

This monitor aims to pull together information across regional partners to understand the impacts of Covid19 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 week**

Across Europe infection rates continue to rise and in the region concern about lockdowns has continued with Birmingham placed on the list of Local Authority Watchlist areas on 21<sup>st</sup> August as an area of enhanced support, while Sandwell remained an area of concern. Universities have continued dealing with admissions. Students received their GCSE results and grades are higher in 2020 than in 2019. Positively, a variety of indicators show that on growth and performance the West Midlands is outperforming many other UK regions.

## **Main points are:**

- Nationally private sector companies reported a sharp and accelerated increase in business activity in August. Regionally the NatWest West Midlands Business Activity Index rose sharply from June to July.
- Restructuring is continuing in retail with redundancies in this sector and also accommodation & food services and manufacturing. There is evidence of some smaller retailers having bounced back to pre-lockdown levels of activity.
- Concerns about the end of furlough and uncertainty regarding Brexit trade deals continue.
- Latest returns show that by the end of June 619,800 workers in the WMCA 3-LEP area had been furloughed, representing a take-up rate of 34% of those eligible. For comparison the UK take-up rate was 32%.
- Much of the labour market emphasis on furlough and the Covid-19 crisis more generally has focused on young people. This is particularly the case in the WMCA given its relatively youthful population. Take-up of furlough nationally is lowest amongst 41-55 year olds, before rising with age. Older workers becoming unemployed are at greater risk of becoming long-term unemployed than younger workers; they are less likely to return to employment after redundancy; they are less likely to participate in training than younger people; and some perceive that their labour market opportunities are curtailed by ageism – which is perhaps exacerbated by Covid-19 health risks.
- The Interim Report of the West Midlands Regional Health Impact of Covid-19 Task and Finish Group highlights interlinked health, socio-demographic and economic impacts of Covid-19. It notes that the health risk associated with older age is lower in the WMCA area than the national average. This is countered by other risk factors including occupation and ethnicity, plus the prevalence of excess weight, diabetes and deprivation. The report emphasises cross-cutting inequalities relating to ethnicity, gender, disability and vulnerability. The economic effects of Covid-19 and uncertainty in employment prospects present challenges for mental health. It notes the importance of maintaining a balance between developing a cohesive regional approach and understanding the specific needs, assets and priorities of local communities.
- With Birmingham appearing on the watchlist as an area of enhanced support there are ongoing concerns about the implications of any local lockdown. Local lockdowns in the UK to date have varied in scope and scale. In the Leicester area the situation was predominantly one of delayed reopening. In Greater Manchester and parts of Lancashire and parts of West Yorkshire there have been bans on household gatherings. In Aberdeen there has been a more stringent 3-week local lockdown in August. Key issues arising in local lockdowns include some confusion about who is in charge and that it can be hard for people to know what they should be doing. The fact that these local lockdowns have coincided with the main summer holiday period and the differences between local lockdowns means that it is hard to make comparisons and extrapolate from these cases to other local areas. At this stage evidence on the economic impact of local lockdowns is limited. High quality data – including on business sentiment – is needed.
- A review of the regional dimensions of the pandemic underscores the uneven geographical distribution of the pandemic within countries, exacerbating intra- and inter-regional inequalities. Other issues of interest include the spatial-industrial organisation of value chains, and environmental issues – in both the short- and longer-term.
- The Covid-19 crisis has led to renewed concerns about the ‘quantity’ of employment but has also highlighted the importance of the foundational economy where low-paid workers such as those in social care have been on the frontline. Good quality jobs (i.e. ‘good work’) is central to levelling up. In policy terms ‘good work’ is not just about discrete interventions, but rather is about making the whole employment and skills system work better.

## Global Outlook

### Ben Brittain WMREDI

Hong Kong is to [suspend some social distancing measures](#) following a reduction in community infection rates. It had recently experienced a small uptick in infection rates which resulted from international travel. A man in Hong Kong caught the coronavirus after recovering from an initial bout in April which required hospitalisation but the most recent reinfection was asymptomatic, indicating the body's immune system potentially remembers the virus and can effectively fight it off.

[Across Europe](#) cases are continuing to rise. One major factor in increased infection rates has been the restart of intra-European travel, including people going on their summer holiday. In Germany almost 40% cases are thought to have been contracted abroad, according to the Robert Koch Institute.

This rate is similar to Italy, where almost a third of new cases were imported from overseas.

[Stock-index futures](#) are indicating a slightly higher open in Europe. This follows on from gains in Asia that have resulted from optimism about treatments for the coronavirus. Cloud and software stocks are likely get a supportive boost in Europe after Salesforce.com Inc. topped analysts' quarterly revenue and profit estimates. This indicates that many corporate customers have responded to the global pandemic and resulting lockdown economic slump by upgrading technology systems to enhance their businesses operations and services.

The headline [German IFO Business Climate Index came in at 92.6 in August](#), which registered stronger than last month's 90.5 while defying the consensus estimates of a lower reading. Germany has extended its job reservation program until the end of 2021. The measure is similar to the UK's furlough program.

Similarly, in France the [INSE's consumer confidence index](#) held at 94 in August, which was unchanged from July. This shows that the two major economics of the Eurozone are (so far) holding steady against market fears of resurgent infection rates, despite a reduction in the Eurozone's August flash PMI.

#### [August IHI Mark / CIPS Flash Composite PMI:](#)

US: 54.7 (18 month high)

Japan: 44.9 (contraction)

UK: 60.3 (82 month high)

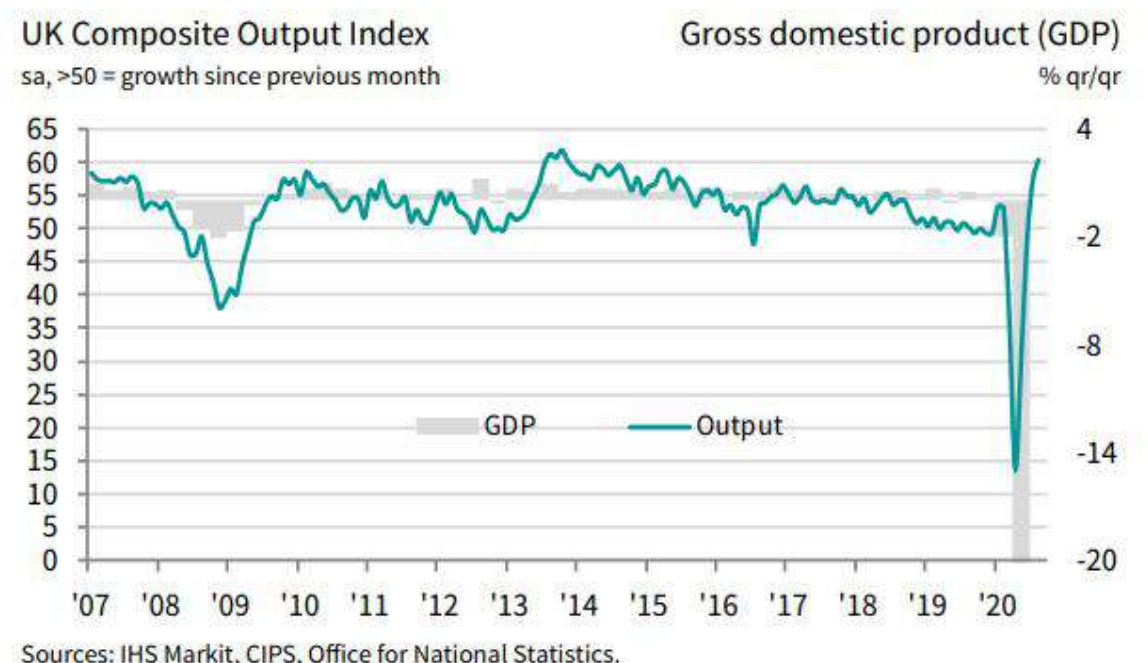
Eurozone: 51.6 (two month low)

### National Outlook

[The HIS Marki / CPS August flash UK Markit flash PMI](#) registered at 60.3, an 82 month high. July registered at 57.0. Anything above 50 denotes growth.

UK private sector companies reported a sharp and accelerated increase in business activity during August. Both the manufacturing and service sectors are continuing to experience a recovery in consumer demand. The headline seasonally adjusted IHS Markit / CIPS Flash UK Composite Output Index –registered 60.3 in August, up from 57.0 in July and signalling the fastest rate of business activity expansion since October 2013.

Manufacturing production (index at 61.6) increased at a slightly quicker pace than service sector activity (60.1) during July, which may indicate an increase in goods domestically and internationally.



The exceptionally higher levels of private sector output is overwhelmingly a result of the reopening of the UK economy after the lockdown period in the second quarter of the year and a subsequent increase in both consumer and business spending.

New order growth was mostly linked to an accelerated reopening among corporate customers, alongside greater willingness-to-spend among UK households.

The Chancellor's Eat Out to Help Out scheme has been a [successful policy intervention](#) at steering consumer behaviour, with over 64 million meals claimed under the discount scheme. The number of people in restaurants is 61% higher than average for Monday to Wednesday last year. 10.5m meals were claimed in the first week, rising to 35m in the second and then shooting up to 64m by the third.



## Regional Outlook

[The headline NatWest West Midlands Business Activity Index](#) – a seasonally adjusted index that measures the month-on-month change in the combined output of the region’s manufacturing and service sectors – rose sharply from 50.4 in June to 61.9 in July.

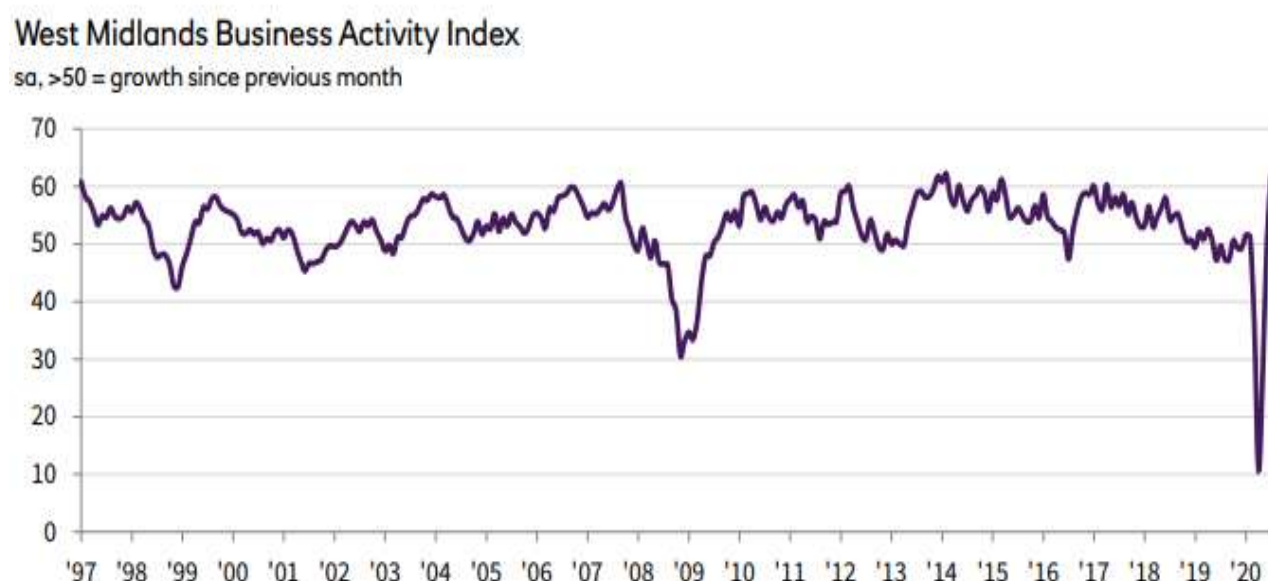
The West Midlands, whilst amongst the hardest hit during the pandemic, is leading the UK regions in its recovery. July PMI registered at 61.9, the highest in the UK, and the second-fastest rate in the survey history.



Private sector firms in the region have reported a substantial increase in new business during July, with the rate of growth surging to the second-fastest since the survey started in mid-1996. The Export Climate Index has risen to growth, from 48.0 in June to 52.4 in July, indicating an improvement in conditions export markets for the first time since January. The latest reading was also the highest since March 2019.

[The labour market](#) in the region faces a mixed but improving picture. The latest KPMG and REC, UK Report on Jobs has stated the wider Midlands region has registered a further reduction in permanent job appointments in July, although this rate of contraction was the softest in the current five-month sequence of falls. This could mean that growth resulting from the ease of lockdown measures is slowing the expected tirade of job losses.

Also recruiters across the Midlands have signalled an increase in the availability of permanent staff during July. The seasonally adjusted Permanent Staff Availability Index rose further from June to register a fresh series record. The Midlands region has also registered by far the fastest increase in permanent availability across the four monitored UK regions, showing that in both growth and employment the West Midlands is outperforming other UK regional peers.



## Qualitative intelligence

Restructuring in the retail sector continues, with liquidations and redundancies. However, there is emerging evidence that some smaller retailers have bounced back and are trading at close to normal conditions.

Redundancies continue in the accommodation and food services sector. The regional response to the 'Eat Out to Help Out' scheme has been positive in general.

In manufacturing redundancies are continuing also. This reflects both lower orders and a realisation amongst some companies that they can be productive with fewer workers.

There are still businesses who have received no support or loans.

Concerns about the end of furlough continue.

Start-up enquiries have increased but some of those coming forward have business ideas that are unlikely to reap rewards in the short-term. Tradespeople working on home improvements are doing well. Estate agents and surveyors are seeing an increase in activity as a result of the Stamp Duty holiday.

Amongst workers who have worked extremely hard in recent months there is some emerging evidence of resentment of those returning from furlough having had an extended period away from work ("on holiday") with full pay.

HR organisations are reporting an increase in tribunal cases. This reflects individuals challenging employers regarding perceived unfair dismissal.

Experience to date and sentiment suggests that office-based businesses will be slow to return to city centres. Partial remote working appears to be more embedded with the passage of time.

EU exit remains a subject of ongoing concern, with businesses calling for certainty about future trading arrangements.

There are concerns about the consequences of a possible local lockdown, with fears that this might cause some businesses to fold. With schools, colleges and universities returning for the new term in the next month there is potential for a rise in infections.

Universities have remained busy with admissions following changes to A level results. Domestic student admissions are looking higher at this stage than was expected a few months ago.

At the height of the summer holiday season it is difficult to interpret trends – i.e. are changes in activity related to changes in the real economy or are they holiday related?

## Examinations: GCSEs

Alex Smith, WMCA

Following last week's discussion of A level results universities have been dealing with applicants with revised results. This has created unprecedented pressures on admissions.

GCSE results were issued on 19<sup>th</sup> August. As in the case of A levels, students did not have the opportunity to sit their exams.

The national profile of GCSE grades across subjects for this year and last shows a sharp increase in GCSE grades awarded across all grades. The comparison of grades below (cumulative from grade 9 down) shows that the greatest difference is around the middle of the grade range:

	2020 (CUMULATIVE PERCENTAGE)	2019 (CUMULATIVE PERCENTAGE)	Difference 2019-2020
GRADE 9	6.6	4.7	1.9
GRADE 8	15.3	11.8	3.5
GRADE 7	27.5	21.8	5.7
GRADE 6	43.3	36.1	7.2
GRADE 5	61.5	53.5	8.0
GRADE 4	78.8	69.9	8.9
GRADE 3	91.0	85.6	5.4
GRADE 2	97.1	94.3	2.8
GRADE 1	99.6	98.5	1.1

The discrepancy between this year (2020) and the previous year (2019) is much narrower at either end of the grading spectrum, with the main effect of using predictions instead of exam assessments being a shift upwards for pupils in the middle who would have received grades 3-7.

This is distinct from how A Levels were affected by the changes; at A Level teachers seldom predicted less than a C grade, meaning that the largest increases were at the low end. However, the largest gap being at the grade 4 level (a 'standard pass', and loosely equivalent to a grade C') indicates there is still a tendency to over-predict at this grade range. Overall, in 2020 78.8% were at grade 4 and above, compared with 69.9% in 2019. The higher overall grade distribution means that some students may receive the grades required for the next stage of their education/ training who would not have done of had they been required to take the exam. The number of exam resits may decrease and some students may find they struggle at the next stage.



## West Midlands Regional Health Impact of COVID-19 Task and Finish Group: Interim Report and Call for Evidence

### Grace Scrivens, Public Health Intelligence Analyst, WMCA Population Intelligence Hub

The interim report demonstrates and reflects on work and analysis of COVID-19 and health inequalities to date which has been carried out by PHE Population Intelligence Hub and stakeholder members of the West Midlands Regional Health Impact of COVID-19 (RHIC) Task and Finish Group. This Group consists of WMCA, PHE, local authorities, universities, community organisations and the NHS. The purpose of the group is to focus on the relationship between disparities analysis from the PHE review and wider health inequalities in the West Midlands region.

The report identifies the Group's concerns around the upcoming challenges facing the West Midlands over the coming months, the unique opportunities that the situation presents, and the next steps for the group's work. It includes a call for evidence as the group begins a short period of stakeholder engagement to inform its work. Importantly, the report is to act as an interim to the more comprehensive Health of the Region report to be published later in the year which will reflect on the implications of COVID-19 in relation to inequalities in health and wellbeing across West Midlands region.

### The health impact of COVID-19

Key points from the PHE Disparities Review are explored in the context of their implications for the health impact of COVID-19 in the West Midlands. Existing population vulnerabilities, risk factors and inequalities facing population groups likely to be disproportionately impacted are considered. These suggest that the risk associated with older age (80 years and above) is lower in the WMCA area than the national average but this is countered by other risk factors. Firstly, occupation and ethnicity: the WMCA area has a higher proportion of jobs within sectors associated with a greater increase in excess all-cause deaths and exposure to infection. Jobs in these sectors are disproportionately held by ethnic groups associated with poorer COVID-19 health outcomes. Secondly, the prevalence of excess weight, diabetes and deprivation in WMCA area increases the prevalence of population groups more likely to be disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 due to

increased risk of complication.

### The immediate consequence of COVID-19 in the worsening inequalities across the life course

There are concerns about the effects that upcoming challenges are likely to have on existing inequalities, and how the economic consequences and wider forms of response may exacerbate problems at each stage of the life course. There is focus on the relationship between health and wealth and the wider determinants of health and wellbeing. Cross-cutting inequalities relating to ethnicity, gender, disability and vulnerability mean that particular groups of people may be disproportionately affected throughout. An inclusive approach which seeks to actively engage seldom heard citizens is essential in supporting services and communities in responding to and recovering from COVID-19.

Focusing on social factors and systemic discrimination can explain some of the ethnic inequalities in relation to COVID-19. These include:

- socioeconomic deprivation due to the links between poor health and poverty and that particular ethnic groups are more likely to be on lower incomes, reside in deprived areas, and live in more crowded households;
- experiencing discrimination and racism on a daily basis which can affect physical and mental health, and experience and access to health services;
- living in more deprived areas with higher levels of pollution;
- poorer access to health services;
- different preferences and attitudes towards health promoting activities;
- impact of genetic factors (which is thought to be marginal).

These issues could mean that BAME children and young people are especially vulnerable to the impacts of COVID-19 and experience a disproportionate effect on children's best start in life, resulting in cumulative disadvantage throughout the life course.

Children and young people are a key population group due to the disruptive impact of educational settings closures, disproportionate effects on early years development and lack of opportunity for social care interventions.

The economic effects of COVID-19 and uncertainty in employment prospects present further challenges for young people's mental health. For working age adults, those already in lower socioeconomic brackets, BAME groups or young cohorts are identified as key groups facing adverse experiences such as job loss. The impact of lockdown measures on those living in unstable or overcrowded accommodation is likely to exacerbate health risks facing these groups. Mental health and wellbeing has been negatively impacted and there are challenges to access to health care, social care and elder care.

### **Opportunities for change and new ways of working**

Alignment of economic recovery planning with existing priorities around inclusive growth, health inequalities and wellbeing and working in partnerships across health and care systems presents a number of current opportunities to address some of the challenges. These include:

- New public focus on health inequalities and public health, including the recently launched national strategy for tackling obesity
- Increased public awareness of infection control
- Reframing of physical activity as an opportunity to be outdoors, socialise, get around safely and improve wellbeing, rather than solely as a tool to promote healthy weight
- New ways of working that maximise use of technology, enabling more flexibility and improving work-life balance as well as reducing environmental impact
- Changes to local delivery models, for example the Black Country Healthcare Mental Health Trust is a new organisation rethinking the delivery model of mental health services to involve voluntary sector, service users and GPs
- Role of communities, for example in driving a collaborative approach to population health management
- Workstreams to ensure that BAME inequalities are considered in all aspects of response and recovery, for example the PHE West Midlands' Health & Wellbeing team has set out a comprehensive programme of work focusing on health inequalities with a specific focus on BAME inequalities through COVID-19 recovery and beyond.
- Drawing down resources to help address structural inequalities, for example through a formal submission to the comprehensive spending review

- Understanding lessons learnt from the first wave from a healthcare perspective
- Pooling and sharing of intelligence and engagement resources and analysis as a regional health systems network

It is important to maintain a balance between developing a cohesive, regional approach and understanding the specific needs, assets and priorities of local communities. Local stakeholders, NHS and primary care providers will play the driving role in mobilising the health system response. This means being clear about where the WMCA can add value to local work, and where that role should focus on co-ordination and collaboration.

Opportunities for action over the longer term include:

- Developing a Health in all Policies approach to embed consideration of physical and mental health across all WMCA policy areas
- Using the Thrive model to improve workforce health and wellbeing, and to address inequalities in education, skills and employment across the region in line with inclusive growth objectives
- Maximising the potential of the 2022 Commonwealth Games to drive down inequalities and deliver a lasting legacy that reduces inequalities, especially in communities hit hardest by COVID-19
- Supporting regional collaboration to tackling health inequalities, especially for groups such as the homeless and migrant populations
- Working with communities, and local and national partners, to improve the recording and routine analysis of demographic data so that we are actively monitoring inequalities and demonstrating progress across the region (e.g. in relation to death certificates recording of details such as faith and ethnicity)
- Supporting local governments in their ambitions to protect and improve the lives of local citizens and work with them to ensure adequate funding for the public health function that has been so important in responding to the current crisis
- Devolution presents a significant opportunity to co-ordinate action across the system in local recovery to improve the wider determinants of health and wellbeing, working in partnership with stakeholders across localities and sectors



## Stakeholder activities:

Examples of regional stakeholder activity in responding to COVID-19 are as follows:

### Public Health England:

- Supporting the Region's local health system in understanding inequalities exacerbated at local level. Working with NHSE on health inequality as a recovery theme and the significant backlog of non-COVID-19 morbidity in light of its effect which may widen existing inequalities. Supporting vulnerable health groups. PHE West Midlands Health and Wellbeing Team have a strong focus on BAME communities moving forward.

### WMCA Population Intelligence Hub:

- Focusing on producing analysis on the existing inequalities in WMCA and WM Region and the implications of COVID-19 in relation to inequalities in health and wellbeing across the West Midlands region. The Hub has been supporting the Regional Health Impact Group in producing the interim report and the Health of the Region report to be published later in the year.

### Councils:

- Walsall Council are using this an opportunity for reset not just recovery. There is focus on mental health and broader communities; building on work that has been carried out around cohesion and connectivity in communities; and building confidence within its communities.
- Wolverhampton Council are focusing on the longer-term impact of unemployment on mental health; children's disruption to education directed towards best start in life; and inequality in healthcare provision.
- Birmingham Council have produced a comprehensive Cabinet report which was published in July 2020 and sets the frame for their work to understand impact over time, as well as sharing what they know now; the Council are building an emphasis around tackling inequalities into Council strategies and delivery planning arrangements, and this will be taken forward by the Health and Wellbeing board sub-group. Focus upon transparency with the public over the next stages.
- Walsall Council and other local authorities across WMCA will be undertaking deep dive community engagement pieces utilising existing various consultation groups to engage and consult and Birmingham City Council is undertaking ethnographic research.

### NHS:

- NHSE are delivering restoration and recovery through the System Transformation Recovery Board (STAR) building health inequalities into governance with STPs and clinical stewardship whilst also standing services back up. Supported by population health management. Adopting digital delivery as a default option, workforce development of the whole clinical team contribution, and adoption of improvement science for productivity and reducing variation. Research focused upon primary care looking at impact on services nationally and regionally, and the impact and challenges on pathway-based services such as cancer and heart disease in comparison to mental health services.
- University Hospitals Birmingham Trust are focusing on the management of increasing emergency attendances and the flow of attendee clusters; focusing on preparedness for a second wave; attention to the nervousness of BAME individuals in presenting at hospital; and over the next two years will concentrate on digital transformation through the use of technology and links into NHS England Improvement approach, and development of patient pathways linking nearby services to population. The Trust has also been participating in national research trials on testing.

Black Country & West Birmingham CCG are focusing on deprived populations groups; urgent care and COVID-19 capacity; forward planning for a second wave; preventative services in the community; and public perception of service access. The CCG has carried out a study looking at the testing of all staff and residents in all care homes across Black Country & West Birmingham. There is also a mortality review underway along with analysis focusing on current impact on local populations in Birmingham, Solihull and Black Country. Black Country Healthcare Mental Health Trust is implementing an approach of Reimagination as part of the NHS programme of 'Recovery and Restoration', and as a newly created Trust are undertaking a programme of working with stakeholders to develop a clinical strategy, embracing the learning and innovation from COVID-19. The model involves the voluntary sector, service users and GPs. The Trust is a member of the MERIT – a partnership involving all the mental health provider Trusts in the West Midlands area and is developing a model which utilises learning from other pandemics, natural disasters and emergency situations to predict the impact on mental health and subsequent demand for mental health services. Community and Voluntary Sector:



- Birmingham Voluntary and Community Sector are focusing on the crisis and recovery by accelerating STP transformation focus on prevention to reduce health inequalities;
- and increasing community capacity.
- BVSC is undertaking a voluntary sector survey which will be published in September 2020 and have been involved with Birmingham City Council Public Health Directorate research on impacts of COVID-19 on BAME communities.

#### Violence Reduction Unit:

- Supported delivery partners to transition services to enable the delivery of detached youth work and remote intervention and support services. The effectiveness of this is being monitored with a view to upscaling activity in the future, recognising the complexity of the digital divide and other inhibitors to equal access to services.
- VRU programmes include support for the education system; practical and financial support to commission interventions; and the delivery of a programme of activities for vulnerable young people.
- The VRU executive group is supporting member organisations to identify opportunities to improve approaches to community engagement and youth voice.
- Delivering place-based support in seven communities across the region this year, layering initiatives from different organisations in order to reduce vulnerability. Each of these is steered by a committee which brings together community members and organisations that deliver services in those localities.

#### Universities:

- West Midlands Universities are balancing exiting lockdown in September to avoid a greater economic hit on the West Midlands Universities sector against the impact that young people moving into the region will have upon the system and perceptions in local places. The Universities are involved with the Midlands Engine funded Mental Health Productivity Pilot (MHPP), led by Coventry University, and includes looking at the impact that COVID-19 has had on small, medium and large enterprises.
- WM-REDI and WMCA Office of Research & Data Analytics are focusing on the economic impacts of COVID-19 and producing an on-going weekly economic monitor, as well as the State of Region Report which links to the impact of COVID-19 on inequalities.

#### A call for evidence

Feedback from communities has highlighted a number of issues contributing to the inequalities identified and where improvement is needed across the system. For example, access to health services and other services or networks; opportunities to participate in activities that improve health and wellbeing; changes in employment or working patterns; additional challenges in circumstances such as care responsibilities or domestic violence; and racism and structural disadvantage.

The RHIC Group is working with partners and stakeholders across the region to build on this feedback and develop an approach to recovery from COVID-19 that takes into account the experiences, needs and priorities of our citizens.

The project aims to consolidate existing evidence from across the region and then identify common themes as well as issues specific to localities, identify any gaps in the evidence and make plans to address them.

The call for evidence hopes to hear from public agencies, local services and community groups and individuals. The Call for Evidence closes on Monday 14 September 2020 – [submit your evidence](#).

Alternatively, if you are interested in contributing please contact [Grace.Scrivens@phe.gov.uk](mailto:Grace.Scrivens@phe.gov.uk) who will be able to provide you with more information.

## Local Lockdowns

Anne Green, WMREDI

### What are local lockdowns?

Tackling economic and public health challenges will [require targeted policies that are sensitive both to the spread of the disease and the economic costs of different interventions](#). Local lockdowns are one element of such targeted policies. A local lockdown is a partial or full re-imposition of measures to control the spread of the coronavirus in a specific locality, or the deferring of planned easing of restrictions, in response to a localised spike in infections.

In England, unitary metropolitan councils and county councils with a high number of cases or a rising rate of increase of cases are designated to one of three categories, allowing regional and national resources to be provided to support local authorities when needed:

- ‘Areas of concern’
- ‘Areas of enhanced support’ – where additional resources, such as mobile testing capacity may be provided
- ‘Areas of intervention’ - where additional restrictions such as the closure of premises may be introduced

Local authorities in England in ‘areas of concern’ and ‘areas of enhanced support’ can close individual premises and public spaces. Local authorities have also been given resources to conduct localised contact tracing programmes. More stringent restrictions can only be introduced through regulations made by central government.

### The UK experience of local lockdowns

In the UK **local lockdowns to date have varied in scope and scale**. The UK’s first local lockdown was applied in Leicester and parts of Leicestershire. On 30<sup>th</sup> June non-essential retail was required to close and residents were banned from staying overnight away from their homes. On 4<sup>th</sup> July pubs, restaurants and cafes remained closed when they opened elsewhere in England (i.e. there was delayed opening here rather than closure of premises that had reopened). Some pubs close to but beyond the local lockdown area also remained closed due to concerns about attracting large numbers of people from Leicester. **Restrictions were lifted gradually and at different speeds across the local lockdown area**, with

restrictions in those areas outside the city of Leicester and Oadby and Wigston lifted on 18<sup>th</sup> July. In Oadby and Wigston local restrictions were lifted on 1<sup>st</sup> August. On 3<sup>rd</sup> August restaurants, cafes and bars were permitted to open in all postcodes. At the time of writing some restrictions on meeting with people outside the household remain in place. **Leicester is the only place in the UK where some level of stricter restrictions have been in place continuously since the original national lockdown at the end of March.** *This means the experience of Leicester is distinctive as the experience is one predominantly of delayed re-opening, with non-essential retail closing relatively soon after re-opening.* Leicester and Leicestershire schools re-open in the last week of August (a week before most other places in England).

Elsewhere in England local restrictions were subsequently introduced in **Luton**, Greater Manchester, parts of Lancashire and parts of West Yorkshire.

In Luton restrictions were short-lived, with a delay in opening indoor gyms, swimming pools and other sport and exercise facilities from 25<sup>th</sup> July (when they opened elsewhere in England) until 1<sup>st</sup> August.

In **Blackburn with Darwen** the same delay on opening was imposed from 25<sup>th</sup> July. Subsequently, along with some other **parts of Lancashire, Greater Manchester and parts of West Yorkshire** a ban on household gatherings (other than for members of support bubbles) in each other’s homes or gardens was imposed from 5<sup>th</sup> August. Pubs, restaurants and cafes remained open and there have been no extra restrictions. Continuing the pattern of different areas moving out of lockdown at different speeds, Wigan and Rossendale will be moved out of local restrictions on 26<sup>th</sup> August. However, **additional local restrictions** have been imposed in **Oldham, parts of Blackburn and parts of Pendle**. These involve that residents should not socialise with people they do not live within indoor public venues – such as pubs, restaurants, cafes, shops, places of worship, community centres, leisure and entertainment venues, or visitor attractions, and not socialise with people they do not live within other outdoor public venues such as parks.

With regard to **travel** the advice is that individuals should try not to share a car with those outside their household or social bubble. If they do share the transport with the same people each time. Residents should not travel outside of your area to meet people other than those in your support bubble, in their homes or gardens, or indoor public places. In the areas with additional restrictions public transport should be used only for essential reasons – getting to and from work, getting essential food and medical supplies, supporting the vulnerable, for exercise, for attending a nursery, school or college. *It is too soon for evidence to emerge on the impact of limitations on the use of public transport.*

In **Northampton** the surge in cases was linked to a particular food factory and action taken has been for the food factory to close and for the workers to self-isolate. *An issue raised by this case is that of car sharing for journeys and spread of coronavirus amongst residents of HMOs.* It is worthy of note here that operatives in food factories tend to be low-paid workers.

In **Scotland** the main local lockdown of note has been in **Aberdeen** from 5<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> August. This has been *the most stringent local lockdown other than in Leicester*. Bars, cafes and restaurants were required to close. Residents were advised not to meet other households indoors or travel more than five miles for leisure or recreation. Visits to hospitals and care homes were limited to essential visits. Pupils returned to school for the new term on 17<sup>th</sup> August during this lockdown. The Chair of the Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce has called for the UK Government's Eat Out to Help Out scheme to be extended the city given that it is the only place in the UK that has been unable to take advantage of it to date. He has *citing the importance of encouraging spending and building consumer confidence* for economic recovery. An Aberdeen Local Restrictions Business Support Fund **provides a** £1m grant support scheme for businesses in Aberdeen City, which will provide grants of up to £1,500 to businesses most affected. The support package, which is being administered by Aberdeen City Council, also includes a discretionary fund to offer support for businesses in sectors not required to close by the regulations.

#### **Indicative lessons from local lockdowns in the UK** *(N.B. these should be interpreted with caution)*

1. (Especially in Leicester) it was not clear who was in charge and at the outset what the boundaries of the local lockdown area were.

2. Life is simpler in a national lockdown than in a local lockdown when it is sometimes hard to know what you should be doing.
3. Mixed messages between national and local scales do not help.
4. Colleagues at the same workplace may be subject to different rules in their home areas.
5. While conditions for social distancing in workplaces are a concern, so is travelling to work – either lift sharing or in public transport. Low paid workers who have fewest travel options, who are unlikely to be able to work from home, and who may live in overcrowded conditions are at greatest risk here.
6. Postal addresses do not necessarily reflect administrative areas of residence, so leading to confusion – e.g. some residents of Greater Manchester have Cheshire postal addresses and may not consider themselves living in Greater Manchester, while some residents of Leicestershire outside the Leicester/Leicestershire local lockdown area have a Leicester postcode. This means that some people might be unaware that local lockdown restrictions apply to them, while residents in areas close to local lockdown areas may be negatively impacted also.
7. Areas close to, but outside, local lockdown areas may feel negative impacts of local lockdowns.
8. For the most part local lockdowns in the UK have coincided with the main summer holiday period and it is difficult to judge whether any changes in footfall in city centres and changes in business travel are related to local lockdown or to a summer holiday effect.
9. Local lockdowns may further slow a return to city centre office working.
10. The local lockdowns themselves are very different. This means it is difficult to make comparisons between them and to extrapolate from them to any future local lockdown in the West Midlands.

#### **Limited robust evidence of economic impacts of local lockdowns**

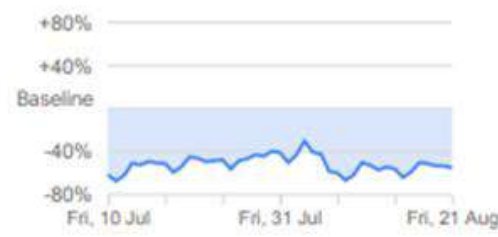
Covid-19 Community Mobility Reports from Google for the period to 21<sup>st</sup> August do not provide definitive evidence on the negative impact of local lockdowns.



## Aberdeen City

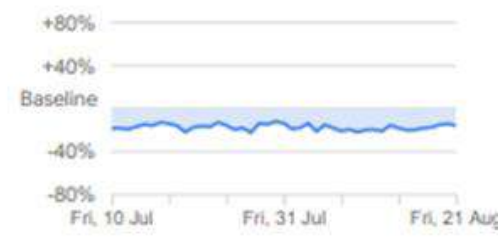
### Retail and recreation

**-55%** compared to baseline



### Supermarket and pharmacy

**-16%** compared to baseline



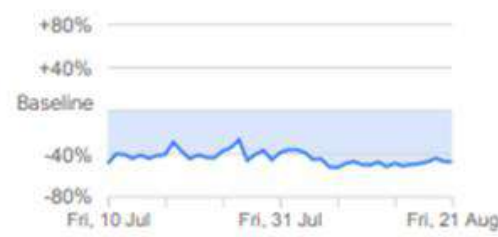
### Parks

**+28%** compared to baseline



### Public transport

**-48%** compared to baseline



### Workplaces

**-50%** compared to baseline



### Residential

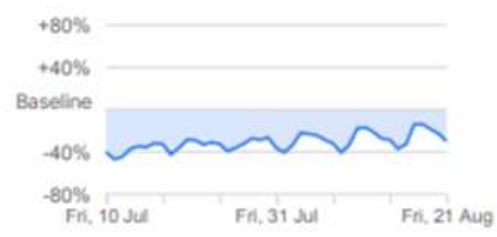
**+17%** compared to baseline



## Greater Manchester

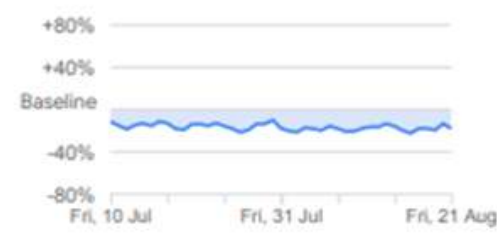
### Retail and recreation

**-30%** compared to baseline



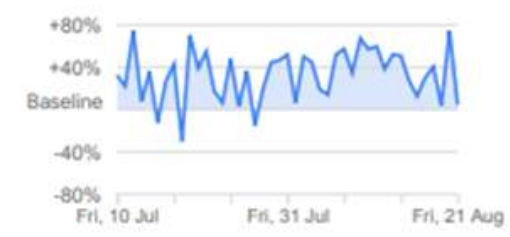
### Supermarket and pharmacy

**-18%** compared to baseline



### Parks

**+5%** compared to baseline



### Public transport

**-49%** compared to baseline



### Workplaces

**-46%** compared to baseline



### Residential

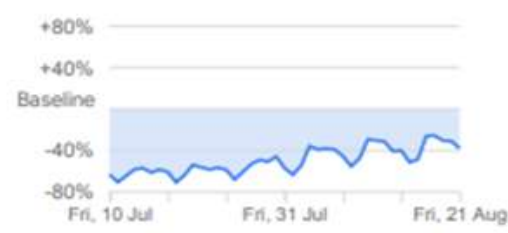
**+12%** compared to baseline



## Leicester

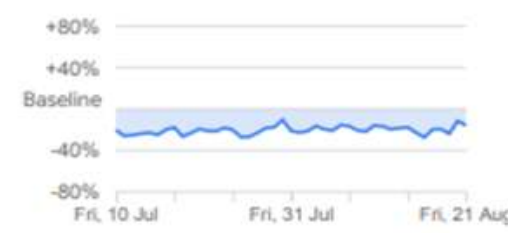
### Retail and recreation

**-38%** compared to baseline



### Supermarket and pharmacy

**-16%** compared to baseline



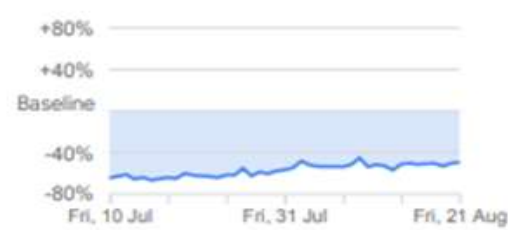
### Parks

**+27%** compared to baseline



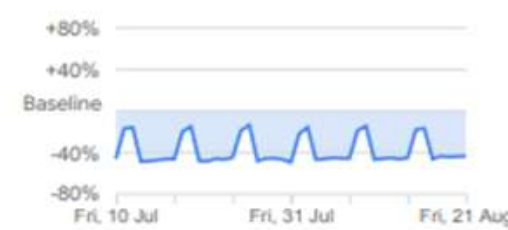
### Public transport

**-49%** compared to baseline



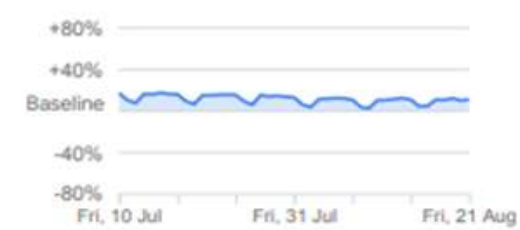
### Workplaces

**-44%** compared to baseline



### Residential

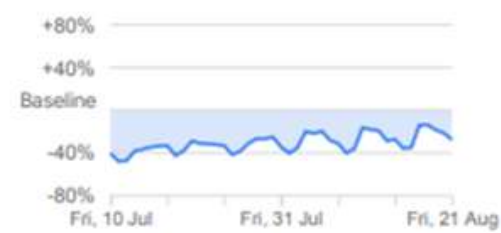
**+11%** compared to baseline



## West Midlands

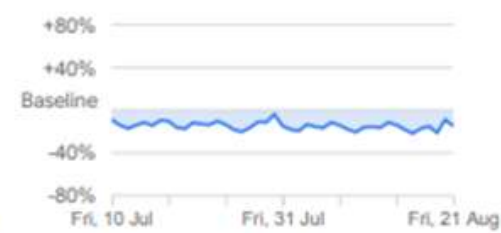
### Retail and recreation

-28% compared to baseline



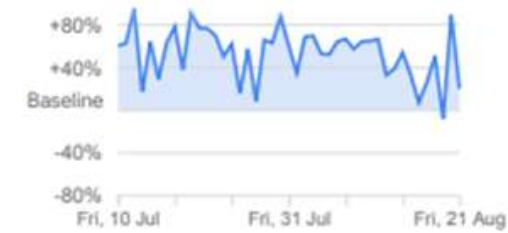
### Supermarket and pharmacy

-15% compared to baseline



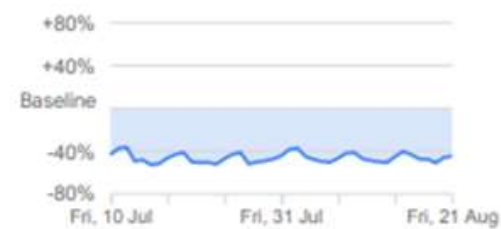
### Parks

+20% compared to baseline



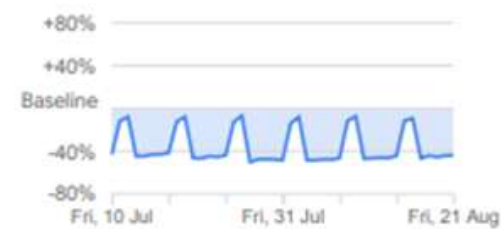
### Public transport

-45% compared to baseline



### Workplaces

-44% compared to baseline



### Residential

+11% compared to baseline



## The Melbourne experience

**Outside the UK** one of the most stringent lockdowns in a western democracy has been in the **city of Melbourne and Victoria, Australia**. In early August the city of Melbourne moved to [Stage 4 restrictions](#) for six weeks. These involve:

- Curfew between 8 pm and 5 am.
- Leaving home is allowed only for four reasons: shopping for food and essential items (within 5 km of home or to nearest location), care and caregiving, daily exercise (for up to one hour within 5 kms of home) and work. Employers must support workers to work from home if they can.
- You cannot have visitors or go to another person's house unless it is for the purpose of giving or receiving care.
- Restaurants and cafes can operate as takeaway only.
- Hairdressers and beauty salons are closed.
- Warehouses (in Melbourne) are limited to two-thirds of their normal workforce onsite at any time.
- Major private construction projects have been limited to only 25% of their normal workforce onsite.
- Students are working remotely and childcare is closed except for vulnerable children.

**Sectors that are particularly hard hit** include non-essential retail, hospitality and construction.

This hard lockdown comes after the first coronavirus restrictions in Victoria in March being largely lifted in May, followed by new restrictions in July and a hard lockdown in August. These are stringent measures and the sentiment is that the ramping up restrictions could be the end for businesses struggling to operate, such that they might cease trading. There are fears that the local restrictions in Victoria are damaging confidence, investment and spending in other states of Australia.

Around 39% of jobs lost in Victoria by mid-April had been regained by 27 June, but by early August this had reduced to 12 per cent.

The impact can be seen in Covid-19 Community Mobility Reports from Google for Melbourne compared with Sydney.

Covid-19 Community Mobility Reports from Google for the period to 21<sup>st</sup> August do not provide definitive evidence on the negative impact of local lockdowns.



## Melbourne City

### Retail and recreation

-88% compared to baseline



### Supermarket and pharmacy

-56% compared to baseline



### Parks

-69% compared to baseline



### Public transport

-87% compared to baseline



### Workplaces

-70% compared to baseline



### Residential

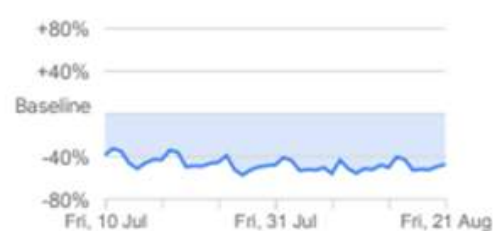
+38% compared to baseline



## Council of the City of Sydney

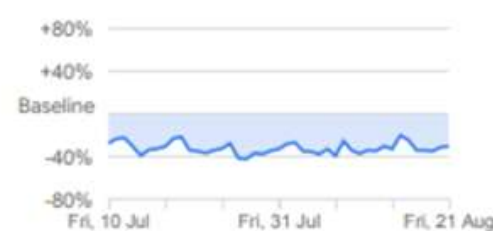
### Retail and recreation

-48% compared to baseline



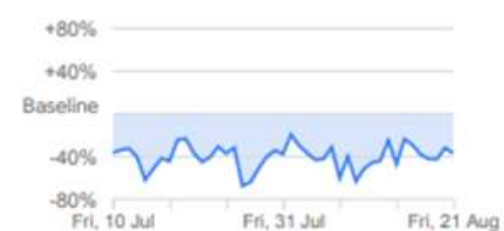
### Supermarket and pharmacy

-30% compared to baseline



### Parks

-37% compared to baseline



### Public transport

-56% compared to baseline



### Workplaces

-42% compared to baseline



### Residential

+17% compared to baseline



## Compliance with local lockdown rules

Whether people comply with local lockdown rules is a function of motives (for example, economic or social factors), capabilities (having the knowledge or resources available to comply with the rules), a respect for the law, and the risk of detection and punishment (including severity) if caught. Awareness of rules – through sharing in traditional and social media – is also key. Visibility of required behaviours (e.g. wearing face coverings, (breaking a) curfew) is also an element in compliance. However, [research from the US](#) highlights that

compliance is also influenced by the many opportunities for people to break the rules, impulsiveness (vs self-control) and the perceptions of what others are doing. If people believe there is widespread non-compliance, it often leads to further non-compliance. People are more likely to follow rules when the authorities are clear in their directions of what is and is not allowed, so that there is clarity about what is required, why, where, when and for how long.



## Economic aspects of the COVID-19 crisis in the UK: DELVE Report No. 5

**Chloe Billing, WMREDI**

On the 14<sup>th</sup> August, the DELVE initiative released their fifth report on the economic aspects of the COVID-19 crisis. DELVE: Data Evaluation and Learning for Viral Epidemics is a multi-disciplinary group, convened by the Royal Society, to support a data-driven approach for managing the pandemic. The report draws on recent economic work and includes insight on the following: (i) economic models that can incorporate insights from epidemiology; (ii) evidence of the pandemic's economic impact; and (iii) data, tools and methods that will be useful in monitoring the economy as it attempts to recover.

This blog pulls out key findings from the report that specifically relate to the West Midlands economy and provides further context, based on research that we are undertaking at [WM REDI](#). The link to the full report can be found [here](#).

### The Importance of Data

The report highlights the importance of accessing a range of high-quality data sources (including on public transport, consumer spending and financial transactions) to inform strategic and tailored policymaking. This attests to the value of this weekly West Midlands monitor and the ongoing work of the [Office for Data Analytics](#).

The report specifically points to the value of increasing access to payments data, which is typically held by private/commercial institutions. The primary advantage of payments data is it provides a near real-time account of economic activity, supporting evidence-based timely policy responses. Additionally, the granularity of payment data provides a measure of the extent to which individual firms and households are affected by economic shocks. This can be used to point to the heterogeneity across income groups, as well as, the impact of uncertainty on different consumption patterns. For example, analysis of granular financial transactions data by the DELVE initiative (2020) revealed, *“More affluent households have increased substantially their savings during the lockdown by cutting non-essential spending”*. In contrast, low-earning families *“have increased their borrowing to fund spending on essential consumption such as groceries, food, and utility bills”*.

Granular datasets such as these are important, since aggregate measures like changes to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employment are limited in telling the full story of the impact of the pandemic. The report calls for action from the UK government to ensure more financial data is made available for such analysis.

In addition to having access to a range of data sources, policy makers need to be flexible to make adjustments in accordance with the data as the epidemic evolves and uncertainties change. For example, *“labour market strategy should be sensitive to the persistence of the crisis and the likelihood of further waves of infection”* (DELVE, 2020).

Analysing the impact of the crisis on the economy needs to consider the impact of human behavioural changes on key business and household decisions. This requires an understanding of the “incentives and disincentives that firms and households face” (DELVE, 2020). This understanding can be reached by surveying individual households, entrepreneurs and risk capital providers, an activity which is currently been undertaken by multiple regional stakeholders including the [MIT REAP West Midlands](#) cohort.

### Nature of Sectors and Supply Chains

The report outlines the importance of recognising the interdependencies between different sectors when measuring the impact of the pandemic. This interdependency means that changes or policy measures on one sector can have a ‘knock on effect’ on other sectors in the economy. The way in which different sectors are interlinked was also highlighted in Dr Andre Carrascal Incera’s recent [blog](#) on the ‘Economic Exposure to COVID-19’ using the SEIM-UK Input-Output framework. For example, the Health Care system relies on: basic pharmaceutical products and pharmaceutical preparations; Computer, electronic and optical products; Scientific research and development services; Architectural and engineering services; technical testing and analysis services; and Residential care and social work activities. Similarly, in a recent [policy briefing](#) Dr Amir Qamar and Professor Simon Collinson pointed to the interconnected nature of automotive supply chains and the high concentration of other firms that are highly dependent on the industry.

The DELVE Initiative (2020) also outlines the consequences of global supply chains and how “the effectiveness of the existing UK strategy will depend on the policies that other countries implement”.

The DELVE Initiative (2020) also outlines the consequences of global supply chains and how “the effectiveness of the existing UK strategy will depend on the policies that other countries implement”. Some specific sectors are more exposed to supply chain fragmentation in the West Midlands, as argued by [Dr Andre Carrascal Incera](#). For example, 18.8% of the machinery and equipment sector is related to foreign exports. Similarly, manufacturing of transport equipment, central to the economy of the region, mainly sells its products for foreign markets (18.6%). Of the top-ranking sectors related to foreign exports, the analysis identified administrative and support service activities, whereby 22.1% of its activity would be directly and indirectly affected by a shock in foreign exports in general. In a recent [blog](#) Professor Raquel Ortega-Argiles also concluded that the West Midlands region has the highest EU trade dependency in imports. The DELVE (2020) report outlines how “these exposure levels have brought to the forefront the need to monitor and design supply chains that are responsive to shocks”. For example, it is important to understand which industry sectors and specific firms are essential for meeting demand of key goods and services in a crisis. Policy interventions to avoid supply chain disruption in the future would require more granular data to answer these questions. Professor Raquel Ortega-Argiles’s [blog](#) also stressed the value for the region to develop an ‘economic diversification strategy’ around its core set of existing capabilities and skills, since technological diversification has proved to be associated with stronger and more resilient growth.

### Intra-regional Inequalities

The report also explores the uneven distribution of the economic effects of the pandemic and calls for any policy interventions to account for how different households and firms have been impacted differently. For example, there is evidence to suggest that women have been hit harder by the impact of pandemic. This was consistent with the findings in a recent [blog](#) by Professor Anne Green, which argued that women – particularly those from BAME groups – are on the frontline of the Covid-19 crisis. This is a result of women comprising a large proportion of health/care workers and also being concentrated in sectors and occupations vulnerable to precarity and poverty. Furthermore, Professor Green found that women in social grades D and E have been disproportionately impacted by furlough and amongst parents; a mothers’ work time is more likely to be interrupted by caring responsibilities than fathers’ work time. The crisis has exacerbated gender inequality in the labour market. Furthermore, the DELVE (2020) report

argues that low-earning workers are in jobs that tend to be harder to perform remotely, increasing their risk of unemployment or infection in the workplace, if mitigating steps are not taken. The adaptation to working from home is not always possible and has been unequal across different occupations and industries.

Understanding what drives differences in the ability to work from home across workers and firms is important for understanding what future policies around homeworking should be.

### Policy Recommendations

The report concludes with a set of ‘smart’ non-pharmaceutical interventions, which take into account the findings from the DELVE initiative. These policy recommendations are primarily aimed at the national level, but are also relevant to have sight of at regional and local levels:

**Workplace rotation schemes:** Rotations or split shifts have an exponential impact on infection rates, for example having just two cohorts or rotations within a workplace.

**Subsidised workplace testing:** Test-Track-Isolate (TTI) could help identify and control workplace outbreaks quickly, particularly in key sectors and those occupations in which ‘high-contact’ is a feature.

**Flexible furloughing:** A more flexible furlough scheme could help to open up the labour market and incentivise business investment in new home-working technologies. With the possibility of continued economic disruption in 2021 and beyond, there is a need to develop effective job-creation schemes in occupations and firms that can adapt to these new circumstances.

**Sick pay:** Current sick pay arrangements create a financial disincentive to self-isolate, with half of workers continuing to work through mild coronavirus symptoms, which in turn makes it more difficult to control transmission. Reviewing statutory sick pay could help incentivise those with symptoms to self-isolate.

**Reopening schools:** Schools can prepare for potential future resurgence of the epidemic with rotation schemes and better online provision for teaching and examinations.

**Capitalising on government commitments to net zero and addressing regional inequalities:** The government before the crisis had committed to net zero carbon emissions by 2050 and to 'level up' the economy. A recovery plan could seek to progress these agendas. For example, promoting employment schemes supported by training programs in clean energy sectors and home insulation can aid in reducing carbon emissions.

**Unemployment support:** As the furlough scheme unwinds, it may be beneficial to review the design of unemployment support systems and schemes designed to help individuals back into work.

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[The DELVE Initiative \(2020\) \*Economic Aspects of the COVID-19 Crisis in the UK\*](#). DELVE Report No. 5. Published 14 August 2020.



## Regions in a time of pandemic

Raquel Ortega-Argiles, WMREDI

This blog is based on the latest editorial in *Regional Studies* "[Regions in a time of pandemic](#)" (Bailey et al., 2020) which considers some relevant regional dimensions of the Covid-19 pandemic and some potential avenues for research on the topic.

The virus's impact has been **unevenly distributed geographically**, and it is also expected that the current economic crisis will have a more considerable variation within countries than between them. In Europe a small fraction of the 500 NUTS-3 regions accounts for a majority of Covid-19 deaths (Guibourg, 2020). Examples of this sub-national dispersion can be found in Italy and the United States. In Italy, Lombardy has reached almost 50% of the total national cases ([Ministerio della Salute, 2020](#)). In the United States, New York and New Jersey have been the areas more affected from 2000 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants to only 60 in Hawaii ([Coronavirus Resource Centre, 2020](#)). The pandemic has affected diverse geographical areas from dense urban places to smaller cities in a rural environment where "superspreading" events have occurred, and these seem to be the ones that have experienced the highest number per capita (see Kuebart and Stabler, 2020 for the German case).

The **economic impacts of the pandemic** are also uneven at the regional level ([KPMG, 2020](#)) mainly linked with the regional industrial composition and general regional conditions (see Ascani, 2020 for the Italian case). Regions heavily reliant on tourism are expected to be amongst the most economically affected. The current crisis, then, is undoubtedly a regional one, with significant consequences for economies, well-being, transportation and everyday life and with a call for place-based and place-sensitive policies. It is expected that the pandemic will exacerbate the trends seen over the past 40 years in **intra- and inter-regional inequality**. In particular, evidence suggests that the virus has disproportionately affected the lives of people living in disadvantaged locations and conditions (Williamson et al., 2020).

The timing of **policy responses** has also had a substantial effect on the uneven regional distribution of the Covid-19 crisis. The OECD has produced six comprehensive briefings on policy responses on the topics of cities, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), tourism, rural development, and the territorial and multilevel

governance impacts and challenges of Covid-19 (OECD 2020a, 2020b, 2020c, 2020d, 2020e, 2020f).

**The spatial-industrial organisation of value chains.** There is a big debate, linked to the theories on global production networks and "strategic coupling" and the role of proximity versus distance, around how the pandemic may potentially impact the location/geography of logistics/distribution and production processes (value-chain spatialities). The pandemic has had a severe effect on the most sophisticated value-chains such as in the automotive and aerospace industries. Given mobility restrictions and the need to be closer to markets and in order to increase value-chain resilience against a potential logistic interruption, locations (sub-urban areas) that have been mainly specialised in logistics may eventually be transformed into new locations of localised manufacturing. These potential new trends in value-chain spatialities are seen to be heavily influenced by the role of regional, industrial and firm institutional and governance structures. The role of knowledge and governance may have increased in importance during these last months, in that the role of online communication and "open innovation", "open science" and "open strategy" may have changed the way that proximity is understood as it becomes more virtual, temporary and network-based.

The opportunities and challenges associated with the '**Fourth Industrial Revolution**' driven by advances in automation, robotisation, sensors, drones, artificial intelligence, were already being widely discussed prior to the Covid-19 crisis, and how the crisis will have impacted on these issues is as yet unclear. On the one hand, many of these technologies allow production to continue without the need for social distancing restrictions, so this may accelerate their take-up in industry. On the other hand, the financial implications of the crisis may mean that firms are unable to finance these sorts of investments, and their adoption and implementation may move down the list of immediate priorities. Given the fact that East Asian economies such as China, Japan and Korea lead in their adoption of these technologies, along with the fact that their Covid-19 related contractions have been much less severe than those in Europe, could lead to many European economies falling even further behind their Asian competitors in these new technologies. The regions most affected by these trends will be those in which the affected sectors are mainly located.

In terms of **knowledge and investment**, the greater focus on the development of vaccines and medical advances may favour certain regions over others, especially if public funding is shifted away from other activities. In particular, such activities already tend to be located in the more prosperous regions, so this may accentuate existing inequalities. Local economic growth often displays evolutionary features, dependent on existing spatial patterns of investments and skills. If there are shifts in the relative prioritisation of certain technologies over others, then this will also impact on the growth potential of different regions. In addition, social distancing measures will also limit the extent to which agglomeration effects associated with frequent face-to-face interactions operate.

In terms of **environmental issues**, the lockdown has produced some temporary positive effects in terms of reduced carbon emissions and energy demand. Yet, the longer-term effects of the Covid-19 crisis on the environment are unclear. These depend on how profound are the changes in individual, household and firm behaviour regarding, for example, employment commuting versus working from home, and also whether or not public policy prioritises sustainability in the recovery process. In recent months, web-based interactions have now become an integral part of how the whole of the global economy operates in a way that was not the case prior to the Covid-19 lockdowns. Some aspects of these changes in behaviour may become permanent, and these, in turn, may partially reshape the role of cities as centres of knowledge generation. The organisation of cities may also shift permanently towards cycle-based and pedestrian mobility, but the effects on public versus private transport are as yet unclear. Until a vaccine is found, public transport may continue to be under-utilised, and car transport may be over-utilised. How these balances will resolve themselves is still unknown.

This [article](#) provides a good roadmap for policymakers and businesses in the West Midlands of the things that we have to consider. There is a real need to understand the extent to which many of the behavioural shocks here exposed are temporary or permanent and how they may change how the city functions and also the relationships between larger cities and more peripheral areas evolve.

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## Total Number of Workers Furloughed

### Megan Boerm, BCC EIU and ODA

On 21<sup>st</sup> August 2020, the third publication of the official Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme Statistics were released. The release includes analysis of claims for the period up to the 30<sup>th</sup> June – the final date of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. The release also includes claims that were submitted to HMRC by 31<sup>st</sup> July (permissible for the period to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020).

#### In Summary

- Across the WMCA (3 LEP), there were 619,800 workers furloughed over the duration of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, this has increased by 5.6% (+33,000 workers) from the July release while for the UK the increase was 2.4%.
- The WMCA had 1,819,100 eligible workers up to June 2020, 619,800 of these workers that have been furloughed which is a take up rate of 34% and above the UK average of 32%.
- Overall, for the West Midlands region, 866,300 people have been furloughed which is approximately 34% of those eligible for the scheme. The total number of workers furloughed accounts for 9.0% of the UK total which is the 5<sup>th</sup> highest region.
- Across the West Midlands Region, the highest sector for the number of workers furloughed was Business, Professional & Financial Services with 177,600. This made up 20.5% of furloughed workers in the area (a lower percentage than at national level, 23.5%), and 32.1% of eligible workers in this sector.

#### In Depth:

##### Parliamentary Constituencies

Over the duration of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, the total number of workers furloughed vary across the WMCA parliamentary constituencies, with 19,400 workers furloughed in Birmingham, Ladywood to 11,500 in Wolverhampton South West.

When comparing the second release (end of June 2020) to the third release (end of June 2020 including claims submitted in July for June), the largest number change from was seen in Wolverhampton North East, Stratford-on-Avon and Warwick and Leamington by 1,100 workers. The highest percentage increase was also seen in Wolverhampton North East by 9.0% to reach 13,300 furloughed workers.

**The following table shows across the parliamentary constituents in the WMCA the number and change of workers furloughed between the last two releases:**

	Furloughed Workers – End of June 2020	Furloughed Workers – Final Statistics as of End of July 2020	Number Change	Percentage Change
Aldridge-Brownhills	11,400	12,000	600	5.3%
Birmingham, Edgbaston	11,800	12,500	700	5.9%
Birmingham, Erdington	15,800	16,700	900	5.7%
Birmingham, Hall Green	14,400	15,100	700	4.9%
Birmingham, Hodge Hill	15,900	16,700	800	5.0%
Birmingham, Ladywood	18,400	19,400	1,000	5.4%
Birmingham, Northfield	13,500	14,400	900	6.7%
Birmingham, Perry Barr	15,100	16,000	900	6.0%
Birmingham, Selly Oak	12,500	13,300	800	6.4%
Birmingham, Yardley	17,000	18,000	1,000	5.9%
Bromsgrove	13,900	14,400	500	3.6%
Burton	17,400	18,300	900	5.2%
Cannock Chase	16,700	17,600	900	5.4%
Coventry North East	16,900	17,900	1,000	5.9%
Coventry North West	16,100	17,000	900	5.6%
Coventry South	13,600	14,300	700	5.1%



	Furloughed Workers – End of June 2020	Furloughed Workers – Final Statistics as of End of July 2020	Number Change	Percentage Change
Dudley North	11,800	12,500	700	5.9%
Dudley South	11,900	12,800	900	7.6%
Halesowen and Rowley Regis	12,900	13,600	700	5.4%
Kenilworth and Southam	11,800	12,400	600	5.1%
Lichfield	14,300	15,000	700	4.9%
Meriden	17,900	18,900	1,000	5.6%
North Warwickshire	14,500	15,300	800	5.5%
Nuneaton	13,900	14,500	600	4.3%
Redditch	15,500	16,300	800	5.2%
Rugby	14,400	15,300	900	6.3%
Solihull	14,400	15,200	800	5.6%
Stourbridge	13,000	13,800	800	6.2%
Stratford-on-Avon	14,500	15,600	1,100	7.6%
Sutton Coldfield	13,400	14,100	700	5.2%
Tamworth	16,600	17,400	800	4.8%
Walsall North	14,000	14,700	700	5.0%
Walsall South	13,900	14,600	700	5.0%
Warley	14,300	15,100	800	5.6%
Warwick and Leamington	14,900	16,000	1,100	7.4%
West Bromwich East	13,400	14,200	800	6.0%
West Bromwich West	14,200	15,000	800	5.6%
Wolverhampton North East	12,200	13,300	1,100	9.0%
Wolverhampton South East	13,500	14,400	900	6.7%
Wolverhampton South West	10,700	11,500	800	7.5%
Wyre Forest	15,100	15,600	500	3.3%

### Local Authorities

Across the WMCA (3 LEP), there were 619,800 workers furloughed, this is an increase of 5.6% (+33,000 workers) while for the UK the increase was 2.4% when compared to the July release.

The highest number increase was seen in Birmingham by an additional 8,400 workers furloughed which is a 5.7% change from the July release to reach 156,200. The highest percentage increase was seen in Wolverhampton at 8.1% (+2,800) and overall stood at 37,200 furloughed workers. The smallest number increase was in North Warwickshire with an additional 400 workers furloughed or 3.9% increase to reach a total of 10,600.

**The following table shows the total number of workers furloughed and change across the WMCA (3 LEP) and the UK between the July release and August release:**

	Furloughed Workers – End of June 2020	Furloughed Workers – Final Statistics as of End of July 2020	Number Change	Percentage Change
Birmingham	147,800	156,200	8,400	5.7%
Bromsgrove	13,900	14,400	500	3.6%
Cannock Chase	16,700	17,600	900	5.4%
Coventry	46,600	49,200	2,600	5.6%
Dudley	45,900	48,600	2,700	5.9%
East Staffordshire	19,000	20,100	1,100	5.8%
Lichfield	15,600	16,300	700	4.5%
North Warwickshire	10,200	10,600	400	3.9%
Nuneaton and Bedworth	19,000	19,900	900	4.7%
Redditch	14,800	15,500	700	4.7%
Rugby	15,000	15,900	900	6.0%
Sandwell	47,700	50,400	2,700	5.7%
Solihull	32,400	34,100	1,700	5.2%
Stratford-on-Avon	19,800	21,200	1,400	7.1%
Tamworth	13,700	14,400	700	5.1%
Walsall	39,300	41,300	2,000	5.1%
Warwick	19,900	21,300	1,400	7.0%
Wolverhampton	34,400	37,200	2,800	8.1%
Wyre Forest	15,100	15,600	500	3.3%
WM 7 Met.	394,100	417,000	22,900	5.8%
Black Country LEP	167,300	177,500	10,200	6.1%
Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP	289,000	304,200	15,200	5.3%
Coventry & Warwickshire LEP	130,500	138,100	7,600	5.8%
WMCA (3 LEP)	586,800	619,800	33,000	5.6%
UK	9,373,900	9,601,700	227,800	2.4%

The WMCA had 1,819,100 eligible workers, 619,800 of these workers that have been furloughed which is a take up rate of 34% and above the UK average of 32%.

For the Black Country LEP, out of the 513,200 eligible workers, 177,500 workers have been furloughed, which is 35% take up rate, the highest within the WMCA (3 LEP) area.

The latest data release shows there were 437,200 eligible workers in Coventry & Warwickshire LEP of which 138,100 workers have been furloughed in which is a take up rate of 32%. For the Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP, there were 868,700 eligible workers, of which 304,200 workers were furloughed with a take up rate of 35%.

### Regional Furloughed Workers per Sector

Overall, for the West Midlands region, 866,300 people have been furloughed which is approximately 34% of those eligible for the scheme. The total number of workers furloughed accounts for 9.0% of the UK total which is the 5<sup>th</sup> highest region.



Compared to the previous release, the number of workers furloughed in the West Midlands has increased by 46,100 which equates to 5.6% increase, which is greater than the UK's 2.4% increase.

Across the West Midlands Region, the highest sector for the number of workers furloughed was Business, Professional & Financial Services with 177,600. This made up 20.5% of furloughed workers in the area (a lower percentage than at national level, 23.5%), and 32.1% of eligible workers in this sector.

The next two highest sectors for furloughed workers in the West Midlands Region were Retail (176,700) and Cultural Economy Inc. Sports (162,700).

**The following table shows the proportion of workers furloughed for the West Midlands Region and England:**

	WM Number of Workers Furloughed	% of WM Furloughed	% of England Furloughed	Number of WM Eligible Workers	WM Furloughed Workers as % of Eligible Per Sector
Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering	159,300	18.4%	11.5%	315,200	50.5%
Transport Technologies and Logistics	41,500	4.8%	4.7%	132,400	31.3%
Life Sciences and Healthcare	35,900	4.1%	4.7%	360,400	10.0%
Low Carbon and Environmental Technologies	6,400	0.7%	0.7%	30,400	21.1%
Business, Professional & Financial Services	177,600	20.5%	23.5%	552,900	32.1%
Digital & Creative	16,500	1.9%	2.6%	74,900	22.0%
Construction	56,100	6.5%	8.0%	97,900	57.3%
Retail	176,700	20.4%	21.0%	409,000	43.2%
Public Sector Inc. Education	28,800	3.3%	4.1%	378,700	7.6%
Cultural Economy Inc. Sports	162,700	18.8%	18.5%	216,000	75.3%
Other	4,800	0.6%	0.6%	12,700	37.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>866,300</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,580,500</b>	<b>33.6%</b>

Source: HM Revenue & Customs, Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme Statistics: August 2020



## Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) – Claims Received up to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020

### Summary

- Across the WMCA (3 LEP) area, there were 175,000 of the population eligible for the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS). There were 135,700 claims made to the 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020, which equates to a value of £372,900,000 or on average nearly £2,900 per claim. The take-up rate for the WMCA (3 LEP) was 78%.
- At a West Midlands Regional level, overall, there were around 263,000 of the population eligible for the SEISS, which is a take up rate of 77% based on the total number of claims of 202,000. This can be split further by gender and there was a total potentially eligible male population of 187,500 for the SEISS, which equates to a take-up rate of 79% at the end of July which is based on the total number of claims of 148,600. There were 75,100 eligible female population for the West Midlands Region with a take-up rate of 71% based on the total number of claims of 53,100.
- Applying broad sectors to the WMCA 10 sectors shows in the West Midlands Region, the sector with the highest eligible population for SEISS in July 2020 was in construction at 82,300 and also had the highest number of claims with 68,000 and a total value of £238,400,000. Although, transport technologies had the highest take-up rate at 85%.

### In Depth

#### WMCA (3 LEP)

Across the WMCA (3 LEP) area, there were 175,000 of the population eligible for the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS). There were 135,700 claims made to the 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020, which equates to a value of £372,900,000 or on average nearly £2,900 per claim. The take-up rate for the WMCA (3 LEP) was 78%.

Compared to June 2020, for the WMCA (3 LEP) area, excluding the average value of claims which has remained the same, all other categories have increased from 174,700 of the population eligible for the SEISS. Total claims have increased from 132,7000 which equalled a value of £364,400,000. The take-up rate for the WMCA (3 LEP) was 76%. The following table shows a breakdown by parliamentary constituency for eligible population, claims and take-up rate for the SEISS up to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020. Eligible population varies from 3,300 in Wolverhampton North East to 6,700 in Birmingham, Hodge Hill. Total number of claims vary from 2,500 in Birmingham, Edgbaston and Wolverhampton North East to 5,300 in Birmingham, Hodge Hill. The total value of claims varies from £6,900,000 in Birmingham, Edgbaston to £13,100,000 in Stratford-on-Avon. The take-up rate varies from 72% to 81%.

Take-up is based on total number of claims to date (excludes error and rejected cases) over total potentially eligible population (includes error and rejected cases).

	Total potentially eligible pop.	Total no. of claims made to 31/7/20	Total value of claims made to 31/7/20 (£)	Average value of claims made to 31/7/20 (£)	Take-Up Rate
Aldridge-Brownhills	3,700	3,000	9,400,000	3,200	81%
Birmingham, Edgbaston	3,400	2,500	6,900,000	2,800	74%
Birmingham, Erdington	4,100	3,200	8,300,000	2,600	78%
Birmingham, Hall Green	5,700	4,600	10,500,000	2,300	80%
Birmingham, Hodge Hill	6,700	5,300	10,600,000	2,000	78%
Birmingham, Ladywood	5,200	3,900	7,900,000	2,000	74%
Birmingham, Northfield	3,700	3,000	8,800,000	2,900	81%
Birmingham, Perry Barr	5,200	3,900	9,200,000	2,300	75%
Birmingham, Selly Oak	3,900	3,100	8,900,000	2,900	79%
Birmingham, Yardley	5,200	4,200	10,600,000	2,500	81%
Bromsgrove	4,600	3,600	11,000,000	3,100	78%
Burton	4,600	3,600	9,300,000	2,600	77%
Cannock Chase	5,000	4,100	12,900,000	3,100	81%

Coventry North East	5,200	3,900	10,100,000	2,600	75%
Coventry North West	4,400	3,500	9,500,000	2,800	78%
Coventry South	3,500	2,700	7,300,000	2,700	76%
Dudley North	3,800	3,000	8,600,000	2,800	79%
Dudley South	3,400	2,700	7,800,000	2,800	81%
Halesowen and Rowley Regis	3,800	3,000	8,600,000	2,800	79%
Kenilworth and Southam	4,200	3,100	9,600,000	3,200	72%
Lichfield	4,400	3,400	10,500,000	3,100	76%
Meriden	4,100	3,200	10,100,000	3,200	78%
North Warwickshire	4,200	3,200	9,600,000	3,000	77%
Nuneaton	3,600	2,800	7,900,000	2,900	76%
Redditch	4,300	3,400	9,800,000	2,900	79%
Rugby	4,100	3,000	8,800,000	3,000	73%
Solihull	3,900	3,000	9,600,000	3,200	78%
Stourbridge	4,400	3,500	9,900,000	2,800	81%
Stratford-on-Avon	5,600	4,200	13,100,000	3,100	75%
Sutton Coldfield	3,700	2,900	9,300,000	3,200	78%
Tamworth	3,900	3,100	9,000,000	3,000	77%
Walsall North	4,100	3,200	9,100,000	2,800	79%
Walsall South	4,200	3,300	8,100,000	2,400	78%
Warley	4,200	3,200	7,700,000	2,400	77%
Warwick and Leamington	3,900	2,900	8,400,000	2,900	75%
West Bromwich East	3,600	2,800	7,500,000	2,700	78%
West Bromwich West	3,700	2,900	7,500,000	2,600	78%
Wolverhampton North East	3,300	2,500	7,100,000	2,800	77%
Wolverhampton South East	3,600	2,700	7,100,000	2,600	77%
Wolverhampton South West	3,700	2,800	7,300,000	2,600	76%
Wyre Forest	5,200	4,000	10,800,000	2,700	77%

The following table shows a breakdown by local authority for eligible population, claims and take-up rate for the SEISS up to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020. The take-up rate varies from 72% for Rugby to 81% in Cannock Chase.

	Total potentially eligible pop.	Total no. of claims made to 31/7/20	Total value of claims made to 31/7/20 (£)	Average value of claims made to 31/7/20 (£)	Take-Up Rate
Cannock Chase	5,000	4,100	12,900,000	3,100	81%
East Staffordshire	5,300	4,000	10,700,000	2,700	76%
Lichfield	4,800	3,700	11,600,000	3,100	77%
Tamworth	3,000	2,300	6,700,000	2,900	78%
North Warwickshire	3,200	2,500	7,400,000	3,000	77%
Nuneaton and Bedworth	4,900	3,800	10,800,000	2,900	76%
Rugby	4,400	3,200	9,500,000	3,000	72%
Stratford-on-Avon	7,600	5,500	17,400,000	3,100	73%
Warwick	5,600	4,200	12,400,000	3,000	75%
Birmingham	47,000	36,600	90,900,000	2,500	78%
Coventry	13,200	10,100	26,900,000	2,700	76%
Dudley	14,400	11,500	32,700,000	2,800	80%
Sandwell	13,200	10,300	26,300,000	2,600	78%
Solihull	7,900	6,200	19,600,000	3,200	78%
Walsall	12,000	9,500	26,500,000	2,800	79%
Wolverhampton	9,900	7,600	20,000,000	2,600	76%
Bromsgrove	4,600	3,600	11,000,000	3,100	78%
Redditch	3,800	3,000	8,800,000	2,900	80%
Wyre Forest	5,200	4,000	10,800,000	2,700	77%
WM 7 Met.	117,600	91,800	242,900,000	2,700	78%
BCLEP	49,500	38,900	105,500,000	2,700	79%
CWLEP	38,900	29,300	84,400,000	3,000	75%
GBSLEP	86,600	67,500	183,000,000	2,900	78%
WMCA (3 LEP)	175,000	135,700	372,900,000	2,900	78%
West Midlands Region	263,000	202,000	565,000,000	2,800	77%
UK	3,402,000	2,604,000	7,576,000,000	2,900	77%

## Regional Analysis

### West Midlands: Claims by Age and Gender

At a West Midlands Regional level, overall, there were around 263,000 of the population eligible for the SEISS, which is a take up rate of 77% based on the total number of claims of 202,000. This can be split further by gender and there was a total potentially eligible male population of 187,500 for the SEISS, which equates to a take-up rate of 79% at the end of July which is based on the total number of claims of 148,600. There were 75,100 eligible female population for the West Midlands Region with a take-up rate of 71% based on the total number of claims of 53,100.



The highest take-up rate in the West Midlands for males were those aged 35- 44 years old and 45 – 54 years old at 82%, with the lowest take-up rate for those aged 65 years and over at 64%. While for females, the highest take-up rate (excluding missing) were those aged 45-54 years old at 74%, with the lowest take up rate for those aged 65 years and over at 54%.

The following table shows a breakdown by age and gender across the West Midlands Region.

Gender	Age bands	Total potentially eligible population	Total no. of claims made to 31/7/20	Total value of claims made to 31/7/20 (£)	Average value of claims made to date (£)	Proportion of total eligible population	Proportion of total number of claims made to date	Proportion of total value of claims made	Take-Up Rate
Male	16-24	8,000	5,700	12,500,000	2,200	3%	3%	2%	71%
	25-34	35,300	28,000	84,800,000	3,000	13%	14%	15%	79%
	35-44	42,100	34,700	102,800,000	3,000	16%	17%	18%	82%
	45-54	48,000	39,300	121,000,000	3,100	18%	20%	21%	82%
	55-64	39,400	31,200	95,900,000	3,100	15%	15%	17%	79%
	65+	12,600	8,100	27,500,000	3,400	5%	4%	5%	64%
	Missing	2,100	1,700	4,400,000	2,700	1%	1%	1%	80%
<b>All</b>		<b>187,500</b>	<b>148,600</b>	<b>448,800,000</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>79%</b>
Female	16-24	2,200	1,400	2,300,000	1,700	1%	1%	0%	61%
	25-34	12,900	9,200	18,700,000	2,000	5%	5%	3%	71%
	35-44	17,500	12,600	25,900,000	2,100	7%	6%	5%	72%
	45-54	20,600	15,300	34,100,000	2,200	8%	8%	6%	74%
	55-64	16,100	11,400	26,400,000	2,300	6%	6%	5%	71%
	65+	5,000	2,700	7,900,000	2,900	2%	1%	1%	54%
	Missing	700	500	1,300,000	2,500	0%	0%	0%	75%
<b>All</b>		<b>75,100</b>	<b>53,100</b>	<b>116,700,000</b>	<b>2,200</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>71%</b>
All	16-24	10,200	7,000	14,800,000	2,100	4%	3%	3%	69%
	25-34	48,200	37,100	103,400,000	2,800	18%	18%	18%	77%
	35-44	59,600	47,300	128,700,000	2,700	23%	23%	23%	79%
	45-54	68,700	54,700	155,100,000	2,800	26%	27%	27%	80%
	55-64	55,500	42,600	122,300,000	2,900	21%	21%	22%	77%
	65+	17,600	10,800	35,400,000	3,300	7%	5%	6%	61%
	Missing	2,800	2,200	5,700,000	2,600	1%	1%	1%	79%
<b>All</b>		<b>263,000</b>	<b>202,000</b>	<b>565,000,000</b>	<b>2,800</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>77%</b>

### West Midlands: Claims by Broad Sector

Applying broad sectors to the WMCA 10 sectors shows in the West Midlands Region, the sector with the highest eligible population for the SEISS is in construction at 82,300 and also had the highest number of claims with 68,000 and a total value of £238,400,000. Although, transport technologies had the highest take-up rate at 85%.

The following table shows a breakdown by sector for the West Midlands Region

Source: HMRC, Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) Statistics: August 2020

	Total potentially eligible pop.	Total no. of claims made to 31/7/20	Total value of claims made to 31/7/20 (£)	Average value of claims made to date (£)	Take-Up Rate
Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering	7,000	5,300	15,700,000	2,900	76%
Business, Professional & Financial Services	52,100	38,900	94,800,000	2,900	75%
Construction	82,300	68,000	238,400,000	3,500	83%
Cultural Economy Inc. Sports	11,900	8,900	22,300,000	2,500	75%
Digital & Creative	2,400	1,500	4,700,000	3,000	63%
Low Carbon & Environmental Technologies	8,700	4,800	15,600,000	3,200	55%
Life Sciences & Health Care	11,500	7,100	20,900,000	2,900	62%
Public Sector Inc. Education	9,400	7,500	17,000,000	2,400	80%
Retail	18,000	13,400	35,400,000	2,600	74%
Transport Technologies and Logistics	23,900	20,400	39,600,000	1,900	85%
Unknown/Other	35,400	25,600	61,000,000	2,400	72%
<b>Total</b>	<b>263,000</b>	<b>202,000</b>	<b>565,000,000</b>	<b>2,800</b>	<b>77%</b>

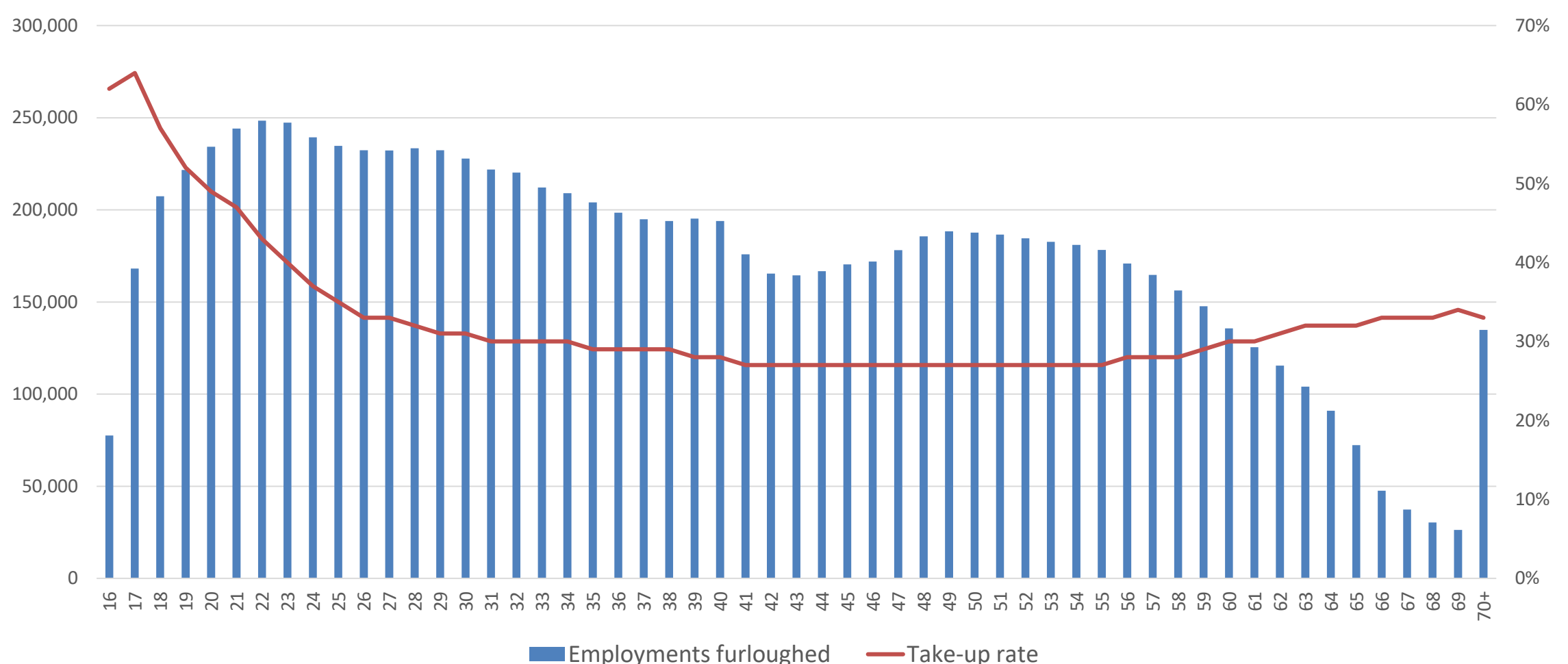
## Older Workers and the Covid-19 crisis

Anne Green, WMREDI

### Introduction

Much of the policy response in the wake of Covid-19 has focused on the plight of young people. This is appropriate given the disproportionate hit they faced with the shutdown of specific sectors where they are concentrated (such as hospitality), their consequent particularly high rate of furlough and the implications of longer-term scarring of difficult transitions from education to employment.

The diagram below based on data from the HMRC on claims received up to 31 July on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme shows at national level the number of employments furloughed by single year of age and the take-up rate (i.e. employments furloughed as a percentage of eligible employments). It is clear that in both absolute terms and the take-up rate young people aged under 25 years have been particularly hard hit.

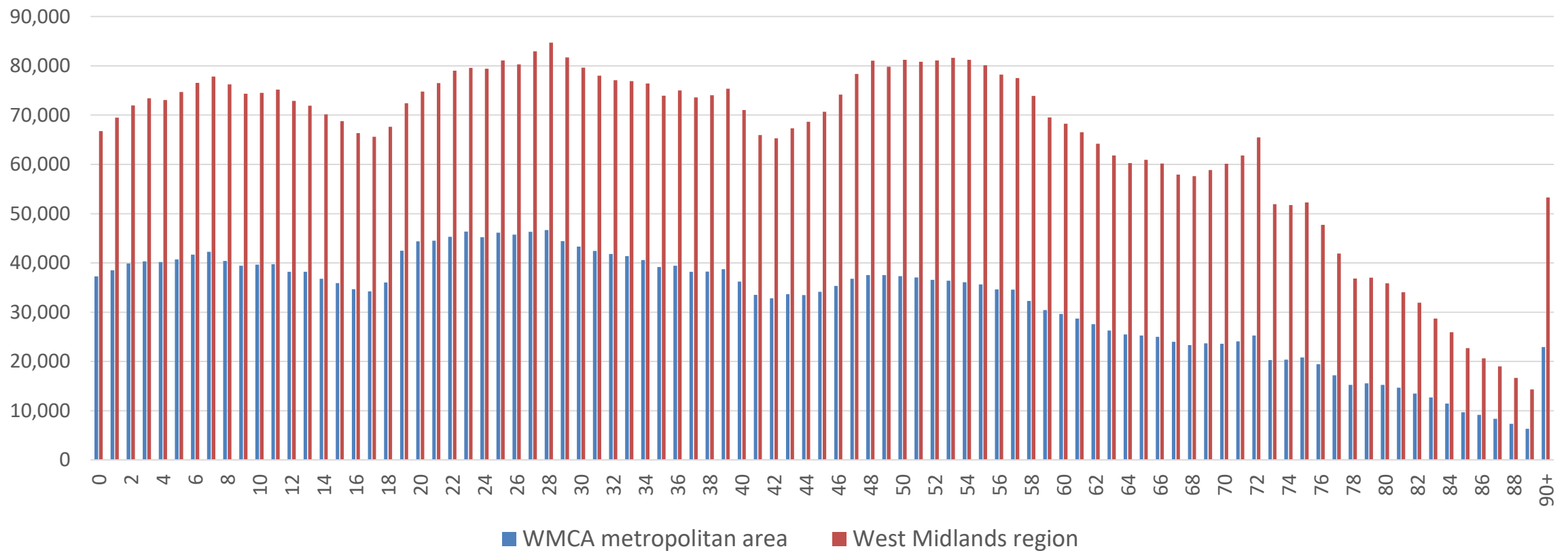


Source: HM Revenue & Customs, Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme Statistics: August 2020

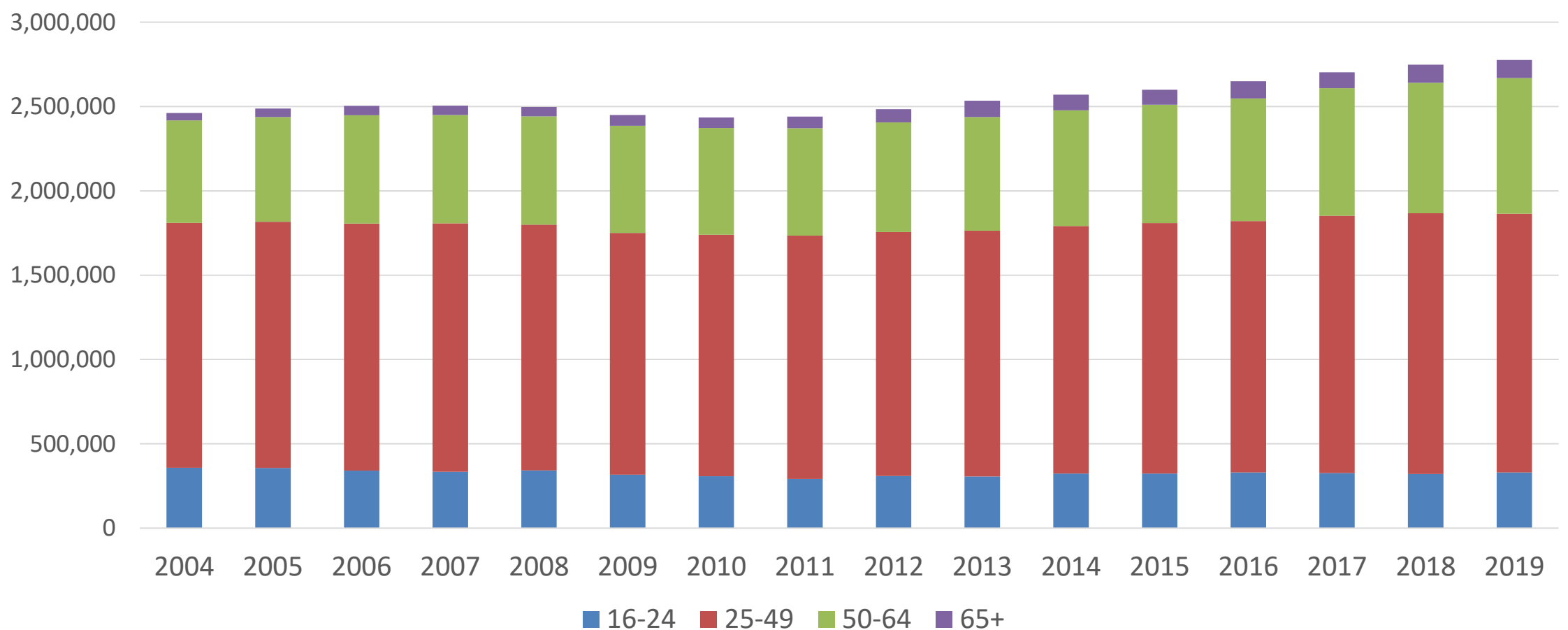
The take-up rate is lowest at 27% for individuals aged between 41 and 55 years. The take-up rate increases from the age of 55 years and rises to over 30% for those aged 60 years and over.

### The increase in older workers

The older workers highlighted above were entering the labour market in the early 1980s recession. They are part of a **large cohort** as demonstrated in the chart below showing the age structure of the population in the West Midlands region based on 2019 data from the ONS Mid Year estimates of population. The WMCA metropolitan area has a younger age profile than the region but nevertheless the relatively large numbers of people in their fifties and early sixties is evident. (By contrast, current school leavers are part of a small cohort).

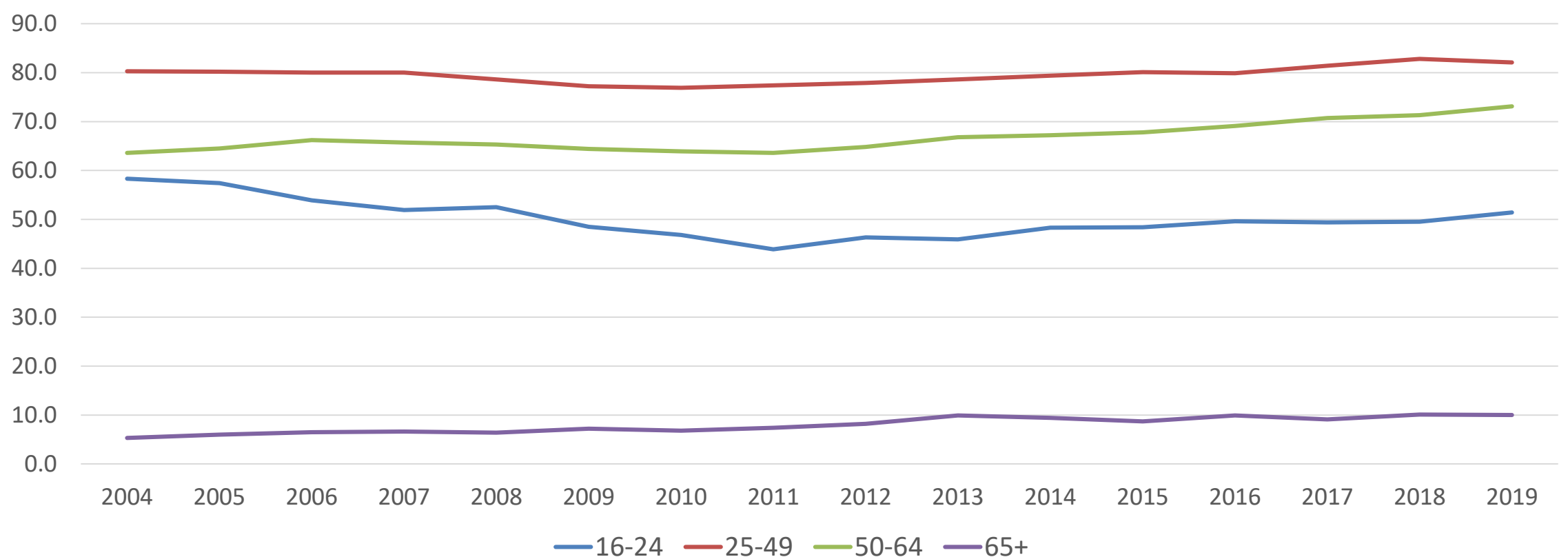


In recent years the number of older workers has risen to historically high levels, as shown in the chart below showing Annual Population Survey data on the broad age profile of people in employment in the West Midlands region.



Whereas the employment rate for 16-24 year olds in the West Midlands region at 51.4% in 2019 remains lower than rates before the Great Recession, the chart below using Annual Population Survey data shows a steady increase of nearly 10 percentage points in the employment rate of 50-64 year olds since the Great Recession. The employment rate for those aged 65 years and over has also risen substantially, albeit employment rates for younger and older workers remain lower than for those aged 25-49 years. However, national analysis shows that people aged over 55 years represented more than half of the employment growth in the decade to 2018.





National analysis shows that people aged over 55 years represented more than half of the employment growth in the decade to 2018. People aged 50 years and over accounted for three-quarters of the increase in employment over the period from 2004 to 2019. The statistics presented above show that this is a function of both population ageing (i.e. compositional change) and an increase in employment rates in the older age groups (i.e. behavioural change).

#### Do older workers merit special attention in the Covid-19 crisis?

All age groups face labour market challenges in the face of the Covid-19 crisis, with increases in the number of benefit claims and risks of further redundancies. However, older workers face a number of issues that they may merit special attention.

First, a recent [report](#) by the Learning and Work Institute for the Centre for Ageing Better highlights that older workers becoming unemployed face a greater than average risk of long-term unemployment. They are twice as likely to be out of work for 12 months or more as younger workers and almost 50% more likely as workers aged 25 to 49 years.

Second, older workers are less likely to return to work following redundancy than younger workers. Around one in three people (35%) aged 50+ returned to work after losing their job, compared to half (54%) of 35 to 49-year olds, and two out of three of 25 to 34 year olds (63%).

Third, statistics on adult learning in the UK show that older people are less likely than young people to participate in training. [Nesta](#) analysis highlights that 39% of those aged 55-64 years participate in adult learning compared with just over 60% of those aged 25-34 years. This means that older people may face particular challenges of upskilling if they need to change sectors/ take on new job roles.

Fourth, [Nesta](#) suggests that the fact that (in aggregate) older workers are less digitally aware and confident than younger workers makes it more difficult for them to transition to remote working (where that is a possibility). This is particularly the case for those in lower socio-economic groups where use of the internet is lowest.

Fifth, there is evidence that older people perceive ageism/ employer stereotypes as a major barrier to employment. [Recent evidence](#) suggests that the greater health risk of Covid-19 for older people is thought to further exacerbate negative stereotypes.

Sixth, the developments above coupled with rises in the state pension ages place financial pressures on some older people, perhaps leading to pensioner poverty. The Covid-19 crisis means that these challenges are difficult to address through longer working lives. Rather increased numbers of older people [may be forced into early retirement and/or have to forego a gradual retirement](#).

### **Conclusions and policy implications**

While older workers have not been furloughed to the same extent as younger workers and have not been the focus of policy to the same degree, once they are out of work they tend to face particular challenges once out of work in transitioning back into employment. The evidence suggests that while a focus on young people is appropriate – especially so in the West Midlands metropolitan area given its younger than average population – this should not be at the expense of taking account of addressing the long-term unemployment, access to training to facilitate job changing and digital skills challenges faced by some older workers negatively impacted by the Covid-19 crisis.

## Good Work and the Covid-19 crisis

Anne Green, WM REDI

### Context

In 2019 national employment rates rose to historically high levels. In Great Britain the employment rate for 16-64 year olds increased from 70.2% in the year ending September 2011 to 75.8% in the year ending December 2019. Although employment rates in the West Midlands are lower than nationally a similar pattern of increase is evident with employment rates over the same period rising from 62.1% in the WMCA area and 67.6% in the West Midlands region to 69.1% in the WMCA area and 73.9% in the West Midlands region.

With this increase in employment rates there was a shift in emphasis of policy makers away from the quantity of employment which was a primary focus in the recession to the quality of work. This reflected ongoing concerns about [weak productivity growth](#), [employment insecurity and precarity](#), [in-work-poverty](#), the [impact of technological change on the experience of work](#), [skills polarisation](#) and persistent [skills shortages](#).

From a policy perspective the [Taylor Review of Modern Working Practices](#) added impetus to growing debates on 'Good Work', calling on the government to play closer attention to the quality of work. Dimensions of 'Good Work' highlighted in the review include wages, employment quality, education and training, working conditions, work-life balance and collective participation and collective representation. In setting out its [Good Work Plan](#) in December 2018 for the first time the UK Government placed equal emphasis on the quality and quantity of work.

While the Covid-19 crisis has led to renewed concerns about the quantity of employment in the context of closure of sectors of the economy during lockdown, furloughing and redundancies, it has also re-energised debates about the quality of work. This is especially so in the [foundational economy](#) where low-paid sectors such as social care have been on the frontline. Moreover, access to [good quality employment](#) is central to levelling up and [inclusive growth](#) agendas in [cities around the world](#).

For some of those workers able to work from home during lockdown the experience of doing so has surfaced

broader questions about [work-life balance](#). The broader context of school closures has foregrounded broader issues about the relative weight given to work and care/ other non-work commitments.

Hence the requirement for '[more and better jobs](#)' has come to the fore.

### So what is 'Good Work' and how is it measured?

There is [no single agreed definition of 'Good Work'](#). 'Quality of employment', 'decent work', 'fair work', 'meaningful work' and 'good work' are often used interchangeably. The concept of 'decent work' is often used in connection with minimum legislative standards and poverty reduction, particularly in developing countries. The [International Labour Organisation](#) defines 'decent work' as where 'all women and men should work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity'. 'Fair work' is part of the policy discourse in Wales with an influential [report from the independent Fair Work Commission](#) in 2019. In Scotland an independent [Fair Work Convention](#) which aims to put fair work at the heart of Scotland's workplaces and economy.

Personal, work, job and social factors all play a part in 'Good Work' and 'Fair Work'. Commentators focus on topics such as terms of employment, pay and benefits, job design, health and well-being, work-life balance, and voice and representation. Yet the priority individual workers place on these various topics varies - including over the life course. For some people pay is of paramount importance. For others flexibility may be a prime consideration. Likewise ambitions to progress in work vary between individuals and may be of greater or lesser importance to the same individual at different times.

In 2018 a [Job Quality Working Group convened by the Royal Society of Arts and Carnegie UK proposed 18 measures of 'good work'](#) categorised in six topics:

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'Good Work' Topic	'Good Work' Measure
Terms of employment	1. job security
	2. minimum guaranteed hours
	3. underemployment
Pay and benefits	4. pay
	5. satisfaction with pay
Job design and nature of work	6. use of skills
	7. control (of the way a worker can do their job)
	8. opportunities for progression
	9. sense of purpose
	10. social support and cohesion
	11. line manager relationship
Health, safety and psychosocial wellbeing	12. physical injury
	13. mental health
Work-life balance	14. over-employment
	15. overtime (paid and unpaid)
Voice and representation	16. trade union membership
	17. employee information
	18. employee involvement

There are considerable overlaps between these 'good work' topics and measure and the components of 'fair work' identified by Fair Work Wales:

1. Fair reward – analogous to 'pay and benefits' above
2. Employee voice and collective representation – relates to 'voice and representation' above
3. Security and flexibility – has some overlaps with 'terms of employment' above
4. Opportunity for access, growth and progression – partial overlap with 'job design and nature of work' above
5. Safe, healthy and inclusive working environment – has some overlaps with 'health, safety and psychosocial wellbeing' and 'work-life balance' above but Fair Work Wales has greater emphasis on inclusion;
6. Legal rights respected and given substantive effect – not reflected in the topics above.

While the focus on 'good work' has been at national level, there is likely to be interest from sub-national and sub-group perspectives in monitoring performance on these measures – some of which are captured in the State of the Region report.

### Promoting 'Good Work': Policy and practice

A range of **public policy measures** for government and institutions can take to promote 'good work' includes:

- *Legislation*: Institutions and legislation frame the nature of the labour market. Examples here include minimum wage regulations and pay parity between workers, pay uplift for non-guaranteed hours, enforcement of existing legislation, and raising awareness of employee rights.
- *Interventions along a 'good employment' pathway*: Tailored active labour market policies, subsidies to increase and/or maintain employment for particular sub-groups and/or in particular areas, and in-work progression initiatives.
- *Learning and skills*: Vocational Education and Training (VET) policies and lifelong learning – for sustaining employment and enabling transitions in the labour market.
- *Wraparound policies*: including non-work/ family support policies.
- *Business-/sector-focused initiatives*: Business support, sectoral bodies addressing sectoral priorities and sectoral collective bargaining.
- *Place-based policies*: to improve work quality and drive a 'good work' agenda (e.g. [employment charters](#), [living wage places](#)) and procurement policies.
- *Strategic initiatives*: Industrial strategy and economic recovery strategy initiatives, and establishing intent by embedding 'good work' in performance frameworks.

Factors and changes that **employers** can implement at workplace level:

- *Business models*: Adoption of business models that ‘design in’ Fair Work features.
- *Strengthening management*: Management development and engagement of HR staff and management in support initiatives - their knowledge and expertise is central for leading and implementing fair work at workplace level.
- *Job design and innovation*: Employers can create space for innovation to improve jobs, empowering staff to take an active role in job design and business improvement.
- *Signing up to external initiatives*: Examples of actions that employers can take include implementation of the real Living Wage and adoption of voluntary employment charters.
- *Internal initiatives*: Examples include employers working towards providing guaranteed/ predictable hours, employer-led sectoral in-work progression initiatives and initiatives to support lifelong learning.
- *Working with trade unions*: to build positive collaborative practices, promote skills development, etc.

Measures focused on and/or which **employees** can take include:

- *Career development and job changing*: Seeking advice and guidance on job changing and career development.

- *Nurturing social relations*: Coming together with other employees (physically or virtually) to provide mutual support and promote improvements to the experience of work.
- *Involvement in collective voice initiatives*: including activities with trade unions/ other collective voice platforms for organising, lobbying for/accessing benefits of ‘good work’.

### **A role for regional and local actors**

UK government has responsibility for decisions about minimum wages and employment regulation. However, actions can take place at different levels – from the UK to the regional and local level, as well as to firm, workplace and worker levels. The ‘good work’ agenda is not just about a few discrete interventions. Rather it is about making the whole system work better.

There is a role for regional actors in generating upward pressure on aspects of ‘good work’ and enforcement of existing rights. They also have a role in targeting business support and other funding for employers who sign up to voluntary initiatives promoting ‘good work’ practices and in-work progression, and adopting place-based local initiatives.

## ONS Weekly Release Indicators

### BCC EIU

On the 20<sup>th</sup> August 2020 the ONS released the weekly publication containing data about the condition of the UK society and economy and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The statistics are experimental and have been devised to provide timely information, with publication of final survey results currently expected to take place fortnightly with initial findings released in-between. The following information contains the initial results from Wave 11 of the Business Impact of Coronavirus Survey, incorporations and voluntary dissolutions, national footfall, results from Wave 22 of the Opinions and Lifestyle (OPN) Survey, experimental online jobs advert indices and Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs).

### Business Impact of the Coronavirus

The initial results from the eleventh round of the Business Impact of Coronavirus Survey (BICS) show that of the 23,905 businesses surveyed across the UK, 21% had responded as of the 18<sup>th</sup> August 2020. Unless stated, the following data is based on the period between 27<sup>th</sup> July to 9<sup>th</sup> August 2020 and regional breakdown is not available.

## Headline Indicators

Across the UK between 27<sup>th</sup> July to 9<sup>th</sup> August, 95% of responding businesses were currently trading with 11% of the workforce on furlough leave. 33% of businesses are providing pay top-ups to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and 68% of the workforce are receiving top-ups to the Coronavirus Retention Scheme. 4% of businesses have temporarily paused or closed trading with 71% of the workforce on furlough leave. 39% of businesses are providing pay top-ups to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and 61% of the workforce are receiving top-ups to the Coronavirus Retention Scheme.

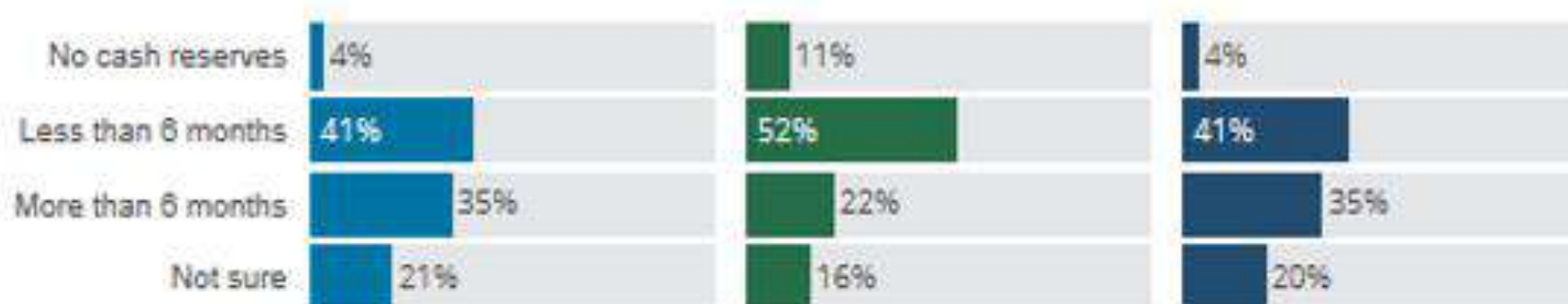
4% of businesses that are currently trading have no cash reserves, this rises to 11% for businesses that have temporarily paused or closed. 41% of businesses currently trading has less than 6 months of cash reserves, this rises to 52% for businesses that have temporary paused or closed.

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme still remains the favoured government support scheme with 78% of businesses that are currently trading have applied for this scheme, rising to 81% for businesses that have temporary paused or closed.

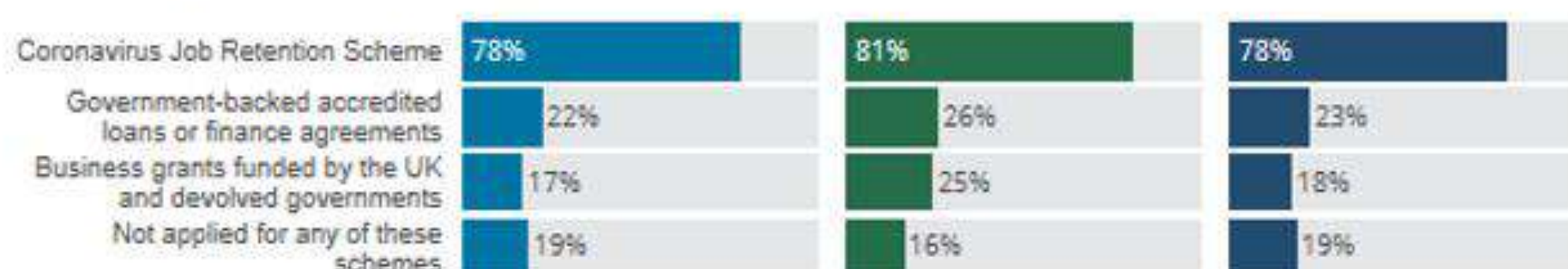
Proportion of businesses by trading status, and proportions of workforce on furlough leave and receiving pay top-ups:



### Cash reserves



### Percentage of businesses applying to government schemes





93% of responding businesses have been trading for more than the last 2 weeks. 3% of responding businesses who had temporary paused trading reported to have started trading in the last 2 weeks. 2% of businesses have started to trade again within the last two weeks after a pause in trading. Less than 1% of businesses that have temporary paused trading but intend to restart trading in the next two weeks and 3% of businesses that have temporary paused trading that do not intend to restart trading in the next two weeks.

**Financial Performance**

Nearly 11% of businesses that have continued trading reported turnover had increased by at least 20%. While 32% reported that turnover had not been affected. However, 51% of businesses reported turnover had decreased by at least 20%.

**Insolvency**

1.2% of UK businesses reported to be at severe risk of insolvency and 10.1% were at moderate risk of insolvency. While 45.4% were at low risk and 31.6% were at no risk to insolvency.

**Company Incorporations and Voluntary Dissolution**

On average, there were 3,002 incorporations per working

day in the week starting 8<sup>th</sup> August. This is a decrease from 3,4472 per working day from the previous week (25<sup>th</sup> July), however this is above the Quarter 3 2019 average of 2,612.

Also, for the week starting 8<sup>th</sup> August, on average there were 865 voluntary dissolution applications which is lower than the Quarter 3 2019 average of 1,008.

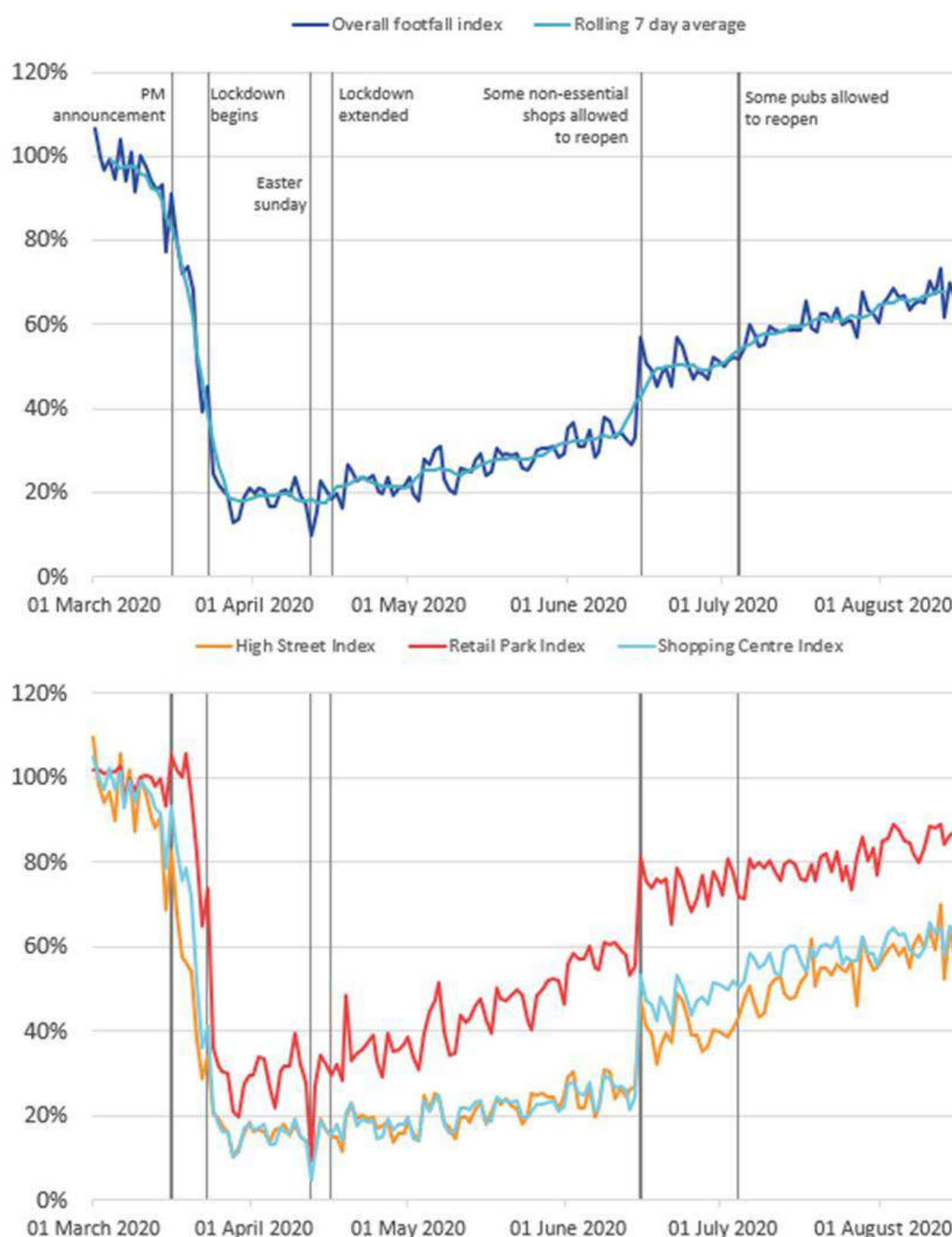
**National Footfall**

Customer activity figures are provided by Springboard. The volume of footfall has been compared to the same day the previous year (i.e. Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> July 2020 will be compared to Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> July 2019) for high streets, retail parks and shopping centres.

The overall footfall seven-day average for the 10<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> August was just over two-thirds of the level on the same day a year ago.

In the week commencing 10<sup>th</sup> August, retail parks were over 85% of its level from the same period in the previous year with shopping centres and high streets both over 60%.

**The following graph shows the volume of footfall for the UK between 1<sup>st</sup> March to 16<sup>th</sup> August, year on year percentage change between footfall on the same day:**



Source: Springboard and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

### Social Impact of the Coronavirus

Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey is a weekly update to understand on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on people, households and communities in Great Britain.

Data on the social impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) on Great Britain were collected from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN). The data relate to the final results for Wave 22, covering the period 12<sup>th</sup>- 16<sup>th</sup> August 2020. In this wave there were 1,533 (61%) responding adults.

#### Face Coverings

95% of adults have worn a face covering outside their home between 12<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> August. The proportion of adults who reported to have worn a face covering varies from 72% in Wales, 95% in Scotland to 96% in England.

93% of adults on England had worn a face covering while shopping, this increases to 95% in Scotland. Although, in Wales where it is not mandatory to wear one while shopping 78% of adults had.

92% of adults reported to have worn a face covering while on public transport between the 12<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> August.

#### Work

15% of adults reported to feeling worried about potentially losing their job. 10% of adults were worried about returning to work.

78% of adults reported they had either worked at home or travelled to work, with 55% of adults reporting they had travelled to work either exclusively or alongside working from home and 22% had worked exclusively at home.

#### Eat Out to Help Out

43% of adults reported they would be comfortable or very comfortable to eat indoors at a restaurant. 11% of adults reported they had eaten out and received a

discount from the Eat Out to Help Out scheme and a further 41% reported they were likely or very likely to use the scheme in August. Although, of those who said they were unlikely or very unlikely to use the scheme, 51% reported they were worried about catching Coronavirus.

#### Return to School

90% of adults reported they were fairly likely or very likely that their children would return to school or college when schools reopen in the new term.

58% of adults were somewhat or very worried about their children returning to school or college. With 56% of adults main concern being that they are worried their children will catch the Coronavirus at school or college. 51% of adults were worried about how prepared the school or college is for keeping pupils safe.

#### Online Jobs Adverts

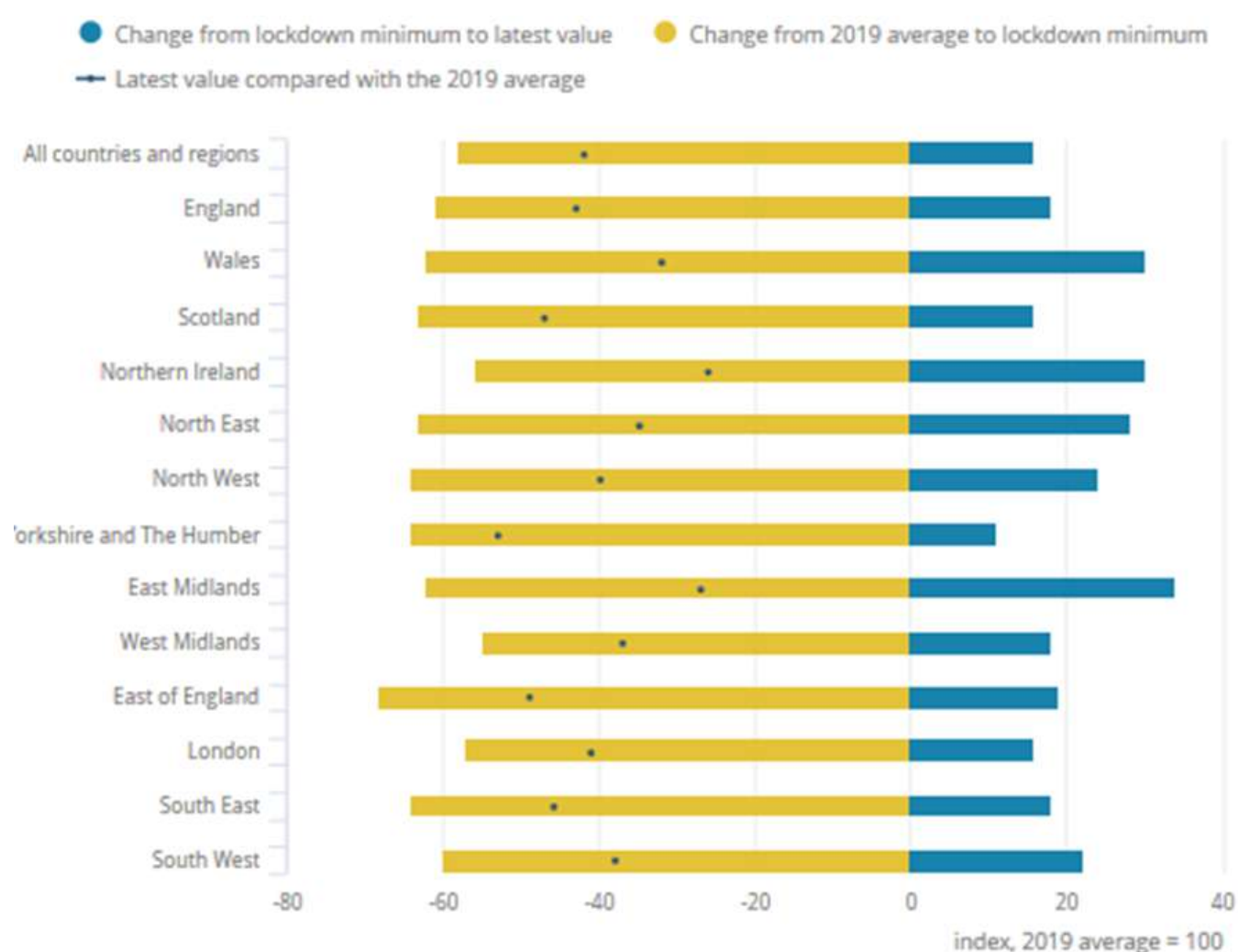
These estimates are experimental figures are taken from jobs adverts provided by Adzuna. Each value in the series measures the number of jobs adverts at a point in time, indexed for the average for 2019 (average = 100).

Nationally, total online job adverts between 7<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> July decreased from 62% to 58% of their 2019 average.

However, following a decrease, online job adverts are still higher than previously seen in the last two months.

For the West Midlands, between the 7<sup>th</sup> August to 14<sup>th</sup> August, the total online jobs adverts have decreased from 73.0% to 63.0% of its 2019 average. With Northern Ireland the closest to their 2019 average at 73.7% to Yorkshire and The Humber at 47.2% on the 14<sup>th</sup> August.

**The following image shows across all the regions, the change from lockdown minimum to the latest value, the change from 2019 to the lockdown minimum and the latest value compared to the 2019 average (Index 2019 average =100):**



Source: Adzuna



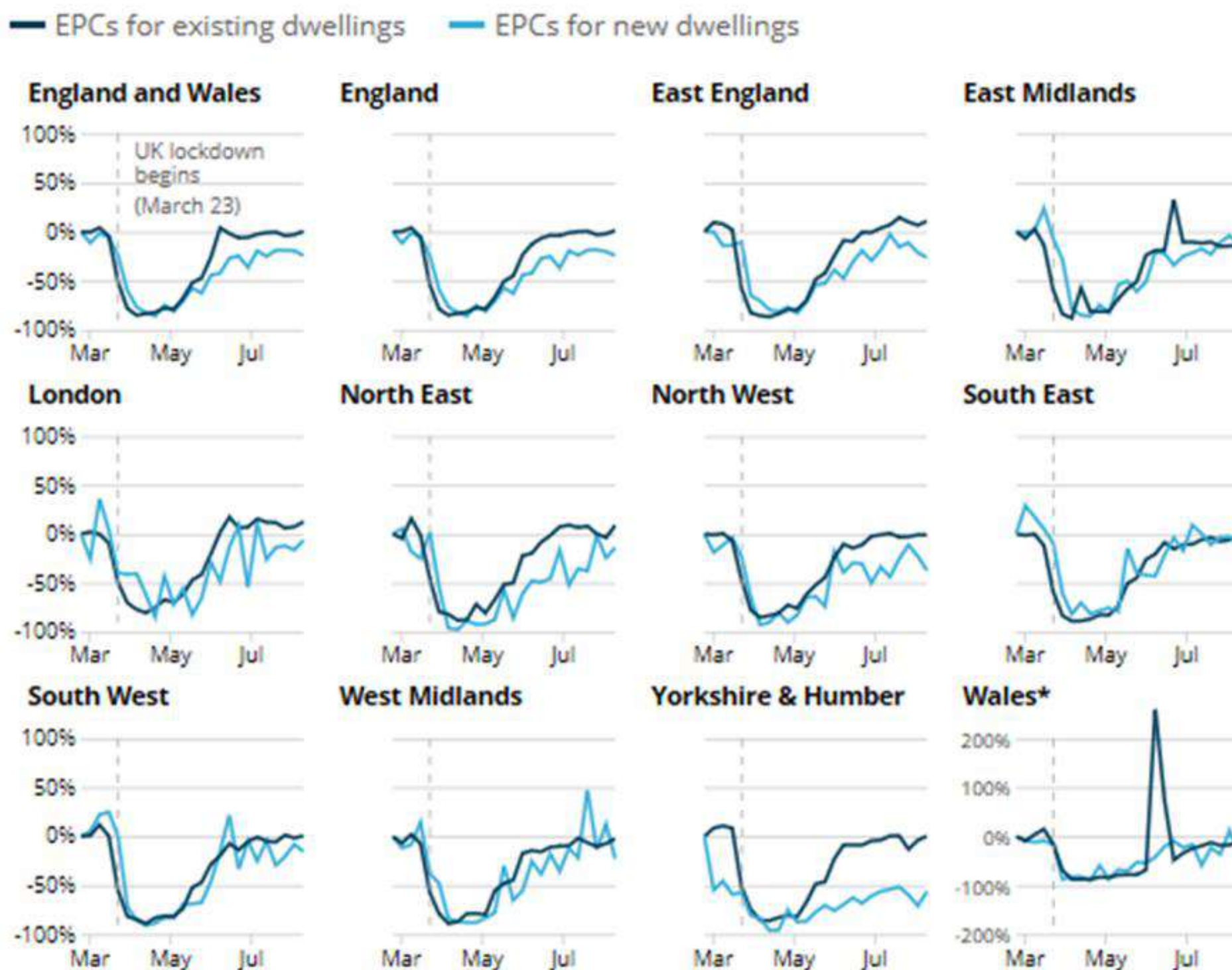
### Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs)

An EPC contains information on the energy efficiency of a property and is a requirement when a property is built, sold or rented. New buildings or conversions of existing buildings require an EPC once construction has been completed.

In the week commencing 10<sup>th</sup> August, EPC lodgements for existing dwellings across all English regions (West

Midlands 2% lower) were around levels observed at the end of February. While EPC lodgements for new dwellings were 24% lower across England and Wales than that observed at the end of February, for West Midlands region 23% lower.

### Existing and new EPCs lodgements by region, percentage change since week commencing 24<sup>th</sup> February:



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), Domestic Energy Performance Certificate Register. Please note, the spike seen in Wales in the middle of June was due to local authorities in Wales reviewing their social housing stock.



## Weekly Deaths Registered: 14<sup>th</sup> August 2020

The following analysis compares the latest time period (week of the 14<sup>th</sup> August 2020) to the previous week period (week of the 7<sup>th</sup> August 2020) for the number of deaths registered and the number of deaths related to the Coronavirus.

Across England and Wales, the overall registered death figure increased from 8,945 in the week of 7<sup>th</sup> August to 9,392 in the week of 14<sup>th</sup> August. The number of deaths registered that state Coronavirus on the death certificate has decreased from 152 people to 139 people over the same period.

Regional level analysis shows that the West Midlands the overall registered death figure decreased from 933 in the week of 7<sup>th</sup> August to 923 in the week of 14<sup>th</sup> August. The number of registered deaths related to Coronavirus increased from 13 to 14 over the same period.

There was a total of 601 deaths registered across the WMCA (3 LEP) area in the week of the 14<sup>th</sup> August. There were 12 deaths registered that were related to Coronavirus over the same period – this accounts for

2.0% of total deaths. The WMCA (3 LEP) area accounts for 85.7% of the 14 Coronavirus related deaths registered in the West Midlands Region.

In comparison to the week of the 7<sup>th</sup> August, the overall registered death figures across the WMCA (3 LEP) decreased by 19 people and the number of registered deaths remained the same.

At local authority level, there were six that had deaths related to Coronavirus, these include; Birmingham with 4 deaths, Walsall with 3 deaths, Coventry with 2 deaths. Tamworth, Solihull and Wolverhampton had 1 death each.

Across the WMCA (3 LEP) area, of the deaths involving Coronavirus registered in the week of 14<sup>th</sup> August, 8 of the deaths were in hospital, 2 deaths were in a care home and 1 death was in each location for hospice and home.

The following table shows the place and number of deaths registered that are related to Coronavirus in the week 14<sup>th</sup> August:

Area name	Care home	Elsewhere	Home	Hospice	Hospital	Other communal establishment	Total
Cannock Chase	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
East Staffordshire	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lichfield	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tamworth	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
North Warwickshire	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nuneaton and Bedworth	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rugby	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stratford-on-Avon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Warwick	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bromsgrove	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Redditch	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wyre Forest	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Birmingham	0	0	1	0	3	0	4
Coventry	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
Dudley	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sandwell	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Solihull	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Walsall	1	0	0	0	2	0	3
Wolverhampton	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
WM 7 Met.	2	0	1	1	7	0	11
Black Country LEP	1	0	0	1	2	0	4
Coventry & Warwickshire LEP	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP	0	0	1	0	5	0	6
WMCA (3 LEP)	2	0	1	1	8	0	12

Source: ONS, Deaths registrations and occurrences by local authority and health board, 25<sup>th</sup> August 2020

**HEADLINES**

SECTOR	KEY CONCERNS
<b>Cross Sectoral</b>	<p>Access to Finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Companies seem more open to receiving consultancy support where grant funding can finance this in order to aid growth plans and assess financial position.</li> </ul> <p>Regional Lockdown</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential regional lockdown of Birmingham a concern for businesses across the West Midlands.</li> </ul> <p>Investment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uncertainty impacting investment in key areas such as employment law and HR.</li> </ul> <p>New Business Models</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some businesses still getting used to the mechanics of continuing work when staff are based remotely.</li> </ul> <p>Supply Chain</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some businesses reporting disruption caused by delays from suppliers.</li> </ul> <p>Recruitment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Starting to see some companies starting to consider recruitment campaigns &amp; planning to employ staff from potentially October, but still concerns about future. Some companies bringing employees back into the office, and some more thinking about how to interview candidates &amp; plan recruitment campaigns.</li> </ul>
<b>Retail</b>	<p>Increased Card Payment Costs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some retail businesses experiencing increased costs as customers are following government advice not to use cash. This is more evident with high frequency, lower value transactions and does vary dependent on service providers.</li> </ul> <p>Access to Finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retail business owners are concerned about the return to normal business rate payments as of April 2021 after the current 12-month rates holiday scheme ends.</li> <li>Businesses would like to understand more about government plans and expectations so they themselves can forward plan for the next fiscal year</li> </ul>
<b>Construction</b>	<p>Project Delays</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some construction businesses suffering from project delays – this has significant financial consequences.</li> </ul>
<b>Business, Professional &amp; Financial Services</b>	<p>New Business Models</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Although many businesses were negatively impacted financially from the crisis, many have used the opportunity to diversify &amp; improve their business. Many have used the time to improve things such as websites, CRM systems and other things that can help them longer term.</li> </ul>
<b>Visitor Economy</b>	<p>Regional Lockdown</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The threat of regional lockdown brings a worry for businesses in this sector in particular after spending recent weeks acclimatising to the new Covid-safe working practices and procedures.</li> </ul>

NEW ECONOMIC SHOCKS			
COMPANY	LOCATION	SECTOR	SOURCE/DETAIL
Great Bridge Indoor Market	Sandwell	Retail	<a href="#">Great Bridge Indoor Market will not reopen post Covid</a> closure due to high rates of the virus being recorded in the borough, break ins and high rates.
Pizza Express	Bromsgrove and Birmingham	Hospitality	<a href="#">Pizza Express to shut restaurants in West Midlands and Shropshire.</a>
Fyffes	Coventry	Storage, Food Distribution	<a href="#">Banana supplier Fyffes has shut a distribution centre in Coventry</a> after 20 more staff tested positive for Covid-19, taking the total to 30. An outbreak at the site on Richardson Way, Cross Point Business Park was reported last week after an initial 10 staff members tested positive for the virus.
Marks and Spencer	National	Retail	<a href="#">Marks and Spencer has announced it plans to shed around 7,000 jobs</a> over the next three months across stores, regional management and its support centre in response to a “material shift in trade”. The retailer said that during lockdown it has learnt to work more flexibly, using the same staff to man both the food aisles and the clothing section of the stores.
Pizza Express	Regional	Hospitality	<a href="#">Pizza Express plans to close 73 restaurants and cut 1,100 jobs</a> as part of a major restructuring of the casual dining business. Nearly one in six Pizza Express restaurants in the UK will close if its CVA plans are approved. The chain had publicly put itself up for sale earlier this month.



NEW INVESTMENT, DEALS AND OPPORTUNITIES			
COMPANY	LOCATION	SECTOR	DETAIL & SOURCE
Guardian Warehousing Limited	Willenhall	Logistics	<a href="#">Extension to warehousing facility</a> will create 8 new jobs as additional loading bays are planned to boost operations.
Central RPL	Sandwell	Manufacturing	<a href="#">Manufacturing company in Sandwell</a> receive a 6 figure loan through CBILS scheme in order to maintain supplier payments and cover overheads as It focuses in recovery post lockdown.
NDC Polipak	Sandwell	Manufacturing and distribution	<a href="#">Sandwell company secure 7 figure CBILS loan</a> in order to support cashflow and supplier payments during recovery stages for the company.
International Water Solutions	Redditch	Manufacturing	<a href="#">International Water Solutions is to launch a new arm of its business, Mydis</a> , focused on the production and supply of its own alcohol-free antibacterial sanitiser and a string of associated products. Finance director Jeffrey Kinn said: “We are based in Essex and needed a more central distribution centre, in the Midlands. Redditch was ideal for our purposes.”
Harvey UK	Henley in Arden	Commercial Interior Design	<a href="#">Henley-in-Arden based commercial decoration company Harvey UK has completed a contract decorating and finishing a £62m</a> student accommodation project on the Warwick University campus. “This work was carried out under strict COVID-safe working and social distancing practices, but was still finished on schedule.”
The MTC	Coventry	Engineering, Manufacturing	<a href="#">The Manufacturing Technology Centre</a> near Coventry has partnered with intelligent video experts One Big Circle to develop a safety system which can spot anti-social behaviour or emergency incidents on station platforms.

NEW INVESTMENT, DEALS AND OPPORTUNITIES			
COMPANY	LOCATION	SECTOR	DETAIL & SOURCE
Safetyflex Barriers	Coventry	Manufacturing	An outdoor street market in London has been protected from the threat of terrorist vehicle attacks by <a href="#">Coventry-based Safetyflex Barriers</a> . The company has provided over 100 anti-terrorism bollards at Broadway Market in Hackney to safeguard shoppers and traders.
NP Aerospace	Coventry	Manufacturing	A £3m contract has been awarded by the UK Ministry of Defence to demonstrate hybrid electric-drive systems on its Foxhound and Jackal vehicles. <a href="#">Coventry-based NP Aerospace has secured the contract</a> .
Aurrigo	Coventry	Automotive, Engineering, Manufacturing	Some of the world's best golfers will be part of a global first demonstration when the European Tour rolls into the Celtic Manor Resort for the ISPS Handa Wales Open today, <a href="#">thanks to a Coventry company</a> .
Warwick Acoustics	Warwick	Engineering	Environmentally friendly audio systems are to be made for electric vehicles by a university and one of its spin-outs after a grant was secured from Innovate UK. <a href="#">Warwick Acoustics</a> , a spinout from the University of Warwick's School of Engineering, will support the development of a lower cost version of its patented ElectroAcoustics Audio Panels for next generation vehicles.
LEVC	Rugby	Automotive, Engineering, Manufacturing	<a href="#">Electric taxi and van maker LEVC has significantly grown its authorised service and maintenance network</a> . The Warwickshire-headquartered company has signed a partnership with o end-to-end fleet management business, Rivus Fleet Solutions. These additional 20 authorised service centres join LEVC's existing 17 sites, increasing the brand's existing UK network to 37 locations by the end of October.

NEW INVESTMENT, DEALS AND OPPORTUNITIES			
COMPANY	LOCATION	SECTOR	DETAIL & SOURCE
Telent	Warwick	Digital and Technology	Pre-tax profits <a href="#">surged at a technology giant</a> which counts Airbus, BT and Stagecoach among its clients during its latest financial year, new documents have revealed. Warwick-based Telent, which provides services to the defence, rail, traffic and public safety sectors, has reported profits of £85m for the 12 months to 31 March 2020, up from £48.3m.



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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