

West Sussex Economy Snapshot

May 2023 (Issue 34)

West Sussex County Council

This is a monthly 'snapshot' of the West Sussex economy, produced by the County Council's Performance & Intelligence team with contributions from partners. The data presented here is publicly available and any analysis provided is for information purposes only.

This report includes national data that can provide a context to the trends seen from the data in West Sussex.

The latest COVID-19 figures relating to West Sussex are available on the [county dashboard](#).

Previous reports can be found on the [Business West Sussex](#) pages.

If you have any questions relating to the information in this report, please email business.support@westsussex.gov.uk or sue.cooper@westsussex.gov.uk

West Sussex Headlines

Over the last month, March '23-April '23, there was an increase of 2% in the number of claimants aged 16+ in West Sussex, regional and national figures increased by 2% and 3% each. All districts & boroughs in West Sussex saw an increase over this time, except Mid Sussex and Worthing. Crawley has the highest number of claimants and the highest claimant count rate, at 3.9%, higher than the regional and same as national rates. Mid Sussex has the lowest claimant count rate.

The number of employees on payrolls is continuing to increase in West Sussex, from pre-pandemic levels. The number of employees on payrolls, from this data, is above that seen before April 2020. Despite the overall increase in employees over the last month, from March 2023 West Sussex's employees decreased by 0.67% compared to South East and the UK fell by 0.62% and 0.45% each. Within West Sussex, Mid Sussex has the highest number of employees at 71,965 and Adur the lowest at 26,743. Similarly, the median monthly pay levels have risen to levels higher than seen at the beginning of 2020. North East West Sussex (Crawley, Horsham & Mid Sussex) continues to have higher monthly pay levels than South West Sussex (Adur, Arun, Chichester & Worthing).

Job postings continue to be higher than pre-pandemic, unique job postings increased by 2% from the previous month. Care workers and home carers continue to be in the highest demand. Other administrative occupations, customer service occupations, sales, and nurses also continue to be in the top 10 occupations posted. Demand is also strong for cleaners and domestics, catering related occupations – kitchen and catering assistants as well as book keepers, payroll managers & wages clerks. From postings, over the last six months, finance has been the most sought 'specialised' skill.

The number of new business incorporations in West Sussex over the last year- May 2022 – April 2023 was higher than the number of businesses that have been dissolved or have gone into liquidation – by around 690 businesses. In the last three months Feb '23– April '23, however, there were 472 more new business than that were dissolved or gone into liquidation. Mid Sussex continues to have the highest number of new business incorporations, also companies dissolved, or had gone into liquidation. In West Sussex, the highest numbers of new businesses were seen in the business services sector which also had the highest number of businesses that were dissolved or in liquidation.

Gross Value Added (GVA) data has been released at local authority level for the year 2021. West Sussex's GVA has fallen by 4% since 2019, though there had been some growth over the year 2020-'21. Crawley has continued to see a fall in GVA 2020-21, driven by the impact of COVID on the air transport sector.

Inside this report

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National Headlines

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is estimated to have fallen in March 2023, after showing no growth in Feb '23. Monthly GDP is now estimated to be 0.1% above its pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) levels (February 2020). Service sector fell by 0.5% in March 2023. Wholesale and retail trade and repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles are the largest contributor to the negative growth. Consumer-facing services fell in March 2023 by 0.5%, following an unrevised growth of 0.4% in February 2023 - wholesale and retail trade of motor vehicles and motorcycles are the major contributor to this fall. Production grew by 0.7% in March 2023 after a fall of 0.1% in February 2023. Construction is estimated to have grown by 0.2% in March 2023 after a growth of 2.6% in Feb '2023.

The number of payrolled employees has continued to increase nationally, albeit at a slower rate, and over the year April 2022-April 2023 rose by 1%.

From the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICs), 95% of businesses reported they were trading. 26% of trading businesses reported turnover was lower compared with March 2023. 35% of trading businesses reported an increase in the prices of goods or services bought in April 2023 compared to the previous month.

Data for England and Wales on company insolvencies shows that there were 1,685 in April 2023, 15% lower than in the same month in the previous year.

New Businesses, West Sussex

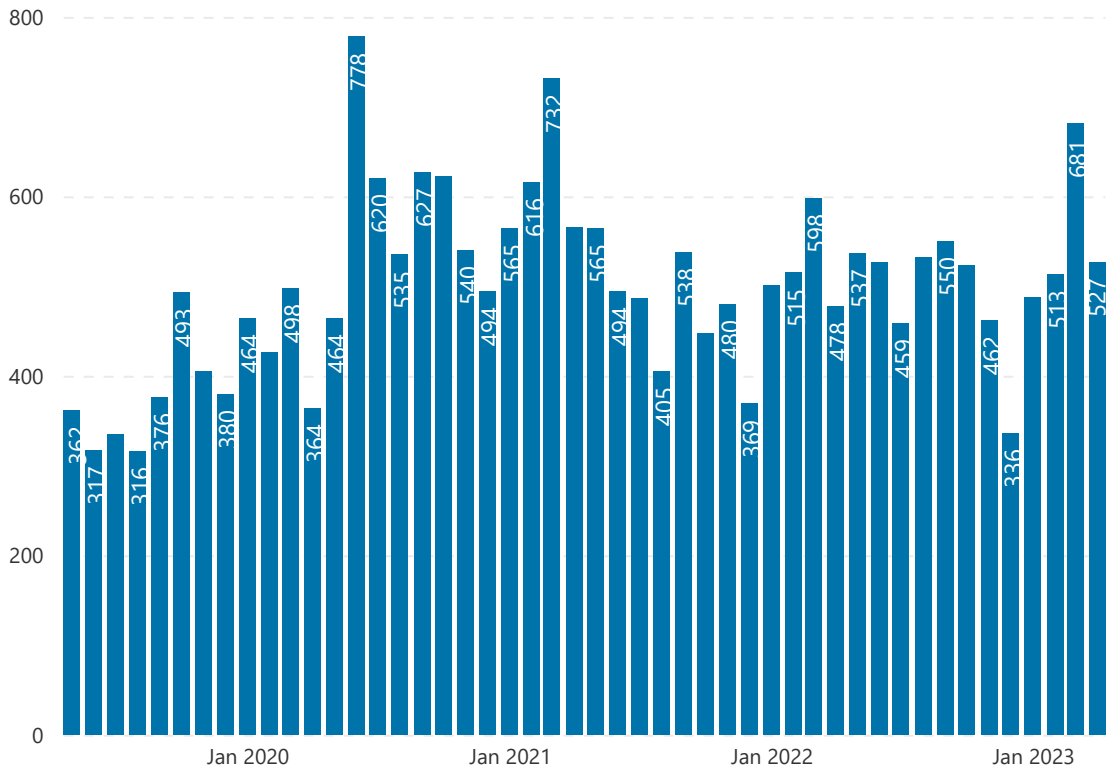
Source: FAME

Released: May 2023

There is no doubt that the time series shows fluctuations month on month, but generally, the numbers of new business formations have tended to be at levels greater than those seen pre-pandemic. In the last 12 months, May 2022- April 2023, there were around 5,958 new business incorporations, 690 more than the 5,268 businesses that were dissolved, or which had gone into liquidation.

In the last 3 months – Feb'23 –April '23 there were 472 more new business incorporations (1,712) than business that dissolved/in liquidation (1,240). In April 2023, there were more new businesses (527) than closures (417).

New business incorporations in West Sussex



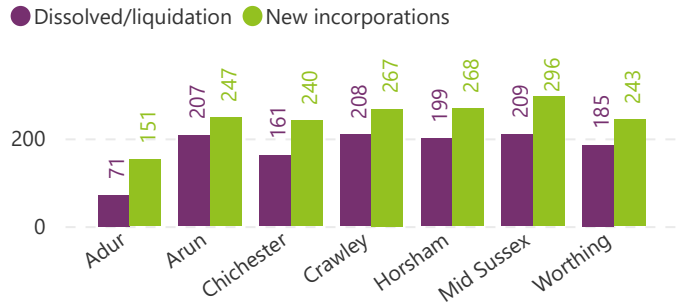
Businesses, West Sussex

Source: FAME

Released: May 2023

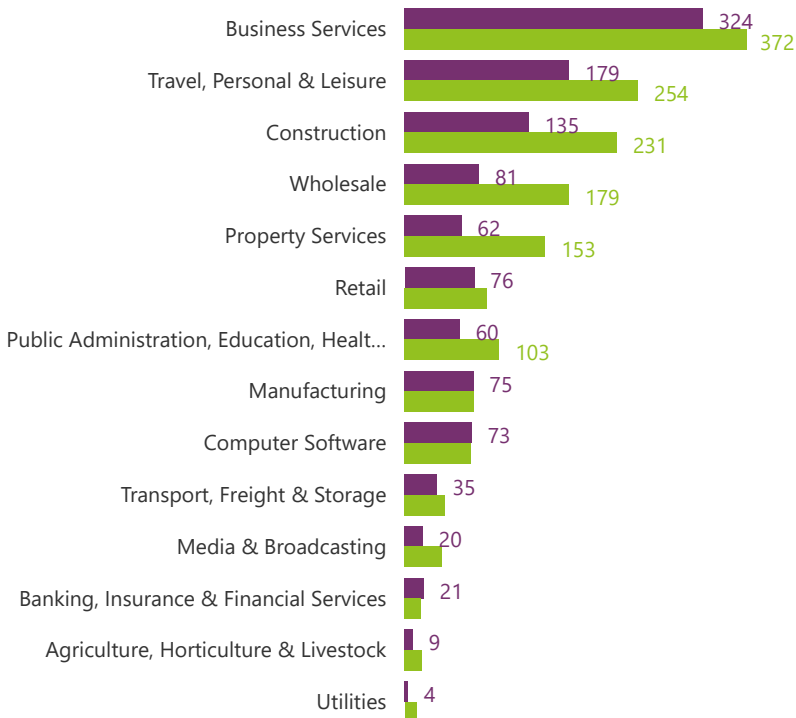
Over the last three-month period – Feb 2023-Apr 2023 Mid Sussex continues to have the highest number of new business incorporations and businesses that have dissolved or are in liquidation. Within West Sussex, all 7 local authority districts saw more new business than business closures. There is an increasing speculation that with high inflation levels as well as rising fuel and energy costs more businesses will close.

Number of new business incorporations and businesses dissolved/in liquidation by local authority (Feb '23-Apr '23)



Number of new business incorporations and businesses dissolved/in liquidation by industry (Feb '23-Apr '23)

● Dissolved/liquidation ● New incorporations



Business services has the highest number of new incorporations as well as numbers dissolved or in liquidation over the last 3 months, a continuation of the past trends, though along with manufacturing, computer software, banking, insurance & financial services saw more closed businesses than new business formations. The top three sectors for new business formations are as in previous months – business services, travel personal and leisure, and construction.

Claimant Count, West Sussex

Source: [ONS, Claimant Count](#)

Released: 16 May 2023 (April 2023 figures are provisional)

The claimant count includes those people who are claiming either Job Seekers Allowance or Universal Credit principally because they are out of work or working very few hours and/or have a very low wage.

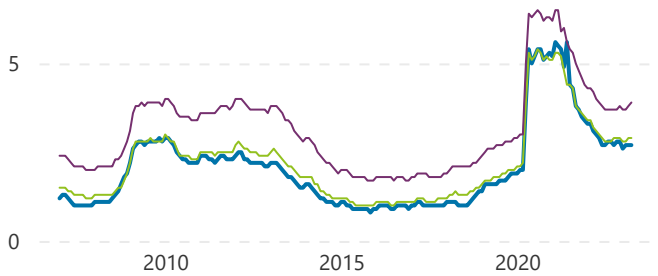
There were 14,195 claimants aged 16+ in West Sussex in April 2023, an increase of 2% from the previous month, compared with a regional and national (England) increase of 2% and 3%.

Within West Sussex, all local authority districts except Mid Sussex and Worthing saw an increase in claimants from Mar'23. Chichester saw the highest increase in claimants at 4%.

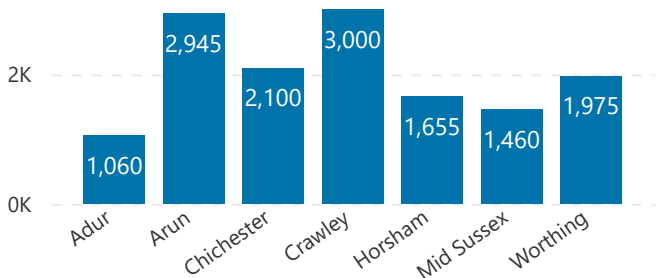
Crawley has the highest number of claimants at 3,000 and the highest claimant count rate at 3.9%, higher than the regional and same as the national rates. Mid Sussex has the lowest claimant count rate at 1.6%. In West Sussex, % of male claimants aged 16+ increased by 1% and female by 3%.

Claimant count rate

● West Sussex ● South East ● England

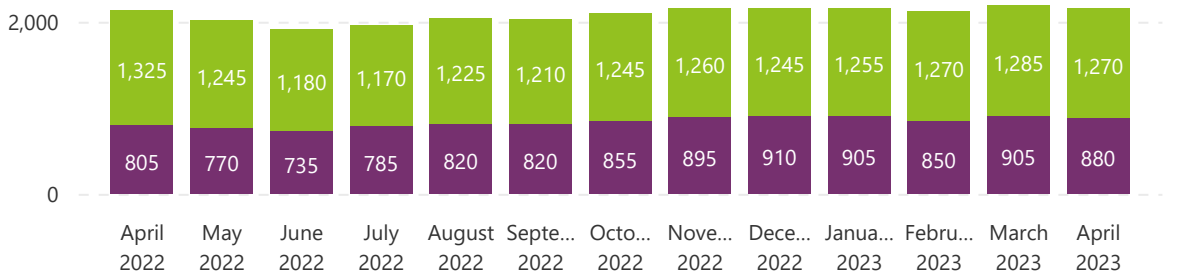


Number of claimants



Claimant count by gender, 18-24 age group

● Female ● Male



Claimant Count, West Sussex

Source: [ONS, Claimant Count](#)

Released: 16 May 2023 (April 2023 figures are provisional)

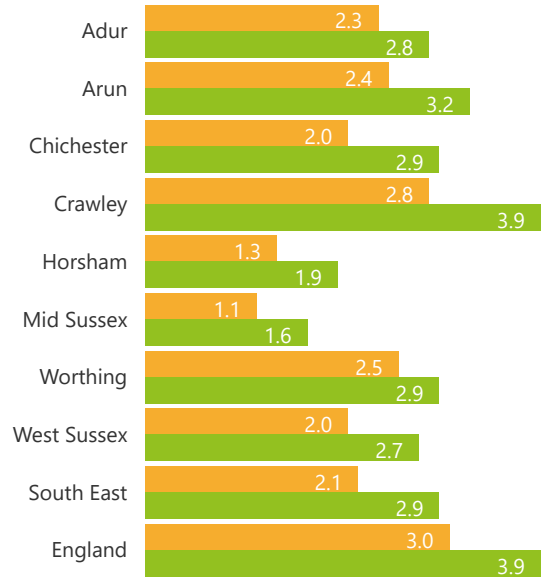
Age profile of claimants: Worthing (19%) has the highest proportion of 16-24 year olds, and Chichester the lowest at 12%. Chichester has a higher proportion of claimants who are over 50 years.

There are 2,150 claimants aged 18-24 in West Sussex, which is a decrease of -1% from the previous month. National (England) and regional figures increased by 0.9% each, for this age category. Crawley has the highest number of claimants in this age group at 440. In West Sussex, Adur, Chichester and Horsham saw increase in claimants aged 18-24. Adur (6%) saw the highest increase, in the claimants aged 18-24 over the last month.

Within West Sussex, over the last month, there was an decreased of -0.5% in claimants amongst males aged 18-24 years; females by -2.2%.

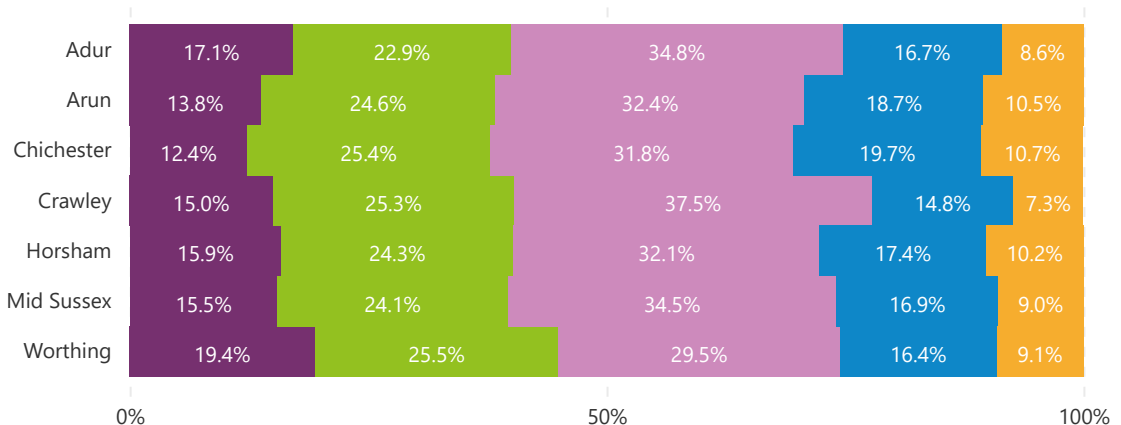
Claimant count rates change

● March 2020 ● April 2023



Distribution of claimants by age band

● Aged 16-24 ● Aged 25-34 ● Aged 35-49 ● Aged 50-59 ● Aged 60+



Universal Credit Claimants, West Sussex

Source: [Department for Work and Pensions](#)

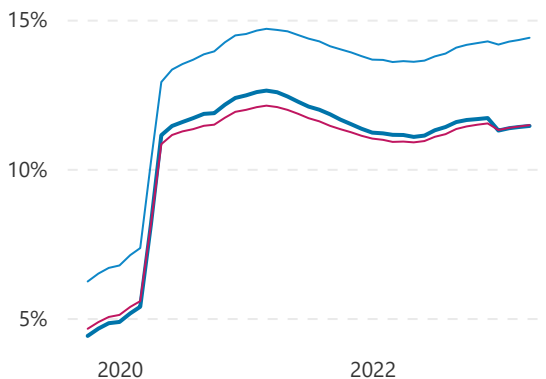
Released: 16 May 2023 (April 2023 figures are provisional)

Universal Credit is a single payment for each household to help with living costs for those on a low income or out of work. In April 2023, there were 60,689 Universal Credit claimants, which is a 1.5% increase from previous month. The numbers of people claiming Universal Credit in West Sussex has increased 122% since March 2020 - from 27,355 to 60,689 in April 2023. In West Sussex, the percentage of people in employment claiming Universal Credit increased since Mar'20 from 41.14% to 44.3% in Mar'23. In Mar'23, within West Sussex, Mid Sussex (3,520) has seen the highest percentage of Universal Credit claimants who are in work at 48% followed by Crawley (5,620) and Horsham (3,236) at 45%.

Crawley has seen the highest % rise (135%) over the period from March 2020 (at the start of the pandemic) to April 2023 though there has been a significant rise in the number of residents claiming Universal Credit across the county. Please note April 2023 employment/not in employment breakdown hasn't released yet.

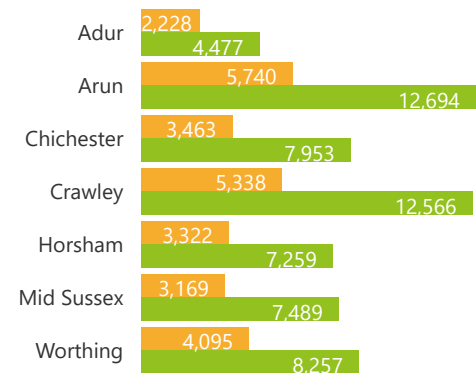
Percentage of people aged 16-64 years claiming Universal Credit

● West Sussex ● South East ● England



Universal Credit claimants in West Sussex change

● March 2020 ● April 2023



Universal Credit claimants in West Sussex by employment status

● In employment ● N/A ● Not in employment



Real Time Information Pay As You Earn (RTI PAYE), Employees, West Sussex

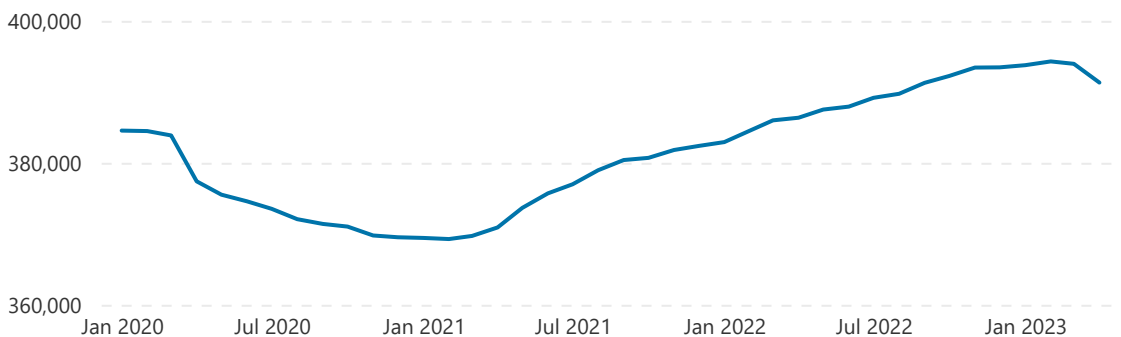
Source: ONS - [Earnings and employment from Pay As You Earn Real Time Information, seasonally adjusted](#)

Released: 16 May 2023

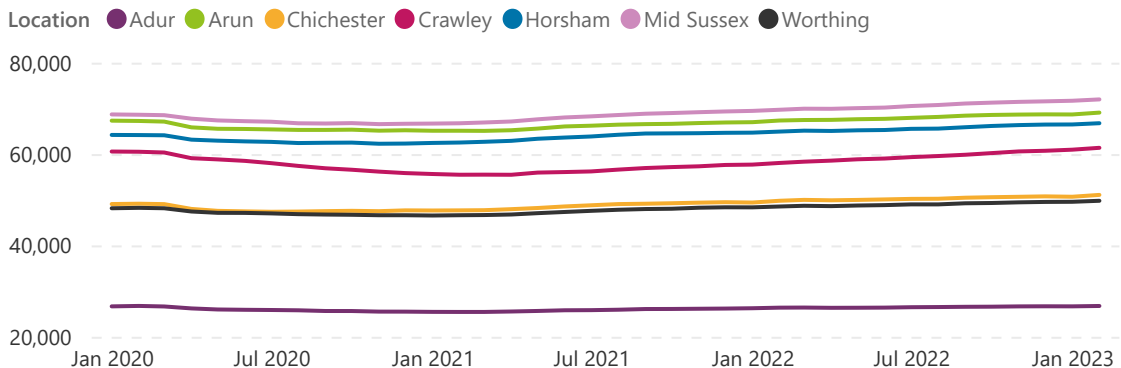
These figures are from a set of 'experimental statistics' from ONS from the earnings and employment statistics Pay as You Earn (PAYE) Real Time Information (RTI) seasonally adjusted data set. The latest data is up to the month of April 2023 for West Sussex, South East and England and up to February 2023 for local authorities. West Sussex's employees decreased by 0.67% from March 2023. The South East's employees decreased by 0.62% and the UK's employees decreased by 0.45%. The local authority with the largest growth from January was Chichester with 0.80%. Adur had the lowest employee growth with 0.31%.

The latest data shows that Mid Sussex has the highest number of employees at 71,965 in West Sussex and Adur the lowest at 26,743. The timeline of employees in West Sussex shows a decrease from April 2020, at the beginning of the first lockdown and continuing to decrease until March 2021 at which point the employee figures begin to increase again. This increase has continued to the current date where all districts and boroughs have exceeded the employee figures seen pre-April 2020.

West Sussex Number of Employees



District Number of Employees



Real Time Information Pay As You Earn (RTI PAYE), Median Pay, West Sussex

Source: ONS - [Earnings and employment from Pay As You Earn Real Time Information, seasonally adjusted](#)

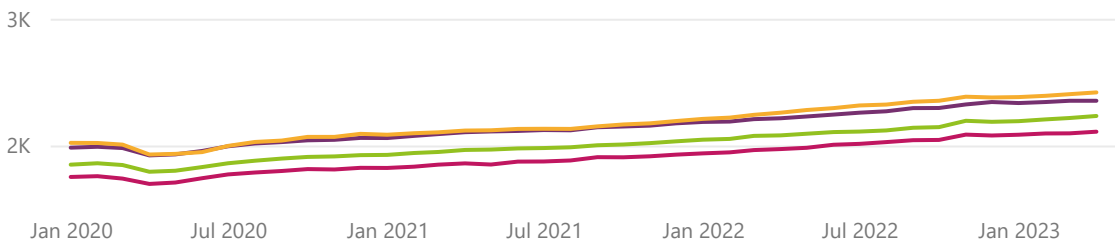
Released: 16 May 2023

As in the previous page, these figures are based on the ONS statistics from the earnings and employment Pay As You Earn (Seasonally Adjusted) RTI data set and are up to the month of April 2023 for West Sussex, South East and UK and up to February for local authorities. The local authority with the largest percentage increase of pay from January 2023 was Chichester with 0.33% compared to a decrease of 1.08% in Horsham which saw the largest decrease. West Sussex South West had a increase in median monthly pay by 0.62% and the North East had a increase in median monthly pay by 0.58% from March 2023. The South East's monthly median pay increased by 0.30% and the UK's increased by 0.72% since March 2023.

The local authority with the highest median monthly pay is Mid Sussex at £2,230, and the lowest is seen in Arun at £1,833. A decrease in median pay can be seen in between the month of March and April 2020 which was the beginning of the first lockdown. Median monthly pay trends then return to pre lockdown levels by July 2020 for all local authorities. Compared to the regional and national median monthly pay, North East West Sussex (Crawley, Horsham & Mid Sussex) has higher monthly pay levels than South West Sussex (Adur, Arun, Chichester & Worthing). The past four months have seen change in monthly median pay with the highest increase since November being 0.35% in Arun. The highest decrease since November was -1.08% in Horsham.

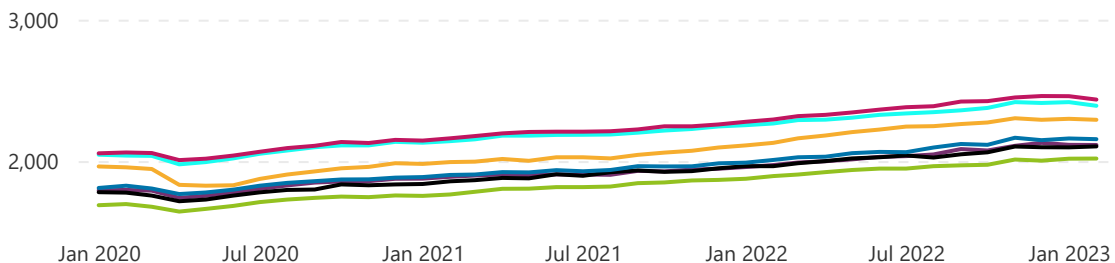
Median Pay National and Regional Figures

Location ● South East ● UK ● West Sussex (North East) ● West Sussex (South West)



Median Pay in West Sussex

Location ● Adur ● Arun ● Chichester ● Crawley ● Horsham ● Mid Sussex ● Worthing



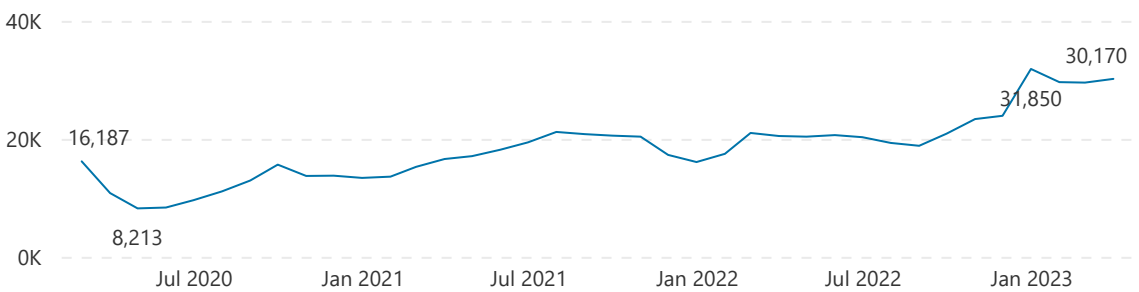
Job Postings, West Sussex

Source: Lightcast

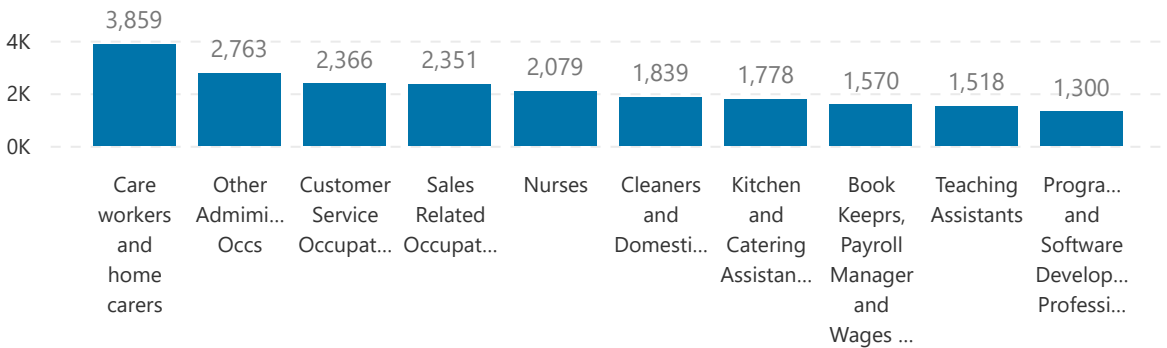
Released: May 2023

Job postings continue to be generally higher than pre-pandemic levels. Unique job postings increased by 2% from the previous month. In terms of the 'top' posted occupations over the last six months to April 2023, care workers and home carers continue to make up the highest numbers of job postings, followed by other administrative occupations. Customer service occupations, sales related and nurses also continue to be in demand. Catering sector, cleaners and domestics along with book keepers, payroll managers & wages clerks continue to be in the top 10 occupations posted.

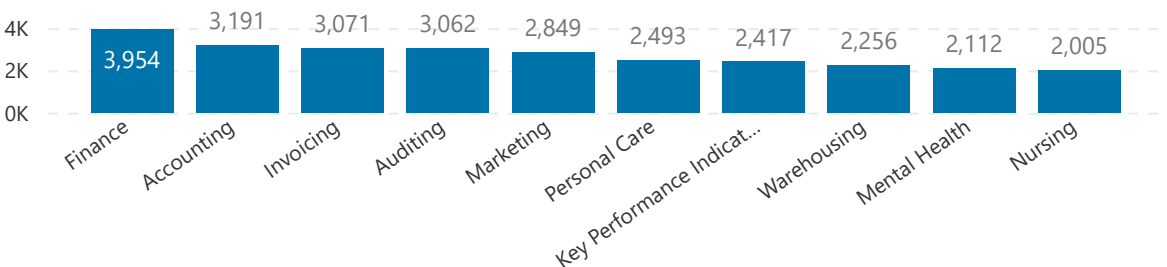
Unique job postings over time in West Sussex



Top 10 posted occupations (unique postings Nov '22 - Apr '23)



Top 10 hard skills (unique postings Nov '22 - Apr '23)



Gross Value Added (GVA), West Sussex

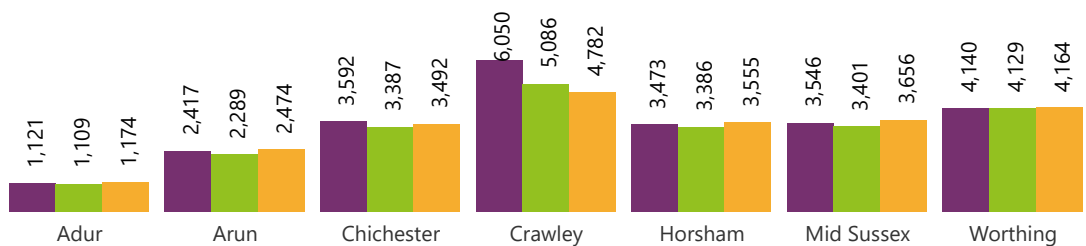
Source: [ONS: GVA per ITL, GVA Current Prices](#)

Released: 25 April 2023

Gross Value Added (GVA) data was released at local authority level for the year 2021 in April 2023. The figures begin to show the impact of COVID, though there are promising signs that in the year 2020-'21 there was some recovery. In West Sussex between 2019-'20 GVA fell by 6.4%. Whilst GVA fell in all authorities in West Sussex over this period, the highest fall was seen in Crawley, driven predominately by the impact on Gatwick Airport, and the loss in the air transport sector. In the following year, 2020-'21 in West Sussex there was an increase in GVA by 2%, though overall GVA is 4.3% lower than 2019 levels. With the exception of Crawley all authorities saw an increase in GVA over the year 2020-21. Crawley experienced a further 6% drop in GVA during this time, again fuelled by the impact of COVID on air transport. Growth over the last year was strong in accommodation and food services, and professional, scientific and technical sectors.

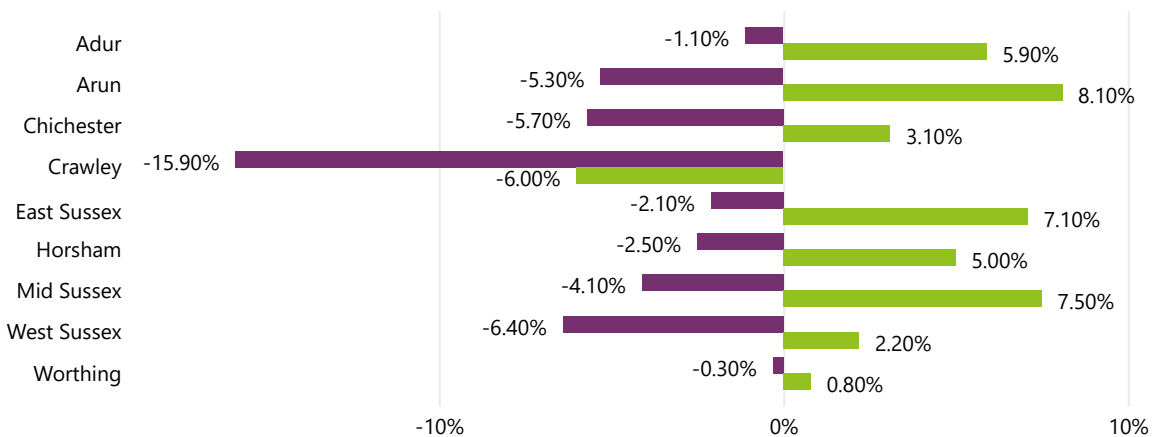
GVA current price (£ Millions)

● 2019 ● 2020 ● 2021



GVA (current price) % change

● 2019-2020 ● 2020-2021



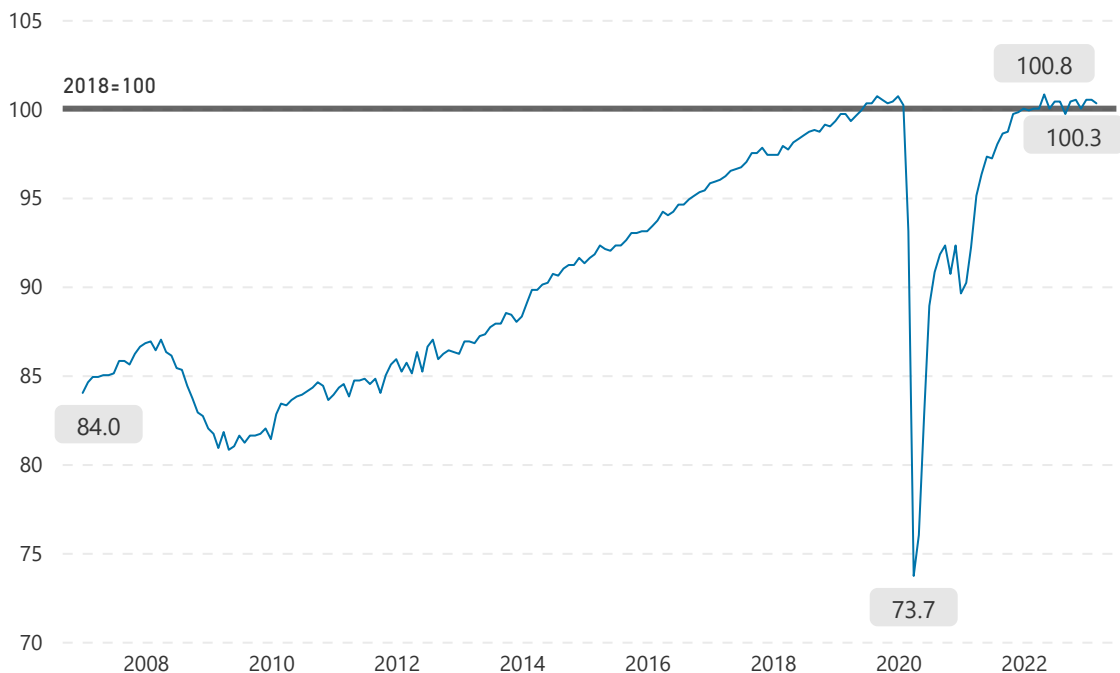
National Headlines - Gross Domestic Product (GDP), UK

Source: [ONS, GDP Monthly Estimate](#)

Released: 12 May 2023

- Gross domestic product (GDP) is estimated to have fallen in March 2023, after showing no growth in February 2023. Looking at the broader picture, GDP grew in by 0.1% in the three months to March 2023. Monthly GDP is now estimated to be 0.1% above its pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) levels (February 2020).
- Services fell by 0.5% in March 2023 after a unrevised fall of 0.1% in February 2023. The largest contributor to negative growth was wholesale and retail trade and repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles, which fell by 1.4%.
- Consumer-facing services fell by 0.8% in March 2023, after a unrevised growth of 0.4% in February 2023. The largest contributor to the fall in consumer-facing services was wholesale and retail trade of motor vehicles and motorcycles with a fall of 4.1%.
- Production grew by 0.7% in March 2023 after a fall of 0.1% in February 2023. This is the strongest monthly growth since May 2021 in this sector. Manufacturing grew by 0.7% and was the largest contributor to the growth in production.
- Construction is estimated to have grown by 0.2% in March 2023 after a growth of 2.6% in February 2023. March 2023 was the highest monthly value in level terms (15,616 million) since records began in January 2010. The main contributor to the growth in construction came from increases in infrastructure new work (2.2%) and public other new work (6.5%).

Monthly index, UK



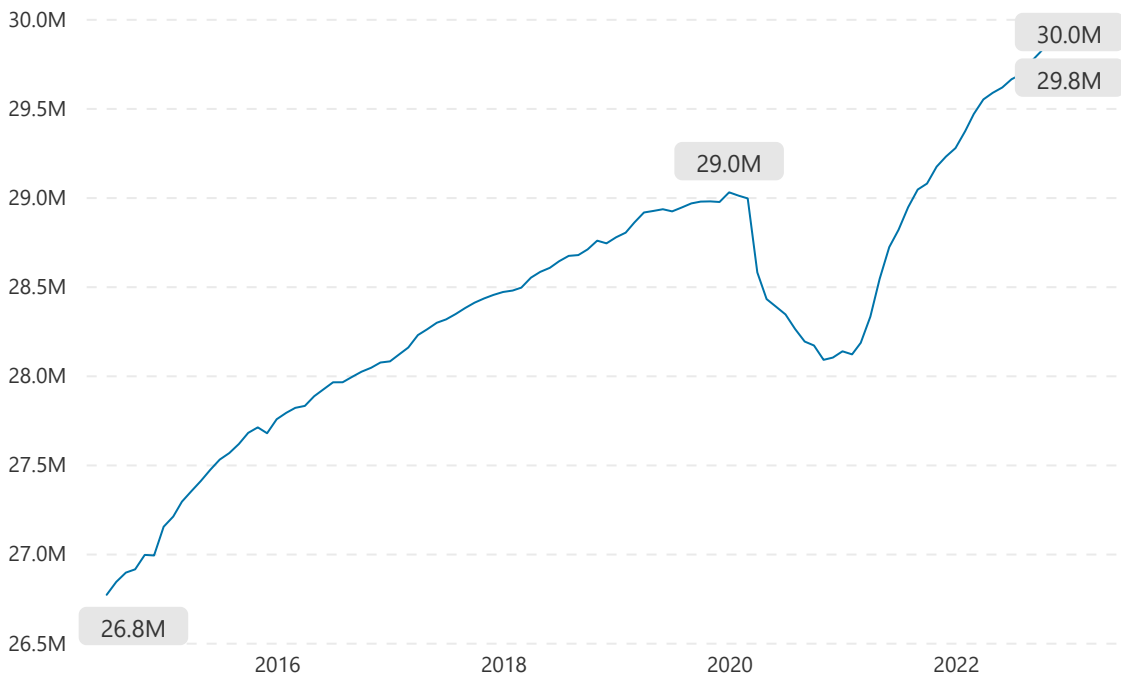
Labour Market, UK

Source: [ONS, Earning and Employment from Pay As You Earn](#)

Released: 16 May 2023

- Early estimates for April 2023 indicate that the number of payrolled employees rose by 1.0% compared with April 2022, a rise of 297,000 employees; the number of payrolled employees was up by 2.9% since February 2020, a rise of 838,000.
- Payrolled employment decreased by 136,000 employees (0.5%) in April 2023 when compared with March 2023, though this should be treated as a provisional estimate and is likely to be revised when more data are received next month. This is the first fall in total payrolled employees since the coronavirus pandemic.
- UK payrolled employee growth for March 2023 compared with February 2023 has been revised from an increase of 31,000 reported in the last bulletin to an increase of 42,000, because of the incorporation of additional real time information (RTI) submissions into the statistics, which takes place every publication and reduces the need for imputation.
- Early estimates for April 2023 indicate that median monthly pay increased by 7.4% compared with April 2022, and increased by 20.1% when compared with February 2020.
- Between April 2022 and April 2023, there was a decrease of 44,000 payrolled employees aged under 25 years; during the same period, payrolled employees aged 35 to 49 years increased by 121,000.

Payrolled employees, seasonally adjusted, UK



Businesses currently trading, UK

Source: [ONS, Business insights and impact on the UK economy](#)

Released: 18 May 2023

The data presented in this bulletin are the final results from Wave 82 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS), which was live for the period of 2 to 14 May 2023.

- In early May 2023, 95% of businesses reported they were trading, with 87% fully trading, 9% partially trading, 3% temporarily paused and 2% permanently ceased trading.
- In April 2023, more than a quarter (26%) of trading businesses reported their turnover was lower compared with March 2023 (19%).
- When asked in early May 2023, more than one in five (21%) trading businesses expect turnover to increase in June 2023, up from 19% for expectations for May 2023.
- Of trading businesses, 35% reported an increase in the prices of goods or services bought in April 2023 compared with March 2023; down from 38% when comparing March with February 2023.
- When looking ahead, 18% of trading businesses expect to raise the prices of goods or services they sell in June 2023, down from 23% for May 2023.
- More than one in six (17%) trading businesses reported their overall performance increased in April 2023 compared with the same calendar month last year, down 2 percentage points from March 2023 compared with March 2022.

Businesses Closures, UK

Source: Gov.uk, [Monthly Insolvency Statistics](#)

Released: 16 May 2023

Data for England and Wales on company insolvencies shows that there were 1,685 in April 2023, 15% lower than in the same month in the previous year (1,988 in April 2022),

There were 183 compulsory liquidations in April 2023, nearly twice the number in April 2022. Numbers of compulsory liquidations have increased from historical lows seen during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, partly as a result of an increase in winding-up petitions presented by HMRC.

For individuals, 531 bankruptcies were registered, which was 5% lower than in April 2022, and less than half of pre-2020 levels.

There were 2,384 Debt Relief Orders (DROs) in April 2023, which was 24% higher than in April 2022. Monthly DRO numbers may be volatile at present due to the introduction of new DRO hubs.

There were, on average, 6,336 Individual Voluntary Arrangements (IVAs) registered per month in the three-month period ending April 2023, which is 16% lower than the three-month period ending April 2022.

Company insolvencies in England & Wales

