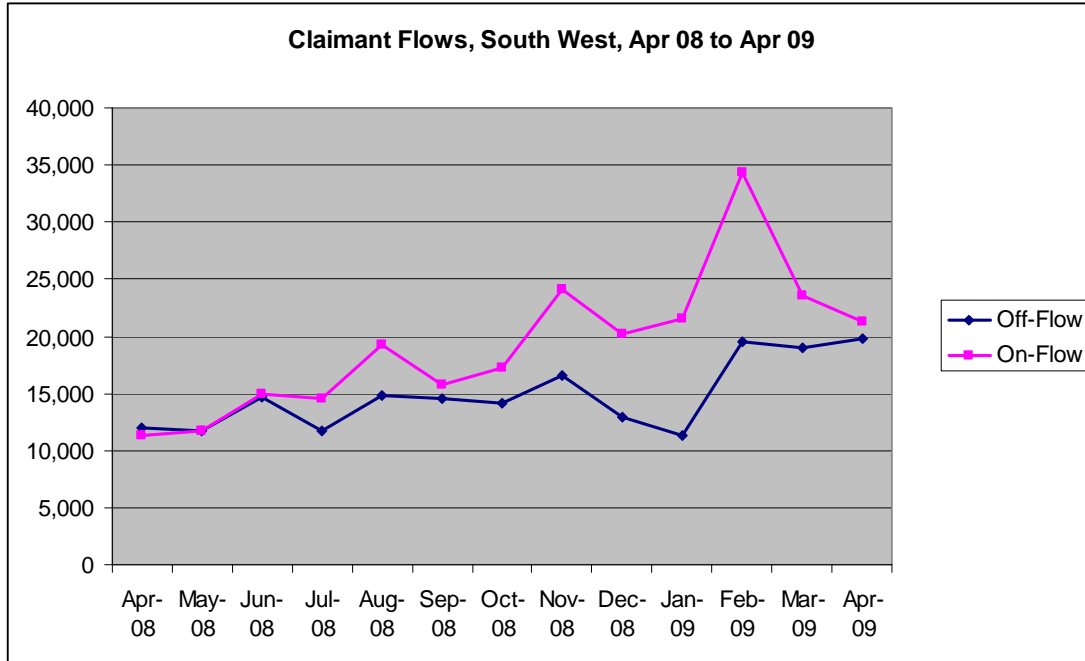
Hidden within the levelling off in the short-term claimant count (the yellow line above) is another dynamic. Between February and April 2009 the number of very short term claimants, those claiming JSA for less than six weeks, fell by c8,500, while the number of people who had been claiming for between six weeks and six months rose by c10,000.

Table 1: South West Claimant Count by duration of claim, number of claimants

Duration of Claim	Feb-09	Apr-09	Change Feb 09 to Apr 09
Up to 6 weeks	34,950	26,435	(8,515)
> 6 weeks and up to 26 weeks	42,250	52,240	9,990
Claiming over 26 weeks	14,160	18,500	4,340
Claiming over 12 months	4,140	4,695	555

Figure 10 shows that this is primarily due to a significant decline in the number of new claimants, or claimant count on-flows, seen in the region in March and April. The fact that the gains in 'off-flow' rates that were made between January and February have been maintained have also helped.

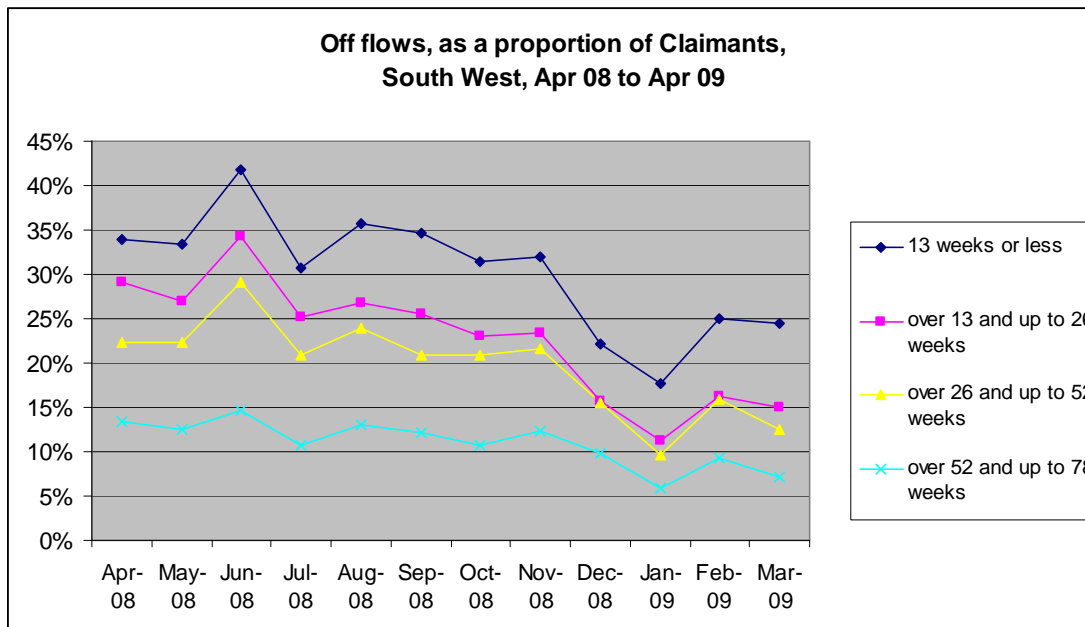
Figure 10: South West Claimant On-flows and Off-flows, April 2008 to April 2009



Source: JC+ / NOMIS

Looking in more detail at off-flows, in March 2009, 25% of people who had been claiming JSA for less than 13 weeks left benefits, compared to 15% of those claiming between 13 and 26 weeks. Figure 11 below, which shows recent trends in off-flow rates by duration of claim. Although it is slightly early to tell, data over the last two months suggests that gap in off-flows between the short term unemployed and other groups may be widening, as unemployment ‘hardens’.

Figure 11: South West Claimant Off-flows, April 2008 to April 2009



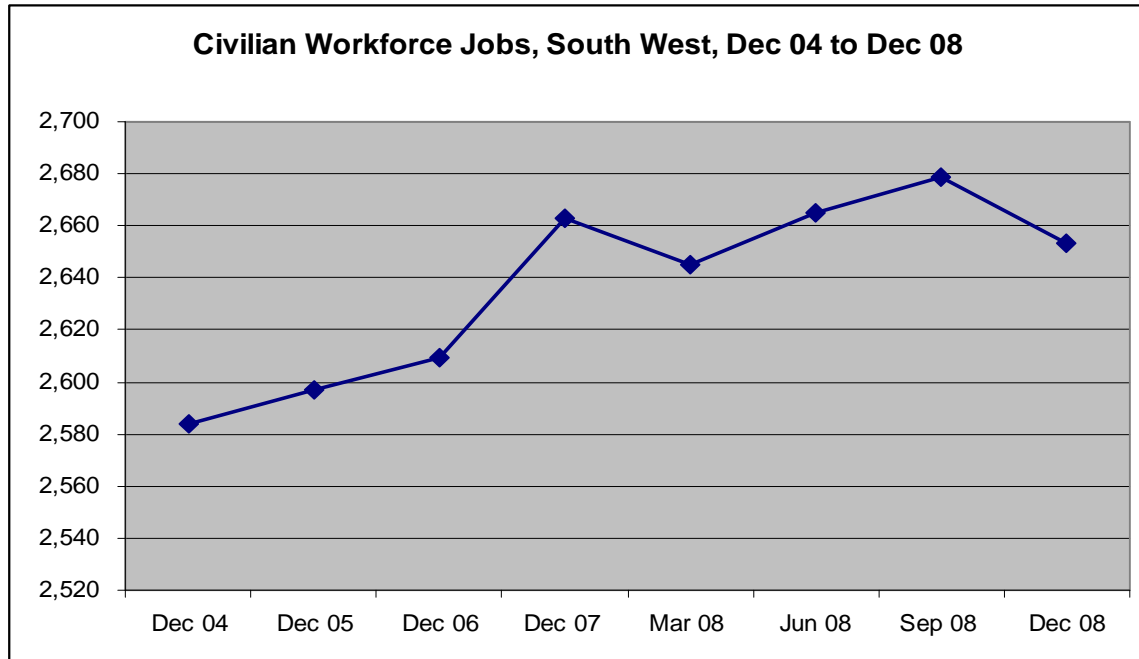
Source: JC+ / NOMIS

3. JOBS AND VACANCIES

Although Figure 2 suggests that the number of people in the South West who are 'employed' has remained near historic highs, other data points to a loss in the number of jobs held in the region, and certainly to a decline in job availability.

ONS estimate that the number of SW civilian workforce jobs declined by just under 1% between the quarters to September 2008 and December 2008.

Figure 12: Civilian workforce Jobs, South West, Dec 2004 – Dec 2008

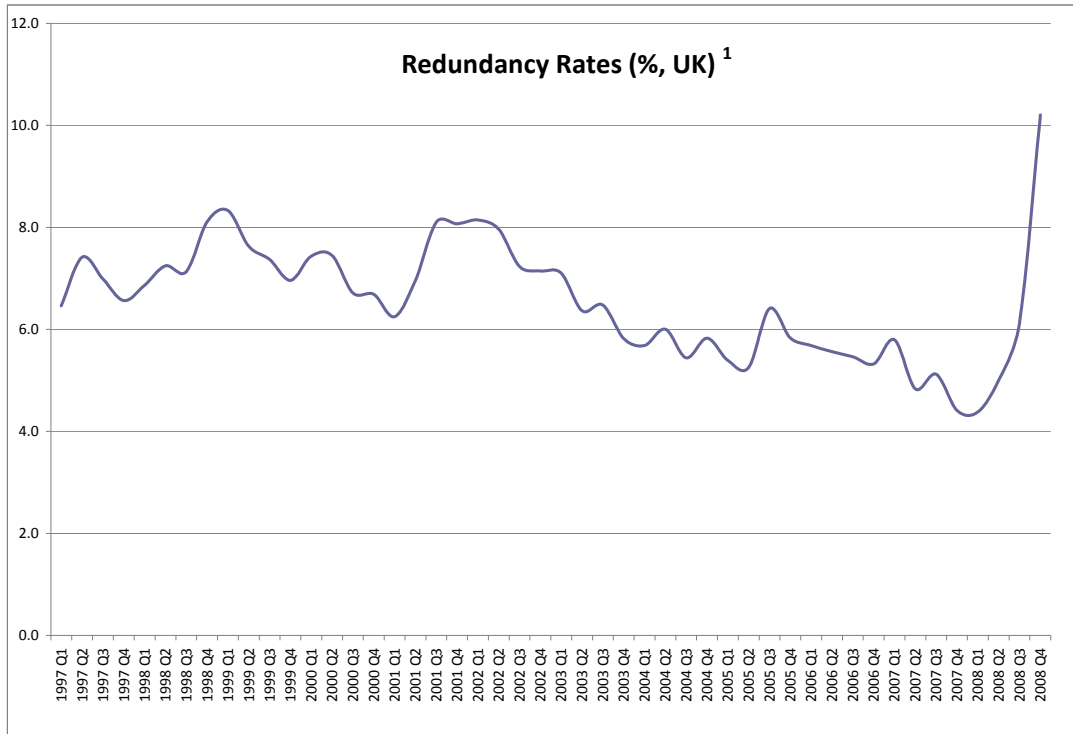


Source: LFS

This is a measure of the number of jobs in the region, rather than the number people who have jobs. Some people hold more than one job. A decline in the number of people holding more than one job could, in theory, account for the apparent decline in job numbers (above) held by an apparently steady number of people in employment (as shown in Figure 2). This however seems unlikely as a full explanation.

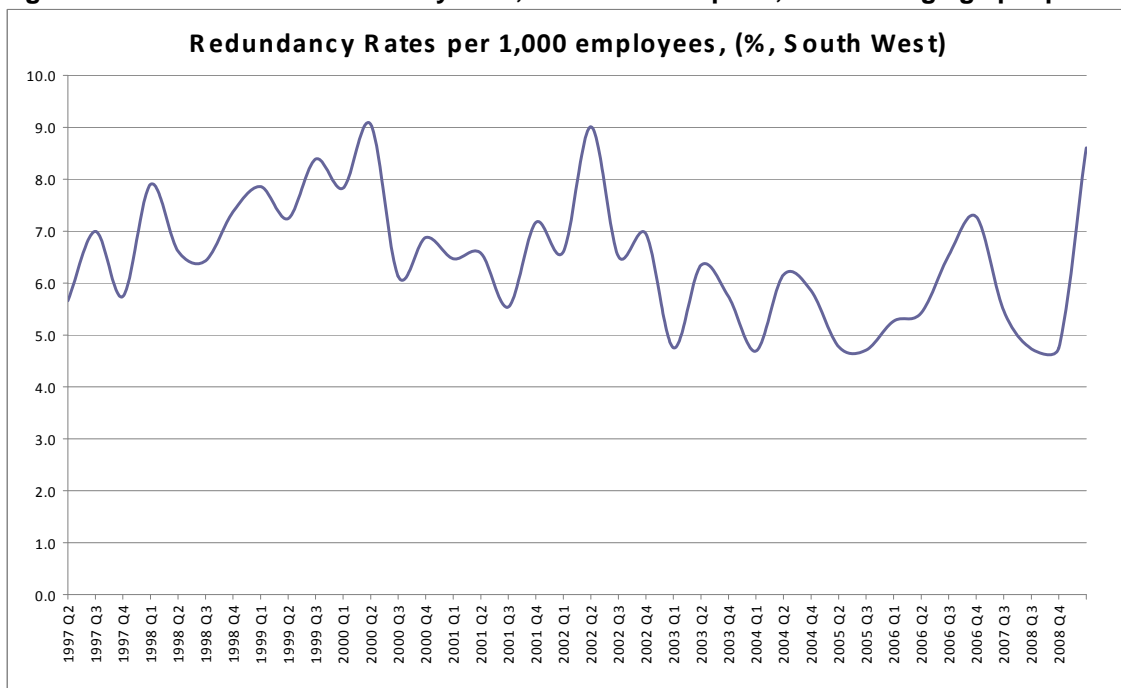
Recent redundancy data certainly paints a picture of job losses. The Labour Force Survey shows rapid increases in the number of people who reported themselves as having been made redundant in the quarter to December 2008. The regional growth in the number of redundancies in December was not as dramatic as that seen at national level.

Figure 13: UK Redundancy Rate, redundancies per 1,000 working age people



Source: ONS / Labour Force Survey

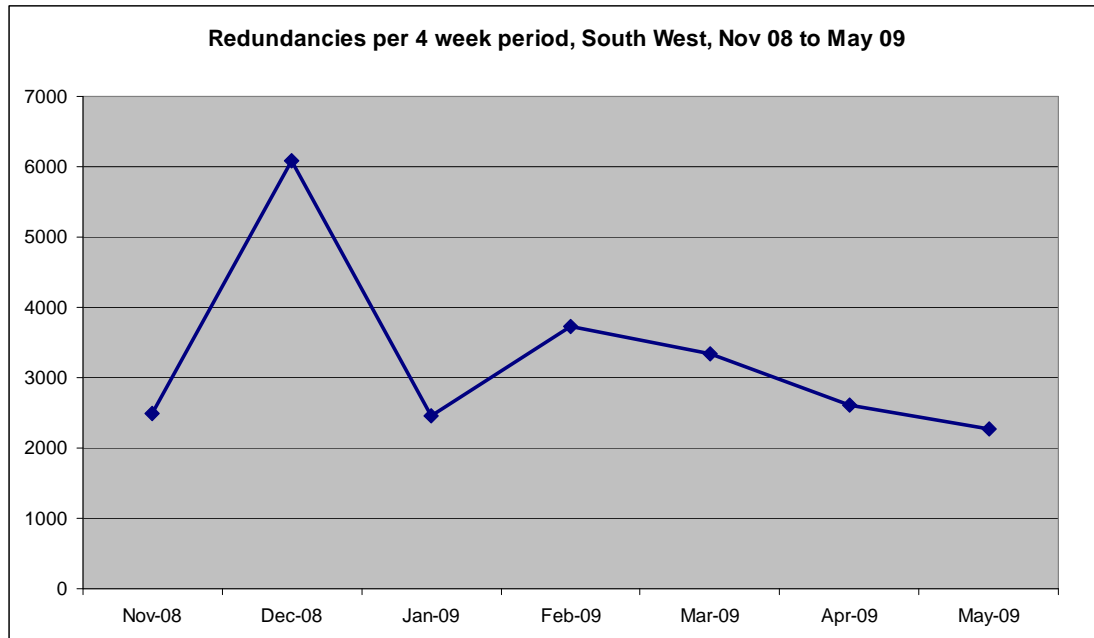
Figure 14: South West Redundancy Rate, redundancies per 1,000 working age people



Source: ONS / Labour Force Survey

Jobcentre plus administrative data provides more up-to-date information on the number of notified redundancies per week at regional level. While this is not comparable with LFS data² Figure 15 below does suggest a gradual decline in the volume of redundancies being notified to Jobcentre Plus between February 2009 and March 2009.

Figure 15: Notified redundancies per 4 week period, South West, 1st November 2008 to 15th May 2009

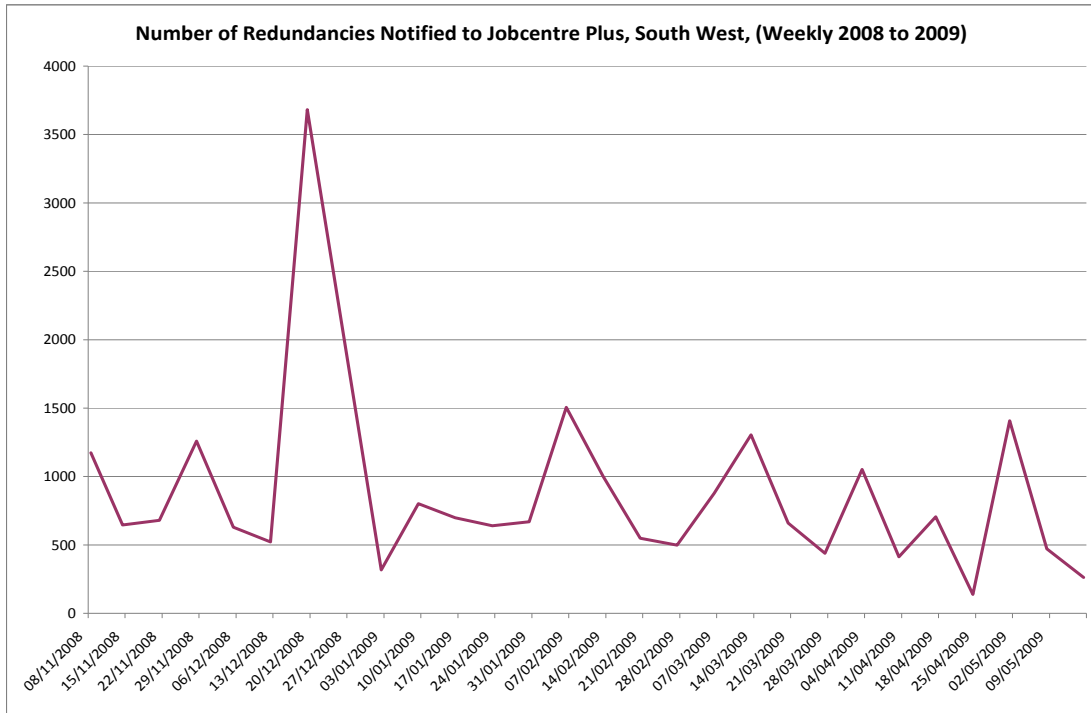


Source: Jobcentre Plus Administrative Data

Caution is also needed here, as weekly redundancy figures (Figure 16 below) are extremely volatile. Although aggregating the data into 4 week periods (as shown in Figure 15) irons out some of this volatility and shows a possible underlying trend, the announcement of a few large scale redundancies, such that by Woolworths in December, could easily reverse any downward progress.

² The spike in the national LFS data for the quarter to December should not be equated with the December spike in the number of notified redundancies in the SW region.

Figure 16: Notified redundancies each week, South West, 1st Nov 2008 to 15th May 2009

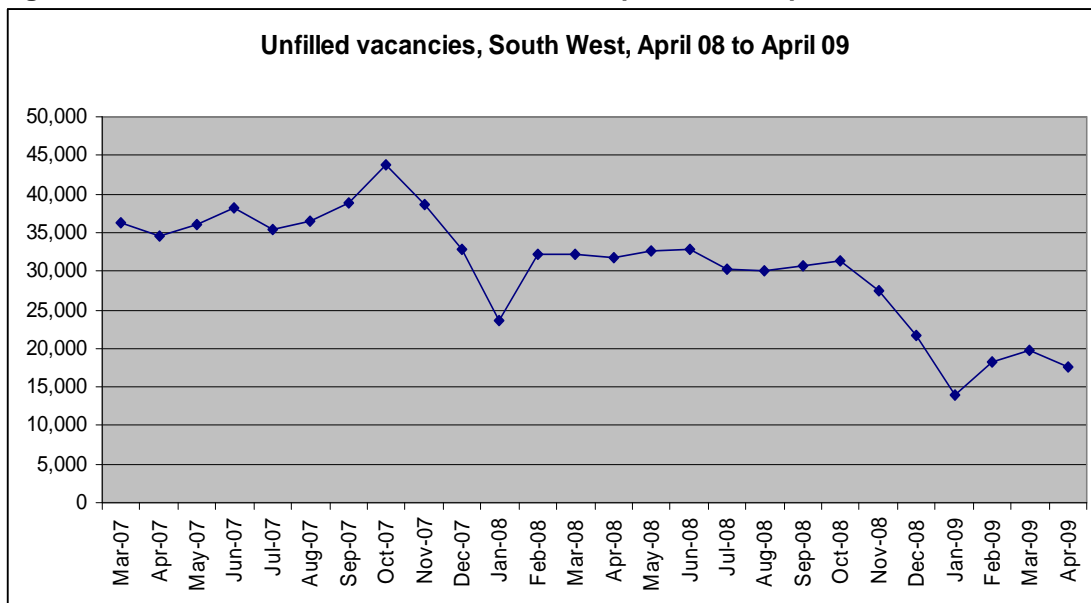


Source: Jobcentre Plus Administrative Data

The decline in the availability of jobs is evident at national level via the Vacancy Survey. This shows a 26% decline in vacancies in the year to January 2009.

At regional level, Figure 17 shows that the number of unfilled vacancies available through Jobcentre Plus more than halved in a 3 months period between October 2008 and January 2009. While this was partly a seasonal trend (which can be seen in the previous year), during the full year to April 2009, the number of live unfilled vacancies in the region fell by 44% from 31,687 to 17,618.

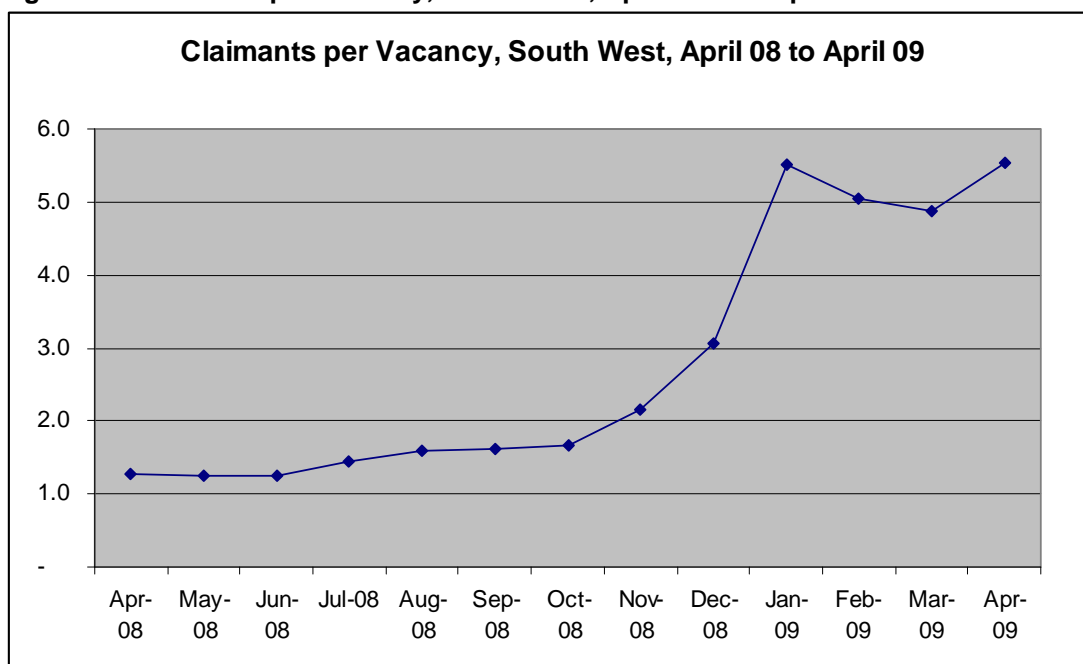
Figure 17: Live unfilled vacancies, South West, April 2008 to April 2009



Source: JC+ / NOMIS

Data on the number of claimants per live unfilled vacancy held by Jobcentre Plus provides a useful if rough measure of the level of competition for jobs within the region and the difficulty that people who are out of work will have in finding jobs.

Figure 18: Claimants per Vacancy, South West, April 2008 to April 2009



Source: JC+ / NOMIS

Figure 18 shows that in April 2009 there were 5.5 jobseekers per vacancy in the region, up from 1.3 in April 2008. An increase in vacancies during February and March 2009 temporarily reversed the upward trend. However by April 2009 the ratio was back to its previous high.

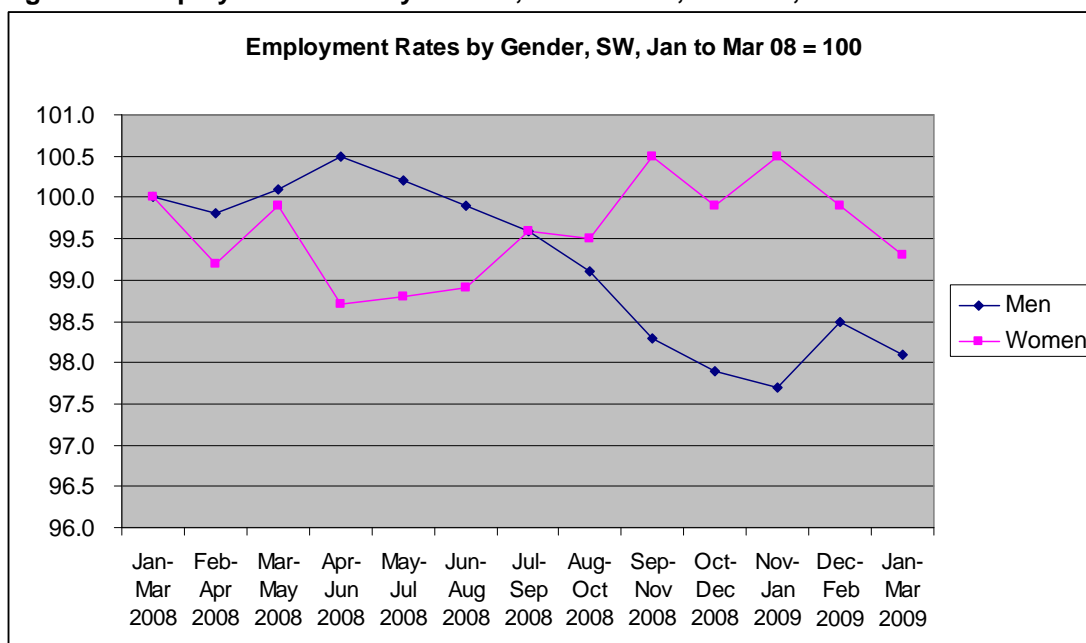
4. IMPACT ON DIFFERENT GROUPS

4.1 Gender

Data suggests that the recession is having a greater impact on male employment than it is on female employment. This is due to the fact that more men work in the private sector than women; due to differences in the industries that men / women tend to work in; and the differences in the jobs they tend to hold within those industries.

Although there has been some fluctuation over time, LFS data suggests that the employment rate for men fell to 98.1% of its level one year ago, while the employment rate for women fell to 99.3%.

Figure 19: Employment Rates by Gender, South West, Indexed, Jan – Mar 08 = 100



Source: LFS

Data on civilian workforce jobs suggests that from September to December 2008 there were 23,000 fewer jobs held by South West resident males³ than in the previous quarter, and 3,000 fewer jobs held by females.

Table 2: Civilian jobs by Gender, South West, March to December 2008

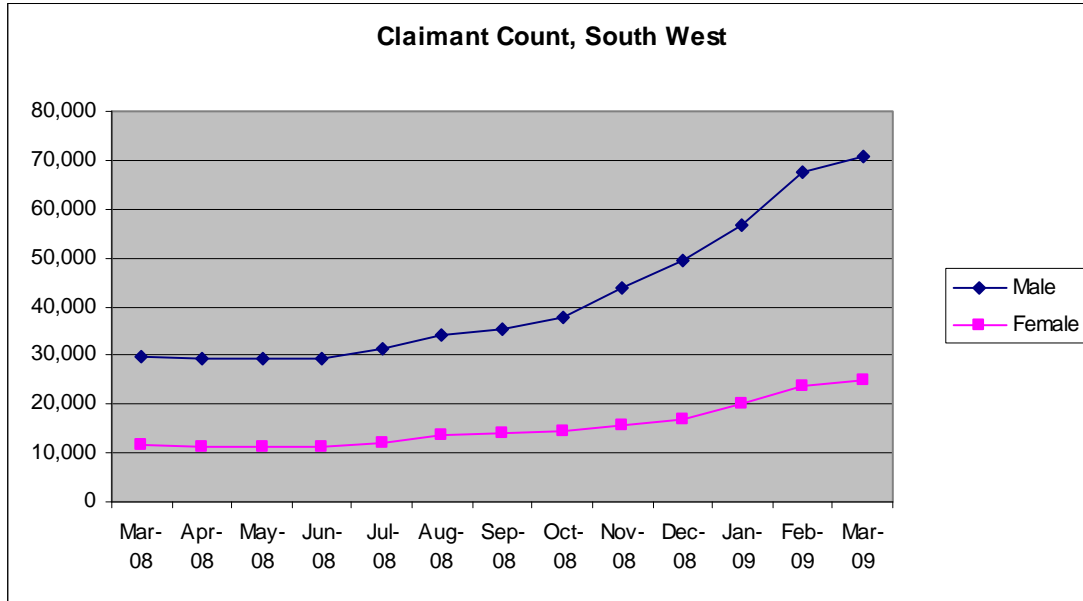
Civilian Jobs '000s	Males	Females
Mar 08	1,383	1,262
Jun 08	1,392	1,273
Sep 08	1,393	1,286
Dec 08	1,370	1,283
<i>Change on quarter</i>	-23	-3
<i>Change %</i>	-1.7	-0.2

Source: ONS, LMS Regional Monthly Data

The claimant count shows that from March 2008 to March 2009 the number of male JSA Claimants in the South West Region rose by 41,000, to just under 71,000, compared to a 13,400 rise among females.

³ Some men and women will hold more than one job, or may be doing one job where they previously did two.

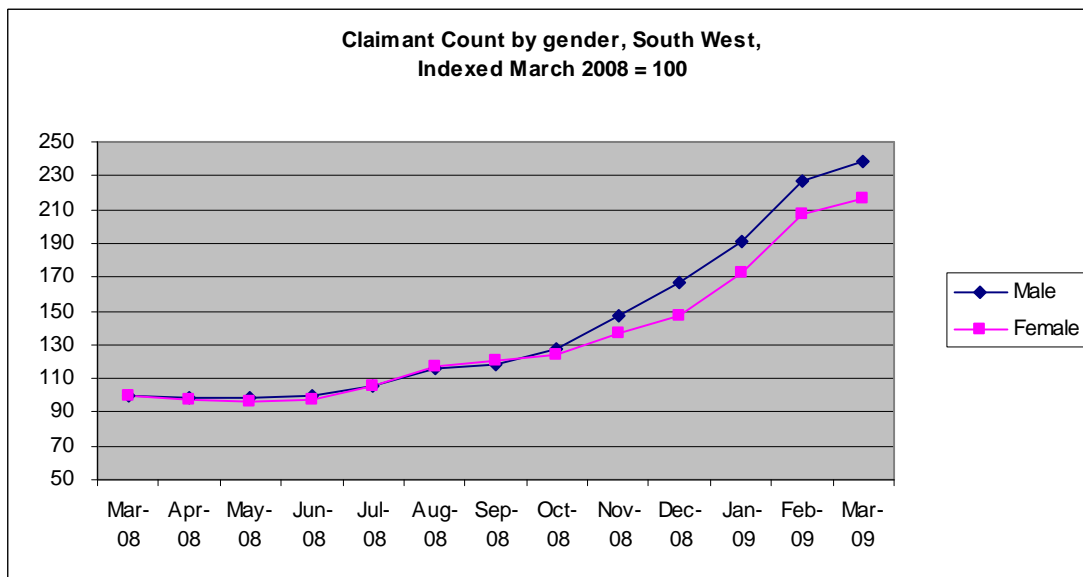
Figure 20: Claimant Count by Gender, South West, March 2008 to March 2009



Source: JC+ / NOMIS

Looking at the rate of growth, although the male claimant count has been rising at a slightly higher rate than female claimant count, the difference is not enormous. The volume differentials shown in Figure 20 are largely due to differences in baseline for each gender.

Figure 21: Claimant Count by Gender, South West, indexed, March 2008 = 100



Source: JC+ / NOMIS

4.2 Age

Unfortunately at the time of writing regional Labour Force Survey and Annual Population Survey data on economic activity by age was only available to September 2008, before the recession began.

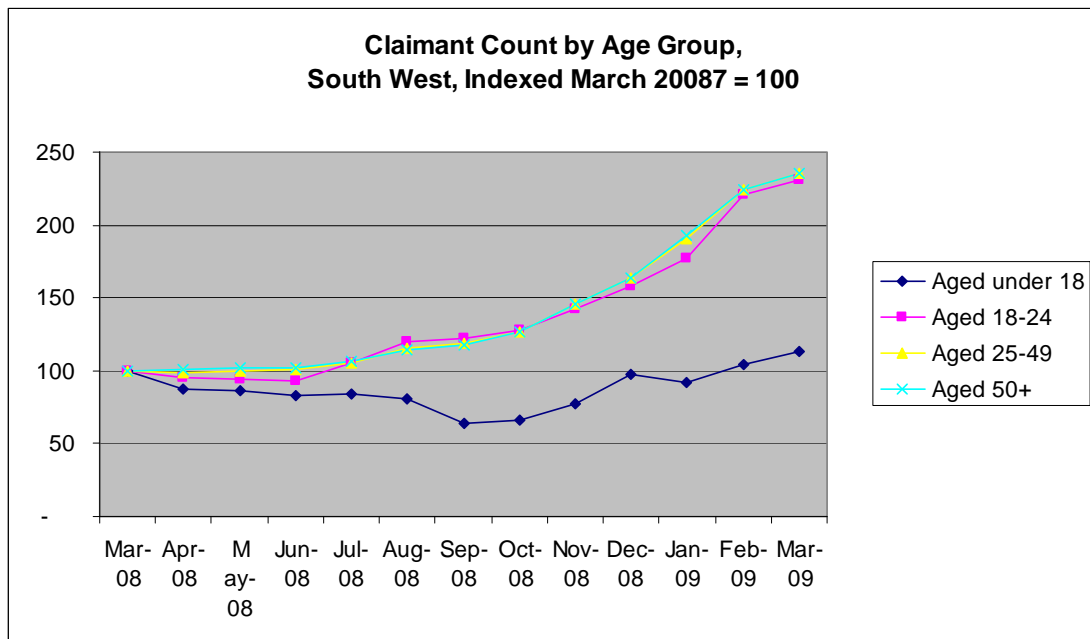
However national LFS data shows that:

Young people have experienced the largest decrease in employment rates, compared with other age groups. In the three months to March 2009, employment rates for 16-17 and 18-24 year-olds were down 3.9 percentage points on the previous year, at 30.6 per cent and 60.6 per cent respectively⁴.

This may be partly due to growth in the number young people who are staying on in education, as these people are less likely to be economically active.

Certainly it is the case that the rate of rise in the claimant count was remarkably similar for all age groups apart from those aged under 18, who are most affected by national education and skills policy.

Figure 22: Claimant Count by Age, South West, March 2008 to March 2009

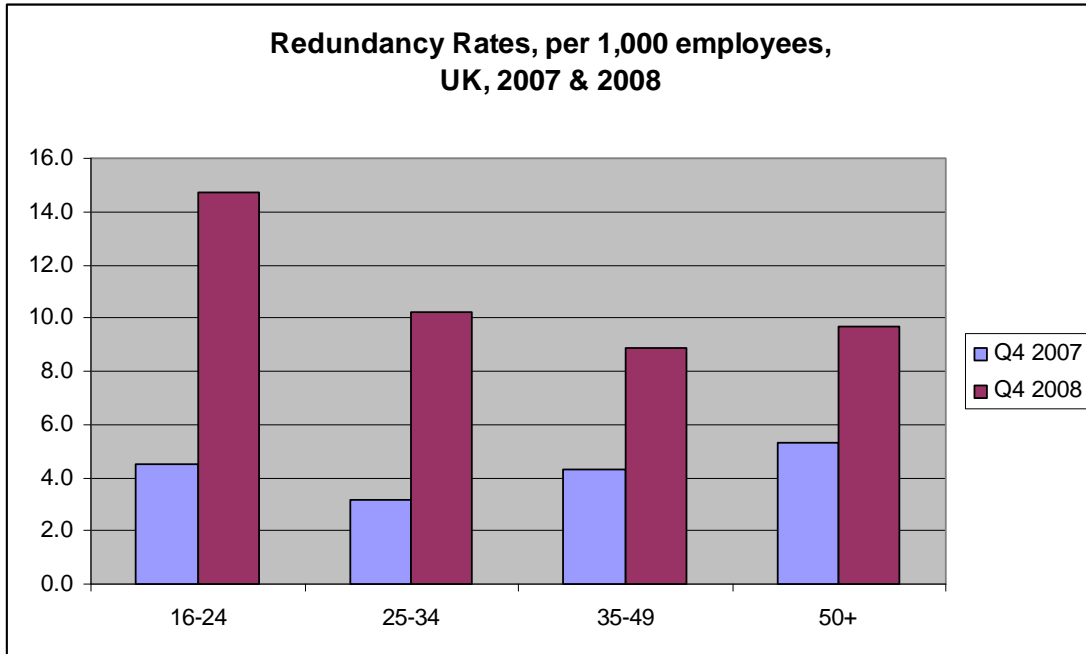


Source: JC+ / NOMIS

National data (regional data is not currently available) also shows that young people had the highest redundancy rates in 2008 quarter 4, and the largest increase in redundancy rates over the previous year.

⁴ *The Labour Market Impacts of the Recession, ONS, May 2009*

Figure 23: Redundancies by Age, South West, Quarter 4 2007 and 2008



Source: LFS

4.3 Ethnicity

Nationally the claimant count for people who identified themselves as 'White' rose 97%, from 505,000 in March 2008 to 992,500 in March 2009. During the same period the rise among those who identified themselves as being from an 'Ethnic minority' rose 44% from 126,000 to 181,000. The rise among White people exceeded the rise among any single ethnic minority sub-group.

This trend is also seen in the South West, where the rise among the 'White' population was 132% compared to a rise of 82% among the region's Ethnic Minority populations.

This is likely to be the result of differences in sector, occupation and type of employment (e.g. self employment), although other factors, such as family support systems or cultural attitudes towards benefit dependency cannot be discounted.

5. IMPACT ON AREAS

Table 3 shows that claimant count growth has tended to be highest in areas in the North and Eastern ends of the region. Swindon and South Gloucestershire both experienced more 200% growth in claimant numbers. In volume terms, the greatest growth in claimant numbers was in Gloucestershire, Devon and City of Bristol.

Table 3: Rise in Claimant Count, Local Authority in SW, April 2008 to April 2009

	%	Number
Swindon	208%	4,437
South Gloucestershire	207%	2,585
Poole	187%	1,604
Wiltshire	171%	4,587
Dorset	166%	3,073
North Somerset	164%	1,932
Devon	150%	6,907
Gloucestershire	144%	7,495
Bath and North East Somerset	143%	1,406
South West	139%	56,653
Somerset	138%	4,678
Bournemouth	127%	2,176
Bristol, City of	116%	5,935
Torbay	103%	1,824
Cornwall	101%	4,722
Plymouth	100%	3,288

Source: JC+ / NOMIS

The three Local Authorities that head Table 3 (above) with the greatest percentage increase in Claimant Count over the last year - Swindon, Poole and South Gloucestershire – are also among four Local Authorities with the greatest proportionate declines in vacancies. Swindon heads both lists. Generally speaking, the rate of decline in vacancies has also been greatest in the north and east of the region.

Table 4: Decline in Vacancies, Local Authority, South West, April 2008 to April 2009

Decline in Vacancies	April 2008	April 2009	% Decline
Swindon	1,240	462	63%
Poole	1,275	516	60%
Bournemouth	1,875	846	55%
South Gloucestershire	2,001	933	53%
Wiltshire	2,111	988	53%
Bath and North East Somerset	922	461	50%
Gloucestershire	3,903	2,033	48%
Bristol, City of	3,389	1,865	45%
Devon	4,635	2,601	44%
Dorset	1,700	1,021	40%
Cornwall	2,936	1,853	37%
Torbay	849	561	34%
North Somerset	1,121	741	34%
Plymouth	1,089	761	30%
Somerset	2,634	1,976	25%
Column Total	31,687	17,618	44%

Source: JC+ / NOMIS

When these two factors are brought together in a calculation of Claimants per Vacancy, Swindon heads the list by some considerable distance. From a base of 1.7 claimants per vacancy in April 2008 the figure has risen rapidly, particularly over recent months, to 14.2 Claimants per Vacancy, well in excess of the regional average of 5.5 Claimants per vacancy.

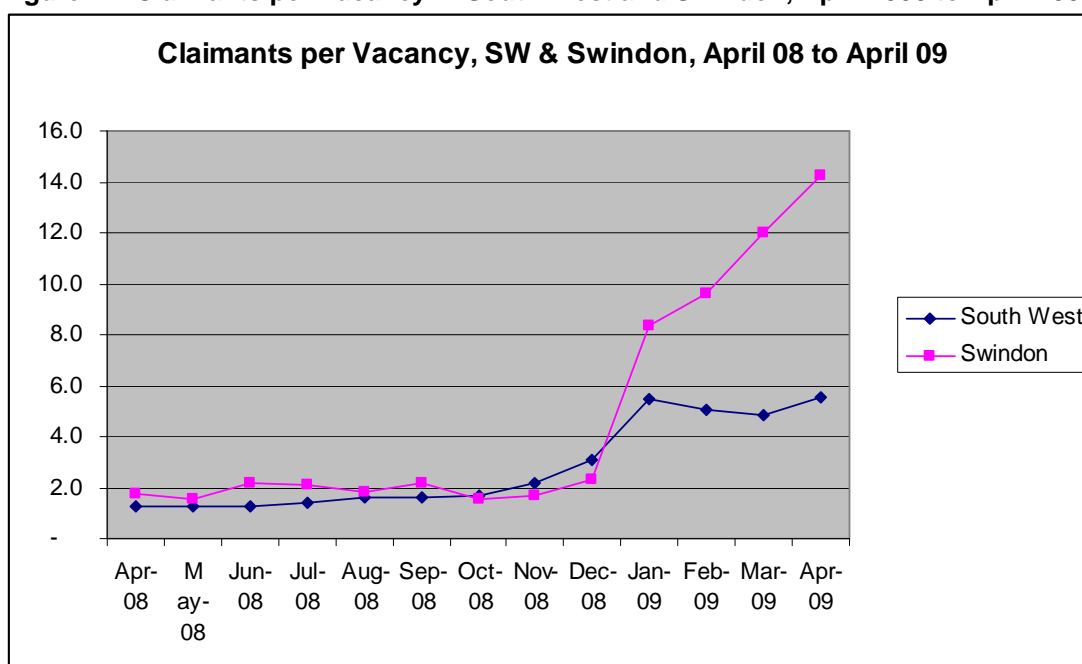
Table 5: Claimants per Vacancy, Local Authority, South West, April 2008 to April 2009

Claimants per Vacancy	April 2008	February 2009	April 2009
Swindon	1.7	9.6	14.2
Plymouth	3.0	9.1	8.7
Wiltshire	1.3	4.5	7.4
Torbay	2.1	10.1	6.4
Gloucestershire	1.3	5.4	6.2
Bristol, City of	1.5	5.2	5.9
South West	1.3	5.0	5.5
Bath and North East Somerset	1.1	3.6	5.2
Cornwall	1.6	8.1	5.1
Dorset	1.1	3.5	4.8
Poole	0.7	3.3	4.8
Bournemouth	0.9	2.9	4.6
Devon	1.0	4.8	4.4
North Somerset	1.0	3.8	4.2
South Gloucestershire	0.6	3.6	4.1
Somerset	1.3	4.2	4.1

Source: JC+ / NOMIS

The continuing steep upward trend in Claimants per Vacancy in Swindon over the last three months, during which the regional rise trend levelled off, is a particular concern.

Figure 24: Claimants per Vacancy in South West and Swindon, April 2008 to April 2009



Source: JC+ / NOMIS

When notified of redundancies Jobcentre Plus district office staff identify these by the location of the employer. The affected employees may come from a wider area.

The two areas where the largest number of redundancies have been made are Bristol and Devon. These areas both have large populations and are significant centres of employment, which makes the large number of redundancies notified by employers in these locations unsurprising.

In reality the redundancies made by employers in an area such as Bristol will not only be divided up among residents of Bristol. Those travelling to work in Bristol from Gloucestershire, Somerset or Wiltshire may be equally affected. Thus the data on redundancies as % of working age population in each county (Table 6) should be treated with caution. It is nonetheless interesting to note that Swindon once again appears to be the area hardest hit.

Table 6: Volume of Notified redundancies per County and Notified Redundancies as a % of Working Age Population , SW Counties, 1/11/08 to 15/3/09

	Volume	% working age population
Swindon	2,030	1.69%
Bristol	5,058	1.29%
Devon	5,857	0.88%
Wiltshire	2,154	0.82%
South West	23,308	0.76%
Glos	2,954	0.58%
Cornwall	1,546	0.50%
Dorset	1,902	0.48%
Somerset	1,807	0.43%

Source: JC+ / NOMIS

6. IMPACT ON SECTORS & OCCUPATIONS

6.1 Sectors

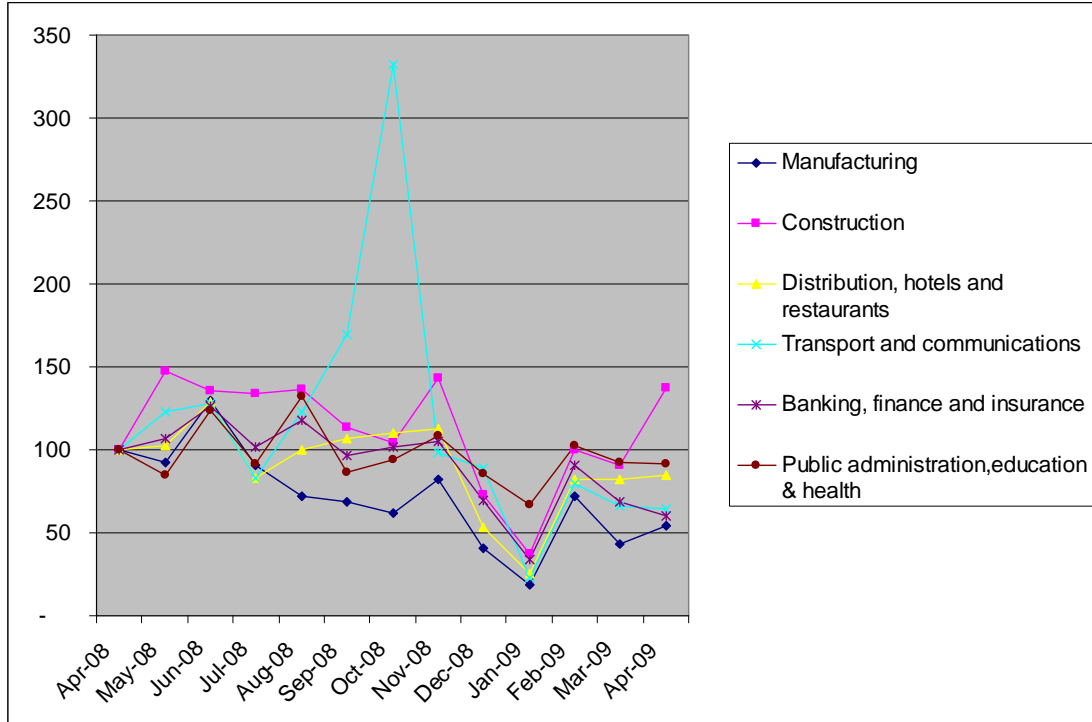
Looking at regional vacancies by sector (Figure 25 below) a number of features emerge in the trends over the last year.

Manufacturing shows the greatest proportionate loss, with unfilled vacancies in April 2009 running at 55% of the April 2008 total. Caution is however again required, in that manufacturing was losing jobs prior to the recession. If the data is re-based using October 2008 as the starting point, manufacturing vacancies have not dropped as fast as the regional all industry average.

Vacancies in Banking, finance and insurance show the next greatest decline, down to 59% of the April 2008 volumes. This is where the greatest volume of vacancies has been lost, over 6,000.

Significant numbers of construction vacancies have been notified to jobcentre plus in recent months, turning a 62% decline in vacancies over the nine months to January 2009 into a 37% gain by April 2009.

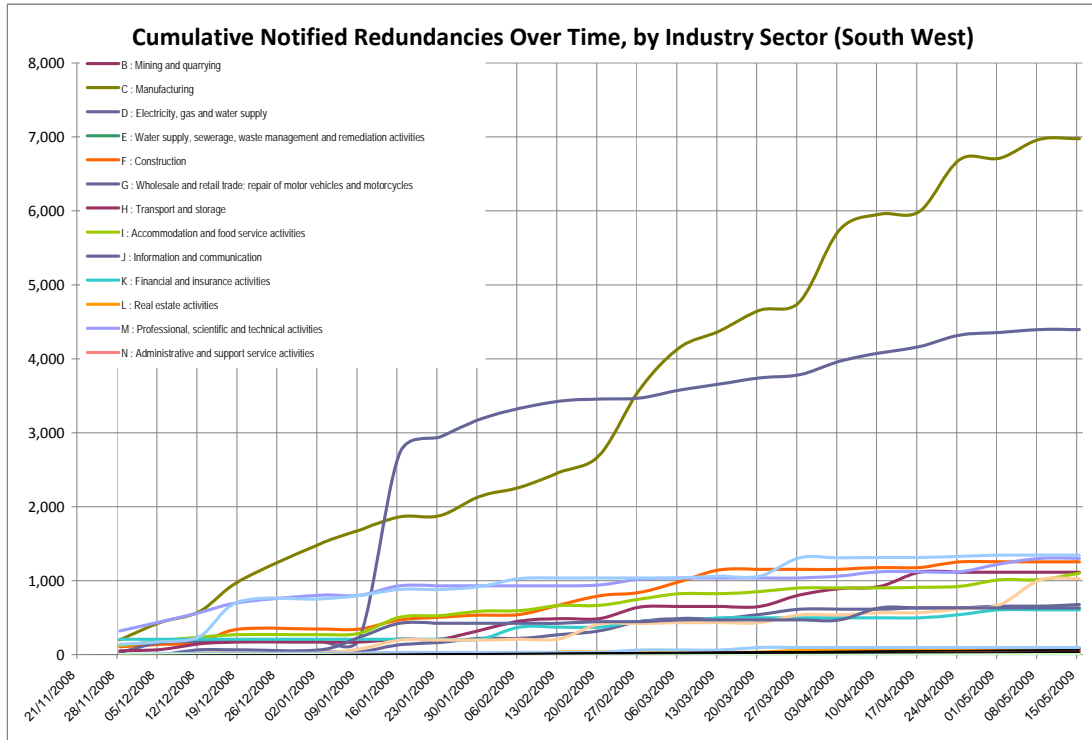
Figure 25: % change in notified vacancies by sector, SW, Apr 2008 to Apr 2009



Source: JC+ / NOMIS

Looking at redundancies, Figure 26 below shows that the largest number of redundancies in the South West have been made in 'Manufacturing' and 'Wholesale and Retail' sectors. Large numbers of wholesale and retail redundancies were notified during December, at the time of the Woolworths announcement. Manufacturing redundancies climbed rapidly, while other sectors show more gradual increases.

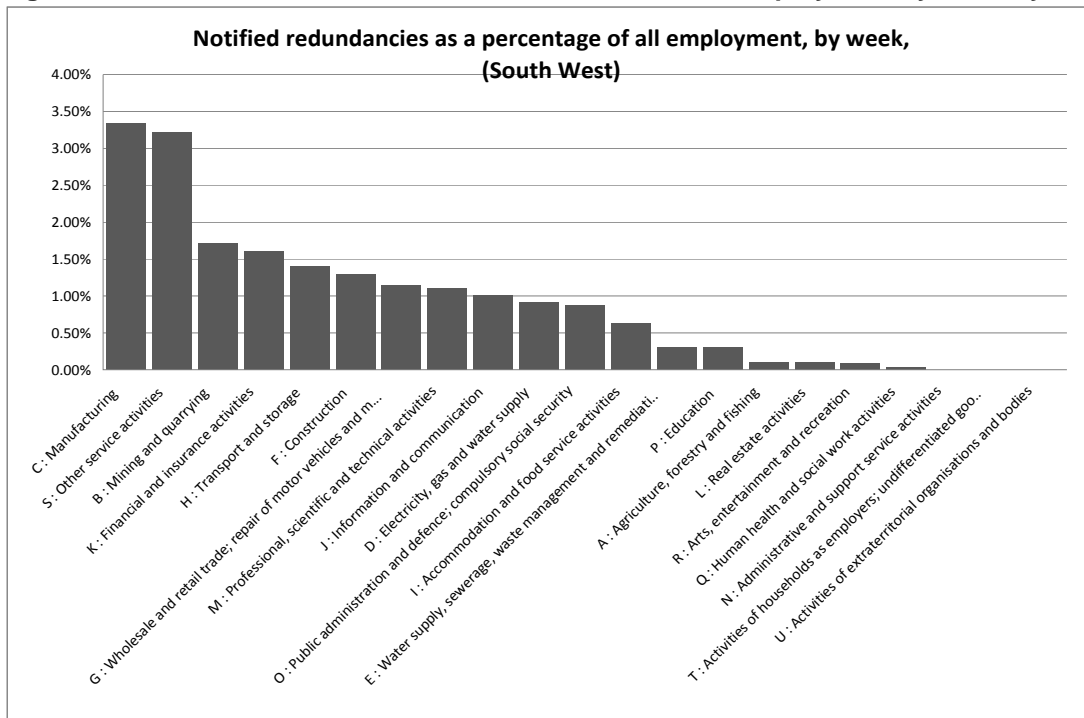
Figure 26: Notified Redundancies by industry, SW, Cumulative from 1/11/08 to 15/5/09



Source: JC+ administrative data

When the number of redundancies made in each sector is calculated as a proportion of the working population in each industry, manufacturing emerges as the sector hardest hit, with notified redundancies amounting to over 3% of the sector workforce. ‘Other service activities’ also appear to have been hit⁵, followed by Mining & Quarrying and Financial and Insurance Activities.

Figure 27: Notified Redundancies, 1/11/08 to 15/5/09, % of employment by industry, SW



Source: JC+ administrative data / ONS Population estimates

6.2 Occupations

Looking at occupations, vacancies for higher skilled occupations that are notified to Jobcentre Plus appear to have held up much better than those for lower skilled occupations.

There could be two interpretations of this. Either this is a reflection of changes in the number of vacancies within each occupation in the labour market at large. Or alternatively, that during the recession employers are more willing to use Jobcentre Plus as a means of filling senior occupations, as this saves money and Jobcentre Plus may be a better route to ‘job-ready’ applicants during recession than it is in times of full employment. Unfortunately it’s not possible to tell which.

⁵ Caution is required here. JC+ may note a variety of employers as suppliers of ‘Other service activities’ beyond official definitions which include dry-cleaning, funeral services, hairdressing and other services.

Table 7: % change in notified vacancies by occupation, April 2008 to April 2009, South West

	% change
Associate Professional and Technical Occupations	18%
Sales and Customer Service occupations	1%
Professional Occupations	-7%
Managers and Senior Officials	-11%
Personal Service Occupations	-28%
Elementary Occupations	-32%
Skilled Trades Occupations	-40%
Process, Plant and Machine Operatives	-40%
Administrative and Secretarial Occupations	-47%

Source: JC+ / NOMIS