

# Oxford Mail



## News

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# WAGE DROP: Why you could be £6,000 worse off than this time last year



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### WAGES across Oxfordshire are on the decline as the number of part-time jobs soars.

While there were 7,000 new jobs created in the county last year, the average salary is now £1,183 less than in 2016, according to new figures released by the Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Nationally, last year's average wage of £28,303 has risen by £703 to £29,009.

South Oxfordshire salaries have fallen most sharply, dropping by nearly £6,000 in the past year to an average of £34,593 – a decline of almost 20 per cent.

The data released by ONS also showed falling salaries in Cherwell and West Oxfordshire, while average salaries in [Vale of White Horse](#) and Oxford increased.

There are a number of explanations for the overall decline in salaries – including a dramatic increase in the number of part-time jobs, while the number of full-time roles falls.

There was a net increase of seven thousand jobs in the county, but that was a result of the creation of 10,000 part-time jobs and a loss of 3,000 full-time jobs.

Other reasons for the decline include salaries in the public sector continuing to fall



Associates, an Oxford-based recruitment firm said they were 'not surprising'.

She said: "Over the past two to three years, inflation has been low and wages have been increasing.

"Now, inflation has caught up and what we are seeing is wages starting to fall behind once more with prices rising faster than pay packets. Only this week, a spate of dairy closures has seen supermarkets raise the cost of milk by 10p.

"So while there may be more money in the pockets of wage earners, the 'real' value of that wage is less than it might have been.

"This is despite the fact that Oxford has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the UK of just 3.6 per cent compared to the national average of 4.5 per cent."

Ms Allen said the figures must not be taken out of context.

She said: "The last decade has been characterised by a number of rises and falls in real wages and we mustn't lose sight of the strength of the employment market in Oxfordshire right now.

"Employer confidence remains at its highest since before the recession, unemployment is at its lowest levels for a generation, and demand for workers – despite a slight slowdown – remains high, with recent figures showing that as many as one in five employers in the region intend to increase their headcount between now and the end of the year."

Rob Panting of Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, an organisation which champions and develops the county's economy, painted a more optimistic picture in response to the ONS figures.

He said: "Over the past five years, we have seen about 40,000 new jobs created across Oxfordshire – just under half of a 2031 target of 85,600 jobs for the county – including 3,000 new jobs at the **Westgate**.

"We have also seen recent further positive indications in relation to Oxfordshire's economy as a whole.

"Just last month a national report suggested that Oxford has the second fastest-growing economy of any UK city.

"Ultimately, these positive developments will have a strong knock-on effect to the county's employment market, further supporting our belief that Oxfordshire has an economy that embraces growth."

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