

West Sussex Economy Snapshot

November 2023 (Issue 40)

West Sussex County Council

This is a monthly 'snapshot' of the West Sussex economy, produced by the County Council's Performance & Intelligence team. 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.

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

In October 2023, there was an increase of 1.46% in the number of claimants aged 16+ in West Sussex compared with the previous month. The regional figure saw an increase of 1.6%, whereas the national figure increased by 1.3%. Mid Sussex saw a decrease in the number of claimants over the last month; Horsham saw an increase of 4.7%, the highest in West Sussex. Crawley has the highest number of claimants and the highest claimant count rate, at 3.8%, which is higher than the regional and national rates. While Adur has the lowest number of claimants in the county, Mid Sussex has the lowest claimant count rate in West Sussex at 1.7%.

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. From September 2023, West Sussex's employees increased by 0.16% and the regional and national figures increased by 0.17% and 0.11% respectively. Within West Sussex, Mid Sussex has the highest number of employees at 72,437 and Adur the lowest at 26,664. 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 West Sussex (Adur, Arun, Chichester & Worthing).

The number of new business incorporations in West Sussex over the last year - November 2022 – October 2023 have tended to be at greater levels than those seen pre-pandemic. In the last three months August 2023–October 2023, there were 242 more new business incorporations (1,627) than business that dissolved/in liquidation (1,385). In October 2023, there were more new businesses (517) than closures (513). Mid Sussex continues to have the highest number of new business incorporations, as well as companies dissolved, or which had gone into liquidation. In West Sussex, the highest numbers of new businesses continues to be in the business services sector which also had the highest number of businesses that were dissolved or in liquidation.

From the recently released Business Demography data set which gives annual data on births, deaths and survival of VAT and/or PAYE registered businesses in the UK, by local authority and Standard Industrial Classification all local authorities except Worthing have seen a decrease in business births from 2017 to 2022 with an average decline of 7%. Business deaths have seen an increase in all local authorities except Adur with an average percent decrease of 7%.

Business survival rate for businesses started up in 2017 shows all local authorities in West Sussex have an estimated 10-20% drop in business survival every year. After 5 years, the majority of local authorities have a survival rate between 47-50% except Crawley which has a survival rate of 38%. West Sussex's 5 year survival rate (47%) is higher than both the national (39%) and regional (43%) survival rate.

National Headlines

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is estimated to have grown by 0.2% in September 2023, after a revised growth of 0.1% in August 2023. Service sector rose in September 2023 by 0.2% and was the main contributor to the growth in GDP in September. Consumer-facing services fell by 0.2% in September 2023, following a fall of 0.7% in August 2023 - sports activities and amusement and recreation activities industry was the major contributor to this fall. Production showed no growth in September 2023 after a fall of 0.5% in August 2023. Construction is estimated to have increased by 0.4% in September 2023.

In the UK, the total number of [online job adverts](#) increased by 4% on 17 November 2023 when compared with the previous week; this number was 17% below the level in the equivalent period of 2022 (Adzuna).

The number of payrolled employees has continued to increase nationally and over the year October 2022 - October 2023 rose by 1.3%.

From the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICs), 95% of businesses reported they were trading. 24% of trading businesses reported turnover was lower compared with September 2023. 23% of trading businesses reported an increase in the prices of goods or services bought in October 2023 compared to the previous month.

Data for England and Wales on company insolvencies shows that there were 2,315 in October 2023, 18% higher than in the same month in the previous year.

Inside this report

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

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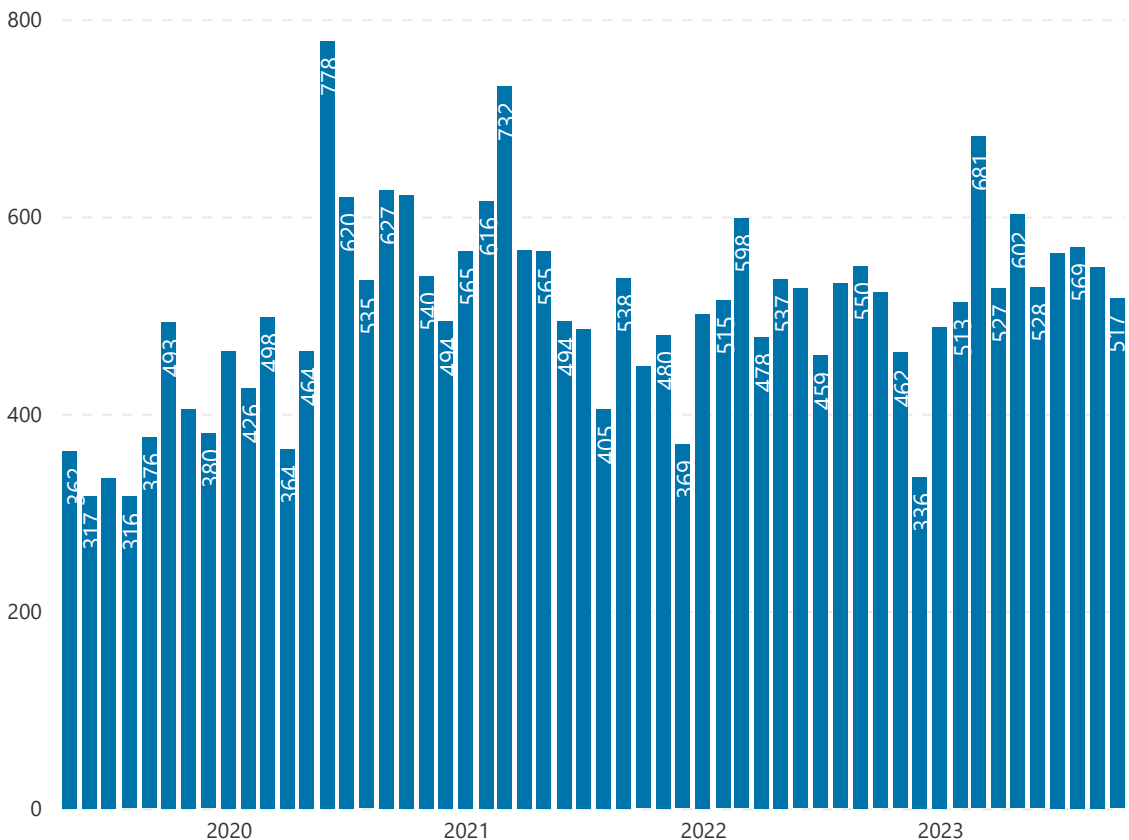
New Businesses, West Sussex

Source: FAME

Released: October 2023

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 West Sussex in the last 12 months, November 2022- October 2023, there were around 6,096 new business incorporations, 772 higher than the 5,324 businesses that were dissolved, or which had gone into liquidation. In the last 3 months – August 2023 – October 2023 there were 242 more new business incorporations (1,627) than business that dissolved/in liquidation (1,385). In October 2023, there were a few more new businesses (517) than closures (513)

New business incorporations in West Sussex



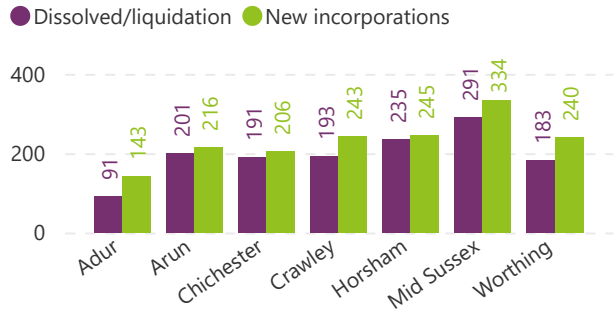
Businesses, West Sussex

Source: FAME

Released: October 2023

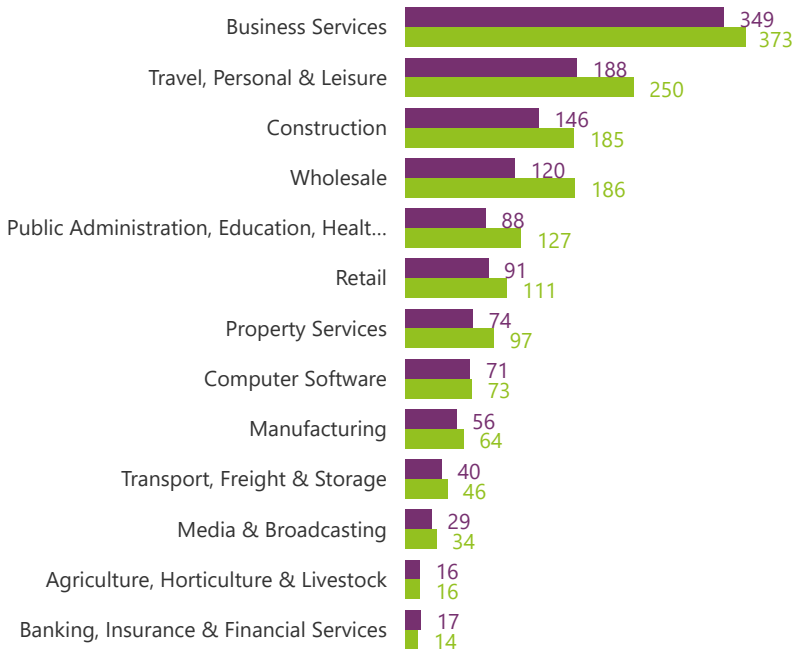
Over the last three-month period – August 2023 - October 2023 Mid Sussex continues to have the highest number of new business incorporations as well as businesses that have dissolved or are in liquidation. Within West Sussex, all local authorities had more new businesses than businesses closed though there is new speculation that with high inflation levels as well as rising fuel and energy costs the numbers of business closures will begin to increase.

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



Number of new business incorporations and businesses dissolved/in liquidation by industry (Aug'23 - Oct '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. The banking, insurance & financial services sector saw more closed businesses than new business formations. The top three sectors for new business formations are – business services, travel personal and leisure, and wholesale.

Claimant Count, West Sussex

Source: [ONS, Claimant Count](#)

Released: 14 November 2023 (October 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 13,920 claimants aged 16+ in West Sussex in October 2023, an increase of 1.5% from the previous month, compared with a national (England) increase of 1.3% and a regional increase of 1.6%.

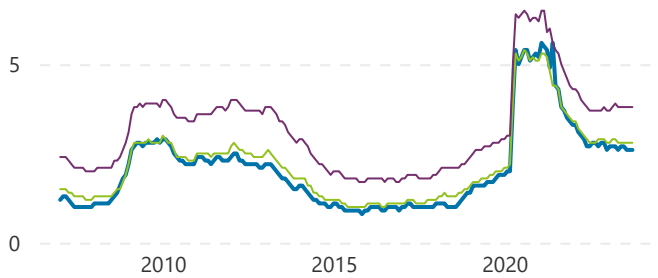
Mid Sussex saw a decrease (-3.7%) in the number of claimants over the last month, September - October 2023. Horsham had the highest increase of 4.7%, the highest in West Sussex.

Crawley has the highest number of claimants at 2,955 and the highest claimant count rate at 3.8%, same as national rate, but still higher than regional (2.8%).

Mid Sussex has the lowest claimant count rate at 1.7%. In West Sussex, % of male claimants aged 16+ increased by 1.9% and female claimants by 1%.

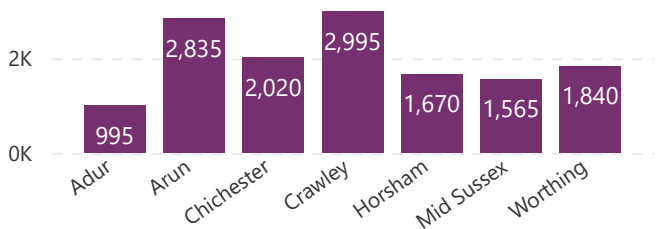
Claimant count rate

● West Sussex ● South East ● England



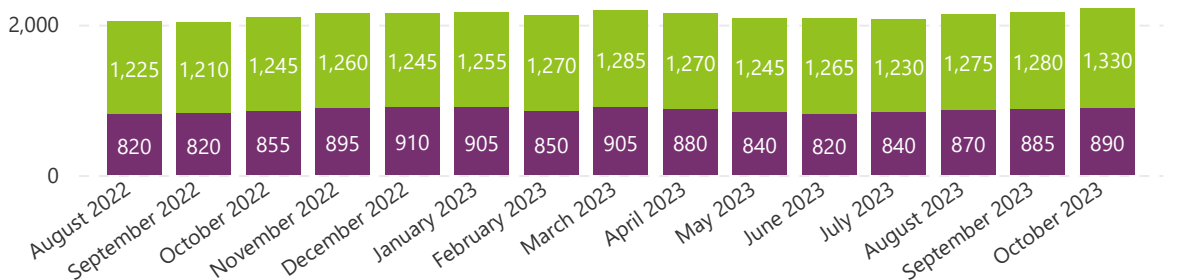
Number of claimants

● October



Claimant count by gender, 18-24 age group

● Female ● Male



Claimant Count, West Sussex

Source: [ONS, Claimant Count](#)

Released: 14 November 2023 (October 2023 figures are provisional)

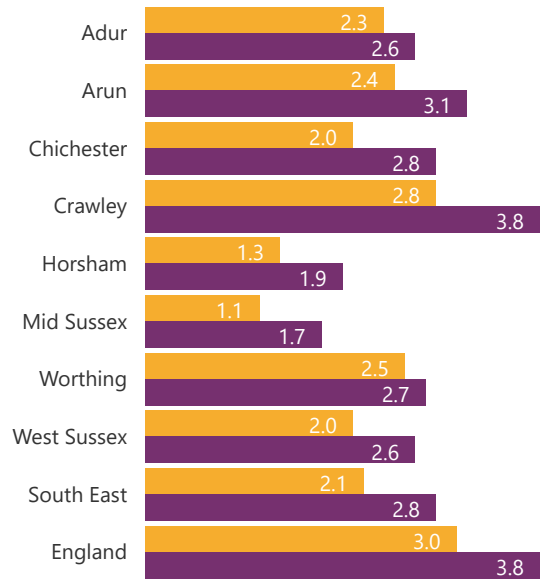
Age profile of claimants: Worthing (19.9%) has the highest proportion of 18-24 year olds, and Chichester the lowest at 12.9%, and higher proportion of claimants who are over 50 years.

There are 2,220 claimants aged 18-24 in West Sussex, which is an increase of 2.5% from the previous month. National (England) and regional figures increased by 2.1% and 3%, for this age category. Crawley has the highest number of claimants in this age group at 500. In West Sussex, local authorities except Chichester and Mid Sussex saw an increase in claimants aged 18-24 years. Horsham saw the highest percentage increase at 12.5%, in the claimants aged 18-24 compared to the last month.

Within West Sussex, over the last month, there was an increase of 3.9% in claimants amongst males aged 18-24 years; females by 0.6%.

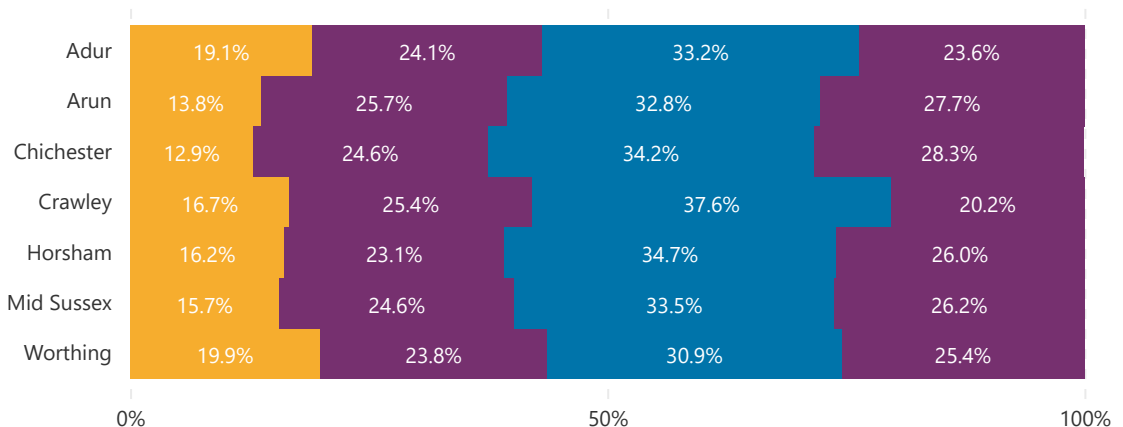
Claimant count rates change

● March 2020 ● October 2023



Distribution of claimants by age band

● Aged 18-24 ● Aged 25-34 ● Aged 35-49 ● Aged 50+



Universal Credit Claimants, West Sussex

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

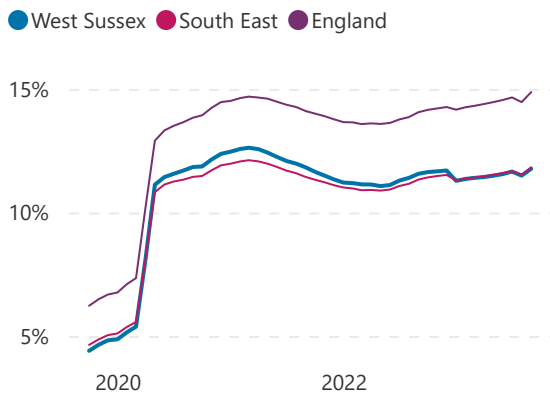
Released: 14 November 2023 (October 2023 figures are provisional)

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 October 2023, there were 62,929 Universal Credit claimants in West Sussex, which is a 1.7% increase from previous month. The numbers of people claiming Universal Credit in West Sussex has increased 130% since March 2020 - from 27,355 to 62,929 in October 2023, a higher percentage increase than nationally (108%) and regionally (120%).

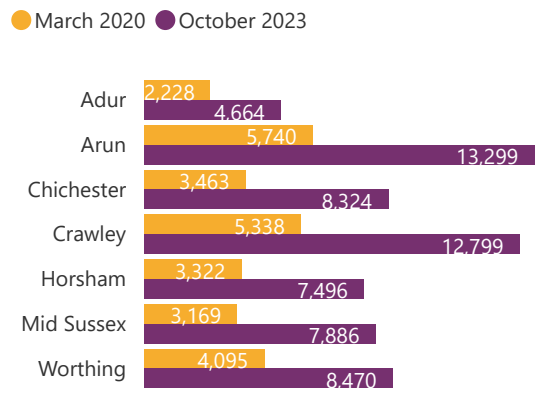
In West Sussex, of those people claiming Universal Credit in September, 44% were in employment. This has increased from 41% seen in March 2020 and is a higher proportion of claimants in employment than in the South East at 41% and nationally (England) 38%. In September 2023, within West Sussex, Mid Sussex has the highest percentage of Universal Credit claimants who are in work at 47% followed by Horsham at 46%.

Mid Sussex has seen the highest % rise (149%) over the period from March 2020 (at the start of the pandemic) to October 2023, Arun has the highest number of Universal Credit claimants at over 13,299 and since March 2020 there has been a significant rise in the number of residents claiming Universal Credit across the county. Please note October 2023 employment/not in employment breakdown hasn't been released yet.

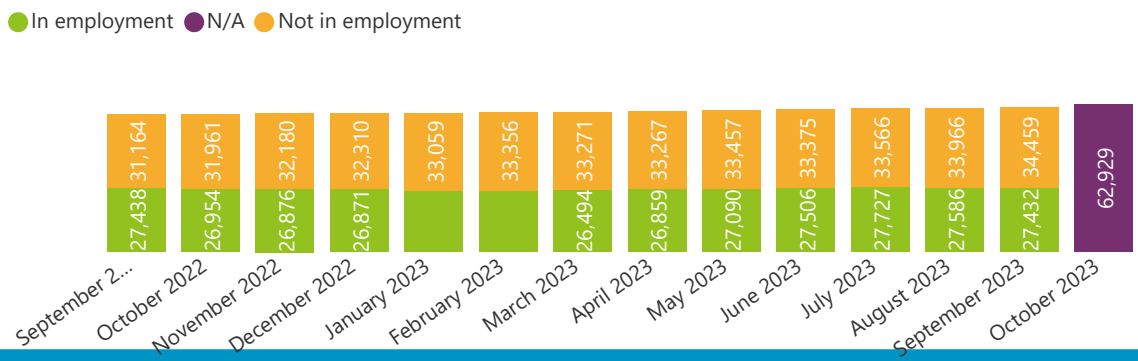
Percentage of people aged 16-64 years claiming Universal Credit



Universal Credit claimants in West Sussex change



Universal Credit claimants in West Sussex by employment status



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

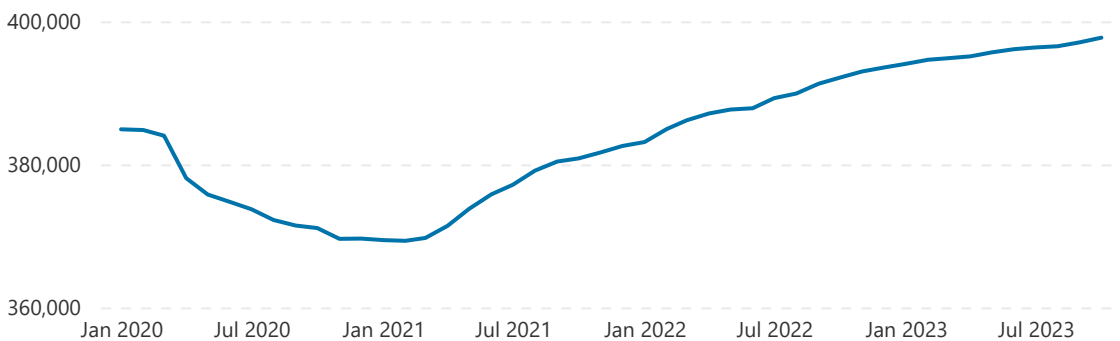
Source: ONS - [Earnings and employment from Pay As You Earn Real Time Information, seasonally adjusted](#)

Released: 14 November 2023

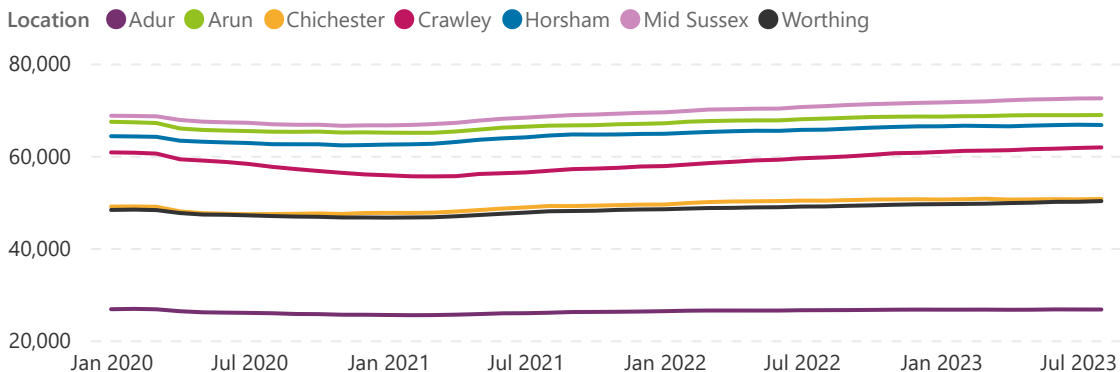
These figures are from a set of 'experimental statistics' from ONS from the earnings and employment statistics Pay as You Earn (PAYE) Real Time Information (RTI) seasonally adjusted data set. The latest data is up to the month of October 2023. West Sussex's employees increased by 0.16% from September 2023. The South East's employees increased by 0.17% and the UKs increased by 0.11%. The local authority with the largest growth from July was Worthing with 0.30%. Horsham had the highest employee decline with -0.09%.

The latest data shows that Mid Sussex has the highest number of employees at 68,781 in West Sussex and Adur the lowest at 26,152. 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](#)

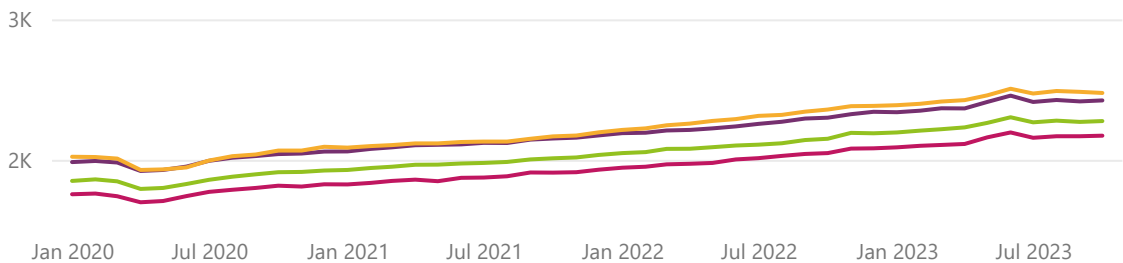
Released: 14 November 2023

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 October 2023. The local authority with the largest percentage increase of pay from July 2023 was Chichester with 0.19% compared to a decrease of 1.55% in Worthing which saw the largest decrease. West Sussex South West saw an increase by 0.18% and West Sussex North East had a decrease in median monthly pay by 0.32% from September 2023. The South East's monthly median pay increased by 0.29% and the UK's increased by 0.26% since September 2023.

The local authority with the highest median monthly pay is Mid Sussex at £2,251, and the lowest is seen in Arun at £1,851. 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 May being 0.63% in Crawley. The highest decrease since May was -1.81% in Worthing.

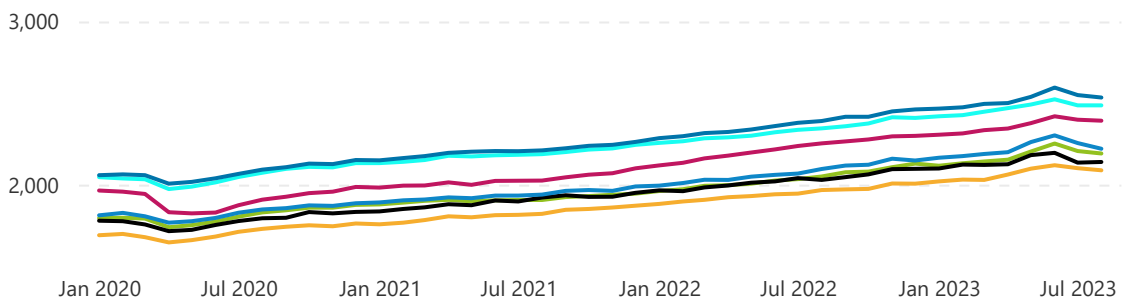
Median Pay National and Regional Figures

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



Businesses Births and Deaths, UK

Source: ONS, [Business Demography](#)

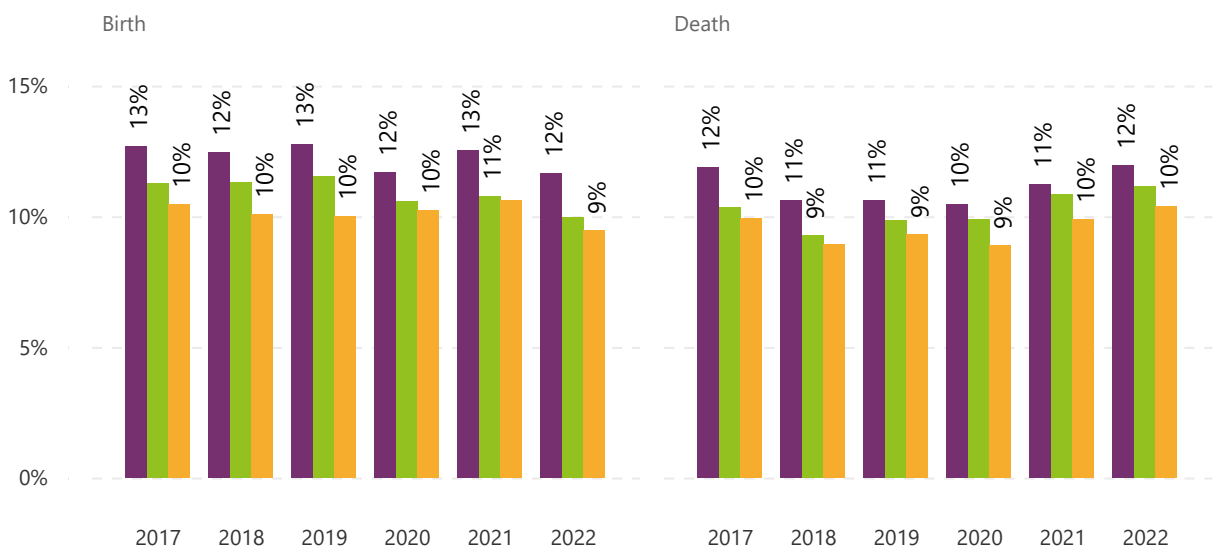
Released: 22 November 2023

Business demography is an annual publication produced from the Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR). The publication focuses on changes to the registered business population, that is, those businesses registered at HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) for Value Added Tax (VAT) and/or Pay As You Earn (PAYE), and at Companies House.

- All local authorities except Worthing have seen a decrease in business births from 2017 to 2022 with an average decline of 7%. Worthing was the only local authority to see an increase in business births with a 6% increase. Mid Sussex has the highest decrease in business births at 19%. Business deaths have seen an increase in all local authorities except Adur with an average percentage increase of 7% and Adur having no change in business deaths. Arun has the highest increase in business deaths at 23%.
- The national figure for the decrease in business births is close to West Sussex's at a decrease of 6% while the regional figure has a higher decrease at 10%. The national figure for the increase in business deaths is lower than West Sussex's at 4% while the regionals increase is higher at 9%.
- The business birth rate of West Sussex has been 1-2% higher in most years compared to the business death rate of West Sussex. This trend is also shown at the national and regional level.
- The latest figures for 2022 show that the birth rate is slightly lower than the death rate in West Sussex (Births: 9.46%, Deaths: 10.4%), the South East (Births: 9.98%, Deaths: 11.15%) and England (Births: 11.65%, Deaths 11.97%).

Business Births and Deaths Rate

● England ● South East ● West Sussex



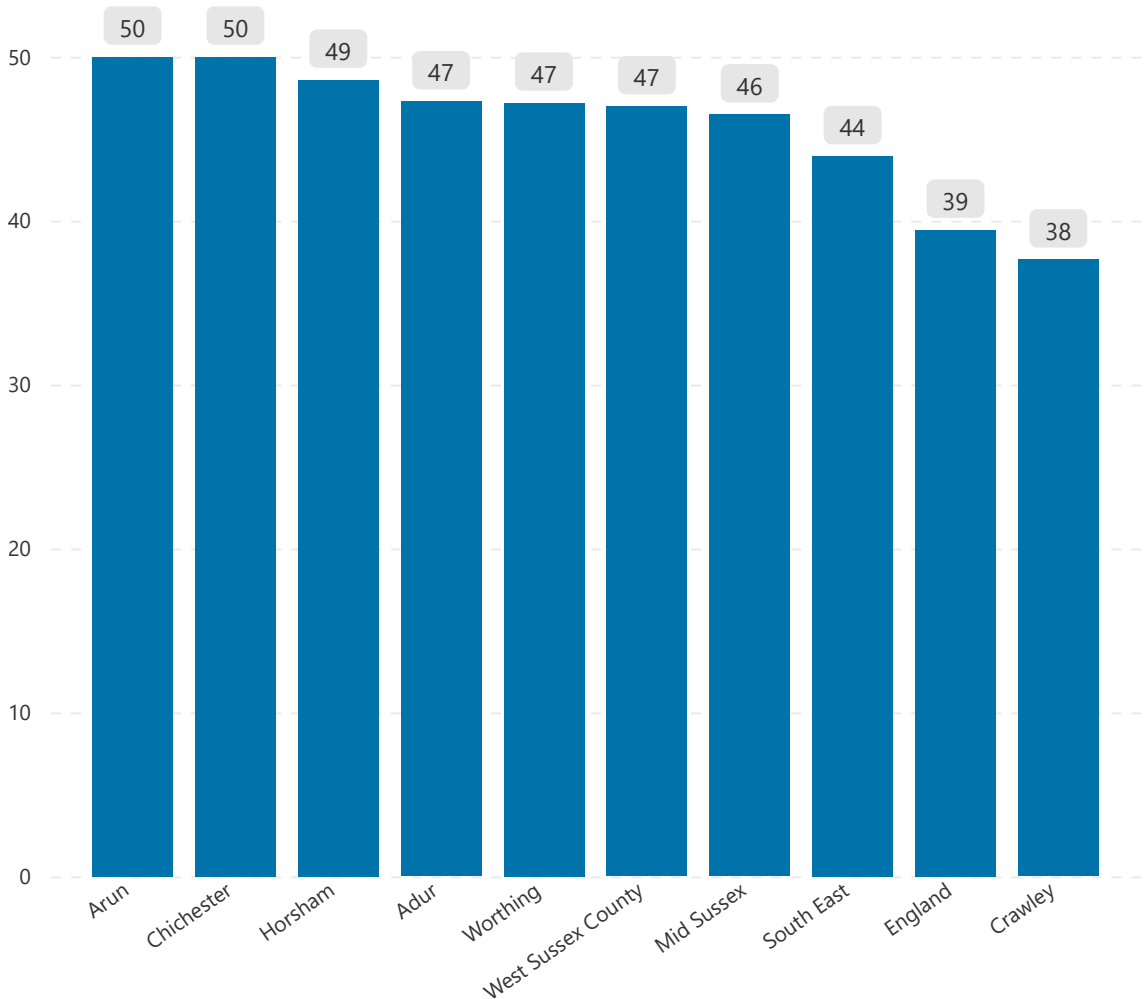
Businesses Births and Deaths, UK

Source: ONS, [Business Demography](#)

Released: 22 November 2023

Business survival rate starting in 2017 shows that all local authorities in West Sussex have an estimated 10% drop in businesses every year. After 5 years the majority of local authorities have a survival rate between 47-50 percent except Crawley which has a survival rate of 38%. The national and regional figures are below the majority of West Sussex local authorities with a survival percentage of 39% and 44% respectively

5-Year Business Survival Rate (%s of businesses starting in 2017 still operating)



Job Vacancies, UK

Source: [ONS](#)

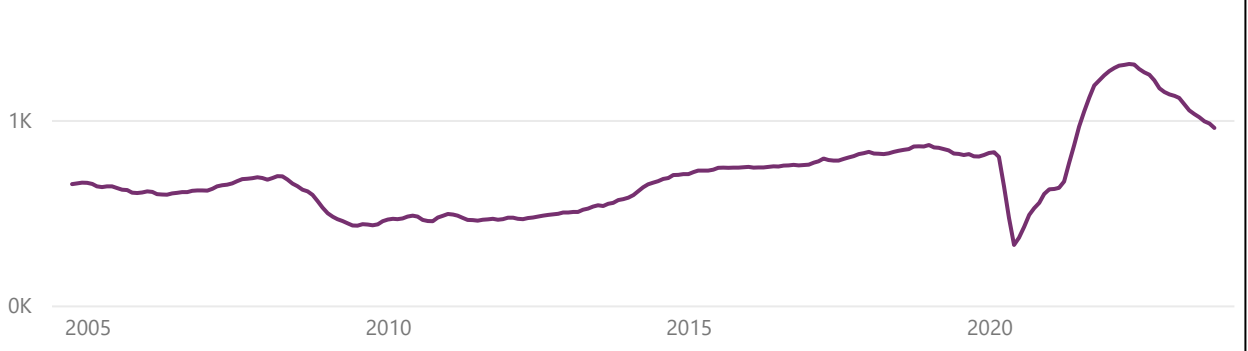
Released: 14 November 2023

The number of vacancies in the UK, in August to October 2023 was 957,000, a decrease of 58,000 from May to July 2023, it was the 16th consecutive period fall in August to October 2023, down by 5.7% since May to July 2023 with vacancies falling in 16 of the 18 industry sectors. In August to October 2023, total estimated vacancies were down by 257,000 from the level of a year ago, although they remained from 156,000 above their pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic January to March 2020 levels.

The number of vacancies has fallen in the majority of industrial sectors. Real estate activities and arts, entertainment and recreation contracting the most, falling by 35.0% and 19.6% respectively. The largest growth was in mining and quarrying, at 5.6%. The industry showing the largest fall in vacancy numbers was professional, scientific and technical activities, which was down by 9,000.

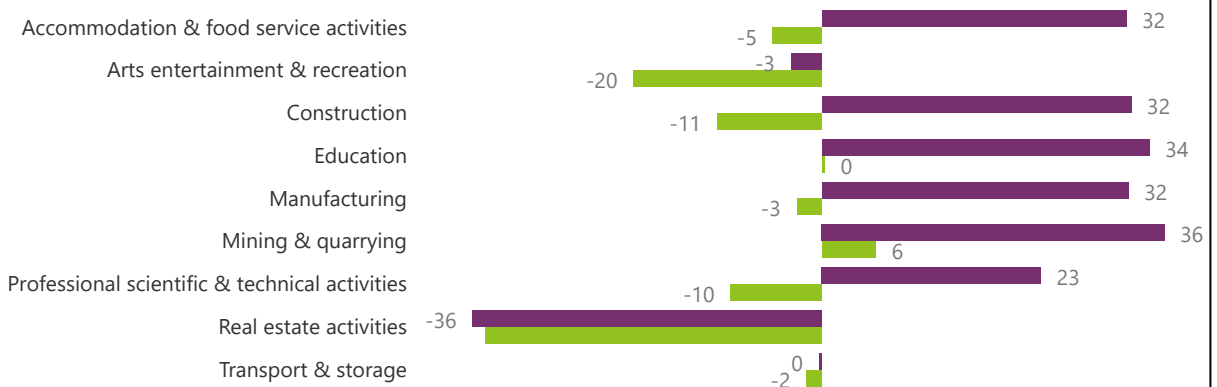
Number of vacancies in the UK

Number of vacancies in the UK, seasonally adjusted, August to October 2004 to August to October 2023



Quarterly growth rate by industry sectors

● Percentage growth since January to March 2020 ● Quarterly percentage growth since May to July 2023



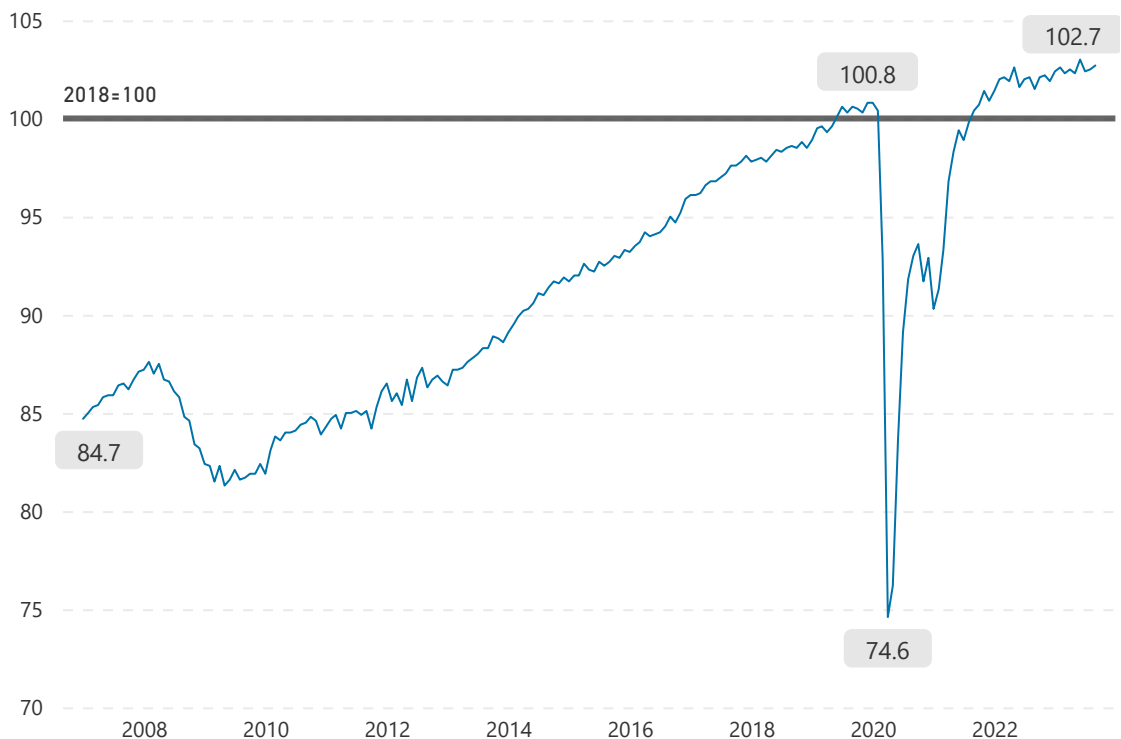
National Headlines - Gross Domestic Product (GDP), UK

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

Released: 10 November 2023

- Gross domestic product (GDP) is estimated to have grown by 0.2% in September 2023, after a revised growth of 0.1% in August 2023. Looking at the broader picture, GDP showed no growth in the three months to September 2023 with growth in all sectors.
- Services sector rose by 0.2% in September 2023 and was the main contributor to the growth in GDP in September. This follows a growth of 0.3% in August 2023. This growth was driven by the sectors of professional, scientific and technical activities, and human health and social work activities.
- Consumer-facing services fell by 0.2% in September 2023, after a fall of 0.7% in August 2023. The largest negative contributor to consumer-facing services came from sports activities and amusement and recreation activities industry (10.8%)
- Production showed no growth in September 2023 after a fall of 0.5% in August 2023. The largest falling sub-sector was manufacturing, which fell by 0.8%.
- Construction is estimated to have increased by 0.4% in September 2023 following from a 0.8% decrease in August 2023. This came from an increase in repair and maintenance of 2.1%.

Monthly index, UK



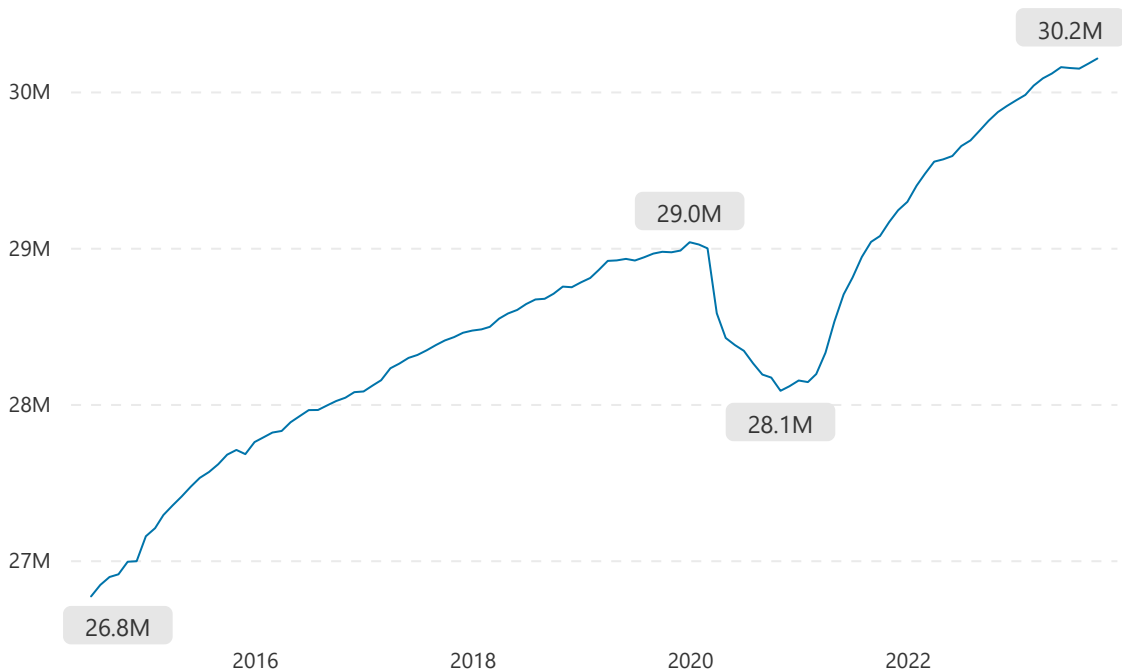
Labour Market, UK

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

Released: 14 November 2023

- Early estimates for October 2023 indicate that the number of payrolled employees rose by 1.3% compared with October 2022, a rise of 398,000 employees; the number of payrolled employees was up by 4.1% since February 2020, a rise of 1,190,000.
- Payrolled employment increased by 33,000 employees in October 2023 when compared with September 2023 though this should be treated as a provisional estimate and is likely to be revised when more data are received next month.
- The annual increase was largest in the health and social work sector, a rise of 221,000 employees.
- UK payrolled employee growth for September 2023 compared with August 2023 has been revised from an decrease of 11,000 reported in the last bulletin to an increase of 32,000, 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 October 2023 indicate that median monthly pay increased by 5.9% compared with October 2022, and increased by 22.3% when compared with February 2020.
- Annual growth in median pay in October 2023 was highest in the other service activities sector, with an increase of 8.2%, and lowest in the information and communication sector, with an increase of 3.8%

Payrolled employees, seasonally adjusted, UK



Businesses currently trading, UK

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

Released: 19 October 2023

The data presented in this bulletin are the final results from Wave 95 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS), which was live for the period of 30 October to 12 October 2023.

- Latest results suggest business conditions remain challenging but estimates show small signs of positive improvement for some measures; examples include, a smaller proportion reporting higher prices for goods or services they bought and sold, and a smaller proportion expecting to raise the prices of goods they sell.
- Nearly a quarter (24%) of trading businesses reported turnover had decreased in October 2023 compared with the previous calendar month; in comparison 14% reported that their turnover was higher, both broadly stable with September 2023.
- Approximately one in six (16%) trading businesses expect their turnover to increase in December 2023, broadly stable with the proportion that had these expectations for November 2023; meanwhile 23% reported that they expect their turnover to decrease, down 8 percentage points over the same period.
- Nearly a quarter (23%) of trading businesses reported an increase in the prices of goods or services bought in October 2023 compared with September 2023, down 4 percentage points when comparing September 2023 with August 2023.
- Of trading businesses, 10% expect to raise the prices of goods or services that they sell in December 2023, down 3 percentage points from expectations for November 2023.
- Nearly two-thirds (62%) of businesses reported some form of concern for their business when looking ahead to December 2023; broadly stable with November 2023.

Businesses Closures, UK

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

Released: 14 November 2023

Data for England and Wales on company insolvencies shows that there were 2,315 in October 2023, 18% higher than in the same month in the previous year (1,954).

There were 256 compulsory liquidations, 1,889 creditors' voluntary liquidations (CVLs), 146 administrations and 23 company voluntary arrangements (CVAs) in October 2023, Numbers of CVLs, CVAs and administrations were all higher than in October 2022.

For individuals, the total number of insolvencies in October 2023 was 9,881, 6% lower than in the same month in the previous year (10,528 in October 2022)

For individuals, 703 bankruptcies, 3,245 debt relief orders (DROs) and 5,933 individual voluntary arrangements (IVAs) were registered in October 2023, The lower number of individual insolvencies compared to October 2022 was driven by a 27% decline in the number of IVAs.

Company insolvencies in England & Wales

