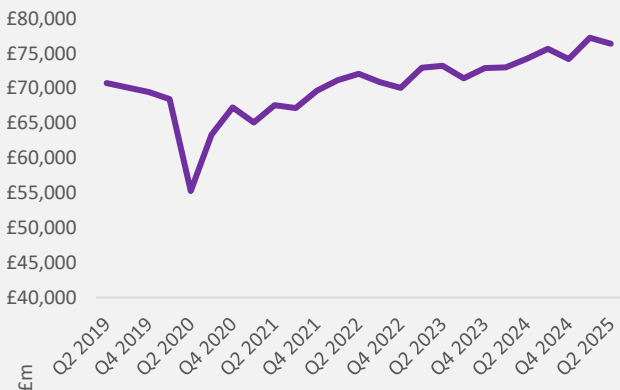


3.0 WISE Annex November 2025

3.1 WMCA Economic Dashboard (Prepared by the EIU)


National

Six Weekly Business Dashboard

Theme	Indicator	June 2024	July 2024	August 2024	September 2024	October 2024	November 2024	December 2024	January 2025	February 2025	March 2025	April 2025	May 2025	June 2025	Trend	Relative to Peer Group¹	Commentary
Business	National Business Investment²  (update due Nov 2025)	£74.2bn (Q2)			£75.7bn (Q3)			£74.2n (Q4)			£77.3bn (Q1)			£76.4bn (Q2)			<p>Revised estimates show UK business investment decreased by 1.1% on the quarter to £76.4bn in Q2 2025 (revised up from 4.0% in the provisional estimate). UK business investment is 3.0% above the level seen in the same quarter a year ago and has increased by 2.3% between 2023 and 2024 (revised up from a 2.0% increase in the previous estimate).</p> <p>Whole economy investment in the UK was 19.3% of GDP in Quarter 2 2025, the second lowest of the G7 nations.</p>

Regional

Monthly / Quarterly Business Dashboard

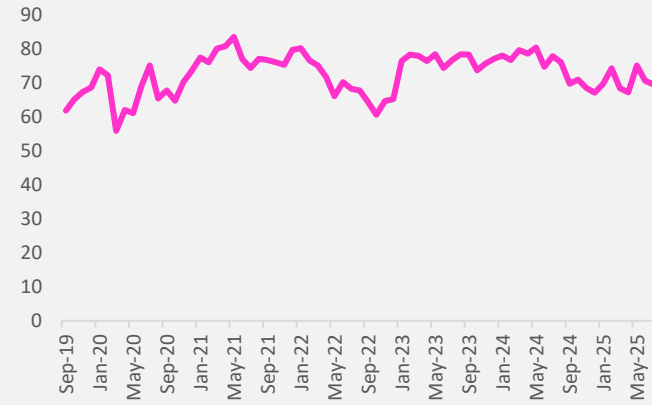
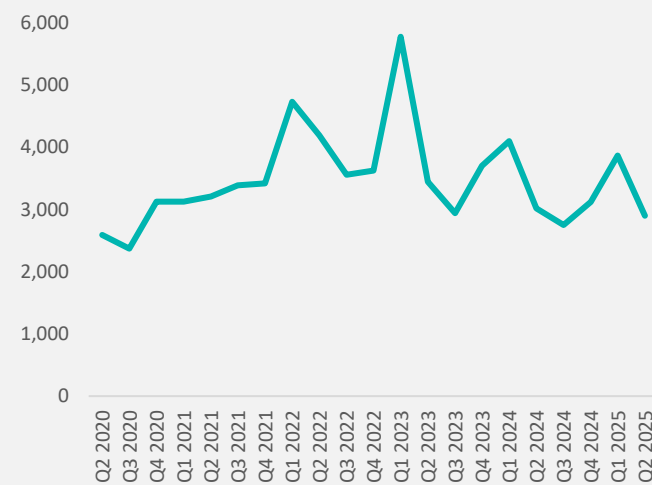
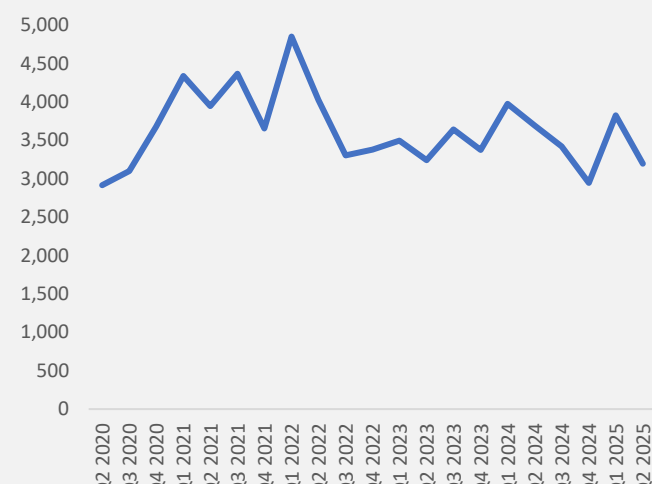
Theme	Indicator	September 2024	October 2024	November 2024	December 2024	January 2025	February 2025	March 2025	April 2025	May 2025	June 2025	July 2025	August 2025	September 2025	Trend	Relative to Peer Group	Commentary
Business	Regional Business Activity Index <sup>3</sup>  (monthly update)	51.2	50.0	49.9	48.9	47.2	48.7	49.6	47.5	50.4	50.9	50.6	51.1	48.1		WM: 6 <sup>th</sup> Lowest UK: 50.1 London: 53.8 (1 <sup>st</sup> ) Northern Ireland: 44.9 (12 <sup>th</sup> )	The West Midlands Business Activity Index decreased from 51.1 in August 2025 to 48.1 in September 2025, the first fall in activity since April 2025. The decline was linked to local firms having a lack of work.

The Dashboard has been updated to reflect the WMCA 7 Met. geography where available.

<sup>1</sup> Comparisons vary depending on geography; Birmingham has been compared to Bristol, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester and Newcastle. Due to data availability, the WM 7 Met. has been either compared to other combined authorities (following what is available Greater London Authority is not always included), (traditional combined authorities are Greater Manchester CA (GMCA), Sheffield City Region, West Yorkshire CA, Liverpool City Region CA, Tees Valley CA, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough CA, West of England CA, North East CA and North of Tyne CA, however for claimants/ ONS labour market activity new CAs are now available meaning the 15 will be – GMCA, South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire, Devon & Torbay, Lancaster, Greater Lincolnshire, Hull & East Yorkshire, Liverpool City Region, Tees Valley, WMCA, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough, West of England, York & North Yorkshire, East Midlands and the North East or NUTS 2 / ITL 2 geography. The West Midlands region has been compared to other regions in the UK. No comparators have been included for UK-wide. The GVA indicator now includes 15 agreed Combined Authorities.

<sup>2</sup> Office for National Statistics (ONS), Business investment in the UK: April to June 2025 Revised results – released September 2025. Please note, in line with ONS National Accounts Revisions Policy, this release contains data that are consistent with the UK National Accounts and the Blue Book 2025, which will be released on 31st October 2025.

<sup>3</sup> NatWest, UK regional growth tracker report– released October 2025

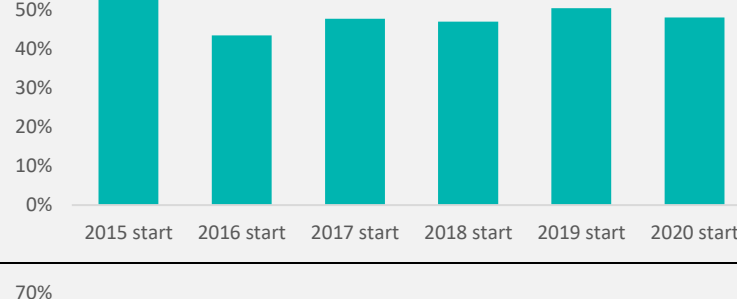
Theme	Indicator	September 2024	October 2024	November 2024	December 2024	January 2025	February 2025	March 2025	April 2025	May 2025	June 2025	July 2025	August 2025	September 2025	Trend	Relative to Peer Group	Commentary										
Business	Regional Future Business Activity Index <sup>4</sup>  (monthly update)	69.8	71.0	68.6	67.2	69.8	74.3	68.5	67.3	75.2	70.7	69.6	74.2	71.4	<div><table><tr><th>Sep 2021</th><th>Sep 2022</th><th>Sep 2023</th><th>Sep 2024</th><th>Sep 2025</th></tr><tr><td>76.8</td><td>64.4</td><td>78.4</td><td>69.8</td><td>71.4</td></tr></table></div>	Sep 2021	Sep 2022	Sep 2023	Sep 2024	Sep 2025	76.8	64.4	78.4	69.8	71.4	WM: Highest Region North East: 69.0 (2 <sup>nd</sup> ) Northern Ireland: 55.4 (12 <sup>th</sup> )	The West Midlands Future Business Activity Index decreased from 74.2 in August 2025 to 71.4 in September 2025. Despite some firms being concerned about budgets, subdued client confidence and US tariffs, in general firms remained optimistic due to reports of new product releases and expansion into new markets.
	Sep 2021	Sep 2022	Sep 2023	Sep 2024	Sep 2025																						
	76.8	64.4	78.4	69.8	71.4																						
WMCA (7 Met.) Enterprise Deaths <sup>5</sup>  (quarterly – update due Oct 2025)	2,750 (Q3)			3,120 (Q4)			3,865 (Q1)				2,900 (Q2)			<div><table><tr><th>Q2 2021</th><th>Q2 2022</th><th>Q2 2023</th><th>Q2 2024</th><th>Q2 2025</th></tr><tr><td>3,205</td><td>4,190</td><td>3,445</td><td>3,015</td><td>2,900</td></tr></table></div>	Q2 2021	Q2 2022	Q2 2023	Q2 2024	Q2 2025	3,205	4,190	3,445	3,015	2,900	WMCA: 2 <sup>nd</sup> Highest CA GMCA: 3,090 (1 <sup>st</sup> ) Tees Valley: 525 (11 <sup>th</sup> )	In Q2 2025, there were 2,900 business deaths in the WMCA area. A decrease of 25.0% when compared to Q1 2025 (UK -11.5%).  Comparing Q2 2025 to Q2 2024 shows a 3.8% decrease in business deaths across the WMCA area (UK -2.4%).	
Q2 2021	Q2 2022	Q2 2023	Q2 2024	Q2 2025																							
3,205	4,190	3,445	3,015	2,900																							
WMCA (7 Met.) Enterprise Births <sup>6</sup>  (quarterly – update due Oct 2025)	3,420 (Q3)			2,945 (Q4)			3,825 (Q1)				3,195 (Q2)			<div><table><tr><th>Q2 2021</th><th>Q2 2022</th><th>Q2 2023</th><th>Q2 2024</th><th>Q2 2025</th></tr><tr><td>3,945</td><td>4,025</td><td>3,240</td><td>3,690</td><td>3,195</td></tr></table></div>	Q2 2021	Q2 2022	Q2 2023	Q2 2024	Q2 2025	3,945	4,025	3,240	3,690	3,195	WMCA: 2 <sup>nd</sup> Highest CA GMCA: 3,660 (1 <sup>st</sup> ) Tees Valley: 640 (11 <sup>th</sup> )	In Q2 2025, there were 3,195 business births in the WMCA area, a decrease of 16.5% when compared to Q1 2025 (UK -12.9%).  Comparing Q2 2025 to Q2 2024 shows a 13.4% decrease in business births across the WMCA area (UK -4.2%).	
Q2 2021	Q2 2022	Q2 2023	Q2 2024	Q2 2025																							
3,945	4,025	3,240	3,690	3,195																							

<sup>4</sup> NatWest, UK regional growth tracker report– released October 2025

<sup>5</sup> ONS, Business demography, quarterly experimental statistics, low-level geographic breakdown, UK – released July 2025.

<sup>6</sup> ONS, Business demography, quarterly experimental statistics, low-level geographic breakdown, UK – released July 2025.

Annual Business Dashboard

Theme	Indicator	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Trend	Relative to Peer Group	Commentary
Business	WMCA (7 Met.) High Growth Enterprises <sup>7</sup>  (annual – update due Nov 2025)	455	415	380	340	345	385		WMCA: 3 <sup>rd</sup> Highest CA GMCA: 585 (1 <sup>st</sup> ) Tees Valley: 95 (11 <sup>th</sup> )	The latest available data for the WMCA area shows that the number of high growth enterprises has increased for the second consecutive year. There was a total of 385 high growth enterprises in the WMCA area in 2023, an increase of 11.6% (+40) since 2022, the UK increased by 19.7%.
	WMCA (7 Met.) Enterprise Births <sup>8</sup>  (annual – update due Nov 2025)	15,785	15,310	14,125	16,550	15,435	14,080		WMCA: 2 <sup>nd</sup> Highest CA GMCA: 14,510 (1 <sup>st</sup> ) Tees Valley: 2,475 (11 <sup>th</sup> )	Enterprise births in the WMCA area decreased by 8.8% (-1,355) since 2022 to 14,080 in 2023. Over this period, the UK decreased by 6.2%.  In 2023, there were 550 fewer enterprise births than deaths.
	WMCA (7 Met.) Enterprise Deaths <sup>9</sup>  (annual – update due Nov 2025)	13,670	12,080	13,830	13,375	14,865	14,630		WMCA: Highest CA GMCA: 14,210 (2 <sup>nd</sup> ) Tees Valley: 2,400 (11 <sup>th</sup> )	Enterprise deaths in the WMCA area decreased by 1.6% (-235) since 2022 to 14,630 in 2023. Over this period, the UK decreased by 11.3%.  In 2023, there were 550 more enterprise deaths than births.
	WMCA (7 Met.) 3 Year Enterprise Survival Rates <sup>10</sup>  (annual – update due Nov 2025)	52.8% (2015 birth)	43.4% (2016 birth)	47.7% (2017 birth)	46.9% (2018 birth)	50.4% (2019 birth)	48.0% (2020 birth)		WMCA: 10 <sup>th</sup> Highest UK: 53.0% York and North Yorkshire: 62.9% (1 <sup>st</sup> ) Liverpool City Region: 47.0% (11 <sup>th</sup> )	Across 1-to-5-year enterprise survival rates, the WMCA performs worse than nationally. Of the 14,125 enterprise births in 2020 in the WMCA area, 48.0% (6,775) were still active after 3 years compared to 53.0% for the UK.
	WM 7 Met. Innovation Active Businesses <sup>11</sup>  (Biennial – update due May 2026)	36.8% (2016-18)		45.0% (2018-20)		31.7% (2020-22)			WM 7 Met.: 8 <sup>th</sup> Lowest/ 40 UK: 36.3% Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire, Wiltshire & Bath/Bristol area: 45.0% (Joint 1 <sup>st</sup> ) Outer London – East & North East: 27.0% (40 <sup>th</sup> )	Trends in the proportion of businesses that are innovation active continues to fluctuate.  Following the national trend (decreasing from 44.9% in 2018-2020 to 36.3% in 2020-22), the WM 7 Met. Area decreased from 45.0% in 2018-20 to 31.7% in 2020-22.

<sup>7</sup> ONS, Business Demography (provisional for 2022), UK 2023 – released November 2024

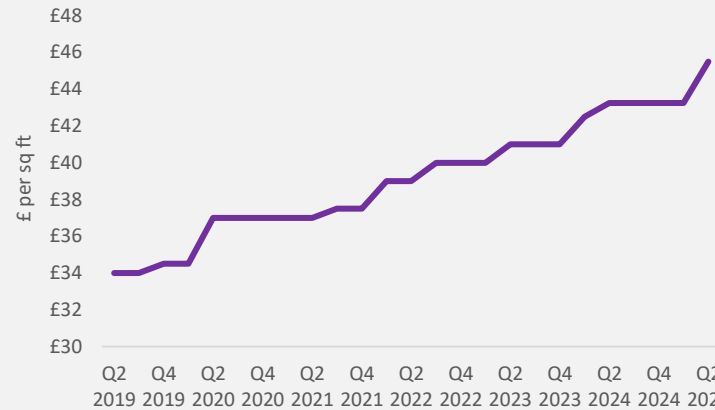
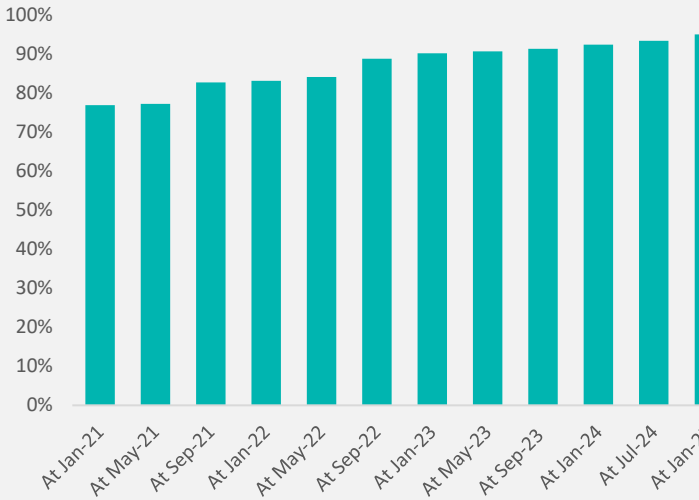
<sup>8</sup> ONS, Business Demography (provisional for 2022), UK 2023 – released November 2024

<sup>9</sup> ONS, Business Demography (provisional for 2022), UK 2023 – released November 2024

<sup>10</sup> ONS, Business Demography (provisional for 2022), UK 2023 – released November 2024

<sup>11</sup> Department for Business and Trade, UK Innovation Survey 2023 – released May 2024

Quarterly Place Dashboard

Theme	Indicator	June 2024	July 2024	August 2024	September 2024	October 2024	November 2024	December 2024	January 2025	February 2025	March 2025	April 2025	May 2025	June 2025	Trend	Relative to Peer Group	Commentary																									
Place	Birmingham City Centre Rent <sup>12</sup>  (Quarterly – update due Nov 2025)	£43.25 Per Sq ft (Q2)			£43.25 Per Sq ft (Q3)			£43.25 Per Sq ft (Q4)			£43.25 Per Sq ft (Q1)			£45.50 Per Sq ft (Q2)	<div><table><tr><th>2021</th><th>2022</th><th>2023</th><th>2024</th><th>2025</th></tr><tr><td>£37.00 Q1</td><td>£39.00 Q1</td><td>£40.00 Q1</td><td>£42.50 Q1</td><td>£43.25 Q1</td></tr><tr><td>£37.00 Q2</td><td>£39.00 Q2</td><td>£41.00 Q2</td><td>£43.25 Q2</td><td>£45.50 Q2</td></tr><tr><td>£37.50 Q3</td><td>£40.00 Q3</td><td>£41.00 Q3</td><td>£43.25 Q3</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>£37.50 Q4</td><td>£40.00 Q4</td><td>£41.00 Q4</td><td>£43.25 Q4</td><td></td></tr></table></div>	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	£37.00 Q1	£39.00 Q1	£40.00 Q1	£42.50 Q1	£43.25 Q1	£37.00 Q2	£39.00 Q2	£41.00 Q2	£43.25 Q2	£45.50 Q2	£37.50 Q3	£40.00 Q3	£41.00 Q3	£43.25 Q3		£37.50 Q4	£40.00 Q4	£41.00 Q4	£43.25 Q4		Birmingham: 3 <sup>rd</sup> Highest / 9 Bristol: £49.00 (1 <sup>st</sup> ) Cardiff: £28.00 (9 <sup>th</sup> )	Prime rental growth continued despite an increase in vacancy, with quarterly rental growth of 0.9% recorded across the Big Nine. This was driven by prime rents hitting £45.50 per sq ft in Birmingham and £49.00 per sq ft in Bristol, representing quarterly increases of 5.2% and 2.1% respectively. Occupiers continue to be drawn to best in-class developments with strong sustainability and wellbeing credentials like Three Chamberlain Square, Birmingham, which has attracted global occupiers including EY, CBRE, and Forvis Mazars.
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025																																					
£37.00 Q1	£39.00 Q1	£40.00 Q1	£42.50 Q1	£43.25 Q1																																						
£37.00 Q2	£39.00 Q2	£41.00 Q2	£43.25 Q2	£45.50 Q2																																						
£37.50 Q3	£40.00 Q3	£41.00 Q3	£43.25 Q3																																							
£37.50 Q4	£40.00 Q4	£41.00 Q4	£43.25 Q4																																							
WMCA (7 Met.) Gigabit broadband Connectivity <sup>13</sup>  (tri-annual – update due late 2025)		93.3% premises (As of Jul 2024)						94.9% premises (As of Jan 2025)							<div><table><tr><th>At Jan-21</th><th>At May-21</th><th>At Sep-21</th><th>At Jan-22</th><th>At May-22</th><th>At Sep-22</th><th>At Jan-23</th><th>At May-23</th><th>At Sep-23</th><th>At Jan-24</th><th>At Jul-24</th><th>At Jan-25</th></tr><tr><td>77.2%</td><td>77.2%</td><td>82.2%</td><td>83.2%</td><td>84.2%</td><td>88.2%</td><td>90.2%</td><td>90.2%</td><td>91.2%</td><td>92.2%</td><td>93.2%</td><td>94.9%</td></tr></table></div>	At Jan-21	At May-21	At Sep-21	At Jan-22	At May-22	At Sep-22	At Jan-23	At May-23	At Sep-23	At Jan-24	At Jul-24	At Jan-25	77.2%	77.2%	82.2%	83.2%	84.2%	88.2%	90.2%	90.2%	91.2%	92.2%	93.2%	94.9%	WMCA: Highest CA UK: 84.4% Tees Valley: 93.3% (2 <sup>nd</sup> ) York & North Yorkshire: 77.2% (11 <sup>th</sup> )	As of January 2025, 94.9% of premises in the WMCA area had gigabit broadband availability - significantly above the UK-wide figure of 84.4%.	
At Jan-21	At May-21	At Sep-21	At Jan-22	At May-22	At Sep-22	At Jan-23	At May-23	At Sep-23	At Jan-24	At Jul-24	At Jan-25																															
77.2%	77.2%	82.2%	83.2%	84.2%	88.2%	90.2%	90.2%	91.2%	92.2%	93.2%	94.9%																															

<sup>12</sup> Avison Young, The Big Nine – created July 2025.  
<sup>13</sup> Ofcom, connected nations – released May 2025. Please note, there was no Summer 2024 release.

Quarterly Economy Dashboard

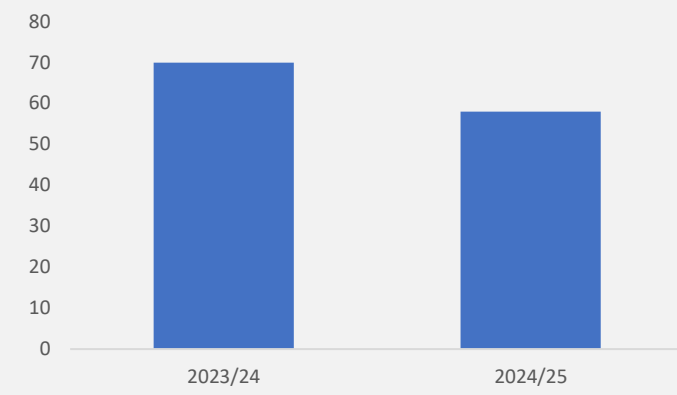
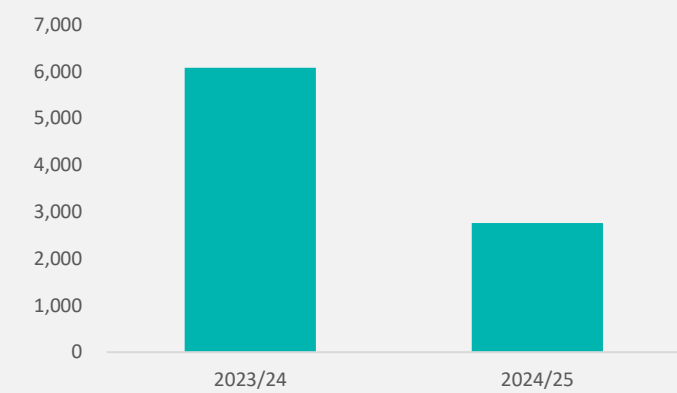
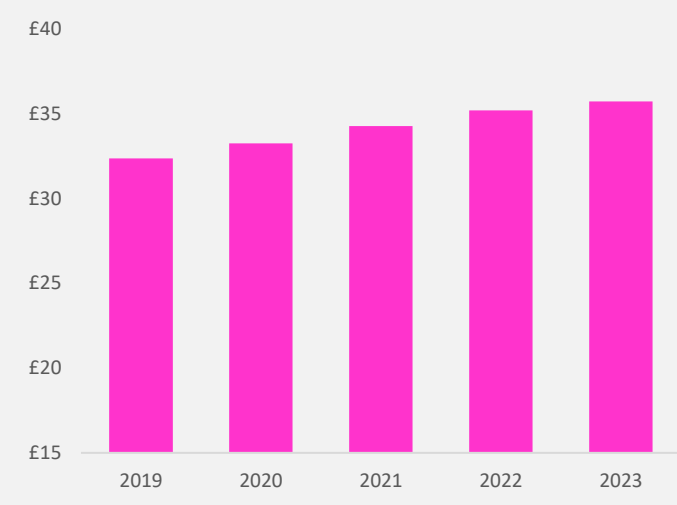
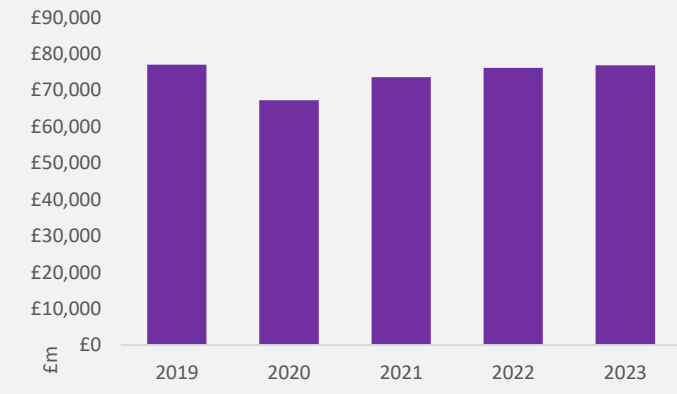
Regional

Theme	Indicator	June 2024	July 2024	August 2024	September 2024	October 2024	November 2024	December 2024	January 2025	February 2025	March 2025	April 2025	May 2025	June 2025	Trend	Relative to Peer Group	Commentary												
Economy	Regional Exports in Goods <sup>14</sup>  (quarterly – update due Jan 2026)	£35.4bn (Year to Q2 2024)			£35.4bn (Year to Q3 2024)			£35.3bn (Full Year 2024)			£34.9bn (Year to Q1 2025)			£34.2bn (Year to Q2 2025)	 <table><tr><th>Year to</th><th>Value (£bn)</th></tr><tr><td>Q2 2021</td><td>26.5</td></tr><tr><td>Q2 2022</td><td>26.8</td></tr><tr><td>Q2 2023</td><td>33.5</td></tr><tr><td>Q2 2024</td><td>35.4</td></tr><tr><td>Q2 2025</td><td>34.2</td></tr></table>	Year to	Value (£bn)	Q2 2021	26.5	Q2 2022	26.8	Q2 2023	33.5	Q2 2024	35.4	Q2 2025	34.2	WM – Joint 3 <sup>rd</sup> Highest Region (with Scotland) South East: 11.1% (1 <sup>st</sup> ) Northern Ireland: 3.0% (12 <sup>th</sup> )	<p>Since the year ending Q2 2024, the West Midlands region’s total value in goods exports decreased by £1.2bn (-3.5%) to £34.2bn in the year ending Q2 2025. The overall value of UK trade in goods exports decreased by 0.8% to £354.7bn.</p> <p>The West Midlands accounted for 9.6% of UK’s goods exports.</p> <p>The West Midlands had a trade deficit of nearly £8.3bn.</p>
	Year to	Value (£bn)																											
Q2 2021	26.5																												
Q2 2022	26.8																												
Q2 2023	33.5																												
Q2 2024	35.4																												
Q2 2025	34.2																												
Regional Imports in Goods <sup>15</sup>  (quarterly – update due Jan 2026)	£42.4bn (Year to Q2 2024)			£42.5bn (Year to Q3 2024)			£42.7bn (Full Year 2024)			£42.8bn (Year to Q1 2025)			£42.4bn (Year to Q2 2025)	 <table><tr><th>Year to</th><th>Value (£bn)</th></tr><tr><td>Q2 2021</td><td>33.5</td></tr><tr><td>Q2 2022</td><td>39.5</td></tr><tr><td>Q2 2023</td><td>42.5</td></tr><tr><td>Q2 2024</td><td>42.4</td></tr><tr><td>Q2 2025</td><td>42.4</td></tr></table>	Year to	Value (£bn)	Q2 2021	33.5	Q2 2022	39.5	Q2 2023	42.5	Q2 2024	42.4	Q2 2025	42.4	WM – 5 <sup>th</sup> Highest Region South East: 18.4% (1 <sup>st</sup> ) Northern Ireland: 1.7% (12 <sup>th</sup> )	<p>Since the year ending Q2 2024, the value of West Midlands region imports increased by £27m (+0.1%) to £42.4bn in the year ending Q2 2025. UK-wide total imports increased by 2.2% to £589.8bn.</p> <p>The West Midlands accounted for 7.2% of UK’s goods imports.</p>	
Year to	Value (£bn)																												
Q2 2021	33.5																												
Q2 2022	39.5																												
Q2 2023	42.5																												
Q2 2024	42.4																												
Q2 2025	42.4																												

<sup>14</sup> HMRC, UK regional trade in goods statistics – released September 2025. Data is not comparable across the dashboard. Please note, annual change figures in the commentary section may not sum due to rounding.

<sup>15</sup> HMRC, UK regional trade in goods statistics – released September 2025. Data is not comparable across the dashboard. Please note, annual change figures in the commentary section may not sum due to rounding.

Annual Economy Dashboard

Theme	Indicator	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Trend	Relative to Peer Group	Commentary
Economy	WMCA FDI Projects <sup>16</sup>  (annual – update due Jun / Jul 2026)							70	58		WM 7 Met.: 4 <sup>th</sup> Highest ITL 2 / 31 Inner London - West: 264 (1 <sup>st</sup> ) Lincolnshire and Outer London – South: 13 (Joint 31 <sup>st</sup> )	For the West Midlands 7 Met. Area, the number of single site FDI projects decreased from 70 in 2023/24 to 58 in 2024/25 (-17.1%).  The UK had an overall decrease of 11.6% to 1,375.
	WMCA FDI New Jobs <sup>17</sup>  (annual – update due Jun / Jul 2026)							6,082	2,758		WM 7 Met.: 5 <sup>th</sup> Highest ITL 2 / 31 Inner London - West: 15,526 (1 <sup>st</sup> ) North Yorkshire: 249 (31 <sup>st</sup> )	The number of new jobs created decreased from 6,082 in 2023/24 to 2,758 in 2024/25 (-54.7%) in the West Midlands 7 Met. Area.  The UK experienced an annual decrease of 3.0% (from 71,478 in 2023/24 to 69,355 in 2024/25).
	WMCA (7 Met.) Smoothed GVA per Hour <sup>18</sup>  (Annual – update due June 2026)	£31.66	£32.36	£33.25	£34.27	£35.18	£35.72				WMCA: 4 <sup>th</sup> Lowest CA / 10 UK: £41.87 West of England: £42.01 (1 <sup>st</sup> ) South Yorkshire: £33.77 (14 <sup>th</sup> )	In 2023, GVA per hour in the WMCA area was £35.72. Since 2022, the WMCA area increased by 1.5% (+£0.54) and the UK increased by 2.2%. When compared to 2018, GVA per hour in the WMCA area increased by 12.8% (+£4.06) while the UK increased by 18.3%.  In 2023, UK GVA per hour was £41.87 meaning the WMCA area had a shortfall of £6.15.
	WMCA (7 Met.) Total GVA – Chained Volume Measures in	£77.9bn	£77.0bn	£67.2bn	£73.6bn	£76.1bn	£76.9bn				WMCA: 2 <sup>nd</sup> Highest CA / 15 GMCA: £92.2bn (1 <sup>st</sup> ) Hull & East Yorkshire (CER): £15.5bn (15 <sup>th</sup> )	The WMCA area total GVA increased from £76.1bn in 2022 to £76.9bn in 2023. This equated to a 1.0% (+£774m) annual increase which was above the UK growth rate of 0.3%.

<sup>16</sup> Department for Business and Trade (DBT), inward investment results – released June 2025.

<sup>17</sup> DBT, inward investment results – released June 2025.

<sup>18</sup> ONS, regional and subregional labour productivity – released June 2025. In this publication ONS covered fourteen Combined Authorities: Greater Manchester, South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire, Liverpool City Region, Tees Valley, West Midlands, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough, West of England, York & North Yorkshire, East Midlands, North East, Hull & East Yorkshire, Greater Lincolnshire and Lancashire.

Theme	Indicator	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Trend	Relative to Peer Group	Commentary
	2022 Money Value <sup>19</sup>  (Annual – update due TBC 2026)											
Economy	WMCA (7 Met.) Exports in Services <sup>20</sup>  (Annual – update TBC 2026)	£8.3bn	£8.7bn	£7.8bn	£8.0bn	£9.2bn	£11.0bn				WMCA.: 4 <sup>h</sup> Highest / 8 Greater London Authority - Inner London: £184.8bn (1 <sup>st</sup> ) North of Tyne: £3.8bn (8 <sup>th</sup> )	Since the year ending 2022, the WMCA’s total value in service exports increased by £1.8bn (+19.3%) to £11.0bn in 2023. The overall value of UK trade in service exports increased, by 13.9% (to £417.6bn) in 2023.  The WMCA had a trade surplus of £7.0bn in 2023.
	WMCA (7 Met.) Imports in Services <sup>21</sup>  (Annual – update TBC 2026)	£3.6bn	£3.7bn	£3.9bn	£3.4bn	£3.6bn	£4.1bn				WMCA: 5 <sup>th</sup> Lowest / 10 Greater London Authority - Inner London: £71.2bn (1 <sup>st</sup> ) Tees Valley: £570m (10 <sup>th</sup> )	Since 2022, the value of WMCA imports increased by £494m (+13.6%) to £4.1bn in 2023. UK-wide total imports increased by 16.2% to £292.1bn.

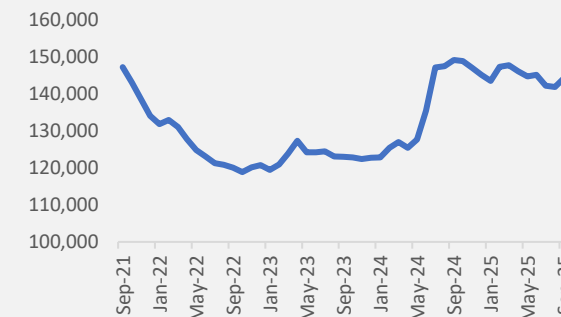
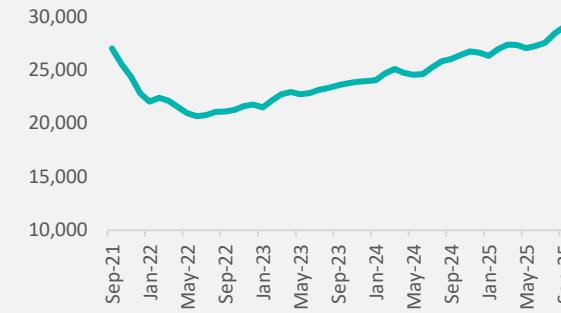
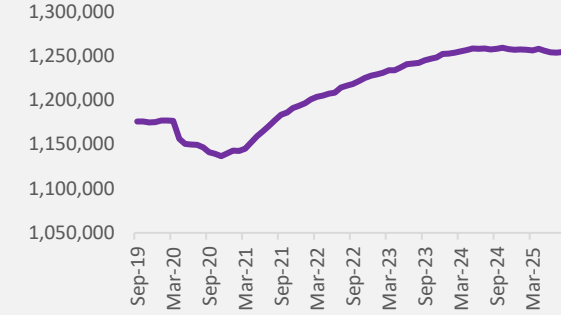
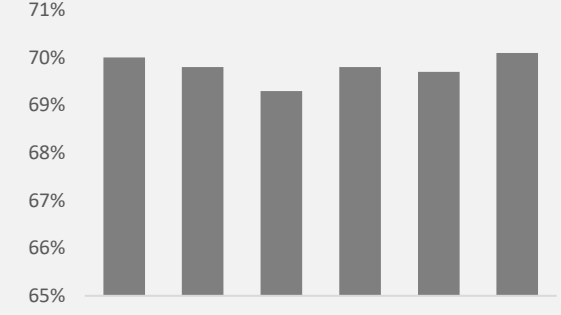
<sup>19</sup> ONS, Regional economic activity by gross domestic product, UK: 1998 to 2023 – released April 2025. This recently updated indicator now has a peer group which covers fifteen currently agreed combined authorities, twelve of which match ITL2 subregions, and the other three are included as city and enterprise regions (CER). The peer group includes Cambridgeshire & Peterborough, Devon & Torbay (CER), East Midlands, Greater Lincolnshire (CER), Greater Manchester, Hull & East Yorkshire (CER), Lancashire, Liverpool City Region, North East, South Yorkshire, Tees Valley, West Midlands, West of England, West Yorkshire and York & North Yorkshire.

<sup>20</sup> ONS, International trade in UK nations, regions and cities: 2023 – released August 2025. Peer Group Combined Authorities are – Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, Greater Manchester, Greater London Authority – Inner and Outer, Liverpool City Region, North of Tyne, South Yorkshire, Tees Valley, West Midlands, West Yorkshire and West of England. However, no data is available for Tees Valley, South Yorkshire and Cambridgeshire & Peterborough CA

<sup>21</sup> ONS, International trade in UK nations, regions and cities: 2023 – released August 2025. Combined Authorities are – Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, Greater Manchester, Greater London Authority – Inner and Outer, Liverpool City Region, North of Tyne, South Yorkshire, Tees Valley, West Midlands, West Yorkshire and West of England. However, no data is available for Liverpool City Region.

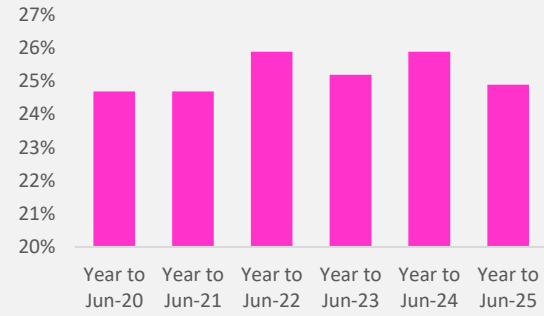
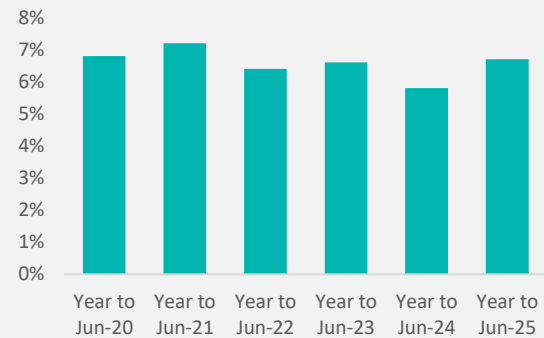
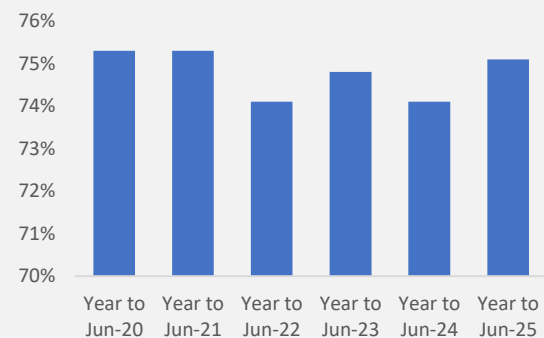
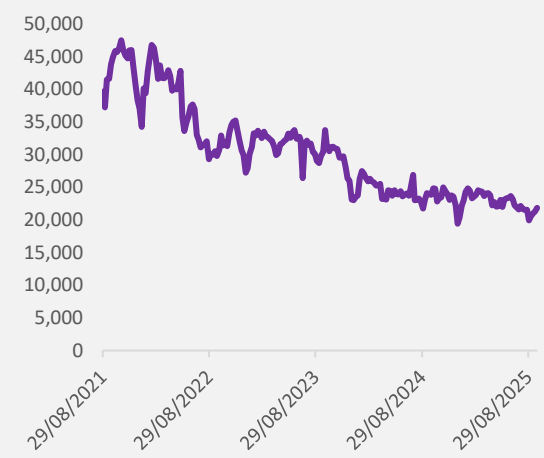


Monthly People Dashboard

Theme	Indicator	September 2024	October 2024	November 2024	December 2024	January 2025	February 2025	March 2025	April 2025	May 2025	June 2025	July 2025	August 2025	September 2025	Trend	Relative to Peer Group	Commentary											
People	WMCA (7 Met.) Claimants (16+) <sup>22</sup>  (monthly update)	149,215 (8.0% of Pop. aged 16-64)	148,960 (8.0% of Pop. aged 16-64)	147,115 (7.9% of Pop. aged 16-64)	145,170 (7.8% of Pop. aged 16-64)	143,575 (7.7% of Pop. aged 16-64)	147,400 (7.8% of Pop. aged 16-64)	147,835 (7.8% of Pop. aged 16-64)	146,120 (7.7% of Pop. aged 16-64)	144,750 (7.7% of Pop. aged 16-64)	145,170 (7.7% of Pop. aged 16-64)	142,280 (7.5% of Pop. aged 16-64)	141,890 (7.5% of Pop. aged 16-64)	144,355 (7.7% of Pop. aged 16-64)	 <table><tr><th>Sep 2021</th><th>Sep 2022</th><th>Sep 2023</th><th>Sep 2024</th><th>Sep 2025</th></tr><tr><td>147,320</td><td>120,045</td><td>123,025</td><td>149,215</td><td>144,355</td></tr></table>	Sep 2021	Sep 2022	Sep 2023	Sep 2024	Sep 2025	147,320	120,045	123,025	149,215	144,355	WMCA: Highest CA UK: 4.0% West Yorkshire: 5.1% (2 <sup>nd</sup> ) York & North Yorkshire: 1.9% (15 <sup>th</sup> )	Provisional estimates show there were 144,355 claimants in the WMCA area in September 2025. Since August 2025, there has been an increase of 1.7% (+2,465) claimants in the WMCA area, while the UK increased by 2.1%. When compared to September 2024 claimants have decreased by 3.3% (-4,860) in the WMCA area, with the UK decreasing by 4.0%.	
	Sep 2021	Sep 2022	Sep 2023	Sep 2024	Sep 2025																							
	147,320	120,045	123,025	149,215	144,355																							
	WMCA (7 Met.) Youth Claimants (18-24) <sup>23</sup>  (monthly update)	26,025 (8.7% of Pop. aged 18-24)	26,390 (8.8% of Pop. aged 18-24)	26,740 (8.9% of Pop. aged 18-24)	26,615 (8.9% of Pop. aged 18-24)	26,325 (8.8% of Pop. aged 18-24)	26,960 (9.0% of Pop. aged 18-24)	27,360 (9.1% of Pop. aged 18-24)	27,340 (9.1% of Pop. aged 18-24)	27,045 (9.0% of Pop. aged 18-24)	27,265 (9.1% of Pop. aged 18-24)	27,540 (9.2% of Pop. aged 18-24)	28,425 (9.5% of Pop. aged 18-24)	29,035 (9.7% of Pop. aged 18-24)	 <table><tr><th>Sep 2021</th><th>Sep 2022</th><th>Sep 2023</th><th>Sep 2024</th><th>Sep 2025</th></tr><tr><td>27,000</td><td>21,105</td><td>23,580</td><td>26,025</td><td>29,035</td></tr></table>	Sep 2021	Sep 2022	Sep 2023	Sep 2024	Sep 2025	27,000	21,105	23,580	26,025	29,035	WMCA: Highest CA UK: 5.6% Tees Valley: 8.1% (2 <sup>nd</sup> ) York & North Yorkshire: 2.6% (15 <sup>th</sup> )	Provisional estimates show there were 29,035 youth claimants in the WMCA area in September 2025. Since August 2025, there has been an increase of 2.1% (+610) youth claimants in the WMCA area, the UK increased by 2.7%. When compared to September 2024, youth claimants have increased by 11.6% (+3,010) in the WMCA area, with the UK increasing by 10.2%.	
Sep 2021	Sep 2022	Sep 2023	Sep 2024	Sep 2025																								
27,000	21,105	23,580	26,025	29,035																								
WM 7 Met. Seasonally Adjusted Payrolled Employees <sup>24</sup>  (monthly update)	1,257,715	1,258,992	1,257,319	1,256,770	1,257,074	1,256,801	1,256,078	1,257,803	1,255,440	1,253,832	1,253,413	1,254,098	1,252,302	 <table><tr><th>Sep 2021</th><th>Sep 2022</th><th>Sep 2023</th><th>Sep 2024</th><th>Sep 2025</th></tr><tr><td>1,183,299</td><td>1,218,060</td><td>1,244,656</td><td>1,257,715</td><td>1,252,302</td></tr></table>	Sep 2021	Sep 2022	Sep 2023	Sep 2024	Sep 2025	1,183,299	1,218,060	1,244,656	1,257,715	1,252,302	WM 7 Met.: 3 <sup>rd</sup> Highest NUTS 2 / 41 Surrey, East & West Sussex: 1,309,253 (1 <sup>st</sup> ) Highlands & Islands: 207,834 (41 <sup>st</sup> )	The latest (provisional) figures show there has been a recent decrease in payrolled employees for the WM 7 Met. area in September 2025 (-0.1%), the UK declined by 0.03%. There were over 1.25m payrolled employees in the WM 7 Met. area in September 2025. When compared to September 2024 there were 5,413 fewer payrolled employees (-0.4% for WM 7 Met. Area and -0.3% for the UK).		
Sep 2021	Sep 2022	Sep 2023	Sep 2024	Sep 2025																								
1,183,299	1,218,060	1,244,656	1,257,715	1,252,302																								
WMCA (7 Met.) Employment Rate <sup>25</sup>  (quarterly – update due Jan 2026)	69.7% (Year Ending Sep 2024)			69.5% (Full Year 2024)			70.0% (Year Ending Mar 2025)				70.1% (Year Ending Jun 2025)			 <table><tr><th>Year to Jun-20</th><th>Year to Jun-21</th><th>Year to Jun-22</th><th>Year to Jun-23</th><th>Year to Jun-24</th><th>Year to Jun-25</th></tr><tr><td>70.0%</td><td>69.8%</td><td>69.3%</td><td>69.8%</td><td>69.7%</td><td>70.1%</td></tr></table>	Year to Jun-20	Year to Jun-21	Year to Jun-22	Year to Jun-23	Year to Jun-24	Year to Jun-25	70.0%	69.8%	69.3%	69.8%	69.7%	70.1%	WMCA: Lowest CA UK: 75.4% West of England: 79.8% (1 <sup>st</sup> ) North East: 70.2% (14 <sup>th</sup> )	The WMCA area employment rate was 70.1% in the year ending June 2025, this was an increase of 0.4pp since the year ending June 2024. While the UK employment rate increased by 0.1pp.
Year to Jun-20	Year to Jun-21	Year to Jun-22	Year to Jun-23	Year to Jun-24	Year to Jun-25																							
70.0%	69.8%	69.3%	69.8%	69.7%	70.1%																							

<sup>22</sup> ONS/DWP, claimant count – released October 2025.  
<sup>23</sup> ONS/DWP, claimant count – released October 2025.  
<sup>24</sup> ONS, Earnings and employment from Pay As You Earn Real Time Information – released October 2025.  
<sup>25</sup> ONS, Annual Population Survey – released October 2025. Please note, figures are not comparable across the dashboard.



Theme	Indicator	September 2024	October 2024	November 2024	December 2024	January 2025	February 2025	March 2025	April 2025	May 2025	June 2025	July 2025	August 2025	September 2025	Trend	Relative to Peer Group	Commentary												
People	WMCA (7 Met.) Economic Inactivity Rate <sup>26</sup>  (quarterly – update due Jan 2026)	25.8% (Year Ending Sep 2024)			25.7% (Full Year 2024)			25.3% (Year Ending Mar 2025)			24.9% (Year Ending Jun 2025)				 <table><tr><td>Year to Jun-20</td><td>Year to Jun-21</td><td>Year to Jun-22</td><td>Year to Jun-23</td><td>Year to Jun-24</td><td>Year to Jun-25</td></tr><tr><td>24.7%</td><td>24.7%</td><td>25.8%</td><td>25.2%</td><td>25.8%</td><td>24.9%</td></tr></table>	Year to Jun-20	Year to Jun-21	Year to Jun-22	Year to Jun-23	Year to Jun-24	Year to Jun-25	24.7%	24.7%	25.8%	25.2%	25.8%	24.9%	WMCA: 3 <sup>rd</sup> Highest CA UK: 21.3% North East: 26.5% (1 <sup>st</sup> ) West of England: 16.9% (15 <sup>th</sup> )	The WMCA area economic inactivity rate was 24.9% in the year ending June 2025, a decrease of 1.0pp since the year ending June 2024. The UK economic inactivity rate decreased by 0.4pp to 21.3%.
	Year to Jun-20	Year to Jun-21	Year to Jun-22	Year to Jun-23	Year to Jun-24	Year to Jun-25																							
	24.7%	24.7%	25.8%	25.2%	25.8%	24.9%																							
	WMCA (7 Met.) Modelled Unemployment <sup>27</sup>  (quarterly – update due Jan 2026)	5.9% (Year Ending Sep 2024)			6.4% (Full Year 2024)			6.3% (Year Ending Mar 2025)			6.7% (Year Ending Jun 2025)				 <table><tr><td>Year to Jun-20</td><td>Year to Jun-21</td><td>Year to Jun-22</td><td>Year to Jun-23</td><td>Year to Jun-24</td><td>Year to Jun-25</td></tr><tr><td>6.8%</td><td>7.2%</td><td>6.4%</td><td>6.6%</td><td>5.8%</td><td>6.7%</td></tr></table>	Year to Jun-20	Year to Jun-21	Year to Jun-22	Year to Jun-23	Year to Jun-24	Year to Jun-25	6.8%	7.2%	6.4%	6.6%	5.8%	6.7%	WMCA: Highest CA England: 4.1% Hull & East Yorkshire: 5.5% (2 <sup>nd</sup> ) York & North Yorkshire: 1.6% (15 <sup>th</sup> )	Since the year ending June 2024, the WMCA area modelled unemployment rate has increased by 0.9pp to 6.7% in the year ending June 2025. England's modelled unemployment rate increased by 0.3pp to 4.1% in the year ending June 2025.
Year to Jun-20	Year to Jun-21	Year to Jun-22	Year to Jun-23	Year to Jun-24	Year to Jun-25																								
6.8%	7.2%	6.4%	6.6%	5.8%	6.7%																								
WMCA (7 Met.) Economic Activity Rate <sup>28</sup>  (quarterly – update due Jan 2026)	74.2% (Year Ending Sep 2024)			74.3% (Full Year 2024)			74.7% (Year Ending Mar 2025)			75.1% (Year Ending Jun 2025)				 <table><tr><td>Year to Jun-20</td><td>Year to Jun-21</td><td>Year to Jun-22</td><td>Year to Jun-23</td><td>Year to Jun-24</td><td>Year to Jun-25</td></tr><tr><td>75.4%</td><td>75.4%</td><td>74.1%</td><td>74.8%</td><td>74.1%</td><td>75.1%</td></tr></table>	Year to Jun-20	Year to Jun-21	Year to Jun-22	Year to Jun-23	Year to Jun-24	Year to Jun-25	75.4%	75.4%	74.1%	74.8%	74.1%	75.1%	WMCA: 3 <sup>rd</sup> Lowest CA UK: 78.7% West of England: 83.1% (1 <sup>st</sup> ) North East: 73.5% (15 <sup>th</sup> )	Overall, for the WMCA area, the economic activity rate was 75.1% in the year ending June 2025, an increase of 1.0pp since the year ending June 2024. The UK economic activity rate was 78.7% and increased by 0.4pp.	
Year to Jun-20	Year to Jun-21	Year to Jun-22	Year to Jun-23	Year to Jun-24	Year to Jun-25																								
75.4%	75.4%	74.1%	74.8%	74.1%	75.1%																								
WMCA (7 Met.) Adzuna Job Postings <sup>29</sup>  (monthly update)	49,369	57,484	49,859	43,248	51,037	51,023	49,572	47,268	45,715	48,285	55,783	44,290	44,196	 <table><tr><td>Sep 2021</td><td>Sep 2022</td><td>Sep 2023</td><td>Sep 2024</td><td>Sep 2025</td></tr><tr><td>108,872</td><td>72,231</td><td>68,872</td><td>49,369</td><td>44,196</td></tr></table>	Sep 2021	Sep 2022	Sep 2023	Sep 2024	Sep 2025	108,872	72,231	68,872	49,369	44,196	-	<p>In September 2025, there were 44,196 unique job postings on Adzuna, a decrease of 94 from the previous month. When compared to September 2024, postings were 5,173 lower.</p> <p>The latest number of postings is high compared to the average for all combined authorities. The Interest Quotient was high at 2.3.</p>			
Sep 2021	Sep 2022	Sep 2023	Sep 2024	Sep 2025																									
108,872	72,231	68,872	49,369	44,196																									

<sup>26</sup> ONS, Annual Population Survey – released October 2025. Please note, figures are not comparable across the dashboard.

<sup>27</sup> ONS, modelled based estimates of unemployment – released October 2025. Please note, figures are not comparable across the dashboard.

<sup>28</sup> ONS, Annual Population Survey – released October 2025. Please note, figures are not comparable across the dashboard.

<sup>29</sup> Adzuna Intelligence – accessed October 2025.

Annual People Dashboard

Theme	Indicator	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Trend	Relative to Peer Group	Commentary
People	WMCA (7 Met.) Not In Education, Employment or Training (NEET) <sup>30</sup>  (annual – update July 2026)	7.1%	6.7%	5.8%	6.0%	5.2%	4.8%	5.6%	6.6%		England: 5.6%	In 2025, in the WMCA area, 6.6% of residents aged 16-17 years old were NEET (including not known). This has increased by 1.0pp in the WMCA area, while for the UK there was an increase of 0.2pp since 2024.
	WMCA (7 Met.) Working Age Population with No Qualifications <sup>31</sup>  (annual – update due April 2026)					10.6%	9.0%	10.3%			WMCA: 2 <sup>nd</sup> Highest CA / 11 UK: 6.8% North East: 10.4% (1 <sup>st</sup> ) West of England: 3.8% (11 <sup>th</sup> )	For the WMCA area, 10.3% (187,700) of the working age population had no qualifications in 2024, an increase of 14.5% (+23,700) since 2023. While for the UK, 6.8% had no qualifications, an annual increase of 2.7%. To match the UK proportion, 64,687 residents in the WMCA area would need to gain a qualification.
	WMCA (7 Met.) Working Age Population with RQF4+ Qualifications <sup>32</sup>  (annual – update due April 2026)					37.8%	41.6%	42.0%			WMCA: 6 <sup>th</sup> CA / 11 UK: 47.4% West of England: 58.4% (1 <sup>st</sup> ) South Yorkshire: 37.4% (11 <sup>th</sup> )	For the WMCA area, 42.0% (763,100) of the working age population had RQF4+ qualifications in 2024, an increase of 0.6% (+4,600) since 2023. While for the UK, 47.4% were qualified to RQF4+ levels, an annual increase of 1.3%. There was a shortfall in the WMCA area (to reach to the national average) of 97,576 people.
	WMCA (7 Met.) Average Life Satisfaction Score <sup>33</sup>  (annual – update TBC)	7.51 (Year Ending Mar 2018)	7.56 (Year Ending Mar 2019)	7.56 (Year Ending Mar 2020)	7.38 (Year Ending Mar 2021)	7.44 (Year Ending Mar 2022)	7.38 (Year Ending Mar 2023)				WMCA: Joint 4 <sup>th</sup> Highest CA (with Sheffield City Region) UK: 7.45 North of Tyne: 7.56 (1 <sup>st</sup> ) Liverpool City Region: 7.30 (10 <sup>th</sup> )	For the year ending March 2023, the average life satisfaction score for the WMCA area was 7.38 (out of 10), below the UK-wide average of 7.45. Since the year ending March 2022, there was a decrease of 0.06 for the WMCA area compared to a decrease 0.09 UK-wide.

<sup>30</sup> Department for Education, Participation in education, training and NEET age 16 to 17 by local authority – released July 2025. Participation estimates are based on data collected in March each year. In order to ensure the most robust estimates of NEET and not known rates an average of December/January/February data is used for an estimate around the end of the calendar year.

<sup>31</sup> ONS, Annual Population Survey – released April 2025. Please note, National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) estimates have been replaced with estimates on a Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) basis. RQF based estimates are available from the Jan – Dec 2022 survey period, while estimates prior to Jan – Dec 2022 remain on an NVQ basis.

<sup>32</sup> ONS, Annual Population Survey – released April 2025. Please note, National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) estimates have been replaced with estimates on a Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) basis. RQF based estimates are available from the Jan – Dec 2022 survey period, while estimates prior to Jan – Dec 2022 remain on an NVQ basis.

<sup>33</sup> ONS, Annual personal well-being estimates – released November 2023. Respondents were asked "Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays? Where 0 is 'not at all satisfied' and 10 is 'completely satisfied'"

Theme	Indicator	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Trend	Relative to Peer Group	Commentary														
People	WMCA (7 Met.) Average Worthwhile Score <sup>34</sup>  (annual – update TBC)	7.71 (Year Ending Mar 2018)	7.71 (Year Ending Mar 2019)	7.70 (Year Ending Mar 2020)	7.70 (Year Ending Mar 2021)	7.71 (Year Ending Mar 2022)	7.73 (Year Ending Mar 2023)			 <table><tr><th>Year to Mar</th><th>Score</th></tr><tr><td>2018</td><td>7.71</td></tr><tr><td>2019</td><td>7.71</td></tr><tr><td>2020</td><td>7.70</td></tr><tr><td>2021</td><td>7.70</td></tr><tr><td>2022</td><td>7.71</td></tr><tr><td>2023</td><td>7.73</td></tr></table>	Year to Mar	Score	2018	7.71	2019	7.71	2020	7.70	2021	7.70	2022	7.71	2023	7.73	WMCA: 3 <sup>rd</sup> Highest CA UK: 7.73 North of Tyne: 7.75 (1 <sup>st</sup> ) West of England: 7.61 (10 <sup>th</sup> )	For the year ending March 2023, the average worthwhile score for the WMCA area was 7.73 (out of 10), now matching the UK-wide average. Since the year ending March 2022, there was an increase of 0.02 for the WMCA area compared to a decrease 0.04 UK-wide.
	Year to Mar	Score																								
	2018	7.71																								
	2019	7.71																								
2020	7.70																									
2021	7.70																									
2022	7.71																									
2023	7.73																									
WMCA (7 Met.) Average Happiness Score <sup>35</sup>  (annual – update TBC)	7.39 (Year Ending Mar 2018)	7.40 (Year Ending Mar 2019)	7.35 (Year Ending Mar 2020)	7.24 (Year Ending Mar 2021)	7.38 (Year Ending Mar 2022)	7.43 (Year Ending Mar 2023)			 <table><tr><th>Year to Mar</th><th>Score</th></tr><tr><td>2018</td><td>7.39</td></tr><tr><td>2019</td><td>7.40</td></tr><tr><td>2020</td><td>7.35</td></tr><tr><td>2021</td><td>7.24</td></tr><tr><td>2022</td><td>7.38</td></tr><tr><td>2023</td><td>7.43</td></tr></table>	Year to Mar	Score	2018	7.39	2019	7.40	2020	7.35	2021	7.24	2022	7.38	2023	7.43	WMCA: 2 <sup>nd</sup> Highest CA UK: 7.39 North of Tyne: 7.44 (1 <sup>st</sup> ) West Yorkshire: 7.20 (10 <sup>th</sup> )	For the year ending March 2023, the average happiness score for the WMCA area was 7.43 (out of 10), above the UK-wide average of 7.39. Since the year ending March 2022, there was an increase of 0.05 for the WMCA area compared to a decrease 0.06 UK-wide.	
Year to Mar	Score																									
2018	7.39																									
2019	7.40																									
2020	7.35																									
2021	7.24																									
2022	7.38																									
2023	7.43																									
WMCA (7 Met.) Average Anxiety Score <sup>36</sup>  (annual – update TBC)	2.71 (Year Ending Mar 2018)	2.74 (Year Ending Mar 2019)	2.89 (Year Ending Mar 2020)	3.30 (Year Ending Mar 2021)	3.12 (Year Ending Mar 2022)	3.15 (Year Ending Mar 2023)			 <table><tr><th>Year to Mar</th><th>Score</th></tr><tr><td>2018</td><td>2.71</td></tr><tr><td>2019</td><td>2.74</td></tr><tr><td>2020</td><td>2.89</td></tr><tr><td>2021</td><td>3.30</td></tr><tr><td>2022</td><td>3.12</td></tr><tr><td>2023</td><td>3.15</td></tr></table>	Year to Mar	Score	2018	2.71	2019	2.74	2020	2.89	2021	3.30	2022	3.12	2023	3.15	WMCA: 3 <sup>rd</sup> Lowest CA UK: 3.23 Greater Manchester: 3.40 (1 <sup>st</sup> ) North of Tyne: 3.03 (10 <sup>th</sup> )	For the year ending March 2023, the average anxiety score for the WMCA area was 3.15 (out of 10), below the UK average. Since the year ending March 2022, there was an increase of 0.03 for the WMCA area compared to an increase 0.11 UK-wide.	
Year to Mar	Score																									
2018	2.71																									
2019	2.74																									
2020	2.89																									
2021	3.30																									
2022	3.12																									
2023	3.15																									
WMCA (7 Met.) Living Wage Foundation Rates (All) <sup>37</sup>  (annual – update due TBC 2025)	23.5%	20.8%	20.1%	19.0%	13.0%	14.5%	17.6%		 <table><tr><th>Year</th><th>Rate</th></tr><tr><td>2019</td><td>23.5%</td></tr><tr><td>2020</td><td>20.8%</td></tr><tr><td>2021</td><td>20.1%</td></tr><tr><td>2022</td><td>19.0%</td></tr><tr><td>2023</td><td>13.0%</td></tr><tr><td>2024</td><td>17.6%</td></tr></table>	Year	Rate	2019	23.5%	2020	20.8%	2021	20.1%	2022	19.0%	2023	13.0%	2024	17.6%	UK: 15.7%	In 2024, approximately 17.6% of all jobs were earning below the Living Wage Foundation rates in the WMCA area. Since 2023, following the national trend, the WMCA proportion increased by 3.1pp (nationally +4.6pp).	
Year	Rate																									
2019	23.5%																									
2020	20.8%																									
2021	20.1%																									
2022	19.0%																									
2023	13.0%																									
2024	17.6%																									

<sup>34</sup> ONS, Annual personal well-being estimates – released November 2023. Respondents were asked "Overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile? Where 0 is 'not at all worthwhile' and 10 is 'completely worthwhile'".

<sup>35</sup> ONS, Annual personal well-being estimates – released November 2023. Respondents were asked "Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday? Where 0 is 'not at all happy' and 10 is 'completely happy'".

<sup>36</sup> ONS, Annual personal well-being estimates – released November 2023. Respondents were asked "Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday? Where 0 is 'not at all anxious' and 10 is 'completely anxious'".

<sup>37</sup> ONS, Number and proportion of employee jobs with hourly pay below the living wage – released November 2024

3.2 EIU Review of Key Sectoral Headlines, Regional Economic Shocks, Investment, Deals, and Opportunities

HEADLINES	
SECTOR	KEY INSIGHTS
Cross Sector	<p><b>Outlook</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Budget in November is likely to reveal a <b>significant deterioration in the outlook for the public finances</b>, requiring the Government to raise taxes in response. A key reason for this is what the <a href="#">Office for Budget Responsibility</a> will assume about how fast the economy can sustainably grow.</li><li>• Recent data from the <a href="#">Office for National Statistics (ONS)</a> reveals real gross domestic product (GDP) is estimated to have <b>grown by 0.3% in the three months to August 2025</b> compared with the three months to May 2025, a slight increase following growth of 0.2% in the three months to July 2025. Monthly GDP is estimated to have <b>grown by 0.1% in August 2025</b>, following a fall of 0.1% in July 2025 (revised down from no growth) and a growth of 0.4% in June 2025.</li><li>• In the near term, <a href="#">NIESR</a> expect UK GDP to grow by 0.3% in the third quarter.</li><li>• <a href="#">Lloyds</a> have revised up UK growth predictions reflecting momentum in the first half of the year, averaging +0.2% over the next four quarters, with end year growth expected to hit 1.4% in 2025, 1.2% in 2026 and 1.5% in 2027.</li><li>• The UK economy has grown by 0.9% in the first half of 2025, faster than the 0.6% the OBR had expected at the time of its March Economic and Fiscal Outlook. This compares with growth over the same period of 0.8% in the US and 0.7% in the Euro Area. The <a href="#">IFS</a> expect the second half of the year to show a deceleration as ongoing elevated uncertainty, both global and domestic, weighs on businesses and consumers, as do financial conditions, which have tightened in recent months despite monetary policy having eased. Despite this slowing, <b>IFS expect real GDP growth for the year as a whole to be 1.4%, up from 1.1% in 2024.</b></li><li>• The global economy is adjusting to a landscape reshaped by new policy measures. <b>Some extremes of higher tariffs were tempered, thanks to subsequent deals and resets.</b> But the overall environment remains volatile, and temporary factors that supported activity in the first half of 2025, such as front-loading, are fading. As a result, global growth projections in the IMF's latest <a href="#">World Economic Outlook (WEO)</a> are revised upward relative to the April 2025 WEO but continue to mark a downward revision relative to the pre-policy-shift forecasts.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Global growth is projected to slow from 3.3% in 2024 to 3.2% in 2025 and 3.1% in 2026.</li><li>○ Projections for the UK are growth to increase from 1.1% in 2024 to 1.3% in 2025, and 1.3% in 2026.</li></ul></li></ul> <p><b>Trading Environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Cost of living pressures</a> are persisting for workers and their families across the UK as inflation is at its joint highest level since January 2024 at 3.8%.</li><li>• The <a href="#">Consumer Prices Index</a> including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH) <b>rose by 4.1% in the 12 months to September 2025, unchanged from August. On a monthly basis, CPIH rose by 0.1% in September 2025</b>, the same rate as September 2024. <b>The Consumer Prices Index (CPI) rose by 3.8% in the 12 months to September 2025, unchanged from August. On a monthly basis, CPI was unchanged in September 2025, as in September 2024.</b></li><li>• <a href="#">The latest survey</a> from the British Chambers of Commerce shows that <b>concern about inflation has been rising again and is now the second biggest issue for firms after taxation.</b> But the two are closely linked: for the past year, businesses have warned the <b>rise in employer National Insurance Contributions has fed directly into price pressures and weakened investment.</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Labour costs continue to be the main cost pressure, cited by 72% of businesses.</li><li>○ <b>Higher energy bills are also a concern</b>, cited by 50% of firms, with the rise in the energy price cap at the start of October indicative of the sustained pressure. Without action to help firms bring down costs, there is a risk of a repeat of a 2022-style energy shock.</li><li>○ <b>Confidence among business remains flat</b>, with only 48% of responding firms expecting their turnover to increase over the next 12 months. That compares with 49% in Q2 and 58% before the 2024 Budget. <b>A fifth (21%) of businesses expect turnover to worsen</b> and 32% expect no change.</li></ul></li><li>• The latest <a href="#">NatWest Purchasing Managers Index (PMI)</a> reports the <b>West Midlands Business Activity Index decreased from 51.1 in August 2025 to 48.1 in September 2025</b>, the first fall in activity since April 2025. The decline was linked to local firms having a lack of work. <b>The UK Business Activity Index decreased from 53.5 in August 2025 to 50.1 in September 2025.</b></li><li>• <b>The West Midlands Future Business Activity Index decreased from 74.2 in August 2025 to 71.4 in September 2025</b>, the highest of any region across the UK. Despite some firms being concerned about budgets, subdued client confidence and US tariffs, in general firms remained optimistic due to reports of new product releases and expansion into new markets.</li><li>• <b>The cyber attack on JLR is estimated to have been the most economically damaging hack in UK history and cost the country around £1.9bn.</b> Around 5,000 businesses across the country have been hit by the fallout of the attack. This comes as news that <a href="#">UK car production</a> fell to a 70-year low in September.</li><li>• <b>A snap survey of businesses across the West Midlands has revealed the significant financial and operational challenges facing JLR's supply chain following a major cyber attack.</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ 77% reported experiencing a <b>negative impact</b> as a result of the JLR cyber-attack, with 44% identifying this as 'significant'.</li><li>○ Nearly half (45%) reported <b>significant negative financial impact</b> including loss of revenue, increased costs and customer payment slowdowns.</li><li>○ As businesses struggle to cope, 35% have reduced staff hours or asked staff not to work temporarily, whilst <b>14% are already making redundancies.</b> A further 17% are seeking additional finance from banks to help tide their businesses over.</li></ul></li><li>• More positively, the <b>Midlands has recorded an increase in the monthly number of start-up businesses with fewer liquidator and administrator appointments</b>, according to <a href="#">R3</a>, but firms should "remain cautious". Monthly analysis of regional start-up data indicates the West Midlands saw an upturn of 26% to 6,730, the highest since April 2024.</li><li>• However, there has been a marked <b>fall in the number of SMEs in the Midlands making research &amp; development tax relief claims.</b> Accountancy and advisory firm <a href="#">Azets</a>, issued the warning after analysing the latest HMRC figures for 2023-24, with the previous year's data in brackets for comparison. <b>There were 2,755 [4,145] claims made in the West Midlands with a total cost of £165m [£245m];</b> Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Warwickshire made 865 [1,250], Shropshire and Staffordshire 810 [1,195] and <b>West Midlands 1,085 [1,700].</b> Manufacturing led with 1,045</li></ul>



HEADLINES	
SECTOR	KEY INSIGHTS
	<p>claims [1,465], followed by information &amp; communication at 520 [675] and professional, scientific &amp; technical at 340 [485].</p> <p><b>Labour Market</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Estimates for <a href="#">payrolled employees</a> in the UK decreased by 93,000 (0.3%) between August 2024 and August 2025 but increased by 10,000 (0.0%) between July 2025 and August 2025.</li><li>The estimated number of <a href="#">vacancies</a> in the UK fell by 9,000 (1.3%) on the quarter, to 717,000, in July to <b>September 2025</b>. This is the 39th consecutive period where vacancy numbers have dropped compared with the previous three months.</li><li>The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) latest <a href="#">Quarterly Recruitment Outlook (QRO)</a> shows that <b>difficulties in finding staff persist despite rising unemployment</b>.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>To tackle this issue, the BCC says the upcoming Budget presents a golden opportunity to unlock potential through <b>targeted investment and incentives</b>.</li><li>Just over half of firms (54%) surveyed said they had attempted to recruit in the last three months.</li><li>Of those firms trying to hire staff, 75% said they experienced difficulties, up slightly from the previous quarter (73%).</li></ul></li><li>The Resolution Foundation <a href="#">recently showed</a> that nearly <b>six-in-ten UK workers experience pay volatility. This leads to volatile spending, plus workers quitting high-volatility jobs. Critically, this volatility is not felt equally, with hourly and low-wage workers experiencing much more of it.</b> Other analysis has recently found that greater volatility is associated <a href="#">with poorer health</a>, irrespective of income level.</li><li><a href="#">Living Wage rates</a> – a voluntary hourly pay rate that is based on what families need to get by – in London and the rest of the UK have been recalculated by the Resolution Foundation, and overseen by the Living Wage Commission on behalf of the <a href="#">Living Wage Foundation</a>. <b>The UK Living Wage for 2025–26 is £13.45.</b> The London Living Wage for 2025–26 is £14.80.</li><li>The UK is lagging other countries, particularly on intermediate skills, and there are persistent inequalities in skills levels between geographic areas and demographic groups. <b>Achieving <a href="#">world-class skills</a> could boost the economy by £22 billion and save taxpayers £8 billion per year.</b></li></ul>
Manufacturing and Engineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Britain’s car industry faces an existential crisis.</b> High energy costs, Chinese competition and US tariffs threaten a sector that contributes <b>£47 billion in gross value added to the economy in 2023 and supports half a million jobs.</b> Without decisive action, we risk losing domestic mass car production entirely. In this policy insight, the <a href="#">Green Alliance</a> outline a <b>comprehensive plan to secure the future of British car manufacturing through the electric vehicle transition.</b> From immediate interventions to cut energy costs and stimulate demand, to long-term strategies for skills development and R&amp;D investment, they demonstrate how coordinated government action can transform challenges into opportunities and <b>position Britain as a leader in EV technology.</b></li></ul>
Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><a href="#">Construction output</a> is estimated to have grown by 0.3% in the three months to August 2025. Over the three-month period, new work fell by 0.4%, and repair and maintenance grew by 1.3%.</li><li>The construction industry is experiencing a skills and labour shortage with thousands more workers needed to help the government meet its house building and infrastructure ambitions. Older workers can provide a solution to these challenges, but only if employers in the sector fully commit to improving work for people in their 50s and 60s argues the <a href="#">Centre for Ageing Better</a>.</li><li>A <a href="#">£75 million skills package</a> to train more than 12,000 people over the next three years to tackle the region’s <b>shortage of construction workers</b> has been announced by Mayor Richard Parker.</li></ul>
Retail, Hospitality and Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><a href="#">Retail sales</a> volumes (quantity bought) are estimated to have <b>risen by 0.5%</b> in September 2025, following an increase of 0.6% in August 2025.</li><li>The West Midlands welcomed <b>101.5 million <a href="#">visitors</a></b> in 2024, <b>six million more</b> than when it hosted the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games. A record <b>£14 billion</b> spent by visitors to the region last year, a <b>7% increase</b>.</li><li><a href="#">Consumers’ intentions to cut back</a> are casting a shadow over Golden Quarter spending, as concerns over the cost of everyday essentials rise.</li><li><a href="#">Coventry Cocktail Week</a> returned in September, and figures have revealed it <b>generated a direct economic impact of £428,580</b>, with 28 bars, restaurants and pubs taking part across the city centre.</li></ul>
Digital / Tech	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Grid connection bottlenecks are forcing <a href="#">UK data centre developers</a> to relocate projects.</b> More than three-quarters of UK data centre developers are exploring alternative sites in other countries, largely because they <b>fear waiting up to eight years for an electricity grid connection.</b></li><li>DSIT has also announced a new <a href="#">UK-India Connectivity Centre</a>, which will aim to <b>transform telecoms with AI, boost telecoms cybersecurity and advance non-terrestrial networks. Backed by an initial £24 million of UK and Indian Government funding,</b> the Centre will collaborate on research with BT group, Ericsson and Nokia and will be implemented as part of the <b>UK-India Technology Security Initiative (TSI).</b></li><li>Minister for Science Lord Vallance <a href="#">said</a> in a speech to that <b>pension firms should invest more in UK science and tech firms and <a href="#">unveiled</a> a new Innovation Clusters Map to help investors to better identify the companies, sectors and regions to target for investment.</b></li></ul>
Transport Technologies and Logistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Plug in hybrids pollute as much as petrol cars</b>, new <a href="#">research</a> has found. <b>Analysis of 800,000 European cars found real-world pollution from plug-in hybrids nearly five times greater than lab tests.</b></li></ul>
Environmental Technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A UK parliamentary hearing featuring executives from Octopus Energy, EDF and E.On has seen some of Britain’s biggest <a href="#">energy suppliers</a> state that the <b>government’s plans to invest in the power system could drive up consumer bills in the coming years.</b></li><li>Despite strong political attention and public support, <b>the <a href="#">UK plastics recycling industry</a> is in sharp decline.</b> 21 recycling facilities have shut down in the past two years. <b>This threatens a sector with a potential value of £2 billion and the capacity to support 5,000 jobs,</b> and the closures undermine government ambitions to end the “throwaway society” under its forthcoming Circular Economy Strategy.</li></ul>

NEW ECONOMIC SHOCKS			
COMPANY	LOCATION	SECTOR	DETAIL
<a href="#">Oxbridge Ltd</a>	Birmingham	Education	Unsecured creditors are set to lose out following the collapse of a <b>Birmingham</b> -based home learning company due to its "substantial level of

NEW ECONOMIC SHOCKS			
COMPANY	LOCATION	SECTOR	DETAIL
			debt". Forvis Mazars LLP were appointed as administrators of Oxbridge Ltd, which traded as Oxbridge Home Learning. The business ceased trading following significant cash flow pressures and 11 staff redundancies.
<a href="#">Pizza Hut</a>	West Midlands	Hospitality	The operator of Pizza Hut UK’s restaurants has completed an administration process less than a year after a rescue deal. Pizza Hut has named the nine locations set for closure in the West Midlands region amidst Pizza Hut’s UK–wide closures, these include in <b>Dudley, Solihull and Coventry</b> .
<a href="#">Jaguar Land Rover</a>	West Midlands	Automotive	The cyber attack which brought production lines at car maker Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) to a standstill for more than six weeks (including in <b>Solihull and Castle Bromwich in the West Midlands</b> ) is estimated to have wreaked £1.9bn of financial damage. It is estimated that around 200,000 staff in JLR’s supply chain could have been affected when orders stopped after production lines were halted.
<a href="#">Jhoots</a>	West Midlands	Healthcare / Retail	22 businesses related to <b>Walsall</b> –based Jhoots have filed notices of intention to appoint administrators. SNJ Health and 21 separate pharmacy businesses have sought court protection from creditors.

NEW INVESTMENT, DEALS AND OPPORTUNITIES			
COMPANY	LOCATION	SECTOR	DETAIL
<a href="#">The Home Hospital</a>	Birmingham	Healthcare / Technology	A virtual hospital platform which is led by a team of serial entrepreneurs, clinicians and technologists is crowdfunding to support the next phase of its growth. The Home Hospital has raised £610,964 from 166 investors on Republic Europe. The <b>Birmingham</b> –based company currently has more than 20 consultant specialist doctors practising with the platform, with more than 100 concurrent patients subscribed to its plans.
<a href="#">Hayward Wright / Wharfside Accountancy Services</a>	Birmingham	Financial Services	Full–service accountancy and advisory firm Hayward Wright has expanded into <b>Birmingham</b> city centre with a significant acquisition. Wharfside Accountancy Services will retain its office on Bridge Street, with all clients transferring to Hayward Wright.
<a href="#">DSW Ventures</a>	Birmingham	Finance	DSW Ventures – the early–stage venture capital arm of Dow Schofield Watts – has opened a <b>Birmingham</b> office to increase its investment activity across the Midlands.
<a href="#">Mobico Group</a>	Birmingham	Transport	Mobico Group, the <b>Birmingham</b> –based transport giant behind the National Express brand, has secured a contract in Saudi Arabia with a total value of €500m revenue. The contract includes the operation of 156 vehicles, 126 of which will be electric, serving Qiddiya, a new city on the outskirts of Riyadh. Qiddiya is one of Saudi Arabia’s key strategic projects and is expected to become the largest entertainment destination in the country.
<a href="#">Love Finance</a>	Birmingham	Finance	<b>Birmingham</b> –based lender Love Finance has secured £45m in its first debt financing deal, giving the company the capacity to grow its loan book and provide faster funding to UK SMEs. The package includes a £35m revolving credit facility from lender Paragon Bank, and a £10m medium–term note programme from LGB Capital Markets. The deal allows the business to lend directly from its own book for the first time, speeding up decision–making and widening access to capital.
<a href="#">Sterling Ventures</a>	Birmingham	Wholesale	A family–run wholesale and distribution hub will create jobs with the launch of a new site after securing a £2.2m funding package from Lloyds. Sterling Ventures UK imports and distributes a range of cookware and glassware for the hospitality, catering, retail and garden sectors. Operating from its national distribution centre on the north side of <b>Birmingham</b> , it supplies independent supermarkets, wholesalers and community organisations across the UK.
<a href="#">Atos</a>	Birmingham / Solihull	Technology	Atos has revealed plans for a £10m investment in the Midlands through two flagship technology centres that will act as a national hub for a wider network of facilities across the UK. Atos’ new Sovereign Orchestration Hub in <b>Birmingham</b> and Digital Agentic Centre in Nottingham are designed to create jobs, boost local innovation and provide British businesses with AI–enabled infrastructure. The Birmingham hub will provide advanced monitoring and management services from a purpose–built, sustainable facility at <b>Birmingham Business Park</b> .
<a href="#">Aurrigo</a>	Coventry	Manufacturing	<b>Coventry</b> –based Aurrigo International has launched a new autonomous transport vehicle at Canada’s largest technology park. The company’s Auto–Shuttle Mk2 will operate along a 4.5km route at Kanata Business Park in Ottawa.
<a href="#">Voltacon Energy Systems</a>	Coventry	Manufacturing	Voltacon Energy Systems, a <b>Coventry</b> –based renewable energy and lighting manufacturer, has secured a £100,000 international defence contract to supply thousands of custom–designed lights for a flagship aircraft carrier of the French Navy.
<a href="#">FireAngel</a>	Coventry	Manufacturing / Safety	FireAngel, a fire safety technology company, is creating a new European headquarters at an office building in the heart of <b>Coventry</b> . Recently acquired by Ningbo–based Siterwell Electronics Company, FireAngel made the decision to remain in <b>Coventry</b> to retain its workforce.
<a href="#">E.ON</a>	Coventry	Energy	<b>Coventry</b> –based E.ON UK has signed an agreement to invest £2.5m in an Australian tech scale–up. Amber is Australia’s largest residential solar and battery automation product with more than 40% of the domestic market.



NEW INVESTMENT, DEALS AND OPPORTUNITIES			
COMPANY	LOCATION	SECTOR	DETAIL
<a href="#">Eurofit Group</a>	Coventry	Automotive	European tyre-wheel assembly specialist Eurofit Group has selected Prologis Park <b>Coventry</b> for its inaugural UK facility, leasing the newly refurbished 105,000 sq ft DC105 unit. The move marks a milestone for Eurofit as it expands into the UK.
<a href="#">Vanguard Foundry</a>	Dudley	Manufacturing	Vanguard Foundry, a <b>Stourbridge</b> -based manufacturer of iron and stainless-steel castings, has secured a £310,000 funding package from Lloyds' Clean Growth Financing Initiative to purchase new machinery to turbocharge the production of complex castings. The new equipment increases production capacity by about 25 per cent, which in turn allows the business to boost overall output by up to 20 per cent.
<a href="#">Deltron Lifts</a>	Dudley	Manufacturing	<b>Dudley</b> -headquartered lift maintenance and repair specialist Deltron Lifts has acquired Newcastle-based Exel Elevator. The deal allows Deltron to expand its geographic footprint and service offering across the North East.
<a href="#">Solarport</a>	Dudley	Manufacturing	Solarport, a designer and manufacturer of solar mounting systems, has secured a multimillion-pound funding package from HSBC UK to support its investment in a new plant and equipment at the <b>Halesowen</b> manufacturing facility, while also providing working capital to enable continued growth. The site will focus on producing solar mounting systems to meet rising demand across domestic and European markets. The investment will create between 15 and 20 jobs.
<a href="#">Woodshire</a>	Dudley	Wholesale	<b>Stourbridge</b> -based Woodshire, a sustainable timber products company has expanded its operations by taking on new premises within Bradford Estates on the Shropshire-Staffordshire border. The company has moved into three sites on the 12,000-acre landed estate, creating up to 14 new jobs as part of its growth plans.
<a href="#">Freshways</a>	Sandwell	Food & Drink	Freshways will operate from a new milk and dairy processing factory in <b>West Bromwich</b> – a £25m investment that is set to create 200 jobs in the <b>West Midlands</b> . Freshways will pasteurise and package almost 900 million pints of fresh milk a year from the <b>West Bromwich</b> facility.
<a href="#">Latham’s</a>	Sandwell	Wholesale	Latham’s has opened its 30,000 sq ft, state-of-the-art warehouse in <b>Tividale</b> . The new facility will boost logistics, enhance stock handling, and support growth in the steel security-door market.
<a href="#">Metal Assemblies / Aston Business School</a>	Sandwell / Birmingham	Automotive	In a UK-first for the automotive supply chain, <b>Aston Business School</b> is teaming up with <b>West Bromwich</b> manufacturer Metal Assemblies Ltd to calculate and report the carbon cost of every metal component used in car production, tackling one of the industry’s biggest sustainability challenges. It is hoped the Knowledge Transfer Partnership will transform how vehicle parts are made and regulated, setting a new standard for transparency and low-carbon manufacturing across Europe.
<a href="#">JMG Group</a>	Solihull	Business Services	JMG Group has acquired a trio of insurance brokerages in <b>Solihull</b> , Kendal and Edinburgh. Yorkshire-headquartered JMG has brought <b>Solihull</b> 's Boston Insurance Brokers, Kendal's Hayton Insurance Brokers and Edinburgh-based Gateway Insurance Services into the group.
<a href="#">TVS Motor</a>	Solihull	Advanced Manufacturing / Technology	It was confirmed that 64 Indian companies are set to invest over £1 billion into the UK, a move which is set to create 6,900 jobs across the UK. Included in the detail is a raft of various tech investments including £250 million from advanced manufacturing company TVS Motor to invest in <b>Solihull</b> to expand its Norton Motorcycles operations and develop next-generation electric vehicles, creating 300 high-quality jobs.
<a href="#">ISS UK</a>	Solihull	Management	ISS UK, a facilities manager, has signed a new 10-year lease on 8,782 sq ft of newly refurbished office space at 3160 Park Square, Birmingham Business Park in <b>Solihull</b> .
<a href="#">Kasdon Group</a>	Walsall	Manufacturing	A deal worth more than £34m has been struck for an electronics contract manufacturer with a strong position in the defence sector. NOTE has signed an agreement to acquire Kasdon Group, which operates from a facility in <b>Willenhall</b> and employs approximately 50 people.
<a href="#">Birchwood Saddle Trees</a>	Walsall	Manufacturing	A <b>Darlaston</b> saddle tree maker is set for further growth after receiving a second funding boost from Walsall Business Support. Birchwood Saddle Trees received a £15,000 donation from Walsall Business Support to help grow the business following an £8,000 donation 18 months ago. The funding boost will allow the business to purchase new, energy efficiency machinery, install heating and replace windows at the factory.
<a href="#">bk plus</a>	Walsall	Financial Services	<b>Walsall</b> -based bk plus has ramped up its nationwide expansion with two accountancy firms joining its growing network, strengthening its UK footprint and adding new specialist services. Geens Chartered Accountants and Wells Richardson bring 250 years of combined heritage, having supported generations of businesses and families with financial advice.
<a href="#">Rockhopper Rescue &amp; Recovery</a>	Wolverhampton	Automotive	A roadside assistance and vehicle recovery company based in <b>Wolverhampton</b> has secured a five-figure funding package to expand its operations. Rockhopper Rescue & Recovery has expanded its fleet of roadside recovery vehicles and recruited an additional two members of staff following a £50,000 investment from ART Business Loans.
<a href="#">Task Consumer Products</a>	Wolverhampton	Manufacturing	<b>Wolverhampton</b> -based Task Consumer Products, a manufacturer of household paper products, has secured a £22m funding package from HSBC



NEW INVESTMENT, DEALS AND OPPORTUNITIES			
COMPANY	LOCATION	SECTOR	DETAIL
			UK to support the purchase of a more than 180,000 sq ft site to expand its capabilities.
<a href="#">Geepas UK</a>	Wolverhampton	Retail / Wholesale	Geepas UK has unveiled its £10m headquarters and distribution centre in <b>Wolverhampton</b> . The 115,708 sq ft facility was launched with a ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by company leadership, partners, and the Geepas UK team. Part of Western International Group, a Dubai-based global conglomerate, Geepas is the flagship brand across electronics, home appliances, and personal care.
<a href="#">Phenna Group / Aquatech</a>	Wolverhampton	Environmental Services	Phenna Group has acquired <b>Wolverhampton</b> -based Aquatech, a business specialising in water hygiene, water testing and legionella risk assessments. Aquatech provides compliance and testing services to housing associations, facilities management companies, food and drink manufacturers, universities, hotels, local councils and Ministry of Defence sites. Its work spans water treatment, hygiene inspection and analysis, air hygiene and ventilation testing, and legionella risk assessments.
<a href="#">Brindley Group / Changan</a>	Wolverhampton	Automotive	<b>Wolverhampton</b> -based car dealer, Brindley Group, has entered a new partnership with vehicle manufacturer Changan and will open its first dealership for the brand in <b>Wolverhampton</b> in early 2026. The new agreement forms part of Brindley’s wider strategy to broaden the range of manufacturers it represents across the Midlands. The dealership will offer Changan’s full line-up along with servicing and maintenance facilities.
<a href="#">School of Coding &amp; AI</a>	Wolverhampton / Birmingham	Technology / Education	A <b>West Midlands</b> company that provides digital skills training has unveiled new £2.5 million state-of-the-art facilities in <b>Birmingham</b> aimed at increasing accessibility and inclusiveness in higher education. For the start of the new academic year, School of Coding & AI has transformed the disused upper floor of its <b>Birmingham</b> campus into a showcase of AI and technology innovation. The facility includes AI labs, an interactive AI avatar, game design facilities, a podcast room, an in-house research centre and computing classrooms.

The West Midlands Insights on Society and Economy (WISE) newsletter is a monthly publication by the West Midlands Combined Authority that sets out the social and economic trends that matter to the West Midlands. The newsletter contributes to our understanding of the economic conditions of the West Midlands, as part of the wider regional research and intelligence ecosystem. Further information is available on the West Midlands research and insights website at [wmca.org.uk/research](http://wmca.org.uk/research) and previous issues are available at [wmca.org.uk/wise](http://wmca.org.uk/wise).

This edition was prepared by Phillip Nelson, Victoria Tidy, Tawfieg Zakria, and Alex Hunt, and incorporates commissioned content from the Economic Intelligence Unit (EIU) and other regional partners.