

Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Economic Bulletin

Issue 56 - April 2025

Welcome to the latest edition of the Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Economic Bulletin produced by our Economy, Skills, and Insight Teams, which provides the timeliest analysis of official Government data, national intelligence, and local insights on the state of the local economy.

Alongside information on the Claimant Count and Job Vacancies that will be a part of every Bulletin, 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 are being impacted the hardest by unemployment and a reliance on work-related benefits across Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent and where there may be a greater need for support. We also provide analysis of the latest business insolvency data to further understand how businesses are faring during the current economic climate.

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 to make sure that it continues to meet your needs. 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

Local Picture

- In Staffordshire having seen **improvement in the local economy and labour market following the COVID pandemic**, as seen nationally, we have seen unemployment, youth unemployment and dependency on work-related benefits increase during the energy and cost-of-living crisis.
- This month we have **seen an increase in the Claimant Count which is reflective of the challenging economic conditions that businesses continue to operate in across the country. Changes by the Department of Work and Pensions introduced in May 2024 are also expected to increase the claimant count nationwide.**
- **Job vacancies have increased slightly this month, and new job postings in Staffordshire are above pre-pandemic levels. In contrast, job vacancies in the region have declined below pre-pandemic levels whilst the national increase is lower.**
- **We will continue to support our residents into work and ensure that Staffordshire has the strong workforce it needs to grow the economy.**
- We also continue to support **local businesses that face ongoing challenging conditions** due to a wide range of factors including **high interest rates and energy prices, increased commodity costs, increased wage levels and lower consumer demand.**
- Looking at the local data in more detail, following increases in the claimant count since before the start of the year, **the number of work-related benefit claimants in Staffordshire increased by 180 claimants this month to a total of 16,045 claimants.**
- **The claimant rate for Staffordshire has increased from 2.9% to 3.0% this month** of the working age population. **Staffordshire saw an increase of 1.1% this month, lower than the regional increase of 1.8% and the national increase of 1.7%.**
- **Staffordshire continues to have one of the lowest rates in the region, far lower than the average for the region 5.6% which increased from 5.5%, and lower than the average for England 4.3% which increased from 4.2% this month.** We will continue to support those residents that unfortunately find themselves out of work to access employment through our partnership working and dedicated Jobs Brokerage service.
- This month the **youth claimant count in Staffordshire saw an increase of 70 claimants with the total number of youth claimants now 3,160. Staffordshire saw a 2.3% increase, lower than the 3.1% increase in the West Midlands and the 3.0% increase in England. The proportion of young people in Staffordshire aged 18-24 claiming work-related Universal Credit increased from 4.9% to 5.0%.** It is important to state that **Staffordshire continues to be lower than the national rate of 5.8% and far lower than the regional rate of 7.8%.** Our focus continues to be to engage with our younger residents and support them to find employment or to continue in education and training.
- Turning to job vacancies, **Staffordshire saw a 0.1% increase in the number of available job vacancies between February and March to a total of 13,000. This is lower than**

the number of work-related benefit claimants. Stoke-on-Trent saw a 1% decrease in job vacancies to a total of 5,000 which is significantly lower than the number of claimants. Across the region in the last month there was a 0.3% increase, and nationally there was a 2% increase in the number of job vacancies.

- Considering the **top 20 job vacancy occupations in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent**, demand for roles in social care continue to remain high with **'Care Workers & Home Carers'** being the most in demand occupations.
- The following occupations **'Cleaners & Domestics,' 'Sales Related'** and **'Secondary Education Teaching Professionals'** also have strong demand.
- In the Education sector there is particularly high demand for **'Teaching Assistants'** and **'Teaching Professionals.'**
- The Logistics sector continues to have high demand for **'Large Goods Vehicle Drivers,' 'Warehouse Operatives,'** and **'Fork-lift Truck Drivers.'**
- There is high demand in the Health and Social Care sector for **'Social Workers.'**
- In the Hospitality sector, **'Kitchen & Catering Assistants'** roles are most in demand.
- In the Motor Trade **'Vehicle Technicians, Mechanics & Electricians'** continue to be in demand.
- There is strong demand for **'Customer Service,' 'Bookkeepers, Payroll Managers & Wages Clerks'** and **'Chartered & Certified Accountants'** across business sectors.
- Demand for **'Managers & Directors'** and **'Sales & Retail Assistants'** in the Retail and Wholesale sector remain strong.
- In the Engineering sector **'Mechanical Engineers,' 'Production & Process Engineers'** and **'Engineering Technicians'** are in demand.
- It is in these areas of the economy where job vacancies remain particularly high and where we are hearing reports of **labour and skills shortages** with a mismatch of workers or skills to fill vacant jobs.
- This has the **potential to slow down economic growth and limit business survival unless the labour shortage and skills gap is quickly and effectively addressed.** Clearly employment support organisations, skills providers and the Government's Plan for Jobs including the Connect to Work schemes and new Skills Bootcamps have a vital role in upskilling and reskilling jobseekers into areas of demand and preventing them becoming long-term unemployed. Government and business sectors have a key role in ensuring that jobs in areas of demand are attracting workers with good pay and terms and conditions to help prevent labour shortages.
- There continues to be a high number of jobs available in the local economy and the need now is to ensure that there is a strong local labour pool with skilled workers able to fill these roles to support business recovery/survival and improve prosperity through better pay. The national and local support which is in place to support those that have been unfortunate enough to lose their jobs is vital in both **reskilling and upskilling** as well as enabling potential applicants to access the opportunities available. Encouraging those that have

become **economically inactive** since COVID through the **Connect to Work Programme** will further help to address labour shortages and skills gaps.

- **Staffordshire County Council's dedicated Job Brokerage Service** is designed to do exactly this by matching local people, employers, and training providers to fill jobs and provide people with the jobs and careers they need.
- There are clear **emerging opportunities for job creation in the digital economy (including online retail and e-commerce) and the green economy (including retrofitting homes to improve energy efficiency, electric cars e.g., Jaguar Land Rover, renewables, and hydrogen e.g., JCB).**
- We will also look to build on our existing strengths including **engineering and advanced manufacturing** through the adoption of AI, Automation and Machine Learning, **construction** to achieve Government house building targets and build major new infrastructure projects such as the West Midlands Freight Interchange which will create 8,500 new jobs. Also **advanced logistics** with ecommerce has continued demand with the announcement by Pets At Home in Stafford creating over 750 new jobs.
- **We will continue to support our residents into work and ensure that Staffordshire has the strong workforce it needs to grow the economy.**



Local Initiatives

- We are continuing to prioritise support for businesses and people to help deliver growth across Staffordshire, as well as putting in place the support needed locally during the cost-of-living and energy crisis.
- Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent businesses that have been turned down by other lenders can now apply to the **Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Business Loan Fund**, supporting businesses to grow through affordable, unsecured loans from £10,000 to £50,000. To find out more visit [here](#).
- The **Get Started and Grow scheme** has been extended which provides fully funded support for 0- to 5-year-old businesses. Businesses have already saved thousands by getting accountancy, business planning, website and branding professionally sorted completely free of charge. Now everyone, from those just thinking about setting up a side-business to those who have got past the tricky first few years can get the support that they need. It is all in response to what you have said is most important for your business growth. [To apply for fully funded SME support.](#)
- Businesses in Staffordshire are able to benefit from a new free recruitment service which will help to match their employment vacancies with appropriate potential candidates. The **Staffordshire Jobs and Careers Service**, provides advice and support to both businesses and people looking for employment opportunities. It will match vacancies with candidates looking for jobs in certain sectors and with appropriate skills. The service is working with a range of partner organisations, and a team of specialist brokers will advise employers and potential employees with options available to them. [Find out more about Staffordshire Jobs and Careers.](#)
- **Need some support? Contact the Growth Hub** - The Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Growth Hub is your first port of call for any business-support related enquiry. It acts as the focal point for businesses that wish to grow by referring them to co-ordinated and cohesive growth programmes, business networks, growth groups and links to specialist information, advice, and services. If you would like a free of charge appointment with a qualified Growth Hub Business Advisor to discuss what options are available to support the growth of your business, please contact them on 0300 111 8002.
- **Help To Grow: Management programme** is 90% funded by the government so you only pay £750. Delivered in partnership with Small Business Charter, courses are running at leading business schools across the UK. This programme includes:
 - access 12-weeks of learning designed to fit alongside work commitments
 - develop a bespoke business growth plan to help your business reach its full potential
 - get 1:1 support from a business mentor
 - learn from peers and network with businesses just like yoursTo find out more [visit](#).

- The **Staffordshire Business and Enterprise Network (SBEN)** has introduced more support for businesses in Staffordshire. The Low Carbon Business Evolution Programme can help you to reduce your carbon footprint and increase energy efficiency. It has now been widened to include an additional Energy Efficiency Review for a business that has previously had one, and grants towards the capital costs for solar projects. Membership of SBEN is still free until the end of next March. Membership includes access to the Carbon Tracker tool. **Why join SBEN?**
- **Businesses in Staffordshire can now apply for free energy assessments through the Green Solutions scheme.** The scheme aims to help businesses reduce their energy consumption and costs for a greener future and more sustainable business practices. Businesses will get a free energy assessment plus expert advice to help improve energy efficiency and support to implement the proposed measures. Firms signing up will also benefit from complimentary Carbon Literacy Training. To apply and submit an expression of interest, businesses can visit the official Green Solutions website. A dedicated member of the Green Solutions team will review the submission and reach out to discuss the next steps.
- **Save up to 15% off your energy costs.** Sub-metering monitoring systems are a cost-effective way for Staffordshire businesses to manage and reduce their energy use. Sub-metering monitoring uses a combination of hardware and software to collect and analyse data about energy performance. SBEN (Staffordshire Business Environment Network), through Staffordshire County Council, is providing businesses with a sub-metering monitoring grant of up to £5000 (50% match funded) to get everything set up. Find out more and apply
- **Staffordshire targets gigabit connectivity for residents and businesses** - A drive to connect Staffordshire residents and businesses to gigabit technology over the next eight years will be coordinated by the county council. Working with broadband and mobile providers, developers and national government, the county council will be aiming to ensure the vast majority of properties can access gigabit speeds by 2030. As part of the government's Levelling Up agenda, Project Gigabit aims to reach those premises in the county that are not considered commercially viable. The new Gigafast Staffordshire team (renamed from the Superfast Staffordshire team) will take a leadership role in the county to deliver the programme locally. The county council will also be working with government on its Shared Rural Network programme to boost 4G mobile connectivity. As well as improving everyday life, the move to gigabit technology could boost the local by hundreds of millions of pounds and also supports the county council's climate change commitments - with smart technology reducing energy consumption and cutting carbon emissions. The county council launched the Community Fibre Partnership support fund for communities which could not be reached by the main programme which helped nine communities to benefit, with a further 24 communities benefitting from the Gigabit Broadband Top-up Voucher scheme. The new Gigafast Staffordshire website has launched to help everyone

understand the benefits of gigabit connectivity at www.gigafaststaffordshire.co.uk.

- **Staffordshire County Council** is also supporting our residents and businesses through the **Here to Help - cost of living support programme**. This website signposts to a range of support that is already available to people.
- The Government has launched the **Skills for Life** campaign which highlights the range of training and employment schemes available for businesses wanting to boost their workforce capabilities, including apprenticeships, traineeships, and T-Levels. The Government's Skills for Life website showcases hundreds of government-funded skills opportunities. It promotes online learning options and free essential skills courses, such as numeracy, English and digital, sector specific qualifications, Skills Bootcamps, Free Courses for Jobs, and in-work training, as well as personalised support and guidance from the National Careers Service. Refreshed campaign toolkits for the skills campaigns currently running for employers, adults and young people are available to share via your networks and channels, with your own audiences, staff and customers to help extend the reach of the campaigns to those people who will benefit most. Find out more.
- **New employer information and advice service - Support with Employee Health and Disability:** A digital information and advice service for businesses is live on [GOV.UK](https://gov.uk), providing tailored guidance on health and disability, to prevent avoidable job loss and help people thrive at work. Employers and disability organisations have been involved in the design and testing of the service which will continue to be developed throughout 2022/23. Current features include:
 - Helping employers to feel more confident having conversations about health and disability.
 - Encouraging early intervention and sustained support.
 - Signposting to trusted expert support and resources.
 - Helping employers understand their legal responsibilities.

Please use the [feedback link](#) as your thoughts on how the content and design are shaped really will make a difference. [Read the press release](#)

- **Stoke-On-Trent & Staffordshire Growth Hub have partnered with the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) to offer free 1-2-1 virtual business support sessions.** Are you looking to start a business or in the embryonic stages of growth? Are you:
 - keen to identify potential new markets?
 - interested in bidding for public procurement opportunities?
 - in need of advice on chasing late payments?
 - seeking general advice and support?

Through one of these invaluable 1-2-1 sessions, you can:

- contact international trade specialists
- find sources of local authority support
- learn key steps in starting a business and get assistance with many more issues/challenges your business faces

If you feel you might benefit from one of these virtual sessions, please email

karen.woolley@fsb.org.uk This offer is open to FSB members and non-members.

- **Do you know what your employees need to be their most productive?**

Any business' most valuable asset is its people, and with adults spending most of their time at work, businesses need to know how to best support their health and wellbeing. The **Staffordshire County Council Workplace Health Service**, working with public health and local health experts, offers businesses a comprehensive and funded package of online and in-person support, including:

- mental health and wellbeing
- smoking cessation
- healthy activity and healthy eating in the workplace, and more.

But where do you start?

- 1) [Check out the business wellbeing support available online](#)
- 2) [Join the Healthy Workplace Newsletter](#)
- 3) [Check out the Everyone Health offer - in-business support](#)
- 4) [Consider starting the Thrive at Work Workplace Wellbeing Award Programme.](#)

CHECK OUT HEALTH AND WELLBEING SUPPORT FOR BUSINESS



National Context

- This month the **economic news has been dominated by US tariffs**, with President Donald Trump continuing to introduce increasingly more and higher tariffs on other countries. This has led to retaliatory tariffs and contributing to an **escalating global trade war**.
- The UK has appeared to have come off lightly compared to other economies, but much uncertainty remains over the potential impact on British consumers. **The tariffs may lead to interest rates and mortgage rates falling further** in order to boost consumer demand, although if price rises fuel inflation, then interest rates could say higher for longer.
- It is **uncertain whether prices will go up or down as a result of the tariffs**, the value of the pound could weaken leading to importer costs rising and passing this on to consumers through higher prices, and UK imposed tariffs on US goods could also see prices rise. However, initially prices could decline in the UK as a result of exporting firms that usually send goods to the US instead sending them to countries such as the UK which do not have such steep tariffs, potentially leading to cheaper goods in the UK.
- British **companies which sell products to the US are set to be hardest hit by the tariffs**, in particular exporters of goods including cars, pharmaceuticals, and machinery. As well as industries such as fishing and electronics. If US demand for such goods declines, this could hit company profits and lead to job cuts unless British firms find new customers outside of the US. For example, **Jaguar Land Rover has announced that it will "pause" shipments to the US for April as it addresses "new trading terms" in relation to Trump's tariffs**.

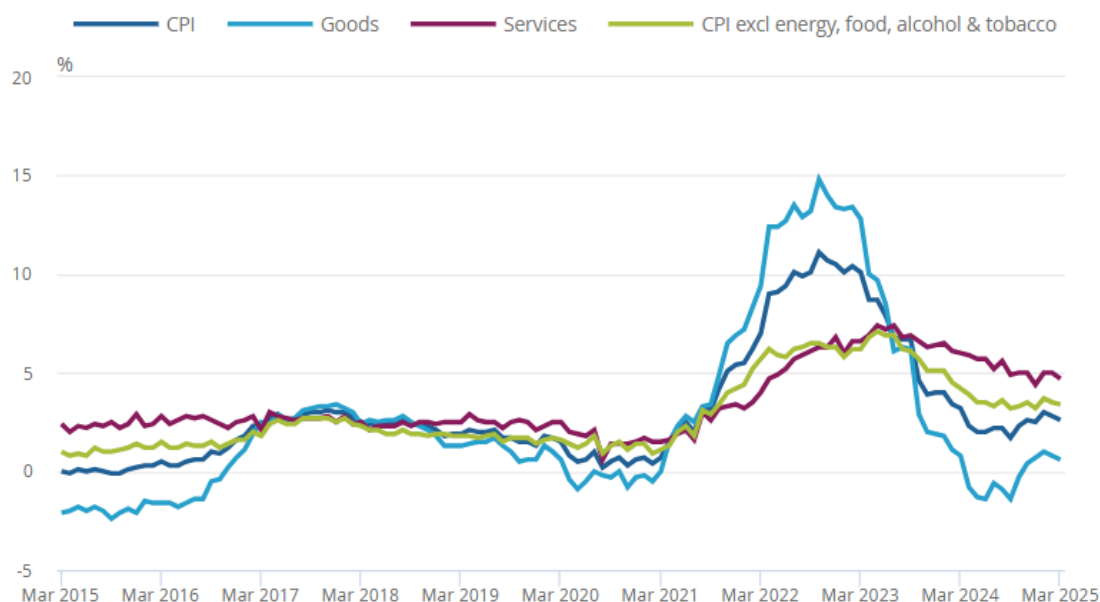
Cost of Living

- **UK inflation has fallen to 2.6 per cent. This represents a second consecutive dip after inflation eased by more than expected to 2.8 per cent in February.** However, the rate remains above the Bank of England target of 2 per cent.
- The largest downward contributions to the monthly change in inflation came from recreation and culture, and motor fuels.



Figure 10: CPI goods, services and core annual inflation rates each eased in March 2025

CPI goods, services and core annual inflation rates, UK, March 2015 to March 2025



Source: Consumer price inflation from the Office for National Statistics

- **Annual growth in employees' average regular earnings excluding bonuses in Great Britain was 5.9% in December 2024 to February 2025, and annual growth in total earnings including bonuses was 5.6%.** RTI pay data showed a similar annual growth rate when compared with Average weekly earnings total earnings, including arrear payments.
- **Annual growth in real terms**, adjusted for inflation using the Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH), **was 2.1% for regular pay and 1.9% for total pay in December 2024 to February 2025.**

Nominal Earnings

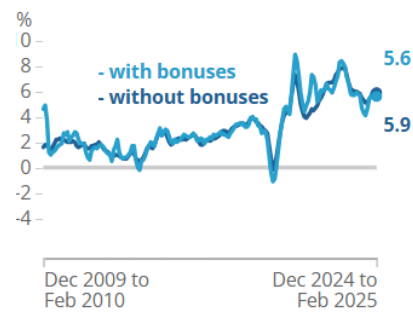
Average Weekly Earnings annual growth rates - nominal pay

Both regular and total pay annual growth rates remain relatively strong

Note: For the April 2025 Average Weekly Earnings release, we have implemented revisions on an exceptional basis, back to October 2020, to allow for late and updated returns we received from one business to be included and improve the quality of the estimates. The impact on the whole economy is small.

Source: MWSS from ONS

[Read more](#)



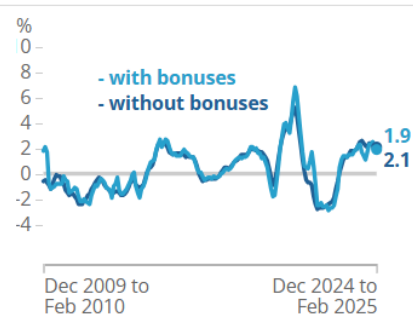
Real Earnings

Average Weekly Earnings annual growth rates - real pay (using CPIH)

The real annual growth rate for both regular and total was unchanged on the previous period

Note: For the April 2025 Average Weekly Earnings release, we have implemented revisions on an exceptional basis, back to October 2020, to allow for late and updated returns we received from one business to be included and improve the quality of the estimates. The impact on the whole economy is small.

Source: MWSS from ONS



- There were an estimated 52,000 working days lost because of labour disputes across the UK in February 2025. Most of the strikes were in the health and social work sector.

Economy

- **The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has reduced its UK growth forecast by a third amid warnings that Britain's economy will be hardest hit by the global trade war.** However, the Washington-based organisation said it was grappling with "extremely high levels of policy uncertainty" but the global economy would slow even if countries managed to negotiate a permanent reduction in tariffs from the US.
- **In February, the economy measured by real gross domestic product (GDP) is estimated to have grown by 0.5% in February 2025**, with growths in all main sectors, following January 2025 which showed no growth.
- Real GDP is estimated to have grown by 0.6% in the three months to February 2025, compared with the three months to November 2024, mainly because of growth in the services sector.
- **Monthly services output grew by 0.3% in February 2025**, following growth of 0.1% in January 2025, and grew by 0.6% in the three months to February 2025.

- **Production output grew by 1.5% in February 2025**, following a fall of 0.5% in January 2025, and grew by 0.7% in the three months to February 2025, with manufacturing output driving the monthly and three-month growths.
- **Construction output grew by 0.4% in February 2025**, following a fall of 0.3% in January 2025, but showed no growth in the three months to February 2025.

GDP Monthly index, January 2007 to February 2025, UK

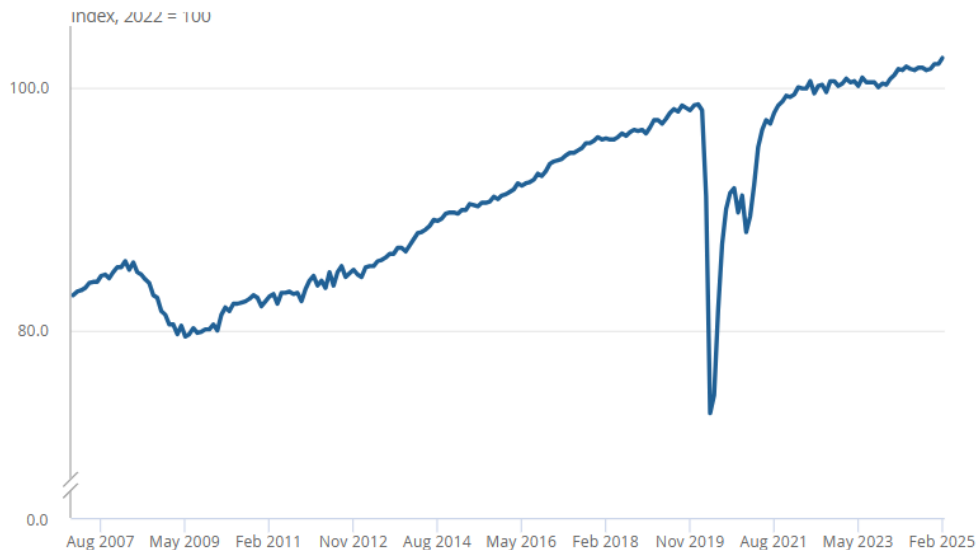
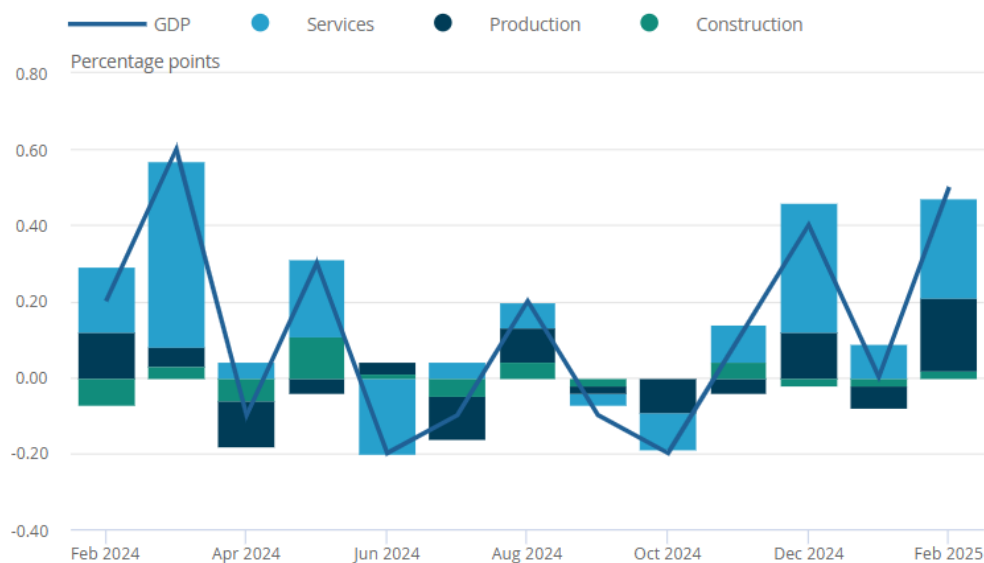


Figure 2: All the main sectors contributed positively to the 0.5% growth in GDP in February 2025

Contributions to monthly gross domestic product (GDP) growth, UK, February 2024 to February 2025



Source: GDP monthly estimate from the Office for National Statistics

Business Conditions

- It remains evident that **many businesses struggling due to a wide range of factors including high interest rates and energy prices, increased commodity costs, wage pressures, supply-chain constraints, lower consumer confidence and some labour market challenges.**
- There is also further evidence of **business concerns regarding the economic uncertainty generated by Trump's tariffs and escalating trade war.**
- The latest results from Wave 130 of the **Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS)**, which was live from 7th to 20th April 2025 suggest that business conditions continue to remain challenging.
- More than 1 in 6 (18%) trading businesses reported that their **turnover had increased** in March 2025 compared with the previous calendar month, up 3 percentage points from February; in contrast, 22% reported their **turnover had decreased**, down 4 percentage points over the same period.
- More than 1 in 7 (15%) trading businesses reported that they **expect their turnover to increase** in May 2025, down 4 percentage points compared with expectations for April 2025; this is 6 percentage points lower than May 2024, suggesting businesses are less optimistic than they were at this time last year.
- **Economic uncertainty was the most commonly reported challenge affecting turnover** for trading businesses in early April 2025, at 32%, up 4 percentage points from early March 2025; for businesses with 10 or more employees, the most commonly reported challenge was **cost of labour** at 42%, the largest proportion reported since the question was introduced in April 2022.
- More than 3 in 10 (32%) trading businesses reported an **increase in the prices of goods or services bought** in March 2025 when compared with the previous month, up 3 percentage points from February; there has been a steady increase of 12 percentage points since October 2024, and it is now the highest proportion reported since June 2023.
- **When looking ahead to May 2025, 65% of businesses reported having some form of concern for their business**, down 3 percentage points from April 2025; although the **most-reported main concern was falling demand for goods and services** (17%), **several businesses commented that they were concerned about tariffs.**
- More than 1 in 6 (17%) trading businesses reported in early April 2025 that they **expect their overall performance to decrease over the next 12 months**; while broadly stable with expectations stated in early March 2025, this has been steadily increasing since July 2024 (9%) and is the largest proportion reported since early September 2022.
- The latest business insolvencies data shows that **in March 2025 there were a total of 2,078 company insolvencies in England and Wales, 16% higher than the number registered in the previous year (1,785 in March 2024), but 2% lower than the number registered three years previously (2,120 in March 2022).** The main concern around company and individual insolvencies are associated issues such as mental health and

homelessness.

- **The Federation of Small Businesses has warned that the tariffs imposed by the US are "a major blow" to small and medium companies (SMEs)**, as 59 per cent of small UK exporters sell to the US, and called for emergency government aid to help those affected

Labour Market

- In summary, the **labour market continues to look fairly flat overall**, not surprising given the current economic outlook. Encouragingly, this month's labour market figures show that **economic inactivity has seen a further decline while unemployment has remained the same and positively employment has increased. This is helping to create a larger pool of labour for businesses to access, however job vacancies have seen a further decline this month to below pre-pandemic levels.**
- The following charts shows the latest **labour market position** and the latest Office for National Statistics data:

Payrolled employees

The number of payrolled employees

Monthly change: ▼ -78,000

Since Feb 2020: ▲ 1,286,000

The number of payrolled employees shows little change since January 2024.

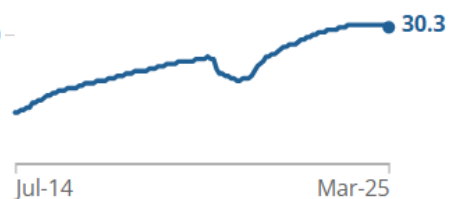
Source: PAYE RTI from HMRC

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millions

35 –

30 –



Employment rate

Employment rate (all aged 16 to 64)

Quarterly change: ▲ 0.2pps

Since Dec-Feb 2020: ▼ -1.4pps

The employment rate is up on the quarter and up on the year, but is still below pre-pandemic rates.

Note: Due to increased volatility of LFS estimates, resulting from smaller achieved sample sizes, estimates of change should be treated with additional caution.

Source: LFS from ONS

%

80 –

75 –

70 –



Unemployment rate

Unemployment rate (all aged 16+)

Quarterly change: ◀▶ 0.0pps

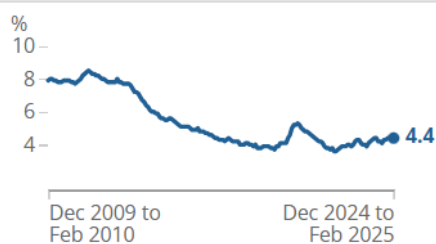
Since Dec-Feb 2020: ▲ 0.5pps

The unemployment rate is largely unchanged on the quarter and up on the year, and is above pre-pandemic rates.

Note: Due to increased volatility of LFS estimates, resulting from smaller achieved sample sizes, estimates of change should be treated with additional caution.

Source: LFS from ONS

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Inactivity rate

Economic inactivity rate (all aged 16 to 64)

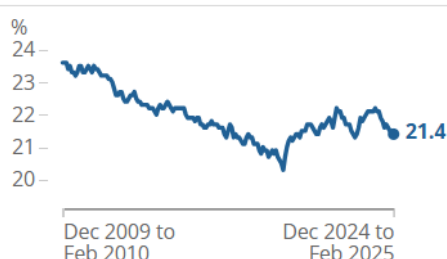
Quarterly change: ▼ -0.2pps

Since Dec-Feb 2020: ▲ 1.1pps

The economic inactivity rate is down on the quarter and down on the year, but is still above pre-pandemic rates.

Note: Due to increased volatility of LFS estimates, resulting from smaller achieved sample sizes, estimates of change should be treated with additional caution.

Source: LFS from ONS



Job vacancies

Number of job vacancies

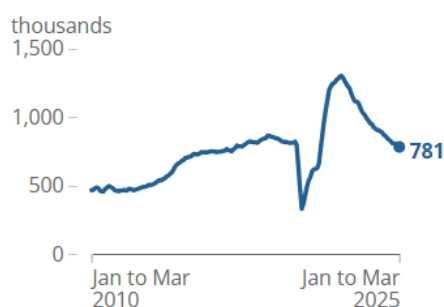
Quarterly change: ▼ -26000

Since Jan-Mar 2020: ▼ -15000

Vacancies are down on the quarter and are below pre-pandemic levels

Source: Vacancy Survey from ONS

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- **Estimates for payrolled employees in the UK decreased by 8,000 (0.0%) between January and February 2025 but rose by 35,000 (0.1%) between February 2024 and February 2025.**
- Payrolled employees fell by 21,000 (0.1%) over the quarter but rose by 50,000 (0.2%) over the year, when looking at December 2024 to February 2025. This is the period comparable with our Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimates.
- The early estimate of payrolled employees for March 2025 decreased by 78,000 (0.3%) on the month and decreased by 70,000 (0.2%) on the year to 30.3 million. The March 2025

estimate should be treated as a provisional estimate and is likely to be revised when more data are received next month.

- The ONS has stated that increased volatility of LFS estimates, resulting from smaller achieved sample sizes, means that estimates of change should be treated with additional caution. We recommend using them as part of our suite of labour market indicators, alongside workforce jobs (WFJ), Claimant Count data, and Pay As You Earn (PAYE) Real Time Information (RTI) estimates.
- The **UK employment rate** for people aged 16 to 64 years was estimated at 75.1% in December 2024 to February 2025. This is above estimates of a year ago, and up in the latest quarter.
- The **UK unemployment rate** for people aged 16 years and over was estimated at 4.4% in December 2024 to February 2025. This is above estimates of a year ago, but largely unchanged in the latest quarter.
- The **UK economic inactivity rate** for people aged 16 to 64 years was estimated at 21.4% in December 2024 to February 2025. This is below estimates of a year ago, and down in the latest quarter.
- **New analysis by the Learning and Work Institute has found that more than half a million young people who are not studying have never had a job, with sickness cited as the main reason.**
- The **UK Claimant Count** for March 2025 increased on the month and the year, to 1.766 million.
- The estimated number of **vacancies in the UK** fell by 26,000 on the quarter, to 781,000 in January to March 2025; this was the 33rd consecutive quarterly decline. Vacancies were 15,000 below their January to March 2020 level. This is the first time since March to May 2021 they were below the pre-pandemic figure.

Housing

- **Ministers have announced thousands of new homes will be built on land owned by the Ministry of Defence and Network Rail, in a drive to meet the Government's housebuilding targets.** A new cross-government taskforce is being launched, involving officials from the MoD, Treasury and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, aimed at accelerating housing development on publicly owned land.

Conclusion

- In conclusion, at a time of economic stagnation and political uncertainty, the **recent US tariff announcements have further impacted global trade** with concerns emerging around price rises, consumer demand and business confidence.
- **UK inflation fell for a second consecutive month to 2.6 per cent**, however the rate remains above the Bank of England target of 2 per cent. Positively, we **continue to see growth in real earnings**, however we realise that **for some the cost-of-living remains a**

key concern.

- There was further positive news with the latest GDP figures showing that the **UK economy grew by 0.5 per cent in February**, with all sectors of the economy seeing growth but tariffs are a risk to future growth.
- It remains evident that **many businesses struggling due to a wide range of factors impacting turnover**, while more **businesses are concerned about the impact of the escalating trade war**.
- The **labour market continues to look fairly flat overall**, not surprising given the current economic outlook. Although it is encouraging to see **economic inactivity continuing to fall with the main movement to employment rather than unemployment. This is helping to create a larger pool of labour for businesses to access, however job vacancies have seen a further decline this month to below pre-pandemic levels**. The need now is to support those seeking work to find employment and support growth.
- We need to continue to **support those still struggling with the cost-of-living, residents to transition into work and viable businesses to survive and grow**. By reducing the impact on our business base, we can see faster recovery and greater economic growth to the benefit of all.
- **In Staffordshire we have a confident, diverse, and robust economy**, demonstrated by the improvement and recovery witnessed since the last lockdown due to Covid. As the **ongoing global and national socio-economic challenges** persist it remains **vital that local partners work together to support local businesses and residents**. We continue to deliver the **Staffordshire Means Business Programme** which has helped hundreds of Staffordshire **businesses transition to new business models including diversification, digitisation and greenification to improve their viability and sustainability**.
- **We continue to support residents into work and help businesses address ongoing labour shortages and skills gaps** to aid survival and growth. A key part of this being the recently **established Staffordshire Jobs and Careers Brokerage Service** which is designed to match local people, employers, and training providers to fill jobs and provide people with the jobs and careers they need.
- Alongside this, skills provision has a significant role to play in **ensuring that local residents have the skills and training needed within the local economy to support increased growth, productivity, and prosperity**. Reskilling and upskilling residents from declining sectors into priority growth areas of the economy such as digital, green, advanced manufacturing, advanced logistics, construction, and health and social care where they can access higher value better paid jobs will be key.

Data Deep Dives:

Business and Individual Insolvencies

This section covers the latest Insolvency Service monthly insolvency statistics¹ for March 2025, which shows the number of new companies and individuals who are unable to pay debts and enter a formal insolvency procedure.

Company Insolvencies

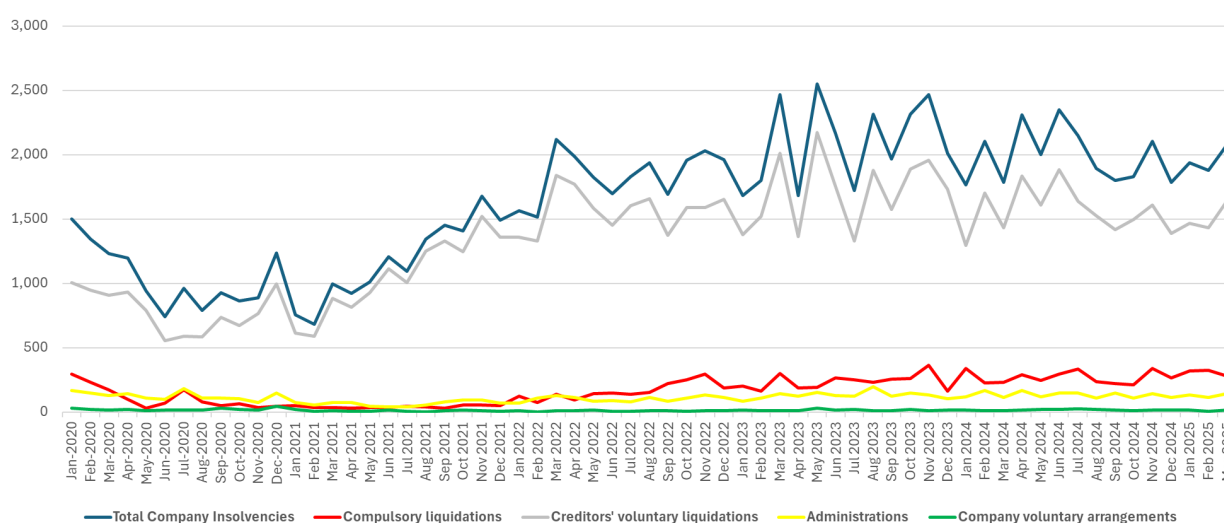
In March 2025 there were a total of 2,078 company insolvencies in England and Wales. The overall number of **company insolvencies are 16% higher than the number registered in the previous year (1,785 in March 2024), but 2% lower than the number registered three years previously (2,120 in March 2022).** Please note that due to the volatility of the underlying data the Insolvency Service recommends comparisons are made with the same month in previous years rather than with the previous month.

There were 281 compulsory liquidations in March 2025, 22% higher than the number in March 2024, and 101% higher than in March 2022. It is important to note numbers of compulsory liquidations have increased from historical lows during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, partly as a result of the increase in winding-up petitions presented by HMRC.

In March 2025 there were 1,637 Creditors' Voluntary Liquidations (CVLs), 14% higher than March 2024, but 11% lower than March 2022. Numbers of administrations are 11% higher than three years previously in March 2022, and Company Voluntary Arrangements (CVAs) are 89% higher than three years previously in March 2022, but numbers are extremely low.

Company insolvencies between April 2024 and March 2025 are 3% lower compared to a year earlier, representing 753 fewer businesses

Company Insolvencies in England and Wales



Source: Insolvency Service (compulsory liquidations only); Companies House (all other insolvency types)¹

¹Source: The Insolvency Service – [Company insolvencies, March 2025 - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/company-insolvencies-march-2025)

The sectors to have seen the largest number of company insolvencies between March 2024 and February 2025 continue to be the Construction sector (4,046), Wholesale & Retail sector (3,607) and Accommodation & Food Service sector (3,405). Levels are below those seen for the same period the previous year for the Construction sector -9% lower, the Wholesale & Retail sector -9% lower, and the Accommodation & Food sector -11% lower than levels a year earlier. Overall, for this period company insolvencies by industry are -7% lower. It is positive to see improvements overall across sectors.

Individual Insolvencies

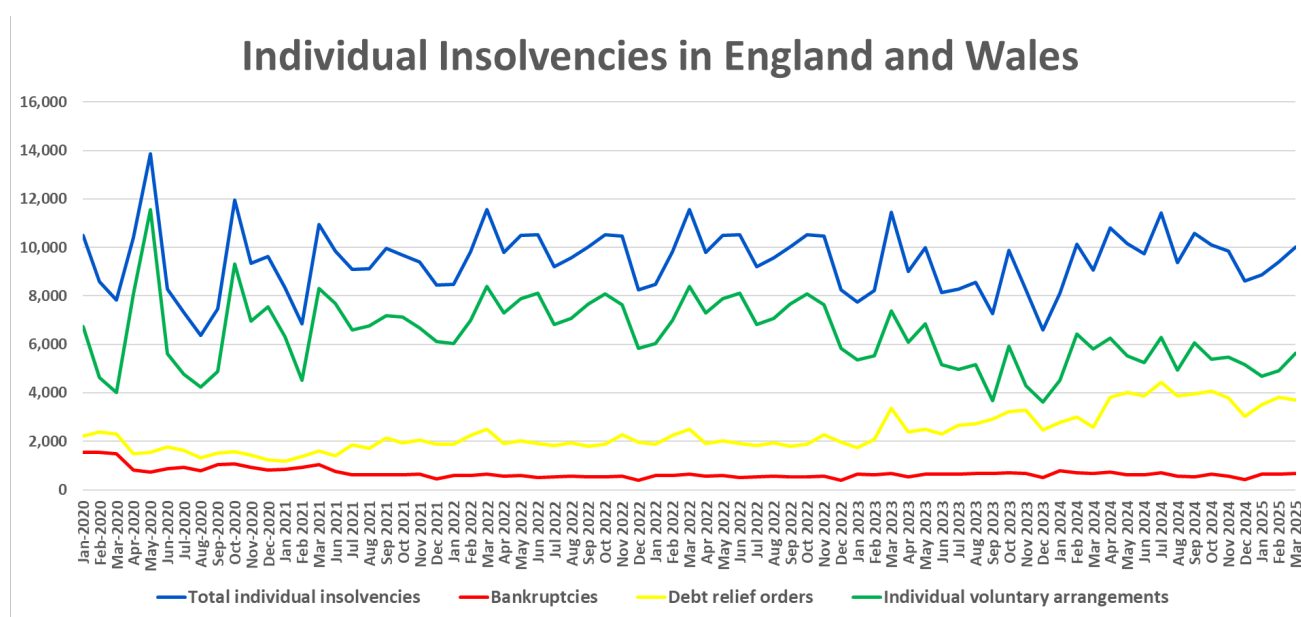
There were **10,016 total individual insolvencies in March 2025**, which was 10% higher than in March 2024, but 13% lower than in March 2022.

For individuals, **667 bankruptcies were registered in March 2025**, which was 2% lower than in March 2024, but 2% higher than in March 2022.

There were **3,712 Debt Relief Orders (DROs) in March 2025**, which was 43% higher than in March 2024, and 48% higher than in March 2022.

There were **5,637 Individual Voluntary Arrangements (IVAs) registered in March 2025**, which was 3% lower than March 2024, and 33% lower than March 2022.

Total Individual Insolvencies between April 2024 and March 2025 are 15% higher than the same period a year earlier, representing an increase of 10,016



Source: Insolvency Service

There were **8,033 Breathing Space registrations in March 2025**, which is 4% higher than the number registered in March 2024. 7,932 were Standard Breathing Space registrations, which is 4% higher and 101 were Mental Health Breathing Space registrations, which is 1% higher than March 2024.

From the start of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic until mid-2021, overall numbers of company and individual insolvencies were low when compared with pre-pandemic levels. This is likely to have been partly driven by government measures put in place to support businesses and individuals during this time. **Company insolvency numbers have now returned to and exceeded pre-pandemic levels. For individuals, numbers of individual voluntary arrangements and bankruptcies remain lower, but debt relief orders are higher than pre-pandemic levels.**

The main concern around company and individual insolvencies are associated issues such as mental health and homelessness.



Claimant Count²

The following table highlights the level of Universal Credit claimants in the Staffordshire Districts and each of the Strategic Authorities in the West Midlands Region:

Claimant Count (Universal Credit) Statistics: March 2025

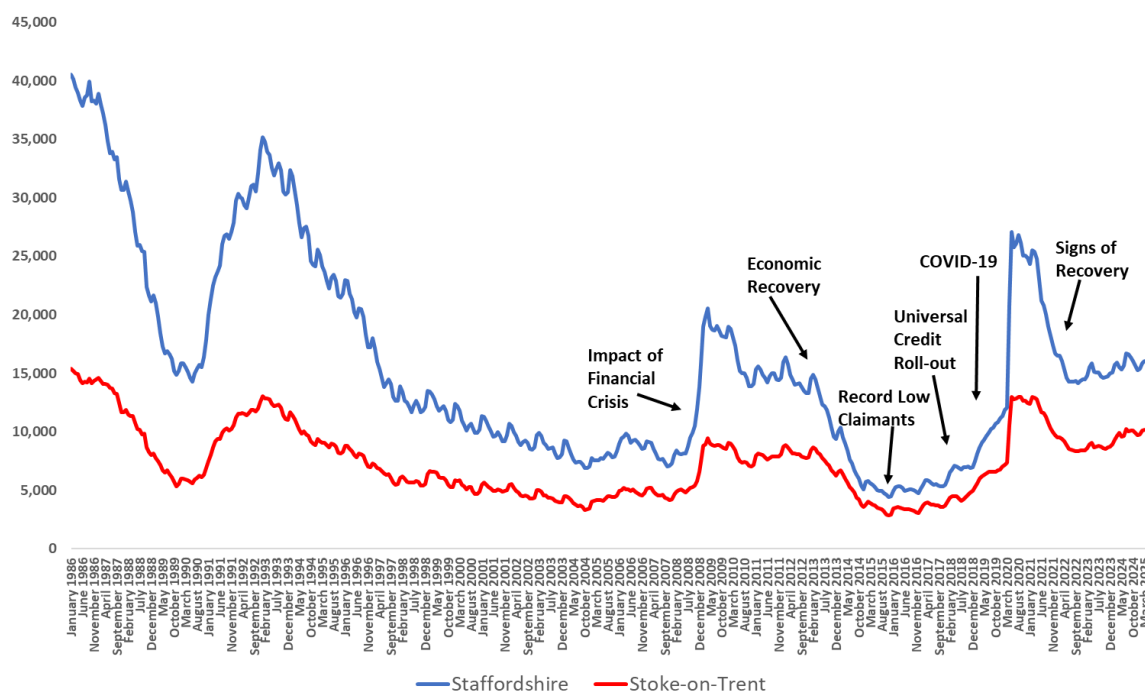
Area	Claimant Count Rate (Mar 2024)	Claimant Count Rate (Feb 2025)	Claimant Count Rate ¹ (Mar 2025)	Number of Claimants (Mar 2025)	Monthly Change in Claimants (Numbers)	Monthly Change in Claimants (%)	Change in Claimants since March 2020 (Numbers)	Change in Claimants since March 2020 (%)
England	3.9	4.2	4.3	1,560,475	26,260	1.7%	496,970	46.7%
West Midlands	4.9	5.5	5.6	212,150	3,705	1.8%	67,800	47.0%
SSLEP	3.6	3.7	3.7	26,185	245	0.9%	6,815	35.2%
Birmingham	8.7	10.5	10.7	80,995	1,525	1.9%	31,625	64.1%
Wolverhampton	7.2	7.5	7.6	12,935	240	1.9%	2,555	24.6%
Sandwell	6.1	7.2	7.4	16,180	330	2.1%	5,400	50.1%
Walsall	5.6	6.3	6.4	11,205	115	1.0%	2,600	30.2%
Stoke on Trent	5.9	6.2	6.2	10,140	65	0.6%	2,820	38.5%
Coventry	5.2	5.7	5.9	14,015	480	3.5%	6,015	75.2%
Dudley	4.6	5.0	5.1	10,095	130	1.3%	1,580	18.6%
Telford and Wrekin	3.5	3.9	3.9	4,710	80	1.7%	1,280	37.3%
Solihull	3.3	3.7	3.7	4,835	45	0.9%	1,185	32.5%
Worcestershire	3.0	3.2	3.2	11,860	175	1.5%	3,555	42.8%
Staffordshire	2.9	2.9	3.0	16,045	180	1.1%	3,995	33.2%
Herefordshire, County of	2.5	2.9	2.9	3,205	70	2.2%	1,095	51.9%
Warwickshire	2.5	2.8	2.9	10,985	235	2.2%	3,155	40.3%
Shropshire	2.3	2.6	2.6	4,940	40	0.8%	930	23.2%
East Staffordshire	3.7	3.7	3.8	2,985	115	4.0%	1,265	73.5%
Tamworth	3.5	3.3	3.4	1,670	15	0.9%	180	12.1%
Cannock Chase	3.3	3.2	3.3	2,120	35	1.7%	465	28.1%
Newcastle-under-Lyme	3.0	3.1	3.1	2,510	35	1.4%	530	26.8%
South Staffordshire	2.6	2.6	2.7	1,765	10	0.6%	455	34.7%
Staffordshire Moorlands	2.2	2.4	2.5	1,365	30	2.2%	445	48.4%
Lichfield	2.4	2.4	2.4	1,590	20	1.3%	270	20.5%
Stafford	2.6	2.5	2.4	2,045	-70	-3.3%	390	23.6%

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

- The claimant count in Staffordshire saw an **increase of 180 claimants over the last month**, with the **total number now at 16,045**.
- Over the last month, the **claimant rate for Staffordshire has increased from 2.9% to 3.0%** of the working age population.
- **Staffordshire saw a 1.1% increase monthly change in claimants, lower than the regional increase of 1.8% and the national increase of 1.7%.**
- The **claimant rate in Staffordshire continues to be one of the lowest in the West Midlands and is far lower than the average for the region 5.6% which increased from 5.5%, and lower than the average for England 4.3% which increased from 4.2%.**
- Stoke-on-Trent saw an **increase of 65 claimants** over the same period with **a total of 10,140 claimants**, with the **rate remaining unchanged at 6.2% this month**.

² Source: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>

Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Claimant Count



- **The total number of Universal Credit (UC) claimants in Staffordshire is now 33.2% or 3,995 higher than the level seen in March 2020 (pre-COVID),** which is lower than the 46.7% increase seen nationally and the 47.0% increase seen regionally.
- **It is important to note that not all claimants will be out of work.** The increases seen since COVID-19 struck in March 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 certain people on low incomes to claim whilst in work. Therefore, there will be **a proportion of claimants that will still be in work but claiming Universal Credit because they are on a low income or have seen reduced hours (under-employment),** although from the data released by the Government it is not currently possible to quantify claimants that are unemployed or employed but on a low income.
- It is also important to recognise that although claimant numbers are higher than pre-pandemic levels, given our strong position going into the pandemic, we still perform well given **Staffordshire's claimant rate is 3.0% of the working age population compared to 5.6% regionally and 4.3% nationally. In Stoke-on-Trent, the Claimant Count remains above both the regional and national averages at 6.2%.**
- For those that find themselves out of work, **demand for labour remains high with the number of new job postings above pre-pandemic levels.**
- We will continue to support those residents that unfortunately find themselves out of work to access employment through our partnership working and dedicated Jobs Brokerage service.

- All the districts in Staffordshire saw increases in the claimant count this month with the exception of Stafford. It is notable that Stafford saw a decrease of -3.3% and has the lowest claimant rate of all districts along with Lichfield. East Staffordshire saw the highest monthly increase of 4.0%.
- The highest claimant rate at 3.8% is in East Staffordshire. Lichfield and Stafford have the lowest claimant rate of 2.4%. It is important to note all districts have a lower claimant rate than both the regional and national rates.

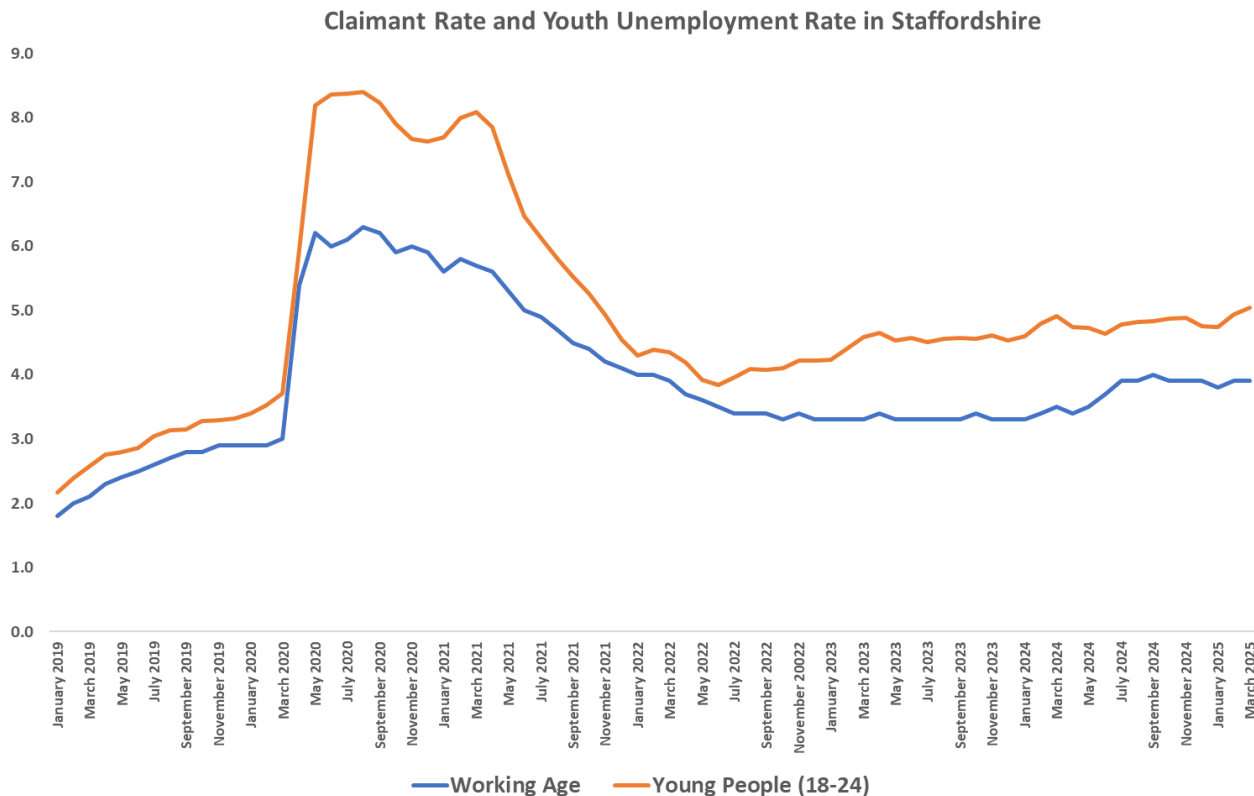
Youth Claimant Count

Youth Claimant Count (Universal Credit) Statistics: March 2025

Area	Youth Claimant Count Rate (Mar 2024)	Youth Claimant Count Rate (Feb 2025)	Youth Claimant Count Rate ¹ (Mar 2025)	Number of Youth Claimants (Mar 2025)	Monthly Change in Youth Claimants (Numbers)	Monthly Change in Youth Claimants (%)	Change in Youth Claimants since March 2020 (Numbers)	Change in Youth Claimants since March 2020 (%)
England	5.3	5.6	5.8	272,085	7,985	3.0%	74,355	37.6%
West Midlands	7.1	7.6	7.8	39,490	1,175	3.1%	11,585	41.5%
Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent	5.8	5.8	6.0	5,130	180	3.6%	1,310	34.3%
Birmingham	9.8	10.9	11.2	14,550	380	2.7%	5,445	59.8%
Wolverhampton	11.0	10.9	11.2	2,385	55	2.4%	475	24.9%
Sandwell	9.5	10.2	10.6	3,040	120	4.1%	925	43.7%
Walsall	9.7	10.0	10.3	2,320	55	2.4%	405	21.1%
Stoke on Trent	8.2	8.2	8.7	1,970	110	5.9%	565	40.2%
Dudley	7.8	8.0	8.2	1,935	40	2.1%	185	10.6%
Solihull	5.9	6.5	6.6	990	20	2.1%	165	20.0%
Telford and Wrekin	6.0	6.4	6.6	980	25	2.6%	220	28.9%
Coventry	5.4	5.6	5.9	2,525	115	4.8%	990	64.5%
Worcestershire	4.8	5.1	5.2	2,190	75	3.5%	595	37.3%
Staffordshire	4.9	4.9	5.0	3,160	70	2.3%	745	30.8%
Herefordshire, County of	4.3	4.4	4.6	535	30	5.9%	120	28.9%
Warwickshire	3.9	4.3	4.5	1,990	70	3.6%	655	49.1%
Shropshire	3.5	4.1	4.2	915	10	1.1%	90	10.9%
Tamworth	6.7	6.6	6.8	390	15	4.0%	95	32.2%
Cannock Chase	6.3	6.2	6.2	440	0	0.0%	75	20.5%
East Staffordshire	5.5	5.0	5.3	475	25	5.6%	155	48.4%
South Staffordshire	4.9	4.6	4.8	360	15	4.3%	110	44.0%
Newcastle-under-Lyme	4.2	4.7	4.7	560	5	0.9%	135	31.8%
Stafford	4.6	4.6	4.5	390	-5	-1.3%	75	23.8%
Lichfield	4.0	4.3	4.4	315	10	3.3%	45	16.7%
Staffordshire Moorlands	3.6	3.8	4.0	235	10	4.4%	60	34.3%

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

- This month the **youth claimant count in Staffordshire saw an increase of 70 claimants with a total of 3,160 young people**. Staffordshire saw a 2.3% increase, lower than the 3.1% increase in the West Midlands and the 3.0% increase in England this month.
- **The proportion of young people in Staffordshire aged 18-24 claiming work-related Universal Credit increased from 4.9% to 5.0%**. It is important to note that Staffordshire continues to be lower than the national rate 5.8%, which increased from 5.6% and far lower than the regional rate 7.8% which increased from 7.6%.
- **Stoke-on-Trent saw an increase of 110 claimants to a total of 1,970 claimants with the rate increasing to 8.7% from 8.2% this month.**



- The majority of districts in Staffordshire saw an increase in the youth claimant rate, with the exception of Stafford which saw a decrease of -1.3% and Cannock Chase which remained unchanged this month.
- Tamworth has the highest rate at 6.8%, whilst Staffordshire Moorlands has the lowest rate at 4.0%. Newcastle-under-Lyme has the highest number of youth claimants at 560, whilst Staffordshire Moorlands has the lowest number of youth claimants at 235.
- Our focus continues to be to engage with our younger residents and support them to find employment or to continue in education and training, such as through the Staffordshire Jobs and Careers Brokerage service, the Connect to Work Scheme, and the new Skills Bootcamps to help prevent them becoming long-term unemployed.

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

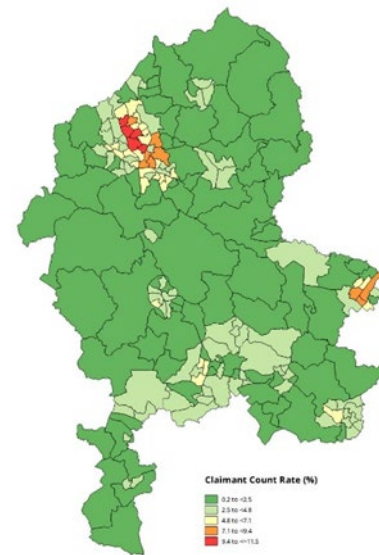
The following maps and tables provide the latest breakdown of the claimant count by wards in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent.

Claimant Count Rate March 2025

Of the 201 wards in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent, 51 were above the England average of 4.3% for the number of claimants as a proportion of the working age population.

Within the twenty highest claimant rate wards, sixteen were in Stoke-on-Trent with the highest rates in Moorcroft: 11.5%/430; Joiner's Square: 11.4%/ 525; Etruria & Hanley: 11.3% /610; Burslem Central: 9.6%/440; and Tunstall: 9.6% /405 total claimants.

In Staffordshire, the four wards with the highest claimant rate were in East Staffordshire with the highest rates in Anglesey: 8.6%/465; Shobnall: 7.9%/430; Burton: 7.6%/230; Eton Park: 6.6%/325 total claimants.

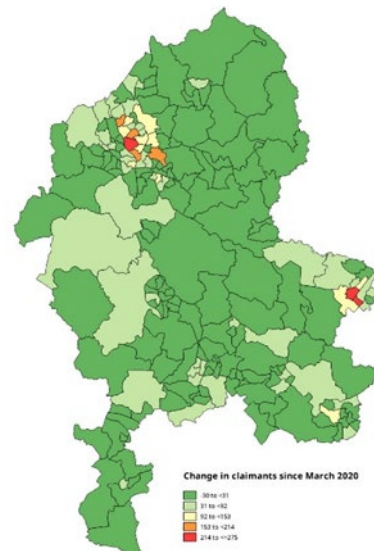


 Staffordshire
County Council

Change in Claimant Count since March 2020

Of the top ten wards in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent with the highest change in the number of claimants since March 2020 there were seven in Stoke-on-Trent including Etruria & Hanley (255 increase to 610); Bentilee & Ubbertley (210 increase to 610); Hanley Park & Shelton (175 increase to 360); Moorcroft (170 increase to 430); Tunstall (155 increase to 405); Joiner's Square (150 increase to 525); Birches Head & Central Forest Park (130 increase to 520).

Of the remaining three wards in the top ten, all were in East Staffordshire including Anglesey (275 increase to 46); Shobnall (220 increase to 430); Eton Park (145 increase to 325).




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

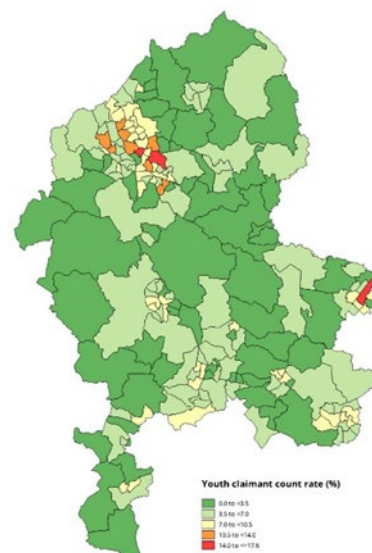
The following maps and tables provide the latest breakdown of the youth claimant count by wards in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent.

Youth Claimant Count Rate March 2025

Of the 201 wards in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent, 75 were above the England average of 5.8% for the number of claimants aged 18-24 as a proportion of the 18-24 population.

Of the top ten wards with the highest youth claimant count rate, seven were in Stoke-on-Trent including Joiner's Square: 17.6%/135; Bentilee & Ubberley: 16.6%/150; Fenton East: 12.9%/60; Burslem Central: 12.2%/75; Abbey Hulton & Townsend: 12.1%/95; Meir South: 11.8%/65; Etruria & Hanley: 11%/95.

In Staffordshire, the three wards with the highest claimant rates were Burton (East Staffordshire): 14.2%/55; Cross Heath (Newcastle-u-Lyme): 11.7%/60; Holditch & Chesterton (Newcastle-u-Lyme): 10.5%/45.



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Change in Youth Claimant Count since March 2020

Of the top ten wards in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent with the highest change in the number of youth claimants since March 2020, seven were in Stoke-on-Trent including Bentilee & Ubberley (60 increase to 150); Etruria and Hanley (50 increase to 95); Hanley Park & Shelton (45 increase to 75); Baddeley, Milton & Norton (40 increase to 100); Joiner's Square (35 increase to 135); Fenton East (25 increase to 60); Abbey Hulton & Townsend (25 increase to 95).

In Staffordshire, the three wards with the highest change in the number of youth claimants since March 2020, were Shobnall (East Staffordshire): 40 increase to 75; Castle (Tamworth): 35 increase to 50; Anglesey (East Staffordshire): 30 increase to 60.

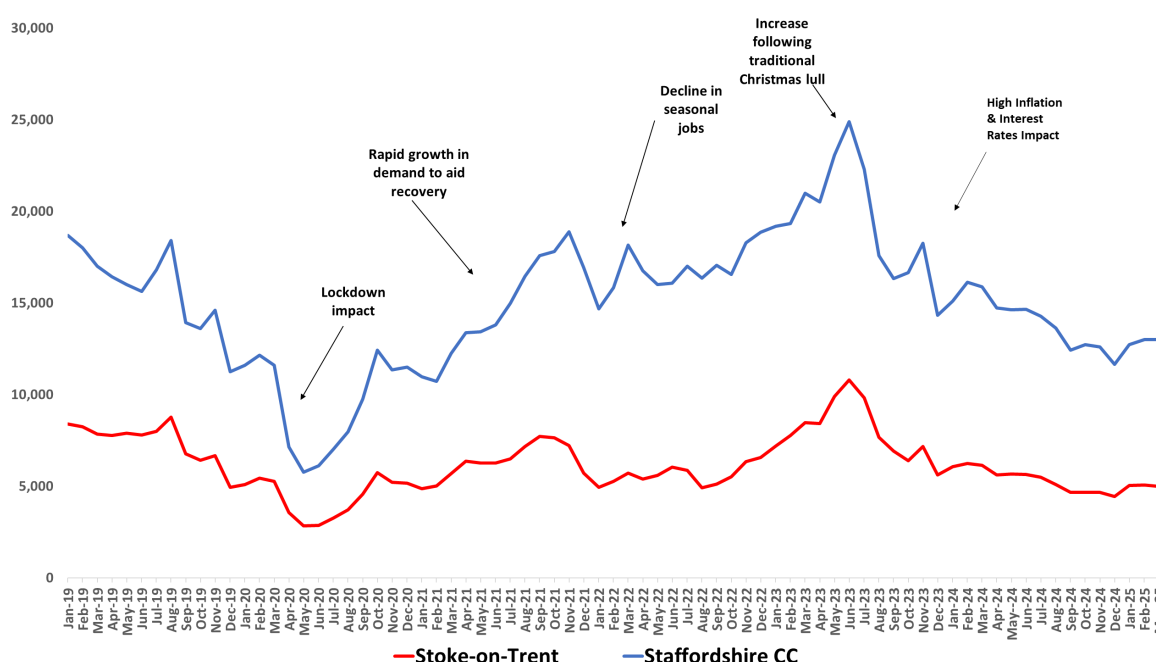


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Job Vacancies³

- Staffordshire saw a 0.1% increase in the number of available job vacancies between February and March to a total of 13,000⁴. This is lower than the number of work-related benefit claimants. Stoke-on-Trent saw a 1% decrease in job vacancies to a total of 5,000 which is significantly lower than the number of claimants.
- Across the region in the last month there was a 0.3% increase, and nationally there was a 2% increase in the number of job vacancies.
- In March there has been a decrease in the number of available job vacancies, compared to a year ago in Staffordshire with the number of job adverts being posted 18% lower, whilst Stoke-on-Trent also decreased by 19%. The chart below indicates a general declining trend overall from July 2023 suggesting a slowdown in the jobs market, at least in part due to business sectors delaying recruitment because of increased costs and uncertainty in the economy. New job postings have shown an increase this month to be above pre-pandemic levels, with Staffordshire job vacancies 7% higher, in positive contrast to the region which is 12% lower and higher than the national level which has increased 1%. Stoke-on-Trent job vacancies are 8% lower. Our focus continues to be to support those that unfortunately find themselves unemployed, to transition into work.

Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Unique Job Vacancies Trend



****Important to note that Lightcast (formerly EMSI/Burning Glass) live job vacancy data has been upgraded and improved through enhanced AI deduplication and sharper skill scraping of job postings. ****

³ Source: Lightcast (formerly EMSI/Burning Glass)

⁴ Lightcast upgraded its location coding process for UK job postings on 19 February 2024. As a result of this change, historic posting counts are estimated to have annual changes of -0.5 to -1% in 2018-19 & 2021; +1%-2% 2020 & 2022-2024.

Monthly Trends in recruitment

- The majority of occupational groups saw a decrease in vacancies during March. However, 'Skilled Trades' occupations saw an increase of +6% whilst 'Administrative & Secretarial occupations' saw the biggest decrease of -11%.
- The occupations to see the most significant increases during March include Mechanical Engineers; Sales & Retail Assistants; Kitchen & Catering Assistants; Managers & Proprietors in Other Services; Project Support Officers; Vehicle Technicians, Mechanics & Electricians; Production & Process Engineers; Chefs; Electrical Engineers; Engineering Technicians; Buyers & Procurement Officers; Financial Accounts Managers; IT Quality & Testing Professionals; Electricians & Electrical Fitters; Bar Staff; Roundspersons & Van Salespersons; Construction & Building trades; Bar & Catering Supervisors; Production Managers & Directors in Manufacturing; Civil Engineers.

Annual Trends in job vacancies

- The occupations to see the largest year-on-year increases include Education (Teaching Professionals; SEND Teaching Professionals; Education Managers; Secondary Education Teaching Professionals; Head Teachers & Principals), Engineering (Mechanical Engineers), Welfare & Housing Associate Professionals, Legal Associate Professionals, Motor Trade (Vehicle Technicians, Mechanics & Electricians); Taxation Experts, Health & Social Care (Generalist Medical Practitioners, Senior Care Workers), Construction (Construction & Building Trades), Air Travel Assistants, Cleaners & Domestic, Authors, Writers & Translators, Retail (Shelf Fillers), Driving Instructors, Elementary Process Plant Occupations, Financial Accounts Managers.

Pre-COVID baseline trends in job vacancies

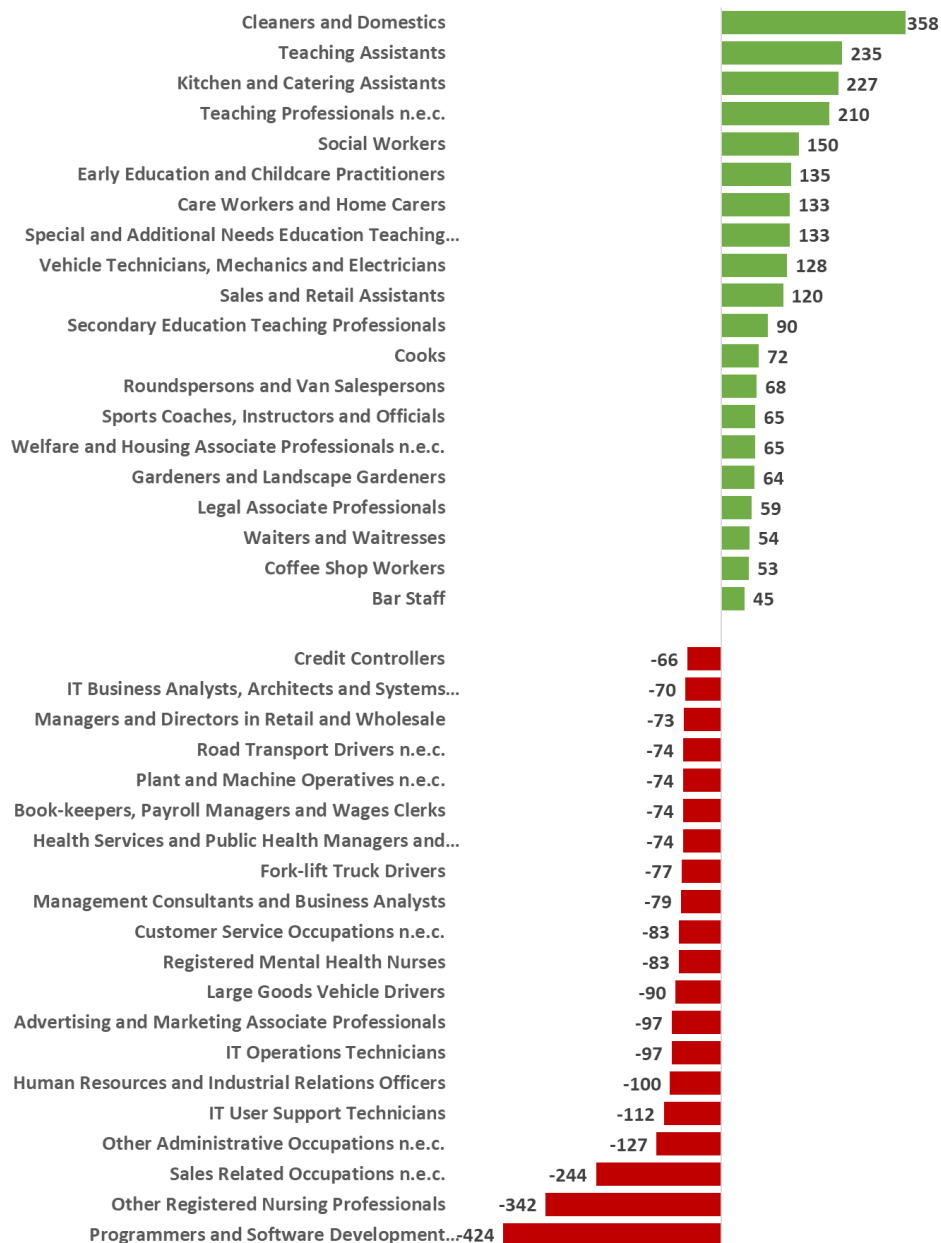
The main occupations with higher vacancies compared to pre-COVID are found in:

- **Housekeepers & Related Occupations** (Cleaners & Domestic)
- **Education** (Teaching Assistants; Teaching Professionals; SEND Teaching Professionals; Secondary Education Teaching Professionals)
- **Hospitality** (Kitchen & Catering Assistants; Cooks; Waiters & Waitresses; Coffee Shop Workers; Bar Staff)
- **Health and Social Care** (Social Workers, Care Workers, and Home Carers)
- **Childcare** (Early Education & Childcare Practitioners)
- **Motor Trade** (Vehicle Technicians, Mechanics & Electricians)
- **Retail & Wholesale** (Sales & Retail Assistants)
- **Logistics** (Roundspersons & Van Salespersons)
- **Sport** (Sports Coaches, Instructors & Officials)

- **Cross Sector Business Roles** (Welfare & Housing Associate Professionals)
- Gardeners & Landscape Gardeners
- **Law** (Legal Associate Professionals)

This is reflective of the ongoing long term recruitment difficulties in these sectors.

Top 20 occupations increasing and top 20 declining between Feb 2020 (Pre-COVID) and Mar 2025 in Staffordshire & Stoke

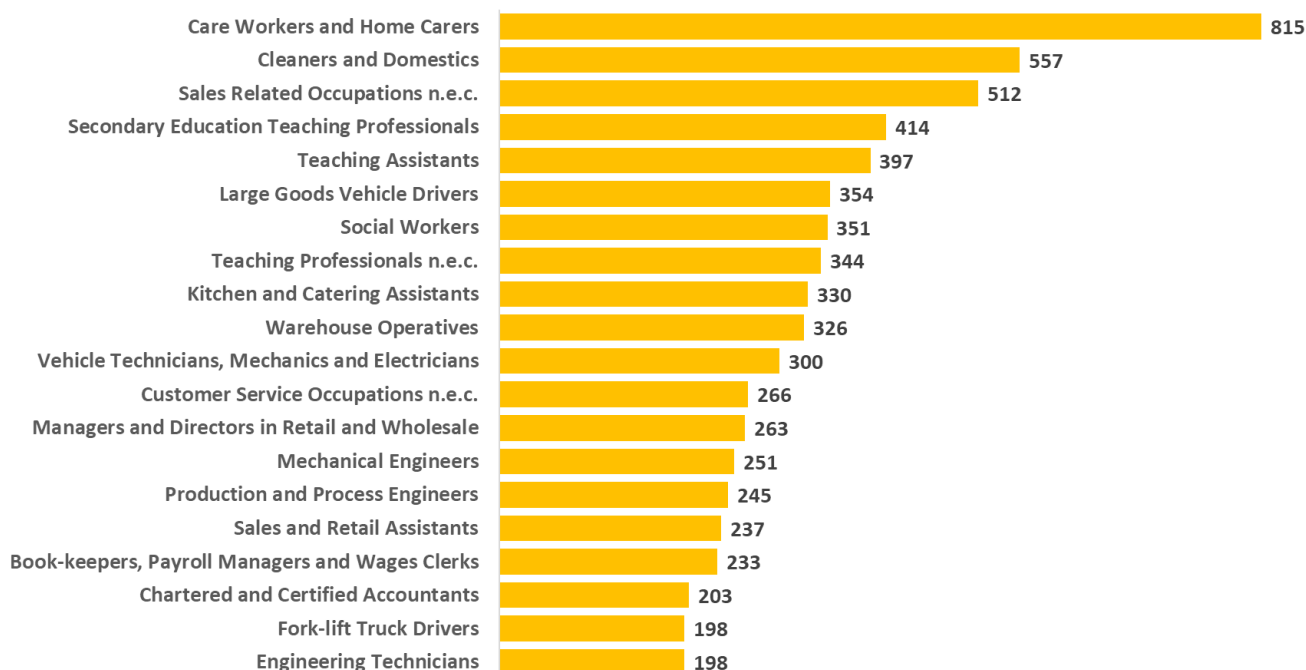


Top Occupations in Demand

- Considering the **top 20 job vacancy occupations in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent**, **'Care Workers & Home Carers'** roles are the most in demand occupations.

- The following occupations **'Cleaners & Domestics,' 'Sales Related,** and **'Secondary Education Teaching Professionals'** also have strong demand.
- In the Education sector there is particularly high demand for **'Teaching Assistants'** and **'Teaching Professionals.'**
- The Logistics sector continues to have high demand for **'Large Goods Vehicle Drivers,' 'Warehouse Operatives,'** and **'Fork-lift Drivers.'**
- There is high demand in the Health & Social Care sector for **'Social Workers.'**
- In the Hospitality sector **'Kitchen & Catering Assistants'** are most in demand.
- In the Motor Trade there is demand for **'Vehicle Technicians, Mechanics & Electricians.'**
- There is strong demand for **'Customer Service,' 'Bookkeepers, Payroll Managers & Wages Clerks'** and **'Chartered & Certified Accountants'** across business sectors.
- Demand for **'Managers & Directors'** and **'Sales & Retail Assistants'** in the Retail and Wholesale sector remain strong.
- In the Engineering sector **'Mechanical Engineers,' 'Production & Process Engineers'** and **'Engineering Technicians'** are in demand.

Top 20 occupations in demand in Staffordshire & Stoke during March 2025



- It is in these areas of the economy where job vacancies remain particularly high and where we are hearing the most reports of **labour and skills shortages** with a mismatch of workers or skills to fill the vacant jobs.

- This has the **potential to slow down economic growth and limit business survival unless the labour shortage and skills gap is quickly and effectively addressed**. Clearly employment support organisations, skills providers and the Government's Plan for Jobs including the Connect to Work schemes and new Skills Bootcamps have a vital role in upskilling and reskilling jobseekers into areas of demand and preventing them becoming long-term unemployed. Government and business sectors have a key role in ensuring that jobs in areas of demand are attracting workers with good pay and terms and conditions to help prevent labour shortages.
- It is clear there continues to be a high number of jobs available in the local economy and the need now is to ensure that there is a strong local labour pool with skilled workers able to fill these roles to support business recovery/survival and improve their own prosperity through better pay. The national and local support which is in place to support those that have been unfortunate enough to lose their jobs is vital in both **reskilling and upskilling** as well as enabling them to access the opportunities available. Also encouraging those that have become **economically inactive** due to COVID back into work will further help to address labour shortages and skills gaps.
- **Staffordshire County Council's new Job Brokerage Service** is designed to do exactly this by matching local people, employers, and training providers to fill jobs and provide people with the jobs and careers they need.
- There are also clear **emerging opportunities for job creation in digital (including online retail and e-commerce) and the green economy (including retrofitting homes to improve energy efficiency, electric cars e.g., Jaguar Land Rover, renewables, and hydrogen e.g., JCB)**.
- We will also look to build on our existing strengths including **engineering and advanced manufacturing** through the adoption of AI, Automation and Machine Learning, **construction** to achieve Government house building targets and build major new infrastructure projects such as the West Midlands Freight Interchange, and **advanced logistics** with ecommerce creating continued demand and the recent announcement by Pets At Home in Stafford creating over 750 new jobs.

