
Director General for Regulation

John Pullinger
National Statistician
UK Statistics Authority
London
SW1V 2QQ

10 June 2015

Dear John,

CLAIMANT COUNT INCLUDING UNIVERSAL CREDIT

Thank you for your letter setting out your plans regarding the claimant count statistics. I am grateful to your staff for engaging openly with my team over the last few months about this important statistical series. I also appreciate the way that you have sought to develop these statistics as Universal Credit has been rolled out, and have been evaluating their quality over time.

Your letter invited the Authority to consider the National Statistics status of the claimant count statistics. Designation of official statistics as National Statistics shows that the statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value. Having reviewed the information that you have shared with us, I consider that, in future, the series based purely on the count of Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) claimants should not have National Statistics status. Unusually, this decision is taken not because of any fundamental quality concerns over the source data, but because the public value of the future series as a measure of the claimant count based solely on the count of JSA claimants will diminish with each subsequent publication.

There will, however, clearly be some continuing user interest in the long historical JSA series. I therefore welcome your plans to continue to make them available to users. I would encourage you to ensure that the status of these statistics - both in terms of their relationship with the replacement measure, and their National Statistics designation - is made clear in the publication.

I look forward to further updates about the development of the new experimental series. I will make provision within my team to assess the new Universal Credit series against the relevant aspects of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics in due course.

Yours sincerely,



Ed Humpherson