May 2023

# Plymouth's Growth Board Economic Dashboard

**Three years on from lockdown; has the pandemic changed the way we shop?**

According to a recent Centre for Cities study, The Covid-19 pandemic that hit the UK – and the rest of the world – exactly three years ago was a large-scale forced social experiment. How and what we consume, in particular, went through a radical shift. As shops, offices, cafes, pubs, and restaurants momentarily closed their doors, the response has, naturally and by and large, been a massive shift online.

The legacy of the pandemic and its impact on how and what people shop, across the UK's largest urban areas, is still visible. But while some of the behaviour changes have persisted, none have sparked a fundamental shift.

Shopping is one of a number of areas where radical change was predicted but hasn't been borne out. Despite early predictions, people have returned to bricks and mortar stores, which is good news for high streets up and down the country. But the challenges many of them faced three years ago largely remain.

None of the radical change that many predicted at the onset of the pandemic has materialised. Over the past three years, internet spending has indeed become a more entrenched habit among British shoppers. But this has largely been an acceleration of pre-pandemic trends rather than a radical shift; and overall bricks and mortar spend has also bounced back.

The implications for the future of the high street are therefore not too dissimilar to what they were on the eve of the pandemic.

The first is that internet spending isn't the biggest threat high streets up and down the country face; the lack of demand is.

The second is that high streets will have to adapt the nature of their offer to changing consumption patterns and move away from an over-reliance on retail.

Both are closely intertwined- and not all places face the same challenge:

- Places like Oxford, Brighton, and Reading, for example that combine high disposable income in their catchment area, and a relatively low share of commercial space allocated to retail have all the fundamentals to keep thriving.
- Other places like Exeter, Peterborough and Worthing rely relatively more on retail, but still in a high-wage local economy. This drives demand for local services and will support a greater diversity of amenities, provided policy enables and facilitates a flexible use of commercial space.
- Cities like Blackpool, Middlesbrough and Wigan are more vulnerable. Commercial space in those cities- and many others often in the North of England- is still dominated by the most exposed sectors, like retail and fashion. And the relatively low affluence levels of their residents and the catchment area they sit within mean that demand levels are also relatively low. This makes it difficult for other sectors, like hospitality, to supplant fashion and retail and fill empty units.

In those places, the high street will only thrive and support a greater diversity of amenities if underpinned by higher demand for high street businesses. This has important implications for policymakers in those places: aside from concerns about the rise in internet shopping, the priority is to boost consumer spending power and address the underlying economics behind the lack of demand, by improving the strength of the economy and creating jobs that put money into people's pockets.

# Job Posting Analytics

There were **10,590** total job postings in April 2023, of which **2,802** were unique*.

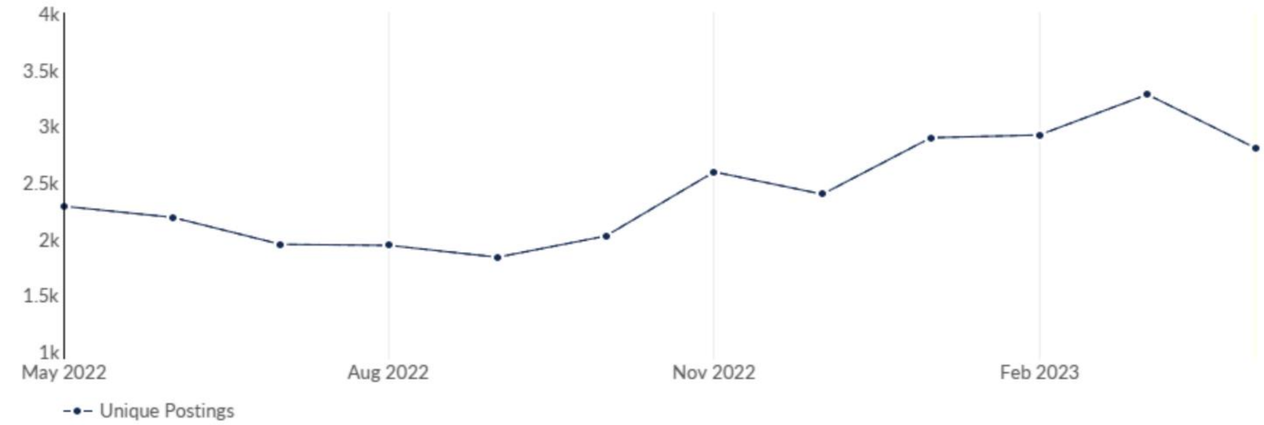
There was a Posting Intensity of **4-to-1**, meaning that for every 4 postings there is 1 unique job posting.

**-15%**

**change in unique job postings between March and April 2023.**

* Unique job posting is the number of “deduplicated” advertised jobs where duplicate job postings are advertised and only one of those duplicates is counted.

Unique Postings Trend

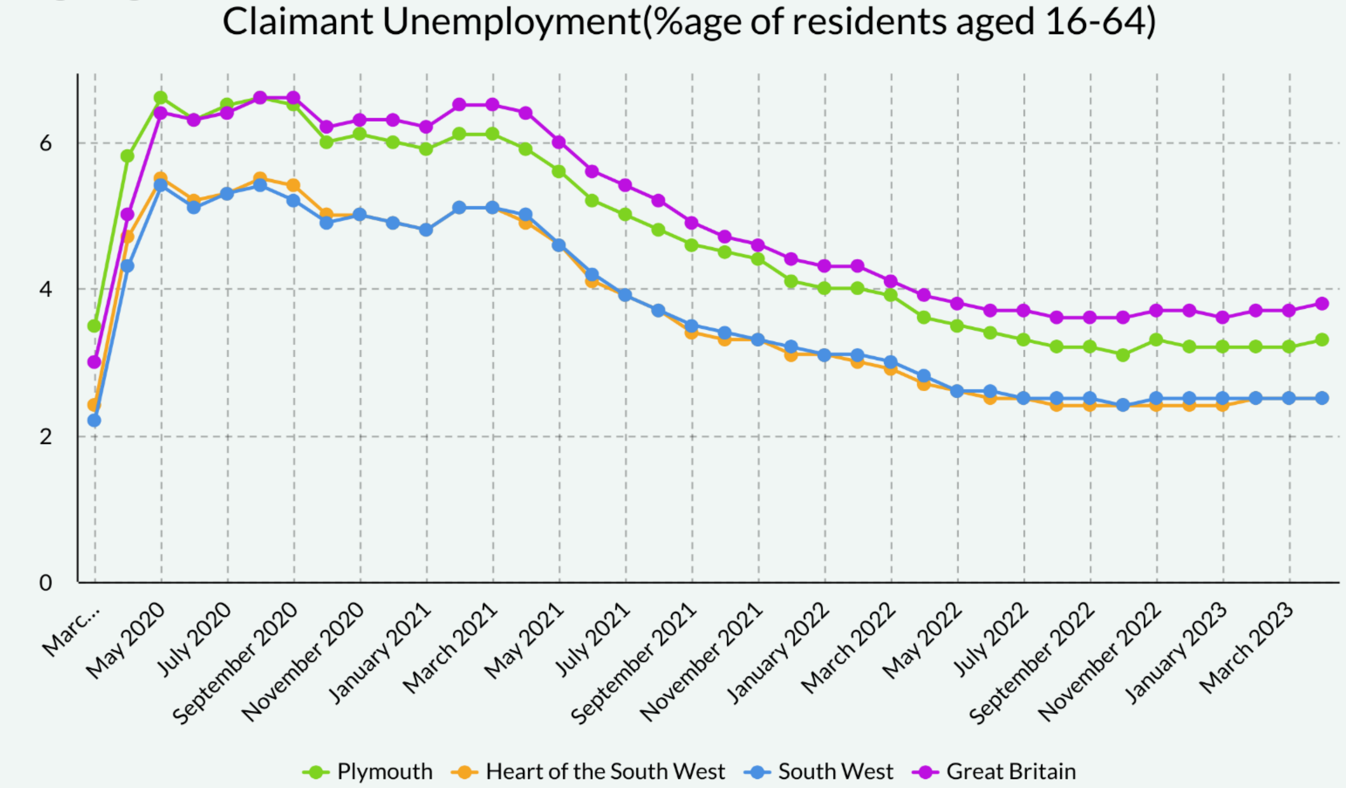



Top Posted Occupations

| Occupation (SOC) | Total/Unique (Apr 2023) | Posting Intensity | Median Posting Duration |
|---|---|---|---|
| Nurses | 505 / 94 | 5 : 1 | n/a |
| Care Workers and Home Carers | 304 / 94 | 3 : 1 | n/a |
| Other Administrative Occupations n.e.c. | 427 / 81 | 5 : 1 | n/a |
| Sales Related Occupations n.e.c. | 127 / 76 | 2 : 1 | n/a |
| Van Drivers | 293 / 66 | 4 : 1 | n/a |
| Kitchen and Catering Assistants | 119 / 61 | 2 : 1 | n/a |
| Cleaners and Domestics | 165 / 55 | 3 : 1 | n/a |
| Managers and Proprietors in Other Services n.e.c. | 129 / 53 | 2 : 1 | n/a |
| Customer Service Occupations n.e.c. | 453 / 51 | 9 : 1 | n/a |
| Secondary Education Teaching Professionals | 67 / 46 | 1 : 1 | n/a |

Lightcast Analyst, 2023

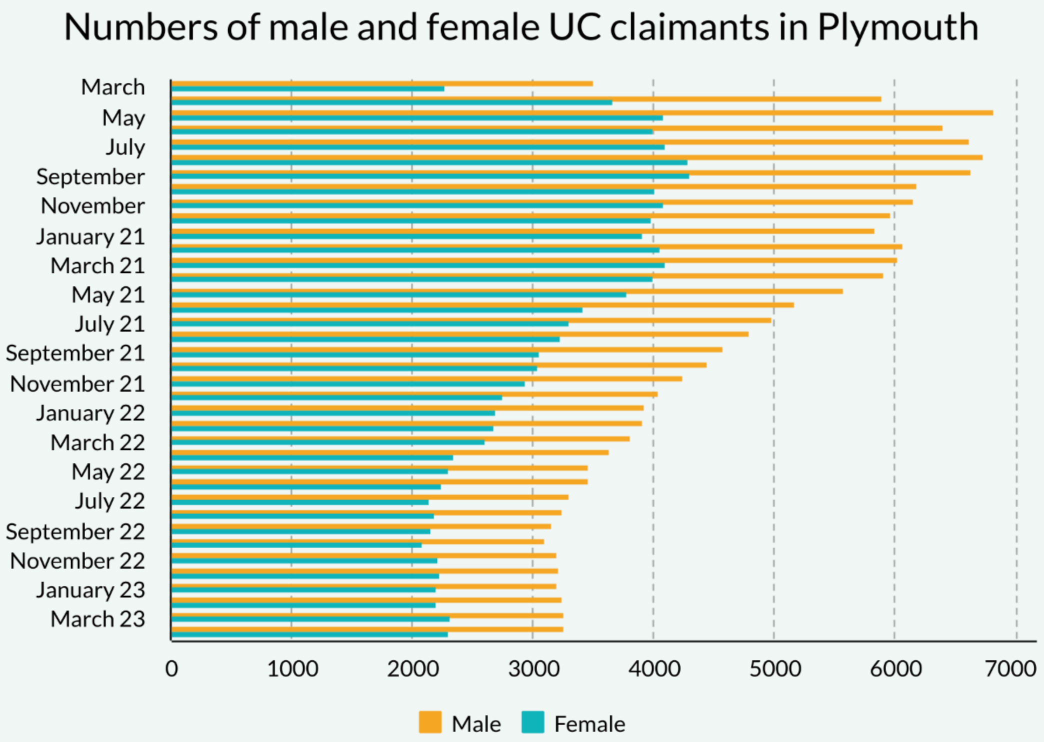
# Highlights




Source: Claimants Count, NOMIS, April 2023

We can see that HotSW is very closely tracking the South West, while Plymouth has been more closely tracking Great Britain but has achieved a lower rate since mid-2020.

Plymouths JSA/UC unemployment rate is now below the pre-pandemic level seen in March 2020.

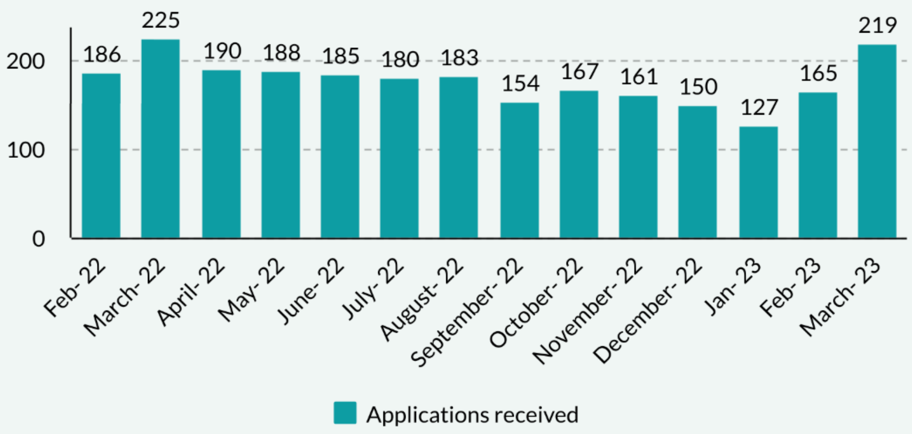



JSA/UC claimant numbers for both males and females is now below the numbers seen pre-pandemic in March 2022. (Sept. 2022 vs March 2020)

Source: Claimants Count, NOMIS, April 2023

# Economy

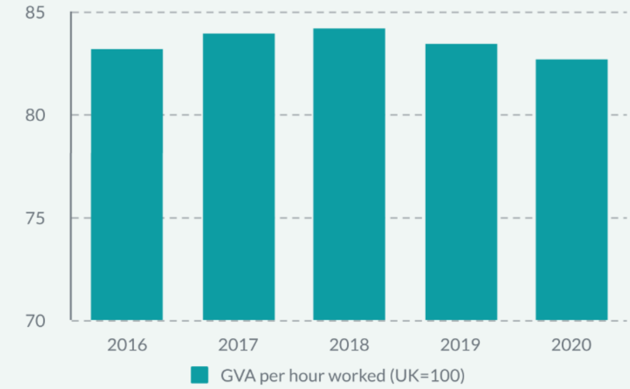
## No. of Planning Applications Received by PCC




In **April** 2023, PCC received **122** planning applications,

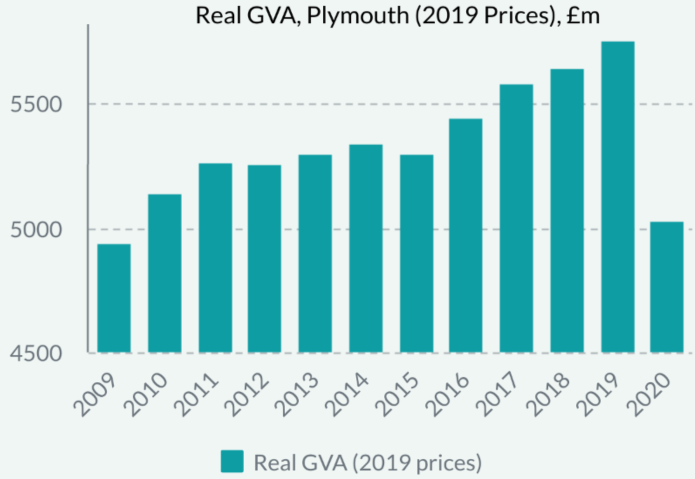
Comparing the number of applications to those of the same month last year, **April** 2023 had 68 planning applications less than those of April 2022- i.e. 35% variation between the two months.

Plymouth Productivity, GVA per hour worked (UK=100)



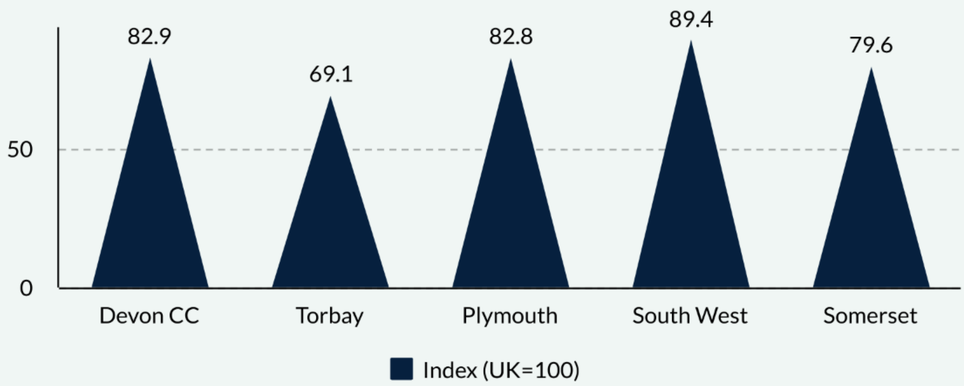

- Plymouth's productivity gap with the national average had been narrowing to 2018 but has since widened again. For 2019 to 2020, it is likely this is in part due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Real GVA, Plymouth (2019 Prices), £m



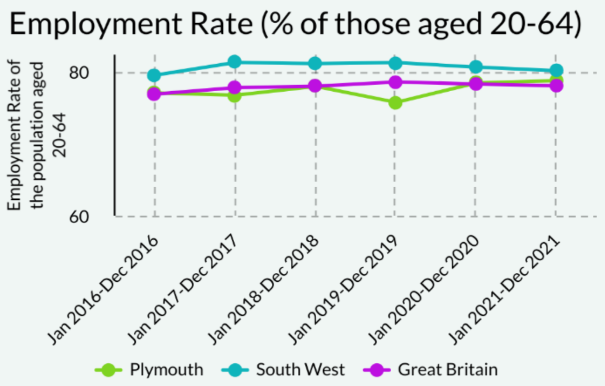

- Real GVA, however, had seen stronger growth up until 2019 but the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic is clearly visible in to 2020 with a significant **decline of over 12%.**

## Productivity - GVA per hour worked, 2020

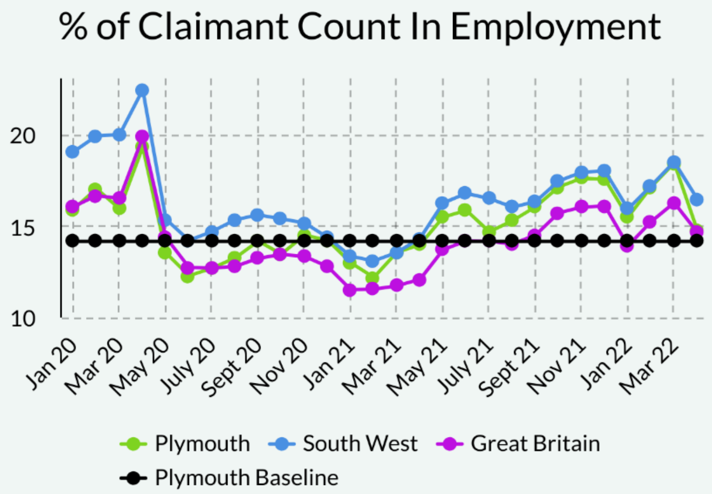



Sources: Regional GVA (Balanced) - ONS, 2020; Sub-regional Productivity - ONS, 2020

## Inclusive Growth

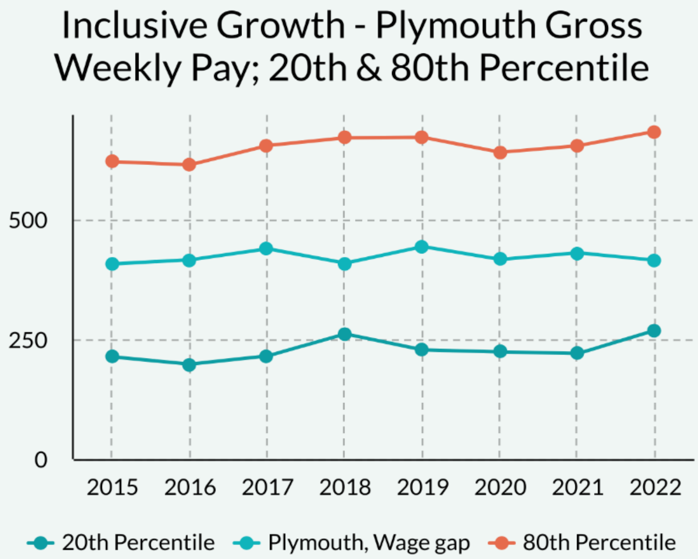


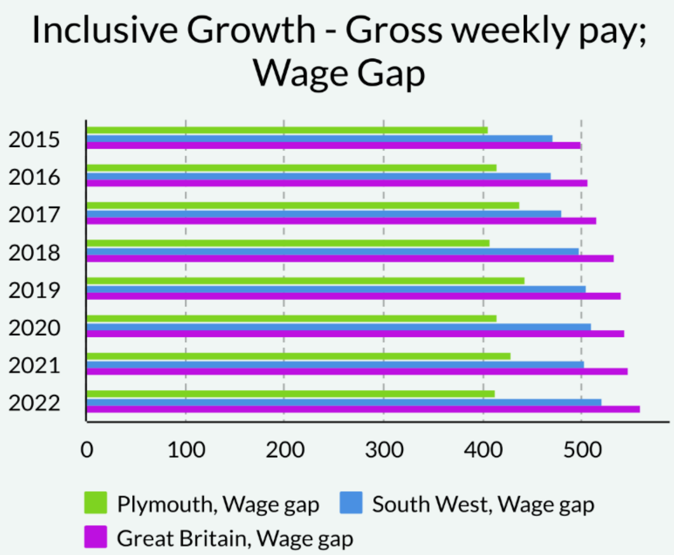

The Employment rate for ages 20-64 in Plymouth for 2020 is roughly in line with the rate for Great Britain. The rate for Plymouth in 2020 is 78.55%, the South West is 80.76% and GB is 78.40%.




from DWP Stat-Xplore using Alternative Claimant Count. Baseline of average 2013-2019

When reviewing the % of claimants' count who are in employment you should read this in conjunction with both the employment rate and claimants' count rate. These have both fluctuated considerably since March 2020. Notably, the in-work claimant rate has dropped as the overall number of claimants have risen. The rate in Plymouth closely tracked the GB rate up to October 2020. Since then, Plymouth has more closely tracked the South West rate with Great Britain having a lower rate. We can see however that all three areas have seen a fall in the % of claimants' who are in employment at the end of 2020 and into 2021. The data for 2021 has shown the proportion of individuals claiming whilst also in work has increased from the low of February 2021. The latest data is showing a steady increase in the % of claimant count in employment across all three areas.

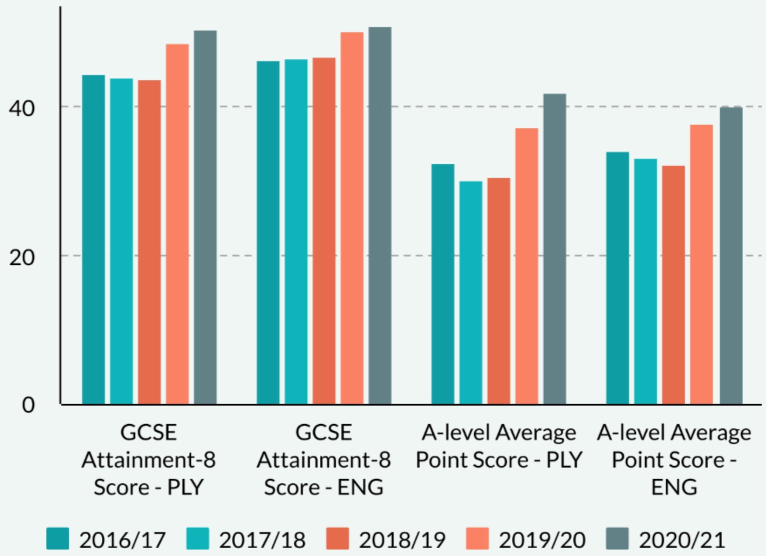


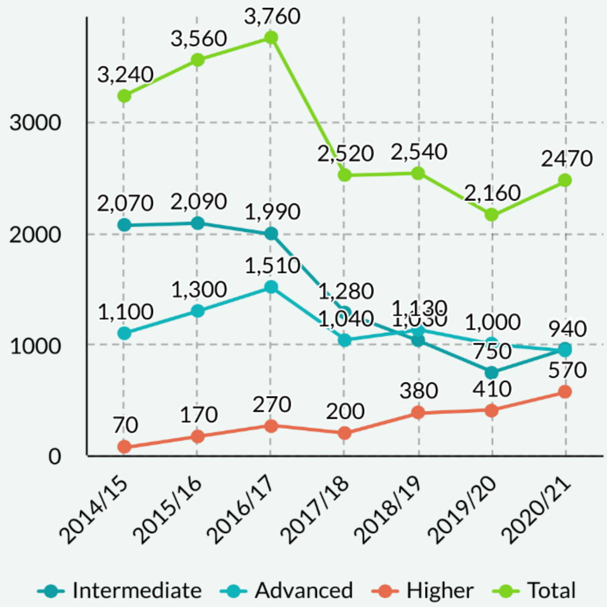

Inequality of wages is an indicator for many underlying causes of inequality. Gross Weekly Pay for Plymouth residents is published annually in increments for each decile of workers. We are monitoring the 20th percentile and the 80th percentile. This shows the maximum wages of the lowest paid 20% of workers and the lowest wage for the highest paid 20% of workers. In 2022, the 20th percentile saw a significant increase of 22% to £286.20 and the 80th percentile saw an increase of 4.6% to £682.2. As a result, the wage gap shrunk from 2021 to 2022.
The gap between the 20th and 80th percentile is lower in Plymouth than the South West and Great Britain although that is largely due to Plymouth having a lower 80th percentile wage.

## Skills

### GCSE and A-level Attainment

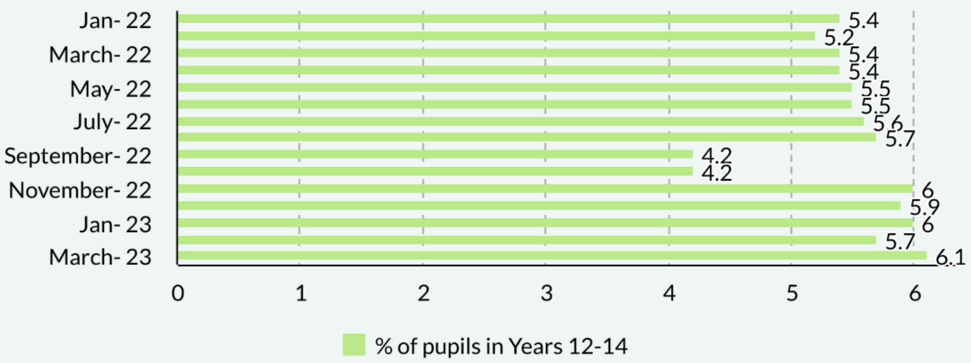



### Apprenticeship Starts by Level




- Plymouth's GCSE and A-level attainment have increased in recent years, with both measures catching up with the average for England.
- Apprenticeship starts has seen an overall downward trend from previous years, however, 2020/21 has seen a reversal in this trend.
- There was an increase in higher level apprenticeship starts over the period.

### NEETs (Pupils Not in Employment, Education or Training)




The absolute NEET figure for **April** 2023 was **253** with a rate of **4.5%**.

Please note that only 2 year groups are now tracked/counted.

This brings measures/KPIs in line with central government and allows for comparison with national and regional benchmarks- see lower chart for further details.