

General UK and North East business news

The [ONS labour market overview for May 2021](#) is now out and shows the following:

- Number of payroll employees has increased for the fifth consecutive month but remains 772,000 below pre-covid levels
- Since Feb 2020 the falls in payrolled employment have been in hospitality, among those under 25 years old and those living in London
- The economic inactivity rate for young people is at a record high. See below data

UK rates by economic status (people aged 16 to 24 years and 25 years and over), seasonally adjusted, cumulative change from January to March 2019, for each period up to January to March 2021



- There are over four million people not working and 3.1 million people still on furlough
- The latest estimates for January to March 2021 show signs of recovery, with a quarterly increase in the employment rate and a quarterly decrease in the unemployment rate
- During Feb 2021 to April 2021, there were an estimated 657,000 job vacancies, which is a growth of 8.0% (48,400) compared with last quarter
- The smallest companies, employing one to nine employees, had 8.9% fewer vacancies in February 2021 to April 2021 compared with the previous quarter and were the only size band displaying a decrease
- Stronger quarterly growth was reflected in 14 out of the 18 industries. The most notable industry that saw a growth was accommodation and food service activities
- Despite the growth on the quarter, however, most industries have seen a fall in the number of vacancies since before the pandemic in January 2020 to March 2020.

The latest NatWest North East Business Activity Index shows the North East economy is recovering but the region is behind other parts of the country: [Recovery continues in North East economy but worrying signs emerge - Business Live \(business-live.co.uk\)](#)

Leisure firms are asking for more support after a year of "haemorrhaging cash" and mounting debts due to the pandemic: [https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-57133899](#)

Amazon is to hire 10,000 UK employees as it opens more warehouses in the north and south of England: [https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2021/may/14/amazon-creates-10000-uk-jobs-on-back-of-online-shopping-boom-coronavirus](#)

Vodafone and Enterprise Nation are offering free online expert training to 100,000 small businesses to help boost their digital skills: [100,000 small businesses to get free digital skills training from Vodafone](#)

More businesses across the country are looking to close or downsize their offices and focus on hybrid, remote working: [https://www.fenews.co.uk/press-releases/68173-a-quarter-of-uk-businesses-looking-to-downsize-or-close-offices?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter](#)

Research from FourthRev has found that four in five UK businesses will need to recruit people from overseas in order to acquire the digital skills they need: [https://www.fenews.co.uk/press-releases/68305-over-half-of-uk-businesses-are-concerned-about-missing-out-on-key-strategic-deliverables-as-a-result-of-digital-skills-shortages](#)

Nearly a third of SME leaders are optimistic about all restrictions lifting next month, according to Nucleus Commercial Finance: [https://bmmagazine.co.uk/in-business/third-of-sme-leaders-optimistic-about-all-restrictions-lifting-in-june/](#)

Bibby Financial Services has found that the average small business is planning to invest £150,000 in the coming months. Different sectors were intending on investing different amounts. For example, construction SMEs intended to invest £225,000 and transport SMEs were planning to invest £209,000: [https://www.assetfinanceinternational.com/index.php/equipment-finance/news-emea/emea-articles/20205-uk-smes-to-invest-150-000-to-boost-economy-as-bibby-s-300-million-recovery-fund-sparks-optimism](#)

Sage CEO Steve Hare said the company's experience of supporting SMEs had been vital through the pandemic. He added: "We believe that small and medium-sized businesses will lead the recovery.": [https://www.standard.co.uk/business/sage-sme-customers-economic-recovery-b935095.html](#)

General North East events

Healthcare Innovation Readiness Programme for SMEs | RTC North – 25th May. Helping businesses to better understand customers and create value propositions that effectively help them sell into the healthcare sector.

[Healthcare Innovation Readiness Programme for SMEs Registration](#)

Transport for The North: The Full Rail Vision | Shoosmiths – 10th June.

Find out about rail infrastructure plans across the North East.

[Transport for North: The Full Rail Infrastructure Vision](#)

Recognising and Celebrating HR&D | CIPD North East of England – 11th June.

We invite you to join colleagues from across the region to be part of an event to recognise and celebrate HR&D in the North East.

[CIPD North East of England Recognising and Celebrating HR&D 2021](#)

Tech Leads the Way in a Challenging World | Dynamo North East – 17th June. Gain an insight into how the North East has excelled in IT and Technology during a pandemic.
[Dynamo 21: 'Tech Leads the Way in a Challenging World' — Dynamo North East](#)

Better Business Skills | North East Growth Hub – dates until 23rd June.
Enhance your business skills by attending our free event.
[Better Business Skills Events - Growth Hub](#)

Showcase North East | RTC North – 8th July.
Listen to local industry leaders and find out about current sector trends and opportunities.
[RTC North: Showcase North East](#)

Small Business Growth Programme North East | Sage – available online now!
Helping SMEs reach their goals.
[Sage Micro Business Growth Programme](#)

Northumberland

Northumberland engineering specialist Osbit is growing its international reach after completing a project in South East Asia:
<https://bdaily.co.uk/articles/2021/05/13/northumberland-engineering-manufacturer-sets-sights-on-global-growth>

Northumberland County Council has launched an Employer Skills Survey to ensure Northumberland businesses have the workforce and the skills they need to succeed:
<https://www.northumberlandgazette.co.uk/business/call-for-employers-to-outline-their-skills-needs-3239688>

Northumberland events

Online Networking | Business Northumberland – 28th May.
Find the RIGHT support for you and your business.
[Online Networking: North Northumberland Business Networking](#)

North East OpEx Forum | BTA – 23rd June.
Support for SME's gaining an insight for what is required to deliver Operational Excellence.
[North East OpEx Forum](#)

Hexham Business Networking Breakfast | Network B2B – every Tuesday.
Speak to friendly professionals from all sectors and share business advice.
[Hexham Business Networking Breakfast](#)

I Do Like Mondays (Hexham) | EveryMonday.org – every Monday.
Meet professionals in a social setting for an informal chat and have fun.
[I DO LIKE MONDAYS! Free networking event in Hexham](#)

I Do Like Mondays (Cramlington) | EveryMonday.org – every Monday.
Meet professionals in a social setting for an informal chat and have fun.
[I DO LIKE MONDAYS! Free networking event in Cramlington](#)

I Do Like Mondays (Ashington) | EveryMonday.org – every Monday.

Meet professionals in a social setting for an informal chat and have fun.
[I DO LIKE MONDAYS! Free networking event in Ashington](#)

North Tyneside

Proposals have been submitted by Helio Pact Ltd for a new industrial development on West Chirton Industrial Estate. The plans would create 40 new jobs:

<https://www.chroniclelive.co.uk/news/more-40-new-jobs-could-20574965>

North Tyneside events

Tynemouth Business Networking Breakfast | Network B2B – every Tuesday.

Speak to friendly professionals from all sectors and share business advice.

[Tynemouth Business Networking Breakfast](#)

Speed Networking VWorks | Village Hotel – on the last Wednesday each month.

Come enjoy some Business-To-Business Speed Networking.

[Speed Networking VWorks](#)

Newcastle

Newcastle-based electrical specialist GME Industry has received £100,000 investment as it looks to expand in the green energy market: <https://bdaily.co.uk/articles/2021/05/13/durham-electrical-specialist-aims-to-boost-green-energy-projects-with-100k-investment>

Newcastle events

Back to the Future | Holiday Inn Jesmond – 20th May.

Come for a chat to get used to face-face networking as we adjust back to normal life.

[Back to the Future Networking](#)

Business Networking | Network B2B – every Wednesday.

Speak to friendly professionals from all sectors and share business advice.

[Jesmond Networking Group](#)

South Tyneside

Pharma firm Immunodiagnostic Systems, based in South Tyneside, is to be acquired by American life sciences company PerkinElmer in a deal worth £110m: <https://www.business-live.co.uk/enterprise/north-east-pharmaceutical-firm-ids-20611580>

South Tyneside events

Business Networking | Network B2B – 21st May.

Speak to friendly professionals from all sectors and share business advice.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/south-shields-virtual-networking-event-tickets-99672027718?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch>

Gateshead

Pharma company Shield Therapeutics has started trading on an American stock market in preparation for a product launch in the states: <https://www.business-live.co.uk/manufacturing/gateshead-pharma-firm-shield-therapeutics-20615495>

Bioscience plant Parker Bioscience Filtration is expanding its manufacturing facilities in the North East: <https://www.business-live.co.uk/manufacturing/north-east-bioscience-plant-supporting-20590366>

Gateshead events

How to Build a Personal Brand | eXp UK – 24th May.

Learn how running an Estate Agency business might be for you.

[eXp Tour - Learn About eXp](#)

Sunderland

Sunderland business woman Dame Irene Hays has launched one of the world's newest cruise liners. Iona is also the largest vessel built for the UK cruise market:

<https://www.itv.com/news/tyne-tees/2021-05-17/sunderland-business-woman-dame-irene-hays-launches-uks-largest-cruise-ship>

Sunderland's Nissan plant has secured £80m investment from Phoenix Group to support its battery car production operations:

<https://www.businessgreen.com/news/4031379/nissan%E2%80%99-sunderland-ev-hybrid-car-factory-secures-gbp80m-boost>

Sunderland events

Online Workshop for Creative Businesses | North East BIC – 21st May

Join us to hear about the future way of working and discuss your creative business growth plans and ideas.

[Online Workshop for Creative Businesses](#)

Washington Network Events | Network B2B – every Tuesday.

Speak to friendly professionals from all sectors and share business advice.

[Washington Networking Event](#)

Durham

The Morrison Busty Low Carbon Depot, a new £8.3m low carbon project, is set to be created in County Durham: <https://bdaily.co.uk/articles/2021/05/13/county-durham-to-become-home-to-multi-million-pound-low-carbon-project>

Durham tech firm Hicomply has announced an international partnership with South African cyber security firm Infosec Consulting: <https://bdaily.co.uk/articles/2021/05/11/durham-tech-firm-expands-global-reach-with-new-south-african-partnership>

Durham events

Meet the Advisors | Business Durham – 24th May.
Offering advice to businesses in South West Durham.

[Meet the Advisors](#)

Business Drop In Clinic | Business Durham – 27th May.
For both large organisations and SMEs with few staff, come and listen to our advisers and how they can help you make your business grow.

[Business Drop In Clinic](#)

Durham Development Plans: Building Back Bigger, Better and Fairer | Durham County Council – 17th June.

Listen to some of County Durham's key leaders in driving the extensive economic development and regeneration opportunities.

[Future Development Plans - Durham and North East](#)