

UK Business: Activity, Size and Location - September 2023¹

The UK Business: activity, size and location dataset released in September 2023 provides a snapshot of the Business Demography (from Inter-Departmental Business Register, IDBR) dataset from March 2023 and provides a breakdown by broad sector, turnover and employment size band. The fuller Business Demography is released in November each year which provides the total number of active enterprises in each location, alongside side enterprise births, deaths, high growth and survival rates.

The following briefing is based on enterprises as opposed to local units².

In Summary:

- The March 2023 snapshot shows there were 36,990 enterprises in the Black Country. This was a decrease of 1.6% (-585 enterprises) compared to the March 2022 snapshot, the UK decreased by 1.5%.
- For the Black Country area, 88.1% (32,605) of enterprises employed between 0-9 employees, below the UK average of 89.1%. Compared to the 2022 snapshot, the Black Country proportion has increased by 0.2pp but the number of enterprises has decreased by 430, the UK proportion decreased by 0.4pp.
- The 2023 snapshot data shows that the Black Country had a higher proportion than or matched the UK in 4 of the 5 turnover bands, the exception was the £0-£199,999 banding (66.8% vs 68.1% UK).
- Snapshot 2023 data shows out of 10 defined sectors, the Black Country has 4 sectors above the UK average. These are: building technologies (14.4% vs 13.8%), environmental technologies (0.6% vs 0.5%), retail (20.1% vs 14.7%) and transport technologies (11.5% vs 4.7%).

In Detail:

- The March 2023 snapshot shows there were 36,990 enterprises in the Black Country. This was a decrease of 1.6% (-585 enterprises) compared to the March 2022 snapshot, the UK decreased by 1.5%.
- Within the Black Country, only Sandwell experienced an annual increase, by 0.6% (+60) to a total of 9,935. The largest number fall was in Walsall, by 335 (-3.9%) to 8,160. This was followed by a decrease of 180 (-1.8%) to 10,035 in Dudley and a decrease of 135 (-1.5%) to 8,860 in Wolverhampton.

¹ Office for National Statistics (ONS): [UK Business: activity, size and location: 2023](#) - released September 2023.

² ONS state that an enterprise can be thought as the overall business, made up of all the individual sites or workplaces. It is defined as the smallest combination of legal units that has a certain degree of autonomy within an enterprise group. A local unit is an individual site (for example a factory or shop) associated with an enterprise. It can also be referred to as workplace.

Enterprise Count and Change between the 2022 snapshot and 2023 snapshot:

	2022	2023	Percentage Change	Number Change
Dudley	10,215	10,035	-1.8%	-180
Sandwell	9,875	9,935	0.6%	60
Walsall	8,495	8,160	-3.9%	-335
Wolverhampton	8,995	8,860	-1.5%	-135
Black Country	37,575	36,990	-1.6%	-585
UK	2,767,700	2,726,830	-1.5%	-40,870

Employment by Size Band

- For the Black Country area, 88.1% (32,605) of enterprises employed between 0-9 employees, below the UK average of 89.1%. Compared to the 2022 snapshot, the Black Country proportion has increased by 0.2pp but the number of enterprises has decreased by 430, the UK proportion decreased by 0.4pp.
- For the Black Country area, the percentage of enterprises that employed 10-49 people was above the UK level (9.7% vs 9.0%). The Black Country area has decreased by 0.3pp when compared to the March 2022 snapshot and the number of enterprises decreased by 155, the UK proportion increased by 0.4pp.
- 1.7% of enterprises employed 50 to 249 people, the UK proportion was 1.6%. This has remained the same proportion for the Black Country while the UK increased by 0.1pp since the 2022 snapshot. The number of enterprises that employed 50-249 people has increased by 5 in the Black Country area since the 2022 snapshot.
- 0.4% of enterprises employed over 250 people in the Black Country, matching the UK proportion. These have remained the same proportions for both the Black Country and UK since the 2022 snapshot. The number of enterprises that employed over 250 people has decreased by 5 in the Black Country area since the 2022 snapshot.

Employment by Size Band, 2023 snapshot:

	Dudley % of Total	Sandwell % of Total	Walsall % of Total	Wolverhampton % of Total	Black Country	Black Country % of total	UK % of total
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	36,990	100.0%	100.0%
Micro (0 to 9)	87.4%	87.9%	88.6%	88.8%	32,605	88.1%	89.1%
Small (10 to 49)	10.6%	9.9%	9.1%	9.1%	3,600	9.7%	9.0%
Medium-sized (50 to 249)	1.6%	1.8%	1.8%	1.6%	630	1.7%	1.6%
Large (250+)	0.3%	0.4%	0.5%	0.5%	155	0.4%	0.4%

Turnover Band

- As seen in the following table, the 2023 snapshot data shows that the Black Country had a higher proportion than or matched the UK in 4 of the 5 turnover bands, the exception was the £0-£199,999 banding (66.8% vs 68.1% UK).
- Reflecting UK trends, the £0-£199,999 turnover band was the only one to decrease when compared to the 2022 snapshot. There was a decrease by 6.4% (-1,695) for the Black Country area and the UK decreased by 6.0%.

Enterprises by Turnover Band for the Black Country, 2023 Snapshot:

	Dudley % of Total	Sandwell % of Total	Walsall % of Total	Wolverhampton % of Total	Black Country	Black Country % of total	UK % of total
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	36,990	100.0%	100.0%
£0 - £199,999	64.6%	65.3%	67.3%	70.5%	24,705	66.8%	68.1%
£200,000 - £999,999	23.4%	22.5%	21.8%	19.8%	8,125	22.0%	21.6%
£1m - £4.99m	9.1%	8.9%	8.3%	7.3%	3,110	8.4%	7.7%
£5m - £49.99m	2.6%	3.0%	2.4%	2.1%	935	2.5%	2.2%
£50m+	0.3%	0.4%	0.4%	0.3%	120	0.3%	0.3%

Defined Sectors

- Snapshot 2023 data shows out of 10 defined sectors, the Black Country has 4 sectors above the UK average. These are: building technologies (14.4% vs 13.8%), environmental technologies (0.6% vs 0.5%), retail (20.1% vs 14.7%) and transport technologies (11.5% vs 4.7%).
- For the Black Country area, the sector with the highest proportion of enterprises was business services which accounted for 26.6% (9,845) of the business base; the UK proportion was 35.9%. This sector has increased by 0.6% (+60) since the 2022 snapshot, opposite of the national trends where there was a 1.9% decrease.
- When compared to the 2022 snapshot, 4 of the 10 defined sectors increased in the Black Country, these were: building technologies by 5 (+0.1%, +0.7% UK), business services by 60 (+0.6%, -1.9% UK), health & wellbeing by 20 (+1.0%, +2.3%) and public sector including education by 45 (+4.6%, +3.9% UK). In contrast, in real terms the Black Country saw the highest fall (by 475) in transport technologies.

Black Country and UK Enterprises by Sector:

	Black Country 2022	Black Country 2023	Black Country % Change	Black Country Num. Change	Black Country 2023 % of Total	UK 2023	UK % Change	UK 2023 % of Total
Advanced Manufacturing	4,255	4,185	-1.6%	-70	11.3%	358,555	-2.5%	13.1%
Building Technologies	5,315	5,320	0.1%	5	14.4%	377,580	0.7%	13.8%
Business Services	9,785	9,845	0.6%	60	26.6%	979,080	-1.9%	35.9%
Environmental Technologies	240	230	-4.2%	-10	0.6%	14,665	-1.0%	0.5%
Health & Wellbeing	2,015	2,035	1.0%	20	5.5%	151,365	2.3%	5.6%
Public Sector inc. Education	985	1,030	4.6%	45	2.8%	106,830	2.1%	3.9%
Retail	7,460	7,435	-0.3%	-25	20.1%	402,165	-2.8%	14.7%
Transport Technologies	4,735	4,260	-10.0%	-475	11.5%	128,600	-6.9%	4.7%
Visitor Economy	2,800	2,655	-5.2%	-145	7.2%	207,975	0.3%	7.6%
Total	37,575	36,990	-1.6%	-585	100.0%	2,726,815	-1.5%	100.0%