

Annual Population Survey: Employment Activity: July 2019 – June 2020

Summary

- In the year ending June 2020, the employment rate in the Black Country was 72.4%, compared to 76.5% for England overall. This meant that for the Black Country area there were 532,200 people employed in the year ending June 2020, this is an increase of 21,00 people compared to the previous year and a 2.4pp increase in the employment rate from 70.0%. The overall employment rate for England increased by 0.7pp over the same time period.
- The unemployment rate for the Black Country was 5.3% (29,600 people) in the year ending June 2020, compared to 4.0% for the England average. For the Black Country, there was a decrease of 0.2pp in the unemployment rate while for England the decrease was 0.1pp when compared to the year ending June 2019.
- The economic activity rate for the Black Country LEP was 76.4% (561,800 people) in the year ending June 2020, compared to 79.7% for England. For the Black Country LEP this is a 2.3pp increase in the economic activity rate from 74.1% the previous year. England increased by 0.6pp over the same period.
- For economic inactivity, the Black Country LEP's rate was 23.6% for the year ending June 2020 (173,400 people), compared to 20.3% in England overall. For the Black Country LEP, this is a 2.3pp decrease in the economic inactivity rate from 25.9%. England decreased by 0.6pp over the same period.

Full Briefing

Employment

- In the year ending June 2020, the employment rate in the Black Country was 72.4%, compared to 76.5% for England overall. This meant that for the Black Country area there were 532,200 people employed in the year ending June 2020, this is an increase of 21,00 people compared to the previous year and a 2.4pp increase in the employment rate from 70.0%. The overall employment rate for England increased by 0.7pp over the same time period.
- Wolverhampton has been the fastest growing local authority in the Black Country during this period, increasing its employment rate from 66.7% (108,600 people) to 71.0% (116,600 people) – an increase of 8,000 people and 4.3pp.
- Walsall has the highest employment rate of the four local authorities, with 74.2% (128,600 people in employment in the year ending June 2020), this is followed by Dudley with 73.7% (141,700) then Wolverhampton, and then Sandwell with 70.7% (145,400).

Figure 1: Black Country Employment rate for the years ending June 2019 and June 2020

	Employment Year End June 19	Employment Rate (%) Year End June 19	Employment Year End June 20	Employment Rate (%) Year End June 20	Number Change	PP Change
Dudley	136,200	71.3	141,700	73.7	5,500	2.4
Sandwell	145,300	70.9	145,400	70.7	100	-0.2
Walsall	121,200	70.6	128,600	74.2	7,400	3.6
Wolverhampton	108,600	66.7	116,600	71.0	8,000	4.3
Black Country	511,200	70.0	532,200	72.4	21,000	2.4
England	26,358,700	75.8	26,679,600	76.5	320,900	0.7

Unemployment

- The unemployment rate for the Black Country was 5.3% (29,600 people) in the year ending June 2020, compared to 4.0% for the England average. For the Black Country, there was a decrease of 0.2pp in the unemployment rate while for England the decrease was 0.1pp when compared to the year ending June 2019.

- Within the Black Country, Walsall was the only local authority that experienced an increase in the Unemployment rate. Walsall's employment rate was 5.2% in the year ending June 2019 rising to 6.2% in the year ending June 2020.
- Dudley has the lowest unemployment rate in the Black Country with 4.6% (6,900 people), followed by Sandwell with 4.7% (7,200), Wolverhampton with 5.6% (6,900 people) and then Walsall with 6.2% (8,500 people). Across all 4 local authorities the unemployment rates are all higher rates than the England average of 4.0%.

Figure 2: Black Country Unemployment rate for the years ending June 2019 and June 2020

	Unemployment Year End June 19	Unemployment Rate (%) Year End June 19	Unemployment Year End June 20	Unemployment Rate (%) Year End June 20	Change	PP Change
Dudley	7,200	5.1	6,900	4.6	-300	-0.5
Sandwell	8,200	5.3	7,200	4.7	-1,000	-0.6
Walsall	6,700	5.2	8,500	6.2	1,800	1.0
Wolverhampton	7,700	6.6	6,900	5.6	-800	-1.0
Black Country	29,800	5.5	29,600	5.3	-200	-0.2
England	1,140,800	4.1	1,118,000	4.0	-22,800	-0.1

Economic Activity

- The economic activity rate for the Black Country LEP was 76.4% (561,800 people) in the year ending June 2020, compared to 79.7% for England. For the Black Country LEP this is a 2.3pp increase in the economic activity rate from 74.1% the previous year. England increased by 0.6pp over the same period.
- Walsall was the local authority in the Black Country that saw the highest percentage point increase in economic activity of +4.6pp to 79.1%. This is also the highest economic activity rate out of all the Black Country local authorities, and only 0.6pp behind the England average of 79.7%.
- Wolverhampton and Dudley also saw an increase in economic activity, +3.9pp for Wolverhampton to 75.3%, and +2.2pp for Dudley to 77.3%. The economic activity rate in Sandwell declined by 0.6pp to 74.3%, meanwhile across England the rate increased by 0.6pp.

Figure 3: Black Country Economic Activity rate for the years ending June 2019 and June 2020

	Economic Activity Year End June 19	Economic Activity Rate (%) Year End June 19	Economic Activity Year End June 20	Economic Activity Rate (%) Year End June 20	Change	PP Change
Dudley	143,500	75.1	148,600	77.3	5,100	2.2
Sandwell	153,400	74.9	152,600	74.3	- 800	-0.6
Walsall	127,800	74.5	137,100	79.1	9,300	4.6
Wolverhampton	116,300	71.4	123,500	75.3	7,200	3.9
Black Country	541,000	74.1	561,800	76.4	20,800	2.3
England	27,499,500	79.1	27,797,500	79.7	298,000	0.6

Economic Inactivity

- For economic inactivity, the Black Country LEP's rate was 23.6% for the year ending June 2020 (173,400 people), compared to 20.3% in England overall. For the Black Country LEP, this is a 2.3pp decrease in the economic inactivity rate from 25.9%. England decreased by 0.6pp over the same period.
- The following figure provides a breakdown for economically inactive by reason for the Black Country LEP and England for the year ending June 2020. The Black Country LEP has on average for the year ending June 2020 a lower percentage of people that are inactive due to retirement (11.0% vs 13.4%), those classed as other (11.2% vs 13.7%), students (24.1% vs 26.3%) and long-term sick (24.1% vs 24.7%).

- Within the Black Country 29.6% of those economically inactive are looking after family/home, compared to 22.2% across England.

Figure 4: Black Country and England Economic Inactivity by reason

	WMCA Economically Inactive No. Year End June 2020	% of Total Black Country Economically Inactive Year End June 2020	UK Economically Inactive No. Year End June 2020	% of Total England Economically Inactive Year End June 2019
% of economically inactive student	41,800	24.1	1,859,700	26.3
% of economically inactive looking after family/home	51,400	29.6	1,573,200	22.2
% of economically inactive sick	41,700	24.1	1,732,600	24.7
% of economically inactive retired	19,100	11.0	944,700	13.4
% of economically inactive other	19,300	11.2	964,400	13.7
Total economically inactive	173,400		7,074,600	

Employment by Occupation

- The following table shows employment by occupation across the Black Country LEP and England for the year ending June 2020.
- The Black Country LEP have a higher than average percentage of people employed in 6 of the 9 areas, these include: administrative and secretarial occupations (10.9% vs 9.8%), skilled trades occupations (11.1% vs 9.6%), caring, leisure and other service occupations (10.3% vs 8.8%), sales and customer service occupations (7.1% vs 6.8%), process, plant and machine operatives (8.3% vs 5.7%) and elementary occupations (13.5% vs 9.6%).

Figure 5: Black Country and England employment by sector

	Black Country LEP Numerator Year Ending June 2020	Black Country Percentage Year Ending June 2020	England Numerator Year Ending June 2020	England Percentage Year Ending June 2020
% all in employment who are - 1: managers, directors and senior officials	46,200	8.5	3,321,900	12.0
% all in employment who are - 2: professional occupations	94,900	17.5	6,188,700	22.3
% all in employment who are - 3: associate prof & tech occupations	67,100	12.4	4,211,300	15.2
% all in employment who are - 4: administrative and secretarial occupations	59,400	10.9	2,726,500	9.8
% all in employment who are - 5: skilled trades occupations	60,500	11.1	2,660,300	9.6
% all in employment who are - 6: caring, leisure and other service occupations	55,800	10.3	2,459,300	8.8
% all in employment who are - 7: sales and customer service occupations	38,300	7.1	1,878,300	6.8
% all in employment who are - 8: process, plant and machine operatives	45,000	8.3	1,584,800	5.7
% all in employment who are - 9: elementary occupations	73,100	13.5	2,675,400	9.6

Source: ONS (Nomis): Annual Population Survey, October 2020