

West Midlands

Weekly Economic Impact Monitor



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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.

This fortnight there have been a number of significant announcements on social care financing, latest furlough data and the PMI, along with a cabinet reshuffle this week. Midlands MP Nadhim Zahawi is the new Education Secretary and Michael Gove has moved to MHCLG. As an avowed public sector reformer, this latter appointment could signal changes across devolved government as he leads the levelling up agenda. Regionally [WMREDI and its partners](#) have launched the [West Midlands Data Lab](#). The data lab provides a single interactive portal for a wealth of up to the minute regional data and research.

- [China's global economy slowed in August](#) raising fears for global recovery.
- The [number of extremely hot days every year when the temperature reaches 50C has doubled since the 1980s](#). Extremely hot days have also been happening in more areas of the world than before.
- [BBC analysis](#) found that maximum temperatures increased by 0.5C more in the last decade compared with the long-term average from 1980 to 2009. However, these increases have not been felt equally around the world.
- The WM Business Activity Index (PMI) decreased from 58.3 in July 2021 to a six-month low of 55.2 in August 2021. This decrease shows that even with the relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions, growth was hindered by companies not being able to appropriate labour to fill job roles and also difficulties in sourcing raw materials. The overall UK Business Activity Index decreased from 59.2 in July 2021 to 54.8 in August 2021. Out of the 12 UK regions (where the highest is first), the West Midlands region was 6th for the Business Activity Index in August 2021. The West Midlands Future Activity Index increased from 74.4 in July 2021 to 77.2 in July 2021: a three-month high and above the historical average. Approximately 63% of West Midlands companies are forecasting growth in the next 12 months.
- From April 2022 employees, employers and the self-employed will all pay [1.25p more in the pound for National Insurance \(NI\)](#). However, from April 2023 NI will return to its normal rate and the extra tax will be collected as a new [Health and Social Care Levy](#). This levy, unlike NI, will also be paid by state pensioners who are still working. The increase will see an employee on £20,000 a year paying an extra £130 in tax. There are concerns this will impact the lower-paid the most.
- 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.
- [Job vacancies have hit a record high](#) since records began in 2001, at 1 million in the three months to August 2021. [Figures also showed](#) employee numbers were back at pre-Covid levels in August. However, [business groups](#) have said that despite the return of staffing levels to pre-pandemic rates there remains high demand for more staff and labour shortages would dampen growth. Currently, food and accommodation sectors have the highest number of vacancies. These industries in the UK usually have a high number of migrant workers.
- [The Bridge Group](#) have found that 51% of graduates in the UK remain local to their university after graduation. Those who commuted to university as students were more likely to stay locally (76%). Graduates want to have 'meaningful' careers, rather than just high salaries, and to be able to live in places and environments which appeal to them.
- 27.7% of businesses that contacted the Growth Hub through the pandemic were referred to one of the nine regional university partner-specific business support programmes, providing specialised support such as adoption of new technologies and processes, skills development, and business leadership.
- Problems with cluster approaches are outlined: it is not an easy task as successful clusters come in all shapes and sizes. As there is no one-size-fits-all cluster model and a "best practice" does not exist, the West Midlands must find the best cluster shape to build competitive advantages based on its local strengths and assets combined with global networks' inspirations and trends. It also needs to take account of the experience of successful local clusters.
- The number of UK payroll employees showed another monthly increase, up 241,000 to 29.1 million in August 2021, returning to pre-coronavirus pandemic (February 2020) levels. For the three months ending in July 2021, the West Midlands regional employment rate (for those aged 16- 64 years) was 74.2%. Since the three months ending April 2021, the employment rate saw an increase of 1 percentage point (pp). For the three months ending in July 2021, the West Midlands regional unemployment rate (aged 16 years and over) was 5.1%, a decrease of 0.8pp since the previous quarter.
- There were 21,000 new VAT reporters in the UK in August 2021, a decrease of 4% from 21,930 in July 2021. The number of new VAT reporters in August 2021 was 18% higher than in August 2020 (17,730) but 2% lower than August 2019 (21,490).

- The month-on-month, all-industry turnover estimate for July 2021 shows that in the past month, out of 38,550 firms, more firms have reported decreasing rather than increasing turnover (net negative 3%). This is the largest negative net difference since April 2020.
- [Transport for West Midlands \(TfWM\)](#) has unveiled a new mini-transport hub which is designed to bring together eco-friendly travel options such as e-scooters, pedal bikes and electric vehicle charging points to neighbourhoods.
- The [University of Birmingham \(UoB\)](#), in [partnership with Siemens](#), is set to transform the University's Edgbaston and Dubai campuses into the world's smartest global campus, creating a '[Living lab](#)' where research, teaching and learning all benefit from access to new data and connectivity.
- [SuperTech West Midlands](#), supported by GBSLEP, has announced the launch of the Connector Series. The aim is to grow the tech professional services cluster and establish the West Midlands as a world leading destination and a centre of excellence.
- In [MakeUK's](#) latest survey, the West Midlands has been the top performer, maintaining manufacturing output levels on average in the second half of the pandemic, posting a positive balance of 12%.
- WCG, formerly Warwickshire College Group, has secured £1.2m of government funding to expand its range of technical qualifications from the £50m TLevel Capital Fund.
- [British Gas](#) has outlined plans for the recruitment of more than 400 smart energy apprentices in the West Midlands over the next decade, with the aim that approximately a 1/3 of the vacancies filled within the next year.

Covid Impacts

- Business confidence in the region stayed strong during August 2021 despite dipping from the previous month, according to new figures. The latest [Business Barometer from Lloyds Bank Commercial Banking](#) found confidence in the West Midlands fell three points during August to 27% but remained above the year-to-date average of 23%.
- There has also been a growth in the number of permanent staff appointments according to the latest [KPMG and REC UK Report on Jobs](#). The report signalled an accelerated upturn in permanent placements during the eighth month of the year as businesses were increasingly confident about market demand.
- The economic recovery of the West Midlands continued in August 2021, with [amid a robust improvement in demand conditions](#). Local companies linked the upturn to the relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions and increased order numbers, but suggested that growth has been restricted by difficulties in sourcing raw materials and struggles finding suitable labour to fill existing vacancies. The rate of inflation was sharp and the second-fastest since mid-2008.
- [Tensions between office workers also appear to be growing globally](#) between those who are vaccinated against Covid and those who are not. 37% of companies surveyed by [Seyfarth at Work](#) reported that vaccinated staff were angry and frustrated at the transmission risk posed by unvaccinated workers
- Last year an unprecedented number of families were pushed into poverty as their incomes reduced due to the loss of working hours following Covid-19. [Unemployment hit a five-year high at the end of 2020](#), with 5.1% or 1.7 million people out of work. This means that significant number of households were relying on social security to stay afloat.
- In order to help those on lower incomes the government decided to [boost Universal Credit \(UC\) and working tax credits by £20 a week](#). This was the [first rise in UC at or above inflation](#) since its introduction 8 years ago in 2013; there was a benefit freeze from 2016 to 2019. Between, 2016 and 2019 UC had fallen [11.5% behind inflation](#). [Citizen's Advice](#) surveyed over 2,000 people on UC and found that 38% would be in debt after paying just their essential bills if their benefits were to decrease by £20 per week.
- [The Trussell Trust](#) found that faced with a £20 a week cut, 1.2 million people (20%) claiming UC say they would very likely need to skip meals and 1.3 million (21%) say they will very likely be unable to afford to heat their homes this winter.
- The WMCA (3 LEP) area had 105,400 employments furloughed on the 31st July 2021. This reflects a 6.2% take-up of eligible employments for the scheme, compared to UK-wide of 5.4%. When compared to 30th June 2021, the number of employments furloughed in the WMCA (3 LEP) area decreased by 16,300 (-13.4%, UK -17.8%). The largest reductions in the number of employments on furlough in June and July were for younger employees in the under 18, 18 to 24 and 25 to 34 age bands. The parliamentary constituency with the highest take-up rate on 31st July 2021 was Birmingham, Hodge Hill at 9.4% (3,700 furloughed of the 39,500 eligible).
- It is estimated that 10% of the region's employees are on low pay and when applied to furlough figures this amounts to 16,000 workers in the region who could struggle if their employment conditions change (i.e. reduced hours) following the ending of the furlough scheme.
- Birmingham is the main outlier in the region for furlough, with 34,400 people accessing support; this is at least three times higher than any other local authority area in the region.
- Some of the furlough impact on manufacturing can be attributed to a global semiconductor shortage and other issues such as Brexit. In the region, as of 30 June 2021 21,000 (10%) of the region's manufacturing employees are still on furlough.
- There has been a total of 523,100 claims made from 151,000 individual in the WMCA (3 LEP) across all SEISS grants; the total claims reached a value of nearly £1.35bn. Across the WMCA (3 LEP) area, 170,100 people were eligible for the fifth grant of SEISS. There were 43,100 claims made to 15th August 2021 (approximately split by 30,600 claims made for the higher grant and 12,900 claims for the lower grant) with a total value of £91.8m (split approximately by £78m for the higher

grant and £13.6m for the lower grant) with an average overall claim value of £2,200. The overall take-up rate for was 25%, above the UK average of 24%.

- At a West Midlands regional level, there were approximately 258,000 of the population eligible for the fifth grant of the SEISS, which is a take up rate of 23% based on the total number of claims of 60,000. This can be split further by gender: there was a total potentially eligible male population of 184,000 for the fifth grant of the SEISS, which equates to a take-up rate of 25%, which is based on the total number of claims of 45,000. There was an eligible female population of 74,000 for the region with a take-up rate of 20% based on the total number of claims of 15,000. The sectors with the highest take-up rates in the region were transport and storage at 34% (24,100 eligible, 8,200 claims) and other service activities at 29% (18,100 eligible, 5,300 claims).
- Businesses were asked how their turnover for the last two weeks compared to normal expectations for the time of year. Excluding 'not sure' responses, 27.3% of trading businesses in the West Midlands reported their turnover had decreased by at least 20%. However, 44.6% of trading businesses reported that their turnover was unaffected and approximately 14.7% reported their turnover had increased by at least 20%.
- 29.1% of trading businesses in the West Midlands reported profits had decreased by at least 20%. However, 41.4% of trading businesses reported that profits had stayed the same and approximately 11.3% reported their profits had increased by at least 20%.
- 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, 25.3% 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, 18.8% in the West Midlands were importing less than normal. 57.4% of businesses who were exporting reported that they had not been affected and 64.4% reported that importing had not been affected.
- 24.9% of responding West Midlands businesses reported that prices increased more than normal, 42.1% reported that prices did not change any more than normal. 7.2% of businesses reported some prices increased and some prices decreased and less than 1% reported prices decreased more than normal.
- 12.2% of responding WM businesses reported an increase in demand for goods or services sold in the last two weeks, with 62.6% reporting no increase.
- 24.6% of WM businesses reported there was no difference in the ability to fill vacancies and 42.8% reported vacancies were more difficult to fill. 13% of businesses did not have any vacancies to fill.
- According to the research by [PWC](#) more than 1,500 shops disappeared from Midlands retail locations in the first half of 2021.
- According to Springboard, in the week to 4th September 2021, the volume of overall retail footfall in the UK decreased slightly by 1% from the previous week (week to 28th August 2021).
- In the week ending 5th September 2021, the seven-day average number of UK daily flights was 3,589, a 5% increase from the previous week (3,405) and a 15% increase from 3,111 the previous month (week ending 8th August 2021). This is the highest weekly average number of UK flights seen for almost 18 months.

EU Exit Impacts

- As previously reported, the labour shortages problem is, according to many businesses' experiences, caused and exacerbated by the UK's exit from the EU. Businesses are struggling to recruit people for less desirable roles, such as HGV drivers, cleaners and care staff, due to the return of EU nationals to the EU, and reduction in flow of EU migration to the UK.
- Furthermore, businesses in the region still report that Brexit has caused ongoing disruption at borders. Reliability of carriers is a problem, as is timeliness, losing shipments and delays of incoming goods stuck at the border.

Global, National and Regional Outlook

Alice Pugh, WMREDI

Global

[China's global economy slowed in August](#) raising fears for global recovery. It was decelerated last month as continuing break-outs of the Delta variant caused the government to enforce strict lockdown and social distancing measures. China's retail sales, which are an important gauge for the country's consumer spend, grew 2.5% in August 2021, a steep drop from 8.5% growth posted in July 2021 and the slowest pace of growth since August 2020. China's retail sales growth hit a monthly high of 34.2% in March 2021. Since then, the indicator has fallen every month as China has faced intermittent Covid-19 outbreaks, rising raw material costs, supply chain bottlenecks and disruptions caused by severe flooding in July 2021.

[Tensions between office workers also appear to be growing globally](#) between those who are vaccinated against Covid and those who are not. In the US, in particular, companies are taking a rigorous approach towards employees' Covid vaccination status, with many announcing that their staff must be fully vaccinated to return to the workplace. This is inflaming workplace conflicts, as some of those that wish to remain unvaccinated strengthen their stances on whether vaccination should be mandatory. Around 37% of companies surveyed by [Seyfarth at Work](#) reported that vaccinated staff were angry and frustrated at the transmission risk posed by unvaccinated workers. 21% of unvaccinated staff are complaining about their treatment, either because they are being 'harshly judged' by colleagues, or claiming that there are better opportunities for vaccinated office-mates.

A survey by [Qualtrics](#), conducted in August 2021 found that 60% of employees support vaccine mandates for in-person work, but almost a quarter of employees 23% said they would strongly consider leaving their place of work if their employers mandated vaccines. The [survey of 1,051 American workers](#) also found that vaccine mandates differ across industries, with 75% of workers in tech supporting vaccine mandates at work, while 58% of government employees support mandates. More men (63%) support vaccine mandates at work than women (56%) and political affiliation also affected the evident level of support, with 81% of those who identifying as Democrats saying they support vaccine mandates at work, while only 45% of Republicans said the same. Some employers are reluctant to enforce workplace rules on vaccines and masks in an effort to avoid conflict, but as people continue to return to the workplace in the US these conflicts are likely to increase, especially as we are now approaching flu season and the winter.

The [number of extremely hot days every year when the temperature reaches 50C has doubled since the 1980s](#). Extremely hot days have also been happening in more areas of the world than before, presenting unprecedented challenges to human health and how we live. On average, between 1980 and 2009 temperatures passed 50C about 14 days a year. This number has risen to 26 days between 2010 and 2019. In the same period the number of temperatures of 45C and above occurred on average an extra two weeks a year.

After record-breaking temperatures of 48.8C in Italy and 49.6C in Canada this summer, scientists have warned that days of 50C will continue to increase elsewhere unless we cut fossil fuel consumption. [BBC analysis](#) found that maximum temperatures increased by 0.5C more in the last decade compared with the long-term average from 1980 to 2009. However, these increases have not been felt equally around the world: Eastern Europe, southern Africa and Brazil saw some maximum temperatures rise by more than 1C, and parts of the Arctic and Middle East recorded increases of more than 2C. This is leading to people, usually in poorer developing countries, to have to leave their homes due to extreme heat which is making drought, wildfires and desertification more likely. This is also likely to [increase conflicts globally](#) as people in countries suffering from extreme heat begin to fight over reducing fertile land and rapidly reducing water supply.

This comes as a [survey of over 10,000 children and young people](#) (16-25 years), across 10 countries, found 45% saying that climate change anxiety and distress is affecting their daily lives and functioning. [The research](#) has come from the largest scientific study into climate anxiety in children and young people thanks to [University of Bath and Avaaz](#). The study also found that 75% of respondents believe 'the future is frightening'. For the first time, it also found that climate change distress and anxiety is significantly related to perceived government inaction and associated feelings of betrayal. 58% of children and young people surveyed said governments were "betraying me and/or future generations," while 64% said their governments are not doing enough to avoid a climate catastrophe.

[The study](#) has found widespread psychological distress among children and young people globally and experts warn that because government inaction on climate change is psychologically damaging, it potentially amounts to a violation of international human rights. The study concludes that governments must respond to 'protect the mental health of children and young people by engaging in ethical, collective, policy-based action against climate change.'

National

From April 2022 employees, employers and the self-employed will all pay [1.25p more in the pound for National Insurance \(NI\)](#). However, from April 2023 NI will return to its normal rate and the extra tax will be collected as a new [Health and Social Care Levy](#). This levy, unlike NI, will also be paid by state pensioners who are still working. The increase will see an employee on £20,000 a year paying an extra £130 in tax. There are concerns this will impact the lower-paid the most. The [Tax Payers Alliance](#) found that the levy will result in poorer workers paying a higher proportion of their income in NI. For poorer non-retired households, [NI would rise from 7.22% to 7.9%](#) of their gross incomes, comparative to richer households who would see a rise from 4.72% to 5.21%. This is due to NI being a [regressive tax](#), which hits the poorest hardest.

Last year an unprecedented number of families were pushed into poverty as their incomes reduced due to the loss of working hours following Covid-19. [Unemployment hit a five-year high at the end of 2020](#), with 5.1% or 1.7 million people out of work. This means that a significant number of households were relying on social security to stay afloat. In order to help those on lower incomes the government decided to [boost universal credit and working tax credits, by £20 a week](#). However, the government has announced that it will now be removing the uplift at the end of this month when furlough and other Covid related support is set to end.

This week [Theresa Coffey the Work and Pensions Secretary of State said](#) that the loss of £20 a week would equate to 'two hours' extra work every week'. But this is incorrect - there is a [taper rate on UC at 63%](#), based on post-tax earnings, this means that UC claimants are only taking home 37p of every extra pound they earn, falling to 25.2p if they earn enough to pay income tax and employee National Insurance (NI). From April this will fall to 24.7p as NI rises. [The Resolution Foundation](#) has found that a UC claimant earning National Living Wage (NLW)- currently £8.91 an hour- and with an income of at least £6,100 a year would not take home £20 for an extra 2 hours work, but would take home only £6.60. Falling to £4.48 if they pay tax and NI. Once any pension contributions, additional childcare or travel costs are considered, [the Resolution Foundation](#) has found this would fall to around £2.24.

[As an example](#), a single parent working three days a week, eight hours a day, on £10 per hour, would need to increase their earnings by a third to make up the loss of the £20 and this is presuming there is no additional childcare involved. Even before the pandemic, the main reason a significant number of employed individuals claimed UC was because they were unable to secure additional hours or better paid employment. When the pandemic hit last year the number of hours available to work was drastically impacted, especially for those on minimum and living wage. Many industries have not fully recovered, meaning that there are even fewer hours available to work than there was pre-pandemic. Additionally, over [1 in 4 claimants](#) are - by the government's standards - not expected to work, for example because they are caring for a child under the age of three, or due to health care problems.

This was the [first rise in UC at or above inflation](#) since its introduction 8 years ago in 2013, as a result of the benefit freeze from 2016 to 2019. Between, 2016 and 2019 UC had fallen by [11.5% behind inflation](#). [Citizens Advice](#) surveyed over 2,000 people found that 38% would be in debt after paying just their essential bills if their benefits were to decrease by £20 per week. This is equivalent to 2.3 million individuals. This figure rises to 49% of people on UC in 'Red Wall' areas. [Citizens Advice](#) found the average shortfall for people tipped into the red would be £51 a month, increasing to £55 a month in 'Red Wall' areas. [The Trussell Trust](#) found that faced with a £20 a week cut, 1.2 million people (20%) claiming UC say they would very likely need to skip meals and 1.3 million (21%) say they will very likely be unable to afford to heat their homes this winter. With 900,000 saying they are very likely to need to seek the use of a food bank as a result of the cut. However, even given the criticism from [within their own party](#) that this will lead to increased poverty, the Government has decided that the uplift will be removed at the end of the month alongside the other employment support schemes.

Consumer price inflation has been released for this month below are the [main points as summarised by ONS](#):

- 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 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 contributions 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.

[Job vacancies have hit a record high](#), since records began in 2001, at 1 million in the three months to August. [Figures also showed](#) employee numbers were back at pre-Covid levels in August. However, [business groups](#) have said that despite the return of staffing levels to pre-pandemic rates there remain high demand for more staff, and labour shortages would dampen growth. Currently, food and accommodation sectors have the highest number of vacancies, but these industries in the UK usually have a high number of migrant workers. However, the availability of workers from these countries has been restricted by Covid related travel rules and Brexit. It is expected that some of these vacancies will be filled by furloughed staff, when furlough ends this month, however this is unlikely given that most furloughed staff will already have a job to return to.

The [Prime Minister has also reshuffled the cabinet this week](#), one casualty has been Gavin Williamson who has been sacked as Education Secretary and will be replaced by Nadhim Zahawi. This is a big promotion after winning praise for presiding over the UK's vaccination programme. Robert Buckland has also been replaced by Dominic Raab as Justice secretary. [Liz Truss](#) takes the position of Foreign Secretary, moving from the Department for International Trade. [Michael Gove has moved to MHCLG](#) after two years as minister for the Cabinet Office. Gove is an avowed public sector reformer who will now have oversight of a key area of domestic policy — and be handed “cross-government responsibility for” Johnson's flagship ‘Levelling Up’ promise to curb regional inequality.

A [new research report](#) has been released this week by social mobility organisation [The Bridge Group](#), funded by higher education charity the [UPP foundation](#). The report finds that the current narrative of graduate success — which focuses on high salaries — is neither accurate nor inclusive. Based on a national quantitative study, and interviews with 35 graduates from four universities and 11 employers with links to those universities, the study shows that the decision to stay local after graduating is guided by considerations of wellbeing, financial independence and health. The research shows that graduates want to have ‘meaningful’ careers, rather than just high salaries, and to be able to live in places and environments which appeal to them.

[The Bridge Group](#) also found that:

- 51% of graduates in the UK remain local to their university after graduation. Those who commuted to university as students were more likely to stay local (76%), but 39% of those who did not commute also stayed on.
- Graduates who stayed in the region of their university after graduating were as likely as graduates who moved away to report that they were in paid employment and that their current activity was on track with their future plans.
- Graduates who stay on in the region are more likely to be from lower socio-economic backgrounds (in terms of the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)), more likely to represent the first generation of their family to attend university and more likely to be mature (25 years old and above on entry).

- There is a mismatch between employers' assumptions and the behaviours of graduates. Employers believe that graduates want to move 'out to move up', but this is contradicted by the finding that 51% of graduates stay in the region.

The [report](#) concludes by making the following recommendations to align graduate success with what graduate actually value, and be more inclusive of students from all socio-economic backgrounds across the UK:

- Rethinking the metrics used to measure graduate success, so that students that study and remain local are valued by universities.
- Ensuring the right kind of advice is available to them through university careers services.
- Assisting SMEs based in the UK's regions with hiring graduate talent.

Regional

The economic recovery of the West Midlands continued in August, with [companies scaling up output amid a robust improvement amid a robust improvement in demand conditions](#). Local companies linked the upturn to the relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions and increased order numbers, but suggested that growth has been restricted by difficulties in sourcing raw materials and struggles finding suitable labour to fill existing vacancies. The rate of inflation was sharp and the second-fastest since mid-2008. When explaining the upturn [West Midlands businesses stated difficulties in sourcing raw materials](#), as well as higher transaction costs (such as increased airfreight prices) and staff costs. However, West Midlands companies remained confident regarding the 12-month outlook for business activity in August, with around 63% of firms forecasting growth, with optimism pinned on the hopes of an end to the pandemic amid the growing vaccine coverage.

[Transport for the West Midlands \(TFWM\)](#) has unveiled a new mini-transport hub which is designed to bring together eco-friendly travel options such as e-scooters, pedal bikes and electric vehicle charging points to neighbourhoods and local centres. Such mobility hubs have already been successfully rolled out across towns and cities in Europe and TFWM is now following suit, innovating their own hub concept in the West Midlands. This comes as part of the £22 million Future Transport Zone programme.

TFWM, which is part of the West Midlands Combined Authority, [worked with Warwick-based design and engineering consultancy CALLUM](#) to develop the concept and manufacture the prototype in collaboration with partners including e-scooter hire company Voi, West Midlands Cycle Hire and electric mobility specialist LOCKEM.

The [University of Birmingham \(UoB\)](#), in [partnership with Siemens](#), is set to transform the University's Edgbaston and Dubai campuses into the world's smartest global campus, creating a '[Living lab](#)' where research, teaching and learning all benefit from access to new data and connectivity. They will do this by [combining digital sensor and analytics technologies](#), artificial intelligence, decentralised energy generation and storage, renewable energy and concepts that help change users' behaviour. The 'Living Lab' will capture data from the University's building technologies, estates infrastructure and energy plants and use it for innovation, R & D activities, as well as teaching. The [UoB stated](#) that scrutinising energy demand and production with live data from across the sites provides a unique opportunity for applied learning for students and creates a platform for cutting-edge research. [Siemens will also sponsor a team of PhD students](#) based in the UK and Dubai. Their research project will be co-designed by Siemens and the University to address important challenges in data, technology, urban systems and Net Zero goals. This year, the UoB will become the first university in the world to introduce Internet of Things (IoT) technology at scale. Starting in Autumn 2021, the first phase of this major energy efficiency project will include the roll out of 23,000 Enlighted IoT sensors across the University estate. [The University has made significant progress](#) in making its operations more sustainable, including achieving its 2020 target of reducing carbon emissions by 20%.

[British Gas](#) has outlined plans this week for the recruitment of more than 400 smart energy apprentices in the West Midlands over the next decade, with the aim that approximately a third of the vacancies to be filled within the next year. Once qualified as smart energy experts, they will then be upskilled to install and maintain carbon-efficient technologies, including electric vehicle charge points, heat pumps, hydrogen boilers and to provide essential energy to efficiency and advice to customers. British Gas has also stated that half the applicants will be made up of women in a bid to improve gender diversity.

Business Support: Referrals to Regional Universities by the GBSLEP Growth Hub

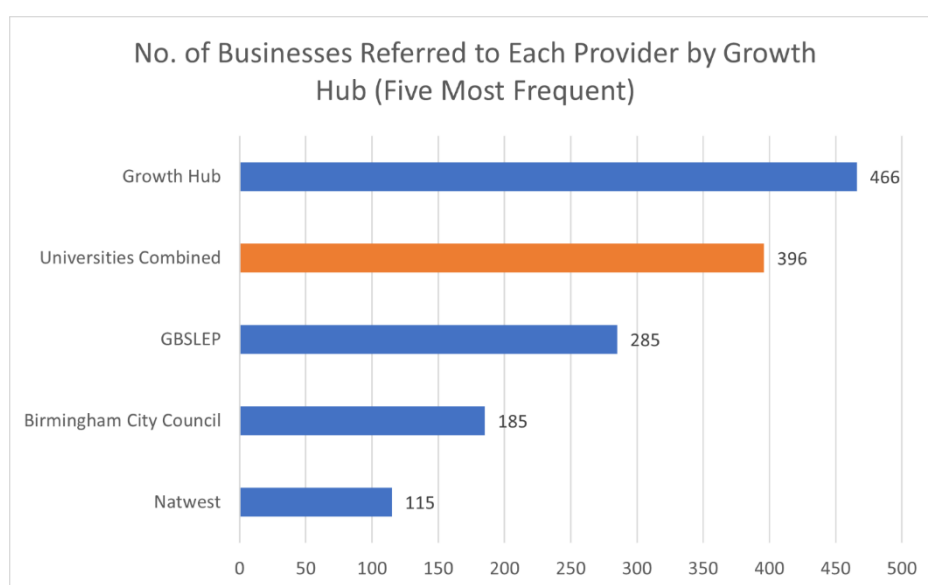
Freya Williams, Alice Pugh and Juliane Schwarz, WMREDI/GBSLEP

GBSLEP Growth Hub

The Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) [Growth Hub](#) offers assistance to businesses located in the GBSLEP area (Birmingham, Bromsgrove, Cannock Chase, East Staffordshire, Lichfield, Redditch, Solihull, Tamworth and Wyre Forest). Support to the business is free, though they may be required to make a matched contribution depending on the funding source where a grant is being provided. The Growth Hub is funded by national organisations such as the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and continues to receive funding from the European Union Regional Development Fund until 2023. Support is provided either within the Growth Hub, GBSLEP or external partners such as regional universities.

Businesses Support by University Providers

Upon contacting the Growth Hub, an individual business' support needs are assessed before being connected to the most appropriate service and provider. Between October 2019 and July 2021, 1428 businesses contacted the Growth Hub. Almost three-quarters (1046 out of 1428) were referred to either internal or external providers for further support. The Growth Hub itself dealt with the majority of enquiries internally through [Peer Networks](#), [Access to Finance Portal](#), and [Brexit Advisors](#). Businesses are also referred to other parts of the GBSLEP, such as the [Skills Hub](#), [Digital Welcome Scheme](#), and the [Pivot and Prosper Grant Fund](#) or to external partners such as local councils, banks and universities.



Over a quarter of businesses (27.7%) that contacted the Growth Hub in the time period were referred to one of the nine regional university partners. The university partners are:

- Aston University
- Birmingham City University
- Coventry University
- Keele University
- Staffordshire University
- University of Birmingham
- University College Birmingham
- University of Warwick
- University of Wolverhampton

Businesses that accessed university support through the Growth Hub were mainly (81.6%) referred to specific university business support programmes that provide specialised support such as, the adoption of new technologies and processes, skills development, and business leadership.

Location

Most businesses supported by universities via the Growth Hub are located in Birmingham (286 of the 396). Solihull had the second most businesses referred (34), followed by Lichfield (21). Seven businesses referred to universities by the Growth Hub are located outside of the GBSLEP.

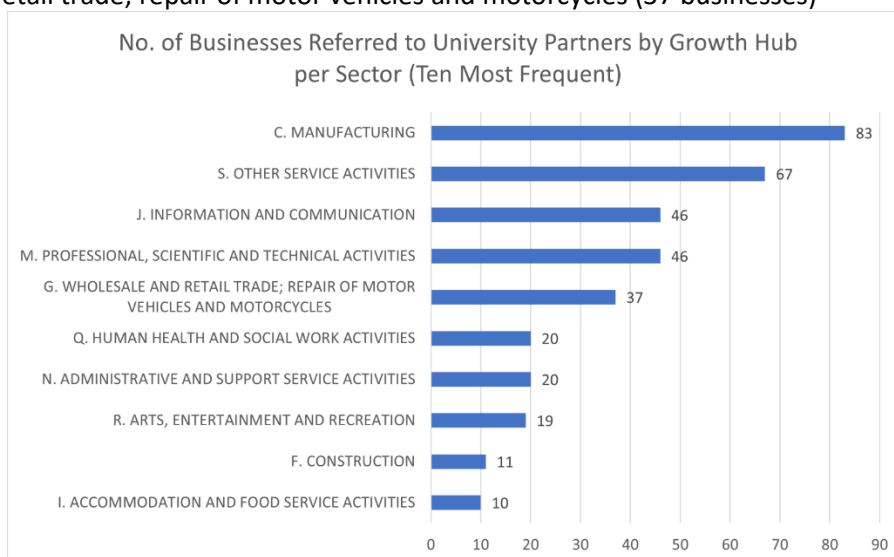


Sectors

Businesses receiving support by universities via Growth Hub referrals operate in 18 different company sectors.

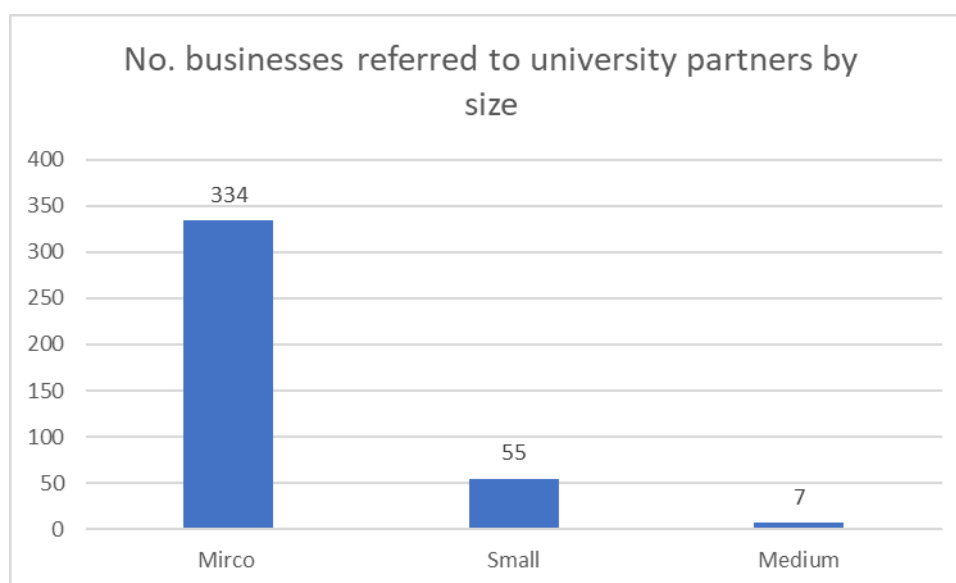
The most common sectors are:

1. Manufacturing (83 businesses)
2. Other service activities (67 businesses)
3. Professional, scientific and technical activities (46 businesses)
4. Information and communication (46 businesses)
5. Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles (37 businesses)



Size of Businesses

Over four fifths (84.3%) of businesses receiving support from a university via the Growth Hub referral route are micro-businesses (less than 10 employees). Only 13.9% are described as small businesses (less than 50 employees) and 1.77% as medium sized (less than 250 employees).



Kinds of Support

The support services offered by universities can be broadly categorised into four distinct but often overlapping areas:

1. Support in growing or running a business;
2. use of facilities and equipment;
3. courses for employees;
4. recruitment of university students.

The support for growing and running a business can be either financial, technical or non-technical. Aston University allows businesses to access matched financial support through the [Innovation Vouchers](#) scheme and grants worth £2500 for ethnic or other minority-led SMEs to enter the supply chains of firms, with the [Diverse Supply Chains](#) programme.

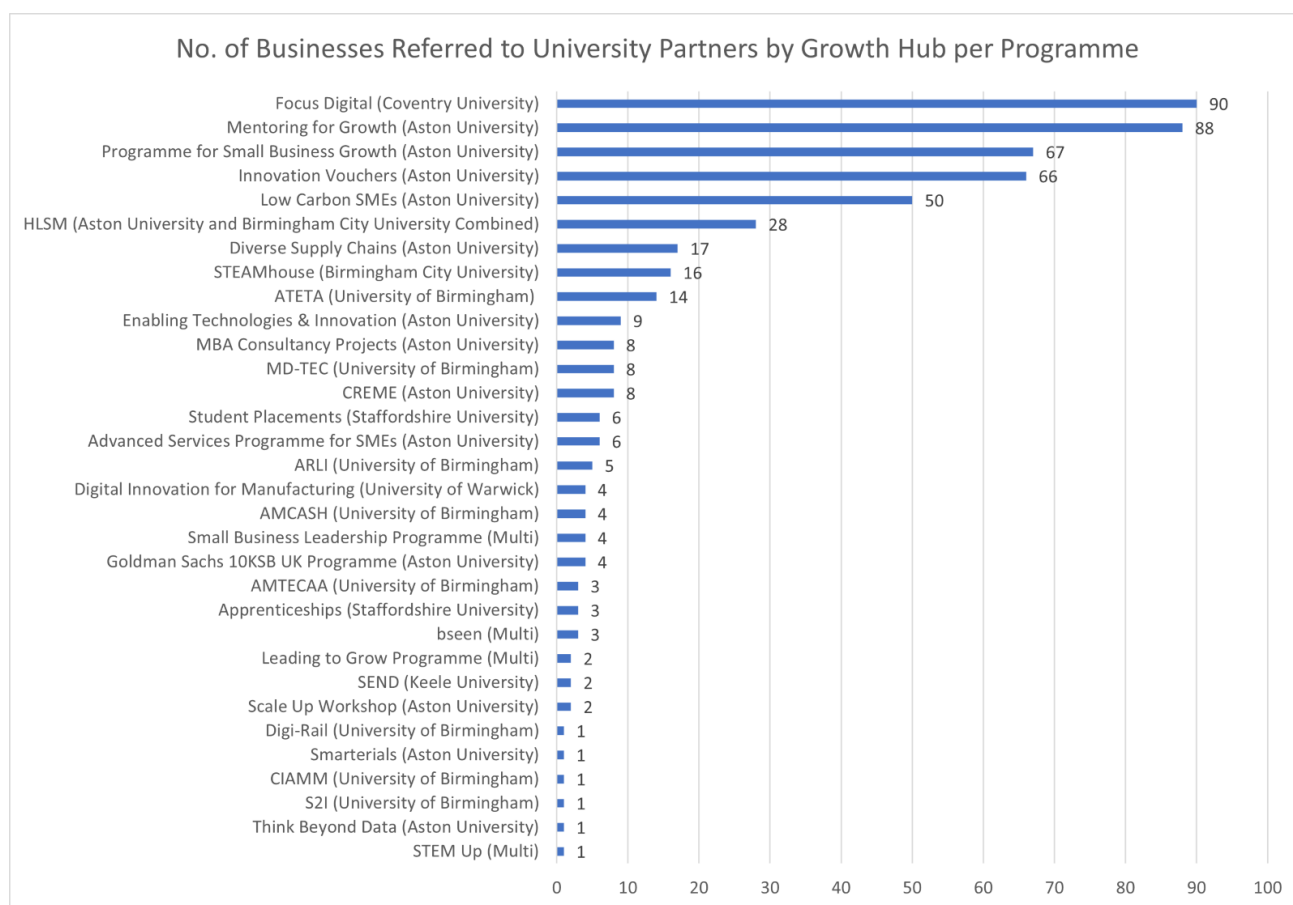
Aston University also offers a variety of routes for businesses to receive non-technical support, including a [Mentoring Programme](#) in partnership with the GBSLEP; [Consultancy Projects with their MBA students](#); and the [Aston Programme for Small Business Growth](#). Coventry University provided non-technical support in conjunction with technical support with the [Focus Digital Programme](#). They offer a package of workshops, one-to-one graphic design and assistance in developing new products or processes.

Thirteen of the 32 university schemes that received referrals from the Growth Hub are offering technical support. This encompasses largely STEM related research and development, short to long-term projects, with a goal of helping businesses to develop innovative and improved products and processes. This type of support often includes access to skills, technical equipment and technicians for prototyping and testing new products, an example of this is Aston University's [Enabling Technologies & Innovation Competences Challenge Project](#).

Many universities offer use of specialist facilities and equipment to local businesses. For example, the University of Birmingham's Medical Devices Testing and Evaluation Centre ([MD-TEC](#)) allows participating SMEs to access their usability suite, when undertaking a medical devices project with the Centre. On the other hand, Birmingham City University's [STEAMhouse](#) initiative offers office and incubator space to businesses.

Universities in the region have been adept at both achieving objectives around increasing employability and graduate employment and retention in the region and meeting specific skills gaps by supporting businesses in recruiting their current and past students. An example of this is the Higher Level Skills Match ([HLSM](#)) programme, run in partnership with Birmingham City, Aston and Newman Universities. It matches businesses with high-calibre graduates, further facilitating knowledge exchange between universities and businesses. The provision of apprenticeships or professional development courses for new or existing staff is another service frequently offered to businesses, e.g. the [Staffordshire University's apprenticeship programme](#).

Some universities have developed specialised business support programmes in response to local needs and national priorities. Aston University's [Low Carbon SMEs](#) programme and the University of Birmingham's Accelerating Thermal Energy Technology Adoption ([ATETA](#)) scheme supported 61 businesses to adopt low zero carbon energy technologies through Growth Hub referrals. The Centre for Research in Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship ([CREME](#)) delivers expertise on business support for ethnic minority entrepreneurs. Eight businesses were referred to CREME by the Growth Hub.



How Can a Space Cluster Help the West Midlands to Diversify?

Professor Raquel Ortega-Argiles, WMREDI

Regional Diversification in the West Midlands

The development of new industries or technologies across geographical space is characterised by path and place dependence: new activities are more likely to emerge in domains whose organisational routines are cognitively close to those that already exist in a given location. **Considering the mix of advanced manufacturing industries, skills, technologies, components, and local institutions, developing a space cluster for the West Midlands seems to be an opportunity for regional diversification in the region.**

Regional diversification refers exclusively to regions' ability to develop new varieties of technologies. More generally, it may also concern developing new varieties of goods, industries and scientific knowledge. In the context of Smart Specialisation, diversification can be understood as the dynamic process of change and the transformation of regional structures, while specialisation refers to domains in which given regions concentrate their expertise in this process of regional industrial renewal. These regional diversification processes should evolve and do not concentrate exclusively on a single domain to avoid industrial lock-in scenarios.

Pursuing diversified specialisation processes

The West Midlands region should pursue diversified specialisation processes, concentrating their efforts in given domains of local specialisation. Focusing in areas of advanced manufacturing, such as the automotive industries or advanced manufacturing, in areas of higher added-value services such as business and professional services or logistics, but at the same time, continuously endeavour to diversity and replace existing specialisations with new (and improved) ones such as space technologies, electric vehicles, railway technologies. These processes normally are dependent on existing regional capabilities, allowing related new and existing varieties to emerge consistently as an essential driving force for new industrial pathways. Related varieties of goods, technologies and industries appear when their development requires similar knowledge, applying similar techniques and/or similar raw materials (for example, auto and aerospace components are related because they are manufactured using similar technologies, skills and materials).

Modern Clusters

Modern clusters are instrumental in creating industrial regeneration and related technological and skill diversification in a region. In the context of Smart Specialisation, modern clusters are defined as the concentration of economic activities in groups of related industries in a specific location connected through multiple linkages and spillovers. In particular, the development of clusters facilitates the process of regional diversification because:

- There are positive effects in productivity and innovation levels associated with critical mass due to higher specialisation and competitive pressures.
- There are positive effects related to the cross-industry nature of value chains and innovation ecosystems due to economies of scope - i.e. benefiting from related industries and at the same time spurring local growth in employment in these industries.
- Positive externalities arise based on the interactions and linkages between local businesses, institutions, the talent base and local markets being stronger in related industries.
- Clusters emerge based on the opportunities for specific and related companies to invest, succeed and grow. They result from a cumulative process of "success breeds success" where one business's success paves the way for others to follow.
- They can integrate research/innovation projects funded through the cluster initiative with market development activities and with customers and private or public users, primarily via "living labs" and global value chain activities.

Developing a space cluster for the West Midlands is not an easy task as successful clusters come in all shapes and sizes. As there is no one-size-fits-all cluster model (i.e. industrial cluster, research-driven cluster, launched through a

government policy or without public intervention, mature or emerging cluster) and a “best practice” does not exist, the West Midlands must find the best cluster shape to build competitive advantages based on its local strengths and assets combined with global networks’ inspirations and trends, but also based on the experience of successful local clusters.

Reaching out to other clusters

Design and developing a cluster space within the West Midlands does not end in its implementation and requires a strategic approach for its evolution and cluster cooperation. The most successful clusters are the ones that are inter-regionally connected with other related clusters (i.e. space clusters in other parts of the world) or complementary clusters (i.e. technological, skills or scientifically related – advanced manufacturing clusters, logistic clusters). Cluster cooperation can appear when solutions and demands with actors from other clusters can further promote commercialisation, value chain opportunities and accelerate innovation uptake. This should be understood to be related only to radical innovation that is new to the world and covers value-chain innovation, where an existing innovation is brought to a new field of application and triggers change.

[View more work from the Local Space Cluster Development Support Programme](#)

The Launch of the West Midlands Data Lab

Stuart Mitchell, WMREDI

[WMREDI and its partners](#) have launched the [West Midlands Data Lab](#). The data lab provides a single interactive portal for a wealth of up to the minute regional data and research. It is a unique tool to inform decision making around key investments and policy formulation for economic, social and environmental benefit in the West Midlands.

The site provides access to live data and Power BI dashboards, intelligence briefings, information on the data lab projects, and access to the latest in-depth research alongside our latest state of the region report and a range of supporting evidence.

Rebecca Riley, Administrative Director, City-REDI / WMREDI:

“The Launch of the Data Lab marks an important milestone in the collaborative approach of WMREDI, developing longer-term partnerships for data analytics and data sharing to answer the challenging questions we face now and in the future.”

Professor Delma Dwight, Director of Black Country Consortium’s Economic Intelligence Unit:

“The West Midlands Lab puts the power of data and research at the fingertips of diverse private and public sector partners from across the region. A better understanding of regional needs and opportunities will enable Data Lab users to target investment for the widest possible economic and social impact.”

So, what does the West Midlands Data Lab feature?



State of the Region

[State of the Region 2021](#) is the fifth annual review of how the region has fared in the last 12 months. The report is written on behalf of the West Midlands Combined Authority, and all its partners by WMREDI. It should be seen as a stocktake of where the region stands, it's a snapshot of how the region is doing and where partners need to work together to improve the region. But this year, as last, it is still produced in extraordinary circumstances and it is a call to action for everyone invested in the West Midlands.

As well as being able to download all the State of the Region report on the website, you can also view reports from previous years and all the supporting evidence that fed into the State of the Region.

Data Lab Projects

This section of the data lab will showcase data dashboards and reports on a variety of topics outlined below. Some of the dashboards are already live, with others being added over the coming months.

Live Now:

West Midlands Cultural Sector Research Project

An interactive cultural infrastructure map, showing arts, film, TV and music, radio, photography, crafts, museums, galleries, library, archives, cultural education and heritage across the West Midlands.

West Midlands Travel Trends

Produced by Transport for West Midlands, the site provides data and analysis on all forms of travel in the West Midlands.

The West Midlands Weekly Economic Impact Monitor

Since the 26th March 2021, the bi-weekly monitor brings together data and intelligence from the [WMREDI partnership](#) into one single source, which can be shared and utilised in planning and responding to the challenge of the virus.

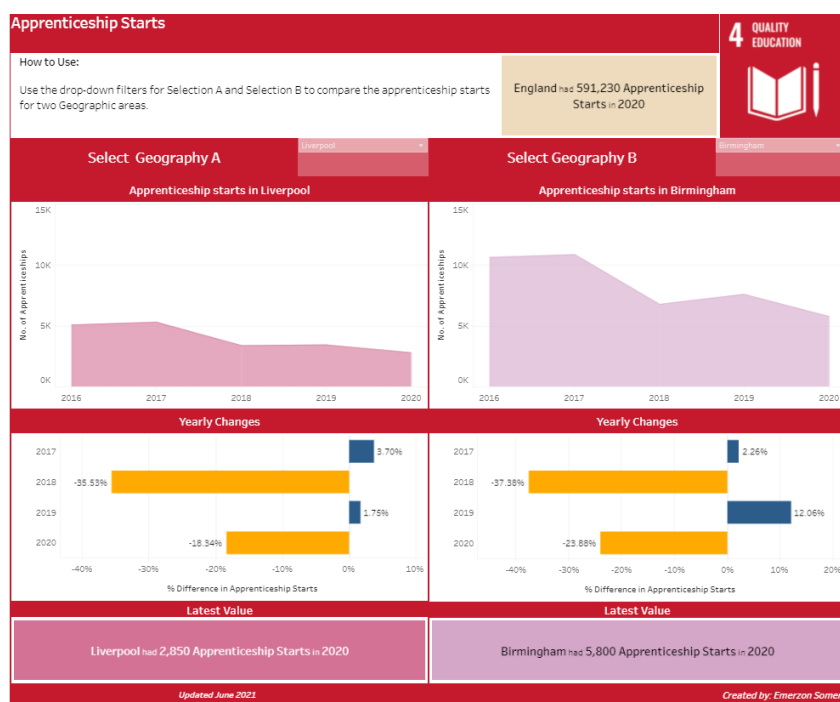
West Midlands Local Skills Report Evidence Base – April 2021

This evidence base aims to understand in detail how the supply of skills in the West Midlands Region matches up to current and future demands. It looks at the skills system at each level, from primary school to further education, apprenticeships, and graduate outcomes.

Coming in September 2021:

Sustainable Development Goals

In 2015, the United Nations set out 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved by 2030. This dashboard allows the user to compare geographies around the UK and see how they are performing in each of the 17 SDGs.



MIT Regional Entrepreneurship Acceleration Program (REAP) Dashboard

A report on various metrics that measure Birmingham/West Midlands region against the national profile on areas of innovation and entrepreneurship.

Civic Index

A dashboard that showcases the impact of Universities on their place in terms of measurable factors such as economic, social and environmental factors.

Coming in October:

Birmingham Economic Review dashboard

A dashboard that users will be able to use to view summarised data of the Birmingham Economic Review (BER) report and compare metrics.

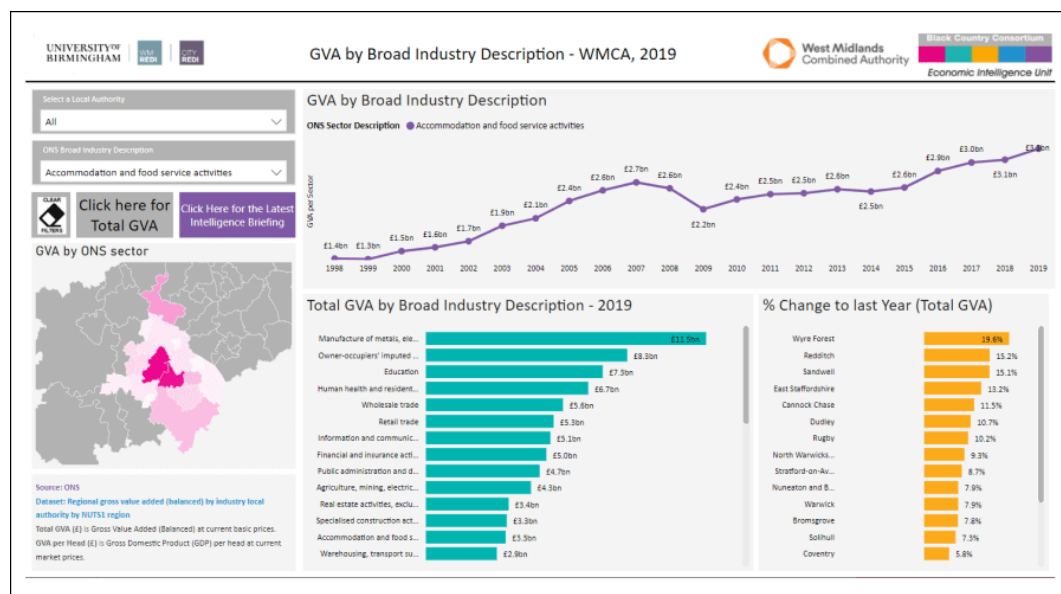
Coming in November:

City Index

A dashboard comparing city regions across the UK and ranks each city against dimensional criteria such as innovation, economic development and cultural impacts.

Economy

In this section, you can find data and analysis about the economy of the West Midlands including GVA & productivity, research & development expenditure, earnings, regional business activity and the region's business base.



A screenshot showing a data dashboard from the Economy section of the Data Lab.

People

This section features data and analysis about the population of the West Midlands including population profile, jobs, education, unemployment, qualifications and health and wellbeing.

Place

This section features data and analysis on house prices, dwelling stock and employment land in the West Midlands.

Contact

If you have any questions about the West Midlands Data Lab, please [get in touch](#).

[Visit the West Midlands Data Lab](#)

NatWest Purchasing Manager Index (PMI) Survey: West Midlands Region Released September 2021¹

Black Country Consortium Economic Intelligence Unit

The following seasonally adjusted indices vary between 0 and 100, with a reading above 50 indicating an overall increase compared to the previous month, and below 50 an overall decrease.

In Summary:

- The West Midlands Business Activity Index decreased from 58.3 in July 2021 to a six-month low of 55.2 in August 2021. While the Business Activity Index is still above the 50-mark, reflecting expansion, this decrease shows that even with the relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions, growth was hindered by companies not being able to appropriate labour to fill job roles and also difficulties in sourcing raw materials.
- The overall UK Business Activity Index decreased from 59.2 in July 2021 to 54.8 in August 2021.
- Out of the twelve UK regions (where the highest is first), the West Midlands region was sixth for the Business Activity Index in August 2021.
- The West Midlands Future Activity Index increased from 74.4 in July 2021 to 77.2 in July 2021, a three-month high and above the historical average. Approximately 63% of West Midlands companies forecasting growth in the next 12 months, with optimism was linked to hopes of an end to COVID-19 with growing vaccine coverage. Companies also reported expectations of new client wins and launching new products and services.

In Detail:

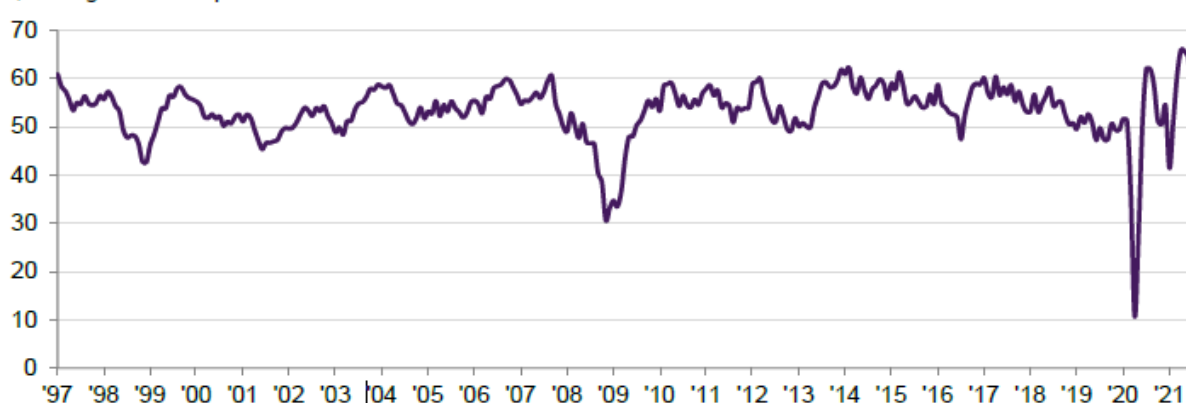
Business Activity Index

The West Midlands Business Activity Index decreased from 58.3 in July 2021 to a six-month low of 55.2 in August 2021. While the Business Activity Index still above the 50-mark, reflecting expansion, this decrease shows that even with the relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions, growth was hindered by companies not being able to appropriate labour to fill job roles and also difficulties in sourcing raw materials.

The following graph show the West Midlands Business Activity Index trends up to August 2021:

West Midlands Business Activity Index

sa, >50 = growth since previous month

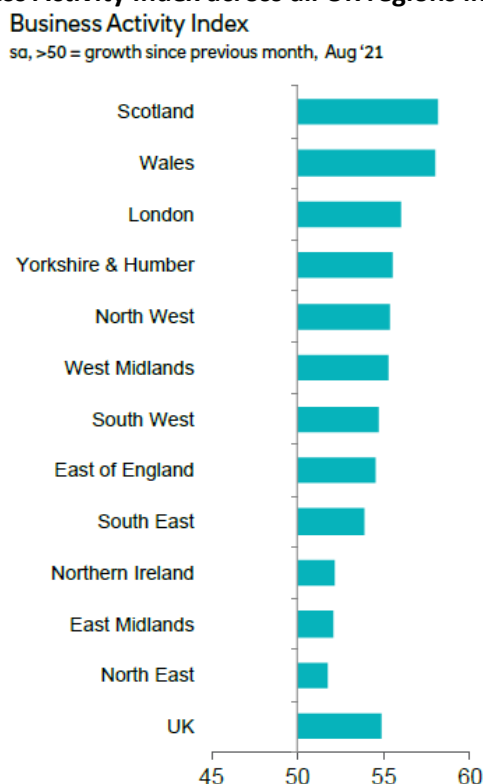


Source: IHS Market/NatWest, September 2021

Out of the twelve UK regions, the West Midlands region was sixth for the Business Activity Index in August 2021, with Scotland the highest at 58.1 down to the North East the lowest at 51.8.

¹ Source: IHS Markit/NatWest West Midlands PMI, September 2021

The following chart shows the Business Activity Index across all UK regions in August 2021:



Source: IHS Market/NatWest, September 2021

Demand

The West Midlands New Business Index increased for the sixth consecutive month. The latest data shows the New Business Index increased from 59.0 in July 2021 to 59.8 in August 2021. Companies linked the growth from improved client confidence, better demand conditions, easing of travel restrictions and increased footfall. The West Midlands had the second strongest growth in new orders across all 12 regions.

Exports²

The West Midlands Export Climate Index decreased from 58.1 in July 2021 to 55.4 in August 2021. Despite falling, the latest figure still shows a robust improvement in export conditions. For the top five destinations for the West Midlands, rates of increase in activity remained strong in Ireland, Germany, France and the USA. However, there was a contraction for China.

The following table shows the top export markets for the West Midlands in August 2021:

Top export markets, West Midlands

Rank	Market	Weight	Output Index, Aug'21
1	USA	21.2%	55.4
2	Germany	11.1%	60.0
3	China	8.7%	47.2
4	Ireland	6.2%	62.6
5	France	6.1%	55.9

Source: IHS Market/NatWest, September 2021

Business Capacity

The West Midlands Employment Index increased for the six-consecutive month. The latest data shows the Employment Index increased from 57.6 in July 2021 to 58.2 in August 2021, with the growth linked to job creation and greater output needs due to demand conditions.

² The West Midlands Export Climate Index is calculated by weighting together national PMI output data according to their importance to the manufacturing exports of the West Midlands. This produces an indicator for the economic health of the region's export markets.

Companies reported backlogs of work during August. The West Midlands Outstanding Business Index increased from 54.7 in July 2021 to 58.1 in August 2021. The rise was linked to finding suitable staff to fill vacancies and the ongoing shortages of raw materials.

Prices

The West Midlands Input Prices Index increased from 77.9 in July 2021 to 78.3 in August 2021. Input prices has increased for fourteen consecutive month and the rate of inflation was the second fastest since mid-2008. Companies suggest the increase was due to difficulties in sourcing raw materials and higher airfreight, shipping and staff costs.

The West Midlands Prices Charged Index increased from 62.0 in July 2021 to 62.2 in August 2021, this increase took the current stretch of inflation to 15 months and was the second quickest rate since July 2008. Companies reported that selling charges were raised due to ongoing increases in their expenses.

Outlook

The West Midlands Future Activity Index increased from 74.4 in July 2021 to 77.2 in July 2021, a three-month high and above the historical average. Approximately 63% of West Midlands companies forecasting growth in the next 12 months, with optimism was linked to hopes of an end to COVID-19 with growing vaccine coverage. Companies also reported expectations of new client wins and launching new products and services.

Out of the twelve UK regions, the West Midlands was seventh for the Future Business Activity Index in August 2021, with the Yorkshire and the Humber the highest at 84.6 and Northern Ireland the lowest at 57.6.

The following chart shows the Future Activity Index across all UK regions in August 2021:



Source: IHS Market/NatWest, September 2021

Ending the furlough scheme

Mike Lewis, WMCA

This briefing note presents some potential implications for the West Midlands as a result of the Coronavirus Job Retention (furlough) scheme ending on 30 September 2021. Analysis from think tanks such as the Resolution Foundation, Institute for Fiscal Studies and the New Economics Foundation is used to provide a framework for considering the impact of the scheme ending. Local furlough data analysis produced by the Office for Data Analytics and BCC Economic Intelligence Unit and other labour market intelligence is then used to supplement this and outline potential issues for the region.

Key Headlines

- The [National Institute for Economic and Social Research](#) recently estimated that there could be a 0.06 percentage point rise in the national unemployment figures by the end of the year. If this same proportionate increase is applied to the unemployment figures in the region the increase would be close to 9,000 extra people being unemployed after September.
- It is estimated that 10% of the region's employees are on low pay and when applied to furlough figures this amounts to 16,000 workers in the region who could struggle if their employment conditions change (i.e. reduced hours) following the ending of the furlough scheme.
- Birmingham is the main outlier in the region for furlough, with 34,400 people accessing support, this is at least three times higher than any other local authority area in the region and is more than both the BCLEP and CWLEP areas.
- Research by the International Monetary Fund suggests that there could be up to a 50% change in people's social mobility (voluntary social distancing) because of a rise in COVID-19 cases. This voluntary social distancing is perhaps linked to a 2% fall in retail footfall seen across the UK in August 2021.
- There are 4,770 furloughed employees in the arts, entertainment and recreation in the region which is 6% of the total number of people employed in the sector – lower than the 15% furloughed workers in the sector nationally.
- Some of the furlough impact on manufacturing can be attributed to a global semiconductor shortage and other issues such as Brexit. In the region, as of 30 June 2021 21,000 (10%) of the region's manufacturing employees are still on furlough.

The impact on people

Commentators are currently assessing the potential impact of the furlough scheme ending. The [National Institute for Economic and Social Research](#) recently estimated that there could be a 0.06 percentage points rise in the national unemployment figures by the end of the year. If this same proportionate increase is applied to the unemployment figures in the region the increase would be close to 9,000 extra people being unemployed after September. Furthermore, there could be additional financial difficulties for the 455,000 and 358,000 Universal Credit (UC) claimants across the West Midlands three LEP and MET areas respectively as the £20 uplift comes to an end.

The furlough data produced by the ONS does not provide a breakdown by income bands, however the Resolution Foundation's [Low Pay Britain report](#) shows that 10% of the region's employees can be classed as being on low pay. If this figure is used as a proxy it can be estimated that 10% (16,000) of those currently on furlough are potentially on low pay, and they could become reliant (at least in the short term) on Universal Credit if job conditions changes, i.e. reduced hours or if employers decide not to retain them. Furthermore, the [Institute for Fiscal Studies](#) recently produced a paper which notes that there are two types of furloughed employees who are going to see big drops in the amount of support that they get from the government if they become unemployed after the furlough scheme ends:

- **High earning spouse and savings:** The first are those who, whatever their previous earnings, have a relatively high earning spouse or significant level of savings, meaning they will qualify for little to no UC.

- **Middle/higher income earners:** The second type are middle or higher earning individuals. Under CJRS they got more support (in cash terms) than furloughed lower earners. But under UC, their (previous) higher levels of earnings do not make them eligible for any extra support.

In considering the national context and the proxies above it is important to note that Birmingham is the main outlier in the region, with 34,400 people on furlough, this is at least three times higher than any other local authority area and is more than both the BCLEP and CWLEP areas.

Scenarios

Local Authority Area	Total Employments Furloughed	Total Eligible Employments	Take Up-Rate
Birmingham	34,400	413,000	8.3%
Bromsgrove	2,800	42,800	6.5%
Cannock Chase	2,800	44,400	6.3%
Coventry	9,200	144,800	6.4%
Dudley	8,500	131,800	6.4%
East Staffordshire	3,300	55,300	6.0%
Lichfield	3,100	45,300	6.8%
North Warwickshire	2,000	29,200	6.8%
Nuneaton and Bedworth	3,600	60,000	6.0%
Redditch	3,100	39,800	7.8%
Rugby	3,000	53,800	5.6%
Sandwell	9,700	132,900	7.3%
Solihull	7,400	91,800	8.1%
Stratford-on-Avon	4,000	58,100	6.9%
Tamworth	2,200	36,100	6.1%
Walsall	8,000	110,600	7.2%
Warwick	4,100	66,000	6.2%
Wolverhampton	6,900	107,000	6.4%
Wyre Forest	2,500	41,100	6.1%
WM 7 Met.	84,000	1,132,000	7.4%
Black Country LEP	33,100	482,300	6.9%
Coventry & Warwickshire LEP	25,900	411,900	6.3%
Greater Birmingham & Solihull SLEP	61,600	809,600	7.6%
WMCA (3 LEP)	120,600	1,703,800	7.1%
West Midlands region	159,400	2,424,300	6.6%
United Kingdom	1,857,400	28,692,200	6.5%

The New Economics Foundation think tank has produced [a briefing note](#) which outlines a number of scenarios that could occur following the ending of the furlough scheme. This note considers some of these scenarios and uses regional data to supplement the analysis.

Scenarios 1: *Cautious public attitudes to social mixing and mobility*

New Economics cites a number of sources which have modelled scenarios where the public continue to persist with social distancing measures after the July lifting of lockdown and ending of the furlough scheme in September. Research by the International Monetary Fund suggests that up to a 50% change in people's social mobility (voluntary social distancing) is down to a rise in COVID-19 cases. Furthermore, the latest Weekly Monitor produced by the Office for Data Analytics shows that, in the week to 21 August 2021, the volume of overall retail footfall in the UK decreased by 2% from the previous week (week to 14 August 2021). This is the first week to see a decrease in footfall across the UK since the week to 19 June 2021. In the latest week, footfall in high streets saw the greatest decrease of 2%, while footfall in retail parks and shopping centres both saw slight decreases of 1%, compared with the previous week.

New Economics notes the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine scenario which suggests that mobility in retail and recreation (i.e., travel to places such as restaurants, shopping centres, museums, and cinemas) and public transport sectors will only reach 95% and 80% of pre-pandemic levels respectively following unlocking on 19 July. [ONS data suggests](#) that, between 14 and 27 June, 15% of the arts, entertainment and recreation workforce, and 11% of the transportation workforce, were still furloughed. Regional analysis by the Economic Intelligence Unit provides a breakdown of furlough numbers by sector. The data shows that 4,770 furloughed employees in the arts, entertainment and recreation which is 6% of the total number of people employed in the sector – lower than the 15% furloughed employees nationally. However, 7% (17,650) of employees in the wholesale and retail trade sector are still furloughed in the region.

Broad Sector	Furloughed 30 June 2021
Manufacturing	21,000
Construction	6,730
Wholesale and retail; repair of motor vehicles	17,650
Transportation and storage	8,410
Accommodation and food services	19,530
Information and communication, Financial and insurance & Real estate	6,260
Professional, scientific and technical	9,250
Administrative and support services	11,860
Education	3,540
Health and social work	4,840
Arts, entertainment and recreation	4,770
Other service activities	5,180
Other	1,550
Total	120,600

Total employments furloughed by broad sector for the WMCA (3 LEP) as of 30th June

Further work is needed to understand the regional picture, however these estimates have potential implications for some sectors, especially those that operate in our towns and centres.

Scenarios 2: *Factors outside the pandemic*

New Economics also considers potential non-pandemic-related economic issues that are also appearing to be driving demand for the furlough scheme. The think tank states that furlough rates in manufacturing and states that these no longer appear to be linked to the level of public health restrictions, with the rate actually increasing slightly in June to around 4.8% of the workforce. The automotive sector provides the strongest example, as it has seen rates rose from around 7% during the January 2021 peak in virus cases, to 21% in late June. It is said that these changes appear to be linked to international trade issues – [notably a global semiconductor shortage](#) and potentially also to Brexit-related impacts. In the region, as of 30 June 2021 21,000 (10%) of the region's manufacturing employees are still on furlough.

Scenarios 3: *Jobs at risk after September*

Modelling by the New Economics Foundation estimates that 830,000 jobs could be at risk nationally following the ending of the furlough scheme. There is said to be significant variations by sector, although this analysis isn't provided.

Observations

- The ending of furlough comes at challenging time for the region, given the challenging position around unemployment, question over why people are not accessing the over 100,000 plus vacancies available.
- It should be noted that not all of the risk around redundancies and job losses can be attributed to the pandemic. For example, there are other structural issues in the manufacturing sector at play as noted.

- Further analysis will be needed to understand the implication as the 30 September deadline approaches and new furlough data becomes available. As such the productivity and skills team will commission the Office for Data Analytics to do a briefing on furlough as part of its work for the Skills Advisory Board.

WMCA Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) Statistics: Released September 2021³

Black Country Consortium Economic Intelligence Unit

Summary

- In total, the WMCA (3 LEP) area had 105,400 employments furloughed on the 31st July 2021. This reflects a 6.2% take-up of eligible employments for the scheme, compared to UK-wide of 5.4%. When compared to 30th June 2021, the number of employments furloughed in the WMCA (3 LEP) area decreased by 16,300 (-13.4%, UK - 17.8%).
- As of 31st July 2021, there was a higher percentage of males furloughed at 7% (60,100), compared to females at 5.4% (45,400). The UK had a take up rate of 5.4% for males and 5.1% for females.
- When proportioning out furloughed workers by gender and age bracket as a proportion of the total number of furloughed workers of the gender, the WMCA (3 LEP) area has a higher proportion of female workers aged under 25 years old on furlough when compared to the UK (11.5% vs 10.8% UK). The WMCA (3 LEP) area had 55.9% of male workers aged 25-49 years old on furlough compared to the UK-wide proportion of 54.9%.
- For the WMCA (3 LEP) area, on the 31st July 2021, the sector with the highest number of employments furloughed was manufacturing at 19,860.
- Latest UK figures show that there were 484,000 employers with 1.6 million staff on furlough on 31st July 2021. This is a decrease of 340,000 jobs from 30th June where there were 1.9 million employments on furlough. Since the start of the scheme a total of 11.6 million jobs have been put on furlough for at least part of the duration of the scheme.
- For all age bands the number of employments on furlough and the take-up rates decreased across February to July 2021. The largest reductions in the number of employments on furlough in June and July were for younger employees in the under 18, 18 to 24 and 25 to 34 age bands.
- The largest reduction is for employers with 250 or more employees where the number of employments on furlough decreased by 114,100 from 367,200 employments at 30th June 2021 to a provisional estimate of 253,100 at 31st July 2021.
- Provisional figures show for the UK that all sectors saw a reduction in levels of furlough between 30th June and 31st July. The arts, entertainment and recreation sector, and accommodation and food services sector had the highest take-up rate of all the sectors, with 15% of employments eligible for furlough on furlough at 31st July 2021.

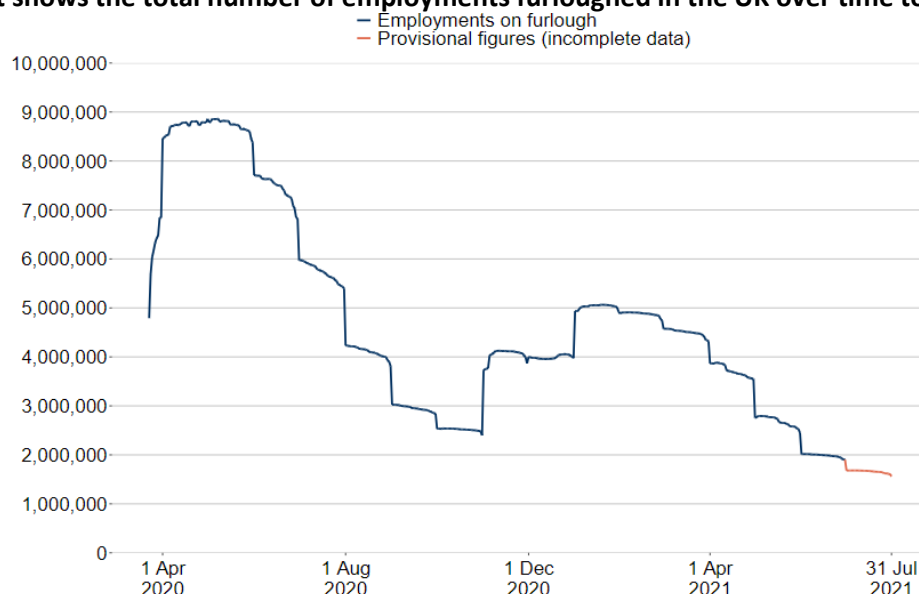
Full Briefing - United Kingdom

Furloughed Employments Over Time

For the UK, the number of employments on furlough peaked at 8.9 million on 8th May 2020. This fell to 2.4 million at 31st October 2020, and rose again to 4.9 million employments on furlough at 31st January 2021. However, the number of employments on furlough has fallen since January 2021 and the latest provisional figures show that as the scheme is coming to an end, the number of employments on furlough was 1.6 million on the 31st July 2021. Since the start of the scheme a total of 11.6 million jobs have been put on furlough for at least part of the duration of the scheme.

³ Source: HMRC, Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme statistics: September 2021. Please note, the figures for July 2021 are based on claims received to the deadline for claims for July of 16 August 2021. In some circumstances, late claims can be made with a reasonable excuse and in agreement with HMRC. Claims for July could also be amended until 30 August 2021. Therefore, the data for July 2021 is incomplete and should be considered provisional.

The following chart shows the total number of employments furloughed in the UK over time to 31st July 2021:

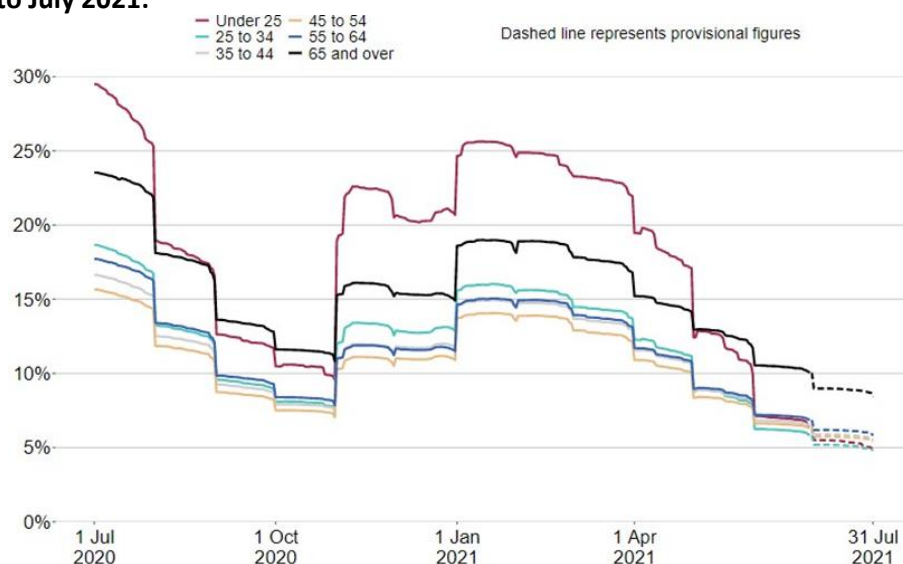


Source: HMRC CJRS data

Employments Furloughed Over Time by Age

- For all age bands the number of employments on furlough and the take-up rates decreased across February to July 2021. The largest reductions in the number of employments on furlough in June and July were for younger employees in the under 18, 18 to 24 and 25 to 34 age bands.
- Take-up rates for the youngest age bands - under 18 and 18 to 24 - decreased dramatically in June 2021 and continues to be comparable with other age bands. This reduction is in line with the easing of restrictions across the UK, particularly in hospitality.
- Take-up rate for the 65 and over age band reduced more slowly than for the youngest age groups through June and July. Thus, at the end of July this age band had the highest take-up of all age groups.
- The 65 and over age band had take-up rates of 8% and 9% for female and male employments at 31st July 2021, in comparison with the 5% and 6% respectively for the total female and male populations.

The following chart shows the proportion of employments furloughed for the UK by the age of the employee between July 2020 to July 2021:



Source: HMRC CJRS and PAYE Real Time Information data

Furlough by Gender

- For the UK, more employments were put on furlough with male job holders than where the employee was female through May, June and July. This reflects decreases in the number of jobs on furlough in sectors such as accommodation and food which typically have higher numbers of female employees.

- For employments where the employee was female, there were 885,400 employments on furlough at 30th June 2021. Provisional figures show that this decreased throughout July to 733,800 at 31st July 2021.
- For employments where the employee was male, there were 973,000 employments on furlough at 30th June 2021. Provisional figures show the number of employments on furlough decreased to 817,400 at 31st July 2021.

Furlough by Employer Size

- For the UK, for all employer sizes, the number of employments on furlough decreased across February, March, April, May, June and July 2021. The largest reduction is for employers with 250 or more employees where the number of employments on furlough decreased by 114,100 from 367,200 employments at 30th June 2021 to a provisional estimate of 253,100 at 31st July 2021.
- Employers with one employment had 139,800 employments on furlough at 30th June 2021. Provisional figures show that this decreased slightly in July to 125,500 employments on furlough at 31st July 2021.
- Employers with 2 to 4 employees had the highest proportion of eligible employments on furlough at 20%. Medium and large sized businesses have the lowest proportion of eligible employment on furlough. Provisional figures for 31st July 2021 show that employers with 250 or more employees had 2% of eligible employees on furlough.
- Between January and the end of July, the number of employments on furlough decreased by a larger proportion amongst large employers. Employers with 250 or more employees have seen an 85% reduction in employments on furlough since the peak in January, in comparison with a 39% reduction amongst employers with one employee. This may reflect the varying impact of the pandemic on businesses of differing sizes.

Furlough by Industry

- Provisional figures show for the UK that all sectors saw a reduction in levels of furlough between 30th June and 31st July. The arts, entertainment and recreation sector, and accommodation and food services sector had the highest take-up rate of all the sectors, with 15% of employments eligible for furlough on furlough at 31st July 2021.
- The accommodation and food services sector saw the largest reduction in the number of employments on furlough between 30th June and 31st July. There were 259,100 employments on furlough in this sector at 31st July 2021, a reduction of 96,700. The construction, transportation and storage, and manufacturing sectors have relatively high take-up rates and have been slower than other sectors in reducing the number of employments on furlough in July.
- Diving further into the broad sectors to an industry level; the ten more detailed industry groups with the highest rates of jobs being put on furlough at 31st July 2021 were passenger air transport (51%), travel agency and tour operator activities (46%), photographic activities (35%), creative, arts and entertainment activities (28%), organisation of conventions and trade shows (25%), manufacture of wearing apparel (26%), manufacture of musical instruments (24%), other reservation service and related activities (24%), printing and service activities related to printing (24%) and retail sale via stalls and markets (23%).

WMCA (3 LEP)

Employments Furloughed by Gender

- In total, the WMCA (3 LEP) area had 105,400 employments furloughed on the 31st July 2021. This reflects a 6.2% take-up of eligible employments for the scheme, compared to UK-wide of 5.4%. When compared to 30th June 2021, the number of employments furloughed in the WMCA (3 LEP) area decreased by 16,300 (-13.4%, UK - 17.8%).
- As of 31st July 2021, there was a higher percentage of males furloughed at 7% (60,100), compared to females at 5.4% (45,400). Whereas the UK had a take up rate of 5.4% for males and 5.1% for females.
- As of the 31st July 2021, the local authority with the highest percentage of employments furloughed was Birmingham at 7.4% (30,400 furloughed of the 413,000 eligible). The local authority with the highest percentage of males furloughed was Birmingham at 8.8% (18,700 furloughed of the 211,500 eligible). The local authority with the highest percentage of female employments furloughed was Solihull at 6.5% (3,000 furloughed of 46,200 eligible).

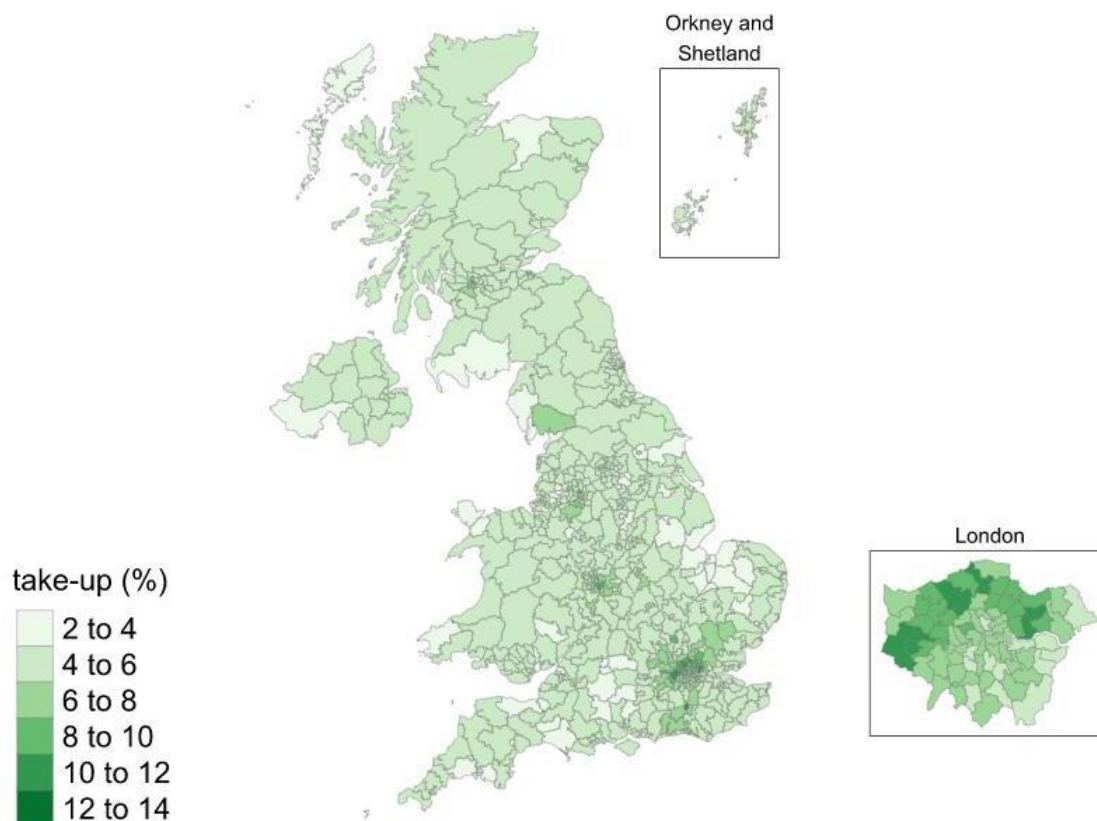
The following table shows employments furloughed, eligible employments and the take-up rate for the WMCA (3 LEP) area by gender as of 31st July 2021⁴:

	Female employments eligible	Male employments eligible	Total employments eligible	Female employments furloughed	Female take- up rate	Male employments furloughed	Male take- up rate	Total employments furloughed	Total take- up rate
Cannock Chase	22,300	22,100	44,400	1,200	5.4%	1,200	5.4%	2,400	5.4%
East Staffordshire	26,900	28,400	55,300	1,400	5.2%	1,500	5.3%	2,800	5.1%
Lichfield	22,800	22,500	45,300	1,300	5.7%	1,500	6.7%	2,800	6.2%
Tamworth	17,800	18,200	36,100	900	5.1%	1,100	6.0%	2,000	5.5%
North Warwickshire	14,700	14,400	29,200	800	5.4%	900	6.3%	1,700	5.8%
Nuneaton and Bedworth	30,000	30,000	60,000	1,400	4.7%	1,800	6.0%	3,200	5.3%
Rugby	26,100	27,700	53,800	1,300	5.0%	1,200	4.3%	2,500	4.6%
Stratford-on-Avon	29,300	28,800	58,100	1,800	6.1%	1,600	5.6%	3,400	5.9%
Warwick	32,300	33,700	66,000	1,800	5.6%	1,800	5.3%	3,600	5.5%
Birmingham	201,500	211,500	413,000	11,700	5.8%	18,700	8.8%	30,400	7.4%
Coventry	71,000	73,900	144,800	3,300	4.6%	5,000	6.8%	8,200	5.7%
Dudley	66,200	65,600	131,800	3,100	4.7%	4,100	6.3%	7,200	5.5%
Sandwell	65,900	67,000	132,900	3,500	5.3%	4,900	7.3%	8,400	6.3%
Solihull	46,200	45,600	91,800	3,000	6.5%	3,300	7.2%	6,300	6.9%
Walsall	54,800	55,800	110,600	3,000	5.5%	4,100	7.3%	7,100	6.4%
Wolverhampton	53,800	53,300	107,000	2,600	4.8%	3,500	6.6%	6,100	5.7%
Bromsgrove	22,100	20,700	42,800	1,200	5.4%	1,300	6.3%	2,500	5.8%
Redditch	20,100	19,700	39,800	1,100	5.5%	1,500	7.6%	2,600	6.5%
Wyre Forest	21,000	20,100	41,100	1,000	4.8%	1,100	5.5%	2,200	5.4%
WM 7 Met.	559,300	572,700	1,132,000	30,200	5.4%	43,600	7.6%	73,800	6.5%
Black Country LEP	240,700	241,700	482,300	12,200	5.1%	16,600	6.9%	28,800	6.0%
Coventry & Warwickshire LEP	203,400	208,500	411,900	10,400	5.1%	12,300	5.9%	22,600	5.5%
Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP	400,700	408,800	809,600	22,800	5.7%	31,200	7.6%	54,000	6.7%
WMCA (3 LEP)	844,800	859,000	1,703,800	45,400	5.4%	60,100	7.0%	105,400	6.2%
West Midlands Region	1,208,800	1,215,600	2,424,300	61,800	5.1%	76,900	6.3%	138,700	5.7%
United Kingdom	14,452,600	14,239,600	28,692,200	733,800	5.1%	817,400	5.7%	1,563,600	5.4%

The parliamentary constituency in the WMCA (3 LEP) area with the highest take-up rate on 31st July 2021 was Birmingham, Hodge Hill at 9.4% (3,700 furloughed of the 39,500 eligible). Birmingham, Hodge Hill was also the parliamentary constituency with the highest male take-up rate with 11.4% (2,500 furloughed of 21,900 eligible). The parliamentary constituency with the highest female take-up rate with 7.1% (1,300 furloughed of the 18,400 eligible) was Birmingham, Hall Green.

⁴ Please note 'unknown' has been excluded from the table, the total UK figure will not sum.

The following map shows employments on furlough as a proportion of eligible employments at 31st July 2021 (provisional), by Parliamentary Constituency:



Employments Furloughed by Age and Gender⁵

- When proportioning out furloughed workers by gender and age bracket as a proportion of the total female furloughed workers, the WMCA (3 LEP) area has a higher proportion of female workers aged under 25 years old on furlough when compared to the UK. The WMCA (3 LEP) area had 11.5% (5,200) of female workers (out of a total of 45,400 eligible for all age bands) on furlough compared to the UK-wide proportion of 10.8%.
- The WMCA (3 LEP) area has a higher proportion of male workers aged 24-49 years old on furlough when compared to the UK. The WMCA (3 LEP) area had 55.9% (33,600) of male workers aged 25- 49 years old (out of a total of 60,100 eligible for all male age bands) on furlough compared to the UK-wide proportion of 54.9%.

The following table shows a breakdown by age and gender the number of workers on furlough at 31st July 2021:

		WM 7 Met.	BCLEP	CWLEP	GBSLEP	WMCA (3 LEP)	West Midlands Region	UK
Female	Under 25 years old	3,630	1,490	1,080	2,630	5,200	6,930	79,600
	Aged 25-49	16,900	6,500	5,560	12,610	24,670	32,430	399,500
	Aged 50-64	8,270	3,610	3,180	6,440	13,230	18,840	214,800
	Aged 65+	1,430	640	590	1,220	2,450	3,610	40,000
	All	30,200	12,200	10,400	22,800	45,400	61,800	733,800
Male	Under 25 years old	4,020	1,540	1,140	2,940	5,620	7,390	79,200
	Aged 25-49	25,280	9,230	6,630	17,740	33,600	41,640	449,100
	Aged 50-64	12,360	5,050	3,800	8,870	17,720	23,290	240,200
	Aged 65+	1,960	860	740	1,590	3,190	4,630	48,800
	All	43,600	16,600	12,300	31,200	60,100	76,900	817,400
Total	Under 25 years old	7,660	3,010	2,230	5,580	10,820	14,310	158,800
	Aged 25-49	42,170	15,750	12,140	30,280	58,170	74,070	848,600
	Aged 50-64	20,630	8,620	7,000	15,260	30,880	42,130	454,900
	Aged 65+	3,390	1,530	1,320	2,820	5,670	8,230	88,800
	All	73,800	28,800	22,600	54,000	105,400	138,700	1,563,600

⁵ UK analysis excludes unknown or missing, figure may not sum.

Employments Furloughed by Broad Sector – WMCA (3 LEP) Overall

- For the WMCA (3 LEP) area, on the 31st July 2021, the sector with the highest number of employments furloughed was manufacturing at 19,860. This was followed by accommodation and food services at 15,410 and then by wholesale and retail; repair of motor vehicles at 15,020 employments furloughed.
- Alongside drops in accommodation and food services (-4,360) and wholesale and retail; repair of motor vehicles (-2,850), there was also notable drops in administrative and support services (-1,430) and professional, scientific and technical (-1,410) since 30th June 2021.

The following table shows the total employments furloughed by broad sector for the WMCA (3 LEP) as of 30th June 2021 and 31st July 2021

Broad Sector	30th June 2021	31st July 2021	No. Change
Manufacturing	21,150	19,860	-1,290
Construction	6,800	6,030	-770
Wholesale and retail; repair of motor vehicles	17,870	15,020	-2,850
Transportation and storage	8,450	8,210	-240
Accommodation and food services	19,770	15,410	-4,360
Information and communication, Financial and insurance & Real estate	6,280	5,530	-750
Professional, scientific and technical	9,300	7,890	-1,410
Administrative and support services	11,910	10,480	-1,430
Health and social work	4,860	4,600	-260
Arts, entertainment and recreation	4,790	3,640	-1,150
Other service activities	5,200	4,430	-770
Other ⁶	5,180	4,510	-670
Total	121,700	105,400	-16,300

⁶ The 'Other' category contains the following sectors: Agriculture, forestry and fishing; Mining and quarrying; Energy production and supply; Water supply, sewerage and waste; Public administration and defence; social security; Households; and Unknown and other.

WMCA: Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) – Released September 2021⁷

Black Country Consortium Economic Intelligence Unit

Introduction

There has been a total of 523,100 claims made from 151,000 individual in the WMCA (3 LEP) across all SEISS grants; the total claims reached a value of nearly £1.35bn.

The following main figures are based on claims submitted for the fifth SEISS to 15th August 2021 only. There are two levels to the fifth SEISS grant. Individuals who have seen a decline in turnover of 30% or more can claim a higher grant of up to 80% of 3 months' average trading profits. Otherwise, individuals can claim a grant worth 30% of 3 months' average trading profits.

Summary

- Across the WMCA (3 LEP) area, 170,100 people were eligible for the fifth grant of SEISS. There were 43,100 claims made to 15th August 2021 (approximately split by 30,600 claims made for the higher grant and 12,900 claims for the lower grant) with a total value of £91.8m (split approximately by £78m for the higher grant and £13.6m for the lower grant) with an average overall claim value of £2,200. The overall take-up rate for was 25%, above the UK average of 24%.
- At a West Midlands regional level, there were approximately 258,000 of the population eligible for the fifth grant of the SEISS, which is a take up rate of 23% based on the total number of claims of 60,000. This can be split further by gender and there was a total potentially eligible male population of 184,000 for the fifth grant of the SEISS, which equates to a take-up rate of 25%, which is based on the total number of claims of 45,000. There were 74,000 eligible female population for the West Midlands region with a take-up rate of 20% based on the total number of claims of 15,000.
- The sectors with the highest take-up rates in the West Midlands region were transport and storage at 34% (24,100 eligible, 8,200 claims) and other service activities at 29% (18,100 eligible, 5,300 claims).

In Depth

WMCA (3 LEP)

Across the WMCA (3 LEP) area, 170,100 people were eligible for the fifth grant of SEISS. There were 43,100 claims made to 15th August 2021 (approximately split by 30,600 claims made for the higher grant and 12,900 claims for the lower grant) with a total value of £91.8m (split approximately by £78m for the higher grant and £13.6m for the lower grant) with an average overall claim value of £2,200. The overall take-up rate for was 25%, above the UK average of 24%.

For the fifth grant of SEISS up to 15th August 2021, the WMCA (3 LEP) area, there were 124,400 of the male population eligible. There were 33,700 claims with a total value of £74m with an average claim at £2,400. The male take-up rate was 27% (UK take-up rate of 25%). For the female population in the WMCA (3 LEP) area there were 45,700 eligible population. There were 9,500 claims, the total value of £17.6m with an average claim at £1,900. The female take-up rate was 21% (UK take-up rate of 20%).

Across local authority areas, the overall take-up rate varies from 17% in Stratford-on-Avon to 29% in both Birmingham and Sandwell.

⁷ Source: HM Revenue & Customs, Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) Statistics: September 2021

The following table shows the overall breakdown of the fifth grant for SEISS by local authority for eligible population, claims, values and take-up rate for the SEISS up to 15th August 2021:

	Total potentially eligible population	Total no. of all claims made to 15/08/21	Total value of all claims made to 15/08/21	Average value of all claims made to 15/08/21	Total number of claims made for higher grant	Total value of claims made for higher grant	Total number of claims made for lower grant	Total value of claims made for lower grant	Total Take-Up Rate
Cannock Chase	5,100	1,300	£3,000,000	£2,200	900	£2,400,000	500	£600,000	27%
East Staffordshire	5,200	1,100	£2,300,000	£2,100	800	£2,000,000	300	£300,000	21%
Lichfield	4,800	1,100	£2,900,000	£2,500	800	£2,400,000	300	£400,000	23%
Tamworth	3,000	800	£1,800,000	£2,200	600	£1,500,000	200	£200,000	27%
North Warwickshire	3,100	700	£1,700,000	£2,400	500	£1,400,000	200	£300,000	23%
Nuneaton and Bedworth	4,900	1,200	£2,600,000	£2,200	800	£2,200,000	300	£400,000	24%
Rugby	4,400	800	£2,000,000	£2,400	600	£1,700,000	200	£200,000	19%
Stratford-on-Avon	7,600	1,300	£3,300,000	£2,600	1,000	£2,900,000	300	£300,000	17%
Warwick	5,500	1,000	£2,500,000	£2,400	800	£2,200,000	300	£300,000	19%
Birmingham	44,400	12,700	£24,500,000	£1,900	9,000	£20,900,000	3,700	£3,600,000	29%
Coventry	12,300	3,400	£7,000,000	£2,100	2,400	£6,100,000	1,000	£1,000,000	28%
Dudley	14,300	3,500	£7,400,000	£2,100	2,400	£6,200,000	1,200	£1,300,000	25%
Sandwell	12,900	3,700	£7,400,000	£2,000	2,500	£6,100,000	1,200	£1,300,000	29%
Solihull	7,800	1,800	£4,700,000	£2,600	1,400	£4,100,000	500	£600,000	24%
Walsall	11,700	3,200	£6,800,000	£2,100	2,200	£5,700,000	1,100	£1,100,000	27%
Wolverhampton	9,700	2,500	£5,000,000	£2,000	1,700	£4,200,000	800	£800,000	25%
Bromsgrove	4,600	900	£2,300,000	£2,500	700	£2,000,000	200	£300,000	20%
Redditch	3,800	1,000	£2,200,000	£2,300	700	£1,900,000	300	£300,000	26%
Wyre Forest	5,000	1,100	£2,400,000	£2,100	800	£2,100,000	300	£300,000	22%
WM 7 Met.	113,000	30,900	£62,800,000	£2,000	21,500	£53,200,000	9,400	£9,700,000	27%
Black Country LEP	48,600	12,900	£26,600,000	£2,100	8,800	£22,200,000	4,300	£4,500,000	27%
Coventry & Warwickshire LEP	37,800	8,400	£19,100,000	£2,400	6,100	£16,500,000	2,300	£2,500,000	22%
Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP	83,700	21,800	£46,100,000	£2,300	15,700	£39,300,000	6,300	£6,600,000	26%
WMCA (3 LEP)	170,100	43,100	£91,800,000	£2,200	30,600	£78,000,000	12,900	£13,600,000	25%
West Midlands Region	258,000	60,000	£129,000,000	£2,200	43,000	£110,000,000	17,000	£19,000,000	23%
United Kingdom	3,342,000	792,000	£1,817,000,000	£2,300	570,000	£1,572,000,000	221,000	£245,000,000	24%

Across the WMCA (3 LEP) parliamentary constituencies, the overall take up rate for the fifth grant of SEISS varies from 16% in Kenilworth and Southam to 33% in Birmingham, Hodge Hill. The male take-up rate varies from 15% in Kenilworth and Southam to 35% in Birmingham, Hodge Hill. The female take-up rate varies from 16% in Kenilworth and Southam to 27% in Warley.

The following table shows an overall breakdown of the fifth grant for SEISS by parliamentary constituencies for eligible population, claims, values and take-up rate up to 15th August 2021:

	Total potential ly eligible population	Total no. of all claims made to 15/08/21	Total value of all claims made to 15/08/21	Average value of all claims made to 15/08/21	Total number of claims made for higher grant	Total value of claims made for higher grant	Total number of claims made for lower grant	Total value of claims made for lower grant	Total Take-Up Rate
Aldridge-Brownhills	3,500	800	£2,000,000	£2,400	600	£1,600,000	300	£300,000	24%
Birmingham, Edgbaston	3,300	900	£1,900,000	£2,100	600	£1,600,000	300	£300,000	27%
Birmingham, Erdington	4,000	1,300	£2,600,000	£2,100	900	£2,200,000	400	£400,000	32%

Birmingham, Hall Green	5,500	1,500	£2,700,000	£1,800	1,100	£2,300,000	400	£300,000	28%
Birmingham, Hodge Hill	5,900	2,000	£3,100,000	£1,600	1,400	£2,700,000	500	£400,000	33%
Birmingham, Ladywood	4,700	1,400	£2,400,000	£1,700	1,000	£2,100,000	400	£300,000	30%
Birmingham, Northfield	3,700	1,100	£2,400,000	£2,300	700	£2,000,000	300	£400,000	29%
Birmingham, Perry Barr	4,700	1,300	£2,300,000	£1,800	900	£1,900,000	400	£400,000	27%
Birmingham, Selly Oak	3,900	1,000	£2,100,000	£2,200	700	£1,800,000	300	£300,000	25%
Birmingham, Yardley	5,000	1,600	£3,100,000	£2,000	1,100	£2,600,000	500	£500,000	31%
Bromsgrove	4,600	900	£2,300,000	£2,500	700	£2,000,000	200	£300,000	20%
Burton	4,600	1,000	£2,000,000	£2,000	700	£1,800,000	300	£300,000	22%
Cannock Chase	5,100	1,300	£3,000,000	£2,200	900	£2,400,000	500	£600,000	27%
Coventry North East	4,700	1,400	£2,900,000	£2,000	1,000	£2,400,000	400	£400,000	30%
Coventry North West	4,200	1,100	£2,300,000	£2,100	800	£2,000,000	300	£300,000	25%
Coventry South	3,400	900	£1,900,000	£2,100	700	£1,700,000	300	£300,000	27%
Dudley North	3,800	1,000	£2,100,000	£2,000	700	£1,700,000	400	£400,000	28%
Dudley South	3,400	800	£1,600,000	£2,100	500	£1,300,000	300	£300,000	23%
Halesowen and Rowley Regis	3,800	1,000	£2,200,000	£2,200	700	£1,800,000	300	£300,000	26%
Kenilworth and Southam	4,300	700	£1,700,000	£2,600	500	£1,500,000	200	£200,000	16%
Lichfield	4,500	1,000	£2,500,000	£2,500	700	£2,200,000	300	£400,000	23%
Meriden	4,100	1,000	£2,500,000	£2,500	700	£2,200,000	300	£300,000	24%
North Warwickshire	4,100	1,000	£2,300,000	£2,300	700	£1,900,000	300	£400,000	24%
Nuneaton	3,700	900	£1,900,000	£2,200	600	£1,600,000	300	£300,000	24%
Redditch	4,300	1,100	£2,400,000	£2,300	800	£2,100,000	300	£300,000	25%
Rugby	4,000	800	£1,900,000	£2,400	600	£1,700,000	200	£200,000	20%
Solihull	3,700	900	£2,300,000	£2,600	700	£2,000,000	200	£300,000	23%
Stourbridge	4,300	1,000	£2,100,000	£2,100	700	£1,800,000	300	£300,000	23%
Stratford-on-Avon	5,600	1,000	£2,500,000	£2,600	800	£2,200,000	200	£300,000	17%
Sutton Coldfield	3,700	800	£1,800,000	£2,400	600	£1,600,000	200	£200,000	20%
Tamworth	3,900	1,000	£2,300,000	£2,300	700	£2,000,000	300	£300,000	25%
Walsall North	4,000	1,200	£2,700,000	£2,100	800	£2,200,000	400	£500,000	31%
Walsall South	4,100	1,100	£2,200,000	£1,900	800	£1,900,000	300	£300,000	27%
Warley	3,900	1,200	£2,300,000	£1,900	800	£1,900,000	400	£400,000	30%
Warwick and Leamington	3,800	800	£1,800,000	£2,300	600	£1,600,000	200	£200,000	20%
West Bromwich East	3,500	1,000	£2,000,000	£2,000	600	£1,600,000	400	£400,000	28%
West Bromwich West	3,700	1,100	£2,100,000	£2,000	700	£1,700,000	400	£400,000	29%
Wolverhampton North East	3,200	800	£1,800,000	£2,100	600	£1,500,000	300	£300,000	26%
Wolverhampton South East	3,500	1,000	£1,900,000	£2,000	600	£1,600,000	300	£300,000	28%
Wolverhampton South West	3,500	800	£1,600,000	£2,000	600	£1,400,000	200	£200,000	23%
Wyre Forest	5,000	1,100	£2,400,000	£2,100	800	£2,100,000	300	£300,000	22%
WMCA (3 LEP)	170,100	43,100	£91,800,000	£2,200	30,600	£78,000,000	12,900	£13,600,000	25%
United Kingdom	3,342,000	792,000	£1,817,000,000	£2,300	570,000	£1,572,000,000	221,000	£245,000,000	24%

Regional Analysis

West Midlands Region: Claims by Age and Gender

At a West Midlands regional level, there were approximately 258,000 of the population eligible for the fifth grant of the SEISS, which is a take up rate of 23% based on the total number of claims of 60,000. This can be split further by gender and there was a total potentially eligible male population of 184,000 for the fifth grant of the SEISS, which equates to a take-up rate of 25%, which is based on the total number of claims of 45,000. There were 74,000 eligible female population for the West Midlands region with a take-up rate of 20% based on the total number of claims of 15,000.

Overall, for the West Midlands region the highest take-up rate was for those aged 25-34 years old at 28% (49,500 eligible, 13,000 claims). The highest take-up rate in the West Midlands region for females were those aged 25- 34 years old at 24% (12,200 eligible and 2,900 claims). For males in the West Midlands region, the highest take-up rate was those aged 25-34 years old at 30% (33,700 eligible, 10,100 claims).

The following table shows a breakdown by age and gender across the West Midlands Region for the fifth grant of SEISS, up to 15th August 2021:

Gender	Age bands	Total potentially eligible population	Total no. of claims made to 15/08/21	Total value of claims made to 15/08/21	Average value of claims made to 15/08/21	Proportion of total number of claims made for higher grant	Proportion of total value of claims made for higher grant	Take-Up Rate
Male	16-24	6,900	1,800	£2,900,000	£1,600	57%	77%	26%
	25-34	33,700	10,100	£22,700,000	£2,200	64%	81%	30%
	35-44	41,900	12,200	£27,200,000	£2,200	67%	83%	29%
	45-54	46,400	11,100	£25,000,000	£2,200	68%	84%	24%
	55-64	40,200	7,700	£18,000,000	£2,300	72%	86%	19%
	65+	13,200	1,800	£5,200,000	£2,900	78%	90%	14%
	Missing	1,700	400	£700,000	£1,800	65%	83%	23%
	All	184,000	45,000	£102,000,000	£2,200	67%	84%	25%
Female	16-24	1,900	400	£600,000	£1,500	82%	93%	19%
	25-34	12,200	2,900	£5,200,000	£1,800	83%	93%	24%
	35-44	17,300	3,800	£6,700,000	£1,700	81%	92%	22%
	45-54	19,800	4,100	£7,700,000	£1,900	81%	92%	21%
	55-64	16,600	2,900	£5,700,000	£2,000	82%	92%	17%
	65+	5,400	600	£1,400,000	£2,400	81%	92%	11%
	Missing	600	100	£300,000	£2,200	85%	94%	20%
	All	74,000	15,000	£27,000,000	£1,900	82%	92%	20%
All	16-24	8,800	2,200	£3,400,000	£1,600	61%	79%	25%
	25-34	45,900	13,000	£27,800,000	£2,100	68%	84%	28%
	35-44	59,200	16,100	£33,900,000	£2,100	70%	85%	27%
	45-54	66,200	15,200	£32,700,000	£2,100	72%	86%	23%
	55-64	56,900	10,600	£23,800,000	£2,200	75%	88%	19%
	65+	18,600	2,400	£6,600,000	£2,700	79%	91%	13%
	Missing	2,400	500	£1,000,000	£1,900	70%	86%	22%
	All	258,000	60,000	£129,000,000	£2,200	71%	85%	23%

West Midlands Region: Claims by Broad Sector

The sectors with the highest take-up rates were transport and storage at 34% (24,100 eligible, 8,200 claims) and other service activities at 29% (18,100 eligible, 5,300 claims).

The following table shows a breakdown by broad industry for the West Midlands Region for the fifth grant of SEISS, up to 15th August 2021:

Sector description	Total potentially eligible population	Total no. of claims made to 15/08/21	Total value of claims made to 15/08/21	Average value of claims made to 15/08/21	Proportion of total number of claims made for higher grant	Proportion of total value of claims made for higher grant	Take-Up Rate
Accommodation and food service activities	6,100	1,100	£2,700,000	£2,400	83%	94%	19%
Administrative and support service activities	18,600	3,300	£5,300,000	£1,600	73%	88%	18%
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	8,500	300	£500,000	£1,900	60%	78%	3%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	5,200	1,300	£3,200,000	£2,400	87%	95%	26%
Construction	78,800	20,700	£51,200,000	£2,500	59%	79%	26%
Education	8,900	2,300	£4,900,000	£2,100	85%	94%	26%
Financial and insurance activities	1,500	200	£700,000	£2,800	64%	82%	16%
Human health and social work activities	11,500	1,700	£3,500,000	£2,100	72%	87%	15%
Information and communication	2,300	500	£1,200,000	£2,600	75%	90%	20%
Manufacturing	6,700	1,500	£3,400,000	£2,300	69%	84%	22%
Other service activities	18,100	5,300	£10,400,000	£2,000	88%	96%	29%
Professional, scientific and technical activities	11,600	2,300	£6,400,000	£2,800	78%	90%	20%
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	500	<100	£200,000	£2,100	70%	88%	18%
Real estate activities	1,100	100	£300,000	£2,200	72%	86%	12%
Transportation and storage	24,100	8,200	£13,200,000	£1,600	75%	89%	34%
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	16,900	2,700	£5,400,000	£2,000	69%	85%	16%
Unknown and other	37,300	8,400	£16,600,000	£2,000	74%	88%	23%
All	258,000	60,000	£129,000,000	£2,200	71%	85%	23%

WMCA Claimant Count and Labour Market Statistics: Released September 2021

WMCA

UK Labour Market Summary⁸

- The number of UK payroll employees showed another monthly increase, up 241,000 to 29.1 million in August 2021, returning to pre-coronavirus pandemic (February 2020) levels. All regions except London, Scotland and South East are now above pre-pandemic levels.
- The number of job vacancies in June to August 2021 for the UK was 1,034,000, which is the first-time vacancies have risen over 1 million since records began, and is now 249,000 above its pre-pandemic January to March 2020 level. Vacancies grew on the quarter in June to August 2021 by 269,300 (35.2%).
- Growth in average total pay (including bonuses) was 8.3% and regular pay (excluding bonuses) was 6.8% among employees for the three months May to July 2021 in the UK.
- In the latest period (May to July 2021) there was a quarterly increase in the UK employment rate of 0.5 percentage points, to 75.2%, and a decrease in the UK unemployment rate of 0.3 percentage points, to 4.6%. The UK economic inactivity rate is down 0.3 percentage points on the previous quarter, to 21.1%.
- In May to July 2021, reports of redundancies in the three months prior to interview⁹ decreased by 0.6 per thousand employees on the quarter to 3.4 per thousand employees, similar to pre- coronavirus pandemic levels.
- The total number of workforce jobs in the UK in June 2021 was an estimated 34.8 million, down by 856,000 from December 2019; both employee jobs and self-employment jobs showed upward movement to increase the overall workforce jobs figure by 293,000 on the quarter, the highest quarterly increase since March 2014.

Regional Labour Market Summary¹⁰

- For the three months ending in July 2021, the West Midlands Region employment rate (aged 16 – 64 years) was 74.2%. Since the three months ending April 2021, the employment rate saw an increase of 1 percentage point (pp); while there is an increase of 0.1pp when compared to the same period in the previous year. The UK employment rate increased by 0.5pp when compared to the previous quarter, but a decrease of 0.4pp when compared to the previous year. The overall UK employment rate was 75.2%.
- For the three months ending in July 2021, the West Midlands Region unemployment rate (aged 16 years and over) was 5.1%, which has decreased by 0.8pp since the previous quarter; but an increase of 0.4pp from the previous year. The UK unemployment rate was 4.6%, a decrease of 0.3pp from the previous quarter, but a 0.3pp increase when compared to the previous year.
- For the three months ending in July 2021, the West Midlands Region economic inactivity rate (aged 16 – 64 years) was 21.7% - a decrease of 0.4pp from previous quarter and also a decrease of 0.5pp when compared to the previous year. The UK economic inactivity rate was 21.1%, a decrease of 0.3pp from the previous quarter but a 0.2pp increase from the previous year.

WMCA Annual Population Survey Summary

- In year ending March 2021, the employment rate in the WMCA (3 LEP) area was 72.9%, compared to 74.7% for the UK overall. This was a 0.4pp increase in the employment rate from 72.4% for the WMCA (3 LEP) area when compared to year ending March 2020. The UK employment rate decreased by 1.2pp over the same time period.
- The unemployment rate for the WMCA (3 LEP) was 6.3% in year ending March 2021 compared to 4.9% for the UK overall. For the WMCA (3 LEP), this was a 0.6pp increase compared to an increase of 1pp for the UK since year ending March 2020.
- For economic inactivity rate, the WMCA's (3 LEP) rate was 22.2% compared to 21.5% in the UK overall for year ending March 2021. For the WMCA (3 LEP) area, this has decreased by 0.9pp compared to a 0.5pp increase for the UK when compared to year ending March 2020.
- The economic activity rate for the WMCA (3 LEP) area was 77.8% compared to 78.5% for the UK in year ending March 2021. For the WMCA (3 LEP) area, there has been a 0.9pp increase in the economic activity rate compared to a 0.5pp decrease for the UK since year ending March 2020.

⁸ Source: ONS, Labour Market Overview; UK: September 2021

⁹ The redundancy estimates measure the number of people who were made redundant or who took voluntary redundancy in the three months before the Labour Force Survey interviews; it does not take into consideration planned redundancies.

¹⁰ Source: ONS, Labour Market in the Regions of the UK: April 2021

WMCA (3 LEP) Claimant Summary

- There were 186,380 claimants in the WMCA (3 LEP) area in August 2021. Since July 2021, there has been a decrease of 1.3% (-2,400) claimants in the WMCA (3 LEP) area, less than the UK decrease of 2.1%. When compared to August 2020, the number of claimants has decreased by 12% (-25,300) in the WMCA (3 LEP) area, with the UK decreasing by 18.7% over the same period. When compared to March 2020, the number of claimants has increased by 58.5% (+68,790) in the WMCA (3 LEP) area, with the UK increasing by 72.3% over the same period.
- There were 35,080 youth claimants in the WMCA (3 LEP) area in August 2021. Since July 2021, there was a decrease of 2.2% (-785) claimants in the WMCA (3 LEP) area, below the UK decrease of 3.3%. When compared to August 2020, the number of youth claimants has decreased by 18.4% (-7,935) in the WMCA (3 LEP) area, with the UK decreasing by 26.6% over the same period. When compared to March 2020, the number of youth claimants has increased by 53.6% (+12,245) in the WMCA (3 LEP) area, with the UK increasing by 60.7% over the same period.

In Depth:

Regional Labour Market¹¹

Please note data is only available at a regional level – please see quarterly Annual Population Survey section for lower-level analysis.

- For the three months ending in July 2021, the West Midlands Region employment rate (aged 16 – 64 years) was 74.2%. Since the three months ending April 2021, the employment rate saw an increase of 1 percentage point (pp); while there is an increase of 0.1pp when compared to the same period in the previous year. The UK employment rate increased by 0.5pp when compared to the previous quarter, but a decrease of 0.4pp when compared to the previous year. The overall UK employment rate was 75.2% with the highest employment rate within the UK for the three months ending July 2021 in the East (78.7%) and the lowest in Northern Ireland (71.2%).
- For the three months ending in July 2021, the West Midlands Region unemployment rate (aged 16 years and over) was 5.1%, which has decreased by 0.8pp since the previous quarter; but an increase of 0.4pp from the previous year. The UK unemployment rate was 4.6%, a decrease of 0.3pp from the previous quarter, but a 0.3pp increase when compared to the previous year. The highest unemployment rate in the UK for the three months ending July 2021 was in London with 6%, with the lowest unemployment rate in the South West at 3.3%.
- For the three months ending in July 2021, the West Midlands Region economic inactivity rate (aged 16 – 64 years) was 21.7% - a decrease of 0.4pp from previous quarter and also a decrease of 0.5pp when compared to the previous year. The UK economic inactivity rate was 21.1%, a decrease of 0.3pp from the previous quarter but a 0.2pp increase from the previous year. The highest economic inactivity rate in the UK for the three months ending July 2021 was in Northern Ireland (25.7%), with the lowest in the East (18.3%).

The table below provides a summary of the latest headline estimates for Regions of the UK, seasonally adjusted, May to July 2021:

	Employment rate – May to Jul 2021 (aged 16- 64 years)	Change on Feb to Apr 2021	Unemployment rate- May to Jul 2021 (16 years +)	Change on Feb to Apr 2021	Inactivity rate – May to Jul 2021 (aged 16- 64 years)	Change on Feb to Apr 2021
UK	75.2%	0.5pp	4.6%	-0.3pp	21.1%	-0.3pp
Great Britain	75.3%	0.5pp	4.6%	-0.3pp	21.0%	-0.3pp
England	75.5%	0.5pp	4.6%	-0.3pp	20.8%	-0.2pp
North East	72.2%	0.5pp	5.3%	-0.9pp	23.9%	0.5pp
North West	73.1%	0.4pp	4.7%	-0.2pp	23.2%	-0.3pp
Yorkshire and The Humber	73.3%	0.5pp	4.7%	-0.3pp	23.0%	-0.4pp
East Midlands	75.0%	-0.1pp	4.4%	-0.5pp	21.4%	0.5pp
West Midlands	74.2%	1.0pp	5.1%	-0.8pp	21.7%	-0.4pp

¹¹ Source: ONS, Labour Market in the Regions of the UK: September 2021

East	78.7%	1.2pp	3.8%	-0.2pp	18.3%	-1.0pp
London	74.9%	0.5pp	6.0%	-0.5pp	20.3%	0.1pp
South East	78.1%	-0.3pp	4.1%	0.2pp	18.5%	0.0pp
South West	77.7%	1.1pp	3.3%	-0.3pp	19.6%	-1.0pp
Wales	74.6%	0.7pp	4.2%	0.0pp	22.0%	-0.8pp
Scotland	74.1%	0.2pp	4.3%	-0.1pp	22.5%	-0.1pp
Northern Ireland	71.2%	0.2pp	4.0%	1.0pp	25.7%	-1.1pp

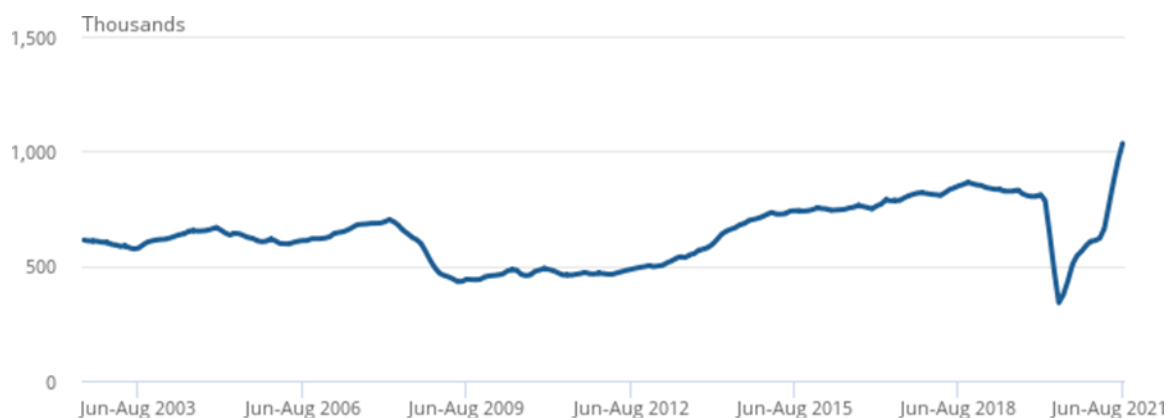
Source: ONS – Labour Force Survey

- For the 12 months ending March 2021, average weekly hours worked varied between London, with 30.2 million hours worked, and the North East, with 27.3 million hours worked; all regions saw a decrease in the average weekly hours worked compared with the same period last year, with the North West and West Midlands both seeing the largest decreases of 4.2 hours per week; for total weekly hours worked, the South East saw the largest decrease compared with the same period last year, down 21.1 million hours per week.
- The latest provisional results for June 2021 show there 2,901,286 workforce jobs in the West Midlands region, an increase of 22,583 (+0.8%) on the quarter (March 2021). However, workforce jobs were 11,070 (-0.4%) when compared to June 2020.
- At broad industry level for workforce jobs in the West Midlands, the latest quarter change (between March 2021 and June 2021) shows that agriculture, forestry & fishing decreased by 10,097 (-38.5%) to 16,139. In contrast, administrative & support service activities increased by 14,514 (+5.6%) since March 2021 to 272,211 in June 2021.

UK Labour Market Statistics - Vacancies¹²

- The number of job vacancies for the UK in June to August 2021 was 1,034,000, the first-time vacancies has risen over 1 million since records began, and is now 249,000 above its pre- coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic January to March 2020 level.

The following chart shows the number of vacancies in the UK, seasonally adjusted, June to August 2002 to June to August 2021:

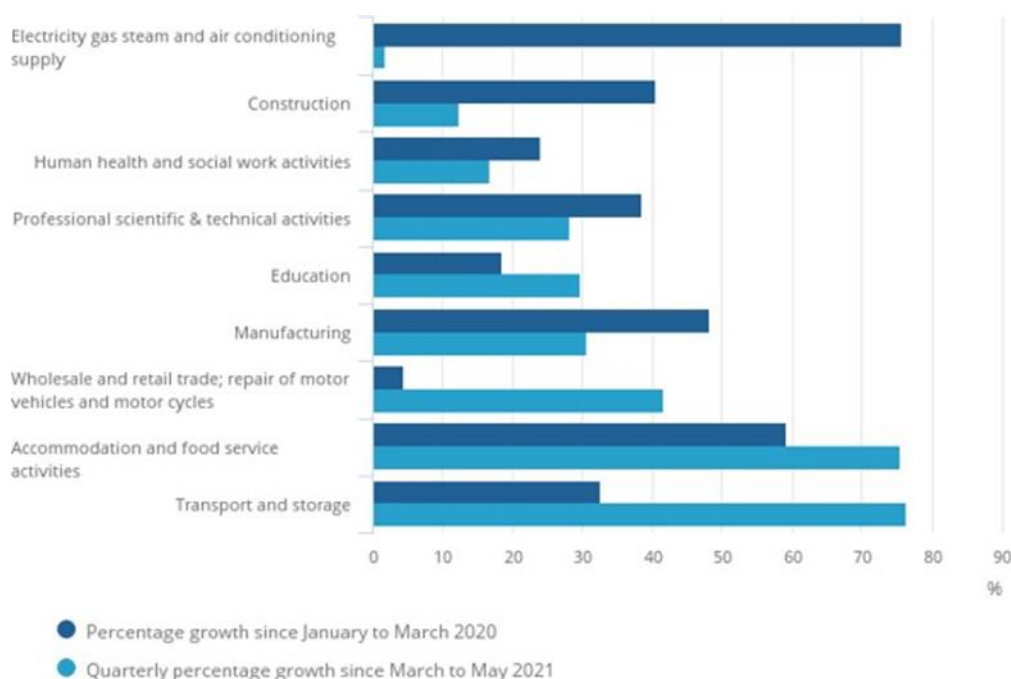


Source: ONS – Vacancy Survey

- Quarterly growth was seen across all industries. The fastest rate of growth was seen in other service activities, which grew by 93.3% (12,500), followed by transport and storage at 76.3% (20,300) and accommodation and food service activities at 75.4% (57,600).

¹² Source: UK labour market: September 2021

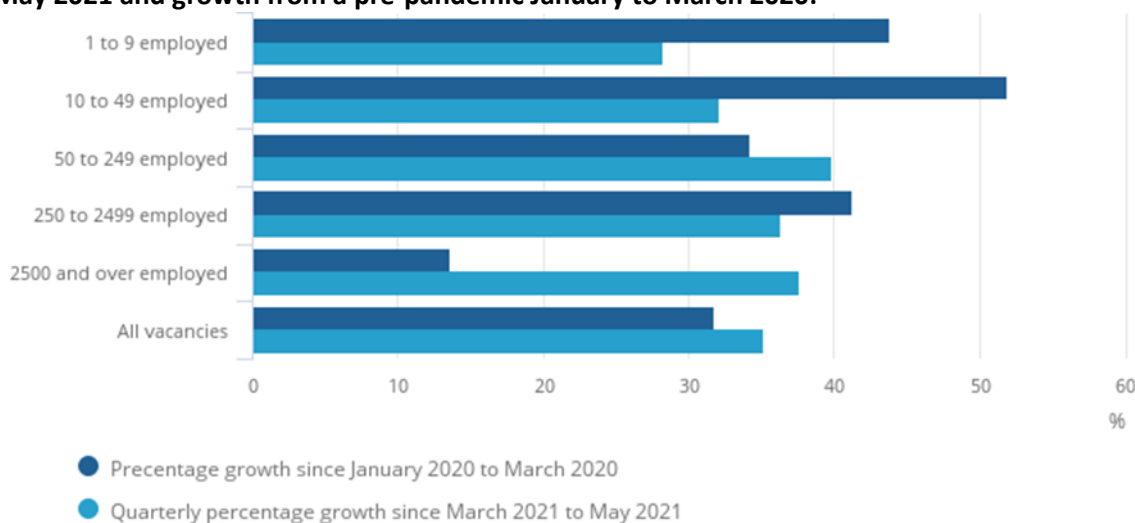
The following chart shows June to August 2021 three-month average vacancies in the UK, quarterly percentage growth from March 2021 to May 2021 and percentage growth from pre- pandemic January to March 2020:



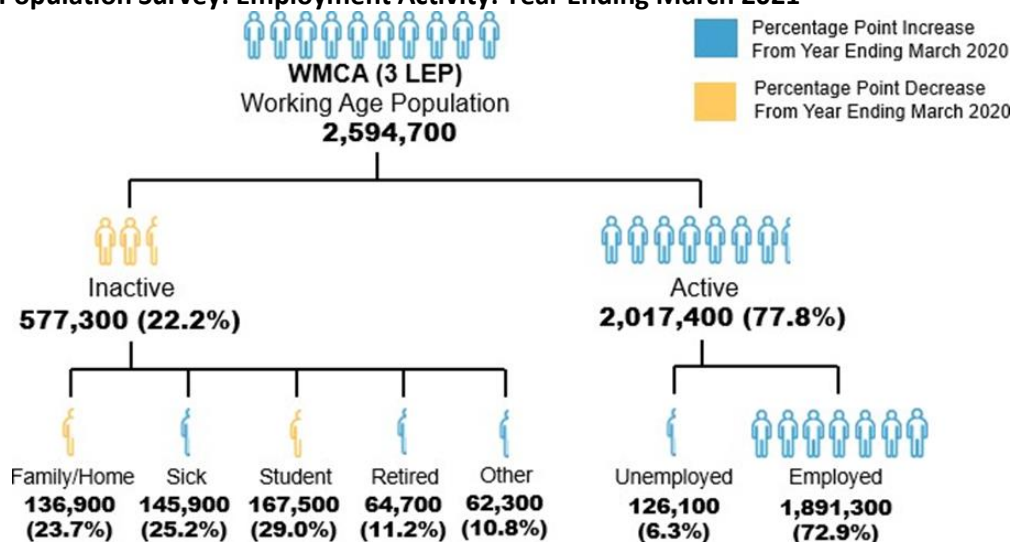
Source: ONS – Vacancy Survey

The number of vacancies reached record levels across all size bands in June to August 2021.

The following chart shows June to August 2021 three-month average vacancies in the UK, quarterly growth from March to May 2021 and growth from a pre-pandemic January to March 2020:



WMCA Annual Population Survey: Employment Activity: Year Ending March 2021



Source: ONS, Annual Population Survey (For Year Ending March 2021) - Released September 2021

Employment Rate

- In year ending March 2021, the employment rate in the WMCA (3 LEP) area was 72.9%, compared to 74.7% for the UK overall. This was a 0.4pp increase in the employment rate from 72.4% for the WMCA (3 LEP) area when compared to year ending March 2020. The UK employment rate decreased by 1.2pp over the same time period.
- The employment rate for the WM 7 Met. area increased from 69.0% in the year ending March 2020 to 70.5% in year ending March 2021.
- Within the WMCA (3 LEP) area, the Black Country LEP employment rate increased by 2.2pp since March 2020 to reach 73.0% in the year ending March 2021. Coventry and Warwickshire LEP's employment rate remains higher than the UK average at 76.2%, but decreased by 1.2pp since year ending March 2020. Whilst Greater Birmingham and Solihull experienced an increase of 0.1pp to an employment rate of 71.3%.
- At local authority level in the WMCA (3 LEP) area, Cannock Chase had the largest percentage point decrease since March 2020; by 10.3pp. Although the employment rate was still 80.3%. In contrast, Wyre Forest had the highest increase in employment rate; by 4.9pp and reached 82.4% in year ending March 2021.

The following table shows the WMCA Employment rate for year ending March 2020 and year ending March 2021:

	Apr 2019-Mar 2020			Apr 2020-Mar 2021			Percentage Point Change
	numerator	denominator	%	numerator	denominator	%	
Birmingham	472,900	731,600	64.6%	484,500	737,400	65.7%	1.1pp
Bromsgrove	47,200	58,200	81.1%	48,500	60,700	80.0%	-1.1pp
Cannock Chase	54,700	60,400	90.6%	50,900	63,300	80.3%	-10.3pp
Coventry	177,400	246,100	72.1%	179,200	246,100	72.8%	0.7pp
Dudley	140,700	190,800	73.8%	138,400	190,900	72.5%	-1.3pp
East Staffordshire	60,100	72,500	82.8%	54,700	70,900	77.2%	-5.6pp
Lichfield	44,800	60,400	74.1%	45,600	61,200	74.5%	0.4pp
North Warwickshire	30,300	38,200	79.4%	29,300	37,600	77.9%	-1.5pp
Nuneaton and Bedworth	61,000	77,100	79.2%	62,400	77,700	80.3%	1.1pp
Redditch	42,100	52,100	80.8%	41,400	53,300	77.8%	-3.0pp
Rugby	53,200	65,300	81.5%	49,600	65,300	76.0%	-5.5pp
Sandwell	142,900	205,200	69.6%	151,700	205,000	74.0%	4.4pp
Solihull	98,600	127,900	77.1%	100,200	126,800	79.0%	1.9pp
Stratford-on-Avon	61,400	71,300	86.2%	54,600	71,900	76.0%	-10.2pp
Tamworth	37,900	47,300	80.3%	37,600	46,300	81.1%	0.8pp
Walsall	123,700	172,900	71.5%	124,700	171,600	72.7%	1.2pp
Warwick	70,600	88,300	80.0%	72,200	88,300	81.7%	1.7pp
Wolverhampton	112,000	164,200	68.2%	119,600	164,300	72.8%	4.6pp
Wyre Forest	43,900	56,600	77.5%	46,100	56,000	82.4%	4.9pp
WM 7 Met.	1,268,200	1,838,700	69.0%	1,298,300	1,842,100	70.5%	1.5pp
Black Country LEP	519,300	733,100	70.8%	534,400	731,800	73.0%	2.2pp
Coventry and Warwickshire LEP	454,000	586,200	77.4%	447,300	587,000	76.2%	-1.2pp
Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP	902,200	1,267,100	71.2%	909,600	1,275,900	71.3%	0.1pp
WMCA (3 LEP)	1,875,500	2,586,400	72.5%	1,891,300	2,594,700	72.9%	0.4pp
United Kingdom	31,370,000	41,355,200	75.9%	30,868,800	41,344,600	74.7%	-1.2pp

Please note, there is a negative percentage point change where the numerator has increased due to the denominator increasing at a faster rate

Unemployment Rate ¹³

- The unemployment rate for the WMCA (3 LEP) was 6.3% in year ending March 2021 compared to 4.9% for the UK overall. For the WMCA (3 LEP), this was a 0.6pp increase compared to an increase of 1pp for the UK since year ending March 2020.
- The unemployment rate for the WM 7 Met. area decreased from 7.2% in year ending March 2020 to 6.9% in year ending March 2021.
- Within the WMCA (3 LEP), since the year ending March 2020, the Black Country LEP's unemployment rate increased by 0.5pp to 6.1% in year ending March 2021. Coventry & Warwickshire LEP has increased by 1pp to 4.3% in year ending March 2021. Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP increased by 0.4pp to 7.3% in year ending March 2021.

Economic Activity Rate

- The economic activity rate for the WMCA (3 LEP) area was 77.8% compared to 78.5% for the UK in year ending March 2021. For the WMCA (3 LEP) area, there has been a 0.9pp increase in the economic activity rate compared to a 0.5pp decrease for the UK since year ending March 2020.
- The economic activity rate in the WM 7 Met. area for year ending March 2021 was 75.7%, an increase of 1.4pp from year ending March 2020.
- The Black Country LEP area experienced a 2.8pp increase from year ending March 2020 to reach 77.8% in year ending March 2021 and Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP increased by 0.5pp to 76.9%. While Coventry and Warwickshire LEP decreased by 0.5pp to 79.6%.
- Economic activity rate varies across the WMCA (3 LEP) local authorities from 72.4% in Birmingham to 86.5% in Cannock Chase in the year ending March 2021. Although, 8 local authorities experienced a decrease when compared to year ending March 2020, with the highest decrease in Stratford-on-Avon by 8.6pp (to 79.2%). While Warwick experienced an increase over this period by 5.6% (to 86.3%).

Economic Inactivity Rate

- For economic inactivity rate, the WMCA's (3 LEP) rate was 22.2% compared to 21.5% in the UK overall for the year ending March 2021. For the WMCA (3 LEP) area, this has decreased by 0.9pp compared to a 0.5pp increase for the UK when compared to year ending March 2020.
- The economic inactivity rate in the WM 7 Met. area for year ending March 2021 was 24.3%, a decrease of 1.4pp from year ending March 2020.
- The following table provides a breakdown for economically inactive by reason for the WMCA (3 LEP) and the UK for year ending March 2021. The WMCA (3 LEP) for the year ending March 2021 a lower percentage of people that are inactive due to retirement (11.2% vs 13.5%), those classed as other (10.8% vs 13.7%) and sick (25.3% vs 25.8%). Within the WMCA (3 LEP) area, students account for 29% of those economically inactive, which is above the UK average of 27.3%.

The following tables shows the WMCA (3 LEP) and UK economic inactivity rate by reason for the year ending March 2021:

	WMCA			UK
	numerator	denominator	percent	percent
% of economically inactive student	167,500	577,300	29.0%	27.3%
% of economically inactive looking after family/home	136,900	577,300	23.7%	19.7%
% of economically inactive sick	145,900	577,300	25.3%	25.8%
% of economically inactive other	62,300	577,300	10.8%	13.7%
% of economically inactive retired	64,700	577,300	11.2%	13.5%
% who are economically inactive - aged 16-64	577,300	2,594,700	22.2%	21.5%

¹³ Due to data gaps local authority data was excluded from analysis

Employment by Occupation

- The following table shows employment by occupation across the WMCA (3 LEP) and the UK for the year ending March 2021. The WMCA (3 LEP) area had a higher percentage of people employed in 4 of the 9 areas when compared to the UK, these include; elementary occupations (11.6% vs 9.1%), process, plant and machine operatives (7.4% vs 5.7%), caring, leisure and other service occupations (9.6% vs 9%) and administrative and secretarial occupations (10.6% vs 10.2%).

The following table shows WMCA (3 LEP) and UK employment by occupation for the year ending March 2021:

	WMCA			UK
	numerator	denominator	percent	percent
% all in employment who are - 1: managers, directors and senior officials	198,100	1,949,400	10.2%	11.1%
% all in employment who are - 2: professional occupations	425,000	1,949,400	21.8%	23.1%
% all in employment who are - 3: associate prof & tech occupations	261,300	1,949,400	13.4%	15.4%
% all in employment who are - 4: administrative and secretarial occupations	207,400	1,949,400	10.6%	10.2%
% all in employment who are - 5: skilled trades occupations	162,300	1,949,400	8.3%	9.0%
% all in employment who are - 6: caring, leisure and other service occupations	187,300	1,949,400	9.6%	9.0%
% all in employment who are - 7: sales and customer service occupations	133,700	1,949,400	6.9%	7.2%
% all in employment who are - 8: process, plant and machine operatives	143,700	1,949,400	7.4%	5.7%
% all in employment who are - 9: elementary occupations	225,600	1,949,400	11.6%	9.1%

Claimant Count

Claimant count for people aged 16 years and over¹⁴:

- There were 186,380 claimants in the WMCA (3 LEP) area in August 2021. Since July 2021, there has been a decrease of 1.3% (-2,400) claimants in the WMCA (3 LEP) area, less than the UK decrease of 2.1%. When compared to August 2020, the number of claimants has decreased by 12% (-25,300) in the WMCA (3 LEP) area, with the UK decreasing by 18.7% over the same period. When compared to March 2020, the number of claimants has increased by 58.5% (+68,790) in the WMCA (3 LEP) area, with the UK increasing by 72.3% over the same period.
- The Black Country LEP had 57,825 claimants aged 16 years and over in August 2021, a decrease of 760 (-1.3%) claimants from the previous month. Compared to the same month in 2020, Black Country LEP claimants decreased by 8,235 (-12.5%). When compared to March 2020 (38,275) the number of claimants has increased by 19,550 (+51.1%).
- In Coventry and Warwickshire LEP, there were 28,315 claimants aged 16 years and over in August 2021, a decrease of 685 (-2.4%) claimants since July 2021. Compared to the same month in 2020, Coventry and Warwickshire LEP claimants decreased by 5,780 (-17%). For the Coventry and Warwickshire LEP area, when compared to March 2020 (15,825) the number of claimants has increased by 12,490 (+78.9%).
- In Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP, there were 100,240 claimants aged 16 years and over in August 2021, a decrease of 955 (-0.9%) claimants since July 2021. Compared to the same month in 2020, Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP claimants decreased by 11,285 (-10.1%). In the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP area, when compared to March 2020 (63,490) the number of claimants has increased by 36,750 (+57.9%).

¹⁴ ONS/DWP, Claimant count, September 2021. Please note, figures for previous months have been revised

The following table shows a breakdown of number of claimants aged 16+ and change by selected months across the WMCA and for the UK:

	March 2020	August 2020	July 2021	August 2021	Aug. 2021 (Claimants as proportion aged 16-64) Rates ⁴	% Change Since Mar 2020	% Change Since Aug 2020	% Change Since Jul 2021
Birmingham	49,370	80,630	76,550	76,090	10.4%	54.1%	-5.6%	-0.6%
Bromsgrove	1,165	2,720	2,150	2,155	3.6%	85.0%	-20.8%	0.2%
Cannock Chase	1,655	3,750	2,860	2,755	4.3%	66.5%	-26.5%	-3.7%
Coventry	8,000	16,350	15,125	14,800	5.8%	85.0%	-9.5%	-2.1%
Dudley	8,515	14,690	12,335	12,210	6.3%	43.4%	-16.9%	-1.0%
East Staffordshire	1,720	3,885	3,330	3,260	4.4%	89.5%	-16.1%	-2.1%
Lichfield	1,320	3,085	2,230	2,155	3.5%	63.3%	-30.1%	-3.4%
North Warwickshire	845	2,100	1,540	1,505	3.8%	78.1%	-28.3%	-2.3%
Nuneaton and Bedworth	2,830	5,445	4,350	4,205	5.3%	48.6%	-22.8%	-3.3%
Redditch	1,535	3,295	2,680	2,620	5.0%	70.7%	-20.5%	-2.2%
Rugby	1,535	3,245	2,620	2,590	3.8%	68.7%	-20.2%	-1.1%
Sandwell	10,780	19,070	17,320	17,225	8.4%	59.8%	-9.7%	-0.5%
Solihull	3,650	7,525	6,225	6,155	4.8%	68.6%	-18.2%	-1.1%
Stratford-on-Avon	1,050	3,160	2,405	2,330	3.0%	121.9%	-26.3%	-3.1%
Tamworth	1,490	2,965	2,390	2,360	5.0%	58.4%	-20.4%	-1.3%
Walsall	8,605	15,185	13,360	13,060	7.5%	51.8%	-14.0%	-2.2%
Warwick	1,570	3,800	2,955	2,880	3.1%	83.4%	-24.2%	-2.5%
Wolverhampton	10,380	17,115	15,570	15,335	9.4%	47.7%	-10.4%	-1.5%
Wyre Forest	1,580	3,665	2,785	2,685	4.6%	69.9%	-26.7%	-3.6%
WM 7 Met.	99,300	170,570	156,490	154,875	8.3%	56.0%	-9.2%	-1.0%
Black Country LEP	38,275	66,060	58,585	57,825	7.8%	51.1%	-12.5%	-1.3%
Coventry and Warwickshire LEP	15,825	34,095	29,000	28,315	4.6%	78.9%	-17.0%	-2.4%
Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP	63,490	111,525	101,195	100,240	7.8%	57.9%	-10.1%	-0.9%
WMCA (3 LEP)	117,590	211,680	188,780	186,380	7.1%	58.5%	-12.0%	-1.3%
United Kingdom	1,268,620	2,688,110	2,232,760	2,185,420	5.2%	72.3%	-18.7%	-2.1%

- Overall, for the WMCA (3 LEP) the number of claimants as a proportion of residents aged 16 - 64 years old was 7.1% compared to 5.2% for the UK in August 2021¹⁵

Youth Claimants (Aged 16-24)

- There were 35,080 youth claimants in the WMCA (3 LEP) area in August 2021. Since July 2021, there was a decrease of 2.2% (-785) claimants in the WMCA (3 LEP) area, below the UK decrease of 3.3%. When compared to August 2020, the number of youth claimants has decreased by 18.4% (-7,935) in the WMCA (3 LEP) area, with the UK decreasing by 26.6% over the same period. When compared to March 2020, the number of youth claimants has increased by 53.6% (+12,245) in the WMCA (3 LEP) area, with the UK increasing by 60.7% over the same period.
- The Black Country LEP had 11,200 youth claimants in August 2021, a decrease of 325 (-2.8%) claimants from the previous month. Compared to the same month in 2020, Black Country LEP youth claimants decreased by 2,495 (-18.2%). When compared to March 2020 (7,750) the number of youth claimants has increased by 3,450 (+44.5%).

¹⁵ WMCA SED Board Dashboard reports the number of claimants as a proportion of population aged 16 years and over – WMCA 3 LEP was 5.6% and the UK was 4.0% in August 2021.

- In Coventry and Warwickshire LEP, there were 5,040 youth claimants in August 2021, a decrease of 110 (-2.1%) claimants since July 2021. Compared to the same month in 2020, Coventry and Warwickshire LEP youth claimants decreased by 1,655 (-24.7%). When compared to March 2020 (2,920) the number of claimants has increased by 2,120 (+72.6%).
- In Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP, there were 18,840 youth claimants in August 2021, this is a decrease of 350 (-1.8%) claimants since July 2021. Compared to the same month in 2020, Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP youth claimants decreased by 3,785 (-16.7%). In the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP area, when compared to March 2020 (12,165) the number of claimants has increased by 6,675 (+54.9%).

The following table shows a breakdown of number of youth claimants and change by selected months across the WMCA and for the UK:

	March 2020	August 2020	July 2021	August 2021	Aug. 2021 (Claimants as proportion aged 16-24) Rates	% Change Since Mar 2020	% Change Since Aug 2020	% Change Since Jul 2021
Birmingham	9,220	16,225	14,395	14,200	8.4%	54.0%	-12.5%	-1.4%
Bromsgrove	220	540	415	410	5.0%	86.4%	-24.1%	-1.2%
Cannock Chase	370	805	585	545	5.8%	47.3%	-32.3%	-6.8%
Coventry	1,550	3,260	2,705	2,640	4.3%	70.3%	-19.0%	-2.4%
Dudley	1,755	3,150	2,465	2,400	7.7%	36.8%	-23.8%	-2.6%
East Staffordshire	320	750	600	565	5.0%	76.6%	-24.7%	-5.8%
Lichfield	275	615	390	370	4.0%	34.5%	-39.8%	-5.1%
North Warwickshire	165	430	285	295	5.1%	78.8%	-31.4%	3.5%
Nuneaton and Bedworth	570	1,110	825	810	6.7%	42.1%	-27.0%	-1.8%
Redditch	310	645	505	490	6.3%	58.1%	-24.0%	-3.0%
Rugby	245	585	470	450	4.5%	83.7%	-23.1%	-4.3%
Sandwell	2,130	3,850	3,360	3,295	9.6%	54.7%	-14.4%	-1.9%
Solihull	830	1,685	1,290	1,285	6.3%	54.8%	-23.7%	-0.4%
Stratford-on-Avon	160	560	350	340	3.1%	112.5%	-39.3%	-2.9%
Tamworth	305	640	510	500	6.7%	63.9%	-21.9%	-2.0%
Walsall	1,940	3,350	2,800	2,700	9.0%	39.2%	-19.4%	-3.6%
Warwick	230	750	510	505	2.6%	119.6%	-32.7%	-1.0%
Wolverhampton	1,925	3,350	2,900	2,805	10.5%	45.7%	-16.3%	-3.3%
Wyre Forest	315	720	505	470	5.4%	49.2%	-34.7%	-6.9%
WM 7 Met.	19,345	34,865	29,920	29,330	7.8%	51.6%	-15.9%	-2.0%
Black Country LEP	7,750	13,695	11,525	11,200	9.2%	44.5%	-18.2%	-2.8%
Coventry and Warwickshire LEP	2,920	6,695	5,150	5,040	4.2%	72.6%	-24.7%	-2.1%
Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP	12,165	22,625	19,190	18,840	7.5%	54.9%	-16.7%	-1.8%
WMCA (3 LEP)	22,835	43,015	35,865	35,080	7.1%	53.6%	-18.4%	-2.2%
United Kingdom	241,760	529,065	401,860	388,460	5.5%	60.7%	-26.6%	-3.3%

- Overall, for the WMCA (3 LEP) the number of youth claimants as a percentage of residents aged 16- 24 years old was 7.1% compared to 5.5% for the UK in August 2021.

Claimant Count by Age and Gender (WMCA 3 LEP)¹⁶

- For those aged 16-24 in the WMCA (3 LEP) area, when comparing August 2021 to July 2021, there was an overall decrease of 785. This can be split by a decrease of 630 males and a decrease of 145 females.

¹⁶ Please note, figure may not sum due to rounding

- Within the 16-24 age bracket, females aged 16-17 increased by 5 claimants.
- For those aged 25-49 in the WMCA (3 LEP) area, when comparing August 2021 to July 2021, there was an overall decrease of 885. This can be split by a decrease of 860 males and a decrease of 25 females.
- Notably within the 25-49 age bracket, females aged 35- 39 increased by 40 claimants, also females aged 40-44 increased by 25 and females aged 45- 49 increased by 10 claimants.
- For those aged 50 years and over in the WMCA (3 LEP) area, when comparing August 2021 to July 2021, there was an overall decrease of 725 claimants. This can be split by a decrease of 410 males and a decrease of 320 females.
- Within this age range (50 years and over) there were increases for females and males aged 65 years and over both by 10 claimants.

The following table shows a breakdown by age brackets and gender for the WMCA (3 LEP) area over selected time periods:

		March 2020	August 2020	July 2021	August 2021	No. Change (Aug. 21 - Mar 20)	No. Change (Aug 21 – Aug 20)	No. Change (Aug 21 – Jul 21)
Total	Age 16+	117,590	211,680	188,780	186,380	68,790	-25,300	-2,400
	Aged 16-24	22,835	43,015	35,865	35,080	12,245	-7,935	-785
	Aged 16-17	250	380	340	320	70	-60	-20
	Aged 18-24	22,580	42,635	35,525	34,760	12,180	-7,875	-765
	Aged 25-49	67,130	121,465	108,935	108,050	40,920	-13,415	-885
	Aged 25-29	15,945	29,335	25,205	24,855	8,910	-4,480	-350
	Aged 30-34	15,635	28,475	25,715	25,540	9,905	-2,935	-175
	Aged 35-39	13,715	24,475	22,890	22,765	9,050	-1,710	-125
	Aged 40-44	11,230	20,175	18,805	18,680	7,450	-1,495	-125
	Aged 45-49	10,605	19,005	16,330	16,195	5,590	-2,810	-135
	Aged 50+	27,635	47,195	43,965	43,240	15,605	-3,955	-725
	Aged 50-54	9,960	18,020	15,960	15,640	5,680	-2,380	-320

Male	Aged 55-59	8,985	15,170	13,860	13,600	4,615	-1,570	-260
	Aged 60-64	7,675	12,055	11,660	11,500	3,825	-555	-160
	Aged 65+	1,020	1,945	2,490	2,500	1,480	555	10
	Age 16+	69,420	127,850	112,210	110,295	40,875	-17,555	-1,915
	Aged 16-24	14,100	26,305	22,130	21,500	7,400	-4,805	-630
	Aged 16-17	115	175	155	130	15	-45	-25
	Aged 18-24	13,980	26,135	21,980	21,365	7,385	-4,770	-615
	Aged 25-49	38,965	73,660	64,370	63,510	24,545	-10,150	-860
	Aged 25-29	9,610	18,425	15,555	15,275	5,665	-3,150	-280
	Aged 30-34	9,095	17,435	15,200	15,065	5,970	-2,370	-135
	Aged 35-39	7,730	14,705	13,330	13,170	5,440	-1,535	-160
	Aged 40-44	6,440	11,960	10,870	10,720	4,280	-1,240	-150
	Aged 45-49	6,080	11,130	9,415	9,275	3,195	-1,855	-140
	Aged 50+	16,355	27,875	25,700	25,290	8,935	-2,585	-410
Female	Aged 50-54	5,820	10,600	9,275	9,100	3,280	-1,500	-175
	Aged 55-59	5,295	8,965	8,130	7,980	2,685	-985	-150
	Aged 60-64	4,575	7,110	6,770	6,680	2,105	-430	-90
	Aged 65+	655	1,200	1,515	1,525	870	325	10
	Age 16+	48,175	83,825	76,570	76,080	27,905	-7,745	-490
	Aged 16-24	8,730	16,705	13,735	13,590	4,860	-3,115	-145
	Aged 16-17	135	215	185	190	55	-25	5
	Aged 18-24	8,595	16,500	13,550	13,395	4,800	-3,105	-155
	Aged 25-49	28,165	47,800	44,565	44,540	16,375	-3,260	-25
	Aged 25-29	6,340	10,910	9,655	9,580	3,240	-1,330	-75
	Aged 30-34	6,530	11,040	10,515	10,480	3,950	-560	-35
	Aged 35-39	5,985	9,775	9,560	9,600	3,615	-175	40
	Aged 40-44	4,790	8,215	7,935	7,960	3,170	-255	25
	Aged 45-49	4,525	7,870	6,910	6,920	2,395	-950	10
	Aged 50+	11,280	19,315	18,270	17,950	6,670	-1,365	-320
	Aged 50-54	4,135	7,420	6,680	6,535	2,400	-885	-145
	Aged 55-59	3,690	6,205	5,730	5,620	1,930	-585	-110
	Aged 60-64	3,100	4,940	4,895	4,820	1,720	-120	-75
	Aged 65+	360	750	965	975	615	225	10

EMSI Job Postings WMCA 3 LEP Geography August 2021¹⁷

Note: The data below identifies job postings, derived from the EMSI Analyst Tool, and not comparable to the official vacancy data.

- There were 170,364 unique job postings across the WMCA 3 LEP geography in August 2021. This is 2,203 (-1.3%) fewer than in July, and the first time since March 2021 that the number of job postings has decreased month-on-month.
- Of the 19 LA areas across the WMCA 3 LEP geography, five recorded a positive change, three recorded no change whilst 11 LA's logged nominal reductions in job postings of between 2% and 5%.
- Stratford-on-Avon logged the largest change in job postings, increasing by 4% followed by East Staffordshire, Nuneaton and Bedworth, Redditch and Rugby which all increased by 1%.
- Although the number of unique job postings fell across the area, posting intensity, i.e., the effort towards hiring for particular positions remained high. Posting intensity increased in Birmingham, Lichfield, Redditch and Tamworth.

	Aug 2021 Unique Postings	% Change (Jul 2021 - Aug 2021)
Birmingham	66,493	-2%
Bromsgrove	2,190	-3%
Cannock Chase	3,053	-5%
Coventry	14,978	0%
Dudley	7,972	-5%
East Staffordshire	5,012	1%
Lichfield	3,598	-2%
North Warwickshire	2,507	-2%
Nuneaton and Bedworth	3,534	1%
Redditch	3,249	1%
Rugby	4,609	1%
Sandwell	9,691	0%
Solihull	8,169	-5%
Stratford-on-Avon	5,245	4%
Tamworth	3,381	-4%
Walsall	6,387	-3%
Warwick	9,518	-2%
Wolverhampton	8,151	-2%
Wyre Forest	2,627	0%

¹⁷Source: EMSI, September 2021

Infection Rates and Vaccine Update

Alice Pugh WMREDI/WMCA

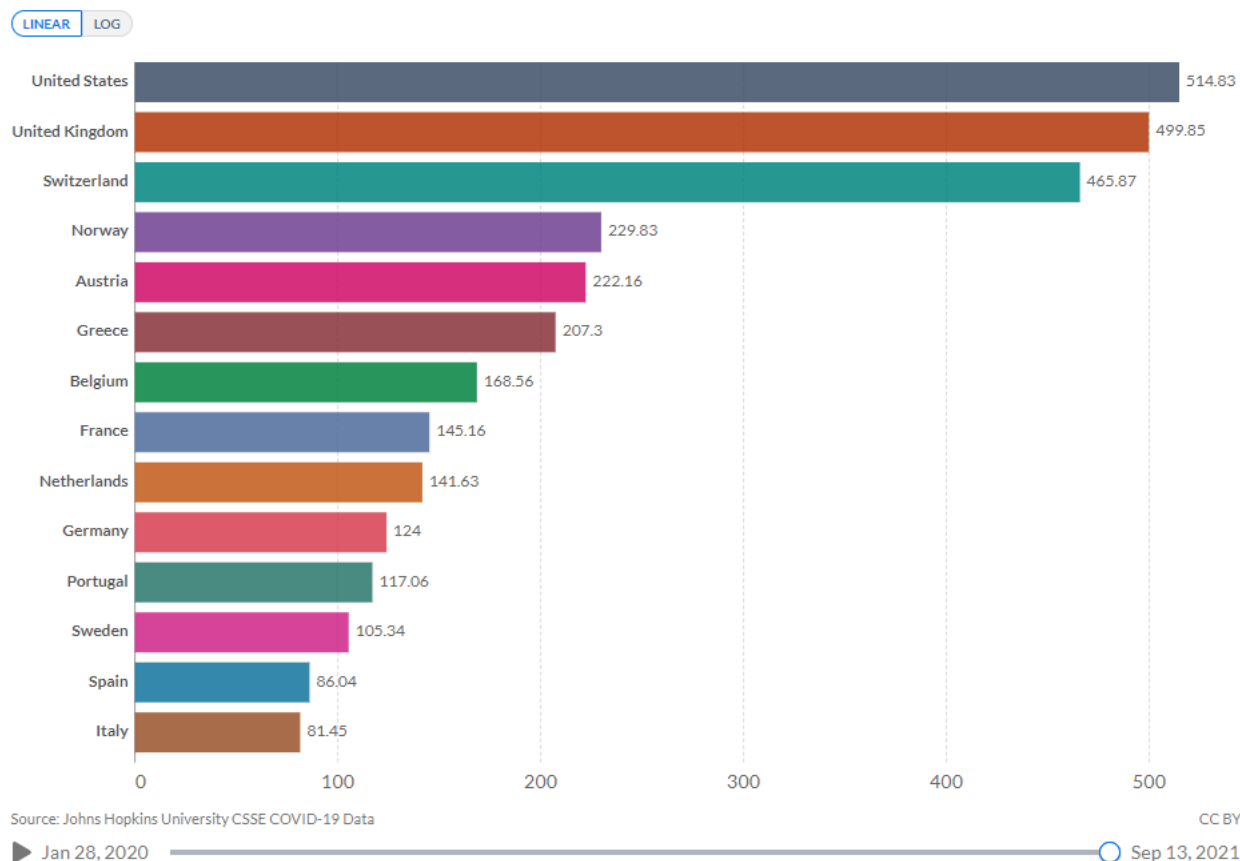
The UK has seen a [resurgence in infection rates](#). The daily new cases confirmed in the UK is now the highest out of the selected European countries in the graph below. This comes as vaccination rates in the UK slow and social distancing rules are relaxed, especially over the summer as people chose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

Since [31 December 2019](#) and as of week 2021-35, **221 357 113 cases** of COVID-19 (in accordance with the applied case definitions and testing strategies in the affected countries) have been reported, including **4 573 597 deaths**.

Daily new confirmed COVID-19 cases per million people, Sep 13, 2021

Shown is the rolling 7-day average. The number of confirmed cases is lower than the number of actual cases; the main reason for that is limited testing.

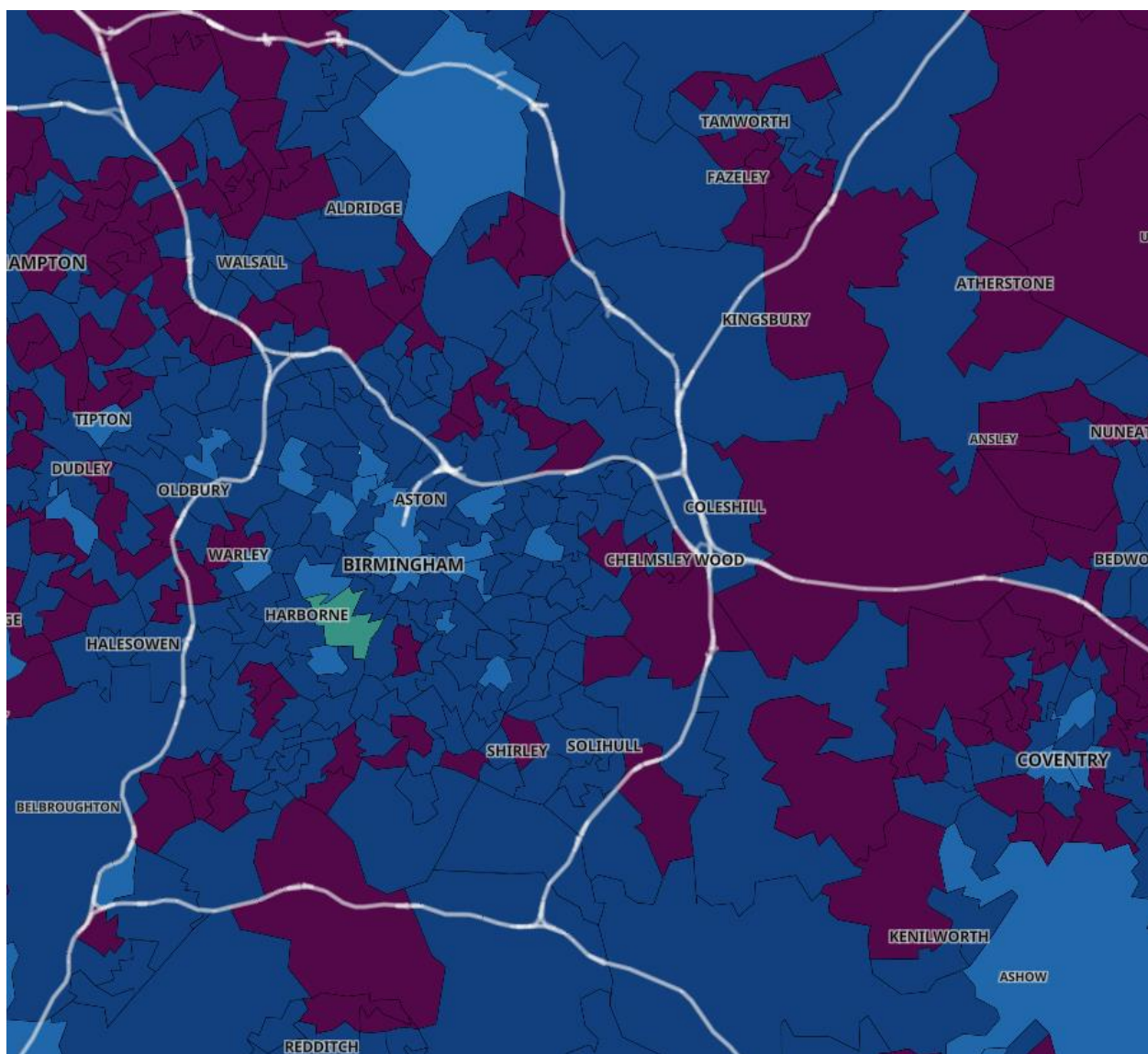
Our World
in Data



Latest [ONS infection survey](#) data (10th September next release 17th September 2021) states:

- In England, the percentage of people testing positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) remained level in the week ending 3 September 2021; we estimate that 754,600 people within the community population in England had COVID-19 (95% credible interval: 704,000 to 808,800), equating to around 1 in 70 people.
- In Wales, the percentage of people testing positive increased in the week ending 3 September 2021; we estimate that 46,800 people in Wales had COVID-19 (95% credible interval: 35,700 to 59,500), equating to around 1 in 65 people.
- In Northern Ireland, the trend in the percentage of people testing positive was uncertain in the week ending 3 September 2021; we estimate that 31,800 people in Northern Ireland had COVID-19 (95% credible interval: 23,000 to 41,800), equating to around 1 in 60 people.
- In Scotland, the percentage of people testing positive increased in the week ending 3 September 2021; we estimate that 117,300 people in Scotland had COVID-19, (95% credible interval: 98,300 to 137,300) 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 8th September 2021. The darker the colour, light blue to deep purple, the higher the infection rate.



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
10 September 2021	1059	1470	378249	2	0.07
09 September 2021	1363	1529	377190	9953	339.86
08 September 2021	1436	1444	375827	10115	345.39
07 September 2021	1560	1514	374391	10165	347.10
06 September 2021	1679	1401	372831	10196	348.15
05 September 2021	1198	1246	371152	9776	333.81
04 September 2021	1262	1394	369954	9624	328.62
03 September 2021	1455	1854	368692	9474	323.50
02 September 2021	1525	1175	367237	9309	317.87
01 September 2021	1486	1311	365712	9111	311.11
31 August 2021	1591	1104	364226	9070	309.71
30 August 2021	1350	1270	362635	8965	306.15

● New cases by specimen date — Cumulative cases by specimen date

4000
3000
2000
1000
0

400000
300000
200000
100000
0

2 2 3614 10079 13349 10 13262 2551 2078 101226 439 4303 230519 251118 39 274136 3328 1590 1679 262 379248

Apr 2020 Jul 2020 Oct 2020 Jan 2021 Apr 2021 Jul 2021

Covid 19 Hospital Activity

Total reported admissions to hospital and diagnoses in hospital

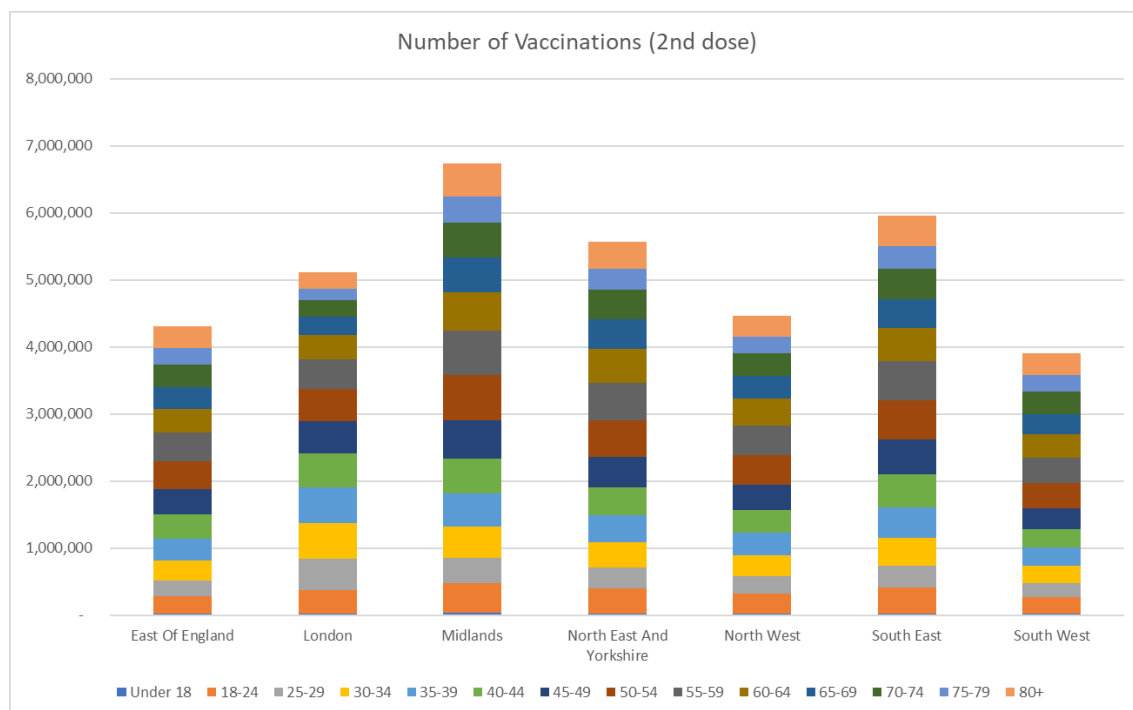
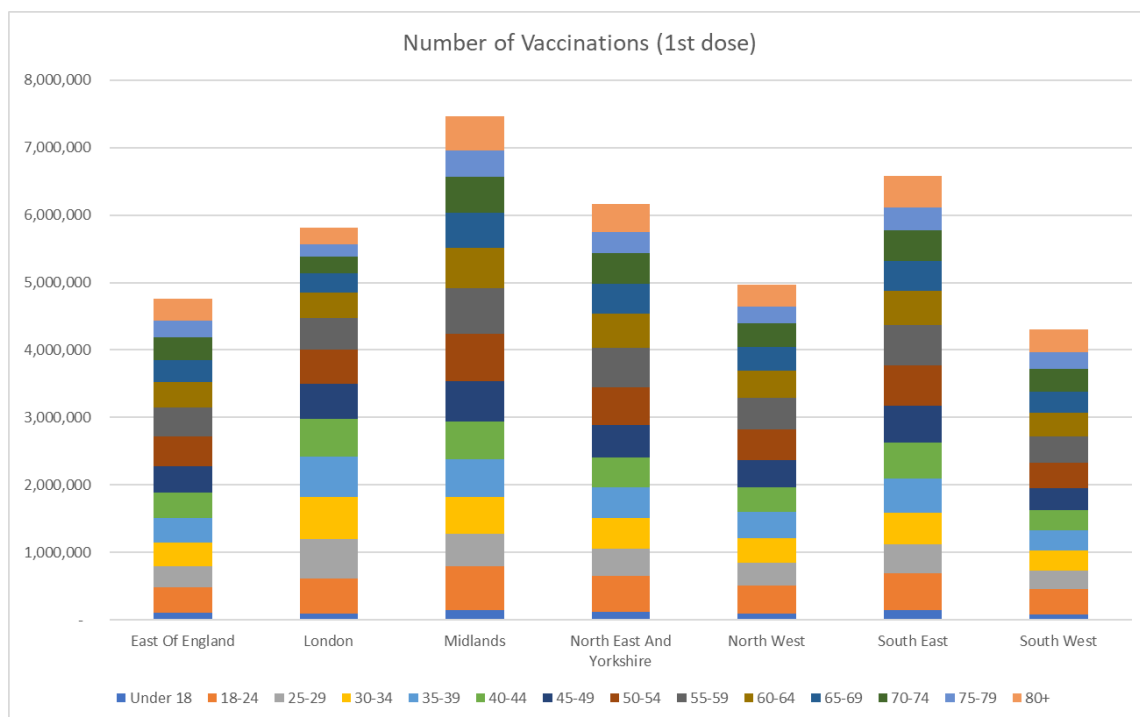
Name	26-Aug-21	27-Aug-21	28-Aug-21	29-Aug-21	30-Aug-21	31-Aug-21	01-Sep-21	02-Sep-21	03-Sep-21	04-Sep-21	05-Sep-21	06-Sep-21	07-Sep-21	08-Sep-21	09-Sep-21	10-Sep-21	11-Sep-21
ENGLAND	777	749	688	701	808	798	835	788	688	752	691	831	801	900	790	670	647
East of England	88	71	54	69	77	65	80	73	36	68	62	87	66	51	68	50	48
London	115	112	116	118	146	141	124	122	102	88	100	142	123	133	114	101	109
Midlands	148	156	133	145	156	143	152	123	150	148	124	147	153	224	147	132	123
North East and Yorkshire	159	139	134	126	152	159	160	140	156	192	158	157	163	156	150	142	148
North West	83	119	101	90	115	121	116	128	109	99	109	119	108	157	147	105	94
South East	87	81	74	84	91	98	119	105	53	74	76	90	108	91	82	65	66
South West	97	71	76	69	71	71	84	97	82	83	62	89	80	88	82	75	58

Name	27-Aug-21	28-Aug-21	29-Aug-21	30-Aug-21	31-Aug-21	01-Sep-21	02-Sep-21	03-Sep-21	04-Sep-21	05-Sep-21	06-Sep-21	07-Sep-21	08-Sep-21	09-Sep-21	10-Sep-21	11-Sep-21	12-Sep-21	13-Sep-21
ENGLAND	874	835	850	859	879	890	897	889	880	878	909	885	896	887	898	865	869	886
East of England	75	71	75	69	79	83	86	86	83	80	87	81	91	80	81	80	71	84
London	215	207	207	221	223	225	226	222	229	230	237	229	228	224	220	222	224	228
Midlands	185	178	178	182	182	181	180	170	161	167	168	155	168	174	179	171	178	173
North East and Yorkshire	139	133	134	133	133	135	142	148	140	141	147	151	156	155	162	152	148	157
North West	116	108	113	109	119	121	115	118	120	116	116	119	119	124	125	116	125	122
South East	80	72	78	85	84	87	86	86	87	89	87	85	74	71	65	57	59	58
South West	64	66	65	60	59	58	62	59	60	55	67	65	60	59	66	67	64	62

Name	27-Aug-21	28-Aug-21	29-Aug-21	30-Aug-21	31-Aug-21	01-Sep-21	02-Sep-21	03-Sep-21	04-Sep-21	05-Sep-21	06-Sep-21	07-Sep-21	08-Sep-21	09-Sep-21	10-Sep-21	11-Sep-21	12-Sep-21	13-Sep-21
ENGLAND	5,889	5,756	5,855	6,002	6,293	6,236	6,186	6,195	6,043	6,167	6,375	6,244	6,302	6,254	6,400	6,206	6,161	6,424
East of England	491	488	510	521	547	535	532	531	503	516	551	547	544	487	546	539	498	550
London	1,189	1,154	1,150	1,192	1,255	1,235	1,202	1,154	1,134	1,143	1,177	1,211	1,214	1,190	1,225	1,209	1,214	1,253
Midlands	1,204	1,172	1,202	1,210	1,280	1,265	1,226	1,235	1,174	1,211	1,243	1,145	1,264	1,265	1,341	1,271	1,296	1,304
North East and Yorkshire	1,090	1,076	1,078	1,104	1,158	1,154	1,136	1,139	1,127	1,163	1,213	1,195	1,189	1,210	1,200	1,186	1,174	1,221
North West	864	854	882	903	949	924	962	975	938	962	966	967	943	933	983	902	887	973
South East	596	545	567	612	625	652	657	691	673	675	704	697	647	655	598	587	601	608
South West	455	467	466	460	479	471	471	470	494	497	521	482	501	514	507	512	491	515

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.



NHS Region of residence name	% 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	50.1%	57.8%	69.8%	76.0%	85.6%	83.7%	90.2%	95.5%	97.8%	94.0%	96.4%	100%*	90.9%
East Of England	53.6%	60.9%	71.6%	77.5%	87.1%	85.8%	91.3%	97.1%	98.2%	94.0%	96.5%	100%*	91.7%
London	47.4%	63.6%	63.6%	67.3%	78.0%	80.8%	84.7%	88.8%	91.2%	88.4%	90.2%	89.8%	80.8%
Midlands	47.5%	52.3%	68.0%	75.6%	85.7%	82.8%	90.9%	95.5%	98.4%	93.8%	96.7%	100%*	92.4%
North East And Yorkshire	47.5%	54.0%	69.1%	77.3%	86.4%	82.4%	90.8%	95.9%	98.2%	95.3%	98.1%	100%*	91.2%
North West	48.0%	52.9%	66.3%	75.4%	84.9%	81.5%	89.5%	95.2%	98.5%	94.1%	97.1%	98.9%	90.6%
South East	53.2%	61.9%	77.2%	81.0%	89.0%	86.4%	91.2%	97.1%	98.7%	95.1%	95.8%	100%*	91.7%
South West	55.0%	62.6%	76.8%	82.1%	90.5%	85.7%	92.0%	97.8%	99.0%	94.3%	97.3%	100%*	94.4%

Weekly Deaths Registered: 3rd September 2021

Black Country Consortium Economic Intelligence Unit

The following analysis compares the latest available time period (the week of the 3rd September 2021) to the previous week period (the week of the 27th August 2021) for the number of deaths registered and the number of deaths registered related to the Coronavirus¹⁸.

Across England and Wales, the overall registered death figures decreased from 10,268 in the week of the 27th August 2021 to 8,797 in the week of 3rd September 2021. The number of deaths registered that state Coronavirus on the death certificate slightly decreased from 668 people to 659 people over the same period.

Regional level analysis shows that the West Midlands' overall registered death figure decreased from 1,008 people in the week of 27th August 2021 to 906 in the week of 3rd September 2021. The number of registered deaths related to Coronavirus slightly increased from 75 people to 77 people over the same period.

There was a total of 599 deaths registered across the WMCA (3 LEP) area in the week of the 3rd September 2021. There were 56 deaths registered that were related to Coronavirus over the same period. In comparison to the week of the 27th August 2021, the overall registered death figures in the WMCA (3 LEP) area decreased by 57, with the number of deaths related to Coronavirus increasing by 1 person.

At local authority level in the week of the 3rd September 2021, there were thirteen local authorities in the WMCA (3 LEP) area that registered deaths related to the Coronavirus (as seen in the following table). Of the 56 registered deaths; Birmingham accounted for 19 registered deaths, Coventry accounted for 7 and Sandwell, Solihull and Wolverhampton each accounted for 5 of the registered deaths.

Of the 56 registered deaths in the WMCA (3 LEP) involving Coronavirus in the week of the 3rd September 2021, 45 were in registered in a hospital 6 deaths were registered at home, 3 deaths were registered at a care home and 2 deaths were registered in a hospice.

	Care home	Elsewhere	Home	Hospice	Hospital	Other communal establishment	Total
Cannock Chase	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
East Staffordshire	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
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	3	0	3
Stratford-on-Avon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Warwick	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bromsgrove	0	0	1	0	2	0	3
Redditch	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Wyre Forest	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Birmingham	1	0	1	1	16	0	19
Coventry	0	0	0	0	7	0	7
Dudley	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Sandwell	1	0	2	0	2	0	5
Solihull	0	0	0	1	4	0	5
Walsall	1	0	1	0	2	0	4
Wolverhampton	0	0	1	0	4	0	5
WM 7 Met.	3	0	5	2	36	0	46

¹⁸ 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, 14th September 2021

Black Country LEP	2	0	4	0	9	0	15
Coventry & Warwickshire LEP	0	0	0	0	11	0	11
Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP	1	0	2	2	25	0	30
WMCA (3 LEP)	3	0	6	2	45	0	56

ONS Weekly Release Indicators

Black Country Consortium Economic Intelligence Unit

On 9th 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, Value Added Tax returns, final results from Wave 38 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS), national company incorporations and voluntary dissolutions and results from Wave 73 of the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN).

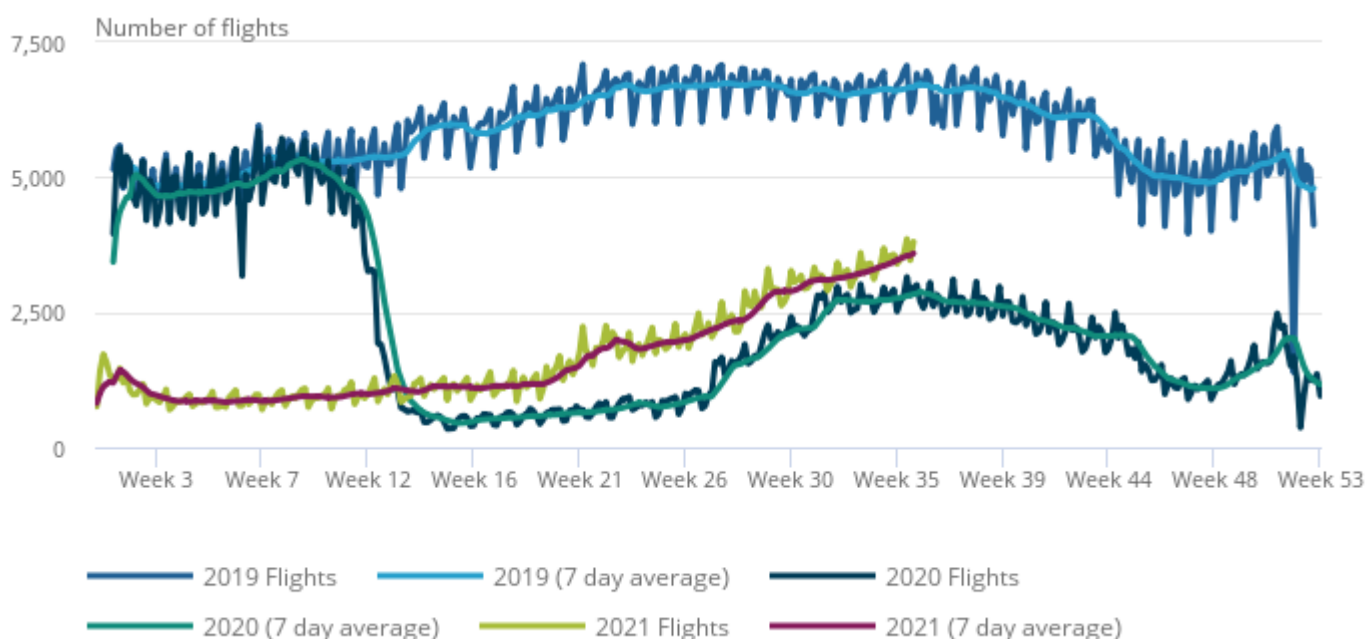
UK Flight Data

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 5th September 2021, the seven-day average number of UK daily flights was 3,589, a 5% increase from the previous week (3,405) and a 15% increase from 3,111 the previous month (week ending 8th August 2021). This is the highest weekly average number of UK flights seen for almost 18 months (since 19th March 2020).

The average number of UK daily flights in the latest week was at 54% of the level seen in the equivalent week in 2019 and 127% of the level seen in the equivalent week of 2020.

Number of daily flights, non-seasonally adjusted, and seven-day moving average, 2nd January 2019 to 5th September 2021, UK:



Source: European Organisation for the Safety of Air Navigation

Online Job Adverts

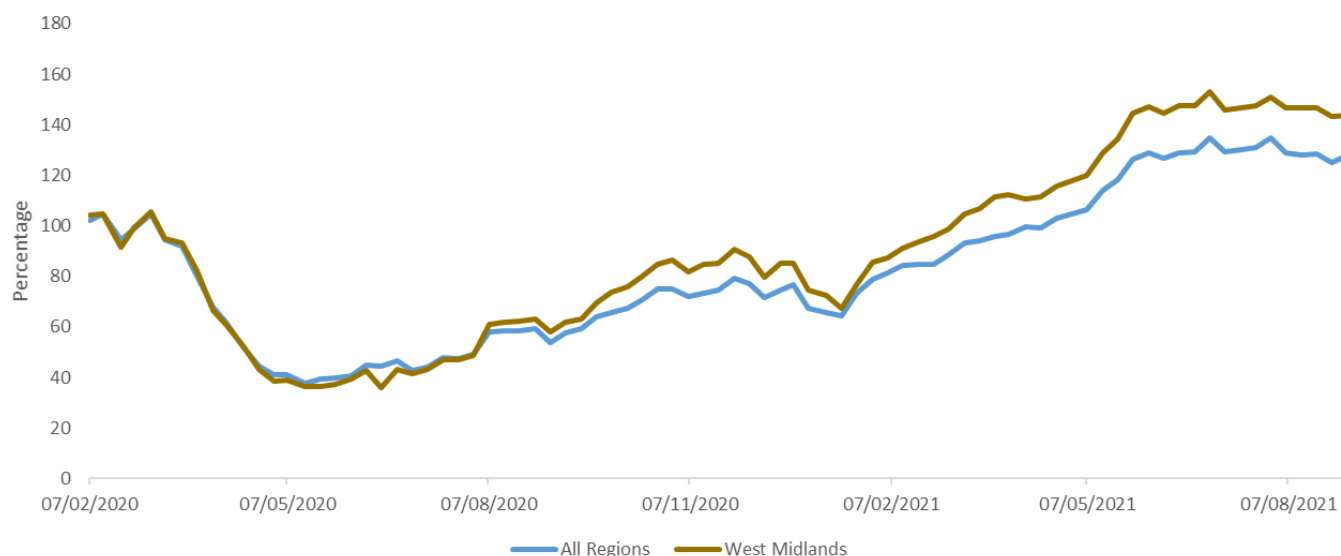
Figures are taken from jobs adverts provided by Adzuna. The Adzuna categories do not correspond to SIC categories and therefore not comparable with the ONS Vacancy Survey. Please note, Index of job adverts on Adzuna by category, 100 = average job adverts in February 2020.

Nationally, between the 27th August and 3rd September 2021 total online job adverts increased by 2.9 percentage points. On 3rd September 2021, total online job adverts were at 127.9% of their average level in February 2020. Out of the 28 categories (excluding unknown) 18 increased and 1 remained the same from the previous week, the largest

increase by 24.5 percentage points (to 160.5%) was part-time/weekend. Of the 28 categories, there were six that were below their February 2020 levels; 'education' (83.1%), 'graduate' (89.9%) 'legal' (90.1%), 'energy, oil and gas' (93%), 'travel/tourism' (96.3%) and 'charity/voluntary' (98.6%).

Between 27th August and 3rd September 2021, the West Midlands region online job adverts increased by 0.2 percentage points. On 3rd September 2021, total online job adverts for the West Midlands was at 143.7% 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 3rd September 2021:



Value Added Tax (VAT) Returns

There were 21,000 new VAT reporters in the UK in August 2021, a decrease of 4% from 21,930 in July 2021. The number of new VAT reporters in August 2021 was 18% higher than in August 2020 (17,730) but 2% lower than August 2019 (21,490). This is also slightly higher than the 2015 to 2019 longer-term average (20,878). The number of new reporters in the production industry rose by 13% from 970 in July 2021 to 1,100 in August 2021. In the services industry, there were 15,900 new VAT reporters in August 2021, a 7% decrease from the 17,140 reported in July 2021.

The month-on-month, all-industry turnover estimate for July 2021 shows that in the past month, out of 38,550 firms, more firms have reported decreasing rather than increasing turnover (net negative 3%). This is the largest negative net difference since April 2020, although it is important to note that the data is unweighted. A net 6% of firms in the construction industry reported decreasing turnover in July 2021. This is the fifth consecutive month where more firms have reported decreasing turnover than increasing turnover in the construction industry. A net 4% of firms in the agriculture industry and 2% of firms in the production industry, reported decreasing turnover in July 2021. Meanwhile, in the services industry, an equal number of firms reported increasing turnover as those that reported decreasing turnover in the last month.

Footfall

According to Springboard, in the week to 4th September 2021, the volume of overall retail footfall in the UK decreased slightly by 1% from the previous week (week to 28th August 2021). In the latest week, retail footfall in high streets decreased by 3%, in shopping centres it remained broadly unchanged from the previous week, and in retail parks it increased slightly by 1%.

In the latest week to 4th September 2021, overall retail footfall was at 84% of the level seen in the equivalent week of 2019. Comparing retail locations, footfall at retail parks remained the strongest relative to pre-coronavirus pandemic levels, at 97% of its equivalent 2019 level. Meanwhile, the corresponding figures was 81% for high streets and 78% for shopping centres.

In the latest week to 4th September 2021, relative to the levels seen in the equivalent week of 2019, retail footfall was strongest in the South West at 90%, followed by the South East and Wales, where footfall was at 87% and 86%, respectively. In contrast, retail footfall was weakest in Scotland and the East Midlands, both at 80% of the level seen in the equivalent week of 2019.

National Company Incorporations and Voluntary Dissolution

Companies House data shows for the UK, there were 12,385 company incorporations in the week to 3rd September 2021. This is down from 13,796 recorded in the previous week and also lower when compared to the same week in 2020 (15,343) and the same week in 2019 (12,714).

Also, for the week to 3rd September 2021, there were 4,880 voluntary dissolution applications, a decrease from 5,814 recorded in the previous week. The number of voluntary dissolution applications was higher than levels seen in the same week of 2020 (4,282) and the same week in 2019 (4,594).

Business Insights and Conditions Survey

The final results from Wave 38 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) based off the 5,083 businesses surveyed across the West Midlands that businesses have a presence in with a response rate of 21.4% (1,087) and to 3,010 businesses that are head quartered in the West Midlands, with a response rate of 20.2% (608). Please note, businesses were asked for their experiences for the reference period 9th to 22nd August 2021. However, for questions regarding the last two weeks, businesses may respond from the point of completion of the questionnaire (23rd August to 5th 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

97.6% of responding West Midlands businesses were trading over the reference period. 1.7% of businesses has temporarily closed or temporarily paused trading and also 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, 27.3% of trading businesses in the West Midlands reported their turnover had decreased by at least 20%. However, 44.6% of trading businesses in the West Midlands reported that their turnover was unaffected and approximately 14.7% reported their turnover had increased by at least 20%.

Excluding 'other' and 'not sure' responses, 52.6% 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, 2.2% reported the main reason as the end of the EU transition period and 15.4% 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, 29.1% of trading businesses in the West Midlands reported profits had decreased by at least 20%. However, 41.4% of trading businesses in the West Midlands reported that profits had stayed the same and approximately 11.3% 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, 25.3% 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, 18.8% in the West Midlands were importing less than normal. 57.4% of West Midlands businesses who were exporting reported that they had not been affected and 64.4% reported that importing had not been affected.

2.3% of businesses in the West Midlands are exporting more than normal and 3.1% are importing more than normal.

3.1% of businesses in the West Midlands have not been able to export in the last two weeks and 1.4% of West Midlands businesses have not been able to import in the last two weeks.

Businesses were asked if they currently use rules of origin to access or zero tariffs on exports, excluding 'not sure' responses, 28.4% of responding West Midlands businesses reported they were not. 8.5% of responding West Midlands businesses they were to EU countries, less than 1% were for non-EU countries and 14.1% reported they were to both EU and non-EU countries.

UKCA Marking

Excluding 'not sure' or 'no' responses, 4% of responding West Midlands businesses manufacture products that need a CE or UKCA marking. 6.8% of West Midlands businesses import products with a CE or UKCA marking and 6.4% distribute products with CE or UKCA markings.

86.6% of responding West Midlands businesses reported they were aware that most CE marked products need to be UKCA marked from 1st January 2022, although 5.6% were not aware.

21.8% of responding West Midlands businesses are already using UKCA marking. 4.9% of West Midlands businesses are not aware of or do not know how to meet the requirements for the UKCA. 39.4% of West Midlands businesses are not using the UKCA marking but plan to by 1st January 2022. 2.1% of West Midlands businesses will not use UKCA marking as it is not relevant to the business or products.

Prices

Businesses were asked how the prices of materials, goods or services brought by their businesses change in the last two weeks in comparison with normal price fluctuations. Excluding 'not sure' or 'not applicable' responses, 24.9% of responding West Midlands businesses reported that prices increased more than normal, 42.1% reported that prices did not change any more than normal. 7.2% of West Midlands businesses reported some prices increased and some prices decreased and less than 1% reported prices decreased more than normal.

Businesses were also asked how the prices of materials, goods or services sold by their businesses change in the last two weeks in comparison with normal price fluctuations. Excluding 'not sure' or 'not applicable' responses, 8.8% of responding West Midlands businesses reported that prices increased more than normal, 62.1% reported that prices did not change any more than normal. 4.1% of West Midlands businesses reported some prices increased and some prices decreased and less than 1% reported prices decreased more than normal.

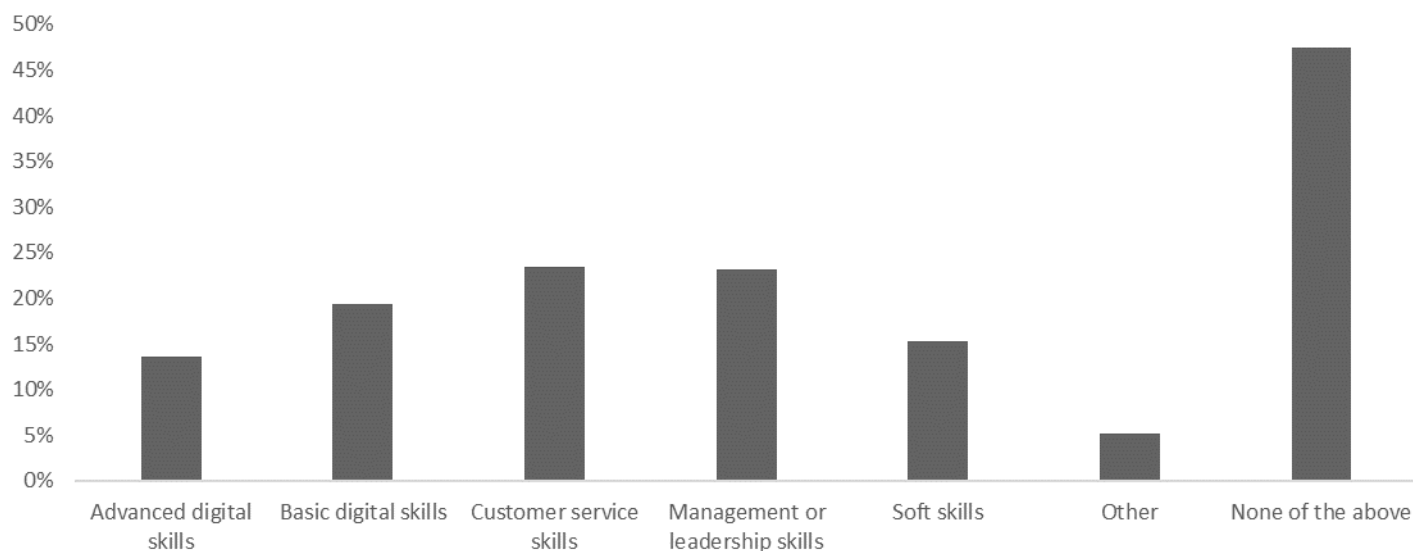
Increases in Demand

12.2% of responding West Midlands businesses reported an increase in demand for goods or services sold in the last two weeks, with 62.6% reporting no increase.

Skills Demand and Support

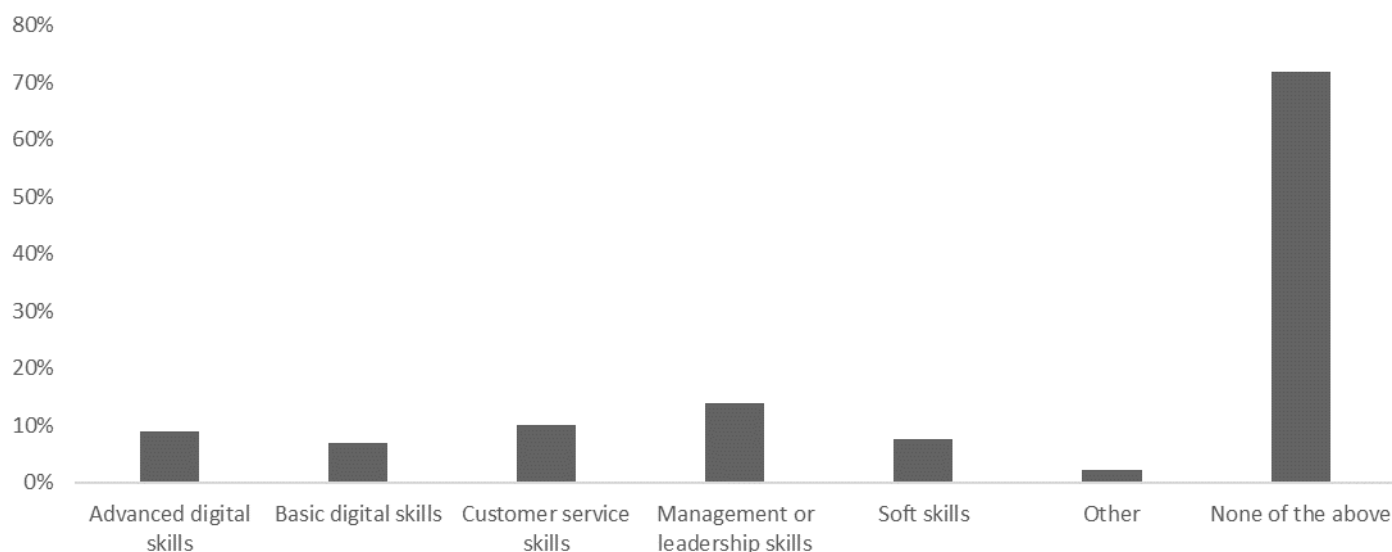
23.5% of West Midlands businesses have experienced an increase in demand for customer service skills.

The following chart shows which skills (if any) West Midlands businesses have seen an increase in demand for in the last 12 months:



13.9% of West Midlands businesses reported their workforce required extra support or training in management or leadership skills.

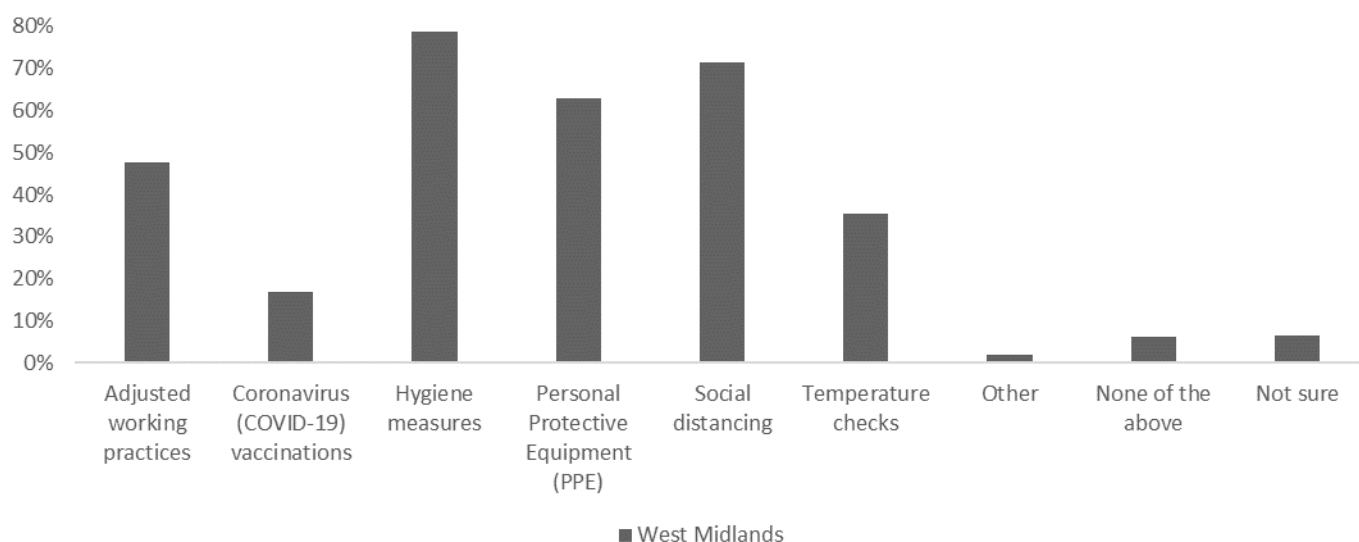
The following chart shows which skills (if any) West Midlands businesses have reported that their workforce requires extra support or training in:



Safety Measures, COVID-19 Testing, Lateral Flow and Contact Tracing

78.7% of responding West Midlands businesses reported they were using, or intending to use hygiene measures as a safety measure in the workplace.

The following graph shows for the West Midlands region what businesses are using or intending to use for safety measures in the workplace:



25.6% of West Midlands businesses reported providing regular COVID-19 testing for the workforce.

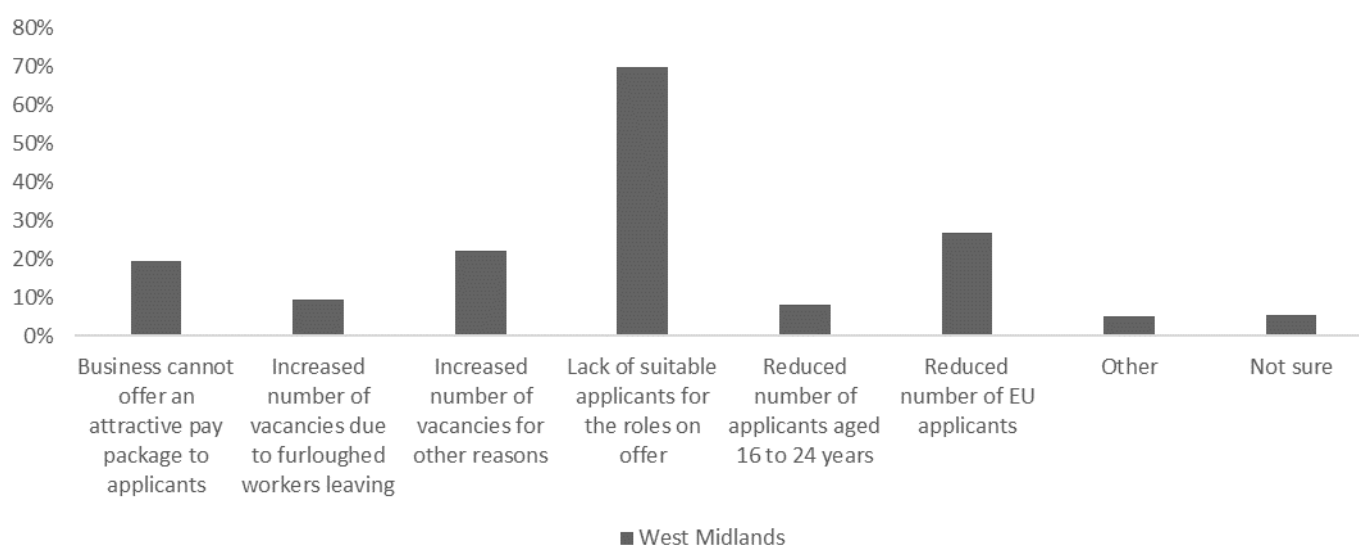
10.6% of West Midlands businesses would be prepared to pay for lateral flow device tests for the employees.

Vacancies

Businesses were asked how the ability to fill vacancies in the last month compare with normal expectations for the time of year. Excluding 'not sure' responses, less than 1% of West Midlands businesses reported that vacancies were easier to fill. 24.6% of West Midlands businesses reported there was no difference in the ability to fill vacancies and 42.8% reported vacancies were more difficult to fill. 13% of West Midlands businesses did not have any vacancies to fill.

Where West Midlands businesses reported that vacancies were more difficult over the last month when compared with normal expectations for the time of the year, the highest response with 70.1% was 'lack of suitable applicants for the roles on offer'.

The following graph shows for the West Midlands region why filling vacancies more difficult over the last month when compared with normal expectations for the time of the year:

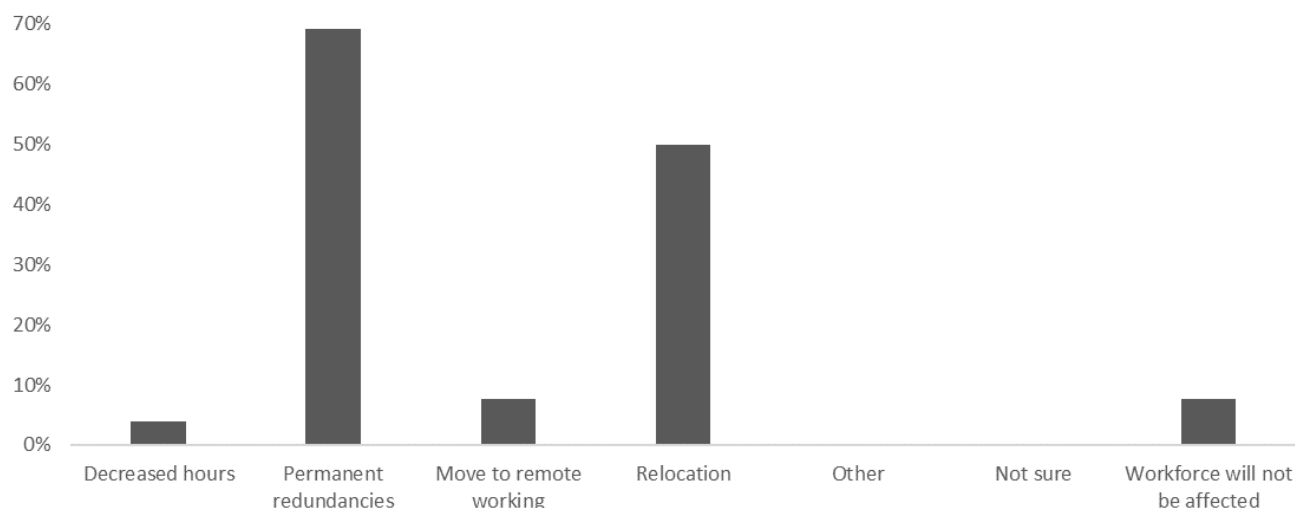


Expected Site Closures

2.4% of responding West Midlands businesses expect to close sites in the next three months. Although, 85.6% of West Midlands businesses reported they did not expect redundancies over the next three months.

69.2% of West Midlands businesses expect to make permanent redundancies by closing the sites.

The following chart shows for the West Midlands region what businesses expect to happen after closing the sites:



Expected Redundancies

5.8% of responding West Midlands businesses expect to make redundancies in the next three months (not linked to expected site closures). Although, 70.5% of West Midlands businesses reported they did not expect redundancies over the next three months.

Innovation

Businesses were asked if their innovation had changed since the start of COVID-19, excluding 'not sure' or 'not applicable' responses, 15.4% of responding West Midlands businesses reported there had been more innovation. 37.3% reported innovation had not changed and 3.7% of West Midlands businesses reported there had been less innovation.

Social Impacts of the Coronavirus

The following refers to the period of 25th August to 5th September 2021. Please note, only a selection of indicators at a regional level are included in the below.

Worries about Returning to School

35% of West Midlands residents with dependent children were very/somewhat worried about the children or young people in their household going back to school or college after the summer holidays (48% GB). While 23% were somewhat/not worried at all (matching GB).

Of those who were very/somewhat worried, neither worried not unworried, somewhat unworried or don't know, 52% were worried about the children or young people catching COVID-19 (58% GB).

Well-Being, Loneliness and Perceptions of the Future

Mean personal well-being scores for life satisfaction was 6.8 in the West Midlands (7.1 GB), worthwhile was 6.9 in the West Midlands (7.3 GB), happiness was 6.8 for West Midlands adults (7.1 GB) and anxious was recorded at 3.9 for West Midlands adults (matching GB).

15% of adults in the West Midlands reported low levels of life satisfaction (7% GB). 15% of West Midlands adults reported low level of feeling worthwhile (7% GB). 17% of responding West Midlands adults reported low level of happiness (11% GB) and 33% reported high levels of anxiety (matching GB).

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

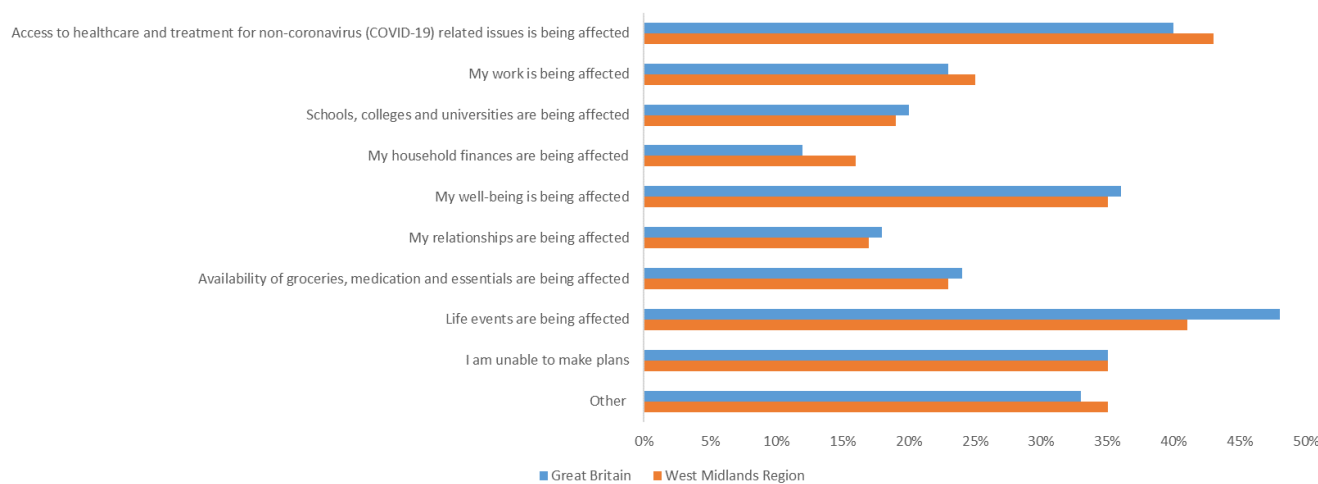
10% of West Midlands adults believe it will take 6 months or less before life returns to normal (12% GB). While 12% of West Midlands adults believed it will take 7 to 12 months (13% GB). 32% of West Midlands adults think it could more than a year to return back to normal (36% GB) and 14% for the West Midlands adults thought it would never go back to normal (11% GB).

Impact on People's Life Overall

In the West Midlands, 56% of adults reported they were very or somewhat worried about the effect COVID-19 was having on their life (50% GB). 16% of responding West Midlands adults reported that they were somewhat unworried or not at all worried (18% GB).

43% of responding West Midlands adults reported access to healthcare and treatment for non-coronavirus related issues is being affected (39% GB).

The following chart shows for the West Midlands region and Great Britain-wide how COVID-19 was affecting adults lives between 25th August and 5th September 2021:



40% of working adults in the West Midlands who say their work had been affected due to COVID-19 (35% GB).

Vaccine Boosters

Among those who have received both doses of a COVID-19 vaccine, 94% of West Midlands adults were very likely or fairly likely to have a vaccine booster jab (93% GB).

48% of West Midlands adults have received a winter flu vaccine in the last 12 months (47% GB). 20% of West Midlands adults were very or fairly unlikely to have the winter flu vaccine (21% GB).

Attitudes to Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions

94% of West Midlands adults reported it was important or very important in washing hands in slowing the spread of COVID-19 (GB 92%).

87% of West Midlands adults reported it was important or very important in wearing a face covering in slowing the spread of COVID-19 (matching GB).

89% of West Midlands adults reported it was important or very important to social distance in slowing the spread of COVID-19 (87% GB).

91% of West Midlands adults reported it was important or very important to use ventilation in slowing the spread of COVID-19 (89% GB).

HEADLINES

SECTOR	KEY INSIGHTS
Cross Sector	<p>Outlook</p> <p>Without performing spectacularly, the West Midlands' economic recovery continues steadily as businesses strive to adapt. A greater rise in business activity and confidence is restricted by staff and raw material shortages, affecting some sectors more severely than others.</p> <p>Business confidence in the region stayed strong during August despite dipping from the previous month, according to new figures. The latest Business Barometer from Lloyds Bank Commercial Banking found confidence in the West Midlands fell three points during August to 27 per cent but remained above the year-to-date average of 23 per cent. There has also been a growth in the number of permanent staff appointments according to the latest KPMG and REC UK Report on Jobs. The report signalled an accelerated upturn in permanent placements during the eighth month of the year as businesses were increasingly confident about market demand as the economy fully reopened.</p> <p>The relative economic stability and normality is clearly having a positive impact on the local business environment – which is much more buoyant than at most times in the last 18 months. However, the positivity exists within a period of sustained uncertainty, with external issues surrounding the legacy of Covid and EU Exit causing businesses many problems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Material shortages and price rises • Skills and labour shortages • Many firms still facing financial hardship from Covid ahead of the end of government schemes like furlough. <p>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.</p> <p>With regard to financial instability, businesses and representative groups are particularly critical of current government policy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Local business leaders say the government's tax hike to fund social care reforms is short-sighted given the challenges already facing firms. Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce say the social care tax rises will take much-needed funds away from businesses who are already facing rising cost pressures. Many businesses are still facing crippling cost pressures and a tax hike which will take much-needed cash away from investment in staff and technology. They urge the Government to use this time to give businesses the confidence they need to move forward and set out a plan which will focus on mitigating Covid-19 related risks whilst also creating an environment that encourages investment and growth. 2) Several businesses in the region have enquired about the possibility of business rate reductions, due to the results of the pandemic and the lack of contracts / depleting order books. This policy issue has been campaigned on consistently by business groups such as CBI, most recently as part of its ask to government for more business friendly policies.

SECTOR	KEY INSIGHTS
	<p>Labour Market</p> <p>A major live issue is the problem of recruiting and retaining suitable staff. 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.</p> <p>Reportedly, employees do not want to return to the office and people are resigning rather than return because they want to continue working from home. Salaries are being pushed through the roof and employees are being poached by competitors in London offering 100% home working with higher wages. Support is sought for adapting businesses to hybrid models and selling the benefits of office working, while revamping companies' digital strategies.</p> <p>Backing this up, several businesses have reported that they are having to offer higher pay packets to improve recruitment of new staff. Businesses that require care assistants, warehouse operatives, hospitality workers and Welding specialists (manufacturing) have all had particular difficulties recruiting.</p> <p>EU Exit</p> <p>As previously reported, the labour shortages problem is, according to many businesses' experiences, caused and exacerbated by the UK's exit from the EU. Businesses are struggling to recruit people for less desirable roles, such as HGV drivers, cleaners and care staff, due to the return of EU nationals to the EU, and reduction in flow of EU migration to the UK.</p> <p>Furthermore, businesses in the region still report that Brexit has caused ongoing disruption at borders. Reliability of carriers is a problem, as is timeliness, losing shipments and delays of incoming goods stuck at the border. In addition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of Blood Vials – As reported in the national press and more regionally, the continued lack of supply of blood vials is now affecting more people and has been highlighted by employers and their affected employees. There is concern that more medical supplies could be affected in the same way. • Supply Chain – Further reports of significantly inflated costs, up to 4 times, of supplies, particularly raw materials such as steel and rubber. Costs inevitably being passed to end consumers. • E-Commerce sector. Businesses who are UK registered and sell via Amazon Seller Central and have DE, FR, IT VAT numbers, currently submit VAT returns via Amazon Seller central with assistance from Avalara. However, they are finding they do not provide the full service we require. Many businesses are owed large sums from local tax authorities, including German. Requests for more guidance and support is needed on claiming VAT back and to ensure businesses are VAT compliant in all EU territories. <p>The UK is set to see a sharp slowdown in economic growth as the mounting supply chain crisis and staff shortages threaten to derail Britain's recovery, according to a major business group. The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) warned there is also a "real danger" the Government's health and social care levy could further stifle the economic bounce-back from the pandemic.</p> <p>Enquiries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grants – Continued interest and regular requests for grants. These referrals continue to be processed with relevant partners with capital purchases and significant private match funding present across all areas of the region. Although this supports the region's recovery, there have been reports that a small number of businesses are putting grant applications on hold as they are too busy and cannot afford to commit the resource to completing the paperwork required.

SECTOR	KEY INSIGHTS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills/Staff Development – Many businesses looking for support for the upskilling and personal development of staff leading to multiple referrals to relevant skills support partners. Some of this leading on to other areas of grant support as projects linked to COVID recovery strategies. • App Development – A flurry of enquiries that involve interesting App Development projects has been seen from a variety of businesses this week. • Premises and sites enquiries are on the increase which points to growth plans for both strategic employers and smaller businesses in the region. • Recruitment – Regional recruitment agencies looking into the technicalities of tapping in to newly available talent pools. Question over whether work could be offered to Afghan refugees that have recently been welcomed into the region. • Electric Vehicles & Rail – A number of businesses involved in the Electric Vehicle and Rail sectors showing increased appetite and interest in being involved with overcoming supply chain issues previously reported. Further investigation taking place to understand what solutions are on offer and how they may assist in overcoming this national problem. • Net Zero: High on the governments agenda and a topic being embraced by local businesses keen to engage with the target of reducing carbon emissions. A number of conscious regional companies looking to revise strategies, part of which is to look to local business to business opportunities for procurement and supply of goods and services.
Retail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the research by PWC more than 1,500 shops disappeared from Midlands retail locations in the first half of 2021 – although the number of closures did fall from the previous year. • In total, 601 shops opened across the region, compared to 1,511 closures, creating a net decline of 910. The number of closures fell from 1,799 in H1 of 2020. • The overall net closure rate for the Midlands fell by 86 (8 per cent) lower than it was at the same point last year, despite some well-known high street fashion and department stores exiting the market in early 2021.
Business and Professional Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SuperTech West Midlands, supported by GBSLEP, has announced the launch of the Connector Series. SuperTech WM is an initiative designed to facilitate collaboration and create a community within different ProfTech sectors (FinTech, LegalTech, PropTech and InsureTech) in the West Midlands. The aim is to grow the tech professional services tech cluster and establish the West Midlands as a world leading destination and a centre of excellence. • According to the survey a large number of mid-size Midlands businesses are looking for private equity investment in a bid to achieve post-pandemic growth. BDO's latest Rethinking the Economy survey of 500 mid-sized companies reveals 26 per cent of companies are actively looking for an investor. Nearly half (48 per cent) have already secured private equity funding since the onset of Covid-19.
Manufacturing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to MakeUK's latest survey, the West Midlands has been the top performer at maintaining manufacturing output levels on average in the second half of the pandemic, posting a positive balance of 12%. • Manufacturing companies are continuing to report difficulties trading with the EU to the Growth Hubs. Requests for more support from Government for training courses to understand documentation and best practice. • Still hard to find answers to simple trading queries on the very complicated.GOV website. • Many manufacturing companies are realising they need to recruit further staff as extra admin continues to be hugely time consuming.
Hospitality / Leisure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses are finding a slow return to pre-pandemic levels, with demand from corporates remaining low, which they are worrying about once school/summer season is over. Pre-pandemic trade is lower than in 2019, even with a VAT reduction.

SECTOR	KEY INSIGHTS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are concerns about being able to fill job vacancies, with a lack of high calibre applicants. Overall, concerned about their balance sheets and future investment potential, given their debts, which they were forced into as a result of the pandemic. Hospitality sectors are specifically increasingly looking for finance towards growth rather than pure survival after many of them went into hibernation over the pandemic. Most of this finance is towards recruitment costs for expanding teams matched with the increased cost per hire you see in a "candidates market".

NEW ECONOMIC SHOCKS

COMPANY	LOCATION	SECTOR	SOURCE/DETAIL
GKN	Birmingham	Automotive	Union members at GKN Driveline in Birmingham have voted overwhelmingly in favour of strike action in the campaign to prevent the closure of the factory and transfer of its work overseas. A GKN Automotive spokesperson said: "GKN Automotive is disappointed by the result of the ballot but respects the right of our colleagues to take legitimate industrial action. However, this does not change our difficult decision to close the Erdington plant." Staff at GKN Automotive in Erdington will begin the industrial action on September 27 which has no fixed end date.
Poundstretcher	Nationwide	Retail	Poundstretcher has been served notice to vacate stores by over 60 landlords. The chain had previously launched a CVA rescue plan in July last year demanding rent cuts.

NEW INVESTMENT, DEALS AND OPPORTUNITIES

COMPANY	LOCATION	SECTOR	DETAIL & SOURCE
Bromwich Hardy	Coventry	Real Estate Activities	Commercial property specialist Bromwich Hardy has secured deals for more than 150,000 sq ft of space at a Coventry industrial site. The firm has secured assignments and a letting of a combined space at Bayton Road Industrial Estate formerly occupied by the Premier Group.
PET-Xi	Coventry	Education and Training	A leading national training provider will be working alongside a prominent further education college in Leamington to help people in the area out of unemployment and into meaningful work. PET-Xi has set up a new office at Royal Leamington Spa College – part of WCG – to deliver the government's Restart Scheme on behalf of Jobs 22 for unemployed people in Leamington, Warwick and Kenilworth.
Coventry Scale Company	Coventry	Manufacturing	Coventry Scale Company, a Coventry weighing company has relocated to a larger office with the support of a five-figure funding package. The new premises has a larger workshop and warehouse, additional office space, plus a product demonstration and training room.
Warwickshire College Group	Warwickshire	Education and Training	A Warwickshire-based college group has secured £1.2m of government funding to expand its range of technical qualifications. WCG, formerly Warwickshire College Group, has been granted the funding from the £50m TLevel Capital Fund.

COMPANY	LOCATION	SECTOR	DETAIL & SOURCE
<u>Carlsberg / Marston's</u>	Wolverhampton	Hospitality	The Wolverhampton-based Carlsberg Marston's Brewing Company is creating 200 new jobs with changes to its logistics network.
<u>Wolverhampton Council</u>	Wolverhampton	Clean Energy	A solar farm the size of 21 football pitches is set to be built in Wolverhampton to produce power for the city's main hospital.
<u>Starbucks</u>	Dudley	Hospitality	A new Starbucks drive-thru and cafe has opened at Merry Hill, creating 20 new jobs.
<u>Amazon</u>	Nationwide	Logistics	Amazon is planning to create another 1,250 jobs across the UK, including at delivery sites in the West Midlands, as part of a major expansion.
<u>Atkins</u>	Birmingham	Engineering, design, planning consultancy and project management	Global consultancy group Atkins has become the latest firm to announce it is relocating its Birmingham office to the £700 million city centre Paradise scheme. Atkins currently has around 850 staff based in Holliday Street at The Axis building but this is due to be demolished and replaced with a brand new block as part of the Axis Square scheme
<u>Eurofins Forensics Services</u>	Birmingham	Professional, scientific and technical services	Eurofins Digital Testing, the global leader in independent Quality Assurance, (QA), software and device testing and cyber and information security for organisations, has set up a dedicated office in Birmingham that will offer its expanding UK-wide client base access to three testing services under one roof – software, cyber security and digital forensics.
<u>COLAS</u>	Birmingham	Civil Engineering	COLAS Ltd have relocated their headquarters from Sussex to the West Midlands. The new offices in Bishops Court, Birmingham Business Park, Birmingham were officially opened on 31 August.
<u>Grand Union: Renovation project of Junction Works building in Digbeth</u>	Birmingham	Infrastructure / Property & Creative and cultural	Birmingham art gallery and artist studios complex Grand Union is beginning the transformation of Junction Works, a Grade II listed building on Fazeley Street, Digbeth, Birmingham, thanks to the flexible approach adopted by Homes England in granting the lease, and a funding package.

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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