

Staffordshire

**Means****Back to Business**

## Economic Bulletin - Issue 6 – December 2020

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

Alongside information on the Claimant Count and Job Vacancies that will be a part of every Bulletin, we again look at the latest Government data regarding the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) Furloughed Workers, but unfortunately there is no update available from Government regarding the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) with the next data release expected in January. This month's issue also provides more detailed youth claimant count analysis and updated ward level analysis of the claimant count to help identify areas which have been impacted the hardest across Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent and where there may be a greater need for support.

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

Stay Safe,

Darryl Evers

Director for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills, Staffordshire County Council



## Key Messages

- This month we have seen a mixed picture of both positive news and further economic impact caused by the pandemic. We heard the very positive news that the first COVID-19 vaccine has been approved by regulators in the UK. The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine has been confirmed as safe and effective by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and the NHS has started to vaccinate priority groups and residents. Clearly, delivering the vaccine will be a huge task and the roll-out will take time, but this is a significant step in the Government's 'exit strategy' and will hopefully lead to a quicker recovery from the crisis.
- However, we have also started to see some of the early signs of the negative impact caused by the second national lockdown and these continuing under Tier 3 COVID-19 restrictions. The sectors hardest hit by the extensive restrictions continue to suffer, with hospitality, arts and entertainment and tourism continuing to operate below full capacity or having to close entirely during the further lockdown leading to some further job losses. At a time when we normally see a surge in recruitment to support increased Christmas trade we have instead witnessed the recent recruitment uplift largely stall due to the second lockdown, this will particularly impact young people and others that look for temporary seasonal work at this time of the year.
- Clearly, until the COVID-19 vaccination programme is rolled out more widely to the general population there are still likely to be some hard times ahead before we can start to look towards the path to full economic recovery and beyond.
- Looking locally the number of people on some form of government economic support scheme is estimated to be slightly lower than the rest of the country, 15% compared to 18% nationally and has dropped considerably over recent months as more people have been able to return to work.
- The claimant count in **Staffordshire saw a small increase of 215 between October 2020 and November 2020 to a total of 25,270 claimants and the claimant rate has remained at 4.7% of the working age population in November.**
- This shows both the positive effect that the package of Government support such as the furlough scheme is having and the increasing job opportunities that we have seen over recent months.
- However, the area has seen **Universal Credit (UC) claimants more than double since March (pre-COVID), an increase of just over 13,200 claimants** - however, not all will be out of work.
- These increases need to be viewed in the context of the move to Universal

Credit. Before Universal Credit, the Claimant Count was based upon Jobseeker's Allowance claimants - people out of work but looking for a job. However, in response to COVID-19 the Government changed the criteria for Universal Credit to allow some people on low income to claim whilst in work. Therefore, there will be **a proportion of claimants currently that will still be in work but claiming Universal Credit because they are on a low income**, although from the data released by Government it is not currently possible to quantify the proportion of people that are indeed unemployed or employed but on a low income.

- Therefore, the reasons for the increase in claimants are still to fully emerge but evidence suggests there will be a combination of factors such as the self-employed no longer being able to operate, part-time employees working less than 16 hours a week who are now furloughed, and Small & Medium Enterprises laying off staff in the short-term.
- It is important to recognise that although we have seen a rise in claimant numbers due to COVID given our strong position going into the pandemic we still perform comparatively well for **our claimant rate which stood at 4.7% of the working age population in November compared to 7.3% regionally and 6.4% nationally**.
- However, it is young people, women, the lowest paid (including those in manual occupations, more routine or less skilled jobs) and part-time workers who continue to feel the impact of the economic shock the most. For example, the **proportion of young people aged 18-24 that are claiming Universal Credit has increased from 3.7% in March 2020 to 7.6% in November 2020**, well above the rate of 4.7% for the working age population. Given that it is harder for these groups to find a new job it is increasingly vital that the welcomed announcements made in 'A Plan for Jobs 2020' such as the **Kickstart Scheme** are quickly and effectively put in place to support these groups and help prevent them becoming long-term unemployed.
- The latest Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) figures show that there were **27,200 furloughed job claims in Staffordshire up to the end of October, equivalent to 7% of eligible workers**, which is in-line with the regional and national averages. **Stoke-on-Trent had 7,000 jobs still furloughed**, equivalent to 6% of eligible jobs.
- Moving forwards there are obvious concerns that the local economy and labour market may continue to be adversely affected by the **tighter tier 3 restrictions**. However, it is welcomed that the Government has put in place a strengthened package of support including the **reintroduction of the 80% furlough support** until the end of March, the **third SEISS grant** has been increased in-line with this and there are **further business grants for those forced to close due to lockdown**.

- The recruitment uplift which we have seen over recent months has been slowed by the country going into a second national lockdown and new tighter tier restrictions, with job vacancies in **Staffordshire seeing only a slight increase of 2% between October and November equivalent to just over 300 more job vacancies**, which is in-line with the growth seen nationally. **Stoke-on-Trent saw a 1% growth with just under 100 more vacancies in November compared to October**. However, it is **very positive that vacancy levels are now above those seen pre-COVID**.
- We continue to see **demand for roles in health, social care and logistics** with clear emerging opportunities for job creation in digital (including online retail), advanced manufacturing (AI and Automation), construction (£900 million Getting Building Fund) and the green economy (including retrofitting homes to improve energy efficiency and electric cars).
- In conclusion, it is apparent that the second national lockdown and tighter tier restrictions have caused further economic impact to businesses and jobs but it continues to be clear that Government and local support is playing a vital role in helping businesses to survive and stave off further job losses. Alongside this the start of the vaccination programme is a major step in the right direction to reducing further impacts.
- Although the number of job vacancies has been impacted by the second lockdown and being placed in tier 3 it is important that we continue to work together to support our residents into the roles that do exist such as through the work of the **Countywide Redundancy Task Group** and the **£2 billion Government Kickstart Scheme** – find out more about the types of roles and how to express an interest at the [Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Enterprise Partnership website](#).
- It is also vital that additional support such as the **Additional Restrictions Grant** is utilised to **help businesses transition to new business models including diversification and digitisation to improve their viability and sustainability post lockdown**.
- A web service launched by a county-based tech-firm to support communities and businesses through the coronavirus restriction period is helping people to Think Staffordshire First when shopping. Local Food Drops – developed by Stafford-based **iWeb** – is a web-based solution that enables people to find businesses which deliver food in their area and includes grocers, butchers, bakers, pet shops and more. It means people can shop safely at home and gives a boost to local businesses which may have been hit by the pandemic. Businesses can sign up on the website for a listing while customers just add their location and will be presented with the companies closest to

them. People can visit the site at [www.localfooddrops.co.uk](http://www.localfooddrops.co.uk) Staffordshire County Council is urging people to Think Staffordshire First through a campaign to consider using local businesses impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

- Large businesses in Staffordshire with 200 employees or more are being urged to take part in a rapid Covid-19 testing programme being rolled out across the county now. Staffordshire is one of 66 councils in the first phase of the roll out the national programme, which tests people without Covid-19 symptoms. By signing up, businesses will help to protect their employees, avoid local outbreaks and ensure business continuity. The tests are available now and support will be offered to businesses to develop a regular programme of testing for employees. All testing equipment and PPE will be provided. Businesses must be able to provide suitable spacious areas for testing - [find out more here](#).
- Finally, the [Brexit/EU transition](#) is drawing closer with time running out for businesses and the public to be ready for the new rules which will be introduced from 1 January 2021.

Regardless of whether we reach a trade agreement with the EU, from 1 January there will be guaranteed changes to the way businesses import and export goods; the process for hiring people from the EU; and the way businesses provide services in EU markets.

You need to act now if you're:

- [importing goods from the EU](#)
- [exporting goods to the EU](#)
- [moving goods to or from Northern Ireland](#)
- [travelling to the EU](#)
- [living and working in the EU](#)
- [staying in the UK if you're an EU citizen](#)

Get the complete list of what you need to do for you, your business and your family [here](#).

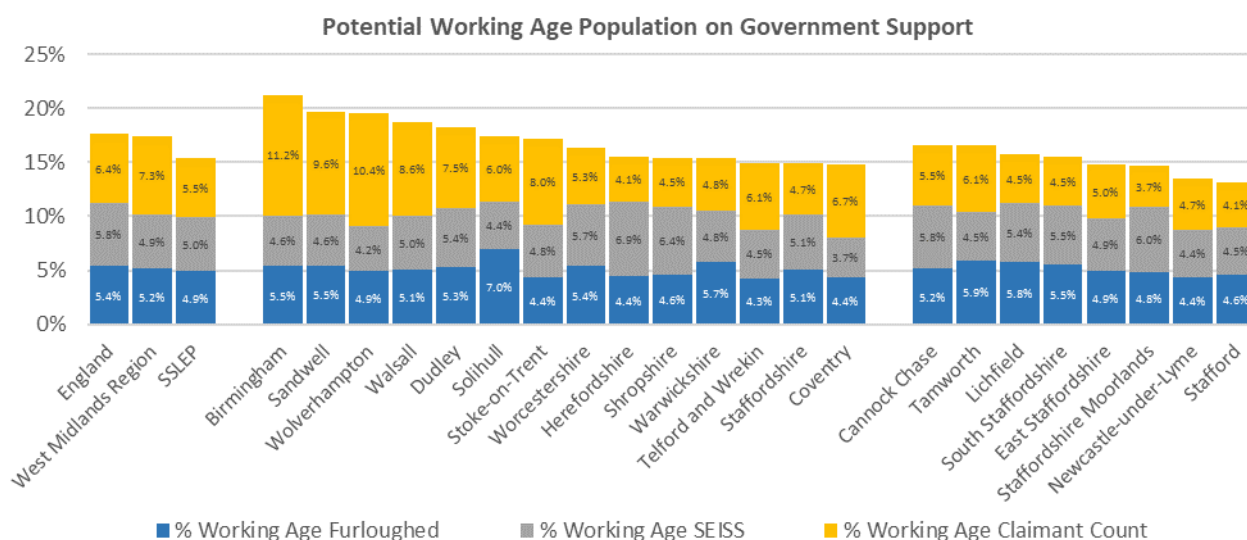
Watch sector specific webinars on demand [here](#).

For the latest transition information direct to your inbox, sign up to the Transition Readiness Business Bulletin [here](#).

## Local Picture – Residents on Government Support Schemes

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

### Overall Number of Residents on Government Support Schemes



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

In total there are potentially just over 107,000 residents in the SSLEP area on Government support, equivalent to around 15% of the working age population which is lower than the regional (17%) and national (18%) averages. Cannock Chase and Tamworth (both 17%) have the highest rates while Stafford (13%) and Newcastle-under-Lyme (14%) have the lowest.

SSLEP Working Age Population	694,954
Jobs in High Risk Sectors	221,000
Claimant Count Nov 2020	37,990
Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) Furloughed job claims as at 31st Oct	34,200
Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) claims up to 31st October	34,900
<b>Potential workers on Government support</b>	<b>107,090</b>
<b>Potential % of working age population on Government support</b>	<b>15.4%</b>

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



## Detailed Breakdown

### Claimant Count<sup>1</sup>

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

#### Claimant Count (Universal Credit) Statistics: November 2020

Area	Claimant Count Rate (Nov 2019)	Claimant Count Rate (Oct 2020)	Claimant Count Rate <sup>1</sup> (Nov 2020)	Number of Claimants (Nov 2020)	Monthly Change in Claimants (Numbers)	Monthly Change in Claimants (%)	Change Mar 2020 to Nov 2020	% Change Mar 2020 to Nov 2020
England	2.8	6.2	6.4	2,248,430	60,095	2.7%	1,184,925	111.4%
West Midlands	3.7	7.1	7.3	265,925	4,440	1.7%	121,575	84.2%
SSLEP	2.5	5.4	5.5	37,990	270	0.7%	18,620	96.1%
Birmingham	6.5	11.0	11.2	81,925	1,210	1.5%	32,555	65.9%
Coventry	3.0	6.6	6.7	16,600	125	0.8%	8,600	107.5%
Dudley	4.3	7.3	7.5	14,460	410	2.9%	5,945	69.8%
Herefordshire, County of	1.8	4.1	4.1	4,675	90	2.0%	2,565	121.6%
Sandwell	4.9	9.3	9.6	19,565	600	3.2%	8,785	81.5%
Shropshire	2.0	4.4	4.5	8,580	175	2.1%	4,570	114.0%
Solihull	2.8	5.8	6.0	7,700	305	4.1%	4,050	111.0%
Staffordshire	2.0	4.7	4.7	25,270	215	0.9%	13,220	109.7%
Stoke-on-Trent	4.2	7.9	8.0	12,720	50	0.4%	5,400	73.8%
Telford and Wrekin	3.0	6.1	6.1	6,855	65	1.0%	3,425	99.9%
Walsall	4.6	8.5	8.6	14,965	230	1.6%	6,360	73.9%
Warwickshire	2.1	4.8	4.8	16,910	110	0.7%	9,080	116.0%
Wolverhampton	6.0	10.2	10.4	16,990	305	1.8%	6,610	63.7%
Worcestershire	2.2	5.1	5.3	18,720	550	3.0%	10,415	125.4%
Tamworth	2.8	6.0	6.1	2,895	85	3.0%	1,405	94.3%
Cannock Chase	2.3	5.5	5.5	3,495	10	0.3%	1,840	111.2%
East Staffordshire	2.1	5.1	5.0	3,685	-20	-0.5%	1,965	114.2%
Newcastle-under-Lyme	2.2	4.7	4.7	3,800	-10	-0.3%	1,820	91.9%
Lichfield	1.9	4.5	4.5	2,795	45	1.6%	1,475	111.7%
South Staffordshire	1.8	4.4	4.5	3,015	65	2.2%	1,705	130.2%
Stafford	1.7	4.1	4.1	3,415	-25	-0.7%	1,760	106.3%
Staffordshire Moorlands	1.5	3.6	3.7	2,165	60	2.9%	1,245	135.3%

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

- The Claimant Count in Staffordshire saw a small increase of 215 between October 2020 and November 2020 to a total of 25,270 claimants. While Stoke-on-Trent saw an increase of 50 over the same period with a total of 12,720 claimants in November.
- These slight increases in the Claimant Count are below the increases seen regionally and nationally. This reflects both the positive effect that the package of Government support such as the furlough scheme is having in staving off higher job losses and the increasing job opportunities that we have seen over recent months.
- It is also important to look at the change in the Claimant Count seen since March 2020 (pre-COVID) where the number of claimants in Staffordshire has more than doubled with an increase of 13,220 claimants and in Stoke-on-Trent there has been an increase of 5,400.

- Ultimately, the full effect of COVID-19 on employment will not be felt until the furlough and SEISS schemes and further Government support such as the Job Support Scheme come to an end.
- The increases in the Claimant Count also need to be viewed in the context of the move to Universal Credit. Before Universal Credit, the Claimant Count was based upon Jobseeker's Allowance claimants, i.e. people out of work but looking for a job. A proportion of claimants currently will have a job but claiming Universal Credit due to having a low income - the reasons for the increase in claimants are still to fully emerge but evidence suggests there will be a combination of factors such as:
  - New Job Starters/PT employees/Self-employed with no income claiming Universal Credit because they are not eligible for the CJRS;
  - Self-employed ceased trading or have very low income claiming Universal Credit (and are either not eligible for, or not yet been paid, income under the SEISS);
  - Working part-time low-income workers claiming Universal Credit and may be furloughed;
  - Potential Redundancies within Small & Medium Enterprises laying off staff in the short-term.
- Unfortunately, due to Government data limitations it is not currently possible to quantify the proportion of people that fall into these cohorts at a local level.
- Given the comparatively strong position of Staffordshire going into the pandemic and the fact that COVID-19 has impacted much of the economy during lockdown, even with the significant increase in claimants the proportion of working age residents on such benefits remains comparatively low in Staffordshire with a rate of 4.7% in November compared to 7.3% regionally and 6.4% nationally. In Stoke-on-Trent the Claimant Count rate remains above both the regional and national averages at 8.0%.
- As well as workers across sectors being impacted differently, there are also signs that it is the lowest paid, women, part-time workers and young people (particularly apprentices) that are being hardest hit. These groups are more likely to work in sectors that have shut down or reduced activity, such as hospitality and non-essential retail. They are also less likely to be able to work from home.
- Young people aged 18-24 continue to be disproportionately impacted by unemployment where the claimant rate for young people in Staffordshire has increased from 3.7% in March to 7.6% in November compared to a rise from 2.3% to 4.7% for all working-age residents, while in Stoke-on-Trent the rate has risen from 5.9% in March to 10.5% in November.

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



- Positively there has been further slight declines over the latest month with Staffordshire youth claimants declining by 100 to a total of 5,040 while Stoke-on-Trent has seen a decline of 30 to 2,475 youth claimants.

### Youth Claimant Count (Universal Credit) Statistics: November 2020

Area	Claimant Count Rate (Nov 2019)	Claimant Count Rate (Oct 2020)	Claimant Count Rate <sup>1</sup> (Nov 2020)	Number of Claimants (Nov 2020)	Monthly Change in Claimants (Numbers)	Monthly Change in Claimants (%)	Change in Claimants since March (Numbers)	Change in Claimants since March (%)
England	3.9	9.0	9.1	432,435	3,875	0.9%	234,705	118.7%
West Midlands	5.0	10.1	10.1	53,400	-110	-0.2%	25,495	91.4%
SSLEP	3.9	8.5	8.4	7,515	-130	-1.7%	3,695	96.7%
Wolverhampton	8.7	15.5	15.6	3,325	30	0.9%	1,415	74.1%
Sandwell	7.5	14.8	15.1	4,000	70	1.8%	1,885	89.1%
Walsall	7.8	14.2	13.9	3,185	-55	-1.7%	1,270	66.3%
Dudley	7.3	12.9	12.9	3,090	15	0.5%	1,340	76.6%
Solihull	5.6	11.5	11.8	1,795	45	2.6%	970	117.6%
Birmingham	6.2	11.4	11.4	16,100	0	0.0%	6,995	76.8%
Stoke-on-Trent	5.4	10.6	10.5	2,475	-30	-1.2%	1,070	76.2%
Telford and Wrekin	4.8	10.3	10.3	1,550	0	0.0%	790	103.9%
Worcestershire	3.8	8.8	9.0	3,725	85	2.3%	2,130	133.5%
Shropshire	3.7	8.1	8.2	1,725	20	1.2%	900	109.1%
Staffordshire	3.3	7.8	7.6	5,040	-100	-1.9%	2,625	108.7%
Herefordshire, County of	3.2	7.4	7.1	865	-45	-4.9%	450	108.4%
Warwickshire	2.8	7.2	7.0	3,200	-65	-2.0%	1,865	139.7%
Coventry	2.7	6.4	6.3	3,330	-75	-2.2%	1,795	116.9%
Tamworth	4.7	10.8	11.0	635	15	2.4%	340	115.3%
Cannock Chase	4.3	10.6	10.4	765	-10	-1.3%	400	109.6%
South Staffordshire	3.0	7.9	7.9	635	5	0.8%	385	154.0%
East Staffordshire	3.0	8.2	7.8	665	-30	-4.3%	345	107.8%
Lichfield	3.6	7.4	7.5	530	10	1.9%	260	96.3%
Stafford	3.0	7.2	6.7	615	-40	-6.1%	300	95.2%
Staffordshire Moorlands	2.7	6.3	6.4	410	5	1.2%	235	134.3%
Newcastle-under-Lyme	2.8	6.0	5.6	780	-60	-7.1%	355	83.5%

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

- It has been a mixed picture this month for Staffordshire Districts with Stafford, East Staffordshire and Newcastle-under-Lyme seeing slight decreases in the number of working age claimants in October. While Tamworth, South Staffordshire, Staffordshire Moorlands, Lichfield and Cannock Chase have seen small increases.
- Tamworth and Cannock Chase continue to record the highest rates in Staffordshire, although Newcastle-under-Lyme and East Staffordshire have the largest caseloads. However, it's important to note all Districts and Boroughs remain lower than the current national and regional rates.

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

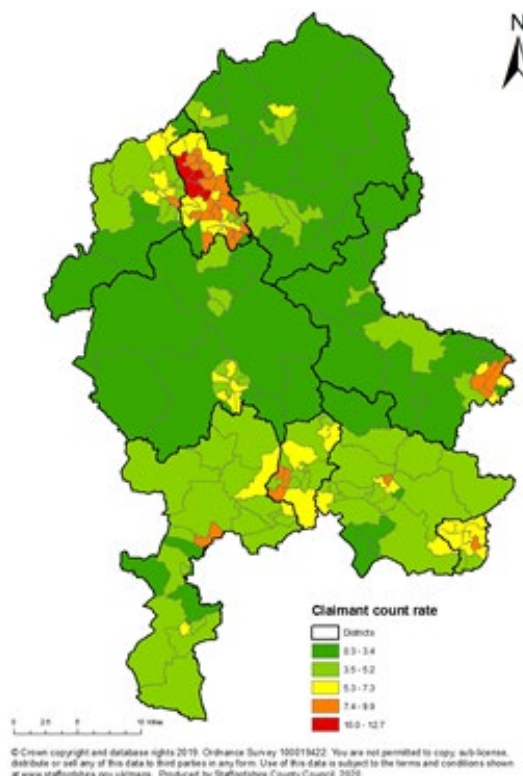
- The following maps and tables provide the latest breakdown of the claimant count by wards in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent.

### Claimant Count Rate November 2020

Out of the 201 wards in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent, 52 were above the England average of 6.4% for the number of claimants as a proportion of the working age population in November.

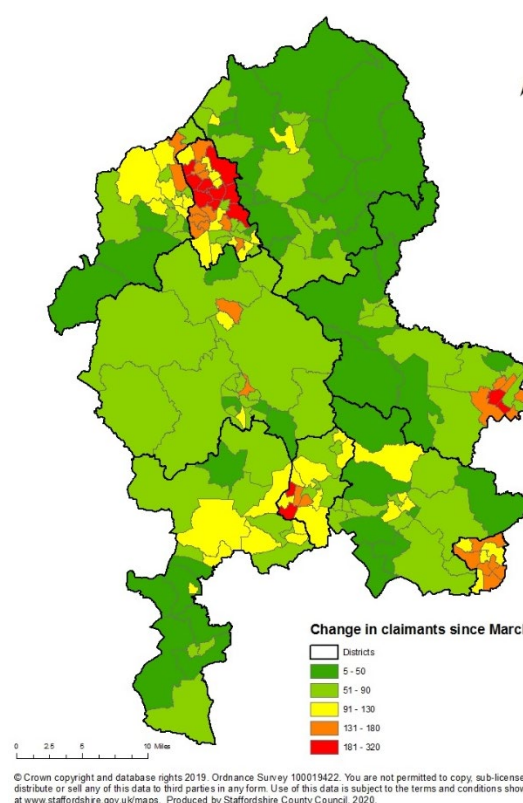
The top 15 wards with the highest claimant count rate were all in Stoke-on-Trent with Joiner's Square (12.7% or 575 claimants), Etruria and Hanley (12.6% or 660), and Moorcroft (12.6% or 465) having the highest rates.

In Staffordshire, Cannock North in Cannock Chase (8.5% or 400) and Burton in East Staffordshire (8.4% or 250) had the highest claimant count rates.



### Change in Claimant Count since March 2020

The top 4 wards with the highest change in the number of claimants since March 2020 were all in Stoke-on-Trent and included Birches Head and Central Forest Park (320 increase to 710 in total), Etruria and Hanley (305 rise to 660), Bentilee and Ubberley (270 increase to 670) and Baddeley, Milton and Norton (295 rise to 590).



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

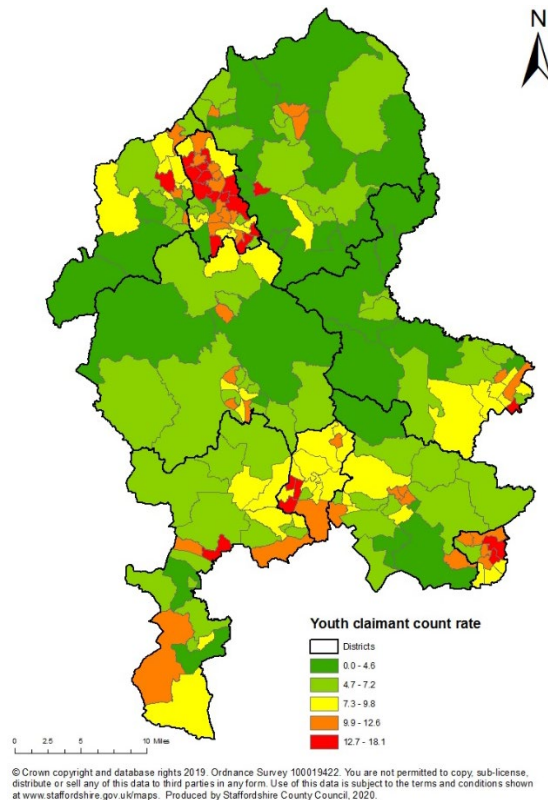
The following maps and tables provide the latest breakdown of the youth claimant count by wards in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent.

### Youth Claimant Count Rate November 2020

Out of the 201 wards in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent, 76 were at or above the England average of 9.1% for the number of claimants aged 18-24 as a proportion of the 18-24 population.

Of the top 10 wards with the highest youth claimant count rate 7 were in Stoke-on-Trent including Moorcroft (18.1%), Joiner's Square (17.4%), Meir North (15.6%), Bentilee and Ubbertley (15.4%), Tunstall (14.5%), Bradeley and Chell Heath (14.4%), and Meir South (14.3%).

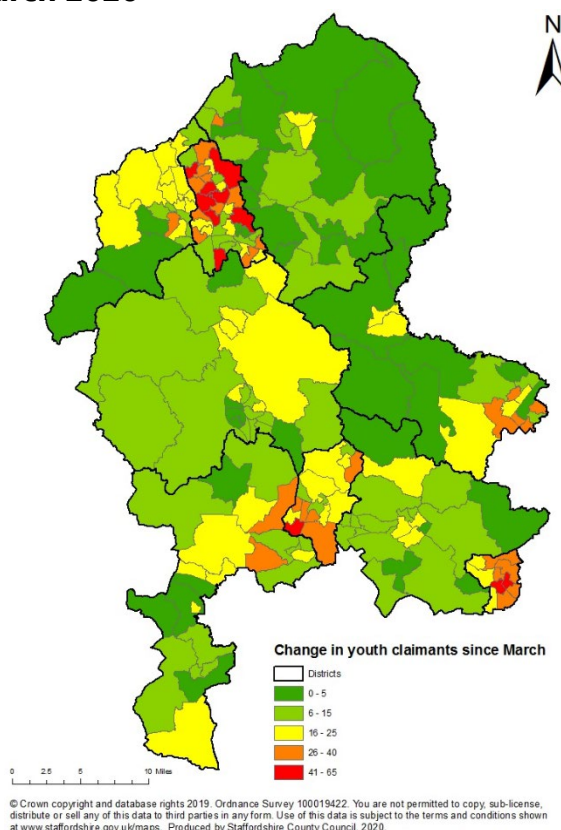
In Staffordshire, the highest rate was Glascote in Tamworth with 18.1%, followed by Cannock South (15.0%) and Cannock North (14.2%).



### Change in Youth Claimant Count since March 2020

Out of the top 10 wards with the highest change in the number of youth claimants since March 2020 8 were in Stoke-on-Trent including Etruria and Hanley (65 rise to 110 in total) and Moorcroft (50 rise to 95).

In Staffordshire, the highest increases were seen in Glascote (50 rise to 105) and Cannock South (50 rise to 100).



## Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) Furloughed Jobs<sup>2</sup>

- HMRC have now rereleased local authority level breakdowns of the CJRS scheme for claims submitted to HMRC by 30<sup>th</sup> November for the period up to 31<sup>st</sup> October.
- HMRC have stated that the CJRS claims data are provision and subject to revisions in future releases due to additional claims submitted following this release. This means that figures are preliminary and are likely to be revised upwards in future releases.
- Based on the provisional figures, **Staffordshire had the 2nd highest number of furloughed job claims up to the end of October in the WM with 27,200**, behind only Birmingham and equivalent to 7% of eligible workers. This is to be expected given Staffordshire is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest strategic authority area in the region.
- Staffordshire has seen **a decline of 6,700 furloughed jobs from the previous month, with the decline slowing over recent months.**
- **Staffordshire's rate of furlough is on-line with the regional and national averages of 7%.**
- **Stoke-on-Trent has seen the number of furloughed jobs decrease from 9,100 to 7,000**, equivalent to 6% of eligible jobs.

### Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) Statistics: December 2020

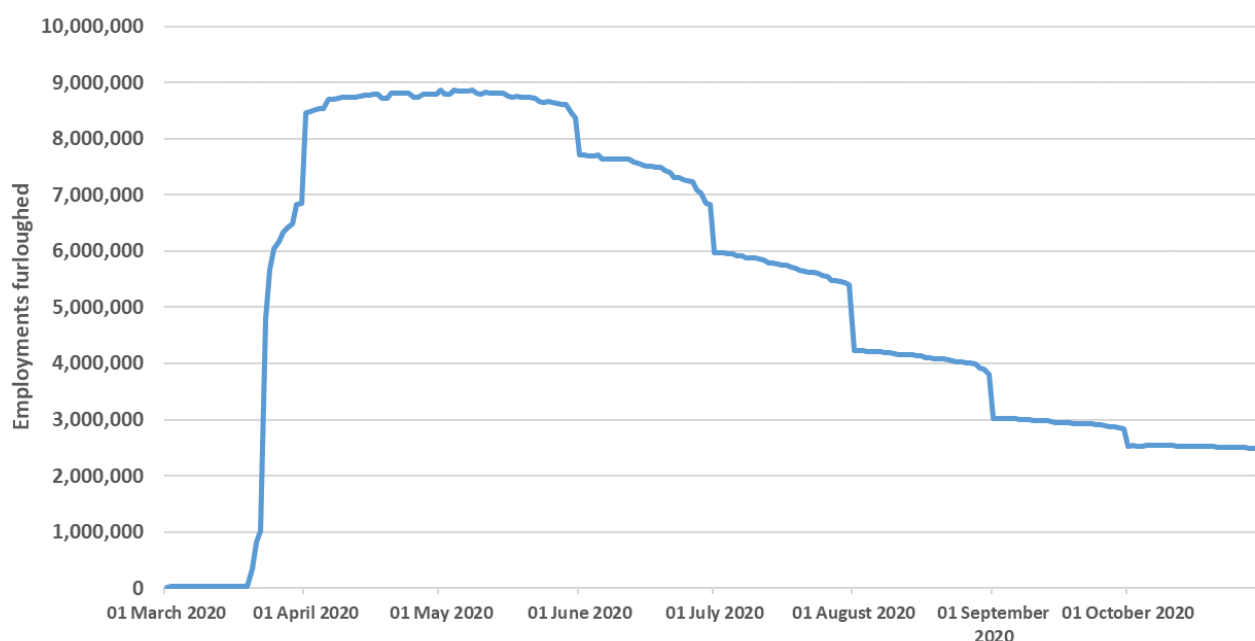
County and district / unitary authority	Employments furloughed	Eligible employments	Take-up rate
Lichfield	3,600	47,300	8%
South Staffordshire	3,700	48,300	8%
<b>England</b>	<b>1,897,400</b>	<b>25,577,900</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>West Midlands</b>	<b>190,300</b>	<b>2,580,400</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>Staffordshire County</b>	<b>27,200</b>	<b>398,200</b>	<b>7%</b>
Cannock Chase	3,300	46,400	7%
Staffordshire Moorlands	2,800	42,300	7%
Tamworth	2,800	38,400	7%
<b>SSLEP</b>	<b>34,200</b>	<b>510,800</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>Stoke-on-Trent UA</b>	<b>7,000</b>	<b>112,600</b>	<b>6%</b>
East Staffordshire	3,600	58,400	6%
Newcastle-under-Lyme	3,600	55,200	6%
Stafford	3,800	61,900	6%

Source: HMRC CJRS and PAYE Real Time Information

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

- **Since the peak of 135,700 claims up to the end of June and as the economy has come out of lockdown, the provisional figures show that Staffordshire has seen furloughed jobs decline by 80%.**
- However, there is still concern as to how many of those workers which remain on furlough are to return to work once furlough ends and is replaced by reduced Government support through the Job Support Scheme.
- The national data provides more detailed breakdowns than available for local authorities and looking at the national picture allows for greater insight into who is currently being supported by the furlough scheme.
- Nationally there were 542,900 employers making 2,399,600 furloughed job claims up to the end of October.
- Over two thirds (69%) of claims were made by SMEs with 31% in large businesses with 250+ employees. While of those workers furloughed, nearly two thirds (58%) were fully furloughed and 42% partially furloughed. The proportion that are fully furloughed has been declining over recent months, with more of those likely to have returned to work at least part-time.
- The following chart shows the trend in furloughed job claims nationally, it appears that as lockdown has eased furlough claims have gradually declined although due to the data being provisional there may be some uplift in claims in future releases.

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





- Nationally, the identified high-risk sectors of 'Accommodation and Food services' and 'Arts, entertainment and recreation' have by far the highest furlough take-up rates. While it is 'Accommodation and Food services' and 'Wholesale and retail including the repair of motor vehicles' which have the highest number of jobs that are still furloughed:

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

Sector	Employers			Employments			Value of claims made for periods to 31 October (£ million)
	Employers furloughing staff at 31 October	Eligible employers	Take-up rate at 31 October	Employments furloughed at 31 October	Eligible employments	Take-up rate at 31 October	
Accommodation and food services	58,700	130,600	45%	601,400	2,216,300	27%	6,890
Wholesale and retail; repair of motor vehicles	81,900	243,600	34%	356,400	4,537,400	8%	7,962
Administrative and support services	51,000	164,400	31%	213,400	2,739,800	8%	4,122
Professional, scientific and technical	81,800	313,200	26%	193,300	2,213,200	9%	3,355
Manufacturing	35,300	100,600	35%	188,200	2,445,100	8%	5,223
Arts, entertainment and recreation	18,200	40,000	45%	159,600	660,900	24%	1,974
Construction	59,300	231,300	26%	130,700	1,285,300	10%	3,810
Transportation and storage	21,100	73,400	29%	121,600	1,343,800	9%	2,539
Other service activities	33,700	92,800	36%	102,100	570,900	18%	1,275
Health and social work	24,800	100,900	25%	96,900	4,111,500	2%	1,587
Information and communication	32,300	155,000	21%	76,900	1,249,500	6%	1,316
Education	12,400	39,200	32%	62,500	3,327,000	2%	1,325
Real estate	14,400	46,000	31%	38,000	435,700	9%	753
Finance and insurance	7,300	34,600	21%	19,100	1,105,400	2%	399
Unknown and other	3,800	23,300	-	16,700	73,300	-	130
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	3,100	33,800	9%	6,900	182,200	4%	130
Water supply, sewerage and waste	1,700	5,600	31%	6,800	174,700	4%	229
Public administration and defence; social security	200	7,800	3%	5,000	1,357,300	0%	54
Households	1,300	81,600	2%	1,700	138,500	1%	44
Mining and quarrying	200	1,000	23%	1,600	51,900	3%	99
Energy production and supply	300	1,200	25%	900	133,600	1%	97
<b>Total</b>	<b>542,900</b>	<b>1,919,800</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>2,399,600</b>	<b>30,353,200</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>43,314</b>

Source: HMRC CJRS and PAYE Real Time Information

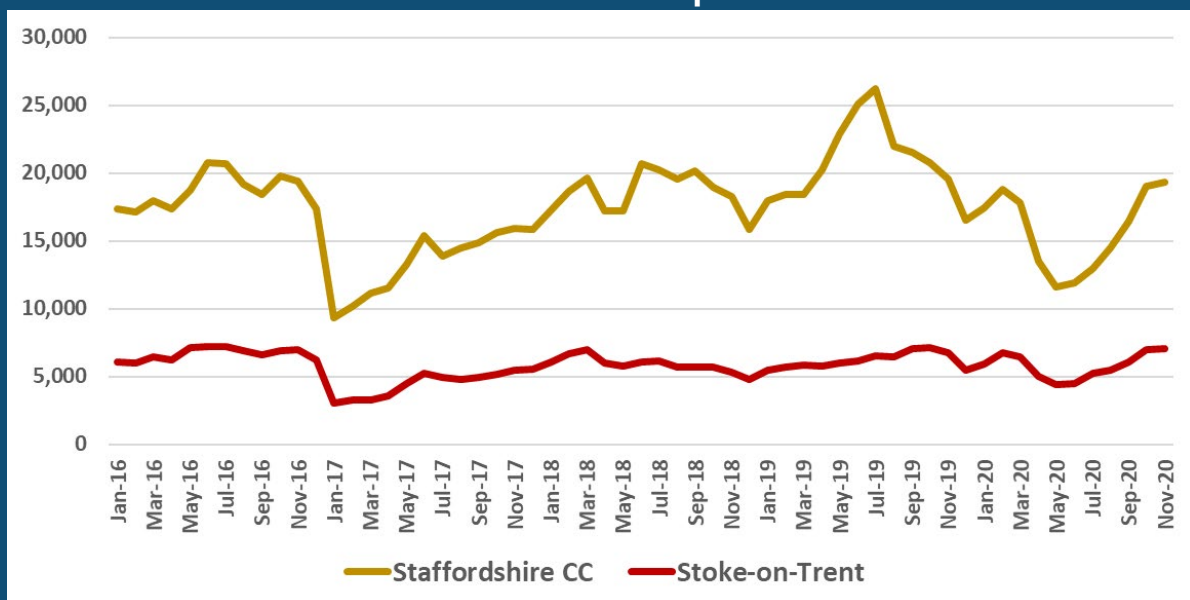
- Beyond the short-term, specific industrial sectors and the associated labour market may continue to be adversely affected, particularly due to changes to Government policy interventions such as the move from national lockdown to regional lockdowns under the 3 Tier system, reduced economic support measures and challenging market conditions.
- A particular risk is the end of the Government's Job Retention Scheme (JRS) at the end of March and the move to the less generous Job Support Scheme (JSS) from April onwards. The JRS has been successful in enabling many people to remain in employment but furloughed during the crisis but once this comes to an end there are concerns that many furloughed workers may not be moved onto the JSS and instead find themselves out of work.



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

- Having seen decent growth in job vacancies over recent months the second national lockdown has slowed the recruitment uplift, with **job vacancies in Staffordshire seeing only a slight increase of 2% between October and November equivalent to just over 300 more job vacancies.** This is in-line with the growth seen nationally.
- **Stoke-on-Trent also saw a modest 1% growth with just under 100 more vacancies in November compared to October.**
- **In both Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent vacancy levels are now above those seen pre-COVID while in contrast regional and national levels still lag behind.**

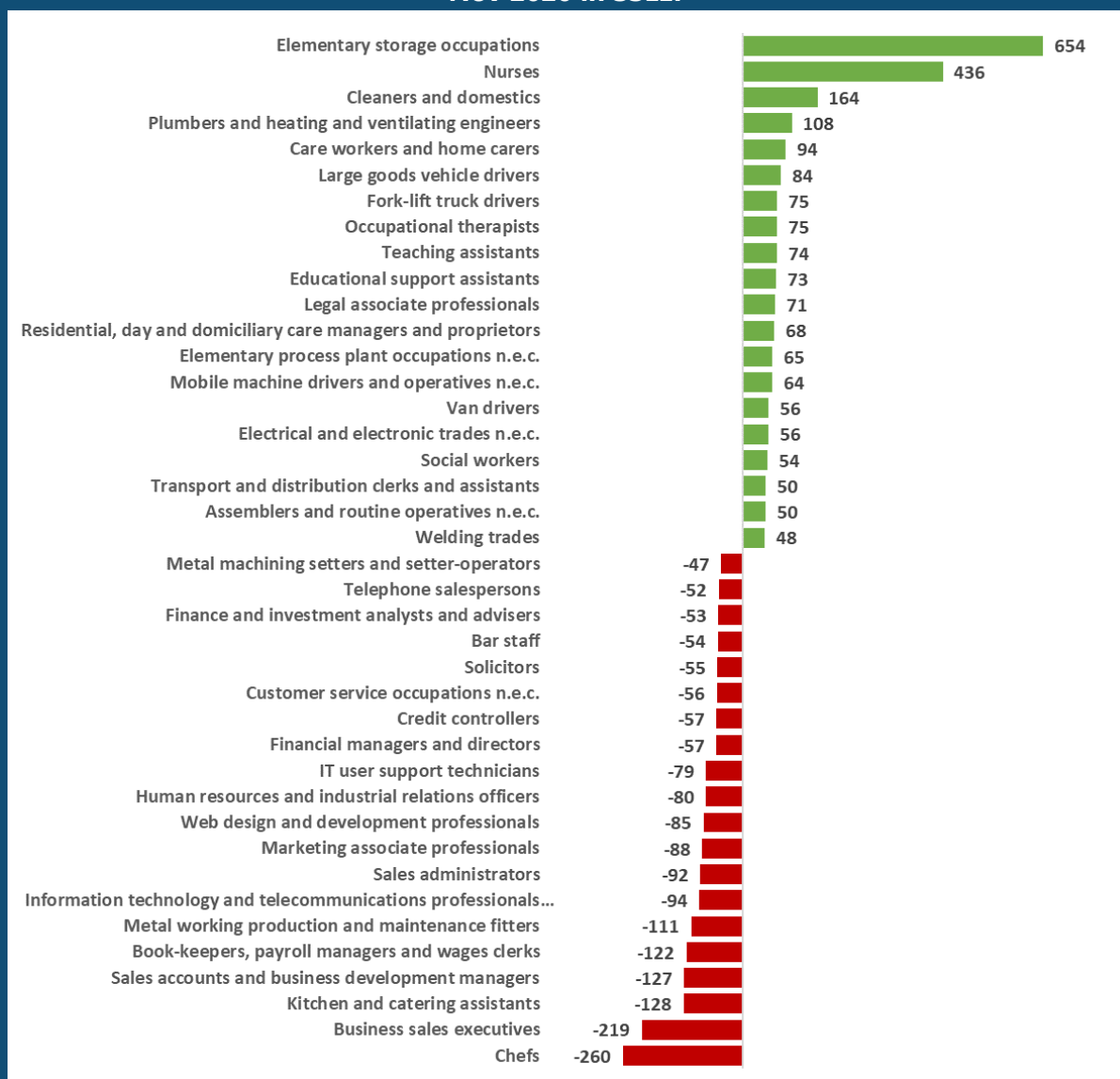
Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Unique Job Vacancies Trend



- Although we saw significant declines in vacancies for most occupations during the early stages of the crisis, particularly within sectors and roles hardest hit by the lockdown, the recent uplift in recruitment is leading to a growth in far more occupations than witnessed previously during the pandemic.
- **The main recruitment growth occupations between Feb (pre-COVID) and November have been elementary storage occupations, nurses, cleaners, plumbers, care workers and home carers, and drivers.**
- The increase in logistics jobs is likely to be partly due to temporary seasonal employment in the run up to Christmas.

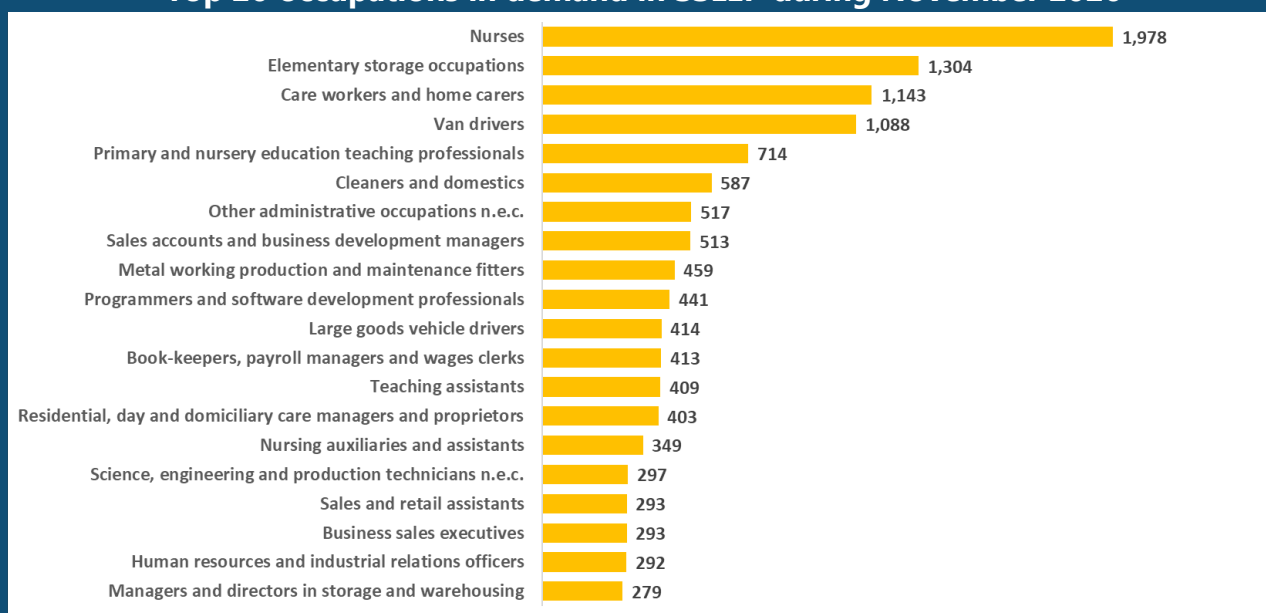
<sup>3</sup> Source: EMSI

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



- While demand for roles in health and social care including **nurses and social care workers and home carers** alongside roles in logistics such as **elementary storage occupations and van drivers** remain by far the strongest of all occupations.
- There is also demand for **primary and nursery education teaching professionals**, which is an area which was badly impacted during lockdown. While in manufacturing **metal working production and maintenance fitters** remain the occupation in most demand.
- As well as these more sector specific roles, there is continuing and growing demand for workers which support numerous sectors including **sales and business development managers, programmers and software development professionals, admin roles and cleaners**.

## Top 20 occupations in demand in SSLEP during November 2020



- It is clear that there are jobs available in the local economy but clearly there will be increasing competition for those roles. 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.

## Job Vacancies Summary Table

Area / SSLEP Occupational Group	Nov 2019 Unique Postings	Feb 2020 Unique Postings	Sept 2020 Unique Postings	Oct 2020 Unique Postings	Nov 2020 Unique Postings	Oct-Nov 2020 (Month on Month Change)	Oct-Nov 2020 Monthly % Change	Feb-Nov 2020 (Month on Month Change)	Feb-Nov 2020 Monthly % Change	Nov 2019- Nov 2020 (Year on Year Change)	Nov 2019- Nov 2020 Annual % Change
Staffordshire CC	19,378	18,821	16,467	18,995	19,303	308	2%	482	3%	-75	0%
Stoke-on-Trent	6,998	6,719	6,085	6,980	7,071	91	1%	352	5%	73	1%
SSLEP	26,376	25,540	22,552	25,975	26,374	399	2%	834	3%	-2	0%
West Midlands	171,522	171,046	138,988	157,489	161,849	4,360	3%	-9,197	-5%	-9,673	-6%
England	1,840,357	1,963,896	1,700,041	1,892,108	1,927,153	35,045	2%	-36,743	-2%	86,796	5%
South Staffordshire	719	648	756	922	922	0	0%	274	42%	203	28%
Stafford	4,540	4,366	4,338	4,975	5,011	36	1%	645	15%	471	10%
Newcastle-under-Lyme	1,695	1,691	1,628	1,842	1,896	54	3%	205	12%	201	12%
East Staffordshire	3,175	3,217	3,023	3,445	3,546	101	3%	329	10%	371	12%
Lichfield	2,327	2,054	1,885	2,182	2,255	73	3%	201	10%	-72	-3%
Cannock Chase	2,364	2,204	1,979	2,218	2,310	92	4%	106	5%	-54	-2%
Tamworth	2,834	2,752	1,784	2,115	2,103	-12	-1%	-649	-24%	-731	-26%
Staffordshire Moorlands	1,724	1,889	1,074	1,296	1,260	-36	-3%	-629	-33%	-464	-27%
Elementary Occupations	2,603	2,118	2,580	3,032	2,979	-53	-2%	861	41%	376	14%
Process, Plant and Machine Operatives	3,110	2,049	2,200	2,591	2,419	-172	-7%	370	18%	-691	-22%
Caring, Leisure and Other Service Occupations	2,736	2,423	2,480	2,679	2,611	-68	-3%	188	8%	-125	-5%
Professional Occupations	5,706	6,366	5,806	6,540	6,827	287	4%	461	7%	1,121	20%
Managers, Directors and Senior Officials	1,562	1,696	1,589	1,781	1,786	5	0%	90	5%	224	14%
Skilled Trades Occupations	2,263	2,294	1,911	2,189	2,163	-26	-1%	-131	-6%	-100	-4%
Associate Professional and Technical Occupations	4,708	4,937	3,611	4,318	4,492	174	4%	-445	-9%	-216	-5%
Administrative and Secretarial Occupations	2,535	2,601	1,682	2,003	2,232	229	11%	-369	-14%	-303	-12%
Sales and Customer Service Occupations	1,153	1,056	693	842	865	23	3%	-191	-18%	-288	-25%

## Notes

### **Claimant Count and ILO Unemployment Definitions**

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

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

### **Understanding the differences between the Claimant Count and ILO Unemployment**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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