

West Sussex Economy Snapshot

December 2023 (Issue 41)

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 November 2023, there was an increase of 2.5% in the number of claimants aged 16+ in West Sussex compared with the previous month. The regional figure saw an increase of 2.2%, whereas the national figure increased by 2.0%. Mid Sussex saw a decrease in the number of claimants over the last month; Worthing saw an increase of 5.0%, the highest in West Sussex. Crawley has the highest number of claimants and the highest claimant count rate, at 3.9%, 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 1.8%.

Whilst the number of employees on payrolls is above that seen before April 2020, over the last month - October - November 2023 West Sussex's employees decreased by 0.05% and the regional and national figures both decreased by 0.04%. Within West Sussex, Mid Sussex has the highest number of employees at 72,706 and Adur the lowest at 26,640. 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 continue to be at levels higher than those seen pre-pandemic. In the last three months September 2023– November 2023, there were 339 more new business incorporations (1,676) than business that dissolved/in liquidation (1,337). In November 2023, there were more new businesses (615) than closures (428) and more new businesses than there had been preceding 7 months. 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.

National Headlines

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is estimated to have fallen by 0.3% in October 2023, after a growth of 0.2% in September 2023. Service sector fell in October 2023 by 0.2% and was the main contributor to the fall in GDP in October. Consumer-facing services fell by 0.1% in October 2023, personal service activities industry was the major contributor to this fall. Production fell by 0.8% in October 2023 after showing no growth in September 2023. Construction is estimated to have decreased by 0.5% in September 2023.

In the UK, the total number of online job adverts fell by 5% on 15 December 2023 when compared with the previous week; this number was 15% below the level in the equivalent period of 2022 (Adzuna).

The number of payrolled employees has continued to increase nationally and over the year November 2022 - November 2023 rose by 1.1% though there was a slight fall of 0.04% over the last month - October - November 2023.

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 October 2023. 24% of trading businesses reported an increase in the prices of goods or services bought in November 2023 compared to the previous month.

Data for England and Wales on company insolvencies shows that there were 2,466 in November 2023, 21% 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.

West Sussex

New Businesses	5
Businesses	6
Claimant Count	7-8
Universal Credit Claimants	9
Real Time Information Pay as you Earn Employees	10-11

National

Job Vacancies	12
Gross Domestic Product	13
Labour Market	14
Businesses currently trading	15
Business Closures	16

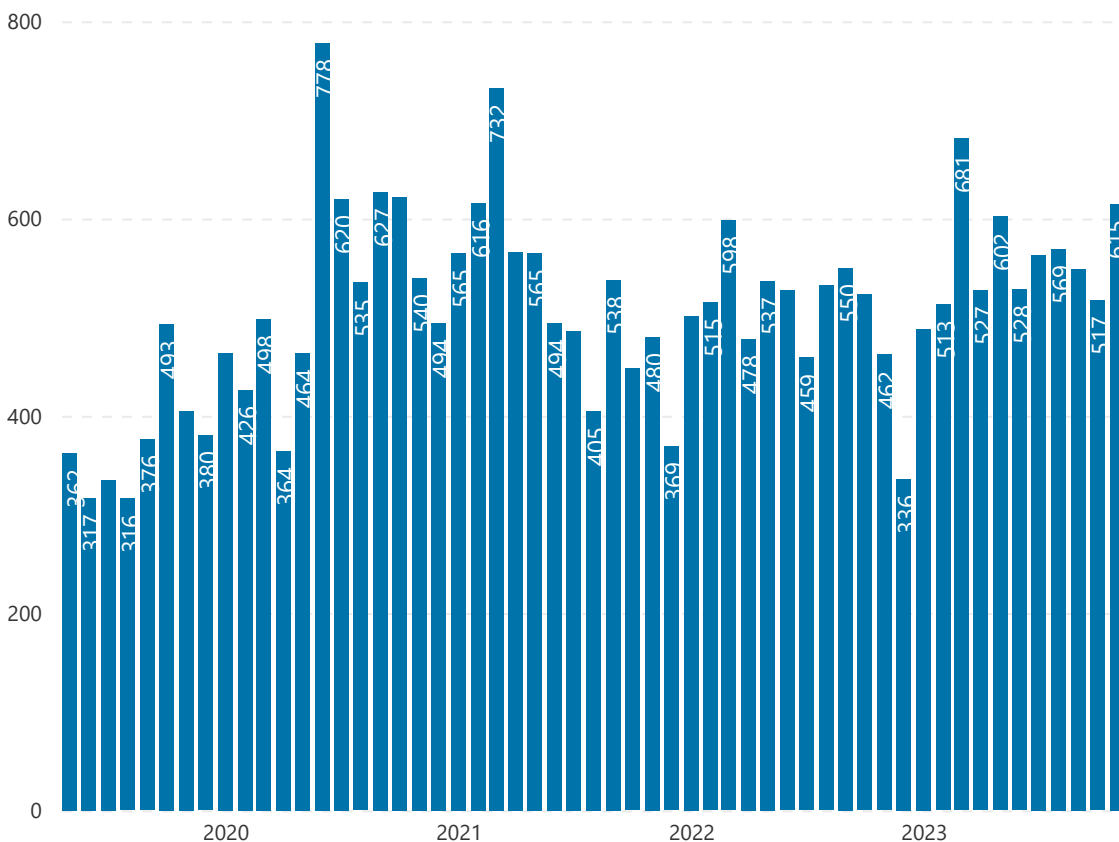
New Businesses, West Sussex

Source: FAME

Released: December 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, December 2022- November 2023, there were around 6,251 new business incorporations, 609 higher than the 5,642 businesses that were dissolved, or which had gone into liquidation. In the last 3 months – September 2023 – November 2023 there were 339 more new business incorporations (1,676) than business that dissolved/in liquidation (1,337). In November 2023, there were more new businesses (615) than closures (428)

New business incorporations in West Sussex



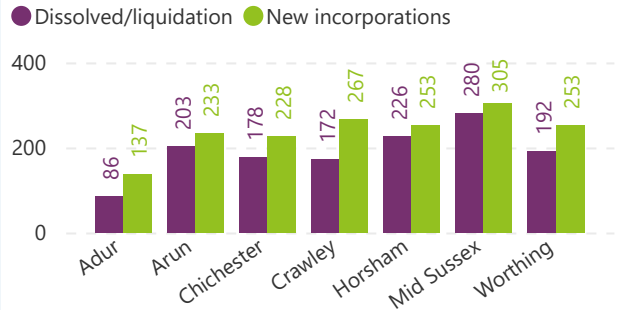
Businesses, West Sussex

Source: FAME

Released: December 2023

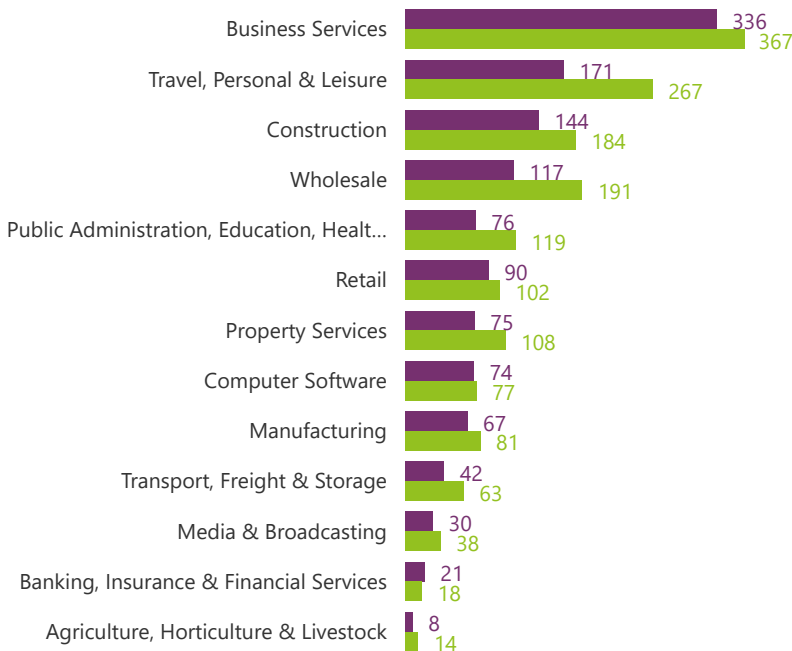
Over the last three-month period – September 2023 - November 2023 Mid Sussex continues to have the highest number of new business incorporations as well as businesses that have dissolved or are in liquidation. Within West Sussex, all local authorities had more new businesses than businesses closed despite the 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 (Sep'23-Nov'23)



Number of new business incorporations and businesses dissolved/in liquidation by industry (Sep'23 - Nov'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: 12 December 2023 (November 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.

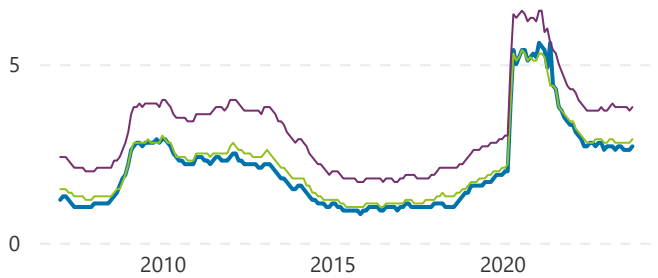
There were 14,165 claimants aged 16+ in West Sussex in November 2023, an increase of 2.5% from the previous month, compared with a national (England) increase of 2.0% and a regional increase of 2.2%.

Mid Sussex saw a decrease (-0.6%) in the number of claimants over the last month, October - November 2023. Worthing had the highest increase of 5.0%, the highest in West Sussex.

Crawley has the highest number of claimants at 3000 and the highest claimant count rate at 3.9%, higher than national (3.8) and regional (2.9%). Mid Sussex has the lowest claimant count rate at 1.8%. In West Sussex, % of male claimants aged 16+ increased by 3.4% and female claimants by 3.9%.

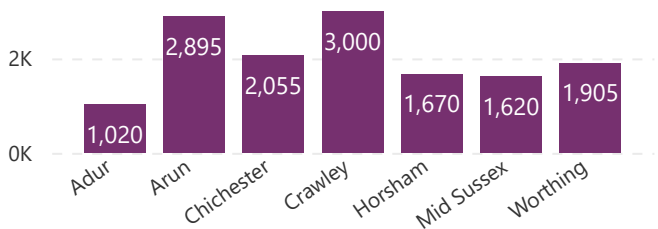
Claimant count rate

● West Sussex ● South East ● England



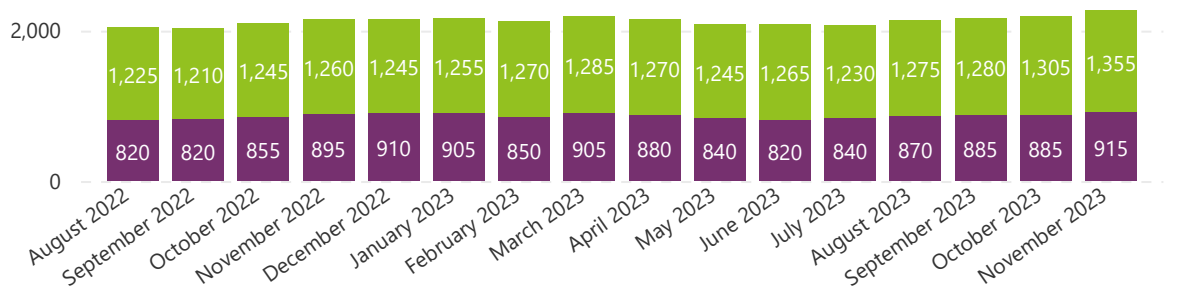
Number of claimants

● November



Claimant count by gender, 18-24 age group

● Female ● Male



Claimant Count, West Sussex

Source: [ONS, Claimant Count](#)

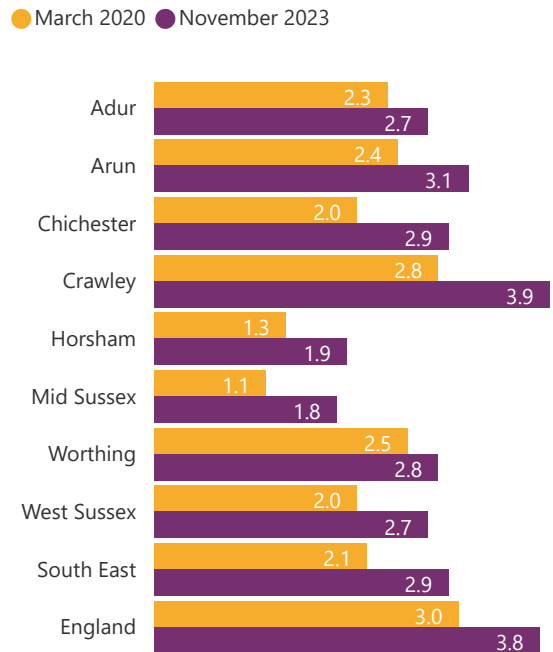
Released: 12 December 2023 (November 2023 figures are provisional)

Age profile of claimants: Worthing (19.5%) has the highest proportion of 18-24 year olds, and Chichester the lowest at 13.3%, but the highest proportion of claimants who are over 50 years.

There are 2,270 claimants aged 18-24 in West Sussex, which is an increase of 3.7% from the previous month. National (England) and regional figures increased by 2.3% and 2.3%, for this age category. Crawley has the highest number of claimants in this age group at 490. In West Sussex, local authorities except Horsham and Crawley saw an increase in claimants aged 18-24 years. Arun saw the highest percentage increase at 13.2%, in the claimants aged 18-24 compared to the last month.

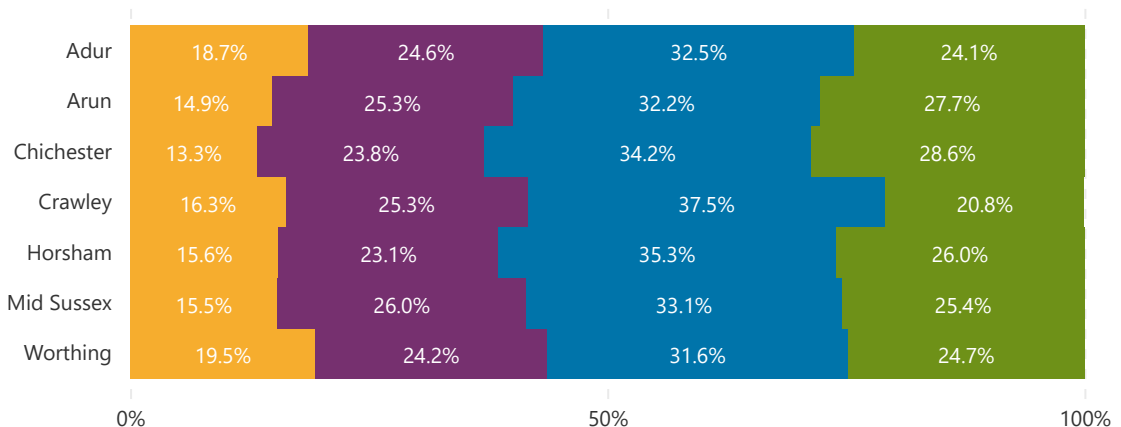
Within West Sussex, over the last month, there was an increase of 3.8% in claimants amongst males aged 18-24 years; females by 3.4%.

Claimant count rates change



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](#)

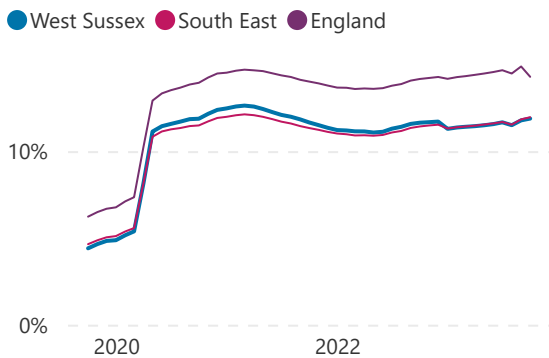
Released: 12 December 2023 (November 2023 figures are provisional)

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 November 2023, there were 63,535 Universal Credit claimants in West Sussex, which is a 1.8% increase from the previous month. The numbers of people claiming Universal Credit in West Sussex has increased 130% since March 2020 - from 27,355 to 63,535 in November 2023, a higher percentage increase than nationally (110%) and regionally (122%).

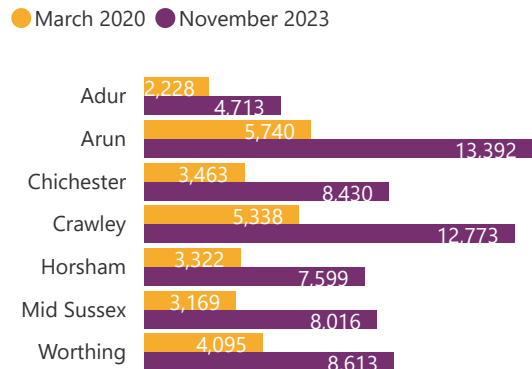
In West Sussex, of those people claiming Universal Credit in October, 44% were in employment. This has increased from 41% seen in March 2020 and is a higher proportion of claimants in employment than in the South East at 41% and nationally (England) 39%. In October 2023, within West Sussex, Mid Sussex 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 (148%) over the period from March 2020 (at the start of the pandemic) to November 2023, Arun has the highest number of Universal Credit claimants at 13,392 and since March 2020 there has been a significant rise in the number of residents claiming Universal Credit across the county. Please note November 2023 employment/not in employment breakdown hasn't been released yet.

Percentage of people aged 16-64 years claiming Universal Credit

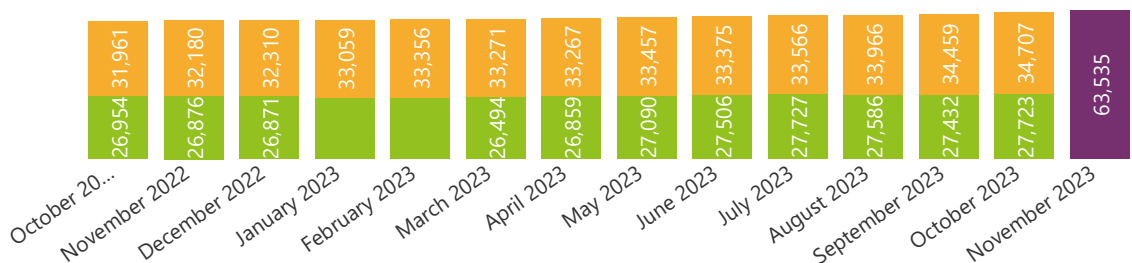


Universal Credit claimants in West Sussex change



Universal Credit claimants in West Sussex by employment status

● In employment ● N/A ● Not in employment



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

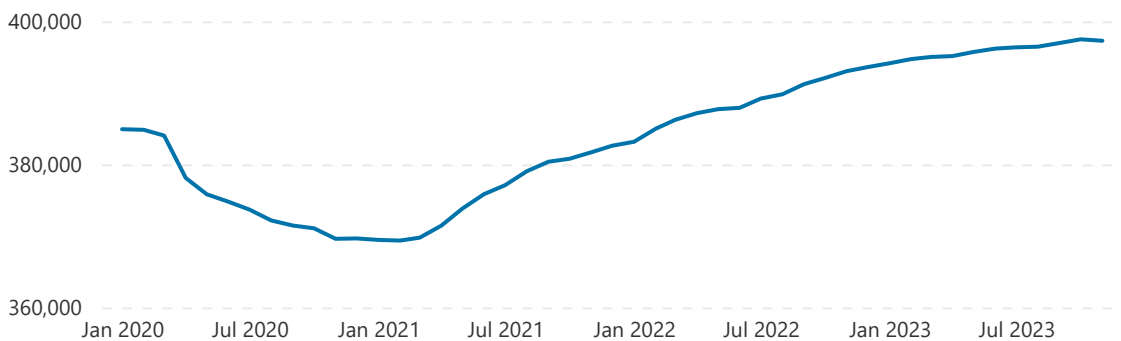
Source: ONS - [Earnings and employment from Pay As You Earn Real Time Information, seasonally adjusted](#)

Released: 12 December 2023

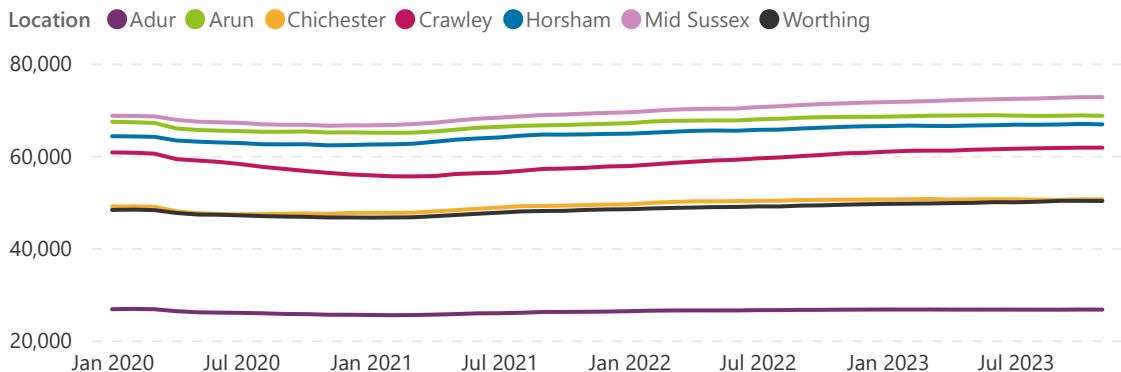
These figures are from a set of 'experimental statistics' from ONS from the earnings and employment statistics Pay as You Earn (PAYE) Real Time Information (RTI) seasonally adjusted data set. The latest data is up to the month of November 2023. West Sussex's employees decreased by 0.05% from October 2023. The South East's employees decreased by 0.04% and the UKs decreased by 0.04%. The local authority with the largest growth from October was Mid Sussex with 0.03%. Arun and Horsham had the highest employee decline with -0.13%,

The latest data shows that Mid Sussex has the highest number of employees at 72,706 in West Sussex and Adur the lowest at 26,640. 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](#)

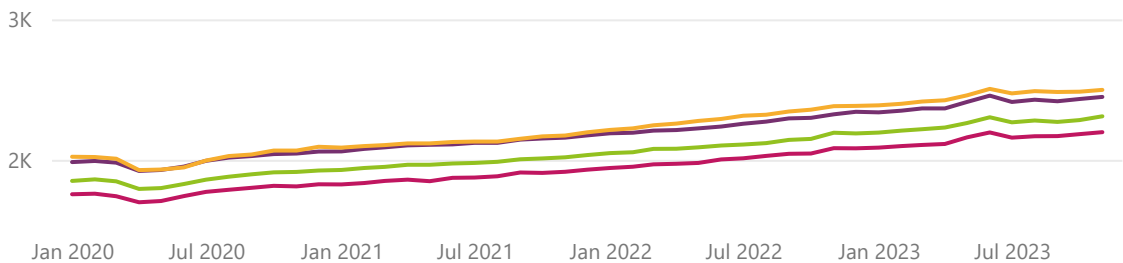
Released: 12 December 2023

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 November 2023. The local authority with the largest percentage increase of pay from October 2023 was Mid Sussex with 0.71% compared to an increase of 0.09% in Arun which saw the lowest increase.. West Sussex South West saw an increase by 0.64% and West Sussex North East had a decrease in median monthly pay by 0.52% from November 2023. The South East's monthly median pay increased by 0.62% and the UK's increased by 1.18% since October 2023.

The local authority with the highest median monthly pay is Mid Sussex at £2,565, and the lowest is seen in Arun at £2,114. 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 August being 2.27% in Chichester. The smallest increase since August was 0.12% in Horsham.

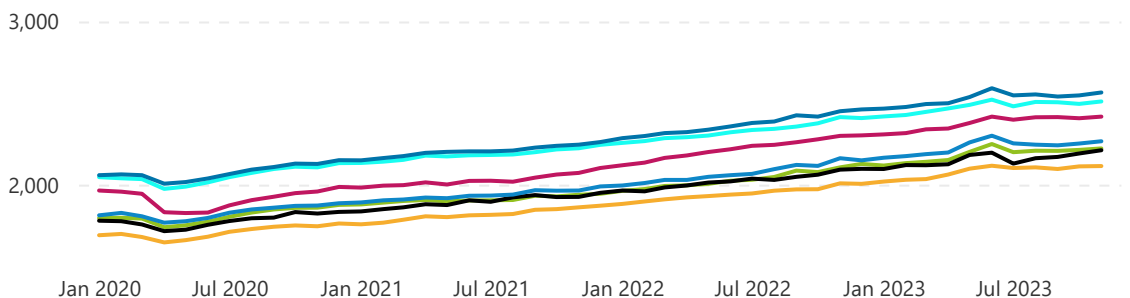
Median Pay National and Regional Figures

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 Vacancies, UK

Source: [ONS](#)

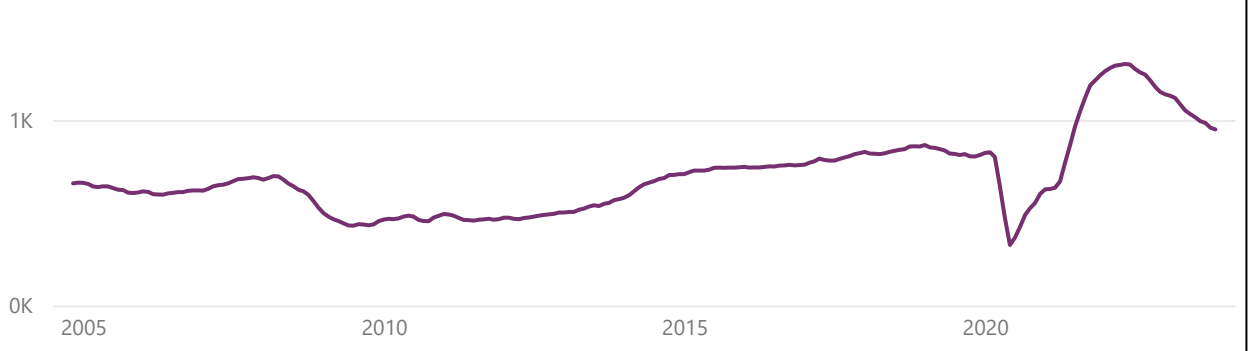
Released: 12 December 2023

The number of vacancies in the UK, in September to November 2023 was 949,000, a decrease of 45,000, down by 4.5% since June to August 2023 with vacancies falling in 16 of the 18 industry sectors. In September to November 2023, total estimated vacancies were down by 229,000 from the level of a year ago, although they remained from 148,000 above their pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic January to March 2020 levels.

The industry sectors showing the largest annual decreases in the number of vacancies were human health and social work, and professional, scientific and technical activities, which both fell by 34,000 from the equivalent period last year. The estimated number of workforce jobs in September 2023 was 36.8 million, an increase of 210,000 from June 2023.

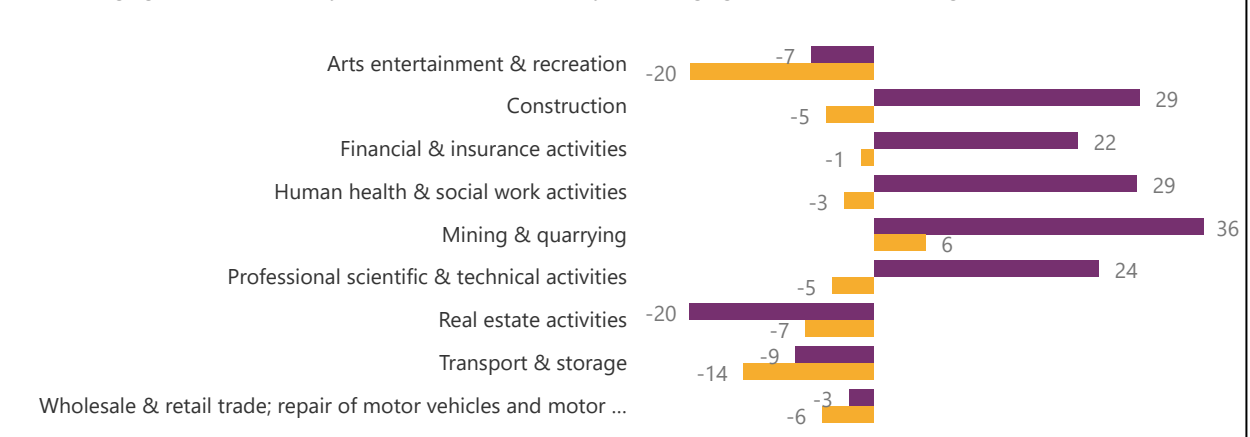
Number of vacancies in the UK

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



UK Quarterly growth rate by industry sectors

● Percentage growth since January to March 2020 ● Quarterly percentage growth since June to August 2023



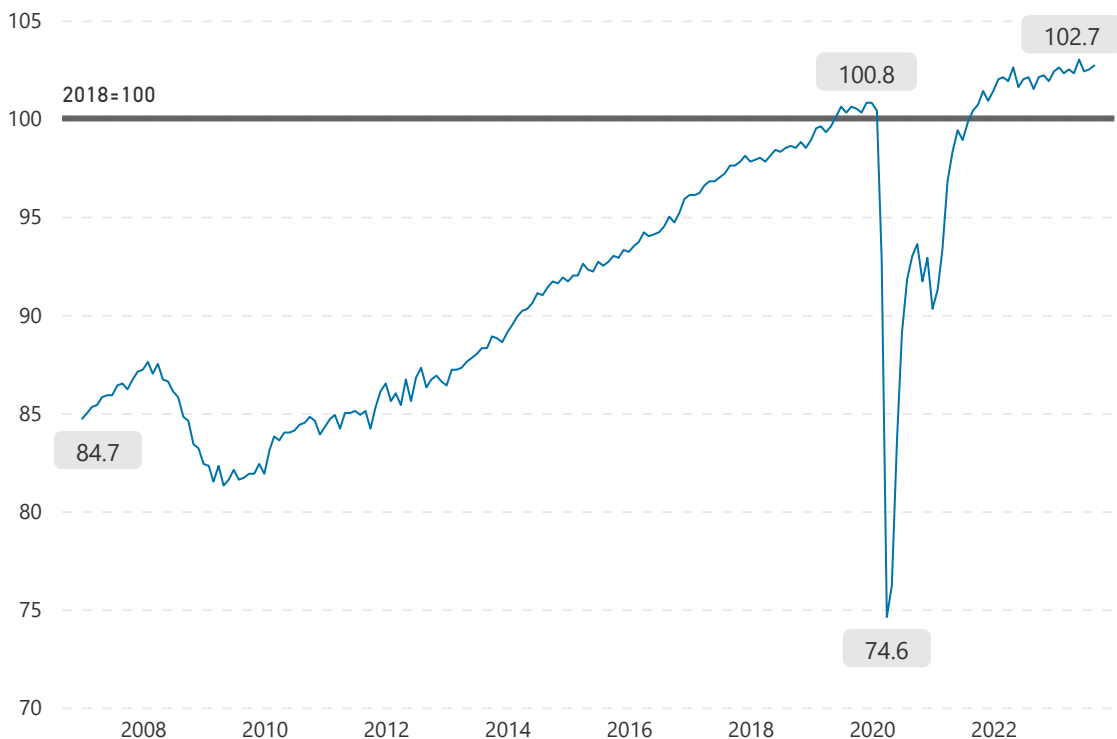
National Headlines - Gross Domestic Product (GDP), UK

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

Released: 13 December 2023

- Monthly GDP is estimated to have fallen by 0.3% in October 2023, following growth of 0.2% in September 2023.
- Monthly real gross domestic product (GDP) is estimated to have shown no growth in the three months to October 2023, compared with the three months to July 2023.
- Services output fell by 0.2% in October 2023, driven by a fall in information and communication, and was the main contributor to the fall in growth in GDP; this follows growth of 0.2% in September 2023.
- Consumer-facing services fell by 0.1% in October 2023. The largest negative contributor to consumer-facing services came from personal service activities, which fell by 2.3%
- Production output fell by 0.8% in October 2023, driven by widespread declines in manufacturing, after showing no growth in September 2023.
- The construction sector fell by 0.5% in October 2023 after growth of 0.4% in September 2023.

Monthly index, UK



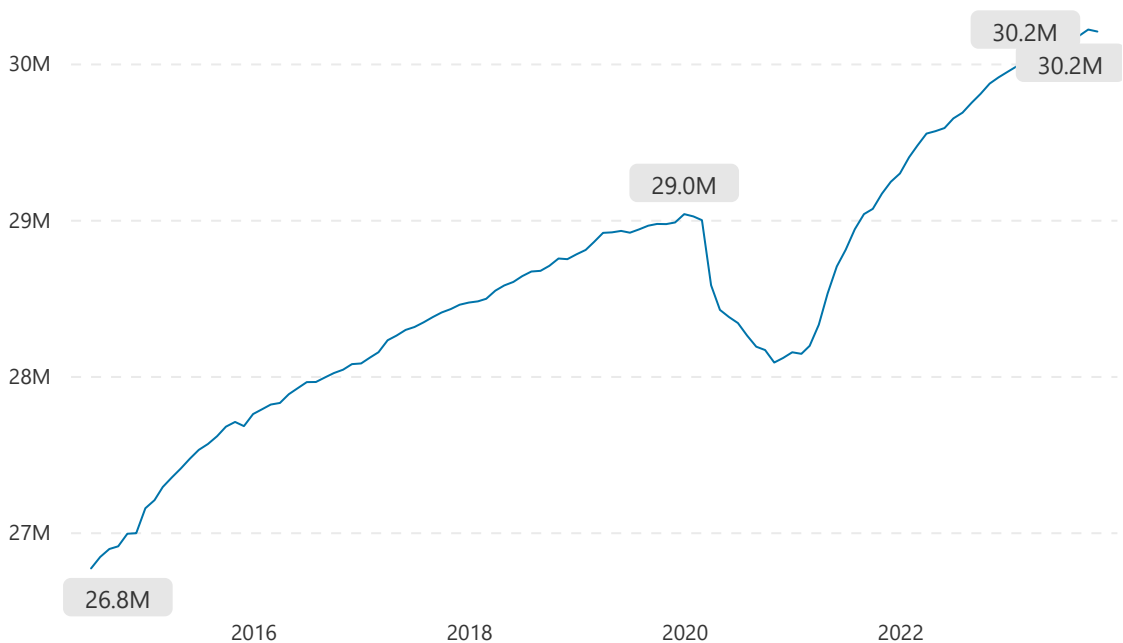
Labour Market, UK

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

Released: 12 December 2023

- Early estimates for November 2023 indicate that the number of payrolled employees rose by 1.1% compared with November 2022, a rise of 333,000 employees; the number of payrolled employees was up by 4.1% since February 2020, a rise of 1,183,000.
- This annual increase was largest in the health and social work sector, a rise of 213,000 employees.
- Payrolled employment in November 2023 is largely unchanged when compared with October 2023, decreasing slightly by 13,000 employees; 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 October 2023 compared with September 2023 has been revised from an increase of 33,000 reported in the last bulletin to an increase of 39,000 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 November 2023 indicate that median monthly pay increased by 5.3% compared with November 2022, and increased by 24.1% when compared with February 2020.
- Annual growth in median pay in November 2023 was highest in the wholesale and retail sector, with an increase of 7.4%, and lowest in the education sector, with an increase of 1.3%.

Payrolled employees, seasonally adjusted, UK



Businesses currently trading, UK

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

Released: 14 December 2023

The data presented in this bulletin are the final results from Wave 97 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS), which was live for the period of 27 November to 10 December 2023.

- Nearly a quarter (24%) of trading businesses reported an increase in the prices of goods or services bought in November 2023 when compared October 2023, while 9% of businesses reported an increase in the prices or services sold over the same period, both broadly stable when comparing October 2023 with September 2023..
- Among trading businesses, more than 1 in 6 (18%) expect to increase the prices of goods or services they sell in January 2024; energy prices were the most commonly given reason for considering doing so (25%), an increase of three percentage points from expectations for December 2023.
- Almost a quarter (23%) of trading businesses reported that their turnover had decreased in November 2023 compared with the previous calendar month, with 15% reporting that their turnover was higher; both of these figures are broadly stable with October 2023.
- When looking ahead to January 2024, more than a quarter (26%) of trading businesses expect their turnover to decrease, up three percentage points from expectations for December 2023; while 12% reported that they expect their turnover to increase, down four percentage points over the same period.
- Approximately 1 in 7 (15%) trading businesses reported that their overall performance had increased in November 2023 compared with the same calendar month last year, broadly stable from October 2023 compared with October 2022; in comparison, 17% reported their performance had decreased, and 55% reported their performance had stayed the same.
- Almost two-thirds (64%) of businesses reported some form of concern for their business when looking ahead to January 2024; this is an increase of two percentage points from concerns reported for December 2023, and the first rise in this figure since April 2023.

Businesses Closures, UK

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

Released: 15 December 2023

Data for England and Wales on company insolvencies shows that there were 2,466 in November 2023, 21% higher than in the same month in the previous year (2,032).

There were 359 compulsory liquidations, 1,962 creditors' voluntary liquidations (CVLs), 133 administrations and 12 company voluntary arrangements (CVAs) in November 2023. The increase in company insolvencies compared to November 2022 was driven by CVLs and compulsory liquidation numbers, while administration numbers remained similar to November 2022 at slightly less than 2019 levels.

For individuals, the total number of insolvencies in November 2023 was 8,243, 21% lower than in the same month in the previous year (10,478 in November 2022)

For individuals, 661 bankruptcies, 3,290 debt relief orders (DROs) and 4,292 individual voluntary arrangements (IVAs) were registered in November 2023. The lower number of individual insolvencies compared to November 2022 was driven by a 44% decline in the number of IVAs.

Company insolvencies in England & Wales

