

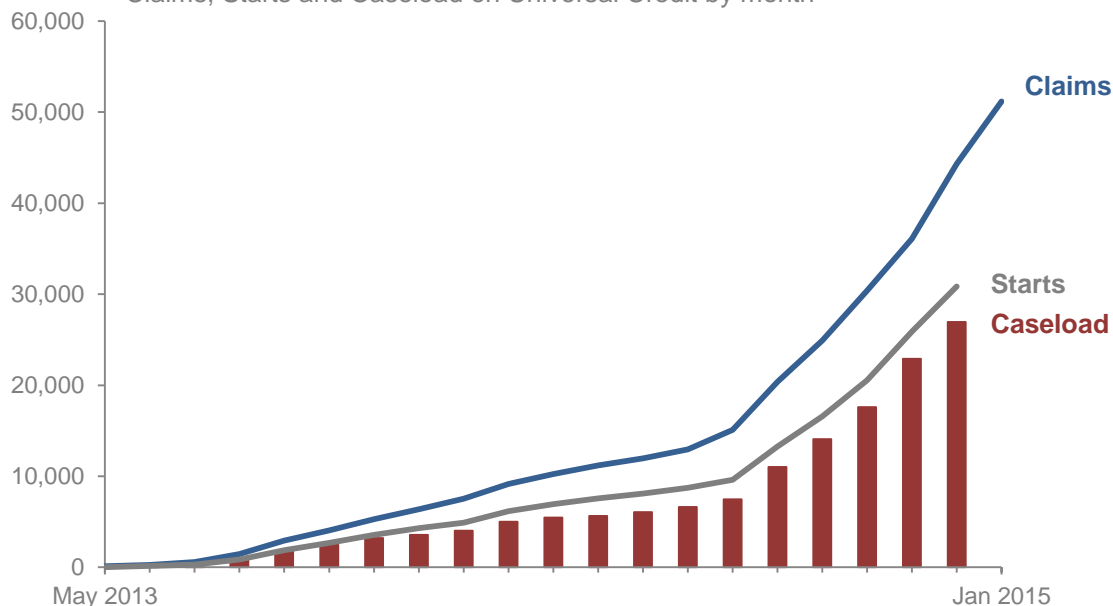
## Universal Credit – monthly experimental official statistics to January 2015

**Universal Credit** is a new benefit which aims to reduce poverty, by making work pay, and to help claimants and their families to become more independent.

Universal Credit was introduced in April 2013 in certain pathfinder areas of North West England. Since October 2013, it has progressively been rolled out to other areas. This release covers the period in which 96 Jobcentre Plus offices have started to introduce Universal Credit.

### Universal Credit

Claims, Starts and Caseload on Universal Credit by month



### Main Findings

**54,380** people have made a claim for Universal Credit up to 15<sup>th</sup> January 2015. The rate at which people are claiming continues to increase as the roll out of Universal Credit continues.

**30,850** of the people who have made a claim have, up to 11<sup>th</sup> December 2014, attended an initial interview, accepted their claimant commitment, and gone on to start Universal Credit.

**26,940** people were on the Universal Credit caseload, as at 11<sup>th</sup> December 2014. Of these, 9,300 (or 35 per cent) were in employment and 17,640 (or 65 per cent) were not in employment.

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## Universal Credit – monthly experimental official statistics to January 2015

### Introduction

This Summary contains statistics on Universal Credit covering the period to 15<sup>th</sup> January 2015 (for claims made) and 11<sup>th</sup> December 2014 (for starts and caseload) covering the 96 Jobcentre Plus offices who had implemented Universal Credit up to this date.

**Universal Credit** is a new benefit which aims to reduce poverty, by making work pay, and to help claimants and their families to become more independent. It also aims to simplify the benefits system by bringing together the following benefits into a single payment:

- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Income Support
- Working Tax Credit
- Child Tax Credit
- Housing Benefit

The main differences between Universal Credit and the current welfare system are:

- Universal Credit is available to people who are in work and on a low income, as well as to those who are out-of-work
- most people will apply online and manage their claim through an online account
- Universal Credit will be responsive – as people on low incomes move in and out of work, they will get on going support
- most claimants on low incomes will still be paid Universal Credit when they first start a new job or increase their part-time hours
- claimants will receive a single monthly household payment, paid into a bank account in the same way as a monthly salary; support with housing costs will usually go direct to the claimant as part of their monthly payment

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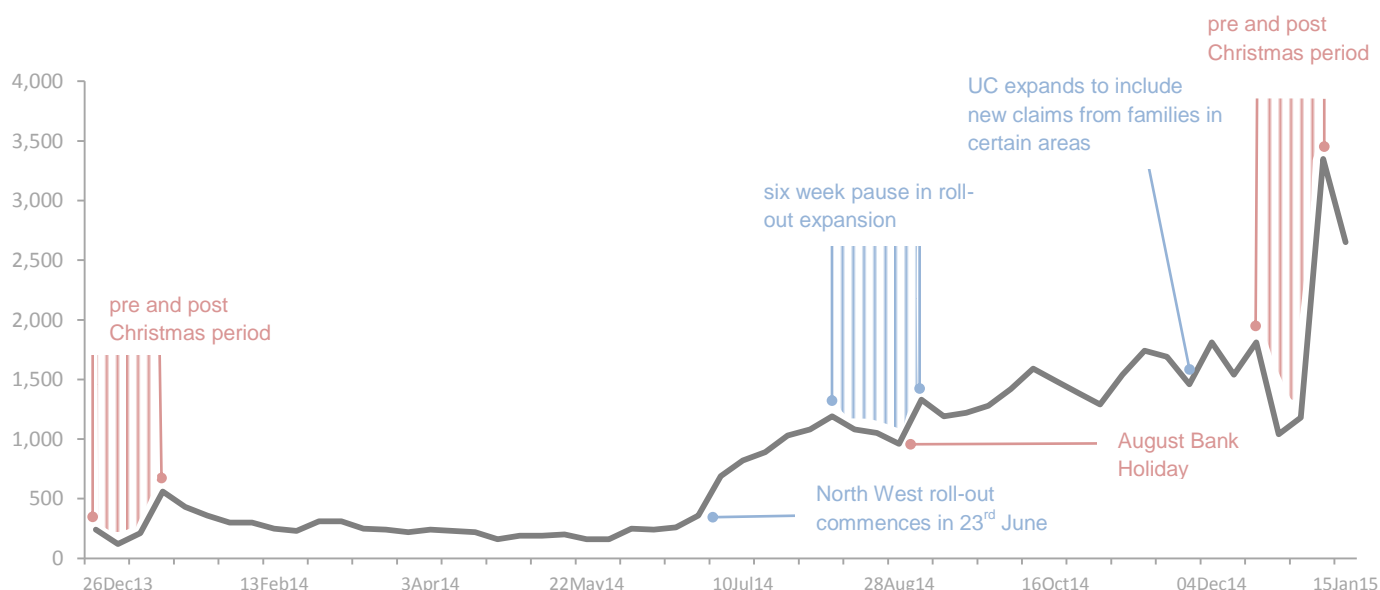
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### Claiming Universal Credit

People will usually make a claim for Universal Credit on-line, in which initial claim verification will take place. After making a claim, an initial interview will take place with the claimant in which eligibility for Universal Credit will be confirmed and the claimant will accept a [Claimant Commitment](#). At this point, a claimant will be recorded as starting Universal Credit. Users should note that the statistics on claims made are four weeks more up-to-date than statistics on starts and caseload. Not all people who make a claim for Universal Credit will go on to start.

#### Claims made to UC are increasing

new claims in each week in the last 13 months to Thur 15th Jan 2015



#### Key messages

**The rate at which people are making a claim to Universal Credit has been increasing since the expansion in North West England began.**

The total number of people who have made a claim is now 54,380, with an average of 2,060 new claims per week in the past four weeks, compared to an average of 1,660 new claims per week in previous four weeks.

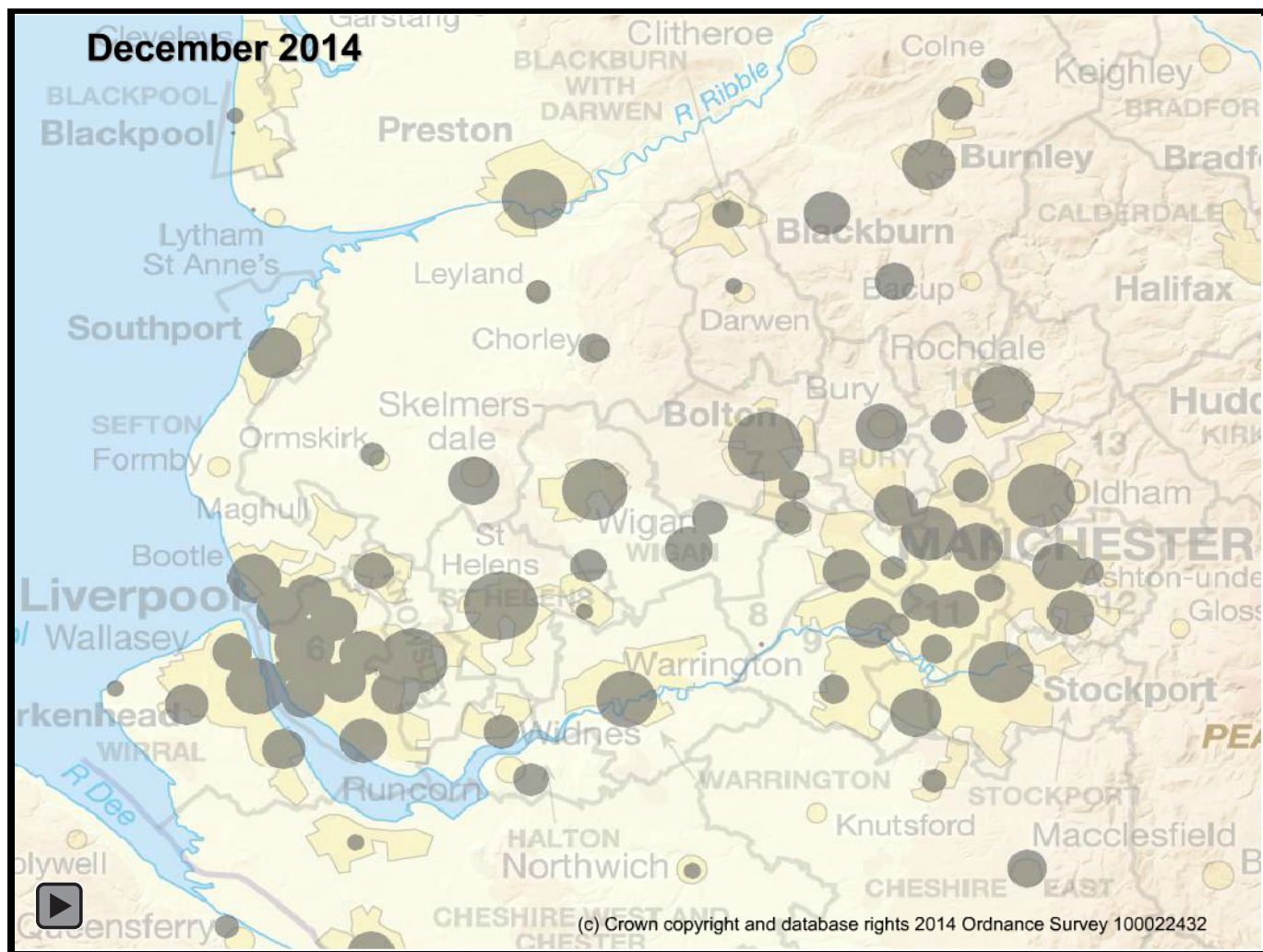
The number of people making a claim to Universal Credit decreased during the week prior to Christmas before slightly increasing during the week from Boxing Day to New Years Day. This was followed by a significant increase in the first week of January where 3,370 people made a claim (86% higher than the previous highest weekly figure of 1,810). This included 910 people making a claim on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> January (the highest on a single day since the introduction of Universal Credit).

See **Excel table 1.01** for full data.

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**People starting Universal Credit** in the North West region in the month shown below.

Please click on the map to view previous month's figures.



### Key messages

**The total number of people who have started Universal Credit up to 11<sup>th</sup> December 2014 was 30,850, within 91 Jobcentre Plus offices.**

The total number of people who have now started Universal Credit is 19 per cent higher than the total a month earlier (25,890).

In the past month, more people have started Universal Credit in St Helens and Bolton, Blackhorse Street Jobcentre Plus offices than any other (170 people starting).

Approximately two-thirds (69 per cent) of people starting Universal Credit are male, and 58 per cent were aged under 24.

See **Excel tables 2.01 - 2.04** for full data.

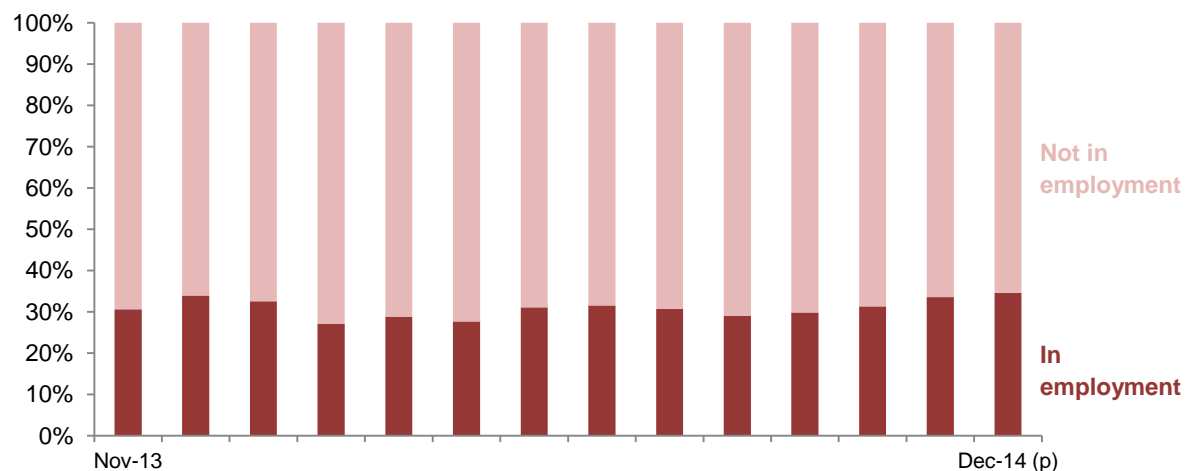
**Map note:** the circle represents a Jobcentre Plus office location, and the size of the circle is proportionate to the number of people starting Universal Credit in the past month.



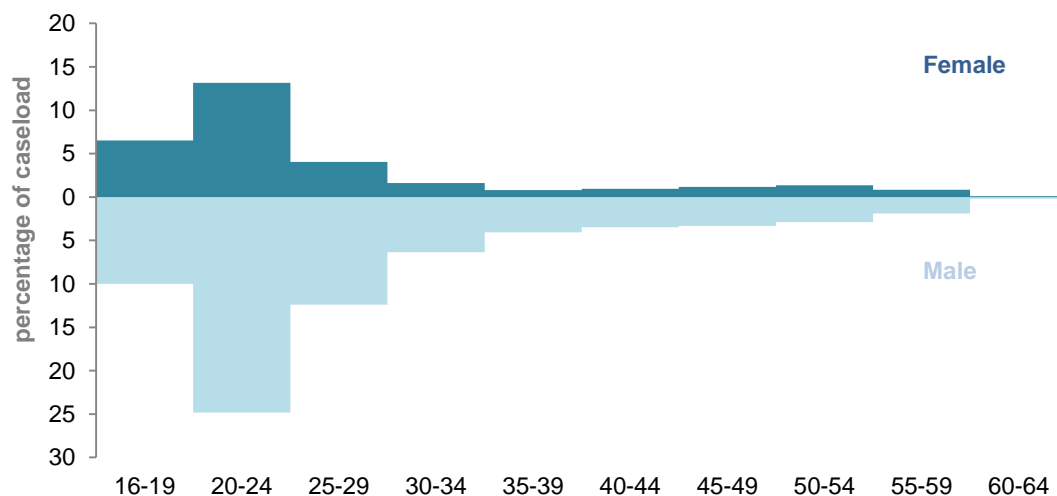
## Universal Credit – monthly experimental official statistics to January 2015

### Universal Credit caseload

by month and employment status



by age group and gender, as at 11<sup>th</sup> December 2014



### Key messages

**There were 26,940 people on the Universal Credit caseload as at 11<sup>th</sup> December 2014.** This represents an increase of 21 per cent on the caseload compared to November 2014.

The Jobcentre Plus office with the largest caseload was Oldham with 2,630 Universal Credit claimants, followed by Wigan with 1,950 (caseload breakdown by local authority and parliamentary constituency are available in accompanying Excel tables).

Of the people on the caseload in December 2014, 35 per cent were in employment and 65 per cent were not in employment..

51 per cent of the Universal Credit caseload in December 2014 has been on for less than three months, this compares to 55 per cent in November 2014, 60 per cent in October 2014 and 54 per cent in September 2014.

There are more males on the Universal Credit caseload than females (69 per cent compared to 31 per cent).

Males aged 20-24 make up 25 per cent of the total Universal Credit caseload.

See **Excel tables 3.01 – 3.19** for full data.

Please note figures for the latest month (December 2014) are provisional and will be finalised in the next release. See the [Data Source and Definitions](#) section for more details.

## Universal Credit – monthly experimental official statistics to January 2015

### Data Source

These official statistics have been compiled using data from systems within local offices and records of Universal Credit benefit payments made by the Department.

This and other new data sources will, in time, allow a progressively wider range of breakdowns to be published as the new IT systems are introduced. The methodology used and definitions of the official statistics may be updated within subsequent releases, along with information on the impact of any changes to the time series already released. A [strategy](#) for the release of official statistics on Universal Credit was published in September 2013.

These statistics have been developed using guidelines set out by the UK Statistics Authority, and are new official statistics undergoing evaluation. They have therefore been designated as [Experimental Statistics](#). Users are invited to [comment](#) on the development and relevancy of these statistics at this stage.

### Definitions used

This report contains three main measures:

- The number of **claims** made is defined as the number of individuals who have submitted a claim to Universal Credit regardless of whether they then go on to start Universal Credit. There are a number of reasons why they may not start e.g. the individual is not eligible to claim Universal Credit. It is also important to note that the headline figure relates to all claims made up to 15<sup>th</sup> January 2015 which is 5 weeks later than the figures provided for starters and caseload. This means that individuals who have made their first claim to Universal Credit after the 11<sup>th</sup> December 2014 will be included in the claims made figure but will not be included in the starters and caseload figures even if they complete the claim process and are still on Universal Credit. They will, however, be captured in future releases which cover the period after 11<sup>th</sup> December 2014.
- A **starter** to Universal Credit is defined as an individual who has completed the Universal Credit claim process and accepted their [Claimant Commitment](#). The reporting month in relation to **starts** to Universal Credit relates to a period from the second Friday in the previous month to the second Thursday in the current month, e.g. for December 2014 the starts recorded relate to the period 14<sup>th</sup> November 2014 to 11<sup>th</sup> December 2014. Figures show the first successful claim per individual. Subsequent claims by the same individual will not be counted in this release. Work is currently on-going to identify and include these cases in future publications.



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- The **caseload** of Universal Credit claimants includes those who have started Universal Credit (as above) and have not had a termination recorded for this spell, up to the 'count date'. A termination would be recorded either at the request of the individual or if their entitlement to Universal Credit ends, for example, they no longer satisfy the financial conditions to receive Universal Credit as they have capital over £16,000, or increased earnings which reduce their award to zero for six consecutive months. The latest overall Universal Credit caseload figure reported in this release relates to the second Thursday in December, i.e. 11<sup>th</sup> December 2014. Please note that caseload figures are provisional and will be finalised in the next release (the expectation is that the provisional caseload figure will be within one per cent of the final figure). The caseload figure includes a breakdown on whether the claimant is **in employment** or **not in** employment, which is also subject to revision although the expectation is that this will be within two per cent of the final figure. An individual on Universal Credit at the count date will be recorded as in employment if they have employment earnings within the Universal Credit assessment period which spans the count date. They may not be in employment precisely on the count date.

### Universal Credit and measures of unemployment

Unemployment in the UK is measured using the Labour Force Survey (LFS) consistent with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) definition. The LFS is a sample survey of people living in private households. The survey asks a series of questions about respondents' personal circumstances and their activity in the labour market. Through these questions every respondent is classified as in employment, unemployed or economically inactive, consistent with ILO definitions.

The LFS and ILO defines an individual as unemployed if they are without work, available for work and seeking work. The UK applies this as anybody who is not in employment by the above definition, has actively sought work in the last 4 weeks and is available to start work in the next 2 weeks, or has found a job and is waiting to start in the next 2 weeks, is considered to be unemployed. The measure is not dependent on which, if any, benefit is being claimed.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) also publish monthly National Statistics on the claimant count – a measure of how many people are claiming Jobseeker's Allowance. Although the headline claimant count statistics do not include data on Universal Credit claimants, ONS do publish an [indicative representation of the claimant count](#) adjusting for Universal Credit caseload.

## Universal Credit – monthly experimental official statistics to January 2015

### Further roll out

Universal Credit, which is available in a number of areas across England, Scotland and Wales, completed its roll out to the whole of the North West of England on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2014. From 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014 Universal Credit expanded to include new claims from couples and from 24<sup>th</sup> November 2014 to new claims from families. Universal Credit will continue its roll out to all Jobcentre Plus offices and local authorities across the country from February 2015.

A limited test of the Digital Service for Universal Credit was launched in Sutton, South London on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2014. Claimants will manage their Universal Credit claim online to monitor payments, communicate with their work coach and record work search progress. Please note that this publication does not currently include statistics covering this area.

In total nearly 100 Jobcentre Plus offices, or 1 in 8 Jobcentres in Britain, are now offering Universal Credit.

Further information can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/universal-credit-to-take-the-first-new-claims-for-couples>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/welfare-revolution-rolls-out-to-families-universal-credit-to-be-in-a-third-of-jobcentres-by-spring>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/plans-announced-for-accelerated-rollout-of-universal-credit-after-success-in-north-west>

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/384115/uc-national-expansion.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/384115/uc-national-expansion.pdf)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-credit-information-for-claimants-in-sutton>

For the period for which these statistics cover there were 91, for starters and caseloads and 96 for claims made, Jobcentre offices delivering Universal Credit.

See **Excel tables 4.01** for a full list of Jobcentre Plus offices by the date they implemented Universal Credit.