

Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Economic Bulletin

Issue 63 - November 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.

Kind Regards,

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 saw unemployment, youth unemployment and dependency on work-related benefits increase during the energy and cost-of-living crisis.
- However, **over the last year we have seen a steady decline in the Claimant Count**, with residents either finding work or becoming economically inactive.
- There is some **positive news for jobseekers with the number of job vacancies showing an increase of 2% over the past year**. Although this is a lower increase than seen regionally and nationally, where job vacancies in the West Midlands have increased 5% and nationally there has been a 13% 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, the **number of work-related benefit claimants in Staffordshire now stands at 15,150, this is 885 fewer claimants than at the same time last year**. This is equivalent to a -5.5% annual reduction which is much higher than the reductions seen both regionally (-3.9%) and nationally (-3.3%).
- The **claimant rate in Staffordshire is currently 2.8%** of the working age population, which has **decreased from 2.9% the same period last year**.
- **Staffordshire continues to have one of the lowest claimant rates in the region, far lower than the regional average 5.4% which decreased from 5.6% the previous month, and lower than the England average of 4.1% which also decreased from 4.2% the previous year.**
- 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 stands at 3,235, this is 180 more youth claimants than at the same time last year**. This is equivalent to a 5.9% annual increase, although this is much lower than the increases seen both regionally (10.5%) and nationally (10.6%).
- The **youth claimant rate in Staffordshire is currently 5.2% of the 18-24 population, which is an increase from 4.9% last year**. This is a concerning trend seen both regionally and nationally. It is important to note that **Staffordshire continues to be lower than the national rate of 5.7%, which increased from 5.2% and far lower than the regional rate of 7.9% which increased from 7.1% over the last year**. 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 2% increase in the number of available job vacancies between October 2024 and October 2025 to a total of 12,900. This is lower than the number of work-related benefit claimants in Staffordshire. Stoke-on-Trent saw an increase of 22% in job vacancies to a total of 5,600 which is significantly lower than the number of claimants. Across the region in the past year there was a 5% increase, and nationally there was a 13% 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,' 'Cleaners & Domestic,'** and **'Large Goods Vehicle Drivers'** also have strong demand.
- In the Education sector there is particularly high demand for and **'Teaching Assistants,' 'Secondary Education Teaching Professionals,' '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,' 'Fork-lift Truck Drivers,' 'Transport & Distribution Clerks/Assistants,' Roundspersons & Van Salespersons.'**
- There is high demand in the Health and Social Care sector for **'Social Workers.'**
- Demand for **'Sales & Retail Assistants'** and **'Managers & Directors'** in the Retail and Wholesale sector remain strong.
- In the Engineering sector **'Mechanical Engineers'** are in demand.
- There is strong demand for **'Customer Service occupations,' 'Book-keepers, Payroll Managers & Wages Clerks'** across business sectors.
- There is also high demand for **'Early Education & Childcare Practitioners.'**
- 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. **Advanced logistics** within the ecommerce sector continue to drive demand, evidenced by Pets At Home in Stafford recently creating over 750 new jobs and Carlsberg Britvic investing £4 million in a new depot, with plans to create several hundred additional 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 yours

To 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

- **Developer Indurent to invest £800m in Staffordshire**

Developer Indurent plans to invest £800m in Staffordshire over the next few years. The industrial and logistics specialist is currently delivering or promoting six million sq. ft of space in the county, said senior director of planning Richard Hickman. "These sites are either in the planning process with a draft allocation, or they're sites that we're building on currently," said Hickman. "To bring those sites forward over the next few years, we're going to be investing something in the order of £800m. That's a huge investment and a reflection of the confidence that we have in Staffordshire. "We're very much focused on the spine of the country and Staffordshire is the central part of that spine."

- **£100 million investment in Staffordshire unveiled by JCB**

JCB is marking its 80th birthday with news of a £100 million investment in ultra-modern manufacturing facilities at its global headquarters in Staffordshire. The project at the company's plant in Rocester, Staffordshire, will see the installation of a fully automated powder paint plant costing £60 million as well as a full modernisation of the shop floor, with new machining centres, friction welders and cylinder boring machines.



National Context

- The **Chancellor has delivered her much-anticipated Autumn Budget**, here is a summary of some of the key points:
- **Personal taxation**
 - National Insurance (NI) and income tax thresholds frozen for extra three years beyond 2028, dragging more people into higher bands over time
 - Amount under-65s can put into cash Isas (Individual Savings Accounts) capped at £12,000 a year, with the rest of the £20,000 annual allowance reserved for investments
 - Basic and higher income tax rates on property, savings and dividend income to increase by 2 percentage points
- **Wages, benefits and pensions**
 - Cap limiting households on universal or child tax credit from receiving payments for a third or subsequent child to be scrapped from April
 - Legal minimum wage for over-21s to rise 4.1% in April, from £12.21 to £12.71 per hour
 - Rate for 18 to 20-year-olds to go up 8.5%, from £10 to £10.85 per hour, as part of a plan to establish a single rate for all adults
 - Basic and new state pension payments to go up by 4.8% from April, more than the current rate of inflation, under the "triple lock" policy
 - Amount people can sacrifice from their salary to avoid paying NI on pension contributions capped at £2,000 a year from 2029
 - Help to Save scheme, which offers people on universal credit a bonus on savings, extended and expanded beyond 2027
- **Housing and property**
 - Properties in England worth more than £2m to face a council tax surcharge of between £2,500-£7,500, following a revaluation of homes in bands F, G and H
- **Transport**
 - 5p "temporary" cut in fuel duty on petrol and diesel extended again, until September 2026 before it rises again over six month period
 - A new mileage-based tax for electric vehicles and plug-in hybrid cars to be introduced from 2028
 - Regulated rail fares for journeys in England frozen next year for the first time since 1996 (there have been periods when prices rose by less than inflation)
 - Premium cars to be excluded from Motability scheme, which allows people on certain disability benefits to lease vehicles more cheaply
- **Business Taxes**
 - Tax exemption for small packages from overseas retailers worth under £135 scrapped from 2029, following complaints it hinders UK businesses
 - Tax on profits made by gambling firms from online bets to rise from 21% to 40% in April, alongside abolition of 10% bingo tax

- **Food and drink**

- Tax on sugary drinks extended to pre-packaged milkshakes and lattes from 2028, reversing an exemption when the tax was introduced in 2018

- **UK growth, inflation and debt**

- Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) predicts the UK economy will grow by 1.5% this year, upgraded from a 1% forecast in March
- Inflation predicted to average 3.5% this year, before falling to 2.5% next year, and returning to the government's 2% target in 2027

- **Other measures**

- English regional mayors to be given powers to tax overnight stays in hotels and holiday lets, echoing existing plans in Scotland and Wales
- Cost of a single NHS prescription in England frozen at £9.90 for another year (they remain free in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland)

Economy

- **The UK economy grew by 0.1 per cent in the three months to September 2025, with output in September falling by 0.1 per cent amid a drop in manufacturing.** The Office for National Statistics said production fell 2 per cent in September, including a 28.6 per cent fall in motor vehicle manufacturing amid the hit from Jaguar Land Rover's cyber-attack, contributing to a slowdown from 0.3 per cent growth in the previous quarter.

GDP Monthly index, January 2007 to September 2025, UK

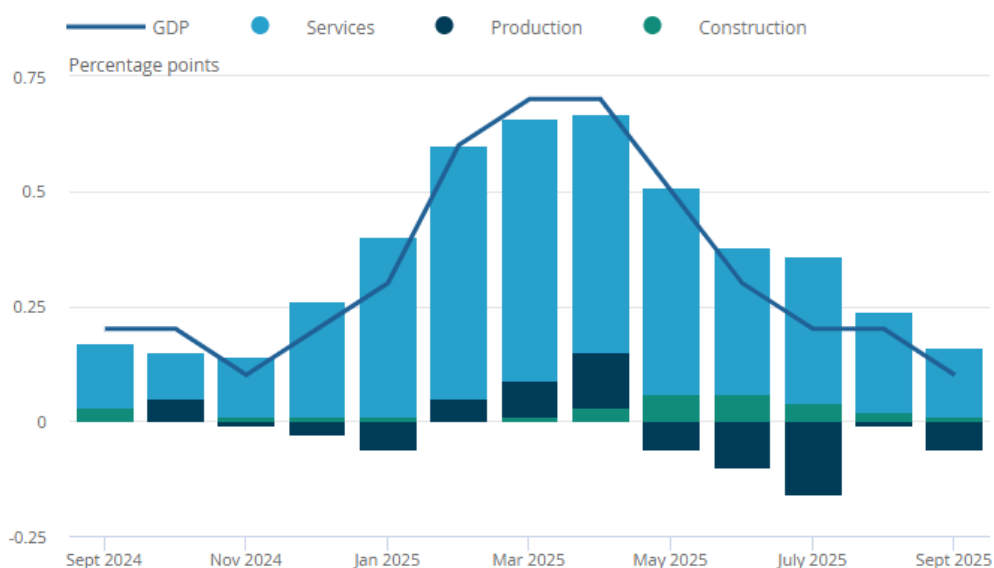


Source: GDP monthly estimate from the Office for National Statistics

- **Quarterly GDP** - In the three months to September 2025, compared with the three months to June 2025:

- **Real gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 0.1%, following growth of 0.2% in the three months to August 2025.**
- **Services output grew by 0.2%**, compared with growth of 0.3% in the three months to August 2025.
- **Production output fell by 0.5%**; this follows a fall of 0.1% in the three months to August 2025.
- **Construction output increased by 0.1%**, compared with a growth of 0.4% in the three months to August 2025.
- **Monthly GDP** - In the month to September 2025:
 - **Monthly GDP is estimated to have fallen by 0.1%, following no growth in August 2025 and a fall of 0.1% in July 2025.**
 - **Production fell by 2.0%, whereas services grew by 0.2% and construction grew by 0.2% in September 2025**; this fall in production was largely because of a fall in the manufacture of motor vehicles, trailers and semi-trailers.
 - The manufacture of motor vehicles, trailers and semi-trailers fell by 28.6%; a negative contribution of 0.17 percentage points to the fall in GDP in September 2025.

Contributions to three-month GDP growth, UK, September 2024 to September 2025



Source: GDP monthly estimate from the Office for National Statistics

Cost of Living

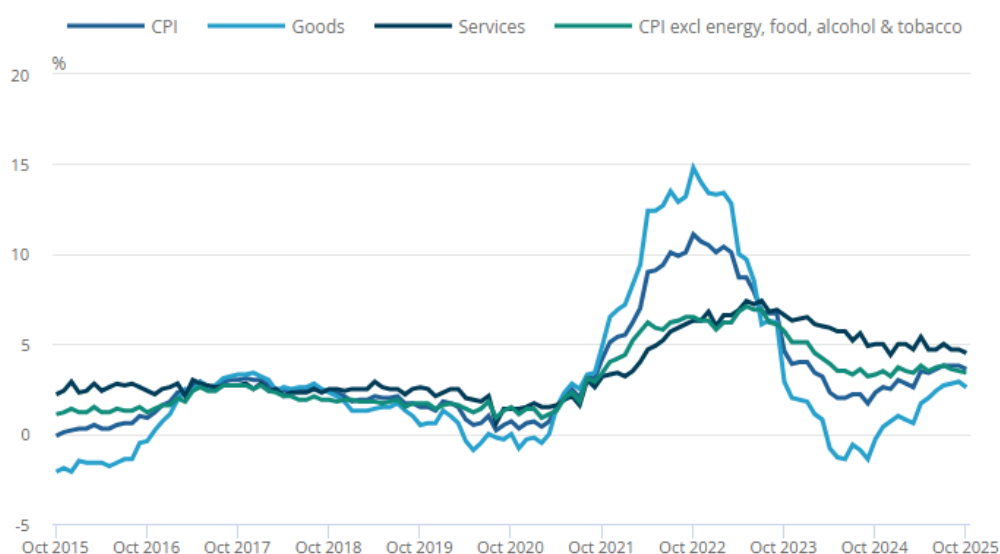
- **UK inflation fell to 3.6 per cent in the year to October**, driven mainly by lower rises in gas and electricity prices. The Office for National Statistics said hotel prices also fell, while food inflation picked up.

- **This was the first cooling in the inflation rate for five months**, declining from a peak of 3.8 per cent over July, August and September.
- **Although the rate of inflation remains well above the Bank of England's 2 per cent target, the decline this month may smooth the path to interest rate cuts**, following interest rates being held at four per cent earlier in the month.

Core CPI annual inflation rate last lower in December

2024

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



Source: Consumer price inflation from the Office for National Statistics

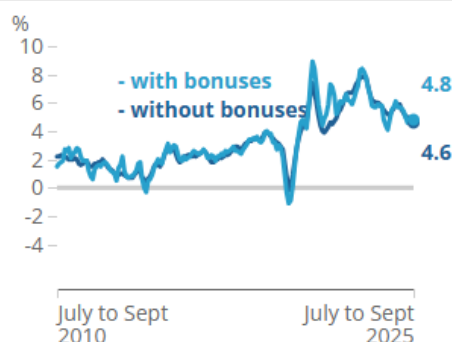
- At the same time, **we are seeing annual real terms growth in wages continue to steadily decline.**
- Annual growth in employees' average earnings in Great Britain for regular earnings (excluding bonuses) was 4.6%, and for total earnings (including bonuses) was 4.8% in July to September 2025.
- **Annual growth in real terms, adjusted for inflation using the Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH), was 0.5% for regular pay and 0.7% for total pay, in July to September 2025.**
- **Annual growth in real terms, adjusted for inflation using the Consumer Prices Index excluding owner occupiers' housing costs (CPI), was 0.8% for regular pay and 1.0% for total pay, in July to September 2025.**

Nominal Earnings

Average Weekly Earnings annual growth rates - nominal pay

Nominal annual growth rate for regular pay and total pay was down on the previous period.

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

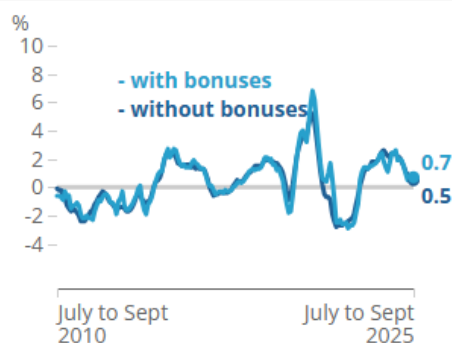


Real Earnings CPIH

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

The real annual growth rate for regular pay and total pay was down on the previous period.

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

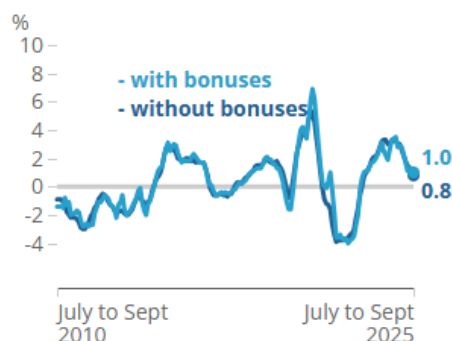


Real Earnings CPI

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

The real annual growth rate for regular pay and total pay was down on the previous period.

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



- There were an estimated 39,000 working days lost because of labour disputes across the UK in September 2025.

Business Conditions

- The latest results from Wave 144 of the **Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS)**, which was live from 3 to 16 November 2025, suggest that business conditions continue to be challenging.
- Around one in seven (14%) trading businesses reported that their **turnover had increased in October 2025** compared with the previous calendar month, which is down 3 percentage points from September 2025; 26% reported their **turnover had decreased**, which is broadly stable with September.
- 14% of trading businesses **expect their turnover to increase in December 2025**, which is broadly stable compared with expectations for November; 26% of trading businesses reported that they **expect their turnover to decrease** in December, which is up 6

percentage points from November but is in line with movements seen around this time in previous years.

- **Economic uncertainty remained the most reported challenge affecting turnover** for trading businesses in early November 2025, at 29%; **the most reported challenge for businesses with 10 or more employees was cost of labour** (34%), though this has fallen 7 percentage points since peaking in early April.
- Nearly a quarter (24%) of trading businesses reported an **increase in the prices of goods or services bought** in October 2025 when compared with the previous month, which is up 2 percentage points from September but broadly stable with August; 8% reported an **increase in the prices of goods or services sold**, which is broadly stable since May.
- 16% of businesses with 10 or more employees reported in early November 2025 that they were **experiencing worker shortages**, which is down 2 percentage points from early October 2025 and is the lowest proportion recorded since this question was introduced in October 2021.
- **Falling demand of goods and services (16%) was the most reported main concern for businesses when looking ahead to December 2025**, which has been broadly stable since September; 26% of businesses reported they had no concerns, which is down 2 percentage points from November.
- The latest business insolvencies data shows that **in October 2025 there were a total of 2,131 company insolvencies in England and Wales, 17% higher than the number registered in the previous year (1,828 in October 2024), and 9% higher than the number registered three years previously (1,956 in October 2022)**. The main concern around company and individual insolvencies are associated issues such as mental health and homelessness.

Labour Market

- 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: ▼ -32,000

Annual change: ▼ -180,000

The number of payrolled employees continued to fall.

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

millions

35 -

30 -



July-2014

Oct-2025

Employment rate

Employment rate (all aged 16 to 64)

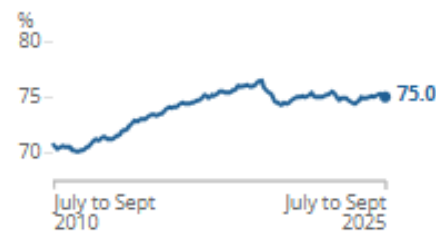
Quarterly change: ▼-0.2pps

Since Dec-Feb 2020: ▼-1.4pps

The employment rate is down on the quarter but up on the year, and 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+)

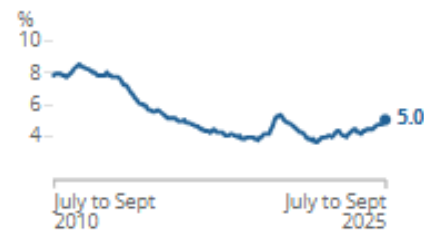
Quarterly change: ▲0.3pps

Since Dec-Feb 2020: ▲1pps

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)

Quarterly change: ◀▶ 0.0pps

Since Dec-Feb 2020: ▲0.6pps

The economic inactivity rate is largely unchanged on the quarter but down the year, and 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

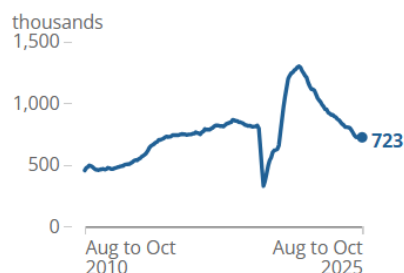
Number of job vacancies

Quarterly change: ▲2,000

Annual change: ▼-99,000

Vacancies were broadly unchanged on the quarter.

Source: Vacancy Survey from the Office for National Statistics



- **Estimates for payrolled employees in the UK fell by 117,000 (0.4%) between September 2024 and September 2025 and decreased by 32,000 (0.1%) between August 2025 and September 2025.**
- When looking at July to September 2025, the period comparable with our Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimates, the number of payrolled employees fell by 109,000 (0.4%) over the year, and by 26,000 (0.1%) over the quarter.
- The early estimate of payrolled employees for October 2025 decreased by 180,000 (0.6%) on the year, and by 32,000 (0.1%) on the month, to 30.3 million. The October 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 would advise additional caution when interpreting survey change measures. ONS recommend using LFS estimates as part of our 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 75.0% in July to September 2025. This is down in the latest quarter but above estimates of a year ago.
- The **UK unemployment rate** for people aged 16 years and over was estimated at 5.0% in July to September 2025. This is up in the latest quarter and above estimates of a year ago.
- The **UK economic inactivity rate** for people aged 16 to 64 years was estimated at 21.0% in July to September 2025. This is largely unchanged in the latest quarter but below estimates of a year ago.
- The **UK Claimant Count** for October 2025 increased on the month but decreased on the year to an estimated 1.696 million.
- The estimated number of **vacancies in the UK** are broadly unchanged on the quarter; early estimates suggest a small increase of just 2,000 (0.2%) vacancies to 723,000 in August to October 2025.
- The number of **people claiming Universal Credit in the UK has risen in the past year by**


one million to a record high of 8.3 million. This surge is linked to higher unemployment and economic pressures, prompting concerns about the strain on welfare systems and the need for policy responses.

- **Almost a million young people are still out of work, education or training**, according to new Office for National Statistics data. The number of NEETs - those aged 16-24 who are unemployed or economically inactive in the UK - had fallen slightly to 946,000 between July and September, down from 948,000 in the three months before.

Housing

- **The number of new homes in England has fallen to its lowest level for nearly a decade.** The Government has promised to build 1.5 million new homes in five years, an average of 300,000 homes per year, but official figures show only 208,600 were created in England in 2024/25, down 6 per cent from 221,409 the previous year.

Conclusion

- In conclusion, the **Chancellor has delivered her much-anticipated Autumn Budget** with a range of measures impacting households and businesses across Staffordshire.
 - The **budget comes at a time when there has been a slowing in GDP growth and the UK economy shrunk in September** due to a drop in manufacturing, and there are real concerns that any economic growth over coming months will be limited at best.
 - It is **positive that inflation fell in October**, but it is **still almost double the Bank's target contributing to weaker economic growth**. At the same time, **real wage growth continues to come down and the cost-of-living remains a challenge for many**. If inflation has reached a peak and continues to decline it may signal interest rate cuts which would benefit those struggling with costs.
 - 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 loosen, with pay growth forecast to slow**. It is concerning that this month's labour market figures show that **payrolled employees and employment have continued to decline, while the level of unemployment has increased to the highest level since 2020 and economic inactivity has stopped falling**. **This all comes at a time when job vacancies have seen a long-term decline**, with the **challenging economic conditions meaning more businesses have reduced recruitment and made redundancies, therefore it will be more challenging for those looking for work to find work**.
 - 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 the pandemic. 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, such as the new Institute of Technology, 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 October 2025, which shows the number of new companies and individuals who are unable to pay debts and enter a formal insolvency procedure.

Company Insolvencies

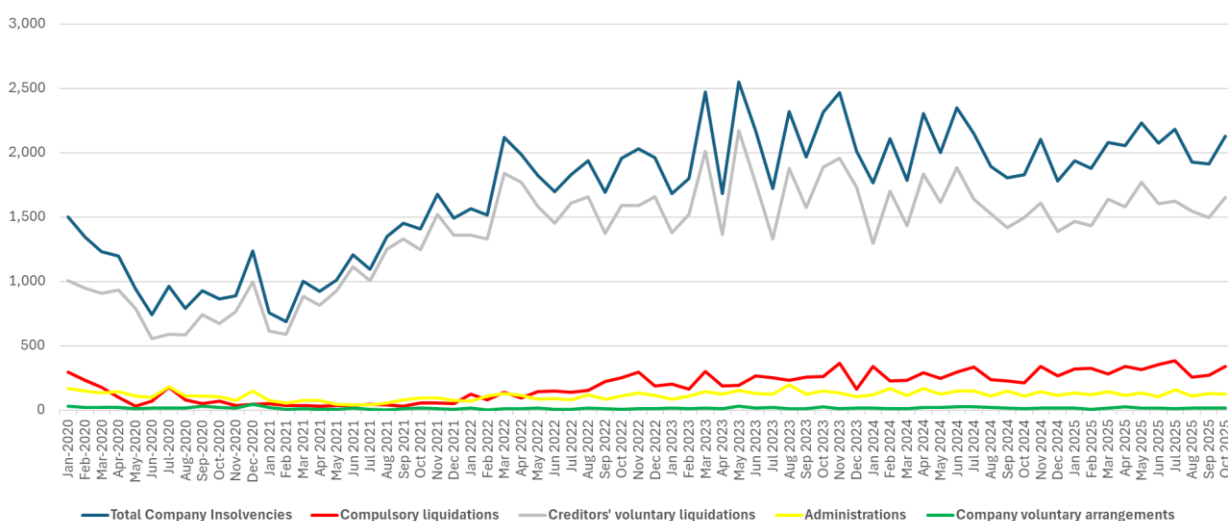
In October 2025 there were a total of 2,131 company insolvencies in England and Wales. The overall number of **company insolvencies** are **17% higher than the number registered in the previous year (1,828 in October 2024), and 9% higher than the number registered three years previously (1,956 in October 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 339 compulsory liquidations in October 2025, 61% higher than the number in October 2024, and 35% higher than in October 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 October 2025 there were 1,651 Creditors' Voluntary Liquidations (CVLs), 10% higher than October 2024, and 4% higher than October 2022. Numbers of administrations are 16% higher than three years previously in October 2022, Company Voluntary Arrangements (CVAs) are 240% higher than three years previously in October 2022, but numbers are low.

Company insolvencies between November 2024 and October 2025 are 1% lower compared to a year earlier, representing 174 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, October 2025 - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/company-insolvencies-october-2025)

The sectors to have seen the largest number of company insolvencies between October 2024 and September 2025 continue to be the Construction sector (3,933), Wholesale & Retail sector (3,749), and Accommodation & Food Service sector (3,370). Levels are below those seen for the same period the previous year for the Construction sector -8% lower, the Wholesale & Retail sector -1% lower, and the Accommodation & Food sector -9% lower than levels a year earlier. Overall, for this period company insolvencies by industry are -4% lower. It is positive to see improvements overall across sectors.

Individual Insolvencies

There were **11,399 total individual insolvencies in October 2025**, which was 13% higher than in October 2024, and 8% higher than in October 2022.

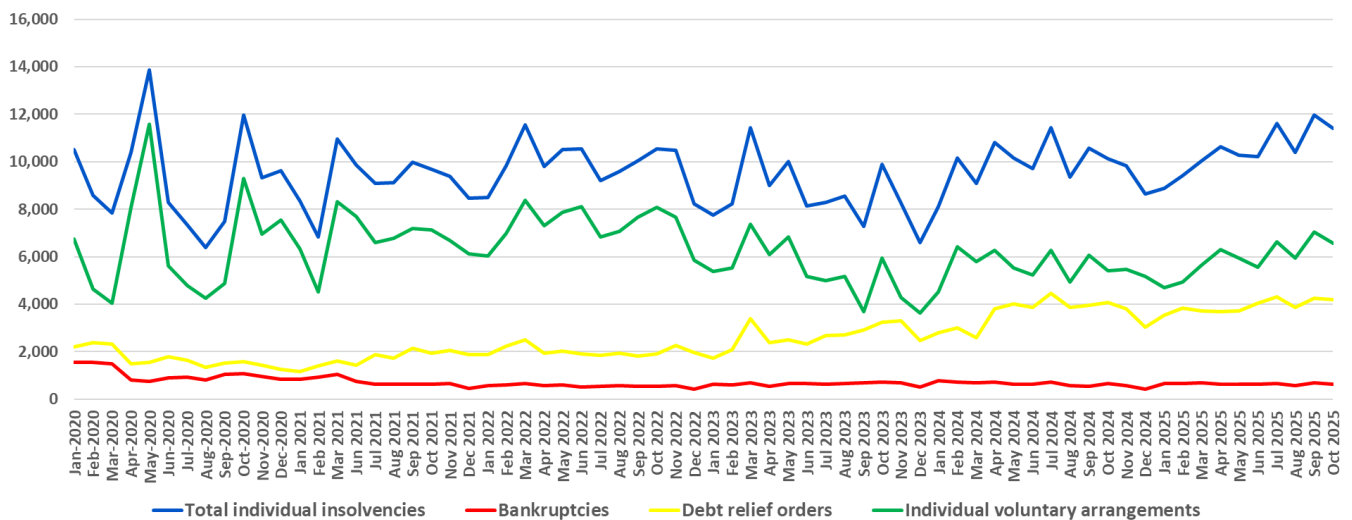
For individuals, **638 bankruptcies were registered in October 2025**, 1% lower than in October 2024, and 16% higher than in October 2022.

There were **4,204 Debt Relief Orders (DROs) in October 2025**, 4% higher than in October 2024, and 122% higher than in October 2022.

There were **6,557 Individual Voluntary Arrangements (IVAs) registered in October 2025**, which was 21% higher than in October 2024, but 19% lower than in October 2022.

Total Individual Insolvencies between November 2024 and October 2025 are 8% higher than the same period a year earlier, representing an increase of 8,894.

Individual Insolvencies in England and Wales



Source: Insolvency Service

There were **7,701 Breathing Space registrations in October 2025, which is 1% lower than the number registered in October 2024.** 7,571 were Standard Breathing Space registrations, which is 1% lower and 130 were Mental Health Breathing Space registrations, which is 21% higher than October 2024.

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

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



Claimant Count²

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

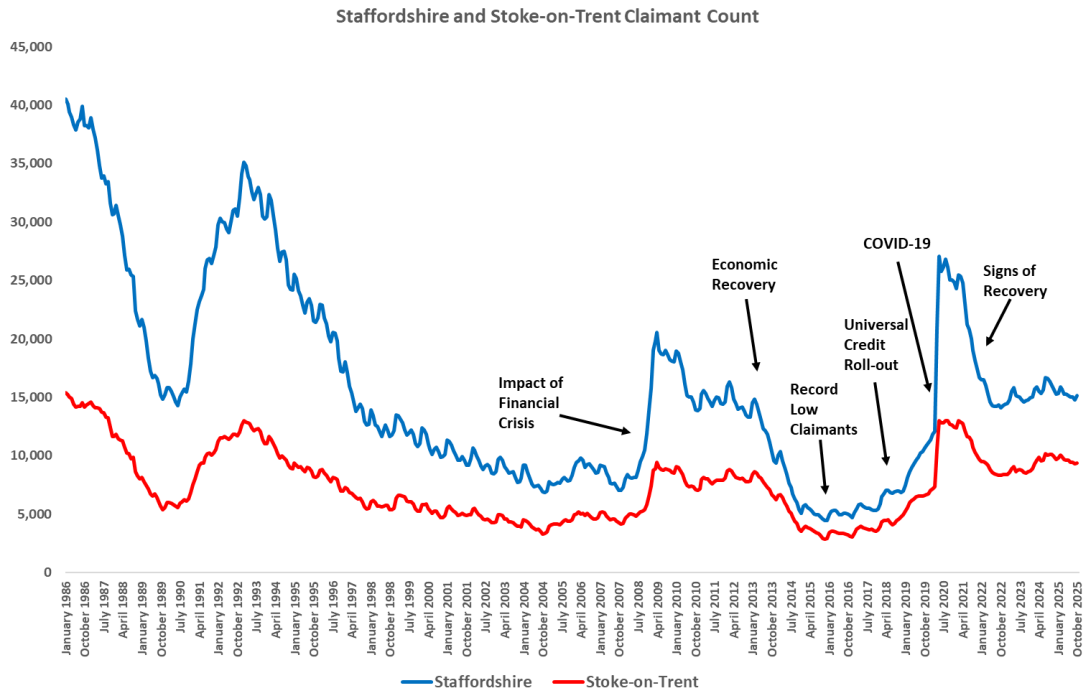
Claimant Count (Universal Credit) Statistics: October 2025

Area	Claimant Count Rate (October 2024)	Claimant Count Rate (September 2025)	Claimant Count Rate ¹ (October 2025)	Number of Claimants (October 2025)	Annual Change in Claimants (Numbers)	Annual Change in Claimants (%)
England	4.2	4.0	4.1	1,485,020	-51,215	-3.3%
West Midlands	5.6	5.3	5.4	202,475	-8,245	-3.9%
Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent	3.7	3.4	3.5	24,505	-1,630	-6.2%
Birmingham	10.5	10.2	10.3	78,220	-1,425	-1.8%
Sandwell	7.3	6.8	7.0	15,260	-715	-4.5%
Wolverhampton	7.8	7.0	7.0	11,945	-1,315	-9.9%
Walsall	6.5	5.9	6.0	10,545	-860	-7.5%
Coventry	5.8	5.6	5.7	13,645	-85	-0.6%
Stoke-on-Trent	6.2	5.7	5.7	9,355	-745	-7.4%
Dudley	5.2	4.7	4.8	9,490	-715	-7.0%
Telford and Wrekin	3.9	3.9	3.9	4,725	30	0.6%
Solihull	3.7	3.6	3.7	4,745	5	0.1%
Worcestershire	3.3	2.9	3.0	11,030	-965	-8.0%
Warwickshire	2.8	2.8	2.9	10,925	165	1.5%
Staffordshire	2.9	2.7	2.8	15,150	-885	-5.5%
Herefordshire, County of	2.9	2.6	2.7	2,895	-285	-9.0%
Shropshire	2.6	2.3	2.4	4,540	-460	-9.2%
East Staffordshire	3.7	3.4	3.4	2,695	-255	-8.6%
Tamworth	3.3	3.2	3.3	1,650	5	0.3%
Cannock Chase	3.4	3.0	3.1	1,970	-205	-9.4%
Newcastle-under-Lyme	3.0	2.9	2.9	2,365	-35	-1.5%
South Staffordshire	2.8	2.4	2.6	1,725	-100	-5.5%
Stafford	2.6	2.4	2.4	2,020	-200	-9.0%
Lichfield	2.3	2.2	2.3	1,505	-15	-1.0%
Staffordshire Moorlands	2.4	2.1	2.2	1,220	-80	-6.2%

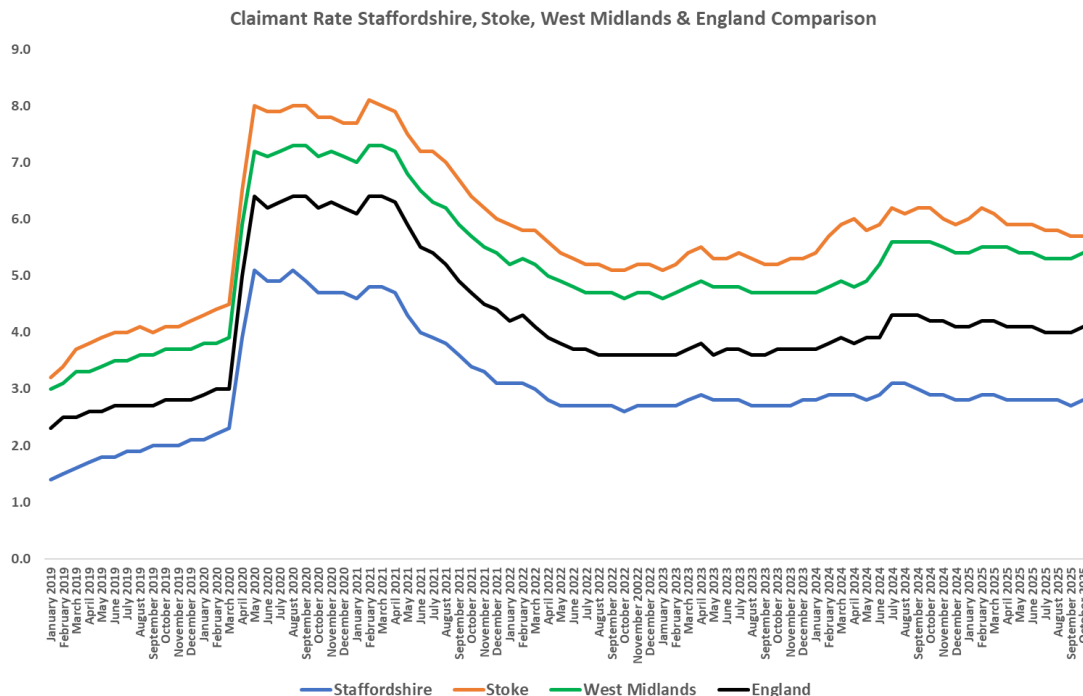
¹ The claimant rate is the proportion of the working age population claiming Universal Credit

- The **claimant count in Staffordshire currently stands at 15,150, this is 885 fewer claimants than at the same time last year.** This is equivalent to a -5.5% annual reduction which is much higher than the reductions seen both regionally (-3.9%) and nationally (-3.3%)
- The **claimant rate in Staffordshire is currently 2.8%** of the working age population, which is **lower than the 2.9% rate seen a year earlier.**
- The number of **claimants in Stoke-on-Trent stands at 9,355**, which is 745 lower than a year earlier, and the **claimant rate has decreased from 6.2% the previous year to 5.7%.**

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



- The **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 decreased from 5.6% the previous year, and lower than the average for England of 4.1% which also decreased from 4.2% the previous year.**



- **It is important to note that not all claimants will be out of work and should 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.
- **The majority of Staffordshire districts have seen a decline in the number of claimants over the last year.**
- **All districts have a lower claimant rate than both the regional and national rates.** The highest claimant rate at 3.4 is in East Staffordshire. Staffordshire Moorlands has the lowest claimant rate of 2.2%.
- 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.

Youth Claimant Count

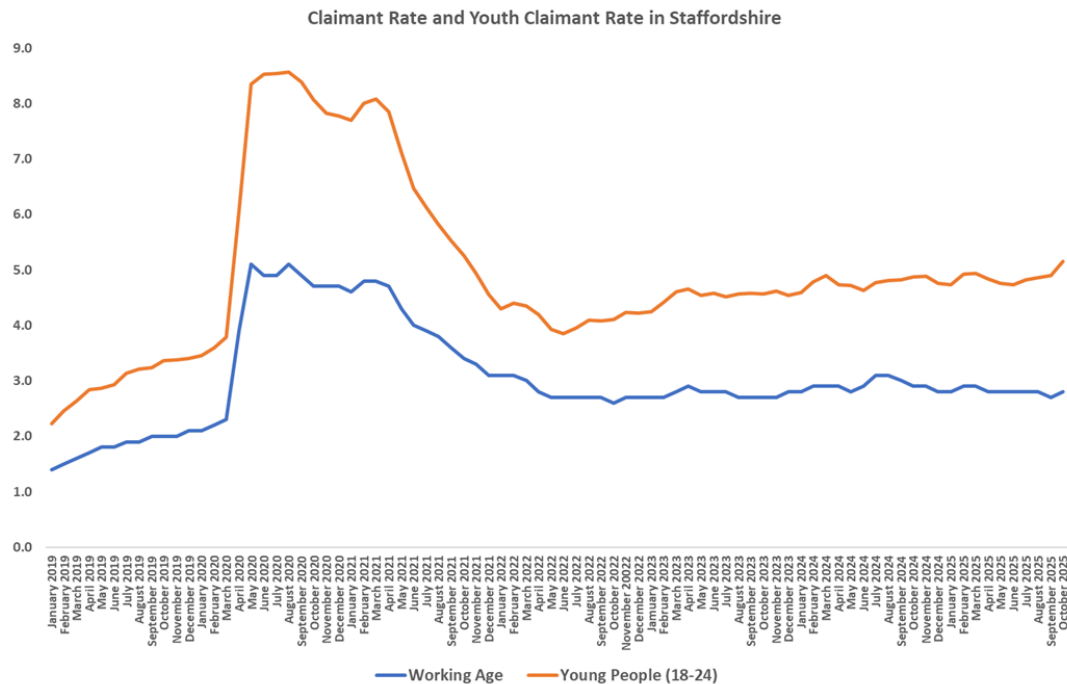
Youth Claimant Count (Universal Credit) Statistics: October 2025

Area	Youth Claimant Count Rate (October 2024)	Youth Claimant Count Rate (September 2025)	Youth Claimant Count Rate ¹ (October 2025)	Number of Youth Claimants (October 2025)	Annual Change in Youth Claimants (Numbers)	Annual Change in Youth Claimants (%)
England	5.2	5.5	5.7	281,845	26,975	10.6%
West Midlands	7.1	7.6	7.9	41,475	3,950	10.5%
Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent	5.7	5.7	5.9	5,115	210	4.3%
Birmingham	9.5	10.5	10.8	15,650	1,890	13.7%
Wolverhampton	10.4	10.1	10.4	2,370	-5	-0.2%
Sandwell	9.1	10.0	10.2	3,155	345	12.3%
Wallsall	9.8	9.7	10.0	2,370	40	1.7%
Dudley	7.7	8.3	8.6	2,080	235	12.7%
Stoke-on-Trent	7.8	8.0	7.9	1,880	25	1.3%
Solihull	6.2	7.0	7.3	1,075	160	17.5%
Telford and Wrekin	6.4	7.0	7.3	1,110	135	13.8%
Coventry	5.0	5.5	5.7	2,680	325	13.8%
Worcestershire	5.1	5.2	5.4	2,230	135	6.4%
Staffordshire	4.9	4.9	5.2	3,235	180	5.9%
Herefordshire, County of	4.4	4.8	5.0	550	70	14.6%
Warwickshire	4.1	4.6	4.9	2,200	370	20.2%
Shropshire	4.2	4.2	4.4	900	45	5.3%
Tamworth	7.1	6.7	7.1	385	0	0.0%
Cannock Chase	6.5	6.4	6.5	450	0	0.0%
South Staffordshire	5.2	5.5	6.0	415	55	15.3%
East Staffordshire	5.1	5.2	5.4	470	20	4.4%
Stafford	5.1	4.8	5.2	425	5	1.2%
Lichfield	3.9	3.9	4.4	310	35	12.7%
Newcastle-under-Lyme	3.8	4.0	4.1	555	40	7.8%
Staffordshire Moorlands	3.6	3.8	3.9	225	20	9.8%

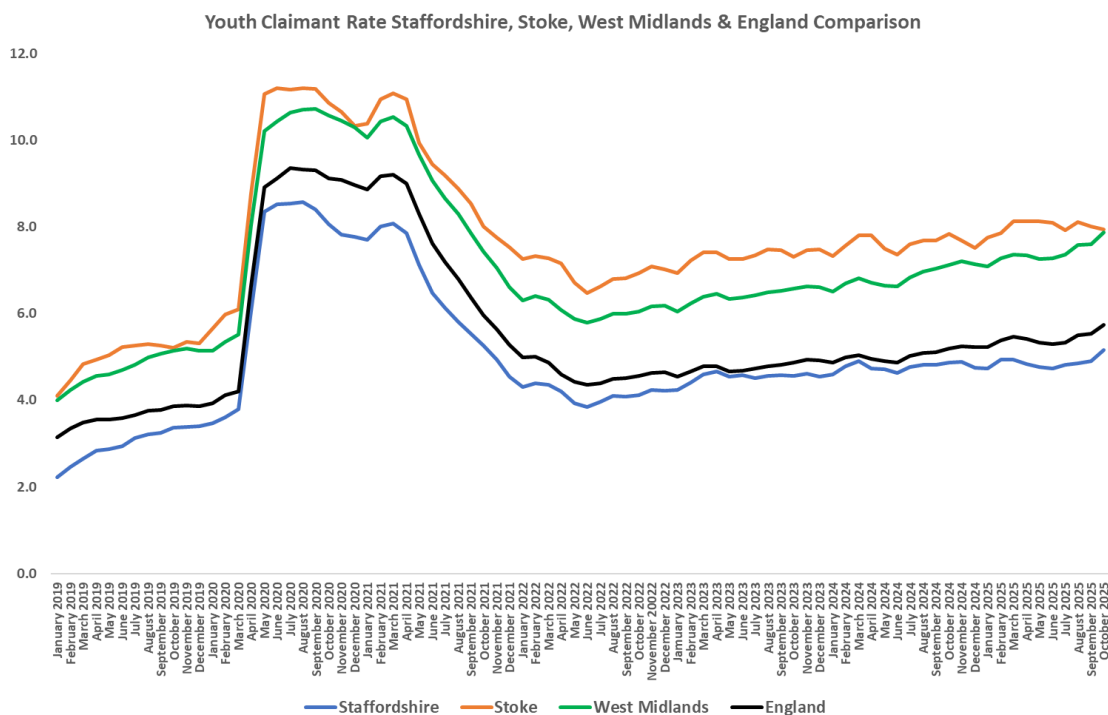
¹ The claimant rate is the proportion of the working age population claiming Universal Credit

- The **youth claimant count in Staffordshire currently stands at 3,235 this is 180 more youth claimants than at the same time last year.** This is equivalent to a 5.9% annual increase, although this is much smaller than the increases seen both regionally (10.5%) and nationally (10.6%).

- The **youth claimant rate in Staffordshire is currently 5.2% of the 18-24 population, which is an increase from 4.9% a year earlier.** This is a concerning trend seen both regionally and nationally.



- The number of **youth claimants in Stoke-on-Trent stands at 1,880**, which is 25 higher than a year earlier, with **the rate increasing to 7.9% from 7.8% a year earlier.**
- It is important to note that **Staffordshire continues to be lower than the national rate of 5.7%, which increased from 5.2% and far lower than the regional rate of 7.9% which increased from 7.1% over the past year.**



- The **majority of districts in Staffordshire have seen small increases in the number of youth claimants over the last year.**
- **All Staffordshire districts have a youth claimant rate below the regional average, but Tamworth, Cannock Chase and South Staffordshire have rates above the national average.**
- 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

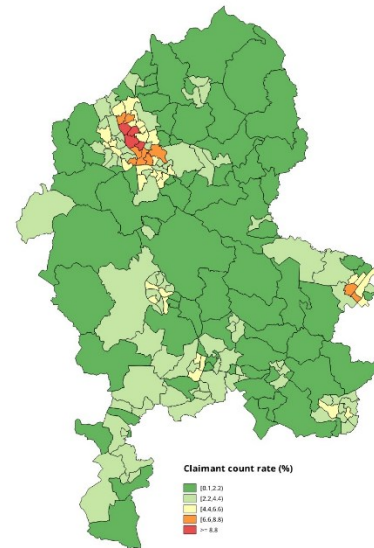
The following maps and tables provide the latest breakdown of the claimant count by wards in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent.

Claimant Count Rate October 2025

Of the 201 wards in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent, 51 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, sixteen were in Stoke-on-Trent with the highest rates in Joiner's Square: 11.0%/500; Etruria & Hanley: 10.3%/555; Moorcroft: 9.7%/360; Burslem Central: 8.8%/440; Tunstall: 8.7%/370 total claimants.

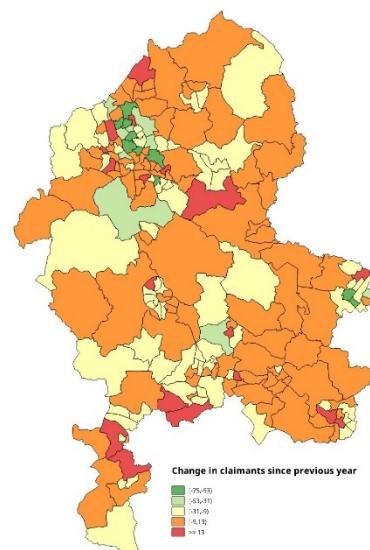
In Staffordshire, three wards in East Staffs had the highest claimant rate including Anglesey: 7.5%/405; Shobnall: 6.7%/365; Burton: 6.6%/200; and also, Knutton in Newcastle-under-Lyme: 6.4%/130 total claimants.



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Annual Change in Claimant Count

Of the ten wards in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent with the highest annual change in the number of claimants two wards were in Tamworth (Castle: 35 increase to 255; Belgrave: 30 increase to 185); three wards in Newcastle-under-Lyme (Knutton: 25 increase to 130; Bradwell: 25 increase to 145; Westlands: 20 increase to 115); Essington (South Staffs): 25 increase to 125; Boney Hay & Central (Lichfield): 20 increase to 105; two wards in Staffordshire Moorlands (Biddulph North: 20 increase to 60; Checkley: 20 increase to 65; Stretton (East Staffordshire): 20 increase to 75).



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

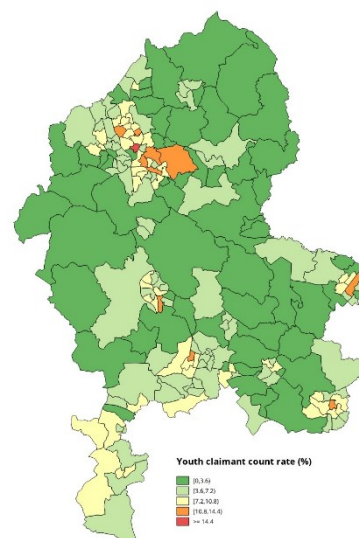
The following maps and tables provide the latest breakdown of the youth claimant count by wards in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent.

Youth Claimant Count Rate October 2025

Of the 201 wards in Staffordshire & Stoke-Trent, 90 were above the England average 5.7% 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, five were in Stoke-on-Trent including Joiner's Square: 18.1%/135; Fenton East: 13.4%/65; Sneyd Green: 12.3%/50; Broadway & Longton East: 11.2%/40; Burslem Central: 10.8%/80.

In Staffordshire, the wards with the highest claimant rate were Cannock North (Cannock Chase): 11.9%/60; Caverswall (S. Moorlands): 11.8%/10; Penside (Stafford): 11.3%/25; Burton (East Staffordshire): 11.1%/45 and Bolehall (Tamworth): 10.9%/50.

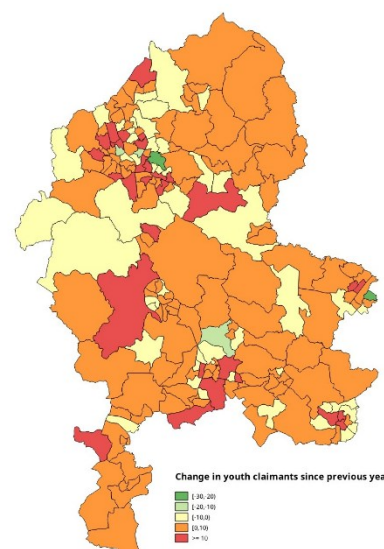


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Annual Change in Youth Claimant Count

Of the ten wards in Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent with the highest annual change in the number of youth claimants, two were in Stoke-on-Trent including Broadway & Longton East (20 increase to 40); Sneyd Green (15 increase to 50).

In Staffordshire, the wards with the highest annual change in the number of youth claimants, two wards were in Newcastle-under-Lyme (Bradwell: 20 increase to 45; Holditch & Chesterton: 20 increase to 50); two wards in East Staffs (Eton Park: 15 increase to 55; Horninglow: 15 increase to 45); Essington (S.Staffs): 15 increase to 35; Castle (Tamworth): 15 increase to 50; Boney Hay & Central (Lichfield): 15 increase to 25; Cannock East (Cannock Chase): 10 increase to 45.

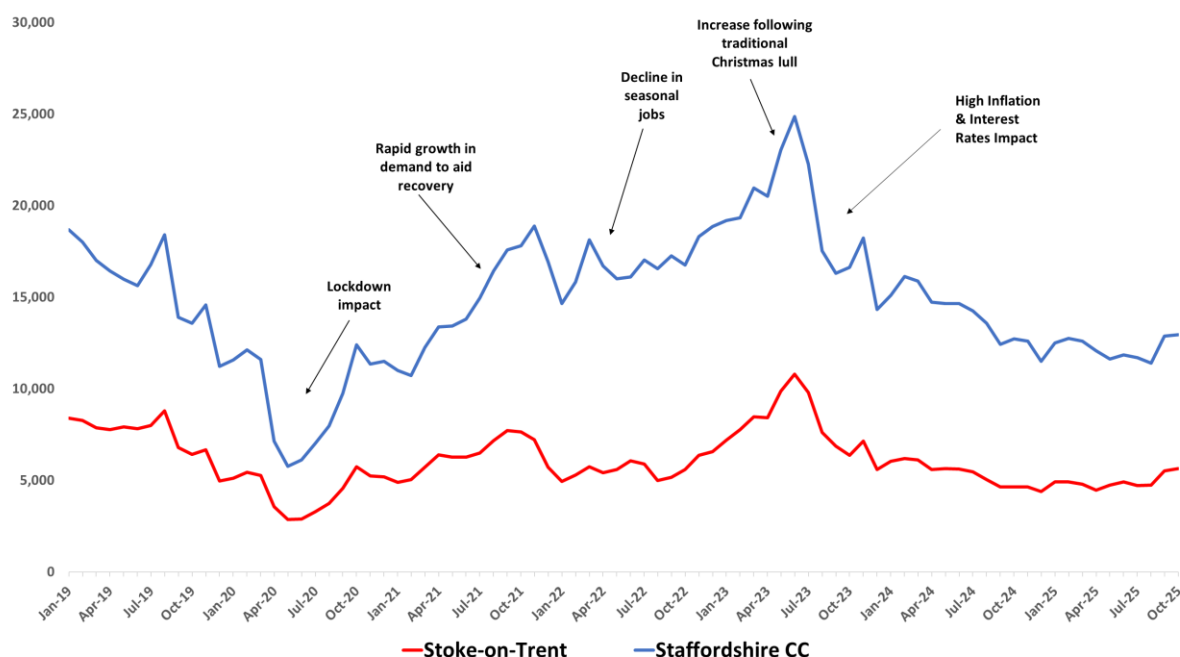


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Job Vacancies³

- Staffordshire saw a 2% increase in the number of available job vacancies between October 2024 and October 2025, lower than increases seen regionally and nationally to a total of 12,900⁴. Job vacancies in Staffordshire are lower than the number of work-related benefit claimants. Stoke-on-Trent saw a 22% increase in job vacancies over the past year to a total of 5,600 which is significantly lower than the number of claimants.
- Across the region over the past year there was a 5% increase, and nationally there was a 13% increase in the number of job vacancies.
- The chart below indicates a general declining trend overall since 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. 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.

Annual Trends in recruitment

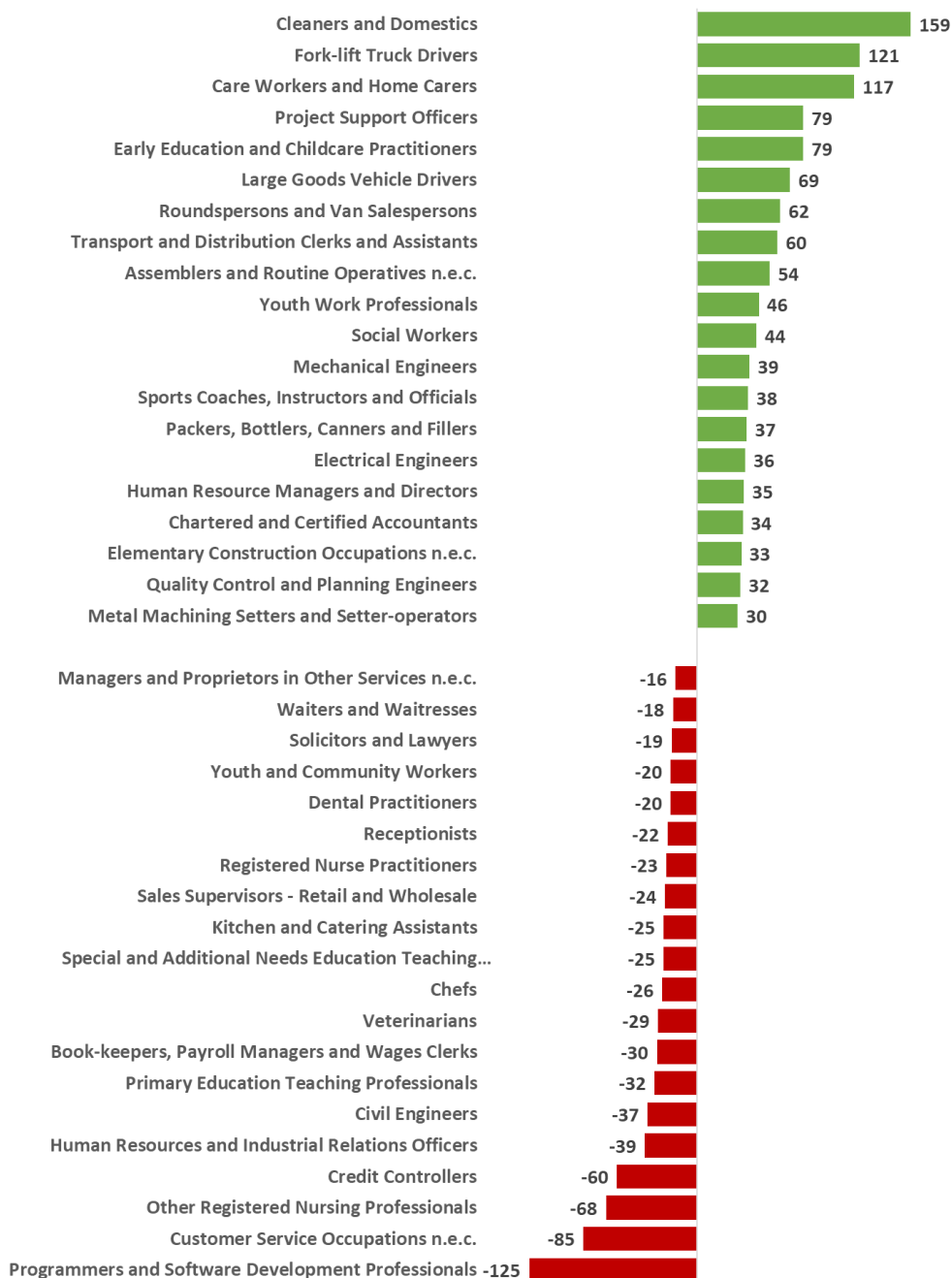
- The majority of occupational groups saw an increase in vacancies over the past year. 'Process, Plant & Machine Operatives' occupations saw the largest increase of 26% whilst 'Administrative & Secretarial' occupations saw a decrease of 7%.

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.

- The occupations to see the largest year-on-year increases include Cleaners & Domestics; Fork-lift Truck Drivers; Care Workers & Home Carers; Project Support Officers; Early Education & Childcare Practitioners; Large Goods Vehicle Drivers; Roundspersons & Van Salespersons; Transport & Distribution Clerks & Assistants; Assemblers & Routine Operatives; Youth Work Professionals; Social Workers; Mechanical Engineers; Sports Coaches, Instructors & Officials; Packers, Bottlers, Canners & Fillers; Electrical Engineers; HR Managers & Directors; Chartered & Certified Accountants; Elementary Construction; Quality Control & Planning Engineers; Metal Machining Setters & Setter Operators.

Top 20 occupations increasing and top 20 declining between Oct24 and Oct 2025 in Staffordshire & Stoke



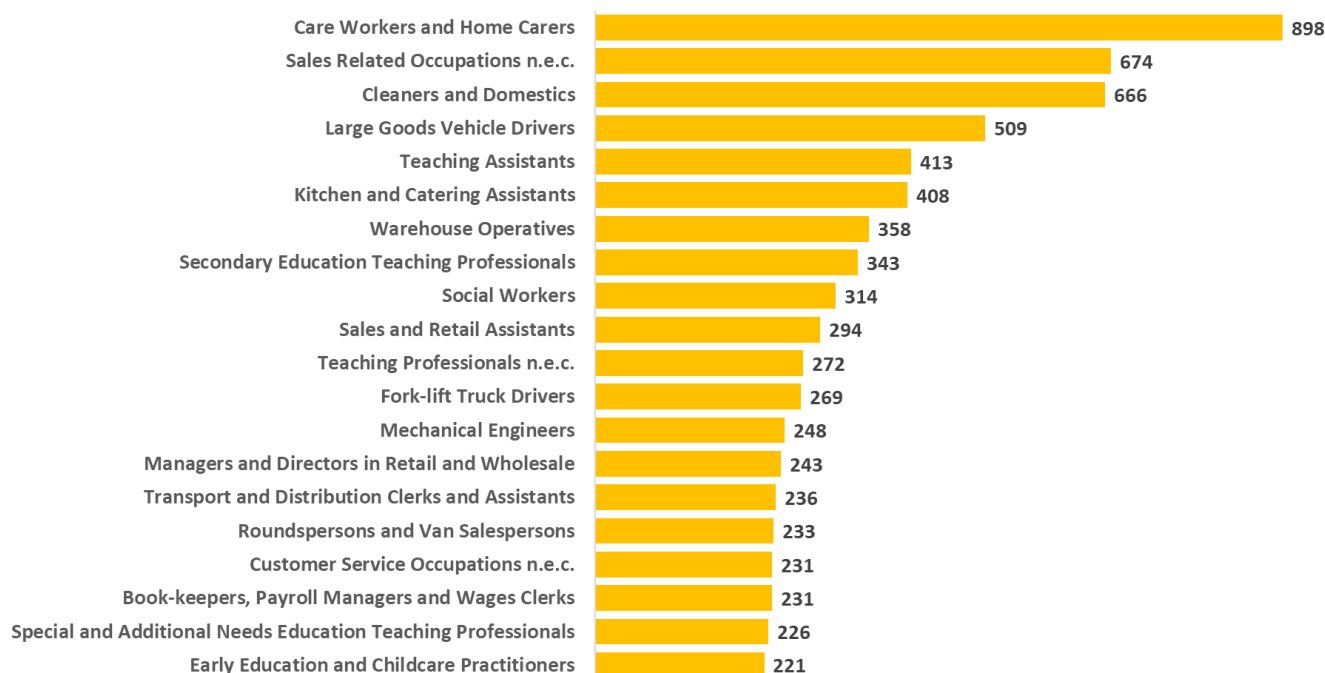
- The occupations to see the largest year-on-year decrease include Programmers & Software Development Professionals; Customer Service; Other Registered Nursing Professionals; Credit Controllers; HR & Industrial Relations Officers; Civil Engineers; Primary Education Teaching Professionals; Book-Keepers, Payroll Managers & Wages Clerks; Veterinarians; Chefs; SEND Teaching professionals; Kitchen & Catering Assistants; Wholesale & Retail Sales Supervisors; Registered Nurse Practitioners; Receptionists; Dental Practitioners; Youth & Community Workers; Solicitors & Lawyers; Waiters & Waitresses; Managers & Proprietors in Other Services.

Top Occupations in Demand

- Considering the **top 20 job vacancy occupations in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, 'Care Workers & Home Carers'** roles are the most in demand occupations.
- The following occupations **'Sales Related,' 'Cleaners & Domestics,' 'Large Goods Vehicle Drivers'** also have strong demand.
- In the Education sector there is particularly high demand for **'Teaching Assistants,' 'Secondary Education Teaching Professionals,' '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,' 'Fork-lift Truck Drivers,' 'Transport & Distribution Clerks & Assistants'** and **'Roundspersons & Van Salespersons.'**
- There is high demand in the Health & Social Care sector for **'Social Workers.'**
- Demand for **'Sales & Retail Assistants'** and **'Managers & Directors'** in the Retail and Wholesale sector remain strong.
- There is continued demand in the Engineering sector for **'Mechanical Engineers.'**
- There is strong demand for **'Customer Service'** and **'Book-keepers, Payroll Managers & Wages Clerks'** across business sectors.
- There is also high demand for **'Early Education and Childcare Practitioners.'**



Top 20 occupations in demand in Staffordshire & Stoke during October 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 which will create 8,500 new jobs. **Advanced logistics** within the ecommerce sector continues to drive demand, evidenced by Pets At Home in Stafford recently generating over 750 new jobs and Carlsberg Britvic investing £4 million in a new depot, with plans to create several hundred additional jobs.

