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Local Authority Council Tax Support – Q4 2024 to 2025

June 2025

FINANCE WITH VISION

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has published the statistical tables for ‘Council Tax Support Q4 2024 to 2025’. This represents an update on the numbers of claimants of council tax support to the end of March 2025. The totals shown are split between pension age and working age claimants across local authorities and it is available as the fifth dataset [here](#).
- 1.2 The figures represent a count of the numbers of council tax support claimants at the end of March 2025 and shows the count at the end of previous quarters back to 2015/16. After re-organisation and the creation of 4 new unitary councils it now covers 296 local authorities, although for this latest quarter one local authority has not submitted data so analysis for the last twelve months covers just 295 councils.
- 1.3 This note is structured as follows:
- Section 2 – Highlights the main messages arising from our analysis of the publication of claimants of council tax support to March 2025; and
 - Section 3 – Provides detailed analysis of claimant numbers published to the end of March 2025.

2. Main messages

2.1. The main messages emerging from analysis of the publication of council tax support claimant numbers across 296 (295 in 2024/25) billing authorities to the end of Q4 2024/25 are as follows:

Overall claimant numbers

- The total number of claimants of council tax support at March 2025 was 3.666m, which was an annual decrease of 1.3% on the previous March.
- Within an individual authority the largest reduction was 12% and the largest increase was 18%.
- 199 or 67% of authorities experienced an annual decrease in the 12 months to March 2025 with an average reduction across these councils of 2.3%.
- 96 or 33% of authorities experienced an annual increase in the 12 months to March 2025 with an average rise across these councils of 2.4%.

Working-age claimant numbers

- The total number of working-age claimants of council tax support at March 2025 was 2.309m, which was an annual decrease of 1.6%.
- 187 or 63% of authorities experienced an annual decrease in the total number of working-age claimants. The average reduction among these councils was 3.2% with 99 of these experiencing a decline of 2.5% or less. The largest annual reduction was 17%.
- A sizeable minority of 108 or 37% of authorities experienced an annual increase in the 12 months to March 2025. The average increase among these councils was 3.7% with twenty-seven of these councils experiencing a rise of 5% or more. The maximum annual increase was 31%.
- There has been a quarterly decrease of 0.3% in the number of working age claimants at March 2025.

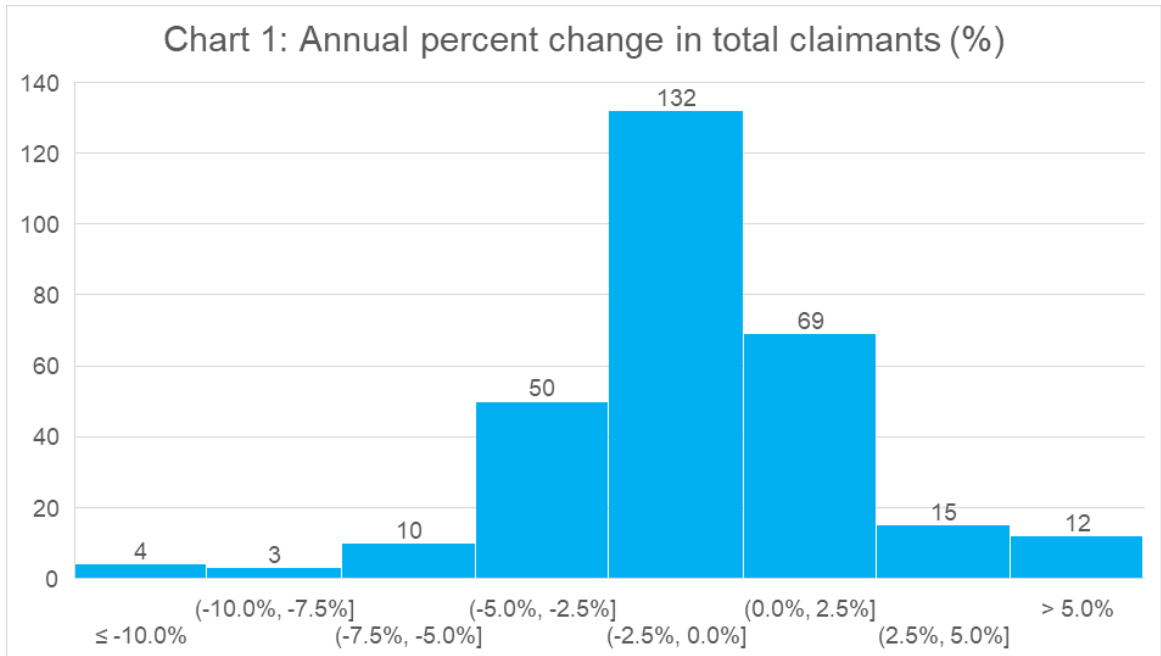
Pension-age claimant numbers

- The total number of pension-age claimants of council tax support at March 2025 was 1.357m, which was an annual decrease of 0.7%.
- The annual reduction to March 2025 of 0.7% follows the trend set in the previous years which is for a slowdown in the annual reduction of pension age claimants. A further slowdown in the level of reductions could potentially be expected throughout 2025/26.

3. Analysis of claimant numbers at March 2025

Overall claimant numbers

- 3.1. The total number of claimants of council tax support at March 2025 was 3.666m, which was an annual decrease of 1.3% on the previous March.
- 3.2. The average decrease across those councils where there was a reduction in overall claimant numbers was 2.3%. The largest decrease in an individual authority was 12%.
- 3.3. The average increase across those councils where there was a rise in overall claimant numbers was 2.4%. The maximum individual authority increase was 18%.
- 3.4. Chart 1 shows the annual change in total claimant numbers across English local authorities.



- 3.5. Chart 1 shows that:
 - 199 or 67% of authorities experienced an annual decrease in their total number of claimants in the 12 months to March 2025;
 - The largest group of 132 or 45% of authorities experienced only a small reduction of between 0% and 2.5%;
 - Only 17 of those authorities with a decrease experienced a reduction of over 5%; and
 - 96 or 33% of authorities experienced an increase in the total number of claimants.

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3.6. This should be set against the context of the previous three years' annual changes in the 12 months to March of total claimant numbers which were:

- 2021/22 -4.9%
- 2022/23 -2.9%
- 2023/24 -1.0%
- 2024/25 -1.3%

3.7. The 1.3% annual decrease to March 2025 is only 0.3% percentage points higher than the annual decline was twelve months ago, reflecting a flatlining of annual reductions at a lower level compared to the rate of reductions in the previous two years.

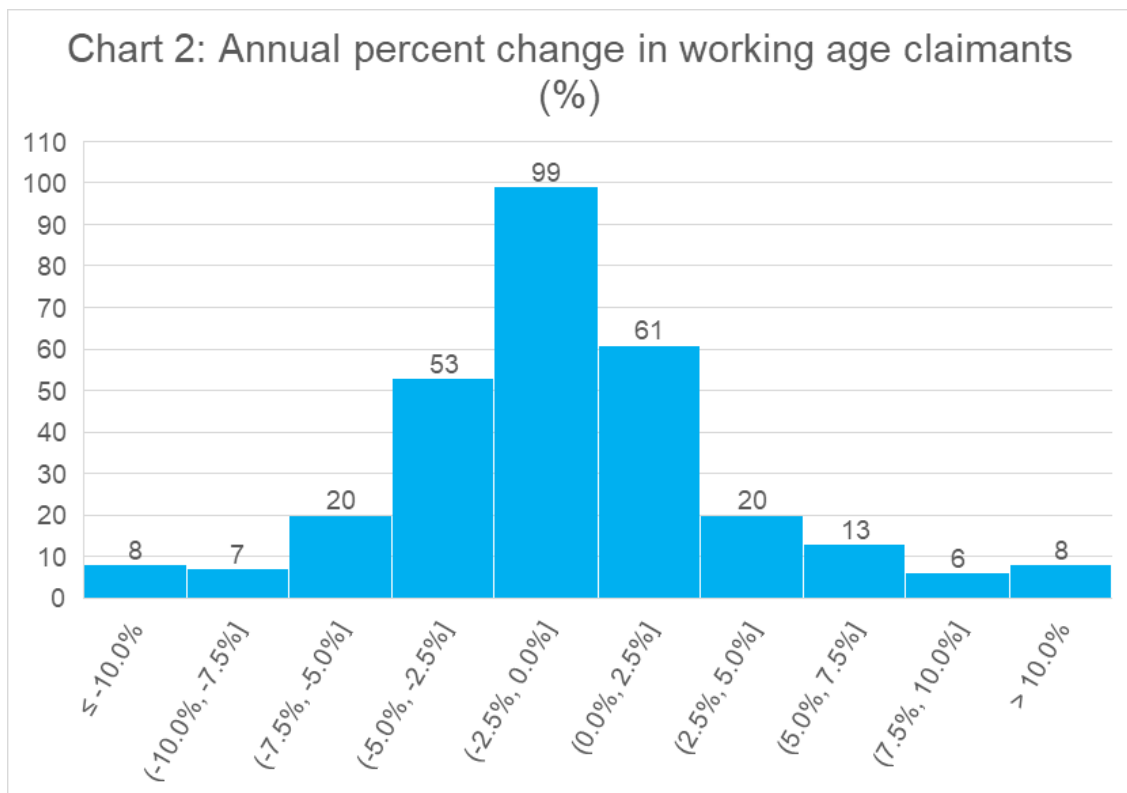
3.8. There was a quarter-to-quarter reduction of 0.3%.

Working-age claimant numbers

3.9. The total number of working-age claimants of council tax support at March 2025 was 2.309m, which was an annual decrease of 1.6% on the previous March and representing a reduction of 37,000 claimants over the twelve months to March 2025.

3.10. The average decrease among those councils with reductions in working age claimants was 3.2% and the largest annual decrease was 17%. The average increase was 3.7% and the largest annual increase was 31%.

3.11. Chart 2 shows the annual change in working-age claimant numbers across English local authorities.



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3.12. Chart 2 shows that:

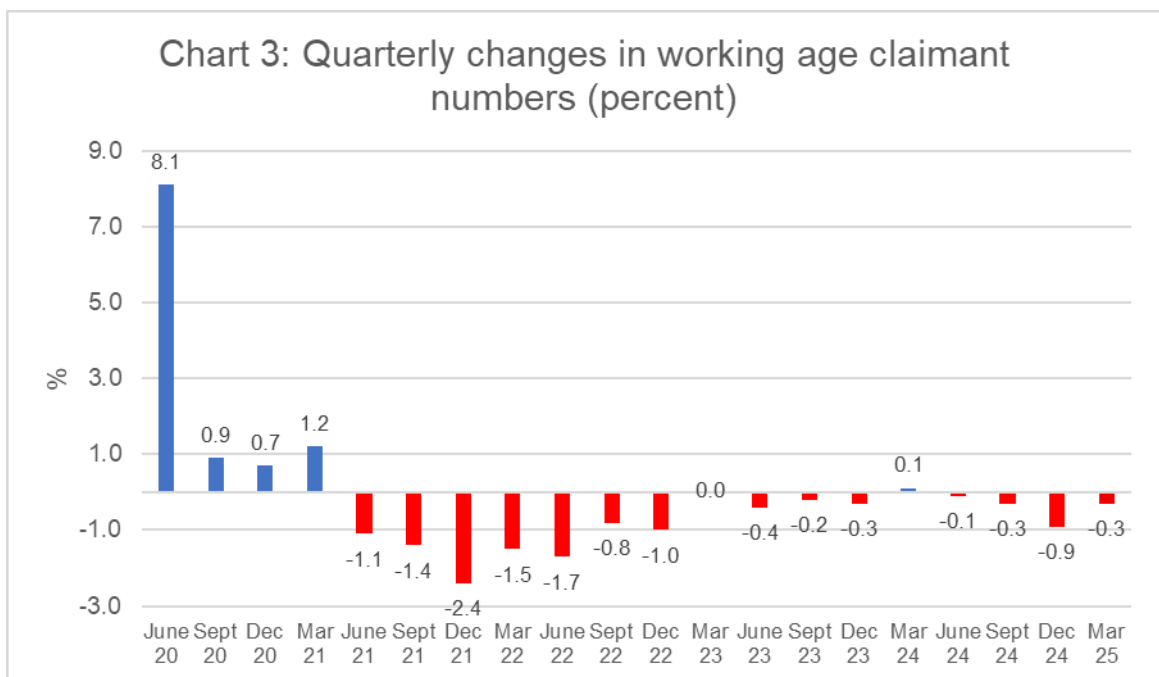
- 187 councils or 63% experienced an annual decrease in the 12 months to March 2025, with more than half (99) of these councils experiencing an annual reduction of 2.5% or less; and
- A large minority of 108 or 37% of councils experienced an annual increase in the 12 months to March 2025. Of these, twenty-seven experienced an annual rise of 5% or more.

3.13. This should be set against the context of the previous three years’ annual changes to working-age claimant numbers in the year to March which were:

- 2021/22 -6.2%
- 2022/23 -3.4%
- 2023/24 -0.9%
- 2024/25 -1.6%

3.14. The rate of decline in the number of working age claimants is now less than one half of the annual rate in March 2023. This reflects a significant slowdown in the rates of reduction in most councils, and increases across a sizeable minority over the last two years. However, the level of reduction in the current year is an improvement on the reduction in 2023/24.

3.15. Most of the increase in 2020/21 arose in just the one quarter, between the end of March 2020 and the end of June 2020, where there was an 8.1% increase in working age claimant numbers. Chart 3 shows an analysis of quarterly changes in working-age claimant numbers over five years leading up to March 2025.



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- 3.16. The quarterly decrease of 0.3% in the number of working age claimants at March 2025 is in line with four of the previous seven quarters, where there have been decreases of between 0.2% and 0.4%. Whilst working age claimant numbers continue to decline, the monthly reductions have become much reduced since March 2023.

Pension-age claimant numbers

- 3.17. The total number of pension age claimants of council tax support at March 2025 was 1.357m, which was an annual decrease of 0.7% on the previous March.
- 3.18. 210 billing authorities or 71% of the total experienced reductions within an average decrease across these councils of 1.5%. 85 billing authorities (29%) experienced no change or an increase in their pension age claimant numbers.
- 3.19. This should be set against the context of the previous three years' annual changes to pension-age claimant numbers in March which were:
- 2021/22 -2.6%
 - 2022/23 -1.9%
 - 2023/24 -1.2%
 - 2024/25 -0.7%
- 3.20. The annual reduction to March 2025 of 0.7% follows the trend set in the previous years which is for a slowdown in the annual reduction of pension age claimants. The rate of reduction is one quarter what it was in 2021/22 (2.6%). A further slowdown in the level of reductions could potentially be expected throughout 2025/26.
- 3.21. The LG Futures' Resource Planning Hub includes further analysis and a detailed comparative data tool for claimants of council tax support enabling comparison with other councils. This enables users to review their changes in working age, pension age and total claimant numbers across any periods of time since 2015/16. This provides analysis of short, medium and long term trends for both your own authority and compared with others. Subscribers to the Hub can access this by clicking [here](#).

If you would like more information about subscribing to the Hub, including complimentary access to our webinars and places at our regional briefings, please contact Rupert Dewhirst at rupert.dewhirst@lgfutures.co.uk or [click here](#).