



# St Helena in Figures

Prepared by the Statistics Office of the St Helena  
Government on January 31, 2023

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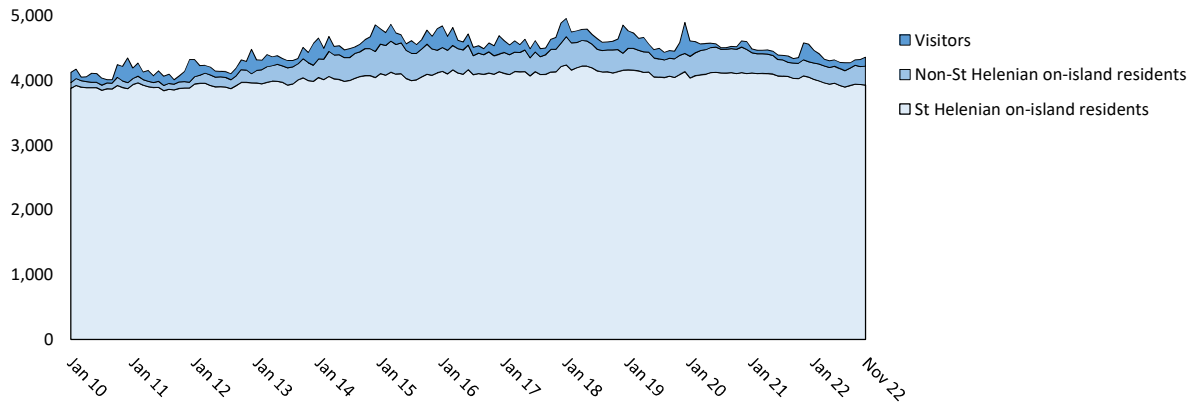
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## Total population

The total on-Island population, both residents and visitors, has fluctuated between 4,000 and 5,000 since 2010. At the end of November 2022, there were an estimated 4,355 people on the island, made up of 3,925 St Helenian residents (90.1%), 292 non-St Helenian residents (6.7%), and 138 visitors (3.2%).

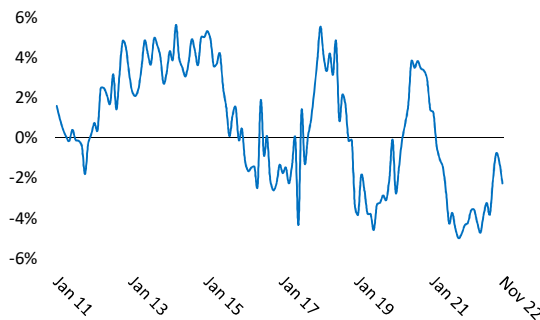
Population at end of each month



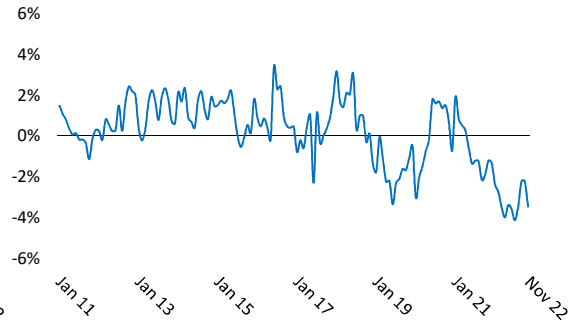
## Annual population growth rates

Over the past few years there have been three periods of positive annual population growth of the resident population (end of month compared to same month of the previous year). The first was due to airport construction between 2012 and 2016, the second when the airport opened for scheduled flights in 2018, and the third was when travel was difficult due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Each of these periods of growth were followed by periods when annual growth rates were negative, and the population size fell, particularly when flights reopened after the initial period of COVID-19.

On-island residents



On-island St Helenian residents

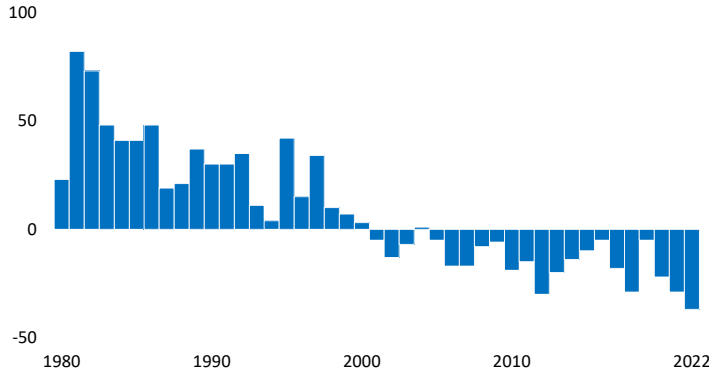




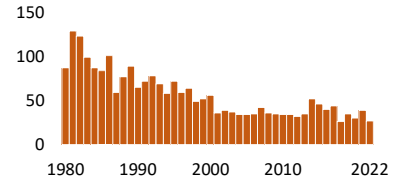
# Births and deaths

In the twenty years before 2000, the number of births exceeded the number of deaths in every year; in 1981 there were 82 more births than deaths. But after 2000 the number of deaths has exceeded the number of births in almost every year. In 2022 there were more than twice as many deaths (64) as births (27).

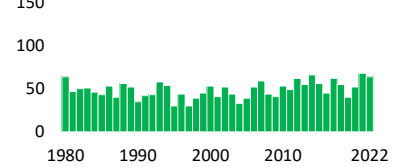
Natural population increase/decrease, excluding migration: the number of births minus the number of deaths each year



Births per year



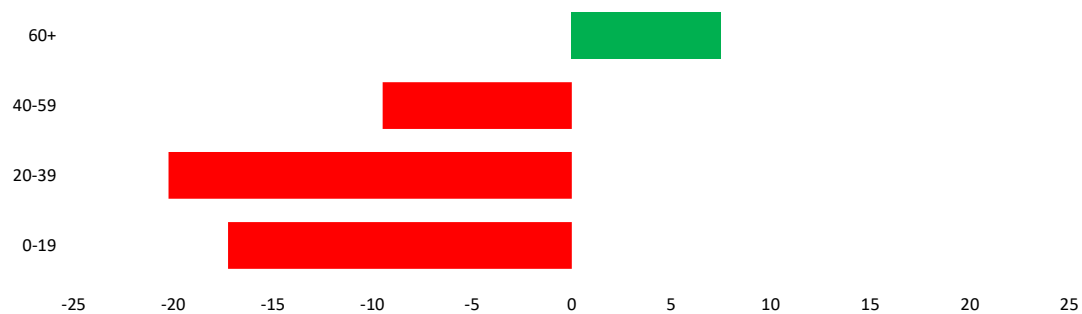
Deaths per year



# Migration

This chart shows the average number of arrivals of Saint Helenian residents, minus the number of departures, per year over the last four years (November 2018 to October 2022). Over this period, the average net emigration of Saint residents was around 40 per year, although among those aged 0-59 it was around 47 per year. Younger St Helenians tend to leave the island to work abroad, with some - but not all - returning later in life.

Average number of arrivals less departures of St Helenian residents per year (Nov 2018 to Oct 2022)



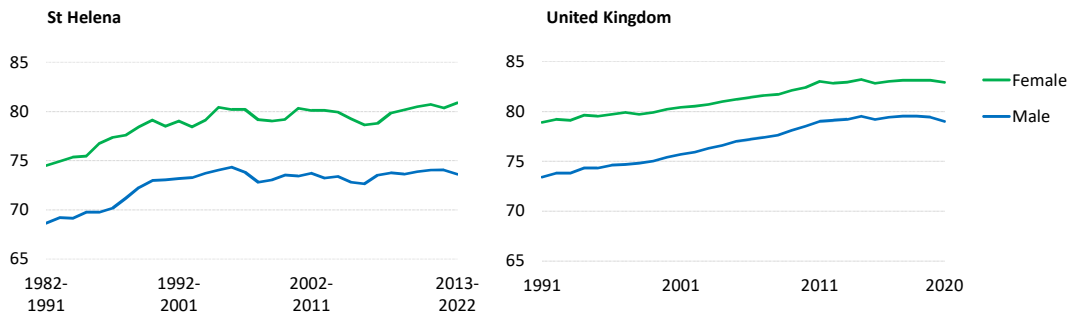


## Life expectancy

Life expectancy at birth, sometimes thought of as average age at death, is around 81 for females and 74 for males, for the ten-year period 2013 to 2022. This is lower than UK, which is around 83 for females and 79 for males. Since the 1980s, life expectancy has increased around six to seven years on average, a similar improvement to that seen in the UK.

Note: estimates for St Helena are based on a ten year period due to the small numbers involved.

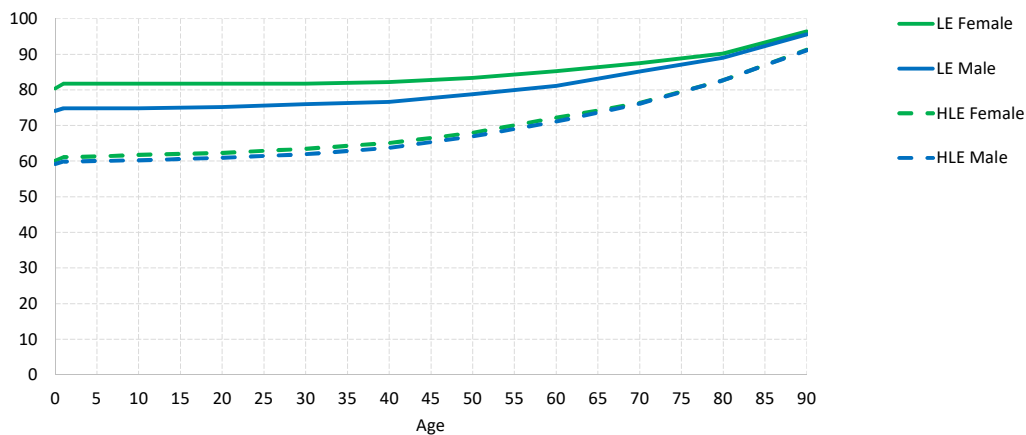
Life expectancy at birth



## Healthy life expectancy

Healthy life expectancy at birth – the number of years, on average, that people live without self-reported health being ‘bad’ or ‘very bad’ – is about 15 and 20 years lower than life expectancy, for men and women respectively.

Life Expectancy (LE) and Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE), 2021 Census

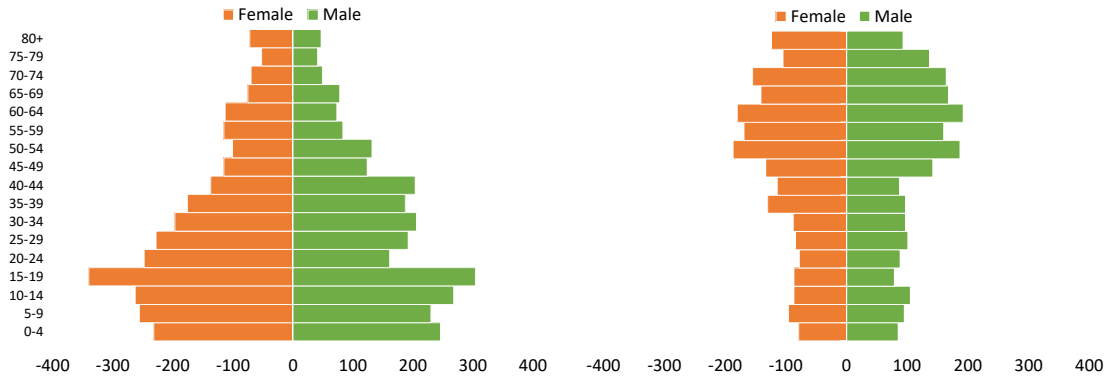




## Demographics: long-term change

The fall in the number of births, the increase in life expectancy, and the tendency for St Helenians to seek work opportunities abroad has led to a dramatic change in the demographic structure of the St Helenian population in the last 30 to 40 years. The number of children under 15 has dropped from around 1,500 in 1987 to around 550 in 2021. The number of people 65 and older was around 500 in 1987, but is just under 1,100 in 2021. And the number of people of roughly working age (15-64) was just under 3,500 in 1987, but is just below 2,500 in 2021.

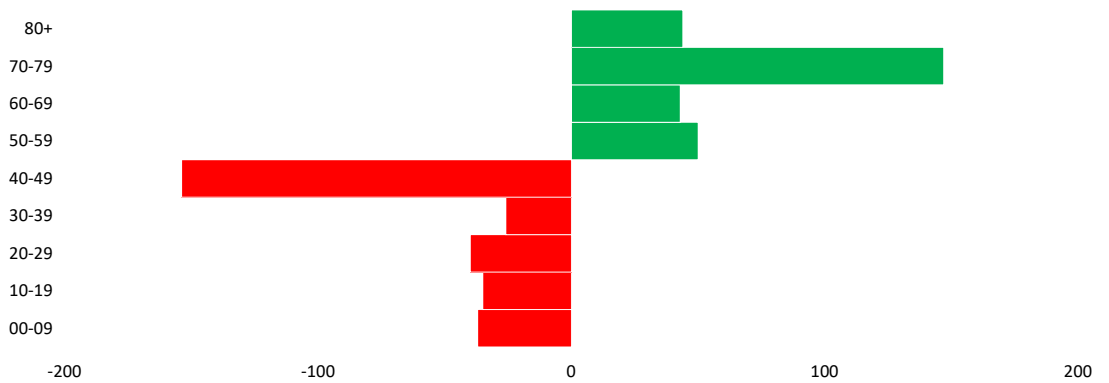
St Helenian resident population: 1987



## Demographics: short-term change

Between 2016 and 2021 the population continued to 'age', and there was also likely an affect from younger people departing to work overseas and for St Helenians of working age to return overseas after working on the construction of the airport or related activities. The median age of St Helenians living on St Helena is now over 50.

Change in age structure of St Helenian resident population: 2016 to 2021

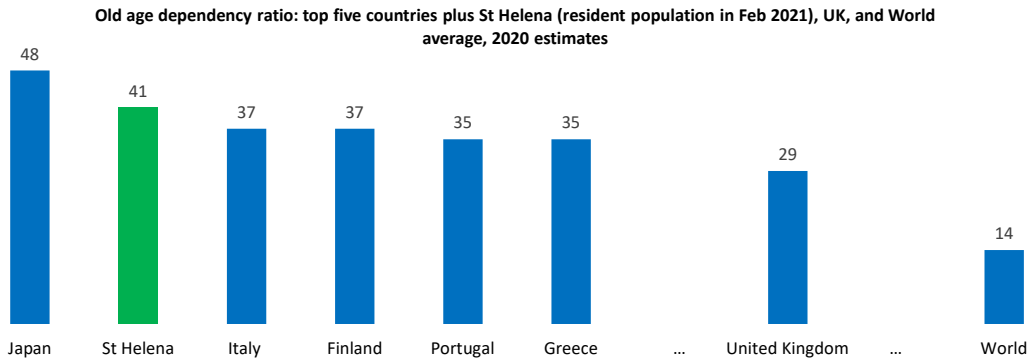




## Old age dependency ratios

The old age dependency ratio is the number of people who are 65 and over compared to the number of people aged 15 to 64. Delivering public services in countries with high old age dependency ratios presents significant challenges. St Helena has a very high age dependency ratio - around 41 residents 65 and over for every 100 residents aged 15 to 64, higher than every country in the world apart from Japan (the ratio of St Helenians only is even higher, at 44).

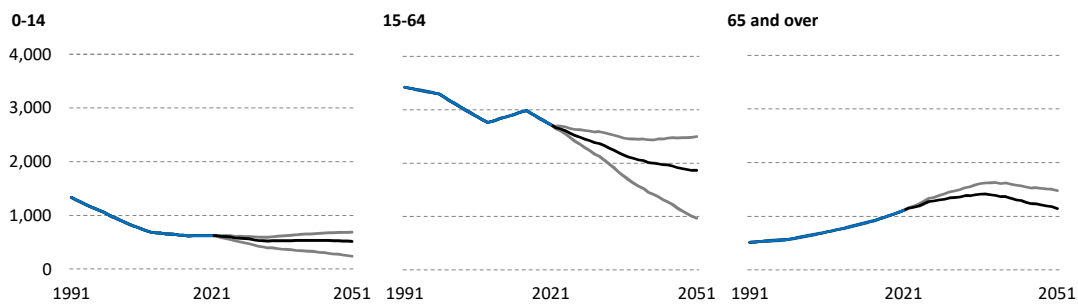
Note: St Helena data are February 2021 (Census); data for other countries are from the World Bank.



## Population projections

Different migration scenarios have been used to forecast St Helena’s population: no net migration, an annual net outward migration of 20 residents, an annual net inward migration of 20 residents, and an annual net inward migration of 40 residents. In all scenarios used, the population aged 15-64 falls by 2051, and the population aged 65 and over increases, but then falls.

Note: Charts show the resident population from 1976 to 2021, and the range of projected population estimates from 2022 to 2051 (i.e. the scenarios that result in the lowest and highest populations in each group).

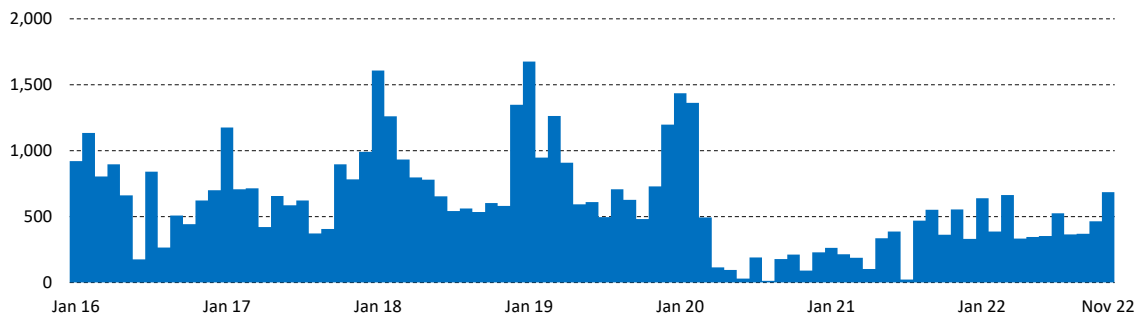




## International travel

After the start of scheduled international air services to St Helena in October 2017 there was an increase in the number of arrivals and departures each month, with peak travel occurring between December and April each year. From March 2020, travel disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic caused a major drop, however arrivals and departures in the 2021/22 holiday season were considerably higher than the same period in 2020/21, and this trend continued into 2022. The total arrivals and departures in November 2022 was 684, the highest since February 2020.

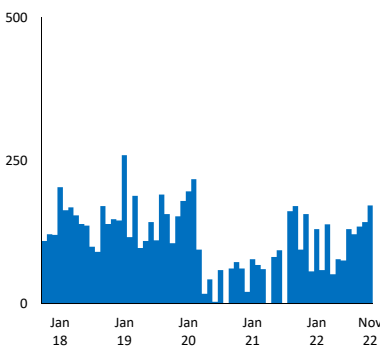
Number of passenger arrivals and departures per month, all modes of transport excluding day visitors from cruise ships



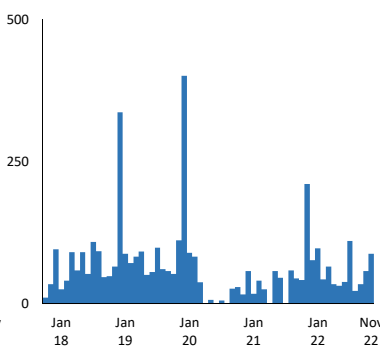
## Air travel: arrivals

Flights have been much less frequent during the COVID-19 pandemic, and various travel restrictions have been in place, and so arrivals by air for all reasons have been lower (tourism arrivals were particularly hard hit). At the end of November 2022 arrival numbers are close to pre-COVID patterns, although slightly lower.

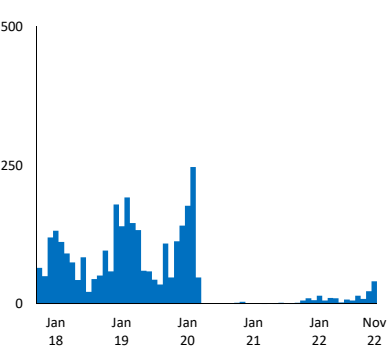
Returning residents, business, and transit



St Helenian holiday visits



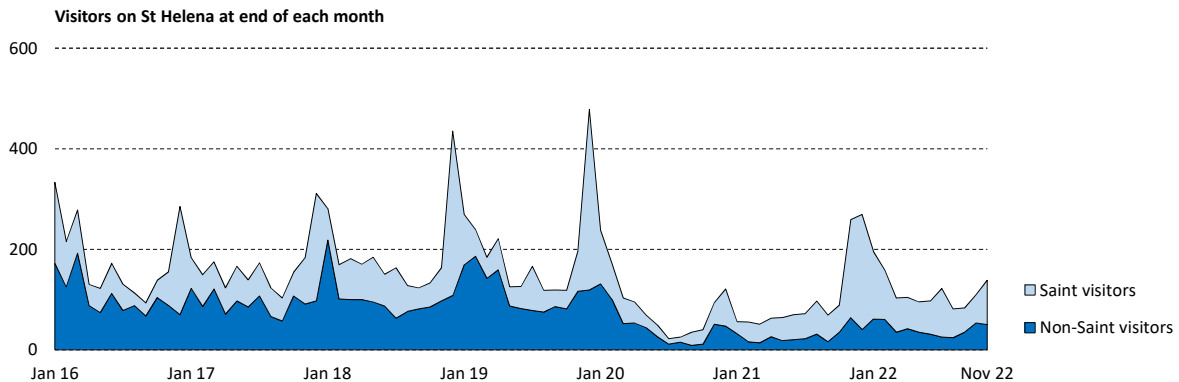
Tourism (non-St Helenian)





## Visitors

Travel restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in lower numbers of visitors on St Helena – both St Helenian and non-St Helenian. But, from the 2020/21 Christmas holiday season into 2021 and 2022, there was a higher number of visitors arriving, with the 2021/22 holiday season showing a more typical pattern. At the end of November 2022, there were 138 visitors on St Helena, compared with 196 at the end of November 2019, before the pandemic.



## Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

GDP is a measure of the economic output that takes place on St Helena. The economy shrank slightly in 2019/20 but it has grown slightly in 2020/21, because of the extra resources provided by the United Kingdom to manage the threat from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Note: since 2017/18, GDP has been calculated using the 'production' (or 'output') method. Because St Helena's economy is very small, timing and other classification issues can affect year-to-year comparisons. All figures should be treated as provisional.

	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21
GDP Market prices (£ million, current)	39.0	41.6	38.8	36.3	38.2	37.8	39.2
Market prices (£ million, constant 20/21)	..	..	..	38.2	39.3	38.2	39.2
Annual GDP growth rate	..	..	..	..	2.9%	-2.6%	2.4%
GDP per capita (£, current)	8,530	8,960	8,570	7,930	8,190	8,330	8,690
GDP per capita (\$, current)	13,760	13,510	11,200	10,530	11,760	10,620	11,370

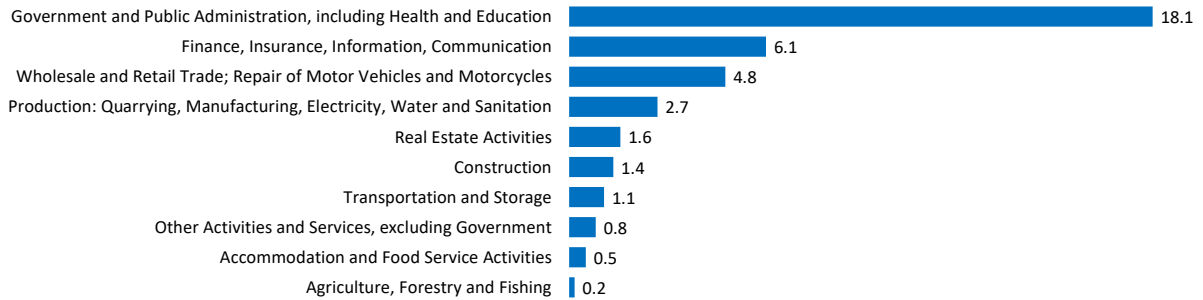




## GDP by sector

Government and public administration is the largest industrial sector measured using Gross Value Added (just under 50% of all GVA) – but this includes education and health services. This sector increased in 20/21, as a result of additional service provision needed during the pandemic. Finance, Insurance, Information and Communication services accounts for around 16% of total GVA, and Wholesale and Retail Trade (including Motor Vehicle Repair) is a further 13%. During the pandemic, the Accommodation and Food Service Activities shrank the most, from 2.3% of GVA in 19/20 to 1.4% in 20/21.

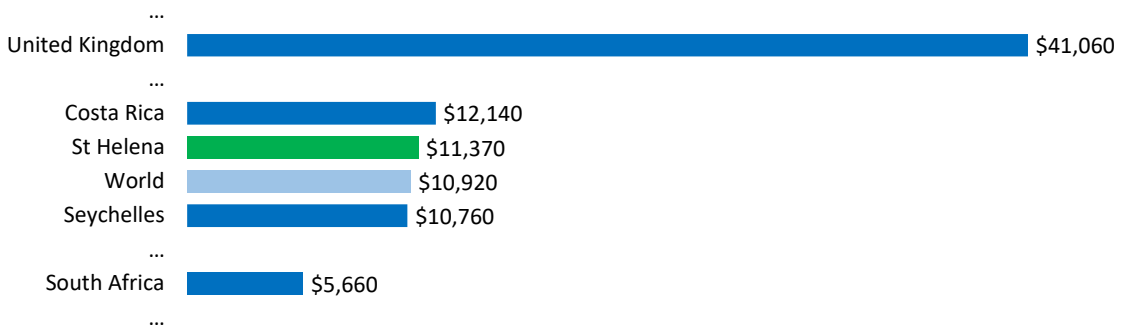
Gross Value Added by industrial sector, 2020/21, £ millions



## GDP per capita

The Gross Domestic Product per capita of St Helena in 2020/21 was around 70% lower than the UK, but close to the world average and around twice as high as South Africa. The two countries closest to St Helena in terms of GDP per capita are the Seychelles and Costa Rica.

Note: the values in the chart are expressed in US dollars, and GDP for other countries relates to the 2020 calendar year.



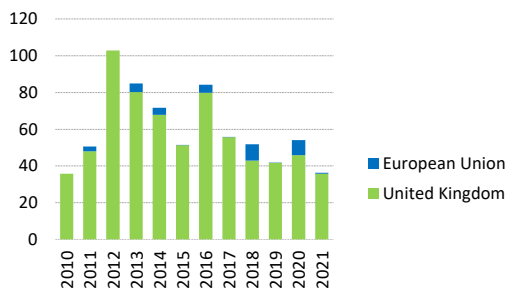


# Aid

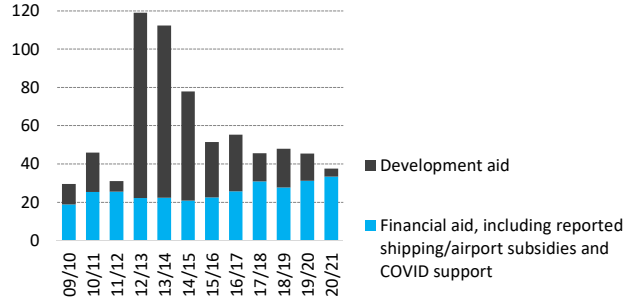
Aid disbursed to St Helena was at a similar level in 2021 as it was in 2010; it was much higher between 2012 and 2017 due to the construction of the airport. As airport construction has ended, development aid – which funds capital projects rather than the provision of government services – has fallen.

Note: Data on aid disbursements are from 'International Development Statistics', published by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Data on receipts are from the St Helena Government Financial Statements.

Disbursements of aid to St Helena, 2010 to 2021, £ million, constant 2020 prices (inflation adjusted)



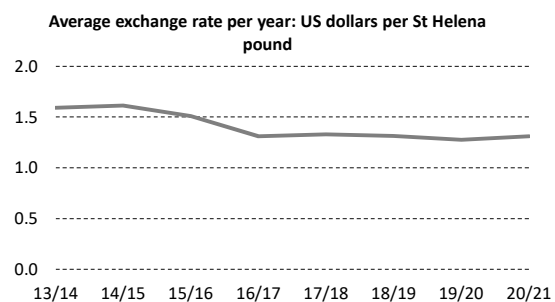
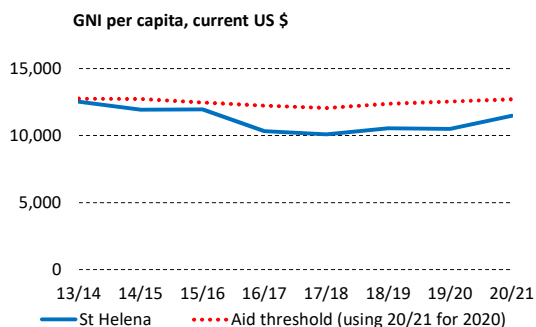
Aid receipts by St Helena, 2010 to 2021, £ million constant 2021 prices (inflation adjusted using St Helena RPI)



# Eligibility to receive aid

In 2020/21, St Helena was below the 'aid graduation' threshold of \$12,695 Gross National Income (GNI) per capita, although it was slightly closer than in 2019/20. The low value of the Pound compared to the dollar since the UK vote to leave the European Union in 2016, and low growth in per capita GNI are the major factors in St Helena remaining below the threshold.

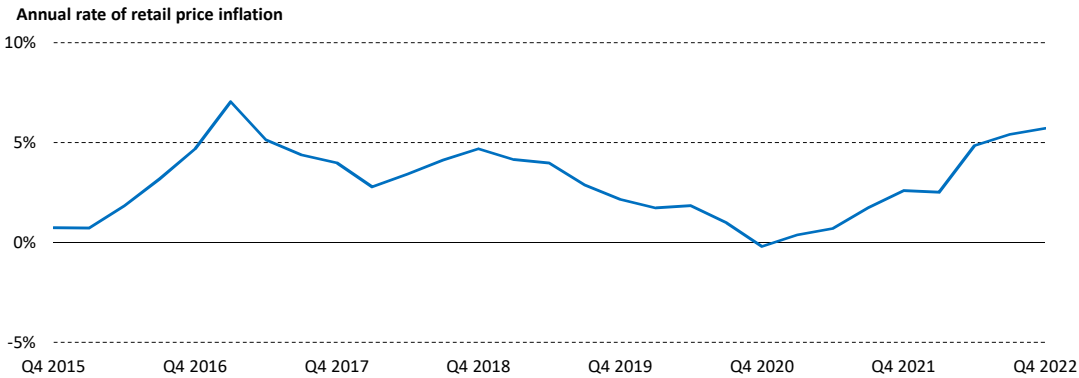
Note: The Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) sets a threshold that determines whether official financial transfers to a country or territory can be classed as Official Development Assistance – ODA, or 'aid'. This uses Gross National Income (GNI) per capita, which is a measure of the average economic resources of St Helena's residents. To graduate from the list of ODA-eligible territories, GNI per capita has to be higher than the threshold for all of the three years prior to the date of classification.





## Price inflation: all items

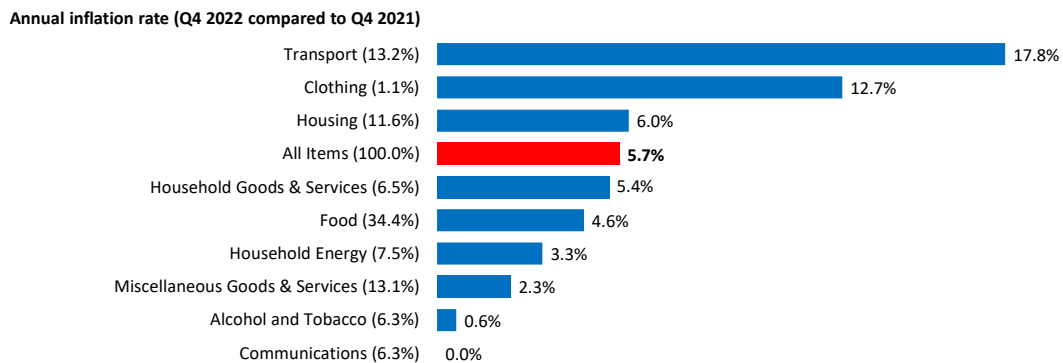
St Helena measures price inflation by collecting the prices of a fixed basket of goods and services each quarter. The latest annual price inflation rate in Q4 2022 is 5.7%, which means that, on average, retail prices went up by 5.7% between Q4 2021 and Q4 2022. Inflation is affected particularly by prices in South Africa and the UK (and the Pound/Rand exchange rate) where the latest inflation rates are around 7.4% and 10.7% respectively.



## Price inflation: by category of expenditure

The annual inflation rate in Q4 2022 was 5.7%, but there are variations in the rate for different categories of goods and services. For instance, the annual price change of Transport was higher at 17.8%, due to the effect of large increases in the price of petrol and diesel fuel in 2022.

Note: the share of average household expenditure spent on each category of goods and services in the base year for the index weighting pattern (2017) is given in brackets.



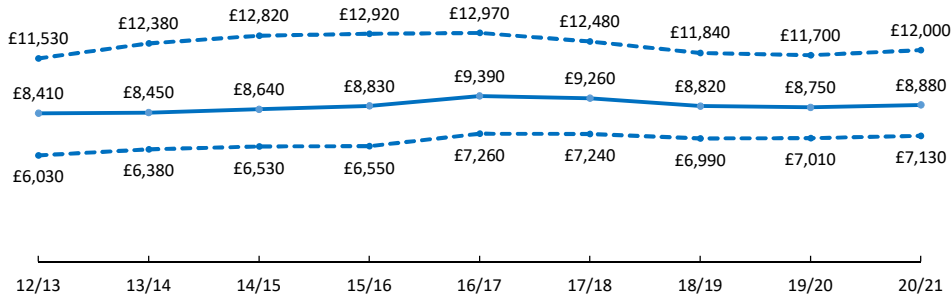


## Wage levels

Adjusted for inflation, median wage levels on St Helena rose substantially during construction of the new Airport in 2016/17, but they have fallen back since. In 2020/21, half of all full-time employees earned less than £8,880 a year, or £170 a week – and a half earned more. A quarter earned less than £7,130 a year, or £137 a week, and a quarter earned more than £12,000 a year, or £230 a week.

Note: these figures are estimates of wage levels for full-time employees only

Inflation-adjusted median annual wage from full-time employment (2020/21 prices), and upper and lower quartiles

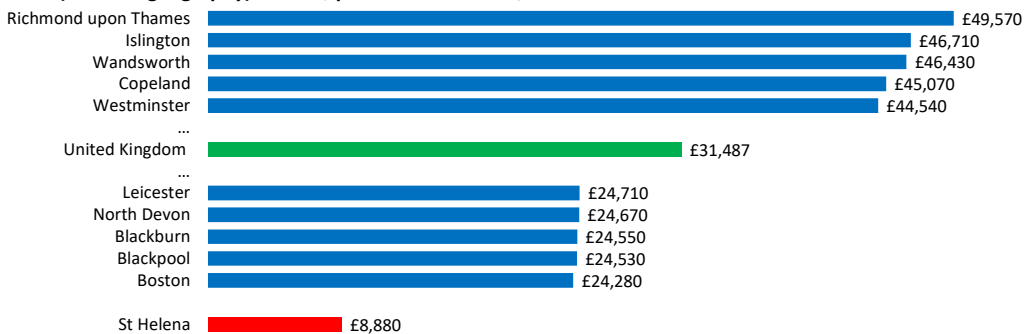


## Wage levels compared to UK areas

The median UK wage earner receives more than 3.5 times their counterpart on St Helena. The median wage earner in the area with the lowest UK wage level (Boston) earns 2.7 times more than their St Helenian counterpart.

Note: St Helena data are from PAYE income tax records, full-time employees only; UK data are from the ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE).

Median gross wage from full-time employment, highest and lowest five of the published UK areas (smallest geography) in 2020, plus St Helena 2020/21



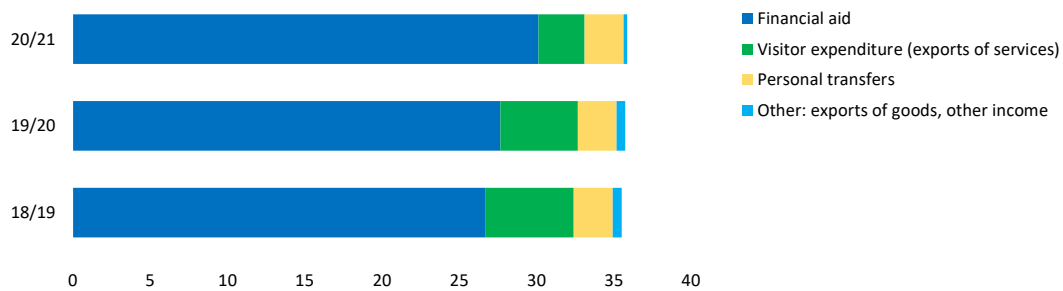


## The Balance of Payments: current account credits

Provisional estimates of the Balance of Payments show that more than 80% of current account credits (money received from abroad) is aid. Visitor expenditure is increasingly important following airport construction, although this was reduced in 20/21 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated travel restrictions. Exports of goods are relatively quite small, mostly some fish and coffee, although some other goods are also exported to Ascension Island.

Note: The Balance of Payments (BoP) measure financial transactions between businesses, organisations and people resident on St Helena, and those resident in the rest of the world. The BoP has three accounts – the current, capital and financial accounts – whose credits and debits together must balance: this chart shows only the current account.

Current account, credits: i.e. receipts from rest of world, or "money in", £ millions

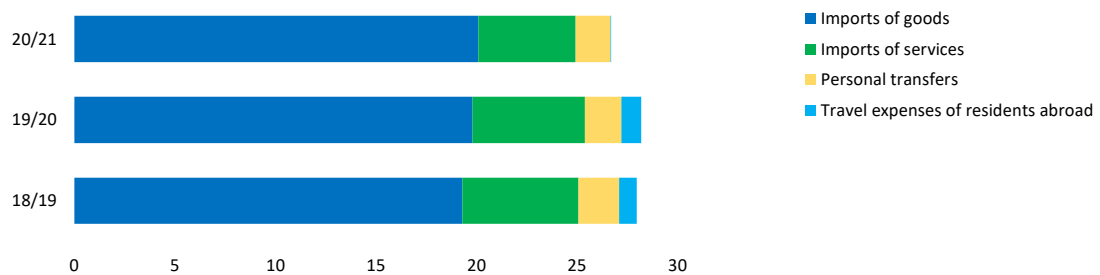


## The Balance of Payments: current account debits

Provisional basic estimates of the Balance of Payments show that almost 70% of current account debits (money spent or sent abroad) pays for imports of goods, and around 20% pays for imports of services – including freight, medical costs, training, technical advice. Service imports and travel expenses of residents temporarily abroad fell in 20/21 due to COVID-19 travel restrictions.

Note: The Balance of Payments (BoP) measure financial transactions between businesses, organisations and people resident on St Helena, and those resident in the rest of the world. The BoP has three accounts – the current, capital and financial accounts – whose credits and debits together must balance: this chart shows only the current account.

Current account, debits: i.e. payments to rest of world, or "money out", £ millions

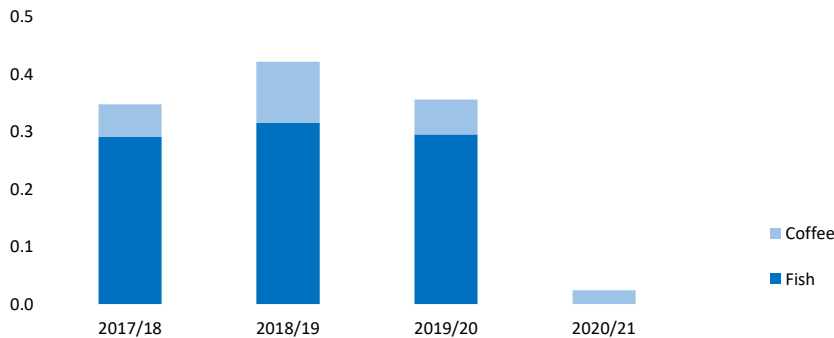




## Exports of goods: fish and coffee

Fish and coffee are St Helena's two main commodity exports, with a total value of around £0.35m to £0.4m in each of the years 2017/18 to 2019/20 (roughly 1% of GDP). In 2020/21, there were no exports of fish due to the closure of the St Helena Fisheries Corporation. It should be noted that the value of the export of goods commodities is normally much smaller than the export of services to visitors (i.e. "tourism").

Exports of major goods commodities, current prices (i.e. not adjusted for inflation), £ millions

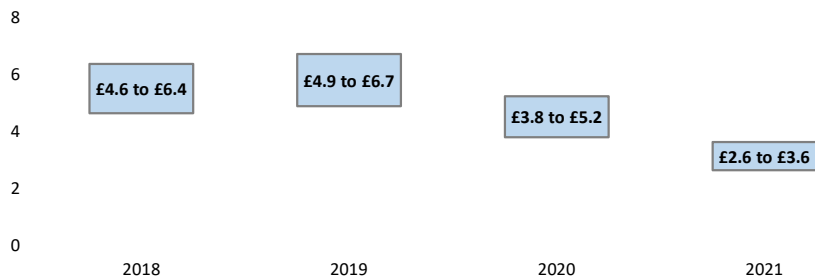


## Exports of services: visitor expenditure

St Helena's biggest export is the provision of services to visitors, who typically spend money on accommodation, food, hospitality, and transport (visitors include both tourists and St Helenians visiting friends and relatives). The expenditure of these visitors in 2018 and 2019 was estimated to be between £4.6m and £6.7m per year, but 2020 and 2021 has been much lower due to the international travel disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

These provisional figures are derived using estimates of visitor spending (based on an airport departure survey), and an analysis of immigration records.

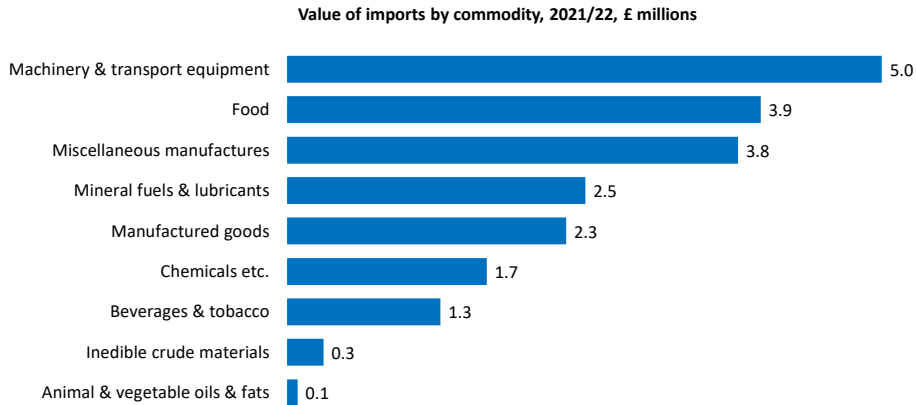
Range estimate of the expenditure of non-residents on St Helena, £ millions, current prices (i.e. not adjusted for inflation)





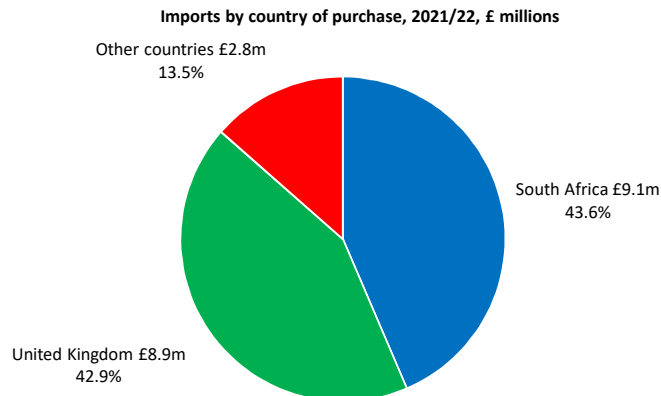
## Imports of goods: by commodity

In 2021/22, the total value of imported goods was £20.8 million, similar to the previous four years. Imports consist mainly of machinery and vehicles, food, various manufactured goods, fuel, chemicals, and beverages and tobacco.



## Imports of goods: by country of purchase

In 2021/22, around 44% of all goods imported were purchased in South Africa, 43% in the UK, and 13.5% from elsewhere (mostly petrol and diesel fuel). The prices of imported goods are affected by the cost of transport from those countries to St Helena, the price inflation rates in South Africa and the UK, and the Pound/Rand exchange rate, since commodities in South Africa are sold in Rand.



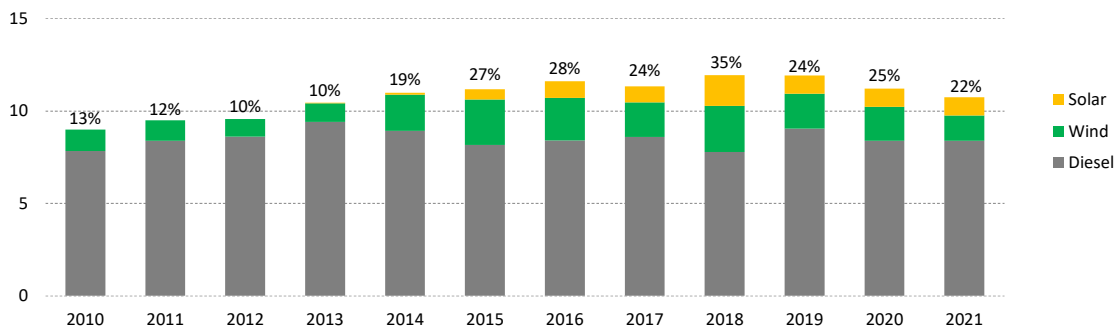


# Electricity generation

St Helena generates around 11-12 gigawatt-hours of electricity a year through its public utility company (Connect Saint Helena Ltd). Around a quarter of this is generated using renewable sources (wind and solar), with around three-quarters still reliant on the diesel-powered power station situated in Rupert’s Valley.

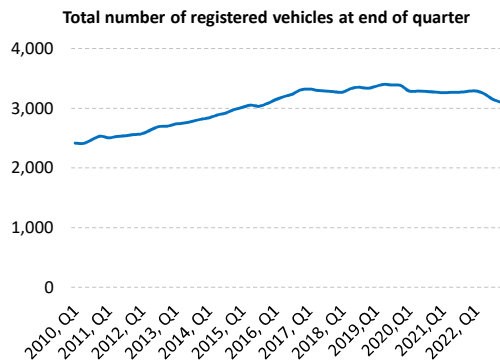
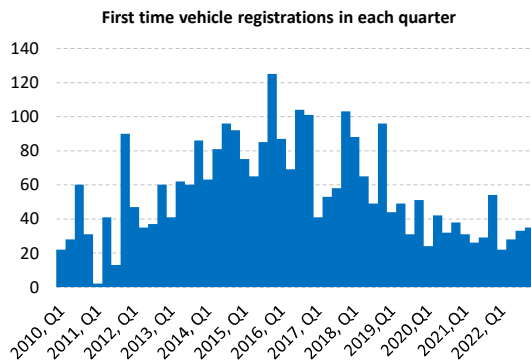
Note: Some businesses and households have installed private solar generation capacity; this is not included in these figures.

Electricity generation by Connect Ltd, GWh (percentages show renewable energy as % of total)



# Vehicle registrations

New vehicle registrations can be a useful indicator of the level of activity in the economy. The number of first-time vehicle registrations (usually imported vehicles) each quarter accelerated during the airport construction period, but slowed in 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 to pre-airport levels. The number of licensed vehicles (i.e. those ‘on the road’) increased rapidly during airport construction, by about a third compared to 2010 and peaking at 3,399 at the end of June 2019. But the number has fallen back to just over 3,095 at the end of December 2022.





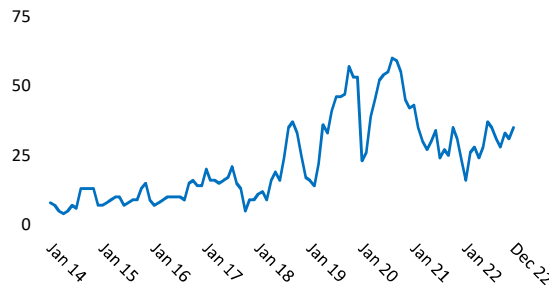


# Unemployment

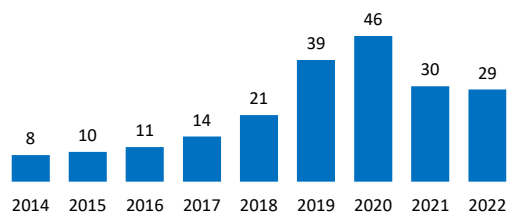
The number of people claiming Unemployment Allowance (UA) rose in 2019 and 2020, although the number fell in 2021. UA was discontinued in September 2021, although the Benefits Office now maintains a count of the number of registered unemployed persons who are 'job ready'.

Note: the number of UA claimants or the number of registered unemployed can significantly underestimate unemployment, which is usually defined as the number of people without a job but actively seeking work.

Persons receiving Unemployment Allowance (to Sept 2021) or registered as unemployed and 'job ready' (from Oct 2021)



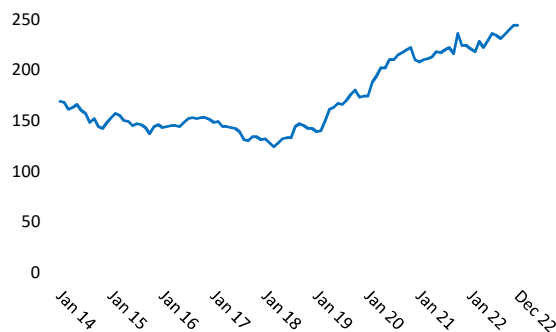
Average number of persons receiving Unemployment Allowance (to Sept 2021) or registered as unemployed (from Oct 2021), per month



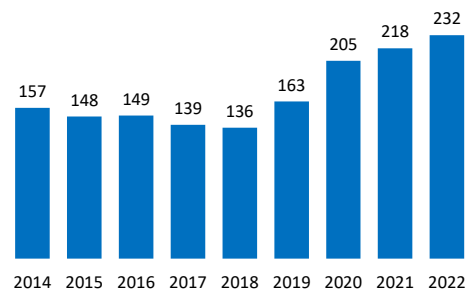
# Social benefits

The number of families claiming Income Related Benefits at the end of December 2022 was just over 240. Up until October 1 2021, Income Related Benefits were paid to households whose income falls below an agreed minimum level, but from October 1 2021 they are paid to families; at the same time, eligibility rules were also changed.

Households (to Sept 21) or families (Oct 21 onwards) receiving Income Related Benefits



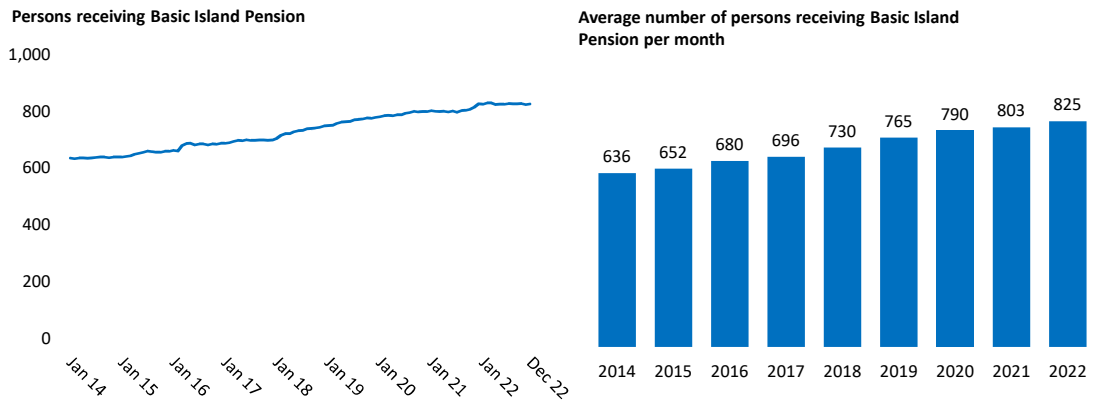
Average number of households (to Sept 21) or families (Oct 21 onwards) receiving Income Related Benefits per month





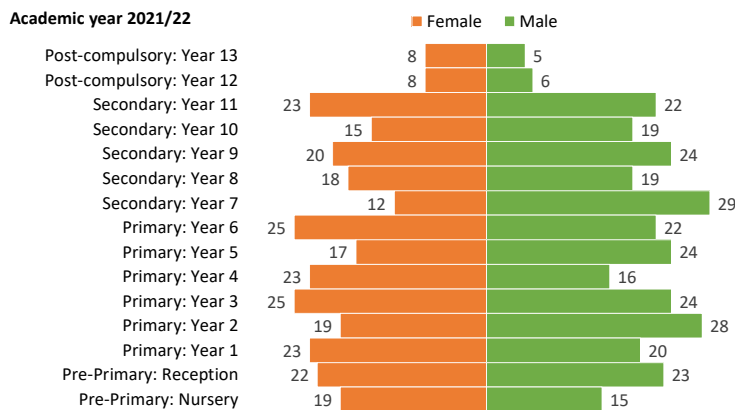
# Basic Island Pension

The number of claimants of Basic Island Pension (BIP) is 825 in December 2022, or just under 20% of the total population. The Basic Island Pension is paid to residents who are 65 and over, have worked for at least 20 years on St Helena, and have only small alternative pensions in place. The number of BIP recipients has risen steadily in recent years, consistent with demographic projections and St Helena’s ‘ageing’ population.



# School enrolment

Up to year 11, each school year group has around 30 to 50 pupils enrolled, with some variations between the groups. Enrolment in post-compulsory education is much lower, with 27 pupils enrolled in the 21/22 academic year across the two year groups 12 and 13 (i.e. children aged 17 and 18). However, it should be noted that some children also enrol in an apprenticeship scheme during these years.





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Comments and questions are very welcome:  
telephone (+290) 22138 or email [statistics@sainthelena.gov.sh](mailto:statistics@sainthelena.gov.sh)

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