

Employment and Skills Opportunities and Challenges – Stafford

Skills and Employability Team
Staffordshire County Council
2024

Introduction

- To provide insight into current and future employment and skills demand and supply opportunities and challenges in Stafford.

The collage features several logos and images: **Wincanton** (blue oval logo), **Stafford BOROUGH COUNCIL** (black knot logo), **Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust** (NHS logo), **Stafford Hospital** (blue box), **NSCG NEWCASTLE AND STAFFORD COLLEGES GROUP** (orange and red text), **Staffordshire POLICE** (crest logo), **Staffordshire County Council** (yellow knot logo), and **GE** (blue circle logo). It also includes an aerial map of a development site with labels like 'AS4' and 'Rutwell Park', a map of the Midlands region with Staffordshire highlighted in red, and an aerial photograph of a stone castle.

SWOT: Stafford

- Apprenticeship starts +5% 2017-23
- Claimant rates lower than average levels
- Employment rate above regional & national
- Highest business survival rate of Staffordshire LAs
- Job growth rate of +1% 2017-22
- Percentage of higher occupation jobs above county and regional averages
- Wage levels above average

- Capitalise on new technologies such as AI and automation to drive key sectors
- Develop strong enterprise offer to support and encourage new SMEs
- Excellent connectivity to support growth
- Encourage mixed use and future proof amenities in town centres
- Further promotion & development as key leisure and activities destination
- Partnerships and links to three universities



- Adult skills levels below county and national averages
- Business start-ups lower than county, regional, and national averages
- Employment rate declining trend 2018-23
- GVA productivity per job filled 16% less productive than UK average
- Inactivity rate higher than county & national

- Adapting amenities and town centre to be future proof and sustainable
- Addressing labour skills shortage (e.g. health and education sectors)
- Attracting new business investment
- Increasing productivity and supporting new business development
- Maintaining growth in high skilled jobs
- Raising aspirations amongst young people and continuing to improve skills levels

Headline Findings



5,370 businesses with **+2%** growth 2018-23. **64,400** jobs in 2022, equivalent to **+1%** growth 2017-22



Apprenticeship starts **+5%** 2017-23, far better than the **-8%** decline for Staffordshire



77% employment rate in 2023, higher than regional and national averages. **2.7%** claimant rate and **4.8%** youth claimant rate below county, regional and national levels



Highest business survival rate of Staffordshire districts at **65%**, higher than county 62%, regional 51% and national 58% averages

Business Growth and Key Sectors

There were 5,370 businesses based in Stafford in 2023. In 2018-23 there were an additional 90 businesses, +2% growth. This is higher than county +0.3%, but lower than region +3% and in line with nation +2%.

Key sectors include Wholesale & Retail (805 businesses), Professional, Scientific & Technical (720 businesses) and Construction (710 businesses).

Strongest growth between 2018-23 in Accommodation & Food (+60 businesses), Construction (+55 businesses) and Transportation & Storage (+45 businesses).

Notable declines between 2018-2023 in Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing (-45 businesses), ICT (-45 businesses), Professional, Scientific & Technical (-40 businesses).

Total Businesses 2023 and Business Change 2018-2023



■ 2023 Total Businesses ■ 2018-2023 Change

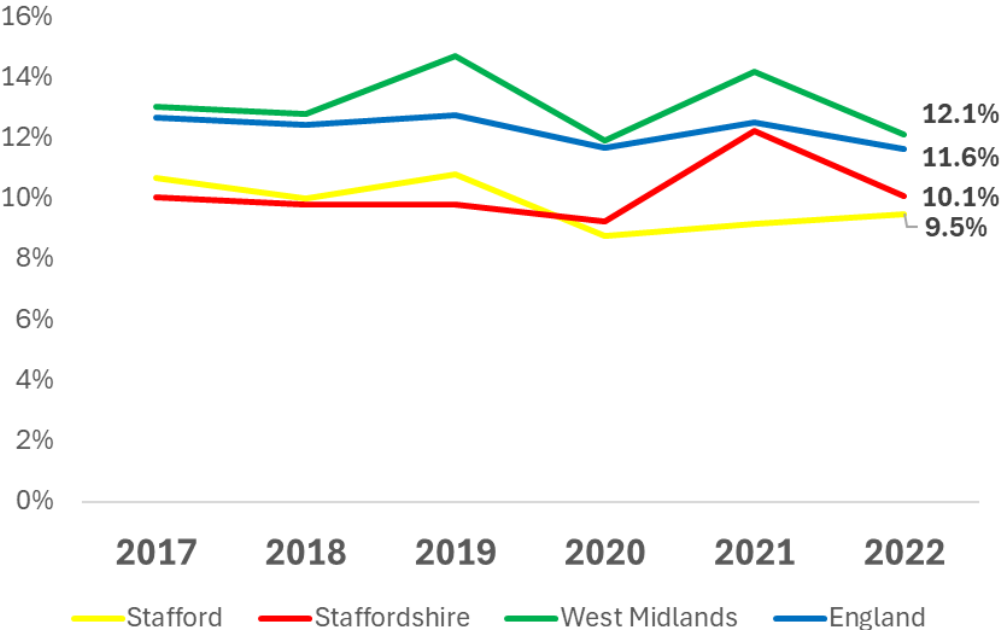
Source: UK Business Counts 2024

Business Start Ups and Closures

Stafford Business Start Up Rate for 2022 at 9.5% is below the county 10.1%, region 12.1% and nation 11.6%. Stafford has the lowest Business Death Rate at 9.7% of all LAs, lower than county 11.1%, region 12.7% and nation 12%.

Stafford has the highest business survival rate of all LAs at 65% in 2022 – higher than the county (62%), regional (51%) and national (58%) averages.

Business Start Up Rate 2017-2022 (%)



Business 3-Year Survival Rate 2022 %



Source: ONS Business Demography, 2024

Key Employment Sectors

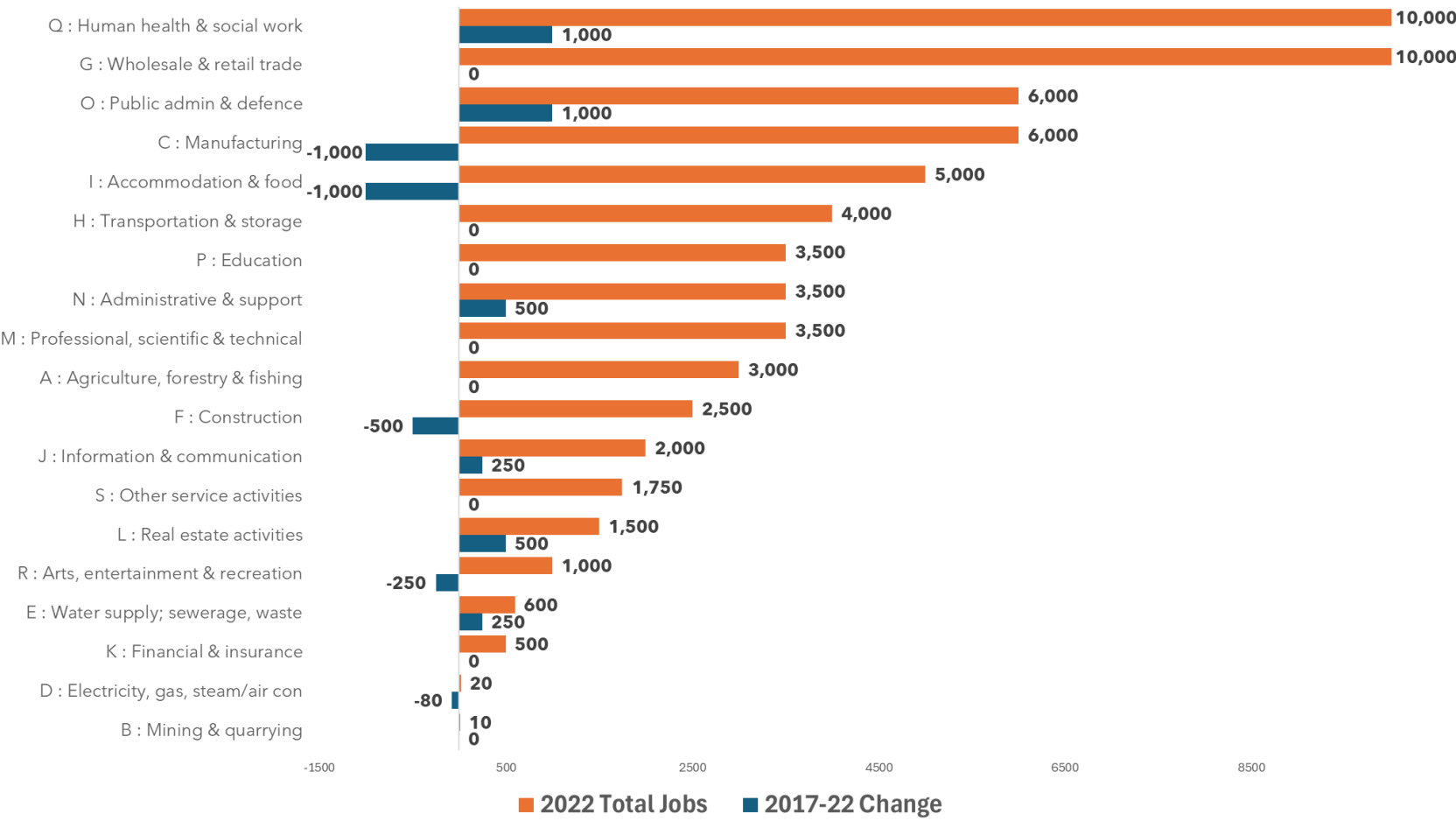
In 2022 there were a total of 64,400 jobs in Stafford. There has been an increase between 2017-22 of +670 jobs or (+1.1%).

Key Sectors in 2022 include Human Health & Social Work (10,000 jobs), Wholesale & Retail (10,000 jobs), Public Admin & Defence (6,000 jobs).

Strongest growth between 2017-22 in Human Health & Social Work (+1,000) and Public Admin & Defence (+1,000) sectors.

Notable declines in growth between 2017-22 in Manufacturing (-1,000), Accommodation & Food (-1,000) and Construction (-500) sectors.

Key Employment Sectors 2022 and Change 2017-2022



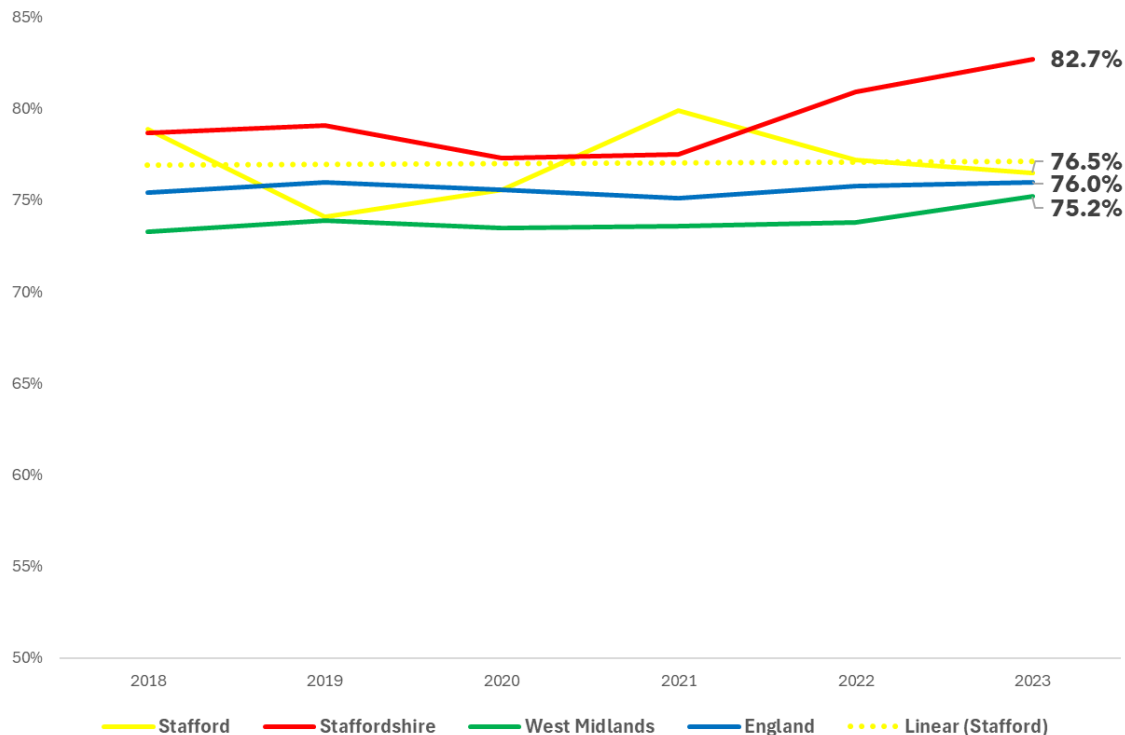
Source: Business Register & Employment Survey (BRES), 2024

Employment Rate

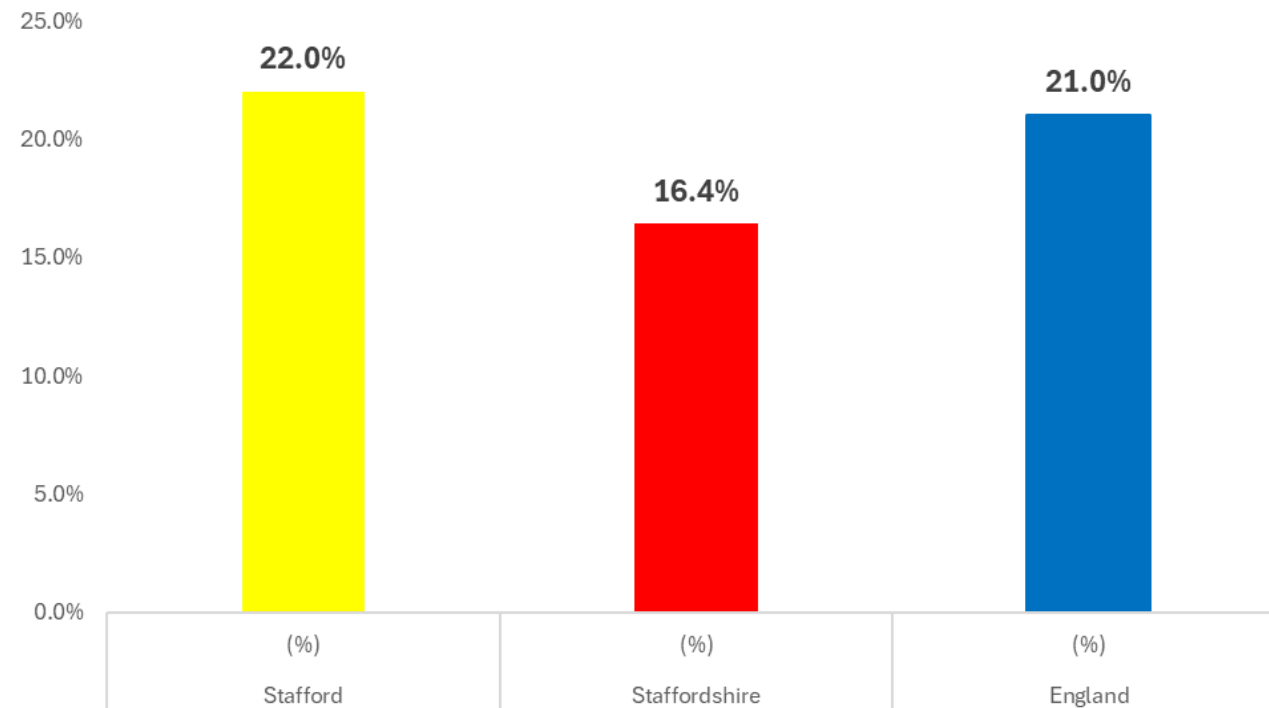
77% (62,200 residents in employment) employment rate 2023 in Stafford, lower than county 83%, but higher than regional 75% and national 76% averages.

22% or 17,900 economically inactive residents January-December 2023, higher than county 16%, regional 21% and national 21% averages.

Employment rate 2018-2023 (aged 16-64)



% Economically Inactive - aged 16-64 (2023)



Source: Annual Population Survey, 2024

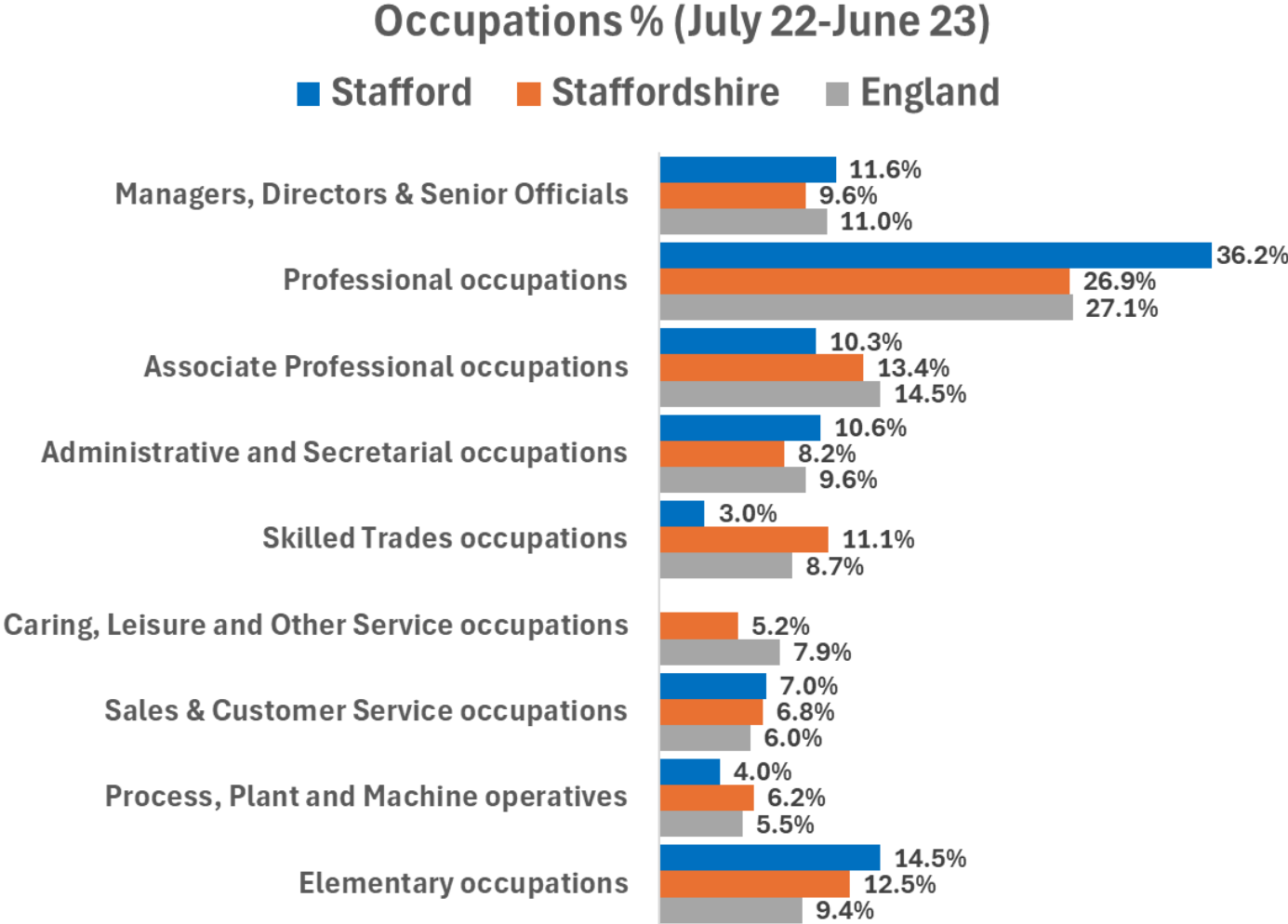
Occupations

58% of jobs in higher occupation groups in July 2022-June 2023, above the county 50% and national average 53% averages.

36% of jobs in professional occupations higher than the county 27% and national 27% averages.

12% Managers, Directors & Senior Officials higher than county 10% and national 11% averages.

Source: ONS Annual Population Survey, 2024



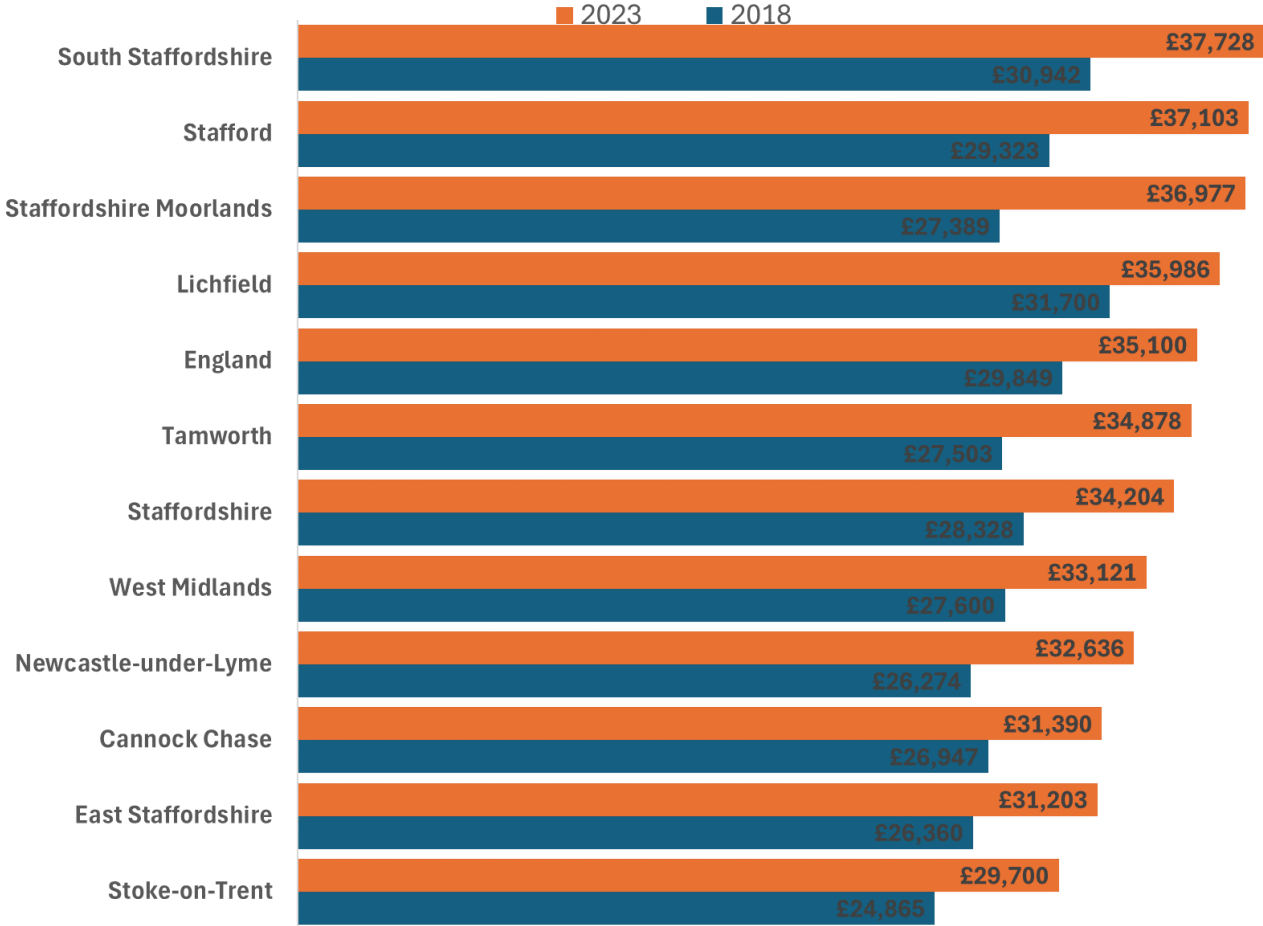
Median Resident Earnings

Average Annual Earnings by Resident (£) 2018-23

£37,103 average annual resident earnings Stafford in 2023, second highest of all LAs. This is higher than county £34,204, regional £33,121 and national £35,100 averages.

26.5% growth in Stafford annual resident earnings 2018-2023, one of the highest percent increase of Staffordshire LAs and higher than the county +20.7%, regional +20.0% and national +17.6% averages.

Source: ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2024



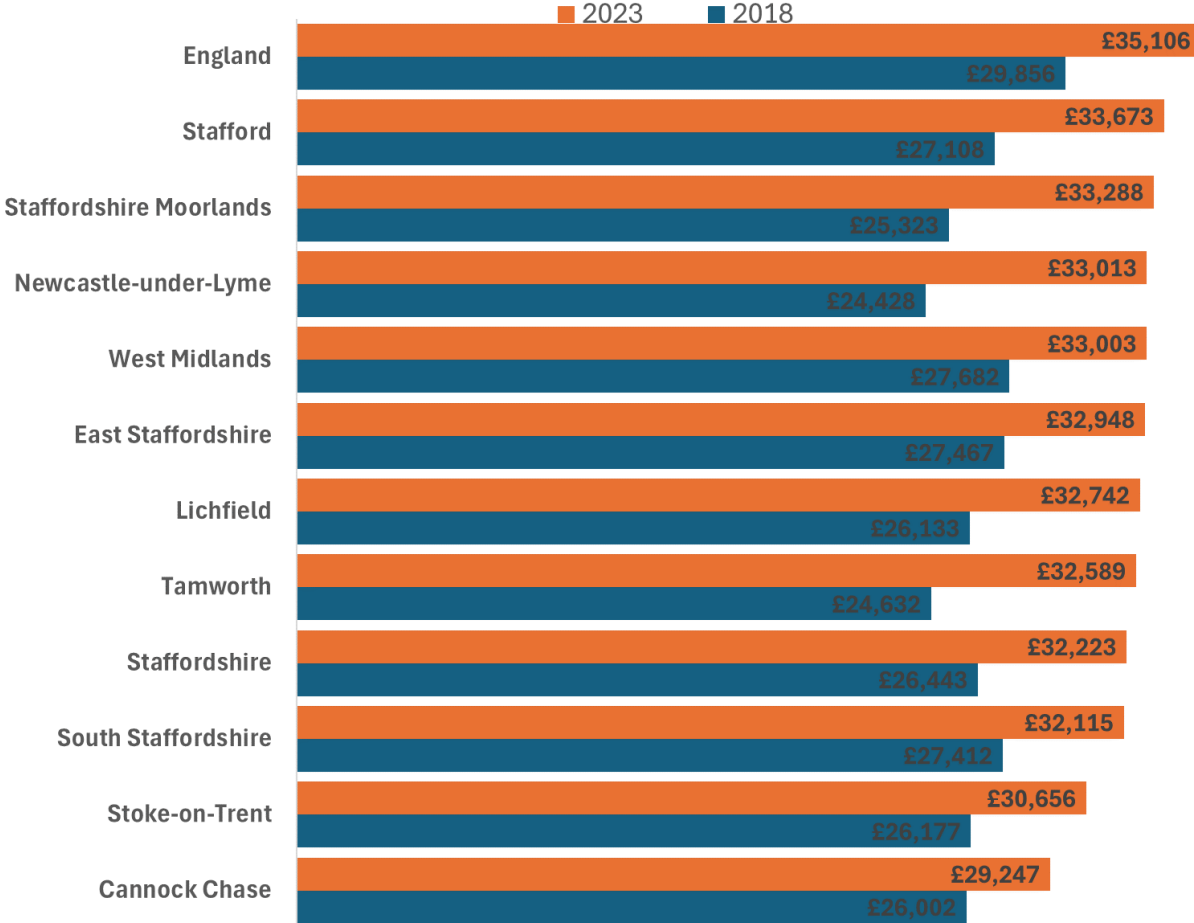
Median Workplace Earnings

£33,673 average annual workplace earnings Stafford in 2023, the highest in Staffordshire. Stafford is higher than the county £32,223, regional £33,003 averages but lower than the national £35,106 average.

24.2% growth in Stafford annual workplace earnings 2018-2023. Stafford is higher than county +21.9%, regional +19.2% and national +17.6% averages.

Source: ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2024

Average Annual Earnings by Workplace (£) 2018-23

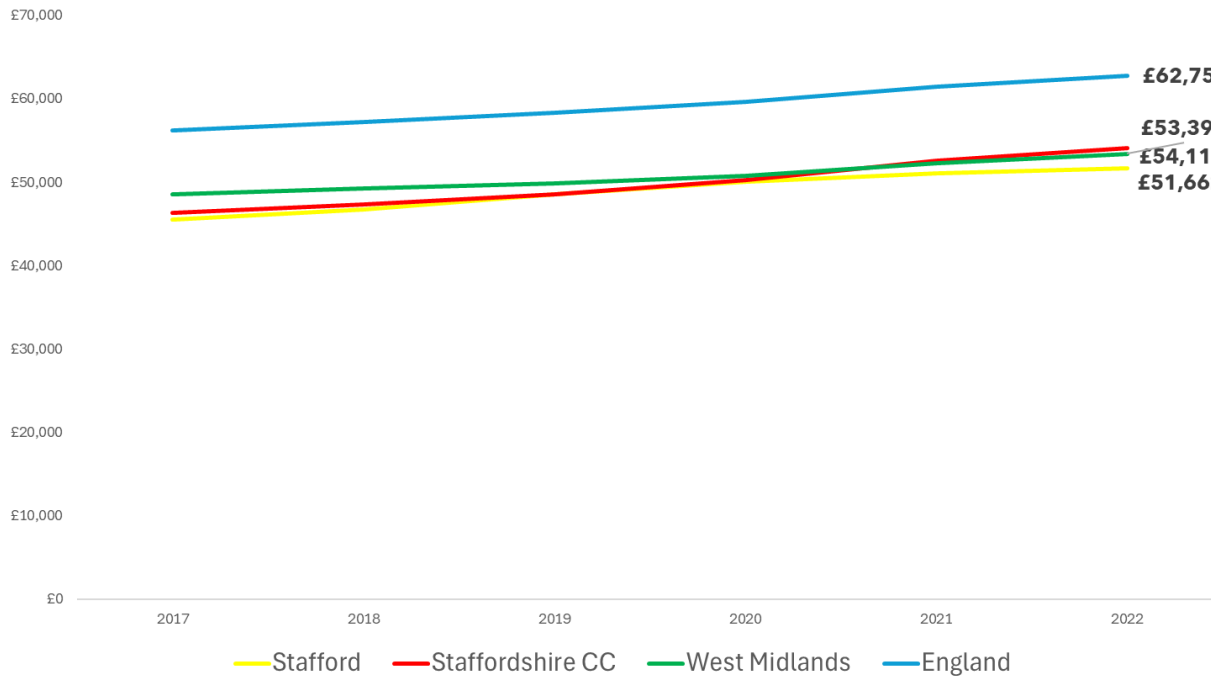


Productivity (GVA per Job Filled)

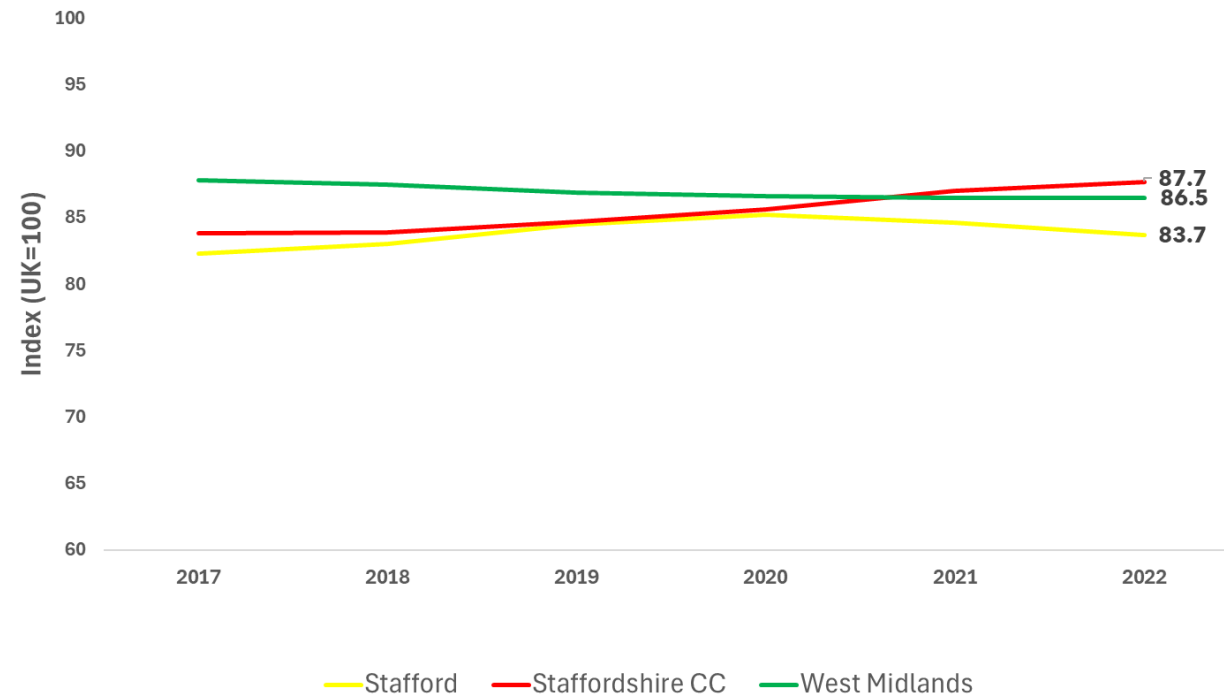
Stafford GVA per job filled at £51,662 in 2022 has grown by +14% between 2017-22. This is lower than county level growth of +17%, but higher than the regional +10% and national level +12%.

Stafford GVA per job filled is -4% lower than the county average, -2.8% lower than the regional and -16% less productive than the UK average.

GVA per Job Filled Growth (£) 2017-2022



GVA per Job Filled relative to UK average (UK=100)

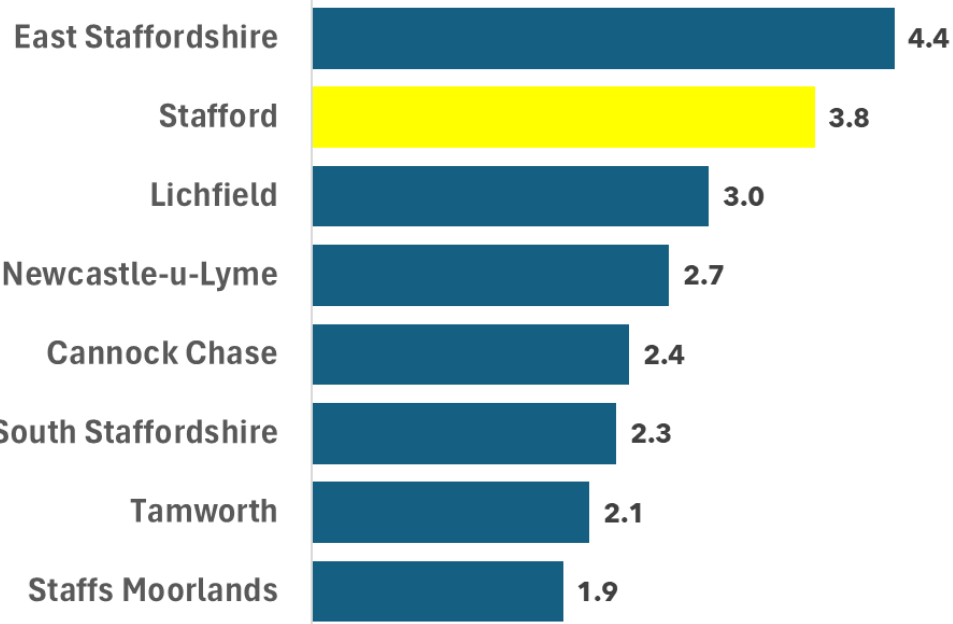


GVA Growth

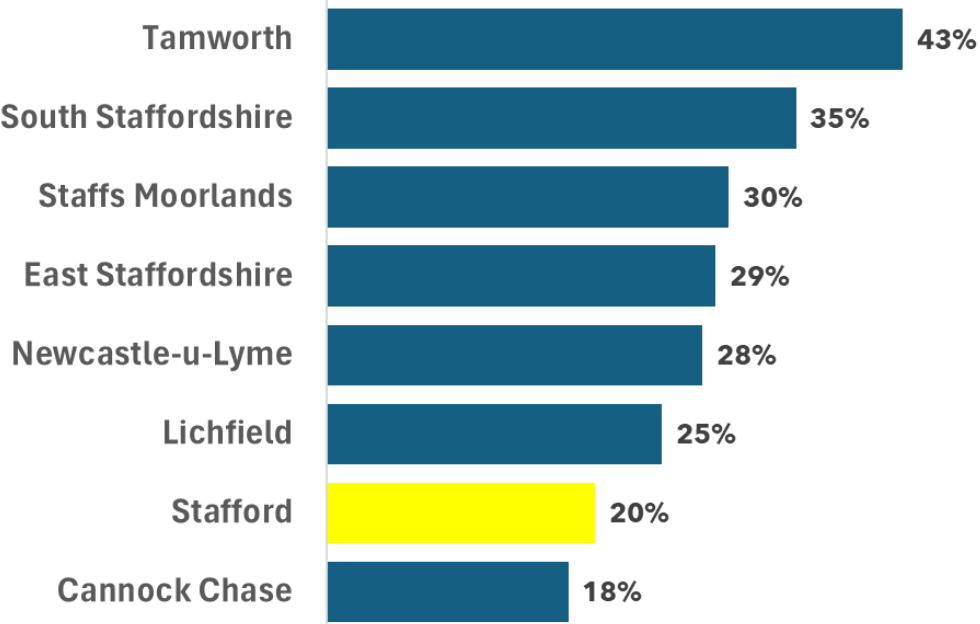
Stafford economy in 2022 worth £3.8 billion total GVA. Largest sectors by GVA include Wholesale & Retail £530 million; Real Estate £529 million; Public Admin & Defence £462 million.

Stafford total growth £646 million (+20%). This is higher than +18% West Midlands but lower than +21% growth in England and Staffordshire +27%.

Total GVA (£billion) 2022



Total GVA Growth 2017-2022 (%)



Source: ONS Regional GVA (balanced) by Local Authority 2024

Claimant Rate

2.7% Claimant rate in September 2024, lower than county 3.1%, regional 5.8% and national 4.4% averages.

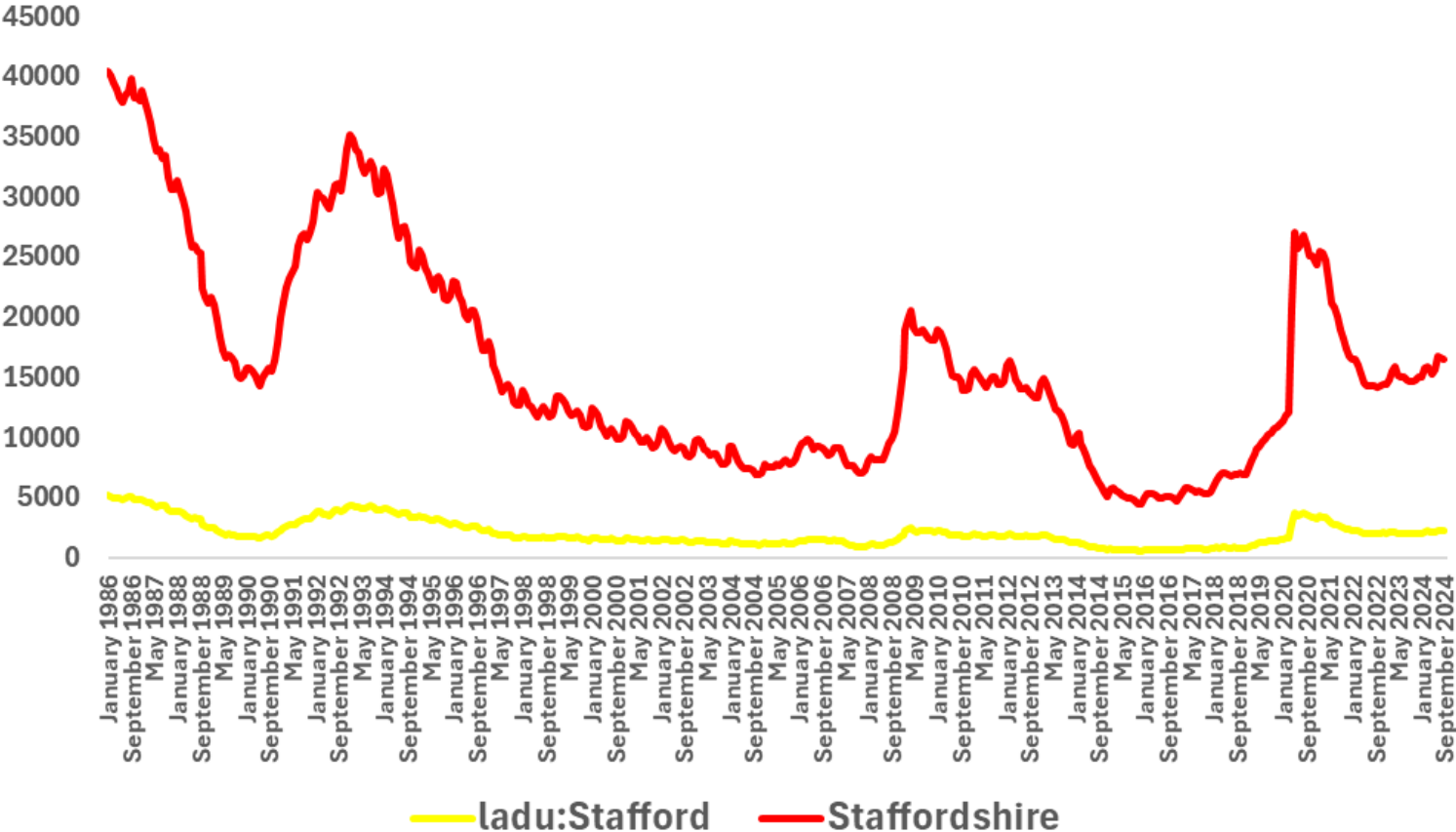
2,255 claimants in September 2024, +36% increase since March 2020, lower than county +37%, regional +49% and national 47% averages.

4.8% Youth claimant rate in September 2024, lower than county 4.9%, regional 7.5% and national 5.4% averages.

415 youth claimants in September 2024, +32% increase since March 2020, higher than county +27% and national +29% averages but lower than regional +35% average.

Source: NOMIS September 2024

Stafford and Staffordshire Claimant Trend



Job Vacancies

22,500 Unique postings July 2023–June 24

£29,100 Median advertised salary
July 2023–June 24

Human Health and Food & Beverage highest sector vacancies July 2023–June 24

Care Workers, Sales Related and Teaching Assistants highest occupation vacancies July 2023–June 24

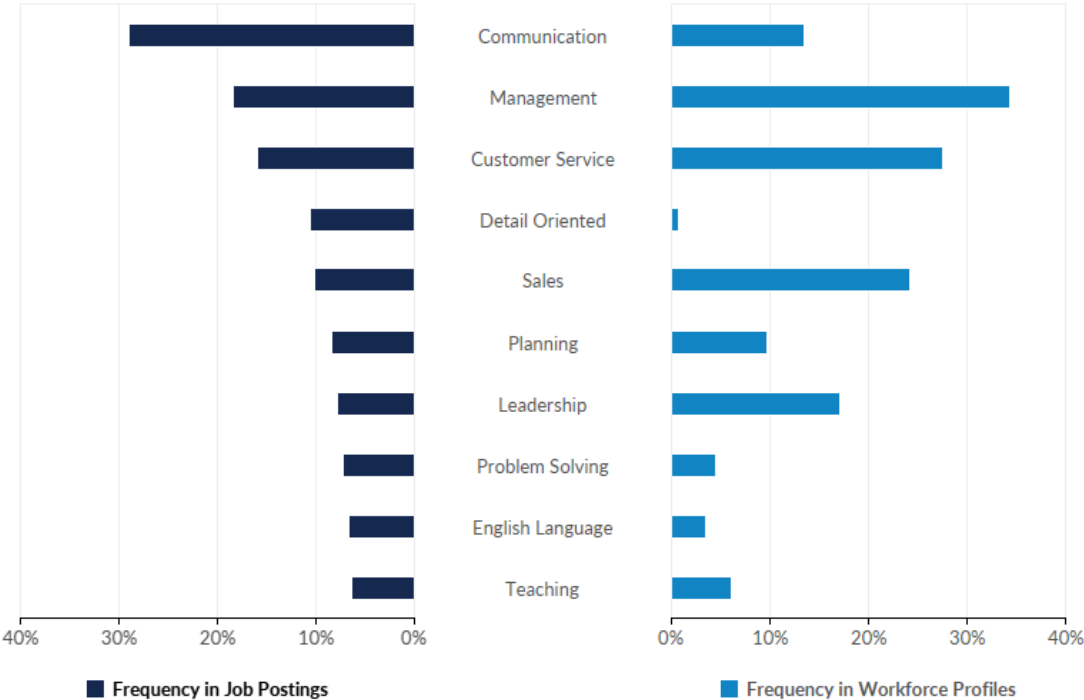
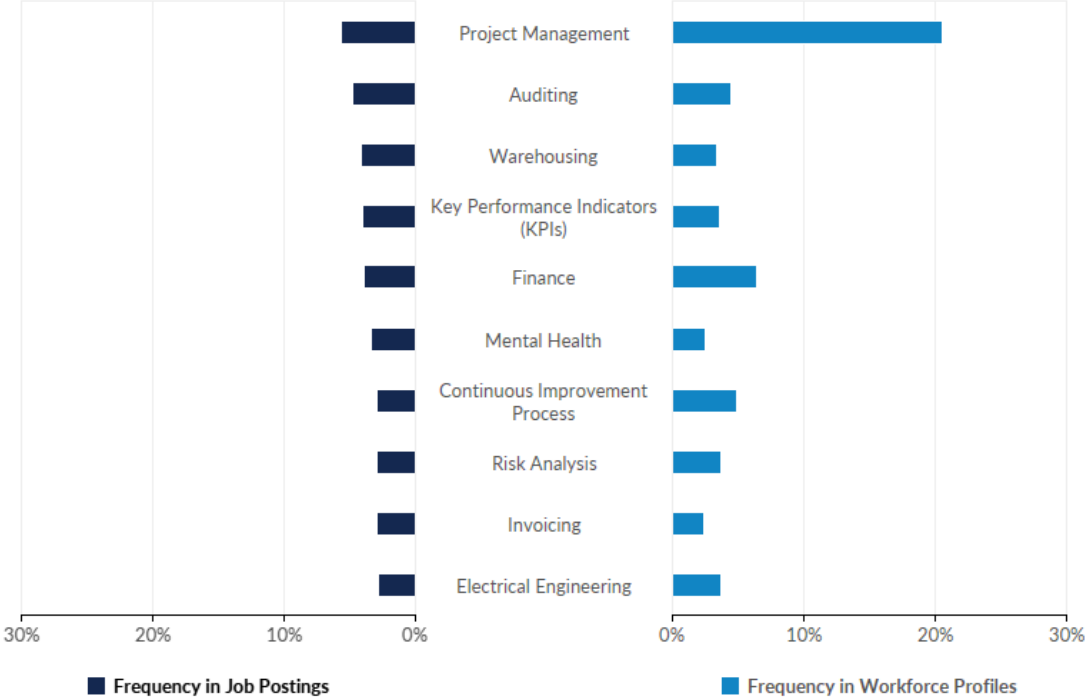
Source: Lightcast 2024

Occupation	Total/Unique (Jul22-Jun23)	Posting Intensity	
Care Workers	2,358/763	3:1	
Cleaners & Domestics	1,699/592	3:1	
Sales Related	1,197/556	2:1	
Kitchen/Catering Assist.	1,139/479	2:1	
Nursing Professionals	2,374/436	5:1	
Social Workers	1,361/431	3:1	
Prod/Process Engineers	808/390	2:1	
Warehouse Operatives	973/360	3:1	
Programmers/Software Dvpt Professionals	747/353	2:1	
Book-keepers/Payroll Mgrs/Wages Clerks	691/344	2:1	

Skills Gap

Project Management, Auditing & Warehousing most in demand **Specialised Skills**

Communication, Management & Customer Service most in demand **Common Skills**



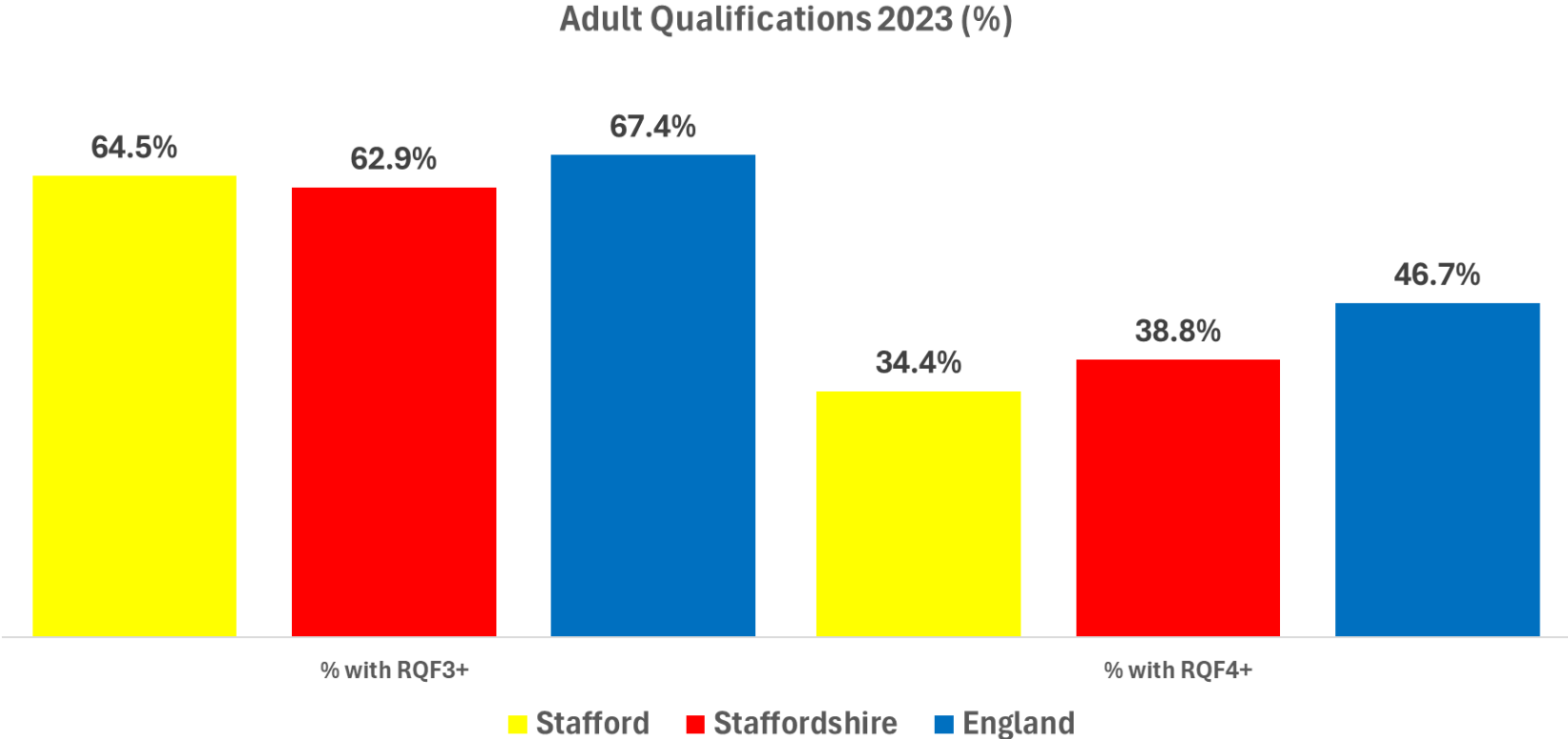
Source: Lightcast 2024

Skills Levels

34.4% Adults with RQF4+, lower than county 38.8% and national 46.7% averages.

64.5% Adults with RQF3+, higher than county average 62.9% but lower than national average 67.4%.

Source: ONS Annual Population Survey 2024



Apprenticeship Starts

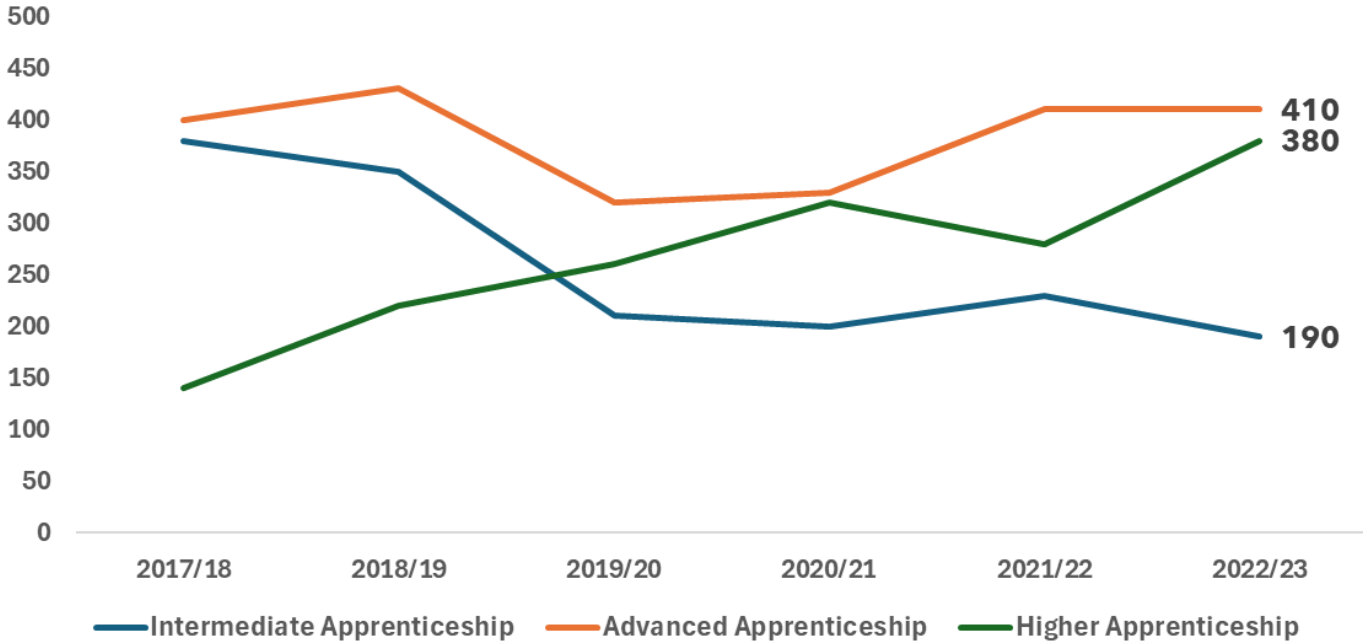
Stafford has seen a **+5%** increase in Apprenticeship Starts 2017/18-2022/23 from 920 to 970, in contrast to the -8% decline across Staffordshire.

Stafford has seen a **171%** increase in Higher Level Apprenticeships 2017/18-2022/23 from 140 to 380. This compares with a 126% increase across Staffordshire.

The 25+ age group accounts for the highest proportion of apprenticeship starts in Stafford at **54%**.

In 2022/23 the most popular subject choice in Stafford was **Business, Administration & Law** and **Health, Public Services & Care** both at 29%.

Stafford Apprenticeships by Level



Source: DfE Geography Region and LAD - Starts, Achievements by Sex, Level, Ethnicity, SSA

Opportunities for Growth & Development



Further develop partnerships and support for new businesses. Stafford Business start-up rate 2023 at **9.5%** is below county 10.1%, regional 12.1% and national 11.6% averages, but Stafford has the highest business survival rate of all Staffordshire LAs at 65%



Continue to improve education and skills levels to boost productivity and growth as **34%** of adults have RQF4+ qualifications below county 39% and national 47% averages



Continue to attract high skilled jobs to area and grow business base to improve productivity – Stafford already has **58%** of jobs in higher occupations, above county and national levels



Address higher than average economic inactivity rate of **22%** and declining employment rate trend to support local residents and improve productivity