

SANDWELL ECONOMIC DASHBOARD – APRIL 2025



The Economic Intelligence Unit


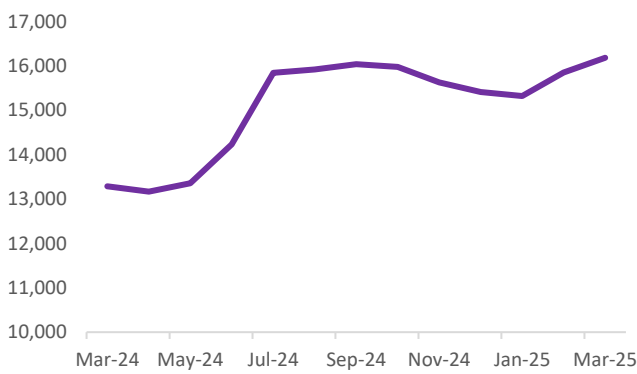
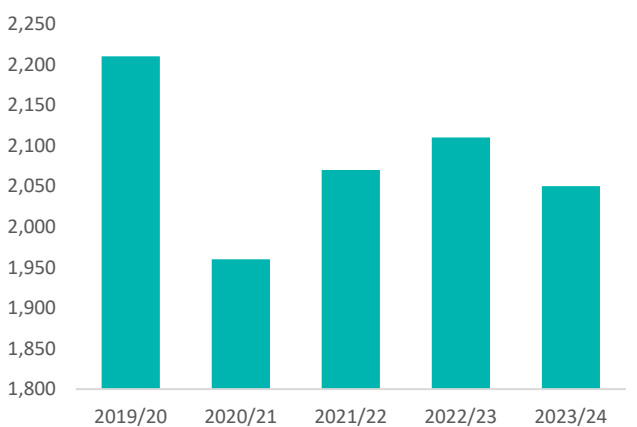
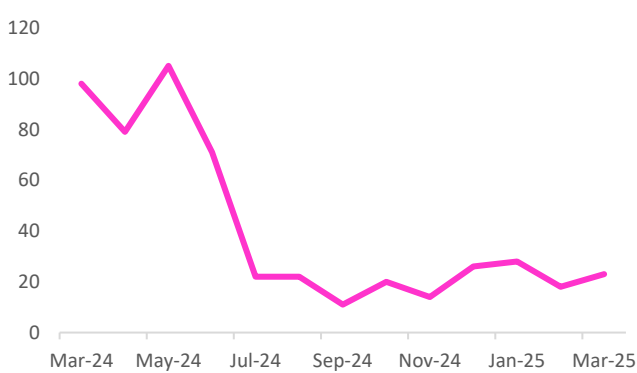
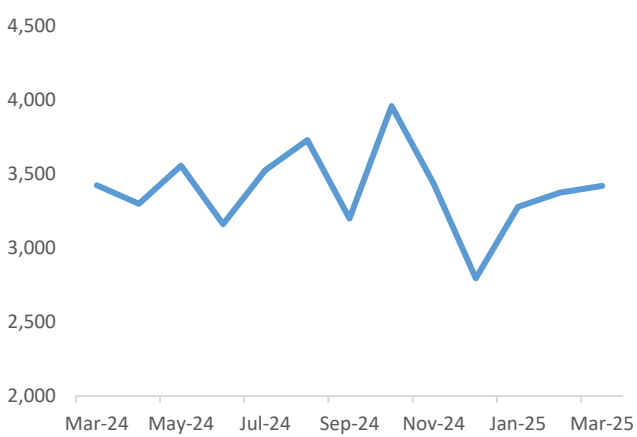
Indicator <sup>1</sup>	Pre-Pandemic (Context) <sup>2</sup>		March 2024	April 2024	May 2024	June 2024	July 2024	August 2024	September 2024	October 2024	November 2024	December 2024	January 2025	February 2025	March 2025	Trend	National/ Regional or LA Comparator <sup>3</sup>	Commentary/ Context
Regional Business Activity Index	51.2 (Feb 2020)		52.8	55.5	54.2	51.6	51.2	52.2	51.2	50.0	49.9	48.9	47.2	48.7	49.6		WM: 6 <sup>th</sup> Highest Region  UK: 51.5  London: 54.9 (1 <sup>st</sup> ) Northern Ireland: 45.3 (12 <sup>th</sup> )	The West Midlands Business Activity Index increased from 48.7 in February 2025 to 49.6 in March 2025, a four-month high. Some firms suggested that constrained client budgets affected output, while others reported growth amid the start of new projects and tentative signs of improving demand.
Regional Future Business Activity Index	72.3 (Feb 2020)		79.7	78.7	80.5	74.8	77.9	76.1	69.8	71.0	68.6	67.2	69.8	74.3	68.5		WM: 2nd Highest Region  East of England: 69.2 (1st) Northern Ireland: 56.1 (12th)	The West Midlands Future Business Activity Index decreased from 74.3 in February 2025 to 68.5 in March 2025, the second highest region across the UK behind the East of England. Firms cited new product releases, efficiency gains and tech investment as supportive factors.
Employment Rate (Aged 16-64) <sup>4</sup>	70.7% Full Year 2019  69.4% Apr 2019 – Mar 2020		68.0% Apr 2023 – Mar 2024			67.4% Jul 2023 – Jun 2024			66.4% Oct 2023 – Sep 2024			67.3% Full Year 2024					Sandwell: Joint 28 <sup>th</sup> Lowest (with Hastings) / 348  UK: 75.5%  Dacorum: 89.9% (1 <sup>st</sup> ) Hyndburn: 61.5% (348 <sup>th</sup> )	Since 2023, the employment rate for Sandwell decreased by 2.5 percentage points (pp) to 67.3% in 2024. The UK-wide employment rate decreased by 0.2 to 75.5% over this period.  For Sandwell to reach the UK-wide employment rate requires an increase of 17,104 residents to be in employment.
Youth Claimants (Aged 16-24)	2,130 (6.2% of 16 – 24 years old pop.) (Mar 2020)		2,735 (7.1% of 16 – 24 years old pop.)	2,660 (6.9% of 16 – 24 years old pop.)	2,645 (6.8% of 16 – 24 years old pop.)	2,680 (6.9% of 16 – 24 years old pop.)	2,710 (7.0% of 16 – 24 years old pop.)	2,790 (7.2% of 16 – 24 years old pop.)	2,795 (7.2% of 16 – 24 years old pop.)	2,820 (7.3% of 16 – 24 years old pop.)	2,855 (7.4% of 16 – 24 years old pop.)	2,850 (7.4% of 16 – 24 years old pop.)	2,840 (7.3% of 16 – 24 years old pop.)	2,935 (7.6% of 16 – 24 years old pop.)	3,050 (7.9% of 16 – 24 years old pop.)		Sandwell: 6 <sup>th</sup> Highest LA / 318  UK: 4.4% of Pop. aged 16-24 years old  Thanet, Birmingham, Blackpool and Wolverhampton: 8.5% (All Joint 1 <sup>st</sup> ) Bath & North East Somerset, City of London, Cambridge: 1.3% (All Joint 318 <sup>th</sup> )	Sandwell had 3,050 youth claimants in March 2025, an increase of 115 claimants (+3.9%, UK +2.9%) from the previous month. When compared to March 2024, the number of youth claimants has increased by 315 (+11.5%, UK +9.2%).

<sup>1</sup> Indicators that are in hatched marked boxes represent regional level analysis. The dashboard sources are as followed: NatWest, UK Regional Tracker report, released April 2025 (please note, the index is seasonally adjusted and measures the month-on-month change in the combined output of the region’s manufacturing and service sectors), Office for National Statistics (ONS)/Annual Population Survey (APS), released April 2025, ONS/Department for Work and Pensions, Claimant count (provisional), released April 2025, Department for Education, released March 2025, Adzuna Intelligence, accessed April 2025.

<sup>2</sup> A pre-pandemic column has been included which will not be RAG rated as this is to show where we were before the impacts of Covid-19 were seen. However, across the dashboard RAG rating is based on change from each month (and not compared to March 2020), green shading illustrates indicators which have moved in a positive direction compared to the UK or England average. The red shading indicates the reverse, and amber indicates a change in the right direction but less than the UK or national average (excluding the Business Activity Index and Future Business Activity Index indicators where the threshold mark is 50 for growth– figures below 50 are red, amber if it has decreased from the previous but remains above or at 50, green if improved from previous month).

<sup>3</sup> The peer group selected varies by indicator – regional is based on all the regions in the UK – showing a range from highest to lowest to understand how the West Midlands compares and then where available, Sandwell has been used and compared to all available local authorities.

<sup>4</sup> Data is not comparable across the table as they are rolling quarterly years.

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Indicator <sup>1</sup>	Pre-Pandemic (Context) <sup>2</sup>		March 2024	April 2024	May 2024	June 2024	July 2024	August 2024	September 2024	October 2024	November 2024	December 2024	January 2025	February 2025	March 2025	Trend	National/ Regional or LA Comparator <sup>3</sup>	Commentary/ Context
Claimants (Aged 16+)	10,780 (4.2% of pop. aged 16+) (Mar 2020)		13,285 (4.9% of pop. aged 16+)	13,165 (4.9% of pop. aged 16+)	13,355 (4.9% of pop. aged 16+)	14,230 (5.3% of pop. aged 16+)	15,840 (5.9% of pop. aged 16+)	15,915 (5.9% of pop. aged 16+)	16,035 (5.9% of pop. aged 16+)	15,975 (5.9% of pop. aged 16+)	15,625 (5.8% of pop. aged 16+)	15,410 (5.7% of pop. aged 16+)	15,320 (5.7% of pop. aged 16+)	15,850 (5.9% of pop. aged 16+)	16,180 (6.0% of pop. aged 16+)		Sandwell: Joint 13 <sup>th</sup> Highest LA (with Wolverhampton) /318  UK: 3.2% of Pop. Aged 16+  Birmingham: 8.9% (1 <sup>st</sup> ) City of London, Ribble Valley: 1.2% (Both 318 <sup>th</sup> )	Sandwell had 16,180 claimants aged 16 years and over in March 2025, an increase of 330 (+2.1%, UK +1.6%) claimants from the previous month. When compared to March 2024, the number of claimants has increased by 2,895 (+21.8%, UK +10.6%).
Apprenticeship Starts <sup>5</sup>	2,870 (Q4 Full Year 2018/19)			1,640 (Q3 Aug-Apr 2023/24)		2,050 (Q4 Aug-Jul 2023/24)				690 (Q1 Aug-Oct 2024/25)			1,130 (Q2 Aug-Jan 2024/25)				Sandwell: 32 <sup>nd</sup> Highest LA (With Central Bedfordshire) /295  Birmingham: 6,020 (1 <sup>st</sup> ) City of London: 50 (295 <sup>th</sup> )	In the 2023/24 academic year there were 2,050 apprenticeship starts in Sandwell, a decrease of 2.8% (-60) since 2022/23. Nationally, apprenticeship starts were up by 0.7% (to a total of 339,580 in 2023/24).
Adzuna Apprenticeship Postings	14 (Mar 2020)		98	79	105	71	22	22	11	20	14	26	28	18	23		-	In Sandwell, there were 23 apprenticeship postings in March 2025, a monthly increase of 5. When compared to March 2024, apprenticeship postings decreased by 75.
Adzuna Unique Job Postings	2,868 (Mar 2020)		3,425	3,300	3,557	3,162	3,527	3,730	3,200	3,960	3,435	2,796	3,279	3,375	3,421		This number of postings is high compared to the average for all local authority districts	In Sandwell, there were 3,421 unique job postings in March 2025, a monthly increase of 46. When compared to March 2024, postings decreased by 4.  In March 2025, the Interest Quotient was 1.8 (high)

<sup>5</sup> Data is not comparable across the table.