

West Sussex Coastal Communities

A summary of benefit claims

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Health and wellbeing in coastal communities:

A framework for action to reduce coastal inequalities



- In 2024, we published '[A Framework for Action to Reduce Coastal Health Inequalities](#)'
- This aimed to provide insight into health and wellbeing and its wider determinants in coastal West Sussex towns and proposed a place-based approach to reducing coastal inequalities
- As part of the framework, we committed to conducting new analyses, insight and learning to further our understanding of the health and wellbeing needs of coastal West Sussex, aligned to specific areas of focus
- The following slides provide a high-level summary of a series of briefings exploring benefit claims in coastal and non-coastal West Sussex, produced as part of this commitment

Child in low-income families (relative and absolute)



How is child poverty measured?

Children in low-income families' (CiLIF) statistics provide estimates of the number of children living in relative and absolute low-income families by local area.

These two measures consider all income before housing costs (including housing benefit) and after all taxes (including council tax). A family must have claimed one or more of Universal Credit, Tax Credits or Housing Benefit at any point during the year to be included in these statistics.

Relative low income

A family whose equivalised income¹ is below 60% of the average in the reference year.

This measure helps us to compare the situation in local areas and measure the number and proportion of individuals who are currently in low income compared to the current median income.

Absolute low income

A family whose equivalised income¹ is below 60% of the 2010/11 median income adjusted for inflation.

The measure helps us to track changes over time in relation to a fixed reference point and is designed to assess how incomes are faring to inflation.

¹ Household income that takes into account differences in household size and composition.

Relative low-income

What is relative low income?

Refers to children living in households whose equivalised income is below 60% of the average income of all households in a reference year¹.

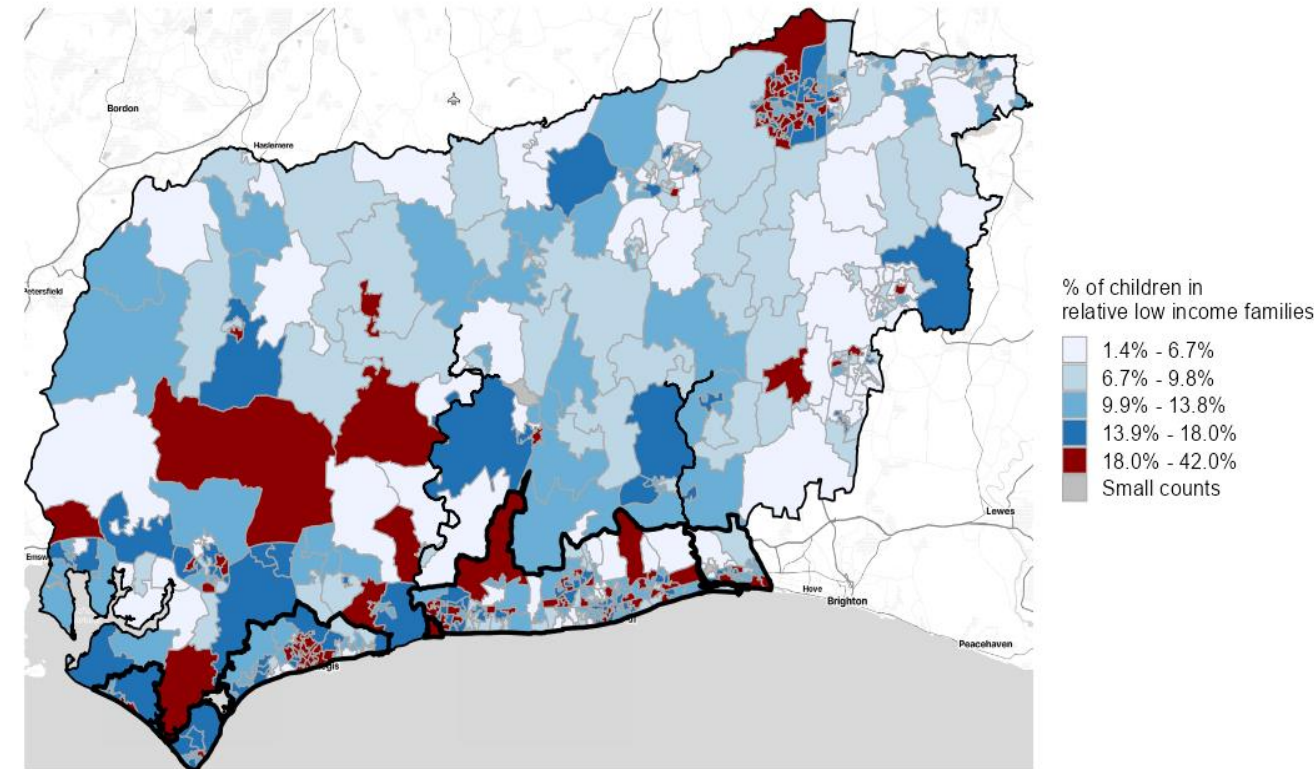
Why does this matter?

This reflects the extent to which the incomes of poorer households with children are keeping pace with the average.

What did our analysis find?

- An estimated 14.8% of children (under 16) lived in relative low-income families in coastal West Sussex, higher than non-coastal areas (12.3%) and county overall (12.9%).
- The proportion of children under 16 living in relative low-income families has fallen in coastal West Sussex overtime.
- 47.5% of children living in relative low-income households in West Sussex were from lone parent families, lower than the South East (49.8%) and England (50.1%).

Proportion of children from relative low-income families amongst under 16s in small areas of West Sussex (2011 Lower Super Output Areas); 2022/23.



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Notes. LSOAs are shaded based on the proportion of children from relative low income families, with data for LSOAs within West Sussex split into 5 equal groups (quintiles). Areas within the top quintile (highest proportion of claims) are shown in red. Quarterly data sourced from the DWP. The boundary for Coastal West Sussex is illustrated with a thicker black border.

Absolute low-income

What is absolute low income?

Refers to children living in households whose equivalised income is below 60% of the 2010/11 median income adjusted for inflation¹.

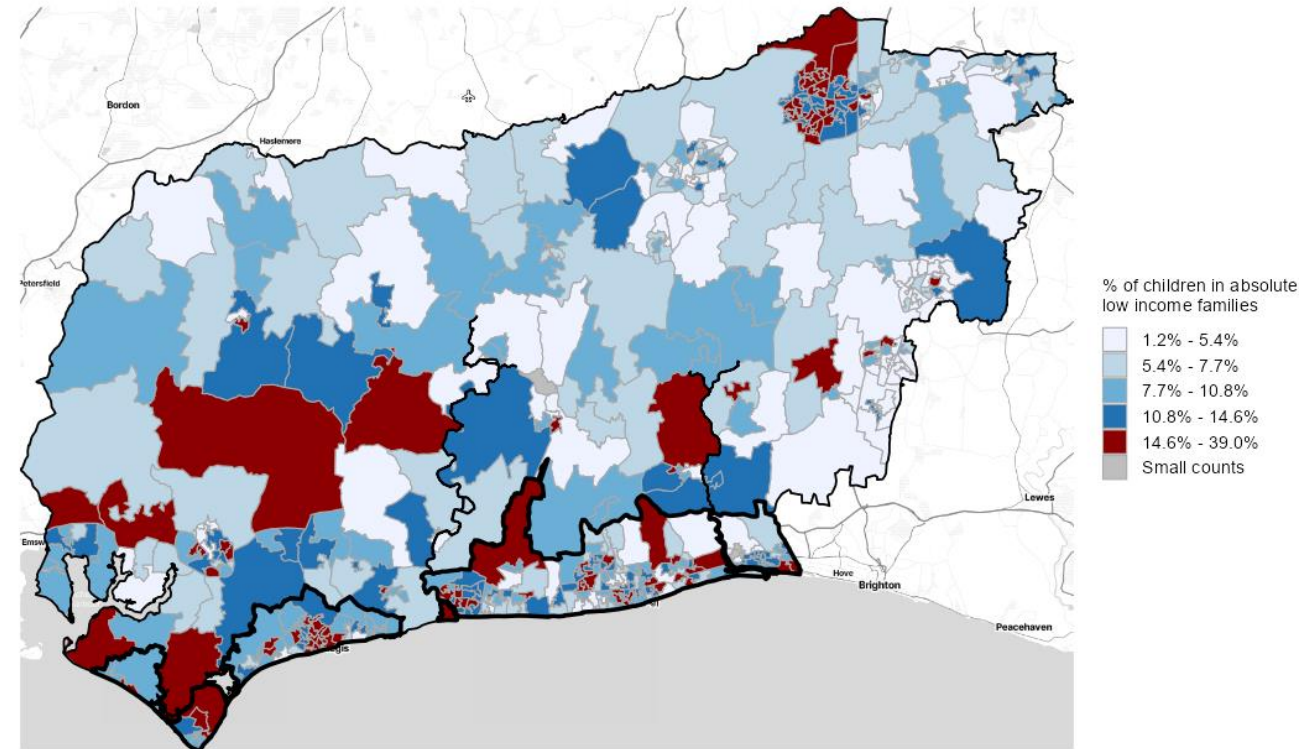
Why does this matter?

By adjusting for inflation, this provides insight into whether incomes of families within communities, such as coastal West Sussex, are keeping pace with the cost of living.

What did our analysis find?

- In 2022/23, an estimated 11.6% of children (under 16) lived in absolute low-income families in coastal West Sussex, higher than non-coastal areas (10.1%) and county overall (10.2%).
- Over time, the proportion of children under 16 living in absolute low-income families has fallen in coastal West Sussex.
- 29.3% of children living in absolute low-income households in West Sussex were from non-working families, lower than the South East (32.1%) and England (35%).

Proportion of children from absolute low-income families amongst under 16s in small areas of West Sussex (2011 Lower Super Output Areas); 2022/23.



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Attendance Allowance (AA)

What is attendance allowance?

AA is a tax free, non-means tested benefit for people State Pension aged (66 years) and over who have required personal care or supervision due to a physical or mental health condition or disability for a minimum of six months.

Why does this matter?

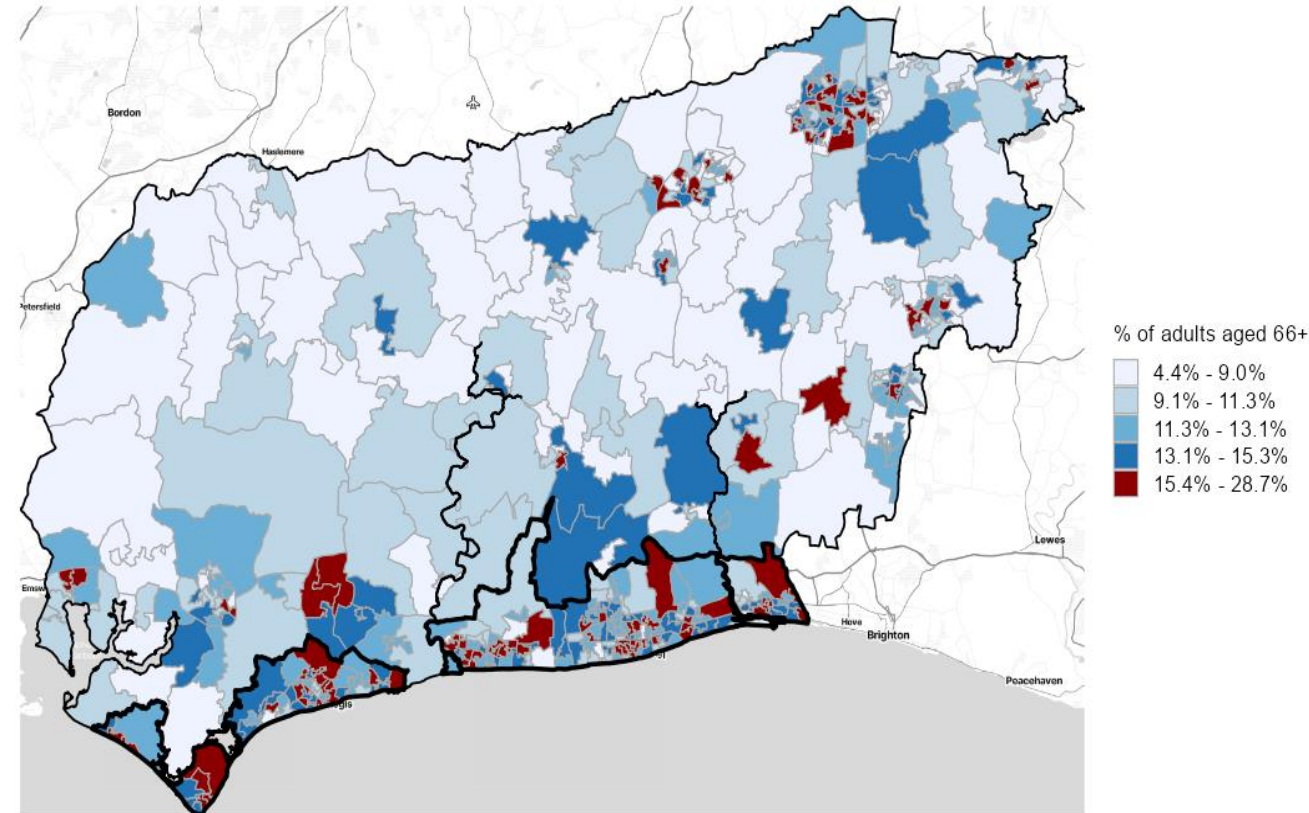
AA can provide additional financial security and claimants could be eligible for additional support e.g., extra Pension Credit or Housing Benefit.

What did our analysis find?

- Around 24,000 (12.3%) people were claiming AA in West Sussex, lower than nationally (13.7%).
- A higher proportion of claimants lived in coastal West Sussex (13.8%) than non-coastal areas (11.9%) and county overall (12.3%).
- Of those in receipt of AA, the main disabling conditions (as recorded on claims), related to musculoskeletal conditions (e.g., arthritis, lower back pain) and dementia.



Proportion of people claiming Attendance Allowance (of population aged 66+) in small areas of West Sussex (2011 Lower Super Output Areas); May 2024



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Notes. LSOAs are shaded based on the proportion of people claiming AA with data for LSOAs within West Sussex split into 5 equal groups (quintiles). Areas within the top quintile (highest proportion of claims) are shown in red. Quarterly data sourced from the DWP. The boundary for Coastal West Sussex is illustrated with a thicker black border.

Pension Credit

What is pension credit?

- Pension credit is the main means-tested benefit for pensioners. It aims to provide financial support to pensioners on low income to bring their weekly income up to a minimum standard amount. The average pension credit award is worth over £3,900 per year.

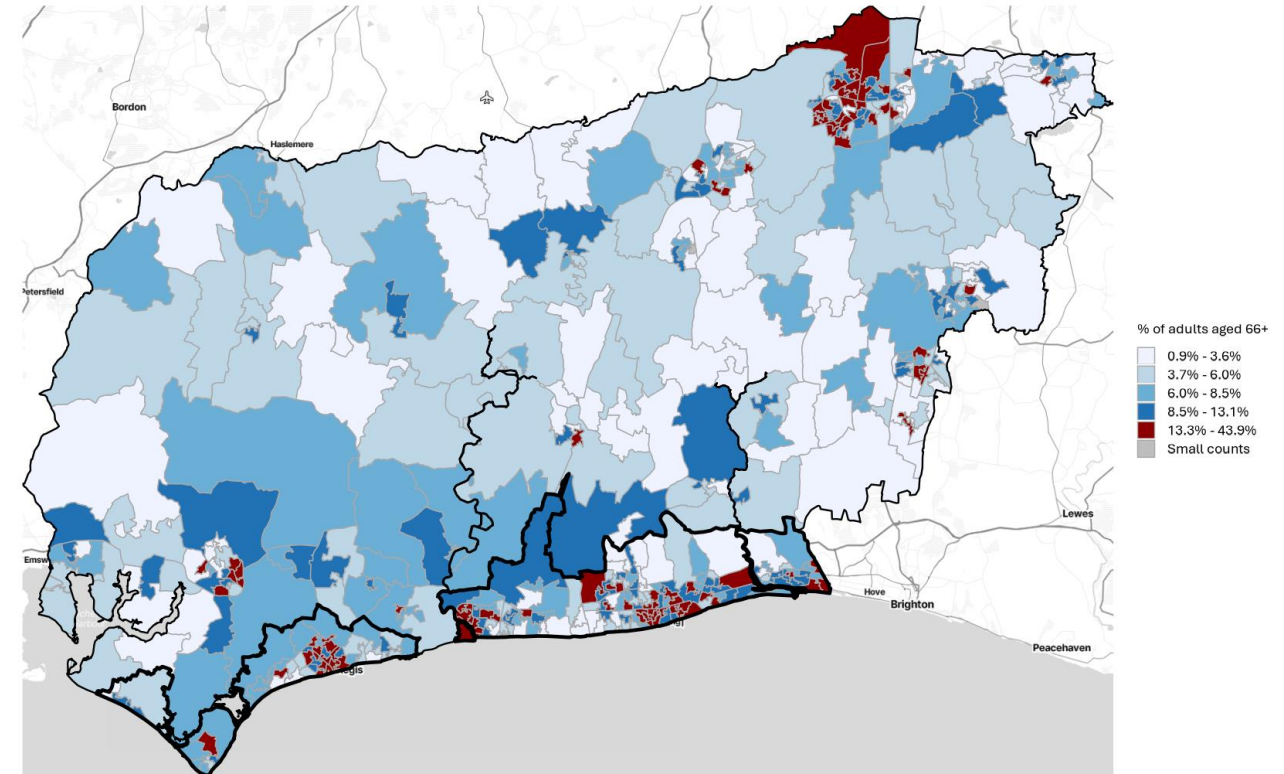
Why does this matter?

- Many older people on low income do not claim the means-tested benefits they are entitled to.
- Pension credit unlocks other financial support, such as help with housing costs, council tax and other bills.

What did our analysis find?

- Around **15,100 claims in West Sussex**, equating to 7.7% of 66+ population - lower than nationally (11.5%).
- The proportion of claims for pension credit is **higher in coastal West Sussex** than the county and non-coastal average, at 9.0%.
- In some small coastal areas of West Sussex, **more than a quarter** of pensioners were claiming pension credit.

Proportion of live claims for Pension Credit among adults aged 66+ in small areas of West Sussex (2011 Lower Super Output Areas); May 2024



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Notes. LSOAs are shaded based on the proportion live claims for Pension Credit, with data for LSOAs within West Sussex split into 5 equal groups (quintiles). Areas within the top quintile (highest proportion of claims) are shown in red. Quarterly data sourced from the DWP. The boundary for Coastal West Sussex is illustrated with a thicker black border.

Housing Benefit

What is housing benefit?

- Housing benefit is a means-tested benefit for people above state pension age to cover rent for households on low income. The level of assistance provided is based on who the property is rented from, household size and circumstances, and actual rent charged.

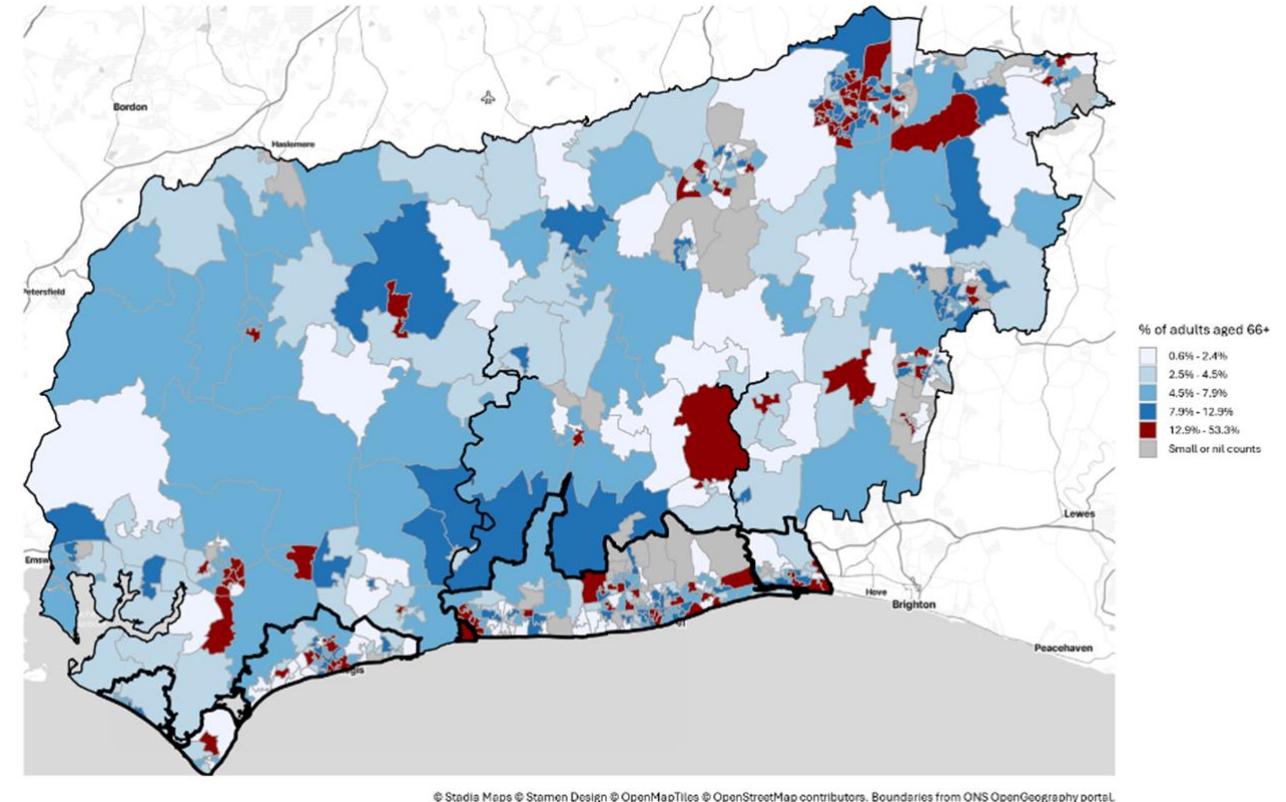
Why does this matter?

- Housing costs are a major driver of poverty. Pensioners who rent are at greater risk of poverty, needing to cover the cost of rent throughout retirement.

What did our analysis find?

- Around **12,250 claims in West Sussex**, equating to 6.3% of the 66+ population – lower than nationally (9.3%).
- The proportion of claims is **lower in coastal West Sussex** than non-coastal, and similar to the county.
- This may reflect complex interactions between age profile (generally older in coastal), tenure (higher levels of ownership in coastal, but also more private rental), supply/demand and affordability.

Proportion of live claims for Housing Benefit among adults aged 66+ in small areas of West Sussex (2011 Lower Super Output Areas); August 2024



Notes. LSOAs are shaded based on the proportion live claims for Housing Benefit, with data for LSOAs within West Sussex split into 5 equal groups (quintiles). Areas within the top quintile (highest proportion of claims among pensioners) are shown in red. Monthly data sourced from the DWP. The boundary for Coastal West Sussex is illustrated with a thicker black border.