

The North Kent economy is showing signs of improvement, with the latest quarterly data showing a rise in the employment rate and a fall in the total unemployment rate. While all out-of-work indicators remain higher in Thames Gateway Kent compared to benchmark areas, the trend is generally downward in line with the wider trends. Across North Kent, Dartford outperforms the other local authority districts on all out-of-work indicators, whilst Swale exhibits particularly high claimant rates amongst 18-24 year olds and those on out of work benefits.

Total Employment Rates		Compared to:		
		Previous quarter	Previous Year	Two years ago
Thames Gateway Kent	71.7%	↑	↑	↑
Kent & Medway	71.1%	↑	↓	↓
Greater South East	74.7%	↑	↑	↑
Great Britain	70.7%	↑	↑	↑

Source: Annual Population Survey, Jan2012-Dec2012, Oct2011-Sep2012; Jan2011-Dec201; Jan2010-Dec2010.

- The total employment rate for TGK has risen above the level for Kent and Medway (K&M), which has declined in relative terms. TGK is also above the GB average but below the Greater South East (GSE).
- The employment rate in TGK is higher than the last quarter, last year and last two years in line with trends in GSE and nationally but counter to trends in K&M.

% Economically Inactive wanting a job		Compared to:		
		Previous quarter	Previous Year	Two years ago
Thames Gateway Kent	42.5%	↑	↑	↑
Kent & Medway	35.5%	↑	↑	↑
Greater South East	26.8%	↑	↑	↑
Great Britain	24.9%	↑	↑	↑

Source: Annual Population Survey, Jan2012-Dec2012, Oct2011-Sep2012; Jan2011-Dec201; Jan2010-Dec2010.

- The percentage of economically inactive people wanting a job is significantly higher in TGK than either K&M, GSE or nationally.
- The rate has risen 11% over two years, compared with 1.1% in both GSE and GB, and 4.7% in K&M.

Total Unemployment Rates		Compared to:		
		Previous quarter	Previous Year	Two years ago
Thames Gateway Kent	8.4%	↓	↓	↑
Kent & Medway	7.8%	↓	↓	↓
Greater South East	6.3%	↓	↓	=
Great Britain	8.0%	↓	↓	↑

Source: Annual Population Survey, Jan2012-Dec2012, Oct2011-Sep2012; Jan2011-Dec201; Jan2010-Dec2010.

- The total unemployment rate remains higher in TGK than in K&M, the GSE and GB.
- Unemployment in TGK has dropped over the past quarter and past year but remains higher than two years ago. GB and particularly GSE have been relatively stable over that period.
- The percentage decrease in TGK (2.6%) since one year ago is more marked than comparator areas.

JSA Claimants Rates			Compared to:		
			Previous Month	Previous Quarter	Previous Year
Thames Gateway Kent	14,160	3.6%	↓	↓	↓
Dartford	1,785	2.8%	↓	=	↓
Gravesham	2,525	3.9%	↓	=	↓
Medway	6,630	3.8%	↓	↓	↓
Swale	3,220	3.7%	↓	↓	↓
Kent & Medway	34,620	3.2%	↓	↓	↓
Greater South East		3.1%	↓	↓	↓
Great Britain		3.7%	↓	↓	↓

Source: Job Centre Plus, JSA Claimant Counts, April, March, January 2013, April 2012.

- The JSA Claimant rate remains higher in TGK than K&M or GSE but lower than GB. Across the piece claimant rates are down on the previous month, quarter and year except for Dartford and Gravesham which show no change on the previous quarter.
- Fluctuations in some areas (slight increase in last month against overall downward trend) may reflect seasonal factors.
- Dartford continues to have lower claimant rates than other TGK authorities or comparators.

18-24 year old JSA Claimants			Compared to:		
			Previous Month	Previous Quarter	Previous Year
Thames Gateway Kent	4,095	7.3%	↓	↓	↓
Dartford	475	5.7%	↓	=	↓
Gravesham	700	7.8%	↓	=	↓
Medway	1,930	7.1%	↓	↓	↓
Swale	985	8.8%	↓	↓	↓
Kent & Medway	9,575	6.2%	↓	↓	↓
Greater South East		5.0%	↓	↓	↓
England & Wales		6.7%	↓	↓	↓

- The percentage of 18-24 year olds claiming JSA is considerably higher in TGK than K&M, GSE or England and Wales (E&W).
- Dartford's claimant rate is significantly lower than TGK as a whole, both Gravesham and Swale are significantly above the TGK rate: the margin of 3.1% difference between Dartford and Swale is very marked.
- Whereas in January 2013 Dartford and GSE showed the same percentage, GSE now scores significantly better overall than any of the comparator areas.

Source: Job Centre Plus, JSA Claimant Counts, April, March, January 2013, April 2012.
 Note: 2011 Census of Population data used for 18-24 year age base and not vet available for GB

18-24 year old JSA Claimants claiming for 6+ months			Compared to:		
			Previous Month	Previous Quarter	Previous Year
Thames Gateway Kent	1,565	38.2%	↑	↑	↓
Dartford	160	33.7%	↑	↑	↓
Gravesham	230	32.9%	↑	↑	↓
Medway	775	40.2%	↑	↑	↓
Swale	405	41.1%	↑	↑	↓
Kent & Medway	3,510	36.7%	↑	↑	↓
Greater South East		34.3%	↑	↑	↓
England & Wales		38.1%	↑	↑	↓

- The proportion of 18-24 year old JSA claimants claiming for more than 6 months in TGK is similar to the E&W rate, but higher than K&M and GSE.
- Within North Kent there is a marked divide between the lower rates in Dartford and Gravesham (which are below GSE rates) and higher rates in Medway and Swale.
- As with 18-24 year old claimants generally, Swale has the highest claimant rate in North Kent.
- Across the piece the proportion of claimants has declined compared with a year ago.

Source: Job Centre Plus, JSA Claimant Counts, April, March and January 2013, April 2012.
 Note: 2011 Census of Population data used for 18-24 year age base and not vet available for GB

Out of work Benefit Claimants			Compared to:		
			Previous Quarter	Previous Year	Two years ago
Thames Gateway Kent	56,110	14.5%	=	↓	↑
Dartford	7,210	11.3%	↓	↓	↓
Gravesham	9,170	14.2%	↓	↓	=
Medway	26,840	14.1%	↓	↓	↑
Swale	13,890	16.1%	↑	=	
Kent & Medway	143,580	13.2%	=	=	↓
Greater South East		11.7%	↓	↓	↓
Great Britain		14.1%	↓	↓	↓

- These data include all categories of benefits so are not directly comparable with previous analyses.
- The TGK rate is slightly higher than the Great Britain average, but significantly higher than K&M and GSE. This is also higher than two years ago and unchanged on the previous quarter.
- Dartford has the lowest rate against all the comparator areas, and Swale the highest.

Source: DWP benefit claimants - working age client group. Key out-of-work benefits includes the groups: job seekers, ESA and incapacity benefits, lone parents and others on income related benefits. November 2012 data

Key	
↑	Upward trend
↓	Downward trend
=	No change
Note	The population base for calculation of rates is Residents aged 16 to 64 years.