

## Appendix 2: Monitoring Solihull Economy September 2020

### 1. Claimant Count Unemployment

Unemployed and Claiming JobSeekers Allowance or Universal Credit

In August 2020 7,605 people in Solihull were unemployed and claiming benefits. The claimant rate in Solihull is 5.9%, lower than both the England (6.6%) and West Midlands (7.4%) averages. The average rate in the three North Solihull regeneration wards (Chelmsley Wood, Kingshurst & Fordbridge and Smith's Wood) is 12.3% (2,910 individuals) compared with 4.5% across the rest of the Borough (4,695 individuals).

There were 1,695 Solihull claimants aged 18-24, equating to 11.1%, compared to 9.3% for England and 10.3% for the West Midlands. The Solihull youth rate is artificially high due to the borough's small 18-24 population, likely caused by a large proportion of this age group moving away for Higher Education. The rate in North Solihull is 19.0% (665 individuals) compared with 8.7% (1,030 individuals) across the rest of the Borough.

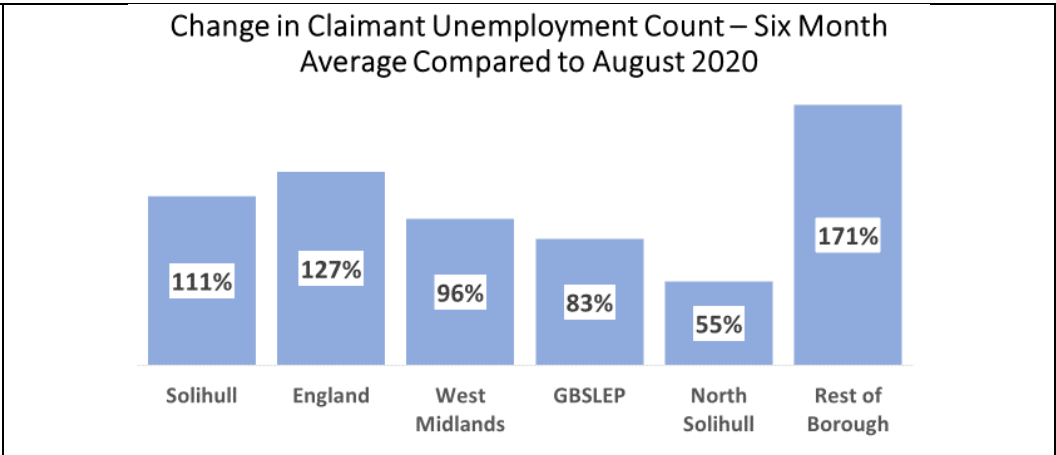
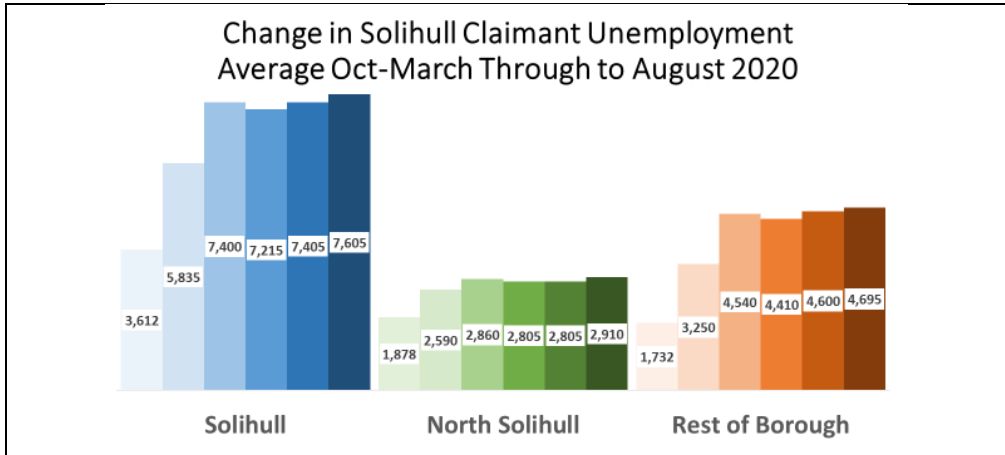
16-64 Working Age Unemployment  
August 2020



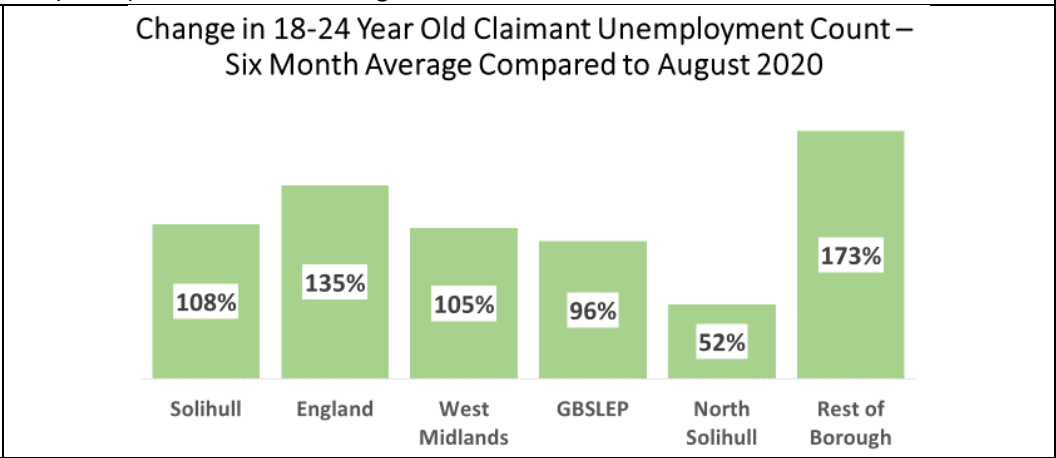
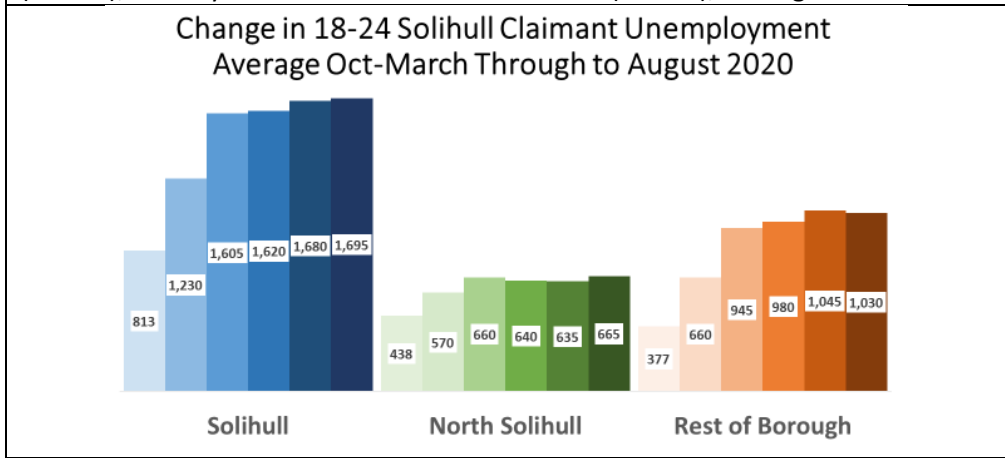
18-24 Claimant Unemployment  
August 2020



The number of working age claimants in Solihull increased by a total of 3,993 over the last five months when compared with the average of the six months prior to lockdown (+2,223 in April, +1,565 in May, -185 June, +190 July, +200 August). The total comprised an increase of 1,032 claimants in North Solihull and 2,963 in the rest of the borough. The number of individuals receiving an unemployment benefit has increased by a total of +111% in Solihull in the five months compared with pre-lockdown baseline. The increase was relatively much lower in North Solihull (+55%) than the rest of the borough (+171%). The increase in Solihull was lower than the England average (+127%), but above that for the West Midlands (+96%) or GBSLEP (+83%). The increase among Solihull males was 121% and 98% for females.



The number of 18-24 claimants in Solihull increased by a total of 882 over the last five months when compared with the pre-lockdown baseline (+417 in April, +375 in May, +15 in June, +60 in July, +15 August). This total comprised an increase of 227 claimants in North Solihull and 653 in the rest of the borough. The number of 18-24 year olds receiving an unemployment benefit increased by +108% in Solihull in the last four months compared with the pre-lockdown benchmark. The increase was relatively much lower in North Solihull (+52%) than the rest of the borough (+173%). The increase in Solihull was lower than the England average (+135%), broadly the same as the West Midlands (+105%), but higher than the GBSLEP (+96%). The increase among Solihull males was 110% and 105% for females.



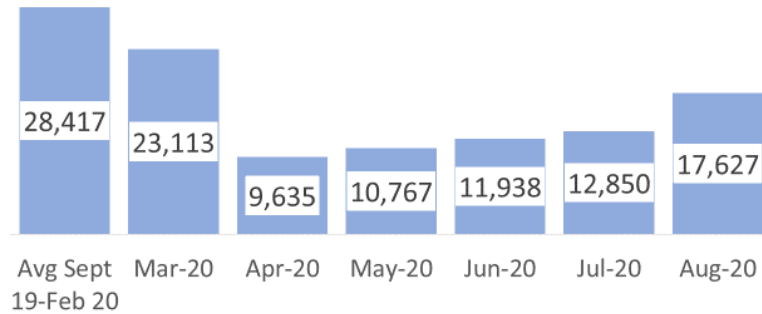
## 2. Job Postings

### Job Postings in GBSLEP Area – Proxy for Vacancies in Travel to Work Area

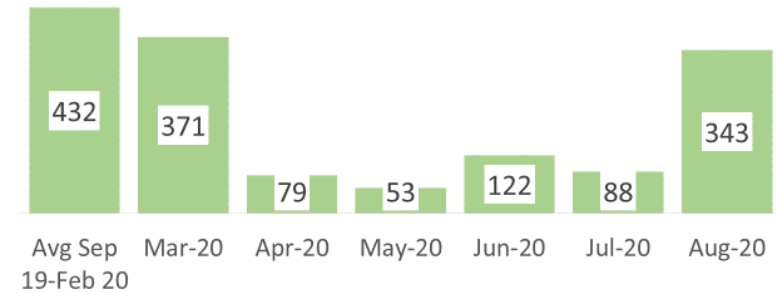
The number of job postings in the GBSLEP was -66% (-18,782 postings) in April 2020 when compared with the monthly average for the six months preceding economic lockdown (Sept 2019-Feb 2020). The number of postings increased for the 4<sup>th</sup> month running in August (+4,777, +37%), but remains -38% below the baseline. By occupation particularly sharp reductions were recorded in Sales, Clerical & Administrative, Hospitality, Food, & Tourism, Engineering, Manufacturing & Production, Human Resources, and Customer & Client Support. Health Care & Nursing, Community and Social Services, IT, Education & Training and Business Management & Operations have been less severely affected.

There were 343 apprenticeship job postings in the GBSLEP in August 2020, marking a strong recovery in demand. Apprenticeship postings are now only -21% lower than the monthly average for the six months preceding economic lockdown (Sept 2019-Feb 2020).

Monthly Job Postings in GBSLEP



Monthly Apprenticeship Job Postings in GBSLEP



### 3. Central Government Grant to Solihull MBC for Covid 19

Solihull received a total of £11.534m from the Government allocation to councils to tackle Covid 19 (including second allocation). The total amount of Government Grant that SMBC have committed to date is: £30.386m (£18.852m over the allocated amount).

<b>Government Grant to SMBC for Covid 19 (including second allocation)</b>	<b>£11.534m</b>
<b>Amount of Government Grant Committed</b>	<b>£30.386m</b>
<b>Over-allocated</b>	<b>£18.852m</b>

### 4. Council Support for Businesses

**Business continuity and job retention** The Council has introduced 12-month business rates holiday in 2020/21 for all retail, hospitality, leisure and nursery businesses in England. Revised rates bills have been issued to all eligible businesses.

The Council has introduced a Retail and Hospitality Grant Scheme - £25,000 for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses with property with a rateable value between £15,001 and £51,000 (who are eligible for the 'expanded retail relief) and £10,000 for those with a rateable value below £15,000. As at 19 June 632 eligible businesses have been identified (190 businesses eligible for the £10,000 grant and 440 businesses eligible for the £25,000 grant) of which 632 have been paid a grant (192 businesses paid £10,000 and 440 businesses paid £25,000). Our aim is to pay businesses within 10 working days once all information is received.

The Council has made available a £10,000 cash grant for all businesses in receipt of small business rate relief or rural rate relief [note the scheme is only for

#### Business Grants

Grant Amount Available	Number of Eligible Businesses Identified	Businesses Paid to Date
<b>£25,000</b> (for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses with property with a rateable value between £15,000 and £51,000)	440	440
<b>£10,000</b> (for businesses in receipt of small business rate relief or rural rate relief and those with an RV of £15,000 below who are entitled to expanded retail relief.)	1,575	1,446

businesses who are rate payers who are therefore considered to have ongoing fixed costs]. 1,383 eligible businesses have been identified (in addition to those eligible under the retail and hospitality grant scheme) and 1,254 paid a grant. A target of 10 working days to process payment once information received.

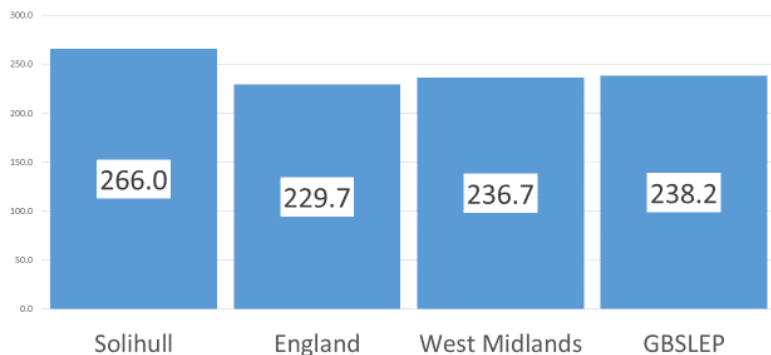
There still remains a number of businesses who have not provided us with the information required to enable us to progress their grant. Attempts have been made to contact all eligible businesses to encourage them to provide the details necessary. We are also working through a number of applications that have complex queries. A total of £25.460 m has been paid to 1,886 businesses.

*Note: the number of eligible business will fluctuate as we receive new applications and decline applications.*

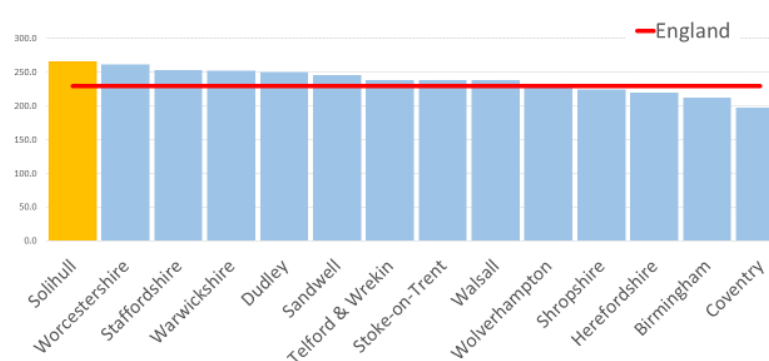
### 5. Furloughed Jobs

At the end of July 34,100 Solihull residents were furloughed. This equates to 266.0 per 1,000 working age population, above the average for England (229.7), the West Midlands (236.7) and GBSLEP (238.2). Solihull had the highest rate among upper tier West Midlands Local Authorities. The number of Solihull furloughed employees increased by 7,200 between May and July. This increase of 27% was slightly higher than for England (25%). Among Solihull parliamentary constituencies, Meriden has more furloughed employees and a higher rate (18,900, 282.2 per 1,000) than Solihull (15,200, 250.4 per 1,000). Both are higher than England or the West Midlands.

Number of Furloughed Employments per 1,000 Working Age Population July 2020



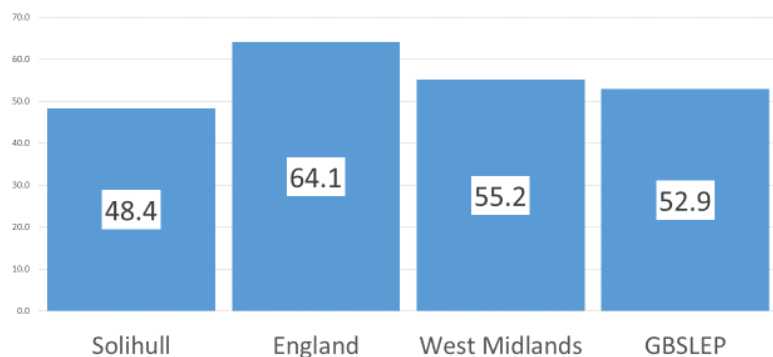
Number of Furloughed Employments per 1,000 Working Age Population July 2020



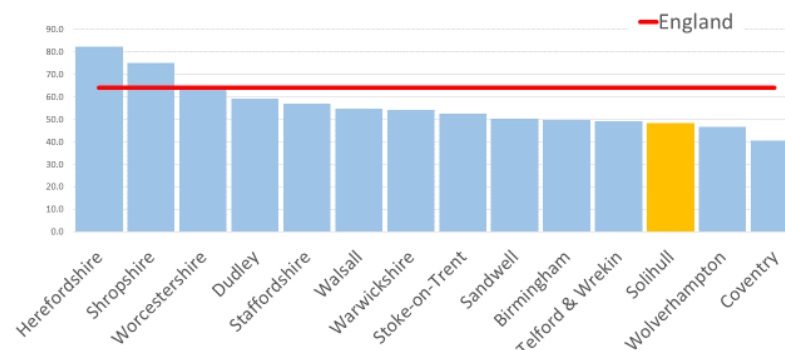
### 6. Self-Employment Support Scheme

At the end of June 6,200 Solihull residents were receiving self-employment support, 78% of the total eligible population. This equates to 48.4 per 1,000 working age population, below the average for England (64.1), the West Midlands (55.2) and GBSLEP (52.9). Solihull is towards the lower end of the spectrum of upper tier West Midlands Local Authorities on this measure. Among the Solihull parliamentary constituencies, Meriden has more people in receipt of self-employment support, but a lower rate (3,200, 47.8 per 1,000) than Solihull (3,000, 49.4 per 1,000). Both have a lower rate than the England and West Midlands averages.

Number of People Receiving Self-Employment Support per 1,000 Working Age Population July 2020



Number of People Receiving Self-Employment Support per 1,000 Working Age Population July 2020

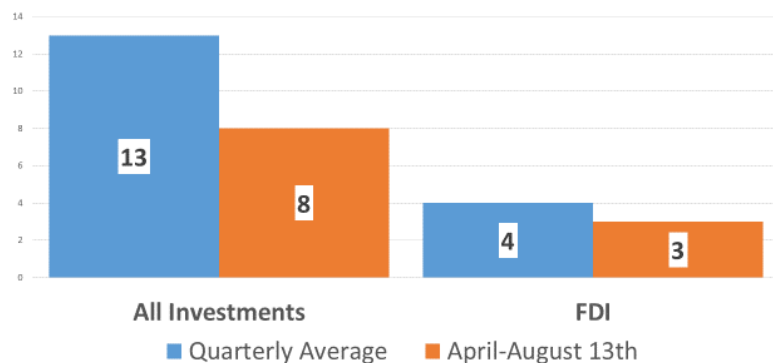


**7. Investment in Solihull**

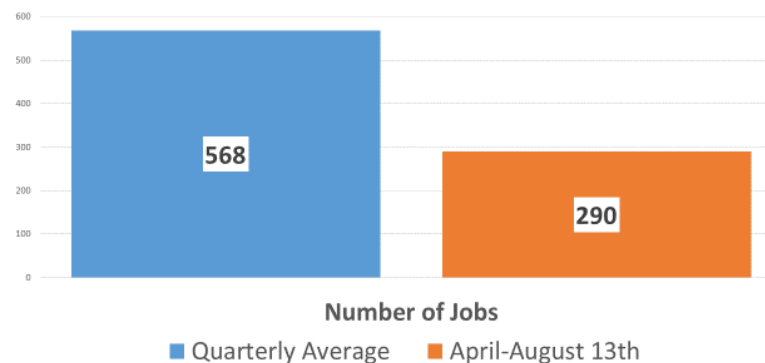
There have been 8 investments in Solihull so far in 2020/21 (up to 13 August). In context there were an average of 13 investments per quarter in the eight quarters preceding the lockdown (dating back to Q1 2018/19). Three out of the eight investments so far this year were Foreign Direct Investments (FDI), which have accounted for an average of 4 per quarter since the start of 2018/19.

So far in 2020/21 290 Solihull jobs have been either created, attracted or safeguarded by investment, compared to the long-run quarterly average of 568.

Number of Investments in Solihull



Number of Jobs Created, Attracted or Safeguarded by Investments in Solihull

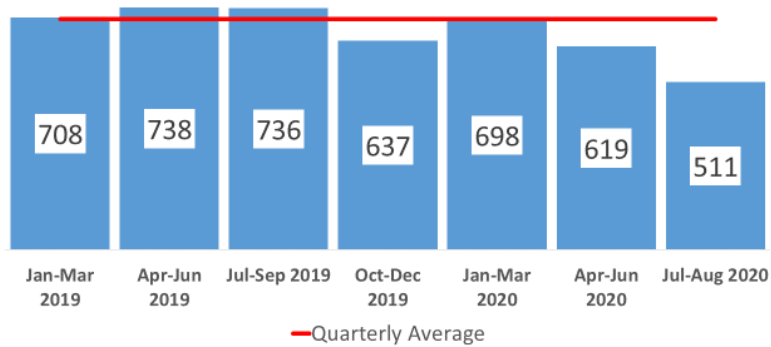


**8. Planning Applications**

There were a total of 619 planning applications in Solihull in Q2 2020 (April-June). This represented 88% of the expected quarterly average, with all categories of application lower than normal: the number of major applications received was 58% of the usual quarterly average; minor applications were 75% of normal; householder applications 89%; and other applications 91%.

Activity has increased in July and August. There have been 511 applications so far, 73% of the expected quarterly average: major (58%), minor (57%), householder (74%), other (75%).

Total Planning Applications in Solihull



Solihull Planning Applications

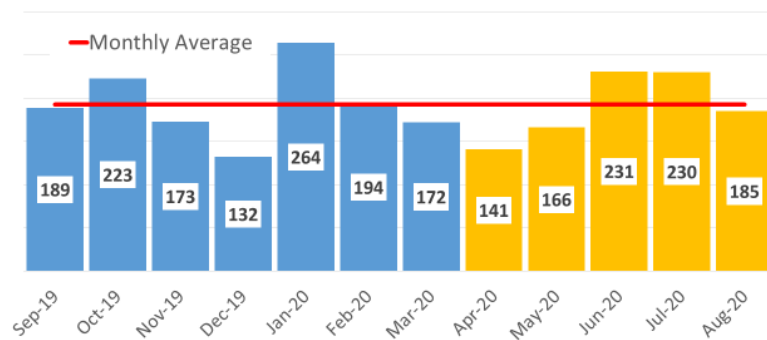
Category	Number of Applications			% Quarterly pre-lockdown Average	
	Pre-lockdown Qtr Average	April-June 2020	July-Aug 2020	Apr-Jun 2020	Jul-Sep 2020
Major	12	7	7	58%	58%
Minor	75	56	43	75%	57%
Householder	300	268	223	89%	74%
Other	317	288	238	91%	75%
<b>Total</b>	<b>703</b>	<b>619</b>	<b>511</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>73%</b>

## 9. Homelessness

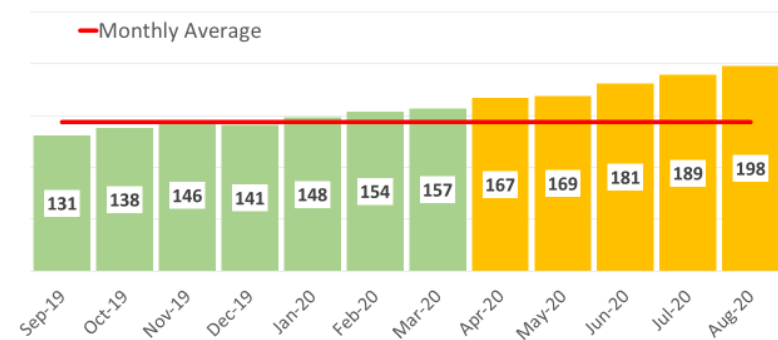
In August there were 185 Solihull households who made an approach because they were homeless or at risk of homelessness, a reduction on last month and broadly in-line with the monthly average for the 12 month period April 2019 to March 2020 (193 households). 13 households presented as homeless on the day in August following figures of 38 in April, 42 in May, 28 in June and 51 in July 2020.

At the end of August 2020 there were 198 Solihull households in Temporary Accommodation, 9 more than the previous month. This is the highest number in over 2 years and 38% higher than the 12 month average snapshot. Two factors have contributed to rising TA placements since lockdown. Anyone who is homeless regardless of eligibility, priority need or local connection has received a placement resulting in more placements of single people. There has been a suspension of all but essential allocations, which means there are less opportunities to move out of TA and into permanent accommodation options.

Solihull Homelessness Approaches



Solihull Households Living in Temporary Accommodation at the End of the Month



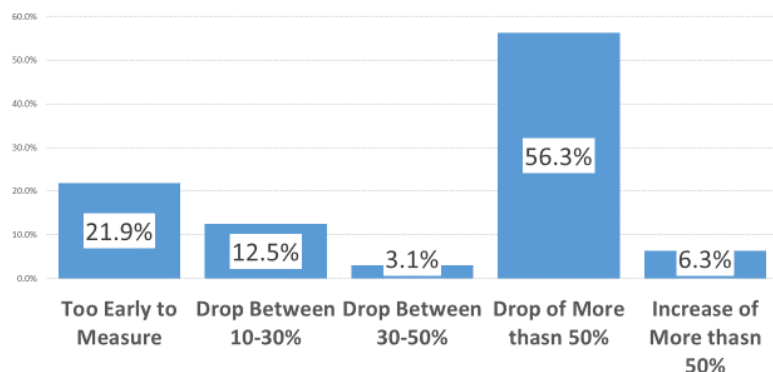
### 10. Solihull Town Centre Business Impact Survey

Survey Conducted by Solihull BID. 32 respondents (10 professional service & office sector; 18 retail; 4 leisure & hospitality)

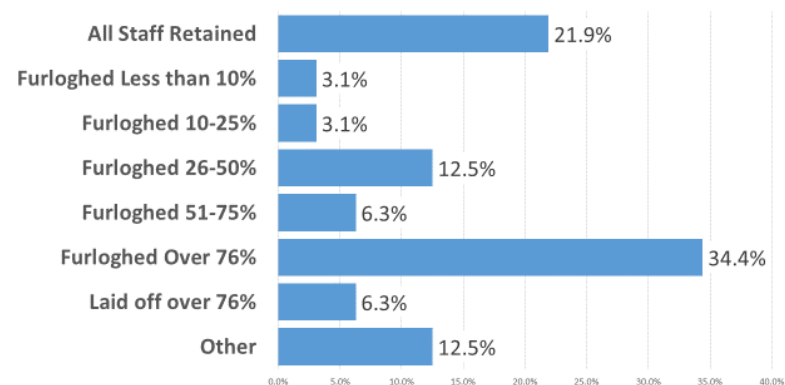
Over half of businesses responding to the survey have experienced a drop in revenue of more than 50%.

34% have furloughed over 76% of staff and 6% have laid-off over 76% of staff. 22% have managed to retain all their workforce.

#### The Impact of Covid-19 on Revenue



#### Staff Retention

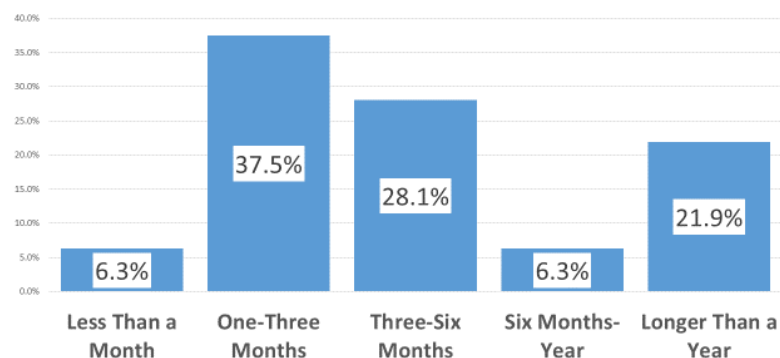


46% of responding firms are experiencing cash flow problems. 39% have applied for the Cash Grant for Retail, Hospitality and Leisure via Solihull Council's website. At 72% the majority of businesses are utilising the Job Retention Scheme to support their business; closely followed by VAT deferral (50%) & Business Rates Holiday (44). 37.5% of businesses have said, taking into account current Government Support, that they predict they will last 1 to 3 months.

#### Financial Support

Type of Support	% Businesses
Experiencing Cash Flow Problems	46.4%
Called HMRC's Time to Pay Helpline	10.7%
Spoken to Bank About Covid-19 Loans	28.6%
Used Link Supplied by Solihull BID to Apply for SMBC Cash Grant for Retail, Hospitality & Leisure	39.3%

#### Length of Time Business Can Survive Without Additional Financial Support



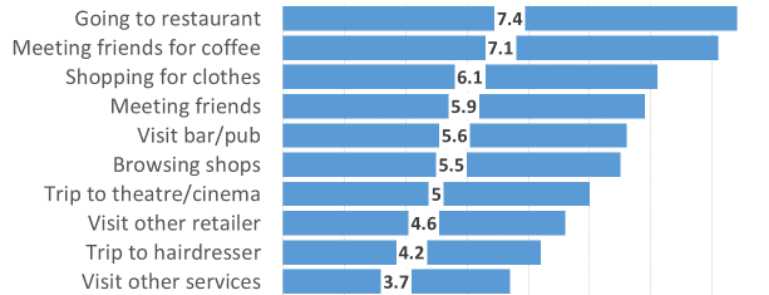
### 11. Solihull Town Centre Visitors Survey

Survey Conducted by Solihull BID. 289 responses from regular visitors to Solihull town centre (92% of sample visited at once per week before lockdown)

The public identified going to a restaurant for a meal and meeting friends for a coffee as the things that they have missed most about visiting the high street. It seems that more social activities based in the town centre have ranked highest although there is still appetite to shop, especially for clothing.

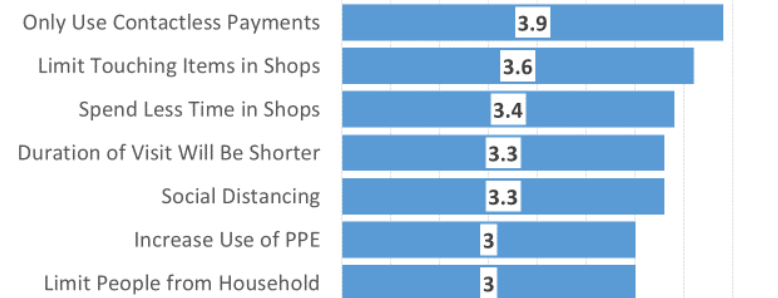
When asked about behaviour changes when returning to the high street - Limiting physical contact sits at the top of the ranked answers. Over 70% of people said they agreed or strongly agreed that they would only use contactless payments whilst almost 70% of people agreed or strongly agreed that they would limit the touching of items in shops. Additional comments show that generally consumers will be hesitant to return to the high street and will shop online where able to. Those that will return when shops re-open will be more cautious and avoid browsing.

### What Have Visitors Missed Most About Visiting Solihull Town Centre



Weighted score based on how important people rated each answer. The higher the number, the higher people ranked its importance.

### Visitor Behaviour Change When Return to Solihull Town Centre High Street



Weighted score based on how important people rated each answer. The higher the number, the more people agreed with it. A score of 2.5 is neutral.

Almost 70% of people said the lockdown has meant that they support local businesses more whilst 67% said they would want to shop locally to feel safer. Increasing pride in the local area and interest in the town centre is also a notable feature.

When asked what changes they would like to see in the Town Centre, just under 86% of people said they would want to see an increase in cleaning and sanitisation. Secondly at 67%, more outdoor seating and places to relax in the open air. More security and reassurance also came in highly at 55%. Other comments included – queue management measures for eternal social distancing.

### How Lockdown Has Affected Visitors Relationship with Solihull Town Centre



Weighted score based on how important people rated each answer. The higher the number, the more people agreed with it. A score of 2.5 is neutral.

### What Changes Do Visitors Want To See To Solihull Town Centre

