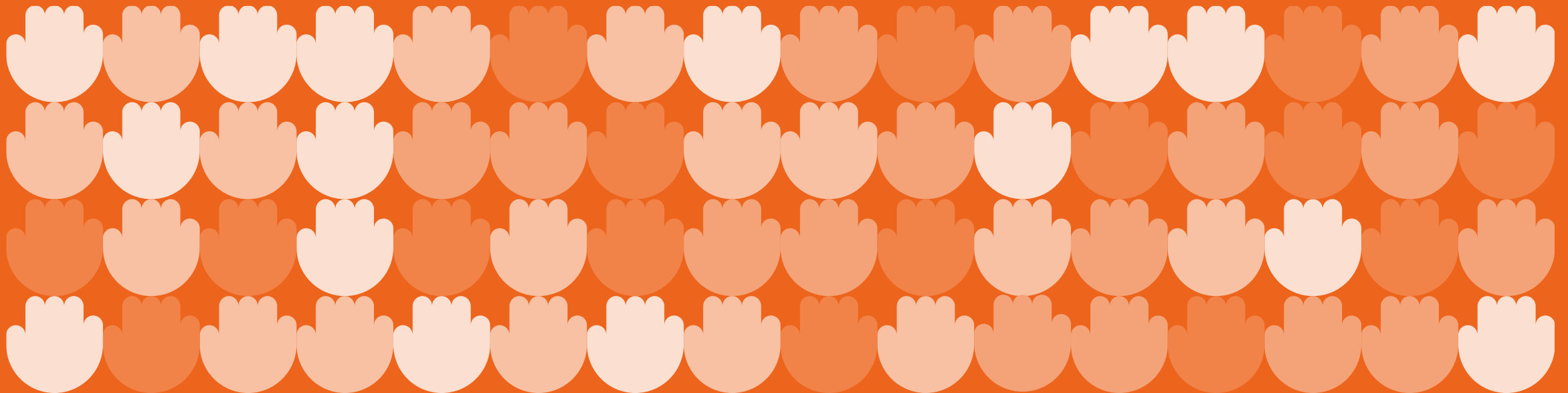




# GM Labour Market Insights Pack

Autumn 2024



# Purpose of Pack

This pack collates Labour Market Information and Sector Insights from various sources, which is reviewed and corroborated by the GM Labour Market Insights Unit.

The purpose of the pack is:

- To provide a unified evidence base for GM's devolved policy and programme development.
- To inform the skills and employment ecosystem in provision development, adaptation, and refinement.
- To supplement existing insights and data sources which are signposted for deeper research.

1. [GM Labour Market & Skills Intelligence Pack](#)
  2. [Purpose of Pack](#)
  3. [Summary & Key Insights](#)
  4. [Summary & Key Insights](#)
  5. [Quarterly Economic Survey](#)
  6. [Business Survey](#)
  7. [Inward Investment Landscape](#)
  8. [Greater Manchester Workforce](#)
  9. [North West Unemployment](#)
  10. [North West Economic Inactivity](#)
  11. [GM Vacancy Market](#)
  12. [Sector Insights – Construction](#)
  13. [Sector Insights – Transport](#)
  14. [Sector Insights – Logistics](#)
  15. [Sector Insights – Creative, Culture, and Sport](#)
  16. [Sector Insights – Retail and Hospitality](#)
  17. [Sector Insights – Manufacturing](#)
  18. [Sector Insights – Financial, Business, and Professional Services](#)
  19. [Sector Insights – Digital/Tech](#)
  20. [Sector Insights – Health and Social Care](#)
  21. [Sector Insights – Education](#)
  22. [Sector Insights – Emergency Services](#)
  23. [Sector Insights – Green Economy](#)
  24. [GM in-demand occupations](#)
  25. [GM in-demand common skills](#)
  26. [GM in-demand specialist skills](#)
-

# Summary Findings

## Economic Headlines

- **Inflation in the UK remained at 2.2%** in the 12 months to August 2024. The Bank of England held interest rates at 5%.
- **Real pay increased over the last 3 months**, but the scale of pay rises appear to be dropping in most parts of the economy compared to the high levels of pay increases in 2023.
- **UK GDP was 1.1% higher in the 3 months to July 2024 than in the same period a year earlier**, but growth in June and July was flat.
- For the latest period (between May – July 2024) the unemployment rate rose slightly but **remains at 4.5% in the North West of England** (compared with 4.4% in the UK) – representing 167,671 people.
- The most recent quarterly data suggested **around 75,000 people in Greater Manchester were unemployed**.
- **Long-term decline in job postings has stabilised** at higher levels than were seen pre-pandemic in 2019.

### Key upcoming events:

- 30<sup>th</sup> October 2024 - Autumn Budget
- Late 2024 – Labour Market Whitepaper – *“Plan to Get Britain Working”*
- Late 2024 – Devolution Whitepaper
- Late 2024 – Early 2025 – Launch of Skills England

### Further reading:

- [GM Chamber of Commerce](#) – Quarterly Economic Survey
- [Business Growth Hub](#) – GC Business Survey
- [Edge Foundation](#) – *“Preserving Apprenticeships for Young People Under a Growth and Skills Levy”*
- [Institute for Employment Studies](#) – *“Working for the Future”*

# Key Insights

## General:

- GM's economy **remains healthier than the wider UK.**
- Business **confidence is mixed – one index dropped slightly while another remains stable.**
  - Manufacturing & Engineering is driving much of the confidence growth due to **high orders and exports.**
  - Retail & Hospitality reported lower confidence due to **depressed expectations around consumer spending.**
- **Rising costs remain the top concern** of many GM businesses.
- GM remains competitive as the **leading city region for overseas investment outside London.**
- **Support for planning & innovation** remained the top reported need for businesses.
- Sectors reliant on public spending have seen a boost with the **new government reaching pay deals with some workers.**

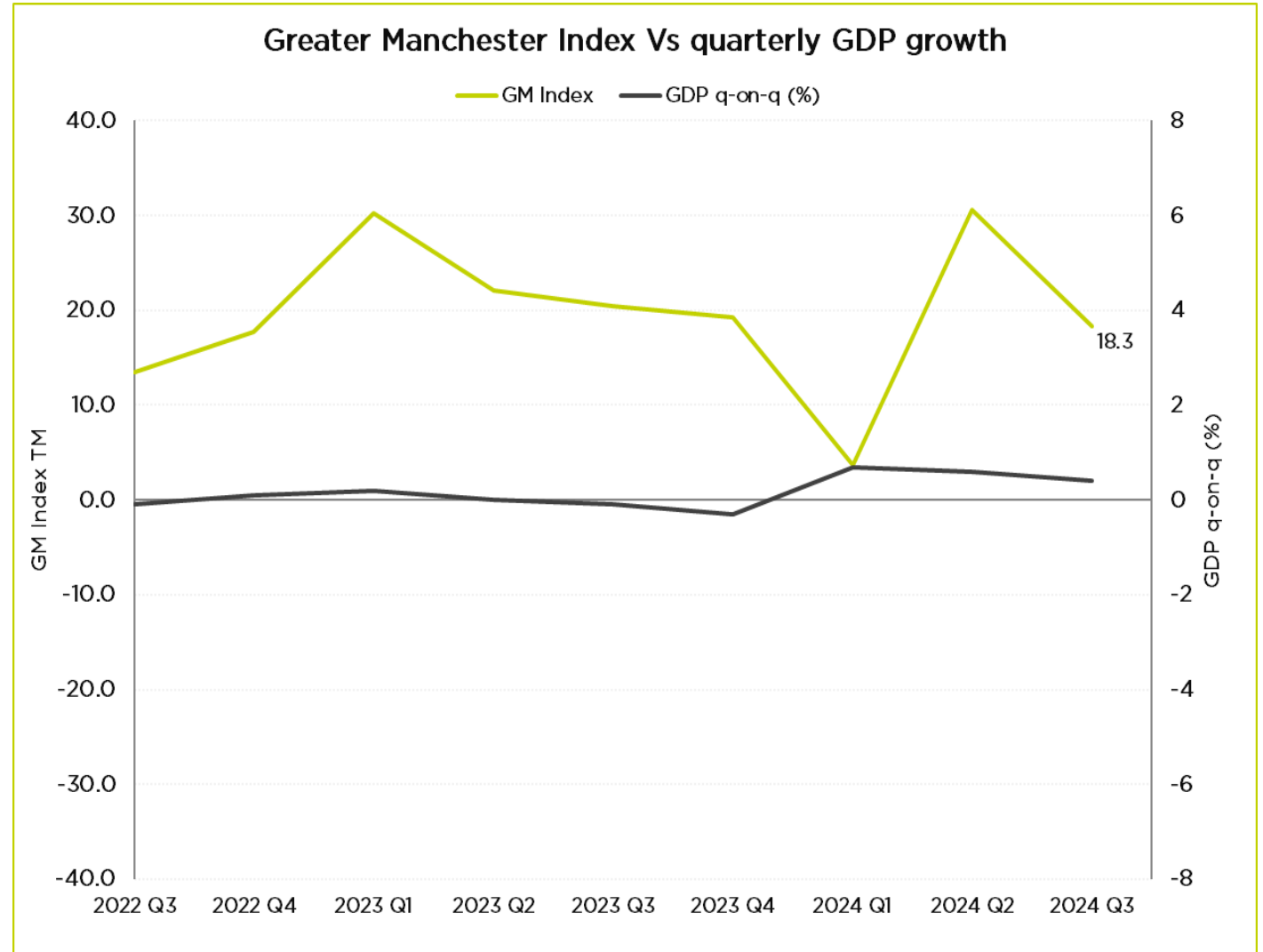
## Labour Market:

- **Unemployment levels and job vacancy levels are levelling out** – reaching a balance of supply and demand for workers.
- More housebuilding, investment infrastructure may cause the **construction sector to face a very tight labour market** with new government policy taking effect.
- **Demand for digital occupations in the GM Labour Market remains relatively shaky** – though demand for digital skills across other jobs remains higher than many comparable areas.
- **Economic inactivity remains a critical issue nationwide** – around 165,000 more North West residents are economically inactive since the start of 2020.
- **Job quality is becoming an increasingly important part of the picture** – the upcoming Workers Rights Bill may shake up the labour market in some sectors.

# Quarterly Economic Survey

The Quarterly Economic Survey is run by the GM Chamber of Commerce and includes results from hundreds of businesses across the city region. 2024 Q3 findings:

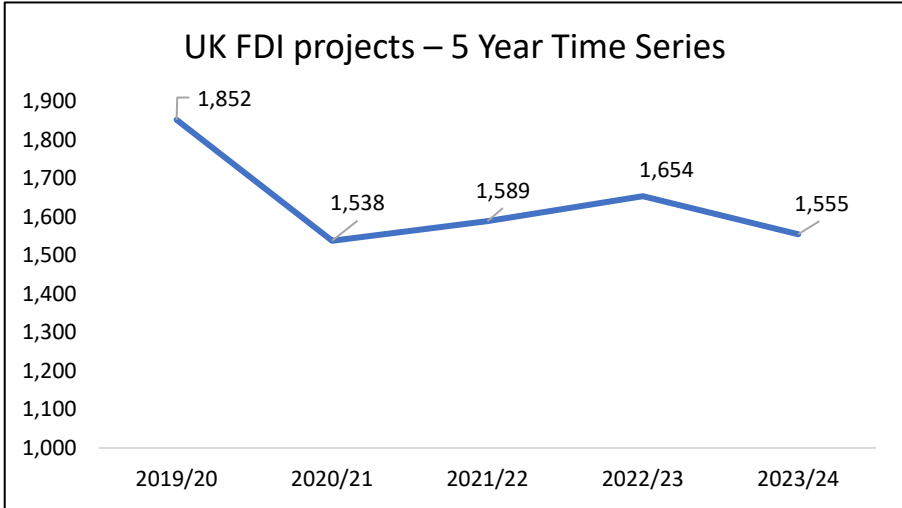
- **GM Index in Q3 2024: 18.3**
- Noticeable slowdown relative to Q2 (previous: 30.6).
- Monthly GDP growth was 0% in June and July 2024.
- **PMI indices for August show monthly improvement**
  - Services **53.7**
  - Manufacturing **52.5**
  - Construction **53.6**
- **Consumer confidence dipped in September after 6 months of improvement.**
- A lot of variability in the global economy.
- Demand for both Domestic and Export sales fell slightly in the Q3 results.



# Business Survey

GROWTH, BUSINESS CONFIDENCE AND INVESTMENT	MAIN IMPACTS AND FINANCIAL RESILIENCE	FUTURE BUSINESS CHALLENGES AND SUPPORT NEEDS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>GC Business Confidence Index (GC-BCI)</b> is a ranking of how confident businesses are on their growth prospects for the year ahead.</li> <li>➤ The GC-BCI currently stands at 7.3 out of 10, same as previous quarter (7.3), indicating stable confidence throughout Autumn 2024. GC-BCI is higher than average for all organisations within Engineering, Construction, Green-Tech, and Other Services. It is lowest in Health and Social Care, Retail, Education, DCTs, Hospitality, and Logistics.</li> <li>➤ <b>Sales and profits.</b> 17% (vs 19%) of firms reported that they experienced an increase in sales in the latest quarter, and 66% expect profits to increase in the year ahead (vs 64%). 3% expect profits to decrease (vs 2%). The main sectors expecting an increase in future sales were Engineering, Manufacturing, Education and Green-Tech – lowest in Logistics, Health and social care and Hospitality &amp; Tourism.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Main impacts.</b> The main impacts of the current economic climate are rising costs 23% (vs 26%), cashflow issues 16% (vs 18%), decreased sales 11% (vs 12%), and minor supply chain issues 8% (vs 11%).</li> <li>➤ <b>Cash reserves.</b> 61% (vs 59%) of firms report that they have cash reserves to last over 6 months. 39% (vs 33%) of SMEs with 10-49 employees have cash reserves to last over 6 months. Reserves were highest in DCTs, Manufacturing, BFPS and Health and social Care.</li> <li>➤ <b>Analysis of insolvency risk for August 2024</b> shows a rise in the total number of firms in GM and small fall in the UK count - with 10 or more employees) and 1-3 red flags. Data for GM: 828 (714 last month) firms in have 1 flag - some insolvency risk; 242 (221 last month) have 2 flags - medium risk; 49 (34 last month) 3 flags - insolvency imminent. The GM 1-3 flags total increased 1.0% month-on-month in July, 1.3% nationally.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>The main pressing challenges facing business in the immediate future</b> are access to new domestic sales opportunities 52% (vs 54%) - highest in DCTs, Manufacturing, BFPS, Green-tech and Health and Social care.</li> <li>➤ <b>The next most popular challenges</b> were developing new products / services 39% (vs 37%), developing business models 35% (vs 36%), managing business finances 30% (vs 31%), and addressing workforce development/skills reported by 21% of firms (vs 23%).</li> <li>➤ <b>The main areas of future support</b> are innovation 38% (vs 39%), business planning 37% (vs 39%) and Marketing 33% (vs 35%), WFD is a priority for 26% of firms (vs 29%), financial advice 26% (vs 28%), and 14% (vs 16%) required help in addressing their environmental impact.</li> </ul>
RECRUITMENT, EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS ISSUES	RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION	SOCIAL VALUE AND GOOD EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Recruitment.</b> 22% (vs 24% previously) of firms surveyed are currently recruiting new staff. DCTs, Manufacturing, BFPS and Health and Social care were more likely to be recruiting, least likely in Retail, Engineering.</li> <li>➤ <b>Workforce skill gaps.</b> 39% (vs 39%) of firms said that their existing workforce skills are at the right level to meet business plan aims.</li> <li>➤ Notably, small SMEs, including those with 10-49 employees, were mostly likely to identify that they had skills gaps.</li> <li>➤ <b>The main technical skill gaps</b> reported relate to specialist technical skills 29% (vs 30%), advanced specialist IT skills 12% (vs 11%), knowledge of products / services 11% (vs 14%), solving complex problems 9% (vs 11%) and adapting to new materials 8% (vs 9%).</li> <li>➤ <b>The main people and practical / personal skill gaps</b> reported are sales 20% (vs 19%), motivating staff 15% (vs 17%), and customer handling skills affecting 14% (vs 12%) of firms.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Innovation activity.</b> 41% (vs 39%) have invested in new / significantly improved services, 24% (vs 25%) in R&amp;D, 22% (vs 23%) introduced new / significantly improved goods, 19% (vs 20%) new business practices, and 14% (vs 15%) have invested in new production methods.</li> <li>➤ <b>Digital innovation.</b> 11% (vs 13%) have invested in acquisition of digital products, and 4% (vs 6%) made investments in the acquisition of advanced machinery or equipment - specifically for innovation.</li> <li>➤ <b>The main barriers to growing innovation.</b> 10% (vs 11%) said availability of finance, 9% (vs 10%) said that market is dominated by established businesses, 8% (vs 7%) said cost of finance, and 6% (vs 6%) said direct innovation costs are too high.</li> <li>➤ <b>Digital Transformation.</b> 16% (vs 15%) firms are looking to invest in Digital Transformation, higher in DCTs, Prof. Services, Manufacturing.</li> </ul>	<p>Businesses are asked the extent to which they have, or would consider implementing, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Guarantee at least 16 hours of work per week.</b> 58% (vs 56%) said this currently applies, 22% (vs 23%) likely to consider in future.</li> <li>➤ <b>Paying the Real Living Wage.</b> 56% of firms (vs 55%) paid the RLW, while 24% (vs 27%) indicated they are likely to implement it in the future.</li> <li>➤ <b>Offer flexible working options to employees.</b> 48% (vs 45%) said this currently applies, and 28% (vs 32%) said likely to include in future.</li> <li>➤ <b>Involve employees in the overall direction of the business.</b> 37% (vs 36%) said this currently applies. 34% (vs 34%) said likely to do in future.</li> <li>➤ <b>Looking to increase the diversity of the workforce.</b> 43% of firms said this currently applies (vs 41%), while 31% indicated they are likely to include this in the future (vs 35%).</li> </ul>

# Inward Investment Landscape

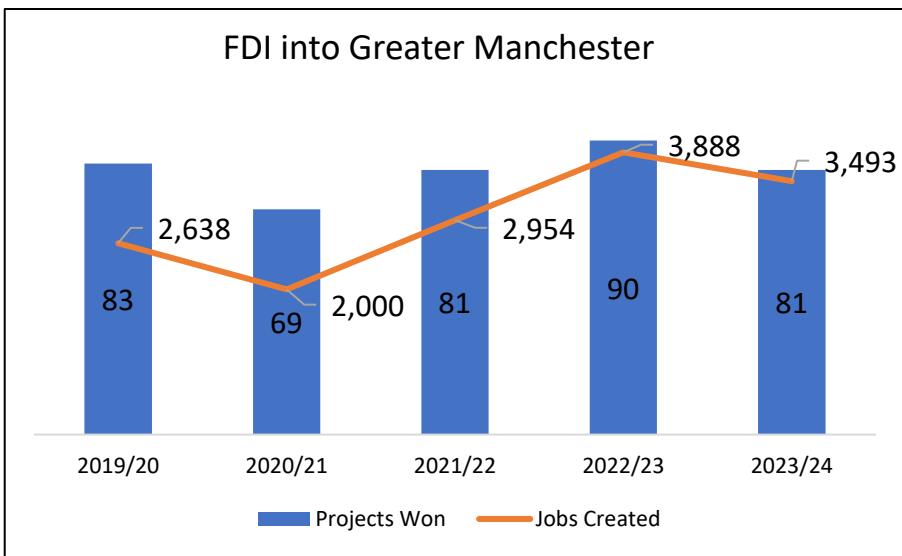


Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into the UK decreased in 2023/24 to its **lowest level since the height of the pandemic**.

Declines were particularly notable across the software/computer services and financial services sectors. Some sectors, such as renewables and automotive, saw increases.

There was a sharp decline in FDI from the US, India, Germany and Italy – all of which have historically been significant source markets for FDI into the UK. FDI from France and Spain increased.

Following the national trend, FDI into Greater Manchester also declined. Despite this, **Greater Manchester remained the leading city region outside of London for attracting FDI investment**.



The table below shows the role split of jobs created from MIDAS supported inward investment projects since April 2023.

Planned job creations over 3-year post-landing Period Greenfield Inward Investment into GM Since April 2023	
Role	Total
Admin/ Customer Services	764
Engineering	647
Tech/ Digital	535
Professional Services (e.g. Lawyers, Bankers, Consultants)	510
Manufacturing/ Construction	307
Business Development/ Marketing	196
Internal Supply Chain/ Logistics	196
Scientific/ Research/ Product Development	187
Other	114
Internal Finance/ Accounting	84
Executive Leadership	51
Creative/ Media	33
Strategy/ Policy	18

*Source: Feedback from MIDAS supported inward investors. It was not possible to gather feedback from every investor.*

## Workforce Headlines

- Greater Manchester’s **workforce is deep and broad**, and shares similarities with many other city regions – it shrank slightly in the latest survey in June 2024.
- While many city regions have similar workforce profiles, **GM has a particularly high concentration of Financial & Professional Services workers** (19.3% vs. 16.5% in West Midlands, 16.6% in Liverpool).
- The Public Sector **employs around 1 in 3 workers in GM**, across health, education, emergency services, and local government. This is slightly above average when compared with other regions.
- Since the start of the pandemic in March 2020, the **number of the working age population claiming unemployment related benefits is up by around 38%** (to approx. 96,000 people).
- Around **1 in 5 workers in GM are employed on a part-time basis** – but this varies hugely by sector, locality, age, and gender.
- In recent years there has been a trend towards more secure employment.** This is reflected in the proportion of self-employed workers – which in GM has dropped from 13.6% to 10.4% in the past 10 years.

## GM Workforce Overview

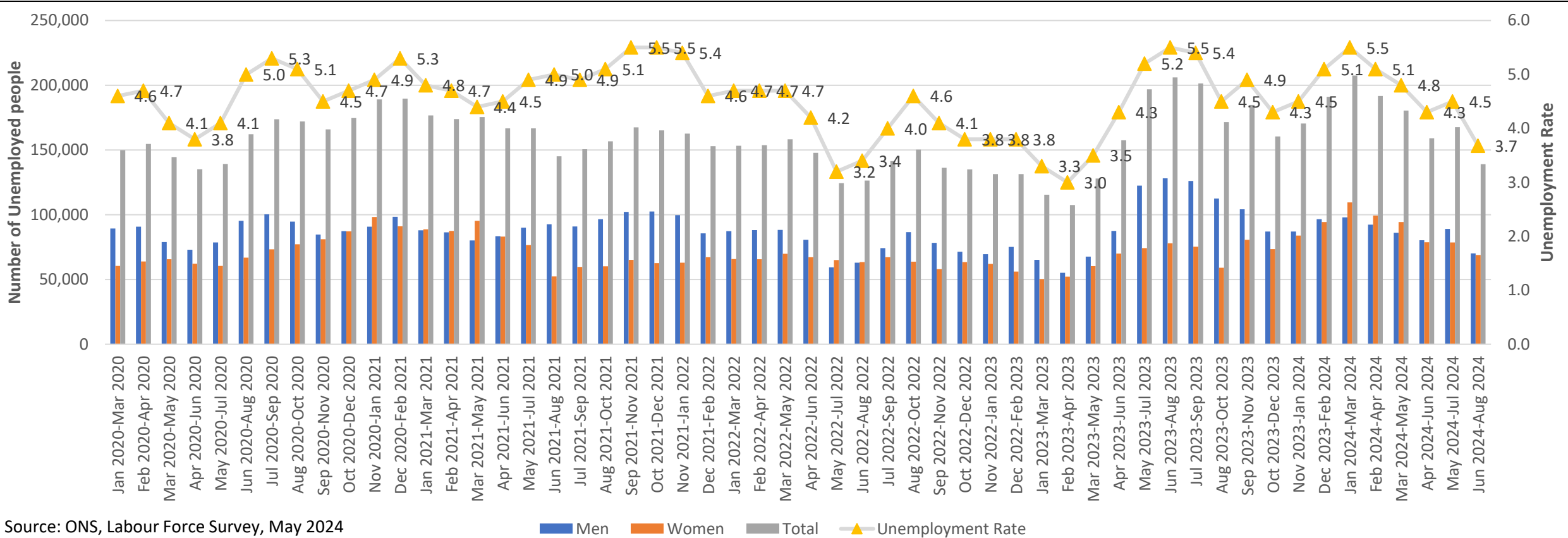
Industry (SIC)	Approx. Number of Jobs	Proportion (%) of jobs
A: Agriculture & fishing	2,200	0.2%
B,D,E: Energy & water	14,700	1.2%
C: Manufacturing	92,600	7.3%
F: Construction	75,200	5.9%
G-I: Wholesale, retail, hotels & restaurants	203,500	16.1%
H-J: Transport, Digital & Communication	136,800	10.8%
K-N: Banking, finance & insurance etc.	244,200	19.3%
O-Q: Public admin, education & health	418,200	33.0%
R-U: Arts, entertainment, recreation & other services	79,900	6.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,267,300</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: Annual Population Survey, ONS, June 2024



# Unemployment

Unemployment, number and rate (16+), North West (NW), Jan-Mar 2020 – Jun-Aug 2024



Source: ONS, Labour Force Survey, May 2024

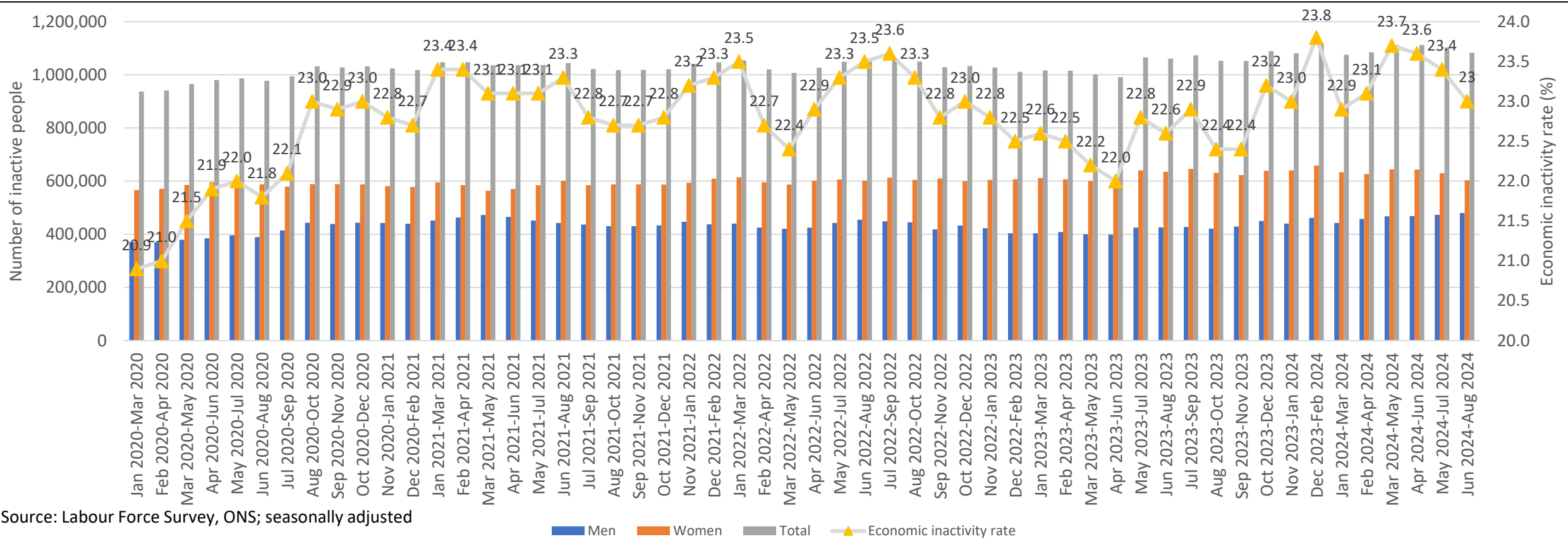
For the latest period (between Jun-Aug 2024) the unemployment rate dropped to 3.7% in the North West of England (compared with 4.0% in the UK) – representing approx. 139,000 people. The most recent quarterly data suggested around 75,000 people in Greater Manchester were unemployed.

Revised data from the Labour Force Survey suggests that in the North West, unemployment for men has generally dropped from recent peaks in mid-2023 and early 2024 (from roughly 130,000 to around 90,000). In GM, the split is roughly even, with approximately 37,000 men and 38,000 women unemployed.

Unemployment in the North West is now slightly lower than pre-pandemic – by around 10,000 people.

# Economic Inactivity

Economic inactivity number and rate (16-64), North West (NW), Jan-Mar 2020 – Jun-Aug 2024



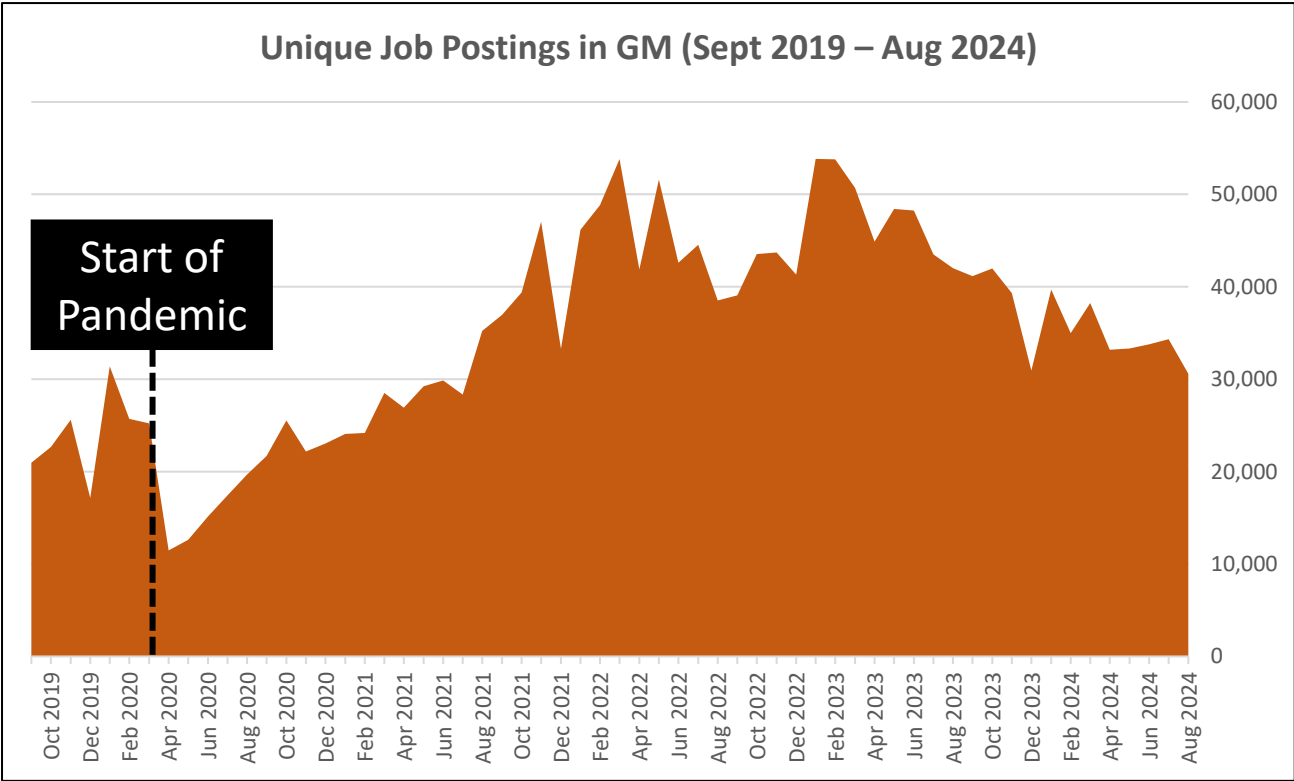
Source: Labour Force Survey, ONS; seasonally adjusted

Economic inactivity refers to people who are not participating in the labour market: they are neither working nor seeking employment. The reasons for inactivity are varied, but the high levels are being driven by long-term ill-health among lower-paid workers and early retirement among higher-paid workers.

The revised Labour Force Survey Data suggested that Economic Inactivity in the North West had continued to tick down over the latest period (Jun – Aug 2024) to 23% - representing 1.08m of the 4.71m aged between 16 – 64. Around 454,000 of GM’s 1.8m 16-64 population are economically inactive – roughly a quarter.

There are around 146,000 more economically inactive people in the North West than before the pandemic – with around 109,000 more men and 37,000 women.

# GM Vacancy Market



- Long-term decline in job postings stabilised in the 3 months to August 2024 – remaining slightly above pre-pandemic levels.
- Declining demand for digital occupations, while some professional occupations (Lawyer / Accountant) are in rising demand.
- Teaching Assistant remains the top advertised role over the 12 months to August 2024.

Source: Lightcast Data

# Sector Insights – Construction

## Sector Intelligence

**New targets for housing mean that Greater Manchester will be aiming to build 75,000 homes over the next 5 years** – pushing housebuilding to the highest levels for 50 years.

**The GM Mayor’s manifesto in May 2024 included various initiatives to support the sector.** It committed to 10,000 affordable Net Zero homes being built over the next 4 years, with 1,000 of these being built in each borough of Greater Manchester.

**A steady increase in future demand for jobs is expected. Estimates are for 11,000 new jobs in GM by 2027** - in ‘traditional’ skill sets and trades as well as new and emerging methods and technologies around low carbon construction and a significant uplift required around the retrofit of existing properties. Most employers are not yet planning any Net zero training - overall, only 11% expect they will start doing more.

**Workers who gained skills cards through employer recommendation (grandfather rights) have until the end of 2024 to become formally qualified.** Some employers report that removing accreditation from so many workers is a high-risk move when the industry already needs to recruit so many extra workers.

**Apprenticeships well-respected as a path into the sector, but entry level routes have declined.** The availability or locality of training providers are the main barriers for employers, as well as more employers finding there isn’t a standard suitable for their needs. There also continues to be delays and poor communication on End Point Assessments across many sectors.

**Transport infrastructure expansion and development has been another area bolstering the construction sector.** Infrastructure’s profile will remain high as the new government aim to invest more in low carbon infrastructure. This is a challenge but also a great sector opportunity for structural and electrical engineers with the technical expertise to navigate and innovate new materials and solutions.

## In-demand Occupations

Manchester City Centre, Bolton, Stockport and Salford have the highest number of Construction vacancies. Construction ongoing and planned within a mile of the city centre is significant.

Main roles in GM (Jul – Sept 24):

- Estimator / Quantity Surveyor (921)
- Construction Site Manager (747)
- Electrician (497)
- Surveyor (449)
- Civil Engineer (446)

## Skills Requirements

Entry level roles have low requirements (usually H&S cert or CSCS card) but roles are generally poorly paid, with fewer development routes. Progression is often **linked to ongoing CPD to learn new trades or equipment**, additional “cards” and certifications, including plant machinery licences, installer safety certifications and additional site H&S certs.

In-demand skills include:

- Electrical engineering
- Structural fabrication and steel erection
- Construction process/project management
- Site engineering, quantity surveying, retrofitting.
- Digitalisation

# Sector Insights – Transport

## Sector Intelligence

**Skills and labour shortages pose a significant challenge for the rail industry.** The National Skills Academy for Rail expects that an additional 153,000 people will be needed in the industry between 2023 and 2030. The next Network Rail “Contract Period” starts in April 2024, which will bring some new contractors into the sector to work on infrastructure.

**Some estimates state that 5,000 apprentices per annum will be needed to close the skills gap, effectively doubling the current average level. The average age of workers in transport is around 45 years old.** Attrition and replacement demand are significant factors in all areas of the sector – keeping qualified staff is particularly difficult, and historically there has been a lot of competition between operators. Internal offer on development and training in most employers is good, but poorly publicised.

**Rail businesses face challenges with apprenticeships, especially concerns about not having enough work to employ apprentices for their whole programme. Flexi Job apprenticeship agencies** can address these industry concerns by recruiting and employing apprentices on behalf of the employer.

The Mayor’s manifesto upon re-election included commitments to **developing plans for extending the Metrolink network, operated by KeolisAmey, to Stockport, Middleton, Heywood and Atom Valley in the North East of GM.**

**Continued expansion of the Bus and Tram Bee Network will undoubtedly create new jobs and provide multiple upskilling opportunities** for GM residents but may place further strain on a sector of ageing workforce.

**Manchester Airport continues to recover from the pandemic – August 2024 was the airport’s busiest ever month, with 3.4m passengers travelling.** The number of flights was up 11% from a year earlier, largely driven by more demand for international travel.

## In-demand Occupations

Roles are concentrated in Manchester city centre, with employers in other areas like Stockport, Bolton, and Oldham advertising a relatively high number of vacancies.

Main roles in GM (Jul – Sept 24):

- Automotive Service Technician / Mechanic (506)
- Heavy Equipment Mechanic (147)
- Transportation Supervisor (140)
- Van / Taxi / Shuttle Driver (138)
- Transport Planner (90)

## Skills Requirements

Particularly in project offices, transport planning roles, and engineering & other technical roles. Often lower numbers of applications and limited resource. Customer-facing roles are often difficult to recruit to – not many understand the reality of the role.

These deficits are creating premiums for skills – for Electrification 12% and for Signalling 10%, evidenced through increased salary demands.

In-demand skills include:

- Groundworking
- Steel-fixing and metal-workers
- Driving and operation
- Project Management
- Electrical engineering
- Communication Network specialists

# Sector Insights – Logistics

## Sector Intelligence

Mid-2024 saw continued economic headwinds and a downturn in demand for goods which has slowed logistics slightly. **Vacancies have largely returned to pre-pandemic levels but do remain above those of the rest of the economy.** Shortages have persisted in the sector for several roles – particularly maintenance and technical roles.

**The transition to net zero is well underway across the logistics sector, with operators focussed on developing plans and embracing new technologies to reduce their emissions today and in the long-term.** This is demonstrated by the uptake of battery electric vans and trials of zero tailpipe emission HGVs, the adoption of low carbon fuels across all modes of logistics transport and industry support of innovative technology development to achieve net zero transport emissions.

**GM continues to see inward investment and development of logistics sites, particularly around the airport and motorway connections in the North East and West of the region.** DB Schenker are developing an £11m 2.3-acre site near the airport, and a joint venture of Chancerygate and Hines are developing a £39m 7.5-acre site in Oldham. Both will bring new jobs and opportunities to the area.

Logistics unlocks many career opportunities, with **roles ranging from drivers and mechanics to robotics and technology developers.** Entry level roles remain accessible for those without a university degree, but still offer highly competitive salaries and some of the best opportunities for progression.

**Innovation and emerging technologies are shaping the future of logistics through changing customer requirements, rapid digital transformation, and automation.** Automated systems can also help to improve safety and accuracy in the handling of goods and reduce the cost of logistics, improving competitive edge.

**Online shopping trends remain high,** driving demand for logistics and “reverse logistics” where goods are returned to the seller – many online retailers offer this at no cost.

## In-demand Occupations

Businesses also report a high demand for Mechanics, Transport Planners, Logistics Administrators, Transport Managers and Transport Co-ordinators. The data shows that there is consistent high demand and skills shortages in the infrastructure around driving & transport operation roles themselves.

Main roles in GM (Jul – Sept 24):

- HGV Truck Driver (1,027)
- Labourer / Warehouse Worker (809)
- Sales Delivery Driver (385)
- Forklift / Pallet Jack Operator (352)
- Light Truck Delivery Driver (294)

## Skills Requirements

- Entry Level recruitment requires very few qualifications, but numerical and problem-solving skills are often essential.
- Future Skills in Logistics covering automation and drone operation.
- Back Office, digitisation and automation in warehousing, sales, customer service – internal and external.
- Leadership and Management – Team management/ motivating staff.

In-demand skills include:

- Digital Warehousing / Reverse Logistics.
- Transport planning / Fleet Management.
- Warehousing & Supply Chain management
- Software Skills
- Forklift truck operation
- Mechanics – Technicians that can operate on electric and alternatively fuelled vehicles.

## Sector Intelligence

**The workforce in Culture, Creative, and Sport workplaces is younger than most, with many staff university-educated.** Workers are more likely to be self-employed than the UK average. Roughly a third of employers report skills gaps amongst staff and challenges recruiting the skills they need from existing talent pool.

**Poor perceptions of the sector create challenges in attracting candidates;** the sector is known for unsociable hours, low pay, and demanding workloads. Due to the nature of the work, arts and culture generates a substantial number of freelance opportunities across a range of artistic, creative, and technical roles.

**Coop Live launched in May 2024, becoming the largest indoor arena in Europe, with a capacity of 23,500.** The £400m venue featured Elbow as the opening act, who performed after a delayed opening.

**In March, Bolton was named GM's Town of Culture for 2024,** bringing a £50,000 programme of taster activities for residents, a grants programme to support freelancers, and a Bolton Gala to be held in March 2025 celebrating the cultural impact of the town.

**The Central Cluster "Growth Location" which is located in Manchester and Salford is planned to create 90,000 new jobs in digital/creative/media and professional services with strong links to universities.** There are overlaps with the digital sector where GM has large employers with diverse opportunities like the BBC and those that work at MediaCity.

**Sports & Physical Activities occupations have a higher proportion of small employers and self-employed workers (23% vs 9% workforce-wide)** consistent with the importance of freelancers to the sector.

**Job flexibility a common characteristic which is an attractive feature of the sector,** with many roles being part-time. While part-time work arrangements can be particularly attractive to those seeking flexibility, such as students, the associated lower earnings may make it more difficult to keep these workers over time.

## In-demand Occupations

Most creative and cultural roles are found in the city centre, but sport roles are widespread across clubs, leisure centres, and sports facilities across GM

Main roles in GM (Jul – Sept 24):

- Coach (244)
- Graphic Designer (224)
- Writer (104)
- Creative Director (94)
- Interpreter / Translator (89)

## Skills Requirements

Soft skills are in high demand – including Marketing, Social media, Project management, Sales, Teamwork, Creativity.

- Many sectors see a growing need for workers with digital art and design tool skills.
- Games development is a growing area in Greater Manchester with studios moving to the region.

Two different T-Level routes focusing on Digital Business and Digital Production. Degrees offered by many universities include Marketing, Design and Creative Media Production

Physical fitness is often a key skill required for most sporting roles. Additionally, employers in the sector look for mental resilience, Teamwork and communication, Strategic thinking and enthusiasm.

# Sector Insights – Retail and Hospitality

## Sector Intelligence

**Some parts of retail and hospitality saw a boost over the summer** as sporting events like the Men's Football Euros and Paris 2024 Olympics drew crowds to watch in venues.

**The hospitality sector still faces spiralling wage costs and business rates increases**, especially for larger or food-led pubs. Pressures on the sector remain acute - it is likely that 500-600 UK pubs are likely to close in 2024 on top of the 530 that closed in 2023.

The retail sector covers **all aspects of high-street and eCommerce shopping**. While increasing online shopping and declining attendance at venues like cinemas have hurt the sector, it remains a major employer. **Nearly 1 in 6 workers in GM are employed in retail, wholesale, and hospitality** occupations – around 200,000 people.

**Summer 2024 saw work continue on the £250m Therme wellbeing facility** in Trafford Park – the hotel and waterpark facility has been delayed by nearly 2 years due to the pandemic, but it aims to open in 2027, creating 1,200 jobs.

UK hospitality is now said to be short of around 188,000 workers, with the **shortage of front-of-house staff and chefs being the worst**. Many jobs within the sector are seen as low-paid and entry level. **Staff turnover within the sector is generally high**, particularly over holiday periods and when student workers move.

**A recent survey of Hospitality Managers revealed that attrition is still at critical levels.** *“Burnout now represents the crux of the issue, with hospitality managers citing long working hours (69%), high stress levels (68%) and understaffing (64%) as the main causes.”*

New immigration rules came into force in Spring 2024, raising the threshold for a skilled worker visa by nearly 50% from £26,200 to £38,700. **Over 95% of the 8,500 hospitality visas issued in 2023 would no longer be valid under these rules.**

## In-demand Occupations

Roles are heavily concentrated in Manchester City Centre and regional town centres, with other hubs like the Trafford Centre and Retail Parks seeing many opportunities.

Main roles in GM (Jul – Sept 24):

- Janitor / Cleaner (1,479)
- Retail Manager (938)
- Sales Representative (789)
- Chef (748)
- Sales Assistant (540)

## Skills Requirements

- Entry level roles are often open to many, with on-the-job training provided as part of induction.
- Roles within the sector are often difficult, with unsociable shift patterns and long-hours, but there are many opportunities for those who stay.
- Management and team leader roles are common after workers have enough experience.

In-demand skills include:

- Customer service
- Sales
- Communication
- Food safety and sanitation
- Teamwork and adaptability
- Food preparation
- Food safety



## Sector Intelligence

**Confidence remained strong over the Summer** – the UK Purchasing Managers Index (PMI), a confidence measure, rose to 52.5 in May, reaching a 30-month high.

The new government released **plans for a new Industrial Strategy in October 2024**, with strong support for growing the manufacturing sector to be outlined.

**Plans continue for the creation of an industrial cluster along the North East Growth Corridor – Atom Valley** – which will include the Advanced Machinery and Productivity Institute (AMPI), the Sustainable Materials and Manufacturing Centre (SMMC), both supporting the growth of the sector in GM.

As an innovative sector, **commercialisation is one of the skills lacking in many early-stage manufacturing businesses**. Understanding potential, writing growth cases, and knowing where and how to access financing is critical. The existing innovation ecosystem run out of the Higher Education institutions – including Royce Institute, NERIC, the GEIC, PrintCity, and ID Manchester – all support businesses to innovate to improve production and develop new products.

Manufacturing & Engineering is an important sector for the Greater Manchester economy. The sector employs around 115,000 people, **making up around 8-9% of the GM workforce**. With a focus on food and drink, component manufacturing, electronics, manufacturing in GM sees a wide range of employers and diverse skills needs.

GM's LSIP identified **Green Skills, Lean Manufacturing, Robotics and Electronic Engineering as urgent/high priority areas** for skills provision development. **Digitalisation, automation, and increasingly AI are disrupting some advanced manufacturing industries**, as manufacturers look for ways to cut costs and raise efficiency.

**Efforts continue to support the technical workforce**. The Made Smarter programme operates throughout the North West, helping manufacturing and engineering companies adopt Industry 4.0 technology, and delivering skills development as part of the programme.

## In-demand Occupations

While there is a sizeable concentration of other businesses in the city centre, manufacturing firms are spread across GM. Wigan, Rochdale, Stockport, and Tameside all have large numbers of manufacturing firms.

Main roles in GM (Jul – Sept 24):

- Mechanical Engineer (757)
- Manufacturing Machine Operator (588)
- Electrical Engineer (516)
- Engineering Manager (325)
- Production Worker (324)

## Skills Requirements

Entry level production roles have low requirements, but roles are generally unskilled and poorly paid.

- Clear lines of progression into Production Management roles.
- Some staff are supported on engineering training programmes if they want to develop – cross-skilling of mechanical and electrical engineers is desirable.
- Series of qualifications for Continuous Improvement Engineers

In-demand skills include:

- Industrial electrical trades
- Green energy, lean manufacturing, sustainability
- Robotics and automation
- Computer Aided Manufacturing (CAM) software, digitalisation, electronics engineering technicians

## Sector Intelligence

The finance world **spent the summer months preparing for an increase in demand as tax reform is widely expected at the 2024 Autumn Budget.**

Disruptors such as AI/ML will continue to revolutionise the industry. **Automation and digitalisation have become an everyday topic** within the talent and people agenda, as the share of roles that are becoming automatable increases. In the fringe areas of FinTech, this is shifting the required skillset in many areas of the sector. **The Financial Services Skills Commission estimates that 1 in 8 roles in the sector is now tech-related.**

While many city regions have similar workforce profiles, **GM has a particularly high concentration of Financial & Professional Services workers** (19.6% vs. 16.5% in West Midlands, 16.6% in Liverpool). GM is seen as a centre of finance and professional services, though remains behind London in terms of workers and firms. Large concentrations of insurance, corporate finance, legal, and banking all drive the sector in GM.

The trends which started during the pandemic have persisted through 2024. **Many employers reacted quickly to working from home and have remained hybrid.** 77% of financial services firms reported a higher proportion of staff working from home, despite recent trends drawing workers back into the office.

Almost a **third of employers across the FBPS sector are struggling to recruit** due to widespread skills shortages and fewer workers choosing the sector. There is a perception in the sector that it is “losing out” to digital employers who can offer higher wages for talented workers.

Apprenticeships are **increasingly welcomed as an entry route into the sector.** In more recent times this is being seen within the legal sector, a hugely positive shift. Degree apprenticeships as a route for upskilling are increasingly common, enabling employers to spend any accrued apprenticeship levy.

## In-demand Occupations

Most roles in financial services like insurance, wealth management and private equity are advertised in the sector are in Manchester city centre, but each area of GM has some accountancy and legal firms.

Main roles in GM (Jul – Sept 24):

- Lawyer (2,011)
- Bookkeeper / Accounting Clerk (1,123)
- Project Manager (1,098)
- Accountant (943)
- Financial Manager (744)

## Skills Requirements

Progression within the sector is heavily linked to further accredited qualifications:

- Accountancy: ACCA, ACA, CIMA, CIPFA, CTA
- Financial Services: IOC, IMC, CII, CFA
- Law: LLB, LPC, CILEX

There is increasing emphasis on soft skills as well as technical skills required to work in the sector, in particular:

- Communication (strong oral and written)
- Teamwork
- Attention to detail
- Curiosity & commercial awareness
- Problem solving
- Analytical skills

# Sector Insights – Digital and Tech

## Sector Intelligence

After a surge in demand over the course of the pandemic, demand in the sector is dropping. **Job adverts in digital roles peaked in May 2022 at just under 8,000 and have since dropped back in September 2024 to just over 2,000.** The GMLSIP update recognised this was not just GM – *“this decline in the sector’s vacancies is not unique to GM alone, but the same applies across the entire country”*.

However, **the number of employers citing functional digital skills as a key need remains steady** – it is just specialised digital roles that have seen a drop in demand.

Employers report **high levels of applicants for entry level positions** but can struggle to progress these workers further up. After 2-3 years of experience, staff often leave for higher paid positions elsewhere.

**The number of adverts for some roles has grown significantly over the past 5 years:** Mobile Developers (up 554%), Multimedia Designers (up 433%), Data Architects (up 300%).

**GM Colleges have begun rolling out investment in Digital Skills provision off the back of the Local Skills Improvement Fund** – including dozens of Cisco learning facilities, 100 new laptops, 90 Raspberry Pis, and CAVEs – virtual learning environment.

**The need for digital experts to implement digital solutions in the public sector is rising** – increasing digitisation of health service, emergency services, etc. all driving need for basic digital skills. Leadership & Management is a consistent gap amongst employers, linked to the speed of digital transformation in traditionally “non-digital” sectors.

**Demand for some specific advanced digital skills increased into mid 2024** – particularly “co-piloting” of AI development tools is seen as a key future skill for workers in the sector.

The Digital Youth Index outlines young people’s aspirations in the digital sphere. **73% of young people see Digital Skills as essential for their future job/or career.**

## In-demand Occupations

Digital specialists needed in wider sectors include data analysis, digital marketing, digital finance, cyber and information security. Most roles are in Manchester and Salford, but many firms now need in-house digital experts.

Main roles in GM (Jul – Sept 24):

- Software Developer / Engineer (1,293)
- Computer Support Specialist (651)
- IT Manager / Director (485)
- Computer Programmer (373)
- Cyber / Information Security Engineer / Analyst (344)

## Skills Requirements

Progression within the sector is often linked to improved technical skills, project management, and leadership opportunities. **Mid-senior digital specialists are hard to recruit**– experienced workers can access a huge range of well-paid opportunities.

Software Development roles usually require programming languages (SQL, Javascript, Python, C++) or familiarity with large suites of digital cloud infrastructure (Microsoft Azure, Amazon Web Services)

In-demand skills include:

- Communication
- Agile Methodology
- Problem-solving
- Automation
- Web Development

# Sector Insights – Health and Social Care

## Sector Intelligence

There has been a worrying **decline in students applying for nursing courses** and Royal College of Nursing (RCN) analysis shows the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan is set to be 10,000 new nurses behind target by 2025. Over the summer, the new government ended strikes by offering significant pay increases to Junior Doctors.

Health and Social Care remains the largest sector in GM by workforce and must continue to grow to keep up with increasing demand on services. **The sector directly employs over 200,000 people, nearly 1 in 6 in GM. Hundreds of thousands more residents take up roles as unpaid carers and volunteers.**

**There are over 350 different job roles across HSC sector** although it's felt that awareness of many of these is low. There have been well over 60,000 job vacancies posted in the sector over the last 12 months, with nursing, social workers, and carers featuring as the top advertised professions across most areas of GM.

The national NHS Workforce strategy, and the GM Integrated Care Partnership People and Culture Strategy both highlight the need to attract more staff and from a variety of routes, and there is ongoing **collaborative work between stakeholders to best strengthen technical routes and career pathways.**

The sector continues to face huge challenges. **Services are often under relentless pressure.** There are funding and staffing concerns across HSC, with many staff reporting feeling overworked. In addition to this, the NHS in GM was placed in Special Measures in April 2024, because of a £180m annual shortfall in funding.

In Primary Care, **community chemists are closing at an alarming rate** due to funding models which make it difficult for businesses to be sustainable. These have also reported finding it hard to recruit pharmacy technicians.

Current **GM Vacancy rate (unfilled positions in the workforce) is 7%** in healthcare. Nursing remains the most in-demand occupation with high turnover also evident.

## In-demand Occupations

Health and Social Care is the largest single workforce in GM – employing around 14-15% of workers. However, many settings have an ageing workforce with concerns about how some of this knowledge will be replaced. Social care worry about losing staff to other sectors or even the NHS where pay, terms and conditions are superior.

Main roles in GM (Jul – Sept 24):

- Registered General Nurse (1,404)
- Family / School / General Social Worker (985)
- Home Care Assistant (976)
- Residential Carer (672)
- Nurse Practitioner (609)

## Skills Requirements

Personal values are often more highly prized than skillset by employers – compassion / empathy / good communication skills / personal resilience. Values based recruitment is becoming popular for some roles

Public Health skills and preventative advice is needed in all roles – not just specialist ones – to reduce strain on the service.

990 different skills were requested in HSC job adverts in GM during 2023. Mental Health Awareness is important – it featured on 13% of all H&SC postings.

In-demand skills include:

- Mental Health awareness including dementia
- Basic clinical skills
- Personal care

# Sector Insights – Education and Early Years

## Sector Intelligence

The Education sector is a huge employer within Greater Manchester with around **120,000 people working directly in education**. It impacts on all our lives, and by equipping people with the skills to succeed, has a huge impact on the growth of our region.

**In the past 12 months, 1 in 10 job roles advertised in GM were somewhere within the Education sector a total of 47,125 job adverts.**

Over the past 5 years, **some areas of the sector are seeing much higher levels of demand than others**. Since June 2019, the number of job adverts for Drama Teachers is 18 times higher, the number of Music Teachers is 5 times higher, and PE Teachers is 3 times higher.

**Teaching Assistant remains the most advertised role in GM in 8 out of our 10 localities**. Its thought that turnover for this position is higher in secondary (rather than primary) education. Some of this has been suggested as an issue with training not always best preparing candidates for the workplace.

**Attrition and staff turnover is also a concern within Early Years workplaces** – a recent survey has suggested that 57% of nursery staff and 38% of childminders are considering leaving the sector in the next 12 months.

**A recruitment and retention campaign is set to start in Autumn 2024 which aims to change the perception of the sector**. It is felt that there is a perception that many roles are just supervisory and not enough credit given to the positive start the workforce can make to somebody's life.

With early years, all localities are reporting a **shortage of Level 3 qualified staff**, with increased turnover in more experienced workforce. This is impacting on quality of provision and ability to identify and meet additional need. There is a **general lack of inclusive childcare provision** with settings increasingly refusing places to children with SEND and capping numbers (not operating at capacity) because of the level of child need.

## In-demand Occupations

Within FE, those with industry knowledge – dual professionals – are hard to recruit and it can affect which subjects are being offered to students. Career leads have also proved difficult to recruit. Those able to teach STEM subjects and modern foreign languages are particularly in demand throughout schooling.

Main roles in GM (Jul – Sept 24):

- Teacher Assistant (2,637)
- Special Education Needs (SEN) Teacher (836)
- Tutor/Teacher (815)
- Preschool / Childcare Teacher / Nursery Nurse (731)
- Primary School Teacher (576)

## Skills Requirements

Staff with industry skills and experience to be able to teach higher level qualifications are in very high demand in most education settings.

FE teaching roles do not require the same formal teaching qualifications as schoolteachers but sometimes do not have the same parity of pay either. Early Years Educators similarly see lower wages than schoolteachers.

Soft skills and a desire to help people are key in this sector.

In-demand skills include:

- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) awareness
- Mathematics
- Learner Support - particularly around mental health
- Safeguarding and child protection
- Careers leads

# Sector Insights – Emergency Services

## Sector Intelligence

The emergency services still see difficulties due to **large increases in demand and an ageing population, a lack of funding, and widespread workforce shortages**. The services experiences higher levels of sickness absence than many sectors and staff are more likely to be physically assaulted or experience verbal abuse when working.

**Almost 20,000 people work for the GM emergency services.** There is good awareness amongst young people about police officer, paramedic and firefighter roles and these score highly as popular career choices. There are clear pathways, well established technical routes and high numbers of applicants. A desire remains to make each service more representative of the communities they serve. **There is less awareness about other roles within the services.**

**AI, data analytics, and the increased quality of video surveillance are all growing trends in the sector.** With it, this brings an increased need for cybersecurity to work hand-in-hand with physical security. The [National Police Chiefs' Council](#) has published the National Policing Cyber Security Strategy setting out proposals to transform policing's resilience to cyber attack.

**Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service** has 41 fire stations and the service employs thousands of personnel, of which 1,200 are frontline firefighters, and 403 non-uniformed support staff. Their role covers traffic accidents, fires, and rescue incidents like drowning. Traffic accidents tends to be the biggest area of incidents – at around 2,000 a year.

**North West Ambulance Service** serve more than seven million people across approximately 5,400 square miles. They receive approximately 1.3 million 999 calls and respond to over a million emergency incidents each year. They employ around 6,900 staff in over 300 different roles.

**Greater Manchester Police** is one of 43 forces in the country. Its PEEL report 2023-25 showed considerable improvement, despite lower levels of public trust, and increasing complexity of crime.

## In-demand Occupations

Roles are concentrated around police stations, ambulance depts, and fire stations – Manchester, Salford, Stockport, and Bolton see higher demand than other areas. Private Security roles are largely concentrated in the city centre around venues.

Main roles in GM (Jul – Sept 24):

- Security Officer (305)
- Safety Specialist / Coordinator (88)
- Dispatcher (59)
- Police Officer (54)
- Probation Officer (36)

## Skills Requirements

Primary front-line roles need exceptional people skills – empathy and compassion are critical for most of the duties performed on the front-line.

Digital skills both in using new equipment and in combatting different emergencies – as crime moves online, the need for cybercrime specialists is growing in most police forces across the UK.

In-demand skills include:

- Preventative measures
- Leadership skills
- Resilience
- Community engagement including BSL and other language skills;
- Health and wellbeing (including mental health expertise)
- Physical fitness

# Sector Insights – Green Economy

## Sector Intelligence

**The next Greater Manchester 5 Year Environment Plan is due to be released towards the end of 2024** – setting out more activity and strategy for reaching Net Zero goals. Among a wide range of activity, it will cover an expansion of renewable energy generation, additional retrofitting of residential and public buildings, and the implementation of the GM Integrated Water Management Plan.

GM is not on currently 2038 target to hit its “fair share” carbon emissions budget, but good progress is being made in most areas. **Since 2019, over 24,000 properties have improved their energy efficiency rating** from an EPC D to C+, and over 230 public buildings have been retrofitted with low carbon technology.

**Employers are advertising more “green jobs” related to sustainability, environment, and low carbon transport / buildings.** The number of green jobs advertised rose 3 times faster than the overall labour market.

**Perceptions of careers in the Green Economy are generally outdated**, with many still referring to environment-linked jobs as traditional “green” career pathways rather than the technical roles that will contribute most to the transition.

Across the Green Economy there are 5 key areas which will see a lot of change:

- **Buildings** – as gas is replaced with electricity, all buildings will need retrofitting to install insulation, power generation, and low-carbon heat.
- **Transport** – both public and private transport are becoming increasingly electrified, with the shift to electric cars and electrification of rail.
- **Energy** – with increased electrification, the power network will need additional upgrades and linkage with new renewables generation.
- **Waste and Recycling** – disposal, recycling, and reuse of materials and waste in an efficient and environmental way.
- **Natural Environment** – management of nature for net zero and biodiversity objectives will be increasingly important.

## In-demand Occupations

Roles in the Green Economy are fairly well spread across GM – roles relating to buildings and energy are broadly distributed.

Main roles in GM (Jul – Sept 24)\*:

- Sustainability Specialist (82)
- Environmental Planner (65)
- Environmental Engineer (17)
- Recycling/Sanitation Worker (14)
- Project Manager (14)

\*methodology under review

## Skills Requirements

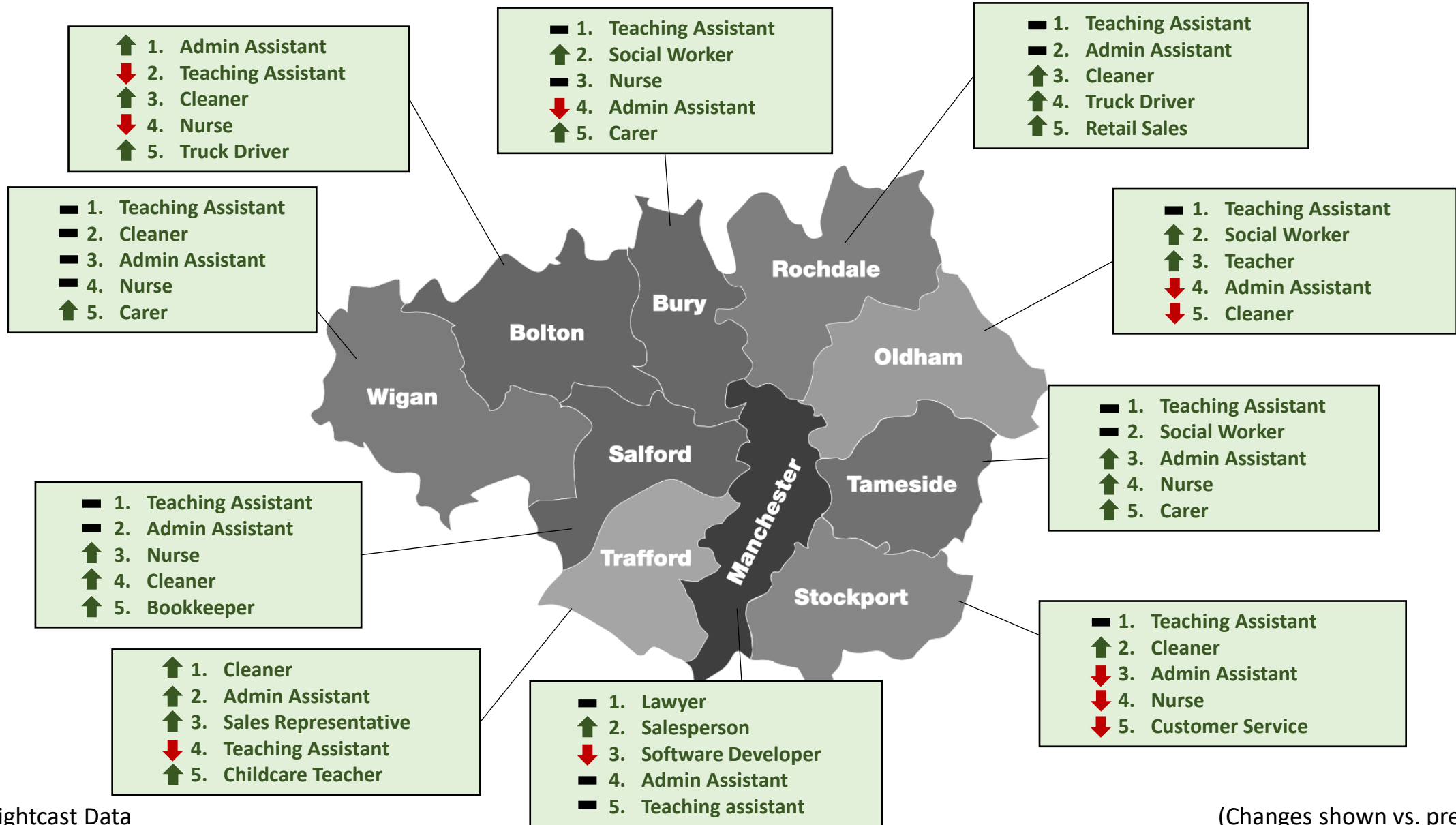
Skills needed for the Green Economy are broad. The size of sector will grow greatly as GM and wider UK moves towards Net Zero targets. Adoption of technology like low carbon heating and electric vehicles are already growing rapidly.

Innovation, digital skills, and creativity will drive adoption and optimisation of new technology. Various senior roles in many occupations and subsectors go unfilled, some skillsets are in very high demand.

In-demand skills include:

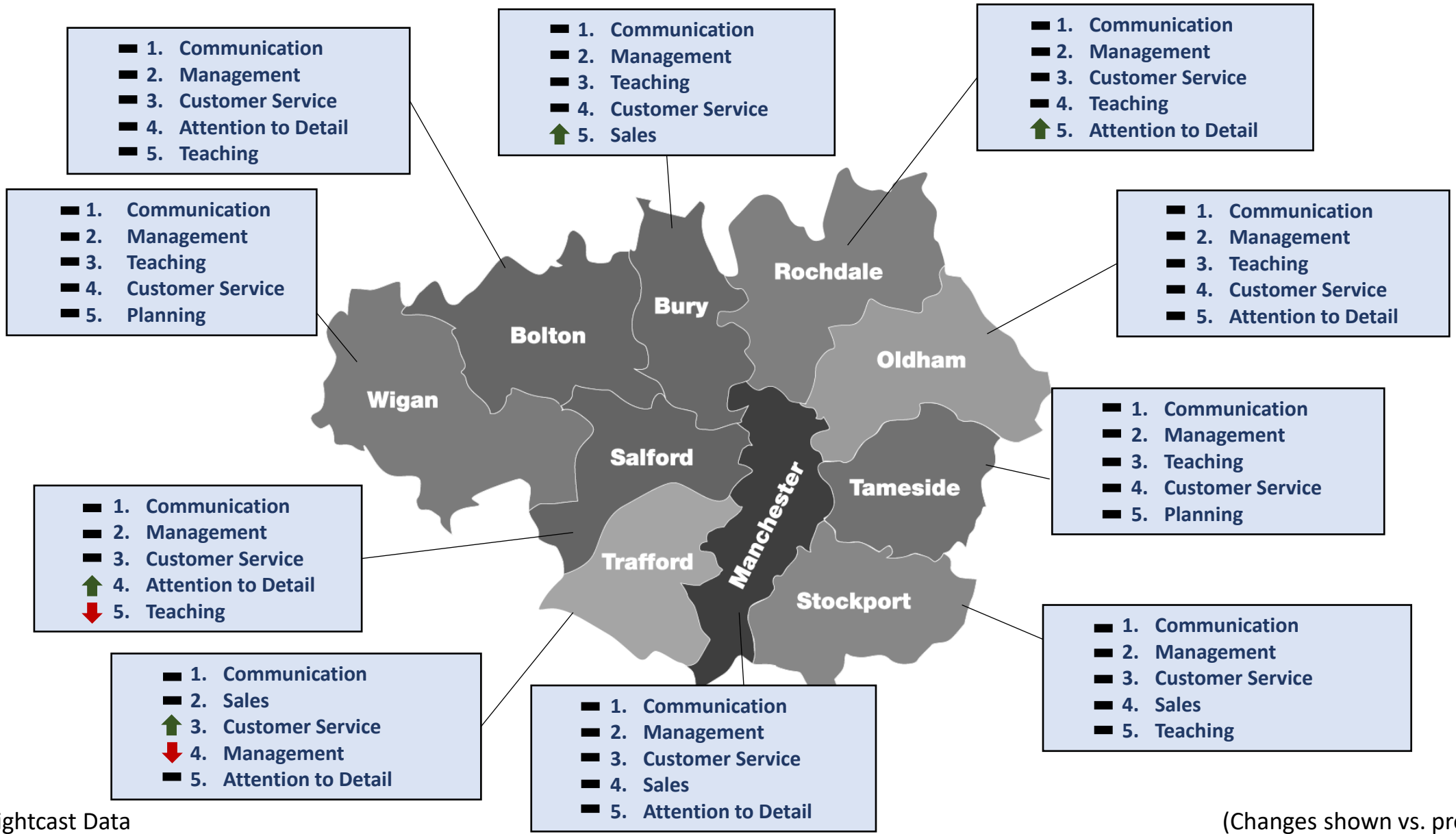
- Management
- Sales
- Project Management
- Carbon Literacy
- Construction trade skills are critical in several areas
- Natural environment – waste and water management

# GM in-demand occupations (Jun 2024 – Aug 2024)





# GM in-demand common skills (Jun 2024 – Aug 2024)



Source: Lightcast Data

(Changes shown vs. previous 3 months)

# GM in-demand specialist skills (Jun 2024 – Aug 2024)

