

Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Economic Bulletin

Issue 58 - June 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 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 an increase 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, and new job postings in Staffordshire have decreased below pre-pandemic levels. In comparison, job vacancies in the region have decreased at a higher rate below pre-pandemic levels whilst nationally there has been a similar decrease.**
- **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 445 claimants this month to a total of 15,715 claimants.**
- **The claimant rate for Staffordshire increased from 2.8% to 2.9% of the working age population, this month. Staffordshire saw an increase of 2.9% this month, slightly higher than the 1.3% increase in the region and the 1.6% increase nationally.**
- **Staffordshire continues to have one of the lowest claimant rates in the region, far lower than the regional average 5.5% which remained the same this month, and lower than the England average 4.2% which increased from 4.1%.** 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 3,040. Staffordshire saw a 0.3% increase**, largely in line with the **0.5% increase in the West Midlands and the 0.1% increase in England. The proportion of young people in Staffordshire aged 18-24 claiming work-related Universal Credit remained the same at 4.8%.** It is important to state that **Staffordshire continues to be lower than the national rate of 5.5% 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 April and May to a total of 11,500. This is lower than the number of work-related benefit claimants in Staffordshire. Stoke-on-Trent saw a 5% increase 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 a 1% decrease, and nationally there was no change 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 & Domestic,'** and **'Secondary Education Teaching Professionals'** 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 Hospitality sector, **'Kitchen & Catering Assistants'** roles are most in demand.
- In the Education sector there is particularly high demand for **'Teaching Assistants,' 'SEND Teaching Professionals,' 'Teaching Professionals'** and **'Primary Education Teaching Professionals.'**
- There is high demand in the Health and Social Care sector for **'Social Workers.'**
- Demand for **'Sales & Retail Assistants'** and **'Managers & Directors'** in the Retail and Wholesale sector remain strong.
- There is strong demand for **'Customer Service occupations'** and **'Book-keepers, Payroll Managers & Wages Clerks'** across business sectors.
- In the Motor Trade **'Vehicle Technicians, Mechanics & Electricians'** are in demand.
- In the Engineering sector **'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), 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 Pets At Home in Stafford recently 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 we have heard **the Chancellor deliver the UK's first multi-year spending review since 2021**. The review sets the day-to-day budgets of government departments over the next three years, used to pay staff and deliver public services. It also sets their investment budgets until the end of the decade, to pay for new infrastructure such as hospitals, schools, and military equipment. Here is a summary of the key points:
- **Health**
 - Day-to-day budget for the NHS in England to go up by 3% on average over the next three years, accounting for inflation, reaching £226bn by 2029
 - Investment budget to be held in real terms over next three years, following rises over the last two years
 - Up to £10bn earmarked by 2029 for new technology, including improving the NHS App and delivering single patient records
 - The health department will be asked to deliver around £9bn in "efficiency gains" by 2029, out of a government-wide target of £13.8bn
- **Education**
 - Core schools budget in England to go up by 0.4% in real terms on average over the next three years, reaching £69.5bn by 2029
 - Free school meals to be extended to about 500,000 more children from September 2026, costing around £490m per year
- **Crime, justice, and borders**
 - Home Office day-to-day budget to go down by 1.7% in real terms over the next three years
 - Ministers say they hope to reduce the department's spending on hotels for asylum seekers, and end their use by the next election
 - They insist police "spending power" will still go up by 1.7% in real terms, based on the assumption that it will be paid for, in part, by increases in council tax
 - The Ministry of Justice budget, which pays for prison and court costs, to see average real-terms rises in day-to-day spending of 1.8% a year, although its investment budget will go down by 2.1% in real terms
- **Defence**
 - Ministry of Defence day-to-day budget to go up 0.7% in real terms, with a big 7.3% average annual rise in investment spending
 - The government has pledged to increase defence spending from 2.3% to 2.5% of overall economic output by 2027
 - It is facing pressure from allies to go further, ahead of a key Nato summit later this month
- **Housing and local government**
 - Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to see 1.4% real-

terms cut in day-to-day budget

- The government says councils' "core spending power" will still go up, if they increase council tax by the maximum amount
- £39bn allocated for social housing in England between 2026 and 2036, an average of £3.9bn a year over the period compared to £2.3bn currently

• **Transport and environment**

- Transport department day-to-day budget cut by 5% in real terms - with the government arguing savings will be made when private train companies are nationalised over the coming years
- £15.6bn allocated between 2027 and 2031 for transport projects in English city regions outside London
- £3 cap on single bus fares in England extended until March 2027
- Environment department day-to-day budget to fall by 2.7% in real terms

• **Energy**

- Energy security department budget to go up 0.5% in real terms for day-to-day spending, and 2.6% for investment
- Additional £11.5bn committed towards the cost of building the Sizewell C nuclear power plant in Suffolk, which will also require private investment

• **International affairs**

- Foreign Office day-to-day budget to go down by 6.8% in real terms over next three years, the biggest drop, largely due to reduced aid spending
- Overseas aid will make up spending 0.3% of national income by 2027, under previously-announced plans

• **Science and technology**

- Department for Science, Innovation and Technology day-to-day budget to rise by average 7.4% in real terms
- £2bn allocated over next three years to deliver the government's "opportunities action plan" for artificial intelligence
- £750m set aside to fund a new supercomputer at Edinburgh University, reversing a controversial cut in the early weeks of the Labour government

- Beyond the spending review **the Government will increase the infrastructure budget to at least £725 billion over the next decade as it begins to set out how key capital funding will be spent across the country ahead of the publication its infrastructure plan.** A new website will be launched giving details of the "pipeline of the projects" so industry will be able to see in advance when and where they will be built. According to the Treasury, the strategy will lay out government plans on prioritised policy areas such as upgrading transport networks, building new homes, modernising public services such as hospitals, and assisting the transition to green energy. Alongside the strategy, Pat McFadden, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, will launch a consultation on an overhaul to procurement rules to make creating high quality British jobs and boosting skill

in local communities key requirements for companies bidding for big projects.

- **The infrastructure plan will be followed by the announcement of sites for “new towns of the future” and the Government will unveil its long-awaited and much anticipated Industrial Strategy - a key component of its broader economic growth plan.**

Cost of Living

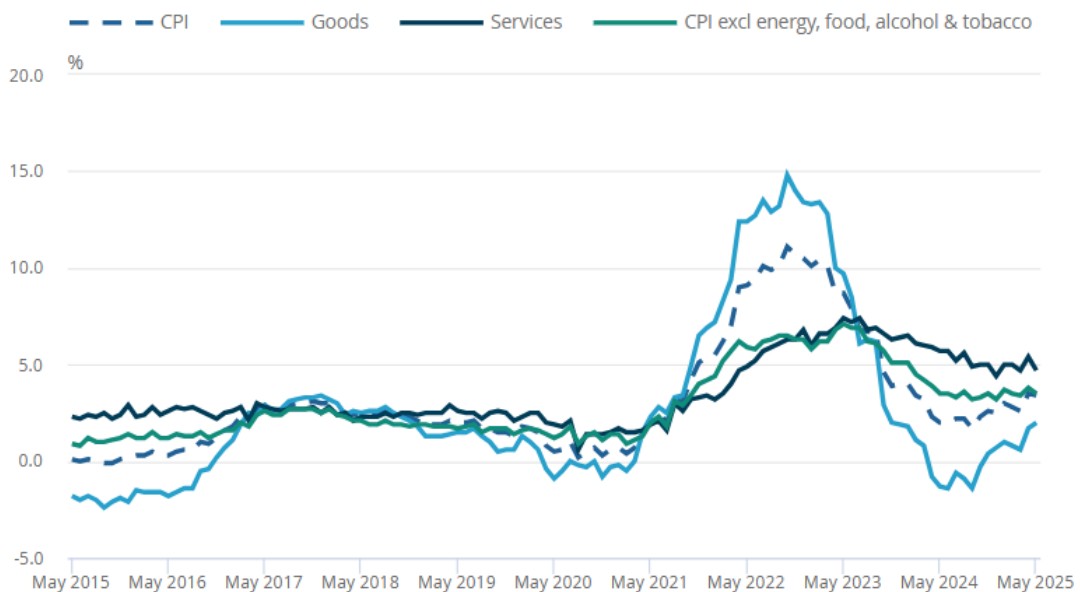
- **UK inflation rose by 3.4 per cent in the 12 months to May 2025, which was the same as the rise seen in April.** The April figure was initially published as 3.5 per cent but the Office for National Statistics later said an error in the Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) tax data it received meant the rate should have been a touch lower. The current rate remains above the Bank of England target of 2 per cent. Inflation was driven last month by increased food, furniture, and household good costs.

CPI goods annual inflation rate highest since November

2023

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

2025



Source: Consumer price inflation from the Office for National Statistics

- At the same time, **we are seeing annual real terms growth in wages steadily decline.**
- **Annual growth in employees' average regular earnings excluding bonuses in Great Britain was 5.2% in February to April 2025, and annual growth in total earnings including bonuses was 5.3%.** Annual average regular earnings growth was 5.1% for the private sector and 5.6% for the public sector. RTI pay data is also published and provides a provisional timelier estimate of median pay. The two data sources generally trend well

for mean total pay.

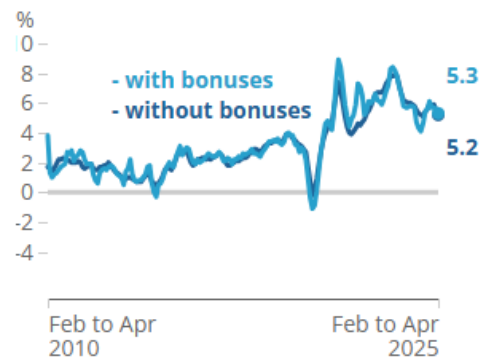
- **Annual growth in real terms**, adjusted for inflation using the **Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH)**, was **1.4% for regular pay and 1.5% for total pay in February to April 2025.**
- **Annual growth in real terms**, adjusted for inflation using the **Consumer Prices Index excluding owner occupiers' housing costs (CPI)**, was **2.1% for regular pay and 2.3% for total pay in February to April 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

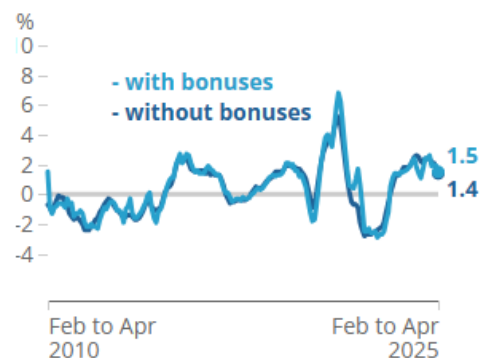


Real Earnings CPIH

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

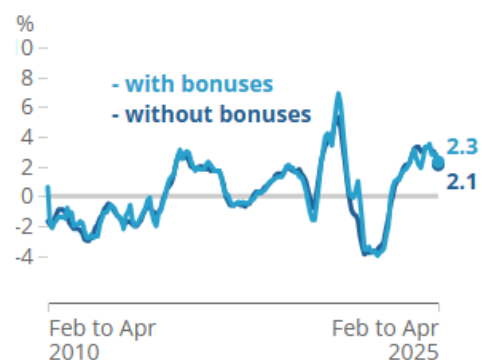


Real Earnings CPI

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

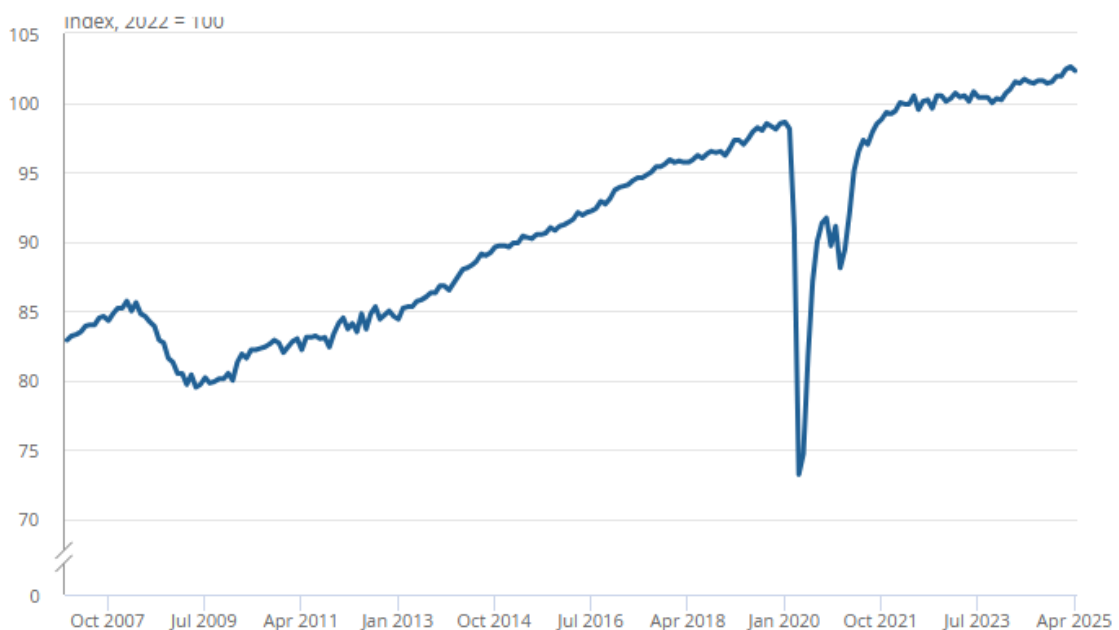


- There were an estimated 47,000 working days lost because of labour disputes across the UK in April 2025.

Economy

- **The UK economy shrank by 0.3 per cent in April**, this was more than expected by most economists. Economists had expected a 0.1% contraction in April after growth of 0.2% in March. **The slowdown has been blamed on the financial uncertainty caused by steep tariffs imposed by Donald Trump, alongside early impact from UK employer tax increases.**
- However, **it should be recognised that monthly figures on the economy are volatile, and the more stable three-month figure to April showed the economy grew by 0.7 per cent.**
- Looking closer at the latest monthly changes we can see that **monthly services output fell by 0.4% in April 2025**, following growth of 0.4% in March 2025, and was the largest contributor to the fall in GDP in the month; but grew by 0.6% in the three months to April 2025.
- **Production output fell by 0.6% in April 2025**, following a fall of 0.7% in March 2025, but grew by 1.1% in the three months to April 2025.
- **Construction output grew by 0.9% in April 2025**, following growth of 0.5% in March 2025, and grew by 0.5% in the three months to April 2025.

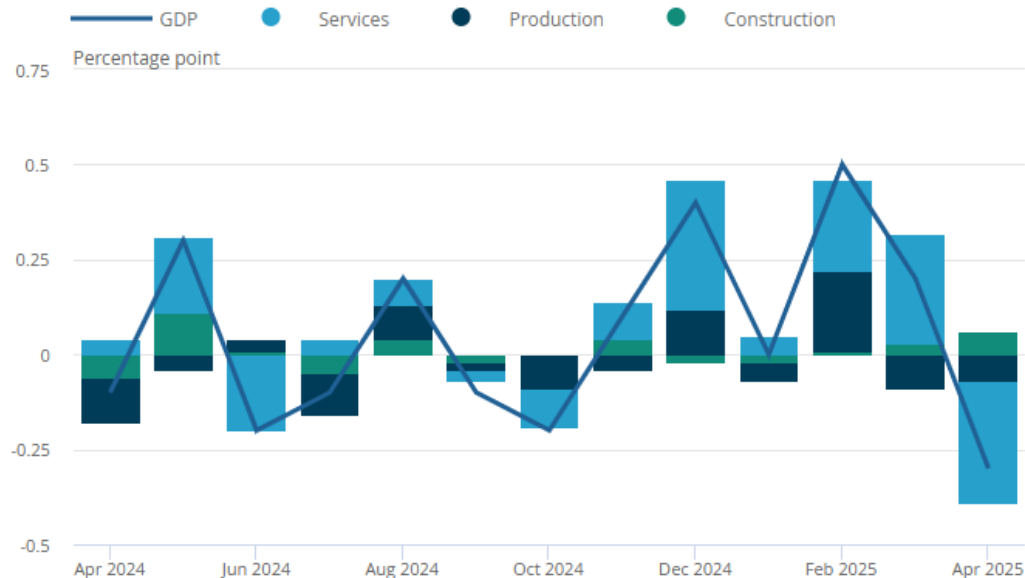
GDP Monthly index, January 2007 to April 2025, UK



Source: GDP monthly estimate from the Office for National Statistics

The services sector was the main contributor to the 0.3% fall in GDP in April 2025

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



Source: GDP monthly estimate from the Office for National Statistics

- **Long-term sickness crisis means Britain's economy is 10 per cent smaller than it otherwise would be, according to a report produced for the NHS.** Tackling the issue would give Britain a £246 billion boost - equivalent to around a 10th of GDP - according to research by Frontier Economics, a consultancy firm.

Business Conditions

- Alongside **rising global uncertainty and the introduction of new business-related UK taxes**, many businesses continue to 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**.
- The latest results from Wave 134 of the **Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS)**, which was live from 2 to 15 June 2025, suggest that business conditions continue to remain challenging.
- Around one in seven (14%) trading businesses reported that their **turnover had increased** in May 2025 compared with the previous calendar month, which is broadly stable with April but down 2 percentage points from May 2024; in contrast, 24% reported that their **turnover had decreased**, which is also broadly stable from April but up 2 percentage

points from a year ago.

- **Economic uncertainty continued to be the most reported challenge affecting turnover** for trading businesses in early June 2025 at 27%, which is down 3 percentage points from early May 2025; **for businesses with 10 or more employees, the most reported challenge was the cost of labour** at 40%, which is broadly stable over the same period.
- A quarter (25%) of trading businesses reported an **increase in the prices of goods or services bought** in May 2025 compared with the previous month; this is down 7 percentage points from April and is the lowest proportion reported since December 2024 (24%).
- Over half (51%) of trading businesses reported that they are **not considering raising their prices** in July 2025, which is up 6 percentage points from June and is the highest proportion reported since December 2024 (52%); **for those businesses that are considering raising prices, the most reported reason for doing so was labour costs** (22%), which is down 5 percentage points from June.
- 16% of businesses with 10 or more employees reported that they were experiencing **worker shortages** in early June 2025; though this is broadly stable with early May, this is the lowest proportion reported since the question was introduced in late October 2021 (except for early February 2025).
- Around one in six (16%) businesses with 10 or more employees reported that they experienced **recruitment difficulties** in May 2025; this is down 2 percentage points from April and is the lowest proportion reported since the question was introduced in March 2022 (except for January 2025).
- The latest business insolvencies data shows that **in May 2025 there were a total of 2,231 company insolvencies in England and Wales, 12% higher than the number registered in the previous year (2,000 in May 2024), and 22% higher than the number registered three years previously (1,826 in May 2022).** The main concern around company and individual insolvencies are associated issues such as mental health and homelessness.

Labour Market

- The **labour market continues to loosen but wage pressures for businesses remain.**
- It is concerning that this month's labour market figures show that **payrolled employees have further declined and are expected to decrease further, at a time when there are fewer job vacancies.**
- More encouragingly, **economic inactivity has seen a further decline, however given the challenging economic conditions movements from economic inactivity have seen both employment and unemployment rise this month.**
- 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

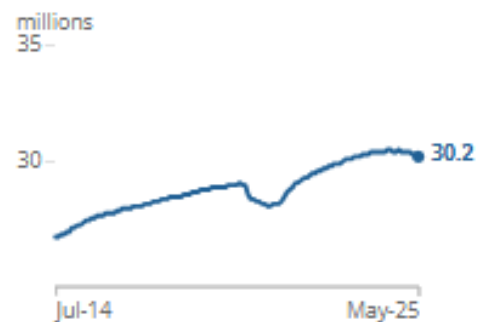
The number of payrolled employees

Monthly change: ▼ -109,000

Since Feb 2020: ▲ 1,133,000

The number of payrolled employees continues to fall.

Source: PAYE RTI from HMRC



Employment rate

Employment rate (all aged 16 to 64)

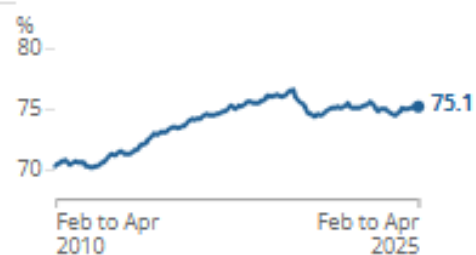
Quarterly change: ▲ 0.1pps

Since Dec-Feb 2020: ▼ -1.4pps

The employment rate is up on the quarter and 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+)

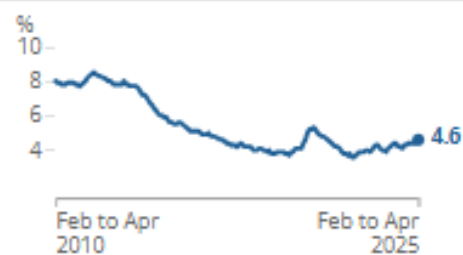
Quarterly change: ▲ 0.2pps

Since Dec-Feb 2020: ▲ 0.7pps

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: ▲1.0pps

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: ▼-63,000

Since Jan-Mar 2020: ▼-59,000

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 55,000 (0.2%) between March and April 2025 and fell by 115,000 (0.4%) between April 2024 and April 2025.**
- When looking at February to April 2025, the period comparable with our Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimates, payrolled employees fell by 78,000 (0.3%) over the quarter and fell by 51,000 (0.2%) over the year.
- **The early estimate of payrolled employees for May 2025 decreased by 109,000 (0.4%) on the month and decreased by 274,000 (0.9%) on the year to 30.2 million.** Early estimates are subject to significant revisions as more returns are received by HMRC next month. The earlier timing of the data extract for May 2025 means these estimates are more uncertain than usual. Additional caution is needed in interpreting these earlier estimates.
- 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 we would advise caution when interpreting change involving those periods. We recommend using LFS estimates as part of our 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 75.1% in

February to April 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 4.6% in February to April 2025. This is above estimates of a year ago, and up in the latest quarter. **This is the highest unemployment rate since July 2021.**
- The **UK economic inactivity** rate for people aged 16 to 64 years was estimated at 21.3% in February to April 2025. This is below estimates of a year ago, and down in the latest quarter.
- The **UK Claimant Count** for May 2025 increased on the month and the year, to 1.735 million.
- The estimated number of **vacancies in the UK** fell by 63,000 on the quarter, to 736,000 in March to May 2025. This was the 35th consecutive quarterly decline with quarterly falls seen in 14 out of the 18 industry sectors. Vacancies were 59,000 below their January to March 2020 level. Feedback from our Vacancy Survey suggests some firms may not be recruiting new workers or replacing workers who have left.
- **Britons took an extra 5 million sick days for mental health reasons last year after a surge in conditions including stress, anxiety, and depression, according to the Office for National Statistics.** Staff took a record 20.5 million days off because of mental health in 2024 - up from 14.8 million in 2023 - which accounted for 13.7 per cent of all sick days taken in Britain, the highest proportion since 2019.

Green Economy

- **Changes to planning regulations around heat pumps** - removing the requirement that they must be at least one metre from a neighbour's property - are to be made as part of Government's Warmer Homes plan to increase take up of the green technology.
- **Ministers are also considering funding energy bill discounts for heat pump owners to try and encourage more households to install the devices to help cut carbon emissions.** Plans are being debated for a scheme under which households with heat pumps would not have to pay "green levies" on the electricity they use to run them, according to government and industry sources.
- **The Energy Secretary Ed Miliband has said builders will be required to fit solar panels to the "vast majority" of new build homes in England under changes to be published this year.**

Housing

- **Housing Secretary Angela Rayner said she is in a race to persuade housing associations to take on social housing projects, with nearly £40 billion for affordable and social homes to be spent over 10 years announced in the Spending Review.** "We're prioritising social rent," Ms Rayner said. "Now we've got to go away and do some of the work with the social landlords."
- **A national housing bank will be created by the Government to help finance the**

building of 500,000 homes. The publicly owned bank - a subsidiary of Homes England - will be backed by £16 billion of public money and aims to leverage £53 billion in private investment.

Conclusion

- In conclusion, **the Chancellor has delivered her Spending Review with overall departmental spending to rise by 2.3% a year in real terms.** The Treasury has also set out plans to **spend a minimum of £725bn over 10 years to boost UK-wide economic, housing, and social infrastructure to drive growth through the Government's infrastructure strategy.** While we also **await the much-anticipated Industrial Strategy,** a key component of the Government's broader economic growth plan.
- **UK inflation rose by 3.4 per cent this month,** the same as last month and above the Bank of England target of 2 per cent. At the same time **real wage growth is steadily coming down and the cost-of-living remains a challenge for many.**
- **The UK economy shrank by 0.3 per cent in April,** with US tariffs and UK tax rises contributory factors. However, over the last quarter up to April the economy grew by 0.7 per cent.
- Alongside **rising global uncertainty and the introduction of new business-related UK taxes,** many businesses continue to 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.**
- The **labour market continues to loosen but wage pressures for businesses remain. Payrolled employees have further declined and are expected to decrease further, at a time when there are fewer job vacancies.** More encouragingly, **economic inactivity has seen a further decline.** 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 statistics¹ for May 2025, which shows the number of new companies and individuals who are unable to pay debts and enter a formal insolvency procedure.

Company Insolvencies

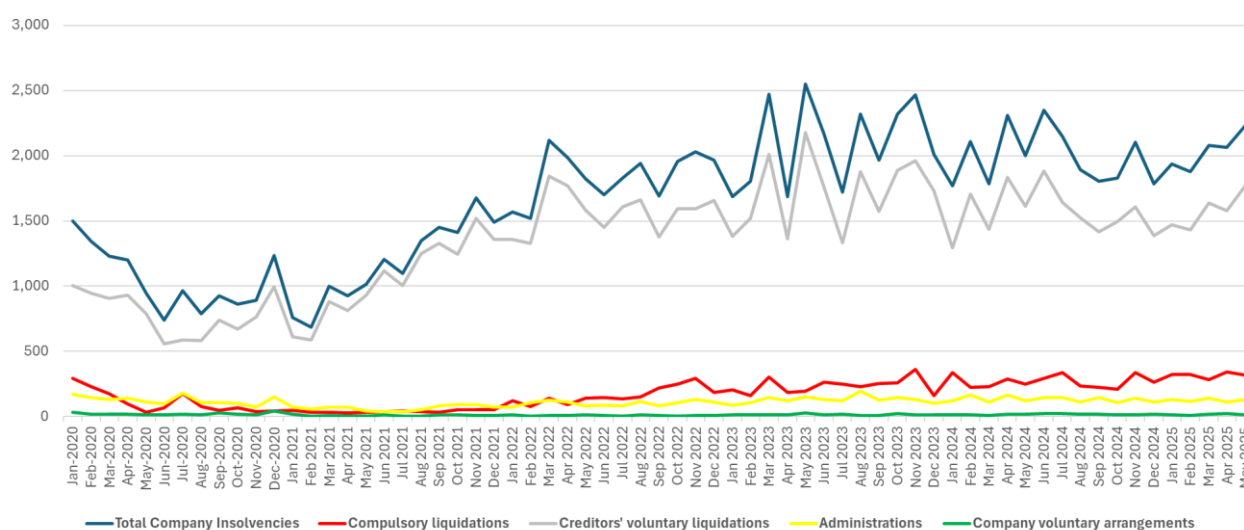
In May 2025 there were a total of 2,231 company insolvencies in England and Wales. The overall number of **company insolvencies are 12% higher than the number registered in the previous year (2,000 in May 2024), and 22 higher than the number registered three years previously (1,826 in May 2022).** Please 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 316 compulsory liquidations in May 2025, 27% higher than the number in May 2024, and 121% higher than in May 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 May 2025 there were 1,769 Creditors' Voluntary Liquidations (CVLs), 10% higher than May 2024, and 12% higher than May 2022. Numbers of administrations are 57% higher than three years previously in May 2022, Company Voluntary Arrangements (CVAs) are at the same level as three years previously in May 2022, and numbers are extremely low.

Company insolvencies between June 2024 and May 2025 are 3% lower compared to a year earlier, representing 841 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, May 2025 - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/company-insolvencies-may-2025)

The sectors to have seen the largest number of company insolvencies between May 2024 and April 2025 continue to be the Construction sector (4,032), Wholesale & Retail sector (3,615) and Accommodation & Food Service sector (3,369). Levels are below those seen for the same period the previous year for the Construction sector -6% lower, the Wholesale & Retail sector -9% lower, and the Accommodation & Food sector -8% lower than levels a year earlier. Overall, for this period company insolvencies by industry are -6% lower. It is positive to see improvements overall across sectors.

Individual Insolvencies

There were **10,278 total individual insolvencies in May 2025**, which was 1% higher than in May 2024, but 2% lower than in May 2022.

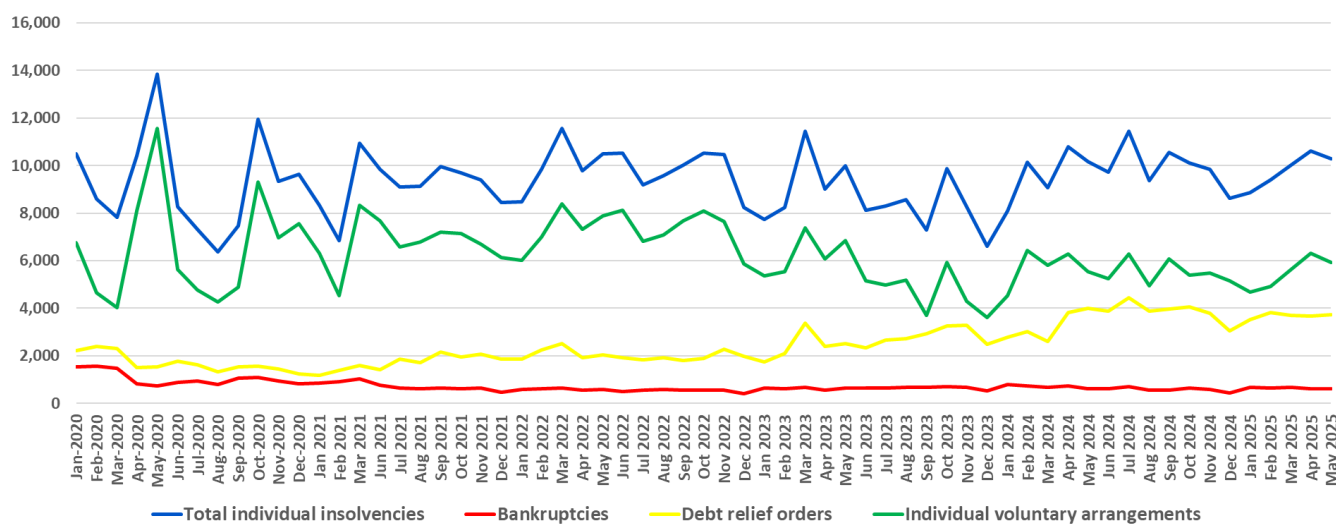
For individuals, **626 bankruptcies were registered in May 2025**, which was 1% higher than in May 2024, and 6% higher than in May 2022.

There were **3,721 Debt Relief Orders (DROs) in May 2025**, which was 7% lower than in May 2024, but 83% higher than in May 2022.

There were **5,931 Individual Voluntary Arrangements (IVAs) registered in May 2025**, which was 7% higher than May 2024, but 25% lower than May 2022.

Total Individual Insolvencies between June 2024 and May 2025 are 13% higher than the same period a year earlier, representing an increase of 13,592

Individual Insolvencies in England and Wales



Source: Insolvency Service

There were **7,805 Breathing Space registrations in May 2025**, which is **2% higher than the number registered in May 2024**. 7,684 were Standard Breathing Space registrations, which is 2% higher and 121 were Mental Health Breathing Space registrations, which is 15% higher than May 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 remain lower, but bankruptcies and 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: May 2025

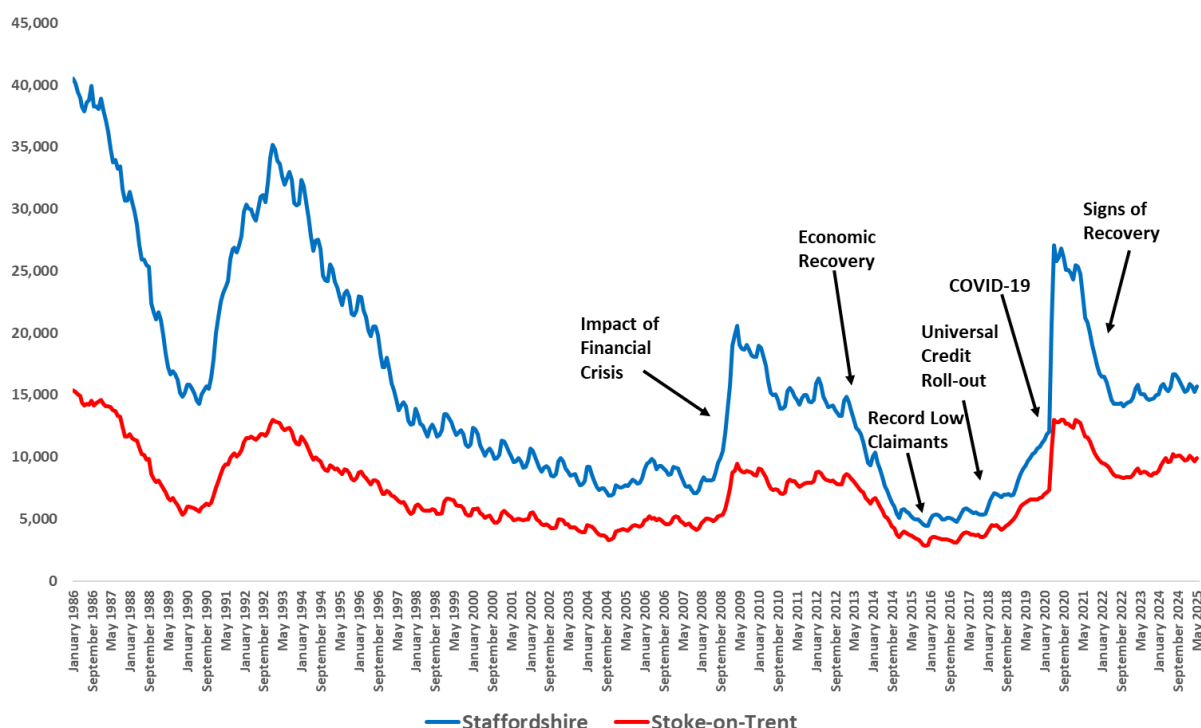
| Area | Claimant Count Rate (May 2024) | Claimant Count Rate (Apr 2025) | Claimant Count Rate ¹ (May 2025) | Number of Claimants (May 2025) | Monthly Change in Claimants (Numbers) | Monthly Change in Claimants (%) | Change in Claimants since March 2020 (Numbers) | Change in Claimants since March 2020 (%) |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|--|
| England | 3.9 | 4.1 | 4.2 | 1,524,415 | 24,200 | 1.6% | 460,910 | 43.3% |
| West Midlands | 4.9 | 5.5 | 5.5 | 207,710 | 2,655 | 1.3% | 63,360 | 43.9% |
| Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent | 3.5 | 3.5 | 3.6 | 25,620 | 685 | 2.7% | 6,250 | 32.3% |
| Birmingham | 8.9 | 10.5 | 10.6 | 80,080 | 830 | 1.0% | 30,710 | 62.2% |
| Wolverhampton | 7.1 | 7.3 | 7.4 | 12,470 | 95 | 0.8% | 2,090 | 20.1% |
| Sandwell | 6.1 | 7.1 | 7.2 | 15,875 | 270 | 1.7% | 5,095 | 47.3% |
| Walsall | 5.5 | 6.1 | 6.2 | 10,915 | 125 | 1.2% | 2,310 | 26.8% |
| Stoke-on-Trent | 5.8 | 5.9 | 6.0 | 9,905 | 240 | 2.5% | 2,585 | 35.3% |
| Coventry | 5.3 | 5.7 | 5.8 | 13,820 | 200 | 1.5% | 5,820 | 72.8% |
| Dudley | 4.5 | 4.9 | 5.0 | 9,810 | 65 | 0.7% | 1,295 | 15.2% |
| Telford and Wrekin | 3.5 | 3.7 | 3.8 | 4,560 | 85 | 1.9% | 1,130 | 32.9% |
| Solihull | 3.2 | 3.7 | 3.7 | 4,810 | 80 | 1.7% | 1,160 | 31.8% |
| Worcestershire | 3.0 | 3.1 | 3.1 | 11,295 | -10 | -0.1% | 2,990 | 36.0% |
| Staffordshire | 2.8 | 2.8 | 2.9 | 15,715 | 445 | 2.9% | 3,665 | 30.4% |
| Herefordshire, County of | 2.5 | 2.8 | 2.8 | 3,020 | 0 | 0.0% | 910 | 43.1% |
| Warwickshire | 2.5 | 2.8 | 2.8 | 10,775 | 225 | 2.1% | 2,945 | 37.6% |
| Shropshire | 2.4 | 2.4 | 2.4 | 4,665 | 15 | 0.3% | 655 | 16.3% |
| East Staffordshire | 3.7 | 3.6 | 3.8 | 2,965 | 100 | 3.5% | 1,245 | 72.4% |
| Tamworth | 3.4 | 3.2 | 3.4 | 1,660 | 60 | 3.8% | 170 | 11.4% |
| Cannock Chase | 3.1 | 3.1 | 3.2 | 2,060 | 50 | 2.5% | 405 | 24.5% |
| Newcastle-under-Lyme | 2.9 | 3.0 | 3.1 | 2,480 | 80 | 3.3% | 500 | 25.3% |
| South Staffordshire | 2.5 | 2.5 | 2.6 | 1,735 | 80 | 4.8% | 425 | 32.4% |
| Staffordshire Moorlands | 2.1 | 2.3 | 2.4 | 1,310 | 30 | 2.3% | 390 | 42.4% |
| Lichfield | 2.2 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 1,530 | 15 | 1.0% | 210 | 15.9% |
| Stafford | 2.5 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 1,980 | 35 | 1.8% | 325 | 19.6% |

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

- The claimant count in Staffordshire saw an **increase of 445 claimants over the last month**, with the **total number now at 15,715**.
- Over the last month, the **claimant rate for Staffordshire increased from 2.8% to 2.9%** of the working age population.
- **Staffordshire saw the number of claimants increase by 2.9% this month, a slightly higher percentage than the 1.3% increase regionally and the 1.6% increase 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 5.5% which remained the same this month, and lower than the average for England of 4.2% which increased from 4.1% the previous month.**
- Stoke-on-Trent saw an **increase of 240 claimants** over the same period with a **total of 9,905 claimants**, with the **rate increasing from 5.9% to 6.0% 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 30.4% or 3,665 higher than the level seen in March 2020 (pre-COVID),** which is far lower than the 43.9% increase seen regionally and the 43.3% 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 5.5% 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.

- All of the districts in Staffordshire saw an increase in the claimant count this month. It is notable that whilst South Staffordshire saw the highest increase of 4.8%, Lichfield saw the lowest monthly increase of 1.0%.
- The highest claimant rate at 3.8% is in East Staffordshire. Lichfield and Stafford both have 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.

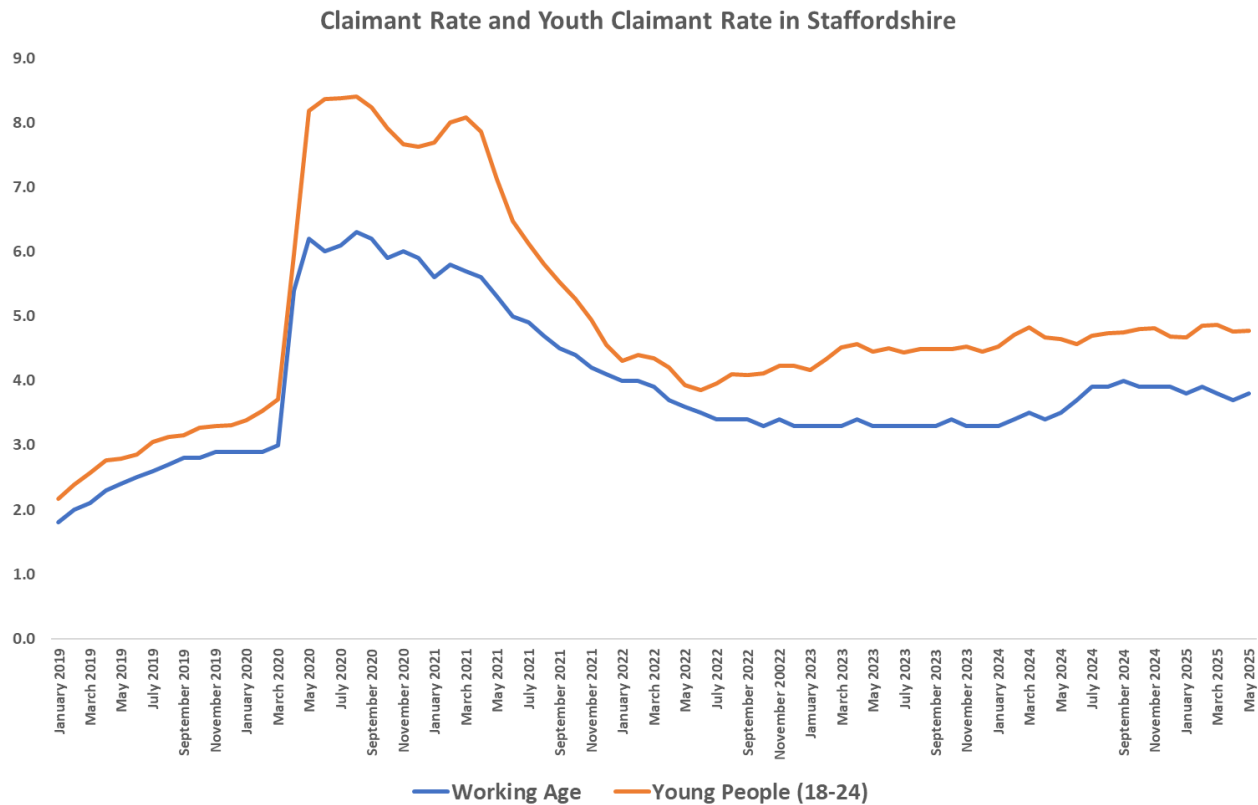
Youth Claimant Count

Youth Claimant Count (Universal Credit) Statistics: May 2025

| Area | Youth Claimant Count Rate (May 2024) | Youth Claimant Count Rate (Apr 2025) | Youth Claimant Count Rate ¹ (May 2025) | Number of Youth Claimants (May 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 | 5.0 | 5.5 | 5.5 | 265,665 | 360 | 0.1% | 67,935 | 34.4% |
| West Midlands | 6.8 | 7.5 | 7.6 | 38,895 | 210 | 0.5% | 10,990 | 39.4% |
| Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent | 5.5 | 5.7 | 5.8 | 4,985 | 30 | 0.6% | 1,165 | 30.5% |
| Wolverhampton | 10.6 | 10.8 | 10.9 | 2,320 | 20 | 0.9% | 410 | 21.5% |
| Birmingham | 9.1 | 10.4 | 10.5 | 14,570 | 95 | 0.7% | 5,465 | 60.0% |
| Sandwell | 9.1 | 10.2 | 10.2 | 2,975 | 15 | 0.5% | 860 | 40.7% |
| Walsall | 9.3 | 10.1 | 10.0 | 2,250 | -15 | -0.7% | 335 | 17.5% |
| Stoke-on-Trent | 7.9 | 8.5 | 8.6 | 1,945 | 20 | 1.0% | 540 | 38.4% |
| Dudley | 7.4 | 8.0 | 8.0 | 1,880 | 10 | 0.5% | 130 | 7.4% |
| Solihull | 5.8 | 6.8 | 6.6 | 950 | -25 | -2.6% | 125 | 15.2% |
| Telford and Wrekin | 5.9 | 6.2 | 6.4 | 970 | 30 | 3.2% | 210 | 27.6% |
| Coventry | 5.0 | 5.4 | 5.5 | 2,525 | 25 | 1.0% | 990 | 64.5% |
| Worcestershire | 4.6 | 5.2 | 5.2 | 2,105 | 5 | 0.2% | 510 | 32.0% |
| Staffordshire | 4.7 | 4.8 | 4.8 | 3,040 | 10 | 0.3% | 625 | 25.9% |
| Herefordshire, County of | 4.1 | 4.4 | 4.6 | 515 | 15 | 3.0% | 100 | 24.1% |
| Warwickshire | 3.7 | 4.4 | 4.4 | 1,985 | 10 | 0.5% | 650 | 48.7% |
| Shropshire | 3.9 | 4.4 | 4.4 | 870 | 0 | 0.0% | 45 | 5.5% |
| Tamworth | 7.0 | 6.5 | 6.5 | 355 | 0 | 0.0% | 60 | 20.3% |
| Cannock Chase | 6.2 | 6.2 | 6.1 | 415 | -10 | -2.4% | 50 | 13.7% |
| East Staffordshire | 5.4 | 5.5 | 5.5 | 470 | 0 | 0.0% | 150 | 46.9% |
| South Staffordshire | 4.8 | 5.0 | 5.0 | 355 | 0 | 0.0% | 105 | 42.0% |
| Stafford | 4.7 | 4.2 | 4.4 | 365 | 15 | 4.3% | 50 | 15.9% |
| Lichfield | 3.9 | 4.3 | 4.3 | 300 | 0 | 0.0% | 30 | 11.1% |
| Staffordshire Moorlands | 3.4 | 4.0 | 3.8 | 215 | -10 | -4.4% | 40 | 22.9% |
| Newcastle-under-Lyme | 3.3 | 3.7 | 3.8 | 555 | 5 | 0.9% | 130 | 30.6% |

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

- This month the **youth claimant count in Staffordshire saw a slight increase of 10 claimants with a total of 3,040 young people**. Staffordshire saw a 0.3% increase, largely in line with the 0.5% increase in the West Midlands and the 0.1% increase in England this month.
- **The proportion of young people in Staffordshire aged 18-24 claiming work-related Universal Credit remained the same at 4.8%**. It is important to note that Staffordshire continues to be lower than the national rate 5.5%, which also remained the same this month and far lower than the regional rate of 7.6% which increased from 7.5%.
- **Stoke-on-Trent saw an increase of 20 claimants to a total of 1,945 claimants with the rate increasing to 8.6% from 8.5% this month.**



- The majority of districts in Staffordshire saw either a decrease in the youth claimant rate this month or no change, whilst Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stafford saw slight increases
- Tamworth has the highest rate at 6.5%, whilst Newcastle-under-Lyme has the lowest rate at 3.8%. Stafford saw the highest percentage increase in youth claimants this month of 4.3% whereas Staffordshire Moorlands saw the biggest decrease of -4.4%.
- 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

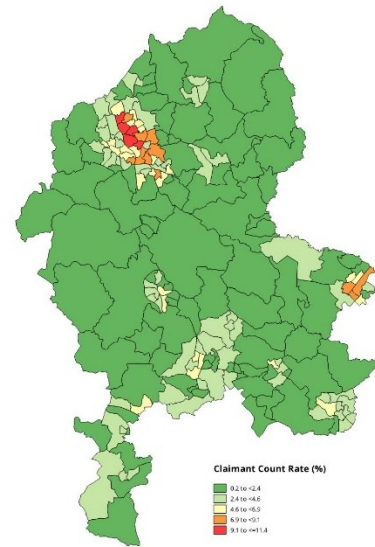
The following maps and tables provide the latest breakdown of the claimant count by wards in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent.

Claimant Count Rate May 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: 11.4%/520; Etruria & Hanley: 11.2%/605; Moorcroft: 10.5%/390; Burslem Central: 9.6%/440; 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: 8.3%/450; Shobnall: 7.9%/430; Burton: 7.8%/235; Eton Park: 6.6%/325 total claimants.

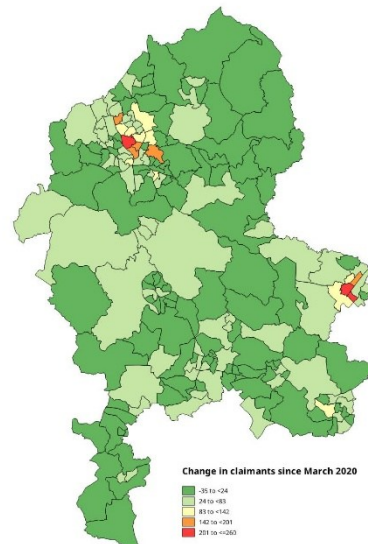


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Change in Claimant Count since March 2020

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 (200 increase to 600); Hanley Park & Shelton (165 increase to 350); Tunstall (155 increase to 405); Joiner's Square (145 increase to 520); Birches Head & Central Forest Park (140 increase to 530); Moorcroft (130 increase to 390).

Of the remaining three wards in the top ten, all were in East Staffordshire including Anglesey (260 increase to 450); 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

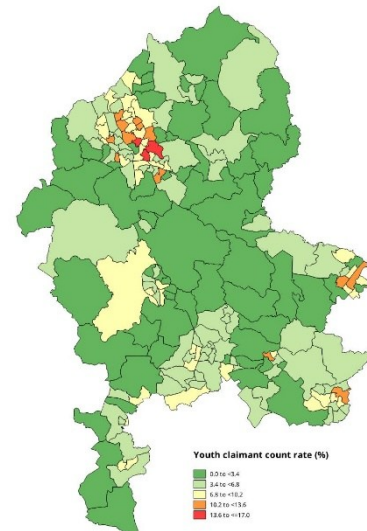
The following maps and tables provide the latest breakdown of the youth claimant count by wards in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent.

Youth Claimant Count Rate May 2025

Of the 201 wards in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent, 84 were above the England average of 5.5% 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: 17.0%/130; Bentilee & Ubbertley: 15.5%/140; Fenton East: 15.0%/70; Burslem Central: 12.2%/75; Meir South: 11.8%/65; Abbey Hulton & Towsend: 11.4%/90.

In Staffordshire, the four wards with the highest claimant rates were Chadsmead (Lichfield): 11.9%/35; Cross Heath (Newcastle-u-Lyme): 11.7%/60; Burton (East Staffordshire): 11.7%/45; Clayton (Newcastle-u-Lyme): 11.0%/20.

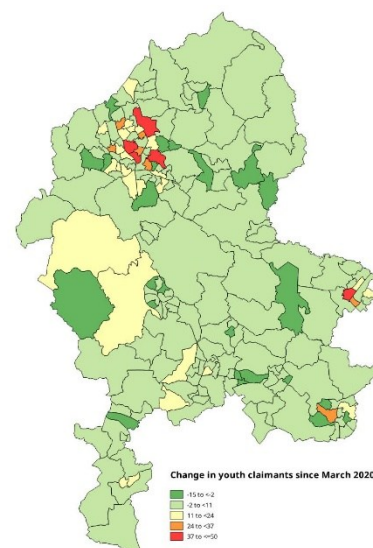


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Change in Youth Claimant Count since March 2020

Of the top ten wards in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent with the highest change in the number of youth claimants since March 2020, six were in Stoke-on-Trent including Bentilee & Ubbertley (50 increase to 140); Etruria and Hanley (45 increase to 90); Hanley Park & Shelton (45 increase to 75); Baddeley, Milton & Norton (40 increase to 100); Fenton East (35 increase to 70); Joiner's Square (30 increase to 130).

In Staffordshire, the four 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; Cross Heath (Newcastle-under-Lyme): 25 increase to 60.

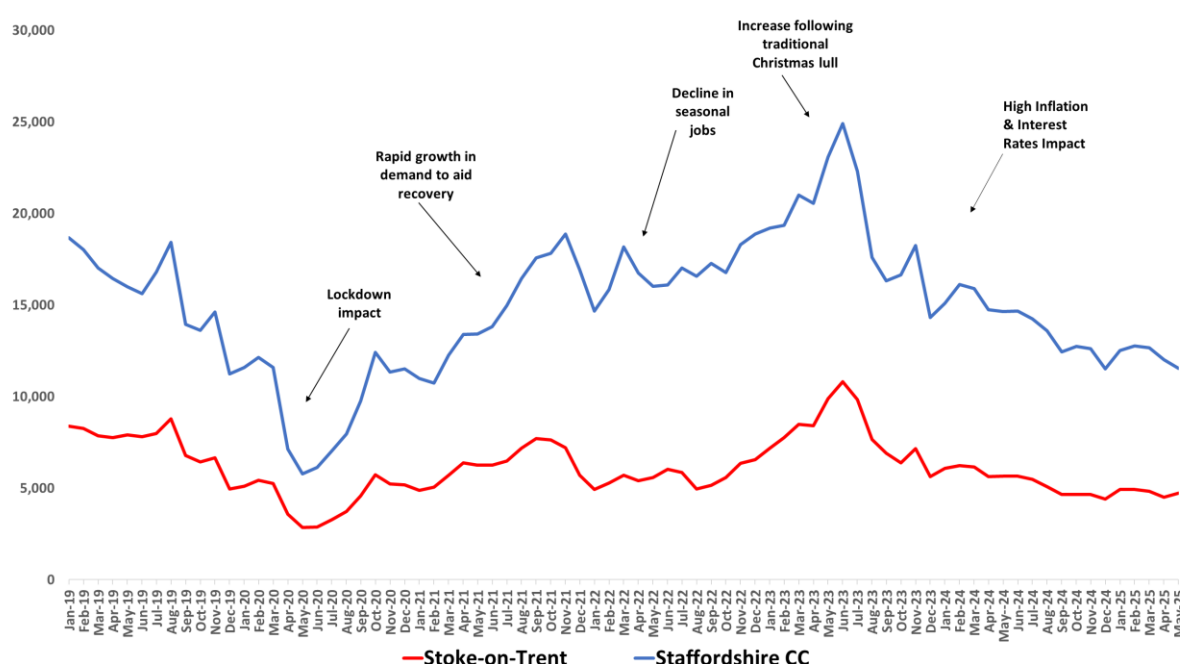


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Job Vacancies³

- Staffordshire saw a 4% decrease in the number of available job vacancies between April and May to a total of 11,500⁴. This is lower than the number of work-related benefit claimants. Stoke-on-Trent saw a 5% increase 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 a 1% decrease, and nationally there was no change in the number of job vacancies.
- In May 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 21% lower, whilst Stoke-on-Trent 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 a decrease this month to be below pre-pandemic levels, with Staffordshire job vacancies 5% lower. In comparison the region has decreased at a higher rate and is 18% below pre-pandemic levels whilst nationally there has been a similar decrease of 3%. Stoke-on-Trent job vacancies are 13% 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. ***

³ Source: Lightcast

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 May. However, 'Sales and Customer Service' occupations saw an increase of +5% whilst 'Professional' occupations saw the biggest decrease of -6%.
- The occupations to see the most significant increases during May include Sales Related; Primary Education Teaching Professionals; HR & Industrial Relations Officers; Elementary Construction; Energy Plant Operatives; Fork-Lift Truck Drivers; Specialist Medical Practitioners; Health Associate Professionals; Authors, Writers & Translators; Secondary Education Teaching Professionals; Driving Instructors; Receptionists; Science, Engineering & Production Technicians; Higher Level Teaching Assistants; Engineering Technicians; Process Operatives; Pharmacists; Debt, Rent & Other Cash Collectors; Bar & Catering Supervisors; Bar Staff.

Annual Trends in job vacancies

- The occupations to see the largest year-on-year increases include SEND Teaching Professionals; Cleaners & Domestics; Secondary Education Teaching Professionals; Driving Instructors; Energy Plant Operatives; Higher Level Teaching Assistants; Road Transport Drivers; Nursing Auxiliaries & Assistants; Youth Work Professionals; Animal Care Services; Financial Accounts Managers; Electrical & Electronics Technicians; Teaching Professionals; Quality Assurance & Regulatory Professionals; Fork-lift Truck Drivers; Coffee Shop Workers; Roundspersons & Van Salespersons; Authors, Writers & Translators; Social Services Managers & Directors; Taxation Experts.

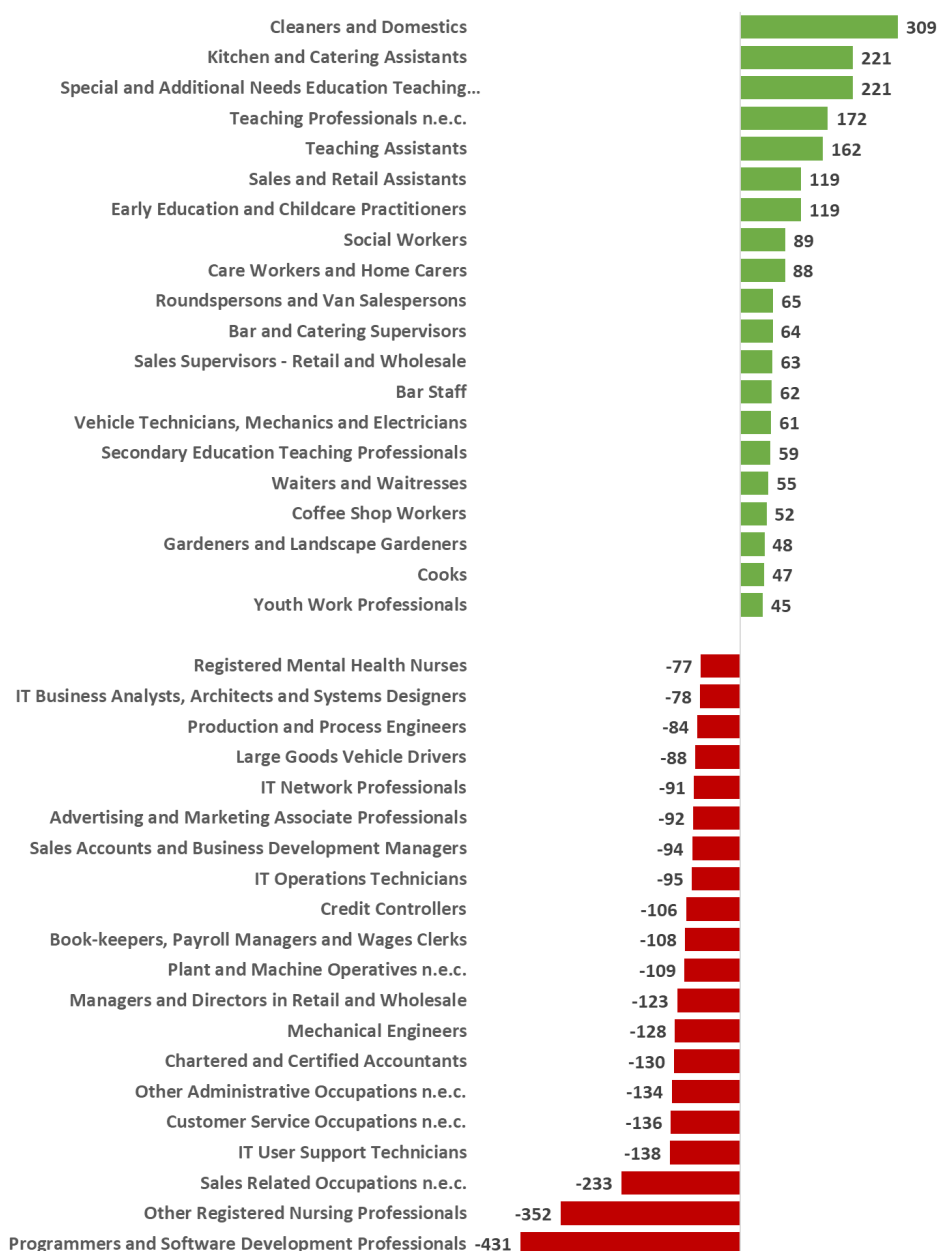
Pre-COVID baseline trends in job vacancies

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

- **Housekeepers & Related Occupations** (Cleaners & Domestics)
- **Hospitality** (Kitchen & Catering Assistants; Bar & Catering Supervisors; Bar Staff; Waiters & Waitresses; Coffee Shop Workers; Cooks)
- **Education** (SEND Teaching Professionals; Teaching Professionals; Teaching Assistants; Secondary Education Teaching Professionals)
- **Retail & Wholesale** (Sales & Retail Assistants; Sales Supervisors)
- **Childcare** (Early Education & Childcare Practitioners)
- **Health & Social Care** (Social Workers; Care Workers & Home Carers; Youth Work Professionals)
- **Logistics** (Roundspersons & Van Salespersons)
- **Motor Trade** (Vehicle Technicians, Mechanics & Electricians)
- **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 May 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 **'Secondary Education Teaching Professionals'** 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 Hospitality sector '**Kitchen & Catering Assistants**' are most in demand.
- In the Education sector there is particularly high demand for '**Teaching Assistants,**' '**SEND Teaching Professionals,**' '**Teaching Professionals**' and '**Primary Education Teaching Professionals.**'
- There is high demand in the Health & Social Care sector for '**Social Workers.**'
- Demand for '**Sales & Retail Assistants**' and '**Managers & Directors**' in the Retail and Wholesale sector remain strong.
- There is strong demand for '**Customer Service**' and '**Book-keepers, Payroll Managers & Wages Clerks**' across business sectors.
- In the Motor Trade there is demand for '**Vehicle Technicians, Mechanics & Electricians.**'
- In the Engineering sector '**Engineering Technicians**' are in demand.

Top 20 occupations in demand in Staffordshire & Stoke during May 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 with Pets At Home in Stafford recently creating over 750 new jobs.

