



Establishments were sampled from the Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR) in 1997. The IDBR gave the address and postcode of the local unit, or workplace. The postcode given on the IDBR was verified at the time of fieldwork, and in the small number of cases where it was found to be incorrect, or to have changed following sampling, the new postcode was recorded. These updated postcodes (correct at the time of fieldwork) have been used as the basis for the TTWA matching.

Having obtained an up-to-date postcode for each surveyed establishment, the 1998 All Fields Postcode Directory (AFPD, but now known as the National Statistics Postcode Directory) was used to identify the TTWA in which each postcode was located. The 1998 version of the AFPD was used in preference to earlier or later versions as it was thought preferable to use a version as close to the timing of the median WERS interview as possible, to avoid difficulties in matching postcodes from the two sources where a long period of time elapsed between verifying the postcode of the establishment, and the timing of the AFPD.

In the vast majority of cases the postcodes recorded for the surveyed workplaces could be located on the 1998 AFPD. In some instances however, TTWA information was not available for some postcodes. These postcodes were then checked against the most recent version of the National Statistics Postcode Directory, August 2007. This left a very small number of cases where, while a postcode was found to be valid, TTWA information was not available. For these seven establishments, TTWAs were assigned on a 'best-fit' basis<sup>1</sup>.

There were also a small number of instances where a match on the AFPD or NSPD could not be found, and the postcode for the address of the establishment was checked from other sources, such as the Royal Mail postcode search facility or other internet search. In most cases this indicated that there was a small error in the postcode recorded on the WERS sample file e.g. one digit or letter was incorrect. In some instances, the postcode was incomplete, or missing, but it was possible to obtain the full postcode for the address. However, in two cases, it was only possible to identify the postcode sector in which the establishment was located. Nevertheless, it was possible to identify the TTWAs in which these establishments were located, as the postcode sector fell entirely within a single TTWA.

The TTWAs are those defined in 1998, which are based on the 1991 electoral ward boundaries.

## **Variable descriptions<sup>2</sup>**

URATE: The unemployment rate within the TTWA at the time of the median WERS interview i.e. February 1998. Constructed from administrative records of the total number of claimants within the TTWA as a percentage of the estimated mid-2001 resident working-age population (defined as the number of people in the TTWA

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<sup>1</sup> We are grateful to ONS Geography for their help on this matter.

<sup>2</sup> The rate variables use the mid-2001 resident working age population as the denominator since this is currently the only resident working age population data available for TTWAs.

between the ages of 16 and 64 for men, and 16-59 for women, and based on the 2001 census). Grouped into seven categories.

VRATE: The vacancy rate within the TTWA at the time of the median WERS interview i.e. February 1998. Constructed from the ONS measure of 'notified vacancies', which is the inflow of newly notified vacancies each month, within the TTWA, expressed as a percentage of the estimated mid-2001 resident working-age population (defined as for URATE). Grouped into seven categories. There are six workplaces on the dataset where vacancy data is not available, as no vacancy data was available for the TTWAs in which they were located.

UVRATIO: The ratio of the total number of unemployed people to the total number of vacancies notified within the TTWA at the time of the median WERS interview i.e. February 1998. Sources are as described for URATE and VRATE. Where the ratio of unemployed to vacancies is unique to a TTWA, the data was banded. This was necessary only at the extremes of the distribution. For the six workplaces on the dataset where vacancy data is not available, the unemployed to vacancies ratio is therefore also not available.

AREA: identifies establishments within the same TTWA. Anonymized so that the value does not correspond to the number assigned to the TTWA by the Office for National Statistics. Provided to facilitate multi-level analysis.

### **Further information**

Users are advised to consult the sources listed in the references section and the ONS website in order to obtain further information on the origins (and limitations) of the data from which the derived variables are constructed.

To facilitate further geographical matching, the postcodes of each individual surveyed workplace are to be added to the WERS 1998 deposit within the Virtual Micro-Data Laboratory operated by the Office for National Statistics:  
<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/bdl/>.

The deposit at the Virtual Micro-Data Laboratory will also include unbanded versions of URATE, VRATE and UVRATIO.

TTWA variables for 2004 are also available for matching on to the WERS 2004 Cross-Section Management Interview data. In addition to variables for the unemployment rate, vacancy rate and the unemployed to vacancies ratio, the 2004 dataset also includes a variable indicating the percentage of the population of the TTWA belonging to an ethnic minority group (ETHSHAR), and an urban-rural indicator (URBRUR)<sup>3</sup>. Users should note that the 2004 data on vacancies is not comparable with that for 1998. The introduction of Jobcentre Plus resulted in vacancy data being inconsistent pre and post introduction. Arrowsmith (2003) explains the various reasons for the under-recording of

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<sup>3</sup> An urban-rural variable is not available on the 1998 All Fields Postcode Directory. The current classification for England and Wales was only published in July 2004, and for Scotland in November 2004.

vacancy data prior to the introduction of the new system, noting that vacancy notifications increased by approximately twenty per cent under the new system

In addition, TTWA variables are also available for matching on to the WERS 1998-2004 Panel Dataset. In addition to the variables described above, this dataset also contains a further variable (URATECHG) indicating the change in the unemployment rate in the TTWA in which the workplace is located, over the period 1998 to 2004.

## **Acknowledgements**

We are grateful to ONS Geography for their valuable help and advice in using the National Statistics Postcode Directory.

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## **References**

Arrowsmith, J. (2003) "Jobcentre Plus notified vacancy series", *Labour Market Trends*, Vol. 111, No. 7, pp. 363-8.

Office for National Statistics (1998) All Fields Postcode Directory Record Specification. Crown Copyright 2004. Source: National Statistics/Ordnance Survey. Extracts are Crown Copyright and may only be reproduced by permission. Available at: <http://edina.ac.uk/ukborders/>

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