

West Sussex Economy Snapshot

June 2023 (Issue 35)

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, April '23-May'23, there was a decrease of -2% in the number of claimants aged 16+ in West Sussex, regional and national figures decreased by -1.7% and -2% each. All districts & boroughs in West Sussex saw a decline in claimants from April 23. 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 April 2023 West Sussex's employees increased by 0.05% compared to South East and the UK increased by 0.16% and 0.08% each. Within West Sussex, Mid Sussex has the highest number of employees at 71,981 and Adur the lowest at 26,512. 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 26% from the previous month. Care workers and home carers continue to be in the highest demand. Other administrative occupations, sales occupations, customer service, 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, teaching assistants, 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- June 2022 – May 2023 was higher than the number of businesses that have been dissolved or have gone into liquidation – by around 760 businesses. In the last three months Mar'23– May'23, however, there were 514 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.

Inside this report

This report is split into two sections - local West Sussex data and National trends.

West Sussex

New Businesses	5
Businesses	6
Claimant Count	7
Universal Credit Claimants	9
Real Time Information Pay as you Earn Employees	10
Job Postings	12

National

Gross Domestic Product	13
Labour Market	14
Businesses currently trading	15
Business Closures	16

National Headlines

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is estimated to have grown by 0.2% in April 2023, after showing a fall in Mar '23. Monthly GDP is now estimated to be 0.3% above its pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) levels (February 2020). Service sector grew by 0.3% in April 2023.

Consumer-facing services rose in April 2023 by 1%, following a fall of 0.8% in March 2023 - food and beverage service activities are the major contributor to this fall. Production fell by 0.3% in April 2023 after a growth of 0.7% in March 2023. Construction is estimated to have decreased by 0.6% in April 2023 after two months of consecutive growth.

The number of payrolled employees has continued to increase nationally, albeit at a slower rate, and over the year May 2022-May 2023 rose by 1.6%.

From the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICs), 95% of businesses reported they were trading. 23% of trading businesses reported turnover was lower compared with April 2023. 30% of trading businesses reported an increase in the prices of goods or services bought in May 2023 compared to the previous month.

Data for England and Wales on company insolvencies shows that there were 2,552 in May 2023, 40% higher than in the same month in the previous year.

New Businesses, West Sussex

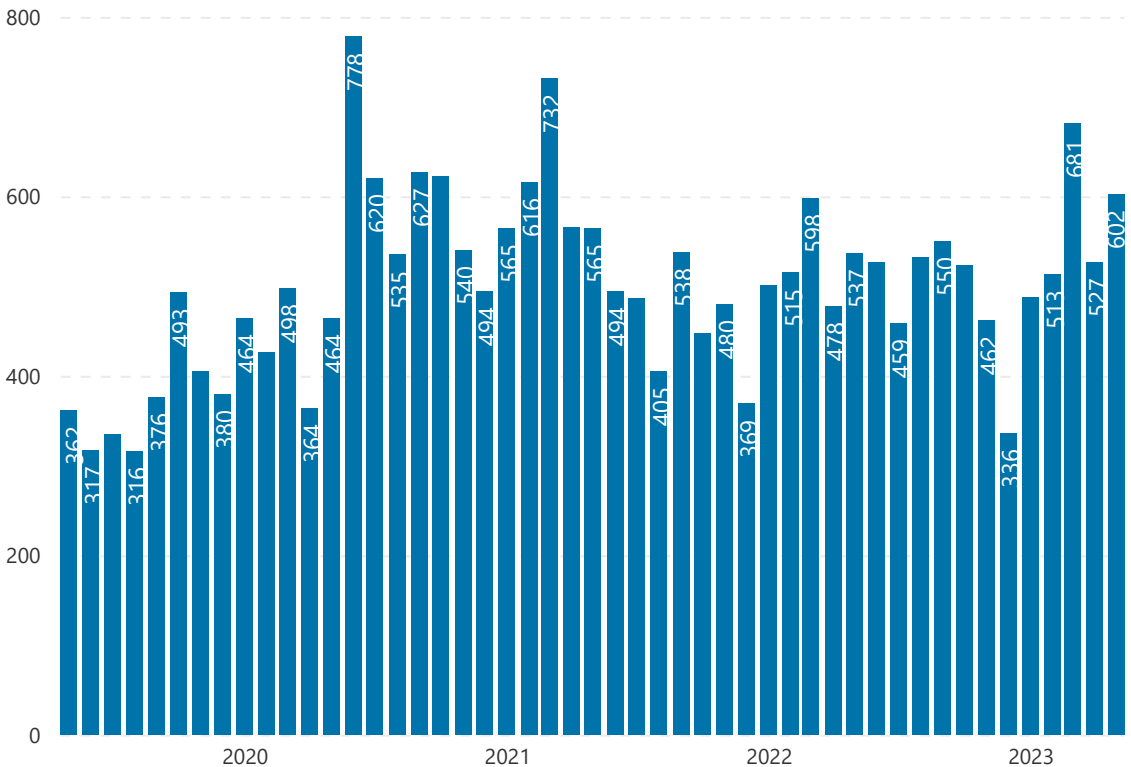
Source: FAME

Released: June 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, June 2022- May 2023, there were around 6,001 new business incorporations, 760 more than the 5,241 businesses that were dissolved, or which had gone into liquidation.

In the last 3 months – Mar'23 –May '23 there were 514 more new business incorporations (1,809) than business that dissolved/in liquidation (1,295). In May 2023, there were more new businesses (602) than closures (497).

New business incorporations in West Sussex



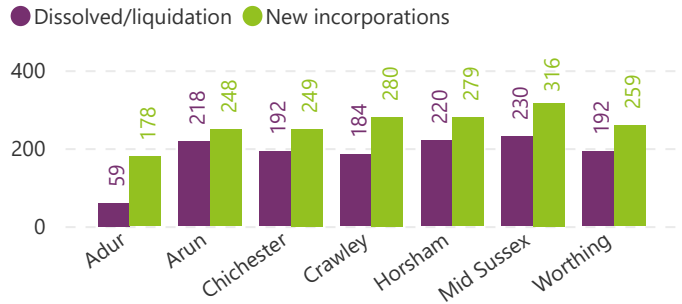
Businesses, West Sussex

Source: FAME

Released: June 2023

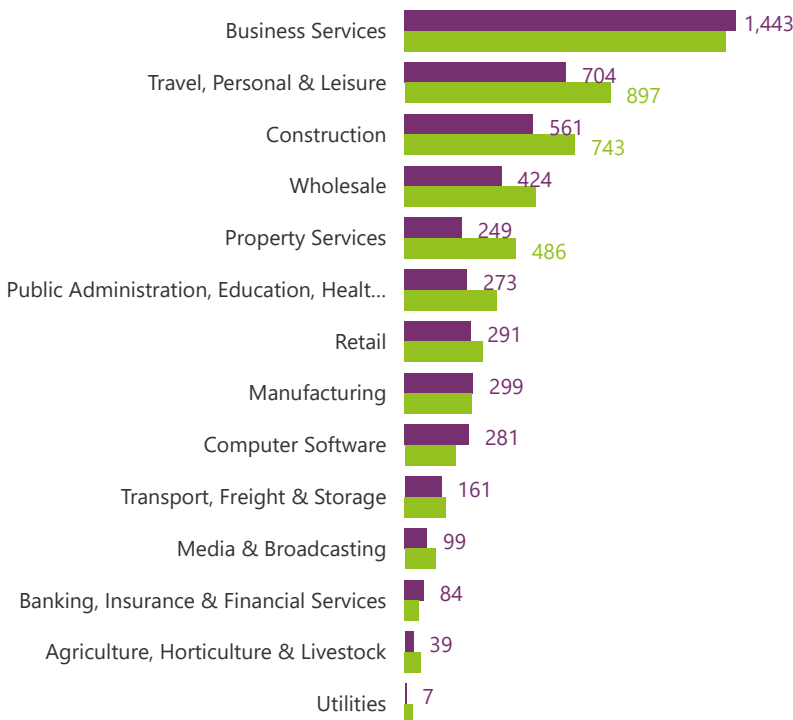
Over the last three-month period – Mar 2023-May 2023 Mid Sussex continues to have the highest number of new business incorporations and businesses that have dissolved or are in liquidation. Within West Sussex, all 7 local authority districts saw more new business than business closures. There is an increasing 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 (Mar '23-May '23)



Number of new business incorporations and businesses dissolved/in liquidation by industry (Mar '23-May '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: 13 June 2023 (May 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.

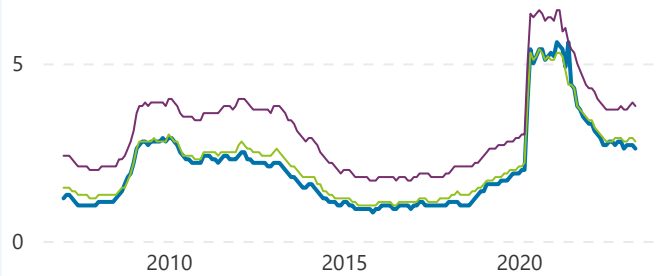
There were 13,820 claimants aged 16+ in West Sussex in May 2023, a decrease of -2% from the previous month, compared with a regional and national (England) decrease of -1.7% and -1.9%.

Within West Sussex, all local authority districts saw a fall in claimants from Apr'23. Adur saw the highest decline in claimants at -5.3%.

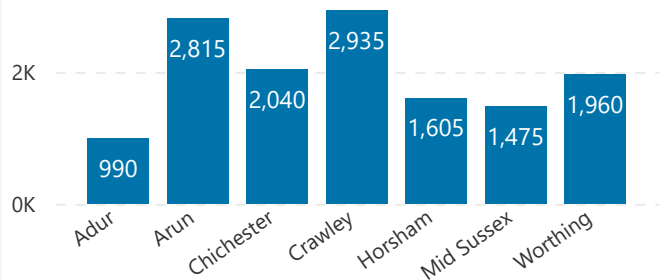
Crawley has the highest number of claimants at 2,935 and the highest claimant count rate at 3.8%, higher than the regional and same as the national rates. Mid Sussex has the lowest claimant count rate at 1.6%. In West Sussex, % of male claimants aged 16+ fell by -1% and female by -3%.

Claimant count rate

● West Sussex ● South East ● England

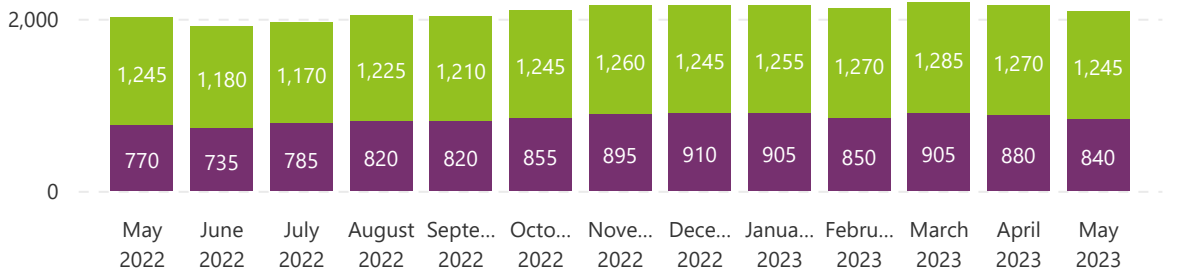


Number of claimants



Claimant count by gender, 18-24 age group

● Female ● Male



Claimant Count, West Sussex

Source: [ONS, Claimant Count](#)

Released: 13 June 2023 (May 2023 figures are provisional)

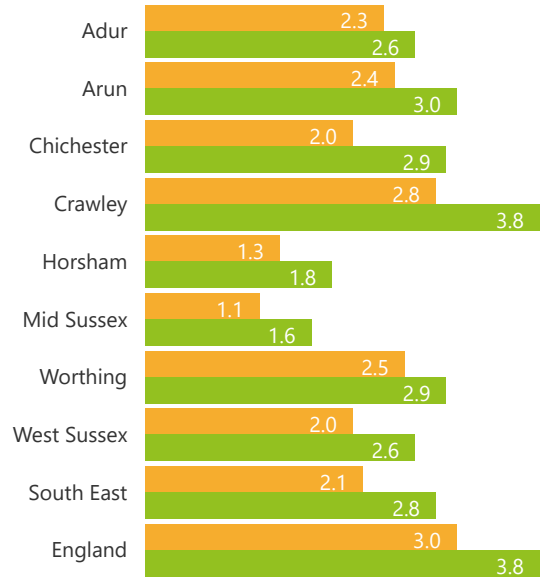
Age profile of claimants: Worthing (19%) has the highest proportion of 16-24 year olds, and Chichester the lowest at 13%. Chichester has a higher proportion of claimants who are over 50 years.

There are 2,085 claimants aged 18-24 in West Sussex, which is a decrease of -2% from the previous month. National (England) and regional figures fell by -1.5% and -1.6%, for this age category. Crawley has the highest number of claimants in this age group at 435. In West Sussex, all local authority districts saw a decrease in claimants aged 18-24 except Chichester. Chichester saw 6% increase, in the claimants aged 18-24 over the last month.

Within West Sussex, over the last month, there was an decreased of -1% in claimants amongst males aged 18-24 years; females by -4%.

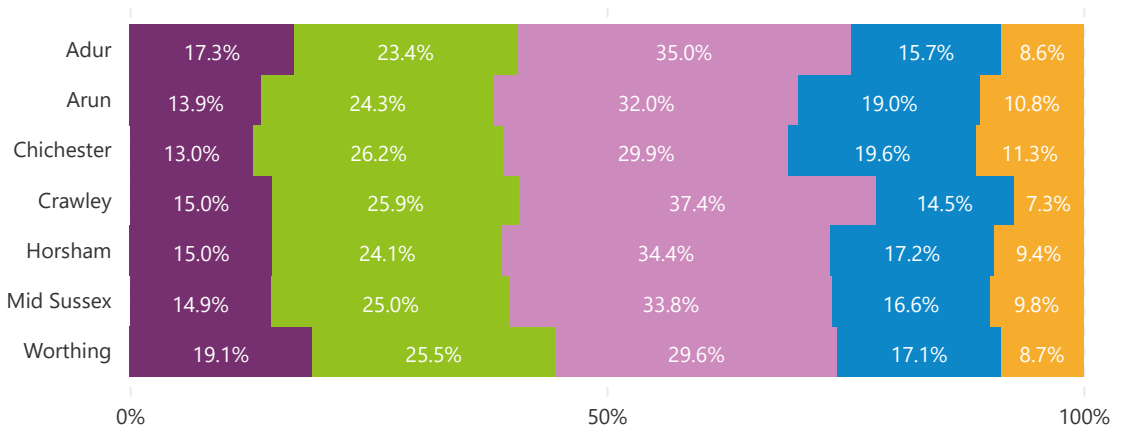
Claimant count rates change

● March 2020 ● May 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

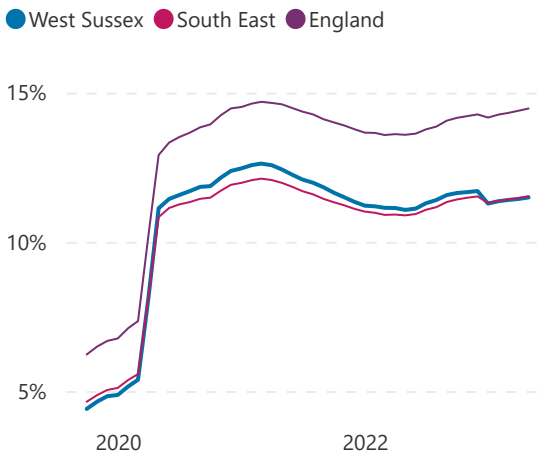
Source: [Department for Work and Pensions](#)

Released: 13 June 2023 (May 2023 figures are provisional)

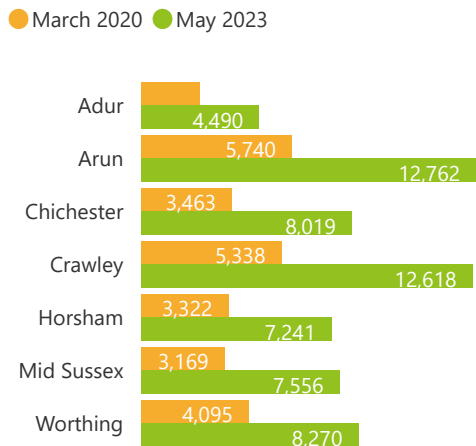
Universal Credit is a single payment for each household to help with living costs for those on a low income or out of work. In May 2023, there were 60,961 Universal Credit claimants, which is a 1.4% increase from previous month. The numbers of people claiming Universal Credit in West Sussex has increased 122% since March 2020 - from 27,355 to 60,961 in May 2023. In West Sussex, the percentage of people in employment claiming Universal Credit increased since Mar'20 from 41.14% to 44.7% in Apr'23. In Apr'23, within West Sussex, Mid Sussex (3,561) has seen the highest percentage of Universal Credit claimants who are in work at 48% followed by Crawley (5,696) and Horsham (3,302) at 46%.

Crawley has seen the highest % rise (136%) over the period from March 2020 (at the start of the pandemic) to May 2023 though there has been a significant rise in the number of residents claiming Universal Credit across the county. Please note May 2023 employment/not in employment breakdown hasn't released yet.

Percentage of people aged 16-64 years claiming Universal Credit



Universal Credit claimants in West Sussex change



Universal Credit claimants in West Sussex by employment status

Legend: ● In employment (green), ● N/A (purple), ● Not in employment (orange)



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

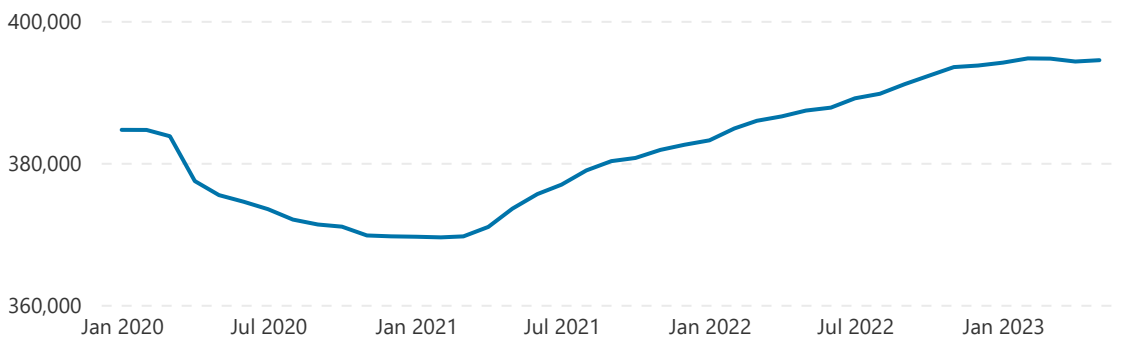
Source: ONS - [Earnings and employment from Pay As You Earn Real Time Information, seasonally adjusted](#)

Released: 13 June 2023

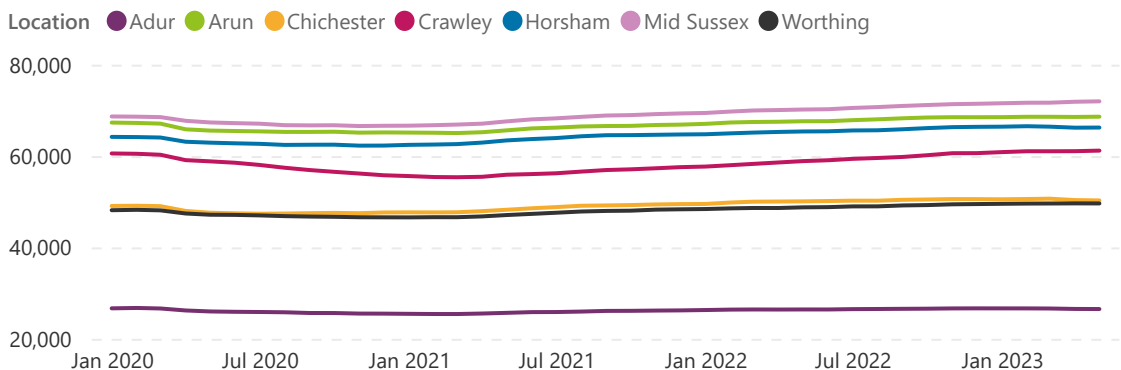
These figures are from a set of 'experimental statistics' from ONS from the earnings and employment statistics Pay as You Earn (PAYE) Real Time Information (RTI) seasonally adjusted data set. The latest data is up to the month of May 2023. West Sussex's employees increased by 0.05% from April 2023. The South East's employees increased by 0.16% and the UK's employees increased by 0.08%. The local authority with the largest growth from April was Crawley with 0.21%. Chichester had the highest employee decline with 0.16%.

The latest data shows that Mid Sussex has the highest number of employees at 71,981 in West Sussex and Adur the lowest at 26,512. 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](#)

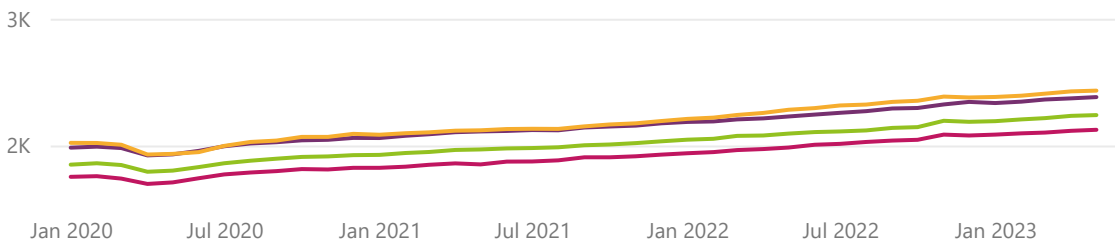
Released: 13 June 2023

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 May 2023. The local authority with the largest percentage increase of pay from April 2023 was Chichester with 0.94% compared to a decrease of 0.04% in Horsham which saw the largest decrease. West Sussex South West had a increase in median monthly pay by 0.38% and the North East had a increase in median monthly pay by 0.25% from April 2023. The South East's monthly median pay increased by 0.38% and the UK's increased by 0.81% since April 2023.

The local authority with the highest median monthly pay is Mid Sussex at £2,250, and the lowest is seen in Arun at £1,849. 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 February being 2.17% in both Arun and Crawley. The lowest increase since February was 1.53% in Horsham.

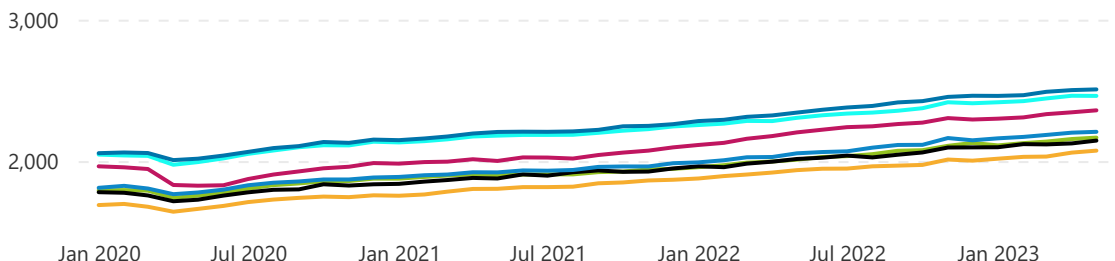
Median Pay National and Regional Figures

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



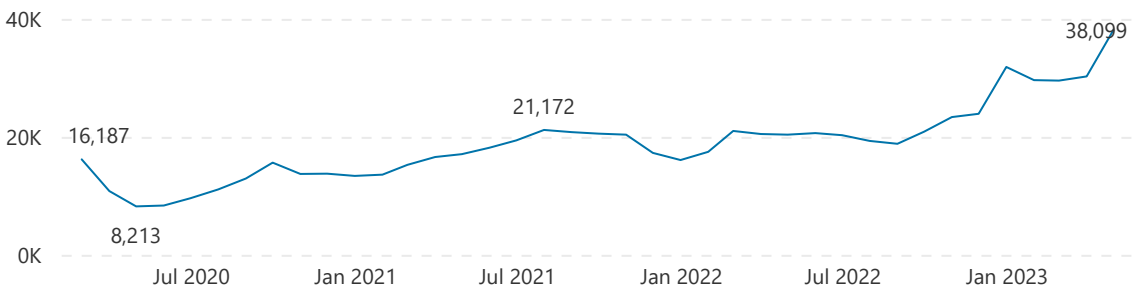
Job Postings, West Sussex

Source: Lightcast

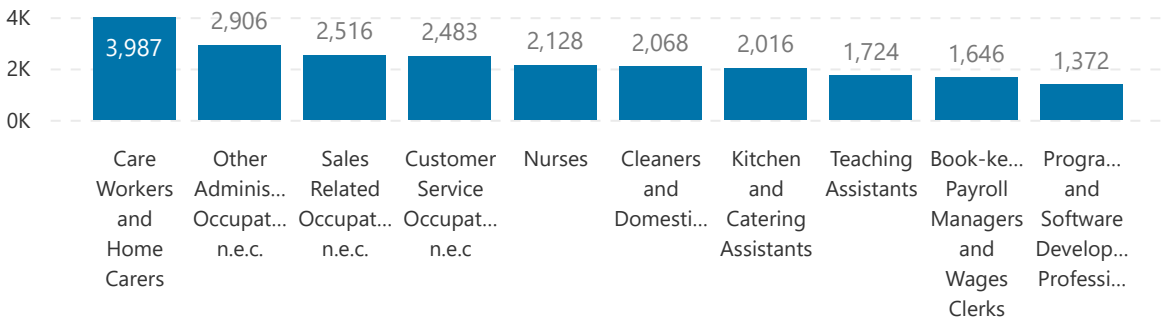
Released: June 2023

Job postings continue to be generally higher than pre-pandemic levels. Unique job postings increased by 26% from the previous month. In terms of the 'top' posted occupations over the last six months to May 2023, care workers and home carers continue to make up the highest numbers of job postings, followed by other administrative occupations. Sales related occupations, customer service and nurses also continue to be in demand. Cleaners and domestics, catering sector along with teaching assistants, book keepers, payroll managers & wages clerks continue to be in the top 10 occupations posted.

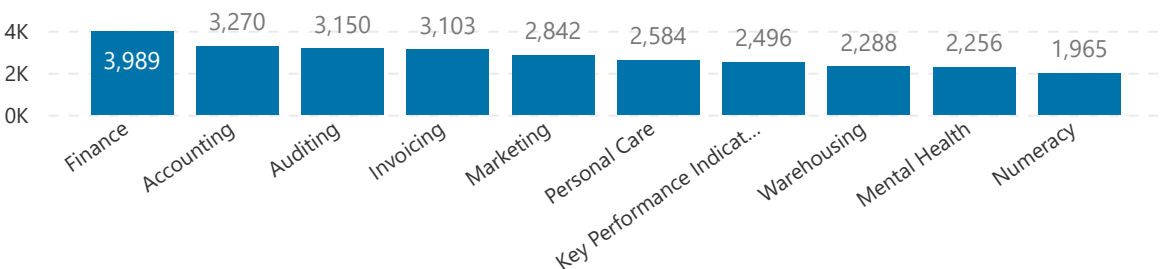
Unique job postings over time in West Sussex



Top 10 posted occupations (unique postings Dec '22 - May '23)



Top 10 hard skills (unique postings Dec '22 - May '23)



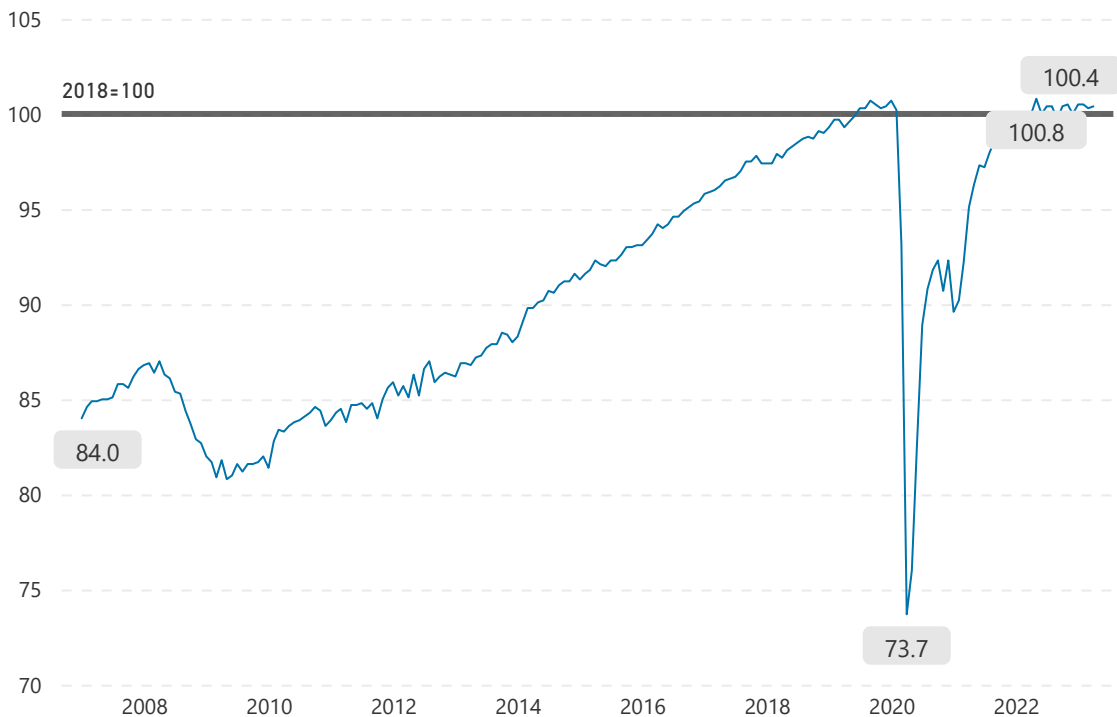
National Headlines - Gross Domestic Product (GDP), UK

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

Released: 14 June 2023

- Gross domestic product (GDP) is estimated to have grown by 0.2% in April 2023, after a fall of 0.3% in March 2023. Looking at the broader picture, GDP grew in by 0.1% in the three months to April 2023. Monthly GDP is now estimated to be 0.3% above its pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) levels (February 2020).
- Services grew by 0.3% in April 2023 following a fall of 0.5% in March 2023, with growths in 10 of the 14 sub-sectors. Overall, the services sector fell by 0.1% in the three months to April 2023 compared with the three months to January 2023, with falls in 8 of the 14 sub-sectors.
- Consumer-facing services rose by 1.0% in April 2023, after a fall of 0.8% in March 2023. The largest contributor to the rise in consumer-facing services came from food and beverage service activities, which grew by 2.0%.
- Production fell by 0.3% in April 2023 after a growth of 0.7% in March 2023. Manufacturing fell by 0.3% and was the largest contributor to the negative growth in production.
- Construction is estimated to have decreased by 0.6% in April 2023 after two months of consecutive growth. March 2023 was the highest monthly value in level terms (15,616 million) since records began in January 2010. The main contributor to the decrease in construction came from a decrease in new work (1.0% fall) with a small offset from an increase in repair and maintenance (0.1%) on the month.

Monthly index, UK



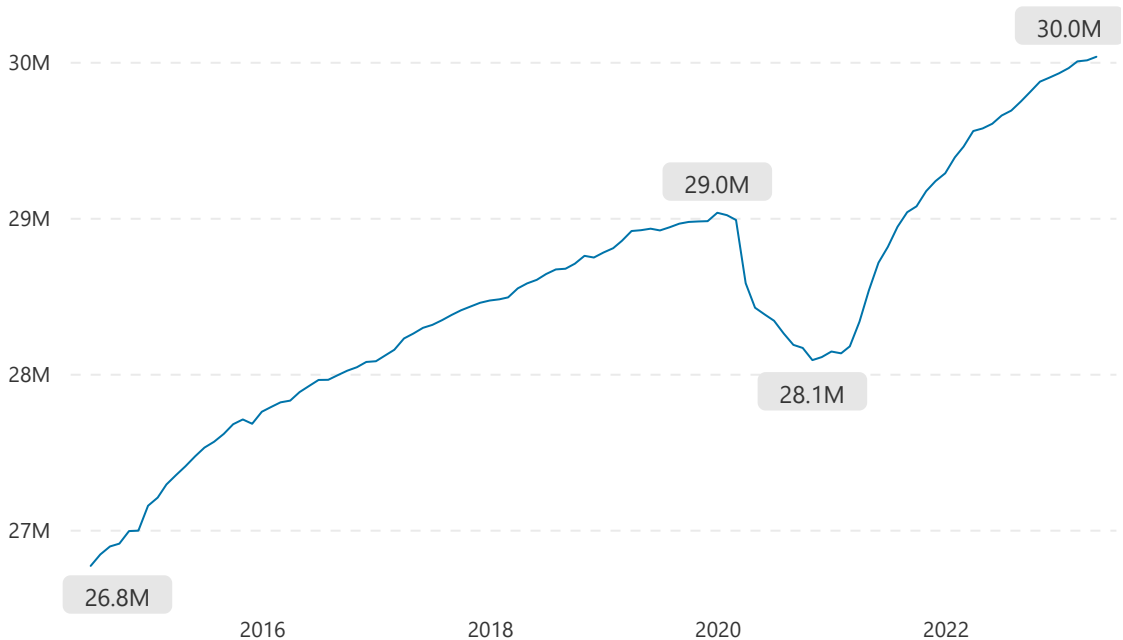
Labour Market, UK

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

Released: 14 June 2023

- Early estimates for May 2023 indicate that the number of payrolled employees rose by 1.6% compared with May 2022, a rise of 460,000 employees; the number of payrolled employees was up by 3.5% since February 2020, a rise of 1,016,000.
- Payrolled employment decreased by 23,000 employees (0.1%) in May 2023 when compared with April 2023, though this should be treated as a provisional estimate and is likely to be revised when more data are received next month.
- UK payrolled employee growth for April 2023 compared with March 2023 has been revised from an decrease of 136,000 reported in the last bulletin to an increase of 7,000, 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 May 2023 indicate that median monthly pay increased by 7.0% compared with May 2022, and increased by 20.4% when compared with February 2020.
- Between May 2022 and May 2023, there was a decrease of 3,000 payrolled employees aged under 25 years; during the same period, payrolled employees aged 35 to 49 years increased by 163,000.

Payrolled employees, seasonally adjusted, UK



Businesses currently trading, UK

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

Released: 15 June 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 30 May to 11 June 2023.

- In early May 2023, 95% of businesses reported they were trading, with 86% fully trading, 8% partially trading, 4% temporarily paused and 2% permanently ceased trading.
- In May 2023, less than a quarter (23%) of trading businesses reported their turnover was lower compared with April 2023 (26%). In comparison, 16% of businesses reported their turnover was higher in May 2023.
- When asked in early June 2023, nearly one in five (19%) trading businesses expect turnover to increase in July 2023, down from 21% for expectations for June 2023.
- Of trading businesses, 3 in 10 (30%) reported an increase in the prices of goods or services bought in May 2023 compared with April 2023. This is down 5 percentage points from April 2023 and has been slowly falling from the 48% reported in September 2022.
- When looking ahead, 17% of trading businesses expect to raise the prices of goods or services they sell in July 2023, stable compared with expectations reported for June 2023. More than a quarter (27%) of these businesses reported energy prices as a reason for considering these increases.
- More than 4 in 10 (41%) of trading businesses reported that they had absorbed costs because of the increase in general prices in early June 2023, whereas 25% reported they had passed the increases onto their customers.
- More than a quarter (27% of businesses with 10 or more employees reported they experiences difficulties recruiting employees in May 2023, unchanged from April 2023, but down from 30% in March 2023.

Businesses Closures, UK

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

Released: 16 June 2023

Data for England and Wales on company insolvencies shows that there were 2,552 in May 2023, 40% higher than in the same month in the previous year (1,825 in May 2022),

There were 189 compulsory liquidations in May 2023, 34% higher than in May 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, 617 bankruptcies were registered, which was 5% higher than in May 2022, and around half of pre-2020 levels.

There were 2,505 Debt Relief Orders (DROs) in May 2023, which was 23% higher than in May 2022. Monthly DRO numbers may be volatile at present due to the introduction of new DRO hubs.

There were, on average, 6,767 Individual Voluntary Arrangements (IVAs) registered per month in the three-month period ending May 2023, which is 14% lower than the three-month period ending May 2022.

Company insolvencies in England & Wales

