

MIDLANDS ENGINE

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF COVID-19

Edition 4: 5th June 2020



Introduction

Welcome to the fourth edition of the Midlands Engine Economic Impact of COVID 19. **This report is produced by the Midlands Engine Economic Observatory which is a partnership commissioned by the Midlands Engine including Black Country Consortium's Economic Intelligence Unit, Nottingham Trent University and WM REDI.**

This monitor aims to pull together information across regional partners to understand the impacts of Covid19 on the economy – at a sub national level, across the Midlands Engine geography. Where possible it will utilise all forms of quantitative and qualitative intelligence. However we urge caution in the use of the contents as this is an emerging situation. **The information is drawn from a wide range of sources including the Midlands Engine Business Forum Members, Growth Hubs, Chambers, LEP's, ONS and others. The Midlands Engine gratefully acknowledges the input of many partners who have directly contributed data to inform this report.**

The report brings together data at the level of the Midlands economy, and allows the interpretation of macro issues and trends, which over time will help shape recovery interventions as well as support short term decision making. Over time the report will evolve to include LEP level interpretation and sector specific analysis.

Moving forward, the possible policy issues emerging will feature proportionately more, as the data set grows and there is a more robust body of evidence from which to draw.

We welcome any feedback on the content to ensure this report meets the needs of partners and welcome any additional intelligence. Please forward any feedback and intelligence to info@midlandsengine.org.

Contents	Number
Executive Summary	3
Emerging Policy Consideration	4
Global and National Outlook	5
ONS weekly Release	6-7
Research & Development Investment	8
Local Economic Impact	9
Education and Training	10-11
Skills	12
Arts and Cultural Sector	13
Local Business Intelligence	14-19
Appendix	20-24

Executive Summary

- The Business Impact of Coronavirus Survey shows that **28% of West Midlands trading businesses and 26% for the East Midlands reported their turnover had decreased by more than 50%**, compared to 25% of businesses in the UK. 3.5% of West Midlands businesses and 4.1% of East Midlands businesses that have not permanently stopped trading have no cash reserves. For the UK, this figure is 4.0%. For businesses in the East Midlands and West Midlands continuing to trade who reported their financial performance was outside normal expectations and were continuing to export and import found that within the last two weeks, less than 1% of businesses stopped exporting (compared to 1.2% across the UK).
- Based in part on analysis from the Office for Budget Responsibility, the Centre for Progressive Policy (CPP) has developed a scenario assuming scarring nationally will be commensurate with previous recessions. The analysis categorises local authorities into three groups – vulnerable, moderate and resilient – based on the size of the lockdown effect (reflecting sectoral structure), time taken to recover from the 2008 recession, unemployment in 2019 and skill levels. **Within the Midlands Engine area, 15 local authorities are categorised as vulnerable, 42 local authorities are in the moderate category and 8 local authorities are classed as resilient.**
- NESTA launched a report on where and how Research and Development (R&D) investment is distributed across the UK. **The West Midlands and the East Midlands are the third and fourth highest regions for amount of private sector spend in R&D at £398 and £353 (respectively) per head . However, in contrast the West Midlands is the lowest region for public sector spend per head in R&D at £83, this is followed closely by the East Midlands at £89.**
- Supply chains have been challenged by the Covid-19 pandemic but the **UK engineering supply chain has demonstrated its agility by repurposing to produce PPE to tackle shortages.** The challenge is to harness this agility going forward.
- According to the latest Covid 19 Manufacturing Monitor published by Make UK, the number of companies now operating in some capacity continues to grow, standing at just under 95%. However, despite this a **quarter of companies plan to make redundancies in the next six months with a further 45% possibly planning to do so. At this stage, just under a third of companies (30%) do not plan to make redundancies.** Of those who plan to make redundancies, over a third of companies (33.3%) plan to make up to 10% of employees redundant, just under a third (31.1%) up to a quarter of employees, whilst more than a quarter (28.9%) plan to make up to half their staff redundant.
- In the Midlands Engine, the arts, entertainment and recreation sector accounts for 2.2% of jobs, 1.8% of enterprises and 1.4% of GVA. Results from the Indigo survey for the arts & cultural sector across the UK shows that 19% of respondents that are actively booking now are for concert venues while only 14% are for orchestra bookings. Concert venues also have the highest proportion of respondents that will not consider booking for at least 4 months at 46%, with art centres the lowest at 38%.
- Analysis from EMSI shows that across the Midlands Engine the highest change in the demand for requested skills is in welfare at an increase of 6.5%, in contrast the requested demand for skills in sourcing has decreased by 23.6%. The most sought-after job title was couriers at 340%, this was followed by call centre sales at 88.5%.
- There is a large literature indicating that **school closures lead to slower progress or a reduction in learning outcomes for students. Despite moves to digital learning there are concerns about disparities in access, with economically disadvantaged students most affected.** There are also concerns about the development of skills that are more difficult to replicate online - including social and emotional skills that are prized by employers.

Emerging Policy Considerations

THEME	KEY CONCERNS
Access to Finance & Cashflow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns remain about the operation and coverage of Government business support initiatives and particularly the situation of those businesses who, for a variety of reasons, appear to be ‘falling through the cracks.’
New Covid-19 Regulations & Social Distancing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Businesses are reporting concerns about how long their industries may be impacted for, particularly those that require overseas travel, and whether Government business support interventions will continue long enough for their industry.
Job Retention Scheme and Future Unemployment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Furlough scheme has been successful in reducing redundancies to date, but evidence is growing – particularly in manufacturing- that as this scheme ‘tapers-off’ firms will move to redundancies on a significant scale;
Reopening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of labour productivity declining in some sectors (notably food processing) due to social distancing highlights a problem that may extend to other sectors as they seek to emerge from lockdown in the coming weeks. Coming out of lockdown has been largely left to businesses to decide, which risks uneven approaches. There is a need for good business support to help businesses prepare and move to opening.
Consumer Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some have fears that not enough customers could be safely accommodated (with social distancing in place) to make reopening profitable.
Supply Chain Readiness & Pinch Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of supply chain problems affecting a variety of businesses with some involved in global supply chains reporting increased costs for some components as a consequence; Logistical challenges are impacting on the East Coast ports – notably Immingham and Boston – e.g. the need to stockpile steel not currently required by the automotive manufacturers of the Midlands; There is still a need for support on how to reshape businesses to deal with recovery – i.e. restrictions on international movement, understand new markets and opportunities, improve their use and application of technology to build on changes already established. Programmes to develop support to create opportunities for diversifying their income and de-risk their business and invest in long term R&D and technology implementation. Also guidance on supply chain resilience and re-shoring; altering the way they work with international suppliers under the longer term social distancing rules and lack of trade missions. The long-term future of tourism, entertainment and other sectors characterised by ‘social consumption’ in a ‘socially distanced’ world is becoming an increasing focus of concern; Support for universities as anchor institutions, especially where they support local economies and labour markets, such as in WM. A strategic funding package that prevents at risk universities collapsing; increase and speed up allocation of research funding; package of support with international recruitment and online learning.

Global and National Outlook

Global Outlook

The tone of global markets is increasingly optimistic with Asian stocks gaining for their second day as investors in China help stabilise Hong Kong markets after China's efforts to tighten their legislative grip on the province. At the beginning of the week commencing 25 May, European stocks have also rallied ahead of continued ease of lockdown measures. The price of oil has also returned to positive peaking above \$34 a barrel.

In France the government has outlined their plans to support the automobile industry. The possibility that reshoring will play a more significant role in government's recovery plans was confirmed by the French President who signalled his intent to encourage Peugeot SA and Renault SA to bring some production back home to France.

Although heavily speculated the biggest corporate rescue in Germany has been confirmed this week. The German government will take a stake in Deutsche Lufthansa AG in a \$9.8 billion bailout. Rival airlines are likely to see this as unfair and dispute the bailout, whilst European Union approval for the bailout is still needed.

Nations' ongoing efforts to control the pandemic has led to sharp declines in output and employment across the major developed world economies for a third successive month in May, according to the latest business data, but rate of decline showed easing which is partly due to some lifting of virus containment measures.

United States PMI has averaged 34.8 over the past three months compared to 29.8, 26.3 and 24.6 for Japan, the UK and the Eurozone respectively.

Whilst it is clear that all four major economies are clearly still in steep declines and entering a substantial recession, the trend is more positive.

National Outlook

In the UK, the Prime Minister has announced that nonessential retailers will be able to reopen in England from 15 June as a continuation to further ease the lockdown in England.

The measure is "contingent on progress in the fight against coronavirus", and retailers will have to adhere to new guidelines to protect shoppers and workers, including social distancing, quarantining products touched by customers for 24 hours and other safety procedures.

Since the 1st June, outdoor markets and car showrooms have now reopened.

More than 8 million people have been furloughed, and from August employers will be required to pay a quarter of the wages of furloughed staff under Treasury plans to wind down the state subsidy scheme.

Companies will also be required to restart paying national insurance, However the government will continue to pay pension contributions.

G4 economies output and employment

Flash Composite PMI of 'G4' developed economies



Sources: IHS Markit, au Jibun Bank (Japan)

On the 21st May 2020 the ONS published its weekly data about the condition of the UK society and economy and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The statistics are experimental and have been devised to provide timely information, with publication of final survey results currently expected to take place fortnightly with initial findings released in-between. The following information contains the final results from Wave 4 of the Business Impact of Coronavirus Survey, the final results for Wave 9 of the Opinions and Lifestyle (OPN) Survey and weekly management information on Universal Credit claims and advances for the 1st March to 12th May.

Trading and Financial Performance

Less than 1% of UK businesses reported they have permanently ceased trading with 20% temporarily closed or paused trading and 79% continuing to trade between 20th April to the 3rd May.

82.5% of responding businesses in the West Midlands have continued to trade through this period and in the East Midlands the figure was 82.0%.

17.2% and 17.8% of businesses have temporarily closed or paused trading in the West Midlands and the East Midlands respectively.

28% of West Midlands trading businesses and 26% for the East Midlands reported their turnover had decreased by more than 50%, compared to 25% of businesses in the UK, however 1.5% of trading businesses in the West Midlands and 1.6% for East Midlands businesses reported that their turnover had increased between 20% and 50% – the figure for UK businesses is 1.3%.

International Trading

For businesses in the East Midlands and West Midlands continuing to trade who reported their financial performance was outside normal expectations and were continuing to export and import found that within the last two weeks, less than 1% of businesses stopped exporting (compared to 1.2% across the UK).

1.8% of businesses in the West Midlands and 2.4% in

the East Midlands had stopped importing (compared to 1.7% across the UK).

Nearly 74% of exporting businesses in the West Midlands, and 69% in the East Midlands (72% UK), reported their businesses were still exporting but less than normal. Of those businesses who continued to trade and import, 65% in the West Midlands and 57% in the East Midlands were importing less than normal, compared to 60% across the UK.

19% of West Midlands businesses and 22% of East Midlands businesses who were exporting reported that they had not been affected, compared to 18% across the UK. 23% of West Midlands importers and 27% of East Midlands Importers said that importing had not been affected, compared to nearly 28% across the UK.

2.2% of businesses in the West Midlands and 5% of East Midlands businesses are exporting more than normal, compared to 3.3% in the UK. The West Midlands and East Midlands figures for importing more than usual are 3.0% and 4.8% respectively (UK 3.2%).

For exporting businesses across the UK, 34% reported that the main challenge was the Coronavirus-related transport restriction, and 21% reported challenges with the increase of transport costs. However, 30% reported no challenges at all with exporting.

Government Schemes

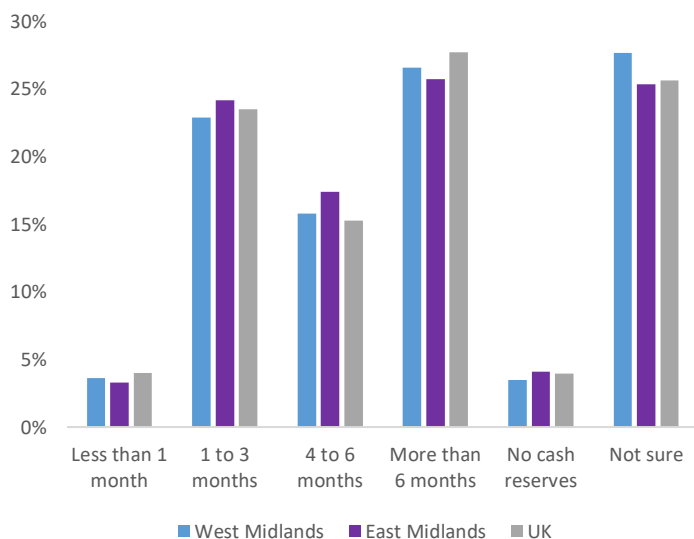
The top government scheme that businesses in the UK who have not permanently stopped trading are applying for is the Coronavirus Job Retention scheme. National take-up is 76% compared to 82% in the West Midlands and 80% in the East Midlands. This is followed by deferring VAT payments with 59% for the UK compared to 70% for the West Midlands and 66% for the East Midlands.

Cash Flow

3.5% of West Midlands businesses and 4.1% of East Midlands businesses that have not permanently stopped trading have no cash reserves. For the UK, this figure is 4.0%.

23% of West Midlands businesses and 24% of East Midlands businesses have between 1 to 3 months of cash reserves compared to nearly 24% for the UK.

The following graph shows for businesses that have not permanently stopped trading how long their cash reserves would last:



Social Impact of the Coronavirus

Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey is a weekly update to understand on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on people, households and communities in Great Britain. Wave 9 covers the period of 14th to 17th May.

In this wave, 2,010 individuals were sampled, with a response rate of 50% (or 995 individuals). The data collection period for this wave of the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey has been reduced to 4 days from 10 or 11 days on previous waves.

Concerns about household finances

25% of adults stated that Coronavirus was affecting their household finances. The most common concern on household finances continues to be a reduced income at 75%, with 17% using savings to cover living costs, and a further 9% borrowing money or using credit. 26% of people survey are unable to save as usual, and 24% have reported that their savings value is being affected by economic instability.

Staying at home and self-isolation

20% of adults reported to self-isolating in the past seven days, this increased to 35% when looking at people with any specific health condition, and to 44% for people aged 70 or older.

Working from home

41% of adults reported that they had worked at home over the latest survey period. 33% had completely worked from home and 8% had worked from home and travelled to work. 29% of adults reported they were travelling to work and had not worked at home.

Social Distancing

97% of adults have tried to stay at least two metres away from other people when outside their home in the past seven days.

91% of adults reported avoiding contact with older or vulnerable adults, within this 10% of people avoiding those whom they provide care to.

Impacts of Wellbeing

The mean anxiety has decreased for all adults from 4.1 (between 24th April – 3rd April) to 4.0 (between 14th – 17th May). For those aged 70 years and over this has increased from 3.8 to 3.9 and for those with any specific health conditions increased from 4.5 to 4.7 over the same periods.

The percentage of all adults that reported feeling lonely some of the time has increased from 16% (24th April – 3rd May) to 18% (14th – 17th May). For those aged 70 years and over this has increased from 12% to 13% and for those with any specific health condition has decreased from 21% to 17% over the same periods.

Universal Credit

National new individual claims for Universal Credit was steady at 10,000 and 16,000 each weekday for the first half of March 2020, this then peaked to 146,290 claims on the 27th March and now numbers have declined to 28,200 new individual claims on the 5th May.

Overall, the number of claimants in the Midlands Engine area has increased from 187,995 in April 2019 to 346,235 in April 2020.

At the start of March, claim advances were steady at just under 5,000 per day, this then peaked on 6th April at 35,280 and now numbers have decreased to 10,360 on the 12th May.

Research & Development Investment

On 28th May 2020 NESTA launched a report on where and how Research and Development (R&D) investment is distributed across the UK.

Background

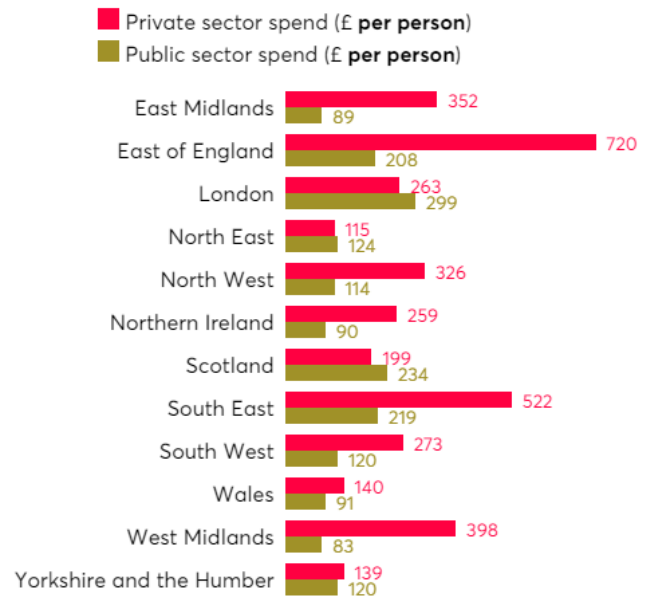
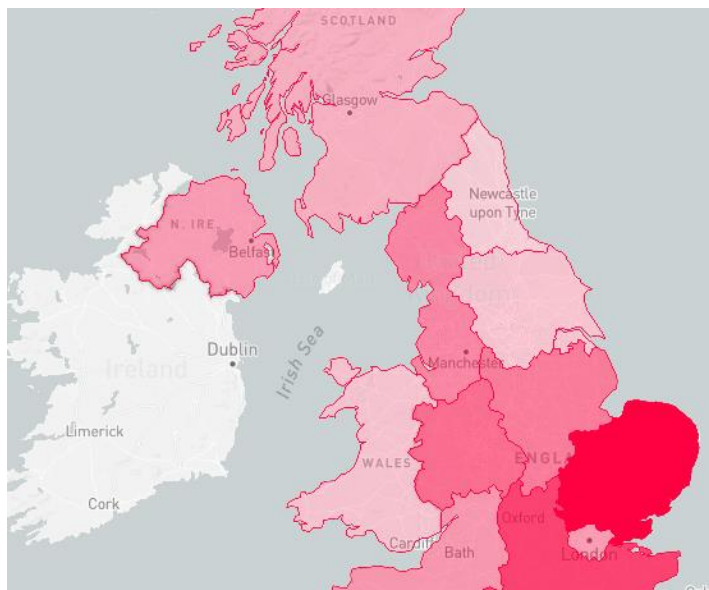
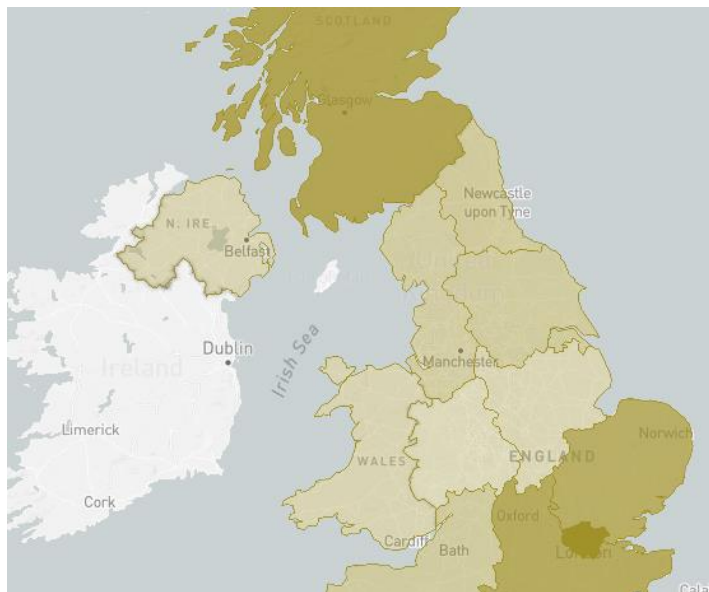
Investment in R&D and innovation is a key public policy issue. R&D spending matters because it leads to innovation, which creates productive industries and well-paid jobs. There is good evidence that R&D investment correlates with economic growth, reduced regional inequalities and better health outcomes for local populations.

R&D

In the East Midlands and West Midlands, business investment in R&D is at or above the UK average, despite low levels of public support. This implies an active R&D landscape not getting enough state support. Increased public spending on R&D here could leverage the benefits of private spending still further.

The West Midlands and the East Midlands are the third and fourth highest regions for amount of private sector spend in R&D at £398 and £353 (respectively) per head. However, in contrast the West Midlands is the lowest region for public sector spend per head in R&D at £83, this is followed closely by the East Midlands at £89.

The following maps and chart show public and private sector spend (£) per person in R&D across the UK:



Local Economic Impact

A report entitled [Back from the brink: Avoiding a lost generation, published by the Centre for Progressive Policy](#) (CPP) in May 2020, examines the potential long-run economic impacts of Covid-19 induced recession at place level (using data for local authorities) and explores the possible economic recovery paths for different groups of local authorities.

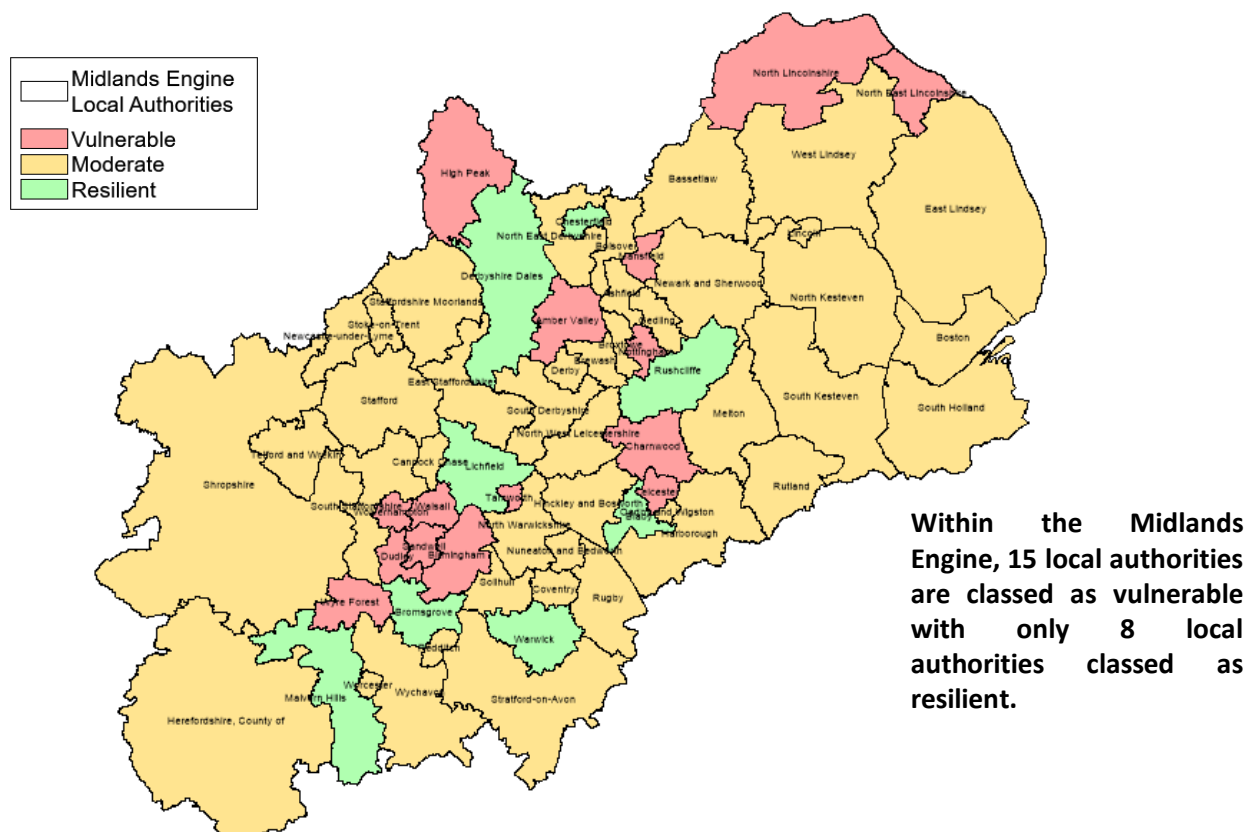
Evidence from previous recessions suggests that their effects can be long lasting, with local areas differing in their resilience to economic shocks. Scarring effects of recessions result from:

- A lack of labour market opportunities leading to long-term unemployment and reducing lifetime earnings
- Time spent long-term unemployed can lead to a permanent loss of skills
- Loss of income and employment can lead to lower educational outcomes in the next generation
- For businesses increased uncertainty can reduce demand and access to credit and lead to less investment in productivity enhancing capital

Local authorities are classified into three categories – vulnerable, moderate, resilience – based on the following indicators; size of the lockdown effect, time taken to recover from 2008 recession, unemployment level in 2019 and skills levels. Local authorities are classed as vulnerable/resilient if they meet at least two of the four vulnerability/ resilience conditions.

After five years the West Midlands is expected to see an average 9.2% decrease in average GVA relative to the trend expected in the absence of the Covid-19 crisis and the East Midlands is expected to see an average 9.1% decrease. This is a greater decrease than the UK average, but slightly less than the average decreases expected for the North West (-9.5%), Yorkshire & the Humber (-10.5%), Northern Ireland (-11.6%) and the North East (-11.7%).

The following map shows the category that each local authority falls into across the Midlands Engine:



Education and Training

School closures and accentuated inequalities in educational achievement

Despite a move to online learning there is considerable concern about school closures leading to slower progress or a reduction in learning outcomes of students. This is an issue not only in England and the UK but internationally and has been an issue in past disease outbreaks around the world. The underlying problems here are the reduction in the availability of education services due to school closures and a lack of educational materials to use at home (especially for those in households facing financial hardship or where there is less family support for learning). There are also concerns in some quarters that there will be a reduction in the utilisation of schools (at least in the early stage after reopening) due to fear of school return/ emotional stress induced by the pandemic. There is limited evidence on mitigation measures – including how distance learning/ use of digital technologies impact on learning.

During wars and natural disasters attempts have been made to keep schools open as much as possible. A recent article in the Economist has highlighted how school learning time lost due to closures of schools during strikes and weather-related events has implications for educational achievement and may mean students are less likely to complete higher education. The evidence points to long-term implications of short-term closures. Clearly digitalisation enables ever more learning to take place online, but there are variations between student in access to technology and suitable study environments, as well as parental support. **OECD analysis of 2018 PISA data reported by the Centre for Economic Performance report on the implications for educational achievement of Covid-19 school shutdowns shows that 40% of economically disadvantaged students in UK secondary schools had access to online learning platforms, compared with 70% of more advantaged peers.**

There are particular concerns about skills development that it is less easy to replicate online, including the development of social and emotional skills, including critical thinking and perseverance, that are important for educational success and that are also prized by employers. Again, evidence suggests that lockdown accentuates existing

inequalities. Also on the theme of inequalities and the social outcomes of education, in the context of Covid19 there is evidence from the OECD that healthy habits during confinement – including keeping in touch with friends and family – increase with educational attainment, while the incidence of depression decreases.

Across the Midlands, 31% of primary school children's first day back will be the 1st June with 28% of children's first day of school expected to be in the week of the 8th June.

First Day Back For Primary School Across England:



Source: TeacherTapp

The Education Policy Institute has formulated policy proposals to check the widening of inequalities and to help stop the existing attainment gap widening further. The proposals include:

- Making summer holiday provision available for all children;
- Increasing pupil premiums for one year in order to provide extra support for students facing transitions or national examinations;
- Extending vocational courses for 16-19 year olds for an additional year
- Greater flexibility for apprenticeships – in the context of temporary cessation of some schemes;
- Extending maintenance loans;

Education and Training

- Greater support for adult reskilling – including relaxing eligibility rules for the Adult Education Budget, including allowing those aged over 24 to take a second Level 3 qualification.

Universities face particular challenges – including:

- Lost income from accommodation, catering and conferences (affecting all universities)
- A significant fall in international students; and
- A possible rise in deferrals of domestic students.

Opportunities

The Covid-19 pandemic also brings with it opportunities. There may be some benefits if a switch to online education encourages greater interaction with technology and more efficient learning and teaching practice, but these benefits are as yet unknown and unquantifiable. Certainly disruption to the education and training system brings opportunities to expand digital offerings. Ideally such new offerings need to be based on what has worked well, and for whom, using digital tools. There are options also for innovative, digital pedagogical approaches such as simulators, augmented/virtual reality, or artificial intelligence. A vibrant EdTech industry might emerge.

More radically, in a Policy Exchange paper David Goodhart proposes that the **Covid-19 crisis provides an opportunity to improve the alignment of the education and training system with economic and social needs in the UK**. One of his proposals is that a new ‘**Opportunity Grant**’ of at least £3,000 should be made available for training or retraining. He proposes that these grants would be drawn down by training providers or FE colleges for individuals on employment-relevant courses from approved providers, with information on likely employment opportunities after a course is completed and on the average pay for people with that skill being used to help individuals navigate training choices and the labour market.

Other proposals include suspending the apprenticeship levy for new entrants and replacing it with a radically simplified model focused on school leavers (who are particularly hard hit by the Covid-19 crisis) and young people up to the age of 24, with Government and employers splitting the full cost on a 50:50 basis. He also suggests that the Covid-19 crisis provides an opportunity to promote greater collaboration between the FE and HE sectors.

There is also an opportunity for the HE sector to promote and give greater impetus to the idea of lifelong learning. Goodhart proposes that as a one-off measure for one year the Government could consider making all courses provided by British universities free to any citizen aged 25 years and over.

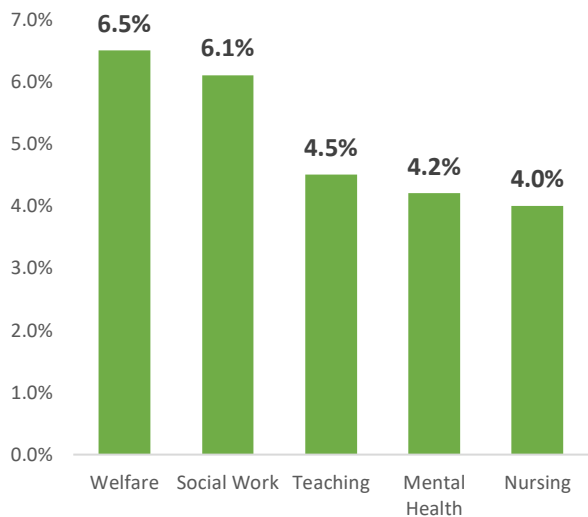
Overall, the Covid-19 crisis points to the need to build system resilience to reinforce the adaptability and responsiveness of education and training systems. There is a question of how investment needed will be financed and the skills for effective delivery developed, but the response to moves to online learning over the last two months have pointed to what can be achieved in a crisis. An OECD analysis of the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on vocational education and training (VET) systems and of the responses in VET systems highlights how different countries have made increasing use of online and virtual platforms; training breaks or extensions; wage support for apprentice retention; flexible skills assessment and awarding of qualifications, including recognition of prior learning, retraining of redeployed workers; and closer engagement with employers and trade unions (locally and nationally), so highlighting the importance of partnership working.

Skills

Change in Skills Demands

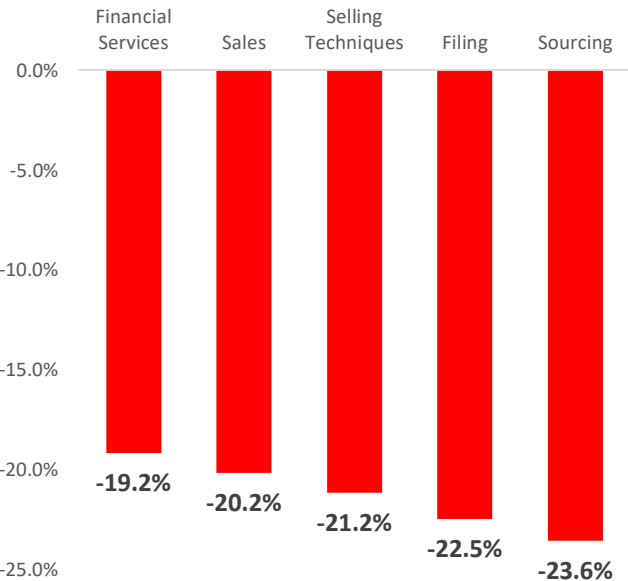
- Welfare was the top requested skill over the 30 day period to 2nd June at 6.5%.

The following chart looks at the charge in demand for the Top 5 requested skills over the 30 day period to 2nd June:



- Sourcing was the least requested skill over the 30 day period to 2nd June at -23.6%.

The following chart looks at the charge in demand for the 5 least requested skills over the 30 day period to 2nd June:



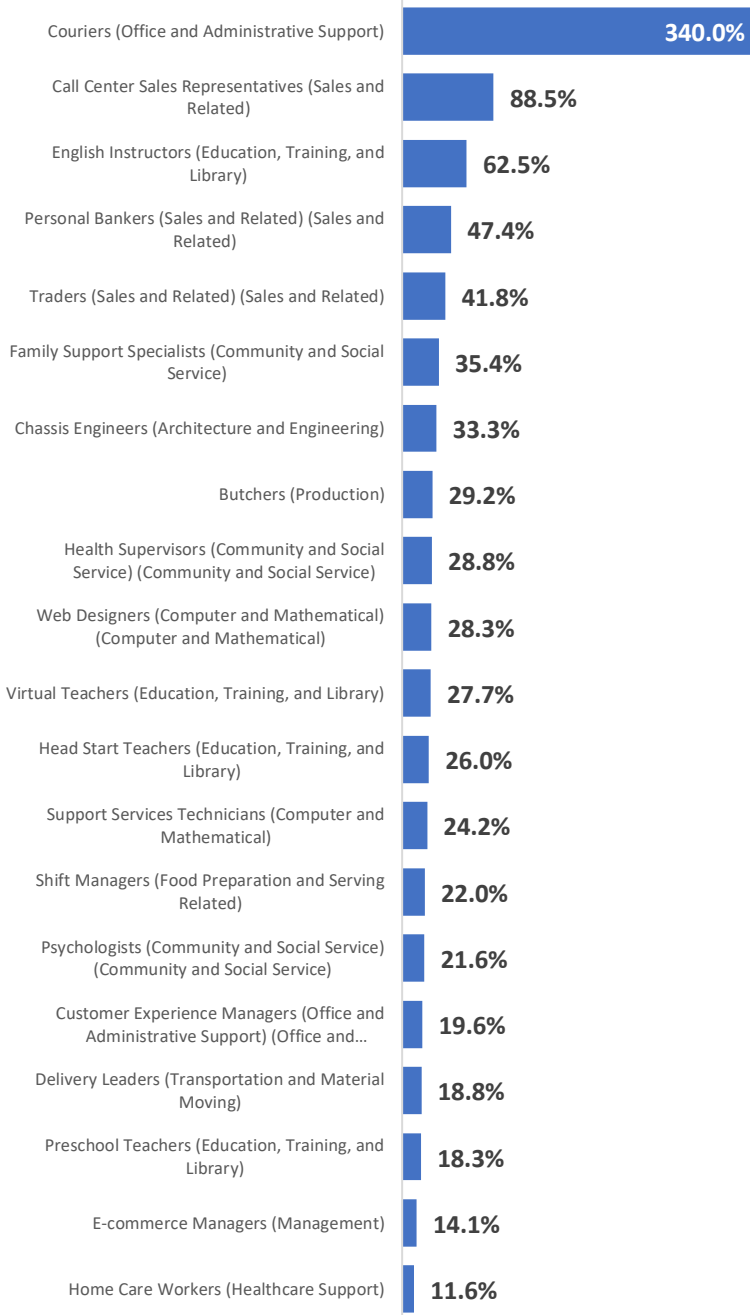
Source: EMSI, June 2020

Sought-After Job Titles

It is important to remember that we are not looking at actual jobs, but rather jobs that employers are hiring for.

Within the top 20 most sought-after job titles, Couriers (office and administrative support) was the highest sought-after job title, this was followed by call centre sales representatives at 88.5%. While 11.6% of home care works were sought-after and 14.1% for e-commerce managers.

The following chart looks at the 20 most sought-after job titles, comparing the 30-day period up to 2 June with the 30 days prior to that:



Arts & Cultural Sector

Indigo undertook research on audience views on returning to live cultural events, booking tickets and missing out on events during the lockdown.

Wave 1 of the survey covers between 16th April – 6th May. Respondents (86k audience responses) were representative of an engaged cultural audience with a high frequency of attendance. Regional response rate is available (EM 7% and WM 5%), however the following results are an overall summary for the UK.

Overall Findings

93% of respondents stated they are currently missing attending live events.

When events can be attended safely again in the future, 74% of respondents were most looking forward to the ‘buzz’ of being at a live event, this was followed by 67% looking forward to seeing performers up close.

17% of respondents were actively booking events over they survey period, with 15% of those booking for between June and August, 35% in September/October time and 50% from November onwards.

6% of respondents would consider booking for events within the next month, however 41% would not consider booking for events for at least another 4 months from the survey period.

Overall 19% of people would feel comfortable attending events as soon as venues are allowed to reopen, however there are some variation by age with those aged over 65 years old at 14% and those aged under 35 years old at 26%. Although, overall 52% of people reported that if venues were open but if advised to they would stay away from large gatherings.

76% of people reported they would feel more safe and comfortable at events if there was a limit on the number who can attend, this was followed by 72% by avoiding long queues pf people and then 65% would like seats spaced at least 2 metres apart.

Where 0 equals less comfortable and 100 is more comfortable, large outdoor events scored 49 with the least favoured venue being large standing venues at 30.

Notably, all venues (excluding large standing venues) scored over 50 for those aged under 25 years old.

Types of venues respondents would feel happier coming back to before others:



Source: After the Interval Wave 1, Indigo-Ltd, May 2020

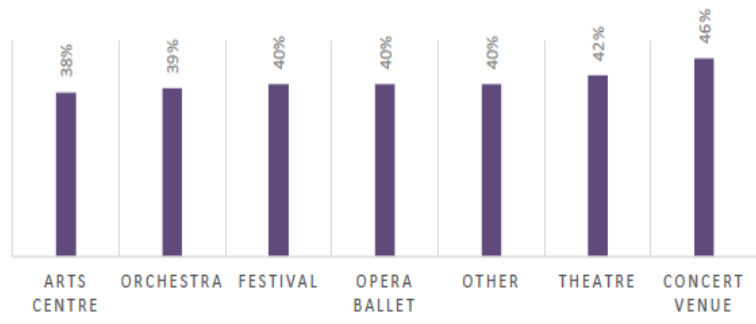
Supporting Cultural Charities

Cultural charities may face financial challenges when they re-open, 79% of respondents stated to ensure a successful re-opening it would be most appropriate to have the option to donate a voluntary amount at point of sale with the least favoured option at 18% of increasing ticket prices.

Key Metrics Compared

19% of respondents that are actively booking now are for concert venues while only 14% are for orchestra bookings. Concert venues also have the highest proportion of respondents that will not consider booking for at least 4 months at 46%, with art centres the lowest at 38%.

% of respondents who will not consider booking for at least 4 months:



Source: After the Interval Wave 1, Indigo-Ltd, May 2020

14% of respondents will come to events if orchestra venues re-open, while the highest proportion was opera ballet at 20%.

Local Business Intelligence

The following table summarises a range of local business intelligence provided by the 9 Midlands Engine LEPs and growth hubs. In the appendix, there is further information on specific firm level activity with regard to new economic shocks and new investments.

HEADLINES	
SECTOR	KEY CONCERNS
Cross Sectoral	<p>Access to Finance & Cashflow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses are still reporting issues with accessing finance through the Covid-19 support schemes due to ineligibility, delays and concerns about their ability to take on risk when they are in a precarious position and may not be able to repay loans. • A number of SMEs have expressed concern about their ability to survive until the economy fully reopens due to cash flow. • SMEs eagerly awaiting the discretionary grants scheme. • Many self-employed people and small business owners were panicking about their financial situation, with many unable to access any of the emergency measures put into place. https://www.shropshirestar.com/news/business/2020/05/26/telford-accountant-warns-safety-vital-in-return-to-work/ • Hope amongst businesses that the Local Authority Discretionary Grants funding will offer support to companies which have been ineligible for previous government support schemes. • Extension to the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme announced last week will be welcomed by many. However, director-managed limited companies have not received equal financial support, despite operating in the same way as self-employed people. In addition, they are not able to furlough themselves and keep their business going. This has been a major issue for many local companies. • Businesses will need longer term support to help recover. • CWLEP 3-month review of Covid-19 data shows 42% have only 1 or 2 months' worth of cash reserves left, 18% of business have no cash reserves left in their business. • Concerns from self-employed regarding access to finance. <p>New Covid-19 Regulations & Social Distancing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses are reporting concerns about how long their industries may be impacted for, particularly those that require overseas travel, and whether Government business support interventions will continue long enough for their industry. • Businesses have raised concerns about how the isolate element of test, trace & isolate will impact their businesses and the risk of 14-day isolation of employees causing them to have to close for 14 days, potentially multiple times over. • Following the announcement that non-essential businesses can re-open from 15th June, further guidance is needed re use of face masks and potential exposure to liabilities if it could be proved that the virus got transmitted in premises, either to employees or customers. <p>Job Retention Scheme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The announcement that from 1st July, businesses will be given the flexibility to bring furloughed employees back part-time will help many local companies plan their recovery. However, previously viable firms not able to open until later, particularly in leisure, hospitality and the creative industries, may need further help and support in the coming months. <p>New Business Models</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the number of start-up enquiries from individuals, many focused around 'work from home' businesses and lifestyle businesses. <p>International Trade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Lincolnshire Chamber of Commerce are reporting that levels of international trade documentation they are handling has decreased by almost 60% compared to this time last year. Nationally the drop has been 20-30%.

Local Business Intelligence

HEADLINES	
SECTOR	KEY CONCERNS
Cross Sectoral	<p>Labour Supply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMEs have contacted various growth hubs regarding redundancy processes – suggesting further redundancies are likely. <p>Reopening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses beginning to return to the workplace where possible. • SMEs have been asking advice about how to restart. • For some businesses only a small selection of staff are returning from furlough as many businesses' workloads are not currently at pre-lockdown levels, and the focus is on easing staff back into work to not put undue pressure on the business resources.
Professional Services	<p>General Performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses often impacted due to clients closing, meaning less business for them. <p>Access to Finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many businesses struggling due to not qualifying for grants & loans that they need to survive. <p>New Covid-19 Regulations & Social Distancing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses would like to see clearer instructions on how to manage PPE/protection in the workplace. <p>Consumer Behaviour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those in the property market concerned about willingness of people to move post covid-19, many expecting a decrease in turnover.
Manufacturing	<p>Access to Finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses in need of finance to help with diversification. • Businesses struggling where they are reliant on other suppliers / tradespeople. • Various businesses reporting lower turnover than expected for the year 2020. Some businesses looking to move premises to reduce overhead costs. • Businesses in this sector would like to see the government continuing with business support until the economy picks up. <p>New Business Models</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses looking to diversify where they have suffered from being reliant on one industry / sector. <p>PPE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over the last few weeks, HP and its network of 3D printing manufacturers have ramped up the production of face shields, mask adjusters and hands-free door openers to support the national fight against coronavirus. Along with the Telford-based company, manufacturers from across the country have printed more than 50,000 parts for use by healthcare institutions. https://www.shropshirestar.com/news/health/coronavirus-covid19/2020/05/25/telford-firm-boosts-ppe-supply-with-3d-printing
Visitor Economy	<p>Cross Theme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting concerns about losing a whole year of activity due to event cancellations, as some venues and organisations have blanket cancelled events for much of 2020. Travel agents beginning to pick up increases in bookings. <p>Access to Finance - Cashflow issues common due to drop off in sales for key months of the year.</p>
Retail	<p>Access to Finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail businesses requiring support to access discretionary grant and bounce back loans. <p>Social Distancing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some have fears that not enough customers could be safely accommodated (with social distancing in place) to make reopening profitable <p>Consumer Behaviour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns about how many customers will visit reopening retail stores.

The following section draws on contributions from the East Midlands Chamber, Make UK, the NFU, CBI, FSB, Growth Hubs and universities across the region (sourced from Midlands Innovation and Midlands Enterprise Universities networks). Scope of coverage will be extended for future iterations of this Midlands wide report.

As lockdown restrictions start to lift, the return to the workplace has been the prime focus of many of the businesses with whom the Chamber has engaged. Many have appreciated the unprecedented level of financial support the Government has provided to employers and workers affected by the pandemic, to help protect jobs and businesses. However, many firms still face significant short-term uncertainty. Giving such firms the option to bring back workers part-time is welcomed. But closing the furlough scheme to new applicants early seems premature and risks undermining some of the work already done to protect businesses and jobs.

Additional future support for businesses and staff unable to get back to work for an extended period may be also be necessary, particularly in sectors facing reduced capacity or demand due to ongoing restrictions.

The East Midlands Chamber has raised concern that furloughing staff could be seen as a transition to redundancies, with businesses using the time to explore their options. Despite this, a level of business confidence is starting to become apparent in some sectors, where increased recruitment was seen, particularly at senior level in finance and marketing.

The BCC's national Coronavirus Business Impact Tracker, based on polling conducted 13-15 May, found that most respondents (83%) reported high levels of awareness of Government's new workplace guidance as sectors of the economy begin to reopen gradually. Just over a third (37%) of respondents said they could fully restart operations by implementing the Government guidance, while 45% said they could do so partially. However, due to social distancing guidelines, it's likely that many firms will see a reduction in demand and will not be able to restart at full capacity. The tracker also showed that around 70% of respondents have furloughed a portion of their staff. Cash-poor firms, with less than three months' cash in reserve, remain more likely to furlough portions of their workforce.

There also appeared to be a shift in the tone, language and outlook of many local businesses as they try to move into the first stages of restarting in a post-lockdown economy. The messaging around the return to work, and what the 'new normal' might look like, needs to be clearer. Government needs to make employers' obligations clear as lockdown is phased out across different sectors.

Sectoral Perspectives

Manufacturing Key Findings:

- A quarter of companies plan to make redundancies in the next six months with less than a third currently ruling any out;
- Of those planning redundancies more than a quarter involve up to half their staff, with almost a third up to a quarter of staff;
- Almost a third of companies have seen their orders decline by up to 50%; and
- Expectations that it will take more than a year for normal trading to return have increased.

Britain's manufacturers are said to be bracing themselves to make substantial redundancies as the rate of decline in orders accelerates and pessimism about a return to normal trading within the next year has grown.

According to the **latest Covid 19 Manufacturing Monitor published by Make UK, the number of companies now operating in some capacity continues to grow, standing at just under 95%. However, despite this a quarter of companies plan to make redundancies in the next six months with a further 45% possibly planning to do so. At this stage, just under a third of companies (30%) do not plan to make redundancies.**

Of those who plan to make redundancies, over a third of companies (33.3%) plan to make up to 10% of employees redundant, just under a third (31.1%) up to a quarter of employees, whilst more than a quarter (28.9%) plan to make up to half their staff redundant.

Local Business Intelligence

Make UK also warned that the rate of decline in orders has increased compared to the last survey two weeks ago with the number of companies reporting order declines of more than half up from just under a quarter to just under a third (31.8%) while those reporting declines of up to half also increased from just under a quarter to just over (27.1%).

Furthermore, the number of companies who believe it will take more than a year to return to normal trading conditions has also grown slightly from the last survey, up to 37.8% from 36% two weeks ago. The extent to which pessimism amongst companies has grown is highlighted by the fact the figure for the same question stood at just 17% of companies a month ago.

In aerospace manufacturing the civil/defence sectors are said to be facing very different prospects with sites associated with the latter seen as less vulnerable to redundancies.

Some evidence has emerged of concern among manufacturers of hygiene equipment of a tendency for overseas governments to shift towards local procurement in the wake of the Pandemic. This could impact on future exports.

CBI Regional Case Studies by Sector:

Electrical contractor

A £70m turnover business with 1,000 employees. 95% of staff had been furloughed but more are coming back to work as house builders start to open-up again. 300 apprentices are still furloughed. Social distancing and individual client requirements will be a big practical challenge but so far payments are still being made on time which is helpful. Government policy on construction and house building will be significant to drive demand, particularly if higher levels of redundancies create weakness. Overdraft facility with the bank has been restarted and this will help but redundancies are not being ruled out.

Home builder

Everything shut at the end of March and sub-contractors and utility companies stopped working which forced them to close all 14 sites. 6 are now

open where the orders were strongest and 5 more opening this week. Houses will take longer to build with social distancing measures in place, only one person will be allowed on each plot at any given time. Only 10% of 150 reservations have been cancelled and these have already been replaced. The mortgage market is key to keeping demand high and 90% loan to value mortgage offers are now available, which will help. Higher levels of redundancies will inevitably lead to order cancellations but there is a feeling of being in a bubble until October when the JRS ends. Overall, the business is 200 orders down on forecast.

Food manufacturer

£45m turnover, 300 employees. 30% of staff have been furloughed a CBILS loan is ongoing but a challenging process as they have to refinance all debt facilities at the same time and this is being done via new lenders not their existing one who knows the business. Credit insurance could become harder for businesses with liquidity or profitability problems.

School uniform supplier

Not eligible for CBILS but a £6m fund has been accessed, 50% by private equity owners and 50% by their bank. There is little liquidity in the sector at the moment and general insurance renewals are coming in at 100% more than usual, which may be a reflection of insurers' expectations of things to come.

Furniture manufacturer

A UK business but with sites in Denmark. Orders are down 70% since Covid-19 started but orders in Europe are holding up so potentially things could be heading back to normal soon. Scenario planning is taking place and they have applied for CBILS loan which will keep them going until December.

Small Business (FSB)

Latest research from the FSB highlights how small firms are endeavouring to support the vulnerable, saving jobs and finding new ways to keep businesses operating. The report New Horizons shows that 29% of small firms in the West Midlands and 27% in the East Midlands are prioritising and supporting vulnerable customers. 21% in the West Midlands and 25% in the East Midlands are helping key workers by providing PPE, volunteering and

Local Business Intelligence

offering accommodation and 20% in the West Midlands (19% in the East Midlands) are providing home deliveries to vulnerable customers free of charge.

Members are reporting high levels of success and satisfaction with regards to applying for the bounce-back loans, which have been well received and, for the most part, have been easy to access.

There remain concerns about those who have fallen through the gaps – most notably the lack of support for self-employed directors of limited companies.

However, the FSB welcomed the Chancellor's announcement at the end of May on making furloughing more flexible. By providing employers with the adaptability they'll require as businesses adjust to a new normal, and bringing forward the flexible furlough launch date, the government is giving hope to small firms right across the UK.

Businesses are seeking more practical advice about reopening- both in the form of health and safety, risk assessments, signage and PPE, and also on staffing issues to do with performance management, facilitating return to work, furlough and sickness absence.

Many in the visitor economy, in places like Shropshire, Derbyshire and East Lindsey, which accounts for a huge proportion of local industry, are likely to suffer a very bad summer due to the ongoing crisis.

Small businesses in Lincolnshire are likely to encounter issues around the workforce where they are dependent on public transport, plus connectivity issues now that working from home looks to be the default option for many outside retail, leisure, hospitality, construction and utilities.

Farming – NFU

The phased reopening of garden centres and plans for food services to follow have been welcomed. Garden centres are of huge importance to the 'ornamentals' sector – albeit that availability of ornamentals to sell may take some weeks to recover due to the lags in production cycles. Product planned for Easter sale has now been composted at significant loss to the growers.

Access to critical inputs remain problematic for some. Supply problems have been experienced for plastic film and other types of packaging materials – but these problems now seem to be easing.

Some farmers involved in pig and poultry production have struggled to access supplies of necessary PPE. There are concerns that these issues could affect other parts of the farming sector as we move into the summer.

Parts of the sector are still struggling with the collapse in demand for farm produce from the food services sector and mass catering outlets – this is being reflected in the low prices being achieved by farmers for some commodities (e.g. potatoes and some livestock). The situation of many horticulturalists and potato growers is said to be precarious.

The 'sunniest May on record' has translated into concerns about water supply in some Eastern districts. Labour shortages – particularly in sectors that traditionally use migrant seasonal labour – have been reported and remain a significant concern likely to grow as the sector moves into the main harvest period over the Summer.

Connectivity challenges associated with poor mobile signal coverage and broadband infrastructure have been identified as a significant concern for some farmers – particularly as the ability to reach customers directly through on-line sales has become more important as a source of business resilience and adaptation.

Agri-Food in Lincolnshire (GLLEP)

The farming and food chain in Greater Lincolnshire is a large sector with 25,000 jobs in food manufacturing (LIS data pack), 15,000 jobs in farming (DEFRA), and an estimated 15,000 jobs in the supply chain (marketing, wholesale, transport and storage from LIS data pack) and it also supports jobs in technology supply and inputs such as packaging.

The GLLEP area has the UK's greatest concentration of food logistics companies with an estimated 30% of national food shipments passing through south Lincolnshire in the food chain. The Spalding area dispatches between 1,000-1,200 finished lorry loads of food per day into the food chain. The south bank of the Humber has a major food logistics sector supporting its

Local Business Intelligence

fish and added value food sector. There is also a growing food logistics cluster on the A1 corridor in the west of the area.

The impact of Covid-19 has been very variable across the industry:

1. Many companies in the food retail supply chain have seen demand increase. For these companies the challenges have been cash flow, growth (i.e. lack of capacity), increased costs, the need to move online, labour supply and the challenge that increased demand maybe temporary;

2. In contrast, food chain companies which supplied food service in most cases saw their market closed completely in under a week. For these companies the loss of markets has necessitated either a complete re-orientation of their business to the 'retail ' or direct to consumer market, or actions to halt expenditure (furloughing staff, seeking rates relief, accessing emergency grants etc) as far as possible, to enable them to survive until the market opens up again;

3. The other large sector in Greater Lincolnshire is ornamental horticulture: flowers, ornamental plants and the supply chain through garden centres. Large parts of this sector were forced to close, deemed to be non-essential businesses, and in plant nurseries this has resulted in major losses.

The food production industry has witnessed challenges on cash flow, costs and inputs (notably labour supply).

Cash flow has been adversely impacted by overtrading as turnover rose quickly, but invoices for products supplied are not being paid any sooner. There is anecdotal evidence some large traders have extended credit terms to up to 180 days, putting real pressure on suppliers in their supply chain.

The industry has needed additional staff because labour productivity has fallen (typically by 10-25%) due to social distancing rules and extra cleaning measures and changes to transport, and because of increased staff absentee rates. The normal supply of seasonal migrant workers has also been disrupted and will impact the industry later in the season as Lincolnshire moves into peak harvest.

Costs across the industry have also risen, due to the labour cost pressure above, but also due to increased cleaning, PPE and rises in the costs of many inputs such as transport, raw food materials and packaging.

Appendix

NEW ECONOMIC SHOCKS			
COMPANY	LOCATION	SECTOR	SOURCE/DETAIL
JLR	National	Automotive, Engineering, Manufacturing	Luxury car maker Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) has applied for government financial support, according to Sky News, although the group denied claims it has asked for £2bn. Reports at the weekend said the group, which operates manufacturing sites in the West Midlands and on Merseyside, has requested tax payer support of around £1bn to help it through the current industrial crisis brought about by the coronavirus lockdown. Link: https://www.thebusinessdesk.com/westmidlands/news/2040939-luxury-car-maker-jlr-seeking-substantial-government-financial-support
I-Nexus Global	Coventry	Information and Communication Technology	The board of a Coventry cloud-based software company is "reviewing strategic options to introduce fresh capital" to the business. I-nexus Global said it is in the early stages of the plans which are running alongside preparing an additional cost reduction plan in response to the Covid-19 crisis. A total of 25 employees were furloughed from 1 April while "significant" cost reduction measures were implemented in January. It comes after the company confirmed that its revenue for the six months to 31 March 2020 went from £2.3m to £2.2m and its pre-tax losses widened from £1.9m to £2.1m. Link: https://www.insidermedia.com/news/midlands/software-firm-eyeing-fresh-capital
Flamingo Flowers	Spalding	Horticulture	It is understood that Flamingo Flowers in Spalding is looking at making redundancies. We are trying to establish scale currently. https://www.spaldingtoday.co.uk/news/rumours-of-possible-job-cuts-ahead-at-area-plant-firm-9111304/

NEW INVESTMENT, DEALS & OPPORTUNITIES			
COMPANY	LOCATION	SECTOR	DETAIL & SOURCE
Thomas Howse	Sandwell	Manufacturing	A leading Middle Eastern manufacturing group has completed its single largest investment in the UK with the acquisition of a historic Sandwell manufacturer of paint and powder coatings. https://www.thinksandwell.com/
PTP Training	Sandwell	Learning and Development	Oldbury-based training provider BCTG Group has acquired PTP Training, trading as Performance Through People, for an undisclosed sum. https://www.thinksandwell.com/sandwellnews/
Resorts World / Genting (Malaysia)	Resorts World, Solihull	Leisure	Expansion of Resorts World Arena to 21,600 will entail the recruitment of up to 220 part-time employees Press release
ilke Homes	Birmingham	Housing	Modular housing specialist ilke Homes has opened offices in Birmingham, Bristol and London https://bit.ly/2Xk4arh https://twitter.com/ilkehomes?lang=en

Appendix

NEW INVESTMENT, DEALS & OPPORTUNITIES			
COMPANY	LOCATION	SECTOR	DETAIL & SOURCE
Safetyflex Barriers	Coventry	Manufacturing	<p>A Coventry manufacturer at the forefront of protecting the public and buildings from potential terrorist vehicle attacks at key locations around the world has landed its first export order in Finland. Safetyflex Barriers has won a contract to supply its anti-terrorist bollards for a major government project to protect key infrastructure in Finland</p> <p>Link: www.thebusinessdesk.com/westmidlands/news/2040911-anti-terrorist-bollard-manufacturer-lands-first-export-order-in-finland</p>
JCB	National	Construction	<p>More than 900 jobs have been saved at JCB plants across the Midlands and in Wales after unions and management announced a new flexible working arrangement for staff. Last week, the digger giant announced it was axing 950 jobs due to falling demand for its products because of the coronavirus epidemic. Now, following discussions between the GMB union and JCB bosses, some 915 shop floor workers have kept their jobs.</p> <p>Link: www.thebusinessdesk.com/westmidlands/news/2040927-over-900-jobs-saved-at-jcb</p>
CEWE Photoworld	Leamington Spa	Photography	<p>CEWE, Europe's largest photo printing specialist, has become an exclusive partner for the photo service operated by Boots, the leading pharmacy-led health and beauty retailer in the UK. Under the heading of "Boots Photo powered by CEWE" customers can now order CEWE products on the Boots website.</p> <p>Link: www.thebusinessdesk.com/westmidlands/news/2040944-warwick-firm-wins-exclusive-boots-deal</p>
Lake Chemicals and Minerals	Redditch	Distribution	<p>A business specialising in the distribution of chemicals and minerals has secured £1m in funding. Lake Chemicals & Minerals, based in Redditch, will use the CBILS funding to support the business through the current crisis. The business, which was established in 2002, supplies chemicals, minerals and technical products to customers across a range of sectors but primarily the manufacturing sector.</p> <p>Link: https://www.thebusinessdesk.com/westmidlands/news/2040971-chemicals-firm-secures-1m-funding-deal</p>
Beeswax Dyson	South Holland	Food & Drink	<p>Beeswax Dyson Farming has joined the UK's leading berry and cherry co-operative to help deliver fresh British strawberries year-round. Link: https://www.agriland.co.uk/farming-news/beeswax-dyson-to-establish-year-round-british-strawberry-supply/</p>
Shifnal Egg Drop	Shifnal	Retail	<p>A couple set up the Shifnal Egg Drop during the Covid-19 crisis to sell fresh eggs to people in their area but have been inundated with order selling nearly 12,000 eggs since the end of April. They source from a Tamworth chicken farm and are now expanding their service to other areas in Staffordshire.</p> <p>Link: www.expressandstar.com/news/business/2020/05/29</p>

Appendix

NEW INVESTMENT, DEALS & OPPORTUNITIES			
COMPANY	LOCATION	SECTOR	DETAIL & SOURCE
Guthrie Douglas Group Limited	Warwick	Manufacturing	<p>A Warwickshire company that specialises in manufacturing blinds for complex buildings is planning to more than double turnover and take on new staff after investing in its growth. Guthrie Douglas, which is based at the Heathcote Industrial Estate, was established nearly 40 years ago and makes blinds which are sold all over the world. Recent orders include automated shading systems for the new Google Headquarters in London, through to a skyscraper in Sydney and a new airport in Kuwait.</p> <p>Link: https://www.thebusinessdesk.com/westmidlands/news/2041021-manufacturer-set-to-double-turnover-and-grow-workforce</p>
Sarissa Biomedical	Coventry	Medical Technologies	<p>A Coventry biotech business has raised £1.2m for a new hand-held device that allows paramedics and emergency doctors to quickly diagnose patients who are having a stroke. Sarissa Biomedical has secured funds from a consortium of investors including the MEIF Proof of Concept & Early Stage Fund, which is managed by Mercia and part of the Midlands Engine Investment Fund, Mercia's EIS funds.</p> <p>Link: https://www.thebusinessdesk.com/westmidlands/news/2041024-firm-raises-1.2m-for-on-the-spot-stroke-test</p>
Filta Group Holdings	Rugby	Catering Services	<p>Revenue jumped at an acquisitive Rugby-based listed company which provides cooking oil filtration and fryer management services to restaurants, according to new figures. Filta Group Holdings has reported a revenue of £24.9m for the 12 months to 31 December 2019, up from £14.2m. It comes after the company snapped up Watbio in December 2018, with the business contributing 34% of the group's revenue in 2019. The group's pre-tax profits went from £1.7m to £936,284 over the same period.</p> <p>Link: https://www.insidermedia.com/news/midlands/revenue-jumps-at-acquisitive-listed-company</p>
Deeley Construction	Coventry/ Newcastle Under-Lyme	Construction	<p>A Coventry construction company has started work on a multimillion-pound Dunelm unit near Newcastle-under-Lyme. Deeley Construction has begun work on the 22,000 sq. ft unit at Wolstanton Retail Park. The unit, which is expected to be completed later this year, is being built between the existing Matalan and Marks & Spencer stores at the retail park.</p> <p>Link: https://www.insidermedia.com/news/midlands/work-starts-on-multimillion-pound-dunelm-shop</p>
Advanced Chemical Etching	Shropshire	Manufacturing	<p>Shropshire's leading manufacturers of precision components has been selected to take part in a prestigious supplier development programme by Collins Aerospace.</p> <p>Link: https://www.shropshirelive.com/business/2020/05/27/telfords-ace-is-going-for-gold-with-collins-aerospace/</p>

Appendix

NEW INVESTMENT, DEALS & OPPORTUNITIES			
COMPANY	LOCATION	SECTOR	DETAIL & SOURCE
Stratford Garden Centre	Stratford-upon-Avon	Retail	<p>Stratford Garden Centre sprang into action shortly after lockdown by implementing a local delivery service to take supplies to customers within a six-mile radius, before then setting up a collection system and then opening its doors when Government relaxed restrictions on the sector. Helen Lloyd, a director of the family-owned business, said: "We realised early on that people were still very keen to do work in their outside spaces and that for many that was a release from lockdown. Once the deliveries were in full swing, we then set up the collection service, and that has allowed us to bring furloughed staff back into the business."</p> <p>Link: https://www.cwgrowthhub.co.uk/news/warwickshire-garden-centres-blooming</p>
DP Skip Hire	Stoke on Trent	Construction	<p>A skip hire business has been forced to extend its operating hours due to an increase in demand for skips during the coronavirus lockdown. DP Skip Hire has seen such a boost in demand for its products that it is now open seven days a week instead of six. The company is also planning on investing in 24 new skips to help fulfil the increase in orders as more and more people embark on home improvement projects during lockdown.</p> <p>Link: www.stokesentinel.co.uk/news/business/</p>
Patera Engineering	Stoke on Trent	Engineering	<p>Up to 30 jobs are on offer at a Stoke-on-Trent engineering business which has seen an influx of new and existing orders since the start of the lockdown. Patera Engineering has launched a recruitment drive for welders, site installers, draughtspersons, project managers and apprentices after seeing its order book double since March. They now have a full order book for two years.</p> <p>Link: www.stokesentinel.co.uk/news/stoke-on-trent-news</p>
Belgrave & Powell	Tamworth	Engineering	<p>Tamworth-based Belgrave & Powell, the specialist engineering services group, has bought Addition Manufacturing Technologies, based in Preston. www.thebusinessdesk.com/westmidlands/news</p>
Grenville Engineering	Stoke on Trent	Engineering	<p>Sandyford Properties has finalised a 15-year lease deal with the second long-term occupier at Newfield Industrial Estate, Grenville Engineering. This follows the recent agreement of a 10-year lease deal with long-established occupier Air Liquide. Commercial property investors Sandyford Properties has owned Newfield Industrial Estate in Stoke-on-Trent since 2000. It comprises 131,000sqft of buildings on a 9.2acre site and is home to 20 businesses.</p> <p>Link: www.thebusinessdesk.com/westmidlands/news</p>

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For any queries please contact the lead authors:

Professor Delma Dwight/ Rebecca Riley/ William Rossiter

Delma_Dwight@blackcountryconsortium.co.uk

R.L.Riley@bham.ac.uk

William.Rossiter@ntu.ac.uk



Produced by:



In Partnership:



UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

BIRMINGHAM BUSINESS SCHOOL

