Real time vacancy analysis:

Early findings on changes in vacancy levels by local area and job type

Tony Wilson, Dafni Papoutsaki, James Cockett and Matthew Williams

20 April 2020

This Briefing Note is the first of a series exploring changes in vacancies since the Covid-19 crisis began. The work is funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, and uses vacancy data collected by Adzuna (www.adzuna.co.uk).

Adzuna is one of the largest online job search engines in the UK, and runs the government's 'Find a Job' service. It aggregates job ads from thousands of sources and cleans, de-duplicates and standardises the information to provide a robust picture of employer demand, covering at least 90 per cent of all vacancy activity. Adzuna is supplying IES with weekly, real-time data on all job vacancies notified and live across the UK.

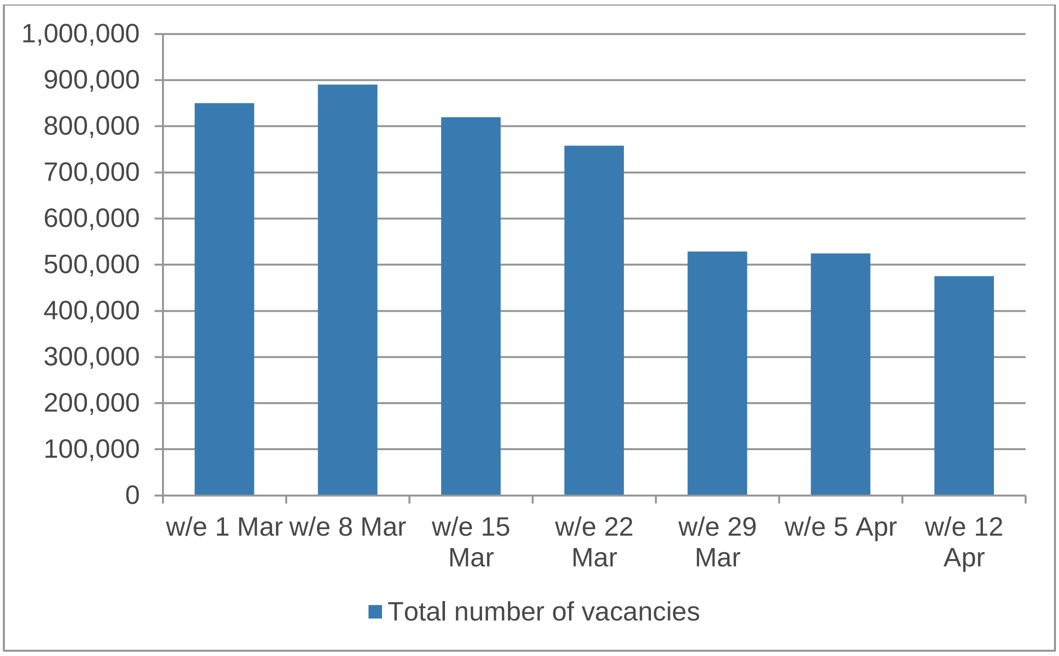
This first briefing note presents early findings on how vacancy levels have changed overall, across local areas and by different job types.

Headline findings

Our analysis finds that job vacancies across the UK have fallen by 42% since the lockdown began in mid-March. As at 15 March 2020, Adzuna was listing 820 thousand UK vacancies, which by 12 April had fallen to 475 thousand. Weekly changes in vacancy levels are set out in Figure 1 below, from late February onwards. This monthly fall is two-and-a-half times greater than the previous largest single monthly fall recorded in official vacancy statistics, of 17% in the depths of the last recession (November 2008)[1].

[1] Source: ONS Single Month Vacancy Survey estimates (dataset X06)

Figure 1: Total number of live vacancies, from week ending 1 March to 12 April



Source: Institute for Employment Studies analysis of Adzuna vacancy data

Changes in vacancy levels by geographical area

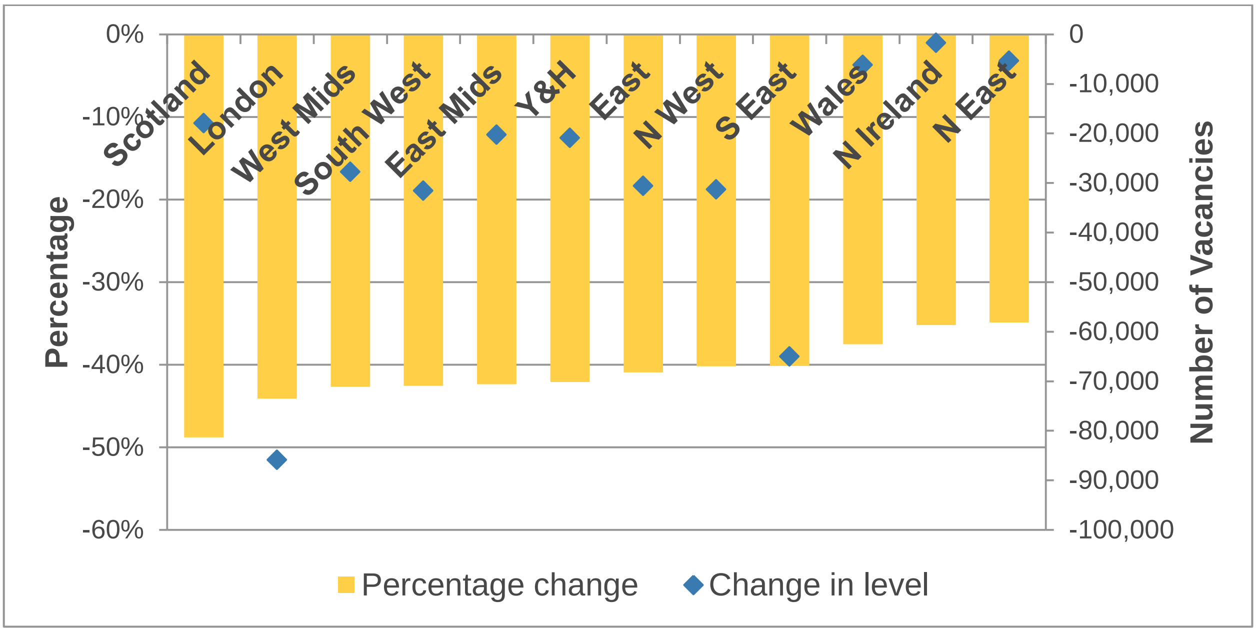
Each vacancy held by Adzuna has a geographical identifier, which we have mapped to Government Office Region and to Upper Tier Local Authority level. The analysis to regional level, which includes the three devolved nations, finds that the largest falls in vacancy levels have been in Scotland (down 49%) and London (down 44%).

London has the highest level of vacancies of any region or nation, so a quarter of all of the fall in vacancies between last month and this month is accounted for by an 86 thousand reduction in job openings in London. Similarly, while the South East has seen its vacancies fall by slightly less than the national average (at 40%), the size of the South East economy means that the 65 thousand fall in vacancies equates to nearly a fifth (19%) of the overall fall.

By contrast, Northern Ireland and the North East have seen vacancies fall by around one third (35%). However, these two regions account for only a small fraction of all job opportunities (just 2.5% of the total).

The regional changes are set out in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Percentage fall in vacancies (left hand axis) and change in the level of vacancies (right hand axis) by region and devolved nation



Source: Institute for Employment Studies analysis of Adzuna vacancy data

In most regions and nations, vacancy levels began their decline in week ending 15 March and fell precipitously two weeks later (in week ending 29 March). The exceptions to this were Wales and Northern Ireland, where vacancies have fallen more consistently since the start of March. In all regions and nations, vacancy levels have largely stabilised during April, but at levels between 30 and 50% lower than before the crisis began. These trends are set out in Figure 3 overleaf.

For the local analysis, we have mapped the postal town of the vacancy to local areas on a ‘best fit’ basis. In all of the country except for London and Northern Ireland, we have mapped to the Upper Tier Local Authority level (which includes Counties, Metropolitan Districts and Unitary Authorities). Analysis for London and Northern Ireland has been broken down into seven and four areas respectively[2].

This analysis shows that the differences within regions are greater than those between them. In all, ten local areas have seen vacancies fall by 50% or more – comprising:

- Two areas in the North West of England – with Blackpool seeing the single largest monthly fall, of 69%, and Trafford in Greater Manchester down by 51%

[2] For London this reflects post code areas: Central (Combining EC and WC), East, North, North East, South East, South West, and West London. In Northern Ireland, the areas are Belfast, East, North, and West and South.

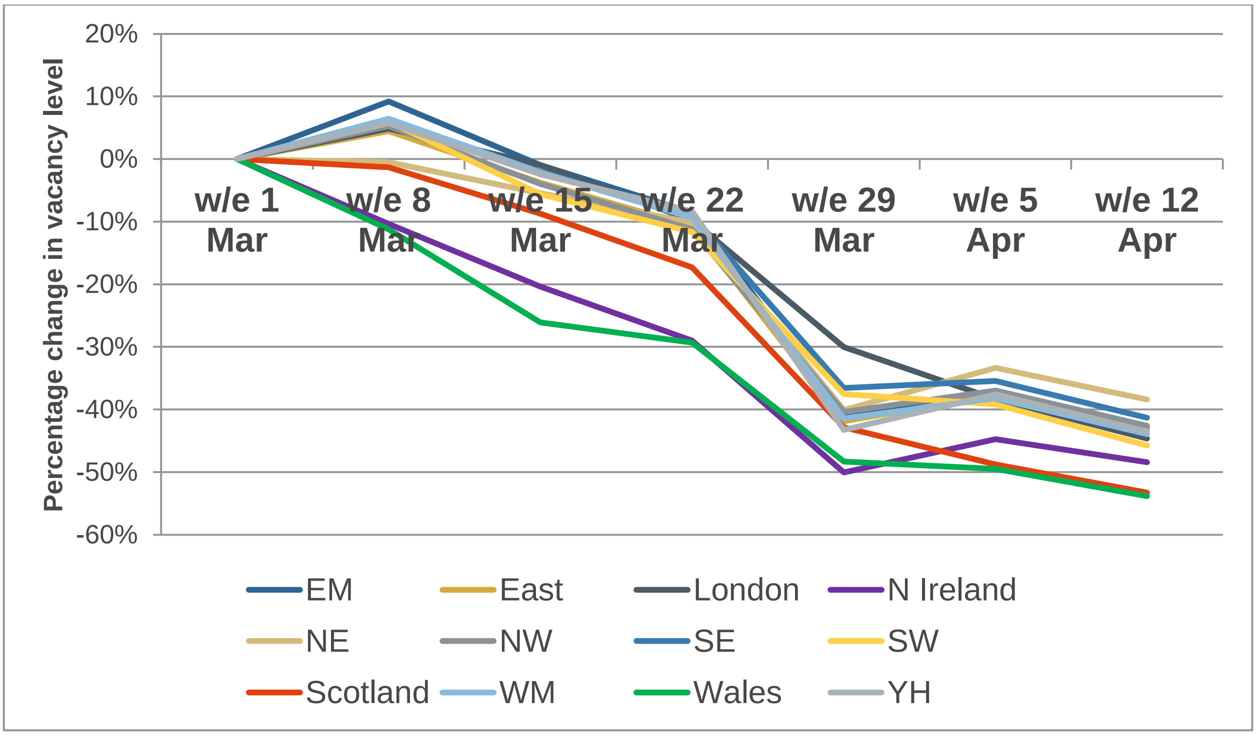
- Five areas in Scotland – with Edinburgh among these, falling by 58%
- Two areas in the South West of England – including Devon, which is down by 53%
- South East London, where vacancies have fallen by 50%

At the other end of the list, fifteen local authorities have seen vacancies fall by less than 30%. These are:

- Five areas in the North West – Blackburn with Darwen, Oldham, Bury, Tameside and Bolton (all with falls of between 23 and 28%)
- Five in the North East – Hartlepool, Darlington, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland, and North Tyneside (all between 18 and 27%)
- Monmouthshire and Newport in Wales, down by 28%
- Rutland in the East Midlands, down 27%
- East Sussex (down 15%) and the Isle of Wight (down 2%) in the South East
- Rotherham in Yorkshire and Humberside, where vacancies are down just 4%

A full list of changes by local area is set out in an Annex to this briefing note.

Figure 3: Percentage changes in vacancy levels by region, since week ending 1 March 2020



Source: Institute for Employment Studies analysis of Adzuna vacancy data

Changes by job types

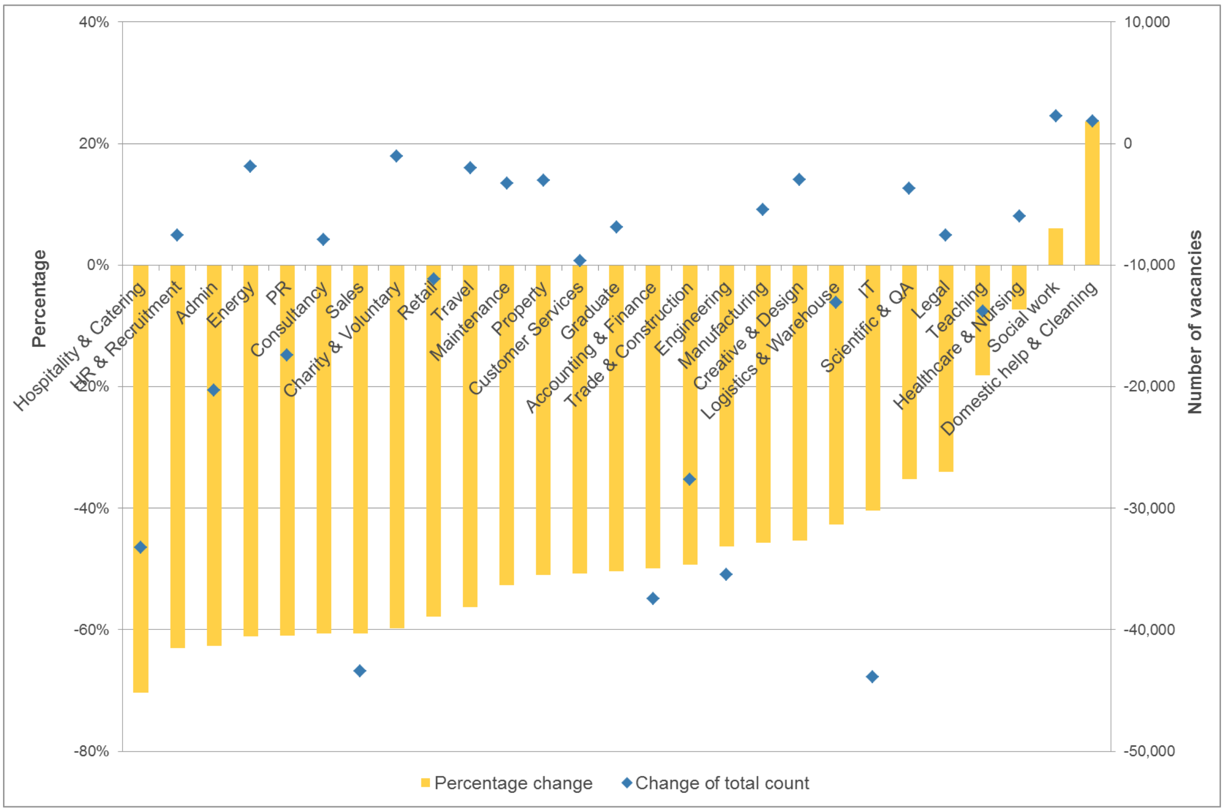
Finally, we have analysed changes in vacancies by the high level 'job types' that are recorded by Adzuna. These categorise all jobs into one of 27 groups, reflecting the broad occupational category for that work. This analysis is presented in Figure 4 below, showing the change in the level of vacancies and the percentage change for each type.

Unsurprisingly, this shows that the largest single fall has been in hospitality and catering jobs (down 70%), which have been most affected by the economic shutdown. However, it is concerning that there are very steep falls across a broad range of job types and not just in those directly shut down. Notably, vacancies have fallen by more than 60% in sales, administration, public relations, consulting, HR and recruitment, energy and charity work.

By volume, the largest falls have been in IT (down 44 thousand), sales (43 thousand), accounting and finance (37 thousand) and engineering (35 thousand). Combined, these four job types account for nearly half (44%) of all of the fall in vacancies.

Looking at those job types where vacancies are holding up, job openings have fallen only slightly in healthcare and have risen in social work and in cleaning. With the steep falls in vacancies elsewhere, these three areas now account for a quarter of all open vacancies compared with just one in seven a month ago.

Figure 4: Percentage fall in vacancies (left hand axis) and change in the level of vacancies (right hand axis) by high level job type



Source: Institute for Employment Studies analysis of Adzuna vacancy data

Conclusions and next steps

This early analysis of real-time vacancy data paints a fairly stark picture of how the jobs market and employer demand have been affected over the first month of lockdown. These impacts are far greater than anything that has been witnessed in at least a generation, and are affecting all places and nearly all parts of the economy.

It shows in particular that many workers who are at high risk of being in poverty, such as those working in restaurants and in non-food retail, are likely among those being hardest hit. At the same time, it demonstrates that demand has fallen dramatically in many professional occupations too.

Nonetheless, one conclusion from this analysis is that there remain nearly half a million current live vacancies, and that this number appears to have stabilised in the last two weeks. So there are still jobs available for those looking for work, and it is important to keep supporting those who are out of work to find those jobs.

None of this analysis should be read as arguing that the lockdown should be eased in the immediate future. Until Covid-19 is under control, we risk far greater economic damage by ending the lockdown than we do by continuing it.

Assuming that the lockdown can be eased during May and June, we should expect to see vacancies start to rise again. There are differing views about how rapid that recovery will be but in our view it is imperative that government, employers and wider labour market stakeholders start planning for that recovery now.

In the coming weeks, we will be publishing further analysis of new vacancy data as this becomes available. We anticipate that this analysis will include:

- Analysis of the unemployment to vacancy ratio in local areas
- Mapping of Adzuna Job Types to Standard Occupational Classifications
- More detailed analysis of what is driving changes in vacancies within local areas
- Analysis of how the salary levels of vacancies are changing over time
- Analysis of the ‘flow’ of new vacancies, as well as of overall vacancy levels

We would welcome input and feedback on this briefing note, and on the content and analysis for future briefings.

Annex: Changes in vacancy levels by local area

Table A.1: Changes in vacancy levels by local area, March 2020 to April 2020

Local Authority	Region/ nation	W/e 15 March	W/e 12 April	Change on month
Blackpool	North West	698	213	-69%
Edinburgh	Scotland	7,412	3,135	-58%
South Ayrshire	Scotland	330	146	-56%
West Lothian	Scotland	1,235	573	-54%
North Eastern Scotland	Scotland	4,665	2,183	-53%
Devon	South West	10,123	4,752	-53%
Trafford	North West	1,241	604	-51%
East Lothian and Midlothian	Scotland	3,348	1,635	-51%
Isles Of Scilly	South West	14	7	-50%
South East London	London	29,254	14,757	-50%
Wokingham	South East	853	431	-49%
Solihull	West Midlands	1,423	721	-49%
Birmingham	West Midlands	17,772	9,192	-48%
Luton	East of England	1,512	783	-48%
Leicestershire	East Midlands	5,426	2,842	-48%
Falkirk	Scotland	412	216	-48%
Bracknell Forest	South East	1,625	852	-48%
Glasgow	Scotland	7,451	3,920	-47%
Gateshead	North East	663	350	-47%
Bedford	East of England	2,118	1,119	-47%
Windsor and Maidenhead	South East	2,783	1,478	-47%
Central Bedfordshire	East of England	3,936	2,105	-47%
North West London	London	7,611	4,086	-46%
Sheffield	Yorkshire and Humber	9,173	4,936	-46%
West Sussex	South East	10,257	5,522	-46%
Buckinghamshire	South East	9,481	5,107	-46%
North Lincolnshire	Yorkshire and Humber	1,112	599	-46%
Northamptonshire	East Midlands	10,047	5,433	-46%
South West London	London	13,590	7,364	-46%
Borders	Scotland	348	189	-46%
West Berkshire	South East	1,451	789	-46%
Slough	South East	2,623	1,428	-46%
Warrington	North West	2,345	1,277	-46%
Gloucestershire	South West	13,304	7,246	-46%
Cumbria	North West	4,795	2,618	-45%

Local Authority	Region/ nation	W/e 15 March	W/e 12 April	Change on month
Barnsley	Yorkshire and Humber	758	414	-45%
Kent	South East	22,587	12,355	-45%
Warwickshire	West Midlands	7,178	3,937	-45%
Leeds	Yorkshire and Humber	14,495	7,958	-45%
Milton Keynes	South East	6,651	3,668	-45%
Telford and Wrekin	West Midlands	1,552	856	-45%
Clackmannanshire and Fife	Scotland	1,599	887	-45%
Calderdale	Yorkshire and Humber	1,112	618	-44%
Worcestershire	West Midlands	5,785	3,220	-44%
Central London (EC & WC)	London	117,498	65,526	-44%
Reading	South East	12,913	7,209	-44%
Staffordshire	West Midlands	6,869	3,848	-44%
Hertfordshire	East of England	19,503	10,941	-44%
Surrey	South East	23,109	12,972	-44%
Plymouth	South West	1,954	1,097	-44%
Cornwall	South West	3,829	2,151	-44%
Hampshire	South East	19,317	10,853	-44%
Cheshire West and Chester	North West	7,543	4,244	-44%
North Yorkshire	Yorkshire and Humber	5,743	3,242	-44%
Perth and Kinross, and Stirling	Scotland	1,052	594	-44%
York	Yorkshire and Humber	2,965	1,675	-44%
Essex	East of England	17,079	9,671	-43%
Bridgend and Neath Port Talbot	Wales	645	366	-43%
Oxfordshire	South East	13,563	7,697	-43%
Central Valleys	Wales	528	301	-43%
North Lanarkshire	Scotland	773	443	-43%
Coventry	West Midlands	3,699	2,122	-43%
Cardiff	Wales	6,485	3,748	-42%
Medway	South East	1,485	860	-42%
Angus and Dundee	Scotland	1,242	721	-42%
Dumfries and Galloway	Scotland	538	313	-42%
Nottinghamshire	East Midlands	5,367	3,133	-42%
Wakefield	Yorkshire and Humber	2,663	1,555	-42%
Cheshire East	North West	4,427	2,590	-41%
Bath and North East Somerset	South West	2,255	1,321	-41%
Stockport	North West	2,654	1,555	-41%
Nottingham	East Midlands	6,700	3,962	-41%
Bristol, City of	South West	16,179	9,590	-41%
East of Northern Ireland	Northern Ireland	1,985	1,178	-41%
Lincolnshire	East Midlands	5,805	3,456	-40%

Local Authority	Region/ nation	W/e 15 March	W/e 12 April	Change on month
Manchester	North West	26,702	15,922	-40%
South Lanarkshire	Scotland	1,167	696	-40%
North London	London	6,331	3,784	-40%
Leicester	East Midlands	4,983	2,984	-40%
Inverclyde, E. Renfrewshire and Renfrewshire	Scotland	1,096	657	-40%
Derby	East Midlands	3,397	2,038	-40%
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole	South West	3,573	2,146	-40%
Gwent Valleys	Wales	1,363	819	-40%
Derbyshire	East Midlands	5,838	3,510	-40%
Newcastle upon Tyne	North East	6,012	3,618	-40%
Highlands and Islands	Scotland	2,822	1,700	-40%
Lancashire	North West	9,568	5,791	-39%
Wiltshire	South West	6,449	3,908	-39%
Bradford	Yorkshire and Humber	2,122	1,288	-39%
East Dunbartonshire, West Dunbartonshire	Scotland	504	307	-39%
Southampton	South East	4,759	2,926	-39%
East London	London	9,603	5,921	-38%
Somerset	South West	7,581	4,676	-38%
Wigan	North West	1,249	774	-38%
Peterborough	East of England	2,643	1,640	-38%
Stoke-on-Trent	West Midlands	2,262	1,406	-38%
Halton	North West	910	567	-38%
Sefton	North West	751	468	-38%
Thurrock	East of England	1,103	688	-38%
Stockton-On-Tees	North East	540	337	-38%
Southend-on-Sea	East of England	921	576	-37%
Kirklees	Yorkshire and Humber	1,887	1,184	-37%
Cambridgeshire	East of England	12,191	7,682	-37%
East Riding Of Yorkshire	Yorkshire and Humber	2,448	1,543	-37%
Dorset	South West	5,542	3,496	-37%
Shropshire	West Midlands	3,073	1,941	-37%
Wirral	North West	1,171	745	-36%
Torbay	South West	603	384	-36%
Sandwell	West Midlands	1,154	735	-36%
Suffolk	East of England	6,909	4,406	-36%
Knowsley	North West	263	168	-36%
Liverpool	North West	8,162	5,221	-36%

Local Authority	Region/ nation	W/e 15 March	W/e 12 April	Change on month
Herefordshire, County of	West Midlands	1,771	1,143	-35%
North East Wales	Wales	1,622	1,047	-35%
Dudley	West Midlands	9,879	6,413	-35%
Portsmouth	South East	2,335	1,516	-35%
South West Wales	Wales	909	592	-35%
North Somerset	South West	994	648	-35%
Salford	North West	928	605	-35%
Brighton and Hove	South East	5,024	3,276	-35%
Doncaster	Yorkshire and Humber	1,895	1,239	-35%
Northumberland	North East	1,660	1,089	-34%
South Tyneside	North East	335	220	-34%
North East Lincolnshire	Yorkshire and Humber	701	466	-34%
Wolverhampton	West Midlands	1,728	1,149	-34%
Norfolk	East of England	6,831	4,551	-33%
Walsall	West Midlands	937	625	-33%
Swansea	Wales	1,559	1,041	-33%
Kingston upon Hull, City of	Yorkshire and Humber	1,504	1,005	-33%
East and North Ayrshire	Scotland	725	489	-33%
Swindon	South West	1,769	1,195	-32%
County Durham	North East	2,866	1,947	-32%
Rochdale	North West	788	536	-32%
West London	London	10,768	7,345	-32%
Belfast	Northern Ireland	2,339	1,596	-32%
North of Northern Ireland	Northern Ireland	189	129	-32%
St. Helens	North West	592	407	-31%
West and South of Northern Ireland	Northern Ireland	497	343	-31%
Sunderland	North East	961	666	-31%
North West Wales	Wales	1,437	998	-31%
South Gloucestershire	South West	10	7	-30%
Powys	Wales	650	458	-30%
Blackburn with Darwen	North West	921	661	-28%
Monmouthshire and Newport	Wales	1,260	910	-28%
Oldham	North West	940	680	-28%
Hartlepool	North East	232	169	-27%
Rutland	East Midlands	332	242	-27%
Bury	North West	502	367	-27%
Tameside	North West	309	226	-27%
Darlington	North East	763	578	-24%
Bolton	North West	503	385	-23%

Local Authority	Region/ nation	W/e 15 March	W/e 12 April	Change on month
Middlesbrough	North East	858	657	-23%
Redcar and Cleveland	North East	148	119	-20%
North Tyneside	North East	255	210	-18%
East Sussex	South East	20,443	17,296	-15%
Rotherham	Yorkshire and Humber	1,049	1,010	-4%
Isle Of Wight	South East	913	897	-2%

About IES

The Institute for Employment studies is an independent, apolitical centre of research and consultancy in employment policy and human resource management. It works with employers, government departments, agencies and professional and employee bodies to support sustained improvements in employment policy and practice.

Institute for Employment Studies, City Gate, 185 Dyke Road, Brighton, BN3 1TL United Kingdom

www.employment-studies.co.uk

@EmploymtStudies

01273 763400