

Workplace Employment in Birmingham 2024

Introduction

The latest official workplace based employment figures for 2024 were released by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in October 2025. The data is taken from the 2024 Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES), which provides workplace based employment data for Birmingham (those who work in the city including in-commuters).

This report sets out the change in overall employment in the city in 2024 with comparisons with other areas. The report also explores the changes in private and public sector employment and which sub-sectors in the local economy have seen the largest increases in employment during 2024.

Key Findings

During 2024 workplace employment in Birmingham increased by 5,500 on the previous year, to stand at 568,500, a 1.0% increase in employment for the year, compared to a 0.5% growth in employment nationally (GB). Birmingham saw the 4th fastest growth in employment in 2024 amongst the 11 GB core cities.

Employment increased in both the private and public sector in 2024. Private sector employment in the city increased by 2,600 (+0.6%) and the public sector workforce locally increased by 2,900 (+2.3%).

Workplace Employment 2024

568,500



Annual Employment Change

+5,500

+1.0% (GB +0.5%)



Private Sector

439,800

+2,600 (+0.6%)

Public Sector

128,700

+2,900 (+2.3%)

Employment in the West Midlands

Employment growth for the 7 West Midlands Met areas is shown in figure 1 below. Overall employment in the Met area decreased by 5,000 a fall in employment of 0.5%. Employment rose in 2 of the 7 Met areas last year with Birmingham (+5,500) and Wolverhampton (+2,000) seeing the largest increase. Employment fell by 4,500 in both Coventry and Dudley in 2024.

Employment in the wider West Midlands region fell by 8,500 (-0.3%) in 2024 compared to the previous year.

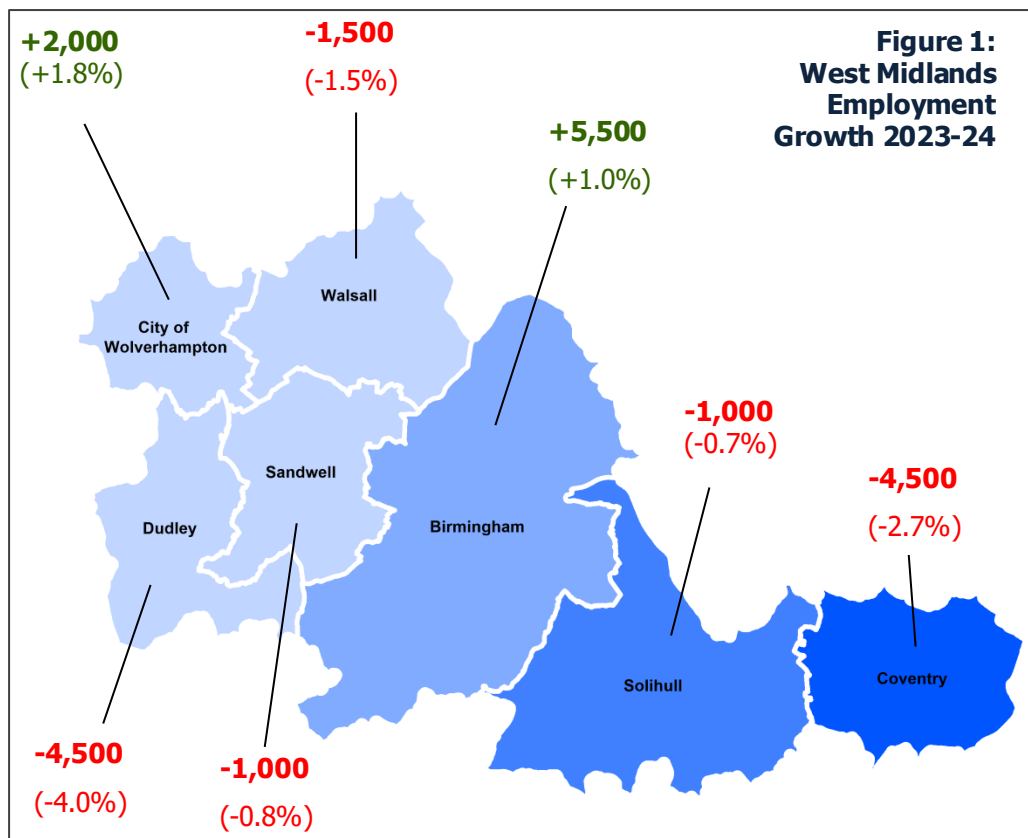


Table 1: Employment Growth by West Midlands Met Authorities Ranked

Area	2023	2024	Annual Change	Annual Change %
Wolverhampton	111,500	113,500	2,000	1.8%
Birmingham	563,000	568,500	5,500	1.0%
Solihull	147,500	146,500	-1,000	-0.7%
Sandwell	128,500	127,500	-1,000	-0.8%
Walsall	101,000	99,500	-1,500	-1.5%
Coventry	168,500	164,000	-4,500	-2.7%
Dudley	112,500	108,000	-4,500	-4.0%
WMCA Met Area	1,332,500	1,327,500	-5,000	-0.4%
West Midlands	2,758,500	2,750,000	-8,500	-0.3%
GB	32,232,500	32,401,500	169,000	0.5%

Employment in the Core Cities

The table below shows the change in employment for the GB core cities and nationally. Birmingham saw the 4th largest growth in employment between 2023 and 2024 amongst the 11 GB core cities. Eight of the core cities saw employment increase last year.

Table 2: Employment Growth by Core City Ranked

Area		2023	2024	Annual Change	Annual Change %
1	Liverpool	286,000	291,000	5,000	1.7%
2	Glasgow	440,000	447,500	7,500	1.7%
3	Leeds	503,000	510,000	7,000	1.4%
4	Birmingham	563,000	568,500	5,500	1.0%
5	Edinburgh	370,000	373,000	3,000	0.8%
6	Bristol	313,000	315,500	2,500	0.8%
7	Nottingham	214,000	215,500	1,500	0.7%
8	Manchester	456,500	457,500	1,000	0.2%
9	Cardiff	229,500	229,000	-500	-0.2%
10	Newcastle	202,500	202,000	-500	-0.2%
	Sheffield	276,000	271,000	-5,000	-1.8%
	GB Core Cities	2,691,000	2,723,000	32,000	1.2%
	GB	32,232,500	32,401,500	169,000	0.5%

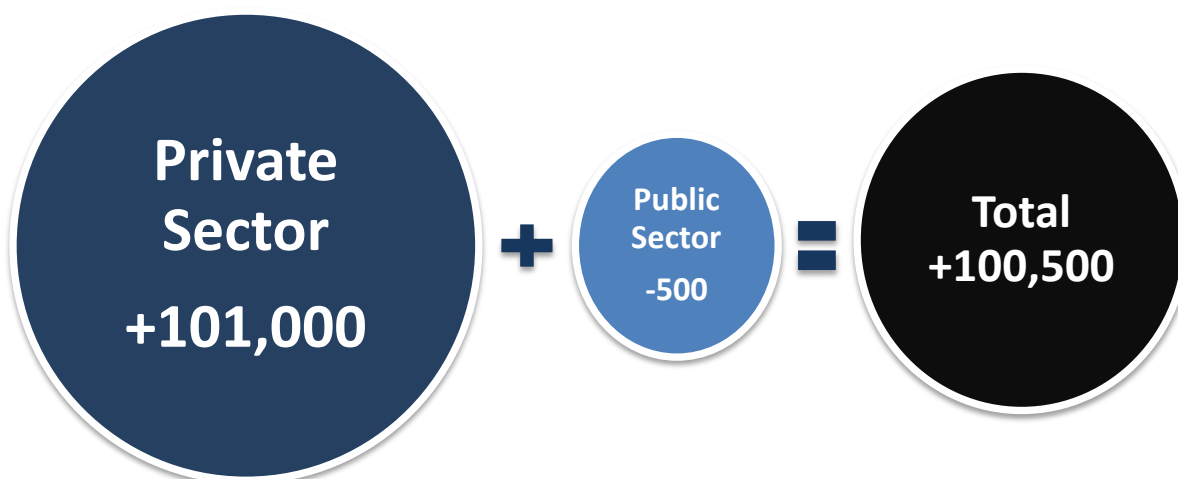
Long Term Employment Growth

Since 2010 Birmingham has seen overall employment grow by 100,500 an increase of 21%.

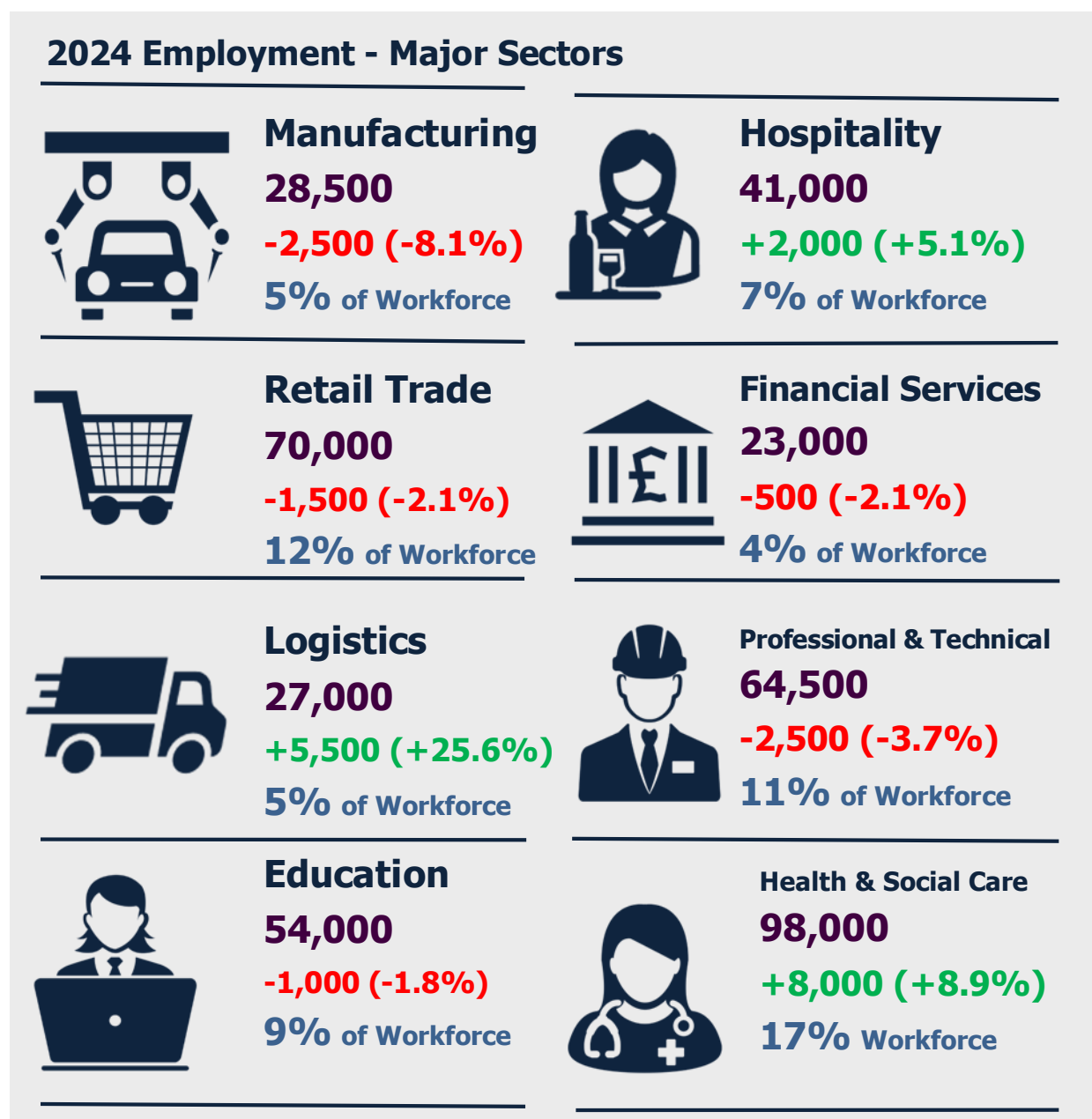
Within the overall increase in employment in the city over the past 14 years there has been divergence in the performance of the private and public sector. Public sector employment has declined (-500) but the local economy has produced enough private sector employment growth (+101,000) to more than compensate for this.

The changes in employment set out above have seen the proportion of public sector employment in the city decline over the last 14 years from 28% in 2010 to 23% in 2024.

Figure 2: Employment Change in Birmingham 2010 -2024



Employment by Sector



The ONS produce a breakdown of workplace based employment in the city by sub sector which is shown in Table 3 on the next page.

The infographic above shows the major sectors in the local economy, what their employment was in 2024, how this has changed since 2023 and what share of total employment in the city that each sector accounts for.

Public services which includes education, health and social care and government services together (188,500) accounts for a third (33%) of employment in the city. This figure is higher than the public sector employment quoted on page 2 as some public services are provided by private sector employers.

Business, professional & financial services combined employed 148,500 in 2024, accounting for over a quarter (26%) of employment in the city. There was a decrease of

3,000 (-2.0%) for the sector between 2023 and 2024. Within the wider sector, professional & technical saw the largest annual decline (-2,500).

The city still retains a significant manufacturing base with 28,500 people employed in 2024, making up 5% of total employment locally.

Retail trade accounted for 70,000 workers in 2024, 12% of total employment. Hospitality is another large employer, with 41,000 people employed in the city (7%).

Overall, the service sector accounts for 91% of employment in Birmingham with employment of 516,600 in 2024, up by 9,900 (+2.0%) between 2023 and 2024.

Table 3 – Top 40 Sub-Sectors by Number Employed

a	Sub Sector	2023	2024	Annual Change	% Annual Change
1	Human health activities	62,000	64,500	2,500	4.0%
2	Education	55,000	54,000	-1,000	-1.8%
3	Retail trade	42,500	40,000	-2,500	-5.9%
4	Public administration and defence	35,500	36,500	1,000	2.8%
5	Food and beverage service activities	33,500	35,000	1,500	4.5%
6	Activities of head offices & management consultancy activities	25,000	25,000	0	0.0%
7	Employment activities	25,000	25,000	0	0.0%
8	Wholesale trade	21,000	22,000	1,000	4.8%
9	Legal and accounting activities	24,000	21,500	-2,500	-10.4%
10	Social work activities without accommodation	16,500	21,000	4,500	27.3%
11	Financial service activities, except insurance and pension funding	13,500	13,500	0	0.0%
12	Residential care activities	11,000	12,500	1,500	13.6%
13	Warehousing and support activities for transportation	7,000	11,500	4,500	64.3%
14	Architectural and engineering activities	10,500	11,500	1,000	9.5%
15	Land transport	9,500	11,000	1,500	15.8%
16	Computer programming, consultancy and related activities	13,000	11,000	-2,000	-15.4%
17	Real estate activities	10,500	11,000	500	4.8%
18	Specialised construction activities	9,500	10,500	1,000	10.5%
19	Services to buildings and landscape activities	12,000	8,500	-3,500	-29.2%
20	Wholesale and retail trade and repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	8,500	8,000	-500	-5.9%
21	Activities auxiliary to financial services and insurance activities	8,500	8,000	-500	-5.9%
22	Office administrative, office support and other business support activities	6,500	8,000	1,500	23.1%
23	Other personal service activities	7,500	7,500	0	0.0%
24	Construction of buildings	6,500	6,000	-500	-7.7%
25	Accommodation	5,500	6,000	500	9.1%

26	Telecommunications	6,000	5,500	-500	-8.3%
27	Sports activities and amusement and recreation activities	5,500	5,500	0	0.0%
28	Manufacture of fabricated metal products, except machinery and equipment	6,000	5,000	-1,000	-16.7%
29	Security and investigation activities	4,500	4,750	250	5.6%
30	Manufacture of motor vehicles, trailers and semi-trailers	4,500	4,500	0	0.0%
31	Postal and courier activities	4,750	4,250	-500	-10.5%
32	Activities of membership organisations	4,750	4,250	-500	-10.5%
33	Other professional, scientific and technical activities	3,750	3,750	0	0.0%
34	Civil engineering	3,750	3,500	-250	-6.7%
35	Other manufacturing	2,250	3,000	750	33.3%
36	Manufacture of machinery and equipment n.e.c.	2,375	2,500	125	5.3%
37	Waste collection, treatment and disposal activities; materials recovery	3,500	2,500	-1,000	-28.6%
38	Manufacture of food products	3,500	2,375	-1,125	-32.1%
39	Manufacture of rubber and plastic products	2,750	2,250	-500	-18.2%
40	Insurance, reinsurance and pension funding	1,750	2,125	375	21.4%
	Total Employment	563,000	568,500	5,500	1.0%