

Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Economic Bulletin

Issue 60 - August 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 seen an increase this month, but new job postings in Staffordshire have decreased slightly below pre-pandemic levels. In comparison, job vacancies in the West Midlands have also decreased but at a higher rate below pre-pandemic levels whilst nationally there has been an increase.**
- **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 260 claimants this month to a total of 15,405 claimants.**
- **The claimant rate for Staffordshire remained the same at 2.8% of the working age population, this month. Staffordshire saw an increase of 1.7% this month, higher than the 0.5% increase in the region and the 0.6% increase nationally.**
- **Staffordshire continues to have one of the lowest claimant rates in the region, far lower than the regional average 5.4% which remained the same this month, and lower than the England average 4.1% which also remained unchanged.** We will continue to support those residents that unfortunately find themselves out of work to access employment through our partnership working and dedicated Jobs Brokerage service.
- This month the **youth claimant count in Staffordshire saw an increase of 110 claimants with the total number of youth claimants now 3,075. Staffordshire saw a 3.7% increase, higher than the 2.9% increase in the West Midlands and the 2.6% increase in England. The proportion of young people in Staffordshire aged 18-24 claiming work-related Universal Credit increased from 4.7% to 4.8%.** It is important to state that **Staffordshire continues to be lower than the national rate of 5.6% which increased from 5.4% and far lower than the regional rate of 7.7% 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 3% increase in the number of available job vacancies between June and July to a total of 12,000. 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 5,000 which is significantly lower than the number of claimants. Across the region in the last month there was also a 3% increase, and nationally there was a 4% increase in the number of job vacancies.**
- Considering the **top 20 job vacancy occupations in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent**, demand for roles in social care continue to remain high with **'Care Workers & Home Carers'** being the most in demand occupations.
- The following occupations, **'Sales Related,' 'Large Goods Vehicle Drivers,' 'Cleaners & Domestic's'** also have strong demand.
- In the Education sector there is particularly high demand for and **'Secondary Education Teaching Professionals,' 'Teaching Assistants,' 'Teaching Professionals'** and **'SEND Teaching Professionals.'**
- In the Hospitality sector, **'Kitchen & Catering Assistants'** roles are most in demand.
- The Logistics sector has high demand for **'Warehouse Operatives'** and **'Transport & Distribution Clerks/Assistants.'**
- There is high demand in the Health and Social Care sector for **'Social Workers.'**
- Demand for **'Managers & Directors'** and **'Sales & Retail Assistants'** and in the Retail and Wholesale sector remain strong.
- In the Engineering sector **'Engineering Technicians'** and **'Mechanical Engineers'** are in demand.
- There is strong demand for **Book-keepers, Payroll Managers & Wages Clerks'** and **'Customer Service occupations'** across business sectors.
- In the IT sector **'Programmers & Software Development Professionals'** are sought after.
- There is continued demand for **'Plant & Machine Operatives'** in the Manufacturing sector.
- 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

- **Hundreds of jobs set to be created by the first business announced at Staffordshire's West Midlands Interchange development will be promoted to local communities by Staffordshire County Council.** Work on a £4million Carlsberg Britvic depot at the WMI site at Four Ashes in South Staffordshire has started. The new depot will feature state-of-the-art facilities and support the company's growing logistics needs.

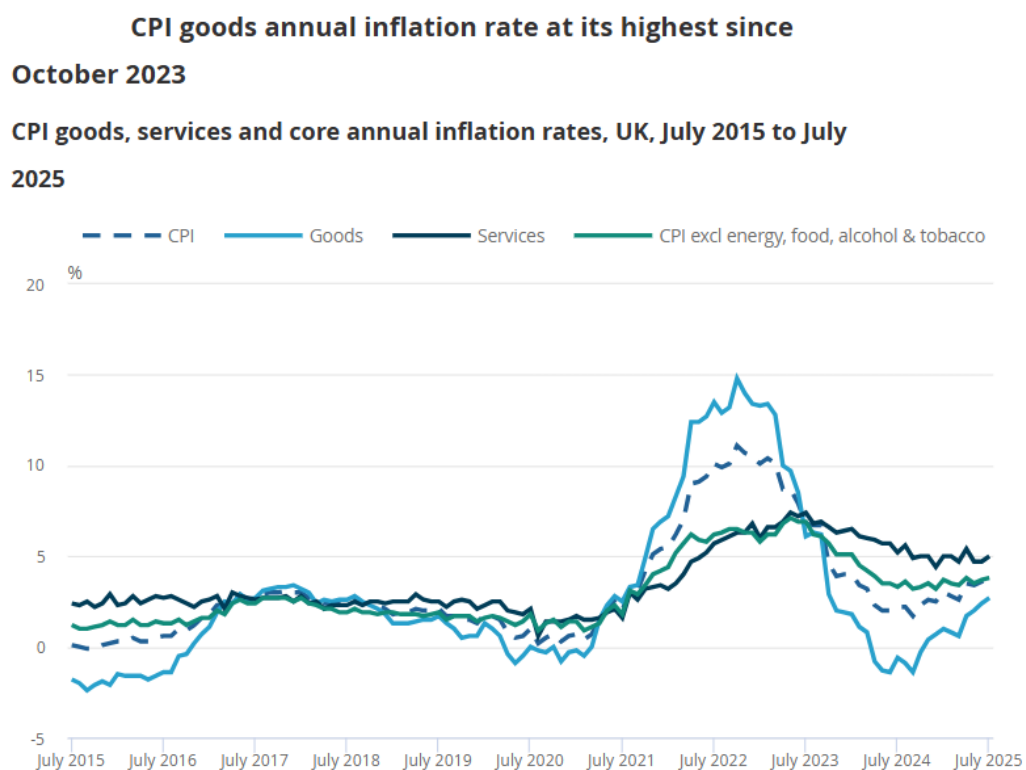


National Context

- The Chancellor has stated that the **focus of the autumn budget will be boosting productivity through further investment and changes to planning rules.**
- This comes on the back of **slowed growth in the second quarter of 2025**, and the recognised **need to further boost the UK economy at a time when global factors such as US tariffs alongside April's tax rises are proving a drag on UK growth.**

Cost of Living

- **UK inflation rose by 3.8 per cent in the year to July, up from 3.6 per cent in June**, with the increase driven mainly by a jump in the price of air fares and food. This is well above the Bank of England target of 2 per cent.



Source: Consumer price inflation from the Office for National Statistics

- We have also heard that **retailers are struggling to attract shoppers back due to rising food prices.** Research by the **British Retail Consortium** found that food prices rose by 4 per cent in July, up from the three-month average of 3.5 per cent.
- **Rents in the UK have reached a record high outside of London**, standing at an average of £1,365 per month, around £417 more than tenants were paying in 2020, according to property website **Rightmove.**
- **The Bank of England has cut interest rates to 4 per cent, taking the cost of borrowing to the lowest level for more than two years.** The cut, from the previous rate of 4.25 per

cent, is the fifth since August last year.

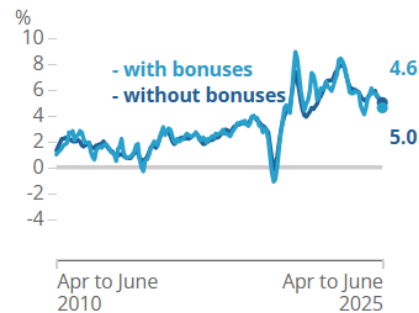
- While at the same time, **we are seeing annual real terms growth in wages steadily decline.**
- Annual growth in employees' average earnings in Great Britain for regular earnings (excluding bonuses) was 5.0% and for total earnings (including bonuses) was 4.6%, in April to June 2025.
- **Annual growth in real terms, adjusted for inflation using the Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH), was 0.9% for regular pay and 0.5% for total pay, in April to June 2025.**
- **Annual growth in real terms, adjusted for inflation using the Consumer Prices Index excluding owner occupiers' housing costs (CPI), was 1.5% for regular pay and 1.1% for total pay, in April to June 2025.**

Nominal Earnings

Average Weekly Earnings annual growth rates – nominal pay

Nominal annual growth rates remain relatively strong

Source: Monthly Wages and Salaries Survey from the Office for National Statistics

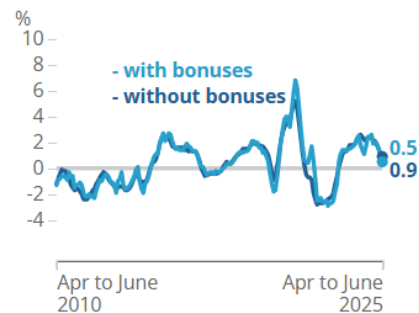


Real Earnings CPIH

Average Weekly Earnings annual growth rates – real pay using CPIH

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

Source: Monthly Wages and Salaries Survey from the Office for National Statistics

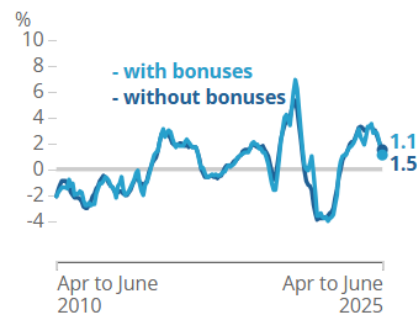


Real Earnings CPI

Average Weekly Earnings annual growth rates – real pay using CPI

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

Source: Monthly Wages and Salaries Survey from the Office for National Statistics

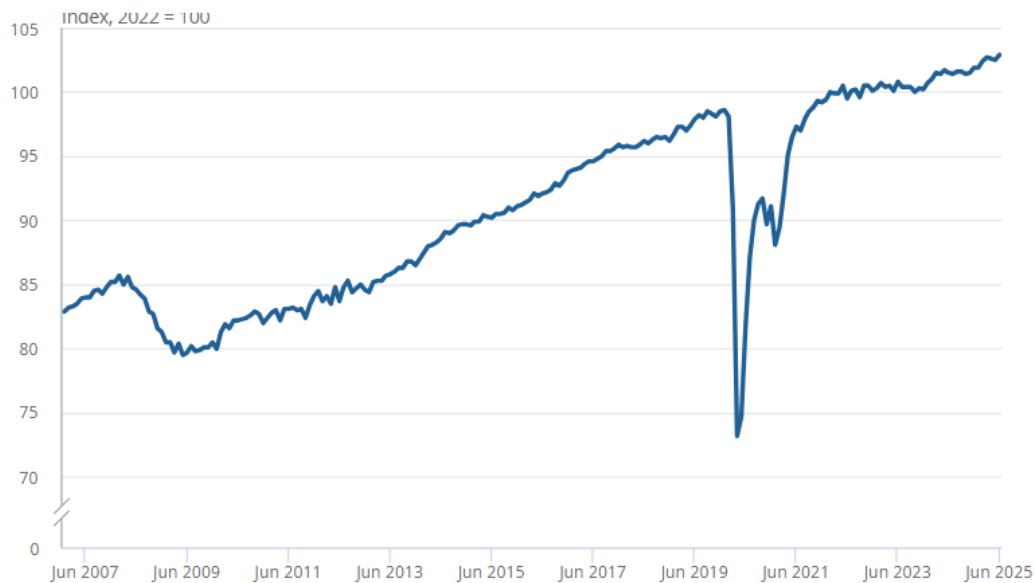


- There were an estimated 38,000 working days lost because of labour disputes across the UK in June 2025.

Economy

- **The UK economy grew by 0.3 per cent between April and June, largely driven by the services sector.** This is better than economists had expected but means growth had slowed from 0.7 per cent in the first three months of the year.
- **Monthly real gross domestic product (GDP) is estimated to have grown by 0.4% in June 2025**, following a fall of 0.1% in May 2025 and a fall of 0.1% in April 2025.

GDP Monthly index, January 2007 to June 2025, UK

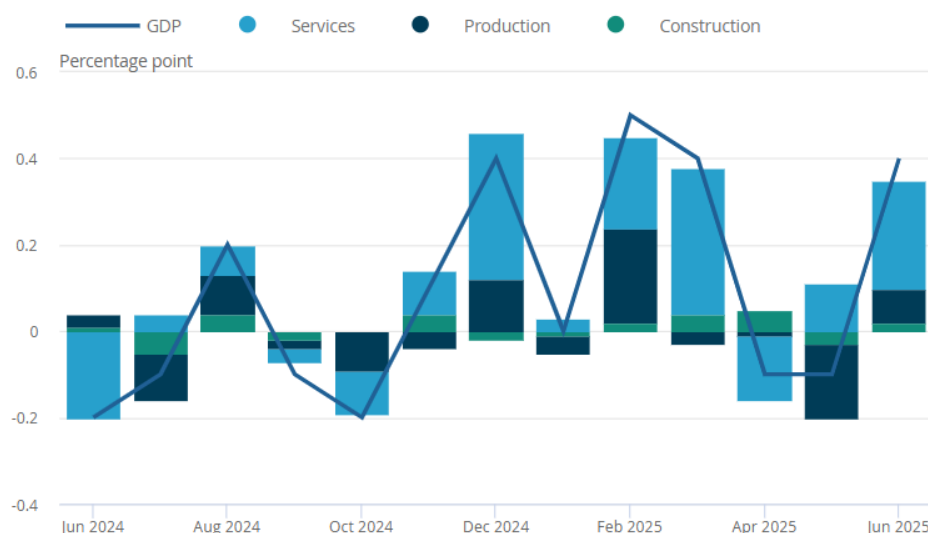


Source: GDP monthly estimate from the Office for National Statistics

- **Monthly services output grew by 0.3% in June 2025**, following growth of 0.1% in May 2025 and a fall of 0.2% in April 2025.
- **Production output grew by 0.7% in June 2025**, following a fall of 1.3% in May 2025 and no growth in April 2025.
- **Construction output grew by 0.3% in June 2025**, following a fall of 0.5% in May 2025 and growth of 0.9% in April 2025.

The services sector was the main contributor to the 0.4% growth in GDP in June 2025

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



Source: GDP monthly estimate from the Office for National Statistics

Business Conditions

- Alongside **continuing global uncertainty and the introduction of new business-related UK taxes**, many businesses also have ongoing 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 138 of the **Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS)**, which was live from 4 to 17 August 2025, suggest that business conditions continue to remain challenging.
- 16% of trading businesses reported that their **turnover had increased** in July 2025 compared with the previous calendar month and was broadly stable from June; in contrast, 24% reported their **turnover had decreased**, also broadly stable over the same period.
- Around 1 in 7 (15%) trading businesses reported that they **expect their turnover to decrease** in September 2025, decreasing by 5 percentage points compared with expectations for August; in comparison, 15% reported that they **expect their turnover to increase**, broadly stable with expectations for August.
- Economic uncertainty was the most reported challenge affecting turnover** for trading businesses in early August 2025 at 25%, down 7 percentage points from early April (32%); **for businesses with 10 or more employees, the most commonly reported challenge**

was cost of labour at 36%, down 6 percentage points over the same period.

- Around a quarter (25%) of trading businesses reported an **increase in the prices of goods or services bought** in July 2025 when compared with the previous month; this is broadly stable with June but down 7 percentage points from April.
- Around 1 in 8 (12%) trading businesses **expect the prices of goods or services they sell to increase** in September 2025, down 12 percentage points from April (24%); 22% of all businesses and 37% of businesses with 10 or more employees **cited labour costs as a reason for considering price rises**.
- 17% of businesses with 10 or more employees reported that they were **experiencing worker shortages** in early August 2025, which is broadly stable with early July and has steadily declined since early June 2022 (36%).
- The latest business insolvencies data shows that **in July 2025 there were a total of 2,178 company insolvencies in England and Wales, 1% higher than the number registered in the previous year (2,147 in July 2024), and 19% higher than the number registered three years previously (1,830 in July 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 cool 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: ▼ -8,000

Since Feb 2020: ▲ 1,244,000

The number of payrolled employees continues to fall.

Source: Pay As You Earn Real Time Information from HM Revenue and Customs

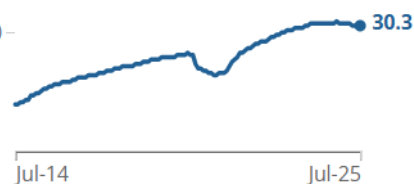
millions
35–

30–

Jul-14

Jul-25

30.3



Employment rate

Employment rate (all aged 16 to 64 years)

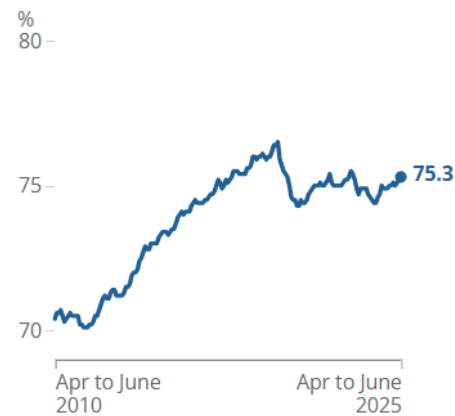
Quarterly change: ▲0.3pps

Since Dec to Feb 2020: ▼-1.2pps

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

Note: Because of increased volatility of Labour Force Survey estimates, resulting from smaller achieved sample sizes, estimates of change should be treated with additional caution.

Source: Labour Force Survey from the Office for National Statistics



Unemployment rate

Unemployment rate (all aged 16 years and over)

Quarterly change: ▲0.1pps

Since Dec to Feb 2020: ▲0.7pps

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

Note: Because of increased volatility of Labour Force Survey estimates, resulting from smaller achieved sample sizes, estimates of change should be treated with additional caution.

Source: Labour Force Survey from the Office for National Statistics



Inactivity rate

Economic inactivity rate (all aged 16 to 64 years)

Quarterly change: ▼-0.4pps

Since Dec to Feb 2020: ▲0.7pps

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

Note: Because of increased volatility of Labour Force Survey estimates, resulting from smaller achieved sample sizes, estimates of change should be treated with additional caution.

Source: Labour Force Survey from the Office for National Statistics



Job vacancies

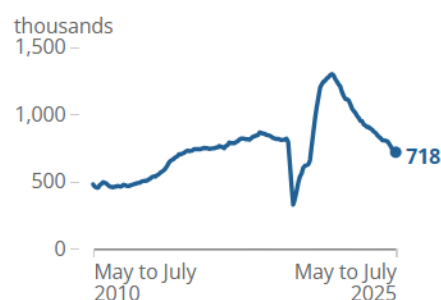
Number of job vacancies

Quarterly change: ▼-44,000

Since Jan to Mar 2020: ▼-77,000

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

Source: Vacancy Survey from the Office for National Statistics



- **Estimates for payrolled employees in the UK fell by 149,000 (0.5%) between June 2024 and June 2025, and by 26,000 (0.1%) between May 2025 and June 2025.**
- When looking at April to June 2025, the period comparable with our Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimates, payrolled employees fell by 110,000 (0.4%) over the year, and by 66,000 (0.2%) over the quarter.
- **The early estimate of payrolled employees for July 2025 decreased by 164,000 (0.5%) on the year, and by 8,000 (0.0%) on the month, to 30.3 million.** The July 2025 estimate should be treated as a provisional estimate and is likely to be revised when more data are received next month.
- Estimates from January to March 2025 include the full effect of the improvements in LFS data collection and sampling methods introduced from January 2024. However, ONS are continuing their efforts to further improve the response to the survey. Consequently, estimates may be subject to the effect of these further improvements, which may have an ongoing impact on the survey. An increased volatility will remain in the LFS estimates for mid-2023 and throughout 2024, so ONS advise additional caution when interpreting survey change measures. ONS recommend using LFS estimates as part of their suite of labour market indicators, alongside workforce jobs, Claimant Count and Pay As You Earn (PAYE) Real Time Information (RTI) estimates.
- The **UK employment rate** for people aged 16 to 64 years was estimated at 75.3% in April to June 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 4.7% in April to June 2025. This is above estimates of a year ago, and up in the latest quarter.
- The **UK economic inactivity rate** for people aged 16 to 64 years was estimated at 21.0% in April to June 2025. This is below estimates of a year ago, and down in the latest quarter.
- The **UK Claimant Count** for July 2025 decreased on the month and the year, to 1.695 million.
- The estimated number of **vacancies in the UK** fell by 44,000 (5.8%) on the quarter, to 718,000, in May to July 2025. This is the 37th consecutive period where vacancy numbers have dropped compared with the previous three months, with vacancies decreasing in 16 of the 18 industry sectors. Feedback from our Vacancy Survey suggests some firms may not be recruiting new workers or replacing workers who have left.

Conclusion

- In conclusion, following slowed economic growth in the second quarter of 2025 the Chancellor has stated that the **focus of the autumn budget will be boosting productivity through further investment and changes to planning rules.**
 - **UK inflation rose by 3.8 per cent last month, up from 3.6 per cent in June**, well above the Bank of England target of 2 per cent. **Interest rates have been cut to 4 per cent, taking the cost of borrowing to the lowest level for more than two years.** While at the same time **real wage growth is steadily coming down and the cost-of-living remains a challenge for many.**
 - **The UK economy grew by 0.3 per cent between April and June**, largely driven by the services sector. This is better than economists had expected but means growth had slowed from 0.7 per cent in the first three months of the year.
 - Alongside **continuing global uncertainty and the introduction of new business-related UK taxes**, many businesses also have ongoing 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 cool 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 July 2025, which shows the number of new companies and individuals who are unable to pay debts and enter a formal insolvency procedure.

Company Insolvencies

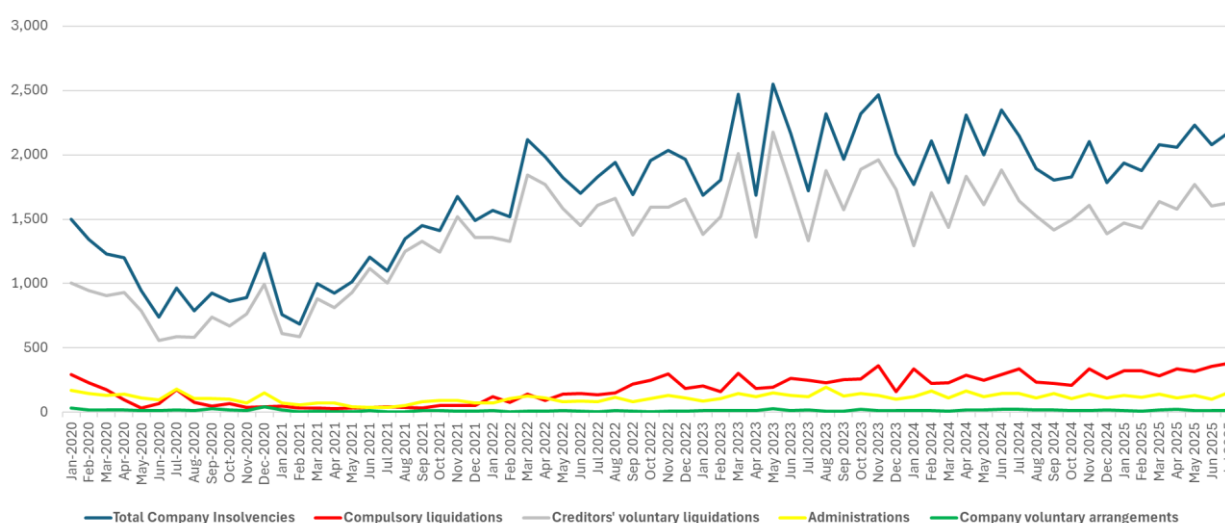
In July 2025 there were a total of 2,178 company insolvencies in England and Wales. The overall number of **company insolvencies are 1% higher than the number registered in the previous year (2,147 in July 2024), and 19% higher than the number registered three years previously (1,830 in July 2022).** 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 381 compulsory liquidations in July 2025, 13% higher than the number in July 2024, and 178% higher than in July 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 July 2025 there were 1,627 Creditors' Voluntary Liquidations (CVLs), 1% lower than July 2024, and 1% higher than July 2022. Numbers of administrations are 95% higher than three years previously in July 2022, Company Voluntary Arrangements (CVAs) are 140% higher than three years previously in July 2022, but numbers are extremely low.

Company insolvencies between August 2024 and July 2025 are 7% lower compared to a year earlier, representing 1,700 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, July 2025 - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/company-insolvencies-july-2025)

The sectors to have seen the largest number of company insolvencies between July 2024 and June 2025 continue to be the Construction sector (3,984), Wholesale & Retail sector (3,655) and Accommodation & Food Service sector (3,366). Levels are below those seen for the same period the previous year for the Construction sector -8% lower, the Wholesale & Retail sector -5% lower, and the Accommodation & Food sector -11% lower than levels a year earlier. Overall, for this period company insolvencies by industry are -5% lower. It is positive to see improvements overall across sectors.

Individual Insolvencies

There were **11,595 total individual insolvencies in July 2025**, which was 1% higher than in July 2024, and 26% higher than in July 2022.

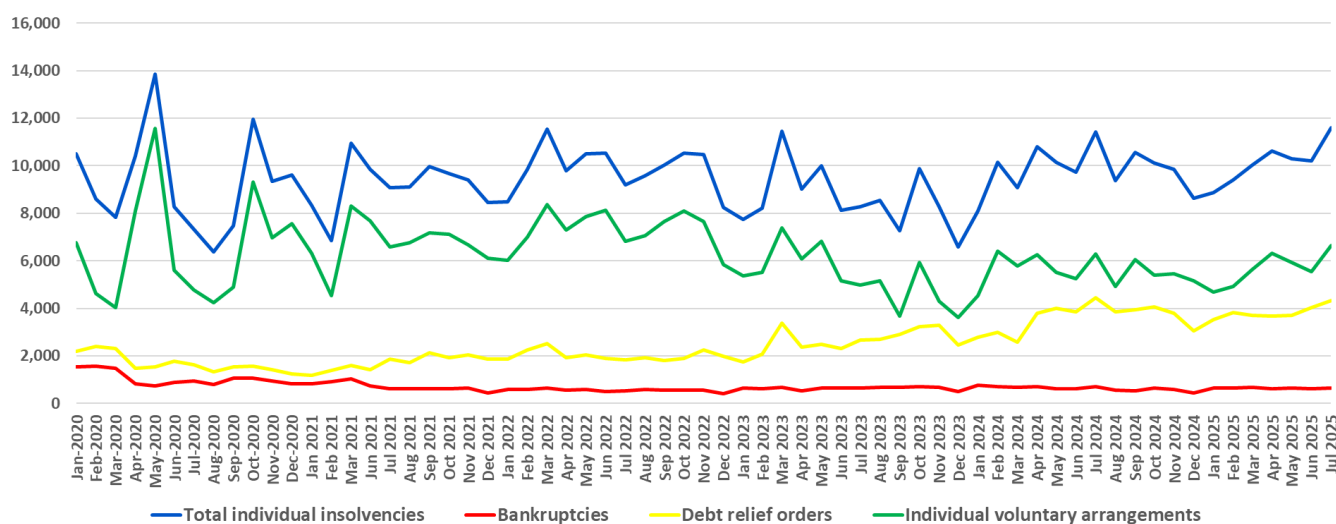
For individuals, **641 bankruptcies were registered in July 2025**, which was 9% lower than in July 2024, but 18% higher than in July 2022.

There were **4,317 Debt Relief Orders (DROs) in July 2025**, which was 3% lower than in July 2024, but 135% higher than in July 2022.

There were **6,637 Individual Voluntary Arrangements (IVAs) registered in July 2025**, which was 6% higher than in July 2024, but 3% lower than in July 2022.

Total Individual Insolvencies between August 2024 and July 2025 are 9% higher than the same period a year earlier, representing an increase of 9,503

Individual Insolvencies in England and Wales



Source: Insolvency Service

There were **8,400 Breathing Space registrations in July 2025**, which is **14% higher than the number registered in July 2024**. 8,286 were Standard Breathing Space registrations, which is 14% higher and 114 were Mental Health Breathing Space registrations, which is 9% lower than July 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: July 2025

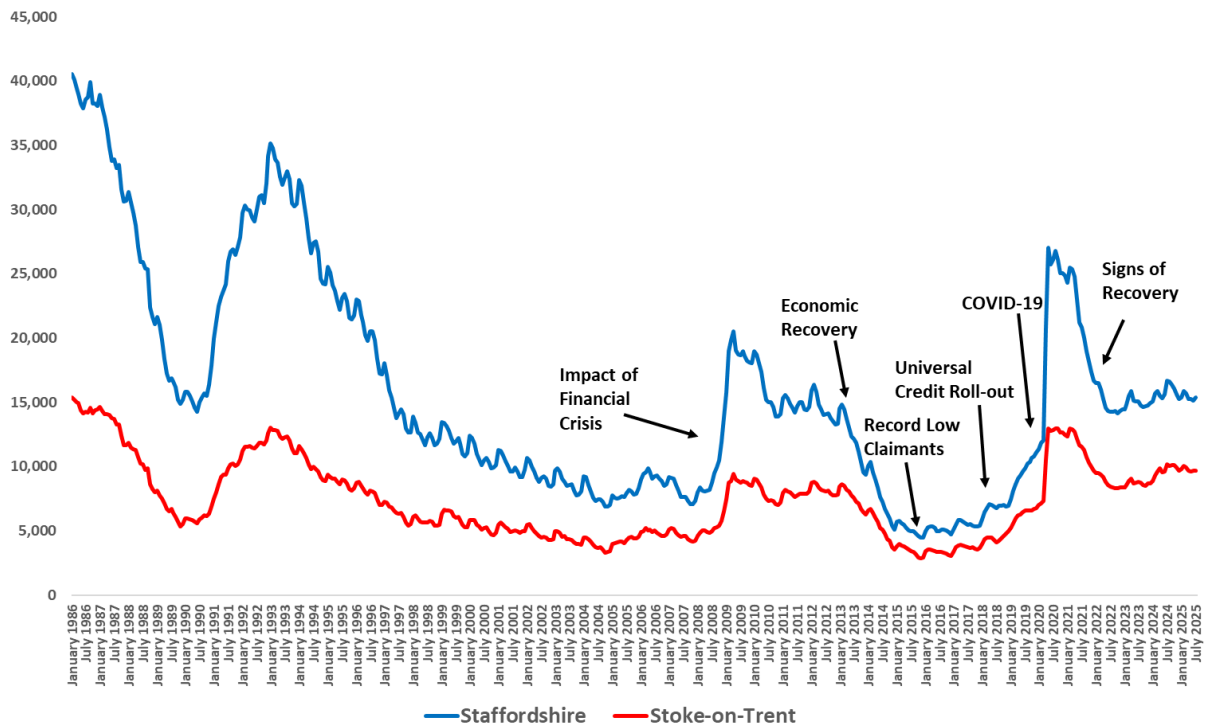
Area	Claimant Count Rate (July 2024)	Claimant Count Rate (June 2025)	Claimant Count Rate ¹ (July 2025)	Number of Claimants (July 2025)	Monthly Change in Claimants (Numbers)	Monthly Change in Claimants (%)	Change in Claimants since March 2020 (Numbers)	Change in Claimants since March 2020 (%)
England	4.3	4.1	4.1	1,501,560	8,630	0.6%	438,055	41.2%
West Midlands	5.6	5.4	5.4	204,420	1,025	0.5%	60,070	41.6%
Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent	3.8	3.5	3.5	25,095	300	1.2%	5,725	29.6%
Birmingham	10.3	10.4	10.4	79,035	185	0.2%	29,665	60.1%
Wolverhampton	7.8	7.2	7.2	12,175	-80	-0.7%	1,795	17.3%
Sandwell	7.2	7.0	7.0	15,435	0	0.0%	4,655	43.2%
Walsall	6.4	6.1	6.2	10,870	105	1.0%	2,265	26.3%
Stoke-on-Trent	6.2	5.9	5.9	9,685	35	0.4%	2,365	32.3%
Coventry	5.9	5.7	5.7	13,660	-15	-0.1%	5,660	70.8%
Dudley	5.1	4.8	4.8	9,400	-55	-0.6%	885	10.4%
Telford and Wrekin	3.9	3.8	3.9	4,705	175	3.9%	1,275	37.2%
Solihull	3.6	3.7	3.6	4,710	-25	-0.5%	1,060	29.0%
Worcestershire	3.3	3.0	3.0	11,145	190	1.7%	2,840	34.2%
Staffordshire	3.1	2.8	2.8	15,405	260	1.7%	3,355	27.8%
Warwickshire	2.8	2.8	2.8	10,735	190	1.8%	2,905	37.1%
Herefordshire, County of	2.8	2.6	2.7	2,920	65	2.3%	810	38.4%
Shropshire	2.7	2.4	2.4	4,535	-5	-0.1%	525	13.1%
East Staffordshire	4.1	3.6	3.6	2,820	15	0.5%	1,100	64.0%
Tamworth	3.6	3.2	3.3	1,625	20	1.2%	135	9.1%
Cannock Chase	3.4	3.1	3.1	2,015	45	2.3%	360	21.8%
Newcastle-under-Lyme	3.1	3.0	3.0	2,440	65	2.7%	460	23.2%
South Staffordshire	2.7	2.5	2.6	1,695	40	2.4%	385	29.4%
Lichfield	2.4	2.3	2.4	1,535	15	1.0%	215	16.3%
Stafford	2.7	2.3	2.4	2,005	65	3.4%	350	21.1%
Staffordshire Moorlands	2.4	2.3	2.3	1,270	0	0.0%	350	38.0%

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

- The claimant count in Staffordshire saw an **increase of 260 claimants over the last month**, with the **total number now at 15,405**.
- Over the last month, the **claimant rate for Staffordshire remained the same at 2.8%** of the working age population.
- **Staffordshire saw the number of claimants increase by 1.7% this month, a higher percentage than the 0.5% increase regionally and the 0.6% 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 5.4% which remained the same this month, and lower than the average for England of 4.1% which also remained unchanged this month.**
- Stoke-on-Trent saw a **slight increase of 35 claimants** over the same period with **a total of 9,685 claimants**, with the **rate unchanged at 5.9% 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 27.8% or 3,355 higher than the level seen in March 2020 (pre-COVID),** which is far lower than the 41.6% increase seen regionally and the 41.2% 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 2.8% of the working age population compared to 5.4% regionally and 4.1% nationally. In Stoke-on-Trent, the Claimant Count remains above both the regional and national averages at 5.9%.**
- We will continue to support those residents that unfortunately find themselves out of work to access employment through our partnership working and dedicated Jobs Brokerage service.

- All the districts in Staffordshire saw an increase in the claimant count this month with the exception of Staffordshire Moorlands which was unchanged. It is notable that whilst Stafford saw the highest increase of 3.4%, East Staffordshire saw the lowest monthly increase of 0.5%.
- The highest claimant rate at 3.6% is in East Staffordshire. Staffordshire Moorlands has the lowest claimant rate of 2.3%. It is important to note all districts have a lower claimant rate than both the regional and national rates.

Youth Claimant Count

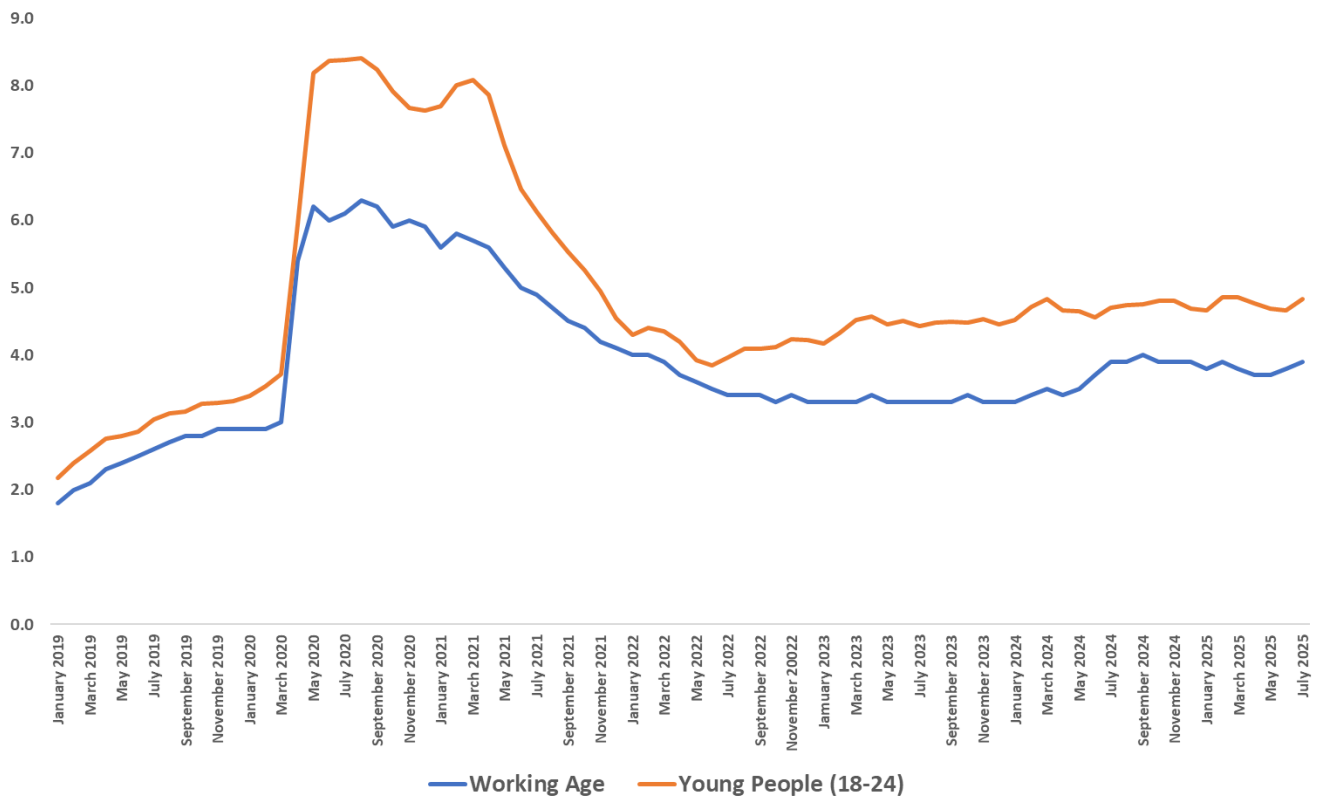
Youth Claimant Count (Universal Credit) Statistics: July 2025

Area	Youth Claimant Count Rate (July 2024)	Youth Claimant Count Rate (June 2025)	Youth Claimant Count Rate ¹ (July 2025)	Number of Youth Claimants (July 2025)	Monthly Change in Youth Claimants (Numbers)	Monthly Change in Youth Claimants (%)	Change in Youth Claimants since March 2020 (Numbers)	Change in Youth Claimants since March 2020 (%)
England	5.1	5.4	5.6	266,710	6,715	2.6%	68,980	34.9%
West Midlands	7.0	7.5	7.7	39,495	1,130	2.9%	11,590	41.5%
Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent	5.6	5.7	5.8	5,005	125	2.6%	1,185	31.0%
Birmingham	9.5	10.5	10.8	15,010	445	3.1%	5,905	64.9%
Wolverhampton	10.8	10.6	10.7	2,275	25	1.1%	365	19.1%
Sandwell	9.3	10.1	10.4	3,030	95	3.2%	915	43.3%
Walsall	9.4	10.0	10.3	2,320	80	3.6%	405	21.1%
Stoke-on-Trent	8.0	8.5	8.6	1,930	15	0.8%	525	37.4%
Dudley	7.5	7.8	7.9	1,865	40	2.2%	115	6.6%
Solihull	6.0	6.6	6.7	965	15	1.6%	140	17.0%
Telford and Wrekin	6.1	6.3	6.7	1,010	50	5.2%	250	32.9%
Coventry	5.1	5.4	5.5	2,555	55	2.2%	1,020	66.4%
Worcestershire	4.9	5.0	5.1	2,080	65	3.2%	485	30.4%
Staffordshire	4.7	4.7	4.8	3,075	110	3.7%	660	27.3%
Herefordshire, County of	4.2	4.4	4.6	520	25	5.1%	105	25.3%
Warwickshire	4.0	4.3	4.5	2,005	75	3.9%	670	50.2%
Shropshire	4.0	4.1	4.3	855	40	4.9%	30	3.6%
Tamworth	6.9	6.5	6.5	355	0	0.0%	60	20.3%
Cannock Chase	6.3	6.1	6.4	435	20	4.8%	70	19.2%
South Staffordshire	5.0	4.9	5.3	380	30	8.6%	130	52.0%
East Staffordshire	5.6	5.3	5.2	445	-10	-2.2%	125	39.1%
Stafford	4.6	4.3	4.5	375	15	4.2%	60	19.0%
Lichfield	4.1	4.1	4.3	295	15	5.4%	25	9.3%
Staffordshire Moorlands	3.3	3.8	4.1	235	20	9.3%	60	34.3%
Newcastle-under-Lyme	3.4	3.7	3.8	560	15	2.8%	135	31.8%

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

- This month the **youth claimant count in Staffordshire saw an increase of 110 claimants with a total of 3,075 young people**. Staffordshire saw a 3.7% increase, higher than the 2.9% increase in the West Midlands and the 2.6% increase in England this month.
- **The proportion of young people in Staffordshire aged 18-24 claiming work-related Universal Credit increased from 4.7% to 4.8%**. It is important to note that Staffordshire continues to be lower than the national rate of 5.6%, which increased from 5.4% and far lower than the regional rate of 7.7% which increased from 7.5%.
- **Stoke-on-Trent saw a slight increase of 15 claimants to a total of 1,930 claimants with the rate increasing to 8.6% from 8.5% this month.**

Claimant Rate and Youth Unemployment Rate in Staffordshire



- The majority of districts in Staffordshire saw an increase in the youth claimant rate this month, whilst East Staffordshire saw a decrease.
- Tamworth has the highest rate at 6.5%, whilst Newcastle-under-Lyme has the lowest rate at 3.8%. Staffordshire Moorlands saw the highest percentage increase in youth claimants this month of 9.3% whereas East Staffordshire saw a decrease of -2.2%.
- 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

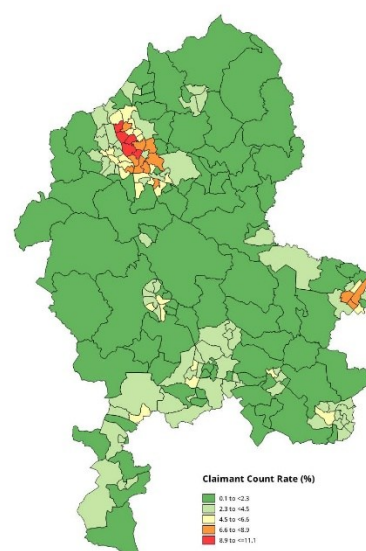
The following maps and tables provide the latest breakdown of the claimant count by wards in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent.

Claimant Count Rate July 2025

Of the 201 wards in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent, 54 were above the England average of 4.1% for the number of claimants as a proportion of the working age population.

Within the twenty highest claimant rate wards, seventeen were in Stoke-on-Trent with the highest rates in Joiner's Square: 11.1%/510; Etruria & Hanley: 10.5%/565; Moorcroft: 10.0%/370; Burslem Central: 9.5%/435; Tunstall: 9.3%/395 total claimants.

In Staffordshire, the three wards with the highest claimant rate were in East Staffordshire with the highest rates in Anglesey: 7.9%/425; Burton: 7.7%/230; Shobnall: 7.1%/385 total claimants.

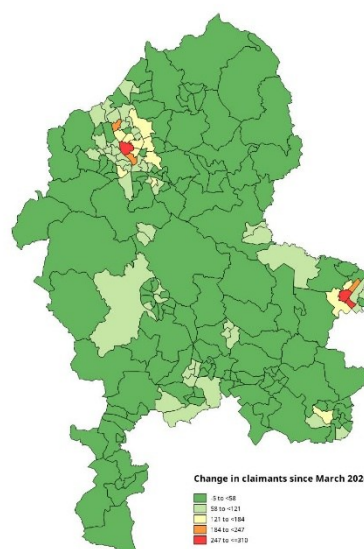


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Change in Claimant Count since March 2020

Of the 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 (270 increase to 565); Hanley Park & Shelton (235 increase to 360); Tunstall (210 increase to 395); Bentilee & Ubberrley (175 increase to 560); Moorcroft (170 increase to 370); Burslem Central (155 increase to 435); Lightwood North & Normacot (155 increase to 245).

Of the remaining three wards, all were in East Staffordshire including Anglesey (310 increase to 425); Shobnall (250 increase to 385); Eton Park (190 increase to 305).



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

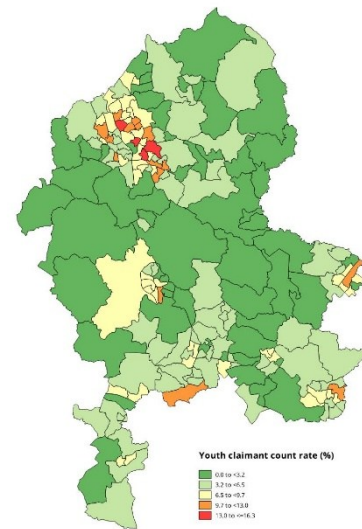
The following maps and tables provide the latest breakdown of the youth claimant count by wards in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent.

Youth Claimant Count Rate July 2025

Of the 201 wards in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent, 79 were above the England average 5.6% for the number of claimants aged 18-24 a proportion of the 18-24 population.

Of the ten wards with the highest youth claimant count rate, seven were in Stoke-on-Trent including Joiner's Square: 16.3%/125; Fenton East: 13.9%/65; Bentilee & Ubbertley: 13.9%/125; Burslem Central: 13.1%/80; Abbey Hulton & Townsend: 12.1%/95; Meir South 10.8%/60; Meir North: 10.8%/60.

In Staffordshire, the three wards with the highest claimant rates included Burton (East Staffordshire): 11.7%/45; Clayton (N-u-L): 11.0%/20; Holditch & Chesterton (N-u-L): 10.5%/45.

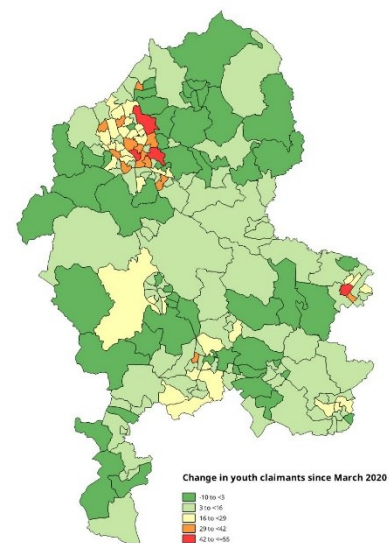


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Change in Youth Claimant Count since March 2020

Of the ten wards in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent with the highest change in the number of youth claimants since March 2020, eight were in Stoke-on-Trent including Bentilee & Ubbertley (55 increase to 125); Hanley Park & Shelton (55 increase to 80); Baddeley, Milton & Norton (45 increase to 85); Joiner's Square (35 increase to 125); Tunstall (35 increase to 65); Fenton East (30 increase to 65); Abbey Hulton & Townsend (30 increase to 95); Meir South (30 increase to 60).

In Staffordshire, the two wards with the highest change in the number of youth claimants since March 2020, were both in East Staffordshire including Shobnall: 45 increase to 70; Anglesey: 35 increase to 55.

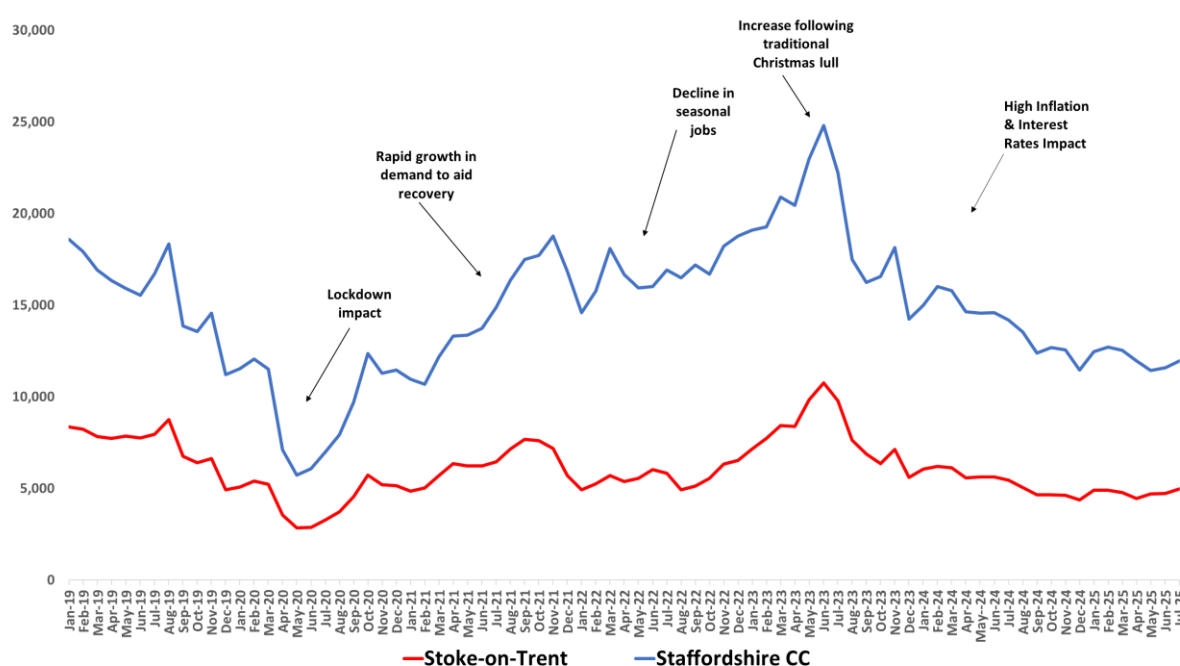


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Job Vacancies³

- Staffordshire saw an increase of 3% in the number of available job vacancies between June and July to a total of 12,000⁴. 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 5,000 which is significantly lower than the number of claimants.
- Across the region in the last month there was also a 3% increase, and nationally there was a 4% increase in the number of job vacancies.
- In July there has been a decrease in the number of available job vacancies, compared to a year ago in Staffordshire with the number of job adverts being posted 16% lower, whilst Stoke-on-Trent decreased by 9%. 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 slight decrease this month to 1% below pre-pandemic levels. In comparison the region has decreased at a higher rate and is 13% below pre-pandemic levels whilst nationally there has been an increase of 6%. Stoke-on-Trent job vacancies are 8% lower. Our focus continues to be to support those that unfortunately find themselves unemployed, to transition into work.

Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Unique Job Vacancies Trend



***Important to note that Lightcast 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 an increase in vacancies or remained the same during July. 'Associate Professional' occupations saw the largest increase of 15% whilst 'Professional' occupations saw the biggest decrease of -4%.
- The occupations to see the most significant increases during July include Authors, Writers & Translators; Sales related; Programmers & Software Development professionals; Buyers & Procurement officers; Parking & Civil Enforcement; Chefs; Mechanical Engineers; IT Business Analysts, Architects & Systems Designers; Care Workers & Home Carers; Warehouse Operatives; Production & Process Engineers; Residential, Day & Domiciliary Care Managers & Proprietors; Finance Officers; Air Conditioning & Refrigeration Installers & Repairers; Routine Inspectors & Testers; Sales & Retail Assistants; Construction & Building Trades; Merchandisers; Finance & Investment Analysts & Advisers.

Annual Trends in job vacancies

- The occupations to see the largest year-on-year increases include Authors, Writers & Translators; Parking & Civil Enforcement; Engineering Technicians; Finance Officers; Large Goods Vehicle Drivers; Production & Process Engineers; Project Support Officers; Education Managers; HR Managers & Directors; Cleaners & Domestic; Bus & Coach Drivers; Managers in Storage & Warehousing; Electrical & Electronics Technicians; Higher Level Teaching Assistants; Inspectors of Standards & Regulations; Chartered Surveyors; Transport & Distribution Clerks & Assistants; Youth Work Professionals; Air Conditioning & Refrigeration Installers & Repairers; Animal Care Services.

Pre-COVID baseline trends in job vacancies

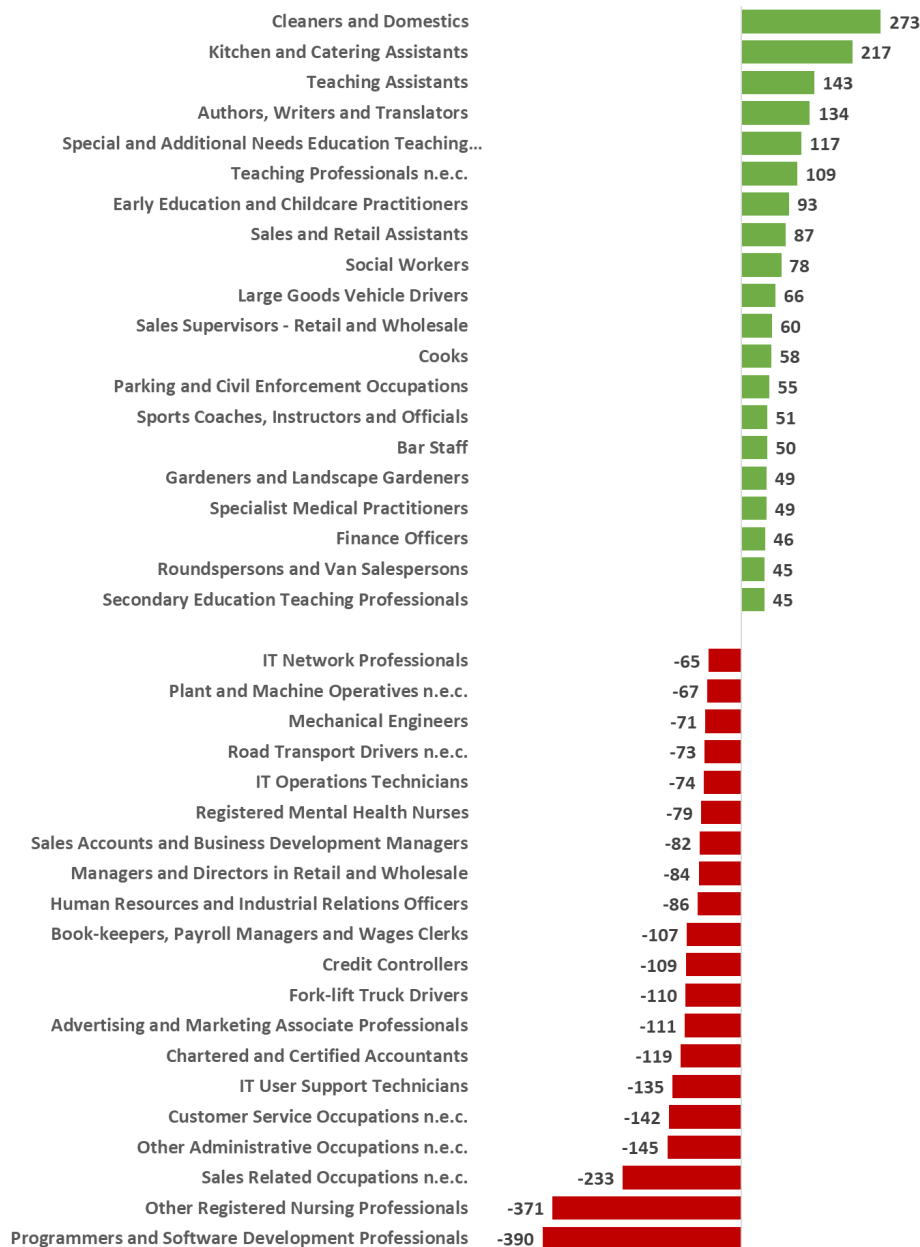
The main occupations with higher vacancies compared to pre-COVID are found in:

- **Housekeepers & Related Occupations** (Cleaners & Domestic)
- **Hospitality** (Kitchen & Catering Assistants; Cooks; Bar Staff)
- **Education** (Teaching Assistants; SEND Teaching Professionals; Teaching Professionals; Secondary Education Teaching Professionals)
- **Writing & Language Professionals** (Authors, Writers & Translators)
- **Childcare** (Early Education & Childcare Practitioners)
- **Retail & Wholesale** (Sales & Retail Assistants; Sales Supervisors)
- **Health & Social Care** (Social Workers; Specialist Medical Practitioners)
- **Logistics** (Large Goods Vehicle Drivers; Roundspersons & Van Salespersons;)
- **Public Safety & Law Enforcement** (Parking & Civil Enforcement)
- **Sport** (Sports Coaches, Instructors & Officials)

- **Horticulture & Landscaping** (Gardeners & Landscape Gardeners)
- **Finance & Accounting** (Finance Officers)

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 Jul 2025 in Staffordshire & Stoke

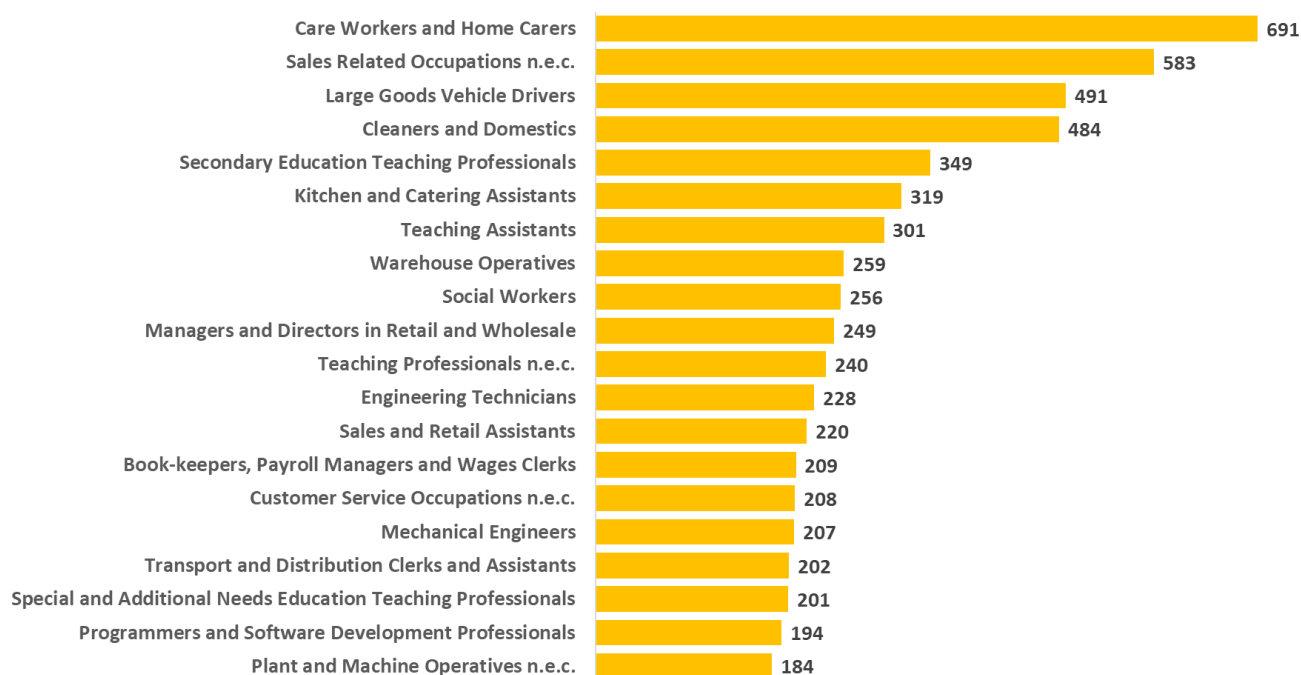


Top Occupations in Demand

- 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,' 'Large Goods Vehicle Drivers,' 'Cleaners & Domestics'** also have strong demand.

- In the Education sector there is particularly high demand for **'Secondary Education Teaching Professionals,' 'Teaching Assistants,' 'Teaching Professionals,'** and **'SEND Teaching Professionals.'**
- In the Hospitality sector **'Kitchen & Catering Assistants'** are most in demand.
- The Logistics sector continues to have high demand for **'Warehouse Operatives'** and **'Transport & Distribution Clerks & Assistants.'**
- There is high demand in the Health & Social Care sector for **'Social Workers.'**
- Demand for **'Managers & Directors'** and **'Sales & Retail Assistants'** in the Retail and Wholesale sector remain strong.
- There is continued demand in the Engineering sector for **'Engineering Technicians'** and **'Mechanical Engineers.'**
- There is strong demand for **'Book-keepers, Payroll Managers & Wages Clerks'** and **'Customer Service'** across business sectors.
- In the IT sector, **'Programmers & Software Development Professionals'** are sought after.
- In the Manufacturing sector **'Plant & Machine Operatives'** are in demand.

Top 20 occupations in demand in Staffordshire & Stoke during July 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.

