



# Hampshire Local Authority District Profiles New Forest

July 2025

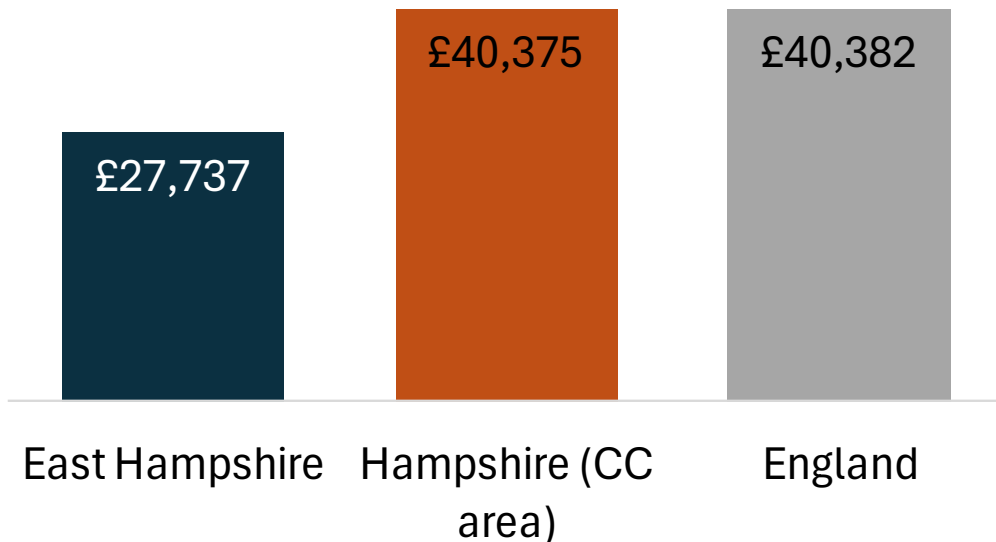
## Economic Performance

The New Forest’s economy is worth **£5.67bn** in **Gross Value Added (GVA)** in current (2023) prices. After other indirect taxes on products (£0.9bn) are added, and subsidies on products (£0.15bn) subtracted, New Forest’s economy amounted to **£6.42bn in nominal GDP terms**, while **GDP per head is 9% below the national average**.

## Productivity

Productivity is the main driver of competitiveness, growth and economic prosperity over the long run. Since most economies face barriers (for instance ageing population and skills) to higher employment, increasing productivity is an important economic policy objective at both national and local level. **New Forest is 10% (110.0) more productive than the UK** on the preferred GVA per hours measure.

Economic Prosperity (GDP per head) - 2023



Labour Productivity - 2023

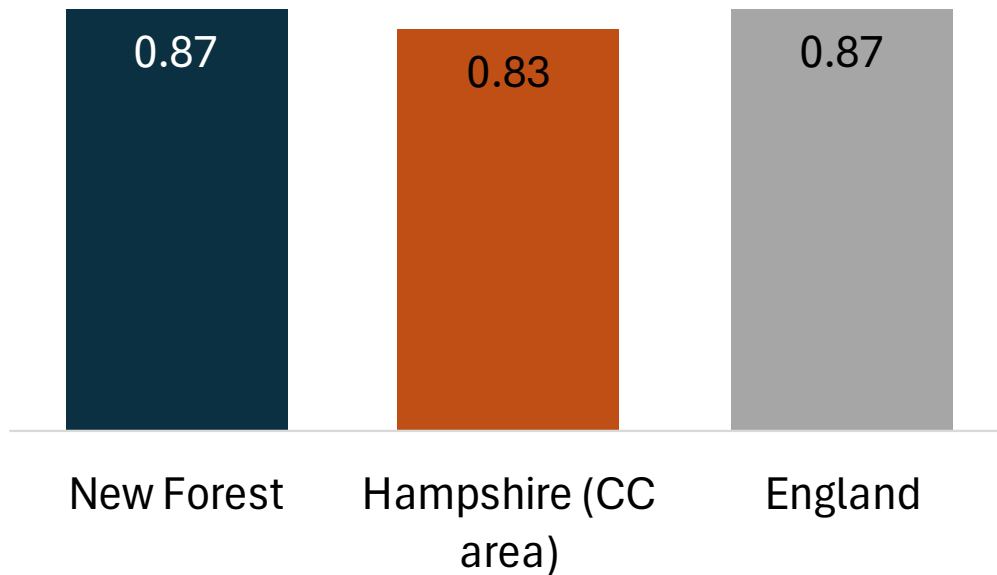
	GVA per hour (£) – preferred ONS measure	GVA per filled job (£)
New Forest	£46.1	£67,123
New Forest (Index UK=100)	110.0	101.1
Hampshire (CC area)	£52.8	£76,232
England	£42.4	£67,338
United Kingdom	£41.9	£66,402

# Labour Market: Demand

## Total jobs and Job Density

New Forest has **84,000 total jobs** using the workplace-based measure of jobs that includes data on employees, self-employment, government-supported trainees and HM Forces, to give a **job density of 0.87**, which is the number of jobs in an area divided by the resident population aged 16-64 in that area. This is aligned with the national average and higher than the Hampshire average. For example, a job density of 1.00 would mean that there is one job for every resident aged 16-64.

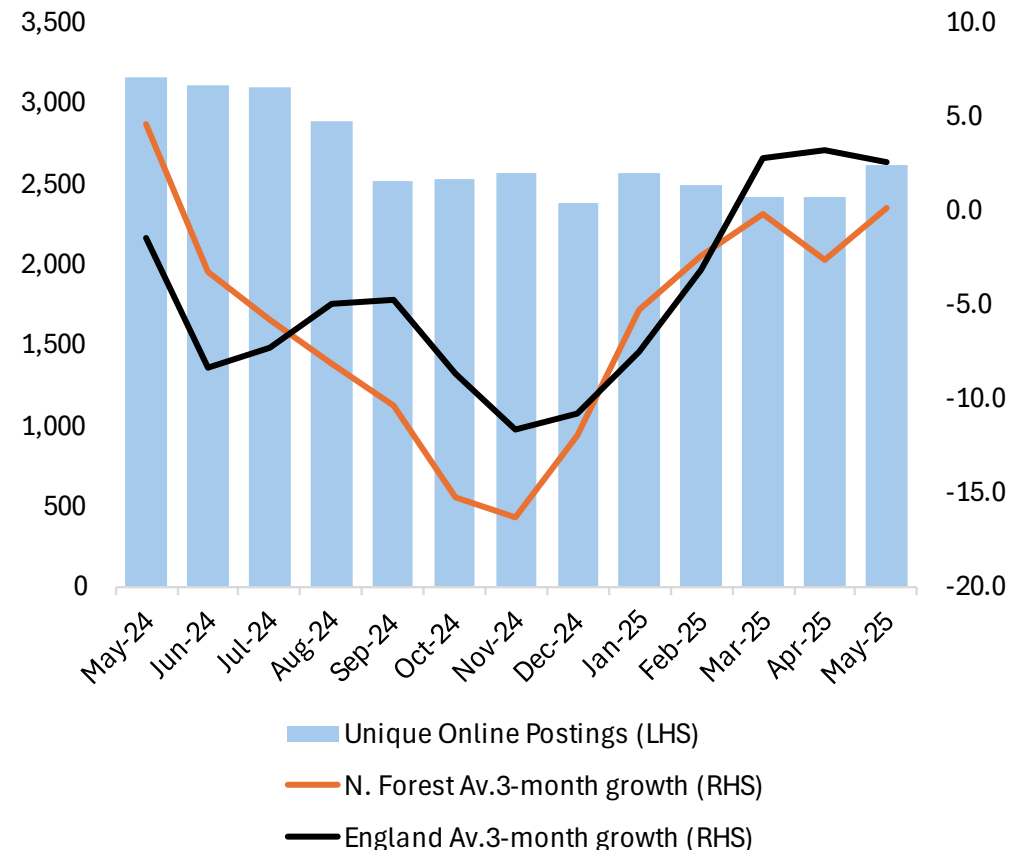
### Job Density - 2023



## Online Job Postings

Labour demand can also be measured by using number of online job postings as a proxy. The data is not seasonally adjusted. Demand has been easing as labour costs have risen (wage inflation, employer NI, National Living Wage) although hiring intentions have been rising locally in 2025.

### Job Postings and Growth Rates



Sources: Job Density ONS (2025). Online vacancies Lightcast (2025)

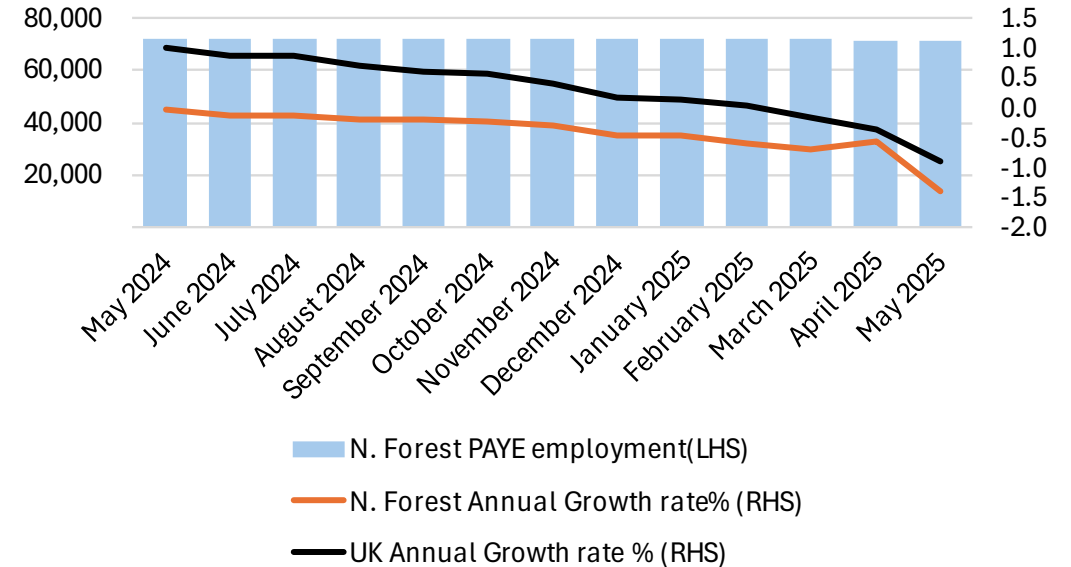
## Resident (16-64 years) Economic Activity

Rolling Annual Quarter: 12-months to December 2024	New Forest Number	New Forest %	Hampshire %	England%
Economic activity rate	79,200	79.5	81.4	78.9
Employment rate	77,300	77.5	79.3	75.7
% aged 16-64 who are employees	69,500	69.7	71.0	66.0
% aged 16-64 who are self employed	7,500	7.5	8.0	9.5
Unemployment rate	2,800	3.3	2.6	4.0

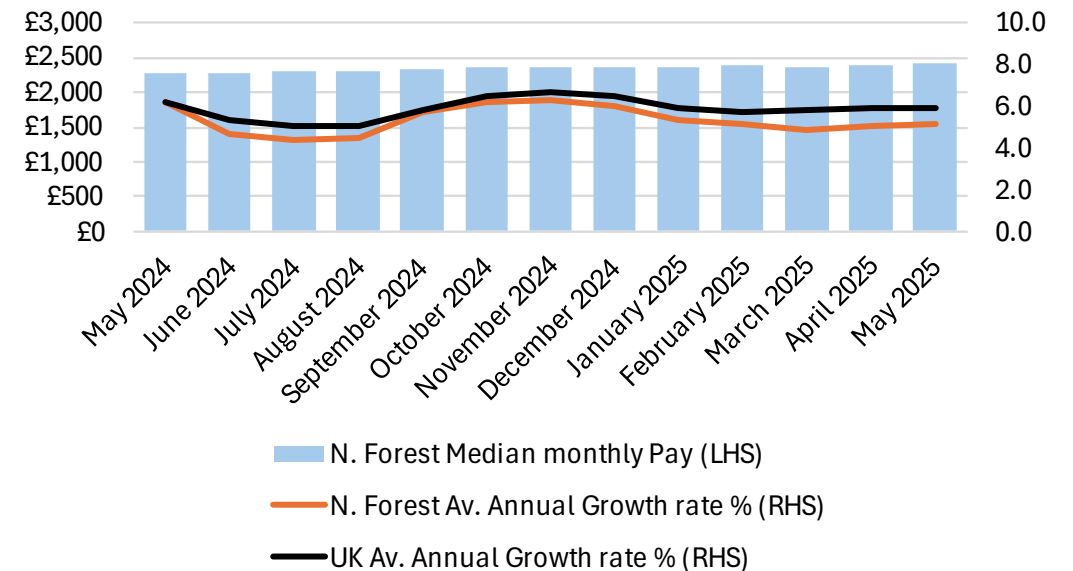
In economic terms, higher employment leads to an increase in income, translating to more disposable income, opportunities for higher consumption and a rise in demand for goods and services, thereby stimulating the production of goods and services and driving forward economic growth.

Source: ONS Annual Population Survey (2025). HMRC/ONS Real Time Indicator Employment and Earnings (2025). Hampshire earnings based on median of LA median earnings, so only indicative. Note that England data is not currently published

## New Forest PAYE employment



## New Forest PAYE Median Earnings



## Residents (16-64 years) by Highest Qualification

Rolling Annual Quarter: 12-months to December 2024	New Forest (numbers)	New Forest (%)	Hampshire (%)	England (%)
% with RQF4+ - aged 16-64	44,200	47.1	47.2	47.1
% with RQF3 only - aged 16-64	24,400	26.1	23.8	20.5
% with RQF2 only - aged 16-64	15,900	17.0	18.7	19.1
% with no qualifications (RQF) - aged 16-64	3,600	3.9	5.3	6.4

**Note: Due to small sample sizes there is no reliable data for RQF/NVQ 1 equivalent or other qualifications. Census 2021 will provide an estimate but not comparable to the APS.**

### No qualifications

No formal qualifications held.

### RQF/NVQ 2 equivalent

e.g. 5 or more GCSEs at grades A-C, intermediate GNVQ, NVQ 2, intermediate 2 national qualification (Scotland) or equivalent.

### RQF/NVQ 3 equivalent

e.g. 2 or more A levels, advanced GNVQ, NVQ 3, 2 or more higher or advanced higher national qualifications (Scotland) or equivalent.

### RQF/NVQ 4 equivalent and above

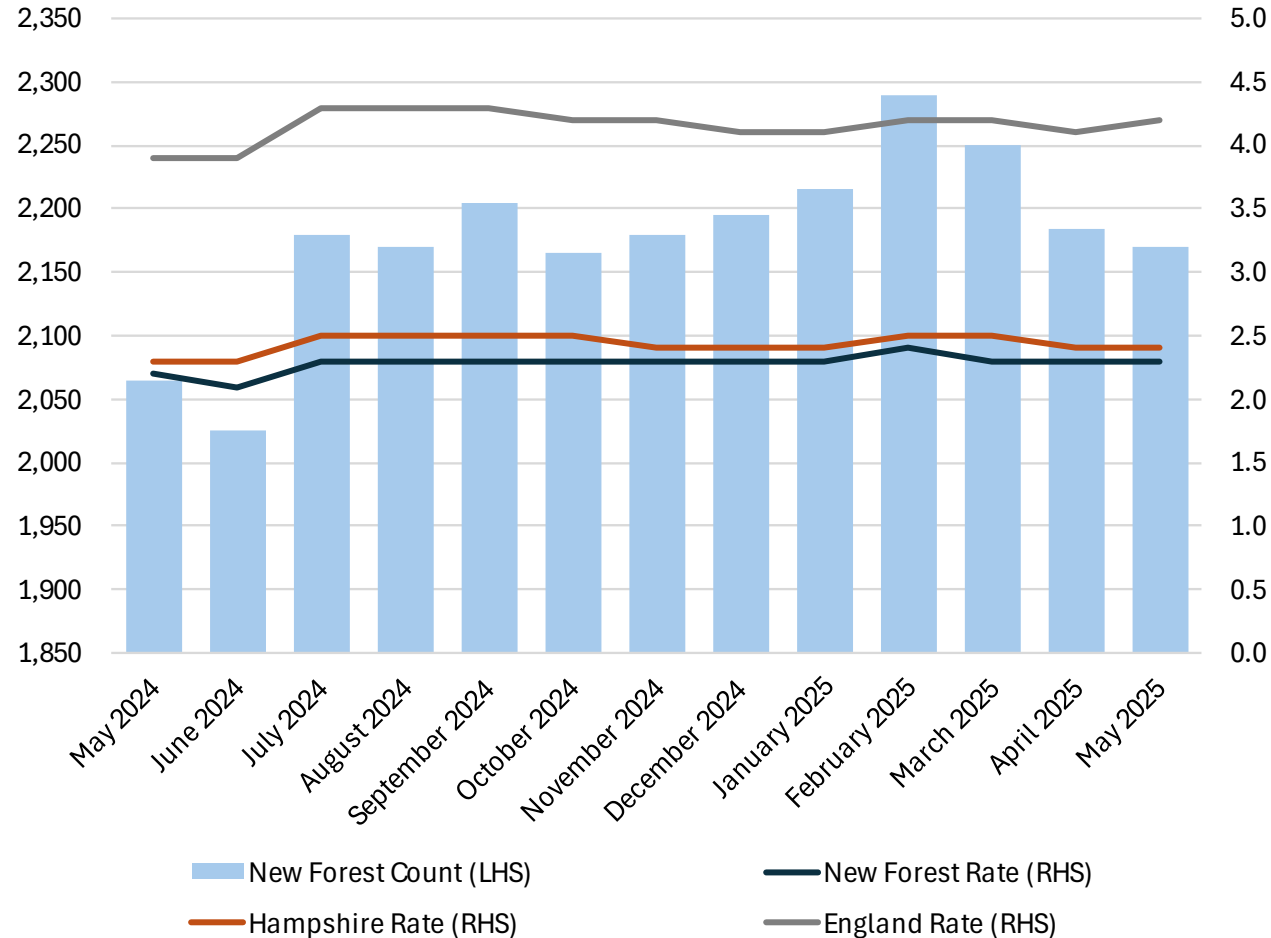
e.g. HND, Degree and Higher Degree level qualifications or equivalent.

## Residents (16-64 years) in Employment by Occupation

Rolling Annual Quarter: 12-months to December 2024 SOC 2020	New Forest (numbers)	New Forest (%)	Hampshire (%)	England (%)
1: managers, directors and senior officials	10,700	13.0	12.8	11.4
2: professional occupations	15,900	19.2	26.9	27.2
3: associate professional occupations	11,700	14.2	14.9	15.4
4: administrative and secretarial occupations	8,500	10.3	9.2	9.2
5: skilled trades occupations	11,100	13.4	8.8	8.5
6: caring, leisure and other service occupations	7,200	8.7	9.2	8.2
7: sales and customer service occupations	6,200	7.6	6.1	5.8
8: process, plant and machine operatives	5,400	6.5	4.5	5.4
9: elementary occupations	6,000	7.2	7.5	8.6

! Estimate and confidence interval not available since the group sample size is zero or disclosive (0-2).

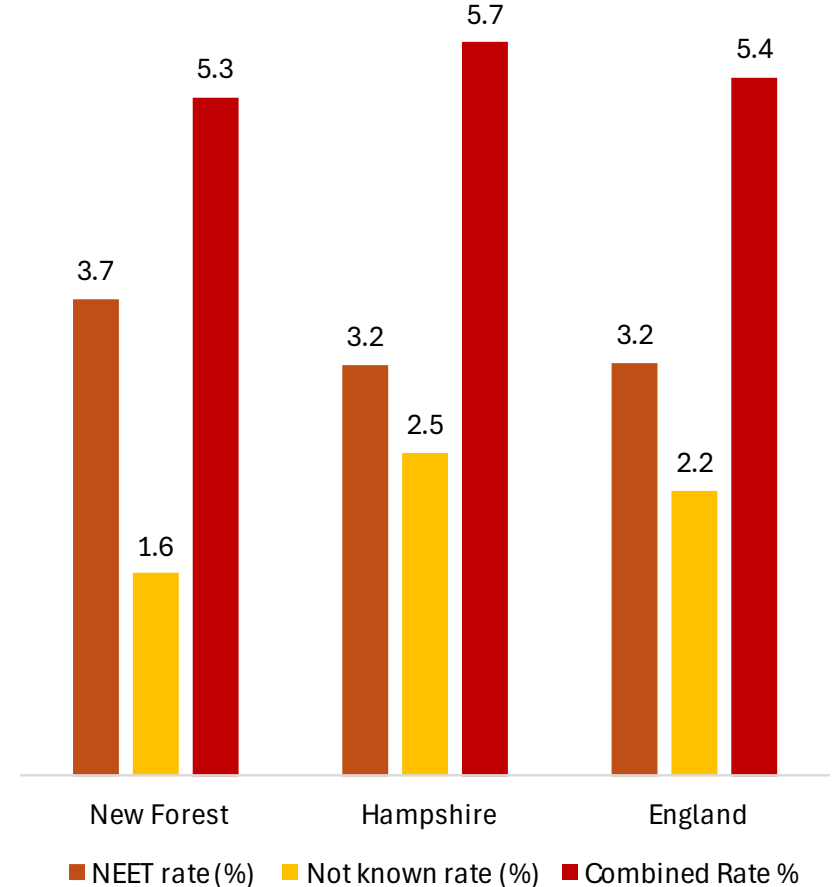
## Monthly Unemployed Benefit Claimants



New Forest’s working age unemployment rates have been consistently lower but close to the Hampshire trendline and much lower than the England average. The May 2025 rate is 2.3% with 2,170 claimants.

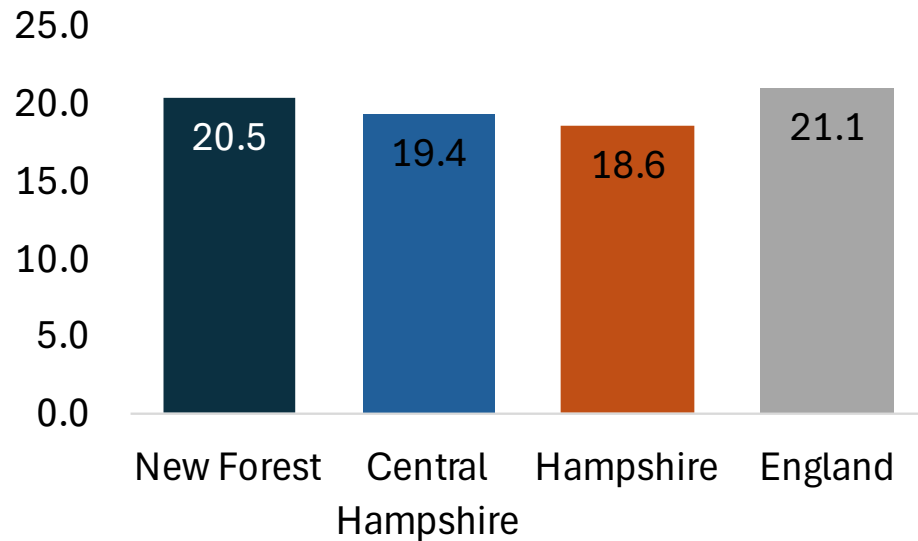
Source: ONS (2025). DfE, Hampshire County Council (2025)

## 16-17-Year-Old NEET, Not Known & Combined Rates (%), 2023/24



Source: DfE (2024), Hampshire County Council (2025). Note that the rates are 3-month average (Dec 23, Jan 24 and Feb 24) as percentage of the 16-17 age cohort. The Combined rate should be used as the primary measure when comparing against benchmarks.

## Economic Inactivity Rate (%), 2024



Economically Inactive working age population of New Forest stands at **20,500 residents in the 12 months to December 2024**.

The **inactive rate is 20.5%**, 1-in-5 working age New Forest residents, higher than the Hampshire (18.6%) and Central Hampshire economic sub-area (19.4%) averages, but lower than the national average (21.1%). Inactivity estimates by reason are unreliable and largely incomplete at district level. Hampshire ITL3 subarea estimates are more reliable.

Source: ONS Annual Population Survey (2025)

## Central Hampshire Sub-area Inactivity by Reason

Reason	Central Hampshire Number	Central Hampshire (%)	Hampshire (%)	England (%)
Student	19,300	30.9	26.7	27.5
Looking after family/home	5,700	9.1	16.7	19.0
Long-term sick	12,800	20.5	24.5	27.0
Inactive retired	16,000	25.6	19.2	12.5
Inactive other	8,700	13.9	10.3	11.5
Inactive (total)	62,500	19.4	18.6	21.1
Inactive (minus students)	43,200	13.4	13.6	15.3

Long term sick is one of the primary causes of economic inactivity across Hampshire. Reasons for economic inactivity caused by long-term sickness or disability are complex – see Hampshire’s Local Get Britain Working Plan report.

Overall health in New Forest improved between 2015 and 2021 and it stands above the national average. New Forest’s **Overall Health Index Score in 2021 was 110.5** (a score over 100 is an improvement). For more health data please see the interactive [JSNA](#) database.

## New Forest Population 2023

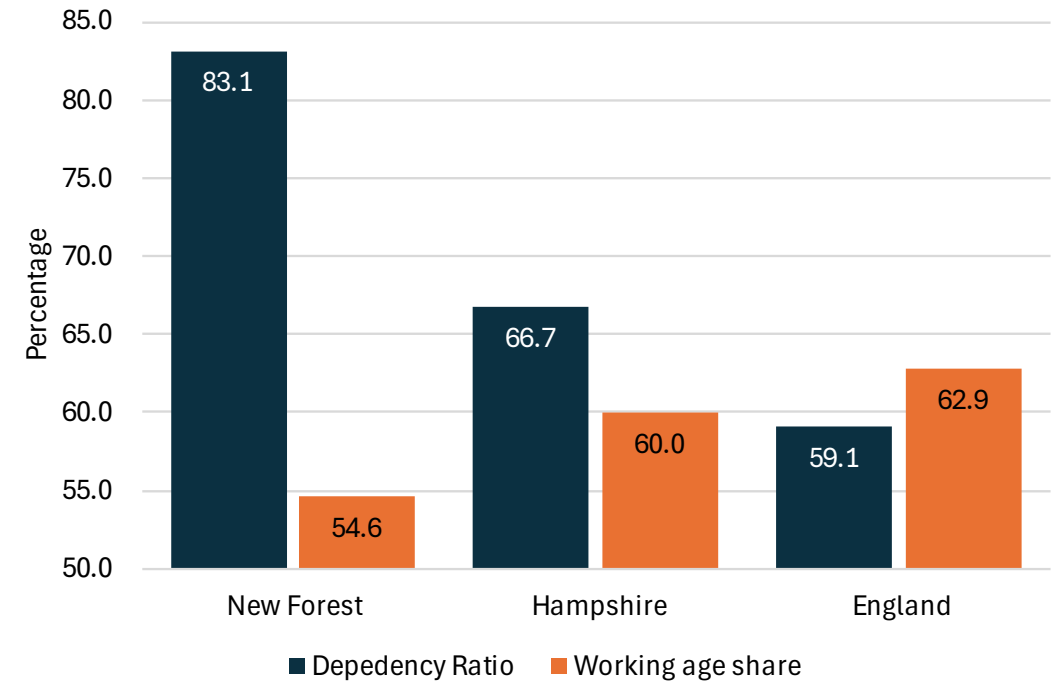
MYE 2023	All Ages	Aged 16 to 64	Aged 0 to 15	Aged 16 to 24	Aged 25 to 49	Aged 50 to 64	Aged 65+
Total (Number)	175,398	95,818	26,438	13,219	43,061	39,538	53,142
Total (%)	100.0	54.6	15.1	7.5	24.6	22.5	30.3
Male (Number)	84,329	46,438	13,602	6,828	20,733	18,877	24,289
Male (%)	48.1	55.1	16.1	8.1	24.6	22.4	28.8
Female (Number)	91,069	49,380	12,836	6,391	22,328	20,661	28,853
Female (%)	51.9	54.2	14.1	7.0	24.5	22.7	31.7

New Forest has a total population of 175,398 according to ONS 2023 mid-year estimates. Just over half (95,818) are of working age (16-64 years).

Overall, there are marginally more females than males. There are more males than females in the younger age groups (0-15 and 16--24 years) but more females from age 25 onwards and especially over 65 years, and fewer working age males.

Source: ONS MYE 2023 (2024)

## Working Age and Dependency Ratio



New Forest has a relatively lower working age population than Hampshire and England but a significantly higher dependency ratio against both benchmarks.

If the age dependency ratio is 50%, then there are two working-age people in the local population for every dependent. High dependency ratio's mean those of working age, and the overall economy, are likely to be subject to a greater tax burden to support an aging population.

**Economy Performance (GDP/GVA) and Productivity (per GVA):** Data for this metric is published by ONS. Gross value added (GVA) is a measure of the increase in the value of the economy due to the production of goods and services. While GDP per head is often referred to as a measure of prosperity. It can be a useful way of comparing regions of different size, comparisons can be affected by commuting flows into or out of the region. They should therefore be used with caution. **Good to be high.**

**Productivity (GVA per hour worked):** A measure of productivity: GVA divided by the number of hours worked to create it. This is the preferred measure of productivity. **Good to be high.**

**Productivity (GVA per job filled):** A measure of productivity: GVA divided by the number of filled jobs used to create it. **Good to be high.**

**Total jobs and Job Density:** This is an historic measure of labour demand. The number of jobs is not the same as the number people with jobs. This is because a person can have more than one job. **Good to be high on both measures.**

**Economic Activity:** Measures of labour supply. **Good to be high for employment, good to be low for unemployment.**

**Skills:** Survey estimates of highest qualification and occupations. **Good to be high for Levels 4+ and 3 but generally good to be low Level 2 or less. Good to be high for more skilled occupations (1-3) although occupations required across all groups for a balanced economy.**

**PAYE employment and Median earnings:** HMRC real time indicators based on PAYE of residents. **On both measures good to be high and growing.**

**Unemployed claimants:** DWP administrative data of benefit claimants seeking work. **Good to be low.**

**Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETS):** Annual 3-month Dec-Feb average published by Department for Education. Data showing the proportions of 16- and 17-year-olds in education and training and an estimate of those not in education, employment or training (NEET) and the Not knowns. Some caution should be taken if using these figures due to the estimates being based on management information and there being considerable variation at local authority level in how well 16- and 17-year-olds are tracked and hence not known proportions can impact on the estimates of the proportion NEET. We include 'Not knowns' to account for this but of itself can also create large variations. **Good to be low.**

**Economic Inactivity:** Measure of labour exclusion. Survey estimate of those not seeking work according to ILO definition. **Good to be low.**

**Working age and Age Dependency ratio:** Working age is recognised by ILO as aged 16-64, even though State Pension Age has moved to 65 and 66 and moving to 67 next decade. The age dependency is the relationship between the working age population and dependents (children and retired). While those aged 0-15 can be seen as dependent there are many retirees who are still active or financially comfortable. **Good to be high for Working age, and good to be low for Age Dependency.**

This publication is produced by Economy and Intelligence, Economy and Skills Team, Hampshire 2050, Hampshire County Council



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