

UK Business Counts 2022

The UK Business Counts dataset was released by the Office for National Statistics on 28 September 2022. Figures for 2023 will be released in Autumn 2023.

NOTE: In this bulletin the term Kent refers to the Kent County Council area and excludes Medway.

Further Information

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[Facts and figures about Kent](#)

The UK Business Counts data is published annually by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and is based on output from the VAT and PAYE administrative systems.

The information provided by the UK Business dataset gives a snapshot of businesses, also known as enterprises, and is broken down by size band, industry, turnover, and age of business.

Summary

- In March 2022 there were 65,230 enterprises in Kent.
- The highest proportion of enterprises in Kent (17.8%) are within the construction sector. Significantly higher than the national proportion of 13.5%.
- Most enterprises in Kent (90.2%) are micro enterprises (with 0-9 employees).
- Most enterprises in Kent (99.4%) are classed as companies which operate within the private sector.
- 61.1% of enterprises in Kent reported a turnover of more than £100k in the year 2021/22 (Nationally 60.1%).

Introduction

The UK Business data is produced from a snapshot of the Inter Departmental Business Register (IDBR) - usually taken during March - and provides the basis for the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to conduct surveys of businesses.

The main administrative sources for the IDBR are VAT (Value Added Tax) trader and PAYE (Pay As You Earn) employer information passed to the ONS by HM Revenue & Customs under the Value Added Tax Act 1994 for VAT traders and the Finance Act 1969 for PAYE employers; details of incorporated businesses are also passed to the ONS by Companies House. The ONS Survey data and survey information from the Department of Enterprise, Trade, and Investment – Northern Ireland (DETINI) and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) farms register provide auxiliary information. Construction statistics formerly produced by the Department for Business Innovation & Skills are now produced by the ONS.

The IDBR combines the information from the three administrative sources with this survey data in a statistical register comprising over two million enterprises. These comprehensive administrative sources combined with the survey data contribute to the coverage on the IDBR, which is one of its main strengths, representing nearly 99 per cent of UK economic activity.

The latest data is published for 2022 and is based upon the 2007 revision to the Standard Industrial Classification UKSIC (2007). Detailed information about the types of industry which make up each of the industrial sectors is available from the [UK Standard Industrial Classification of Economic Activities](#) published by the Office for National Statistics.

This bulletin looks at the main tables available from the UK Business data, which relate to VAT/PAYE enterprises.

An additional dataset from the ONS is the Business Demography dataset. This is also based on VAT and PAYE data, but this information measures any activity during the year, so leads to slightly higher counts of businesses. It provides information on business births, deaths, and survival rates.

Information on this dataset can be found in the bulletin [“Business Births, deaths and survival rates”](#).

Enterprises in Kent

There were 65,230 enterprises in Kent as of March 2022 up 0.8% from the previous year. This was a bigger increase than seen nationally where there was a very small increase (+0.0%) and regionally where the number of enterprises fell by 1.8%.

When compared with 2010 the number of enterprises in Kent has grown by 30.9%, a larger increase than was seen in the South East region (+24.9%) but lower than the national growth of 32.4%.

Maidstone district had the highest number of enterprises (8,320) in 2022 and saw the biggest growth over the previous year (+325 enterprises, +4.1%).

While all Kent districts have seen an increase since 2010, in the last year five districts saw numbers fall. The biggest reduction was in Dartford which had 130 fewer enterprises than in 2021 (a fall of 2.7%). Ashford, Tonbridge & Malling, Tunbridge Wells and Gravesham also saw numbers of enterprises fall.

Table 1: VAT and/or PAYE based enterprises

Area	2022	Number change		Number change	
		2010-2022	% change 2010-2022	2021-2022	% change 2021-2022
Ashford	6,485	1,450	28.8%	-120	-1.8%
Canterbury	5,580	1,160	26.2%	125	2.3%
Dartford	4,650	1,820	64.3%	-130	-2.7%
Dover	3,710	910	32.5%	30	0.8%
Folkestone & Hythe	3,850	740	23.8%	65	1.7%
Gravesham	4,085	1,455	55.3%	-30	-0.7%
Maidstone	8,320	2,185	35.6%	325	4.1%
Sevenoaks	6,665	965	16.9%	55	0.8%
Swale	5,150	1,190	30.1%	105	2.1%
Thanet	4,380	1,260	40.4%	195	4.7%
Tonbridge & Malling	6,105	1,485	32.1%	-35	-0.6%
Tunbridge Wells	6,245	780	14.3%	-55	-0.9%
Kent	65,230	15,410	30.9%	530	0.8%
Medway	8,980	2,745	44.0%	-215	-2.3%
Kent + Medway	74,210	18,155	32.4%	315	0.4%
South East LEP	178,305	40,715	29.6%	375	0.2%
South East Region	412,650	82,275	24.9%	-7,535	-1.8%
Great Britain	2,689,750	657,905	32.4%	1,300	0.0%

Source: ONS UK Business Counts

Presented by: Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

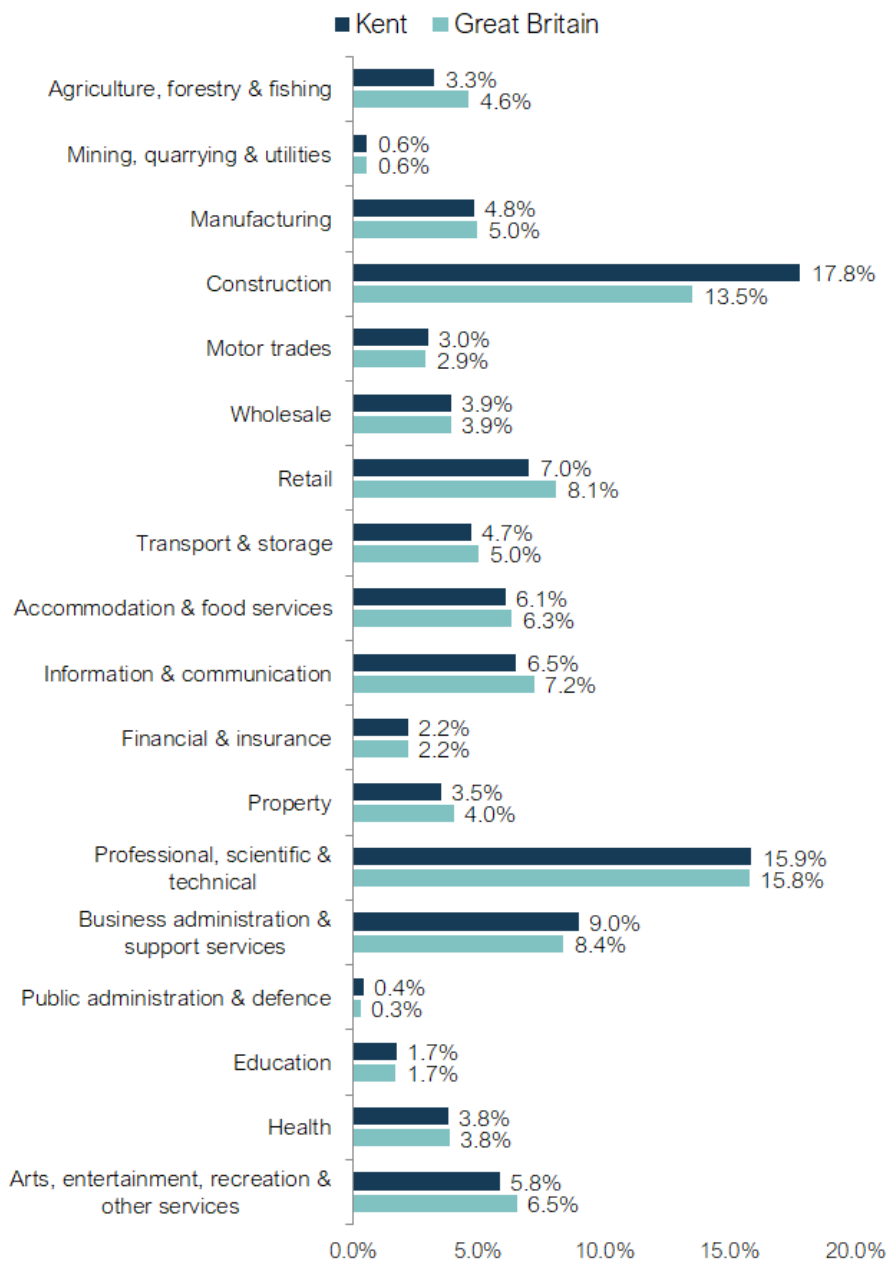
Enterprises by Industry

The UK Business data shows us the number of enterprises by broad industrial group.

Overall, Kent has a similar profile to Great Britain although does show a noticeably higher proportion of enterprises in the Construction Industry and lower proportions in Agriculture and Fishing, Retail, and Information & Communications industries.

Chart 1: Enterprises by Industry

Percentage of Enterprises by Industry, 2022



Source: ONS UK Business Counts
Presented by: Kent Analytics, Kent County Council

Table 2: Number of Vat And/or PAYE Based Enterprises in Kent districts in 2022 By Broad Industrial Group

2022	Agriculture, forestry & fishing	Mining, quarrying & utilities	Manufacturing	Construction	Motor trades	Wholesale	Retail	Transport & storage	Accommodation & food services	Information & communication	Financial & insurance	Property	Professional, scientific & technical	Business administration & support services	Public administration & defence	Education	Health	Arts, entertainment, recreation & other services
Ashford	415	45	320	1,040	170	250	400	205	275	375	395	275	1,005	625	30	90	240	335
Canterbury	160	30	255	835	170	195	470	150	450	355	100	210	935	460	20	115	270	405
Dartford	25	30	215	1,050	145	180	305	320	215	445	70	160	645	385	10	80	170	210
Dover	170	25	175	665	135	105	345	170	335	170	45	95	525	270	35	65	150	230
Folkestone & Hythe	190	15	185	625	125	110	335	145	380	190	40	135	560	305	25	80	150	255
Gravesham	40	20	195	910	120	115	280	420	275	240	40	110	500	375	5	70	150	225
Maidstone	285	45	380	1,560	260	600	540	645	365	455	155	270	1,225	670	35	125	295	410
Sevenoaks	205	30	300	1,180	195	230	380	140	270	505	170	295	1,255	720	25	120	235	425
Swale	195	50	360	1,050	190	165	355	355	340	240	55	165	630	410	25	85	185	290
Thanet	70	25	255	780	120	120	415	140	475	255	60	140	550	360	10	95	160	350
Tonbridge & Malling	120	35	270	1,170	165	245	320	240	275	445	150	185	1,120	690	25	110	220	310
Tunbridge Wells	255	20	240	765	145	235	435	145	310	570	145	240	1,410	605	20	100	245	365
Kent	2,125	360	3,140	11,635	1,945	2,555	4,580	3,070	3,965	4,245	1,420	2,275	10,360	5,875	265	1,140	2,475	3,805
Medway	75	55	455	2,145	280	310	660	670	525	500	110	260	1,130	740	15	175	395	480
Kent + Medway	2,200	415	3,595	13,780	2,220	2,865	5,240	3,735	4,485	4,745	1,530	2,535	11,490	6,620	280	1,310	2,870	4,285

Table 3: Percentage of Vat And/or PAYE Based Enterprises in Kent districts in 2022 By Broad Industrial Group

2022	Agriculture, forestry & fishing	Mining, quarrying & utilities	Manufacturing	Construction	Motor trades	Wholesale	Retail	Transport & storage	Accommodation & food services	Information & communication	Financial & insurance	Property	Professional, scientific & technical	Business administration & support services	Public administration & defence	Education	Health	Arts, entertainment, recreation & other services
Ashford	6.4	0.7	4.9	16.0	2.6	3.9	6.2	3.2	4.2	5.8	6.1	4.2	15.5	9.6	0.5	1.4	3.7	5.2
Canterbury	2.9	0.5	4.6	15.0	3.0	3.5	8.4	2.7	8.1	6.4	1.8	3.8	16.8	8.2	0.4	2.1	4.8	7.3
Dartford	0.5	0.6	4.6	22.6	3.1	3.9	6.6	6.9	4.6	9.6	1.5	3.4	13.9	8.3	0.2	1.7	3.7	4.5
Dover	4.6	0.7	4.7	17.9	3.6	2.8	9.3	4.6	9.0	4.6	1.2	2.6	14.2	7.3	0.9	1.8	4.0	6.2
Folkestone & Hythe	4.9	0.4	4.8	16.2	3.2	2.9	8.7	3.8	9.9	4.9	1.0	3.5	14.5	7.9	0.6	2.1	3.9	6.6
Gravesham	1.0	0.5	4.8	22.3	2.9	2.8	6.9	10.3	6.7	5.9	1.0	2.7	12.2	9.2	0.1	1.7	3.7	5.5
Maidstone	3.4	0.5	4.6	18.8	3.1	7.2	6.5	7.8	4.4	5.5	1.9	3.2	14.7	8.1	0.4	1.5	3.5	4.9
Sevenoaks	3.1	0.5	4.5	17.7	2.9	3.5	5.7	2.1	4.1	7.6	2.6	4.4	18.8	10.8	0.4	1.8	3.5	6.4
Swale	3.8	1.0	7.0	20.4	3.7	3.2	6.9	6.9	6.6	4.7	1.1	3.2	12.2	8.0	0.5	1.7	3.6	5.6
Thanet	1.6	0.6	5.8	17.8	2.7	2.7	9.5	3.2	10.8	5.8	1.4	3.2	12.6	8.2	0.2	2.2	3.7	8.0
Tonbridge & Malling	2.0	0.6	4.4	19.2	2.7	4.0	5.2	3.9	4.5	7.3	2.5	3.0	18.3	11.3	0.4	1.8	3.6	5.1
Tunbridge Wells	4.1	0.3	3.8	12.2	2.3	3.8	7.0	2.3	5.0	9.1	2.3	3.8	22.6	9.7	0.3	1.6	3.9	5.8
Kent	3.3	0.6	4.8	17.8	3.0	3.9	7.0	4.7	6.1	6.5	2.2	3.5	15.9	9.0	0.4	1.7	3.8	5.8
Medway	0.8	0.6	5.1	23.9	3.1	3.5	7.3	7.5	5.8	5.6	1.2	2.9	12.6	8.2	0.2	1.9	4.4	5.3
Kent + Medway	3.0	0.6	4.8	18.6	3.0	3.9	7.1	5.0	6.0	6.4	2.1	3.4	15.5	8.9	0.4	1.8	3.9	5.8

Enterprises by employee size

Most enterprises are classed as micro businesses i.e. they have 0 - 9 employees. Kent has a slightly higher proportion of enterprises which are classed as micro (90.2%) than Great Britain (89.5%).

Chart 2 shows the proportion of enterprises in Kent and Great Britain by employment size.

Chart 2: Enterprises by size-band

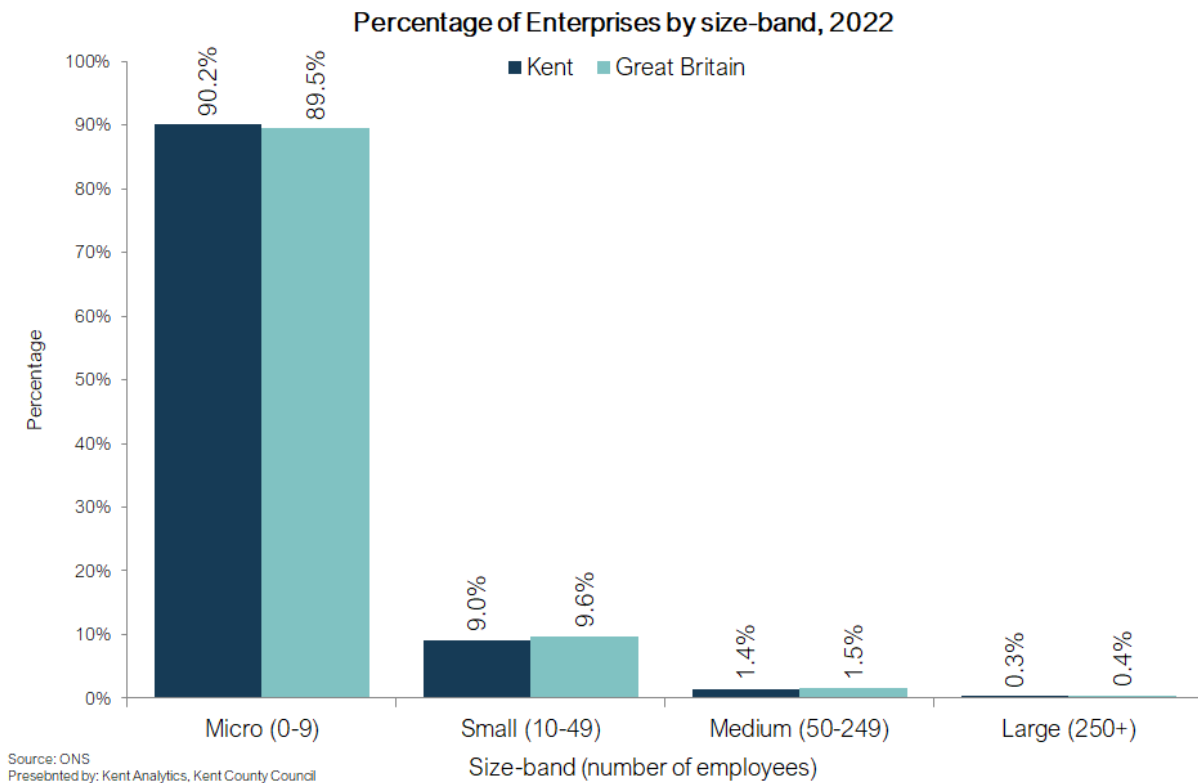


Table 4 shows the number of enterprises by the number of employees in Kent districts.

Table 4: Number of VAT and/or PAYE based enterprises by employment sizeband

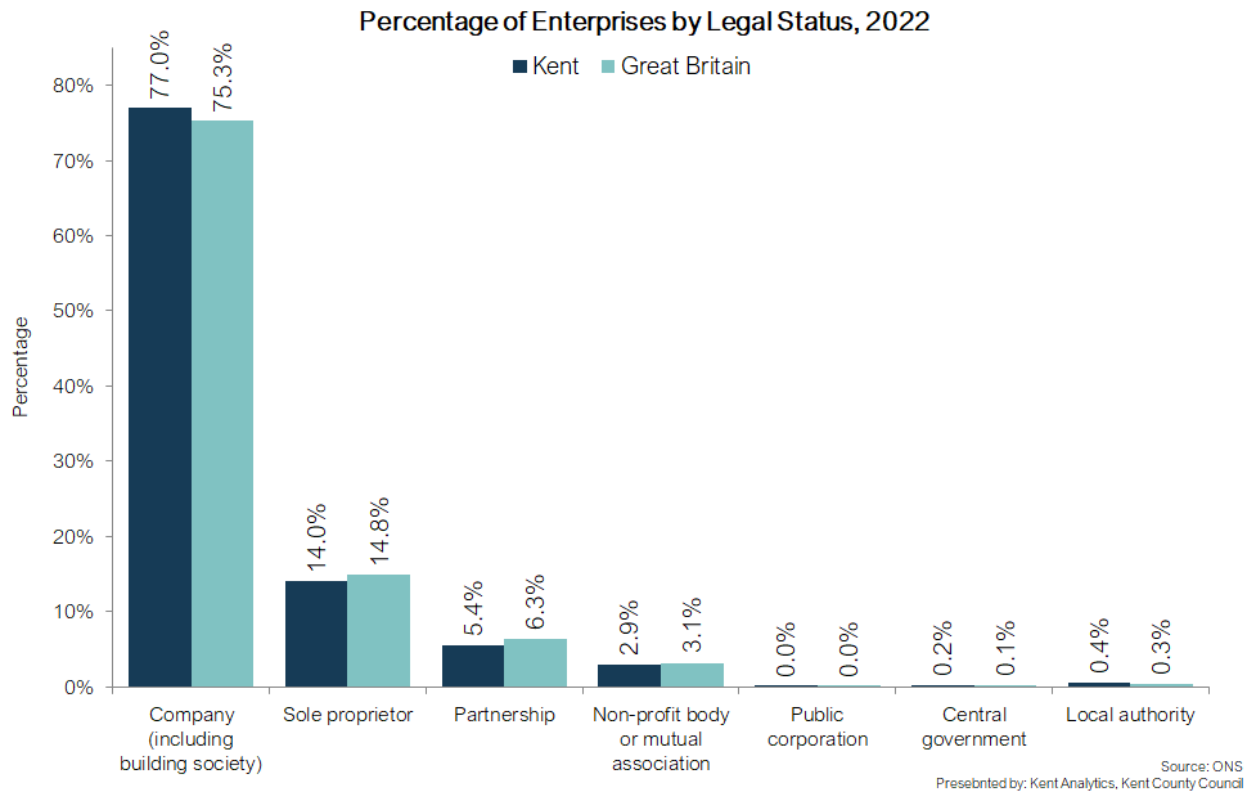
2022	Micro (0-9)	Small (10-49)	Medium (50-249)	Large (250+)	Total
Ashford	5,910	535	80	15	6,485
Canterbury	4,970	565	85	25	5,580
Dartford	4,195	405	85	25	4,650
Dover	3,320	355	60	5	3,710
Folkestone & Hythe	3,470	355	40	10	3,850
Gravesham	3,725	325	50	10	4,085
Maidstone	7,570	675	115	30	8,320
Sevenoaks	6,040	585	90	20	6,665
Swale	4,590	505	80	20	5,150
Thanet	3,950	395	60	5	4,380
Tonbridge and Malling	5,420	630	100	25	6,105
Tunbridge Wells	5,660	555	75	10	6,245
Kent	58,805	5,880	925	200	65,230
Medway	8,165	740	115	30	8,980
Kent + Medway	66,970	6,620	1,040	230	74,210
South East LEP	161,020	15,945	2,410	495	178,305
South East Region	371,330	37,505	5,970	1,590	412,650
Great Britain	2,406,400	258,585	40,685	10,340	2,689,750

Enterprise by status

The Business Counts data also shows the number of enterprises by legal status. The legal status of an enterprise is classified by the ONS in accordance with National Accounts Sector Classifications. All enterprises engage in financial transactions, paying out and receiving money for reasons such as buying and selling goods and services, paying taxes, or collecting tax revenues. Using information received from Companies House and the administrative sources from HM Revenue & Customs, the National Accounts Sector Classification determines whether a body or enterprise is in the private or public sector, and if public, whether they are government bodies or public corporations, and whether certain transactions count as taxes or service fees.

Chart 3 shows the proportion of enterprises by legal status in Kent compared to Great Britain in 2022.

Chart 3: Enterprises by legal status



The majority of enterprises are private sector companies. In Kent they account for 99.4% of all enterprises, just below Great Britain as a whole (99.5%).

Table 5 overleaf shows the number of enterprises by legal status in Kent local authority districts and Kent as a whole, with information at regional and national level for comparison.

Table 5: Number of VAT and/or PAYE based enterprises by legal status

2022	Private sector: Company (including building society)	Private sector: Sole proprietor	Private sector: Partnership	Private sector: Non- profit body or mutual association	Public sector: Public corporation	Public sector: Central government	Public sector: Local authority	TOTAL
Ashford	4,620	880	475	470	0	10	30	6,485
Canterbury	4,095	900	365	190	0	10	25	5,580
Dartford	3,955	475	105	95	0	15	10	4,650
Dover	2,490	750	325	105	0	5	35	3,710
Folkestone & Hythe	2,750	675	295	100	0	10	25	3,850
Gravesham	3,385	475	125	85	0	5	5	4,085
Maidstone	6,665	1,045	380	185	0	10	35	8,320
Sevenoaks	5,325	840	310	160	0	5	30	6,665
Swale	3,860	825	295	125	0	15	25	5,150
Thanet	3,255	745	260	110	0	10	10	4,380
Tonbridge and Malling	4,950	730	240	150	0	5	30	6,105
Tunbridge Wells	4,900	820	345	155	0	5	20	6,245
Kent	50,240	9,155	3,520	1,920	5	100	285	65,230
Medway	7,265	1,170	295	210	0	20	20	8,980
Kent + Medway	57,505	10,325	3,820	2,130	5	120	305	74,210
South East LEP	139,400	24,190	9,310	4,435	10	310	650	178,305
South East Region	324,670	54,720	19,685	11,735	15	425	1,390	412,650
Great Britain	2,024,970	399,100	169,130	84,295	170	3,350	8,740	2,689,750

Turnover

Turnover figures provided to the ONS for the majority of traders is based on VAT returns for a 12 month period. For 2022 this relates to a 12 month period covering the financial year 2021/22. For other records, in particular members of VAT group registrations, turnover may relate to an earlier period or survey data.

For traders who have registered more recently, turnover represents the estimate made by traders at the time of registration.

The turnover figures on the register generally exclude VAT but include other taxes, such as the revenue duties on alcoholic drinks and tobacco. They represent total UK turnover, including exempt and zero-rated supplies.

Turnover bands shown in the analyses relate to the latest year for which information is available. Traders may be registered below the VAT threshold or may choose not to de-register should their turnover fall below the threshold.

Table 6 shows the VAT registration thresholds since 2010/11. The level at which an enterprise must register for VAT has remain unchanged at £85,000 since 1st April 2017.

Table 6 - VAT registration thresholds

Operative dates	VAT Registration Threshold
1 Apr 2010 - 31 Mar 2011	£70,000
1 Apr 2011 - 31 Mar 2012	£73,000
1 Apr 2012 - 31 Mar 2013	£77,000
1 Apr 2013 - 31 Mar 2014	£79,000
1 Apr 2014 - 31 Mar 2015	£81,000
1 Apr 2015 - 31 Mar 2016	£82,000
1 Apr 2016 - 31 Mar 2017	£83,000
1 Apr 2017 onwards	£85,000

A higher proportion of enterprises in Kent (61.1%) have a turnover of £100k and above than is seen nationally (60.1%).

The proportion of enterprises by turnover sizeband in Kent compared to Great Britain is shown in chart 4 overleaf.

Chart 4: Percentage of VAT and/or PAYE enterprises by turnover

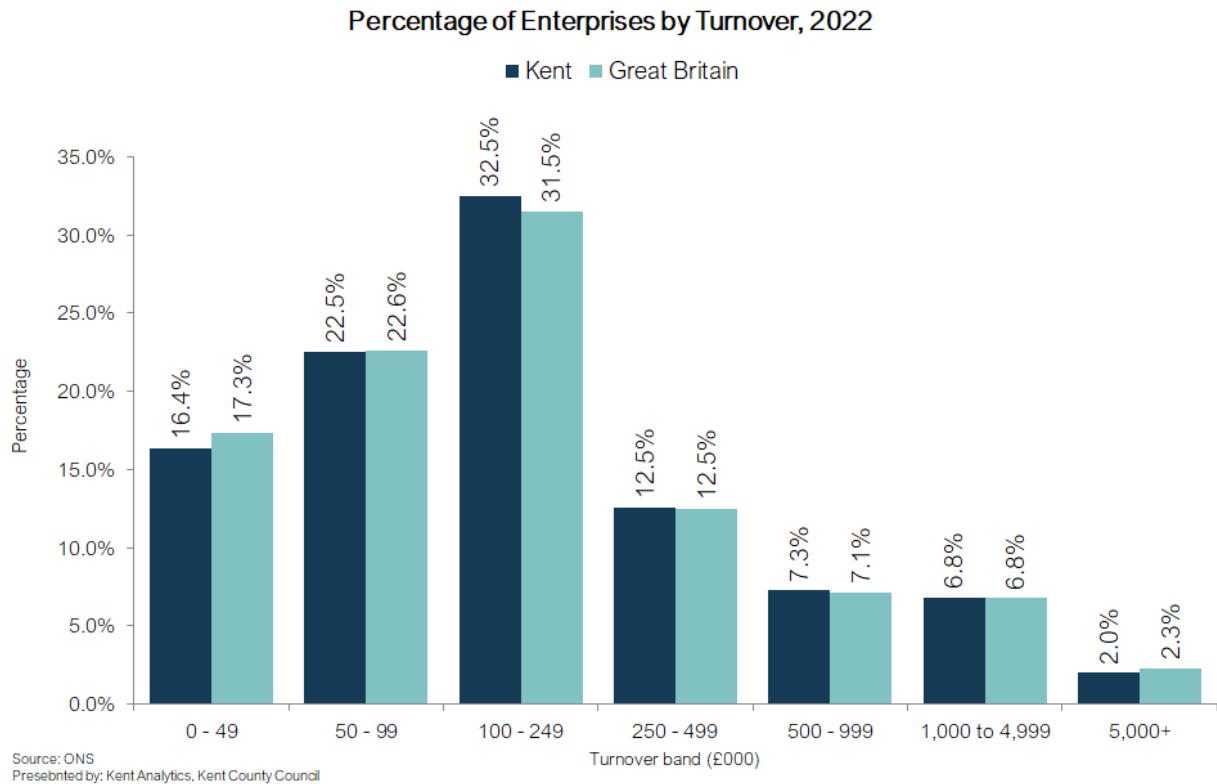


Table 7 overleaf presents the turnover data for Kent local authority districts and Kent as a whole. Regional and national figures are also presented for comparison.

Table 7: Number of VAT and/or PAYE enterprises by turnover

2022	0 to 49 (£ thousand)	50 to 99 (£ thousand)	100 to 199 (£ thousand)	200 to 499 (£ thousand)	500 to 999 (£ thousand)	1,000 to 4,999 (£ thousand)	5,000+ (£ thousand)	TOTAL
Ashford	1,425	1,330	1,955	775	445	450	100	6,485
Canterbury	880	1,320	1,805	710	415	365	85	5,580
Dartford	680	1,130	1,510	550	295	360	125	4,650
Dover	600	885	1,150	470	305	230	70	3,710
Folkestone & Hythe	660	905	1,265	480	265	225	50	3,850
Gravesham	640	1,015	1,310	530	295	250	50	4,085
Maidstone	1,370	1,820	2,855	990	575	535	180	8,320
Sevenoaks	1,080	1,410	2,095	890	515	495	175	6,665
Swale	780	1,175	1,585	675	450	385	100	5,150
Thanet	615	1,005	1,580	590	295	240	60	4,380
Tonbridge & Malling	915	1,325	1,970	780	440	485	195	6,105
Tunbridge Wells	1,030	1,365	2,140	745	445	410	105	6,245
Kent	10,670	14,690	21,215	8,185	4,735	4,440	1,300	65,230
Medway	1,350	2,355	2,785	1,115	630	565	175	8,980
Kent + Medway	12,025	17,040	24,000	9,300	5,370	5,005	1,470	74,210
South East LEP	27,825	40,870	58,385	22,485	13,050	12,165	3,520	178,305
South East Region	70,920	91,985	133,800	50,520	28,510	27,610	9,305	412,650
Great Britain	465,740	607,125	847,370	334,925	191,645	181,855	61,095	2,689,750

Related documents

Further information on a wide range of economic indicators can be found on our [Economy & Employment](#) webpages.