

MIDLANDS ENGINE OBSERVATORY ACADEMIC INSIGHTS

Post-Pandemic employment in the UK

Abigail Taylor (City-REDI) and Ben Harrison (Director, The Work Foundation) and posted on [SPA](#)

Theme:

UK employment has experienced a substantial crisis, but the impact has varied by sector and place.

Area of Focus:

Looking at how COVID-19 has impacted the labour market, leading to policies to tackle these challenges.

Key Findings:

- Unemployment was 0.9% higher in February 2021 than in the previous year.
- Accommodation and food service have decreased in payrolled employees but online retail/distribution, IT, healthcare, and finance have grown.
- Job growth could be geographically concentrated over the next ten years.
- Young people have suffered with workers under 25 representing 60% of the fall in employment since February 2020, with a period of unemployment early on having long term effect on career progression. Young people were already disproportionately affected by the 2008-9 financial crisis.
- The pandemic has exaggerated long term trends towards greater automation and digitisation, and unemployment has risen faster among BME groups.
- Low quality, insecure, or low skilled jobs may be increasing, but these are not the solution. The need for highly skilled, technical, interpersonal people is likely to increase.
- Long term solutions are needed, including personalised support for young people and significant changes to the skill system.



Midlands Engine Impact:

- The region has a young, diverse population, two groups that have been particularly hard hit by the pandemic. A more personalised employment strategy is important.
- The Government is keen to support more apprenticeships, but young people need to be connected to opportunities and apprenticeships must lead to long term jobs.
- The region has a high level of low skilled workers, but more people will need to be upskilled as automation continues. There are long term challenges with our skill system that must be addressed such as cost, time commitments, and perception.
- The number of temporary or jobs with 'bad' characteristics should be addressed, as these are the most precarious and poorly paid

For Further Information Contact:

Dr Abigail Taylor
Research Fellow, CityREDI
A.Taylor.7@bham.ac.uk
+44 (0)121 415 9885

