

Unemployment...in brief

January 2024

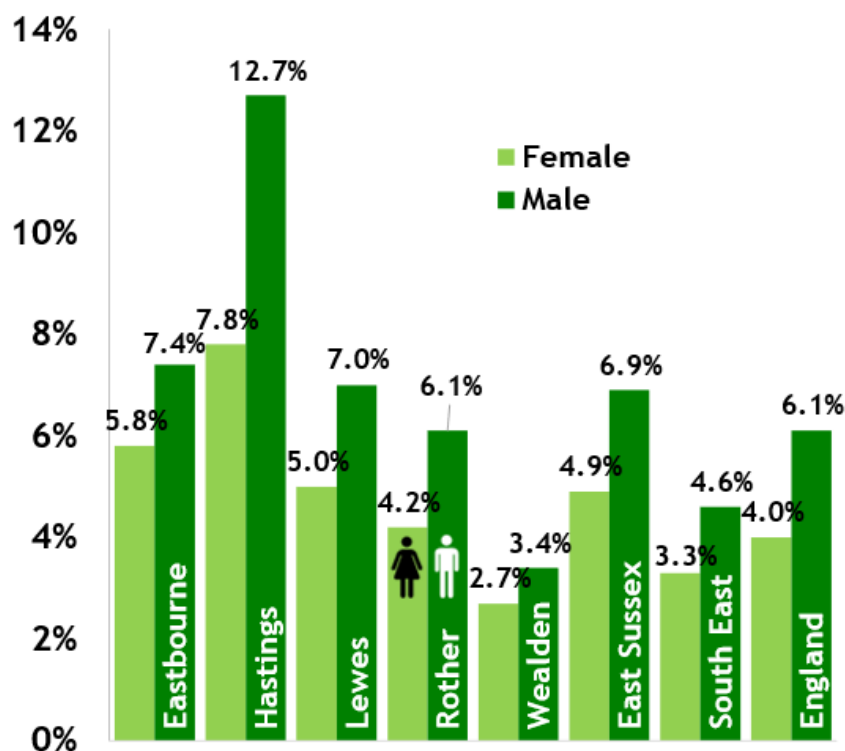
Claimant Count (people seeking work): 10,675 unemployed claimants of Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) and Universal Credit (UC - searching for work conditionality) in November 2023 (3.4% of working age people).

UC/JSA claimant numbers up by 1.2% (130 claimants) since October 2023, and down 5.1% (570 claimants) since November 2022. While East Sussex has remained steady, the Claimant Count has increased a small amount regionally and nationally in the month to November 2023.

Universal Credit (people on low incomes): 48,310 people claiming any UC in November 2023 (15.4% of working age people), of whom 38,161 are not included in the Claimant Count above (i.e. not 'Searching for work' conditionality). Up by 690 since October 2023, and 2,276 since November 2022.

Claimant Count - includes UC (Searching for work) + JSA

Claimant rates in East Sussex districts and England, aged 18-24 by sex, November 2023



Youth unemployment is rising

6.0% young people (aged 18-24) in the county were claiming UC/ JSA in November 2023, up from 5.7% in November 2022. This compares to a rate of 5.1% in England in November 2023. The rate among young people remains higher than it was in March 2020.

The number of young claimants increased by 3.9% (75 claimants) in the year to November 2023, compared to a 5.1% fall (-570 claimants) among all age groups in the same period.

In Hastings 10.4% of young people are claiming, including 12.7% young males.

Number of unemployed claimants of UC/JSA

	November 22	November 23	Actual change	Annual % change
Eastbourne	2,735	2,670	-65	-2.4%
Hastings	3,060	2,855	-205	-6.7%
Lewes	1,790	1,765	-25	-1.4%
Rother	1,685	1,560	-125	-7.4%
Wealden	1,975	1,825	-150	-7.6%
East Sussex	11,245	10,675	-570	-5.1%
South East	159,805	165,755	5,950	3.7%
England	1,298,065	1,349,985	51,920	4.0%

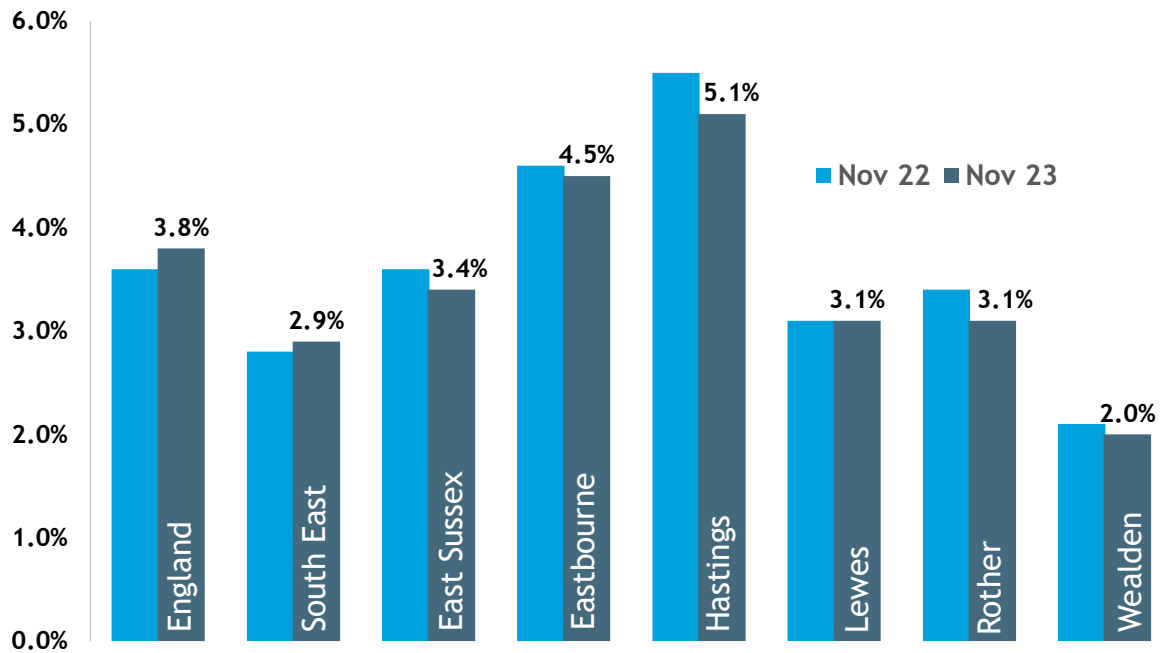
Percentage of working age people claiming UC/JSA because of unemployment

	November 21	November 22	November 23
Eastbourne	5.6%	4.5%	4.4%
Hastings	6.8%	5.4%	5.1%
Lewes	4.0%	3.1%	3.1%
Rother	4.0%	3.3%	3.1%
Wealden	2.7%	2.1%	1.9%
East Sussex	4.4%	3.5%	3.3%
South East	3.4%	2.7%	2.8%
England	4.5%	3.6%	3.7%

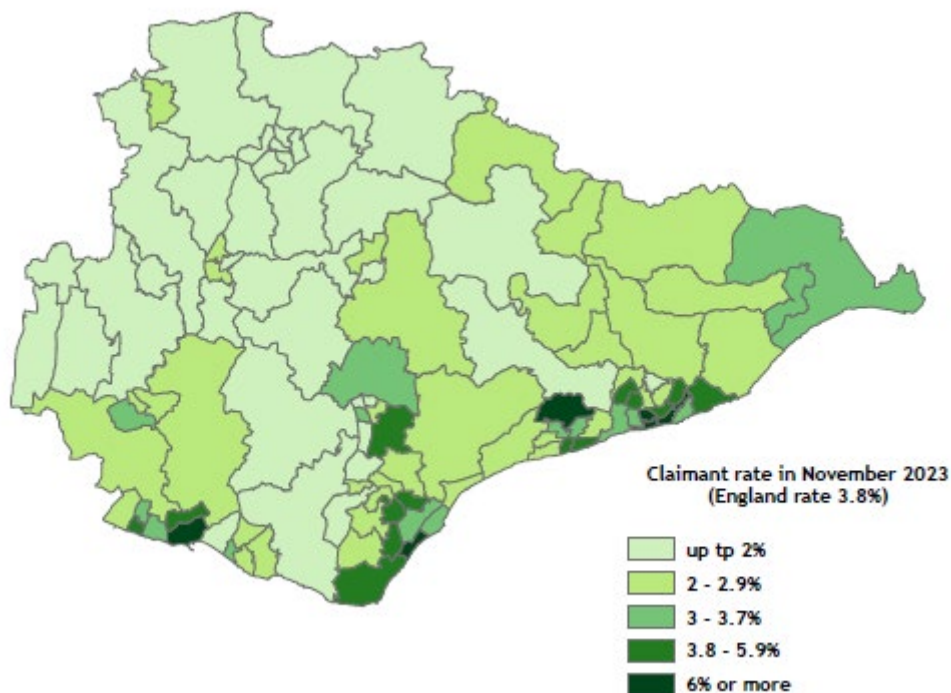
There were 10,675 claimants of UC and JSA in East Sussex in November 2023, up 1.2% (130 claimants) since October 2023 compared to an increase of 2.0% in England and 2.2% in the South East.

3.4% of working age people in East Sussex claiming UC/JSA in November 2023, lower than England rate (3.8%), but higher than SE region (2.9%).

Claimant rates in East Sussex districts and England, November 2022 and November 2023



Claimant rate by ward (post-2019) in November 2023



Wards

21 (post-2019) wards have rates at or above the England rate (3.8%), with the highest rates in Central St Leonards (8.2%), Castle (7.8%) and Gensing (7.2%) in Hastings, and Devonshire (8.2%) in Eastbourne.

24 wards now have rates above what the East Sussex rate was in November 2022 (3.6%), but rates have fallen slightly in 69 wards over the past year.

46 wards in the county saw numbers rise slightly in the month to November 2023, while 40 wards saw a decrease in the number of claimants in the same month. The rates in all other wards in the county remained stable.

Note ward analysis now based on the latest (post-2019) ward boundaries (see further information at end of briefing).

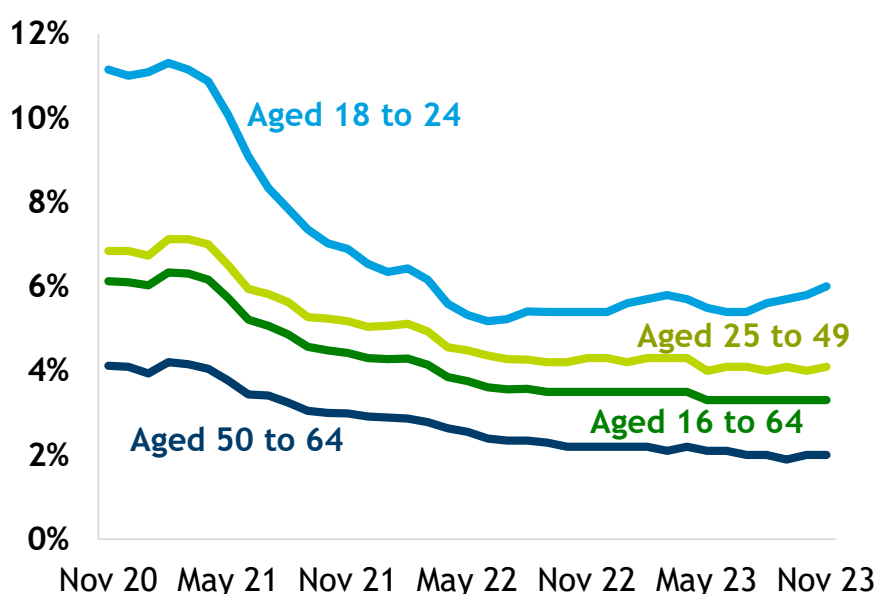
Districts

In November 2023, Claimant Counts rose in all districts, besides Hastings (a decrease of 75) and Rother (remained stable). The biggest numerical increase was seen in Eastbourne where numbers rose by 135 in the month to November 2023.

At 5.1%, Hastings has the highest claimant rate in the county followed by Eastbourne (4.5%).

The largest annual percentage falls in claimants were in Wealden (down 7.6%) and Rother (down 7.4%). The smallest annual decrease is in Lewes, down 1.4% since November 2022.

Claimant rates in East Sussex, all working age and age groups, November 2020-2023



Eastbourne

The Claimant Count increased by 135 in November 2023 but is now 2.4% lower than in November 2022. The claimant rate at 4.5% remains considerably above the national average of 3.8%. Devonshire ward has the highest rate in the district, where 8.2% of working age people are claiming, and numbers rose there by 50 in the month to November 2023.

Hastings

The Claimant Count decreased in Hastings by 75 in November 2023, and is now 6.7% lower than it was in November 2022. With a claimant rate of 5.1% Hastings has the highest rate in the County. 9 out of 16 post 2019 wards have a rate above the national average, with the very highest rates in Central St Leonards (8.2%), Castle (7.8%) and Gensing (7.2%). 3 wards saw an increase in November 2023. Among young people aged 18-24, 10.4% are claiming UC/JSA, including 12.7% of young males.

Lewes

Lewes saw a rise in claimants in November 2023 of 40, but numbers are 1.4% lower than November 2022. While the rate for Lewes district (3.1%) remains below the national average (3.8%), 2 (post 2019) wards have rates above: Newhaven South (6.5%) and Peacehaven West (4.0%). Numbers rose in 9 of 21 wards in Lewes in the month to November 2023, with rates among young people aged 18-24 remaining high at 6.0%.

Rother

The number of claimants remained stable in November 2023, but numbers have dropped by 7.4% since November 2022. With a claimant rate of 3.2%, Rother sits below the national average of 3.8%, however 2 post-2019 wards have rates above the England average: Bexhill Sidley (6.0%) and Bexhill Central (5.8%). Numbers rose in 6 of 21 wards in Rother in the month to November 2023.

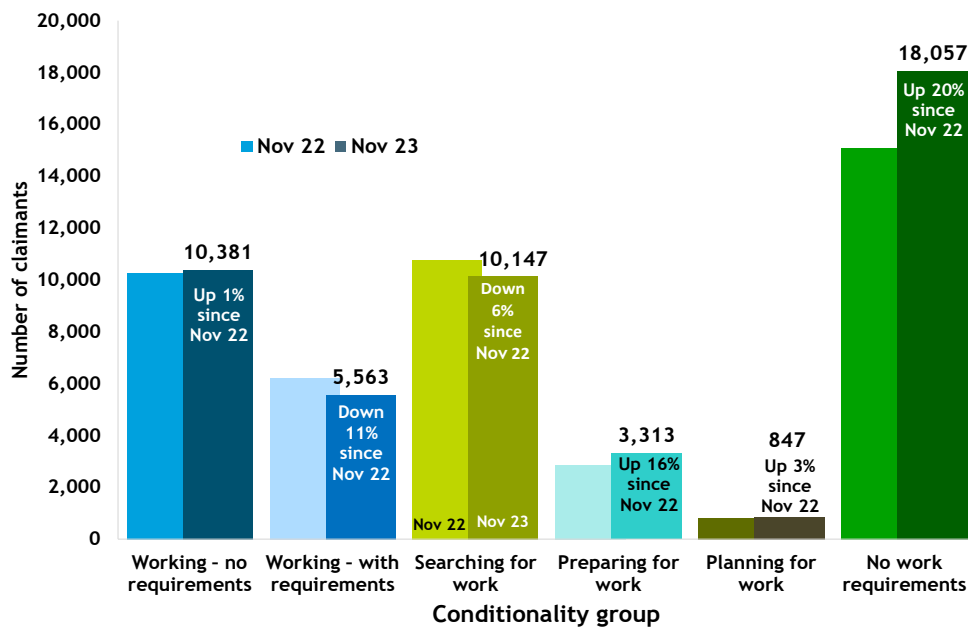
Wealden

Claimant numbers increased in Wealden by 35 in November 2023 but are now 7.6% lower than in November 2022. At 2.0%, the rate is well below the national average (3.8%), with only one (post-2019) ward having a rate above; Hailsham East (5.1%). Numbers rose in 16 wards but fell or were stable in all others.

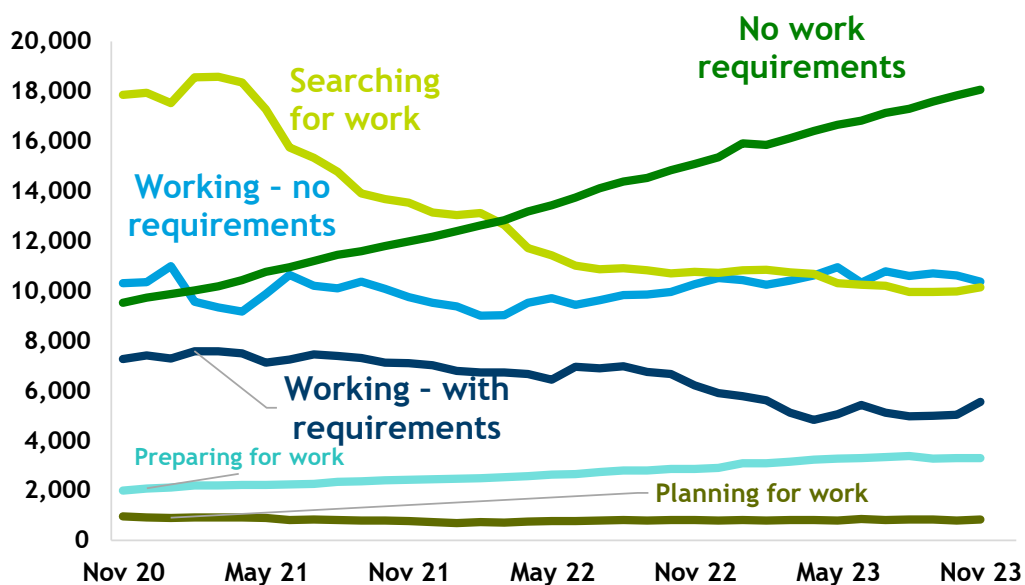
Universal Credit Claimants

In East Sussex in November 2023 there were 48,310 people claiming UC (15.4% of working age people) up 690 since October 2023 and up 2,276 since November 2022. In Hastings 22.8% and in Eastbourne 19.3% of working age people are claiming UC (England 15.2%). Of all East Sussex UC claimants, 21.0% are ‘Searching for work’ and 37.4% have ‘No work requirements’.

Number of Universal Credit claimants by conditionality, November 2022 and November 2023



Number of Universal Credit claimants by conditionality time series, November 2020-2023



Increase in number of UC claimants to November 2023, since November 2022 and October 2023

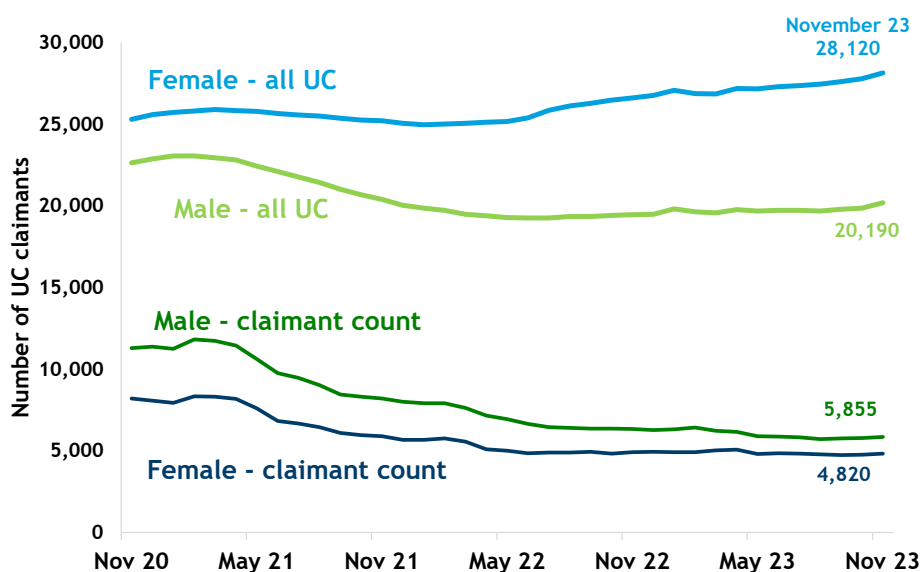
	November 2022	October 2023	November 2023 total claimants	November 2023 % working age
Eastbourne	467	177	11,551	19.3
Hastings	498	163	12,720	22.8
Lewes	524	130	7,662	13.4
Rother	417	110	7,505	15.1
Wealden	375	116	8,874	9.6
East Sussex	2,276	690	48,310	15.4

33.0% of all UC claimants are in work -either with or without additional work-seeking requirements.(conditionality measure)

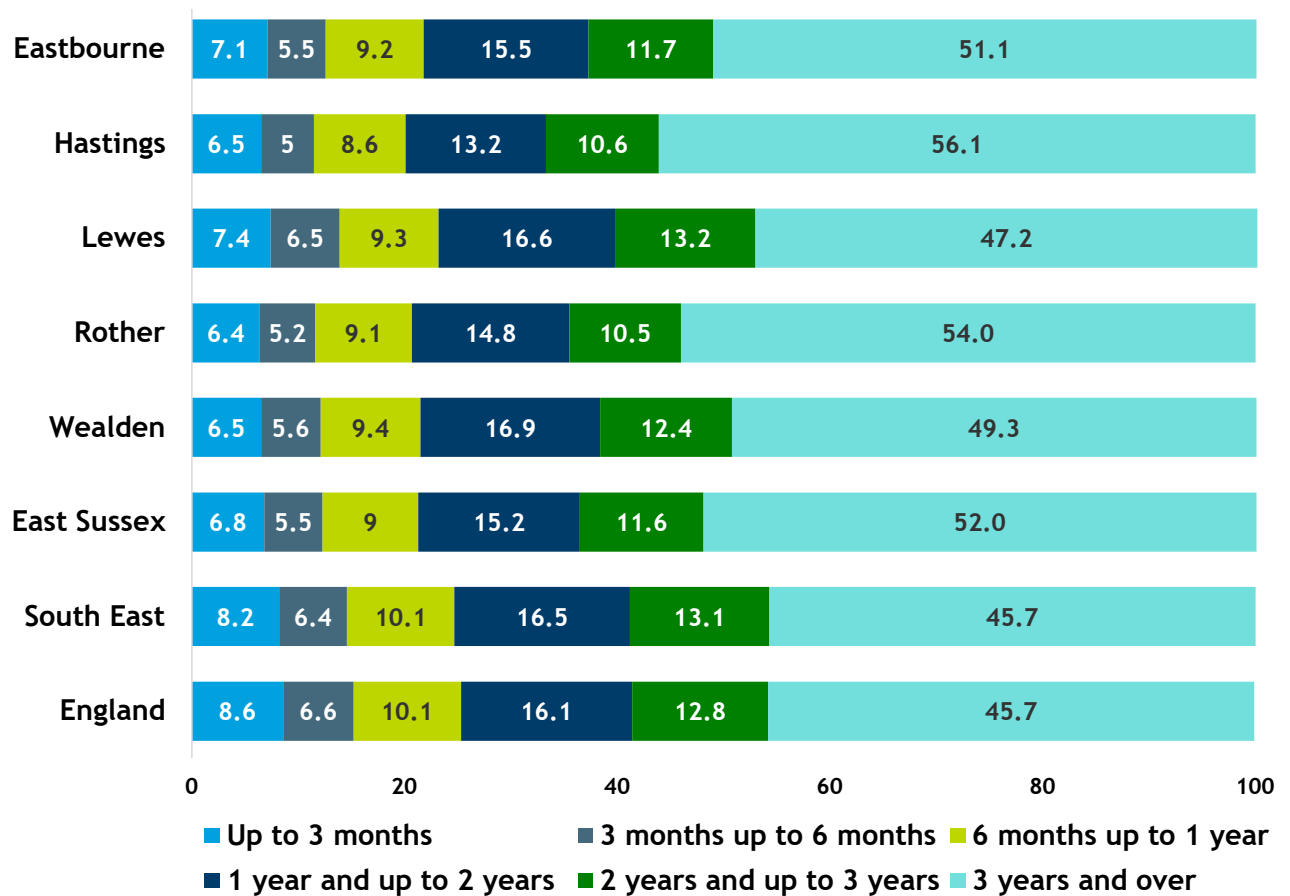
In the year to November 2023 there was an increase among most conditionality groups except those in the ‘Searching for work’ (down 5.7%) and ‘Working - with requirements’ (down 10.5%) groups. The largest increase in conditionality groups can be seen in the ‘no work requirements’ group, with 2,966 more claimants (up 19.7%) and the ‘Preparing for work’ group, with 451 more claimants (up 15.8%).

While the overall rise in UC claimants since March 2020 was steep among both men and women, since May 2020, numbers of male claimants have stabilised but saw a 3.9% increase since November 2022. Numbers of female claimants have risen by 5.8%, in the same period (see chart below). By comparison, the Claimant Count (which includes people Searching for work) has fallen by 7.6% for men and only 1.8% for women since November 2022.

Male and female claimants of Universal Credit and UC/JSA unemployed Claimant Count, November 2020-2023, East Sussex



Universal Credit claimants by Duration, November 2023



The above chart shows the percentage of all UC claimants in each duration group. More than three-quarters of Universal Credit (UC) claimants in the county have been claiming for more than one year, and over half of UC claimants in East Sussex have been claiming for 3 or more years. The highest levels of long-term UC claimants are in Hastings with 56.1% claiming for 3 or more years, followed by Rother (54.0%) and Eastbourne (51.1%). All East Sussex districts have a higher proportion of long-term claimants than the national average (45.7%) in November 2023.

Further information

Please be aware that the denominators used to calculate claimant count at national, regional, county and district levels have been updated with the 2012-2022 rebased mid-year estimates. While this has not significantly changed the figures, we anticipate these changes will have a larger impact on small area data. Small area mid-year estimates are due to be updated later this year.

The Claimant Count measures the number of people who have made claims for benefits for reasons of unemployment. Most new claimants for benefit are covered by Universal Credit, but there are some claimants who do not qualify for UC because they have savings of over £16,000, but may be entitled to contributions-based JSA which is not means-tested.

The main Claimant Count, which includes all JSA claimants and all UC claimants in the 'searching for work' conditionality group, gives an up-to-date measure of changes to the number of unemployed claimants, as data is now available for March 2022. A small number of UC claimants may subsequently be reallocated to other conditionality groups.

To qualify for JSA or UC as a job seeker, claimants must meet certain eligibility criteria which include being available for and actively seeking work, although they may work less than 16 hours per week and still be eligible if their earnings are very low, as long as they continue to meet all the UC work-seeking requirements. JSA claimants include those claiming only National Insurance credits.

The Claimant rate is defined as the number of claimants resident in an area expressed as a percentage of the working age population resident in that area which includes all people aged 16-64. Rates for other age groups use the population of that age group. Population figures are derived from the latest Office for National Statistics (ONS) mid-year population estimates, which are now available for 2021.

The Claimant Count is often used as an indicative measure of unemployment as it provides frequently updated information for a range of geographies. Care should be taken not to confuse this with ONS official labour market statistics which use the International Labour Organisation's definition of the unemployment rate, which includes all those aged 16 plus who are out of work, but actively seeking work, including those claiming no benefits, as a percentage of all Economically Active people aged 16 and over. These are based on the Labour Force Survey and Annual Population Survey, which is less statistically robust at county and district level.

The analysis in this briefing now uses revised ward boundaries (labelled as 'post-2019 wards'). 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 District Council, Rother District Council and Wealden District Council. There are now 108 of these revised electoral wards, compared to 101 previously and Claimant Count data for these wards is now available and published on [ESiF](#). Data for pre-2018 wards is also available on ESiF (see links below).

Detailed statistics for the Claimant Count is available from [Nomis](#). Data about Universal Credit and other benefits is available from the [DWP's StatXplore website](#).

Contact details

For further information about unemployment, benefits, claimants and other labour market data please contact Emma Corby by email emma.corby@eastsussex.gov.uk.

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.

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