

# Unemployment ... in brief

July 2020

The Coronavirus crisis has led to an unprecedented increase in the number of people claiming unemployment benefits including JobSeekers Allowance (JSA) and Universal Credit (UC) as their income has fallen and people are unable to work because their workplaces are currently closed (such as in the hospitality industry) or they are isolating, shielding, or living with someone vulnerable and so unable to work. While some people are still drawing some salary because they have been furloughed under the Government's income support schemes, many more have made claims for benefits. Data on the number of people covered by Government income support schemes is now available up to 30 June 2020. The full range of benefits data for June 2020 is not yet available, so this short briefing will concentrate on analysing available data for the Claimant Count (UC and JSA), all Universal Credit Claimants and Government support schemes. Data for the 'Alternative Claimant Count', which includes estimates of those additional claimants who would be required to search for work under Universal Credit had it been in place at the time they claimed is now available for May 2020. See end of briefing for more detail.

## Some headline numbers for East Sussex:

**19,480** unemployed claimants of JobSeekers Allowance (JSA) and Universal Credit (UC) (searching for work) in June 2020.

**46,768** people claiming UC, of whom **28,760** are not included in the claimant count above (not 'Searching for work') in June 2020

**21,553** more people claimed UC (any conditionality) or JSA between March 2020 and June 2020

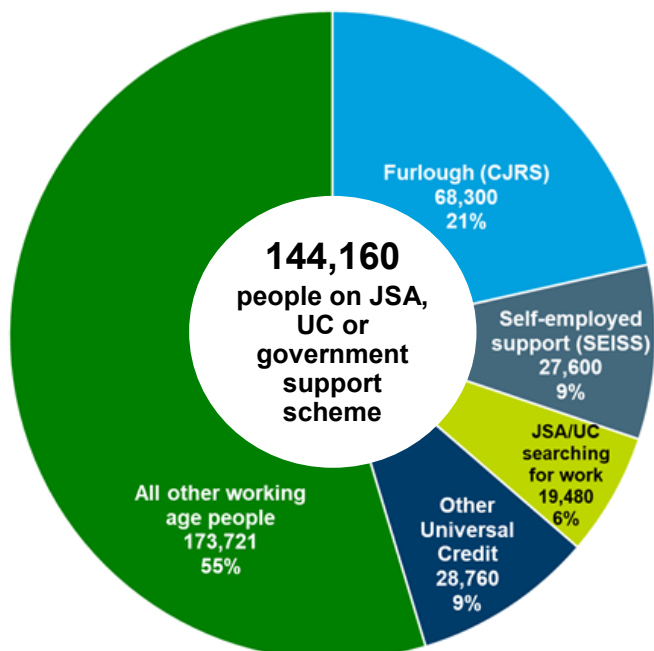
**95,900** supported by government employment support schemes – up to 30 June 2020

**117,450** more people now receiving some sort of income support, through JSA, UC and other government employment support schemes, than in March 2020

Total of **144,140 people** now on either UC, JSA or government support scheme (available data @ July 2020)

**45%** of all working age people are currently receiving JSA or UC, or government employment income support available because of the crisis, up from 42% at the end of May 2020.

## Working age people in East Sussex supported through government schemes, UC or JSA, end June 2020



**1 in 9** young people (aged 18-24) in the county claiming UC/JSA because of unemployment

Hastings: **1 in 7** young people and **1 in 6** young men claiming

	Number of claimants				% of working age people	
	June 2019	June 2020	Actual change	Annual % change	June 2019	June 2020
Eastbourne	2,030	4,540	2,510	124%	3.4	7.6
Hastings	2,570	4,900	2,330	91%	4.5	8.6
Lewes	1,085	3,240	2,155	199%	1.8	5.5
Rother	1,235	2,895	1,660	134%	2.4	5.7
Wealden	1,105	3,900	2,795	253%	1.2	4.3
<b>East Sussex</b>	<b>8,025</b>	<b>19,480</b>	<b>11,455</b>	<b>143%</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>6.1</b>
South East	101,855	289,200	187,345	184%	1.8	5.1
England	942,115	2,231,740	1,289,625	137%	2.7	6.4

**19,480**

Number of claimants of UC and JSA in East Sussex in June 2020

↓ **down 6%**

(+1,200 claimants) since May 2020

Compares to 1.5% decrease in England, and 3.8% in South East

↑ **up 113%** since March 2020

↑ **up 143%** since June 2019

Claimant numbers in the county still second highest since **February 1994**

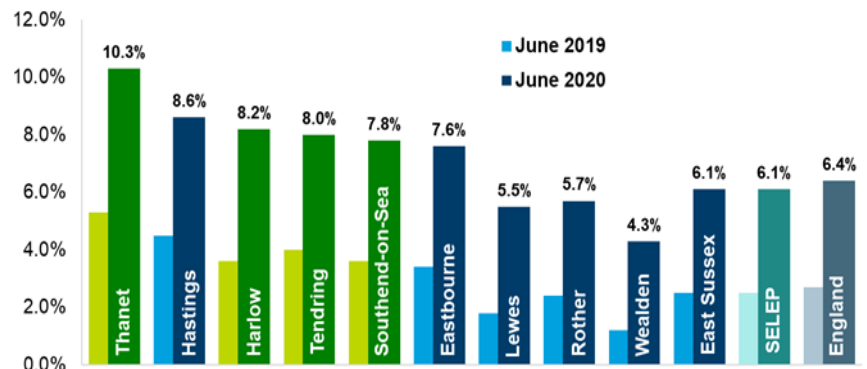
- Hastings has second highest claimant rate in SELEP and SE region after Thanet.
- Largest 3 monthly percentage increases in claimants in Wealden (+197%) and Lewes (+130%).
- Wards: 29 wards have rates at or above the England average, with the highest rates in Central St Leonards (14.2%), Gensing (11.8%) and Castle (11.0%) in Hastings, and Devonshire (11.7%) in Eastbourne.
- But largest *percentage* rises over 3 months have been in rural and less deprived wards with previously negligible numbers of claimants.
- Out of 10,345 new claims since March 2020, 944 were people claiming JSA only (i.e. not eligible for UC—because, for example, they had more than £16,000 savings).

**6.1%**

of working age people in East Sussex claiming UC/JSA in June 2020

Equal to SELEP, lower than England (6.4%), but higher than the SE region (5.4%)

Claimant rates in East Sussex, districts and top 5 districts in SELEP, June 2019 - June 2020

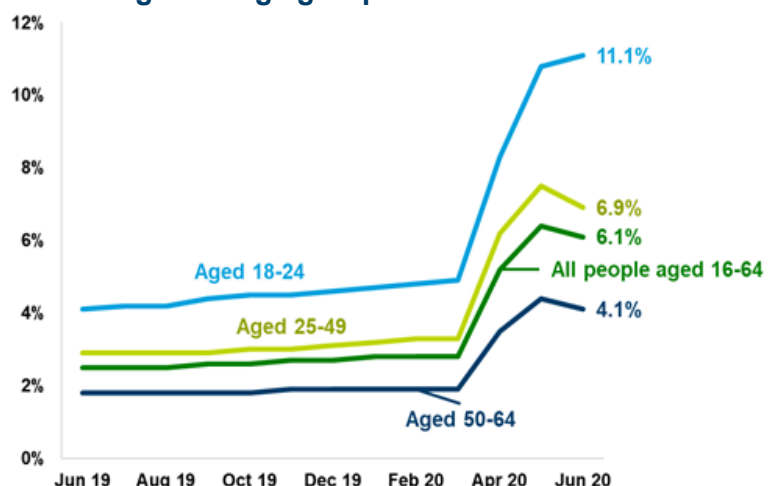


**Youth unemployment is rising faster**

**11.1%** of people aged 18-24 in East Sussex claiming UC/JSA in June 2020 (4.1% in June 2019)

Up **125%** (+2,550) since March 2020  
Compared to 113% rise (+11,305) for all aged 16-64

Claimant rates in East Sussex, all working age and age groups June 2019-June 2020



In East Sussex in June 2020 there were:

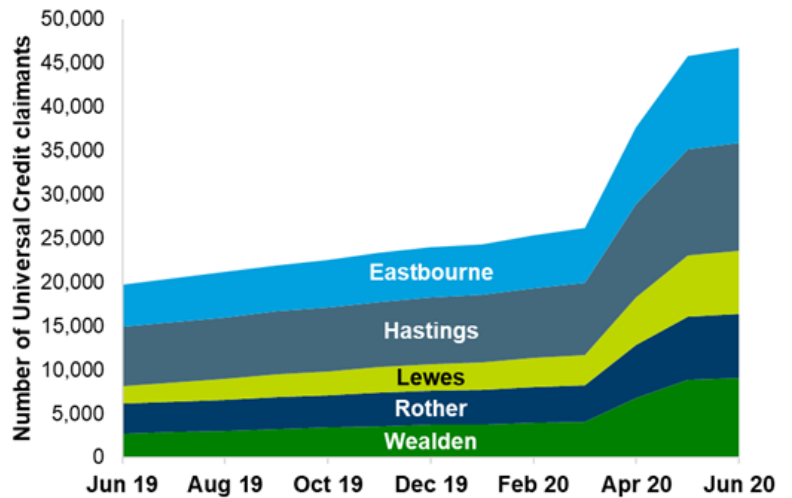
**46,768** people claiming UC  
(14.7% of working age people)

**+994** since May 2020

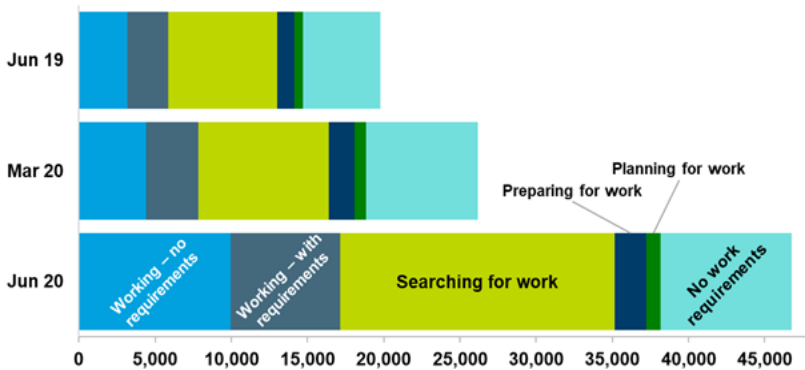
**+20,609** since March 2020

**39%** are 'Searching for work',  
up from 33% in March 2020, but  
down from 42% in May

Universal Credit claimants by district,  
June 2019-June 2020



Universal Credit claimants in East Sussex in June 2019, March and June 2020, by conditionality



Change in number of UC claimants since June 2019:

Eastbourne 6,060 (+127%)

Hastings 5,541 (+82%)

Lewes 5,154 (+250%)

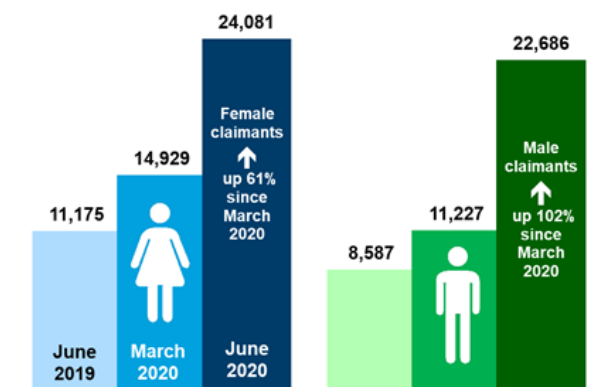
Rother 3,867 (+114%)

Wealden 6,360 (+233%)

East Sussex 26,962 (+137%)

- While the Claimant Count, which measures 'unemployed' claimant numbers declined by 1,200 since May 2020, the total number of UC claimants increased by 994 to 46,768.
- 37% of UC claimants are in work - either with or without additional work seeking requirements. Numbers of working claimants rose by 15% in June (much higher than the total rise of 2.2%) suggesting incomes are falling as there is less work available.
- Male UC claimants rose by 11,459 (102%) and female claimants were up 9,152 (61%) between March and June 2020. The proportion of female UC claimants has fallen from 57% in March 2020 to 51% in June.
- Again wide variation across districts - since March 2020, UC claims are up 123% in Wealden and 107% in Lewes, compared to rises of 51% in Hastings, 73% in Rother and 74% in Eastbourne.

Claimants of UC in East Sussex  
by gender,  
June 2019, March and June 2020



**95,900**

people in East Sussex currently supported by government schemes (as at 30 June 2020):

68,300 furloughed (CJRS)

27,300 self-employed support (SEISS)

Numbers have increased by 10,800 (13%) since 31 May 2020

In spring 2020, the government announced two schemes to support people who work for businesses that have been unable to trade because of the restrictions brought in during the Coronavirus crisis.

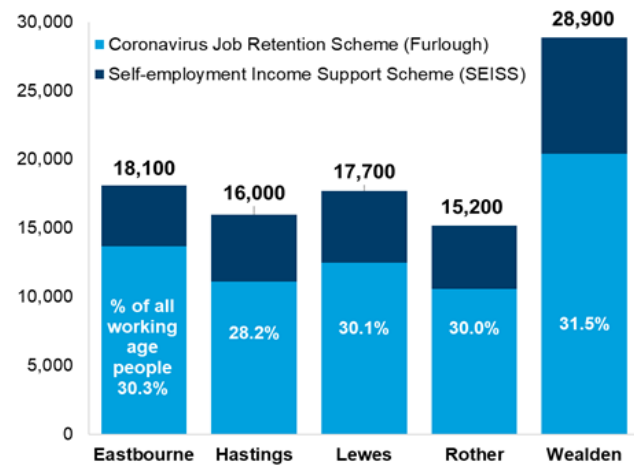
The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS, otherwise known as the Furlough scheme) enables companies to furlough employees rather than terminate their employment, paying 80% of people's wages, up to a maximum of £2,500 per month. Anyone working in a full-time job (or on a PAYE basis) on 19th March can be furloughed. This includes people on zero hours contracts or those working flexibly. It does not apply to people who had switched jobs between the end of February and the government announcement.

Being placed on furlough is similar to gardening leave. An employee continues to be paid by their employer and will still pay taxes from their income - but are not able to continue working for their employer for the duration of the furlough. In this case, they are effectively being paid not to work until the end of June. On May 12, Chancellor Rishi Sunak announced plans to extend the scheme for four months until October, after businesses said were concerned that they would not recover in time to re-employ them.

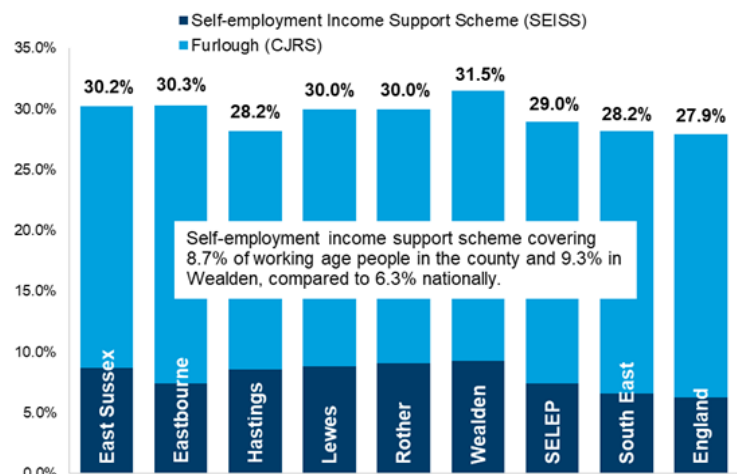
The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme was set up by the government to provide support for those who are self-employed, either as a sole trader or a partner in a partnership and who have been trading during the 2018/19 tax year. A business is considered to have been trading if they have been running a business selling goods or services and they have completed self-employed or partnership pages as part of their Self Assessment tax return. It is not available for people who work through their own companies and so receive wages through the PAYE system and/or dividends (although these people may be covered by the furlough scheme above). Self-employed profits are the trading profits shown on the tax return. It is the difference between the turnover, i.e. trading income and the allowed expenses deducted for tax purposes.

Data on the numbers covered by the schemes are now published on East Sussex in Figures (see further information).

Number of people covered by Government Employment Support Schemes, 30 June 2020

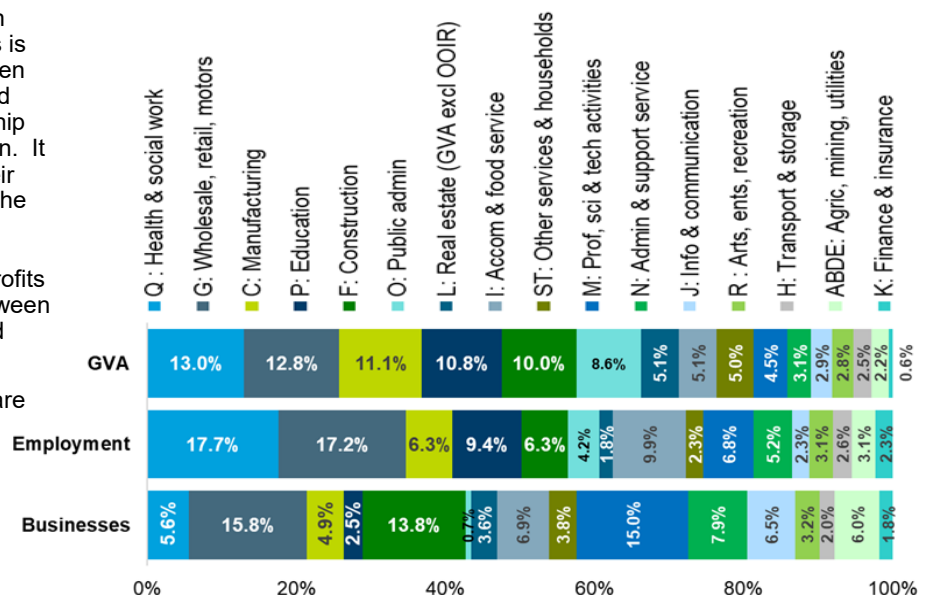


Percentage of working age people covered by Government Employment Support Schemes, 30 June 2020



Which sectors dominate in the East Sussex Labour Market?

East Sussex SIC sections: GVA (excl OOIR) and Employment (2018), and Businesses (2019)  
Ordered by largest GVA in 2018



## Further information

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 will 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.

Before the Coronavirus crisis, while unemployment numbers were fairly stable, the [Alternative Claimant Count](#) was the best measure of the numbers of unemployed people claiming, because it includes estimates of those additional unemployed claimants who would have been searching for work under Universal Credit had it been rolled out in their area at the time, together with those unemployed people claiming JSA and UC included in the Claimant Count, which removes biases in the Claimant Count due to households changing between benefit regimes (due to a change in circumstances for example). This data is released quarterly, but the most recent data available is for May 2020. There were around 1,600 people in this 'additional' group in May 2020, the last date for which data is available on that measure. However, in the current circumstances, the main Claimant Count, which includes all JSA claimants (who may or may not be entitled to UC), and UC claimants in the 'searching for work' conditionality group, gives a more up to date measure of changes to the number of unemployed claimants, as data has now been released for June 2020, and the numbers of 'additional claimants' made up only 7% of all unemployed claimants. The Alternative claimant count shows a very similar picture to the main claimant count data.

The Full Service of UC has now been rolled out in all five districts. 'Full Service' means that all new claimants of means tested benefits now claim UC rather than the previous benefits including JSA, Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), Income Support, Housing Benefits and Tax Credits.

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. However work-seeking requirements were relaxed because of the current crisis, until July 2020. 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.

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 unemployment which includes all those aged 16 plus who are out of work, but actively seeking work, including those claiming no benefits.

Detailed statistics for the Claimant Count by [gender](#), [age](#) and [towns](#) are available on East Sussex in Figures.

ESiF also has tables giving data about [people](#) and [households](#) claiming UC, Housing Benefit claimants by [employment status](#) and [family type](#), [ESA and IB claimants](#) and people claiming [DLA and PIP](#).

Data is also now available on ESiF about people covered by the main [Government Employment Support Schemes](#), the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS or 'Furlough' scheme) and the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS).

For further information about unemployment, benefits, claimants and other labour market data please contact Lenna Santamaría by email [mariahelena.santamaria@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:mariahelena.santamaria@eastsussex.gov.uk).

## Contact details

The Research and Information 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.

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](http://www.eastsussexinfigures.org.uk)

or e-mail [esif@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:esif@eastsussex.gov.uk)  
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