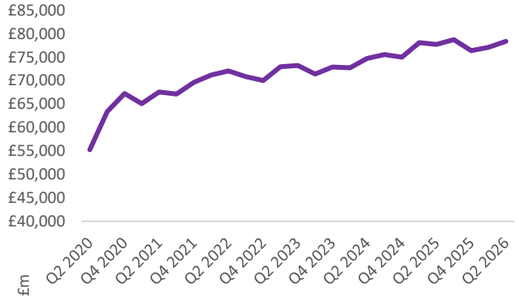
WMCA ECONOMIC DASHBOARD – SEPTEMBER 2026

National

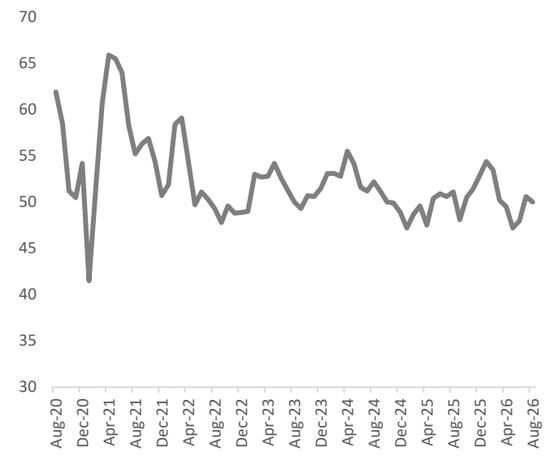
Six Weekly Business Dashboard

Theme	Indicator	June 2025	July 2025	August 2025	September 2025	October 2025	November 2025	December 2025	January 2026	February 2026	March 2026	April 2026	May 2026	June 2026	Trend	Relative to Peer Group[1]	Commentary
Business	National Business Investment[2] (update due Sep 2026)	£77.8bn (Q2)			£78.7bn (Q3)			£76.4bn (Q4)			£77.1bn (Q1)			£78.4bn (Q2)			Provisional estimates show that UK business investment was at £78.4bn in Q2 2026. It has increased by 1.7% since Q1 2026. UK business investment was 0.8% above the level seen in Q2 2025.

2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
£71.2bn Q1	£73.0bn Q1	£72.8bn Q1	£78.2bn Q1	£77.1bn Q1
£72.1bn Q2	£73.2bn Q2	£74.8bn Q2	£77.8bn Q2	£78.4bn Q2
£70.9bn Q3	£71.4bn Q3	£75.6bn Q3	£78.7bn Q3	
£70.1bn Q4	£73.0bn Q4	£75.0bn Q4	£76.4bn Q4	

Regional

Monthly / Quarterly Business Dashboard

Theme	Indicator	August 2025	September 2025	October 2025	November 2025	December 2025	January 2026	February 2026	March 2026	April 2026	May 2026	June 2026	July 2026	August 2026	Trend	Relative to Peer Group	Commentary
Business	Regional Business Activity Index[3] (monthly update)	51.1	48.1	50.5	51.4	52.9	54.4	53.5	50.2	49.5	47.2	48.0	50.6	50.0		WM: 5th Lowest Region UK: 52.5 Northern Ireland: 55.5 (1st) Scotland: 48.9 (12th)	The West Midlands Business Activity Index decreased from 50.6 in July 2026 to 50.0 in August 2026. The latest data shows output was unchanged in the West Midlands. The UK Business Activity Index increased from 49.3 in July 2026 to 52.5 in August 2026.

Aug 2022	Aug 2023	Aug 2024	Aug 2025	Aug 2026
49.3	50.0	52.2	51.1	50.0

The Dashboard has been updated to reflect the WMCA 7 Met. geography where available.

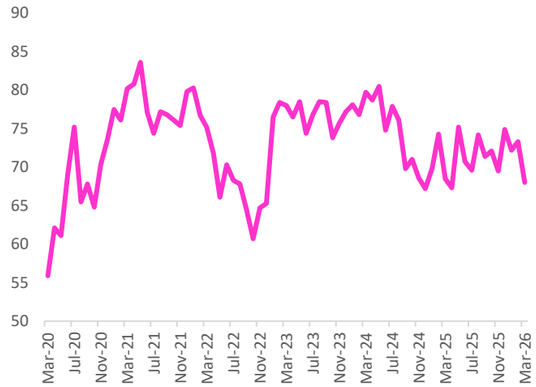
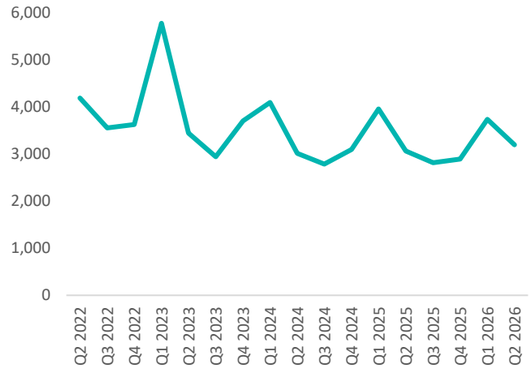
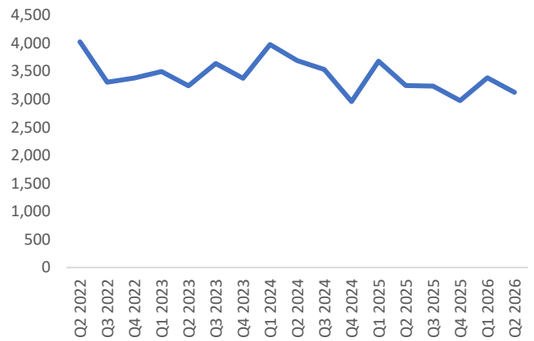
[1] Comparisons vary depending on geography; Birmingham has been compared to Bristol, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester and Newcastle. Due to data availability, the WM 7 Met. has been either compared to other combined authorities (following what is available Greater London Authority is not always included), (traditional combined authorities are Greater Manchester CA (GMCA), Sheffield City Region, West Yorkshire CA, Liverpool City Region CA, Tees Valley CA, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough CA, West of England CA, North East CA and North of Tyne CA, however for claimants/ ONS labour market activity new CAs are now available meaning the 15 will be - GMCA, South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire, Devon & Torbay, Lancaster, Greater Lincolnshire, Hull & East Yorkshire, Liverpool City Region, Tees Valley, WMCA, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough, West of England, York & North Yorkshire, East Midlands and the North East or NUTS 2 / ITL 2 geography. The West Midlands region has been compared to other regions in the UK. No comparators have been included for UK-wide. The GVA indicator now includes 15 agreed Combined Authorities.

[2] Office for National Statistics (ONS), Business investment in the UK: April to June 2026 provisional results – released August 2026.

[3] NatWest, UK regional growth tracker news release– released September 2026

WMCA ECONOMIC DASHBOARD – SEPTEMBER 2026

The Economic Intelligence Unit

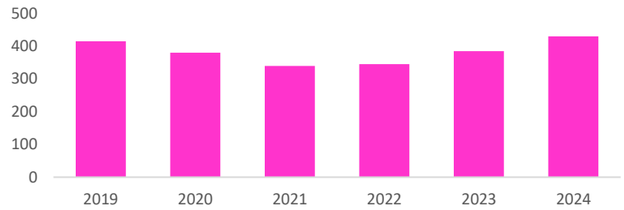
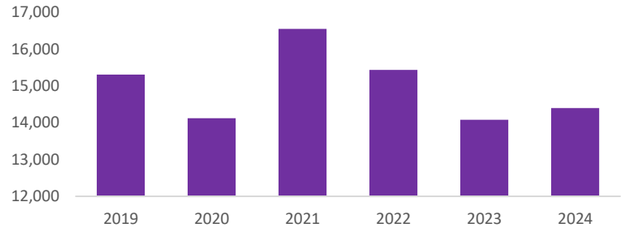
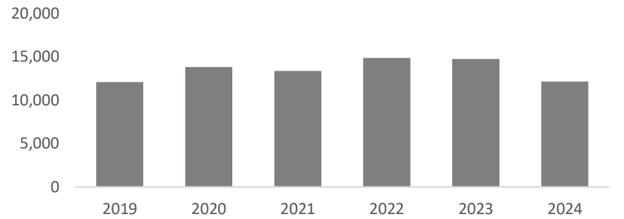
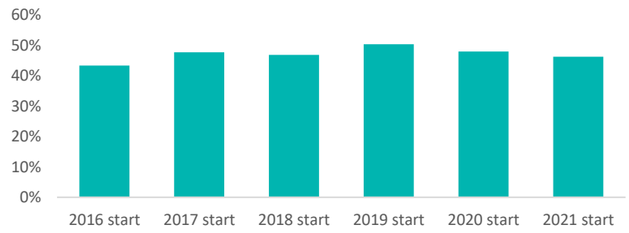
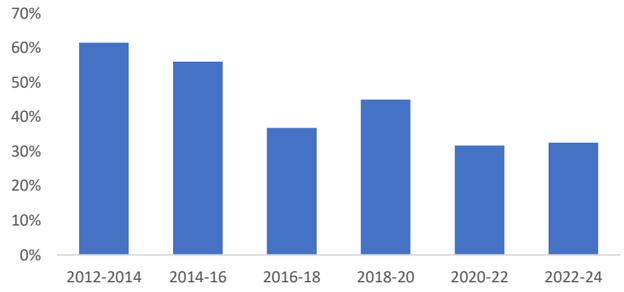
Theme	Indicator	August 2025	September 2025	October 2025	November 2025	December 2025	January 2026	February 2026	March 2026	April 2026	May 2026	June 2026	July 2026	August 2026	Trend	Relative to Peer Group	Commentary
Business	Regional Future Business Activity Index[4] (monthly update)	74.2	71.4	72.1	69.5	74.9	72.2	73.3	68.0	*Not Currently Available*	*Not Currently Available*	*Not Currently Available*	*Not Currently Available*	*Not Currently Available*	 Mar 2022: 75.2; Mar 2023: 78.0; Mar 2024: 79.7; Mar 2025: 68.5; Mar 2026: 68.0	WM: 2nd Highest Region London: 68.5 (1st) Northern Ireland: 55.7 (12th)	The West Midlands Future Business Activity Index decreased from 73.3 in February 2026 to 68.0 in March 2026. Expectations to launch new products and explore new markets, as well investment in operations and increasing marketing budgets supported business confidence in the region.
	WMCA (7 Met.) Enterprise Deaths[5] (quarterly – update due Oct 2026)		2,815 (Q3)			2,890 (Q4)			3,735 (Q1)			3,195 (Q2)			 Q2 2022: 4,190; Q2 2023: 3,555; Q2 2024: 3,015; Q2 2025: 3,060; Q2 2026: 3,195	WMCA: 2nd Highest CA GMCA: 3,310 (1st) Hull & East Yorkshire: 530 (15th)	The number of business deaths in the WMCA area in Q2 2026 was 3,195. This figure was 4.4% (+135) higher than the number of business deaths in Q2 2025, exceeding the UK increase of 2.0% Quarter on quarter analysis (between Q1 2026 and Q2 2026) shows a decrease in business deaths of 14.5% (-540) for the WMCA area, the UK decreased by 8.1%.
	WMCA (7 Met.) Enterprise Births[6] (quarterly – update due Oct 2026)		3,235 (Q3)			2,975 (Q4)			3,385 (Q1)			3,125 (Q2)			 Q2 2022: 4,025; Q2 2023: 3,240; Q2 2024: 3,690; Q2 2025: 3,245; Q2 2026: 3,125	WMCA: 2nd Highest CA GMCA: 3,660 (1st) Hull & East Yorkshire: 555 (15th)	The number of business births in the WMCA area in Q2 2026 was 3,125. This figure was 3.7% (-120) lower than the number of business births in Q2 2025. The UK increased by 2.2% over this period. Quarter on quarter analysis (between Q1 2026 and Q2 2026) shows a decrease of 7.7% (-260) for the WMCA area, while the UK increased by 0.9%.

[4] NatWest, UK regional growth tracker report – released April 2026
[5] ONS, Business demography, quarterly experimental statistics, low-level geographic breakdown, UK – released July 2026.
[6] ONS, Business demography, quarterly experimental statistics, low-level geographic breakdown, UK – released July 2026.

WMCA ECONOMIC DASHBOARD – SEPTEMBER 2026

The Economic Intelligence Unit

Annual Business Dashboard

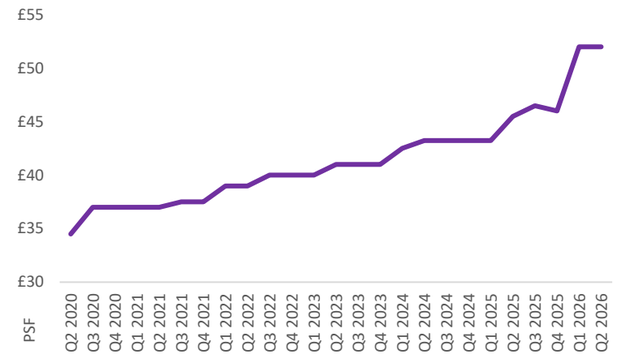
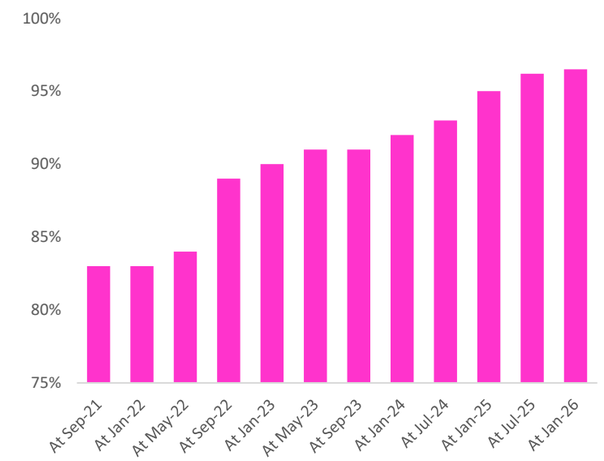
Theme	Indicator	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Trend	Relative to Peer Group	Commentary
Business	WMCA (7 Met.) High Growth Enterprises[7] (annual – update due Nov 2026)	415	380	340	345	385	430		WMCA: 3rd Highest CA GMCA: 580 (1st) Tees Valley: 90 (15th)	The latest available data for the WMCA area shows that the number of high growth enterprises has increased for the third consecutive year. There was a total of 430 high growth enterprises in the WMCA area in 2024, an increase of 11.7% (+45) since 2023, the UK increased by 4.2%.
	WMCA (7 Met.) Enterprise Births[8] (annual – update due Nov 2026)	15,310	14,125	16,550	15,435	14,080	14,395		WMCA: 2nd Highest CA GMCA: 15,150 (1st) Hull & East Yorkshire: 2,475 (15th)	Enterprise births in the WMCA area increased by 2.2% (+315) since 2023 to 14,395 in 2024. Over this period, the UK increased by 0.4%. In 2024, there were 2,255 more enterprise births than deaths.
	WMCA (7 Met.) Enterprise Deaths[9] (annual – update due Nov 2026)	12,080	13,830	13,375	14,865	14,760	12,140		WMCA: 2nd Highest CA GMCA: 12,735 (1st) Hull & East Yorkshire 2,035 (15th)	Enterprise deaths in the WMCA area decreased by 17.8% (-2,620) since 2023 to 12,140 in 2024. Over this period, the UK decreased by 9.5%. In 2024, there were 2,255 more enterprise births than deaths.
	WMCA (7 Met.) 3 Year Enterprise Survival Rates[10] (annual – update due Nov 2026)	43.4% (2016 birth)	47.7% (2017 birth)	46.9% (2018 birth)	50.4% (2019 birth)	48.0% (2020 birth)	46.3% (2021 birth)		WMCA: Lowest CA UK: 53.5% York and North Yorkshire: 60.3% (1st) Liverpool City Region: 47.6% (14th)	Across 1-to-5-year enterprise survival rates, the WMCA performs worse than nationally. Of the 16,550 enterprise births in 2021 in the WMCA area, 46.3% (7,665) were still active after 3 years compared to 53.5% for the UK.
	WM 7 Met. Innovation Active Businesses[11] (Biennial – update due Jun 2028)		45.0% (2018-20)		31.7% (2020-22)		32.5% (2022-24)		WM 7 Met.: 11th Lowest/ 45 UK: 34.0% Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire: 47.9% (1st) Southern Scotland: 25.1% (45th)	In 2022-24, 32.5% of businesses in the WM 7 Met. area was innovation active. This is an increase compared to 31.7% in 2020-22. This bucked the national and regional trend as 34.0% of UK businesses were innovation active in 2022-24, a decrease from 36.3% in 2020-22 and for the West Midlands region, there were 33.5% of innovation active businesses, down from 35.4% in 2020-22.

[7] ONS, Business Demography (provisional for 2022), UK 2024 – released November 2025
[8] ONS, Business Demography (provisional for 2022), UK 2024 – released November 2025
[9] ONS, Business Demography (provisional for 2022), UK 2024 – released November 2025
[10] ONS, Business Demography (provisional for 2022), UK 2024 – released November 2025
[11] Department for Business and Trade, UK Innovation Survey 2025 – released May 2026

WMCA ECONOMIC DASHBOARD – SEPTEMBER 2026

The Economic Intelligence Unit

Quarterly Place Dashboard

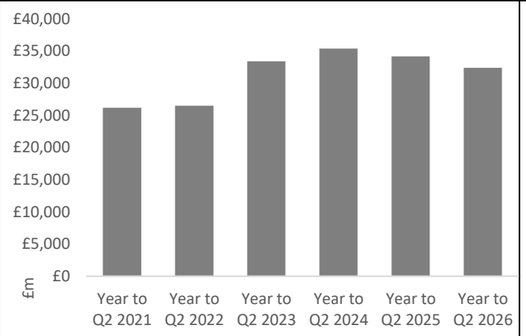
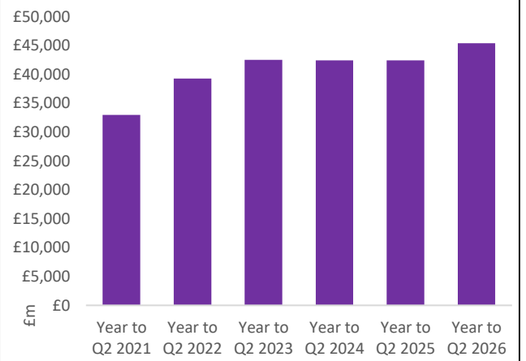
Theme	Indicator	June 2025	July 2025	August 2025	September 2025	October 2025	November 2025	December 2025	January 2026	February 2026	March 2026	April 2026	May 2026	June 2026	Trend	Relative to Peer Group	Commentary
Place	Birmingham City Centre Rent[12] (Quarterly – update due Nov 2026)	£45.50 Per Sq ft (Q2)			£46.50 Per Sq ft (Q3)			£46.00 Per Sq ft (Q4)			£52.00 Per Sq ft (Q1)			£52.00 Per Sq ft (Q2)	 2022: £39.00 Q1, £39.00 Q2, £40.00 Q3, £40.00 Q4 2023: £40.00 Q1, £41.00 Q2, £41.00 Q3, £41.00 Q4 2024: £42.50 Q1, £43.25 Q2, £43.25 Q3, £43.25 Q4 2025: £43.25 Q1, £45.50 Q2, £46.50 Q3, £46.00 Q4 2026: £52.00 Q1, £52.00 Q2	Birmingham: Joint Highest (with Bristol) / 9 Manchester: £48.00 (3rd) Liverpool: £29.50 (9th)	Birmingham's prime rent remained at £52.00 psf on the quarter. Although, there was an annual increase of 14%. Avison Young report that restrained levels of development activity will continue to place upward pressure on prime rents as 263,000 sq. ft due to be delivered this year in the city centre, below the 10-year average of 330,000 sq. ft of deliveries seen per annum.
	WMCA (7 Met.) Gigabit broadband Connectivity[13] (bi-annual – update due Autumn 2026)			96.2% premises (As of Jul 2025)					96.5% premises (As of Jan 2026)						 	WMCA: Highest 2nd CA UK: 88.9% Hull & East Yorkshire: 97.0% (1st) Devon & Torbay: 72.5% (15th)	As of January 2026, 96.5% of premises in the WMCA area had gigabit broadband availability – remained significantly above the UK-wide figure of 88.9%.

[12] Avison Young, The Big Nine – created August 2026.
[13] Ofcom, connected nations – released May 2026.

WMCA ECONOMIC DASHBOARD – SEPTEMBER 2026

Quarterly Economy Dashboard

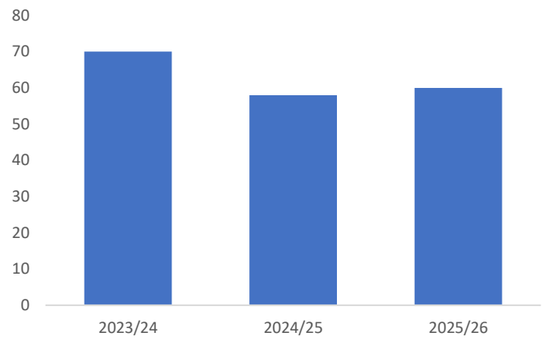
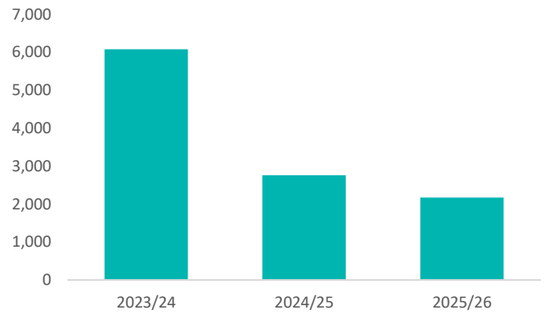
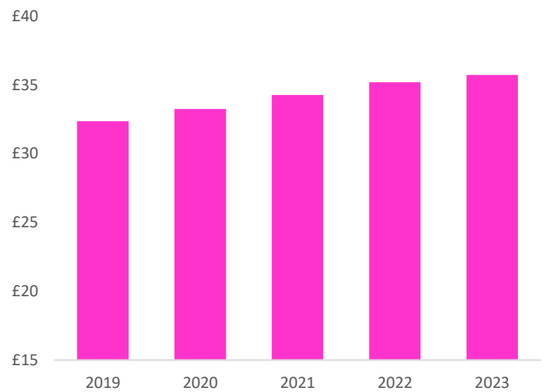
Regional

Theme	Indicator	June 2025	July 2025	August 2025	September 2025	October 2025	November 2025	December 2025	January 2026	February 2026	March 2026	April 2026	May 2026	June 2026	Trend	Relative to Peer Group	Commentary
Economy	Regional Exports in Goods[14] (quarterly – update due Dec 2026)	£34.2bn (Year to Q2 2025)			£33.2bn (Year to Q3 2025)			£31.5bn (Full Year 2025)			£31.6bn (Year to Q1 2026)			£32.4bn (Year to Q2 2026)		WM – 3rd Highest Region (8.8%) London: 11.3% (1st) Northern Ireland: 3.0% (12th)	In the year ending Q2 2026, the West Midlands region exported £32.4bn worth of goods, a decrease of £1.8bn (-5.3%, UK: +1.6%) compared to the previous annual period. The West Midlands had a trade deficit of £13.0bn.
	Regional Imports in Goods[15] (quarterly – update due Dec 2026)	£42.4bn (Year to Q2 2025)			£42.6bn (Year to Q3 2025)			£42.7bn (Full Year 2025)			£43.6bn (Year to Q1 2026)			£45.4bn (Year to Q2 2026)		WM – 5th Highest Region (7.2%) South East: 18.2% (1st) Northern Ireland: 1.7% (12th)	Goods imports to the West Midlands region were worth £45.4bn in the year ending Q2 2026, an annual increase of £3.0bn (+7.0%, UK: +6.2%).

[14] HMRC, UK regional trade in goods statistics – released September 2026. Data is not comparable across the dashboard. Please note, annual change figures in the commentary section may not sum due to rounding.
[15] HMRC, UK regional trade in goods statistics – released September 2026. Data is not comparable across the dashboard. Please note, annual change figures in the commentary section may not sum due to rounding.

WMCA ECONOMIC DASHBOARD – SEPTEMBER 2026

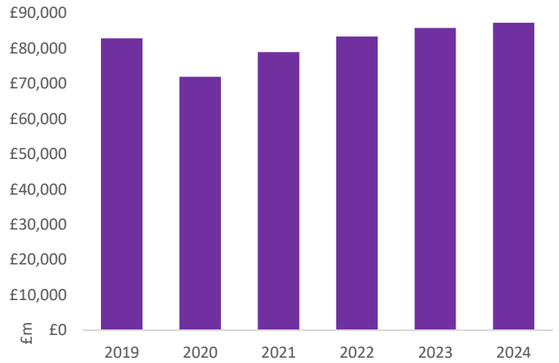
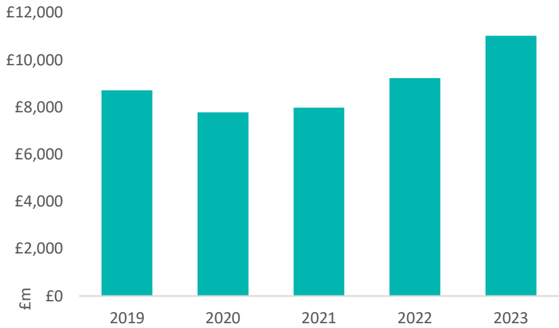
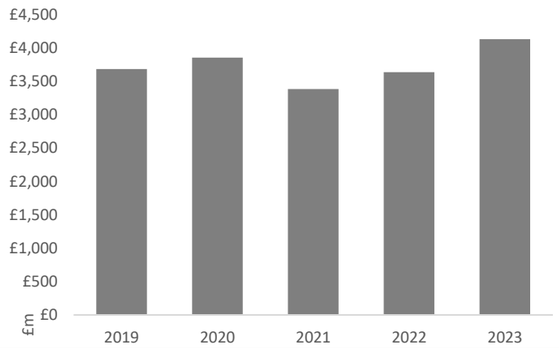
Annual Economy Dashboard

Theme	Indicator	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	Trend	Relative to Peer Group	Commentary
Economy	WMCA FDI Projects[16] (annual – update due Jun 2027)							70	58	60		WM 7 Met.: 4th Highest ITL 2 / 20 Inner London - West: 211 (1st) Cheshire and Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire: 11 (Joint 20th)	For the West Midlands 7 Met. Area, the number of single site FDI projects increased from 58 in 2024/25 to 60 in 2025/26 (+3.4%). The UK had an overall decrease of 25.8% to 1,020.
	WMCA FDI New Jobs[17] (annual – update due Jun 2027)							6,082	2,758	2,174		WM 7 Met.: 5th Highest ITL 2 / 20 Inner London - West: 9,673 (1st) Mid & South West Wales: 171 (20th)	The number of new jobs created decreased from 2,758 in 2024/25 to 2,174 in 2025/26 (-21.2%) in the West Midlands 7 Met. Area. The UK experienced an annual decrease of 0.3% (from 69,355 in 2024/25 to 69,166 in 2025/26).
	WMCA (7 Met.) Smoothed GVA per Hour[18] (Annual – update due Nov 2026)	£31.66	£32.36	£33.25	£34.27	£35.18	£35.72					WMCA: 4th Lowest CA / 10 UK: £41.87 West of England: £42.01 (1st) South Yorkshire: £33.77 (14th)	In 2023, GVA per hour in the WMCA area was £35.72. Since 2022, the WMCA area increased by 1.5% (+£0.54) and the UK increased by 2.2%. When compared to 2018, GVA per hour in the WMCA area increased by 12.8% (+£4.06) while the UK increased by 18.3%. In 2023, UK GVA per hour was £41.87 meaning the WMCA area had a shortfall of £6.15.

[16] Department for Business and Trade (DBT), inward investment results – released June 2026. Data only available for 20 ITL2 areas.
[17] DBT, inward investment results – released June 2026. Data only available for 20 ITL2 areas.
[18] ONS, regional and subregional labour productivity – released June 2025. In this publication ONS covered fourteen Combined Authorities: Greater Manchester, South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire, Liverpool City Region, Tees Valley, West Midlands, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough, West of England, York & North Yorkshire, East Midlands, North East, Hull & East Yorkshire, Greater Lincolnshire and Lancashire.

WMCA ECONOMIC DASHBOARD – SEPTEMBER 2026

The Economic Intelligence Unit

Theme	Indicator	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	Trend	Relative to Peer Group	Commentary
	WMCA (7 Met.) Total GVA – Chained Volume Measures in 2023 Money Value[19] (Annual – update due TBC 2027)	£84.3bn	£82.9bn	£72.0bn	£79.0bn	£83.4bn	£85.8bn	£87.3bn				WMCA: 2nd Highest CA / 14 GMCA: £101.1bn (1st) Tees Valley: £16.6bn (14th)	The WMCA area total GVA increased from £85.8bn in 2023 to £87.3bn in 2024. This equated to a 1.7% (+£1.5bn) annual increase which was above the England growth rate of 1.3%.
Economy	WMCA (7 Met.) Exports in Services[20] (Annual – update Nov 2026)	£8.3bn	£8.7bn	£7.8bn	£8.0bn	£9.2bn	£11.0bn					WMCA.: 4h Highest / 8 Greater London Authority - Inner London: £184.8bn (1st) North of Tyne: £3.8bn (8th)	Since the year ending 2022, the WMCA's total value in service exports increased by £1.8bn (+19.3%) to £11.0bn in 2023. The overall value of UK trade in service exports increased, by 13.9% (to £417.6bn) in 2023. The WMCA had a trade surplus of £7.0bn in 2023.
	WMCA (7 Met.) Imports in Services[21] (Annual – update Nov 2026)	£3.6bn	£3.7bn	£3.9bn	£3.4bn	£3.6bn	£4.1bn					WMCA: 5th Lowest / 10 Greater London Authority - Inner London: £71.2bn (1st) Tees Valley: £570m (10th)	Since 2022, the value of WMCA imports increased by £494m (+13.6%) to £4.1bn in 2023. UK-wide total imports increased by 16.2% to £292.1bn.

[19] ONS, Regional economic activity by gross domestic product, UK: 1998 to 2024 – released September 2026. Please note, West of England Combined Authority has been suppressed, meaning the peer group covers 14 combined authorities.

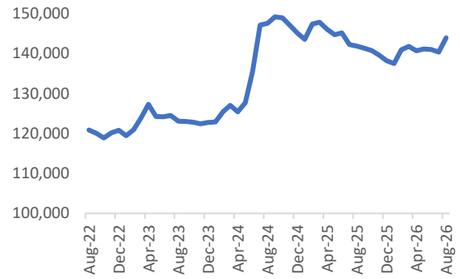
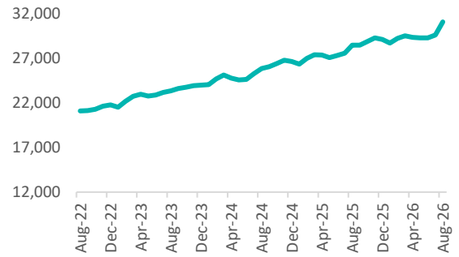
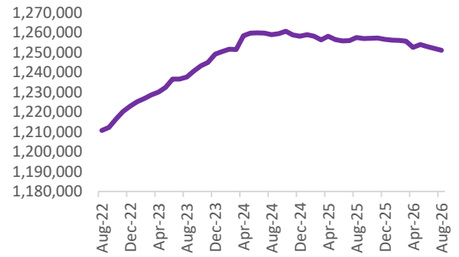
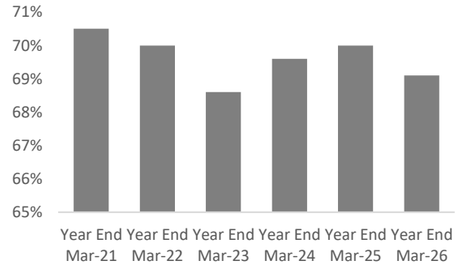
[20] ONS, International trade in UK nations, regions and cities: 2023 – released August 2025. Peer Group Combined Authorities are – Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, Greater Manchester, Greater London Authority – Inner and Outer, Liverpool City Region, North of Tyne, South Yorkshire, Tees Valley, West Midlands, West Yorkshire and West of England. However, no data is available for Tees Valley, South Yorkshire and Cambridgeshire & Peterborough CA

[21] ONS, International trade in UK nations, regions and cities: 2023 – released August 2025. Combined Authorities are – Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, Greater Manchester, Greater London Authority – Inner and Outer, Liverpool City Region, North of Tyne, South Yorkshire, Tees Valley, West Midlands, West Yorkshire and West of England. However, no data is available for Liverpool City Region.

WMCA ECONOMIC DASHBOARD – SEPTEMBER 2026

The Economic Intelligence Unit

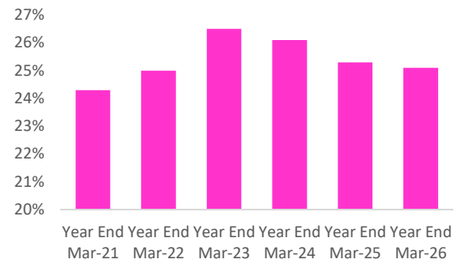
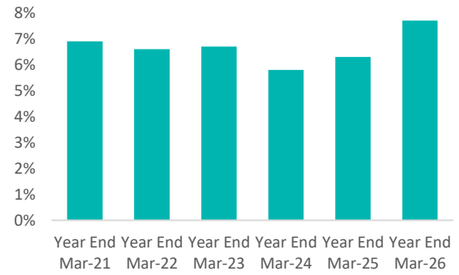
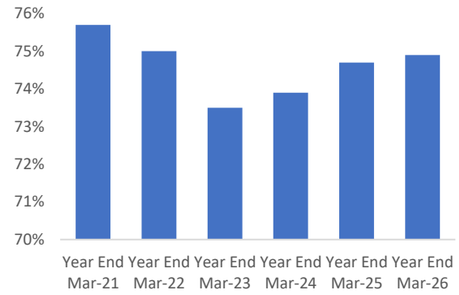
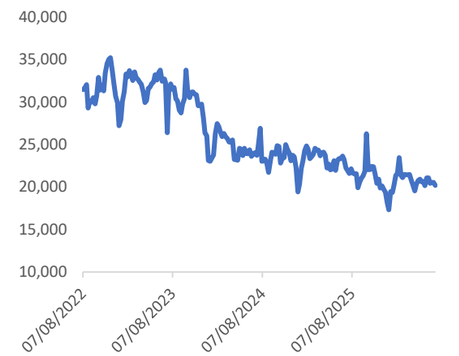
Monthly People Dashboard

Theme	Indicator	August 2025	September 2025	October 2025	November 2025	December 2025	January 2026	February 2026	March 2026	April 2026	May 2026	June 2026	July 2026	August 2026	Trend	Relative to Peer Group	Commentary
People	WMCA (7 Met.) Claimants (16+)[22] (monthly update)	141,890 (7.4% of Pop. aged 16-64)	141,350 (7.3% of Pop. aged 16-64)	140,760 (7.3% of Pop. aged 16-64)	139,605 (7.2% of Pop. aged 16-64)	138,270 (7.2% of Pop. aged 16-64)	137,525 (7.1% of Pop. aged 16-64)	140,975 (7.3% of Pop. aged 16-64)	141,845 (7.4% of Pop. aged 16-64)	140,685 (7.3% of Pop. aged 16-64)	141,195 (7.3% of Pop. aged 16-64)	141,035 (7.3% of Pop. aged 16-64)	140,395 (7.3% of Pop. aged 16-64) Revised	142,985 (7.5% of Pop. aged 16-64) Provisional	 Aug 2022: 120,850 Aug 2023: 123,075 Aug 2024: 147,585 Aug 2025: 141,890 Aug 2026: 142,985 p	Provisional WMCA: Highest CA Eng.: 4.0% West Yorkshire: 5.0% (2nd) York & North Yorkshire: 2.0% (15th)	Provisional estimates show there were 143,985 claimants in the WMCA area in August 2026. Since July 2026, there has been an increase of 2.6% (+3,590) claimants in the WMCA area, England increased by 2.2%. When compared to August 2025 claimants have increased by 1.5% (+2,095) in the WMCA area, with England increasing by 1.8%.
	WMCA (7 Met.) Youth Claimants (18-24)[23] (monthly update)	28,425 (9.3% of Pop. aged 18-24)	28,425 (9.3% of Pop. aged 18-24)	28,835 (9.5% of Pop. aged 18-24)	29,245 (9.6% of Pop. aged 18-24)	29,080 (9.5% of Pop. aged 18-24)	28,665 (9.4% of Pop. aged 18-24)	29,205 (9.6% of Pop. aged 18-24)	29,480 (9.7% of Pop. aged 18-24)	29,325 (9.6% of Pop. aged 18-24)	29,265 (9.6% of Pop. aged 18-24)	29,265 (9.6% of Pop. aged 18-24)	29,585 (9.7% of Pop. aged 18-24) Revised	31,040 (10.2% of Pop. aged 18-24) Provisional	 Aug 2022: 21,080 Aug 2023: 23,325 Aug 2024: 25,815 Aug 2025: 28,425 Aug 2026: 31,040 p	Provisional WMCA: Highest CA Eng: 6.1% Tees Valley: 8.5% (2nd) York & North Yorkshire: 2.8% (15th)	Provisional estimates show there were 31,040 youth claimants in the WMCA area in August 2026. Since July 2026, there has been an increase of 4.9% (+1,455) youth claimants in the WMCA area, England-wide youth claimants increased by 5.0%. When compared to August 2025, youth claimants have increased by 9.2% (+2,615) in the WMCA area, with England increasing by 9.4%.
	WM 7 Met. Seasonally Adjusted Payrolled Employees[24] (monthly update)	1,257,447	1,256,968	1,257,117	1,257,244	1,256,522	1,256,165	1,256,033	1,255,621	1,252,548	1,254,031	1,252,900	1,252,049	1,251,055	 Aug 2022: 1,210,712 Aug 2023: 1,237,629 Aug 2024: 1,258,959 Aug 2025: 1,257,477 Aug 2026: 1,251,055	WM 7 Met.: 3rd Highest NUTS 2 / 41 Surrey, East & West Sussex: 1,305,323 (1st) Highlands & Islands: 207,124 (41st)	The latest (provisional) figures show for the WM 7 Met. Area, there was a monthly decrease of 0.1%, matching the UK rate. There were over 1.25m payrolled employees in the WM 7 Met. area in August 2026. When compared to August 2025 there were 6,392 fewer payrolled employees (-0.5%) for the WM 7 Met. Area, nationally there was a 0.5% decrease.
	WMCA (7 Met.) Employment Rate[25] (quarterly – update due Oct 2026)		70.6% (Year Ending Sep 2025)			69.2% (Full Year 2025)			69.1% (Year Ending Mar 2026)							WMCA: Lowest CA / 15 Eng: 75.8% West of England: 79.9% (1st) Hull & East Yorkshire: 70.5% (14th)	The WMCA area employment rate was 69.1% in the year ending March 2026, this was a decrease of 0.9pp since the year ending March 2025. While England's employment rate increased by 0.1pp to 75.8%.

[22] ONS/DWP, claimant count – released September 2026.
[23] ONS/DWP, claimant count – released September 2026.
[24] ONS, Earnings and employment from Pay As You Earn Real Time Information – released September 2026.
[25] ONS, Annual Population Survey – released July 2026. Please note, figures are not comparable across the dashboard.

WMCA ECONOMIC DASHBOARD – SEPTEMBER 2026

The Economic Intelligence Unit

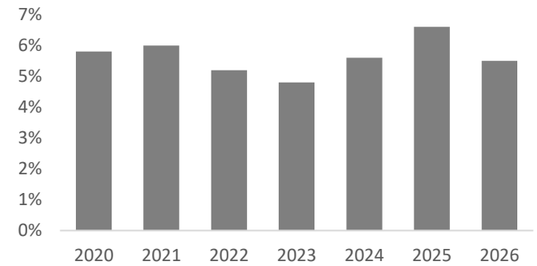
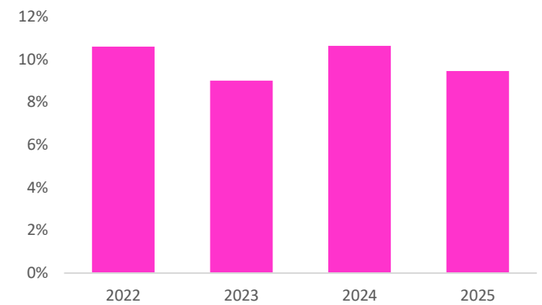
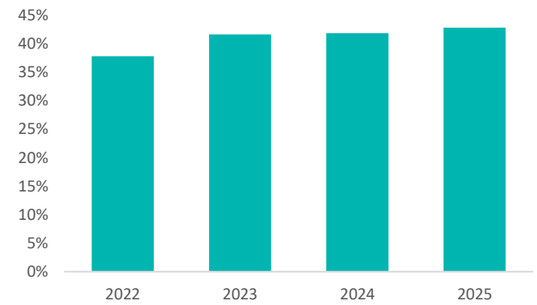
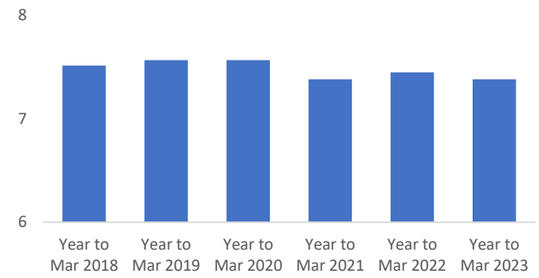
Theme	Indicator	August 2025	September 2025	October 2025	November 2025	December 2025	January 2026	February 2026	March 2026	April 2026	May 2026	June 2026	July 2026	August 2026	Trend	Relative to Peer Group	Commentary
People	WMCA (7 Met.) Economic Inactivity Rate[26] (quarterly – update due Oct 2026)		23.8% (Year Ending Sep 2025)			25.1% (Full Year 2025)			25.1% (Year Ending Mar 2026)							WMCA: Joint Highest CA (with Hull & East Yorkshire) Eng: 20.5% Tees Valley: 24.7% (3rd) West of England: 17.3% (15th)	The WMCA area economic inactivity rate was 25.1% in the year ending March 2026, a decrease of 0.2pp since the year ending March 2025. England's economic inactivity rate decreased by 0.7pp to 20.5%.
	WMCA (7 Met.) Unemployment Rate[27] (quarterly – update due Oct 2026)		7.3% (Year Ending Sep 2025)			7.6% (Full Year 2025)			7.7% (Year Ending Mar 2026)							WMCA: Highest CA Eng: 4.7% Tees Valley: 6.1% (2nd) York & North Yorkshire: 2.0% (15th)	Since the year ending March 2025, the WMCA area unemployment rate has increased by 1.4pp to 7.7% in the year ending March 2026. England's unemployment rate increased by 0.7pp to 4.7% in the year ending March 2026.
	WMCA (7 Met.) Economic Activity Rate[28] (quarterly – update due Oct 2026)		76.2% (Year Ending Sep 2025)			74.9% (Full Year 2025)			74.9% (Year Ending Mar 2026)							WMCA: Joint Lowest CA (with Hull & East Yorkshire) Eng: 79.5% West of England: 82.7% (1st) North East: 75.3% (13th)	Overall, for the WMCA area, the economic activity rate was 74.9% in the year ending March 2026, an increase of 0.2pp since the year ending March 2025. England's economic activity rate was 79.5% and increased by 0.7pp.
	WMCA (7 Met.) Adzuna Job Postings[29] (monthly update)	44,290	44,196	58,427	45,055	37,090	39,207	45,014	42,716	46,084	40,882	39,621	30,735	20,172	 Aug 2022: 74,075 Aug 2023: 79,963 Aug 2024: 56.610 Aug 2025: 44,290 Aug 2026: 20,172	-	In August 2026, there were 20,172 unique job postings on Adzuna, a decrease of 10,563 from the previous month. When compared to August 2025, postings were 24,118 lower. The latest number of postings is high compared to the average for all combined authorities. The Interest Quotient was high at 2.3.

[26] ONS, Annual Population Survey – released July 2026. Please note, figures are not comparable across the dashboard.
[27] ONS, Annual Population Survey – released July 2026. Please note, figures are not comparable across the dashboard.
[28] ONS, Annual Population Survey – released July 2026. Please note, figures are not comparable across the dashboard.
[29] Adzuna Intelligence – accessed September 2026. Please note, the graph shows job postings per week since 2022.

WMCA ECONOMIC DASHBOARD – SEPTEMBER 2026

The Economic Intelligence Unit

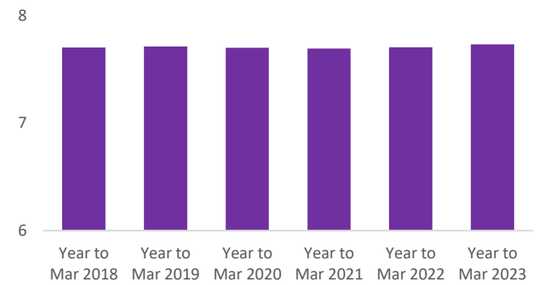
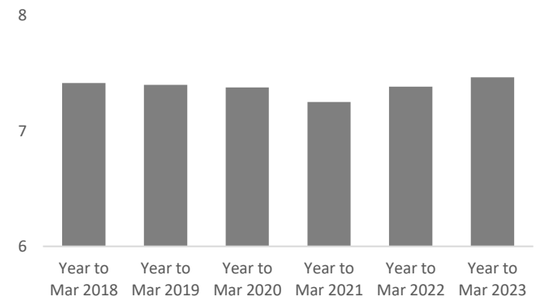
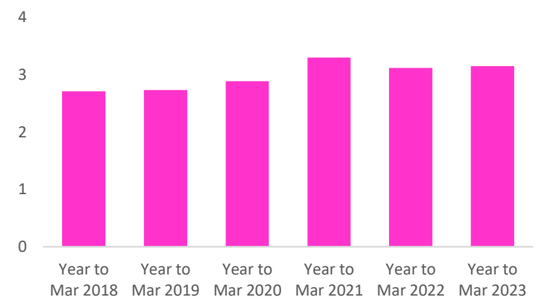
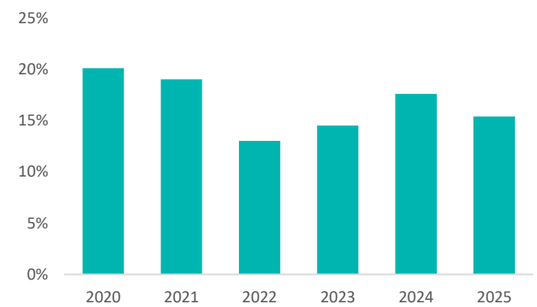
Annual People Dashboard

Theme	Indicator	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	Trend	Relative to Peer Group	Commentary
People	WMCA (7 Met.) Not In Education, Employment or Training (NEET)[30] (annual – update Jul 2027)	7.1%	6.7%	5.8%	6.0%	5.2%	4.8%	5.6%	6.6%	5.5%		England: 5.8%	In 2026, in the WMCA area, 5.5% of residents aged 16-17 years old were NEET (including not known). This has decreased by 1.1pp in the WMCA area, while for England there was an increase of 0.2pp since 2025.
	WMCA (7 Met.) Working Age Population with No Qualifications[31] (annual – update due Apr 2027)					10.6%	9.0%	10.6%	9.5%			WMCA: 2nd Highest CA / 15 UK: 6.4% North East: 10.2% (1st) West of England: 3.3% (15th)	For the WMCA area, 9.5% (172,100) of the working age population had no formal qualifications in 2025, a decrease of 10.8% (-20,900) since 2024. While for the UK, 6.4% had no qualifications, an annual decrease of 7.4%. To match the UK proportion, 56,125 residents in the WMCA area would need to gain a qualification.
	WMCA (7 Met.) Working Age Population with RQF4+ Qualifications[32] (annual – update due Apr 2027)					37.8%	41.6%	41.9%	42.8%			WMCA: 8th (middle) CA / 15 UK: 48.4% West of England: 54.8% (1st) Greater Lincolnshire: 34.2% (15th)	For the WMCA area, 42.8% (778,900) of the working age population had RQF4+ qualifications in 2025, an increase of 2.5% (+18,800) since 2024. While for the UK, 48.4% were qualified to RQF4+ levels, an annual increase of 3.5%. There was a shortfall in the WMCA area (to reach to the national average) of 101,469 people.
	WMCA (7 Met.) Average Life Satisfaction Score[33] (annual – update TBC)	7.51 (Year Ending Mar 2018)	7.56 (Year Ending Mar 2019)	7.56 (Year Ending Mar 2020)	7.38 (Year Ending Mar 2021)	7.44 (Year Ending Mar 2022)	7.38 (Year Ending Mar 2023)					WMCA: Joint 4th Highest CA (with Sheffield City Region) UK: 7.45 North of Tyne: 7.56 (1st) Liverpool City Region: 7.30 (10th)	For the year ending March 2023, the average life satisfaction score for the WMCA area was 7.38 (out of 10), below the UK-wide average of 7.45. Since the year ending March 2022, there was a decrease of 0.06 for the WMCA area compared to a decrease 0.09 UK-wide.

[30] Department for Education, Participation in education, training and NEET age 16 to 17 by local authority – released July 2026. Participation estimates are based on data collected in March each year. In order to ensure the most robust estimates of NEET and not known rates an average of December/January/February data is used for an estimate around the end of the calendar year.
[31] ONS, Annual Population Survey – released April 2026. Please note, National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) estimates have been replaced with estimates on a Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) basis. RQF based estimates are available from the Jan - Dec 2022 survey period, while estimates prior to Jan - Dec 2022 remain on an NVQ basis.
[32] ONS, Annual Population Survey – released April 2026. Please note, National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) estimates have been replaced with estimates on a Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) basis. RQF based estimates are available from the Jan - Dec 2022 survey period, while estimates prior to Jan - Dec 2022 remain on an NVQ basis.
[33] ONS, Annual personal well-being estimates – released November 2023. Respondents were asked "Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays? Where 0 is 'not at all satisfied' and 10 is 'completely satisfied'"

WMCA ECONOMIC DASHBOARD – SEPTEMBER 2026

The Economic Intelligence Unit

Theme	Indicator	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	Trend	Relative to Peer Group	Commentary
People	WMCA (7 Met.) Average Worthwhile Score[34] (annual – update TBC)	7.71 (Year Ending Mar 2018)	7.71 (Year Ending Mar 2019)	7.70 (Year Ending Mar 2020)	7.70 (Year Ending Mar 2021)	7.71 (Year Ending Mar 2022)	7.73 (Year Ending Mar 2023)					WMCA: 3rd Highest CA UK: 7.73 North of Tyne: 7.75 (1st) West of England: 7.61 (10th)	For the year ending March 2023, the average worthwhile score for the WMCA area was 7.73 (out of 10), now matching the UK-wide average. Since the year ending March 2022, there was an increase of 0.02 for the WMCA area compared to a decrease 0.04 UK-wide.
	WMCA (7 Met.) Average Happiness Score[35] (annual – update TBC)	7.39 (Year Ending Mar 2018)	7.40 (Year Ending Mar 2019)	7.35 (Year Ending Mar 2020)	7.24 (Year Ending Mar 2021)	7.38 (Year Ending Mar 2022)	7.43 (Year Ending Mar 2023)					WMCA: 2nd Highest CA UK: 7.39 North of Tyne: 7.44 (1st) West Yorkshire: 7.20 (10th)	For the year ending March 2023, the average happiness score for the WMCA area was 7.43 (out of 10), above the UK-wide average of 7.39. Since the year ending March 2022, there was an increase of 0.05 for the WMCA area compared to a decrease 0.06 UK-wide.
	WMCA (7 Met.) Average Anxiety Score[36] (annual – update TBC)	2.71 (Year Ending Mar 2018)	2.74 (Year Ending Mar 2019)	2.89 (Year Ending Mar 2020)	3.30 (Year Ending Mar 2021)	3.12 (Year Ending Mar 2022)	3.15 (Year Ending Mar 2023)					WMCA: 3rd Lowest CA UK: 3.23 Greater Manchester: 3.40 (1st) North of Tyne: 3.03 (10th)	For the year ending March 2023, the average anxiety score for the WMCA area was 3.15 (out of 10), below the UK average. Since the year ending March 2022, there was an increase of 0.03 for the WMCA area compared to an increase 0.11 UK-wide.
	WMCA (7 Met.) Living Wage Foundation Rates (All)[37] (annual – update due TBC 2026)	23.5%	20.8%	20.1%	19.0%	13.0%	14.5%	17.6%	15.4%			UK: 14.6%	In 2025, approximately 15.4% of all jobs were earning below the Living Wage Foundation rates in the WMCA area. Since 2024, the WMCA Living Wage Foundation rate decreased at a faster rate than nationally (-2.2pp vs -1.1pp).

[34] ONS, Annual personal well-being estimates – released November 2023. Respondents were asked "Overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile? Where 0 is 'not at all worthwhile' and 10 is 'completely worthwhile'".
[35] ONS, Annual personal well-being estimates – released November 2023. Respondents were asked "Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday? Where 0 is 'not at all happy' and 10 is 'completely happy'".
[36] ONS, Annual personal well-being estimates – released November 2023. Respondents were asked "Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday? Where 0 is 'not at all anxious' and 10 is 'completely anxious'".
[37] ONS, Number and proportion of employee jobs with hourly pay below the living wage – released October 2025