Sub-Regional Business Intelligence

June 2021

Contents

1. Executive Summary

Welcome to the June edition of the Coventry & Warwickshire Smart Region report. This month our spotlight theme is health and wellbeing, especially in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, and its economic impact.

Whilst the full economic impact of the pandemic may not be fully understood for some time, (if ever), as usual we present what we know right now, through a range of the latest economic data, statistics, and business intelligence. We still lack a complete year's data for all indicators, but we are gathering a good overall picture of the economic impact of the pandemic so far.

The recommendations and findings in this month's report are based on intelligence gathered from CWLEP Growth Hub's contacts with local businesses, alongside survey data and information provided by Coventry City Council, Warwickshire County Council, and CWLEP.

Other sources include the Office for National Statistics, The Health Foundation, organisations such as Mind and Westfield Health, and other research bodies with ability in labour market analysis.

Key Headlines

- In May 2021, **the claimant count in Coventry & Warwickshire totalled 31,885 people.** At the start of the pandemic, in March 2020, the claimant count stood at 15,830.

- Whilst **the overall claimant count total has been around the current level in Coventry & Warwickshire since May 2020, the falls over the past few months give signs for optimism** as the local economy continues to re-open and recover**.**

Area	March 2020	May 2020		March 2021	April 2021	May 2021
Coventry	8,000	15,650		17,245	16,995	16,255
North Warwickshire	845	2,135		2,020	1,960	1,810
Nuneaton & Bedworth	2,830	5,370		5,105	4,990	4,780
Rugby	1,535	3,195		3,120	3,065	2,940
Stratford-on-Avon	1,050	3,120		3,050	2,965	2,760
Warwick	1,570	3,715		3,680	3,585	3,340
Warwickshire	7,830	17,535		16,975	16,565	15,630
CWLEP	**15,830**	**33,185**		**34,220**	**33,560**	**31,885**

Source: Office for National Statistics

- Nationally, the claimant count stood at **2,503,160 in May 2021, compared with 2,661,340 twelve months ago.**

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) also reported that:

- **The number of payrolled employees increased for the sixth consecutive month, up by 197,000 in May 2021** to 28.5 million. It is however 553,000 below levels seen before the Covid-19 pandemic.

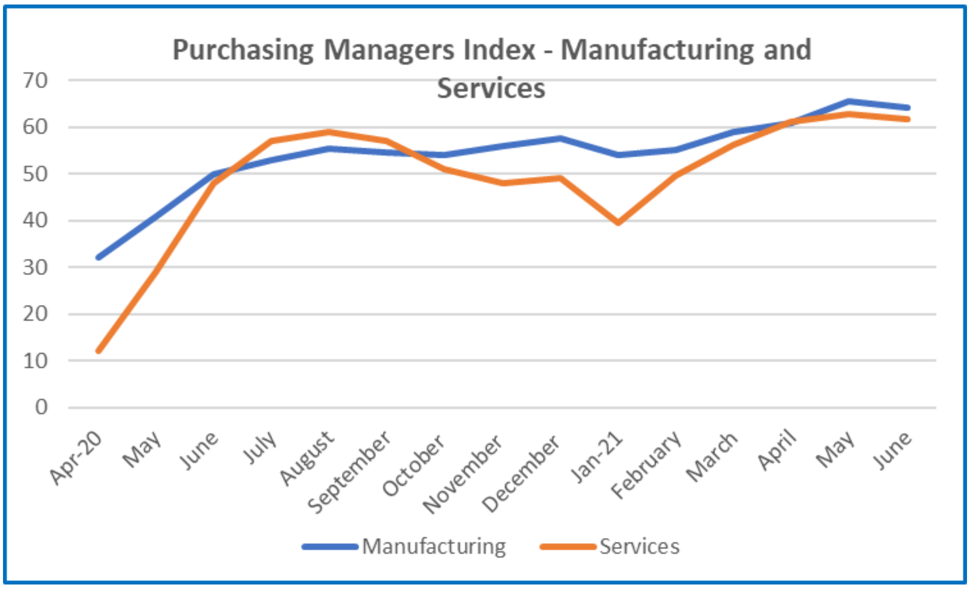
- There was a **quarterly increase in the employment rate of 0.2 percentage points to 75.2% and a quarterly decrease in the unemployment rate of 0.3 percentage points to 4.7%.** The economic inactivity rate was largely unchanged on the previous quarter at 21.0%.

- With the relaxation of many Covid-19 restrictions, **total hours worked increased on the quarter,** however it is still below pre-pandemic levels. The **redundancy rate has decreased**, and is now similar to pre-pandemic levels.

- The number of job vacancies in March to May 2021 was 758,000, only 27,000 below the level before the pandemic in January to March 2020; **most industries have recovered to show vacancies above pre-pandemic levels**. The strongest quarterly increase was in accommodation and food services.

- The overall picture with the labour market is **becoming generally more optimistic, although some uncertainties remain - and the continuation of the furlough scheme is continuing to provide important support** for many workers.

- **Finally, business confidence has significantly improved in recent months, albeit levelling.** The Purchasing Managers Index (PMI) for manufacturing jumped to 65.6 in May and has fallen slightly to 64.2 in June (a figure above 50 represents growth). Likewise, for services the PMI increased, albeit more slowly, and is currently 61.7.



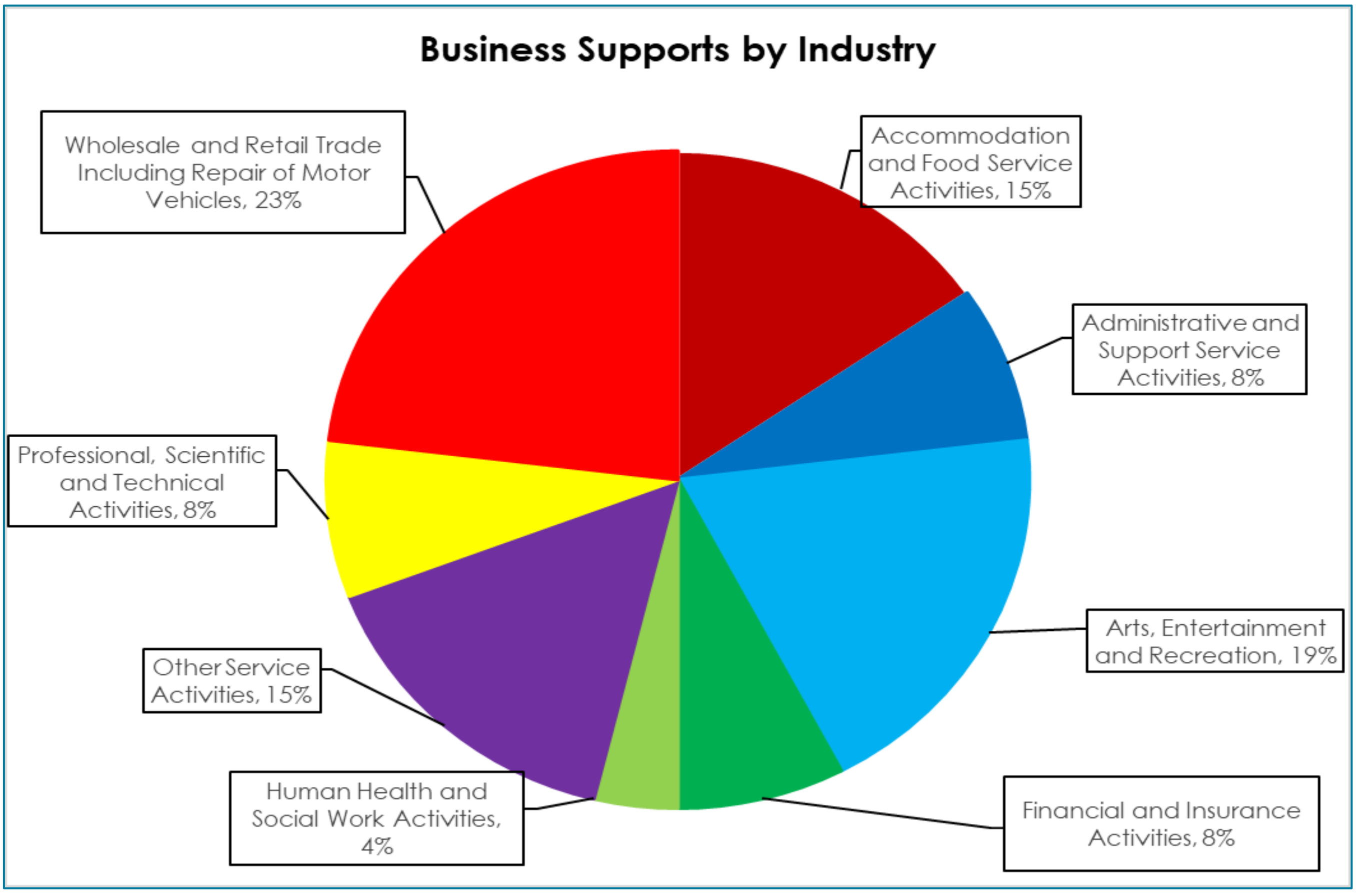
Source: The Markit/CIPS UK Services PMI (Purchasing Managers' Index)

2. Latest CWLEP Growth Hub Insights

2.1 CWLEP Growth Hub - Trends

Since the start of the pandemic in March 2020, **CWLEP Growth Hub has supported 4,179 businesses and has had substantive discussions with 1,637 businesses specifically related to Covid-19 impact and EU Exit.**

This month's business insights are taken from intelligence gathered in **May 2021**.

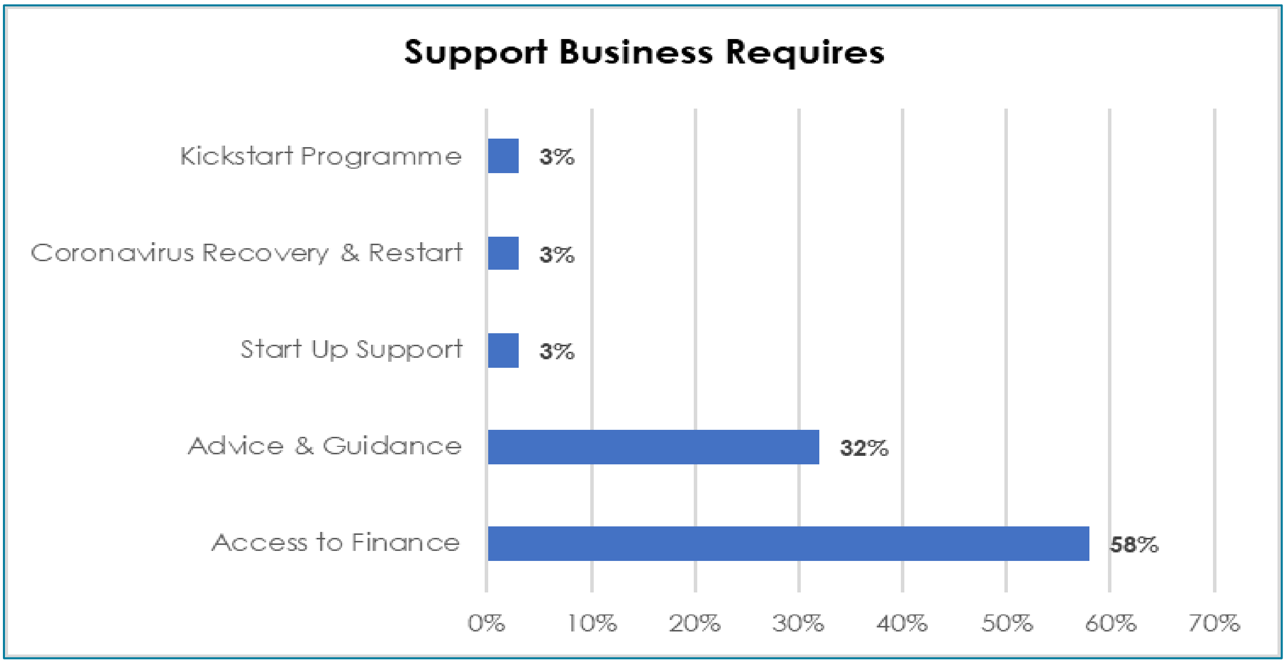


The top sectors supported by CWLEP Growth Hub in May were **Wholesale & Retail Trade inc. Repair of Motor Vehicles (23%); Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (19%); Other Service Activities (15%); and Accommodation & Food Service Activities (15%).**

The volume of businesses from the **Wholesale & Retail Trade and Manufacturing sectors** seeking help reflects the levels from these sectors that local business support systems has traditionally aided in high numbers. Meanwhile **Human Health & Social Work Activities** has been less represented this month.

The size profile of the businesses supported over the past month consisted of **31% sole traders; 46% micro businesses (2-9 employees); and 23% small businesses (10-49 employees).**
There was an **increase in Micro and Small Enterprises** and **decreased in Sole Traders** approaching CWLEP Growth Hub compared to the last month. 38% of all respondents came from businesses that started trading in either 2020 or 2021.

2.2 CWLEP Growth Hub – Enquiries & Support



Access to Finance was the most popular reason for support over the past month. As clients have many different and complex business needs and wants, there are a spread of other enquiries too. There was a high proportion of businesses that selected **Advice & Guidance** as their main support need, which could have led to help around **Marketing support, Business rates, and Tax & legal issues.**

Finally, it is worth noting that whilst advice and guidance is always a key requirement from businesses seeking support from the CWLEP Growth Hub, there remains a proportion of businesses seeking advice about **Start Up support and Coronavirus Recovery & Restart support.**

2.3 CWLEP Growth Hub - Themes

Grants – CWLEP Growth Hub Advisors are currently looking after a healthy number of new and ongoing business support grant referrals. Projects are wide ranging, covering all aspects of available support and include capital purchases, replacement for more energy efficient machinery, premises re-fits and refurbishments and innovative new ideas. Another established business, supported in their main business activity by Growth Hub staff, are looking for grant support to develop new gin making classes in Stratford.

Innovation – A regional, larger SME, that has benefitted from a longer-term relationship with CWLEP Growth Hub, has decided to create an Innovation Hub within an unused part of their state-of-the-art manufacturing facility. This will allow them to showcase their offering to potential clients but more importantly their focus will be on engaging with regional schools and colleges to inspire the next generation of engineers.

A regional Rail Innovation hub, recently taken over by Porterbrook, a train rolling stock company established in April 1994 as part of the privatisation of British Rail, have signed a new 15-year lease to secure the future of this important research facility.

Another business, specialising in the animation of medical procedures for teaching medical professionals as well as explaining procedures to patients, is looking for investment to translate into multiple languages and for product development.

Further ongoing innovation support offered in relation to patents for new technologies that are moving forward with designs.

Training – A number of businesses looking for skills development within their existing workforces. Some looking for training to widen their offer to provide new services. Kickstart and Apprentices continue to be a focus for many CW based businesses.

Start Up Finance – A good number of newer businesses, not eligible for regular grant streams given their limited time trading, are being referred to CWRT for Duplex funding as it potentially offers a cheaper way to raise finance. Projects include refurbishment and fit-out of new premises, the development of new medical products, and a business involved with the restoration of ex-military vehicles.

Materials Support – A number of CW businesses looking to develop new products have been referred to, and are receiving, valuable export support and advice from wider regional academia and the Smarterials programme.

Other themes this month:

- **B2B Referrals** – A number of successful referrals between regional clients have seen results come to fruition, leading to long term lucrative contracts.
- **Inward Investment** – CWLEP Growth Hub Advisors continue to deal with a number of Inward Investment opportunities from around the country, some of which have been drawn by the region's automotive reputation, ability, opportunities, and skills.
- **Digital Boost** – Digital support continues to feature as businesses deal with new ways of working, post Covid-19. Social Media and Digital Marketing support among the most frequently sought after, including one business looking to market a new online pharmacy.
- **Virtual Reality** – VR is changing the method of delivery for some Events businesses. Another Housebuilder, is actively developing VR tours for the marketing of new properties, reducing the need for visits to show homes at development sites.

3. Spotlight: Impact of Covid-19 on Health & Wellbeing

3.1 Context

Mental health is one of the key elements in supporting positive social and economic outcomes for individuals and for wider society. The importance of good mental health, often overlooked in the past, is rightly now being recognised by employers as contributing to high-quality work, improved productivity, and economic recovery.

Different communities and groups of people in the UK experienced the pandemic and lockdown differently. The pandemic had a huge effect on the health and wellbeing of people; the ONS estimated that during the crisis, around a fifth of adults experienced depression compared to pre-Covid-19 (around 9.7%) estimates.

Furthermore, the Health Foundation organisation highlighted that 69% of adults in the UK reported to feel very worried or somehow worried that Covid-19 will have an impact on their life. Vulnerable groups of people, such as young adults, experienced more severe mental ill health as result of pandemic. This is supported by a social study by UCL, who monitored the mental health symptoms of 90,000 UK adults throughout lockdown. They found that levels of anxiety and depression of adults fell in early June, when the first national lockdown eased.

On the other hand, these levels were still high for other groups of people, particularly young people, those with a low household income, people who already had a mental illness, people living in urban areas, and people living with children. These wider determinants of health inequalities have been exposed by the pandemic.

Main Factors contributing to poor Mental Health and Wellbeing

There are some key factors that have caused people's mental health and wellbeing to deteriorate during the pandemic:

Social isolation: Since the first lockdown occurred, isolation has grown rapidly, particularly for people who are living alone or are in the shielding category.

Jobs and financial loss: People experienced unequal financial hardship which has impacted on mental health. Unemployed workers mental health was severely affected whilst over a third of full-time employees had concerns over their job security, according to Mental Health Foundation's data. Their data also revealed that almost half of the respondents were worried that they would be unable to provide sufficient food to meet basic needs.

Housing insecurity and quality: Ability to afford housing has had a strong influence on mental health. For example, the Mental Health Foundation found that during lockdown people living in rental accommodation had increased worries about their financial situation and their longer-term ability to afford rents. Furthermore, the quality of housing has also become more of an issue impacting on mental health – with, for example, 12% of households in the UK having no access to a private or shared garden.

Reduced access to mental health services: Many providers reported that they were unable to meet the rising demand before the pandemic occurred, where lockdown has added pressure on the providers. One charity, Mind, stated that during April 2021, almost 25% of people who attempted to access mental health services failed to get support.

Working from home: A high proportion of the workforce have worked from home for many months. Uncertainty around when Covid-19 restrictions might be eased and a return to workplaces can take place has led to increased stress and anxiety for many people.

Furthermore, remote working has added to employees' isolation from colleagues, work related social activities, and connections. A poll by **RSPH (Royal Society for Public Health)** identified that remote working had a negative impact on some people's mental health. It reported that two-thirds felt less connected with their colleagues, with 34% of respondents being offered support with their mental health from their employer.

3.2 Labour Market – Mental Health and Wellbeing

Health and wellbeing vary depending on geography and socioeconomic influences. Factors that contributed to good physical and mental wellbeing are age, income, environment, social networks, and self-assessed health.

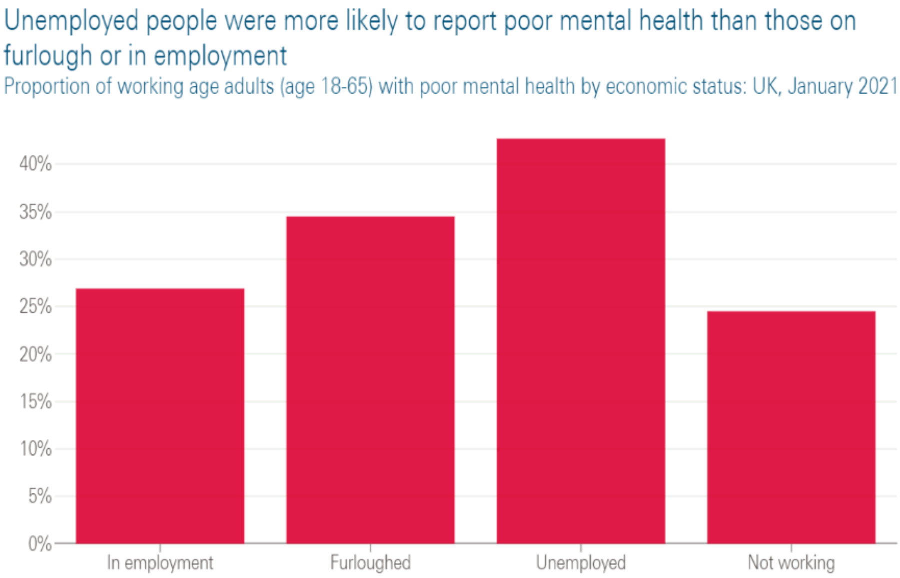
Gender

According to the Health Foundation survey, 68% of women reported to have decreased confidence at work compared to 31% of men since the start of the pandemic. Additionally, 64% of women also reported feeling lonely and isolated, compared to 36% of men. There are ongoing impacts of Covid-19 on women's mental health in the workplace – often in sectors with high risks of exposure to Covid-19 such as the healthcare or education sectors.

Employment

Changes in employment status has also been highlighted as a contributory factor to changes in mental health and wellbeing. Workers becoming unemployed have reported suffering additional stress and reduced self-esteem due to job loss or stigma related to unemployment. Some also experience financial hardship and uncertainty which can further have negative impacts on health. Finally, where unemployed people were required to do extensive paperwork for claims, work capability, and job searches, this was reported as taking a further negative toll on mental health.

There is a link between unemployment and poorer mental health, as the chart shows. The rate of unemployment could increase further at the end of year, after furlough ends, so there could be further mental health impacts on the wider workforce as the pandemic progresses.



Source: Health Foundation, data up to January 2021

Furthermore, reduced working hours or income can be linked with psychological distress, which may point to the growing proportion of poor mental health of both employed and furloughed workers.

SMEs

It is not only employees experiencing poorer mental health as the pandemic has progressed, but also employers, especially small business owners, according to The UK Domain. Data from their recent survey highlighted five out of seven entrepreneurs experienced additional workplace stress in the past year and out of those, a quarter sought support from a professional.

3.3 Industry - Health and Wellbeing

Healthcare sector

There is increased likelihood for front-line service workers, including care workers in the healthcare sector to suffer with their mental health and wellbeing. This has been supported by a study 2,773 healthcare workers (carried out in April 2020) which contained a measure of mental health factors. This reported that nearly 33% of respondents had moderate to severe levels of anxiety and depression, which was higher than reported pre-Covid-19 levels. Furthermore, front-line workers appeared to have poorer mental health than non-front-line healthcare workers.

Manufacturing sector

A recent survey conducted by Westfield Health received 1,600 responses from workers in the manufacturing sector. The result highlighted that 65% of respondents did not feel that their work-life balance is currently 'normal'. Additionally, around two-fifths of respondents want their workplace to be more Covid-19 secure. Employees want to receive more physical health support at work from their employer (at around a quarter) which was higher compared to the average figure for all sectors.

3.4 Support Available for Health and Wellbeing

Support & Resources – Charities and Organisations

Tools and resources are available for employers, especially small business owners, and employees to manage their mental health and wellbeing. NHS Choices and the Mental Health at Work are two examples of online resources available to all.

The diagram below produced by Local Government Association, shows the potential impact of Covid-19 on short, medium, and long-term mental health and wellbeing. This gives an opportunity for councils to work with other local partners, NHS, schools, and employers, to tackle health inequalities for the future.

Local Government Association | Association of Directors of Public Health | Hertfordshire

Immediate mental health impact of COVID-19 across life course

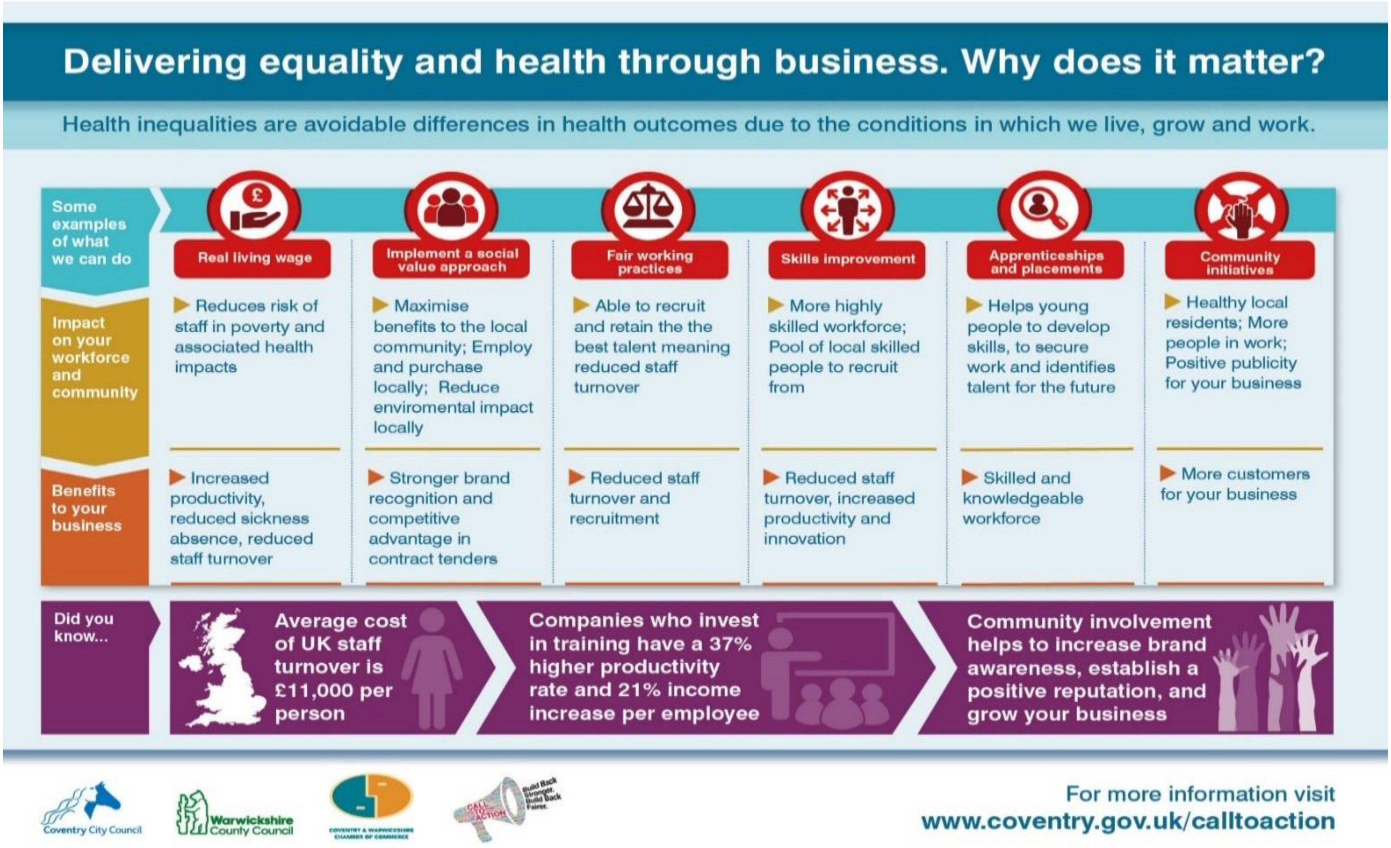
	Pre-term	0-5 years	School years	Young adults	Working age adults	Old age
Key issues to consider	Anxiety about impact of COVID on baby Financial worries Anxiety about delivery and access to care Isolation	Coping with significant changes to routine Isolation from friends Impact of parental stress and coping on child	School progress and exams Boredom Anxiety or depression or other mental health problems Isolation from friends Impact of parental stress Carer stress	Self isolation at university and away from family Carer stress Difficulty accessing usual support networks Job and financial anxiety Relationship stress	Balancing work and home Being out of work Carer stress Anxiety about measures and family or dependents or children Financial worry Isolation	Isolation and disruption of routine Anxiety from being dependent on services Financial worry Fear about impact of COVID if infected Carer stress
Staff/ volunteers	Cumulative load of stress from significant changes. Traumatic incidents. Isolation from work colleagues. Having to manage working from home. Potential bullying from or to others as part of not coping. Frontline staff working under exceptional pressure.					
Loss	Loss of loved ones dying may be particularly severe and grieving disrupted because of inability to do normal grieving rites eg being physically close to dying person, have usual funeral rites, attend funeral etc.					
Specific issues	Impact of delayed diagnoses and treatment (eg chronic conditions,surgery, people living in pain). Suicide and self harm risk for most at risk populations. Members of faith communities may feel disconnected because of the changes to public worship. Domestic abuse may be issues across life course. Drug and alcohol issues. People reliant on foodbanks or on low incomes or self-employed may have additional stress. People with learning disabilities and/or autism will have additional needs which should be considered in detail. Student populations may have particular issues. Impact of delayed diagnoses and treatment (eg chronic conditions, surgery, people living in pain) because of backlogs or people worried about accessing health services. Impact of changes to level of restrictions in local areas.					

Source: Local Government Association

To reduce health inequalities based on this life course approach, individuals decrease cumulative disadvantages that begin in early childhood. However, the diagram also shows that at any age, health and wellbeing can be improved.

Support & Resources – Local Authority

The diagram below is a resource for businesses to identify and take actions recommended to tackle health inequalities.



Source: Call to Action, provided by Coventry City Council

Strategic Reset Principles – CWLEP

CWLEP and local partners in Coventry & Warwickshire aim to minimise the negative economic impacts of Covid-19 on health and wellbeing. The CWLEP Strategic Reset Principles present the way our local economy can work in the future, including through improving people's health and wellbeing. Two of the principles that are relevant for health and wellbeing are as follows:

- Fundamental reshaping of our whole economy - **a reset, not a return to pre Covid-19 norms.**
- It will require a wholesale re-imagination of productivity and embedded approaches to supporting the **mental health of the workforce.**

3.5 Suggestions for Improving Health and Wellbeing

- To encourage workers to return to the workplace, **hybrid work patterns and flexible working practices need to be explored.** Many employees expect their work patterns will not return to pre-Covid-19 norms. The response to the pandemic from employees has shown that they can adapt and implement a remote and flexible working schedule (depending on types and sector for business). These practices could improve the health and wellbeing of the workers as they have an opportunity to socialise with others, but also better support other aspects of their lives.

- Businesses explore and apply a **social value policy/approach** within their business operations.

- Provide training and achieve a wellbeing accreditation (e.g., **Thrive at Work programme run by WMCA**). Thrive at work promotes employee health and wellbeing and focuses on key matters and manager training.

- Signpost to the **Mental Health and Productivity Pilot (MHPP)**. **This is a three-year programme funded by Midlands Engine, until June 2022, led by Coventry University in partnership with University of Warwick,** West Midlands Combined Authority, mental health charity Mind, Public Health England and five other Midlands universities – Birmingham, Derby, Lincoln, Loughborough and Nottingham. **The pilot provides a wide range of support and resources for businesses and employees, run pilot trials, have compiled a range of practical case studies, and completed research studies**.

4. Recommendations

The following recommendations have been derived from analysis of macro-economic and business-level data and intelligence collated from Coventry & Warwickshire stakeholders.

4.1 Short Term

4.1.a
Clarification is needed for businesses due to open at the final stage of the Government's Roadmap (**now no earlier than 19th July**). It should be noted that for seasonal businesses, such as events and weddings, these delays may have a bigger impact than expected, due to the peak-summer timing. Further detail on the steps these businesses need to take in the lead up to 19th July and thereafter is necessary.

In addition, there is a need to continue **developing contingencies should the final step in the roadmap be further delayed due to insufficient progress with reducing Covid-19 cases and hospitalisations, and the roll-out of vaccinations**. There is also a need for a contingency plan should there be another wave of infections, post-lockdown lifting, as we head through the rest of the summer towards the autumn.

4.1.b
Further support is necessary for businesses in relation to EU trading arrangements. Based on feedback from Coventry & Warwickshire businesses through surveys and account management, **it is clear they continue to need specific support and clarity around future trading with the EU.**

Businesses should be encouraged to engage with local organisations, such as Growth Hubs, Chamber of Commerce, and DIT to access support around EU trading.

4.1.c
Local and national campaigns to spread more prompt messaging around the costs and practicalities associated with trading with the EU. This should include up-to-date waiting times at ports/crossings, as well as the required taxes/tariffs that have been levied to businesses and customers. The following topics need immediate attention:

- IP
- Data regulations
- Upskilling the workforce in customs declarations/processes.
- Supply chains/raw materials

4.1.d
With the current lockdown restrictions continuing further into 2021 there remains the **potential for increasing unemployment later in the summer** - with further rounds of redundancies possible as the employment support schemes finally ends.

Partners in the region can support enhanced promotion of the Employment Solutions portal, supported by CWLEP and other local partners, to promote current and future job opportunities to both local jobseekers and employers.

Visit cwemploymentsolutions.co.uk/

The uncertainty around furlough ending, and further potential job losses, adds to the anxiety being felt by some groups of employees across the labour market. **Appropriate resources should be made available to minimise the impact on employees' mental health.**

4.1.e

A focus on **training and reskilling for younger workers in particular will be needed short-term**, to help reduce unemployment levels post-pandemic.

Gig workers of all ages may also need support reskilling in the short term, as for some it is unlikely the demand for their services will consistently reach pre-pandemic levels once restrictions are lifted.

Particular investment around digital skills should be encouraged, given the large number of businesses still without an active internet presence, during a time in which businesses will need to continue operating virtually in some capacity for the foreseeable future.

4.1.f

We have a clear opportunity during the late spring and throughout the summer 2021 to restart the visitor economy, especially with the commencement of the City of Culture programme from mid-May. **A clear strategy on how to navigate the potential barriers, such as the current international travel restrictions, will ensure that the move towards our local economic recovery is not unnecessarily stifled.**

A locally focused consumer confidence campaign could help to boost tourism in the CW economy, as we move out of this phase of the pandemic.

4.1.g

With details now appearing around the new **Levelling-Up Fund and the Community Renewal Fund, local stakeholders in Coventry & Warwickshire should establish a compelling and exciting range of projects** for submission to Government so we get the best we can for Coventry & Warwickshire.

4.1.h

There is an urgent need to **tackle the gap in funding for those ineligible for government financial support**, such as those recently self-employed.

4.1.i

Regardless of whether employees continue working from home or return to a workplace environment, **there is a likelihood we will see heightened levels of both anxiety or isolation across the workforce - employers, business leaders and stakeholders should be aware of this changing situation as the economy re-opens further**. Attention should be drawn to existing resources to help workers with their mental health.

For example, the FSB have a Wellbeing Hub , Mind have set up resources to help employers, and the CIPD's article on Supporting Mental Health in the Workplace and the Midlands Health and Productivity Pilot add to the accessible resources.

4.1.j

HR professionals are encouraged to take part in research underway by the Midlands Engine Mental Health and Productivity Pilot to share their thoughts on how Covid-19 has affected long-term sick leave in workplaces, and to help inform future policy.

4.2 Medium Term

Added initiatives that would help the local economy and the labour market in the medium term could be led by government and include:

4.2.a

Rollout of broadband - inconsistencies remain across Coventry & Warwickshire and **investment in skills** to improve computing and digital skills within the CW labour market will be critical to help employees and consumers, as well as businesses, adapt to modern technologies to expand new and existing trading relationships.

4.2.b

Continue **vaccine rollout and enhancing facilities for increased regular workplace and community-based testing**, to sustain safe working environments for businesses in the region.

4.2.c

Better promotion of local, regional, national, and international initiatives and opportunities to expand trading relationships within the UK and helping to better utilise UK suppliers, in addition to highlighting the benefits of expanding markets globally. Services such as Coventry & Warwickshire's FinditinCW can help businesses to find new suppliers locally and build relationships.

4.2.d

Work alongside banks/lenders and other financial and business support institutions to explore ways to relieve the volume of debt in all sectors. This will ensure diversification, investment, and growth are not held back for longer than necessary.

4.2.e
Greater clarity is needed on the future funding for business support infrastructure following the end of the transition period with the EU.

In addition, firmer commitment to business support funding, not only for Growth Hubs but the wider local support landscape, would also allow for more effective planning for the long-term business support infrastructure in the region.

4.2.f
Effectively monitor and evaluate the amount of existing and future employment land, to ensure that there is a range of stock available for all sizes and sectors, to help with the economic recovery from Covid-19.

4.2.g
Clarity is needed on the **UK Shared Prosperity Fund and its potential impact on Coventry & Warwickshire.** Local partners and stakeholders should ensure that Coventry & Warwickshire benefits from the fund to the best it can, as the details become known.

4.2.h
Develop innovative ways of utilising empty retail and larger commercial property space particularly in town centres, as there is a shift in the availability of premises due to the restrictions and challenges that the sector has faced.

4.2.i
Given the likelihood of some form of continued homeworking for many businesses in the sub-region, **an increased focus on cyber-security should be encouraged.**

4.2.j
Further to 5.2.i, as a result of continued homeworking, employers must look to conduct **research into the working set-up/equipment/environment of their employees working from home, in an attempt to minimise long-term implications** on their employees' health and wellbeing.

Looking ahead, **the provision of the equipment necessary to work from home will become an added expense for employers to consider.**

4.3 Long Term

Businesses and the economy would benefit if both central government and local stakeholders consider and support these long-term recommendations:

4.3.a
Conduct market research to explore the best ways to further address the issues businesses are facing following Covid-19 and post EU Transition period.

4.3.b
Drive and support initiatives to upskill the workforce, to promote diversification and boost the labour market in many sectors as the reset of the local economy occurs, including the **promotion of 'good work' opportunities and sustainable growth which reduces economic inequalities**.

A focus on training and reskilling for all age groups will be needed long-term, to help reduce unemployment levels post-pandemic.

4.3.c
Create and implement a clear and compelling presence for 'Coventry & Warwickshire' to showcase the offer from our local area, to be used to attract future inward investment to the sub-region and deliver against our Strategic Reset Strategy.

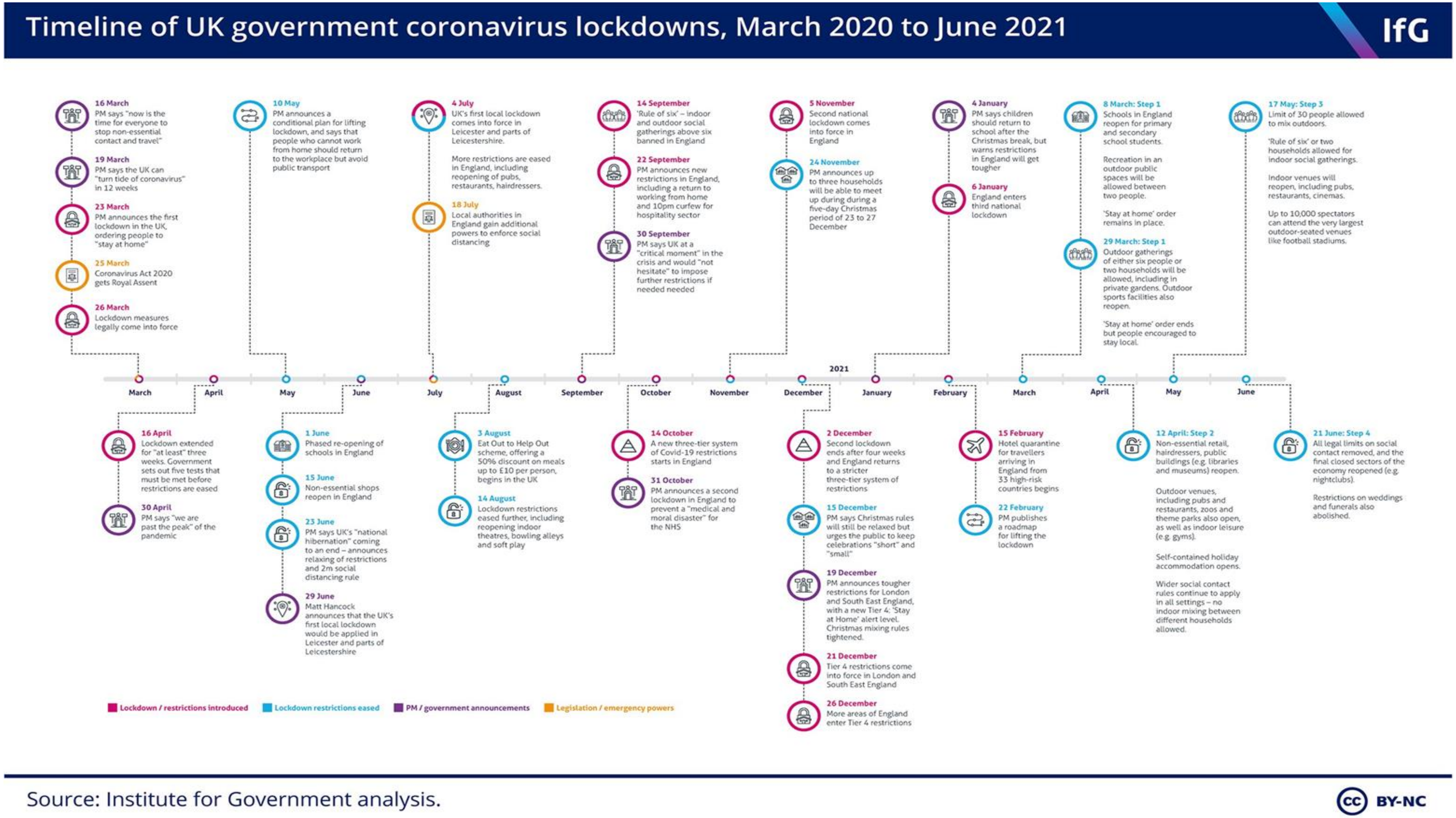
Building a strong and consistent branding and messaging style will help to strengthen the presence for Coventry & Warwickshire.

4.3.d
Recognise and plan for a range of opportunities which will help to address market need for employment space, ensuring that there is a good supply of space available, for all sectors and all sizes in the economy throughout Coventry & Warwickshire. This will help the recovery from Covid-19 and allow business start-up, expansions, and inward investment.

4.3.e
The New Economics Foundation (NEF) recommends **improving the provision of tailored necessary advice services for self-employed workers**, taking some of the burden off existing general advice services over the medium to long term.

4.3.f
To further help businesses survive and grow, **further investment in innovation is required**. It is apparent from the last 12-18 months the **positive effect that diversification can have on a business that might otherwise have struggled**, therefore, this should be encouraged where possible.

5. Covid-19 Timeline - Announcements, Restrictions & Lockdowns



Source: Lifting lockdown in 2021: the next phase of the coronavirus strategy - Institute for Government - February 2021