West Midlands
Weekly Economic Impact Monitor

WM REDI CITY REDI

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This monitor aims to pull together information across regional partners to understand the impacts of Covid-19 on the economy. Where possible it will utilise all forms of quantitative and qualitative intelligence. However, we urge caution in the use of the contents as this is an emerging situation.

The optimism about economic recovery that characterised many indices of business confidence in June and July has given way to a much more mixed picture as we move into Autumn. Recently it has become clear that multiple global issues, such as climate change, port delays, container shortages, HGV driver shortages, Covid-19 spikes and subsequent lockdowns, energy prices, raw materials shortages amidst increasing demand, are all causing inflationary pressures on prices, as governments and industries try to fix the supply chains. In recent weeks we have begun to see this play out more starkly, particularly in relation to shortages of fuel, gas and some foods. While damaging the confidence and options for the public, this is also causing major issues for many cash strapped businesses that are heavy consumers of energy and fuel.

- The Oxford Economics baseline forecast to 2040 predicts WMCA GVA will grow to £131bn by 2040, an average of 1.16% per year lagging the UK at 1.35%. GVA per head is expected to grow to £29,939 by 2040. Earnings are predicted to grow from £28,444 to £52,441, just behind the UK annual average.
- There is currently a global shortage of new cars and this is impacting the used car market.
- About 70% of the world's toys are made in China and the cost of delivery has rapidly increased. There is currently a shortage of containers leading to shipping prices being 10 times higher than last year and there is less time available to get the toys on the shelves before the festive season.
- Ports across the globe are reporting record levels of backlogs, with Ocean carriers' reporting delays of up to 30 days on the worst hit China to EU routes and 22 days on the worst hit China to US routes.
- Over the last 18 months consumers have been spending their time at home as a result of lockdowns and switched from purchasing services to goods. This has translated into a rapid increased demand for freight and shipping containers, with global container demand increasing by 6% to 8% this year. This will likely lead to further delays.
- The US is also having its own HGV driver's crisis. 'Trucking' in the US is the primary source of container transport. A shortage of drivers across the country means much of the container volume has been sitting idle at capacity-strained facilities.
- Nationally in the UK there is a 100k shortage of drivers due to a range of factors including EU Exit resulting in the loss of thousands of EU drivers; Trade and Border controls, slowing the process of inbound and outgoing freight; The ageing driver workforce; Covid-19 issues stemming from the need for workers to self-isolate; The lack of new drivers compounded by the unavailability of HGV tests throughout 2020 and into 2021; IR35 rules removing many agency drivers from the labour market.
- The global food eco-system has been hit hard, with some employers having to raise wages at a double-digit pace. This will likely continue to push food prices up even higher; prices in August this year were up 33% globally from the same month last year.
- Coffee prices have risen as this year Brazil suffered a severe drought which led to reduced crops and is now suffering from severe frost which will likely led to a reduction in supply next year as well.
- Shortage of durum wheat after this soaring summer temperatures which hit Canada, one of the world's largest producers. This led to prices rise of up to 90%. Durum is a key ingredient for products like pasta and prices could rise by 50%.
- Advanced countries may be rolling out vaccines at a fast rate, but poorer countries do not have the same ability to do so. This is causing significant delays further down the line, as spikes of Covid-19 and the resulting lockdowns drain the labour supply from poorer countries and further intensify supply chain issues.
- The EU has also been hit by soaring energy prices, threatening to derail post-pandemic recovery, strain household incomes and detrimentally impact the transition to greener energy. Natural gas prices across Europe have risen from €16 megawatt per hour in early January to €75 by mid-September, an increase of more than 360% in less than a year. Gazprom, Russia's state-backed energy company, has refused to increase exports to the EU.
- Global gas crunch is particularly bad news for the UK following a string of issues with the UK electricity system. Nuclear power plants have been forced to take unplanned outages for maintenance, a main power cable used to import electricity from France has shut down due to a fire, and the UK's wind turbines have slowed during some of the least windy months since 1961.

The WM Weekly monitor is funded by the West Midlands Combined Authority, Research England/UKRI

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- Brexit will likely cause greater impact for the UK comparative to the EU, as the EU's internal energy market allows member states to trade with each other in a way that balances prices out. Whilst the UK can now take full advantage when prices are cheap, it also means that it is also fully exposed when prices are high.
- The Guardian found that this time last year, households with average energy usage who were on the cheapest gas and electricity bills were paying around £800 to £817 a year. Households that pay by direct debit will now face bills averaging £1,277 a year for duel fuel, whilst those on meters - typically the most vulnerable - will see average energy bills rise to an average of £1,309 a year.
- The Universal Credit £20 weekly up lift ends at the end of September 2021, as well as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS). Over the last 18 months the CJRS has covered the wages of roughly 11.6 million people, and has provided 2.3 billion days of furlough at a cost of almost £70 billion (in gross terms). Along with other economic support measures, it has ensured that the worst recession for 300 years saw the only a small rise in unemployment.
- It is anticipated that around 1 million people will still be on furlough on 30th September as it ends, with half of those still fully furloughed. Therefore, it is likely that there will be at least a moderate rise in unemployment.
- The Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH) rose by 3.0% in the 12 months to August 2021, up from 2.1% in the 12 months to July. The increase of 0.9 percentage points is the largest increase ever recorded in the CPIH National Statistics 12-month inflation rate series, which began in January 2006; however, this is likely to be a temporary change.
- 56% of women thought that working from home would help progress their career. As traditionally, the majority of childcare, caring and unpaid household duties fall on women within the household, the flexibility of home working has made this less of an issue.
- Solihull has become one of the first places in the UK to see driverless vehicles take to its roads; as part of new ground-breaking passenger trials.
- BT has announced that it is to recruit 1,000 new people at its flagship Birmingham office, with around 225 posts currently available. BT still believes in the future of the office but has recognised the benefits of home working for employees as well, and as a result will be offering a flexible 'Smart Working' approach.
- A recent report by the Midlands Engine highlights low carbon opportunities, relating to the use and production of green goods, digital, relating to the manufacture and use of digital technologies in products and the manufacturing process, and new products and markets, some of which are used elsewhere but are new for the region.
- Research by WMREDI shows that the downstream space sector employs the majority of space sector workers (79%) and has grown at an average rate of 5% per annum in the last 5 years. The West Midlands has the second-largest cohort of students outside of London studying in these subject areas. This makes it attractive for investors in this emerging industry.
- The seven-day average number of UK daily flights was 3,593, broadly unchanged from the previous week (3,579). The average number of UK daily flights in the latest week was at 54% of the level seen in the equivalent week of 2019.
- The volume of overall retail footfall in the UK remained unchanged from the previous week (week to 11 September 2021). This is the first week since the week to 28th August 2021 where the volume of overall retail footfall in the UK has not seen a week-on-week decrease.
- Between the 10th and 17th September 2021, total online job adverts increased by 4.3 percentage points. On the 17th September 2021, total online job adverts were at 132.7% of their average level in February 2020. The West Midlands region increased by 5.3 percentage points; total online job adverts for the West Midlands were at 149% of their average level in February 2020.
- 28% of trading businesses in the West Midlands reported their turnover had decreased by at least 20%. However, 46.1% of trading businesses in the West Midlands reported that their turnover was unaffected and approximately 13.7% reported their turnover had increased by at least 20%.
- 29% of exporting businesses in the West Midlands reported their businesses were still exporting but less than normal. Of those businesses who continued to trade and import, 20.8% in the West Midlands were importing less than normal. 56.1% of West Midlands businesses who were exporting reported that they had not been affected and 63% reported that importing had not been affected.
- 31.2% of responding West Midlands businesses reported they intended to use increased homeworking as a permanent business model going forward. 46.5% of West Midlands businesses reported they did not intend to use this business model with a further 22.3% unsure.
- 9% of adults in the West Midlands reported low levels of life satisfaction (matching Great Britain (GB)). 9% of West Midlands adults reported low level of feeling worthwhile (8% GB). 16% of responding West Midlands adults reported low level of happiness (12% GB) and 36% reported high levels of anxiety (33% GB).

Global, National and Regional Outlook

Alice Pugh, WMREDI

Global

Currently, the only thing the world doesn't seem to have a shortage of is shortages! Whilst UK shoppers are focusing on the lack of HGV drivers and its impact on supply chains across the UK, the impacts are being exacerbated by shortages in supply chains elsewhere and for a range of different reasons. For instance, there is currently a global shortage of new cars and this is impacting the used car industry too. When the pandemic hit last year most car production ceased and semiconductor manufacturers diverted their chips to the consumer electrics industry. As cars as essentially computers on wheels now, this has led to a shortage of microchips needed as production opens back up. With an under-supply of new cars, this has caused second-hand cars to shoot up in price.

It does not look like things are set to improve for Christmas as about 70% of the world's toys are made in China and the costs of delivery have rapidly increased. There is currently a shortage of containers in Asia, as a result of the effects of the pandemic on international supply chains, leading to shipping prices being 10 times higher than last year. Also, even if you can get your hands on a container shipping times have doubled, meaning there is less time available to get the toys on the shelves before the festive season.

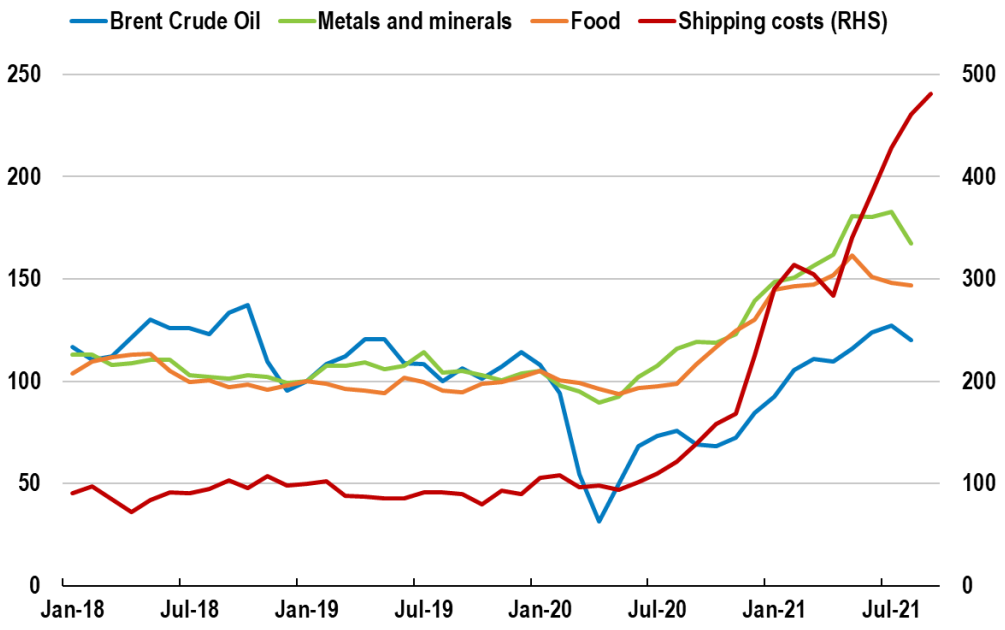
The US is also having its own HGV driver's crisis. 'Trucking' in the US is the primary source of container transport once the cargo is unloaded at port. A shortage of drivers across the country means much of the container volume has been sitting idle at capacity-strained facilities. Much like with the shortage in the UK, current employees are frustrated by the lack of employment prospects and safety concerns, in combination with a family at home and expanded unemployment benefits many have left the industry.

There are also issues affecting agriculture and food production globally. Staff shortages have hit a number of sectors over the last 18 months due to the pandemic, but the one of the hardest hit has been the agriculture and food sector as it is highly labour intensive. The global food eco-system has been hit hard, with some employers having to raise wages at a double-digit pace. This will likely continue to push food prices up even higher, prices in August this year were up 33% globally from the same month last year.

Additionally, other food supply chains have been hit by climate change issues over the summer which has led to reduced harvests and rising costs. For instance, coffee prices have risen because Brazil suffered a severe drought which led to reduced crops and is now suffering from severe frost which will likely led to a reduction in supply next year as well. There is also a shortage of durum wheat following soaring summer temperatures which hit Canada, one of the world's largest producers, leading to prices rise of up to 90%. As Durum wheat is a key ingredient for products like pasta, food industry experts in Italy are saying prices could rise by 50%.

Even if you do have the labour and good weather to get your yields and products out of the factory, there will be severe delays in delivery. Ports across the globe are reporting record levels of backlogs, with Ocean carriers' reporting delays of up to 30 days on the worst hit China to EU routes and 22 days on the worst hit China to US routes. Whilst, labour shortages due to lockdowns in Asia are largely to blame for the delays, demand is also a factor. Over the last 18 months consumers have been spending the vast majority of their time at home as a result of lockdowns and thus have switched from purchasing services to goods. This has led to a rapid increased demand for freight and shipping containers, with global container demand increasing by 6% to 8% this year. As, we get closer and closer to Christmas demand will only increase. This will likely lead to further delays, especially as the winter months set in and any more spikes in Covid-19 will add to delays.

All of these issues - climate change, port delays, container shortages, HGV driver shortages, Covid-19 spikes and their subsequent lockdowns, raw materials shortages and increasing demand - are causing inflationary pressures on prices, as governments and industries try to fix the supply chains. The graph below from the OECD shows global prices rises since 2018. At the height in 2021, the price of shipping costs rose 27% comparative to the baseline in January 2019.



One of the major issues, as OECD points out, is that whilst more advanced countries may be rolling out vaccines at a fast rate, poorer countries do not have the same ability to do so. This is causing significant delays further down the line, as spikes of Covid-19 and the resulting lockdowns drain the labour supply from poorer countries. Advanced countries are dependent on developing countries to produce commodities at a cheaper prices, but the fragility of supply chains and rising demand will likely continue delays and price rises right through until 2022, and potentially until 2023. In order to ease all this the OECD recommends that governments in advanced countries support less economically advanced countries, especially in Asia, by helping them with the roll-out of vaccine programmes.

The EU has also been hit by soaring energy prices this Autumn, which is threatening to derail post-pandemic recovery, strain household incomes and detrimentally impact the transition to greener energy. Natural gas prices across Europe have risen from €16 megawatt per hour in early January to €75 by mid-September, an increase of more than 360% in less than a year. The reasons for this are a combination of both temporary and structural problems. The first issue was last winter, when colder than expected temperatures led to higher demand to heat buildings and with more people in lockdown at home there were greater numbers of homes to heat. This caused a marked decrease in gas reserves, which reduced to 30% by March.

Then in Spring 2021, when a number of EU economies began to reopen, business activity began to intensify rapidly. The economic recovery prompted a new wave of energy demand, which was higher than usual in the summer due to the sweltering temperatures that hit the EU and pushed people to use air conditioning and cooling systems. Then as economies reopened across most of Asia this summer, there was another spike in demand, with China's demand for gas this year expected to have risen by 8%.

It was expected that some of this shortfall could be made up by greater supply from Russia. However Gazprom, Russia state-backed energy company, has refused to increase exports to the EU. The company has already fulfilled its contractual obligations in terms of the volume of gas it has to supply to the EU. Supplies of Russian gas via the Yamal-Europe line dropped to 15,021 MWH per hour on Tuesday down from 35,131 MWH per hour on Monday. The worry amongst EU leaders is the President Putin maybe trying to keep gas prices high by limiting supply, in order to force through the approval of the Nord Streamline pipeline. The pipeline directly linking Russia and Germany is now complete but has not begun operations due to bureaucratic hurdles. The project has also faced heavy criticism within and outside the EU, as the line will perpetuate the EU's reliance on fossil fuels and extend the geo-political influence of President Putin.

National

The global gas crunch is particularly bad news for the UK, which has become highly dependent on gas in recent months following a string of issues with the UK electricity system. Across the UK ageing nuclear power plants have been forced to take unplanned outages for maintenance, a main power cable used to import electricity for France

has shut down due to a fire, and the UK's wind turbines have slowed during some of the least windy months since 1961.

Furthermore, even though the UK is highly reliant on gas for home heating cooking, less than 1% of Europe's stored gas is held by the UK. This has forced Britain to temporarily fire up coal power stations to plug the shortfall. Natural gas fairly consistently makes up round 40% of the UK's energy mix, oil roughly the same, 15% comes from renewables and an even smaller amount from coal. This shows how reliant the UK is on natural gas and because of a lack of diversity in energy resources the UK is highly susceptible to price shocks.

Brexit will likely also cause greater impacts for the UK comparative to the EU, as the EU's internal energy market allows member states to trade with each other in a way that balances prices out. This means whilst EU member states cannot always take full advantage of low energy prices, they are protected from very high energy prices. Whilst the UK can now take full advantage when prices are cheap, it also means that it is also fully exposed when prices are high.

So far as a result of the soaring energy prices in the UK, 12 energy firms have collapsed. This means that over 2 million people across the UK have now lost their energy supplier. But what does this mean for household energy prices? The Guardian found that this time last year, households with average energy usage who were on the cheapest gas and electricity bills were paying around £800 a year to £817 depending on whether they were on variable or fixed paid tariffs. If your energy company has collapsed then you will be moved to a tariff charged at Ofgem's price cap. This is the maximum suppliers can charge customers on their standard variable tariffs and is set to rise by 12% on 1 October. This means that households that pay direct debit will face bills averaging £1,277 a year for duel fuel, whilst those on meters typically the most vulnerable, will see average energy bills rise to an average of £1,309 a year.

This is bad news for lower income consumers especially as the UC £20 weekly up lift ends at the end of this month, as well as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS). Over the last 18 months the CJRS has covered the wages of roughly 11.6 million people, and has provided 2.3 billion days of furlough at a cost of almost £70 billion (in gross terms). Along with other economic support measures, it has ensured that the worst recession for 300 years saw a smaller than expected rise in unemployment. It is anticipated that around 1 million people will still be on furlough as it ends on 30th September, with half of those still fully furloughed. Therefore, it is likely that there will be at least a moderate rise in unemployment, but this will vary by industry.

All this has put upwards pressure on inflation. Below are the main points from the ONS' Consumer Price Inflation update:

- The Consumer Prices Index, including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH), rose by 3.0% in the 12 months to August 2021, up from 2.1% in the 12 months to July 2021.
- The increase of 0.9 percentage points is the largest increase ever recorded in the CPIH National Statistic 12-month inflation rate series, which began in January 2006; however, this is likely to be a temporary change.
- The largest upward contribution to change is a base effect, because, in part, of discounted restaurant and café prices in August 2020 resulting from the government's Eat Out to Help Out scheme and, to a lesser extent, reductions in Value Added Tax (VAT) across the same sector.
- The largest upward contribution to the August 2021 CPIH 12-month inflation rate came from transport (0.87 percentage points) with further large upward contributions from restaurants and hotels (0.65 percentage points), housing and household services (0.65 percentage points), and recreation and culture (0.28 percentage points).
- CPIH increased by 0.6% on the month in August 2021, compared with a fall of 0.3% in August 2020.
- Restaurants and hotels, recreation and culture, and food and non-alcoholic beverages made the largest upward contributors to the change in the CPIH 12-month inflation rate between July and August 2021.
- The Consumer Prices Index (CPI) rose by 3.2% in the 12 months to August 2021, up from 2.0% in July: the increase of 1.2 percentage points is the largest ever recorded increase in the CPI National Statistic 12-month inflation rate series, which began in January 1997; this is likely to be a temporary change.
- On a monthly basis, CPI increased 0.7% in August 2021, compared with a fall of 0.4% in August 2020.
- Football admissions became available in August 2021, meaning that there are no more CPIH items identified as unavailable because of lockdown restrictions.

A survey conducted by the BBC this month has found that 56% of women thought that working from home would help progress their career. As traditionally the majority of childcare, caring and unpaid household duties fall on women within the household, the flexibility of home working has made this less of an issue. With 65% of managers in surveyed saying they think it would help to advance women's careers. Following, the benefits that flexible home working has provided the government has announced proposals to allow all UK employees to request flexible working arrangement from their first day with a new employer.

Regional

Have you ever wanted to experience what it is like to be in a driverless car? Well the opportunity could now be yours, as Solihull has become one of the first places in the UK to see driverless vehicles take to its roads; as part of new ground-breaking passenger trials. As part of a wider UK central programme being funded by the WMCA, the trial has been launched to test the integration of Connected Autonomous Vehicles (CAVs) into the borough's transport networks in the future. Solihull Council has thus become the first local authority in the country to purchase its very own fully electric autonomous shuttle and initial trialling will being over the next four weeks. The shuttle will carry up to 8 passengers and will use a number of sensors to understand its surroundings, allowing it to move safely, interacting with live traffic with little or no human operator input. However, in line with current safety guidelines there will be a safety operator on board at all times, who if needed, will have the ability to take control of the shuttle. For more info on how to take part in this experience please see the link here.

At a business event hosted by national audit, tax, advisory and risk firm Crowe, it was advised that firms should consider the new Very Light Rail Programme. The Black Country Innovative Manufacturing Organisation (BCIMO) is encouraging small and medium size firms to gear up for the new Very Light Rail (VLR) industry currently being developed in Coventry and at Dudley's £24 million VLR National Innovation Centre, which is due to be completed next February. Funding for BCIMO and the Very Light Rail National Innovation Centre has been secured through the Black Country LEP, European Regional Development Fund and Midlands Engine.

The VLR vehicles will offer a cheaper, more efficient and more technologically advanced alternative to metro tram systems, whilst also enable cost effective operation of new branch lines and the re-opening of closed lines. The ones currently in development in Coventry will be powered by their own electric batteries and will only weigh 9 tonnes, compared to 30 for metro trams.

BT has announced that it is to recruit 1,000 new people at its flagship Birmingham office, with around 225 posts currently available. This employment boost as construction finishes on Three Snowhill, which will serve as BT's regional hub site for the Midlands. The roles currently available at BT are in areas such as digital, data, analytics, sales and HR. Eventually, the new offices will accommodate around 3,500 colleagues from across BT Group, including digital network business Openreach. The state-of-the art building will be the first of BT's hub locations in the UK to open as part of its 'Better Workplace Programme' - the largest workplace improvement and consolidation scheme of its type ever undertaken in the UK. The programme will reduce BT's footprint from over 300 locations to around 30. BT's ambition is to increase efficiency and productivity. BT still believes in the future of the office but, has recognised the benefits of home working for employees as well, and as a result will be offering a flexible 'Smart Working' approach; where teams will choose how colleagues spend time between home and their office.

ONS have reported that the West Midlands manufacturing sector has the highest number of employments still on furlough. The manufacturing industry has been hit very hard over the last 18 months, with Covid-19 causing factory closures, lack of raw materials, shortages on goods such as microchips, lower demand for goods such as cars and now the energy crisis will hit the industry too. The likelihood is that some of the manufacturers will have to make employees redundant in the following weeks, as the furlough scheme ends. The Local Government Association has predicted that unemployment in the West Midlands will rise to the highest level in the UK at 9.3%.

New Local Business Support

Health and Safety Courses, The Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce: The Chambers of Commerce is offering an information-based course net month to help small businesses with their health and safety guidance. This training is being offered, due to new legislation on company requirements being reviewed and updated on the 1st October. The course will offer the most current and accurate information on business procedures, not only for the safety of their team and customers but also to follow the laws surrounding Health and Safety in the workplace. The course is

to be delivered by Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce in partnership with European Health & Safety Consultants Ltd. For more information please follow the link here.

West Midlands Low Carbon and Circular Economy Fund, GBSLEP: The Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP (GBSLEP) has launched the West Midlands Low Carbon and Circular Economy fund to support firms in the low carbon and food and drinks manufacturing sectors. A total of £240,000 will be made available to support business located with the WMCA 3-LEP area, including GBSLEP, Black Country LEP (BCLEP) and Coventry and Warwickshire LEP (CWLEP). In order to apply, food and drinks manufacturers will need to work with low carbon innovators to develop more eco-friendly production methods either with the aim of cutting waste or carbon or the use of more sustainable packaging. To qualify for the grant, projects are expected to fulfil one of the following themes:

- Implementing circular economy principles for food waste in food and drink manufacturing
- Decarbonisation of food and drink manufacturing processes
- Sustainable packaging in food and drink manufacturing

For more information please follow the link here.

Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce's Skills Hub: Businesses in Cannock Chase, East Staffordshire, Tamworth, South Staffordshire, and Lichfield are now able to apply for grants covering the full cost of training. Grants up to £5000 are on offer to businesses from all sectors, with the businesses from the hospitality & logistics sector to apply. Applications for a wide variety of training needs, from sales and management training to more niche & bespoke courses are all welcome to apply. To qualify, businesses must be classed as SME's, have been trading for more than 6 months and training must be paid for by the end of October. For more information please follow the link here.

Oxford Economic Forecasting Model – Baseline forecast

The WMCA, Midlands Engine and Midlands Connect have funded the development of a forecasting and impact model provided by Oxford Economics. The model covers all the Midlands geography down to Local Authority level. There has been a network of superusers established who are currently developing their skills in applying and using the model for partners.

The Economic Forecasting Model provides access to Oxford Economics' baseline forecasts which reflect their latest view on the impact of the current pandemic on the economy and the Government's response, as well as other factors such as Brexit. International, national and regional outlooks – fully consistent with the broader global and national forecasts we produce.

The forecast uses historical trends in an area, which implicitly factor in supply side factors affecting demand; and fundamental economic relationships which interlink the various elements of the outlook. Oxford Economics' models therefore ensure full consistency between variables in a local area, and between local areas. This forecasting framework is critical in ensuring the local area forecasts are much more than just an extrapolation of historical trends and reflect external economic conditions.

The baseline forecast does contain a number of assumptions:

- UK GVA growth of 7.4% in 2021, underpinned by:
    - Removal of lockdown restrictions
    - Continued fiscal support
    - Consumers spending some of their excess savings
    - Inflation remains contained
    - Sustained monetary policy support
    - Extra trade frictions due to Brexit
- Long-term growth underpinned by continued growth in the labour supply and the strength of certain UK service sectors
- Employment growth lead by:
    - Professional, scientific & technical activities
    - Human health & social work
    - Administrative & support services

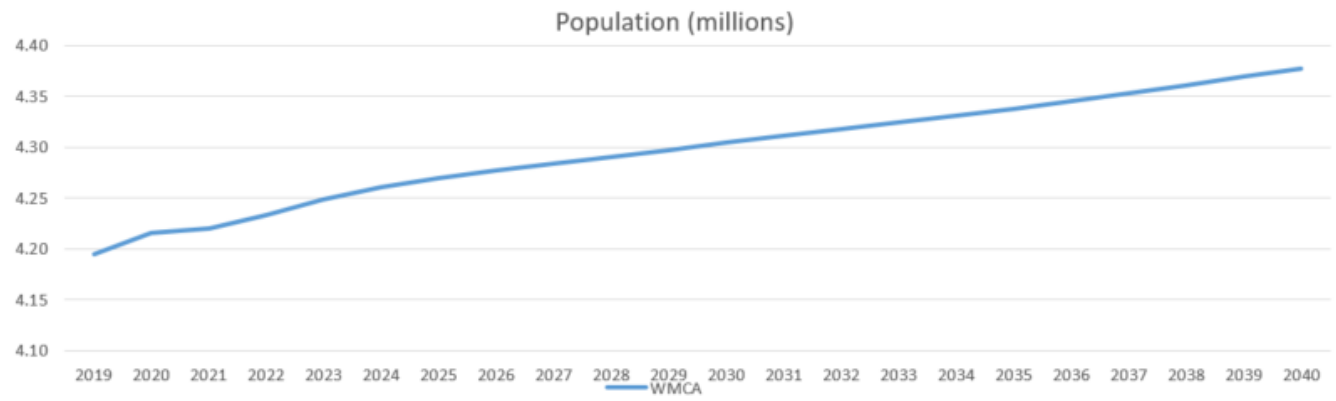
- Urban areas will continue to drive growth, in the Midlands the following places will drive employment and GVA growth:

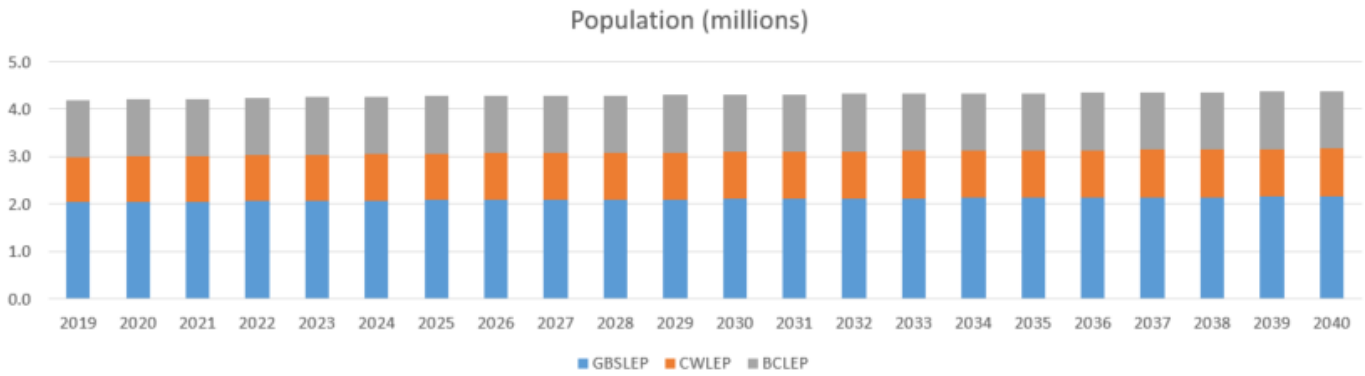
Employment change (000's)	2019-2025
Nottingham	18.8
Birmingham	15.7
North Northamptonshire	14.7
Leicester City	10.0
West Northamptonshire	8.2
Coventry	7.4
Derby City	6.5
Charnwood	5.1
Solihull	4.3
Blaby	4.1

GVA growth (% per year)	2019-2025
Nottingham	2.2
Rushcliffe	2.0
North Northamptonshire	2.0
Lichfield	2.0
Rugby	1.9
Leicester City	1.8
Derby City	1.7
Charnwood	1.7
Blaby	1.6
Chesterfield	1.6

Population baseline

- Total population across the WMCA was 4.2 million in 2020.
- It is forecasted to grow to 4.4 million by 2040.
- This a projected growth of 182,000 people, or a 4.36% growth in the population compared to 4.5% nationally by 2040

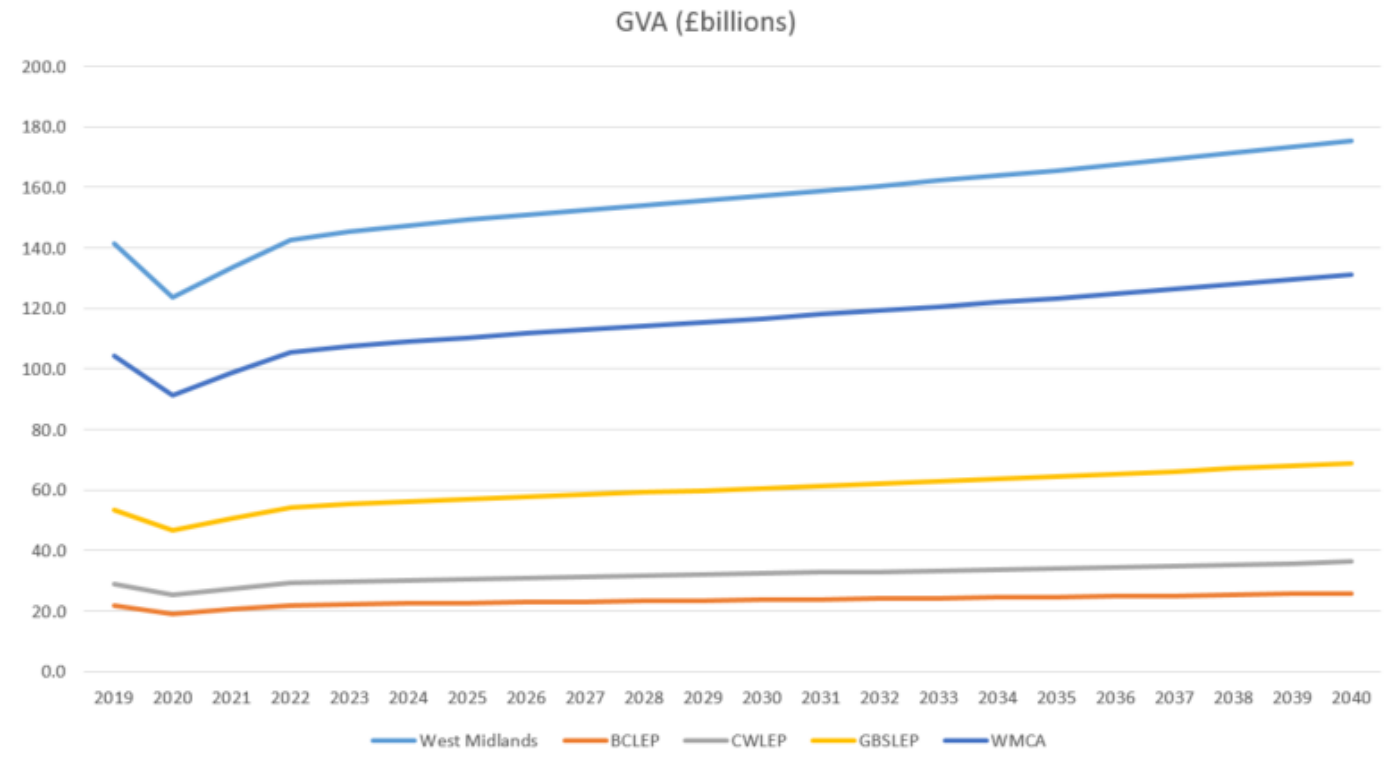




GVA Baseline

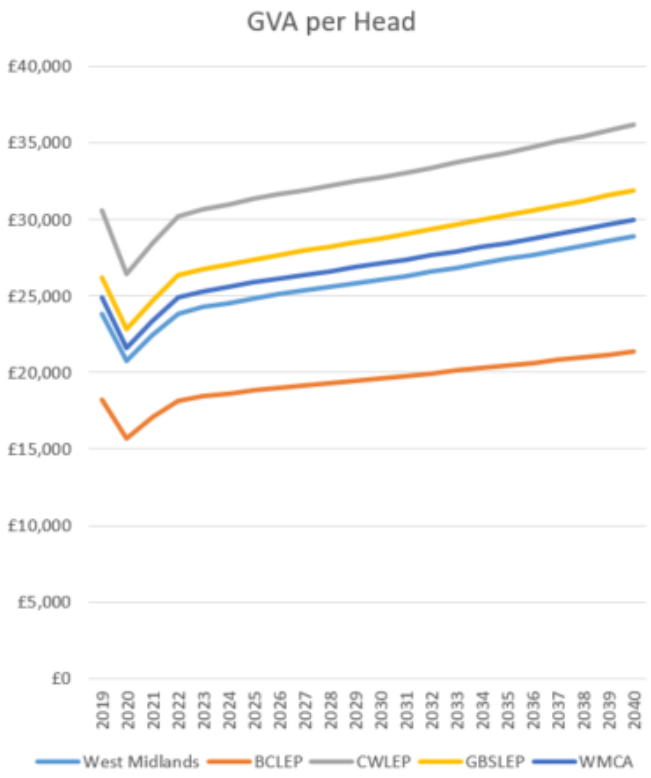
- Total GVA in 2019 for the WMCA was £104 billion
- The projected GVA in 2040 is £131 billion- an additional £27 billion
- This is an increase of 25.5%, with an annual yearly growth rate of 1.16%

- Below the UK annual yearly growth rate at 1.35% therefore the WMCA will continue to fall behind



GVA per head Baseline

- In 2019 GVA per head across the WMCA was £24,895, comparative to the UK average of £28,765.
- The baseline scenario forecasts the WMCA GVA per head to grow to £29,939 by 2040- an average annual yearly growth rate of 0.95%, compared to the UK at 1.15%
- CWLEP has the highest GVA in the WMCA area, however GBSLEP had the highest annual growth rate at 1.01%. BCLEP had the slowest growth at 0.8% annually



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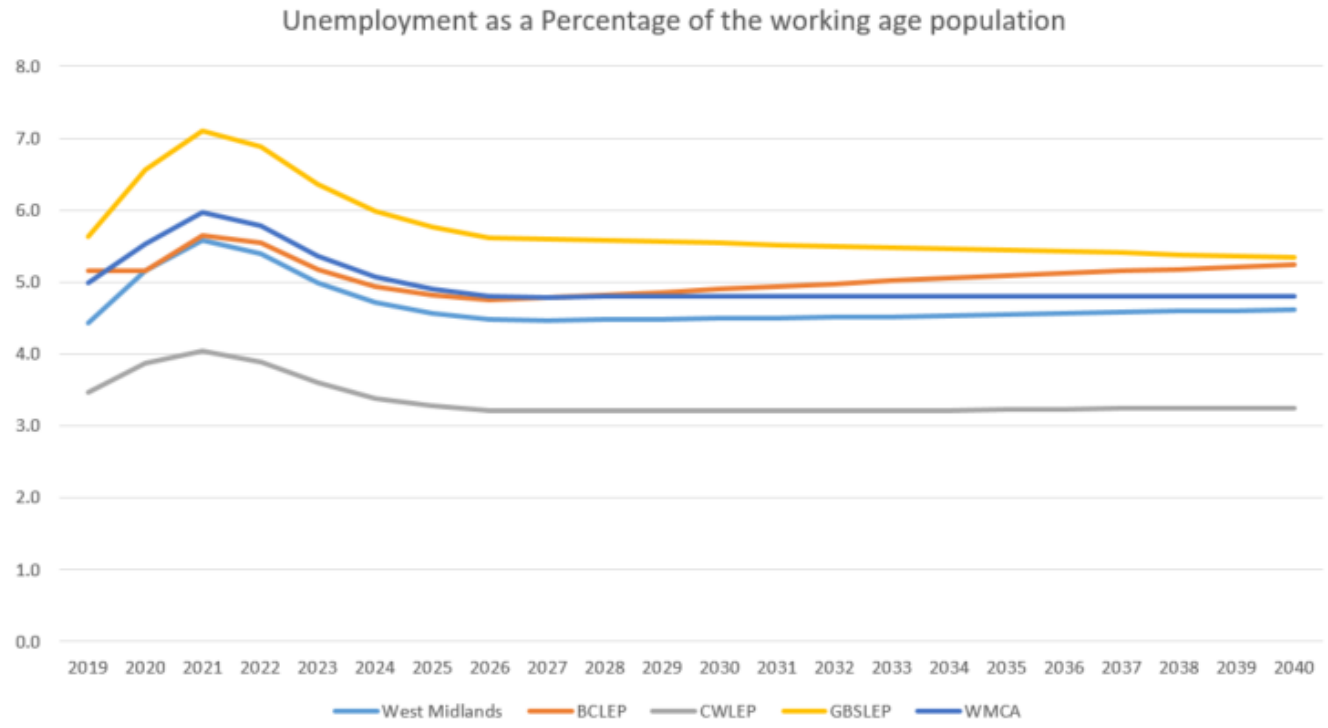
Earnings

- In 2019, WMCA workplace based earnings were £28,444 per year
- By 2040 this is predicted to reach £52,441 per year
- The WMCA average annual yearly growth rate is 2.96% and the UK annual growth rate is 3.07%.

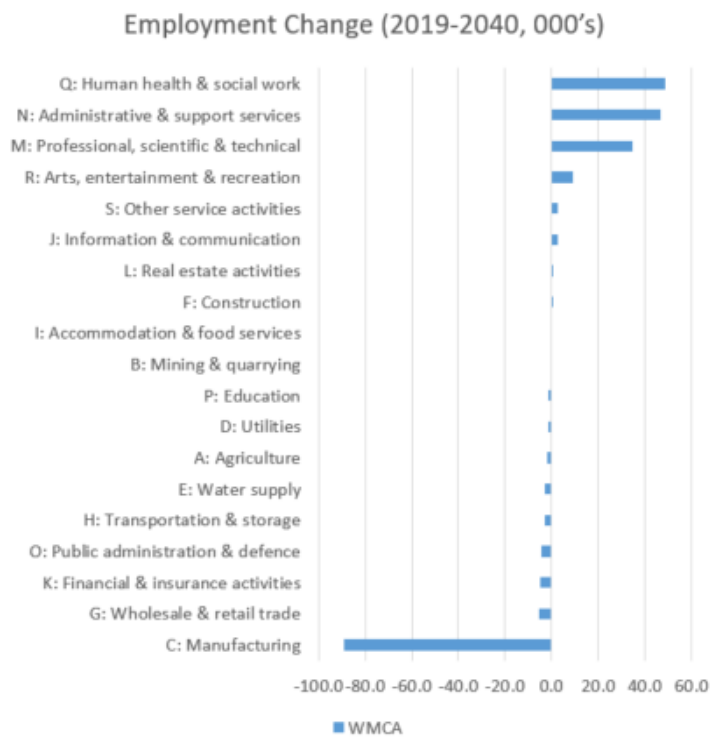
Unemployment baseline

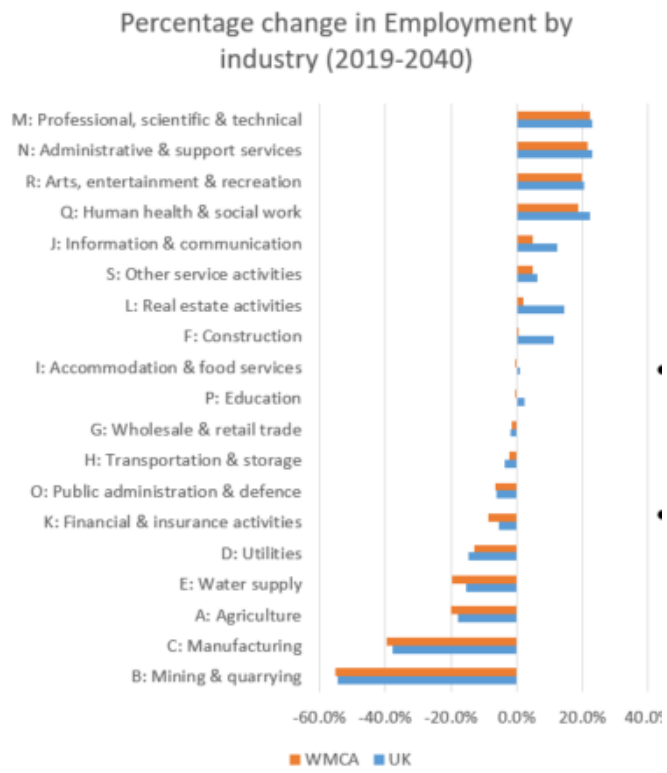


- The percentage of those unemployed as a percentage of the working age population was 5% in the WMCA, compared to the UK at 3.8% in 2019.
- The Oxford model predicts that unemployment will decrease to 4.8% in the WMCA by 2040
- Unemployment is set to decrease in WMCA, GBSLEP and CWLEP, but increase in BCLEP by 2040

Employment Baseline

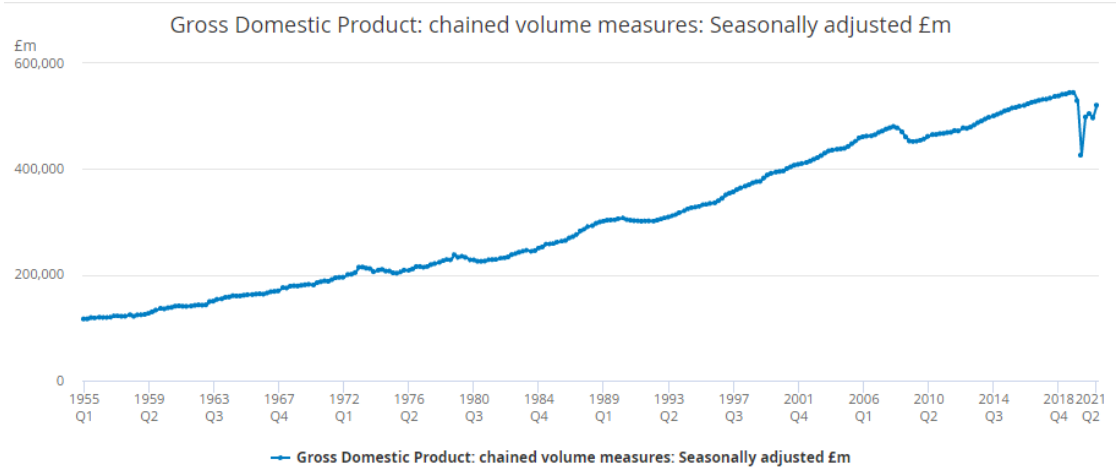
- The largest declines in employment from 2019 and 2040, will be in mining and quarrying (-55%) and manufacturing (-40%). However, mining and quarrying only employees 7,000 people in WMCA. Whereas, Manufacturing currently employees 225,700, meaning the industry will see a loss of 89,100 employees
- This is similar to the rest of the UK mining and quarrying will decrease by 54% and manufacturing by 38%
- The largest increases in employment were in Human health & social work (+49%), Administrative & support services (+48%) and Professional, scientific & technical (+35%) sectors.





Key issues to consider:

- This baseline is a 'do nothing' baseline, things continuing as they have been with the recent shocks returning the UK and region back to a growth trajectory, albeit slightly lower than the past. For context the national GDP growth since 1955 to date has looked like this:



Source: ONS: GDP

The 2008 shock disrupted the higher growth in the 2000s back to a similar growth trajectory of previous years. 2020 shocks are forecast to do something similar by OE.

- The baseline takes a softer approach to Brexit and Covid impacts, success of government intervention and assumes a return to trend by 2023
- The forecast generally continues previous trends, and therefore any new projects/activities are not represented
- GVA and GVA per head continues to grow, but at a slower rate to the UK – therefore the gap gets wider
- The Black Country has continued unemployment growth unemployment growth
- General growth in construction, real estate, ICT, health continues at UK level but WMCA not getting its share
- WMCA does not outperform UK on any growth sectors
- Manufacturing takes a huge employment hit over the next 10 years, as does water supply, agriculture and also financial services

Tackling the 'Perfect Storm' in Logistics

Gemma Gathercole, Andy Davis – Coventry & Warwickshire LEP, and Katy Urwin - North Warwickshire & South Leicestershire College

There isn't a day that goes by at the moment without media stories of shortages, rising costs, delays, and empty shelves impacting on different sectors of the economy. The 'perfect storm' hitting the Logistics sector and reaching out across many other sectors, clearly shows the complexity of supply chains and the critical linkages that exist between sectors.

In Logistics, the impact of the shortage of HGV drivers has become part of the national dialogue. According to Logistics UK the driver shortage has grown rapidly in recent years, and has now reached around 100,000. Some of the reasons for this include:

- EU Exit resulting in the loss of thousands of European driver capacity
- Trade and Border controls, slowing the process of inbound and outgoing freight
- The ageing driver workforce
- Covid-19 issues stemming from the need for workers to self-isolate
- The lack of new drivers compounded by the unavailability of HGV tests throughout 2020 and into 2021
- IR35 rules removing many agency drivers from the market

The challenges for the sector are short, medium, and long term, and all will need addressing to start to reduce the impacts of the 'perfect storm'. These can be summarised as:

Short Term:
- Nationwide 100k driver shortage – additional numbers of permits for temporary overseas drivers could help in short term
- LogisticsUK call for 10k to be granted immediately
- Clear backlog of test candidates delayed due to Covid-19
- Impacts being felt across many other sectors

Medium Term:
- Sort exam and test infrastructure for new drivers
- Re-assess time and costs of gaining different levels of licence
- More efficient processes for assessing candidates
- Clarity/flexibility around IR35 regulations
- Sector based approaches to encourage driver retention within companies
- Modern and safer work patterns

Long Term:
- Building a more diverse workforce
- Widening workforce demographics
- Changing the image of the sector
- Delivering clearer career pathways and highlighting opportunities
- Establishing wider FE/Apprenticeships and skills development offer
- Building modern and safer working conditions and infrastructure
- Better understanding of linkages across sectors and supply chains

The demographic issue, just one aspect of the challenges for the sector, is complex enough in itself. Logistics UK report that over half of the HGV driver workforce are aged over 50, and around 95% are male. Each year 10,000 HGV drivers retire and a further 20,000 drivers leave the UK pool to pursue other careers. These would normally be replaced by the 43,000 new drivers passing their HGV tests each year. However, in the 12 months to March 2021 only some 15,000 HGV test passes were achieved due to the 8-month suspension of testing during the pandemic which has resulted in a shortfall of 27,000 new drivers. Changing and diversifying the demographic profile of the workforce won't be achieved in the short term.

In the West Midlands there are a range of actions to help ease the issues short, medium, and long term:

1. Establishing regional links with the Road Haulage Association (RHA) –

- RHA & Sandwell Logistics Forum in July – included discussions with four Black Country businesses. Over 20 HGV driver Apprenticeships were required by three of the employers and the fourth business was an SSR Plant closure in Sandwell with 10 employees wishing to go into HGV careers.
- Sandwell Council allocated funds from their Apprenticeship Levy - to support local residents in this sector & training through Apprenticeships.

- SERCO currently working with RHA on bespoke courses to be delivered to their members across the West Midlands, currently being reviewed by supply chain partners. Courses identified are classed as skills gaps within the sector and demanded by employers.

2. Logistics Skills Network eight-point Plan for 100,000 drivers

Logistics Skills Network, supported by the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), Coventry & Warwickshire LEP and the Black Country Chamber of Commerce, ask that the Government agree to a meeting between the Secretary of State for Transport and industry representatives from the West Midlands**.** Such a meeting would provide opportunity to discuss in more detail an eight-point plan to deliver 100,000 new HGV drivers over the coming years.

3. Centre for Logistics, Education, and Research (CLEAR)

CLEAR was set up to become the Supply Chain network's centre of excellence, for professional learning and development. Seeking to address both short- and long-term skills challenges, the curriculum is employer led working closely with industry to upskill existing staff, as well as providing a training offer for the sector to attract new people in to the sector. The partnership will also be conducting work to attract young people into the sector.

Phase 1 of CLEAR is a physical training centre, Bittersby House, based in Magna Park, Lutterworth, at the centre of the Logistics Golden Triangle. There are ambitions to develop a phase 2 building focussed on research, development and technical training for automation and robotics in the logistics and supply chain sector.

Feedback from employers is that access to training is not an issue, but there is a profound labour shortage. The Centre is working closely with Wincanton and others to tackle the driver shortage.

Midlands Engine Manufacturing Opportunities: What could be made in the Midlands in the Future? – September 2021

Midlands Engine

Executive Summary

As the UK's manufacturing engine, the Midlands is more than individual companies making products. Taken together these companies provide phenomenal capacity and capability; they are so much more than the sum of their parts. The interconnected supply chains across the Midlands form a network of companies all working together in collaborative and innovative ways to manufacture products for our everyday use. From spices and ceramics, to aeroplanes and medical devices, these products are then distributed and used not just in the Midlands and UK, but across the world.

The three themes of the report are low carbon, relating to the use and production of green goods, digital, relating to the manufacture and use of digital technologies in products and the manufacturing process, and new products and markets, some of which are used elsewhere but are new for the region.

The chosen sectors reflect the regional expertise identified in the 2017 Science and Innovation Audit as areas for growth.

Midlands Engine manufacturing opportunities by theme

Low Carbon

- New materials, recycling or reusing processes can help make food packaging and medical equipment more sustainable
- Using waste from food and textile production through industrial symbiosis will decrease waste and lead to new products. Reprocessing will also occur for metals and lithium batteries
- Electric battery manufacturing and alternative fuel cell manufacturing, including hydrogen, will become a significant opportunity for existing car manufacturers such as Toyota and RollsRoyce and their supply chains
- Hydrogen presents an opportunity as a fuel for trains and cars, but also as a heat source for homes
- Sustainable fuels, lightweighting and new electric flight systems will change aerospace development
- Lightweighting and developments in power trains will improve the efficiency of vehicles
- Light and Very Light Rail can be deployed as cleaner and more efficient rail
- The National Centre for Doctoral Training in Fuel Cells and their Fuels covers Birmingham, Nottingham, Loughborough, encouraging academic research and development
- The region can produce more green energy, building on it's existing capacity
- National Grid is investing money in the grid to improve efficiency.
- There are significant opportunities in other energy generation methods, such as nuclear, wind and solar building on the region's current energy generation facilities

Digital

- Automated production including drones and robotics will decrease waste and potentially make manufacturing across all sectors more efficient

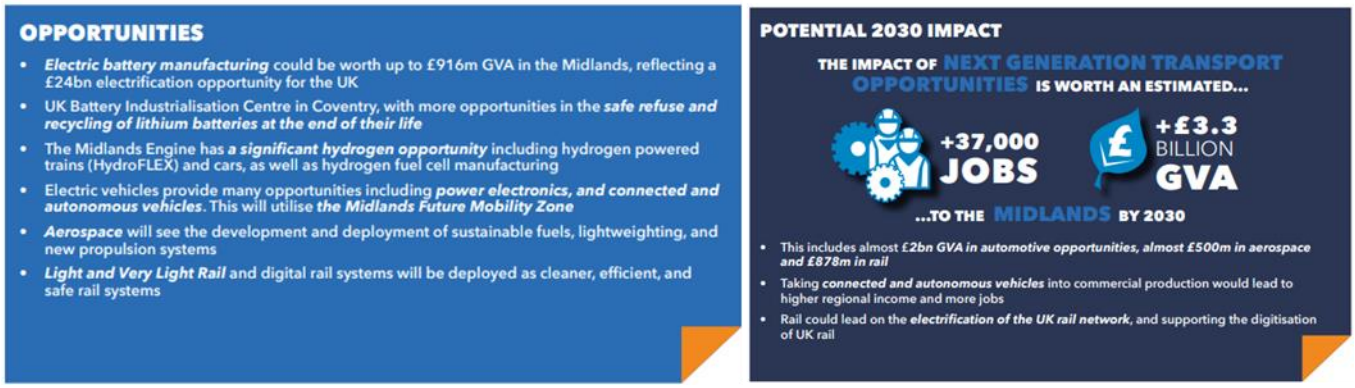
- Sensors can be used across food and health care to monitor patients health, increase food safety and reduce waste and improve crop yields
- Digital will change medicine, particularly monitoring and diagnostics, through the use of wearable health devices and Big Data analysis
- Digital control systems for the national grid and other systems like HS2 will be deployed across wind systems, among others, to understand usage and reduce waste

New Products and Markets

- The food market could export its products further. This is coupled with new opportunities for 'free-from' products as demand increases
- Connected and autonomous vehicles, developed through the Future Mobility Zone, will gain in popularity
- Defence and Trauma medicine has been an area identified for potential growth in the region
- New markets and manufacturers have become involved in the medical sector due to COVID-19 which leads to greater diversity in supply chains
- Improving drug pathway developments will develop new drugs and delivery mechanisms
- Lightweighting requires aluminium, high strength steels and carbon fibre which will continue to be developed. Composites and polymers will also be utilised in lightweighting
- Advanced ceramics will expand across multiple sectors such as space, medical and transport
- Textiles for wound care and other protective textiles has potential to expand, as well as an increased demand for reshoring fashion and textile re-use
- There are cross-cutting developments, including injection moulding and digital technologies like robotics, 3D printing and machine learning

Future Food and Drink

Next Generation Transport



Medical and Pharmaceuticals

OPPORTUNITIES

- Growth of ***digital health and wearable devices***, sensors to increase diagnostic capacity, and 3D printing and robotics
- ***Defence and Trauma medicine*** is currently only supported by ***18% of MedTech businesses*** and represents a significant area for potential growth
- ***New markets created by COVID-19*** have bought in new manufacturers to the sector. There is potential for ***more manufacturers to enter medical manufacturing***
- Improving ***drug pathway development*** though collaboration with universities and the NHS would improve patient care
- The region could become a hub of both new interventions and ***regulatory science*** which provides guidance on digital monitoring and new policy around healthcare
- ***Big Data*** from wearable devices and other new data sources could ***improve patient diagnosis and care***
- ***Reusable or recyclable*** medical devices

POTENTIAL 2030 IMPACT

THE IMPACT OF MEDICAL AND PHARMACEUTICALS IS WORTH AN ESTIMATED...

+8,000 JOBS

+£1.5 BILLION GVA

...TO THE MIDLANDS BY 2030

- Over 5,000 jobs of could be in Med-tech and almost 3,000 in biopharma
- The current healthy life expectancy for the Midlands engine is ***1.9 and 0.9 years below the UK average*** for female and males respectively which exemplifies the need to improve the region's health

Low Carbon Goods

OPPORTUNITIES

- ***Control systems*** will be deployed across wind, smart grids, and HS2 to track energy and reduce usage
- ***Hydrogen*** is a significant opportunity with ***hydrogen heat pumps and boilers*** being developed by Bosch, as well as hydrogen vehicles and hydrogen generation taking place in the region
- ***The National Centre for Doctoral Training in Fuel Cells*** and their Fuels covers Birmingham, Nottingham, Loughborough, strengthening regional expertise
- ***Electric vehicles*** will become necessary and the major car manufacturers region (Toyota, JLR, Aston Martin, BMW, Tata Motors) adapting to these changes. The ***UK Battery Industrialisation Centre*** will aid this
- The country will need more ***green energy generation***, and the region can provide this through increasing the production of wind, solar, nuclear biomass, and anaerobic digestion power

POTENTIAL 2030 IMPACT

THE IMPACT OF LOW CARBON GOODS IS WORTH AN ESTIMATED...

+39,000 JOBS

+£4.2 BILLION GVA

...TO THE MIDLANDS BY 2030

- This includes ***20,000 additional jobs in the wind sector*** and over 12,000 in solar
- £1.6bn potential GVA could be added by alternative fuels like ***hydrogen by 2030, creating 7,000 jobs***

Advanced metals and materials

OPPORTUNITIES

- ***Lightweighting***, the practice of making vehicles lighter and therefore more econmoical to run, requires aluminium, high strength steels, and carbon fibre
- ***Composites and polymers*** will increase in use in lightweighting in car bodies, chassis, and power trains
- ***Metal reprocessing and industrial symbiosis*** will be essential in reducing waste and improving reusability and recyclability of advanced manufacturing
- ***National Grid*** is investing significant money in the grid to improve the sustainability of the region
- ***Advanced ceramics*** will expand across multiple sectors such as space, medical and transport
- ***Textiles for wound care*** and other protective textiles has potential to expand
- There will be an increased demand for ***reshoring fashion*** and textile re-use
- There are ***cross-cutting developments***, including injection moulding and ***digital technologies***
- Driving sustainable construction by applying manufacturing processes, via Modern Methods of Construction technologies such as offsite

POTENTIAL 2030 IMPACT

THE IMPACT OF ADVANCED METALS AND MATERIALS IS WORTH AN ESTIMATED...

+49,000 JOBS

+£2.6 BILLION GVA

...TO THE MIDLANDS BY 2030

- ***25,000 additional jobs could be created within metals***, contributing £1.3bn GVA
- A further £900m GVA and 17,250 jobs could be added through ***advanced materials opportunities like ceramics and plastics***
- The potential of opportunities in textiles by 2030 is valued at ***£420m GVA and 7,250 new jobs***

For more details please access the report **here**.

Hidden Potential? The Role of Universities in the Development of Space-Related Innovation Clusters

Professor Simon Collinson, WM REDI

Universities and Region Innovation Ecosystems

A dynamic regional innovation ecosystem enables some regions to adapt faster or better than other regions. Universities, as both R&D producers and skills developers, are an integral part of this ecosystem, particularly when new technology or R&D-based opportunities appear. The alignment (or misalignment) between university R&D strengths and local firm-level innovation is a key component of this dynamism. A close match between the R&D and skills produced by local universities and demand by local firms and strong 'absorptive capacity' enables the region to exploit and benefit from new knowledge, expertise or technology for improved competitive advantage. The alternative, in less well-aligned ecosystems, is where graduates leave to work elsewhere and university R&D outputs are exploited by firms elsewhere, nationally or internationally.

The Birmingham city-region economy was an increasingly attractive place for both businesses and talented employees to invest, work and live in the pre-COVID period. We know this from data on inward investment and graduate retention. More students, from outside the region studying in local universities, stayed to work in this region after they graduated than in the recent past. This attractiveness was driving the economic and cultural renaissance of the city-region before the economic shock stalled the growth momentum.

In the case of new and emergent industries which are R&D-intensive, the role of universities is even more important. This is why it is helpful to map the R&D projects and education programmes across the group of local universities, against the demand for firm-level assets and expertise, in a new or emergent industry sector. By comparing this with similar combinations in other regions we can estimate the relative competitive advantage of one place against another. To some extent, this helps shape national and local R&D investment policies and other interventions which, under conditions of limited resources (i.e., always), need to accurately target particular growth policies towards places with particular kinds of comparative and competitive potential.

Mapping the Regional Space Sector

In our research on the regional space sector, mapping local university R&D and educational programmes and understanding how much these involved collaborations and the co-production of knowledge and expertise with and/or relevant to local firms, proved to be a very good place to start. Our 'university asset mapping' shows that R&D programmes, closely related to new opportunities in the space sector, exist in the West Midlands region. For example, the UKRI-funded SWIMMR (Space Weather Instrumentation, Measurement, Modelling and Risk) project, which will deliver improved monitoring capability to the UK's Met Office, involves a national consortium led by the University of Birmingham. The 'Enhanced Assured Location Simulator Leveraging WiFi and GNSS Sensor Fusion' (ELWAG) project is the focus of an Innovate UK project led by Spirent Communications and WMG at the University of Warwick. It aims to help intelligent vehicles and smart devices to gain more accurate location awareness by integrating Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS) and WiFi signals.

Similarly, an analysis of teaching programmes in regional universities focused on subjects like engineering, technology, physics, ICT and computer sciences, but including more specialist modules such as telecommunications, data analytics, navigation, GIS, or earth observation gave an estimate of the local skills 'supply-side'. This revealed, for example, that Coventry University is a significant source of the right kinds of skills for this industry.

The downstream space sector, particularly space applications and data services businesses, employs the majority of space sector workers (79%) and has grown at an average rate of 5% per annum in the last 5 years. Demand is likely to increase. So, regions that have a ready supply of talent are likely to attract investment from firms that are expanding or moving into the space sector. The West Midlands has the second-largest cohort of students outside of London studying in these subject areas. This makes it attractive for investors in this emerging industry.

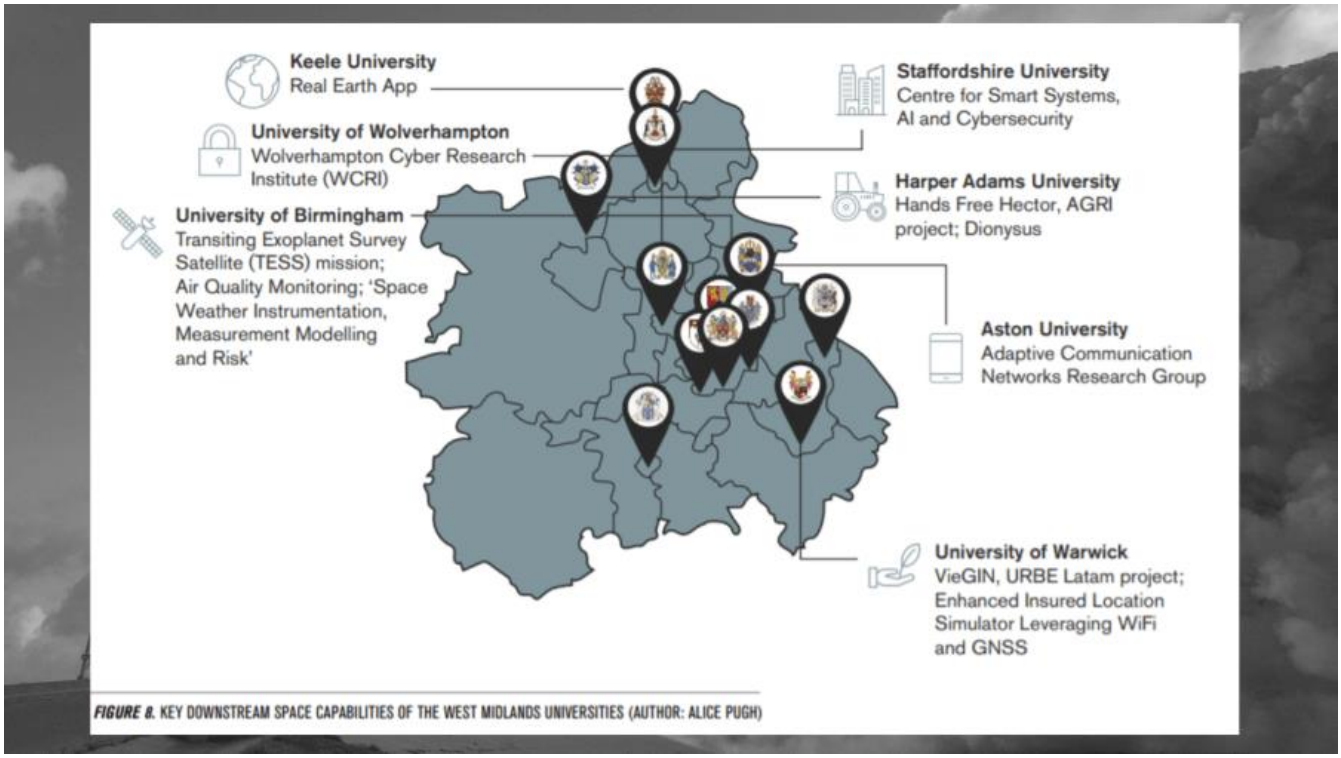


FIGURE 8. KEY DOWNSTREAM SPACE CAPABILITIES OF THE WEST MIDLANDS UNIVERSITIES (AUTHOR: ALICE PUGH)

Challenges Ahead

But a number of challenging questions still remain. First, how much of the R&D in local universities is transferred, or spills-over, potentially via graduates, to benefit firms in the local space innovation ecosystem? Second, is this revealed alignment, between universities and business, any greater than in other comparable regions? Do the university contributions give support particular patents, technologies, processes, capabilities or knowledge that provide sustainable competitive advantages, again compared to combinations elsewhere?

It is worth trying to resolve some of these questions, if only to get a slightly clearer vision of what the future might bring for regions that need investment and jobs, now more than ever.

Meeting the Skills Needs of the Space Sector

Professor Anne Green WMREDI

Professor Anne Green outlines the skills shortage in the space sector, the types of skills needed, how the industry can attract a wider pool of recruits and what opportunities are available in the West Midlands and beyond.

The space sector is experiencing continuing growth. As such, it should be an attractive sector for new entrants to the labour market. Also, at a time when various other sectors have seen a downturn in demand due to the Covid-19 crisis, job opportunities in the space sector should appeal to workers with relevant skills seeking to move elsewhere and to those interested in upskilling and/or reskilling. Yet the space sector faces skills deficiencies. In part, this is due to the high level, specialised nature and mix of skills required, and to the demand for similar skills from other sectors. This underscores the need for firms in the space sector – nationally and regionally – to consider carefully what more they can do to meet their skills needs. This means examining recruitment, training, skills utilisation and retention. This study provides information on the number and types of higher education courses in the West Midlands of relevance to the upstream and downstream space applications, while the 2020 Space Census and the Space Sector Skills Survey 2020 provide recent insights into skills issues in late 2019 and early 2020 at the national level. All of these sources are drawn on here.

Types of skills needed

The space sector is characterised by a highly qualified workforce, often with graduate and postgraduate qualifications. While some space sector firms require one or more specific space specialisms – such as satellite imagery processing and interpretation, orbital mechanics, launch operations, space system engineering, etc., there is also strong demand for generic technical skills – such as data science, AI techniques, software engineering, etc. These generic technical skills are also in demand across a range of manufacturing and services sectors. An underpinning breadth of scientific understanding, primarily in maths and physics, is particularly important in the space sector. Yet 'scientific' skills alone are insufficient for many roles in the space sector. Other skills, such as 'agility' and communication and collaboration skills, are increasingly valuable for businesses, along with commercial awareness and business acumen. Moreover, given that on the job learning plays an important role in the space sector, there is a need for mentoring and teaching skills. The challenges of hiring people with a 'hybrid skills' set (i.e. both sector-specific specialisms and non-sector specific skills) are exacerbated when recruiting for those roles requiring a specific combination of skill sets. Findings from the Space Sector Skills Survey 2020 reveal demand for 'transferable skills' as well as for 'specialised skills' amongst firms in the space sector recruiting staff in late 2019 and early 2020. In a similar vein, an analysis of 812 early-career UK space sector job adverts using a competencies taxonomy, identified software development and data analysis skills as the technical skills that were most sought after. The same analysis reveals a high demand for interpersonal and communication skills. Chiming with the findings of an Industrial Strategy Council report on the UK Skills Mismatch examining the economy as a whole, the space sector requires both technology and people (including management and leadership) skills.

Skills deficiencies

Skills deficiencies comprise skills gaps in the existing workforce (i.e. in the internal labour market) and skill shortages in the external labour market. According to the Space Sector Skills Survey 2020, the most frequently cited skills gaps in scientific, engineering or technical functions in the existing space sector workforce were in software engineering, radio frequency engineering, systems engineering, engineering or electronics design, electronic engineering at professional level, and AI and machine learning. The most commonly cited difficulties for those space sector businesses citing difficulties recruiting on the external labour market were first, applicants lacking required experience; secondly, applicants lacking required specialist skills, knowledge or qualifications; and thirdly Brexit reducing the ability to attract people from Europe. These answers are indicative of wider skill shortages in the external labour market in the UK. The fact that 'lack of required experience' was the most commonly cited difficulty may be indicative of a preference to recruit rather than to train, which is evident across the UK economy more generally. The fourth and fifth most commonly cited reasons for recruitment difficulties were competition from businesses in other sectors, followed by competition from businesses in space-related activities. These responses indicate the wider demand for skills sought in the space sector. This includes the programming skills that are so sought after in the space sector. They may be symptomatic of a fear of poaching, which in turn may lead to some reluctance to invest in training.

Supply of graduates

The asset mapping in the West Midlands for this report highlights a strong higher education base in the region. Focusing first on upstream activities, across 12 universities there are 228 related courses (the majority in engineering-related subjects) and 21,600 enrolments. Some universities (e.g. Birmingham and Warwick) have experience of European Space Agency funded projects and there are some good examples of links with industry stakeholders (including the University of Warwick Satellite Engineering project), including projects focusing on product development to help small businesses (e.g. the Enabling Technologies and Innovation Competencies Challenge Project at Aston). There are also a large number of downstream activities, with 12 universities teaching 491 related courses (including in business studies, engineering and technology and computer science) and 80,110 enrolments. Yet there are concerns that courses in universities, though space-oriented, lag behind industry developments in the context of rapidly advancing technologies and/or lack specificity to the space sector's particular needs. Indeed, 40% of companies in the Space Sector Skills Survey 2020 reported gaps in current training provision, primarily at the graduate/post-graduate level, so suggesting a need for the development of postgraduate training courses aimed at developing specific skills. Yet the Survey also reveals that graduates are in plentiful supply – especially for entry-level positions.

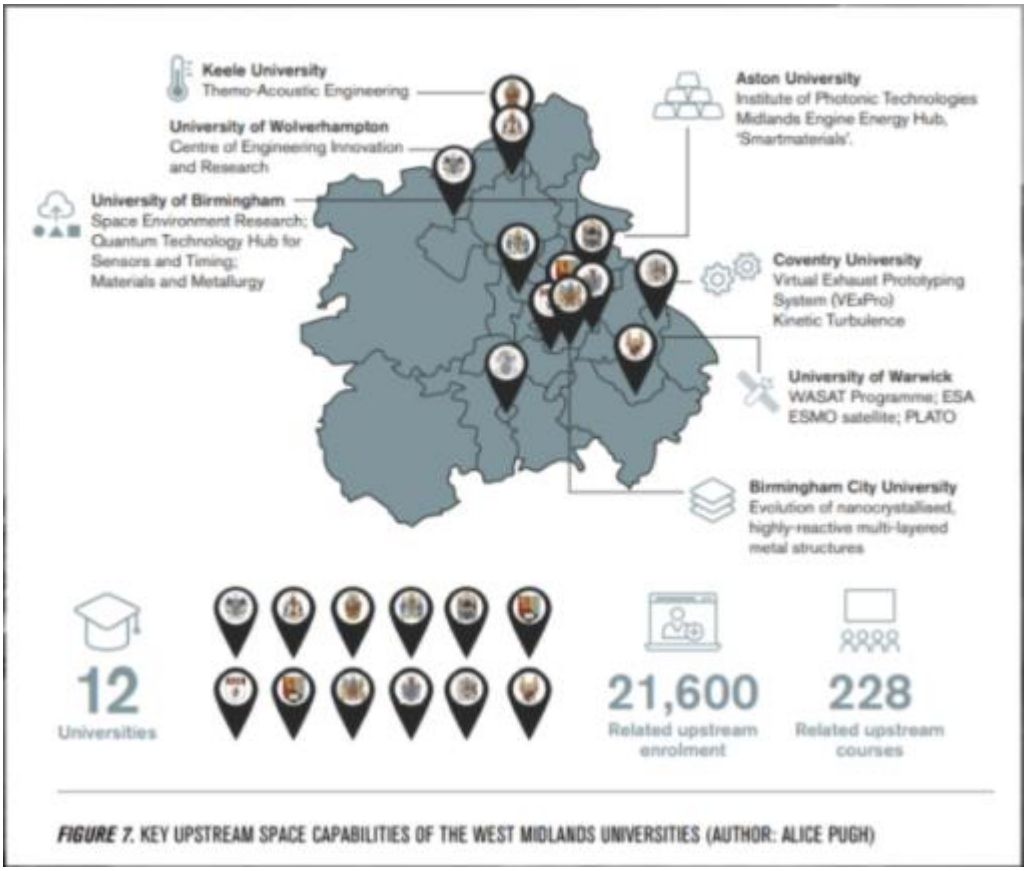


FIGURE 7. KEY UPSTREAM SPACE CAPABILITIES OF THE WEST MIDLANDS UNIVERSITIES (AUTHOR: ALICE PUGH)

Attracting recruits for the space sector

While the space sector has traditionally focused on recruiting highly qualified postgraduates and undergraduates, disproportionately from higher socio-economic groups and from privately educated backgrounds. To supplement the more traditional talent pipeline, it is important not to overlook other potential labour pools, including recruits with A levels and workers with experience in other sectors. Employers – especially smaller firms – prefer recruits with direct experience of working in the space sector, so narrowing recruitment. This desire for experience places some onus on the space sector to develop internship and placement programmes. Research suggests that there is a perception that entry to the sector is difficult without specialist skills, which may put off potential applicants. Recognising that shortcomings in recruitment are a barrier to growth, other sectors in the West Midlands, such as the professional and business services sector, are working to broaden their recruitment activities to attract, and benefit from, a more diverse talent pool. The 2020 Space Census shows that women are significantly under-represented in the space sector, reflecting wider trends amongst STEM students and graduates. In the West Midlands, there is particular potential to harness skills from a relatively large population of young women and men. However, the evidence suggests that the space sector is characterised by an inward-focused approach to recruitment. Work by the Space

Skills Alliance on assessing the quality of space job adverts highlights that whereas most adverts provided clear information on job title, company background, job description, and person specification, they tended to be much less clear about salary details, benefits, diversity statements and the transparency of the recruitment process. These latter factors all impact on the diversity of candidates who apply. This suggests that there is scope to revise conventional recruitment methods to reach and attract a wider pool of potential applicants.

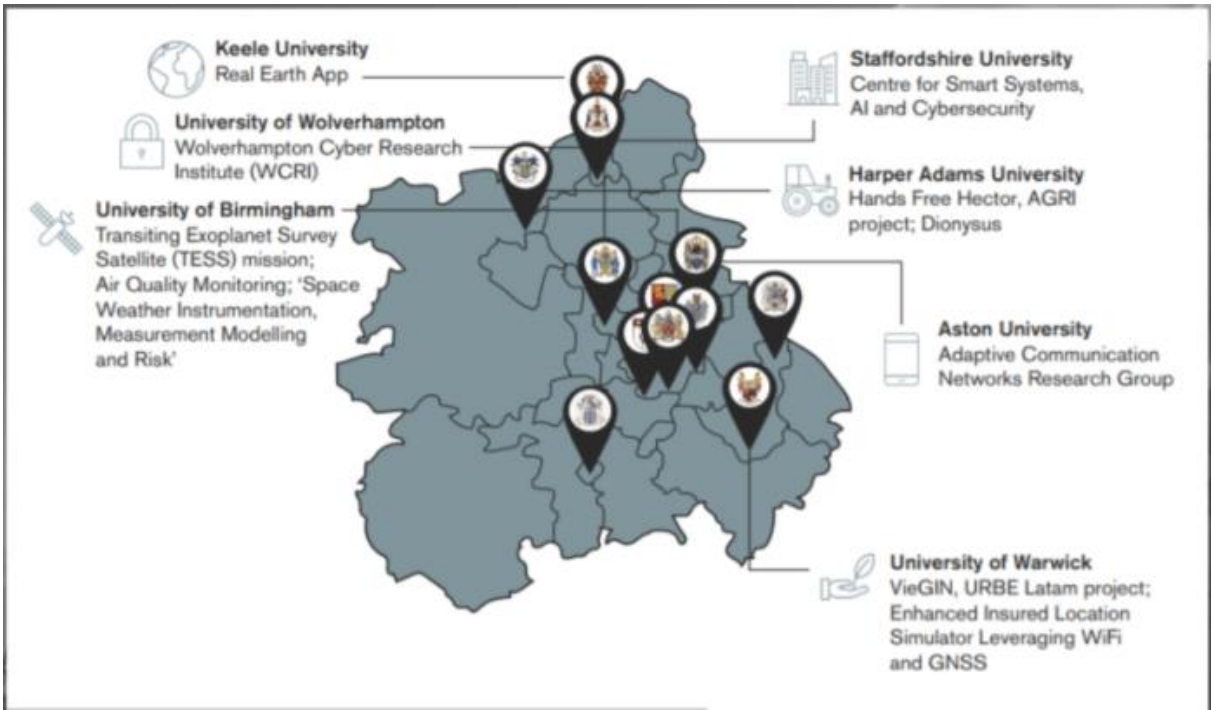


FIGURE 8. KEY DOWNSTREAM SPACE CAPABILITIES OF THE WEST MIDLANDS UNIVERSITIES (AUTHOR: ALICE PUGH)

Retention

The results of the Space Sector Skills Survey 2020 show that in addition to recruitment, retention is a problem for some companies in the space sector. It seems that retention challenges are starkest in large companies. Once space sector employees have a few years' experience they become more valuable to other space sector businesses (given the preference outlined above for workers with directly relevant experience). Moreover, after three-six years working in the space sector, some graduates realise that their work experience means that their value has increased also for employers outside the sector and with their technical and other skills, which are in demand elsewhere, they can earn more outside the sector. Uncompetitive pay is the most frequently cited reason in the Space Sector Skills Survey 2020 amongst those firms experiencing staff retention difficulties. While space sector firms often provide competitive pay to highly qualified entrants, pay rates may be less attractive as experience increases and so space firms are vulnerable to poaching for higher pay by firms within and beyond the sector.

The challenge ahead

Given that the space sector requires high level specialised technical and transferable skills, many of which are in demand across the economy, it is likely to face ongoing competition for skills. Furthermore, Brexit may mean that the UK space sector may be less attractive to European Union workers, who comprised the majority of foreign nationals working in the sector. Previous research has identified key limitations of the current space skills pipeline as encompassing a lack of awareness of the space sector, lack of opportunities to develop experience, and the mismatch between teaching useful knowledge in universities.

Opportunities

Yet there are opportunities to address skills needs in the space sector in the West Midlands (and beyond). There is scope to widen recruitment beyond conventional channels. The professional and business services sector in the West Midlands has successfully broadened non-graduate recruitment to take on people with A levels and to utilise apprenticeships – including degree apprenticeships – to a greater extent than was formerly the case. In doing so, it has begun to diversify its workforce. Employers and education and training providers have adjusted their training programmes accordingly. In the space sector, the absence of a training-supported entry route for young people at the 'A' level point has been identified already. In the context of the continued growth within the sector, the time

would be ripe to implement this. A further key source of new talent is skilled workers with transferable skills in engineering and advanced manufacturing (notably the aerospace and automotive sectors which are particularly important in the West Midlands). Here there is potential for existing firms to pivot into the space sector. With the addition of a 'space' dimension to existing technical qualifications and transferable skills, there would be scope for workers made redundant/otherwise looking to change jobs to move into the space sector. Hence, alongside looking to a broader talent pool for recruitment, there is a need to address current limitations in the training infrastructure, as indicated above. In the university sector evidence from Industrial Strategy Council research on Rising to the UK's Skills Challenges suggests that many companies value strong relationships with higher education institutions where they can help shape the curriculum and collaborate on course development and programme design, as well as offering regular placement opportunities. There are examples in the West Midlands (e.g. from the Warwick Manufacturing Group) that could be built on here. In this way students' exposure to, and work experience in, the space sector would stand them in good stead. With regard to retention, in addition to looking at ways of making pay more competitive, non-pecuniary avenues for keeping and further developing skills include creating opportunities to work on new projects. A multi-pronged strategy to meeting skills needs for the space sector is required – current approaches are not up to the task.

Universities' STEM Assets Project – An Intern's Insight

Robert Lynam, WMREDI

About the Overall Project

This project sits within a theme that examines regional innovation ecosystems and the relationships between universities, local firms, entrepreneurship, innovation, technology transfer and knowledge exchange as contributors to different kinds of growth. We know that strong regional innovation systems underpin stronger economic growth pathways, tend to be more competitive and resilient and tend to benefit both firms and local communities. Understanding the relative impact of various interventions and investments for regional economic growth, sustainability and the reduction of social inequality in the West Midlands underpins policies to attract more public R&D investment and guide better growth in the region.

The aim is to track and compare different interventions or investments, as micro-level pathways to impact, which in aggregate produce macro-level growth patterns. Commercial and non-commercial types of innovation will also be studied in order to understand the trade-offs between productivity growth and improvements in sustainability or inclusivity at the regional level.

There are two key phases of this project. The first is to map the region's university infrastructure, focusing specifically on fixed STEM assets. Examples include (i) Warwick Manufacturing Group; (ii) the Manufacturing Technology Centre; (iii) Energy Systems Catapult; and (iv) Tyseley Energy Plant. The project will work to identify the size, scale, employment, turnover, and growth of each of these assets, in direct and indirect terms using proxy measures and multipliers.

The second phase of the project is to compare the commercial and non-commercial impacts of the assets, identifying any social/ environmental/ economic trade-offs. Examples of non-commercial impacts are healthcare interventions, public sector and social innovations. This impact analysis will help identify different forms of regional economic growth that can be attributed to university-related investments. The aim is then to model what the impact would be if the assets did not exist, as well as estimating the regional impact of the adoption and diffusion of specific commercial and non-commercial innovations in the pipeline.

Phase 1 Infrastructure Mapping

Support with Systematic Literature Review

During the initial weeks of my placement, I contributed to the systematic literature review by reading 19 relevant academic papers and extracting any relevant information and lessons learned that could help with the project's research design and methodology. Specific information that the team were looking for included: what type of asset the paper focused on, the asset's relationship and involvement with universities, inputs – such as resources, outputs – such as activities, the type, level and duration of impact, useful methodological approaches, and available data sets.

The team began by searching for all relevant research papers, based on a set of search terms and exclusion criteria, which found 1000+ papers. This list was narrowed down to a selection of the 144 papers that were considered to be most relevant.

Case Study Development

I spent the second half of my placement contributing to the scoping work which will provide a foundation for the rest of the primary research moving forward to establish the existing 'state of the art' in this field. Such work has involved collecting basic data for two of the project's case studies – Warwick Manufacturing Group (WMG) and the Manufacturing Technology Centre (MTC) – to add to an evidence base consisting of relevant information about the asset's capabilities and impact, as well as identifying any gaps.

I'm currently using the information I've researched to produce two 10-page briefing documents on the case studies, describing what knowledge is already known about the assets' governance structure, size, scale, employment,

funding structures, turnover, growth, capability, and impact. Such documents will then be used to inform the subsequent empirical research.

What's next?

The 'Theme 3' team will now use my evidence base and contribution to the systematic literature review as a foundation for the next phase of the project. This will involve a 'deep dive' case study on WMG and MTC, aimed at building an understanding of the specific regional contribution the fixed asset makes and the factors that constrain its innovation and productivity growth. This will be achieved through interviews with key stakeholders, which will focus on:

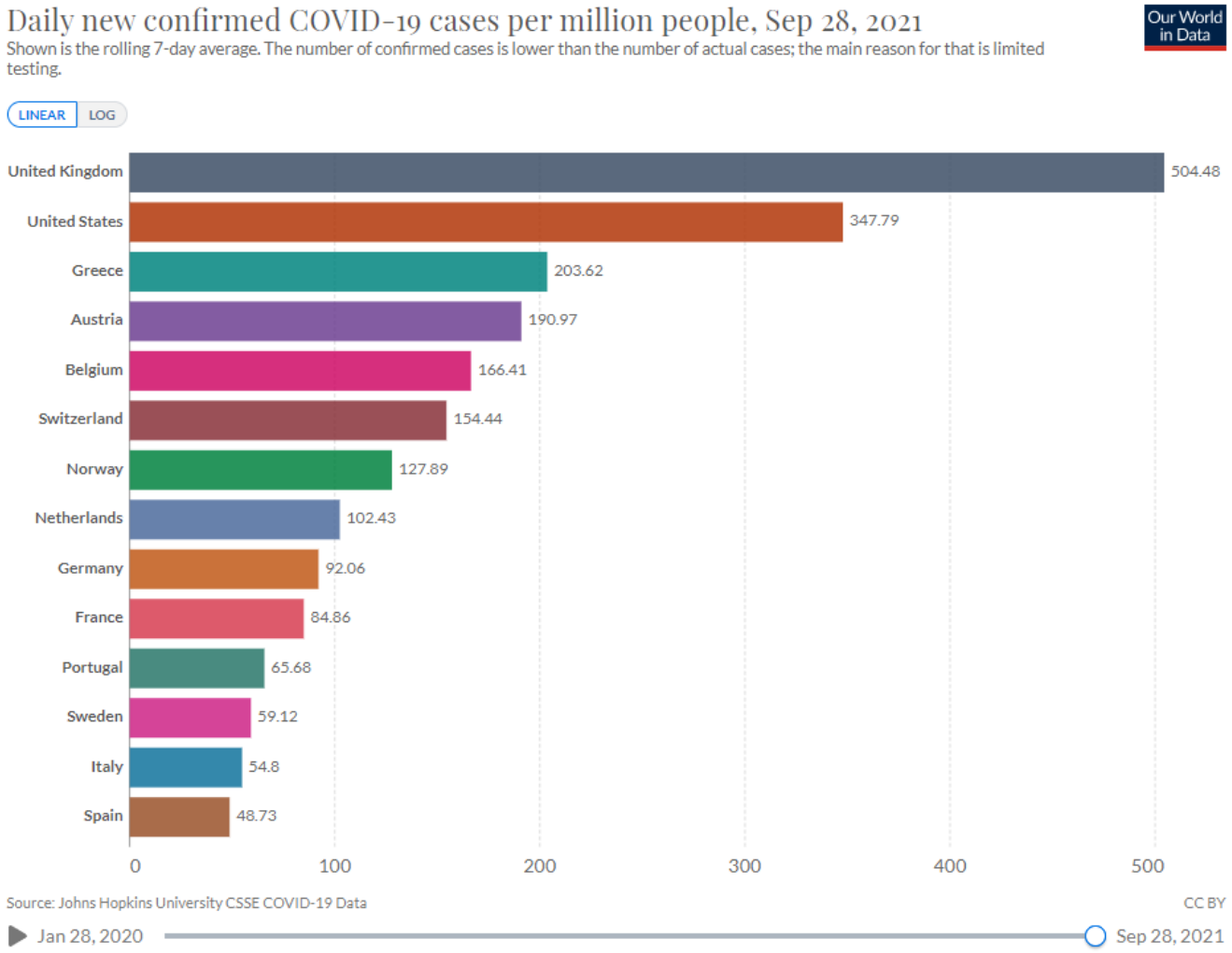
- 'How' and 'in what way' STEM assets generate impact: exposing the relationship between inputs, activities, output, and outcomes, and considering their relative contribution alongside other factors and 'third mission' activities
- The impact of STEM assets, beyond commercial/ economic impacts: focusing on understanding the complete picture of value created by STEM assets, which can help inform funding strategies.
- The factors that constrain the innovation/ productivity growth of these STEM assets and to what extent they are region or university specific. The impact of STEM assets will be dependent on their ability to overcome different local challenges in relation to the availability of specific kinds of skills, R&D assets, and infrastructure.

Infection Rates and Vaccine Update

Alice Pugh WMREDI/WMCA

The UK has seen a resurgence in infection rates, and the daily new cases confirmed in the UK is now easily the highest out of the selected European countries in the graph below and higher than in the US. This comes as vaccination rates in the UK fall and social distancing rules are relaxed, especially over the summer as people chose to go on 'staycation' holidays.

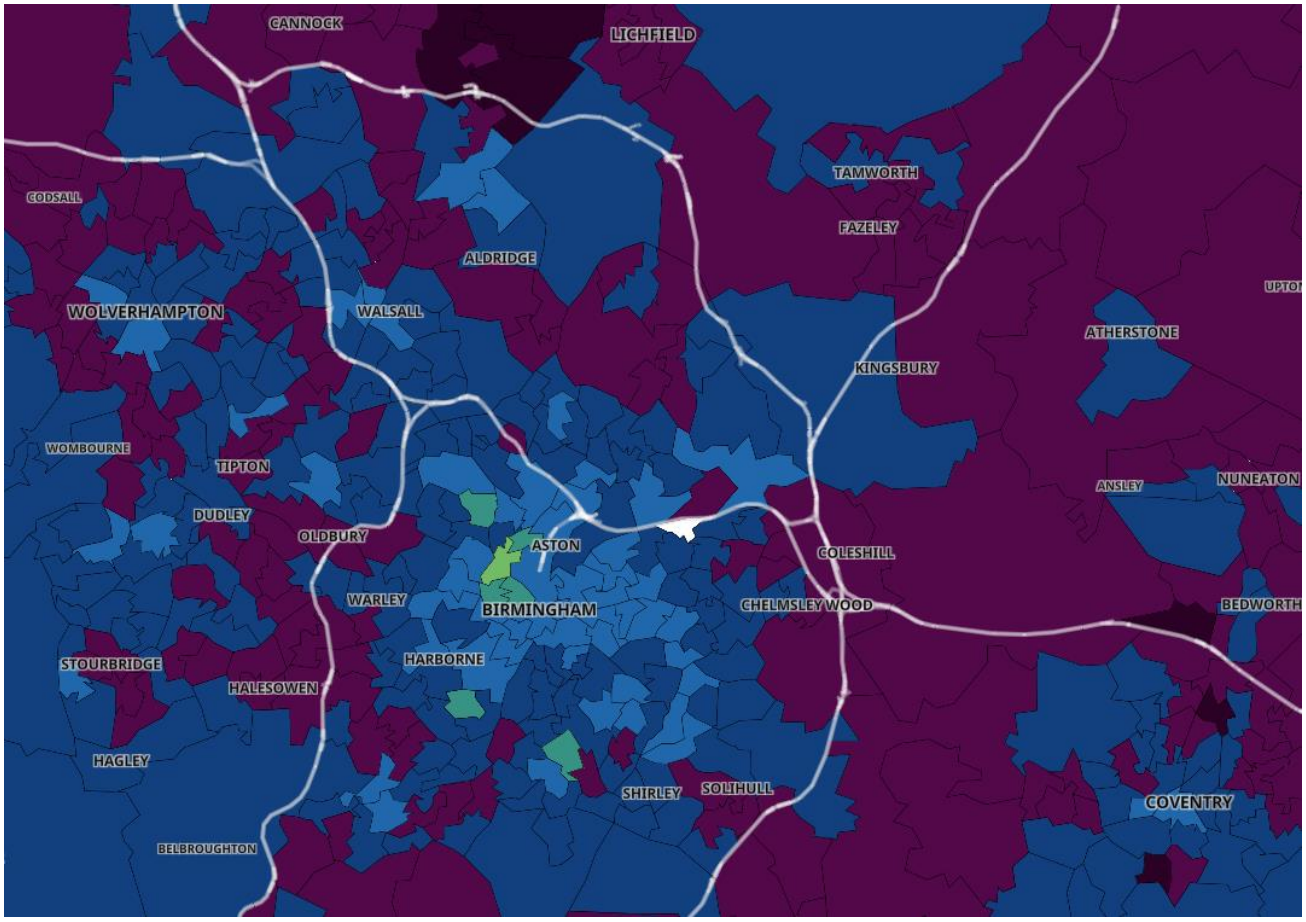
Since 31 December 2019 and as of week 2021-37, **229 415 774 cases** of COVID-19 (in accordance with the applied case definitions and testing strategies in the affected countries) have been reported, including **4 699 359 deaths**.



Latest ONS infection survey data (24th September next release 1st October 2021) states:

- In England, the percentage of people testing positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) decreased in the week ending 18 September 2021; we estimate that 620,100 people within the community population in England had COVID-19 (95% credible interval: 577,100 to 663,900), equating to around 1 in 90 people.
- In Wales, the percentage of people testing positive increased in the most recent two weeks, but the trend is uncertain in the week ending 18 September 2021; we estimate that 50,700 people in Wales had COVID-19 (95% credible interval: 39,900 to 62,700), equating to around 1 in 60 people.
- In Northern Ireland, the trend in the percentage of people testing positive is uncertain in the week ending 18 September 2021; we estimate that 30,300 people in Northern Ireland had COVID-19 (95% credible interval: 22,800 to 39,200), equating to around 1 in 60 people.
- In Scotland, the percentage of people testing positive appeared level in the week ending 18 September 2021; we estimate that 120,200 people in Scotland had COVID-19, (95% credible interval: 101,000 to 141,500) equating to around 1 in 45 people.

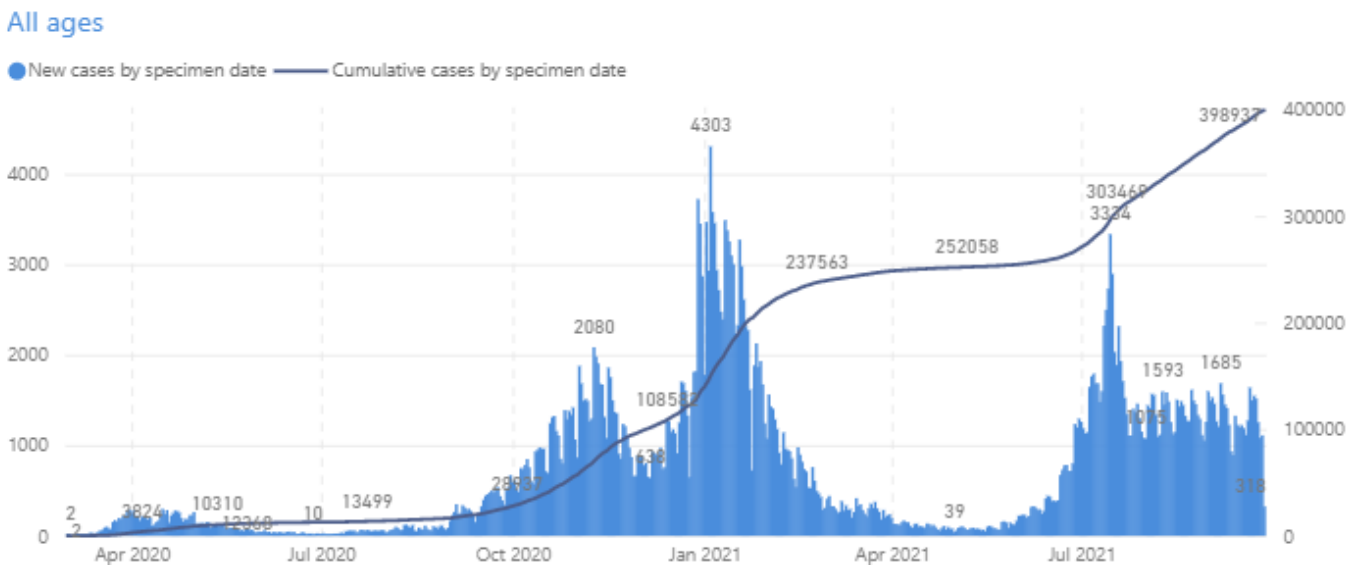
The map below displays weekly data, which are updated every day here. Seven–day rolling rate of new cases by specimen date ending on 23rd September 2021.



Regional Data

The Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Epidemiology and Intelligence Cell have created a dashboard which looks at covid data on a regional level. Data below:

Date	New cases by specimen date	New cases by publish date	Cumulative cases by specimen date	Cases in the last 7 days	Rate per 100,000 in the last 7 days
25 September 2021	1080	1525	397509	2	0.07
24 September 2021	1252	1721	396429	9833	335.76
23 September 2021	1514	1151	395177	9769	333.57
22 September 2021	1547	1440	393663	9478	323.64
21 September 2021	1496	1323	392116	9127	311.65
20 September 2021	1638	1270	390620	8854	302.33
19 September 2021	1273	1195	388982	8542	291.68
18 September 2021	1113	1293	387709	8156	278.50
17 September 2021	1188	1258	386596	7969	272.11
16 September 2021	1223	1183	385408	8004	273.31
15 September 2021	1196	1081	384185	8193	279.76
14 September 2021	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]



As can be seen from the charts below in the first lockdown infections were higher in the older age groups, whereas now younger people are being infected (nb there will be some effect from higher testing but symptomatic cases presenting for testing are also more prevalent now).

Covid 19 Hospital Activity

A number of data collections have been implemented to support incident management. The collections were activated at short notice and the content of the collections has evolved as the incident has developed. The data collected is classified as management information. It has been collected on a daily basis with a tight turn round time. No revisions have been made to the dataset. Any analysis of the data should be undertaken with this in mind.

Total reported admissions to hospital and diagnoses in hospital

The table below shows the latest daily rates

Name	14-Sep-21	15-Sep-21	16-Sep-21	17-Sep-21	18-Sep-21	19-Sep-21	20-Sep-21	21-Sep-21	22-Sep-21	23-Sep-21	24-Sep-21	25-Sep-21	26-Sep-21
ENGLAND	**701**	**691**	**672**	**540**	**560**	**572**	**606**	**602**	**572**	**577**	**557**	**520**	**535**
East of England	76	48	61	41	56	49	53	42	41	42	46	38	32
London	90	89	103	76	78	70	97	86	80	88	87	81	72
Midlands	128	110	138	112	102	123	114	123	110	124	101	86	104
North East and Yorkshire	152	147	142	120	132	146	139	123	126	125	137	130	129
North West	109	136	96	82	91	95	93	112	83	83	97	94	75
South East	74	83	63	40	52	40	49	64	65	57	33	33	64
South West	72	78	69	69	49	49	61	52	67	58	56	58	59

Mechanical Ventilation beds - occupied by confirmed COVID-19 patients

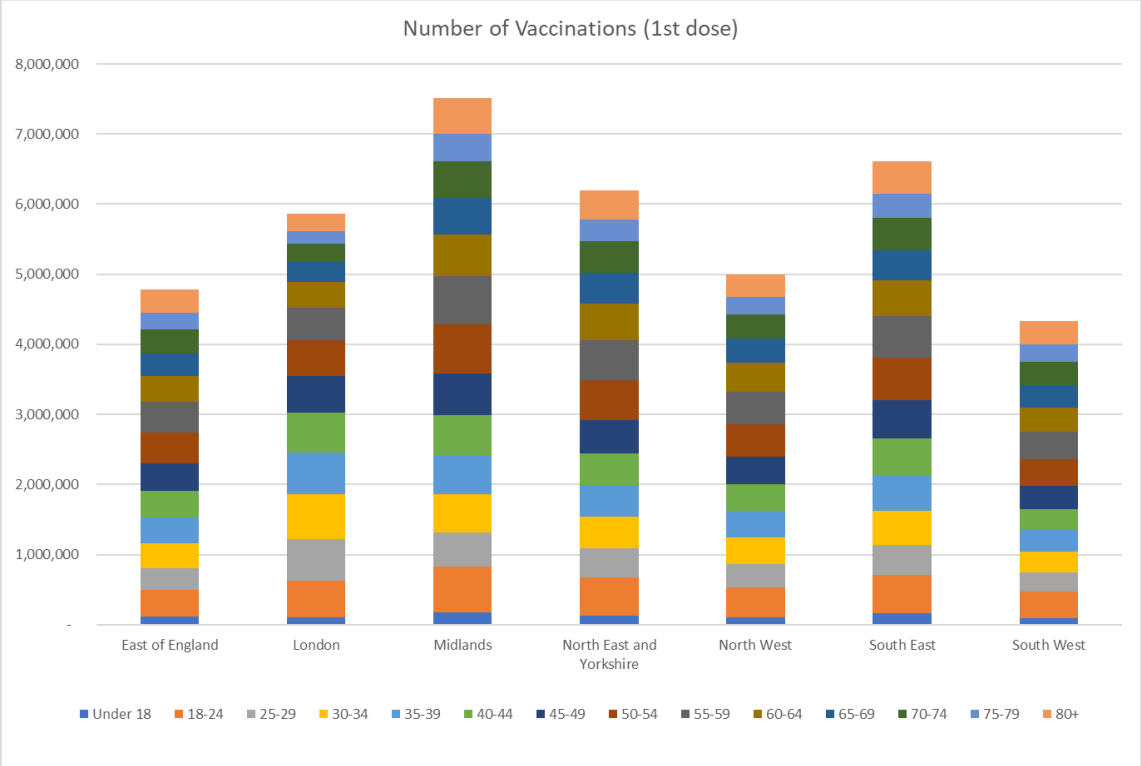
Name	16-Sep-21	17-Sep-21	18-Sep-21	19-Sep-21	20-Sep-21	21-Sep-21	22-Sep-21	23-Sep-21	24-Sep-21	25-Sep-21	26-Sep-21	27-Sep-21	28-Sep-21
ENGLAND	**849**	**844**	**829**	**824**	**811**	**774**	**783**	**757**	**730**	**723**	**689**	**685**	**681**
East of England	77	73	65	64	71	59	63	61	55	46	48	44	45
London	222	227	228	229	221	210	209	204	195	193	191	183	177
Midlands	166	172	170	173	176	169	161	157	155	147	146	144	139
North East and Yorkshire	156	150	152	143	132	133	138	136	124	136	130	130	135
North West	112	108	104	112	110	97	100	98	100	98	83	90	87
South East	55	56	54	53	47	50	51	50	47	50	41	43	50
South West	61	58	56	50	54	56	61	51	54	53	50	51	48

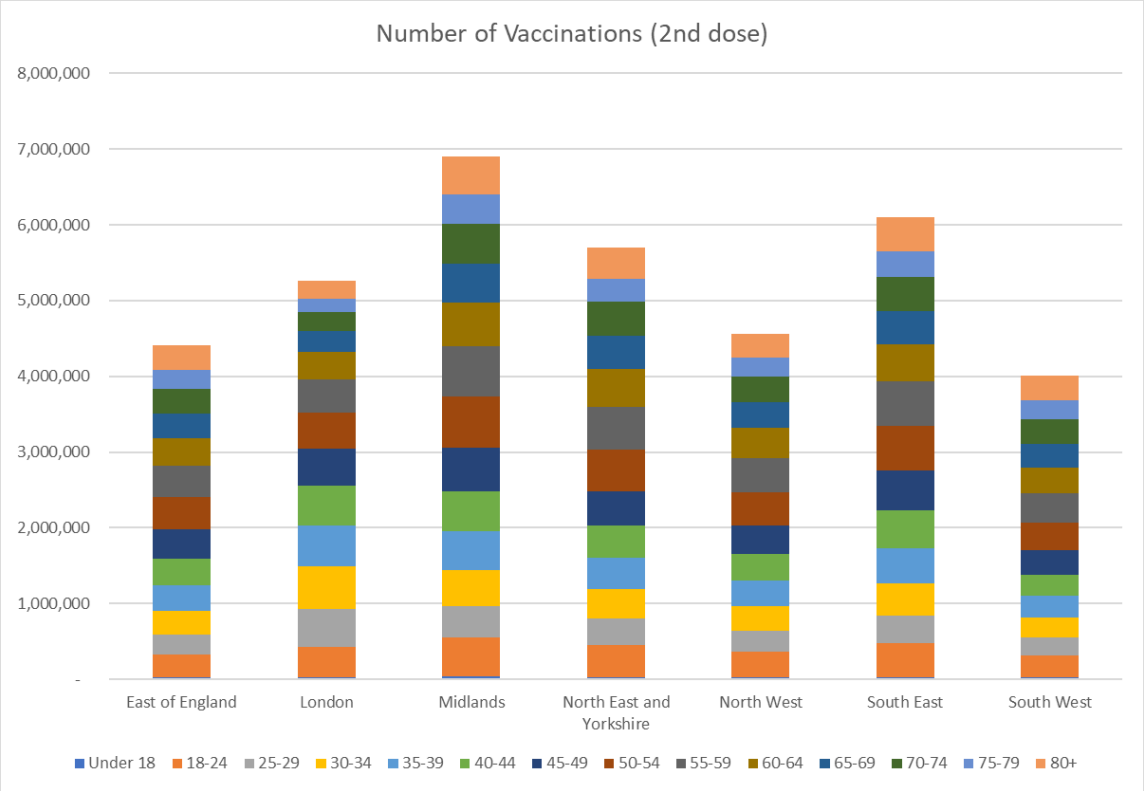
Total beds - occupied by confirmed COVID-19 patients (as at 08:00)

Name	16-Sep-21	17-Sep-21	18-Sep-21	19-Sep-21	20-Sep-21	21-Sep-21	22-Sep-21	23-Sep-21	24-Sep-21	25-Sep-21	26-Sep-21	27-Sep-21	28-Sep-21
ENGLAND	**6,081**	**5,910**	**5,688**	**5,695**	**5,727**	**5,543**	**5,406**	**5,214**	**5,036**	**5,100**	**4,949**	**5,121**	**5,126**
East of England	512	473	459	458	482	456	442	414	390	373	371	379	371
London	1,179	1,153	1,124	1,134	1,122	1,077	1,056	1,013	1,000	984	990	999	1,001
Midlands	1,227	1,209	1,134	1,159	1,178	1,150	1,113	1,068	1,044	998	1,009	1,011	1,012
North East and Yorkshire	1,163	1,146	1,130	1,147	1,156	1,129	1,120	1,075	1,003	1,161	1,063	1,129	1,087
North West	958	955	916	888	913	859	850	845	829	825	788	870	858
South East	563	523	478	479	434	456	432	437	432	430	404	405	447
South West	479	451	447	430	442	416	393	362	338	329	324	328	350

Vaccine Update

Between the 8th December 2020 and the 22nd August 2021, the Midlands has successfully vaccinated **7,380,915** people with the first dose and **6,491,598** of these individuals have received the second dose as well. Meaning the Midlands has successfully provided the most jabs out of any region including London.





	% who have had both doses (using ONS denominators)												
	18-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75-79	80+
Total	58.2%	63.8%	72.8%	78.1%	85.1%	86.1%	91.3%	93.5%	95.3%	94.4%	95.2%	97.2%	90.0%
East of Englanc	63.6%	68.0%	74.9%	79.6%	86.7%	87.7%	92.4%	94.6%	95.9%	94.7%	95.5%	98.9%	90.8%
London	54.6%	67.7%	67.7%	69.4%	77.3%	81.4%	84.8%	86.8%	88.2%	87.1%	88.0%	88.4%	80.2%
Midlands	54.8%	57.2%	69.8%	77.4%	85.0%	85.7%	92.0%	93.3%	96.2%	94.7%	95.9%	97.7%	91.6%
North East and Yorkshire	55.3%	59.3%	71.1%	78.7%	85.7%	85.9%	92.1%	94.4%	95.8%	95.7%	96.7%	97.3%	90.5%
North West	54.4%	57.7%	68.2%	76.7%	84.5%	84.8%	90.9%	93.5%	96.0%	95.1%	95.6%	96.7%	90.0%
South East	62.3%	68.8%	80.6%	84.0%	88.9%	88.3%	92.6%	94.6%	96.2%	95.5%	95.0%	98.4%	90.6%
South West	64.9%	70.3%	79.8%	84.5%	90.1%	88.8%	93.2%	95.6%	96.6%	95.2%	96.2%	99.5%	93.0%

The WM Weekly monitor is funded by the West Midlands Combined Authority, Research England/UKRI

Weekly Deaths Registered: 17th September 2021

Black Country Consortium Economic Intelligence Unit

The following analysis compares the latest available time period (the week of the 17th September 2021) to the previous week period (the week of the 10th September 2021) for the number of deaths registered and the number of deaths registered related to the Coronavirus[1].

Across England and Wales, the overall registered death figures decreased from 11,035 in the week of the 10th September 2021 to 11,009 in the week of 17th September 2021. The number of deaths registered that state Coronavirus on the death certificate decreased from 857 people to 851 people over the same period.

Regional level analysis shows that the West Midlands' overall registered death figure increased from 1,152 people in the week of 10th September 2021 to 1,203 in the week of 17th September 2021. The number of registered deaths related to Coronavirus was 108 for both weeks.

There was a total of 796 deaths registered across the WMCA (3 LEP) area in the week of the 17th September 2021. There were 74 deaths registered that were related to Coronavirus over the same period. In comparison to the week of the 10th September 2021, the overall registered death figures in the WMCA (3 LEP) area increased by 6, with the number of deaths related to Coronavirus decreasing by 1 person.

At local authority level in the week of the 17th September 2021, there were twelve local authorities in the WMCA (3 LEP) area that registered deaths related to the Coronavirus (as seen in the following table). Of the 74 registered deaths; Birmingham accounted for 28 registered deaths, Wolverhampton accounted for 12 and Sandwell accounted for 9 of the registered deaths.

Of the 74 registered deaths in the WMCA (3 LEP) involving Coronavirus in the week of the 17th September 2021, 63 were in registered in a hospital, 9 deaths were registered at home and 2 deaths were registered at a care home.

Place and number of deaths registered that are related to Coronavirus in the week of 17th September 2021:

	Care home	Elsewhere	Home	Hospice	Hospital	Other communal establishment	Total
Cannock Chase	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
East Staffordshire	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Lichfield	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tamworth	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
North Warwickshire	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nuneaton and Bedworth	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Rugby	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stratford-on-Avon	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Warwick	0	0	1	0	3	0	4
Bromsgrove	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
Redditch	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wyre Forest	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Birmingham	0	0	4	0	24	0	28
Coventry	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
Dudley	0	0	1	0	5	0	6
Sandwell	0	0	0	0	9	0	9
Solihull	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Walsall	1	0	0	0	4	0	5
Wolverhampton	0	0	3	0	9	0	12
WM 7 Met.	**1**	**0**	**8**	**0**	**56**	**0**	**65**
Black Country LEP	1	0	4	0	27	0	32
Coventry & Warwickshire LEP	0	0	1	0	8	0	9
Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP	1	0	4	0	28	0	33
WMCA (3 LEP)	**2**	**0**	**9**	**0**	**63**	**0**	**74**

[1] Please note that up-to-date counts of the total numbers of deaths involving COVID-19 are published by Public Health England (PHE) -ONS figures differ from the PHE counts as the latter include deaths which have not yet been registered.
Source: ONS, Death registrations and occurrences by local authority and health board, 28th September 2021

The WM Weekly monitor is funded by the West Midlands Combined Authority, Research England/UKRI

ONS Weekly Release Indicators

Black Country Consortium Economic Intelligence Unit

On the 23rd September 2021, Office for National Statistics (ONS) released 'economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators'. These statistics are experimental and have been devised to provide timely information. The following information contains UK flight data, footfall data, online job adverts, final results from Wave 39 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS), national company incorporations and voluntary dissolutions and results from Wave 74 of the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN).

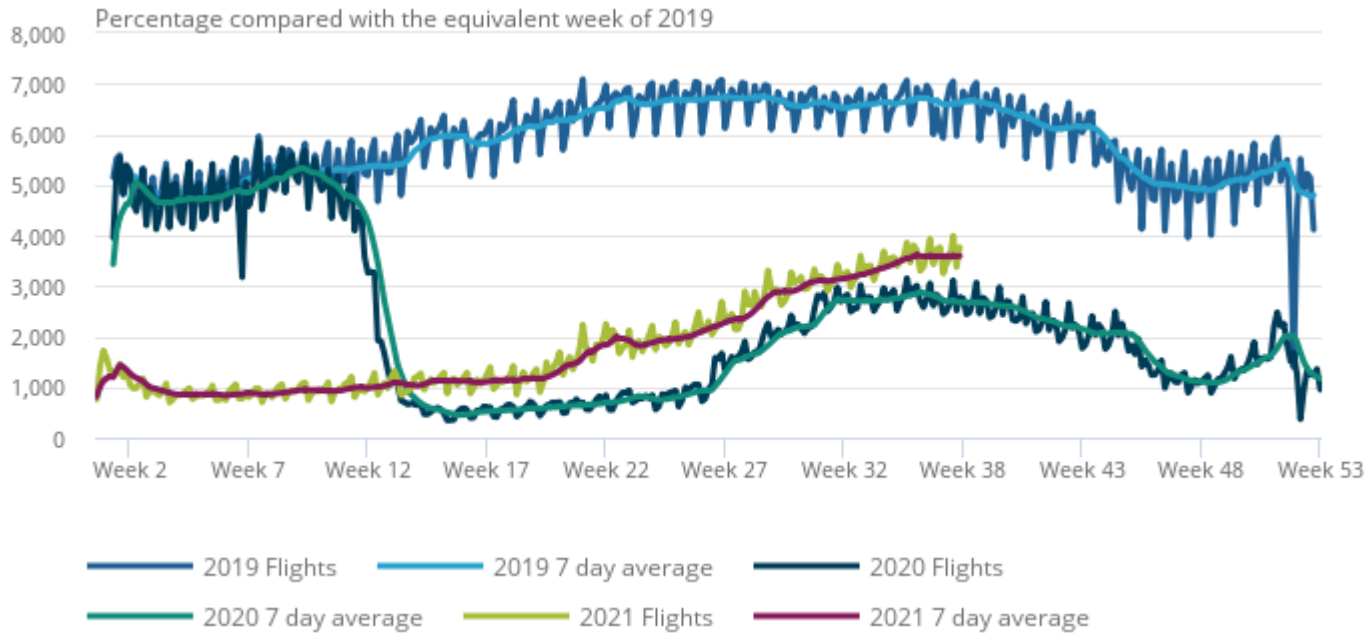
UK Flight Data

Flight data includes international arrivals and departures to and from the UK (including Crown Dependencies) and domestic UK flights, but exclude overflights (flights that pass over UK territory). This includes commercial flights carrying passengers and cargo as well as non-commercial flights such as private and military flights. Data from EUROCONTROL does not include information on the volume of passengers or cargo carried on UK flights. Especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, flights might not be operating at full capacity and therefore trends in passengers and cargo will differ from trends in flights presented below.

In the week ending 19th September 2021, the seven-day average number of UK daily flights was 3,593, broadly unchanged from the previous week (3,579). The average number of UK daily flights in the latest week was at 54% of the level seen in the equivalent week of 2019 and 134% of the level seen in the equivalent week of 2020.

The seven-day average number of UK daily flights has increased by 152% from the week ending 23rd May 2021; the week that international travel was allowed to resume and the UK government implemented the travel traffic light system.

Number of daily flights, non-seasonally adjusted, and seven-day moving average, 2nd January 2019 to 19th September 2021, UK:



Source: European Organisation for the Safety of Air Navigation

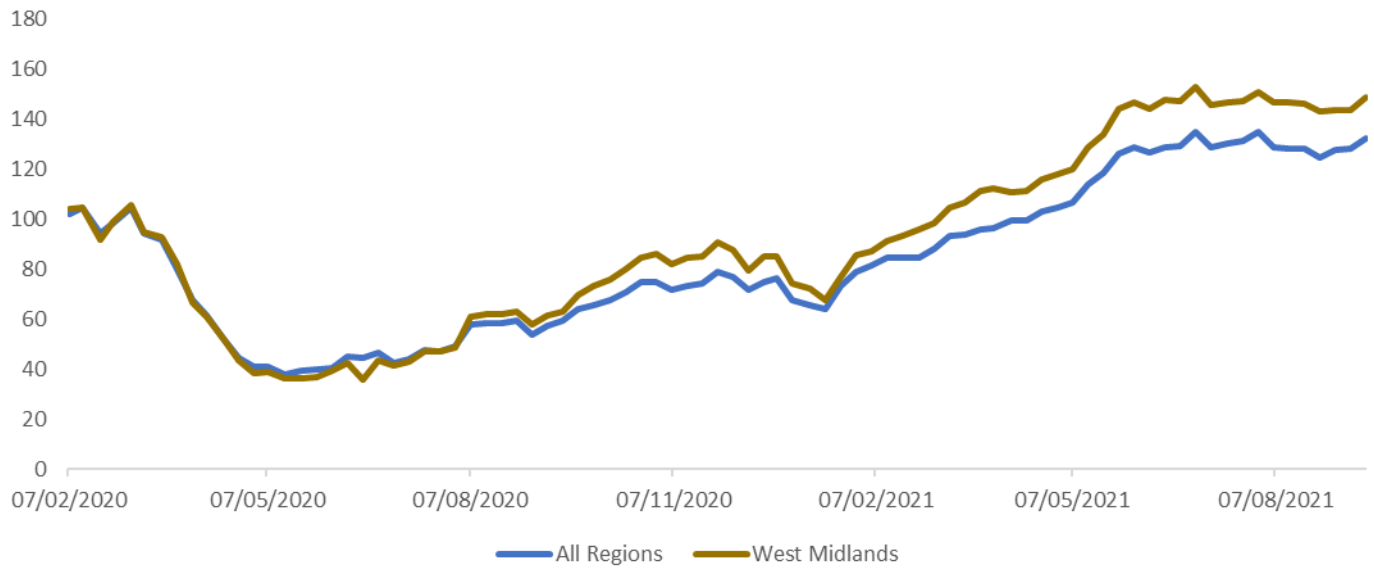
Online Job Adverts

These experimental figures are taken from online jobs adverts provided by Adzuna. The Adzuna categories do not correspond to SIC categories and therefore not comparable with the ONS Vacancy Survey. Please note, Index of job adverts on Adzuna by category, 100 = average job adverts in February 2020.

Nationally, between the 10th and 17th September 2021, total online job adverts increased by 4.3 percentage points. On the 17th September 2021, total online job adverts were at 132.7% of their average level in February 2020. Out of the 28 categories (excluding unknown) only 3 decreased from the previous week ('Energy/ oil & gas' -3.7pp, 'wholesale and retail' -3.9pp and 'management/ exec / consulting' -0.7pp). The highest increase by 26.6 percentage points was in 'transport/logistics/warehouse' (to 351.6%). Of the 28 categories, there were five categories that were below their February 2020 levels these were; 'legal' (98.8%), 'energy/ oil and gas' (96.3%), 'graduate' (96%), 'education' (97%) and 'travel/ tourism' (96.5%).

Across the 12 UK regions, there was an increase in online job adverts for the latest weeks. Between the 10th and 17th September 2021, the West Midlands region online job adverts increased by 5.3 percentage points. On the 17th September 2021, total online job adverts for the West Midlands were at 149% of their average level in February 2020.

The following chart shows the index of job adverts on Adzuna by category, 100 = average job adverts in February 2020, overall all regions and the West Midlands region, 7th February 2020 to 17th September 2021:



Footfall

According to Springboard, in the week to 18th September 2021, the volume of overall retail footfall in the UK remained unchanged from the previous week (week to 11 September 2021). This is the first week since the week to 28th August 2021 where the volume of overall retail footfall in the UK has not seen a week-on-week decrease. Shopping centre and high street footfall were both unchanged when compared with the previous week, whereas footfall in retail parks fell by 1% during the same period.

In the latest week to 18th September 2021, overall retail footfall was at 80% of the level seen in the equivalent week of 2019. Footfall at retail parks remained the strongest relative to pre-coronavirus pandemic levels, at 95% of its equivalent 2019 level. Meanwhile, the corresponding figures for high streets and shopping centres were both at 76%.

In the week to 18th September 2021, retail footfall saw week-on-week percentage decreases in 5 out of the 10 UK countries and English regions, the largest of which was in the East of England and the South East of England, where footfall fell by 2% from the previous week. Wales and Scotland saw largest week-on-week increases in footfall, both recording a 3% rise from the previous week; in both locations these increases were driven by increased footfall in in high streets and shopping centres.

National Company Incorporations and Voluntary Dissolutions

Companies House data shows for the UK, there were 14,749 company incorporations in the week to 17th September 2021. This is up from 14,027 recorded in the previous week, lower when compared to the same week in 2020 (17,347) but higher than the same week in 2019 (12,302).

For the week to 17th September 2021, there were 5,218 voluntary dissolution applications, a decrease from 5,762 recorded in the previous week. The number of voluntary dissolution applications was higher than levels seen in the same week of 2020 (4,698) and the same week in 2019 (4,727).

Business Insights and Conditions Survey

The final results from Wave 39 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) based off the 5,085 businesses surveyed across the West Midlands that businesses have a presence in with a response rate of 24.1% (1,224) and to 3,006 businesses that are head quartered in the West Midlands, with a response rate of 22.6% (678). Please note, businesses were asked for their experiences for the reference period 23rd August to 5th September 2021. However, for questions regarding the last two weeks, businesses may respond from the point of completion of the questionnaire (6th to 19th September 2021). Also, the data used is unweighted for regions and response levels can be low so the following results should be treated with caution when evaluating the impact of COVID-19. Due to weighted data being available for the UK a comparison has not been included.

Trading and Financial Performance

98.4% of responding West Midlands businesses were trading over the reference period. Less than 1% of businesses temporarily closed or temporarily paused trading and less than 1% of businesses had permanently ceased trading.

Businesses were asked how their turnover for the last two weeks compared to normal expectations for the time of year. Excluding 'not sure' responses, 28% of trading businesses in the West Midlands reported their turnover had decreased by at least 20%. However, 46.1% of trading businesses in the West Midlands reported that their turnover was unaffected and approximately 13.7% reported their turnover had increased by at least 20%.

Excluding 'other' and 'not sure' responses, 50.1% of responding West Midlands businesses reported the main reason for the change in the business turnover in the last two weeks was due to COVID-19. While 3.1% reported the main reason as the end of the EU transition period and 15.3% reported that it was due to COVID-19 and the end of the EU transition period.

Profits

Businesses were asked in the last two weeks how profits compared with normal expectations for the time of year. Excluding 'not sure' and 'not applicable' responses, 27.9% of trading businesses in the West Midlands reported profits had decreased by at least 20%. However, 44.4% of trading businesses in the West Midlands reported that profits had stayed the same and approximately 10.8% reported their profits had increased by at least 20%.

International Trading

Businesses were asked in the last two weeks, had their businesses exporting or importing of goods or services been affected when compared to normal expectations for the time of year. Excluding 'not sure' responses, 29% of exporting businesses in the West Midlands reported their businesses were still exporting but less than normal. Of those businesses who continued to trade and import, 20.8% in the West Midlands were importing less than normal.

56.1% of West Midlands businesses who were exporting reported that they had not been affected and 63% reported that importing had not been affected.

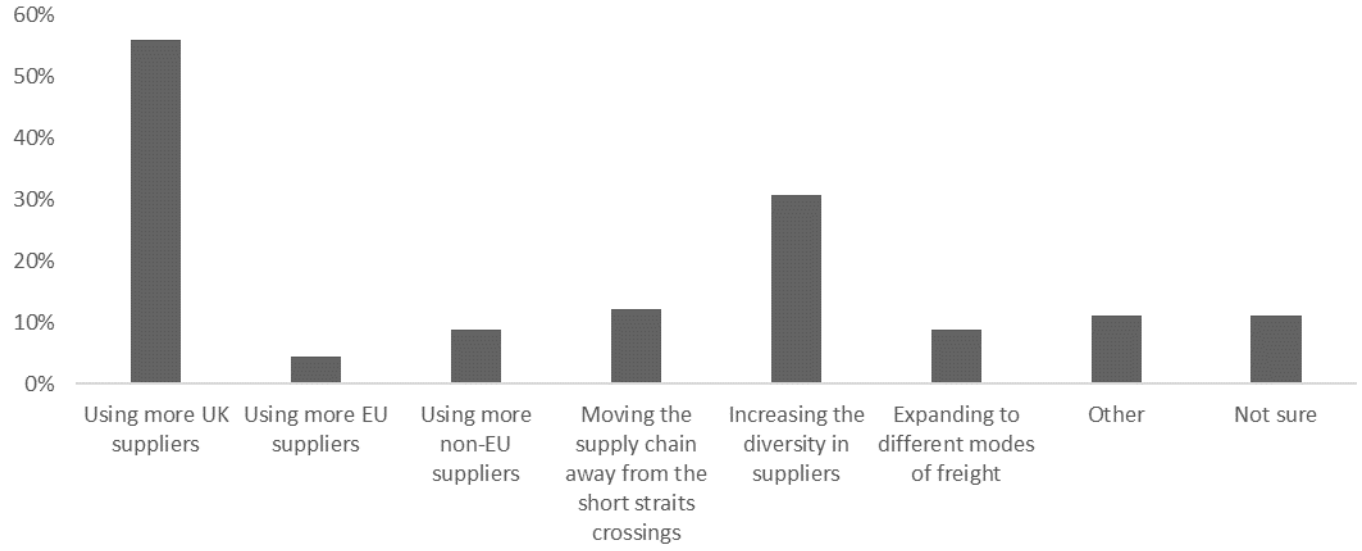
1.3% of businesses in the West Midlands are exporting more than normal and 3.2% are importing more than normal.

3.3% of businesses in the West Midlands have not been able to export in the last two weeks and less than 1% of West Midlands businesses have not been able to import in the last two weeks.

Supply Chains

Businesses were asked if they had made changes to supply chains due to the end of the EU transition period. 7.5% of responding West Midlands businesses reported they had. Where businesses stated they had made changes, the highest response at 56% of responding West Midlands businesses reported they were using more UK suppliers.

The following table shows the reason for any extra costs due to the end of the EU transition period:



33.4% of responding West Midlands businesses reported the business had no extra costs due to the end of the EU transition period.

Where applicable, 7.7% of responding West Midlands businesses reported they had not been able to get the materials, goods or services from the EU in the last two weeks. 6.2% of West Midlands businesses had only been able to get the materials, goods or services due to chaning the supplier or finding alternative solutions.

2.4% of responding West Midlands businesses reported that they intended to open new branches or subsidaries in the EU in the next 12 months.

Where applicable, 9.4% of responding West Midlands businesses reported they had not been able to get the materials, goods or services from within the UK in the last two weeks. 12.2% of West Midlands businesses had only been able to get the materials, goods or services due to changing the supplier or finding an alternative solution.

Stock Levels

Businesses were asked how stock levels for the last two weeks compared to normal expectations for the time of year. Excluding 'not sure' and 'not applicable', 13.1% of West Midlands businesses reported stock levels are lower than normal. 43.5% of West Midlands businesses reported stock levels had not changed and 10% reported stock levels are higher than normal. Coronavirus and the end of the EU transtion was the main reason as to why stock levels had been impacted in the West Midlands at 32.4%.

Capital Expenditure

Excluding 'not sure' and 'not applicable' responses, 4.8% of responding West Midlansd businesses reported capital expenditure was higher than normal for the last two weeks when compared to normal expectations for the time of year and 49.5% of responding West Midlands businesses reported capital expenditure had not been affected. Although, 13.3% reported capital expenditure was lower than normal and 6.7% reported capital expenditure had stopped.

Excluding 'other' and 'not sure' responses, 55.3% of responding West Midlands businesses reported the main reason for the change in the business capital expenditure was due to COVID-19. While 6.6% of West Midlands businesses reported it was due to the end of the EU transition period and 4% reported the main change was due to super-deduction.

Grants Applied, Received, Finance Agreements and Further Schemes

13.1% of West Midlands businesses had applied for Local Restrictions Support Grant – England (92.5% have received). 1.6% of West Midlands businesses had applied for a grant from the Lockdown Business Fund – Wales (13% have received). 1.4% of West Midlands businesses have applied for a grant from the Strategic Framework Business Fund Scotland (10.6% have received) and 3.1% had received a grant from Local Restrictions Support - Northern Ireland. While 73.2% of West Midlands businesses have not applied for any of these grants and 5.6% had not received any of these grants.

6.2% of responding West Midlands businesses have received small business grant, 7.9% have received a sector-specific grant and 4.5% have received an additional Restriction Grant.

25.6% of West Midlands businesses have received government-backed loans or finance agreements during COVID-19.

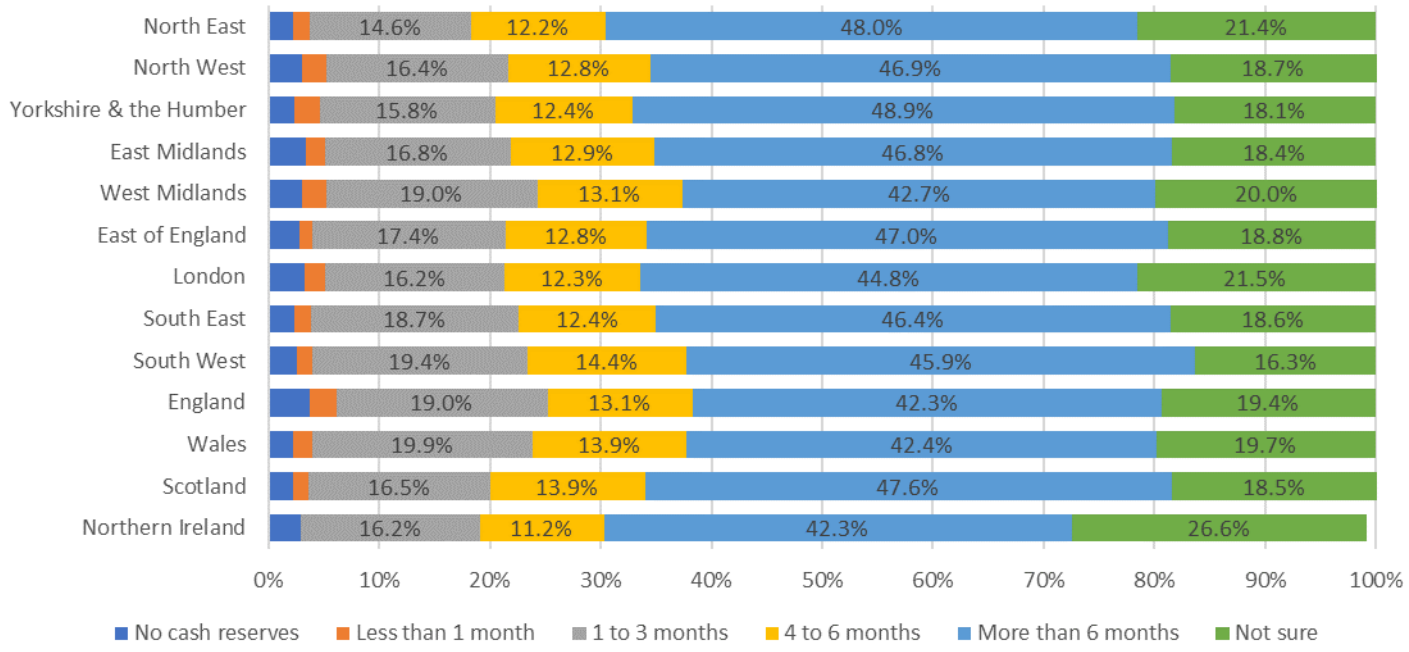
8.5% of West Midlands businesses are using or intend to use Kickstart Job Scheme for young people. 48.5% are using or intend to use the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and 4.7% of West Midlands businesses are using or intend to use Recovery Loan Scheme. While 35.7% of West Midlands businesses are not using or intend to use either of these schemes.

62.5% of responding West Midlands businesses reported that the support received from the initiatives or schemes allowed the business to continue trading.

Cash Reserves

3.1% of responding West Midlands businesses that have not permanently stopped trading have no cash reserves.

The following graph shows across the UK regions how long cash reserves will last:



Business Confidence, Debts and Insolvency

In the West Midlands, 71% of responding businesses had high confidence in surviving over the next three months. 22.6% had moderate confidence of survival, less than 1% had low confidence or no confidence and 5.1% were not sure.

Businesses were asked over the last month how the businesses debt repayment compared with turnover, excluding 'not sure' responses, less than 1% of West Midlands businesses reported repayments were more than 100% of turnover with 2% reporting repayment was between 50% and 100% of turnover. 3.3% of West Midlands businesses

reported repayments were between 20% and 50% of turnover and 22.3% reported repayments were up to 20% of turnover. 38.8% of responding West Midlands businesses reported no repayments.

15.2% of responding West Midlands businesses reported repayments have increased by up to 20% when compared with normal expectations for the time of the year. 4.7% reported repayments have increased between 20% and 50% and 6.7% of West Midlands businesses reported repayments have increased by more than 50%.

Over the next month, 3.6% of West Midlands businesses expect repayments to increase a little and 1% expect repayments to substantially increase. However, 68.9% of West Midlands businesses have high confidence to meet debt obligations with 19% of businesses with moderate confidence.

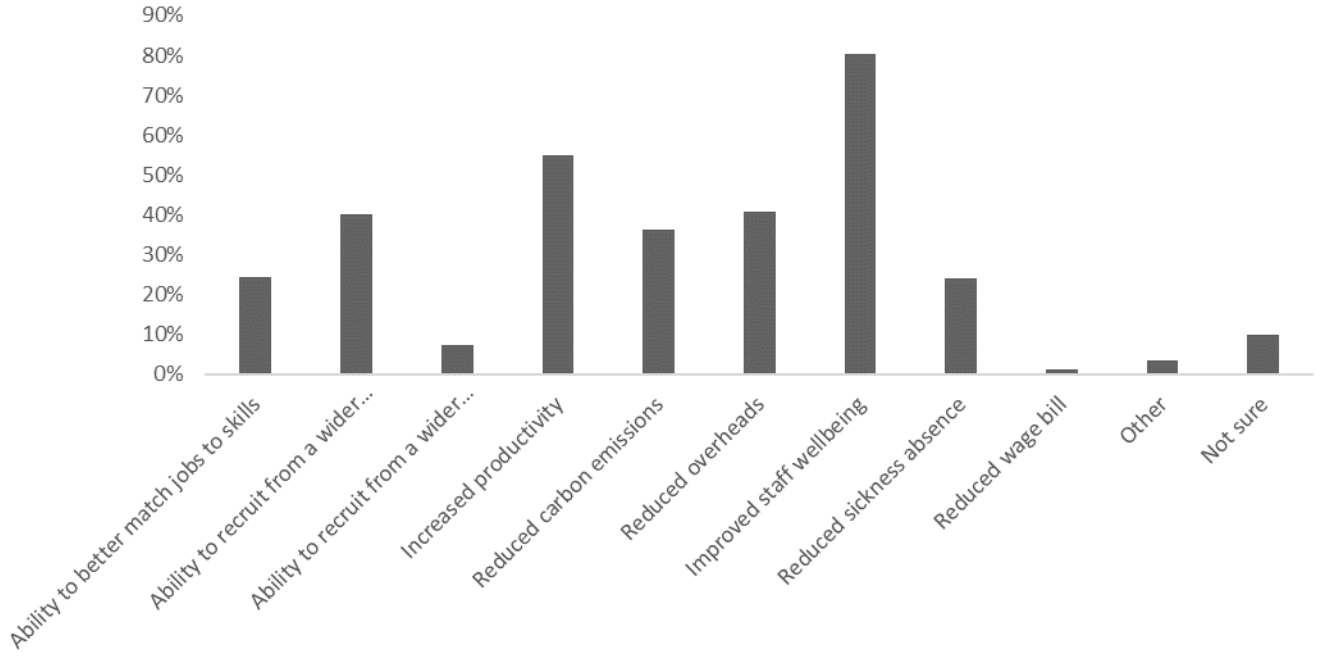
Excluding 'not sure' responses, less than 1% of responding West Midlands businesses reported they were at severe risk from insolvency and 7.5% of West Midlands businesses reported they were at moderate risk. 49.7% of West Midlands businesses reported a low risk of insolvency and 33.6% reported no risk.

Homeworking

31.2% of responding West Midlands businesses reported they intended to use increased homeworking as a permanent business model going forward. 46.5% of West Midlands businesses reported they did not intend to use this business model with a further 22.3% unsure.

The top reasons that West Midlands businesses reported as to why they intend to use increased homeworking as a permanent business model was; 80.3% for improved staff wellbeing, 55% for increased productivity and 40.8% for reducing overheads.

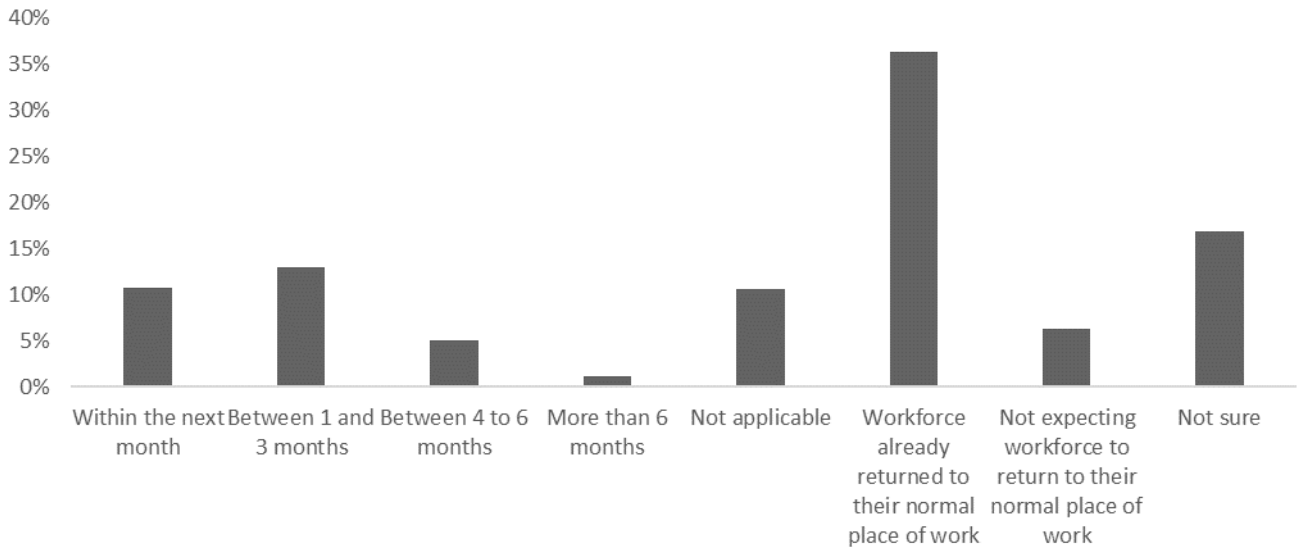
The following graph shows for West Midlands businesses why they intend to use increased homeworking as a permanent business model going forward:



Return to Workplace

36.3% of responding West Midlands businesses reported the workforce had already returned to their normal place of work, with a further 10.8% expecting the workforce to return within the next month.

The following chart shows for the West Midlands region when/if they expect the workforce to return to the normal place of work:



Expected Redundancies

5.3% of responding West Midlands businesses expect to make redundancies in the next three months. Although, 68.2% of West Midlands businesses reported they did not expect redundancies over the next three months. The remaining 26.4% were not sure.

Social Impacts of the Coronavirus

The following refers to the period of 8th to 19th September 2021. Please note, only a selection of indicators at a regional level are included in the below.

Personal Experience of Shortages of Goods

62% of West Midlands adults reported everything they have needed has been available in the past two weeks (GB 61%). Although 22% reported other food items have not been available (GB 25%).

The following chart shows responses for in the past two weeks, which of these things, if any, have you not been able to buy as they were not available:

Well-Being, Loneliness and Perceptions of the Future[2]

Mean personal well-being scores for life satisfaction was 6.9 in the West Midlands (7 GB), worthwhile was 7.2 in the West Midlands (7.3 GB), happiness was 6.8 for West Midlands adults (7.1 GB) and anxious was recorded at 4.2 for West Midlands adults (4 GB).

9% of adults in the West Midlands reported low levels of life satisfaction (matching GB). 9% of West Midlands adults reported low level of feeling worthwhile (8% GB). 16% of responding West Midlands adults reported low level of happiness (12% GB) and 36% reported high levels of anxiety (33% GB).

23% of adults in the West Midlands reported to often/always or some of the time to feeling lonely (24% GB). While 50% reported hardly ever or never feeling lonely in the West Midlands (49% GB).

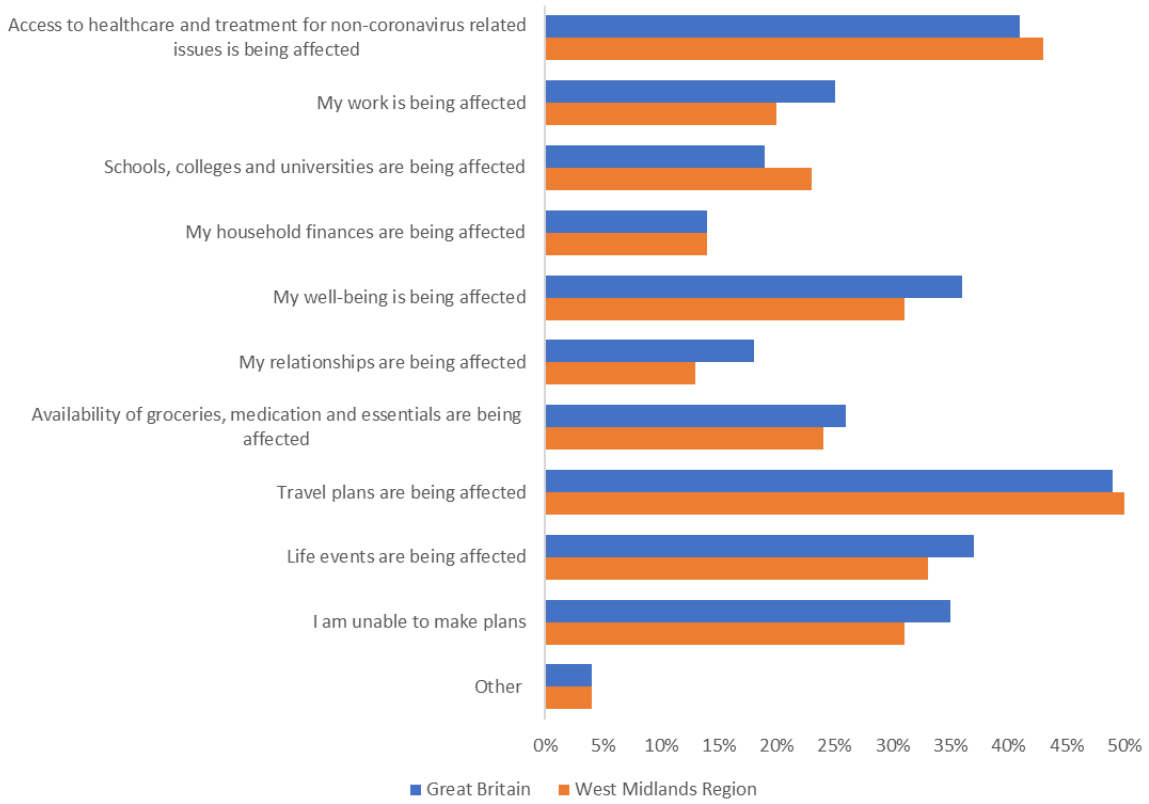
8% of West Midlands adults believe it will take 6 months or less before life returns to normal (10% GB). While 17% of West Midlands adults believed it will take 7 to 12 months (16% GB). 36% of West Midlands adults think it could more than a year to return back to normal (34% GB) and 11% for the West Midlands adults thought it would never go back to normal (12% GB).

Impact on People's Life Overall

In the West Midlands, 48% of adults reported they were very or somewhat worried about the effect COVID-19 was having on their life (49% GB). 22% of responding West Midlands adults reported that they were somewhat unworried or not at all worried (21% GB).

50% of responding West Midlands adults reported travel plans were being affected due to COVID-19 (49% GB).

The following chart shows for the West Midlands region and Great Britain-wide how COVID-19 were affecting adults between 8th and 19th September 2021:



28% of working adults in the West Midlands who say their work had been affected due to COVID-19 (36% GB).

[2] Please note for this section: each of these questions are answered on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is "not at all" and 10 is "completely". High anxiety is defined as a score of 6-10 for the question "How anxious did you feel yesterday?". Low levels of life satisfaction, feeling worthwhile and happiness are defined as a score of 4 or below for their respective questions.

SECTOR	KEY INSIGHTS
Cross Sector	**Outlook** The optimism about economic recovery that characterised many indices of business confidence in June and July has given way to a **much more mixed picture as we move into Autumn.** There remain risk factors that could derail prospects for recovery – notably **continuing distribution and supply difficulties and growing input price pressures** affecting many economic sectors. A **period of sustained uncertainty**, with external issues surrounding the legacy of Covid and EU Exit causing businesses many problems. In recent weeks we have begun to see this play out more clearly, particularly related to **shortages of fuel, gas and food.** While damaging the confidence and options for the public, this is also causing major issues for many cash strapped businesses that use a lot of energy and fuel. • Though some businesses working directly in the energy space have mentioned that the energy price situation could **potentially have a positive impact for them,** highlighting the **need for the UK to transition to a cleaner energy system** that is less dependent of imports. According to one local report from the Greater Birmingham Chamber, **rising prices and supply chain disruption are likely to have a knock-on impact on any projected recovery** and if labour and supply shortages are prolonged there will be a noticeable impact for firms to meet customer demand. With **acute supply and staff shortages, heightened uncertainty still therefore looms over the UK's economic outlook.** As economic growth levels out and firms face key challenges and shortages, business leaders are stressing how **vital it is the Government sets out a clear strategy on how they intend to minimise the prospect of future lockdowns and give businesses the confidence** they need to plan effectively and rebuild over the next few months, mitigating the issues surrounding the above three issue areas. In the short-term, quick and clear policy and action is needed to mitigate the crises. **Labour Market** A key factor of threats is the UK's current multi-faceted labour crisis. As widely reported, the **shortage of HGV drivers** is at the heart of this issue: • Each year 10,000 HGV drivers retire and a further 20,000 drivers leave the UK pool to pursue other careers. These would normally be replaced by the 43,000 new drivers passing their HGV tests each year. However, in the 12 months to March 2021 only some 15,000 HGV test passes were achieved due to the 8-month suspension of testing during the pandemic which has resulted in a shortfall of 27,000 new drivers • On top of this, it is estimated that the number of EU nationals working as drivers in the UK had fallen by 15,000 in 2020-21 partly due to Brexit and partly to Covid-19. There is also an unquantified impact of the new IR35 regulations, which has greatly cut take-home pay for many drivers. All together and on top of a pre-pandemic driver shortage of 59,000, current driver shortage could be as much as 100,000. The impact of the shortage is **already beginning to emerge with daily reports of supply chain interruptions and empty shelves.** This will lead to consumer price inflation as the transportation cost of goods rises. It is also **raising fears of affects to Christmas and on wider services such as patient care.** While a lack of HGV drivers has dominated the headlines, the challenge extends well beyond this to **include other skilled professions**, and along with resulting disruption to supply chains, has led to increasing calls for action in the run-up to Christmas.

SECTOR	KEY INSIGHTS

There is a difficulty across almost all sectors to source the right skills and talent for businesses, making it hard for firms to deliver on existing contract wins. This has led to **some businesses having to turn away orders.** Reflecting the variety of sectors and roles affected, the CBI have identified examples of current shortages.

CBI suggest the following to alleviate short-term pressures:

- marrying skills policies to roles with the highest unfilled vacancies
- adding greater flexibility to the Apprenticeship Levy
- using the Government's own skill-focused immigration levers

Annex – examples of shortages identified by CBI members

	RQF level 1, or equivalent	RQF level 2	RQF level 3+
Logistics		Forklift drivers LGV drivers HGV driver	
Food & Drink	Food & meat processing operatives Livestock & arable workers Fruit & flower pickers		Butchers
Retail & hospitality	Front of house Retail shop floor Warehouse operatives Laundry operatives Cleaners & housekeeping	Chefs	Administration
Construction		Scaffolders Carpenters	Welders Electrical engineers
Manufacturing	Fabricators Production operatives Factory assembly workers	Machine operatives	Mechanical engineers

These measures would be to help tackle what is considered a long-term problem that **threatens the growth of the West Midlands.** Evidence of this is provided by both British Chambers and through BDO's Rethinking the Economy survey. The latter found that **staffing is the biggest concern amongst regional business leaders**, with more than a quarter (28%) citing recruitment as the most significant barrier to growth.

Growth Hubs in the region have heard specific issues from businesses related to:

- **Staff Availability** – Further reduction in the availability of permanent staff. Elevated uncertainty surrounding the jobs market made some staff unwilling to move between roles.
- **Shortages** – Huge shortages in areas across logistics sector and also IT sector being raised as an issue by regional recruiters and employers.
- **Redundancies/End of Furlough** – No large scale redundancies coming through, although some are still expected at end of furlough.
- **Permanent Positions** – The number of permanent staff appointments across the region has continued to increase rapidly.
- **Increased Pay** – Recruiters across the region have reported an increase hourly pay rates & salaries.
- Reports from one regional School/Academy that highlighted concerns around **the time dedicated to careers advice provided to high school children being insufficient** and a risk in terms of suitably preparing the next generation workforce.

SECTOR	KEY INSIGHTS
	In detail, the time allocated to advising students reduced by half. Time that is allocated is outside of the curriculum with sessions completed before and after lessons or during breaktimes. **Product Shortages and Price Rises** Linked to a lack of HGV drivers, a **wide range of product and raw material supply problems** are being reported across multiple sectors, ranging from **food shortages, fertiliser, construction materials, wood, steel and aluminium, through to semiconductors**. At best this is resulting in supply delays, at worst significant price increases or even lack of supply resulting in halted production. This is now impacting cashflow for many businesses in the supply chain. The manufacturing sector is being particularly affected by these issues , while in the construction sector this is being compounded by HS2 and some of the major builders stockpiling materials, resulting in short supplies and price increases. A combination of the above affects, and reflecting both Covid and Brexit, **shortages of key metals, plastics and electronics resulting in rising costs for many UK manufacturers**. MakeUK's latest Manufacturing Outlook survey indicates costs have continued to climb upwards impacting manufacturer's ability to produce cost-effectively and protect supplier-customer relationships. Both **UK and Export prices reported at a record high balance of 49% and 43% respectively**, with expectations prices would rise further in Q4. A report by West Midlands Chambers of Commerce found that **40% of respondents had experienced increased costs due to Brexit.** Nearly four in five manufacturers (76%) cited increased costs; contrasting sharply with the 30% of services sector firms that had seen their costs increase. It is not just manufacturing that is majorly affected though. Construction businesses continue to express a critical concern with the **availability and cost for materials such as cement and plaster.** This has increased enquiries through local construction businesses, as **firms tackle inflated pricing and loss of business.** **Enquiries** It is anticipated that the region's Growth Hubs will see an **increase of enquiries over the coming month** with the end of furlough, grouped with energy company concerns and logistics concerns causing companies to feel a lot of strain, with more staff taking time off sick as the pressure becomes too much. Particularly **frequent enquiries of late** include: • **Grants** – There continues to be a strong demand for regular business support grant streams, particularly for capital investment and property related projects. A large number of these also looking to take advantage of the 130% tax super deduction offered by government. • **International Growth** – Pressures on businesses that have viable products and clear international markets seeking assistance from DiT to help with the ongoing issues related to international travel restrictions. Examples include struggles dealing with the Australian market as they are working with complex and frequently changing border controls, stunting the growth of many business. Other support from DiT relating to trade with the EU and North America also sought this week. • **Property Searches** – Increased requests for property searches. Businesses include those involved with Engineering, Heavy Manufacturing, Storage/Warehousing, Catering/Food Production and Photography. • **Net Zero** – Climate change a key consideration for a number of businesses as they, their suppliers and customers seek to engage with energy efficiency initiatives. One business looking to engage SME's with Community Energy projects that see the unification of like-minded businesses in shared premises in adopting efficient communal energy sources such as solar PV. • **Supply chain and the circular economy** is increasingly coming up in client conversations. Businesses are beginning to explore how they can utilise waste products from their

SECTOR	KEY INSIGHTS
	operations and are keen to be introduced to partners that have a need for such waste streams. • **Other –** Requests for support for other issues include, Property and Planning, 5G Technology, support with Acquisitions, Start-Up support and Digital Marketing.
Business and Professional Services	• The **Services** sector are reporting several challenges with HMRC, that include- **port delays, increase in volumes in Trade Finance division**. Finding it very confusing with no clear guidance. Brexit is causing **delays in goods getting through**, additional costs, lack of good skills/staff available. After the pandemic, it has put a strain on many of our services sector businesses. • There is an overwhelming lack of confidence in the market, **increasing shipping line costs,** material cost increases, final sales prices low though due to COVID effect globally. • Some Services SMEs who supply goods to educational institutions, make seasonal sales once a year. All are **still waiting for the restrictions to be over globally** to create more efficiencies. Red listed countries are affecting trade for some and consistently losing their market share. Some are reporting a continued impact due to contractors being unable to source materials, forcing difficult decisions and delays.
Manufacturing	• Despite current challenges sectors, manufacturing is still **reporting high levels of output and future confidence.** According to MakeUK's Q3 2021 Outlook, both business and economic confidence have achieved a new peak since data collection for this metric began in Q3 2014. The result continues to be fuelled by the reopening of the economy and new work returning to manufacturers up and down the UK. • In addition the Manufacturing Growth Programme (MGP) have released their latest Manufacturing Barometer, revealing that major supply **chain issues and recruitment challenges are suppressing the recovery of the UK's SME manufactures.** Nearly all of the 260 respondents (96%) are struggling with price changes within their supply chain, Firms believe that rising costs are being driven by lack of availability of raw materials (94%), rising transport costs (82%), and reduced capacity in the market to meet demand (63%). • Also looking forward, The Midlands Engine has published two new manufacturing reports, representing two phases: - The first report – **"Midlands Engine Makes"** – showcases the **unique strengths of manufacturing across the Midlands.** - Phase 2 focuses on "**What Could be Made in the Midlands in Future**", calling on **government and industry to capitalise on emerging opportunities within its manufacturing heartland**, as it targets 165,000 new jobs in the sector by 2030 to support the shift to net zero and deliver levelling up.
Tourism	• The sector is reporting that Brexit has **created serious labour and skills shortage.** Increased supply prices and their shortage. Also, forcing increases in wages to attract labour. • With businesses **unable to absorb these costs and customer orders falling.** • Price inflations affecting raw ingredients, packaging and services price inflation as well as supply issue; **putting businesses back in survival mode.**
Creative and Cultural	• The sector is **demanding clarity on what the trading environment is and to adopt a positive stance towards Europe** (contacts and customers abroad reflect that UK has become inward looking and insular and not interested in trading globally). Many businesses have lost trade overseas and finding it challenging to gain work domestically.

NEW ECONOMIC SHOCKS

COMPANY	LOCATION	SECTOR	SOURCE/DETAIL
Disney Store	Merry Hill	Retail	The Disney Store at Merry Hill will close it has been confirmed. The brand giant announced in March that it

COMPANY	LOCATION	SECTOR	SOURCE/DETAIL
			would "significantly reduce" stores as it focuses more on e-commerce.
X4Office	Coventry	Retail and Wholesale	A Coventry-based furniture business, which has offices and clients all over the world, says its growth is being hampered by a shortage of staff and has 15 roles that urgently need filling. X4Office, which is based on the Pilot Business Park in the city, is ready to recruit 12 new furniture fitters on full-time contracts, with full training, to help fulfil contracts in the coming months.
Henry Squire and Sons	Wolverhampton	Manufacturing	Union workers at the historic lock makers Henry Squire and Sons in Featherstone, near Wolverhampton, will begin strike action next month in a dispute over pay. Unite said that its members were due to receive a pay increase in January but management refused to make an offer. Squire employs a team of 45 people at its manufacturing headquarters of which 19 are members of Unite.

NEW INVESTMENT, DEALS AND OPPORTUNITIES

COMPANY	LOCATION	SECTOR	DETAIL & SOURCE
Volvo	Black Country	Automotive	Volvo are looking to create a new head office in Walsall with a fresh sales department, vehicle workshops and offices. Hartshorne Group says is bidding to expand its 13,700 sq m site at Bentley Mill Close, Walsall, to include new vehicle workshops and offices.
UK Security Doors Limited	Black Country	Manufacturing	A working capital facility has been agreed from Arbuthnot Commercial Asset Based Lending to support its plans for future growth.
IBSTOCK	Black Country	Manufacturing	More than 30 new jobs will be created at “world-renowned” brick making firm when it undergoes a major expansion. . The development means the company will more than double its annual production of bricks from 40 million to 105 million.
Homeserve	Walsall	Utilities	Home repairs company HomeServe has launched a major new recruitment drive. Applicants are sought for 34 customer service representative roles at its Cable Drive headquarters in Walsall.
Schroder UK Real Estate	Wolverhampton	Development	A major development to create warehouse style units which will bring almost 250 new jobs to Wolverhampton has been given the green light. Delighted regeneration bosses said the proposal by Schroder UK Real Estate Fund to build four industrial units on the existing Tata Steel site, which it owns, off Steelpark Way, will help “relight” the city. Wolverhampton Council planners this week approved the application, which was submitted earlier this year.
Travelodge	Region-wide	Hotels	Dozens of jobs in West Midlands available as Travelodge starts massive recruitment drive. Travelodge has launched a recruitment drive in the hope of finding 750 new workers. 40 of the jobs are available here in the West Midlands.
Percuro Primal Pet Food Ltd	Henley in Arden	Manufacturing	A sustainable pet food brand has secured contracts with retailers in the UK and globally six months after securing support funding.

COMPANY	LOCATION	SECTOR	DETAIL & SOURCE
			Percuro Primal Pet Food Ltd, which has its headquarters in Henley-in-Aden in Warwickshire, secured funding from the European Regional Development Fund through the Innovate EDGE UK Proof-of-Concept programme, which is provided by Coventry University.
Birmingham 2022 Festival	Birmingham	Creative/Culture	The Birmingham 2022 Festival has begun work on a number of projects including Critical Mass in partnership with DanceXchange which is currently recruiting over 300 young people aged 16-30. Participants will perform in some of 2022's biggest cultural events including the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games opening and closing ceremonies thanks to funding from Spirit of 2012.
Nude Bar and Grill	Birmingham	Food/Drink	A new destination hospitality venue is set to open in Birmingham City Centre following a £1 million investment from its West Midlands based owners – creating more than 50 jobs
Iceni Projects	Birmingham	BPFS	A multi-disciplinary consultancy firm has opened a new office in Birmingham city centre.
Merry Hill	Brierley Hill	Retail	A raft of brands have agreed to take space at Merry Hill shopping centre. A deal has also been secured for an expanded Primark store. Expanding by 10,000 sq ft, the now almost 84,000 sq ft Primark Merry Hill store will provide customers with a range of home and lifestyle items. Additionally, deals have been exchanged for a Starbucks drive-thru, a German Donner Kebab and a 12,500 sq ft Bon Pan.
HL Smith	Wolverhampton	Engineering	A Wolverhampton-based remanufacturer of heavy-duty commercial vehicle drivetrain and steering systems has been acquired by a US firm which serves the global automotive industry. HL Smith has been snapped up by Michigan-headquartered ATC.
Rothley	Wolverhampton	Manufacturing	Following a period of continued growth, interior accessories manufacturer Rothley has taken new warehouse and office space in Wolverhampton, spreading over 56,000 sq ft, which will allow it to double the stock it can hold. The new Central Midlands location at Discovery Park, Wobaston Road will be officially opened on Wednesday, October 6.
City & Guilds	Coventry	Charity	Holt Commercial, acting for Coventry City Council, has let the 3,519 sq ft industrial property on Fullwood Close on the Aldermans Green Industrial Estate to national charity City & Guilds. It's the fourth deal that Holt Commercial has achieved on the secure and well-managed estate recently while a further property is under offer. Another 5,715 sq ft unit which has been fully refurbished has just been launched to the market in the area.
Sixth Street / Henley Investments	Birmingham	Retail	A joint venture between a global investment firm and a private equity real estate company has acquired the Martineau Place shopping destination in Birmingham.

Disclaimer: The contents of this document are based on the latest data available and the contribution of regional partners in a fast paced environment, therefore we urge caution in its use and application
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