

Rupert Dewhirst
Associate Consultant

rupert.dewhirst@lgfutures.co.uk
T. 07775 428145

Local Authority Council Tax Support – Q1 2026 to 2027

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has published the latest statistical tables for 'Council Tax Support Q1 2026 to 2027'. This represents an update on the numbers of claimants of council tax support to the end of June 2026. 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 June 2026 and shows the count at the end of previous quarters back to 2015/16. It covers all 296 local authorities.
- 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 June 2026; and
 - Section 3 – Provides detailed analysis of claimant numbers published to the end of June 2026.

2. Main messages

2.1. The main messages emerging from analysis of the publication of council tax support claimant numbers across 296 billing authorities to the end of Q1 2026/27 are as follows:

Overall claimant numbers

- The total number of claimants of council tax support at June 2026 was 3.636m, which was an annual decrease of 0.3% on the previous June.
- Within an individual authority the largest reduction was 8.5% and the largest increase was 11.3%.
- 127 or 43% of authorities experienced a decrease in the 12 months to June 2026 with an average reduction across these councils of 2.0%.
- 169 or 57% of authorities experienced an increase in the 12 months to June 2026 with an average rise across these councils of 1.9%.

Working-age claimant numbers

- The total number of working-age claimants of council tax support at June 2026 was 2.291m, which is the same as a year ago.
- 101 or 34% of authorities experienced an annual decrease in the total number of working-age claimants. The average reduction among councils with a reduction was 3.0% with 56 of these experiencing a decline of 2.5% or less. The largest annual reduction was 15.0%.
- A majority of 194 or 66% of authorities experienced an increase in the 12 months to June 2026. The average increase among these councils was 3.4% with thirty-eight of these councils experiencing a rise of 5% or more. The maximum annual increase was 41.2%.
- There has been a quarterly increase of 0.1% in the number of working age claimants at June 2026, which follows a 0.4% increase in the previous quarter.

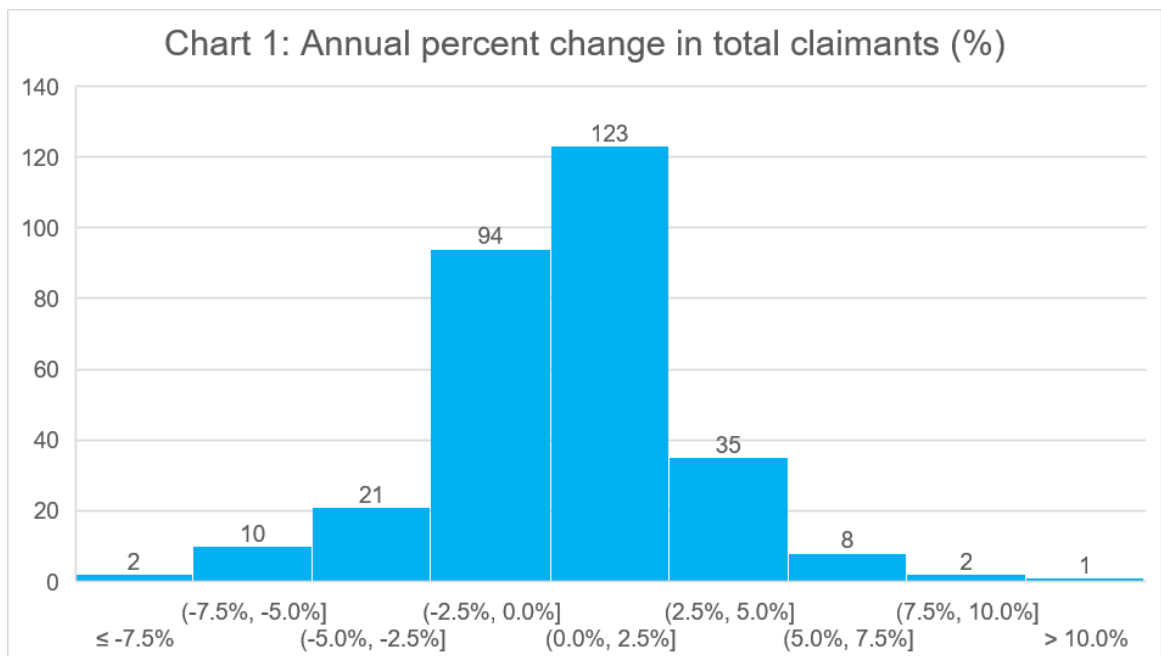
Pension-age claimant numbers

- The total number of pension-age claimants of council tax support at June 2026 was 1.344m, which was an annual decrease of 0.9%.
- The annual reduction to June 2026 of 0.9% is a higher reduction than in the previous twelve-month period (0.5%), but the decline is still well below long term trends.

3. Analysis of claimant numbers at June 2026

Overall claimant numbers

- 3.1. The total number of claimants of council tax support at June 2026 was 3.636m, which was an annual decrease of 0.3% on the previous June.
- 3.2. The average decrease across those councils where there was a reduction in overall claimant numbers was 2.0%. The largest decrease in an individual authority was 8.5%.
- 3.3. The average increase across those councils where there was a rise in overall claimant numbers was 1.9%. The maximum individual authority increase was 11.3%.
- 3.4. Chart 1 shows the annual change in total claimant numbers across English local authorities.



- 3.5. Chart 1 shows that:

- 169 or 57% of authorities experienced an increase in the total number of claimants;
- 127 or 43% of authorities experienced an annual decrease in their total number of claimants;
- The largest group of 123 or 42% of authorities experienced a small increase of between 0% and 2.5%; and
- Only 12 of those authorities with a decrease experienced a reduction of over 5%.

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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 June of total claimant numbers which were:

2023/24	-2.0%
2024/25	-0.8%
2025/26	-1.6%
2026/27	-0.3%

3.7. The 0.3% annual decrease to June 2026 is below the decrease in each of the previous three years and is one fifth of the average annual decrease of the previous three years.

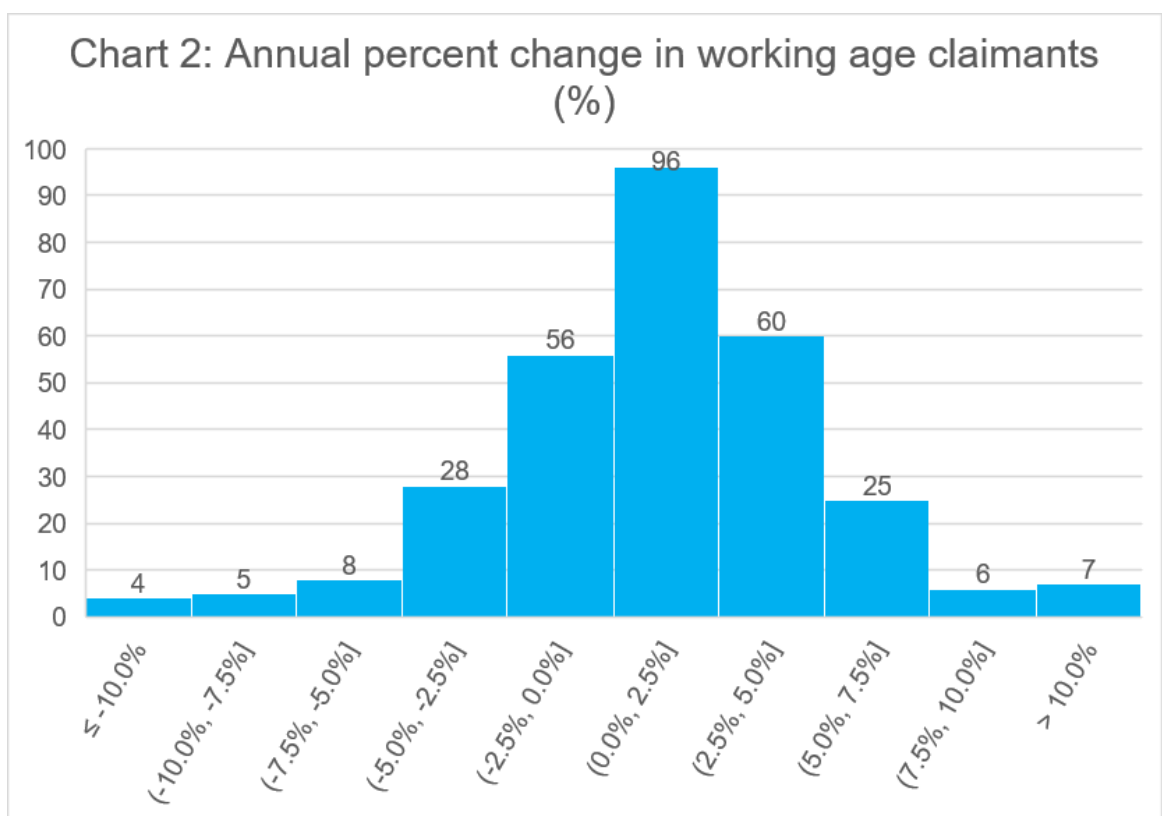
3.8. There was a quarter-to-quarter decrease of 0.1%, which follows a 0.1% increase in the previous quarter.

Working-age claimant numbers

3.9. The total number of working-age claimants of council tax support at June 2026 was 2.291m, which was the same as the previous June.

3.10. The average decrease among those councils with reductions in working age claimants was 3.0% and the largest annual decrease was 15.0%. The average increase was 3.4% and the largest annual increase was 41.2%.

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



3.12. Chart 2 shows that:

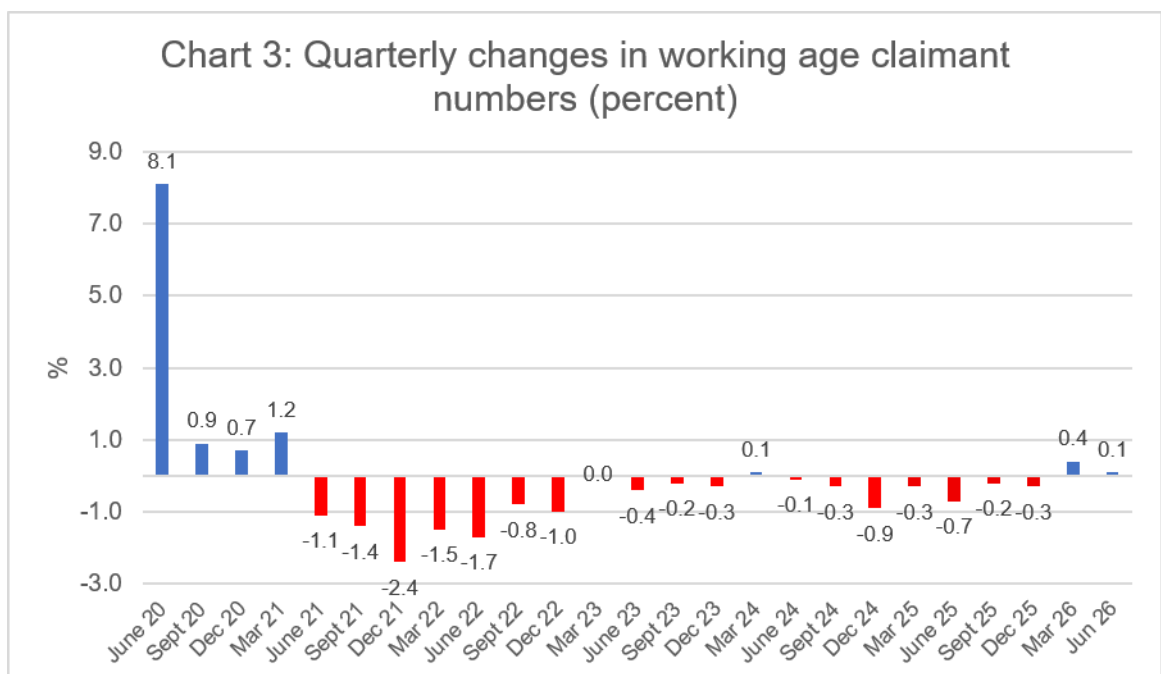
- 101 councils or 34% experienced an annual decrease in the 12 months to June 2026 with 56 of these councils experiencing an annual reduction of 2.5% or less; and
- A majority of 194 or 66% of councils experienced an annual increase in the 12 months to June 2026. Of these, thirty-eight experienced an 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 June which were:

- 2023/24 -2.2%
- 2024/25 -0.6%
- 2025/26 -2.3%
- 2026/27 0.0%

3.14. The rate of decline in the number of working age claimants is below both the rates in each of the last three years and is 1.7% less than the average over the previous three years.

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 between June 2020 and June 2026.



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- 3.16. There was a quarterly increase of 0.1% in the number of working age claimants at June 2026 which follows on from an increase of 0.4% in the previous quarter, which represented a revision upwards from what was reported in the quarterly release in March 2026. This represents the first time there have been two consecutive quarterly increases since March 2021.
- 3.17. The increases over the last two quarters has negated the previous two quarters reductions, which explains the June 2026 figure for claimant numbers matching the figure for June 2025.

Pension-age claimant numbers

- 3.18. The total number of pension age claimants of council tax support at June 2026 was 1.344m, which was an annual decrease of 0.9% on the previous June.
- 3.19. 217 billing authorities or 73% of the total experienced reductions within an average decrease across these councils of 1.7%. 79 billing authorities (27%) experienced an increase in their pension age claimant numbers with an average increase of 1.0%.
- 3.20. This should be set against the context of the previous three years' annual changes to pension-age claimant numbers in June which were:
- 2023/24 -1.6%
 - 2024/25 -1.2%
 - 2025/26 -0.5%
 - 2026/27 -0.9%
- 3.21. The annual reduction to June 2026 of 0.9%, while above the decrease of 0.5% for the previous 12 months, is below the declines in the previous two years shown. Whilst it is positive that the fall in the number of pension age claimants is higher than in the previous 12 months the decline is still well below long term trends.
- 3.22. 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](#).

