City of Wolverhampton
Strategic Economic Evidence Base
December 2023

The Economic Intelligence Unit

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL

Executive Summary

The economic shocks of recent years have provided a difficult environment for Wolverhampton businesses and communities, especially due to persistently high inflation and high interest rates. Together with longer-term, structural disparities between Wolverhampton and regional / national comparators, this presents a multitude of challenges for the local economy.
However, within this adversity there are some positive signals in the data presented, alongside the tangible examples of investment, growth and improvement across the city. Some of the promising findings from this report include:

- The latest Gross Value Added (GVA) figure for Wolverhampton (£5.5bn) is the highest on record, with the city showing faster growth than the national average in the last yearly period (+11.0% between 2020 and 2021 compared to +7.1% nationally).
- Productivity and the overall number of jobs and businesses also increased at a higher rate than the national average, although gaps remain.
- There are clear industrial strengths in the Wolverhampton economy that are showing growth, and a host of opportunities to further this – e.g., sustainable construction, manufacturing and materials, and the green economy.
- Wolverhampton has a diverse business ecosystem with major strategic companies, fledgling start-ups / scaleups and innovators, as well as very high levels of female-led firms (6th of all local authorities in the UK), ethnic-minority owned businesses and social enterprises.
- There has been relatively more stability in 2023 which has supported more consistent business confidence and positive movement on metrics such as local business closures (coming down) and regional exports (going up).

These good signals for Wolverhampton's business environment and economy are covered in Section 2 of the report (and sectors covered in more detail in the annex) and are all an important part of driving growth and prosperity across the city. Positive movement on these metrics can help support reduction in major challenges reinforced and stated mostly in Sections 3, 4 and 5 of the report. For example:

- Wolverhampton has considerably higher rates of deprivation, child poverty, fuel poverty and poor health / physical activity than the national average.
- There remains a gap in employment and economic activity – affecting some groups of people more than others - despite rising jobs vacancies and qualification levels. Businesses are still struggling to find the skills they need.
- Infrastructure accessibility and provision is varied across the geography, while a step change is required to achieve net zero in a reasonable timeframe – particularly given the area's high concentration of high energy intensive users.
- The overall business base still lacks overall dynamism in terms of density, innovation and investment, while the sectoral mix currently limits growth in these areas.

Despite improvement on some of these metrics, they remain important challenges for the city to resolve for the good of its people, businesses, communities and the whole economy.
Together, these activities and insight are important to consider for Wolverhampton to meet its economic ambitions while raising standards of living and other important social and environmental outcomes.

Contents

1. Innovation, Enterprise and Growth

1.1. Economic Conditions and Productivity

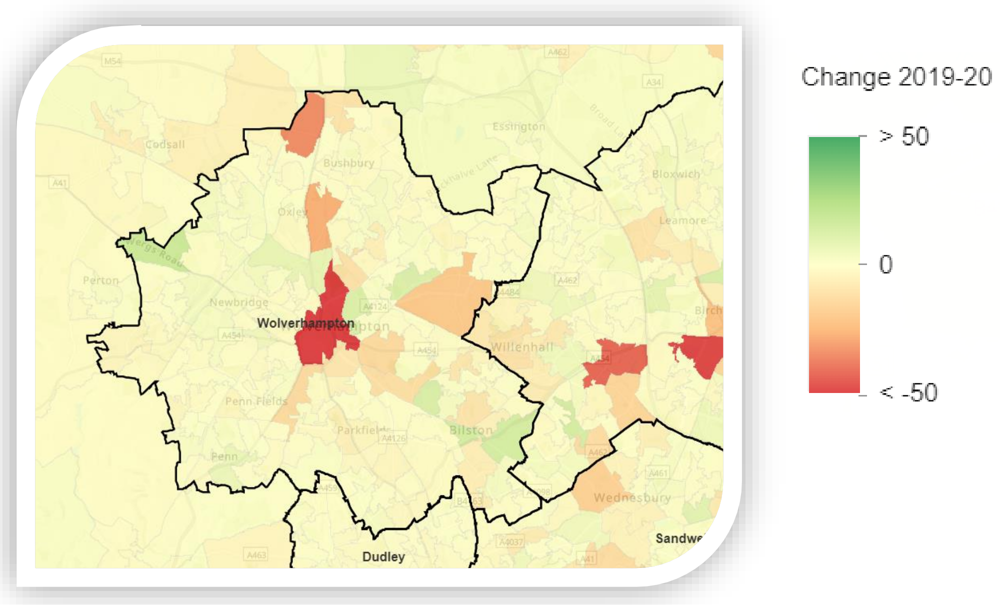
Gross Value Added (GVA)

Reflecting national trends and recovery from the Covid pandemic, Wolverhampton's total GVA increased from £5.0bn in 2020 to £5.5bn in 2021.[1] This equated to an 11.0% annual increase while England-wide increased by 7.1%. The latest GVA figures for Wolverhampton are the highest on record. Longer term, the average growth in GVA since 2017 for Wolverhampton was 13.1% which was above the England growth rate of 9.9%. There is a time lag in low level geography (Lower Super Output Area - LSOA), however the below map provides insight to changes in total GVA across Wolverhampton between 2019 to 2020.[2]

With total GVA increasing, Wolverhampton's GVA per head increased from £18,812 in 2020 to £20,918 in 2021. This equated to an 11.2% increase for Wolverhampton with the England average increasing by 7.1% (from £29,060 to £31,138). As GVA per head increased in Wolverhampton between 2020 and 2021, the gap to England also decreased over this period from £10,248 to £10,221.

Wolverhampton's GVA per employee was £52,104 in 2021; this was a 7.9% (+£3,813) increase from 2020[3]. England increased by 3.9% (+£2,466) to £66,179 GVA per employee, leading to a shortfall of £14,076 for Wolverhampton in 2021. As GVA per employee increased in Wolverhampton between 2020 and 2021, the gap to England also decreased over this period from £15,422 to £14,076.

The following map shows change in GVA between 2019 to 2020 across Wolverhampton (£ millions):



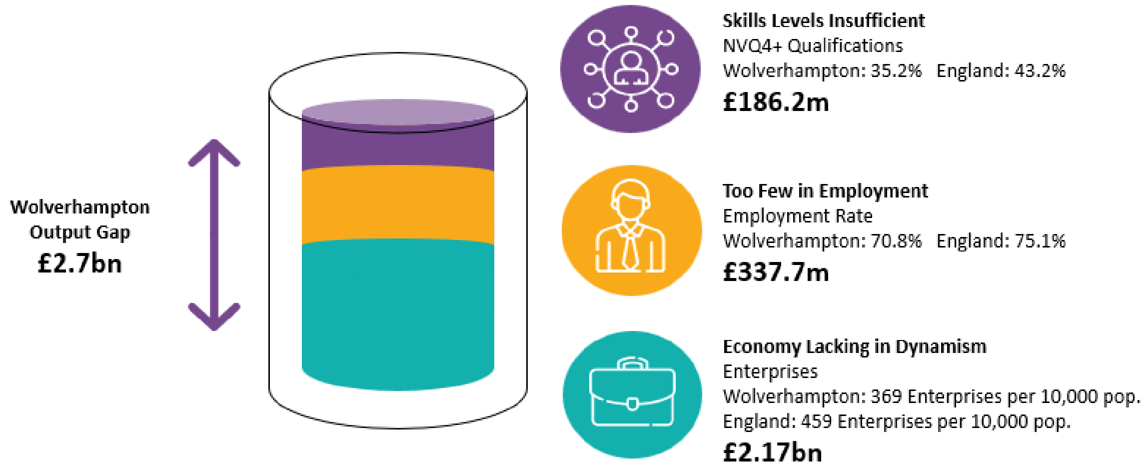
Source: ONS, Regional gross value added (balanced) by industry: all ITL regions, 2023, and Business Register Employment Survey, released 2022

[1] ONS, Regional gross value added (balanced) by industry: all ITL regions, 2023.
[2] ONS, Disaggregating annual subnational gross value added (GVA) to lower levels of geography: 1998 to 2020, released 2023
[3] ONS, Regional gross value added (balanced) by industry: all ITL regions, 2023 and Business Register Employment Survey, released 2022.

Output Gap

Wolverhampton's output gap (GVA per head in Wolverhampton compared to national average) remains broadly at £2.7bn for 2021. With GVA per head increasing since 2020, the output gap in Wolverhampton decreased by £11m. However, when compared to 2004, this has increased by £1.6bn. As seen in the following infographic, the largest component of Wolverhampton's output gap[4] is reflected by an economy that lacks dynamism compared to the national average. This "residual" output gap factor reflects that, beyond employment, skills and pay deficiencies, the make-up of the Wolverhampton economy is less productive and dynamic than the national average.

Wolverhampton Output Gap, 2021:



Source: ONS Annual Population Survey 2023, Business Demography 2023

Productivity

Between 2005 and 2010, smoothed GVA per hour declined each year in Wolverhampton, however since 2010, there has been continual annual increases[5]. GVA per hour worked for Wolverhampton increased by 3.4% (+£1.05) since 2020 to reach £32.14 in 2021 – the highest on record. England-wide increased by 1.5% (+£0.57 to £38.91). There was a shortfall of £6.19 when comparing Wolverhampton to the England in 2021.

Smoothed GVA per filled job for Wolverhampton increased by 1.0% (+£444.70) since 2020 to £46,949 in 2021, making this the highest figure on record for Wolverhampton. Over this period, England-wide increased by 0.7% (+£417 to £59,286), meaning Wolverhampton had a shortfall of £11,378.

[4] The Economic Intelligence Unit (EIU) calculations using ONS Annual Population Survey and Business Demography, released 2023
[5] ONS, Subregional productivity in the UK: June 2023

1.2. Structure of the Economy - Strategic and Foundational Sectors[6]

The shortfall in business dynamism and productivity is likely to be a combination of firm-level effects (lower productivity in Wolverhampton businesses than national average) and sector-level effects (a higher reliance in Wolverhampton on lower productivity sectors). ONS research has found that industry mix appears to only play a relatively small role in explaining average productivity differences between different areas. Instead, it is the differences between average firms' productivity within industries that has the most significant effect on aggregate regional productivity differences.[7]
And yet Wolverhampton's sectoral and sub-sectoral make-up also contributes to a performance described by Centre for Cities as "Falling Behind".

While Wolverhampton has a high concentration in some higher productivity industries such as advanced manufacturing, it also has a higher concentration than the national average in lower productivity sectors – such as retail and health & wellbeing. In contrast, there is a large gap in the concentration of business services nationally compared to Wolverhampton (26.2% of jobs compared to 17.0% of jobs). This is a highly productive sector.

The type of sub-sectors present locally in each sector are also relevant; high productivity is often driven by high-end, technologically strong sub-sectors and companies. Furthermore, the existence of retail and advanced manufacturing sectors as major underpinning sector in Wolverhampton is potentially fragile, given both have declined in recent years and face additional risks – not least from Brexit, the pandemic and technological change.

Summary of GVA, jobs and enterprises by defined sector[8] for Wolverhampton (and percentage of total for England):

	GVA (£m)			Jobs			Enterprises (Snapshot)		
	2021	%	England %	2022	%	England %	2023	%	England %
Advanced Manufacturing	£974m	17.6%	11.3%	13,670	12.5%	9.9%	790	8.9%	11.7%
Building Technologies	£360m	6.5%	6.0%	4,050	3.7%	4.8%	1,150	13.0%	13.9%
Business Services	£1.3bn	23.4%	43.2%	18,515	17.0%	26.2%	2,500	28.3%	37.3%
Environmental Technologies	£134m	2.4%	2.7%	1,275	1.2%	1.1%	55	0.6%	0.5%
Health & Wellbeing	£882m	16.0%	8.4%	23,400	21.4%	15.1%	445	5.0%	5.5%
Public Sector inc. Education	£920m	16.7%	11.7%	17,000	15.6%	15.2%	225	2.5%	4.0%
Retail	£661m	12.0%	10.7%	17,500	16.0%	14.0%	1,640	18.5%	14.8%
Transport Technologies	£202m	3.7%	3.2%	8,270	7.6%	5.1%	1,380	15.6%	4.8%
Visitor Economy	£97m	1.8%	2.8%	5,550	5.1%	8.5%	660	7.5%	7.4%
Wolverhampton Total	**£5.5bn**			**109,230**			**8,845**		

Source: ONS, Regional gross value added (balanced) by industry: all ITL regions, 2023, ONS, BRES, 2023, ONS, UK Business Counts, 2023

[6] Based on Black Country defined strategic sectors (advanced manufacturing, building technologies, business services, environmental technologies, transport technologies and visitor economy) and foundational sectors (health & wellbeing, public sector including education and retail).
[7] ONS, Understanding spatial labour productivity in the UK, released 2019
[8] ONS, Regional economic activity by gross domestic product, UK: 1998 to 2020, released 2022, Business Register Employment Survey, released 2021 and Business Demography, released 2021. In the table: strategic sectors are in bold, shaded boxes indicator Wolverhampton has a higher or same proportion that the national proportion for that sector.

However, there are clear industrial strengths and opportunities in the Wolverhampton economy, some expected and traditional, others more recent and unexpected.

From a growth perspective, health and wellbeing and the wider public sector have had notable increases in jobs and GVA in recent years, while there were less jobs in 2022 than in 2015 for advanced manufacturing, building technologies and business services – all key transformative sectors. More positively, manufacturing and business services were among sectors that saw an uptick in jobs in 2022, alongside a significant uplift in transport technologies activity. The manufacturing increase is in contrast to predictions in forecasts which suggest continued decline; albeit the sector has only reached pre-Covid levels of jobs.

Also, across 5 sectors Wolverhampton has reported higher GVA growth than the national average since 2015, including advanced manufacturing, health and wellbeing, public sector, retail and transport technologies. Business growth has also been stronger than reported nationally in several sectors and the economy as a whole.

Wolverhampton remains reliant on 5 key sectors of employment and output creation: business services, manufacturing, health and wellbeing, retail and wholesale, and the public sector. Within these sectors is where most, but not all, of Wolverhampton's strengths lie too, highlighted in the bubble graph below[9]. Some activities in these areas continue to grow, but others are in decline.
Demonstrated somewhat by the growth aspect of the below graph, there are a host of emerging sector opportunities for Wolverhampton, of which some have already demonstrated a high growth in jobs. Tracking some of these "new economy" sectors can be difficult though, hence the use of other datasets and insight later in this report (via The Data City for instance).

More information is available in sector profiles provided as separate appendices.

Growth, Size and Specialisation of Sector Activities in Wolverhampton

Source: ONS, Regional gross value added (balanced) by industry: all ITL regions, 2023, ONS, BRES, 2023, ONS, UK Business Counts, 2023

[9] Size of bubble = size of sector activity by jobs; further to the right indicates Wolverhampton specialisation (location quotient); and further to the top indicates higher growth in jobs in the last 5 years. Interactive version

Growth Analysis – 2015 to Latest data

	Jobs (2015-2022)			GVA (2015-2021)		
Sector and Sub-Sector	**Wton change**	**Wton %**	**England %**	**Wton change**	**Wton %**	**England %**
Advanced Manufacturing	-1,795	-11.6%	1.5%	£233m	31.4%	13.0%
Building Technologies	-325	-7.4%	15.8%	£35m	10.8%	15.8%
Business Services	-510	-2.7%	12.0%	£209m	19.3%	20.8%
Environmental Technologies	100	8.5%	13.9%	£31m	30.1%	16.5%
Health & Wellbeing	5,775	32.8%	11.7%	£281m	46.8%	34.6%
Public Sector inc. Education	1,750	11.5%	5.1%	£313m	51.6%	25.6%
Retail & Wholesale	£0	0.0%	-3.3%	£143m	27.6%	22.2%
Transport Technologies	2,520	43.8%	17.4%	£42m	26.3%	-7.8%
Visitor Economy	225	4.2%	20.1%	£7m	7.8%	4.6%
Grand Total	**7,740**	**7.6%**	**8.4%**	**£1,297m**	**30.7%**	**19.3%**

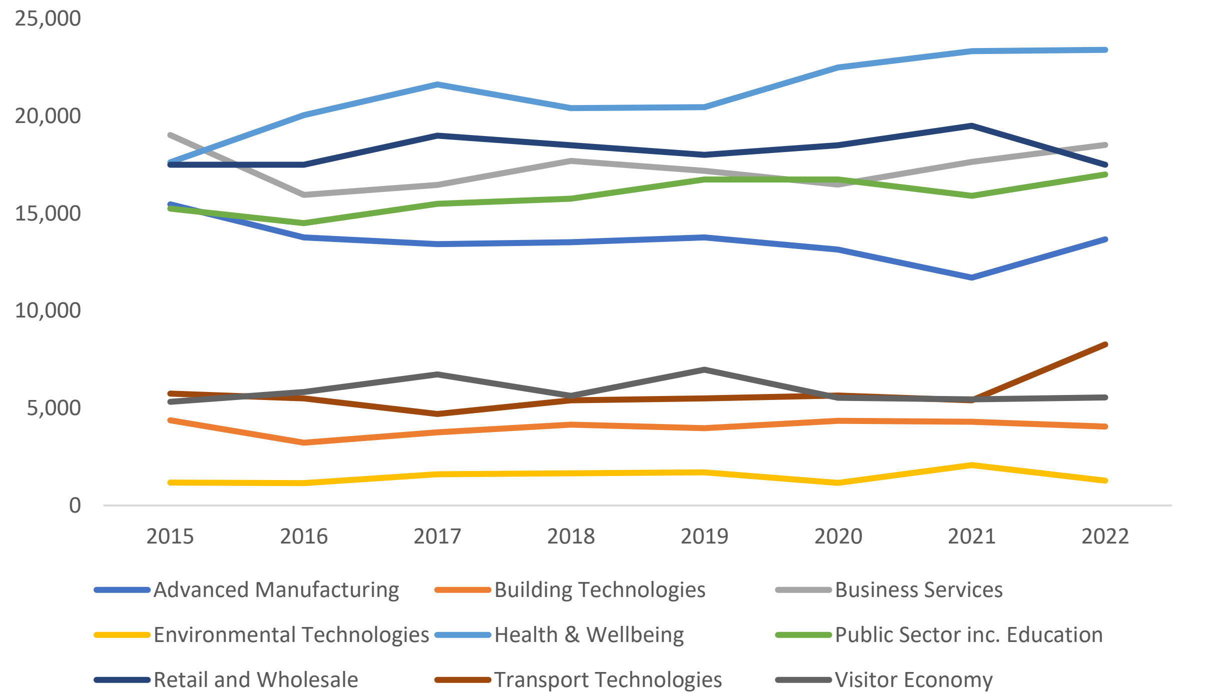
Source: ONS, Regional gross value added (balanced) by industry: all ITL regions, 2023, ONS, BRES, 2023

Growth Analysis – Latest Yearly Growth

	Jobs (2021-2022)			GVA (2020-2021)		
Sector and Sub-Sector	**Wton change**	**Wton %**	**England %**	**Wton change**	**Wton %**	**England**
Advanced Manufacturing	1,970	16.8%	3.3%	£154m	18.8%	8.1%
Building Technologies	-250	-5.8%	2.0%	£64m	21.6%	13.3%
Business Services	870	4.9%	3.2%	£91m	7.6%	4.9%
Environmental Technologies	-800	-38.6%	-1.0%	£17m	14.5%	12.2%
Health & Wellbeing	75	0.3%	1.9%	£73m	9.0%	6.3%
Public Sector inc. Education	1,100	6.9%	1.1%	£42m	4.8%	6.3%
Retail & Wholesale	-2,000	-10.3%	-0.1%	£57m	9.4%	8.6%
Transport Technologies	2,865	53.0%	0.8%	£26m	14.8%	2.6%
Visitor Economy	100	1.8%	7.5%	£22m	29.3%	31.8%
Grand Total	**3,930**	**3.7%**	**2.3%**	**£549m**	**11.0%**	**7.1%**

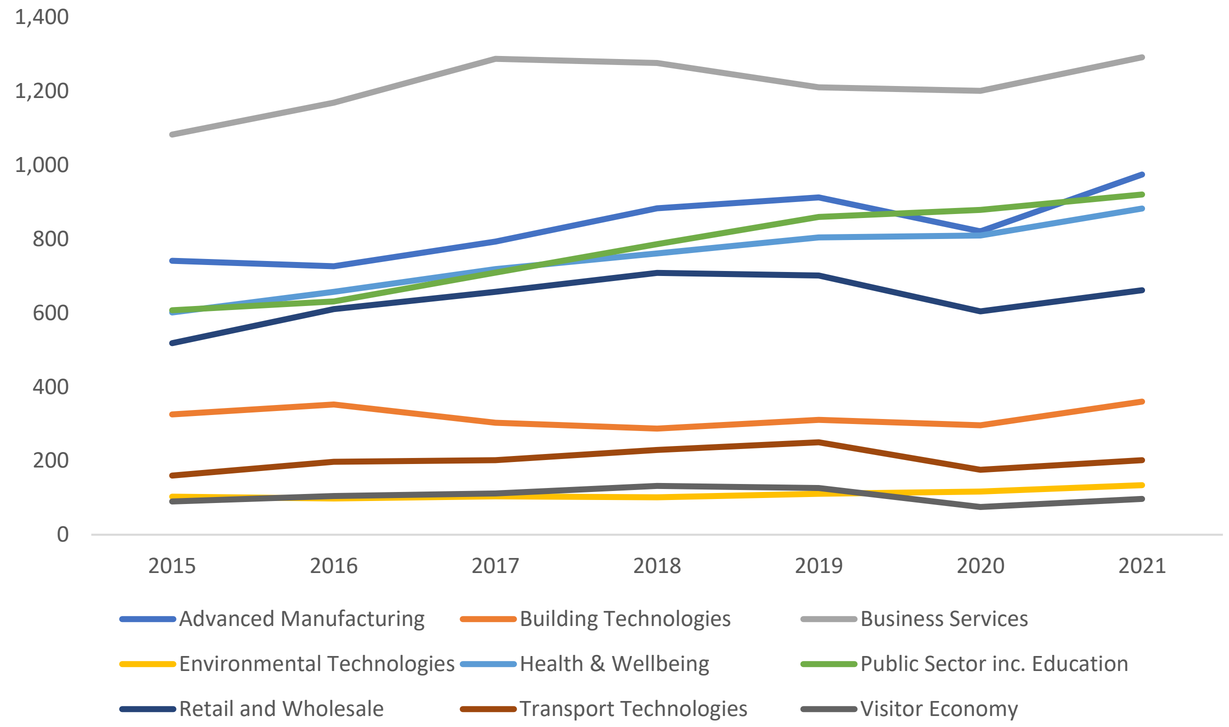
Source: ONS, Regional gross value added (balanced) by industry: all ITL regions, 2023, ONS, BRES, 2023

Sector Jobs Growth Over time in Wolverhampton



Source: ONS, BRES, 2023

Sector GVA Growth Over time in Wolverhampton (£m)



Source: ONS, Regional gross value added (balanced) by industry: all ITL regions, 2023

1.3. Business Demography and Entrepreneurship

Active Enterprises

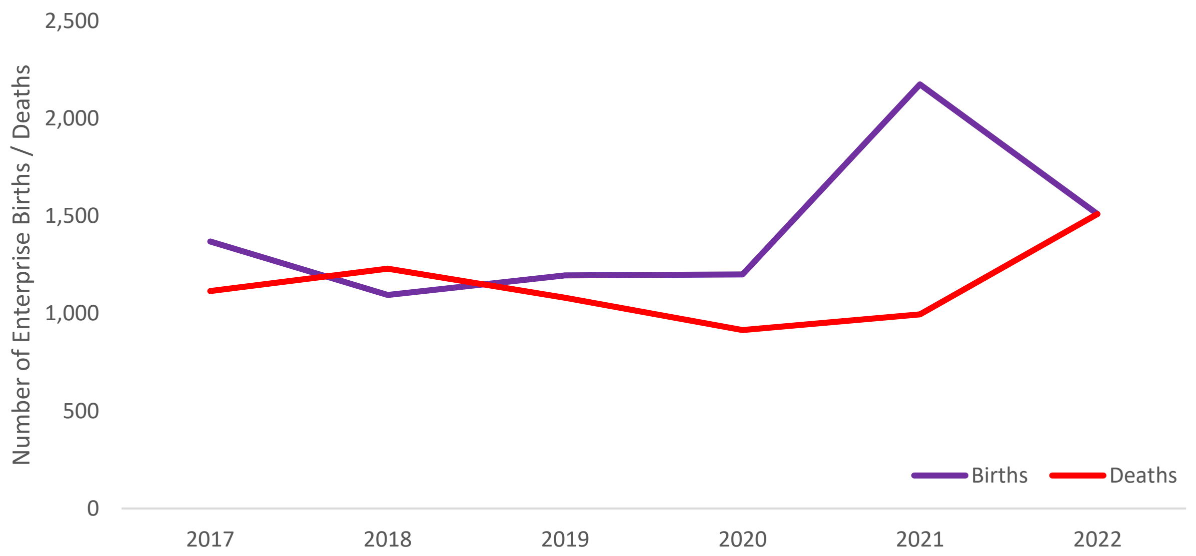
The number of active enterprises[10] in Wolverhampton increased from 9,745 in 2021 to 10,485 in 2022. This represents a growth rate of 7.6% locally, while nationally there was a decline of 0.5%.

There were 397 enterprises per 10,000 population for Wolverhampton in 2022, compared to 457 per 10,000 population for England. For Wolverhampton to reach the national average of 457 per 10,000 population requires an additional 1,569 active enterprises.

Enterprise Births and Deaths

As seen in the chart below, following enterprise deaths overtaking births in 2018, there was a three-year period where enterprise deaths were back below the number of enterprise creations. The latest figure in 2022 show that there was the exact same amount of enterprise deaths as births (1,510).

Wolverhampton's Enterprise Births and Deaths Trends:



ONS, Business Demography, released 2023

Enterprise births in Wolverhampton has decreased by 30.6% (-655) since 2020, while England overall decreased by 7.4%. However, despite the fall, there were 57 enterprise births per 10,000 population in Wolverhampton in 2022, compared to 53 per 10,000 population for England.

Since 2021, enterprise deaths in Wolverhampton increased by 51.8% (+515), while England increased by 6.0%.

Experimental Business Births and Deaths

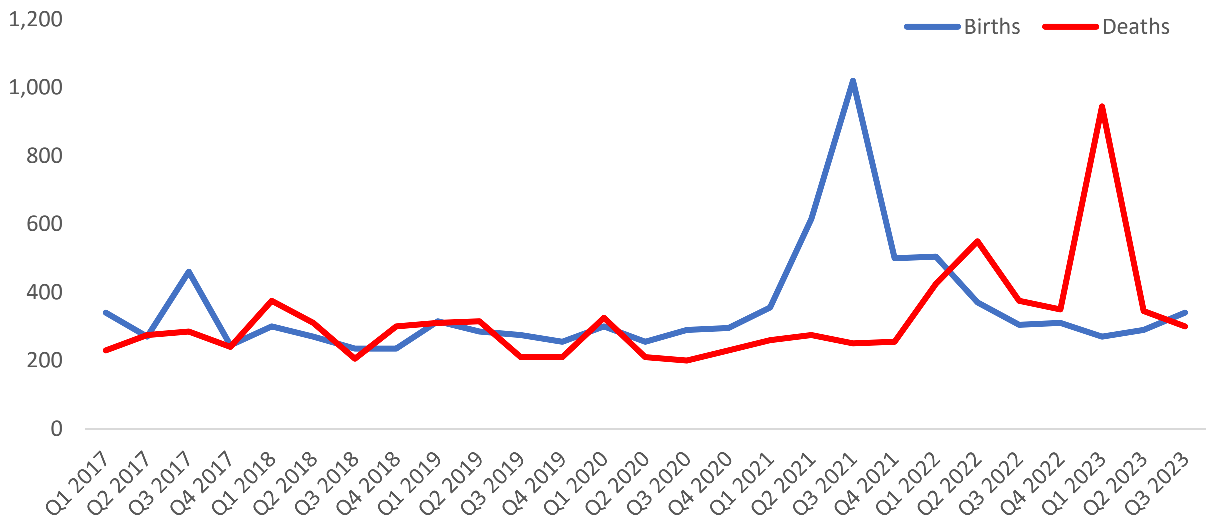
The trends shown in Wolverhampton generally reflect trends being shown in national data, with declining business deaths throughout 2023 and business creation exceeding business deaths in the most recent quarter for the first time since early 2022. Business creation in Q3 2023 totalled 340 in Wolverhampton, behind Walsall and Sandwell at 345 and 375 respectively. However, strength in

[10] Enterprise stock, births, deaths and survival rates analysis is derived from ONS, Business Demography, released 2023

business creation is shown in Wolverhampton with an increase in business creation of +17.2% in the last quarter, considerably exceeding the increase across the Black Country of +11.8%, wider West Midlands (WMCA) (+9.1%) and UK (+1.9%).

Similarly, in comparison to the same quarter in 2022, Wolverhampton reported an 11.5% increase in business creation, exceeding that across the Black Country (+11.3%) and the West Midlands (+7%). In contrast, Wolverhampton lags slightly behind the national figures in the last quarter in terms of business closures where data shows a 17.7% decline nationally with Wolverhampton decreasing more steadily at 13%.

Trends in (experimental) Wolverhampton Business Births and Deaths:



Source: ONS, Business demography, quarterly experimental statistics, UK: July to September 2023

Wolverhampton ranked highest in terms of business closures in the Black Country with a total of 300 in the last quarter, however Wolverhampton based businesses still show strength with business closures declining. Despite a sharp rise in business closures in the first quarter of 2023, business deaths in the last quarter are the lowest they have been since Q4 2021.

Business Births and Deaths, Wolverhampton and Comparator Areas (2023 Q3):

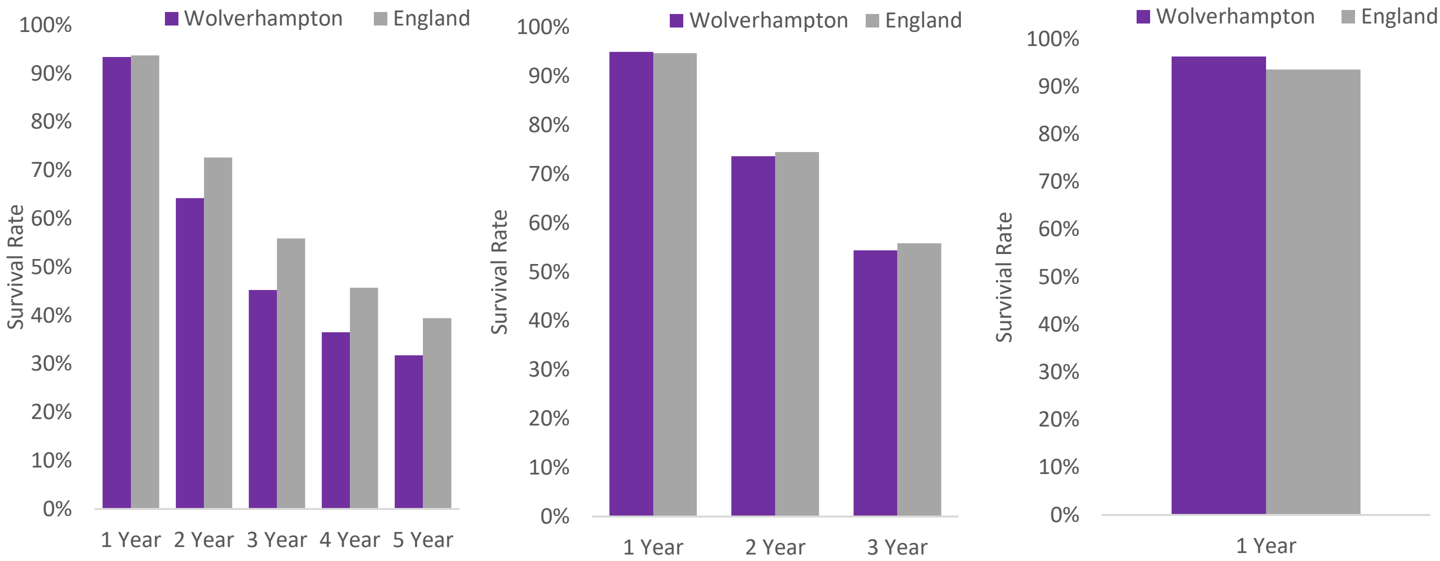
	2023 Q3 Births	Births last Q change	Births same Q last year change	2023 Q3 Deaths	Deaths last Q change	Deaths same Q last year change
Wolverhampton	**340**	**17.2%**	**11.5%**	**300**	**-13.0%**	**-20.0%**
Black Country	1,330	11.8%	11.3%	1,095	-14.8%	-17.7%
West Midlands (Met County)	3,535	9.1%	7.0%	2,855	-18.7%	-19.7%
UK	78,655	1.9%	14.9%	69,445	-17.7%	-13.6%

Source: ONS, Business demography, quarterly experimental statistics, UK: July to September 2023

Enterprise Survival Rates

The findings suggest that Wolverhampton performs better on short-term survival (1–2-year enterprise survival rates are higher in Wolverhampton than the England average), but lags behind when it comes to longer-term survival (3-5 years enterprise survival rates in England are higher than in Wolverhampton).

From Left to Right Shows 5-Year Survival Rates from 2017 Births, 3-Year Survival Rates from 2019 Births and 1-Year Survival Rates for Enterprises in Wolverhampton and England-Wide:



Source: ONS, Business demography, quarterly experimental statistics, UK: July to September 2023

Scaleups and High Growth Companies

Utilising data analysed by Beauhurst, the Scale Up Institute holds data on scaleup (high growth) companies in the UK. In the most recent Annual Review, analysis shows that:

- There were 28,410 scaleups in the UK in 2021, down from 33,955 in 2020.
- The Black Country had 355 scaleups in total in 2021, representing 29.3 scaleups per 100,000 population.
- Albeit representing data from a previous Annual Report, a list of each "visible" scaleup in the UK is available on the Scale Up Institute's website, with the Black Country cohort (96 firms) together providing over 33,000 jobs and £2.7bn turnover through their activities – from Black Country bases.
- 11 visible scaleups are identified in Wolverhampton, providing over 6,400 jobs and £630m in turnover. These are:
  - Alpha Designs Upholstery (Advanced Manufacturing)
  - Task Consumer Products (Retail)
  - Carver Limited (Building Technologies)
  - Pallet-Track Limited (Transport Technologies)
  - Charter Court Financial Services Limited (Business Services)
  - Laystall Engineering (Advanced Manufacturing)
  - Onboard Corrugated Limited (Advanced Manufacturing)
  - Sevacare Limited (Health & Wellbeing)
  - Sherwood Stainless and Aluminium Ltd (Advanced Manufacturing)
  - Premium Choice Limited (Business Services)
  - Salisbury Poultry Limited (Advanced Manufacturing)

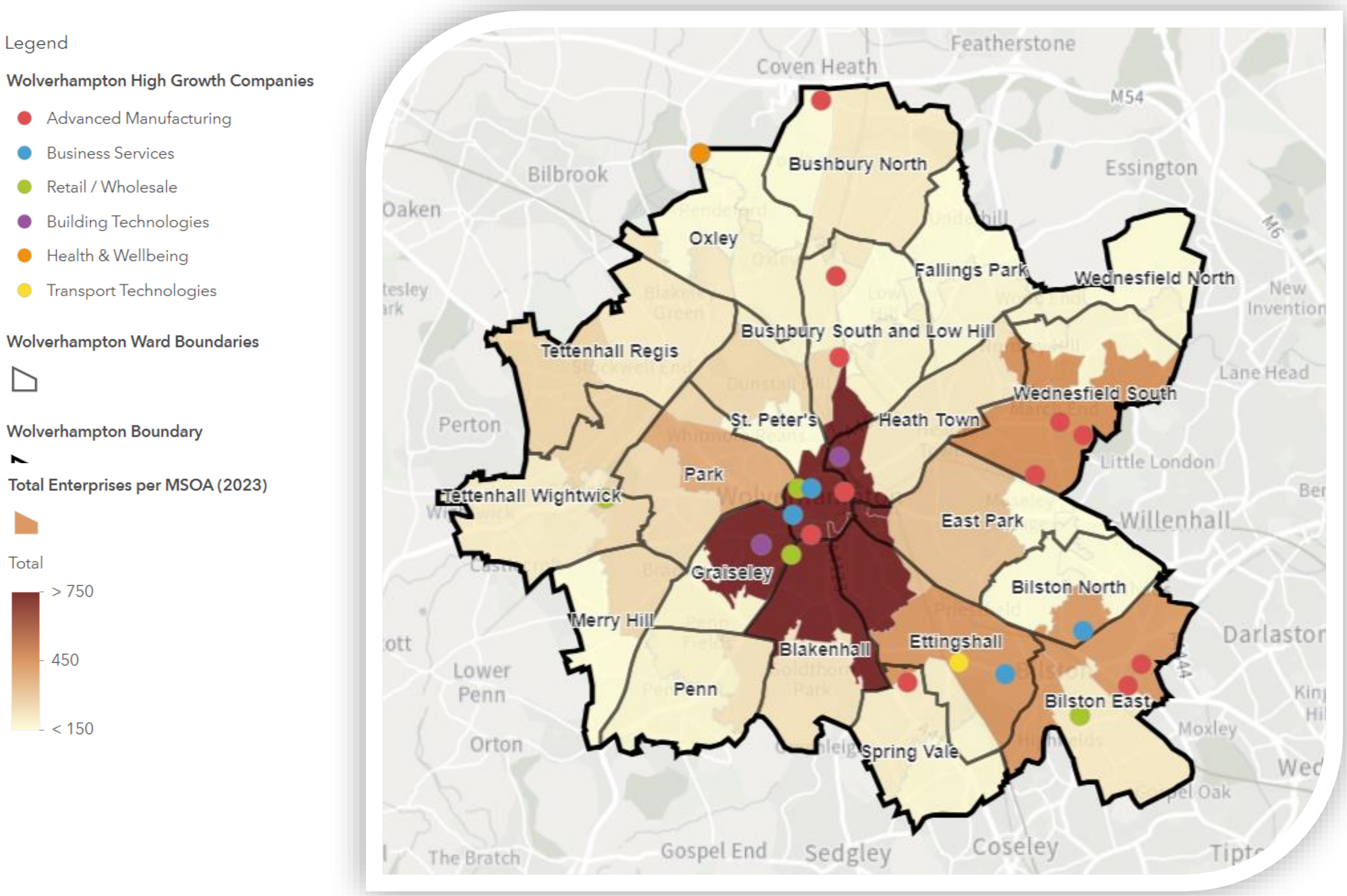
Note that the majority these companies are based on data and reports published in 2021 so may no longer be high growth companies / scaleups in reality.

- Looking at raw company financial data through The Data City, an assessment of more up to date high growth companies can be made. Using a mix of growth measures related to turnover growth in companies, the following are summarised as probable high growth firms in Wolverhampton, given that they appear in more than 1 “high growth list” (of 3 in total, looking at growth in the last year and growth in the last 3 years):
    - Acton Banks Limited (health & wellbeing)
    - Carver (Wolverhampton) Limited (building technologies)
    - Compton Care Group Limited (health & wellbeing)
    - Contollo Care Group (health & wellbeing)
    - Cooper Coated Coil Limited (advanced manufacturing)
    - Fastline Steel Services UK Ltd (advanced manufacturing)
    - Fortress Interlocks Limited (advanced manufacturing)
    - Marston's Plc (advanced manufacturing)
    - Midwest Mechanical and Electrical services limited (construction)
    - Mueller Europe Limited (advanced manufacturing)
    - Nautilus Designs Limited (retail / wholesale)
    - Onboard Corrugated Limited (advanced manufacturing)
    - Pallet - Track Limited (transport technologies)
    - Ralph Martindale (England) Limited (advanced manufacturing)
    - Restore Digital Limited (business services)
    - Sherwood Stainless and Aluminium Ltd (advanced manufacturing)
    - Tarmac Building Products Limited (construction)
    - Task Consumer Products Limited (retail / wholesale)
    - Textile Recycling International Limited (business services)
    - Total Construction Supplies Limited (advanced manufacturing)
    - W. Brindley (Garages) Limited (retail / wholesale)
    - Wulfrun Building Solutions Limited (construction)
    - Yoo Recruit Ltd (business services)
    - Zaun Limited (advanced manufacturing)

Furthermore, according to data collated by Dealroom as part the Data City’s platform, the following Wolverhampton companies have been identified as receiving investment (e.g., equity, debt investment, buyouts) in recent years: Restore Digital (Digital), Advanced Chemical Etchings (Engineering), Berriman Eaton (Estate Agency), Strix UK (Water Treatment), iKnowa (Technology / Construction), Chromatwist (Research), Goldilock (Cyber).

The latest official ONS figures for the number of high growth companies – defined by all enterprises with average annualised employment growth greater than 20% per annum over a three-year period - in Wolverhampton is 20 (2022), which has remained steady in the last few years. This represents 15.4% of the high growth companies in the Black Country.

High Growth Companies and Total Enterprises Across Wolverhampton:



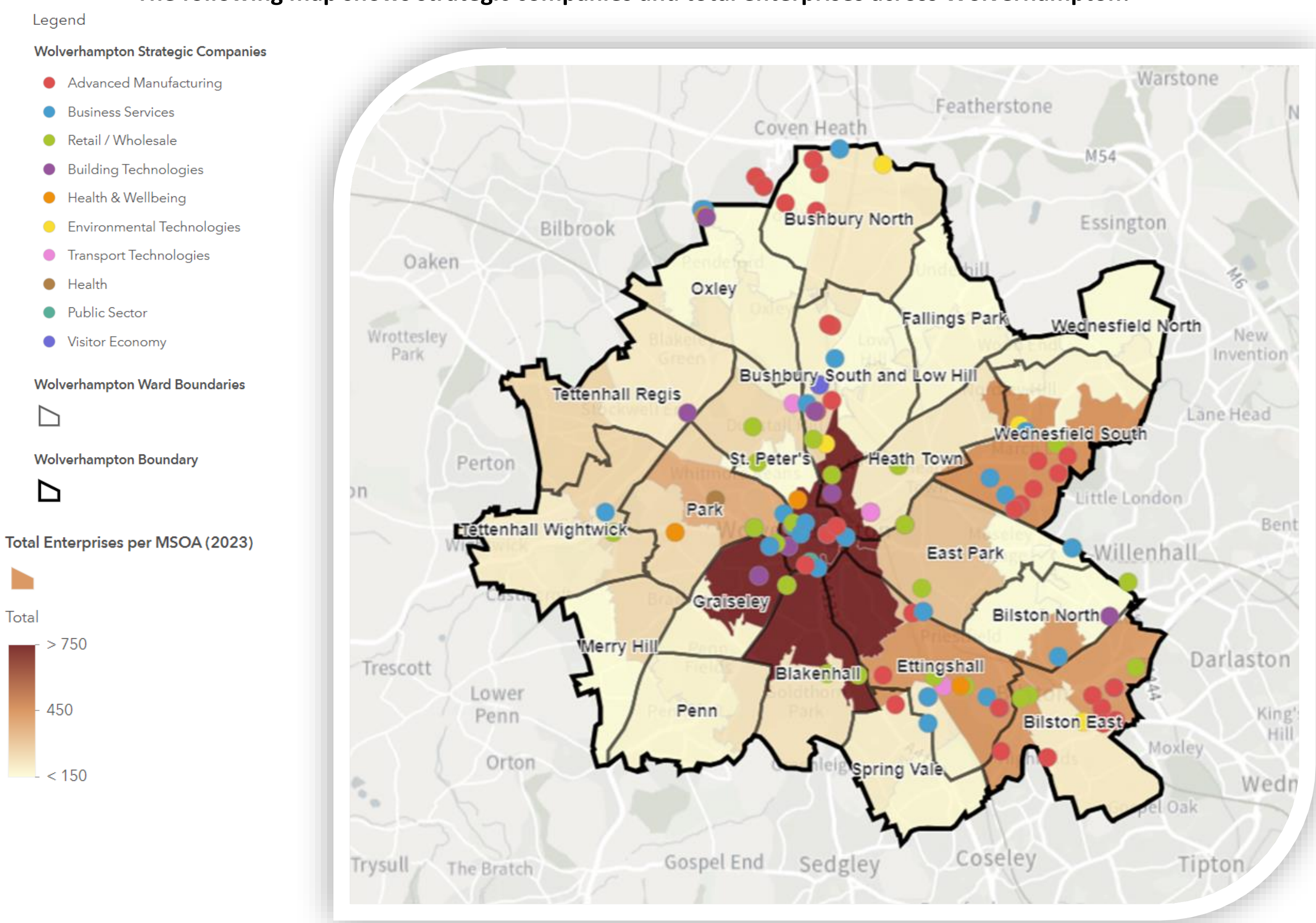
Source: ONS, UK Business Counts, 2023, DataCity Explorer; note interactive version of maps available [here]

Strategic Companies

Major businesses continue to have an important presence locally. Combining City of Wolverhampton Council data and that of the EIU (via The Data City), 137 strategic companies with turnover above £10m annually have been identified in Wolverhampton. This includes national and global companies such as Jaguar Land Rover, Tata Steel, Sainsburys, and Royal Mail that have substantial activity in Wolverhampton without being registered in the city.

Over one-third (37%) of companies in the strategic company list are in the advanced manufacturing sector, followed by business services (34 companies, 35% of the total) and retail (26 companies, 19% of the total. The only other sectors to have more than 5 companies represented are building technologies / construction (10 companies, 7% of the total) and Health & Wellbeing (6 companies, 4% of the total).

The following map shows strategic companies and total enterprises across Wolverhampton:



Source: ONS, UK Business Counts, 2023, DataCity Explorer

Wolverhampton's strategic companies include the following household names and major employers:

The previous sector analysis makes use of traditional Standard Industrialisation Classification (SIC) codes to define sectors. In addition, wider sources are used to understand new and emerging sectors that aren't well reflected in SIC codes, as well as other important characteristics such as ownership and equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). This helps us understand more specifically about key sub-sectors and activities that will be critical to the modern Black Country economy, especially those that aren't easily defined, while providing a stronger evidence base for policy / decision-making. For example:

- **Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Sector**
  - Analysis of data from NCVO's Almanac suggests that there are over 1,000 VCSEs in Wolverhampton.
  - Social Enterprise UK's State of Social Enterprise reports demonstrate key characteristics of social enterprises across UK regions.
  - A high percentage of West Midlands social enterprises are led by women (60% vs 47% for the UK), while a relatively high percentage operate in deprived parts of the region (29% vs 22% for the UK).
- **Ethnic Minority Owned Businesses**
  - Based on national figures and population estimates, there is likely to be over 5,000 enterprises in the Black Country that are ethnic minority owned (EMBs). The number in Wolverhampton is likely to be well over 1,000.
  - Based on recent data from the Gender Index, there are 2,616 enterprises in Wolverhampton that are ethnic minority female-led companies, 14% of all companies compared to a UK average of 7.6%.
  - Research by FSB (among others) suggests that EMB firms in the UK are more innovative and more likely to export than average, and yet they face greater barriers in terms of access to finance and other support.
  - It is difficult to identify an exact number and location of EMBs, but examples of large, successful enterprises are provided through OPEN's report with MSDUK. One Wolverhampton business - Maelor Foods – is included in their top 100 list.
- **Female Owned Businesses**
  - From a dataset of 19,273 companies, recent analysis in the Gender Index reports that there are 4,863 female-led companies in Wolverhampton. This represents 25.2% of all active Wolverhampton businesses in the study, above the UK average of 18.3%.
  - While there is much more to be done, this ranks Wolverhampton 6th of all local authority areas in the UK for the proportion of companies that are female led, contributing to a strong performance by the West Midlands region overall (2nd of all regions behind London).
  - 18.2% of female-led companies had angel investors, compared to 11.4% in the UK, with 0.01% of female-led companies classed as fast growth in Wolverhampton, compared to 0.02% in the UK.
  - The sectors with the highest proportion of female-owned companies in Wolverhampton are public health and safety, administrative and support, health, wellbeing and social care, education, logistics.

1.4. Trade in Goods and Services

Trade in Goods

Within the Black Country, Wolverhampton remained the largest goods exporters[11], totalling £988m in 2022 and this was an increase from £919m in 2021. Wolverhampton's imports increased from just over £1.1bn in 2021 to just over £1.4bn in 2022. This means for 2022, there was a trade deficit of £452m.

The latest figures show that Wolverhampton's exported £426m to the EU and £562m to non-EU. When compared to 2021, this is an increase of £76m for EU exports but a decrease of £7m for non-EU exports.

In 2022, Wolverhampton imported £646m worth of goods from the EU and £794m from non-EU locations. Since 2021, EU imports increased by £229m, with a smaller increase (+£76m) from non-EU. There was a trade deficit in goods to both the EU (at £220m) and non-EU (at £232m) in 2022.

Trade in Services

In 2021, Wolverhampton exported £507m worth of services[12], when compared to 2020, total exports in services had increased by 31.3% (+£121m). Wolverhampton imported £240m worth of services in 2021, a decrease of 4.4% (-£11m) since 2020. Meaning Wolverhampton had a trade surplus of £267m (increasing from £135m in 2020).

In 2021, Wolverhampton exports in services can be split by £193m (38% of total) to the EU and £314m to non-EU. This has increased by 24.5% (+£38m) and 35.9% (+£83m) respectively when compared to 2020.

In 2021, Wolverhampton imports of services can be split by £95m (40% of total) from the EU and £145m from non-EU. This has decreased by 23.4% (-£29m) and increased by 14.2% (+£18m) respectively when compared to 2020.

There was still a trade surplus to the EU at £98m (increasing from £31m) and to the non-EU at £169m (increasing from £104m).

Wolverhampton's Trade in Services Summary for 2021:

Direction of trade	EU	Non-EU	Total	Percentage to/from the EU
Imports	£95m	£145m	£240m	40%
Exports	£193m	£314m	£507m	38%
Balance	£98m	£169m	£267m	

Source: HM Revenue & Customs

[11] HM Revenue & Customs, UK regional trade in goods statistics disaggregated by smaller geographical areas, released 2023 (Goods only)
[12] ONS, International trade in UK nations, regions and cities: 2021, released 2023. Please note analysis excludes travel and covers trade in services only.

1.5. Innovation and R&D

According to the latest UK Innovation Survey[13] (covering the period 2018-2020), 43.5% of Black Country companies are "innovation active". This is below the England average of 45.7%, but above nearby Greater Birmingham and Solihull (34.1%). It also represents an almost 10 percentage point increase on the previous survey; higher than average growth compared to nationally.

On most measures, the Black Country has a lower percentage of companies than the national average. However, 17.9% of Black Country companies in the survey cited performing internal R&D, higher than the England average of 16.5%.

UK Innovation Survey Results (% of Companies) 2018-2020:

	Innovation Active	Product Innovator	Process Innovator	Strategic & Marketing	Performing Internal R&D	Collaborating within Business Group	New to Market Goods and Services as a % of Turnover
Black Country	**43.5%**	**13.2%**	**16.4%**	**31.8%**	**17.9%**	**47.3**	**3.0%**
Change from 2016-2018	**+8.6pp**	**-3.3pp**	**+1.8pp**	**+5.0pp**	**+8.8pp**	**+3.3pp**	**-4.7pp**
England	45.7%	21.0%	16.7%	34.8%	16.5%	51.8	8.0%
Change from 2016-2018	+7.3pp	+2.2pp	+3.9pp	+7.6pp	-0.8pp	+3.2pp	-0.5pp

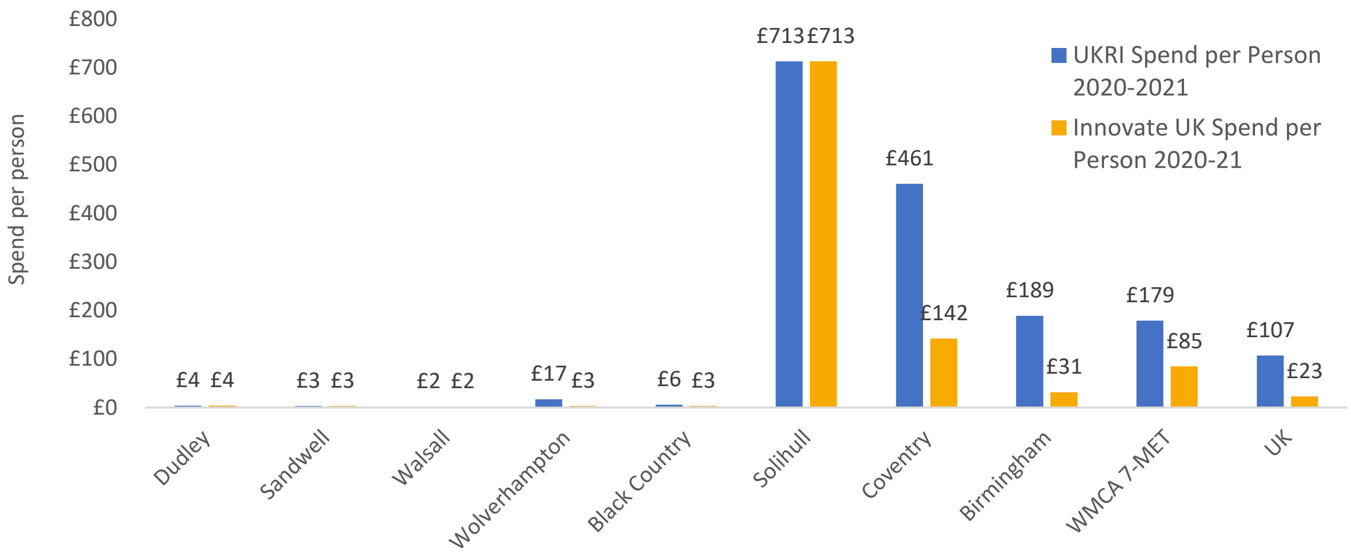
Source: BEIS, 2022

This data is not available at Wolverhampton level but looking at Innovate UK data[14] demonstrates the level and type of innovation funding secured to Wolverhampton organisations. Since 2016/17, Wolverhampton has received £8.0m worth of Innovate UK funding awards, 25% of the Black Country total of £32m. This reflects that Wolverhampton and the wider Black Country traditionally record low levels of innovation and related funding, as depicted by the graph below, covering Innovate UK and wider UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) awards by locality just in the year 2020/21.

This demonstrates that Wolverhampton received £17 per person from UKRI in 2020/21 and just £3 per person for Innovate UK only. These proportions are much lower than the regional and national averages, demonstrating an issue relating to Wolverhampton organisations accessing innovation funding. However, awards to Catapult centres can skew this data somewhat.

[13] Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, UK innovation survey 2021: report, released 2022
[14] UK Research and Innovation, Innovate UK funded projects since 2004, updated 2022.

UKRI & Innovate UK spend per person, 2020-21 (via UKRI data)



Source: UK Research and Innovation

However, there have been strong project investments locally in this time, with the largest Innovate UK awards for Wolverhampton organisations in recent years including:

- £861,477 awarded to the SWITCH project which aims to SWITCH aims to answer the challenge of climate-neutral short-medium range air transport by developing a revolutionary sustainable gas turbine propulsion system. (2022/23).
- £806,751 awarded to The Fuel Architecture and Systems Technology (FAST) project, supporting the development of future Fuel System Technology – including UTC Aerospace and HS Marston among a large consortium. (2017/18).
- £691,110 awarded to UTC Aerospace to develop an aircraft actuator, suitable for thinner wings in commercial aircraft. (2020/2021).
- £522,901 awarded to the GreenLog project which accelerates systemic changes in last mile delivery ecosystems for economically, environmentally and socially sustainable city logistics. (2022/23).
- £241,371 awarded to the STELLAR project – incorporating University of Wolverhampton as part of a larger consortium – to develop tools and business models required to provide affordable homes through high-cost design, frame manufacturing and warranty tools within a central virtual hub. (2019/2020)

For the 2022/23 competition year, there has been 8 projects in Wolverhampton thus far, which were awarded a total of £2.2m.

Innovate UK Funded Projects in Wolverhampton for 2022/23:

Sector	Participant	Project Title	Innovate UK Product Type	Award Offered
Responsive	The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust	Make healthcare safer by preventing accidentally retained surgical items	Collaborative R&D	£89,502
Responsive	University of Wolverhampton	Envirosurface - Urban Heat Management Eco Paving (High Albedo Index PU-R Composite)	Collaborative R&D	£117,484
Ageing Society, Health & Nutrition	The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust	Make childbirth and surgery safer by preventing accidentally retained surgical items	Collaborative R&D	£89,502

Sector	Participant	Project Title	Innovate UK Product Type	Award Offered
Responsive	AIRGUARD FILTERS LIMITED	Smart Sink	Grant for R&D	£49,836
Global	APTISENS LTD	ECOlogically sustainable NUTRIent management in agriculture aiming to prevent, mitigate and eliminate pollution in soils, water and air'	EU-Funded	£115,389
Global	HS MARSTON AEROSPACE LIMITED	SWITCH	EU-Funded	£861,477
Global	University of Wolverhampton	Cooperative and Interconnected Green delivery solutions towards an era of optimized zero emission last-mile Logistics	EU-Funded	£522,901
Global	University of Wolverhampton	Systematic and orchestrated deployment of safety solutions in complex urban environments for ageing and vulnerable societies	EU-Funded	£365,621
Global	GOODRICH ACTUATION SYSTEMS LIMITED	Hybrid Electric Regional Wing Integration Novel Green Technologies - HERWINGT	EU-Funded	£103,761

According to The Data City, the following companies are identified as "innovative" in Wolverhampton: Future Genetics Limited (Life Sciences), Schott UK (Glass), Zeel Solutions (Digital Services in Recruitment), Disulfican (Research), Ovivo (Water Treatment), Airguard Filters (Water Treatment / Manufacturing) , Aptisens (Sensors), Membracon (Water Treatment).

While data between 2000 and 2020 via Beauhurst and SpinoutsUK[15] identifies 4 spinout companies from the University of Wolverhampton: Disulfican, Equiami, Pebble Learning, and Watstech. Note this data source will not capture new spinouts from the last 3 years, such as Algorid Limited.

New Economy Clusters[16]

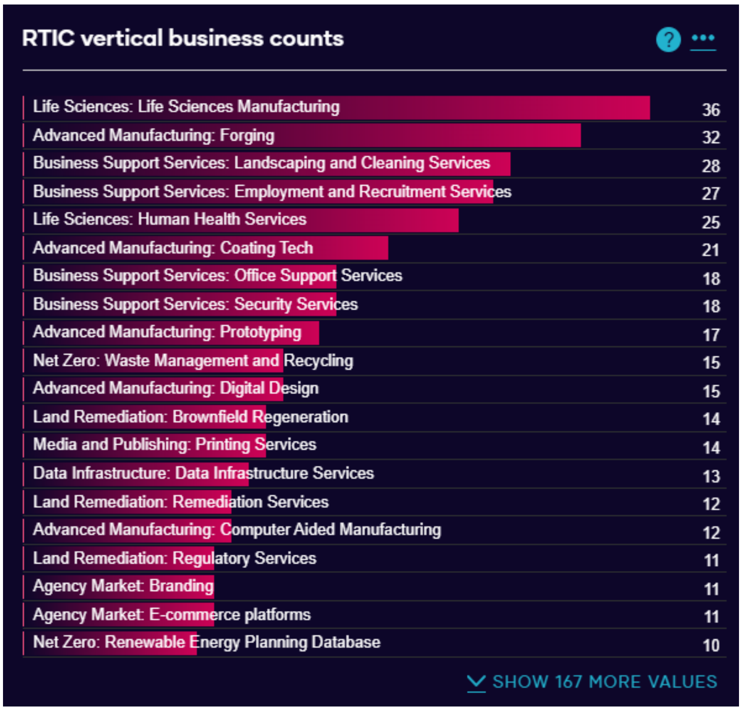
Furthermore, To map the modern, emerging and innovative economy, DataCity have produced over 350 'Real-Time Industrial Classifications' (RTICs). This aims to support a better understanding of what companies do (via their websites) on a self-updating basis, while helping identify more specific clusters of activity in local areas.

The Data City platform includes over 19,000 companies with a registered Wolverhampton address and over 24,000 including those with a Wolverhampton trading addresses (but not headquartered). Of this total, 1,271 companies are identified as working in one of the 200+ RTICs defined by DataCity. 561 of these have registered addresses in Wolverhampton, identified by businesses working in high-growth, innovative and emerging sectors in the economy.

These companies contribute £1bn in turnover and over 8,400 jobs across their operations, an estimated 6,708 in Wolverhampton itself. 56 of the companies were incorporated since 2021, while 6 have been rated as having 3 stars for innovation within the Data City platform. 31 of these companies are identified as having an estimated 20% average growth per year.

[15] Company Listings (spinoutsuk.co.uk)
[16] Data correct up to August 2023; The Data City platform updates in real-time hence the data is always changing.

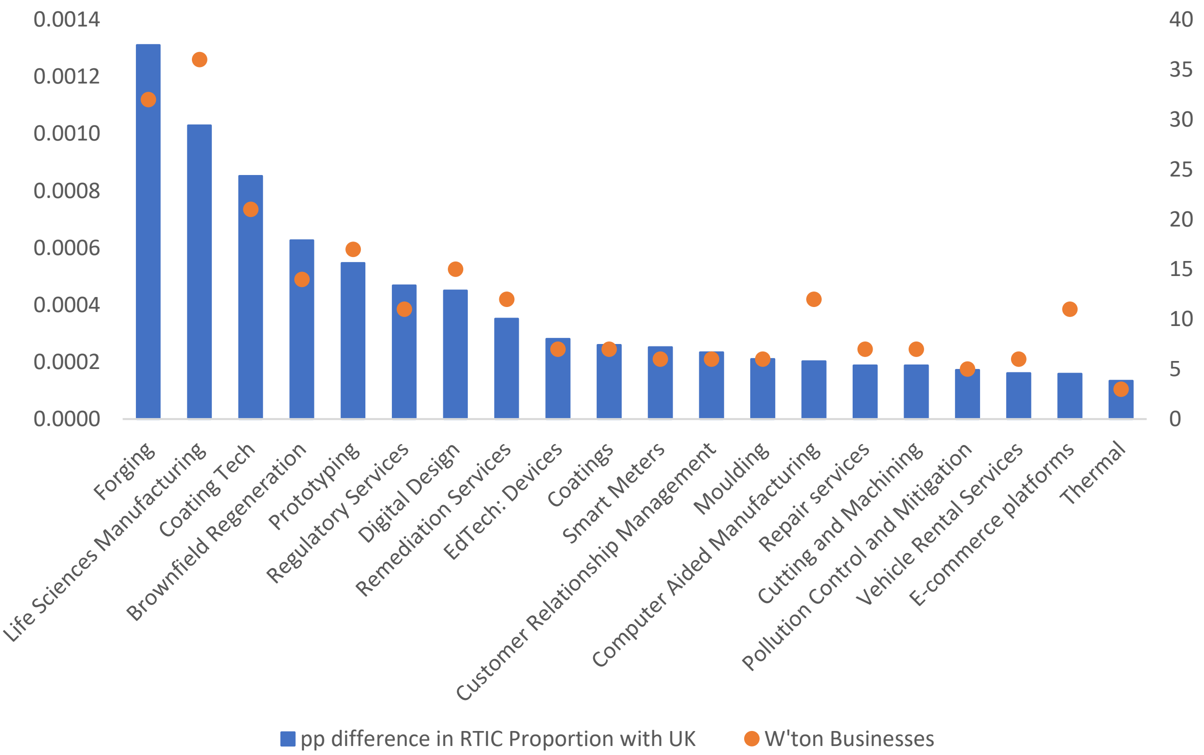
No. of Businesses in Wolverhampton by "Real-Time" Industrial Cluster



The graph to the left reflects the top RTIC sub-categories in Wolverhampton by pp difference. Most common RTIC sub-categories to be represented in Wolverhampton include a mixture of production and service activities. Some of these include activities linked to traditional manufacturing industries locally, such as forging, computer aided manufacturing (CAD) and coating tech, while others are more service / technology based: EdTech, digital design and prototyping. There are other interesting findings, including apparent clusters in brownfield regeneration.

Importantly, some RTIC sub-categories have a high concentration of activity in Wolverhampton compared to the England average. This reflects cluster activities that are of especially unique to Wolverhampton. The diagram below demonstrates this through the blue bars: the percentage point difference between the RTIC proportion (of all companies) in the Wolverhampton vs England. For example, forging, life sciences manufacturing and coating tech.

Common and Highly Concentrated RTIC Sub-Categories in Wolverhampton, Businesses:



Analysis of additional findings from The Data City alongside more traditional sector analysis suggests strengths and opportunity within four core areas in Wolverhampton, all with emerging / nascent cluster potential:

- Sustainable Construction: especially brownfield land
- Manufacturing & Materials
- Services (includes digital)
- Green Economy

While a secondary set of clusters remain important too:

- E-commerce and logistics
- Health and Life Sciences
- Retail
- Sport, Leisure, Tourism and Hospitality Offer
- Other Services etc – creative, admin services, public sector

The sector annex provides more detail of these areas while highlighting growth opportunities in these clusters, linking them to wider regional policy frameworks and research (the West Midlands Plan for Growth and Midlands Engine cluster project).

1.6. Key Trends, Challenges and Future Opportunities

Following the major economic shocks of recent years, Wolverhampton has shown a strong recovery with faster than national average GVA and productivity growth in the last yearly period and in recent years. GVA is now the highest it has ever been in the city.

However, Wolverhampton still has a large output gap with the UK average, which has increased long-term. Furthermore, the overall business base still lacks overall dynamism in terms of density, innovation and investment.

Wolverhampton’s industrial mix also contributes to structural weaknesses in productivity and growth, with an over-reliance on some sectors that are either lower in productive value (retail, health and public sector) or have been most affected by economic shocks (advanced manufacturing).

However, many of these remain important strengths with major future opportunities to be harnessed for local economic growth – as part of a more mixed economy. For example:

- Harnessing future manufacturing and materials-based opportunities such as in electric vehicles, lightweighting, future propulsion and automation in all sectors including food and drink.
- Building on Wolverhampton’s advanced and sustainable construction cluster, incorporating modern methods, digitisation, brownfield land remediation and regeneration.
- Further developing the city centre’s business services and digital offer to attract more high-value activities that drive productivity and agglomeration affects.
- Exploiting the opportunities presented by the green economy and net zero, integrating the other but also other markets such as the circular economy.

These reflect that Wolverhampton has exciting opportunities and strengths to build on. As the data shows, there is pioneering activity happening and business communities to draw on: including very high levels of female-led firms (6th of all local authorities in the UK), ethnic-minority owned businesses and social enterprises. These organisations form part of a diverse business ecosystem with major strategic companies, fledgling start-ups / scaleups and innovators – as identified in the report. Attracting more of these high value companies to move, stay and growth in Wolverhampton within a representative business base will build Wolverhampton’s growth story and investment offer.

Currently, though, businesses continue to face persistent and serious challenges, especially related to the cost of doing business – with inflation still higher than the norm and interest rates high – and structural challenges related to skills, infrastructure and access to finance among other challenges. More positively, there has been relatively more stability in 2023 which has supported more consistent business confidence and positive movement on metrics such as local business closures (coming down) and regional exports (going up).

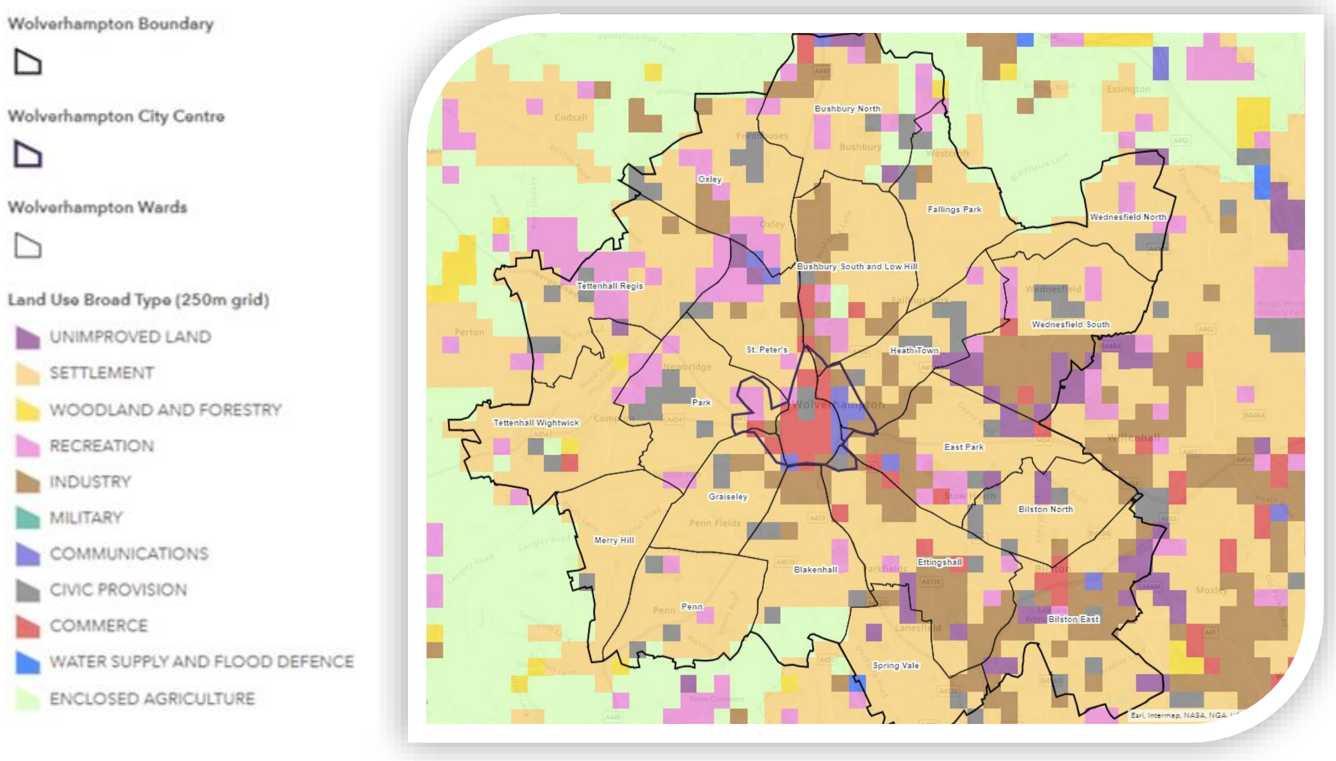
Therefore, a challenging balance in Wolverhampton is required; between providing for business survival in the here and now, and strategically supporting a more productive, innovative and successful business base for the long-term. For the latter, Wolverhampton may need to focus on investment in its strengths, while also attempting to diversify the business base and wider economy.

2. Infrastructure

2.1. Land, Housing and Environment

The following map shows land use by broad type in Wolverhampton. Settlement dominates the area with pockets of recreation and industry seen throughout, and commercial land in the central area.

Land Use by Broad Type Across Wolverhampton:



Source: Natural England, National Historic Landscape Characterisation 250m Grid

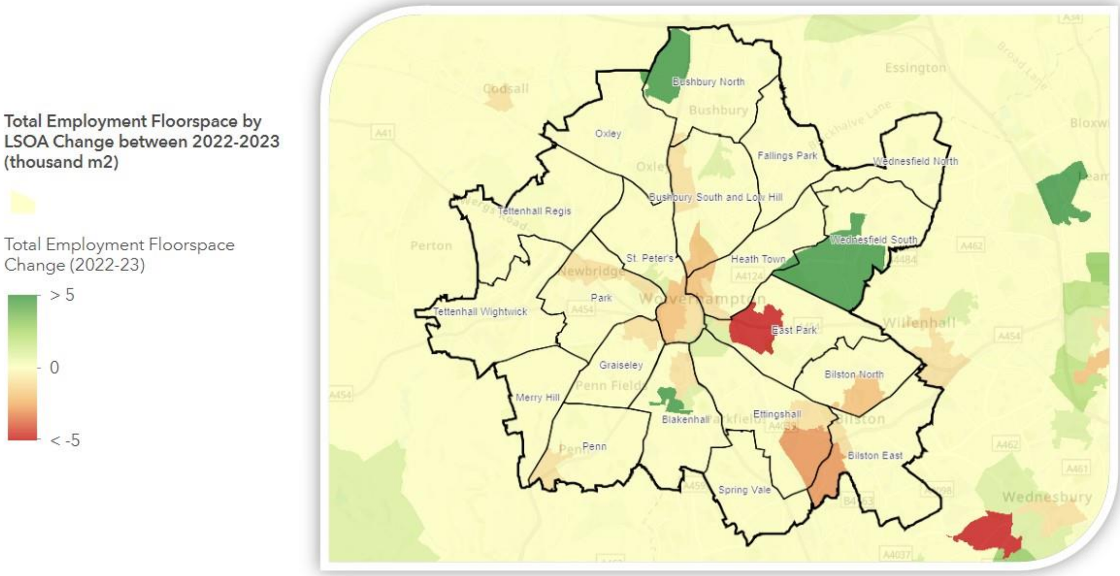
Employment Land[17]

In 2022-23, there were 8,970 total rateable properties in Wolverhampton. This was an increase of 1.1% (+100) compared to an increase of 0.2% England-wide since 2021-22. The total rateable properties totalled £196m in Wolverhampton in 2022-23. This was an increase of 0.2% (+£360,000) compared to a decrease of 0.1% England-wide since 2021-22.

In 2022-23 there was a total of 3.1 million sqm of business floorspace in Wolverhampton – following the national trend, this had increased by 0.2% since 2021-22. There are high concentrations of employment floorspace in Blackenhall, Bushbury North and the southern side of Wednesfield South, and as seen in the following map, there were some declines in the central of Wolverhampton, this may be a long-term response to shifting retail and spending patterns.

[17] Valuation Office Agency, Non-domestic rating: stock of properties including business floorspace, released 2023. This source covers total employment rates, floorspace and retail, industrial and other floorspace and change in any employment floorspace is not the absolute figure created it is a net figure. Please note rateable property (also known as hereditament) is a unit of property that is, or may become, liable to non-domestic rating and thus appears in a rating list.

Total Employment Land Change in Wolverhampton Since 2022-23:



Source: Valuation Office Agency

In 2022-23, the business floorspace total rateable value per metre squared was £48 in Wolverhampton, with England wide at £88 per metre squared. Both Wolverhampton and England remained the same since 2021-22.

Wolverhampton business floorspace can be split into four categories:

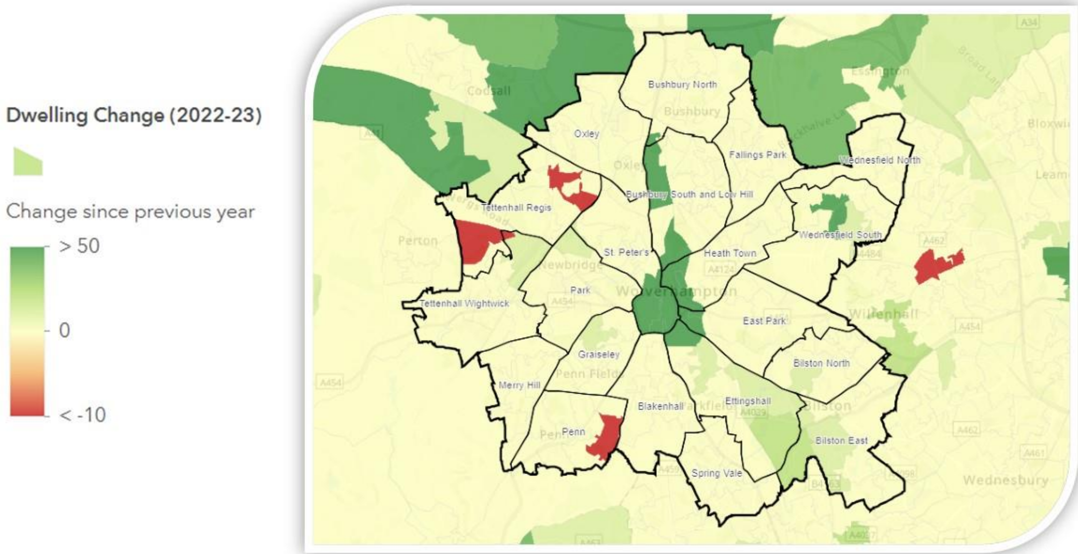
- Retail floorspace decreased from 507,000 sqm in 2021-22 to 501,000 sqm in 2022-23 (-1.2%, England -0.8%)
- Office floorspace increased from 210,000 sqm in 2021-22 to 211,000 sqm in 2022-23 (+0.5%, England -1.8%)
- Industrial floorspace increased from 2,185,000 sqm in 2021-22 to 2,194,000 sqm in 2022-23 (+0.4%, England +0.8%)
- Other business floorspace increased from 224,000 sqm in 2021-22 to 225,000 sqm in 2022-23 (+0.4%, England +0.5%)

Housing Stock

Housing stock continues to increase in Wolverhampton and as of March 2023, Wolverhampton had a total of 113,200 homes, an increase of 570 (+0.5%, England +1.0%) since March 2022[18]. Notably, central Wolverhampton saw increases in dwellings since the previous year. Areas in the outskirts of the borough saw decreases. This may be due to redevelopment in the area leading to temporary declines but in future years more dwellings will be available.

[18] Valuation Office Agency, Council Tax statistics, released 2023

Dwelling Stock Change in Wolverhampton Between March 2022 and March 2023:



Source: Valuation Office Agency

Affordable Housing Supply[19]

Starts

Between 2015-16 to 2021-22 there has been a total of 1,428 affordable housing starts in Wolverhampton; of which 71.7% (1,016) were for affordable rent. In 2021-22, there were 175 affordable housing starts in Wolverhampton; of which 5.7% (10) were for affordable rent. In the last year, there was a decrease of 71 (-87.7%) starts in Wolverhampton.

Completions

Between 2015-16 to 2021-22, there has been a total of 1,372 affordable housing completions in Wolverhampton; of which 84.0% (1,153) were for affordable rent. In 2020-21, the number of affordable housing completions in Wolverhampton was at the highest level in over 20 years; reaching 464 completions in 1 year; of which 75.9% (352) were affordable rent. In the last year, there was an increase of 112 (+31.8%) completions in Wolverhampton.

Affordable Housing by Starts and Completions for Wolverhampton, 2019-20 to 2021-22:

	2019-20		2020-21		2021-22	
	Starts	**Completions**	**Starts**	**Completions**	**Starts**	**Completions**
Social Rent	2	2	0	0	0	42
Affordable Rent	204	150	81	307	10	352
Intermediate Rent	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shared Ownership	51	24	29	45	4	70
Affordable Home Ownership	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wolverhampton Total	**257**	**176**	**110**	**352**	**14**	**464**

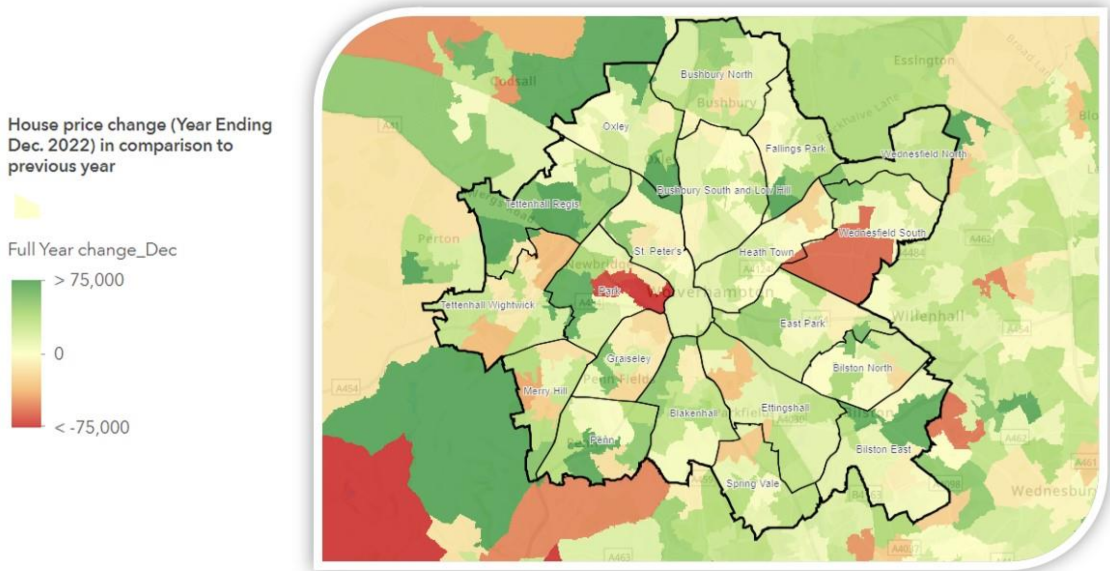
Source: DLUHC, 2023

[19] Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, Live tables on affordable housing supply, released 2023

Median House Prices

In the year ending December 2022, house prices in Wolverhampton were £190,000[20]. This was an increase of 5.6% (+£10,000) compared to a 3.6% increase England-wide since the year ending December 2021. House prices in Wolverhampton are at the highest levels since records began in September 1996. Wolverhampton house prices were £95,000 lower than England-wide in the year ending December 2022. However as seen in the following map, there are areas with significant increases and decreases for house prices.

Median House Price Change between year ending December 2021 and 2022 across Wolverhampton:



Source: ONS, 2023

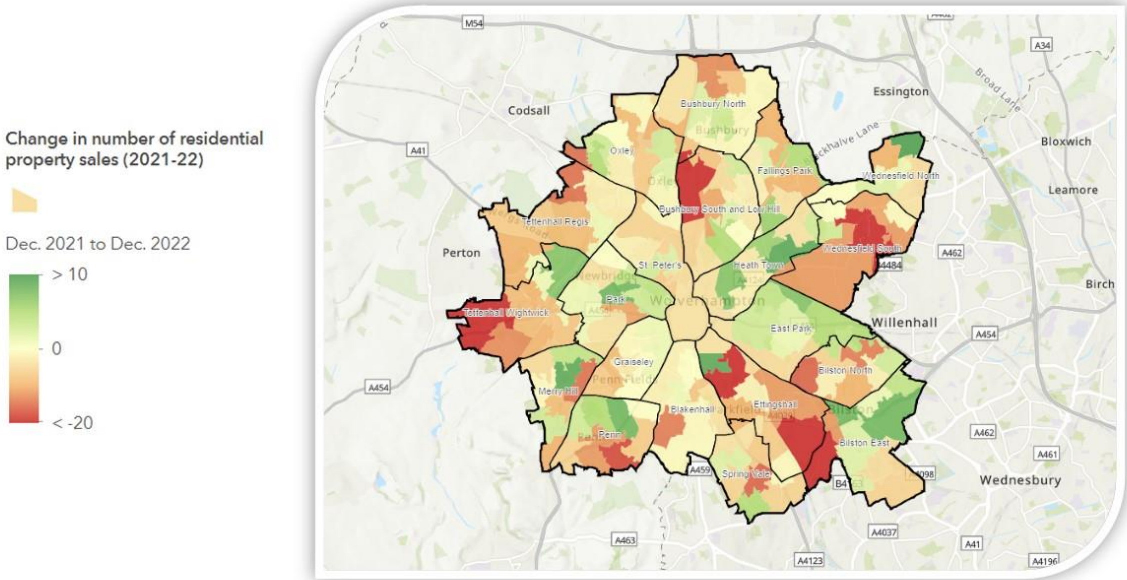
Residential Property Sales

There were 2,413 residential property sales[21] in Wolverhampton in the year ending December 2022. This was a decrease of 22.9% (-716) compared to a national decrease of 27.2% since the year ending December 2021. Of the 2,413 residential sales in Wolverhampton, 48.7% (1,056) were semi-detached houses, although this decreased by 339 sales when compared to the year ending December 2021. 30.5% (662) of the sales were for terraced houses.

As seen in the following map, there were decreases in property sales in Tettenhall, Penn, Bushbury South and Lowhill, Wednesfield South, Ettingshall and Bilston East.

[20] ONS, Median house prices for administrative geographies, year ending December 2022, released 2023
[21] ONS, Residential property sales for administrative geographies, year ending December 2022, released 2023

Residential Property Sales Change between year ending December 2021 and 2022 across Wolverhampton:



Source: ONS, 2023

Environment Assets

Wolverhampton is rich in both its natural and built heritage and environmental assets – including its extensive canal network, ancient geology, rich wildlife and open spaces. The canal network in Wolverhampton is a reminder of the area's industrial past, tunnelling under the limestone hills connecting the mines to the furnaces. Apart from the beautiful scenery along the canals, the waterways provide a wide range of ecosystem services, including recreation, land drainage, flood protection, water supply, waste disposal, energy generation, carbon storage, heritage preservation and nature conservation.

Parts of the Wolverhampton landscape have been recognised for their importance for nature and are protected under various laws or designations. The area is also home to Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) such as Cotwall End and Smestow Valley, as well as Ancient Woodlands such as Tettenhall Wood.

The average distance to nearest park or public garden is 702m, compared to 951m across urban areas in England[22]. The average size of nearest park or public garden is 81,920m^2 compared to 212,023 m^2 across other urban areas in England. The average population per park or public garden is 22,573 compared to 16,197 across other urban areas in England.

Black Country iTree Eco Survey

There are approximately 473,000 trees across Wolverhampton.

The following flyer outlines key facts and figures based on results from a completed iTree Eco survey of the Black Country:

[22] ONS, Access to gardens and public green space in Great Britain, released 2020

Black Country Consortium Ltd

Forest Research

Birmingham Tree People

Treeconomics

VALUING THE CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON'S URBAN FOREST

Most Common Tree Species:

Hawthorn, Silver Birch and Sycamore

The replacement cost* of Wolverhampton's Urban Forest is

£375 Million

*Replacement cost refers to the CTLA Valuation, and does not account for the health or amenity value.

Urban forests provide people with a range of benefits (or ecosystem services) that help make our towns and cities better places to live.

Trees filter air pollution, improve our health, store carbon and reduce flooding, whilst also providing important habitat for wildlife and a multitude of other benefits.

Black Country Consortium Ltd worked in partnership with Birmingham Tree People, Barton Hyett Associates and Treeconomics to survey the trees in Wolverhampton. Using a plot sample assessment in i-Tree Eco the structure of Wolverhampton's urban forest was assessed and a range of the ecosystem services it provides to society were valued.

Number of Trees
473,000

16.5%
Tree Cover

78
Tree Species

68
Trees per hectare

Wolverhampton's urban forest contains an estimated 473,000 trees benefiting over 262,000 people. That's 1.8 trees per person!

In addition, Wolverhampton's trees:

- Cover an area equivalent to 1,150 ha with a leaf area of 8,690 ha.
- Intercept around 151,000 m³ of rain water every year, equivalent to an estimated £149,000 in avoided water treatment costs.
- Filter 66 tonnes of airborne pollutants each year, worth £1.7 million.
- Remove an estimated 6,150 tonnes of carbon from the atmosphere each year, worth £5.6 million.
- Store an impressive 168,000 tonnes of carbon worth £153 million.
- Are at risk from pests and diseases - Ash dieback could affect 31,800 trees in Wolverhampton.

Leaf area is equivalent to 1,257 times the area of West Park (6.9 ha)!

Avoided runoff is equivalent to 60 olympic swimming pools of water!

Carbon sequestration is equivalent to the annual CO_2 emissions of 12,680 cars!

Carbon storage is equivalent to the weight of 13,600 new London double-decker busses (12.4 tonnes)!

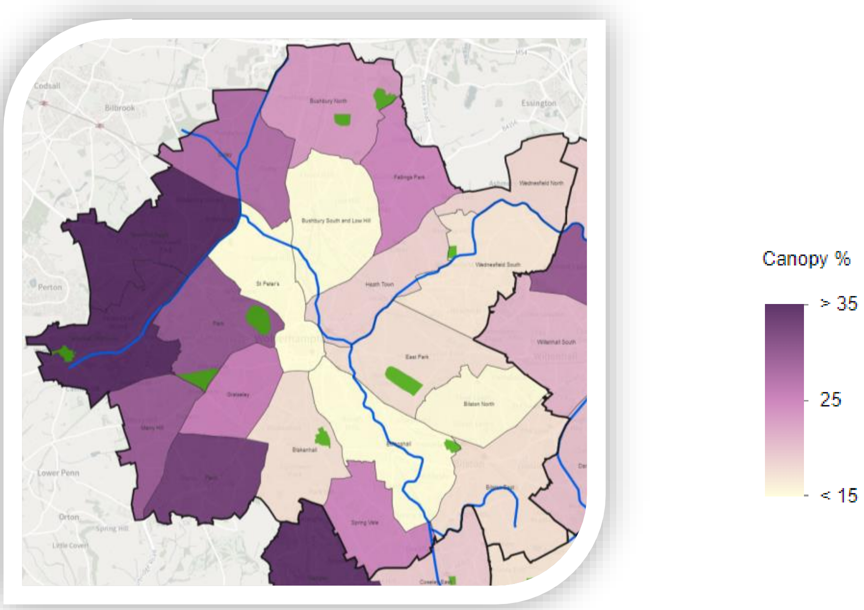
i-Tree

Barton Hyett Associates
Arboricultural Consultants

For Further Information Contact:
Ric Bravery
Ric.Bravery@wolverhampton.gov.uk

There is a good distribution of both semi-mature and mature trees, however there are very few large senescent trees. Managing trees to ensure they reach their full potential, namely in their stature is important, as large trees provide far more benefits than small trees. Planting of young trees is also required to replace dying or removed trees and to further enhance the urban forest.

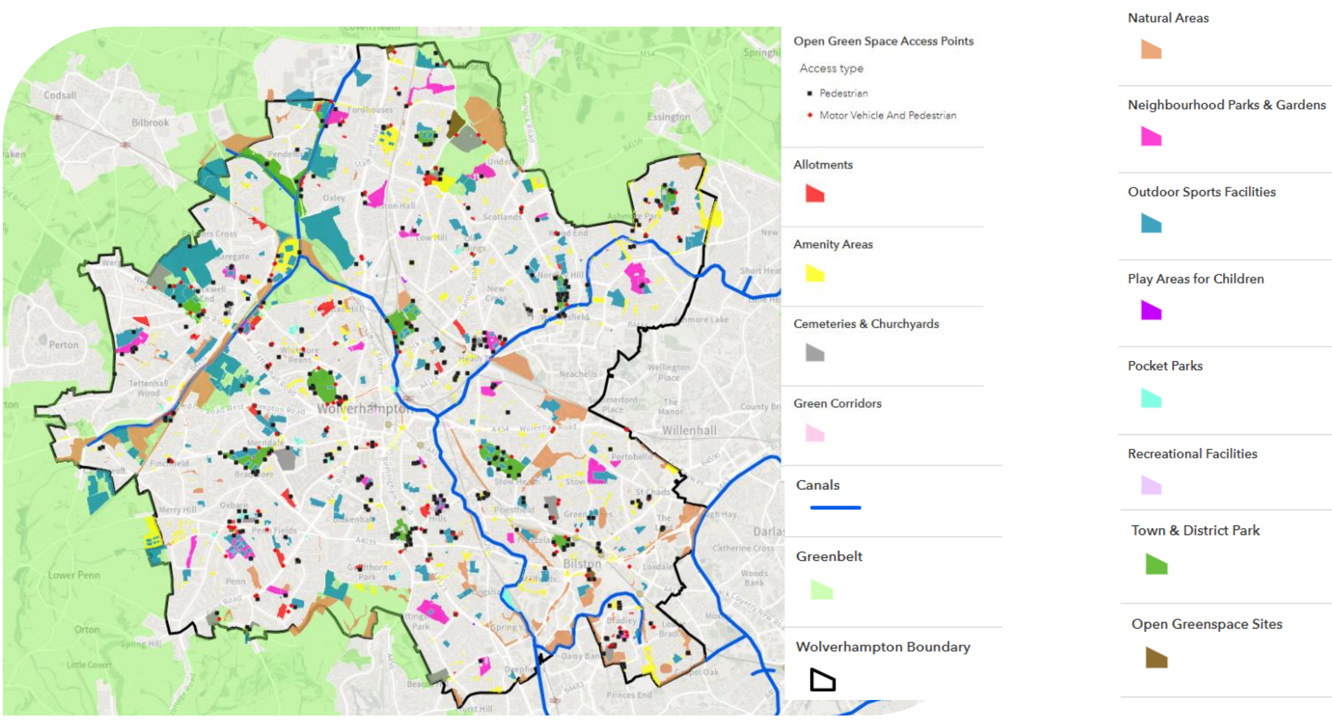
Wolverhampton Tree Canopy Cover by Ward, and Public Parks and Gardens



Source: [iTree Eco Survey of the Black Country](), 2022

The following map showcases the various public greenspace amenities across Wolverhampton and the types of access to these sites, whether they are accessible by pedestrians or for cars.

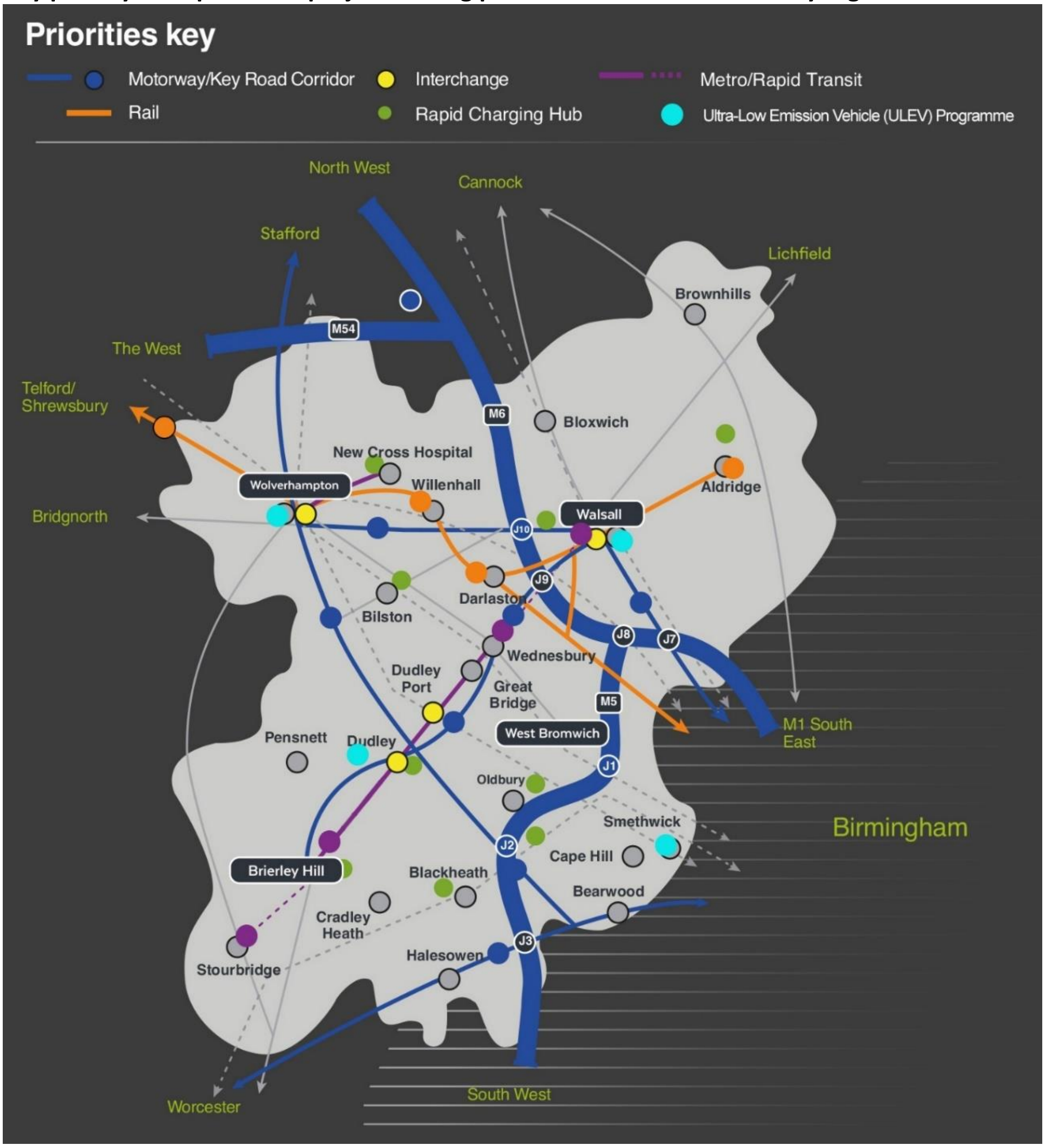
Wolverhampton Greenspace & Open Space Assets:



Source: Ordnance Survey - Open Greenspace, & LA greenspace (derived from PPG17)

2.2. Transport and Mobility

Key priority transportation projects taking place within the Black Country region:



Source: Transport for West Midlands

Transport Projects in Wolverhampton Include:

- A4123 Corridor (Phase 2)
- Darlaston and Willenhall Stations
- A454 City East Gateway (Phase 1-2 and 3)
- A449 Stafford Road Corridor
- Wolverhampton to New Cross Hospital and Wednesfield Metro Extension
- Ultra-Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV) Programme

Near Completion:

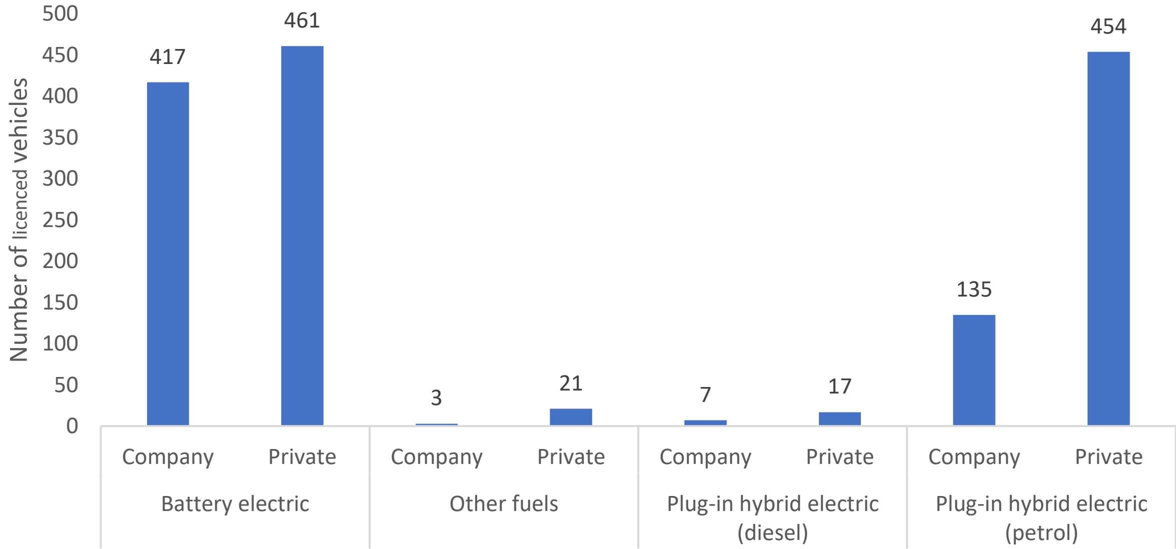
- Wolverhampton Interchange

2.3. Clean Energy and Net Zero

Ultra-Low Emission Vehicles

In 2023 Q1, there were a total of 1,515 licenced ultra-low emission vehicles in Wolverhampton[23]. This is an increase of 145 (+10.6%) since the previous quarter (2022 Q4), and an increase of 458 (+43.3%) since 2022 Q1. Of these 1,515 vehicles; 878 (58%) were battery electric, 589 (39%) were plug-in hybrid electric (petrol), 24 (1.6%) were plug in hybrid (diesel) and 24 (1.6%) were other fuels. 37% of these vehicles were company owned and 63% were privately owned.

Number of ultra-low emission vehicles in 2023 Q1 in Wolverhampton:

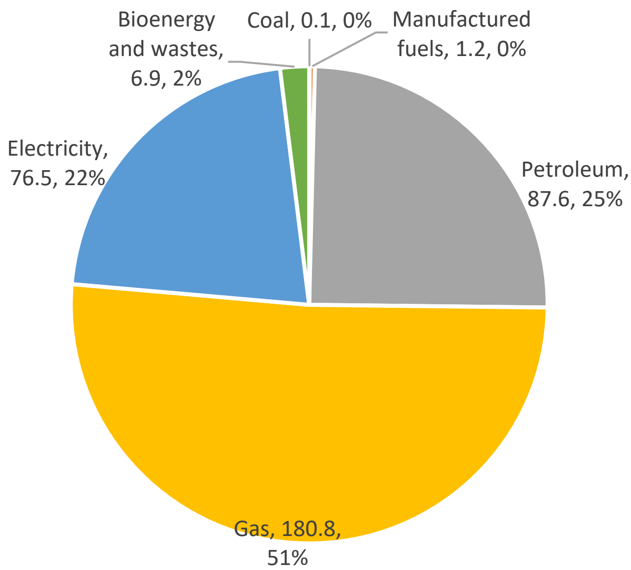


Source: BEIS, 2023

Total Energy Consumption

The figure on the right shows Wolverhampton's energy consumption[24] measured in Ktoe = kilo tonnes of oil equivalent (both renewable and non-renewable), which is split up by:

- Coal accounts for 0% of energy consumption
- Manufactured fuels 0.4%
- Petrol 25%
- Gas 51%
- Electricity 22%
- Bioenergy & wastes 2%



Source: BEIS, 2023

[23] Department for Transport and Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency, Vehicle licensing statistics data tables, released 2023
[24] Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, Sub-national total final energy consumption data, released 2023

Renewable Electricity

In 2022, there were 2,634 installations[25] of photovoltaics (solar PV) across Wolverhampton, followed by 1 sewage gas, 1 municipal solid waste and 3 plant biomasses. In 2022, there was a capacity of 19.1 MW from photovoltaics, 8 MW from municipal solid waste, 0.9 MW from sewage gas, and 0.4 MW from plant biomass. In Wolverhampton, 16,451 MWh of electricity was generated from photovoltaics, with other generation data classed as supressed to prevent the output of individual plants being revealed.

Total Electricity and Gas Consumption

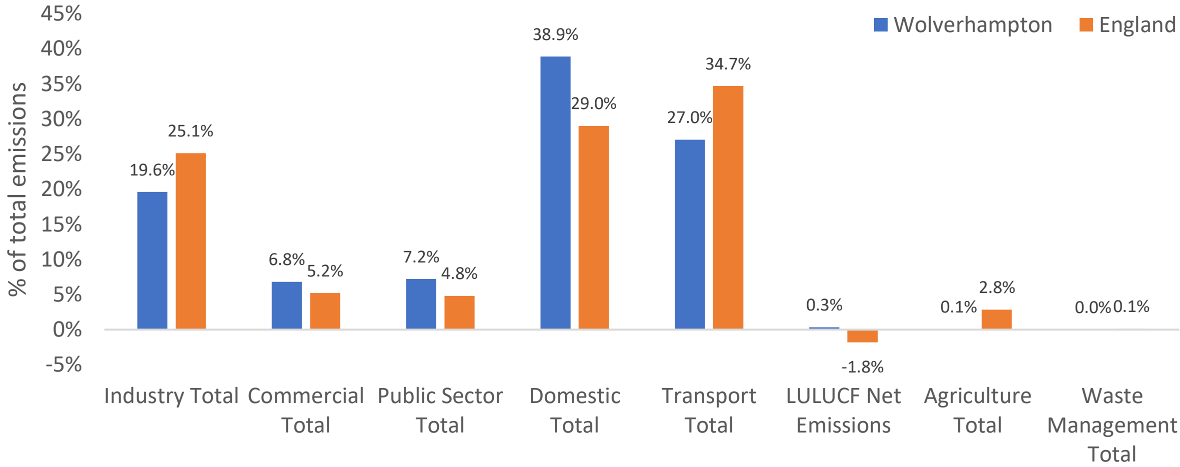
In 2022, Wolverhampton used 33 Ktoe of electricity[26] for domestic uses, and 44 GWh electricity for non-domestic reasons. This gives a domestic vs non-domestic breakdown of 43% compared to 57%. In England, this breakdown was 40% vs 60%.

In 2022, Wolverhampton used 119 Ktoe of gas for domestic uses, and 62 Ktoe gas for non-domestic reasons. This gives a domestic vs non-domestic breakdown of 66% compared to 34%. In England, this breakdown was 65% vs 35%.

Net Zero

In 2021, Wolverhampton produced a total of 895 Kt CO_2e emissions[27]. This has increased by 77 Kt CO_2e (8.0%) since last year, compared to an increase of 7.4% in England. Carbon dioxide emissions can be split into eight categories as seen in the following chart: the highest category for Wolverhampton was domestic at 38.9% (343 Kt CO_2e).

Carbon Dioxide Emissions by Category for Wolverhampton and England in 2021:



Source: BEIS, 2023

In 2021, emissions in Wolverhampton were equivalent to 3.4 tCO_2e per capita, compared to 4.8 tCO_2e per capita in England. In context to area, emissions were equivalent to 12.3 $KtCO_2e$ per km^2 in Wolverhampton, compared to 1.3 $KtCO_2e$ per km^2 in England. Using a business-as-usual and based on previous trends approach, Wolverhampton would reach net zero in carbon dioxide emissions in the year 2192[28].

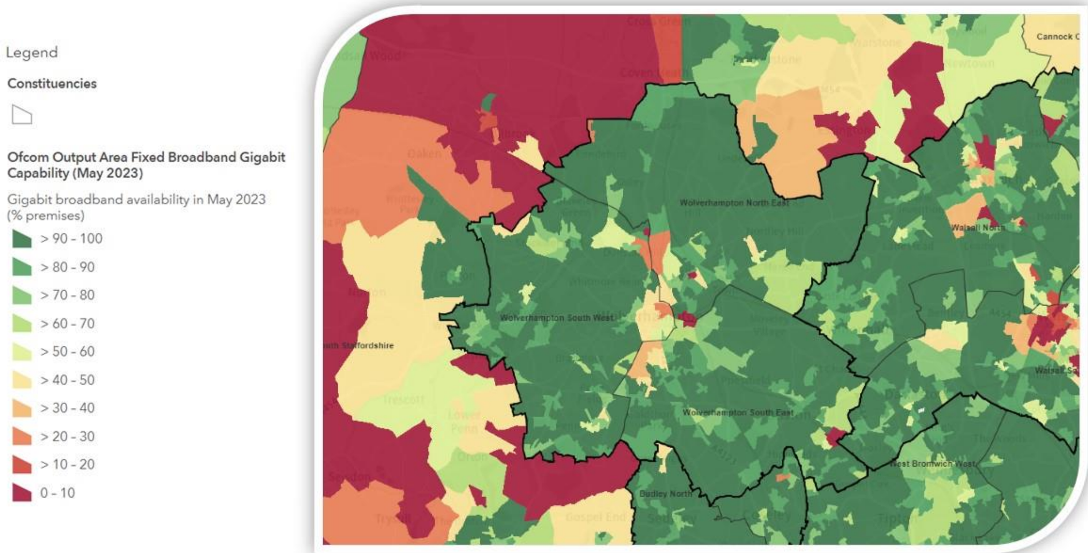
[25] Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, Regional Renewable Statistics, released 2023.
[26] Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, Sub-national total final energy consumption data, released 2023
[27] Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions national statistics, released 2023
[28] The EIU analysis based on, UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions national statistics trends

2.4. Digital Infrastructure

Overall, in Wolverhampton as of May 2023, Wolverhampton had an extensive digital infrastructure[29]:

- 99.2% of premises had superfast broadband availability.
- 95.6% of premises had ultrafast (100Mbit/s) broadband availability.
- 99.3% of premises had Next Generation Access broadband availability.
- 95.2% of premises had gigabit broadband availability. As seen in the following map, at a lower-level geography, there are areas that are falling behind, specifically in the centre.

Gigabit Capacity Across Wolverhampton as of May 2023:



In April 2023, 5G coverage from 'At least one Mobile Network Operator (MNO)' ranges from 98.6% (very high confidence) to 99.9% (high confidence) of premises outdoors in Wolverhampton (UK 76.1% very high confidence to 84.9% high confidence). 5G coverage from 'All MNOs' ranges from 33.2% (very high confidence) to 51.1% (high confidence) of premises outdoors in Wolverhampton (UK 12.4% very high confidence to 22.5% high confidence).

[29] Ofcom, Connected Nations and infrastructure reports, released Summer 2023

2.5. Key Trends, Challenges and Future Opportunities

Infrastructure in various forms plays a crucial role in supporting local economies, particularly in utilising land for essential productive activities and ensuring the safety and well-being of communities. In essence, Wolverhampton faces several trends and considerations:

- **Employment Land:** While the value of rateable properties has remained constant locally and nationally, the city centre has witnessed a decline in retail space. Conversely, areas like Blakenhall, Wednesfield South, and Bushbury North have experienced growth due to office, industrial, and other spaces, presenting investment opportunities outside the city centre.
- **Housing:** Wolverhampton has seen a continuous increase in housing stock, an ongoing trend that needs to be sustained, especially in providing affordable housing, currently at its highest level in over two decades. This aspect is crucial for attracting skilled workers, notably the younger demographic, leveraging Wolverhampton's relative affordability as an advantage.
- **Environmental Assets:** There is an increasing emphasis on utilising natural environmental resources for various benefits, including decarbonisation, promoting health and well-being, and achieving net-zero objectives. New datasets like the iTree Eco study offer valuable insights for evidence-based decision-making.
- **Net Zero Drive:** Achieving net-zero carbon emissions remains a significant goal, given that Wolverhampton, following current trends, would only reach this milestone by 2192. Recent increases in emissions, especially in the recovery phase from Covid, underscore the necessity to establish a new low-carbon norm.
- **Transition Challenges:** Wolverhampton faces obstacles in transitioning to low-carbon practices due to its dependence on heavy industries, which are both high emitters and adversely affected by energy price spikes. Collaboration with these industries to drive decarbonisation and facilitate a shift towards net-zero strategies is essential to prevent them from being left behind.
- **Other Infrastructural Aspects:** Beyond these, transport and digital infrastructure also play crucial roles for local communities and businesses. Enhancing accessibility through these means is a priority, although Wolverhampton has generally performed well in terms of broadband, 5G connectivity, and transportation links.

3. Inclusive Communities

Demographics

Mid-year population estimates[30] for 2022 shows there were 268,651 residents in Wolverhampton. An increase of 1.3% (+3,391) compared to a national increase of 1.0% since 2021. The latest annual change shows that Wolverhampton had population declines in five age bands, these were for those aged 20-24 years old (-484), aged 45-49 years old (-425), aged 80-84 years old (-84), aged 50-54 years old (-73) and aged 70-74 years old (-50). However, in contrast there were significant increases for those aged 40-44 years old (+652), aged 0-4 years old (+531) and aged 35-39 years old (+518).

Age breakdown for 2021 and 2022:

Age	Wolverhampton 2021	Wolverhampton 2022	Wolverhampton Annual Number Change	Wolverhampton Annual Percentage Change	England Annual Percentage Change
All Ages	**264,260**	**267,651**	**3,391**	**1.3%**	**1.0%**
Age 0 - 4	16,260	16,791	531	3.3%	0.3%
Aged 5-9	17,752	18,041	289	1.6%	0.1%
Aged 10-14	18,107	18,577	470	2.6%	2.2%
Aged 15-19	15,568	15,967	399	2.6%	2.2%
Aged 20-24	15,746	15,262	-484	-3.1%	0.8%
Aged 25-29	17,009	17,265	256	1.5%	0.6%
Aged 30-34	18,787	18,961	174	0.9%	1.0%
Aged 35-39	18,419	18,937	518	2.8%	1.5%
Aged 40-44	17,377	18,029	652	3.8%	2.5%
Aged 45-49	16,896	16,471	-425	-2.5%	-2.6%
Aged 50-54	18,062	17,989	-73	-0.4%	-1.0%
Aged 55-59	16,552	16,724	172	1.0%	0.9%
Aged 60-64	14,131	14,534	403	2.9%	3.0%
Aged 65-69	11,940	12,111	171	1.4%	1.7%
Aged 70-74	10,842	10,792	-50	-0.5%	-4.8%
Aged 75-79	8,194	8,643	449	5.5%	9.5%
Aged 80-84	6,232	6,148	-84	-1.3%	1.1%
Aged 85+	6,386	6,409	23	0.4%	2.2%

Source: ONS, Mid-year population estimates, released 2023

Latest figures show that the median age of population in Wolverhampton was 38.4 years, below the England median of 40.5 years. In 2022, there were 3,855 people per sq. km in Wolverhampton, significantly above the England-wide figure of 438 people per sq. km.

The 2021 census shows that 39.4% (104,019) of the population were ethnic minorities, above the overall Black Country figure of 31.4% and the wider-England figure of 19.0%.

Gross Disposable Household Income

Wolverhampton's total Gross Disposable Household Income (GDHI) reached £4.2bn in 2021[31]. When compared to 2020, total GDHI in Wolverhampton increased by 2.8% (+£114m), below the England-wide increase of 3.7%.

[30] ONS, Mid-year population estimates, released 2023.
[31] ONS, Regional gross disposable household income, UK: 1997 to 2021, released 2023

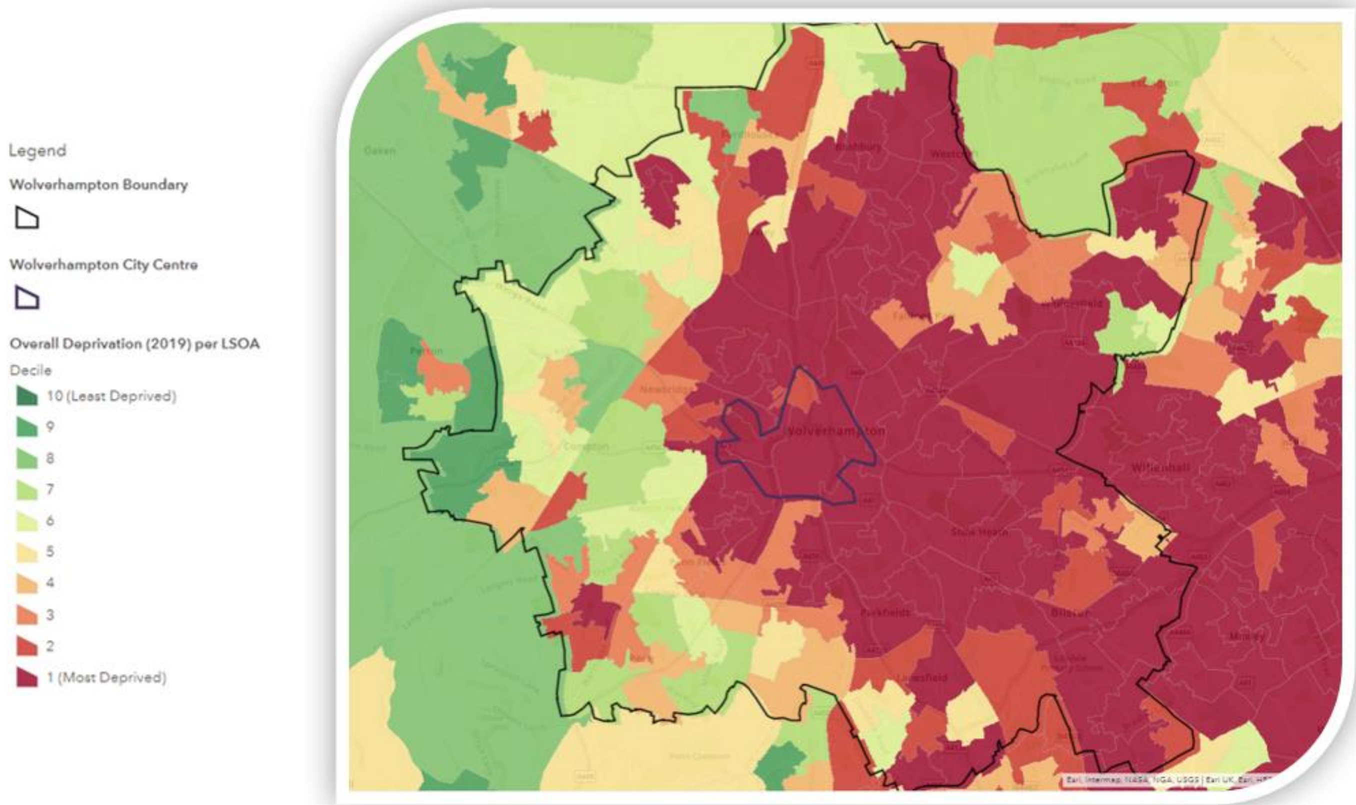
In 2021, Wolverhampton's GDHI per head was at £16,008, there was a shortfall of £6,205 to the national figure, but the gap has reduced over time. Since 2020, GDHI per head increased by 2.9% (+£451) in Wolverhampton, while England-wide there was an increase of 3.7%.

Deprivation

Out of 317 local authorities, Wolverhampton was 24th highest for deprivation.[32] However, this has improved when compared to 2015 where it was 17th highest.

Wolverhampton has reduced the proportion of areas in both 10% and 20% most deprived areas in England by 5 percentage points (to 21%) and 2 percentage points (to 49%) respectively equating to moving positively in the ranking of proportion of LSOAs in most deprived 10% nationally.

Overall Deprivation by Decile for Wolverhampton in 2019:



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Children in Low-Income Families

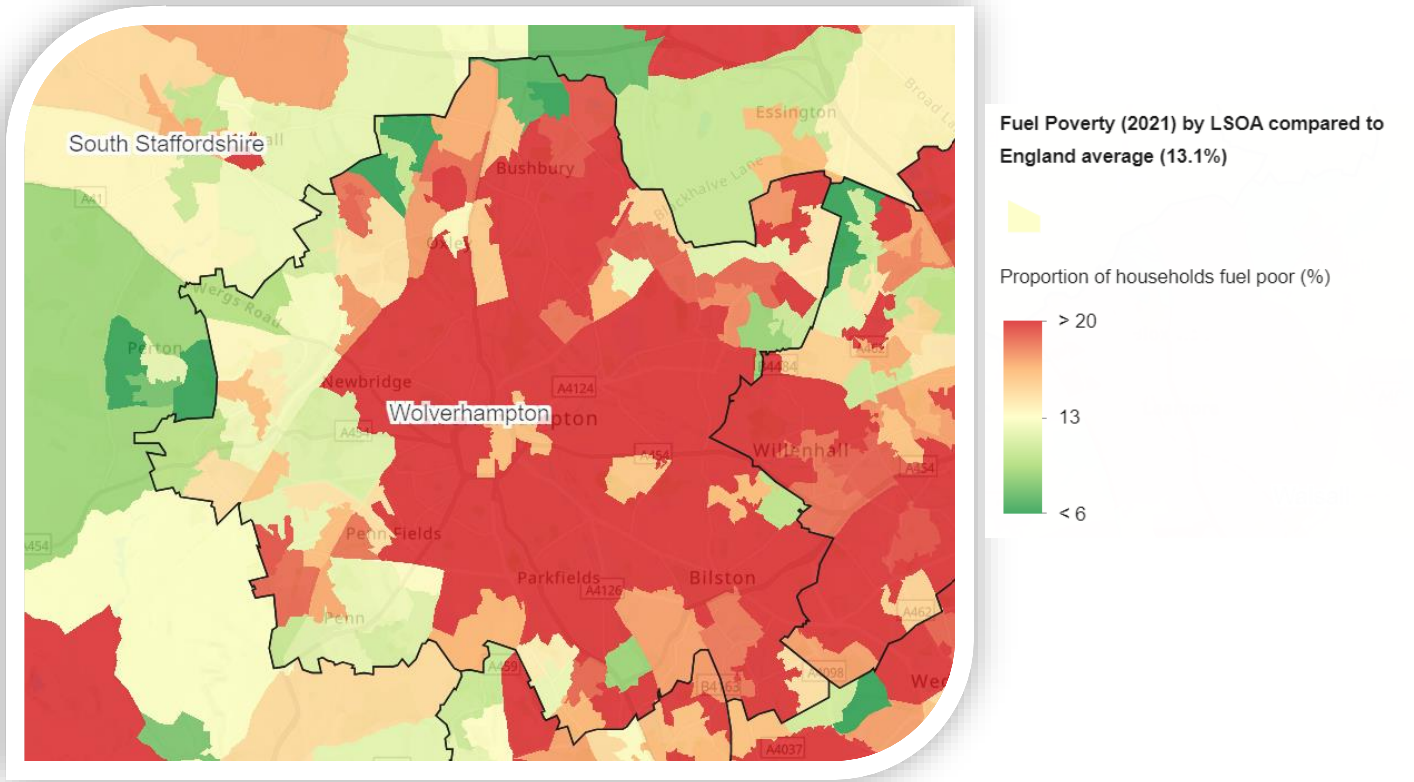
In 2021/22, 26.1% (14,433) of children (aged 0-15) in Wolverhampton were in absolute low-income families, above the England-wide figure of 15.3%[33]. Since 2020/21, despite national figures decreasing (-2.7%), Wolverhampton increased by 6.6% (+895). For Wolverhampton, the proportion of children from low-income families is at its highest recorded levels.

[32] Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, English indices of deprivation, released 2019
[33] Department for Work and Pensions, Stat-Xplore, Children in Low Income Families (Absolute Low Income), released 2023.

Fuel Poverty

In 2021, 21.8% (107,600) of households in Wolverhampton were in fuel poverty[34], the third highest local authority (behind Birmingham at 23.2% and Stoke-on-Trent 22.9%). This was significantly above the England-wide figure of 13.1%. However, this has decreased from 22.4% (110,201) of households in Wolverhampton in 2020 (England was at 13.2%).

Proportion of Households in Fuel Poverty (at LSOA level), 2021:



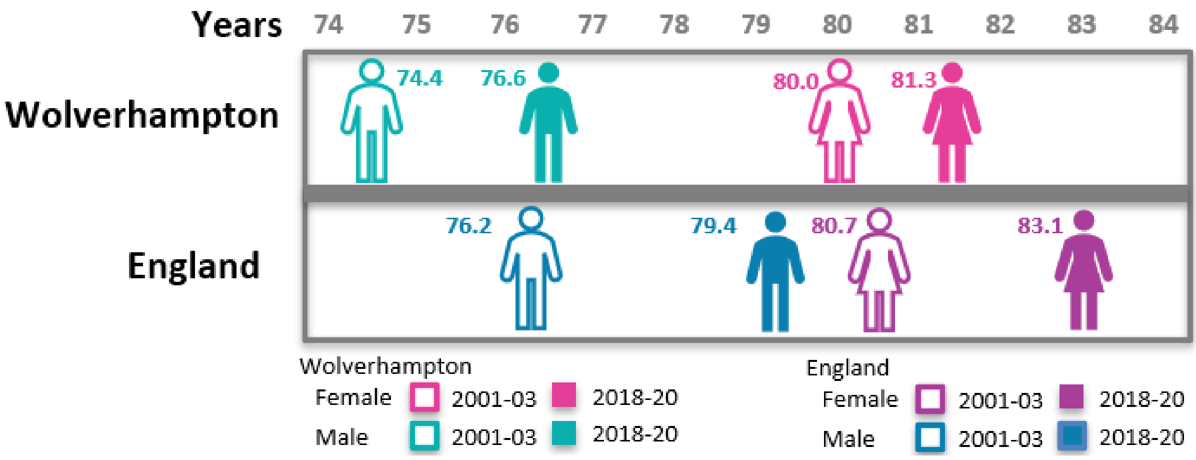
3.1. Health and Wellbeing

Life Expectancy, Healthy Life Expectancy and Good Health[35]

Female life expectancy in Wolverhampton was 81.3 years compared to 83.1 years nationally (gap of 1.8 years) in 2018-20. When compared to 2016-18, Wolverhampton's female life expectancy decreased by 0.1 years – matching the national decline. Male life expectancy in Wolverhampton was 76.6 years compared to 79.4 years nationally (gap of 2.9 years) in 2018-20. When compared to 2016-18, Wolverhampton's male life expectancy decreased by 0.6 years while nationally there was a decline of 0.2 years.

[34] Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, subnational fuel poverty statistics, released 2023.
[35] ONS, Health state life expectancies, UK: 2018 to 2020, released 2022

Life Expectancy Change from 2001-03 to 2018-2020 for Wolverhampton and England:



Source: ONS, 2022

Female healthy life expectancy in Wolverhampton was 59.3 years compared to 63.9 years nationally (gap of 4.5 years) in 2018-20, meaning that 73.0% of Wolverhampton female residents and 76.8% England-wide female's life was spent in "good health". When compared to 2016-18, Wolverhampton's female healthy life expectancy increased by 1.3 years, while nationally the figure remained the same.

Male healthy life expectancy in Wolverhampton was 60.0 years compared to 63.1 years nationally (gap of 3.1 years) in 2018-20 meaning that 78.4% of Wolverhampton male residents and 79.5% England-wide male life was spent in "good health". When compared to 2016-18, Wolverhampton's male healthy life expectancy increased by 1.3 years while nationally there was a decline of 0.3 years.

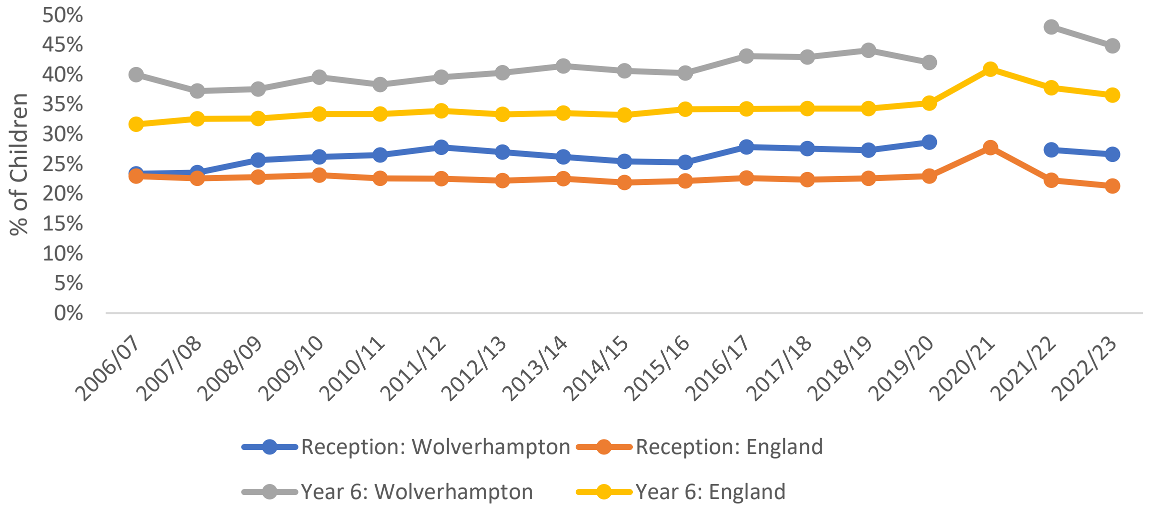
Overweight Children and Adults

In 2022/23 for Wolverhampton, 26.6% (895) of reception aged children were classed as overweight (including obesity) compared to 21.3% England-wide[36]. Compared to 2021/22, Wolverhampton decreased by 0.7 percentage points and England decreased by 0.9 percentage points. To reach the England-wide figure, requires 179 fewer reception aged children to be classed as overweight.

In 2022/23 for Wolverhampton, 44.8% (1,605) of children in year 6 were classed as overweight (including obesity) compared to 36.6% England-wide. Compared to 2021/22, Wolverhampton decreased by 3.2 percentage points and England-wide decreased by 1.2 percentage points. However, to reach the England-wide figure, requires 296 fewer children in year 6 to be classed as overweight.

[36] Public Health England Fingertips/ NHS Digital, National Child Measurement Programme, released 2023.

Reception and Year 6: Prevalence of Overweight (including Obesity) Trends for Wolverhampton and England:



Source: National Child Measurement Programme, 2023

In Wolverhampton, 69.7% of adults were classed as overweight or obese compared to 63.8% England-wide in 2021/22[37]. Compared to 2020/21, Wolverhampton increased by 2.2 percentage points and England-wide increased by 0.5 percentage points.

Physical Activity and Inactivity Levels

For the Wolverhampton area, 53.9% of adults (112,500) were classed as active compared to 63.1% nationally between November 2021-22[38]. Since November 2020-21, active levels in Wolverhampton decreased by 1.2 percentage points while nationally levels increased by 1.7pp. To reach the national level percentage of active would require Wolverhampton to increase by 19,127 that are classed as active.

While 35.3% of Wolverhampton adults (73,600) were classed as inactive compared to 25.8% nationally between November 2021-22. Since November 2020-21, inactivity levels in Wolverhampton increased by 1.1 percentage points while nationally levels reduced by 1.4pp. To reach the national level percentage of inactivity would require Wolverhampton to reduce by 19,781 that are classed as inactive.

Personal Wellbeing Estimates

The performance of average ratings of personal well-being in the UK have declined across all measures in the year ending March 2023:

- In Wolverhampton the average mean rating for life satisfaction[39] was 7.25 in 2022/23, which was below the England figure of 7.44. When compared to 2021/22, life satisfaction decreased by 0.25, this followed the national trend (-0.11).

[37] Public Health England Fingertips, released 2023.
[38] Sport England, Active Lives Survey, released 2023.
[39] ONS, Annual personal well-being estimates, released 2023. Please note questions were: Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays? Where 0 is 'not at all satisfied' and 10 is 'completely satisfied', 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', overall, how happy did you feel yesterday? Where 0 is 'not at all happy' and 10 is 'completely happy' and overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday? Where 0 is 'not at all anxious' and 10 is 'completely anxious'.

- The average mean rating for feeling worthwhile was 7.62, below the England figure of 7.73 in 2022/23. When compared to 2021/22, feeling worthwhile decreased by 0.13 and England decreased by 0.05.
- In Wolverhampton the average mean rating for feeling happy was 7.49 above the England figure of 7.38 in 2022/23. However, when compared to 2021/22, feeling happy decreased by 0.04 and England decreased by 0.07.
- In Wolverhampton the average mean rating for feeling anxious was 3.11, below the England figure of 3.24 in 2022/23. However, when compared to 2019/20, feeling anxious increased by 0.04 and England increased by 0.11.

3.2. Wider Determinants of Health

Health Index[40]

The ONS have developed a Health Index[41] which provides a single value for an area, representing a broad definition of health. The Health Index is then split into three main domains; healthy people, healthy lives and healthy places and covers topics such as health conditions, health-related behaviours, personal circumstances and wider drivers of health. All scores are relative to the 2015 baseline of 100.

Health in Wolverhampton in 2021 (87.6) was better than health in 2015 (85.1). England's health Index in 2021 was 100.8, compared to 100.0 in 2015.

Of the three domains in 2021, overall Healthy Places had the highest score at 96.4 (England: 104.2). This can be linked to access to green space and access to services scoring 101.0 and 105.8 respectively. Notably, within living conditions, air pollution scored 114.1 and within economic and working conditions, workplace safety scored 111.2. However, within economic and wellbeing conditions, job-related training and child poverty was 102.8 and 86.7 respectively.

The Healthy People score was 90.8 for Wolverhampton in 2021 (England: 97.7). Within mental health, suicide scored 110.8. While in contrast, within mortality, mortality from all causes had the lowest score in Wolverhampton at 80.8.

The Healthy Lives score was 81.4 for Wolverhampton in 2021 (England: 100.2). Within children and young people, early years development saw the most improvement scoring 106.3. While in contrast, within physiological risk factors, overweight and obesity in children was 75.1.

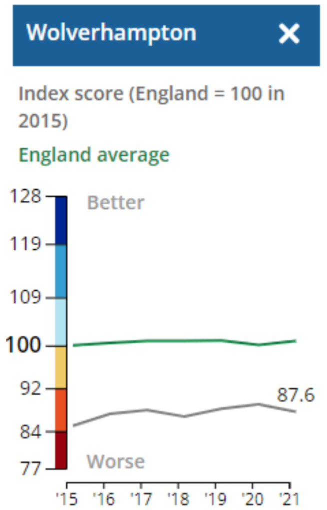
Wolverhampton's Health Index can be seen in detail on the following page.

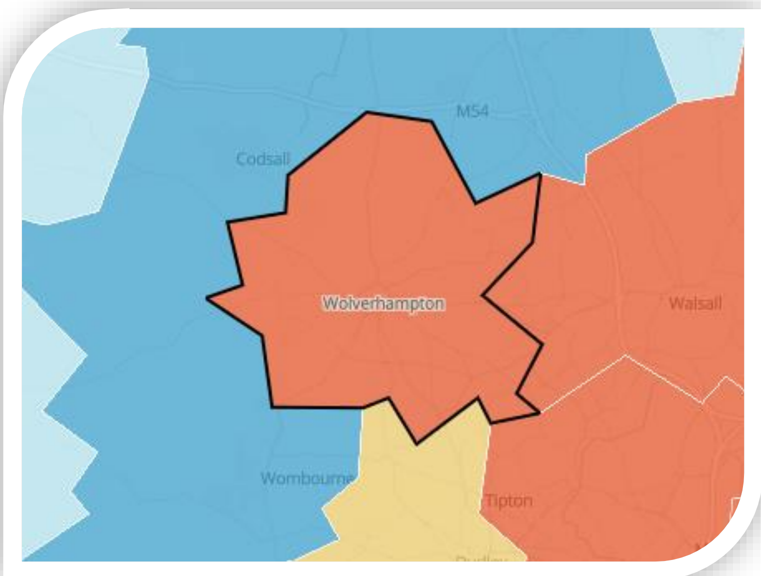
[40] The Index aligns with the World Health Organization's (WHO's) definition of health, that health "is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity".
[41] ONS, Health in England: 2015 to 2021, released 2023

Wolverhampton's Health Index, 2021:

Health Index: 87.6					
Domain/Sub Domains	**Index**	**Domain/Sub Domains**	**Index**	**Domain/Sub Domains**	**Index**
1. Healthy People	**90.8**	**2. Healthy Lives**	**81.4**	**3. Healthy Places**	**96.4**
1.1. Difficulties in Daily Life	**89.6**	**2.1. Behavioural Risk Factors**	**87.1**	**3.1. Access to Green Space**	**101.0**
Disability	*81.6*	*Alcohol misuse*	*97.0*	*Private outdoor space*	*101.0*
Frailty	*101.4*	*Drug misuse*	*101.7*	**3.2. Access to Services**	**105.8**
1.2. Mental Health	**104.0**	*Healthy eating*	*84.0*	*Distance to GP services*	*106.1*
Children's social, emotional, and mental health	*94.5*	*Physical activity*	*87.2*	*Distance to pharmacies*	*103.4*
Mental health conditions	*98.6*	*Sedentary behaviour*	*85.9*	*Distance to sports or leisure facilities*	*102.0*
Self-harm	*104.2*	*Sexually transmitted infections*	*82.8*	*Internet access*	*118.9*
Suicides	*110.8*	*Smoking*	*109.3*	*Patients offered acceptable GP practice appointments*	*93.7*
1.3. Mortality	**81.9**	**2.2. Children and Young People**	**98.6**	**3.3. Crime**	**92.3**
Avoidable mortality	*82.8*	*Early years development*	*106.3*	*Low-level crime*	*104.3*
Infant mortality	*88.5*	*Pupil absences*	*103.2*	*Personal crime*	*81.3*
Life expectancy	*83.8*	*Pupil attainment*	*97.3*	**3.4. Economic and Working Conditions**	**89.3**
Mortality from all causes	*80.8*	*Teenage pregnancy*	*99.6*	*Child poverty*	*86.7*
1.4. Personal Well-Being	**95.3**	*Young people in education, employment and apprenticeships*	*96.5*	*Job-related training*	*102.8*
Activities in life are worthwhile	*95.1*	**2.3. Physiological Risk Factors**	**72.3**	*Unemployment*	*91.8*
Feelings of anxiety	*93.1*	*High blood pressure*	*99.8*	*Workplace safety*	*111.2*
Happiness	*102.8*	*Low birth weight*	*79.6*	**3.5. Living Conditions**	**103.0**
Life satisfaction	*92.7*	*Overweight and obesity in adults*	*87.1*	*Air pollution*	*114.1*
1.5. Physical Health Conditions	**98.1**	*Overweight and obesity in children*	*75.1*	*Household overcrowding*	*97.0*
Cancer	*102.4*	**2.4. Protective Measures**	**82.4**	*Noise complaints*	*110.1*
Cardiovascular conditions	*94.9*	*Cancer screening attendance*	*79.4*	*Road safety*	*92.5*
Dementia	*92.9*	*Child vaccination coverage*	*89.3*	*Rough sleeping*	*105.3*
Diabetes	*89.9*				
Kidney and liver disease	*98.7*				
Musculoskeletal conditions	*105.5*				
Respiratory conditions	*99.8*				

Wolverhampton Overall Health Index:





Source: ONS Health Index, 2023

3.3. Key Trends, Challenges and Future Opportunities

The Covid pandemic accelerated the need to move beyond mere economic growth as the sole measure of a successful economy. Understanding the broader impact of economies on all individuals and communities is crucial, necessitating the integration of social and equality indicators to monitor progress.

Addressing the existing inequalities within Wolverhampton is paramount for genuine levelling-up, ensuring that every person in the area reaps the benefits of economic growth and prosperity, irrespective of their geographical location, ethnicity, age, or gender.

Unfortunately, Wolverhampton grapples with a combination of low skills, limited employment opportunities, leading to a cycle of poverty for certain individuals and families. This is evident in the local data, showcasing high levels of relative deprivation and child poverty. Such challenges manifest in lower life expectancy, poorer health outcomes, including reduced physical activity, and elevated levels of obesity. The extremely high rates of fuel poverty are symptomatic of the deprivation prevalent in the borough.

Examining changes over time presents a mixed picture:

- The Health Index suggests an improvement in health in Wolverhampton from 2015 to 2021, yet issues like obesity and lower life expectancy persist.
- While certain standards of living indicators improved before the onset of Covid, such as the growth of Gross Disposable Household Income and a reduction in deprived communities between 2015 and 2019, disparities remain.
- Moreover, Wolverhampton boasts a diverse and growing population. Recent population data indicates an influx of young people, with the median age at 38.4, presenting an opportunity to harness the productivity benefits and vibrancy that young individuals bring to a community.

These considerations are pivotal, not only for driving economic growth in Wolverhampton but for fostering inclusive economic growth and an Economy of Together.

4. Skills, Education and Employment

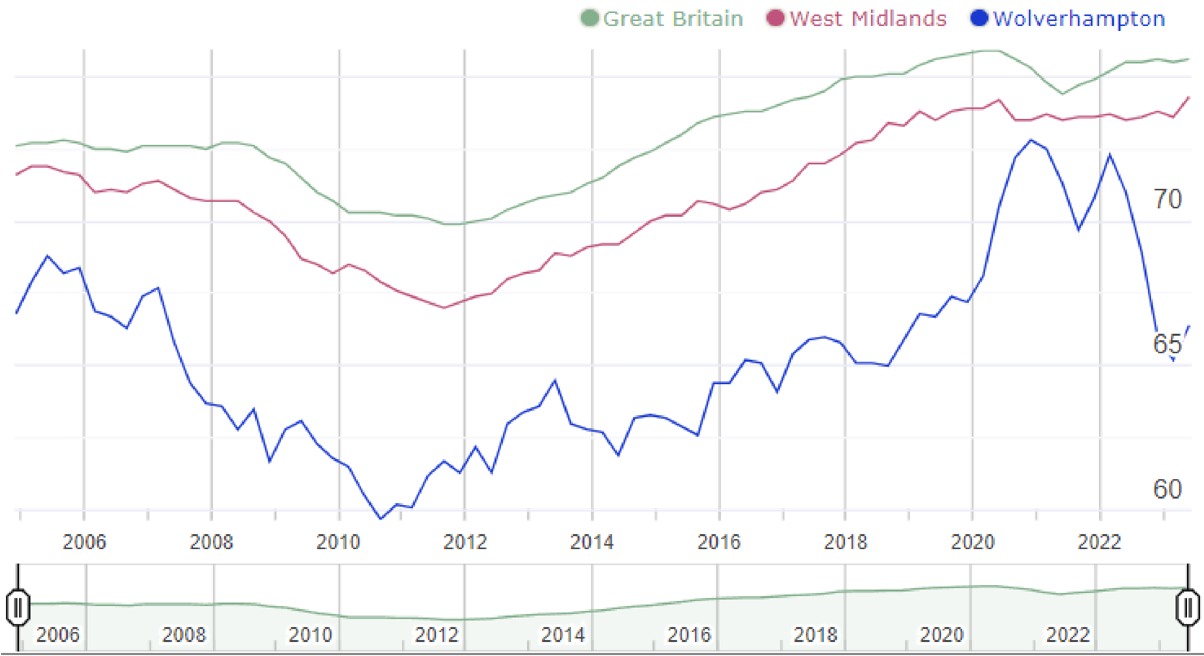
4.1. Employment and Economic Activity

At both the national and regional level, the data is suggesting lower labour market participation, with the number of people in the labour market (either in work or looking for work) falling. A lot of people who have left the workforce are not returning. This participation issue can also be linked to higher worklessness due to poor health (particularly mental health) which suggests a need to improve access and the way in which health services and employment services work together. The percentage of people not in work due to long term health problems has increased significantly in 2023, for the last two quarters we have seen an increase of 6%, this is higher than during the pandemic which highlights that people may have had long term effects on their health from Covid.

This wider trend is replicated to a degree in Wolverhampton, with inactivity up 4.5pp (or 7,500 people) to 28.7% and those economically active down 4.5pp to 71.3%. Where the trend diverges in Wolverhampton, is that unemployment has also increased, up by 0.9pp to 8,700 whilst those employed has decreased by 4.8pp (-7,300 people) to 66.0%[42]. As the visual below shows, we can see Wolverhampton has seen a decrease in the number of people who are economically active and in employment since summer 2022, a trend that wasn't seen regionally or nationally.

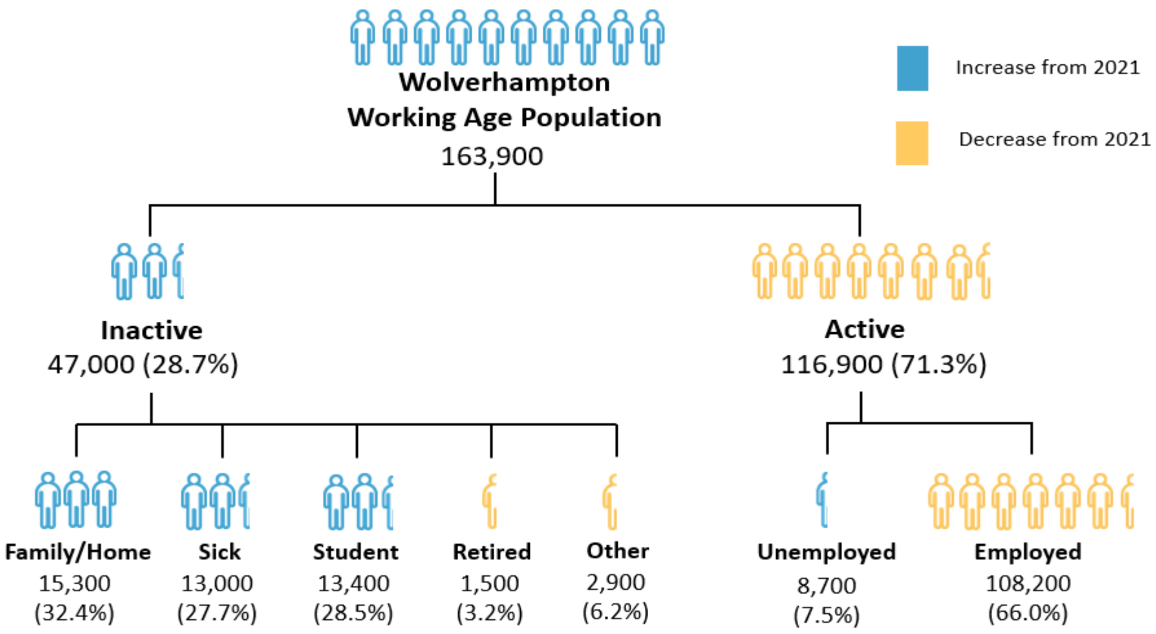
Using other datasets like the new low-income family tracker (LIFT) tool, we can see that economically inactive residents in Wolverhampton have barriers preventing them from getting into work. 74% of the 18-24 group identified on the LIFT tool have medium or high barriers to work (the most common barrier being that they are lone parents). To address these barriers, more affordable childcare options should be suggested to residents as well as more flexible and remote job contracts.

Labour Market Summary for Wolverhampton in 2021:



Source: Lightcast, 2023

[42] ONS, Annual Population Survey, released 2023 – also covers all the economic inactivity analysis.

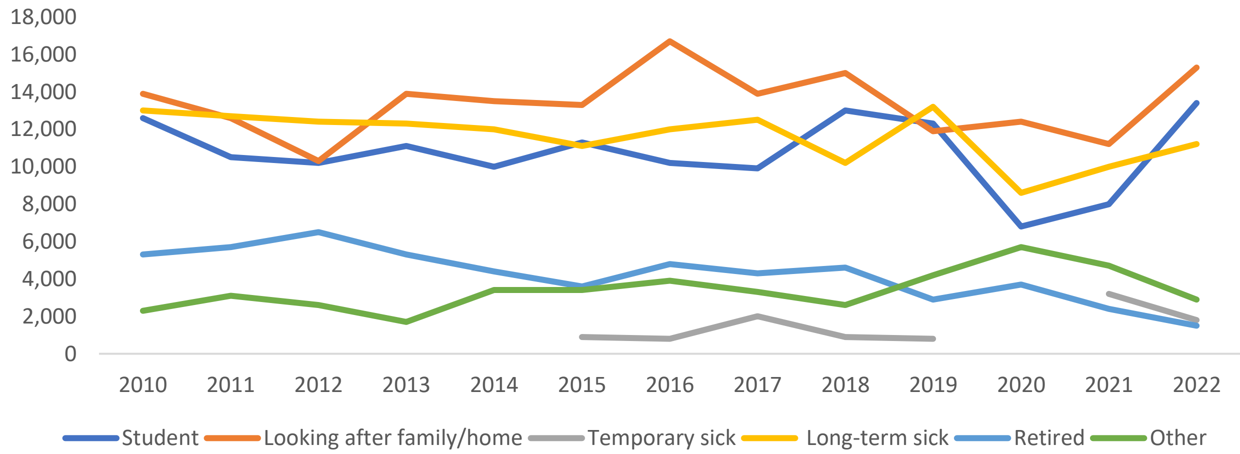


Source: ONS Annual Population Survey, 2023

The change in inactivity or participation is primarily due to a significant increase in students and those looking after the family/home, whilst temporary sick and retired decreased, details are as follows:

- Looking after the family/home increased by 4,100 to 32.4% (England 20.3%)
- Retired decreased by 900 to 3.2% (England 13.8%)
- Other decreased by 1,800 to 6.2% (England 12.0%)
- Long-term sick increased by 1,200 to 23.9% (England 24.6%)
- Temporary sick decreased by 1,400 to 3.8% (England 2.1%)
- Students has increased by 5,400 to 28.5% (England 26.8%)

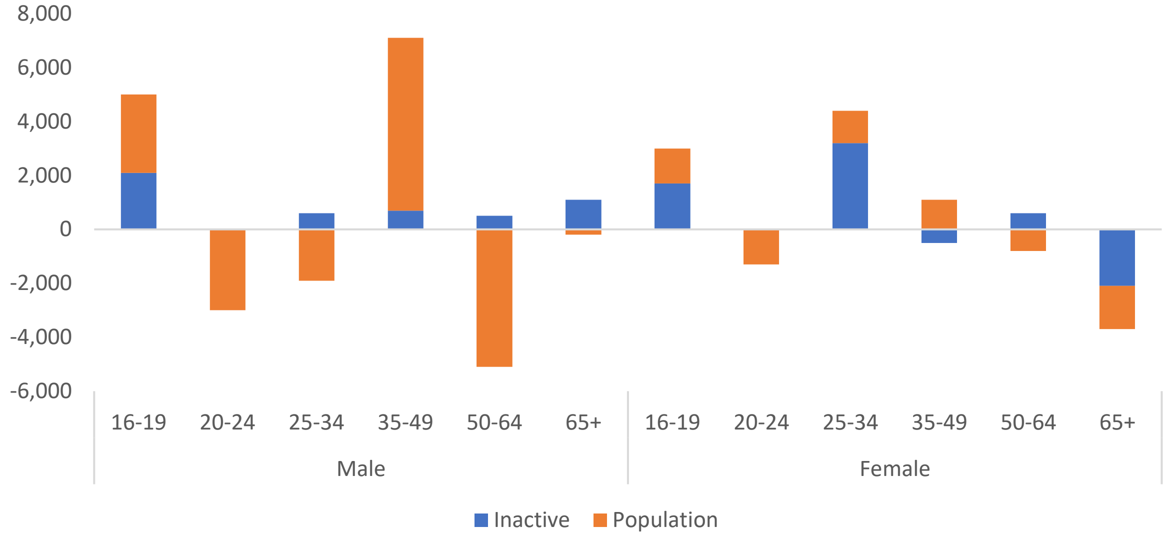
Trends of Economic Inactivity by Reason for Wolverhampton:



Source: ONS Annual Population Survey, 2023

Focussing on those inactive, further analysis of age and gender shows that the increase in inactivity is mainly concentrated among females aged 25-34- and 16–19-year-olds of both sexes, with males 65+ also showing a notable increase. However, there has been a decrease in inactivity in females aged 65+.

Annual Change in Economic Inactivity by Population, Age and Gender for Wolverhampton:



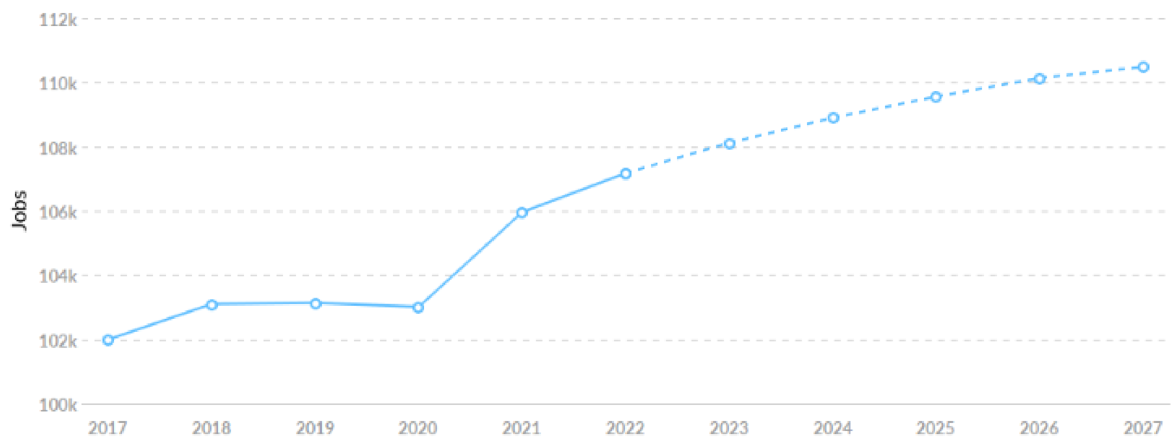
Jobs

In 2022, the total number of jobs in Wolverhampton was 109,000, an increase of 3,000 (2.8%) since the previous year. Nationally, the total number of jobs increased by 2.4%[43]. When compared to 2021, Wolverhampton's part-time employees increased by 1,000 as full-time employees increased by 2,000.

From 2017 to 2022 jobs in Wolverhampton have increased by 6.9% (+7,000), which was above the national growth rate of 5.1%. Lightcast forecasts Wolverhampton jobs to increase between 2022 and 2023.

Projections from Lightcast, show Wolverhampton jobs are expected to continue to grow and reach over 110,000 by 2027.

Wolverhampton Job Trends and Projections

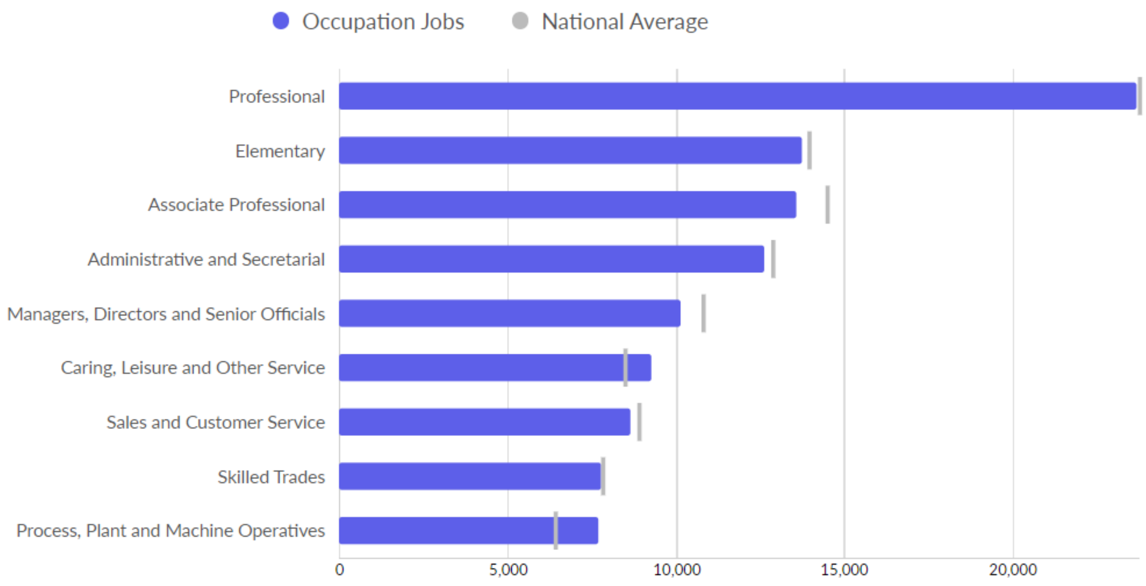


Source: Lightcast, 2023

As seen in the following chart, professional and elementary jobs were the highest categories in Wolverhampton. Administrative and secretarial occupations have increased in Wolverhampton since last year (+5,700 jobs), followed by elementary occupations (+4,100).

[43] ONS, Business Register and Employment Survey, released 2022.

Jobs by Occupation in Wolverhampton and National:



Source: Lightcast

Qualifications

From January 2022 onwards, the NVQ metric has been replaced with RQFs. Within the RQF structure, Trade Apprenticeships are split across the other levels, rather than treated as a separate qualification entirely (as they were on NVQs). This reflects the growth and diversity in the qualifications available through Trade Apprenticeships.

The RQF framework has nine levels from Entry Level through to Level 8, with Level 8 being the highest. The level of a qualification shows how difficult the learning is.

Qualifications that share the same level:

- are broadly similar in terms of the demand.
- can be very different in terms of content, duration, and assessment method.

For example, GCE A levels are at level 3 on the RQF, as are BTEC Level 3 National qualifications and the Level 3 Extended Project qualification. The level of the qualification is stated in the qualification title to ensure it's really clear for users of the qualification.

In 2022, 36.1% of residents have a RQF4 or higher, this is slightly lower than the national average of 45.1%, however the same proportion of Wolverhampton residents have a RQF3 as England with 21.3% - an RQF3 is the equivalent to A Levels, meaning these people have the option to go into higher education. Although this is positive, there are still a high proportion of Wolverhampton working aged residents who have no qualifications (13.8%) compared to the national average of 6.6%.

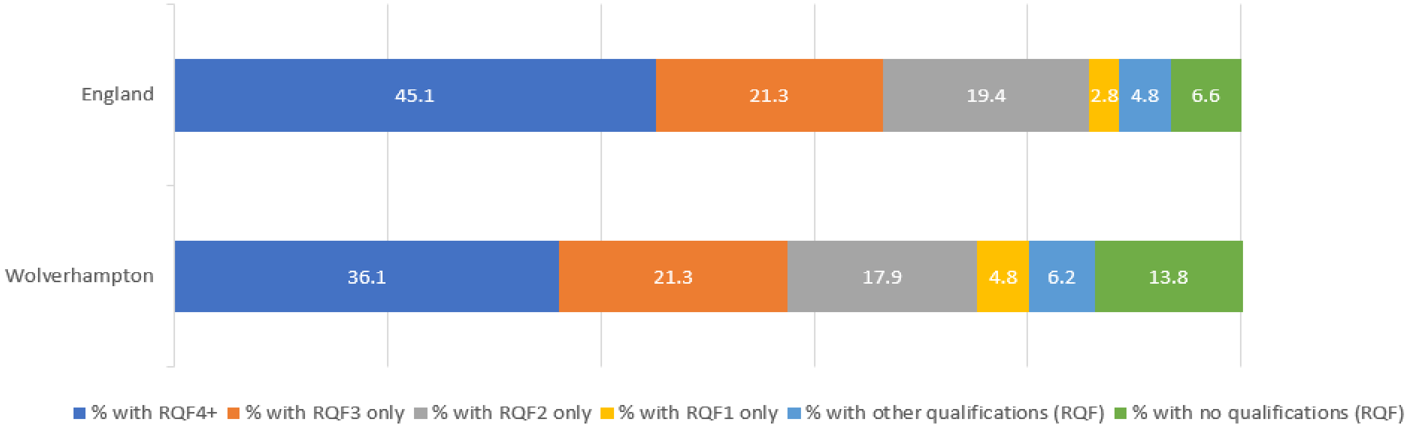
Because this data has newly replaced NVQs, there are no historic versions of this data to see progress in performance and they aren't directly comparable to NVQs.

Wolverhampton and England RQF Qualifications, 2022

	W'ton 2022		England 2022		Gap to England
% with RQF4+	51,900	36.1	15,098,500	45.1	9%
% with RQF3 only	30,500	21.3	7,125,200	21.3	Same
% with RQF2 only	25,700	17.9	6,496,000	19.4	1.5
% with RQF1 only	6,800	4.8	924,000	2.8	Higher than England
% with other qualifications (RQF)	8,800	6.2	1,615,100	4.8	Higher than England
% with no qualifications (RQF)	19,800	13.8	2,199,100	6.6	Higher than England

Source: ONS, Annual Population Survey, 2023

Wolverhampton and England Qualification Level Summary, 2022:



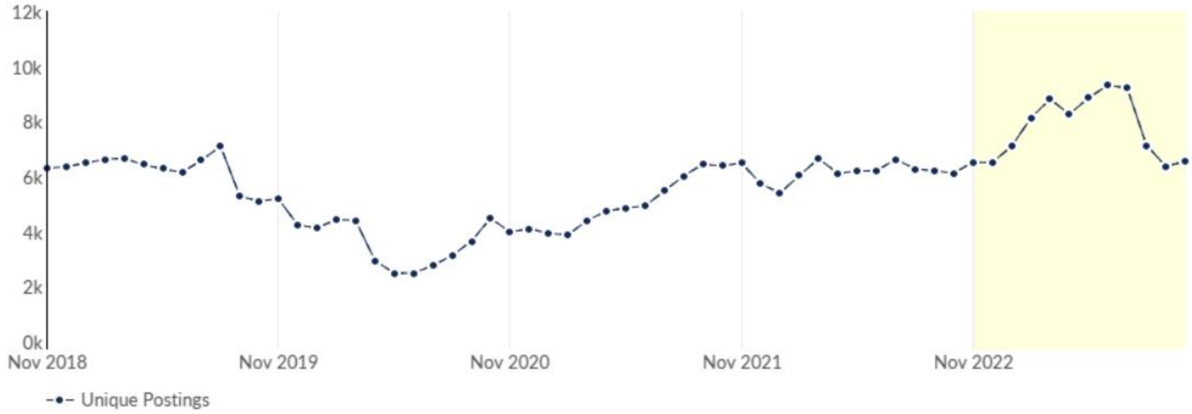
Source: ONS, Annual Population Survey, 2023

Wolverhampton Job Postings and Vacancies

Wolverhampton's job postings remain strong across all sectors. Since the turn of the year, there have been 35,275 unique job postings, up 30.2% from the same time period the previous year. This trend hasn't been seen nationally, although the same peak in Summer 2023 can be seen for England, the October rate for this year's job postings is 8% lower than this time last year and is the lowest it's been since June 2021.

At the moment, the most recent APS data for June 2023 shows that Wolverhampton has 9,200 unemployed working aged residents and there were 9,315 job postings in June 2023. In June 2022 for example there were 10,000 unemployed working aged residents and only 6,205 jobs. This highlights that the job market is growing which, with the right support more residents will be able to find work, therefore decreasing unemployment levels in the city.

Wolverhampton's Job Posting Trends:



Source: Lightcast 2023

Over this period (highlighted yellow in the graph above), job adverts have increased by 7% compared to October 2022. As the graph above shows, there was a significant spike in the number of unique job postings with the peak reaching 9,315 in June, these are the highest numbers we've seen in the past 5 years. Although this dropped down again in August, the numbers are still higher than previous years around the same time of year.

Top 10 Most In-demand Occupations

Occupation (SOC)	Total/Unique (Nov 2022 - Oct 2023)	Posting Intensity	Median Posting Duration
Sales Related Occupations n.e.c.	2,417 / 1,197	2 : 1	32 days
Care Workers and Home Carers	3,154 / 1,169	3 : 1	32 days
Teaching Assistants	1,985 / 991	2 : 1	33 days
Other Administrative Occupations n.e.c.	1,729 / 856	2 : 1	32 days
Secondary Education Teaching Professionals	1,404 / 789	2 : 1	34 days
Customer Service Occupations n.e.c.	1,965 / 772	3 : 1	30 days
Plant and Machine Operatives n.e.c.	1,327 / 694	2 : 1	33 days
Mechanical Engineers	1,265 / 657	2 : 1	33 days
Programmers and Software Development Professionals	1,425 / 626	2 : 1	33 days
Book-keepers, Payroll Managers and Wages Clerks	1,100 / 619	2 : 1	31 days

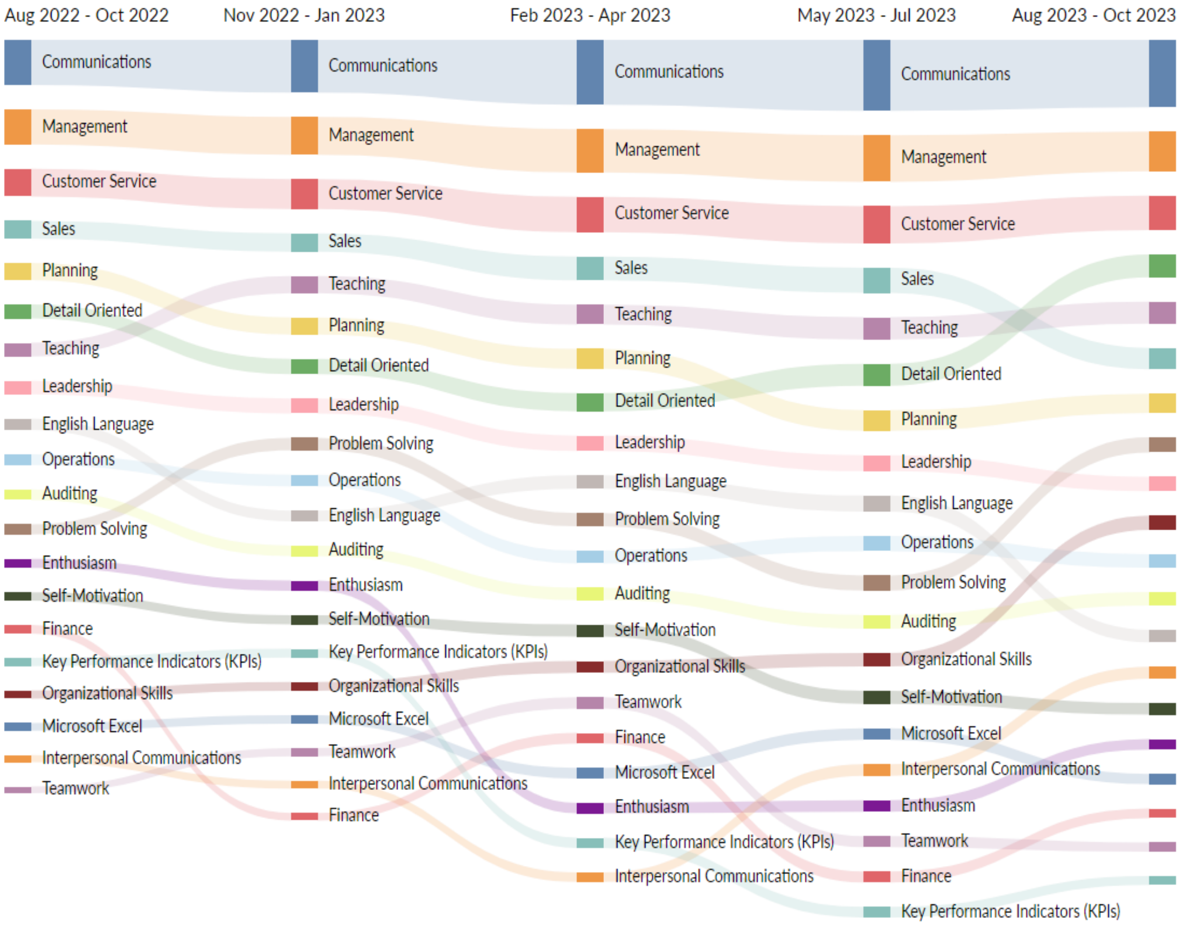
Source: Lightcast 2023

Over the period analysed, these top 10 occupations account for over 30% of all job postings in Wolverhampton.

'Sales Related Occupations' and 'Care Workers and Home Carers' are the most advertised positions with 2,366 unique job postings. Although lower down on the unique job postings list, posting intensity was also notably high (7:1) in Wolverhampton for 'Registered Nurse Practitioners', suggesting that the skills for this role and those related to health care are significantly lacking within the labour market. The data also suggests that employers and recruiters are finding it difficult to find suitable candidates for 'Health Services and Public Health Managers and Directors'.

In addition to the volume of job postings (highlighted above), the types of skills demanded by businesses also helps to understand not only what Wolverhampton excels in, but how it is growing.

Top Ten Skills in Wolverhampton by Quarter:



This visual shows skills volatility overtime. The current most in demand skills for Wolverhampton are communications, management and customer service and have been for the past year. This data is valuable as it allows us to see what kind of skills the labour market need to have to get into work as this data comes from job postings data, highlighting that these are the skills most employers are seeking in their recruitment campaigns. Knowing this information will enable the council to tailor its unemployment support to residents by ensuring they have the relevant skills needed to get into work in the industries they want to work in but also encourage more residents to be upskilled on the skills that are most in demand to ensure more people are getting into work. The business support offering can be improved by using this data to match applicants to roles and improve recruitment and retainment of staff for local businesses.

4.2. Worklessness

Unemployment Rate and Economically Inactive[44]

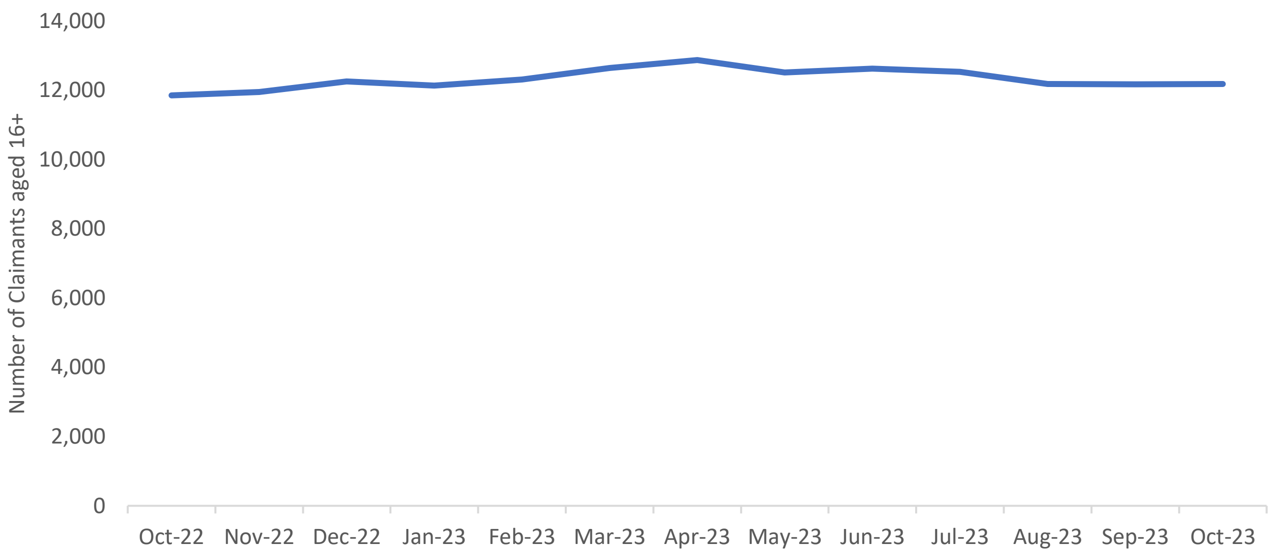
In 2022, the overall unemployment rate (aged 16-64) for Wolverhampton was at its seventh lowest on record at 7.5%, with the lowest levels seen in 2020 at 4.9%. Wolverhampton had a higher proportion unemployment rate (aged 16+) for those classed as ethnic monitory at 9.6%, than the unemployment rate for those classed as white at 6.2%. This follows the England trend which shows an unemployment rate of 3.1% for white and 6.3% for BAME in 2022.

Wolverhampton's economically inactive rate (aged 16-64) was 28.7% in 2022, up from 24.2% in 2021. In 2022, Wolverhampton had a lower proportion at 73.9% of those who are economically inactive who do not want a job when compared to England at 82.1%.

Claimants

Wolverhampton had 12,180 claimants (6,795 males and 5,385 females) in October 2023, an overall increase of 10 (+0.1%) claimants since September 2023; UK increased by 1.1%[45]. Compared to October 2022, Wolverhampton claimants increased by 330 (+2.8%); UK increased by 3.4%. Wolverhampton had 1,800 more claimants since March 2020 (pre Covid pandemic). This is an increase for Wolverhampton by 17.3%, while UK increased by 21.4%.

Claimant Count in Wolverhampton between October 2022 to October 2023:

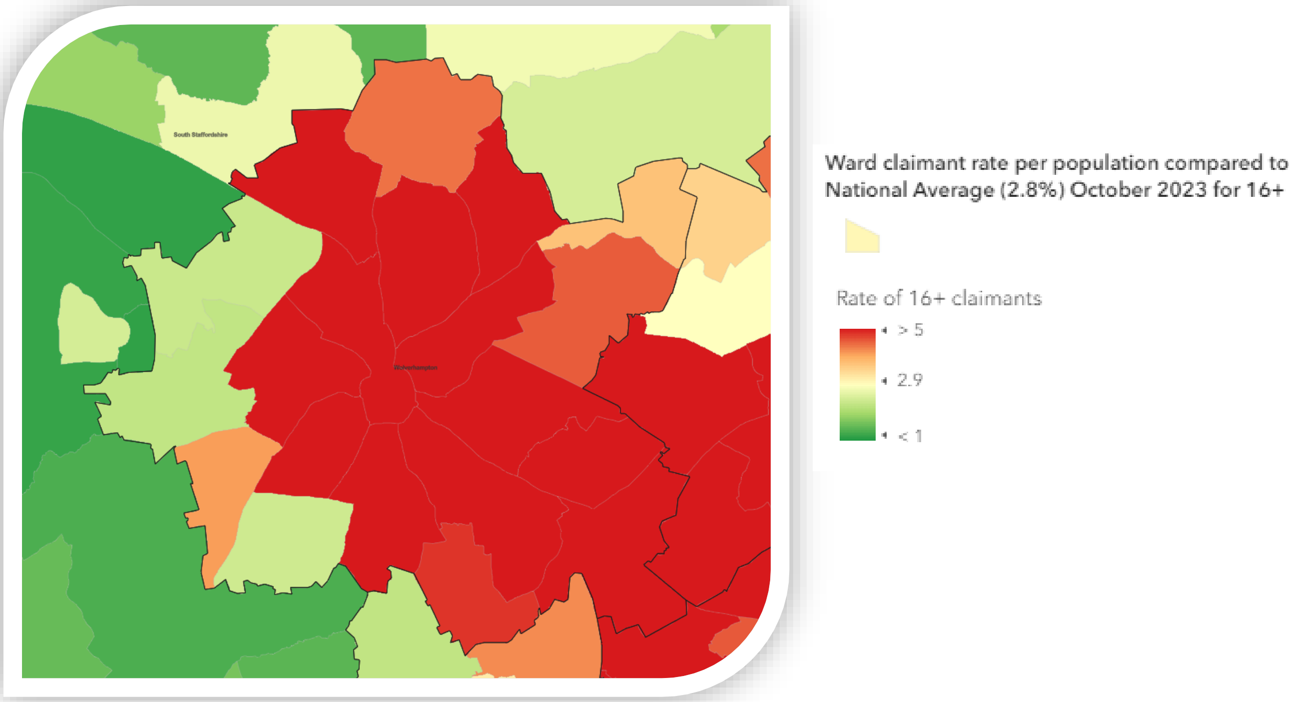


Source: ONS, APS 2023

For Wolverhampton the number of claimants as a percentage of residents aged 16 years and over was 5.8% compared to 2.8% for the UK in October 2023. Of the 20 wards in Wolverhampton, 17 were above the UK proportion in October 2023.

[44] ONS, Annual Population Survey, released 2022.
[45] ONS, Claimant count / Department for Work and Pensions, released 2022.

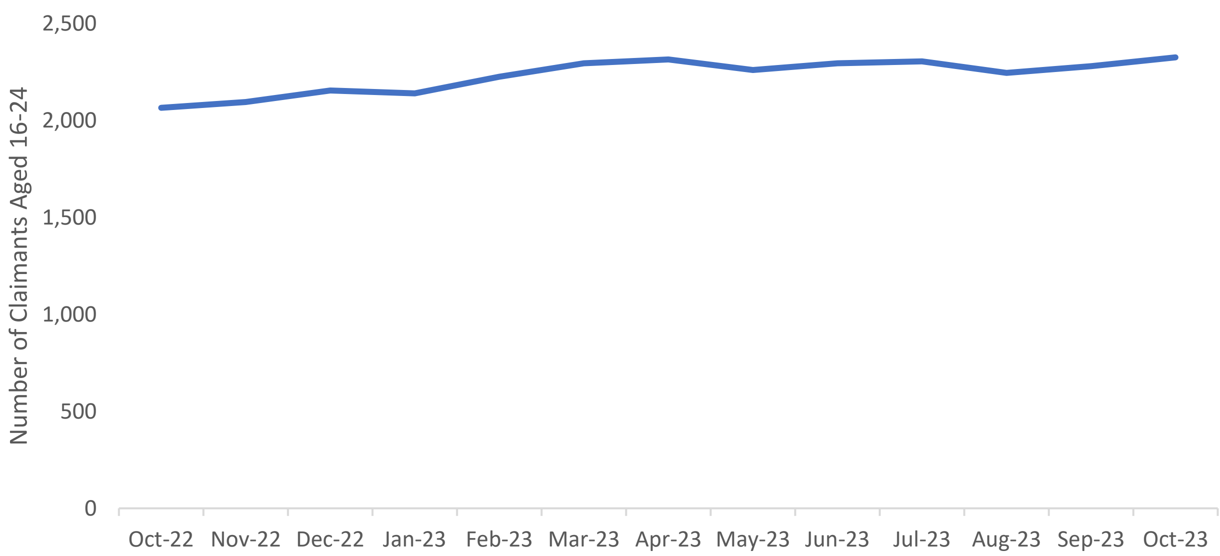
Claimants as a Percentage of Wolverhampton Residents Aged 16 Years and Over in October 2023:



Source: ONS / DWP, 2023

Wolverhampton had 2,325 claimants aged 16-24 years old (1,390 males and 935 females) in October 2023, an overall increase of 45 (+2.0%) claimants aged 16-24 years old since September 2023; UK increased by 1.9%. Compared to October 2022, Wolverhampton claimants aged 16-24 years old increased by 260 (+12.6%); UK increased by 8.3%. Wolverhampton had 400 more claimants since March 2020 (pre Covid pandemic). This is an increase for Wolverhampton by 20.8%, while UK increased by 14.7%.

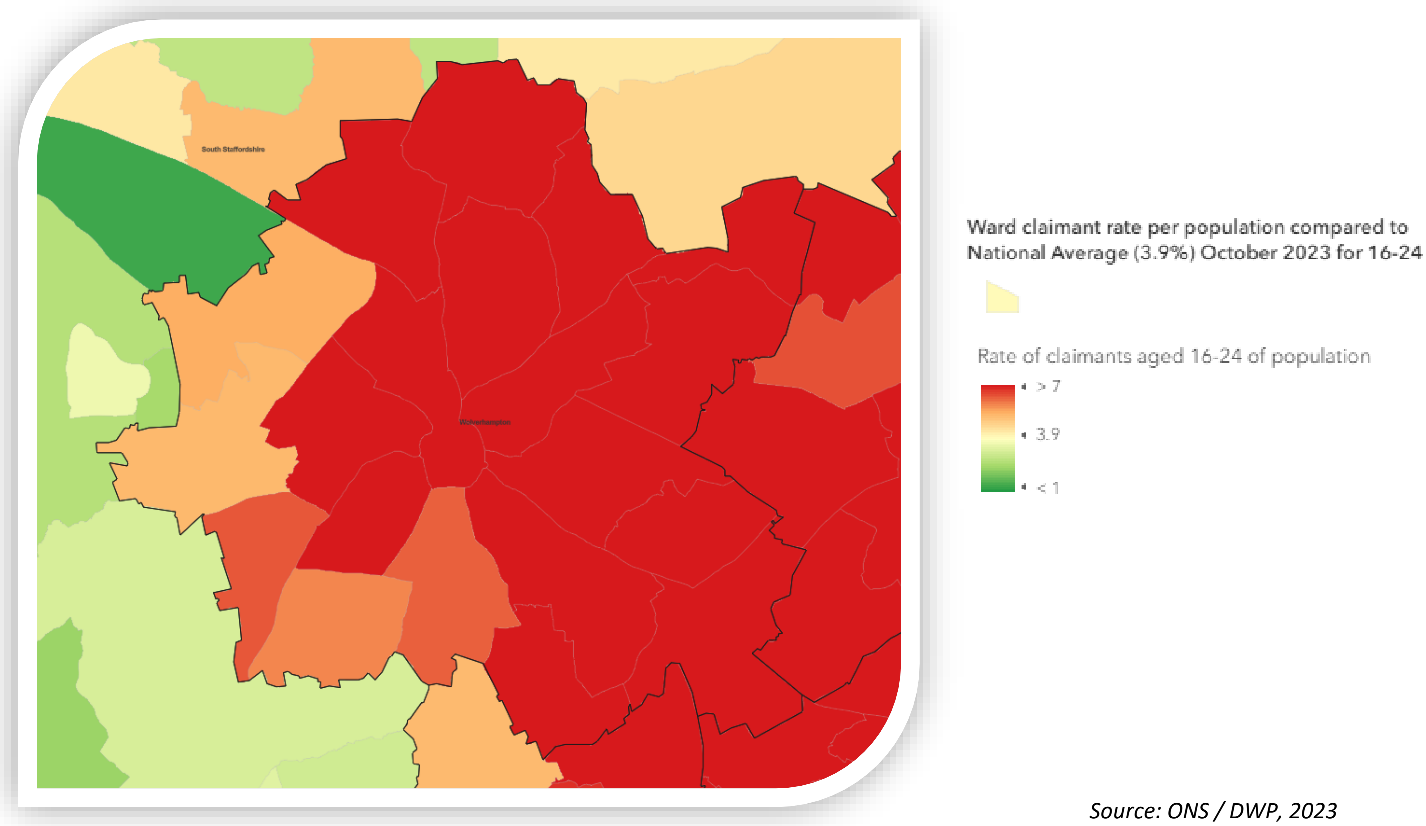
Claimant Count for Those Aged 16-24 Years Old in Wolverhampton, October 2022 to October 2023:



Source: ONS / DWP, 2023

For Wolverhampton the number of claimants as a percentage of residents aged 16 to 24 years old was 8.3% compared to 3.9% for UK in October 2023. This rate was the highest across all local authorities. All 20 wards in Wolverhampton were above the UK proportion in October 2023.

Claimants as a Percentage of Wolverhampton Residents Aged 16 to 24 Years Old in October 2023:



Source: ONS / DWP, 2023

Workless Households

In 2022, there were an estimated 18.2% (13,800) of workless households in Wolverhampton, this was above the England-wide figure of 13.4%[46]. Since 2021, workless households in Wolverhampton have increased by 13.1% (+1,600) while nationally there was a 0.2% increase.

Workless households can be split into the following categories and in 2022 for Wolverhampton:

- 1.8% (1,300) were all unemployed households, compared to 0.9% in England. This has decreased by 27.8% (-500 households) since 2021 and England decreased by 16.9%.
- 15.4% were all inactive households, compared to 11.7% in England. This has increased by 27.2% (+2,500 households) since 2021, England increased by 3.7%.

For Wolverhampton to reach the England-wide figure of 13.4% workless households, Wolverhampton requires a reduction of 4,908 households that are classed as workless.

[46] ONS, Annual Population Survey – households by combined economic activity status, released 2023.

Not in Education, Employment or Training

In Wolverhampton, 3.1% (202) of 16–17-year-olds were Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), below the England-wide figure of 5.2% at the end of 2023[47]. For Wolverhampton this has slightly increased from 2.8%, while England increased from 4.7% when compared to the end of 2022. At the end of 2023, following the national trend, Wolverhampton had a higher proportion of male NEET (6.3%, England: 5.8%) than female NEET (4.7%, England: 4.7%).

Excluding, the "other" category, the highest proportion of NEET in Wolverhampton for the end of 2023 was those classed as white at 7.6%, above the England-wide figure.

NEET by Ethnicity for Wolverhampton and England at the End of 2023:

	White	Mixed race	Black or black British	Asian or Asian British	Chinese	Other	Total
Wolverhampton	**7.6%**	**1.8%**	**2.0%**	**1.2%**	**0.0%**	**2.9%**	**3.1%**
England	5.7%	5.2%	3.1%	2.7%	1.8%	4.3%	**5.2%**

Source: Department for Education

As seen in the following table, at the end of 2023, Wolverhampton had a higher proportion of NEET with SEND or SEN support than the England-wide figure.

NEET by Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) and SEN support for Wolverhampton and England at the End of 2023:

	with SEND (EHCP or statement)	with SEN support	without SEND (no EHCP or statement, no SEN support)	Total
Wolverhampton	**14.3%**	**12.0%**	**2.5%**	**3.1%**
England	10.1%	9.3%	4.6%	5.2%

Source: Department for Education

4.3. Participation in Education and Training

Wolverhampton Supply/Demand Sector Subject Area (SSA1) Overview (All Provision)[48]

The following table maps Further Education (FE) achievements in Wolverhampton (all learning delivered in Wolverhampton-to-Wolverhampton learners) to the high-level Sector Subject Areas. This is then compared to the total annual job openings to give an understanding of how FE supply is meeting labour market demand.

[47] Department for Education - NEET and participation: local authority figures, released 2023 (period: average of December, January and February)

[48] Lightcast, reported as of November 2023

Wolverhampton Supply/Demand Sector Subject Area (SSA1) Overview (All Provision)

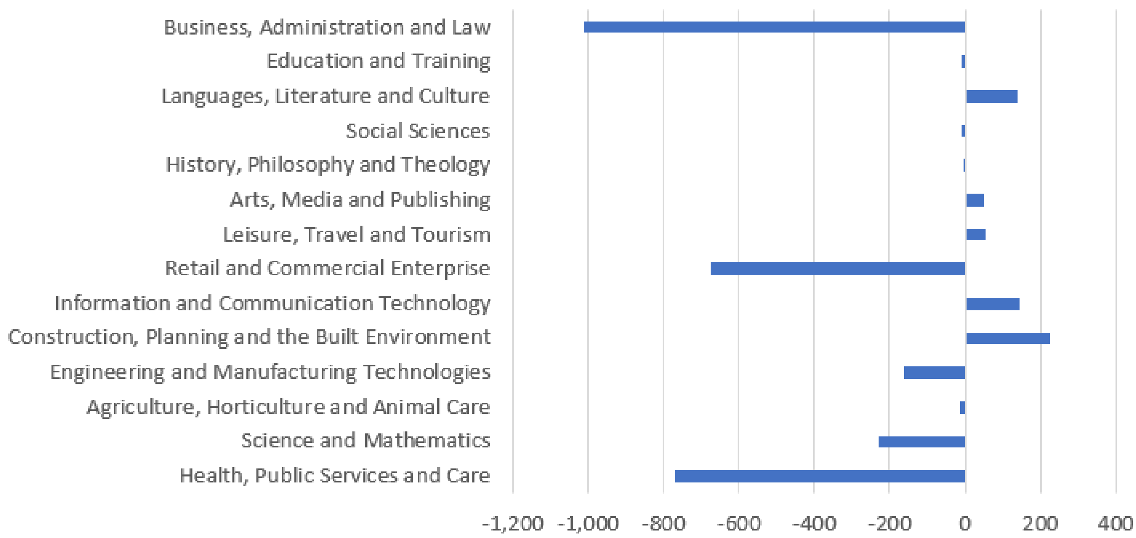
Sector Subject Area (SSA) 1	2022 Achievements Volumes (FTLE)	Annual Openings	Regional Jobs (2022)	% Jobs Growth (2020-2030)
Health, Public Services and Care	449	1,216	28,850	6%
Science and Mathematics	183	414	9,252	9%
Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	55	67	1,852	1%
Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	341	502	15,397	2%
Construction, Planning and the Built Environment	469	244	7,187	4%
Information and Communication Technology	309	164	4,613	6%
Retail and Commercial Enterprise	215	888	26,856	3%
Leisure, Travel and Tourism	149	96	2,703	2%
Arts, Media and Publishing	208	156	4,465	3%
History, Philosophy and Theology	2	4	144	No change
Social Sciences	14	22	569	6%
Languages, Literature and Culture	145	7	225	3%
Education and Training	303	313	8,589	3%
Business, Administration and Law	289	1,300	39,873	3%

Source: Lightcast

Further Education (FE) achievements by SSA in Wolverhampton:

As seen in the above table, Health, Public Services and Care recorded the highest number of achievements, followed by Science and Mathematics. In order to evaluate supply and demand, the graph below shows the variance between FE delivery and labour market demand in Wolverhampton.

Demand Supply Variance in Wolverhampton in 2022:

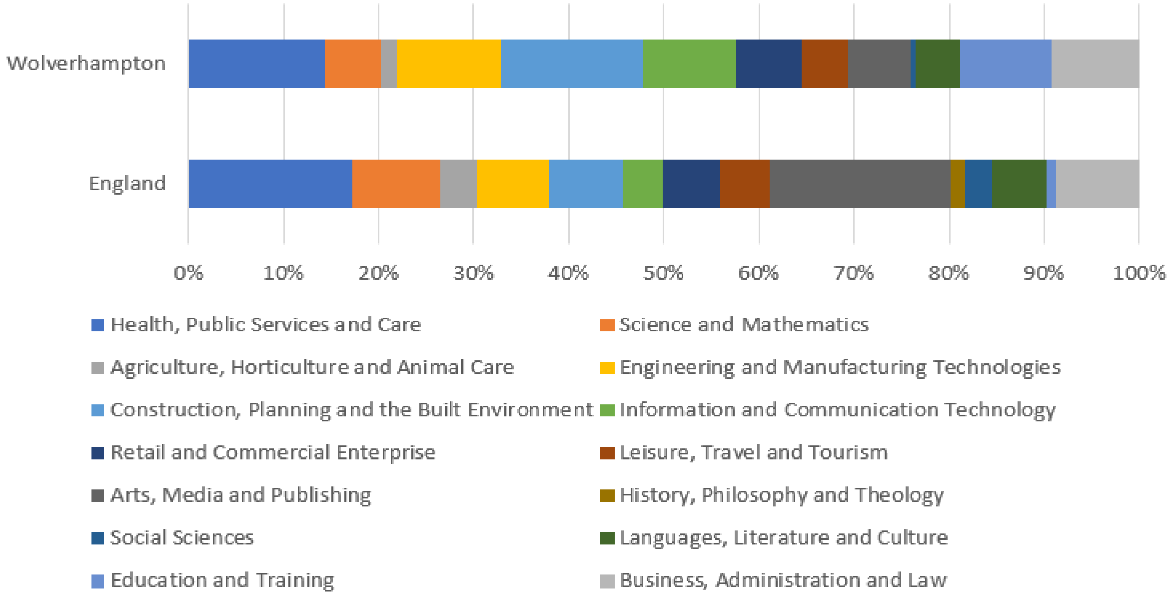


Source: Lightcast

The data suggests that there are opportunities in Wolverhampton to strengthen delivery in business, administration, Retail and Commercial Enterprise and Health, Public Services and Care. The undersupply in Health, Public Services are Care could become a significant future issue if not addressed, as the sector is also forecast to grow by 6% by 2030 exacerbating current recruitment issues. There may need to be incentives and encouragements to get more people to start training and being upskilled to work in this sector. Conversely, there seems to be an oversupply in Construction, Planning & the Built Environment, Languages, Literature & Culture, and Information & Communication Technology.

In terms of Information & Communication Technology given future digital demand, an oversupply in provision and not enough employer demand could lead to an oversaturated supply of labour in the other disciplines. Learners from these courses could find it difficult to find employment locally, and possibly look further afield to find work. This is notable when comparing the delivery of provision in Wolverhampton to that of the national average as seen in the chart below – specifically Education & Training and Information & Communication Technology.

Wolverhampton and England Achievements Comparison (FTLE) in 2022:



Source: Lightcast

Nationally, Education and Training accounts for 1.1% of delivery whilst in Wolverhampton it is 9.7%; and likewise, Information & Communication Technology is 4.2% nationally but 9.9% in Wolverhampton.

Apprentice Starts

Apprenticeship starts have been falling rapidly across all areas in the West Midlands since the introduction of levy in 2017/18 and then further exacerbated by the pandemic. The 2022/23 figure has seen an even bigger decrease than previous years, a -380 change since 2021/22. When compared to 2016/17 – the last full year before the levy - the fall in starts in Wolverhampton is -55.4%. The data shows the largest reductions since last year were recorded at advanced level whilst higher level starts have shown the smallest decrease. Intermediate level starts have also fallen significantly, severely hampering pathways for young people.

Apprentices aged under 19 account for 22% (280) in Wolverhampton, below the national average of 24.8%. 19 to 24-year-olds account for 30.7% (390), above the national average of 29.7%; apprentices aged 25 and over account for 47.2% (600) above the national average of 45.6%.

Looking internally at what the council are doing, the number of apprentices and graduates placed within the council has doubled over the past 15 months contributing to its employment support offer to help get local people into jobs and training and growing our own leaders of the future.

4.4. Future Skills Need

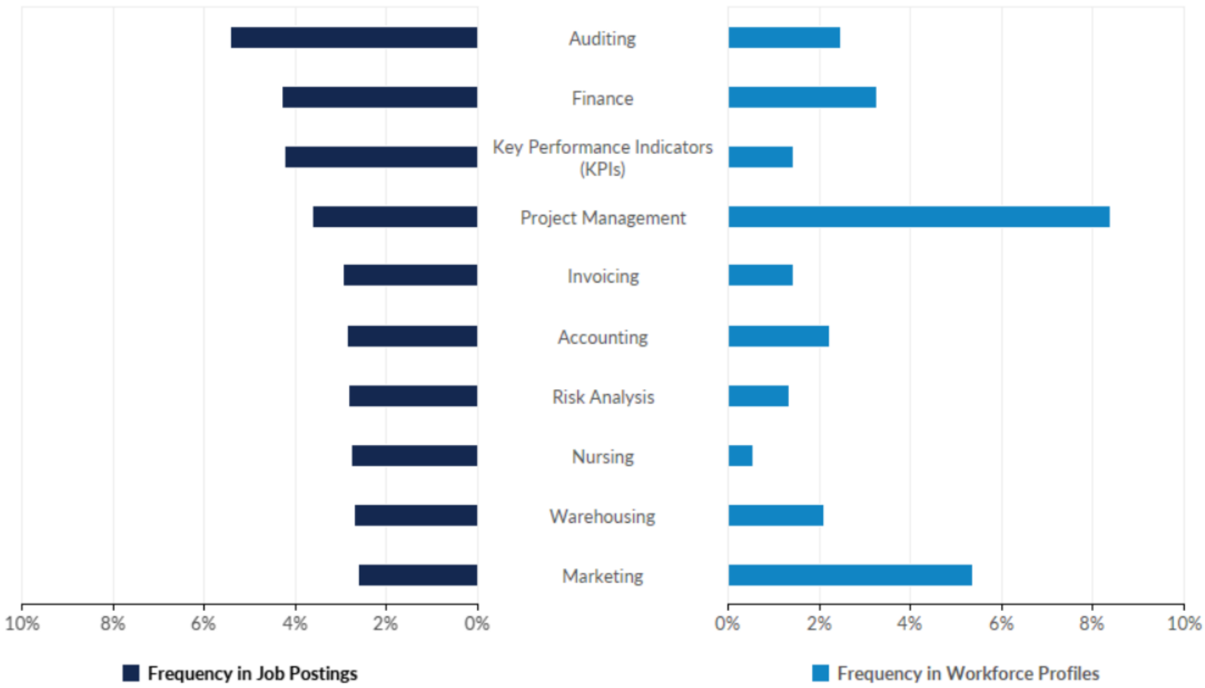
There has been significant change within many industries post pandemic, digitisation of services has increased significantly since people adjusted to doing things online during lockdown. Businesses need to adapt to be able to adapt to shifts in consumer demand to be able to survive.

Soft Versus Hard Skills

There are two types of skills: hard skills and soft skills. Hard skills relate to job-specific skills and the ability to perform distinct tasks that require specialist knowledge. Soft skills, on the other hand, refer to human skills that define the way you work. This includes the way you solve problems, how you interact with colleagues, and the way that you manage work. Both are indispensable in the current economic climate.

The chart below lists the top ten most in-demand hard skills in Wolverhampton, between Nov 2022 and Oct 2023, based on the number of times they are requested in job postings. Auditing is the most in-demand skill in Wolverhampton, requested in 2,199 unique job postings. Finance is in second at 1,746, and Key Performance Indicators comes in third, requested in 1,711 job postings.

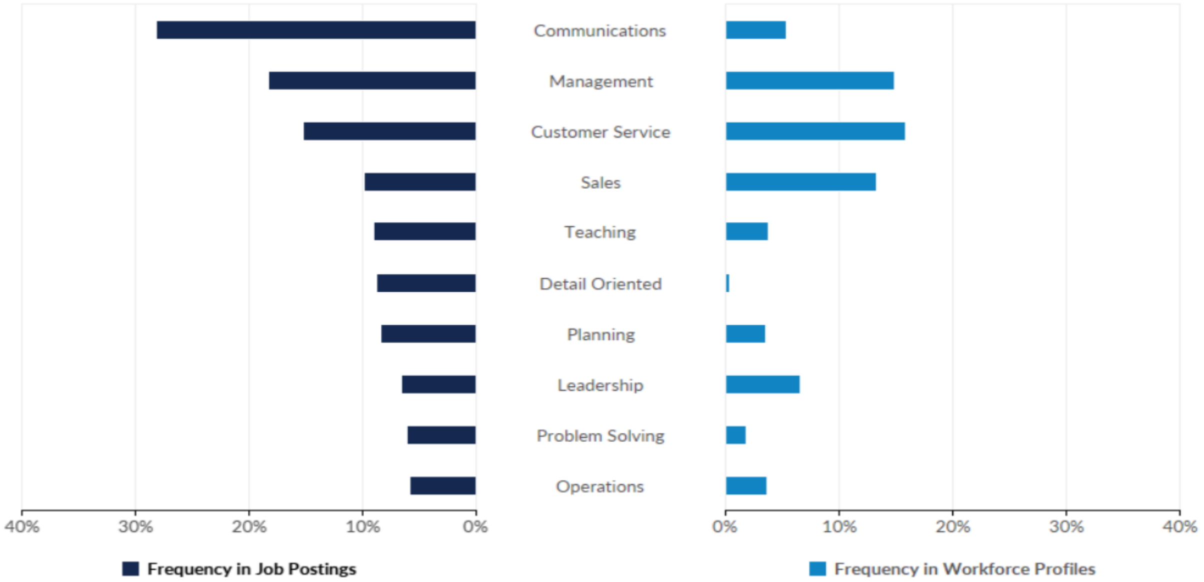
Top Ten Most-in-Demand Hard Skills in Wolverhampton:



Source: Lightcast

Over the same time period, the most requested soft skills in Wolverhampton were communication, requested in 11,432 unique job postings, followed by management in second at 7,422, and then customer service, requested in 6,196 job postings.

Top Ten Most-in-Demand Soft Skills in Wolverhampton:



Source: Lightcast

Communication is also the top soft skill nationally, appearing in 2.73m unique job postings in the same period. This demand is reflective of the changing needs of the working world following the pandemic.

Digital[49]

- 80% of West Midlands residents have Foundation Level Digital Skills, compared to 84% across England.
- 88% of West Midlands residents have Life Essential Digital Skills, compared to 92% across England.
- 88% of West Midlands residents have Work Essential Digital Skills, compared to 82% across England.

Top 10 Fastest Growing Occupations in Wolverhampton

Taking a longer-term snapshot at employer demand across Wolverhampton and looking at this year so far (January 2023 to October 2023); Culture, Media & Sports occupations demand has increased by over 130%. Community & Civil Enforcement Occupations have also increased as well as Leisure & Travel related occupations.

[49] Lloyds, Consumer Digital Index, Essential Digital Skills tables, 2023

Top 10 Fastest Growing Occupations in Wolverhampton:

Occupation	Annual Median Advertised Salary	Salary Observations Count	Unique Postings from Jan 2023 - Oct 2023	% Change (Jan 2023 - Oct 2023)
Culture, Media and Sports Occupations	£31,168	347	661	+137%
Community and Civil Enforcement Occupations	£23,040	11	22	+33%
Leisure, Travel and Related Personal Service Occupations	£23,232	112	301	+17%
Skilled Agricultural and Related Trades	£24,448	37	79	+17%
Transport and Mobile Machine Drivers and Operatives	£27,456	412	891	+15%
Sales Occupations	£25,536	938	1,935	+11%
Teaching and Other Educational Professionals	£35,008	804	2,270	+8%
Administrative Occupations	£25,024	1,469	2,623	+8%
Skilled Metal, Electrical and Electronic Trades	£31,040	947	1,718	+5%
Elementary Trades and Related Occupations	£27,008	123	292	+5%

Source: Lightcast

Top 10 Fastest Growing Job Titles in Wolverhampton

Job Title	Annual Median Advertised Salary	Salary Observations Count	Unique Postings from Jan 2023 - Oct 2023	% Change (Jan 2023 - Oct 2023)
Interpreters	£31,200	53	104	+2,650%
Digital Marketing Managers	£42,496	23	30	+900%
Finance Assistants	£24,448	40	58	+700%
Front End Developers	£47,488	23	25	+700%
Production Engineers	£29,952	12	20	+700%
Executive Assistants	£40,064	15	21	+700%
Shopfitters	£32,384	10	21	+700%
Catering Managers	£32,128	3	9	+600%
Service Administrators	£25,984	8	18	+600%
Digital Marketing Executives	£29,952	20	23	+500%

Source: Lightcast

The table above suggests that Digital Marketing is on the rise, there is a need for companies to have an online presence, more so since the pandemic with people relying on the internet. With advances in technology, there are advantages to digital marketing over traditional marketing. Distributing information online via social media and other methods is cheaper, faster, and more likely to reach a wider audience. However, digital poverty is prevalent in Wolverhampton specifically in areas with high levels of deprivation. There are also areas where the population is older and digital training would need to be carried out for digital marketing to be beneficial in those areas. There's also a notable increase in the need for Interpreters which is a niche area but gives people with unique skillsets a chance to get into work.

4.5. Key Trends, Challenges and Future Opportunities

There is currently an ongoing disconnect in the labour market, between continued heightened levels of claimants seeking work and a record number of job vacancies. Furthermore, Wolverhampton has long-term challenges related to unemployment and inactivity as well as lower qualification levels in the population. While progress has been made on some of these areas, the problems remain stark according to the data, but with new sector growth, investment opportunities and the next generation of young people coming through, there is potential locally for improvement.

Inactivity and Unemployment
Lower labour market participation is prominent locally, regionally and nationally, with a lot of people who have left the workforce not returning. Wolverhampton has long had considerably higher levels of unemployment and economic inactivity (thus higher levels of claimants, youth claimants, workless households and NEETs), and lower levels of employment. The unemployment rate in Wolverhampton is currently 7.5% and the economic inactivity rate is 28.7%, reflecting the major challenges. The change in inactivity or participation is primarily due to a significant increase in students and those looking after the family/home. Long-term sickness is also prominent.

Jobs
Positively, the total number of jobs in Wolverhampton increased between 2021 and 2022, above the national average rate of increase (+2.8% vs 2.4%). Projections from Lightcast, show Wolverhampton jobs are expected to continue to grow and reach over 110,000 by 2027.

Job Demand and Vacancies
Demand for skilled, semi-skilled and low skilled occupations remains high across all sectors locally, adding to the potential of more jobs in Wolverhampton; trends not necessarily seen across the whole of the UK. Wolverhampton's job postings remain strong across all sectors. Since the turn of the year, there have been 35,275 unique job postings, up 30.2% from the same time period the previous year. 'Sales Related Occupations' and 'Care Workers and Home Carers' are the most advertised positions with 2,366 unique job postings. Although lower down on the unique job postings list, posting intensity was also notably high (7:1) in Wolverhampton for 'Registered Nurse Practitioners', suggesting that the skills for this role and those related to health care are significantly lacking within the labour market.

Qualifications, Education and Training
A key part of the issue is a less qualified population in Wolverhampton: in 2022, 36.1% of residents have a RQF4 or higher, slightly lower than the national average of 45.1%, while there is still a high proportion of Wolverhampton working aged residents who have no qualifications (13.8%) compared to the national average of 6.6%. Unfortunately, the number of apprentice starts has also declined since the introduction of the Levy in 2017/18, with an opportunity to revamp this in future to support key sectors and providing young people with good careers. Training will also need to address future skills as well as existing, incorporating digital in particular.

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