

# Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Economic Bulletin

## Issue 57 - May 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 [SkillsAnalysis@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:SkillsAnalysis@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 a decrease in the Claimant Count**. It should be noted that **changes by the Department of Work and Pensions introduced in May 2024 are expected to increase the claimant count nationwide**.
- **Job vacancies have decreased this month, however new job postings in Staffordshire are above pre-pandemic levels. In contrast, job vacancies in the region are below pre-pandemic levels whilst nationally they are slightly above pre-pandemic levels.**
- **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 decreased by 45 claimants this month to a total of 15,635 claimants.**
- **The claimant rate for Staffordshire remained the same at 2.9% this month** of the working age population. **Staffordshire saw a slight decrease of 0.3% this month, in contrast to the region which saw a slight increase of 0.2% and no change nationally.**
- **Staffordshire continues to have one of the lowest claimant rates in the region, far lower than the regional average 5.6% which increased from 5.5%, and lower than the England average 4.2% which remained the same.** 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 a slight increase of 10 claimants with the total number of youth claimants now 3,105. Staffordshire saw a 0.3% increase, lower than the 1.2% increase in the West Midlands and the 0.6% increase in England. The proportion of young people in Staffordshire aged 18-24 claiming work-related Universal Credit remained the same at 4.9%.** It is important to state that **Staffordshire continues to be lower than the national rate of 5.6% and far lower than the regional rate of 7.6% which increased from 7.5%.** 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 4% decrease in the number of available job vacancies between March and April to a total of 12,400. This is lower than the**

**number of work-related benefit claimants. Stoke-on-Trent saw a 7% decrease in job vacancies to a total of 4,700 which is significantly lower than the number of claimants. Across the region in the last month there was also a 4% decrease, and nationally there was a 1% decrease 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, **'Sales Related,' 'Cleaners & Domestics,'** and **'Teaching Assistants'** also have strong demand.
- The Logistics sector has high demand for **'Large Goods Vehicle Drivers,' 'Warehouse Operatives,' 'Fork-lift Truck Drivers'** and **'Transport & Distribution Clerks/Assistants.'**
- In the Education sector there is particularly high demand for **'Secondary Education Teaching Professionals,' 'Teaching Professionals'** and **'SEND Teaching Professionals.'**
- In the Hospitality sector, **'Kitchen & Catering Assistants'** roles are most in demand.
- There is high demand in the Health and Social Care sector for **'Social Workers.'**
- In the IT sector, **'Programmers & Software Development Professionals'** are in demand.
- Demand for **'Sales & Retail Assistants'** and **'Managers & Directors'** in the Retail and Wholesale sector remain strong.
- In the Motor Trade **'Vehicle Technicians, Mechanics & Electricians'** are in demand.
- There is strong demand for **'Bookkeepers, Payroll Managers & Wages Clerks'** and **'Customer Service'** across business sectors.
- In the Engineering sector **'Mechanical Engineers'** 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), construction sector (including retrofitting homes), the car industry e.g. electric cars at Jaguar Land Rover, and in manufacturing e.g. hydrogen combustion technology at 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](http://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

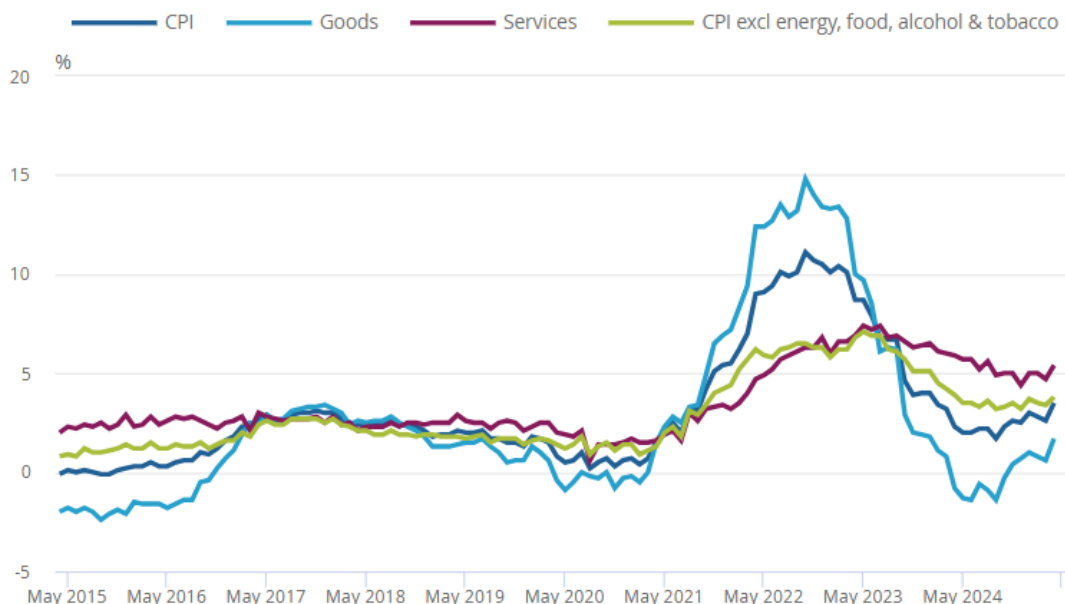
- This month there remains much **uncertainty around the rapidly changing global trade war**, with business confidence dented by such economic uncertainty leading to a pause on investment and an impact on turnover.
- For the UK there is some positive news with **US tariffs being reduced** to some extent and **new trade deals emerging with the likes of India and the EU**. It is hoped that these trade deals will help **boost economic growth**, while allowing for stronger ties to be developed with the US on services, in particular financial services and technology.
- The strategic focus on **building on our economic strength is clearly important, particularly at a time of geopolitical uncertainty**.

## Cost of Living

- **UK inflation rose by 3.5 per cent in the 12 months to April 2025, up from 2.6 per cent in the 12 months to March.** This is above the rate remains above the Bank of England target of 2 per cent. The largest upward contributions to the monthly change came from housing and household services, transport, and recreation and culture; the largest, partially offsetting, downward contribution came from clothing and footwear.

### Core CPI at highest rate since April 2024

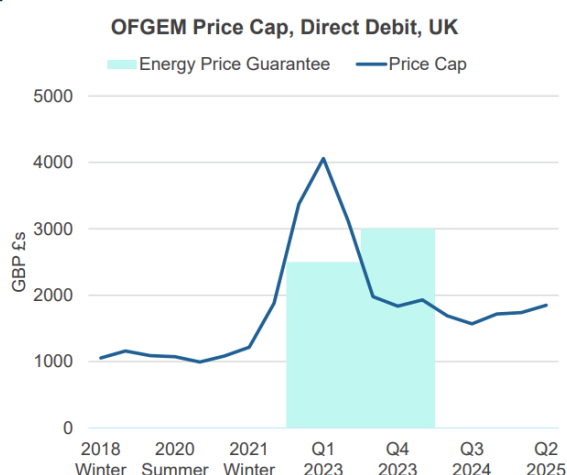
CPI goods, services and core annual inflation rates, UK, April 2015 to April 2025



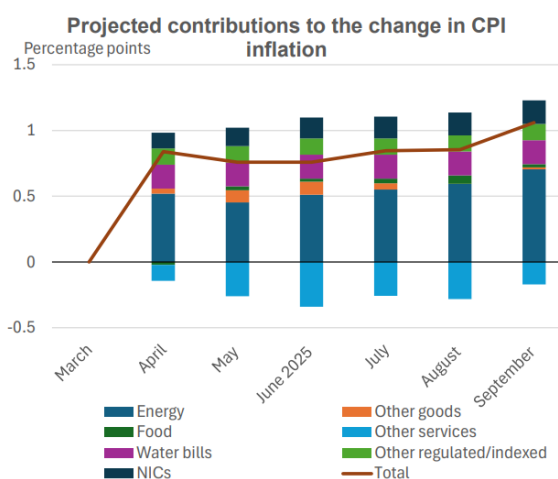
Source: Consumer price inflation from the Office for National Statistics

- Positively, **energy prices have stabilised, and bills are forecast to fall from this July and will continue to drop in the autumn and winter.** Energy consultants Cornwall Insight predict that households will be charged £129 less for a typical annual bill from July as the energy price cap is due to fall. Although a wide range of other inflationary pressures remain.

## Energy prices have stabilised, but inflationary pressures remain



Source: ONS, OFGEM



Source: Bank of England

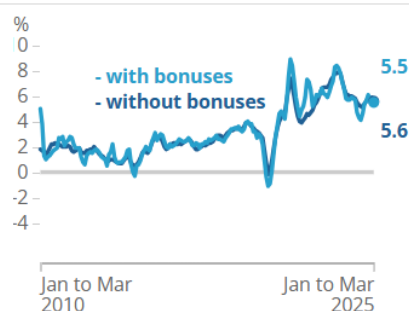
- The Bank of England has lowered interest rates to 4.25% from 4.5% and the governor of the Bank of England has hinted more could follow in the coming months.** This will be welcomed news to both businesses and householders, with the cost of borrowing and mortgages set to ease. The reduction in rates marks the fourth cut within the past year and the Bank considered an even bigger cut to 4% due to concerns the global trade war could hit UK economic growth.
- Annual growth in employees' average regular earnings excluding bonuses in Great Britain was 5.6% in January to March 2025, and annual growth in total earnings including bonuses was 5.5%.** 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 1.8% for regular pay and 1.7% for total pay in January to March 2025.**
- Annual growth in real terms, adjusted for inflation using the Consumer Prices Index excluding owner occupiers' housing costs (CPI), was 2.6% for both regular pay and total pay in January to March 2025.**

### Nominal Earnings

Average Weekly Earnings annual growth rates - nominal pay

Both regular and total nominal pay annual growth rates are down on the previous period.

Source: MWSS from ONS

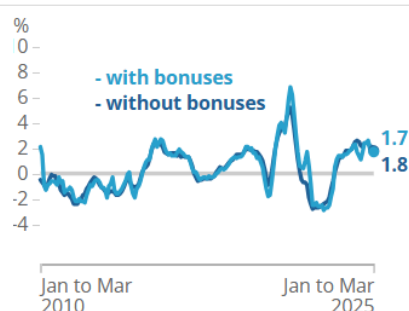


### Real Earnings CPIH

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

The real annual growth rate for both regular and total are down on the previous period

Source: MWSS from ONS

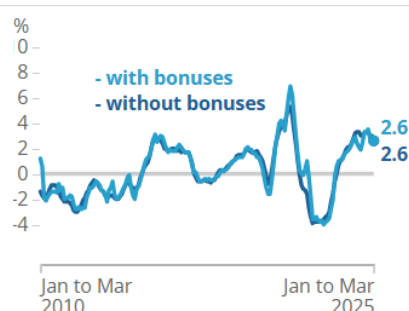


### Real Earnings CPI

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

The real annual growth rate for both regular and total are down on the previous period

Source: MWSS from ONS



- There were an estimated 55,000 working days lost because of labour disputes across the UK in March 2025.

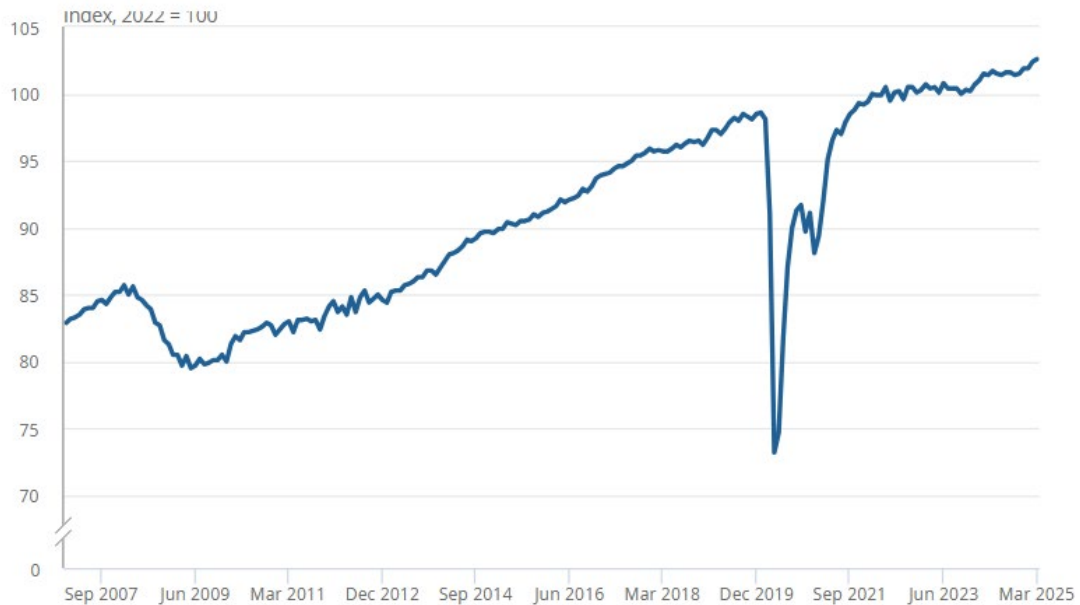
## Economy

- There has been the welcomed news that **the UK's economy grew by more than expected in the first three months of the year**. The economy expanded by 0.7 per cent in January to March, stronger than the 0.6 per cent that had been forecast, which the Office for National Statistics said was largely driven by the UK services sector.
- However, the figures mark the **period just before the US imposed import tariffs and UK employer taxes increased in April, and analysts have warned the strong rate of growth is unlikely to continue with survey indicators pointing to weaker momentum and productivity growth remains a challenge**.
- **Monthly real gross domestic product (GDP) is estimated to have grown by 0.2% in March 2025**, following growth of 0.5% in February 2025.
- **Monthly services output rose by 0.4% in March 2025**, following growth of 0.3% in February 2025, and was the largest contributor to the growth in GDP in the month; services also grew by 0.7% in the three months to March 2025.
- **Production output fell by 0.7% in March 2025**, following growth of 1.7% in February

2025, but grew by 1.1% in the three months to March 2025.

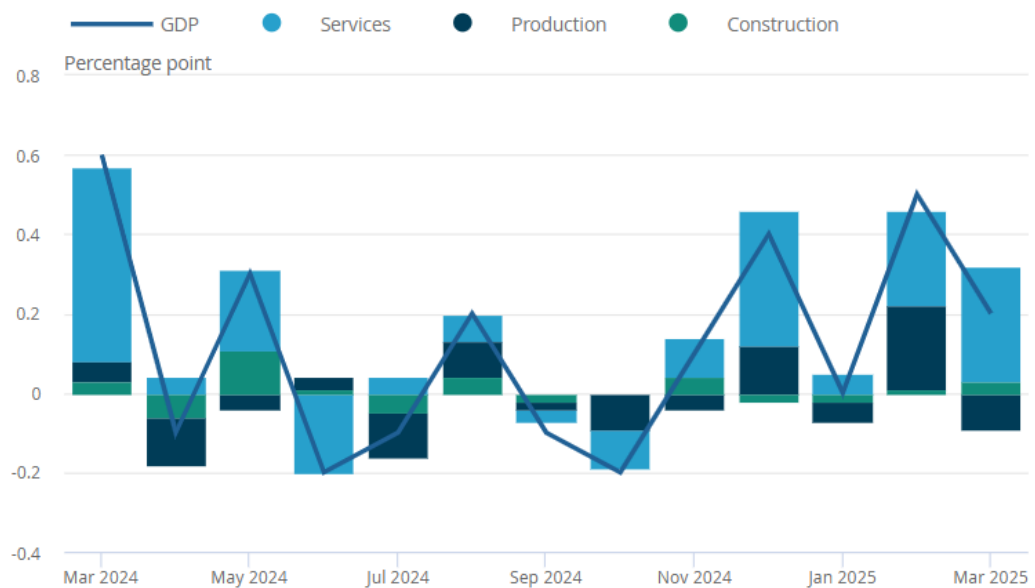
- **Construction output grew by 0.5% in March 2025**, following growth of 0.2% in February 2025, but showed no growth in the three months to March 2025.

### GDP Monthly index, January 2007 to March 2025, UK



### The services sector was the main contributor to the 0.2% growth in GDP in March 2025

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

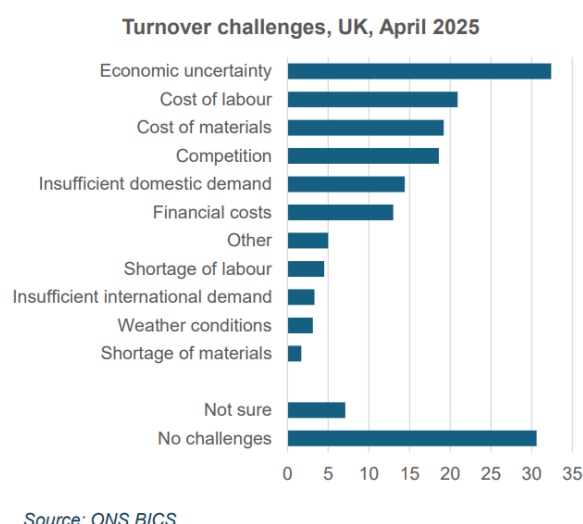
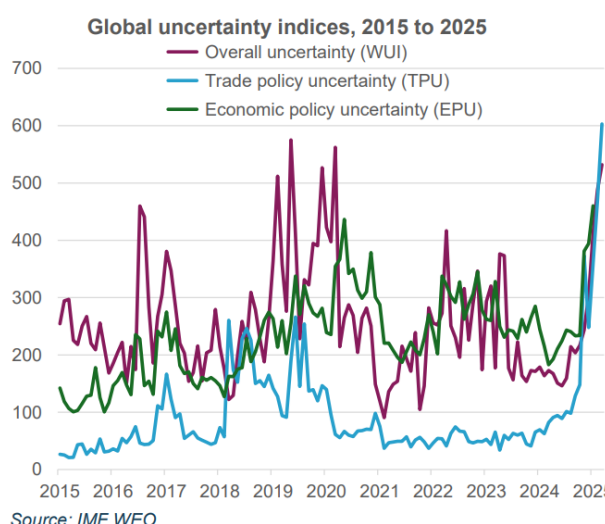


Source: GDP monthly estimate from the Office for National Statistics

## Business Conditions

- **Rising global uncertainty has caused businesses to see it as their main challenge in 2025.**
- It also remains evident that **many businesses have concerns around longer-term issues including high interest rates and energy prices, increased commodity costs, wage pressures, supply-chain constraints, lower consumer confidence and some labour market challenges.**

## Increasing uncertainty contributing to challenges



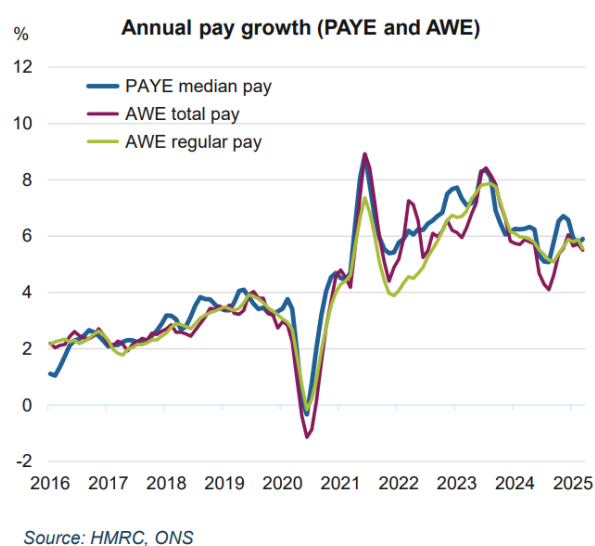
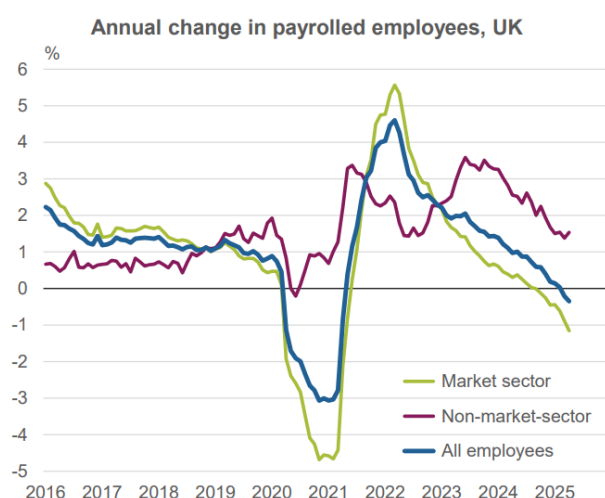
- The latest results from Wave 132 of the **Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS)**, which was live from 6<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> May 2025 suggest that business conditions continue to remain challenging.
- Approximately 1 in 7 (14%) trading businesses reported that their **turnover had increased** in April compared with the previous calendar month, down 4 percentage points from March; in contrast, 24% reported that their **turnover had decreased**, remaining broadly stable over the same period.
- Around 1 in 7 (14%) trading businesses reported that they **expect their turnover to decrease** in June 2025; although down 2 percentage points from expectations for May 2025, this proportion is 4 percentage points higher than June 2024, suggesting that businesses are more pessimistic than they were at this time last year.
- **Economic uncertainty was the most reported challenge affecting turnover** for trading businesses in early May 2025, at 30%, down 3 percentage points from early April 2025; for businesses with 10 or more employees, the most commonly reported challenge was **cost of labour** at 39%, down 2 percentage points over the same period.
- More than 3 in 10 (32%) trading businesses reported an **increase in the prices of goods or services bought** in April 2025, when compared with the previous month; this is broadly

stable with March 2025, after a steady increase of 13 percentage points from October 2024.

- Around half (46%) of trading businesses with 10 or more employees cited **labour costs as a reason for considering raising their prices** in June 2025; while this is down 8 percentage points from May 2025, it is 7 percentage points higher than June 2024.
- The latest business insolvencies data shows that **in April 2025 there were a total of 2,062 company insolvencies in England and Wales, 11% lower than the number registered in the previous year (2,309 in April 2024), but 4% higher than the number registered three years previously (1,988 in April 2022).** The main concern around company and individual insolvencies are associated issues such as mental health and homelessness.
- **A quarter of employers are planning to make redundancies in the next quarter, a survey by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development found.** It suggests the Government's plans to overhaul workers' rights has led to a drop in business confidence and shows the UK jobs market is hampering hiring in education and healthcare.

## Labour Market

- The **labour market is loosening but sticky wage inflation persists.**



- Concerningly, this month's labour market figures show that **payrolled employees have declined and are expected to decrease further, at a time when there continues to be a decline in job vacancies.**
- More encouragingly, **economic inactivity has seen a further decline, however given the challenging economic conditions movements from economic inactivity have seen unemployment rise while employment has remained largely unchanged.**
- Although it is **positive that more people are actively looking to engage in the labour market, this comes at a time when businesses are reducing recruitment and making redundancies, therefore it will be more challenging for those looking for work to find work.**



- The following charts shows the latest **labour market position** and the latest Office for National Statistics data:

### Payrolled employees

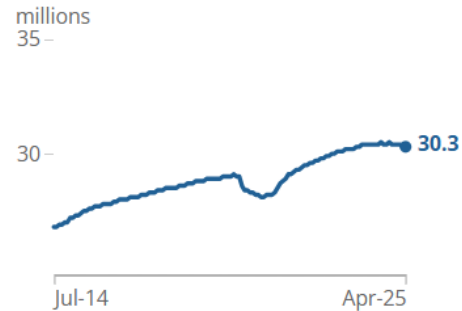
The number of payrolled employees

Monthly change: ▼ -33,000

Since Feb 2020: ▲ 1,259,000

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

Source: PAYE RTI from HMRC



### Employment rate

Employment rate (all aged 16 to 64)

Quarterly change: ◀▶ 0.0pps

Since Dec-Feb 2020: ▼ -1.5pps

The employment rate is largely unchanged on the quarter but up on the year and 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



### Unemployment rate

Unemployment rate (all aged 16+)

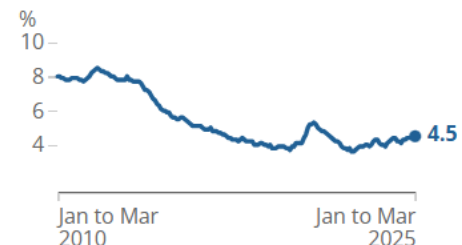
Quarterly change: ▲ 0.2pps

Since Dec-Feb 2020: ▲ 0.6pps

The unemployment rate is up on the quarter and 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



### 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



Source: LFS from ONS

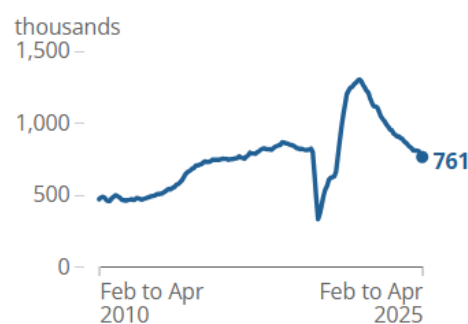
### Job vacancies

Number of job vacancies

Quarterly change: ▼-42,000  
Since Jan-Mar 2020: ▼-34,000

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

Source: Vacancy Survey from ONS



- **Estimates for payrolled employees in the UK decreased by 47,000 (0.2%) between February and March 2025 and fell by 63,000 (0.2%) between March 2024 and March 2025.**
- Payrolled employees fell by 53,000 (0.2%) over the quarter and fell by 4,000 (0.0%) over the year, when looking at January to March 2025. This is the period comparable with Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimates.
- The early estimate of payrolled employees for April 2025 decreased by 33,000 (0.1%) on the month and decreased by 106,000 (0.3%) on the year to 30.3 million. The April 2025 estimate should be treated as a provisional estimate and is likely to be revised when more data are received next month.
- LFS estimates from January to March 2025 include the full effect of recent improvements in LFS data collection and sampling methods introduced from January 2024, and are therefore more likely to be representative of labour market conditions. An increased amount of volatility will remain in the LFS estimates from mid-2023 and throughout 2024, so ONS advise caution when interpreting change involving those periods. ONS recommend using LFS estimates as part of their suite of labour market indicators, alongside Workforce Jobs, Claimant Count and Pay As You Earn Real Time Information (PAYE RTI) estimates.

- The **UK employment rate** for people aged 16 to 64 years was estimated at 75.0% in January to March 2025. This is above estimates of a year ago, but largely unchanged in the latest quarter.
- The **UK unemployment rate** for people aged 16 years and over was estimated at 4.5% in January to March 2025. This is above estimates of a year ago, and up in the latest quarter.
- The **UK economic inactivity rate** for people aged 16 to 64 years was estimated at 21.4% in January to March 2025. This is below estimates of a year ago, and down in the latest quarter.
- The **UK Claimant Count** for April 2025 increased on the month and the year, to 1.726 million.
- The estimated number of **vacancies in the UK** fell by 42,000 on the quarter, to 761,000 in February to April 2025. This was the 34th consecutive quarterly decline with quarterly falls seen in 13 out of the 18 industry sectors. Vacancies were 34,000 below their January to March 2020 level.

## Green Economy

- **The UK's climate advisers have warned people and critical infrastructure are highly exposed to extreme weather due to a "piecemeal and disjointed approach" to prepare for extreme weather.** The Climate Change Committee warns that, by 2050, over half of England's top farmland, one in four homes and half of roads and rail lines will be at risk of flooding while heat-related deaths could pass 10,000 in an average year.
- **Ministers are reportedly set to announce almost every new home in England will be fitted with solar panels as standard within two years.** Housebuilders will be required by law to install solar roof panels on new properties by 2027 under new rules. The LGA has called on the Government to ensure all new homes have solar panels, saying it would save householders money and help to meet green energy targets.

## Conclusion

- In conclusion, there remains **significant economic uncertainty due to the global trade war** and this is impacting business investment and turnover. The **UK continues to develop trade deals** with countries around the world which will hopefully boost economic growth during such geopolitical uncertainty.
- **UK inflation rose by 3.5 per cent this month** and is above the Bank of England target of 2 per cent. Positively, the **Bank of England has reduced interest rates further, energy bills are expected to fall, and real wages continue to increase.** However, **inflationary pressures persist for many and cost-of-living remains a key concern.**
- The **economy grew by more than expected during the first quarter of 2025**, largely driven by the services sector. However, **due to global economic uncertainty and UK employer tax changes, it is widely expected that growth will be weaker over coming months.**

- **Rising global uncertainty has caused businesses to see it as their main challenge in 2025**, alongside a wide range of other factors impacting turnover and business growth.
- The **labour market is loosening but sticky wage inflation persists**. Although it is **positive that more people are actively looking to engage in the labour market, this comes at a time when businesses are reducing recruitment and making redundancies, therefore it will be more challenging for those looking for work to find work**. 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**.
- **In Staffordshire we have a confident, diverse, and robust economy**, demonstrated by the improvement and recovery witnessed since 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 statistics<sup>1</sup> for April 2025, which shows the number of new companies and individuals who are unable to pay debts and enter a formal insolvency procedure.

#### Company Insolvencies

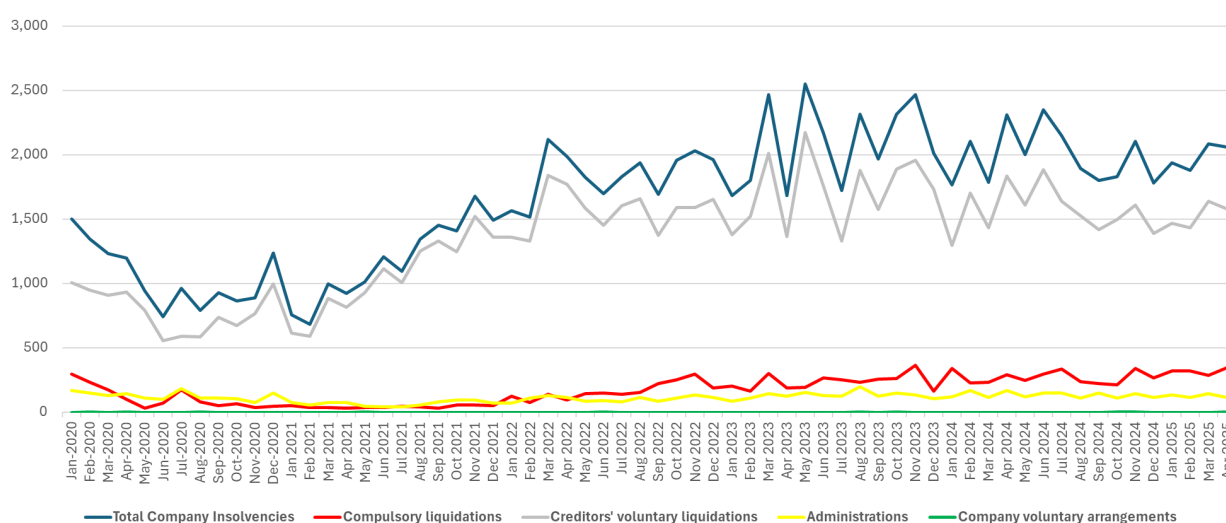
**In April 2025 there were a total of 2,062 company insolvencies in England and Wales.** The overall number of **company insolvencies are 11% lower than the number registered in the previous year (2,309 in April 2024), but 4% higher than the number registered three years previously (1,988 in April 2022).** 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 343 compulsory liquidations in April 2025, 18% higher than the number in April 2024, and 265% higher than in April 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 April 2025 there were 1,580 Creditors' Voluntary Liquidations (CVLs), 14% lower than April 2024, and 11% lower than April 2022. Numbers of administrations are 1% higher than three years previously in April 2022, and Company Voluntary Arrangements (CVAs) are 140% higher than three years previously in April 2022, but numbers are extremely low.

**Company insolvencies between May 2024 and April 2025 are 6% lower compared to a year earlier, representing 1,621 fewer businesses**

Company Insolvencies in England and Wales



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

<sup>1</sup>Source: The Insolvency Service – [Company insolvencies, April 2025 - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/company-insolvencies-april-2025)

**The sectors to have seen the largest number of company insolvencies between April 2024 and March 2025 continue to be the Construction sector (4,111), Wholesale & Retail sector (3,646) and Accommodation & Food Service sector (3,407).** Levels are below those seen for the same period the previous year for the Construction sector -4% lower, the Wholesale & Retail sector -5% lower, and the Accommodation & Food sector -10% lower than levels a year earlier. Overall, for this period company insolvencies by industry are -3% lower. It is positive to see improvements overall across sectors.

### Individual Insolvencies

There were **10,593 total individual insolvencies in April 2025**, which was 2% lower than in April 2024, but 8% higher than in April 2022.

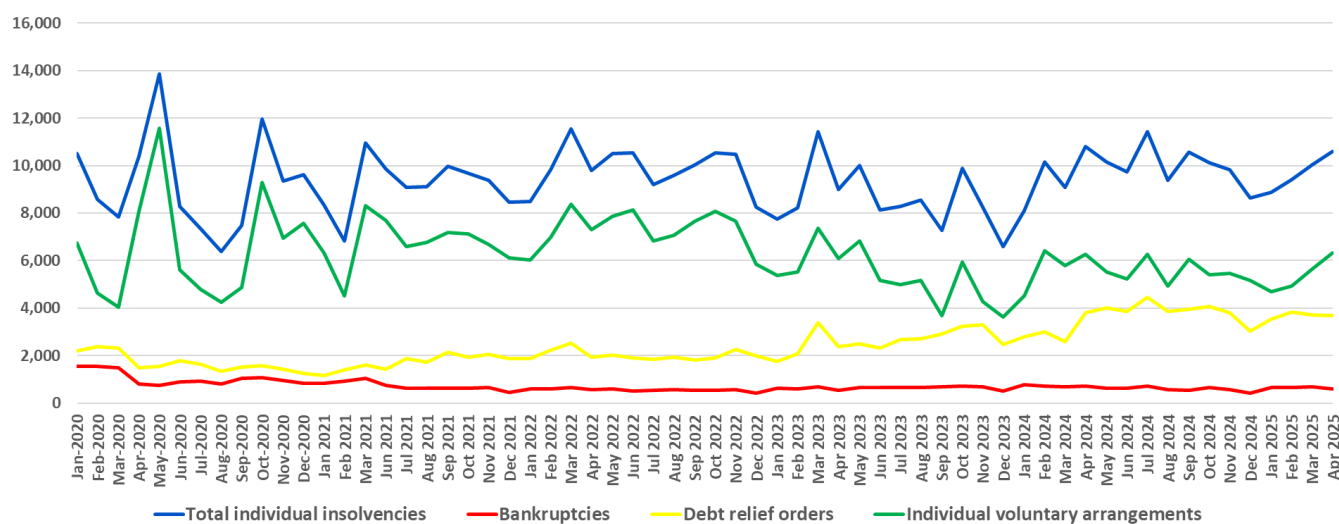
For individuals, **600 bankruptcies were registered in April 2025**, which was 17% lower than in April 2024, but 7% higher than in April 2022.

There were **3,677 Debt Relief Orders (DROs) in April 2025**, which was 3% lower than in April 2024, but 91% higher than in April 2022.

There were **6,316 Individual Voluntary Arrangements (IVAs) registered in April 2025**, which was 1% higher than April 2024, but 14% lower than April 2022.

**Total Individual Insolvencies between May 2024 and April 2025 are 13% higher than the same period a year earlier, representing an increase of 13,602**

### Individual Insolvencies in England and Wales



Source: Insolvency Service

There were **7,273 Breathing Space registrations in April 2025**, which is **5% lower than the number registered in April 2024**. 7,170 were Standard Breathing Space registrations, which is 5% lower and 103 were Mental Health Breathing Space registrations, which is 1% higher than April 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 Count<sup>2</sup>

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: April 2025

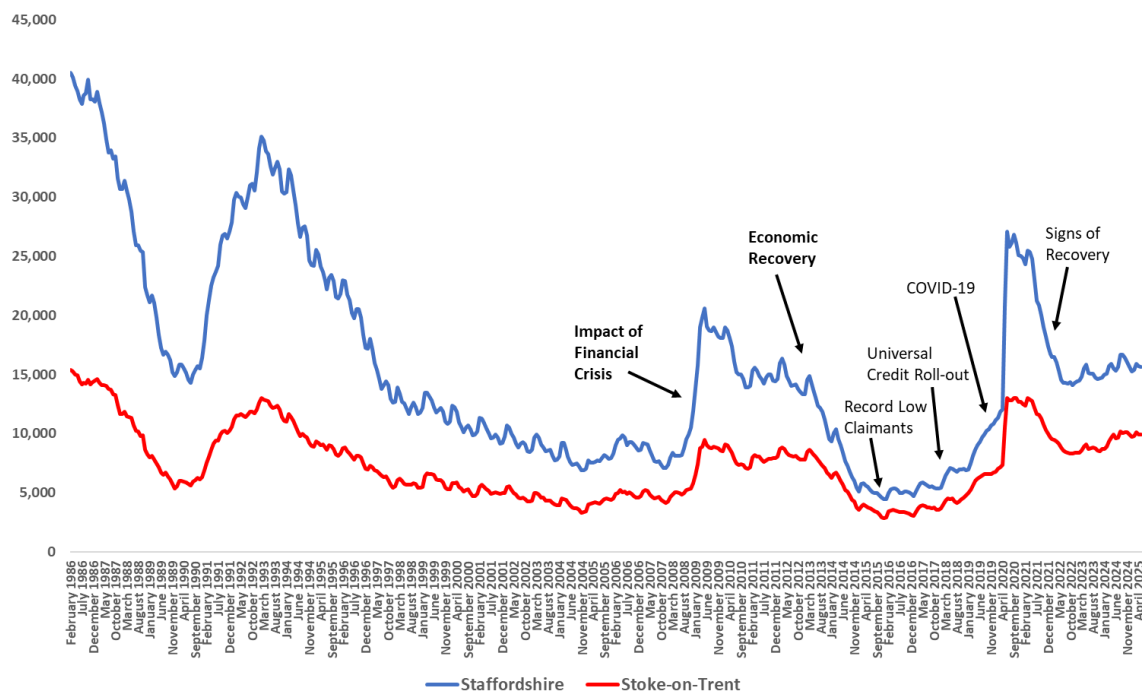
Area	Claimant Count Rate (Apr 2024)	Claimant Count Rate (Mar 2025)	Claimant Count Rate <sup>1</sup> (Apr 2025)	Number of Claimants (Apr 2025)	Monthly Change in Claimants (Numbers)	Monthly Change in Claimants (%)	Change in Claimants since March 2020 (Numbers)	Change in Claimants since March 2020 (%)
England	3.8	4.2	4.2	1,529,600	180	0.0%	466,095	43.8%
West Midlands	4.8	5.5	5.6	208,710	370	0.2%	64,360	44.6%
Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent	3.6	3.6	3.6	25,545	-45	-0.2%	6,175	31.9%
Birmingham	8.7	10.6	10.6	80,430	495	0.6%	31,060	62.9%
Wolverhampton	7.0	7.5	7.4	12,570	-65	-0.5%	2,190	21.1%
Sandwell	6.0	7.2	7.3	15,905	40	0.3%	5,125	47.5%
Walsall	5.4	6.2	6.3	11,015	30	0.3%	2,410	28.0%
<b>Stoke-on-Trent</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>9,910</b>	<b>-5</b>	<b>-0.1%</b>	<b>2,590</b>	<b>35.4%</b>
Coventry	5.2	5.8	5.8	13,865	95	0.7%	5,865	73.3%
Dudley	4.5	5.0	5.0	9,895	-25	-0.3%	1,380	16.2%
Telford and Wrekin	3.4	3.8	3.8	4,570	-10	-0.2%	1,140	33.2%
Solihull	3.2	3.7	3.7	4,830	105	2.2%	1,180	32.3%
Worcestershire	3.0	3.2	3.1	11,470	-120	-1.0%	3,165	38.1%
<b>Staffordshire</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>15,635</b>	<b>-45</b>	<b>-0.3%</b>	<b>3,585</b>	<b>29.8%</b>
Herefordshire, County of	2.4	2.9	2.8	3,095	-45	-1.4%	985	46.7%
Warwickshire	2.5	2.8	2.8	10,760	-30	-0.3%	2,930	37.4%
Shropshire	2.3	2.5	2.5	4,760	-55	-1.1%	750	18.7%
East Staffordshire	3.7	3.7	3.7	2,950	55	1.9%	1,230	71.5%
Tamworth	3.5	3.3	3.4	1,665	15	0.9%	175	11.7%
Cannock Chase	3.2	3.2	3.2	2,045	-25	-1.2%	390	23.6%
Newcastle-under-Lyme	2.9	3.1	3.0	2,435	-40	-1.6%	455	23.0%
South Staffordshire	2.5	2.6	2.6	1,710	0	0.0%	400	30.5%
Lichfield	2.2	2.4	2.4	1,540	-15	-1.0%	220	16.7%
Stafford	2.5	2.4	2.4	1,995	10	0.5%	340	20.5%
Staffordshire Moorlands	2.2	2.4	2.3	1,295	-40	-3.0%	375	40.8%

<sup>1</sup> The claimant rate is the proportion of the working age population claiming Universal Credit

- The claimant count in Staffordshire saw a **decrease of 45 claimants over the last month**, with the **total number now at 15,635**.
- Over the last month, the **claimant rate for Staffordshire has remained the same at 2.9%** of the working age population.
- **Staffordshire saw a slight decrease of 0.3% this month, in contrast to the region which saw a slight increase of 0.2% and no change nationally.**
- 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 4.2% which remained the same as the previous month.**
- Stoke-on-Trent saw a **decrease of 5 claimants** over the same period with a **total of 9,910 claimants**, with the **rate decreasing from 6.1% to 6.0% this month.**

<sup>2</sup> 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 29.8% or 3,585 higher than the level seen in March 2020 (pre-COVID),** which is far lower than the 44.6% increase seen regionally and the 43.8% increase seen nationally.
- **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 2.9% of the working age population compared to 5.6% regionally and 4.2% nationally. In Stoke-on-Trent, the Claimant Count remains above both the regional and national averages at 6.0%.**
- 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.
- Four districts in Staffordshire saw decreases in the claimant count this month with the exception of East Staffordshire, Stafford and Tamworth which saw increases and South

Staffordshire which saw no change. It is notable that Staffordshire Moorlands saw a decrease of -3.0%. East Staffordshire saw the highest monthly increase of 1.9%.

- The highest claimant rate at 3.7% is in East Staffordshire. Staffordshire Moorlands has the lowest claimant rate of 2.3%. It is important to note all districts have a lower claimant rate than both the regional and national rates.

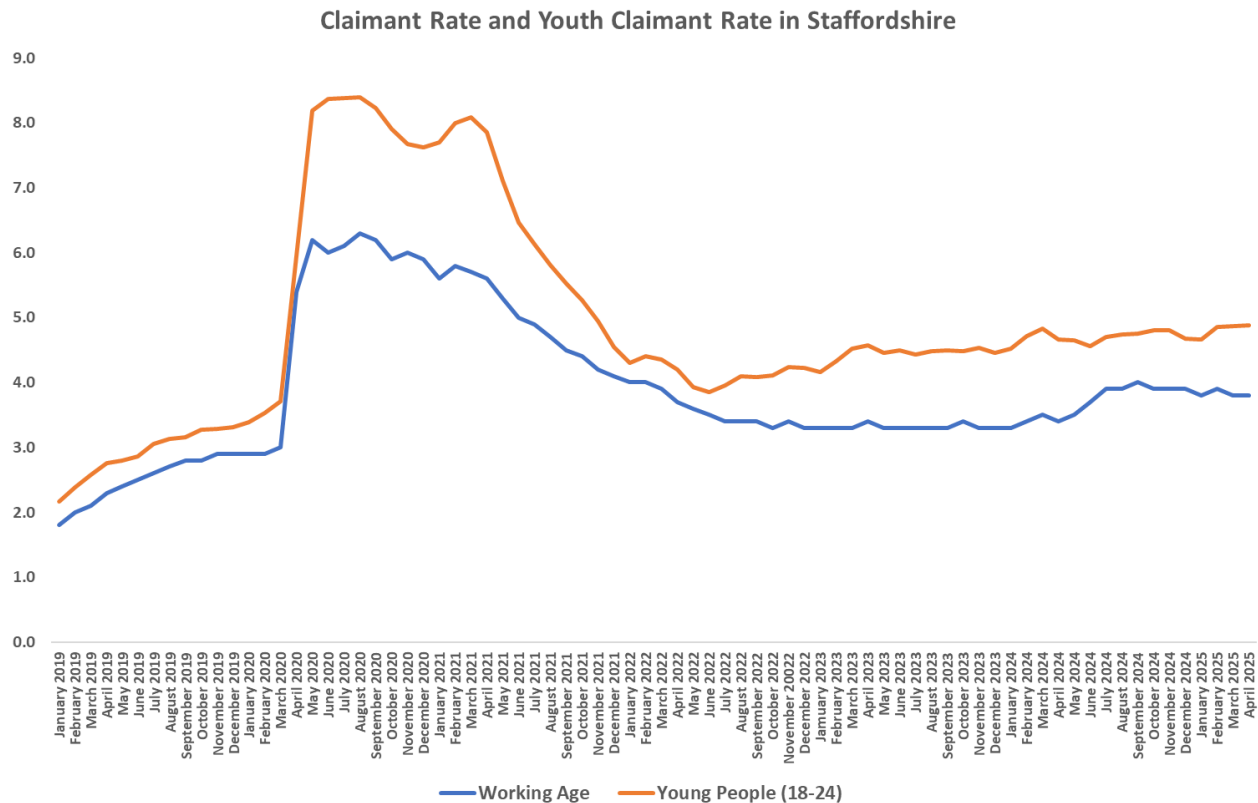
## Youth Claimant Count

### Youth Claimant Count (Universal Credit) Statistics: April 2025

Area	Youth Claimant Count Rate (Apr 2024)	Youth Claimant Count Rate (Mar 2025)	Youth Claimant Count Rate <sup>1</sup> (Apr 2025)	Number of Youth Claimants (Apr 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	5.1	5.6	5.6	269,395	1,590	0.6%	71,665	36.2%
West Midlands	6.9	7.5	7.6	39,295	480	1.2%	11,390	40.8%
Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent	5.6	5.8	5.9	5,065	45	0.9%	1,245	32.6%
Wolverhampton	10.9	10.9	10.9	2,330	20	0.9%	420	22.0%
Birmingham	9.1	10.3	10.5	14,645	245	1.7%	5,540	60.8%
Walsall	9.5	10.2	10.4	2,325	25	1.1%	410	21.4%
Sandwell	9.1	10.3	10.3	3,015	25	0.8%	900	42.6%
<b>Stoke-on-Trent</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>1,965</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>2.1%</b>	<b>560</b>	<b>39.9%</b>
Dudley	7.7	8.1	8.1	1,895	-10	-0.5%	145	8.3%
Solihull	5.8	6.7	6.8	985	15	1.5%	160	19.4%
Telford and Wrekin	5.8	6.2	6.4	965	25	2.7%	205	27.0%
Coventry	5.0	5.4	5.5	2,540	55	2.2%	1,005	65.5%
Worcestershire	4.8	5.3	5.2	2,120	-20	-0.9%	525	32.9%
<b>Staffordshire</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>3,105</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>690</b>	<b>28.6%</b>
Herefordshire, County of	4.3	4.7	4.5	510	-15	-2.9%	95	22.9%
Shropshire	3.8	4.4	4.5	895	15	1.7%	70	8.5%
Warwickshire	3.8	4.3	4.5	2,005	55	2.8%	670	50.2%
Tamworth	7.2	7.1	6.8	370	-20	-5.1%	75	25.4%
Cannock Chase	6.3	6.3	6.3	430	0	0.0%	65	17.8%
East Staffordshire	5.4	5.3	5.6	485	30	6.6%	165	51.6%
South Staffordshire	4.9	4.9	5.1	365	15	4.3%	115	46.0%
Lichfield	4.0	4.5	4.4	305	-5	-1.6%	35	13.0%
Stafford	4.7	4.6	4.3	360	-20	-5.3%	45	14.3%
Staffordshire Moorlands	3.5	4.1	4.0	225	-10	-4.3%	50	28.6%
Newcastle-under-Lyme	3.2	3.7	3.8	555	10	1.8%	130	30.6%

<sup>1</sup> 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 10 claimants with a total of 3,105 young people**. Staffordshire saw a 0.3% increase, lower than the 1.2% increase in the West Midlands and the 0.6% increase in England this month.
- **The proportion of young people in Staffordshire aged 18-24 claiming work-related Universal Credit remained the same at 4.9%**. It is important to note that Staffordshire continues to be lower than the national rate 5.6%, which also remained the same and far lower than the regional rate 7.6% which increased from 7.5%.
- **Stoke-on-Trent saw an increase of 40 claimants to a total of 1,965 claimants with the rate increasing to 8.7% from 8.5% this month.**



- The majority of districts in Staffordshire saw a decrease in the youth claimant rate, with the exception of East Staffordshire, South Staffordshire and Newcastle-under-Lyme which saw increases and Cannock Chase which remained unchanged this month.
- Tamworth has the highest rate at 6.8%, whilst Newcastle-under-Lyme has the lowest rate at 3.8%. However, Newcastle-under-Lyme has the highest number of youth claimants at 555, whilst Staffordshire Moorlands has the lowest number of youth claimants at 225.
- 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

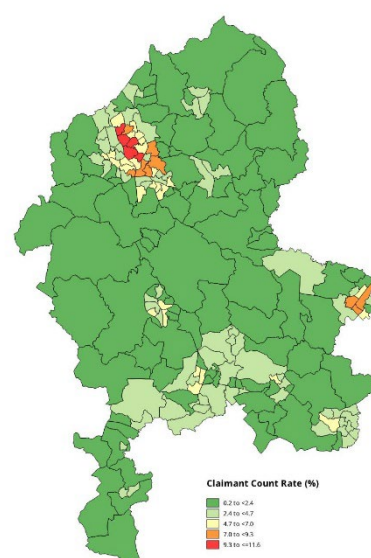
The following maps and tables provide the latest breakdown of the claimant count by wards in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent.

## Claimant Count Rate April 2025

Of the 201 wards in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent, 51 were above the England average of 4.2% 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 Joiner's Square: 11.6%/ 530; Etruria & Hanley: 11.3% /605; Moorcroft: 11.0%/405; Tunstall: 9.7% /410; Burslem Central: 9.3%/425 total claimants.

In Staffordshire, the four wards with the highest claimant rate were in East Staffordshire with the highest rates in Anglesey: 8.1%/435; Shobnall: 8.0%/435; Burton: 7.9%/240; Eton Park: 6.6%/325 total claimants.

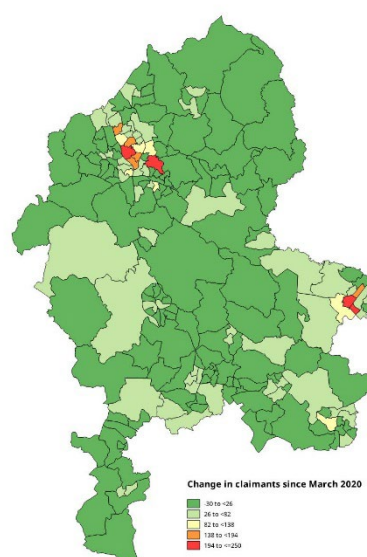


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## Change in Claimant Count since March 2020

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 (250 increase to 605); Bentilee & Ubberley (205 increase to 605); Hanley Park & Shelton (175 increase to 360); Tunstall (160 increase to 410); Joiner's Square (155 increase to 530); Moorcroft (145 increase to 405); Birches Head & Central Forest Park (120 increase to 510).

Of the remaining three wards in the top ten, all were in East Staffordshire including Anglesey (245 increase to 435); Shobnall (225 increase to 435); Eton Park (145 increase to 325).



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

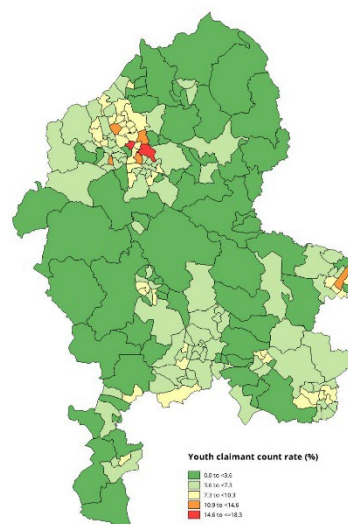
The following maps and tables provide the latest breakdown of the youth claimant count by wards in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent.

### Youth Claimant Count Rate April 2025

Of the 201 wards in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent, 82 were above the England average of 5.6% 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, six were in Stoke-on-Trent including Joiner's Square: 18.3%/140; Bentilee & Ubberrley: 16.1%/145; Fenton East: 13.9%/65; Burslem Central: 12.2%/75; Abbey Hulton & Towsend: 11.4%/90; Meir South: 10.8%/60.

In Staffordshire, the four wards with the highest claimant rates were Burton (East Staffordshire): 11.7%/45; Clayton (Newcastle-u-Lyme): 11.0%/20; Cross Heath (Newcastle-u-Lyme): 10.7%/55; Holditch & Chesterton (Newcastle-u-Lyme): 10.5%/45.

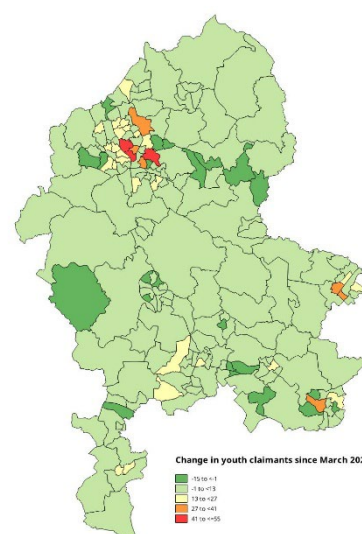


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### Change in Youth Claimant Count since March 2020

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 & Ubberrley (55 increase to 145); Hanley Park & Shelton (55 increase to 85); Etruria and Hanley (45 increase to 90); Joiner's Square (40 increase to 140); Baddeley, Milton & Norton (35 increase to 95); Fenton East (30 increase to 65); Tunstall (25 increase to 65).

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; Anglesey (East Staffordshire): 30 increase to 60; Castle (Tamworth): 30 increase to 45.

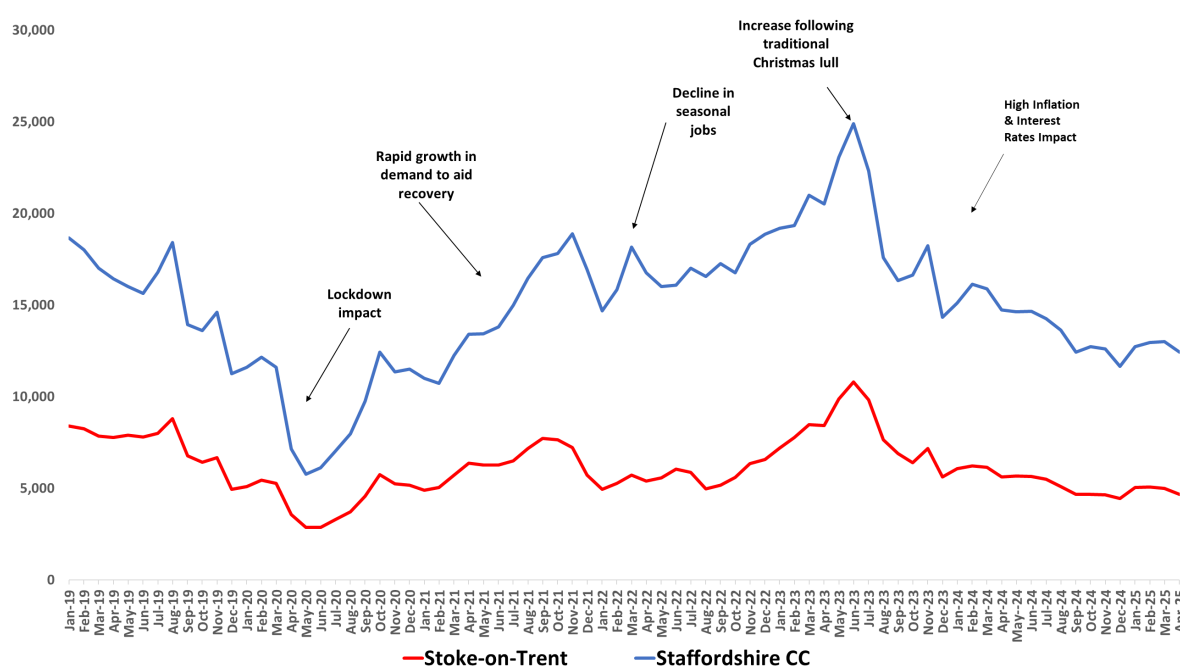


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## Job Vacancies<sup>3</sup>

- **Staffordshire saw a 4% decrease in the number of available job vacancies between March and April to a total of 12,400<sup>4</sup>. This is lower than the number of work-related benefit claimants. Stoke-on-Trent saw a 7% decrease in job vacancies to a total of 4,600 which is significantly lower than the number of claimants.**
- **Across the region in the last month there was also a 4% decrease, and nationally there was a 1% decrease in the number of job vacancies.**
- In April 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 16% lower, whilst Stoke-on-Trent also decreased by 17%. 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 2% higher, in positive contrast to the region which is 15% lower and higher than the national level which increased 0.2%. Stoke-on-Trent job vacancies are 14% 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 live job vacancy data has been upgraded and improved through enhanced AI deduplication and sharper skill scraping of job postings.\*\**

<sup>3</sup> Source: Lightcast

<sup>4</sup> 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 April. However, 'Process, Plant & Machine Operatives' occupations saw an increase of +2% whilst 'Managers, Directors & Senior Officials' occupations saw the biggest decrease of -16%.
- The occupations to see the most significant increases during April include Programmers & Software Development Professionals; Sales & Retail Assistants; Sales Related; Business Sales Executives; Quantity Surveyors; Welding Trades; Nursing Auxiliaries & Assistants; HR Administrative; HE Teaching Professionals; Buyers & Procurement Officers; Youth Work Professionals; Fork-Lift Truck Drivers; Occupational Therapists; Electrical & Electronics Technicians; Road Transport Drivers; Transport & Distribution Clerks & Assistants; Taxi & Cab Drivers/Chauffeurs; Other Drivers & Transport Operatives; Primary Education Teaching Professionals; Registered Specialist Nurses.

## Annual Trends in job vacancies

- The occupations to see the largest year-on-year increases include Programmers & Software Development Professionals; Secondary Education Teaching Professionals; Business Sales Executives; SEND Teaching Professionals; Road Transport Drivers; Financial Accounts Managers; Teaching Professionals; Quality Assurance & Regulatory Professionals; Welding Trades; Youth Work Professionals; Cleaners & Domestics; Nursing Auxiliaries & Assistants; Legal Associate Professionals; Senior Care Workers; Project Support Officers; Early Education & Childcare Service Proprietors; Rail Construction & Maintenance Operatives; Higher Level Teaching Assistants; Other Drivers & Transport Operatives; Elementary Process Plant Occupations.

## Pre-COVID baseline trends in job vacancies

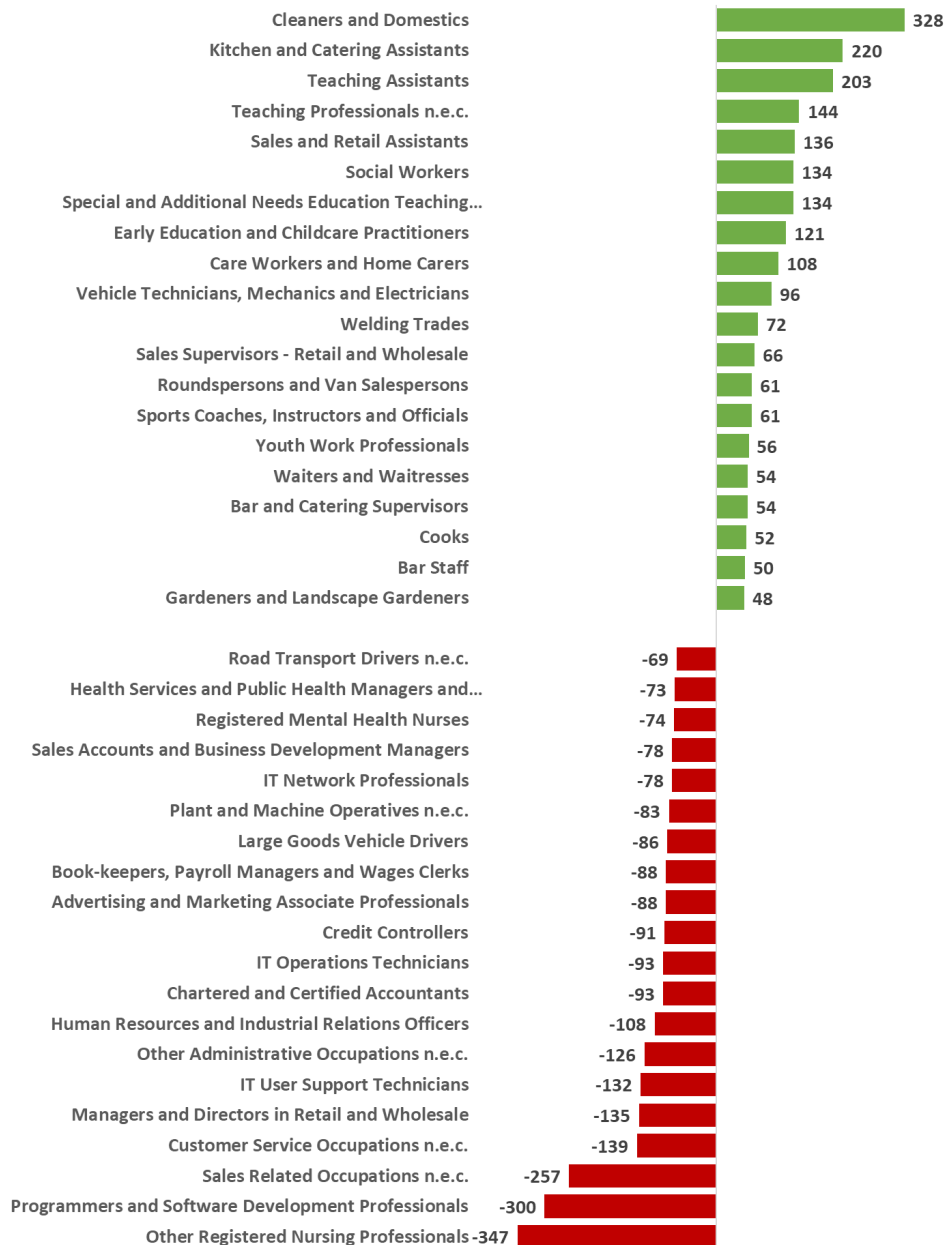
The main occupations with higher vacancies compared to pre-COVID are found in:

- **Housekeepers & Related Occupations** (Cleaners & Domestics)
- **Hospitality** (Kitchen & Catering Assistants; Waiters & Waitresses; Cooks; Bar & Catering Supervisors; Bar Staff)
- **Education** (Teaching Assistants; Teaching Professionals; SEND Teaching Professionals)
- **Retail & Wholesale** (Sales & Retail Assistants; Sales Supervisors)
- **Health & Social Care** (Social Workers; Care Workers & Home Carers; Youth Workers)
- **Childcare** (Early Education & Childcare Practitioners)
- **Motor Trade** (Vehicle Technicians, Mechanics & Electricians)
- **Manufacturing** (Welding Trades)
- **Logistics** (Roundspersons & Van Salespersons)

- **Sport** (Sports Coaches, Instructors & Officials)
- **Horticultural** (Gardeners & Landscape Gardeners)

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 Apr 2025 in Staffordshire & Stoke

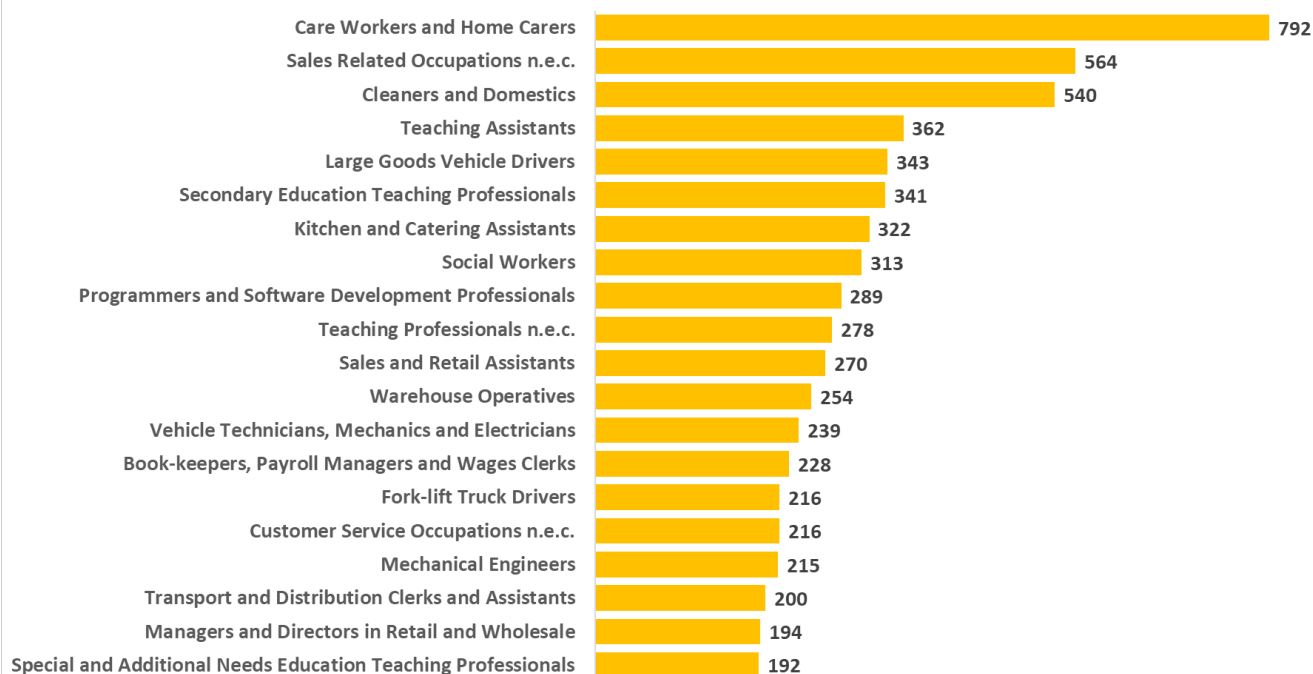


### Top Occupations in Demand

- 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 **'Sales Related,' 'Cleaners & Domestics,'** and **'Teaching Assistants'** also have strong demand.

- The Logistics sector continues to have high demand for **'Large Goods Vehicle Drivers,' 'Warehouse Operatives,' 'Fork-lift Drivers' and 'Transport & Distribution Clerks & Assistants.'**
- In the Education sector there is particularly high demand for **'Secondary Education Teaching Professionals,' 'Teaching Professionals' and 'SEND Teaching Professionals.'**
- In the Hospitality sector **'Kitchen & Catering Assistants'** are most in demand.
- There is high demand in the Health & Social Care sector for **'Social Workers.'**
- In the IT sector **'Programmers & Software Development Professionals'** are in demand.
- Demand for **'Sales & Retail Assistants'** and **'Managers & Directors'** in the Retail and Wholesale sector remain strong.
- In the Motor Trade there is demand for **'Vehicle Technicians, Mechanics & Electricians.'**
- There is strong demand for **'Bookkeepers, Payroll Managers & Wages Clerks'** and **'Customer Service'** across business sectors.
- In the Engineering sector **'Mechanical Engineers'** are in demand.

Top 20 occupations in demand in Staffordshire & Stoke during April 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 the digital economy (including online retail and e-commerce), construction sector (including retrofitting homes), the car industry e.g. electric cars at Jaguar Land Rover, and in manufacturing e.g. hydrogen combustion technology at 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.

