

Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) 2021¹: Black Country

Please note, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) have reported that interpreting average earnings data is difficult at the moment; in July ONS published a blog: [How COVID-19 has impacted the Average Weekly Earnings data](#), which explains the complexities of interpreting earnings data in the current climate; compositional and base effects are likely to affect the growth rates, as the data for April 2020 was affected by both the coronavirus pandemic, in terms of wages and hours worked in the economy, and also disruption to the collection of data from businesses; this means **that comparisons with 2020 need to be treated with caution**, and we would encourage users to focus on long-term trends rather than year on year changes.

In Summary:

- Average full-time annual earnings for Black Country residents have rose by £405 (+1.5%) since April 2020 to reach £28,169 in April 2021, the UK decreased by 0.6%. Black Country resident earnings are at 90% of the UK average, with the average resident earning £3,116 less than the UK average of £31,285.
- Average full-time workplace annual earnings for the Black Country area have rose by £470 (+1.7%) since April 2020 to reach £28,887 in April 2021, the UK decreased by 0.6%. The Black Country workplace earnings are at 92.3% of the UK average, with the average workplace earning £2,398 less than the UK average of £31,285.
- Gender pay gap is defined as the difference between men's and women's hourly earnings as a percentage of men's earnings. In 2021, the Black Country had a higher work-based median gender pay gap at 13.3% compared to 12.4% for home-based. Although, these figures were both below the UK proportion of 15.4%.
- In April 2021, for the West Midlands region, there were approximately 99,000 employee jobs with employees aged 16 years and over who were paid below the National Minimum Wage (NMW) or National Living Wage (NLW). This accounts for 4.3% of employee jobs in the West Midlands compared to the UK with 3.8% of employee jobs.

Full Brief:

Resident Based

- Average full-time annual earnings for Black Country residents have rose by £405 (+1.5%) since April 2020 to reach £28,169 in April 2021, the UK decreased by 0.6%. Black Country resident earnings are at 90% of the UK average, with the average resident earning £3,116 less than the UK average of £31,285.
- Within the Black Country, Dudley was the only local authority to experience a decrease in full time annual resident earnings between 2020 and 2021 at -5.3% (-£1,653 to £29,438). Sandwell and Walsall each increased by 2.7% (+£692 to £26,630 and +£760 to £28,515 respectively). Wolverhampton increased by 7.4% (+£1,894) since 2020 to reach £27,503 in 2021.

¹ Sources: Office for National Statistics - Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings- Employee earnings in the UK: 2021, low and high pay in the UK: 2021 and gender pay gap in the UK: 2021; released October 2021

The following table shows resident earnings, 2020-2021:

	2020	2021	Percentage Change	Number Change
Dudley	£31,091	£29,438	-5.3%	-£1,653
Sandwell	£25,938	£26,630	2.7%	£692
Walsall	£27,755	£28,515	2.7%	£760
Wolverhampton	£25,609	£27,503	7.4%	£1,894
Black Country LEP	£27,764	£28,169	1.5%	£405
United Kingdom	£31,487	£31,285	-0.6%	-£202

- The Black Country part-time annual resident earnings were £11,142 in April 2021, this has decreased by 5.2% (-£612) since April 2020. The UK increased by 0.6% (+£70) over this period to reach £11,310, leading to a gap of £168 for Black Country part-time resident earnings.

Workplace Based

- Average full-time workplace annual earnings for the Black Country area have rose by £470 (+1.7%) since April 2020 to reach £28,887 in April 2021, the UK decreased by 0.6%. The Black Country workplace earnings are at 92.3% of the UK average, with the average workplace earning £2,398 less than the UK average of £31,285.
- At local authority level within the Black Country, Sandwell had a decrease in workplace full-time earnings between 2020 and 2021 at -0.4% (-£98 to £27,547). In contrast, since 2020 Dudley had the highest increase by 3.2% (+£917 to £30,000).

The following table shows workplace earnings, 2020-2021:

	2020	2021	Percentage Change	Number Change
Dudley	£29,083	£30,000	3.2%	£917
Sandwell	£27,645	£27,547	-0.4%	-£98
Walsall	£28,559	£29,152	2.1%	£593
Wolverhampton	£28,042	£28,408	1.3%	£366
Black Country LEP	£28,417	£28,887	1.7%	£470
United Kingdom	£31,487	£31,285	-0.6%	-£202

- The Black Country part-time annual workplace earnings were £11,121 in April 2021, this has decreased by 7.0% (-£842). The UK increased by 0.6% (+£70) over this period to reach £11,310, meaning the Black Country had a gap of £189.

Regional National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage

- In April 2021, for the West Midlands region, there were approximately 99,000 employee jobs with employees aged 16 years and over who were paid below the National Minimum Wage (NMW) or National Living Wage (NLW). This accounts for 4.3% of employee jobs in the West Midlands, which is joint fourth highest rate with the East Midlands across all regions with Northern Ireland highest at 5.8% down to the lowest of 2.7% in London. The UK rate was 3.8% of employee jobs.
- For context in the West Midlands region, this compares with 188,000 (8.3% of employee jobs) in 2020 and 38,000 (1.6% of employee jobs) in 2019, reflecting the decrease in furloughed employees with reduced pay between 2020 and 2021 and approximately the 290,000 employees furloughed in April 2021.

Gender Pay Gap

Gender pay gap is defined as the difference between men's and women's hourly earnings as a percentage of men's earnings.

- In 2021, the Black Country had a higher work-based median gender pay gap at 13.3% compared to 12.4% for home-based. Although, these figures were both below the UK proportion of 15.4%.
- Within the Black Country, Sandwell had the lowest gender pay gap at 0.7% for work-based and 6.9% home-based. Dudley had a higher gender pay gap for work-based at 18.3% then for home-based at 11.1%. Walsall and Wolverhampton had a higher home-based gender pay gap at 17.1% and 17.7% respectively than a work-based gender pay gap at 15.4% for Walsall and 13.4% for Wolverhampton.

The following table shows the gender pay gap for all employee jobs, 2021:

	Gender Pay Gap Median – Home Based	Gender Pay Gap Median –Work Based
Dudley	11.1%	18.3%
Sandwell	6.9%	0.7%
Walsall	17.1%	15.4%
Wolverhampton	17.7%	13.4%
Black Country LEP	12.4%	13.3%
United Kingdom	15.4%	15.4%