

West Sussex Economy Snapshot

January 2024 (Issue 42)

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 December 2023, there was an increase of 1.3% in the number of claimants aged 16+ in West Sussex compared with the previous month. The regional figure saw an increase of 1.9%, whereas the national figure increased by 1.5%. Mid Sussex saw a decrease in the number of claimants over the last month; Arun saw an increase of 3.8%, 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 1.7%.

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 November 2023, West Sussex's employees decreased by 0.14%, the regional figure decreased by 0.17% and the national figure decreased by 0.08%. 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 over the last twelve months, January 2023 – December 2023 have tended to be at greater levels than those seen pre-pandemic. In the last three months October 2023– December 2023, there were 144 more new business incorporations (1,545) than business that dissolved/in liquidation (1,401). In December 2023, there were more businesses closures (462) than new openings (431). 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 grown by 0.3% in November 2023, after a fall of 0.3% in October 2023. Service sector grew in November 2023 by 0.4% and was the main contributor to the growth in GDP in November. Consumer-facing services grew by 0.6% in November 2023, retail trade, except for motor vehicles and motorcycles activities industry was the major contributor to this growth. Production grew by 0.3% in November 2023 after a fall in October 2023 of 1.3%. Construction is estimated to have decreased by 0.2% in November 2023.

In the UK, the total number of online job adverts increased by 3% on 12 January 2023 when compared with the previous week; this number was 16% below the level in the equivalent period of 2023 (Adzuna).

The number of payrolled employees has continued to increase nationally and over the year December 2022 - December 2023 rose by 1.0%.

From the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICs), 94% of businesses reported they were trading. 5% of businesses with 10 or more employees reported global supply chain disruption in December 2023. 20% of businesses reported they are using or intending to use increased home working as a permanent business mode. 7% of businesses experienced worker shortages in late December 2023. 11% of businesses reported employee hourly wages had increased in December 2023.

Data for England and Wales on company insolvencies shows that there were 2,002 in December 2023, 2% 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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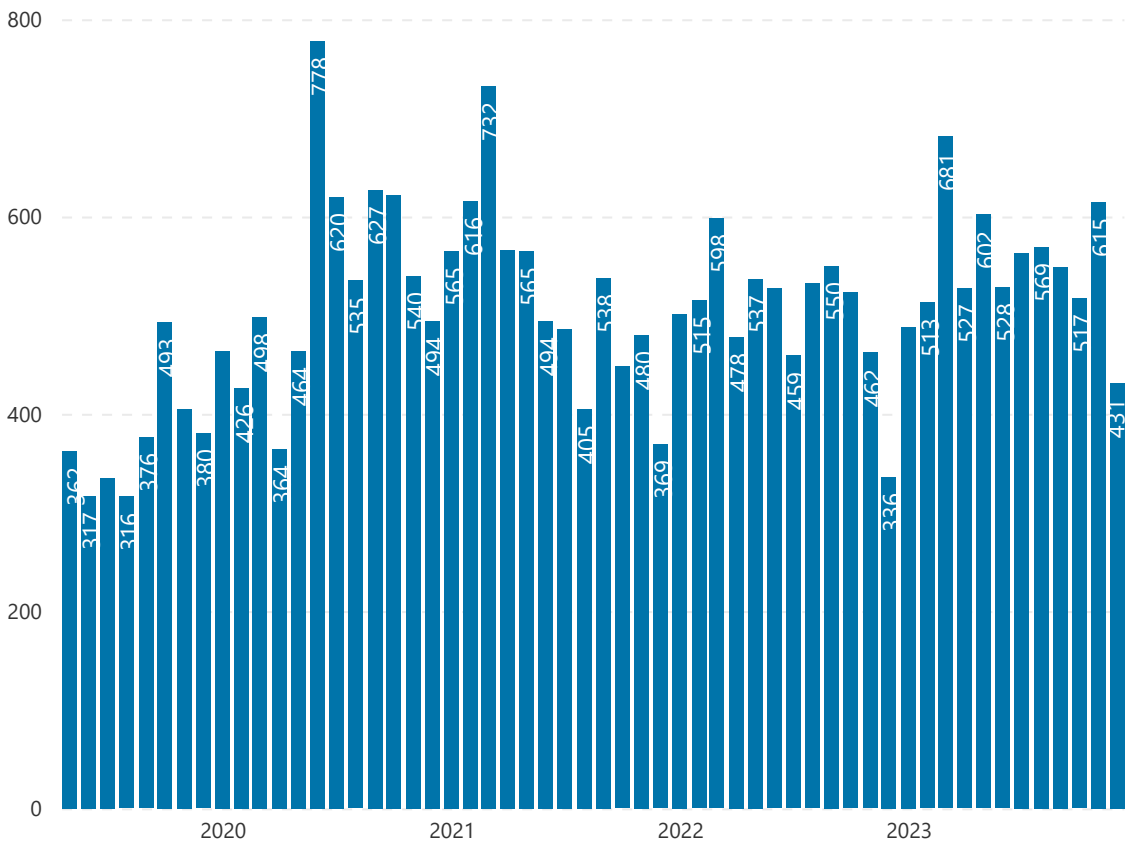
New Businesses, West Sussex

Source: FAME

Released: January 2024

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, January 2023 - December 2023, there were around 6,335 new business incorporations, 747 higher than the 5,588 businesses that were dissolved, or which had gone into liquidation. In the last 3 months – October 2023 – December 2023 there were 144 more new business incorporations (1,545) than business that dissolved/in liquidation (1,401). In December 2023, there were more closures (462) than new openings (431).

New business incorporations in West Sussex



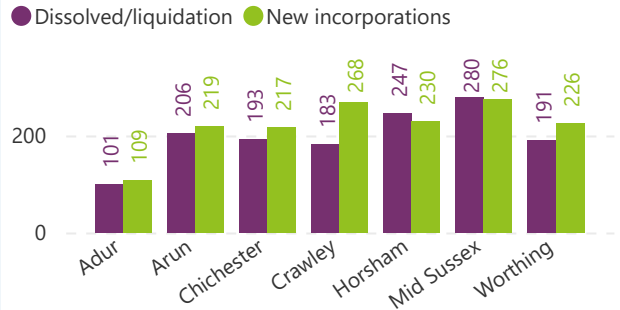
Businesses, West Sussex

Source: FAME

Released: January 2024

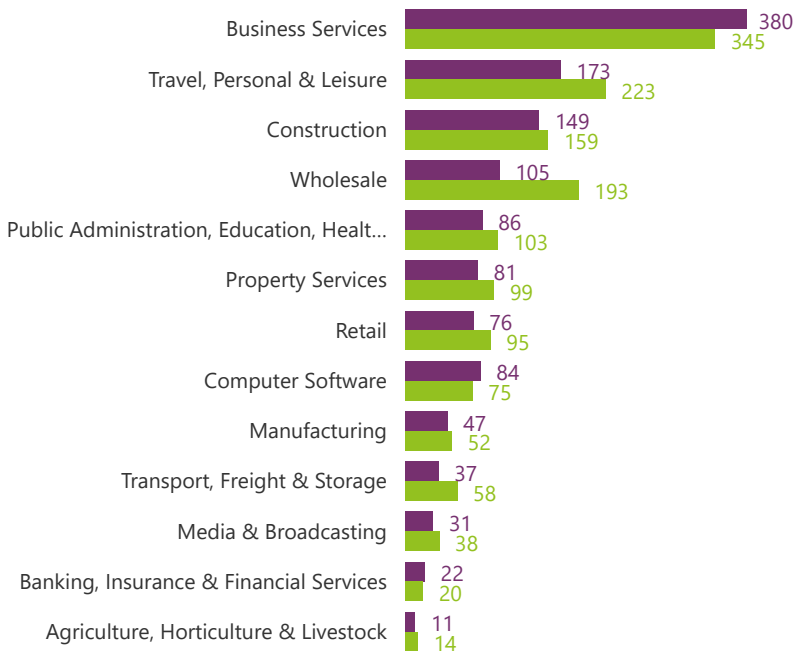
Over the last three-month period (October 2023–December 2023), Mid Sussex has continued to have the highest number of new business incorporations as well as businesses that have dissolved or are in liquidation. Within West Sussex, all local authorities (except Mid Sussex and Horsham) had more new businesses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

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



Number of new business incorporations and businesses dissolved/in liquidation by industry (Oct'23 - Dec'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, Business Service, Computer Software 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: 16 January 2024 (December 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.

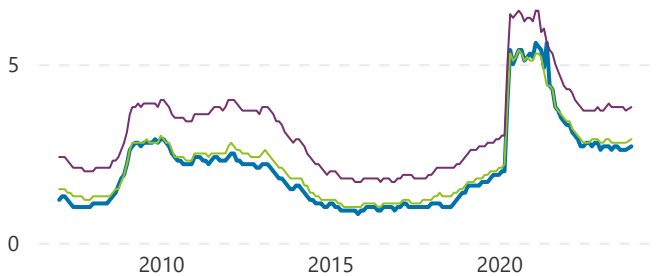
There were 14,155 claimants aged 16+ in West Sussex in November 2023, an increase of 1.3% from the previous month, compared with a national (England) increase of 1.5% and a regional increase of 1.9%.

Mid Sussex saw a decrease (-2.4%) in the number of claimants over the last month, November - December 2023. Arun had the highest increase of 3.8%, 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 1.7%. In West Sussex, % of male claimants aged 16+ increased by 0.8% and female claimants by 2%.

Claimant count rate

● West Sussex ● South East ● England



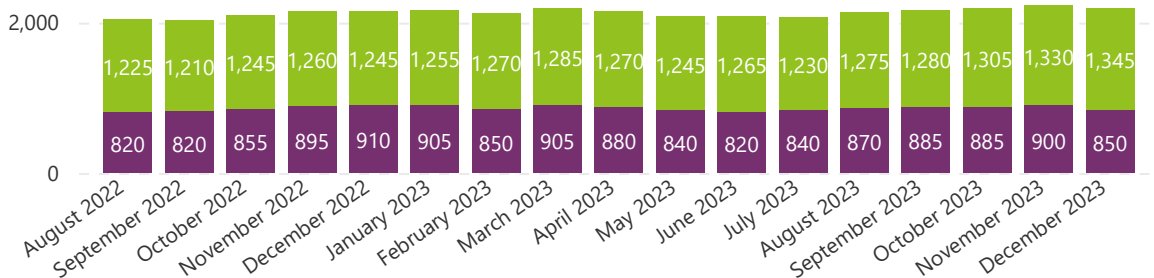
Number of claimants

● December



Claimant count by gender, 18-24 age group

● Female ● Male



Claimant Count, West Sussex

Source: [ONS, Claimant Count](#)

Released: 16 January 2024 (December 2023 figures are provisional)

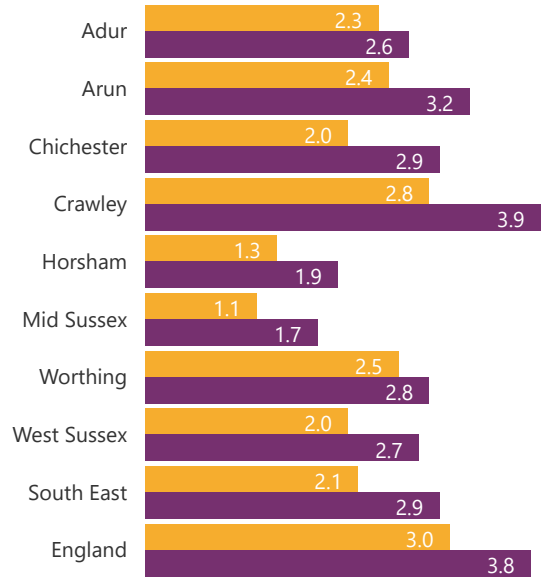
Age profile of claimants: Adur (18.7%) has the highest proportion of 18-24 year olds, and Chichester the lowest at 12.4%, and higher proportion of claimants who are over 50 years.

There are 2,195 claimants aged 18-24 in West Sussex, which is an increase of 1.6% from the previous month. National (England) and regional figures increased by 1.5% and 1.9%, for this age category. Crawley has the highest number of claimants in this age group at 485. In West Sussex, Arun and Mid Sussex saw an increase in claimants aged 18-24 years. Arun saw the highest percentage increase at 2.4%, in the claimants aged 18-24 compared to the last month.

Within West Sussex, over the last month, there was an increase of 1.1% in claimants amongst males aged 18-24 years; females decrease by -5.6%.

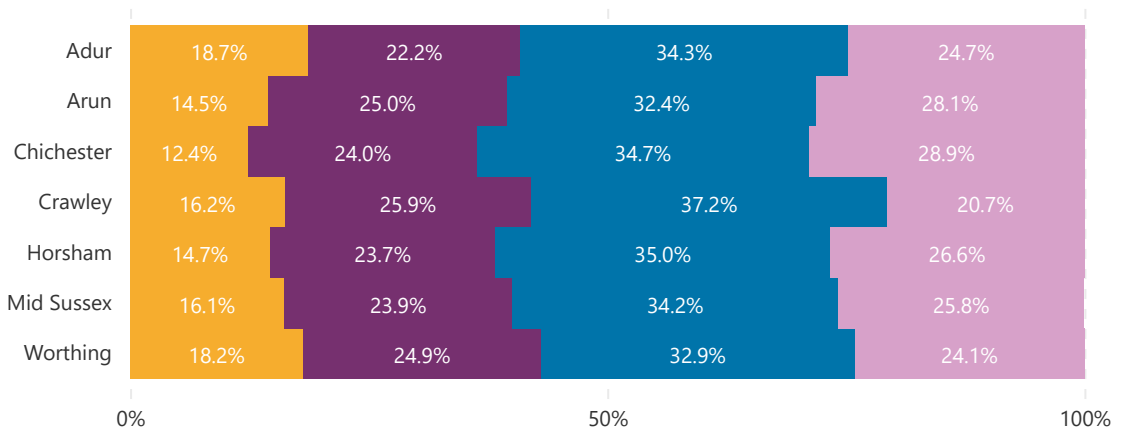
Claimant count rates change

● March 2020 ● December 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](#)

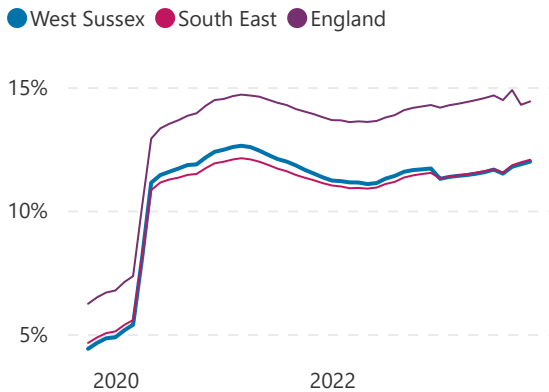
Released: 16 January 2024 (December 2023 figures are provisional)

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 December 2023, there were 63,985 Universal Credit claimants in West Sussex, which is a 1.6% increase from previous month. The numbers of people claiming Universal Credit in West Sussex has increased 133% since March 2020 - from 27,355 to 63,985 in December 2023, a higher percentage increase than nationally (113%) and regionally (125%).

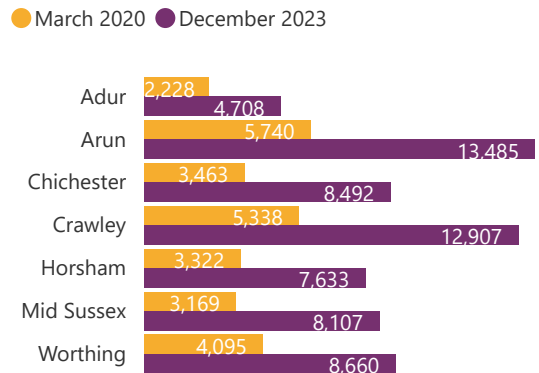
In West Sussex, of those people claiming Universal Credit in November, 44% were in employment. This has increased from 41% seen in March 2020 and is a higher proportion of claimants in employment than in the South East at 41% and nationally (England) 39%. In November 2023, within West Sussex, Mid Sussex 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 (155%) over the period from March 2020 (at the start of the pandemic) to December 2023, Arun has the highest number of Universal Credit claimants at over 13,485 and since March 2020 there has been a significant rise in the number of residents claiming Universal Credit across the county. Please note December 2023 employment/not in employment breakdown hasn't been released yet.

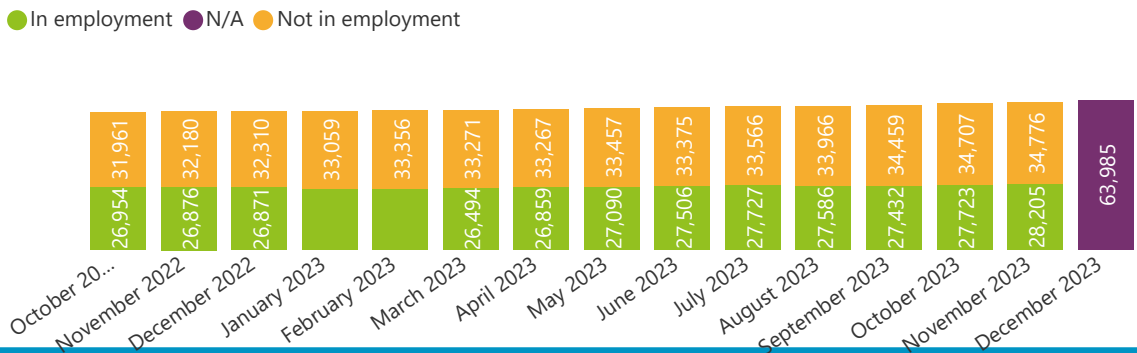
Percentage of people aged 16-64 years claiming Universal Credit



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

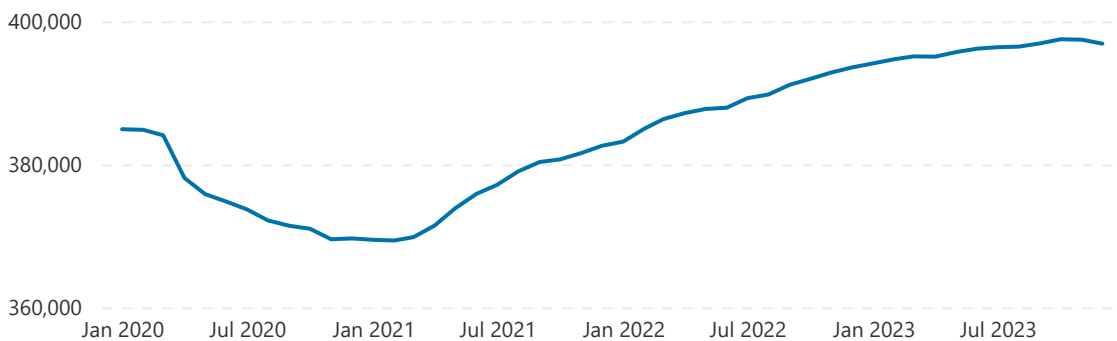
Source: ONS - [Earnings and employment from Pay As You Earn Real Time Information, seasonally adjusted](#)

Released: 16 January 2024

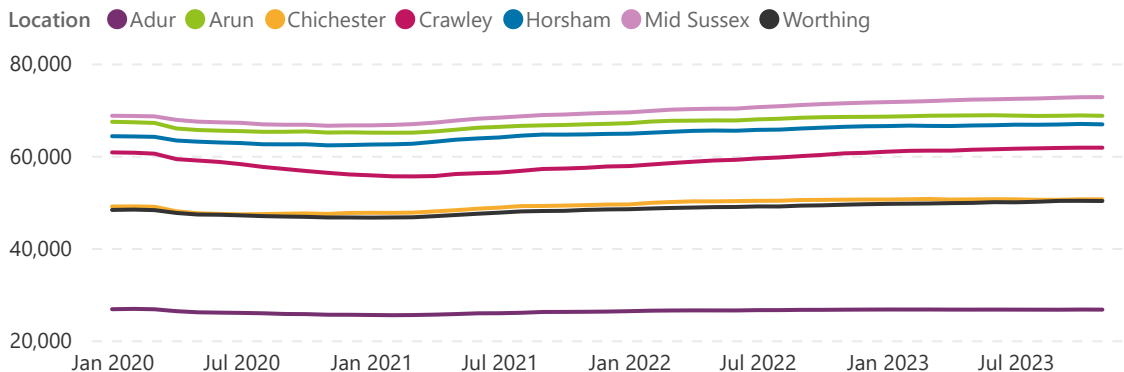
These figures are from a set of 'experimental statistics' from ONS from the earnings and employment statistics Pay as You Earn (PAYE) Real Time Information (RTI) seasonally adjusted data set. The latest data is up to the month of December 2023. West Sussex's employees decreased by 0.14% from November 2023. The South East's employees decreased by 0.17% and the UKs decreased by 0.08%. 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](#)

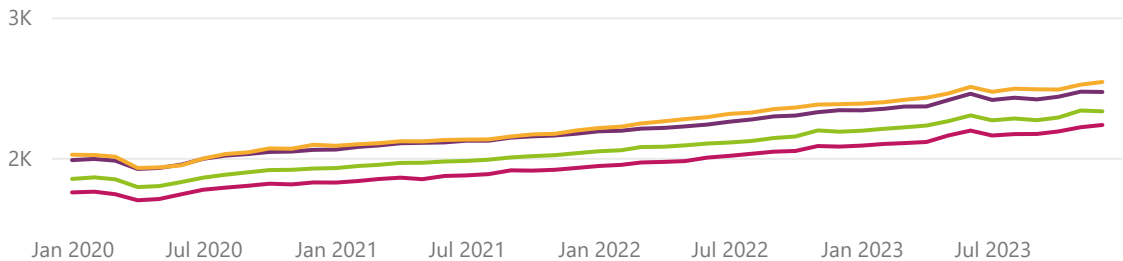
Released: 16 January 2024

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 December 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 0.72% and West Sussex North East had an increase in median monthly pay of 0.75% from December 2023. The South East's monthly median pay decreased by 0.08% and the UK's decreased by 0.26% since November 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.

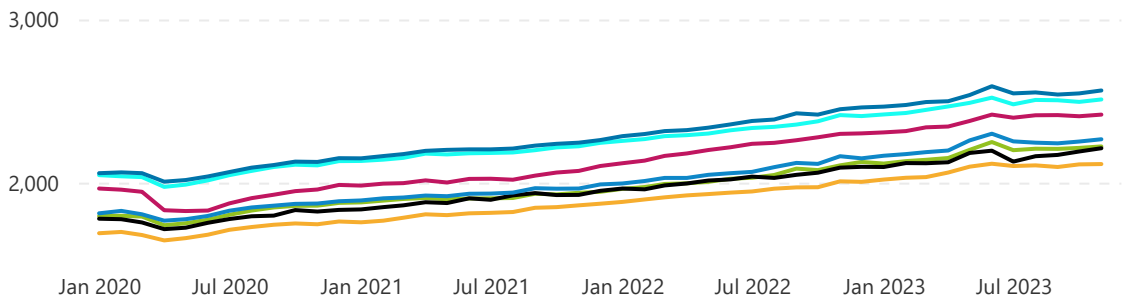
Median Pay National and Regional Figures

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](#)

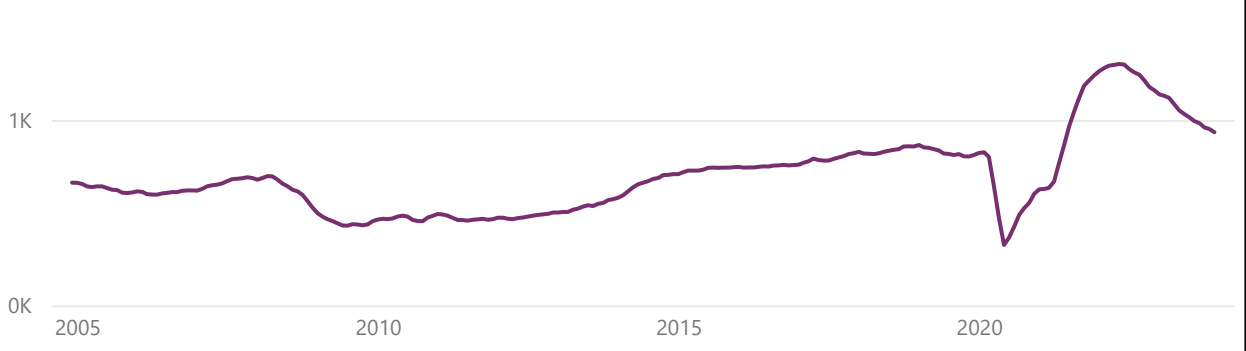
Released: 16 January 2024

The number of vacancies in the UK, in October to December 2023 was 934,000, a decrease of 49,000, down by 5.0% since July to September 2023 with vacancies falling in 12 of the 18 industry sectors. In October to December 2023, total estimated vacancies were down by 2226,000 from the level of a year ago, although they remained from 133,000 above their pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic January to March 2020 levels.

The industry sectors showing the largest quarterly decreases in the number of vacancies were wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles, and transport and storage, which fell by 13,000 and 9,000, respectively.

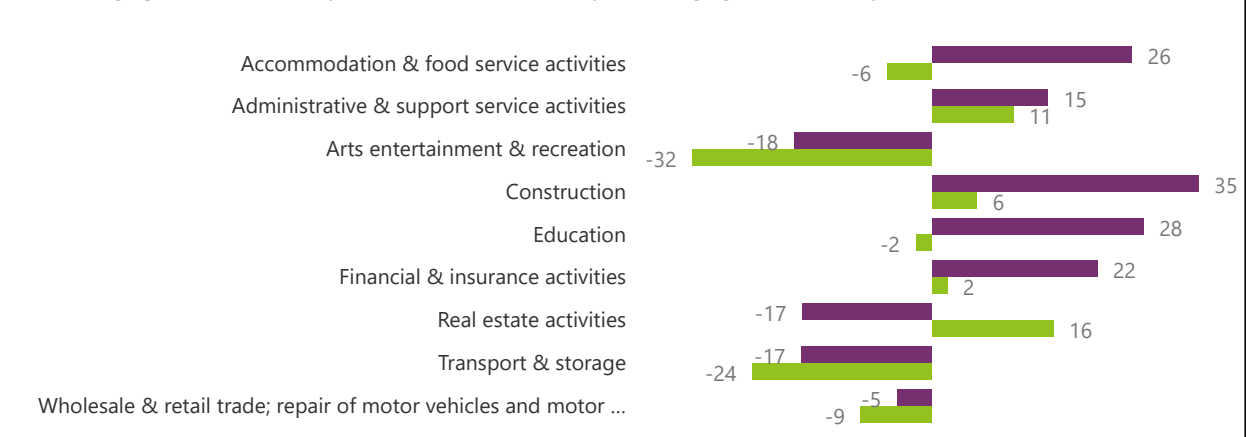
Number of vacancies in the UK

Number of vacancies in the UK, seasonally adjusted, Oct to Dec 2004 to Oct to Dec 2023



Quarterly growth rate by industry sectors

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



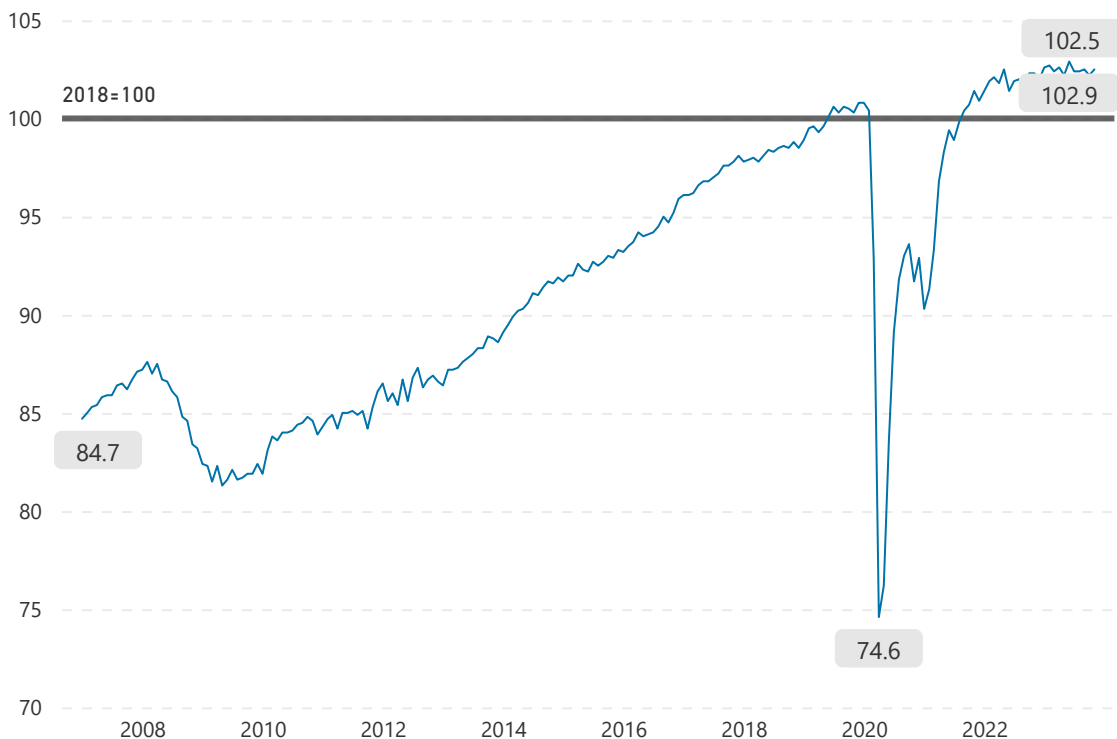
National Headlines - Gross Domestic Product (GDP), UK

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

Released: 12 January 2024

- Real gross domestic product (GDP) is estimated to have fallen by 0.2% in the three months to November 2023, compared with the three months to August 2023.
- Monthly GDP is estimated to have grown by 0.3% in November 2023, following an unrevised fall of 0.3% in October 2023.
- Services output grew by 0.4% in November 2023 and was the main contributor to the monthly growth in GDP; this follows a fall of 0.1% in October 2023 (revised up from a 0.2% fall in our previous publication).
- Consumer-facing services grew by 0.6% in November 2023. The largest positive contributor to consumer-facing services came from retail trade, except for motor vehicles and motorcycles, which grew by 1.3%.
- Production output grew by 0.3% in November 2023, following a fall of 1.3% in October (revised down from a 0.8% fall in our previous publication).
- The construction sector fell by 0.2% in November 2023 after a fall of 0.4% in October 2023 (revised up from a 0.5% fall in our previous publication).

Monthly index, UK



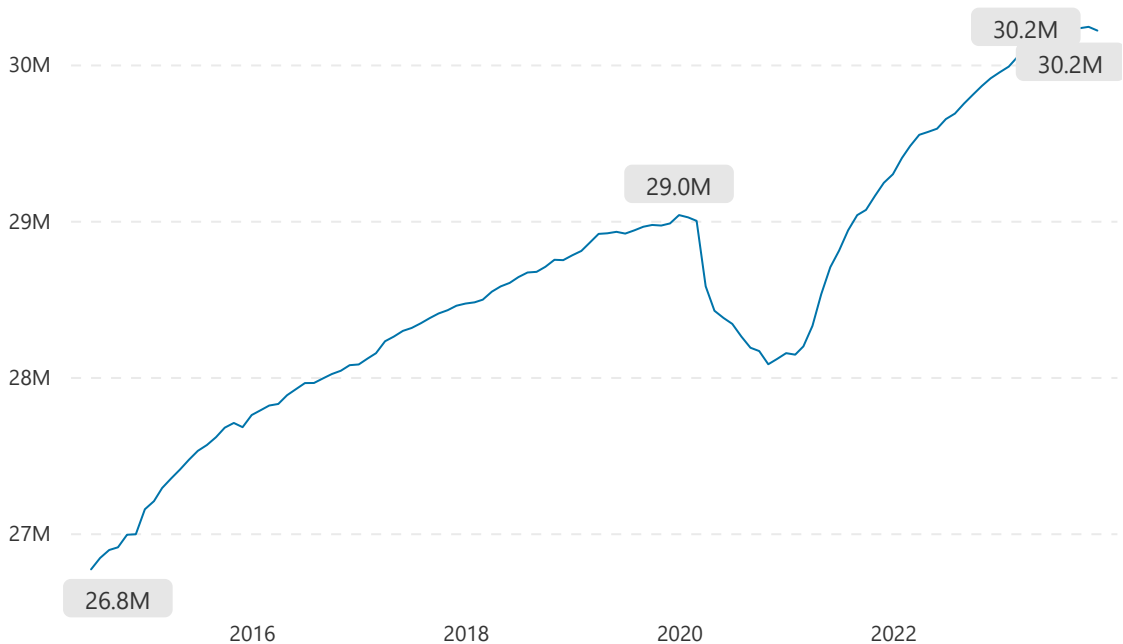
Labour Market, UK

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

Released: 16 January 2024

- Early estimates for December 2023 indicate that the number of payrolled employees rose by 1.0% compared with December 2022, a rise of 306,000 employees.
- This annual increase was largest in the health and social work sector, a rise of 203,000 employees.
- Payrolled employment decreased by 24,000 employees (0.1%) in December 2023 when compared with November 2023; 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 November 2023 compared with October 2023 has been revised from a decrease of 13,000 reported in the last bulletin to an increase of 9,000; this is 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 December 2023 indicate that median monthly pay increased by 6.6% compared with December 2022.
- Annual growth in median pay in December 2023 was highest in the transportation and storage sector, with an increase of 9.7%, and lowest in the professional, scientific and technical sector, with an increase of 4.2%.

Payrolled employees, seasonally adjusted, UK



Businesses currently trading, UK

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

Released: 11 January 2024

The data presented in this bulletin are the final results from Wave 99 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS), which was live for the period of 27 December to 7 January 2024.

- In December 2023, 69% of trading businesses reported that they were able to get the materials, goods or services they needed from within the UK, up two percentage points from November 2023; in contrast, 3% were unable to get the materials, goods or services they needed from within the UK, broadly stable over the same period.
- The percentage of businesses with 10 or more employees that reported global supply chain disruption in December 2023 remained broadly stable from November 2023, at around 5%.
- One in five (20%) businesses reported they are using or intending to use increased home working as a permanent business model; more than half (54%) of those businesses reported this is for improved staff wellbeing.
- Fewer than 1 in 10 (7%) businesses experienced worker shortages in late December 2023; this is down one percentage point from mid-December and down from the 12% reported in late December 2022.
- More than 1 in 10 (11%) businesses reported that employee hourly wages had increased in December 2023 compared with November 2023.

Businesses Closures, UK

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

Released: 16 January 2024

Data for England and Wales on company insolvencies shows that there were 2,002 in December 2023, 2% higher than in the same month in the previous year (1,965).

There were 153 compulsory liquidations, 1,731 creditors' voluntary liquidations (CVLs), 103 administrations and 15 company voluntary arrangements (CVAs) in December 2023, CVL numbers were higher than in December 2022, while compulsory liquidation and administration numbers were lower.

For individuals, the total number of insolvencies in December 2023 was 6,584, 20% lower than in the same month in the previous year (8,254 in December 2022)

For individuals, 496 bankruptcies, 2,472 debt relief orders (DROs) and 3,616 individual voluntary arrangements (IVAs) were registered in December 2023, The lower number of individual insolvencies compared to December 2022 was driven by a 38% decline in the number of IVAs.

Company insolvencies in England & Wales

