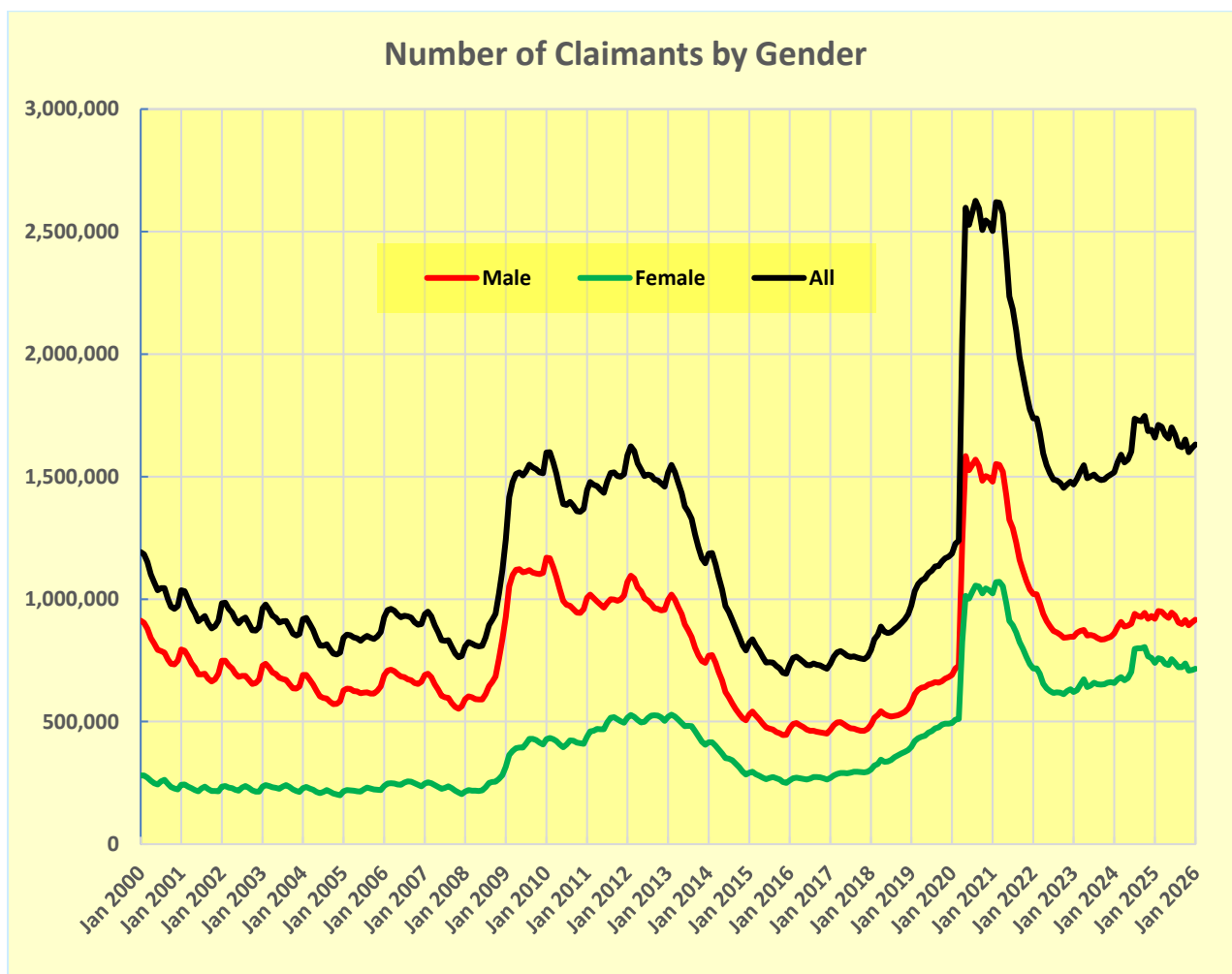


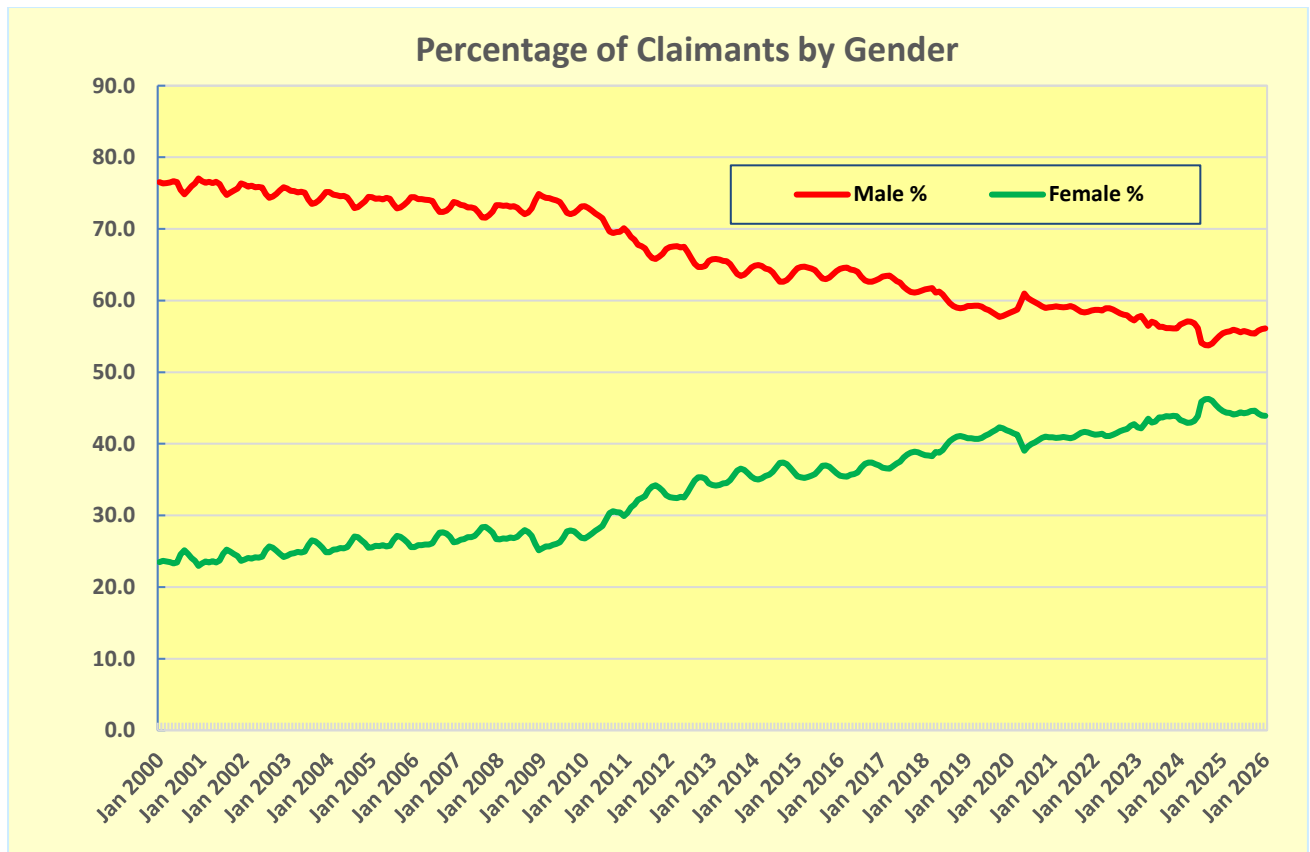
# Trends in Unemployment

The Department for Work and Pensions publish monthly figures detailing the number of claimants for unemployment-related benefits, segmented by both gender and age across Great Britain. Data has been compiled from January 2000 to March 2026, and is illustrated in the following charts. It is important to note that, from April 2015 onwards, the Claimant Count incorporates all Universal Credit claimants who are required to seek and be available for work, alongside all Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) claimants. The transition from JSA to Universal Credit is ongoing, meaning some individuals remain on the previous system. Prior to 2015, figures solely represented those on the older JSA scheme. The Claimant Count also includes individuals who claim unemployment-related benefits but may not receive payments, such as those temporarily sanctioned and not in receipt of benefits.

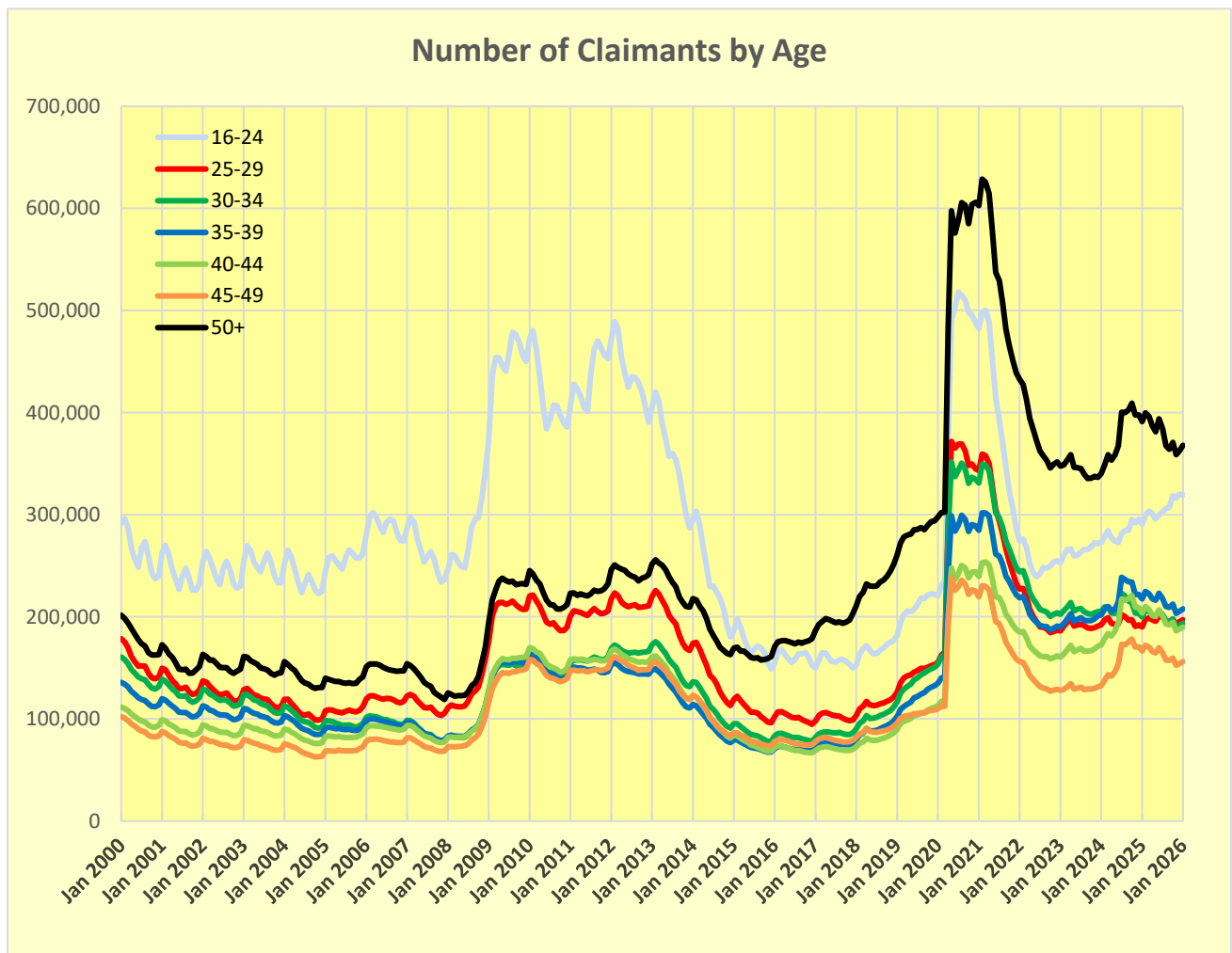
The first chart presents the number of claimants by gender from January 2000 onwards. The data highlights a rise in claimant numbers during the recession of 2009 and 2010, followed by a decrease around 2013. From approximately 2017, the numbers began to climb again, with a dramatic surge occurring during the pandemic. This spike subsequently fell back. Looking beyond the pandemic spike, there is still a notable upward trend in claimant numbers since about 2017, suggesting underlying changes beyond the immediate impact of Covid.



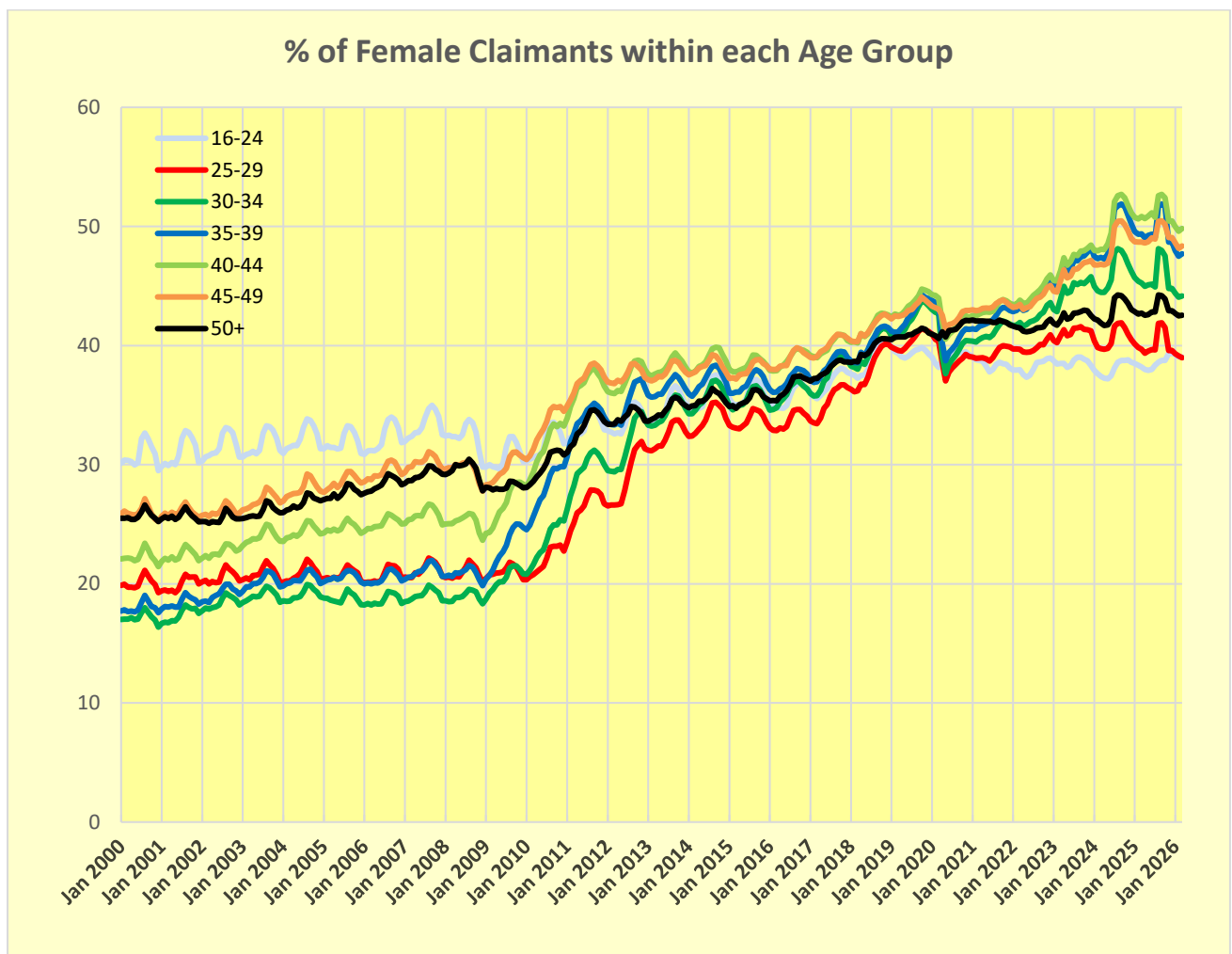
The second chart shows the percentage of claimants by gender over time. Notably, in January 2000, women represented just under one quarter of all claimants, by March 2026, this figure had increased to approximately 44%. This steady and significant rise suggests complex underlying causes, such as greater participation of women in the labour market, possibly as a response to financial pressures within households, declining birth rates, and shifts in the employment landscape, including growth in sectors like health and care. As the female workforce expands, it follows that a greater number may experience unemployment.



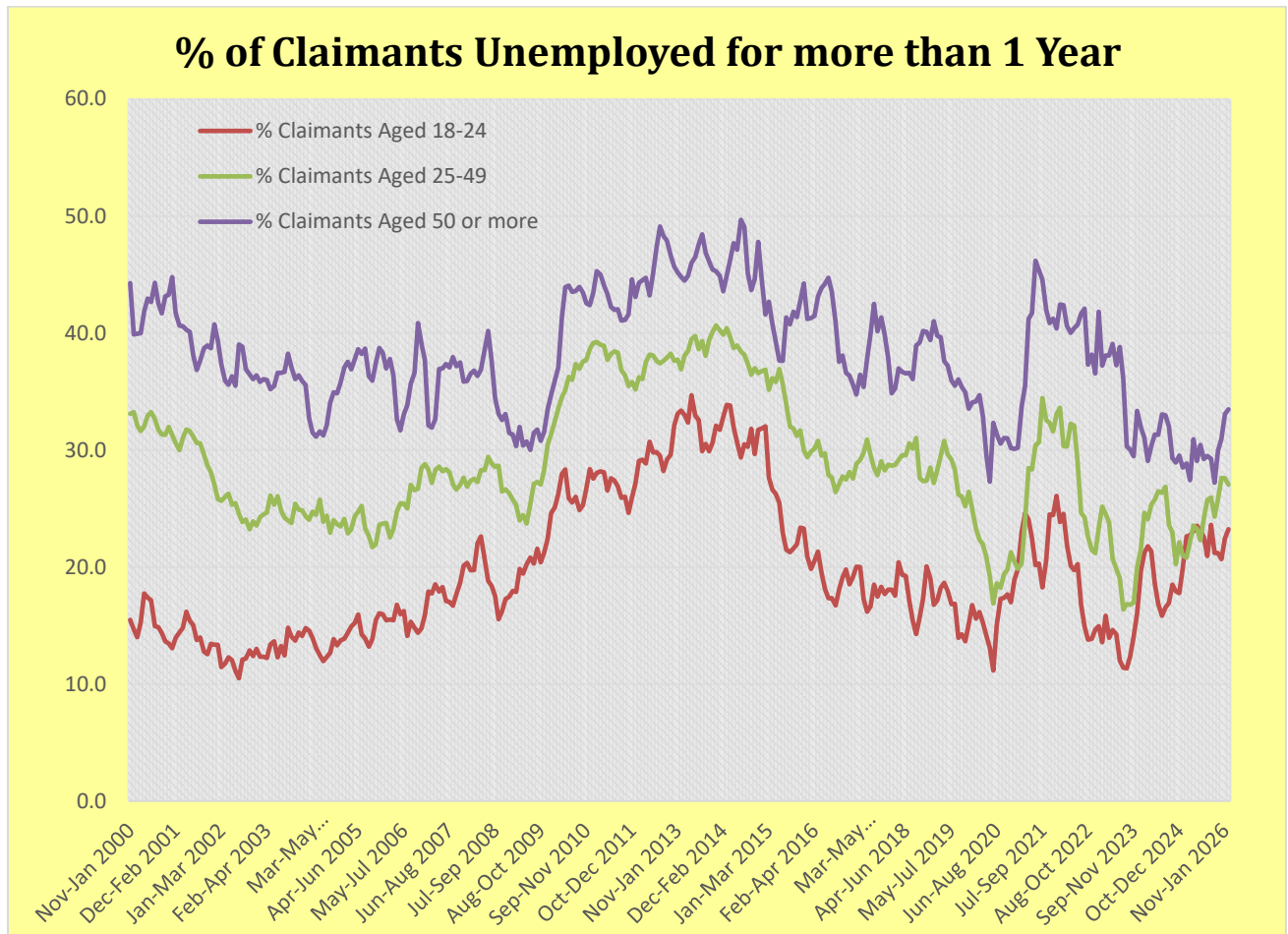
The third chart shows claimant numbers by age group. Before 2016, the 16-24 age group comprised the largest proportion of claimants and was particularly affected by the recession in 2009 and 2010. However, from around 2016, claimants aged 50 and over became the largest group. Since 2017, numbers have risen across all age groups, with the pandemic having the greatest impact on older workers, who continue to constitute the largest group of claimants. This suggests that individuals over 50 are facing ongoing difficulties in returning to employment. Additionally, since around 2022, the number of claimants aged 16-24 has also increased and from around 2022 this increase has been quite marked. In January 2026, about 4.6% of people in this age group were claimants, up from approximately 3.4% in 2022, indicating a rise in youth unemployment. This trend may be linked to reductions in service sector employment. Although older claimants remain the largest group numerically, they also represent the largest age group in population terms, and only about 2.8% of the cohort were claimants in January 2026



The fourth chart shows the proportion of female claimants within each age group over time. Across all age groups, the proportion of female claimants has risen, as we have already seen, but within that overall rise there are differences between the age groups. For those aged 50 and over, the share of female claimants increased from around 26% in 2000 to about 43% in 2026, reflecting the overall trend. In the 16-24 age group, the proportion rose from roughly 30% to about 40% whilst for the slightly older female groups those aged either 35-39 or 40-44, the proportion of female claimants has risen more sharply and now stands at a little over 50%. It should also be noted that claimant numbers within the year do vary slightly, and this is due to seasonal effects and this seems to be most marked within the youngest age group.



The final chart shows the proportion of claimants who have been unemployed for more than a year within three broad age groups. This data is drawn from the Labour Force Survey. The chart shows that long term unemployment is far more prevalent amongst older claimants although the most recent figures do show a narrowing of these differences as the proportion falls back a little.



David Griffiths  
TRAC Consultancy  
5<sup>th</sup> May 2026