

Universal Credit Claimants

Universal Credit data are published by the Department for Work and Pensions.

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Further Information

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[Kent facts and figures](#)

This bulletin looks at the number of claims for Universal Credit in Kent and Medway. This includes the number of new starts, and the total number of people who are currently claiming Universal Credit.

Highlights

- There were 196,901 people on Universal Credit in Kent and Medway in January 2025, an increase of 145.2% (+116,601) since March 2020.
- 17.1% of people in Kent and Medway were claiming Universal Credit in January 2025.
- There were 3,857 monthly new starts to Universal Credit in Kent and Medway in January 2025. This is a 27.1% decrease compared to October 2024.
- New starts in January 2025 were highest amongst claimants aged 35-44 (945).

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Introduction

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) publishes information on the number of claims being made to Universal Credit.

Universal Credit is a payment to help with living costs for those on a low income or who are out of work. Universal Credit provides a single payment per household based upon the circumstances of the household. Support for housing costs, children and childcare costs are integrated into Universal Credit. It also provides additions for disabled people and carers.

Universal Credit can be claimed even if the claimant is still employed but they have a low income.

Universal Credit is available in every jobcentre across Great Britain. The table below shows the current standard monthly rate for Universal Credit.

Claimant's circumstances	Monthly standard allowance
Single and under 25	£311.68
Single and 25 or over	£393.45
In a couple and both under 25	£489.23 (for you both)
In a couple and either of you is 25 or over	£617.60 (for you both)

The first section of this bulletin looks at all those who are receiving Universal Credit in Kent and Medway compared to Great Britain, the claimant's sex, and whether they are in employment or not in employment.

The second section of this bulletin looks at those people for whom a new claim had been awarded and started between February 2020 and January 2025.

This data looks at starts to Universal Credit by claimants residing in Kent and Medway Jobcentre Plus areas. There are thirteen Jobcentre Plus areas across Kent and Medway. The Jobcentre Plus areas are defined as those areas that are covered by each Jobcentre Plus office. As such, they do not correspond with local authority district boundaries, but they are situated within Kent and Medway boundaries.

Analysis

Data is available for all months and is released on a quarterly basis. The latest months' figures are provisional ("P") and liable to revision in future releases.

Totals may not sum due to rounding at source.

Please note that population estimates are from the 2023 mid-year population estimates data. It is worth noting that the estimate for Great Britain has not been released yet. As a result, the 2022 mid-year population estimate has been used for Great Britain figures in this bulletin.

People on Universal Credit

This section looks at the total number of people who are receiving Universal Credit in the Local Authorities in which they are living.

The data looks at the sex of the claimant and includes a comparison to Great Britain. The data also looks at whether a claimant is in employment or not in employment.

Universal Credit Claimants in Kent and Medway

Between March 2020 and January 2025, the total number of Universal Credit claimants in Kent and Medway increased by 145.2% (+116,601). 56.6% of this increase (+65,960) occurred between March and May 2020 and was a direct result of measures put in place at the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic.

The total number of Universal Credit claimants in Kent and Medway has reached a new peak of 196,901 in January 2025. In the most recent reporting period (November 2024 to January 2025) the number of Universal Credit claimants has increased from 192,366 to 196,901. This is an increase of 3.8% compared to 3.9% in the South-East and 4.1% nationally.

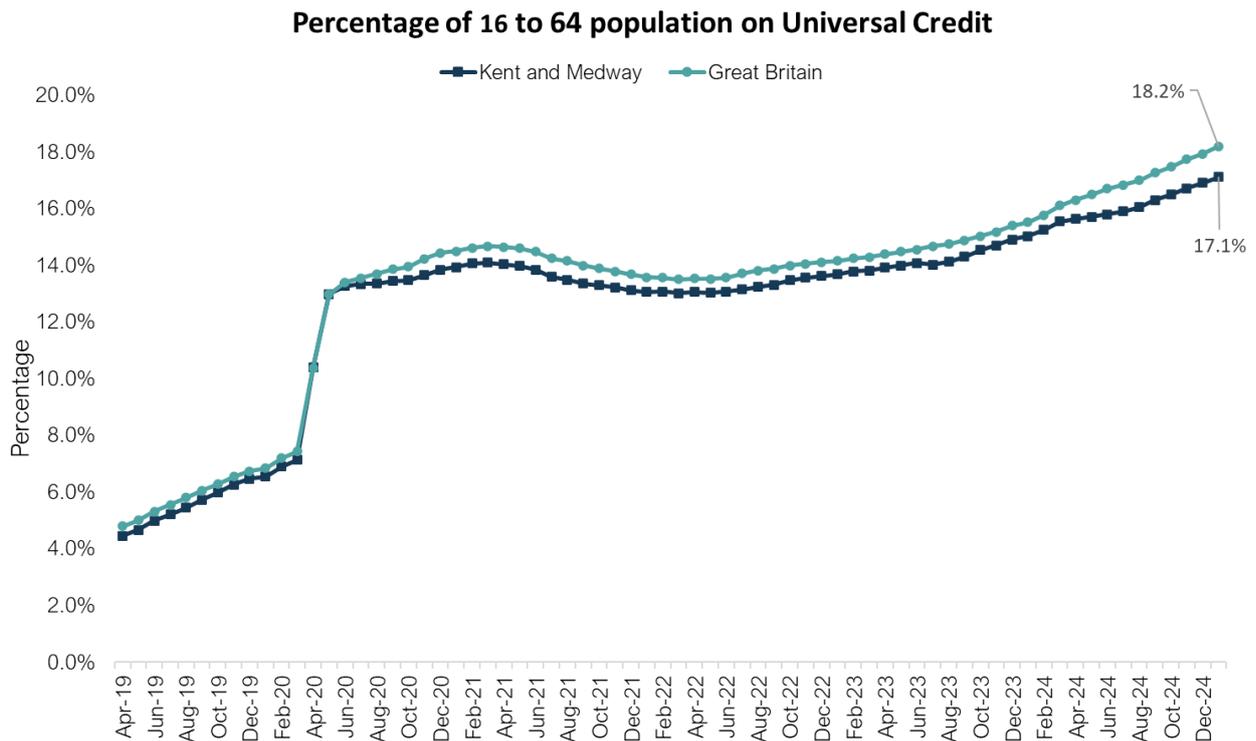
An increase in claimants is expected as Universal Credit continues to be rolled out. DWP are gradually transferring claimants of existing benefits (those that Universal Credit was designed to replace) onto Universal Credit. This includes people claiming Working and Child Tax Credits (including people in receipt of Tax Credits and ESA), Job Seekers Allowance (Income-Related), Income Support (Income-Related) or Housing Benefit (Income-Related). This managed migration should be complete by March 2025. The

managed migration of claimants on Income-Related Employment and Support Allowance, except for those receiving Child Tax Credit, will take place in 2028.

Month-to-month changes with respect to the total number of Universal Credit claimants in Kent and Medway through October 2024 to January 2025 were +1.4% (+2,590), +1.1% (+2,124), and +1.2% (+2,411), respectively. These month-to-month changes result in an overall increase of 3.8% (+7,125) in Universal Credit claimants between the previous reporting period (October 2024) and January 2025.

In Kent and Medway, 17.1% of the population aged 16–64 now claim Universal Credit. This is a new peak for Kent and Medway, however it is lower than the claimant rate figure for Great Britain (18.2%). Kent and Medway has consistently had a lower claimant rate than Great Britain since June 2020 and reflects the general trends seen in Great Britain, this is shown in chart 1.

Chart 1: Percentage of 16 to 64 population on Universal Credit



Figures marked "p" are provisional. These figures will be subject to revision in subsequent releases.
 Source: DWP Stat Xplore
 Presented by: Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

Universal Credit claimants by Kent District

The total number and proportion of Universal Credit claimants in Kent Local Authorities are presented in tables 1 and 2. Figures for Medway, the South-East and Great Britain are presented for comparison.

Thanet (21,699), Swale (18,821), Maidstone (16,707) and Canterbury (15,520) were the four districts with the highest number of Universal Credit claimants in January 2025.

Between the last reporting period (October 2024) and January 2025, Thanet saw the largest number increase in people claiming Universal Credit, with 750 (+3.6%) more claimants. This was followed by Canterbury with 696 (+4.7%) and Maidstone with 655 (+4.1%) more claimants. Canterbury (4.7%), Sevenoaks (4.5%), and Dartford (4.3%) had the largest percentage increases in Universal Credit claimants.

Table 1: Number of Universal Credit claimants in Kent districts

Area	Jan-25 (p)	Change (No.) since Oct 2024	Change (%) since Oct 2024	Change (No.) since Dec 2024	Change (%) since Dec 2024
Ashford	13,624	455	3.5%	191	1.4%
Canterbury	15,520	696	4.7%	246	1.6%
Dartford	11,423	471	4.3%	139	1.2%
Dover	13,735	315	2.3%	138	1.0%
Folkestone and Hythe	12,125	460	3.9%	127	1.1%
Gravesham	13,182	364	2.8%	140	1.1%
Maidstone	16,707	655	4.1%	203	1.2%
Sevenoaks	7,738	331	4.5%	109	1.4%
Swale	18,821	648	3.6%	228	1.2%
Thanet	21,699	750	3.6%	249	1.2%
Tonbridge and Malling	9,821	391	4.1%	132	1.4%
Tunbridge Wells	8,484	294	3.6%	103	1.2%
Kent	162,879	5,830	3.7%	2,005	1.2%
Medway	34,022	1,295	4.0%	406	1.2%
Kent and Medway	196,901	7,125	3.8%	2,411	1.2%
South East	819,832	30,469	3.9%	11,092	1.4%
Great Britain	7,450,461	296,374	4.1%	104,593	1.4%

Source: DWP Stat Xplore

Note: Figures marked "P" are provisional & subject to revision

Presented by: Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

Historically, Thanet has always had the highest percentage of the district population claiming Universal Credit out of the Kent districts. In January 2025, 26.6% of the population in Thanet were in receipt of Universal Credit (21,699 people), the highest number and

proportion of claimants in Kent. This makes up 13.3% of all the claimants in the Kent. Dover has the second highest proportion of population claiming Universal Credit at 20.0% (13,735), followed by Gravesham at 19.9% (13,182). This is the same top three districts in Kent as seen in October 2024.

In Kent & Medway, the proportion of the 16-64 population claiming Universal Credit increased from 16.5% to 17.1% during this latest period (November 2024 to January 2025) and remained below the national average (18.2%). The Kent County Council figures increased from 16.2% to 16.8%.

Table 2: Percentage of Universal Credit claimants in Kent districts

Area	Oct 2024	Nov 2024	Dec 2024	Jan-25 (p)
Ashford	15.7%	15.9%	16.0%	16.2%
Canterbury	15.0%	15.3%	15.5%	15.7%
Dartford	14.3%	14.5%	14.7%	14.9%
Dover	19.5%	19.7%	19.8%	20.0%
Folkestone and Hythe	18.1%	18.3%	18.6%	18.8%
Gravesham	19.4%	19.5%	19.7%	19.9%
Maidstone	14.2%	14.4%	14.6%	14.8%
Sevenoaks	10.5%	10.7%	10.8%	11.0%
Swale	19.1%	19.4%	19.5%	19.8%
Thanet	25.7%	26.0%	26.3%	26.6%
Tonbridge and Malling	11.5%	11.6%	11.8%	12.0%
Tunbridge Wells	11.7%	11.8%	11.9%	12.1%
Kent	16.2%	16.4%	16.6%	16.8%
Medway	18.2%	18.5%	18.7%	18.9%
Kent and Medway	16.5%	16.7%	16.9%	17.1%
South East	13.5%	13.7%	13.8%	14.0%
Great Britain	17.5%	17.7%	17.9%	18.2%

Source: DWP Stat Xplore

Note: Figures marked "P" are provisional & subject to revision

Presented by: Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

Universal Credit claimants by sex

In January 2025, females accounted for 60.4% of people on Universal Credit in Kent and Medway.

Historically, more females than males have typically claimed Universal Credit, however through the early months of the coronavirus pandemic more males than females were starting on Universal Credit. The proportion of claimants that were male increased from 42% in March 2020 to 48% in May 2020. In January 2025, although the total number of

Universal credit claimants is 145.2% higher than that of March 2020, the proportion of males to females on Universal Credits has plateaued, with 39.6% of claimants being male.

Between October 2024 and January 2025, the number of males on Universal Credit increased by 3,345 (4.5%), while the number of females on Universal Credit increased by 3,767 (3.3%). This is shown in Table 3.

Previously, the total number of Universal Credit claimants that were male peaked at 73,730 in February 2021. During the succeeding months, this number gradually fell to 61,947 (-11,783 claimants) in June 2022, before slowly increasing to a new peak of 78,005 in January 2025. The number of female Universal Credit claimants has been increasing since February 2022, with a total of 118,888 female claimants in January 2025.

In January 2025, 13.9% of the male and 20.2% of the female population aged 16–64 in Kent and Medway were on Universal Credit, respectively. The number of male claimants is now the highest it has been, which is the same as the female. Despite this, the proportion of females on Universal Credit is slightly lower than that of Great Britain (20.9%), and the figure for males is even lower than that of Great Britain (15.4%).

Table 3: Universal Credit claimants in Kent and Medway by sex

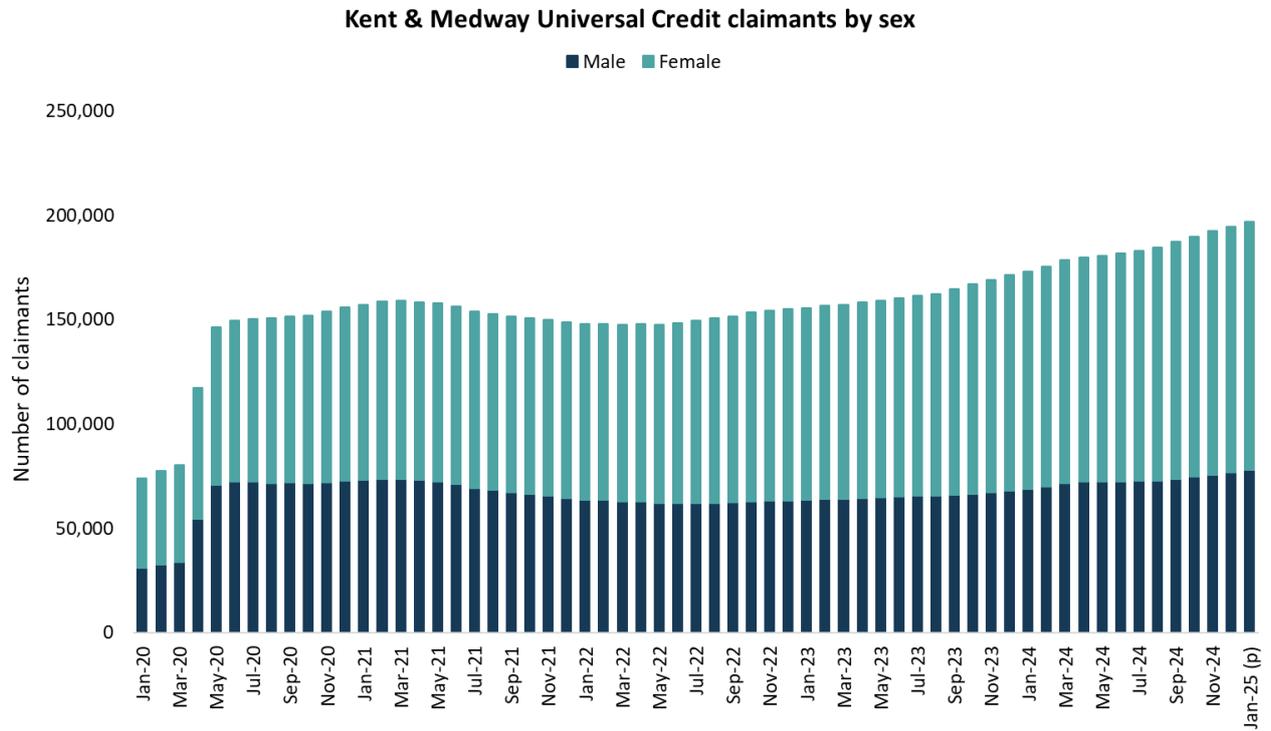
Gender	Oct 2024	Jan-25 (p)	Change (No.) since Oct 2024	Change (%) since Oct 2024
Male	74,660	78,005	3,345	4.5%
Female	115,121	118,888	3,767	3.3%
Total	189,776	196,901	7,125	3.8%

Source: DWP Stat Xplore

Presented by: Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

Shown in Chart 2, we can see the increase in Universal Credit claimants between March 2020 and May 2020 caused by Covid. In this period, male claimants grew at a faster rate, growing from 42.0% of claimants to 48.5% of claimants. Since July 2022, the number of claimants has grown and females have gradually made up an increasing proportion of these claimants.

Chart 2: Universal Credit claimants by sex



Source: DWP Stat Xplore
Presented by: Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

In Kent, the largest proportion of males claiming Universal Credit is in Thanet. The lowest proportion of males claiming Universal Credit is in Sevenoaks. See table 4 for details.

Table 4: Kent & Medway Universal credit claimants by Sex and District

Districts	Male Jan-25 (p)	Male % Jan-25 (p)	Female Jan-25 (p)	Female % Jan-25 (p)
Ashford	5,301	38.9%	8,325	61.1%
Canterbury	6,488	41.8%	9,028	58.2%
Dartford	4,206	36.8%	7,214	63.2%
Dover	5,656	41.2%	8,082	58.8%
Folkestone and Hythe	5,063	41.8%	7,057	58.2%
Gravesham	5,172	39.2%	8,013	60.8%
Maidstone	6,463	38.7%	10,240	61.3%
Sevenoaks	2,748	35.5%	4,992	64.5%
Swale	7,397	39.3%	11,423	60.7%
Thanet	9,200	42.4%	12,502	57.6%
Tonbridge and Malling	3,566	36.3%	6,250	63.7%
Tunbridge Wells	3,359	39.6%	5,126	60.4%
Kent	64,619	39.7%	98,252	60.3%
Medway	13,386	39.3%	20,636	60.7%
Kent and Medway	78,005	39.6%	118,888	60.4%
South East	327,925	40.0%	491,914	60.0%
Great Britain	3,108,869	41.7%	4,341,594	58.3%

Source: DWP Stat Xplore

Presented by: Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

Universal Credit claimants by employment status

In December 2024 in Kent, the percentage of Universal Credit claimants in employment is 36.7%. The percentage of claimants not in employment is 63.3%. This is almost the same as seen nationally (in employment, 36.9% and not in employment, 63.1%), but when compared with the South East region a higher proportion of claimants than Kent are in employment (39.8%) and a lower percentage are not working (60.2%).

Within Kent, Dartford has the highest percentage of claimants in employment (41.7%) and Folkestone and Hythe and Thanet have the highest percentage of claimants not in employment (both 65.8%). Table 5 shows a breakdown of the Kent districts showing the number in employment or not in employment followed by the percentage of the total claimants.

Table 5: Kent & Medway Universal credit claimants by Employment and District

Dec 2024	In employment	% In Employment	Not in Employment	% Not in Employment	Total Claimants
Ashford	5,181	38.6%	8,255	61.4%	13,436
Canterbury	5,307	34.7%	9,970	65.3%	15,277
Dartford	4,708	41.7%	6,574	58.3%	11,282
Dover	4,766	35.1%	8,830	64.9%	13,596
Folkestone and Hythe	4,097	34.2%	7,900	65.8%	11,997
Maidstone	4,941	37.9%	8,096	62.1%	13,037
Gravesham	6,264	37.9%	10,247	62.1%	16,511
Sevenoaks	2,863	37.5%	4,766	62.5%	7,629
Swale	6,413	34.5%	12,184	65.5%	18,597
Thanet	7,345	34.2%	14,110	65.8%	21,455
Tonbridge and Malling	3,878	40.0%	5,814	60.0%	9,692
Tunbridge Wells	3,215	38.4%	5,168	61.6%	8,383
Kent	58,978	36.7%	101,914	63.3%	160,892
Medway	12,413	36.9%	21,201	63.1%	33,614
Kent and Medway	71,391	36.7%	123,115	63.3%	194,506
South East	321,759	39.8%	486,980	60.2%	808,739
Great Britain	2,712,832	36.9%	4,633,039	63.1%	7,345,871

Source: DWP Stat Xplore

Presented by: Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

Table 6 shows Universal Credit claimants by sex and by employment status in December 2024. The table is broken down by the Kent districts with the regional and national data at the bottom. The data shows us that when looking at the sex and employment status, there is a higher percentage of female claimants in employment (40.5%) than male claimants in employment (30.8%) in Kent. This is similar to the National (females in employment: 40.7%, males in employment: 31.6%) and regional (females in employment: 43.6%, males in employment: 34.1%) claimants. Overall, males not in employment make up the largest proportion of the claimants in Kent (69.2%).

Table 6: Kent & Medway Universal credit claimants by Sex, Employment and District

Dec 2024	Male In employment	Male Not in Employment	Male Claimants	Female In Employment	Female Not in Employment	Female Claimants
Ashford	1,766	3,433	5,199	3,410	4,821	8,231
Canterbury	1,874	4,489	6,363	3,429	5,481	8,910
Dartford	1,451	2,679	4,130	3,252	3,892	7,144
Dover	1,625	3,972	5,597	3,141	4,865	8,006
Folkestone and Hythe	1,379	3,631	5,010	2,717	4,267	6,984
Maidstone	1,621	3,467	5,088	3,324	4,632	7,956
Gravesham	2,065	4,296	6,361	4,201	5,944	10,145
Sevenoaks	793	1,891	2,684	2,071	2,869	4,940
Swale	2,132	5,144	7,276	4,279	7,037	11,316
Thanet	2,625	6,437	9,062	4,719	7,666	12,385
Tonbridge and Malling	1,168	2,333	3,501	2,711	3,479	6,190
Tunbridge Wells	1,087	2,215	3,302	2,125	2,954	5,079
Kent	19,586	43,987	63,573	39,379	57,907	97,286
Medway	3,980	9,191	13,171	8,434	12,016	20,450
Kent and Medway	23,566	53,178	76,744	47,813	69,923	117,736
South East	109,720	212,302	322,022	212,037	274,681	486,718
Great Britain	964,452	2,088,120	3,052,572	1,748,380	2,544,923	4,293,303

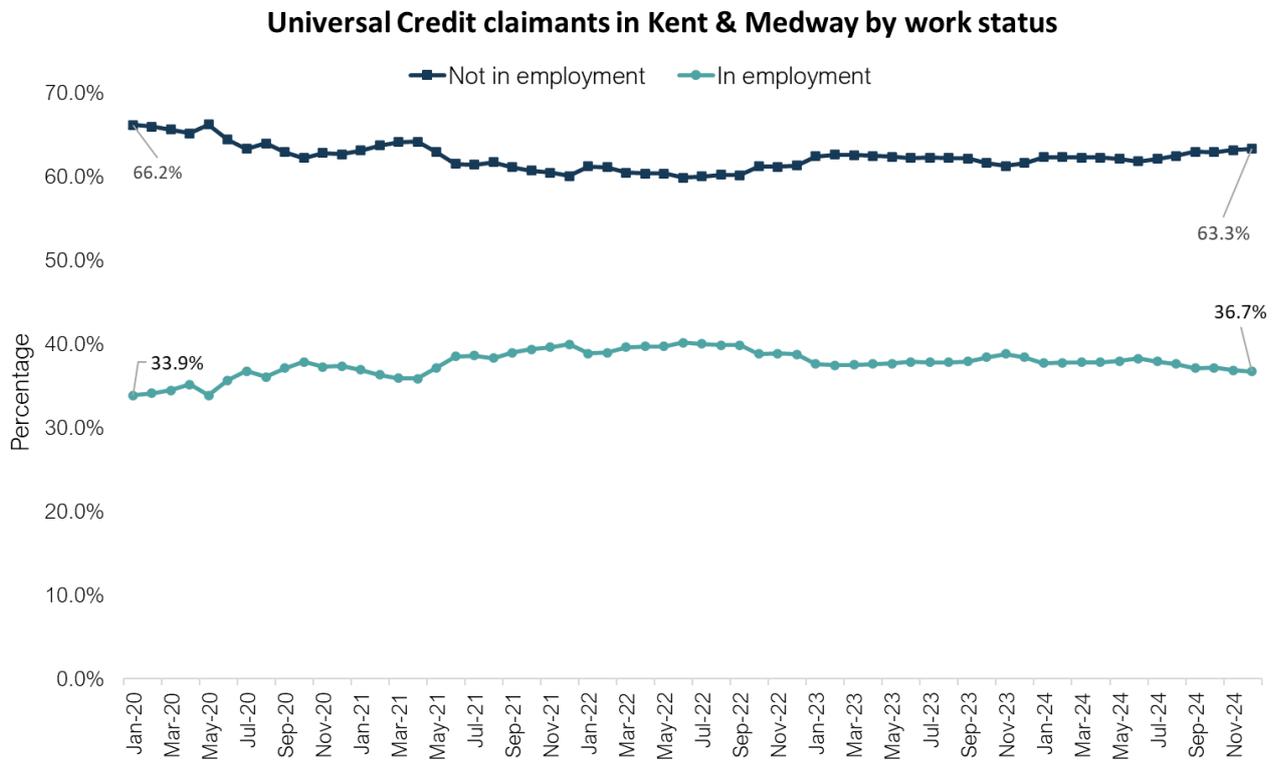
Source: DWP Stat Xplore

Presented by: Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

In Kent and Medway, the composition of Universal Credit claimants has changed compared to before the coronavirus pandemic. For Universal Credit claimants where the employment status was known, 36.7% were in employment in December 2024. This has increased from 34.4% in March 2020. Universal Credit claimants who were not in employment had been gradually decreased from 65.6% (March 2020) to 61.8% (June 2024) but this has subsequently risen to 63.3% in December 2024. This is shown in chart 3 overleaf.

The proportion of Universal Credit claimants who were in employment reached a peak of 40.1% in June 2022.

Chart 3: Percentage of Universal Credit claimants in Kent and Medway by work status



Source: DWP Stat Xplore
Presented by: Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

Between September 2024 and December 2024, the number of Universal Credit claimants in employment increased by 2.7% while claimants not in employment increased by 4.3%. As seen in table 7 below, male claimants not in employment saw the greatest percentage increase with 4.6% (2,327 claimants), whilst female claimants in employment saw the smallest percentage increase 1,169 (2.5%) claimants.

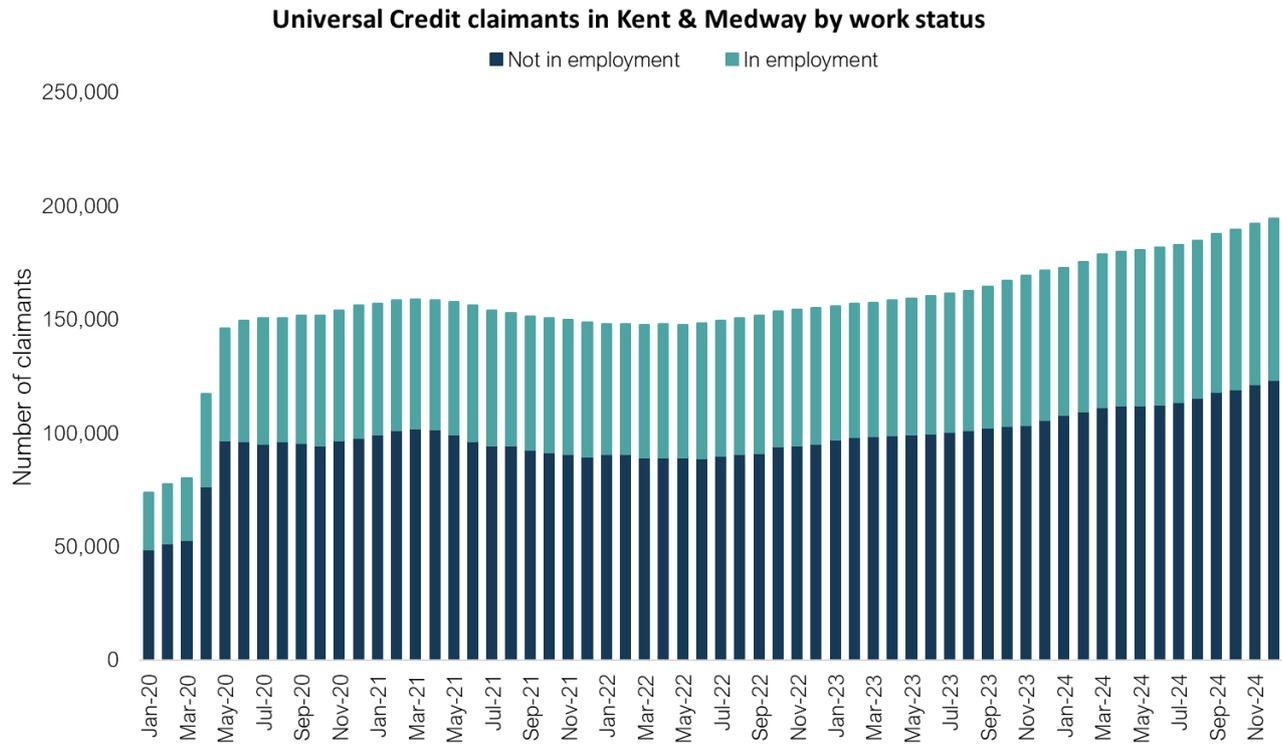
Table 7: Universal Credit claimants by work status

Kent & Medway	Dec 2024 In employment	Dec 2024 Not in employment	Change (No.) since Sep 2024 In employment	Change (No.) since Sep 2024 Not in employment	Change (%) since Sep 2024 In employment	Change (%) since Sep 2024 Not in employment
Males	23,566	53,178	671	2,327	2.9%	4.6%
Females	47,813	69,923	1,169	2,752	2.5%	4.1%
Total	71,391	123,115	1,846	5,096	2.7%	4.3%

Source: DWP Stat Xplore
Presented by: Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

Chart 4 displays how the proportion of claimants is split between those not in employment and those in employment. Since January 2020, the number not in employment has been consistently greater than those in employment.

Chart 4: Universal Credit claimants by work status



Source: DWP Stat Xplore
Presented by: Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

Starts to Universal Credit

This section looks at the number of starts to Universal Credit. The starts figure shows the number of claims which have gone through the application process and have been awarded Universal Credit.

The data is available by Jobcentre Plus areas. The Jobcentre Plus office at which a claimant is recorded is based upon the postcode of where the claimant lives. Thirteen Jobcentre Plus areas cover Kent and Medway.

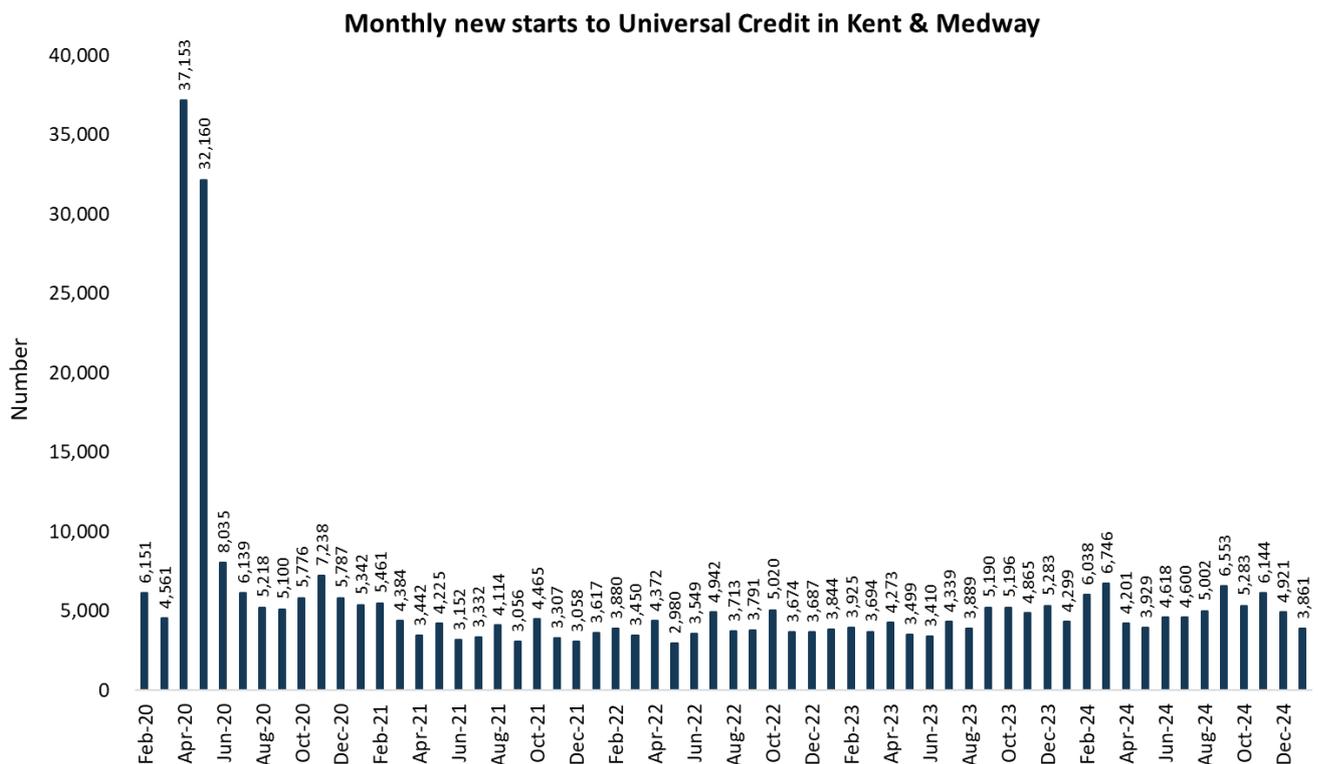
New claims started in Kent and Medway

The UK government introduced changes to Universal Credit in response to the coronavirus pandemic. These changes, together with the negative impact of the coronavirus pandemic

on people’s circumstances, resulted in a considerable increase in the number of new claims started in Kent and Medway in April 2020.

With the exception of November 2020 (7,238), between August 2020 and January 2025 the number of starts to Universal Credit has returned to pre-coronavirus levels, ranging between 2,980 and 6,746. Indeed, there were 33,292 (-89.6%) fewer starts to Universal Credit in January 2025 compared to the peak in April 2020. This is shown in Chart 5.

Chart 5: Monthly new starts to Universal Credit



Source: DWP Stat Xplore
Presented by: Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

In Kent and Medway combined there were 3,857 starts to Universal Credit in January 2025. This is a decrease of 21.5% (-1,055) when compared to December 2024. In addition, January’s data is an decrease of 27.1% (-1,433) from the end of the previous reporting period (October 2024).

In January 2025, starts to Universal Credit were highest in the Chatham Job Centre Plus area (665), then Maidstone (399) and Canterbury (384). Chatham has consistently reported the highest number of new claims started throughout the current reporting period (November 2024 = 1,114; December 2024 = 865) and accounts for between 17.2% and 18.1% of starts to Universal Credit in Kent and Medway during this period.

In Kent and Medway, in the current reporting period (November 2024 to January 2025) the total number of starts to Universal Credit was 14,926. This is a decrease of 8.2% (-1,229) from the total number of starts throughout the previous reporting period (July 2024 to October 2024).

Table 8: Monthly new starts to Universal Credit

Area	Jan-25 (p)	Change (No.) since Oct 2024	Change (%) since Oct 2024	Change (No.) since Dec 2024	Change (%) since Dec 2024
Ashford	302	-82	-21.4%	-20	-6.2%
Canterbury	384	-32	-7.7%	7	1.9%
Chatham	665	-265	-28.5%	-200	-23.1%
Dartford	316	-76	-19.4%	-60	-16.0%
Dover	211	-89	-29.7%	-56	-21.0%
Folkestone	217	-109	-33.4%	-123	-36.2%
Gravesend	275	-107	-28.0%	-101	-26.9%
Maidstone	399	-220	-35.5%	-239	-37.5%
Margate	186	-86	-31.6%	-91	-32.9%
Ramsgate	197	-112	-36.2%	-70	-26.2%
Sheerness	134	-51	-27.6%	-20	-13.0%
Sittingbourne	218	-75	-25.6%	-34	-13.5%
Tonbridge	357	-118	-24.8%	-53	-12.9%
Total	3,857	-1,433	-27.1%	-1,055	-21.5%

Source: DWP Stat Xplore

Note: Figures marked "P" are provisional & subject to revision

Presented by: Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

New claims started by age group

Between the end of the previous reporting period (October 2024) and January 2025 all age groups for claimants starting on Universal Credit decreased. The largest percentage decrease was in the 16-24 group (-592, -48.3%) The smallest percentage decrease was -14.8% (-146), in the 45-54 age group..

In January 2025, the age group making up the largest proportion of new starts was the 35-44 age group, equating to 24.7% of the new starts compared to 23.2% of new starts in October 2024.

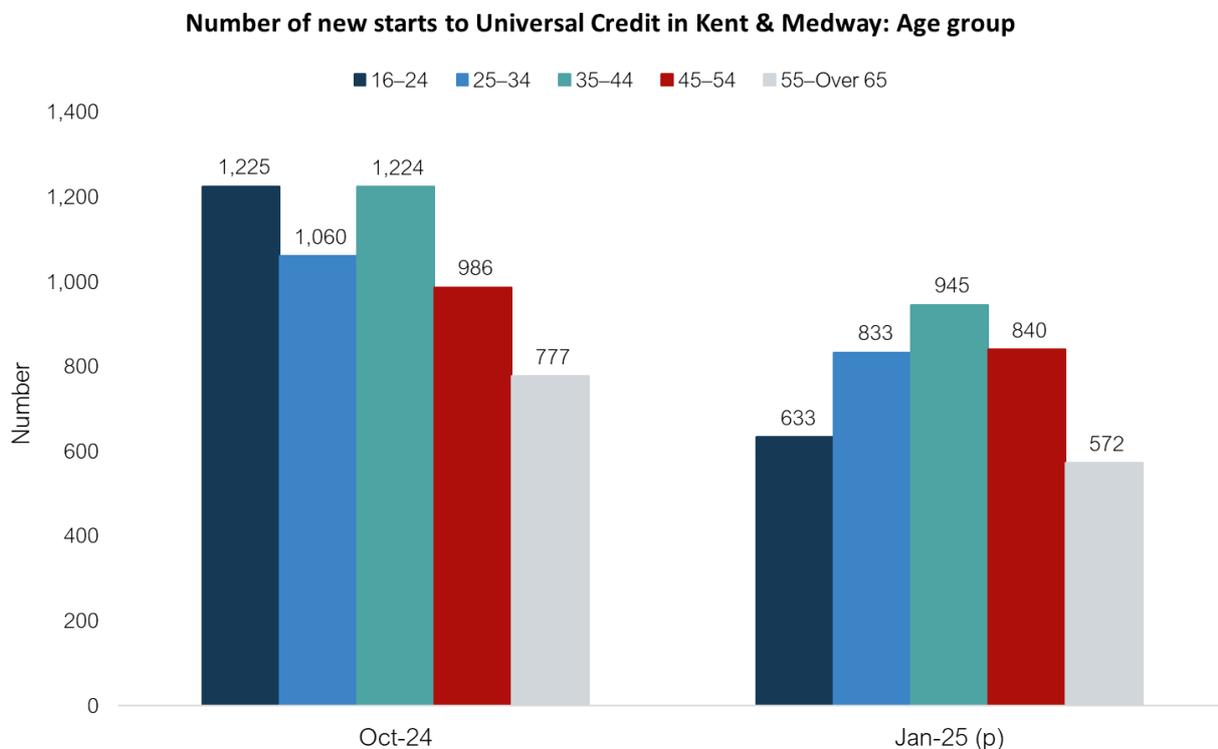
Table 9: Monthly new starts to Universal Credit by age group

Age	Jan-25 (p)	Change (No.) since Oct 2024	Change (%) since Oct 2024	Change (No.) since Dec 2024	Change (%) since Dec 2024
16 - 24	633	-592	-48.3%	-314	-33.2%
25 - 34	833	-227	-21.4%	-135	-13.9%
35 - 44	945	-279	-22.8%	-194	-17.0%
45 - 54	840	-146	-14.8%	-198	-19.1%
55 - Over 65	572	-205	-26.4%	-199	-25.8%
Grand Total	3,823	-1,449	-27.5%	-1,040	-21.4%

Source: DWP Stat Xplore

Note: Figures marked "P" are provisional & subject to revision

Presented by: Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

Chart 6: Monthly new starts to Universal Credit by age group


Figures marked "p" are provisional. These figures will be subject to revision in subsequent releases.

Source: DWP Stat Xplore

Presented by: Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

Related documents

Information on claimants of other benefits can be found in our [Benefits Claimants bulletin](#).

Information on unemployment in Kent can be found in our [Unemployment bulletins](#) which present the latest monthly unemployment figures for wards and districts.