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Kollydas, Kostas; Green, Anne

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Labour market insights from online job postings in East Birmingham and North Solihull

Kostas Kollydas and Anne Green

January 2026



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This report is based on research conducted as part of the '[Youth transitions to good employment: East Birmingham & North Solihull](#)' project.

This project is undertaken by a research team at City-REDI and the School of Education at the University of Birmingham, working with local partners including Birmingham City Council, Solihull Council and the West Midlands Combined Authority.

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Executive summary

This briefing uses online job postings data to explore labour demand in East Birmingham and North Solihull (EBNS) by sector and major occupation group. It also looks at how patterns of job demand in the EBNS area differ from those in the wider West Midlands region and England.

Key findings include:

- The share of professional occupations in total job postings in the EBNS area rose by more than five percentage points between 2022 and 2025. Skilled trades increased at a similar pace.
- The share of job postings for routine or lower-skilled roles declined during the same period.
- The EBNS area shows a stronger emphasis on education, professional and technical jobs than the broader West Midlands region. This likely reflects the area's mix of public-sector organisations, universities and professional service employers.
- Business services and digital roles are more common in EBNS than in neighbouring areas. For example, the share of IT jobs is nearly twice as high as in the West Midlands region overall.
- Demand for trade & construction jobs is also more pronounced in the EBNS area than in the wider region and England. These types of work often require technical or vocational skills and qualifications, thus highlighting continued demand for mid-level occupations.
- The median advertised salaries in the EBNS area stood at £36.6 thousand during 2022-2025. This is approximately 15% higher than the regional average and 6% above England's average.

The development of clearer routes into mid- and higher-skilled jobs partly depends on targeted education and training initiatives. It is therefore important to build robust relationships between local employers and learning providers. For younger people in East Birmingham and North Solihull this can help open up access to good and secure jobs as the local economy continues to change.



Background

There are significant spatial inequalities across the UK in terms of wages and employment rates, even though these are smaller than they were a couple of decades ago. In 2019, the average pay in London was about 60% higher than in low-wage towns such as Scarborough and Grimsby (Overman and Xu, 2024). Employment rates ranged from 66% in Skegness and Louth to 90% in Harrogate. Most of the best-paid jobs are clustered in London and a few other urban areas. This picture is partly driven by the concentration of highly skilled workers and more productive firms that demand such workers in these areas. Younger adults and graduates are often concentrated in cities such as London, Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds and Manchester, while a higher share of older people live in coastal or rural areas that provide natural amenities. However, wages in higher-paying areas are often offset by higher rents. Hence, overall life satisfaction does not necessarily vary much by place (Overman and Xu, 2024).

In the West Midlands, there are considerable differences in local skills structures, which result in uneven economic potential. Skills shortages and surpluses vary widely across the region (Sevinc et al., 2020). These, in turn, affect local growth prospects. In areas where related firms and industries cluster together, the picture looks more positive. Specifically, places with a stronger industrial base tend to experience fewer skills gaps and shortages. This is because thicker labour markets make it easier for firms to find the workers they need and for workers to find suitable jobs (Corradini et al., 2025).

About this briefing

To address some of the skills- and employment-related challenges, one important step is to understand where and in which sectors job opportunities arise. Job postings data offer a useful view of employer demand because they show which roles and skills are valued across different

local economies. The following analysis utilises such data to investigate patterns of labour demand in East Birmingham and North Solihull (EBNS). It also compares this demand with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) area, the broader West Midlands region and England. It should be noted that job postings data do not provide information on who applied for these jobs or who got them. The goal of the present analysis is to shed more light on some of the local opportunities and likely constraints that influence access to good employment.

Labour demand by sector and occupation group

This section examines job demand by sector and occupation group in the EBNS area, drawing on Adzuna¹ online job postings data. The results presented in the tables and figures below are compared with those for the WMCA area (the 7-metropolitan area), the West Midlands region, and England overall.

Teaching, engineering, and information technology (IT) cover the largest shares of online job postings in the EBNS area (see Table 1). These ‘sectors’² accounted for a third of all job vacancies between July 2022 and June 2025 and have a stronger presence in the EBNS area than in England overall. Similarly, demand for trade & construction jobs³ is more pronounced in the EBNS area than in the wider region and England. These types of work often require technical or vocational skills and qualifications, thus highlighting continued demand for mid-level occupations.

In general, the EBNS area has a more professional and knowledge-based profile than the wider West Midlands region. Roles related to education, business services (such as accounting, consultancy and human resources), and digital work are relatively more common. This picture likely reflects the area’s mix of public-sector institutions, universities, and professional services-oriented employers. For instance, IT jobs have nearly double the share in the EBNS area compared with the West Midlands region as a whole. This signifies the concentration of digital and technical employment around Birmingham’s city centre and some of its universities. In contrast, sectors such as healthcare, logistics and manufacturing are less represented in the EBNS area. England’s profile is more balanced, showing stronger representation in hospitality and marketing.

¹ [Adzuna](#) is an online job search engine that compiles data from an extensive number of sources (such as employer websites, job boards, and recruitment software providers). According to Adzuna, this coverage represents approximately 90%-95% of all online job postings in the UK at any given point in time. Throughout this article, Adzuna data refer to unique (deduplicated) online job postings. Job postings are classified by the location of the advertised job; information on the residential location of individuals who ultimately take these jobs is not available.

² The sectors in the Adzuna data refer to occupation groups defined by job functions and roles rather than by industry classification. This means they capture the type of work that is advertised, not the industry of the employer.

³ Online job postings may understate true demand in construction, as many vacancies in the sector are filled through informal recruitment and word-of-mouth networks. It is estimated that more than 207,000 additional workers will be needed over the next five years to meet industry demand in England, including 4,000 per year in the West Midlands (Construction Industry Training Board, 2025).

Table 1. Distribution (%) of online job postings by sector for selected areas (1 July 2022-30 June 2025)

Occupation category (sector)	EBNS	WMCA	West Midlands	England
Teaching	11.7	14.7	11.3	10.2
Engineering	10.9	11.4	12.1	9.4
Information technology (IT)	10.4	6.1	5.4	8.8
Hospitality & catering	8.5	7.1	8.6	9.9
Sales	7.8	6.7	5.9	6.3
Trade & construction	7.3	5.6	4.8	5.9
Accounting & finance	7.1	5.7	5.4	7.6
Healthcare & nursing	4.9	6.6	7.1	6.3
Retail	4.7	5.4	5.9	4.9
Admin	4.7	4.9	4.8	4.5
Social work	3.3	4.9	5.9	4.6
Logistics & warehouse	2.9	5.3	6.9	4.7
Customer services	2.6	2.4	2.5	2.4
HR & recruitment	2.1	1.9	1.5	1.7
Legal	1.9	1.4	1.4	2.0
Consultancy	1.9	1.2	0.9	1.3
PR, advertising & marketing	1.7	1.2	1.3	2.4
Manufacturing	1.2	2.9	3.5	1.9
Domestic help & cleaning	1.1	1.3	1.5	1.3
Maintenance	0.8	1.1	1.1	0.9
Scientific & Quality Assurance (QA)	0.7	0.6	0.7	1.1
Property	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.6
Creative & design	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.5
Travel	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4
Energy oil & gas	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2
Other/general	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Voluntary	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
Total number of unique job postings	185,273	474,199	1,386,124	28,493,115

Note: For each area, the shares sum to 100% across all sectors. The East Birmingham & North Solihull (EBNS) area comprises the following parliamentary constituencies: Birmingham Hall Green, Birmingham Ladywood, Birmingham Erdington, Birmingham Hodge Hill, Birmingham Yardley, and Meriden. The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) area (7-metropolitan area) includes 27 parliamentary constituencies. The West Midlands region covers all constituencies within the region. Figures are ordered in descending order of the share of job postings by sector in the EBNS area.

Source: Adzuna Intelligence, authors' calculations

It is apparent from the data that the labour market in the EBNS area is weighted towards higher-skill occupations (Figure 1). Professional roles⁴ represented 35.9% of all job postings in 2025, while managers, directors and senior officials made up 11.3%. Together, these groups accounted for nearly half of all job postings in the area. This share is significantly higher than that of the West Midlands region (40%) and England's average (43%).

The labour market profile described above is substantially different from that of the broader West Midlands region. In the West Midlands, lower-skilled and manual roles (including process, plant & machine operatives, and elementary occupations) make up a larger share of total job demand

⁴ Professional occupations include 'science, research, engineering, and technology professionals', 'health professionals', 'teaching professionals', and 'business, media, and public service professionals'.

compared to the EBNS area. EBNS also records a smaller proportion of caring, leisure and service job postings than the regional average.

Figure 1. Distribution (%) of online job postings by major occupation group for selected areas (1 July 2024-30 June 2025)



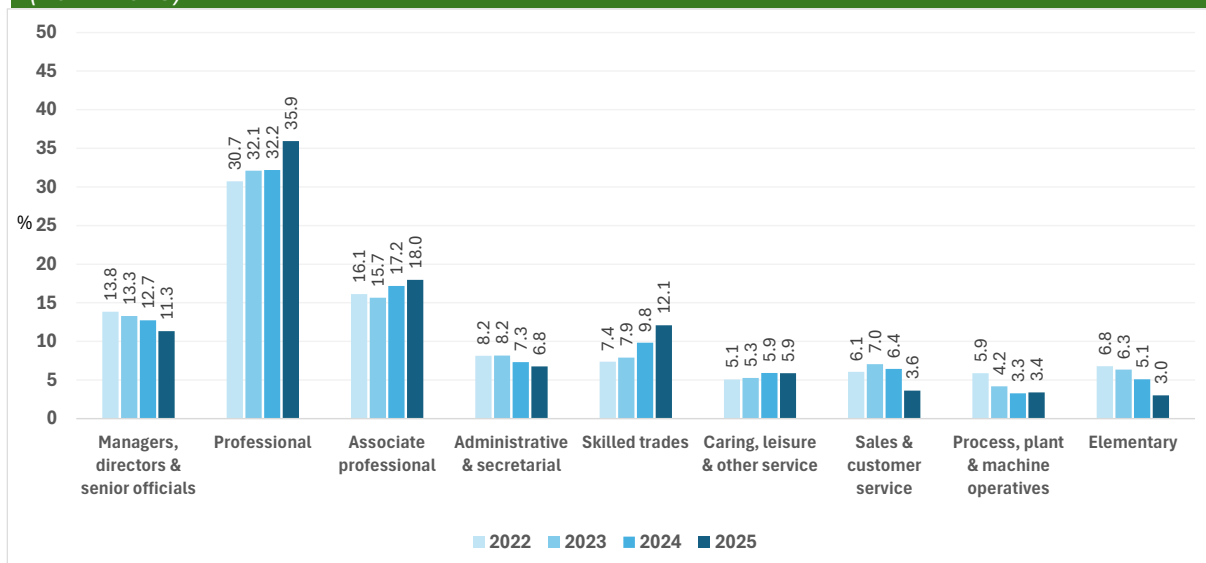
Note: Occupation groups are defined according to the 2020 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC). For each area, the shares sum to 100% across all occupation groups. During the period 1 July 2024-30 June 2025, there were approximately 61 thousand unique online job postings in EBNS, 138 thousand in the WMCA area, 391 thousand in the West Midlands region, and 7.7 million in England. These figures include only job postings with a known SOC allocation and a known location (parliamentary constituency). Given that only part of the job postings could be matched to an occupation and location, these figures should be interpreted with caution. Specifically, if postings with known classifications systematically differ from those without, the reported distributions in the graph may not fully reflect the true occupational composition of job postings in each area. The East Birmingham & North Solihull (EBNS) area comprises the following parliamentary constituencies: Birmingham Hall Green, Birmingham Ladywood, Birmingham Erdington, Birmingham Hodge Hill, Birmingham Yardley, and Meriden. The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) area (7-metropolitan area) includes 27 parliamentary constituencies. The West Midlands region covers all constituencies within the region.
Source: Adzuna Intelligence, authors' calculations

Figure 2 reveals that the share of professional occupations in total job demand in the EBNS area rose sharply between 2022 and 2025 (by over five percentage points). Skilled trades increased at a similar rate, thereby demonstrating the growth in demand for technical and hands-on roles. On the other hand, the share of lower-skilled occupation groups amongst job postings declined over the same period. The largest decrease was observed in elementary occupations (by 3.8 percentage points). These occupational patterns align with the findings discussed earlier. They suggest a higher presence of roles associated with education, business services, digital and technical work in the EBNS area. On the flip side, relatively fewer opportunities exist for routine or entry-level occupations, although such opportunities do exist. Some of these job openings, especially if they are rather casual in nature, may not be advertised online.

Commuting, and residential movements, within Birmingham, Solihull and surrounding areas might play a role here. Many people travel daily into the city centre for professional and public-sector work. Other workers may relocate to nearby areas, including parts of EBNS, to be closer to these jobs. This mobility reinforces the cluster of high-skill employment and associated spending power around the city centre. But it can also mask economic inequalities between different local areas. For example, some local residents do not have the qualifications or experience needed for higher-skilled roles in the EBNS area. For others, it may be difficult to reach areas with jobs that match their skills. As a result, not everyone can access secure and

well-paid jobs. These gaps are likely to be more pronounced among younger workers (who often begin in lower-skilled positions) and among those whose travel options are relatively limited.

Figure 2. Distribution (%) of online job postings by major occupation group in the EBNS area (2022-2025)



Note: Occupation groups are defined according to the 2020 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC). Each year covers the period from 1 July of the previous year to 30 June. The East Birmingham & North Solihull (EBNS) area comprises the following parliamentary constituencies: Birmingham Hall Green, Birmingham Ladywood, Birmingham Erdington, Birmingham Hodge Hill, Birmingham Yardley, and Meriden. The total number of job postings in the EBNS area was approximately 51 thousand in 2022, 69 thousand in 2023, 55 thousand in 2024, and 61 thousand in 2025. These figures include only job postings with a known SOC allocation and a known location (parliamentary constituency). Given that only part of the job postings could be matched to an occupation and location, these figures should be interpreted with caution. Specifically, if postings with known classifications systematically differ from those without, the reported distributions in the graph may not fully reflect the true occupational composition of job postings in each area.

Source: Adzuna Intelligence, authors' calculations

Salary levels by sector and area

Table 2 indicates that advertised salaries in the EBNS area are generally higher than in the West Midlands region and those observed across England. Over the period 2022-2025, the weighted median salary in EBNS stood at £36.6 thousand. This translates to a pay level that is roughly 15% higher than the regional average and around 6% above England's average.

This earnings premium is consistent with the EBNS area's occupational and sectoral profile discussed earlier. The higher concentration of employment in education, professional and technical activities is associated with higher levels of average advertised salaries. For instance, median salaries in trade & construction, energy, oil & gas, and engineering exceed regional and national benchmarks, while IT jobs also perform very strongly.

At the lower end of the pay distribution, sectors such as hospitality, administration, and customer services offer salaries between £24,000 and £27,000, which are close to regional and national averages. This variation in salaries across sectors highlights clear differences in job quality and earning potential in local, but also wider, labour markets.

Table 2. Weighted median salaries by sector for selected areas (1 July 2022-30 June 2025)

Occupation category (sector)	EBNS	WMCA	West Midlands	England
Information technology (IT)	£51,602	£46,981	£45,155	£51,695
Trade & construction	£48,168	£44,386	£41,808	£43,693
Energy oil & gas	£42,109	£40,067	£38,908	£39,857
Legal	£41,943	£41,753	£39,601	£45,700
Engineering	£40,983	£38,161	£38,719	£39,764
Property	£40,651	£36,696	£33,361	£34,727
Healthcare & nursing	£39,965	£39,197	£38,301	£39,877
Scientific & Quality Assurance (QA)	£37,250	£35,968	£33,225	£36,560
Sales	£37,214	£33,713	£32,440	£32,803
Creative & design	£37,175	£34,726	£35,544	£36,309
Accounting & finance	£36,409	£33,439	£32,943	£38,287
Other/general	£34,987	£34,260	£34,415	£31,294
Consultancy	£34,726	£33,560	£32,928	£34,297
PR, advertising & marketing	£34,573	£33,361	£32,296	£35,142
HR & recruitment	£34,290	£32,916	£31,909	£34,627
Teaching	£34,214	£32,274	£31,481	£31,805
Retail	£31,884	£28,045	£25,542	£25,029
Voluntary	£31,005	£31,157	£30,455	£33,438
Maintenance	£30,969	£32,160	£31,097	£32,106
Logistics & warehouse	£28,598	£27,148	£26,670	£27,176
Manufacturing	£28,027	£26,058	£26,352	£26,411
Travel	£27,045	£26,834	£27,198	£27,882
Social work	£26,824	£25,806	£25,122	£26,618
Hospitality & catering	£26,706	£25,691	£25,684	£26,961
Admin	£25,618	£24,374	£24,095	£25,043
Customer services	£24,509	£23,748	£23,729	£24,443
Domestic help & cleaning	£20,760	£20,970	£21,031	£22,000
All sectors	£36,620	£33,147	£31,953	£34,645

Note: The East Birmingham & North Solihull (EBNS) area comprises the following parliamentary constituencies: Birmingham Hall Green, Birmingham Ladywood, Birmingham Erdington, Birmingham Hodge Hill, Birmingham Yardley, and Meriden. The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) area (7-metropolitan area) includes 27 parliamentary constituencies. The West Midlands region covers all constituencies within the region. For EBNS, WMCA, and the West Midlands region, salaries are weighted means of constituency-level median salaries. Each constituency median salary is weighted based on the number of online job postings in that constituency. The total (all sectors) is a weighted mean of sector-level median salaries based on the number of job postings in each sector. A colour scale is applied to the table, shading higher salaries towards green and lower salaries towards red. Figures are ordered in descending order of the weighted median salaries by sector in the EBNS area.

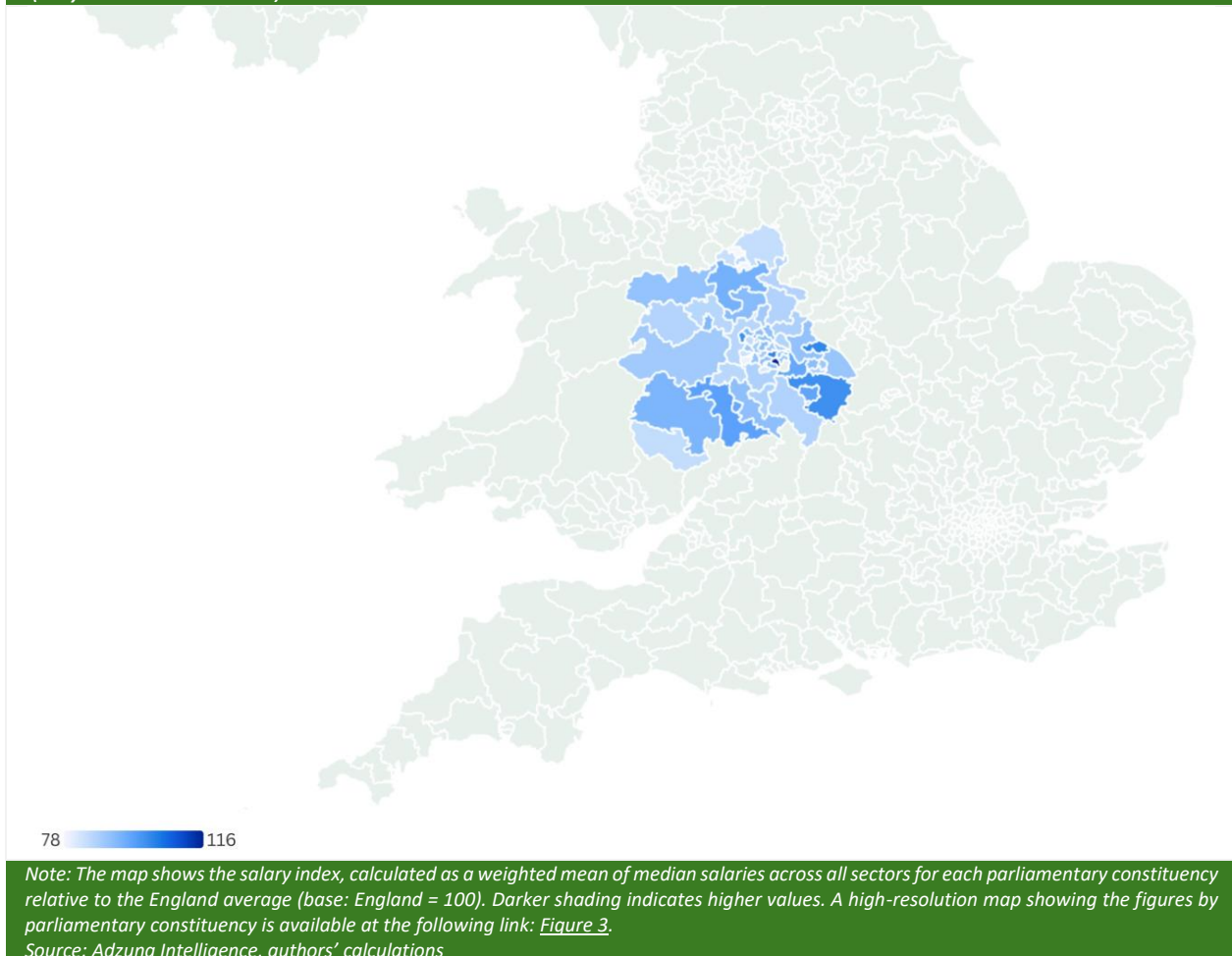
Source: Adzuna Intelligence, authors' calculations

There are large differences in advertised salaries across parliamentary constituencies in the West Midlands. Figure 3 presents a salary index that compares median salaries in each constituency (including all sectors) with the England average. In particular, values above 100 indicate areas where advertised salaries are higher than the England average, while values below 100 show the opposite. The weighted salary index (England = 100) ranged from 78.1 in Stoke-on-Trent North to 115.8 in Birmingham Hall Green during the period 2022-2025. Overall, only five out of 58 constituencies had average salaries above the national benchmark: Birmingham Hall Green (115.8), Birmingham Ladywood (102.2), Nuneaton (101.7), Wolverhampton South West (100.5), and Kenilworth and Southam (100.4).

Employers located in areas around central Birmingham and parts of Warwickshire tend to advertise higher salaries. Conversely, parts of Staffordshire, Shropshire, the Black Country, Stoke-on-Trent, and Coventry tend to see job postings with lower wage levels. This may be associated with a higher share of lower-paid service and production roles in these areas.

The salary levels also differ substantially across parliamentary constituencies within the EBNS area. As mentioned, Birmingham Hall Green stands out with the region's highest index value. The other EBNS constituencies – Birmingham Erdington (87.9), Hodge Hill (88.9), Yardley (91.1), Meriden (95.9), and Ladywood (102.2) – report a mixed picture of median salaries. This pattern likely illustrates the diversity of pay conditions, as well as the occupational and industrial mix. It also echoes differences in the demand for, and supply of, skills in the area.

Figure 3. Salary index per parliamentary constituency in the West Midlands (England=100) (July 2022-June 2025)



Spatial variation in job density across the West Midlands

Figure 4 illustrates how the availability of jobs differs across the West Midlands. It shows the number of people aged 16-64 for every online job posting by parliamentary constituency. This ratio does not measure labour market tightness directly, given that it includes everyone of working age rather than only those seeking work; also, it excludes vacancies not advertised online. However, it provides an overview of job density at the local level. In particular, it estimates (albeit imperfectly) the relationship between potential labour supply and the number of available

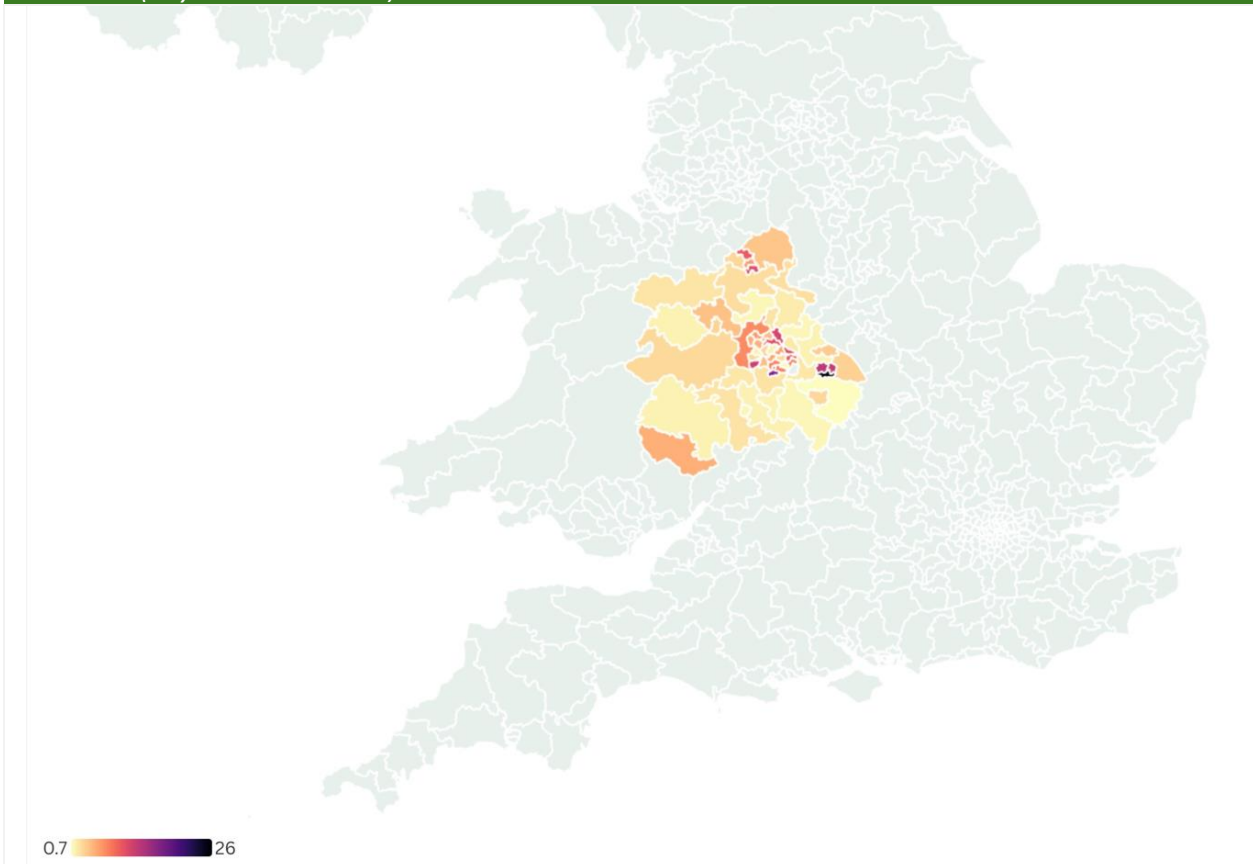
jobs. Lower ratios suggest a higher density of vacancies and a more dynamic market. Conversely, higher values imply fewer openings per potential worker.

Across the West Midlands, these ratios vary substantially. They range from 0.7 in Kenilworth and Southam (implying a high job density) to 26.0 in Coventry South (where competition for vacancies appears more intense). On average, there were 2.6 people per online job posting in the West Midlands, 2.5 in the EBNS area, and 1.2 in England during the period 2022-2025. This means that, overall, the pool of potential workers per vacancy is twice as large in the region as nationally.

Ratios are lower for certain areas close to central Birmingham and Warwickshire, such as Birmingham Hall Green (0.8), Kenilworth and Southam (0.7), and Stratford-on-Avon (1.0). On the other hand, areas such as Coventry South (26.0), Birmingham Northfield (16.5), Coventry North West (12.9), and Stourbridge (11.7) display some of the highest ratios in the region. There are also considerable differences within the EBNS area itself. Birmingham Hall Green recorded one of the lowest ratios in the region, while Erdington (10.4) and Hodge Hill (9.5) – which lies at the heart of the EBNS area – had far higher values. This pattern implies significant internal variation in job densities, even across neighbouring constituencies.

Several reasons could explain these differences. Job markets tend to be tighter in areas with an abundance of professional, business, and technical work. In contrast, ratios are higher in some outer urban constituencies, like parts of north and south Birmingham, Coventry, and the edges of the Black Country. When comparing these patterns with the salary figures presented earlier, a mixed picture emerges: the geography of job density and pay only partially overlaps. Constituencies around central Birmingham and parts of Warwickshire combine relatively high salaries with lower people-to-job ratios. Elsewhere, weaker job creation and lower pay continue to coincide.

Figure 4. Ratio of people aged 16-64 to job postings by parliamentary constituency in the West Midlands (July 2022-June 2025)



Note: The map shows the ratio of people aged 16-64 to the total number of job postings in each parliamentary constituency in the West Midlands region. The total number of job postings refers to the sum of unique postings across all sectors (occupation categories) from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2025. Population figures refer to 2024 estimates from the Annual Population Survey. Darker shading indicates higher values. A high-resolution map showing the figures by parliamentary constituency is available at the following link: [Figure 4](#). Source: Adzuna Intelligence, authors' calculations

Conclusion

The labour market in East Birmingham and North Solihull focuses on higher-skilled and specialised work to a higher extent than the wider West Midlands region, which is characterised by more production-oriented demand. The demand for jobs in sectors related to education, professional and technical roles is higher in the EBNS area. This partly reflects the area's proximity to Birmingham's city centre, which includes labour-intensive businesses, public service organisations and higher education institutions. These features bring more openings for well-paid jobs in the EBNS area. But they may also narrow the range of routes into work for those without advanced skills.

For younger people, this matters. Many jobs in the local economy require higher qualifications, sector-specific training and prior experience. However, a significant proportion of younger people are more likely to be employed in lower-paid or less secure roles. If "good employment" is to become more widely accessible, then more attention will be needed to mid-skilled pathways and stronger alignment between skills supply and local demand. For young people in East Birmingham and North Solihull, a system that brings these elements together could make a difference by improving access to well-paid and secure jobs and helping more residents take part in the area's changing economy. This is especially important when set alongside the travel

options and the quality of transport links in and out of East Birmingham and North Solihull. As part of the wider metropolitan area, the EBNS area relies on a road network that is adequate overall but faces certain operational challenges (Begum et al., 2022), which may limit how easily some residents can travel to a wider range of jobs.

Evidence from the Netherlands suggests that jobs located in dense urban areas demand more skills and a broader mix of skill types than comparable jobs in smaller towns or rural municipalities (Rouwendal and Koster, 2025). In particular, the number of required skills rises with population density, even within the same occupation and firm. Urban jobs involve greater use of professional, IT, soft, and language skills, suggesting broader and more diverse skills portfolios. Analytical non-routine and knowledge-intensive occupations display the strongest link between complexity and city size. These results indicate that employment structures are more intricate in urban labour markets. Similar patterns are likely to hold in other large urban areas outside the Netherlands (including the UK), where work tends to be more complex and skills-intensive. It is therefore important to make long-lasting pathways that lead to jobs that require advanced skills. This necessitates focused educational and training initiatives, alongside robust collaborations between educational institutions and employers.

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