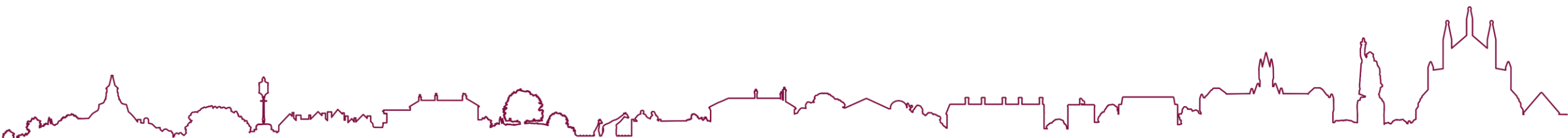


Winchester District Quarterly Economic Intelligence Dashboard



June 2026

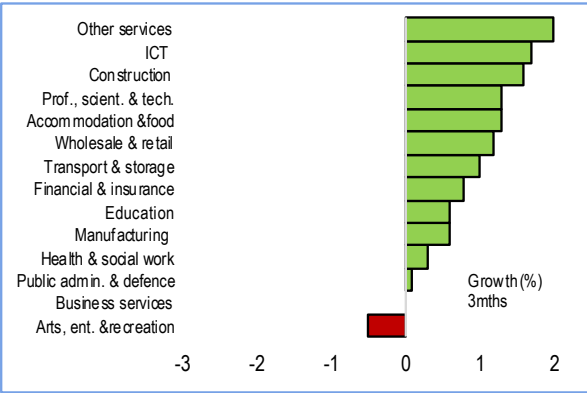
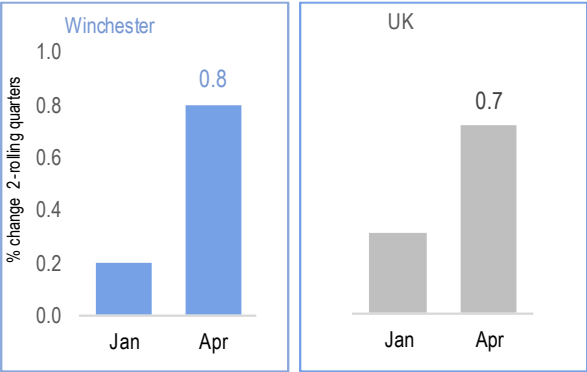


Winchester
City Council

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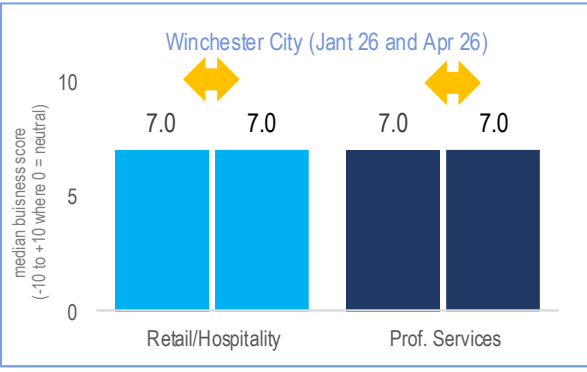
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Economic Growth



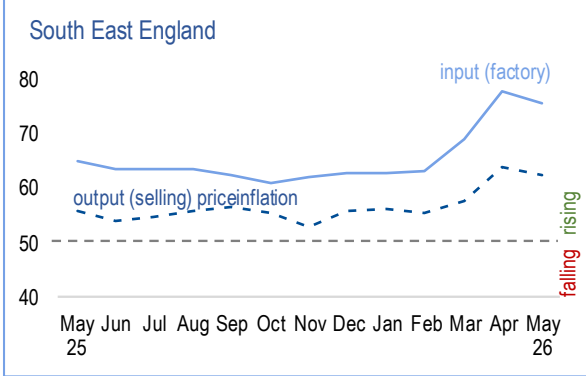
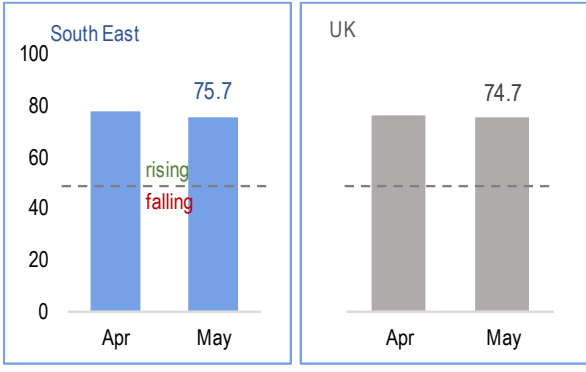
- Our preliminary estimate shows Winchester’s economy growing by 0.8% compared to the previous quarter, marginally faster than the UK.
- UK growth was driven by retail, IT, construction and professional services. Output in manufacturing increased, led by pharmaceuticals and IT.
- Arts, entert. and recreation contracted.

Business Performance



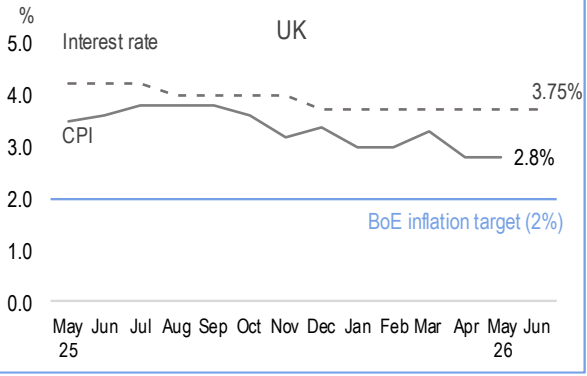
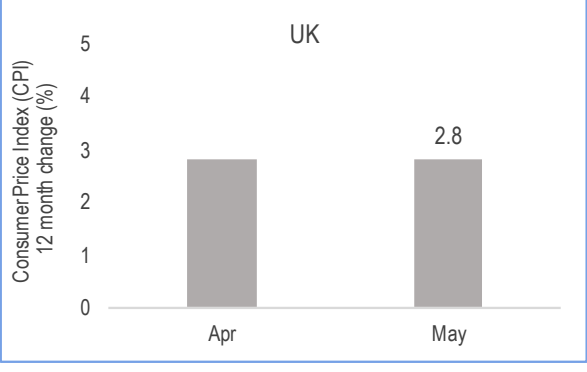
- Survey evidence from Winchester BID Business Barometer suggest that business performance in retail and professional services remain resilient despite headwinds. Scores stay at ‘7’.
- Survey evidence suggests that private sector business activity in the South East region reported slightly slower growth in May compared to April.

Business Prices



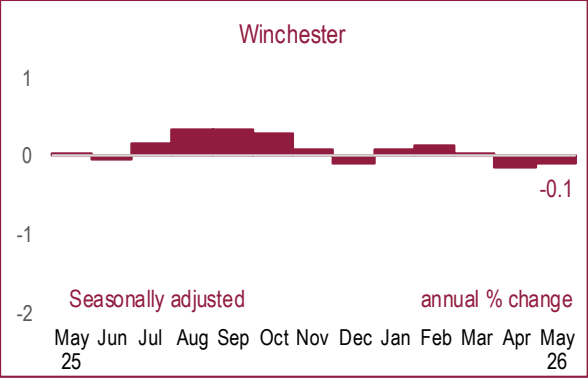
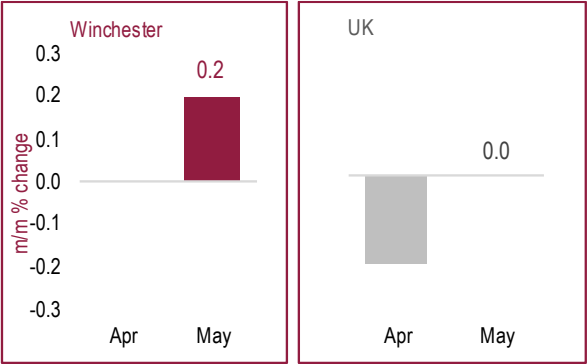
- Business input costs in the region eased slightly in May but remain historically elevated, reflecting high energy, fuel, raw material and transport costs, alongside secondary pressures on wages.
- Charge inflation softened but remains elevated, as businesses continue to pass on costs to consumers.

Inflation

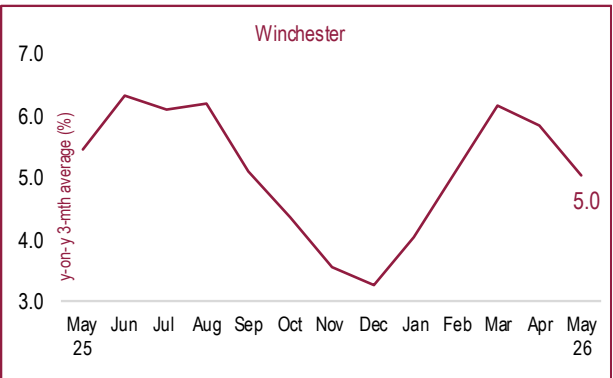
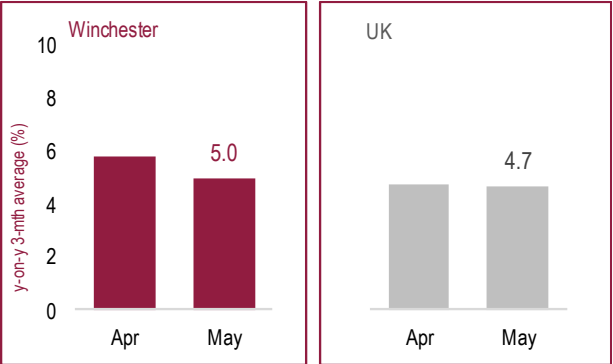


- UK CPI inflation rose by 2.8% in May, unchanged from April, with lower food prices largely offsetting rising transport costs.
- Core inflation edged up to 2.6%, while services inflation rose to 3.7%.
- The Bank of England held the base rate at 3.75% in June, the fourth hold since December 2025.

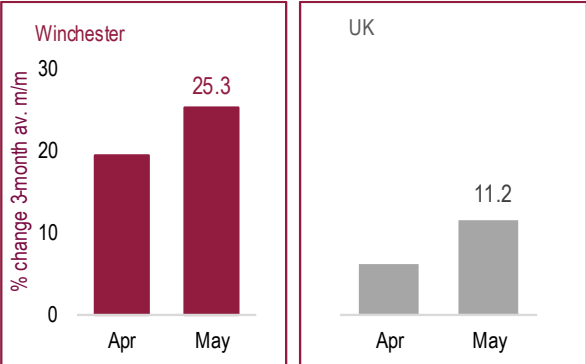
PAYE Employees



PAYE Earnings



Labour Demand



Demand by Occupation

Unique jobs postings by Occupation (SOC)	May	% of total
Kitchen and Catering Assistants	124	5.7
Cleaners and Domestics	110	5.0
Care Workers and Home Carers	105	4.8
Chefs	96	4.4
Early Education and Childcare Practitioners	91	4.2
Programmers and Software Development Professionals	85	3.9
Sales Related Occupations n.e.c.	83	3.8
Managers and Directors in Retail and Wholesale	71	3.2
Special and Additional Needs Education Teaching Professionals	66	3.0
Chartered and Certified Accountants	59	2.7

Unique jobs postings by Occupation (SOC)	Apr	% of total
Kitchen and Catering Assistants	125	6.1
Care Workers and Home Carers	114	5.6
Programmers and Software Development Professionals	107	5.2
Cleaners and Domestics	97	4.7
Early Education and Childcare Practitioners	69	3.4
Chefs	66	3.2
Sales Related Occupations n.e.c.	65	3.2
Special and Additional Needs Education Teaching Professionals	60	2.9
Managers and Directors in Retail and Wholesale	55	2.7
Chartered and Certified Accountants	55	2.7

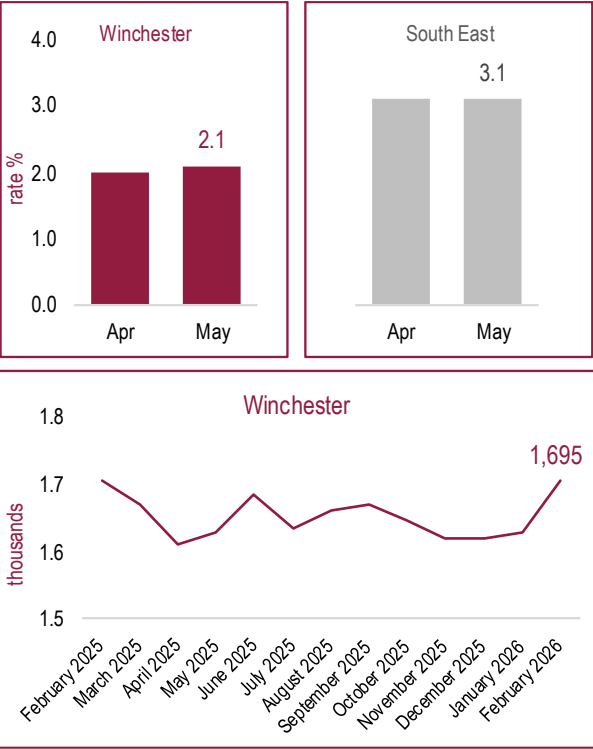
- Timely preliminary estimates from HMRC PAYE points to employment increasing in May after no growth in April and outperforming the UK average.
- PAYE employment in Winchester was 0.2% higher on the month, up 0.1% on the quarter but 0.1% lower on the year. Annual employment at 58,100.

- PAYE earnings in Winchester remains elevated and above inflation although continues to soften following easing in April. However, growth rate above the UK average.
- National wage data covering the entire UK economy slowed sharply to 3.4% last month; slowest in just over five years, just above inflation.

- Labour demand saw another strong seasonal uptick in the 3-mths to May in Winchester, following good growth in April. This is despite ongoing economic global uncertainty and rising domestic labour costs.
- Volatile daily data shows higher demand in 2026 compared to same period last year but narrowing in Jun.

- Seasonal demand sees kitchen & catering staff remain top, followed by local services in care, education (notably SEN and early years), hospitality and retail.
- The top specialised skills: Project Management, Auditing, Continuous Improvement Process, Finance, Food Safety–Sanitation, Governance.

Claimant Unemployment ↑



- The number of unemployed claimants in Winchester district (not adjusted for seasonal factors) increased by 50 to 1,695. Winchester had 65 more unemployed people than at the same time last year.
- The rate increased on the month to 2.1% in May, below South East (3.1%) and UK rates (3.9%).

Local Claimants

Local Authority	Rate (%)	RAG	Change (ppts)	RAG
Basingstoke and Deane	2.7		0.1	
East Hampshire	2.1		0.1	
Eastleigh	2.2		0.0	
Fareham	2.1		0.0	
Gosport	3.7		0.0	
Hart	1.7		0.0	
Havant	3.3		0.0	
Isle of Wight	3.9		-0.1	
New Forest	2.4		0.0	
Portsmouth	4.6		0.0	
Rushmoor	3.0		-0.1	
Southampton	4.2		0.0	
Test Valley	1.9		-0.1	
Winchester	2.1		0.1	

>= UK rate (3.9%)

>= SE rate < UK

< SE rate (3.1%)

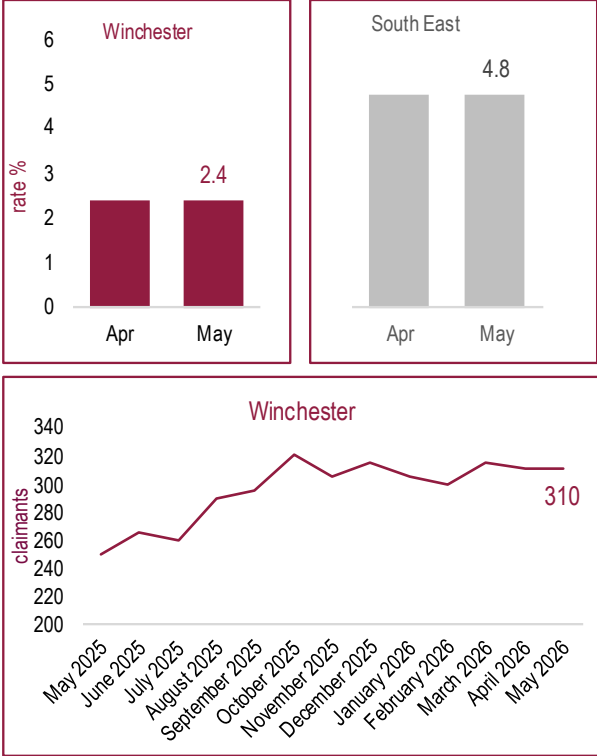
> 0.0 ppts

No change

< 0.0 ppts

- Like most Hampshire and the Solent authorities, Winchester's claimant count rate is below the two benchmarks. The two cities and the loW are above the UK rate, and Gosport and Havant above S. East.
- Three of the 14 Hampshire and the Solent LAs including Winchester saw an increase in unemployment rates.

Youth Unemployment ↔



- The number of young unemployed claimants aged 18–24-year-olds in Winchester district was unchanged to stand at 310 in May.
- The youth claimant unemployment rate stayed at 2.4% more or less unchanged since Nov 25. The 18-24-year-old rate is below South East (4.8%) and the UK (5.7%) averages.

Young Local Claimants

Local Authority	Rate (%)	RAG	Change (ppts)	RAG
Basingstoke and Deane	5.8		0.0	
East Hampshire	3.6		0.1	
Eastleigh	4.5		0.0	
Fareham	3.9		-0.1	
Gosport	7.4		-0.3	
Hart	2.4		-0.2	
Havant	7.1		-0.1	
Isle of Wight	8.7		-0.2	
New Forest	4.8		0.2	
Portsmouth	5.1		0.0	
Rushmoor	5.0		-0.1	
Southampton	3.7		0.1	
Test Valley	3.9		-0.2	
Winchester	2.4		0.0	

>= UK rate (5.7%)

>= SE rate < UK

< SE rate (4.8%)

> 0.0 ppts

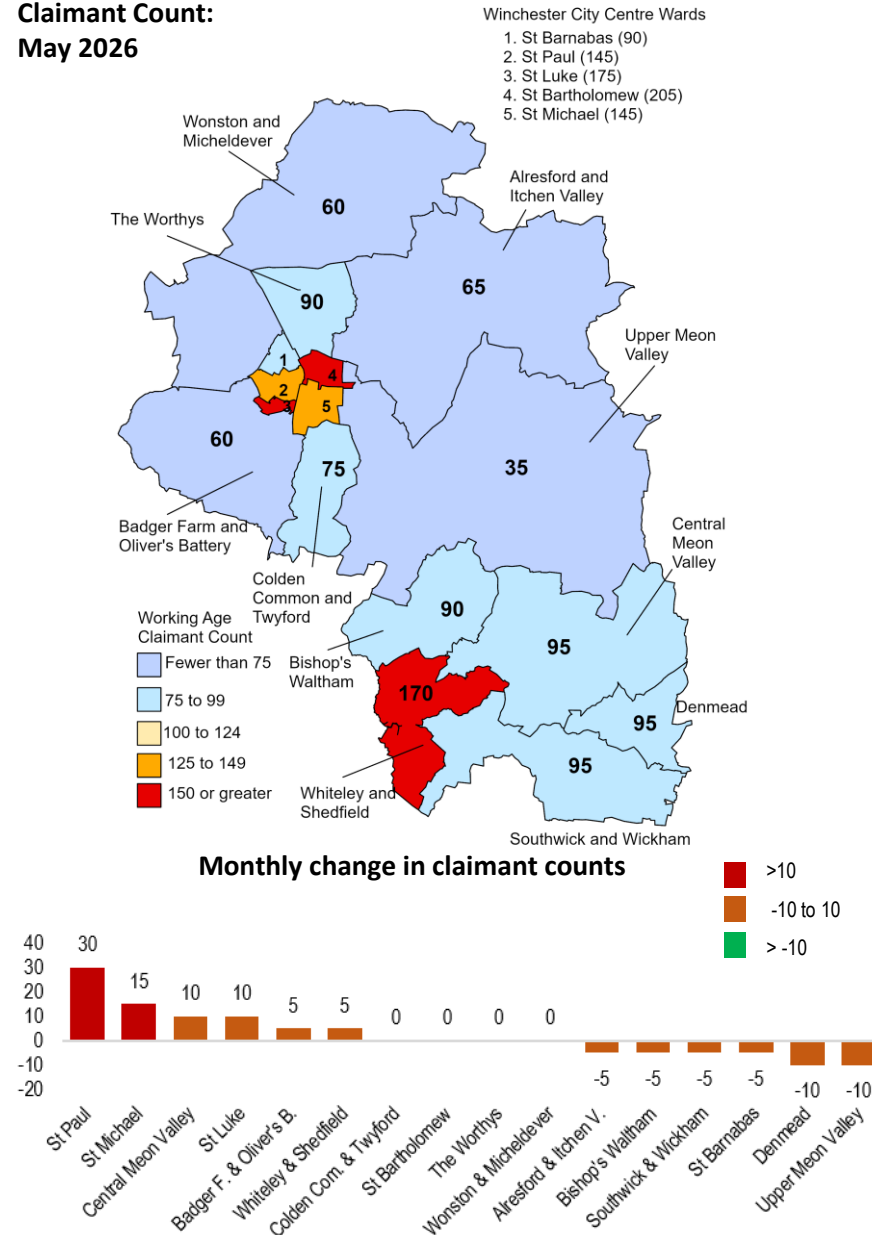
No change

< 0.0 ppts

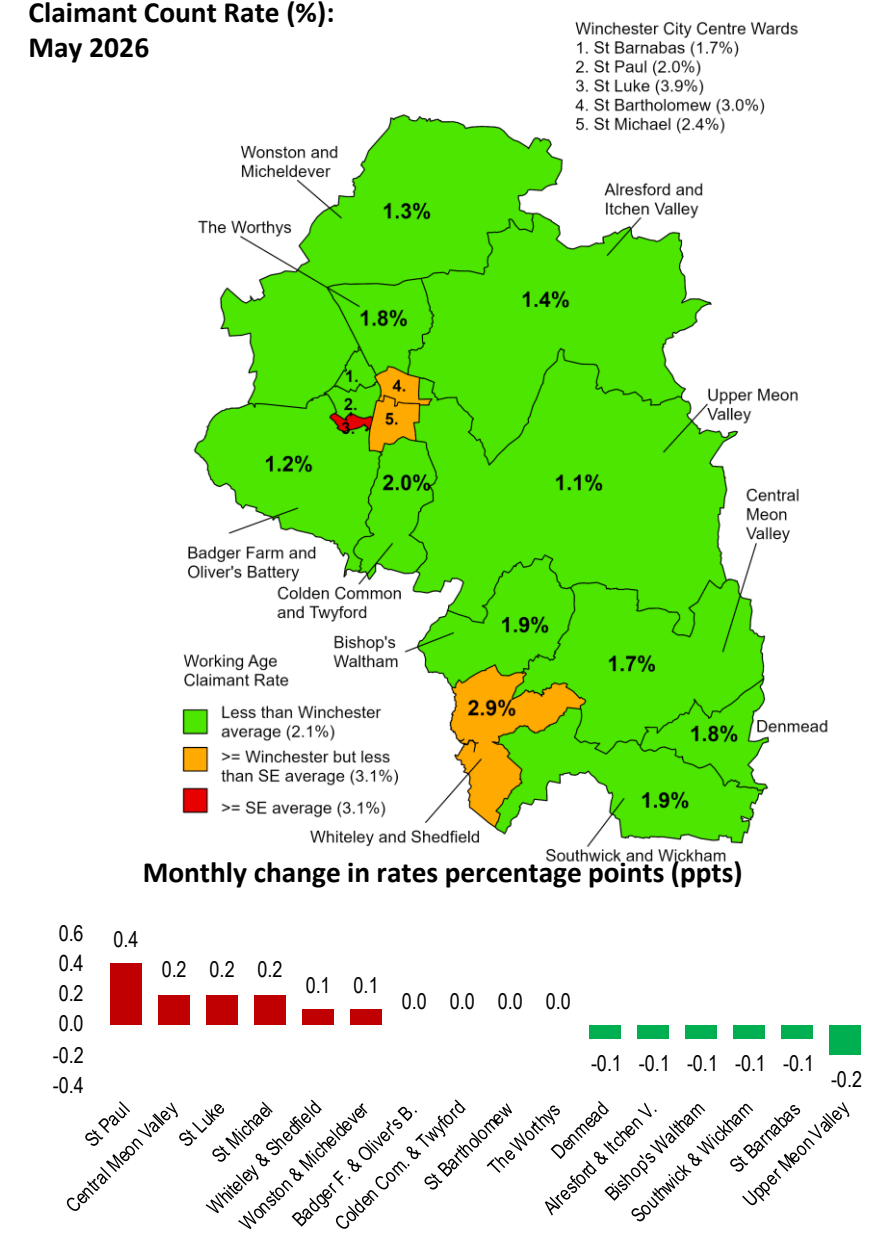
- Half of the 14 Hampshire and the Solent districts have rates below the South East and UK rates. Three LAs above the South East rate, and four LAs above or equal to the UK.
- Half (seven) saw a decrease on the previous month, four saw no change (incl. Winchester) and three LAs saw an increase on the previous month.

- Based on the thresholds between -10 and 10 almost all wards (14 out of 16) saw no change in claimant counts on the previous month.
- Only St Paul and St Michael wards met the threshold for an increase of greater than 10 claimants.
- Claimant count concentrations (over 150) are in the City of Winchester – St Luke and St Bartholomew wards, and in Whiteley and Shedfield Ward.
- However, small increases in claimant counts was enough for six of the 16 Winchester district wards to also see increases in their claimant rates in May, notably St Paul Ward. Four wards and six wards saw a decrease.
- St Luke Ward (3.9%) has an unemployment rate above or equal to the South East average (3.1%), three wards are above the Winchester average (2.1%). No Winchester district wards are above the UK average (3.9%), but St Luke Ward has the same rate.

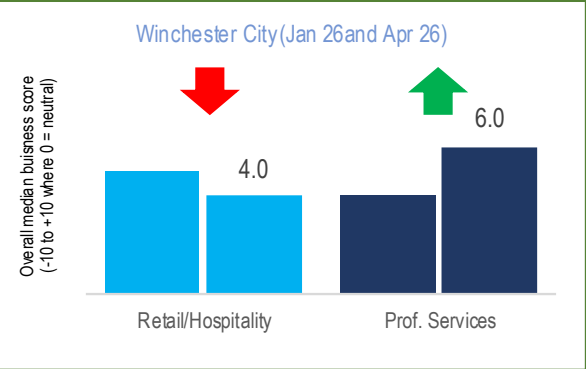
**Claimant Count:
May 2026**



**Claimant Count Rate (%):
May 2026**

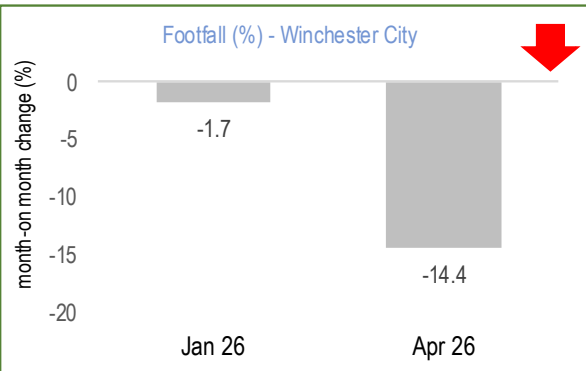
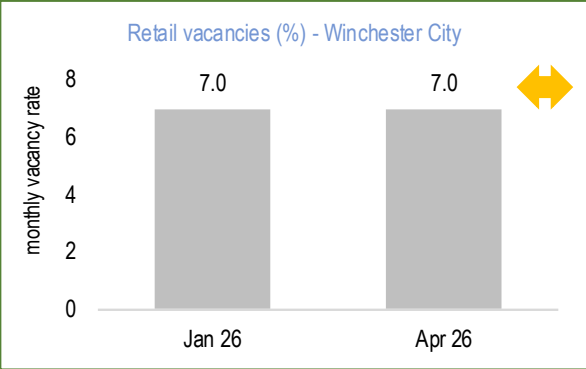


Business Confidence



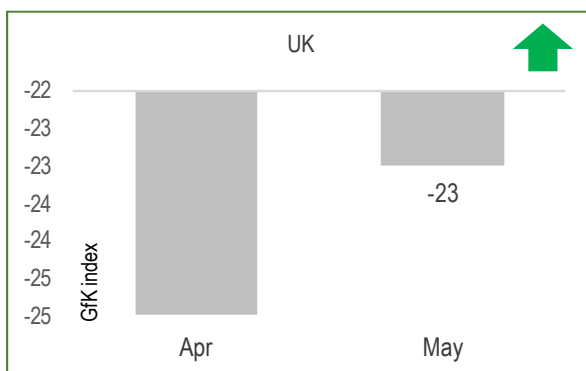
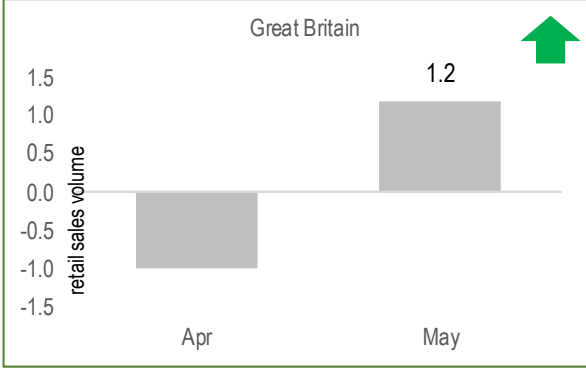
- The Business sentiment score in Winchester city centre were decreased for retail/hospitality to 4.0 but increased by 0.2 points for professional service in Apr 2026.
- Timelier regional survey data points to demand steadying allowing modest job creation. Outlook positive with new work/investment in the pipeline.

Vacancies & Footfall



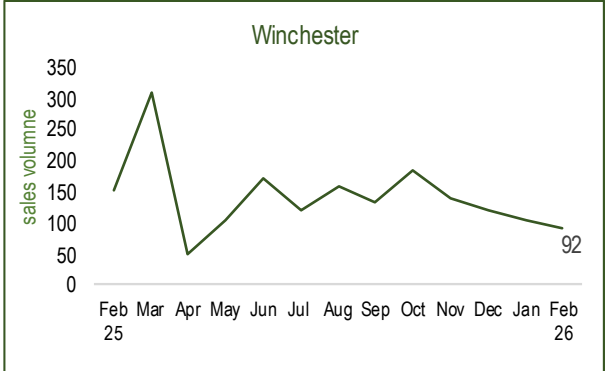
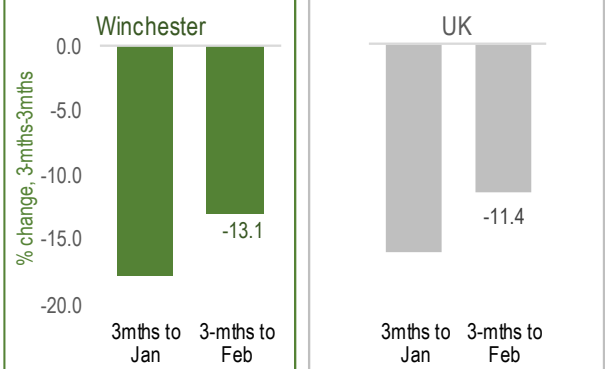
- The Winchester High Street vacancy rate stay at 7.0% for Apr 26 as the retail property market remains subdued. However, High Street vacancy rate comparable to a year ago.
- Footfall falls sharply in Apr 26, down 14.4% on Mar 26, and down 2.0% in Q1 2026 compared Q1 2025.

Spending & Sentiment



- Retail sales volumes grew 1.2% in May following Apr downturn. Quarter sales up 0.4% but sales volumes rose by 3.2% in year to May 2026.
- Consumer confidence edged up 2 points to -23 in May, first slight uptick in 2026. Major purchases lowest since Jan 25. Cost-of-living/inflation fears weighing on consumers.

House Sales



- House sales 13.1% lower in 3-mths to Feb (seasonally unadjusted) compared to 3-mths to Jan. Number of provisional sales down to 92 in Feb.
- Average house price was £462K in Apr for Winchester (71% above UK), lower than prices for the previous month and on the year. Average detached property £745K in Apr.

Business-specific Intelligence and News (BID)

- **Winchester City BID report (April 2026) points to resilient performance up to April 2026**, despite the backdrop of ongoing economic headwinds. Retail/Hospitality (RH) and Professional Services (PS) each reported another performance score of '7' (out of 10) in April, unchanged on January 2026.
- **Winchester's city-centre RH outlets' sales remain relatively subdued** with zero growth in Q1 2026, following softening sales growth in Q4 2025. **PS saw sales growth slow**; down from 4.0% in January 2026 to 3.0% in April 2026 but better than the 0% growth predicted at the start of the calendar year. Anecdotal evidence on the impact on RH sales from the High Street Market was mixed but with an overall neutral score (0) i.e., neither good nor bad.
- **Proportion of some RH outlets reporting higher dwell** time in stores has in **fallen to under 20%**. To quote, "customers are not 'hanging around'".
- **Around one third (32%) of Winchester City RH businesses reported higher levels of net profitability** in Q1 2026; down from 50% in January. **Just under one third (31%) of PS businesses achieved profitability** in Q1 2026, slightly down from January (40%).
- **Refurbishment of the 'Butter Cross' Monument** in the High Street causing problems for adjacent retailers and those close by with sales down 40%-50%.
- **Winchester City High Street retail vacancies stay at 7.0% in April 2026** compared to January 2026 as the retail property market remains subdued. However, the High Street vacancy rate is comparable to a year ago and remains significantly lower than the national rate (13-24%) reported by Savills.
- **Winchester City businesses footfall falls sharply in April 2026**, with reported footfall down 14.4% on March 2026, and was down 2% in Q1 2026 compared Q1 2025.

Public Policy News

Key Policy Announcements for 2026

- **Statutory Minimum Wage Rates (From April 2026)** – the following increases came into effect in April: Aged 21 and over (National Living Wage) at £12.71; Aged 18 to 20: £10.85; Aged 16 to 17: £8.00; Apprentice Rate: £8.00.
- **King's Speech (May 13, 2026)** –number of [Bills](#) announced, with the [LGA](#) providing a comprehensive local government viewpoint.
- **Energy sector cyber security strategy published (28 May)**: sets out what the [government](#) will do to protect Great Britain's energy system and consumers, and to develop a clean, digital and resilient energy system.
- **Hampshire and the Solent Combined County Authority June 2026 ([HSCCA](#))** formally established following parliamentary approval of the statutory instrument. The HSCCA will initially be led by a Board of Leaders from the four constituent upper tier councils. In May 2028, inaugural elections will be held for a Mayor who will then lead the HSCCA Board. In the meantime, Dr Ruth Adams (Interim Chief Executive) is leading the HSCCA team on a part time basis, alongside her work with South-East Employers, the Regional Employers Organisation for the South East of England.
- **Sir Keir Starmer announces his resignation as Leader of the Labour Party and as Prime Minister.** MPs have until 9 July 2026 to declare their bid for the leadership. As at going to press, Andy Burnham is the only candidate to declare his intent. As Mayor of Manchester, Burnham has advocated for more devolution and localism. There is an expectation Burnham appointed Prime Minister around the parliamentary summer recess (16 July) if no other candidates stand, otherwise, a contest will see a new leader in September.

How to read 'traffic lights':



Refers to decline or growth relative to the previous period (GVA, PMI business activity and business prices indicators, job postings, business investment, retail and house sales).

In the case of inflation, PAYE employment & earnings and consumer sentiment, it refers to the direction of travel relative to the previous period.

For claimant count unemployment indicators, the change refers to the rate not the level. For example, a decrease in youth unemployment would see a downward green arrow.



Little or no change on previous period.

† The local estimate is preliminary, and it needs to be treated with a high degree of caution since it is based on the sectoral mix of the Portsmouth economy and the national sectoral impacts.

Sources:

The primary data sources are the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and HMRC, while additional data comes from several commercial sources such as S&P Global, Lightcast, CBI, BCC, HM Land Registry, the Bank of England and Winchester BID.

Monthly/Quarterly data for Business Activity, Jobs & Earnings, Unemployment and Sentiment & Investment.

In the case of several monthly indicators, the South East is used as a proxy geography for Winchester and Hampshire.

Estimates of payrolled employees and their pay from HMRC Pay As You Earn (PAYE) Real Time Information are preliminary but seasonally adjusted. Employment figures differ from the ONS Labour Force Survey (LFS) data. Moreover, median pay figures differ from the ONS Average Weekly Earnings (AWE) and are based on gross earnings which do not cover other sources of income, such as self-employment.

For further information on Winchester's labour market see Quarterly Labour Market Updates and Monthly Ward Claimant Count Reports available at:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/business/ebis/reports>

Produced by Winchester City Council in partnership with the Economy Intelligence Team

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