

# **Dudley 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	+£3,727		
		SAN	£33,029	SAN	+£1,109 (+3.5%)	SAN	+£14,320 (+76.5%)	SAN	+£6,214		
		WAL	£34,036	WAL	+£1,538 (+4.7%)	WAL	+£15,358 (+82.2%)	WAL	+£5,207		
		WOL	£35,858	WOL	+£2,773 (+8.4%)	WOL	+£17,293 (+93.1%)	WOL	+£3,385		
		BC	£34,602 (avg.)	BC	+£1,530 (+4.6% BC) +4.3% Eng.	BC	+£15,817 (+84.2% BC) +74.9% Eng.	BC	+£4,641 Eng.: £39,243		
Achieve Better Population Balance		DUD	17.0%			DUD	-0.1pp	DUD	+16,257		
		SAN	10.8%			SAN	Opp	SAN	+36,179		
		WAL	13.7%			WAL	-0.5pp	WAL	+22,370		
		WOL	13.4%			WOL	-0.3pp	WOL	+21,620		
		BC	13.6%			BC	-0.3pp BC +0.5pp Eng.	BC	+96,427 Eng.: 23.5% AB's		
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					
		SAN	37.0%	SAN	+5.5pp	SAN					
		WAL	43.5%	WAL	+8.4pp	WAL					
		WOL	51.6%	WOL	-3.1pp	WOL					
		BC	44.5%	BC	+3.8pp BC +0.6pp Eng.	BC					
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									
<b>Increase the Hectares of Local Nature Reserves</b>	887.3ha		0ha		-		1ha of Local Nature Reserve per 1,000 pop.		
<b>Have a Sustainable Environment- Reduce CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions (Tonnes per capita)</b>	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									
<b>Reduce the Number of People with No Qualifications</b>	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%	
<b>Increase the Number of People with RQF4+</b>	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%	
<b>Improve Pupils Progress 8 Score</b>	DUD	-0.12	DUD	-0.11	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		
<b>Reduce the No. of 16–17-Year-Olds Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)</b>	DUD	21.5%	DUD	+833 (+101.3%)	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									
<b>Increase Net New Homes</b>	DUD	142,236	DUD	+686 (+0.5%)	DUD	+13,110 (+10.2%)	DUD	-261	
	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		
<b>Provide Industrial Floorspace</b>	DUD	2,371,000 sqm	DUD	+15,000 sqm	DUD	-590,000 sqm	DUD	-427	
	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		
<b>Provide Office Floorspace</b>	DUD	258,000 sqm	DUD	-1,000 sqm	DUD	-48,000 sqm	DUD	-103,000 sqm	
	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		
<b>Provide Retail Floorspace</b>	DUD	598,000 sqm	DUD	-5,000 sqm	DUD	-20,000 sqm	DUD	+62,000 sqm	
	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.

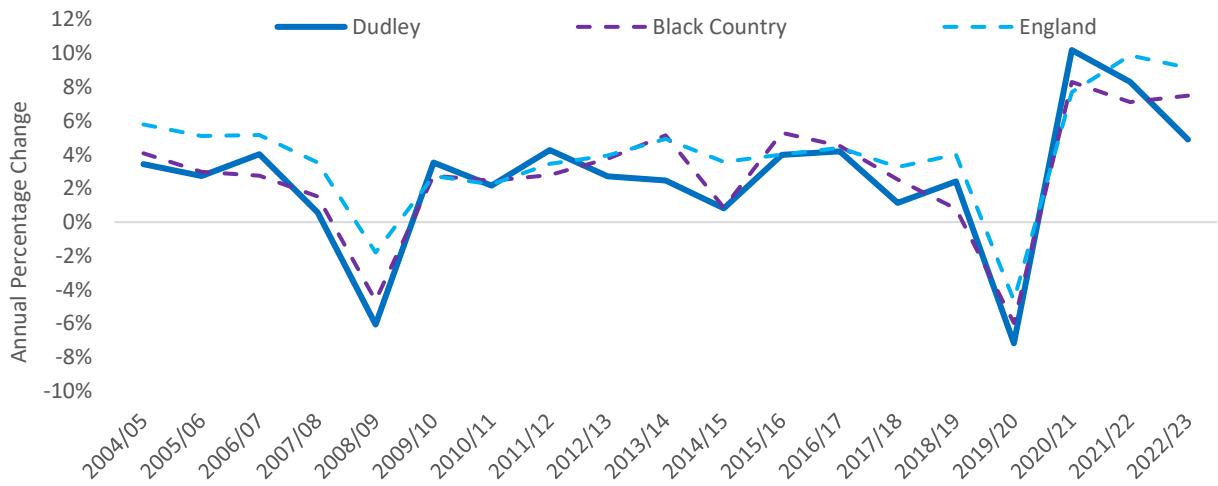
# 2025 KEY MESSAGES

## 1.1. Economy

### Economy and Productivity

- After higher than national growth rates between 2020 and 2021 (+10.2% compared to +7.7%), Dudley's total Gross Value Added (GVA)<sup>2</sup> continues to increase but at a slower pace (+8.3% compared to 9.9% between 2021/22). **Dudley's GVA increased from £5.9bn in 2022 to nearly £6.2bn in 2023.** Equating to a growth rate of 4.9% 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:



- Dudley's GVA per head remains substantially lower than the national average at £18,838 compared to £36,632 in 2023.** Although, there was an annual increase of 4.3% (+£782), while England increased by 8.1%. For Dudley, there was an **overall output gap<sup>3</sup> of £5.8bn**, an annual increase of just over £664m and longer-term (since 2004) a significant increase of £3.5bn.
- GVA per hour<sup>4</sup> for Dudley was £31.90 in 2023, with a slower annual growth rate than nationally at 1.3% compared to 2.2%.** When compared to 2019, Dudley performed above the national average growth rate (+15.7% compared to +14.5%). However, in 2023 there was still a **shortfall of £10.00 to reach the UK average (£41.90)**.
- Dudley's Gross Disposable Household Income (GDHI) per head<sup>5</sup> increased from £17,746 in 2022 to £19,238 in 2023, which equated to a growth rate of 8.4%, matching the national growth rate.** Across all ITL3 areas, Dudley had the 37<sup>th</sup> lowest GDHI per person (moving from 35<sup>th</sup> place in 2022) and had a **shortfall of £5,598 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 2025

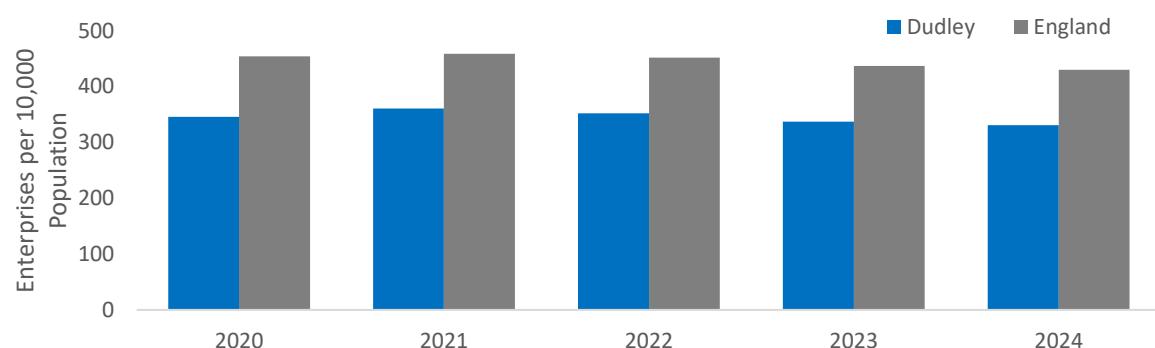
<sup>5</sup> ONS, Regional gross disposable household income, released 2025

## 1.2. Business

### Business Environment

- Following the national trend, total enterprises have decreased for the third consecutive year in Dudley. In 2024, there were **10,970 enterprises<sup>6</sup>** in Dudley, an annual decrease of 0.9% (-100), above the national decline of 0.4%. Despite the recent declines, **enterprises in Dudley have increased by 0.7% when compared to 2019**, which contrasts with the national trend of a decrease by 1.0%.
- There are still **too few enterprises in Dudley at 330 enterprises per 10,000 population compared to 430 per 10,000 population for England in 2024**. For Dudley to reach the national average requires **an additional 3,307 active enterprises**.

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



- In 2024, there were **45 high-growth firms** in Dudley. An **annual increase of 12.5% (+5)**, nationally there was an increase of 4.0%.
- Dudley's enterprise survival rates are lower than national levels on both a short-term and long-term basis.** Of the 1,145 enterprise births in 2023, there were 91.7% that were still active after 1 year with England at 93.4%. Of the 1,405 enterprise births in 2019 in Dudley, 33.5% were still active after 5 years with England at 38.3%.
- Between 2019 and 2024, **enterprise births in Dudley fell by 16.4%, from 1,405 to 1,175**. However, this reflected the national trend (-13.1%). More recent trends show that after two consecutive years of declines, **enterprise births were on the up** in Dudley between 2023 and 2024, with the latest annual increase at 2.6%, above the national growth of 0.3%.
- There were **35 enterprise births per 10,000 population for Dudley compared to 48 per 10,000 population for England** in 2024. To match the national average, Dudley requires an overall increase of 426 births per year.
- 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** (255 births compared to 220 deaths in Dudley).
- There is an opportunity to **harness innovative activity of the diverse business base locally**, 20.4% of companies in Dudley are female-led<sup>8</sup>, above the UK average (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> The Gender Index, released 2025

## Traditional Sectors

- Out of 9 defined sectors, Dudley has a **higher than the national proportion in 5 sectors for GVA<sup>9</sup>, 5 sectors in jobs<sup>10</sup> and 6 sectors for enterprises<sup>11</sup>** (illustrated by the green shading in the following table).

### GVA, Jobs and Enterprises per Sector:

	Dudley GVA	% of Dudley GVA	% of England GVA	Dudley Jobs	% of Dudley Jobs	% of England Jobs	Dudley Enterprises	% of Dudley Enterprises	% of England Enterprises
Advanced Manufacturing	£1.0bn	16.8%	10.7%	14,575	13.8%	9.5%	1,235	12.4%	11.4%
Building Technologies	£718m	11.7%	6.3%	5,400	5.1%	4.9%	1,720	17.2%	14.1%
Business Services	£1.7bn	27.5%	43.0%	14,905	14.1%	26.1%	2,920	29.2%	37.6%
Environmental Technologies	£37m	0.6%	2.4%	450	0.4%	1.1%	65	0.7%	0.5%
Health & Wellbeing	£697m	11.3%	8.2%	20,400	19.4%	14.0%	495	5.0%	4.4%
Public Sector inc. Education	£791m	12.9%	11.6%	16,500	15.7%	15.5%	335	3.4%	4.1%
Retail	£794m	12.9%	10.1%	21,000	19.9%	13.7%	1,910	19.1%	14.5%
Transport Technologies	£144m	2.3%	3.5%	3,500	3.3%	5.1%	540	5.4%	4.2%
Visitor Economy	£250m	4.1%	4.3%	8,625	8.2%	10.1%	775	7.8%	9.0%
Total	£6.2bn	100%	100.0%	106,000	100%	100%	9,995	100%	100%

- Furthermore, **450 strategic companies<sup>12</sup>** have been identified in the Black Country area, **of which 123 were in Dudley**.

## West Midlands High Growth Clusters

- When aligning to the five high growth clusters<sup>13</sup> as seen in the [West Midlands Growth Plan](#), Dudley has some **strengths in the smart energy systems and advanced engineering, light electric vehicles & batteries clusters**. Although Dudley does account for 15.1% of WMCA businesses in the health & med tech cluster.

### Dudley GVA, Employment and Businesses per High Growth Cluster:

	Dudley GVA	% of WMCA GVA	Dudley Employment	% of WMCA Employment	Dudley Businesses	% of WMCA Businesses
Advanced Engineering, Light Electric Vehicles & Batteries	£1.2bn	9.3%	17,132	9.1%	1,961	11.8%
Digital Tech & Creative	£91m	2.9%	1,585	4.6%	385	8.1%
Health & Med Tech	£11m	2.8%	250	5.0%	55	15.1%
Next Generation Services	£1.2bn	6.2%	6,855	4.2%	1,680	9.1%
Smart Energy Systems	£224m	16.3%	2,305	11.1%	610	18.1%

<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 Dudley has either **the same or higher proportion than nationally in 5 sectors for enterprises and 3 sectors for jobs**.

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

	Employees			Businesses		
	Dudley	Dudley % of Total	UK % of Total	Dudley	Dudley % of Total	UK % of Total
Advanced Manufacturing	3,725	<b>3%</b>	2%	175	<b>2%</b>	1%
Clean Energy Industries	206	0.1%	3%	70	<b>1%</b>	1%
Creative Industries	2,895	3%	5%	500	5%	10%
Defence	1,545	<b>1%</b>	0.1%	12	<b>0.1%</b>	0.1%
Digital & Technologies	2,090	2%	7%	690	7%	10%
Financial Services	1,250	1%	3%	180	<b>2%</b>	2%
Life Sciences	50	<b>0.1%</b>	0.1%	15	<b>0.1%</b>	0.1%
Professional & Business Services	9,745	9%	14%	1,690	17%	21%
Total	21,506	19.2%	34.2%	3,332	30.2%	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 clear specialisation with a **business LQ of 1.86, employee LQ of 1.31, and turnover LQ of 2.06**, marking it as a leading sector. While **the defence sector records a strong employee LQ of 2.15**, both business LQ (0.88) and turnover LQ (1.07) sit closer to average.

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

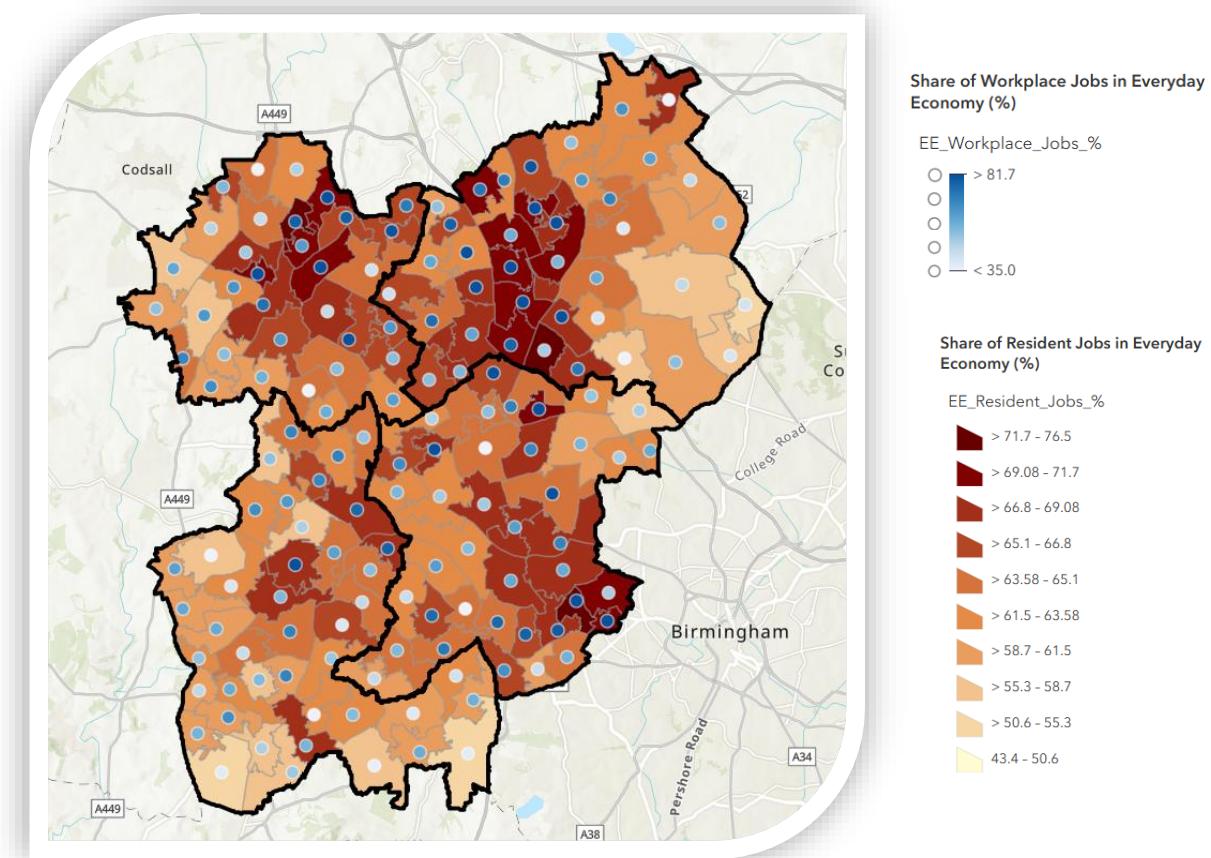
Sector	Business LQ	Employee LQ	Turnover LQ
Advanced Manufacturing	<b>1.86</b>	<b>1.31</b>	<b>2.06</b>
Clean Energy Industries	0.71	0.14	0.18
Creative Industries	0.67	0.73	0.52
Defence	0.88	<b>2.15</b>	1.07
Digital and Technologies	0.69	0.21	0.47
Financial Services	0.9	0.25	0.18
Life Sciences	0.71	0.55	0.65
Professional and Business Services	0.86	0.45	0.47

## 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 Dudley, it is estimated that 62.0% of residents work in these jobs while 62.4% 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, Dudley has received the most funding at £23.6m which was from 99 awards.**

## International Trade

- In 2023, Dudley **exported £795m of goods and services**<sup>16</sup>. An annual decrease of 7.6% (-£65m) while in contrast, England increased by 6.4%. Over this period, **Dudley's imports decreased by 2.4% to a total of £1.4bn** (England increased by 4.2%). Meaning in 2023, Dudley had an overall trade deficit of £647m.
- International trade activity** in Dudley was a **similar level for exports in goods (£407m) and services (£388m)**. However, imports in goods were significantly higher (£1.3bn) than services (£123m).
- Meaning in 2023, Dudley had a **trade in goods deficit of £921m**. However, Dudley had a **trade surplus of £265m in services**.

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

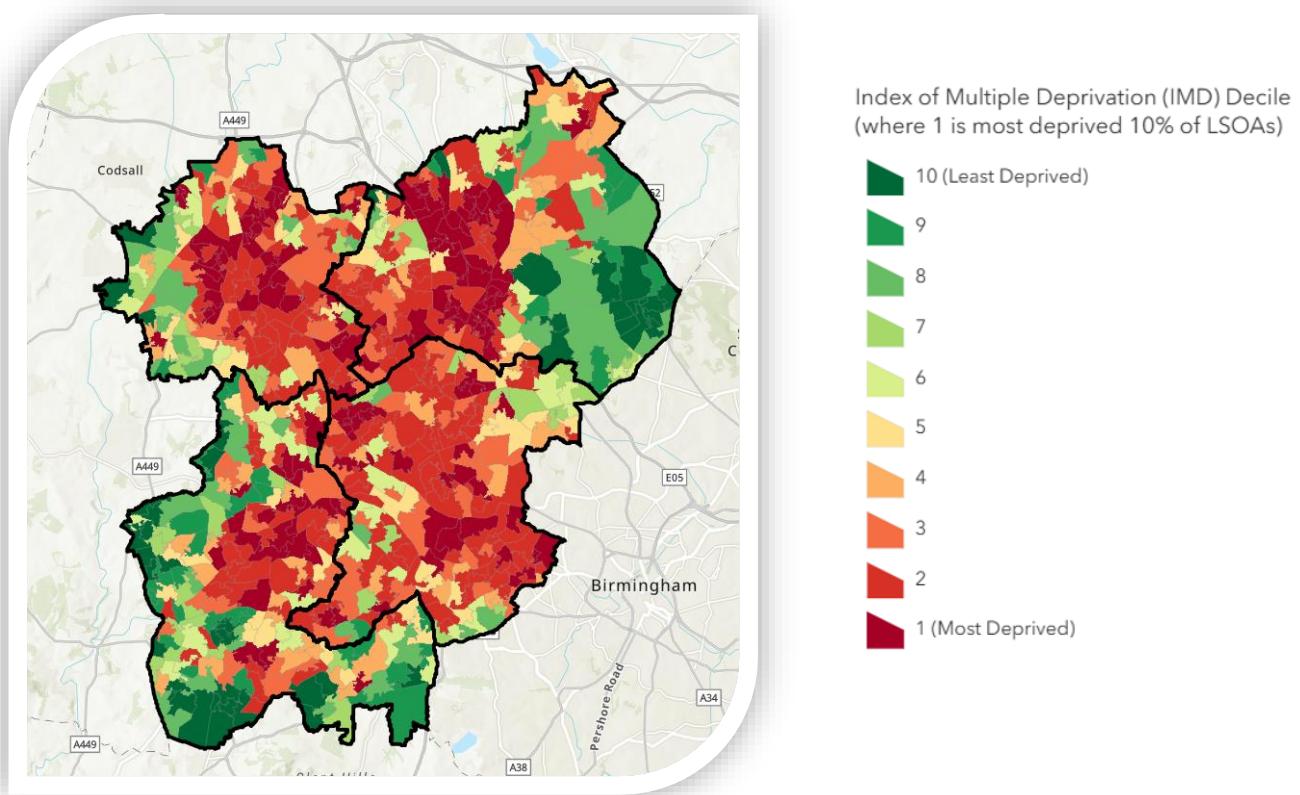
<sup>16</sup> ONS, International trade in UK nations, regions and cities: 2023, released 2025.

## 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. **Dudley's ranking improved in 2025 compared with 2019 - placed in 103<sup>rd</sup>, which has improved from 91<sup>st</sup> in 2019.**
- **26.1% (53) of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Dudley are in the top 20% most deprived areas in England.** Of these 10.8% (22) 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, 50 LSOAs that were identified as deprived in 2019 are still active in 2025 analysis, **there were 2 fewer LSOAs in the top 10%, 3 fewer in top 20% and 5 moved into the 3<sup>rd</sup> decile.**

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



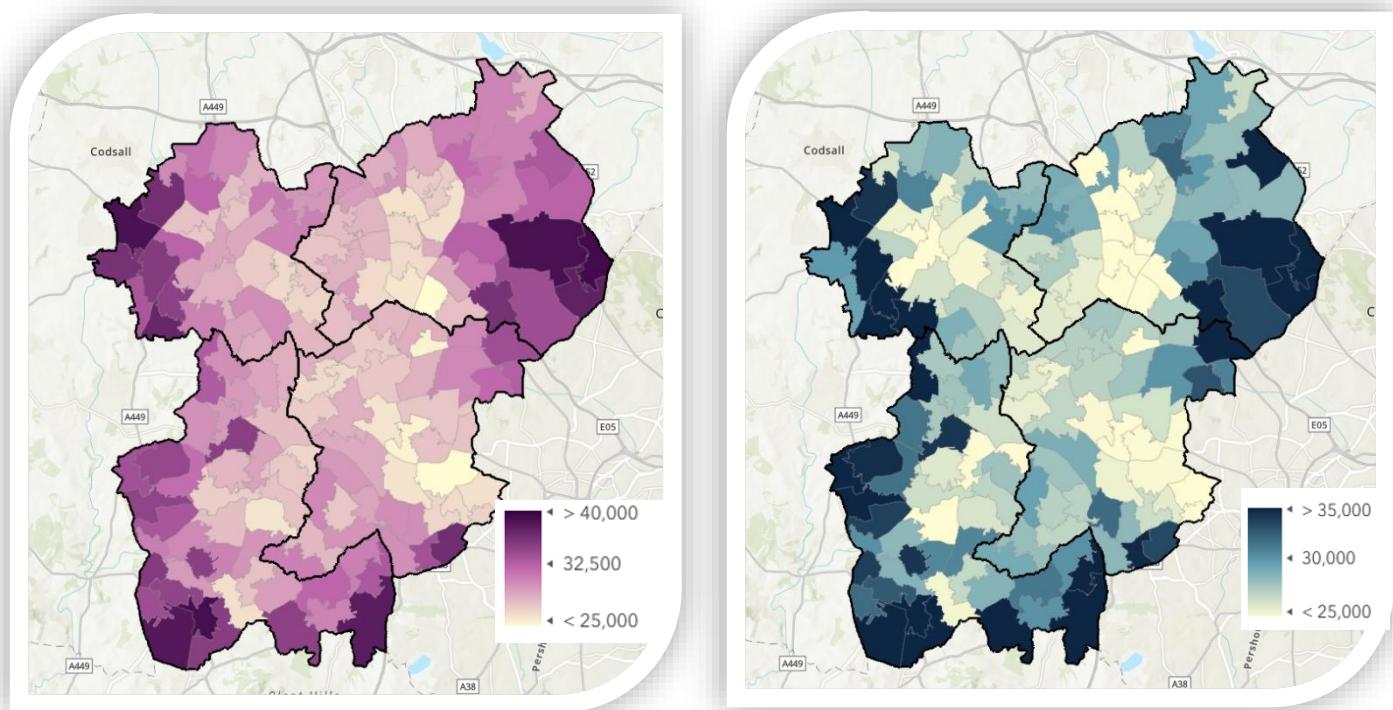
- In the financial year ending 2023, the mean equivalised household disposable (net) income<sup>18</sup> before housing costs varied within Dudley from £26,221 to £39,073, **with 93.0% (40 MSOAs) under the England and Wales average of £36,800.**

<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 Dudley from £23,906 to £38,944, **with 76.7% (33 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 Dudley, in 2025, show 686 net additional homes** leading to a total of approximately **142,236 homes overall<sup>19</sup>**.
- There is also a region-wide **affordable housing crisis**, the Government have recently backed the [WMCA Social and Affordable Home Programme](#). In Dudley, there were **15 social housing completions<sup>20</sup> in 2024/25**, although none were recorded in the previous year. There were also **205 affordable homes completed**, lower than the 430 completed in the previous year.
- Housing affordability ratios<sup>21</sup> show that in 2024, residents in Dudley could **expect to spend 6.4 times their annual earnings buying a home**, down from 7.0 in 2023. The equivalent figure in England is 7.7 times annual earnings, down from 8.4.

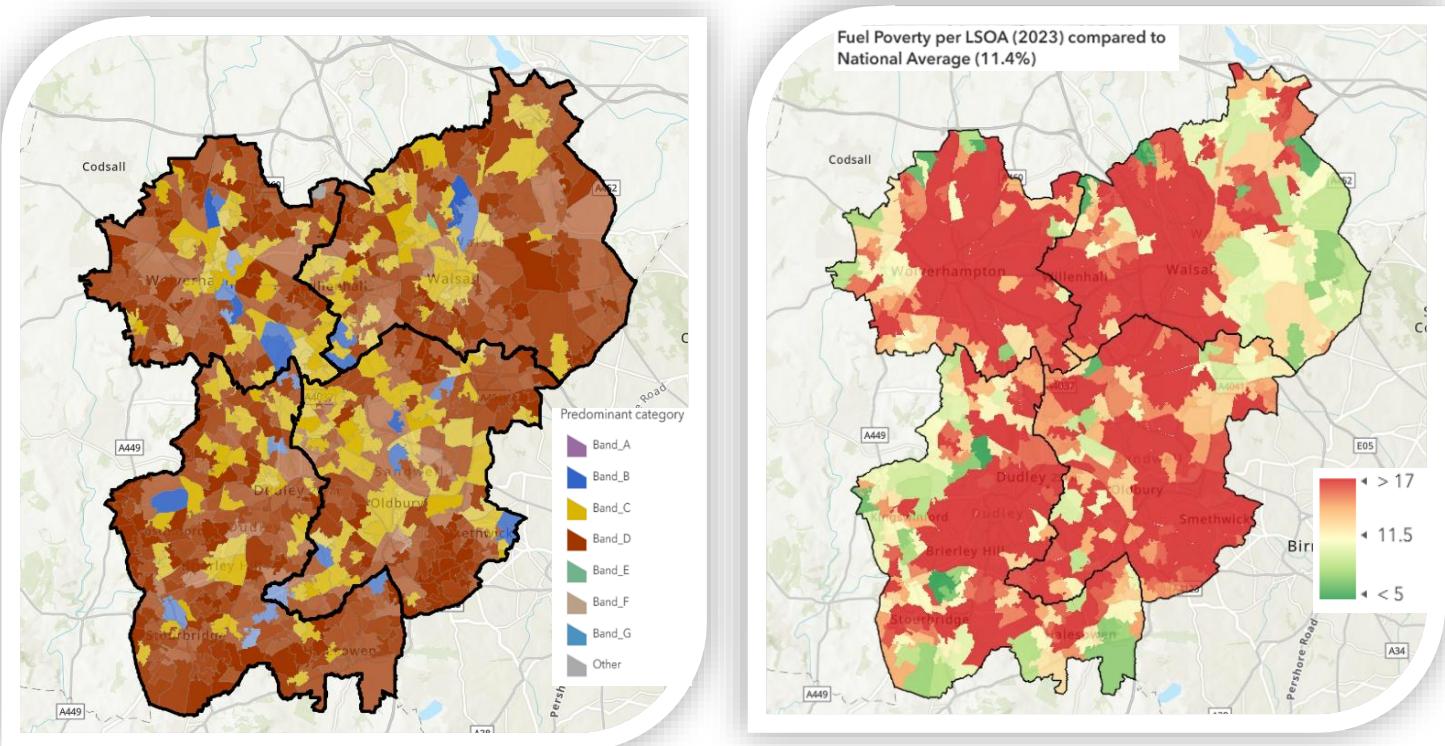
<sup>19</sup> Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Live tables on housing supply: net additional dwellings and on dwelling stock, both released 2025.

<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, 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 just over 90% of Dudley lodgements were in Band D (45.6%), Band C (32.1%) and Band E (12.7%).**
- **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 Dudley, 15.8% (22,023) of households were in fuel poverty, across all local areas in England, this was the 15<sup>th</sup> highest, moving from 21<sup>st</sup> place in 2022.**

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



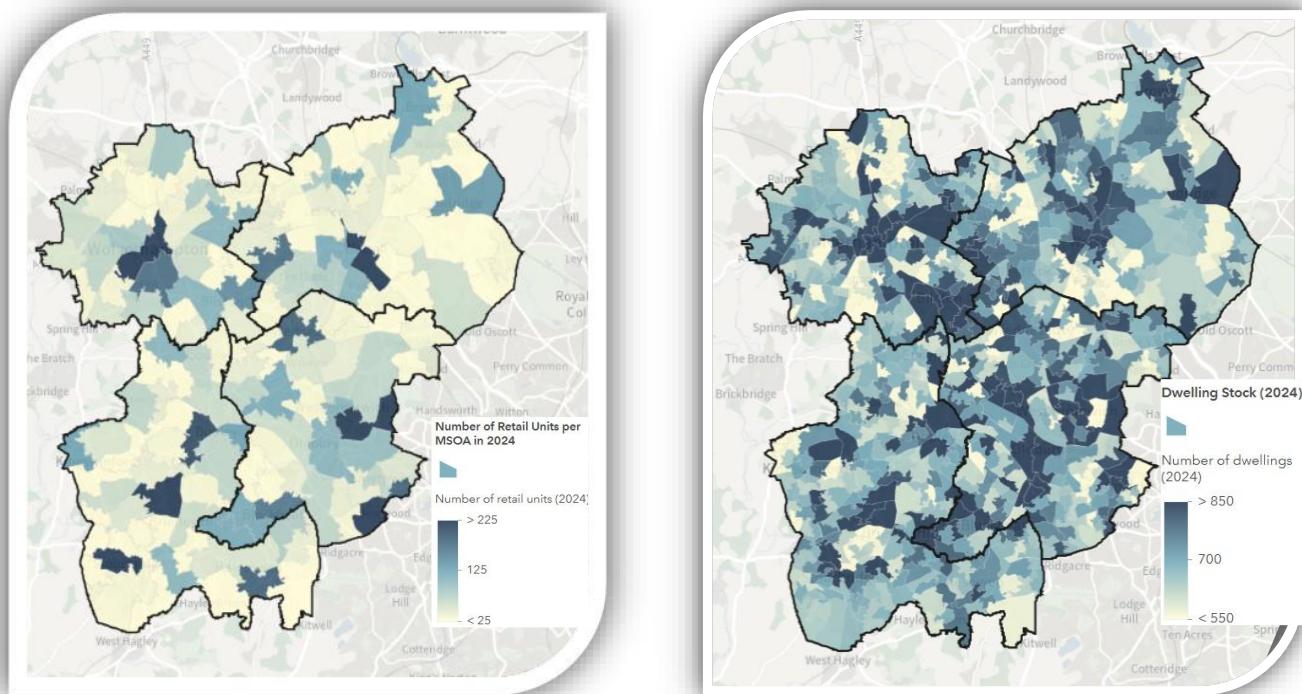
- Across Dudley as of March 2025, there was a total of **10,460 non-domestic properties<sup>24</sup>**, this is now the **lowest recorded since 2016**. Reflecting national trends (-0.1%), there was a decrease of 0.5% (-50) in Dudley when compared to March 2024.
- Analysing non-domestic properties by type, was a total of **2,740 retail properties across Dudley**, which is the lowest on record (since 2011). There has been **an annual decrease of 0.7% (-20)** in Dudley, above the national decline of 0.3%. **Office properties also declined in Dudley, by 70 to 1,610 (-3.6% compared to -0.1% nationally).**
- Whereas **industrial properties increased by 10 to 3,790 properties** overall in Dudley (+0.3% compared to +0.4% nationally). **Properties classed as other increased annually in Dudley by 20 to a total of 2,320 properties** (+0.9% compared to -0.4% nationally).

<sup>22</sup> ONS, Energy efficiency of housing, released 2025. 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):

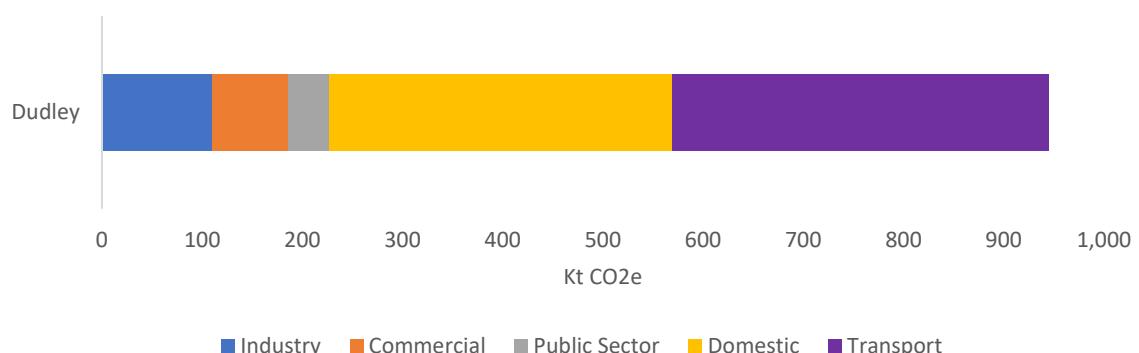


- As of July 2025, **87.7% of premises in Dudley had full fibre connectivity<sup>25</sup>**, above the UK-wide figure of 78.2%.

### Carbon Dioxide Emissions

- In 2023, **total carbon dioxide emissions<sup>26</sup>** were **949 kt CO<sub>2</sub>e** in Dudley. This has decreased at a slightly slower rate than nationally since 2022 (-5.3% compared to -5.7%). Longer term (since 2005), emissions have decreased at a faster rate, by 50.4% for Dudley 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 Dudley's Carbon Dioxide Emissions, 2023:



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

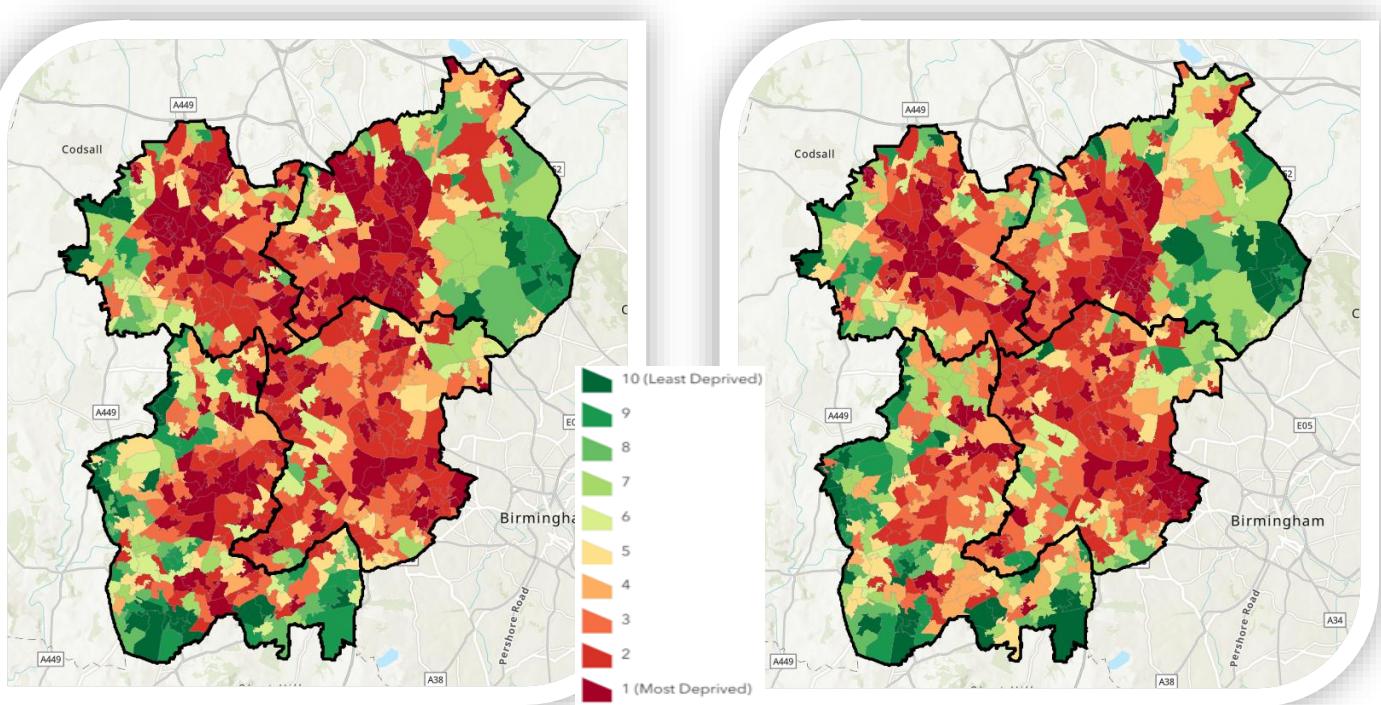
<sup>26</sup> Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, UK local authority & regional greenhouse gas emissions national statistics, released 2025

## 1.4. People

### Population and Deprivation

- In 2024, Dudley had a population of 331,930 residents<sup>27</sup>, reflecting a slightly slower annual growth rate (+1.1%) than the national average (+1.2%). Compared to England overall, Dudley had higher proportions of children aged 0–15 (19.0% compared to 18.4%, equating to 63,221 residents) and adults aged 65 and over (20.2% compared to 18.7%, equating to 67,075 residents). As a result, the working-age population (16–64) was lower at 60.7% (201,634 residents) than the national figure of 62.9%.
- 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 Dudley, 43.2% of children live in income-deprived families, ranking the borough 51st highest in England for this measure. Geographically, 30.8% (61) of LSOAs in Dudley fall within the 20% most deprived nationally. Of these, 12.8% (26) are in the top 10% most deprived.
- In addition, there is also the Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index (IDAOP1) which measures the proportion of all those aged 60 or over who experience income deprivation. In Dudley, 17.2% of residents aged 60 or over experience income deprivation, placing the borough 83rd highest in England for this measure. Geographically, 16.7% (34) of Dudley's LSOAs fall within the 20% most deprived nationally. Of these, 4.9% (10) are in the top 10% most deprived.

IDACI (Left) and IDAOP1 (Right), By Overall Decile per LSOA:



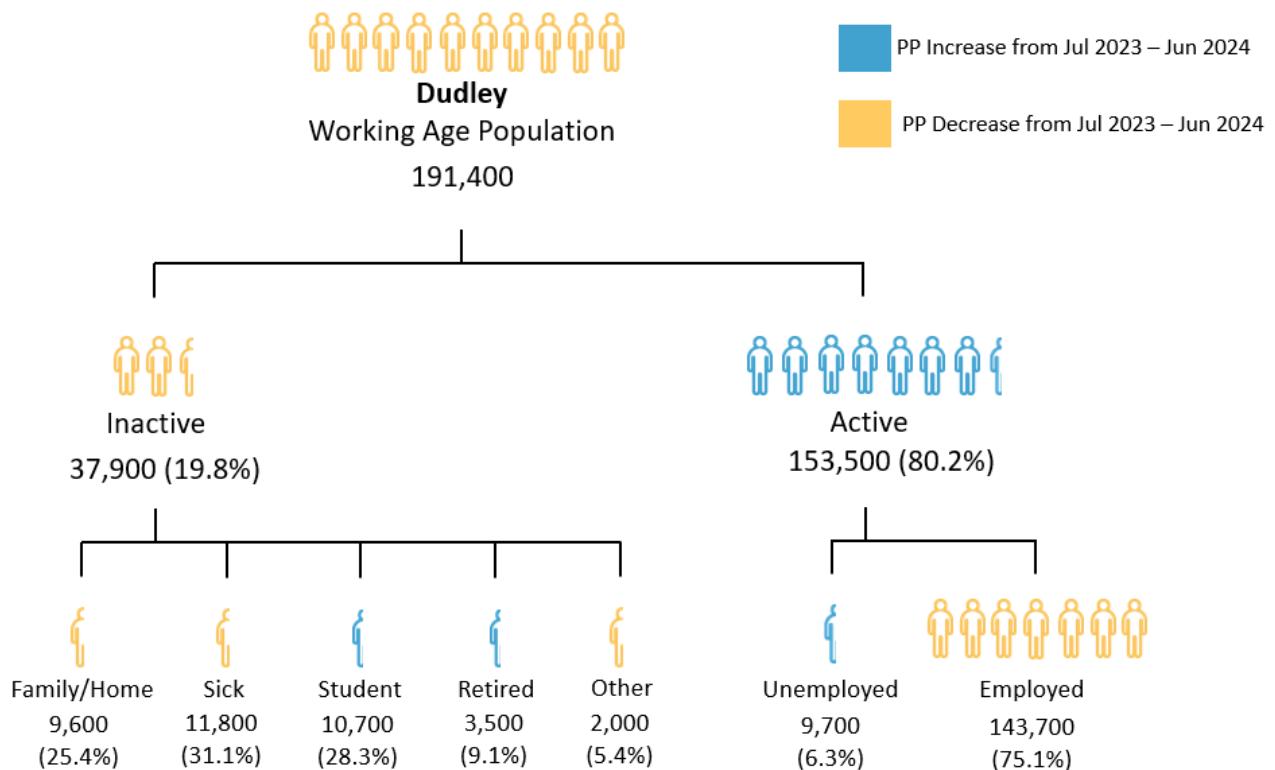
<sup>27</sup> ONS, mid-year population estimates, 2025

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

## Labour Market

- **Dudley'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 Dudley stands at 75.1% (compared to 75.8% nationally), requiring an **additional 9,420 people to enter work to meet the government target**.
- In addition, Dudley's economic inactivity was nearly at 20.0%, **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**) has doubled in the last year alone to 21.5%, the highest level in England and significantly above the national average of 5.6%.
- In Dudley, the **employment rate of those classed as Equality Act (EA) core or work-limiting disabled<sup>31</sup>** was at 52.4% which was 29.8pp lower than those classed as not EA core or work-limiting disabled (84.0%). This was higher than the national average of 24.6pp (57.6% compared to 82.2% respectively).
- **Dudley's female employment rate (74.2%) was 1.7pp lower than the male employment rate (75.9%).** However, this gap was **smaller than the national average of 6.5pp.**

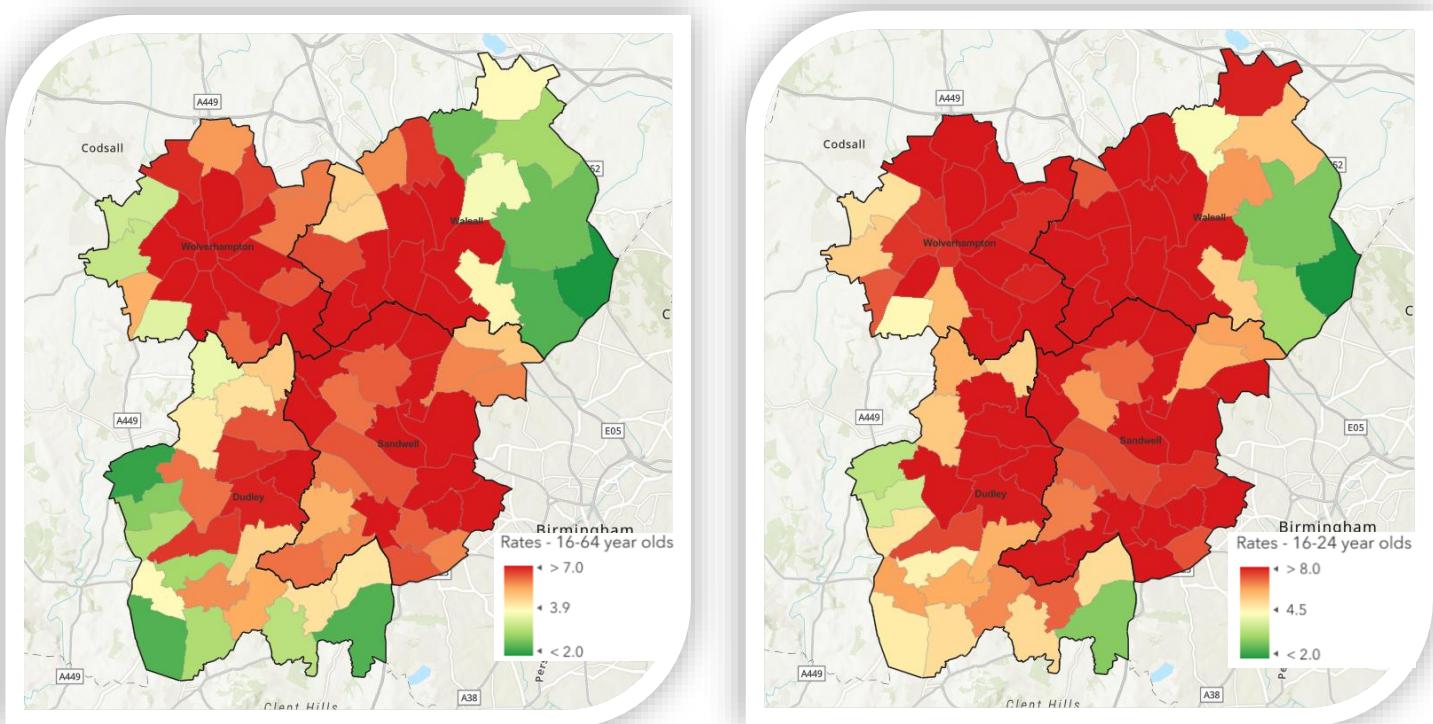
<sup>29</sup> ONS, Annual Population Survey, 2025.

<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 Dudley'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 Dudley.** There are approximately 9,500 people claiming benefits looking for work. This equates to 4.8% of the population aged 16-64 years old, with the national rate at 4.0%. **Youth claimants (aged 16-24) remain high with a rate of 6.4% compared to 4.4% nationally.** Across all local authorities, Dudley ranked 21st highest (with Middlesbrough, City of Kingston Upon Hull, Tameside, and Doncaster).

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



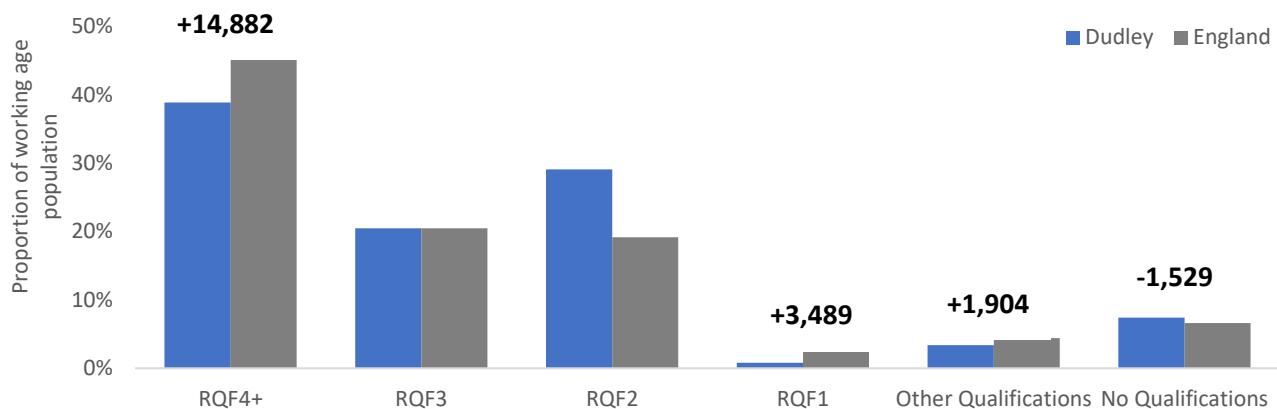
## Skills

- **38.9% (73,700) of Dudley residents had RQF4+ qualifications<sup>33</sup>** compared to 46.8% nationally in 2024. An annual decrease of 3.2%, (-2,400) in contrast to an increase of 0.5% nationally. **For Dudley to reach the national level requires it 14,882 residents to gain a qualification at Level 4 and above.**
- At the other end of the scale, **7.4% (14,000) of Dudley's working age population had no formal qualifications**, above the national average of 6.6% in 2024. An annual increase of 62.8% (+5,400) for Dudley compared to an increase of 6.8% nationally. **For Dudley to reach the national level it requires 1,529 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:



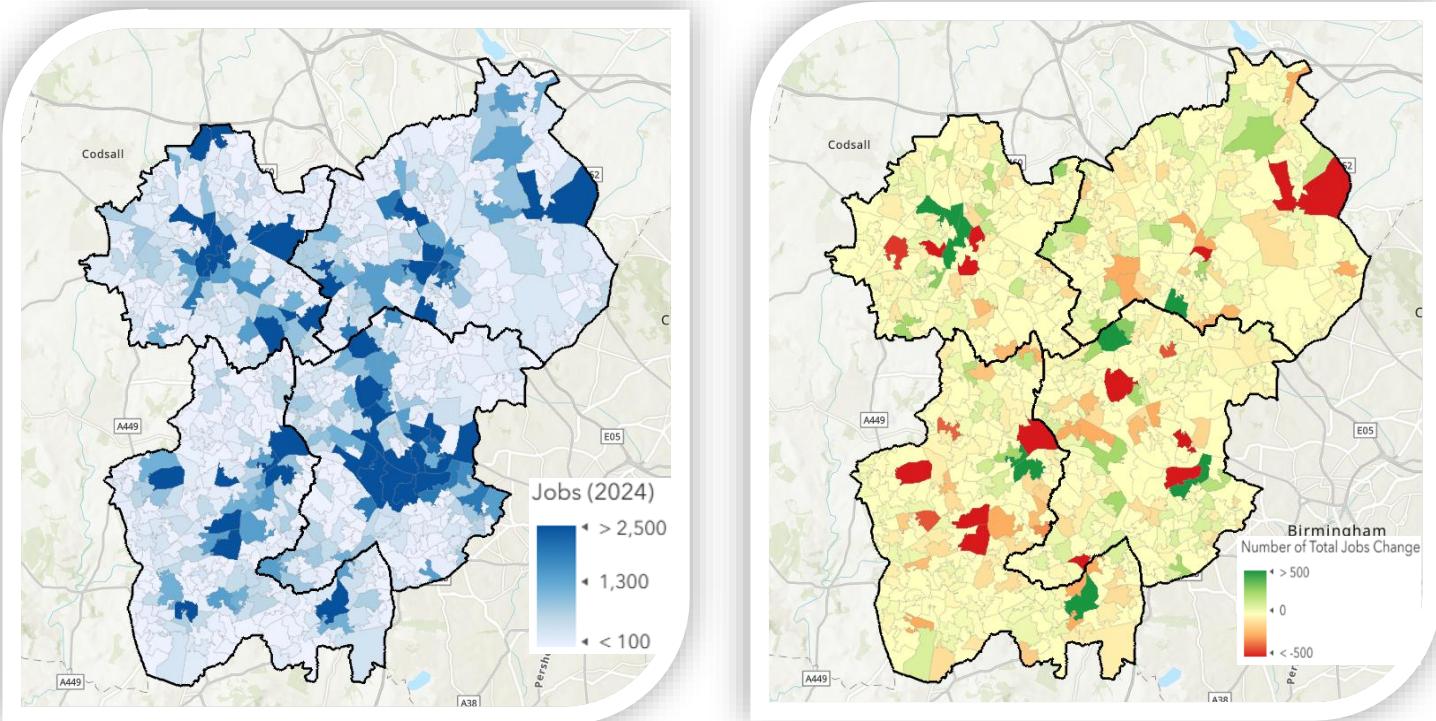
## Apprenticeship Starts

- In the 2024/25 academic year, there were **2,100 apprenticeship starts<sup>34</sup>** in Dudley. When compared to 2023/24, this was a **decrease of 5.0% (-110)**, whereas there was an overall national **increase (+4.1%)**. However, exploring apprenticeship starts by level, there was an annual increase of 2.6% (+20) in higher apprenticeship starts (to total 790).

## Workforce Jobs

- In 2024, there were **106,000 jobs<sup>35</sup>** in Dudley. An **annual decrease of 4.5% (-5,000)** in contrast to an increase nationally by 0.6%.

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



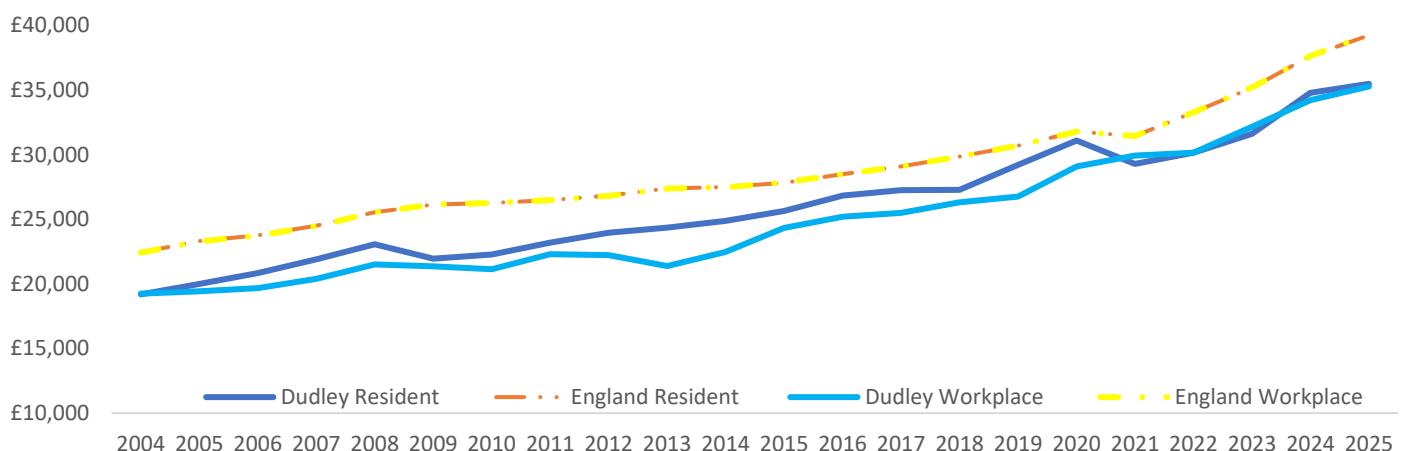
<sup>34</sup> Department for Education, apprenticeships, released 2025

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

## Earnings

- In 2025, full-time annual resident earnings<sup>36</sup> for Dudley reached £35,486, an annual increase of 2.0% (+£700) compared to an increase of 4.3% nationally. Earnings were approximately 90.4% of the England average (£39,243 - a shortfall of £3,757). Notably for Dudley, female residents earn more than male residents (-2.5%).
- Whereas in 2025, full-time annual workplace earnings for Dudley were slightly lower at £35,281, (89.8% of the England average of £39,298). An annual increase of 3.1% (+£1,065), compared to an increase of 4.4% nationally.
- Low pay<sup>37</sup> analysis shows that 19.0% of employee jobs in Dudley were paid below the Living Wage Foundation rate in 2025, this was above the national average of 14.6%.

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



## 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 Dudley has been calculated at £761 million.

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

Cost element	Description	Cost to the UK	Cost to Dudley
Economic inactivity	Lost output due to working-age ill-health which prevents work	£127bn-£188bn	£387m
Sickness absence	Lost output due to sickness absence	£38bn-£56bn	£141m
Informal care giving	Lost output due to working age carers caring for working age sick	£37bn	£106m
NHS cost	The additional costs to the NHS when someone with a health problem is economically inactive rather than economically active	£2bn	£1.5m
Benefits payments	Cost of social security benefits related to health conditions that prevent people from working	£36bn-£47bn	£126m
<b>Total</b>	<b>Total expenditure in 2022</b>	<b>£240bn-£330bn</b>	<b>£761m</b>
of which: Exchequer flowbacks	Tax and National Insurance foregone due to health-related worklessness	£57bn	£168m

<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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For any queries please contact: Professor Delma Dwight ([Delma.Dwight@theieu.org](mailto:Delma.Dwight@theieu.org))

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