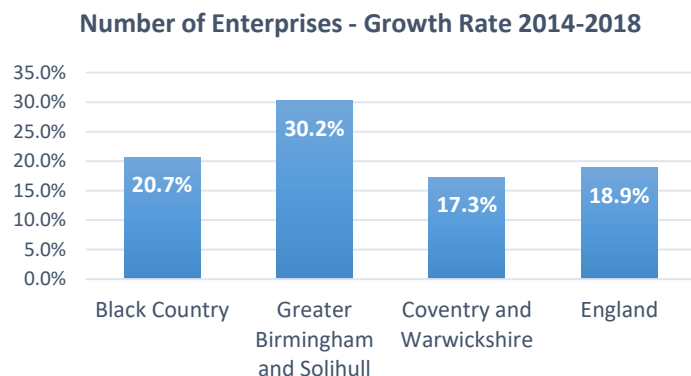


## UK Business Counts Annual Release: October 2018

The latest annual UK Business Counts data was released this week, displaying the number of enterprises across areas and within sectors.<sup>1</sup>

Following impressive business growth in the last 5 years, the new data shows the number of Black Country businesses stabilising at its high level of over 33,000. In 2018, **33,330 businesses** are registered in the Black Country, up from 27,625 in 2014 – an increase of 20.7%. This is faster growth than the national average and among the top 10 of all LEPs areas.



It's reassuring that, despite major shifts in activity (such as Carillion's collapse and issues surrounding the high street), the **Black Country's resilient business base has remained at a stable level** from 2017 - when business counts experienced strong growth. This data is more evidence of the **Black Country's business robustness and ability to adapt successfully to changing conditions.**

Some sectors perform better than others. Encouragingly amid the Carillion situation, **construction has had the largest increase in new enterprises in the Black Country, a rise of 165 firms.** There're also notable increases in the number of firms in the administrative and support service sector (+130), real estate (+55) and other service activities (+50). In contrast, **the health & social care, (-340) education (-245), and professional, scientific and technical activities (-145) sectors had the largest drop in the number of businesses locally.** Other key sectors such as manufacturing (-20) and wholesale and retail (+35) have experienced only minor changes.

Broad Industry Group (Selected)	2017	2018	Change	% Change
Manufacturing	3,360	3,340	-20	-0.6%
Construction	4,330	4,495	165	3.8%
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	6,680	6,715	35	0.5%
Transportation and storage	2,900	2,940	40	1.4%
Accommodation and food service activities	2,015	2,030	15	0.7%
Real estate activities	975	1,030	55	5.6%
Professional, scientific and technical activities	3,865	3,720	-145	-3.8%
Administrative and support service activities	2,390	2,520	130	5.4%
Education	730	485	-245	-33.6%
Other service activities	1,525	1,575	50	3.3%
<b>Black Country Total</b>	<b>33,570</b>	<b>33,330</b>	<b>-240</b>	<b>-0.7%</b>

In the Black Country overall there were **240 less businesses in 2018 compared to the previous year, a decrease of less than 1%. This is a slightly larger percentage fall than the England average, which showed a 0.1% drop.** There is a slight divergence across the four Black Country local authorities, with Walsall and Dudley having had slight falls in the number of firms in the last year; Sandwell is the only area which had an increase, with Wolverhampton displaying no change in the number of businesses. The number of enterprises fell across all three of the WMCA's LEP area, at a slightly higher rate than the Black Country in Coventry & Warwickshire (-1.3%) & a slightly lower rate in Greater Birmingham & Solihull (-0.1%). The WMCA's overall 0.5% fall in firms is slightly worse than the England average.

<sup>1</sup> Source; ONS: UK Business Counts (2018)