

Oldham's credit crunch war cabinet

Monthly update

July 2009

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1 Credit crunch war cabinet monthly report






This is the fifth update from Oldham’s credit crunch war cabinet (CCWC). This update is published after each of the war cabinet’s monthly meetings and will give you a clear picture of the current economic situation – positives and negatives – in the borough. It will help the partnership to examine trends, and anticipate the need for preventative action, and will help partners to identify any adjustments they might need to make to their mainstream services.

2 The current situation

- Oldham saw a reduction in JSA claimants for May, possibly due to the recruitment for Tesco on Huddersfield Road. On flow has continued to rise, but off flow also saw a significant rise and the number of people coming off JSA was higher than those coming on.
- However, several redundancy announcements, including 100 people made redundant at Mobilis, will affect these figures over the coming month.
- Jobcentre Plus vacancies were up in May.
- All bar a few wards saw a reduction in JSA claimants in May. Lees and Coldhurst saw significant rises.
- The number of young people not in employment, education or training fell for the second successive month and is only 0.2% away from England’s average.

Full statistics are shown below.

Dashboard Indicator	Baseline January 08 (unless stated)	Latest performance data 2008-09		Trend	Rank in Greater Manchester
		Data	Date		
Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) Claimant Count	3,899	6,786	May 09		6 out of 10, where 1 is highest no. of claimants
JSA Claimant Rate (proportion of working age)	2.9%	5.1%	May 09		4 out of 10, where 1 is the highest

population)					rate
Number of people coming off JSA	706	1,734	May 09		4 out of 10, where 1 is the highest off flow
Number of people coming on to JSA	1048	1,592	May 09		6 out of 10, where 1 is the highest on flow
Jobcentre Plus vacancies	1495 (May 08)	800	May 09		7 out of 10, where 1 is the highest no. of vacancies
Business Rateable Values	£136.4m (baseline 1 December 2007)				Not Applicable
Number of commercial properties	7,124 (baseline 1 December 2007)				Not Applicable

3 Take up of benefits

The CCWC heard that in total, the estimated annual monetary value of unclaimed income-related benefits in Oldham ranged between £26.86 million and £44.22 million in 2006-07 (the latest data available). This has highlighted the need to raise awareness of benefits that are available to residents in Oldham. If these benefits were taken up, this would have a significant impact on the viability of the local economy.

The first stage of this has been to map which organisations currently give benefit advice. From that, a twin track approach has developed:

1. Awareness raising

The credit crunch roadshows will be used to raise awareness of the availability of benefits. This will include staff from Unity Partnership (council tax and housing benefit advice), Citizens Advice Bureau (general advice and financial management), Oldham Council (welfare reform and training advice) and Highway to Opportunity (universal benefit support). We know people can be put off by the term 'benefit' so the campaign will refer to 'rebates' instead.

2. Increased support

Increased awareness will lead to the need for increased support. A series of training sessions for front line workers will be held. Oldham's submission to the government's Future Jobs Fund (to provide jobs for young people) made provision for the extra workers we will need to support this.

We are currently working on a full plan for this activity, and updates will be provided in future updates.

If you would like any more detail, please contact credit.crunch@oldham.gov.uk

4 Other updates

- A team are currently developing the credit crunch advice roadshows. The programme began with a successful event for businesses run jointly with Rochdale Council.
- Funding has been provided by central government to the council for a court desk to provide free, on-the-day legal advice for people facing repossession or eviction hearings.
- As a result of support provided by the CCWC, the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) waiting list is now down to 2-3 weeks. With the introduction of a court desk, colleagues will seek CAB's view about their future staffing needs.
- An extra member of staff will be recruited to work specifically on supporting the CCWC and its work.

5 Next meeting

The CCWC will meet again on 28 September at 2pm.

6 Contact us

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