

# **City of Wolverhampton Annual Economic Review 2025**

**January 2026**



Our Measures of Success - The Black Country Performance Management Framework									
In the Black Country we will:	Where we are now		Change over the last year <sup>1</sup>		Direction of travel relative to national average since 2004		Scale of the challenge (To reach England where applicable)		
Grow our Population and Reverse Net Outward Migration Particularly to Environs	DUD	331,930	DUD	+3,577 (+1.1%)	DUD	+25,759 (+8.4%)			
	SAN	353,860	SAN	+4,026 (+1.2%)	SAN	+65,011 (+22.5%)			
	WAL	295,678	WAL	+4,441 (+1.5%)	WAL	+38,976 (+15.2%)			
	WOL	281,251	WOL	+5,650 (+2.1%)	WOL	+40,684 (+16.9%)			
	BC	1,262,719	BC	+17,694 (+1.4% BC) +1.2% Eng.	BC	+170,430 (+15.6% BC) +16.8% Eng.			
Raise Incomes	DUD	£35,486	DUD	+£700 (+2.0%)	DUD	+£16,295 (+84.9%)	DUD	£35,486	
	SAN	£33,029	SAN	+£1,109 (+3.5%)	SAN	+£14,320 (+76.5%)	SAN	£33,029	
	WAL	£34,036	WAL	+£1,538 (+4.7%)	WAL	+£15,358 (+82.2%)	WAL	£34,036	
	WOL	£35,858	WOL	+£2,773 (+8.4%)	WOL	+£17,293 (+93.1%)	WOL	£35,858	
	BC	£34,602 (avg.)	BC	+£1,530 (+4.6% BC) +4.3% Eng.	BC	+£15,817 (+84.2% BC) +74.9% Eng.	BC	£34,602 (avg.)	
Achieve Better Population Balance	DUD	17.0%			DUD	-0.1pp	DUD	17.0%	
	SAN	10.8%			SAN	0pp	SAN	10.8%	
	WAL	13.7%			WAL	-0.5pp	WAL	13.7%	
	WOL	13.4%			WOL	-0.3pp	WOL	13.4%	
	BC	13.6%			BC	-0.3pp BC +0.5pp Eng.	BC	13.6%	
Transform the Environment	70.5% of residents satisfied with Black Country as a place to live						77.8% resident satisfaction		
Regenerated Our Economy (pp = percentage points)									
Reduce the Output Gap	DUD	£5.8bn	DUD	+£664m	DUD	+£3.5bn	DUD	-£5.8bn	
	SAN	£5.4bn	SAN	+£463m	SAN	+£3.9bn	SAN	-£5.4bn	
	WAL	£5.1bn	WAL	+£441m	WAL	+£3.1bn	WAL	-£5.1bn	
	WOL	£3.5bn	WOL	+£435m	WOL	+£2.4bn	WOL	-£3.5bn	
	BC	£19.8bn	BC	+£2.0bn	BC	+£12.9bn	BC	-£19.8bn	
Raise the Number of Local Jobs	DUD	106,000	DUD	-5,000 (-4.5%)	DUD	-12,000 (-10.2%)			
	SAN	125,000	SAN	-2,000 (-1.6%)	SAN	+2,000 (+1.6%)			
	WAL	98,000	WAL	-1,000 (-1.0%)	WAL	+4,000 (+4.3%)			
	WOL	111,000	WOL	+1,000 (+0.9%)	WOL	+7,000 (+6.7%)			
	BC	440,000	BC	-7,000 (-1.6% BC) +0.6% Eng.	BC	+1,000 (+0.2% BC) +19.8% Eng.			
Increase the Total Employment Rate	DUD	75.1%	DUD	-1.6pp	DUD	+2.1pp	DUD	+1,296	
	SAN	65.7%	SAN	-1.9pp	SAN	+1.3pp	SAN	+20,953	
	WAL	71.8%	WAL	-3.2pp	WAL	+3.4pp	WAL	+6,875	
	WOL	75.1%	WOL	+10.5pp	WOL	+6.3pp	WOL	+1,036	
	BC	71.7%	BC	+0.6pp BC +0.2pp Eng.	BC	+3.0pp BC +2.9pp Eng.	BC	+30,083 Eng.: 75.8%	
Increase the Percentage of Knowledge Workers	DUD	46.4%	DUD	+2.0pp	DUD		DUD	+10,891	
	SAN	37.0%	SAN	+5.5pp	SAN		SAN	+23,736	
	WAL	43.5%	WAL	+8.4pp	WAL		WAL	+13,589	
	WOL	51.6%	WOL	-3.1pp	WOL		WOL	+2,725	
	BC	44.5%	BC	+3.8pp BC +0.6pp Eng.	BC		BC	+51,149 Eng.: 53.8%	
Raise Enterprise Births	DUD	1,175	DUD	+30 (+2.6%)	DUD	-15 (-1.3%)	DUD	+426 P.A.	
	SAN	1,655	SAN	+115 (+7.5%)	SAN	+715 (+76.1%)	SAN	+51 P.A.	
	WAL	1,280	WAL	-30 (-2.3%)	WAL	+235 (+22.5%)	WAL	+146 P.A.	
	WOL	1,385	WOL	+85 (+6.5%)	WOL	+385 (+38.5%)	WOL	Above National	
	BC	5,495	BC	+200 (+3.8%) +0.3% Eng.	BC	+1,320 (+31.6% BC) +13.8% Eng.	BC	+594 P.A. Eng.: 48 per 10,000 pop.	
Reduce the Percentage of Workless Households	DUD	9.6%	DUD	-4,300 (-31.9%)	DUD	-6,500 (-41.4%)	DUD	Below England	
	SAN	18.6%	SAN	0 (0%)	SAN	-400 (-2.1%)	SAN	-5,317	
	WAL	10.6%	WAL	-6,300 (-42.3%)	WAL	-7,200 (-45.6%)	WAL	Below England	
	WOL	18.1%	WOL	+1,100 (+8.0%)	WOL	-300 (-2.0%)	WOL	-3,827	
	BC	14.3%	BC	-9,500 (-15.5%) +0.9% Eng.	BC	-14,500 (-21.9%) BC -14.6% Eng.	BC	-2,948 Eng.: 13.5%	
Increase the Number of Visitors to the Area	35.05m		+1.39m				A leading UK visitor destination		

In the Black Country we will:	Where we are now		Change over the last year <sup>1</sup>		Direction of travel relative to national average since 2004		Scale of the challenge (To reach England where applicable)	
Sustainable Environmental Transformation								
Increase the Hectares of Local Nature Reserves	887.3ha		0ha		-		1ha of Local Nature Reserve per 1,000 pop.	
Have a Sustainable Environment- Reduce CO <sup>2</sup> Emissions (Tonnes per capita)	DUD	2.9	DUD	-0.2	DUD	-3.3	Net Zero by 2041	
	SAN	3.3	SAN	-0.3	SAN	-4.4		
	WAL	3.1	WAL	-0.2	WAL	-3.8		
	WOL	2.9	WOL	-0.2	WOL	-3.9		
	BC	3.1	BC	-0.2 BC -0.3 Eng.	BC	-3.9 BC -4.6 Eng.		
Raised Education and Skills								
Reduce the Number of People with No Qualifications	DUD	7.4%	DUD	+5,400 (+62.8%)	DUD	-13,700 (-49.5%)	DUD	-1,529
	SAN	14.9%	SAN	+6,400 (+26.3%)	SAN	-9,500 (-23.6%)	SAN	-17,110
	WAL	11.8%	WAL	+300 (+1.6%)	WAL	-12,400 (-39.1%)	WAL	-8,568
	WOL	9.8%	WOL	-3,600 (-19.6%)	WOL	-19,900 (-57.3%)	WOL	-4,858
	BC	11.1%	BC	+8,400 (-0.7% BC) +6.8% Eng.	BC	-55,700 (-41.4% BC) -51.2% Eng.	BC	-31,965 Eng.: 6.6%
Increase the Number of People with RQF4+	DUD	38.9%	DUD	-2,400 (-3.2%)	DUD	+34,700 (+89.0%)	DUD	+14,882
	SAN	29.7%	SAN	-2,900 (-4.5%)	SAN	+34,200 (+125.7%)	SAN	+35,133
	WAL	28.4%	WAL	-8,000 (-14.7%)	WAL	+18,400 (+65.9%)	WAL	+29,935
	WOL	45.7%	WOL	+4,800 (+7.5%)	WOL	+44,300 (+178.6%)	WOL	+1,522
	BC	35.3%	BC	-8,500 (-3.3% BC) +0.5% Eng.	BC	+131,700 (+110.9% BC) +100.1% Eng.	BC	+81,471 Eng.: 46.8%
Improve Pupils Progress 8 Score	DUD	-0.12	DUD	-0.11	DUD		DUD	Improve by 0.09
	SAN	-0.16	SAN	-0.09	SAN		SAN	Improve by 0.13
	WAL	-0.22	WAL	-0.02	WAL		WAL	Improve by 0.19
	WOL	-0.05	WOL	-0.03	WOL		WOL	Improve by 0.02
	BC	-0.14	BC	-0.04	BC		BC	Improve by 0.11 Eng.: -0.03
Reduce the No. of 16–17-Year- Olds Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)	DUD	21.5%	DUD	+833 (+101.3%)	DUD		DUD	-1,655
	SAN	2.6%	SAN	-1 (-0.4%)	SAN		SAN	-261
	WAL	5.2%	WAL	+15 (+3.6%)	WAL		WAL	-427
	WOL	3.9 %	WOL	+28 (+11.1%)	WOL		WOL	-281
	BC	7.8%	BC	+875 (+50.0% BC) +8.7% Eng.	BC		BC	No NEETs -2,624
Transformed our Environmental Infrastructure								
Increase Net New Homes	DUD	142,236	DUD	+686 (+0.5%)	DUD	+13,110 (+10.2%)	DUD	
	SAN	137,002	SAN	+596 (+0.4%)	SAN	+16,595 (+13.8%)	SAN	
	WAL	119,232	WAL	+651 (+0.5%)	WAL	+12,741 (+12.0%)	WAL	
	WOL	115,585	WOL	+421 (+0.4%)	WOL	+13,739 (+13.5%)	WOL	
	BC	514,055	BC	+2,354 (+0.5% BC) +0.8% Eng.	BC	+56,186 (+12.3% BC) +19.1% Eng.	BC	
Provide Industrial Floorspace	DUD	2,371,000 sqm	DUD	+15,000 sqm	DUD	-590,000 sqm	DUD	
	SAN	3,908,000 sqm	SAN	-2,000 sqm	SAN	-915,000 sqm	SAN	
	WAL	2,201,000 sqm	WAL	+25,000 sqm	WAL	-596,000 sqm	WAL	
	WOL	2,194,000 sqm	WOL	+9,000 sqm	WOL	-574,000 sqm	WOL	
	BC	10,674,000 sqm	BC	+47,000 sqm	BC	-2,675,000 sqm	BC	
Provide Office Floorspace	DUD	258,000 sqm	DUD	-1,000 sqm	DUD	-48,000 sqm	DUD	
	SAN	180,000 sqm	SAN	-2,000 sqm	SAN	-16,000 sqm	SAN	
	WAL	166,000 sqm	WAL	-4,000 sqm	WAL	-7,000 sqm	WAL	
	WOL	211,000 sqm	WOL	+1,000 sqm	WOL	-32,000 sqm	WOL	
	BC	815,000 sqm	BC	-6,000 sqm	BC	-103,000 sqm	BC	
Provide Retail Floorspace	DUD	598,000 sqm	DUD	-5,000 sqm	DUD	-20,000 sqm	DUD	
	SAN	564,000 sqm	SAN	-3,000 sqm	SAN	+71,000 sqm	SAN	
	WAL	507,000 sqm	WAL	-4,000 sqm	WAL	+39,000 sqm	WAL	
	WOL	501,000 sqm	WOL	-6,000 sqm	WOL	-28,000 sqm	WOL	
	BC	2,170,000 sqm	BC	-18,0000 sqm	BC	+62,000 sqm	BC	

<sup>1</sup> The **green** shading illustrates those indicators where the Black Country moved in a positive direction of travel compared to the national average (excluding output gap where the latest change is shaded green due to the positive change and not compared to England), the **red** shading indicates the reverse and the **orange** indicates no change or a growth rate in the right direction but less than the national average growth rate. Please note for qualifications, RQF's have replaced NVQs and caution should be used when comparing change over time. West Midlands Growth Company (WMGC) provided the visitor economy figure for the Black Country via the STEAM model.

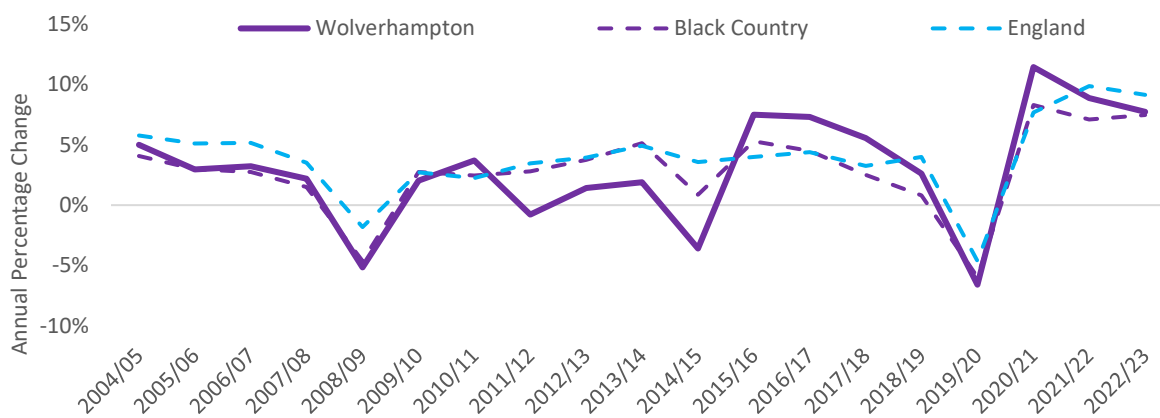
# 2025 KEY MESSAGES

## 1.1. Economy

### Economy and Productivity

- After higher than national growth rates between 2020 and 2021 (+11.5% compared to +7.7%), Wolverhampton's total Gross Value Added (GVA)<sup>2</sup> continued to increase but at a slower pace (+8.9% compared to +9.9%) between 2021/22. **Wolverhampton's GVA increased from £6.0bn in 2022 to over £6.4bn in 2023**, equating to a growth rate of 7.7% compared to 9.1% nationally.
- Insights for 2025 show that the **UK economy continues to expand**, but the pace of growth **remains modest and vulnerable** to disruption. Inflationary pressures persist, limiting real income gains and constraining consumer demand. Although **business investment shows signs of improvement**, rising cost burdens and an uncertain global environment are tempering overall economic momentum.

### Annual Changes in Total GVA:



- **Wolverhampton's GVA per head remains substantially lower than the national average at £23,640 compared to £36,632 in 2023.** There was an **annual increase of 6.0%** which was below the national growth rate (+8.1%). Despite this, for Wolverhampton, there was still an **overall output gap<sup>3</sup> of £3.5bn**, an annual increase of £435m and longer-term (since 2004) an increase of £2.4bn.
- **GVA per hour worked<sup>4</sup> for Wolverhampton was £35.30 in 2023**, with a **slightly slower annual growth** rate than nationally at 2.0% compared to 2.2%. Also, when compared to 2019, Wolverhampton performed above the national average growth rate (+19.7% compared to +14.5%). Despite this, in 2023 there was a **shortfall of £6.60 to reach the UK average (£41.90).**
- **Wolverhampton's Gross Disposable Household Income (GDHI) per head<sup>5</sup> increased from £16,958 in 2022 to £18,174 in 2023**, which equated to a **growth rate of 7.2%**, below the national growth rate of 8.4%. Across all local authority areas, Wolverhampton had the 14<sup>th</sup> lowest GDHI per person (moving from 19<sup>th</sup> place in 2022) and had a **shortfall of £6,662 to the national average (£24,836).**

<sup>2</sup> Office for National Statistics (ONS), Regional economic activity by gross domestic product, released 2025

<sup>3</sup>The EIU calculations based off ONS, Regional economic activity by gross domestic product, released 2025 and mid-year population estimates, released 2025.

<sup>4</sup> ONS, Subregional productivity in the UK, released 2024

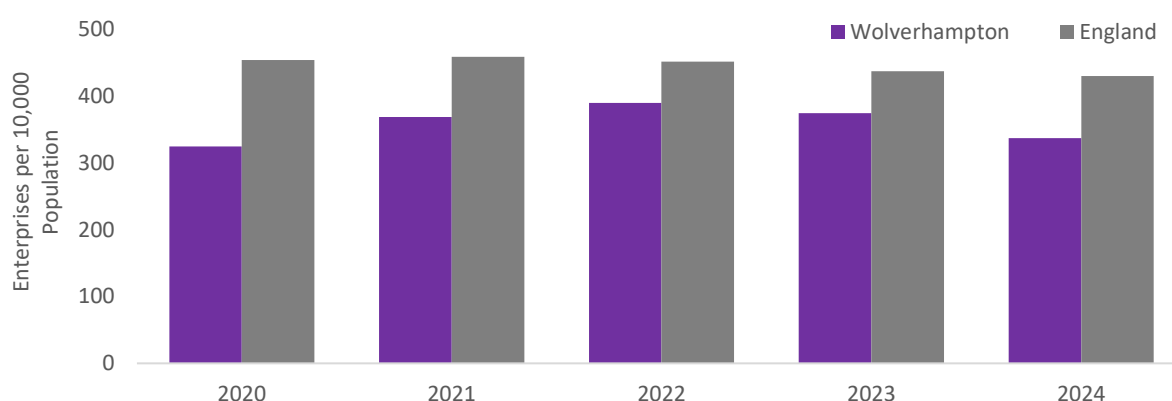
<sup>5</sup> ONS, Regional gross disposable household income, released 2025

## 1.2. Business

### Business Environment

- Total enterprises<sup>6</sup> have decreased for the second consecutive year in Wolverhampton, although nationally it is the third year of declines. In 2024, there were **9,480 enterprises in Wolverhampton**, an **annual decrease of 8.1% (-835)**, above the national decline of 0.4%. **When compared to five years ago, enterprises in Wolverhampton have increased by 11.3% which contrasts with the national trend of a decrease by 1.0%.**
- There are still **too few enterprises in Wolverhampton at 337 enterprises per 10,000 population compared to 430 per 10,000 population for England in 2024**. For Wolverhampton to reach the national average requires **an additional 2,617 active enterprises**.

### Trends in Active Enterprises per 10,000 population:



- In 2024, there were **35 high-growth firms** in Wolverhampton. An **annual increase of 16.7% (+5)**, nationally there was an increase of 4.0%.
- **Wolverhampton's enterprise survival rates are lower than national levels on both a short-term and long-term basis.** Of the 1,300 enterprise births in 2023, there were 90.8% still active after 1 year with England at 93.4%. Of the 1,195 enterprise births in 2019 in Wolverhampton, 34.7% were still active after 5 years with England at 38.3%.
- Between 2019 and 2024, **enterprise births in Wolverhampton rose by 15.9%, from 1,195 to 1,385**. This bucked the national trend (-13.1%). Also, there are more **positive recent trends**, with the latest data for between 2023 and 2024, showing an overall 6.5% increase which was above the national increase of 0.3%.
- In 2024, there were **49 enterprise births per 10,000 population for Wolverhampton which was above the national average** (48 per 10,000 population).
- Experimental quarterly data<sup>7</sup> shows an overall positive picture locally and nationally as **business births were back ahead of business deaths in Q3 2025** (305 births compared to 255 deaths in Wolverhampton).
- There is an opportunity to **harness innovative activity of the diverse business base locally** as 21.2% of companies in Wolverhampton are female-led<sup>8</sup>, this was above the UK average of 19.2%.

<sup>6</sup> ONS, Business Demography, released 2025

<sup>7</sup> ONS, Business demography, quarterly experimental statistics, low-level geographic breakdown, released 2025

<sup>8</sup> Gender Index, released 2025

## Traditional Sectors

- Out of 9 defined sectors, Wolverhampton has **higher than the national proportion in 6 sectors for GVA<sup>9</sup>, 6 sectors in jobs<sup>10</sup> and 4 sectors for enterprises<sup>11</sup>.**

### GVA, Jobs and Enterprises per Sector:

	W'ton GVA	% of W'ton GVA	% of England GVA	W'ton Jobs	% of W'ton Jobs	% of England Jobs	W'ton Enterprises	% of W'ton Enterprises	% of England Enterprises
Advanced Manufacturing	£1.2bn	<b>19.3%</b>	10.7%	12,605	<b>11.6%</b>	9.5%	740	9.1%	11.4%
Building Technologies	£419m	<b>6.4%</b>	6.3%	3,950	3.6%	4.9%	1,110	13.7%	14.1%
Business Services	£1.6bn	25.4%	43.0%	18,170	16.7%	26.1%	2,335	28.7%	37.6%
Environmental Technologies	£137m	2.1%	2.4%	1,425	<b>1.3%</b>	1.1%	60	<b>0.7%</b>	0.5%
Health & Wellbeing	£843m	<b>13.1%</b>	8.2%	23,250	<b>21.3%</b>	14.0%	460	<b>5.7%</b>	4.4%
Public Sector inc. Education	£923m	<b>14.3%</b>	11.6%	17,250	<b>15.8%</b>	15.5%	220	2.7%	4.1%
Retail	£717m	<b>11.1%</b>	10.1%	18,000	<b>16.5%</b>	13.7%	1,690	<b>20.8%</b>	14.5%
Transport Technologies	£251m	<b>3.9%</b>	3.5%	6,510	<b>6.0%</b>	5.1%	895	<b>11.0%</b>	4.2%
Visitor Economy	£271m	4.2%	4.3%	7,900	7.2%	10.1%	620	7.6%	9.0%
Total	£6.4bn	100%	100.0%	111,000	100%	100%	8,130	100%	100%

- Furthermore, **450 strategic companies<sup>12</sup>** have been identified in the Black Country area, **of which 93 were in Wolverhampton.**

## West Midlands High Growth Clusters

- When aligning to the five high growth clusters<sup>13</sup> as seen in the [West Midlands Growth Plan](#), Wolverhampton has some **strengths in the advanced engineering, light electric vehicles & batteries cluster.**

### Wolverhampton's GVA, Employment and Businesses per High Growth Cluster:

	W'ton GVA	% of WMCA GVA	W'ton Employment	% of WMCA Employment	W'ton Businesses	% of WMCA Businesses
Advanced Engineering, Light Electric Vehicles & Batteries	£1.1bn	<b>9.1%</b>	16,110	<b>8.6%</b>	1,848	<b>11.2%</b>
Digital Tech & Creative	£94m	3.0%	1,340	3.9%	360	7.6%
Health & Med Tech	£13m	3.1%	190	3.8%	25	6.8%
Next Generation Services	£1.2bn	6.0%	10,190	6.2%	1,345	7.3%
Smart Energy Systems	£79m	5.8%	1,310	6.3%	250	7.4%

<sup>9</sup> ONS, Regional economic activity by gross domestic product, released 2025

<sup>10</sup> ONS, Business Register and Employment Survey, released 2025

<sup>11</sup> ONS, UK Business Counts, released 2025

<sup>12</sup> The EIU analysis from The Data City, 2025.

<sup>13</sup> Please note, these clusters do not cover all businesses/employment or GVA.

## The Industrial Strategy (IS)-8 Sectors

- The UK Government has launched [The Modern Industrial Strategy](#) which identifies **eight growth-driving sectors**. These sectors are advanced manufacturing, clean energy industries, creative industries, defence, digital & technologies, financial services, life sciences, and professional & business services. Data shows<sup>14</sup> that Wolverhampton has either **above or the same proportion seen nationally in 5 sectors for enterprises and 4 sectors for jobs**.

### Employees and Businesses per IS-8 Sector:

	Employees			Businesses		
	W'ton	W'ton % of Total	UK % of Total	W'ton	W'ton % of Total	UK % of Total
Advanced Manufacturing	4,100	4%	2%	95	1%	1%
Clean Energy Industries	679	1%	3%	58	1%	1%
Creative Industries	1,175	1%	5%	430	5%	10%
Defence	611	1%	0.1%	7	0.1%	0.1%
Digital and Technologies	2,865	3%	7%	525	6%	10%
Financial Services	3,500	3%	3%	140	2%	2%
Life Sciences	35	0.1%	0.1%	5	0.1%	0.1%
Professional & Business Services	8,800	8%	14%	1,340	16%	21%
Total	21,765	20.1%	34.2%	2,600	32.2%	45.2%

- A Location Quotient (LQ) is a measure that compares the concentration of an industry, sector, or occupation in a specific region to its concentration at a broader geographic level (in this case, the national average). **Advanced manufacturing shows strength with a business LQ of 1.09, employee LQ of 1.46, and turnover LQ of 1.76**, confirming it as a local area of specialisation. Defence has a very high turnover LQ of 5.10 and an above-average employee LQ of 1.32, though its business LQ is low (0.36), pointing to concentrated but limited firms. As well, **Life sciences** show potential with an **employee LQ of 1.33**, though both **business (0.84)** and **turnover (0.45)** LQs remain weaker.

### Wolverhampton Location Quotient per IS-8 Sector:

Sector	Business LQ	Employee LQ	Turnover LQ
Advanced Manufacturing	1.09	1.46	1.76
Clean Energy Industries	0.6	0.6	0.84
Creative Industries	0.64	0.5	0.79
Defence	0.36	1.32	5.1
Digital and Technologies	0.52	0.35	0.7
Financial Services	0.94	0.7	0.74
Life Sciences	0.84	1.33	0.45
Professional and Business Services	0.76	0.58	0.92

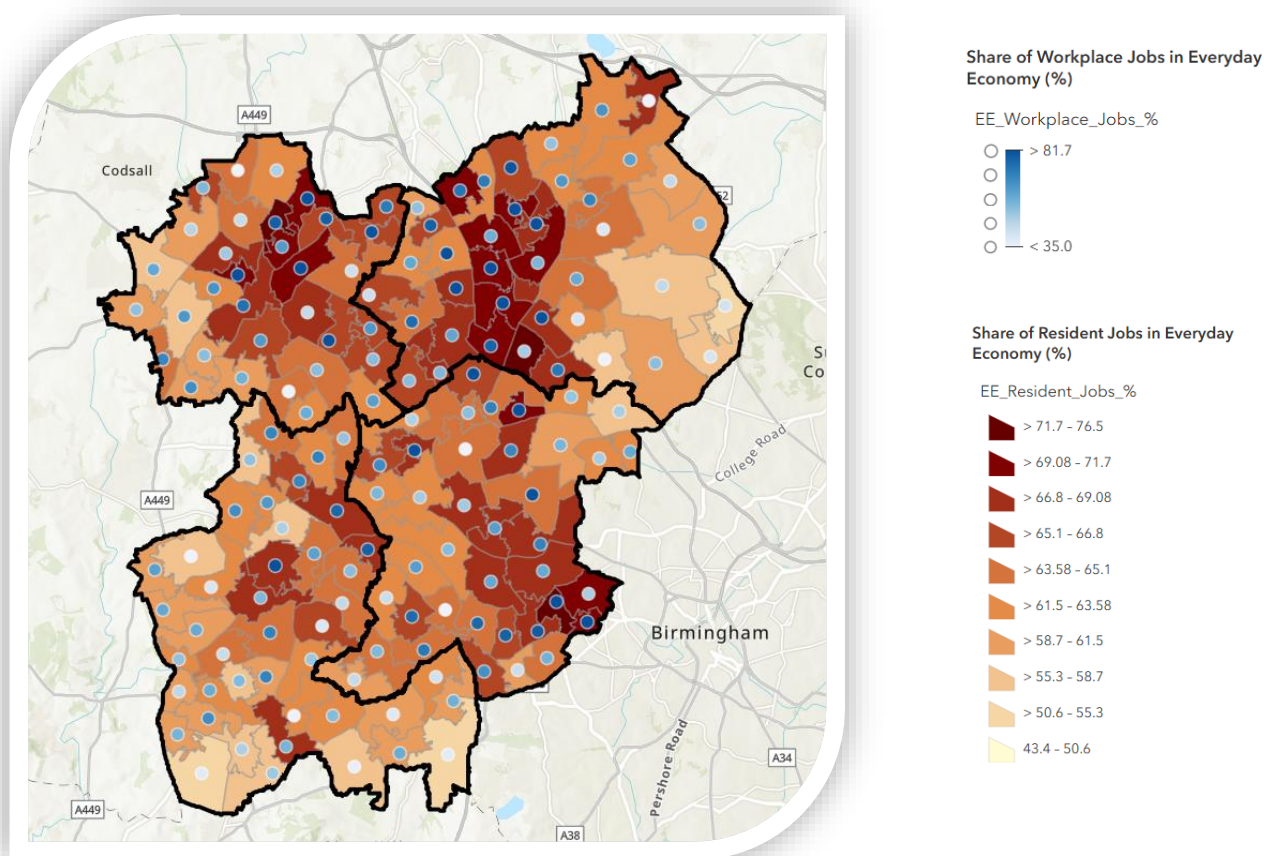
## Everyday Economy

- As defined in the [West Midlands Growth Plan](#), the everyday economy consists of jobs in health & care, teachers, school staff, retail, hospitality, tourism, leisure, the arts, night-time economy, construction, transport, logistics and utilities and these are seen as essential services that are the backbone of the economy. **For Wolverhampton, it is estimated that 64.7% of residents work in these jobs while 65.1% of workplace jobs are in these jobs**.

<sup>14</sup> The EIU analysis from The Data City, 2025.



## Workplace and Resident Jobs in Everyday Economy:



## Innovation Funding

- Focusing on the project-level Innovate UK data<sup>15</sup>, since 2013/14, the Black Country has received almost £50m worth of funding across 358 grant awards. This represents 2% of the total West Midlands region awards over this time period, and 0.3% of the UK total. **Of the Black Country local authorities, Wolverhampton received the second highest funding at £15.1m but had the highest number of awards (138).**

## International Trade

- In 2023, Wolverhampton **exported £1.7bn of goods and services**<sup>16</sup>. An annual increase of **10.0%** (+£154m), England increased at a slower rate, by 6.4%. Over this period, **Wolverhampton's imports decreased by 3.8% (-£54m) to a total of nearly £1.4bn** (England increased by 4.2%). Meaning in 2023, Wolverhampton had an overall trade surplus of £319m.
- International trade activity** in Wolverhampton was a **similar level for exports in goods (£875m) and services (£822m)**. However, imports in goods were significantly higher (£1.1bn) than services (£297m).
- Meaning in 2023, Wolverhampton had a **trade in goods deficit of £206m**. However, there was a **trade surplus of £525m in services**.

<sup>15</sup> Innovate UK, 2025

<sup>16</sup> ONS, International trade in UK nations, regions and cities: 2023, released 2025.

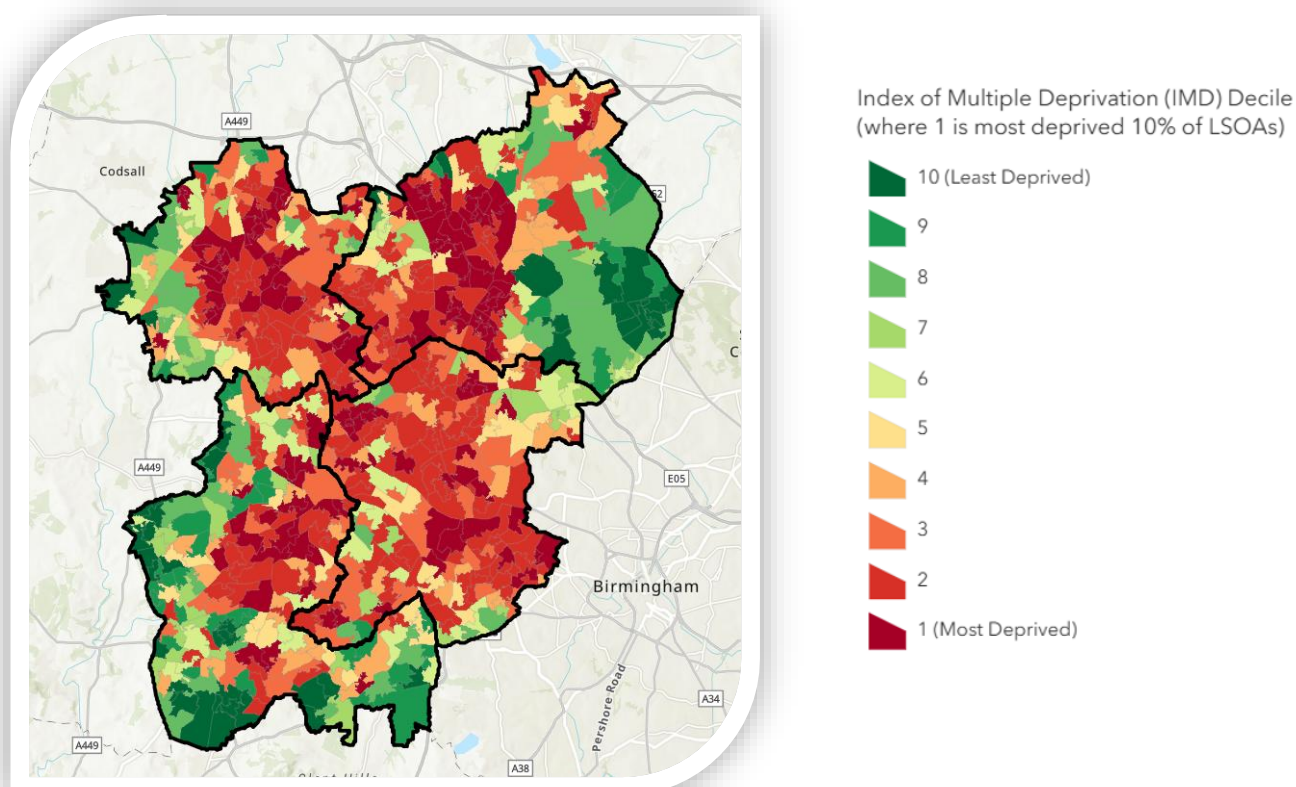


## 1.3. Place

### Deprivation and Low-Income Areas

- The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)<sup>17</sup> is the official measure of relative deprivation in England and is part of a suite of outputs that form the Indices of Deprivation (IoD). This allows local authorities to be ranked from 1 (most deprived) to 296 (least deprived) in England. **Wolverhampton's ranking slightly worsened in 2025 compared with 2019 - placed in 23<sup>rd</sup> from 24<sup>th</sup>.**
- **48.4% (78) of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Wolverhampton are in the top 20% most deprived areas in England.** Of these 21.7% (35) of LSOAs are in the top 10% most deprived areas. Due to a change in geographical boundaries, a direct comparison to 2019 cannot be made. However, 75 LSOAs that were identified as deprived in 2019 are still active in 2025 analysis, **there were 3 more LSOAs in the top 10% but 9 fewer in top 20% and 6 had moved into the 3<sup>rd</sup> decile.**

#### IMD 2025, Overall Decile per LSOA:



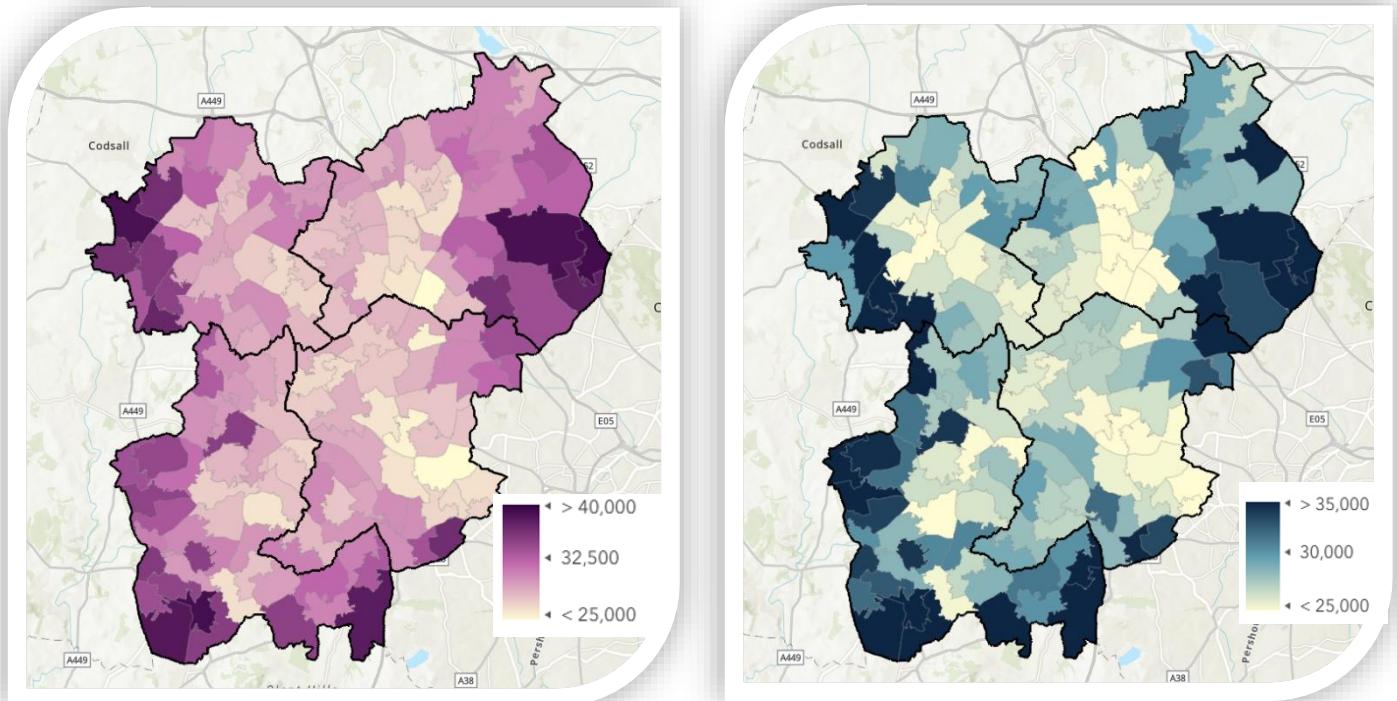
- In the financial year ending 2023, the mean equivalised household disposable (net) income<sup>18</sup> before housing costs varied within Wolverhampton from £26,788 to £38,798, **with 93.9% (31 MSOAs) under the England and Wales average of £36,800.**

<sup>17</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, English indices of deprivation 2025

<sup>18</sup> ONS, Income estimates for small areas, England and Wales: financial year ending 2023, released 2025

- While the mean equivalised household disposable (net) income after housing costs varied within Wolverhampton from £22,612 to £39,258, with **84.8% (28 MSOAs) under the England and Wales average of £34,500**.

**Net Annual Income Before Housing Costs (Left) and Net Annual Income After Housing Costs (Right):**



## Infrastructure

- There are **shortfalls in housing supply to the demand**; to address this, the government has set a national target of building 1.5m new homes in the next five years, with the WMCA area setting a target of 12,200 homes per year. This also links in with the [WMCA Spatial Development Strategy \(SDS\)](#) where one element is about long-term plans for housing (as well as jobs, transport and green spaces). **Provisional estimates for Wolverhampton show 421 net additional homes** leading to a total of **approximately 115,164 homes<sup>19</sup> overall in 2025**.
- There is also a region-wide **affordable housing crisis**, the Government have recently backed the [WMCA Social and Affordable Home Programme](#). In Wolverhampton, there were **no social housing completions<sup>20</sup> in 2024/25**, although none have been recorded since 2021/22. There were **227 affordable homes completed**, up from 12 completed in the previous year.
- Housing affordability ratios<sup>21</sup> show that in 2024, residents in Wolverhampton could **expect to spend 6.2 times their annual earnings buying a home**, down from 6.5 in 2023. The equivalent figure in England is 7.7 times annual earnings, down from 8.4.

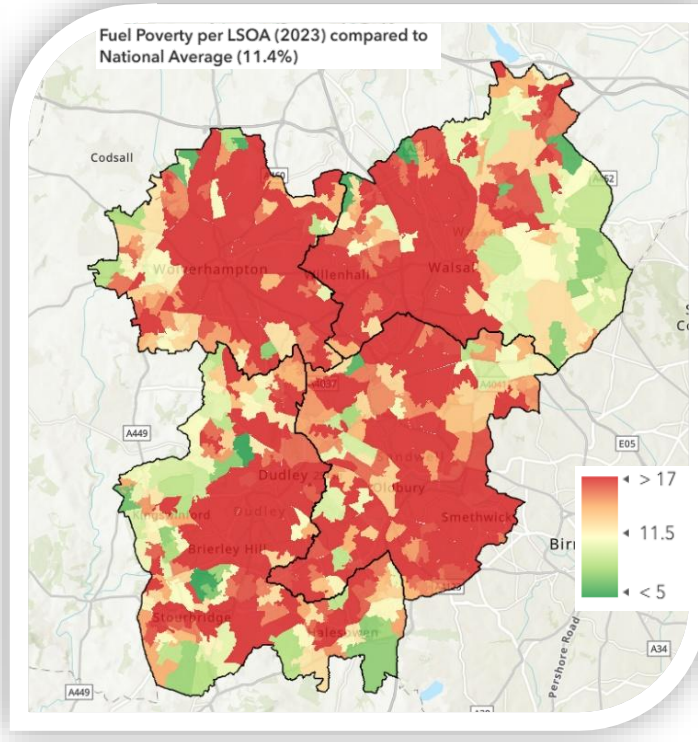
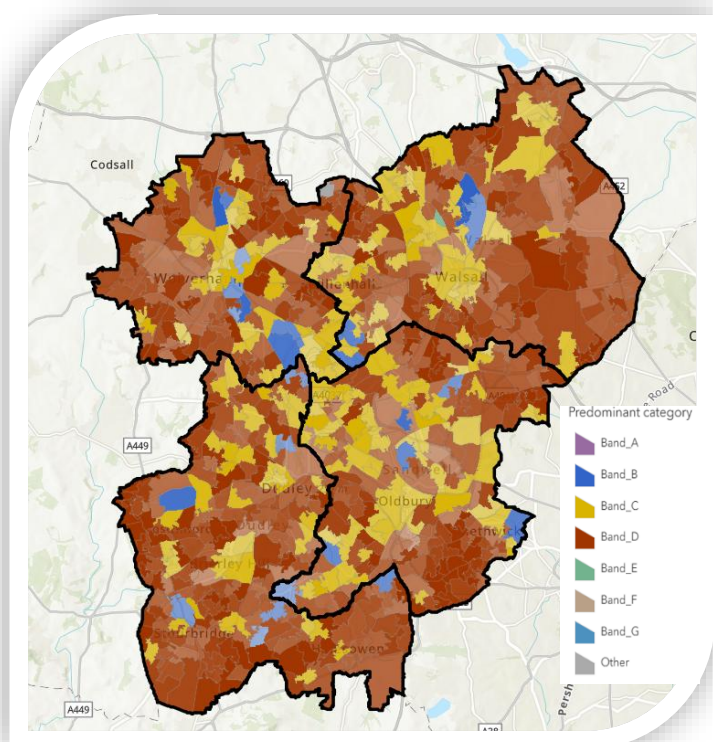
<sup>19</sup> Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Live tables on housing supply: net additional dwellings and on dwelling stock, both released 2025.

<sup>20</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, affordable housing supply statistics, 2025

<sup>21</sup> ONS, Housing affordability in England and Wales, released 2025

- Looking at the efficiency of housing, by using Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs)<sup>22</sup> shows in the year ending March 2024 (based of rating bands for a 10-year period), **where Band A is very efficient and Band G is very energy inefficient, that nearly 90% of Wolverhampton lodgements were in Band D (42.2%), Band C (30.8%) and Band E (14.3%).**
- Challenges remain with households in fuel poverty<sup>23</sup>**, as data shows the West Midlands region continues to have the highest rates at 16.7%, compared to 11.4% overall for England in 2023. **In Wolverhampton, 18.7% (19,957) of households were in fuel poverty, across all local areas in England, this was the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest, remaining in the same place in 2022.**

#### EPCs (Left) and Fuel Poverty (Right), per LSOA:



- Across Wolverhampton as of March 2025, there was a total of **8,970 non-domestic properties<sup>24</sup>**. **Bucking the national trend (-0.1%),** there was an increase of 0.6% (+50) when compared to March 2024.
- Analysing non-domestic properties by type, was a total of **1,760 office properties across Wolverhampton**. There has been an **annual increase** of 1.1% (+20), above the national increase of 0.1%. There were **2,970 industrial properties**, an **annual increase** of 0.3% (+10), again above the national increase (+0.4%). **Properties classed as 'other' also increased in Wolverhampton, by 30 to 1,820 (+1.7% compared to -0.4% nationally).**
- Whereas retail properties remained unchanged** at 2,410, while nationally retail properties decreased by 0.3%.

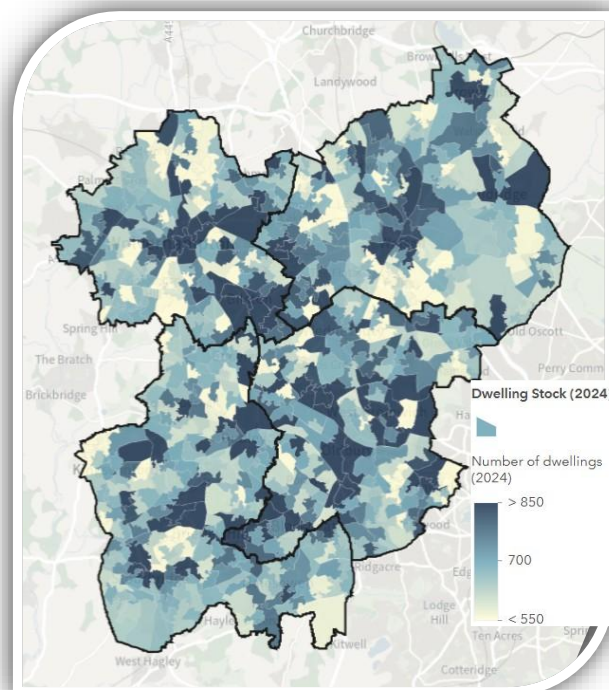
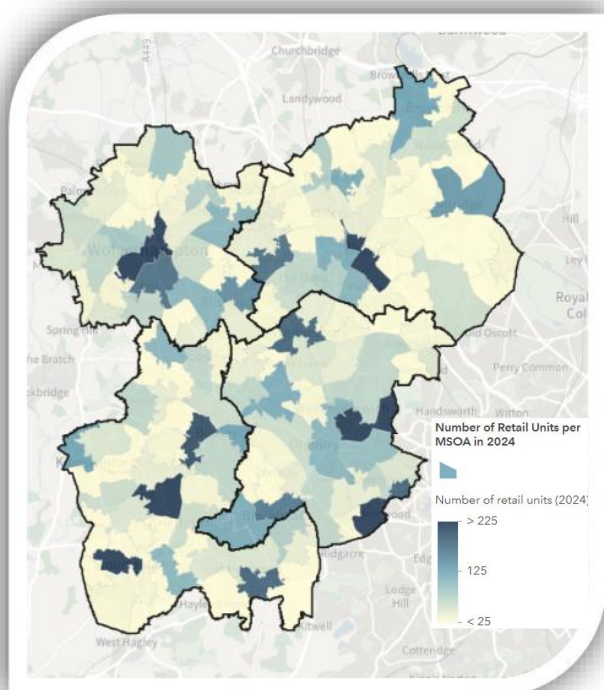
<sup>22</sup> ONS, Energy efficiency of housing, released 2024. This data does not reflect all dwellings in England and Wales, because not every dwelling has an EPC.

<sup>23</sup> Department for Energy Security & Net Zero, Sub-regional fuel poverty in England, released 2025

<sup>24</sup> Valuation Office Agency, Non-domestic rating: stock of properties collection, released 2025



## Retail Properties (Left) and Dwellings (Right):

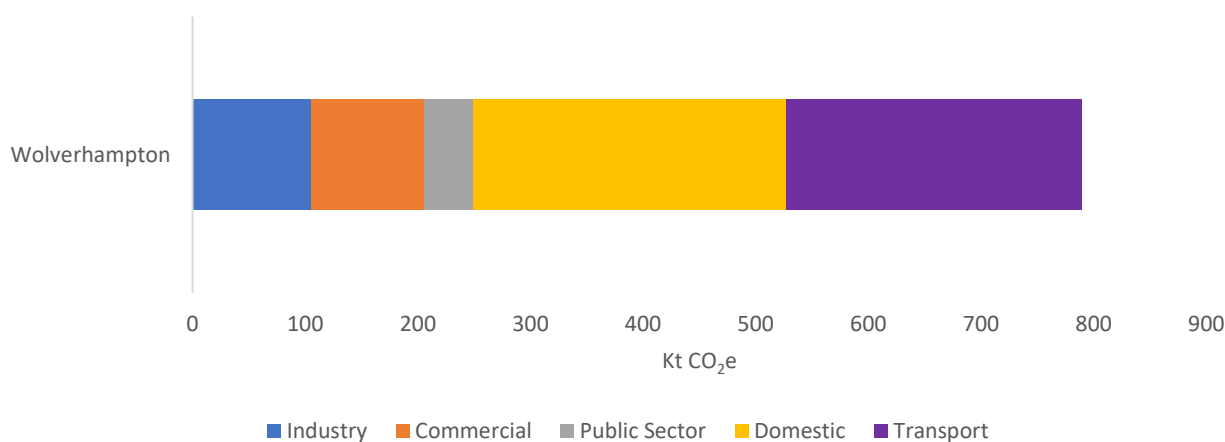


- As of July 2025, **95.6% of premises in Wolverhampton had full fibre connectivity<sup>25</sup>**, above the UK-wide figure of 78.2%.

## Carbon Dioxide Emissions

- In 2023, **total carbon dioxide emissions<sup>26</sup> were 793 kt CO<sub>2</sub>e in Wolverhampton. This has decreased at a slower rate than nationally since 2022 (-5.4% compared to -5.7%).** Longer term (since 2005), emissions have decreased at a faster rate, by 51.7% for Wolverhampton compared to 47.6% nationally. However, **there is still a long way to go to reach Net Zero by 2041.**

## Breakdown by Main Sector for Wolverhampton's Carbon Dioxide Emissions, 2023:



<sup>25</sup> Ofcom, Connected Nations, released 2025

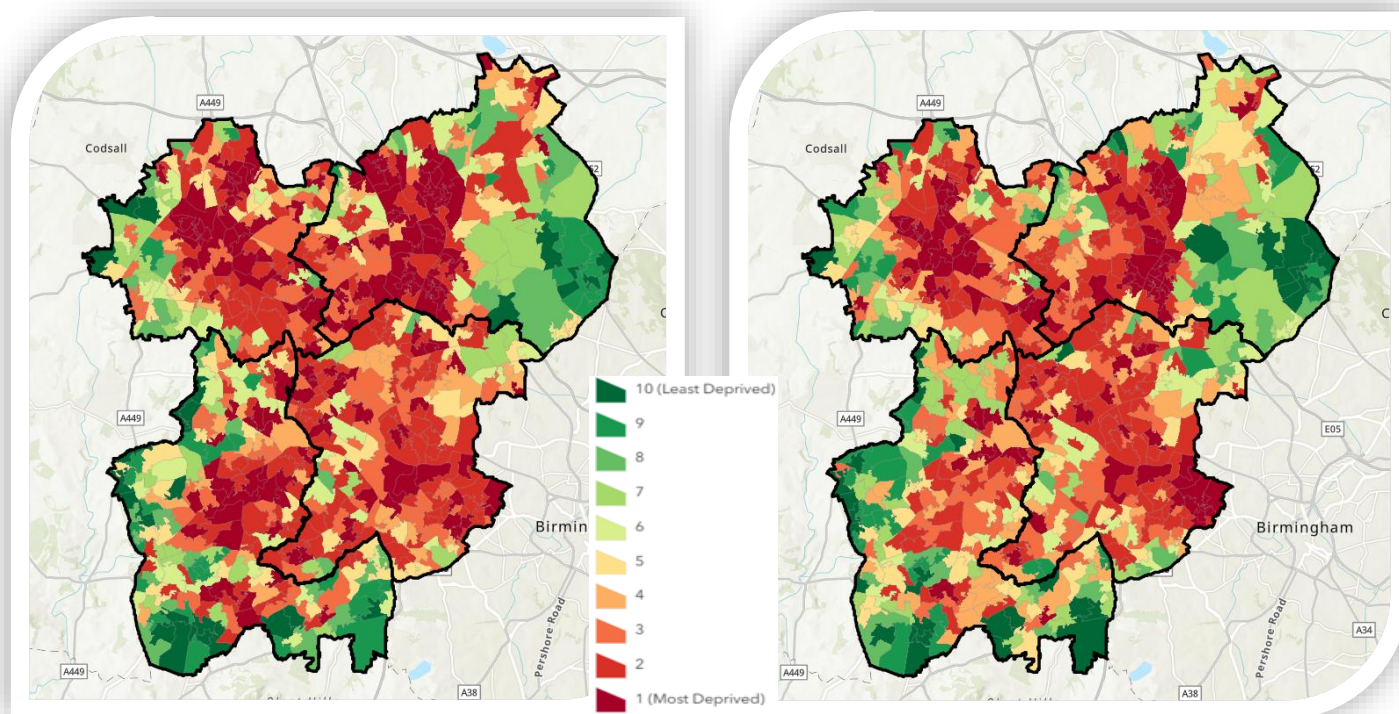
<sup>26</sup> Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, UK local authority & regional greenhouse gas emissions national statistics, released 2025

## 1.4. People

### Population and Deprivation

- In 2024, Wolverhampton had a **population of 281,251 residents<sup>27</sup>**, an **annual increase of 2.1% (+5,650)** which was above the national growth rate (+1.2%). Compared to England, Wolverhampton had a **higher proportion of children** aged 0–15 (21.6% compared to 18.4%, equating to 60,611 residents). While 62.4% (175,532) were aged 16–64 and 16.0% (45,108) were aged 65 years and over, both proportions were lower than national levels (62.9% and 18.7% respectively).
- As part of the IMD suite<sup>28</sup>, there are two supplementary indices, the first being Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) which measures the proportion of all children aged 0 to 15 living in income deprived families. **In Wolverhampton, 52.8% of children live in income-deprived families**, ranking the borough 18<sup>th</sup> highest in England for this measure. Geographically, **47.8% (77) of LSOAs in Wolverhampton fall within the 20% most deprived nationally**. Of these, 24.2% (39) are in the top 10% most deprived.
- In addition, there is also the Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index (IDAOPI) which measures the proportion of all those aged 60 or over who experience income deprivation. **In Wolverhampton, 23.0% of residents aged 60 or over experience income deprivation**, placing the borough 35<sup>th</sup> highest in England for this measure. Geographically, **41.0% (66) of Wolverhampton's LSOAs fall within the 20% most deprived nationally**. Of these, 20.5% (33) are in the top 10% most deprived.

#### IDACI (Left) and IDAOPI (Right), By Overall Decile per LSOA:



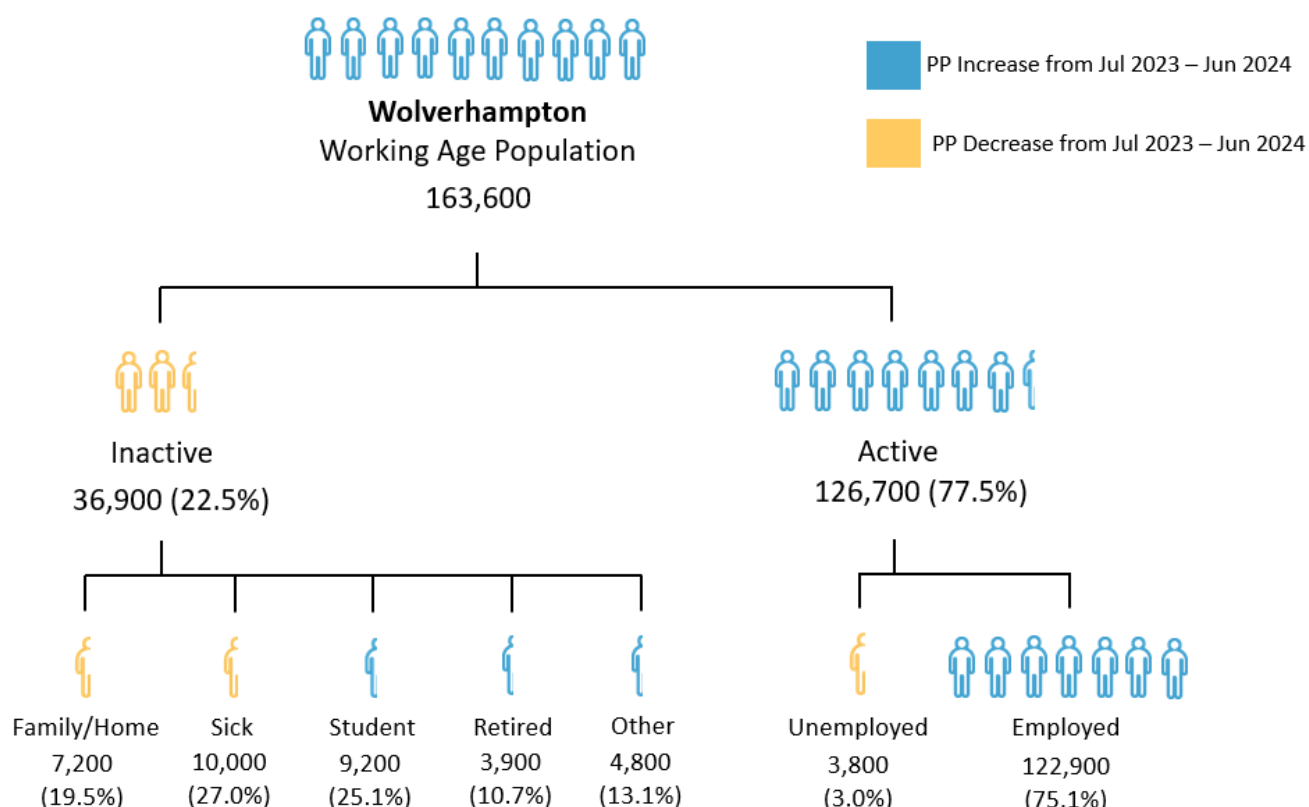
<sup>27</sup> ONS, mid-year population estimates, 2025

<sup>28</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, English indices of deprivation 2025

## Labour Market

- **Wolverhampton's labour market is likely to face acute pressures in 2026** amid the [UK's Get Britain Working](#) reforms. This national initiative aims for an 80% employment rate and measurable reductions in inactivity gaps. The employment rate<sup>29</sup> in Wolverhampton stands at 75.1% (compared to 75.8% nationally), requiring an **additional 7,980 people to enter work to meet the government target**.
- In addition, despite a recent fall in Wolverhampton's economic inactivity it was still at 22.5%, **fuelled by long-term sickness, suggesting health barriers over mere vacancy shortages**.

### Labour Market Activity, for the Period of July 2024 – June 2025 and the Percentage Point Change Since July 2023 - June 2024:



**No data available for economically inactive – discouraged and temporary sick.**

- The proportion of those aged 16 -17 years olds that are Not in Employment, Education or Training<sup>30</sup> (NEET) in Wolverhampton remain below the national average at 3.8% compared to 5.6%.
- In Wolverhampton, the **employment rate of those classed as Equality Act (EA) core or work-limiting disabled<sup>31</sup> was at 48.3% which was 34.3pp lower than those classed as not EA core or work-limiting disabled (82.6%)**. This was **higher than the national average of 24.6pp** (57.6% compared to 82.2% respectively).
- **Wolverhampton's female employment rate (71.3%) was 8.3pp lower than the male employment rate (79.6%)**. This **gap was above the national average of 6.5pp**.

<sup>29</sup> ONS, Annual Population Survey, 2025.

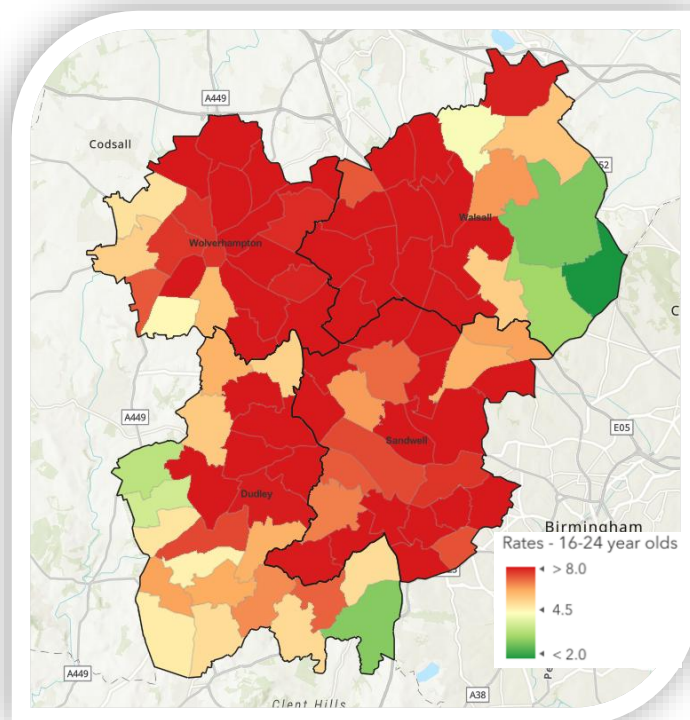
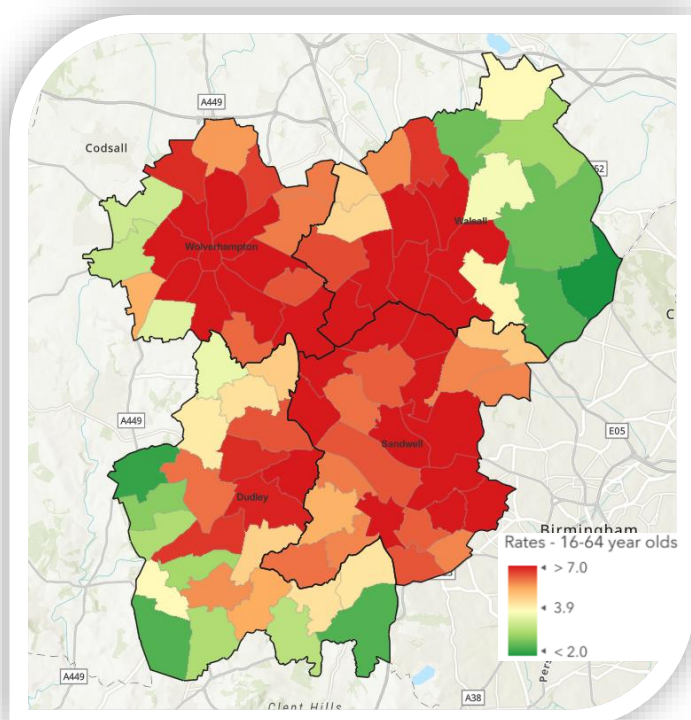
<sup>30</sup> Department for Education, Participation in education, training and NEET age 16 to 17 by local authority, 2025. Please note, the figures include not known.

<sup>31</sup> ONS, Annual Population Survey, 2025.



- To this end, the [West Midlands Works](#) framework offers a critical bridge, channelling national ambitions into regional action. **Prioritising Wolverhampton's most challenged areas**, it must scale integrated health and employment support to curb sickness-driven inactivity, boost higher-level qualifications and apprenticeships, and align training with resilient sectors. **A coordinated, place-based rollout is essential to reverse the region's trajectory.**
- Total claimant<sup>32</sup> numbers remain heightened across Wolverhampton.** There are approximately 11,900 people claiming benefits who are looking for work. This equates to 7.0% of the population aged 16-64 years old, compared to the national rate of 4.0%. **Youth claimants (aged 16-24) remain stubbornly high with a rate of 7.9% compared to 4.4% nationally.** Across all local authorities, Wolverhampton came in 3<sup>rd</sup> highest.

Claimant Rates per Ward for those aged 16-64 (Left) and 16-24 (Right) Compared to National:



## Skills

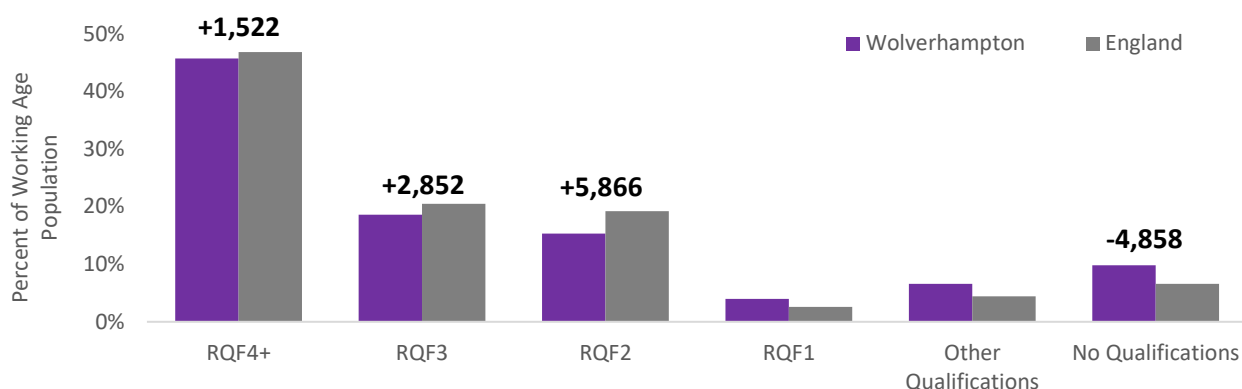
- 45.7% (69,100) of Wolverhampton residents had RQF4+ qualifications<sup>33</sup>** compared to 46.8% nationally in 2024. This was an **annual increase of 7.5% (+4,800)**, which was **above the national average increase of 0.5%**. Despite the increase, **for Wolverhampton to reach the national level it requires 1,522 residents to gain a qualification at Level 4 and above.**
- At the other end of the scale, **9.8% (14,800) of Wolverhampton's working age population had no formal qualifications**, above the national average of 6.6% in 2024. Bucking the national trend where there was annual increase (+6.8%), Wolverhampton decreased by 19.6% (-3,600). **For Wolverhampton to reach the national level it requires 4,858 residents to gain a qualification.**

<sup>32</sup> ONS/ Department for Work and Pensions, claimant count, released 2025

<sup>33</sup> ONS, Annual Population Survey, released 2025



### Qualification Profile, 2024:



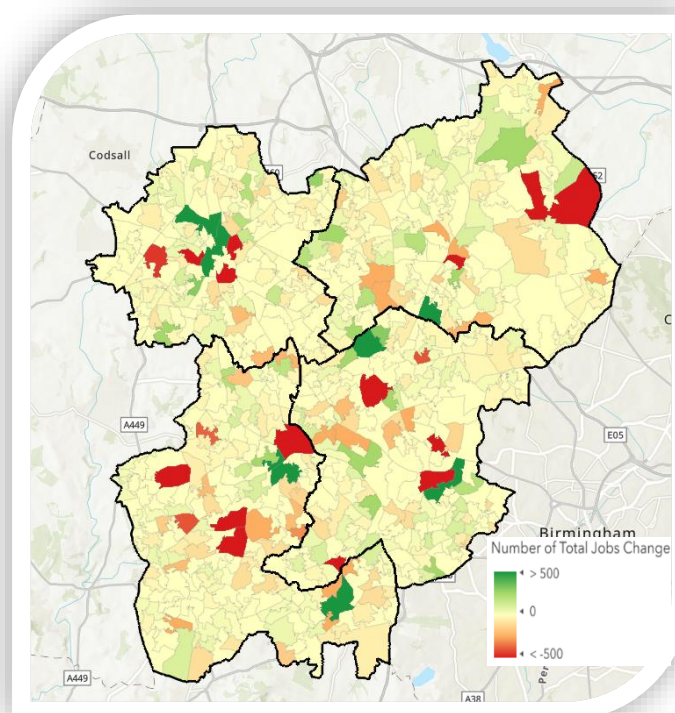
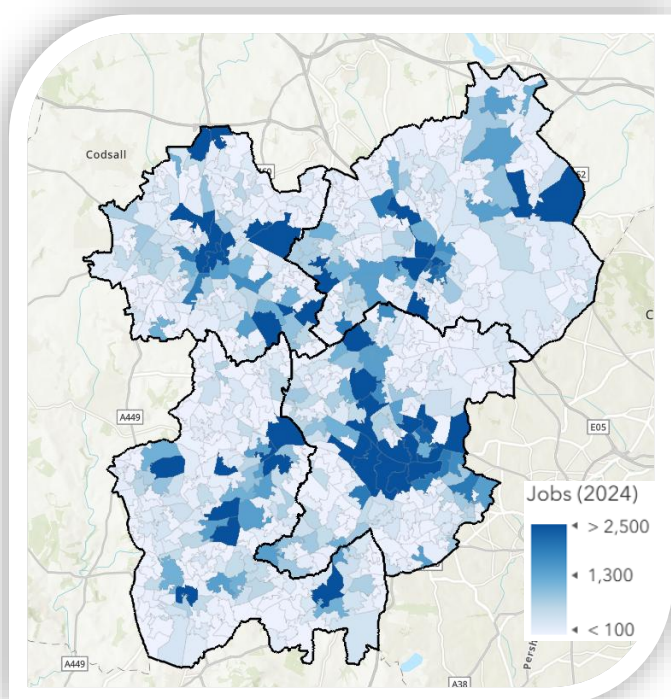
### Apprenticeship Starts

- In the 2024/25 academic year, there were **1,670 apprenticeship starts<sup>34</sup>** in Wolverhampton. When compared to 2023/24, this was an **increase of 1.8% (+30)**, nationally there was an increase of **4.1%**. Exploring apprenticeship starts by level, there were **annual increases in higher and advanced apprenticeship starts** at 3.1% and 4.5% respectively (nationally there were increases of 15.1% and 0.4%).

### Workforce Jobs

- For the fourth consecutive year, there has been an increase in jobs<sup>35</sup> in Wolverhampton. **The latest data shows an annual increase of 0.9% between 2023 and 2024 leading to a jobs total of 111,000 in Wolverhampton.** Nationally there was an annual increase of 0.6%.

### Total Number of Jobs (Left) and Annual Change (Right), per LSOA:



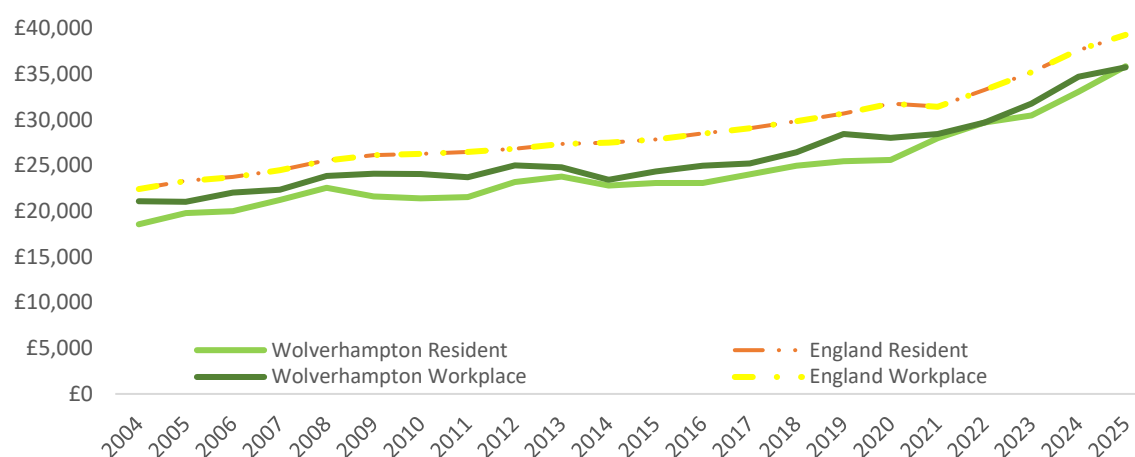
<sup>34</sup> Department for Education, apprenticeships, released 2025

<sup>35</sup> ONS, Business Register and Employment Survey, released 2025.

## Earnings

- In 2025, full-time annual resident earnings<sup>36</sup> for Wolverhampton reached **£35,858**, an annual increase of **8.4% (+£2,773)** compared to an increase of **4.3% nationally**. However, earnings were approximately **91.4% of the England average** (£39,243 - a shortfall of £3,385).
- Whereas in 2025, full-time annual workplace earnings for Wolverhampton were slightly lower at **£35,740** (90.9% of the England average, £39,289). There was an annual increase of 2.9% (+£1,007), which was slightly behind the national increase of 4.4%. Notably for Wolverhampton, workplace data shows that females earn slightly more than men (-0.1%).

### Wolverhampton's Full-Time Annual Resident and Workplace Earnings Compared to National:



- Low pay<sup>37</sup> analysis shows that **16.2% of employee jobs in Wolverhampton were paid below the Living Wage Foundation rate** in 2025, this was **above the national average of 14.6%**.

## Economy as a Driver of Health

- In total, the cost to the economy of working age ill-health and disability that prevents work<sup>38</sup> in 2022 is estimated to be between **£240 and £330 billion in the UK**. Where data is available, the cost to Wolverhampton has been calculated at **£1.1 billion**.

### Summary of the Cost of Working Age Ill Health and Disability that Prevents Work:

Cost element	Description	Cost to the UK	Cost to W'ton
Economic inactivity	Lost output due to working-age ill-health which prevents work	£127bn-£188bn	£613m
Sickness absence	Lost output due to sickness absence	£38bn-£56bn	£153m
Informal care giving	Lost output due to working age carers caring for working age sick	£37bn	£154m
NHS cost	The additional costs to the NHS when someone with a health problem is economically inactive rather than economically active	£2bn	£1.6m
Benefits payments	Cost of social security benefits related to health conditions that prevent people from working	£36bn-£47bn	£197m
<b>Total</b>	<b>Total expenditure in 2022</b>	<b>£240bn-£330bn</b>	<b>£1.1bn</b>
of which: Exchequer flowbacks	Tax and National Insurance foregone due to health-related worklessness	£57bn	£244m

<sup>36</sup> ONS, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, released 2025

<sup>37</sup> ONS, Low and high pay in the UK, released 2025. Living Wage Foundation rate in 2025 - £13.85 in London and £12.60 outside of London.

<sup>38</sup> The EIU analysis based off DWP, The cost of working age ill-health and disability that prevents work, 2025. These estimates are not a definitive assessment of what savings might be achieved by further interventions to reduce ill-health or increase employment. The estimates in this costing can be regarded as the difference between current economic output, and the potential economic output if working age health conditions were not limiting or preventing work. This does not assume that all health issues could be resolved when entering work, rather that ill-health is no longer a barrier to work.

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