

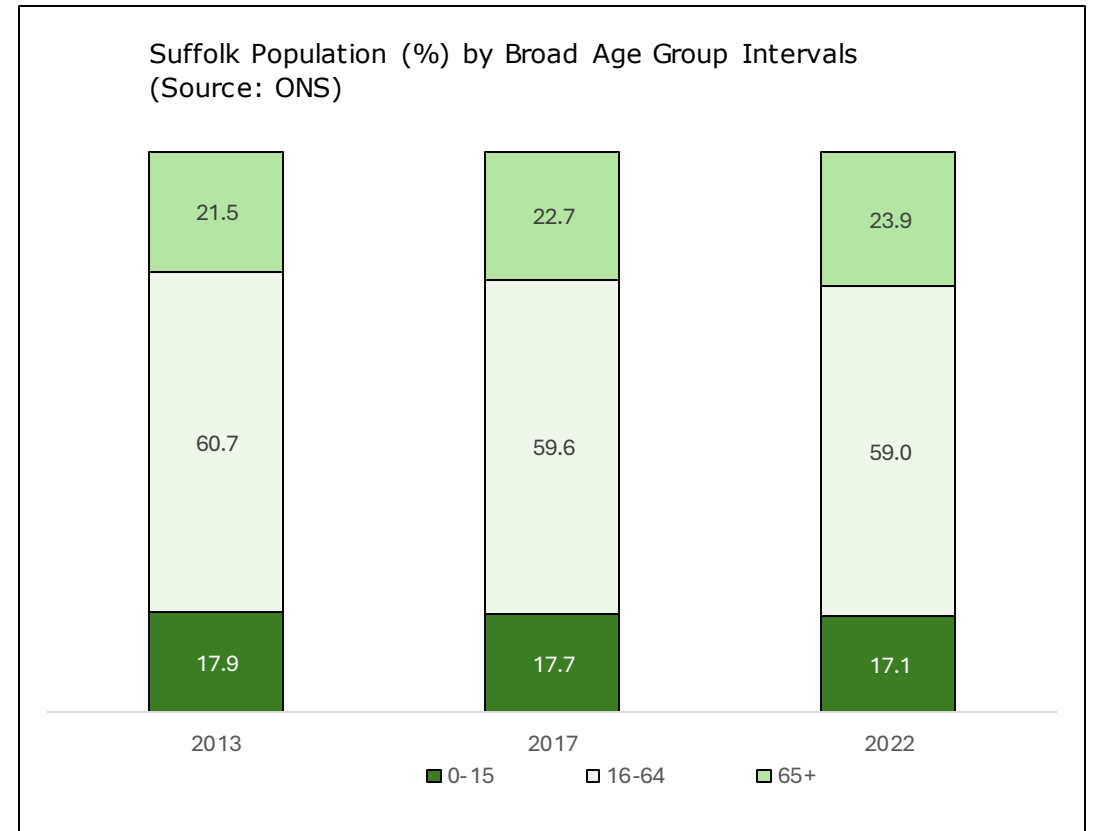
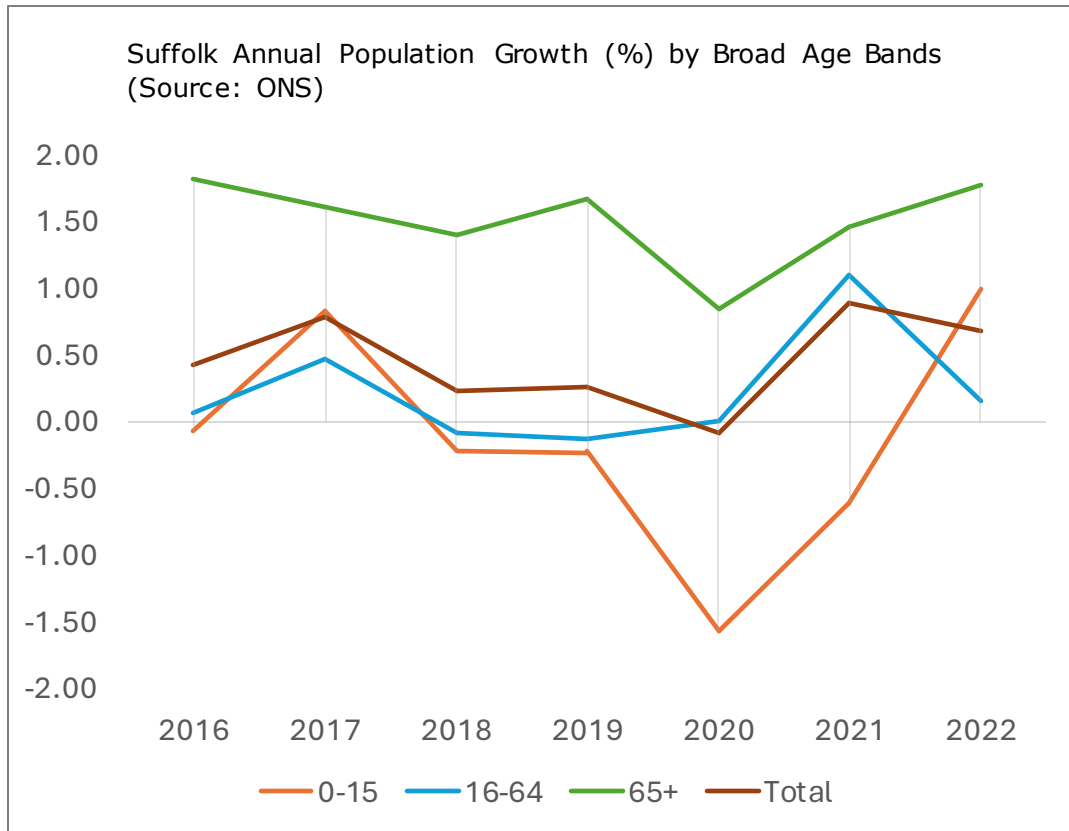


# SUFFOLK ECONOMY & EMPLOYMENT UPDATE

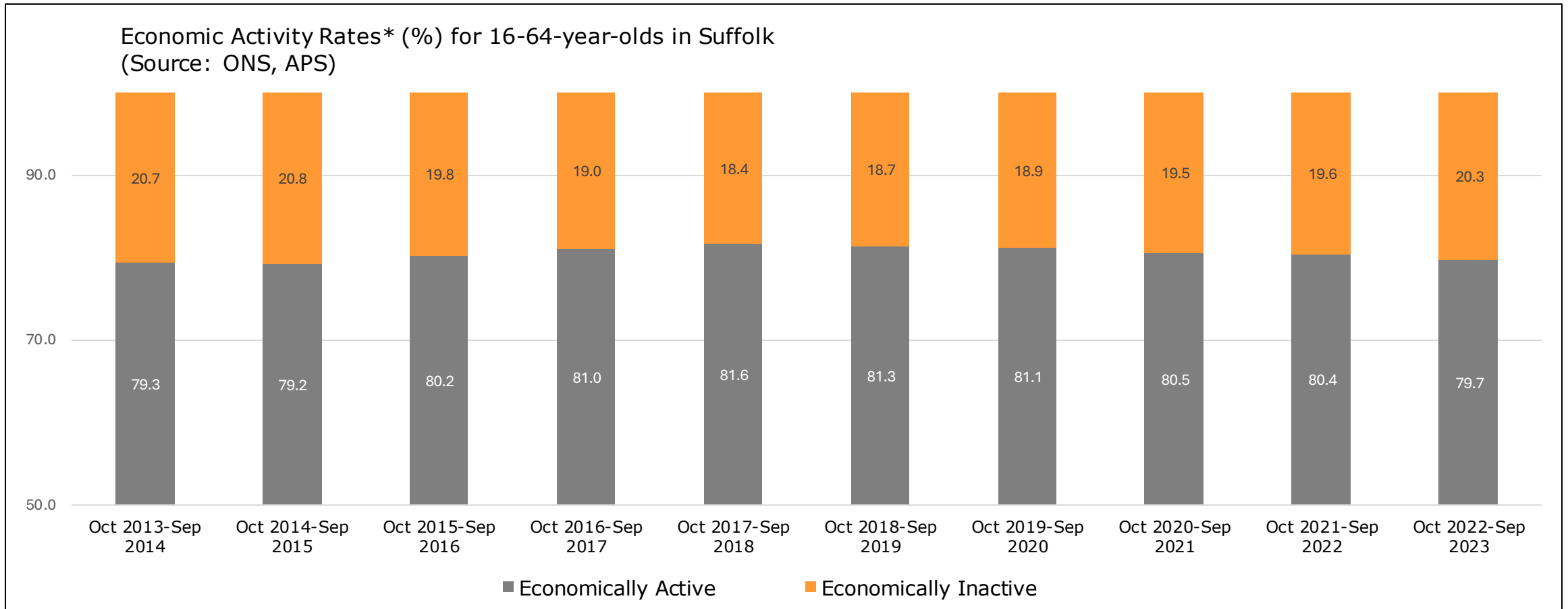
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Suffolk's economy is suffering from slower working-age population growth (0.15%) and consistently stronger growth of the 65+ age band (1.77%) The proportion of 16-64-year-olds is estimated at 59.0% in 2022 – the lowest in more than 30 years.



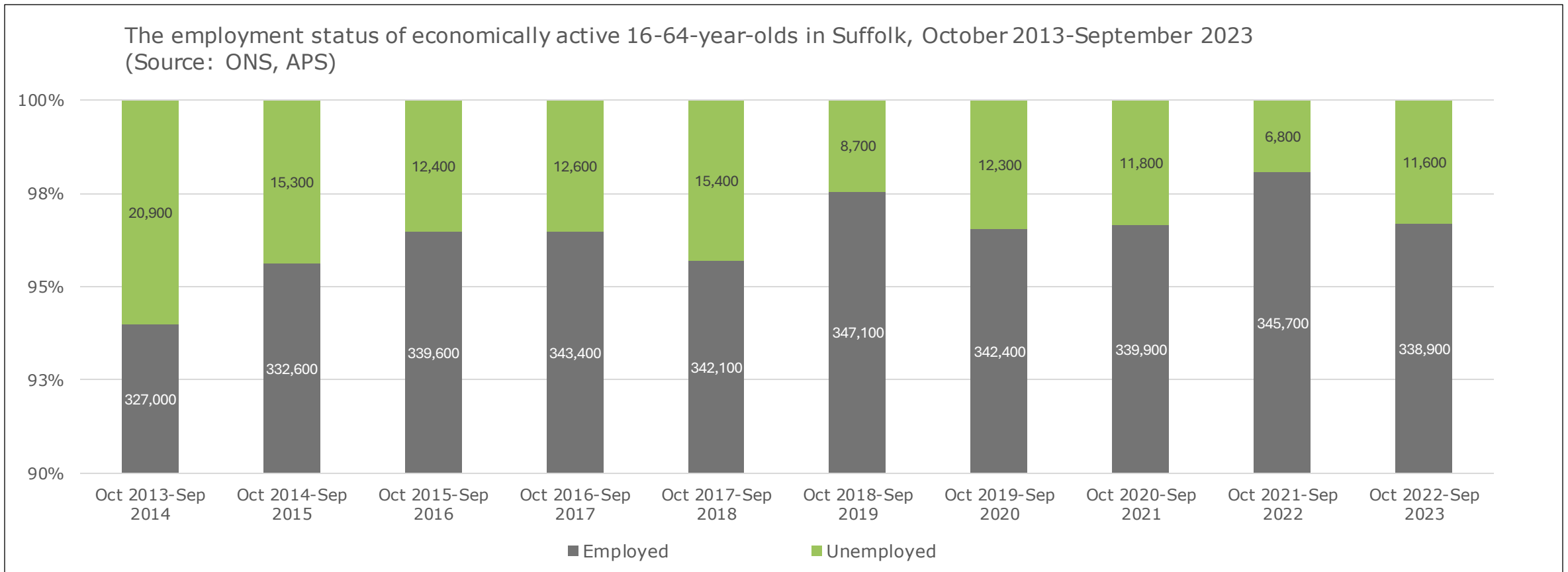
The economic activity rate of 16-64-year-olds in Suffolk has been declining slowly since 2017 with 79.7% (350,500) active in the 12 months to September 2023, down from 80.4% (352,500) the previous year.



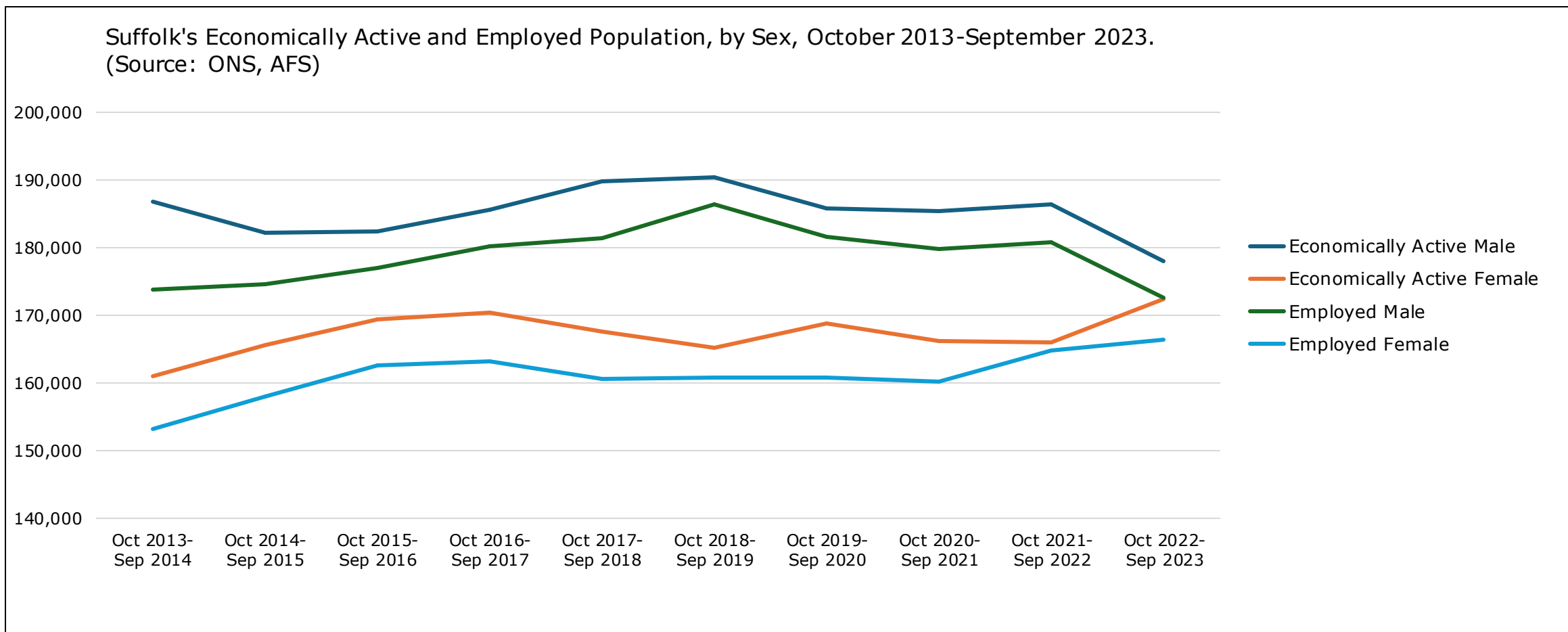
\* Economically active: 16-64-years-old in work or seeking work and willing and able to accept a job.  
Economically inactive: 16-64-years-old and not involved in the labour market – not working nor seeking employment.



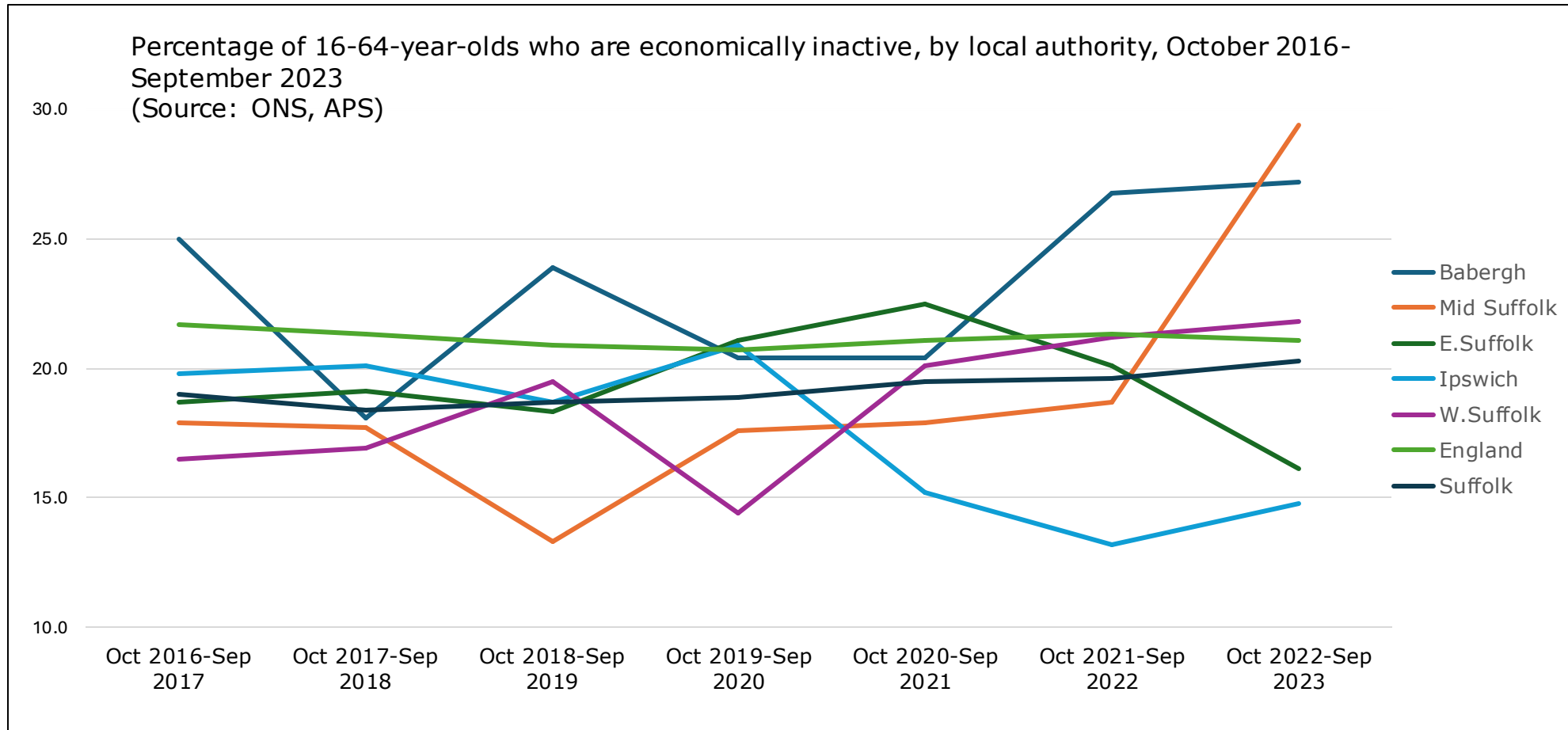
The proportion of economically active 16-64-year-olds in employment has fluctuated significantly; the latest figures shows a decline in the 12 months to September 2023 (from 78.9% (345,700) to 77% (338,900)). Fewer 16-64-year-olds are in employment than for any year (October-September) since 2015.



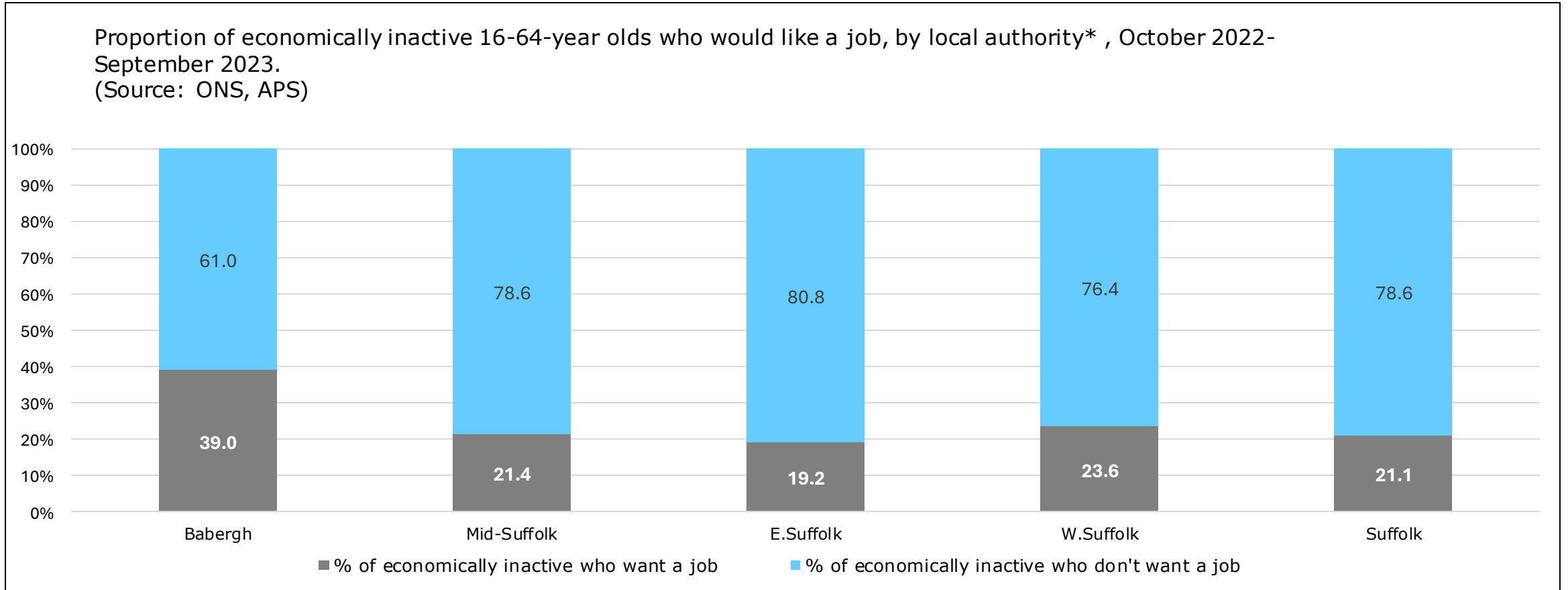
The number of economically active males in Suffolk has fallen to its lowest point while the number of economically active women has risen to its highest level for 10+ years. 51% (178,000) of the economically active population were male and 49% (172,500) female in the 12 months to September 2023. This compares with 52.5% male and 47.5% female for England and 54% and 64% respectively in Suffolk in 2013-2014.



The percentage of economically inactive 16-64-year-olds in Suffolk (20.3% in the 12 months to September 2023) has been gradually increasing. For the first time for many years, West Suffolk (21.8%) and Mid-Suffolk (29.5%) have joined Babergh (27.2%) in over-indexing against England (21.1%).



The proportion of Suffolk's economically inactive population who do not want a job is 78.6%. The proportion in Babergh is substantially lower (61%) and higher in East Suffolk (80.8%). **There are therefore 18,900 people who are currently inactive but would like a job.**

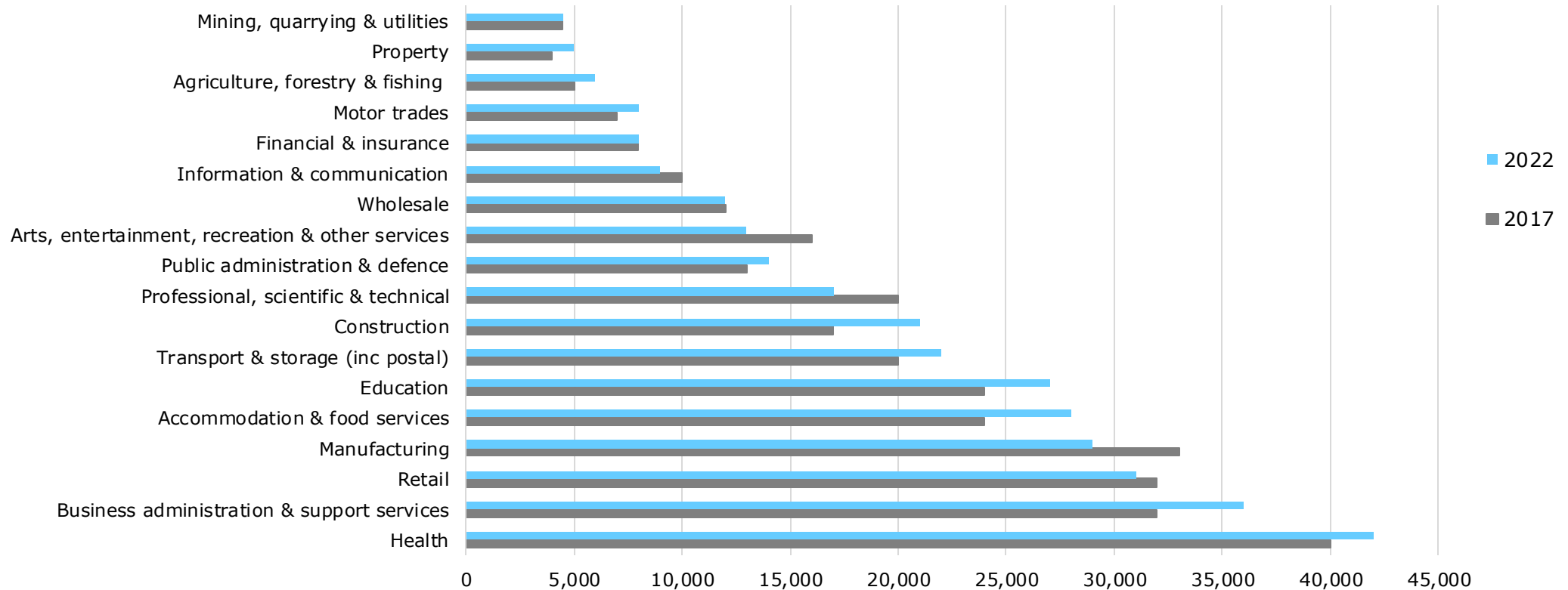


\* APS estimates for Ipswich for the 12 months to October 2022 and October 2023 are not available; the group sample size is zero or disclosive (0-2)



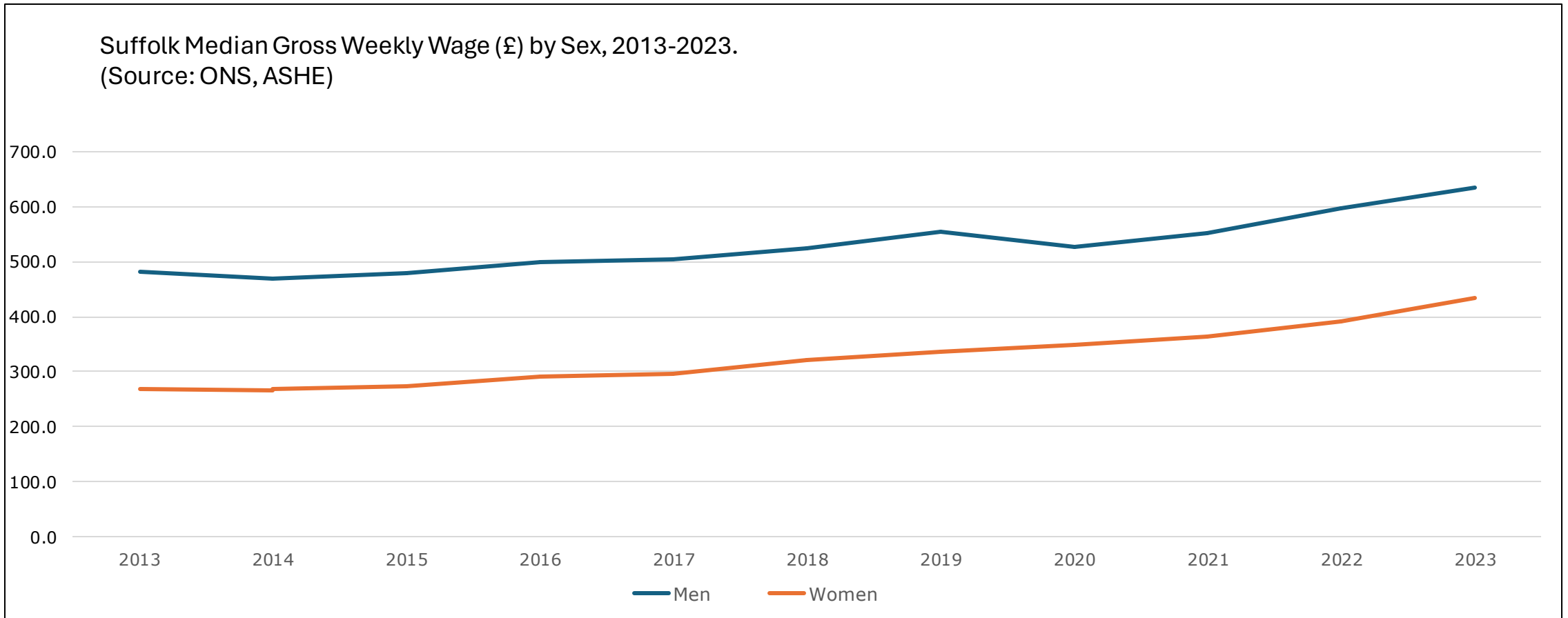
The health industry continues to be the largest source of employment in Suffolk, closely followed by Business Administration and Support Services. Manufacturing held the second ranking in 2017 but since fallen to rank only fourth in 2022.

Number of Employees by Industry, Suffolk, 2017 and 2022.  
(Source: ONS, BRES)

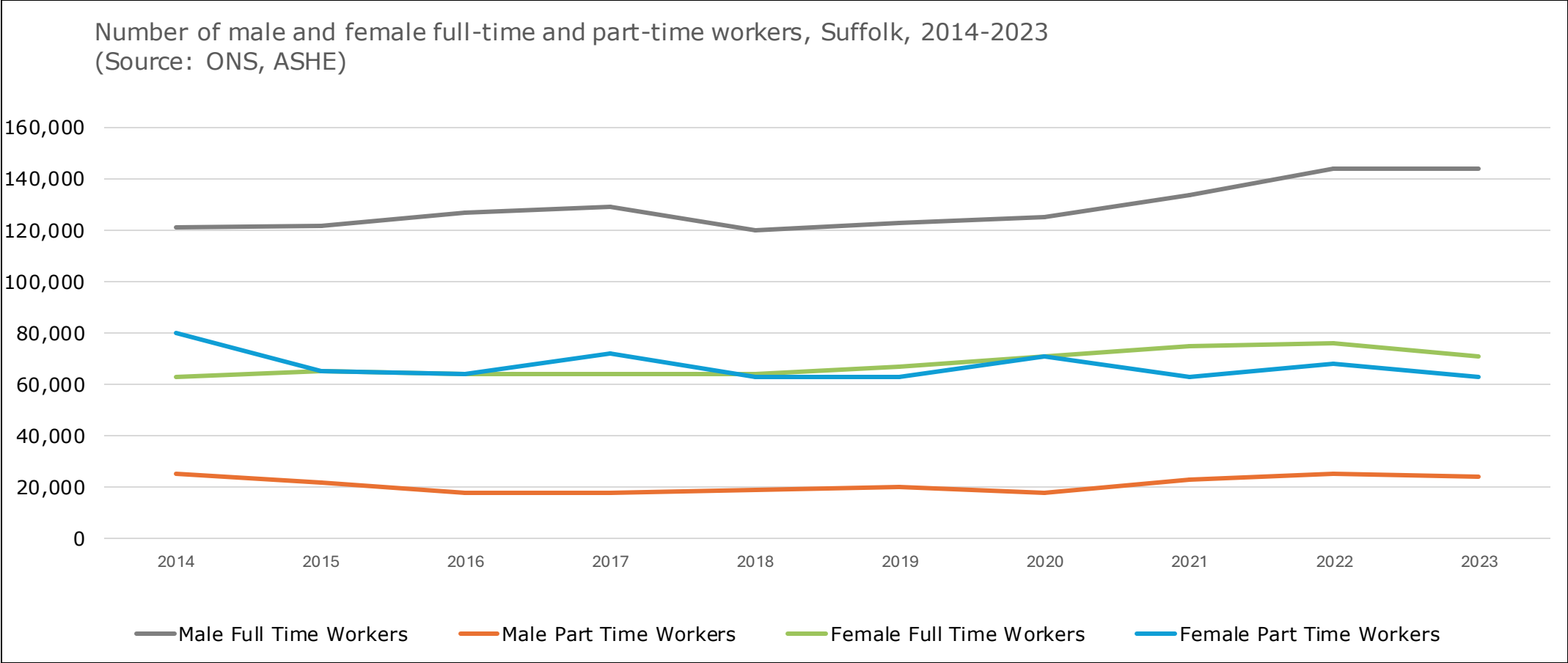




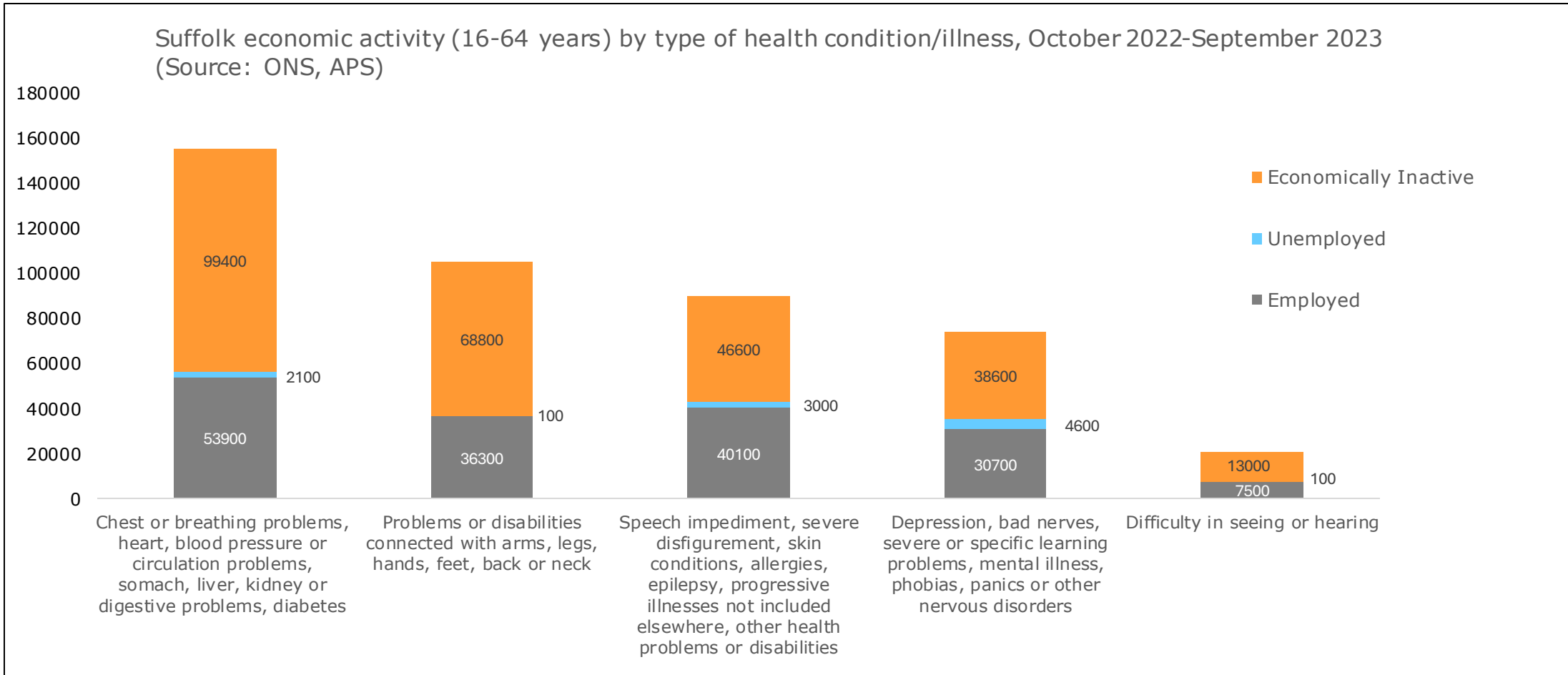
Suffolk median gross weekly wages have continued to rise gently since a modest fall during the covid pandemic. The gap between weekly pay for men and women has not **closed significantly despite women now making up almost half of the economically active population. This disparity is largely due to the choice of industry and hours worked.**



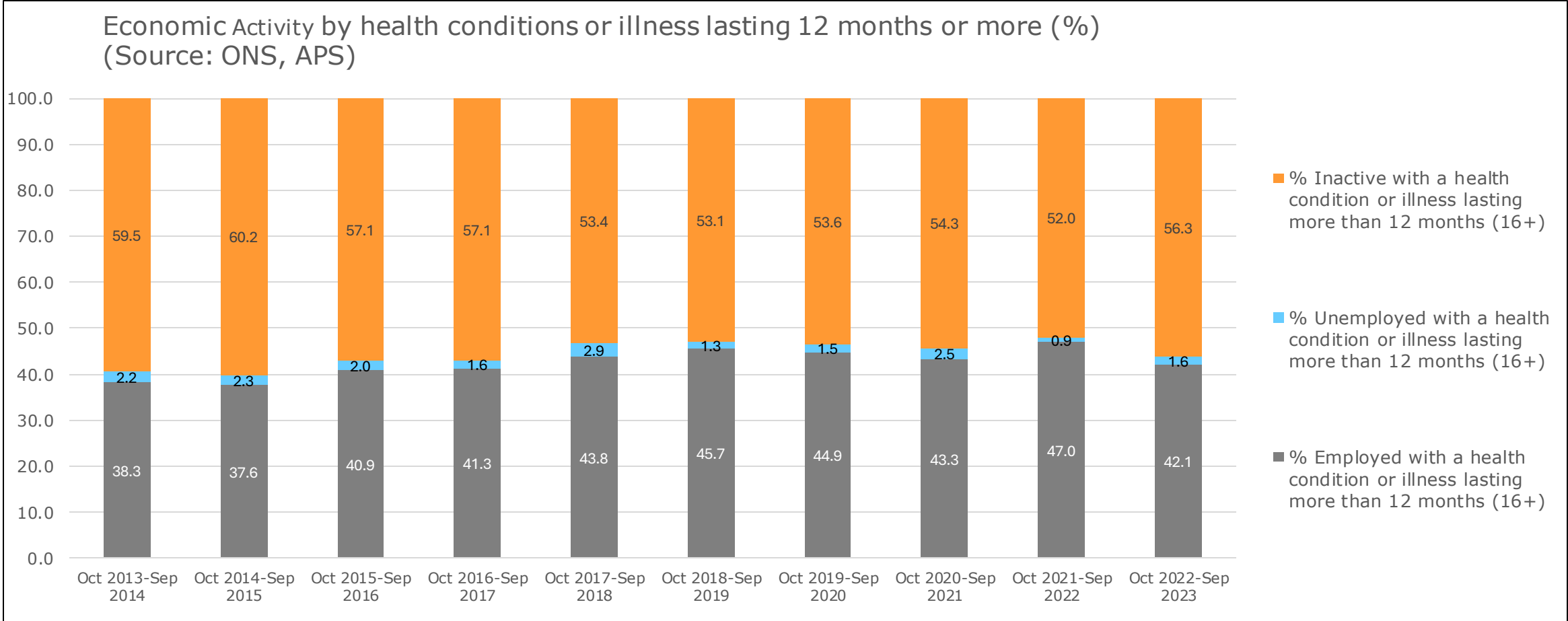
After falling marginally during the covid pandemic, the number of male full-time workers increased 2020-22 before remaining steady in 2023. By contrast, full and part-time female workers have reduced in numbers in 2023.



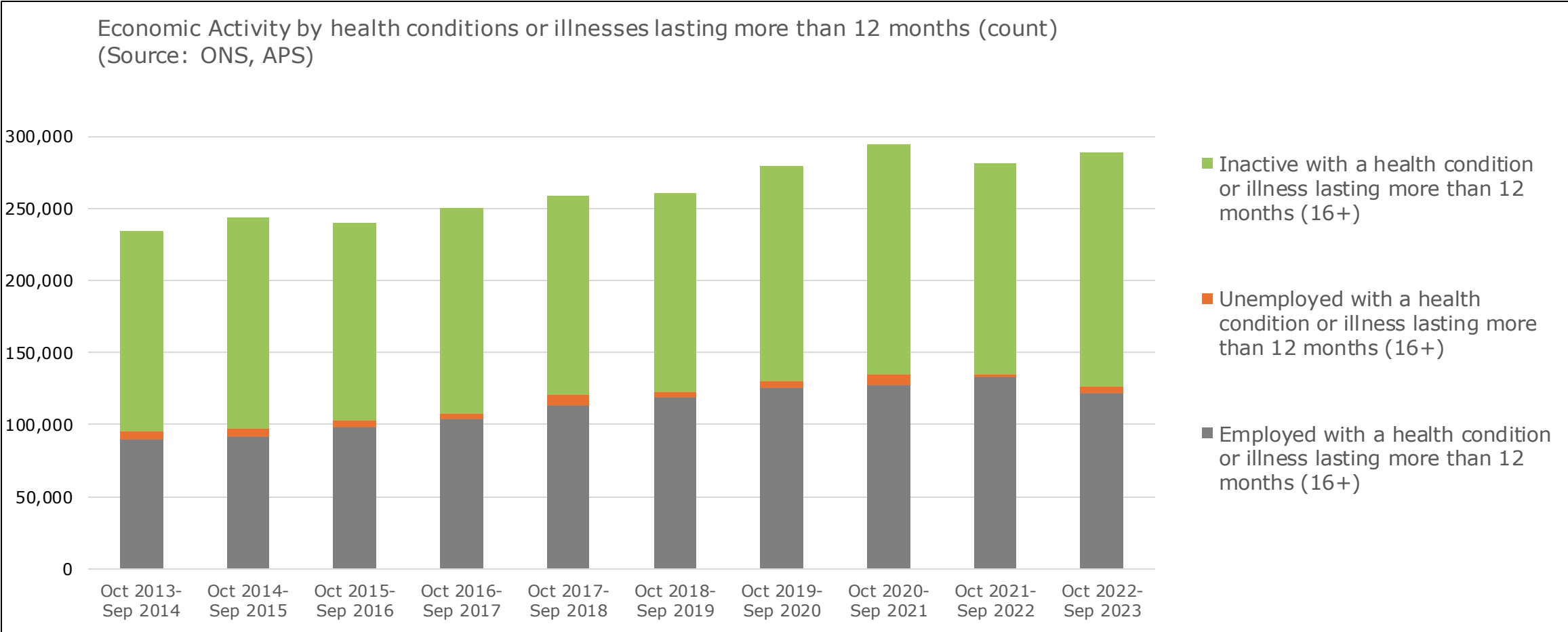
In the 12 months to September 2023, 155,400 people in Suffolk had problems with their chest, breathing, blood pressure, circulation, stomach, liver and/or diabetes. Of these, 35% (53,900) remained employed while 64% (99,400) were economically inactive.



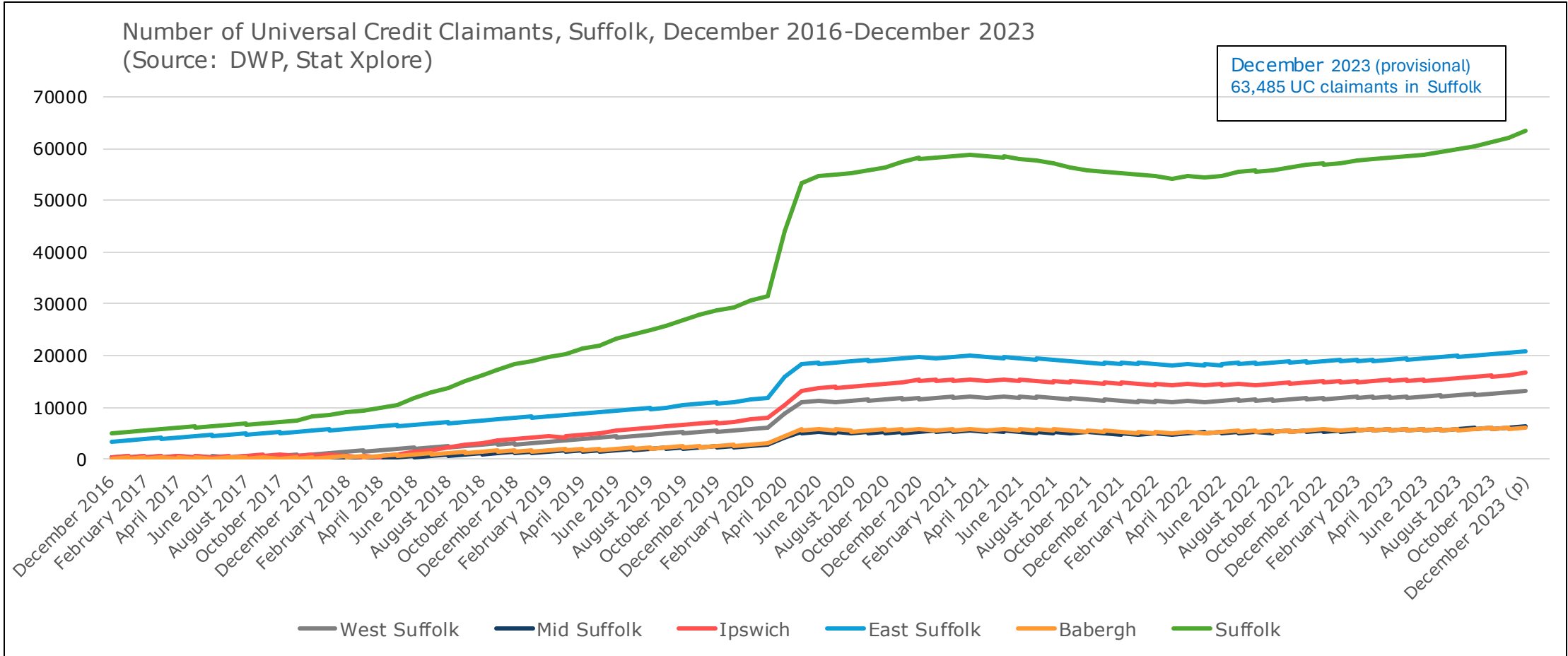
The proportion of individuals with a health condition or illness lasting more than 12 months who are economically inactive has jumped 4% in the 12 months to September 2023 but has otherwise remained relatively stable over the last 10 years.



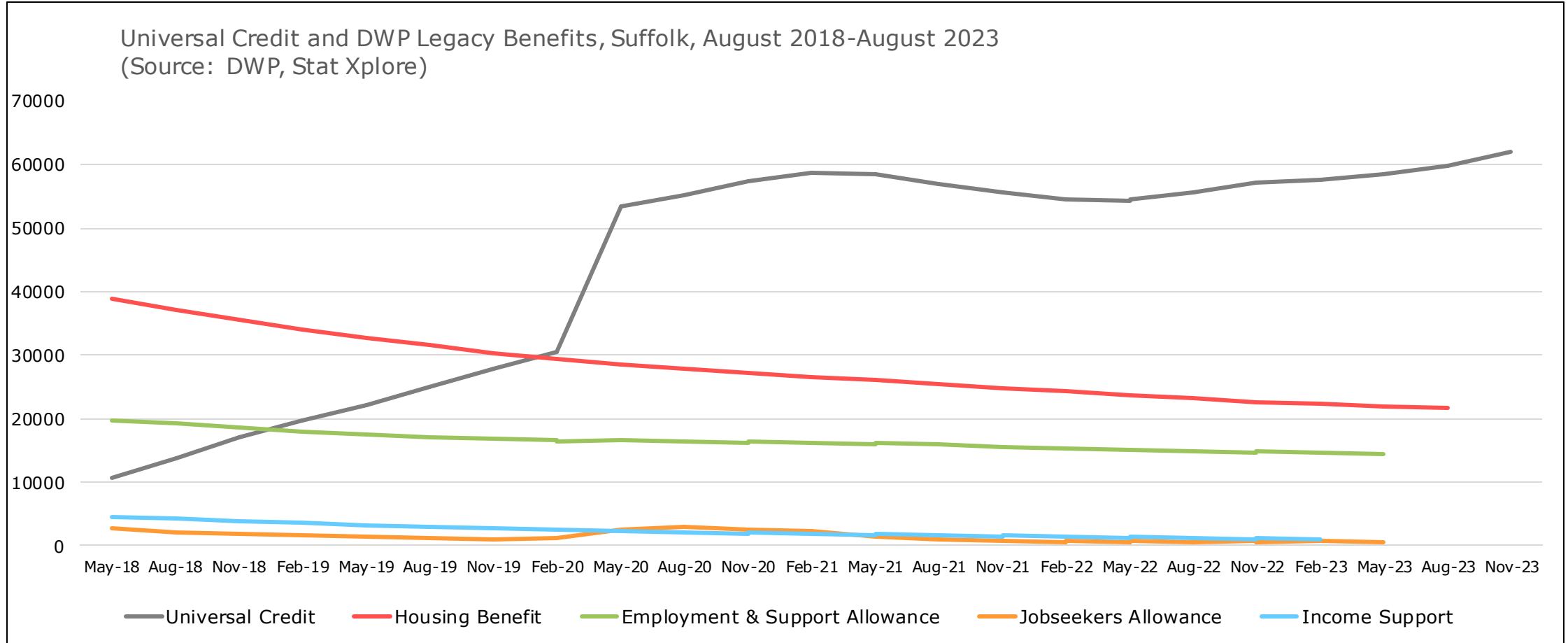
The jump in the percentage of individuals with a health condition or illness for 12 months or more who are inactive plays out in the total count; after a fall of 8% in 2021-2022, the number of those inactive rose 11% to 162,400 in the 12 months to September 2023.



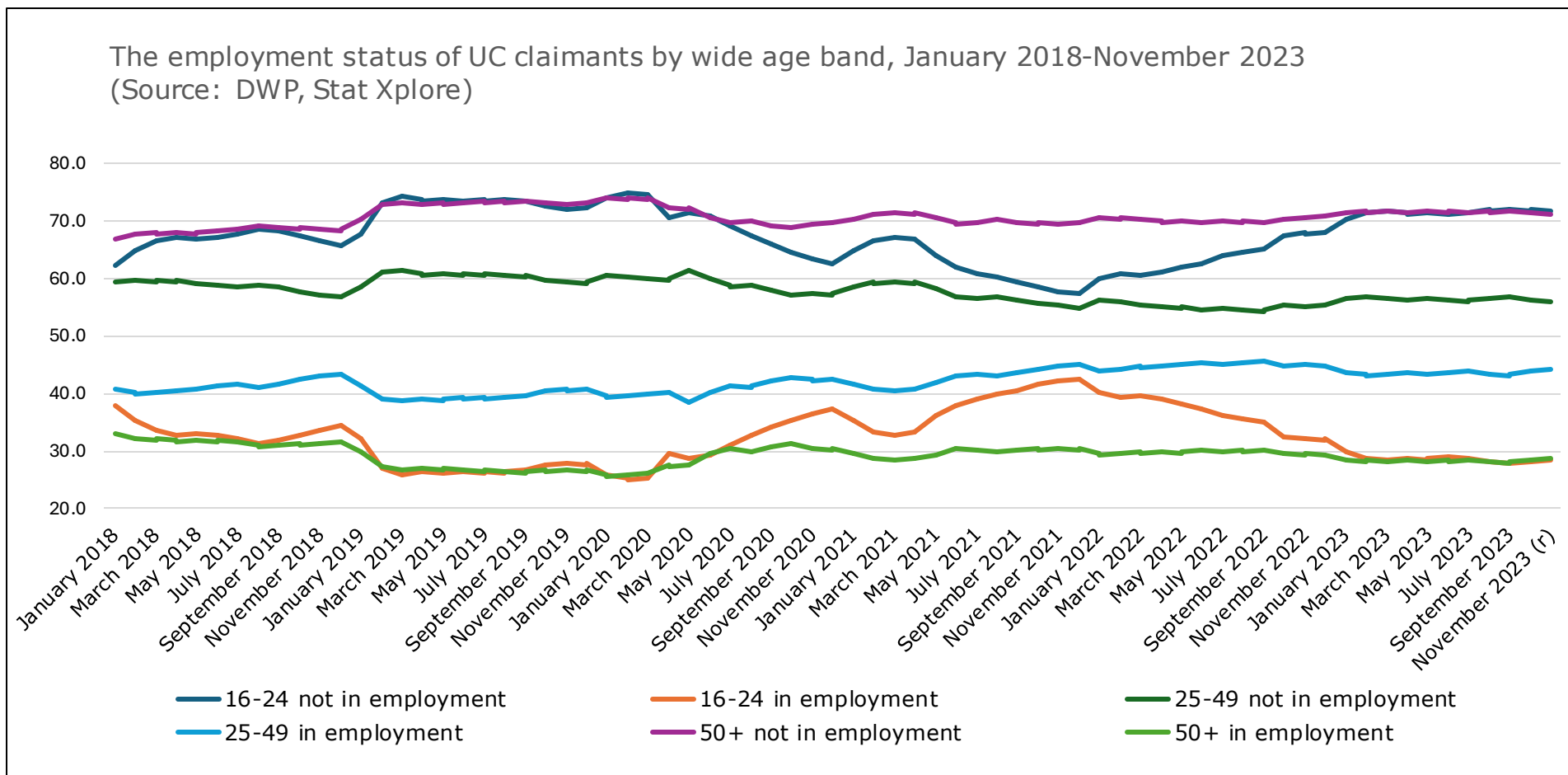
The number of Universal Credit (UC) claimants has continued to rise since its roll-out, in part due to the numbers being moved off DWP legacy benefits and in larger part due to the consequences and policies of the covid pandemic and Cost-of-Living crisis.



The number of legacy benefit claimants understandably declines as new claimants start on Universal Credit (UC) and existing claimants gradually switch over to UC. **However, the significantly disproportionate increase in UC indicates that much of this rise is due to 'new need'.**

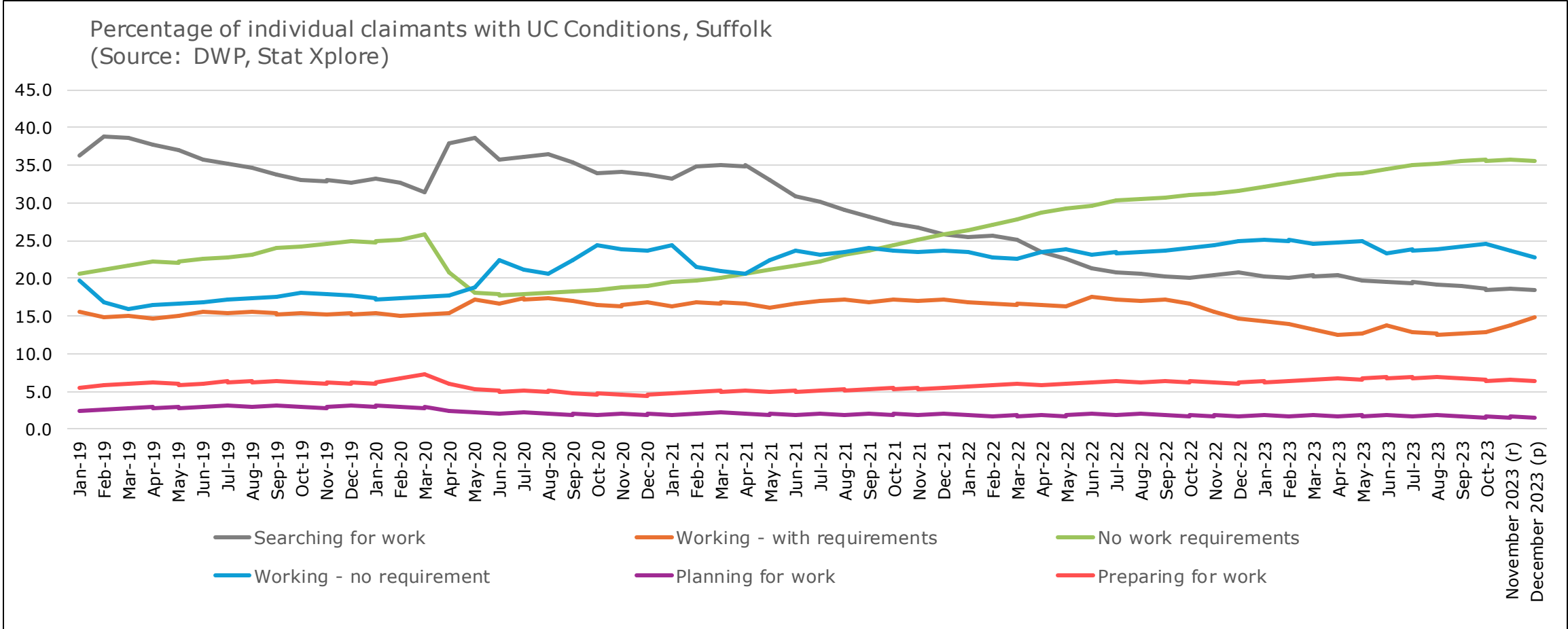


The percentage of UC claimants aged 25-49 and over 50 who are in employment has remained relatively stable over the last 5 years. However, the employment status of 16-24-year-olds on UC has fluctuated; the number of 16-24-year-olds in employment peaked at 42.6% in December 2021 only to fall back to 28.4% by November 2023. Seasonal peaks are usual for this age group.



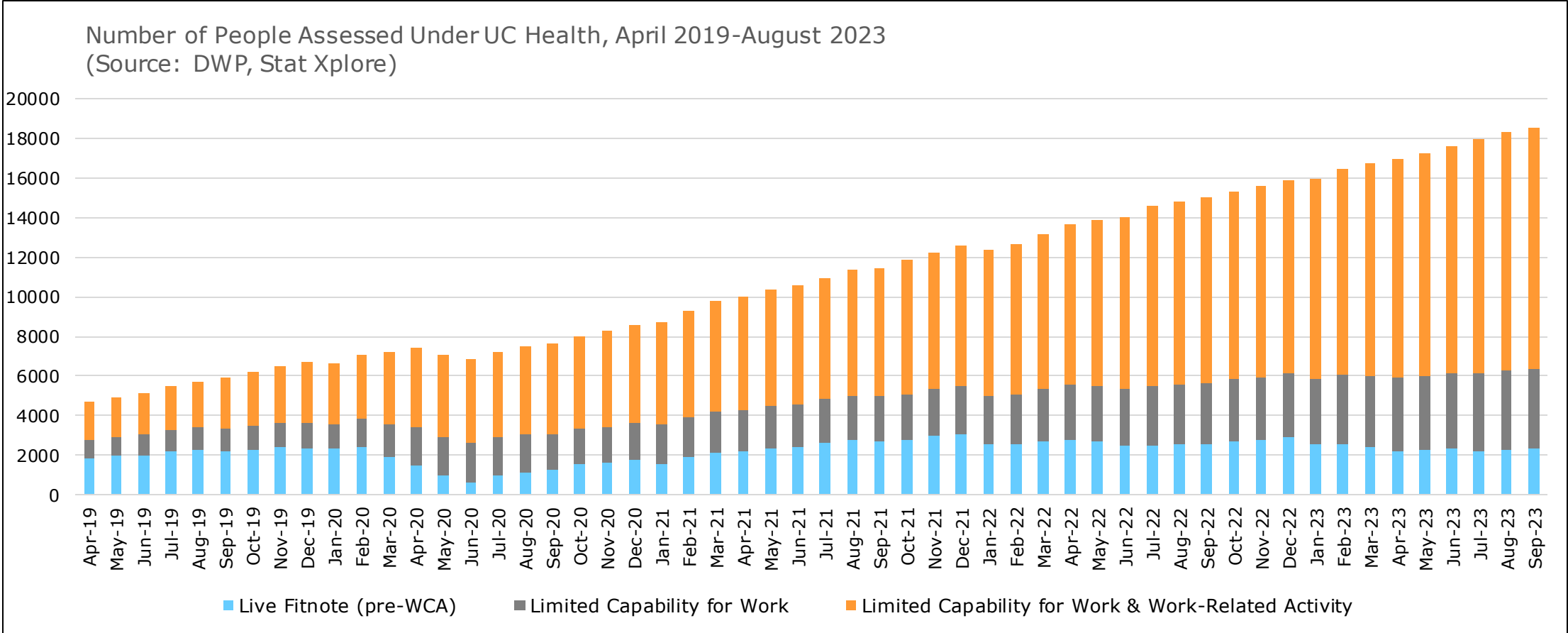


The percentage of UC claimants with no work requirements has been increasing steadily since mid-2020, plateauing at 35% since mid-2023.



\* See Appendix for UC Regime definitions.

When Universal Credit (UC) claimants declare they have a restricted ability to work due to their health condition and DWP receives medical evidence in support of the claim, the claimant is placed on UC health. The UC Health Caseload has continued to increase dramatically led by claimants with limited capability for Work and Work-Related Activity.



# Appendix

Conditionality Regime	Description
No work requirements	Not expected to work at present. Health or caring responsibility prevents claimant from working or preparing for work.
Working - with requirements	In work but could earn more, or not working but has a partner with low earnings
Working - no requirements	Individual or household earnings over the level at which conditionality applies. Required to inform DWP of changes of circumstances, particularly if at risk of decreasing earnings or losing job.
Searching for work	Not working, or with very low earnings. Claimant is required to take action to secure work - or more / better paid work. The Work Coach supports them to plan their work search and preparation activity.
Planning for work	Expected to work in the future. Lone parent / lead carer of child aged 1 <sup>(a)</sup> . Claimant required to attend periodic interviews to plan for their return to work.
Preparing for work	Expected to start preparing for future even with limited capability for work at the present time or a child aged 2 <sup>(b)</sup> , the claimant is expected to take reasonable steps to prepare for work including Work Focused Interview.

