

West Sussex Economy Snapshot

February 2024 (Issue 43)

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 January 2024, 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 2.3%, whereas the national figure increased by 2%. Crawley saw a decrease in the number of claimants over the last month; Arun saw an increase of 5.9%, the highest in West Sussex. Arun has the highest number of claimants and the highest claimant count rate is in Crawley, at 3.8%, which is higher than the regional and national rates. While Adur has the lowest number of claimants in the county, Mid Sussex has the lowest claimant count rate in West Sussex at 1.8%.

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 December 2023, West Sussex's employees increased by 0.20%, the regional figure increase by 0.18% and the national figure increased by 0.16%. 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 year - February 2023 – January 2024 continue to be at levels higher than those seen pre-pandemic. In the last three months November 2023 – January 2024, there were 263 more new business incorporations (1,677) than business that dissolved/in liquidation (1,414). In January 2024, there were more businesses openings (657) than closures (529). Crawley has the highest number of new business incorporations, and Mid Sussex has the highest 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 December 2023. Service sector fell in December 2023 by 0.1%. Consumer-facing services fell by 0.7% in the three months to December 2023, food and beverage service activities industry was the major contributor to this fall. Production grew by 0.6% in December 2023 but fell by 1.0% in the three months to December 2023. Construction is estimated to have decreased by 0.5% in December 2023.

In the UK, the total number of [online job adverts](#) decreased by 3% January 2024 when compared with the previous week; this number was 15% below the level in the equivalent period of 2023 (Adzuna).

The number of payrolled employees has decreased annually where human health and social activities and accommodation and food service activities fell by 41,000 and 37,000 respectively. The number of employees remain above pre-pandemic levels.

From the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICs), 94% of businesses reported they were trading. 7% of businesses with 10 or more employees reported global supply chain disruption in December 2023. 62% of trading businesses reported that they were able to get the goods they needed from within the UK in December 2023. 21% of businesses with 10 or more employees reported that they were either importing less compared with the same calendar month a year ago, or were unable to import. 19% of businesses with 10 or more employees reported they were experiencing worker shortages.

Data for England and Wales on company insolvencies shows that there were 1,769 in January 2024, 5% higher than in the same month in the previous year.

Inside this report

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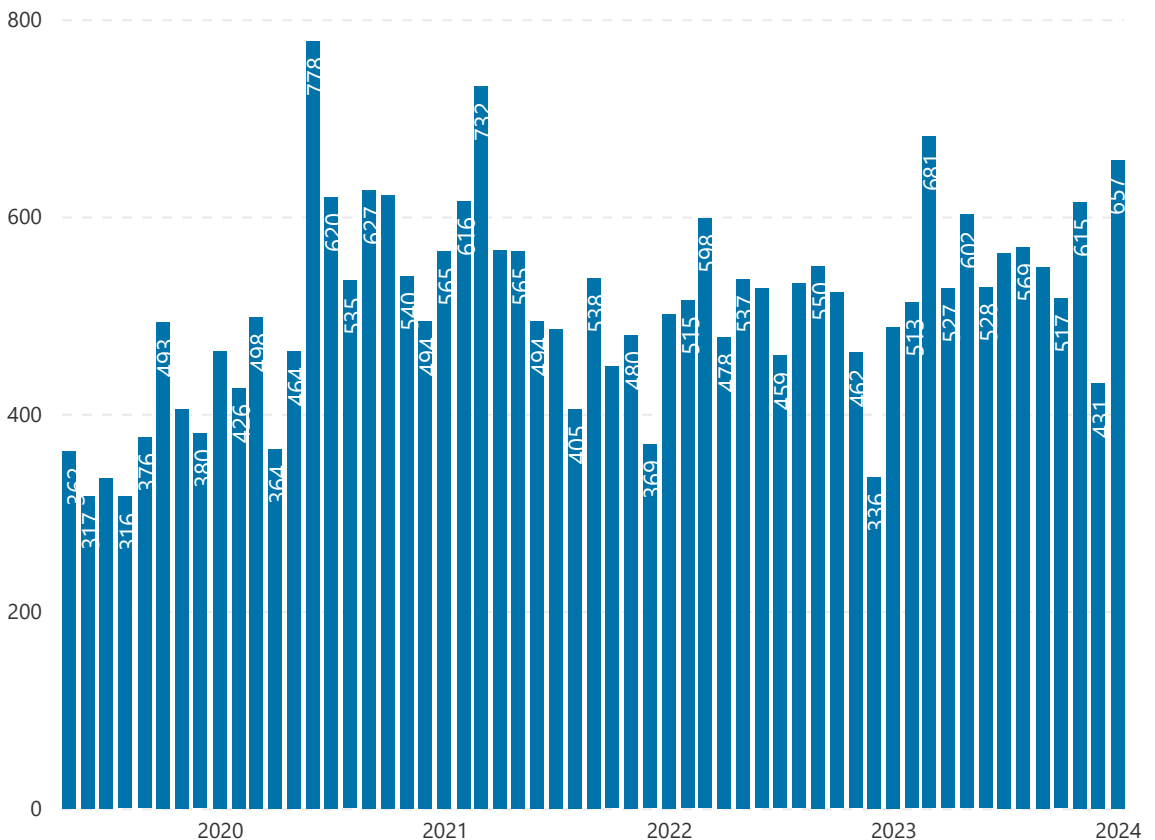
New Businesses, West Sussex

Source: FAME

Released: February 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, February 2023- January 2024, there were around 6,473 new business incorporations, 1020 higher than the 5,453 businesses that were dissolved, or which had gone into liquidation. In the last 3 months – November 2023 – January 2024 there were 263 more new business incorporations (1,677) than business that dissolved/in liquidation (1,414). In January 2024, there were more new businesses (657) than closures (529).

New business incorporations in West Sussex



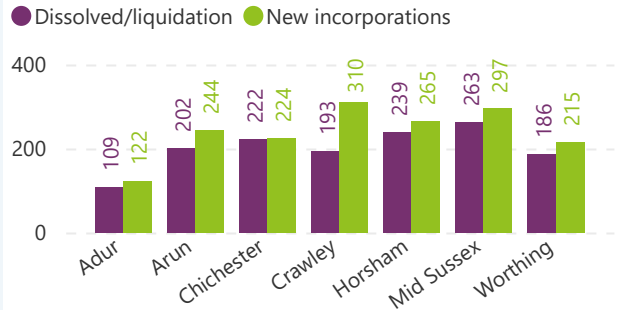
Businesses, West Sussex

Source: FAME

Released: February 2024

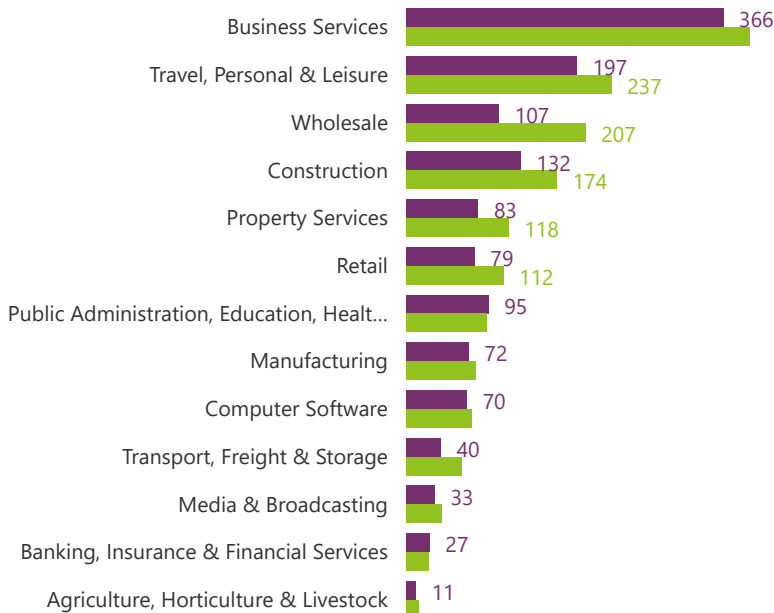
Over the last three-month period (November 2023–January 2024), Crawley had the highest number of new business incorporations and Mid Sussex has highest number of businesses that have dissolved or are in liquidation. Within West Sussex, all local authorities had more new businesses than businesses closed.

Number of new business incorporations and businesses dissolved/in liquidation by local authority (Nov'23-Jan'24)



Number of new business incorporations and businesses dissolved/in liquidation by industry (Nov'23 - Jan'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 banking, insurance & financial services, Public administration 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 February 2024 (January 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.

There were 14,430 claimants aged 16+ in West Sussex in January 2024, an increase of 2.5% from the previous month, compared with a national (England) increase of 2% and a regional increase of 2.3%.

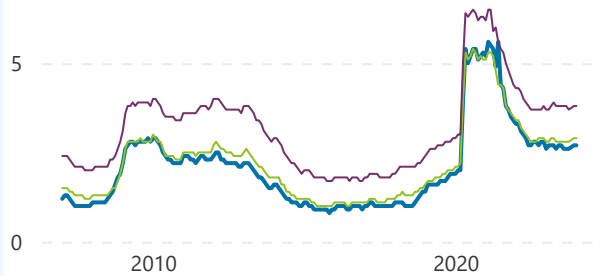
Crawley saw a decrease (-1%) and Mid Sussex stayed the same in the number of claimants over the last month, December - January 2024. Arun had the highest increase of 5.9%, the highest in West Sussex.

Arun has the highest number of claimants at 3065 but the highest claimant count rate is in Crawley at 3.8%, same as national (3.8%) and higher than regional (2.9%). Mid Sussex has the lowest claimant count rate at 1.8%.

Within West Sussex, over the last month, there was an increase of 2.2% in claimants amongst males aged 18-24 years; females increase by 1.2%.

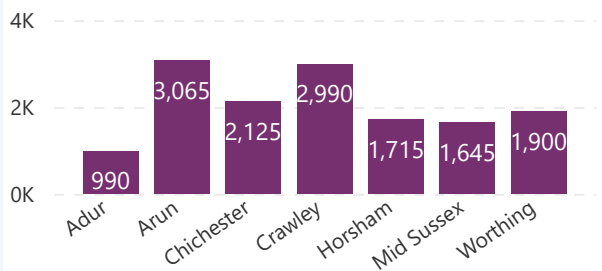
Claimant count rate

● West Sussex ● South East ● England



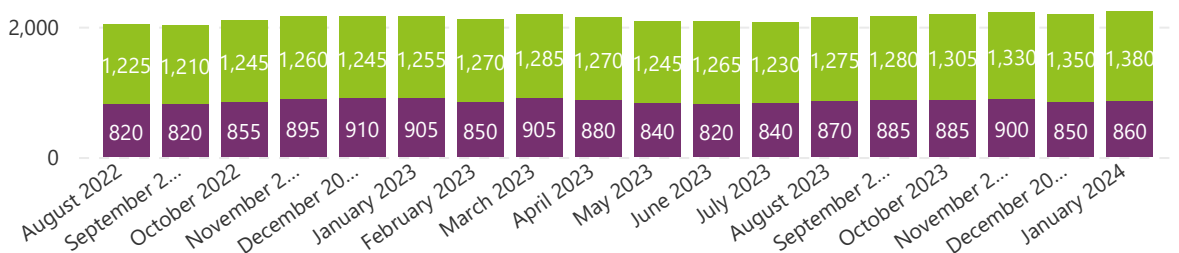
Number of claimants

● January



Claimant count by gender, 18-24 age group

● Female ● Male



Claimant Count, West Sussex

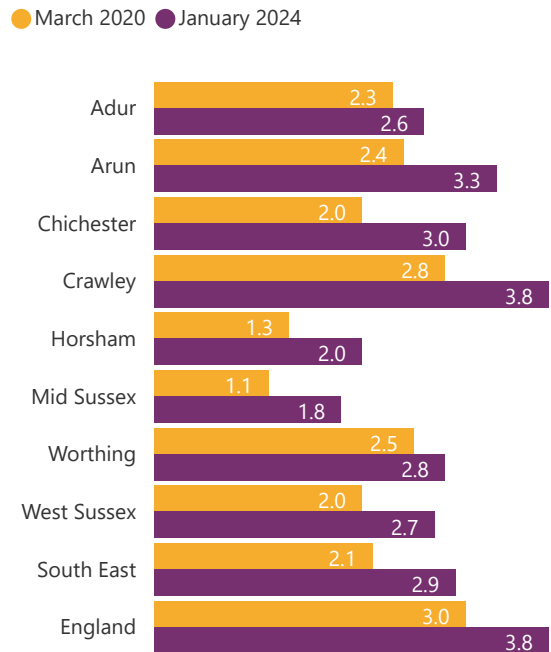
Source: [ONS, Claimant Count](#)

Released: 12 February 2024 (January 2024 figures are provisional)

Age profile of claimants: Worthing (19.5%) 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.

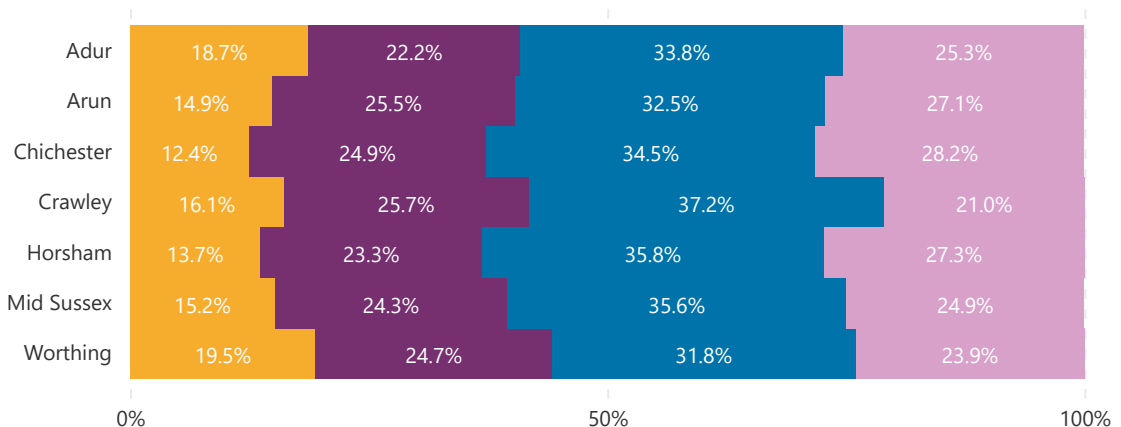
There are 2,240 claimants aged 18-24 in West Sussex, which is an increase of 2.1% from the previous month. National (England) and regional figures increased by 1.2% and 2.4%, for this age category. Crawley has the highest number of claimants in this age group at 480. In West Sussex, Arun, Worthing and Chichester saw an increase in claimants aged 18-24 years. Arun saw the highest percentage increase at 8.3%, in the claimants aged 18-24 compared to the last month.

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

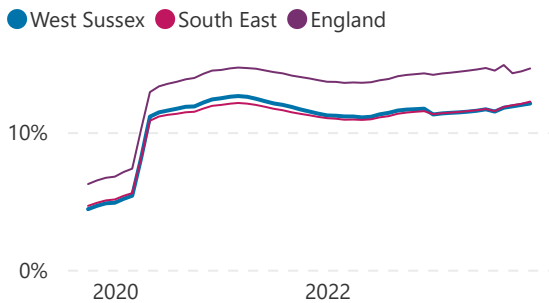
Source: [Department for Work and Pensions](#) Released: 13 February 2024 (January 2024 figures are provisional)

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 January 2024, there were 64,242 Universal Credit claimants in West Sussex, which is a 1.1% increase from previous month. The numbers of people claiming Universal Credit in West Sussex has increased 135% since March 2020 - from 27,355 to 64,242 in January 2024, a higher percentage increase than nationally (115%) and regionally (127%).

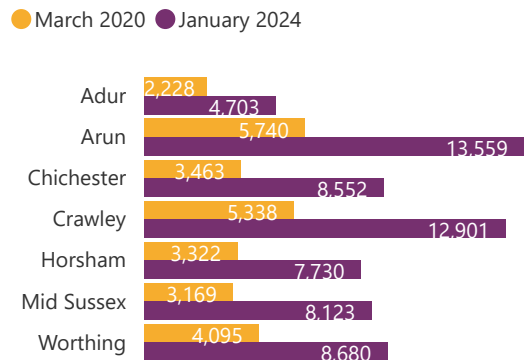
In West Sussex, of those people claiming Universal Credit in December 2023, 44% were in employment. This has increased from 41% seen in March 2020 and is a higher proportion of claimants in employment than in the South East at 41% (December 2023) and nationally in England 39% (December 2023). In December 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 (156%) over the period from March 2020 (at the start of the pandemic) to January 2024, Arun has the highest number of Universal Credit claimants at over 13,559 and since March 2020 there has been a significant rise in the number of residents claiming Universal Credit across the county. Please note January 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

Legend: ● In employment (green), ● N/A (purple), ● Not in employment (orange)



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

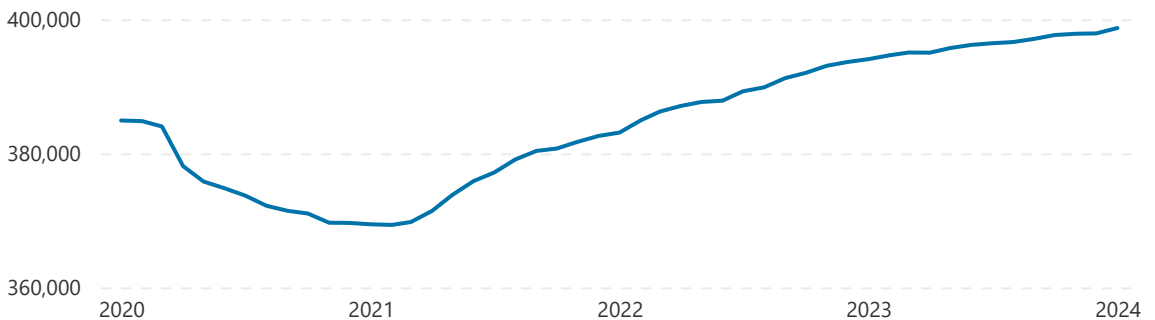
Source: ONS - [Earnings and employment from Pay As You Earn Real Time Information, seasonally adjusted](#)

Released: 13 February 2024

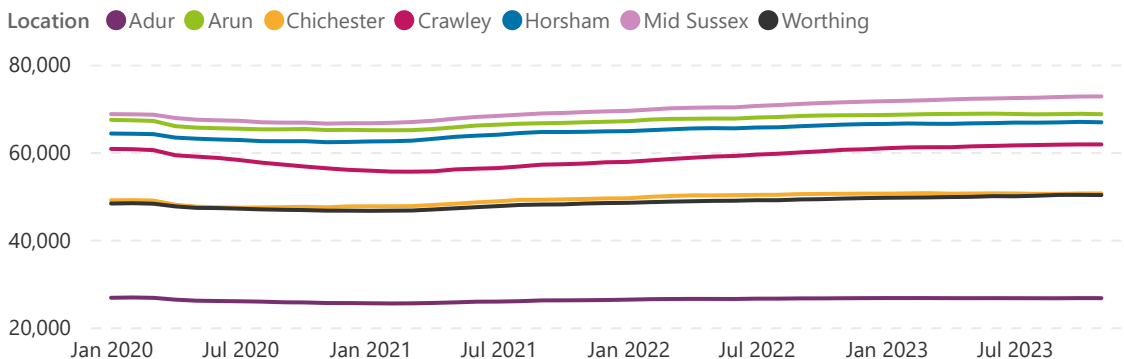
These figures are from a set of 'experimental statistics' from ONS from the earnings and employment statistics Pay as You Earn (PAYE) Real Time Information (RTI) seasonally adjusted data set. The latest data is up to the month of January 2024. West Sussex's employees increased by 0.20% from December 2023. The South East's employees increased by 0.18% and the UKs increased by 0.16%. 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

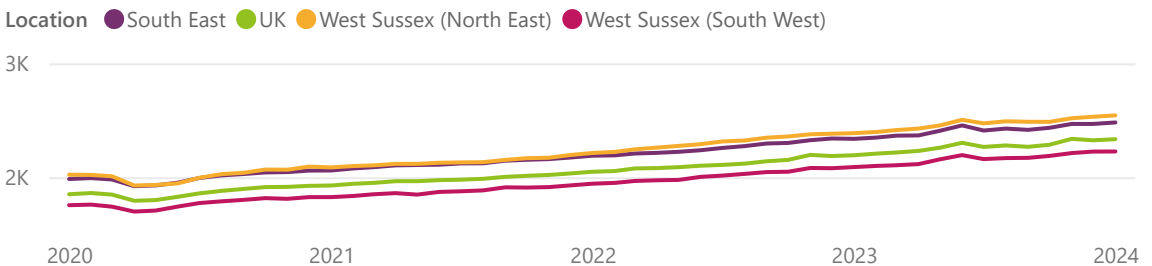
Source: ONS - [Earnings and employment from Pay As You Earn Real Time Information, seasonally adjusted](#)

Released: 13 February 2024

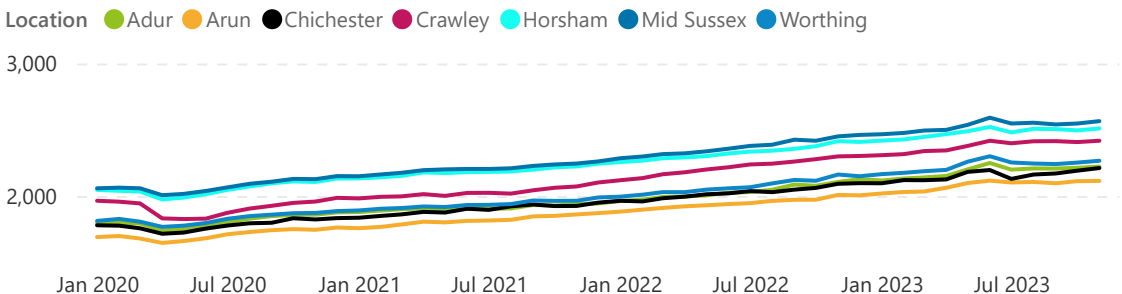
As in the previous page, these figures are based on the ONS statistics from the earnings and employment Pay As You Earn (Seasonally Adjusted) RTI data set and are up to the month of January 2024. The local authority with the largest percentage increase of pay from October 2023 was Chichester with 0.91% compared to an increase of 0.09% in Arun which saw the lowest increase. West Sussex South West saw an increase by 0.04% and West Sussex North East had an increase in median monthly pay of 0.47% from December 2023. The South East's monthly median pay increased by 0.53% and the UK's increased by 0.43% since December 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



Median Pay in West Sussex



Job Vacancies, UK

Source: [ONS](#)

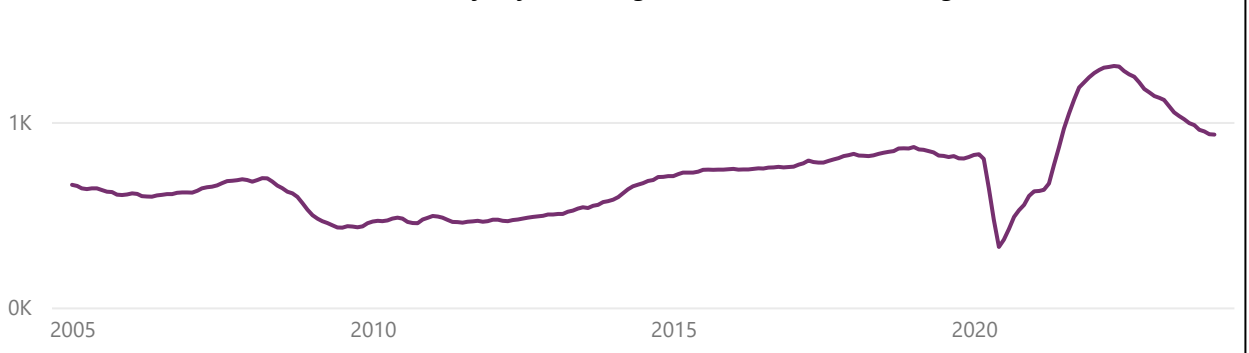
Released: 13 February 2024

The number of vacancies in the UK, in November 2023 to January 2024 was 932,000, a decrease of 26,000, down by 2.7% since August to October 2023 with vacancies falling in 12 of the 18 industry sectors. In November 2023 to January 2024, total estimated vacancies were down by 209,000 from the level of a year ago, although they remained from 131,000 above their pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic January to March 2020 levels.

The industry sectors showing the largest annual decrease in the number of vacancies were human health and social activities, and accommodation and food service activities, which fell by 41,000 and 37,000 respectively.

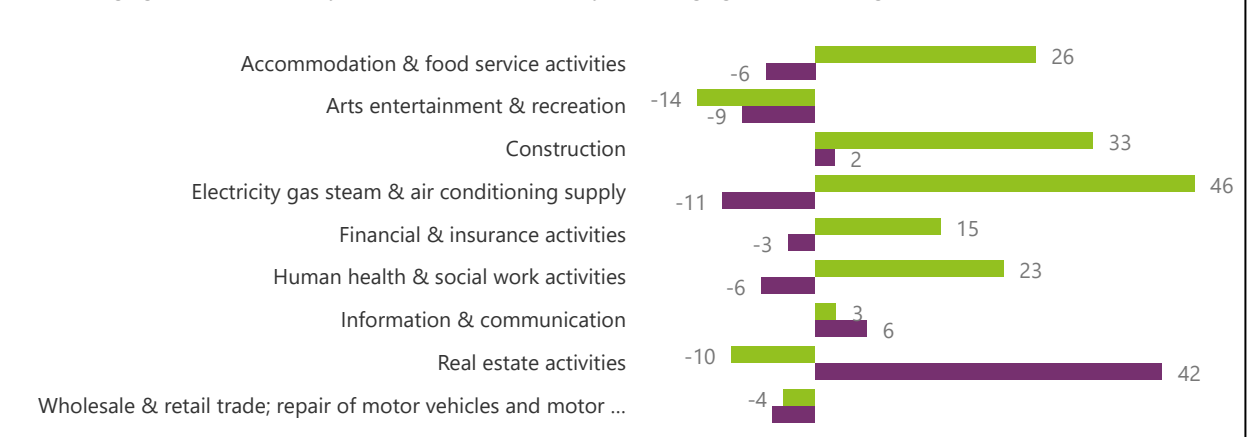
Number of vacancies in the UK

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



Quarterly growth rate by industry sectors

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



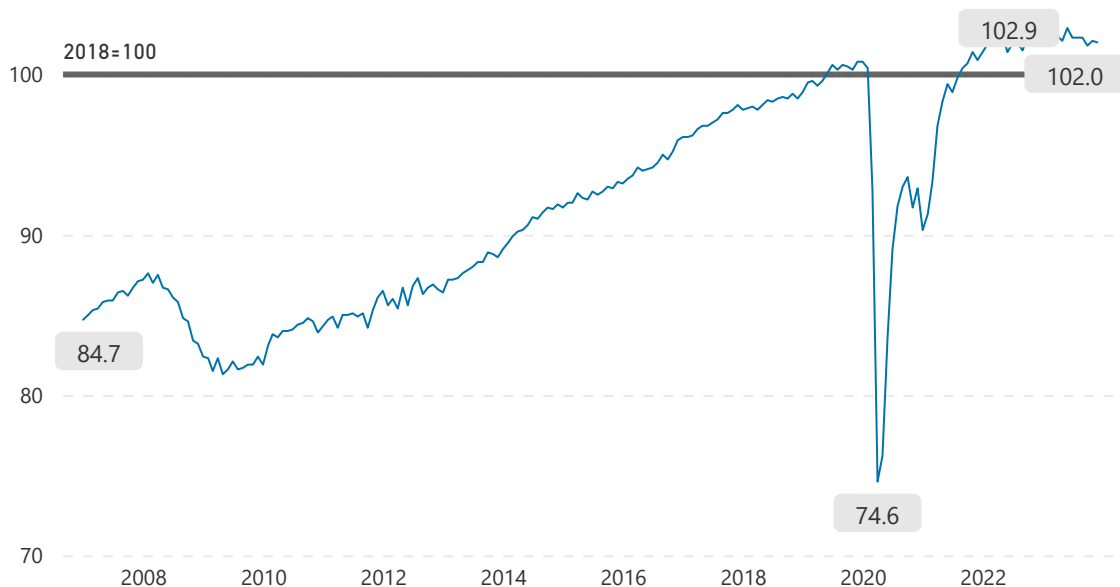
National Headlines - Gross Domestic Product (GDP), UK

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

Released: 15 February 2024

- Real gross domestic product (GDP) is estimated to have fallen by 0.3% in the three months to December 2023, compared with the three months to September 2023.
- Monthly GDP is estimated to have fallen by 0.1% in December 2023, following a growth of 0.2% in November 2023.
- Services output fell by 0.1% in December 2023 and in the three months to December 2023 services output fell by 0.2%
- Consumer-facing services fell by 0.7% in the three months to December 2023, compared with the three months to September 2023. The largest negative contributor to consumer-facing services came from food and beverage service activities, which fell by 2.1%.
- Production output grew by 0.6% in December 2023, but in the three months to December 2023 production output fell by 1.0%.
- The construction sector fell by 0.5% in December 2023 and in the three months to December 2023 construction output fell by 1.3%.
- Output GDP is estimated to have annual growth of 0.4% in 2023 compared with 2022; this figure is measured differently to the 0.1% annual growth in 2023 in our GDP first quarterly estimate for October to December 2023, which uses average GDP.

Monthly index, UK



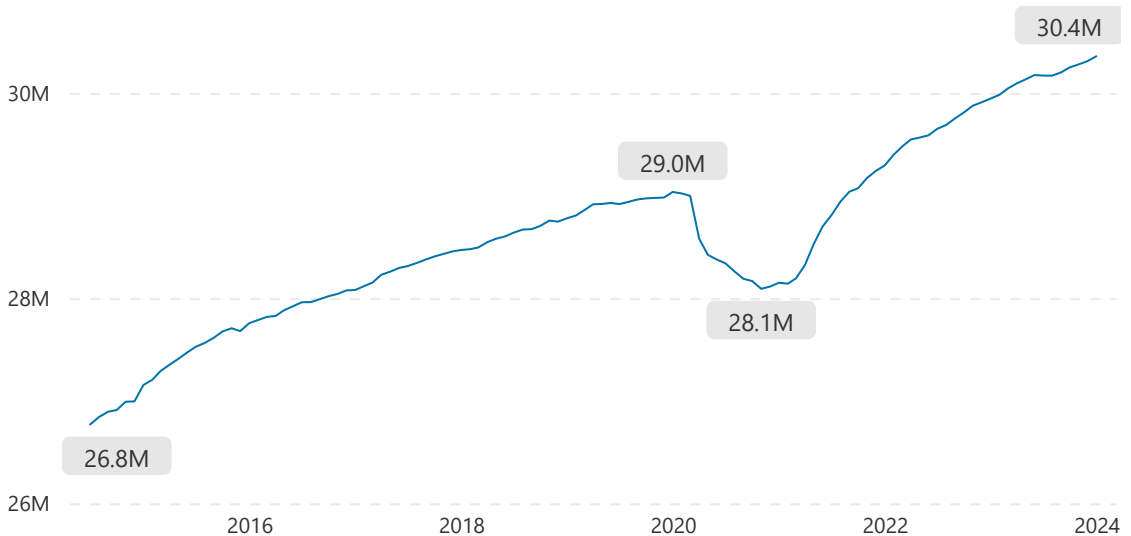
Labour Market, UK

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

Released: 13 February 2024

- Early estimates for January 2024 indicate that the number of payrolled employees rose by 1.4% compared with January 2023, a rise of 413,000 employees.
- This annual increase was largest in the health and social work sector, a rise of 217,000 employees.
- Payrolled employment increased by 48,000 employees (0.2%) in January 2024 when compared with December 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 December 2023 compared with November 2023 has been revised from a decrease of 24,000 reported in the last bulletin to an increase of 31,000; 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 January 2024 indicate that median monthly pay increased by 6.4% compared with January 2023.
- In this month's publication, estimates for pay in Northern Ireland for November and December 2023 have seen larger revisions than usual; this is because of additional imputation being run on schemes where we have identified partially missing data in those schemes' submissions.

Payrolled employees, seasonally adjusted, UK



Businesses currently trading, UK

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

Released: 22 February 2024

The data presented in this bulletin are the final results from Wave 101 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS), which was live for the period of 22 January to 4 February 2024.

- Fewer than 1 in 10 (7%) businesses with 10 or more employees experienced global supply chain disruption in December 2023; this is broadly stable with previous months.
- Nearly two-thirds (62%) of trading businesses reported that they were able to get the goods they needed from within the UK in December 2023 without any disruption, broadly stable with November 2023.
- The proportion of trading businesses with 10 or more employees that reported they were either importing less compared with the same calendar month a year ago, or were unable to import, rose from 18% in November 2023 to 21% in December 2023.
- In late January 2024, 19% of businesses with 10 or more employees reported they were experiencing worker shortages, broadly stable with late December 2023; of those businesses, 49% reported that their employees were working increased hours as a consequence.

Businesses Closures, UK

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

Released: 16 February 2024

Data for England and Wales on company insolvencies shows that there were 1,769 in January 2024, 5% higher than in the same month in the previous year (1,685).

There were 339 compulsory liquidations, 1,294 creditors' voluntary liquidations (CVLs), 120 administrations and 16 company voluntary arrangements (CVAs) in January 2023, CVL numbers were lower than in January 2023, while compulsory liquidation and administration numbers were higher.

For individuals, the total number of insolvencies in January 2024 was 8,089, 4% higher than in the same month in the previous year (7,756 in January 2023)

For individuals, 768 bankruptcies, 2,793 debt relief orders (DROs) and 4,528 individual voluntary arrangements (IVAs) were registered in January 2024, The higher number of individual insolvencies compared to January 2023 was driven by a 60% increase in the number of DROs and a 20% increase in the number of bankruptcies.

Company insolvencies in England & Wales

