

Economic update - March 2024

Key points

- Median monthly earnings, at £2,172 in the county (December 2023 - from PAYE), are considerably lower than national (UK=£2,365) and regional (£2,503) averages. However the annual increase to December 2023 is similar to the national average (up 6.8% in East Sussex and 6.7% in the UK).
- Employment rates (PAYE employees as a percentage of working age people aged 16-64) are lower in all districts and boroughs of East Sussex than the national and regional averages: lowest in Hastings and Rother and highest in Wealden.
- In East Sussex in 2022 there were 24,015 active businesses, down from 24,335 in 2021. There were more business closures (2,335) than business starts (2,185).
- There are now 10,950 people (January 2024) receiving benefits because they are unemployed (JSA or Universal Credit (UC) searching for work) down 2.5% from 11,235 in January 2023. This compares to a 5.5% *increase* in unemployed claimants nationally over the year.
- 48,814 people in East Sussex are now receiving UC (any conditionality), 38,423 of whom are not included in the unemployed Claimant Count above (i.e. not 'Searching for work') in January 2024. This is an increase of 5.5% since January 2023, but this is lower than the national rise of 10.7%
- The economy of East Sussex generated £9.9 billion in 2021, or £18,039 per head (UK £30,221 per head). Total GVA increased by 7.1% between 2020 and 2021, equal to the rise in the UK as a whole, and in 2021 was 13.9% higher than in 2016.
- In 2021, 238,540 of working aged people (16-64) in East Sussex were economically active (76.2% of all residents aged 16-64). This compares with 75.4% of working age in England who were economically active.
- In 2021, the county had a higher proportion of people who were self-employed, with 15.7% of working aged people compared to 11.2% nationally. 17.8% of working aged people in Wealden were self-employed.
- In 2021 the largest sector in the county in terms of employment was Human health and social work, which employed 17.6% of people, up from 15.5% in 2011, whereas the proportion working in Wholesale, retail and motors, which was the largest sector in 2011, fell from 16.0% in 2011 to 14.3% in 2021.

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Labour market & skills

Claimant count

jobcentreplus

In East Sussex in January 2024 there were:
10,950 Unemployed claimants of JSA and UC
(3.5% of working age people, lower than England with 3.8%)

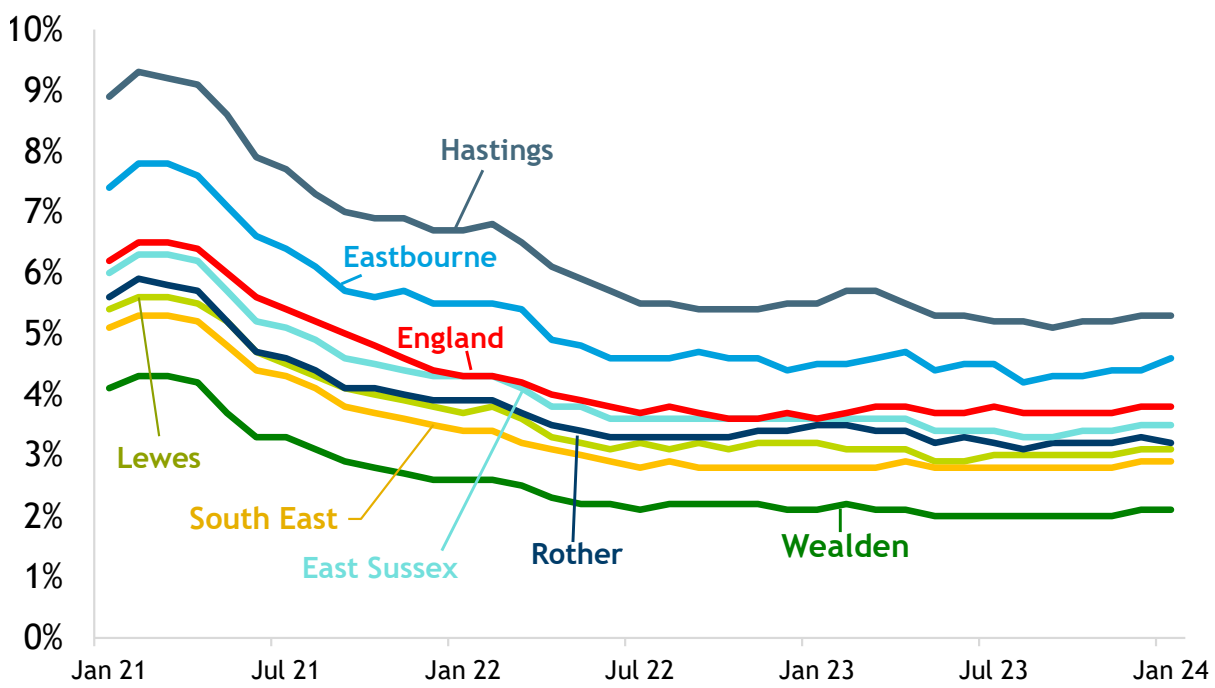
Down 285 (2.5%) since January 2023
Up 115 (1.1%) since December 2023

In January 2024 Hastings has the highest claimant rate in the county with 5.4% of working age people claiming UC/JSA because of unemployment.

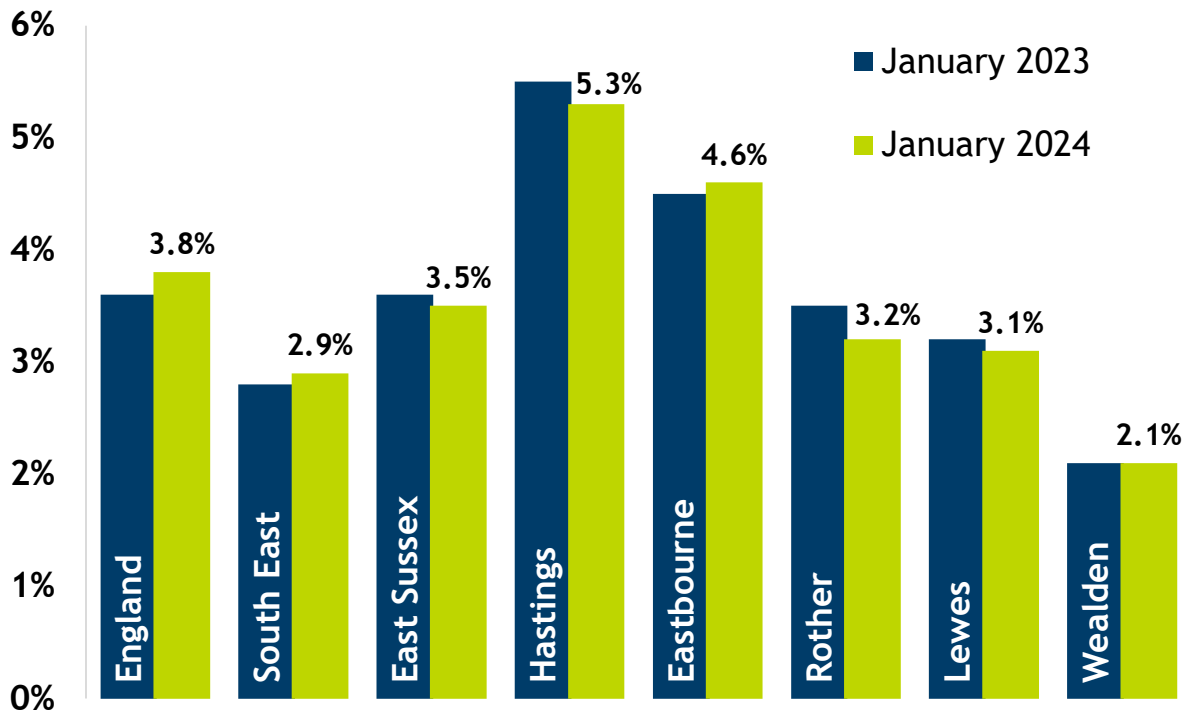
Eastbourne rates are also above the national average with unemployed UC/JSA claimants making up 4.6% of the working age population.

[See [note 1](#)]

Claimant rates in East Sussex by district, January 2021-2024

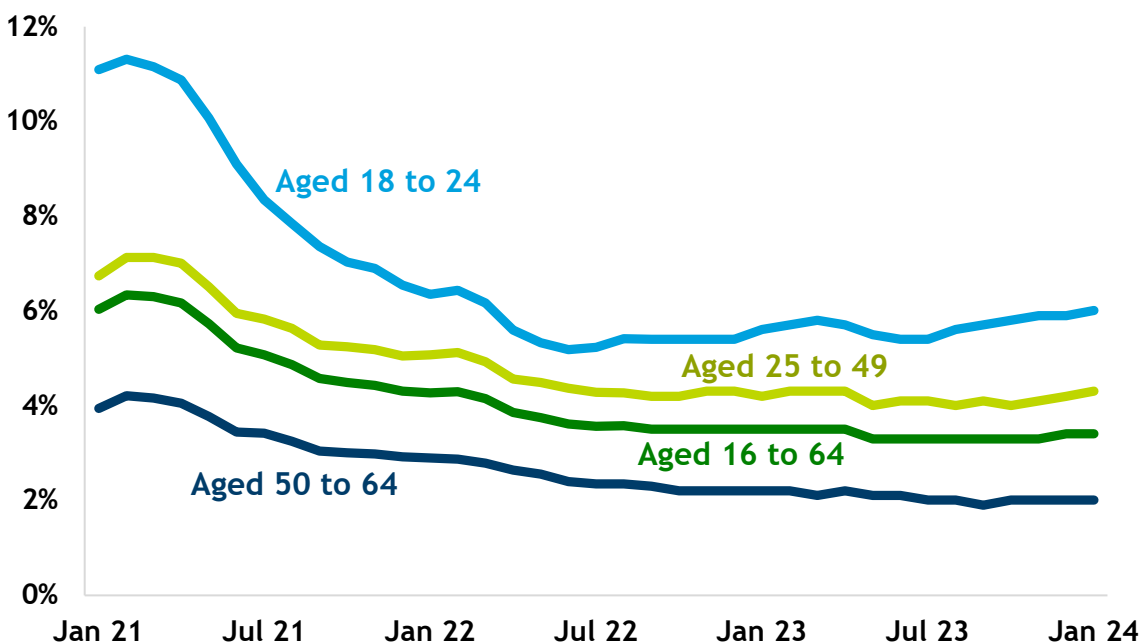


Claimant rates, England, South East, East Sussex and districts, January 2023 and 2024



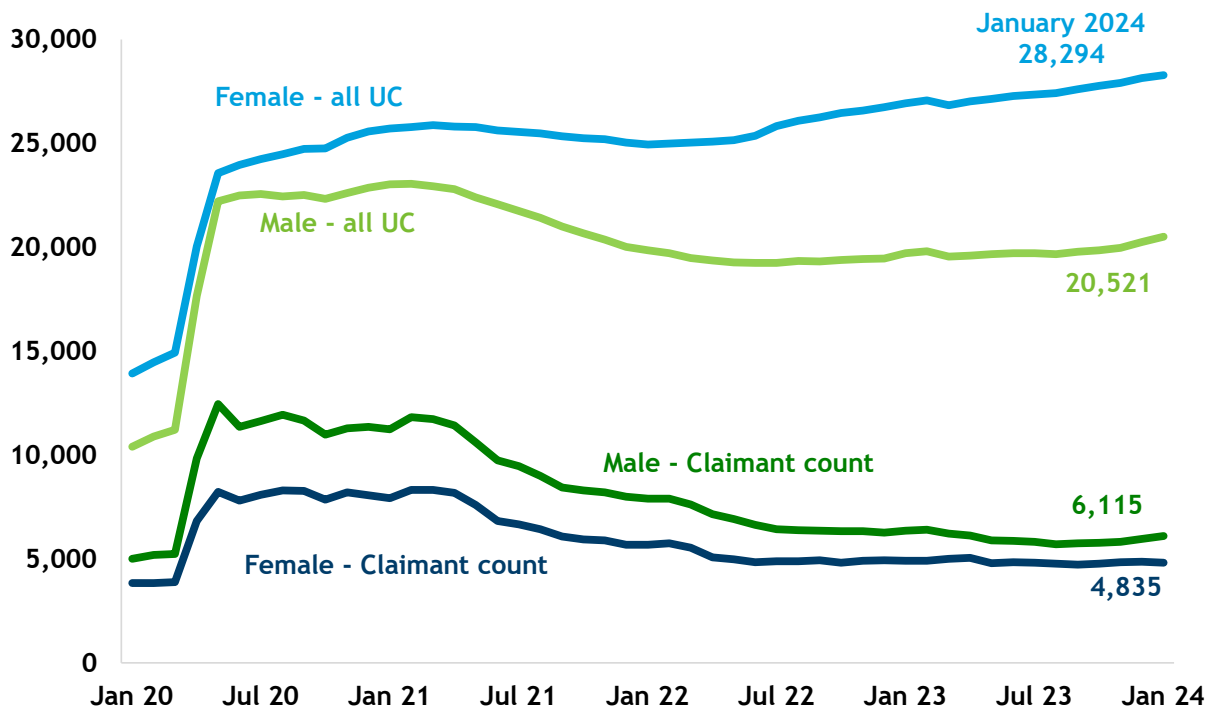
- In East Sussex, overall claimant numbers have fallen by 2.5% over the past year, from 11,235 in January 2023 to 10,950, with claimant rates falling from 3.6% to 3.5% in the county. This compares to the picture for England as a whole, where there was a rise in claimant numbers of 5.5% over the same period, and rates rose from 3.6% in January 2023 to 3.8% in January 2024.

Claimant rates in East Sussex, all working age and broad age groups, January 2021-2024



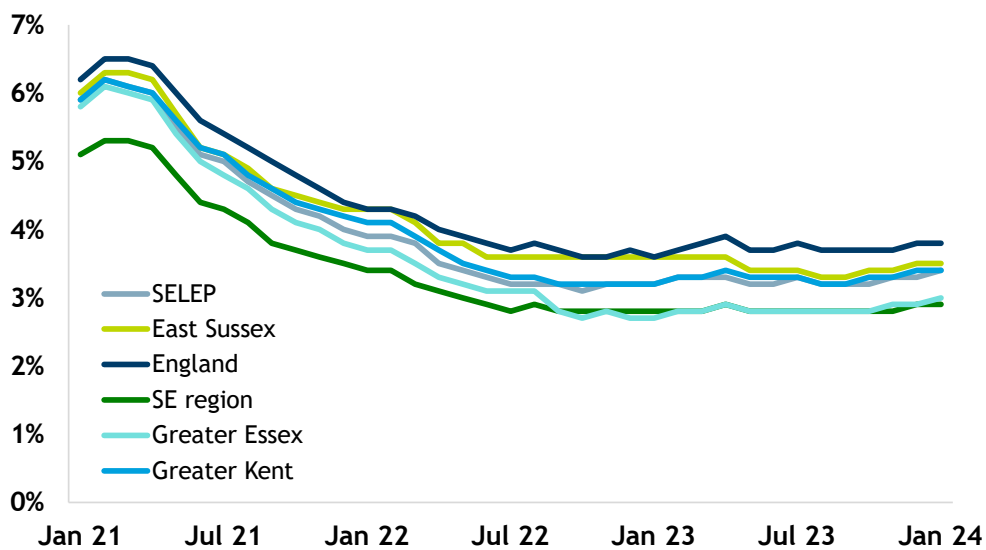
- Youth unemployment has seen an increase in the year to January 2024 with the number of UC/JSA claimants aged 18-24 in East Sussex rising from 1,995 in January 2023 to 2,035, an increase of 2.0% in the year to January 2024. But this is considerably lower than the national rise of 9.6% among young claimants over the same period.
- 6.0% of people aged 18-24 in East Sussex are now claiming UC/JSA (January 2024), and numbers rose by 45 (2.3%) in the month to January 2024. While the number of young male claimants rose by 4.1% between December 2023 and January 2024, the number of young female claimants did not change over this period.
- The highest levels of youth claiming are seen In Hastings, where 10.4% of young people are claiming UC/JSA, including 12.4% of young males in January 2024.

Male and female claimants of Universal Credit and UC/JSA unemployed claimant count, January 2020-2024, East Sussex



- While the number of male unemployed UC/JSA claimants is higher than the number of female claimants (see dark green - male and blue - female lines, labelled 'Claimant count', above), the number of female claimants in all UC conditionality groups (light blue line) is much higher than the number of males (light green line) claiming (see chart above), however numbers rose faster among male claimants in the month to January 2024 in both the unemployed UC/JSA and all UC groups.
- Claimant counts rose in Eastbourne (up 120), Hastings (up 20) and Wealden (up 20) but fell in Rother (down 35) and Lewes (down 15), in the month to January 2024.
- The largest percentage decrease in claimants since January 2023 was seen in Wealden (-8.7%). All East Sussex districts saw claimant numbers decline over the year with the exception of Eastbourne (up 2.6%), but this is still a smaller increase than the national rise of 5.5%.

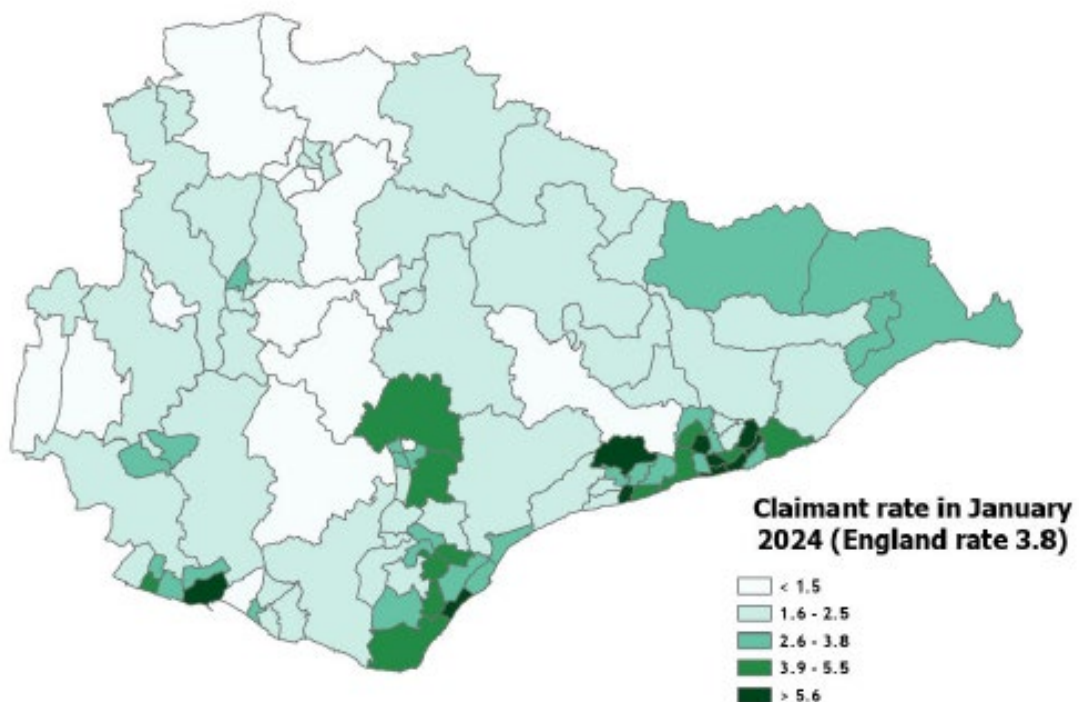
Claimant rates East Sussex, SELEP and comparators, January 2021 - 2024



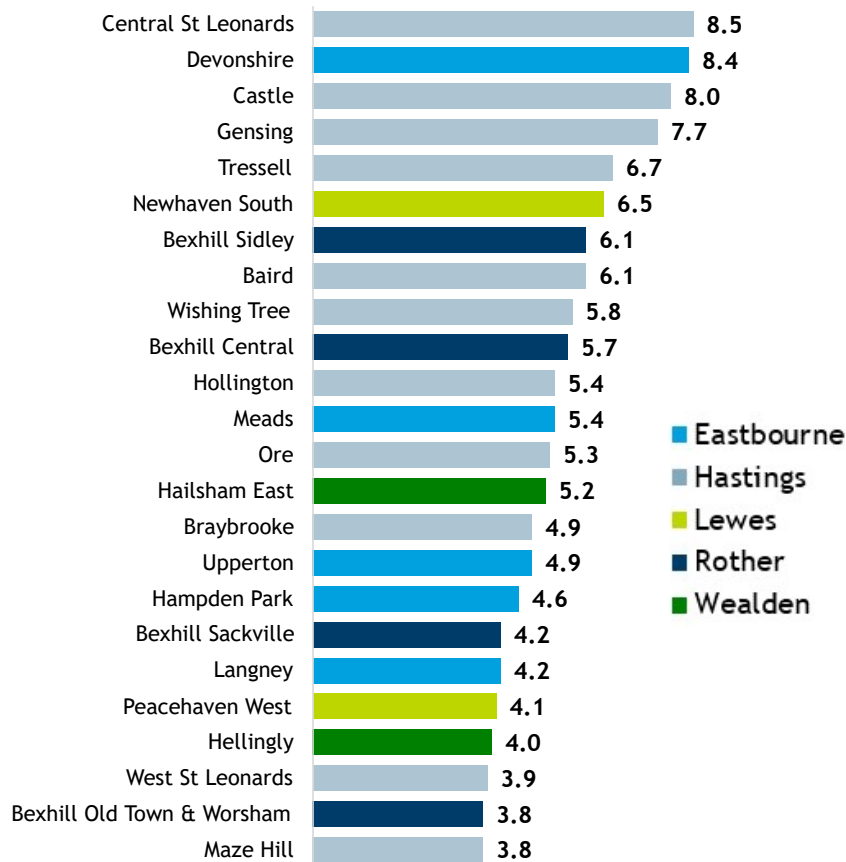
Wards

- 24 post 2019 wards (see map below and [note 2](#)) have rates above or at the England average (3.8%), with the highest rates in Central St Leonards (8.5%), Castle (8.0%) and Gensing (7.7%) in Hastings, and Devonshire (8.4%) in Eastbourne.
- This includes 11 wards in Hastings, 5 in Eastbourne, 4 in Rother, 2 in Lewes and 2 in Wealden, where Hellingly ward is now above the national average for the first time.
- 32 (post 2019) wards saw an increase in claimant numbers in the month to January 2024, while 27 wards saw a decline.

Map showing claimant rate in January 2024 by (post 2019) ward in East Sussex



Claimant rate in January 2024, (post 2019) wards above the national average (3.8%)



Universal Credit

UC

In East Sussex in January 2024 there were:

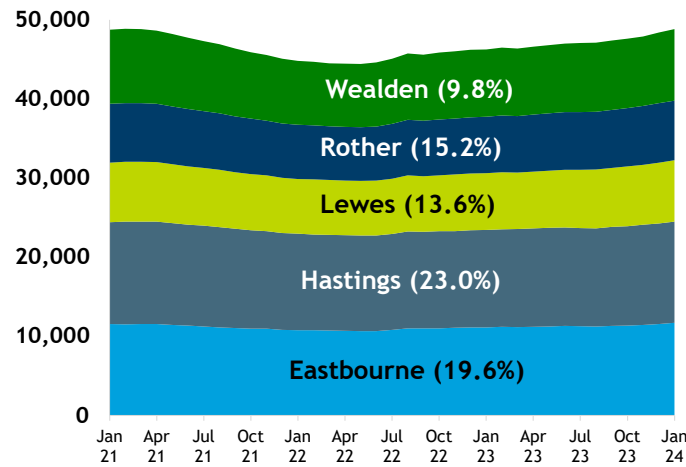
48,814 people claiming UC
(15.5% of working age people)

Up **2,556** (5.5%) since January 2023

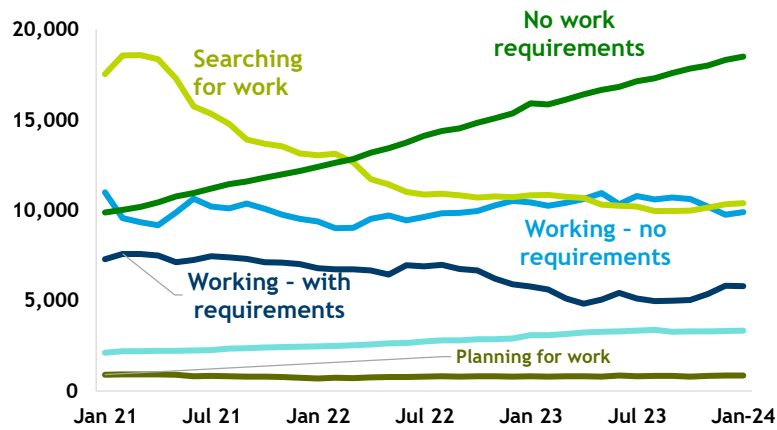
Up **407** (0.8%) since December 2023

In December 2023, **36.9%** of all UC claimants were in employment, down from 38.4% in December 2022
[see [note 3](#)]

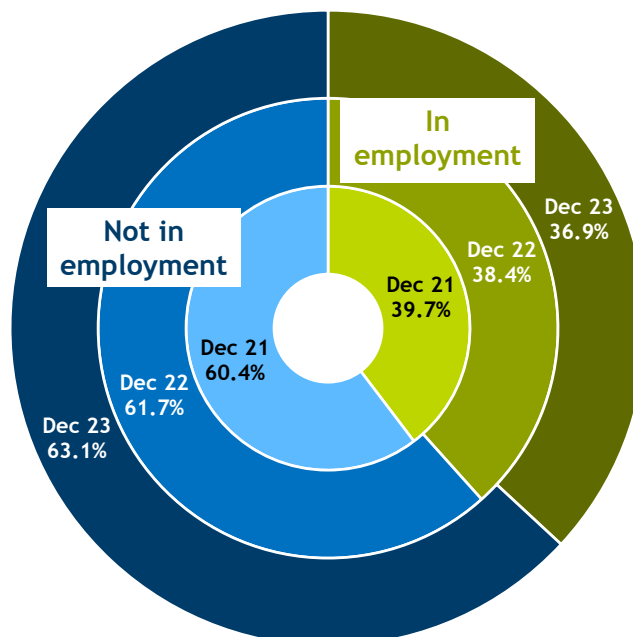
Universal Credit claimants by district, January 2021-2024 (inc % working age claiming in January 2024)



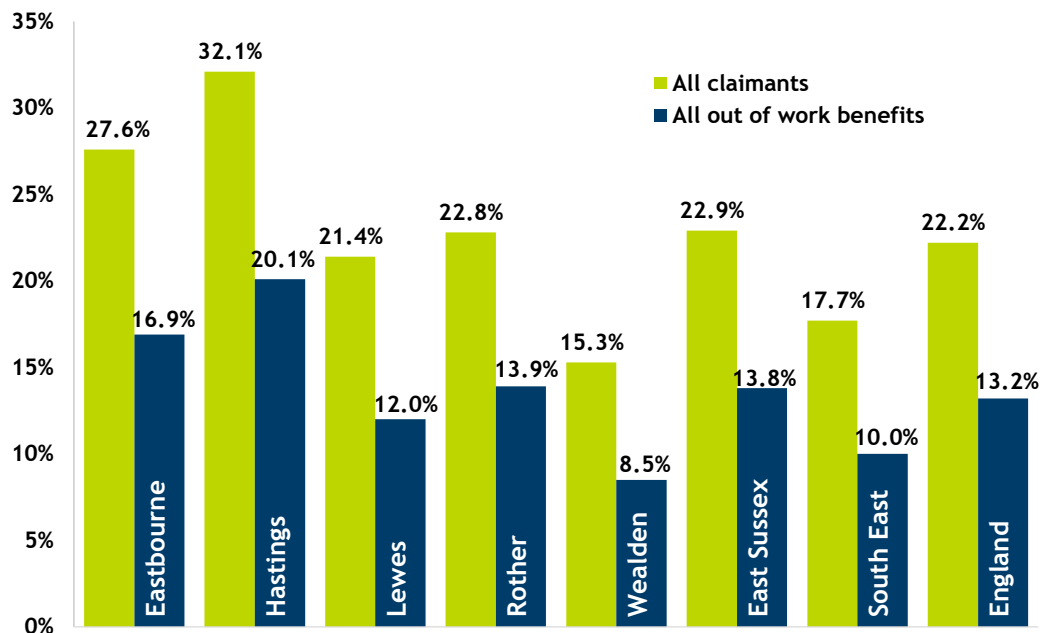
Universal Credit claimants by conditionality - January 2021 - 2024



Employment indicator of Universal Credit claimants in East Sussex - December 2021, 2022 and 2023



Percentage of working age people claiming any DWP benefit and Out-of-work benefits in August 2023, districts, East Sussex and comparators [see [note 4](#)]



Labour market - Census data

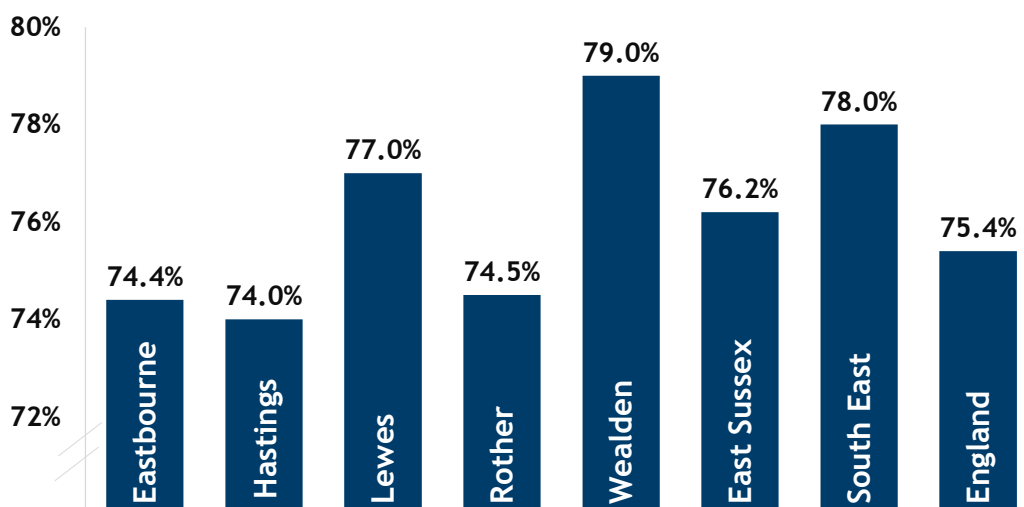
Census 2021 results are now available [see [note 5](#)]

Detailed data is now available for labour market variables from the 2021 Census.

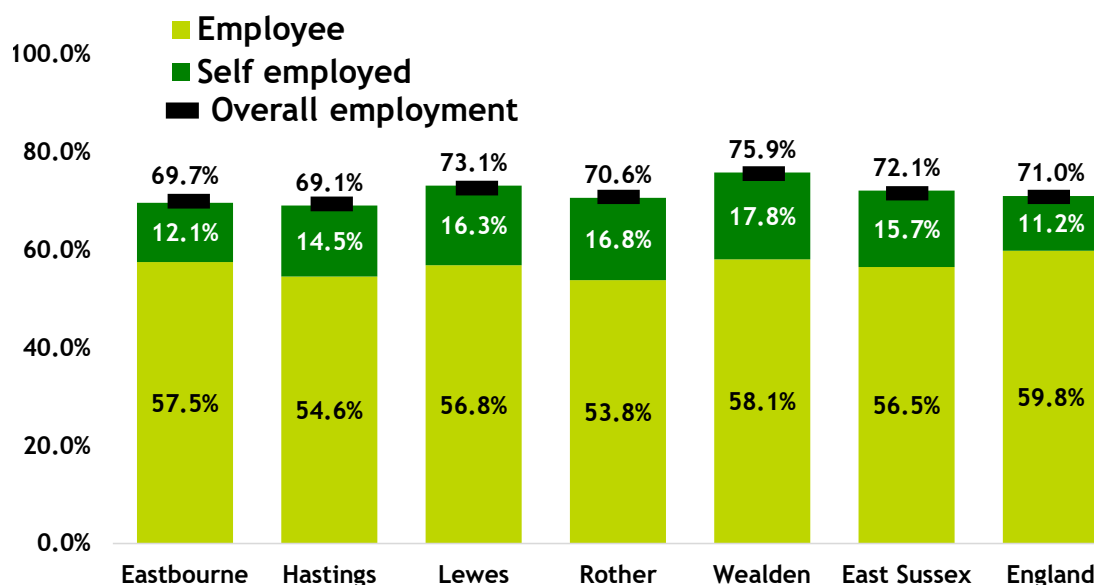
It is important to note that the 2021 Census took place during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, a period of unparalleled and rapid change; the national lockdown, associated guidance and furlough measures will have affected the labour market topic.

Note that the economically active population included people who were on furlough at the time of Census 2021, who were considered to be temporarily away from work. In East Sussex, HMRC data estimated that 32,100 employees were enrolled on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme at 31 March 2021, while 17,000 self-employed people made a claim to the fourth grant of the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme (30 April 2021).

Economic activity rates in 2021- percentage of the working age population (16-64) (note axis not at zero)



Employees and self-employed in 2021 (Aged 16-64)



Economic activity and inactivity

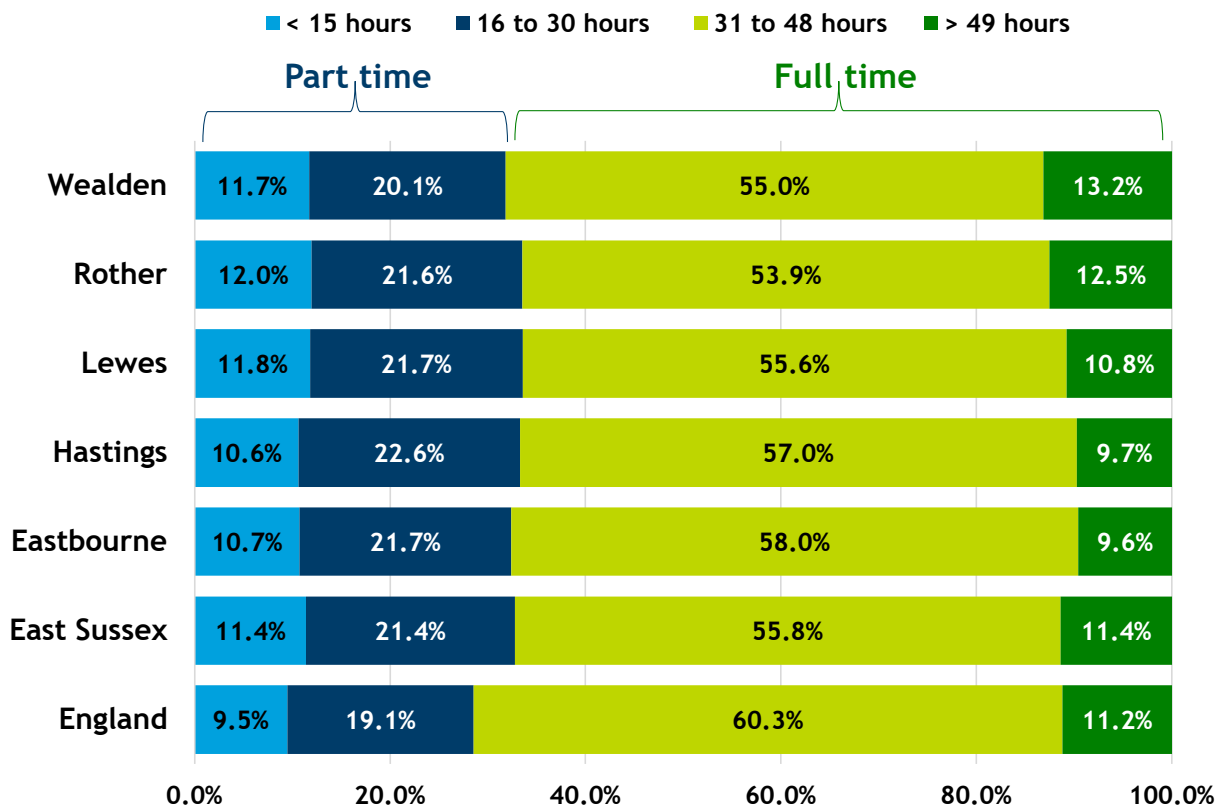
- Economic activity rates have fallen in all districts, regionally and nationally since 2011, and economic activity rates are lower across the county than the national average.
- 2021 there were 238,540 working age people in East Sussex who were economically active (76.2% of all people aged 16-64 years) of whom 225,900 were in employment (72.1% of people aged 16-64). This compares with 75.4% of 16-64 year olds in England who were economically active and 71.0% nationally who were in employment. Economic activity rates in the County were higher than the National average in Lewes and Wealden for working age people, but lower than the national average in all other districts.

- Wealden has the highest economic activity rate of the working age population in the County with 79.0% of those aged 16-64 being economically active in the district.

Employees and self-employment

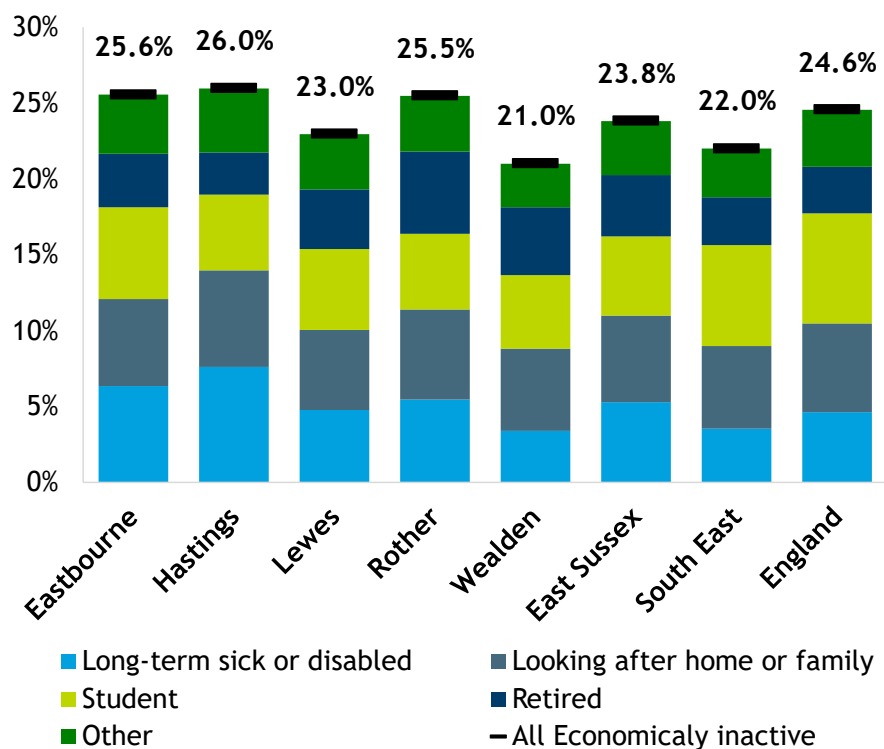
- A higher proportion of working age adults in East Sussex are self-employed (15.7%) compared to the national average (11.2%). Wealden had the highest rate of self-employed people aged 16-64 at 17.8%, but all districts had rates above the national average.
- 48.5% of employed adults (aged 16-64) in the county were working full-time (more than 31 hours per week) (50.8% in England) in 2021. 8.2% of the working age population of East Sussex were working very long hours (48 hours or more), compared to 7.9% nationally.
- There was a higher percentage of part-time workers (23.6%) in the county compared to the national average (20.3%).

Hours worked in 2021 (Aged 16-64)



Economic inactivity

Economically inactive in 2021 by type (working age 16-64)



- In 2021, 23.8% of the county's working age population (16-64) were economically inactive, compared to 24.6% in England.
- More than a quarter of the working age population are economically inactive in three of the county's districts (Hastings 26.0%, Eastbourne 25.6% and Rother 25.5%) compared to 24.6% of economically inactive 16-64-year-olds in England.
- In the county in 2021, 4.0% of the working age population was economically active and unemployed, compared to 4.4% nationally. The highest rates are in Hastings (5.0%) and Eastbourne (4.8%).
- While 5.3% of adults 16-64 in the county were inactive because they were long-term sick or disabled, similar to the national average (4.6%), in Hastings 7.6% were inactive for this reason, compared to just 3.4% in Wealden.

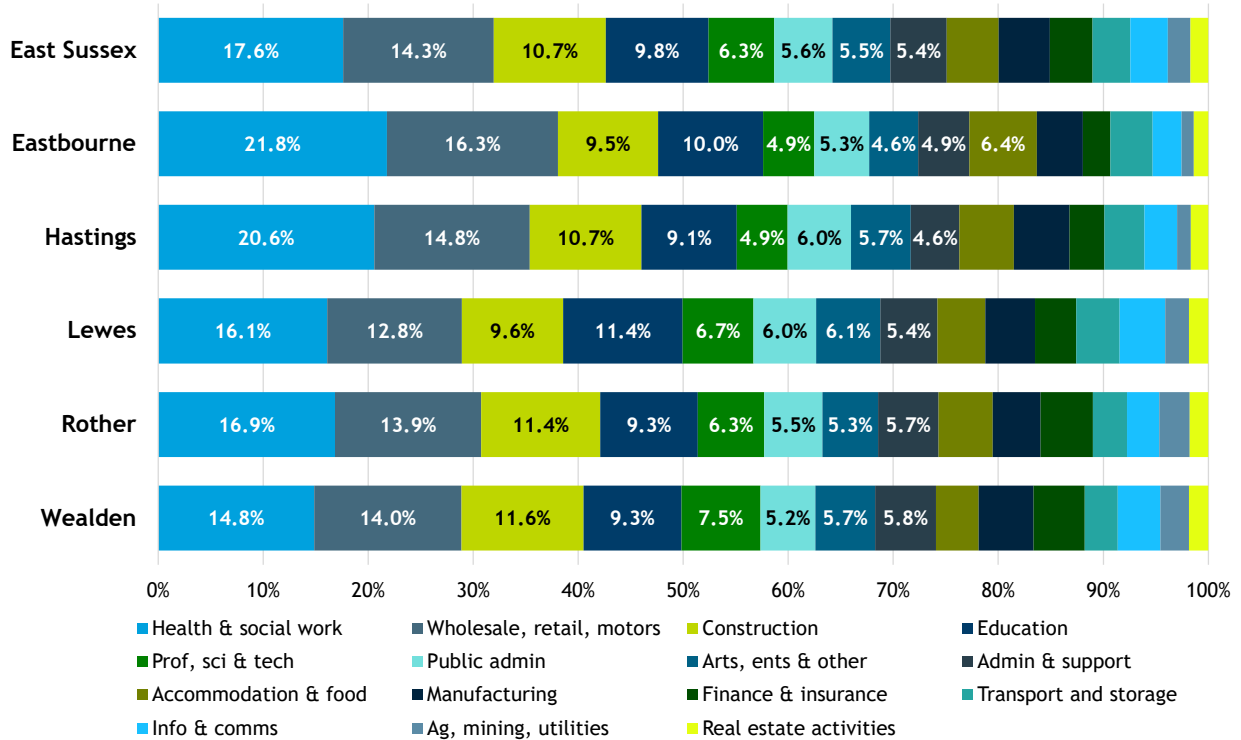
Industry of employment

- Employment in Health and social care, and Wholesale, retail and motors dominates in the county.
- The structure of the labour force has changed since 2011. In 2021 the largest sector in the county in terms of employment was Human health and social work, which employed 17.6% of people, up from 15.5% in 2011, whereas the proportion working in Wholesale, retail and motors, which was the largest sector in 2011, fell from 16.0% in 2011 to 14.3% in 2021. Once again, the pandemic maybe a factor in these changes.
- Eastbourne had the highest percentage of employed adults working in the Human health and social work sector (21.8%) of all districts/UAs in the country. It also has the

highest proportion (3.5%) of people working in the Residential care sub-sector.

- Hastings (2.2%) and Lewes (1.9%) had the highest proportion of people working in the Creative, arts and entertainment activities sub-sector outside of the London boroughs and Brighton and Hove.

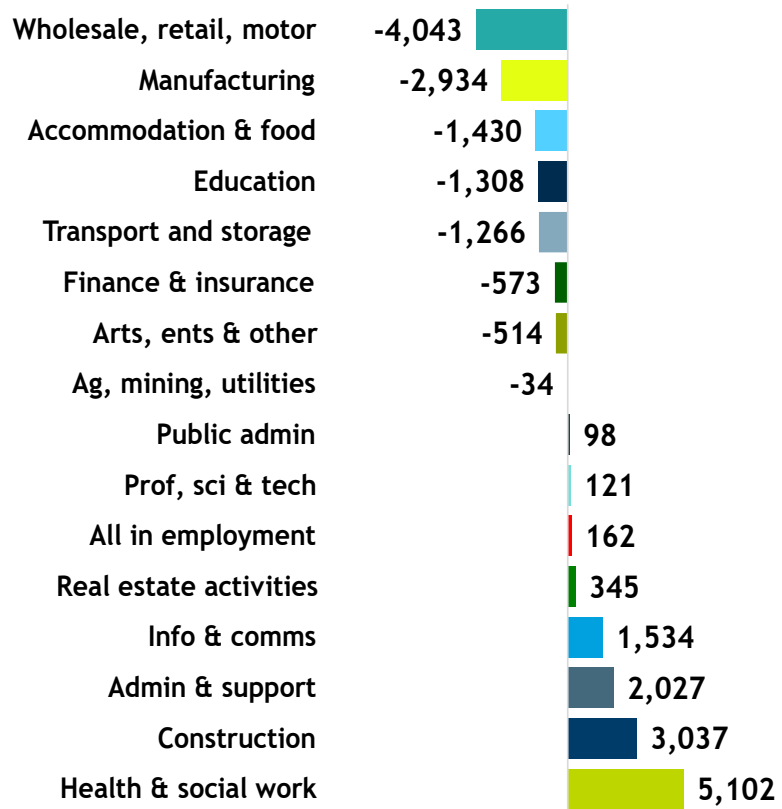
Percentage of people working in different industrial sectors in 2021



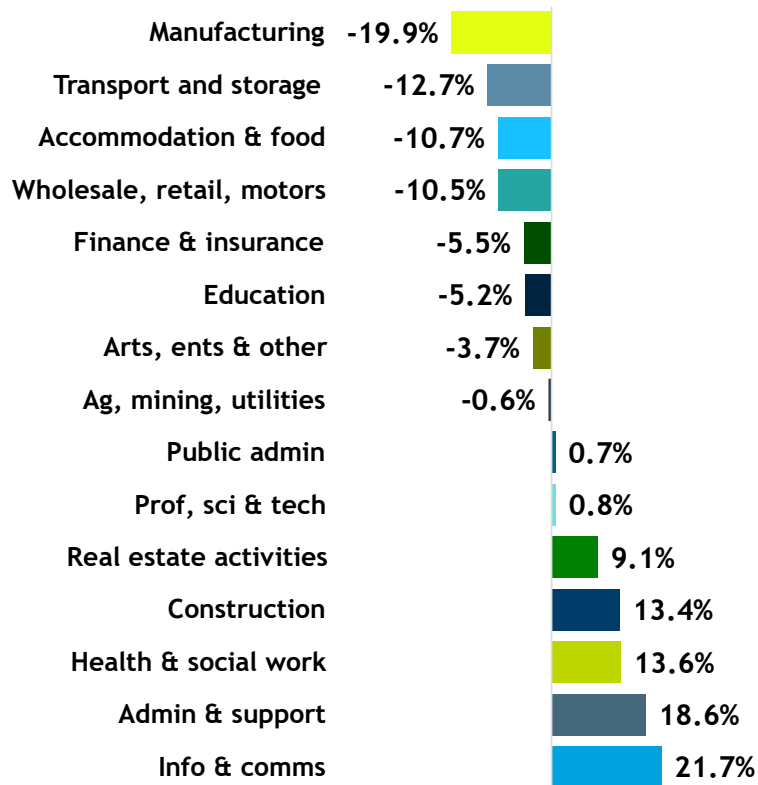
Industry of employment - change since 2011

- The sector that grew the most in East Sussex was Information and communication, where the number of people employed grew by 21.7% between 2011 and 2021, although this sector still only represents 3.6% of overall employment (up from 2.9% in 2011) (see charts below and previous page).
- The biggest fall was seen in the Manufacturing sector where the number employed declined by 19.9% over the 10 years (a steeper decline than in England where numbers fell by 14.3%).
- 4.9% were employed in Manufacturing in 2021, compared to 6.1% in 2011. The fall in manufacturing was greatest in Lewes, where 25.4% fewer people were employed in manufacturing in 2021 than in 2011.

Actual change in industry of employment in East Sussex, 2011-2021



Percentage change in industry of employment 2011-2021



Small area data on industry sectors from Census 2021

- At small area level (MSOA) some sectors are much larger in some parts of the county than in the country as a whole.
- Employment in the Residential Care sub-sector is much higher in parts of East Sussex than the rest of the country. The MSOA Eastbourne 010 (Pier) had the highest percentage of people in this sub-sector of all MSOAs in the country at 6.0%, with four MSOAs in the county being among the highest 20 MSOAs nationally for employment in Residential Care.
- Hastings 011 (Central St Leonards) had 5.5% of people employed in the Creative, Arts and Entertainment sector, the highest proportion of any MSOA in the country outside London.
- In broad industry sections, more than a quarter of adults in Eastbourne 010 (Pier) and Eastbourne 008 (Upperton) were working in the Human Health and Social Work sector.

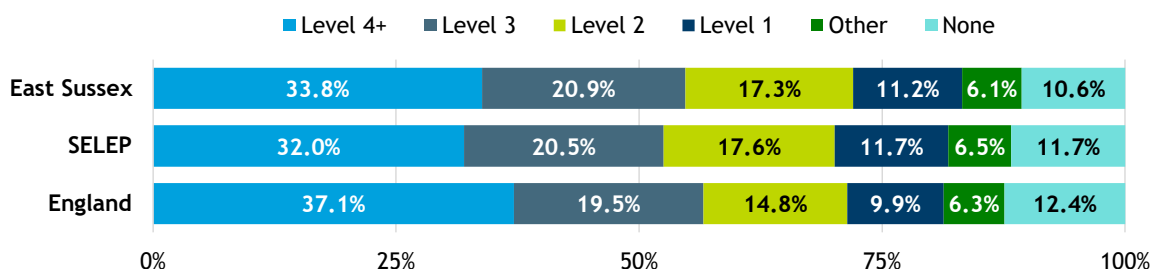
Skills

census2021

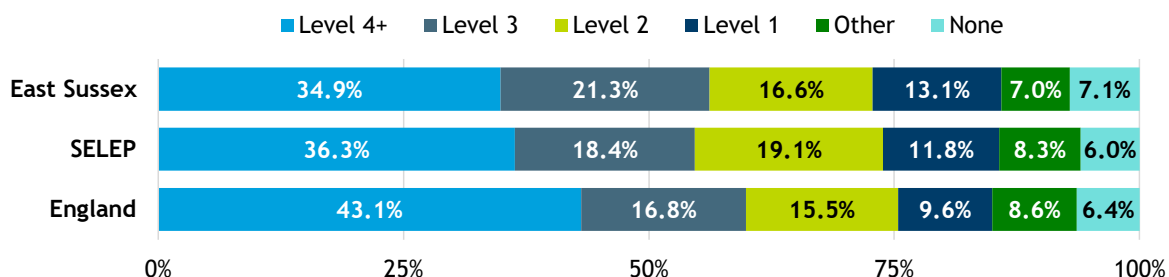
Qualifications

- In 2021, a lower proportion of working-age (aged 16-64) people in the county had level 4 qualifications than nationally, whether we look at the Census 2021 data or the Annual Population Survey (APS).
- A slightly lower proportion of working age people had no qualifications compared to England when we look at the data from Census 2021. However, a slightly higher proportion of working-age people in East Sussex appeared to have no qualifications in December 2021 when looking at the APS.

Qualifications of the population aged 16-64 (highest qualification), Census 2021 [see [note 6](#)]



Qualifications of the working-age population (aged 16-64) (highest qualification), December 2021 (from Annual Population Survey)



Census key points

- The overall number of schoolchildren and full-time students aged five years and over has decreased since 2011, when it was 88,250. While the proportion of students as a percentage of the total population aged 5 and over has remained largely static in England (20.4% in 2021 vs 20.5% in 2021), in East Sussex, it has fallen from 17.7% in 2011 to 16.8% in 2021.
- 33.8% of residents aged 16-64 years (105,930 people) had NVQ Level 4 or above qualifications (for example, Higher National Certificate, Higher National Diploma,

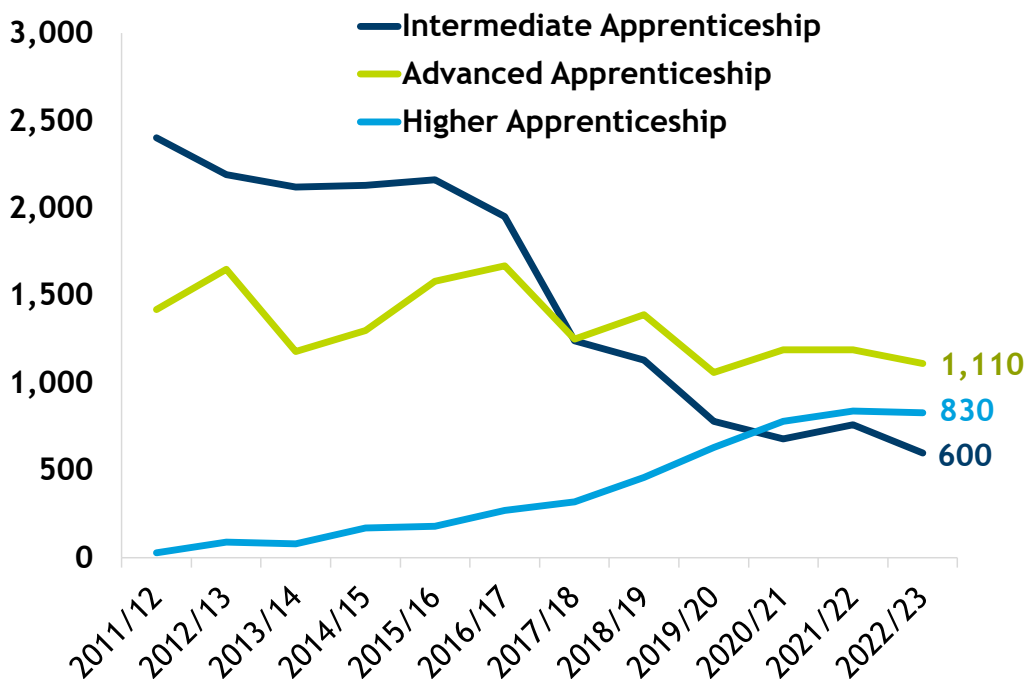
Bachelors degree and post -graduate qualifications). This is slightly lower than the English national average (37.1%).

- In 2021, 10.6% of the population aged 16 to 64 (33,310 people) reported having no qualifications. This is lower than the English national average of 12.4%.
- Apprenticeships were the highest qualification for 4.3% of working age people (13,610).
- Within East Sussex, the district with the highest percentage of the working age population with Level 4 or above qualifications was Lewes with 37.4% (21,220) and the lowest percentage was Hastings, with 30.6% (17,220).
- Comparisons between 2011 and 2021 data for highest level of qualifications are not possible due to changes in how the questions were asked. (see charts on p.13 and [note 6](#) at end).

Apprenticeships

- There were 2,540 apprenticeship starts in East Sussex in the year 2022/2023, 9% lower than the previous year.
- Apprenticeships at all levels saw a decline in the year, with the largest drop being in intermediate level apprenticeships (down 21.1%). [see [note 7](#)].

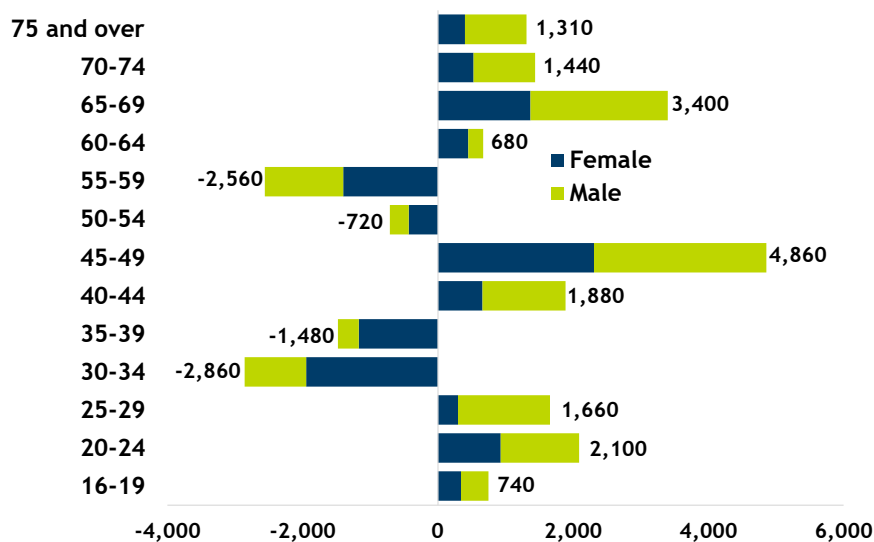
East Sussex apprenticeship starts, 2011-2023



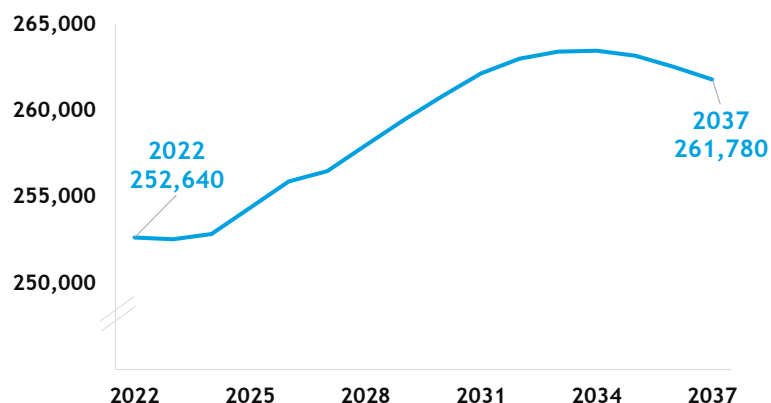
Workforce projections

- The labour force (economically active people aged 16-74) is expected to increase by 3.6% (by 9,140) to about 261,800 people in 2037, but although there is only projected to be a small rise, of 1.7%, in younger workers up to age 59, there is expected to be a 15% increase in the labour force aged 60-74, reflecting changes to pension ages and increasing female participation in the workforce as well as rising numbers of older people due to the ageing of the baby boom generations. [see [note 8](#)]
- When we look at detailed age groups (see next page) the largest rises are projected among the oldest age groups (aged 65-69 - up 3,400) and the 45-49 age group (up 4,860), with smaller rises among the youngest workers (aged 16-29). Significant decreases are projected among the 30-34 age group (down 2,860), and among those aged 55-59 (down 2,560).

Actual change in labour force numbers by age group and sex, 2022-2037



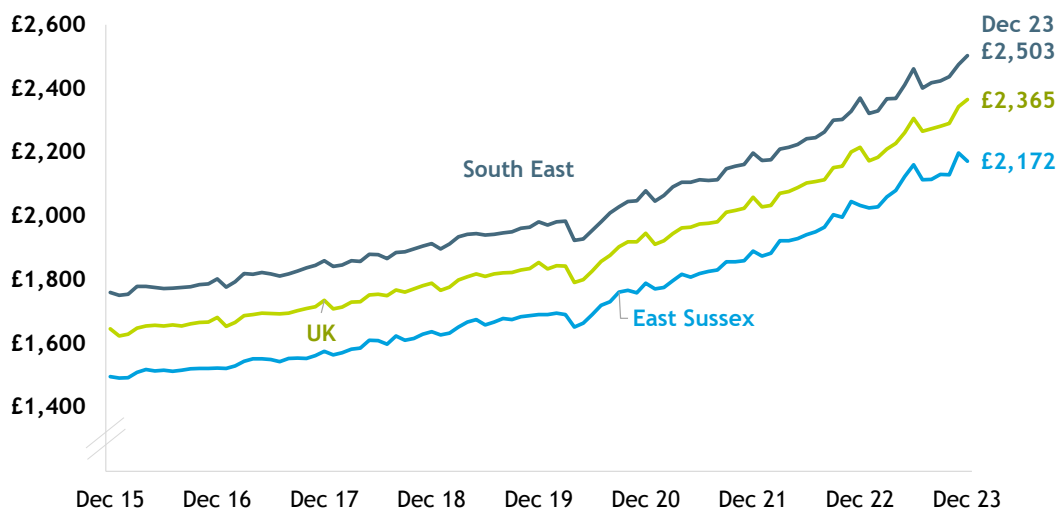
Workforce projections for East Sussex (dwelling-led) - projected number of economically active people aged 16-74 [[see note 9](#)]



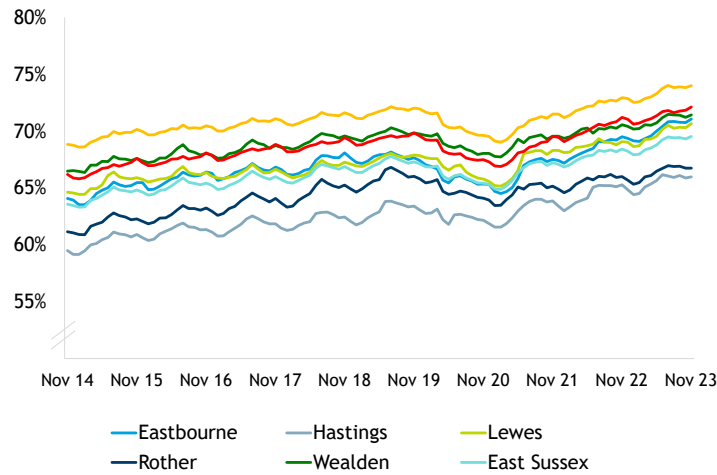
Wages and employment £

- At £624pw, there is comparatively low full-time workplace pay in the county (from ASHE - England £684pw, SE region £704 pw) but it has increased significantly since 2020, and by 7.5% between 2022 and 2023, faster than the national average (England FT pay up by 5.7%) [see [note 10](#)] for more information and see chart on page 17.
- Employment rates (PAYE employees as a percentage of working age people aged 16-64) are lower in all districts and boroughs of East Sussex than the national and regional averages: lowest in Hastings and Rother and highest in Wealden (see chart bottom left) [see [note 11](#)].
- At 217,529 the number of employees in December 2023 is marginally lower than the peak seen in November 2023 (218,679).
- Median monthly earnings at £2,172 in the county (December 2023) are also considerably lower than national (UK=£2,365) and regional (£2,503) averages (see chart below), but saw an annual increase equal to the average - up 6.8% in East Sussex and 6.7% in the UK since December 2022.
- Wages are lower than average because the dominant sectors for employment in the county: Health; Wholesale, retail and motors; and Accommodation and Food are all below the national average wage and are lowest in the Accommodation and Food sector (excl. Household sector - see chart p.22).

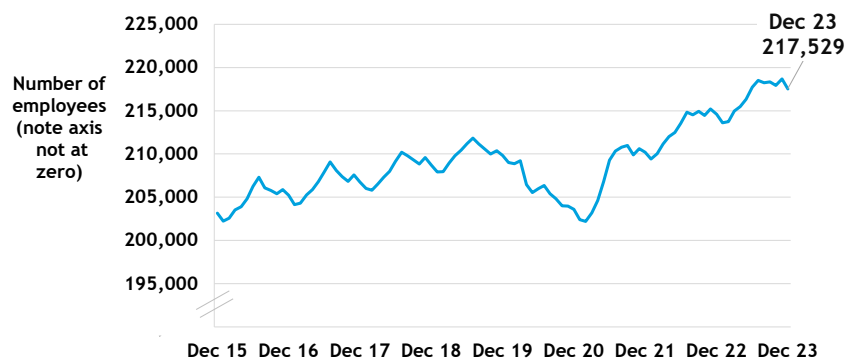
Median monthly earnings from PAYE Real Time Information (RTI), December 2015-2023 (note axis not at zero)



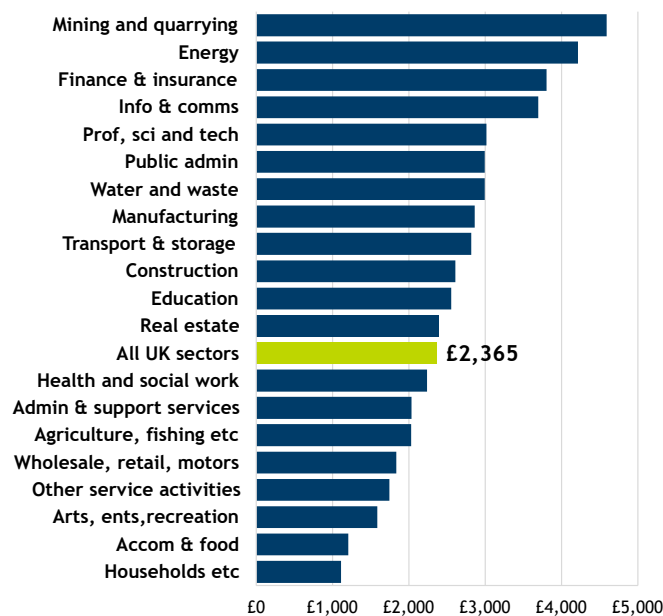
Employment rate from PAYE RTI (employees per working age, 16-64), November 2014-2023 (note axis not at zero)



Total number of employees (PAYE RTI) August 2015-August 2023, East Sussex [see [note 11](#)]

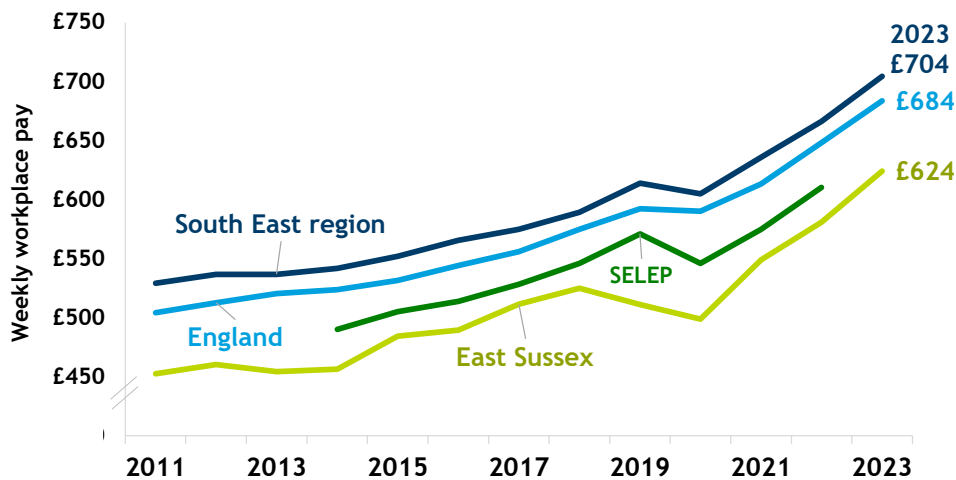


Median monthly pay by industry (PAYE RTI) in the UK, December 2023



Workplace-based median full-time weekly earnings, 2011-2023

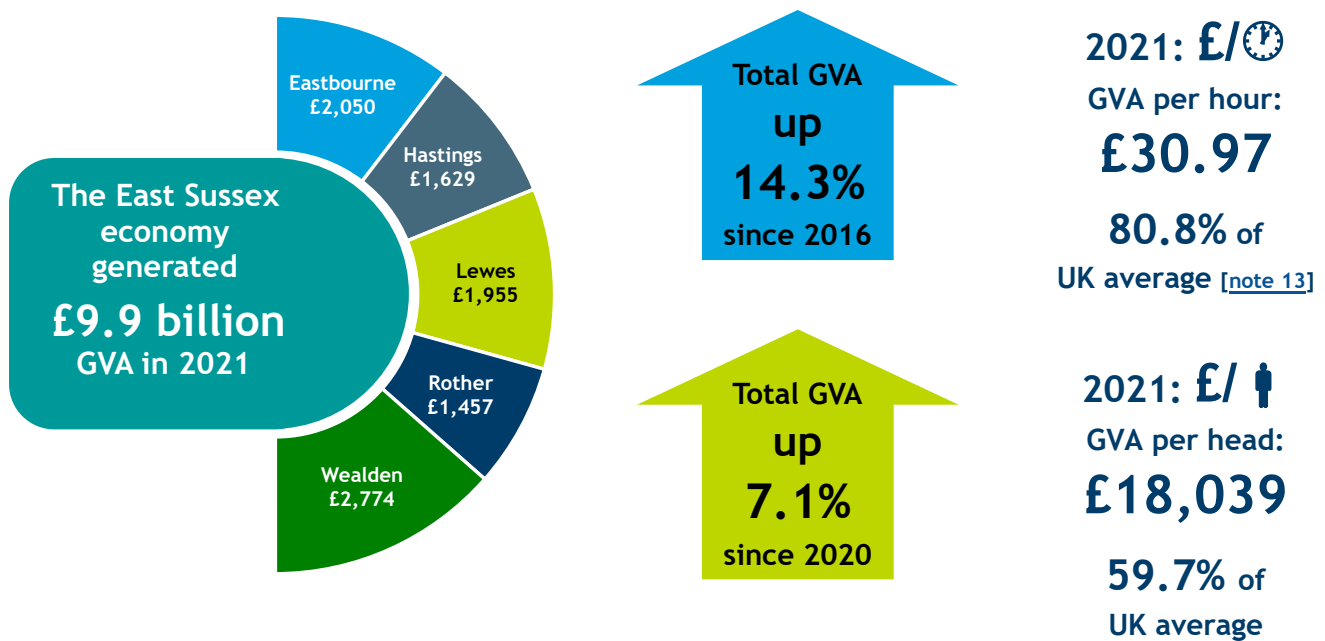
[from ASHE - see [note 10](#)]







Gross Value Added

- Total GVA grew by 36.7% in the county between 2011 and 2021, slightly lower than growth of 38.8% in the UK as a whole and 39.6% in the SE region [see [note 12](#)].
- GVA per head in the county grew from £16,489 in 2020 to £18,039 in 2021. In 2021 it was just 59.7% of the UK figure of £30,221. The rise of 9.4% was larger than the national increase in GVA per head. But because revised 2021 Census based population estimates for the period 2012-2020 have not yet been released, ONS recommend treating changes in GVA with caution - see note.
- While Real estate is the largest sector in the county at 26% of GVA, if we take out 'Owner-occupied imputed rental' (OOIR - [see [note 13](#)]), which reflects property prices in an area, Health, Wholesale, retail and motors, and Education are the largest sectors.
- There is much variation at district level, especially when OOIR is not included. For example, Health and Social work make up 22% of the GVA of Eastbourne compared to 9% in Lewes and Wealden.
- Transportation and Storage (up 42%), Agriculture, mining and utilities (up 26%) and Construction (up 25%) were the industries seeing the largest growth in the county in 2020-21.

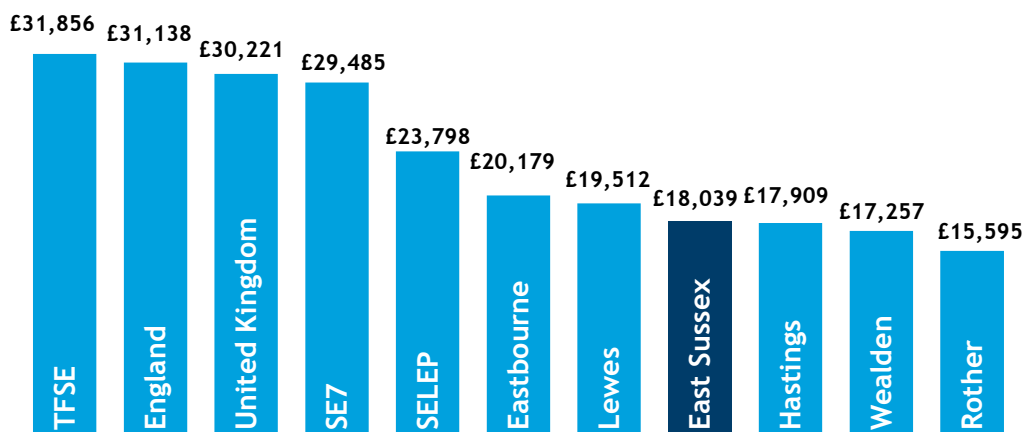
Gross Value Added (GVA) infographic



4 sectors account for more than half of total GVA in East Sussex (2021):

-  Real Estate - including owner occupiers imputed rental (25%) (OOIR accounts for 20%)
-  Health (11%)
-  Wholesale, retail & motors (11%)
-  Education (9%)

GVA per head in 2021, by district, including TFSE, SE7 and other geographies

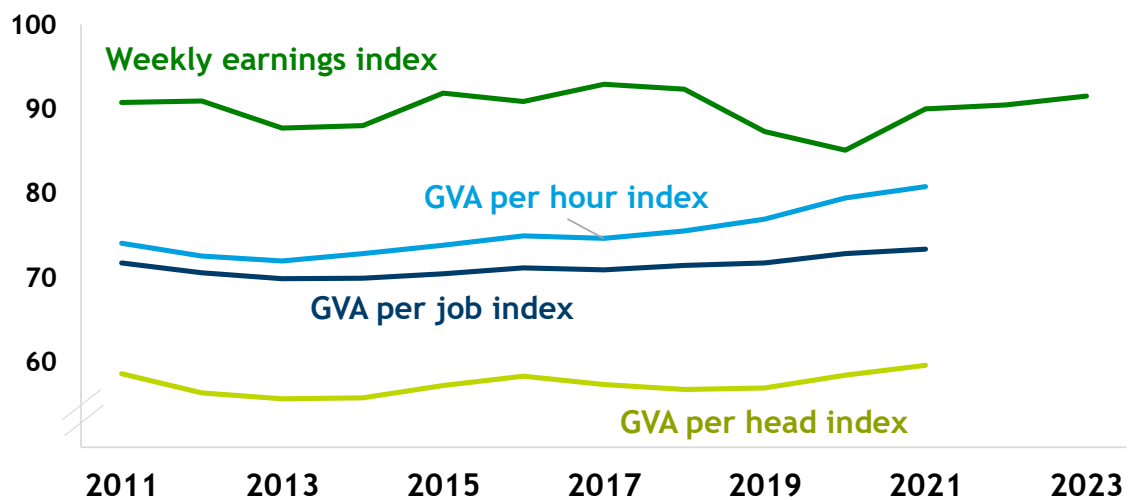


If we exclude OOIR [see [note 13](#)], different sectors make a higher than average contribution to GVA in the districts:

- Eastbourne:** Health and Social work (22.4%); Wholesale, retail etc. (13.6%); Education (11.0%)
- Hastings:** Health (19.7%); Manufacturing (16.6%)
- Lewes:** Public admin (17.1%); Wholesale etc (12.6%)
- Rother:** Education (12.9%); Construction (12.7%)
- Wealden:** Construction (16.3%); Wholesale, retail etc (13.7%); Manufacturing (12.5%)

- Wholesale, retail, and motors saw the largest rise in GVA over 2011-21 (£402m), followed by Construction (£291m), Health and social work (£261m), Real Estate (excl. OOIR) (£242m), and Manufacturing (£203m).

Productivity and earnings measures compared - East Sussex indices, where UK=100 [see [note 14](#) and [note 15](#)]

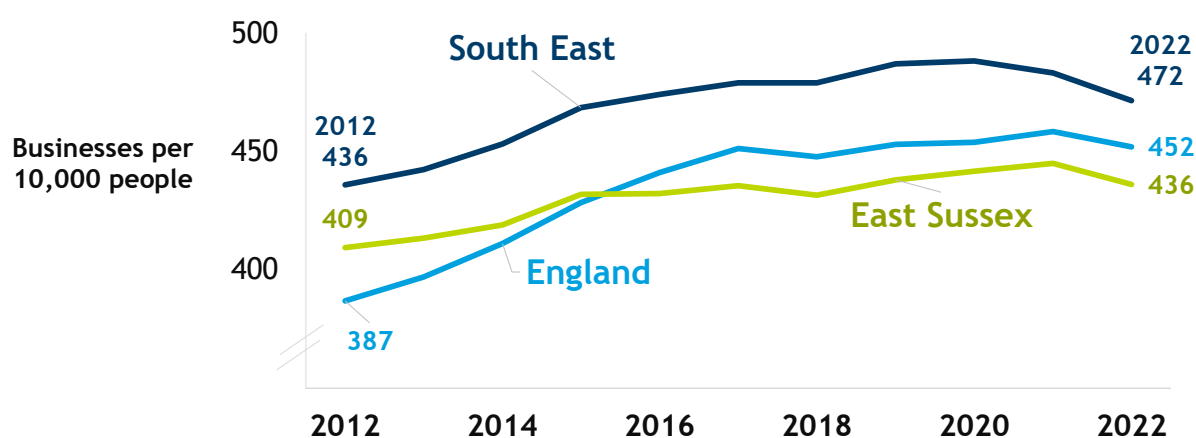


Businesses

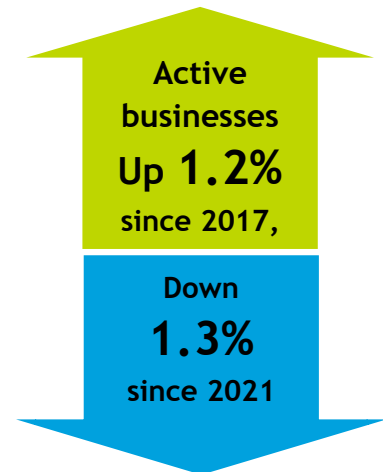


- East Sussex has fewer businesses per head than average for the region and the number of active businesses fell in 2022 [see [note 16](#)].
- In terms of local business units, the dominant sectors in the county are Wholesale, retail and motor trades (15.7% of local business units), Construction (14.9%) and the Professional, scientific and technical sector (13.7%) [see [note 17](#)].
- 86.3% of business units in the county have fewer than 10 employees (2023, England 84.6%). 73.8% have fewer than 5 employees (England 71.8%).
- East Sussex has relatively few medium and large businesses (50+ employees).
- There were more business closures (2,335) than business starts (2,185) in East Sussex in 2022, and there were 200 fewer new business starts in 2022 than in 2021, and 195 fewer business closures.
- At 2,185 in 2022, the number of business births was the second lowest since 2012, with the lowest number seen in 2018 (2,080).
- Of 2,175 businesses with more than 10 employees in 2022 in East Sussex, 80 (3.7%) were classed as 'high growth' businesses (England 4.1%).
- 45.0% of businesses in East Sussex started in 2016 survived their first five years. 5 year business survival rates for the county are higher than the England average (38.0%).

Active businesses per 10,000 population [see [note 16](#)] (note axis not at zero)



Active businesses in East Sussex



Fastest growing sectors in the county (2018-2023) (in terms of number of business units)



Construction - up 12%
Lower than national rise (England up 14%)



Business administration and support services - up 11% (England up 2%)

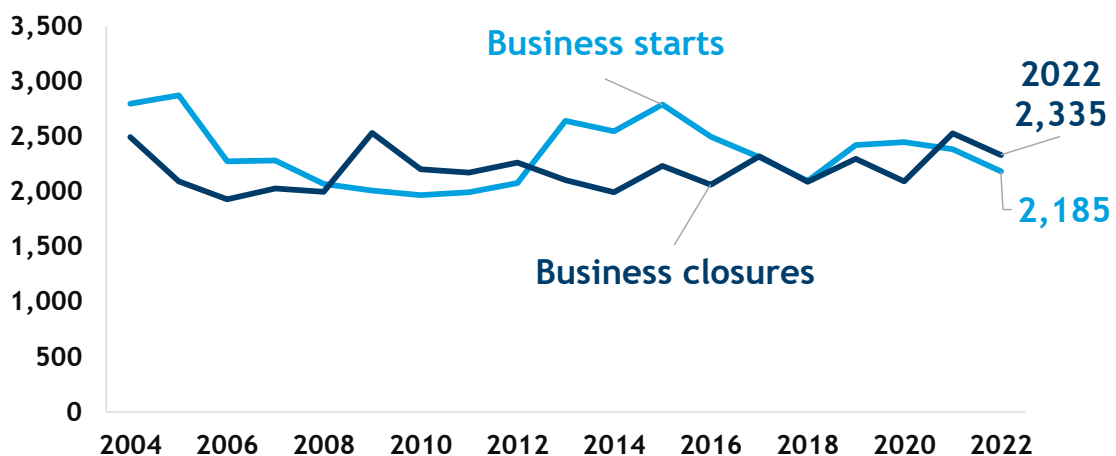


Public administration and defence - up 11% (England up 1.4%)

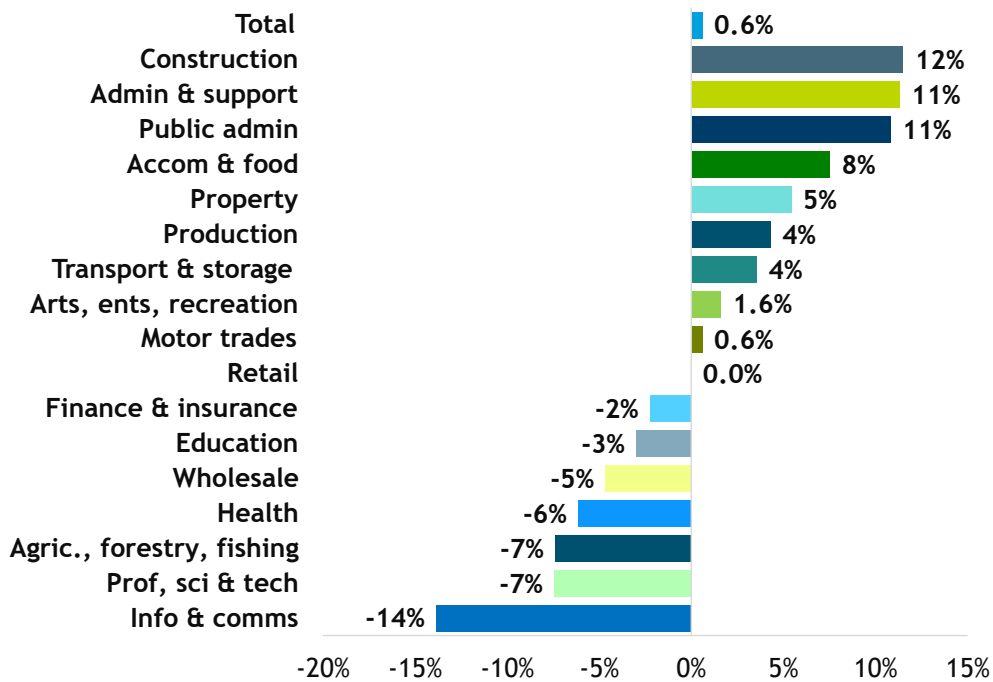


Accommodation and food services - up 8% (England up 13%)

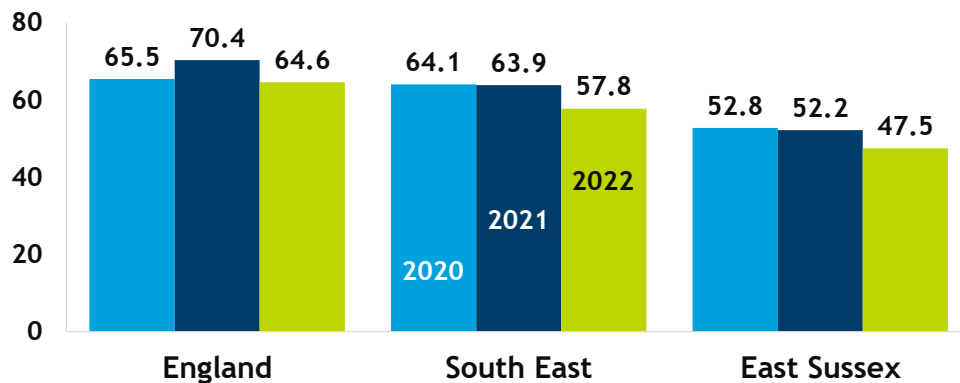
Business births and deaths in East Sussex 2004-22



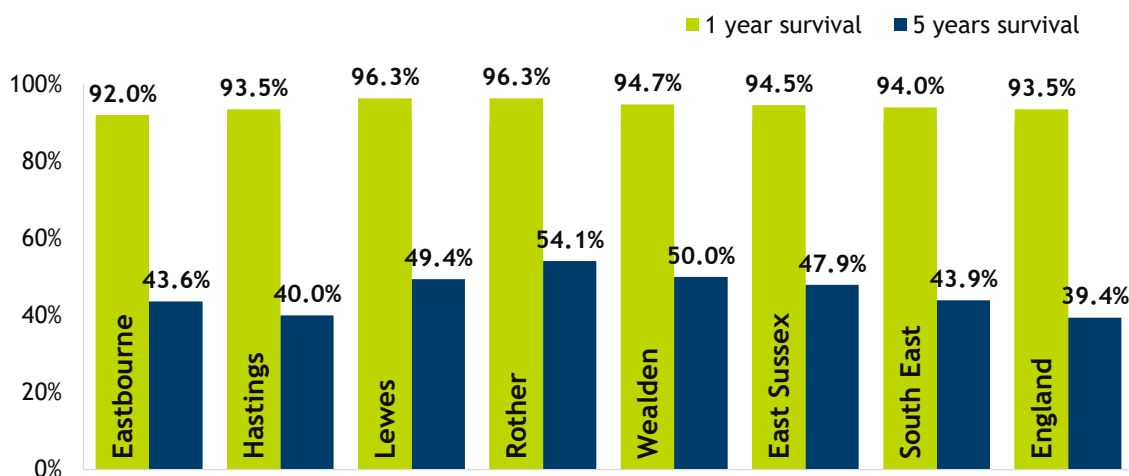
Change in number of business units by sector in East Sussex, 2018-2023



New business registration rates, 2020-22



1- and 5-year business survival rates in of businesses active in 2022



Growth measures - March 2024

Infrastructure and GVA

Growth measure	Contribute to unlocking key employment floor space allocated in Local Plans (Square metres)	Achieve average annual housing completions of 1,504 in East Sussex to 2020 in accordance with our Local Plans <small>(Source: East Sussex County Council On-line Housing Monitoring Database)</small>	Increase GVA per capita by 20% by 2020 <small>(Source: Office for National Statistics)</small>
2015	Glovers House and Sovereign House: 4,690	1,358 (2014-15 data)	£14,983 Up 21.1% 2005-15
2016		1,509 (2015-16 data)	£15,764 Up 22.8% 2006-16
2017	Swallow Business Park: 3,409	1,446 (2016-17 data)	£16,032 Up 22.3% 2007-17
2018	Newhaven Eastside (South) Business Park: 2,322	1,316 (2017-18 data)	£16,279 Up 16.5% 2008-18
2019	DPQR Welcome Building: 2,650 High Weald House: 2,385 Newhaven Eastside: 3,529	1,734 (2018-19 data)	£16,887 Up 25.1% 2009-19
2020	Eastbourne Fishermens: 310	1,852 (2019-20 data)	£16,489 Up 21.6% 2010-20
2021	Lewes Creative Hub: 533	1,549 (2020-21 data)	£18,039 Up 33.3% 2011-21
2022	Eastbourne Food Street: 440	1,606 (2021-22 data)	
2023	Observer Building (Hastings): 2,100 Seven Sisters Country Park: 233 Plumpton (Skills for Rural Businesses post-Brexit): 1,570	2,426 (2022-23 data)	

Employment and unemployment

Growth measure	Maintain the employment rate for East Sussex at a higher level than the England rate to 2020** <small>(Source: Annual Population Survey/Labour Force Survey, NOMIS/ONS)</small>	Maintain the Claimant Rate for East Sussex at below the England rate to 2020 <small>(Source: Office for National Statistics/NOMIS)</small>	Maintain the 18-24 Claimant Rate for East Sussex at below the England rate <small>(Source: Department for Work and Pensions/StatXplore)</small>
2014	75.5% +3.2% points higher than England (Sept)	2.1% -0.6% points lower than England (April)	4.2% -0.3% points lower than England (April)
2015	73.5% Equal to England (Sept)	1.5% -0.4% points lower than England (April)	3.1% +0.1% points higher than England (April)
2016	72.4% -1.7% points lower than England (Sept)	1.4% -0.4% points lower than England (April)	2.8% Equal to England (April)

Growth measure	Maintain the employment rate for East Sussex at a higher level than the England rate to 2020** (Source: Annual Population Survey/Labour Force Survey, NOMIS/ONS)	Maintain the Claimant Rate for East Sussex at below the England rate to 2020 (Source: Office for National Statistics/NOMIS)	Maintain the 18-24 Claimant Rate for East Sussex at below the England rate (Source: Department for Work and Pensions/StatXplore)
2017	76.3% +1.6% points higher than England (Sept)	1.5% -0.4% points lower than England (April)	2.7% -0.1% points lower than England (April)
2018	74.1% -1.2% points lower than England (Sept)	2.2% +0.1% points higher than England (April)	3.6% +0.6% points higher than England (Apr)
2019	75.4% -0.5% points lower than England (Sept)	2.5% -0.1% points lower than England (April)	4.2% +0.6% points higher than England (Apr)
2020	78.3% +2.4% points higher than England (Sept)	5.2% +0.2% points higher than England (April)	8.3% +1.7% points higher than England (Apr)
2021	75.8% +0.8% points higher than England (Sept)	6.3% equal to England (April)	10.9% +1.9% points higher than England (Apr)
2021 Census % of age 16-64	% of aged 16-64 in employment 72.1% (England 71.0%) 1.1% higher than England	% of aged 16-64 unemployed 4.0% (England 4.4%) 0.4% lower than England	% of aged 18-24 unemployed 10.2% (England 9.8%) 0.4% higher than England
2022	73.7% -2.0% points lower than England (Sept)	3.9% equal to England (April)	5.6% +1.0% points higher than England (Apr)
2023	73.4% -2.5% points lower than England (Sept)	3.6% -0.3% points lower than England (April)	5.7% +0.8% points higher than England (Apr)

Qualifications

Growth measure	Increase the percentage of working age residents in East Sussex with a Level 4 qualification to at least 35% by 2020** (Source: Annual Population Survey, Nomis/ONS)	Reduce the percentage of working age residents in East Sussex with no qualifications or qualified only to NVQ1 to below the England level by 2020** (Source: Annual Population Survey, Nomis/ONS)
2014	36.6% +0.9% points higher than England (Dec)	19.4% -1.2% points lower than England (Dec)
2015	30.9% -5.8% points lower than England (Dec)	23.2% +3.2% points higher than England (Dec)
2016	34.0% -3.8% points lower than England (Dec)	22.5% +3.4% points higher than England (Dec)
2017	37.7% -0.5% points lower than England (Dec)	15.5% -3.0% points lower than England (Dec)
2018	37.0% -2.0% points lower than England (Dec)	20.9% +2.7% points higher than England (Dec)
2019	35.6% -4.4% points lower than England (Dec)	19.2% +1.6% points higher than England (Dec)

Growth measure	Increase the percentage of working age residents in East Sussex with a Level 4 qualification to at least 35% by 2020** (Source: Annual Population Survey, Nomis/ONS)	Reduce the percentage of working age residents in East Sussex with no qualifications or qualified only to NVQ1 to below the England level by 2020** (Source: Annual Population Survey, Nomis/ONS)
2020	36.4% -6.4% points lower than England (Dec)	18.1% +2.0% points higher than England (Dec)
2021	34.9% -8.2% points lower than England (Dec)	20.2% +4.2% points higher than England (Dec)
2021 Census % of age 16-64	33.8% -3.3% points lower than England (Census 2021)	21.8% -0.5% points lower than England (Census 2021)
2022	ONS have changed the definitions used in the qualifications data so further time series cannot be used	ONS have changed the definitions used in the qualifications data so further time series cannot be used

** At sub-regional level the APS is subject to sampling variability which means that the data is not very reliable. The ONS provide confidence intervals for APS data, but at even county level these intervals can be very broad, for example, for people with Level 4 qualifications, for Jan-Dec 2020, the confidence interval for East Sussex was 3.7%, meaning that there is a 95% chance that the true figure could lie anywhere between 36.8 ± 3.7 i.e. between 33.1% and 40.5%. This explains why there appear to be wild swings in the qualifications and employment data, but this may not be reflected in the situation on the ground.

With the release of the data from the 2021 Census, it has become apparent that even the data at national level is quite inaccurate. In the year to December 2021, the APS reported that the proportion of working age people with Level 4+ qualifications in England was 43.1%, whereas in fact the proportion in March 2021 (Census) was 37.1%. When looking at those with low or no qualifications, APS said that 16.0% had no or level 1 qualifications in England but the Census put this proportion at 22.3% in England. This suggests that the sample used for the APS generally overestimates those with better qualifications.

Further information and sources

This publication is produced as an aid to understanding the mechanisms at work in the economy of East Sussex. The sources for all the data are given in this section.

Labour Market and Skills

Note 1

The Claimant Count of people claiming JSA and Universal Credit because they are searching for work is considered to be the most reliable and up to date source for unemployed claimant data. Detailed data is available on [ESiF](#).

Note 2

Following a major boundary review, wards were reviewed for the local elections in May 2018 for Hastings Borough Council and May 2019 for Eastbourne Borough Council, Lewes, Rother and Wealden District Councils. The number of wards in the county increased to 108. Some wards have retained the same name but the boundary has changed, including in Hastings, and as claimant rates are based on the working age population and claimant numbers, some areas appear to have different claimant rates using the new ward boundaries. A [map comparing the old and new ward boundaries is available in ESiF](#).

Note 3

Data is published on ESiF on the number of [people](#) and [households](#) claiming Universal Credit (UC), and people on Universal Credit by [duration of claim](#). We have also now published data on the [number of households on UC who receive a local housing allowance](#) element with their benefit which does not actually cover their rent. Other claimant data can also be found in [ESiF](#) and on the DWP's [StatXplore](#) website.

Note 4

Data for Benefit combinations, including out-of-work benefits is published on [ESiF](#).

Note 5

Data is now available for some of the labour market variables from the 2021 Census, and more detailed information is being released over the next year or two.

It is important to note that the 2021 Census took place during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, a period of unparalleled and rapid change; the national lockdown, associated guidance and furlough measures will have affected the labour market topic.

Some of the 2021 Census data is now available on ESiF: on [Economic activity and inactivity](#), [Hours worked](#), [Industry of employment](#) and [Qualifications of the adult population](#). Further data is available from the [ONS](#), including [Census maps](#) showing how the districts and small areas in the county compare to the country as a whole.

Note 6

Qualifications data for working age people is taken from the Census 2021 and also from the Annual Population Survey (APS), which is published by the ONS on the [Nomis](#) website. Note that sample variability means that some APS data is not very reliable, which may explain the wide variation between years.

With the release of the data from the 2021 Census, it has become apparent that even the APS data at national level is quite inaccurate. In the year to December 2021, the APS

reported that the proportion of working age people with Level 4+ qualifications in England was 43.1%, whereas in fact the proportion in March 2021 (Census) was 37.1%. When looking at those with low or no qualifications, APS said that 16.0% had no or level 1 qualifications in England but the Census put this proportion at 22.3% in England. This suggests that the sample used for the APS generally overestimates those with better qualifications.

Note 7

Broader participation data for FE and apprenticeships comes from the FE Data Library, on the Gov.UK website, and is published on ESiF.

Workforce projections

Note 8

The County Councils own workforce projections show how the workforce is anticipated to change in the years to 2037. These projections take into account such variables as future levels of planned housing development as well as expected changes in economic activity rates and retirement ages. They also use the most up to date mid-year population estimates, and rebased 2012-2021 estimates from the ONS.

Note 9

The dwelling-led demographic projections are produced by the East Sussex County Council (ESCC) Research and Information Team, at county and district levels, using the POPGROUP model and local housing plans supplied by each district. The latest 2020-based ESCC projections are based on the mid-2020 population estimates released by ONS in June 2021 and future house building trajectories provided by each district in Spring 2022. Projections are also produced for the number of households and the number of people in the workforce (that is, economically active people aged 16-74), and this data is published in [ESiF](#). Note that the projections do not currently take into account the latest population data from the 2021 Census. Revised population projections and workforce projections will be produced once rebased population mid-year estimates for 2011-2020 are released by the ONS but these are not due for release until at least November 2023.

Earnings

Note 10

Earnings data is from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings which is published by ONS and is available on the [Nomis](#) website. We have mostly used [workplace-based median earnings](#) which gives earnings for jobs based in the area, but [residence-based data](#) is also available, which is the earnings of those living in the area. There were temporary factors that increased the headline growth rate in earnings above the underlying rate over the course of the Covid-19 pandemic. Changes in earnings were sharply affected, so ONS published an interesting [blog post](#) discussing how to interpret average earnings data.

Note 11

Following the economic crisis provoked by the Coronavirus pandemic, the ONS and HMRC started to release administrative data from PAYE records giving the number of employees, median and mean pay down to district level. Data for ITL3 (formerly NUTS3, including East Sussex county) and higher geographies are published monthly, and data for districts is released quarterly and published in [ESiF](#).

Gross value added

Note 12

[Gross value added \(GVA\)](#) data is released annually by the [Office for National Statistics \(ONS\)](#), and GVA per head is calculated using [ONS mid-year-estimate data](#). GVA is a measure of the increase in the value of the economy due to the production of goods and services. Estimates are measured at current basic prices, which include the effect of inflation. The GVA data for 2021 was released in May 2023, and data is now also available for district level Gross Domestic Product (see [ESiF](#)). This year Census 2021 in England and Wales has provided new estimates of the population of areas in 2021, but ONS do not yet have rebased estimates for the intercensal years 2012 to 2020. As a result, there is a discontinuity in the population estimates between 2020 and 2021. ONS have therefore suppressed any annual growth estimates of gross domestic product (GDP) per head for 2020 to 2021 from some of their publications, and strongly advise people not to use these distorted growth rates themselves, but instead to look at annual growth in real GDP to compare the performance of areas over time. GVA per head will be updated on ESiF when new population estimates for 2012-2020 become available.

Note 13

Owner-occupiers' imputed rental (OOIR) is part of the GVA data that gives an estimate of the housing services consumed by households who are not actually renting their residence. It can be thought of as the amount that non-renters pay themselves for the housing services that they produce. For the purposes of assessing the county's economic productivity it is sometimes preferable to exclude this from the data. See [ONS website](#) for more information.

Note 14

GVA per hour worked data is obtained from the [ONS' Sub-regional productivity](#) tables, and East Sussex data is published on [ESiF](#). When assessing regional economic performance, it is recommended that the best measure of productivity is this data, rather than GVA per head or per job. This is particularly important when there are large net commuting flows into or out of an area, as is the case in East Sussex.

Note 15

GVA per head relates the value added by production activity in an area to the resident population of that area, and thus is subject to distortion due to effects of commuting and variations in the age distribution of the population. Small areas, such as local authorities, can be subject to very large distortions and this should be borne in mind when interpreting the statistics as an indicator of relative economic prosperity. GVA per head is thus not the best measure of productivity. GVA per job is also not the best measure of productivity because we have to consider the impact of a higher proportion of part-time jobs.

For further information about GVA, sub-regional productivity, Business Demography and UK BASL data, visit the [ONS website](#).

Businesses

Note 16

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) provide data on active businesses, start-ups and closures in the annual '[Business Demography](#)' series. These national statistics are

compatible with EU wide business demography data. 1-5 year survival rates are also included with this data. All new business registration rates are calculated by the Research and Information Team using the latest available mid-year estimate population data from the ONS, and are published on [ESiF](#).

Note 17

The [UK Business: Activity, Size and Location](#) (UK BASL) dataset from the ONS uses data from the Inter-departmental Business Register (IDBR) to report the total number of businesses. This is the most up-to-date source for data about business activity at local authority level and gives details of both the number of business enterprises and the number of local units. Data is available by industrial sector, business size (in terms of number of employees), annual turnover and age of business (years of trading). Some of the data is also published as 'UK business counts' in the Nomis website. Data for East Sussex and districts has been published in [ESiF](#).

Business Demography counts differ from those given in UK BASL because the Business Demography methodology takes into account businesses that were active at any time during the reference calendar year, whereas UK BASL numbers are based on a snapshot taken from the IDBR on a specific date at the end of March of the relevant year. As a result, numbers in the Business demography dataset are higher than those given in UK BASL. Business demography data is currently available for 2022, whereas UK BASL data on business enterprises and local business units is now available for 2023.

There are a number of other sources of business data available. For more information about business data sources and how the data can be used, see our [data note](#).

Contact details

The Research and Intelligence Team, Governance Services provides demographic and socio-economic data, intelligence and insight to support East Sussex County Council and other East Sussex Partners. The Team also manages East Sussex in Figures (ESiF), the Local Information System for East Sussex.

For further information about labour market and economic data please contact Lenna Santamaría by email mariahelena.santamaria@eastsussex.gov.uk, or Emma Corby on emma.corby@eastsussex.gov.uk.

ESiF is a web-based information system that contains detailed, up-to-date and reliable information on a very wide range of topics. It is free and very easy to use and puts individual users in control. ESiF lets you specify exactly what data you want to see (for the places and time periods you are interested in) and how you want to view it (as a table, chart or map).

Visit www.eastsussexinfigures.org.uk or e-mail esif@eastsussex.gov.uk for more information.