

Staffordshire

Means**Back to Business**

Economic Bulletin - Issue 4 – October 2020

Welcome to the fourth edition of the new Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Economic Bulletin produced by our Economy, Skills and Insight Teams, which provides the timeliest secondary data available on what is happening with the local economy. However, this clearly only provides part of the picture and we continue to build up our softer intelligence to provide a better indication of what is happening on the ground, including the local response to the COVID-19 crisis and subsequent recovery.

Alongside information on the Claimant Count and Job Vacancies that will be a part of every Bulletin, we again look at the latest Government data regarding the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) Furloughed Workers and Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS). This month's issue also provides more detailed youth claimant count analysis and updated ward level analysis of the claimant count to help identify areas which have been impacted the hardest across Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent and where there may be a greater need for support. We also provide updated analysis of how local businesses are making use of the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) and the Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLs).

We hope you find the Bulletin useful and welcome your comments and suggestions on further information you would like to see included in future editions. If you do have any feedback please send your comments to Darren Farmer, Economy & Skills Analyst at darren.farmer@staffordshire.gov.uk.

Stay Safe,

Darryl Evers

Director for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills, Staffordshire County Council



Key Messages

- The number of people on some form of government economic support scheme is estimated to be slightly lower than the rest of the country, 18% compared to 20% nationally.
- The claimant count in **Staffordshire saw a decrease of 200 between August 2020 and September 2020 to a total of 26,595 claimants, with the claimant rate remaining unchanged at 5% of the working age population.** However, the area has seen Universal Credit claimants more than double since March (pre-COVID), an increase of just over 14,500 claimants - however, not all will be out of work.
- These increases need to be viewed in the context of the move to Universal Credit. Before Universal Credit, the Claimant Count was based upon Jobseeker's Allowance claimants - people out of work but looking for a job. However, in response to COVID-19 the Government changed the criteria for Universal Credit to allow some people on low income to claim whilst in work. Therefore, there will be **a proportion of claimants currently that will still be in work but claiming Universal Credit because they are on a low income**, although from the data released by Government it is not currently possible to quantify the proportion of people that are indeed unemployed or employed but on a low income.
- Therefore, the reasons for the increase in claimants are still to fully emerge but evidence suggests there will be a combination of factors such as the self-employed no longer being able to operate, part-time employees working less than 16 hours a week who are now furloughed, and Small & Medium Enterprises laying off staff in the short-term.
- It is important to recognise that although we have seen a rise in claimant numbers due to COVID given our strong position going into the pandemic we still perform comparatively well for **our claimant rate which stood at 5.0% of the working age population in September compared to 7.4% regionally and 6.6% nationally.**
- However, it is young people, the lowest paid (including those in manual occupations, more routine or less skilled jobs) and part-time workers who continue to feel the impact of the economic shock the most. For example, the **proportion of young people aged 18-24 that are claiming Universal Credit has increased from 3.7% in March 2020 to 8.2% in September 2020**, well above the rate of 5.0% for the working age population. Given that it is harder for these groups to find a new job it is increasingly vital that the welcomed announcements made in 'A Plan for Jobs 2020' such as the **Kickstart Scheme** are quickly and effectively put in place to support these groups and help prevent them becoming long-term unemployed.

- The latest Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) figures show that there were **40,500 furloughed job claims in Staffordshire up to the end of August, equivalent to 10% of eligible workers**, slightly below the regional and national averages of 11%. **Stoke-on-Trent had 10,200 jobs still furloughed**, equivalent to 9% of eligible jobs.
- **Staffordshire has seen 26,200 self-employed workers claim for the second SEISS grant up to the end of September** and a take-up rate of 66% for those eligible through the scheme, just below the regional and national average take-up rates of 67%. **Stoke-on-Trent had 7,500 SEISS claims up to the end of September**, equivalent to 72% of those eligible. This is the highest rate the West Midlands Region upper-tier authorities.
- Moving forwards there are obvious concerns that the local economy and labour market may continue to be adversely affected by the economic downturn, particularly due to changes to economic support measures and market conditions. A particular risk now is the imminent conclusion to the Government's successful **Job Retention Scheme (JRS)** at the end of October and the potential impact this may have on unemployment. Whilst we welcome the announcements in the Government's post-furlough winter support plan, including the **Job Support Scheme**, further help for the self-employed and specific support for businesses that have been forced to close due to local lockdowns, it is however widely felt that the level of support may not go far enough to stave off further job losses.
- A positive again this month is the further recovery of business recruitment, with **job vacancies in Staffordshire increasing by 14% between August and September equivalent to nearly 2,000 more job vacancies which is above the growth seen regionally (11%) and nationally (9%). Stoke-on-Trent saw a 12% growth with just over 630 more vacancies in September compared to August.** Although vacancy levels remain below those seen pre-COVID. We continue to see demand for roles in health, social care and distribution with clear emerging opportunities for job creation in digital (including online retail), advanced manufacturing (AI and Automation), construction (£900 million Getting Building Fund) and the green economy (including retrofitting homes to improve energy efficiency and electric cars).
- In conclusion, it is apparent that as we navigate through the second wave of COVID and as Government support is reduced there are more businesses finding the need to restructure their operations and unfortunately in some cases this means making staff redundant. However, there are clearly increasing job opportunities in our area and it will be vital that we put the necessary support in place to enable our residents to fill those roles.

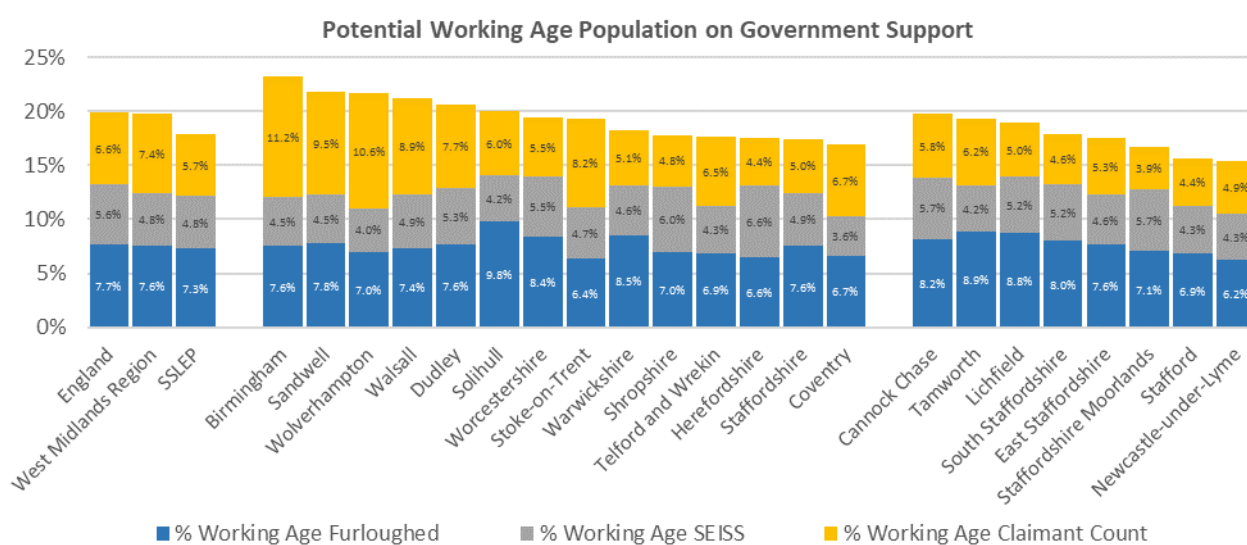
- Our main focus now continues to be on working together to ensure that as many people as possible currently on furlough return to work and for those residents unfortunate enough to have lost their jobs support them back into work as we build a stronger and more resilient local economy.
- Fundamental to this is the work of the Countywide Redundancy Task Group where more than 20 local partners are working together to support businesses and employees with potential redundancies. Alongside this the Redundancy and Recruitment Triage Service will have an important role in helping residents gain new skills and employment.
- The County Council and our local partners have also put in place numerous interventions over the last few months to support our residents and businesses. The **Kickstart Scheme** is a £2 billion fund from the government to create thousands of high-quality, fully-funded six-month work placements for young people that give them a stepping-stone to future work and the confidence they need for the future. It is much easier to get a job when you already in one.
- Employers across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent are now being called on to express an interest in funding for placements for 16 to 24 year olds. Offering a scheme through the Kickstart scheme means that you are injecting new enthusiasm, imagination and innovation into your business while helping the next generation and the local economy.
- Placements need to:
 - Be new, and take the place of any temporary, permanent or planned roles
 - Show your commitment to supporting the young person’s professional development throughout the placement
 - Be a minimum of 25 hours a week for 6 months
- In return you’ll get:
 - 100% of the relevant National Minimum Wage for that age group for 25 hours a week
 - associated National Insurance Contributions
 - employer minimum automatic enrolment contributions
 - £1,500 of extra funding to support them with the experience, skills and training to help move them onto more sustainable employment.
- Whether you are interested in getting funding for just one placement or many, you could get funding from Kickstart and the support you need to make the best of the placement.

- Find out more about the types of roles and how to express an interest at the [Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Enterprise Partnership website](#).
- Staffordshire County Council is also just launching the **#ThinkStaffordshireFirst** campaign. Small and independent shops and local businesses are just one of the things that makes Staffordshire a great place to live, yet we know that shops, bars, restaurants, farmers and local food suppliers have been hit hard.
- The #ThinkStaffordshireFirst campaign, is a shop-local campaign with a difference. It's not about changing how people buy or even what they buy, it's about getting everyone to do their bit to think about the local businesses that they could patronise first. Thousands more Staffordshire businesses are now online than before lockdown selling the products and services that people now want at cost-competitive prices, for example. This campaign is about raising awareness with our residents that you can get what you want, in the way you want it, from local businesses that support local jobs. Did you know that if everyone spent just £5 more locally each week for a year, it would be worth an extra £189 million to the Staffordshire economy. The campaign will showcase those local businesses across the county until well into December.
- There's never been a better time to encourage people to #ThinkStaffordshireFirst with research showing that people recognise how supporting local business are essential for supporting the local economy.
- Can you support the #ThinkStaffordshireFirst campaign? Do you know a business that helps the community, supports local jobs, has diversified their products or services over lockdown to online or door to door delivery, or just sells fantastic products at great prices? Let us know at communications@staffordshire.gov.uk Thanks for your support.
- **Grants for Growth** - Revenue grants of £1,000 are available to help businesses in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent grow and thrive. Expenditure could include product design and development, specialist consultancy or consultancy costs to build or improve a website. The £1,000 grants must be matched by £667 of a business's funds. Businesses must be based in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire. All businesses must have been trading for at least 12 months and 70 per cent of sales must be derived from business to business. Anyone interested should contact Angela.Halls@stoke.gov.uk

Local Picture – Residents on Government Support Schemes

During this period it is important to be able to understand how local businesses are responding to the gradual reopening of the economy and what impact COVID-19 has had and continues to have on jobs. A key aspect of this is monitoring the number of people claiming Universal Credit (Claimant Count), and the number of people on the Coronavirus Job Retention (CJRS) and Self-Employment Income Support Schemes (SEISS), as seen below.

Overall Number of Residents on Government Support Schemes



In line with the Claimant Count rate which shows the proportion of the working age population claiming Universal Credit we have calculated the proportion of the working age population which may be on the furloughed or have accessed SEISS support.

In total there are potentially just over 124,000 residents in the SSLEP area on Government support, equivalent to around 18% of the working age population which is slightly lower than the regional and national averages of around 20%. Cannock Chase (20%) and Tamworth (19%) have the highest rates while Newcastle-under-Lyme (15%) and Stafford (16%) have the lowest.

SSLEP Working Age Population	694,954
Jobs in High Risk Sectors	221,000
Claimant Count Sep 2020	39,740
Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) Furloughed job claims as at 31st Aug	50,700
Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) claims up to 30th September	33,700
Potential workers on Government support	124,140
Potential % of working age population on Government support	17.9%

Note: Important to recognise that there may be some workers which are accessing more than one support scheme and there may be some double counting due to jobs moving on and off the furlough scheme

Detailed Breakdown

Claimant Count¹

The following table highlights the level of claimant unemployment in the Staffordshire Districts and each of the Strategic Authorities in the West Midlands Region:

Claimant Count (Universal Credit) Statistics: September 2020

Area	Claimant Count Rate (Sept 2019)	Claimant Count Rate (Aug 2020)	Claimant Count Rate ¹ (Sept 2020)	Number of Claimants (Sept 2020)	Monthly Change in Claimants (Numbers)	Monthly Change in Claimants (%)	Change in Claimants since March (Numbers)	Change in Claimants since March (%)
England	2.8	6.5	6.6	2,306,555	24,550	1.1%	1,243,050	116.9%
West Midlands	3.6	7.3	7.4	271,845	3,195	1.2%	127,495	88.3%
SSLEP	2.4	5.7	5.7	39,740	-40	-0.1%	20,370	105.2%
Birmingham	6.4	11.0	11.2	82,060	1,430	1.8%	32,690	66.2%
Wolverhampton	5.9	10.5	10.6	17,280	165	1.0%	6,900	66.5%
Sandwell	4.7	9.3	9.5	19,435	365	1.9%	8,655	80.3%
Walsall	4.5	8.8	8.9	15,410	225	1.5%	6,805	79.1%
Stoke-on-Trent	4.1	8.1	8.2	13,145	155	1.2%	5,825	79.6%
Dudley	4.2	7.6	7.7	14,830	140	1.0%	6,315	74.2%
Coventry	2.9	6.6	6.7	16,765	415	2.5%	8,765	109.6%
Telford and Wrekin	2.8	6.5	6.5	7,240	15	0.2%	3,810	111.1%
Solihull	2.8	5.9	6.0	7,675	150	2.0%	4,025	110.3%
Worcestershire	2.2	5.5	5.5	19,505	220	1.1%	11,200	134.9%
Warwickshire	2.0	5.0	5.1	17,830	85	0.5%	10,000	127.7%
Staffordshire	1.9	5.0	5.0	26,595	-200	-0.7%	14,545	120.7%
Shropshire	1.9	4.7	4.8	9,075	50	0.6%	5,065	126.3%
Herefordshire, County of	1.7	4.4	4.4	5,000	-20	-0.4%	2,890	137.0%
Tamworth	2.7	6.3	6.2	2,935	-30	-1.0%	1,445	97.0%
Cannock Chase	2.2	5.9	5.8	3,700	-50	-1.3%	2,045	123.6%
East Staffordshire	2.0	5.3	5.3	3,900	15	0.4%	2,180	126.7%
Lichfield	1.8	5.0	5.0	3,060	-25	-0.8%	1,740	131.8%
Newcastle-under-Lyme	2.1	4.9	4.9	4,000	-15	-0.4%	2,020	102.0%
South Staffordshire	1.8	4.6	4.6	3,080	0	0.0%	1,770	135.1%
Stafford	1.6	4.5	4.4	3,685	-50	-1.3%	2,030	122.7%
Staffordshire Moorlands	1.5	3.9	3.9	2,235	-40	-1.8%	1,315	142.9%

¹ The claimant rate is the proportion of the working age population claiming benefits

- The Claimant Count in Staffordshire saw a decrease of 200 between August 2020 and September 2020 to a total of 26,595 claimants. While Stoke-on-Trent saw an increase of 155 over the same period with a total of 13,145 claimants in September.
- The relatively small increase in claimants seen in Stoke-on-Trent between August and September is similar to the trend seen regionally and nationally. This reflects the continuing success of the furlough scheme in preventing more people finding themselves out of work.

¹ Source: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>

- It is also important to look at the change in the Claimant Count seen since March 2020 (pre-COVID) where the number of claimants in Staffordshire has more than doubled with an increase of 14,545 claimants and in Stoke-on-Trent there has been an increase of 5,825.
- Ultimately, the full effect of COVID-19 on employment will not be felt until the furlough and SEISS schemes and further Government support such as the Job Support Scheme come to an end.
- The increases in the Claimant Count also need to be viewed in the context of the move to Universal Credit. Before Universal Credit, the Claimant Count was based upon Jobseeker's Allowance claimants, i.e. people out of work but looking for a job. A proportion of claimants currently will have a job but claiming Universal Credit due to having a low income - the reasons for the increase in claimants are still to fully emerge but evidence suggests there will be a combination of factors such as:
 - New Job Starters/PT employees/Self-employed with no income claiming Universal Credit because they are not eligible for the CJRS;
 - Self-employed ceased trading or have very low income claiming Universal Credit (and are either not eligible for, or not yet been paid, income under the SEISS);
 - Working part-time low-income workers claiming Universal Credit and may be furloughed;
 - Potential Redundancies within Small & Medium Enterprises laying off staff in the short-term.
- Unfortunately, due to Government data limitations it is not currently possible to quantify the proportion of people that fall into these cohorts at a local level.
- Given the comparatively strong position of Staffordshire going into the pandemic and the fact that COVID-19 has impacted much of the economy during lockdown, even with the significant increase in claimants the proportion of working age residents on such benefits remains comparatively low in Staffordshire with a rate of 5.0% in September compared to 7.4% regionally and 6.6% nationally. In Stoke-on-Trent the Claimant Count rate remains above both the regional and national averages at 8.2%.
- As well as workers across sectors being impacted differently, there are also signs that it is the lowest paid, part-time workers and young people (particularly apprentices) that are being hardest hit. These groups are more likely to work in sectors that have shut down or reduced activity, such as hospitality and non-essential retail. They are also less likely to be able to work from home.

- Young people aged 18-24 continue to be disproportionately impacted by unemployment where the claimant rate for young people in Staffordshire has increased from 3.7% in March to 8.2% in September compared to a rise from 2.3% to 5.0% for all working-age residents, while in Stoke-on-Trent the rate has risen from 5.9% in March to 11.0% in September. This means there are now 5,445 young people claiming work related benefits in Staffordshire and a further 2,605 in Stoke-on-Trent.

Youth Claimant Count (Universal Credit) Statistics: September 2020

Area	Claimant Count Rate (Sept 2019)	Claimant Count Rate (Aug 2020)	Claimant Count Rate ¹ (Sept 2020)	Number of Claimants (Sept 2020)	Monthly Change in Claimants (Numbers)	Monthly Change in Claimants (%)	Change in Claimants since March (Numbers)	Change in Claimants since March (%)
England	3.8	9.2	9.4	446,325	8,180	1.9%	248,595	125.7%
West Midlands	4.9	10.2	10.4	55,260	1,030	1.9%	27,355	98.0%
SSLEP	3.7	9.0	9.0	8,050	10	0.1%	4,230	110.7%
Wolverhampton	8.7	15.6	15.9	3,380	60	1.8%	1,470	77.0%
Sandwell	7.2	14.4	15.0	3,985	160	4.2%	1,870	88.4%
Walsall	7.6	14.4	14.8	3,385	80	2.4%	1,470	76.8%
Dudley	7.2	13.1	13.6	3,240	110	3.5%	1,490	85.1%
Birmingham	6.1	11.4	11.6	16,360	285	1.8%	7,255	79.7%
Solihull	5.1	11.0	11.5	1,750	75	4.5%	925	112.1%
Stoke-on-Trent	5.3	10.9	11.0	2,605	20	0.8%	1,200	85.4%
Telford and Wrekin	4.7	10.5	10.7	1,615	25	1.6%	855	112.5%
Worcestershire	3.8	9.2	9.4	3,905	65	1.7%	2,310	144.8%
Shropshire	3.5	8.7	8.7	1,825	10	0.6%	1,000	121.2%
Staffordshire	3.2	8.3	8.2	5,445	-15	-0.3%	3,030	125.5%
Herefordshire, County of	3.1	8.1	7.8	960	-30	-3.0%	545	131.3%
Warwickshire	2.7	7.4	7.4	3,395	5	0.1%	2,060	154.3%
Coventry	2.7	6.1	6.4	3,410	180	5.6%	1,875	122.1%
Tamworth	4.5	10.9	11.1	640	10	1.6%	345	116.9%
Cannock Chase	4.3	11.0	10.8	790	-15	-1.9%	425	116.4%
East Staffordshire	3.0	8.9	8.9	750	0	0.0%	430	134.4%
Lichfield	3.0	8.7	8.4	590	-25	-4.1%	320	118.5%
South Staffordshire	2.9	8.3	8.3	665	0	0.0%	415	166.0%
Stafford	2.8	7.4	7.4	675	-5	-0.7%	360	114.3%
Staffordshire Moorlands	2.7	6.7	6.8	435	5	1.2%	260	148.6%
Newcastle-under-Lyme	2.8	6.4	6.4	895	5	0.6%	470	110.6%

¹ The claimant rate is the proportion of the working age population claiming benefits

- All Staffordshire Districts have seen slight decreases in the number of claimants in September with the exception of East Staffordshire which saw an increase of 15 claimants and South Staffordshire which saw no change. The largest decrease was seen in Cannock Chase and Stafford, both seeing a decline of 50 claimants. Tamworth and Cannock Chase continue to record the highest rates in Staffordshire, although Newcastle-under-Lyme and East Staffordshire have the largest caseloads. However, it's important to note all Districts and Boroughs remain lower than the current national and regional rates.

Claimant Counts and Rates in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Wards

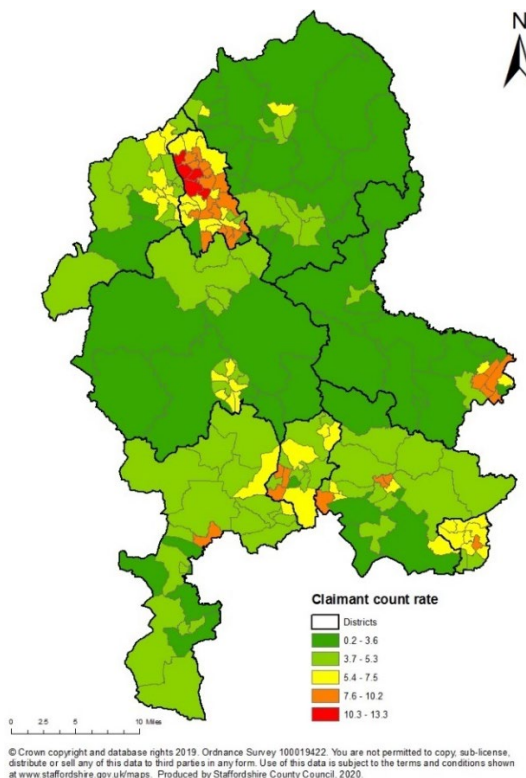
- The following maps and tables provide the latest breakdown of the claimant count by wards in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent.

Claimant Count Rate September 2020

Out of the 201 wards in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent, 57 were at or above the England average of 6.6% for the number of claimants as a proportion of the working age population in September.

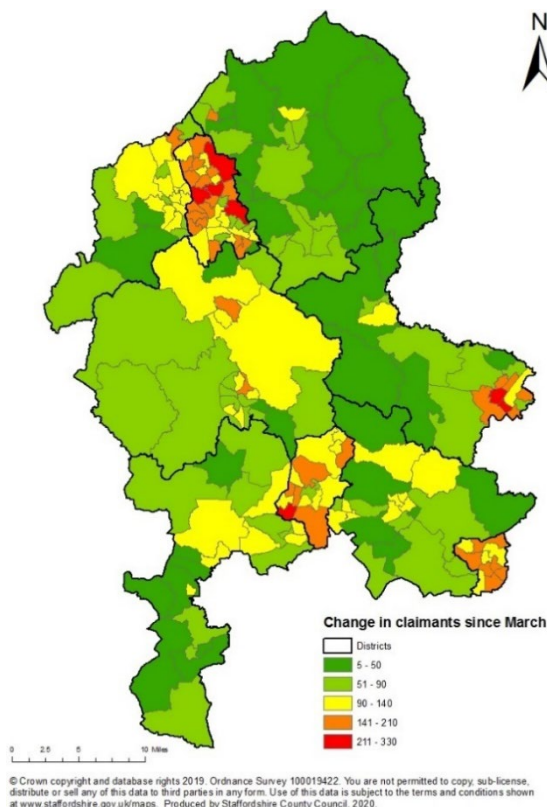
The top 9 wards with the highest claimant count rate were all in Stoke-on-Trent with Etruria and Hanley (13.3% or 670 claimants), Joiner’s Square (13.3% or 585), and Moorcroft (12.7% or 465) having the highest rates.

In Staffordshire, Burton in East Staffordshire (9.4% or 270) and Cannock South in Cannock Chase (9% or 480) had the highest claimant count rates.



Change in Claimant Count since March 2020

The top 4 wards with the highest change in the number of claimants since March 2020 were all in Stoke-on-Trent and included Birches Head and Central Forest Park (330 increase to 720 in total), Etruria and Hanley (315 rise to 670), Bentilee and Ubbertley (300 increase to 700) and Baddeley, Milton and Norton (280 rise to 610).



Youth Claimant Counts and Rates in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Wards

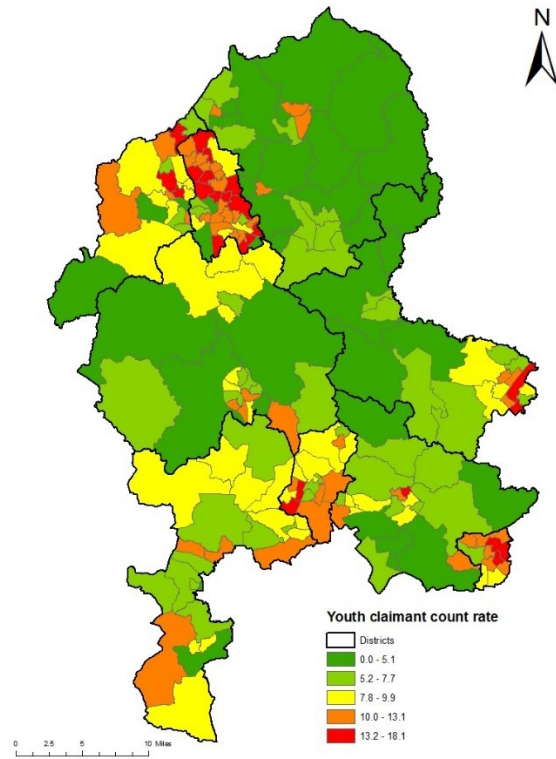
The following maps and tables provide the latest breakdown of the youth claimant count by wards in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent.

Youth Claimant Count Rate September 2020

Out of the 201 wards in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent, 83 were at or above the England average of 9.4% for the number of claimants aged 18-24 as a proportion of the 18-24 population.

Of the top 10 wards with the highest youth claimant count rate 6 were in Stoke-on-Trent including Moorcroft (18.1% - the highest in SSLEP area), Joiner's Square (18.0%), Bradeley and Chell Heath (16.7%), Bentilee and Ubberley (16.5%), Meir North (15.6%) and Meir South (15.2%).

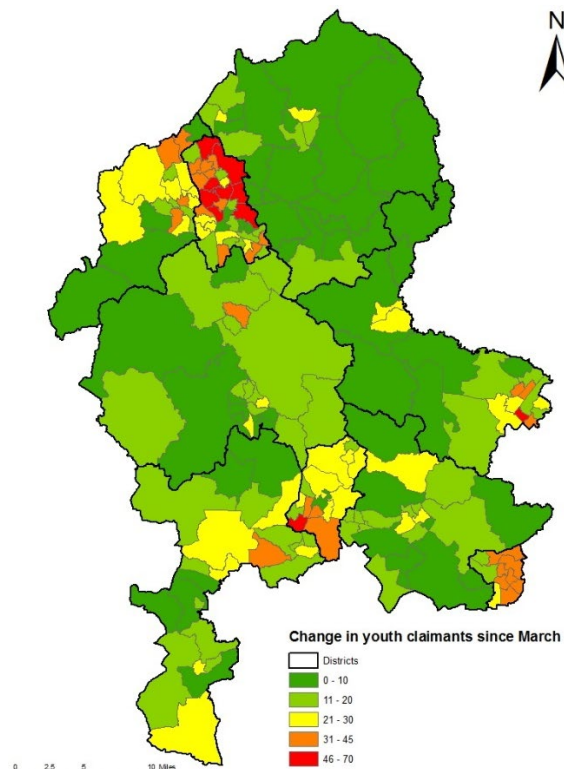
In Staffordshire, the highest rate was Glascote in Tamworth with 16.4%, followed by Stapenhill in East Staffordshire (15.4%), and Cross heath (15.2%) and Holditch & Chesteron (15.0%) in Newcastle-under-Lyme.



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Change in Youth Claimant Count since March 2020

The top 4 wards with the highest change in the number of youth claimants since March 2020 were all in Stoke-on-Trent including Etruria and Hanley (70 rise to 115 in total), Bentilee and Ubberley (60 rise to 150), Birches Head and Central Forest Park (increase of 55 to 125), and Moorcroft (55 rise to 95).



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Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) Furloughed Jobs²

- Following a period of successful Government lobbying, HMRC have now rereleased local authority level breakdowns of the CJRS scheme for claims submitted to HMRC by 30th September for the period up to 31st August.
- HMRC have stated that the CJRS claims data for July and August is not yet complete as claims for periods from 1 July onwards may still be made. This means that the figures for July and August are preliminary and are likely to be revised upwards in future releases
- Based on the provisional figures, **Staffordshire had the 2nd highest number of furloughed job claims up to the end of August in the WM with 40,500** behind only Birmingham and equivalent to 10% of eligible workers. This is to be expected given Staffordshire is the 2nd largest strategic authority area in the region.
- **Staffordshire's rate of furlough is slightly below the regional and national averages of 11%.**
- **Stoke-on-Trent had 10,200 jobs still furloughed**, equivalent to 9% of eligible jobs.

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) Statistics: October 2020

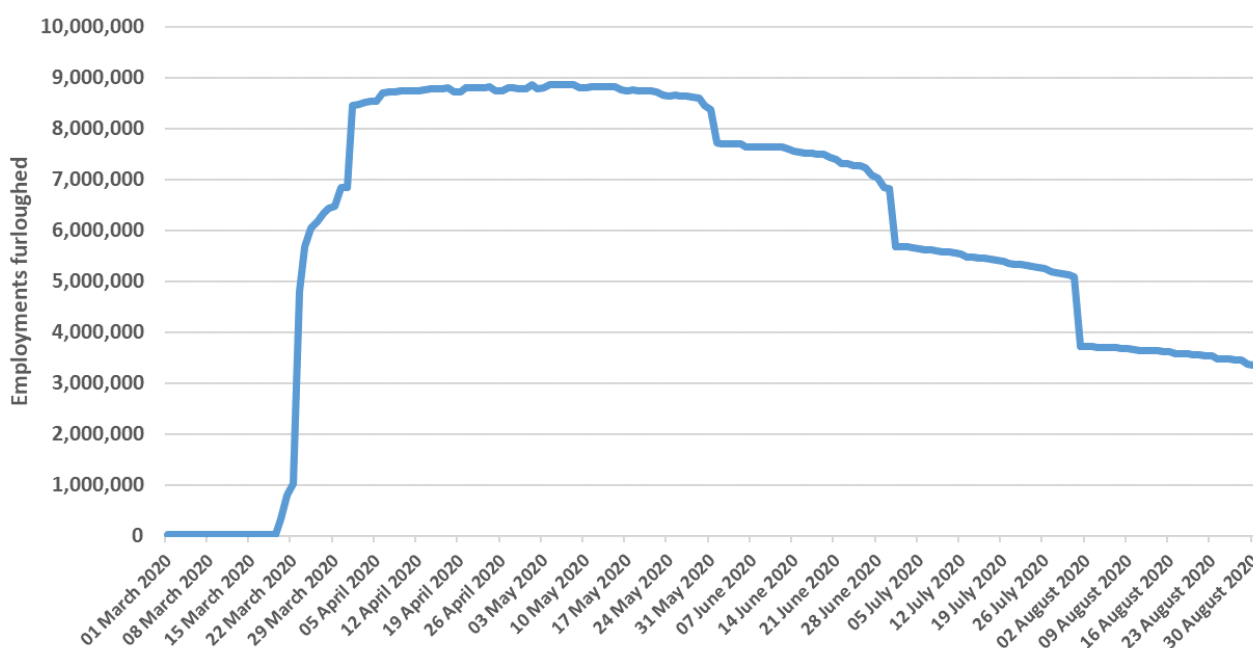
County and district / unitary authority	Employments furloughed	Eligible employments	Take-up rate
Cannock Chase	5,200	46,400	11%
Lichfield	5,400	47,300	11%
South Staffordshire	5,400	48,300	11%
Tamworth	4,200	38,400	11%
West Midlands	278,400	2,580,400	11%
East Staffordshire	5,600	58,400	10%
Staffordshire Moorlands	4,100	42,300	10%
Staffordshire County	40,500	398,200	10%
United Kingdom	3,274,900	30,353,200	11%
SSLEP	50,700	510,800	10%
Newcastle-under-Lyme	5,100	55,200	9%
Stafford	5,700	61,900	9%
Stoke-on-Trent UA	10,200	112,600	9%

Source: HMRC CJRS and PAYE Real Time Information

² Source: HMRC - <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/coronavirus-job-retention-scheme-statistics-october-2020>

- These latest provisional figures show significant declines in the number of jobs furloughed in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent up to the end of August.
- **Since the peak of 135,700 claims up to the end of June and as the economy has come out of lockdown, the provisional figures show that Staffordshire has seen furloughed jobs decline by 70%.**
- However, there is still concern as to how many of those workers which remain on furlough are to return to work once furlough ends and is replaced by reduced Government support through the Job Support Scheme.
- The national data provides more detailed breakdowns than available for local authorities and looking at the national picture allows for greater insight into who is currently being supported by the furlough scheme.
- Nationally there were 631,300 employers making 3,274,900 furloughed job claims up to the end of August.
- Above two thirds (70%) of claims were made by SMEs with the remaining 30% in large businesses with 250+ employees. While of those workers furloughed, two thirds (66%) were fully furloughed and the remaining third partially furloughed.
- The following chart shows the trend in furloughed job claims nationally, it appears that as lockdown has eased furlough claims have gradually declined although the drop in August is based on provisional data with future revisions potentially seeing an uplift in claims.

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) Statistics: October 2020 Time Series



- Nationally, the identified high-risk sectors of Arts, entertainment and recreation, Accommodation and Food, Construction, Manufacturing and Wholesale and Retail remain amongst the highest for the number and rate of jobs that have been furloughed:

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) Statistics: October 2020 by Sector

Sector	Employers			Employments			claims made for periods to 31 August (£ million)
	Employers furloughing staff	Eligible employers	Take-up rate	Employments furloughed	Eligible employments	Take-up rate	
Arts, entertainment and recreation	20,100	40,000	50%	218,400	660,900	33%	1,741
Accommodation and food services	58,900	130,600	45%	592,800	2,216,300	27%	6,175
Other service activities	35,700	92,800	38%	129,500	570,900	23%	1,146
Construction	72,100	231,300	31%	185,700	1,285,300	14%	3,535
Professional, scientific and technical	97,000	313,200	31%	290,200	2,213,200	13%	2,992
Manufacturing	41,100	100,600	41%	292,500	2,445,100	12%	4,789
Wholesale and retail; repair of motor vehicles	95,200	243,600	39%	535,100	4,537,400	12%	7,369
Real estate	17,000	46,000	37%	54,300	435,700	12%	684
Administrative and support services	59,100	164,400	36%	323,900	2,739,800	12%	3,688
Transportation and storage	23,700	73,400	32%	131,200	1,343,800	10%	2,194
Information and communication	38,700	155,000	25%	115,700	1,249,500	9%	1,163
Water supply, sewerage and waste	2,000	5,600	36%	11,600	174,700	7%	212
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	3,800	33,800	11%	10,000	182,200	6%	120
Mining and quarrying	300	1,000	29%	3,000	51,900	6%	93
Education	17,100	39,200	43%	156,400	3,327,000	5%	1,198
Health and social work	33,000	100,900	33%	173,600	4,111,500	4%	1,440
Finance and insurance	9,100	34,600	26%	30,100	1,105,400	3%	360
Households	2,600	81,600	3%	3,200	138,500	2%	41
Energy production and supply	300	1,200	29%	1,600	133,600	1%	91
Public administration and defence; social security	200	7,800	3%	6,000	1,357,300	0%	43
Unknown and other	4,300	23,300	-	10,000	73,300	-	100
Total	631,300	1,919,800	33%	3,274,900	30,353,100	11%	39,173

Source: HMRC CJRS and PAYE Real Time Information

- Beyond the short-term, specific industrial sectors and the associated labour market may continue to be adversely affected, particularly due to changes to Government policy interventions such as local lockdowns under the 3 Tier system, economic support measures and market conditions.
- A particular risk is the ongoing changes to the Government's Job Retention Scheme (JRS) which has been successful in enabling many people to remain in employment but furloughed during the crisis. Whilst the scheme has been extended to the end of October, it is being gradually withdrawn from August onwards, and even with the announcement of the new Job Support Scheme from November onwards, the reduced Government support may lead to potential further increases in unemployment.

Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS)³

- **Staffordshire has seen 26,200 self-employed workers claim for the second SEISS grant up to the end of September** and a take-up rate of 66% for those eligible through the scheme, just below the regional and national average take-up rates of 67%.
- **Stoke-on-Trent had 7,500 SEISS claims up to the end of September**, equivalent to 72% of those eligible. This is the highest rate the West Midlands Region upper-tier authorities.

Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) Statistics: October 2020

County and district / unitary authority	Total potentially eligible population	Total no. of claims made to 30/9/20	Total value of claims made to 30/9/20 (£)	Average value of claims made to 30/9/20 (£)	Total Take-Up Rate
Stoke-on-Trent UA	10,500	7,500	16,800,000	2,200	72%
Cannock Chase	5,000	3,600	9,800,000	2,700	71%
Tamworth	3,000	2,000	5,100,000	2,500	69%
Newcastle-under-Lyme	5,200	3,500	8,900,000	2,500	68%
SSLEP	50,000	33,700	84,200,000	2,499	67%
Lichfield	4,800	3,200	8,700,000	2,700	67%
South Staffordshire	5,300	3,500	9,300,000	2,600	67%
West Midlands (all West Midlands)	261,000	175,000	424,000,000	2,400	67%
United Kingdom	3,390,000	2,261,000	5,703,000,000	2,500	67%
Staffordshire County	39,500	26,200	67,400,000	2,600	66%
East Staffordshire	5,200	3,400	7,800,000	2,300	65%
Stafford	5,600	3,600	9,300,000	2,600	63%
Staffordshire Moorlands	5,400	3,300	8,500,000	2,500	62%

- Nationally, **transport and storage, construction, education and arts, entertainment and recreation are the sectors which have seen the highest take-up rates.**

³ Source: HMRC - <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/self-employment-income-support-scheme-statistics-october-2020>

The Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) and the Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLs)⁴

- Updated data published by the British Business Bank shows that businesses in all parts of the UK are continuing to make use of and benefiting from Coronavirus loan schemes.
- The data shows the regional distribution of loans under the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) and the Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLs), which are schemes designed to provide financial support to businesses across the UK that are losing revenue and seeing their cashflow disrupted, as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak.
- As at the 4th October, there were 4,722 CBILS loans in the West Midlands for a total of just over £1.1bn. This represented 8% of the total number of CBILS loans UK-wide.
- While for BBLs loans the West Midlands there were a total of 102,322 loans for a total of just over £3.1bn and represented 8% of all UK loans, behind only the North West and East of England outside of London and the South East (34% combined).
- Generally, the proportion of loans in each region is equivalent to their share of the business population across the UK.
- The Wholesale and Retail sector has accessed a significantly higher proportion of CBILS loans (18%) than its share of the business population (9%), with Manufacturing (13% v 5%) and Accommodation and Food Services (8% v 3%) following a similar pattern.
- The Wholesale and Retail sector also accessed a relatively high proportion of Bounce Back Loans compared to its business population share (16% v 9%), as did businesses in Accommodation and Food Services (8% v 3%) and Real Estate Services (6% v 2%).
- The British Business Bank has also released constituency level data for CBILS and BBLs. The following table shows the breakdown for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent constituencies:

⁴ Source: British Business Bank - <https://www.british-business-bank.co.uk/regional-analysis-of-coronavirus-loan-schemes-shows-continued-even-distribution-across-the-uk/>

Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) and the Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BLS) Statistics: 4th October 2020

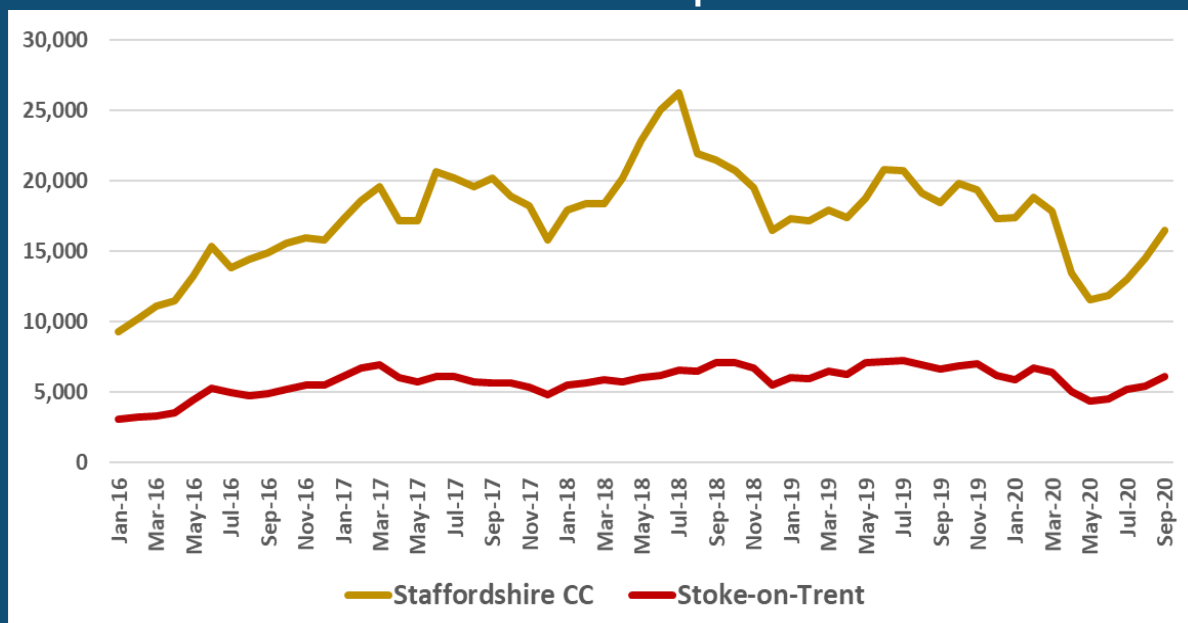
Constituency	CBILS		BLS		TOTAL		% of SSLEP Loans	% of SSLEP Businesses
	Number of Loans Offered	Value of Loans Offered (£)	Number of Loans Offered	Value of Loans Offered (£)	Number of Loans Offered	Value of Loans Offered (£)		
Burton	94	19,793,958	1,800	52,831,717	1,894	72,625,675	10%	10%
Lichfield	91	16,941,556	1,781	51,077,851	1,872	68,019,407	10%	11%
Tamworth	119	35,404,678	1,612	47,623,498	1,731	83,028,176	9%	9%
Cannock Chase	90	19,273,531	1,602	46,260,210	1,692	65,533,741	9%	9%
Stone	55	11,604,993	1,597	47,062,473	1,652	58,667,466	9%	10%
South Staffordshire	65	15,072,530	1,578	46,381,395	1,643	61,453,925	9%	10%
Stafford	69	10,528,405	1,468	41,887,171	1,537	52,415,576	8%	9%
Stoke-on-Trent Central	65	17,929,751	1,348	41,416,847	1,413	59,346,598	8%	6%
Newcastle-under-Lyme	69	17,096,032	1,295	39,677,826	1,364	56,773,858	7%	6%
Stoke-on-Trent North	66	12,698,562	1,248	36,497,202	1,314	49,195,764	7%	6%
Staffordshire Moorlands	50	7,507,782	1,224	35,158,515	1,274	42,666,297	7%	9%
Stoke-on-Trent South	48	13,590,439	1,032	30,883,940	1,080	44,474,379	6%	5%
Staffordshire	702	153,223,465	13,957	407,960,656	14,659	561,184,121	79%	84%
Stoke-on-Trent	179	44,218,751	3,628	108,797,989	3,807	153,016,740	21%	16%
SSLEP	881	197,442,216	17,585	516,758,645	18,466	714,200,861	100%	100%
West midlands	4,722	1,119,000,000	102,322	3,117,000,000	107,044	4,236,000,000		
UK	56,491	13,928,241,876	1,268,981	38,330,294,758	1,325,472	52,258,536,634		

- As at the 4th October, there were a combined 18,466 CBILS and BLS loans in the SSLEP area equivalent to £714m, this represented 17% of the total loans in the West Midlands. The proportion of loans in the SSLEP area is largely in-line with areas share of the business population in the West Midlands (18%).
- In terms of local constituencies, Burton had the highest number of loans with 1,894 while Tamworth had the highest value of all loans with just over £83m.
- For most constituencies the proportion of loans in the SSLEP area is largely in-line with their share of the business population in the SSLEP. However, the constituencies in the north including Stoke-on-Trent Central, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Stoke-on-Trent North and Stoke-on-Trent South all have higher proportions of the total loans in the SSLEP compared to their share of the business population.
- This financial support has been vital in supporting businesses across all sectors, protecting jobs, but in particular those in sectors that have been impacted hardest by the pandemic, helping to keep people in work.

Job Vacancies⁵

- As seen over recent months, we have continued to witness a recruitment uplift in Staffordshire during September. Between August 2020 and September 2020 there was an **increase in job vacancies of 14% equivalent to nearly 2,000 more job vacancies which is above the growth seen regionally (11%) and nationally (9%).**
- **Stoke-on-Trent saw a 12% growth with just over 630 more vacancies in September compared to August.**
- **Staffordshire's year-on-year decline in September stood at 11% which was in-line with the decline seen nationally,** this is certainly a positive change give that over previous months of the crisis we have generally seen greater year-on-year declines than those seen nationally associated to having more jobs in the sectors hardest hit by COVID.
- **Stoke-on-Trent fared better than the national average with a year-on-year decline in vacancies of 8% in September.**

Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Unique Job Vacancies Trend



- Although we have seen a decline in vacancies for most occupations since the crisis started, particularly within sectors and roles hardest hit by the lockdown, we are starting to see some growth in far more occupations than witnessed previously during the pandemic.
- **The main recruitment growth occupations between Feb (pre-COVID) and September have been elementary storage occupations, nurses, cleaners, drivers, plumbers and care workers/managers.**

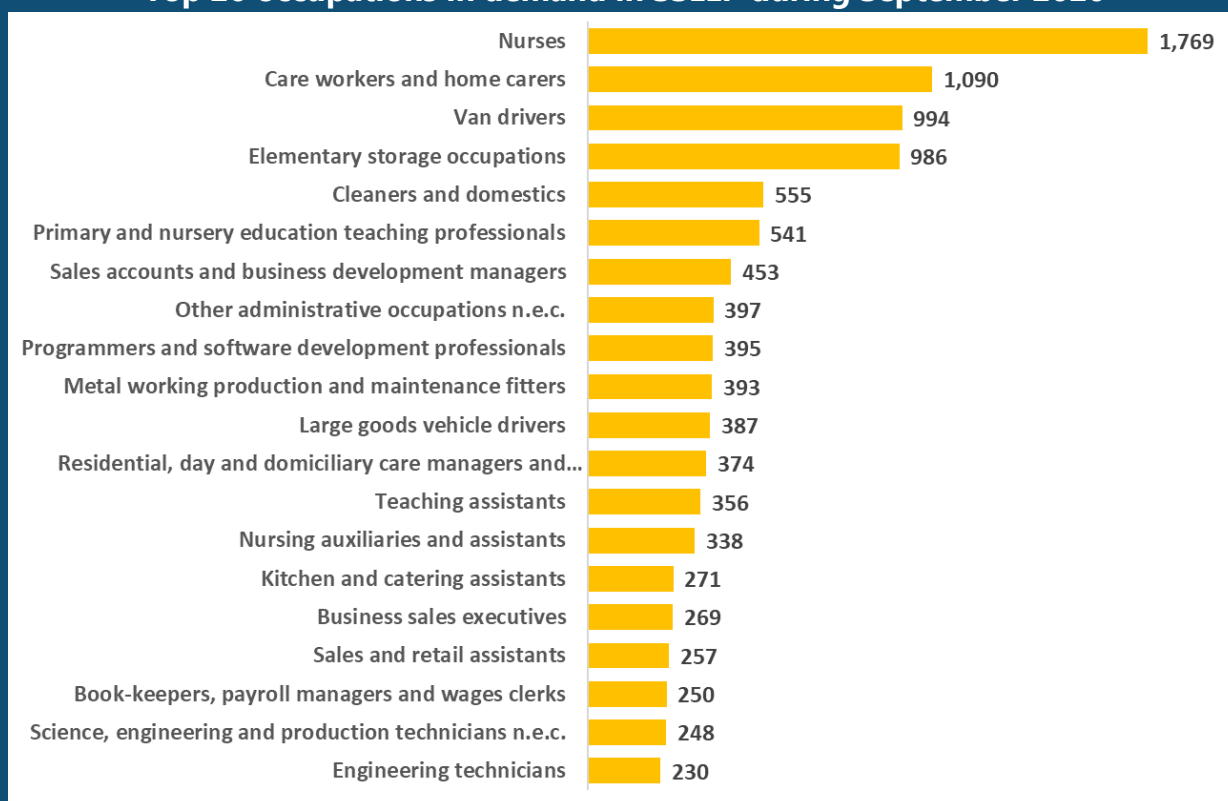
⁵ Source: EMSI

Top 20 occupations declining and top 20 increasing between Feb 2020 (Pre-COVID) and Sept 2020 in SSLEP



- While demand for **nurses and social care workers and home carers** remains by far the strongest of all occupations. Alongside health and social care roles, there is also comparatively high demand for workers to support distribution including van drivers and **elementary storage occupations**. There is also demand for **primary and nursery education teaching professional**, which is an area which was badly impacted during lockdown. As well as these more sector specific roles, there is continuing and growing demand for workers which support numerous sectors including **sales and business development managers, programmers and software development professionals, admin roles and cleaners**.

Top 20 occupations in demand in SSLEP during September 2020



- However, the overall fall in the number of job vacancies and increasing competition for jobs suggests that those unfortunate enough to lose their jobs may struggle to find new ones at least in the short-term, although there are still opportunities available with increasingly more coming online.

Job Vacancies Summary Table

Area / SSLEP Occupational Group	Sept 2019 Unique Postings	Feb 2020 Unique Postings	July 2020 Unique Postings	Aug 2020 Unique Postings	Sept 2020 Unique Postings	Aug-Sept 2020 (Month on Month Change)	Aug-Sept 2020 Monthly % Change	Feb-Sept 2020 (Month on Month Change)	Feb-Sept 2020 Monthly % Change	Sept 2019- Sept 2020 (Year on Year Change)	Sept 2019- Sept 2020 Annual % Change
Staffordshire CC	18,422	18,813	12,976	14,475	16,455	1,980	14%	-2,358	-13%	-1,967	-11%
Stoke-on-Trent	6,622	6,713	5,229	5,453	6,084	631	12%	-629	-9%	-538	-8%
SSLEP	25,044	25,526	18,205	19,928	22,539	2,611	13%	-2,987	-12%	-2,505	-10%
West Midlands	175,414	171,108	119,528	125,738	138,972	13,234	11%	-32,136	-19%	-36,442	-21%
England	1,911,080	1,967,280	1,496,347	1,568,662	1,704,867	136,205	9%	-262,413	-13%	-206,213	-11%
South Staffordshire	511	648	589	652	757	105	16%	109	17%	246	48%
Stafford	4,266	4,376	3,289	3,678	4,343	665	18%	-33	-1%	77	2%
Newcastle-under-Lyme	1,728	1,690	1,272	1,451	1,627	176	12%	-63	-4%	-101	-6%
East Staffordshire	3,102	3,206	2,236	2,607	3,013	406	16%	-193	-6%	-89	-3%
Lichfield	2,120	2,050	1,571	1,730	1,880	150	9%	-170	-8%	-240	-11%
Cannock Chase	2,236	2,201	1,598	1,752	1,978	226	13%	-223	-10%	-258	-12%
Tamworth	2,754	2,753	1,553	1,609	1,783	174	11%	-970	-35%	-971	-35%
Staffordshire Moorlands	1,705	1,889	868	996	1,074	78	8%	-815	-43%	-631	-37%
Elementary Occupations	2,488	2,115	1,722	2,088	2,578	490	23%	463	22%	90	4%
Process, Plant and Machine Operatives	2,128	2,033	1,260	1,734	2,185	451	26%	152	7%	57	3%
Caring, Leisure and Other Service Occupations	2,349	2,421	2,141	2,204	2,477	273	12%	56	2%	128	5%
Managers, Directors and Senior Officials	1,466	1,699	1,450	1,501	1,590	89	6%	-109	-6%	124	8%
Professional Occupations	5,542	6,371	5,315	5,365	5,806	441	8%	-565	-9%	264	5%
Skilled Trades Occupations	2,418	2,293	1,330	1,614	1,911	297	18%	-382	-17%	-507	-21%
Associate Professional and Technical Occupations	4,822	4,938	3,031	3,334	3,616	282	8%	-1,322	-27%	-1,206	-25%
Sales and Customer Service Occupations	1,171	1,055	541	612	692	80	13%	-363	-34%	-479	-41%
Administrative and Secretarial Occupations	2,660	2,601	1,415	1,476	1,684	208	14%	-917	-35%	-976	-37%

Notes

Claimant Count and ILO Unemployment Definitions

The Claimant Count is a measure of the number of working age people claiming benefits principally for the reason of being unemployed, including those claiming Jobseeker's Allowance plus those who claim Universal Credit and are required to seek work and be available for work.

ILO unemployment data is obtained from the national Labour Force Survey. The definition for unemployment is those without a job, want a job, have actively sought work in the last four weeks and are available to start work in the next two weeks, or; are out of work, have found a job and are waiting to start work in the next two weeks.

Understanding the differences between the Claimant Count and ILO Unemployment

According to the UK Claimant Count for May, claimant unemployment increased to 2.8 million and a rate of 7.8% – a rise of 125% in just two months, the fastest rate of growth on record. However, the ILO measure shows that unemployment has remained largely unchanged at around 1.3 million and a rate of 3.9%. Understanding the reasons why there is this difference is important for policymakers trying to determine whether we are currently in the middle of an unemployment crisis or whether this is to come as the Job Retention Scheme (JRS) is gradually withdrawn.

The following section tries to explain this incredibly confusing, complicated and often contradictory data.

The main reasons for the difference between the Claimant Count and ILO measures include:

- **The two measures describe different periods** – for claimant unemployment, the numbers refer to claimants on a specific 'count date' with the last three being 12 March, 9 April and 14 May. Therefore, these are point-in-time estimates, and handily we can compare what the situation was about a week before the crisis (12 March) with how things were two months later (14 May).

The ILO measure is a three-month average of survey responses between early February and late April 2020. This means that two months pre-date the crisis, while one month (April) is since the crisis began. However, ONS does release [single month estimates](#) (latest available April 2020) which show a drop in employment in April of 320,000 explained almost entirely by fewer people self-employed but only slight increase of 40,000 unemployed. Instead there is a steep rise in 'economic inactivity' which is those who are out of work but are not looking and/ or available for work.

- **Difference in measuring economic inactivity/worklessness** - the Claimant Count measures those who are required to look/be available for work as a condition of benefit, while the ILO measure is those who say that they actually are actively seeking and available for work. The Labour Force Survey is recording a single-month increase in the number of people out of work (unemployed and economically inactive) of 330,000, but nearly 290,000 of these people are not looking for work (economically inactive). The majority of this rise is people previously self-employed and are either not eligible for, or not yet been paid, income under the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme (SEISS).
- **Claimant Count now includes more workers on low-income** - In the Claimant Count, people with earned income can be counted as claimant unemployed if their earnings in the reference month are below a set threshold (£338 per month for a single person, or £541 per month for a couple). Before Universal Credit (UC), short-hours working was penalised and so these numbers were generally low. However, UC incentivises short-hours work, and so we've seen a growth in recent years in the number of people treated as being unemployed but who have some earnings. The detailed data for UC suggests that 190,000 of the 1 million increase between March and April was accounted for by working claimants – so around one fifth of the rise.
- **Difference in recording people who are 'in work'** – in the Labour Force Survey you are recorded as in employment even if you have not done any work that week but 'have a job or business that you were away from... (and that you expect to return to)". Obviously this category of workers 'away' from work now captures about 9 million people furloughed under the Job Retention Scheme (JRS) who are continuing to earn, but it also includes people who consider themselves to be employees or self-employed but who have no earnings. 'Real time' Pay As You Earn data suggests that this may be mainly employees, with the number of paid employees falling by 450,000 between March and April. This 450,000 could include a large number of people who may have been due to start a job in March or April but have been told that their job isn't available yet and may also be people who had very few or irregular hours before the JRS was introduced and whom employers have not submitted a JRS claim. These people may be describing themselves as being workers with a job that they are away from, rather than as being actively seeking a new job.
- **Benefit take-up/eligibility impact on the Claimant Count** – given that the claimant count only counts those who claim benefit it may be under-stating the growth in worklessness. We know that many unemployed people do not claim, and particularly young people (usually due to eligibility). Under UC, there have been on average 450,000 more ILO unemployed young people than claimant unemployed and even if that gap narrows in the crisis, as tends to happen in recessions, it's possible that ILO youth unemployment will remain significantly higher than the claimant measure.

Summary table outlining the potential estimates for the Claimant Count rise in April

Potential Proportion of Claimant Count Change Mar-20 to Apr-20	Potential Number of Claimants	Potential Reasons for being a Claimant	Labour Force Survey Categorisation
44%	450,000	New Job Starters/PT employees/Self-employed with no income claiming Universal Credit not supported by JRS	In Employment - even if not done any work that week but 'have a job or business that were away from... (and that expect to return to)' – rather than unemployed
28%	292,500	Self-employed ceased trading or have very low income claiming Universal Credit (and are either not eligible for, or not yet been paid, income under the SEISS)	Economically inactive - people out of work but are not looking for work - majority people previously self-employed
18%	190,000	Working part-time low income workers claiming Universal Credit	In Employment
10%	100,000	Potential Redundancies	
100%	1,032,500	Claimant Count Increase Mar-20 to Apr-20	

- It is hoped that this analysis has provided further clarity as to why we have seen such a spike in the number of claimants early in the crisis. What is clear is that we have seen a record fall between March and April in the number of people working and not being supported by JRS. We have also seen worklessness rising at a faster rate than at any time before. Although very few of the decline in the numbers 'working' had translated into higher unemployment in April, it is envisaged that this may be the case if people are unable to get back into work quickly.
- Looking forward, the growth in claims for UC is slowing and so the growth in the Claimant Count is also likely to slow as well. That said claimant unemployment is currently at the highest level on record. The main concern now is what happens to many workers as JRS is gradually withdrawn and it is important that we are thinking now about how to support people that are made redundant and what policy interventions are needed.