



Individual Insolvencies by Location, Age and Gender

Quality and methodology information document

For general notes on individual insolvency statistics in England and Wales please see the quarterly Insolvency Statistics publication, which is the definitive source of the number of new cases each year in England and Wales, and the rate per 10,000 adults. The latest publication is at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/insolvency-statistics>

1. Data sources and methodology

Details of individual insolvencies are sourced from administrative records held by the Insolvency Service. Extracts from these records, including postcode, date of birth, date of insolvency, and gender, are taken to derive the breakdowns used in this publication.

Postcode data are matched against the National Statistics Postcode Lookup, to determine the region and local authority of each individual. These data are then aggregated to produce counts of insolvencies in each geographical area. The National Statistics Postcode Lookup is derived from data from the Office for National Statistics and Ordnance Survey.

Geographical boundary definitions are sourced from the Office for National Statistics and are based on Ordnance Survey data.

Population statistics are sourced from the Office for National Statistics publication Population Estimates for UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, Mid-2019 (and related statistics for previous years). These statistics are used as the denominator when calculating insolvency rates per 10,000 adults.

2. Quality

This section provides information on the quality of the Individual Insolvency Statistics by Region, to enable users to judge whether or not the data are of sufficient quality for their intended use. The section is structured in terms of the 5 quality dimensions of the European Statistical System.

2.1. Relevance *(the degree to which the statistical product meets user needs for both coverage and content)*

The Insolvency Service has policy responsibility for individual insolvency in England and Wales only; the extent of the coverage of these statistics reflects this.

Individual insolvency figures at national (England and Wales) level are published quarterly by the Insolvency Service as a National Statistics release.



The annual statistics in this publication provide breakdowns by region, county, unitary authority and local authority; and by age and gender at region-level.

Users of insolvency statistics include the Insolvency Service itself, which has policy responsibility for insolvency in England and Wales and for the non-devolved areas within Scotland and Northern Ireland; other government departments; parliament; the insolvency profession; debt advice agencies; media organisations; academics; the financial sector; the business community and the general public.

2.2 Accuracy and reliability *(including the closeness between an estimated or stated result and the [unknown] true value)*

The latest data relate to the calendar year 2019. National-level statistics covering this period were first published on 30 January 2020 as part of the quarterly Insolvency Statistics publication, and have continued to be published in subsequent quarterly reports published in April, July and September 2020. Note that the Individual Insolvency Statistics by Region is not consistent with the quarterly publication (see Coherence, below).

Accuracy and completeness of geographic data

Individual insolvents have been classified into geographic areas on the basis of the postcode supplied by the individual. As some postcodes supplied are missing or incomplete, or have not matched the National Statistics Postcode Lookup, some individuals have not been matched to geographic areas.

Nationally, this proportion had been following a decreasing trend. This year, coinciding with improvements to our cleaning and matching procedure, the overall percentage unmatched has reduced to the smallest percentage to date.

Postcodes are assigned to areas using the centroid of the postcode area. As postcode boundaries are not contiguous with other geographic boundaries, these postcode boundaries could span several geographic boundaries.

It is possible an individual changed place of residence in order to cut costs and attempt to get out of financial difficulty. Where this failed and the individual was declared insolvent, it will be the address at the time of the insolvency which is recorded and used to classify the insolvent's location, where this can be determined. Where more than one address has been provided and the address at the time of insolvency is not known, the first known postcode listed in our systems is used.



Table 1: Percentage of missing or unmatched postcodes in Individual Insolvencies by Location, Age and Gender and Individual Insolvencies by Parliamentary Constituency

England and Wales, 2000 to 2019

	Bankruptcies	IVAs	DROs
2000	12.4%	14.7%	..
2001	9.3%	12.2%	..
2002	8.0%	10.1%	..
2003	6.4%	8.4%	..
2004	5.6%	8.5%	..
2005	4.8%	4.3%	..
2006	4.1%	3.2%	..
2007	3.5%	2.1%	..
2008	3.2%	0.8%	..
2009	2.9%	0.5%	0.1%
2010	4.1%	0.6%	0.2%
2011	1.1%	0.9%	0.2%
2012	0.9%	0.8%	0.1%
2013	0.4%	0.5%	0.3%
2014	0.8%	0.5%	0.1%
2015	0.5%	0.1%	0.1%
2016	0.8%	1.3%	0.2%
2017	1.1%	0.0%	0.1%
2018	1.6%	0.1%	0.3%
2019	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%

1. Percentages have been rounded to one decimal place.

Accuracy and completeness of age and gender data

Some records of individual insolvents have missing, incomplete or implausible today data for either or both of date of birth and gender. These have been classified as 'unknown' in the relevant tables but included in the regional tables if the postcode matched the National Statistics Postcode Lookup.

Processing error

A processing error was identified affecting some historical time periods in the 2018 release. Cases were incorrectly allocated to some geographies when they should have been recorded elsewhere. Additionally, the number of cases where the geography was unknown was over estimated in 2018 only. This meant that the percentage unmatched was lower than published in last year's methods note. These inconsistencies were small, and the levels, rates and matched percentages have been corrected in this release. Prior publications will remain unrevised.



2.3 Timeliness and punctuality (*Timeliness refers to the elapsed time between publication and the period to which the data refer. Punctuality refers to the time lag between the actual and planned dates of publication.*)

The key statistics in this publication relate to the rate of individual insolvency per 10,000 adults, which is dependent on population estimates at local authority, county and unitary authority, and region level for the denominator in this calculation. The Office for National Statistics released Population Estimates for UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, mid-2019 on 24 June 2020. Typically, we publish these statistics in mid-July – this is the minimum amount of time required to ensure outputs can be produced to the required standard.

However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we delayed this publication to 27 November 2020. This allowed us to use our resources to publish more timely, monthly insolvency statistics, giving users a more up-to-date picture of the effect of the pandemic on insolvencies and the economy. We intend to revert back to our usual publication schedule from 2021 but this is subject to change.

These statistics relate to the calendar year 2019. National-level statistics covering this period were first published on 30 January 2020 as part of the quarterly Individual Insolvency Statistics publication – though this release is not consistent with the quarterly publication (see Coherence, below). The latest quarterly publication was released on 30 October 2020.

2.4 Accessibility and clarity (*Accessibility is the ease with which users are able to access the data. It also relates to the format in which the data are available and the availability of supporting information. Clarity refers to the quality and sufficiency of metadata, illustrations and accompanying advice*)

The Insolvency Statistics are available free of charge to the end user on the GOV.UK website. They are also linked via the Publication Hub and they meet the standards required under the Code of Practice for Official Statistics and the Insolvency Service's own website accessibility policy. Related data are available at the same GOV.UK location.

This publication consists of a statistics release in PDF format, which contains key results and commentary to help interpret the data, and detailed data tables in both Open Document Spreadsheet and Excel format. If you have any queries about the publication or would like it in a different format, please email statistics@insolvency.gov.uk

2.5 Coherence and comparability (*Coherence refers to the degree to which data which are derived from different sources or methods, but which refer to the same phenomenon, are similar. Comparability refers to the degree to which data can be compared over time and domain*)

Numbers of new cases presented in these tables may not be consistent with the official, headline quarterly National Statistics published as they have been extracted from a live database at a different point in time and on a different basis. The quarterly National Statistics



are the definitive source of the number of new cases each year in England and Wales, and the rate per 10,000 adults.

Numbers of individual insolvencies in each geographical area each year, and the underlying population data, are categorised according to administrative boundaries as at May 2020, allowing for comparisons to be made between time periods and between geographical areas.

2019 boundary changes

On 1 April 2019, several boundary changes were implemented which affect this release.

The ceremonial county of Dorset was changed from consisting of a non-metropolitan county (itself divided into 6 districts) and 2 unitary authorities, into consisting of 2 unitary authorities. The new unitary authorities in Dorset are:

- Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (E06000058) consisting of the old unitary authorities of Bournemouth and Poole as well as the district of Christchurch,
- Dorset Council (E06000059), which merged the 5 remaining districts of East Dorset, North Dorset, Purbeck, West Dorset, and Weymouth and Portland, as well as the former county council.

In Suffolk, the number of districts was reduced from 7 to 5. West Suffolk (E07000245) was created by merging Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury. East Suffolk (E07000244) was created by merging Suffolk Coastal and Waveney. These new districts are not unitary authorities, and the two-tier structure of county and district councils remains in place.

In the non-metropolitan county of Somerset, the number of districts was reduced from 5 to 4, when Taunton Deane and West Somerset were merged as Somerset West and Taunton (E07000246). This new district is not a unitary authority, and the two-tier structure of county and district councils remains in place.

2020 boundary changes

The existing Buckinghamshire County Council, along with its districts of Aylesbury Vale, Chiltern, South Bucks, and Wycombe, was replaced by a single unitary authority known as Buckinghamshire Council (E06000060) on 1 April 2020.

Statistics on the new boundaries

Due to the correspondence between the old and new boundaries, it was straightforward to derive historical estimates for the new geographies without attempting to rematch old postcodes on the new basis. These figures covering the period 2000 to 2018 have been included in the time series tables alongside the 2019 data. Our old publications remain unrevised. As per our usual approach to revisions in this publication, figures from previous years have remained unrevised unless stated otherwise.



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Any enquiries regarding this document/publication should be sent to us at
statistics@insolvency.gov.uk