

Sandwell 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 ¹		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	Opp	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 ¹		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 CO₂ 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	

¹ 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.

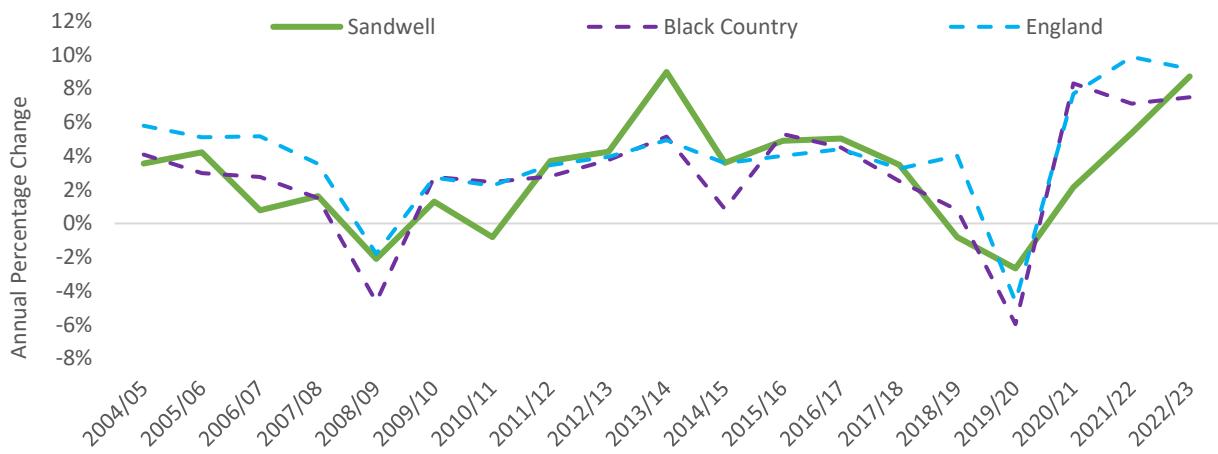
2025 KEY MESSAGES

1.1. Economy

Economy and Productivity

- Sandwell's total Gross Value Added (GVA)² has increased for the third consecutive year. The latest data shows **Sandwell's GVA increased from £6.7bn in 2022 to £7.3bn in 2023**. Equating to a **growth rate of 8.7%**, compared to 9.1% nationally. Sandwell's growth rates are the closest to national levels seen in the past three years.
- 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:



- **Sandwell's GVA per head remains substantially lower than the national average at £21,021 compared to £36,632 in 2023.** There was an annual increase of 7.8% (+£1,519), below the national growth rate (+8.1%). For Sandwell, there was an **overall output gap³ of £5.4bn**, an annual increase of just over £463m and longer-term (since 2004) a significant increase of £3.9bn.
- **GVA per hour worked⁴ for Sandwell was £32.80 in 2023**, with a **slower annual growth** rate than nationally at 1.0% compared to 2.2%. Also, when compared to 2019, Sandwell performed behind the national average growth rate (+8.5% compared to +14.5%). In 2023 there was a **shortfall of £9.10 to reach the UK average** (£41.90).
- **Sandwell's Gross Disposable Household Income (GDHI) per head⁵ increased from £15,360 in 2022 to £16,652 in 2023**, which equated to a **growth rate of 7.8%**, slightly below the national growth rate of 8.4%. Across all local authority areas, Sandwell had the 2nd lowest GDHI per person (remaining in the same place as in 2021 and 2022) and had a **shortfall of £8,274 to the national average** (£24,836).

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

³ The EIU calculations based off ONS, Regional economic activity by gross domestic product, released 2024 and mid-year population estimates, released 2025

⁴ ONS, Subregional productivity in the UK, released 2025

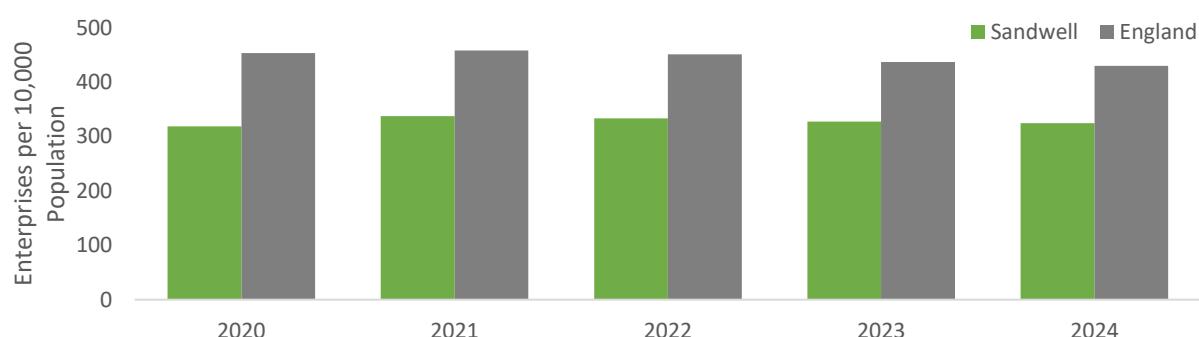
⁵ ONS, Regional gross disposable household income, released 2025

1.2. Business

Business Environment

- After two years of contraction, the total number of enterprises⁶ has returned to an upward trend, in contrast to the national trend. In 2024, there were **11,495 enterprises** in Sandwell, an annual increase of 0.3% (+30) while nationally there was a decrease of 0.4%. **Over the longer-term (2019 - 2024) enterprises in Sandwell have increased (by 12.0%) which contrasts with the national trend of a decrease of 1.0%.**
- There are still **too few enterprises in Sandwell at 325 enterprises per 10,000 population compared to 430 per 10,000 population for England in 2024**. For Sandwell to reach the national average it requires **an additional 3,725 active enterprises**.

Trends in Active Enterprises per 10,000 population:



- In 2024, there were **50 high-growth firms** in Sandwell. Since 2023, this **remains unchanged**, nationally there was an increase of 4.0%.
- Sandwell's enterprise survival rates are lower than national levels on a longer-term but performed better on the short-term basis.** Of the 1,515 enterprise births in 2019, there were 36.6% still active after 5 years with England at 38.3%. Of the 1,540 enterprise births in 2023 in Sandwell, 93.8% were still active after 1 year with England at 93.4%.
- Between 2019 and 2024, **enterprise births in Sandwell rose by 9.2%, from 1,515 to 1,655**. This bucked the national trend (-13.1%). More recent trends show that after three consecutive years of declines, **enterprise births were on the up** in Sandwell between 2023 and 2024, with the latest annual increase at 7.5% (+115), above the national growth of 0.3%.
- There were **47 enterprise births per 10,000 population for Sandwell compared to 48 for England** in 2024. To match the national average, Sandwell requires an overall increase of 51 births per year.
- Experimental quarterly data⁷ shows an overall positive picture locally and nationally as **business births were back ahead of business deaths in Q3 2025** (405 births compared to 320 deaths in Sandwell).
- There is an opportunity to **harness innovative activity of the diverse business base locally**, 17.3% of companies in Sandwell are female-led⁸ (UK average 19.2%).

⁶ ONS, Business Demography, released 2025

⁷ ONS, Business demography, quarterly experimental statistics, low-level geographic breakdown, released 2025

⁸ The Gender Index, released 2025

Traditional Sectors

- Out of 9 defined sectors, Sandwell has **higher than the national proportion in 6 sectors for GVA⁹, 5 sectors in jobs¹⁰ and 3 sectors (with a further one matching) for enterprises¹¹.**

GVA, Jobs and Enterprises per Sector:

	Sandwell GVA	% of Sandwell GVA	% of England GVA	Sandwell Jobs	% of Sandwell Jobs	% of England Jobs	Sandwell Enterprises	% of Sandwell Enterprises	% of England Enterprises
Advanced Manufacturing	£1.5bn	20.8%	10.7%	19,360	15.5%	9.5%	1,110	10.8%	11.4%
Building Technologies	£584m	8.0%	6.3%	5,800	4.6%	4.9%	1,320	13.0%	14.1%
Business Services	£1.6bn	21.7%	43.0%	19,300	15.5%	26.1%	2,420	23.9%	37.6%
Environmental Technologies	£209m	2.9%	2.4%	1,550	1.2%	1.1%	55	0.5%	0.5%
Health & Wellbeing	£903m	12.4%	8.2%	19,300	15.5%	14.0%	520	5.1%	4.4%
Public Sector inc. Education	£777m	10.6%	11.6%	17,000	13.6%	15.5%	270	2.7%	4.1%
Retail	£948m	13.0%	10.1%	22,500	18.0%	13.7%	2,310	22.8%	14.5%
Transport Technologies	£600m	8.2%	3.5%	11,515	9.2%	5.1%	1,315	13.0%	4.2%
Visitor Economy	£178m	2.4%	4.3%	8,585	6.9%	10.1%	830	8.2%	9.0%
Total	£7.3bn	100%	100.0%	125,000	100%	100%	10,140	100%	100%

- Furthermore, **450 strategic companies¹²** have been identified in the Black Country area, **of which 137 were in Sandwell.**

West Midlands High Growth Clusters

- When aligning to the five high growth clusters¹³ as seen in the [West Midlands Growth Plan](#), Sandwell has some **strengths in the smart energy systems and advanced engineering, light electric vehicles & batteries clusters.**

Sandwell GVA, Employment and Businesses per High Growth Cluster:

	Sandwell GVA	% of WMCA GVA	Sandwell Employment	% of WMCA Employment	Sandwell Businesses	% of WMCA Businesses
Advanced Engineering, Light Electric Vehicles & Batteries	£1.8bn	14.6%	27,111	14.4%	2,604	15.7%
Digital Tech & Creative	£55m	1.8%	1,175	3.4%	340	7.2%
Health & Med Tech	£11m	2.6%	260	5.2%	25	6.8%
Next Generation Services	£886m	4.5%	9,770	6.0%	1,345	7.3%
Smart Energy Systems	£178m	13.0%	2,105	10.2%	300	8.9%

⁹ ONS, Regional economic activity by gross domestic product, released 2025

¹⁰ ONS, Business Register and Employment Survey, released 2025

¹¹ ONS, UK Business Counts, released 2025

¹² The EIU analysis from The Data City, 2025.

¹³ 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. Please note, data suggests that there is no presence in Sandwell for the defence sector. Data shows¹⁴ that Sandwell has either **the same or higher proportion than nationally in 2 sectors for enterprises and 3 sectors for jobs**.

Employees and Businesses per IS-8 Sector:

	Employees			Businesses		
	Sandwell	Sandwell % of Total	UK % of Total	Sandwell	Sandwell % of Total	UK % of Total
Advanced Manufacturing	3,600	3%	2%	140	1%	1%
Clean Energy Industries	3,338	3%	3%	49	0.1%	1%
Creative Industries	1,075	1%	5%	375	4%	10%
Digital and Technologies	1,255	1%	7%	480	5%	10%
Financial Services	1,250	1%	3%	120	1%	2%
Life Sciences	20	0.1%	0.1%	5	0.1%	0.1%
Professional and Business Services	9,405	7%	14%	1,275	13%	21%
Total	19,943	16.1%	34.1%	2,444	25.2%	45.1%

- 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 is highly concentrated** with a Business LQ of 1.50, Employee LQ of 1.32, and Turnover LQ of 1.62, marking it as a clear area of specialisation. Despite a weak Business LQ (0.53), **the clean energy industries sector shows strong labour specialisation with an Employee LQ of 1.70**, suggesting a concentrated employment base.

Sandwell Location Quotient per IS-8 Sector:

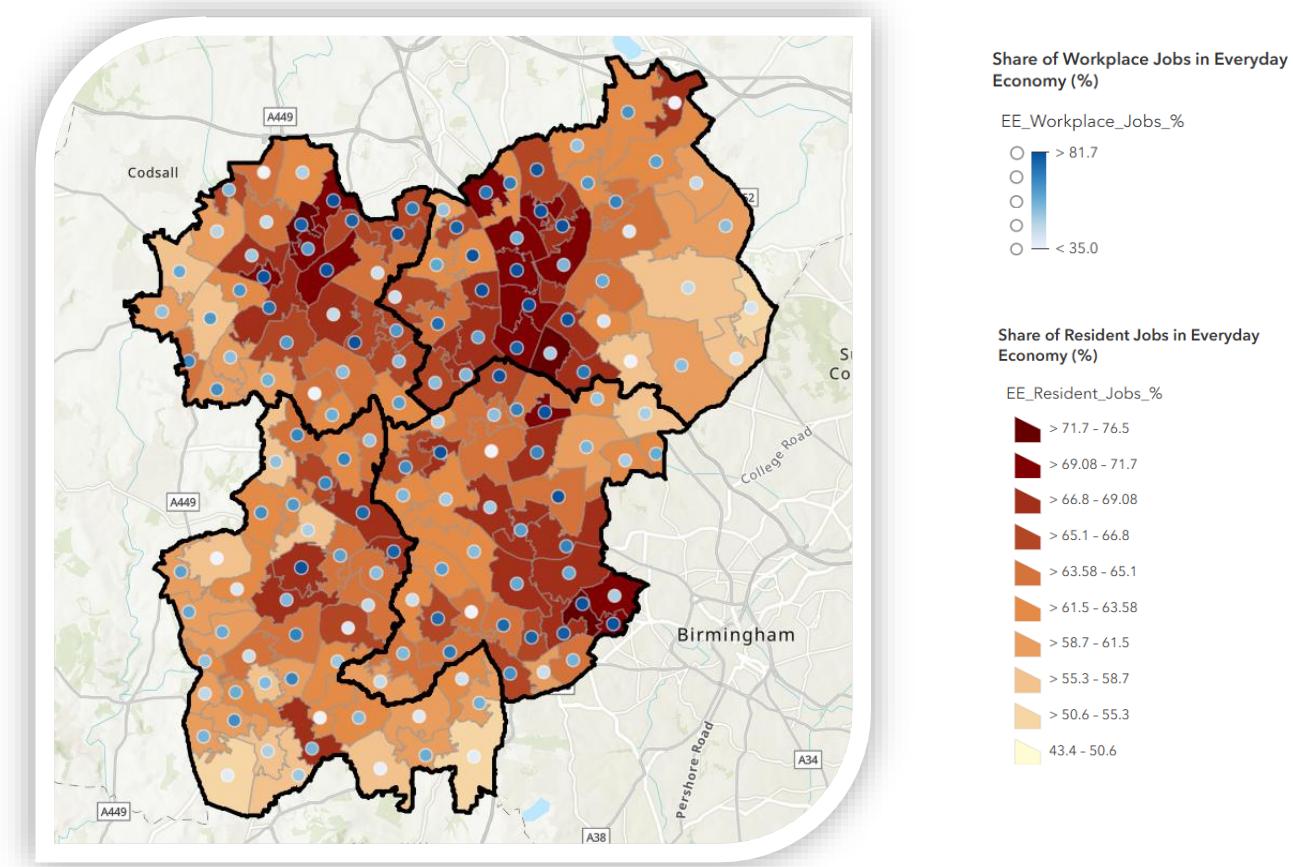
Sector	Business LQ	Employee LQ	Turnover LQ
Advanced Manufacturing	1.5	1.32	1.62
Clean Energy Industries	0.53	1.7	0.93
Creative Industries	0.55	0.33	0.3
Digital and Technologies	0.36	0.64	0.75
Financial Services	0.33	0.29	0.24
Life Sciences	0.82	0.67	0.47
Professional and Business Services	0.57	0.8	0.72

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 Sandwell, it is estimated that 65.0% of residents work in these jobs while 63.6% of workplace jobs are in these jobs.**

¹⁴ The EIU analysis from The Data City, 2025.

Workplace and Resident Jobs in Everyday Economy:



Innovation Funding

- Focusing on the project-level Innovate UK data¹⁵, 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, Sandwell (£7.1m from 77 awards) received the second lowest amount of R&D/innovation funding via Innovate UK programmes in the last decade.**

International Trade

- In 2023, Sandwell **exported £910m of goods and services**¹⁶. An annual decrease of 19.4% (-£219m) while in contrast, England increased by 6.4%. Over this period, **Sandwell's imports increased by 9.0% to a total of £1.9bn** (England increased by 4.2%). Meaning in 2023, Sandwell had an overall trade deficit of £1.0bn.
- International trade activity in Sandwell was a similar level for exports in goods (£509m) and services (£401m).** However, imports in goods were significantly higher (£1.7bn) than services (£196m).
- Meaning in 2023, Sandwell had a **trade in goods deficit of £1.2bn**. However, Sandwell had a **trade surplus of £205m in services**.

¹⁵ Innovate UK, 2025

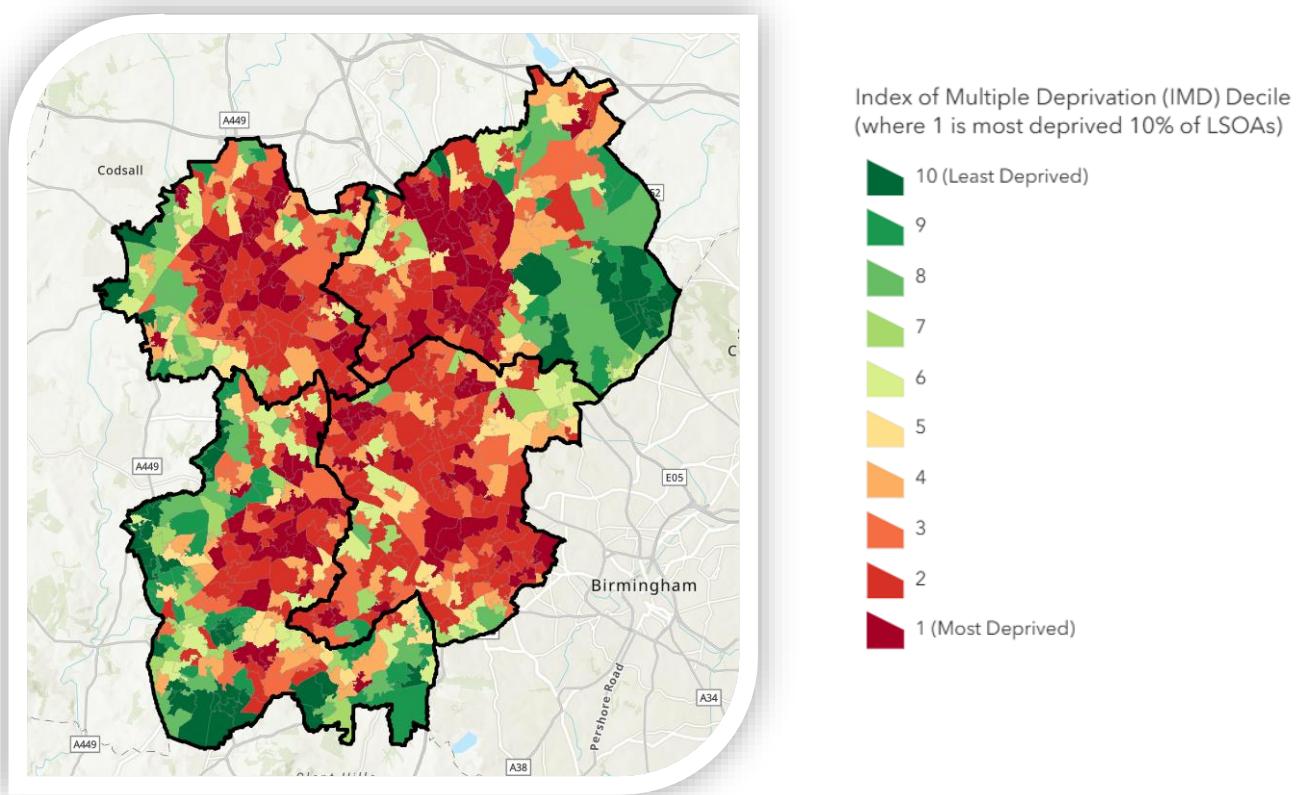
¹⁶ ONS, International trade in UK nations, regions and cities: 2023, released 2025.

1.3. Place

Deprivation and Low-Income Areas

- The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)¹⁷ 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. **Sandwell's ranking improved in 2025 compared with 2019 - placed in 19th from 12th.**
- **56.3% (107) of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Sandwell are in the top 20% most deprived areas in England.** Of these, 16.3% (31) 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, 105 LSOAs that were identified as deprived in 2019 are still active in 2025 analysis, **there were 6 fewer LSOAs in the top 10%, 7 fewer in top 20%, 12 had moved into the 3rd decile and 1 had moved into the 4th decile.**

IMD 2025, Overall Decile per LSOA:



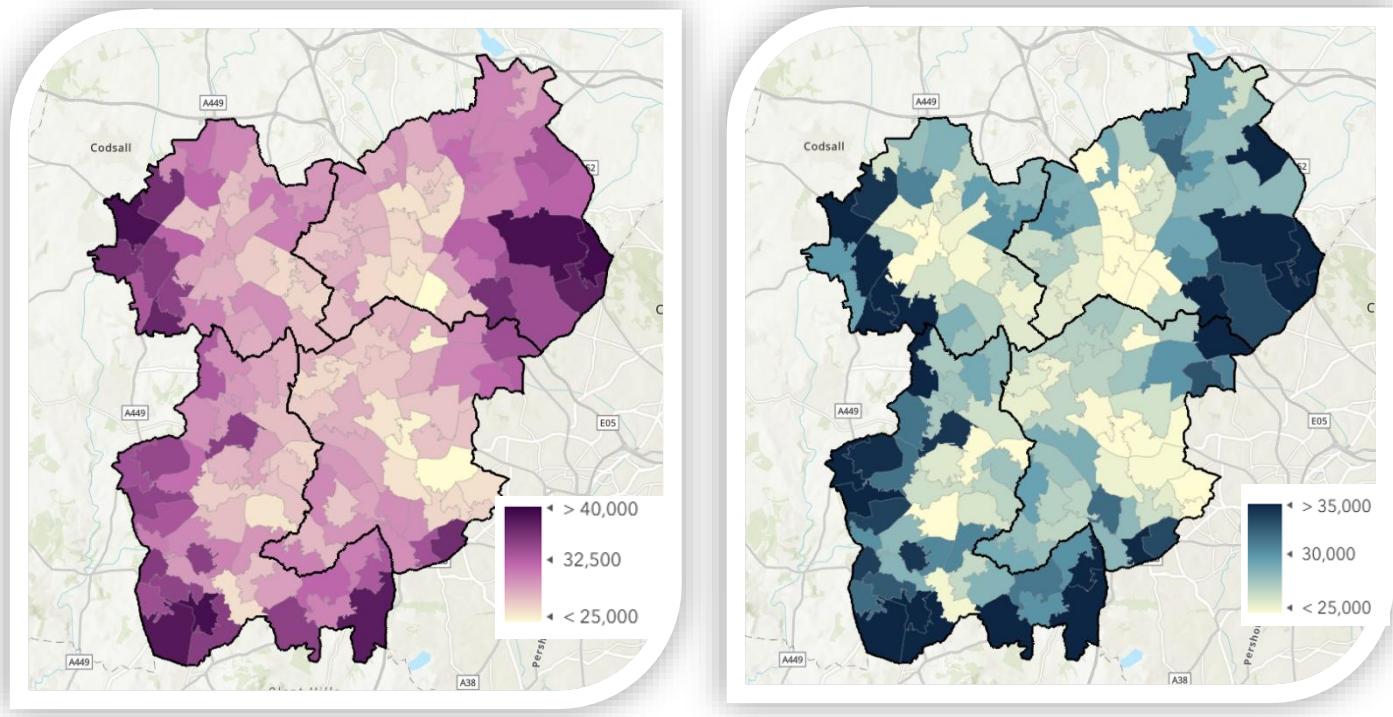
- In the financial year ending 2023, the mean equivalised household disposable (net) income¹⁸, before housing costs varied within Sandwell from £24,836 to £36,801, **with 97.4% (38 MSOAs) under the England and Wales average of £36,800.**

¹⁷ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, English indices of deprivation 2025

¹⁸ 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 Sandwell from £23,555 to £35,448. **With 94.9% (37 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 Sandwell show **596 net additional homes** leading to a total of **approximately 137,002 homes¹⁹** 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 Sandwell, there were **no social housing completions²⁰** in **2024/25**, although none have been recorded since 2018/19. There were **226 affordable homes completed**, up from 164 completed in the previous year.
- Housing affordability ratios²¹ show that in 2024, residents in Sandwell could **expect to spend 6.4 times their annual earnings buying a home**, down from 6.8 in 2023. The equivalent figure in England is 7.7 times annual earnings, down from 8.4.

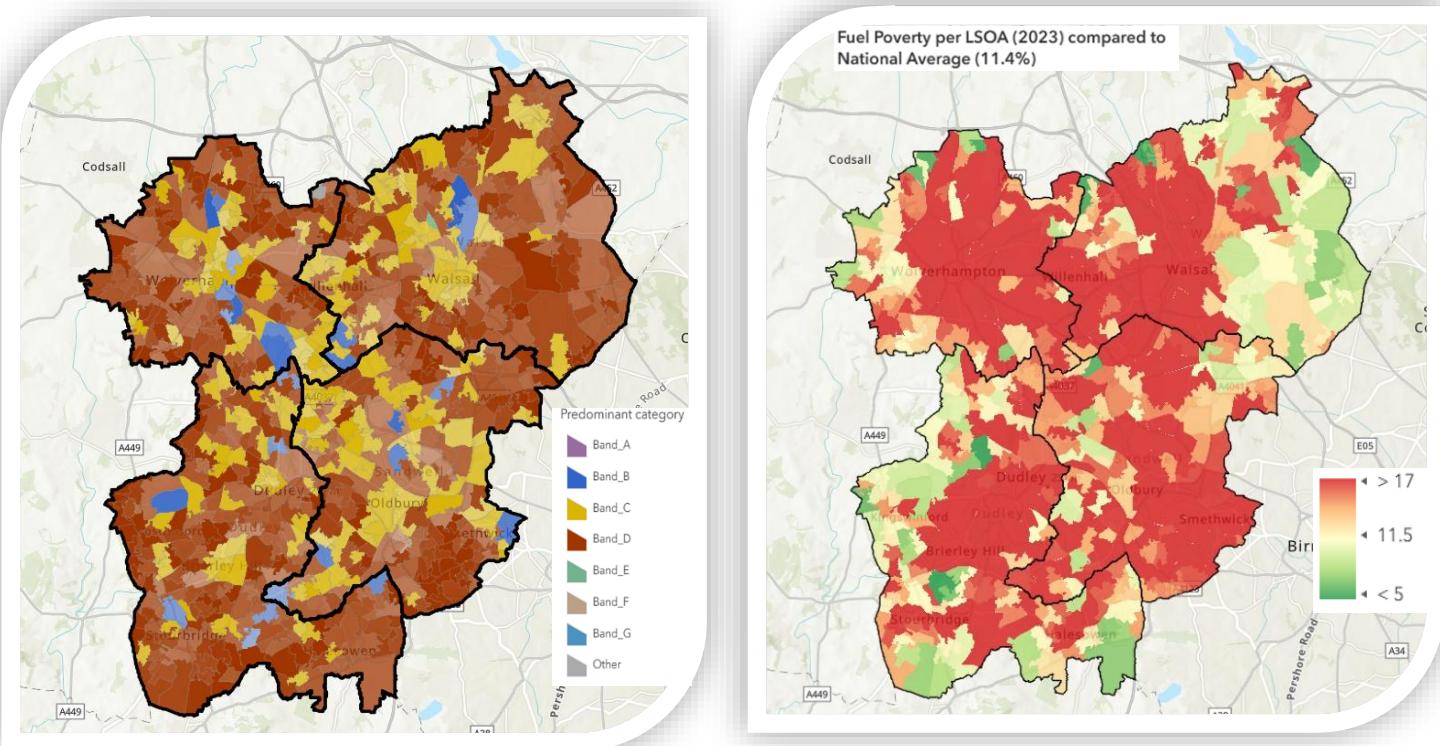
¹⁹ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Live tables on housing supply: net additional dwellings and on dwelling stock, both released 2025.

²⁰ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, affordable housing supply statistics, 2025

²¹ ONS, Housing affordability in England and Wales, released 2025

- Looking at the efficiency of housing, by using Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs)²² shows in the year ending March 2024 (based on rating bands for a 10-year period), where **Band A is very efficient and Band G is very energy inefficient**, that just over 88% of Sandwell lodgements were in Band D (42.0%), Band C (32.7%) and Band E (13.6%).
- **Challenges remain with households in fuel poverty**²³, 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 Sandwell, 18.5% (24,435) of households were in fuel poverty, across all local areas in England, this was the 4th highest, moving from 5th place in 2022.

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



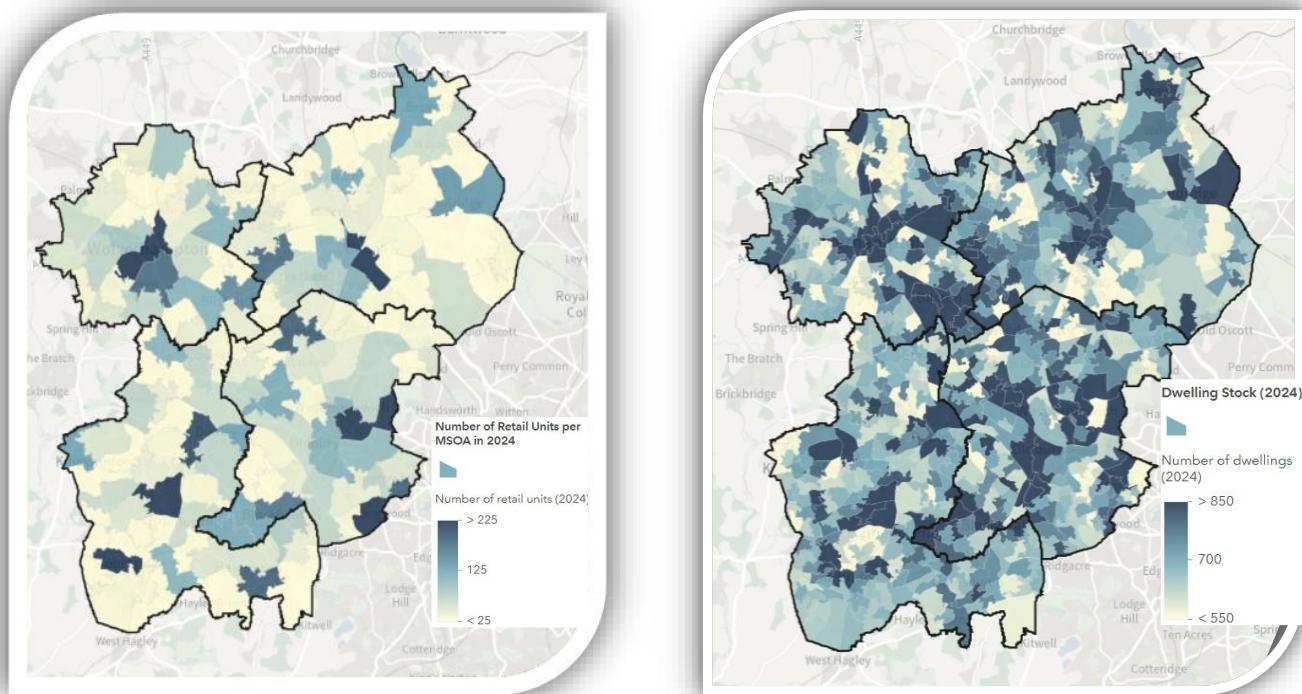
- Across Sandwell as of March 2025, there was a total of **10,930 non-domestic properties**²⁴. Reflecting national trends (-0.1%), there was a decrease of 0.2% (-20) in Sandwell when compared to March 2024.
- Analysing non-domestic properties by type, there was a total of **2,930 retail properties across Sandwell**. There has been **an annual decrease** of 0.7% (-20) in Sandwell, above the national decline of 0.3%. **Properties classed as 'other' also declined in Sandwell, by 20 to 2,460** (-0.8% compared to -0.4% nationally).
- **Whereas industrial properties increased by 10 to 4,540 properties** overall in Sandwell (+0.2% compared to +0.4% nationally). **Office properties also increased annually in Sandwell by 10 to a total of 1,000 properties** (+1.0% compared to +0.1% nationally).

²² 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

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

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

Retail Properties (Left) and Dwellings (Right):

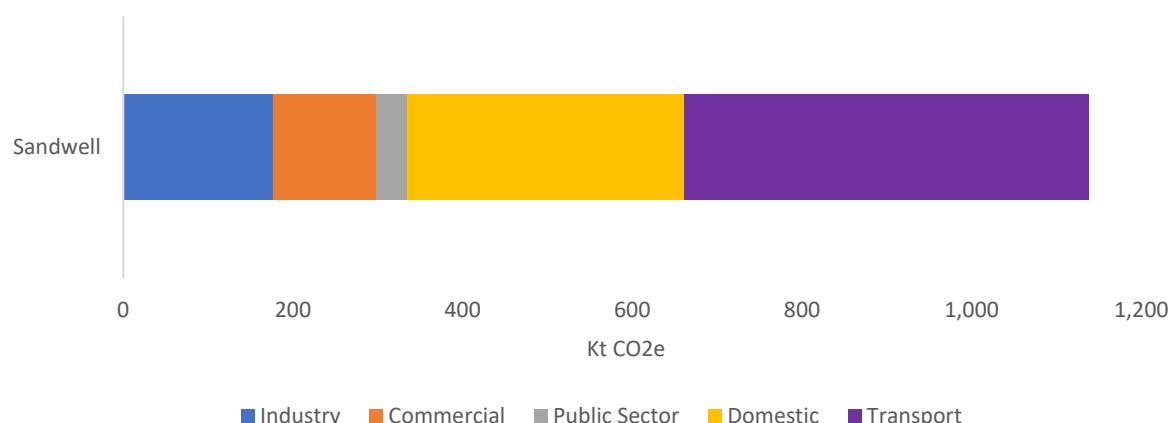


- As of July 2025, **88.9% of premises in Sandwell had full fibre connectivity²⁵, above the UK-wide figure of 78.2%.**

Carbon Dioxide Emissions

- In 2023, **total carbon dioxide emissions²⁶ were 1,142 kt CO₂e** in Sandwell. **This has decreased at a faster rate than nationally since 2022** (-6.5% compared to -5.7%). Longer term (since 2005), emissions have also decreased at a faster rate, by 49.0% for Sandwell 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 Sandwell's Carbon Dioxide Emissions, 2023:



²⁵ Ofcom, Connected Nations, released 2025

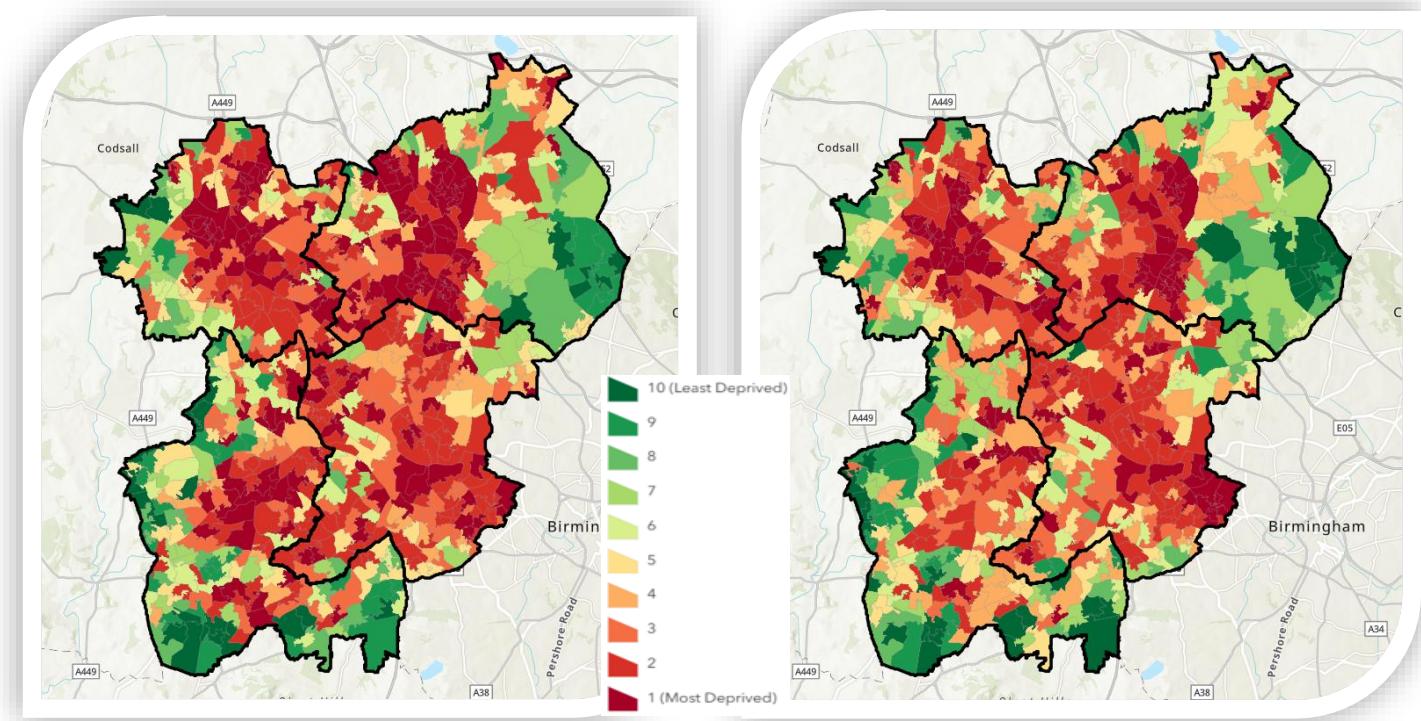
²⁶ Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, UK local authority & regional greenhouse gas emissions national statistics, released 2025

1.4. People

Population and Deprivation

- In 2024, Sandwell had a population of 353,860 residents²⁷, an annual increase of 1.2% (+4,026) which matched the national growth rate. Compared to England overall, Sandwell had higher proportions of children aged 0–15 (22.3% compared 18.4%, equating to 78,758 residents) and adults aged 16-64 (63.3% compared to 62.9%, equating to 223,861 residents). As a result, the population aged 65 years and over was lower at 14.5% (51,241 residents) than the national figure of 18.7%.
- As part of the IMD suite²⁸, 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 Sandwell, 54.4% of children live in income-deprived families, ranking the borough 13th highest in England for this measure. Geographically, 54.2% (103) of LSOAs in Sandwell fall within the 20% most deprived nationally. Of these, 18.4% (35) 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 Sandwell, 29.0% of residents aged 60 or over experience income deprivation, placing the borough 24th highest in England for this measure. Geographically, 47.9% (91) of Sandwell's LSOAs fall within the 20% most deprived nationally. Of these, 13.2% (25) are in the top 10% most deprived.

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



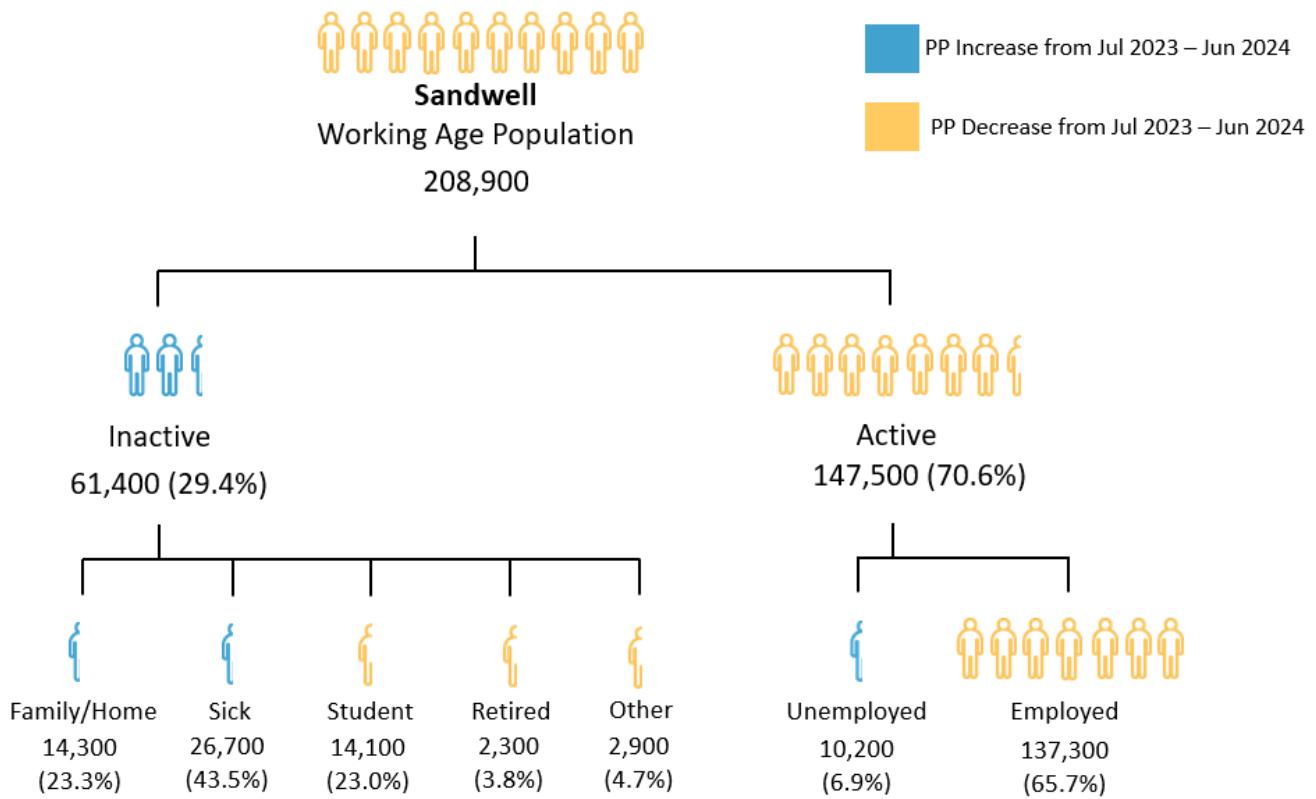
²⁷ ONS, mid-year population estimates, 2025

²⁸ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, English indices of deprivation 2025

Labour Market

- **Sandwell'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 rate²⁹ in Sandwell stands at 65.7% (compared to 75.8% nationally), requiring an **additional 29,820 people to enter work to meet the government target.**
- In addition, Sandwell's economic inactivity was nearly at 30%, **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 old that are Not in Employment, Education or Training³⁰ (**NEET**) in Sandwell remains below the national average at 2.6% compared to 5.6%.
- In Sandwell, the **employment rate of those classed as Equality Act (EA) core or work-limiting disabled³¹** was at 31.8% which was 47.4pp lower than those classed as not EA core or work-limiting disabled (79.2%). This was higher than the national average of 24.6pp (57.6% compared to 82.2% respectively).
- **Sandwell's female employment rate (64.2%) was 3.1pp lower than the male employment rate (67.3%).** However, this gap was **smaller than the national average of 6.5pp.**

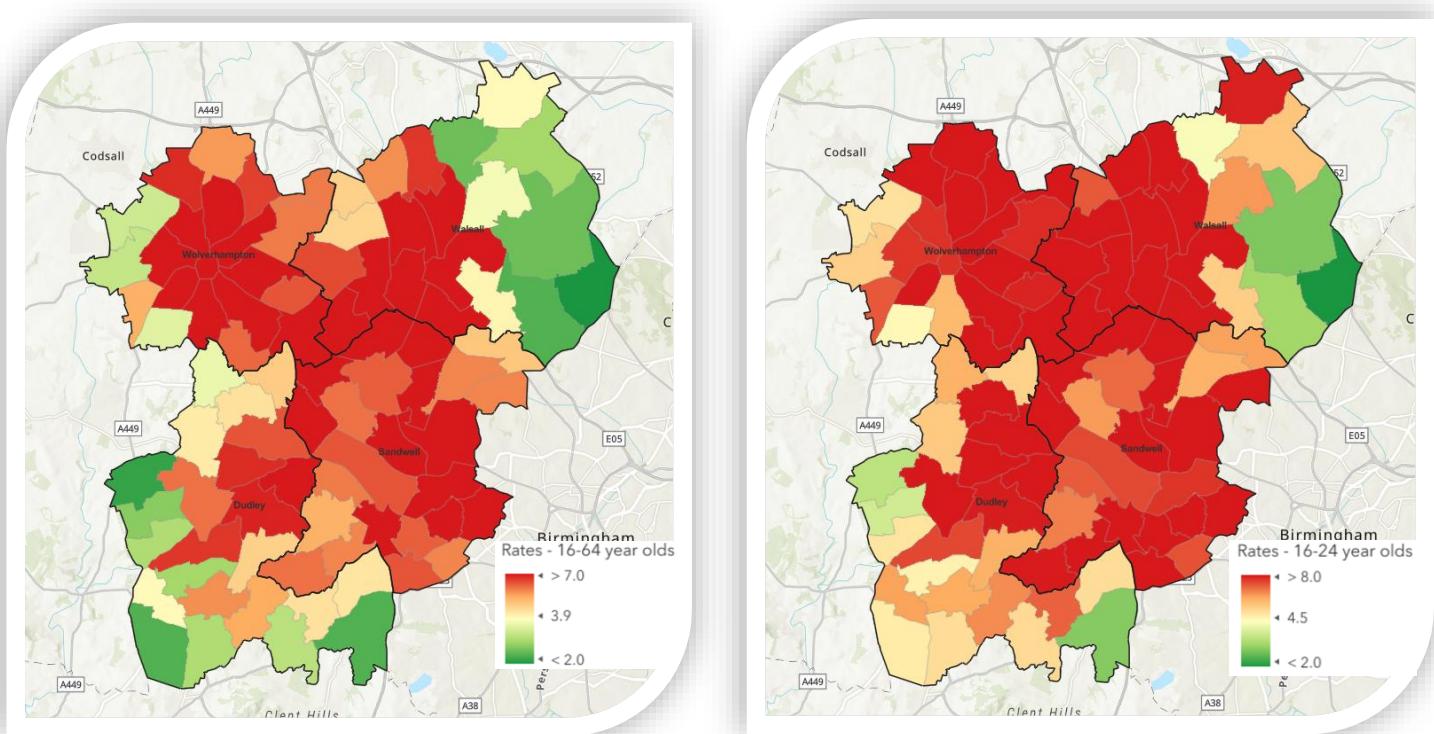
²⁹ ONS, Annual Population Survey, 2025.

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

³¹ ONS, Annual Population Survey, 2025.

- To this end, the [West Midlands Works](#) framework **offers a critical bridge**, channelling national ambitions into regional action. **Prioritising Sandwell'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 claimant³² numbers remain heightened across Sandwell.** There are approximately 15,100 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 7.8% compared to 4.4% nationally.** Across all local authorities, Sandwell came in at 4th highest.

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



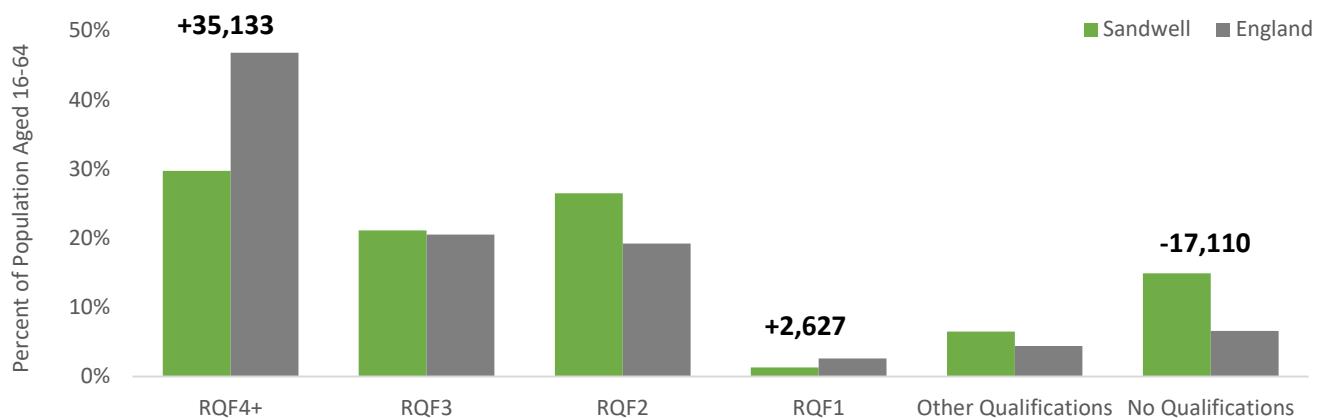
Skills

- **29.7% (61,400) of Sandwell residents had RQF4+ qualifications³³** compared to 46.8% nationally in 2024. This was an annual decrease of 4.5% (-2,900), in contrast to an increase of 0.5% nationally. **For Sandwell to reach the national level it requires 35,133 residents to gain a qualification at Level 4 and above.**
- At the other end of the scale, **14.9% (30,700) of Sandwell's working age population had no formal qualifications**, above the national average of 6.6% in 2024. This was an annual increase of 26.3% (+6,400) for Sandwell compared to an increase of 6.8% nationally. **For Sandwell to reach the national level it requires 17,110 residents to gain a qualification.**

³² ONS/ Department for Work and Pensions, claimant count, released 2024

³³ ONS, Annual Population Survey, released 2025

Qualification Profile, 2024:



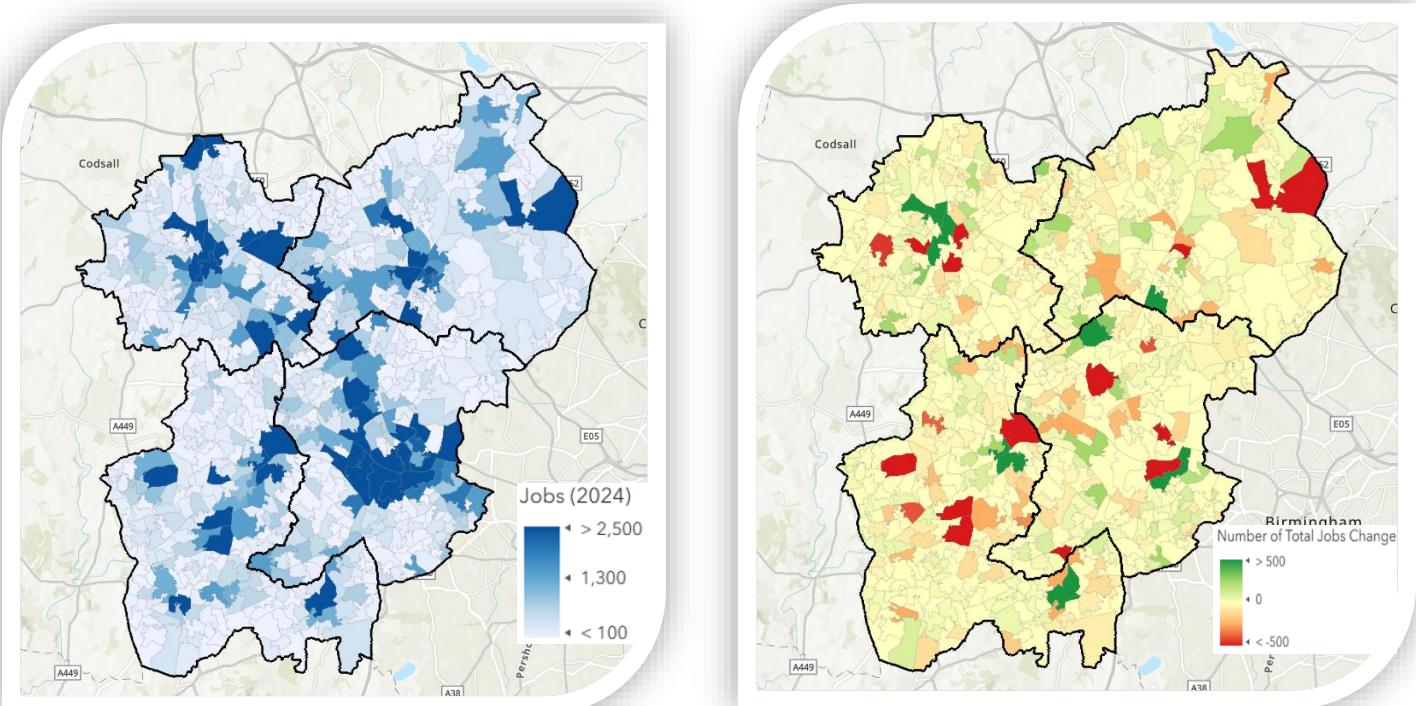
Apprenticeship Starts

- In the 2024/25 academic year, there were **2,050 apprenticeship starts³⁴** in Sandwell. When compared to 2023/24, this was **broadly unchanged, whereas there was an overall national increase (+0.7%).**

Workforce Jobs

- After three consecutive years of growth in job³⁵ numbers, **the latest data shows an annual decrease of 1.6% between 2023 and 2024 with jobs now totalling 125,000.** Nationally there was an annual increase of 0.6%.

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



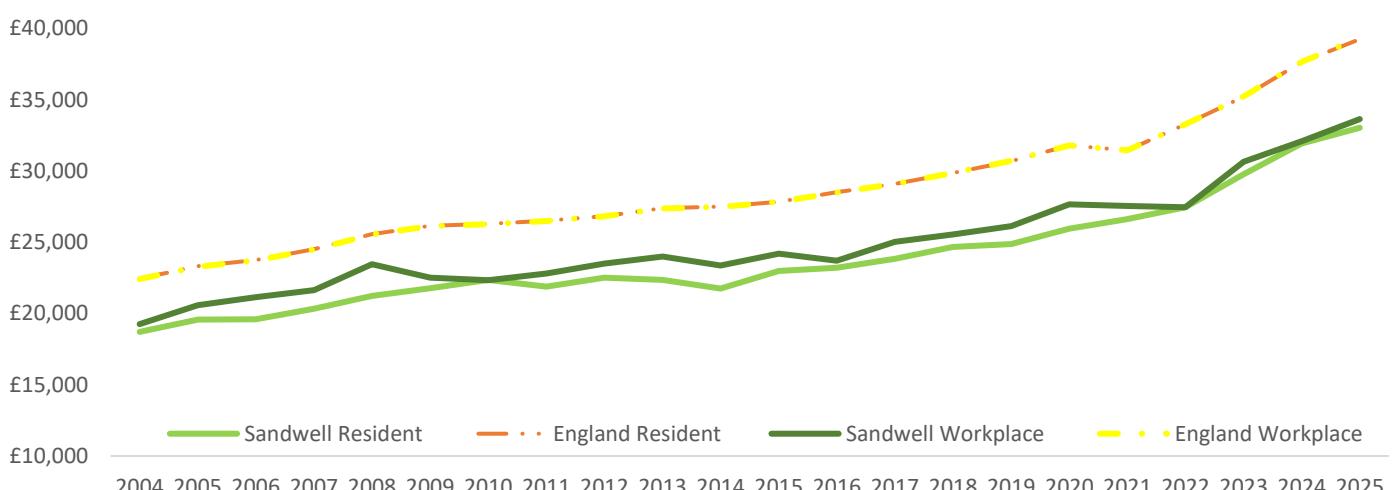
³⁴ Department for Education, apprenticeships, 2025

³⁵ ONS, Business Registers and Employment Survey, 2025

Earnings

- In 2025, full-time annual resident earnings³⁶ for Sandwell reached £33,029, an annual increase of 3.5% (+£1,109) compared to an increase of 4.3% nationally. However, earnings were approximately 84.2% of the England average (£39,243 - a shortfall of £6,214).
- Whereas in 2025, full-time annual workplace earnings for Sandwell were higher at £33,636, (85.6% of the England average of £39,289). This was an annual increase of 4.9% (+£1,560), which was above the national increase of 4.4%. Notably for Sandwell, workplace data shows that females earn more than males (-8.7%).

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



- Low pay³⁷ analysis shows that 19.0% of employee jobs in Sandwell 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 work³⁸ in 2022 is estimated to be between £240 and £330 billion in the UK. Where data is available, the cost to Sandwell has been calculated at £1.8 billion.

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

Cost element	Description	Cost to the UK	Cost to Sandwell
Economic inactivity	Lost output due to working-age ill-health which prevents work	£127bn-£188bn	£1bn
Sickness absence	Lost output due to sickness absence	£38bn-£56bn	£182m
Informal care giving	Lost output due to working age carers caring for working age sick	£37bn	£225m
NHS cost	The additional costs to the NHS when someone with a health problem is economically inactive rather than economically active	£2bn	£1.8m
Benefits payments	Cost of social security benefits related to health conditions that prevent people from working	£36bn-£47bn	£331m
Total	Total expenditure in 2022	£240bn-£330bn	£1.8bn
of which: Exchequer flowbacks	Tax and National Insurance foregone due to health-related worklessness	£57bn	£380m

³⁶ ONS, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, released 2024

³⁷ 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.

³⁸ 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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