West Midlands
Weekly Economic Impact Monitor

WM REDI | CITY REDI

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

This week has seen the UK's previously highest temperature record smashed with temperatures in excess of 40C recorded. Wildfires have raged across many parts of Europe. Inflation has been rising globally. In the UK the cost of living crisis has intensified as inflation hit 9.4% for the 12 months to June 2022.

Record temperatures

- Wildfires have been sweeping across Europe, including in France, Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece, triggered by the hottest heatwave the region has ever seen.
- These fires will significantly impact Europe's economies. Already thousands of hectares of agricultural land have been destroyed, with countries loosing significant proportions of their agricultural crops. The heatwave has also added to pressures on struggling healthcare systems.
- Coningsby in Lincolnshire recorded the UK's highest temperature of 40.3C on 19th July, beating the previous highest recorded temperature of 38.7C, at Cambridge Botanic Gardens on 25 July 2019. Provisional figures also show the UK experienced the warmest night on record from 18th-19th July.
- Heatwaves – and other major weather events - are placing increasing pressure on UK infrastructure. If UK infrastructure struggles to cope with the changing climate it will lead to unprecedented economic and health impacts, which may cost the economy millions.

Inflation and cost of living

- Inflation has been rising globally. Sri Lanka last week ousted their Prime Minister over poor economic management which has fuelled inflation in the country. Currently, inflation in the country is at 54.6% and people have been struggling with daily power cuts and shortages of basics such as fuel, food and medicine.
- The cost of living has continued to worsen this week as UK inflation hit 9.4% in the 12 months to June, up from 9.1% in May. Rising fuel and food prices have been the largest contributors to upwards pressure on inflation. Average petrol prices stood at 184p per litre in June, the highest since records began in 1990 and up from 129.7p a year earlier. The monthly rise was also the largest on record, at 18.1p. The average price of diesel in June was 192.4p per litre, again a record high.
- A report from Centre for Cities, has found that there is a geography to the cost-of-living crisis, with a prominent north south divide. With many of the cities and large towns that were facing higher inflation rates in May 2022 were located in the North, Midlands and Wales. The report found that a combination of low incomes, poor energy stock and high share of vehicle-related spending was leading to comparatively high inflation in the Midlands and North.

Oxford Economics Forecasts for the WMCA area, 2020-2040

- Updated forecasts from Oxford Economics (OE) project GVA reaching £138.6bn by 2040, an additional £42.6bn. The projected annual growth rate lags the UK rate (1.4%) at 1.16%.
- GVA per head in 2022 was £22,761 behind the UK average of £27,044; the forecast to 2040 for the WMCA is expected to reach £32,367.
- GVA per job in 2020 was £51,393 and is lagging the UK (£59,432) and predicted to reach £70,055 by 2040, slightly below the annual growth rate of the UK (1.60%) at 1.57%.
- Total employment is predicted to increase by 5.3% to 2040 (behind the UK at 6.7%). The largest increases in employment between 2020 and 2040 are expected to be in Arts, entertainment & recreation (+25.3%), Administrative & support services (+24.2%) and Professional, scientific & technical (+23.5%) sectors.
- Overall, the OE forecast takes the view that the region will now fall back to its long run performance and the gains in growth made in the run up to 2019 have been lost because of the impacts of the pandemic specifically on trade and manufacturing.

Regional labour market trends

- For the three months ending May 2022, the WM region employment rate (aged 16 – 64 years) was 75.1%, below the UK rate of 75.9%. Since the previous quarter, the employment rate decreased by 0.4pp, the UK increased by 0.4pp. There was an increase of 1.0pp for the WM when compared to the same period in the previous year and the UK increased by 1.1pp.

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

West Midlands Combined Authority | UKRI Research England

- For the 3 months ending in May 2022, the WM region unemployment rate (aged 16 years and over) was 4.4%, which has decreased by 0.7pp since the previous quarter (largest decrease across all regions) and a decrease of 1.2pp from the previous year. The UK unemployment rate was 3.8%, a decrease of 0.1pp from the previous quarter, and a 1.1pp decrease when compared to the previous year.
- For the three months ending May 2022, the WM region economic inactivity rate (aged 16 – 64 years) was 21.3% - slightly above the UK at 21.1%. Since the previous quarter, the WM economic inactivity rate increased by 0.8pp, while the UK decreased by 0.4pp. The WM remained the same level when compared to the same period in the previous year, the UK decreased by 0.3pp.
- There were 147,595 claimants in the WMCA (3 LEP) area in June 2022. Since May 2022, there has been a decrease of 0.1% (-170) claimants in the WMCA (3 LEP) area, UK decreased by 1.2%.
- When compared to March 2020 (pre-pandemic figures), claimants have increased by 25.5% (+30,005) in the WMCA (3 LEP) area, with the UK increasing by 23.2% over the same period.
- Overall, for the WMCA (3 LEP) the number of claimants as a proportion of residents aged 16 - 64 years old was 5.6% compared to 3.7% for the UK in June 2022.

Vacancy trends

- According to the ONS Vacancy Survey the number of job vacancies in April to June 2022 was 1,294,000; this was a small increase of 6,900 from the previous quarter and an increase of 498,400 from before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in January to March 2020.
- In April to June 2022, vacancies increased by 6,900, which is the smallest quarterly increase since June to August 2020. Accommodation and food service activities showed the largest increase at 10,200 vacancies. However, gains were offset by falls in other industry sectors, particularly wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles, which fell by 7,200.
- Data for the WMCA 3-LEP geography from the Lightcast Analyst Tool shows that after a strong rebound in job postings in May 2022, job postings across the WMCA 3 LEP area dipped again in June, down by 12,442 to 131,877 or -8.6%. There was a mixed picture at the local level with 10 local authority areas reporting an increase, eight recording a decrease and one, Wolverhampton where there was no change.

Over 50s in the labour market

- With some employers facing labour and skills shortages in recent months, concerns have been raised nationally about a downturn in the number of over 50s in the workforce and the widening of the employment gap between people aged over 50 and the wider working population.
- From the mid-1990s until the Covid-19 crisis there was a trend towards increasing labour market participation of the over 50s, particularly amongst women and people in their 60s.
- Over 50s face a range of barriers in accessing learning and employment. Including: qualifications, skills and training: employers are less likely to train older than younger workers; difficulties in finding quality employment after job loss; perceived age discrimination; and poorer health.
- Part-time and flexible working can help older people stay in employment for longer. Personalised support and an asset-based approach, taking account of the value of over 50s' existing skills, instilling positive attitudes and expectations, and considering issues of pay, fulfilment through work and flexibility to fit with non-work responsibilities and interests, and health challenges.

A partnership approach to employment support and skills

- Although higher levels of educational attainment translate into better employment outcomes, improving the supply of skills is only part of the story in levelling up. This is because skills are a derived demand; so, necessitating a focus on the demand for and utilisation of skills in addition to skills supply.
- At the sub-national level, this calls for a holistic focus on employment support and skills strategies, characterised by integration across policy domains, most notably skills and economic development (where skills policy needs to be linked to economic development in order to address weak demand), but also cognate fields such as transport, health and housing. This means a partnership approach at the local/ city-regional/ regional level, founded on ongoing formal and informal communication, is necessary in order to apply local knowledge to tailor strategies to local needs and opportunities.

Learning from past pandemics and economic shocks

- Past pandemics have led to long term structural changes in national economies, labour shortages and distrust in outsiders. As with mandatory preventative measures today, in past pandemics these have led to protests of big government.
- History shows that pandemics erode trust in institutions and leaders. Given the already low levels of trust in British society, this could lead to even greater political volatility. Measures to rebuild civic trust are urgently needed.
- Maintaining a safety net for the most vulnerable communities can avoid contributing to enhanced social polarisation in the aftermath of Covid-19.

- The Covid-19 pandemic and its aftermath can be harnessed to reset the economy, counter inequality, and mitigate environmental unsustainability. Community wealth building is one alternative economic approach that could be considered.
- The pandemic strengthens the case for further devolution, given the need to apply knowledge from "on the ground" to diversify local economies and develop citizen-centred services.
- The pandemic has accelerated trends towards home working and e-commerce. City centre development needs to be more flexible, with accessible green spaces and public squares, and consideration of minimum space standards for housing.

Long run disparities

- Policies that support left-behind places could boost the level of activity and the underlying growth rate. This would significantly boost the net present value of local growth policy
- There is little evidence that regional policies come at the expense of reduced aggregate economic growth. The evidence suggests large spatial disparities hamper economic growth.
- The UK economy has become so highly unbalanced that the UK is now one of the world's most inter-regionally unequal countries
- The real long-term implications of the pandemic will only begin to become evident in the coming years. Regions specialising in tourism, hospitality, entertainment and transportation services will be especially hard hit, as will many retail centres.

ONS Updates

- Job adverts are decreasing slightly in the region, but still remain at 126% of the Feb 2022 level
- 1 in 5 business say their turnover has decreased
- Nearly 50% of businesses say prices of goods and services have increased, whereas only 22.5% of businesses reported that prices sold had increased
- Over 40% of business say energy prices are the main cause of price rises
- 60% of businesses reported that staffing costs had increased and 40% of businesses are experiencing recruitment difficulties
- 62% of people are spending less on non-essentials, using less fuel at home or for travel and spending less on shopping.
- 43% are finding it hard to pay energy bills, increasing by 6% from last month, and 6% are behind on bills.

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

Global, National and Regional Outlook

Alice Pugh, WMREDI

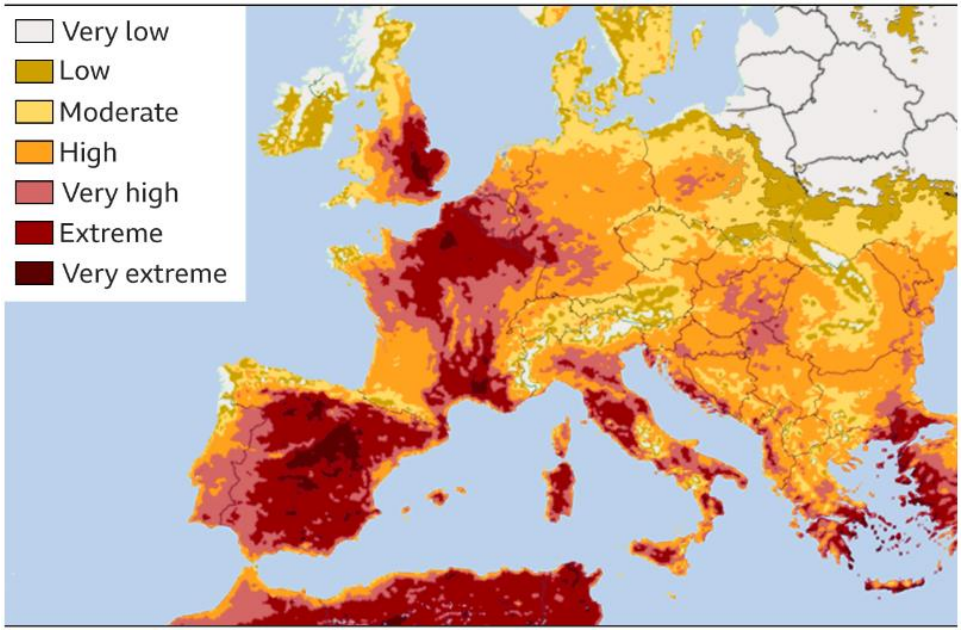
Global

Wildfires

Wildfires have been sweeping across Europe, triggered by the hottest heatwave the region has ever seen. Figure 1 below shows where there are fire danger forecasts across Europe, with a significant proportion of Western Europe having a high to very extreme fire forecast. France has had to evacuate more than 30,000 people, with emergency shelters being set up for evacuees. Gironde, a popular tourist region in the south-west around Bordeaux, has been hit particularly badly, with firefighters from across France battling to control blazes that have destroyed nearly 17,000 hectares (42,000 acres) of land since last Tuesday, according to the BBC.

Portugal, Spain, Greece, Italy and the UK have also experienced wildfires this week, with thousands of people having to evacuate their homes. Spain and Portugal have attributed more than 1,000 deaths so far to increased heat in recent days. Temperatures in Portugal hit 47C on Thursday, a record for July. The majority of the country has now been placed under high fire danger by the national meteorological office IPMA, as reported by the BBC.

Figure 1: Fire danger forecast for Europe, 19 July



Source: BBC, 2022

Unfortunately, the wildfires are expected to spread to Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands as the heatwave travels north eastwards across the continent. Alongside, the immense human and animal loss, these fires will significantly impact Europe's economies. Already thousands of hectares of agricultural land have been destroyed, with countries loosing significant proportions of their agricultural crops. This will heighten pressures on an already diminished food supply, as it will compound the loss of crops as a result of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. As the fires spread across Europe this will place increasing pressure on food supply chains and food security is likely to worsen significantly. As basic commodity food supplies drop, this will raise the price of these goods, and food costs will increase across the board, fuelling inflation. Additionally, the impact of the fires may be long-term, due to significant soil degradation and erosion, which could impact agricultural harvest for a pro-longed number of years.

Furthermore, the heatwave is placing substantial pressure on already struggling health systems. The heatwave is leading to increase hospitalisation and deaths across Europe, which is already trying to deal with rising Covid cases and falling staffing numbers.

The loss of domestic homes will be devastating for many families, especially in a cost-of-living crisis heading towards a recession. Many families will have lost everything and the emotional and financial damage this may cause to families will be devasting. This places increased pressures on public spending, at a time when governments across

Europe have already seen record spending levels as a result of the pandemic. The economic impact will likely cost millions if not billions to economies in Europe.

The rise in temperatures which has led to the widespread wildfires, is as a result of climate change. Climate change increases hot and dry conditions, which enables fires to spread faster and burn for longer and rage more intensely. The hot weather also saps moisture from vegetation, turning it into dry fuel for the fires to spread. Forecasters predict that wildfire frequency and damage is set to continue to rise across Europe, as temperatures continue to rise globally. This will continue to worsen food security globally. The Darfur war and the related genocide is widely considered the 'first climate change conflict' by many researchers, given the convergence of environmental and political factors in the build up to the conflict starting in 2003. It is likely that as climate change worsens draughts and the loss of arable land will become increasingly widespread, and conflicts will worsen. Additionally, it will likely lead to significant climate change migration, as fertile land becomes scarce, and people flee in order to survive.

Inflation

Inflation has been rising globally. Sri Lanka last week ousted their Prime Minister over poor economic management which has fuelled inflation in the country. Currently, inflation in the country is at 54.6% and people have been struggling with daily power cuts and shortages of basics such as fuel, food and medicine. The country's dire economic conditions led to the public marching on the capital city and into the Prime Minister's private residency, leading the politician to flee the country. The country is now looking to help from various global institutes, however without a stable government, many will be unwilling to provide financial help, especially given we are facing a global financial crisis.

National

Wildfires

This week Coningsby in Lincolnshire has reported temperatures of 40.3C, the highest recorded temperature in the UK before Tuesday was 38.7C, at Cambridge Botanic Gardens on 25 July 2019. Scotland has also recorded its hottest day on Tuesday, reaching 34.8C. Since 1990, 9 of the 10 hottest days ever have been recorded in the UK. The hottest days also includes Monday when the fourth hottest temperature of 38.1C was recorded in Suffolk. Wales recorded its hottest day with 37.1C. Provisional figures also show the UK experienced the warmest night on record from Monday into Tuesday. These excessive temperatures have led to wildfires across the UK.

The UK is relatively used to dealing with wildfires; however, they are increasing in severity and intensity. This time the wildfires feel different though, they are not in sparsely populated areas on moors in the Northwest, they are now encroaching on our capital city. Across, Greater London the London fire brigade dealt with 15 major fires, and a large number of wildfires and grassland fires, with London Fire Brigade declaring a major incident.

The Telegraph reported, that across the country, "major incidents" were declared by 10 fire services, some stations ran out of engines and others stopped responding to automatic alarms, as Britain recorded temperatures of more than 40C for the first time. As of Tuesday, there had been 420 fires in England and Wales since the start of the year, comparative to 247 the year before and 200 the year before that.

Wildfires, as across the rest of Europe, are expected are expected to worsen in the UK, both in frequency and intensity. This will place increasing pressure on UK infrastructure, as the majority of infrastructure in the UK is not engineered to deal with such a varying climate. Summers are getting increasingly hotter and winters increasingly colder and wetter, and UK infrastructure is simply not built to deal with these conditions. If UK infrastructure struggles to cope with the changing climate it will lead to unprecedented economic and health impacts, which may cost the economy millions. However, experts have criticised the government for not being adequately prepared to deal with these unprecedented wildfires, which will most likely led to greater loss of human and animal life, the degradation of fertile land and loss of eco-systems, increasing economic costs the longer it remains unchecked.

Inflation

The cost of living has continued to worsen this week as UK inflation hit 9.4% in the 12 months to June, up from 9.1% in May. Rising fuel and food prices have been the largest contributors to upwards pressure on inflation. Average petrol prices stood at 184p per litre in June, the highest since records began in 1990 and up from 129.7p a year

earlier. The monthly rise was also the largest on record, at 18.1p. The average price of diesel in June was 192.4p per litre, again a record high.

Figure 2 below shows the increase in inflation by food or drink. Low fat milk has seen the highest price rises at 26.3% from the same time the previous year, followed by butter (21.5%), Mineral or Spring waters (19.5%), flour (19.3%) and whole milk (18.6%).

Figure 2: Rising cost of groceries, June 2021 to June 2022

Food item	Price rise (%)
Low fat milk	26.3
Butter	21.5
Mineral or spring waters	19.5
Flour (all types)	19.3
Whole milk	18.6
Olive oil	18.2
Other food products (inc yeast, baking powder, stock)	17.6
Sauces, condiments, salt, herbs and spices	17.1
Ready-made meals	16.7
Pasta products and couscous	15.9

Source: BBC, 2022

Increases in the prices of basic necessities and ingredients such as these, is leading to increases in the cost of food and drinks goods across the board. As prices continue to rise at such a rapid rate, it will increasingly place pressure on household incomes and reduce standards of living. This is likely to intensify talks with Unions, as they call for pay rises to help workers cope. However, there is a fear the increasing public sector wages could further fuel inflation. The Bank of England has said that if inflationary pressure persist then it is likely that the Bank will raise interest rates by half a point at the next monetary policy committee.

Regional

Wildfires

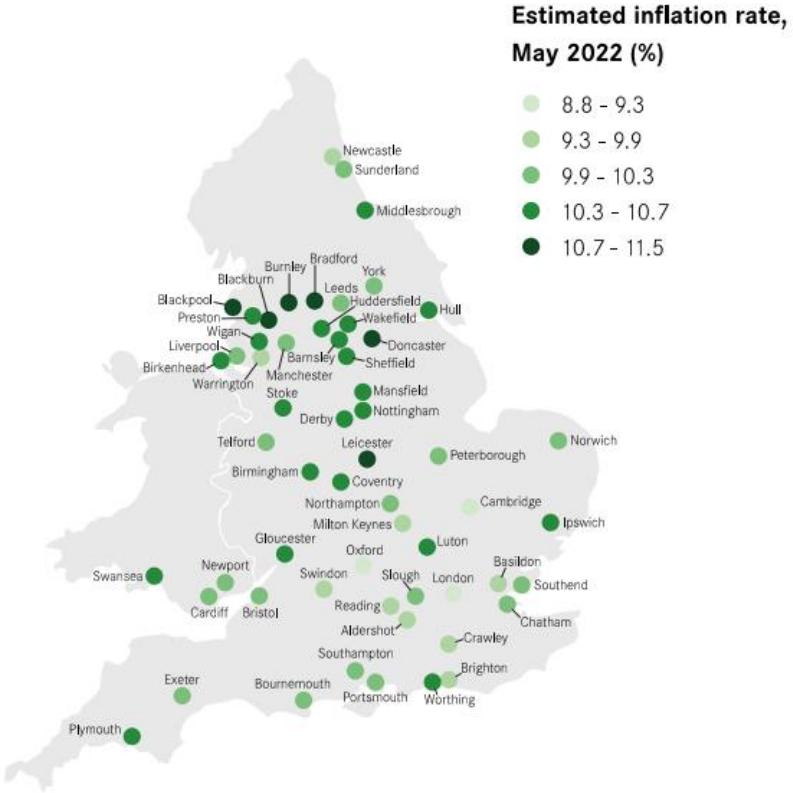
The West Midlands has also seen wildfires in the region, as a result of the rising temperatures. A large wildfire broke out in woodland at Lickey Hills Country Park on the edge of Birmingham. Within hours the blaze spread from around 400 square metres (4,305sq ft) of land to 50,000 square metres (53,820sq ft) in the Rose Hill area within hours. A few families had to be evacuated from their homes. However, the fire service noted that firefighting was hampered by heat, humidity and the terrain.

As temperatures continue to worsen, the West Midlands can expect wildfire to increase in frequency and intensity. This will place immense pressure on public services across the region, especially the fire service and NHS. As a result, local authorities and emergency services will likely have to develop prevention and contingency plans in order to deal with future pressures. If it fails to adequately prepare then it will likely lead to significant health and economic costs.

Inflation

A report from Centre for Cities, has found that there is a geography to the cost-of-living crisis, with a prominent north south divide. With many of the cities and large towns that were facing higher inflation rates in May 2022 were located in the North, Midlands and Wales, while those in the South (particularly in the Greater South East) are relatively more sheltered from rising costs.

Figure 3: Estimated inflation rate by city or town May 2022



Source: Centre for Cities, 2022

The report found that a combination of low incomes, poor energy stock and high share of vehicle-related spending was leading to comparatively high inflation in the Midlands and North. With the report finding that the current support package provided by the government, is not based on energy needs and fails to consider fact that energy demand is influenced by the energy efficiency of housing stock. This means that unless additional targeted support is provided, for many places, particularly those in the North and Midlands, energy bills are likely to jump even higher when the price cap is lifted in October.

Oxford Economics Forecasts 2020 to 2040

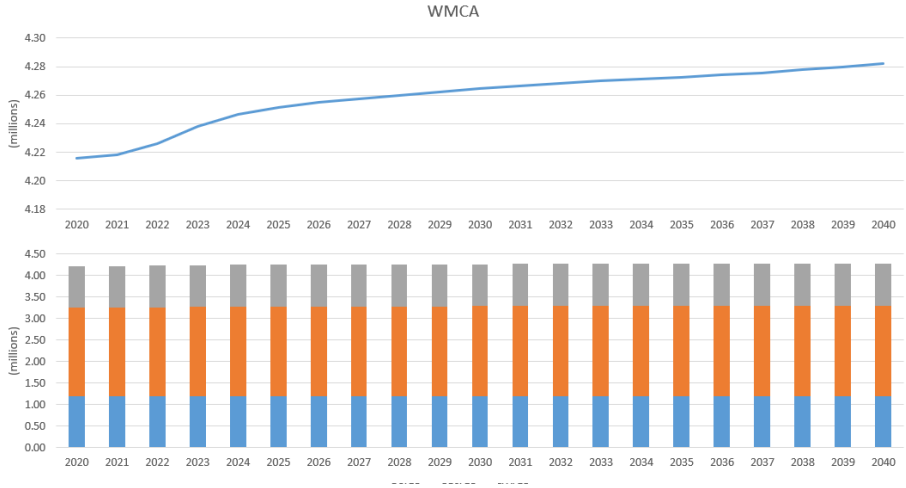
Rebecca Riley, Alice Pugh, WMREDI

The pandemic and exiting the EU have hit the region hard since 2020 and we have seen this presented in the monitors over the last two and a half years. Lagging data is now being published for the years affected by the pandemic such as GVA, which is giving us a better indication of the impacts at the height of the pandemic. Forecasters are now producing predictions based on latest data. More real time rapid economic and social indicators have also worsened since last year this has a knock-on effect to the short and long term forecast globally, nationally and regionally.

In the Midlands the WMCA, Midlands Engine and Midlands Connect collaborated to purchase a version of the Oxford Economics forecasting model in order to create a consistent baseline down to Local Authority Level. A single version of a baseline with the ability to create scenarios at a local level enables partners to share a single version of a forecast. These forecasts are based on a trend and all things being equal, and are inclusive of any policy or investment already announced, but exclusive of any new policy or investments in the future.

Oxford Economics (OE)[1] have updated this forecast for the partners, one of the key components of the forecast is the population, which is set to grow to 4.28m by 2040, slightly below the UK growth.

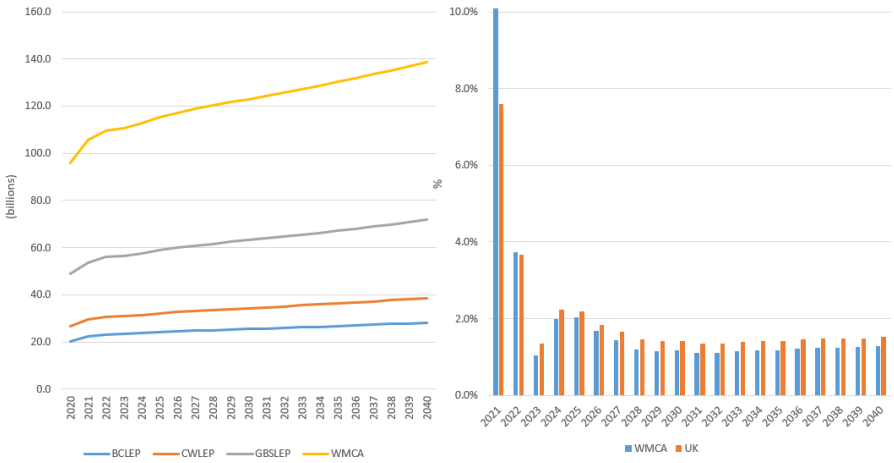
Oxford Economics Population Forecast



- Total population across the WMCA was **4.22 million in 2020**.
- It is forecasted to **grow to 4.28 million by 2040**.
- This a projected growth of **66,258 people**, or a **1.57% growth in the population** compared to 1.75% nationally by 2040

The new forecast suggests that the 2020 GVA will dip back to £96bn. However, in their latest forecast OE projects a stronger rebound for the region by 2040, reaching £138.6bn and an additional £42.6bn. This is better performance than predicted last year, but the annual growth rate will still lag the UK rate (1.4%) at 1.16%.

Oxford Economics – GVA forecast



- Total GVA in 2020 for the WMCA was **£96 billion**
- The projected GVA in 2040 is **£138.6 billion- an additional £42.6 billion**
- This is an increase of 44.4%, with an **annual yearly growth rate of 1.87%.** Below the UK annual yearly growth rate at 1.96%

GVA per head in 2022 was £22,761 behind the UK average of £27,044, the forecast to 2040 for the WMCA is expected to reach £32,367.

[1] Oxford Economic Forecasting, Midlands Forecasting model June 2022

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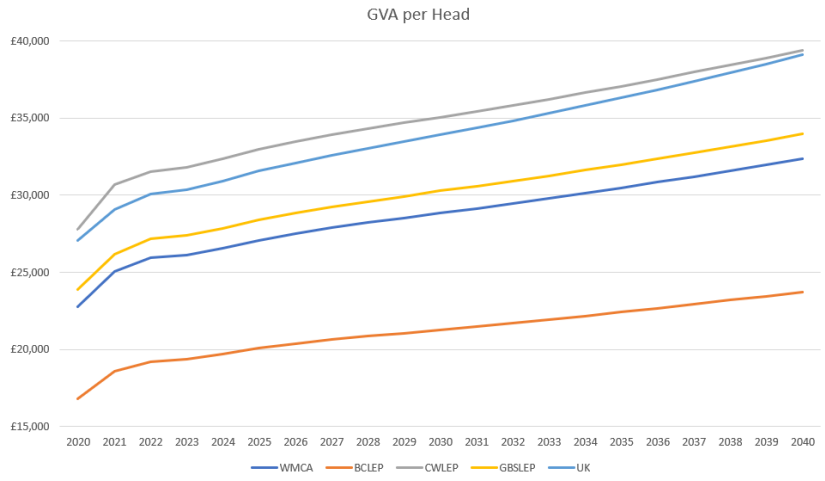
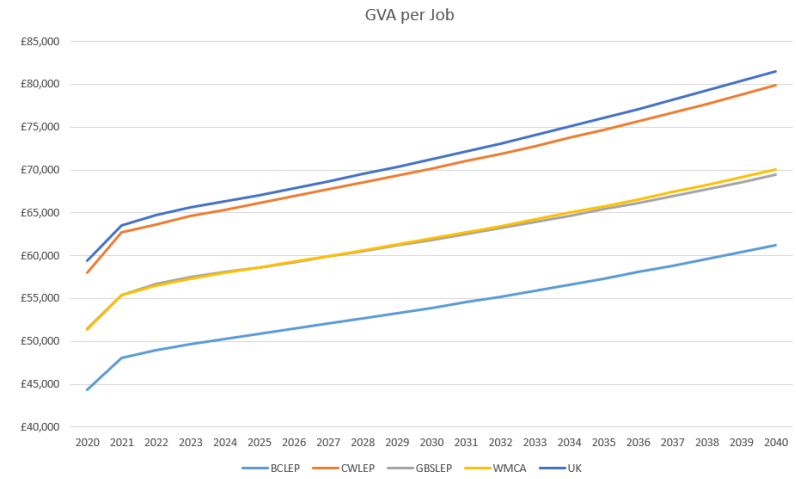
Oxford Economics – GVA per head



- In 2020 GVA per head across the **WMCA was £22,761**, comparative to the UK average of £27,044.
- The baseline scenario forecasts the WMCA GVA per head will to **grow to £32,367 by 2040**- an average annual yearly growth rate of 1.79%, compared to the UK at 1.87%
- CWLEP has the highest GVA per head in the WMCA area, however GBLEP had the highest average annual growth rate at 1.79%. BCLEP had the slowest growth at 1.76% annually on average

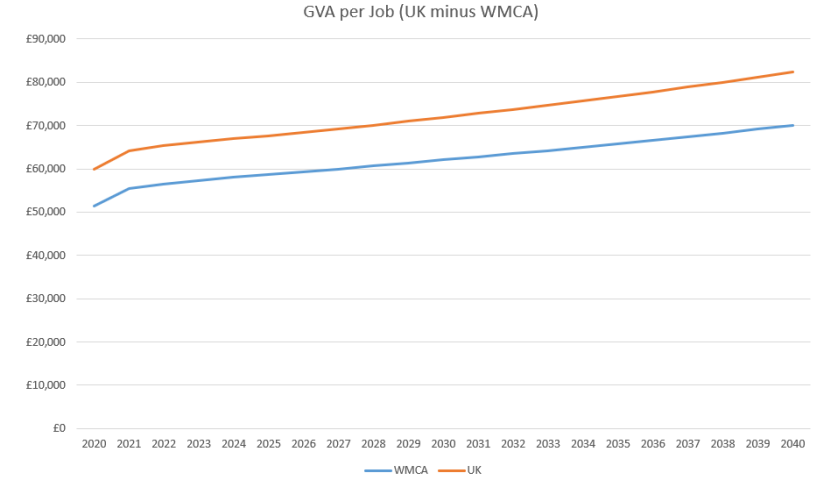
GVA per job in 2020 was £51,393 and is lagging the UK (£59,432) and predicted to reach £70,055 by 2040, slightly below the annual growth rate of the UK (1.60%) at 1.57%.

Oxford Economics – GVA per job



- In 2020 GVA per job across the **WMCA was £51,393**, comparative to the UK average of £59,432.
- The baseline scenario forecasts the WMCA GVA per job to **grow to £70,055 by 2040**- an average annual yearly growth rate of 1.57%, compared to the UK at 1.60%
- CWLEP has the highest GVA per job in the WMCA area, however BCLEP had the highest average annual growth rate at 1.63%. GBSLEP had the slowest growth at 1.51% annually on average

Oxford Economics – GVA per job – Minus WMCA



- In 2020 GVA per job across the WMCA was **£51,393**, comparative to the UK average minus the WMCA GVA per job is £59,956
- The baseline scenario forecasts the WMCA GVA per job to **grow to £70,055 by 2040**- an average annual yearly growth rate of 1.57%, compared to the UK (minus WMCA) at 1.60%

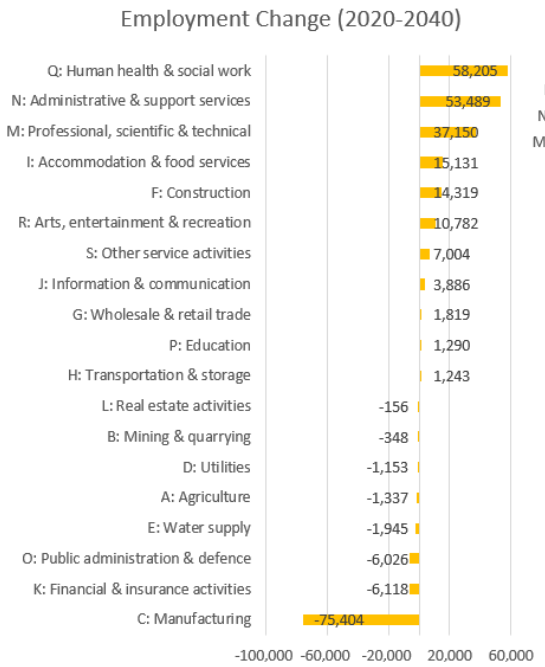
In terms of **earnings** the WMCA area is also predicted to lag the yearly growth rate of the UK (3.12% v 3.21%) and average earnings by 2040 will be £53,011. As the chart illustrates there is a slight bump in the growth over the next few years but this will not counteract the general cost of living issues.

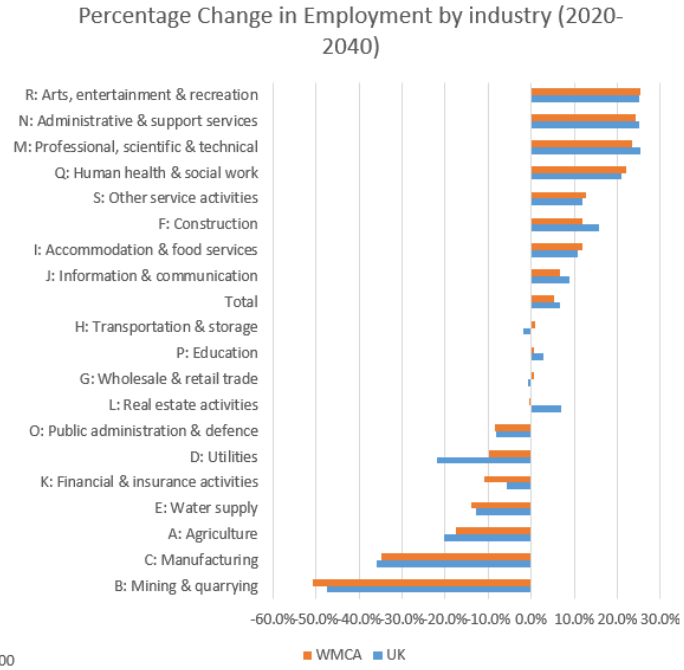
Oxford Economics – Earnings

- In 2020, WMCA workplace based earnings were **£28,983 per year**
- By **2040** this is predicted to reach **£53,011 per year**
- The WMCA average annual yearly growth rate is **3.12%** and the UK annual growth rate is 3.21%

The impact of the pandemic and EU Exit on the sectors in the region, continues to shift reflecting the waves of different impacts the economy has suffered. The declines predicted last year in manufacturing employment however have been revised and are not as severe as predicted, with a drop of 34% (75,404) as opposed to 40% (89,100) prediction last year. In terms of employment growth, this again reflects the shifts in the economy from Human, health and social work, critical to pandemic and social impacts, to the highest sectoral growth in Arts, entertainment and recreation (growing by 25.3%) as the economy opens up and people return to activities and social life. Within the forecast the region still has a strong employment performance in critical sectors, Admin & Support (+24.2%), and Professional, scientific, and technical (+23.5%) which have fuelled growth in the past. Total employment is predicted to increase by 5.3% to 2040 (behind the UK at 6.7%). Construction however, which underpinned the accelerated growth at the end of the last decade has still not recovered.

Oxford Economics – Employment

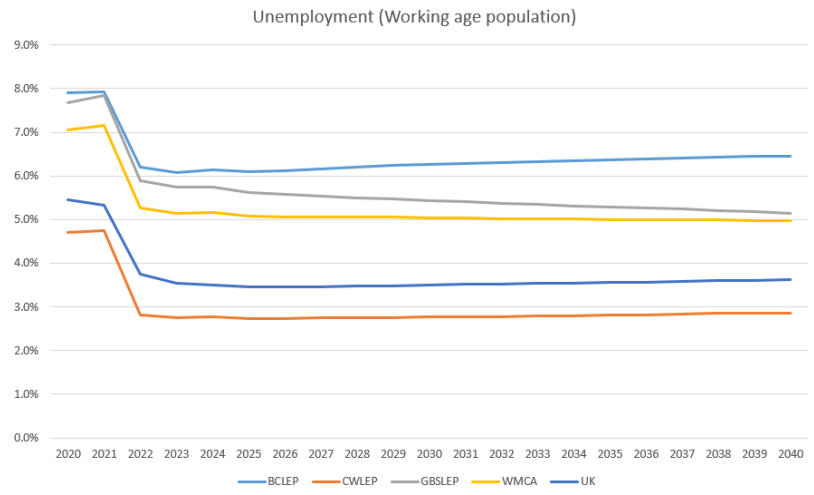




- The largest declines in employment from 2020 and 2040, will be in **mining and quarrying (-50.8%)** and **manufacturing (-34.9%).** However, mining and quarrying only employees 686 people in WMCA. Whereas Manufacturing currently employees 215,896, meaning the industry will see a **loss of 75,404 employees**
- The largest increases in employment between 2020 and 2040 are expected to be in **Arts, entertainment & recreation (+25.3%), Administrative & support services (+24.2%) and Professional, scientific & technical (+23.5%) sectors.**
- Overall **Total employment** is set to **increase by 5.3%** between 2020 and 2040, whereas the UK will see a 6.7% increase

In terms of **unemployment** this will remain higher in the immediate term but over the long term to 2040 will drop by 5% compared with only 3.6% at the UK level.

Oxford Economics – Unemployment



- The percentage of those unemployed as a percentage of the working age pop. was **7.1% in the WMCA**, compared to the UK at 5.4% in 2020.
- The model predicts that unemployment will decrease to **5.0% in the WMCA by 2040,** whereas for the UK it will decrease to 3.6%
- By 2040 unemployment will have also decreased 2.9% for CWLEP, 6.5% in BCLEP and 5.1% in GBSLEP

Overall, this forecast from OE takes the view that the region will now fall back to its long run performance and the gains in growth made in the run up to 2019 have been lost because of the impacts of the pandemic specifically on trade and manufacturing.

This forecast performance for the region reflects the significant impacts the region, places and people have faced but overall suggests the region will get back on track in the long term. In the short term though we can see from the data that the region, like many places globally, faces significant challenges as seen in the data and analysis provided in previous monitors. Issues flagged in the real time data affecting businesses over the last 12 months is now flowing through into the recent GVA release and therefore the forecast.

Labour Market Statistics and Claimant Count: Released July 2022

Black Country Consortium Economic Intelligence Unit

UK Summary[2]

- For the UK, early estimates for June 2022 indicate that the number of payrolled employees rose by 3.0% (+874,000) compared with June 2021; the number of payrolled employees was up by 1.9% (+561,000) since February 2020. The latest monthly change shows payrolled employment increased by 0.1% (+31,000) in June 2022 when compared with May 20223.
- In March to May 2022, reports of redundancies in the three months prior to interview[4] decreased by 0.8 per thousand employees, compared with the previous three-month period, to a record low of 1.8 per thousand employees.
- The UK employment rate increased by 0.4 percentage points on the quarter to 75.9% (still below pre-coronavirus pandemic levels). The number of full-time employees increased during the latest three-month period to a record high. Part-time employees also increased during the latest three-month period, continuing to show a recovery. The number of self-employed workers fell during the coronavirus pandemic and has remained low, although the number has increased during the latest three-month period. The increase was driven by part-time self-employed, and was largely offset by a decrease in the number of full-time self-employed.
- The UK unemployment rate for March to May 2022 decreased by 0.1 percentage points on the quarter to 3.8%. Those unemployed for up to six months increased over the latest three-month period at the fastest rate since late 2020.
- The UK economic inactivity rate decreased by 0.4 percentage points to 21.1% in March to May 2022. Since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, the increases in economic inactivity were driven by those who were economically inactive and who did not want a job. This group have now also driven the quarterly decrease during the latest period.
- For the UK, the number of job vacancies in April to June 2022 was 1,294,000; this was a small increase of 6,900 (+0.5%) from the previous quarter and an increase of 498,400 from before the coronavirus pandemic in January to March 2020. The number of unemployed people to every vacancy remained at a record low of 1.0 in March to May 2022, with the number of unemployed people falling just below the number of vacancies for only the second time in its history.
- For the UK, growth in average total pay (including bonuses) was 6.2%, and growth in regular pay (excluding bonuses) was 4.3% among employees in March to May 2022. In real terms (adjusted for inflation) in March to May 2022, growth in total and regular pay both fell on the year, at 0.9% for total pay and 2.8% for regular pay; this was a record fall for regular pay.
- For the UK, total public sector employment increased in March 2022 compared with the previous quarter and the previous year; the increase from a year ago is largely because of the ongoing response of the NHS and the Civil Service to the coronavirus pandemic. There were an estimated 5.74 million employees in the public sector for March 2022, which was 21,000 (0.4%) more than for December 2021 and 67,000 (1.2%) more than for March 2021.
- Compared with the previous three-month period, total actual weekly hours worked increased by 6.5 million hours to 1.05 billion hours in March to May 2022 in the UK. This is still 6.4 million below pre-coronavirus pandemic levels (December 2019 to February 2020); however, total actual weekly hours worked by women exceed pre-coronavirus pandemic levels.

Regional Labour Market Summary[5]

- For the three months ending May 2022, the West Midlands region employment rate (aged 16 – 64 years) was 75.1%, below the UK rate of 75.9%. Since the previous quarter, the West Midlands employment rate decreased

[2] Source: ONS, Labour Market Overview; UK: July 2022
[3] This should be treated as a provisional estimate and is likely to be revised when more data is received next month.
[4] The redundancy estimates measure the number of people who were made redundant or who took voluntary redundancy in the three months before the Labour Force Survey interviews; it does not take into consideration planned redundancies.
[5] Source: ONS, Labour Market in the Regions of the UK: July 2022

by 0.4pp, the UK increased by 0.4pp. There was an increase of 1.0pp for the West Midlands when compared to the same period in the previous year and the UK increased by 1.1pp.

- For the three months ending in May 2022, the West Midlands region unemployment rate (aged 16 years and over) was 4.4%, which has decreased by 0.7pp since the previous quarter (largest decrease across all regions) and a decrease of 1.2pp from the previous year. The UK unemployment rate was 3.8%, a decrease of 0.1pp from the previous quarter, and a 1.1pp decrease when compared to the previous year.
- For the three months ending May 2022, the West Midlands region economic inactivity rate (aged 16 – 64 years) was 21.3% - slightly above the UK at 21.1%. Since the previous quarter, the West Midlands economic inactivity rate increased by 0.8pp, while the UK decreased by 0.4pp. The West Midlands remained the same level when compared to the same period in the previous year, the UK decreased by 0.3pp.

WMCA (3 LEP) Claimant Summary

- There were 147,595 claimants in the WMCA (3 LEP) area in June 2022. Since May 2022, there has been a decrease of 0.1% (-170) claimants in the WMCA (3 LEP) area, while the UK decreased by 1.2%. When compared to March 2020 (pre-pandemic figures), claimants have increased by 25.5% (+30,005) in the WMCA (3 LEP) area, with the UK increasing by 23.2% over the same period.
- Overall, for the WMCA (3 LEP) the number of claimants as a proportion of residents aged 16 - 64 years old was 5.6% compared to 3.7% for the UK in June 2022.
- There were 24,480 youth claimants in the WMCA (3 LEP) area in June 2022. Since May 2022, there was a decrease of 0.4% (-110) youth claimants in the WMCA (3 LEP) area, while the UK decreased by 0.7%. When compared to March 2020 (pre pandemic figures), youth claimants have increased by 8.4% (+1,900) in the WMCA (3 LEP) area, with the UK increasing by 2.3% over the same period.
- Overall, for the WMCA (3 LEP) the number of youth claimants as a percentage of residents aged 18- 24 years old was 6.2% compared to 4.3% for the UK in June 2022.

In Depth:

UK Labour Market Stastics - Vacancies[6]

- The number of job vacancies in April to June 2022 was 1,294,000; this was a small increase of 6,900 from the previous quarter and an increase of 498,400 from before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in January to March 2020.
- In April to June 2022 the quarterly rate of growth continued to slow down, falling for the 11th consecutive period to 0.5%.
- In April to June 2022, accommodation and food service activities showed the largest increase in vacancies, but this was offset by falls in other industry sectors, most notably wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles.
- In March to May 2022, the ratio of unemployed people per vacancy remained at 1.0 for the fourth consecutive period, with the number of vacancies slightly higher than the number of unemployed people.

The following chart shows the number of vacancies in the UK, seasonally adjusted, April to June 2003 to April to June 2022:

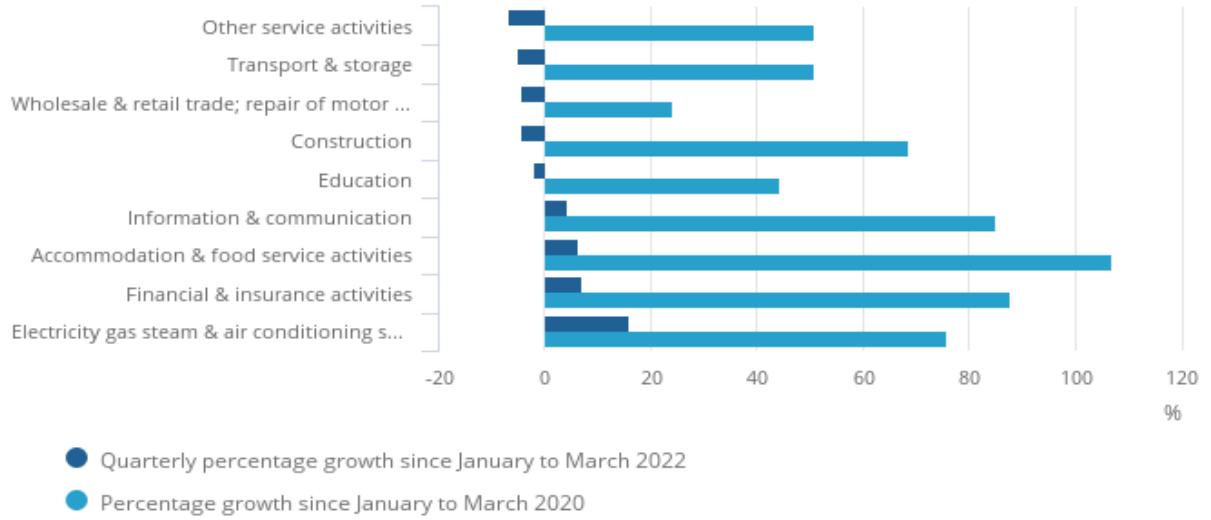
[6] Source: UK labour market, vacancies and jobs in the UK: July 2022

Source: ONS – Vacancy Survey

- In April to June 2022, quarterly vacancy growth fell to 0.5% from 4.0% in the last quarter. Despite the quarterly growth rate decreasing for 11 consecutive periods, it remains positive and shows the most sustained period of positive growth since the end of 2015.

- However, the total number of vacancies for April to June 2022 is not a record high, despite the growth from the previous quarter (January to March 2022), because the total number of vacancies in March to May 2022 was higher.

April to June 2022 three-month average vacancies in the UK, three-month percentage growth from January to March 2022 and percentage growth from a pre-pandemic January to March 2020:



Source: ONS – Vacancy Survey

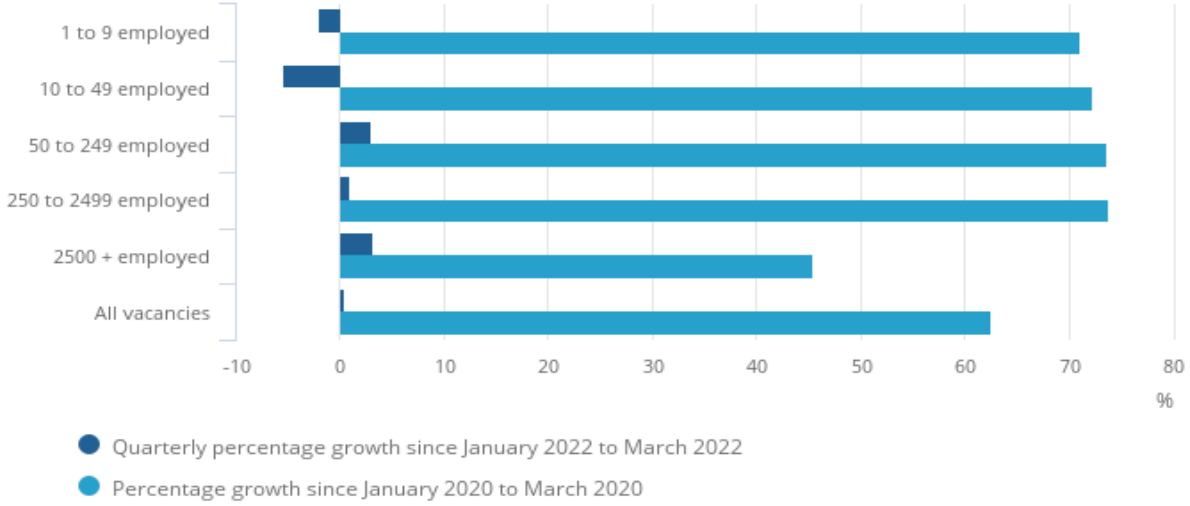
- Quarterly growth varied across industry sectors; the industry displaying the highest rate of growth was electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply at 16%, while the lowest was other service activities at negative 6.7%.

- In April to June 2022, vacancies increased by 6,900, which is the smallest quarterly increase since June to August 2020. Accommodation and food service activities showed the largest increase at 10,200 vacancies. However, any such gains were offset by falls in other industry sectors, particularly wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles, which fell by 7,200.

- In April to June 2022, the total number of vacancies was 498,400 (62.6%) above the January to March 2020 pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic level, with the largest increase in accommodation and food service activities up 91,000 (107.1%). Total vacancies rose by 429,500 (49.7%) from the same time last year, with the same industry sector showing the largest growth of 68,700 (64.0%).

- The number of unemployed people to every vacancy remained at a record low of 1.0 in March to May 2022, with the number of unemployed people falling just below the number of vacancies for only the second time in its history.

April to June 2022 three-month average vacancies in the UK, three-month percentage growth from January to March 2022 and growth from a pre-pandemic January to March 2020:



Source: ONS – Vacancy Survey

- In April to June 2022, the rate of quarterly growth varied across company size bands, with those businesses of less than 50 employees showing a decrease in their number of vacancies, while larger ones continued to grow.

Regional Labour Market[7]

- For the three months ending May 2022, the West Midlands region employment rate (aged 16 – 64 years) was 75.1%, below the UK rate of 75.9%. Since the previous quarter, the West Midlands employment rate decreased by 0.4pp, the UK increased by 0.4pp. There was an increase of 1.0pp for the West Midlands when compared to the same period in the previous year and the UK increased by 1.1pp. The highest employment rate within the UK for the three months ending May 2022 was in the South West at 79.3% and the lowest was in the Northern Ireland at 70.1%.

- For the three months ending in May 2022, the West Midlands region unemployment rate (aged 16 years and over) was 4.4%, which has decreased by 0.7pp since the previous quarter (largest decrease across all regions) and a decrease of 1.2pp from the previous year. The UK unemployment rate was 3.8%, a decrease of 0.1pp from the previous quarter, and a 1.1pp decrease when compared to the previous year. The highest unemployment rate in the UK for the three months ending May 2022 was in the North East with 5.1%, with the lowest unemployment rate in the East Midlands at 2.5%.

- For the three months ending May 2022, the West Midlands region economic inactivity rate (aged 16 – 64 years) was 21.3% - slightly above the UK at 21.1%. Since the previous quarter, the West Midlands economic inactivity rate increased by 0.8pp, while the UK decreased by 0.4pp. The West Midlands remained the same level when compared to the same period in the previous year, the UK decreased by 0.3pp. The highest economic inactivity rate within the UK for the three months ending May 2022 was in Northern Ireland with 28.0% and the lowest was in the South West with 18.4%.

The table below provides a summary of the latest headline estimates and quarterly changes for regions of the UK, seasonally adjusted, March to May 2022:

[7] Source: ONS, Labour Market in the Regions of the UK: July 2022

	Employment rate – Mar to May 22 (aged 16- 64 years)	Change on Dec 21 to Feb 22	Unemployment rate - Mar to May 22 (16 years +)	Change on Dec 21 to Feb 22	Inactivity rate – Mar to May 22 (aged 16-64 years)	Change on Dec 21 to Feb 22
UK	75.9%	0.4pp	3.8%	-0.1pp	21.1%	-0.4pp
Great Britain	76.0%	0.4pp	3.8%	-0.1pp	20.9%	-0.4pp
England	76.2%	0.4pp	3.8%	-0.1pp	20.7%	-0.4pp
North East	71.5%	1.2pp	5.1%	-0.3pp	24.8%	-0.9pp
North West	74.1%	0.8pp	4.4%	0.1pp	22.4%	-0.9pp
Yorkshire and The Humber	74.4%	2.0pp	4.5%	0.3pp	22.0%	-2.3pp
East Midlands	76.8%	0.7pp	2.5%	-0.3pp	21.2%	-0.4pp
West Midlands	**75.1%**	**-0.4pp**	**4.4%**	**-0.7pp**	**21.3%**	**0.8pp**
East	78.3%	0pp	3.6%	0.4pp	18.8%	-0.3pp
London	75.4%	-0.3pp	4.6%	0pp	20.7%	0.3pp
South East	78.5%	0.4pp	2.9%	-0.5pp	19.1%	0pp
South West	79.3%	0.5pp	2.7%	-0.1pp	18.4%	-0.4pp
Wales	73.7%	-0.5pp	3.8%	0.8pp	23.4%	-0.1pp
Scotland	75.4%	0.6pp	3.5%	0.1pp	21.8%	-0.6pp
Northern Ireland	70.1%	0.7pp	2.6%	-0.4pp	28.0%	-0.4pp

Source: ONS – Labour Force Survey

Claimant Count

Claimant count for people aged 16 years and over[8]:

- There were 147,595 claimants in the WMCA (3 LEP) area in June 2022. Since May 2022, there has been a decrease of 0.1% (-170) claimants in the WMCA (3 LEP) area, while the UK decreased by 1.2%. When compared to June 2021, claimants have decreased by 23.4% (-45,085) in the WMCA (3 LEP) area, with the UK decreasing by 31.6% over the same period. When compared to March 2020 (pre-pandemic figures), claimants have increased by 25.5% (+30,005) in the WMCA (3 LEP) area, with the UK increasing by 23.2% over the same period.

- The Black Country LEP area had 45,555 claimants aged 16 years and over in June 2022, an increase of 190 (+0.4%) claimants from the previous month. Compared to the same month in 2021, Black Country LEP claimants decreased by 14,375 (-24.0%). When compared to March 2020 (38,275) the number of claimants has increased by 7,280 (+19.0%).

- In Coventry and Warwickshire LEP, there were 21,770 claimants aged 16 years and over in June 2022, a decrease of 15 (-0.1%) claimants since May 2022. Compared to the same month in 2021, Coventry and Warwickshire LEP claimants decreased by 7,895 (-26.6%). When compared to March 2020 (15,825) the number of claimants has increased by 5,945 (+37.6%).

- In Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP, there were 80,270 claimants aged 16 years and over in June 2022, a decrease of 345 (-0.4%) claimants since May 2022. Compared to the same month in 2021, Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP claimants decreased by 22,815 (-22.1%). When compared to March 2020 (63,490) the number of claimants has increased by 16,780 (+26.4%).

The following table shows a breakdown of number of claimants aged 16+ and change compared to June 2022 on selected months for WMCA and UK:

	Mar 2020	Jun 2021	May 2022	Jun 2022	Jun 2022 (Claimants as proportion aged 16-64) Rates	% Change Since Mar 20	% Change Since Jun 21	% Change Since May 22
Birmingham	49,370	77,885	63,160	62,990	8.6%	27.6%	-19.1%	-0.3%
Bromsgrove	1,165	2,190	1,555	1,530	2.6%	31.3%	-30.1%	-1.6%
Cannock Chase	1,655	2,830	1,960	1,955	3.1%	18.1%	-30.9%	-0.3%
Coventry	8,000	15,475	11,830	11,970	4.7%	49.6%	-22.6%	1.2%
Dudley	8,515	12,580	9,715	9,645	5.0%	13.3%	-23.3%	-0.7%

[8] ONS/DWP, Claimant count, July 2022. Please note, the latest months figures are provisional and when new data is released, the previous month is revised.

	Mar 2020	Jun 2021	May 2022	Jun 2022	Jun 2022 (Claimants as proportion aged 16-64) Rates	% Change Since Mar 20	% Change Since Jun 21	% Change Since May 22
East Staffordshire	1,720	3,470	2,255	2,255	3.0%	31.1%	-35.0%	0.0%
Lichfield	1,320	2,280	1,530	1,535	2.5%	16.3%	-32.7%	0.3%
North Warwickshire	845	1,580	1,050	1,025	2.6%	21.3%	-35.1%	-2.4%
Nuneaton and Bedworth	2,830	4,490	3,260	3,190	4.0%	12.7%	-29.0%	-2.1%
Redditch	1,535	2,720	2,040	2,050	3.9%	33.6%	-24.6%	0.5%
Rugby	1,535	2,665	1,870	1,860	2.8%	21.2%	-30.2%	-0.5%
Sandwell	10,780	17,830	13,600	13,785	6.7%	27.9%	-22.7%	1.4%
Solihull	3,650	6,435	4,505	4,380	3.4%	20.0%	-31.9%	-2.8%
Stratford-on-Avon	1,050	2,425	1,655	1,630	2.1%	55.2%	-32.8%	-1.5%
Tamworth	1,490	2,435	1,725	1,685	3.6%	13.1%	-30.8%	-2.3%
Walsall	8,605	13,595	9,885	9,870	5.7%	14.7%	-27.4%	-0.2%
Warwick	1,570	3,030	2,120	2,100	2.3%	33.8%	-30.7%	-0.9%
Wolverhampton	10,380	15,930	12,165	12,255	7.5%	18.1%	-23.1%	0.7%
Wyre Forest	1,580	2,835	1,890	1,890	3.2%	19.6%	-33.3%	0%
WM 7 Met.	**99,300**	**159,730**	**124,860**	**124,900**	**6.7%**	**25.8%**	**-21.8%**	**0.03%**
Black Country LEP	38,275	59,930	45,365	45,555	6.2%	19.0%	-24.0%	0.4%
Coventry and Warwickshire LEP	15,825	29,665	21,785	21,770	3.6%	37.6%	-26.6%	-0.1%
Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP	63,490	103,085	80,615	80,270	6.3%	26.4%	-22.1%	-0.4%
WMCA (3 LEP)	**117,590**	**192,680**	**147,765**	**147,595**	**5.6%**	**25.5%**	**-23.4%**	**-0.1%**
United Kingdom	1,268,620	2,285,995	1,582,215	1,563,350	3.7%	23.2%	-31.6%	-1.2%

- Overall, for the WMCA (3 LEP) the number of claimants as a proportion of residents aged 16 - 64 years old was 5.6% compared to 3.7% for the UK in June 2022.

Youth Claimants (Aged 18-24)

- There were 24,480 youth claimants in the WMCA (3 LEP) area in June 2022. Since May 2022, there was a decrease of 0.4% (-110) youth claimants in the WMCA (3 LEP) area, while the UK decreased by 0.7%. When compared to June 2021, the number of youth claimants has decreased by 34.0% (-12,610) in the WMCA (3 LEP) area, with the UK decreasing by 42.1% over the same period. When compared to March 2020 (pre pandemic figures), youth claimants have increased by 8.4% (+1,900) in the WMCA (3 LEP) area, with the UK increasing by 2.3% over the same period.

- The Black Country LEP area had 7,790 youth claimants in June 2022, a decrease of 30 (-0.4%) claimants from the previous month. Compared to the same month in 2021, Black Country LEP youth claimants decreased by 4,105 (-34.5%). When compared to March 2020 (7,690) the number of youth claimants has increased by 100 (+1.3%).

- In Coventry and Warwickshire LEP, there were 3,395 youth claimants in June 2022, a decrease of 20 (-0.6%) claimants since May 2022. Compared to the same month in 2021, Coventry and Warwickshire LEP youth claimants decreased by 2,025 (-37.4%). When compared to March 2020 (2,875) the number of claimants has increased by 520 (+18.1%).

- In Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP, there were 13,295 youth claimants in June 2022, this is a decrease of 60 (-0.4%) claimants since May 2022. Compared to the same month in 2021, Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP

youth claimants decreased by 6,480 (-32.8%). In the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP area, when compared to March 2020 (12,015) the number of claimants has increased by 1,280 (+10.7%).

The following table shows a breakdown of number of youth claimants and change compared to June 2022 on selected months for WMCA and UK:

	Mar 2020	Jun 2021	May 2022	Jun 2022	Jun 2022 (Claimants as proportion aged 18-24) Rates	% Change Since Mar 20	% Change Since Jun 21	% Change Since May 22
Birmingham	9,105	14,800	10,420	10,375	7.4%	13.9%	-29.9%	-0.4%
Bromsgrove	215	425	225	225	3.8%	4.7%	-47.1%	0.0%
Cannock Chase	365	585	370	365	5.1%	0.0%	-37.6%	-1.4%
Coventry	1,535	2,910	1,920	1,945	3.6%	26.7%	-33.2%	1.3%
Dudley	1,750	2,555	1,685	1,655	7.0%	-5.4%	-35.2%	-1.8%
East Staffordshire	320	615	345	345	4.1%	7.8%	-43.9%	0.0%
Lichfield	270	405	260	265	3.8%	-1.9%	-34.6%	1.9%
North Warwickshire	160	300	180	180	4.1%	12.5%	-40.0%	0.0%
Nuneaton and Bedworth	555	825	575	555	6.0%	0.0%	-32.7%	-3.5%
Redditch	310	520	340	350	5.9%	12.9%	-32.7%	2.9%
Rugby	235	465	285	270	3.7%	14.9%	-41.9%	-5.3%
Sandwell	2,115	3,510	2,330	2,355	9.0%	11.3%	-32.9%	1.1%
Solihull	825	1,370	805	785	5.1%	-4.8%	-42.7%	-2.5%
Stratford-on-Avon	160	365	185	180	2.2%	12.5%	-50.7%	-2.7%
Tamworth	295	540	320	315	5.6%	6.8%	-41.7%	-1.6%
Walsall	1,915	2,850	1,840	1,820	7.9%	-5.0%	-36.1%	-1.1%
Warwick	230	550	275	265	1.6%	15.2%	-51.8%	-3.6%
Wolverhampton	1,910	2,985	1,965	1,960	9.4%	2.6%	-34.3%	-0.3%
Wyre Forest	310	520	265	270	4.1%	-12.9%	-48.1%	1.9%
WM 7 Met.	**19,155**	**30,975**	**20,960**	**20,900**	**6.9%**	**9.1%**	**-32.5%**	**-0.3%**
Black Country LEP	7,690	11,895	7,820	7,790	8.3%	1.3%	-34.5%	-0.4%
Coventry and Warwickshire LEP	2,875	5,420	3,415	3,395	3.4%	18.1%	-37.4%	-0.6%
Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP	12,015	19,775	13,355	13,295	6.6%	10.7%	-32.8%	-0.4%
WMCA (3 LEP)	**22,580**	**37,090**	**24,590**	**24,480**	**6.2%**	**8.4%**	**-34.0%**	**-0.4%**
United Kingdom	238,085	420,500	245,245	243,480	4.3%	2.3%	-42.1%	-0.7%

- Overall, for the WMCA (3 LEP) the number of youth claimants as a percentage of residents aged 18 - 24 years old was 6.2% compared to 4.3% for the UK in June 2022.

Claimant Count by Age and Gender (WMCA 3 LEP)[9]

- As seen in the following table, there were a selection of age bands where claimants increased from May 2022 to June 2022.

- For those aged 16-24 in the WMCA (3 LEP) area, when comparing June 2022 to the previous month, there was an overall decrease of 105 claimants. This can be split by an increase of 10 males and a decrease of 115 females.

- For those aged 25-49 in the WMCA (3 LEP) area, when comparing June 2022 to the previous month, there was an overall increase of 230 claimants. This can be split by an increase of 220 males and an increase of 10 females.

- For those aged 50 years and over in the WMCA (3 LEP) area, when comparing June 2022 to the previous month, there was an overall decrease of 290 claimants. This can be split by a decrease of 235 males and a decrease of 60 females.

The following table shows a breakdown by age brackets and gender for the WMCA (3 LEP) area over selected time periods and change compared to June 2022:

[9] Please note, figure may not sum due to rounding.

		Mar 2020	Jun 2021	May 2022	Jun 2022	No. Change Since Mar 20	No. Change Since Jun 21	No. Change Since May 22
Total	**Age 16+**	**117,590**	**192,680**	**147,765**	**147,595**	**30,005**	**-45,085**	**-170**
	Aged 16-24	**22,835**	**37,435**	**24,820**	**24,715**	**1,880**	**-12,720**	**-105**
	Aged 16-17	250	350	235	235	-15	-115	0
	Aged 18-24	22,580	37,090	24,590	24,480	1,900	-12,610	-110
	Aged 25-49	**67,130**	**110,700**	**87,415**	**87,645**	**20,515**	**-23,055**	**230**
	Aged 25-29	15,945	25,965	18,950	18,880	2,935	-7,085	-70
	Aged 30-34	15,635	26,160	20,690	20,715	5,080	-5,445	25
	Aged 35-39	13,715	23,050	18,880	19,060	5,345	-3,990	180
	Aged 40-44	11,230	19,015	15,870	16,015	4,785	-3,000	145
	Aged 45-49	10,605	16,515	13,010	12,970	2,365	-3,545	-40
	Aged 50+	**27,635**	**44,545**	**35,530**	**35,240**	**7,605**	**-9,305**	**-290**
	Aged 50-54	9,960	16,245	12,565	12,490	2,530	-3,755	-75
	Aged 55-59	8,985	13,990	11,150	10,945	1,960	-3,045	-205
	Aged 60-64	7,675	11,790	9,685	9,645	1,970	-2,145	-40
	Aged 65+	1,020	2,520	2,130	2,160	1,140	-360	30
Male	**Age 16+**	**69,420**	**114,690**	**87,570**	**87,570**	**18,150**	**-27,120**	**0**
	Aged 16-24	**14,100**	**23,240**	**15,555**	**15,565**	**1,465**	**-7,675**	**10**
	Aged 16-17	115	165	100	100	-15	-65	0
	Aged 18-24	13,980	23,075	15,450	15,455	1,475	-7,620	5
	Aged 25-49	**38,965**	**65,530**	**51,010**	**51,230**	**12,265**	**-14,300**	**220**
	Aged 25-29	9,610	16,130	11,590	11,580	1,970	-4,550	-10
	Aged 30-34	9,095	15,525	12,125	12,220	3,125	-3,305	95
	Aged 35-39	7,730	13,415	10,785	10,875	3,145	-2,540	90
	Aged 40-44	6,440	10,985	9,055	9,110	2,670	-1,875	55
	Aged 45-49	6,080	9,470	7,460	7,445	1,365	-2,025	-15
	Aged 50+	**16,355**	**25,915**	**21,010**	**20,775**	**4,420**	**-5,140**	**-235**
	Aged 50-54	5,820	9,410	7,370	7,300	1,480	-2,110	-70
	Aged 55-59	5,295	8,195	6,630	6,520	1,225	-1,675	-110
	Aged 60-64	4,575	6,795	5,710	5,630	1,055	-1,165	-80
	Aged 65+	655	1,530	1,290	1,320	665	-210	30
Female	**Age 16+**	**48,175**	**77,990**	**60,195**	**60,040**	**11,865**	**-17,950**	**-155**
	Aged 16-24	**8,730**	**14,195**	**9,265**	**9,150**	**420**	**-5,045**	**-115**
	Aged 16-17	135	185	130	125	-10	-60	-5
	Aged 18-24	8,595	14,005	9,140	9,025	430	-4,980	-115
	Aged 25-49	**28,165**	**45,170**	**36,405**	**36,415**	**8,250**	**-8,755**	**10**
	Aged 25-29	6,340	9,830	7,365	7,300	960	-2,530	-65
	Aged 30-34	6,530	10,630	8,575	8,505	1,975	-2,125	-70
	Aged 35-39	5,985	9,630	8,090	8,180	2,195	-1,450	90
	Aged 40-44	4,790	8,030	6,815	6,910	2,120	-1,120	95
	Aged 45-49	4,525	7,045	5,555	5,525	1,000	-1,520	-30
	Aged 50+	**11,280**	**18,620**	**14,530**	**14,470**	**3,190**	**-4,150**	**-60**
	Aged 50-54	4,135	6,840	5,195	5,190	1,055	-1,650	-5
	Aged 55-59	3,690	5,795	4,510	4,430	740	-1,365	-80
	Aged 60-64	3,100	5,000	3,975	4,015	915	-985	40
	Aged 65+	360	995	840	835	475	-160	-5

Alternative Claimant Count[10]

These statistics measure the number of people claiming unemployment related benefits by modelling what the count would have been if Universal Credit had been fully rolled out since 2013. Trends over time for local areas can be considered using the Claimant Count prior to 2013, and the Alternative Claimant Count from 2013. The figures cannot be directly compared as they are defined differently.

[10] Source: Department for Work and Pensions, Alternative claimant statistics, July 2022

All Ages

- The alternative claimant count data estimated 142,286 claimants in the WMCA (3 LEP) area in May 2022, a decrease of 28.9% (-57,747) when compared to May 2021. Over the same period the UK decreased by 36.9%.

The following table shows the all-ages alternative claimant count, May 2017 – May 2022:

	May-17	May-18	May-19	May-20	May-21	May-22	Num. Change Since May 21	% Change Since May 21
WM 7 Met.	**98,427**	**96,838**	**99,383**	**174,161**	**165,550**	**120,701**	**-44,849**	**-27.1%**
Black Country LEP	39,318	38,510	38,461	68,581	62,521	43,726	-18,795	-30.1%
Coventry & Warwickshire LEP	14,787	14,628	15,181	34,249	30,864	21,560	-9,304	-30.1%
Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP	60,678	60,567	63,023	113,774	106,648	77,000	-29,648	-27.8%
WMCA (3 LEP)	**114,783**	**113,705**	**116,665**	**216,604**	**200,033**	**142,286**	**-57,747**	**-28.9%**
UK	1,308,741	1,284,646	1,282,120	2,764,673	2,423,108	1,529,480	-893,628	-36.9%

16-24 years old

- The alternative claimant count data estimated 23,318 youth claimants in the WMCA (3 LEP) area in May 2022, a decrease of 38.6% (-14,643) when compared to May 2021. Over the same period the UK decreased by 47.8%.

The following table shows the 16–24-year-olds alternative claimant count, May 2017 – May 2022:

	May-17	May-18	May-19	May-20	May-21	May-22	Num. Change Since May 21	% Change Since May 21
WM 7 Met.	**15,328**	**14,997**	**16,274**	**32,712**	**31,640**	**19,982**	**-11,658**	**-36.8%**
Black Country LEP	6,425	6,186	6,420	12,951	12,161	7,265	-4,896	-40.3%
Coventry & Warwickshire LEP	1,996	2,039	2,262	6,188	5,621	3,242	-2,379	-42.3%
Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP	9,254	9,249	10,336	21,244	20,179	12,811	-7,368	-36.5%
WMCA (3 LEP)	**17,675**	**17,474**	**19,018**	**40,383**	**37,961**	**23,318**	**-14,643**	**-38.6%**
UK	198,505	191,639	203,144	493,745	437,371	228,326	-209,045	-47.8%

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

Lightcast[11] Job Postings WMCA 3 LEP Geography June 2022[12]

Note: The data below reports unique job postings, derived from the Lightcast Analyst Tool, and is not comparable to official vacancy data.

- After a strong rebound in job postings in May 2022, job postings across the WMCA 3 LEP area dipped again in June, down by 12,442 to 131,877 or -8.6%.

- There was a mixed picture at the local level with 10 local authority areas reporting an increase, eight recording a decrease and one, Wolverhampton where there was no change.

- Whilst Stratford-upon-Avon (+16%) and North Warwickshire (+8%) recorded the greatest increase, Bromsgrove, Cannock Chase and Wyre Forest all dropped by -6%.

- Unsurprisingly, posting intensity, i.e., the effort towards hiring for particular positions was subdued in all 19 LAs, it remained strongest across the 7 Met. areas.

The following table reports the number of unique job postings across the WMCA (3 LEP) local authorities in June 2022 and the percentage change from the previous month:

	Jun 2022 Unique Postings	% Change (May 2022 - Jun 2022)
Birmingham	56,603	-1%
Bromsgrove	1,353	-6%
Cannock Chase	1,787	-6%
Coventry	13,002	3%
Dudley	5,954	4%
East Staffordshire	4,717	-2%
Lichfield	2,025	3%
North Warwickshire	1,231	8%
Nuneaton and Bedworth	3,284	-4%
Redditch	3,196	-1%
Rugby	2,836	6%
Sandwell	5,448	3%
Solihull	5,862	2%
Stratford-on-Avon	3,117	16%
Tamworth	2,655	4%
Walsall	4,147	1%
Warwick	6,968	-2%
Wolverhampton	6,255	0%
Wyre Forest	1,437	-6%

[11] EMSI/Burning Glass are now known as Lightcast

[12] Source: Lightcast, June 2022 - please note, as of March 2022, Lightcast, previously known as Emsi Burning Glass implemented new data collection and processing procedures within the Analyst Tool. It is estimated that this will result in an approximate 22% reduction in overall job posting counts, which will vary depending on the filters used within the research. Lightcast believe that these new procedures will mean fewer duplicates are collected upfront alongside an enhanced deduplication process.

Over 50s in the Labour Market

Anne Green, WMREDI

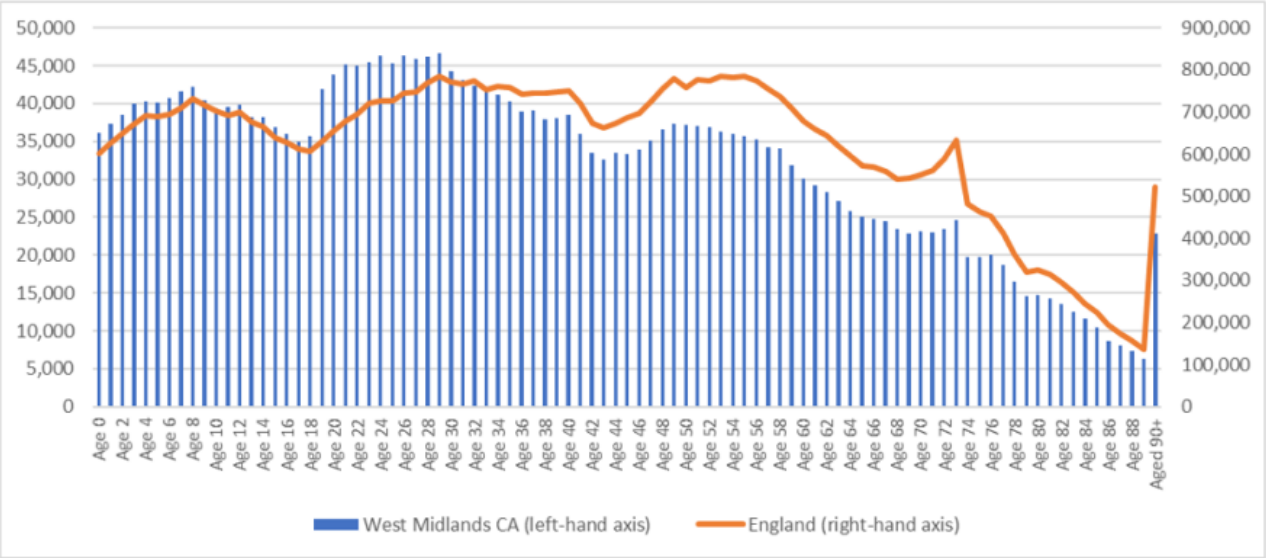
Introduction

With the number of vacancies nationally outstripping the numbers of unemployed people and many employers facing recruitment challenges, some labour market commentators argue that greater policy emphasis needs to be placed on measures to boost labour supply. While higher student numbers and a reduction in in-migration than prior to the Covid-19 pandemic are factors in reducing labour supply, so too is a downturn nationally in the number of over 50s in the workforce. The employment gap between people aged over 50 and the wider working population is widening.

Population ageing

Over the medium term, a general trend of population ageing is continuing. This has contributed to a growth in people aged 50 years and over in employment, albeit this trend is less marked in the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) area than nationally. In the next ten years, all of the large post World War II 'baby boomer' generation will have reached State Pension Age.

The West Midlands 7-Met area's age structure in 2020 is shown in the graph below by the blue bars; the orange line shows the age profile of the population of England (using data from ONS Population Estimates). The age structure of the WMCA area is younger than that for England. However, the relative sizes of different age cohorts in the WMCA area follow the national pattern, with a large cohort aged in their 50s, followed by a smaller cohort aged in their early and mid-40s. Hence, national analyses of over 50s in the labour market will have resonance for the West Midlands.



The age profile of the population by single year of age, WMCA 7 Met area and England, 2020

Labour market participation

From the 1970s until the mid-1990s there was a decrease in employment rates for the over 50s, driven by the early exit from the labour market of older men from declining industries. From the mid-1990s until the Covid-19 crisis there was a trend towards increasing labour market participation of the over 50s, particularly amongst women and people in their 60s. A key factor underlying this increase has been the rise in the state pension age (SPA) for women from the age of 60 to 65 years over the period from April 2010 to November 2018. The long-term trend towards more years of healthy life in retirement is now stalling and there are marked inequalities in the economic and health experience of the over 50s. The over 50s are a heterogeneous group, with some much more able to support themselves in retirement than others.

Nationally, the Covid-19 pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on older (as well as younger) workers, with a particularly marked reduction in the employment rates of older women, but this is less evident in the West Midlands than nationally. Formerly their employment rates had been increasing, alongside the rise in the State Pension Age for women amongst the younger members of the 'baby boomer' cohort.

Labour market status and employment characteristics of older workers

The employment characteristics of workers over 50, and more especially those over 60, are rather different from those of younger workers. In particular, older workers are more likely to work part-time and have low weekly (and hourly) pay than all but the youngest workers. They are also more likely to be self-employed, with the increase in self-employment being particularly marked for those in their 60s.

The table below, presenting data from the Annual Population Survey, shows the labour market status of 50-64 year olds in the West Midlands (NUTS 1) region in the year ending June 2021, compared with the UK. 50-64 year olds in the West Midlands region were slightly more likely to be economically active (74.8%) than in the UK (73.6%), were more likely to be employees and less likely to be self-employed. Of those in employment, 74.0% in the West Midlands NUTS 1 region were working full-time compared with 73.3% in the UK. The three right-hand columns compare the labour market status on 50-54 year olds, 55-59 year olds and 60-64 year olds in the West Midlands NUTS 1 region. Economic inactivity increases with age: just over 40% of 60-64 year olds are economically inactive, compared with 24.4% of 55-59 year olds and 13.6% of 50-54 year olds. Part-time employment increases with age, from 16.0% of 50-54 year olds, to 20.7% of 55-59 year olds and 31.0% of 60-64 year olds.

Labour market status of 50-64 years olds in the West Midlands NUTS 1 region, year ending June 2021

	WM 50-64 (n)	*WM 50-64 (%)*	*UK 50-64 (%)*	*WM 50-54 (%)*	*WM 55-59 (%)*	*WM 60-64 (%)*
All persons	1,117,300					
Economically Active	835,500	74.8	***73.6***	86.4	75.6	59.7
Employed	804,600	72.0	***70.7***	83.9	73.2	56.2
Employee	667,100	82.9	***81.9***	85.0	83.2	78.6
Employee: Full-time	497,000	61.8	***61.0***	69.0	62.5	47.6
Employee: Part-time	170,100	21.1	***21.0***	16.0	20.7	31.0
Self Employed	134,900	16.8	***17.7***	14.8	16.6	20.7
Self Employed: Full-time	97,800	12.2	***12.2***	11.5	12.0	13.5
Self Employed: Part-time	37,100	4.6	***5.5***	3.2	4.5	7.2
Other (Government trainee or unpaid family worker)	2,600	0.3	***0.4***	0.2	!	0.7
Other: Full-time	700	0.1	***0.1***	!	!	!
Other: Part-time	1,900	0.2	***0.2***	!	!	0.7
Total Full-time	595,600	74.0	***73.3***	80.7	74.6	61.1
Total Part-time	209,100	26.0	***26.7***	19.3	25.4	38.9
Unemployed	30,900	3.7	***3.9***	2.9	3.2	5.9
Economically inactive	281,800	25.2	***26.4***	13.6	24.4	40.3

The sectors with the oldest average workforces at the national level are primary industries, real estate and transport and storage. However, the largest absolute numbers of workers aged 50 years and over are in education, health & social work, manufacturing and wholesale & retail; together these sectors account for nearly half of older workers.

Barriers to accessing learning and employment

The over 50s face a range of barriers in accessing learning and employment.

Qualifications, skills and training: Employers are less likely to train older than younger workers. A lack of up-to-date skills and qualifications hampers some (but by no means all) older job seekers. Some over 50s feel overqualified for jobs on offer. Yet (re)training can be helpful in transitioning to new jobs, especially for those made redundant – where early intervention is helpful. Modular training and sector-specific training may be particularly valuable.

Difficulties in finding quality employment after job loss: Older workers are more likely to face redundancy than younger workers, with analyses revealing that the redundancy rate was higher for over 50s than younger workers in 49 out of 57 quarters (i.e. 86% of the time) since 2007. Moreover, older workers take longer to return to

employment after becoming unemployed than younger people. The over 50s are also more likely to lack experience of recent job moves and job search. Those with lower levels of education and women are less likely to find employment after unemployment. On average, the over 50s who find employment after job loss earn substantially less than they did in their previous job, including when compared to those who are younger.

Age discrimination: Legally employers cannot ask for a date of birth on a job application unless there are specific age requirements for the job in question. A substantial proportion of the over 50s perceive age discrimination as a factor in their difficulties in finding employment. International evidence suggests that a combination of factors, including ageism in the workplace, seniority pay out of line with older workers productivity and relatively low digital skills contribute to an unwillingness amongst employers to hire older workers.

Poor health: Evidence on transitions of older workers out of employment shows that those reporting a long-standing and work-limiting health problem are almost 5 percentage points less likely to still be in work a year later compared with those not reporting such a health problem. The likelihood of poor health affecting the over 50s' continuation in work varies by the type of work that they do. Evidence indicates that only around one in 20 of those aged 60-65 in professional occupations have been forced out of the labour market because of poor health, compared with one in three of those in elementary occupations or process, plant and machinery operatives who have left work and become economically inactive because of poor health.

The role of part-time and flexible working: Flexible working can help older people stay in employment for longer; it may help fit around caring responsibilities and health problems, which are major reasons for early retirement. Relatedly, some commentators suggest that social prescribing of workplace health support, or more general advice and support, is one way of enabling people to stay in the workplace.

What works in helping the over 50s into employment

Generic programmes tend to be less effective at supporting older people. Rather, personalised support and an asset-based approach, taking account of the value of over 50s' existing skills, instilling positive attitudes and expectations, and considering issues of pay, fulfilment through work and flexibility to fit with non-work responsibilities and interests, and health challenges, is likely to be more fruitful.

Further reading: For more details on ***Over 50s in the Labour Market***, with a particular focus on the West Midlands, see The West Midlands Local Skills Report Supporting Evidence.

A Partnership Approach: The Role of Employment Support and Skills in Levelling Up

Anne Green and Abigail Taylor, WMREDI

In this blog, from REDI-Updates, Professor Anne Green and Dr Abigail Taylor discuss the key challenges that need to be overcome to improve employment support and skills in the UK.

Large disparities exist between and within local areas in terms of the proportion of residents with and without formal qualifications. Research by the Centre for Progressive Policy indicates that levelling up basic skills could raise employment by up to 302,000 in the most deprived areas and 573,000 across England. Progress is not just required in relation to basic skills levels. The Chartered Management Institute has emphasised how a lack of leadership and management skills is limiting UK productivity. In addition, WMREDI research has found that gaps exist in terms of how well existing national surveys capture new approaches to training, suggesting a need to expand focus on who is responsible for workplace training, communities of practice and perceived benefits of training.

A partnership approach to levelling up

Although higher levels of educational attainment translate into better employment outcomes, improving the supply of skills is only part of the story in levelling up. This is because skills are a derived demand; so, necessitating a focus on the demand for and utilisation of skills in addition to skills supply.

In turn, at the sub-national level, this calls for a holistic focus on employment support and skills strategies, characterised by integration across policy domains, most notably skills and economic development (where skills policy needs to be linked to economic development in order to address weak demand), but also cognate fields such as transport, health and housing. This means a partnership approach at the local/ city-regional/ regional level, founded on ongoing formal and informal communication, is necessary in order to apply local knowledge to tailor strategies to local needs and opportunities.

Local and international evidence (Green A., et al (2017), Froy F., et al (2012), Lyons H., et al (2020) and Taylor A., et al (2021)) points to the importance of a mutually reinforcing set of factors in effective local strategies. Central is a framework set by strong local economic governance and consistent policies and investment over the medium- and long-term. This framework provides a structure for stakeholders and players in the employment support and skills ecosystem. As well as local/city-regional government authorities and associated economic development partnerships/ agencies, key stakeholders include education and training providers, employers and employer representative bodies (given the centrality of labour demand considerations), sectoral bodies, trade unions and anchor institutions (from the public and the private sector). Partnership working implies collaboration between the further education sector, higher education institutions and private sector training providers to design and develop flexible and responsive training provision to meet current and future needs.

The experience in England is of a fragmented system which is difficult to navigate. Policy and financial frameworks tend to incentivise competition between skills partners rather than strategic collaboration at the place level. Frequent national reforms and centralised control over policy-making and budgets put obstacles in the way of local efforts to streamline skills provision and integrate it with other services.

Insights from local initiatives

Yet, there are ways forward. Recent years have seen several innovative initiatives which could be scaled up and developed to achieve levelling up. In terms of employment support policy, in 2017 the Departments for Work and Pensions in conjunction with the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government announced £35 million of support for six pilot schemes. The focus of the programmes vary, but a key aspect was how whilst nationally funded, the pilots were developed and delivered by combined authorities in partnership with the government. They included:

- A 'Health and Care Sector Progression Academy' training social care workers in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.
- Household-focused holistic support in Liverpool City Region.

- Neighbourhood-focused support in the West Midlands Combined Authority is designed to strengthen communities by increasing income from work and improving health and wellbeing.

Evaluations of many of the pilots are still ongoing and not publicly available. However, evidence from Liverpool City Region indicates the value of investing in "locally tailored solutions" to support economic recovery and levelling up. Powers devolved through the programme meant that it could respond quickly and agilely to local needs during the Covid-19 pandemic. The pilots have either concluded or are due to conclude in 2022. Focus is now required on how to use learning from the pilots – particularly the benefits of local, regional, and national stakeholder partnership working – to inform future employment support policy.

In terms of skills strategies, WMREDI research into priorities for up-skilling and re-skilling emphasises the role that universities can play in supplying graduates and up-skilling the wider population to respond to emerging and future local and regional skills needs. Universities in the region have established a range of programmes and institutes to support upskilling and re-skilling across specific sectors important regionally, namely Advanced Manufacturing, Cyber, Healthcare, Sustainability and Climate Change, and Digital Skills. Partnering to expand graduate-focused careers guidance is a growing focus for universities in Birmingham. The research suggests that to achieve levelling up, in addition to partnerships funded and instigated by the national government, it is important that local and regional players including universities come together to identify and address local skills needs. Developing stronger local and regional partnerships is particularly important to respond to opportunities to support graduates to enter the labour market, better linking skills to innovation and developing higher-level skills through regional investment, R&D and innovation activities. There is potential to create more responsive local skills systems through developing a skills escalator approach at the regional level maximising collaboration between communities, Further Education and Higher Education.

View REDI-Updates

Megatrends in the West Midlands: Urban Responses to Pandemics and Economic Shocks

Liam O'Farrell, University of Sheffield and City REDI

In this piece, Liam O'Farrell draws from a range of case studies to explore how cities have responded to and been shaped by pandemics and economic shocks.

It is part of larger project looking at Megatrends in the West Midlands. Megatrends are major movements or patterns or trends that are having a transformative impact on business, economy, society, cultures and personal lives. The project examines some of these megatrends in a series of provocations, podcasts and a report.

How do pandemics affect society?

This piece opens by considering the impacts of diseases, starting with the Black Death of the fourteenth century, which is credited with breaking down feudalism (Castor, 2001). It considers the erosion of trust as a long-term impact of the 1918-20 Spanish flu pandemic (Aassve et al., 2020). It then introduces the AIDS pandemic in the early 1980s that has disproportionately affected marginalised communities and developing countries (Bonuck, 1993; Stover and Bollinger, 1999; Barnett et al., 2001). These case studies put Covid-19 in context and show the typical effects of pandemics. For brevity's sake, other pandemics such as SARS, avian flu, swine flu, and smallpox are not considered here, but they also demonstrate the importance of preparedness, international collaboration, and evidence-led responses.

The impacts of the economic crisis and sudden spikes in inequality are presented with reference to post-2008 Athens, drawing parallels with interwar Berlin and Vienna. Rapid growth in inequality, combined with low trust in institutions, can lead to political instability and existential threats to democracy. The article then presents Aberdeen, a city that has been hit hard by the collapse in demand for oil since 2014. This example demonstrates the importance of diversifying local economies, developing long-term strategies, and investing in social and physical infrastructure for greater resilience. The piece closes by reflecting on lessons for the future.

Past pandemics

The Black Death

The Black Death was one of the defining events of medieval Europe. Causing between 75-200 million deaths, it rocked the continent and this 'population shock' left a new world in its wake (Jedwab et al. 2020). There were long-term impacts on urban development and population growth, structural changes in national economies owing to major labour shortages, and the growth of hostility towards 'outsiders', particularly Jews (Cantor, 2001). Covid-19 is not on the same scale as the Black Death, and medical science has progressed far since then. However, this experience alerts us to the possibility that the fear unleashed by pandemics can trigger underlying authoritarian predispositions among segments of the population, leading to the scapegoating of minorities (Haidt, 2012). We see the potential for this already with tropes about "bat soup" and anti-Chinese racism in the context of Covid-19 (Fernando and Mumphrey, 2020; Taylor, 2020).

The Spanish Flu of 1918-20

The pandemic that has been most referenced in relation to Covid-19 is the Spanish Flu of 1918-20, which originated in Kansas (Ott et al., 2007). As of now, mandatory closures of schools, bars, and restaurants were introduced, with libertarian protestors decrying public health orders to wear face masks as "big government" overreach (Hauser, 2020). This pandemic claimed the lives of 50-100 million people. Research shows that areas that took swift action to enforce social distancing and other non-clinical interventions saw lower overall excess mortality (Ott et al., 2007; Lilley et al., 2020). Premature relaxation of measures also led to second waves which far outstripped the first in their intensity (Wheelock, 2020). Crucially, the social disruption of the pandemic undermined trust and constrained future economic growth, with damaging implications for society in the following decades (Aassve et al., 2020). This calls for greater emphasis on measures to rebuild trust in institutions after the Covid-19 pandemic, especially given that trust has already been much eroded in Britain over the past decade (More in Common, 2020).

AIDS

There is another ongoing pandemic that has claimed the lives of 33 million people since the early 1980s (UNAIDS, 2020). AIDS disproportionately affects marginalised populations – gay men, trans people, drug addicts, sex workers, and black people in Western countries, and up to one-quarter of the entire population in sub-Saharan African countries such as Eswatini, Lesotho, and Botswana. The efforts to research a vaccine for Covid-19 are a reminder that humanity can achieve remarkable results quickly and gives hope that such efforts can be applied to other diseases. AIDS demonstrates how pandemics disproportionately affect vulnerable groups and operate on a global scale. In parts of some African countries, the impact of AIDS is so severe that it undermines the potential for local economic development (Stover and Bollinger, 1999; Olakunde et al., 2020). As such, responses to pandemics ought to be global in nature, for ethical reasons, to help end aid dependency, and to ensure that Covid-19 is eradicated before it can mutate and increase in lethality.

Protracted Crisis

At the time of writing in February 2021, the UK has recorded one of the world's highest death rates from Covid-19 (Johns Hopkins, 2021) and experienced the deepest economic contraction of any Western nation (Walker, 2020). While there are optimistic hopes for a return to growth in 2021, these are contingent on the successful rollout of vaccines and ending the lockdown. There is potential for further contraction ahead, especially with the effects of Brexit beginning to be felt. In January 2021, British exports to the EU fell by 68%, with exporters naming increased bureaucracy as a major barrier to trade (Reuters, 2021). Given that the EU accounts for 43% of the value of UK exports (Ward, 2020), there will be significant negative pressure on GDP if trade disruption continues, with the potential for a more long-term recession.

Economic Crisis

The Greek Economic Crisis of 2009-18

Prolonged economic contraction often leads to growth in poverty, distrust in institutions, and increases in frustration. This was demonstrated in the Greek economic crisis of 2009-2018, which was triggered by the Global Financial Crisis that dramatically increased the country's budget deficit and public debt. Owing to rules governing membership of the Eurozone, Greece was unable to take the classic response of devaluing its currency. A series of harsh austerity policies implemented by the "troika" of the European Commission, ECB, and IMF further weakened the country's economy and precipitated the growth of both SYRIZA, the Coalition of the Radical Left, and the far-right Golden Dawn party, which was recently outlawed for murdering an anti-fascist campaigner. Athens itself is degraded by the crisis, and there has been a rise in the number of buildings occupied by radical groups in the city (Arampatzi and Nicholls, 2012; Dalakoglou, 2012; Raimondi, 2019). For those who believe the UK is immune to such possibilities, the rise of left-wing populism in the form of Corbynism, support for the right-wing populism of UKIP and its reincarnations, and the murder of Jo Cox MP by a fanatical Brexiter serve as a cautionary warning.

Sudden economic shock

Cities without a diversified economic base are vulnerable to sudden economic shocks. Birmingham has already been through such a shock from the late 1970s as its industrial base collapsed, particularly in automobile production. Between 1981 and 2013, the city lost 300,000 manufacturing jobs (Swinney and Thomas, 2015). Over this period, the West Midlands fell from being one of the UK's wealthiest regions to its second-poorest (O'Farrell, 2020).

Aberdeen and North Sea Oil Boom

Aberdeen is a city whose fortunes have been founded on the North Sea oil boom since the 1970s. The collapse in oil demand since 2014 hit the city hard, with prices falling by more than 70 per cent in a short space of time (Thøgersen, 2016). While Stavanger, the other oil capital of the North Sea, had the world's largest sovereign wealth fund to fall back on (Price, 2013), the British government has not saved its oil windfall, using it instead to fund tax cuts (Hawksworth, 2008). The experience of Aberdeen points to the importance of diversifying local economies and taking a more long-term approach toward economic policy.

The collapse in demand for oil significantly depressed Aberdeen's property market (Smith, 2019). A quarter of all jobs in the area are linked to oil and gas; a 35% contraction in the number of jobs supported by the industry between 2014-18 thus undermined Aberdeen's economic stability (Aberdeen City Council, 2018). The city responded by seeking to diversify its economic base towards life sciences, digital, energy, and food and drink, along with

investment in infrastructure and redevelopment of the city centre (Cockburn et al., 2013; Aberdeen City Council, 2015). While the pace of change has been slow, these interventions had begun to bear some fruit before the onset of Covid-19. After a contraction of 11.8% of GDP between 2014 and 2016, economic decline stabilised with a fall of 0.9% in 2017 (Aberdeen City Council, 2019). This is a long-term challenge to wean Aberdeen off its dependence on oil, especially given the negative environmental impacts of fossil fuels. The lack of establishment of a sovereign wealth fund, contrary to the case of Norway, is indicative of the failures of strategic planning.

Aberdeen did not have a coordinated industrial strategy for the development of its oil industry and has far less collaboration between institutions across the city than Stavanger. Interestingly, a comparative study of the innovation systems in the two found similar levels of international economic competitiveness. Based on this, researchers suggest that differences in local innovation systems may be associated with similar long-term outcomes (Hatakenaka et al., 2011). This conclusion challenges contemporary policy narratives in favour of local industrial strategies and university-industry collaborations. However, much other research finds that strategies are effective in enhancing economic output, particularly in "left behind" regions, through applying local knowledge and adapting to specific strengths and weaknesses on the ground (Berry, 2018). This suggests that government-led industrial strategies are one potential solution, but that in other cases the private sector can also be effective at developing a local specialisation cluster without government intervention.

Key policy messages

1. Maintaining a safety net for the most vulnerable communities can avoid contributing to social polarisation in the aftermath of Covid-19.
2. The Covid-19 pandemic can be harnessed to reset the economy, counter inequality, and mitigate environmental unsustainability. Community wealth building is one alternative approach that could be considered.
3. History shows that pandemics erode trust in institutions and leaders. Given the already low levels of trust in British society, this could lead to even greater political volatility. Measures to rebuild civic trust are urgently needed.
4. The pandemic strengthens the case for further devolution, given the need to apply knowledge from "on the ground" to diversify local economies and develop citizen-centred services.
5. The pandemic has accelerated trends towards home working and e-commerce. City centre development needs to be more flexible, with accessible green spaces and public squares, and consideration of minimum space standards for housing.

You can view the full provocation on which it was based, a podcast and a report on the topic "Megatrends in the West Midlands" on our website. Visit Megatrends in the West Midlands.

Levelling Up Inter-Regional and Inter-Urban Inequality in the UK and the Geography of Discontent: A Historical and International Perspective

Raquel Ortega-Argiles, WMREDI

Welcome to REDI-Updates. REDI-Updates aims to get behind the data and translate it into understandable terms. In this edition, WMREDI staff look at the government's flagship policy - Levelling Up. We look at the challenge of implementing, understanding and measuring Levelling Up.

Professor Raquel Ortega-Argiles discusses regional imbalances in the UK, the impact of Brexit and Covid and the need to act upon regional inequalities.

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The City-REDI contribution to the ESRC Rebuilding Macroeconomics Network initiative on The Long-Run Consequences of Adverse Economic Shocks: UK Regional and Urban Inequalities were featured in the White Paper sub-section 'The Role of Public Policy' (pp. 99) and the sub-section considering "the appropriate role of public policy in reshaping the economic geography and reversing spatial disparities across the UK" makes use of our data in Figure 1.70.

Other City-REDI work provides further nuances to the White Paper's arguments as to why a long time frame and also international comparators are so important. If policies are ill-conceived and poorly applied, the boost to potential output in left-behind places could prove to be temporary rather than permanent. This is precisely why it is so important to analyse inter-regional inequalities and how they relate to growth prospects from a historical perspective and to look at best practices from international cases that successfully have been able to use policy initiatives to improve socio-economic cohesion.

Historical inter-regional inequality disparities – a European comparison

In a historical and international comparative context, our research explores the nature and scale of inter-regional and inter-urban inequalities in the UK and identifies which inequalities are linked with national levels of economic performance. We consider the UK-specific experience of the relationship between interregional inequality and economic growth in the light of international comparisons using over a century of evidence, and in more detail over the last two decades. We demonstrate that the UK-specific relationships between (extremely high) inter-regional inequalities and national economic growth are an outlier by international standards.

The Levelling Up White Paper (Figure 1.24) shows that UK inter-regional inequalities have widened and narrowed and then narrowed again over the last century. To situate the scale of these differences in the context of the experience of other industrialised countries, Figure 1 applies a spatial Theil Index to data on economic development (Roses, J.R. and Wolf, N. (eds) (2019), The Economic Development of Europe's Regions: A Quantitative History Since 1900, Abingdon: Routledge.) to plot the long-run evolution of interregional inequality in GDP per capita across a range of western European countries over more than a century. Cross-country productivity differentials between European countries were very large in the earlier years of the twentieth century. Inter-regional disparities greatly narrowed in most countries, including the UK, following international and inter-regional convergence processes during the second half of the twentieth century. After 1990, the UK displays an opposite trajectory from the other European countries, showing a profound increase in inter-regional productivity variations.

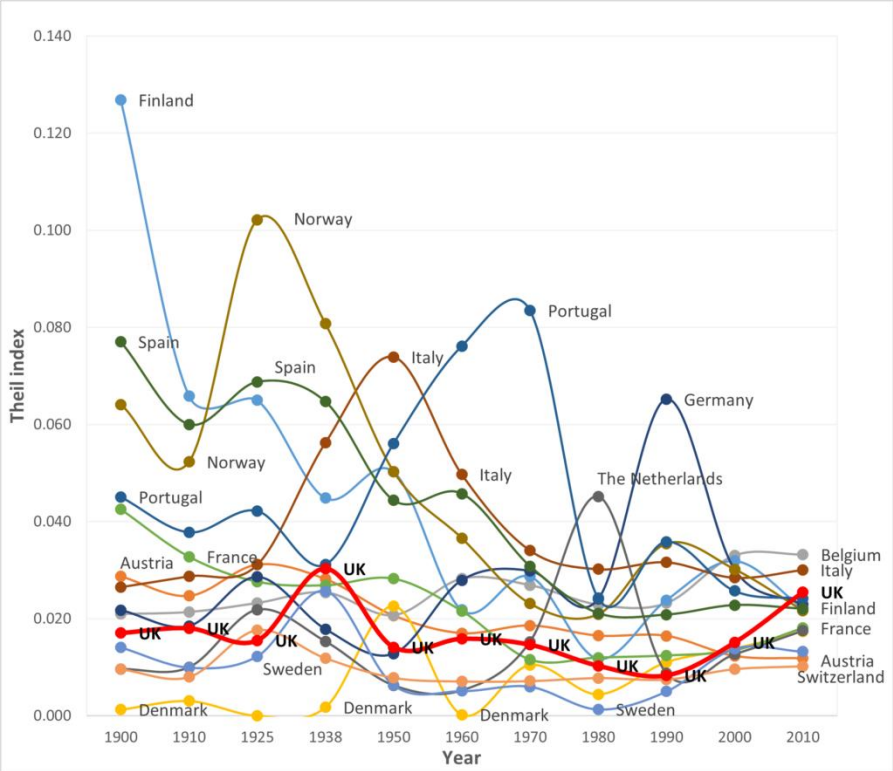

Figure 1. The long-run evolution of interregional inequality, 1900-2010

The relationship between inter-regional inequality and economic growth

As the Levelling Up White Paper indicates, it is possible that policies that support left-behind places could boost not only the level of activity but also the underlying growth rate. This would significantly boost the net present value of local growth policy. The document emphasises that there is little evidence that regional policies come at the expense of reduced aggregate economic growth. If anything, as our research demonstrates, the evidence suggests large spatial disparities hamper economic growth.

Our OECD-wide analysis of the relationships between economic growth and interregional inequality shows that such relationships are fragile. The only clear evidence of a positive relationship is in the post-2008 crisis period, a result that points to differentials in regional resilience rather than inequality-led growth. Moreover, when former transition economies are removed from the sample (see Figure 2), the positive relationship between inter-regional inequality and national annual economic growth disappears. Hence, the international evidence suggests that the UK's very high spatial inequalities have hampered, rather than facilitated, national economic growth.

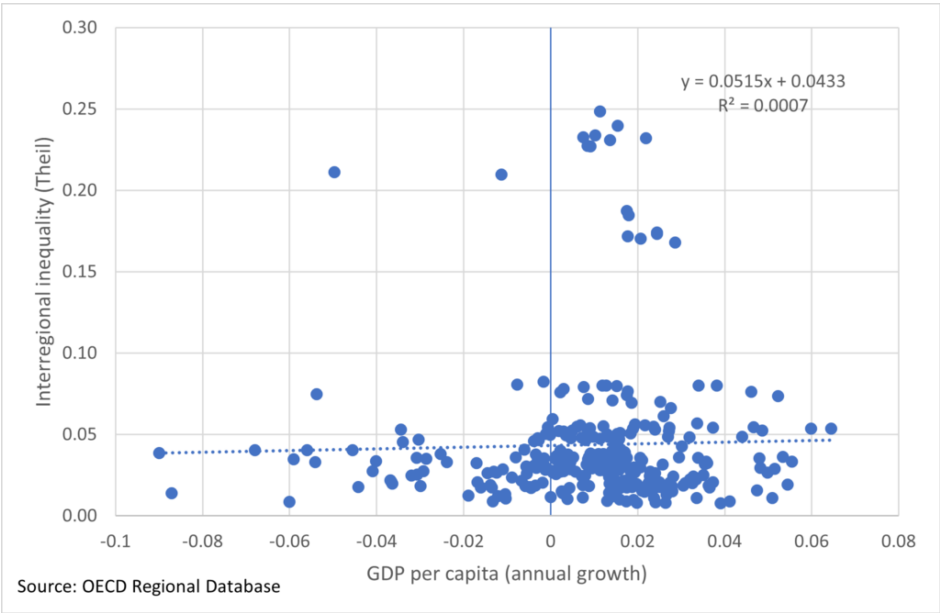

Figure 2. GDP per capita annual growth and interregional inequality, OECD TL3 regions (excluding former transition economies) 2000-2017

As the Levelling Up White Paper indicates, high UK spatial disparities are likely to have hampered growth and well-being not just in left-behind places but across the UK as a whole. The dividend from unlocking this potential is likely to be large, both in financial (such as productivity) and non-financial (well-being, health, skills) terms. It is also likely to be lasting. Closing geographic imbalances thereby potentially deliver a twin-win, boosting living standards and life satisfaction, durably and significantly, in both left-behind and steaming-ahead places (see page 99).

Reflections

These economic arguments underpin wider socio-economic and political economy arguments for Levelling Up. The UK economy has become so highly unbalanced that the UK is now one of the world's most inter-regionally unequal countries (McCann 2016). Over the last forty years, economic growth has been heavily concentrated in and around London and its hinterland. While this has been partly due to economic mechanisms, it has also been in part the result of numerous national governance and institutional decisions, taken without any real consideration of their long-term spatial consequences. The enormous productivity imbalances we now see across the UK underpin significant inter-regional variations in prosperity, wellbeing and quality of life to the extent that the country is becoming largely decoupled into regions with predominantly prosperous towns and cities co-existing alongside regions of mostly broken towns and cities. These profound differences are becoming ever more difficult for governments to respond to and ameliorate, and this failure puts enormous strains on the efficacy of our governance systems and the trust which people have in them, giving rise to a marked 'geography of discontent.

More recently, the notions of "levelling up" and "rebalancing" are intrinsically related to two recent shocks: Brexit and Covid-19, but this was not always the case, as the inequalities long pre-date these events.

In terms of Brexit, almost all the available evidence suggested that the less prosperous regions are the ones that are going to be more heavily affected by the Brexit trade-related consequences (See this research project and these papers Thissen, M; et al (2020), Billing, C., et al (2020) and Chen, W., et al (2018)). This evidence also shows that Brexit effects will make regional inequalities greater than they already were.

The Covid-19 pandemic already has and will continue to have profound impacts worldwide (McCann, P., et al (2021) and Bailey, B., et al (2020)). The real long-term implications of the pandemic will only begin to become evident in the coming years. Regions specialising in tourism, hospitality, entertainment and transportation services will be especially hard hit, as will many retail centres. The ongoing pandemic shocks to these regions may lead to severe long-term economic scarring and will set some of these regions into downward growth trajectories for the foreseeable future. Although many prosperous and densely populated regions have suffered some of the most severe localised Covid-19 outbreaks, there are also strong arguments to suggest that the general long-term pattern will be that the economically weaker regions are likely to suffer the most from Covid-19 (McCann, P. and Ortega-Argiles, R. (2021)). As we move towards a post-Brexit and post-pandemic context, addressing these inequalities will be even more important.

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Housing and Spatial Justice – Insights From Three European Cities

Liam O'Farrell, University of Sheffield

Liam O'Farrell considers spatial justice and housing, comparing the UK and its European counterparts.

Overcoming common urban social issues

Mitigating the segregation of marginalised groups is highly dependent on local context. Nevertheless, comparing a major British city with peers elsewhere in Europe suggests that devolution of decision-making powers and financial resources, along with a commitment to achieving spatial justice, could help overcome some common urban social issues.

The concept of spatial justice is a way of giving physical form to the sometimes more abstract idea of social justice. In an international collaboration of urban planners, geographers and political scientists from the UK and Switzerland, we sought to explore the democratic foundations of spatial justice. To this end, we analysed housing policies and carried out a series of interviews with stakeholders in three European cities. The project ran as a comparison between these case studies with radically different planning traditions and roughly similar populations in their metropolitan areas: Birmingham, Lyon and Zurich.

A framework for comparison

Our framework drew from Susan Fainstein's (2010) work on the 'just city', which advocates for urban planning that defends and furthers equity while also recognising diversity. We combined this with Edward Soja's (2010) theory of spatial justice, which argues for the equitable distribution of resources across cities. This links to work by the likes of David Harvey (1972) and the idea of territorial justice, which calls for mechanisms to achieve social justice across the entire city. We conceptualised a socially just urban transformation as being predicated upon actively reducing socio-spatial inequalities – that is, policies targeting both people and place. Our project broke with Fainstein on, among other points, the value we see in civic engagement, rather than expecting technical experts to dominate decisions.

Key urban trends

We identified gentrification and ghettoisation as key urban trends across the case studies. Both are also linked as by-products of housing financialisation. Investment in hitherto deprived parts of cities can start a process of gentrification as wealthier residents move in, in turn displacing poorer residents. When viewed on a city-wide scale, this displacement can lead to poorer residents becoming increasingly concentrated in certain parts of a city. There is thus involuntary spatial segregation or ghettoisation. Access to affordable housing of a decent standard, mixed throughout the urban area, is therefore essential to counteracting spatial injustice. The concentration of poorer residents – who are often also members of minorities, have lower educational qualifications and employment rates, and are marginalised in multiple ways – has, among many other effects, negative impacts on the health of democratic culture. It is already well-established that there is a causal relationship between experience of inequality, lower rates of social trust and decreased political and civic participation (Uslaner and Brown, 2005).

Birmingham

Our work in Birmingham added to the literature on the impacts of the intense centralisation and destructive austerity that is the reality for many local authorities in the UK. Interviews with urban planners, council officers and elected representatives found widespread feelings of disempowerment, anxiety, and a sense from multiple participants that the housing market in the city is failing to deliver for the most vulnerable people. There are also issues with low quality housing stock and increasing homelessness which we seriously doubt the 'trickle down' growth model of urban leaders will address. No participant in our interviews was able to meaningfully articulate how Birmingham's vision of 'inclusive growth' would be achieved in practice, suggesting there remain too few mechanisms for achieving this beyond the rhetoric. Nevertheless, we also noted growing interest in co-production and innovation in citizen participation which might be green shoots of optimism for the city's future.

Lyon

By contrast, our work in Lyon found rather different attitudes. Extensive devolution to the city region has provided local leaders with the tools and resources to tackle these issues. Empowered narratives among those we interviewed

were coupled with data showing increasing social housing stock in the city and the introduction of policies to encourage social mixing that is a step away from the policy failure of the banlieue, or large housing estate. However, residents are typically not empowered to participate in making decisions about the future of their city – although, as might be (and indeed was) argued, the public electing representatives to make these decisions is a fundamental characteristic of representative democracy.

Zurich

Finally, the Swiss case study is a model of direct democracy, with citizens used to regularly voting in referenda. As an international financial centre, Zurich faces an unusual pressure in that, alongside a large population of poorer and lower-skilled migrants, there has also been a substantial influx of highly skilled and wealthy migrants. The city relies heavily on housing associations to maintain the availability of affordable accommodation. A further unusual feature is that around one-third of Zurich's population does not have Swiss citizenship and is thus disenfranchised. Those with foreign backgrounds who are not successful in applying for citizenship are not able to participate in decisions about the future of the city.

Conclusions

Despite their different political models, planning traditions and degree of civic engagement, we found some commonalities in the pro-growth attitudes of local leaders. At its core, this has several fundamental problems. Firstly, it is very difficult to see how infinite growth using finite resources can be achieved in practice. Moreover, competition for resources and investment, including the growing popularity of state-led funding competitions, can become a zero-sum game in which some win (often those with greater resources, knowledge and connections) and others lose out. Finally, there are the social and environmental impacts of the current urban growth model which we know to be unsustainable.

Crucially, we believe that when it comes to the idea of the 'just city', it is not gentrification-induced displacement that is the most pressing issue in our cities. Instead, a greater cause for concern is the widespread passivity or tacit acceptance of existing – and indeed growing – levels of social and ethnic segregation. This is damaging to the health of our societies and our democracies. As such, we call for the empowerment of local leaders and planners to tackle this problem, making decisions adapted to local knowledge. To that end, local authorities need to have the resources and powers to take action, including intervening in property markets through construction of new social housing.

Finally, the political geography of cities strengthens the case for regional-level devolution. The formal borders of the municipality of Birmingham do not represent the functional urban area of the city any more than in the case of Lyon or Zurich. Therefore, collaboration between neighbouring local authorities within a guaranteed devolved governance framework, potentially supported by active citizen participation, could strengthen our democratic foundations and help deliver more just cities.

'The Democratic Foundations of the Just City' was funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation and ran as a collaboration between the universities of Zurich and Birmingham.

Sources:

Fainstein, S. (2010) The just city. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
Harvey, D. (1972) 'Social justice and spatial systems' in Peet, R. (ed.) Geographical perspectives on American poverty. Worcester, MA: Antipode, pp. 87-106.
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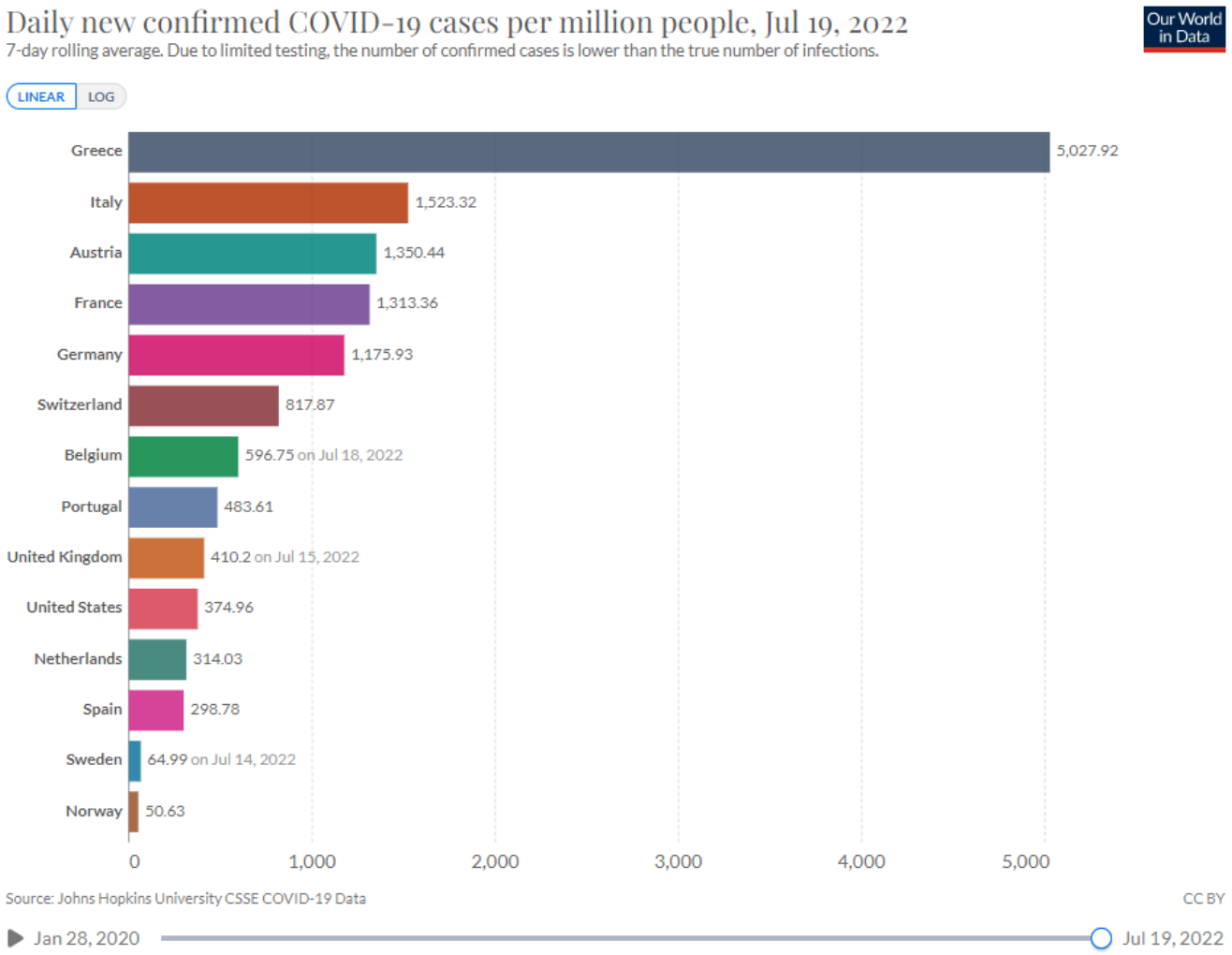
Infection Rates and Vaccine Update

Alice Pugh, WMREDI

Case numbers across Europe cases have continued rise across the majority of countries since the previous monitor. The risen for these increases is likely as a result of the majority of economies reopening and big events fully returning. Additionally, travel restrictions between countries have mostly been removed and people are starting to travel abroad again, to countries with higher rates of infection.

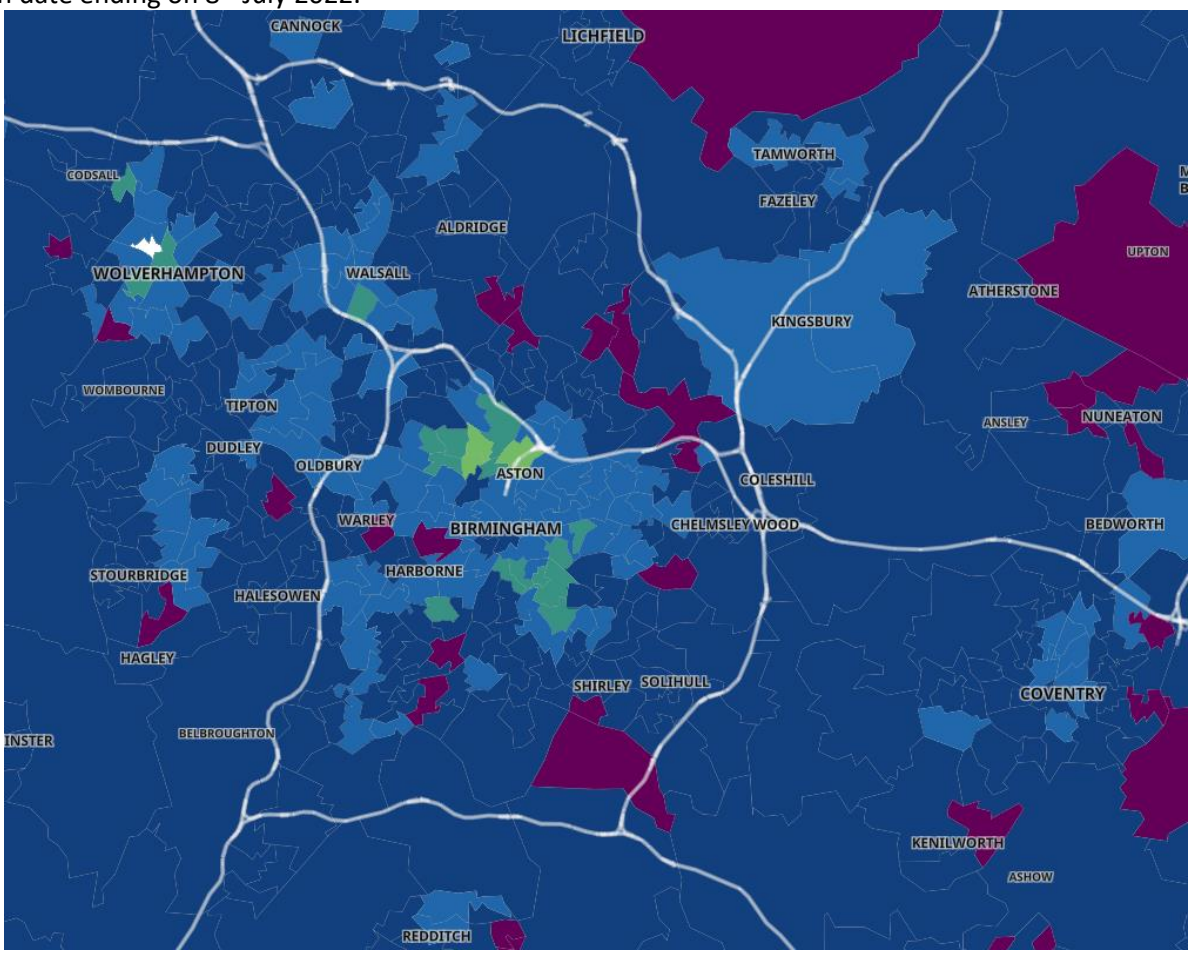
Since 31 December 2019 and as of the 19th July 2022, there have been **561,156,416 confirmed cases** of COVID-19, including **6,365,510 deaths**, reported to WHO. As of 19 July 2022, a total of **12,166,921,655 vaccine doses** have been administered.



Latest ONS infection survey data (15th July 2022 next release to be 22nd July 2022) states:

- The percentage of people testing positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) continued to increase across the UK.
- In England, the estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 was 2,873,600 (95% credible interval: 2,754,900 to 2,991,100), equating to 5.27% of the population, or around 1 in 19 people.
- In Wales, the estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 was 183,500 (95% credible interval: 155,800 to 215,300), equating to 6.04% of the population, or around 1 in 17 people.
- In Northern Ireland, the estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 was 107,600 (95% credible interval: 86,900 to 129,700), equating to 5.86% of the population, or around 1 in 17 people.
- In Scotland, the estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 was 334,000 (95% credible interval: 287,400 to 382,300), equating to 6.34% of the population, or around 1 in 16 people.

The map below displays weekly data, which are updated every day here. Seven–day rolling rate of new cases by specimen date ending on 8th July 2022.



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	05-Jul-22	06-Jul-22	07-Jul-22	08-Jul-22	09-Jul-22	10-Jul-22	11-Jul-22	12-Jul-22	13-Jul-22	14-Jul-22	15-Jul-22	16-Jul-22	17-Jul-22
ENGLAND	**1,926**	**1,945**	**1,967**	**1,696**	**1,601**	**1,889**	**2,005**	**1,945**	**1,946**	**1,839**	**1,487**	**1,373**	**1,694**
East of England	183	194	198	161	192	184	194	240	190	165	155	137	178
London	248	279	330	224	211	270	263	271	266	278	215	179	229
Midlands	384	390	421	365	314	375	428	366	372	400	312	287	333
North East and Yorkshire	318	288	303	252	220	307	283	341	304	303	255	238	262
North West	319	308	265	294	236	283	265	293	334	290	227	196	279
South East	301	296	270	254	274	280	364	270	298	233	184	206	232
South West	173	190	180	146	154	190	208	164	182	170	139	130	181

Mechanical Ventilation beds - occupied by confirmed COVID-19 patients

Name	05-Jul-22	06-Jul-22	07-Jul-22	08-Jul-22	09-Jul-22	10-Jul-22	11-Jul-22	12-Jul-22	13-Jul-22	14-Jul-22	15-Jul-22	16-Jul-22	17-Jul-22	18-Jul-22	19-Jul-22
ENGLAND	**229**	**217**	**232**	**228**	**229**	**250**	**264**	**264**	**274**	**282**	**287**	**305**	**292**	**307**	**318**
East of England	26	27	31	23	24	34	32	36	24	25	24	27	27	23	24
London	74	65	76	78	85	81	85	85	90	93	97	103	101	103	113
Midlands	25	21	28	28	27	34	42	36	40	39	36	44	43	46	43
North East and Yorkshire	31	33	27	23	29	27	25	30	33	35	34	44	37	35	36
North West	30	28	28	21	19	21	25	25	32	36	36	31	32	36	37
South East	32	32	33	41	36	39	41	39	42	41	41	42	40	48	47
South West	11	11	9	14	9	14	14	13	13	13	19	14	12	16	18

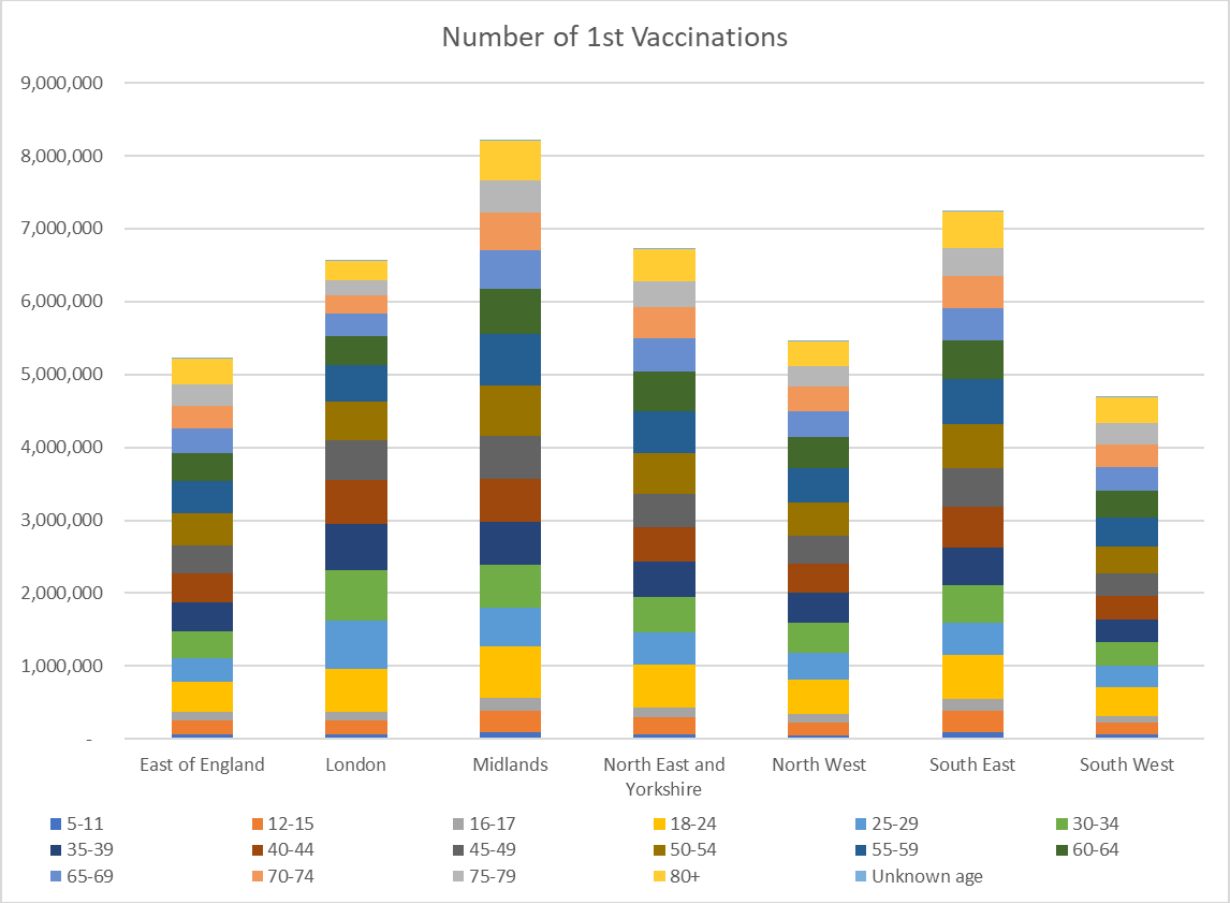
The WM Weekly monitor is funded by the West Midlands Combined Authority, Research England/UKRI

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

Name	05-Jul-22	06-Jul-22	07-Jul-22	08-Jul-22	09-Jul-22	10-Jul-22	11-Jul-22	12-Jul-22	13-Jul-22	14-Jul-22	15-Jul-22	16-Jul-22	17-Jul-22	18-Jul-22	19-Jul-22
ENGLAND	**11,049**	**11,465**	**11,878**	**12,283**	**12,440**	**12,879**	**13,336**	**13,621**	**13,741**	**13,807**	**13,975**	**13,701**	**13,840**	**14,044**	**13,837**
East of England	1,066	1,142	1,199	1,235	1,218	1,343	1,340	1,354	1,387	1,419	1,432	1,407	1,421	1,416	1,375
London	1,897	1,907	1,947	1,990	2,066	2,085	2,180	2,237	2,225	2,257	2,295	2,282	2,281	2,330	2,339
Midlands	2,104	2,239	2,309	2,428	2,486	2,600	2,692	2,741	2,815	2,827	2,827	2,802	2,842	2,857	2,816
North East and Yorkshire	1,657	1,706	1,753	1,807	1,864	1,868	1,965	2,026	2,047	2,048	2,060	2,066	2,146	2,191	2,177
North West	1,730	1,795	1,834	1,922	1,855	1,961	2,039	2,098	2,097	2,089	2,265	2,070	2,098	2,133	2,142
South East	1,639	1,652	1,744	1,794	1,836	1,891	1,939	1,936	1,955	1,974	1,931	1,940	1,940	1,985	1,905
South West	956	1,024	1,092	1,107	1,115	1,131	1,181	1,229	1,215	1,193	1,165	1,134	1,112	1,132	1,083

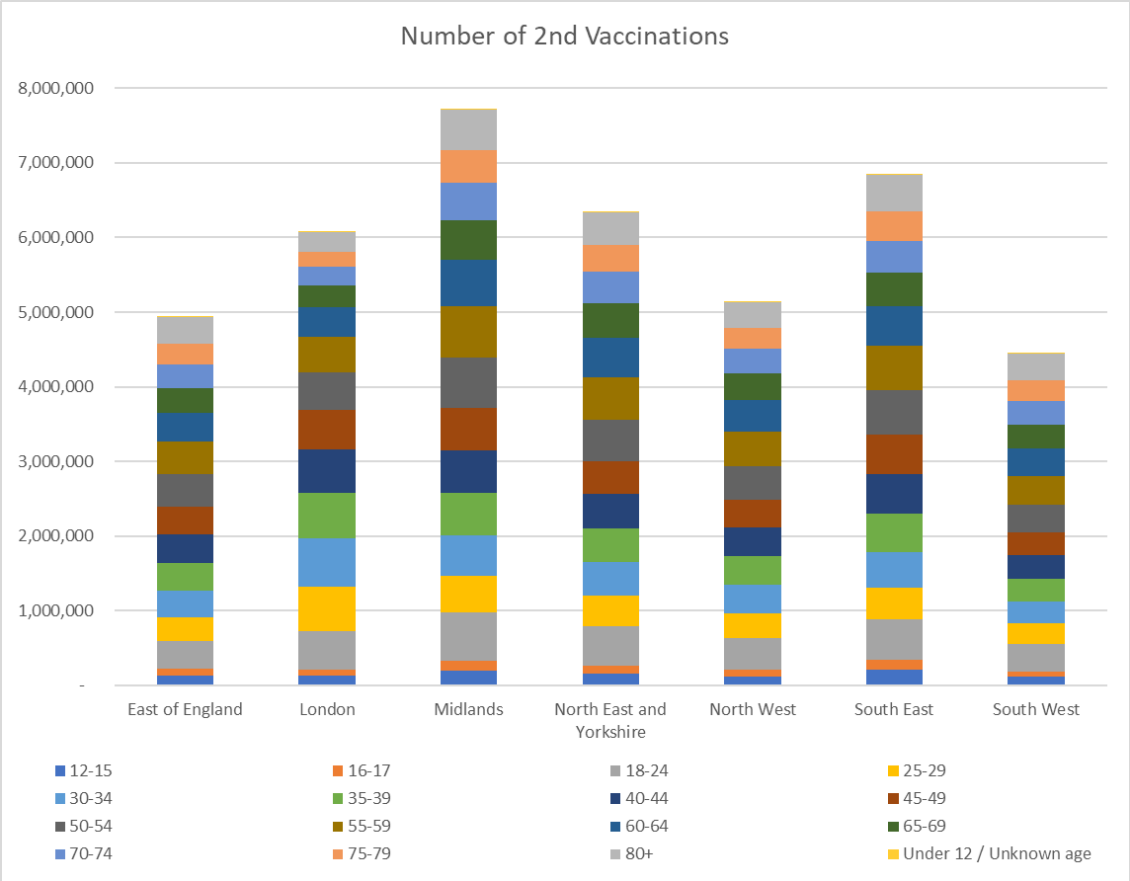
Vaccine Update

Between the 8th December 2020 and the 30th June 2022 the Midlands has successfully vaccinated **8,191,692** people with the first dose and **7,703,507** of these individuals have received the second dose as well. A further **6,041,525** 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)															
	5-11	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+
Total	9.9%	58.2%	73.3%	81.6%	82.6%	89.2%	91.1%	96.5%	89.0%	94.8%	98.8%	100%*	99.3%	92.6%	100%*	98.8%
East of England	10.7%	61.3%	77.4%	85.8%	85.6%	89.5%	90.6%	96.1%	89.8%	94.8%	99.2%	100%*	98.5%	91.1%	100%*	98.8%
London	7.5%	45.8%	59.1%	80.3%	86.3%	84.1%	82.7%	89.4%	90.9%	92.5%	96.5%	99.1%	96.3%	90.5%	100%*	89.1%
Midlands	9.8%	57.8%	72.6%	75.6%	73.7%	85.0%	90.0%	95.9%	86.7%	94.8%	98.1%	100%*	98.2%	93.5%	100%*	100%*
North East and Yorkshire	8.9%	57.8%	72.6%	77.0%	76.4%	86.7%	91.2%	97.0%	85.7%	94.2%	97.5%	100%*	99.9%	93.5%	100%*	98.6%
North West	7.7%	54.6%	71.1%	77.6%	76.3%	85.3%	91.0%	97.4%	87.0%	94.3%	97.9%	100%*	99.9%	92.8%	100%*	99.2%
South East	12.6%	66.3%	80.8%	83.9%	85.7%	95.4%	94.8%	97.7%	90.0%	94.7%	99.2%	100%*	99.8%	90.9%	100%*	99.1%
South West	12.6%	65.4%	80.6%	86.5%	87.7%	94.5%	95.8%	99.4%	88.5%	94.2%	99.5%	100%*	98.2%	92.3%	100%*	100%*

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



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+
Total	39.0%	56.4%	73.4%	76.6%	83.8%	86.8%	92.9%	86.6%	92.9%	97.2%	100%*	98.1%	91.8%	100%*	98.2%
East of England	41.9%	60.8%	78.8%	80.3%	84.9%	86.9%	93.2%	87.8%	93.3%	97.9%	100%*	97.7%	90.5%	100%*	98.4%
London	29.3%	43.5%	69.6%	79.7%	78.8%	78.3%	85.5%	87.5%	89.4%	93.6%	96.4%	93.8%	88.6%	100%*	87.8%
Midlands	38.4%	55.1%	68.3%	68.3%	79.8%	85.8%	92.4%	84.5%	93.0%	96.7%	100%*	97.3%	92.9%	100%*	99.9%
North East and Yorkshire	38.0%	54.6%	69.4%	70.6%	81.2%	86.8%	93.3%	83.5%	92.5%	96.3%	100%*	99.2%	93.0%	100%*	98.2%
North West	36.1%	53.8%	69.5%	70.3%	79.5%	86.1%	93.3%	84.2%	92.1%	96.2%	100%*	98.9%	92.1%	100%*	98.6%
South East	47.1%	65.6%	77.1%	80.6%	90.7%	91.3%	95.0%	88.2%	93.3%	98.0%	100%*	98.9%	90.2%	100%*	98.6%
South West	43.5%	63.7%	79.7%	82.5%	89.9%	92.2%	96.7%	86.7%	92.9%	98.3%	100%*	97.4%	91.7%	100%*	100%*

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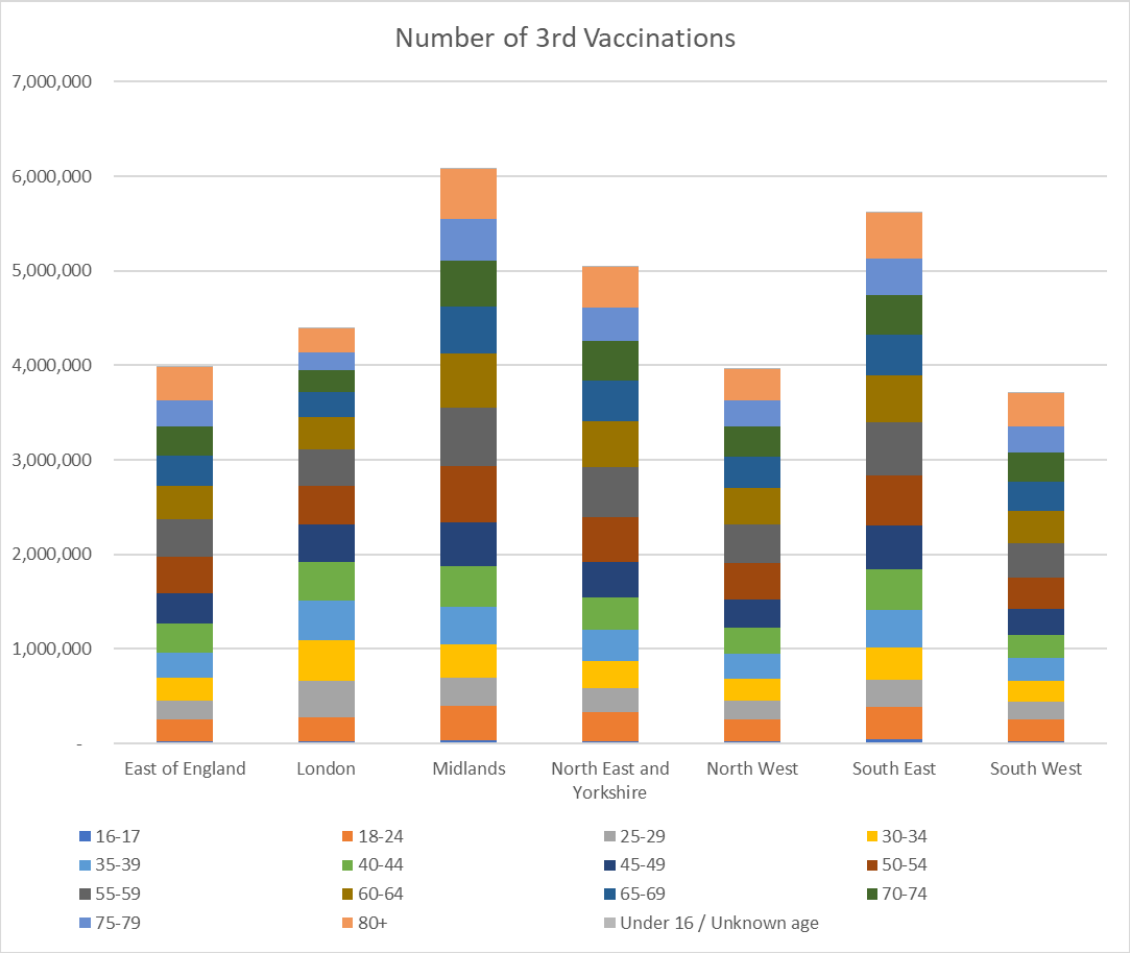

NHS Region of residence name	% of people (not just those eligible) who have had at least 3 doses (using ONS denominators)													
	16-17	18-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75-79	80+
Total	15.1%	42.6%	48.0%	55.9%	62.1%	71.6%	70.9%	80.6%	87.1%	93.5%	93.0%	88.6%	100%*	95.6%
East of England	16.5%	47.7%	51.9%	57.9%	63.8%	73.9%	73.9%	82.8%	89.5%	95.0%	93.5%	88.1%	100%*	96.4%
London	10.0%	35.7%	50.2%	52.3%	53.4%	61.3%	65.5%	71.0%	77.4%	83.2%	84.5%	82.4%	95.9%	82.8%
Midlands	14.1%	39.0%	41.0%	51.4%	60.1%	70.3%	68.8%	80.7%	86.8%	94.1%	92.4%	89.9%	100%*	97.4%
North East and Yorkshire	13.8%	40.4%	43.0%	52.8%	61.4%	71.7%	68.5%	80.8%	87.3%	93.6%	94.6%	90.2%	100%*	96.0%
North West	13.7%	37.7%	40.9%	49.2%	58.2%	68.9%	66.8%	78.5%	85.3%	93.2%	93.3%	88.7%	100%*	95.8%
South East	20.0%	48.8%	54.4%	64.8%	70.0%	78.2%	76.6%	84.5%	90.7%	96.1%	95.1%	88.0%	100%*	96.8%
South West	19.4%	51.4%	56.1%	64.9%	71.6%	80.1%	75.6%	84.4%	91.0%	96.1%	93.9%	89.6%	100%*	99.4%

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Weekly Deaths Registered: 8th July 2022

Black Country Consortium Economic Intelligence Unit

The following analysis compares the latest available time period (the week of the 8th July 2022) to the previous week period (the week of the 1st July 2022) for the number of deaths registered and the number of deaths registered related to the Coronavirus[13].

Across England and Wales, the overall registered death figures decreased from 10,357 in the week of the 1st July 2022 to 10,232 in the week of 8th July 2022. The number of deaths registered that state Coronavirus on the death certificate increased from 332 to 423 people over the same period.

Regional level analysis shows that the West Midlands' overall registered death figures increased from 1,032 people in the week of 1st July 2022 to 1,070 in the week of 8th July 2022. The number of registered deaths related to Coronavirus increased from 28 to 44 people.

There was a total of 751 deaths registered across the WMCA (3 LEP) area in the week of the 8th July 2022. There were 29 deaths registered that were related to Coronavirus over the same period. In comparison to the week of the 1st July 2022, the overall registered death figures in the WMCA (3 LEP) area increased by 46, with the number of registered deaths related to Coronavirus increasing by 12 people.

At local authority level in the week of the 8th July 2022, 14 local authorities the WMCA (3 LEP) area registered deaths related to the Coronavirus. Of the 29 registered Coronavirus related deaths; Nuneaton & Bedworth accounted for 6 deaths, Birmingham accounted for 5 deaths, Solihull and Wolverhampton both accounted for 3 deaths each.

Of the 29 registered Coronavirus deaths in the WMCA (3 LEP) involving Coronavirus in the week of the 8th July 2022, 21 were registered in a hospital, 4 deaths were registered at home, 3 deaths were registered at a care home and 1 death was registered at a hospice.

Place and number of deaths registered that are related to Coronavirus in the week of 8th June 2022:

Area name	Care home	Elsewhere	Home	Hospice	Hospital	Other communal establishment	Total
Cannock Chase	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
East Staffordshire	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Lichfield	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Tamworth	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
North Warwickshire	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nuneaton and Bedworth	0	0	0	1	5	0	6
Rugby	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Stratford-on-Avon	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Warwick	0	0	1	0	1	0	2
Bromsgrove	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Redditch	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wyre Forest	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Birmingham	1	0	2	0	2	0	5
Coventry	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Dudley	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sandwell	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Solihull	1	0	0	0	2	0	3
Walsall	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wolverhampton	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
WM 7 Met.	**2**	**0**	**2**	**0**	**10**	**0**	**14**
Black Country LEP	0	0	0	0	4	0	4
Coventry & Warwickshire LEP	0	0	2	1	9	0	12
Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP	3	0	2	0	8	0	13
WMCA (3 LEP)	**3**	**0**	**4**	**1**	**21**	**0**	**29**

[13] 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, 19th July 2022.

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

ONS economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators

Black Country Consortium Economic Intelligence Unit

On the 14th July 2022, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) released 'economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators'. These statistics are early experimental data and analysis on economic activity and social change in the UK. These faster indicators are created using rapid response surveys, novel data sources, and experimental methods.

ONS also provides on a fortnightly basis the social insights on daily life and events, including impacts on health and well-being and the cost of living from 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 1st and 8th July 2022, total online job adverts decreased by 1.2%. On the 8th July 2022, total online job adverts were at 126.1% of their average level in February 2020. Out of the 28 categories (excluding unknown) 16 decreased and 1 remained the same ("charity/voluntary") from the previous week. The largest weekly decrease was in the category "marketing/advertising/PR", which decreased by 11.3% to 115.9%. The highest increase was "education" by 3.9% to 130.2%. There were four categories below the February 2020 average level, these were; "legal" (87.6%), "property" (91.4%), "sales" (93.8%) and "healthcare and social care" (95.6%).

Online job adverts across 8 of the UK regions increased between the 1st and 8th July 2022. The West Midlands online job adverts increased by 1.3% and on the 8th July 2022, it was at 135.7% of the average level in February 2020. All 12 regions were above their February 2020 levels, varying from; 115.4% in London to 160.1% in Northern Ireland.

Google Mobility

Google Mobility data provide an indicator of changes in the volume of visits to different location types compared with a pre-coronavirus baseline. ONS have transformed the publicly available anonymised data into an indexed seven-day moving average to smooth the weekday and weekend.

As of the 8th July 2022, for the West Midlands region visits to retail and recreation, transit stations and workplaces had not yet returned to pre-coronavirus levels.

Visits to each location type for the West Midlands region in the week to 8th July 2022 compared with the previous week shows that retail and recreational decreased by 0.2% (to 92.9%), grocery and pharmacy decreased by 0.2% (to 108.2%) and workplaces decreased by 0.8% (to 82.3%). While residential increased by 0.1% (to 102.6%), transit stations increased by 2.5% (to 84.8%) and parks increased by 4.2% (to 129.5%).

National Company Incorporations and Voluntary Dissolutions

Companies House data shows for the UK, there were 14,826 company incorporations in the week to the 8th July 2022, up from 14,164 recorded in same week in 2021. This is down from 18,661 recorded in the same week in 2020 but up in the same week in 2019 (13,806).

Also, for the week to the 8th July 2022, there were 5,755 voluntary dissolution applications, down from 6,608 recorded in the same week in 2020. This is up from 4,642 recorded in the same week of 2020 but down in the same week in 2019 (5,203).

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 3rd July 2022, across the UK there were 34 employers proposing 1,767 potential redundancies. The potential redundancies 4-week rolling average was 2,305 and the employers proposing redundancies 4-week rolling average was 35. When indexed (100 = weekly average from week ending 21st April 2019 to week ending 23rd February 2020), the potential redundancies 4-week rolling average was 47 and the employers proposing redundancies 4-week rolling average was 64.

System Average Price of Gas

The System Average Price (SAP) of gas increased by 33% in the week to 10th July 2022 (from the previous week) to 45% of the peak level seen on 10 March 2022. It was 132% higher than the equivalent period from the previous year and 739% higher when compared to the pre-Coronavirus baseline.

Business Insights and Conditions Survey

The final results from Wave 60 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) based off the 5,100 businesses surveyed across the West Midlands that businesses have a presence in with a response rate of 23.8% (1,214) and 3,065 businesses that are head quartered in the West Midlands, with a response rate of 23.2% (711). Please note, the survey reference period was 1st to 30st June 2022 with a survey live period of 27th June to 10th July 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

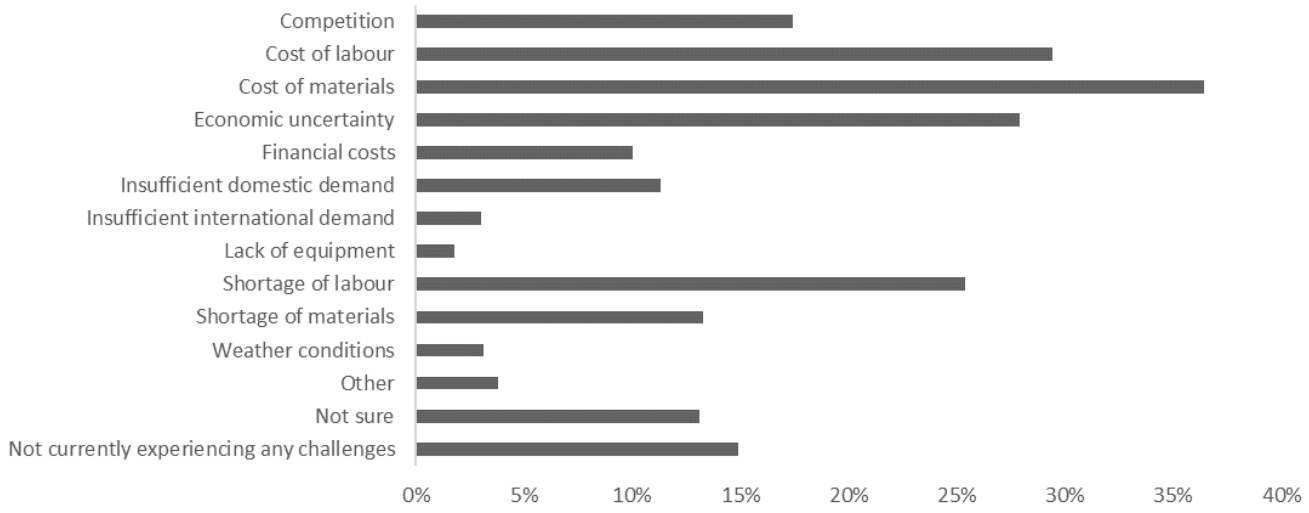
98.8% of responding West Midlands businesses were trading over the survey period, split by 97.0% fully trading and 1.8% partially trading.

Financial Performance

Excluding “not sure” responses, 21.7% of West Midlands businesses reported that the business turnover in June 2022 when compared with the previous calendar month had increased, 47.5% reported turnover to have stayed the same and 20.0% reported turnover had decreased.

36.4% of responding West Midlands businesses reported that the costs of materials was impacting business turnover.

Which challenges, if any, are currently impacting West Midlands business's turnover:



Excluding "not sure responses", 18.9% of West Midlands businesses reported that they expect business turnover in August 2022 to increase, 53.7% expected turnover to stay the same and 15.6% expect turnover to decrease.

Prices

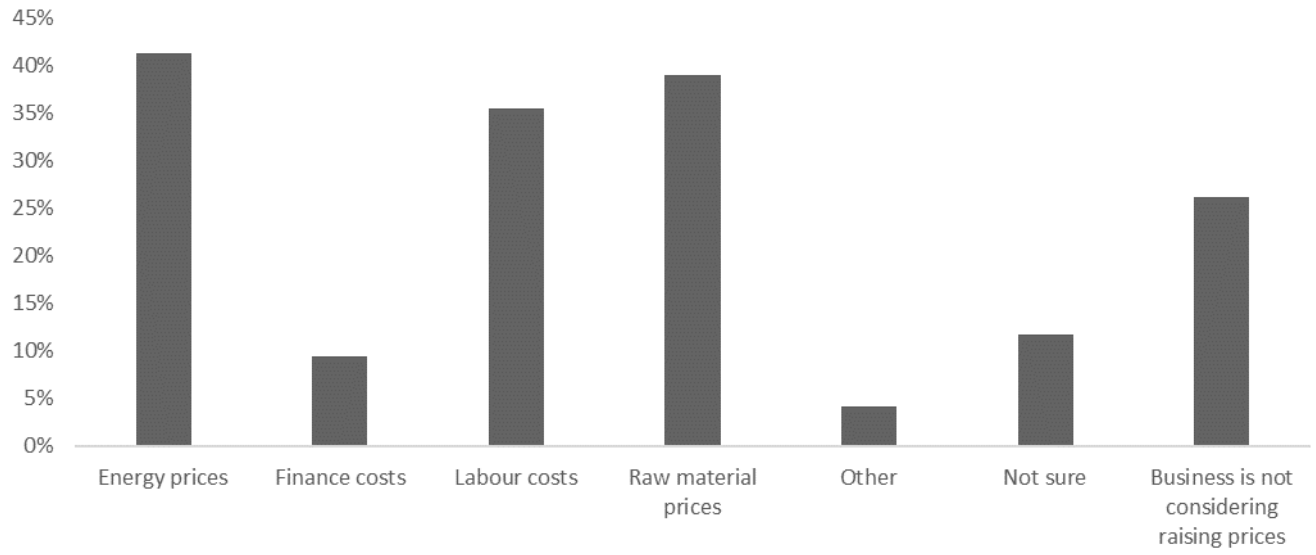
32.6% of West Midlands businesses reported the prices of goods or services brought in June 2022 when compared to the previous calendar month had stayed the same. Although, 48.6% of West Midlands businesses reported that prices brought had increased.

In comparison, 60.5% of West Midlands businesses reported the prices of goods or services sold in June 2022 when compared to the previous calendar month had stayed the same, 22.5% of West Midlands businesses reported that prices sold had increased and 1.4% reported that prices sold had decreased.

51.2% of West Midlands businesses expect the prices of goods or services sold in August 2022 will remain the same, 27.7% expect the prices to increase and 1.2% expect the prices to decrease.

As seen in the following chart, 41.4% of West Midlands businesses report that energy prices are the cause for considering to raise prices in August 2022.

What factors, if any, are causing West Midlands businesses to consider raising prices in August 2022:



Demand for Goods and Services

54.6% of West Midlands businesses reported the domestic demand for goods or services in June 2022 when compared to the previous calendar month had stayed the same and a further 12.0% reported an increase. Although, 13.9% of West Midlands businesses reported that domestic demand had decreased.

In comparison, 25.7% of West Midlands businesses reported the international demand for goods or services in June 2022 when compared to the previous calendar month had stayed the same and a further 4.9% reported an increase. Although, 4.1% of West Midlands businesses reported that international demand had decreased.

Energy Prices

5.1% of West Midlands businesses reported that production was affected by recent increases in energy prices, 19.2% reported that suppliers were affected by recent increases in energy prices and 23.1% reported that both production and suppliers were affected by recent increases in energy prices.

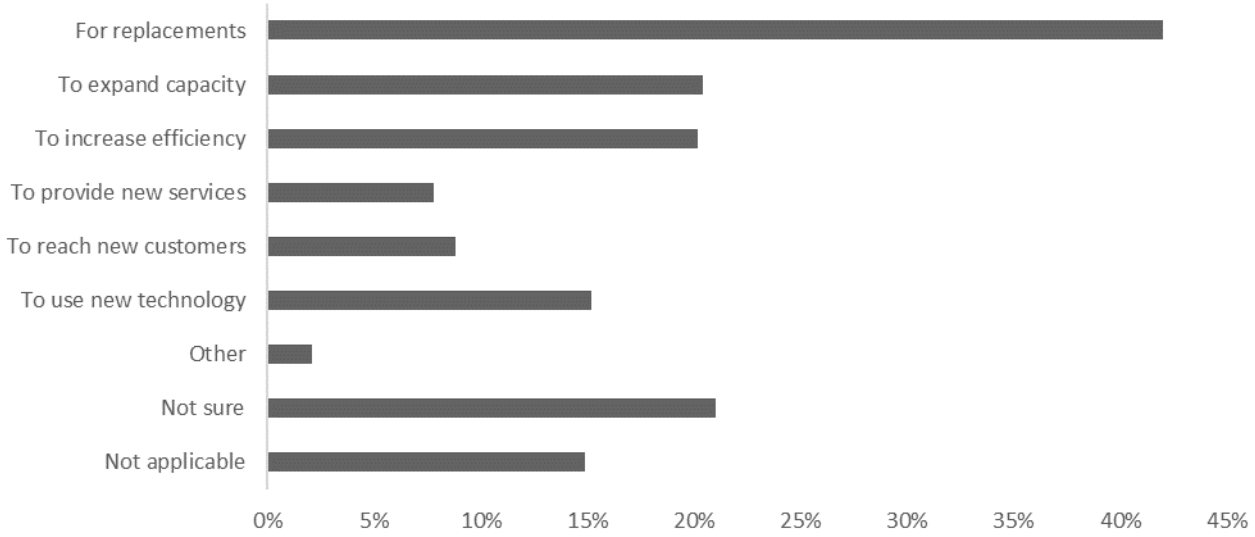
57.2% of West Midlands businesses have had to absorb the costs from the price rises.

Capital Expenditure

Excluding "not sure" and "not applicable" responses, 14.5% of West Midlands businesses expect capital expenditure will increase over the next three months, 42.8% expect capital expenditure will stay the same and 8.8% expect capital expenditure to decrease.

42.0% of West Midlands businesses are expecting to authorise capital expenditure in August 2022 for replacements.

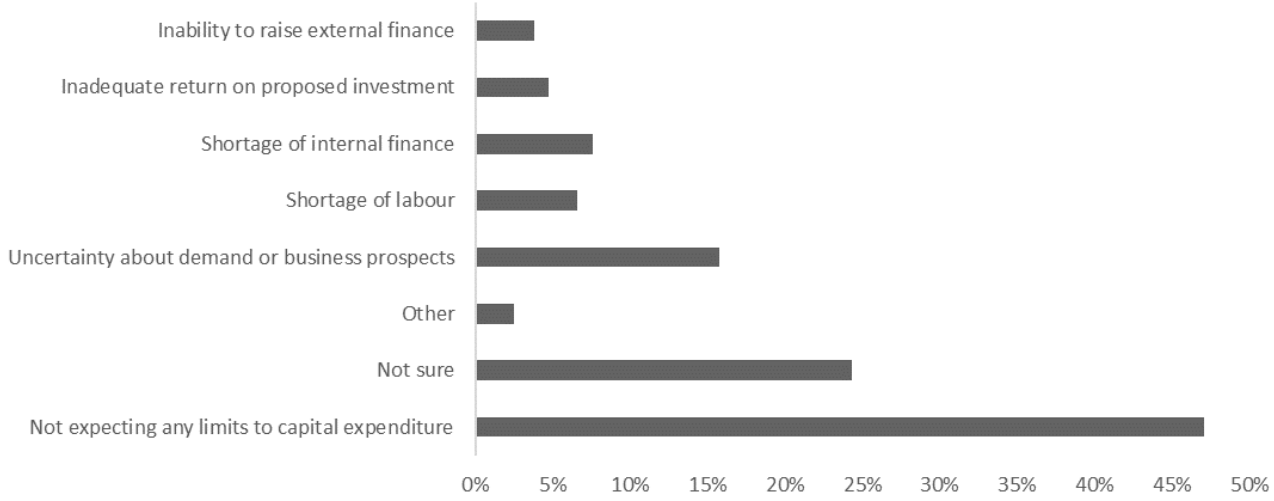
Why West Midlands businesses are expecting to authorise capital expenditure in August 2022:



1.5% of West Midlands businesses had to scrap capital assets earlier than intended in June 2022.

47.1% of West Midlands businesses are not expecting any limits to capital expenditure in August 2022. While 15.8% expect to limit business capital expenditure due to uncertainty about demand or business prospects.

Which reasons, if any, did West Midlands expect to limit your business's capital expenditure in August 2022:



Number of Employees

Excluding "not sure" responses, 60.3% of West Midlands businesses reported that the number of employees in June 2022 when compared to the previous month had stayed the same and a further 19.9% reported the number of employees had increased. Although, 10.9% of West Midlands businesses reported the number of employees had decreased.

Excluding "not sure" responses, 61.0% of West Midlands businesses expect that the number of employees in August 2022 will stay the same and a further 22.2% expect the number of employees to increase. Although, 5.7% of West Midlands expect the number of employees to decrease.

Staffing Costs

Excluding "not sure" and "not applicable" responses, 59.1% of West Midlands businesses reported that staffing costs had increased over the last three months, 26.2% reported staffing costs had stayed the same and 2.2% reported that staffing costs had decreased.

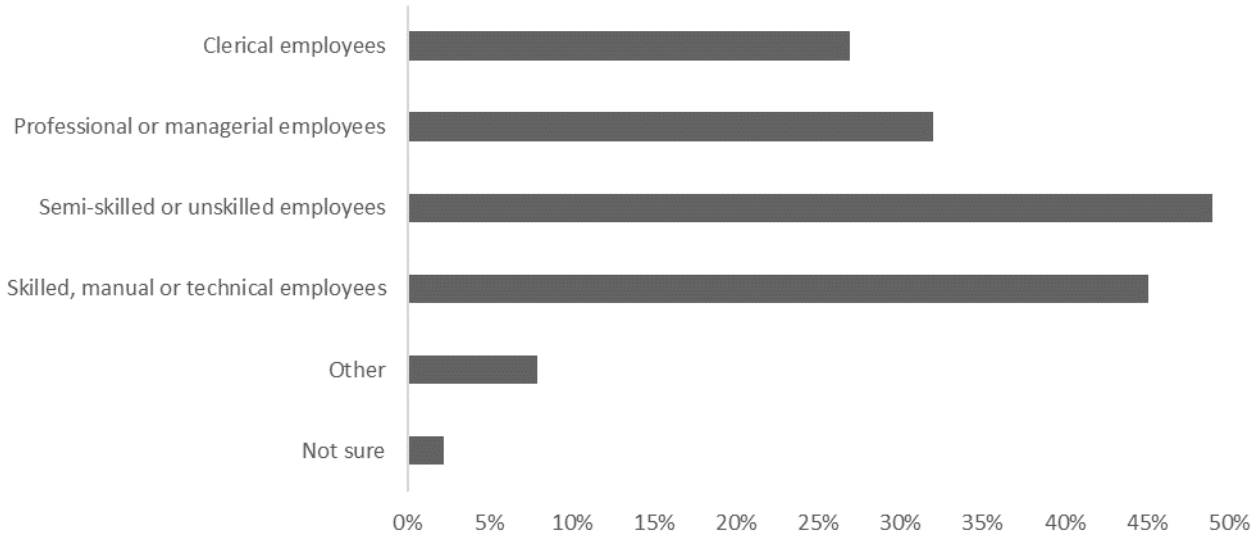
Excluding "not sure" and "not applicable" responses, 42.2% of West Midlands businesses are expecting staffing costs to increase over the next three months, 40.1% expect staffing costs to stay the same and 2.0% expect staffing costs to decrease.

Recruitment Difficulties

41.1% of West Midlands businesses reported experiencing difficulties in recruiting employees in June 2022. While 29.7% of West Midlands businesses reported no difficulties.

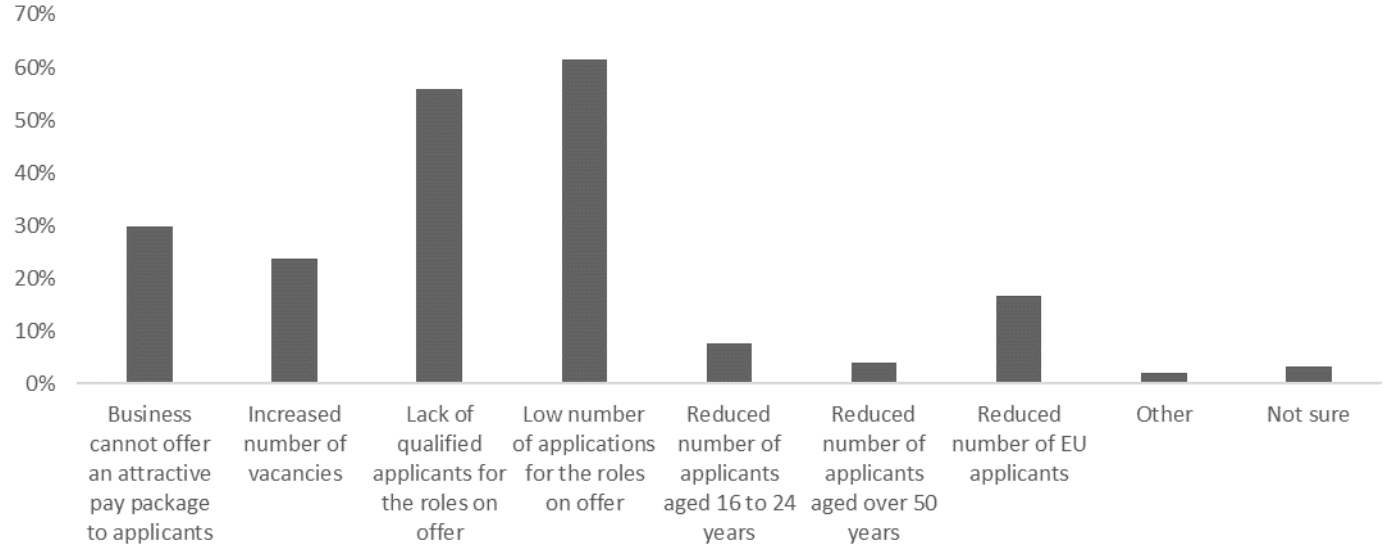
49.0% of West Midlands businesses reported to have difficulties in recruiting for semi-skilled or unskilled employees.

Employees West Midlands businesses have had difficulties recruiting in:



61.5% of West Midlands businesses reported that low number of applications for the roles on offer was causing difficulties in recruiting.

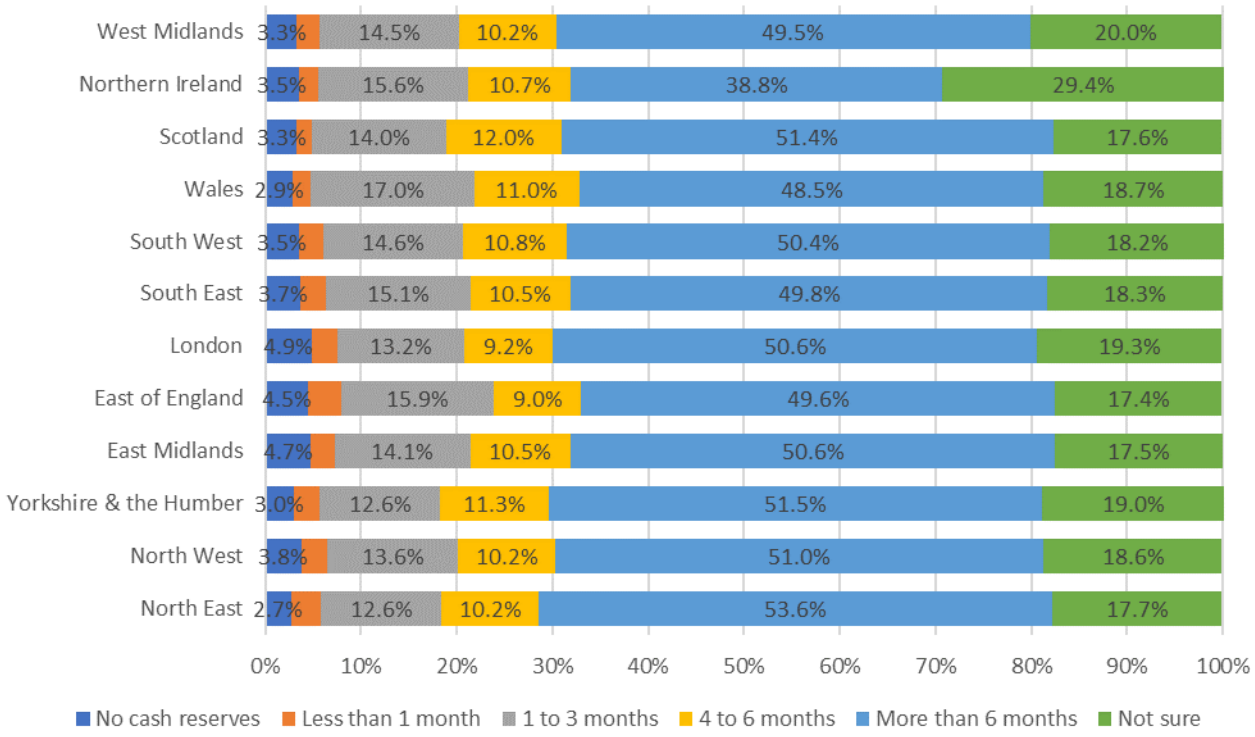
Why West Midlands businesses are experiencing difficulties in recruiting employees:



Cash Reserves

49.5% of West Midlands businesses reported to having more than 6 months of cash reserves, while 3.3% reported no cash reserves.

How long West Midlands businesses expect cash reserves to last:



Overall Performance

Excluding "not sure" responses, 39.0% of West Midlands businesses reported that the business's overall performance in June 2022 compared with the same period in 2021 had stayed the same and a further 28.8% reported that performance had increased. Although, 19.0% of West Midlands businesses reported that performance had decreased.

Excluding "not sure" responses, 37.7% of West Midlands businesses expect that the business's overall performance in the next 12 months will stay the same and a further 33.1% expect an increase in overall performance. Although, 11.5% of West Midlands businesses expect performance will decrease.

Public opinions and social trends

Breakdowns by region are no longer provided within this dataset because of the smaller responding sample size of the OPN survey. Estimates are based on data collected between 22nd June to 3rd July 2022, (the "latest period") and 8th to 19th June 2022 (the "previous period").

Actions Following Cost of Living Increases

The most common actions reported by adults who reported their cost of living had increased continued to be spending less on non-essentials (62% - up 2pp the previous period), using less fuel such as gas or electricity at home (53% - down 2pp from previous period), cutting back on non-essential journeys in vehicles (46% - up 1pp from previous period) and spending less on food shopping and essentials (38% - up 3pp from previous period).

Paying Energy Bills

43% of adults who pay energy bills reported they found it very or somewhat difficult to afford them in the latest period, an increase compared with 37% in the previous period.

Among those who reported they have gas or electricity supplied to their home, 6% reported they were behind on these bills (4% in the previous period). This proportion has appeared to be relatively stable since the question was asked in March 2022.

Rail Disruptions

Adults were asked if in the past two weeks if rails strikes had disrupted travel plans.

15% of adults reported that their travel plans had been disrupted. This rises to 25% for those aged 16 to 29 years and decreases to 4% for those aged 70 years or older.

Of those who said they had experienced travel disruptions, the most common impacts were: being unable to take part in leisure activities (34%), spending more money on travel (24%) and being unable to work the hours they planned to (13%).

Personal Well-Being

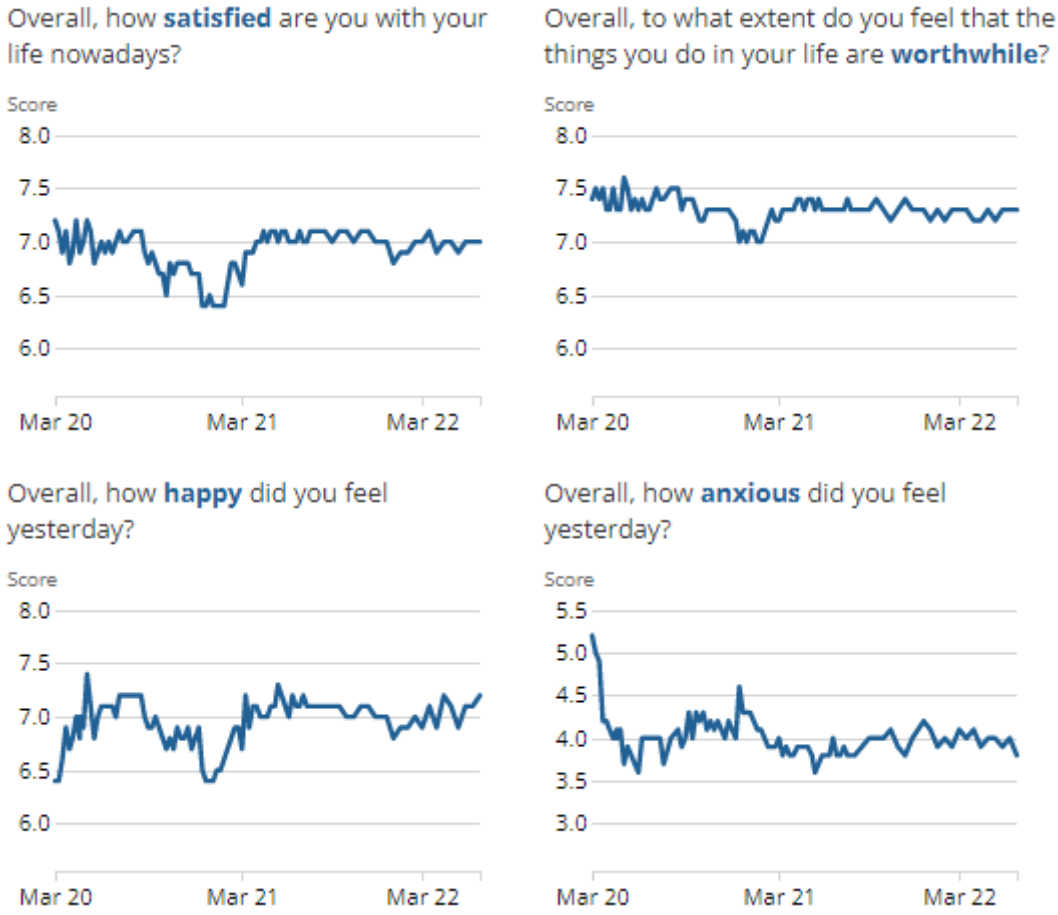
Life satisfaction – remained at 7.0 since the previous period.

Feeling that the things done in life are worthwhile – remained at 7.3 since the previous period.

Happiness – increased by 0.1 since the previous period to 7.1.

Anxiety – decreased by 0.2 since the previous period to 3.8.

Levels of personal well-being, Adults in Great Britain, March 2020 to July 2022:



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

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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