West Sussex Economy Snapshot

October 2026 (Issue 7)

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West Sussex Summary

New Businesses October 2026

- 476 new businesses incorporated. (**7.4%** less then September 2026)
- 478 businesses dissolved or liquidated. (**10%** less then September 2026)

Net decrease of 2 businesses.

Claimants October 2026

- Claimant count increased by **1.5%** in West Sussex over the last month.
- The claimant count rate is **3.1%** in West Sussex, lower then regional rate **3.2%**. Meanwhile, the national rate increased to **4.1%**.

Universal Credit Claimants August 2026 (latest revised data August 2026 updates quarterly)

- Universal Credit claimants increased by **0.5%** in West Sussex over the last month.
- In July (August provisional) 2026, **15.6%** of the 16-64 population in West Sussex are claiming UC, close to the regional percentage and lower than the national percentage of **19.5%**.

West Sussex IT businesses and IT job postings summary (October 2026):

- **Business creation remains at record levels:** IT company incorporations increased from **166 in 2024** to **348 in 2025**, reaching a new high of **394 in 2026**.
- **Strong sector growth:** IT business formation has accelerated significantly since 2024, reflecting growing entrepreneurial activity and demand for digital services.
- **Jobs market recovering:** IT vacancies rose from a low of **177 in early 2025** to approximately **495 in 2026**, the highest level since 2023.
- **Key takeaway:** The West Sussex IT sector continues to strengthen, with record business formation and a sustained recovery in employer demand for IT talent.

No of Employees (Real Time Information) October 2026 (% Change from September 2026 - October 2026)

- West Sussex: 397,421 (increased by **0.14%**)
- West Sussex (South West): 195,326 (increased by **0.16%**)
- West Sussex (North East): 202,095 (increased by **0.13%**)
- South East: 4,270,217 (increased by **0.06%**)
- UK: 30,247,443 (increased by **0.07%**)

Median Pay (Real Time Information) October 2026 (% Change from September 2026 - October 2026)

- West Sussex (South West): 2,548 (decreased by **0.12%**)
- West Sussex (North East): 2,857 (Saw no change)
- South East: 2,805 (increased by **0.07%**)
- UK: 2,669 (increased by **0.26%**)

Job Postings (Lightcast)

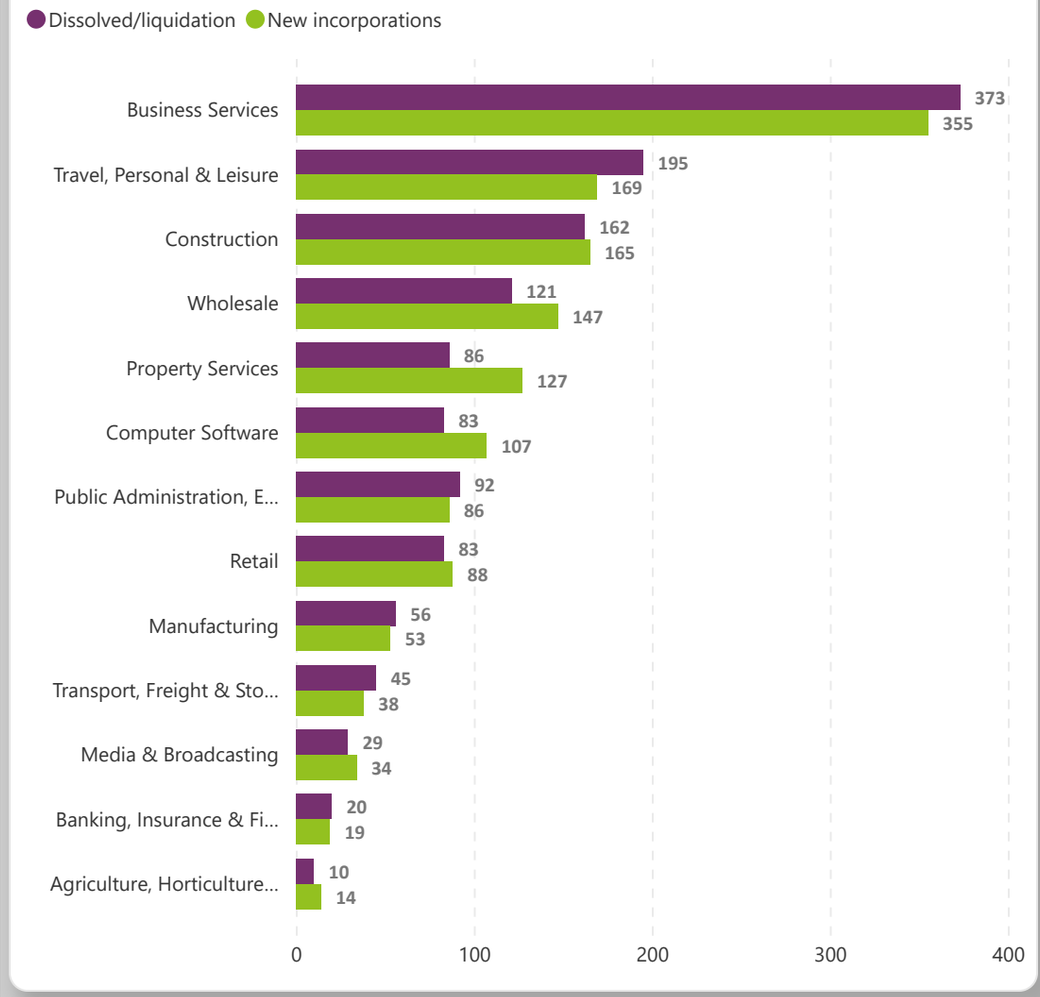
- In October 2026, there were **12,405** unique job postings in West Sussex, which is about **9%** higher than the same time last year.
- In terms of the top posted occupations over the last six months (**May 2026 to October 2026**), home health aide is the top posted followed closely by Janitor/Cleaner.

House Prices

- Adur: £376,000
- Arun: £319,000
- Chichester: £422,000
- Crawley: £339,000
- Horsham: £451,000
- Mid Sussex: £439,000
- Worthing: £297,000

West Sussex: New Businesses

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



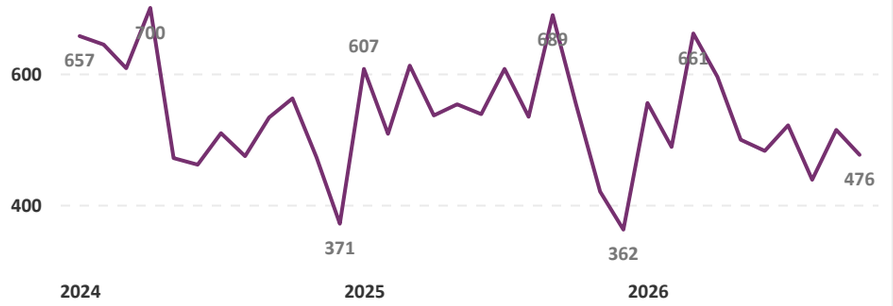
Source: FAME

Released: November 2026

New Business Count

-7% ▼

New business incorporations in West Sussex



Summary of Business Formation Trends in West Sussex

Overall trend:

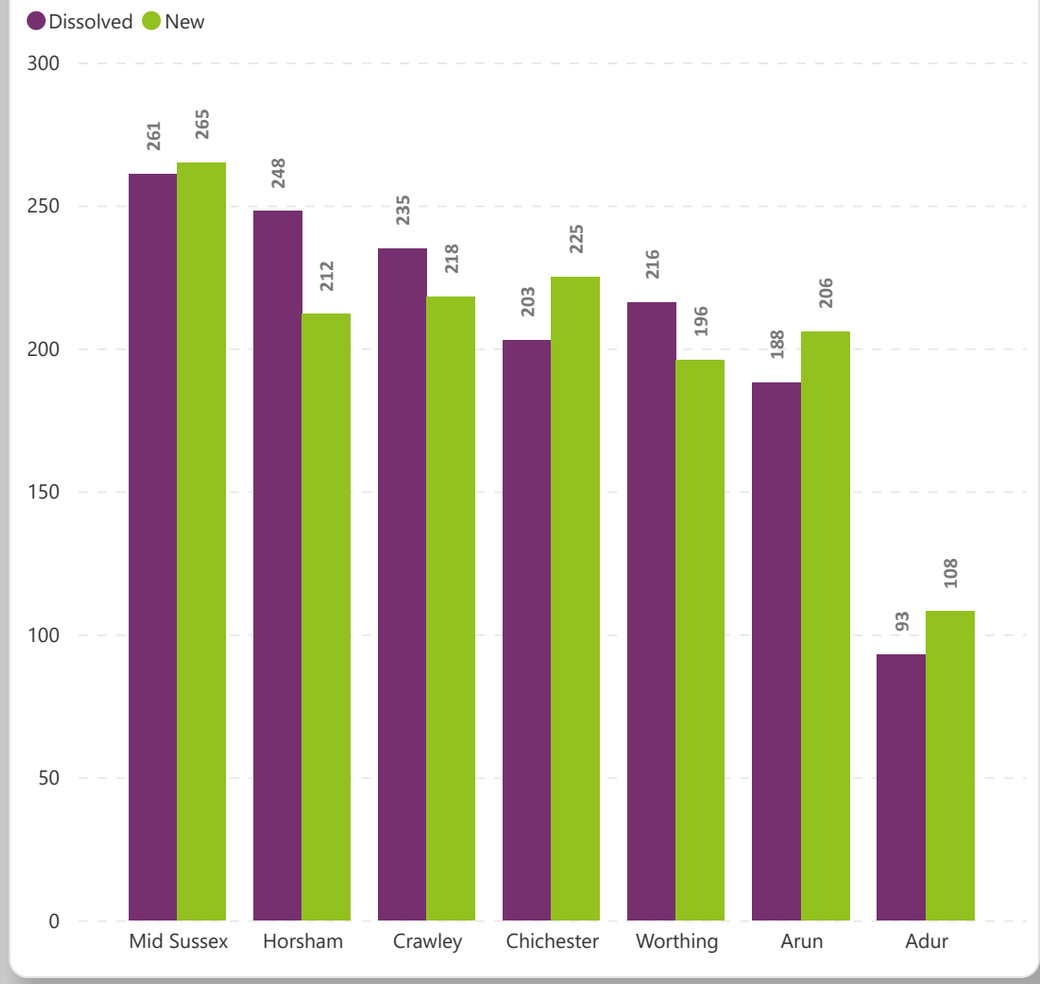
- A mix of new business incorporations and dissolutions was recorded across all sectors. **Business closures exceeded new incorporations** in **Business Services, Travel, Personal & Leisure, Public Administration, Education & Health, Manufacturing, Transport, Freight & Storage, and Banking, Insurance & Finance**.
- **Wholesale, Property Services, Computer Software, Retail, Media & Broadcasting, Construction, and Agriculture, Horticulture & Fishing** recorded net business growth, with more new businesses being incorporated than dissolved.
- **Business Services** recorded the highest levels of both incorporations (355) and dissolutions (373), resulting in a net loss of **-18 businesses**. **Travel, Personal & Leisure** recorded the largest sectoral decline, with 195 dissolutions compared with 169 incorporations, a net loss of **-26 businesses**.
- **Property Services** recorded the strongest net growth (**+41 businesses**), followed by **Computer Software** (**+24**) and **Wholesale** (**+26**). **Retail** (+5), **Media & Broadcasting** (+5), **Construction** (+3), and **Agriculture, Horticulture & Fishing** (+4) also recorded modest net gains.

October 2026:

- 476 new businesses incorporated. (**7.4%** less then September 2026)
- 478 businesses dissolved or liquidated. (**6.3%** less then September 2026)
- Net decrease of 2 businesses.

West Sussex: New Businesses

Number of new business incorporations and businesses dissolved/in liquidation by local authority (Aug'26-Oct'26)



Adur ratio	Arun ratio	Chichester ratio	Crawley ratio
16.1%	9.6%	10.8%	-7.2%

Horsham ratio	Mid Sussex ratio	Worthing ratio	West Sussex ratio
-14.5%	1.5%	-9.3%	-1.0%

Summary of Business Formation Trends in West Sussex

Over the last 3 months:

- **Mid Sussex** recorded the highest level of business activity, with **265 incorporations** and **261 dissolutions**, resulting in a small net gain of **4 businesses**.
- **Chichester** recorded the strongest net growth (**+22 businesses**), followed by **Arun** (**+18**) and **Adur** (**+15**).
- **Horsham** experienced the largest net decline, with **248 dissolutions** compared with **212 incorporations**, resulting in a loss of **36 businesses**. **Crawley** (-17) and **Worthing** (-20) also recorded net declines.
- **Adur** recorded the lowest number of business start-ups (**108**) and closures (**93**) during the period.
- Overall, **four of the seven local authorities recorded more business start-ups than closures**, indicating a broadly balanced picture across West Sussex between Aug'26 and Oct'26.

Last 12 months:

- 6,451 new businesses incorporated.
- 6,704 businesses dissolved or liquidated.
- Net decrease of 253 businesses.

Last 3 months:

- 1,430 new businesses incorporated.
- 1,444 businesses dissolved or liquidated.
- Net decrease of 14 businesses.

Source: FAME

Released: November 2026

West Sussex: Claimant Count (numbers)

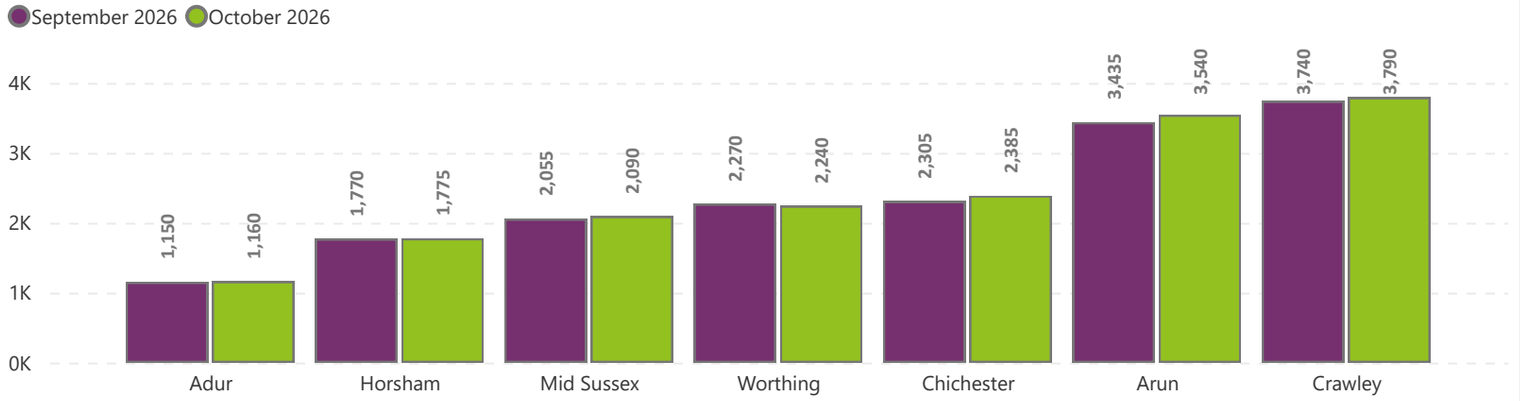
16,975 Oct'26	16,725 Sep'26	West Sussex Change 1.5% ▲

Adur	Arun	Horsham
0.9% ▲	3.1% ▲	0.3% ▲

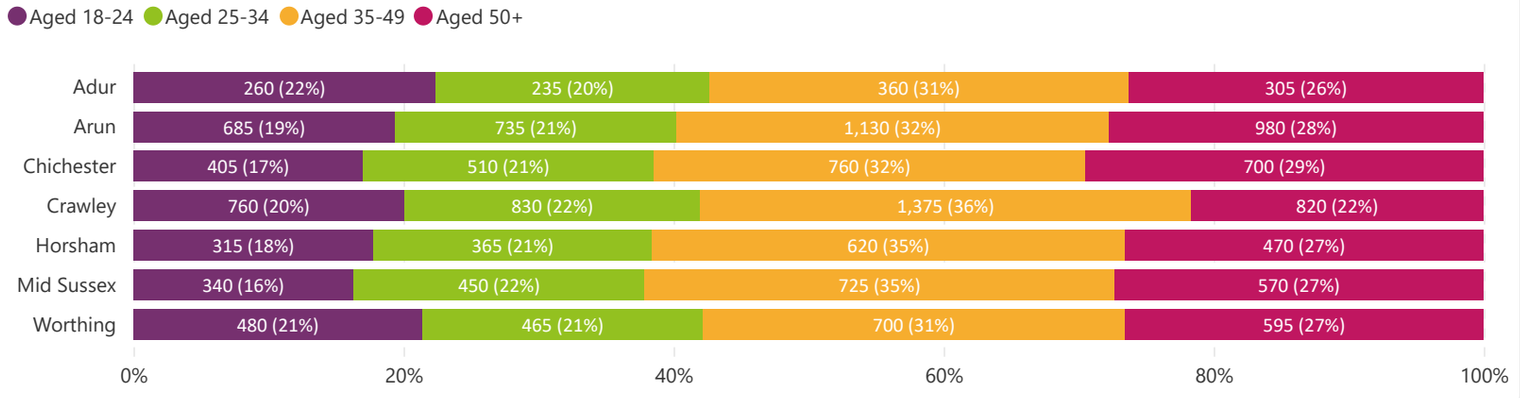
Chichester	Crawley	Mid Sussex
3.5% ▲	1.3% ▲	1.7% ▲

Worthing
-1.3% ▼

Total Number of Claimants by Local Authority



Distribution of claimants by age band



Source: ONS, Claimant Count

Released: 20 Nov 2026 (Oct 2026 Figures are provisional)

Summary of Claimant Count Changes in West Sussex, October 2026

Breakdown by district (Sep'26 - Oct'26):

Age groups:

- Adur and Worthing highest % of young claimants.
- Arun (685) and Crawley (760) has the most number of young claimants.
- Crawley has the highest number of claimants who are age 35-49

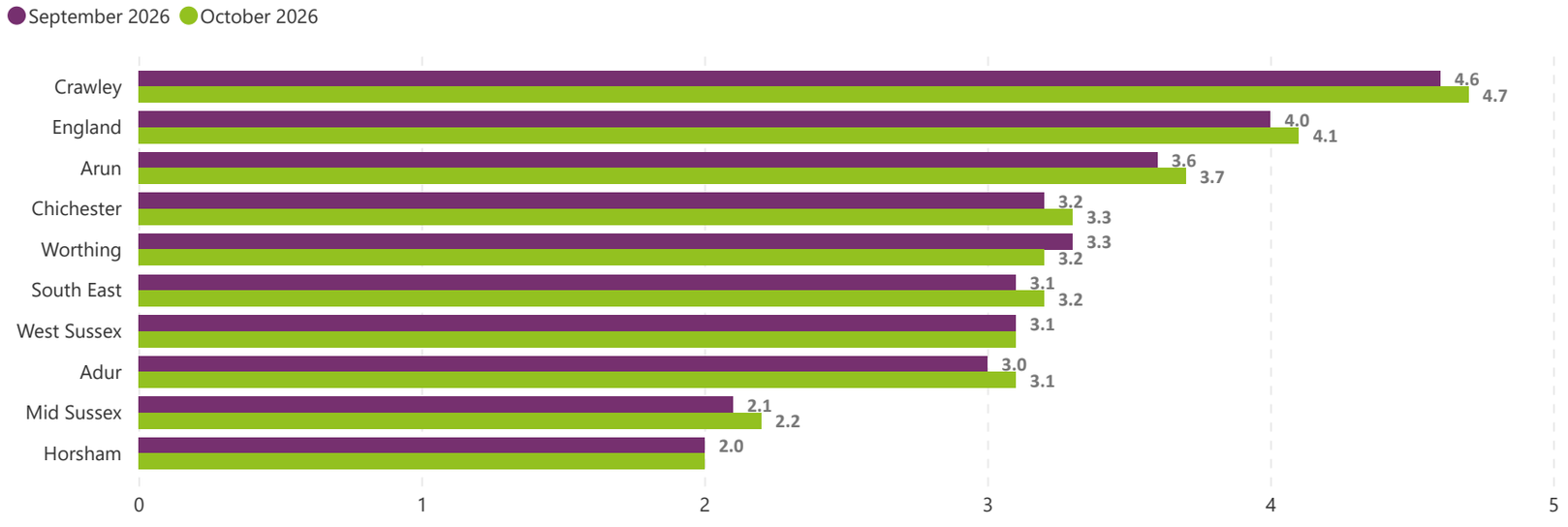
Specifics (Oct'26):

- Crawley recorded the highest claimant count (**3,790**).
- Crawley had the highest claimant count rate (**4.7%**), higher then regional and national average.

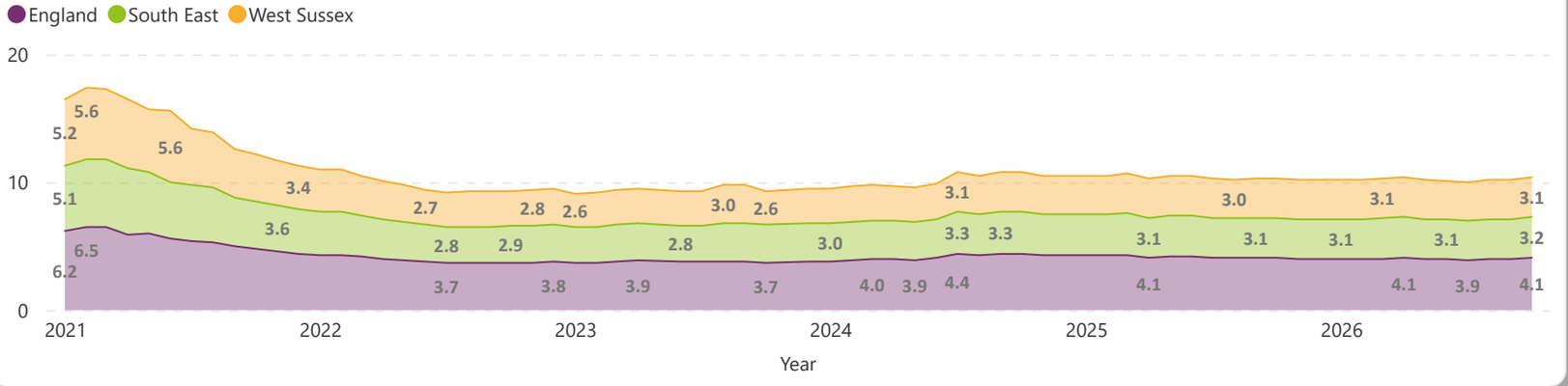
*The claimant count includes those people who are claiming either Job Seekers Allowance or Universal Credit principally because they are out of work or working very few hours and/or have a very low wage.

West Sussex: Claimant Count (rate)

Claimant count rate change



Claimant count rate



Source: ONS, Claimant Count

Released: 20 Oct 2026 (Sep 2026 Figures are provisional)

West Sussex Change	England Change
0.0 —	0.1 ▲

South East Change
0.1 ▲

Summary of Claimant Count Changes in West Sussex, October 2026

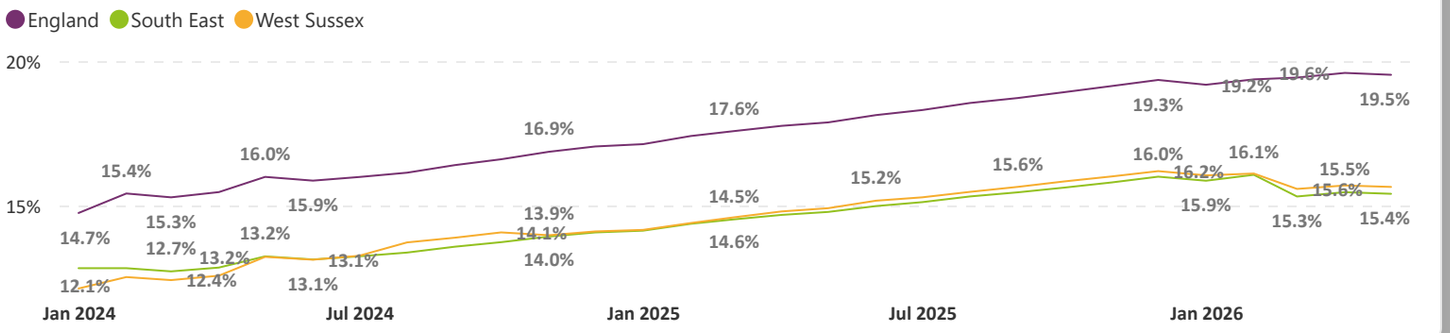
Overall:

- Claimant count has increased over the last month by **1.5%** (16,975) in West Sussex.
- Claimant count rate stayed the same at **3.1% in West Sussex**, remaining below the **national average of 4.1%** and the **regional rate of 3.2%**.
- Horsham had the lowest claimant count rate (**2%**).

*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

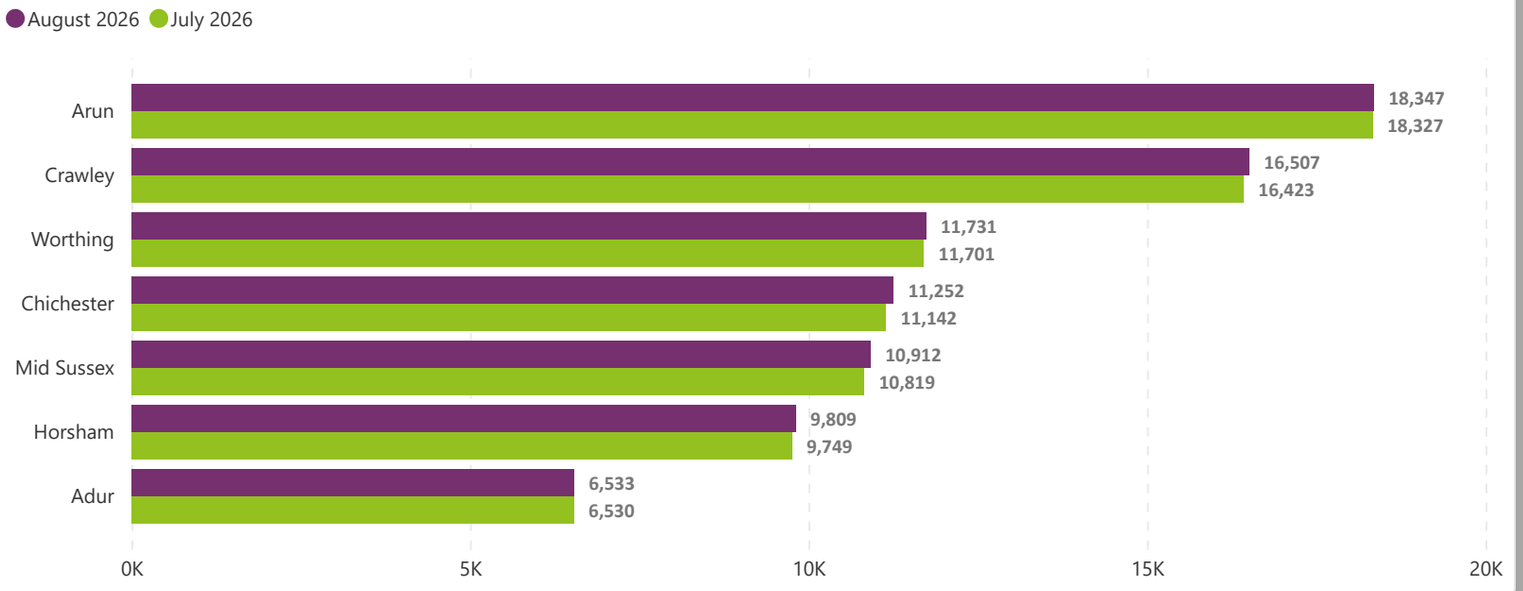
Percentage of people aged 16-64 years claiming Universal Credit



Adur	Arun	Chichester	Crawley
0.0% ▲	0.1% ▲	1.0% ▲	0.5% ▲

Horsham	Mid Sussex	Worthing	West Sussex
0.6% ▲	0.9% ▲	0.3% ▲	0.5% ▲

Universal Credit claimants in West Sussex change



Source: Department for Work and Pension Released: 17 Nov 2026

(Aug 2026 figures are provisional)

Summary of Universal Credit Claimants in West Sussex, August 2026

Overall:

- In August 2026, numbers of Universal Credit claimants increased by almost 0.5% (85,091 total) over the last month in West Sussex.
- The percentage (July 2026) of the 16-64 population claiming UC in West Sussex has risen to 15.6%, which is almost the same as the regional percentage and lower than the national percentage of 19.5% for the last month.

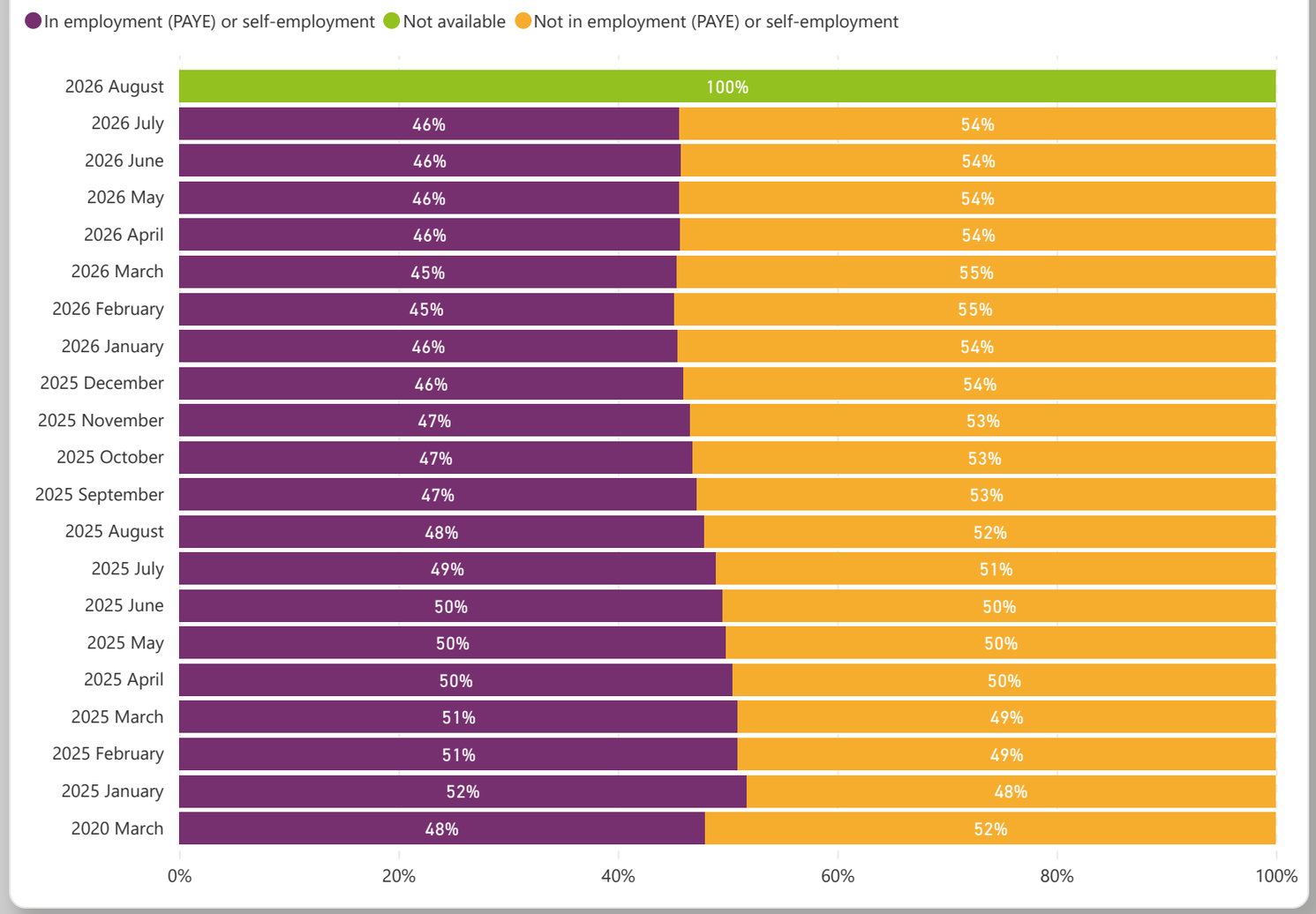
District-specific:

- Chichester had the highest percentage increase in claimants (1%) since July 2026.
- At August 2026, Arun had the highest number of claimants at 18,347.

Update: *From May 2026 this data is released on a **quarterly** basis. The definition of the "Percentage of people aged 16–64 years claiming Universal Credit" is being updated. Previously, the population denominator for ages 16–64 was derived from Census 2021 data. From March 2026 onwards, this will instead be calculated using the latest mid-year population estimates, ensuring the indicator reflects more up-to-date demographic changes.*

West Sussex: Universal Credit Claimants

Universal Credit claimants in West Sussex by employment status



Source: Department for Work and Pension Released: 17 Nov2026

(Aug 2026 figures are provisional)

Summary of Universal Credit Claimants in West Sussex, August 2026

Employment status:

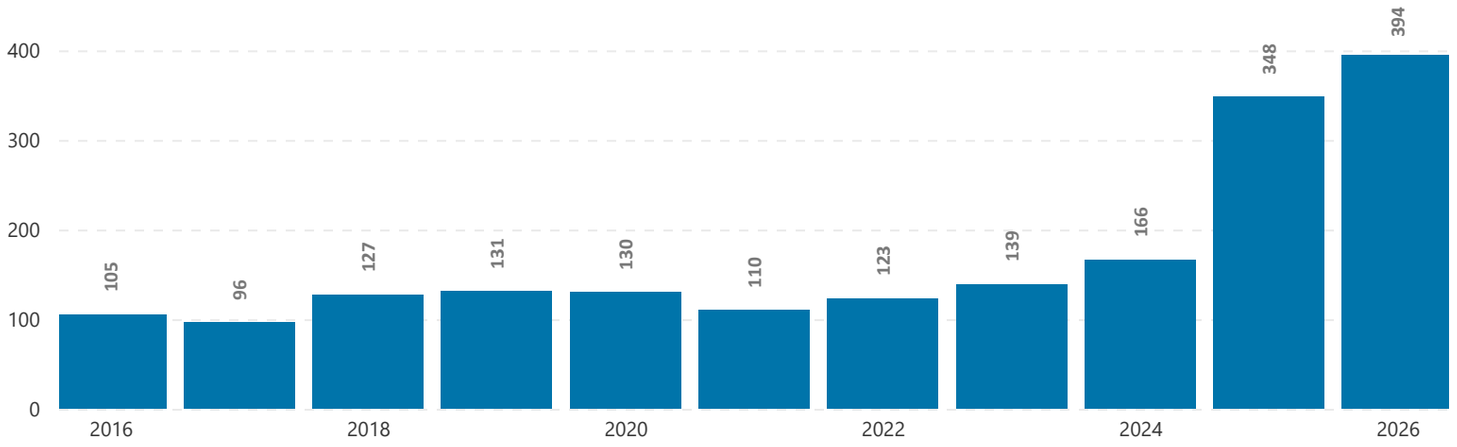
- 46% of claimants were in employment in August 2026. Higher than national (38%) or regional (43%) average.
- Mid Sussex had the highest percentage of employed claimants (49%).

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

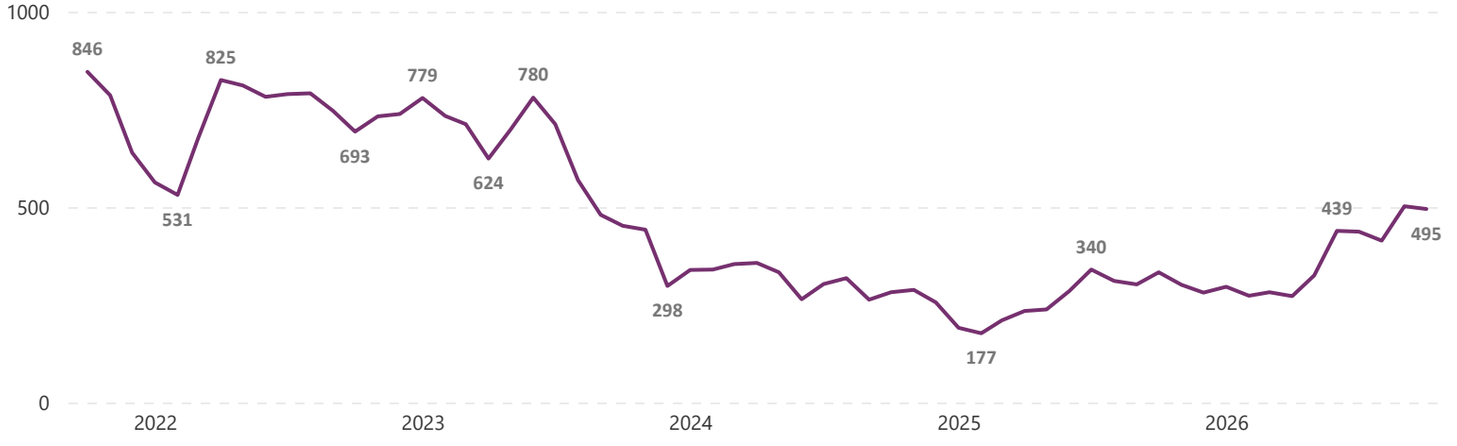
Update: Since May 2026, the DWP has changed the way it reports its figures. Data will now be published quarterly instead of more frequent releases. In addition, employment indicators have been updated to provide a broader view of the labour market by incorporating both PAYE employees and self-employed individuals.

West Sussex: IT business sector

New Company Incorporation Trends in the IT Sector (West Sussex)



IT Job Posting Trends (West Sussex)



This is for the following SIC codes:

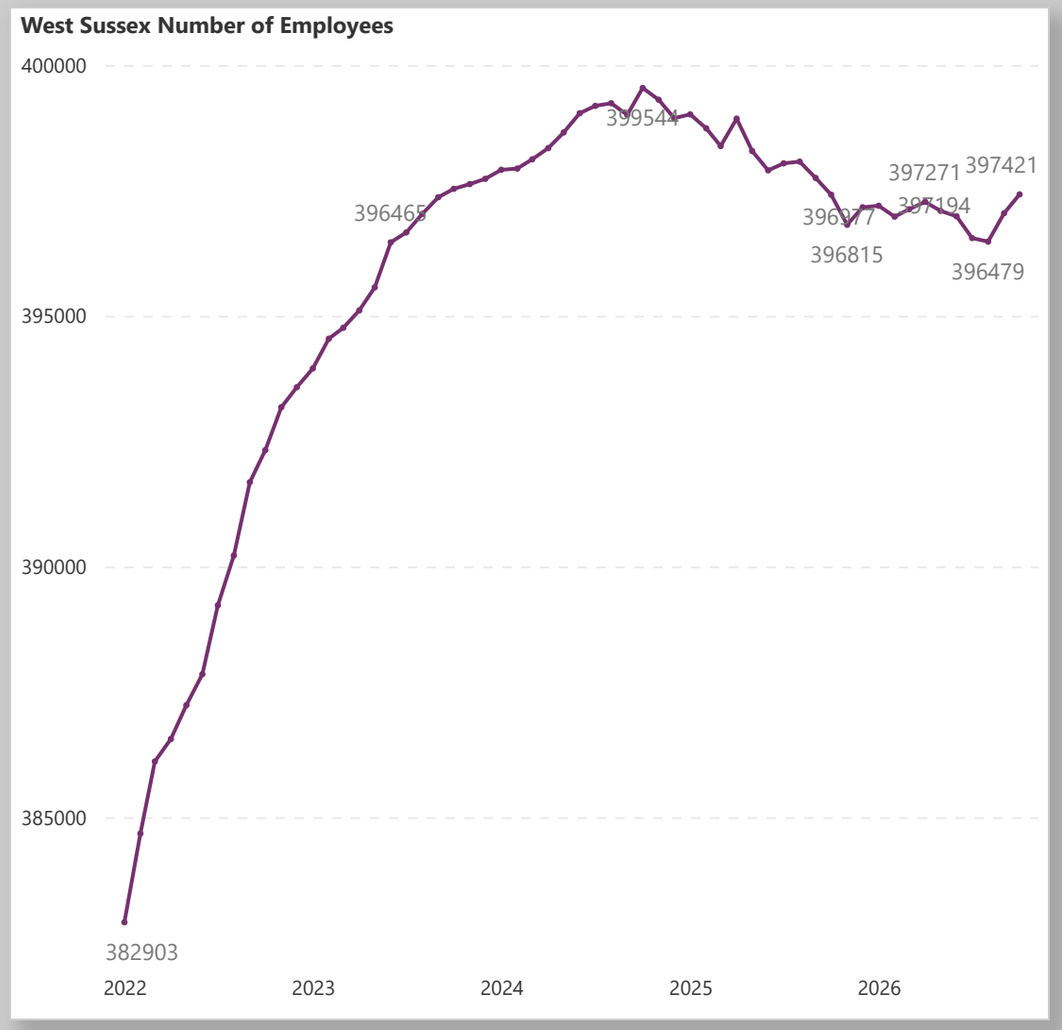
- **62012** – Business and Domestic Software Development
- **62020** – Information Technology Consultancy Activities
- **62030** – Computer Facilities Management Activities
- **62090** – Other Information Technology Service Activities
- **63110** – Data Processing, Hosting and Related Activities
- **63120** – Web Portals

New IT sector company incorporations in West Sussex remained relatively stable between **2016 and 2023**, ranging from **96 to 139 businesses per year**. Growth accelerated in **2024**, rising to **166 incorporations**, before more than doubling to **348 incorporations in 2025**. **2026** has already exceeded the previous record, reaching **394 incorporations**, making it the **highest year on record**. This continued growth highlights the increasing importance of the IT sector to the West Sussex economy, reflecting strong entrepreneurial activity and sustained demand for digital and technology services.

IT job postings in West Sussex have generally declined since peaking at **846 vacancies in 2021**. Demand remained relatively strong throughout **2022 and 2023**, despite some volatility, with vacancy numbers frequently exceeding **700 postings**. Vacancy levels fell sharply during **2024** and reached a low of **177 vacancies in early 2025**, marking the weakest point in the market. Since then, demand has recovered steadily, rising to around **340 vacancies** later in 2025 and continuing to strengthen throughout **2026**. The latest data shows approximately **495 vacancies**, the highest level since 2023 and almost three times higher than the low recorded in early 2025, indicating a sustained recovery in demand for IT professionals.

Source: FAME, LightCast Released: November 2026

Real Time Information Earnings and Employment



West Sussex Change %

0.14% ▲

South East Change %

0.06% ▲

Uk Change %

0.07% ▲

Summary of RTI employees in West Sussex for October 2026.

Overall:

- West Sussex: 397,421
- West Sussex (South West): 195,326
- West Sussex (North East): 202,095
- South East: 4,270,217
- UK: 30,247,443

One Month Change (September 2026 - October 2026):

- West Sussex rose by 0.14%
- West Sussex (South West) rose by 0.16%
- West Sussex (North East) rose by 0.13%
- South East rose by 0.06%
- UK rose by 0.07%

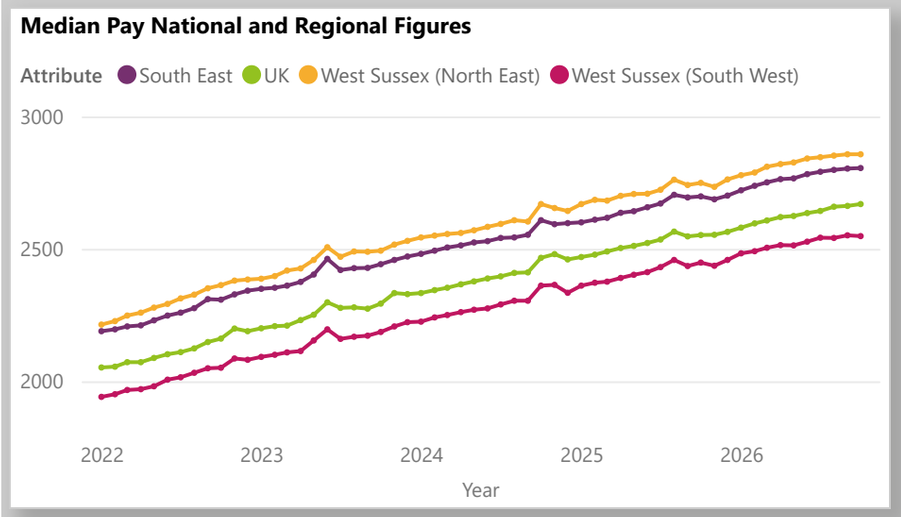
Three Month Change (July 2026 - October 2026):

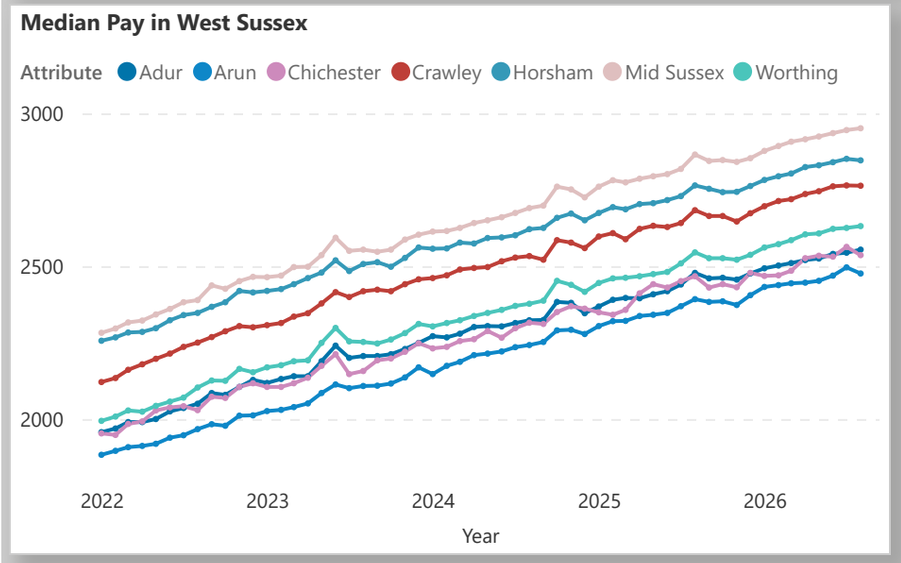
- West Sussex rose by 0.22%
- West Sussex (South West) fell by 0.20%
- West Sussex (North East) rose by 0.24%
- South East fell by 0.02%
- UK fell by 0.07%

Source: ONS - Earnings and employment from Pay As You Earn Real Time Information, seasonally adjusted

Released: 17 November 2026

Real Time Information Earnings and Employment





West Sussex South West Change % Pay

0.12% ▼

West Sussex North East Change % Pay

0.00% —

South East Change % Pay

0.07% ▲

UK Change % Pay

0.26% ▲

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

Overall:
- West Sussex (South West): 2,548
- West Sussex (North East): 2,857
- South East: 2,805
- UK: 2,669

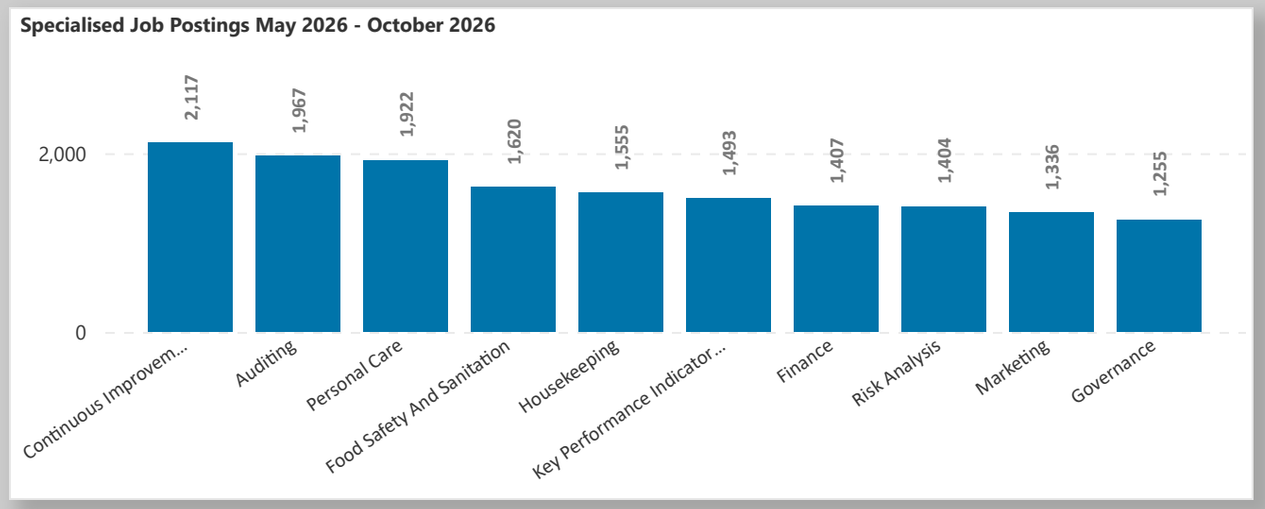
One Month Change (September 2026 - October 2026):
- West Sussex (South West) fell by 0.12%
- West Sussex (North East) saw no change
- South East rose by 0.07%
- UK rose by 0.26%

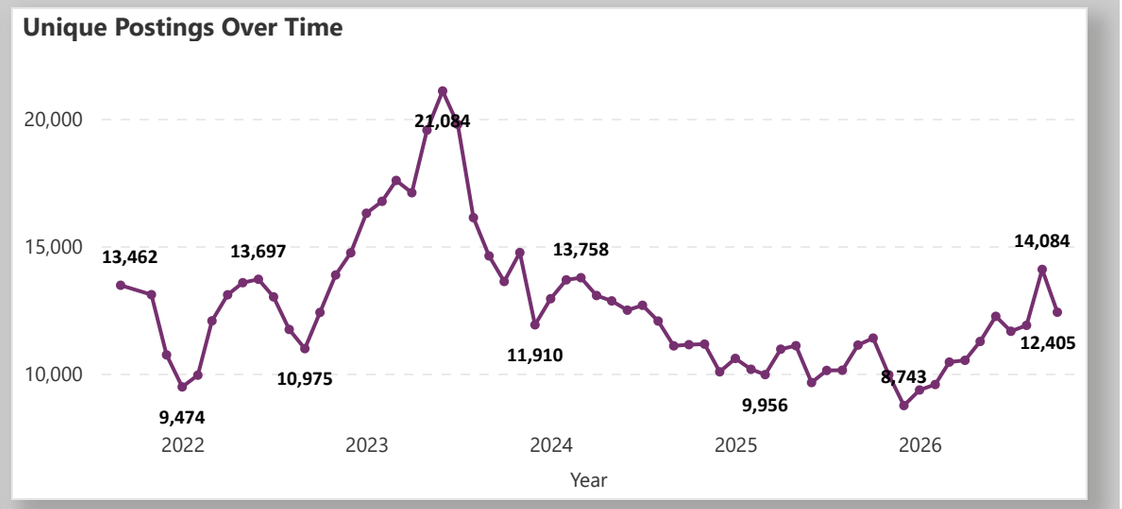
Three Month Change (July 2026 - October 2026):
- West Sussex (South West) rose by 0.50%
- West Sussex (North East) rose by 0.98%
- South East rose by 0.24%
- UK rose by 0.39%

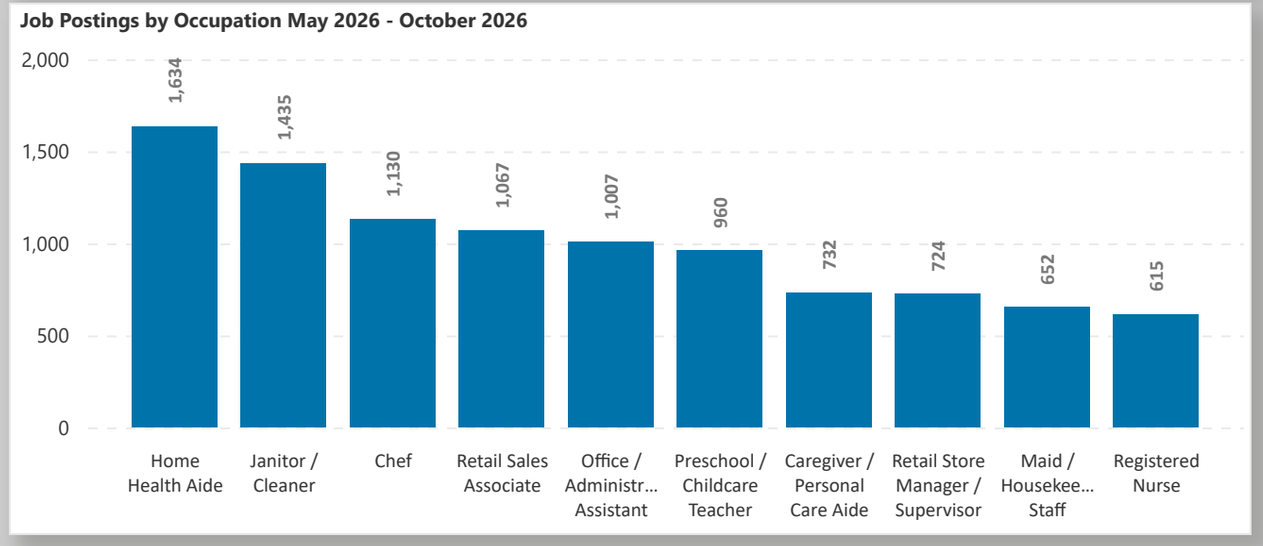
Source: ONS - Earnings and employment from Pay As You Earn Real Time Information, seasonally adjusted

Released: 17 November 2026

Job Postings







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 October 2026 there were 12,405 unique job postings in West Sussex, a significant reduction from the peak in June 2023 of 21,084 but still higher than the general levels seen pre-Covid. In terms of the top posted occupations over the last six months (May 2026 to October 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.

Source: Lightcast

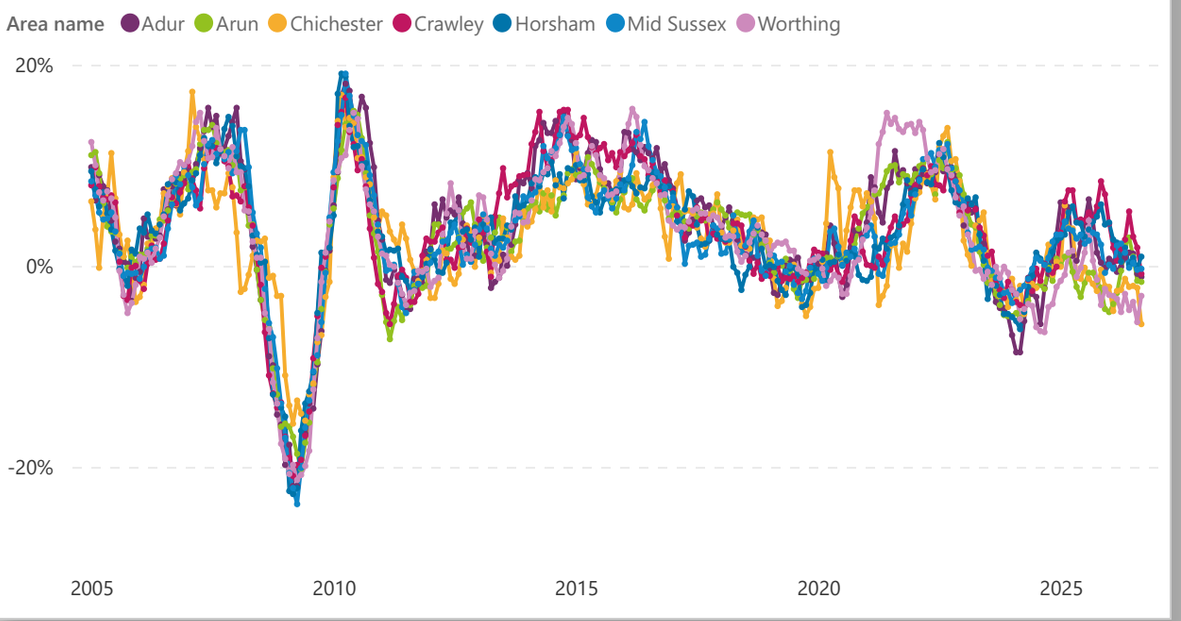
Released: November 2026

House Prices

House Price Data (September Provisional ONS)

Area	Average First-time buyers	Average House Price	Average Monthly Rent	Average Mortgage Buyers
Adur	£320,000.0	£376,000.00	£1,432.00	£371,000.00
Arun	£253,000.0	£319,000.00	£1,250.00	£317,000.00
Chichester	£331,000.0	£422,000.00	£1,348.00	£421,000.00
Crawley	£295,000.0	£329,000.00	£1,505.00	£329,000.00
Horsham	£331,000.0	£451,000.00	£1,505.00	£439,000.00
Mid Sussex	£333,000.0	£439,000.00	£1,451.00	£445,000.00
Worthing	£244,000.0	£297,000.00	£1,303.00	£305,000.00

Annual House Price Change %



Highest Average House Price
Horsham

Highest Average Mortgages
Mid Sussex

Highest Average Monthly Rent
Crawley/Horsham

Highest First Time Buyer Average
Mid Sussex

Source: ONS

Released: 18 November 2026

National Summary

Job Vacancies

- Estimated vacancies in August to October 2026 was 690,000.
- Decreasing 22,000 or 3.0% from May 2026 to July 2026.
- The number of unemployed people per vacancy was 2.4 in July 2026 to September 2026, down from 2.5 in April to June 2026.

Gross Domestic Product

- Monthly GDP is estimated to have grown by 0.7% in September 2026.

Labour Market

- Early estimates for October 2026 indicate that the number of payrolled employees was 30.2 million which is a fall of 0.3% from the previous year.
- The largest increase was in the administrative and support services sector, with a rise of 52,000. The largest decrease was in the wholesale and retail sector, with a fall of 79,000 employees.
- Early estimates for October 2026 indicate that median monthly pay increased by 4.6% compared with October 2025.
- Annual growth in median pay in October 2026 was highest in the other services sector, with an increase of 5.6%. it was lowest in the professional, scientific and technical sector, with a increase of 3.4%.

Business Trading

- 14% of trading businesses reported that their turnover had increased in October 2026 compared with the previous month
- In early November 2026, 71% of businesses reported some degree of concern about increases in fuel prices
- 32% of trading businesses reported an increase in the prices of goods and services bought in October 2026 when compared to the previous month.
- 11% of trading businesses reported an increase in the prices of goods and services sold in October 2026.
- 16% of businesses reported that their main concern will be falling demand of goods and services in November 2026.

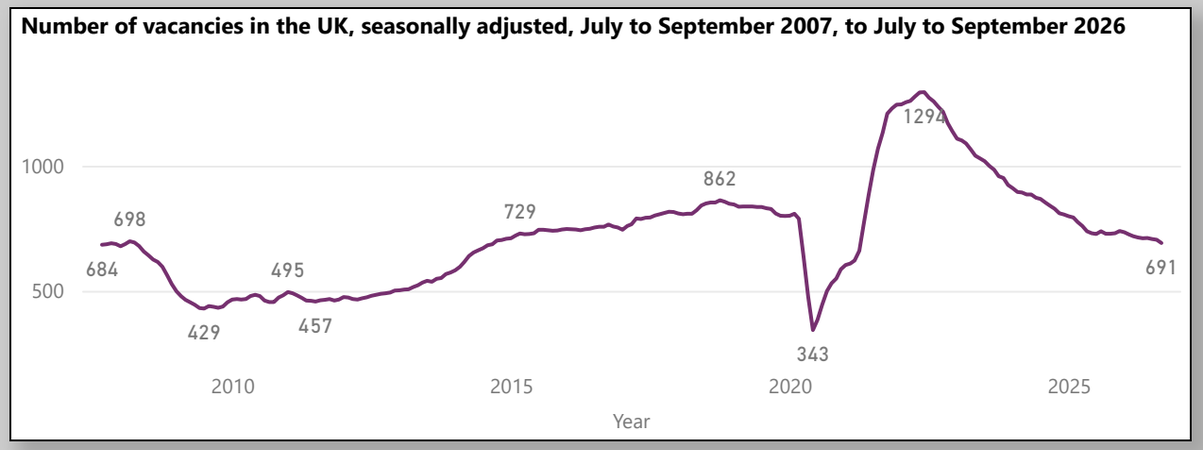
Business Closures

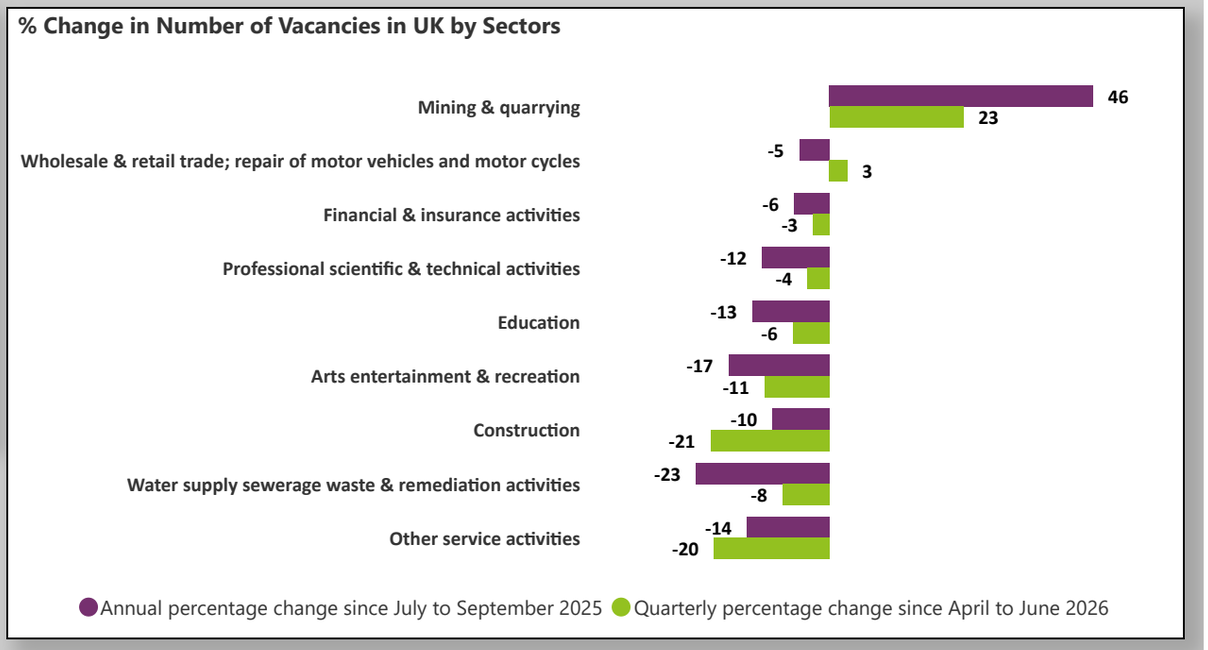
- Company insolvencies in England and Wales stood at 1,757 in October 2026, which was 6% lower than in September 2026.
- Company insolvencies consisted of 301 compulsory liquidations, 1,307 creditors' voluntary liquidations (CVLs), 136 administrations and 13 company voluntary arrangements (CVAs).
- There were 13,187 individual insolvencies in England and Wales.
- Individual insolvencies consisted of 696 bankruptcies, 4,064 debt relief orders (DROs) and 8,427 individual voluntary arrangements (IVAs).

AI Adoption

- 30% of businesses reported use of at least one type of AI technology.
- 20% up since the question was introduced in September 2023.
- AI Adoption is consistently higher for larger businesses.
- The most common AI technology used was were text generation using large language models at 21% and visual content creation at 19%.

Job Vacancies (UK)





Summary of job vacancies (UK).

Overall:

- Estimated vacancies are for the period of August to October 2026.
- Vacancies change measures from the dates May 2026 to July 2026.
- The number of unemployed people per vacancy was 2.4 in July 2026 to September 2026, down from 2.5 in April to June 2026.

Job Vacancies

690000 ▼

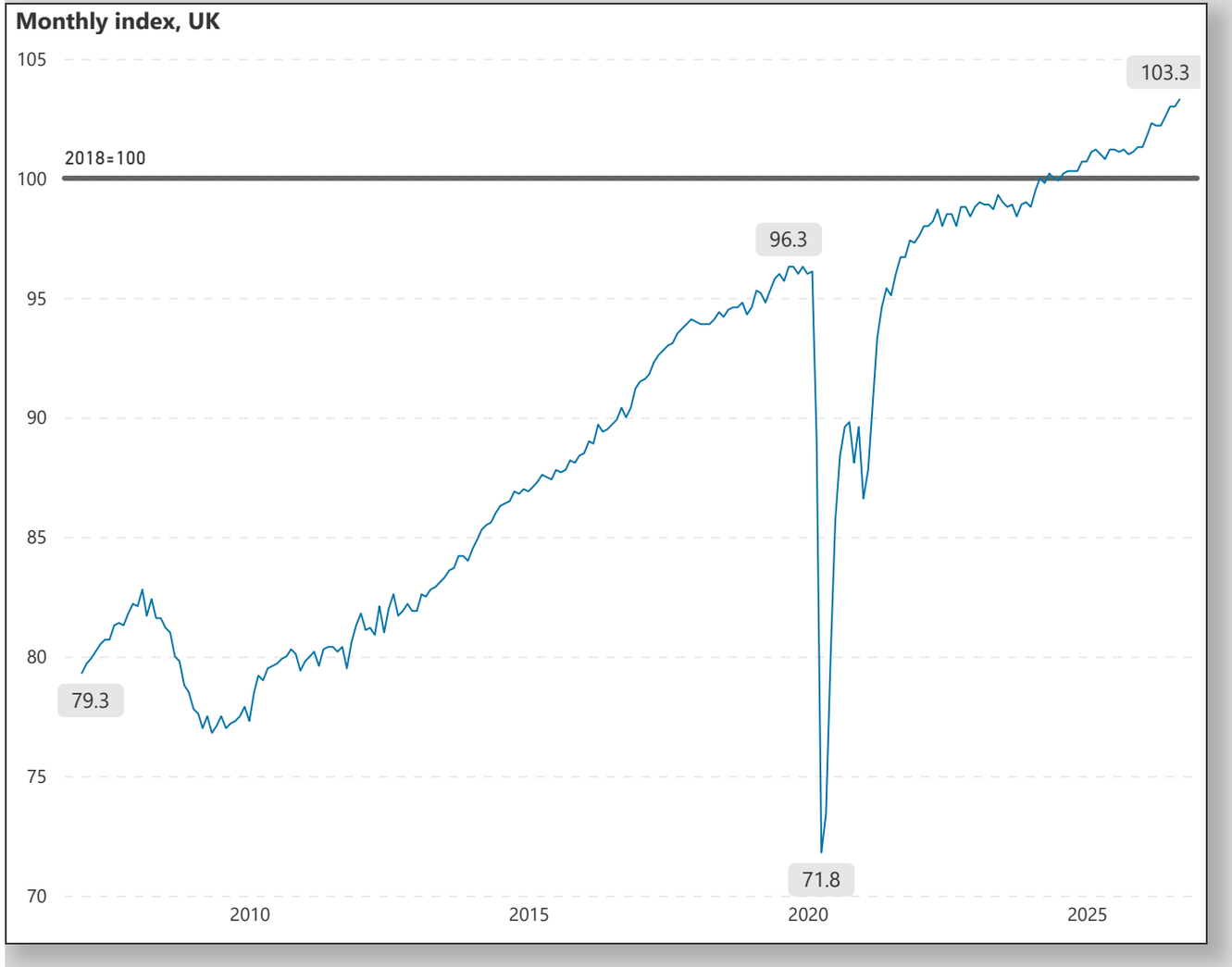
Vacancies Change %

3.00% ▼

Source: ONS

Released: 17 November 2026

Gross Domestic Product (GDP)



GDP % Change	0.70% ▲
Services % Chan...	0.90% ▲
Production % C...	0.10% ▲
Construction % ...	0.70% ▼

Summary of Gross Domestic Product for the three months up to September 2026 (GDP) (UK).

Overall:

- Monthly GDP is an estimate of all final goods and services produced within a country's borders during a specific period typically a year or quarter.

Output growth:

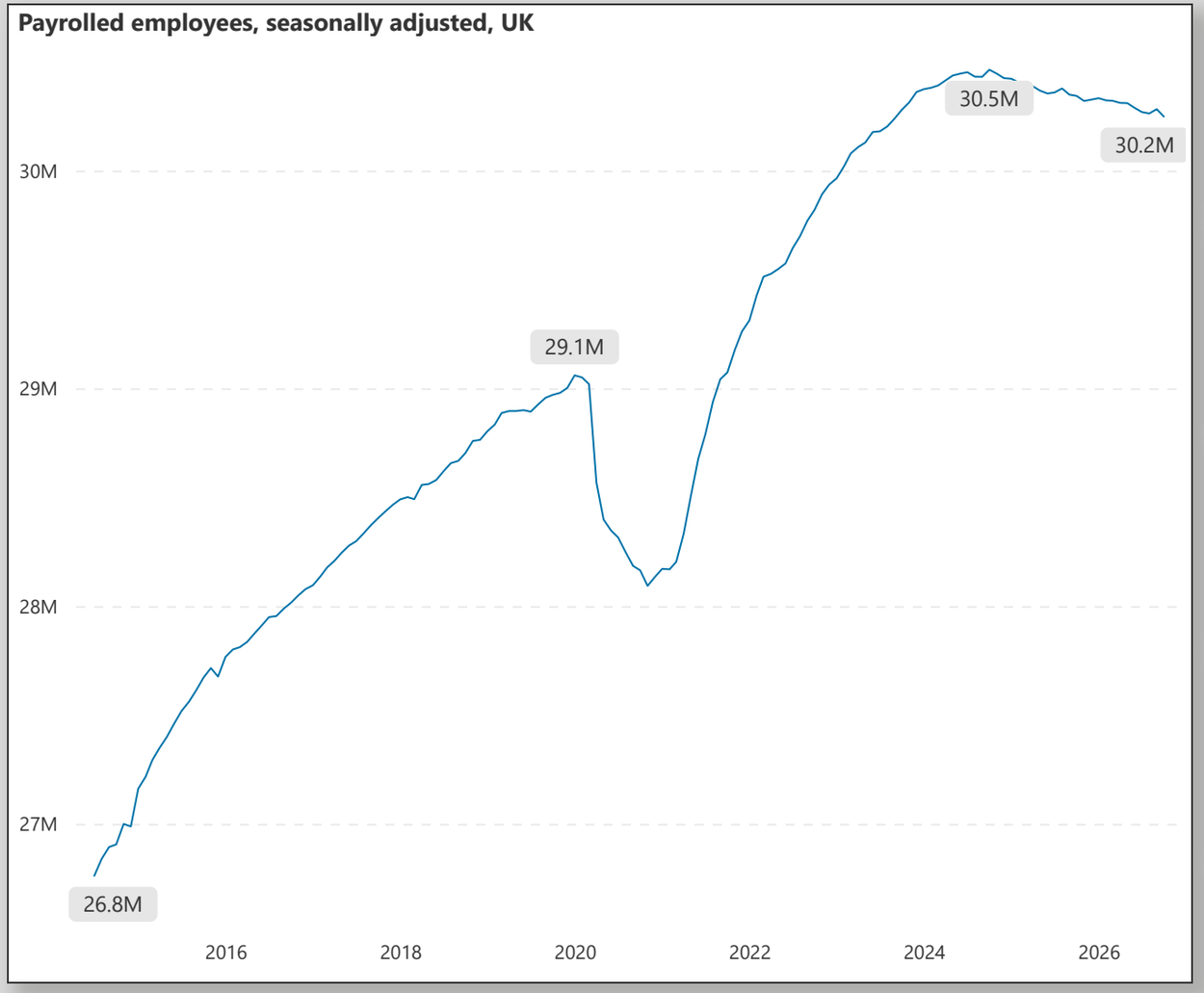
GDP growth is measured in three sectors:

- Services deals with a large and diverse grouping of industries that produce intangible economic output. This includes: wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles, information and communication, transportation and storage and many more.
- Production deals with industries at each stage of production (manufacturing, services and agriculture).
- Construction deals with the amount of output chargeable to customers for building and civil engineering.

Source: ONS, GDP Monthly Estimate

Released: 12 November 2026

Labour Market



No. of Payrolled Employees

30.2 million

Payrolled Employees % Change

0.30% ▼

Largest Sector Increase Change

52000 ▲

Largest Sector No Decrease

-79000 ▼

Monthly Median Pay % Change

4.60% ▲

Summary of Labour Market (UK).

Overall:

- Estimates are for October 2026 with the change being measured from the previous year.
- The largest increase sector was in administrative and support services sector.
- The largest decrease sector was in wholesale and retail sector.
- Median monthly median change is for October 2025 to October 2026.
- Annual growth in median pay in October 2026 was highest in the other services activities sector, with an increase of 5.6%. it was lowest in the professional, scientific and technical sector, with a increase of 3.4%.

Source: ONS, Earning and Employment from Pay As You Earn

Released: 17 November 2026

Business Trading

Turnover % Change in Previous Month	Concern on Fuel Prices	Goods and services bought
14% ▲	71.00%	32% ▲

Goods and services sell expectations %	Goods and services sell	Concern regarding falling demand
15% ▲	11% ▲	16% ▲

Summary of business insights and impact on the UK economy.

This data is the final results from Wave 166 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) which was live 2 to 15 November 2026.

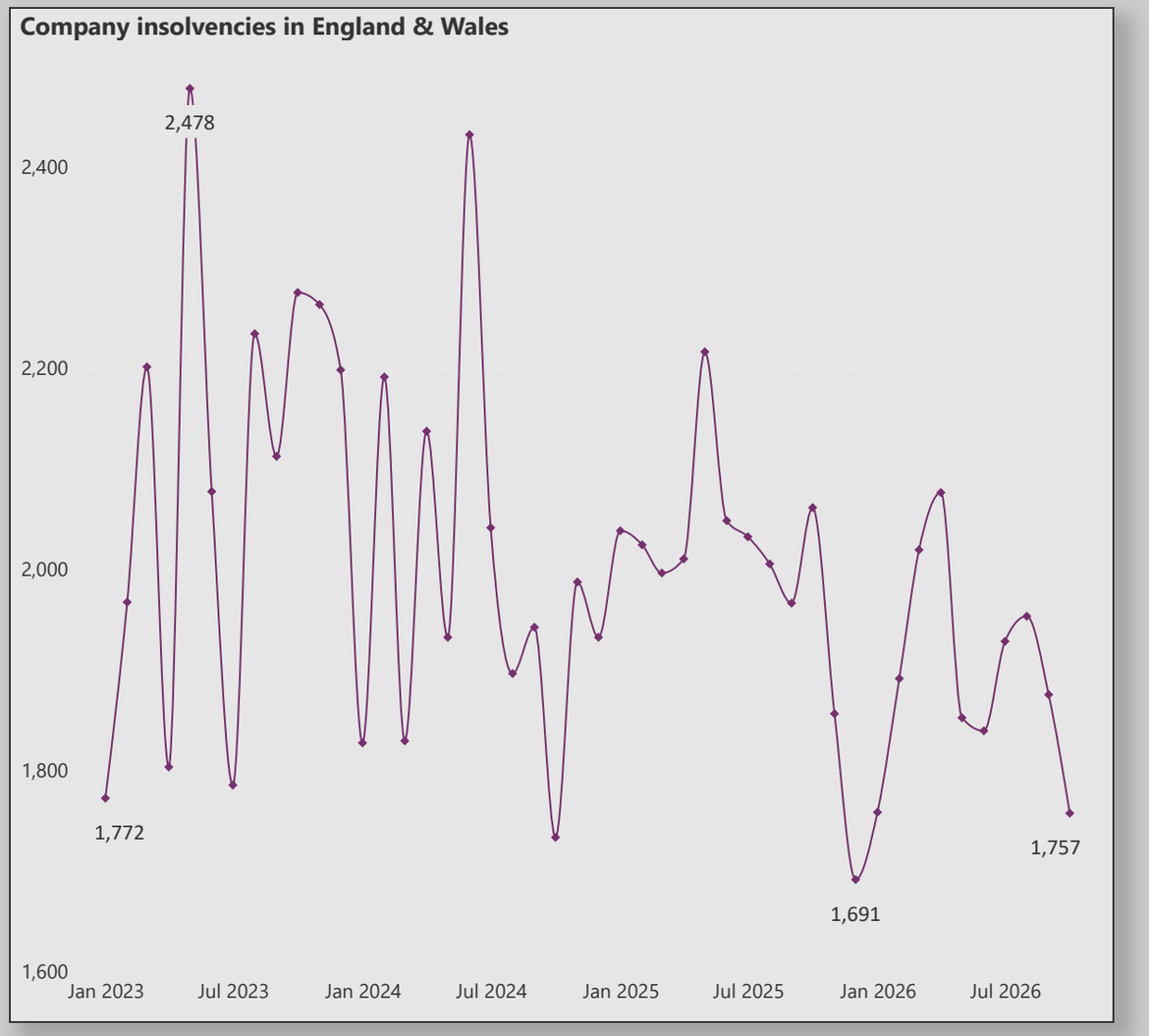
Overall:

- All figures shown above are for trading businesses.
- Goods and services bought and sold refer to the previous month of October 2026 while goods and services expectation refer to what businesses expect prices to be in the next month of December 2026.

Source: ONS, Business insights and impact on the UK economy

Released: 19 November 2026

Business Closures (Company)



Company insolvancies No

1757 ▼

Insolvancy % Change

6.00% ▼

Administrations

136

Compulsory liquidations

301

Creditors' voluntary liquidations

1307

Company voluntary arrangements

13

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

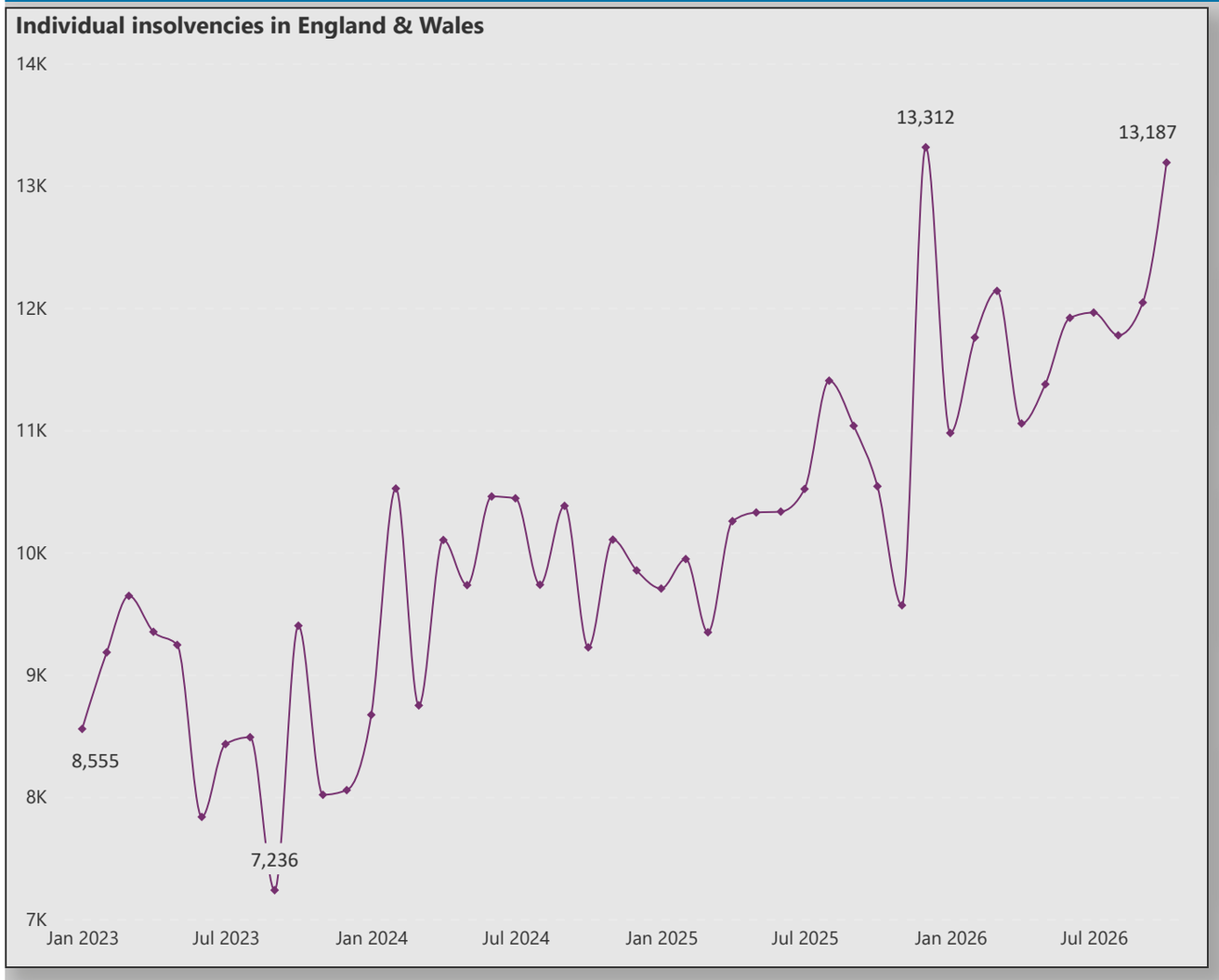
Overall:

- Company insolvencies figures are for England and Wales for the month of October 2026.

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

Released: 17 November 2026

Business Closures (Individual)



Individual insolvancies No

13187 ▲

Bankruptcies

696

Debt relief orders

4,064

Individual volunary arrangements

8,427

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

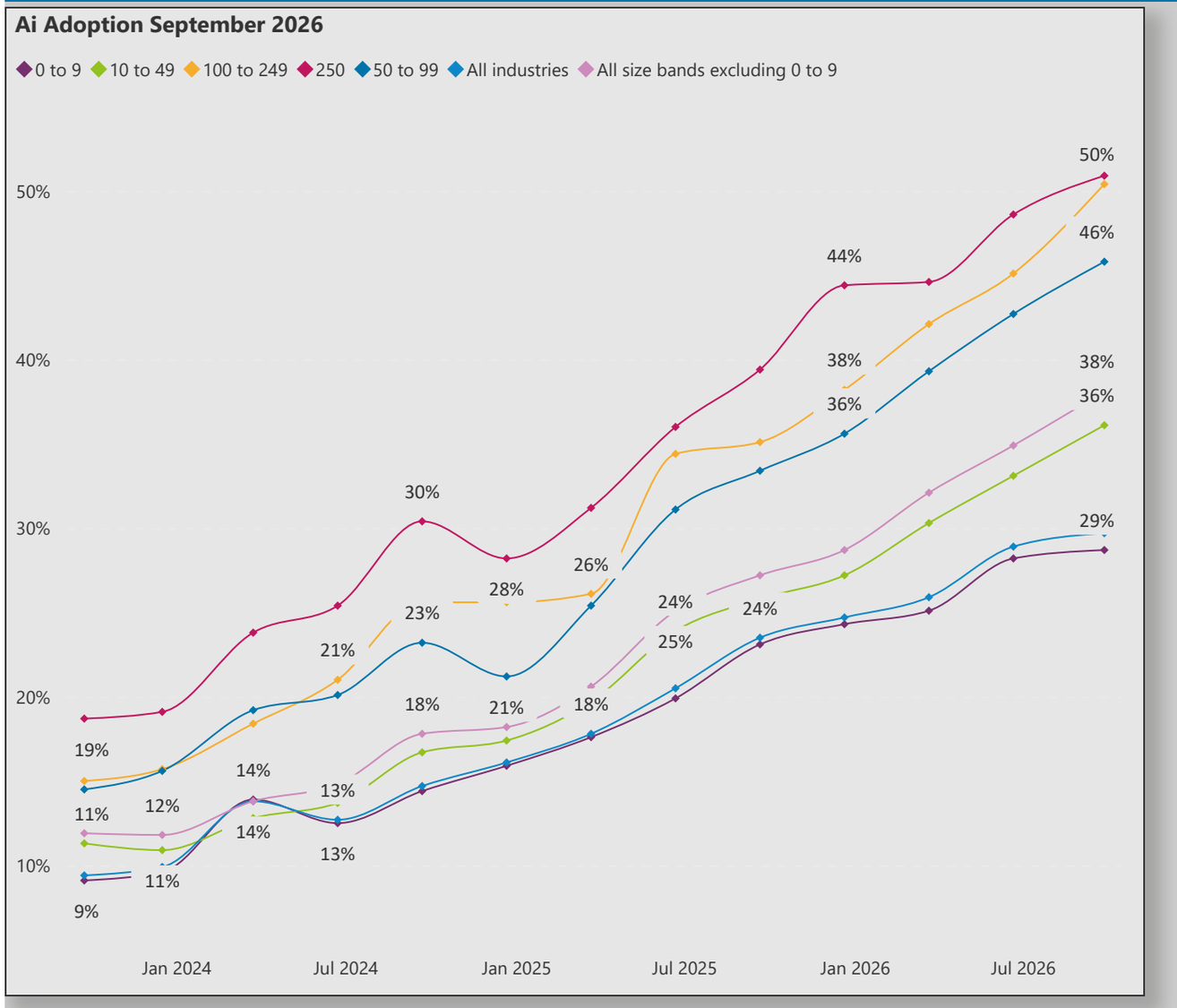
Overall:

- Individual insolvencies figures are for England and Wales for the month of October 2026.

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

Released: 17 November 2026

AI Adoption



Source: Business insights and impact on the UK economy

Released: 8 October 2026

AI Adoption across the UK September 2026

- 30% of businesses reported use of at least one type of AI technology.
- 20% up since the question was introduced in September 2023.
- AI Adoption is consistently higher for larger businesses.
- The most common AI technology used was were text generation using large language models at 21% and visual content creation at 19%.