

WALSALL ECONOMIC DASHBOARD – FEBRUARY 2026

Indicator <sup>1</sup>	Pre-Pandemic (Context) <sup>2</sup>	January 2025	February 2025	March 2025	April 2025	May 2025	June 2025	July 2025	August 2025	September 2025	October 2025	November 2025	December 2025	January 2026	Trend	National/ Regional or LA Comparator <sup>3</sup>	Commentary/ Context
Regional Business Activity Index	51.2 (Feb 2020)	47.2	48.7	49.6	47.5	50.4	50.9	50.6	51.1	48.1	50.5	51.4	52.9	54.4		WM: 2 <sup>nd</sup> Highest UK: 53.7 London: 57.7 (1 <sup>st</sup> ) Yorkshire & Humber: 49.3 (12 <sup>th</sup> )	The West Midlands Business Activity Index increased from 52.9 in December 2025 to 54.4 in January 2026, the fastest rise in output in the region for 21 months. Firms attributed the rise in activity to ongoing improvements in demand conditions and new order volumes.
Regional Future Business Activity Index	72.3 (Feb 2020)	69.8	74.3	68.5	67.3	75.2	70.7	69.6	74.2	71.4	72.1	69.5	74.9	72.2		WM: 5 <sup>th</sup> Highest London: 76.6 (1 <sup>st</sup> ) Northern Ireland: 59.2 (12 <sup>th</sup> )	The West Midlands Future Business Activity Index decreased from 74.9 in December 2025 to 72.2 in January 2026, with sentiment among West Midlands firms higher than across the UK as a whole. Expectations of new client wins and improving customer confidence, alongside investment and new product releases, underpinned optimistic forecasts.
Employment Rate (Aged 16-64) <sup>4</sup>	70.6% Full Year (Jan-Dec) 2019 71.4% Apr 2019 – Mar 2020			72.9% Apr 2024 – Mar 2025			71.8% Jul 2024 – Jun 2025			68.6% Oct 2024 – Sep 2025						Walsall: 26 <sup>th</sup> Lowest LA /348 UK: 75.5% Shetland Islands: 90.1% (1 <sup>st</sup> ) Kensington & Chelsea: 61.5% (348 <sup>th</sup> )	Since the year ending September 2024, the employment rate for Walsall decreased by 6.6 percentage points (pp) to 68.6% in the year ending September 2025. The UK-wide employment rate increased by 0.2pp to 75.5%.
Youth Claimants (Aged 16-24)	1,940 (6.5% of 16 – 24 years old pop.) (Mar 2020)	2,240 (7.0% of 16 – 24 years old pop.)	2,285 (7.2% of 16 – 24 years old pop.)	2,320 (7.3% of 16 – 24 years old pop.)	2,290 (7.2% of 16 – 24 years old pop.)	2,220 (7.0% of 16 – 24 years old pop.)	2,260 (7.1% of 16 – 24 years old pop.)	2,320 (7.3% of 16 – 24 years old pop.)	2,375 (7.5% of 16 – 24 years old pop.)	2,330 (7.3% of 16 – 24 years old pop.)	2,355 (7.4% of 16 – 24 years old pop.)	2,435 (7.6% of 16 – 24 years old pop.)	2,395 (7.5% of 16 – 24 years old pop.)	2,450 (7.7% of 16 – 24 years old pop.)		Walsall: Joint 6 <sup>th</sup> Highest LA (with Wolverhampton and Hastings)/ 361 UK: 4.4% of Pop. aged 16-24 years old Birmingham: 8.7% (1 <sup>st</sup> ) Isles of Scilly: 0% (361 <sup>st</sup> )	Walsall had 2,450 youth claimants in January 2026, an increase of 55 (+2.3%, UK +1.1%) compared to the previous month. When compared to January 2025, the number of youth claimants increased by 210 (+9.4%, UK +9.8%).

<sup>1</sup> Indicators that are in hatched marked boxes represent regional level analysis. The dashboard sources are as followed: NatWest, Regional Tracker report (UK), released February 2026 (please note, the index is seasonally adjusted and measures the month-on-month change in the combined output of the region’s manufacturing and service sectors), Office for National Statistics (ONS)/Annual Population Survey (APS), released January 2026, ONS/Department for Work and Pensions, Claimant count, released February 2026 (provisional), Department for Education, released November 2025 / January 2026, Adzuna Intelligence accessed February 2026.  
<sup>2</sup> A pre-pandemic column has been included which will not be RAG rated as this is to show where we were before the impacts of Covid-19 were seen. However, across the dashboard RAG rating is based on change from each month (and not compared to March 2020), green shading illustrates indicators which have moved in a positive direction compared to the UK or England average. The red shading indicates the reverse and amber indicates a change in the right direction but less than the UK or national average (excluding the Business Activity Index and Future Business Activity Index indicators where the threshold mark is 50 for growth – figures below 50 are red, amber if it has decreased from the previous but remains above 50 or is at 50, green if improved from previous month).  
<sup>3</sup> The peer group selected varies by indicator – regional is based on all the regions in the UK – showing a range from highest to lowest to understand how the West Midlands compares and then where available, Walsall has been used and compared to all available local authorities.  
<sup>4</sup> Data is not comparable across the table as they are rolling quarterly years.

Indicator <sup>1</sup>	Pre-Pandemic (Context) <sup>2</sup>	January 2025	February 2025	March 2025	April 2025	May 2025	June 2025	July 2025	August 2025	September 2025	October 2025	November 2025	December 2025	January 2026	Trend	National/ Regional or LA Comparator <sup>3</sup>	Commentary/ Context
Claimants (Aged 16-64)	8,605 (5.0% of pop. aged 16-64) (Mar 2020)	10,750 (5.9% of pop. aged 16-64)	11,090 (6.1% of pop. aged 16-64)	10,985 (6.1% of pop. aged 16-64)	10,790 (5.9% of pop. aged 16-64)	10,670 (5.9% of pop. aged 16-64)	10,765 (5.9% of pop. aged 16-64)	10,635 (5.9% of pop. aged 16-64)	10,550 (5.8% of pop. aged 16-64)	10,340 (5.7% of pop. aged 16-64)	10,305 (5.7% of pop. aged 16-64)	10,260 (5.7% of pop. aged 16-64)	10,070 (5.5% of pop. aged 16-64)	10,235 (5.6% of pop. aged 16-64)		Walsall: Joint 25 <sup>th</sup> Highest LA (with Burnley, Pendle Greenwich and Southwark) /361  UK: 3.8% of Pop. Aged 16-64  Birmingham: 9.9% (1 <sup>st</sup> ) City of London: 1.1% (361 <sup>st</sup> )	Walsall had 10,235 claimants in January 2026, an increase of 165 (+1.6%, UK +2.5%) claimants from the previous month. Compared to January 2025, claimants in Walsall decreased by 515 (-4.8%, UK -1.8%).
Apprenticeship Starts <sup>5</sup>	2,310 (Q4 Full Year 2018/19)	1,070 (Q2 Aug-Jan 2024/25)			1,470 (Q3 Aug-Apr 2024/25)			1,850 (Full Year 2024/25)					690 (Q1 Aug-Oct 2025/26)			Walsall: 42 <sup>nd</sup> Highest LA / 294  Birmingham: 6,060 (1 <sup>st</sup> ) Isles of Scilly: 10 (294 <sup>th</sup> ) (Full year)	In the 2024/25 academic year there were 1,850 apprenticeship starts in Walsall, an increase of 4.5% (+80) since 2023/24. Whereas over this period, England-wide there was an increase of 4.1%.
Adzuna Apprenticeship Postings	10 (Mar 2020)	28	12	10	7	11	17	15	10	6	10	6	7	12		-	In Walsall, there were 12 apprenticeship postings on Adzuna in January 2026. This increased by 5 from the previous month. When compared to January 2025, apprenticeship postings decreased by 16.
Adzuna Unique Job Postings	2,159 (Mar 2020)	2,813	2,594	2,631	2,569	2,399	2,575	3,105	2,493	2,514	3,092	2,247	1,806	1,844		Latest number of postings is average compared to the average for all local authority districts	In Walsall, there were 1,844 unique active job postings on Adzuna in January 2026. This increased by 38 postings since the previous month. When compared to January 2025, job postings on Adzuna decreased by 969.  In January 2026, Interest Quotient is average at 1.0.

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