



Monitoring the economy Research bulletin

Corporate Research and
Information Unit

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Conwy - Sir flaengar sy'n creu cyfleoedd

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If you have any suggestions about how we could improve this monitor, or if you require further information, please contact us.

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Next update – winter 2022

Monitoring the economy in Conwy County Borough – quarterly research bulletin

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Introduction

This is the latest monitor in a series which is produced by the Corporate Research and Information Unit. The monitor looks at key economic indicators for Conwy County Borough, presenting the latest data, historical context and providing some commentary on what the data shows. It updates the information sources used in the December 2019 monitor. New data sources will be added to the monitor as they become available.

Appendices showing unemployment at ward (electoral division) level and providing summary economic information for strategic sub areas of Conwy County Borough and the sub regions of North Wales are available at the end of this monitor.

The impacts of Covid-19 and Brexit on economic indicators

The monitor was not produced during 2020 and 2021. This was partly because the Covid-19 pandemic changed the focus of our work and shifted staff resources. However the main reason is because the Covid-19 pandemic has meant that some key data sources were not collected and/or reported on as they had been before March 2020. Other data sources have been temporarily impacted by changes in legislation or changes in behaviours. These disruptions need to be considered when interpreting the data in this bulletin.

As well as the changes in collection/reporting practices that were seen over the past two years, it is still too early to know how Covid-19 will influence the economy in the medium to long term, and the resultant impacts of this. In this same time period there have been shocks and discontinuities in economic indicators caused by Brexit, and it is not always possible to separate these two big drivers of economic change.

Therefore we cannot rely on data from 2020-21 to help us model the future, as we will not know what behavioural changes are likely to be long term, and which are just blips in the trajectory before returning to pre-pandemic patterns. Therefore it is best to remain mindful yet cautious when trying to plan for the post-Covid/post-Brexit future.

Bearing this in mind, where possible and where appropriate a commentary on the perceived impacts of Covid-19 and Brexit is provided alongside analysis of the data.

Headlines

- In Q3 (Jul-Aug-Sep) 2021 the UK economy grew by 1.3%. However, it is currently only at 98.2% of its 2019 level following the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and the UK exit from the European Union. GDP per capita has recovered more slowly from the fall seen during the pandemic, as population has grown faster than GDP. The service has had the best recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic so far. However, the construction industry had the largest fall in GDP and has had a slower recovery, with output falling slightly in the last quarter (currently at 95.3% of 2019 level).
- There are current worries about the slower than expected recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, and concerns that rising energy prices and supply disruption has led to higher than expected inflation (World economic outlook update, International Monetary Fund).
- 50,400 people were in employment in the last recorded quarter, which was an increase of 1,100 since the same period last year. Numbers fell during the Covid-19 pandemic but have since almost returned to 2019 levels.
- The Business Register and Employment Survey for 2020 puts the number of PAYE jobs in Conwy CB at 46,000. This is an increase of about 1,000 since the previous

year. In the ten years since 2010 – which was in the midst of the post-2008 economic down-turn – the overall increase in jobs in Conwy CB was 4,000 or 9.5%.

- The accommodation & food services sector saw the biggest growth (about +2,000 jobs). The highest losses since 2010 are in the retail sector (-1,250 jobs), public administration (-375), and the wholesale sector (-300).
- Levels of part-time working are high in Conwy CB – 39% of employees work part-time compared to 32% and 31% in Wales and Great Britain.
- The production base has declined considerably over the past three decades to about 4.3% of jobs by 2020, and there is a heavy skew towards employment in the service industries (particularly in the public sector) and the tourism sector. Employment in the high skills, high wage sectors of information & communication, finance & insurance, professional, scientific & technical, and business administration & support services is relatively low, totalling just 13% of all employment compared to 25% across GB as a whole.
- The 2019 STEAM report estimates that around 12,600 jobs in total are provided by the tourism industry, which is almost a quarter of all employment in Conwy County Borough. Tourism brings in around £996 million each year to the local economy.
- More people travel out of Conwy for work than travel in to the County Borough – a net out-flow of about 4,300 commuters. Most of these outward commuters travel to the neighbouring Welsh authority areas (to Denbighshire in particular), though an estimated 3,100 people travel to England for work.
- 38.3% of the working age population had degree level qualifications or higher in 2018. We have more people with no/very low levels of qualification, and fewer people qualified at degree level or above compared to the Welsh averages.
- The claimant count unemployment rate for December 2021 was 4.5%. This was significantly higher than the pre-pandemic level (December 2019 = 3.4%), but has been on a downward trend since reaching a peak of 7.1% in July 2020. The overall figure is currently comparable to the UK rate, but higher than the all-Wales average.
- A new Alternative Claimant Count is being developed that takes account of changes to Universal Credit. Before the Covid-19 pandemic the new measure was on an upward trend, after falling between 2013 and 2018. Like the existing measure it shows unemployment in the County Borough is seasonal, peaking around February/March each year.
- 3,800 people were either unemployed or economically inactive and wanting a job in September 2021 but DWP ‘find a job’ system showed only 490 jobs available in Conwy County Borough, and only 1,250 jobs available in the neighbouring authorities of Gwynedd, Anglesey and Denbighshire.
- Across the UK the number of people employed on “zero-hours contracts” in their main job, during July-September was 996,150, representing 3.1% of all people in employment. Data about zero hours contracts is not available at a local level.
- The high proportion of jobs on “zero hours” contracts in the accommodation and food service industries is of note for Conwy CB as these sectors provide a relatively high proportion of jobs in the area (16.2% in Conwy CB, compared to 7.1% across the UK).
- In 2021 there were an estimated 4,655 business enterprises with their operational base in Conwy County Borough. The proportion of businesses which are within the agricultural sector (14.8%) is particularly high (GB = only 4.6%). The accommodation and food services sector also accounts for a high proportion of businesses (12.2%) in

comparison to the national trends, as a result of the importance of the tourism industry within the area. The high skill sectors (professional, scientific and technical; information and communication) are under-represented in Conwy CB when compared to GB as a whole.

- Businesses which have their main base in Conwy CB tend to be smaller than in Wales or Great Britain as a whole in terms of size of workforce and annual turnover levels.
- In December 2021 the average (mean) house price in Conwy CB was £207,446. Compared to February 2020 (the last date before the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic started to affect the housing market) Conwy CB house prices have increased by 23.3% (UK average = 19.1%).
- In Conwy CB the average house price is currently 7.3 times the average household income of £28,300 and 12.7 times the lower quartile household income of £16,350. Most mortgage suppliers would look to a loan to income ratio of about 3.5 or 4.
- For each year since April 2007 (the start date for the current local development plan) the provision of new dwellings has fallen below the annual figure needed to reach the identified requirement of 6,800 additional dwellings by 2022. In the 12 years to April 2019 only 3,196 additional dwellings have been provided – if the requirement was shared equally across that period, that figure should be closer to 5,440. That is a shortfall of about -2,240 or -41% below target.
- In May 2021 there were a total of 22,425 benefit claimants of working age. There was a decrease compared to the previous quarter (February 2021) of about -185 claimants. There was a significant and sudden increase in the number of Universal Credit claimants after the onset of the pandemic. The number of claimants has since fallen considerably, but in May 2021 was still much higher than in February 2020. Conwy CB has a high incidence of claimants for most benefits related to disability and/or ill-health, when compared to the GB average.
- Wage levels for jobs in Conwy CB are significantly below levels for Great Britain as a whole. The 2021 median gross weekly wage (including overtime and bonuses) for all full-time employees in Conwy CB was £524. This was only 85% of the British average.
- Wage deflation is also an issue. As well as disparity between Conwy CB and national wage levels, the buying power of wages has shrunk in recent years. In real terms, national average weekly wages in November 2021 were the equivalent of only 99% of November 2020 weekly wages.
- The annual average (median) household income rose by about £3,000 between 2011 and 2021 to £28,300, which was an increase across the period of 11.9%. Overall CPIH inflation increase by about 30% in the same period, meaning household incomes have not kept pace with increases in the cost of living. In the same period the households with lowest incomes in the County Borough saw much lower levels of growth – lower quartile household income rose by only £1,800 to just £16,350 and the proportion of households with income falling below 60% of the median for Great Britain increased.
- Per head of population, the gross disposable household income (GDHI) for Conwy CB was only 84.9% of the UK average. Between 2018 and 2019 the total money available for Conwy CB rose by about £34 million overall, which was an increase per person of about £285.
- In 2020, there were 278 individual insolvency cases in Conwy County Borough. Though this was a small increase on the previous year (up three), numbers have been on an upward trend since 2016. The insolvency rate is more than 1.5 times higher than 15 years ago. Conwy CB has the eight highest insolvency rate in Wales.

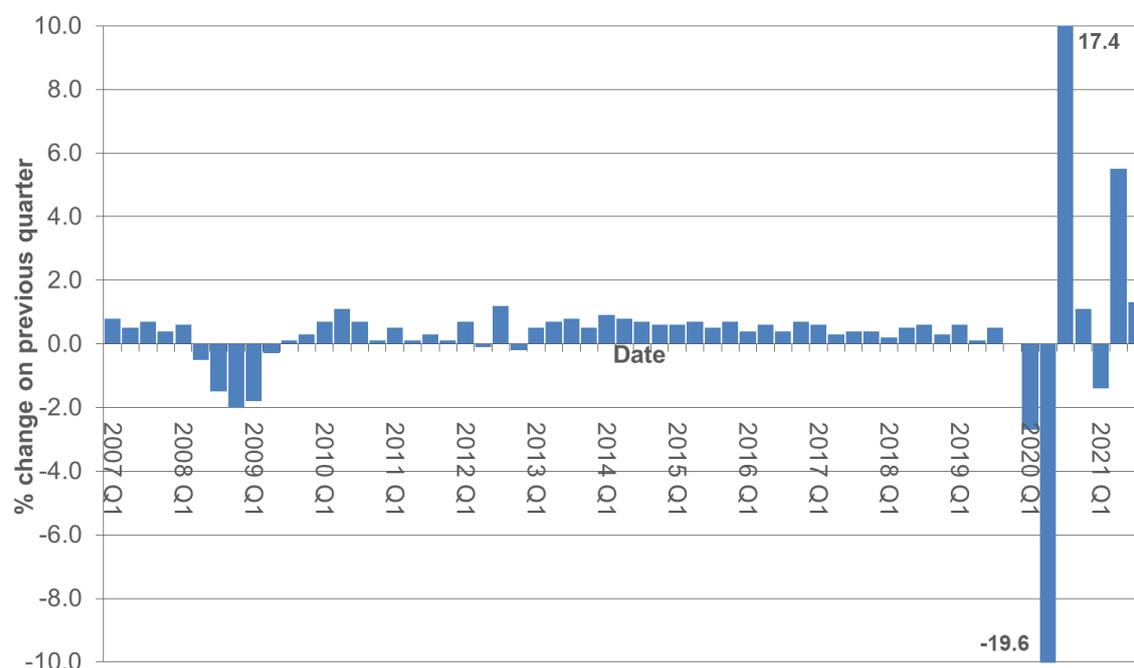
Section 1: The economy – overview

The context for the local economy is provided by national and even international events and policy decisions. Though these key drivers of economic change are often outside the sphere of influence of local businesses and service providers we need to consider what is happening in the wider economic picture in order to help understand what is happening in Conwy County Borough, and to help shape our responses to changes, challenges and opportunities.

Gross domestic product

Chart 1.1: gross domestic product (GDP) – quarterly change

Source: national accounts GDP percentage change (latest quarter on last quarter), ONS



Note: 2020 Q2 and Q3 data extend beyond the scale of the chart

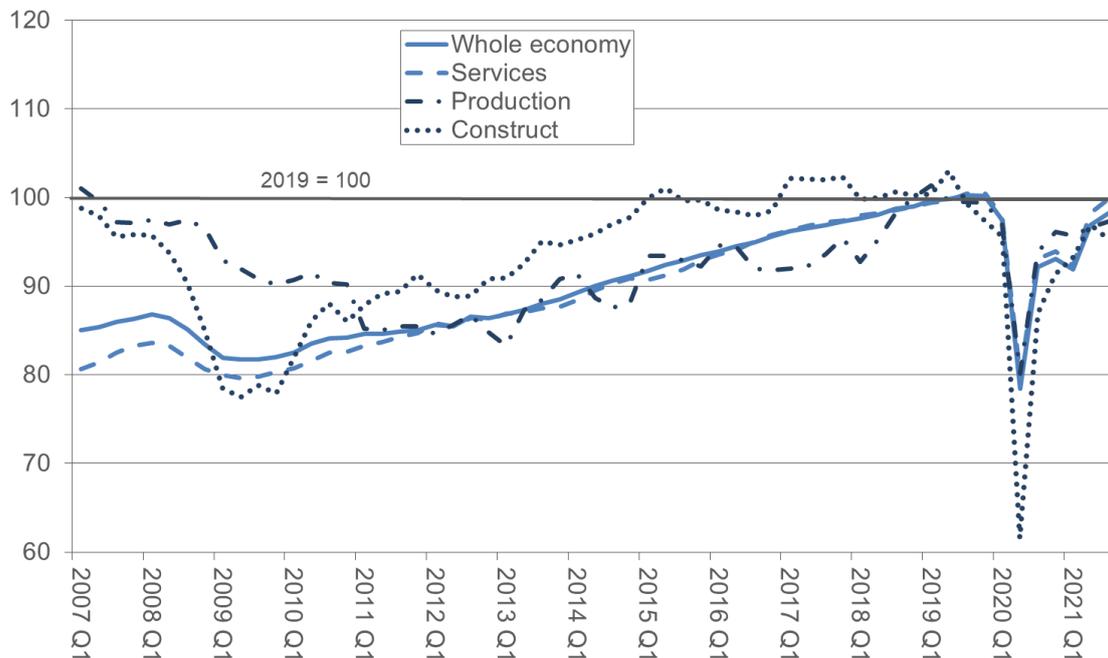
In Q3 (Jul-Aug-Sep) 2021 the UK economy grew by 1.3%. GDP fell steeply in the first two quarters of 2020, primarily driven by the contractions in economic and social activity as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, but also seeing impacts from the UK exit from the European Union, which took place in January 2020. It picked up when economic activity increased after the easing of the first lockdown restrictions in the summer of 2020 but fell again with the winter 2021 lockdown. There was a second bounce back in spring 2021, but estimates of growth have been revised downward as GDP has not recovered as quickly as expected and is currently only at 98.2% of its 2019 level. GDP per capita has recovered more slowly from the fall seen during the pandemic, as population has grown faster than GDP. In Q3 2021, GDP per head was at only 97.8% of its Q4 2019 level, with Real Net National Disposable Income at 95.1%.

On the next page, Chart 1.2 compares the different components of the economy. The service sector – by far the largest sector in the economy – has had the best recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic so far, and is currently at 99.8% its 2019 level. The

construction industry had the largest fall in GDP and has had a slower recovery, with output falling slightly in the last quarter (currently at 95.3% of 2019 level). Production output in the last quarter is at only 97.3% of the 2019 level.

Chart 1.2: components of GDP compared to 2019 levels

Source: output components of gross domestic product, constant prices, seasonally adjusted, ONS



The latest available measure of GDP economic growth at a local level (Gross Value Added) is for 2019 and not suitable for monitoring the performance of the local economy on a timely basis. However, it is worth noting that the 2019 GVA per head figure for Conwy County Borough (£16,271) was only 76% of the Wales figure, and 56% of the UK figure. Data for this indicator does not yet show the impacts on the economy of Covid-19 and Brexit.

Interest rates and inflation

The Bank of England interest rate is currently 0.25% (December 2021). Rates have been below 1% since March 2009. With the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020 the Bank of England reduced the rate from 0.75% to 0.25% and then to 0.10% in April 2020. The rise to 0.25% in December 2021 was to help manage inflation. The Bank's Monetary Policy Committee said they will "[continue] to judge that there are two-sided risks around the inflation outlook in the medium term, but that some modest tightening of monetary policy over the forecast period is likely to be necessary to meet the 2% inflation target sustainably."¹ The next interest rate review is due in February 2022.

¹ <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy-summary-and-minutes/2021/december-2021>

Table 1.1: interest rates and annual inflation

Sources: Bank of England end of month interest rates; retail price index (RPI) and consumer price index (CPI), (ONS STATBASE)

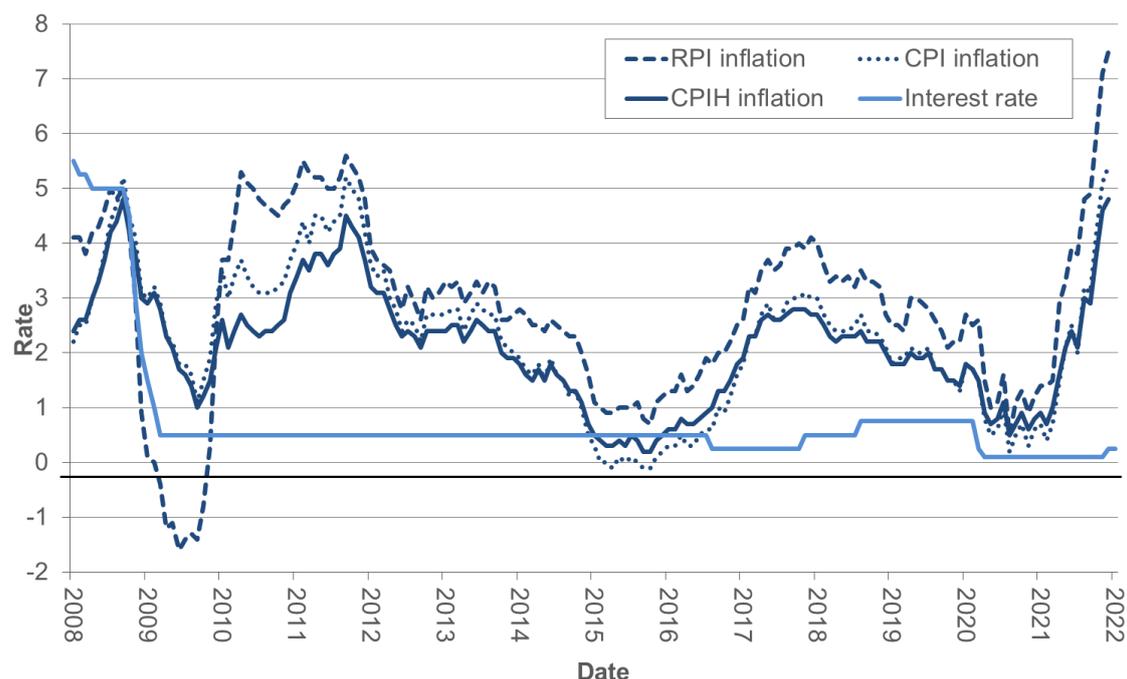
	Current (Dec 2021)	Last quarter (Sep 2021)	Last year (Dec 2020)	5 years ago (Dec 2016)
Bank of England interest rate	0.25%	0.10%	0.10%	0.25%
CPIH inflation: including housing costs	4.8%	2.9%	1.4%	1.8%
RPI inflation: all goods	7.5%	4.9%	2.2%	2.5%
CPI inflation: excluding housing costs	5.4%	3.1%	1.3%	1.6%

Though the low interest rate has had some positive impact on inflation, it has also reduced returns on investment and savings.

There are currently three key measures of inflation that are commonly used and quoted in the media.

Chart 1.3: annual interest rates and inflation

Sources: Bank of England end of month interest rates; retail price index (RPI) and consumer price index (CPI), (ONS STATBASE)



A measure of inflation called CPIH (Consumer Price Index including owner occupiers' Housing costs) was adopted in April 2017. This is usually the lower measure of inflation, is used to index benefits, tax credits and public sector pensions and is currently the government's preferred measure of inflation. The CPIH 12-month inflation rate was 4.8% in December 2021. This is the highest rate recorded for this measure since its inception in 2008. It compares to a rate of 4.6% in the previous month. In February 2020 – just before the Covid-19 pandemic – the rate was 1.7%.

Since the previous year the biggest upward contributions to change in the rate came from housing and household services (mostly energy costs) and transport (mostly fuel and second hand cars). The biggest influence on the upward trend since the previous month came from food and non-alcoholic beverages, restaurants and hotels, furniture and household goods, and clothing and footwear.

The higher measure, Retail Price Index (RPI) is usually used to index items we pay for, including regulated items such as rail fares. The RPI inflation measure – which includes some housing costs but excludes spending by people at the very top and very bottom of income distributions from its calculations – was 7.5% in December 2021. This is the highest rate since March 1991. RPI was 2.5% in February 2020.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) was historically the government's preferred measure for indexation of benefits and pensions and is still sometimes reported by the media. This measure is similar to CPIH, but excludes the changing level of housing costs for home owners, such as mortgage interest and buildings insurance. The CPI 12-month inflation rate was 5.4% in December 2021 (February 2020 = 1.7%).

Inflation rates fell below 1% at the start of the pandemic and CPIH stayed below 2% until May 2021, when demands for goods and services started to rise again. The significant increases since then are partly explained by something called the statistical base effect. As the UK economy starts to recover from pandemic, the dramatic declines in some indicators during 2020 and 2021 will leave their echo in the latest numbers as they become the starting point for calculating 12-month growth rates².

The impacts of increases in fuel and energy prices following the removal of price caps due in April 2022 are not included in the measures of inflation.

Monitoring future trends

To help track emerging and potential changes to the UK economy and society, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) provides a round-up of key statistical outputs. This gives the current picture for each release from the latest available data as well as providing some brief economic context to guide the future interpretation of these statistics. It is available online at

[Understanding the UK economy - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/understanding-the-uk-economy).

ONS provides a roundup of the latest data and analysis on the UK economy, business and jobs following Brexit and during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. [UK economy latest - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/uk-economy-latest)

The Office for Budgetary Responsibility provides independent and authoritative analysis of the UK's public finances. It produces medium and long-term fiscal forecasting and risk analysis, evaluates performance against targets and scrutinises Government costings, and monitors the sustainability of public finances

[Publications - Office for Budget Responsibility \(obr.uk\)](https://www.obr.gov.uk/publications)

The International Monetary Fund provides a regular update on the global economic outlook. In January 2022 it expresses worries that the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic is much slower than expected as variants spread; that rising energy prices and supply disruption has led to higher than expected inflation; and that continuing

² <https://blog.ons.gov.uk/2021/05/19/beware-base-effects/>

low levels of private consumptions have limited growth.

[World Economic Outlook Update, January 2022: Rising Caseloads, A Disrupted Recovery, and Higher Inflation \(imf.org\)](#)

Section 2: The labour market

Good employment is the most common, and often the most effective means of providing a family with the finances needed to improve many areas of well-being³. It's not just about the number of jobs that are available, but also what types of employment opportunities they offer, and how well they keep up with changes in the global economy as well as local priorities. Secure, well paid employment affects not just the economic well-being of individuals and communities, but can also help with mental well-being as it fosters a sense of purpose and a sense of belonging within society.

Labour supply

75.6% of people aged 16-64 in Conwy CB are economically active (in work or available for work) – slightly lower than the Wales and GB figures. Economic activity rates had been on an upward trend until the Covid-19 pandemic. Rates fell after March 2020, partly because some people moved out of the workforce due to reduced employment opportunities due to the pandemic, or because some chose to stay in education rather than joining a precarious jobs market, and partly due to increases in long-term ill-health. Though activity rates have now started to rise again there is some concern that the pandemic could accelerate the longer term trend of falling activity because of an ageing population structure⁴.

Table 2.1: labour supply – working aged population and economic activity (residence based)

Sources: ONS mid year population estimates; ONS annual population survey, (NOMIS)

	Conwy CB		Wales	Great Britain
	No.	%	%	%
All people aged 16-64 (mid 2020)	66,400	56.2	61.2	62.4
Economic activity (Oct 2020 - Sep 2021)				
Economically active	51,700	75.6	76.0	78.5
In employment	50,400	73.7	72.8	74.6
Employees	41,600	62.2	63.5	65.0
Self employed	8,300	10.9	8.8	9.5
Economically inactive	15,800	24.4	24.0	21.5

However, population estimates put the percentage of the population in Conwy CB who are aged 16-64 at only 56.2%, compared to 61.2% in Wales and 62.4% across Great Britain. This leads to high dependency ratios – that is, a high number of children/older people for each person of working age. High proportions of dependants in the population can place a strain on the economy and on the social structure of the community.

³ Health matters: health and work, Public Health England, January 2019

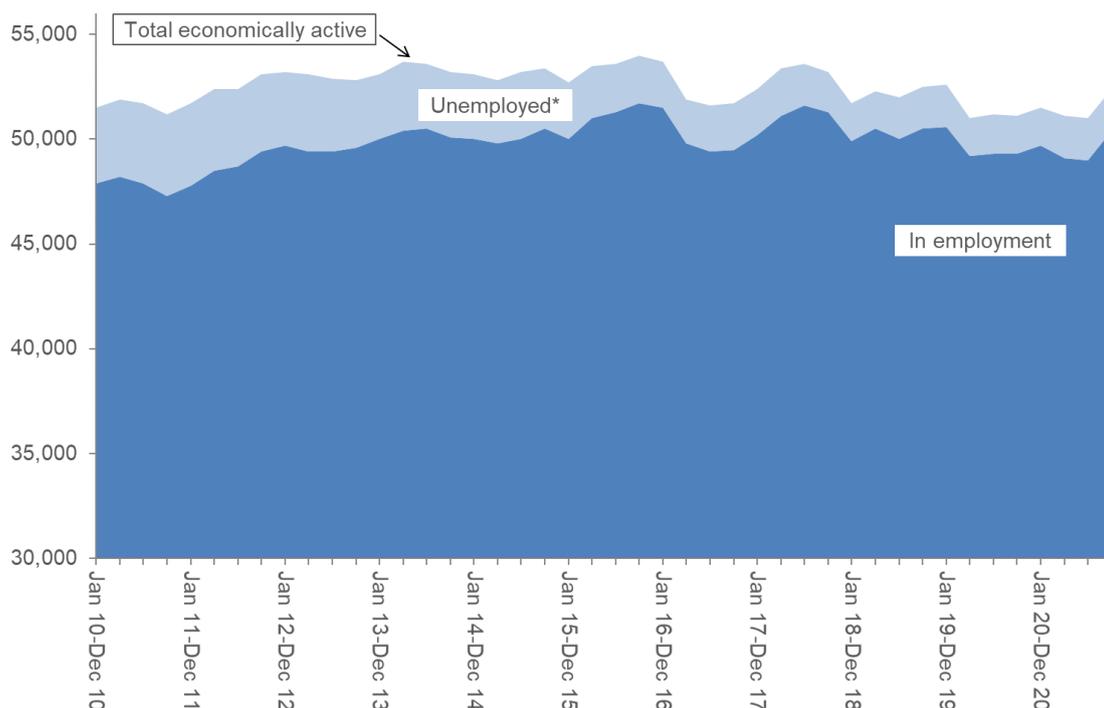
⁴ Monetary Policy Report, Bank of England, November 2021

Though economic activity rates are on an upward trend, the total number of people who are economically active is more volatile. This is affected by the size of the working age population, and may start to decline in the near future due to the large 'baby boomer' cohort moving out of the workforce as they reach retirement age.

50,400 people were in employment in the last recorded quarter, which was an increase of 1,100 since the same period last year. Numbers fell during the Covid-19 pandemic but have since almost returned to 2019 levels. At a UK level the number of people who were in employment or otherwise economically active fell between 2008 and 2011 due to the economic recession, but total counts did not see any impact from the pandemic. The UK estimate for people in employment is currently at the highest level ever seen. However, the rate of growth appears to be slowing, as some of the drivers for growth over the recent years reduce in impact – as well as improvements in the general economy, other reasons for this national increase in numbers in employment include the changes to state pension age (which means people staying in the workforce for longer) and revised definitions of what counts as economic activity (for example internships and other unpaid work/volunteering).

Chart 2.1: total economically active residents (aged 16-64), Conwy County Borough

Sources: ONS annual population survey, (NOMIS)



* the data used in this chart follows the International Labour Organisation (ILO) definition of unemployment. It is not the same as the claimant count measure of unemployment which is presented later in this document.

The number of people in the workforce who are self-employed is estimated at about 8,300 persons – around 10.9% of the workforce. This compares to a rate of around 8.8% across Wales and 9.5% for Great Britain. Nationally this rate is on a noticeably upward trend, perhaps in part as a result of the rise in the 'gig' economy as a source

of employment. Though traditionally associated with individual entrepreneurship, self-employment is increasingly considered to be a precarious form of work with limited employment rights and income at about only 60% of the average employee wage⁵.

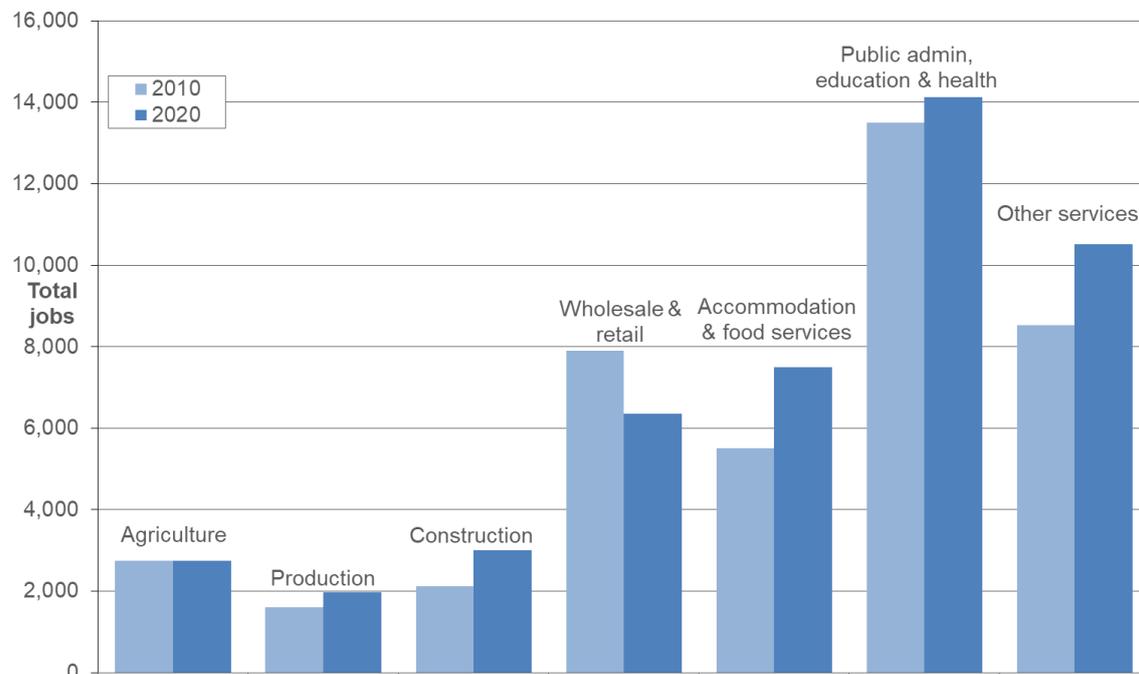
Employment demand

Data for this indicator is not yet likely to show the full impacts on the economy of Covid-19 and Brexit.

The Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES)⁶ for 2020 puts the number of PAYE jobs in Conwy CB at 46,000. This is an increase of about 1,000 since the previous year. In the ten years since 2010 – which was in the midst of the post-2008 economic down-turn – the overall increase in jobs in Conwy CB was 4,000 or 9.5%.

Chart 2.2: comparison of employment sectors over a 10 year period

Sources: ONS annual business inquiry & business register and employment survey, (NOMIS)



However, this change wasn't distributed equally across employment sectors. Some sectors saw declining job numbers – the highest losses since 2010 are in the retail sector (-1,250 jobs), public administration (-375), and the wholesale sector (-300). There are also some changes in the last year that look to be impacted by Covid-19

⁵ Trends in self-employment in the UK, ONS 2018; What does the rise of self-employment tell us about the UK labour market?, Institute for Fiscal Studies, 2020

⁶ BRES does not cover the very small businesses that are not registered for Value Added Tax (VAT) or Pay As You Earn (PAYE), which make up a small part of the economy. As a result, there is a difference between the BRES UK estimate of employment and the estimate from the ONS workforce jobs series.

and Brexit and may not represent long-term trends – accommodation, retail and wholesale sectors all saw significant losses between 2019 and 2020.

The accommodation & food services sector saw the biggest growth (about +2,000 jobs). The biggest proportional growth was in the business administration sector which has increased by 100% since 2010 (about 1,375 jobs). Other significant growth sectors since 2010 are health (+1,000), construction (+875) and the professional / scientific / technical sector (+500).

Levels of part-time working are high in Conwy CB – 39% of employees work part-time compared to 32% and 31% in Wales and Great Britain respectively. The levels of part-time working are highest for female workers.

The employment structure in Conwy CB differs from that of Great Britain as a whole. The production base has declined considerably over the past three decades to about 4.3% of jobs by 2020, and there is a heavy skew towards employment in the service industries (particularly in the public sector) and the tourism sector.

In Conwy CB employment in the high skills, high wage sectors of information & communication, finance & insurance, professional, scientific & technical, and business administration & support services is relatively low, totalling just 13% of all employment compared to 25% across GB as a whole.

Table 2.2: labour demand – employment, 2020 (workplace based)**

Source: ONS business register and employment survey, (NOMIS)

	Conwy CB		Wales	Great Britain
	No.	%	%	%
PAYE jobs	46,000			
Total employees	42,000	91.3	94.6	96.6
Full-time	24,000	52.2	62.8	65.6
Part-time	18,000	39.1	31.8	31.0
Working proprietors	4,000	8.7	5.4	3.4
Employment by industry				
Agriculture	2,800	5.9	3.7	1.6
Production	2,000	4.3	12.2	9.0
Construction	3,000	6.5	5.6	4.9
Services	38,500	83.3	78.5	84.5
Wholesale & retail	5,400	11.6	11.2	13.0
Accommodation & food services	7,500	16.2	8.3	7.1
Public admin, education & health	14,100	30.6	31.2	26.3
Other services	11,500	24.9	27.8	38.1

* These figures exclude farm agriculture (SIC subclass 01000)

** Employment figures are for employees plus working proprietors

The proportions of employment in the tourism related sectors of retail, accommodation & food services, and arts, entertainment & recreation are high – a total of about 32% of all jobs compared to 21% nationally. These sectors are the ones most likely to include low wage, part time or seasonal employment.

The pre-pandemic 2019 STEAM figures estimates that around 10,050 jobs are provided directly by the tourism industry and a further 2,550 jobs are indirectly supported by tourism – around 12,600 jobs in total, which is almost a quarter of all employment in Conwy County Borough. Tourism brings in around £996 million each year to the local economy.

Data from the 2020 STEAM report⁷ is available and shows a significant fall in tourism based activity within the economy, as would be expected during a world-wide shut-down of the key sectors it relies upon – the hospitality and leisure industries took some of the hardest hits from the effects of lockdown in 2020 and 2021. It is expected that this will be a blip in the performance of the tourism industry in Conwy and the rest of North Wales, and that the 2021 data is likely to show an uptick in numbers. There is also some optimism that there may be a longer-term increase in activity, driven by a renewed interest from the domestic market in holidaying within the UK.

Table 2.3: commuting, 2020

Sources: ONS annual population survey

Commuters	
Number of working residents	48,900
Number commuting out of Conwy CB	13,500
Number of people working in Conwy CB	44,600
Number commuting in to Conwy CB	9,200
Net outflow	4,300
Percentage of residents working in Wales	93.7%
Percentage of residents working in Conwy CB	72.4%

More people travel out of Conwy for work than travel in to the County Borough – a net out-flow of about 4,300 commuters. Altogether, around 28% of Conwy's working population travel out of the area for employment. Most of these outward commuters travel to the neighbouring Welsh authority areas (to Denbighshire in particular), though an estimated 3,100 people travel to England for work. About 9,200 people either live in Conwy CB and travel to Denbighshire for work or vice versa, which is around 10.4% of all working residents in the area. This highlights the need for co-ordinated economic planning across both counties.

This indicator is based on modelled data and does not yet show the impacts that the Covid-19 pandemic may have (for example increases in working from home or changes in employment sectors).

⁷ 2020 STEAM report – total jobs = 5,500, economic impact £373 million

Work-based learning

Data for this indicator is not yet likely to show the full impacts on the economy of Covid-19 and Brexit.

Included within the suite of skills for employment are a whole range of academic and work related qualifications. The route to higher education and a university degree are not suitable for all school leavers or adult learners, and apprenticeships and other work based learning opportunities form a large part of the local skills base. As well as educated graduates a resilient mixed economy will require skilled technicians, administrators, retail operatives and so on. On-the-job learning, apprenticeship schemes and formal higher education all have significant roles to play in providing skills within the employment market.

There is an inarguable connection between skills and employment opportunities, both for the individual and for the wider workforce. Enhancing skills significantly improves the ability of the unemployed to find work. At the same time enhancing skills helps those in lower paid jobs to progress within the labour market. As the skills base of the local workforce increases, the area becomes more attractive to prospective investors looking to bring in new business⁸.

Welsh Government publishes data on work-based learning (WBL), which give details of post-16 training through recognised programmes. In 2019/20 there were 1,705 apprenticeships in Conwy County Borough, part of an overall total of 1,840 WBL programmes. This was a significant decrease on the previous year, and is likely to have been impacted by the cancellation of face-to-face teaching during the last few months of the academic year due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

For the 16-24 age group, there has been a downward trend in the number and rate per 1,000 population for about four years. This is seen for both apprenticeships and the wider all work-based learning measure. The decrease was particularly noticeable for 2019/20. Conwy County Borough saw a bigger decrease in the rate than was seen across Wales as a whole – for 2019/20 this was -34.7 for apprenticeships in Conwy BC and -15.4 for Wales (-42.1 for Conwy CB for WBL; Wales = -26.1).

A similar pattern was seen for the broader 16-64 age group, though the decrease was much smaller.

Compared to the national rate, Conwy County Borough is better provided for apprenticeships than the national averages, particularly in the 16-24 age group (55.3 per 1,000 population of that age group in CCB compared to 53.2 across Wales).

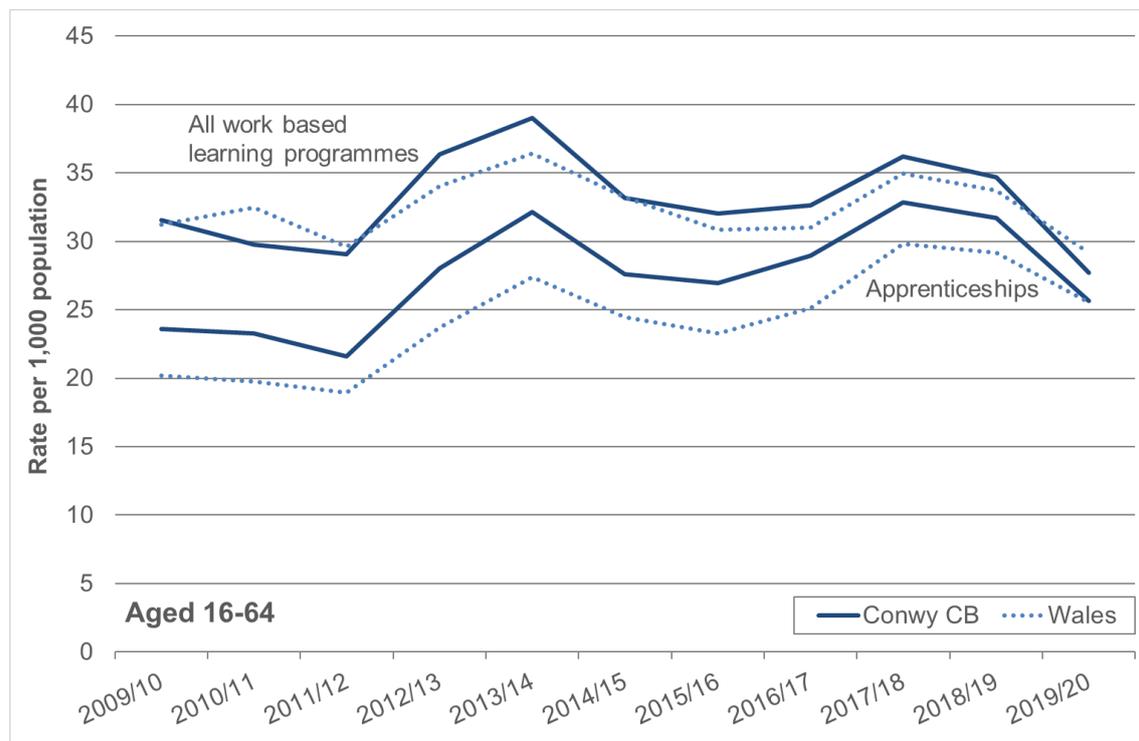
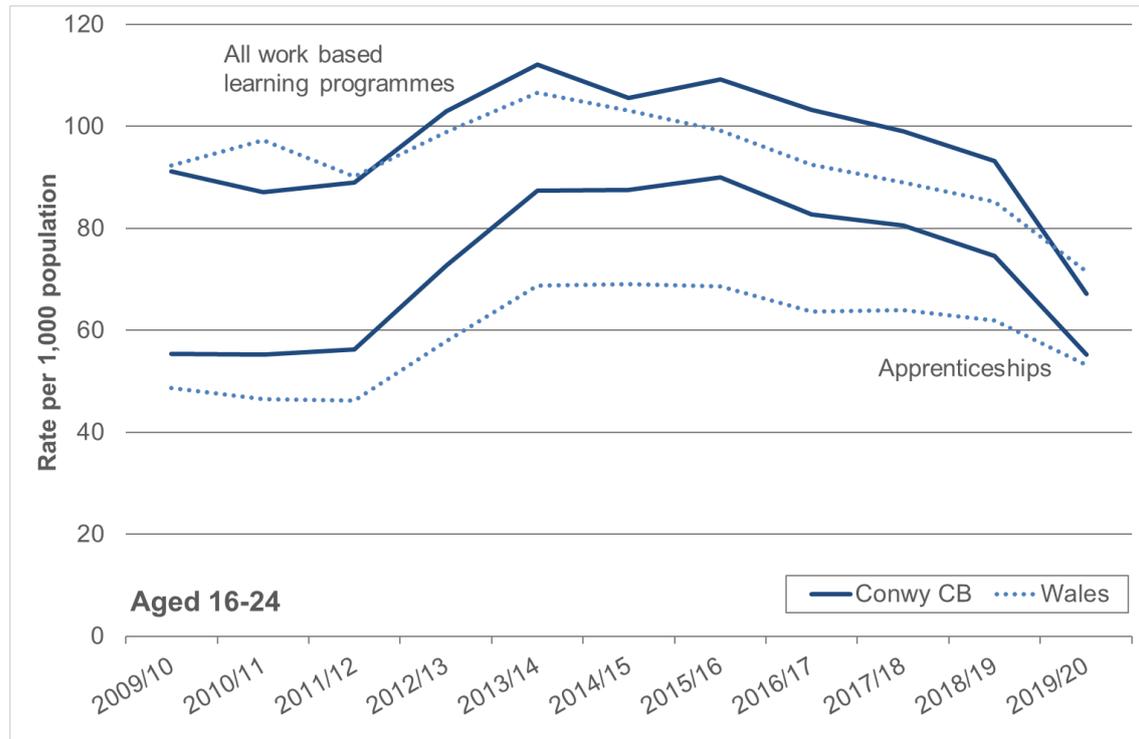
Only 33% of apprenticeships and 37% of all WBL programmes in Conwy County Borough were undertaken by people aged under 25, compared to 37% of apprenticeships and 45% of all programmes across Wales. This may reflect the older age structure of the County Borough.

More women than men undertake work-based learning in Conwy CB. 62% of apprenticeships and 60% of all training is undertaken by women. Wales-wide figures are a little more equal – women make up 60% of all apprentices and 58% of all those undertaking WBL.

⁸ The role of skills from worklessness to sustainable employment with progression – UK Commission for Employment and Skills, September 2011

Chart 2.3: work-based learning programmes – rate per 1,000 population

Source: Learning Network analysis, Welsh Government (StatsWales)



*Rate is per 1,000 in that age group

Compared to all-Wales figures, Conwy CB has a high proportion of programmes within the hospitality sector – 9% of apprenticeships (4% for Wales) and 8% of all programmes (3% for Wales). This reflects the County Borough’s employment

structure, and is also influenced by the courses available at local further education institutions. The business administration and retail sectors also have a higher proportion of learning programmes than the Wales average. Work-based learning programmes in the management & professional, construction, and engineering sectors are under-represented in Conwy CB when compared to all-Wales figures.

Table 2.4: work-based learning programmes, 2019/20

Source: Learning Network analysis, Welsh Government (StatsWales)

	Conwy CB			Wales	
	Number	Rate*	% **	Rate*	% **
Apprenticeships					
All aged 16-64	1,705	25.7		25.5	
Aged 16-24	785	55.3	32.6%	53.2	37.2%
Aged 25+	1,150	20.4	67.4%	19.5	62.8%
Male	655	-	38.4%	-	40.3%
Female	1,050	-	61.6%	-	59.7%
All work-based learning programmes					
All aged 16-64	1,840	27.7		29.2	
Aged 16-24	965	67.1	37.5%	71.5	45.0%
Aged 25+	1,150	20.4	62.5%	20.0	55.0%
Male	730	-	39.7%	-	41.9%
Female	1,110	-	60.3%	-	58.1%

*Rate is per 1,000 in that age group

** % is of all apprenticeships/work-based learning programmes

Qualifications

Qualification levels in Conwy County Borough have improved considerably since 2010. The proportion of people of working age (18-64) with no qualification has fallen by five percentage points to 8.3% in 2020. 38.8% of the working age population had degree level qualifications or higher in 2020, compared to only 31.9% in 2010. However, the rate of improvement has stalled over the past few years.

Compared to the Welsh and UK averages, the working age population in Conwy County Borough is less qualified. We have more people with no/very low levels of qualification, and fewer people qualified at degree level or above. Women are generally more qualified than men.

Chart 2.4: levels of qualification in Conwy County Borough

Source: Annual Population Survey/Annual Local Labour Force Survey (StatsWales)

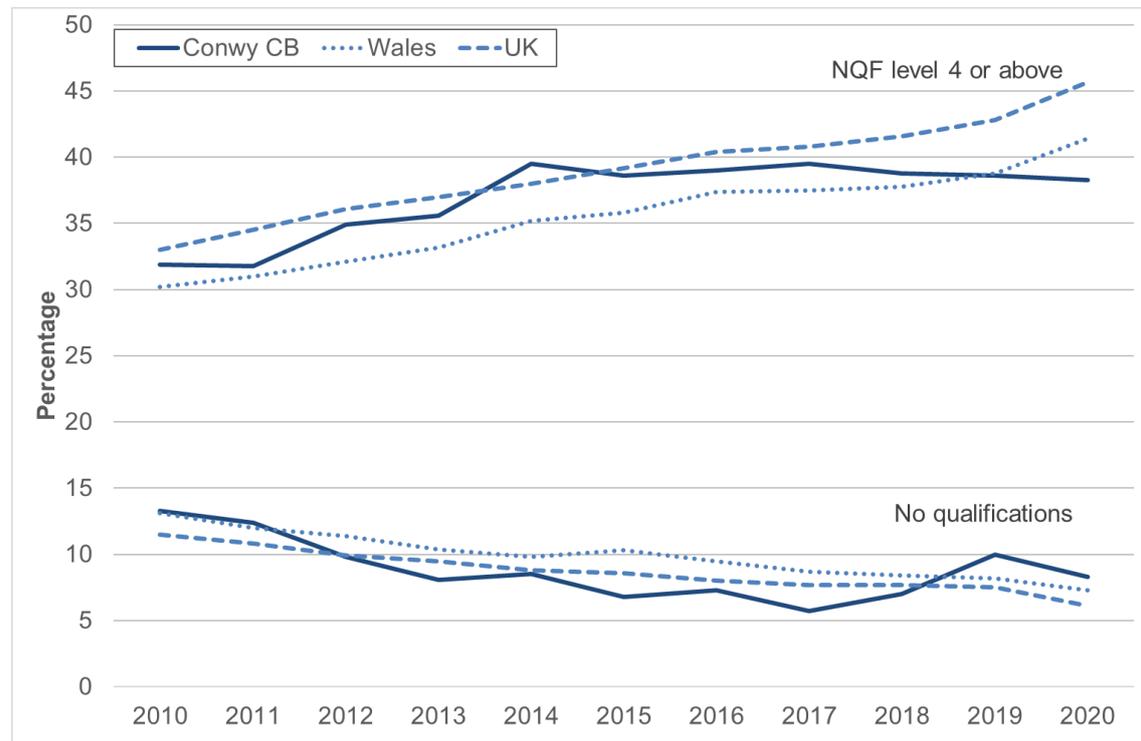


Table 2.5: highest qualification held by the working age population

Source: Annual Population Survey/Annual Local Labour Force Survey (StatsWales)

	Conwy County Borough				Wales 2020	UK 2020
	2010	2020	Males 2020	Females 2020		
No qualifications	13.3	8.3	8.7	7.7	7.3	6.1
Below level 2	15.5	11.3	11.4	11.1	11.8	11.4
NQF level 2	23.0	20.1	19.7	20.7	18.6	17.3
NQF level 3	16.3	22.0	23.7	20.0	21.0	19.5
NQF levels 4-6	26.1	25.6	23.8	27.7	29.3	-
NQF levels 7-8	5.8	12.7	12.7	12.8	12.1	-
NQF level 4 or above	31.9	38.3	36.5	40.5	41.4	45.7

Definitions

Examples of highest qualifications at each level include:

Below level 2: NQF level 1, Entry Level qualifications, Basic Skills

Level 2: NQF level 2 or equivalent, 5 or more GCSE A*-C, 2 AS levels

Level 3: 2 A level passes, 4 AS level passes, NQF level 3, Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate

Levels 4-6: First degrees, Foundation degrees, NQF level 4

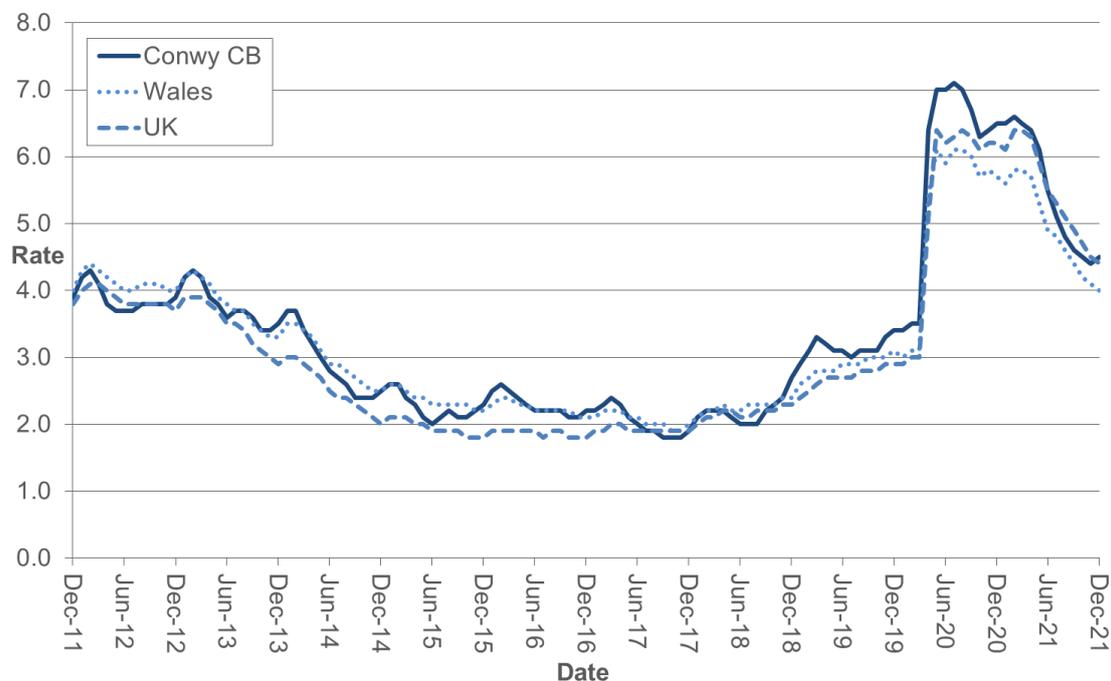
Levels 7-8: Postgraduate qualifications, NQF level 5

Unemployment and worklessness

Unemployment figures represented in this section of the report come from monthly claimant count statistics produced by the Department of Works and Pensions (those claiming Job Seekers Allowance benefits plus those who claim Universal Credit and are required to seek work and be available for work)⁹. Under Universal Credit, a broader span of claimants are required to look for work than under Jobseeker's Allowance. This has the effect of increasing the Claimant Count which means there is some discontinuity in this data series – more details are available in the section 'Alternative claimant count'.

Chart 2.5: claimant count unemployment, December 2011-December 2021

Source: ONS claimant count, (NOMIS)



The claimant count unemployment rate for December 2021 was 4.5%. This was significantly higher than the pre-pandemic level (December 2019 = 3.4%), but has been on a downward trend since reaching a peak of 7.1% in July 2020. There was a significant and sudden increase in the number of claimants after the onset of the pandemic, with the peak count in July 2020 (4,740 claimants) being more than double that seen in February 2020. The overall figure is currently comparable to the UK rate, but higher than the all-Wales average.

⁹ This is not the headline unemployment figure that tends to be report in the media, which comes from the quarterly Annual Population Survey (APS) and uses a different definition of unemployment. The APS, which is a sample survey, sees significant fluctuations in results at unitary authority level, and is therefore not robust enough to provide a reliable measure for monitoring unemployment at the local level.
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/met/hodologies/aguidetolabourmarketstatistics#unemployment>

Unemployment in Conwy County Borough is generally seasonal – at its highest in the winter months, usually peaking around February.

Table 2.6: comparative quarterly claimant count unemployment figures

Source: ONS claimant count, (NOMIS)

	Conwy CB		Wales		UK	
	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate
December 2021	2,970	4.5	77,860	4.0	1,848,050	4.4
September 2021	3,030	4.6	84,325	4.4	2,032,690	4.9
June 2021	3,655	5.5	95,050	4.9	2,285,995	5.5
March 2021	4,330	6.5	112,150	5.8	2,675,305	6.4
December 2020	4,325	6.5	110,215	5.7	2,589,740	6.2
December 2016	1,435	2.2	39,600	2.1	747,420	1.8
December 2011	2,645	3.9	76,710	4.0	1,568,850	3.8

The total number of unemployed claimants aged under 25 was 510 in December 2021. In general, young people under the age of 25 are overrepresented in the claimant count. They make up around 17% of all unemployed claimants, though they are only 14% of the working age population (aged 16-66) and a much smaller proportion of the economically active population, given most 16-17 year olds and many 18-24 year olds will be in in full-time education and thus not economically active.

Table 2.7: latest claimant count unemployment figures for Conwy County Borough (December 2021)¹⁰

Source: ONS claimant count, (NOMIS)

	No.	Rate	% all claimants
All people	2,970	4.5	
Males	1,835	5.6	61.8
Females	1,135	3.4	38.2
Aged under 25	510	-	17.2
Aged 50 +	900	-	30.3

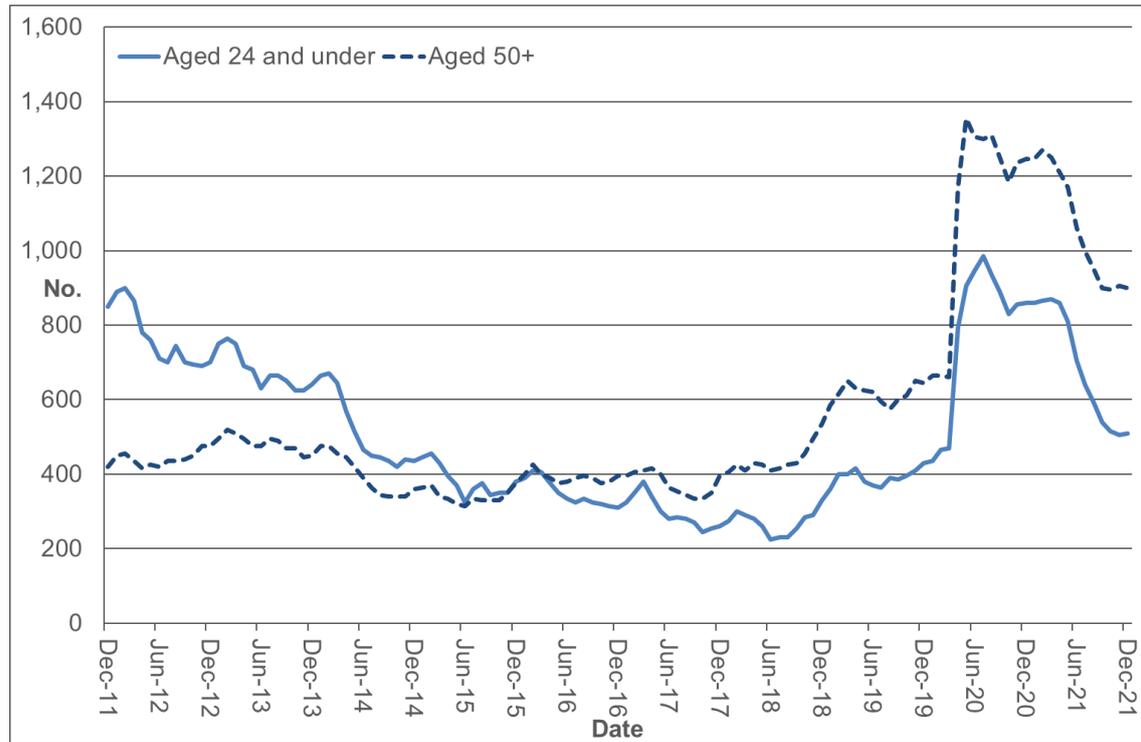
The number of young people who are unemployed rose steeply in late 2008 as a result of the global recession and remained high for over five years. There followed a period of falling youth unemployment, impacted by general improvements in the economy, increased participation in higher and further education, and partly due to changes in benefit entitlements for that age group. However, numbers started rising

¹⁰ The Office for National Statistics is working to produce robust unemployment data that combines counts from Universal Credit (UC) and Job Seekers Allowance. This data is not yet available for breakdowns of the length of unemployment (duration). This means that figures for long term unemployment which used to be included in this report have been removed for the time being.

in autumn 2018 and were at a five year high in February 2020, before the pandemic hit. During the pandemic numbers reached a peak of 985 in July 2020. Though numbers have since fallen significantly the claimant count for 16-24 year olds is still 45 higher than pre-pandemic levels.

Chart 2.6: claimant count unemployment – selected age groups

Source: ONS claimant count, (NOMIS)



At the other end of the workforce age spectrum, the number of claimants aged 50+ also saw a significant increase after the 2007/08 economic downturn. Despite a fall in numbers of claimants in this age group in 2014-15 numbers rose again and were at the highest level since 1997 in February 2020. The number of claimants aged 50+ reached a peak in May 2022 – two months earlier than the overall peak – with a count of 1,355. Numbers have fallen since then but remain significantly higher than before the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. At 900 claimants in December 2021 there were about 235 more claimants in this age group than there were in February 2020. Changes in state pension age may in part explain why the number of unemployed claimants aged 50+ remains high – people who would have been classed as ‘retired’ a few years ago now fall within the working age population group. This age group is also relatively large compared to other age groups as it covers the baby boomer cohort. Despite the high numbers, this age group are underrepresented in the claimant count. People aged 50-66 currently make up 42% of the working age population but only 30% of claimants.

Table 2.8: economic inactivity (residence based)

Source: ONS annual population survey, (NOMIS)

	Conwy CB		Wales	Great Britain
	No.	%	%	%
Economic activity (Oct 2020 - Sep 2021)				
Economically inactive	15,800			
% inactive wanting a job	1,800	11.4	18.8	19.8
% inactive not wanting a job	14,000	88.6	81.2	80.2

Of the 15,800 people aged 16-64 who were economically inactive in Conwy CB, only 1,800 (11.0%) wanted a job which is low compared to national figures – perhaps a reflection of the area being a retirement destination. The number of economically inactive people wanting a job has fallen significantly since before the pandemic, but we do not yet know if this is a long-term impact of or a temporary reaction to the global pandemic.

In the twelve months to September 2021, at any one time an average of 3,800 people were either unemployed or economically inactive and wanting a job¹¹. However in October 2021 the DWP ‘find a job’ system showed only 490 jobs available in Conwy County Borough, and only 1,250 jobs available in the neighbouring authorities of Gwynedd, Anglesey and Denbighshire (data extracted 22nd October 2021). This includes full- and part-time jobs.

Appendices showing unemployment for the North Wales region, strategic sub areas and wards (electoral divisions) are available at the end of this monitor.

Alternative claimant count

Under Universal Credit, a broader span of claimants are required to look for work than under Jobseeker's Allowance. This has the effect of increasing the Claimant Count and the Office for National Statistics (ONS) have stated that the figures are no longer as reliable an economic indicator as they used to be. To address this, the new Alternative Claimant Count statistics measure the number of people claiming unemployment benefits by modelling what the count would have been if Universal Credit had been in place since 2013 with the broader span of people this covers.

Currently these statistics are only published every quarter, do not include rates and only allow limited analysis. They have not yet replaced the Claimant Count as a preferred measure of unemployment, but are expected to do so in the future. However, given the implementation of Universal Credit and the natural increases to the Claimant Count that this brings, the statistics provide:

- a consistent unemployed claimant series

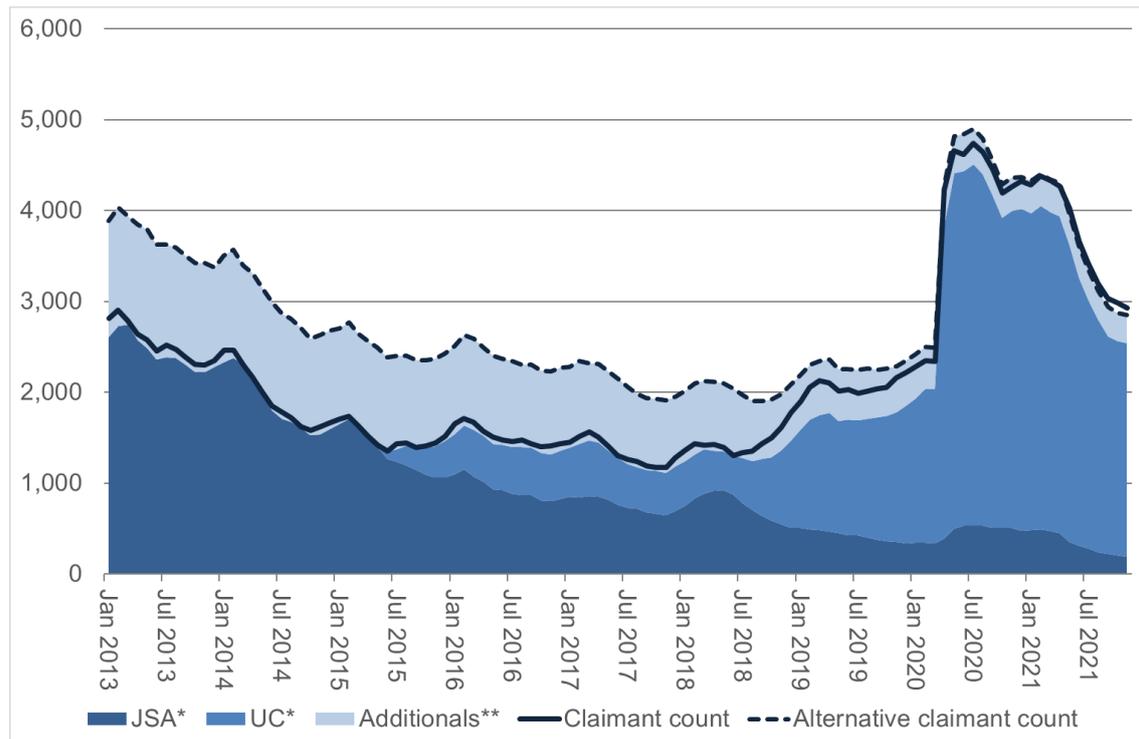
¹¹ Does not include those in work who were underemployed (wanting an additional job or more hours, for example).

- an alternative indicator of local labour market change over time

As new official statistics undergoing evaluation they have been badged as experimental official statistics. Headline figures are provided below for information. Once the Alternative Claimant Count is accepted as a National Statistic a more robust analysis of the data will be provided.

Chart 2.7: claimant count and alternative claimant count for Conwy County Borough

Source: DWP benefit statistics, (Stat-Xplore)



* JSA = Job Seeker's Allowance UC = Universal Credit (searching for work conditionality)

** Additional claimants = estimates of those additional claimants who would have been searching for work under Universal Credit had it existed over the entire time period from January 2013.

For November 2021 the alternative claimant count gave a figure of 2,850 unemployed claimants in Conwy County Borough, compared to 2,930 in the existing claimant count. This was a difference of 80 claimants. Before the Covid-19 pandemic the new measure was on an upward trend, after falling between 2013 and 2018.

There was a significant and sudden increase in the number of Universal Credit claimants after the onset of the pandemic, with the peak count in June 2020 (4,840 claimants) being almost double that seen in February 2020. The number of out-of-work claimants has since fallen considerably, but the count is still 350 claimants higher than in March 2020.

Like the existing measure, before the disruption of the pandemic the alternative claimant count showed unemployment in the County Borough is seasonal, peaking around February/March each year.

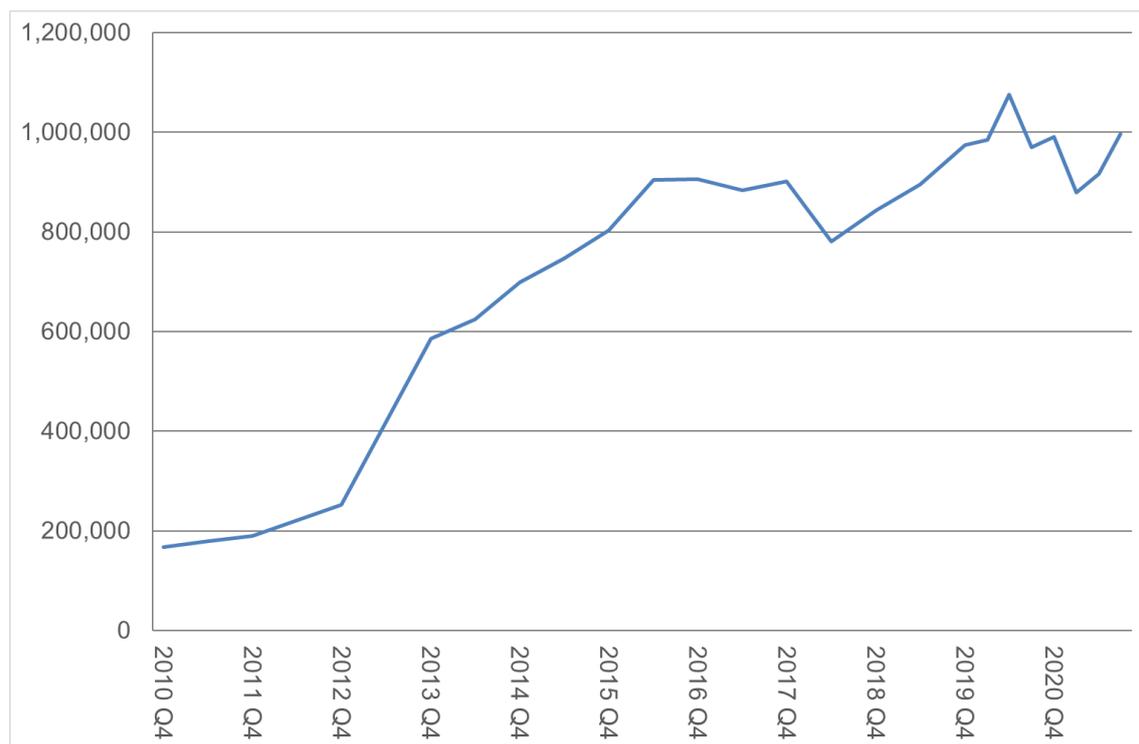
Zero hours contracts

Since the economic downturn in 2008-2011 there has been a growing awareness of the use of “zero hour contracts” as a means of managing temporary employment. Zero hours contracts can cause problems for employees. It is difficult to plan financially when you don’t know how much work you are going to get in any given period – and the fact that zero hours contracts are concentrated in the lower paid sectors can exacerbate this financial insecurity. Having no fixed hours of work can make it difficult to plan ahead in terms of family/social commitments and there may be pressure around being constantly ‘on call’. Many zero hours contracts also mean the employer does not have to observe some elements of employment law relating to employee rights such as sick pay, holiday pay or training commitments and staff also miss out on benefits that full time or permanent employees will get as standard, such as a pension and redundancy rights.

Zero hour contracts are not always seen as a negative, however. Some groups find the flexibility an advantage; young people for example, who combine flexible working with their studies. They may also be a way of temporarily boosting household income, or of providing work experience in different employment sectors.

Chart 2.8: estimates of people in work in the UK who are on zero hours contracts

Source: Labour Force Survey, ONS



According to the Office for National Statistics’ Labour Force Survey, across the UK the number of people employed on “zero-hours contracts” in their main job, during July to September 2021 was 996,150, representing 3.1% of all people in employment. This latest estimate is 25,750 higher than the same period in the previous year (970,400 or 3.0% of people in employment).

The number of people on zero hours contracts rose sharply between 2013 and 2016 but this might be in part due to a greater awareness of the issue¹². From 2016 to early 2019 numbers more or less plateau. Issues that may have impacted the figures in this time frame include a stabilisation in the new reporting trend; the introduction of new regulation around zero hours employment slowing growth; changes in the structure of the labour supply as a result of outward economic migration of EU nationals following the Brexit referendum. Numbers began to rise again in mid-2019, reaching a peak of 1.1M in 2022 Q2. Numbers have been volatile since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, which is to be expected given the disruptions to the economy and the labour market, and the difficulties of collecting data during this time. Peaks and troughs in this time may be due to changes in legislation and provisions of state support for businesses and employees such as furlough payments or eligibility for Universal Credit payments.

Data about zero hours contracts is not available at a local level.

On average, someone on a “zero-hours contract” usually works 25.5 hours a week. About a quarter of people (23.4%) on a “zero-hours contract” want more hours, with most wanting them in their current job, as opposed to a different job which offers more hours. In comparison 6.5% of other people in employment wanted more hours.

For July to September 2021:

- women make up a bigger proportion of those reporting working on “zero-hours contracts” (56.6%) compared with their proportion in employment not on “zero-hours contracts” (47.4%)
- people who report being on a “zero-hours contract” are more likely to be at the youngest end of the age range; 38.3% of people on “zero-hours contracts” are aged 16 to 24 (compared with 10.2% for all people in employment not on a “zero-hours contract”)
- 22.7% of people on “zero-hours contracts” are in full-time education compared with 3.2% of other people in employment
- 65.6% of people on “zero-hours contracts” are working part-time when compared with 23.2% of people who are in employment not on a “zero-hours contracts”
- 24.9% of people in employment on a “zero-hours contract” are in the accommodation and food industry
- 14.2% of people employed in the accommodation and food industry are on a “zero-hours contract”

The high proportion of jobs on zero hours contracts in the accommodation and food service industries is of note for Conwy CB as these sectors provide a relatively high proportion of jobs in the area (16.2% in Conwy CB, compared to 7.1% across Great Britain) – see the section on labour supply for more information.

More information about the labour market is available in the NOMIS area profile at <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157385/report.aspx>.

¹² In the 2010s, increases in the number of people reporting to the LFS that they were on a zero-hours contract were likely to have been affected by greater awareness and recognition of the term “zero-hours contract”.

Section 3: Business structure

Business structure – businesses based in Conwy County Borough

This section is about enterprises which have their main headquarters or operating base in the area. For Conwy CB, it does not include national or international businesses or organisations which are based outside of the area (for example the major retail chains or banks).

The estimate of the number of business enterprises includes VAT registered businesses and PAYE registered businesses. It does not include businesses that are not registered for either, which will include a high number of sole traders. It includes businesses within the public and voluntary sectors (for example hospitals or local charities) as well as the private sector.

In 2021 there were an estimated 4,655 of these types of business enterprises in Conwy County Borough, a slight increase of about 15 (+0.3%) since the previous year.

Table 3.1: business enterprises by industry, 2021

Source: ONS interdepartmental business register

	Conwy CB		Wales	Great Britain	Conwy CB - previous year
	No.	%	%	%	
Total enterprises	4,655				4,640
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	690	14.8%	12.8%	4.6%	14.9%
Production	260	5.6%	6.4%	5.6%	5.7%
Construction	570	12.2%	12.9%	13.0%	11.9%
Motor trades	165	3.5%	3.5%	2.8%	3.2%
Wholesale	115	2.5%	3.0%	3.9%	2.5%
Retail	355	7.6%	7.8%	8.0%	7.5%
Transport & storage (inc. postal)	230	4.9%	5.5%	5.0%	5.0%
Accommodation & food services	570	12.2%	8.6%	6.1%	12.3%
Information & communication	135	2.9%	4.2%	7.8%	2.9%
Finance & insurance	75	1.6%	1.7%	2.2%	1.8%
Property	125	2.7%	2.8%	3.8%	2.5%
Professional, scientific & technical	460	9.9%	10.9%	16.6%	9.8%
Business admin & support services	335	7.2%	7.5%	8.5%	7.2%
Public administration & defence	25	0.5%	0.5%	0.3%	0.5%
Education	55	1.2%	1.3%	1.7%	1.2%
Health	215	4.6%	4.0%	3.8%	5.1%
Arts, entertainment & other services	275	5.9%	6.4%	6.4%	6.0%

Figures are rounded to the nearest 5 and may not add to the column total.

The proportion of businesses which are within the agricultural sector is particularly high (14.8%) when compared to GB figures (only 4.6%), reflecting the rural nature of much of the County Borough. The accommodation and food services sector also accounts for a high proportion of businesses (12.2%) in comparison to the national trends, as a result of the importance of the tourism industry within the area. The high skill sectors (professional, scientific and technical; information and communication) are under-represented in Conwy CB when compared to GB as a whole.

The proportion of businesses within a sector of industry does not give a full measure of the importance of that sector within the local economy and the employment market, however (see table 2.2 above). Only half a percent of businesses fall within the public administration and defence sector, but the 25 or so enterprises in this group include North Wales Police and Conwy County Borough Council, two of the largest employers in the area. Many businesses in the agricultural sector will be very small in terms of both number of employees and turn over.

Table 3.2: business enterprises by number of employees, 2021

Source: ONS interdepartmental business register

	Conwy CB		Wales	Great Britain	Conwy CB - previous year
	No.	%	%	%	
Total enterprises	4,655				4,640
0 - 4 employees	3,580	76.9%	77.3%	78.6%	76.2%
5 - 9 employees	600	12.9%	12.4%	11.1%	13.6%
10 - 19 employees	275	5.9%	5.7%	5.5%	5.8%
20 - 49 employees	140	3.0%	3.0%	2.9%	3.1%
50 - 99 employees	35	0.8%	0.9%	1.0%	0.9%
100 - 249 employees	20	0.4%	0.5%	0.5%	0.3%
250 + employees	5	0.1%	0.3%	0.4%	0.1%

Table 3.3: business enterprises by size of annual turnover, 2021

Source: ONS interdepartmental business register

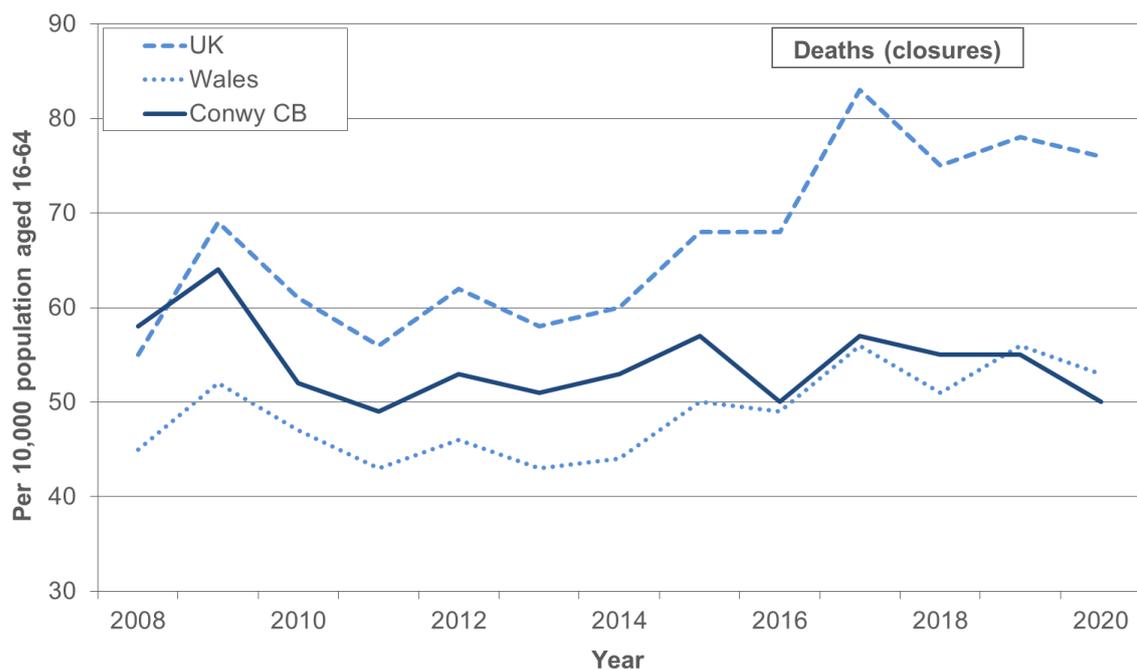
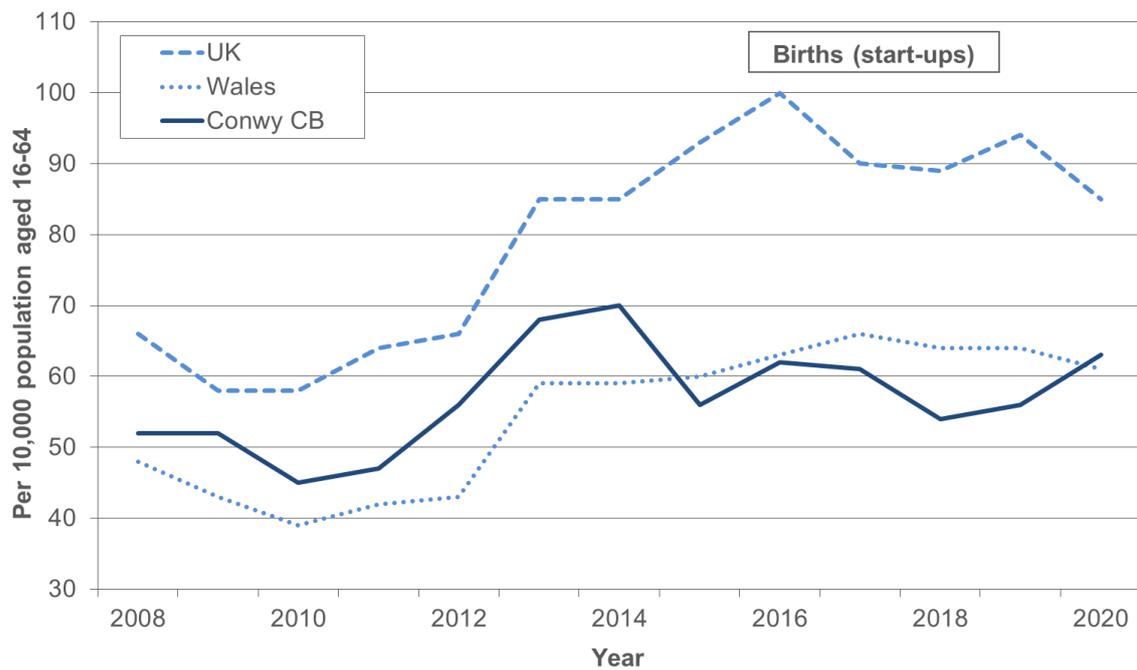
	Conwy CB		Wales	Great Britain	Conwy CB - previous year
	No.	%	%	%	
Total enterprises	4,655				4,640
£0 - 49,999	795	17.1%	19.7%	15.4%	16.4%
£50,000 - 99,999	1,235	26.5%	22.5%	22.4%	27.0%
£100,000 - 249,999	1,435	30.8%	30.3%	32.6%	30.8%
£250,000 - 499,999	580	12.5%	12.8%	12.8%	12.6%
£500,000 - 999,999	330	7.1%	7.0%	7.3%	7.1%
£1m - 4.9m	215	4.6%	6.0%	7.0%	5.0%
£5m +	65	1.4%	1.8%	2.4%	1.1%

Businesses which have their main base in Conwy CB tend to be smaller than in Wales or Great Britain as a whole in terms of size of workforce and annual turnover levels, but this is to be expected given the inclusion of more businesses which operate nationally and have greater reach within the Wales and GB figures.

Business births and deaths

Chart 3.1: enterprise birth and death rates

Source: ONS business demography



In 2020, there were 4,300 active enterprises which had their main operational base in Conwy CB – which was an increase on the previous year. When measured against population of working age (aged 16-64) enterprise birth and death rates (start-ups and closures) were both lower than the UK average. The number of births was 4.8% higher than the previous year.

The main impact of the 2007/08 economic downturn was to suppress business start-up rates rather than cause more closures and Conwy CB has still not recovered its pre-recession levels of start-up. Conwy CB's business death rates have varied less than birth rates over the past 10 years. However, rising business death rates for the UK as a whole since 2016 might be a pre-warning of uncertainty in the wider economy.

Data for this indicator is not yet likely to show the impacts on the economy of Covid-19 and Brexit. The Westminster and Cardiff governments provided financial support for businesses during 2020 and 2021 through various grant schemes and the employee furlough scheme which may have delayed any economic shocks.

Table 3.4: business demographics (births, deaths and stock of enterprises), 2020

	Conwy CB	Wales	UK
Stock of active enterprises	4,300	104,445	3,003,470
per 10,000 population aged 16-64	648	539	718
change since previous year	4.8%	0.7%	0.4%
5 year change	9.0%	9.9%	12.4%
10 year change	12.1%	15.5%	27.7%
Births	415	11,905	357,725
per 10,000 population aged 16-64	63	61	85
change since previous year	13.7%	-2.9%	-8.3%
Deaths	335	10,200	316,310
per 10,000 population aged 16-64	50	53	76
change since previous year	-6.9%	-5.2%	-2.5%

Notes:

Data includes VAT registered businesses and PAYE registered businesses. It does not include businesses that are not registered for either, which will include a high number of sole traders. It includes businesses within the public and voluntary sectors (for example hospitals or local charities) as well as the private sector.

The data is for enterprises which have their main headquarters or operating base in the area. It does not include national or international businesses which are based outside of the area (for example the major retail chains or banks).

In addition to annual start-up and closure rates for businesses, survival rates can help us understand how healthy the local economy is. Survival rates tell us what proportion of businesses born in a specific year are still operating in later years. Though rates in Conwy County Borough are generally comparable to national

figures, in the last three years there has been a noticeable increase in the proportion of businesses that have survived five years, which is not mirrored at a national level.

Table 3.5: business survival rates

Source: ONS business demography

	Conwy CB	Wales	UK
Survived 1 year			
Born in 2019 (last year)	91.8%	90.7%	88.3%
Born in 2018 (2 years ago)	90.1%	89.3%	89.3%
Born in 2015 (5 years ago)	93.3%	90.8%	89.7%
Born in 2010 (10 years ago)	88.5%	86.7%	86.7%
Born in 2005 (15 years ago)	95.9%	96.1%	95.9%
Survived 5 years			
Born in 2015 (5 years ago)	45.3%	40.4%	39.6%
Born in 2010 (10 years ago)	41.0%	40.7%	41.4%
Born in 2005 (15 years ago)	44.8%	44.4%	44.4%

Section 4: The local economy

Planning applications

Table 4.1: planning applications received

Source: planning applications register, Regulatory Service, Conwy County Borough Council; Snowdonia National Park Planning Authority

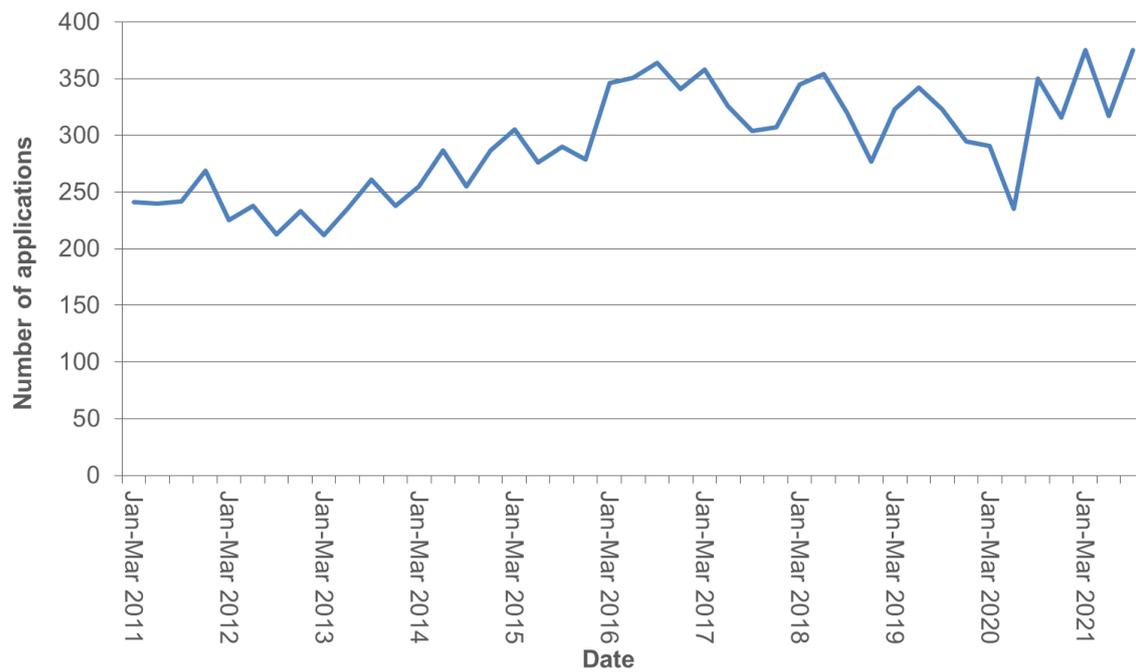
	Quarter 1 Apr-Jun	Quarter 2 Jul-Sep	Quarter 3 Oct-Dec	Quarter 4 Jan-Mar	Annual Apr-Mar
2021/22	317	375			
2020/21	235	350	316	375	1,276
2019/20	342	323	295	291	1,251
2018/19	354	320	277	323	1,274
2017/18	326	304	307	345	1,282
2016/17	351	364	341	358	1,414
2015/16	276	290	279	346	1,191
2014/15	287	255	287	305	1,134
2013/14	236	261	238	255	990
2012/13	238	213	233	212	896
2011/12	240	242	269	225	976
2010/11	280	256	238	241	1,015

Though we need to treat the figures with caution – as it is not possible to tell whether an individual planning application is for a small scale domestic project such as a kitchen extension, or for a 100 unit housing development – the table and chart are nevertheless indicative of the effects of the current economic climate on confidence and productivity in the construction industry.

After a five year period of noticeable decline following the 2008 global economic downturn, in 2013 there was an upturn in the number of planning applications received. Levels have fluctuated since then but are on a generally upward trend. After a noticeable dip in numbers in April-June 2020 when the first Covid-19 lockdown was in place there was a quick bounce-back in overall numbers of applications received.

Chart 4.1: planning applications received

Source: planning applications register, Regulatory Service, Conwy County Borough Council; Snowdonia National Park Planning Authority



Section 5: Housing activity

The provision of good housing is essential to allow employees to move to areas where jobs exist. Investment in housing also generates substantial employment. It is critical to household income; housing which is ‘affordable’ – that which does not present an excessive burden on household income – reduces the risk of poverty and financial hardship.

In addition good housing provides shelter, security, space for family life and activities, privacy, personal identity and development. It is a keystone of individual and community well-being.

UK house price index

The Land Registry publishes average house price data on a monthly basis. This is the house price figure that is usually reported in the media, and provides the most up-to-date information. However, Conwy’s monthly figures are based on a relatively small number of house sales and should be treated with caution as one high-end sale could significantly skew the data. This section of the report looks at this monthly data to provide the most timely report on house prices, and the next section looks at older, more robust data in more detail.

Table 5.1: house price index, December 2021

Source: Land Registry house price index

	Conwy CB	Wales	UK
Average price	207,446	204,835	274,712
Monthly change (%)	-0.6	2.0	0.8
Annual change (%)	11.0	13.0	10.8
April 2000 index* (Apr '00=100)	380.4	383.2	307.9
10 yr index* (Dec '11=100)	152.7	160.8	164.5
February 2020 index* (Feb '20=100)	123.3	123.4	119.1

* An index is a way of measuring relative change over time. If the average house price at April 2000 is taken to be 100, the index shows how prices have changed since that date. For example, an index of 150 means the current price is one and a half times what it was at the start of the index period.

In December 2021 the average (mean) house price in Conwy CB was £207,446. Generally house prices in Conwy CB are slightly higher than the Welsh average, but significantly below the UK level. The average house price was 11.0% higher than the previous year. This is comparable to UK rates.

In Conwy CB the average house price is currently 7.3 times the average household income of £28,300 and 12.7 times the lower quartile household income of £16,350. Most mortgage suppliers would look to a loan to income ratio of about 3.5 or 4.

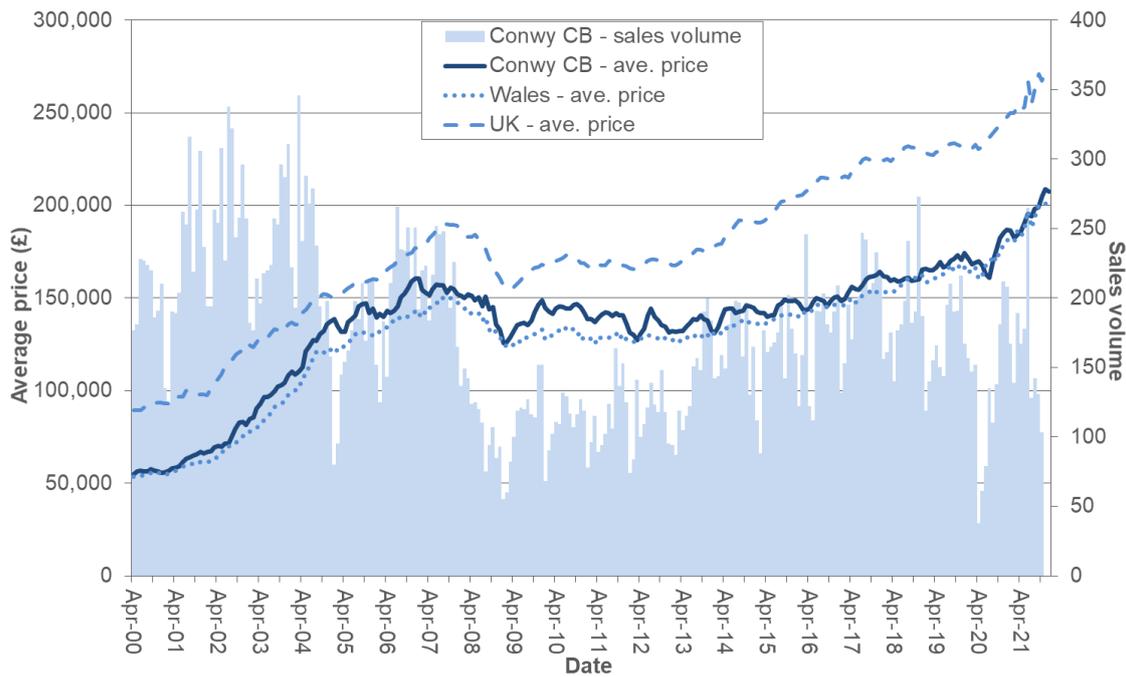
Compared to February 2020 (the last date before the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic started to affect the housing market) Conwy CB house prices have increased by 23.3% (UK average = 19.1%).

The initial impact of Covid-19 on the housing market was to depress the number and type of sales. Economic and social activity was restricted, and people entered a period of uncertainty that is likely to have impacted on decisions about big life changes like moving house. The noticeable dip in house prices in early 2020 (see chart 5.1) is more an effect of the historically low number of house sales that were completed in Spring 2020 rather than a true reflection of house prices overall. April 2020 numbers were only a quarter of those for February 2020.

As restrictions were lifted, there was a rapid increase in the number of sales, which led to the supply of available housing sale outstripping demand, pushing prices upward. As well as the market playing ‘catch-up’ for the months of low activity it is likely that lockdown led people to reassess their housing requirements – both in terms of size and location – and this added to the supply-demand problem, particularly in an attractive area like Conwy County Borough. At the same time, to help the property market recover, Westminster government introduced a time-limited Stamp Duty holiday, and this also increased demand until it came to an end in summer 2021 (the number of sales completed in June 2021 was the highest since 2004). Numbers have since fallen, but anecdotal evidence suggests there is still a significant supply-demand squeeze on the housing market.

Chart 5.1: house price and sales volume April 2000-December 2021

Source: UK house price index,



House prices in Conwy CB are 52.7% or more than 1.5 times higher than they were 10 years ago (UK = 64.5% or 1.6 times higher).

Looking longer term the current average house price in Conwy County Borough is more than 3.8 times what it was in April 2000 (which is around the time of the start of the last big housing boom). By comparison, average full-time wages have not risen by nearly so much and are only about 1.9 times what they were in 2000. The

relatively high cost of buying a home in the area has been an issue of concern for a long time.

Annual house price analysis

Though it is the most up-to-date house price data available to us, the UK house price index does not allow detailed analysis of trends, and is subject to fluctuations as it is based on a relatively small dataset which is updated monthly.

This section of the report looks at the data in a different way, using unit level transaction data which is available from the Land Registry, and collects data for the whole year. The median measure of average which is used here is more robust than the mean measure used in the UK index, and if we look at this on an annual rather than month-by-month basis we can also smooth out the fluctuations caused by the low number of monthly transactions and the seasonality of the housing market.

Table 5.2: changes in house prices by accommodation type

Source: Land Registry price paid data

	2020	Change since last year		Change since 2010	
		No.	%	No.	%
Median house price					
All	£175,000	£10,000	6.1%	£25,750	17.3%
Detached	£249,000	£19,000	8.3%	£49,025	24.5%
Flat	£115,000	-£5,000	-4.2%	-£3,000	-2.5%
Semi	£160,000	£5,750	3.7%	£25,000	18.5%
Terraced	£136,000	£7,025	5.4%	£22,000	19.3%
New build	£227,473	£32,473	16.7%	£47,473	26.4%
Resale	£171,000	£11,000	6.9%	£25,000	17.1%
Lower quartile house price					
All	£131,000	£5,000	4.0%	£21,000	19.1%
Detached	£190,000	£10,000	5.6%	£34,000	21.8%
Flat	£77,625	£1,125	1.5%	-£8,375	-9.7%
Semi	£137,500	£7,500	5.8%	£25,000	22.2%
Terraced	£107,500	£1,500	1.4%	£16,500	18.1%
New build	£185,000	£10,000	5.7%	£53,000	40.2%
Resale	£130,000	£5,000	4.0%	£20,000	18.2%

Half of all house sales were at or below the median (average) point. One quarter (25%) of all house sales were at or below the lower quartile point. Lower quartile house prices are sometimes used to measure what is affordable within the open market.

The median house price for Conwy County Borough was £175,000 in 2020, an increase of 6.1% since the previous year. The lower quartile house price was £131,000, an increase of 4.0% since the previous year. Both median and lower quartile house prices show that detached properties are the most expensive property type. The cheapest properties are flats.

The lowest priced home sold in 2020 was a flat in central Colwyn Bay which sold for £30,000 – one of several in a large property that was recently converted to a number of smaller units. Such a low price suggests it was either in need of significant refurbishment, or that it was sold at a very reduced price, perhaps as part of an inheritance or divorce settlement. The most expensive was a detached property in the countryside above Colwyn Bay which sold for 46 times that at £1,385,000. This was 7.9 times the median average price and 49 times the median household income.

Though overall houseprices are up 17.3% on 10 years ago, there has been much lower growth levels for some types of property in particular for flats, where the slower growth rates may be partly due to a shift away from the national trend for building more expensive luxury apartments. In 2010 the housing market was still feeling the impact of the 2007/08 global economic crash, and prices and sales volume were depressed compared to those seen in the mid-noughties.

Table 5.3: number of registered sales by accommodation type

Source: Land Registry price paid data

	2020	Change since last year		Change since 2010	
		No.	%	No.	%
All	1,553	-557	-26.4%	224	16.9%
Detached	599	-152	-20.2%	95	18.8%
Flat	214	-87	-28.9%	1	0.5%
Semi	455	-229	-33.5%	58	14.6%
Terraced	285	-89	-23.8%	70	32.6%
New build	64	-83	-56.5%	-53	-45.3%
Resale	1,489	-474	-24.1%	277	22.9%

Only those new build properties which are registered as change of land ownership are included, so some self-built properties will be excluded.

Not all house sales are recorded through the Land Registry and some transactions may see a delay in registration, but it is the most complete register of house prices available in the UK.

There was a decrease in the volume of house sales compared to the previous year for all housing types, caused primarily by the restrictions on movement and housing market activity as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, figures show significant increases since 2010. Sales of detached properties were the least affected by the slump in the latest year.

Data for this indicator is not yet likely to show the full impacts on the economy of Covid-19 and Brexit.

Note: this data does not cover the same time period as the data in the 'UK house price index' section.

Affordability of buying a home

This section looks at the affordability of properties at median and lower quartile house prices when compared to median income.

A house price to household income ratio (or multiplier) gives some indication of how affordable housing is in the area for first time buyers.

Typically a ratio of 3 to 4 times income is needed to be able to afford a mortgage. In 2020 for Conwy CB even if a buyer has managed to save the £35,000 needed to provide a 20% deposit, housing at the median price is out of the reach of people with average household income, with a ratio of 4.75.

Table 5.4: house price to median household income ratio (2020)

Source: CACI PayCheck data; Land Registry price paid data

	Conwy County Borough	North Wales	Wales
Median house price	£175,000	£165,000	£165,000
Lower quartile house price	£131,000	£123,000	£117,000
Median household income	£29,450	£29,000	£29,000
Ratios at full price			
Median house price	5.94	5.69	5.69
Lower quartile house price	4.44	4.24	4.03
Ratios with 10% deposit			
Median house price	5.34	5.12	5.12
Size of deposit needed	£17,500	£16,500	£16,500
Lower quartile house price	4.00	3.82	3.63
Size of deposit needed	£13,100	£12,300	£11,700
Ratios with 20% deposit			
Median house price	4.75	4.56	4.55
Size of deposit needed	£35,000	£33,000	£33,000
Lower quartile house price	3.56	3.40	3.23
Size of deposit needed	£26,200	£24,600	£23,400

Though it is seemingly more affordable, housing in the lower quartile range is mostly smaller properties (for example one bedroomed properties and/or converted flats) or those which need a lot of refurbishment. In Conwy CB properties in the lower price range also include a significant number of retirement apartments, which have restrictions about who can buy them¹³. We cannot assume that these cheaper properties provide suitable accommodation for all first time buyers.

¹³ Analysis of properties for sale on Rightmove website (May 2017) showed that 9% of all properties with an asking price of £125,000 or less were retirement apartments.

This analysis has just looked at the situation for households with median income. Obviously individuals and households who have income that falls below this level of income find it even harder to buy a home, in terms of both being eligible for a mortgage based on their income, and saving for a deposit. This will apply to those who are already homeowners but may not be able to move to bigger or more appropriate accommodation as their circumstances change as well as those who wish to enter the housing market for the first time.

Relative to household incomes, Conwy County Borough is a more expensive place to buy a house than across the North Wales region and Wales as a whole.

Data for this indicator is not yet likely to show the full impacts on the economy of Covid-19 and Brexit.

Note: this data does not cover the same time period as the data in the 'UK house price index' section.

House building activity

Note: this indicator has not been updated since the December 2019 bulletin, as the annual data has not updated in 2020 or 2021.

Table 5.5: house building activity – progress of units with planning permission or local plan allocation

Source: Joint housing land availability study, Planning Policy team, CCBC/WG/Planning Inspectorate & SNPA/WG/Planning Inspectorate

Year	Completions	Under construction	Not yet started
2018/19	310	379	1,260
2017/18	322	316	1,571
2016/17	237	391	985
2015/16	187	413	980
2014/15	192	291	518
2013/14	303	353	906
2012/13	191	435	1,164
2011/12	226	194	1,730
2010/11	235	193	2,300
2009/10	222	249	2,531
2008/09	344	319	2,667
2007/08	427	331	2,671
2006/07	326	362	2,140
2005/06	392	305	1,909
2004/05	424	339	1,887
2003/04	503	342	1,930

The housing stock increases year-on-year as new houses and flats are built. The table below shows recent house building activity in the County Borough.

Between April 2009 and March 2019 the average completion rate for new dwellings and conversions has been around 243 units per year, and was 310 in 2018/19.

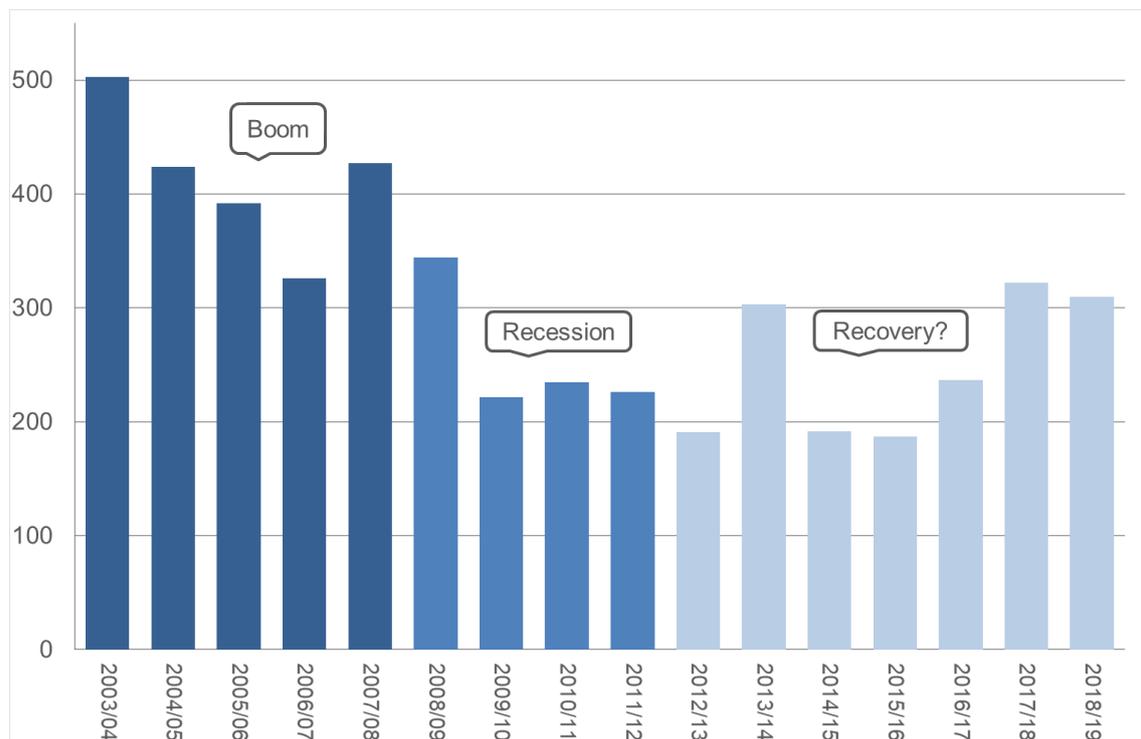
Since the economic downturn in 2007/08 there has been a general downward trend in the number of new dwellings which are built annually within the County Borough.

In 2013/14 there was a significant rise in house-building activity, in part due to the completion of a number of large developments by registered social landlords. However, figures for most other years since 2008/09 were particularly low, and may not have kept pace with demand.

The number of units which are 'not yet started' has fallen significantly since 2010/11. This is due to a combination of fewer sites being submitted for planning permission, and sites with existing permissions expiring as they have not been built on during the 5 year period of their permission. Both of these reasons are by-products of the slow-down in the construction industry due to the economic down-turn.

Chart 5.3: new home building in Conwy County Borough

Source: joint housing land availability study, Strategic Planning Policy team, CCBC/WG/Planning Inspectorate & SNPA/WG/Planning Inspectorate



For each year since April 2007 (the start date for the current local development plan) the provision of new dwellings has fallen below the annual figure needed to reach the identified requirement of 6,800 additional dwellings by 2022. In the 12 years to April 2019 only 3,196 additional dwellings have been provided – if the requirement was shared equally across that period, that figure should be closer to 5,440. That is a shortfall of about -2,240 or -41% below target.

Section 6: Welfare benefits, income and insolvency

Benefits claimants

Table 6.1: benefit claimants by client group and benefit type (May 2021)

Source: DWP benefit statistics, (Stat-Xplore)

	Conwy CB		Wales	Great Britain	Last quarter	Last year	Feb 2020 (pre-pandemic)	5 years ago
	No.	%	%	%				
Children (aged 0-15)								
Disability Living Allowance (DLA)	1,040	5.5%	4.7%	4.5%	5.6%	5.6%	5.4%	4.3%
Working age (aged 16-66)								
Universal Credit	10,170	14.6%	13.9%	14.1%	14.6%	13.6%	7.7%	1.2%
Job Seekers Allowance (JSA)	345	0.5%	0.4%	0.4%	0.7%	0.9%	0.6%	1.4%
Employment & Support Allowance (ESA)*	4,155	6.0%	6.3%	4.3%	6.0%	6.3%	6.4%	8.1%
Disability Living Allowance (DLA)	210	0.3%	0.2%	0.6%	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%	3.8%
Personal Independence Payments (PIP)	5,425	7.8%	8.1%	5.5%	7.6%	7.5%	7.2%	4.0%
Carer's Allowance	2,120	3.0%	3.1%	2.4%	3.1%	3.0%	3.0%	2.8%
Pensioners (aged 67+)								
State Pension	29,420							
Pension Credit	3,900	13.1%	14.6%	13.2%	13.3%	13.7%	14.1%	16.9%
Attendance Allowance	5,100	17.2%	16.5%	13.8%	17.2%	17.5%	18.0%	17.2%
Disability Living Allowance (DLA)	1,625	5.5%	8.6%	5.2%	5.5%	5.9%	6.2%	8.9%
Personal Independence Payments (PIP)	1,190	4.0%	5.6%	3.6%	3.9%	3.6%	3.6%	1.6%
Carer's Allowance	1,100	3.7%	4.1%	2.9%	3.7%	3.9%	4.1%	4.0%

* includes Incapacity Benefit

Percentage is of all in that age group

There is a discontinuity in the benefits data, as Universal Credit is rolled out and starts to replace older awards systems.

Conwy CB has a high incidence of claimants for most benefits related to disability and/or ill-health, when compared to the GB average (PIP/DLA, attendance allowance, carers allowance and the out-of-work incapacity benefits such as ESA).

Looking specifically at benefits for people in the working age client group, in May 2021 there were 6,620 claimants through the older DWP system, 10,170 Universal Credit (UC) claimants and 5,630 claiming DLA or PIP – a total of 22,425 benefit claimants of working age. There was a decrease compared to the previous quarter (February 2021) of about -185 claimants.

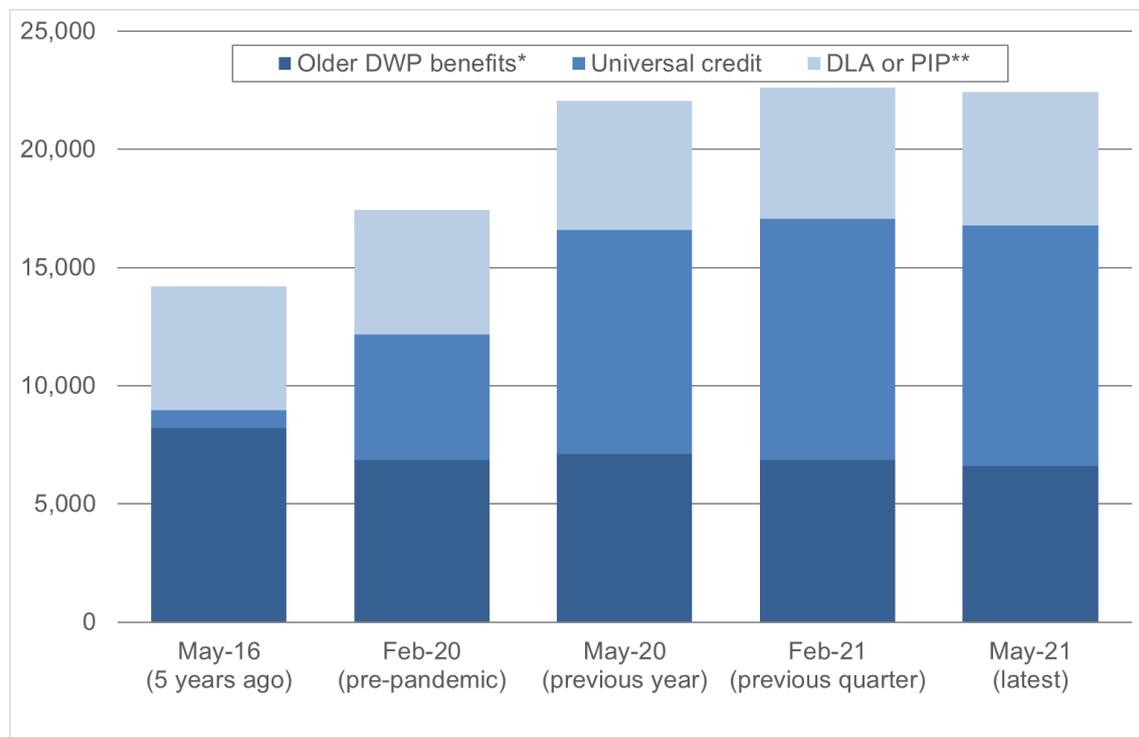
There was a significant and sudden increase in the number of Universal Credit claimants after the onset of the pandemic, with the peak count in June 2020 being almost double that seen in February 2020. The number of claimants has since fallen considerably, but in May 2021 was still much higher than in February 2020.

Between February 2020 – the date closest to the start of the Covid-19 pandemic – and May 2021 the proportion of the population aged 16-66 who were claiming benefits increased by 6.9 percentage points to 32.2%. Increases between 2016 figures and pre-pandemic 2020 were in part due to the broader range of benefits that are included within Universal Credit compared to older definitions of working age benefits.

Over the past 20 years, the overall rate of working age benefit claimants has generally remained 0.5-2 points below the all-Wales average, and 3-5 points above the GB figure.

Chart 6.1: working age client group benefit claimants

Sources: DWP benefit statistics, (Stat-Xplore)



* Job Seekers Allowance (JSA), Employment & Support Allowance (ESA), Carer's Allowance.

** Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

The introduction of the Universal Credit (UC) benefit system was rolled out to Conwy CB in mid-2015, and most new claimants are registered with this system. Existing claimants are still counted under the old Department of Works and Pensions system (DWP), which currently records the vast majority of benefit claimants in the area. It is not possible to undertake detailed analysis of the UC figures by type of benefit as it is with the pre-existing DWP system, and the eligibility criteria are different, so there is some discontinuity between the figures over time. Some types of benefit have a faster turn-around of claimants – for example Job Seekers Allowance – and the DWP data will appear to reduce quite rapidly as the churn of new claimants for this type of benefit are picked up by the new UC system instead. Other types of claimant – those covered by the old DWP categories ‘carers allowance’ or ‘incapacity benefit’ for example – are likely to see much slower switchover to UC benefits.

People claiming Disability Living Allowance (DLA) benefits are also affected by the replacement of this benefit with the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) benefit. This will primarily affect people of working age as there is a programme to reassess and shift all clients in this age group to the replacement benefit. Currently people over pension age¹⁴ and children are less impacted by this change.

Because of this, the analysis in this section should be treated with caution, as it may not provide a full picture of patterns in benefit claimant statistics. We hope to improve the coverage of the UC data as the system expands and improves.

Earnings (wages)

Data for median earnings by workplace are for employee jobs based within Conwy County Borough.

The data we have comes from a small sample and so is quite volatile, but it suggests that wage levels for jobs in Conwy CB are significantly below levels for Great Britain as a whole. The 2021 median gross weekly wage (including overtime and bonuses) for all full-time employees in Conwy CB was £524. This was 93% of the Welsh average and only 85% of the British average.

Table 6.2: gross weekly pay – median earnings by workplace (2021)

Source: Annual survey of hours and earnings (NOMIS)

	Conwy CB	Wales	Great Britain
Full-time workers	£523.70	£562.80	£612.80
Male full-time workers	£519.20	£583.70	£654.30
Female full-time workers	£531.80	£519.80	£558.10

Wage deflation is also an issue. As well as the disparity between Conwy CB and national wage levels, the buying power of wages has shrunk in recent years. At a UK level CPIH and RPI inflation is currently higher than wage inflation. When allowing for

¹⁴ New claimants of disability benefits who are over pension age will normally be awarded Attendance Allowance. However, people who originally received disability related benefits before they reached pension age may still receive DLA or PIP.

inflation national average weekly wages in November 2021 were at the equivalent of only 99% of November 2020 weekly wages. (Average weekly earnings time series, ONS).

Household income

Table 6.3: annual household income (2021)

Source: CACI PayCheck data

	Conwy CB	Wales	Great Britain
Median income	£28,300	£27,850	£32,750
Lower quartile income	£16,350	£15,900	£18,150
% households with income below 60% of GB median	32.9%	34.0%	28.0%

Half of all households have an income at or below the median (average) point. One quarter (25%) of all households have an annual income at or below the lower quartile point. The most commonly used threshold of relative low income is a household income that is 60% or less of the average (median) British household income in that year.

For all of these measures, household income levels in Conwy County Borough are significantly below those for Great Britain as a whole.

The annual average (median) household income rose by about £3,000 between 2011 and 2021 to £28,300, which was an increase across the period of 11.9%. Household incomes also rose at GB level, though by a greater amount and a greater percentage – by 12.9% or £3,750. Overall CPIH inflation increase by about 30% in the same period, meaning household incomes have not kept pace with increases in the cost of living.

In the same period the households with lowest incomes in the County Borough saw much lower levels of growth – lower quartile household income rose by only £1,800 to just £16,350 and the proportion of households with income falling below 60% of the median for Great Britain increased. Nationally, the income for these low-income households also rose more slowly than for higher income households.

Measures of household income include wages, welfare support, investments, pensions and other income for all household members.

This indicator is based on modelled data and is not yet likely to show the impacts on the economy of Covid-19 and Brexit.

Gross disposable household income

Gross disposable household income (income after taxes, pensions and property ownership costs are deducted) gives an indication of the amount of money that is available to be consumed or saved by households. It is not a direct measure of

household income however. The 'household' label is used to separate it from income for businesses. It includes the income of not for profit institutions serving households such as universities and charities.

Table 6.4: gross disposable household income (2019)

Source: UK national accounts (Blue Book), ONS

	Conwy CB	Wales	UK
£ per head	£18,189	£17,263	£21,433
Index (UK = 100)	84.9	80.5	-
Total (£ million)	£2,132	£54,427	£1,431,678

Per head of population, the gross disposable household income (GDHI) for Conwy CB was only 84.9% of the UK average. Between 2018 and 2019 the total money available for Conwy CB rose by about £34 million overall, which was an increase per person of about £285.

Data for this indicator does not yet show the impacts on the economy of Covid-19 and Brexit.

Individual insolvencies

In 2020, there were 278 individual insolvency cases in Conwy County Borough. Though this was a small increase on the previous year (up three), numbers have been on an upward trend since 2016.

Table 6.5: new insolvency cases (rates per 10,000 adult population)

Source: the Insolvency service

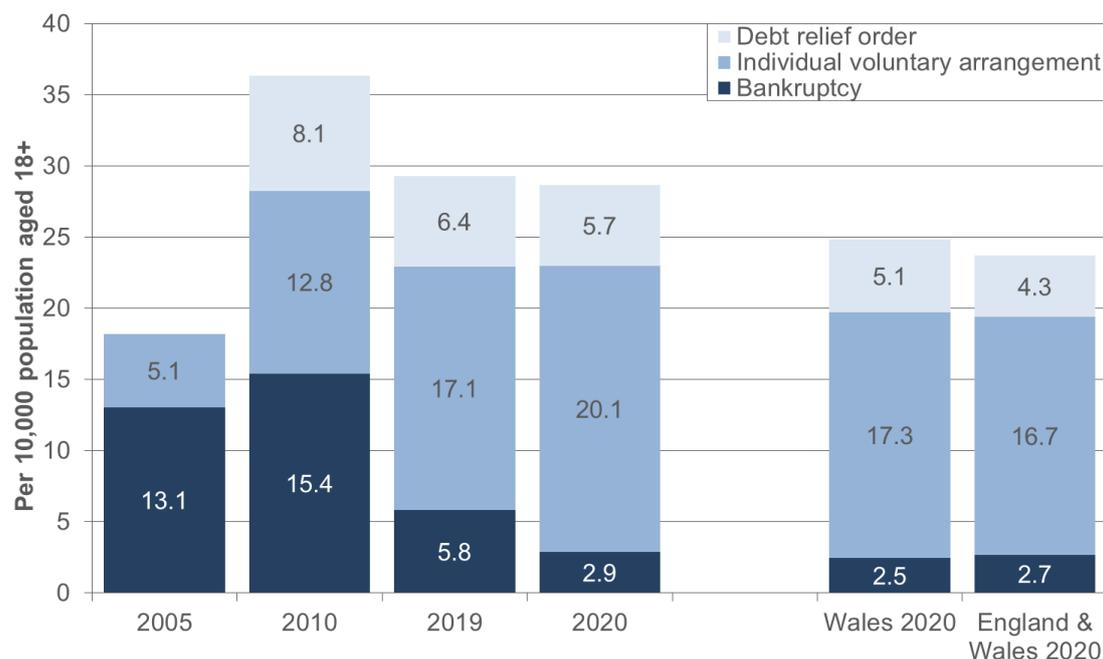
	Conwy CB		Wales	England & Wales
	Number	Rate	Rate	Rate
2020 total	278	28.7	24.8	23.7
Bankruptcy	28	2.9	2.5	2.7
Individual voluntary arrangement	195	20.1	17.3	16.7
Debt relief order	55	5.7	5.1	4.3
2019 total (1 year)	281	29.3	28.1	26.1
2015 total (5 year)	166	17.5	18.9	17.6
2010 total (10 year)	337	36.4	32.6	30.7
2005 total (15 year)	163	18.2	11.8	16.2

After a period of being comparable to national rates, Conwy CB's individual insolvency rate of 28.7 cases per 10,000 adults (aged 18+) is now noticeably higher than the England & Wales average. The insolvency rate is more than 1.5 times what it was 15 years ago. Conwy CB has the eighth highest insolvency rate in Wales.

The rate for bankruptcies fell significantly in 2016 and has been low in recent years. This was mainly due to changes in legislation for this category of insolvency which raised the minimum debt level from £750 to £5,000.

Chart 6.2: comparative insolvency rates (per 10,000 adult population)

Source: the Insolvency service



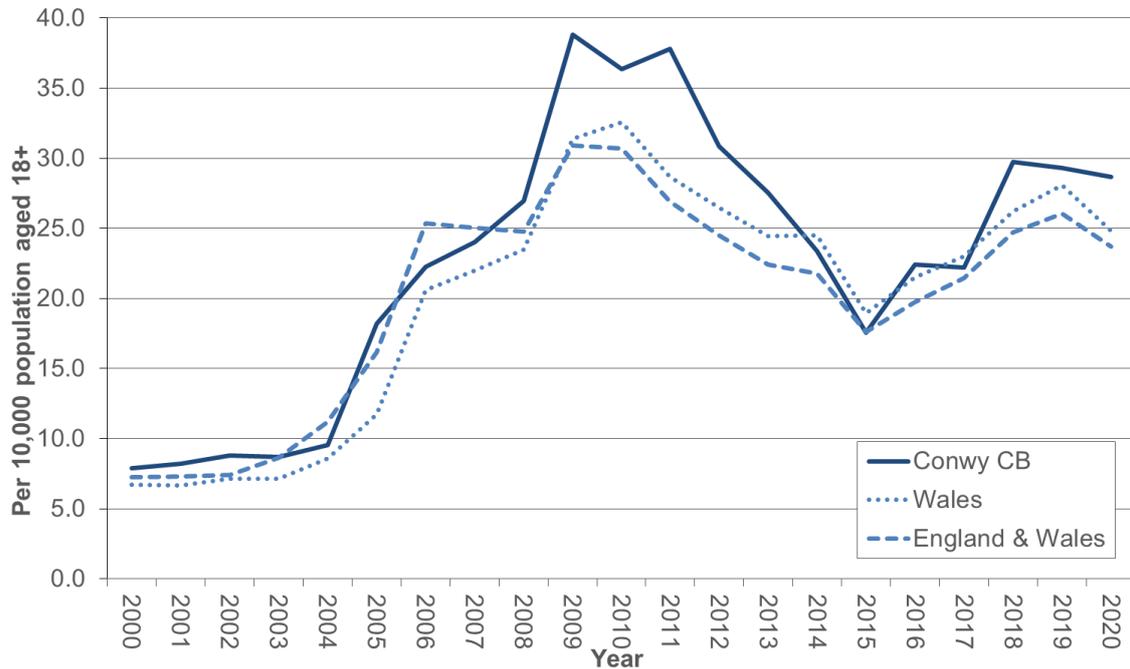
The rate of total individual insolvencies in Conwy County Borough started to rise in 2004, predating the 2007/08 economic downturn. Rates continued to rise, peaking at 38.9 in 2009. From 2010 to 2015 rates followed a slow downward trend, but have started to rise again since 2016. Though overall rates in Conwy County Borough are generally higher, the trend follows the national picture.

Looking at national figures, in 2020 the individual insolvency rate was highest in the 35-44 age group, as it has been for each year since 2007. The insolvency rate was higher among females than males in all age groups aged 18-64, while males had higher insolvency rates for the 65+ age group. Despite women overall having a higher rate in the last few years, historically men are more likely to be declared insolvent. This change coincided with a decline in the number of bankruptcies (where males have a higher rate of insolvency) and the introduction and growth in the number of debt relief orders (where the rate for women is higher).

Data for this indicator is not yet likely to show the impacts on the economy of Covid-19 and Brexit.

Chart 6.3: insolvency rates per 10,000 adult population

Source: the Insolvency service



Definitions

Bankruptcy – a form of debt relief available for anyone who is unable to pay the debts they owe. Any assets owned are sold and the proceeds distributed to creditors.

Individual voluntary arrangements – a voluntary means of repaying creditors some or all of what they are owed. Once approved by the majority of creditors, the arrangement is binding on all.

Debt relief order (DRO) – a form of debt relief available to those who owe £15,000 or less and have little by way of assets or income. There is no distribution to creditors, and discharge from debts takes place 12 months after the DRO is granted.

Appendix 1 – summary economic data for comparative areas

Sources: ONS mid year population estimates; ONS business register and employment survey, (NOMIS)

	County Borough	North West Wales	North East Wales	North Wales	Wales	Great Britain
Working age population (mid 2020)						
All people aged 16-64	66,400	237,900	177,150	415,000	1,938,250	40,665,282
As % total population	56.2%	58.0%	60.5%	59.0%	61.2%	62.4%
Employment by industry (2020)						
Total jobs	46,000	171,500	136,000	307,000	1,331,000	30,547,000
Agriculture	5.9%	7.0%	1.7%	4.7%	3.7%	1.6%
Production	4.3%	7.3%	24.7%	14.9%	12.2%	9.0%
Construction	6.5%	6.4%	5.5%	6.0%	5.6%	4.9%
Services	83.3%	79.3%	68.1%	74.3%	78.5%	84.5%
Wholesale & retail	11.6%	11.1%	10.5%	10.7%	11.2%	13.0%
Accommodation & food services	16.2%	14.0%	5.5%	10.2%	8.3%	7.1%
Public admin, education & health	30.6%	32.0%	23.9%	28.4%	31.2%	26.3%
Other services	24.9%	22.2%	28.1%	24.9%	27.8%	38.1%
Employees	91.3%	91.3%	96.7%	93.6%	94.6%	96.6%
Full-time employees	52.2%	56.0%	69.1%	61.7%	62.8%	65.6%
Part-time employees	39.1%	35.3%	27.6%	31.9%	31.8%	31.0%
Working proprietors	8.7%	8.7%	3.3%	6.4%	5.4%	3.4%

* except for the Wales and GB totals, these figures exclude farm agriculture (SIC subclass 01000). Employment figures are for employees plus working proprietors

North West Wales = Anglesey, Gwynedd, Conwy CB, Denbighshire. North East Wales = Flintshire and Wrexham

Appendix 1 – summary economic data for comparative areas (cont.)

Sources: ONS annual population survey, (NOMIS); ONS claimant count, (NOMIS)

	County Borough	North West Wales	North East Wales	North Wales	Wales	Great Britain
Economic activity (Oct 2020-Sep 2021)						
Total population aged 16-64	66,400	237,900	177,150	415,000	1,938,250	40,665,282
Economically active	75.6%	75.4%	78.0%	76.6%	76.0%	78.5%
In employment	73.7%	72.3%	75.4%	73.7%	72.8%	74.6%
Employees	62.2%	60.5%	66.4%	63.0%	63.5%	65.0%
Self employed	10.9%	11.3%	7.9%	9.8%	8.8%	9.5%
Economically inactive	24.4%	24.6%	22.0%	23.4%	24.0%	21.5%
% inactive wanting a job	11.4%	15.3%	20.6%	17.5%	18.8%	19.8%
% inactive not wanting a job	88.6%	84.7%	79.4%	82.5%	81.2%	80.2%
Unemployment (Dec 2021)						
Claimant count - number	2,970	9,640	6,820	16,460	77,860	1,806,865
Claimant count - rate	4.5	4.1	3.8	4.0	4.0	4.4
Rate last quarter (Nov 2018)	4.6	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.4	4.9
Rate last year (Feb 2018)	6.5	5.9	5.4	5.7	5.7	6.2
Rate 5 years ago (Feb 2014)	2.2	2.2	1.7	2.0	2.1	1.8
Rate 10 years ago (Feb 2009)	3.9	3.9	3.5	3.7	4.0	3.8
Aged under 25 (% all claimants)	17.2%	17.9%	17.2%	17.6%	18.6%	16.2%
Aged 50 and over (% all claimants)	30.3%	27.7%	23.2%	25.9%	23.5%	24.6%
Qualifications - aged 16-64 (2020)*						
No qualifications	8.4	7.5	9.0	8.2	7.7	6.4
NVQ level 4 and above	36.1	37.0	32.5	35.0	38.5	43.1

* Definition and data source differs from that in main report

North West Wales = Anglesey, Gwynedd, Conwy CB, Denbighshire. North East Wales = Flintshire and Wrexham

Appendix 1 – summary economic data for comparative areas (cont.)

Source: ONS interdepartmental business register

	County Borough	North West Wales	North East Wales	North Wales	Wales	Great Britain
Business structure 2021						
Total enterprises	4,655	16,340	9,780	26,120	107,085	2,688,450
Industry						
Agriculture	14.8%	19.0%	7.2%	14.6%	12.8%	4.6%
Production	5.6%	5.6%	7.9%	6.5%	6.4%	5.6%
Construction	12.2%	12.5%	13.8%	13.0%	12.9%	13.0%
Services	67.3%	62.9%	71.1%	66.0%	67.9%	76.9%
Wholesale & retail	13.6%	13.1%	15.7%	14.1%	14.4%	14.7%
Accommodation & food services	12.2%	11.6%	5.9%	9.5%	8.6%	6.1%
Public admin, education & health	6.3%	6.4%	5.9%	6.2%	5.8%	5.7%
Other services	35.1%	31.9%	43.5%	36.2%	39.1%	50.4%
Size of enterprise (no. employees)						
0 - 4 employees	76.9%	76.8%	77.1%	77.0%	77.3%	78.6%
5 - 19 employees	18.8%	18.8%	17.5%	18.3%	18.0%	16.6%
20 - 99 employees	3.8%	3.9%	4.4%	4.1%	3.9%	3.9%
100 + employees	0.5%	0.5%	0.9%	0.7%	0.8%	0.9%
Annual turnover						
£0 - 49,000	17.1%	21.1%	17.6%	19.8%	19.7%	15.4%
£50,000 - £99,000	26.5%	23.4%	21.1%	22.5%	22.5%	22.4%
£100,000 - £249,000	30.8%	29.2%	31.6%	30.1%	30.3%	32.6%
£250,000 - £999,000	19.5%	19.6%	20.2%	19.9%	19.8%	20.2%
£1m +	6.0%	6.6%	9.5%	7.7%	7.8%	9.5%

Appendix 1 – summary economic data for comparative areas (cont.)

Sources: ONS business demography; Land Registry price paid data; CACI PayCheck data; DWP benefit statistics, Stat-Xplore

	County Borough	North West Wales	North East Wales	North Wales	Wales	Great Britain
Business demographics (2020)						
Total active enterprises	4,300	14,475	10,060	24,535	104,445	2,938,870
per 10,000 population aged 16-64	648	608	568	591	539	723
percentage change since previous year	4.8%	1.1%	1.6%	1.3%	0.7%	0.4%
Average house prices (2020)						
Median annual house price	£175,000	£167,500	£160,000	£165,000	£165,000	-
Lower quartile annual house price	£131,000	£125,000	£120,000	£123,000	£117,000	-
Ratio income:houseprice (median)	5.9	5.9	5.3	5.7	5.7	-
Ratio income:houseprice (lower quartile)	7.6	7.6	7.0	7.4	7.0	-
Household income (2021)						
Median income	£28,300	£27,350	£28,600	£27,850	£27,850	£32,750
Lower quartile income	£16,350	£15,800	£16,200	£16,100	£15,900	£18,150
% households with income below 60% of GB median	32.9%	34.5%	33.0%	33.9%	34.0%	28.0%
Benefits claimants (May 2021)*						
Total working age residents claiming state benefits	22,420	74,640	54,410	129,050	641,960	11,478,600
DLA and PIP** - as % all aged 16-64	8.1%	7.5%	7.3%	7.4%	8.3%	6.1%
Universal credit - as % all aged 16-64	14.6%	13.5%	14.5%	13.9%	13.9%	14.1%
Older DWP benefits*** - as % all aged 16-64	9.5%	9.0%	7.8%	8.5%	9.7%	7.1%

* There is a discontinuity in the benefits data, as Universal Credit is rolled out and starts to replace older awards systems.

** Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and Personal Independence Payments (PIP) *** Job Seekers Allowance (JSA), Employment & Support Allowance (ESA), Carer's Allowance.

North West Wales = Anglesey, Gwynedd, Conwy CB, Denbighshire. North East Wales = Flintshire and Wrexham

Appendix 2 – summary economic data for strategic sub areas

Sources: ONS mid-year population estimates; ONS business register and employment survey, (NOMIS); ONS claimant count, (NOMIS)

	West	North	Central	East	South	County Borough
Working age population (mid 2020)						
All people aged 16-64	16,650	11,550	18,750	12,000	7,450	66,400
As % total population	57.6%	56.0%	56.4%	53.3%	57.7%	56.2%
Employment by industry (2020)*						
Total jobs	9,365	10,815	12,455	6,405	4,560	46,000
Agriculture	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%	0.5%	2.0%	5.9%
Production	5.2%	1.5%	3.4%	8.7%	7.8%	4.3%
Construction	5.7%	2.8%	8.8%	8.1%	11.7%	6.5%
Services	88.9%	95.7%	87.6%	82.7%	78.5%	83.3%
Full-time employees	57.7%	46.2%	54.2%	54.6%	50.0%	52.2%
Part-time employees	36.6%	46.2%	39.0%	36.9%	36.7%	39.1%
Working proprietors	5.7%	7.5%	6.8%	8.5%	13.3%	8.7%
Unemployment (Dec 2021)						
Claimant count - number	555	605	1,045	580	170	2,970
Claimant count - rate	3.4	5.2	5.6	4.8	2.4	4.5
Rate last quarter (Aug 2018)	3.3	5.2	5.8	4.9	2.6	4.6
Rate last year (Nov 2018)	5.2	7.8	7.6	6.9	4.1	6.5
Rate 5 years ago (Nov 2014)	1.7	2.6	2.7	2.1	0.9	2.2
Rate 10 years ago (Nov 2009)	3.3	4.5	4.8	4.5	2.0	3.9

* except for the Conwy CB totals, these figures exclude farm agriculture (SIC subclass 01000). Employment figures are for employees plus working proprietors

Appendix 2 – summary economic data for strategic sub areas (cont.)

Sources: Land Registry price paid data; CACI PayCheck data; DWP benefit statistics, Stat-Xplore

	West	North	Central	East	South	County Borough
Average house prices (2020)						
Median annual house price	£187,000	£185,000	£169,950	£155,250	£170,000	£175,000
Lower quartile annual house price	£150,000	£136,250	£122,500	£127,125	£133,000	£131,000
Ratio income:houseprice (median)	5.8	6.6	5.8	5.6	5.6	5.9
Ratio income:houseprice (lower quartile)	7.9	8.3	7.3	7.8	7.5	7.6
Household income (2021)						
Median income	£30,550	£27,200	£27,900	£26,700	£28,850	£28,300
Lower quartile income	£17,850	£15,650	£15,950	£15,650	£16,650	£16,350
% households with income below 60% of GB median	29.0%	34.8%	33.9%	35.2%	32.0%	32.9%
Benefits claimants (May 2021)*						
Total working age residents claiming state benefits	4,356	4,176	7,251	4,923	1,699	22,424
DLA and PIP** - as % all aged 16-66	6.2%	8.0%	9.3%	10.4%	5.4%	8.1%
Universal credit - as % all aged 16-66	11.5%	16.9%	16.7%	16.4%	10.0%	14.6%
Older DWP benefits*** - as % all aged 16-66	7.3%	9.5%	11.0%	11.9%	6.4%	9.5%

* There is a discontinuity in the benefits data, as Universal Credit is rolled out and starts to replace older awards systems.

** Job Seekers Allowance (JSA), Employment & Support Allowance (ESA), Carer's Allowance

Appendix 3.1 – quarterly claimant count unemployment figures for wards (electoral divisions): ranked by rate

Source: ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [from Nomis on 18 January 2022]

	December 2021		September 2021		June 2021		March 2021	
Glyn	275	11.0	275	10.9	300	11.9		12.7
Abergele Pensarn	115	8.9	130	10.0	140	11.0	170	13.3
Llysfaen	135	7.9	130	7.6	155	8.9	165	9.6
Gogarth	140	7.1	140	6.9	180	9.0	200	10.0
Towyn	80	6.5	80	6.5	80	6.7	115	9.4
Tudno	190	6.3	210	6.9	240	8.0	290	9.6
Mostyn	140	6.1	120	5.3	160	7.1	180	8.0
Pentre Mawr	105	5.9	100	5.8	140	8.2	150	8.8
Colwyn	140	5.8	150	6.1	180	7.4	205	8.4
Pant-yr-afon/Penmaenan	95	5.8	100	6.2	125	7.5	140	8.4
Mochdre	65	5.6	60	5.2	75	6.3	75	6.5
Eirias	85	4.9	90	4.9	125	6.9	140	7.8
Kinmel Bay	160	4.8	175	5.3	215	6.4	255	7.7
Craig-y-Don	80	4.7	80	4.8	105	6.2	130	7.8
Conwy County Borough	2,970	4.5	3,030	4.6	3,655	5.5	4,330	6.5
Pensarn	85	4.5	70	3.9	90	4.8	110	5.9
Rhiw	155	4.3	170	4.8	200	5.6	240	6.8
Crwst	50	4.2	40	3.7	50	4.2	55	4.8
Llandrillo yn Rhos	145	3.9	160	4.3	185	5.0	245	6.6
Bryn	45	3.7	40	3.6	45	3.9	55	4.9
Pandy	40	3.7	45	4.1	40	3.8	60	5.4
Gele	80	3.3	65	2.7	90	3.7	110	4.7
Llanddulas	30	3.3	35	3.8	45	4.9	50	5.6
Betws-y-Coed	20	3.2	25	3.6	30	4.1	40	5.5
Conwy	90	3.1	90	3.0	110	3.8	135	4.6
Gower	20	3.1	25	3.8	25	4.0	30	4.7
Trefriw	25	3.1	25	3.6	35	4.7	45	5.8
Betws yn Rhos	35	2.9	45	3.5	50	4.0	60	4.7
Capelulo	20	2.8	25	3.0	35	4.5	30	4.1
Deganwy	70	2.7	65	2.5	80	3.3	85	3.5
Marl	75	2.7	75	2.7	85	3.1	120	4.5
Caerhun	25	2.4	30	2.5	45	3.9	50	4.2
Llansanffraid	30	2.4	35	2.7	40	3.3	55	4.4
Penrhyn	55	2.2	55	2.1	60	2.4	75	2.9
Llansannan	25	2.0	20	1.7	25	2.2	35	2.8
Llangernyw	10	1.5	15	2.0	20	2.3	25	3.3
Uwchaled	15	1.5	10	1.2	15	1.5	20	2.4
Eglwysbach	10	1.3	15	2.0	15	1.7	30	3.2
Uwch Conwy	10	1.1	10	1.4	20	2.4	30	3.4

Appendix 3.2 – annual claimant count unemployment figures, with rates, for wards (electoral divisions): ranked alphabetically

Source: ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [from Nomis on 18 January 2022]

	December 2021		December 2020		December 2016		December 2011	
Conwy County Borough	2,970	4.5	4,325	6.5	1,435	2.2	2,645	3.9
Abergele Pensarn	115	8.9	170	13.0	70	5.0	110	8.4
Betws-y-Coed	20	3.2	35	4.8	5	0.6	11	1.3
Betws yn Rhos	35	2.9	50	4.1	10	0.6	32	2.4
Bryn	45	3.7	55	4.6	20	1.7	37	3.2
Caerhun	25	2.4	55	4.8	10	1.0	12	1.0
Capelulo	20	2.8	35	4.4	10	1.5	27	3.0
Colwyn	140	5.8	195	8.0	70	2.9	142	5.5
Conwy	90	3.1	140	4.8	45	1.5	94	3.7
Craig-y-Don	80	4.7	125	7.4	45	2.5	62	3.5
Crwst	50	4.2	60	5.2	15	1.2	37	3.7
Deganwy	70	2.7	90	3.7	40	1.6	55	2.8
Eglwysbach	10	1.3	30	3.3	-	-	11	1.2
Eirias	85	4.9	125	7.0	35	2.1	78	3.9
Gele	80	3.3	105	4.4	25	1.1	68	3.0
Glyn	275	11.0	330	13.2	150	5.8	220	8.8
Gogarth	140	7.1	200	9.9	70	3.4	123	5.9
Gower	20	3.1	35	5.0	5	0.8	18	2.5
Kinmel Bay	160	4.8	255	7.7	75	2.1	172	5.0
Llanddulas	30	3.3	45	5.0	15	1.9	30	3.2
Llandrillo yn Rhos	145	3.9	230	6.3	60	1.6	125	3.5
Llangernyw	10	1.5	25	3.2	5	0.8	10	1.2
Llansanffraid	30	2.4	55	4.3	10	0.7	29	2.2
Llansannan	25	2.0	30	2.5	10	0.6	17	1.6
Llysfaen	135	7.9	160	9.1	60	3.4	98	5.6
Marl	75	2.7	130	4.8	30	1.1	59	2.8
Mochdre	65	5.6	85	7.3	40	3.3	61	5.5
Mostyn	140	6.1	190	8.4	65	2.7	113	5.3
Pandy	40	3.7	60	5.8	25	2.2	31	2.8
Pant-yr-afon/Penmaenan	95	5.8	140	8.5	60	3.4	107	6.8
Penrhyn	55	2.2	75	2.9	15	0.6	42	1.6
Pensarn	85	4.5	135	7.1	35	1.9	63	3.9
Pentre Mawr	105	5.9	140	8.0	45	2.3	93	4.9
Rhiw	155	4.3	235	6.6	80	2.2	144	3.9
Towyn	80	6.5	115	9.3	40	3.3	82	5.9
Trefriw	25	3.1	45	5.8	15	1.9	28	3.7
Tudno	190	6.3	310	10.2	110	3.7	171	6.0
Uwch Conwy	10	1.1	20	2.5	10	1.3	14	1.4
Uwchaed	15	1.5	20	2.5	5	0.5	18	2.1