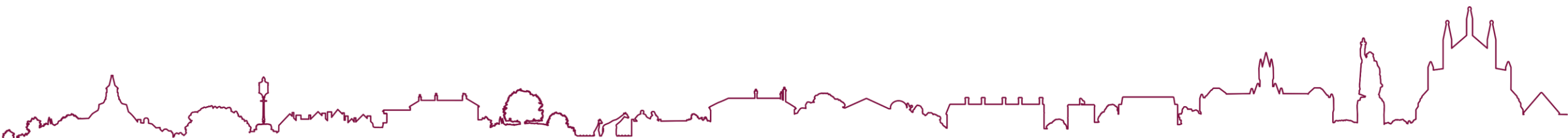


Winchester District Quarterly Economic Intelligence Dashboard



September 2026

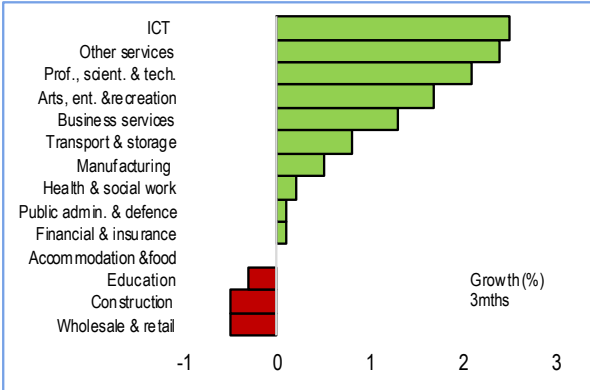
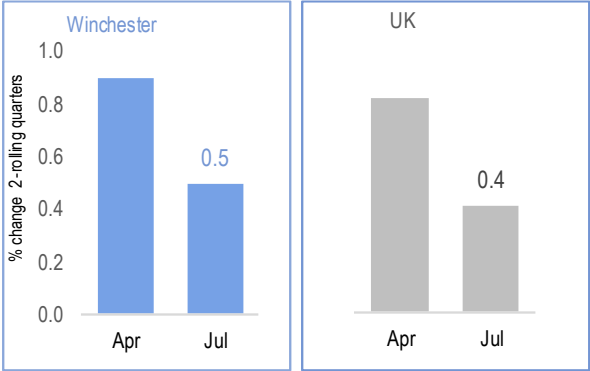


Winchester
City Council

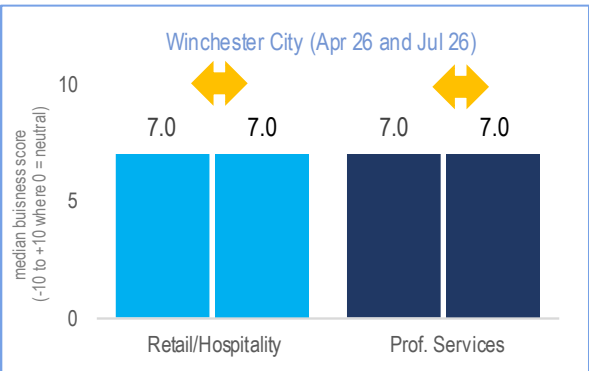
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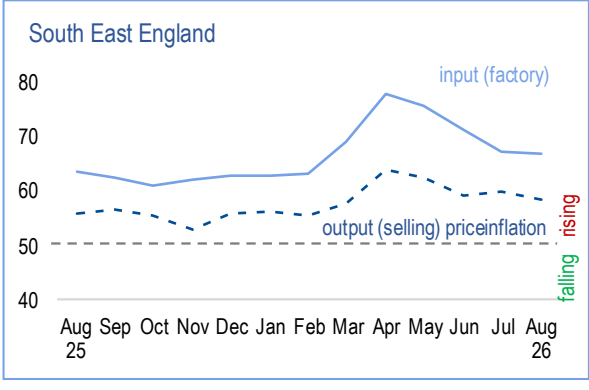
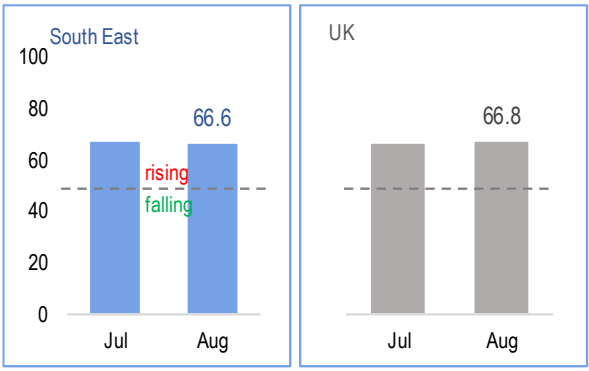
Economic Growth



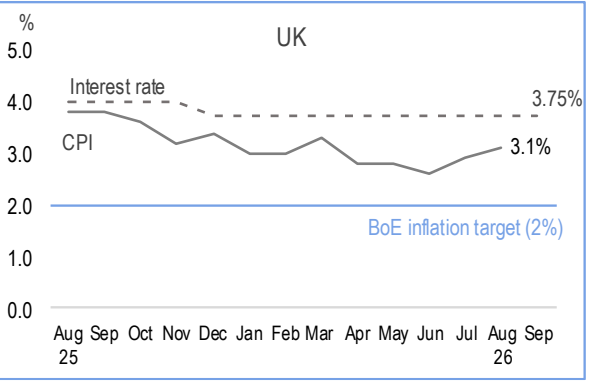
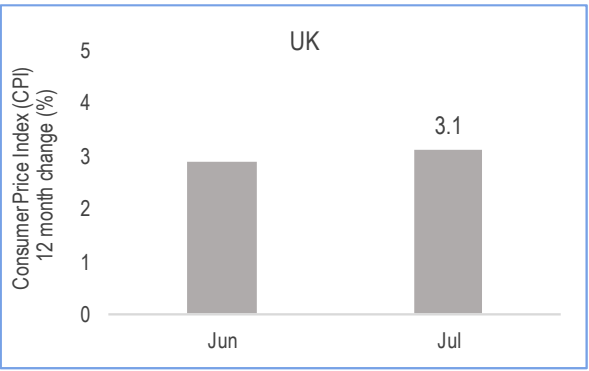
Business Performance



Business Prices



Inflation



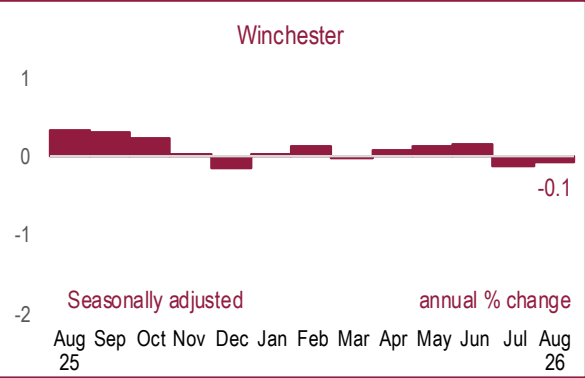
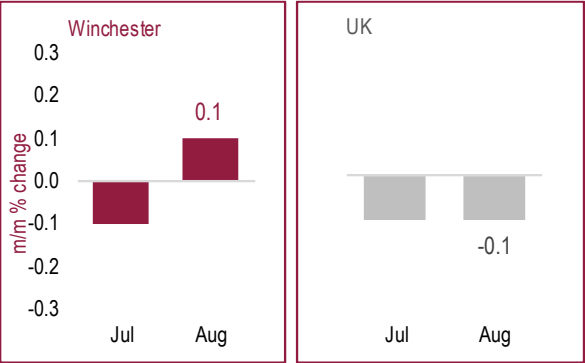
- Our preliminary estimate shows Hampshire and the Solent's economy grew at 0.4% in the three months to July, in line with the UK.
- UK growth was led by ICT and other knowledge-intensive services, while wholesale, construction and education declined (education partly reflecting heatwave-related school closures).

- 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 Aug compared to Jul.

- Input cost inflation in the region eased to a six-month low, although labour, fuel and material costs continued to place upward pressure on businesses.
- Output price inflation eased to its lowest rate since April, but price increases remained stronger than the UK average.

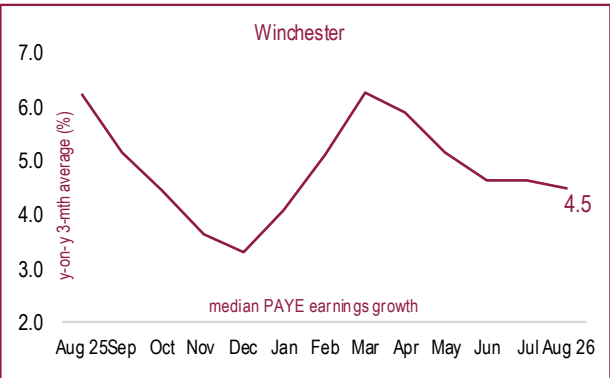
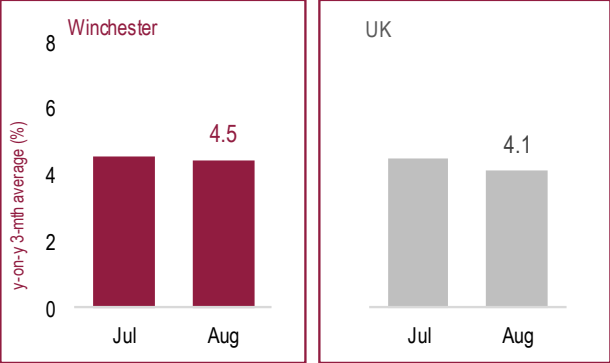
- CPI inflation rose to 3.1% in Aug, driven by higher petrol, diesel and airfares as Middle East conflict disrupts supply.
- Core inflation (excluding food and energy) and services inflation remained at 2.6% and 3.4%, while goods inflation rose to 2.7% (highest since Sep 2025).
- As expected, the Bank of England held base rate at 3.75%.

PAYE Employees



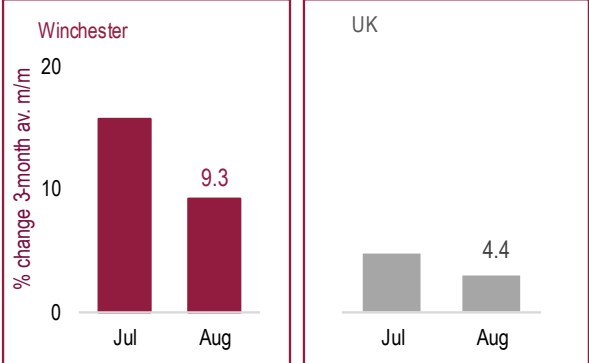
- Timely preliminary estimates from HMRC PAYE points to marginal employment growth in Aug after a small decrease growth in Jul, and outperforming the UK average.
- PAYE employment in Winchester was 0.1% higher on the month, no growth on the quarter but 0.1% lower on the year. Annual employment at 58,200.

PAYE Earnings



- PAYE earnings in Winchester maintains an elevated position above inflation although continues to soften following easing in Aug. However, growth rate above the UK average.
- National wage growth across the economy slowed to 3.5% in the latest month, more-or-less stable for the past five months.

Labour Demand



- Labour demand remains strong in the 3-mths to Aug in Winchester. Signs of slowdown compared to previous 4-months, due to mix of seasonal trends and ongoing economic uncertainty. Growth above South East average.
- Volatile daily data shows higher demand in 2026 compared to same period last year but narrowing in Sep.

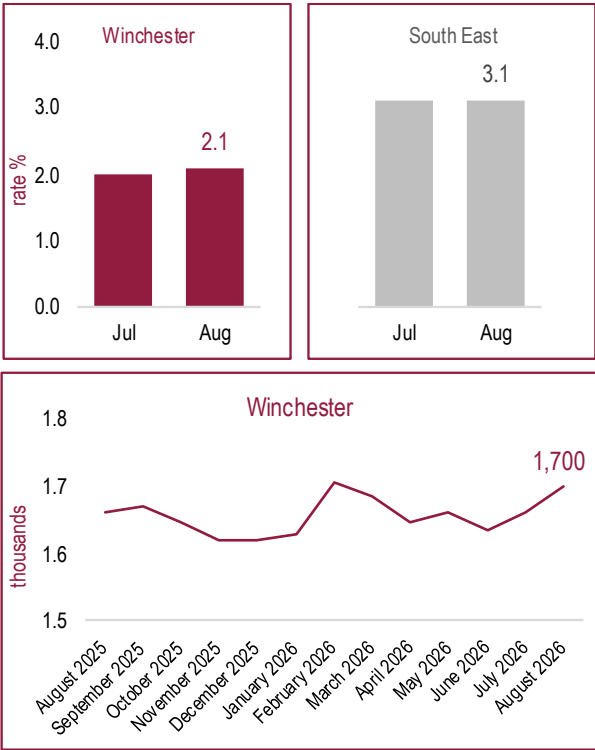
Demand by Occupation

Unique jobs postings by Occupation (SOC)	Aug	% of total
Care Workers and Home Carers	142	6.2
Cleaners and Domestic	131	5.7
Chefs	125	5.4
Kitchen and Catering Assistants	98	4.3
Programmers and Software Development Professionals	94	4.1
Sales Related Occupations n.e.c.	92	4.0
Early Education and Childcare Practitioners	77	3.3
IT Business Analysts, Architects and Systems Designers	68	3.0
Mechanical Engineers	62	2.7
Managers and Directors in Retail and Wholesale	54	2.3

Unique jobs postings by Occupation (SOC)	Jul	% of total
Care Workers and Home Carers	126	5.5
Chefs	116	5.1
Cleaners and Domestic	109	4.7
Programmers and Software Development Professionals	107	4.7
Kitchen and Catering Assistants	103	4.5
Sales Related Occupations n.e.c.	102	4.4
Early Education and Childcare Practitioners	85	3.7
Mechanical Engineers	59	2.6
Managers and Directors in Retail and Wholesale	58	2.5
Project Support Officers	57	2.5

- Top ten account for two-fifths of job postings in Aug, led by local services in care/domestic and hospitality. High-skilled demand in IT (IT business analysts join top 10), and mechanical engineers.
- The top specialised skills: Continuous Improvement Process, Auditing, Project Management, Finance.

Claimant Unemployment



- The number of unemployed claimants in Winchester district (not adjusted for seasonal factors) increased by 40 to 1,700 and 40 on the month and on the year. Fall in over 50s (-30) partly offsets rise in under 50s (+70).
- The rate increased on the month to 2.1% in Aug, below South East (3.1%) and UK rates (3.9%).

Local Claimants

Local Authority	Rate (%)	RAG	Change (ppts)	RAG
HSCCA area	3.0		0.1	
Basingstoke and Deane	2.7		0.0	
East Hampshire	2.1		0.1	
Eastleigh	2.3		0.1	
Fareham	2.0		0.0	
Gosport	3.6		0.1	
Hart	1.8		0.1	
Havant	3.3		0.1	
Isle of Wight	3.6		0.0	
New Forest	2.3		0.0	
Portsmouth	4.5		0.1	
Rushmoor	3.0		0.0	
Southampton	4.2		0.1	
Test Valley	2.0		0.0	
Winchester	2.1		0.1	

>= UK rate (3.9%)

>= SE rate < UK

< SE rate (3.1%)

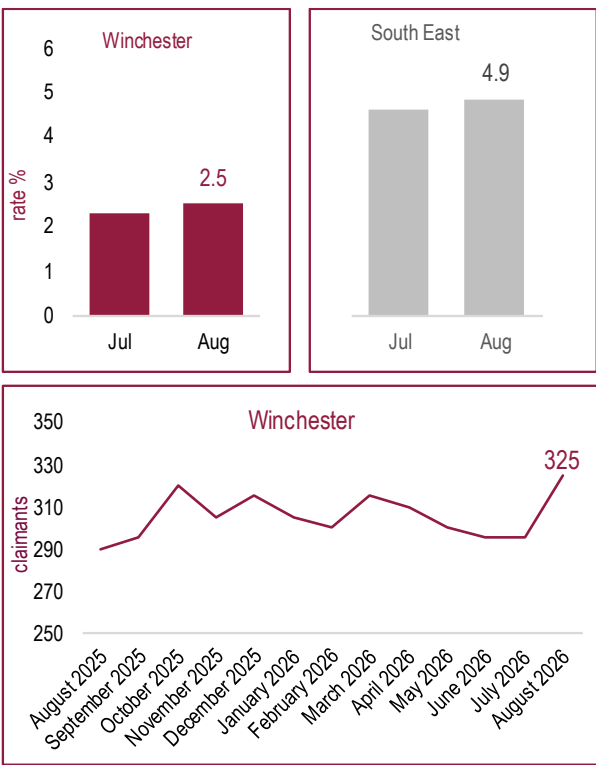
> 0.0 ppts

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 are above the UK rate, and Gosport and Havant and IoW above S. East.
- Eight 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 increased by 30 to stand at 325 in August.
- The youth claimant unemployment rate increased to 2.5% highest since Oct 25. The 18-24-year-old rate is below South East (4.9%) and the UK (5.9%) averages.

Young Local Claimants

Local Authority	Rate (%)	RAG	Change (ppts)	RAG
HSCCA area	4.5		0.2	
Basingstoke and Deane	6.1		0.3	
East Hampshire	3.7		0.1	
Eastleigh	4.7		0.3	
Fareham	4.2		0.4	
Gosport	7.3		0.4	
Hart	2.8		0.1	
Havant	7.0		0.1	
Isle of Wight	8.2		0.2	
New Forest	4.8		0.1	
Portsmouth	5.0		0.2	
Rushmoor	5.0		0.3	
Southampton	3.8		0.2	
Test Valley	4.1		0.2	
Winchester	2.5		0.2	

>= UK rate (5.9%)

>= SE rate < UK

< SE rate (4.9%)

> 0.0 ppts

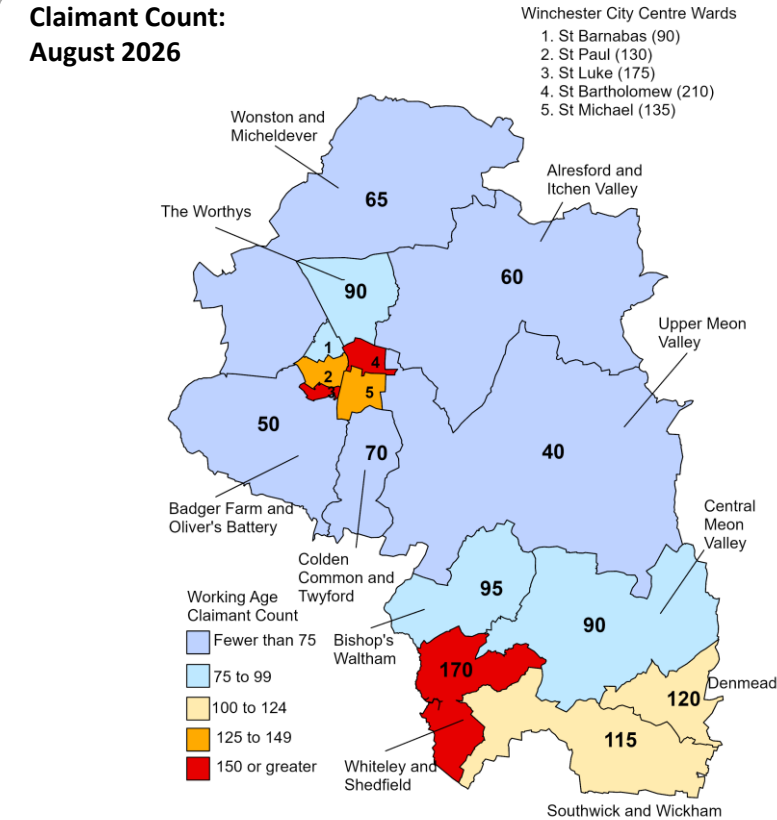
No change

< 0.0 ppts

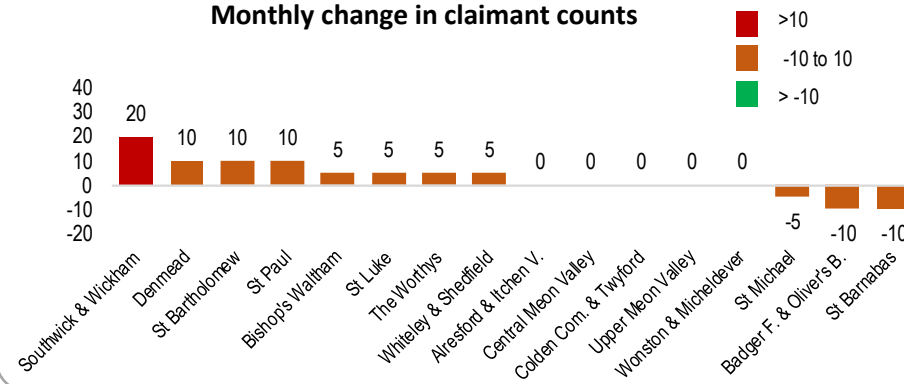
- Eight of the 14 Hampshire and the Solent districts have rates below the South East and UK rates. Two LAs above the South East rate, and four LAs above or equal to the UK.
- All 14 Hampshire and the Solent local authorities, saw an increase on the previous month, with Winchester in creasing by 0.2ppts.

- Based on the thresholds between -10 and 10 almost all wards (15 out of 16) saw no change in claimant counts on the previous month.
- Only Southwick and Wickham Ward 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 nine of the 16 Winchester district wards to also see increases in their claimant rates in August, notably Southwick and Wickham Ward. Three wards and four wards saw no change and a decrease, respectively.
- St Luke and St Bartholomew wards have unemployment rates above or equal to the South East average (3.1%), four wards are above the Winchester average (2.1%). No Winchester wards are above the UK average (3.9%), but St Luke Ward has the same rate.

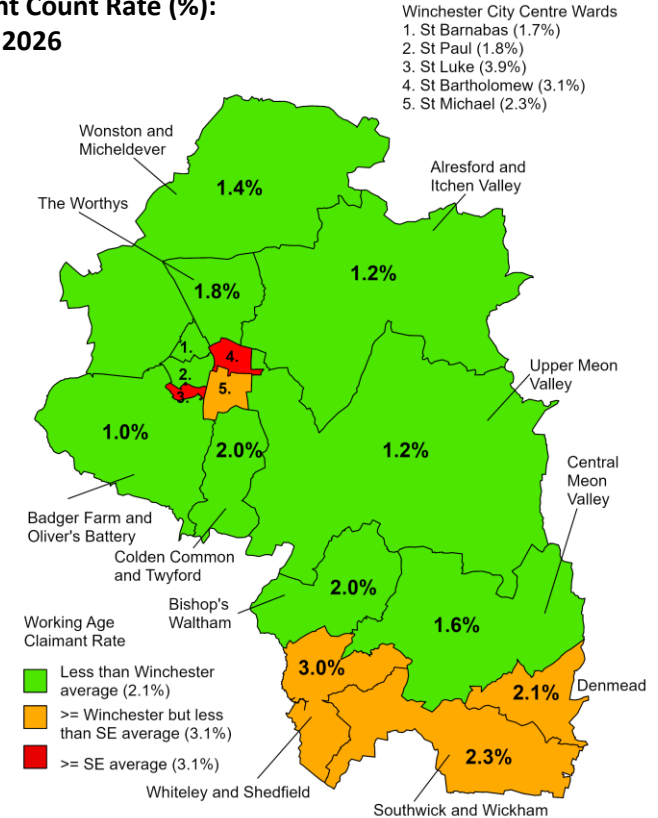
Claimant Count:
August 2026



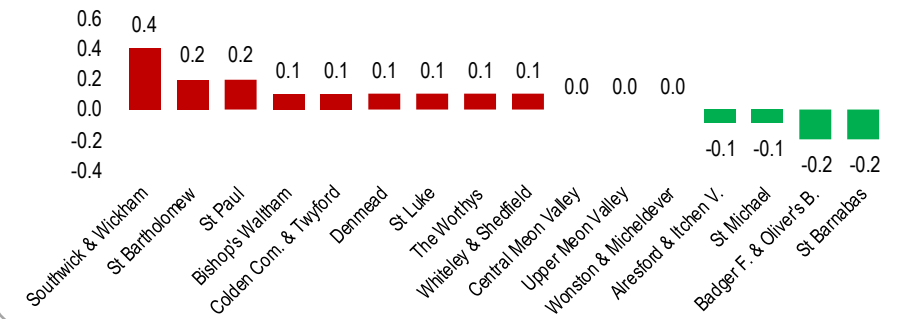
Monthly change in claimant counts



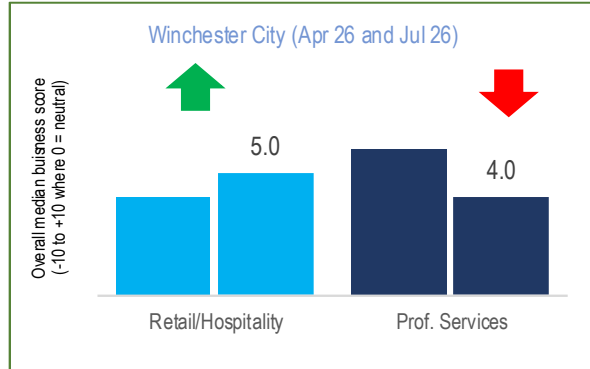
Claimant Count Rate (%):
August 2026



Monthly change in rates percentage points (ppts)

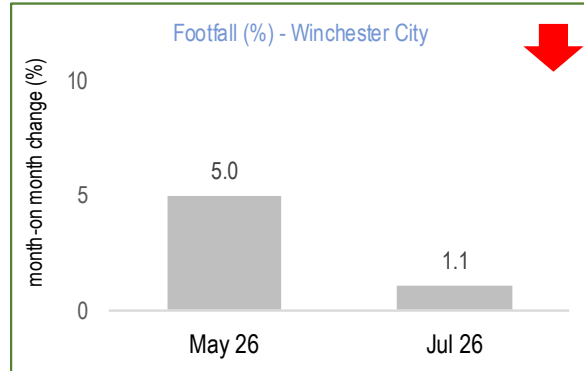


Business Confidence



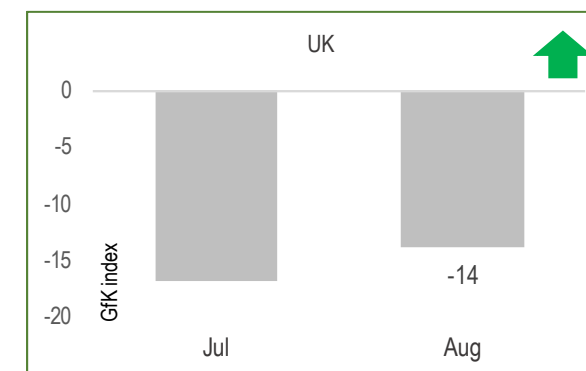
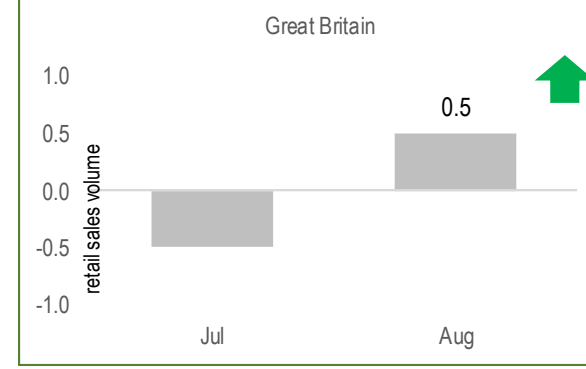
- The Business sentiment score in Winchester city centre increased for retail/hospitality to 5.0 but decreased by 0.2 points for professional service between April and July 2026.
- Timelier regional survey data points to modest but continued positive sentiment in Aug on back of expectations for stronger sales.

Vacancies & Footfall



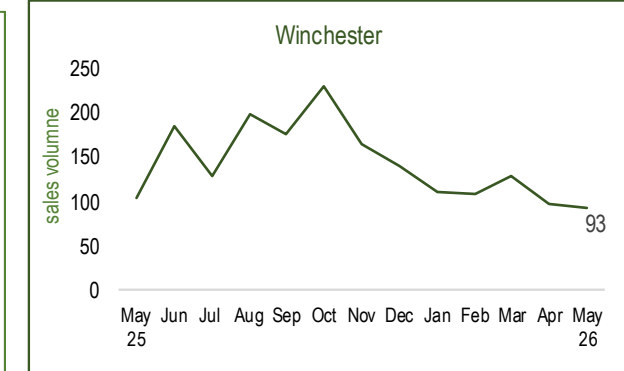
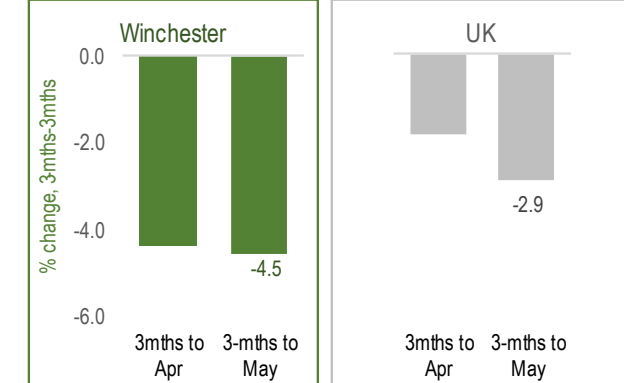
- The Winchester High Street vacancy rate dropped from 7.0% in Apr 26 to 2.3% as the High Street attracts upscale and high-end brands.
- Footfall falls grew by just 1.1% in July 26, much slower than in May, possibly down to extreme heat.
- Y-on-Y saw footfall 9.6% higher in July 2026 than in July 2025.

Spending & Sentiment



- Retail sales volumes grew 0.5% in Aug following Jul downturn. Quarter sales up 0.9% but sales volumes rose by 2.4% in year to Aug 2026.
- Consumer confidence in UK climbed 3 points to -14 in Aug; highest level of confidence in two years. Growing optimism but inflation and global uncertainty mean recovery is fragile.

House Sales



- House sales 4.5% lower in 3-mths to May compared to 3-mths to Apr (seasonally unadjusted). Provisional sales effectively unchanged in May.
- Average house price was £463K in Jul for Winchester (70% above UK), and lower than prices for the previous month but higher on the year. Average detached property £746K in Jul.

Business-specific Intelligence and News (BID)

- **The Winchester City BID report (July 2026) indicates stable performance through July 2026**, despite ongoing economic headwinds. Retail and Hospitality (RH) and Professional Services (PS) each recorded another performance score of 7 out of 10 in July, unchanged from April 2026. However, sentiment among consumer discretionary retailers was lower, at 2.5, as the cost-of-living crisis eroded household disposable income.
- **RH business sentiment returned to a score of 5 in July**, having previously dipped to 4 in April. However, PS sentiment fell from 6 in April to 4 in July.
- **Sales at Winchester city-centre RH outlets remained relatively subdued**, growing by 1% between April and July, although this outperformed the national rate of -0.3%. **In contrast, PS sales growth rose from 3% in April to 7.0% in July**. Research suggests that high temperatures may have shifted more sales online at the expense of physical high-street stores.
- **Around one-third of Winchester city-centre RH businesses reported higher levels of net profitability**, unchanged from April. Half of PS businesses were profitable in July, an improvement on April, when the figure was around 30%.
- **The Winchester High Street vacancy rate dropped from 7.0% in April 2026 to 2.3%**, as the area attracted upmarket brands such as Gail's Artisan Bakery, Jo Malone, Healthspan and Pasta Evangelists. The vacancy rate remained significantly lower than the national rate of 13.4% reported by Savills in May. However, this positive news was dampened by a fire that closed three outlets in The Square and by uncertainty surrounding TG Jones and Kuoni.
- **Footfall among Winchester city-centre businesses grew by just 1.1%** in July 2026, much more slowly than in May. Anecdotally, this was attributed to the extreme heat and the opening of Helch Market in Upper Brook Street, which diverted footfall to that part of the city.

Public Policy News

Key Policy Announcements for 2026

- **Andy Burnham officially became prime minister** of the UK on July 20th 2026.
- **Cabinet statement Rewiring the State** announced 31st July with number of key policies:
 - Major transfer of powers and service responsibilities:
 - Greater fiscal autonomy, but more exposure to local economic performance
 - Strategic authority coverage and governance reform will accelerate: Greater funding freedoms
- **Government establish 'No 10 North'**, in Manchester, to lead on growth.
- **Autumn Budget statement** to be delivered on 28 October 2026.
- **Government intends further reform adult social care** and deliver a national care service - Independent Commission on Adult Social Care, to report by summer 2027.
- **Business rates support for pubs, clubs and live music venues** to get 20% cut in England from April 2027.
- **More powers for local authorities to tackle vape and betting shops:** additional powers to block new businesses opening in town centres to stop the "hollowing out" of high streets.
- **MHCLG published the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** August 2026.
 - Separates out plan-making from national decision-making policy.
 - New rules and definitions around settlements and more housing around well-connected stations.
 - Greater importance to grey belt and accessible and adaptable housing.
 - Provide stronger protection against the loss of pubs and other community facilities.
- **Local Government Reorganisation** unexpectedly paused by government and reviews decisions, including Hampshire and Solent following legal advice.

How to read 'traffic lights':



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

In the case of business prices, inflation, PAYE 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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