

West Sussex Economy Snapshot

September 2024 (Issue 50)

West Sussex County Council

This is a monthly 'snapshot' of the West Sussex economy, produced by the County Council's Performance & Insight 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 August 2024, there were 16,175 people claiming Job Seekers Allowance or Universal Credit principally because they were out of work, available to work or working very few hours and/or earning a very low income. This was an increase of 1.2% from the previous month. Claimants increased in Arun (3.4%), Chichester (1.5%), Horsham (0.8%), Mid Sussex (2.4%), and Worthing (2.7%) compared to a national increase of 0.9% and a regional increase of 1.1% in the South East. Conversely, claimants decreased in Adur (0.5%) and Crawley (2%). The claimant count rate for West Sussex at August 2024 was 3.1%, Arun recorded the highest claimant count (3,495) and Crawley had the highest rate (4.5%), exceeding the national average (4.4%) and the regional rate (3.2%). Conversely, Mid Sussex and Horsham had the lowest claimant count rate (2.1%).

In West Sussex, the number of people claiming Universal Credit increased significantly by 160% since March 2020, reaching 71,184 in August 2024. Notably, 45% of claimants in a previous month (July) were employed, exceeding both regional and national averages. Mid Sussex has the highest percentage of employed claimants (47% in July 2024) and the highest increase in claimants since March 2020 (184% August 2024). Arun district has the largest number of claimants at over 15,178.

The number of employees on payrolls in West Sussex continues to be significantly higher than pre-pandemic levels. A slight decrease in employees has been seen in West Sussex (-0.11%), South East (-0.14%) and UK (-0.19%) from July 2024 to August 2024.

Pay levels have increased in West Sussex South West (Adur, Arun, Chichester, Worthing) by 0.35% and increased in the North East (Crawley, Horsham, Mid Sussex) by 0.62% over the last month. The regional pay level increased by 0.20% and the national level increased by 0.71%. West Sussex North East in August 2024 had a monthly median pay of £2,614 compared to that of West Sussex South West of £2,304. For comparison the monthly median pay for the South East region was £2,547.

New business incorporations in West Sussex remain above pre-pandemic levels. The last three months, June 2024 - August 2024 saw a net increase of 100 businesses (1,418 incorporations vs. 1,318 closures/liquidations). In August 2024 alone, there were 474 new businesses established compared to 358 closures. Mid Sussex has the highest number of new incorporations and closures. Arun and Horsham had more business closures than incorporations compared to the rest of the county.

In July 2024 ONS released the latest mid-year population estimates - which is for the period mid-2023. West Sussex is estimated to have a population at this time of 900,862, an increase in the last 10 years of 9.2% compared to a 7.0% across England and 7.6% in the South East. Horsham saw the highest percentage growth - at 12.5% over this period. Arun continues to have the highest population in West Sussex, which makes up 18.6% of the county's total, with Adur the lowest at 2.9%. In terms of percentage increase, population growth has been higher amongst older age groups, with a 16.6% increase in the population aged 65 years and over, which in 2013 made up 21.7% of total population compared to 23.2% in 2023.

National Headlines

UK GDP:

- Monthly GDP showed no growth in July 2024, following no growth in June 2024.
- Services grew by 0.1% in July 2024 following a decrease of 0.1% in June 2024.
- Production and Construction output decreased in July 2024 by 0.8% and 0.4% respectively.

UK job vacancies decreased slightly (4.7%) in June to August 2024 compared to March 2024 to May 2024. This is the 26th consecutive quarter with a decline. Despite the decrease, vacancies remain higher than pre-pandemic levels.

From the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICs), 96% of businesses reported they were trading.

- **Turnover:** More than a quarter (26%) of businesses reported a decrease in turnover in August compared to July, while 14% saw an increase. These figures remain relatively stable from last month.
- **Prices:** Approximately one in five (20%) businesses experienced increased input costs (goods/services bought) in August 2024 when compared to July 2024.
- **Worker Shortage:** In early September 2024, 8% of all businesses and 20% of businesses with 10 or more employees reported they were experiencing worker shortages.

Company Insolvencies in England and Wales (July 2024):

Data indicates a decrease in company insolvencies across England and Wales for August 2024. The number of company insolvencies recorded in August 2024 was 1,953, 9% lower than in July 2024.

Individual Insolvencies:

Individual insolvencies in England and Wales saw a decrease in August 2024. There were 10,000 individuals entering insolvency during this period, 16% higher than in August 2023.

Key Points:

- Company insolvencies in England and Wales decreased by 9% in August 2024 compared to July 2024.
- Individual insolvencies decreased by 5% compared to July 2024.

Inside this report

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

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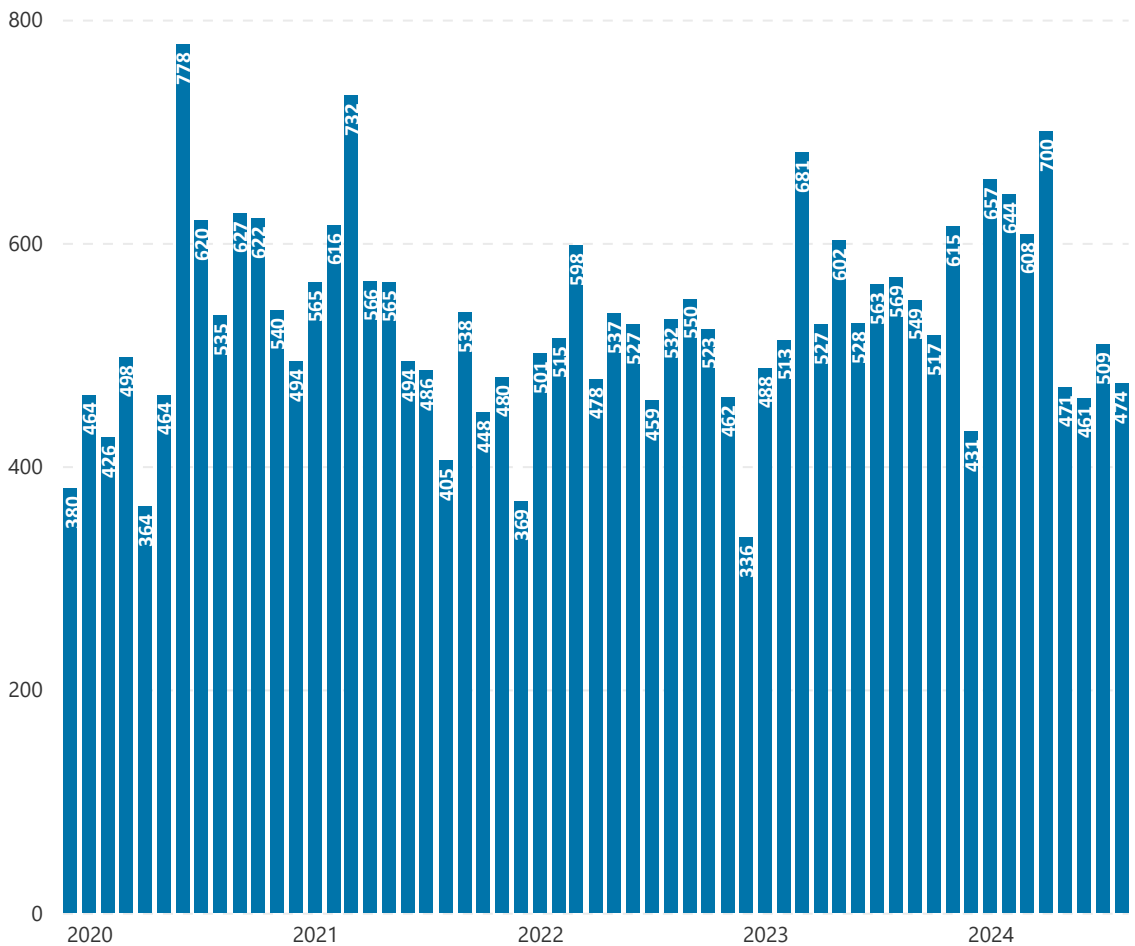
New Businesses, West Sussex

Source: FAME

Released: September 2024

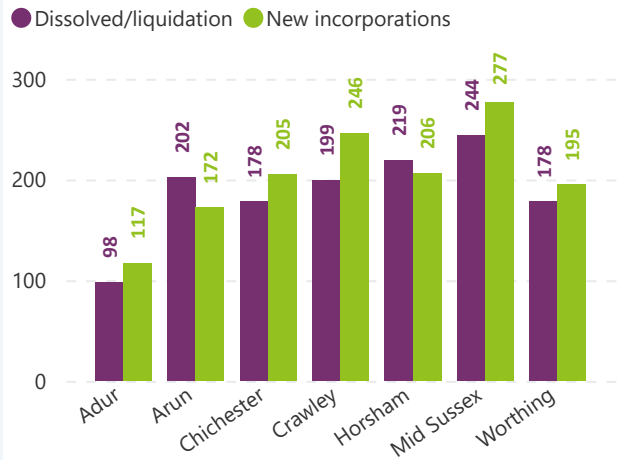
The time series shows fluctuations month on month, but generally, the numbers of new business formations have tended to be at levels greater than those seen pre-pandemic. In West Sussex in the last 12 months, Sep 2023- Aug 2024, there were around 6,298 new business incorporations, 861 higher than the 5,437 businesses that were dissolved, or which had gone into liquidation. In the last 3 months – June 2024 – Aug 2024 there were 100 more new business incorporations (1,418) than business that dissolved/in liquidation (1,318). In August 2024, there were more new businesses (474) than closures (358).

New business incorporations in West Sussex



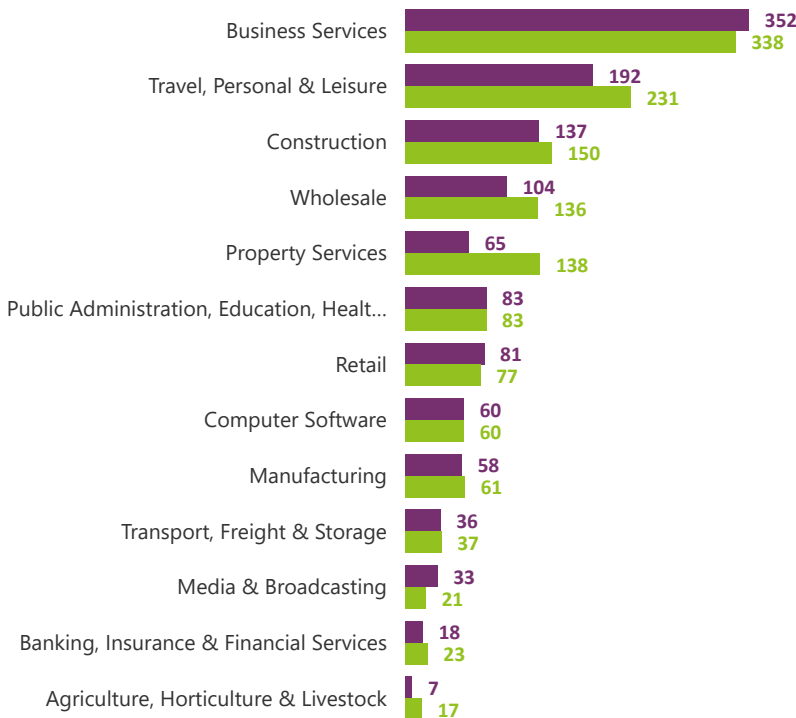
Over the last three-month period (June 2024 – Aug 2024), Mid Sussex had the highest number of new business incorporations and the highest number of businesses that have dissolved or are in liquidation. Within West Sussex, Arun and Horsham had more businesses that had closed than new incorporations.

Number of new business incorporations and businesses dissolved/in liquidation by local authority (Jun'24-Aug'24)



Number of new business incorporations and businesses dissolved/in liquidation by industry in West Sussex (Jun'24 - Aug'24)

● 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 top three sectors for new business formations are – business services, travel personal and leisure, and construction.

Claimant Count, West Sussex

Source: [ONS, Claimant Count](#)

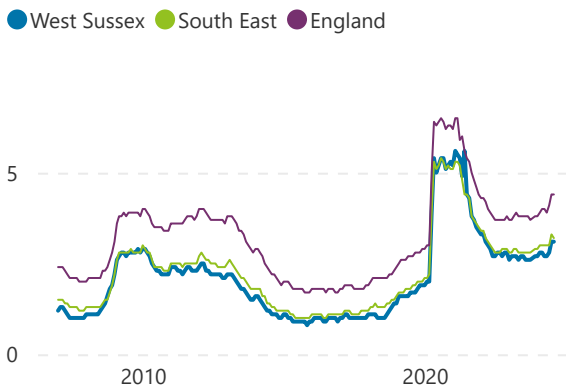
Released: 10 Sep 2024 (Aug 2024 figures are provisional)

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.

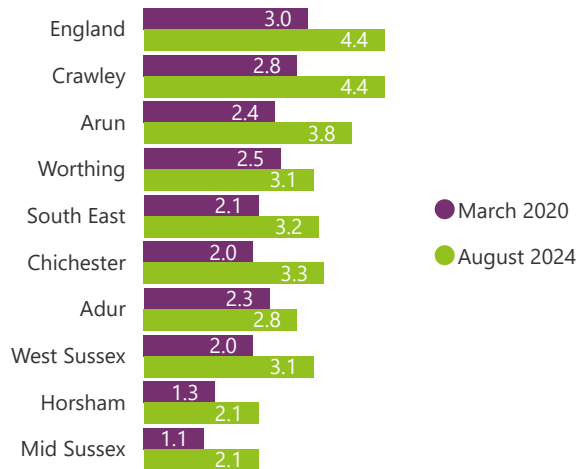
In August 2024, West Sussex saw a rise in claimants to 16,175, representing a 1.2% increase from the previous month. The claimant count rate increased to 3.1% for West Sussex and 4.4% for England and 3.2% for South East. Decrease in claimants in Adur (0.5%) and Crawley (2%). Increased in Arun (3.4%), Chichester (1.5%), Horsham (0.8%), Mid Sussex (2.4%) and Worthing (2.7%). Arun reported the highest increases within the county.

Arun recorded the highest claimant count (3,495). Crawley has the highest rate (4.5%), exceeding the national average (4.4%) and the regional rate (3.2%). Conversely, Mid Sussex and Horsham had the lowest claimant count rate (2.1%).

Claimant count rate



Claimant count rates change



Total Number of Claimants by Local Authority



Age Profile of Claimants:

Distribution: Worthing holds the highest proportion of claimants aged 18-24 at 18.9%, while Chichester has the lowest at 11.2% and the highest proportion of claimants over 50 years old.

In August 2024, West Sussex experienced a 4.2% increase in the number of 18-24 year-old Jobseeker Allowance claimants compared to the previous month, contrasting with a 2.3% national increase and a 1.8% regional increase for this age group.

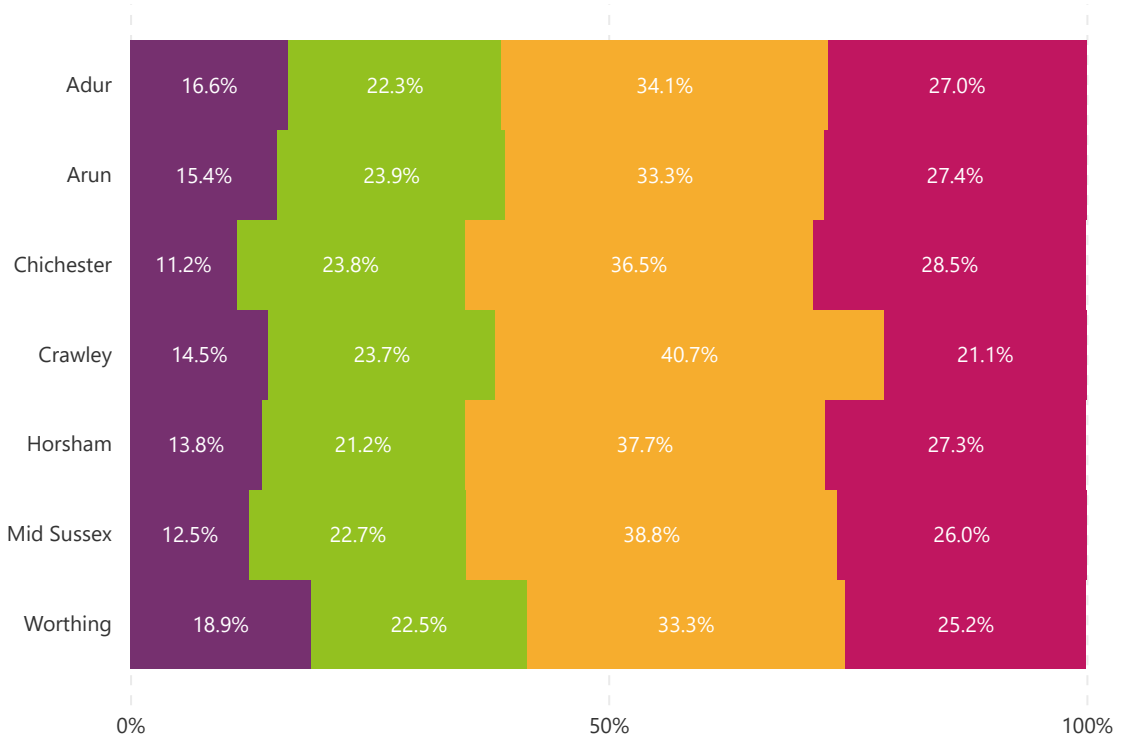
Within West Sussex, the following trends were observed:

- **Decreases:** Chichester (1.9%)
- **Increases:** Adur (9.4%), Arun (4.9%), Mid Sussex (9.1%), Crawley (1%), Horsham (4.2%) and Worthing (8.2%)

Arun reported the highest number of claimants aged 18-24, with 540 claimants.

Distribution of claimants by age band

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

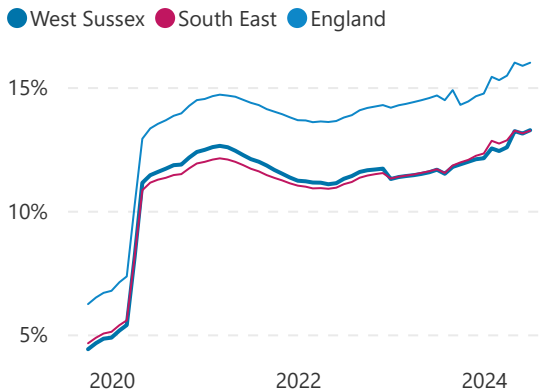


Universal Credit Claimants, West Sussex

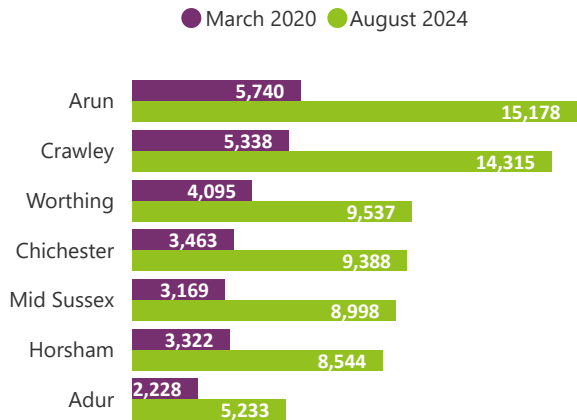
Source: [Department for Work and Pensions](#) Released: 13 Sep 2024 (Aug 2024 figures are provisional)

Universal Credit is a single payment per household that helps with living costs for those on a low income or are out of work. In August 2024, there were 71,184 Universal Credit claimants in West Sussex, representing a 2.1% increase from the previous month. The number of people claiming Universal Credit in West Sussex has increased significantly since March 2020. Compared to 27,355 claimants in March 2020, there were 71,184 in August 2024, a 160% increase. This rise is higher than the national increase of 136% and the regional increase of 147%. In West Sussex, 45% of those claiming Universal Credit in July 2024 were in employment. This figure has risen from 41% observed in March 2020. West Sussex has a higher proportion of claimants in employment compared to both the South East (41%, July 2024) and England (38%, July 2024). Within West Sussex, Mid Sussex has the highest percentage of Universal Credit claimants who are in work (47% in July 2024). Mid Sussex has witnessed the highest percentage rise (184%) in claimants from March 2020 (pre-pandemic) to August 2024. Arun district currently has the highest number of Universal Credit claimants at over 15,178. The employment/not in employment breakdown for August 2024 hasn't been released yet.

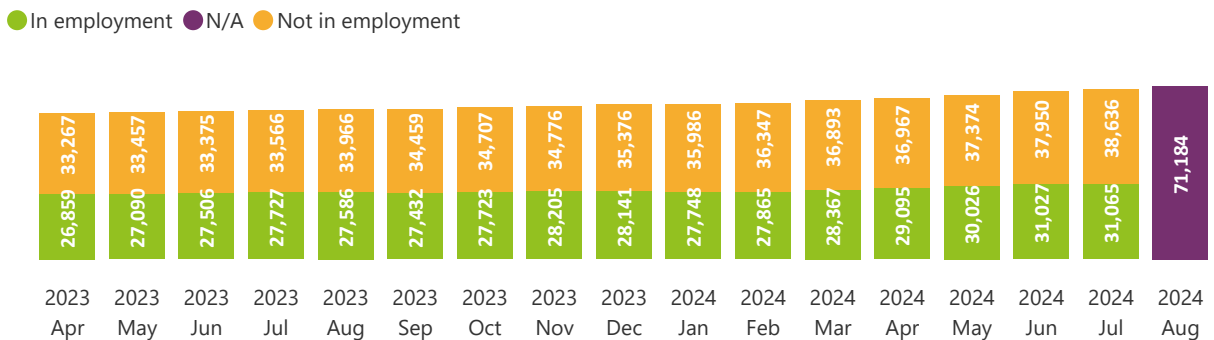
Percentage of people aged 16-64 years claiming Universal Credit



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: 10 September 2024

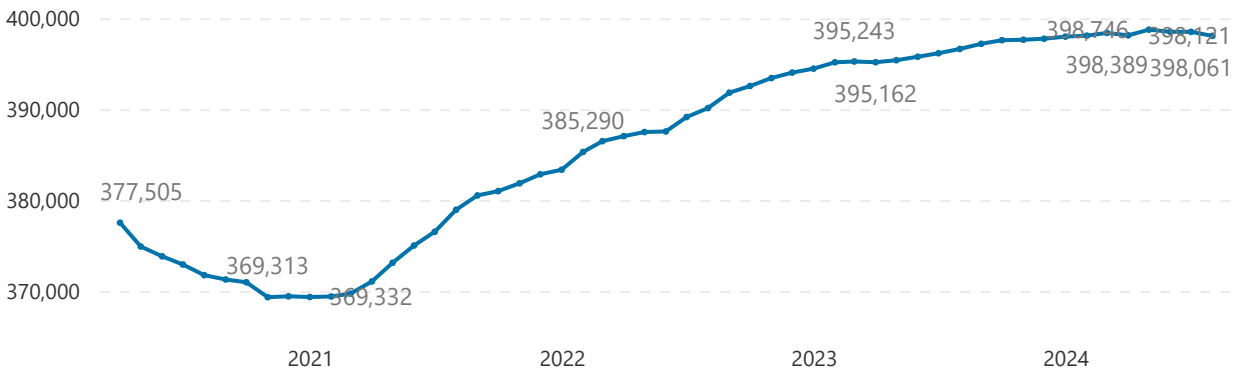
This data is taken from experimental statistics obtained from the Office for National Statistics (ONS). The data is derived from earnings and employment figures collected through the Pay as You Earn (PAYE) Real Time Information (RTI) system and has been seasonally adjusted to account for predictable fluctuations throughout the year. The most recent data included in this report is for August 2024.

% change in employees (Jul'24 - Aug'24)

- West Sussex: -0.11%
- South East: -0.14%
- UK: -0.19%

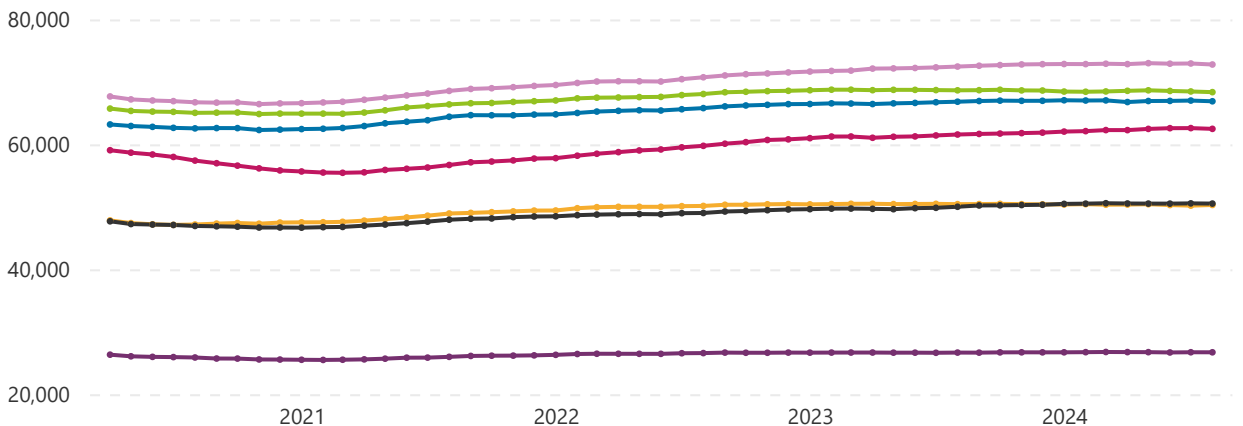
West Sussex, South East and England all saw a slight decrease in employees from July 2024 to August 2024.

West Sussex Number of Employees



District Number of Employees

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



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: 10 September 2024

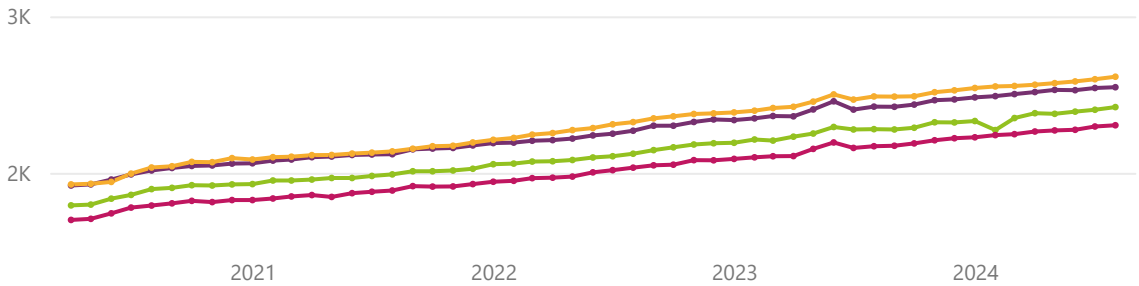
As in the previous page, these figures are based on the ONS statistics from the earnings and employment Pay As You Earn (Seasonally Adjusted) RTI dataset and are up to the month of August 2024.

West Sussex South West median pay increased by 0.35% and West Sussex North East increased by 0.62%. The South East region increased by 0.20% and the UK increased by 0.71% compared to August 2024.

The local authority with the highest median monthly pay continues to be Mid Sussex at £2,686, and the lowest continues to be Arun at £2,244. 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.

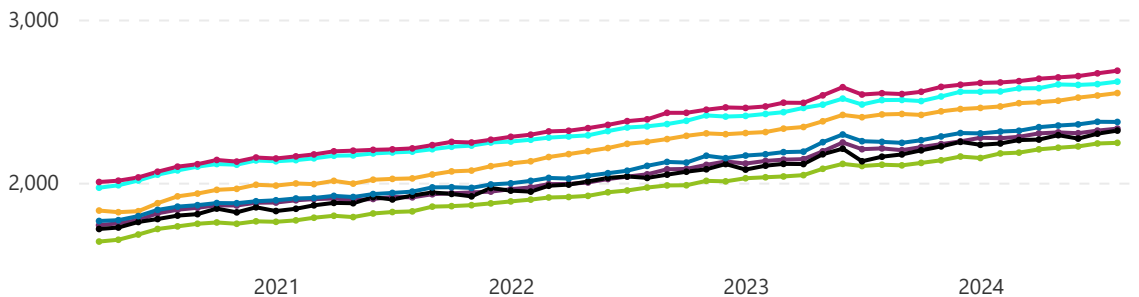
Median Pay National and Regional Figures

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



2023 Mid-Year Population Estimates for West Sussex

Source: nomis, [Link](#)

Released: 29 November 2023

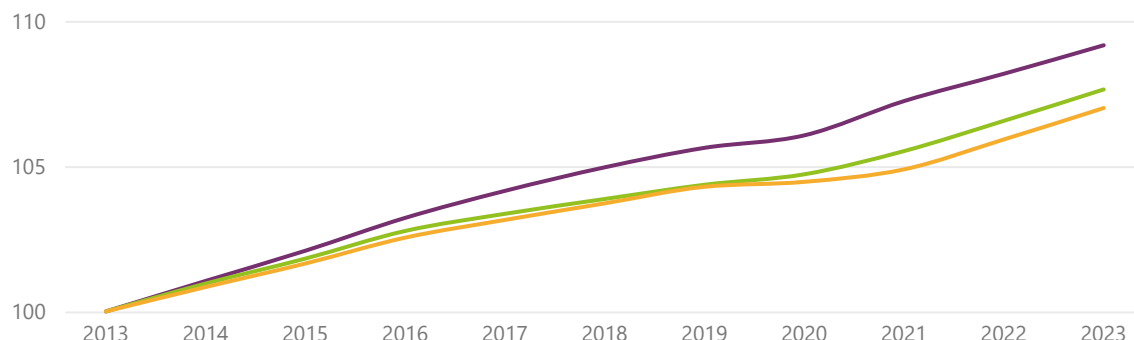
In July 2024 ONS released population estimates for England and Wales down to local authority level for mid-2023, these took into account the 2021 Census, along with births, deaths, immigration, emigration and estimates of other populations that include HE students, and school pupils studying away from home, members of the armed forces, and prison populations. Mid-year 2023 population estimates for lower-level geographies are expected to be released later in the year. The current population for West Sussex at June 2023 is estimated to be 900,862 making up around 9.5% of the population of the South East region. Arun continues to have the highest population in West Sussex at 168,000 contributing 18.6% of the county's population and Adur the lowest at 64,680 (7.2%). Over the last 10 years, 2013-2023, the population of West Sussex has seen an increase of 9.2%, higher than the increase seen in England (7.0%), and in the region at 7.6%. Horsham has seen the highest percentage increase in West Sussex at 12.5%, and Adur the lowest at 2.9%. The population has increased by the highest rate amongst the older aged groups, with West Sussex seeing a 16.5% increase in the population aged 65 years and over, the highest % increase in this age group has been seen in Horsham. The population aged 16- 64 years, seen essentially as the working age population makes up a slightly lower proportion at 59.2% in 2023 than it did in 2013 at 60.3%. Arun has the lowest proportion of working age population in West Sussex at 55.9%.

Population Estimates at mid-2023						
Area	Date		% change 2013-'23	% growth 2013-2023 by broad age groups		
	2013	2023		0-15 yrs.	16-64 yrs.	65+
West Sussex	825,301	900,862	9.2	7.1	7.1	16.5
Adur	62,850	64,687	2.9	4.9	0.2	8.4
Arun	154,034	168,008	9.1	5.6	7.3	14.6
Chichester	116,120	128,003	10.2	5.8	8.1	17.9
Crawley	110,190	120,545	9.4	12.4	7.2	15.7
Horsham	132,807	149,464	12.5	8.2	9.4	25.2
Mid Sussex	142,951	157,915	10.5	11.0	7.8	18.5
Worthing	106,349	112,240	5.5	-1.9	5.8	10.7
England	53,918,686	57,690,323	7.0	4.6	5.2	16.1
South East	8,809,382	9,482,507	7.6	5.5	5.6	17.0

source ONS/NOMIS

Change in Population 2013 - 2023 (index 2013 = 100)

● West Sussex ● South East ● England



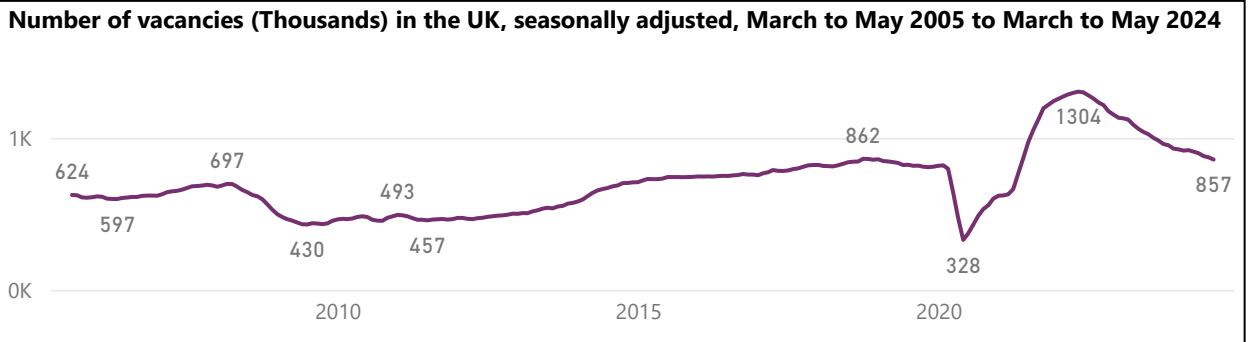
Job Vacancies, UK

Source: [ONS](#)

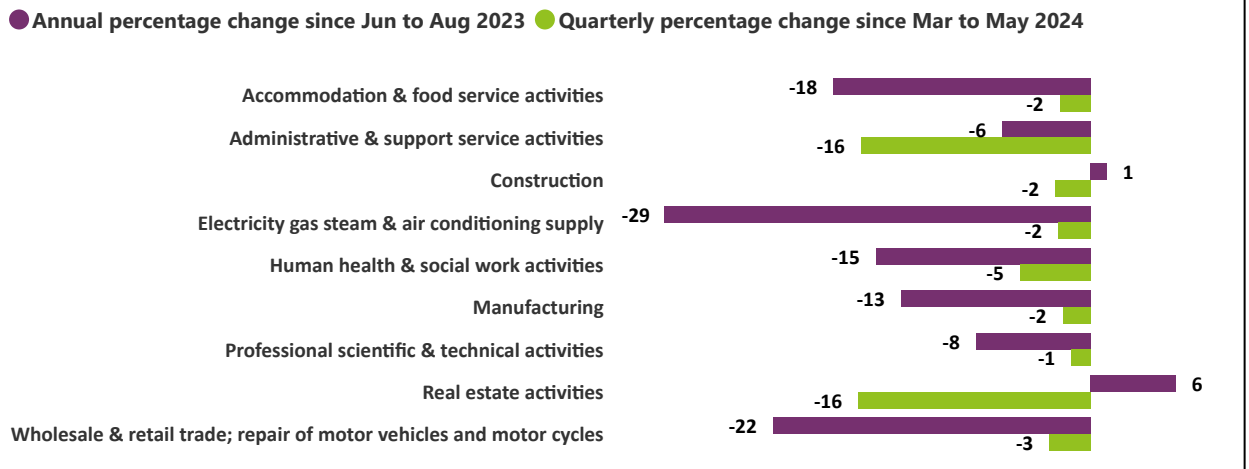
Released: 10 September 2024

The estimated number of vacancies in the UK from June to August 2024 was 857,000, a decrease of 42,000 or 4.7% compared to the previous three month period - March to May 2024. Vacancy numbers decreased on the quarter for the 26th consecutive period in June to August 2024, with vacancies decreasing in all of the 18 industry sectors. In June 2024 to August 2024, total estimated vacancies were down by 143,000 (14.3%) from the level seen in the previous year, although they remained 61,000 (7.7%) above their pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic January to March 2020 levels. In May to July 2024, the number of unemployed people per vacancy was 1.6, down from 1.7 in the previous quarter (February to April 2024).

Number of vacancies in the UK



% Change in Number of Vacancies in UK by Sectors



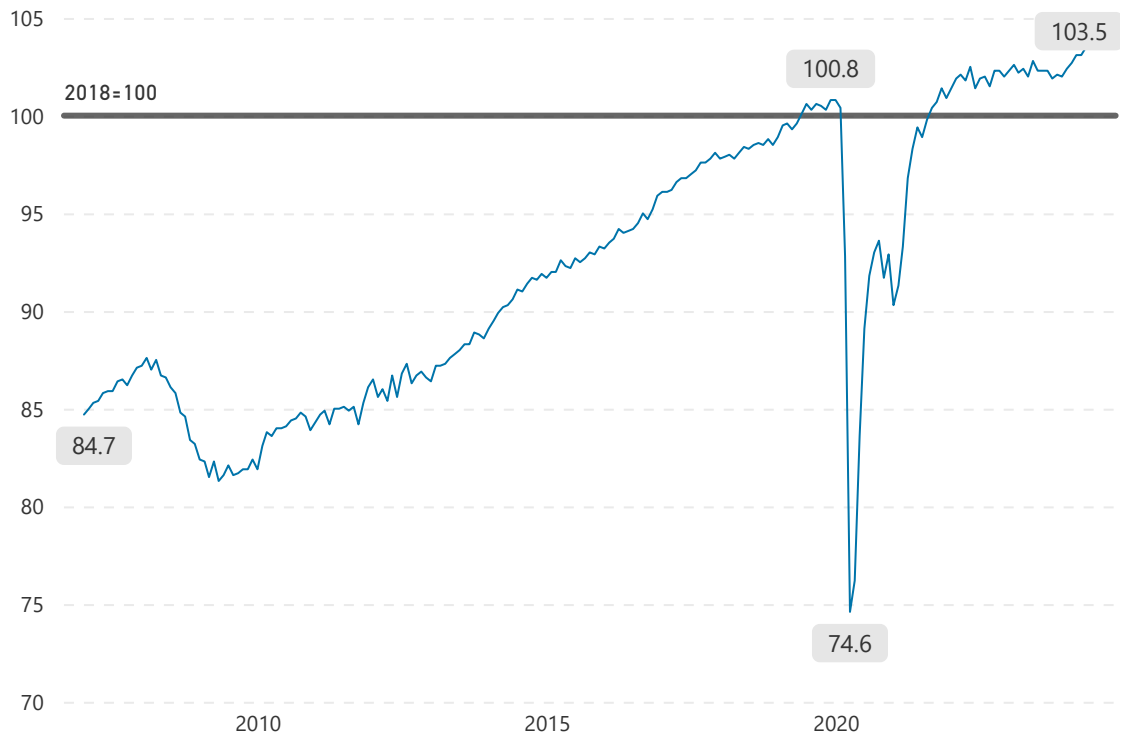
National Headlines - Gross Domestic Product (GDP), UK

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

Released: 11 September 2024

- Monthly real gross domestic product (GDP) is estimated to have shown no growth in July 2024, after showing no growth in June 2024.
- Real GDP is estimated to have grown by 0.5% in the three months to July 2024 compared with the three months to April 2024, with widespread growths in the services sector in this period.
- Services output grew by 0.1% in July 2024, following a decrease of 0.1% in June 2024, and grew by 0.6% in the three months to July 2024.
- Production output decreased by 0.8% in July 2024, following a growth of 0.8% in June 2024, and decreased by 0.1% in the three months to July 2024.
- Construction output decreased by 0.4% in July 2024, following a growth of 0.5% in June 2024, but grew by 1.2% in the three months to July 2024, its first positive three-month growth since September 2023.

Monthly index, UK



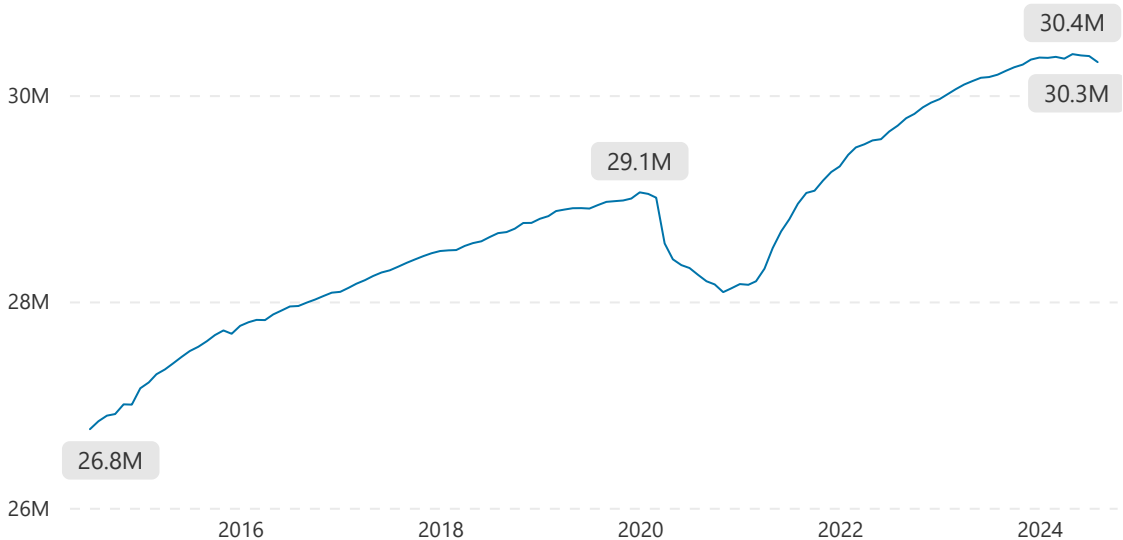
Labour Market, UK

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

Released: 10 September 2024

- Early estimates for August 2024 indicate that the number of payrolled employees rose by 0.4% compared with August 2023, a rise of 122,000 employees.
- This annual increase was largest in the health and social work sector, a rise of 139,000 employees.
- Payrolled employment decreased by 59,000 employees (0.2%) in August 2024 when compared with July 2024; figures for August should be treated as provisional estimates and are likely to be revised when more data are received next month.
- UK payrolled employee growth for July 2024 compared with June 2024 has been revised from an increase of 24,000 reported in the last bulletin to a decrease of 6,000; 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 August 2024 indicate that median monthly pay increased by 6.2% compared with August 2023.
- Annual growth in median pay in August 2024 was highest in the accommodation and food service activities sector, with an increase of 10.4%, and lowest in the public administration and defence sector, with an increase of 1.7%.

Payrolled employees, seasonally adjusted, UK



Businesses currently trading, UK

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

Released: 19 September 2024

The data presented in this bulletin are the final results from Wave 116 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS), which was live from 2 September to 15 September 2024.

- More than a quarter (26%) of trading businesses reported a decrease in their turnover in August 2024 compared with July 2024, up 3 percentage points from last month and the highest proportion reported since January 2024; in contrast, 14% reported an increase in their turnover, remaining broadly stable from last month.
- Almost one in five (19%) trading businesses anticipate an increase in turnover in October 2024. Meanwhile, 53% expect turnover to remain stable, with a 2% increase or decrease compared to September 2024 expectations. In contrast, only 14% anticipate a fall in turnover, maintaining a relatively stable level over the same period.
- Approximately 1 in 5 (20%) trading businesses reported an increase in the prices of goods or services bought in August 2024 when compared with July 2024, while less than 1 in 10 (6%) reported an increase in the prices of goods or services sold; these are the lowest proportions reported since these response options were introduced in March 2022.
- More than two-thirds (67%) of trading businesses expect the prices of goods or services they sell to stay the same in October 2024, up 3 percentage points on expectations for September 2024; the proportion of businesses that expect to increase their prices in October 2024 was 11%, remaining broadly stable with September 2024.
- In early September 2024, 8% of all businesses and 20% of businesses with 10 or more employees reported that they were experiencing worker shortages; both figures are broadly stable with early August 2024.

Businesses Closures, UK

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

Released: 20 September 2024

- After seasonal adjustment, the number of registered company insolvencies in England and Wales was 1,953 in August 2024, 9% lower than in July 2024 (2,144) and 15% lower than the same month in the previous year (2,286 in August 2023). However, the number of company insolvencies remained much higher than those seen both during the COVID-19 pandemic and between 2014 and 2019.
- Company insolvencies in August 2024 consisted of 279 compulsory liquidations, 1,542 creditors' voluntary liquidations (CVLs), 112 administrations and 20 company voluntary arrangements (CVAs). All types of company insolvency were lower than in July 2024.
- One in 180 companies on the Companies House effective register (at a rate of 55.5 per 10,000 companies) entered insolvency between 1 September 2023 and 31 August 2024. This was a slight increase from the 55.4 per 10,000 companies that entered insolvency in the 12 months ending 31 August 2023. Insolvency rates are calculated on a 12-month rolling basis as a proportion of the total number of companies on the effective register. The 12-month rolling rates show longer term trends and reduce the volatility associated with estimates based on single months.
- While the insolvency rate has increased since the lows seen in 2020 and 2021, it remains much lower than the peak of 113.1 per 10,000 companies seen during the 2008-09 recession. This is because the number of companies on the effective register has more than doubled over this period.

Company insolvencies in England & Wales



Businesses Closures, UK

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

Released: 20 September 2024

- After seasonal adjustment, 10,000 individuals entered insolvency in England and Wales in August 2024. This was 5% lower than in July 2024, but 16% higher than in August 2023.
- The individual insolvencies consisted of 594 bankruptcies, 4,166 debt relief orders (DROs) and 5,240 individual voluntary arrangements (IVAs). The last five months all saw the highest monthly numbers of DROs since their introduction. This followed the [removal of the £90 administration fee](#) to obtain a DRO from 6 April 2024 and the expansion of eligibility criteria in June 2024. The number of IVAs registered in August was similar to the average monthly number over the past 12 months. Bankruptcy numbers remained at about half of pre-2020 levels and were also lower than numbers seen over the past 12 months.
- In the 12 months ending 31 August 2024, one in 441 adults in England and Wales entered insolvency (a rate of 22.7 per 10,000 adults). This is slightly lower than the rate of 23.0 per 10,000 adults (1 in 435) who entered insolvency in the 12 months ending 31 August 2023.
- There were 7,256 Breathing Space registrations in August 2024. This is 5% lower than in August 2023.

Individual insolvencies in England & Wales

