

February 2026 (Issue 11)

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New Businesses January 2026

- 555 new businesses were incorporated (a 43% increase from December 2025).
- 524 businesses were dissolved or liquidated (a 14% decrease from December 2025).

There were 31 more newly created businesses than those that were dissolved.

Claimants January 2026

- Claimant count increased by 4% in West Sussex over the last month.
- Although the count has increased, the count rate has stayed the same at 3.1% in West Sussex, matching the regional average of 3.1% and staying below the national average of 4%.

Universal Credit Claimants January 2026

- Universal Credit claimants increased by 0.7% in West Sussex over the last month.
- Significant rise since March 2020 (211% increase). Higher increase than national (180%) or regional (193%) average.
- In December 2025, 16.1% of the 16-64 population in West Sussex are claiming UC, close to the regional percentage and lower than the national percentage of 19.1%.

Real Time Information (No of Employees) January 2026 (% Change from previous month in brackets)

- West Sussex: 396,957 (increased by 0.03%)
- West Sussex (South West): 195,049 (increased by 0.08%)
- West Sussex (North East): 201,908 (decreased by 0.03%)
- South East: 4,272,234 (decreased by 0.07%)
- UK: 30,278,600 (increased by 0.17%)

Real Time Information (Median Pay) January 2026 (% Change from previous month in brackets)

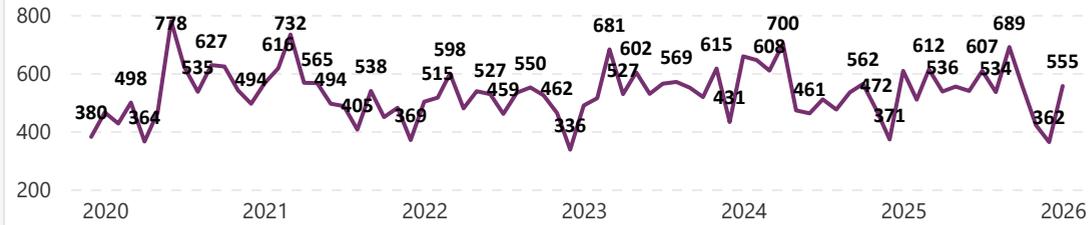
- West Sussex (South West): 2,490 (increased by 1.26%)
- West Sussex (North East): 2,780 (increased by 0.69%)
- South East: 2,728 (increased by 0.85%)
- UK: 2,588 (increased by 1.29%)

Job Postings (Lightcast)

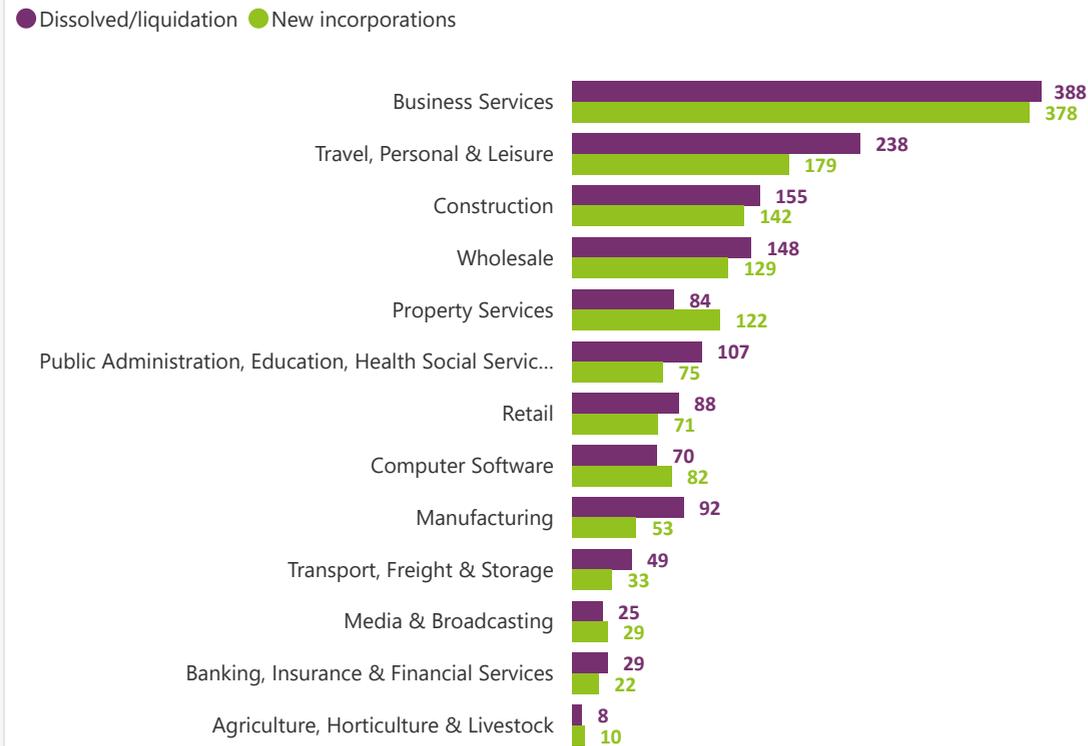
- In January 2026, there were 9,387 unique job postings in West Sussex, which is 12% lower than the same time last year.
- In terms of the top posted occupations over the last six months (August 2025 to January 2026), home health aide is the top posted followed closely by janitors/cleaners.

West Sussex: New Businesses

New business incorporations in West Sussex



Number of new business incorporations and businesses dissolved/in liquidation by industry in West Sussex (Nov'25 - Jan'26)



Number of new business incorporations and businesses dissolved/in liquidation by local authority (Nov'25-Jan'26)



Summary of Business Formation Trends in West Sussex

Overall trend: Over the past three months, a predominantly negative trend has been observed across all districts and boroughs, with the exception of Horsham, which has remained unchanged. Most sectors have seen a decline during this period, except for property services, computer software, media, broadcasting, agriculture, horticulture, and livestock. This same trend can also be observed in previous years for the equivalent time period.

Last 12 months:

- 5,766 new businesses incorporated.
- 5,969 businesses dissolved or liquidated.
- Net loss of 203 businesses.

Last 3 months:

- 1,342 new businesses incorporated.
- 1,588 businesses dissolved or liquidated.
- Net decrease of 140 businesses.

January 2026:

- 555 new businesses incorporated. (43% increase from December 2025)
- 524 businesses dissolved or liquidated. (14% decrease from December 2025)
- Net increase of 31 businesses.

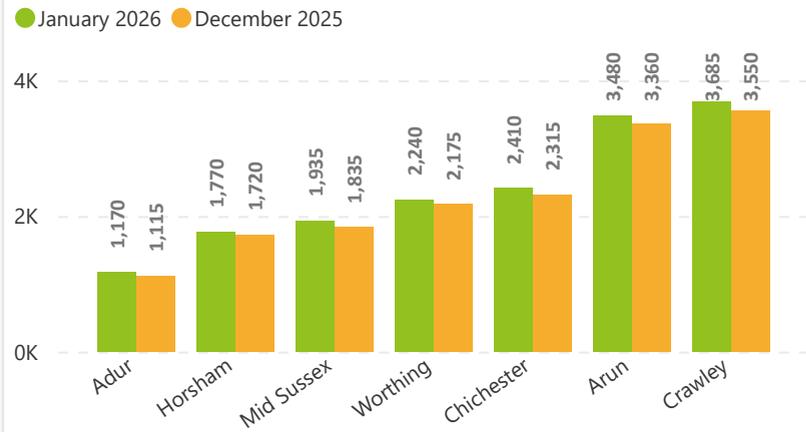
West Sussex: Claimant Count



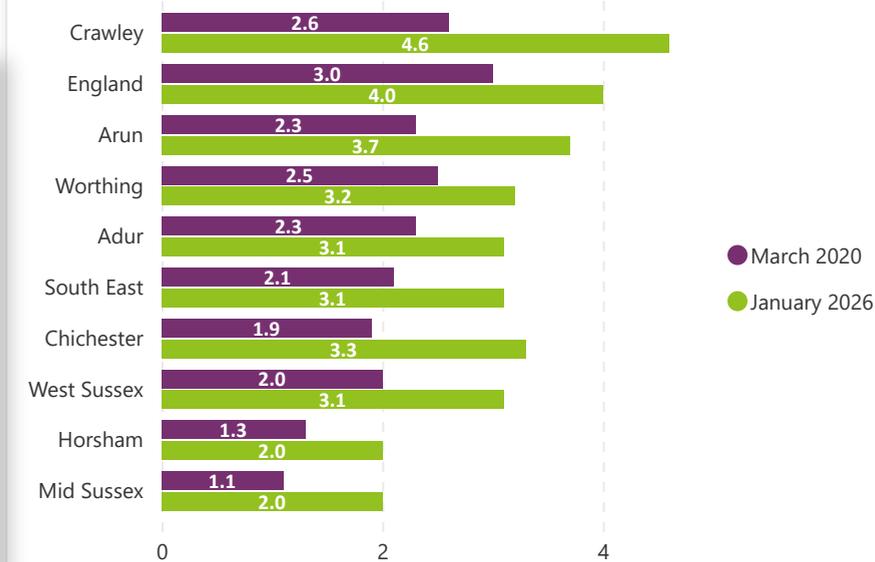
16,070
Dec'25

16,695
Jan'26

Total Number of Claimants by Local Authority



Claimant count rate change



Summary of Claimant Count Changes in West Sussex, January 2026

Overall:

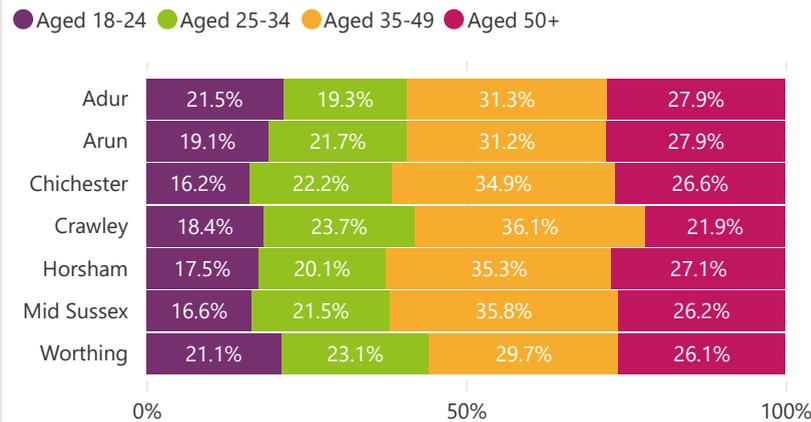
- Claimant count has increased over the last month by 4% (16,695) in West Sussex.
- Claimant count rate is 3.1% in West Sussex, remaining below national average of 4% and same as regional at 3.1%.

Breakdown by district (Dec'25 - Jan'26):

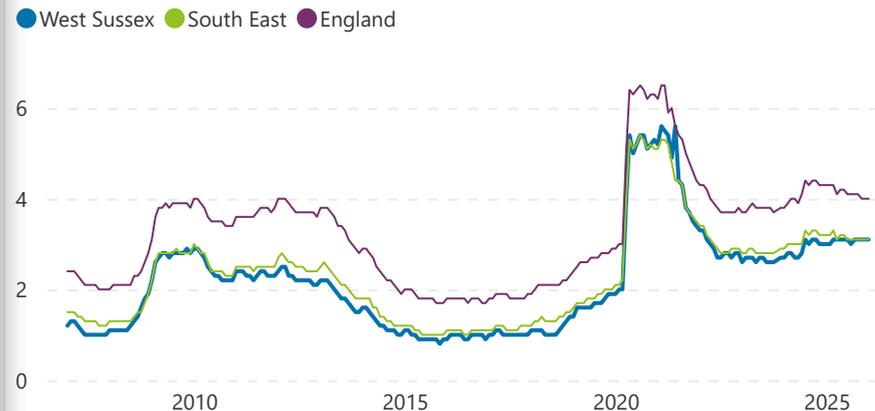
Increases:

- Adur (4.9%)
- Arun (3.6%)
- Chichester (4.1%)
- Crawley (3.8%)
- Horsham (2.9%)
- Mid Sussex (5.4%)
- Worthing (3%)

Distribution of claimants by age band



Claimant count rate



Specifics (Jan'26):

- Crawley recorded the highest claimant count (3,685).
- Crawley had the highest claimant count rate (4.6%), higher than regional and national average.
- Horsham and Mid Sussex had the lowest claimant count rate (2%).

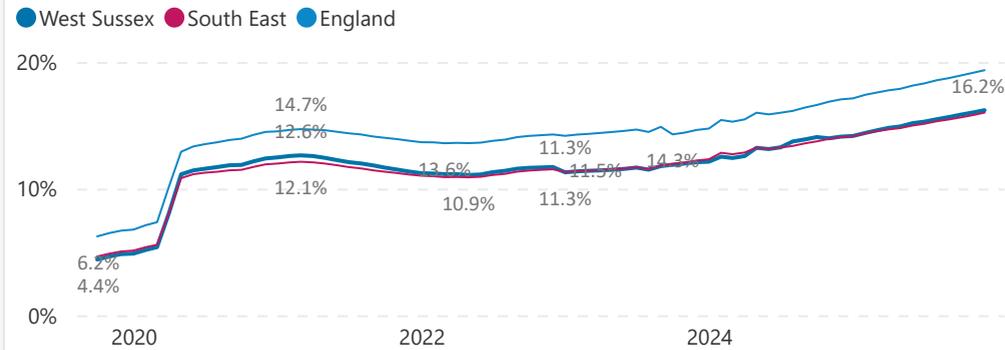
Source: [ONS, Claimant Count](#)

Released: 17 Feb 2026 (Jan 2026 Figures are provisional)

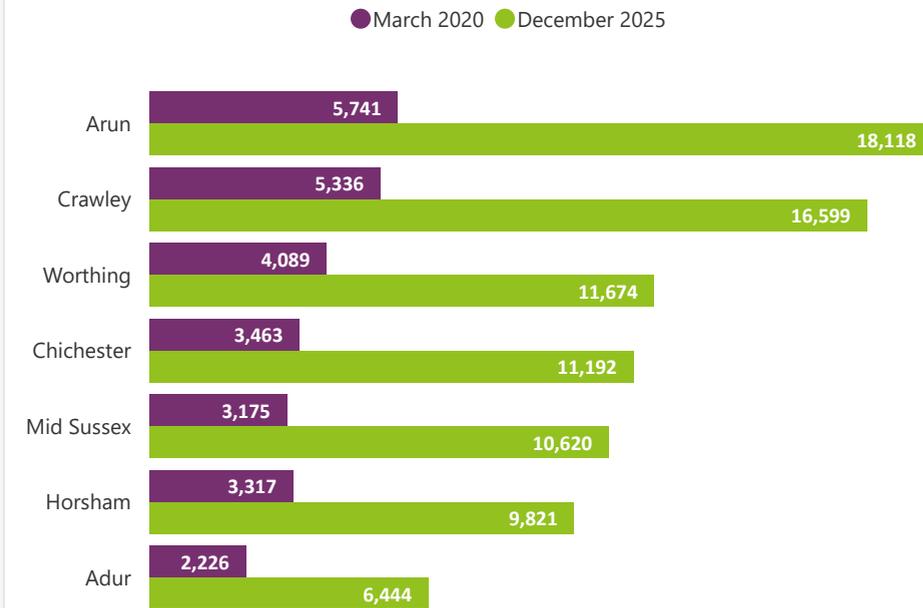
*The claimant count includes those people who are claiming either Job Seekers Allowance or Universal Credit principally because they are out of work or working very few hours and/or have a very low wage.

West Sussex: Universal Credit Claimants

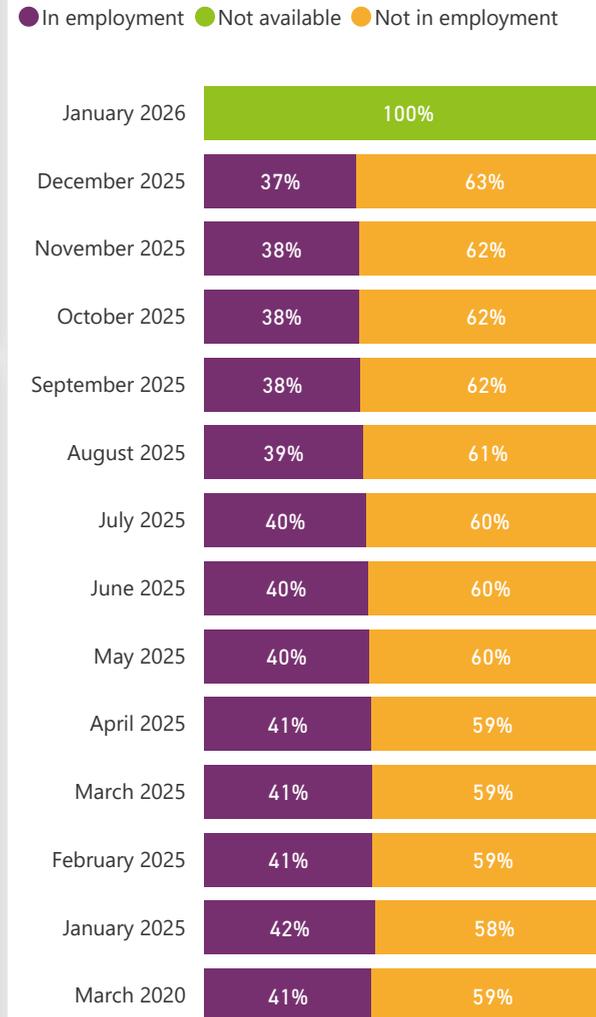
Percentage of people aged 16-64 years claiming Universal Credit



Universal Credit claimants in West Sussex change



Universal Credit claimants in West Sussex by employment status



Summary of Universal Credit Claimants in West Sussex, January 2026

Overall:

- In January 2026, numbers of Universal Credit claimants increased by almost 0.7% (85,104 total) over the last month in West Sussex.
- Significant rise since March 2020 (211% increase).
- Higher increase than national (180%) or regional (193%) average.
- The percentage (December 2025) of the 16-64 population claiming UC in West Sussex has risen to 16%, which is almost the same as the regional percentage and lower than the national percentage of 19.1% for the last month.

Employment status:

- 37% of claimants were in employment in December 2025. Higher than national (32%) or regional (35%) average.
- Mid Sussex and Horsham had the highest percentage of employed claimants (40%).

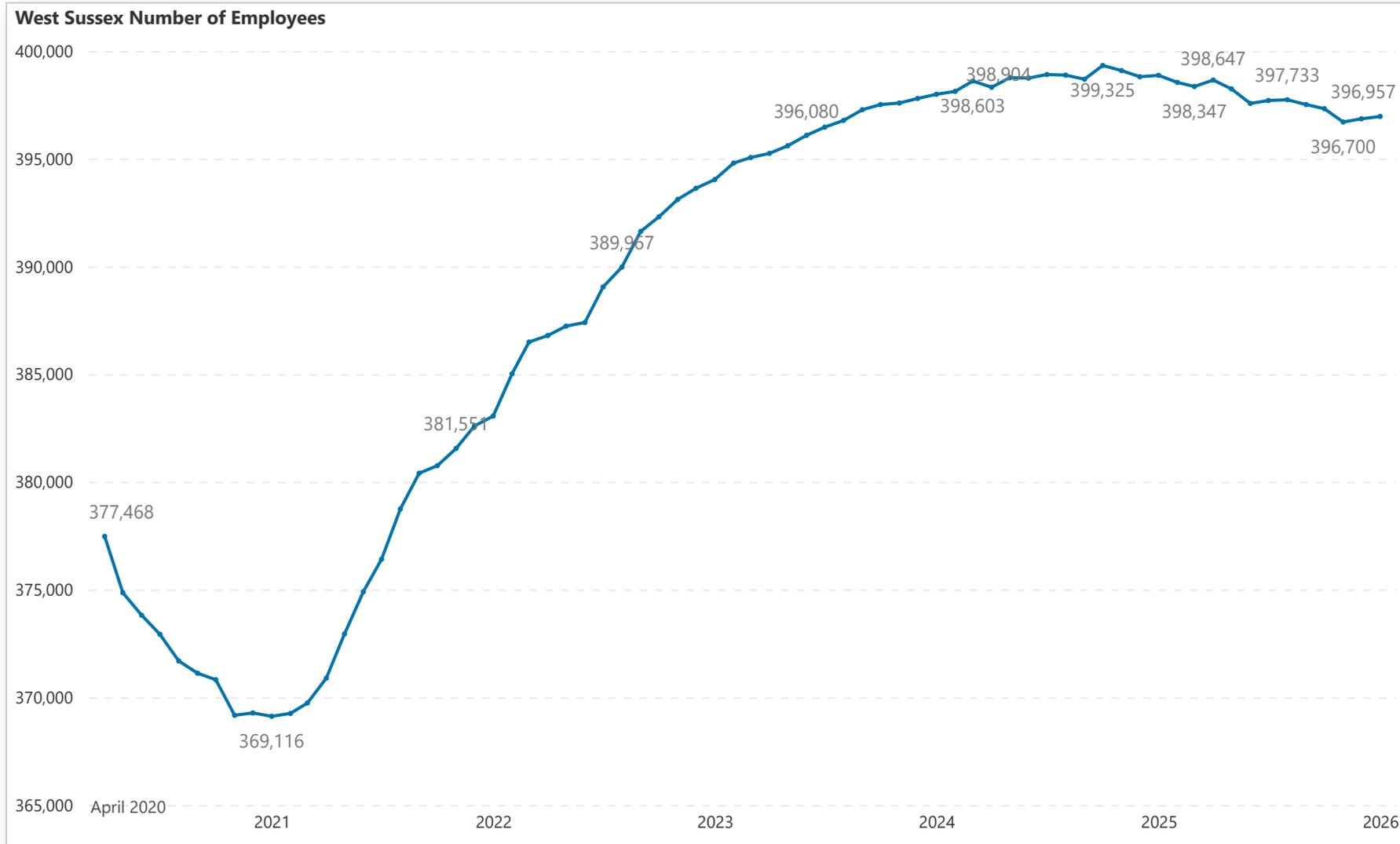
District-specific:

- Mid Sussex had the highest percentage increase in claimants (237%) since March 2020.
- At January 2026, Arun had the highest number of claimants at 18,118.

Note: Employment/not in employment breakdown for January 2026 is not available.

Update: Since 17th of June 2025 Changes were made to the format of the underlying Universal Credit Full Service data feed to provide improvements to the accuracy of Service Centre and Jobcentre site information.

Real Time Information Earnings and Employment



Summary of RTI employees in West Sussex for January 2026.

Overall:

- West Sussex: 396,957
- West Sussex (South West): 195,049
- West Sussex (North East): 201,908
- South East: 4,272,234
- UK: 30,278,600

One Month Change (December 2025 - January 2026):

- West Sussex increasing 0.03%
- West Sussex (South West) increasing 0.08%
- West Sussex (North East) decreasing 0.03%
- South East decreasing 0.07%
- UK increasing 0.17%

Three Month Change (October 2025 - January 2026):

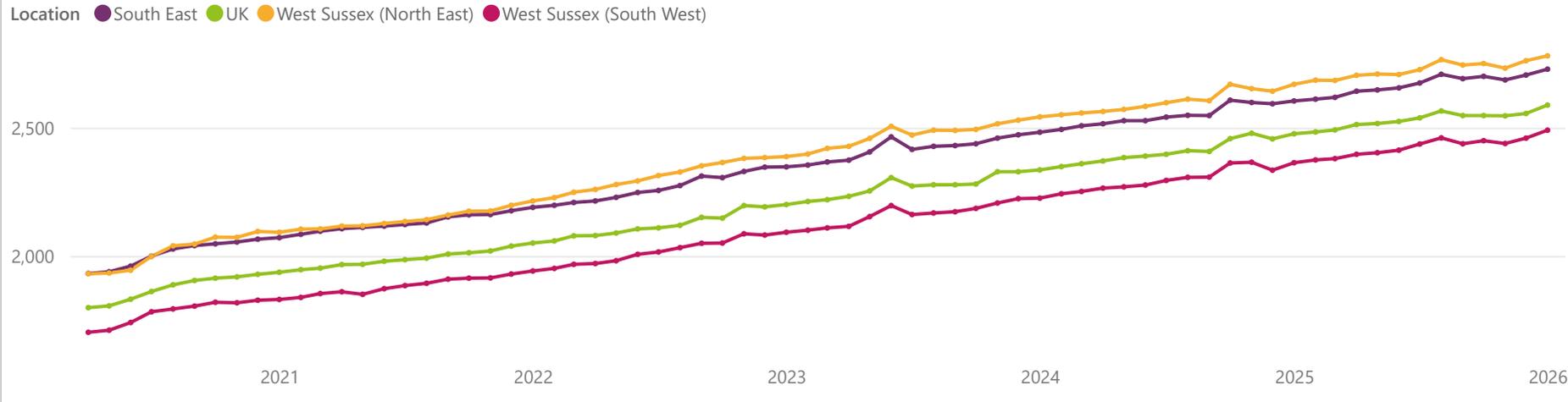
- West Sussex decreasing 0.09%
- West Sussex (South West) decreasing 0.06%
- West Sussex (North East) decreasing 0.12%
- South East decreasing 0.16%
- UK decreasing 0.08%



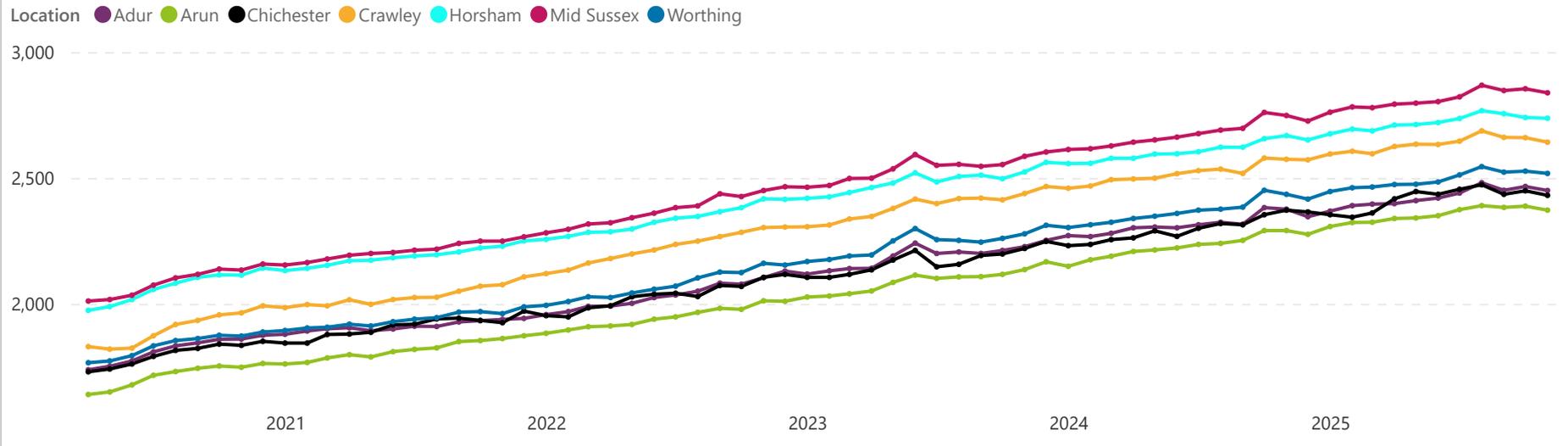
Real Time Information Earnings and Employment



Median Pay National and Regional Figures



Median Pay in West Sussex



Summary of RTI median pay in West Sussex for January 2026.

Overall:

- West Sussex (South West): 2,490
- West Sussex (North East): 2,780
- South East: 2,728
- UK: 2,588

One Month Change (December 2025 - January 2026):

- West Sussex (South West) increasing 1.26%
- West Sussex (North East) increasing 0.69%
- South East increasing 0.85%
- UK increasing 1.29%

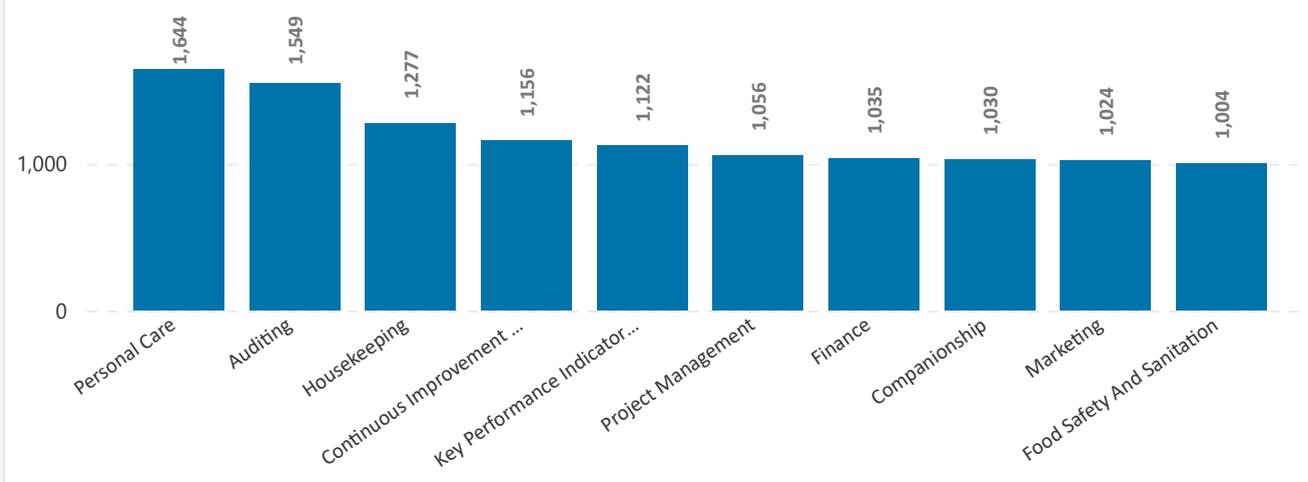
Three Month Change (October 2025 - January 2026):

- West Sussex (South West) increasing 1.67%
- West Sussex (North East) increasing 1.09%
- South East increasing 1.04%
- UK increasing 1.61%

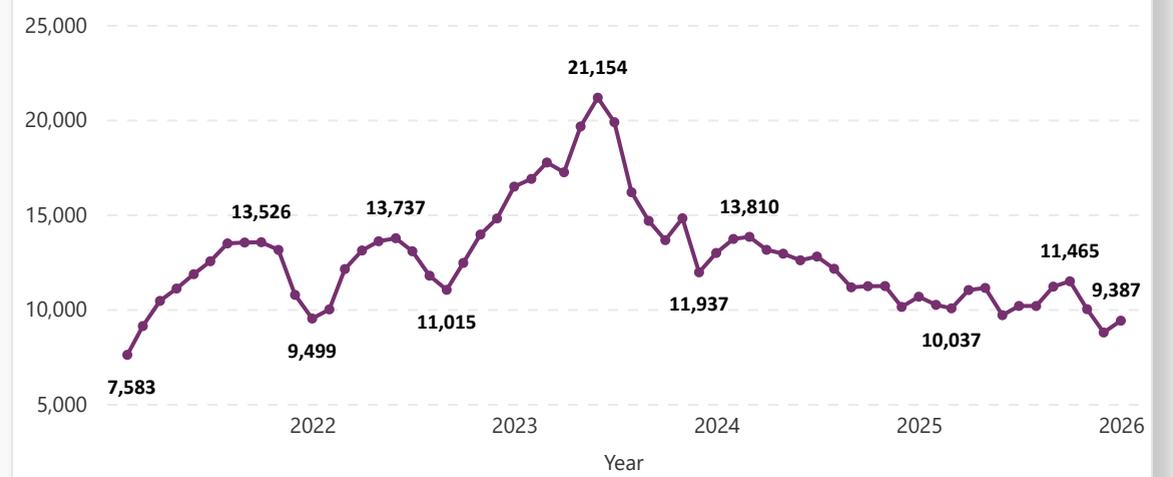


Job Postings

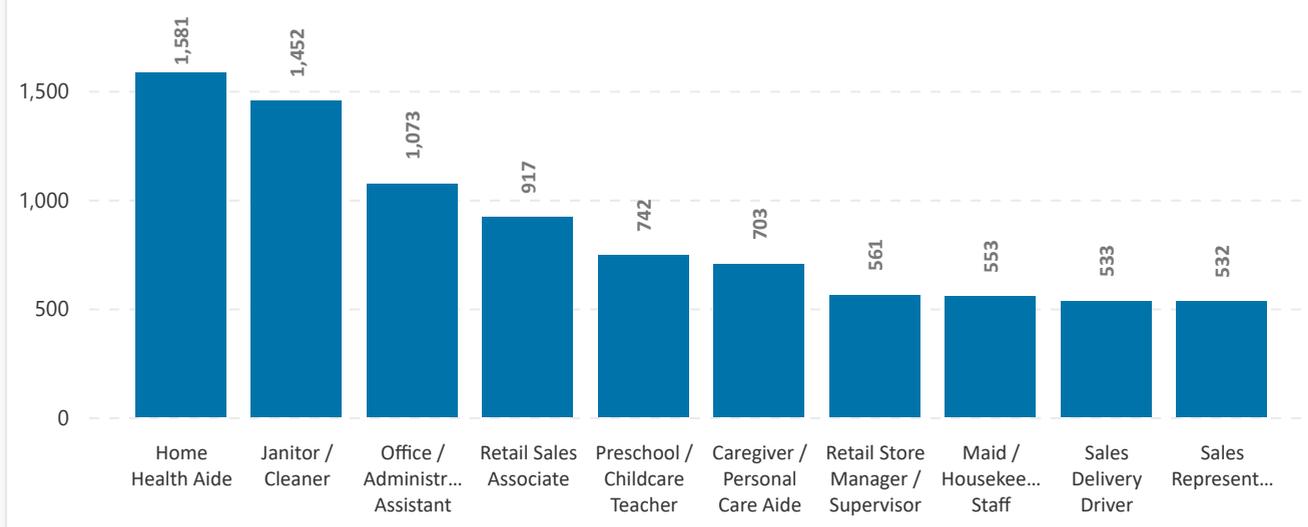
Specialised Job Postings August 2025 - January 2026



Unique Postings Over Time



Job Postings by Occupation August 2025 - January 2026



Summary of the job postings in West Sussex by Lightcast.

WSCC has access to Lightcast from which the numbers of job postings by occupation type, along with other information including skills requirements and job titles is available. In January 2026 there were 9,387 unique job postings in West Sussex, a significant reduction from the peak in June 2023 of 21,154 but still higher than the general levels seen pre-Covid. In terms of the top posted occupations over the last six months (August 2025 to January 2026), Home Health Aide is the most frequently posted role, making up the highest number of occupations followed by Janitor/Cleaner. The remaining occupations appear to be evenly distributed.

Job Vacancies

- Estimated vacancies in November to January 2026 was 726,000.
- Increasing 2,000 or 0.3% from August to October 2025.
- Total estimated vacancies were down by 73,000 (9.2%) in November 2025 to January 2026 from levels in the previous year.
- The number of unemployed people per vacancy was 2.6 in October 2025 to December 2025, up from 2.5 in the previous quarter and 1.9 in the previous year.

Gross Domestic Product

- Monthly GDP is estimated to have grown by 0.1% in December 2025.

Labour Market

- Early estimates for January 2026 indicate that the number of payrolled employees was 30.3 million which is a fall of 0.4% or 134,000 from the previous year.
- The largest increase was in the health and social work sector, with a rise of 39,000. The largest decrease was in the wholesale and retail sector, with a fall of 65,000 employees.
- UK payrolled employee growth for December 2025 compared with November 2025 has been revised from a decrease of 43,000 reported in the last bulletin to an decrease of 6,000.
- Early estimates for January 2026 indicate that median monthly pay increased by 4.6% compared with January 2025.
- Annual growth in median pay in January 2026 was highest in the wholesale and retail sector, with an increase of 6.2%. Annual growth was lowest in the finance and insurance sector, with a increase of 2.1%.

Business Trading

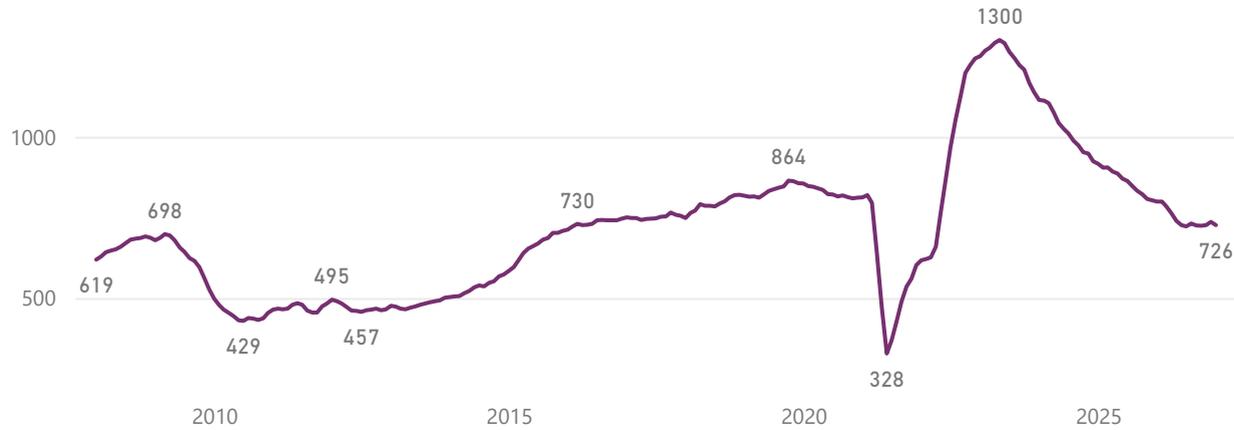
- 16% of trading businesses reported their turnover had increased in January 2026 compared with December 2025.
- 31% of trading businesses reported that their turnover had decreased in January 2026 compared with the previous month
- 13% of trading businesses reported that they expect their turnover to decrease in March 2026.
- 21% of trading businesses reported that they expect their turnover to increase in March 2026.
- In early February 2025, economic uncertainty was the most commonly reported challenge affecting turnover for trading businesses at 30%.
- 28% of trading businesses reported an increase in the prices of goods and services bought in January 2026 when compared to the previous month.
- 12% of trading businesses reported an increase in the prices of goods and services they sell in January 2026.
- 17% of trading businesses expect the prices of goods or services they sell to increase in March 2026.
- 16% of trading businesses with 10 or more employees reported that they were experiencing worker shortages in early February 2026

Business Closures

- Company insolvencies in England and Wales stood at 1,744 in January 2026, which was 4% higher than in December 2025 and 14% lower than in the same month of the previous year.
- Company insolvencies consisted of 256 compulsory liquidations, 1,323 creditors' voluntary liquidations (CVLs), 151 administrations and 13 company voluntary arrangements (CVAs).
- There were 10,843 individual insolvencies in England and Wales.
- Individual insolvencies consisted of 780 bankruptcies (lower than usual due to a temporary backlog of debtor bankruptcies), 3,847 debt relief orders (DROs) and 6,216 individual voluntary arrangements (IVAs).
- The number of DROs in January 2026 were lower than December 2025 but similar to the historical high levels seen over the past two years.
- Bankruptcy were higher than in December 2025, although numbers were affected by the partial clearing of a backlog following the Insolvency Service moving to a new case management system.

Job Vacancies (UK)

Number of vacancies (Thousands) in the UK, seasonally adjusted, Jul to Sep 2005 to Jul to Sep 2024

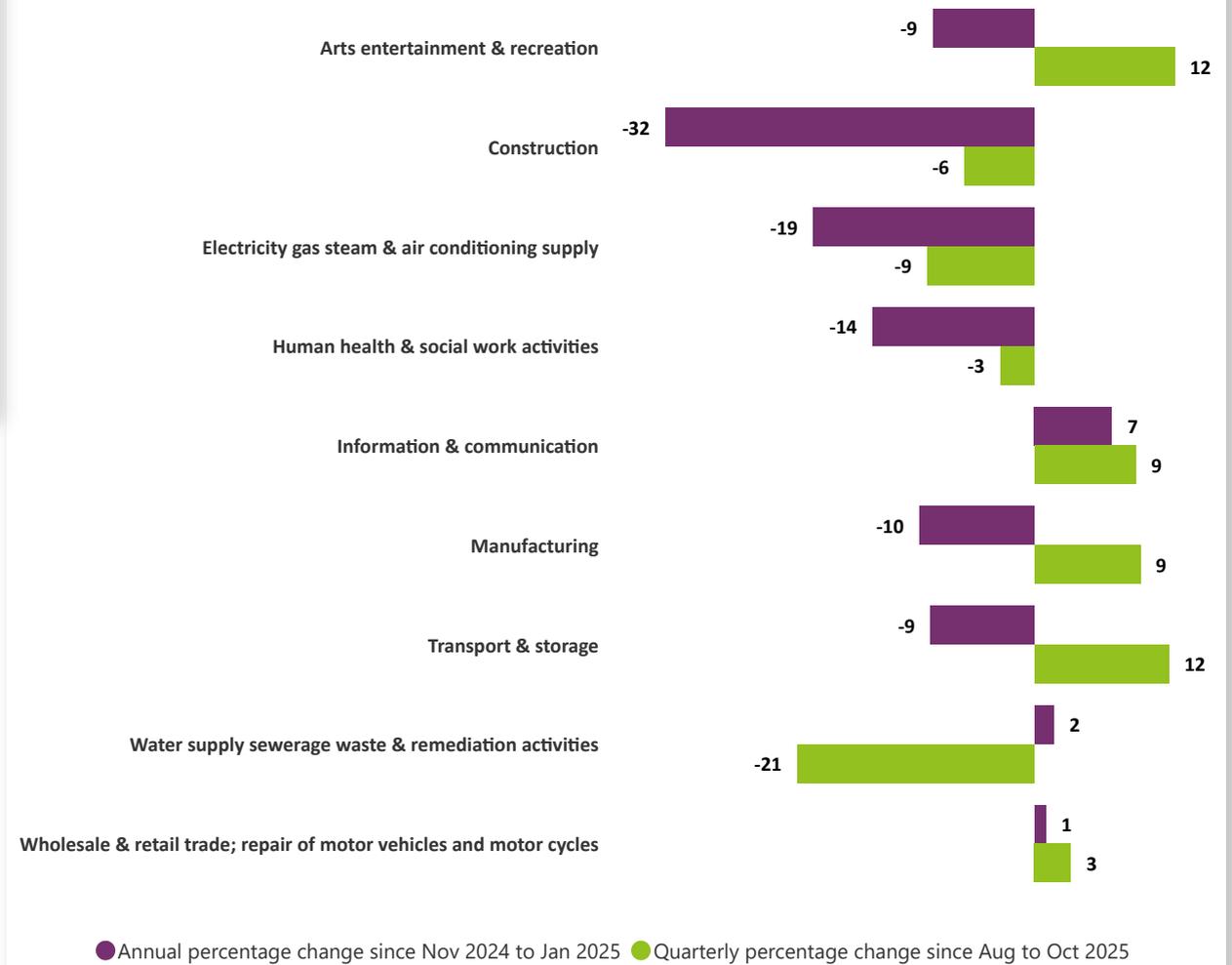


Summary of job vacancies (UK).

Overall:

- Estimated vacancies in November to January 2026 was 726,000.
- Increasing 2,000 or 0.3% from August to October 2025.
- Total estimated vacancies were down by 73,000 (9.2%) in November 2025 to January 2026 from levels in the previous year.
- The number of unemployed people per vacancy was 2.6 in October 2025 to December 2025, up from 2.5 in the previous quarter and 1.9 in the previous year.

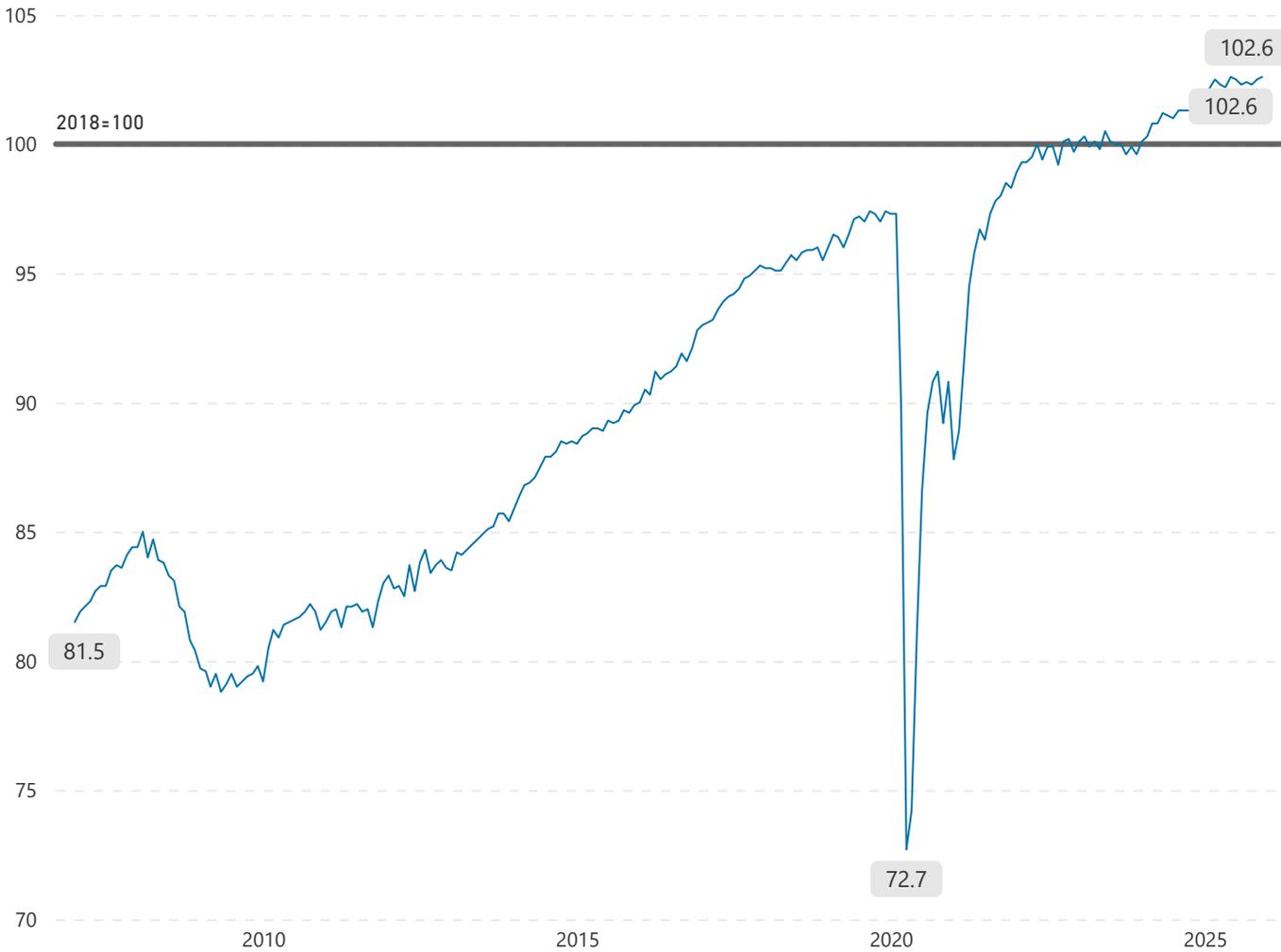
% Change in Number of Vacancies in UK by Sectors



Gross Domestic Product (GDP)



Monthly index, UK



Summary of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (UK).

Overall:

- Monthly GDP is estimated to have grown by 0.1% in December 2025.

Output growth:

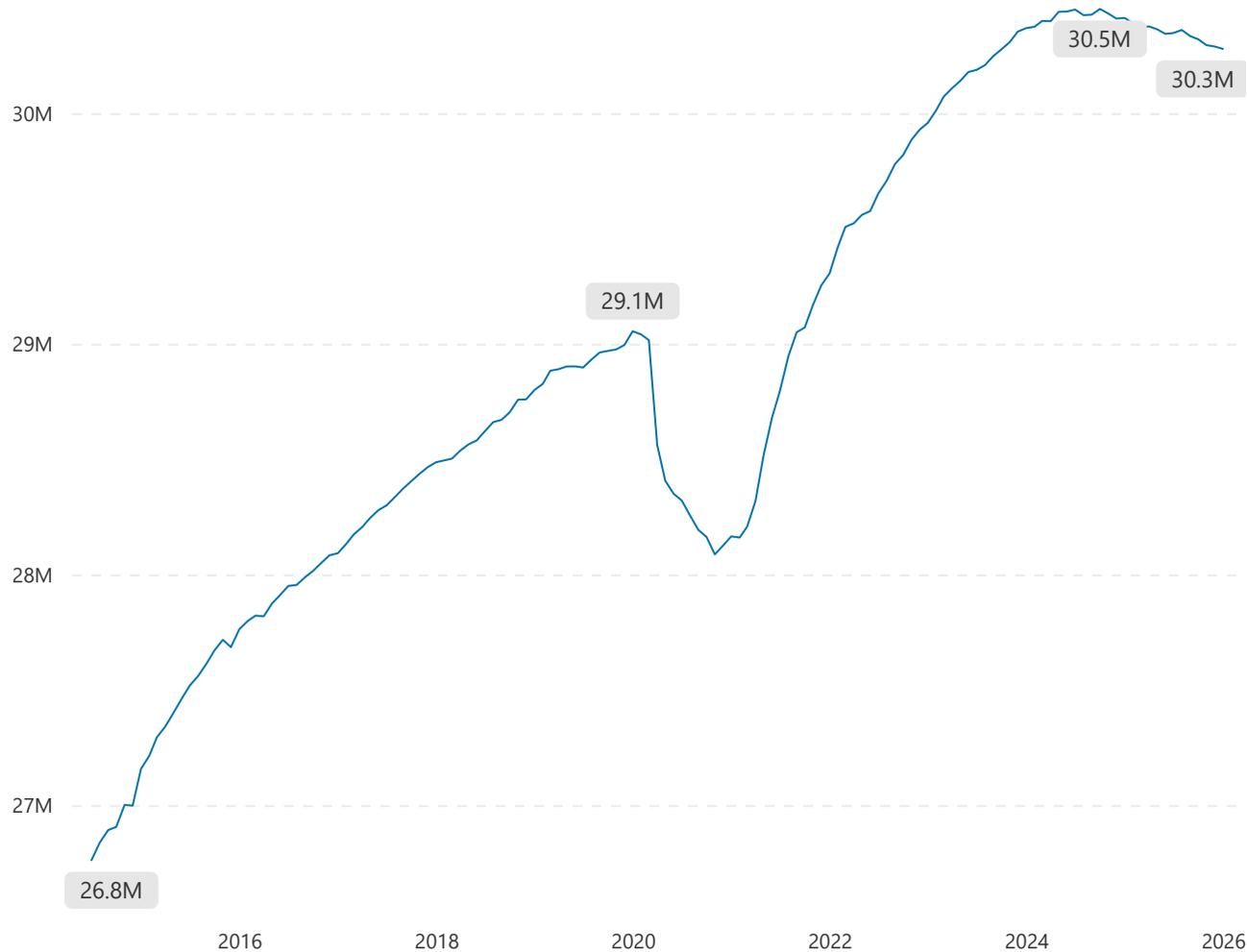
- Services showed no growth in the three months to December 2025
- Production grew by 1.2% in the three months to December 2025
- Construction fell by 2.1% in the three months to December 2025

Source: [ONS, GDP Monthly Estimate](#)
Released: 12 February 2026



Labour Market

Payrolled employees, seasonally adjusted, UK



Summary of Labour Market (UK).

Overall:

- Early estimates for January 2026 indicate that the number of payrolled employees was 30.3 million which is a fall of 0.4% or 134,000 from the previous year.
- The largest increase was in the health and social work sector, with a rise of 39,000. The largest decrease was in the wholesale and retail sector, with a fall of 65,000 employees.
- UK payrolled employee growth for December 2025 compared with November 2025 has been revised from a decrease of 43,000 reported in the last bulletin to an decrease of 6,000.
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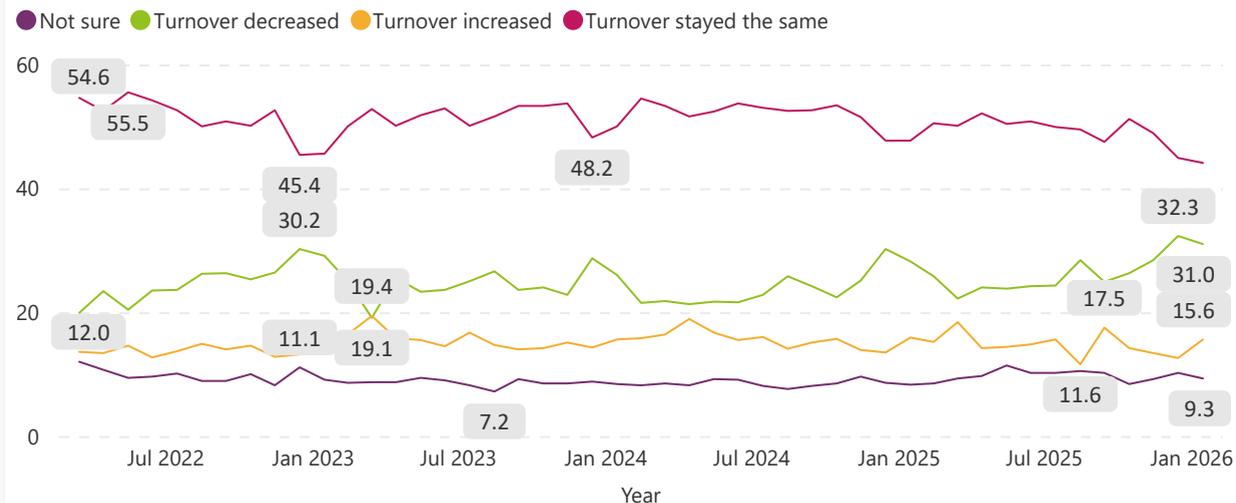
Summary of business insights and impact on the UK economy.

This data is the final results from Wave 150 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) which was live 2 to 15 February 2026.

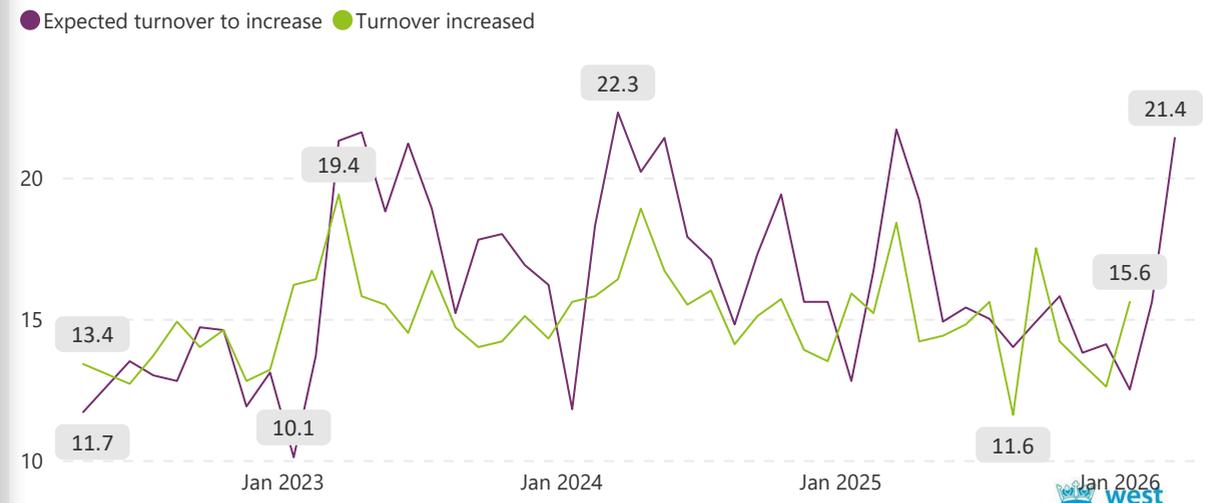
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- 13% of trading businesses reported that they expect their turnover to decrease in March 2026.
- 21% of trading businesses reported that they expect their turnover to increase in March 2026.
- In early February 2025, economic uncertainty was the most commonly reported challenge affecting turnover for trading businesses at 30%.
- 28% of trading businesses reported an increase in the prices of goods and services bought in January 2026 when compared to the previous month.
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- 16% of trading businesses with 10 or more employees reported that they were experiencing worker shortages in early February 2026

Turnover Comparison of Previous Month

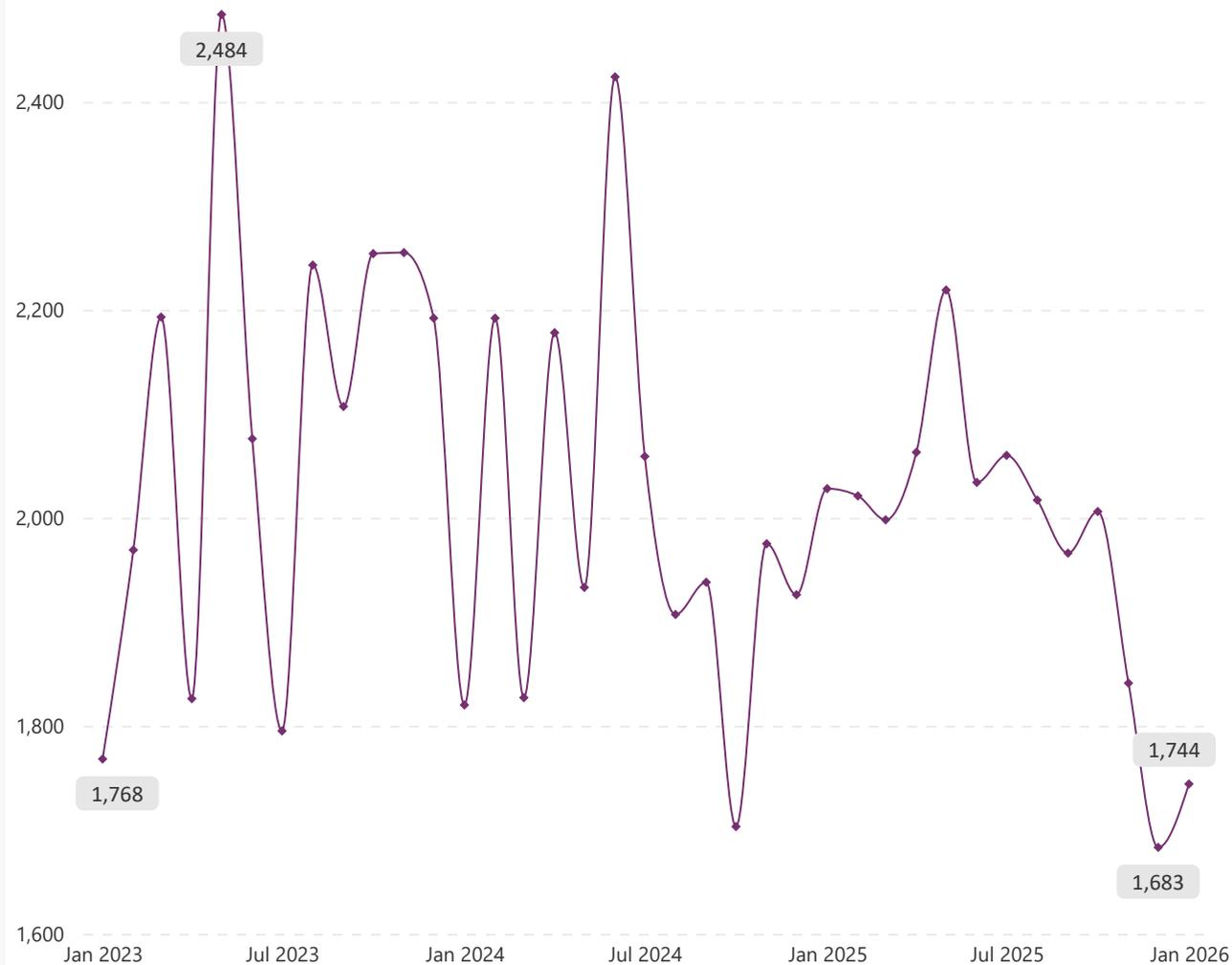


Expected Turnover Figures



Business Closures (Company)

Company insolvencies in England & Wales



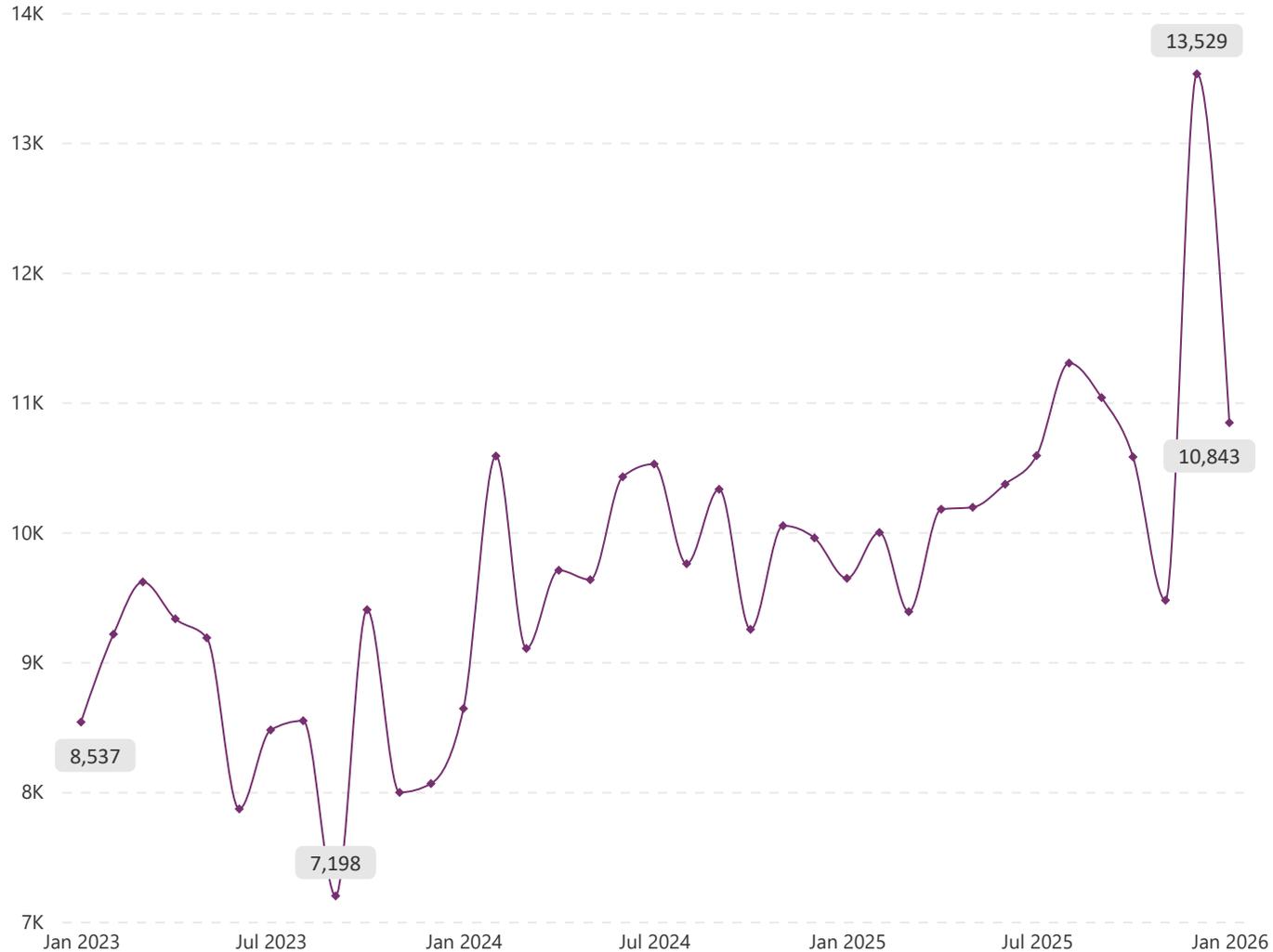
Summary of business closures (company) on the UK economy.

Overall:

- Company insolvencies in England and Wales stood at 1,744 in January 2026, which was 4% higher than in December 2025 and 14% lower than in the same month of the previous year.
- Company insolvencies consisted of 256 compulsory liquidations, 1,323 creditors' voluntary liquidations (CVLs), 151 administrations and 13 company voluntary arrangements (CVAs).

Business Closures (Individual)

Individual insolvencies in England & Wales



Summary of business closures (individual) on the UK economy.

Overall:

- There were 10,843 individual insolvencies in England and Wales.
- Individual insolvencies consisted of 780 bankruptcies (lower than usual due to a temporary backlog of debtor bankruptcies), 3,847 debt relief orders (DROs) and 6,216 individual voluntary arrangements (IVAs).
- The number of DROs in January 2026 were lower than December 2025 but similar to the historical high levels seen over the past two years.
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