Monthly Labour Market Report

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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Welcome

The Monthly Labour Market Report from the Learning and Skills Observatory Wales (LSO) aims to provide the main headlines on the Welsh labour market and is based on the latest data available.

This month's issue puts the spotlight on **Commuting in Wales.**

This report was produced by the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion (known as *Inclusion*), commissioned by Welsh Government to blend Wales's available labour market information (LMI) (from the various sources) and produce a monthly analysis. Whilst the report is owned by Welsh Government it is not validated in terms of its specific content or interpretation.

Inclusion has an unrivalled understanding of the labour market based on over 28 years of experience of working with the range of stakeholders involved in delivering employment and skills services. We collect and analyse both national and local labour market data through our well developed Local Labour Market Information System, conduct research on employment and skills issues at the local level, run events that bring together policymakers and providers in the skills and employment sector, and produce weekly e-briefings that summarise what is new in employment and skills for our subscribers.

We currently supply monthly employment and skills data to the Greater London Authority, as well as providing labour market tools and analysis for Greater Manchester.

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Latest labour market trends

Employment

Employment data from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) – estimates published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) obtained from a large sample quarterly rolling survey of households – show that Wales performed less well than some but not all the other UK nations and English regions in the rolling quarter June to August 2014.

The (seasonally adjusted) Labour Force Survey estimate of the number of people aged 16 and over in employment in Wales fell by 12,000 (-0.9%) compared to the previous quarter (March to May 2014) to a total of 1,363,000. The quarterly net fall in employment in Wales is due entirely to a fall in the number of women in employment. Male employment increased by 5,000 (+0.7%) to 716,000 while female employment fell by 17,000 (-2.5%) to 647,000.

The total quarterly fall in employment in Wales contrasts with a corresponding increase in total UK employment of 46,000 (+0.1%). In contrast to the fall in Wales, employment increased by 25,000 (+0.1%) in England and by 35,000 (+1.4%) in Scotland but fell by 2,000 (-0.2%) in Northern Ireland. The net increase in England comprised an increase in employment in the North West (21,000, +0.7%), Yorkshire and Humberside (14,000, 0.6%), the East of England (21,000, +0.7%), and London (30,000, +0.7%) and a decrease in employment in the North East (-11,000, -1.0%), the East Midlands (-7,000, -0.3%), the West Midlands (-20,000, -0.8%), the South East (-21,000, -0.5%) and the South West (-3,000, -0.1%).

The working age employment rate for Wales (i.e. the proportion of the population aged 16-64 in employment) fell by 0.3 percentage points in the quarter to 68.8%. This compares with an unchanged rate in England, an increase of 0.9 percentage points in Scotland and an increase of 0.2 percentage points in Northern Ireland. The employment rate in Wales is 4.2 percentage points lower than the UK average (73.0%) and lower than the employment rate in both England (73.3%) and Scotland (73.9%) but higher than the rate in Northern Ireland (68.3%).

In keeping with recent quarterly data releases the ONS commented as follows on the latest quarterly fall in employment in Wales:

"Although much lower than the record highs toward the end of 2013, the recent falls in the employment rate estimates for Wales appear to be levelling off with the latest estimate showing a decrease of 0.3 percentage points. Most regions of the UK are either showing general increases in employment rates over recent periods or are fairly flat, increasing over the last year."

Unemployment and economic inactivity

The number of people in Wales who are unemployed on the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Labour Force Survey definition fell by 3,000 (down 2.6%) to a total of 94,000 between the quarters March to May 2014 and June to August 2014. Total unemployment fell by 106,000 (down 6.0%) in England, by 40,000 (down 21.0%) in Scotland and by 5,000 (down 8.7%) in Northern Ireland.

Unemployment in Wales fell despite the corresponding fall in the number of people in employment because of a decrease of 14,000 in the number of people active in the labour market. The number of unemployed men fell by 8,000 (-12.3%) to 55,000 but this was partially offset by an increase of 5,000 (+15.1%) to 39,000 in the number of unemployed women.

The ILO unemployment rate in Wales fell by 0.1 percentage point to 6.5% in the quarter. The UK average rate of ILO unemployment fell by 0.4 percentage points to 6.0%. The unemployment rate in Wales was higher than in England (6.1%), Scotland (5.5%) and Northern Ireland (6.1%). Within England, the North East (9.3%), the North West (6.7%), the West Midlands (7.5%), Yorkshire and Humberside (7.0%) and London (6.6%) had a higher unemployment rate than Wales. South West England (4.6%), South East England (4.7%) and the East of England (4.9%) had the lowest unemployment rates.

The administrative count of people unemployed and claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) is somewhat lower (53,000 in Wales in September 2014, a JSA claimant count rate of 3.7%) than ILO unemployment because non-JSA claimant jobseekers are excluded. The JSA claimant count rate in Wales is 0.9 percentage points higher than the UK average rate (2.8%). The number of JSA claimants in Wales decreased by 1,000 between August and September 2014. However care should be taken in interpreting change in the claimant count since this can be influenced by changes to the benefit system as well as underlying change in the labour market.

The number of economically inactive people of working age in Wales increased by 8,000 (+1.6%) to 503,000 between the quarters March to May 2014 and June to August 2014. As the LMI scorecard shows the working age rate of economic inactivity in Wales (26.3%) is 4.1 percentage points higher than the UK average (22.2%).

Within the UK nations and regions only Northern Ireland (27.2%) had a higher inactivity rate than Wales in the quarter June to August 2014. The lowest inactivity rates are in the East of England (19.1%), the South East (19.6%) and the South West (20.0%).

LMI scorecard

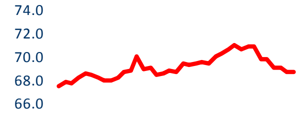
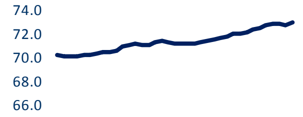
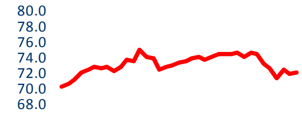
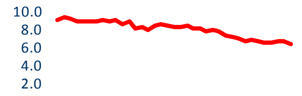
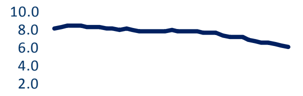
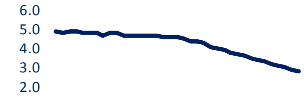
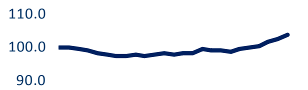
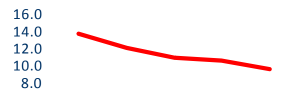
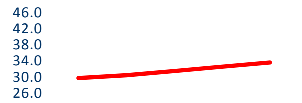
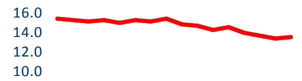
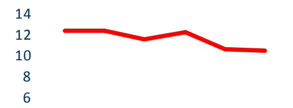
The scorecard presents recent trends and figures for a number of core labour market indicators, using a variety of different sources:

	Source
Working age employment rate	1
Working age male employment rate	1
Working age female employment rate	1
ILO unemployment rate 16+	1
Claimant count as a proportion of the working age population	2
Working age economic inactivity	1
Index of workforce jobs	3
Proportion of the working age population with no qualifications	4
Proportion of the working age population qualified to NQF4+	4
Proportion of the working age population who claim out of work benefits	5
Children living in workless households	6
Proportion of 16–18 year olds who are not in employment, education or training	7

1	LFS, ONS: subject to sampling variability and should be used with caution
2	Claimant count seasonally adjusted, NOMIS: trends can be affected by changes to benefit rules
3	Employer surveys, household surveys and administrative sources, ONS
4	Annual Population Survey/Annual Local LFS, ONS. Data is subject to sampling variability and should be used with caution.
5	Department for Work and Pensions, NOMIS
6	Household LFS, ONS: subject to sampling variability and should be used with caution
7	Source: ONS, Higher Education Statistics Agency, Welsh Government Lifelong Learning Wales Record, Pupil Level Annual School Census, Annual Population Survey.

LMI Scorecard

October 2014

		Wales: Trend (Three to four years)	Wales: Latest result & trend	Difference between Wales and National (latest figures): Better / Worse	NATIONAL (UK or GB depending on indicator): Latest result & trend	NATIONAL: Trend (Three to four years)
Supply of Labour	Working age employment rate (%)		68.8% ↓	-4.2 Charts cover: Jun - Aug 11 to Jun - Aug 14	73.0% ↑	
	Working age male employment rate (%)		72.1% ↓	-5.8 Charts cover: Jun - Aug 11 to Jun - Aug 14	77.9% ↑	
	Working age female employment rate (%)		65.4% ↓	-2.7 Charts cover: Jun - Aug 11 to Jun - Aug 14	68.1% ↑	
	ILO Unemployment rate 16+ (%)		6.5% →	0.4 Charts cover: Jun - Aug 11 to Jun - Aug 14	6.0% ↓	
	Claimant Count as a proportion of the workforce, seasonally adjusted (%)		3.7% ↓	0.9 Charts cover: Sep 11 to Sep 14	2.8% ↓	
	Working age economic inactivity (%)		26.3% ↑	4.1 Charts cover: Jun - Aug 11 to Jun - Aug 14	22.2% ↓	
Demand	Index of workforce jobs. 2008 Q1=100		100.3% ↑	-3.1 Charts cover: 2008 Q2 to 2014 Q2	103.4% ↑	
Skill gaps	Proportion of the working age population with no qualifications (%)		9.7% ↓	1.0 Charts cover: Year to Dec 09 to year to Dec 13	8.7% ↓	
	Proportion of the working age population qualified to NQF4+ (%)		33.6% ↑	-4.0 Charts cover: Year to Dec 09 to year to Dec 13	37.6% ↑	
Worklessness & NEETS	Proportion of the working age population who claim out of work benefits		13.5% ↓	2.9 Charts cover: May 10 to Feb 14	10.6% ↓	
	Children living in workless households (%)		15.1% ↓	2.4 Charts cover: Apr-Jun 2008 to Apr-Jun 2014	12.7% ↓	
	Proportion of 16-18 year olds who are NEET (%)		10% ↓	2.0 Charts cover: 2008 to 2013	8% England ↓	

Commuting in Wales

Introduction

The need to travel to work is an accepted cost for the majority of working age people, even though research studies have often found commuting to be negatively related to aspects of personal well-being such as life satisfaction, or to wider measures of mental health and well-being. However, there are also benefits associated with commuting such as increasing an individual's potential for higher earnings by working in labour markets further away from their home.

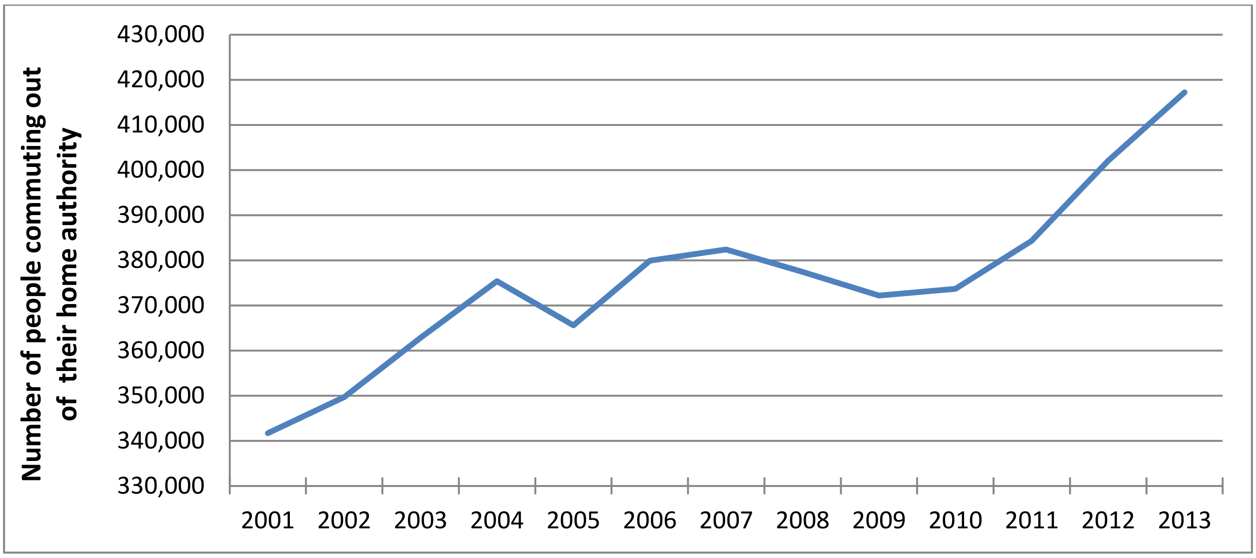
This month's spotlight focuses on commuting trends in Wales, covering issues such as methods of travel to work, distances travelled and levels of commuting by occupation and industrial sector. It will also examine the potential for some of the larger Welsh labour markets to help tackle persistent joblessness in surrounding areas.

Overall Trends

In 2013, the Welsh Government's detailed analysis of commuting data from the Annual Population Survey (APS) showed that of a total of 1,337,800 working residents in Wales, around 417,200 (31% of all working people) travel to work in a different local authority area to the one in which they live. 88,700 of these people travel outside of Wales to work.

Since 2001 (the first year of the Welsh Government's commuting data series), the general trend has been for increasing numbers of people to travel to work outside of their home local authority. As Figure 1 shows, approximately 341,700 people commuted outside their home local authority in 2001, a figure which rose sharply up to 2004, before falling as the economy slowed and went into recession. Since 2010, the number has once again risen sharply to its latest level.

Figure 1: Number of people commuting outside their home local authority area, Wales, 2001 - 2013



Source: Stats Wales Commuting Data, https://statswales.wales.gov.uk/Catalogue/Business-Economy-and-Labour-Market/People-and-Work/Employment/Commuting/CommutingPatterns-by-WelshLocalAuthority-Measure

Where do people commute to?

As can be seen in Table 1, the largest net commuting flows in Wales were in the South, with the largest commuting inflows going into Cardiff, Swansea and Newport and the largest out-commuting flows from

Rhondda Cynon Taf, Caerphilly and the Vale of Glamorgan, with Cardiff being the main employment destination from all three areas. There was also a strong net outflow from Flintshire (often to destinations in North West England), the Isle of Anglesey and Conwy in the North (most commonly into Denbighshire and Gwynedd).

Table 1: Commuting Flows by Local Authority, Wales, 2013

	Number of people commuting out of authority	Number of people commuting into authority	Net Inflow	As % of working residents
Cardiff	33,900	83,100	49,200	29%
Swansea	16,900	29,300	12,400	13%
Newport	23,300	32,000	8,700	14%
Gwynedd	8,200	12,200	4,000	8%
Monmouthshire	18,100	20,100	2,000	5%
Ceredigion	4,000	5,700	1,700	5%
Bridgend	17,300	18,600	1,300	2%
Pembrokeshire	5,200	5,900	700	1%
Merthyr Tydfil	8,500	7,900	-600	-3%
Denbighshire	12,300	11,600	-700	-2%
Wrexham	18,100	17,200	-900	-1%
Torfaen	15,600	13,400	-2,200	-6%
Powys	12,600	8,700	-3,900	-6%
Conwy	14,100	8,200	-5,900	-12%
Isle of Anglesey	9,600	3,600	-6,000	-21%
Blaenau Gwent	12,200	5,800	-6,400	-25%
Carmarthenshire	20,200	13,100	-7,100	-9%
Neath Port Talbot	24,200	11,500	-12,700	-22%
Flintshire	29,100	15,900	-13,200	-19%
Vale of Glamorgan	31,200	11,000	-20,200	-35%
Caerphilly	39,200	19,000	-20,200	-26%
Rhondda Cynon Taf	43,400	16,800	-26,600	-27%
Wales	**88,700**	**42,100**	**-46,600**	**-3%**

Source: StatsWales Commuting Data, https://statswales.wales.gov.uk/Catalogue/Business-Economy-and-Labour-Market/People-and-Work/Employment/Commuting/CommutingPatterns-by-WelshLocalAuthority-Measure

Detailed analysis by the Welsh Government also found that there are also significant net commuting flows occurring in both directions between:

- Neath Port Talbot and Swansea;
- Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan;
- Cardiff and Rhondda Cynon Taf;
- Newport and Torfaen;
- Flintshire and Wrexham;
- the Isle of Anglesey and Gwynedd;
- Conwy and Denbighshire.

Mode of Transport

Table 2 shows people's main method of transport to work in Wales for 2001 and 2011 (the principal source of data on transport to work is the Census of Population). It shows that the fastest rate of growth has been in rail transport, with passenger numbers up by over 80% in this time. However, despite around 15% growth in the number of people employed, the number of cars or vans being used for commuting has risen by 20% over the same period. This represents almost 146,000 additional vehicles on Welsh roads for travelling to work, suggesting that an increasing amount of strain is being put on the capacity of the road network, particularly in some of the main urban economies. For example, the number of cars being driven to work in Cardiff rose by around 18,600, in Swansea by 14,500 and in Newport by approximate 5,500.

Table 2: Main mode of transport to work in Wales, 2001 and 2011

Main mode of transport to work	2001	2011	Change 2001 - 2011	% change 2001 - 2011
Work mainly at or from home	115,323	142,178	26,855	23%
Underground, metro, light rail, tram	697	1,133	436	63%
Train	14,619	26,504	11,885	81%
Bus, minibus or coach	62,322	61,731	-591	-1%
Taxi	5,975	5,905	-70	-1%
Motorcycle, scooter or moped	8,888	7,520	-1,368	-15%
Driving a car or van	726,363	872,210	145,847	20%
Passenger in a car or van	106,526	90,484	-16,042	-15%
Bicycle	16,389	19,156	2,767	17%
On foot	122,732	130,176	7,444	6%
Other method of travel to work	6,422	6,618	196	3%
Total in Employment	**1,186,256**	**1,363,615**	**177,359**	**15%**

Source: Census of Population, 2001 and 2011, via NOMIS

There are real economic costs associated with traffic congestion. Research carried out by INRIX and the Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR) estimates that congestion cost the UK economy around £13.1 billion in 2013. This is made up of both direct and indirect economic impacts on car commuting households. Direct costs relate to the value of fuel and the time wasted rather than being productive at work, and indirect costs relate to higher freighting and business fees from company vehicles idling in traffic, which are passed on as additional costs to household bills. Congestion cost the average UK household commuting to work by car £1,426 in 2013, and the average British driver lost 124 hours through being in gridlocked traffic.

One means of addressing the economic costs of commuting is the development of superfast broadband. Broadband can enable more efficient, more frequent teleworking, reducing the need for commuting, and hence lead to household savings on transport costs. The potential economic benefits of broadband will be covered in more detail in next month's spotlight report.

Distance travelled to work

The average distance that people in Wales commute has increased in recent years. Using data from the Census of Population, Table 3 shows that the proportion of workers travelling more than 30km to work has risen from 6% of the total to 8% in 2011, while the proportion travelling between 10 and 30km was up from 26% to 28%. The number of people travelling more than 30km rose from 62,000 to around 90,000 in this period.

Table 3: Distance travelled to work, Wales (workplace population), 2001 and 2011

Distance travelled	2001	2011	Change 2001 - 2011
Less than 10km	68%	64%	-4%
10-30km	26%	28%	2%
More than 30km	6%	8%	2%
Total	**989,397**	**1,081,959**	**92,562**

Source: Census of Population, via Nomis. Data excludes those who mainly work at home or have no fixed place of work.

At a local authority level, the trend is fairly consistent, with a rise in the level of long-distance commuting (30km or more) observed across almost all authority areas. The longest average distances travelled were in some the most rural Welsh authorities:

- Pembrokeshire 18.3km
- Powys 17.4km
- Anglesey 16.9km
- Gwynedd 16.7km
- Ceredigion 16.1km

While the lowest average distances were in the Valleys:

- Blaenau Gwent 11.1 km
- Rhondda, Cynon, Taff 10.8 km
- Caerphilly 10.6 km
- Torfaen 10.0 km
- Merthyr Tydfil 9.5 km

The main urban areas of Wales had average commuting distances more in line with the average for Wales as a whole (13km).

Distance travelled by occupation and industry

Table 4 shows the distances travelled by workers in different industries and occupations. While there are some variations between industry sectors, the most interesting point of note is the extent to which those in higher level occupations (managerial, professional and technical) are prepared to travel further to work than for other occupations. Workers across all three occupations are one and a half times more likely than average to travel at least 30 km to work, with 12% travelling at least that far in 2011.

Of course it is no coincidence that these occupations are the highest paid on average, meaning that increased travel costs associated with greater distances travelled are more than offset by the higher salaries these kinds of jobs offer. For lower paid occupations, the average distance travelled is significantly shorter.

Table 4: Distance travelled by industry and occupation (workplace population), Wales, 2011

Industry	Distance travelled		
	Less than 10km	10-30km	More than 30km
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	63%	25%	11%
Manufacturing	59%	33%	8%
Energy and water	50%	37%	12%
Construction	56%	31%	12%
Distribution, hotels and restaurants	71%	22%	7%
Transport and communication	62%	28%	10%
Financial, Real Estate, Professional and Admin	61%	30%	9%
Public administration, education and health	62%	30%	8%
Other	71%	22%	7%
Occupation	**Less than 10km**	**10-30km**	**More than 30km**
Managers, directors and senior officials	58%	30%	12%
Professional occupations	52%	36%	12%
Associate professional and technical occupations	54%	34%	12%
Administrative and secretarial occupations	67%	28%	5%
Skilled trades occupations	62%	29%	9%
Caring, leisure and other service occupations	72%	23%	5%
Sales and customer service occupations	74%	20%	6%
Process, plant and machine operatives	62%	30%	8%
Elementary occupations	73%	20%	6%
All Industries / Occupations	**64%**	**28%**	**8%**

Source: Census of Population, via Nomis. Data excludes those who mainly work at home or have no fixed place of work.

Commuting into larger labour markets

Based on the evidence presented here that demonstrates large flows of commuting into Wales' larger labour markets, this section will look at the potential for some of those larger labour markets to assist in tackling persistently high levels of joblessness in surrounding communities.

A brief analysis of Census data for 2011 shows a correlation between car ownership and the likelihood of being in employment. For Wales as a whole, 32% of unemployed people lived in households that had no car, compared to just 8% of people in employment. It therefore seems a reasonable assumption that the quality of public transport links are an important factor in providing access to jobs for those people who don't have access to a car. This in turn suggests that the more comprehensive public transport links to the major urban centres of Cardiff, Swansea and Newport are likely to be of potential benefit to jobseekers in some of the surrounding Valleys areas, where car ownership is lower than average.

The Welsh Government is working to improve the quality of public transport across Wales through its National Transport Plan, and also accepted the majority of the recommendations of an inquiry into integrated public transport in Wales in 2013.

With significantly higher than average rates of long-term unemployment in some of the Valleys local authorities, there is also the issue of whether the larger labour markets that have potential to offer more employment opportunities can provide sufficient numbers of the right kinds of jobs for long-term unemployed people to get back into work. For many, this may mean jobs in occupations that are lower skilled and lower paid, such as those in personal service (caring or leisure) occupations, sales / customer services, process / machine operatives or elementary occupations.

Table 5 shows that Cardiff offers the largest number of jobs in these lower level occupations (around 71,500), although Cardiff also has the lowest proportion of employment in lower level jobs of any local authority in Wales. There were 39,700 jobs in these occupations in Swansea, 25,700 in Newport and in North Wales, there were 24,900 in Flintshire and 23,300 in Wrexham.

Table 5: Employment by Occupation by local authority (workplace), Wales, July 2013 - June 2014

	Personal service	Sales and customer service	Process, plant and machine operatives	Elementary occupations	Total Jobs	% in lower level occupations
Anglesey	2,200	1,300	1,500	3,400	23,000	37%
Blaenau Gwent	3,100	1,500	2,300	3,000	20,300	49%
Bridgend	6,800	4,000	6,700	6,400	59,600	40%
Caerphilly	4,300	3,300	6,300	6,700	56,700	36%
Cardiff	20,100	21,400	9,400	20,600	214,300	33%
Carmarthenshire	8,000	7,200	5,300	9,900	78,200	39%
Ceredigion	3,600	3,100	1,800	4,200	34,800	36%
Conwy	5,400	4,100	1,900	4,600	41,900	38%
Denbighshire	6,300	3,600	2,400	4,800	41,800	41%
Flintshire	4,700	4,400	5,900	9,900	61,500	40%
Gwynedd	6,500	3,800	2,800	6,800	57,500	35%
Merthyr Tydfil	2,400	2,200	1,600	3,100	20,800	45%
Monmouthshire	4,000	2,700	3,300	6,400	42,900	38%
Neath Port Talbot	5,400	3,000	4,700	5,200	45,900	40%
Newport	7,400	6,100	4,000	8,200	69,400	37%
Pembrokeshire	6,000	4,300	3,200	5,400	50,800	37%
Powys	6,900	3,000	3,300	6,300	58,200	34%
Rhondda, Cynon, Taff	9,600	6,100	6,100	7,600	77,400	38%
Swansea	9,600	11,700	5,000	13,400	113,600	35%
Vale of Glamorgan	5,000	2,200	1,400	4,500	38,900	34%
Torfaen	3,500	3,500	4,000	3,800	36,000	41%
Wrexham	5,700	4,400	7,200	6,000	65,700	35%
Wales	**136,300**	**107,100**	**89,900**	**150,000**	**1,309,000**	**37%**

Source: Annual Population Survey Workplace analysis (via Nomis)

As mentioned above, jobs in these occupations are often relatively low paid. For the UK as a whole, gross weekly pay in full-time jobs in caring / leisure, sales / customer service and elementary occupations were around 35% below the average (median) for all occupations. Therefore transport costs may be a significant barrier to people being able to take up jobs in these occupations where significant commuting distances may be involved.

By way of example, a weekly train season ticket for someone commuting from Aberdare to Cardiff Central would cost £26.30, approximately 8% of the gross weekly wage for jobs in these occupations. For the same commuting journey by car (around 25 miles each way), the average weekly cost would be around £94.00, roughly 28% of the average weekly wage for the same occupations. The cost of commuting by car - a necessity for many people in rural areas - may therefore be a significant disincentive for people looking to enter employment in lower paid occupations if significant travelling distances are involved.

This issue has been highlighted by research undertaken by the Work Foundation in 2012. Focusing on transport issues for young people, their research found that:

'Transport barriers are a significant barrier to work for some young unemployed people. Limited access to transport can hinder both a young person's job search and their ability to sustain employment. Young people are more reliant on the public transport system and typically have lower incomes to cover rising travel costs. This is particularly an issue for those young people who find employment in low paid, temporary and part-time positions.'

Summary

This month's spotlight has focused on commuting to work in Wales. It has shown that the general trend has been for increasing numbers of people travelling to work outside of their home local authority, with around 417,200 (31% of all working people) travelling to work in a different local authority area to the one in which they live.

As might be expected, the largest net commuting flows in Wales were in the South, with the largest commuting inflows going into Cardiff, Swansea and Newport and the largest out-commuting flows from the authorities surrounding Cardiff. There was also a strong net outflow of commuters from Flintshire, often to destinations in North West England.

By mode of transport, census data shows that the biggest growth has been in rail transport, with passenger numbers up by over 80% between 2001 and 2011. However, the number of cars or vans being used for commuting has risen by 20% over the same period, representing almost 146,000 additional vehicles on Welsh roads for travelling to work compared to 2001 levels. Rising traffic and congestion levels are estimated to have cost the UK economy around £13.1 billion in 2013.

The average distance travelled to work has also increased, suggesting that people are prepared to travel further for the right kind of job. The number of people travelling more than 30km rose from 62,000 to around 90,000 between 2001 and 2011. People in managerial, professional and technical occupations travelled - on average - further than those in lower paid occupations.

The link between commuting and transport costs is fairly clear, with a strong relationship between car ownership and the likelihood of being in employment. The larger labour markets in Wales that are better served by public transport can offer more opportunities to get unemployed people back to work, in that they offer large numbers of jobs in lower level occupations that might be more accessible to people with limited skills or experience. However, the issue of transport costs is a significant one for people working in low paid jobs, and are a particular problem for young people.

Currently, UK policy offers support with transport costs for jobseekers, but does not extend to sustained support for those people who do find work, even if their employment is relatively low paid. A system of support to help low earners with the cost of travelling to and from work and which therefore encourages them to secure or stay in employment (such as the Work Incentive Transport Subsidy Scheme in Hong Kong) would address this issue, but whether such a scheme is viable in Wales at a time of austerity in public finances would certainly be open to question.

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