

# West Midlands

## Weekly Economic Impact Monitor



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

This week the news has been dominated by developments in Ukraine, and this has affected the data and research published on general economic conditions. Many forecasters are now reviewing their forecasts given the unfolding situation across Europe, and its wider impacts on the global economy. Once again this has flagged how interrelated countries are and how much shocks affect individuals, businesses and economies.

### Invasion of Ukraine – some economic implications

- The Putin regime has mounted the largest invasion of a neighbouring country in decades, [invading Ukraine on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2022](#).
- Countries around the world have [rallied to support Ukraine](#). Many governments have begun imposing sanctions on Russia and Russian government supporters, in order to reduce funding for the invasion. However, there has been criticisms that these sanctions will [not take effect fast enough](#). Many businesses have also begun to [stop business operations](#) within Russia to stay in line with sanctions.
- There are also likely to be massive economic disruptions, with additional supply chain issues following the disruption of the Covid-19 pandemic. [McKinsey](#) analysis shows the biggest exports from Russia are in the oil, gas and other extractive industries. A good deal has been said about the potential implications of the conflict for energy supplies. But there are [several other sectors](#) that are likely to be impacted; in particular, the chemicals, construction, and transportation sectors are likely to face either supply shortages, price increases, or both. The food manufacturing and automotive manufacturing sectors are also strongly connected to exports from Russia.
- The price of oil rose [above \\$100 a barrel](#), while European natural gas prices initially [surged by almost 70%](#).

### National and regional developments

- [Nationwide's House Price Index](#) has seen the average cost of a home increase by 12.6% in February, pushing average house prices over £260,000 for the first time. This follows the highest rise in prices for the beginning of the [year since 2005](#). House prices have hit their highest level since records began in 1952, rising to £260,230. This was up [£29,162 on February 2021](#), and is the largest ever year on year increase ever recorded, almost matching the average annual wage of full-time employees last year at £31,285.
- ONS has released model based estimates of regional GVA. These estimates of seasonally adjusted growth are modelled from a variety of data sources, including the [first estimate of UK gross domestic product \(GDP\)](#) for Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2021. ONS found that all regions are estimated to have seen a positive quarter-on-previous-quarter growth in GVA in Q4 2021. The East Midlands, East of England, London, South East, South West and West Midlands had greater growth than the UK-wide figure in Quarter 4 2021.
- The British Business Bank's eighth annual [Small Business Finance Market Report 2021/22](#) has found that the West Midlands smaller businesses are showing strong signs of recovery and a renewed appetite for growth. Equity investment in West Midlands smaller businesses reached £277 million by the end of 2021's third quarter.
- The amount of debt held by smaller businesses has significantly increased compared to pre-pandemic levels due to businesses accessing the government's Covid-19 emergency finance schemes to help them survive. Encouragingly, however, debt repayments are becoming a smaller share of businesses cash flow as UK economic recovery helps boost their turnover.
- Projections released by [Midlands Connect and WSP ahead of its EV conference](#) show that the Midlands is on the brink of an electric vehicle boom – and could have more than 1.7 million electric cars on its streets by the end of the decade. This suggests that the Midlands is set to see a [2,475% increase](#) in uptake of Electric Vehicle cars by the end of 2030, as the projections predict EV usage to rise from 68,725 EVs today to [1,769,855 by 2030](#). This means almost a third of cars in the region will be EV by 2030.

### Regional economic trends

- Quarterly GDP analysis shows for the West Midlands region there was growth of 5.1% in 2021 Q2, while England overall increased by 4.8%. All regions and countries in the UK showed positive quarter-on-quarter growth.

- For the West Midlands region, there was positive growth in GDP for three sectors in 2021 Q2; the production sector by 0.9%, services sector by 5.6% and the construction sector by 16.5%. The agriculture, forestry and fishing sector had a contraction in GDP by 2.2%.
- For the West Midlands region, there was positive growth in GDP for 16 industries and contractions in two industries in 2021 Q2.
- Online job adverts for eight regions increased between the 11<sup>th</sup> February 2022 and 18<sup>th</sup> February 2022. Week-on-week online job adverts decreased by 4.5 percentage points in London, in contrast, online job adverts increased by 4.1 percentage points for both the West Midlands and the North East. On the 18<sup>th</sup> February 2022 total online job adverts for the West Midlands were at 161.6% of their average level in February 2020.
- According to Springboard, overall retail footfall in the UK in the week to 19<sup>th</sup> February 2022 was at 74% of the level seen in the equivalent week of 2019; this was a 4% decrease when compared to the previous week. In the week to 19<sup>th</sup> February 2022, footfall in high streets decreased by 7% from the previous week and was 65% of the level seen in the equivalent week of 2019. Over the same period, footfall in retail parks remained unchanged and was 94% of the level seen in the equivalent week of 2019 and shopping centres remained unchanged and was 72% of the level seen in the equivalent week of 2019.
- 40.6% of responding West Midlands businesses reported that Covid-19 was the main reason for the change in the business turnover over the last two weeks, 1.4% reported that the “end of the EU transition period” was the main reason. While 24.9% reported “other” as the main reason and 15.0% of West Midlands businesses reported Covid-19 and the end of the EU transition period.
- 43.1% of West Midlands businesses reported the prices of materials, goods or services brought over the last month compared with normal price fluctuations had increased more than usual and less than 1% reported prices decreased more than usual.
- 37.6% of responding West Midland businesses reported to currently experiencing a shortage of workers. Due to the shortage of workers, 66.3% of West Midlands businesses reported employees were then working increased hours.

### Procurement

- In England, the government will shortly be introducing [new rules on public procurement](#) which will actively encourage the adoption of more innovative processes and solutions. A procurement strategy has already been published. Public authorities will need to consider innovation, sustainability, job creation and social value goals when they prepare their tenders for procuring products or services. They will have to enhance procurement skills and embed them within the teams commissioning innovative solutions.
- [Birmingham City Council](#) already has long-standing experience in this area. It can play a leading role in responding to the government’s initiative. Across the region, many authorities will have similar problems. The [Digital Services Roadmap](#) has already made it clear that procurement ambitions are essential for the effective and early deployment of digital solutions. That thinking needs to be expanded to other sectors.

### Local industrial specialisation

- There could be advantages in the West Midlands region pursuing diversified specialisation processes, concentrating their efforts in given domains of local industrial specialisation, such as the automotive industry or advanced manufacturing, as well as areas of higher added-value services such as business and professional services or logistics. At the same time, in order to [increase its industrial resilience](#), the region must continue to diversify and replace existing specialisations with new (and improved) ones.
- A unique strength of the West Midlands is the manufacturing sector (aerospace, automotive, and rail). The skills, technologies, components, and local institutions built around these existing firms in the region are in an exceptional position to secure future regional diversification pathways into the space sector, for example.

### Addressing regional inequalities

- City-REDI international comparative research on reducing inequalities at city-region level found that sustained high levels of funding were imperative in transforming the city-regions. The 2030 target in the Levelling Up White Paper means that commitments in the UK are being planned over an eight-year timescale. By contrast, for instance, despite high levels of funding, it took 15 years for unemployment to start falling in Leipzig and a further 15 years to bring it closer to the national average. This shows how levelling up is likely to be a long-term process.

### Experience of selected population sub-groups in the labour market

- Disabled people have the lowest employment rates than the rest of the UK population, regardless of their qualification level. Yet the biggest barrier disabled people face in gaining employment are the negative attitudes and discrimination they can face throughout the recruitment process.
- As 20% of the working population are disabled, and 8 out of 10 disabled people acquired their disability during their working life, the chances are that disability is an issue that you will come across in your business or experience yourself.

- The Covid-19 pandemic has disproportionately impacted young people's experiences of, and transitions into, work. Across the UK there were 340 thousand fewer payrolled employees aged 18-24 years in April 2021 than in February 2020.
- The [unequal nature of the jobs crisis](#) has exacerbated inequalities amongst young people. As previously in the context of a difficult labour market, young people – especially young women – have taken up further and higher educational opportunities.
- Young people have experienced the [greatest deterioration in mental health](#) during the pandemic of any age group.
- The scarring effect of higher unemployment and lower earnings persisting for [young people who fail to make 'good' transitions into the labour market](#) highlights both the importance of combatting worklessness and facilitating transitions from education to employment and job quality
- In 2020 and 2021 experience of work and transitions into work were disrupted for many young people.
- When they are not successful in finding desired roles requiring higher-level skills, graduates often have the opportunity to 'bump down' in the labour market to take up roles requiring lower qualifications, so reducing opportunities for the less qualified.

### Apprenticeships

- Apprenticeships have become a significant route into the workplace. Between August 2021 and October 2021, 130,200 people started apprenticeships in England according to the [Government website](#). [86% of employers said](#) apprenticeships helped them develop skills relevant to their organisation; 78% of employers said apprenticeships helped them improve productivity; 74% of employers said apprenticeships helped them improve the quality of their product and service.
- [Employers say that qualified apprentices](#) are 15% more employable than those with other qualifications. Apprenticeships boost productivity to businesses by on average £214 per week. 90% of apprentices stay in employment with over 70% staying with the same employer. Nearly a quarter of former apprentices are promoted within a year of finishing their apprenticeship.

### Covid-19

- Across Europe [case numbers have been falling](#). This is largely because of continued vaccination programmes, as well as the end of winter. Additionally, as a result of the social distancing ending and countries and economies reopening, vaccination rates have increased, this is because many countries, events and venues, require guests to be vaccinated.

# Global, National and Regional Outlook

Alice Pugh, WMREDI

## Global

Since the last monitor the world order has changed. The Putin regime has mounted the largest invasion of a neighbouring country in decades, [invading Ukraine on the 24<sup>th</sup> February 2022](#). Putin stated the reason for this was because Russia could not feel “[safe, develop and exist](#)” because of a constant threat from the current Ukrainian Government. President Putin is claiming that his goal is to protect people subjected to bullying genocide and aims for the “[demilitarisation and de-Nazification](#)” of Ukraine.

Putin feels that he has lost power and influence over Ukraine: a neighbouring country, which is hoping to make stronger ties with the west. Since the [pro-Russian Ukrainian government was overthrown in 2014](#), President Putin has frequently accused Ukraine as being taken over by extremists. The Ukrainian government is committed to developing a [strong democracy](#).

In 2014 the pro-Russian government was overthrown and in retaliation Putin [seized the southern region of Crimea](#). The Russian government then [supported separatists and rebellions](#) in eastern regions, and since 2014 14,000 lives have thought to have been lost. Now Putin is taking the opportunity to complete his invasion of Ukraine, attacking by land, sea and air, with forces attacking not only government buildings and infrastructure, but now civilian buildings.

As a result, countries around the world have [rallied to support Ukraine](#); they have sent both [humanitarian aid](#) and [weapons](#) to help Ukraine. Many governments have also begun imposing sanctions on Russian government supporters, in order to reduce funding for the invasion. However, there has been criticisms that these sanctions will [not take effect fast enough](#). Many businesses have also begun to [stop business operations](#) within Russia to stay in line with sanctions, but also out of a moral duty, in the hope that this will place pressure on the regime from the Russian population.

Much of the Russian population did not want to go to war with neighbouring Ukraine, demonstrated by [the thousands of protesters](#) who have lined the Russian streets, in a country where more than one person protesting at a time is a criminal offense. As a result, thousands of Russian citizens have been [arrested for protesting](#) against the invasion of Ukraine. Many Russians do not want to enter a false war and [face another iron curtain](#). The Russian government has also cracked down on [news distributors](#) and [social media channels](#) to prevent genuine and factual news from meeting its population, in an effort to curb anti-invasion sentiment.

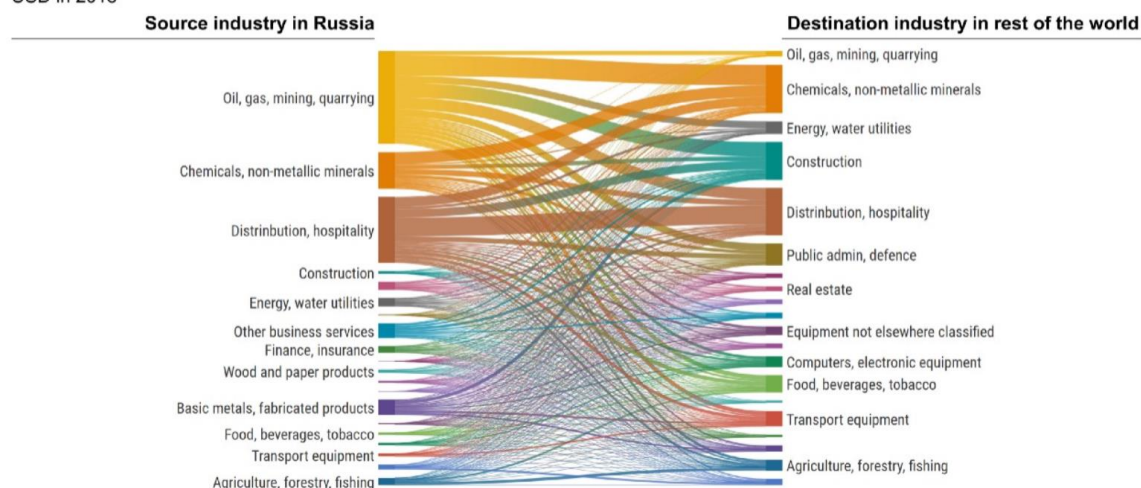
Currently, the Ukrainians are [strongly defending their nation](#), and slowing the invasion. However, whilst nations around the world have offered support to Ukraine, there will be [no troops placed on the ground](#). [NATO troops](#) will only be sent into the region if Russia were to attack a NATO nation. The main aim for the majority of governments at the moment is de-escalation and the prevention of loss of human life.

There are also likely to be massive economic disruptions, as the Ukrainian invasion will cause additional supply chain issues following the disruption for the pandemic. The image below from [McKinsey](#) shows, on the left hand the GVA by sector in industries from which Russia exports goods and services to the rest of the world. Unsurprisingly, the biggest exports are in the oil, gas and other extractive industries, as well as wholesale and logistics (the “Distribution, hospitality” sector shown in the image).

[The right-hand part of the chart](#) shows the sectors in which the exported goods and services are consumed. A good deal has been said about the potential implications of the conflict for energy supplies. But there are [several other sectors](#) that are likely to be impacted; in particular, the chemicals, construction, and transportation sectors are likely to face either supply shortages, price increases, or both. The food manufacturing and automotive manufacturing sectors are also strongly connected to exports from Russia.

# Disruptions in supplies from Russia will likely have implications for chemicals, construction, transport and food sectors

Gross value added of Russian exports to the rest of the world by source and destination sector  
USD in 2018



Source: OECD Trade in Value Added database; McKinsey analysis

McKinsey & Company 1

Whilst the UK does not currently receive a large quantity of energy from Russia, energy prices are set internationally not nationally, and as price rises due to reduced supplies from Russia, energy prices internationally will rise for countries reliant on oil and gas. This will further increase the cost of living and business operations, as many across the globe are already struggling with high prices. The price of oil rose [above \\$100 a barrel](#), while European natural gas prices initially [surged by almost 70%](#).

## National

[Second homeowners in Wales](#) could potentially have to pay up to four times their current level of council tax from next year, the Welsh government has announced. Currently, councils can charge a second home premium of up to [100% but that will rise to 300%](#) from April 2023. In recent years there has been growth in second home ownership in Wales and this has reduced supply and increased prices for local people, pricing many first-time buyers especially, out of the market. Additionally, because most second homers spend little of their time in their second home, it means they spend little of their money there and local economies become more and more tourist focused, reducing year-round opportunities for local economies.

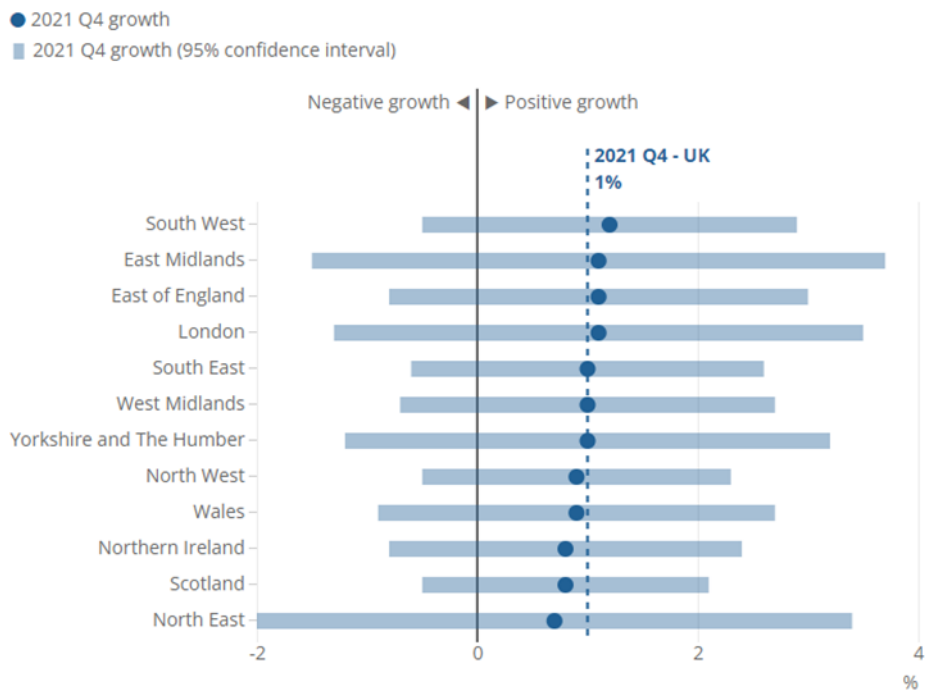
At the moment properties available to let for a minimum of 140 days in any 12-month period, and actually let for at [least 70 days](#), pay rates, not council tax. Under the changes, properties must be available to let for at least 252 days, and actually let for a minimum of [182 days to qualify](#). The government said this would make it clearer that the premises are genuine holiday accommodation and are making a "substantial contribution" to the local economy.

According to the Welsh government council tax premiums are being paid on more than [23,000 properties](#) in Wales this year. In the 2022-23 tax year [nine authorities](#) will charge a premium, ranging from 25% in Conwy and Ceredigion, 50% in Anglesey, Flintshire, Denbighshire and Powys, and 100% in Gwynedd, Pembrokeshire and Swansea. Additionally, Ministers will also raise the maximum premium for empty homes to 300%.

Furthermore, [Nationwide's House Price Index](#) has seen the average cost of a home increase by 12.6% in February, pushing average house prices over £260,000 for the first time. This is following the highest rise in prices for the beginning of the [year since 2005](#). House prices have hit their highest level since records began in 1952, rising to £260,230. This was up [£29,162 on February 2021](#), and is the largest ever year on year increase ever recorded, almost matching the average annual wage of full-time employees last year at £31,285.

ONS has released model based estimates of regional gross value added (GVA). These estimates of seasonally adjusted growth are modelled from a variety of data sources, including the [first estimate of UK gross domestic product \(GDP\)](#) for Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2021. ONS found that all regions are estimated to have seen a positive quarter-on-previous-quarter growth in GVA in Q4 2021, as shown in the figure below.





Source: Office for National Statistics

The [first quarterly estimate of GDP](#) at UK level for Quarter 4 2021 estimated [gross value added \(GVA\)](#) in basic prices to have increased by 1% quarter-on-quarter. The [model-based estimates of regional GVA](#) indicate that the East Midlands, East of England, London, South East, South West and West Midlands had greater growth than the UK-wide figure in Quarter 4 2021, see the figure above. The highest was the South West with 1.2% growth. The model estimates that the North East, Yorkshire and The Humber, North West, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland had growth below the UK GVA. The lowest was the North East, with 0.1% growth.

## Regional

The British Business Bank's eighth annual [Small Business Finance Market Report 2021/22](#) has found that the West Midlands smaller businesses are showing strong signs of recovery and a renewed appetite for growth. Equity investment in West Midlands smaller businesses reached £277 million by the end of 2021's third quarter across 46 deals. An 18% rise on the number of equity deals completed in the same period in 2020, however the region experienced a 25% drop in investment value.

In addition to the growth in equity finance, the report indicates that UK debt markets overall are returning to near pre-pandemic levels. [Challenger and specialist banks](#) accounted for just over half of the bank lending market (51%): a record share, up from 32% in 2020. However, the amount of debt held by smaller businesses has significantly increased compared to pre-pandemic levels due to businesses accessing the government's Covid-19 emergency finance schemes to help them survive. Encouragingly, however, debt repayments are becoming a smaller share of businesses cash flow as UK economic recovery helps boost their turnover.

The [report from the British Business Bank](#) also looked at various factors impacting entrepreneurs' willingness and ability to access finance. It reported that ethnic minority-led businesses are more open to using finance and more ambitious for business growth but access to finance remains an issue. 50% of ethnic minority-led businesses are open to using finance for growth compared to 32% of White-led businesses.

[47% of smaller businesses](#) also recorded viewing reducing carbon emissions as a priority. In 2021, almost half of smaller businesses viewed reducing their carbon emissions or environmental impact to be a priority for their business and one in five would use external finance to help transition their business to net zero, with one in ten already having done this

Projections released by [Midlands Connect and WSP ahead of its EV conference](#) show that the Midlands is on the brink of an electric vehicle boom – and could have more than 1.7 million electric cars on its streets by the end of the decade. This suggests that the Midlands is set to see a [2,475% increase](#) in uptake of Electric Vehicle cars by the end

of 2030, as the projections predict EV usage to rise from 68,725 EVs today to [1,769,855 by 2030](#). This means almost a third of cars in the region will be EV by 2030. The report forecasts that to deal with this demand change, the Midlands region will require an additional 8,909 public charging points by 2030.

While local councils have worked tirelessly to improve the city's EV infrastructure, analysis by [Midlands Connect](#) suggests that a £131 million 'Electric Vehicle fund' is needed to support them in delivering the public charging points needed this decade. The research predicts that private businesses will fund around half (51%) of EV charging points, with LAs expected to fund the rest (49%).

A [West Midlands training provider](#) has been selected as a key delivery partner to the £12m Supplier Skills Programme (SSP). In-Comm Training will work to help upskill 800 individuals across Birmingham, Bromsgrove, Redditch, Solihull and Wyre Forest by offering access to specialist training to help SMEs make the most of the economy post-pandemic. Funded by the European Social Fund (ESF), the initiative will offer grants for up to half the [total cost of the training, up to £18,000](#). Around 200 local firms will have the opportunity to train employees in [one of 36 accredited courses](#), covering anything from quality, IOSH, toolmaking and leadership and management to mechatronics and robotics. Training will range from basic to degree level training, which could either be carried out at the employer's site or within In-Comm Training's state-of-the-art technical academy.

[The employer-led approach](#) will boost engagement levels for SSP across five key areas, with eligible firms able to also maximise the innovates technologies currently available at the technical academy. This includes CNC machinery, welding, fluid control, metrology, additive manufacturing and outstanding design capabilities.

# Other Countries Have Made Progress in Levelling Up – Here’s How the UK’s Plan Compares

Abigail Taylor, WMREDI

*Dr Abigail Taylor looks at how the UK’s approach to levelling up compares with regions that have been successful in reducing inequalities. She draws on recent research she contributed to led by Anne Green, Professor of Regional Economic Development, City-REDI and Jeffrey Matsu, Chief Economist at CIPFA. Liam O’Farrell, Hannes Read, Gina Coe, Ben Brittain, and George Bramley also co-authored the report.*

The UK is currently [one of the most regionally unequal countries](#) in the developed world. The white paper on [levelling up](#) outlines the government’s plans to address this through 12 “missions” to increase economic and educational opportunities across all regions.

The UK is far from the first country to try and “level up” regional areas. Research with the [Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy](#) examined similar efforts in France, Germany, Japan and the US to determine what works in tackling regional inequalities.

We reviewed policy and interviewed policymakers, academics and third sector workers to identify the factors that led to countries successfully reducing regional inequality. We focused on Fukuoka in Japan, Leipzig in Germany, Cleveland in the US and Nantes in France. To use the UK’s language, these are all cities that previously would have been considered “left behind”.

Leipzig, for example, suffered mass unemployment and rapid population decline following the reunification of East and West Germany in 1990. Today, the city’s economy is one of the fastest-growing in Europe.

Overall, there are ambitious ideas and aims to welcome in the white paper. But levelling up policy in the UK remains shorter term and less well-funded than in the cases we studied. Here’s how the UK compares:

## 1. Long-term investment

Our research found that sustained high levels of funding were imperative in transforming the city-regions. The 2030 target in the white paper means that commitments in the UK are being planned over an eight-year timescale. By contrast, despite high levels of funding, it took 15 years for unemployment to start falling in Leipzig and a further 15 years to bring it closer to the national average. This shows how levelling up is likely to be a long-term process. Cleveland’s flagship project to build community wealth and create a more inclusive economy is planned on a 20- to 30-year horizon.

Policies to address regional inequalities in Germany totalled almost €2 trillion (£1.69 trillion) between 1990 and 2014, while the committed funding in the UK’s plan is [timid](#). The white paper included no [new funding](#), with financial support for the majority of initiatives having already been announced. For example, of the £500 million announced to support innovation in the Midlands, £400 million for the British Business Bank appears to have been announced at the [2021 autumn budget](#).

## 2. Responsive revenue raising

Both Leipzig and Nantes have systems that enable funds to be redistributed across regions and cities to address regional and urban inequalities. They show how tax powers can be designed to compensate areas with low tax revenues. But enhancing the tax-raising powers of local and regional institutions has not been proposed in the white paper, so their revenue raising abilities will remain limited.

## 3. Key players

Cleveland’s experience shows that anchor institutions, like hospitals and universities, can play a key role in levelling up. The city was hit hard by deindustrialisation, which exacerbated challenges like racial segregation and high



poverty levels. Major anchor institutions are working with city authorities and a philanthropic organisation, the Cleveland Foundation, to support growth in local communities.

Their focus is largely on procurement – how services and goods are bought by public authorities. The Greater University Circle initiative aims to change the way people are hired and services are bought, to increase local spending and employment. Over 50,000 people are employed by the scheme, demonstrating the value of anchor institutions in stimulating local economic activity.

Nantes' experiences show the importance of ensuring procurement teams, who are responsible for buying services on behalf of the local council and mayoral combined authority, are sufficiently resourced.

The UK plan stresses the importance of anchor institutions in supporting regional economies, but questions remain about the extent to which government departments and other players will work together to facilitate economic development. How much weight will departments and officers give to using public procurement for levelling up if it differs from the lowest cost option?

#### **4. Shared political will**

The four city-regions we studied benefited from stronger local and regional powers than comparable areas in the UK. For example, German states, including Saxony, where Leipzig is located, benefit from powers relating to public health, public finance, education and planning. Leipzig City Council has powers over administrative services, community integration, tourism, transport and the environment.

The devolution proposals announced in the white paper are a step in the right direction in increasing the ability of local and regional governments to introduce tailored strategies.

However, although all regions are being invited to agree London-style devolution deals with central government, it is unclear which additional powers they will gain. For example, will employment support and training budgets be devolved? Devolving substantial power and resources will be essential if levelling up is to address local and regional needs.

The UK's white paper sets out a tight time frame, with limited funding to make progress towards the levelling up missions. While it is impossible to fully compare, given differing political systems and priorities, the government's white paper could learn a lot from proven examples of levelling up.

# Rethinking Public Procurement for Post-COVID Recovery

## Malcolm Harbour, Connected Places Catapult

*Malcolm Harbour CBE from Connected Places Catapult examines how the public sector can use procurement to drive innovation in Birmingham and the West Midlands.*

*This blog post was produced for inclusion in the Birmingham Economic Review for 2021.*

*The annual Birmingham Economic Review is produced by [City-REDI](#), University of Birmingham and the [Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce](#). It is an in-depth exploration of the economy of England's second city and a high-quality resource for informing research, policy and investment decisions.*

*This post is featured in Chapter 2 of the Birmingham Economic Review for 2021, on Industry and Innovation: Pathways to Prosperity.*

Click [here](#) to read the Review.

### Birmingham's role in innovation

Birmingham has played a historic role in developing and manufacturing innovative products. These deeply ingrained skills provide a strong foundation for the post-Covid economy. Working closely with the [West Midlands Combined Authority](#), ambitious plans have been made to develop the skills and infrastructure for future success.

All these plans position innovation as an essential ingredient to achieve global competitiveness. There are many proposals to develop innovative companies, particularly through "accelerators" or "incubators". But for lasting success, these companies need customers for their innovations. Accelerators must pave roads to customer contracts, Incubators must generate flourishing offspring. Without customers, innovators will struggle to build long-term businesses, with global reach, that will help secure our economic future.

### Public Sector

The public sector, as lead customer, can be a powerful booster for innovation. It can use public procurement in an innovative way and work with innovative suppliers to develop solutions to the many challenging problems it is now facing. Tackling climate change and making the transition to a zero-carbon economy is just one example. Innovative ideas will be needed to meet public expectations in all areas of public service delivery.

### Local Innovation

The UK cannot meet demanding policy goals by centrally run programmes. They will have to be addressed regionally or locally by projects initiated and managed by local authorities and regional agencies. Local innovation is indispensable across a whole range of products and services to deliver solutions that will be robust, effective and offer value for money.

### New Rules on Public Procurement

In England, the government will shortly be introducing [new rules on public procurement](#) which will actively encourage the adoption of more innovative processes and solutions. A procurement strategy has already been published. Public authorities will need to consider innovation, sustainability, job creation and social value goals when they prepare their tenders for procuring products or services. They will have to enhance procurement skills and embed them within the teams commissioning innovative solutions.

### Procurement Challenges

[Birmingham City Council](#) already has long-standing experience in this area. It can play a leading role in responding to the government's initiative. Across the region, many authorities will have similar problems. There would be real benefits from strong coordination and sharing of ideas. Procurement challenges can be built around planned

infrastructure investment – for example, innovative ideas for exploiting 5G connectivity. Sectors already identified as key technology hubs, such as transport or medical devices – could be central to procurement challenges. Combined tender offers will be very attractive to innovative suppliers.

### **Public Sector Customers**

Ambitious and innovative public sector customers must ensure that they have simple and clear processes that encourage ambitious and innovative businesses to supply them. Where they are looking for “cutting edge” solutions, they should set out their unmet needs and engage the market with pre-tender consultations to ensure that they are being offered the best ideas. The Commonwealth Games team have set a great example with their very clear supplier web portal, future contracts listings and direct online tendering.

### **Strategic Public Procurement**

Strategic public procurement would position Birmingham and the West Midlands as a leading innovative region. The clustering of innovative public sector customers demanding innovative suppliers would have a dynamic effect on the economy. Early-stage companies with a future customer contract will be attractive propositions for scale-up funding. Potential investors would be encouraged to work with new suppliers, understand their needs and develop new investment opportunities.

### **A New Consortium**

The new procurement rules offer Birmingham and the West Midlands a great opportunity to enhance its strong portfolio of regeneration plans. The [Digital Services Roadmap](#) has already made it clear that procurement ambitions are essential for the effective and early deployment of digital solutions. That thinking needs to be expanded to other sectors. Rethinking the role of procurement will be assisted by building a research base of ideas and case studies to help authorities and businesses respond to the new challenges. [City-REDI](#) at the University of Birmingham, working with the University of Manchester and the Connected Places Catapult, are ready to play a key role as partners in a new Consortium for [Research in Innovative and Strategic Public Procurement](#), which was launched in 2021.

# How You Can Ensure Talented Individuals With Disabilities Are Able to Thrive in Your Business

**Shani Handa, Social Entrepreneur and Disability Specialist**

*Shani Handa discusses the barriers disabled people face when looking for employment, why businesses should employ more disabled people and how they can go about it.*

*This blog post was produced for inclusion in the Birmingham Economic Review for 2021.*

*The annual Birmingham Economic Review is produced by City-REDI, University of Birmingham and the Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce. It is an in-depth exploration of the economy of England's second city and a high-quality resource for informing research, policy and investment decisions.*

*This post is featured in Chapter 3 of the Birmingham Economic Review for 2021, on the city's labour market and current and future challenges*

Click [here](#) to read the Review.

## Disability

For many of us, having a job is something that is fulfilling personally, economically, socially, and professionally. Work is a necessary part of life and a calling in many respects. Day to day, it is easy to overestimate one aspect of work such as getting paid, and underestimate another, such as building valuable relationships.

In addition to the significant impact on employment due to Covid-19, there are many groups of people who were already shut out of the jobs market. This is largely due to societal bias towards their characteristics such as age, race, disability and sexuality – to name a few.

[An article by People Management showed](#) 25% of UK employers are less likely to employ someone with a disability, and 60% were concerned about whether a disabled person could do the job. These statistics did not come as a surprise to me as I have first-hand experience of how difficult it can be to gain employment when you experience disability. I had to learn this harsh life lesson at the age of 16 when I had applied for over 100 jobs, but I was only successful in getting an interview when I removed any mention of my condition from job applications.

Unfortunately, my story is not uncommon. Disabled people have the lowest employment rates than the rest of the UK population, regardless of their qualification level. Yet the biggest barrier disabled people face in gaining employment are the negative attitudes and discrimination they can face throughout the recruitment process.

As 20% of the working population are disabled, and 8 out of 10 disabled people acquired their disability during their working life, the chances are that disability is an issue that you will come across in your business or experience yourself.

Most businesses will agree that building a pipeline of sustainable talent is vital, however increasingly it's harder than ever to find people with the right skills to boost growth. But businesses are missing out on a huge skills pool – seven million disabled people of working age, almost half of whom are unemployed.

## The unemployment of disabled people is a societal issue

It goes without saying that disabled people should have the same job opportunities as everyone else, but it's simply not the case because, on average, disabled people:

- Are more than twice as likely to be unemployed than non-disabled people
- Apply for 60% more jobs than non-disabled people
- When applying for jobs only half of applications result in an interview, compared with 69% for non-disabled applicants

The disability employment gap has been stuck at over 30% for more than a decade. And yet even a 10-percentage point rise in disabled people's employment rate would contribute an additional £12 billion to the Treasury by 2030.

We know that disabled people face unavoidable extra costs of £583 per month, as a result of living with an impairment or condition. These additional costs mean disabled people have less money in their pocket than non-disabled people, or simply go without.

Due to the pandemic, disabled people and carers are at least twice as likely to face redundancy as the rest of the working population. Nearly half the UK's 14 million people in poverty are disabled or live with someone who is.

There couldn't be a clearer case of why businesses must make every effort to create employment opportunities for disabled people. Yet, due to many myths, negative attitudes, and bias – the group of people that make up the world's largest minority are facing further inequality, and the dial on disability inclusion is not moving quick enough.

## Debunking the myths

Ample research has been carried out around disability and employment over the years, which conclude disabled employees are:

- **Reliable**– We take fewer days off, take less sick leave and stay in jobs longer than other workers
- **Productive**– Once in the right position with the correct support, we perform as well (or better) as other employees
- **Affordable**– Recruitment costs are lower due to less turnover. The majority of reasonable adjustments are low cost or cost nothing at all (e.g., flexible working)
- **Safe**– We are no more likely to be injured at work than other employees
- **Good for business**– Reflecting the customers we serve; people buy from ethical and purposeful companies, and people prefer to work for inclusive organisations.

## Here are some top tips to help you get started today:

- Think differently – Understand the reality of living with a disability and change the mindset of your business, from seeing the medical side of disability, to thinking about the barriers in the way of people with impairments.
- Talk openly – Changing culture starts with encouraging and supporting your employees to be open when it comes to discussing disability.
- Lead confidently – Clear leadership and accountability for disability are important to maintain focus. Making sure people get the support they need to apply for jobs and work with you is critically important.
- Measure up – Transforming your approach to disability doesn't happen overnight. Find ways to build trust, create a dialogue, track your progress – it'll help keep you focused, encourage momentum, and allow you to celebrate key milestones.

## [Work With Me Guide](#)

The value of disabled people in the workplace is far more than ticking a box. Every decision we make can raise or lower barriers to participation in society. It's our collective responsibility to remove these barriers, so those furthest from the jobs market are being provided with the necessary opportunities to get in and stay in work.

## Further reading and resources

Here are several key organisations and networks that will help you get going and support you on your disability inclusion journey:

**#WorkWithMe** – A network of businesses that support each other in becoming more inclusive for disabled people. It's free to join and to access the library of [resources](#).



**Evenbreak** – Connecting talented disabled people and job-seekers with disability-friendly and inclusive employers.  
**Scope** – Offer several employment support services.

**Leonard Cheshire** – Internships and awards for disabled entrepreneurs.

**The Valuable 500** – A business to business initiative to commit to putting disability inclusion on their leadership agendas.

**Disability Confident Scheme** – Helps employers make the most of the opportunities provided by employing disabled people, and disabled job-seekers can find disability confident employers.

**Access to Work** – A discretionary grant scheme that provides personalised support to disabled people to take up or remain in work.

# Young People Into Work

Anne Green, WMREDI

*Professor Anne Green looks at how the pandemic has impacted young people's experiences of work, the support available to enhance job prospects and how employers can help by playing a key role.*

*This blog post was produced for inclusion in the Birmingham Economic Review for 2021. It draws on data up to summer 2021.*

*The annual Birmingham Economic Review is produced by [City-REDI](#), University of Birmingham and the [Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce](#). It is an in-depth exploration of the economy of England's second city and a high-quality resource for informing research, policy and investment decisions.*

*This post is featured in Chapter 3 of the Birmingham Economic Review for 2021, on the city's labour market, and current and future challenges.*

Click [here](#) to read the Review.

## The pandemic and young people's work

The Covid-19 pandemic has disproportionately impacted young people's experiences of, and transitions into, work. Across the UK there were 340 thousand fewer payrolled employees aged 18-24 years in April 2021 than in February 2020. In relative terms, young people suffered the largest reductions in payrolled employees at the outset of the pandemic. They have been slowest to see recovery as hiring has increased once again. In part, this picture is explained by the sectoral footprint of the pandemic, with the hospitality and non-essential retail sectors, where many young people traditionally gain initial work experience, hard hit.

## Inequalities exacerbated

The [unequal nature of the jobs crisis](#) has exacerbated inequalities amongst young people. As previously in the context of a difficult labour market, young people – especially young women – have taken up further and higher educational opportunities. Ethnic differentials in economic experience have widened, with the reduction in employment rates being four times and three times greater for young Black people and young Asian people, respectively, than for young white people (albeit higher rates of participation in education by the former two groups explains part of this difference). The least well qualified have also fared worse than those with higher qualifications.

## Deterioration in mental health

Just as they have been impacted most in employment terms for most of the Covid-19 pandemic, young people have experienced the [greatest deterioration in mental health](#) during the pandemic of any age group. Worsening mental health amongst young people was a concern before the pandemic. There is a positive association between young people in insecure work and reporting of mental health problems. Survey evidence suggests that anxiety is higher amongst the unemployed than those in work and that the longer young people are jobless [the more negative they feel about themselves](#). While mental health issues are a matter of concern currently, evidence from previous crises suggests that mental health issues risk harming future job prospects and so have longer-term impacts.

## The scarring effect

The scarring effect of higher unemployment and lower earnings persisting for [young people who fail to make 'good' transitions into the labour market](#) highlights both the importance of combatting worklessness and facilitating transitions from education to employment and job quality. The Covid-19 pandemic has underscored the link between high-quality work and healthy lives not only for young people but across the age spectrum. Hence the nature of labour demand matters.

## Good employment

For young people, a 'good job' is usually a full-time job but with flexible hours of work paying above the living wage. They also place an onus on sharing the ethics and values of the company they work for: they want to believe in the content of the job or the purpose of what they are doing. Employers seeking to attract and retain young talent need to pay heed to these desires and values.

## Government schemes

Yet in 2020 and 2021 experience of work and transitions into work have been disrupted for many young people. Government responses include the [Kickstart Scheme](#), which provides young people at risk of long-term unemployment with fully-subsidised jobs to give them experience and skills, as well as an [Opportunity Guarantee](#), giving every young person the chance of an apprenticeship or an in-work placement.

## Specialist support from universities

When they are not successful in finding desired roles requiring higher-level skills, graduates often have the opportunity to 'bump down' in the labour market to take up roles requiring lower qualifications, so reducing opportunities for the less qualified. [Universities in Birmingham \(and beyond\) are increasingly focused on providing specialised support](#) to enable graduates to fill jobs commensurate with their skills levels, providing enterprise support and internship opportunities with local businesses, as well as emphasising the role of volunteering and other activities in providing a 'rounded CV' that enhances employability.

## Supporting the labour market disadvantaged

[For those young people who face the greater labour market disadvantage](#), reviews of evidence on 'what works' indicates engagement through non-work-related activities and one-to-one support, both at the pre-employment stage and when in work, is helpful, as is involving young people in co-design of support. [Youth Hubs and other place-based responses](#) have an important role to play in co-locating and joining up a range of support for young people at the local level.

## Perceptions influence behaviour

Looking ahead, for all young people a key issue relates to outlook (i.e. the way young people view themselves and the world), since perceptions influence behaviour. [Survey evidence suggests a trend towards widening of 'outlook inequality'](#) with the less advantaged being more pessimistic about the future, with key perceived barriers including that employers would be unwilling to hire inexperienced candidates and having a lack of training or qualifications for a different job. There is a key role for employers seeking to diversify their workforces in challenging misplaced perceptions regarding opportunities, including through the provision of virtual and physical internships, engaging in outreach events and further publicising strategies for diversifying their workforce.

# National Apprenticeship Week: The Importance of Apprentices

Ellie MacDonald, WM REDI

***Ellie Macdonald recently started at City-REDI / WMREDI as a Digital Marketing Apprentice. For National Apprenticeship Week, Ellie talks about why she decided to become an apprentice and the significance of apprenticeships for the workplace.***

Apprenticeships help you get your foot in the door in a work environment that you want to be in. They can help you gain experience that you might not get at University or other educational pathways and allow you to create connections in the workplace. Having experienced both university and apprenticeship life, there are some clear differences in them both.

Apprenticeships have become a significant route into the workplace. Between August 2021 and October 2021, 130,200 people started apprenticeships in England according to the [Government website](#).

You may not get the university independence of living and nightlife, but you can earn whilst you learn and get real experience of independence in the workplace. As an apprentice, you learn skills and gain experience that employers want and need. You handle your own tasks, allowing you to be independent and be responsible and proud of the work that you are producing. By getting personalised support with any task you are set, you build workplace relationships with the people you are working with and have fun along the way.

For example, in the second week of my apprenticeship, I was involved in an ITN Production Project with the West Midlands Growth Company, showcasing what WMREDI is all about and how great Birmingham is. This is just one of the amazing opportunities I have been given in my first month.

It not only has an impact on the person carrying out the apprenticeship as it advances their skills in a particular area but also enables employers to have an extra set of hands.

## Ellie Macdonald:

*Taking an apprenticeship after coming out of university always seemed backwards to me. but it has shown me that I learn better on the job. The opportunities available to me within the workplace are endless. After university, every job I applied for wanted marketing experience which I did not have, so taking on a role where I can earn whilst I learn was the best path for me to take. I can ask the silly questions that I felt uncomfortable asking in a huge lecture hall. I get the one to one time with my manager to talk through assignments and to go to seminars and events that will help me enhance my learning. This was the best. you gain respect within the team and I have already made so many valuable connections.*

[Over 250,000 businesses across the UK](#) currently employ an apprentice, showing that apprenticeships can increase productivity and improve business performance. Recruiting apprentices enables employers to fill the skills gaps that exist within their current workforce as apprentices begin to learn sector-specific skills from their first day. Hiring an apprentice is a productive and effective way to grow talent and develop a motivated, skilled, and qualified workforce.

## Statistics

- [86% of employers said](#) apprenticeships helped them develop skills relevant to their organisation
- 78% of employers said apprenticeships helped them improve productivity
- 74% of employers said apprenticeships helped them improve the quality of their product or service
  
- [Employers say that qualified apprentices](#) are 15% more employable than those with other qualifications
- Apprenticeships boost productivity to businesses by on average £214 per week
- 90% of apprentices stay in employment with over 70% staying with the same employer
- Nearly a quarter of former apprentices are promoted within a year of finishing their apprenticeship

## Academic Impacts

Having spoken with [Professor Anne Green](#) and [Dr Abigail Taylor](#), I got an insight into the effect apprentices have on businesses and the issues facing young people getting into work.

### Professor Anne Green:

*“Although the Covid-19 pandemic has had widespread impacts on businesses and people, apprenticeships are important for employers in helping meet their skills needs. This is especially so given current labour and skills shortages in many sectors and with the need to build skills for the future. One issue facing young people, in particular, is that the employment and skills system is complicated and fragmented, so it is often difficult to navigate and find out what opportunities are available.”*

I found my apprenticeship by looking for jobs on the University of Birmingham [Jobs Page](#). It was an easy application form to follow and allowed me to express my interest further at the interview.

### Dr Abigail Taylor:

*“[City-REDI research into skills systems in the West Midlands](#) shows how universities across the West Midlands are developing higher-level applied skills through offering higher-level apprenticeship programmes. Increasing cooperation between Further Education and Higher Education in jointly delivering degree apprenticeships offers opportunities to expand this further. It is vital that education providers work with employers to ensure apprenticeships respond to their workforce development needs and to help them to understand the support available to employ apprentices.”*

Whilst I have only just begun my journey as an apprentice, I’m excited about where it will take me. From a national perspective, Apprenticeships provide an excellent route for anyone into employment, as well as helping employers to enhance their company skills.



# Smart Specialisation and the Diversification of Related Sectors: The Context of Developing a West Midlands Space Cluster

Chloe Billing and Raquel Ortega-Argilés, WMREDI

*Dr Chloe Billing and Professor Raquel Ortega-Argilés discuss smart specialisation and regional diversification processes, and how the West Midlands can use its unique strengths to secure future regional diversification pathways into the space sector.*

*This blog post was produced for inclusion in the Birmingham Economic Review for 2021.*

*The annual Birmingham Economic Review is produced by [City-REDI](#), University of Birmingham and the [Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce](#). It is an in-depth exploration of the economy of England's second city and a high-quality resource for informing research, policy and investment decisions.*

*This post is featured in Chapter 2 of the Birmingham Economic Review for 2021, on Industry and Innovation: Pathways to Prosperity.*

Click [here](#) to read the Review.

## What is Smart Specialisation?

[Smart Specialisation](#) can be understood as a place-based policy prioritisation process based on increasing the local innovation capabilities, entrepreneurial opportunity and excellence in research and innovation, moving towards a sustainable and innovation-oriented growth strategy. These policy prioritisation choices should be based on regional competencies and capabilities via entrepreneurial discovery processes, related technological diversification, industrial embeddedness and spatial connectivity. In practice, these strategies are based on supporting regions in finding ways of diversifying their innovation potential, avoiding fragmentation and duplication or imitation. It should be based on the accumulation of critical mass (i.e. modern clusters creation) by involving actors as anchors in the innovative regional cycle.

## Regional Diversification

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

## Increasing Resilience in the West Midlands

The West Midlands region should pursue diversified specialisation processes, concentrating their efforts in given domains of local industrial specialisation, such as the automotive industries or advanced manufacturing, as well as areas of higher added-value services such as business and professional services or logistics. At the same time, in order to [increase its industrial resilience](#), the region must continue to diversify and replace existing specialisations with new (and improved) ones. These processes normally are dependent on existing regional capabilities, allowing related new and existing varieties to emerge consistently as an essential driving force for new industrial pathways with higher value-added. Related varieties of goods, technologies and industries appear when their development requires similar knowledge, applying similar techniques or similar raw materials (for example, auto and aerospace components are related because they are manufactured using similar technologies, skills and materials).

## The Development of a West Midlands Space Cluster

One potential new regional specialisation pathway could be the development of a West Midlands Space Cluster. We recently examined the potential for the [West Midlands to become a regional centre for the UK space industry](#), which

has grown ten-fold since 2010, is worth £15 billion and employs 42,000 people. This project was part of the [UK Space Agency 'Local Space Sector Cluster and Supply Chain Development' funding](#), founded to develop the maturity of 'early-stage' local space clusters across the UK. The seed-corn funding focussed on stimulating activities to provide evidence and analysis of the local ecosystem in order to progress the maturity of local space clusters, stimulate local advocacy and investment in Space-related activities and increase the uptake of space data and technologies.

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

### **The Development of New Industries**

The development of new industries or technologies across the geographical space is characterised by path and place dependence; new activities are more likely to emerge in domains whose organisational routines are cognitively close to those already existing in a given location. This is based on the concept of relatedness. Relatedness suggests that businesses operating in similar fields perform tasks with greater cognitive proximity, making it easier for businesses to diversify or pivot into new industrial segments that are closer to their existing production routine.

### **Unique Strengths in the Region**

A unique strength of the West Midlands is our manufacturing sector (aerospace, automotive, and rail). We found that the skills, technologies, components, and local institutions built around these existing firms in the region are in an exceptional position to secure future regional diversification pathways into the space sector. For example, we have strong supply chains mobilised around local key capabilities (such as engines, electromechanical systems, etc.). These industries (and, in particular, aerospace) share close similarities with space and thus demonstrate strong latent space potential.

# Quarterly Gross Domestic Product (GDP): April to June 2021 (Q2) – West Midlands Region<sup>1</sup>

## Black Country Consortium Economic Intelligence Unit

Please note, this data release has been updated to include Quarter 2 2021 only, no revisions to the earlier data period.

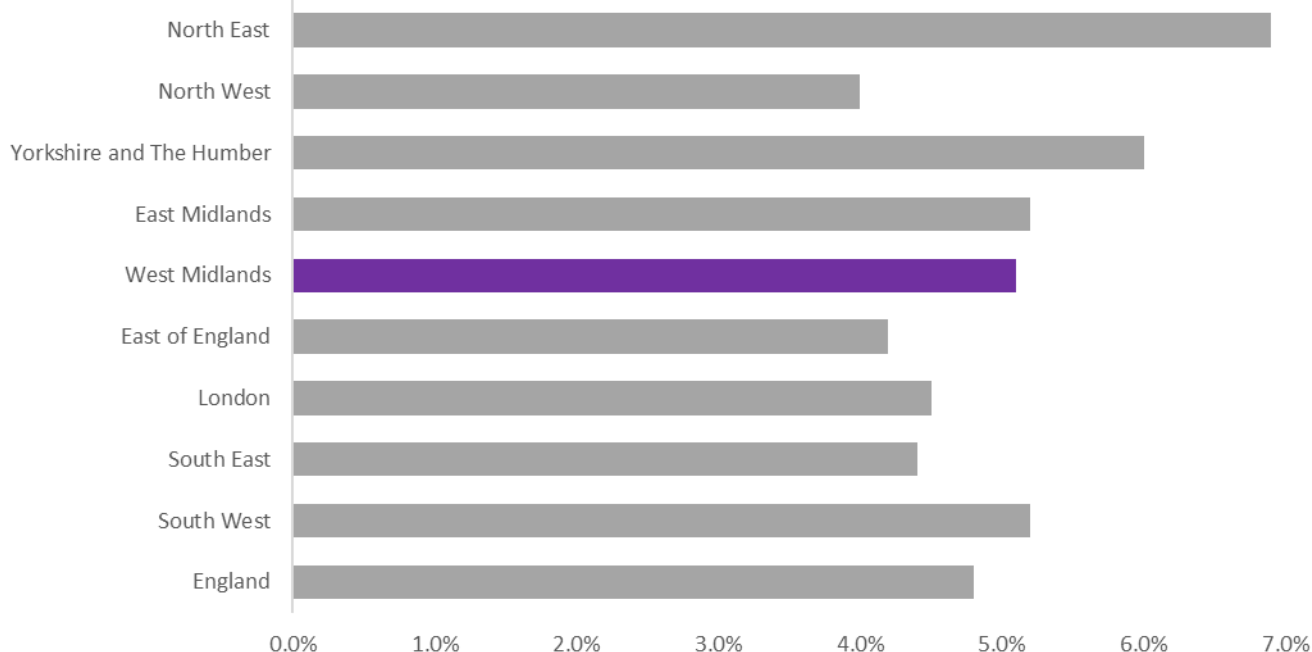
### In Summary:

- Quarterly GDP analysis shows for the West Midlands region there was growth of 5.1% in 2021 Q2, while England overall increased by 4.8%. All regions and countries in the UK showed positive quarter-on-quarter growth.
- For the West Midlands region, there was positive growth in GDP for three sectors in 2021 Q2; the production sector by 0.9%, services sector by 5.6% and the construction sector by 16.5%. The agriculture, forestry and fishing sector had a contraction in GDP by 2.2%.
- For the West Midlands region, there was positive growth in GDP for 16 industries and contractions in two industries in 2021 Q2.

### Full Briefing:

- Quarterly GDP analysis shows for the West Midlands region there was growth of 5.1% in 2021 Q2, while England overall increased by 4.8%.
- There was positive growth in GDP for all of the nine English regions in 2021 Q2, with the North East and Yorkshire and The Humber experiencing the highest increases at 6.9% and 6.0% respectively. In contrast, the North West and the had the lowest growth recorded with 4.0% and 4.2% respectively.

The following chart shows GDP change in 2021 Q2 across the English regions and England-wide:



### Sectors and Industries

- For the West Midlands region, there was positive growth in GDP for three sectors in 2021 Q2; the production sector by 0.9%, services sector by 5.6% and the construction sector by 16.5%. The agriculture, forestry and fishing sector had a contraction in GDP by 2.2%.

<sup>1</sup> Source: ONS: GDP, UK regions and Countries: April to June 2021 – released 18<sup>th</sup> February 2022

- For the West Midlands region, there was positive growth in GDP for sixteen industries in 2021 Q2. Notably, in all English regions and Wales, the industry with the largest growth in 2021 Q2 was accommodation and food service activities; the highest growth reported in the West Midlands at 63.9% due to the easing of Covid-19 restrictions. Other increases across industries include; activities of households as employers, undifferentiated goods and services by 17.0% and the education by 16.4%.
- For 2021 Q2, there were contractions in West Midlands GDP in two industries. These industries were real estate activities and administrative and support services activities which both contracted by 0.1%.

**The following chart shows GDP change for sectors and industries for the West Midlands regions between 2021 Q1 and 2021 Q2:**



# Infection Rates and Vaccine Update

Alice Pugh WMREDI/WMCA

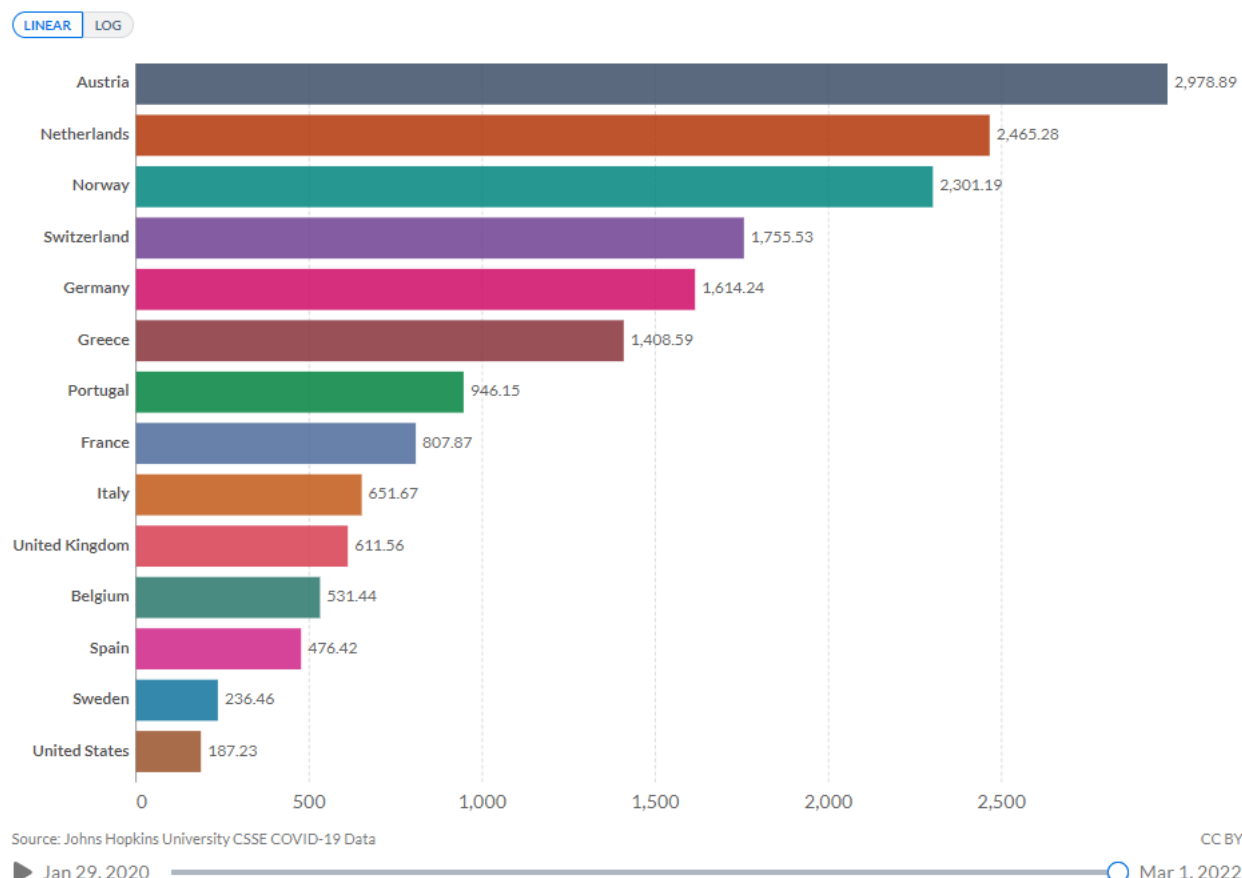
Across Europe [case numbers have been falling](#), as in the graph below. This is largely because of continued vaccination programmes, as well as the end of winter. Additionally, as a result of the social distancing ending and countries and economies reopening, vaccination rates have increased, this is because many countries, events and venues, require guests to be vaccinated.

[Since 31 December 2019](#) and as of week 2022-7, **424 971 978 cases** of COVID-19 (in accordance with the applied case definitions and testing strategies in the affected countries) have been reported, including **5 898 291 deaths**.

## Daily new confirmed COVID-19 cases per million people, Mar 1, 2022

7-day rolling average. Due to limited testing, the number of confirmed cases is lower than the true number of infections.

Our World  
in Data



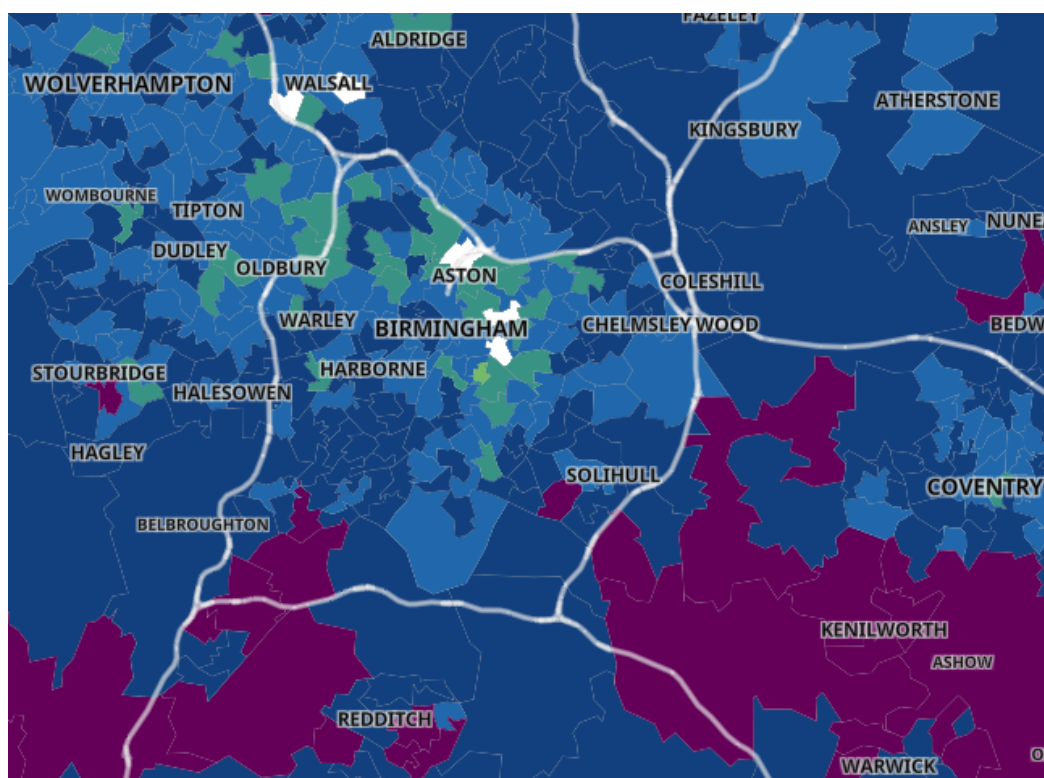
Latest [ONS infection survey data](#) (25<sup>th</sup> February 2022 next release to be 4<sup>th</sup> March 2022) states:

- In England, the percentage of people testing positive for COVID-19 continued to decrease in the week ending 19 February 2022; we estimate that 2,096,200 people in England had COVID-19 (95% credible interval: 2,015,100 to 2,175,600), equating to around 1 in 25 people.
- In Wales, the percentage of people testing positive for COVID-19 decreased in the two weeks up to 19 February 2022, but the trend was uncertain in the most recent week; we estimate that 98,200 people in Wales had COVID-19 (95% credible interval: 83,100 to 114,900), equating to around 1 in 30 people.
- In Northern Ireland, the percentage of people testing positive for COVID-19 decreased in the two weeks up to 19 February 2022, but the trend was uncertain in the most recent week; we estimate that 132,700 people in Northern Ireland had COVID-19 (95% credible interval: 115,900 to 150,900), equating to around 1 in 14 people.
- In Scotland, the percentage of people testing positive for COVID-19 increased in the week ending 20 February 2022; we estimate that 240,700 people in Scotland had COVID-19 (95% credible interval: 215,100 to 269,400), equating to around 1 in 20 people.



- In all UK countries, infections compatible with the Omicron BA.2 variant have increased in the most recent week; the percentage of cases compatible with the Omicron BA.1 variant decreased in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and the trend was uncertain in Scotland in the most recent week.

The map below displays weekly data, which are updated every day [here](#). Seven-day rolling rate of new cases by specimen date ending on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2022.

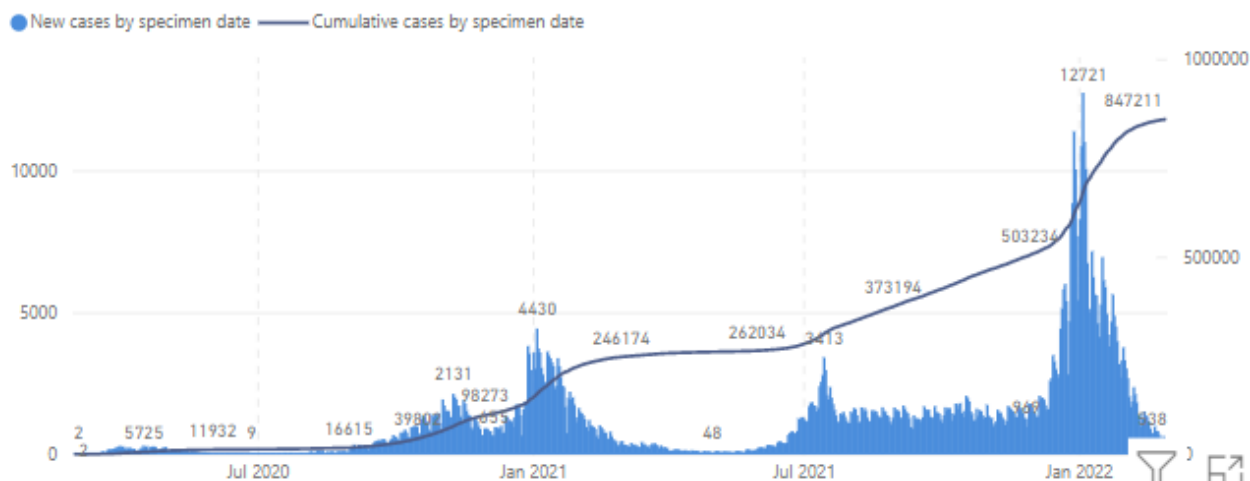


## Regional Data

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

Date	New cases by specimen date	New cases by publish date	Cumulative cases by specimen date	Cases in the last 7 days	Rate per 100,000 in the last 7 days
26 February 2022	537	0	846038	2	0.07
25 February 2022	580	702	845501	5350	182.68
24 February 2022	696	866	844921	5679	193.92
23 February 2022	807	942	844225	6138	209.59
22 February 2022	820	858	843418	6649	227.04
21 February 2022	982	796	842598	7195	245.68
20 February 2022	756	857	841616	7716	263.47
19 February 2022	709	918	840860	8199	279.96
18 February 2022	909	1301	840151	8483	289.66
17 February 2022	1155	1409	839242	8873	302.98
16 February 2022	1318	1377	838087	9119	311.38
15 February 2022	1366	1316	836769	9624	328.62
14 February 2022	1503	1182	835403	10361	353.79
13 February 2022	1239	1108	833900	11219	383.09

## All ages



## Covid 19 Hospital Activity

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

## Total reported admissions to hospital and diagnoses in hospital

The table below shows the latest daily rates

Name	12-Feb-22	13-Feb-22	14-Feb-22	15-Feb-22	16-Feb-22	17-Feb-22	18-Feb-22	19-Feb-22	20-Feb-22	21-Feb-22	22-Feb-22	23-Feb-22	24-Feb-22	25-Feb-22	26-Feb-22	27-Feb-22
ENGLAND	989	1,029	1,132	1,144	1,120	971	900	834	971	1,030	976	976	984	841	888	949
East of England	109	106	111	115	113	93	94	97	131	132	109	135	117	80	103	125
London	139	132	160	137	144	149	129	106	111	114	125	106	116	104	92	112
Midlands	169	168	186	195	203	195	180	159	158	182	169	190	167	143	159	156
North East and Yorkshire	169	158	170	203	188	144	154	114	142	146	154	125	148	145	141	126
North West	123	126	163	140	143	112	119	123	149	153	141	132	153	112	118	145
South East	174	194	201	212	186	164	112	136	185	170	162	170	158	158	149	177
South West	106	145	141	142	143	114	112	99	95	133	116	118	125	99	126	108

## Mechanical Ventilation beds - occupied by confirmed COVID-19 patients

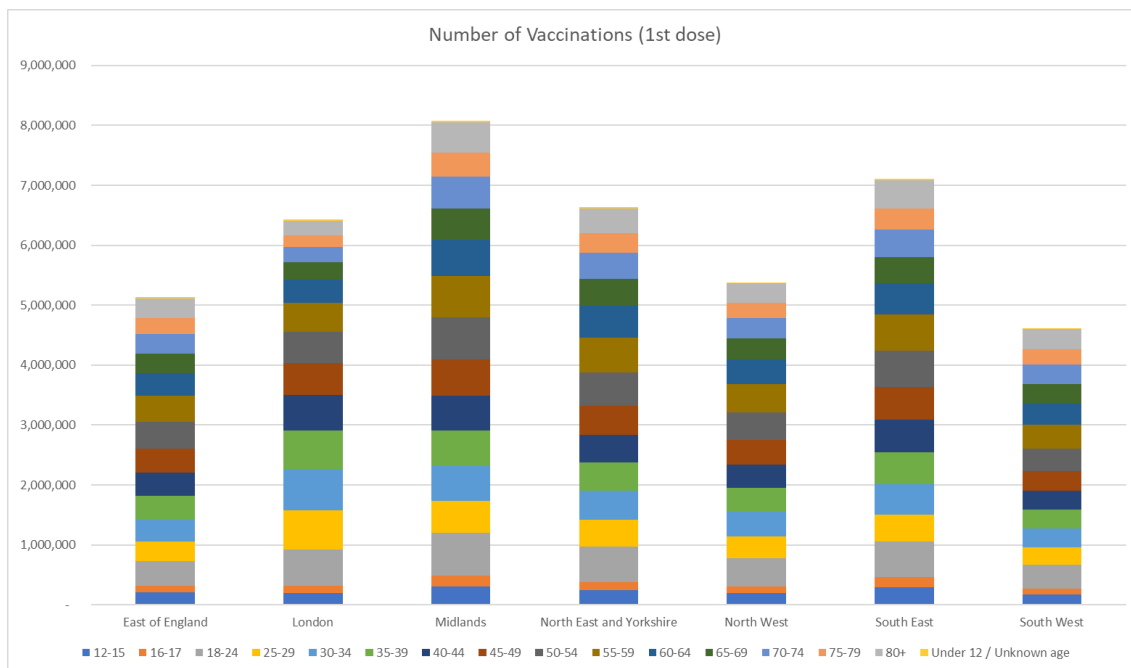
Name	14-Feb-22	15-Feb-22	16-Feb-22	17-Feb-22	18-Feb-22	19-Feb-22	20-Feb-22	21-Feb-22	22-Feb-22	23-Feb-22	24-Feb-22	25-Feb-22	26-Feb-22	27-Feb-22	28-Feb-22	01-Mar-22
ENGLAND	355	323	326	303	303	296	304	292	284	278	262	246	226	239	254	245
East of England	37	31	31	32	34	33	33	34	32	31	28	28	22	24	28	25
London	132	119	118	103	106	101	111	98	101	98	94	94	88	92	98	96
Midlands	58	52	51	43	37	42	43	38	34	36	32	30	30	29	35	30
North East and Yorkshire	50	44	44	40	43	41	41	44	42	41	42	36	31	32	31	31
North West	41	40	41	42	39	37	36	38	38	32	31	26	25	23	20	22
South East	27	27	30	30	30	25	24	24	21	24	22	21	17	23	23	23
South West	10	10	11	13	14	17	16	16	16	16	13	11	13	16	19	18

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

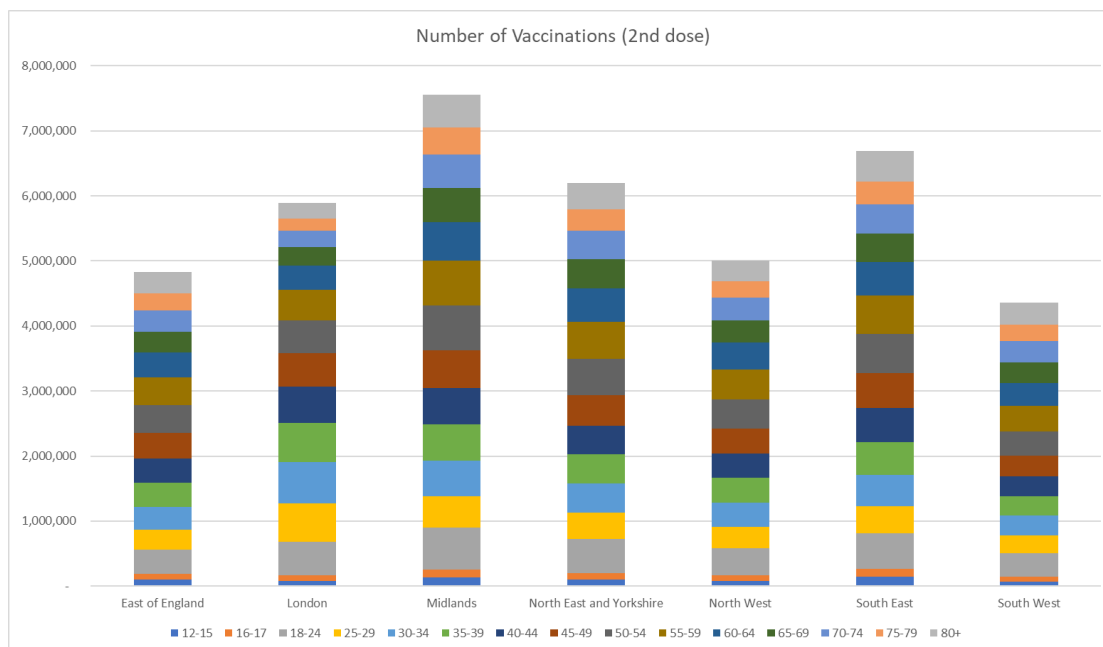
Name	14-Feb-22	15-Feb-22	16-Feb-22	17-Feb-22	18-Feb-22	19-Feb-22	20-Feb-22	21-Feb-22	22-Feb-22	23-Feb-22	24-Feb-22	25-Feb-22	26-Feb-22	27-Feb-22	28-Feb-22	01-Mar-22
ENGLAND	10,273	10,019	9,804	9,600	9,258	9,187	9,058	9,229	8,948	8,868	8,645	8,498	8,197	8,305	8,538	8,486
East of England	1,016	975	944	897	897	887	893	918	912	889	873	885	817	827	912	935
London	2,071	2,031	2,004	1,972	1,899	1,832	1,829	1,799	1,809	1,776	1,712	1,661	1,576	1,572	1,579	1,575
Midlands	1,953	1,852	1,808	1,731	1,727	1,689	1,697	1,708	1,676	1,657	1,606	1,568	1,528	1,547	1,609	1,581
North East and Yorkshire	1,585	1,512	1,509	1,488	1,450	1,505	1,413	1,416	1,398	1,361	1,344	1,286	1,281	1,308	1,314	1,297
North West	1,509	1,487	1,437	1,403	1,227	1,321	1,252	1,378	1,315	1,301	1,256	1,243	1,204	1,178	1,219	1,210
South East	1,394	1,397	1,348	1,333	1,299	1,249	1,251	1,268	1,141	1,188	1,174	1,157	1,100	1,145	1,159	1,162
South West	745	765	754	776	759	704	723	742	697	696	680	698	691	728	746	726

## Vaccine Update

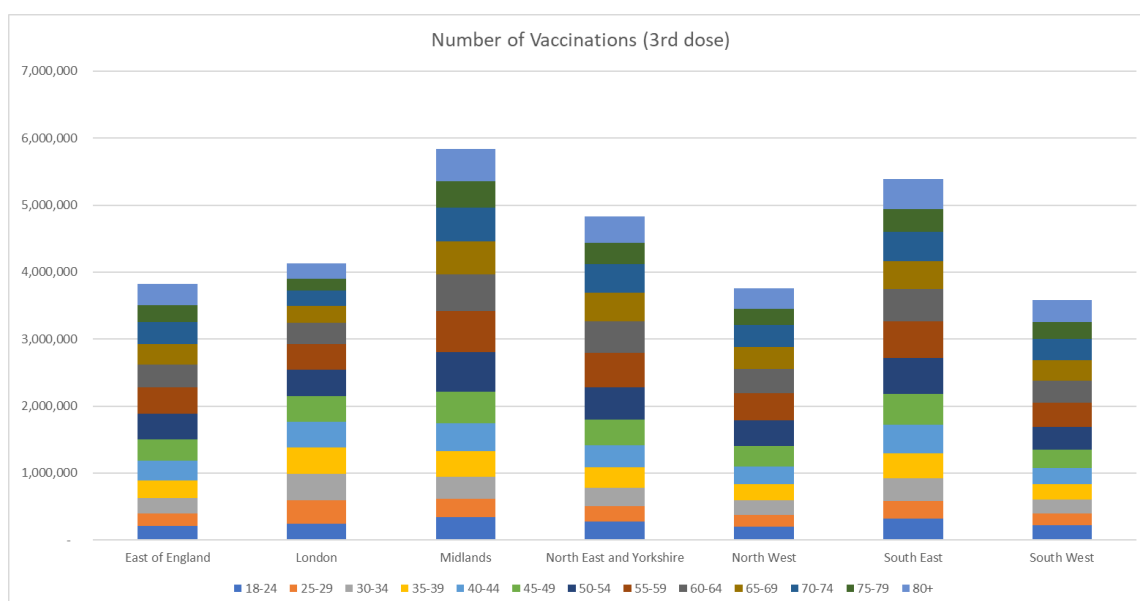
Between the 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020 and the [24<sup>th</sup> February 2022](#) the Midlands has successfully vaccinated **8,083,185** people with the first dose and **7,556,001** of these individuals have received the second dose as well. A further **5,860,971** have received their booster. Meaning the Midlands has successfully provided the most jabs out of any region including London.



NHS Region of residence name	% of people who have had at least 1 dose (using ONS denominators)														
	12-15	16-17	18-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75-79	80+
<b>Total</b>	60.3%	74.8%	82.0%	82.5%	88.7%	90.1%	94.5%	91.1%	95.5%	97.9%	99.9%	97.1%	96.0%	100%*	92.2%
East of England	64.5%	79.0%	85.2%	86.4%	89.9%	90.4%	94.9%	91.9%	95.6%	98.3%	100.0%	96.7%	95.7%	100%*	92.3%
London	47.1%	60.9%	82.8%	86.4%	83.1%	81.6%	87.8%	90.2%	91.7%	94.4%	94.9%	92.7%	90.9%	94.5%	83.3%
Midlands	60.1%	74.2%	75.8%	74.0%	85.2%	89.3%	94.2%	89.8%	95.8%	97.4%	100%*	96.7%	96.6%	100%*	93.5%
North East and Yorkshire	60.0%	74.3%	77.7%	76.6%	86.5%	90.4%	94.7%	89.3%	95.5%	97.4%	99.2%	97.7%	97.1%	100%*	92.4%
North West	56.6%	72.6%	77.6%	76.2%	85.1%	90.2%	95.0%	90.0%	95.3%	97.8%	100%*	97.7%	96.5%	100%*	92.5%
South East	68.8%	81.4%	83.3%	86.3%	95.9%	94.5%	96.5%	92.0%	95.6%	98.2%	100%*	97.7%	95.3%	100%*	92.7%
South West	67.1%	82.8%	87.0%	88.1%	94.9%	95.1%	97.8%	91.7%	95.9%	99.2%	100%*	96.9%	96.4%	100%*	94.8%



NHS Region of residence name	% of people who have had at least 2 doses (using ONS denominators)														
	12-15	16-17	18-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75-79	80+
<b>Total</b>	26.5%	54.7%	72.8%	75.4%	82.5%	85.3%	90.7%	88.4%	93.4%	96.2%	98.4%	95.9%	95.2%	100%*	91.5%
East of England	31.9%	53.1%	77.5%	79.8%	84.3%	86.2%	91.7%	89.7%	93.9%	97.0%	98.8%	95.8%	95.0%	100%*	91.8%
London	19.1%	42.0%	70.2%	78.6%	77.0%	76.6%	83.3%	86.3%	88.3%	91.3%	92.1%	90.2%	89.0%	92.7%	81.9%
Midlands	25.8%	53.9%	67.8%	67.5%	79.1%	84.6%	90.4%	87.2%	93.9%	95.9%	99.0%	95.6%	95.9%	100%*	93.0%
North East and Yorkshire	24.6%	53.6%	69.2%	69.7%	80.1%	85.4%	90.8%	86.8%	93.7%	96.1%	98.2%	97.0%	96.5%	100%*	92.0%
North West	24.5%	51.3%	68.3%	68.8%	78.2%	84.5%	90.5%	86.9%	93.0%	95.9%	98.9%	96.7%	95.8%	100%*	91.9%
South East	33.4%	62.2%	75.8%	80.0%	90.4%	90.5%	93.6%	89.9%	94.0%	96.9%	99.1%	96.7%	94.6%	100%*	92.1%
South West	27.0%	63.2%	79.6%	82.0%	89.6%	91.2%	94.9%	89.7%	94.4%	97.9%	99.5%	96.1%	95.8%	100%*	94.3%



NHS Region of residence name	% of people (not just those eligible) who have had at least 3 doses (using ONS denominators)												
	18-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75-79	80+
<b>Total</b>	39.1%	43.9%	52.2%	59.0%	68.3%	71.3%	80.4%	85.6%	90.2%	90.7%	91.7%	98.1%	87.7%
East of England	43.9%	48.1%	55.0%	61.5%	71.1%	74.4%	82.7%	88.0%	91.9%	91.6%	92.2%	100%*	88.9%
London	33.5%	45.9%	48.0%	49.8%	57.8%	63.2%	69.3%	74.7%	79.0%	80.9%	82.4%	86.5%	75.7%
Midlands	36.0%	37.8%	48.8%	57.5%	67.6%	70.4%	81.0%	85.5%	91.1%	90.9%	92.5%	98.0%	89.2%
North East and Y	36.6%	39.0%	49.1%	58.3%	68.1%	70.2%	81.1%	86.5%	90.9%	92.4%	93.5%	98.3%	88.3%
North West	33.0%	36.1%	45.2%	54.6%	64.7%	67.5%	78.2%	84.1%	89.9%	91.0%	91.9%	96.7%	87.5%
South East	45.2%	50.7%	62.0%	67.6%	75.6%	77.1%	84.5%	89.0%	93.0%	92.8%	92.0%	100%*	88.9%
South West	48.3%	52.5%	62.3%	69.1%	77.4%	77.3%	85.1%	90.1%	93.3%	92.5%	93.4%	100%*	91.5%

## Weekly Deaths Registered: 18<sup>th</sup> February 2022

### Black Country Consortium Economic Intelligence Unit

The following analysis compares the latest available time period (the week of the 18<sup>th</sup> February 2022) to the previous week period (the week of the 11<sup>th</sup> February 2022) for the number of deaths registered and the number of deaths registered related to the Coronavirus<sup>2</sup>.

Across England and Wales, the overall registered death figures decreased from 11,558 in the week of the 11<sup>th</sup> February 2022 to 11,271 in the week of 18<sup>th</sup> February 2022. The number of deaths registered that state Coronavirus on the death certificate decreased from 1,066 to 863 people over the same period.

Regional level analysis shows that the West Midlands' overall registered death figures decreased from 1,247 people in the week of 11<sup>th</sup> February 2022 to 1,216 in the week of 18<sup>th</sup> February 2022. The number of registered deaths related to Coronavirus decreased from 131 people to 98 people over the same period.

There was a total of 831 deaths registered across the WMCA (3 LEP) area in the week of the 18<sup>th</sup> February 2022. There were 70 deaths registered that were related to Coronavirus over the same period. In comparison to the week of the 11<sup>th</sup> February 2022, the overall registered death figures in the WMCA (3 LEP) area decreased by 27, with the number of registered deaths related to Coronavirus decreasing by 24 people.

In the week of the 18<sup>th</sup> February 2022, fifteen local authorities in the WMCA (3 LEP) area had at least one registered death related to the Coronavirus. Of the 70 registered Coronavirus related deaths; Birmingham accounted for 26 deaths, Dudley accounted for 8 deaths and Coventry accounted for 6 deaths.

Of the 70 registered Coronavirus deaths in the WMCA (3 LEP) involving Coronavirus in the week of the 18<sup>th</sup> February 2022, 45 were registered in a hospital, 12 deaths were registered at care home, 12 were registered at home and 1 death was registered elsewhere.

#### Place and number of deaths registered that are related to Coronavirus in the week of 18<sup>th</sup> February 2022:

Area name	Care home	Elsewhere	Home	Hospice	Hospital	Other communal establishment	Total
Cannock Chase	1	0	0	0	2	0	3
East Staffordshire	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lichfield	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tamworth	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
North Warwickshire	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Nuneaton and Bedworth	0	0	1	0	1	0	2
Rugby	0	0	1	0	1	0	2
Stratford-on-Avon	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
Warwick	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bromsgrove	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
Redditch	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Wyre Forest	0	0	2	0	1	0	3
Birmingham	5	1	3	0	17	0	26
Coventry	2	0	2	0	2	0	6
Dudley	2	0	0	0	6	0	8
Sandwell	0	0	1	0	3	0	4
Solihull	0	0	1	0	3	0	4
Walsall	0	0	1	0	2	0	3
Wolverhampton	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
<b>WM 7 Met.</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>52</b>
Black Country LEP	2	0	2	0	12	0	16
Coventry & Warwickshire LEP	3	0	4	0	7	0	14
Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP	7	1	6	0	26	0	40
<b>WMCA (3 LEP)</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>70</b>

<sup>2</sup> Please note that up-to-date counts of the total numbers of deaths involving COVID-19 are published by Public Health England (PHE) -ONS figures differ from the PHE counts as the latter include deaths which have not yet been registered. Source: ONS, Death registrations and occurrences by local authority and health board, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2022.

## ONS Weekly Release Indicators

### Black Country Consortium Economic Intelligence Unit

On the 24<sup>th</sup> February 2022, Office for National Statistics (ONS) released 'economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators'. These statistics are experimental and have been devised to provide timely information. The following information covers: online job adverts, footfall data, national company incorporations and voluntary dissolutions, potential redundancies, final results from Wave 50 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS), and results from Wave 84 of the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN).

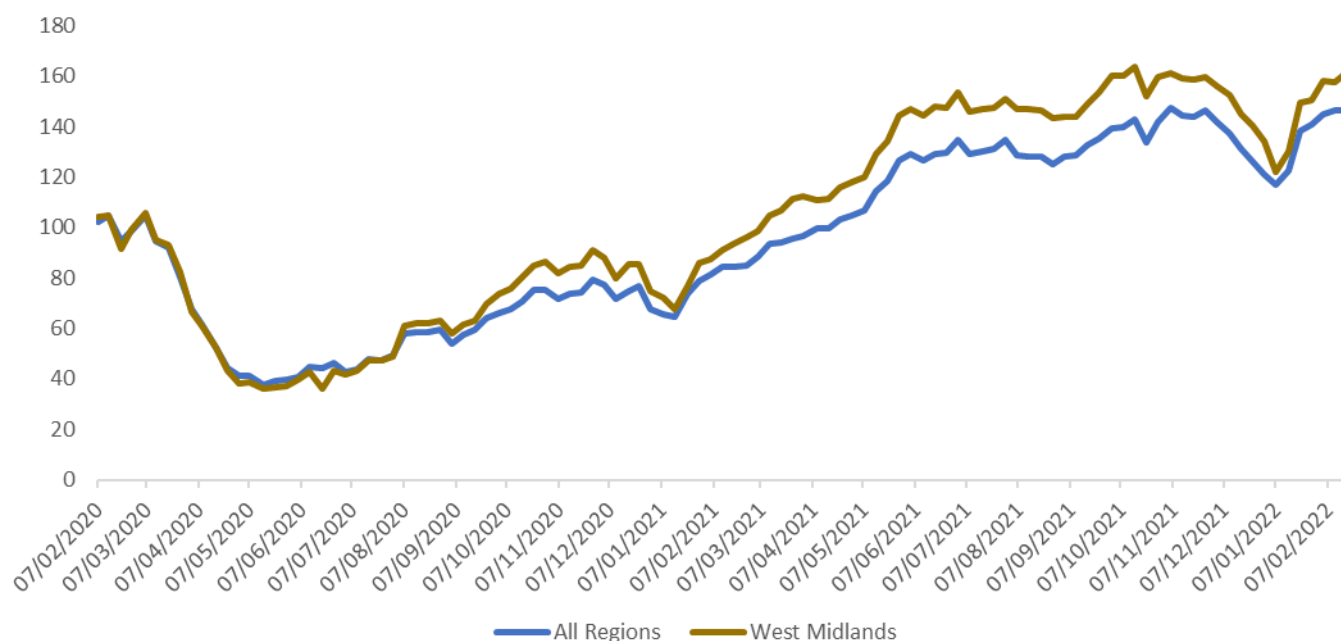
#### Online Job Adverts

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

Nationally, between the 11<sup>th</sup> February 2022 and 18<sup>th</sup> February 2022, total online job adverts increased by 0.4 percentage points. On the 18<sup>th</sup> February 2022, total online job adverts were at 146.5% of their average level in February 2020. Out of the 28 categories (excluding unknown) 17 increased from the previous week. The largest weekly increase was in "HR & recruitment", which rose by 11.9 percentage points and was at 254.7% of the February 2020 level. Categories below the February 2020 average level were "Legal" (84.3%), and "energy/oil & gas" (94.0%). The largest week-on-week decrease was in "domestic help" decreasing by 23.3 percentage points to 193.7% of the average level in February 2020.

Online job adverts for eight regions increased between the 11<sup>th</sup> February 2022 and 18<sup>th</sup> February 2022. Week-on-week online job adverts decreased by 4.5 percentage points in London, in contrast, online job adverts increased by 4.1 percentage points for both the West Midlands and the North East. On the 18<sup>th</sup> February 2022 total online job adverts for the West Midlands were at 161.6% of their average level in February 2020. On the 18<sup>th</sup> February 2022, all regions were above their February 2020 levels, varying from; 124.9% in London to 186.3% in the North East.

**The following chart shows the index of job adverts on Adzuna by category, 100 = average job adverts in February 2020, overall all regions and the West Midlands region, 7<sup>th</sup> February 2020 to 18<sup>th</sup> February 2022:**



#### Footfall

According to Springboard, overall retail footfall in the UK in the week to 19<sup>th</sup> February 2022 was at 74% of the level seen in the equivalent week of 2019; this was a 4% decrease when compared to the previous week. In the week to 19<sup>th</sup> February 2022, footfall in high streets decreased by 7% from the previous week and was 65% of the level seen in



the equivalent week of 2019. Over the same period, footfall in retail parks remained unchanged and was 94% of the level seen in the equivalent week of 2019 and shopping centres remained unchanged and was 72% of the level seen in the equivalent week of 2019.

In the week to 19<sup>th</sup> February 2022, retail footfall saw week-on-week decreased in 8 out of the 10 English regions and UK countries. The largest falls were in Wales, decreasing by 10% and the South West decreasing by 8%.

Although, it is worth noting that footfall was affected by the adverse weather conditions throughout the UK. On the 18<sup>th</sup> February, overall footfall was 53% of the level seen in the equivalent day of 2019 – the lowest single- day figure, relative to the equivalent day of 2019, since 11<sup>th</sup> April 2021 (reopening of non-essential retail).

### **National Company Incorporations and Voluntary Dissolutions**

Companies House data shows for the UK, there were 16,163 company incorporations in the week to 18<sup>th</sup> February 2022, down from 16,761 recorded in the previous week. Although, this is up from 15,846 recorded in the same week in 2021, higher when compared to the same week in 2020 (13,052) and the same week in 2019 (13,366).

Also, for the week to 18<sup>th</sup> February 2022, there were 6,760 voluntary dissolution applications, up from 6,224 recorded in the previous week. This is up from 6,087 recorded in the same week in 2021 and higher than levels seen in the same week of 2020 (5,371) and the same week in 2019 (6,025).

### **Potential Redundancies**

HR1 forms are used by employers to notify the Insolvency Service's Redundancy Payments Service of potential redundancies. They are only required when firms wish to make 20 or more redundancies. The data is presented in a week-ending Sunday format. The data does not record the total number of redundancies; they record the number of potential redundancies filed on HR1 forms.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> February 2022, across the UK there were 47 employers proposing 4,202 potential redundancies. The potential redundancies 4-week rolling average was 3,157 and the employers proposing redundancies 4-week rolling average was 48. When indexed (100 = weekly average from week ending 21<sup>st</sup> April 2019 to week ending 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2020), the potential redundancies 4-week rolling average was 64 and the employers proposing redundancies 4-week rolling average was 68.

### **Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS)**

The final results from Wave 50 of the BICS based off the 5,091 businesses surveyed across the West Midlands that businesses have a presence in with a response rate of 22.0% (1,120) and 3,035 businesses that are head quartered in the West Midlands, with a response rate of 21.3% (647). Please note, the survey reference period was 24<sup>th</sup> January 2022 to 20<sup>th</sup> February 2022 with a survey live period of 7<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> February 2022. Also, the data used is unweighted for regions and response levels can be low so the following results should be treated with caution when evaluating the impact of Covid-19. Due to weighted data being available for the UK a comparison has not been included.

### **Trading Status and Financial Performance**

99.1% of responding West Midlands businesses were trading over the reference period, split by 94.7% fully trading and 4.4% partially trading.

Excluding “not sure” responses, 22.7% of responding West Midlands business reported that turnover over the last two weeks when compared to normal expectations for the time of year had decreased. While 53.2% of West Midlands businesses reported turnover had not been affected and 14.6% reported turnover had increased.

Excluding “not sure” responses, 40.6% of responding West Midlands businesses reported that Covid-19 was the main reason for the change in the business turnover over the last two weeks, 1.4% reported that the “end of the EU transition period” was the main reason. While 24.9% reported “other” as the main reason and 15.0% of West Midlands businesses reported Covid-19 and the end of the EU transition period.

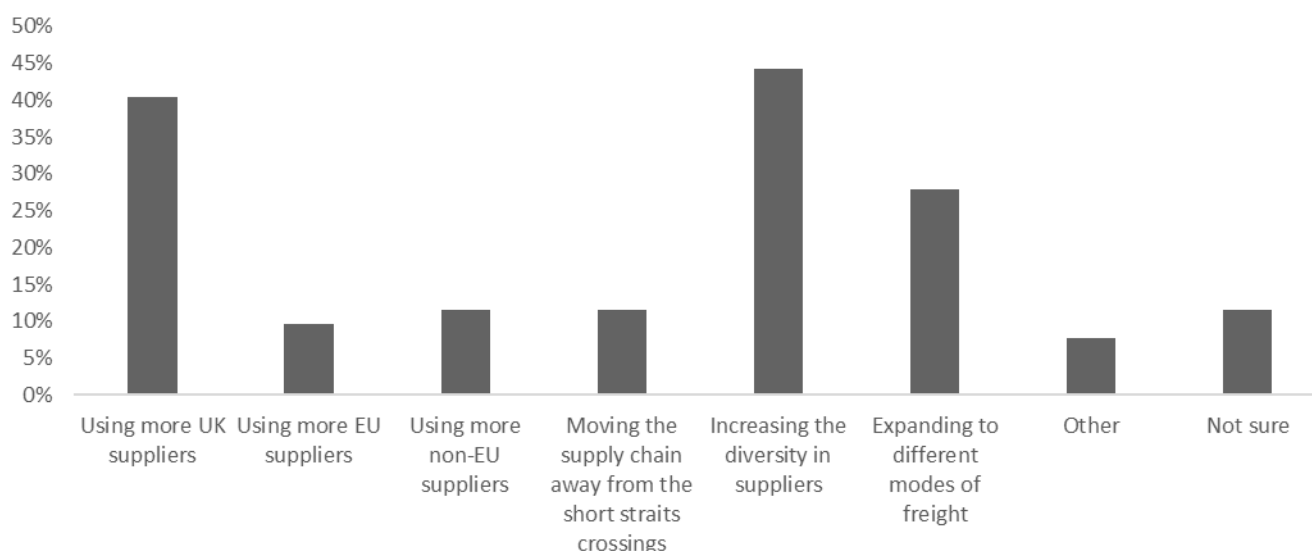


## Supply Chains

9.3% of responding West Midlands businesses reported changes to the supply chains had occurred due to the end of the EU transition period. With 37.5% reporting that these changes to the supply chain were made as a results of a new UK trade agreement.

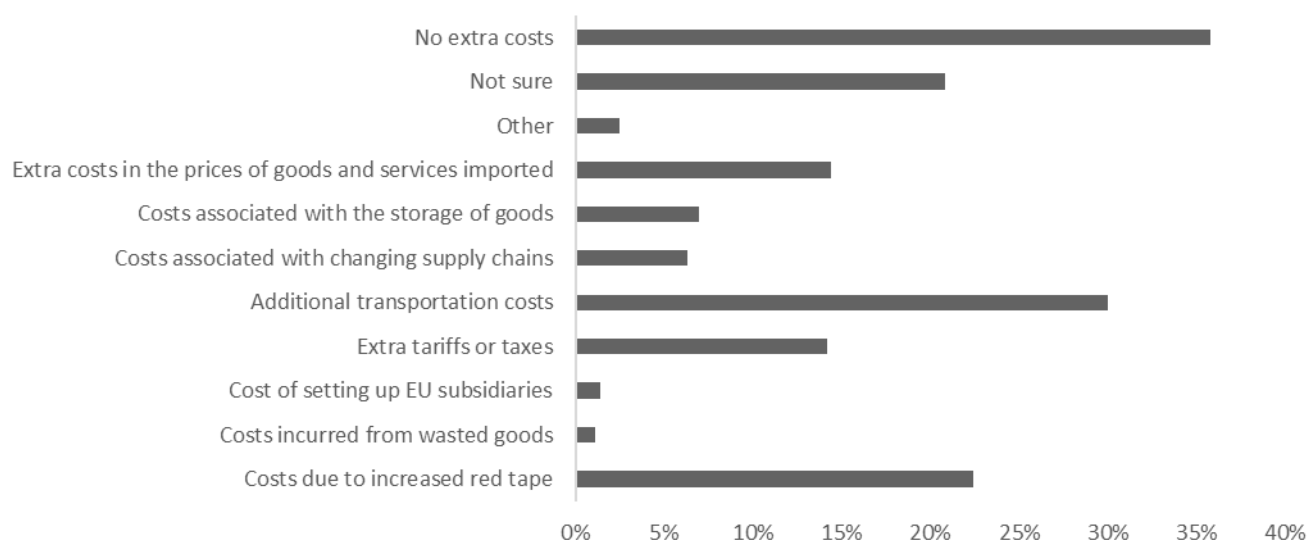
44.2% of West Midlands businesses reported they had increased the diversity of suppliers.

The following chart shows the ways West Midlands businesses changed supply chains due to the end of the EU transition period:



35.8% of West Midlands businesses reported no extra costs due to the end of the EU transition period. While 30.0% reported additional transportation costs.

The following chart shows if the West Midlands businesses had any extra costs due to the end of the EU transition period:



6.7% of responding West Midlands businesses reported they were only able to get the materials, goods or services it needed over the last month from the EU by changing suppliers or finding alternative solutions. 11.2% of responding West Midlands businesses reported they were only able to get the materials, goods or services it needed over the last month from the UK by changing suppliers or finding alternative solutions.

2.8% of West Midlands businesses reported that they intended to open new branches or subsidiaries in the EU in the next twelve months.

## Gas Prices

Excluding “not applicable” or “not sure” responses, 33.9% of West Midlands businesses reported that the business had not been affected by recent increases in wholesale gas prices. Although, 5.3% of West Midlands businesses reported that production had been affected by recent increases in wholesale gas prices. 12.7% of West Midlands businesses reported suppliers had been affected and 9.0% of West Midlands businesses reported that both production and suppliers had been affected.

## Stock Levels and Stockpiling

Excluding “not sure” or “not applicable” responses, 13.6% of responding West Midlands businesses reported stock levels over the last month when compared to normal expectations for the time of year were higher. 8.5% reported lower stock levels and 44.2% reported stock levels had not changed.

8.4% of West Midlands businesses reported to stockpiling goods or materials.

## Prices

Excluding “not sure” or “not applicable”, 43.1% of West Midlands businesses reported the prices of materials, goods or services brought over the last month compared with normal price fluctuations had increased more than usual and less than 1% reported prices decreased more than usual. 8.1% reported that some prices had increased and some decreased and 28.9% reported prices did not change any more than normal.

Excluding “not sure” or “not applicable”, 19.6% of West Midlands businesses reported the prices of materials, goods or services sold over the last month compared with normal price fluctuations had increased more than usual and less than 1% reported prices decreased more than usual. 6.1% reported that some prices had increased and some decreased and 55.7% reported prices did not change any more than normal.

## Increase in Demand

17.6% of responding West Midlands businesses reported an increase in demand for goods or services sold over the last month.

## Expected Site Closures and Expected Redundancies

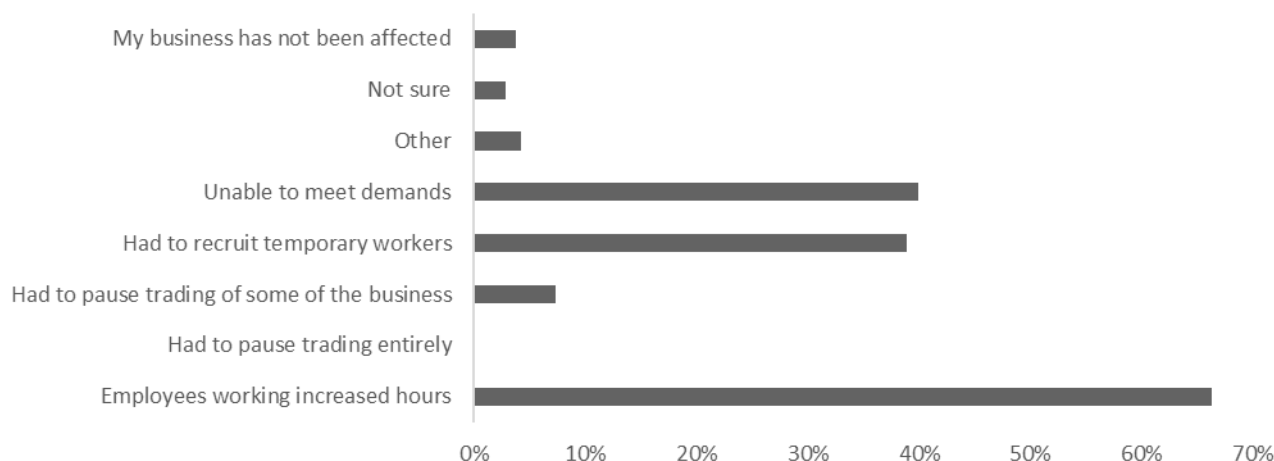
2.3% of responding West Midlands businesses intend to permanently close business sites in the next three months.

2.5% of West Midlands businesses expect to make redundancies over the next three months.

## Worker Shortages

37.6% of responding West Midlands businesses reported to currently experiencing a shortage of workers. Due to the shortage of workers, 66.3% of West Midlands businesses reported employees were then working increased hours.

**The following chart shows how the shortage of workers affected West Midlands businesses:**

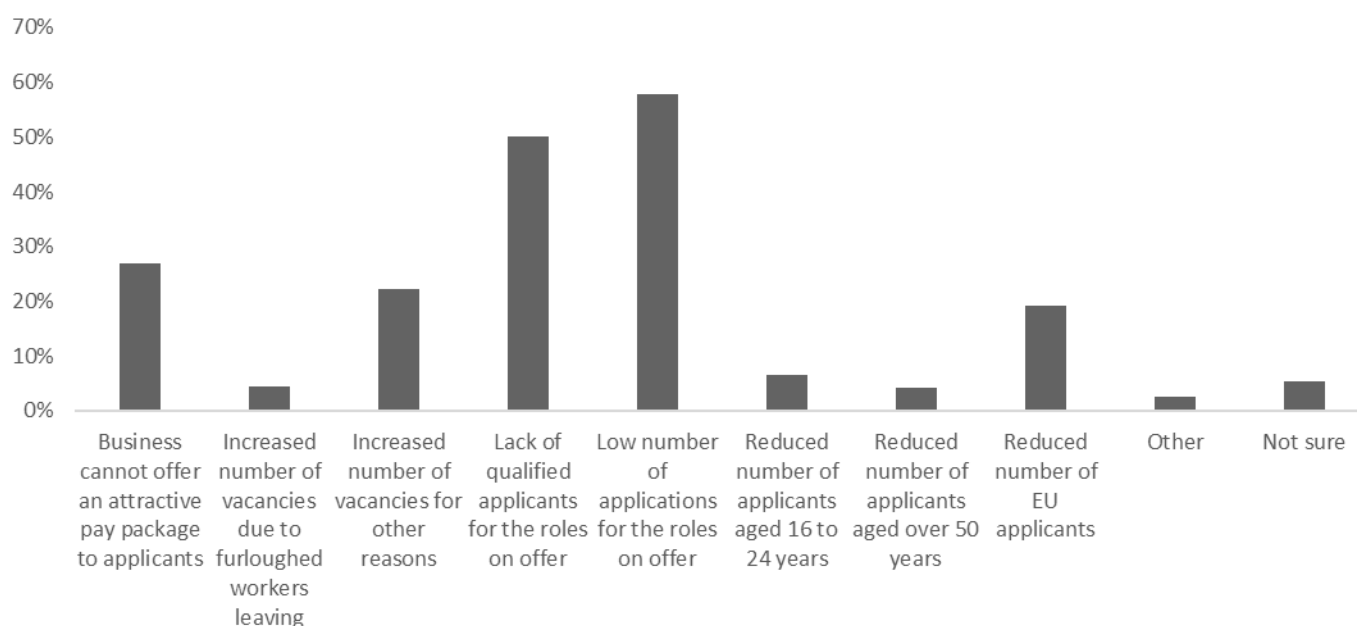


## Vacancies

Excluding “not sure” and “did not have any vacancies to fill” responses, 26.0% of West Midlands businesses reported there was no difference in the ability to fill vacancies. 2.4% of West Midlands businesses reported vacancies were easier to fill while 41.7% reported vacancies were harder to fill.

Of the West Midlands businesses that reported vacancies were harder to fill over the last month compared to normal expectations for the year, 57.1% stated the reason was due to “low number of applications for the roles on offer”.

The following chart shows why West Midlands businesses found filling vacancies more difficult over the last month when compared to normal expectations for the time of year:



## Social Impacts of the Coronavirus

The following section refers to the period of 3<sup>rd</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> February 2022. Please note, only a selection of indicators at a regional level are included in this section.

### Cost of Living

Over the last month, 72% of West Midlands adults reported the cost of living had Increased (76% GB). 27% of West Midlands adults reported the cost of living had stayed the same (23% GB).

94% of West Midlands adults reported the price of the food shop had increased (90% GB). 82% reported gas or electricity bill had increased (77% GB) and 78% reported the price of fuel had increased (69% GB).

### Financial Situation and Borrowing

56% of West Midlands adults reported that the household could afford to pay an unexpected but necessary expense of £850 (57% GB).

16% of West Midlands adults reported that they have had to borrow more money or use more credit than usual in the last month compared to a year ago (19% GB).

41% of West Midlands adults reported that in view of the general economic situation, that they will be able to save money in the next 12 months (39% GB).

### Well-Being, Loneliness and Perceptions of the Future

Mean personal well-being scores for life satisfaction was 7.3 in the West Midlands (6.9 GB), worthwhile was 7.7 in the West Midlands (7.2 GB), happiness was 7.2 for West Midlands adults (6.9 GB) and anxious was recorded at 3.8 for West Midlands adults (4.0 GB)<sup>3</sup>.

6% of adults in the West Midlands reported low levels of life satisfaction (9% GB). 6% of West Midlands adults reported low level of feeling worthwhile (8% GB). 11% of responding West Midlands adults reported low level of happiness (14% GB) and 31% reported high levels of anxiety (34% GB)<sup>4</sup>.

18% of adults in the West Midlands reported to often/always or some of the time to feeling lonely (25% GB). While 55% reported hardly ever or never feeling lonely in the West Midlands (49% GB).

6% of West Midlands adults believe it will take 6 months or less before life returns to normal (9% GB). 10% of West Midlands adults believed it will take 7 to 12 months (matching GB). 30% of West Midlands adults think it could more than a year to return back to normal (31% GB) and 12% of the West Midlands adults thought it would never go back to normal (13% GB).

### Impact on People's Life Overall

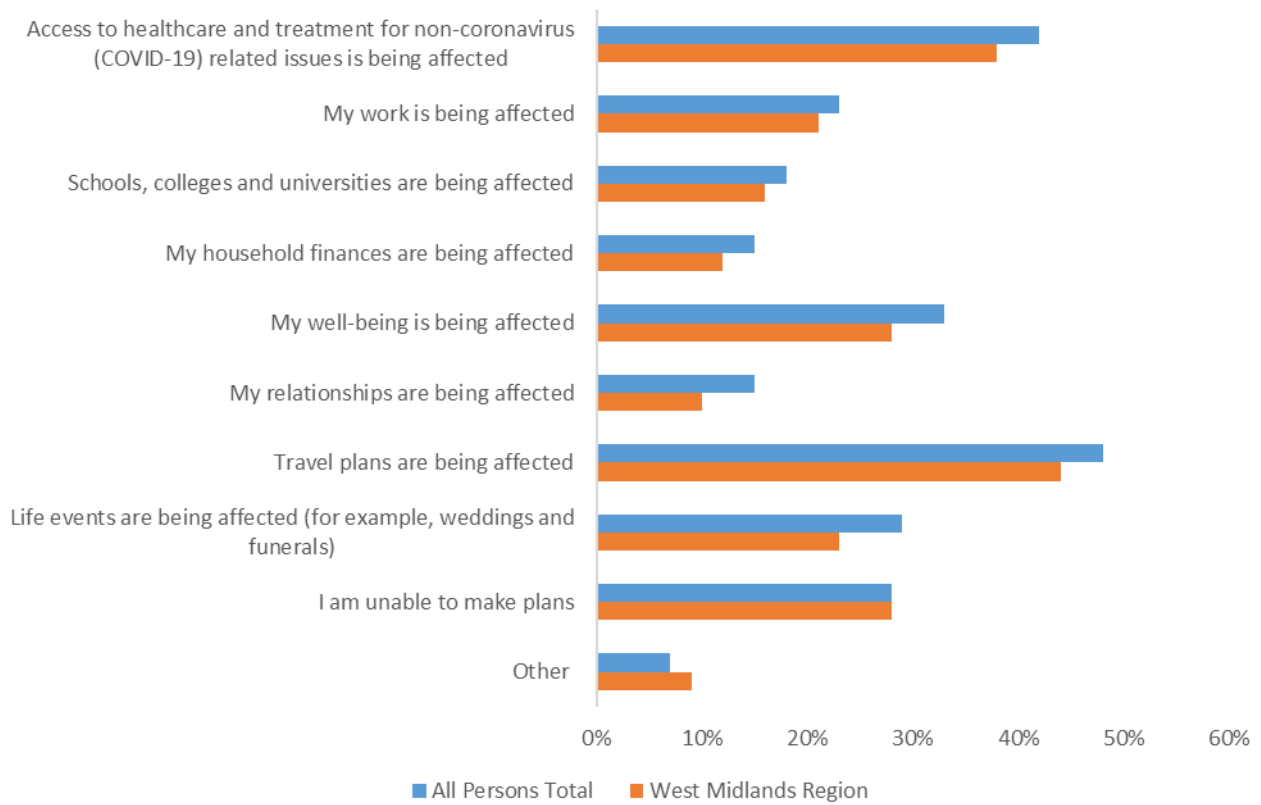
In the West Midlands, 35% of adults reported they were very or somewhat worried about the effect Covid-19 was having on their life (43% GB). 25% of responding West Midlands adults reported that they were somewhat unworried or not at all worried (23% GB).

44% of West Midlands adults reported that Covid-19 was affecting their travel plans (48% GB)

**The following chart shows for the West Midlands region and for all person total the ways COVID-19 is affecting life:**

<sup>3</sup> Each of these questions are answered on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is "not at all" and 10 is "completely".

<sup>4</sup> Low levels of life satisfaction, feeling worthwhile and happiness are defined as a score of 4 or below for their respective questions. High anxiety is defined as a score of 6-10 for the question "How anxious did you feel yesterday?".



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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