

A NEW DEAL FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE WEST MIDLANDS

June 2024



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About the Centre for Social Justice

Established in 2004, the Centre for Social Justice is an independent think-tank that studies the root causes of Britain's social problems and addresses them by recommending practical, workable policy interventions. The CSJ's vision is to give people in the UK who are experiencing the worst multiple disadvantages and injustice every possible opportunity to reach their full potential.

The majority of the CSJ's work is organised around five "pathways to poverty", first identified in our ground-breaking 2007 report *Breakthrough Britain*. These are: educational failure; family breakdown; economic dependency and worklessness; addiction to drugs and alcohol; and severe personal debt.

Since its inception, the CSJ has changed the landscape of our political discourse by putting social justice at the heart of British politics. This has led to a transformation in Government thinking and policy. For instance, in March 2013, the CSJ report *It Happens Here* shone a light on the horrific reality of human trafficking and modern slavery in the UK. As a direct result of this report, the Government passed the Modern Slavery Act 2015, one of the first pieces of legislation in the world to address slavery and trafficking in the 21st century. Our research is informed by experts including prominent academics, practitioners, and policymakers. We also draw upon our CSJ Alliance, a unique group of charities, social enterprises, and other grassroots organisations that have a proven track-record of reversing social breakdown across the UK.

The social challenges facing Britain remain serious. In 2024 and beyond, we will continue to advance the cause of social justice so that more people can continue to fulfil their potential.

Acknowledgements

We are very grateful to the individuals and organisations who have kindly given up their time and shared their knowledge and expertise with us. Their work is vital in understanding the challenges facing young people across the West Midlands and we are thankful for their time, expertise and guidance.

Firstly, we would like to thank the following organisations who attended the Big Listen event in Birmingham and fed their insights into this report.

- Action Tutoring
- Ambition Institute
- Aquarius Action Project
- Brilliant Club
- CAF
- CAFAG - Chell Area Family Action Group
- Coachbright
- Eagle's Nest
- Employability UK
- Fair Education Alliance
- Football Beyond Borders
- Future First
- Generation UK
- Get Further
- Grace Academy Solihull
- Grace Foundation
- Into University
- Jericho
- Kissing it Better
- National Lottery
- Probono Economics
- Really Neet Project
- Right2Succeed
- Safe Families for Children
- SCC (Simplify the Complex)
- Selly Oak Trust School
- Solihull Sixth Form College
- Speakers for Schools
- Speakers Trust
- Survivor Alliance
- Team You
- Think Forward

We would also like to thank Jess Philips, Member of Parliament¹ for Birmingham Yardley, who spoke at the Big Listen West Midlands.

We are also grateful to the school leader from Holy Trinity Catholic School for sharing their insights.

¹ At time of publication Jess Philips was the Labour Candidate for Birmingham Yardley, due to Parliament being dissolved for the 2024 General Election.

We are grateful to the following businesses who attended a private roundtable discussion and fed their insights into this report.

- TechWM
- DLA Piper LLP
- Food Division LTD
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- Midcounties Co-operative LTD
- Voyage Care LTD
- Midlands Engine
- Millennium Point Charitable Trust
- Birmingham Hippodrome
- Intercity Technology LTD
- NatWest PLC
- Ernst & Young LLP

Finally, we are grateful to The Rigby Foundation, and in particular Sir Peter Rigby and Steve Rigby, for their support – without which this work would not have been possible.



Foreword:

Steve Rigby

In the midst of a general election campaign, both major political parties are attempting to offer a fresh new vision for young people across the nation. National service, votes at age 16, and an overhaul of the apprenticeship system are all on the table, each being promised as the solution to improving the lives of our young people. The parties may disagree on the answer, but the question is clear: how can we turbo charge the opportunities and boost the life chances for our youngest generation?

The question for me is even more personal. How can we turbo charge the opportunities for young people living right here in the West Midlands, the place where I grew up and where Rigby Group, our family business, has worked for decades. The scale of the problem is daunting. Only around 4 per cent of students eligible for free school meals progress to the most competitive universities, compared with nearly 12 per cent of their wealthier peers. The attainment gap between advantaged and less advantaged students has failed to improve over the last decade² and our region has a higher-than-average poverty rate at 23 per cent. There is also a higher proportion of adults working in lower-paid occupations, and higher rates of economic inactivity and unemployment among working-age adults.³ Most hard hitting of all is the fact that the West Midlands has the highest rate of child poverty in the UK, at 38 per cent, with areas including Birmingham, Sandwell, Stoke-on-Trent, Walsall and Wolverhampton all making the top 20 most affected local authorities.⁴ Ambition in our young must be matched with an environment that allows them to prosper locally in well paid roles, so it is clear then that there is a great need in the West Midlands for a new approach to helping the next generation to thrive, and the Rigby Family want to be a part of the solution.

My parents established the Rigby Foundation in 1992 and for over thirty years, they have proudly supported many hundreds of local and national charities providing invaluable support to people and communities in need.

As the 50th anniversary of our family business approaches in 2025, we have been reviewing the purpose of our charitable support. We have agreed to focus future funding on programmes that help children and young people to succeed in education and to have the best possible chance of securing meaningful and sustainable employment.

Due to our strong ties to the West Midlands, from both a family and a business perspective, we have decided that this region will be our priority.

To help inform our strategy, we decided to work with the Centre for Social Justice on this report, *A New Deal for Young People in the West Midlands*, leveraging their deep understanding of the root causes of Britain's biggest social problems.

2 Education Policy Institute, *Covid-19 And Disadvantage Gaps in England 2021*, December 2022, p.9

3 Joseph Rowntree Foundation, *Households below the Minimum Income Standard: 2008-2021*, 22 February 2023

4 Action for Children, *Where is child poverty increasing in the UK?*, 22 March 2024

This report is just the beginning of The Rigby Foundation's work in the region. It lays out the challenges facing young people across the West Midlands, particularly in education, employment and training. It draws on discussions with education and charity leaders, representatives from the West Midlands Combined Authority and employers, all of whom play a vital role in helping our local young people to achieve their full potential.

Definitions

Unless specified otherwise these are the definitions used within this report.

The West Midlands: The Government Region which consists of the counties of Herefordshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, West Midlands and Worcestershire.

The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA): Combined authority for the West Midlands metropolitan county in the United Kingdom, made up of seven Constituent authorities of Birmingham City Council, Coventry City Council, Dudley Metro Borough Council, Sandwell Metro Borough Council, Solihull Metro Borough Council, Walsall Council and the City of Wolverhampton.

The West Midlands (county): Referring to the area governed by the WMCA constituent authorities of Birmingham City Council, Coventry City Council, Dudley Metro Borough Council, Sandwell Metro Borough Council, Solihull Metro Borough Council, Walsall Council and the City of Wolverhampton.

Executive Summary

Young people across Birmingham and the West Midlands, need a new deal for education, employment and skills in order to fully unlock their potential and turbo charge the region's prosperity.

Birmingham is the youngest major city in Europe - nearly four in 10 (38 per cent) of the city are under 25. This offers a unique opportunity for propelling the city forward, if young people in the area are equipped, skilled and released into their full potential.

But despite this potential, young people across the region are struggling. We have spoken to charities, school leaders and employers who are all seeking to improve the life chances of young people across the West Midlands and Birmingham, and they told of low aspiration; young people lacking social and communication skills; stagnant social mobility and families marked by intergenerational worklessness. As just one snap shot, there are over 130,000 children in Birmingham who are living in the bottom quintile of deprivation nationally and the city is ranked the 7th most deprived local authority in England.

Children and young people in the West Midlands are coming top of the league tables for all the wrong things. They missed the most amount of school days in the first year of the pandemic due to school closures; were the second to least likely to attend clubs for hobbies, arts and music (12 percentage points less likely than counterparts in London); and are the least likely to have had some kind of work experience. This is despite over half (55.3 per cent) of young people in Birmingham identifying work experience as the single biggest thing that could make a difference to their employment prospects.

Young people struggle to climb the first rung of the employment ladder. In July 2021, almost one in five young people in Birmingham were out of work, much higher than the national average. The difficult job market was most frequently identified by young people in the West Midlands as the primary reason young people struggle to find a job.

On average those in the West Midlands were more pessimistic about their young people's future than across the country. Over a third of adults in the West Midlands do not think young people in their local area have the skills to succeed in their first job compared to less than 1 in 3 across the country. Only one in five adults in the region say there are good job opportunities for young people leaving school compared to one in four across the UK. Only a quarter (26 per cent) of 18 – 21-year-olds in the West Midlands agreed that disadvantaged young people had the support they needed to succeed.

Young people themselves however are more optimistic than their elders about employment prospects for their peers, and stakeholders should act together to capitalise on this optimism. *A New Deal for Young People in the West Midlands* lays out how central and local Government can work with local philanthropists, employers and businesses to create a brighter future for the young people living across the region. The report recommends that:

The Department for Education should:

1. Review the allocation of Pupil Premium to ensure it is going to the most disadvantaged students.
2. Roll out 84 attendance mentors across the West Midlands, at a cost of £3.36 million per year.
3. Create a companion to Ofsted focused on helping schools improve following an Ofsted inspection.
4. Roll out Family Hubs to all remaining 317 English local authorities that do not yet have one, ensuring families across the WMCA have a one-stop shop of support.

The West Midlands Combined Authority and its constituent Local Authorities should:

5. Pioneer a new qualification, modelled on the Mbacc in Manchester, which facilitates a technical skills pathway from aged 14, linking the curriculum to skills needed in the local economy.
6. Ringfence funding for apprenticeships for 16-18 year olds.
7. Give due consideration to grassroots organisations such as small and medium-sized charities when granting contracts.
8. Review careers advice services across the local authorities and put forward a renewed strategy to ensure every young person receives high quality, appropriate provision.

Schools and Colleges should:

9. Ensure that every pupil has completed a minimum of two weeks of work experience before the age of 18.
10. Impose a ban of all mobile phones for pupils up to the end of GCSEs, during the school day.
11. Draw on the provision of local grassroots organisations to provide an enrichment guarantee for young people, providing up to five hours a week of extracurricular activities.
12. Publish and roll out a West Midlands Parents Participation Strategy, to help schools and parents engage meaningfully and effectively together to tackle the issue of absence.

Employers and Philanthropists should:

13. Co-ordinate their degree apprenticeship intakes in order to give those on apprenticeships the same social and life skills experience as those who go to university.
14. Co-ordinate their existing efforts to upskill and employ disadvantaged young people. A first step should be to map out all initiatives for young people that exist across the region, making an easily searchable portal for young people, employers, schools and parents to navigate. This would also allow schools to identify what support they could benefit from.
15. Co-ordinate an outreach programme to schools to ensure young people leaving schools understand the apprenticeship offer across the region.
16. Aim for sustained, meaningful and skill-specific ESG and engagement, led by what the charities say they need.
17. Funders should commit to minimum of 3-5 year funding packages for small and medium sized charities to provide stability of services for young people.

Introduction:

The need to focus on young people in Birmingham and the West Midlands

Birmingham is the youngest major city in Europe, with under 25s accounting for 38 per cent of the city's population⁵ and the under 16s for 23 per cent. On some metrics, Birmingham is Europe's largest local authority.⁶ The workforce is uniquely young, offering a great opportunity for propelling the city forward, if young people in the area are equipped, skilled and released into their full potential. Currently many ambitious, skilled young people looking for opportunities feel like they must move away from the region to pursue their career. A CEO of a major creative space in Birmingham stated, *"In the West Midlands talent is way outweighing opportunity. In my sector people are leaving the city."* But despite this, charities and those working with young people across Birmingham and the West Midlands were adamant that the talent is there, it just has to be released.

"We have this huge amount of talent in the West Midlands that is waiting to be tapped."

Deputy CEO, National Tutoring Charity

The feel of Birmingham is also unique. While other cities have pushed themselves forward, residents of Birmingham felt the city was often overlooked. Despite being the UK's second city, Birmingham residents felt that they didn't have the same cultural capital as other large UK cities outside of London. This is despite Birmingham having the second largest financial services sector in the country,⁷ and the West Midlands having just under a fifth of all finance roles.⁸

5 University of Birmingham, *The City of Birmingham*. Accessed: <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/ptr/departments/theologyandreligion/research/cpur/about/city#:~:text=England's%20second%20city%2C%20a%20strategically,40%25%20of%20the%20city's%20population.>

6 BBC News, *Vital Services Safe - Leader Of 'Bankrupt' Birmingham Council*, 5 September 2023. Accessed: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-birmingham-66715441>

7 West Midlands Growth Company, *Birmingham Remains Second-Largest Business, Professional, And Financial Services Cluster In UK*, September 2023

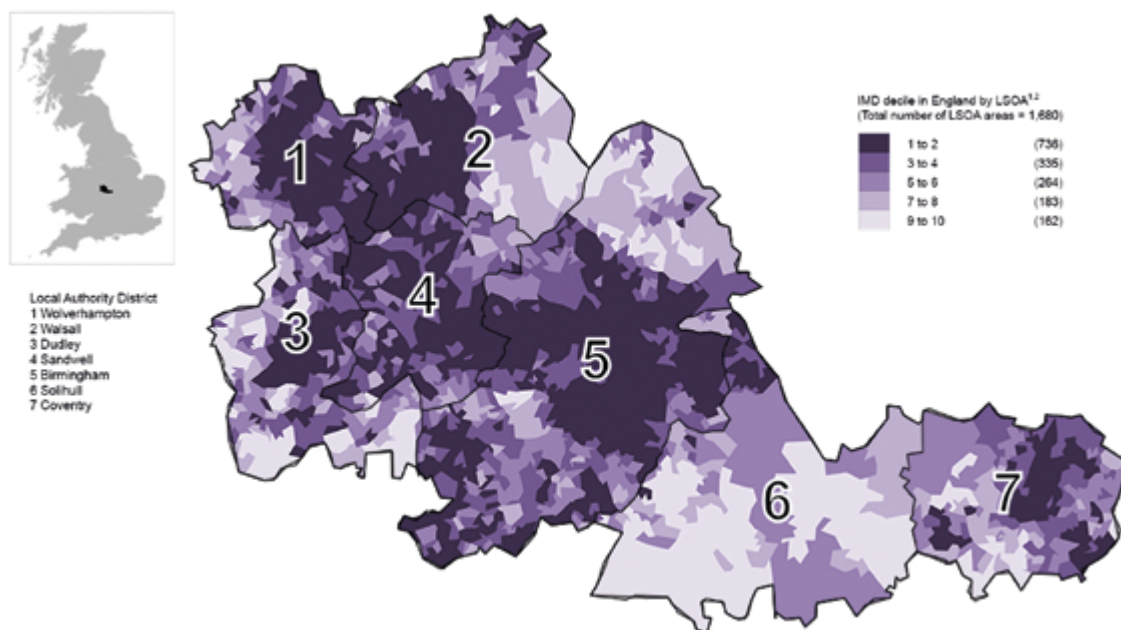
8 The Business Desk.Com, *A Fifth of Finance Roles Are Now Based in The West Midlands*, May 2023

But despite this opportunity and broadening out from Birmingham, inhabitants of the West Midlands tend to have a more negative view of what young people can achieve in the region, when compared to the rest of the nation. The Centre for Social Justice commissioned a national poll of adults, with a boost of respondents from the West Midlands.⁹ Nearly a third (32 per cent) of adults in the West Midlands said the primary reason young people struggle to get a job was the difficult job market, compared to a quarter (25 per cent) of the country. The Centre for Social Justice also commissioned an additional poll to understand the views of young people across the West Midlands.¹⁰ For those between the ages of 16 and 21 over a third (36 per cent) said the difficult job market was the primary barrier to young people who struggle to get a job. Only one in five adults say there are good job opportunities for young people leaving school compared to one in four across the UK. Over a third (34 per cent) do not think young people in their local area have the skills to succeed in their first job compared to less than one in three (29 per cent) across the country.

Within the West Midlands there is a clear generation divide in opinions. Over a third (34 per cent) of 18-34-year-olds think there are few opportunities for young people in the region, compared to only a quarter (26 per cent) of over 55-year-olds who agree. Just under 3 in 10 (29 per cent) under 35s say that young people do not have the skills they need to succeed in their first job, compared to nearly 4 in 10 (39 per cent) of those aged over 55. Over 4 in 10 (42 per cent) under 35s said the primary reason young people struggle to get a job was the difficult job market. For those over 55 this was just over a quarter (26 per cent).

The West Midlands and the West Midlands Combined Authority also includes areas of high deprivation. The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) shows hotspots of deprivation around Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Walsall, Telford & Wrekin, and Stoke on Trent, depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Deprivation Across the West Midlands Combined Authority



Source: Office for National Statistics map of Department of Communities and Local Government data

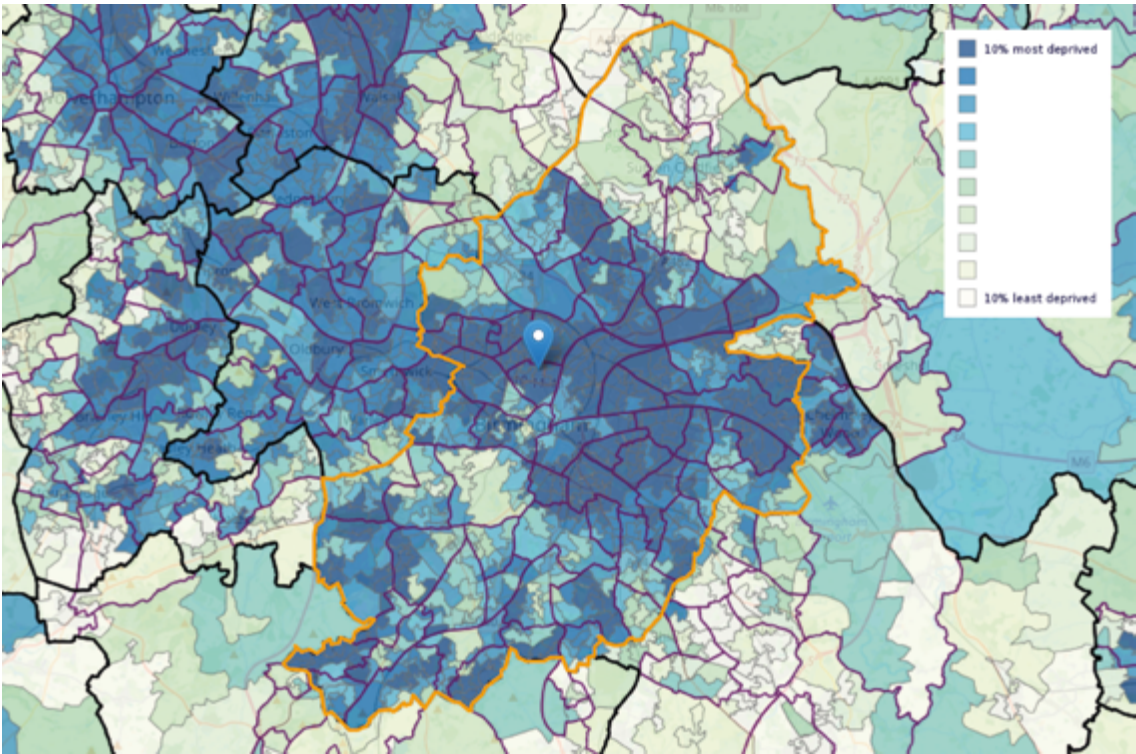
9 Fieldwork commissioned by CSJ and conducted by Opinium between 5 - 9 April 2024. Nationally representative sample of 2000 adults, plus 505 adults from the West Midlands (Government Region). Opinium Research is a member of the British Polling Council.

10 Fieldwork commissioned by CSJ and conducted by Opinium between 5 April - 31 May 2024. 536 people living in the West Midlands (Government region) between the ages of 16 and 21 were polled. Opinium Research is a member of the British Polling Council.

Birmingham is ranked the 7th most deprived local authority in England by the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) and the city is also the most deprived authority in the West Midlands Metropolitan area. Birmingham is ranked the third most deprived English Core City¹¹ after Liverpool and Manchester. Within Birmingham, according to the 2019 IMD, 43 per cent of the population of Birmingham live in Lower layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) that are among the highest decile of deprivation in England, and 51 per cent of children (under 16s) live in the 10 per cent most deprived areas.¹²

While there are pockets of deprivation in all parts of the city, deprivation is most heavily clustered in the area surrounding the city centre. Sandwell (12th), Wolverhampton (24th) and Walsall (25th) are all within the 10 per cent most deprived local authority areas in the country. In terms of Parliamentary constituencies¹³, Hodge Hill is the most deprived constituency in the city. In terms of wards, Sparkbrook and Balsall Heath East, Bordesley Green and Lozells are the top three most deprived wards. Sutton Coldfield is the least deprived part of the city with seven of the eight Sutton wards ranked as the city’s least deprived wards.

Figure 2: Deprivation Across Birmingham



Source: Indices of Deprivation: 2019

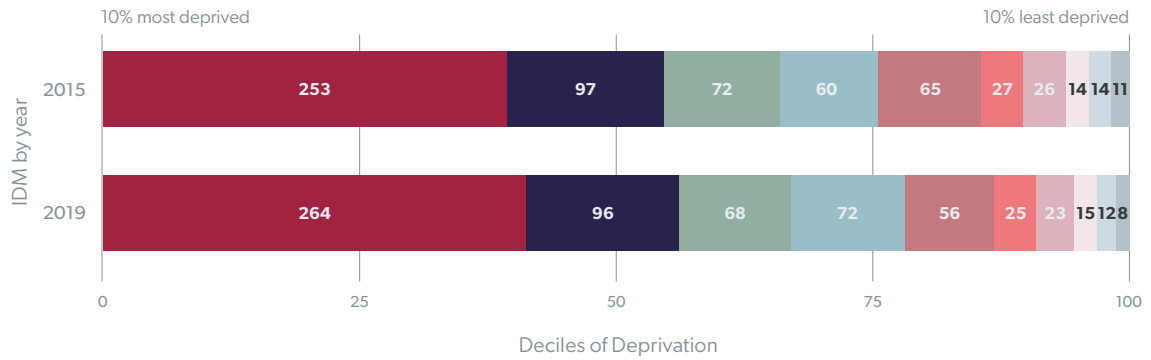
The number of areas in the highest decile of relative deprivation increased between 2015 and 2019 (the latest that year IMD data is available). There were more LSOAs in Birmingham falling into the 10 per cent most deprived LSOAs nationally in 2019 (264) than in 2015 (253), as shown in Figure 3. The proportion of the population living in the 10 per cent most deprived areas nationally has increased from 40 per cent in 2015 to 43 per cent in 2019.

11 Core cities are defined according to the IMD as Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Nottingham, Newcastle, Leeds, Sheffield and Bristol. Note this does not include London.

12 Index of Multiple Deprivation, *Deprivation in Birmingham, Analysis of the 2019 Indices of Deprivation*, December 2019

13 On 2019 General Election constituency boundaries

Figure 3: Percentage Distribution of Deprivation Within Birmingham, by Decile



Source: Indices of Deprivation: 2019

Birmingham has the highest share in the West Midlands of residents living in the most deprived areas with 43 per cent of people living in areas that are ranked in the top decile of deprivation nationally. This means that nearly half a million (490,800) of the city's residents and 132,500 children live in the highest tenth of deprivation by area nationally.

Figure 4: Proportion Of the Population That Is the Bottom 10 Per Cent Nationally, By Local Authority In The West Midlands



Source: Birmingham City Council analysis of Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019

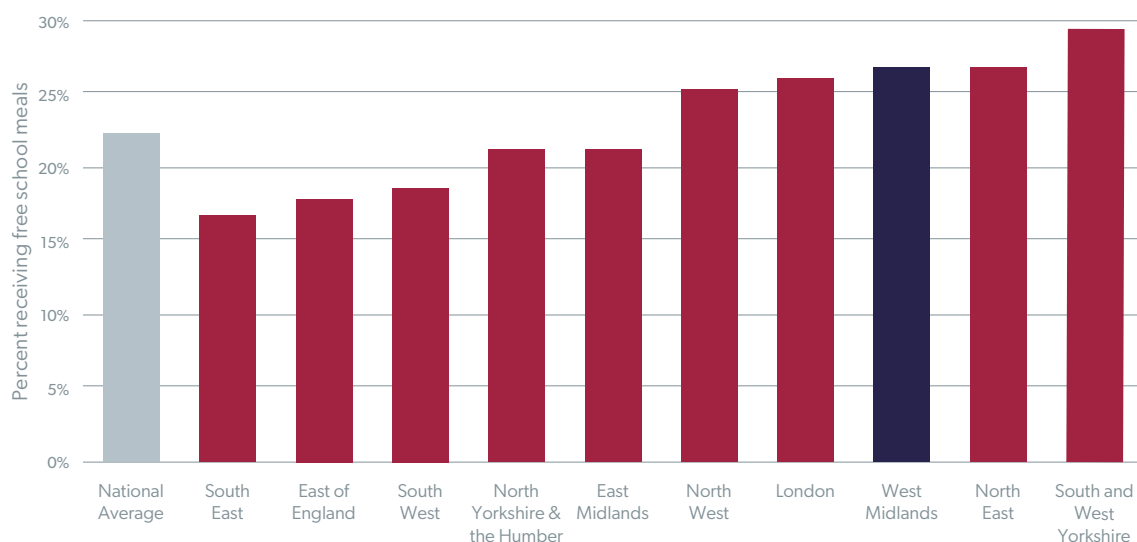
All this shows that young people across Birmingham and the West Midlands are facing specific challenges that require a fresh approach.

Chapter 1: Schools

Disadvantage and Attainment

Across the country, 22.5 per cent of pupils receive Free School Meals (FSM). Children eligible for FSM live in families on low or no income. To be eligible for FSM while on Universal Credit, household income must be less than £7,400 a year, after tax and not including benefits.¹⁴ In the West Midlands 26.71 per cent of pupils receive FSM, higher than the national average, although the regions of Yorkshire and the North East have higher percentages than the West Midlands, as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Percentage of Children Receiving FSM, By Government Region¹⁵



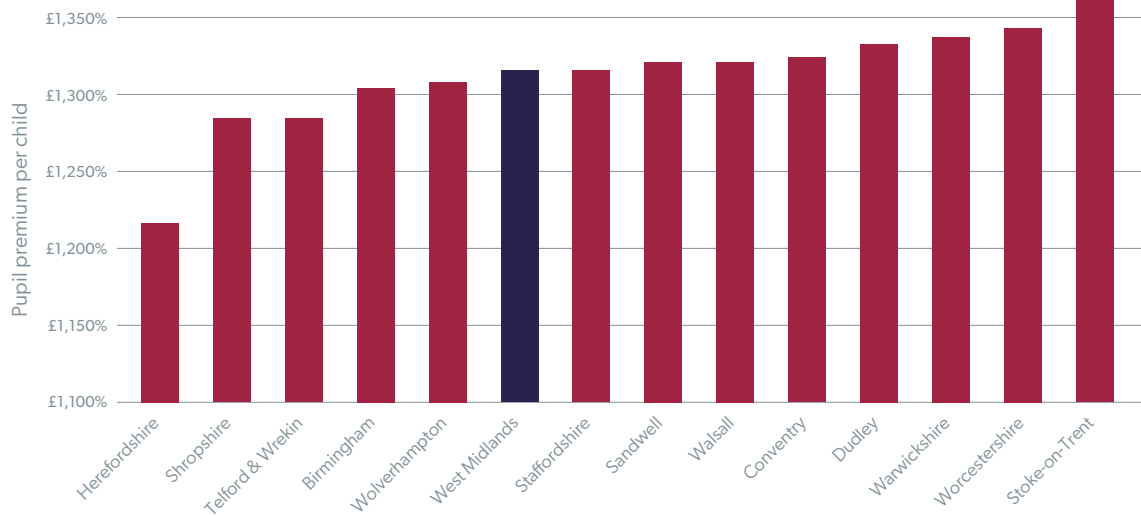
Source: CSJ analysis of ONS Schools, pupils and their characteristics, Academic year 2022/23

Across the West Midlands there is variation in the average allocation of Pupil Premium, the additional funding to improve educational outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in state-funded schools, as shown in Figure 6. Stoke-on-Trent had the highest allocation of Pupil Premium, indicating the highest proportion of students meeting the eligibility criteria for disadvantage.

¹⁴ Gov,UK, *Apply For Free School Meals*. Accessed: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals>

¹⁵ N=3210 schools

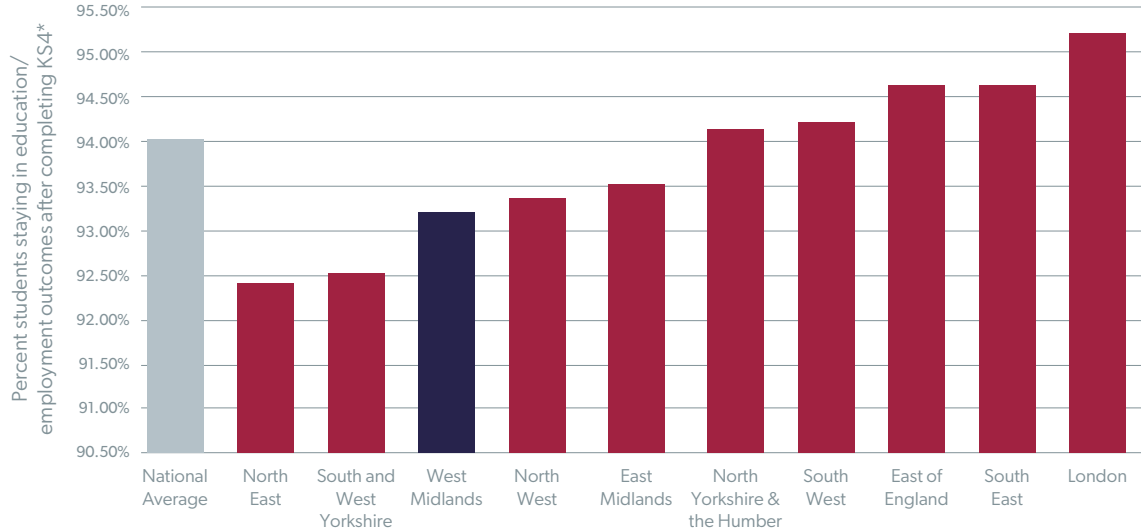
Figure 6: Pupil Premium per Child, by Local Authority in the West Midlands



Source: ONS, Pupil Premium allocations for financial year 2023 to 2024 by local authority area and region

Across the country 94.0 per cent of young people stay in education or employment after completing Key Stage 4 (end of GCSEs), while in the West Midlands this is 93.2 per cent. Again, only Yorkshire (at 92.5 per cent) and the North East (at 92.4 per cent) are lower. This is depicted in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Students Staying in Education/Employment After Key Stage 4¹⁶

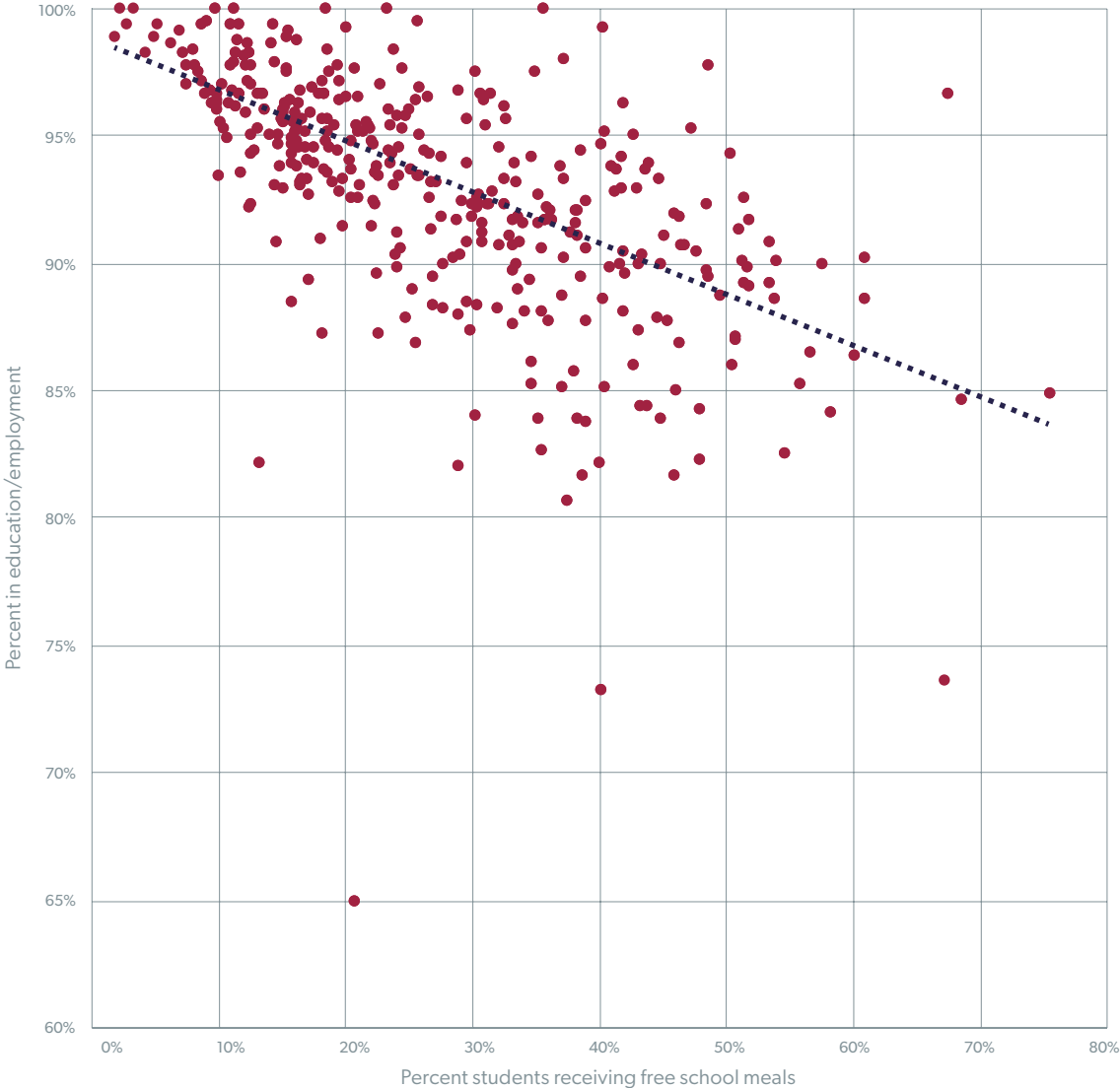


Source: ONS, Pupil Premium allocations for financial year 2023 to 2024 by local authority area and region

There is a correlation between the schools with a higher percentage of students receiving FSM, and having a lower proportion of school leavers in education or employment two terms after leaving school, as shown in Figure 8.

¹⁶ N = 3120 Schools

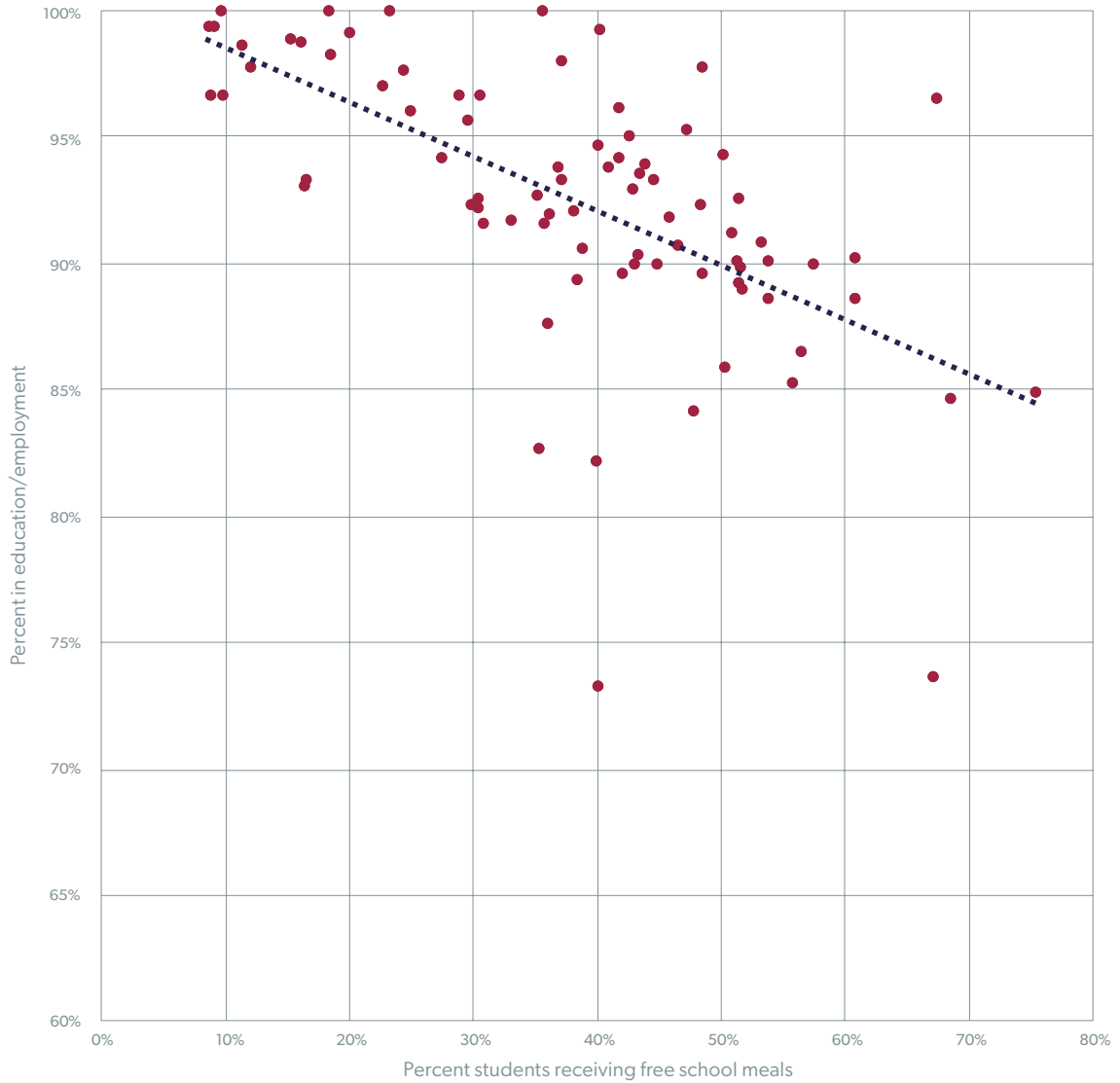
Figure 8: Proportion of Pupils on FSM in West Midlands Schools and Education/Employment Outcomes



Source: CSJ Analysis of secondary school data

Examining just schools in Birmingham, the correlation persists, as shown in Figure 9. However, Ark St. Alban’s Academy in Highgate, Birmingham is a noticeable outlier to this trend. Over two thirds of their students are eligible for free school meals (67.4 per cent), but the school maintains a high proportion of school leavers who go on to education or employment at 96.6 per cent, which is higher than both the national and regional average.

Figure 9: Proportion of Pupils on FSM in Birmingham Schools and Education/Employment Outcomes



Source: CSJ Analysis of secondary school data

The allocation of Pupil Premium is designed to provide additional support to the most disadvantaged pupils, but there is frustration about how the allocations are made and how the money is spent. A school leader articulated this and said: *"I think there needs to be a review of Pupil Premium... where are the case studies of where it's being spent well... is it having the greatest impact... It's almost like money has been thrown at it... but where is the evidence to say it is making a difference?... is it really addressing the root of the problem?"*

Recommendation

1. The Department for Education should review the allocation of Pupil Premium to ensure it is going to those students who are the most disadvantaged.

Increasing demand on school services

In addition to academic results, schools across the West Midlands are experiencing unprecedented pressures, and increasingly are having to meet the social and material needs of their pupils and the pupils' families.

Across England, there are 4,000 school-based food banks in primary and secondary schools, which equates to one in every five schools running a food bank.¹⁷ This proportion rises for schools with high numbers of students from deprived backgrounds, with a third (33 per cent) of schools in deprived areas running foodbanks.¹⁸ This means that schools are now the biggest source of charitable food and household aid for families, overtaking the number of food banks provided by charities. There is significant regional disparity in the distribution of foodbanks in schools, ranging from 17 per cent to 18 per cent in East of England, South East, and South West to a high of 24 per cent in London, the Midlands, and the North West.¹⁹

Case Study

Oasis Academy Short Heath, in Streetly, North Birmingham is a school that has expanded its remit to provide for the material needs of its families and the wider community. Since September 2017, the school has operated its own food bank and provides food parcels, free uniforms, clothes washing and support accessing benefits to families in the school and the wider community. The community hub feeds about 35 families every week.²⁰

One teacher at a Multi-Academy Trust in Birmingham said, *"When a family or child needs help, it comes back into schools to help, but as a school we don't have enough capacity to help."* Another headteacher of a school in a deprived area of Birmingham spelled out how great the material needs could be. They said, *"Even affording a pencil case or a uniform is a challenge for some of our pupils. [There is] only so much schools can meet the shortfall."* Given the wide spectrum of backgrounds and vulnerabilities of pupils in schools, it was difficult for teachers to balance often competing needs within the class too. One teacher said, *"How do we balance helping our most vulnerable while supporting those children who are in school to learn?"* A national coalition of organisations tackling educational inequality felt that across the West Midlands the demand of families' needs had shifted from being met by the Borough Councils and the West Midlands Combined Authority to being shouldered by schools and charity sector organisations. This may have been exacerbated by Birmingham City Council issuing a Section 114 notice in September 2023, an equivalent to declaring bankruptcy.

Corporations and businesses based across the West Midlands reported not being able to offer their services and support to schools as teachers simply did not have the capacity to do anything beyond the demands of keeping the school running. Capacity for innovation or collaboration was therefore limited, due to the internal pressures on senior school leaders, particularly to deliver expected standards in GCSE results. A charity offering tutoring services said *"I have had several free programmes for school, but I cannot get a headteacher in front of me because they have so little capacity. I can't give them away because there is no bandwidth."* One medium employer in central Birmingham had been able to

17 Will Baker et al., *Feeding Hungry Families: Food Banks in Schools in England*, Bristol Working Papers in Education Series, April 2024, p. 2

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid, p. 10

20 BBC West Midlands, *Providing food for families the new norm – school*, 2 May 2024. Accessed: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cyer-592j3gno>

successfully partner with schools improving the tech capacity of the school. The CEO of that company said, *"We're doing an awful lot going into schools, kitting them out with the equipment of the future. The 3D printers, the laser cutters, getting more girls into computer science..."*

Case Study: The Grace Foundation

The Grace Foundation was established in 2003, with a vision to transform young people's lives through holistic education. The charity initially worked closely alongside three Grace Academy schools in Solihull, Coventry and Darlaston, but has now expanded. The Grace Foundation increases the capacity of the school staff team, and Grace Foundation employees work closely with school staff to embed the Grace ethos within the school. Each Grace Foundation supported school has a funded Family Support Worker and Youth Worker as well as access to the Cross Academy Support Team based in the central offices in Solihull.

The Grace Foundation currently works with 12 partner schools across 3 Multi-Academy Trusts, impacting over 12,000 young people and their families. There are plans to expand to 13 partner schools by the end of 2024, bringing in major business sponsors. Partner Schools are all secondary and based in the Midlands, Northamptonshire and the Milton Keynes area.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is still being keenly felt by young people across the region. Children who were in year 7 at the onset of the COVID-19 lockdowns are sitting their GCSEs in Summer 2024. Babies who were born in the first months of lockdown are starting school in September 2024. Pupils in the West Midlands, on average, missed the most amount of school between March 2020 and March 2021, whereas those in the South West of England missed the least.²¹ One charity working with young children and their families in the suburbs of Stoke-on-Trent described the difficulty of teaching a class where some pupils are still lagging far behind their peers. They said, *"By year 3 or 4 you have a 10-year reading gap. Some who can't read at all and some who are reading at secondary levels. How do you plan a lesson for that?"*

Those working with children and young people were also particularly concerned by the social impact of the prolonged lockdowns. One school reported, that although children were back in school, *"their social, emotional, and mental health has been battered."* There was a widespread feeling that the full impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has not been appreciated or dealt with, particularly the damage on young people. While educators, the council and other stakeholders involved in the lives of young people banded together during the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a feeling that it had receded into people's memories and there is pressure for services and others to 'move on' from it, despite the impacts still being deeply felt. A Director of Learning at a Multi-Academy Trust said that *"everyone went above and beyond in the pandemic... We've gone back into systems so quickly... the shock of it has not really been dealt with... there needs to be some recognition of it."* Some charities said that donors and other funders were beginning to be frustrated with the desire to still be concerned with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and are interested only in funding forward looking programmes. One charity said, *"Funders tell us we need to move on from the pandemic... we can stop talking about it but that isn't going to make it go away."*

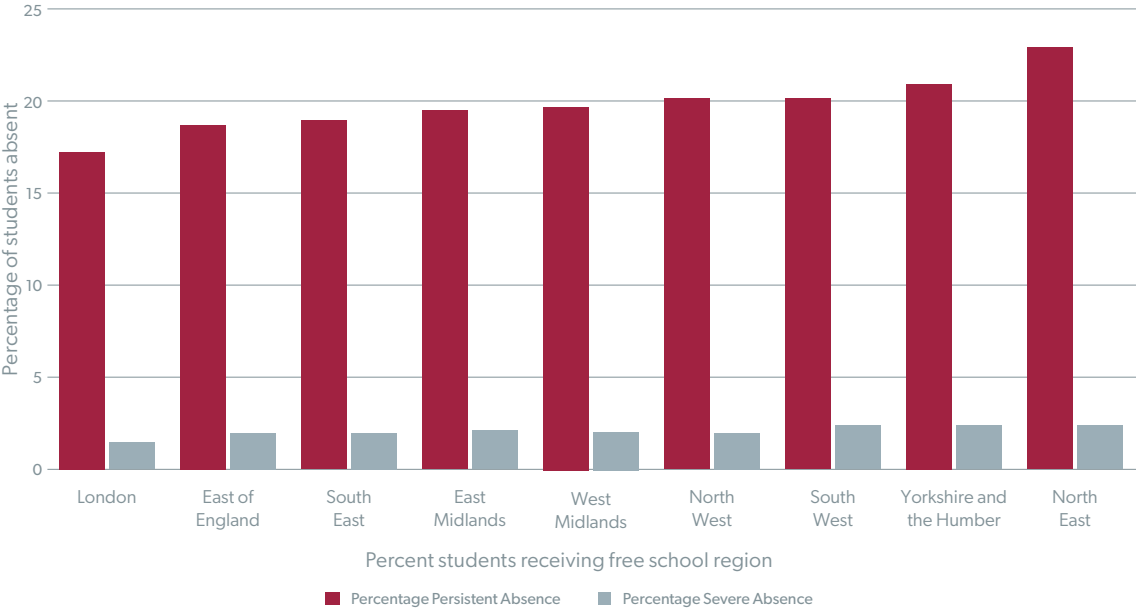
21 House of Commons Library, Autumn Term 2020: *How Covid-19 Affected England's State-funded Schools*, March 2021

Absence

Although children being absent from school is a national challenge, absence was raised by schools in the West Midlands as one of the primary challenges facing their students. An Assistant Principle of a Multi-Academy Trust said, "Getting young people into school after Covid is an absolute nightmare. We try everything and anything to get children into school." A national charity with a presence in Birmingham said, "Before we get to educational attainment, we get 10-year-olds saying they are not going to school." The most disadvantaged pupils are more likely to be absent. In the 2022/23 academic year, children in receipt of FSM had a severe absence rate more than triple the rate for children who were not eligible.

Across the nation in the Autumn term of 2023, 19.44 per cent of students were persistently absent from school.²² This means they miss 10 per cent of their education, equivalent to an afternoon a week. The West Midlands is very slightly higher than the national average at 19.7 per cent. Across the nation there were 142,487 pupils severely absent from school in the autumn term of 2023. Severely absent children missed more than 50 per cent of their education, meaning they are absent more than they are present. 1.97 per cent of the national school population are severely absent and in the West Midlands this is 2.00 – close to national average.

Figure 10: Persistent and Severe Absent by Region, Autumn Term 2023

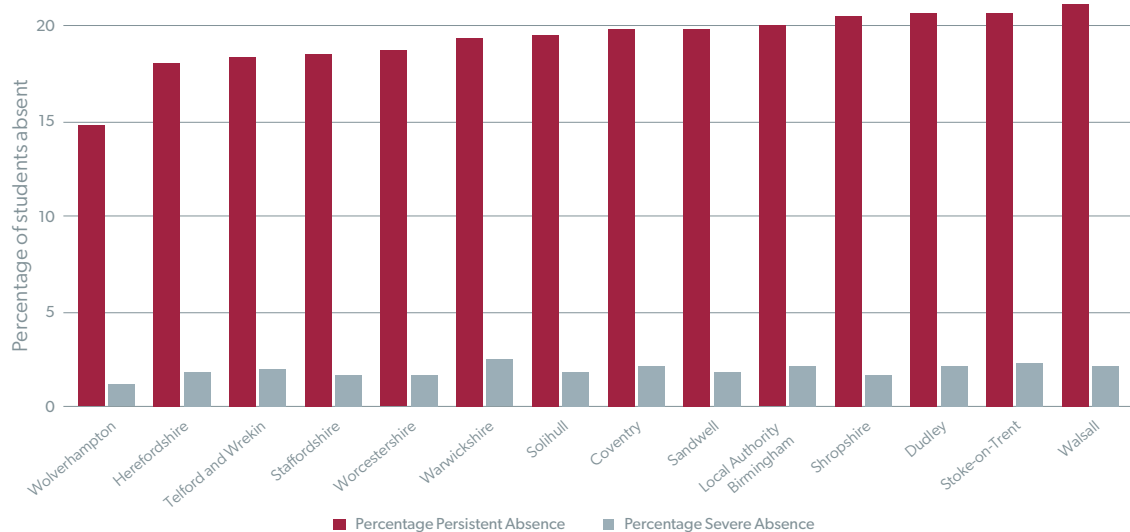


Source: CSJ Analysis of Department for Education, *Pupil absence in schools in England: Autumn Term 2023/24*, May 2024

Within the West Midlands, Birmingham had the highest proportion of persistently absent children, as shown in Figure 11.

²² Department for Education, *Pupil absence in schools in England: Autumn Term 2023/24*, May 2024. Accessed: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/pupil-absence-in-schools-in-england/2023-24-autumn-term>

Figure 11: School Absences by Local Authority, Autumn Term 2023



Source: CSJ Analysis of Department for Education, *Pupil absence in schools in England: Autumn Term 2023/24*, May 2024

The mental health of young people was one clear driver of school absence. A national charity with a presence in Birmingham said, “*The age [where children are absent] is getting younger. It used to be secondary school children who didn’t go to school, it’s now primary school children who aren’t going to school... We had a child break a mother’s arm when she tried to take him to school. The mental health crisis is driving this.*” This perspective chimes with analysis the CSJ has conducted about the drivers of absence across the nation which found that anxiety was the biggest driver behind recent increases in absence.²³ Data collected from NHS Surveys shows how the likelihood of school attendance issues varies based upon whether children have a mental health condition.²⁴ According to their survey, (3.8 per cent) of children aged 8-16 years missed more than 15 days of school between February and April 2023. School absence rates were higher for children with a probable mental health disorder: 11.2 per cent of children with a probable mental health disorder missed 15 days or more of school, compared to 1.5 per cent of children who were unlikely to have a mental health disorder.²⁵

Some schools in the West Midlands attributed the challenges of absence to changing parental attitudes, but were quick to say that parents needed supportive, not punitive, measures. The view of one school leader in a Multi-Academy Trust was that the “*attendance issue is linked to parents; it’s not linked to kids.*” A charity that supports teachers and school leaders in the West Midlands said that parental attitudes changed during the COVID-19 pandemic, when working from home became more popular. They suggested that with parents at home it was easier for children and young people to stay home from school. A national poll conducted by the CSJ found that 28 per cent of parents agree that the pandemic showed that it is not essential for children to attend school every day.²⁶ Broken down by Government region, this poll showed that a higher proportion of parents in the West Midlands believed this to be the case, with a net agreement with the statement of 35 per cent.²⁷

23 CSJ, *Lost and Not Found How Severe Absence Became Endemic In England’s Schools*, March 2024

24 NHS Digital, *Mental Health of Children and Young People in England 2023 – wave 4 follow up to 2017 survey*, 2023. Accessed via: <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/mental-health-of-children-and-young-people-in-england/2023-wave-4-follow-up/data-sets>

25 Ibid.

26 The Centre for Social Justice commissioned You Gov to conduct a poll of 1,206 parents of children who were aged between 5-16 and enrolled in primary or secondary school. Fieldwork took place between 15-19th December 2023. Written up in Centre for Social Justice, (CSJ), *The Missing Link: Restoring the Bond Between Schools and Families*, January 2024

27 This figure was based on a sample size of 97 for the West Midlands.

This attitude was reflected by school leaders in the West Midlands who reiterated that during the COVID-19 pandemic their children were able to stay at home and be educated, so they believed this could continue. An Assistant Principal of a Multi-Academy Trust said the experience of online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic had made both parents and children believe it was interchangeable with in-person learning. The teacher said they would ask pupils why they hadn't come to the lesson, and they would reply that it was ok because they had caught up and copied the work they had missed. The Assistant Principal said, "*It's not ok, I am the expert...you need to be in my lesson.*"

Case Study: Selly Oak Trust School

Selly Oak Trust School have paid for two occupational therapists to work with their pupils to tackle attendance. This has cost the school £100,000 per year to cover the salaries and costs.

Case Study: Q3 Academy Langley

Q3 Academy Langley, a state secondary school in Sandwell, has an innovative approach to attendance and in the Autumn term 2023 the school was ranked 20th highest in the country for attendance and 3rd for schools in a similar category.

As of October 2023, the Academy had 1,380 students, of whom 31.9 per cent were Pupil Premium, 27.8 per cent received Free School Meals and 7.6 per cent had Special educational needs and disability (SEND). The school's own analysis identified the home environment coupled with high levels of deprivation in Sandwell, as the main drivers of absence.

Q3 Academy Langley said they are motivated to tackle absence as "*Local attitudes have always been that 'they are kids from Sandwell' and there is a generational and regional attitude that we are working hard to change and give children and families from disadvantaged backgrounds every opportunity.*"²⁸

Q3 Academy Langley policies to tackle absence include:

- Pastoral staff call students attached to their year groups so that staff can interact with parents with whom they have an existing relationship. Due to prudent financial planning, the Academy has prioritised designated staffing to support with attendance strategies.
- Students who are Pupil Premium and SEND are prioritised when calls are made. On average following a first round of calls, 1 in 3 students are brought into the Academy. Parents are held accountable for their child's absence.
- Pastoral staff make a third round of calls at the end of the day, to ensure that students who were absent are feeling better. It is reiterated that the staff look forward to seeing absent pupils in the morning. This typically ensures that approximately 50 per cent of students, who were off on a given day, return to school the following day.

²⁸ Written evidence submitted by Q3 Langley Academy, PA0226. Accessed: <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/119271/pdf/#:~:text=At%20the%20Academy%2C%20we%20have,with%20a%20member%20of%20staff>

- Absence data is collated over a half-termly basis and meetings are arranged between parents and the child's Head of Year to support parents with strategies to enable their child to improve their attendance. This also develops the relationship between the parent and the child so that the parent does not feel isolated in tackling the issue of persistent absence. This works particularly well for the 'hard to reach' families who may otherwise feel stigmatised by the poor attendance of their child.
- The Academy runs an attendance car for all Door Step Visits. Every child who is absent for a second day, a Door Step Visits is carried out to not only see the child for safeguarding purposes, but to encourage the child to come into the Academy with a member of staff. All pastoral staff are trained to drive the attendance car.

Their attendance and persistent absence figures have been amongst the best in the country, despite Sandwell being recently identified as the second poorest borough in the UK. Despite this, the Academy has an average that is almost 7 per cent above national and a persistent absence rate that is 7.9 per cent above.

| Year | Cohort Size | Academy Attendance (National) | Persistent Absence Percentage | Disadvantaged/ Pupil Premium Attendance Percentage | SEND |
|-----------|-------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2019-2020 | 870 | 98.0 (N/A) | 2.0 | 97.4 | 96.7 |
| 2020-2021 | 1110 | 97.5 (95.4) | 5.34 | 96.6 | 96.1 |
| 2021-2022 | 1110 | 96.4 (95.4) | 7.64 | 95.3 | 93.6 |
| 2022-2023 | 1260 | 95.8% (90.7) | 9 | 96.6 | 92.1 |
| 2023-2024 | 1380 | 96.8 (91.1) | 9.81 | 95.4 | Support (89.1) EHCP (97.7) |

Q3 Academy Langley provided the below case study as written evidence for a Parliamentary Committee.²⁹

A disadvantaged student in Year 11 was severely absent for the majority of the first term in 2021/22 with an attendance of 40.4 per cent. The Academy held several meetings with the mother, who was a single parent, to identify barriers to attendance. Pastoral staff helped the young person identify their aspirations for the future. The young person's attendance improved progressively throughout the course of the year and their attendance rose to 92.7 per cent.

Recommendation

2. The Department for Education should roll out 84 attendance mentors across the West Midlands, at a cost of £3.36 million per year.
3. The West Midlands Combined Authority should publish and roll out a West Midlands Parents Participation Strategy, to help schools and parents engage meaningfully and effectively together to tackle the issue of absence.

²⁹ Written evidence submitted by Q3 Langley Academy, PA0226. Accessed: <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/1119271/pdf/>

Assessment

Those working with young people in school settings spoke about the pressure that schools are under for their children to perform well in formal assessments. What schools were assessed on drove their priorities. There was agreement that unless the assessment framework was shifted there would not be a change in how schools allocated their timetabling, resource or staffing. A charity that works with 11–18-year-olds who are not able to effectively engage in mainstream education pointed to the pressure being driven by how schools are measured and in particular Ofsted inspections and the measurement of Progress 8 scores. Speaking about assessment frameworks within schools, the charity said: *“There is no room for differences. If you don’t fit that mould, which is becoming narrower and narrower and narrower, you will fall out of the system. 15 years ago, we built a hairdresser in our school. So, they [the students] did English, maths, and sciences, but also hairdressing so they were ready for work. They did really practical work. All of that has been withdrawn. It’s narrowed the field. If you don’t fit the mould you don’t work.”*

Other school leaders felt that Ofsted could do more to support schools that needed to improve. They were frustrated that following an Ofsted inspection (especially if a school had been graded as ‘Requires Improvement’ or ‘Inadequate’) schools were not given support or guidance on how to improve, despite Ofsted Inspectors having that knowledge.

Recommendation

4. The Department for Education should create a companion to Ofsted focused on helping schools improve following an Ofsted inspection.

Attainment

Across the nation, the average percentage of grades marked as A or A* in 2023 was just over a quarter (25.4 per cent), as shown in Table 1. The West Midlands comes under the national average at 22.9 per cent and only the North East and the East Midlands have lower average results.

Table 1: Percentage of A level Grades Marked A and A* by Region³⁰

| Region | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| National Average | 24.4 | 37.2 | 43.2 | 34.7 | 25.4 |
| North East | 23.0 | 35.6 | 39.2 | 30.8 | 22.0 |
| North West | 23.5 | 35.8 | 41.4 | 34.4 | 24.1 |
| Yorkshire and the Humber | 23.2 | 35.0 | 41.1 | 32.4 | 23.0 |
| West Midlands | 22.0 | 35.0 | 40.9 | 32.3 | 22.9 |
| East Midlands | 21.0 | 34.5 | 41.3 | 31.4 | 22.3 |

³⁰ Note there were no summer exams in 2020 or 2021, so results reflect Teacher Assessed Grades and other grading methods, producing significant grade inflation.

| Region | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|----------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Eastern Region | 25.6 | 38.3 | 44.8 | 36.1 | 26.6 |
| South West | 25.8 | 38.8 | 44.7 | 36.0 | 26.3 |
| South East | 28.3 | 41.2 | 47.1 | 39.5 | 30.3 |
| London | 26.9 | 40.7 | 47.9 | 39.0 | 30.0 |

Source: Ofqual, *A Level Results, 2023*

Across the nation, the average percentage of GCSE grades marked 7 (pre-2017 equivalent to a Grade A), for 2023 was 20.9 per cent, as shown in Table 2. The average score across the West Midlands was 18.4. Again, the North East is lower than the West Midlands, and also Yorkshire and the Humber, with the East Midlands having a similar average score (18.5 per cent) to the West Midlands.

Table 2: Percentage of GCSE Grades Marked 7/A and Above, by Region³¹

| Region | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| National Average | 19.9 | 25.1 | 27.7 | 25.2 | 20.9 |
| North East | 16.4 | 22.0 | 24.5 | 22.4 | 17.6 |
| North West | 18.6 | 23.5 | 25.9 | 23.1 | 18.6 |
| Yorkshire and the Humber | 17.8 | 22.3 | 24.4 | 22.4 | 18.2 |
| West Midlands | 18.1 | 23.0 | 25.3 | 22.8 | 18.4 |
| East Midlands | 18.3 | 23.0 | 25.1 | 22.5 | 18.5 |
| Eastern Region | 20.5 | 25.9 | 28.5 | 26.2 | 21.9 |
| South West | 20.4 | 26.1 | 29.1 | 25.3 | 20.8 |
| South East | 23.5 | 29.0 | 31.9 | 29.2 | 24.4 |
| London | 25.7 | 31.4 | 34.5 | 32.6 | 28.4 |

Source: Ofqual, GCSE results, 2023

Variation for average A-level score across the West Midlands can be seen in Table 3. For a full breakdown of the results of state secondary schools in Birmingham with a Pupil Premium percentage of over 50 per cent, including Progress 8 scores, percentage of grades above grade 5 in GCSE maths and English, Ebacc average and deprivation decile of the school can be seen in Appendix 1.

³¹ Note there were no summer exams in 2020 or 2021, so results reflect Teacher Assessed Grades and other grading methods, producing significant grade inflation.

Table 3: Average A-level result by Local Authority

| Council | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 |
|----------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Birmingham | C+ | B | B+ | B | B- |
| Coventry | C | B- | B | B- | C |
| Dudley | C | B- | B- | B | C+ |
| Herefordshire, (County of) | C+ | B | B | B | B- |
| Sandwell | C- | B- | B- | C+ | C |
| Shropshire | C | B- | B | B- | C |
| Solihull | C+ | B- | B | B- | C+ |
| Staffordshire | C | B- | B | B- | C |
| Stoke-on-Trent | C | B- | B- | B- | C+ |
| Telford and Wrekin | B- | B | B+ | B | B- |
| Walsall | C | B- | B | B- | C+ |
| Warwickshire | B- | B | B | B | B- |
| Wolverhampton | C | B- | B | C+ | C |
| Worcestershire | C | B- | B | B- | C+ |

Source: ONS, Academic year 2022/23, A level and other 16 to 18 results

Curriculum

School leaders pointed to the content heavy focus of the curriculum, much of which they struggled to help students apply to their lives. A school leader said they would like to see a shift from purely knowledge to representing and communicating content, advocating a focus on *“the use of something, over knowing something.”* Another school leader of a Multi Academy Trust said, *“they are learning stuff that they will never use in their whole lives.”* Only 33 per cent of adult respondents in the West Midlands felt that disadvantaged young people had the support they needed to succeed in their first job and 47 per cent felt that they did not have the support needed.³²

A broader curriculum was particularly pertinent for children who do not suit an academic classroom environment. A charity founder that works with young people not in education, employment or training suggested that opportunities for a technical education should be presented earlier than 16. The practical education stream would suit many children much better and could prevent them leaving school feeling that they were a failure due to struggling to achieve the minimum grades in maths and English.

³² Fieldwork commissioned by CSJ and conducted by Opinium between 5 - 9 April 2024. Nationally representative sample of 2000 adults, plus 505 adults from the West Midlands (Government Region). Opinium Research is a member of the British Polling Council.

The curriculum was also criticised for not allowing enough time for enrichment activities, experiences that were likely to be commonplace in the lives of more affluent pupils, but that more disadvantaged peers were more likely to miss out on. A charity leader was very clear: “[Enrichment] is what’s missing from disadvantaged communities.” They pointed out that this adds to the expectation on schools serving children in deprived areas. They said that “It’s this pressure on schools, having to replace things which children aren’t getting from home.”

Young people from the West Midlands are among the least likely to have extracurricular activities. Examining students aged 21-22, the Education Policy Institute (EPI) looked at what student characteristics are most strongly associated with take up of sporting clubs or clubs for hobbies, arts or music when the young people were aged 13-15, in 2013 and 2014.³³ Students from London, the South West and the South East were the most likely to attend sports clubs (75 per cent, 73 per cent, and 72 per cent, respectively), whilst students from Yorkshire and the Humber, the North East and the West Midlands were the least likely (60 per cent, 64 per cent, and 67 per cent, respectively). Students from London, the South West and the East of England were the most likely to attend clubs for hobbies, arts and music (66 per cent, 66 per cent and 63 per cent respectively), whilst students from Yorkshire and the Humber, the East Midlands and the West Midlands were the least likely (46 per cent, 53 per cent and 54 per cent respectively).

The CEO of a company in Tyseley that employs less than 100 people pointed to “the disconnect between the business community and the employers and the actual schooling system” as a big issue facing employers. A national not-for-profit company that supports young people into employment in Birmingham through free skills boot-camps and online classes spoke about how they can flex their skills training to the needs of the local economy, in the way the school curriculum cannot. They spoke of the impact when training was successfully linked to local needs:

“There are 1 million jobs available in the UK. We noticed there were 10,000 data engineers needed so we built a curriculum to train people for that. We’re building a similar programme for green jobs. We go where the economy tells us there is a need. For what employers need. We also use personal coaches. There’s an instructor who teaches the class and then there is a mentor who is more responsible for the holistic wellbeing of the participants. Job retention after 1 year is 90 per cent. And we’re seeing our workers getting promoted and headhunted. These aren’t low skill entry level jobs.”

Recommendation

5. The Mayor of the West Midlands should pioneer a new qualification, modelled on the Mbacc in Manchester, which facilitates a technical skills pathway from aged 14, linking the curriculum to skills needed in the local economy.
6. Schools should draw on the provision of local grassroots organisations to provide an enrichment guarantee for young people, providing up to five hours a week of extracurricular activities.

33 Education Policy Institute, *Access to Extra-Curricular Provision and the Association with Outcomes*, February 2024

Careers Advice and Work Experience

Both employers and school leaders pointed to the lack of mandatory work experience and poor quality and piecemeal careers advice as a problem, especially for the most disadvantaged pupils. Following national cuts to Connexions [sic] which placed personal advisers in schools, colleges and Connexions centres across England which was set up to give 14- to 19-year-olds job and training advice and support with issues like claiming benefits, there is no national careers advice service and schools reported provision being patchy across the West Midlands. A national consultancy firm that provides apprenticeships with a presence in Birmingham said that it was crucial that any careers advice service engaged parents and teachers, alongside engaging young people. They said that for careers advice to be effective it needs to, *“Educate the influencers. So, the parents, the Guardians, the teachers, the schools or careers advisors, they just don’t know that these things exist. They don’t know. We do lots of apprenticeships and people don’t know it.”* Both employers and school leaders said that to be effective careers advice needed to be integrated from an earlier age, suggesting it should be part of the curriculum from year 7, well before students chose their GCSE subjects. The CEO of a tech firm based in Birmingham said, *“Are we going in early enough for the children to help shape them and give them a vision of what good could look like?”* It was agreed that careers advice should also expand young peoples’ horizons, explaining and pointing towards jobs that young people may not know exist, especially around the tech and creative industries.

Speakers for Schools conducted a nationally representative survey to ascertain the prevalence of work experience and found that young people who grew up in the West Midlands were the least likely of any region to have work experience.³⁴ Respondents in the survey were asked to recall any employer engagement activities they participated in while they were in secondary school and in post-16 education settings. As shown in Table 4, those who grew up in the West Midlands were the most likely of any region to have no work experience (34 per cent reported no work experience). One charity founder and CEO that works with young people who are unemployed said: *“It doesn’t really matter what the work placement is so long as the people there care about the person. You need to have a place where people are cared for and engaged.”*

³⁴ Speakers for Schools, *Work Experience for All*, November 2022, p. 21 The report considers the responses of 2,098 individuals from across the UK who completed a survey administered by the polling firm YouGov in April 2022

Table 4: Work Experience by Region³⁵

| Region | No Work experience (%) | At Least One Opportunity (%) |
|--------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|
| National Average | 24 | 76 |
| Northern Ireland | 13 | 87 |
| Wales | 16 | 84 |
| London | 19 | 81 |
| North East | 20 | 80 |
| North West | 21 | 79 |
| East Midlands | 23 | 77 |
| South West | 24 | 76 |
| Yorkshire and the Humber | 26 | 74 |
| South East | 26 | 74 |
| East of England | 30 | 70 |
| Scotland | 32 | 68 |
| West Midlands | 34 | 66 |

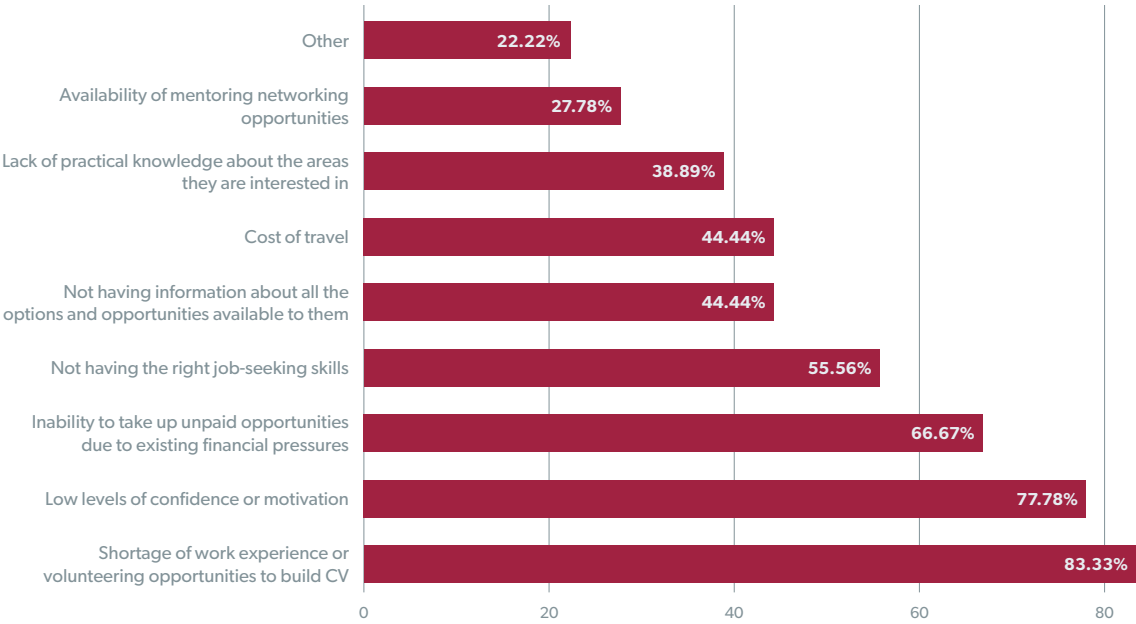
Source: Speakers for Schools, *Work Experience for All*, November 2022

Education stakeholders surveyed by Birmingham City Council following the pandemic identified a shortage of work experience as the most common barrier for young people seeking employment, as shown in Figure 12. In the same survey, 31.2 per cent of young people from affluent families were likely to feel confident about their prospects in finding work experience compared to 25.4 per cent of their less wealthy peers. The disparity continued in attitudes to finding paid employment (33.6 per cent versus 28 per cent).³⁶

³⁵ N= 1171

³⁶ Ibid.

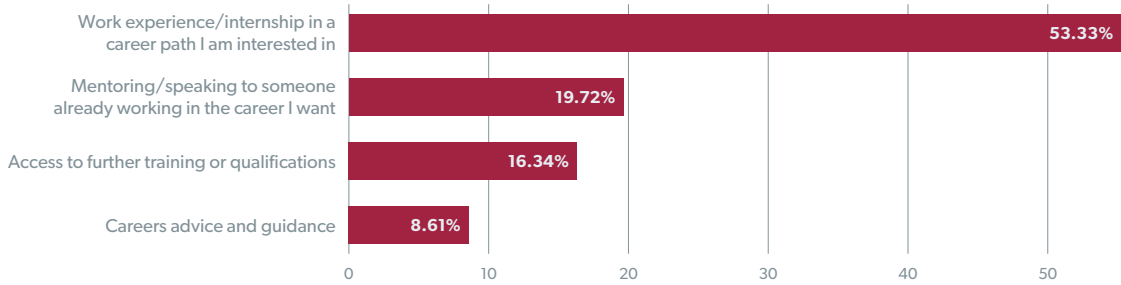
Figure 12: Barriers for Young People Seeking Employment



Source: Education Stakeholder Survey Conducted by Birmingham City Council 2021

Work experience was also identified by young people in Birmingham as the single biggest thing that could make a difference to employment prospects, as shown in Figure 13.

Figure 13: Factors that Make the Biggest Difference to Future Employment Prospects



Source: Education Stakeholder Survey Conducted by Birmingham City Council 2021

Charities working with young people across the West Midlands spoke about the importance of paid work experience opportunities, to reinforce the connection for young people between working and earning. Speakers for Schools research found that for each additional type of work experience reported throughout secondary school, respondents in full-time work reported a 3.4 per cent higher average wage.³⁷ In addition, regression analysis found a statistically significant relationship between recalled participation in work experience and whether respondents were Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) on the day of the survey. Looking at the odds from the final model, after controlling for variables, attending work experience at secondary school age reduced the probability of becoming NEET from 11 per cent to 7 per cent.³⁸

³⁷ Speakers for Schools, *Work Experience for All*, November 2022, p. 22

³⁸ Ibid.

Recommendation

7. The WMCA should review careers advice services across the local authorities and put forward a renewed strategy to ensure every young person receives high quality, appropriate provision.
8. Schools and colleges should ensure that every pupil has completed a minimum of two weeks of work experience before the age of 18.

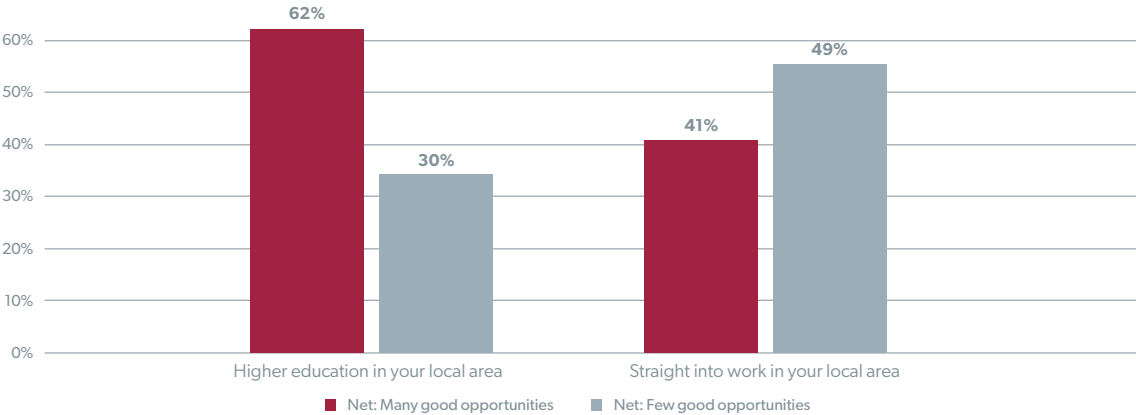
Transitions Points

Transition points were identified as particular challenges for young people in their education journey. One key transition is the move from primary to secondary school, at age 11. A school leader from a multi-academy trust said that the impact on pupils beginning secondary school can be vast, where they go from being the oldest children in a smaller school, to being the youngest children in a bigger school. This can be very unsettling for young people. The school leader suggested that buddy systems and mentoring programmes needed to continue as young people entered secondary school, rather than abruptly ending in primary school. Another academy trust in the West Midlands has attempted to smooth this transition by year 7s just having one teacher for the majority of their subjects, emulating the set up in primary school and allowing pupils to build a meaningful relationship with a key staff member. Another school was very honest about what had not worked. They had attempted a buddy system between their sixth form students (aged 16 to 18) and their year 7 students (aged 11 and 12). They said that the scheme had not worked because the age gap was too large, and the mentors found providing the mentoring 'a chore.'

Another difficult transition point for disadvantaged young people was for those who went onto university. A national charity helping young people from disadvantaged backgrounds gain places at high quality higher education establishments and to succeed when they get there said that disadvantaged pupils are at a greater risk of not completing their university course. The charity leader said, "*Students from disadvantaged backgrounds can't even finish their first year of university. They're lacking confidence*".

Higher education opportunities were positively viewed by young people. When asked what opportunities were available for those leaving school aged 18, 62 per cent of respondents felt there were good opportunities for higher education locally, however only 41 per cent said there were good opportunities to go straight into work, with 49 per cent saying there were not good opportunities for those going straight into work.

Figure 14: Opportunities for 18-Year-Olds



Source: Fieldwork commissioned by CSJ and conducted by Opinium between 5 April - 31 May 2024

Case Study: University of Birmingham School

The University of Birmingham School is a secondary school for pupils aged 11-18 with a unique partnership with the University of Birmingham. The 16 to 19 Tuition Fund in the school was used to support Sixth Form students who had not yet achieved a grade 4 in English and/or Mathematics or had not achieved a grade 4 or above in English and/or mathematics and were from the 27 per cent most economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

The 16-19 Tuition Fund provided direct tuition which was delivered one-to-one and in small groups of up to five students.

The main focus was on providing support for disadvantaged students who have been identified by internal data as being the furthest behind expected progress in specific subjects. Priority was given to those disadvantaged students with SEND or High Needs.

Case Study: Aston University

Aston University in central Birmingham, was pointed out as an example of combining academic study with the skills that are needed to succeed in the world of work. This was particularly attributed to the high number of students who undertake placement years, which allowed for the development of transferrable skills. In 2020-23, over 65 per cent of Aston students took a placement year or engaged in clinical practice.³⁹ Aston have said that approximately 30 per cent of companies offer their placement students a job on graduation⁴⁰ and 80 per cent of Aston graduates go on to a graduate level job within six months.⁴¹ An academic study found that those who completed a work placement as part of their course secured graduate positions more quickly and earned higher salaries, on average, than students who graduated without completing a placement.⁴²

39 UK Research and Innovation, *Aston University: Institutional Context Summary*. Accessed: <https://kef.ac.uk/data/10007759>
 40 Aston University Website, *Offer a Placement*. Accessed: <https://www.aston.ac.uk/alumni/abs/get-involved/offer-a-placement>
 41 Aston University, *Welcome to Aston University and Careers and Placements*. Accessed: <https://jobs.aston.ac.uk/Upload/vacancies/files/2943/AU%20and%20Careers%20and%20Placements%20Information.pdf>
 42 Divan, A., Pitts, C., Watkins, K., McBurney, S. J., Goodall, T., Koutsopoulou, Z. G., & Balfour, J., *Inequity in Work Placement Year opportunities and graduate employment outcomes: a data analytics approach*, (2022), *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 46(7), 869–883

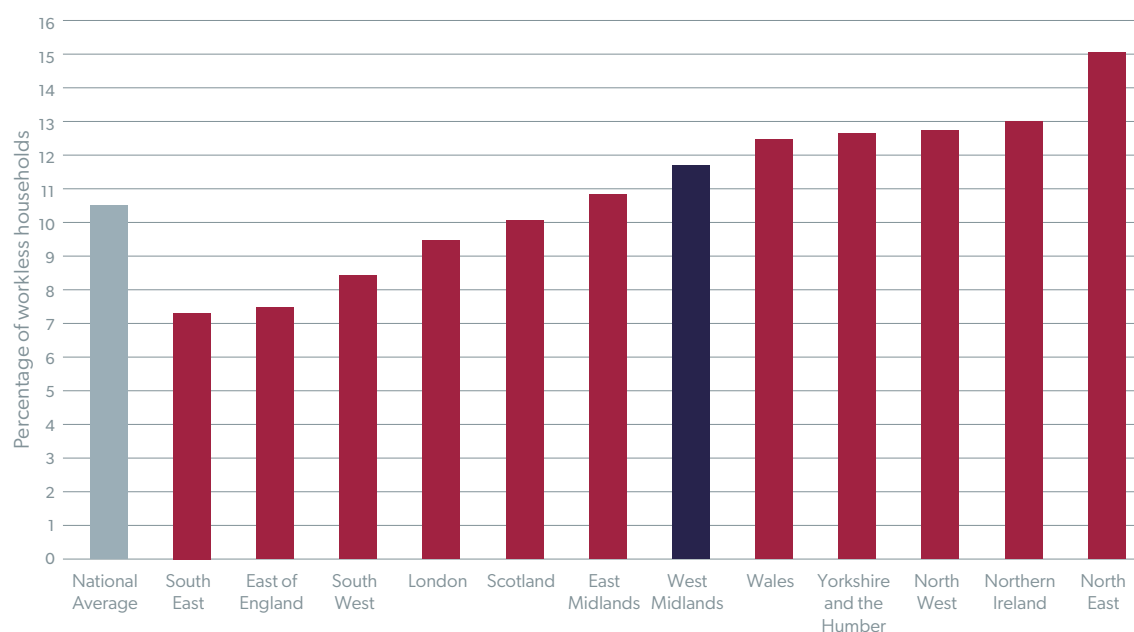
Chapter 2:

Family Environment

Charities working closely with young people were adamant that to effectively support a disadvantaged child, interventions had to look at the home environment and support the family, especially the parents. A national charity that works with the most disadvantaged children in Birmingham said, “You can’t expect a child to achieve if their parents are fighting [whilst] they are making their breakfast. You can’t expect those children to go into school and succeed.” Supporting children and young people and parents together was key to breaking cycles of disadvantage.

Across the nation 11.1 per cent of children live in workless households, as shown in Figure 15. The West Midlands is close to the national average at 11.8 per cent, with five regions having a higher per centage than the West Midlands and six regions having a lower percentage.

Figure 15: Percentage of Children Living in Workless Households



Source: ONS, Children living in long-term workless households, by region (Table D) for 2022

Children growing up in workless households face particular difficulties and can have an intergenerational impact. One charity that works to support teachers spoke of how parents’ own experiences at school can negatively impact how they engage with teachers and pupils. The charity said, “It’s a negative memory, they [parents] don’t want to go and engage. Their defence mechanism kicks in. There’s a knowledge gap... reading for 15mins can make a huge difference. There’s a cultural gap on the perceptions of the education system.” Another charity that supports students to secure maths and English qualifications concurred. They said, “[With] parents who fail in education and have

had a negative education the cycle repeats over again. We need an intergenerational approach to education.” A headteacher of a school in a very deprived area of Birmingham said, “Education breaks the cycle of [poor] education. It’s the only chance they are going to get. There is nothing else to fall back on.” Another school leader spoke of how it was sometimes necessary to challenge parents who talked down the importance of engaging at school, especially if the parent had not engaged with school themselves and felt that life had turned out ok for them.

Patterns of work within a household also had an impact on a child’s outlook. Charities said they continued to work with parents who had been out of work for many years. A Birmingham wide charity said they routinely support young people who come from households of *“three or four generations that have never worked.”* Another Birmingham charity supporting young people furthest from the job market pointed to the problem of intergenerational worklessness. They said that often young people have *“No role models in the family”* and that *“lockdown reinforced that staying home was safe and ok.”*

A local government official spoke about how interventions such as Sure Start and now Family Hubs had a dual purpose of supporting children but also educating and empowering parents. They said, *“I think Sure Start was pretty good... it was about better preparing kids, but it was also around parents’ education... mak[ing] sure the mother was educated.”* One national charity that works with the most vulnerable families whose children are most at risk of being taken into care, said that a lot of their work was *“trying to replicate families for people who don’t have families.”*

Case Study: Family Learning Project

Holy Trinity Catholic High School in Central East Birmingham runs a weekly Family Learning Project supporting parents in skills such as English, education in family, health and nutrition. The project encourages parents and children to learn together and has practical session including sewing, baking cakes, support making appointments and cooking.

Staff are paid out of the central budget to run these programmes, as a mark of how essential they are seen to the school’s mission. Ofsted’s inspection of the school pointed to the ‘exemplary’ work with parents.

Despite the challenges that family situations can bring, parents are also a brilliant asset, and should be viewed as a partner in the endeavour to get the best for young people, rather than a hindrance. Many parents are still dealing with the consequences of their own upbringing, and need support, not an approach that sidelines them and just focuses on their child. One nationwide charity with a presence in Birmingham spoke about how they have a branch of their work that is exclusively led by parents. Their organic friendships and networks with other parents make them the perfect ambassadors for the work, and they naturally build support networks among themselves, something that even charity workers would not be able to achieve. The charity leader said, *“[Our Programme] ...is led by parents. It spreads the word and helps with outreach.”*

Recommendation

9. The Government should roll out Family Hubs to all remaining 317 English local authorities that do not yet have one, ensuring families across the WMCA have a one-stop shop of support.

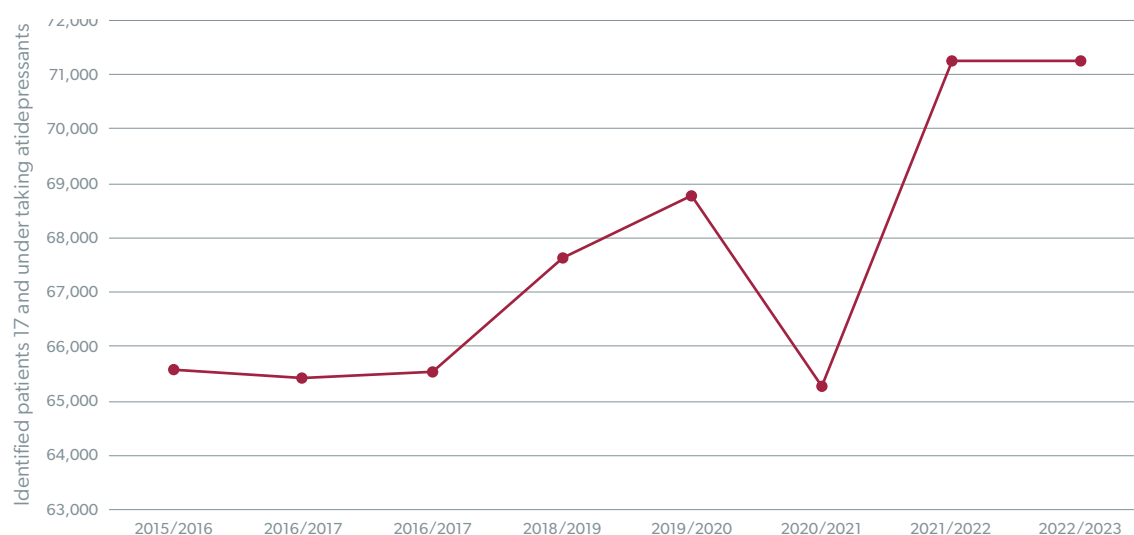
Chapter 3:

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Mental Health

A clear challenge facing young people from across the country is the rising diagnosis of mental ill health. Across the country, from 2017 to 2023, the percentage of children aged 8 to 16 years who had a probable mental disorder rose from 12.5 per cent to 20.3 per cent. For young people aged 17 to 19 years, this rise is even more stark, rising from 10.1 per cent in 2017, to 23.3 per cent in 2023.⁴³ This has put pressure on services, with the number of children and young people accessing services rising 37 per cent from March 2021 to March 2024.⁴⁴ Whilst according to NICE guidelines children are only to be prescribed antidepressants as a last resort,⁴⁵ the number of children taking antidepressants has risen 8.6 per cent from 2015/16 to 2022/23,⁴⁶ further highlighting the increasing problem. The fall between 2019/20 and 2020/21 depicted in Figure 16, is likely due to the difficulty of getting appointments during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 16: Identified patients under 17 taking anti-depressants



Source: Medicines Used in Mental Health - England - 2015/16 to 2022/23

43 NHS Digital, *Mental Health of Children and Young People in England, 2023 – wave 4 follow up to the 2017 survey*, November 2023

44 NHS Digital, *Mental Health Services Monthly Statistics Dashboard*, Accessed 30/05/2024

45 National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, *Depression in children and young people: identification and management*, June 2019

46 NHS Business Services Authority, *Medicines Used in Mental Health – England – 2015/16 to 2022/23*, July 2023

Across Birmingham, over three quarters (76.6 per cent) of young people surveyed by Birmingham City Council believed that their mental health had significantly or slightly deteriorated over the course of the pandemic.⁴⁷ In the same survey 100 per cent of respondents to the Education Stakeholders Survey believed that Covid-19 had a very or slightly negative impact on the mental health of the young people they worked with.⁴⁸

A charity that works with young people in the UK through long-term coaching identified mental ill health as the most pressing challenge for young people. They said, *"It [mental health] is now the single most significant barrier post pandemic for young people. The need far outstrips the response... the trauma of the pandemic has not been dealt with for every generation... we're now training our coaches to be trauma-informed practitioners."*

Mental ill health and wellbeing has a clear connection to young people entering work. The CEO of a charity supporting young people furthest from the workforce said: *"We've seen a big increase of young people coming out of school with mental health issues who do not feel they can go into work. There needs to be a middle place where you feel safe."*

Waiting lists for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) remain long with it being reported, before the COVID-19 pandemic, that children in Birmingham face some of the longest waiting times in the country.⁴⁹ In Birmingham and Solihull ICS and NHS Trusts children waited 164 days on average, in Sandwell and West Birmingham 108 days, in Birmingham Crosscity 106 days, and in Birmingham South and Central 92 days. Due to the long wait times, the threshold for support can seem very high. A charity that works in schools reported, *"A girl attempted to kill herself and it has not met the threshold for referral. I spent four hours on the phone trying to get help."*

Online Challenges

All professionals working with young people identified the online world, and in particular social media, as having a detrimental impact on young people.

Young people accessing social media platforms means that bullying can follow the child home, meaning not even the home environment is safe from the reaches of harm. Social media apps like Snapchat™ were particularly used for spreading hurtful, unkind and dangerous content due to the temporary nature of the communication. Snapchat servers are designed to automatically delete all 'Snaps' (messages) after they have been viewed by all recipients. It was agreed that social media and smart phones had fundamentally changed the experience of childhood and adolescence. One senior leader from a Multi Academy Trust described this as a move from a play-based childhood to a screen based one, echoing findings of the American social psychologist and author Jonathan Haidt.⁵⁰ Another charity that worked with children who were not engaging in mainstream education said that the online world had *"create[d] a place of belonging and sense of relationship in a community... that is not real"* and that relationships and friendships were being formed through social media, rather than 'in real life'. Another school leader spoke of Tiktok™ trends that would *"overpower the school."* They spoke of staff having to expend large amounts of time dealing with the consequences of the online world. The school leader said, *"I'm having data sharing requests from police and how I have handled the consequences of something that has not happened at school."*

⁴⁷ Birmingham City Council, *Working Towards Birmingham's Future*, 2021, p. 27

⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 33

⁴⁹ Birmingham Mail, *Children with Mental Health Problems in Birmingham Face Some of The Longest Treatment Waiting Times In The Country*. Accessed via: <https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/children-mental-health-problems-birmingham-14285638>

⁵⁰ Jonathan Haidt, *The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood Is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness*, March 2024

Many parents felt powerless to understand, let alone deal with the new online world that their children inhabit. Although some parents are highly involved and conscientious, the founder of a charity that delivers social impact through sports programmes said, *"I don't think any parent knows exactly what their child is accessing online."* Even young people who are aware of the harms and try to self-monitor their exposure to harmful content are up against sophisticated algorithms that are deliberately designed to bring such young people in. One charity leader pointed out that, *"If a young person accidentally or deliberately looks at something offensive, even if they decide they want to change their behaviour, every device has already clocked that they have looked at it and it affects their algorithm. That message keeps being pushed to them. Even if a young person decides to change their behaviour your phone is working against you."* In addition to the harmful content, phones used during school time provided a distraction for young people. Parents could be part of the problem here, as many were constantly texting their children, subjecting them to frequent interruptions during the school day.

Even parents who heavily controlled their own child's social media use cannot prevent harmful content being shared with their child. One parent said, *"As a parent, the only way I can parent his use is by not allowing him to have it because I cannot control what is sent to his phone. When children have received these images, parents don't know how to get the support. The early help network is just not there."*

There were mixed feelings amongst practitioners about the proposal to ban social media or smart phone use for young people. Some school leaders felt that an outright ban of social media platforms for young people was not a practical solution in an increasingly online world. Instead of an outright ban, a considered attempt to prepare young people for the online world by supporting them to engage with social media in a positive, controlled way, was espoused by some practitioners. One charity CEO said, *"by engaging with social media in a positive asset-based way, that changes the narrative... we need to find a different way of developing a narrative around social media."* A charity that works to upskill teachers said, *"It's not about banning phones, it's about teaching and processing the information and getting them to use and deploy it well and productively Other school leaders and parents wanted an outright ban."*

A Multi Academy Trust surveyed 1,000 Key Stage 3 and 4 students across Birmingham in February 2024 to understand how students engaged with the online world. They found that the average time spent by the students on their phones was 3-5 hours per day. The young people in the survey identified bullying and/or trolling as the primary negative consequence of being online, followed by affecting sleep and getting addicted. They identified connecting with friends as the top positive of being online. Students still identified parents or teachers as the first place they would go for guidance on mental health and wellbeing, or on their future career, with social media coming third for both these categories.

Although the vast majority of young people have access to the internet, some professionals working with young people reported that their families were being left behind in the digital world. Although many families would likely have a smart phone, they were less likely to have laptops which were needed for schoolwork. A national survey carried out by Ofcom between January and March 2020 found that 9 per cent of households with children did not have home access to a laptop, desktop PC or tablet.⁵¹ A UCL study in April 2020 found that one in five of those eligible for free school meals had no access to a computer at home.⁵² Young people in London (18 per cent) and the West Midlands (10 per cent) were particularly likely to be both in receipt of free school meals and lack a home internet connection.⁵³

51 Ofcom, *Ofcom Nations & Regions Technology Tracker - 2020, 9th January to 7th March 2020*, Table 4.

52 Francis Green, University College London, *Schoolwork in Lockdown: New Evidence on the Epidemic of Educational Poverty*, LLAKES Research Paper 67

53 Nominal Social Impact, *Digital Youth Index*, 2023, p. 20

Recommendation

10. Schools across the West Midlands should impose a ban of all mobile phones during the school day. This does not require direction from central or local Government.

To tackle distraction in schools, schools across the West Midlands should impose a ban of all mobile phones during the school day. This does not require direction from central or local Government.

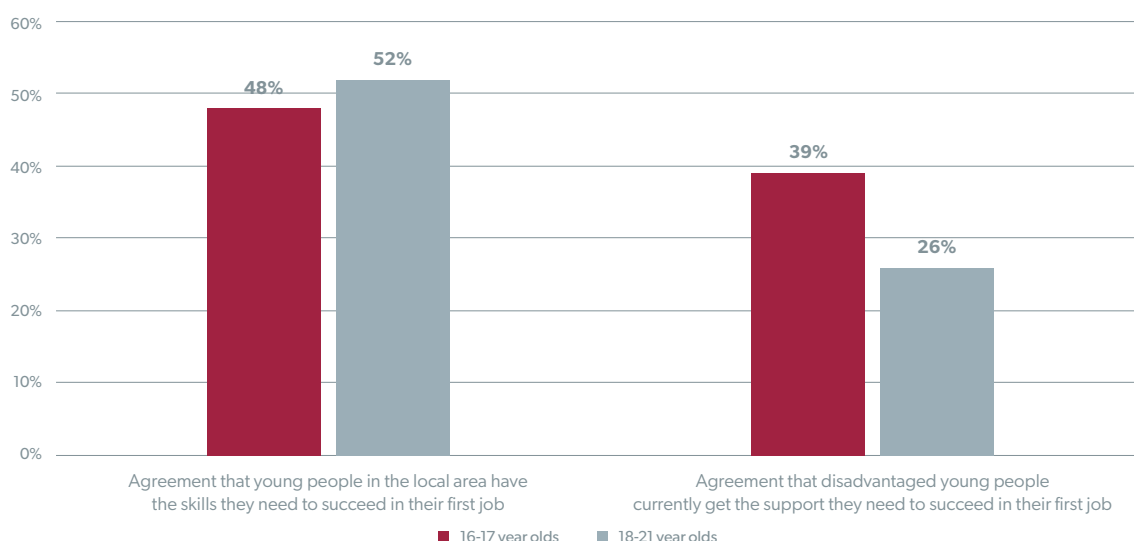
Chapter 4: Skills

Basic Functional Skills

All jobs will require basic life skills and competencies. Basic literacy skills were identified as a key barrier for many young people. A Director from a Multi Academy Trust said, *"I think one of the biggest barriers is literacy... in terms of qualifications... speech and language concerns as well, as a result of the pandemic we're seeing more referrals for speech and language."* A charity that supports students to secure maths and English qualifications reiterated this. They said, *"At the top of the list is low level of skills in gateway qualifications, English and maths."* In addition to literacy there was a consensus among both small and large employers that the vast majority of jobs would require at least basic levels of digital competency. Another medium sized charity reiterated the centrality of skills to changing outcomes for the most disadvantaged. They said: *"Skills are the only thing that individuals can have that can drag you out of all the things life threw at you such as bad housing."*

48 per cent of 16- to 17-year-olds across the West Midlands agreed that young people in their local area had the skills they need to succeed in their first job, but over a third (35 per cent) said they did not have the skills they needed. For 18- to 21-year-olds, this was slightly higher, at 52 per cent agreeing and 48 per cent not agreeing. When asked whether disadvantaged young people had the support they needed, only 39 per cent of 16- to 17-year-olds and 26 per cent of 18- to 21-year-olds agreed.

Figure 17: Young People's Attitudes to Skills



Source: Fieldwork commissioned by CSJ and conducted by Opinium between 5th April - 31st May 2024

While the most recent national statistics for literacy are over a decade old, regional data from 2021 shows that the region with the highest proportion of people with no qualifications was the West Midlands at 21.1 per cent.⁵⁴

Even some of the most basic skills need to be taught to the most disadvantaged young people. One charity working with young people who are seeking work said: *"It took us 7 months to get one of our young people on an apprenticeship to answer the work phone! We had to do months of one-on-one training with her to get her to have the confidence to answer the phone."*

Despite some young people struggling, charities and the Local Authority felt it was important to have a strengths-based approach to skills. A staff member from the WMCA said: *"I just sigh every time they say young people don't have the skills... [it's a] growing narrative that's really quite harmful."* A charity working with young people who are seeking work said it was important to find the skills unique to each individual. *"Helping people find their talent and their contribution is key. We've worked out that we need to get in earlier and work with children earlier (in school) to help them find their talents. At [our charity] they can stay in school while at the same time working on their practical talents, like cooking in a kitchen."*

Some young people are held back by the perception of their own skills. For example, a national bank with a presence in Birmingham said that people were put off applying for roles in the bank, as they feel they lack skills in basic maths. This was despite the fact that a large proportion of roles available in the bank do not require maths. This was reinforced by the requirement for English and maths GCSE for many jobs, even if the content was not drawn upon for the job. The bank said: *"We still say you need GCSE maths and English for most careers, even though we never think about them again."*

Employers agreed that there was a responsibility for employers to make a difference in developing skills in young people. One national company with a presence in Birmingham said: *"We see a real role for employers to go into schools and make [a difference]. If you want them work ready, you are going to have to go in and make that change and invest in your future school. They are not going to come to you."*

Soft Skills

There was a widespread consensus across school leaders, employers and those working directly with young people that despite the importance of academic skills, the biggest challenge facing young people was their lack of so-called 'soft skills' - emotional intelligence, intra-personal skills, self-management, the ability to take initiative and communication. These skills are central to what employers are looking for and could be a hurdle that the most disadvantaged young people struggle to overcome in order to secure employment. An assistant principle of a Multi-Academy Trust said: *"Our young people have the grades for the job, they go to the interview, but they fail at the interview. They do not have the cultural capital to bring to the table."*

Employers agreed that they predominantly hire young people based on their attitude, as they can teach the skills. A CEO of a medium sized business said: *"There's the education disconnect, because they're not being taught what they need to, so I think as employers, we need to be a bit more patient and actually understand they're not being taught those skills. So why are you expecting them to do a*

54 Office for National Statistics, *Education, England and Wales: Census 2021*, January 2023

great interview?" Another CEO went on to say, "They don't know how to interview, they don't know how to even communicate. They're not even confident enough to stand up and speak in front of their peers, let alone speak in front of employers." The CEO of a different company said that despite delivering tech solutions, it was actually the 'soft skills' they prized more highly. This was because they were confident that those skills would always be required, whereas the demands of the tech-specific workplace were constantly changing and were likely to go through a complete revolution over the next 10 to 20 years.

Another national bank with a regional presence said they had adjusted how they hire and train young employees to address this deficit. They had found they "were spending more time to be patient and considered and help go through those softer skills, which then brings confidence which then brings their talent. So... as an employer, we take a step back, pause and build those skills first, but those interventions seem to be working."

Case Study: Nat West

In June 2021, the national bank NatWest launched CareerSense⁵⁵, an employability education programme, with an aim of supporting 13- to 24-year-olds with readiness for work support and aiming to reach over 10,000 young people per year. The NatWest Birmingham office runs a 'capability day' for 300 young people teaching them communication skills including interview preparation. The training is delivered in house in their Birmingham offices, giving young people a chance to see the possible careers at a bank first hand.

Volunteering

Volunteering was also highlighted as a key thing that young people wanted to do, but also an opportunity to develop and practice both basic and soft skills. There was an agreement that young people, especially those in Generation Z and following, had a strong emphasis on contributing value and finding meaning in work. The CEO of a Birmingham charity focused on getting young people into sport said that "I think young people are very motivated to give to their community." There is a chance to capitalise on this through volunteering. Volunteering also provides an opportunity for young people to get experience of a range of professions before they decide to formally pursue one, allowing them to identify their areas of interest and to widen their horizons for what is possible in the world of work. A shift towards younger volunteers was observed during the COVID-19 pandemic, attributed to older volunteers needing to shield and the growing resonance of digital volunteering.⁵⁶ A national Government commissioned review into youth volunteering following the COVID-19 pandemic found that young people are increasingly interested in volunteering, but how they conceive it can differ somewhat from traditional definitions.⁵⁷ The review commented that this generation of young people are driven not solely by how volunteering may support their individual employment or educational goals but by benefit beyond themselves to local communities - particularly those most vulnerable.

55 NatWest Group, *Supporting Young People To Build Essential Skills For The Workplace*, Accessed: <https://www.natwestgroup.com/news-and-insights/news-room/press-releases/financial-capability-and-learning/2021/jun/supporting-young-people-to-build-essential-skills-for-the-workpl.html>

56 Saxton, J. *The Big Trend: Are Young People Replacing Older People As The Key Volunteering Group?* (London: nfpSynergy), 2020. Available at: <https://nfpSynergy.net/blog/are-young-people-replacing-older-people-key-volunteering-group>; Norrlander, A., Meghjee, W., Sisy, K., Litchfield, A., Jones, R., Thelwall, S., and Thornton, A., *Valuing the contribution of volunteers to community businesses supported by the Community Business Fund*, 2021

57 Institute for Community Studies, *Volunteering Journeys Growing the youth volunteering Generation*, 2022

Nationally, those between the ages of 25 and 34 were the age cohort least likely to volunteer, with only 19 per cent volunteering in the past year.⁵⁸ Of 16- to 24-year-olds, 29 per cent had volunteered in the past year, a higher percentage of older age cohorts. 28 per cent of 35- to 29-year-olds and 27 per cent of 50- to 64-year-olds had volunteered in the last year. Across the country there is little variation in volunteering across regions, however, in line with all regions, the percentage of people who volunteered informally at least once a month in the West Midlands decreased from 33 per cent in 2020/21 to 26 per cent in 2021/22.⁵⁹

Case Study: United by 2022

United by 2022 is the official charity of the Commonwealth Games hosted in Birmingham in 2022 and is dedicated to maintaining the legacy of the Games. United by 2022 supports communities across the West Midlands through five project areas which include youth projects, volunteering initiatives, a dance collective of disabled and non-disabled young people and community focused projects to increase social value for the region.

United by 2022 launched Gen22, a free to access project creating opportunities for young people between the ages of 16-24 from the West Midlands to gain employability boosting opportunities, particularly those who might otherwise struggle to access opportunities. United by 2022 modelled their programme for young people on the Duke of Edinburgh award, which includes a volunteering component, and aim to provide 30 hours of social action for young people. Since they launched, over 1,000 young people between the ages of 16 and 24 have taken part in Gen22.

United by 2022 found that young people wanted to volunteer, but often needed pointers on how to begin. The CEO said that for many young people, *"The point wasn't doing the 30 hours, the point was getting started."*

58 NCVO, *UK Civil Society Almanac 2023*, October 2023. Accessed: <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/news-and-insights/news-index/uk-civil-society-almanac-2023/volunteering/what-are-the-demographics-of-volunteers/#:~:text=Rates%20of%20informal%20volunteering%20show,east%2C%20and%20south%2Dwest>

59 Department for Culture, Media and Sport, *Community Life Survey 2021/22: Reference Tables*, 28 February 2023

Chapter 5:

Employment

Across the West Midlands Combined Authority adult employment rate is 69.2 per cent, which is lower than the national average.⁶⁰ Across the West Midlands adult unemployment rate is 4.9 per cent, and 10.9 per cent of the 1,604,165 economically inactive are long term sick or disabled.

Research by Birmingham City Council found that prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 6.3 per cent of young people aged 18-24 in Birmingham and 6.1 per cent in the West Midlands were unemployed.⁶¹ In March 2021, this had risen to 11.6 per cent in Birmingham and 11.5 per cent in the West Midlands – up over 5 per cent. Even after removing young people who were not currently seeking employment (likely students), youth unemployment in Birmingham rose to approximately 20 per cent as of April 2021. In July 2021 almost one in five young people in Birmingham were out of work, substantially greater than the then UK average of 13.5 per cent.

For young people seeking training with a view to gaining employment in the area, it was important that skills development is matched to the needs of the local economy. For example, Leamington Spa was identified as an area with up-and-coming tech industries and is recognised as a major hub of the UK's gaming sector. However, jobs in Leamington, and also in other tech companies around Birmingham were being filled with those from outside the area. A national charity that supports young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to achieve in university and further education laid out this problem. *"You do wonder how young people in certain neighbourhoods are able to plug into these new industries. How engaged are [companies] with local families? Where are the connectors? There's a gap there that could grow quite quickly."* Another charity said it was important for young people to match their skills to the local opportunities. They said, *"What is important to the city? Green jobs, construction jobs, digital jobs."* It was widely agreed by employers that the tech eco system in Birmingham is also a burgeoning opportunity.

Case Study: The Hilton, Birmingham

The Hilton hosted an open recruitment day, which did not require an application. The event details carefully guided young people on exactly what to wear (smart clothes), what to expect (be ready to talk about what you have done) and gave advice on how to best answer questions.

A charity said this approach really works for young people: *"This is good for the kids who aren't getting this at home. It levels the playing field by being really clear on what you expect and guides. Our understanding of the workplace is built on years of tacit understanding... The young people don't have this cultural capital."*

⁶⁰ Office for National Statistics Labour Force Survey, *Work Foundation Calculations*, 2021- 2022

⁶¹ Birmingham City Council, *Working Towards Birmingham's Future*, 2021

Case Study: Head Start Programme, DLA Piper LLP

DLA Piper LLP is a global law firm, with offices in Birmingham. Their Head Start Programme⁶² selects a small cohort of children from disadvantaged backgrounds and supports them for up to five years through providing training and mentorship. As part of the programme the young people are introduced to a broad range of careers, not just law. Many will go on to non-legal careers but are still supported.

100 per cent of Head Start students were accepted into university or onto a high-level apprenticeship. 62 per cent of students were offered places at Russell Group universities. All of the participants on the course met multiple social mobility criteria.

Case Study: Digital Innovators

Digital Innovators⁶³ give young people between the ages of 14 and 24 access to fulfilling career opportunities. Digital Innovators collaborate with education providers, businesses and community organisations across the West Midlands to develop employability skills and provide valuable work experience to help young people stand out from the crowd. Digital Innovators work especially with young people who have been excluded or suspended or dropped out of school. The students assist corporates on live work projects to solve innovation challenges.

"It's been really inspiring to engage with students on the DI Skills Programme. We've been very impressed at the quality of their thinking. As digital natives, we have a lot to learn from the young generation."

- Head of Customer Service, Corporate Client of Digital Innovators

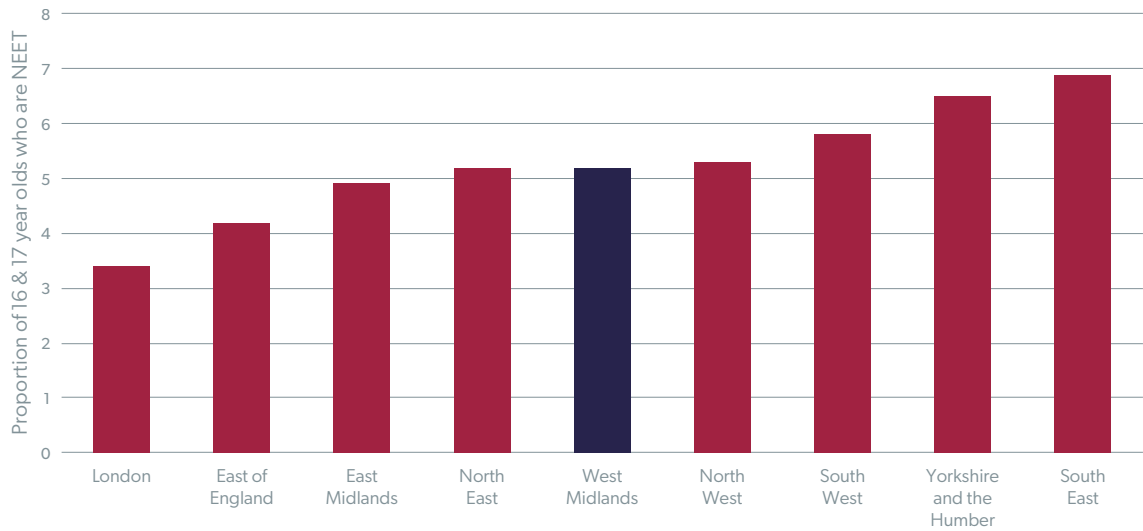
NEETs

Young people who are Not in Education, Employment, or Training are known as NEET. In 2023, 2.6 per cent of 16–17-year-olds in the West Midlands were NEET. This is slightly below the national average, as shown in Figure 18. The West Midlands rank 4th in the nation (of 9 regions) behind London, East Midlands and the South East on NEET in this age group.

62 DLA Piper, *Improving Socioeconomic Diversity at DLA Piper*, November 2022. Accessed: <https://www.dlapiper.com/-/media/files/other/2022/social-mobility-report-v10-digital-pages.pdf?rev=-1>

63 Digital Innovators. Accessed: <https://digitalinnovators.co.uk/project-case-studies/>

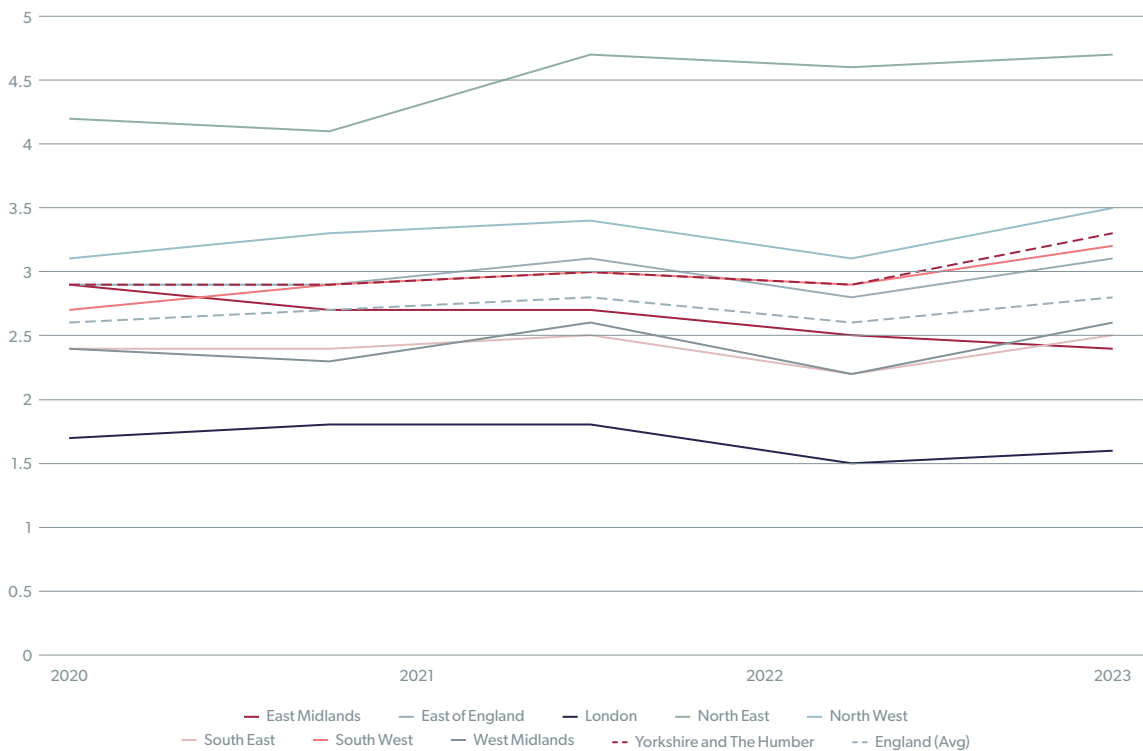
Figure 18: Proportion Of 16- And 17-Year-Olds Who Are NEET, by Region



Source: ONS, Academic year 2022/23, Participation in education, training and NEET age 16 to 17 by region

The West Midlands has had stable rates of 16–17-year-olds not in education, employment, or training over the past 5 years, as shown in Figure 19. In 2019, 2.4 per cent of 16–17-year-olds were NEET. While there has been some growth in the proportion of NEET, in 2023 the West Midlands is still only at 2.6 per cent of 16–17-year-olds being NEET. Year after year the West Midlands is below the national average (2.8 per cent in 2023).

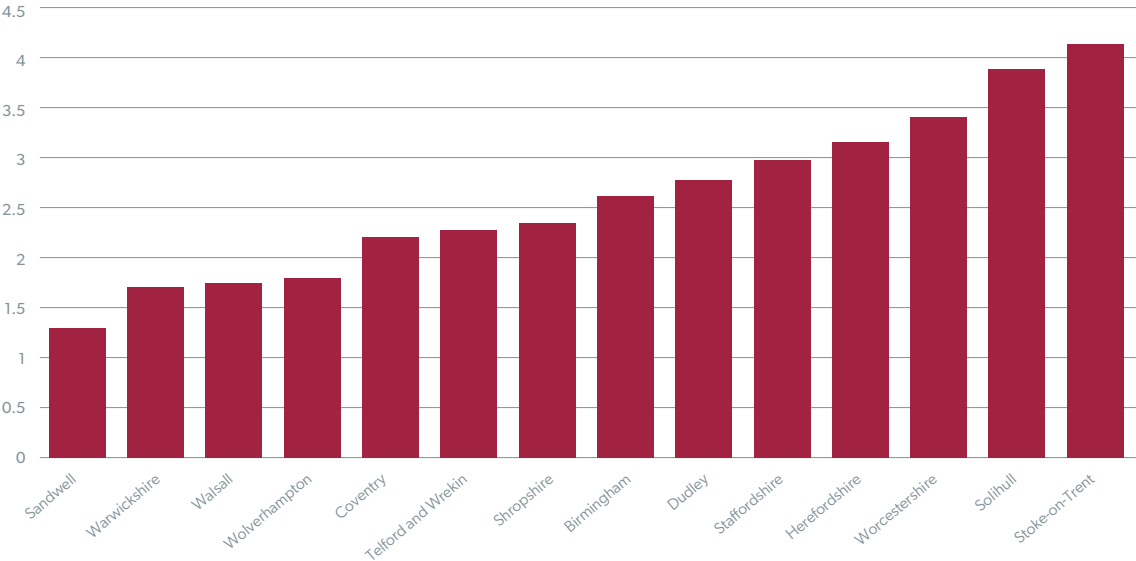
Figure 19: Percentage Of NEET 16–17-Year-Olds by Region



Source: ONS, Academic year 2022/23, Participation in education, training and NEET age 16 to 17 by region

However, when drilling down into the councils within the West Midlands, there is a large variance of the proportion of NEET young people, as show in Figure 20.

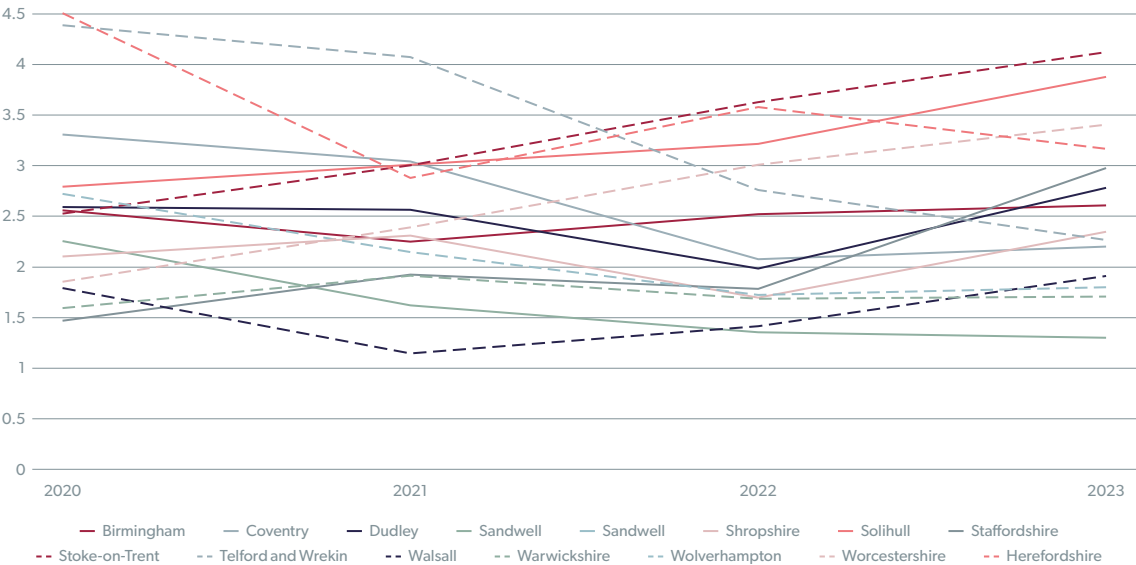
Figure 20: Proportion Of 16-17 Years Olds Who Are NEET, by Local Authority



Source: ONS, Academic year 2022/23, Participation in education, training and NEET age 16 to 17 by local authority

NEET figures over time, as shown in Figure 21, have large increases in some Councils. Stoke-on-Trent has seen a relatively large increase in NEET youth since 2019, whereas Telford and Wrekin have seen a relatively large drop in NEET youth in the same period. Even when addressing NEET statistics on a local authority level, charities working closely with unemployed young people reported that these figures don't reflect their experience. In pockets of high deprivation, the figures are much higher. The areas of more affluence across the region mask pockets of very high NEET proportions amongst young people.

Figure 21: Percentage of NEET 16–17-year-olds, by Local Authority

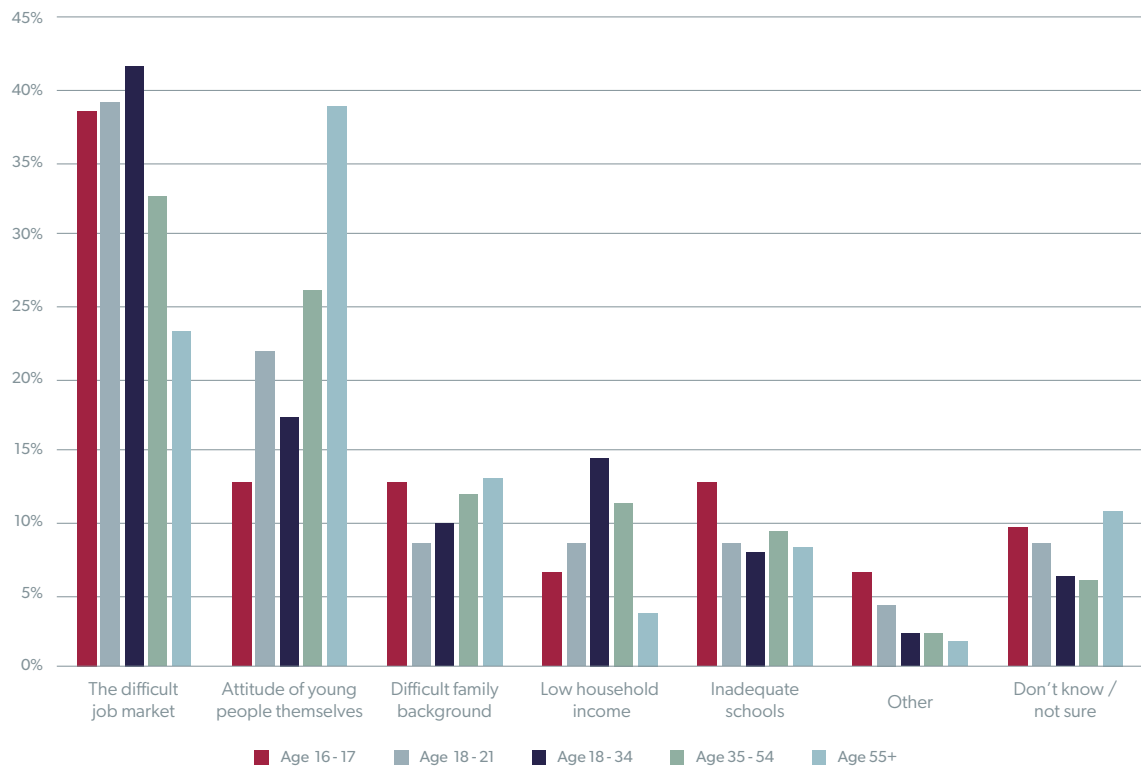


Source: ONS, Academic year 2022/23, Participation in education, training and NEET age 16 to 17 by region

Charities working with young people who are NEET identified a correlation between a lack of aspiration and exposure to opportunities and youth unemployment. A school leader in a Multi Academy Trust said they see a distinct lack of aspiration and that lots of young people think, “I’m either going to do what my parents have done or I’m going to sit on benefits.” A leader from a different school said that during their experience of teaching they have seen a change in ambition in young people. They said, “Kids don’t dream anymore!” One head teacher in a very deprived area of Birmingham identified the poverty of aspiration as a greater need than the poverty of material circumstances. To illustrate how small some families’ horizons were, the head teacher said that despite the school being in the Birmingham region, many of his pupils had never been to central Birmingham.

The area a young person grew up in was identified as having a big impact on this ability to dream. A medium sized charity in Stoke on Trent said, “I also think because of the area we are based; aspirations are a lot of it... there aren’t many job opportunities in Stoke-on-Trent... there’s nothing I can do in Stoke-on-Trent job wise to do better.” A local council employee identified the close relationship between mental ill health in young people and aspiration. They said, “In their mind they don’t aspire to gain skills or get employment. I have seen a relationship between the state of their mental health and their ability to say I want a job.” 28 per cent of 16-17-year-olds across the West Midlands and a quarter (25 per cent) of 16- to 21-year-olds identified the attitude of young people themselves as the main barrier young people face who struggle to get a job, the second most common selected answer for both cohorts after the difficult job market (30 per cent for 16-17 year olds and 36 per cent for 16-21 year olds).⁶⁴

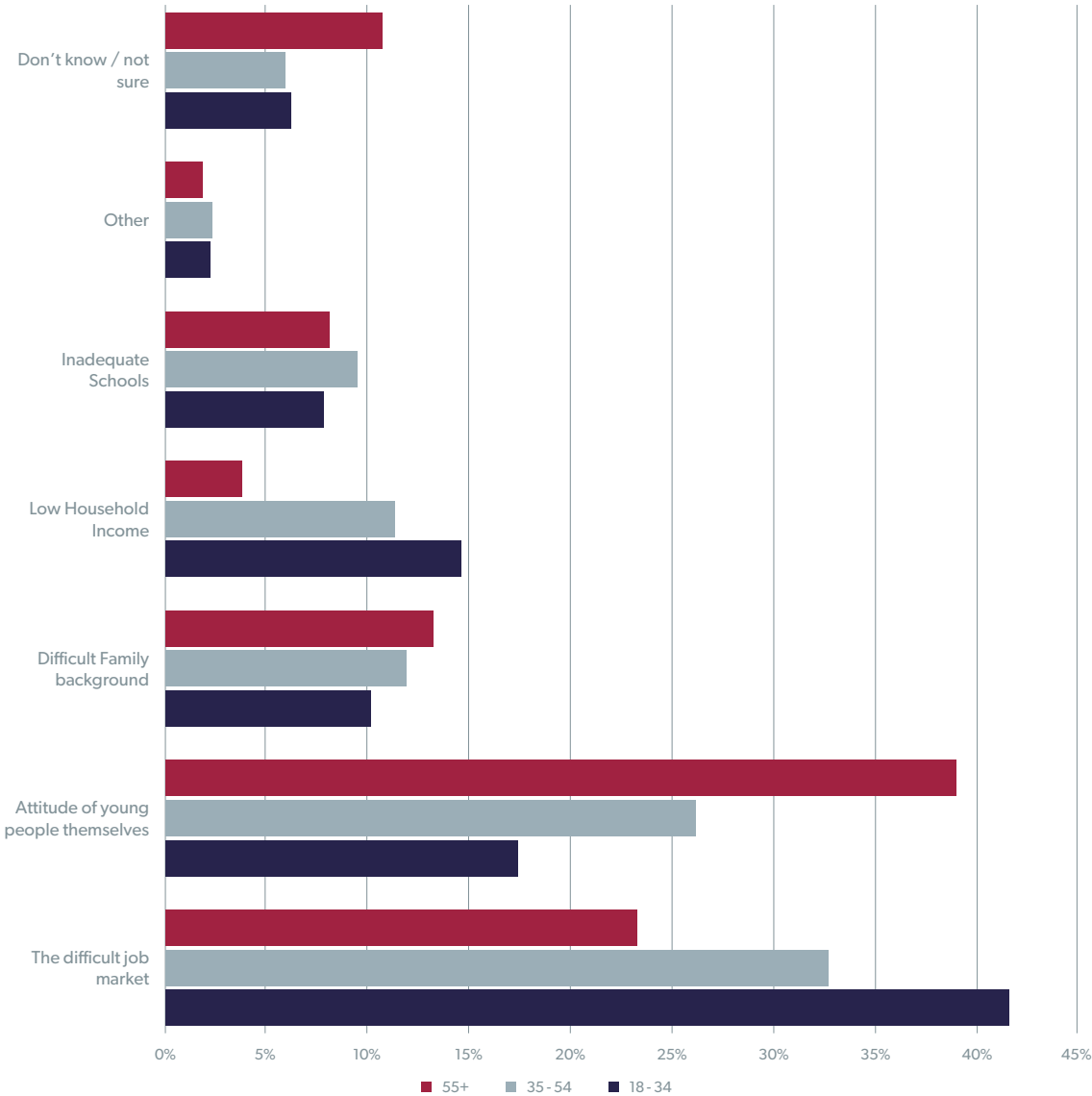
Figure 22: Why Young People May Struggle to Get A Job, 16-21 Year Olds



Source: Fieldwork commissioned by CSJ and conducted by Opinium between 5th April - 31st May 2024

64 Fieldwork commissioned by CSJ and conducted by Opinium between 5th April - 31st May 2024. 536 people living in the West Midlands (Government region) between the ages of 16 and 21 were polled. Opinium Research is a member of the British Polling Council.

Figure 23: Why Young People May Struggle to Get A Job, All Ages



Source: Fieldwork commissioned by CSJ and conducted by Opinium between 5th April - 31st May 2024.

Despite this, polling of young people across the West Midlands showed 16- to 17-year-olds were more optimistic about their future employment prospects than young adults. 45 per cent of 16–17-year-olds felt that young people in their area were positive about the opportunities available to them, compared to 30 per cent of 18–21-year-olds, 36 per cent of 35–54-year-olds and 21 per cent of those over 55.⁶⁵

The challenges working with young people not in employment, education or training are self-evident. Not only do they often have many barriers to overcome regarding employment, but identifying them in the first place can also be difficult. A charity that brings the older and younger generation together said: *“Where are the NEETs? Well, we don’t know, by definition. It took me several weeks to find them.”*

⁶⁵ Fieldwork commissioned by CSJ and conducted by Opinium between 5th April - 31st May 2024. 536 people living in the West Midlands (Government region) between the ages of 16 and 21 were polled. Opinium Research is a member of the British Polling Council.

Case Study: An employer's experience employing a NEET young person with neurodiversity.

We've got a young guy who [has autism]. He wouldn't have ever gone to an interview. He wrote in asking could he have a job? He had worked for nothing for six months, but he needed experience. He got a 2:2 in cyber, and we took him on. We obviously paid him. But the reward that the whole business got and the people who worked with him has been tenfold...I do believe neurodiversity, especially in tech, but not just tech in other areas, is something that perhaps we were certainly missing the boat on. He's presented to the board after six months, you know, and said "This is the most transformational period of my life. I now actually feel part of a team." When you're in an academic environment, it's competitive with your peers. All of a sudden, he was in an environment where people care for him, and he's given it back tenfold.

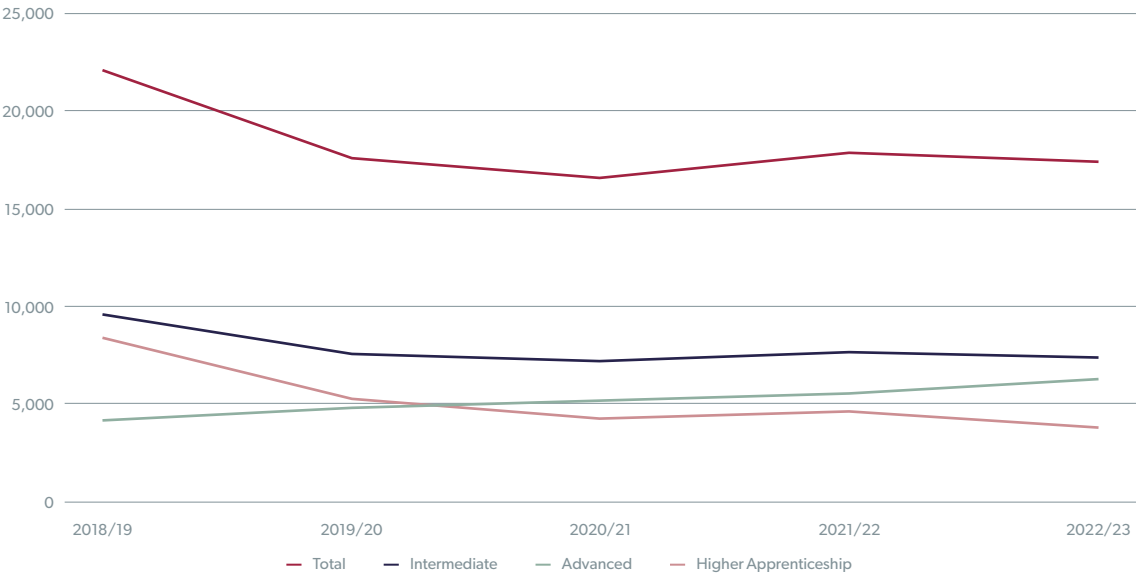
Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships have the opportunity to provide new opportunities for skills and avenues for young people, if fully utilised and if the right people can access them. Despite a desire for 'parity of esteem' between different employment and academic pathways, charities working with young people reported that apprenticeships were still seen as second tier by many prospective applicants, even though they were in fact extremely valuable to employers. If managed appropriately, apprenticeships can be transformative. A charity that works with young people far from the job market said that apprenticeships can lay the foundations for work by providing the much needed first step, and an experience of the rhythms and demands of work. They said, "*We have level 2 apprenticeships that people can access for English and maths. [Its] a job before a job. It gets you into a routine of getting into work.*" Another charity working with unemployed young people said, "*Supported internships are a great way to get people into jobs. We have one in [London] now. It's a rotational programme that gives the person time in different parts of the business.*"

Despite the possibility apprenticeships can offer, the West Midlands Combined Authority said, "*There's also been a really big drop in the number of apprenticeships... even more so for those from disadvantaged backgrounds. To do a T-Level, you've got to have English and Maths. Lots of employers don't take on 16-year-olds... everything has narrowed.*" This experience in WMCA follows a similar trend across the country. There was a decline in apprenticeships between 2017 and 2018, after the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy, followed by a further decline during the COVID-19 pandemic. Department for Education data showed that starts for 2021/22 are still 11 per cent lower than in 2018/19.

Following similar trends reflected across the country, total apprenticeships being started in a year in the West Midlands have fallen per year, from 22,060 in 2018/19 to 17,450 in 2022/23, as shown in Figure 24.

Figure 24: Apprenticeship Starts in West Midlands (Devolved English Region)



Source: ONS, Geography LEP and EDA – Starts

Employers and charities were deeply frustrated with what they perceived to be an ineffective apprenticeship levy. In addition, despite its intentions to be used to provide a viable alternative route to university, many people felt employers used apprenticeships primarily to upskill existing company employees, rather than to bring in new people. A tutoring charity said, *“the apprenticeship levy is just being spent on people upskilling within companies.”* In addition, those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds are not necessarily benefiting from apprenticeship opportunities. Nationally for apprentices under 30, only 13 per cent were recipients of FSM at Level 2, 9 per cent at Level 3, 7 per cent at Level 4 and 5, and 5 per cent at degree level.⁶⁶ This compares to 6.7 per cent of those entering university. This means that the proportion of young people eligible for free school meals is lower amongst apprentices than those attending university.

Employers who had offered apprenticeships (of various kinds) reported that the training aspect of the qualification lacked the necessary flexibility to maximise their effectiveness for employers. There was an opportunity to reform apprenticeships so the training element could be responsive to the needs of the business. An employer in a tech firm said that despite wanting to take on apprentices, they had struggled. They said, *“We’ve been struggling to get training providers to provide a real quality apprenticeship training in the digital skills that we need.”*

There was a particular concern that apprenticeships for 16–18-year-olds needed to be protected given the additional support 16–18-year-olds require to become effective employees. One charity said, *“If you... don’t protect 16-18 apprenticeships... the bottom will fall out of 16-18 apprenticeships. It is a challenge to employers to carry the 16-18 load.”* Another charity said, *“Young people tell us that they don’t feel prepared for the world of work... there’s that snobbery between academic and skills... Young people tell us there isn’t an opportunity to explore the world of work in school, they really don’t know what’s available to them so young people feel ill equipped.”*

66 The Sutton Trust, *The Recent Evolution of Apprenticeships*, December 2022, p. 4

Degree apprenticeships have risen in popularity but are not necessarily going to those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds. A medium-sized employer in Birmingham said that *“they have been hijacked by people who are still A grade students but don’t want to pay the tuition fees. And I think employers are encouraging that because they’re just creaming the top of those and the people who get those apprenticeships really shouldn’t be targeted at all.”* Nationally, those over the age of 25 account for the vast majority of those undertaking Higher Apprenticeships and over half of those undertaking Degree Apprenticeships.⁶⁷

Case Study: KPMG, Birmingham

The Birmingham offices of KPMG now have 50 per cent university graduates and 50 per cent apprenticeships for the entry level positions, where previously it used to be 100 per cent university graduates. Despite this success, the challenge has been engaging with schools in order to publicise the apprenticeships. KPMG had an established process of engaging with universities, of which there are fewer, and the relationships had been built up over years. For apprenticeships engagement with schools is required, of which there are 1000s, compared to 100s of universities.

Recommendation

11. Ringfence funding for 16-18 apprenticeships.
12. Employers in Birmingham and the West Midlands should co-ordinate their degree apprenticeship intakes in order to give those on apprenticeships the same social and life skills experience as those who go to university.
13. Employers in Birmingham and the West Midlands should co-ordinate an outreach programme to schools to ensure young people leaving schools understand the apprenticeship offer across the region.

Challenges Facing Employers

Large and small employers across Birmingham and the West Midlands reported various challenges in recruiting and retaining talented young people.

One national corporation that has an office in central Birmingham said that 18 months ago for the first time in years they had been unable to recruit all the graduates they needed for their graduate scheme. The company had changed their practices to ensure they continue to engage students in the six months between being offered a place of the programme and beginning it.

While large companies may have had the ability to change their practices in order to accommodate young people coming through the recruitment pipeline, smaller businesses had less capacity to

⁶⁷ Ibid.

accommodate the upskilling and training needed to employ large amounts of young people. A CEO of a small company of less than 100 employees said, *"Small businesses don't have the budgets to do large scale investment or schemes [for] young people."* They went on to say, *"I know that for me to onboard a 16-, 17- or 18-year-old into my organisation. It's going to cost me three times the amount [than] to onboard someone who's older. And then on top of that, to keep them engaged and to keep them developing is also going to cost me more on an ongoing basis."*

Despite this, there was agreement that there were things that employers of size could do to accommodate the changed priorities of a younger work force. For example, those entering the workforce had a greater expectation of hybrid working and were also conscious of how overworking could detrimentally impact mental health. However, a survey of young people across Birmingham in the wake of Covid found that 60.3 per cent stated that they were not motivated to work or learn from home, and only 40 per cent said that they were comfortable working or learning from home.⁶⁸ The CEO of a company in central Birmingham in the creative industries said, *"the idea of a job for life has changed. A portfolio career is what the next generation is going to expect."* A charity concurred with this saying, *"Gen Z want to work flexibly and it's playing out as entitlement, but things are different now. They're not necessarily making a decision about a career... their mindset is more flexible... I'm not joining you for a career..."*

There was agreement from business leaders that the changing expectations of the younger generation also provided an opportunity for re-balance. One CEO described how previous generations had potentially prioritised work over wellbeing. They said, *"I think I'm glad there's a generation that will call us out. I think the pendulum has swung a bit one way, and then the pendulum will come back to the middle, and I think we're in that situation."* Employers agreed they would have to adapt expectations and practices for the intergenerational workforce.

A final challenge facing employers was the ability to understand what other initiatives there were across Birmingham and the region. As seen throughout the case studies of this report, many companies are employing innovative approaches to provide training and employment opportunities for young people, to great effect. However, it is difficult for employers to keep abreast of their colleagues' programmes and for young people to understand what is out there.

One Birmingham based business said: *"I think we've got to try and somehow work together as employers. [Everyone has] separate initiatives in order to try and drive this and I think it will rely on the education system answering it for us... We are probably going to have to take it into our own hands and we're probably gonna [sic] have to try and work together more to drive the same initiatives."*

Recommendation

14. Medium and large employers across Birmingham should co-ordinate their existing efforts to upskill and employ disadvantaged young people. Beginning with a mapping exercise, an overview of all initiatives for young people should be brought together, making an easily searchable portal for young people, employers, schools and parents to navigate.

68 Birmingham City Council, *Working Towards Birmingham's Future*, 2021, p. 37

Chapter 6:

The Unique Role of Charities

Many young people across Birmingham and the West Midlands were supported into employment or training by charities and social enterprises. However, small charities face particular challenges to survive in the current environment. A large national funding organisation made it clear services across Birmingham were experiencing undue demand. They said, *“All we are hearing is how tough and overworked all the services are, in Birmingham you have the perfect storm.”* Many charities felt like there was an expectation that the charity sector is there to fill the gap that a lot of families need. One challenge is having to prove their impact to the same level as large charities with big research and evidence capacity. A small charity in Stoke-on-Trent said: *“Proof of impact is really hard. They are expecting small organisations to do really advanced research. If we could have collective agreement that 1:1 interventions work and that could be submitted alongside applications, that would be so helpful. Taking some of the burden off the impact reporting would be a massive help.”*

There was widespread consensus that services that were previously “early help” were now offering crisis intervention and that early help, and preventative approaches, had been gutted out. Youth services, and in particular youth clubs, were highlighted as an important space for young people existing between schools and family, to provide a safe space for young people to socialise and gain skills. A charity working with vulnerable young people spoke of the centrality of youth clubs to youth outcomes. They said, *“I think youth clubs are needed.... If there’s a young person struggling at school and has a broken family... they’ve got broken families, they’ve got anxiety, the youth club gives them a bit of stability... we can kind of incorporate education in not an education environment...”* Every region of England has each seen funding for youth services cut by more than 60 per cent since 2010, with some of the most severely affected experiencing average area cuts of as much as 74 per cent in the North West, 76 per cent in the North East, and 80 per cent in the West Midlands.⁶⁹ In the same time period, Birmingham City Council had to reduce its budget for charitable and voluntary organisations by £15 million.⁷⁰

Although there were many successful partnerships between charities and corporates or funders, charities expressed frustration at how some corporates engaged with them. A social mobility charity that engages children in state schools with relatable role models said: *“They look for the cheapest charity they can support with the highest profile. We are grassroots and we will never get that support.”* Some Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) engagement felt tokenistic. A charity providing tutoring for disadvantaged students explained that *“Most corporates have volunteering hours but its planting one tree. That does nothing. We need corporates to be able to release a team every week for an hour.”*

69 YMCA, *Out of Service*. Accessed: <https://www.ymca.org.uk/outofservice>

70 Business Live, *Birmingham Charities See Funding Cut as Council Slashes £15m Off Budget*. Accessed: <https://www.business-live.co.uk/economic-development/birmingham-charities-see-funding-cut-3918568>

It was agreed that funders could be most impactful by providing focused funding over a sustained amount of time, rather than spreading too thinly. A local government representative spoke about the importance of long term, place-based funding. *"I think there's something fundamental about the way we fund... it's easy to fund institutions... when you go outside of that, [the question is] how do we take a place-based approach... how do you get to that place where you can fund... for 5 [years]."* Another Birmingham wide charity said their activities were focused by where they could have the biggest impact. They had landed with trying to *"have deep transformation, rather than many, many interventions."*

Third sector organisations such as charities and social enterprises have a unique ability to walk alongside the most vulnerable children. It was clear that families looked to the charity sector rather than statutory services for support. One teacher at a Multi Academy Trust said, *"Families are withdrawing from anything that looks like it would be able to help: whether that's the NHS or the job market. There is a lack of confidence in our systems and processes."* Schools also reported that families with the most complex needs are the least likely to engage with statutory services. A school leader said that the *"Local authorities will tell you they are meeting the need because those families that are engaging are already buying in. But the families with complex domestic abuse backgrounds will not engage."* Another small charity said they could build trust with families in a way that other statutory services were unable to, and because of this were able to retain this distinct role between families and statutory services. They said, *"Because we are not statutory, families will engage with us when they wouldn't with the local authorities."* A charity spoke of a small initiative to engage disadvantaged girls through dance classes, which had built confidence in this group of girls. The charity was very honest that the programme wouldn't be as impactful if it wasn't run by that specific charity worker who had developed personal relationships with the young people. They said, *"If it wasn't being run by Sally⁷¹, it would not work."* They acknowledged that much of the success of the charity interventions depended on the individual drive and commitment of the professionals, and the relationships they built, and so would be difficult to replicate.

Recommendation

- 15. The WMCA, when making contracting decisions for the provision of social services, should give due consideration to grassroots organisations such as small and medium-sized charities; this should be applied across all departments which issue contracts and award funding to charitable organisations.
- 16. The Government should ringfence a proportion of its charitable grant-making for grassroots charitable organisations, such as those classified as small and medium-sized.
- 17. Corporates and businesses looking to engage with charities across the West Midlands should aim for sustained, meaningful and skill-specific ESG and engagement, led by what the charities say they need.
- 18. Funders should commit to minimum of 3-5 year funding packages for small and medium sized charities to provide stability of services for young people.

71 *Name changed.

Appendix 1:

Charities in Birmingham working with Young People

The Jericho Foundation

| | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Charity No | 1037084 | Age Range | 16+ |
| Website | jericho.org.uk | Area | Work and Employability |
| Location | Birmingham City | Numbers | 100 per year |
| Income | £2,312,264 | Impact | 91% of Completers Progress into positive outcomes = £1.3m Social Return |
| Year Est | 30+ years | | |
| Who | Young People/Victims of Modern Slavery | | |
| What | JERICHO is a charity and family of seven social enterprises that provide supported work opportunities for people facing challenges in getting a job. Challenges include trauma, insufficient work experience, health and well-being needs, education barriers and communication difficulties. Currently, we primarily support survivors of modern slavery and young people. | | |

The Really NEET Project

| | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Charity No | 07583111 | Who | Young People |
| Website | reallyneetproject.co.uk | Age Range | 16 – 24 Years |
| Location | National - Telford | Area | Employability |
| Income | £2,500,000 | Numbers | 120 (per year) |
| Year Est | 2011 | Impact | (Barnsley Project) 94% of students moved onto successful outcomes |
| What | The Really NEET Project was founded to meet the unique needs of NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) young people (aged 16-25) to learn in a supportive and specially tailored environment. They empower positive change in young people by giving them the tools to create stability and security in their lives that will enable them to achieve their future goals and become contributing members of wider society. | | |

Coach Core

| | | | |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|
| Charity No | 1186782 | Who | Young People |
| Website | coachcore.org.uk | Age Range | 16 – 24 Years |
| Location | National - Birmingham | Area | Employability |
| Income | £843,923 | Numbers | 214 (per year) |
| Year Est | 2020 (4 years) | Impact | 71% move direct into employment |
| What | Coach Core is an employment and education project that uses community sports/ physical activity-based apprenticeships to target young adults not in employment, education or training (NEET) and have them not only change their future pathways but also become a positive influence in communities that need the provision most. | | |

IntoUniversity

| | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Charity No | 1118525 | Who | Children/Young People |
| Website | intouniversity.org | Age Range | 7 years + |
| Location | National - Birmingham | Area | Education |
| Income | £11,026,858 | Numbers | 52,400 (per year) |
| Year Est | 17 years | Impact | 61% of IntoUniversity 2023 alumni progressed to Higher Education |
| What | IntoUniversity aims to address underachievement and social exclusion among young people by offering an integrated programme of out-of-school study, mentoring, aspirational coaching, personal support and, in partnership with universities, specially-devised FOCUS weeks, days and weekends. | | |

Football Beyond Borders (FFB)

| | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Charity No | 1158046 | Age Range | 11 – 16 years |
| Website | footballbeyondborders.org | Area | Education |
| Location | National - Birmingham | Numbers | 2,000 |
| Income | £2,785,885 | Impact | 95% of the young people remain in school & 11x more likely to sit GCSE's |
| Year Est | 10+ Years | | |
| Who | Children / Young People | | |
| What | Football Beyond Borders supports young people who are disengaged at school and passionate about football in order to help them finish school with the skills and grades to make a successful transition into adulthood. | | |

LANDAU

| | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Charity No | 1048645 | Who | Young People |
| Website | landau.co.uk | Age Range | 16 – 24 Years + |
| Location | West Midlands | Area | Employment & Training |
| Income | £6,391,711 | Numbers | 800 (per year) |
| Year Est | 29 Years | Impact | 97.5% of students express an endorsement of the programme |
| What | Landau is a supported employment and work-related training organisation providing one to one support for people with learning disabilities. | | |

Grace Foundation

| | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Charity No | 1103021 | Age Range | 11 – 16 Years |
| Website | grace-foundation.org.uk | Area | Education |
| Location | Birmingham | Numbers | 12,000 (per Year) |
| Income | £1,331,577 | Impact | 650k student engagements, 20k family support interventions, 8k Support groups & 3k Mentoring sessions = Improved student outcomes |
| Year Est | 20+ Years | | |
| Who | Children & Young People | | |
| What | Grace Foundation partners with secondary schools to transform young people's lives through holistic education. The Programme helps develop the whole child, improves well-being and advances student outcomes. They work with schools from the inside out to help transform young people from the inside out. | | |

Think Forward

| | | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Charity No | 1152862 | Age Range | 13 – 18 Years |
| Website | thinkforward.org.uk | Area | Education & Employment |
| Location | National - Birmingham | Numbers | 1,356 |
| Income | £2,644,772 | Impact | 82% of ThinkForward's 2021 graduates are in Education, Employment or Training. |
| Year Est | 11 years | | |
| Who | Children/Young People | | |
| What | ThinkForward is a breakthrough programme which intervenes early to ensure that disengaged young people make a successful transition from education into employment. ThinkForward works with schools to identify young people entering their GCSE years who are most at risk of being unemployed when they leave school and commits to supporting them for five years through their transition into employment. | | |

Khulisa

| | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Charity No | 1120562 | Who | Children & Young People |
| Website | khulisa.co.uk | Age Range | 11 – 18 Years |
| Location | National - Birmingham | Area | Education |
| Income | £727,613 | Numbers | 4,518 |
| Year Est | 17 Years | Impact | 279 Programmes delivered – 77% reduction in reoffending. |

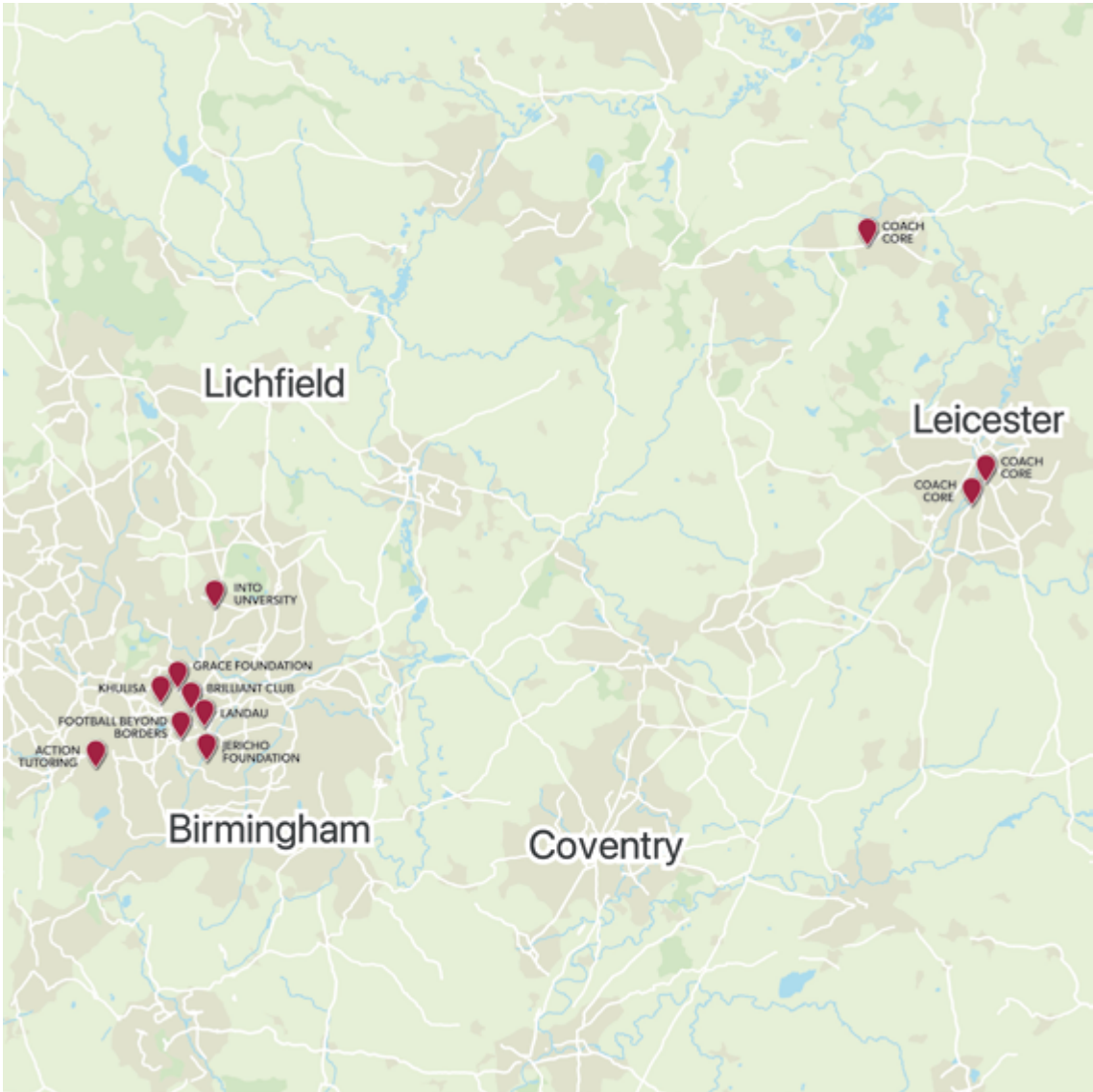
What Khulisa supports young people and the adults around them, they deliver intensive, therapeutic group programmes for young people to explore the root causes of their emotional distress. They train professionals, parents and carers in how to create nurturing, trauma-informed environments for young people. The Programmes place wellbeing at the heart of supporting young people and provide intensive therapeutic support to help them build self-awareness and emotional resilience.

Action Tutoring

| | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Charity No | 1147175 | Age Range | 10 – 16 Years |
| Website | actiontutoring.org.uk | Area | Education |
| Location | National - Birmingham | Numbers | 5,743 |
| Income | £3,565,661 | Impact | 65% of (disadvantaged) pupils pass their maths GCSE compared to the national average of 52%. |
| Year Est | 12 Years | | |

Who Children/Young People

What Action Tutoring provides free tuition to pupils from low-income backgrounds through partnerships with schools, using high quality volunteer tutors, aiming to ensure pupils are equipped in English and maths to be able to progress to further education, employment or training.



Appendix 2:

State Schools in Birmingham Data Tables

| School Name | Type of School | Ofsted rating | Address of school | Area of School | Central, south or Other | Pupils eligible for free school meals at any time during the past six years | School Category | Admissions | Deprivation Decile (Where the 1 decile is in the 10% of most deprived areas and 2 is in the 20% of most deprived areas in England etc). | % of residents born in the UK, within selected school's postcode | Local Source Output Area | Pupiltypes | Number of pupils included in Progress 8 score | Progress 8 score & description | Staying in education or entering employment (2021 leavers) | Grade 5 or above in GCSE Maths & English (average is 45.3% (average here is ± 2.5% of 22/23 figures)) | Attainment 8 | EBacc average score | Positive Ofsted Comments | Notes |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Mainstream Schools | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| St John Wall Catholic School | Maintained School | Good, 21/6/23 | Oxhill Road, Birmingham, B21 8HH | Handsworth | Other | 54.10% | Faith School | Favours Catholic children and those with siblings at the school. | 1 | 52.5 | Birmingham 036B | All pupils | 107 | 0.92 | 91% | 40% | 49.4 | 3.96 | | Averages 31.66 hours of teaching a week (below Gov recommendation from September 2024 of 32.5 hours). Uses some of the People Premium funding to pay for Attendance apprentices to ensure high levels of attendance for disadvantaged pupils. |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | 60 | 0.79 | 94% | 35% | 47.6 | 3.82 | | |
| Hillcrest School and Sixth Form Centre | Academy | Good, 28/9/22 | Stonehouse Lane, Birmingham, B32 3AE | Bartley Green | South | 52.50% | Comprehensive Girls school | | 2 | 83.2 | Birmingham 095B | All pupils | 91 | 0.61 | 90% | 50% | 51.4 | 4.94 | Ambitious SEND curriculum, lots of engaging extra curriculum activities readily available, emphasis on reading which is paying dividends. Lessons are planned so pupils gain knowledge in manageable steps. | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | 49 | 0.41 | 89% | 43% | 47.7 | 4.53 | | |
| Broadway Academy | Academy | Good, 12/10/22 | The Broadway, Birmingham, B20 3DP | Aston | Central | 52.10% | Comprehensive school | | 1 | 53.1 | Birmingham 033A | All pupils | 196 | 0.53 | 90% | 42% | 45.1 | 3.68 | Pupil premium clearly is somewhat ineffective here | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | 89 | 0.22 | 84% | 28% | 40 | 3.21 | | |
| Heartlands Academy | Academy | Outstanding, 6/2/14 | Great Francis Street, Birmingham, B7 4QR | Nechells | Central | 61.50% | Comprehensive school | Students eligible for pupil premium is ranked above distance to school in admissions criteria | 1 | 54.1 | Birmingham 052E | All pupils | 151 | 0.37 | 90% | 58% | 48.3 | 3.97 | A key component of this school is that it's dedicated to ensuring equality of opportunity for students who are eligible for Pupil Premium. There is an excellent use of assessment, teachers have a strong idea of how each child is progressing. As well, the school offered additional work opportunities for students on Saturdays and school holidays. Finally, student attendance is above average across the board. | They have a mental health curriculum, half of the staff members are trained mental health first aiders, over 20+ extra curricular clubs (the most popular club was the weekly Science Club). Heartlands community Hub offers digital skills, English for beginners etc. Involved with National Tutoring organisation (non-profit). Aston Villa put on a free football youth club. Those students who are registered on Pupil Premium are able to attend Breakfast club, have additional mentoring, water&bananas before exams etc |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | 92 | 0.37 | 88% | 55% | 47.5 | 3.83 | | |
| Ark St Alban's Academy | Academy | Requires Improvement, 24/11/21 | Conybere Street, Birmingham, B12 0YH | Bordesley & Highgate | Central | 73.00% | Comprehensive school | | 1 | 54.1 | Birmingham 071A | All pupils | 124 | 0.33 | 97% | 41% | 46 | 3.93 | There is a lack of students who are studying a MFL and this is declining. In addition, those with Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are deemed to be treated ineffectively according to Ofsted. | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | 119 | 0.29 | 97% | 40% | 45.4 | 3.87 | | |
| Lordswood Boys' School | Academy | Good, 16/2/22 | Hagley Road, Birmingham, B17 8BJ | Harborne | South | 51.40% | Comprehensive boys school | | 5 | 68 | Birmingham 073A | All pupils | 47 | 0.38 | 96% | 43% | 42.8 | 3.68 | Achieves the required duration of 32.5 hours (coming into place September 2024) per week of contact time. The website lists that literacy is the key focus here. | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | 34 | 0.23 | 95% | 30% | 37.3 | 3.04 | | |
| Selly Park Girls' School | Maintained School | Good, 24/11/22 | 5 Selly Park Road, Birmingham, B29 7PH | Bournbrook & Selly Park | South | 53.70% | Comprehensive Girls school | | 4 | 80.6 | Birmingham 100D | All pupils | 126 | 0.21 | 98% | 52% | 49.7 | 4.59 | 2/4 ratings good and 2/4 ratings outstanding. It is noted that all subjects go beyond the minimal national curriculum. In addition, all students study a MFL in KS4. Students who struggle with reading can quickly catchup with one-to-one and small group interventions. | Not particularly deprived, signed up to National Tutoring Programme, longer hours for subjects (e.g 4.5 hours a week for maths). Wide variety of additional after school clubs available, including MFL & STEM Clubs. As well, there are 6 different lessons each day, four days a week, with 33.25 per week. This is 3/4 hour above the September 2024 minimum expected hours. |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | 72 | 0.29 | 99% | 51% | 48.3 | 4.46 | | |

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|--------------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| King Edward VI Sheldon Heath Academy | Academy | Good, 8/2/23 | Sheldon Heath Road, Birmingham, B26 2RZ | Garretts Green | Other | 53.20% | Comprehensive school | | 1 | 86.4 | Birmingham 069D | All pupils | 200 | 0.2 | 94% | 41% | 47.2 | 3.94 | | It is based in a 20th to 30th percentile deprived area (CDRC Harmonised 2019 IMD). |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | 94 | -0.04 | 93% | 27% | 42.6 | 3.5 | | |
| Harborne Academy | Academy | Good, 16/11/22 | Harborne Road, Birmingham, B15 3JL | Edgbaston | South | 60.01% | Comprehensive school | | 6 | 59.8 | Birmingham 079C | All pupils | 102 | 0.18 | 94% | 42% | 44.8 | 3.9 | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | 84 | 0.06 | 90% | 34% | 43 | 3.96 | | |
| St Thomas Aquinas Catholic School | Academy | Good, 8/11/18 | Wychall Lane, Birmingham, B38 8AP | King's Norton North | South | 50.09% | Faith School | Admissions favoured for catholic children in feeder schools, using distance | 1 | 82.9 | Birmingham 126A | All pupils | 193 | 0.17 | 95% | 47% | 48 | 4.08 | Teaching has improved drastically over the previous two years - with subjects such as English being classed as excellent. Those with SEND requirements are said to be making good progress thanks to staff providing extra support when needed. | Voluntary aided (faith) school, large DoE programmes, options are chosen in Year 8 as opposed to Year 9, strong attendance policies. Listed on the website as having a strong culture of revision and memory. Restricted to just catholic children, with wide range of subsidised (and mostly free) religious and school trips. |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | 92 | -0.14 | 95% | 37% | 42.2 | 3.57 | | |
| Washwood Heath Academy | Academy | Good, 4/3/20 | Burney Lane, Birmingham, B8 2AS | Ward End | Other | 50.07% | Comprehensive school | | 1 | 61.7 | Birmingham 055D | All pupils | 246 | 0.15 | 92% | 33% | 43.2 | 3.78 | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | 122 | 0.12 | 92% | 30% | 41.5 | 3.64 | | |
| Erdington Academy | Academy | Good, 19/4/23 | Kingsbury Road, Birmingham, B24 8RE | Gravelly Hill | Other | 58.20% | Comprehensive school | | 1 | 64 | Birmingham 031A | All pupils | 150 | 0.1 | 90% | 35% | 40.7 | 3.26 | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | 89 | 0.1 | 85% | 34% | 39.5 | 3.16 | | |
| Ninestiles, an Academy | Academy | Good, 4/12/19 | Hartfield Crescent, Birmingham, B27 7QG | Acocks Green | South | 56.00% | Comprehensive school | | 2 | 75.8 | Birmingham 098B | All pupils | 278 | -0.01 | 92% | 41% | 44.8 | 3.95 | Pupil Premium is spent on targeting those with lowest reading ages - with one-on-one interventions. Also funding is used to add extra lessons for year 11s, in effect adding in an additional 2 months of teaching, which is shown to be most beneficial to those who are disadvantaged. School and all individual subjects encourage reading and "drop everything" to read at least once a day. Perhaps, students can see clear progression, so work hard as in the 2022 cohort 99.4% moved on to post 16 education, employment apprenticeships etc. | Higher results disadvantaged |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | 257 | -0.02 | 88% | 42% | 45.2 | 3.99 | | |
| Rockwood Academy | Academy | Good, 15/11/19 | Naseby Road, Birmingham, B8 3HG | Alum Rock | Other | 51.50% | Comprehensive school | | 1 | 60.8 | Birmingham 048E | All pupils | 174 | -0.09 | 93% | 33% | 41.9 | 3.7 | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | 94 | -0.09 | 93% | 32% | 41.5 | 3.67 | | |
| Aston Manor Academy | Academy | Outstanding, 7/6/17 | Phillips Street, Birmingham, B6 4PZ | Newtown | Other | 61.90% | Comprehensive school | | 1 | 46.60 | Birmingham 050A | All pupils | 142 | -0.11 | 93% | 40% | 43.4 | 3.58 | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | 87 | -0.27 | 91% | 36% | 40.4 | 3.31 | | |
| George Dixon Academy | Academy | Requires Improvement, 29/6/22 | Portland Road, Birmingham, B16 9GD | North Edgbaston | Other | 62.00% | Comprehensive school | | 1 | 60.3 | Birmingham 060E | All pupils | 144 | -0.11 | 90% | 31% | 37.3 | 3.37 | Reference to Ofsted report, leaders not understanding key knowledge required, moderately deprived area | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | 91 | -0.11 | 90% | 25% | 34.1 | 3.04 | | |
| Greenwood Academy | Academy | Good, 20/12/21 | Farnborough Road, Birmingham, B35 7NL | Castle Vale | Other | 61.00% | Comprehensive school | | 1 | 91.9 | Birmingham 029B | All pupils | 166 | -0.15 | 84% | 33% | 40.4 | 3.49 | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | 99 | -0.4 | 80% | 24% | 36.7 | 3.18 | | |
| King Edward VI Northfield School for Girls | Academy | Good, 7/3/17 | Turves Green, Birmingham, B31 4BP | Longbridge & West Heath | South | 51.10% | Comprehensive Girls school | | 2 | 93.8 | Birmingham 124E | All pupils | 138 | -0.17 | 93% | 35% | 42.3 | 3.73 | This academy opened on 1/9/21. Go to Turves Green Girls' School for previous record. | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | 75 | -0.44 | 93% | 14% | 34.3 | 2.94 | | |
| Holy Trinity Catholic School | Academy | Good, 27/9/23 | Oakley Road, Birmingham, B10 0AX | Bordesley Green | Central | 59.30% | Faith School | Baptised Catholic children favoured | 1 | 62.8 | Birmingham 071B | All pupils | 115 | -0.22 | 91% | 26% | 40.4 | 3.12 | This is a new academy which opened on 1/5/19. | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | | -0.08 | 89% | 27% | 39 | 2.96 | | |

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|---------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Tile Cross Academy | Academy | Requires Improvement, 20/10/21 | Gressel Lane, Birmingham, B33 9UF | Glebe Farm & Tile Cross | Other | 71.40% | Comprehensive school | | 1 | 80.3 | Birmingham 057C | All pupils | 91 | -0.3 | 74% | 27% | 35.3 | 3 | | Very deprived area, some students speak english as a second language (Ofsted report suggests english language learning inadequate) |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | 76 | -0.25 | 82% | 21% | 34.4 | 2.88 | | |
| Holyhead School | Academy | Good, 5/2/20 | Milestone Lane, Birmingham, B21 0HN | Holyhead | Other | 57.10% | Comprehensive school | | 1 | 55.8 | Birmingham 036F | All pupils | 202 | -0.25 | 92% | 38% | 40.8 | 3.64 | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | 116 | -0.41 | 90% | 30% | 36.9 | 3.25 | | |
| Holte School | Maintained School | Good, 11/10/23 | Wheeler Street, Birmingham, B19 2EP | Lozells | Other | 61.10% | Comprehensive school | | 1 | 60 | Birmingham 041D | All pupils | 186 | -0.26 | 95% | 39% | 46.6 | 4.18 | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | 174 | -0.23 | 93% | 38% | 4.71 | 4.22 | | |
| Ark Boulton Academy | Academy | Good, 6/7/22 | Golden Hillock Road, Birmingham, B11 2QG | Sparkbrook & Balsall Heath East | South | 63.40% | Comprehensive school | | 1 | 62.4 | Birmingham 140A | All pupils | 164 | -0.38 | 86% | 40% | 40.2 | 3.61 | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | 138 | -0.38 | 84% | 38% | 39.6 | 3.54 | | |
| Shenley Academy | Academy | Good, 7/7/21 | Shenley Lane, Birmingham, B29 4HE | Bartley Green | South | 61.30% | Comprehensive school | Pupil premium greater factor than distance to school | 1 | 90.6 | Birmingham 106E | All pupils | 159 | -0.38 | 87% | 34% | 37.7 | 3.09 | | Listed as putting mental health and wellbeing at the centre of their operations. |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | 80 | -0.8 | 82% (74 of 90 pupils) | 23% | 30 | 2.47 | | |
| Colmers School and Sixth Form College | Maintained School | Requires Improvement, 19/4/23 | Bristol Road South, Birmingham, B45 9NY | Rubery & Rednal | South | 51.60% | Comprehensive school | | 4 | 87.7 | Birmingham 130A | All pupils | 200 | -0.38 | 94% | 27% | 37.3 | 3.09 | | The website talks about this school being oversubscribed - perhaps this is why their GCSE results are so far below average. This school is also affected by students not learning the consequences of poor behaviour as suspensions are too high. |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | 90 | -0.56 | 89% (84 of 94 pupils) | 18% | 31.3 | 2.54 | | |
| Four Dwellings Academy | Academy | Good, 12/10/22 | Dwellings Lane, Birmingham, B32 1RJ | Quinton | South | 64.80% | Comprehensive school | | 5 | 77.4 | Birmingham 080D | All pupils | 91 | -0.39 | 85% | 33% | 40.5 | 3.34 | | The Ofsted report suggests that disadvantaged pupils do not take advantage of the wide-range of extra curricular activities available so are not enriched. It is located in an area which is not deprived. |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | 61 | -0.67 | 85% (47 of 55 pupils) | 29% | 37.3 | 3.06 | | |
| Bartley Green School | Academy | Good, 8/3/23 | Adams Hill, Birmingham, B32 3QJ | Bartley Green | South | 52.10% | Comprehensive school | | 4 | 89.1 | Birmingham 094B | All pupils | 173 | -0.4 | 90% | 32% | 40.1 | 3.46 | | Located within a moderately deprived area of South West Birmingham. The Ofsted report mentions how there is a lack of a proper strategy concerning pupils who are struggling to learn how to read. Finally, some disadvantaged students struggle to behave well enough, the School is advised to regulate the behaviors of SEND pupils. |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | 86 | -0.63 | 84% (63 of 75 pupils) | 18% | 33.4 | 2.79 | | |
| Cockshut Hill School | Academy | Good, 29/6/23 | Cockshut Hill, Birmingham, B26 2HX | Garretts Green | Other | 59.40% | Comprehensive school | | 1 | 83.4 | Birmingham 062D | All pupils | 166 | -0.41 | 90% | 27% | 37.8 | 3.41 | | The Ofsted report mentions how absences are too high, especially within disadvantaged groups of students. |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | 94 | -0.88 | 89% (101 of 113 pupils) | 22% | 31.7 | 2.85 | | |
| Turves Green Boys' School | Academy | N/A | Turves Green, Birmingham, B31 4BS | Longbridge & West Heath | South | 53.00% | Comprehensive boys school | | 1 | 88.8 | Birmingham 126E | All pupils | 110 | -0.5 | N/A | 35% | 39.4 | 3.54 | | This academy opened on 1/5/21. Go to Turves Green Boys' School for previous record. |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | 51 | -1 | N/A | 19% | 31.4 | 2.7 | | |
| Moseley School and Sixth Form | Maintained School | Good, 29/9/21 | Wake Green Road, Birmingham, B13 9UU | Sparkhill | South | 56.40% | Comprehensive school | | 2 | 63.3 | Birmingham 097F | All pupils | 204 | -0.59 | 89% | 23% | 37.3 | 3.2 | | This is in a moderately deprived area of Southern Birmingham, Ofsted report suggests it is a "good", despite low results. |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | 113 | -0.51 | 91% (115 of 127 pupils) | 20% | 37.6 | 3.23 | | |
| King Edward VI Balaam Wood Academy | Academy | N/A | New Street, Birmingham, B45 0EU | Frankley | South | 74.80% | Comprehensive school | | 1 | 94.2 | Birmingham 125G | All pupils | 59 | -0.63 | 85% | 18% | 31.7 | 2.58 | | This school opened on 1/9/19. Go to Balaam Wood School for previous record. |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | 45 | -0.66 | 81% (48 of 59 pupils) | 11% | 29.4 | 2.34 | | |
| North Birmingham Academy | Academy | Good, 4/10/23 | 395 College Road, Birmingham, B44 0HF | Stockland Green | Other | 62.00% | Comprehensive school | | 2 | 67.4 | Birmingham 022A | All pupils | 158 | -0.69 | 91% | 34% | 38.1 | 3.16 | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | 105 | -0.75 | 86% (89 of 103 pupils) | 30% | 35.7 | 2.95 | | |

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|--------------------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Fortis Academy | Academy | Good, 24/10/23 | Aldridge Road, Birmingham, B44 8NU | Oscott | Other | 59.90% | Comprehensive school | | 4 | 84.8 | Birmingham 013A | All pupils | 262 | -0.72 | 89% | 21% | 34.3 | 2.84 | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | 147 | -0.87 | 91% (125 of 137 pupils) | 15% | 30.4 | 2.52 | | |
| Jewellery Quarter Academy | Academy | Good, 19/5/22 | St George's Court, Birmingham, B1 3AA | Soho & Jewellery Quarter | Central | 67.70% | Comprehensive school | | 5 | 62 | Birmingham 137D | All pupils | 96 | -0.73 | 90% | 23% | 32.4 | 2.76 | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | 74 | -0.65 | SUPP (of 70 pupils) | 25% | 32.8 | 2.78 | | |
| Aston University Engineering Academy | Academy | Good, 13/1/22 | 1 Lister Street, Birmingham, B7 4AG | Nechells | Central | 52.00% | Engineering academy | Takes pupils from Year 10, who focus on vocational subjects whilst doing GCSE courses | 3 | 70.1 | Birmingham 050E | All pupils | 70 | -0.74 | 92% | 40% | 42.4 | 3.33 | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | 37 | -0.78 | 90% (36 of 40 pupils) | 38% | 40.2 | 3.1 | | |
| King Solomon International Business School | Academy | N/A | Lord Street, Birmingham, B7 4AA | Nechells | Central | 58.50% | Multi-denominational christian school' | Christian faith children preferred | 3 | 70.1 | Birmingham 050E | All pupils | 64 | -0.93 | N/A | 19% | 31.5 | 2.7 | | This academy opened on 01/04/2022. Go to King Solomon International Business School for previous record. |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | 42 | -1.14 | N/A | 12% | 27.3 | 2.31 | | |
| Ark Kings Academy | Academy | Inadequate, 9/2/22 | Shannon Road, Birmingham, B38 9DE | King's Norton South | South | 78.30% | Comprehensive school | | 1 | 69.7 | Birmingham 128A | All pupils | 108 | -1.01 | 85% | 16% | 31.8 | 2.71 | | Ineffective schooling as it is common place for students understanding to not be regularly checked leading to gaps in knowledge. Lack of safeguarding and discipline makes it a challenging places to learn. |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | 98 | -1.03 | 81% (61 of 75 pupils) | 14% | 30.6 | 2.58 | | |
| Bournville School | Academy | Requires improvement, 11/11/21 | Hay Green Lane, Birmingham, B30 1SH | Bournville & Cotteridge | South | 63.80% | Comprehensive school | | 5 | 93.7 | Birmingham 113B | All pupils | 98 | -1.11 | 89% | 21% | 33 | 2.78 | | The school has only had limited success in trying to reduce the amount of students regularly arriving late to school. As well as this, there are negative relations between teachers and senior leaders at the school. A 2021 report from Ofsted also indicates that there are delays in diagnosing some children with learning issues and working out a relevant course of action. |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | 61 | -1.4 | 84% (59 of 70 pupils) | 13% | 27.5 | 2.24 | | |
| City Academy | Academy | Requires improvement, 8/3/23 | 23 Langley Walk, Birmingham, B15 2EF | Ladywood | Central | 64.70% | Comprehensive school | | 3 | 44.8 | Birmingham 134C | All pupils | 122 | -1.16 | 89% | 17% | 28.6 | 2.57 | | This school opened on 01/09/2020 following the closure of City Academy Birmingham and Central Academy. |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | 81 | -1.27 | 84% (96 of 114 pupils) | 12% | 25.6 | 2.27 | | |
| Waverley Studio College | Academy | Good, 23/9/22 | 470 Belchers Lane, Birmingham, B9 55X | Heartlands | Other | 50.70% | Vocational college | Health, Creative Technology and Enterprise | 1 | 73.6 | Birmingham 063D | All pupils | 31 | -1.33 | 73% | 16% | 30.8 | 2.38 | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | 23 | -1.31 | 74% (34 of 46 pupils) | 17% | 30.1 | 2.31 | | |
| Special Schools | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Queensbury School | Special School | Good, 25/5/23 | Wood End Road, Birmingham, B24 8BL | Gravelly Hill | Other | 65.30% | | | 1 | 49.8 | Birmingham 031D | All pupils | 34 | -1.2 | 100% | 0% | 6.5 | 0.5 | | This academy opened on 01/09/2020. Go to Queensbury School for previous record. |
| Queensbury School | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | 19 | -1.29 | 100% (21 of 21 pupils) | 0% | 6.6 | 0.48 | | This academy opened on 01/09/2020. Go to Queensbury School for previous record. |
| Braidwood School for the Deaf | Special School | Good, 17/10/18 | Bromford Road, Birmingham, B36 8AF | Bromford & Hodge Hill | Other | 66.10% | | | 2 | 74.7 | Birmingham 044A | All pupils | 10 | -1.3 | Suppressed | 0% | 4.7 | 0.15 | | |
| Braidwood School for the Deaf | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | SUPP> | | SUPP (of 3 pupils) | | | | | |

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| Lindsworth School | Special School | Requires Improvement, 8/6/22 | Monyhull Hall Road, Birmingham, B30 3QA | Druids Heath & Monyhull | South | 91.50% | | | 5 | 92.7 | Birmingham 118D | All pupils | 14 | -1.41 | 70% | 0% | 6.6 | 0.45 | Average in 21/22 for GCSEs 5 or above in English and Mathematics in Special Schools is 1.2%. The green represents above average and the red represents below average. | |
| Lindsworth School | Disadvantaged pupils | | | | | | | | | | | SUPP> | | 72% (12 of 17 pupils) | | | Cannot find stats on attainment 8 and ebac average score 21.3 | | | |
| Calthorpe Academy | Special School | Good, 5/10/23 | Darwin Street, Birmingham, B12 0TP | Bordesley & Highgate | Central | 62.10% | | | 1 | 54.9 | Birmingham 071C | All pupils | 36 | -1.47 | 100% | 2% | 1 | 0.08 | | |
| Calthorpe Academy | Disadvantaged pupils | | | | | | | | | | | 28 | -1.44 | 100% (17 of 17 pupils) | 3% | 1.4 | 0.11 | | | |
| Selly Oak Trust School | Special School | Good, 16/11/22 | Oak Tree Lane, Birmingham, B29 6HZ | Bournville & Cotteridge | South | 58.90% | | | 4 | 78.5 | Birmingham 100A | All pupils | 47 | -1.52 | 95% | 0% | 1.5 | 0.17 | | |
| Selly Oak Trust School | Disadvantaged pupils | | | | | | | | | | | 25 | -1.5 | SUPP (of 34 pupils) | 0% | 2 | 0.19 | | | |
| Baskerville School | Special School | Good, 15/6/22 | Fellows Lane, Birmingham, B17 9TS | Harborne | South | 57.70% | | | 6 | 84.3 | Birmingham 073B | All pupils | 16 | -1.62 | 100% | 0% | 2.6 | 0.15 | | |
| Baskerville School | Disadvantaged pupils | | | | | | | | | | | 8 | -1.69 | 100% (12 of 12 pupils) | 0% | 1.3 | 0.09 | | | |
| Oscott Manor School | Special School | Good, 7/12/22 | 290 Reservoir Road, Birmingham, B23 6DE | Stockland Green | Other | 61.20% | | | 2 | 79.9 | Birmingham 026C | All pupils | 21 | -2.25 | 100% | 0% | 4.5 | 0.48 | | |
| Oscott Manor School | Disadvantaged pupils | | | | | | | | | | | 10 | -2.9 | 100% (12 of 12 pupils) | 0% | 6.5 | 0.7 | | | |
| Victoria School | Special School | Outstanding, 3/11/22 | Bell Hill, Birmingham, B31 1LD | Allens Cross | South | 74.40% | | | 5 | 76 | Birmingham 109B | All pupils | N/A> | | 100% | | | | | |
| Victoria School | Disadvantaged pupils | | | | | | | | | | | N/A> | | 100% (10 of 10 pupils) | | | | | | |
| Lea Hall Academy | Special School | Inadequate, 12/7/23 | Hallmoor Road, Birmingham, B33 9QY | Glebe Farm & Tile Cross | Other | 93.80% | | | 1 | 81 | Birmingham 054D | All pupils | N/A > | | | | | | This academy opened on 01/09/2021. Go to Skilts School for previous record. | |
| Lea Hall Academy | Disadvantaged pupils | | | | | | | | | | | N/A> | | | | | | This academy opened on 01/09/2021. Go to Skilts School for previous record. | | |
| Hallmoor School | Special School | Requires Improvement, 22/1/20 | 50 Scholars Gate, Birmingham, B33 0DL | Glebe Farm & Tile Cross | Other | 67.20% | | | 1 | 82.5 | Birmingham 057B | All pupils | N/A> | | 91% | | | | | |
| Hallmoor School | Disadvantaged pupils | | | | | | | | | | | N/A> | | SUPP (of 14 pupils) | | | | | | |

| School Name | Type of School | Ofsted rating | Address of school | Area of School | Central, south or Other | Pupils eligible for free school meals at any time during the past six years | School Category | Admissions | Deprivation Decile (Where the 1 deciles is in the 10% of most deprived areas and 2 is in the 20% of most deprived areas in England etc.) | % of residents born in the UK, within selected school's postcode | Local Source Output Area | Pupil type | Number of pupils included in Progress 8 score | Progress 8 score & description | Staying in education or entering employment (2021 leavers) | Grade 5 or above in GCSE Maths & English (average is 45.3% (average here is ± 2.5% of 22/23 figures)) | Attainment 8 | EBacc average score | Positive Ofsted Comments | Notes |
|------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Mayfield School | Special School | N/A | Wheeler Street, Birmingham, B19 2EP | Lozells | Other | 57.80% | | | 1 | 60 | Birmingham 041B | All pupils | N/A> | | | | | | | This academy opened on 1/6/21. Go to Mayfield School for previous record. |
| Mayfield School | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | N/A> | | | | | | | This academy opened on 1/6/21. Go to Mayfield School for previous record. |
| Fox Hollies School | Special School | Good, 26/5/22 | Highbury Community Campus, Birmingham, B13 8QB | Moseley | South | 66.70% | | | 4 | 86.3 | Birmingham 088D | All pupils | N/A> | | 100% | | | | | |
| Fox Hollies School | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | SUPP> | | 100% (7 of 7 pupils) | | | | | |
| Hamilton School | Special School | Outstanding, 16/10/19 | Hamilton Road, Birmingham, B21 8AH | Holyhead | Other | 60.90% | | | 1 | 46.5 | Birmingham 036C | All pupils | N/A > | | | | | | | |
| Hamilton School | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | N/A> | | | | | | | |
| James Brindley Academy | Special School | Good, 29/6/22 | Bell Barn Road, Birmingham, B15 2AF | Ladywood | Central | 61.70% | | | 3 | 49.8 | Birmingham 134C | All pupils | N/A > | | | | | | | |
| James Brindley Academy | | | | | | | | | | | | Disadvantaged pupils | N/A> | | | | | | | |



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