Bedford Borough's Labour Market:

Q1 2023/24

Bedford Borough's Economy:
Key Statistics

79,000 employee jobs

Over 7,000 businesses

Key Sectors:
 - Logistics
 - Advanced Engineering
 - Creative
 - Food & Drink

Bedford Borough's Economy: *Yearly Comparison*

Please note due to the time lag on some data releases, all but the claimant count are not reflective of current changes due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

		2022/ 1 year prior	2023/ Most up to date data	Movement
Total Population		174,700	185,800	Up
Total working age population		106,400 (60.9%)	117,400 (63.2%)	Up
% of the working age population that are in employment		77.1%	78.5%	Up
% of the working age population qualified to Level 4		53.0%	49.5%	Down
% of the working age population with no qualifications		3.9%	5.3%	Up
Unemployment rate		3.7%	4.2%	Down
Claimant rate		4.0%	4.1%	Down
Gross Weekly Pay (mean)	By resident	£736.20	£762.0	Up
	By workplace	£684.40	£709.60	Up

Source: NOMIS. Data extracted on 14/11/2023

Job Market

The total number of jobs adverts for Q1 was 12,992.

	Job Title	Q1
1	Support Workers	185
2	Administrators	134
3	Cleaners	90
4	Warehouse Operatives	88
5	Care Assistants	88
6	Production Engineers	57
7	Vehicle Technicians	56
8	Health Care Assistants	51
9	Design Engineers	51
10	Team Leads	50

	Job Title	Q1
11	Account Assistants	49
12	Registered Nurses	47
13	Physiotherapists	46
14	Project Managers	44
15	Field Service Engineers	43
16	Delivery Drivers	39
17	HGV Technicians	39
18	Sales Executives	38
19	Apprentices	38
20	Residential Support Workers	38

Source: Lightcast

Employability Skills

Basic Skills

Literacy   Numeracy   Spoken English   Basic Digital

Core Transferable Skills

Communication		Time management
Organisation	Problem solving	Analytical
Digital literacy	Creativity/Innovation	Teamwork/Collaboration
Planning	Leadership	Resilience

Attitudes & Behaviours

Detail orientated		Reliability
Work ethic	Independent working	Politeness
Willingness to learn	Flexibility	Humility
Enthusiasm	Adaptability	Empathy
Self-motivation	Honesty	Curiosity

Technical/Vocational Skills

Job specific		
Operations	Management	Financial awareness
Customer service	Specialist digital skills	Working with hands
Sales	Commercial acumen	Driving

Qualifications and Certification

__Digital literacy__ defined as: Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint, Word, Teams
__Basic digital__ is defined as: search online, access a bank account, sending/receiving emails.
__Spoken English__ includes ESOL

Bedford Borough's Economy:
Key Investments and Developments

Recent Companies:

Richardson International

Richardson International is Canada's largest agribusiness and is recognised as a global leader in agriculture and food processing. They acquired the Mile Road site from European Oat Millers in 2017 and have been working up proposals to invest £50m into the site and have recently commenced construction work to expand the facility and increase capacity by upwards of 35%. This latest investment will improve upon all operational aspects of the plant, from intake and warehousing capabilities to logistics and distribution. A full overhaul of the site footprint will result in greater operational efficiencies, modernization, and enhanced storage capacity.

Bedford Borough's Economy:
Key Investments and Developments

Key Developments:

Colworth Science Park

Colworth Science Park in Sharnbrook is a centre of excellence with significant innovation and research & development undertaken on the park. Home to Unilever's global R&D centre, Colworth Science Park is the top location for new and growing food and agri-tech businesses, who will benefit from being in the same community as one of the largest consumer brands in the world.

Unilever have recently occupied a new £5m engineering facility and have a dedicated team of scientists, including many that are internationally recognised as leaders in their fields. Their expertise covers: Chemistry, Cell Biology, Microbiology, Toxicology, Process Safety, Exposure Science, Computational & Mathematical Modelling, Informatics & Data Science, and Environmental & Sustainability Science. The Unilever Colworth team apply their current scientific knowledge and risk/impact assessment expertise while also continuing to develop new science and approaches to produce development and manufacturing and packaging processes.

Mayes Yard

The town centre urban block (which encompasses the vacant former Beales building, vacant former Debenhams and Council assets at the Corn Exchange, Harpur Suite and Central Library) is being considered as a combined town centre project and is the focus of engagement and joint working with key stakeholders.

The envisioned Mayes Yard development site has been proposed as a Bedford Borough Local Plan 2040 allocation, as policy HOU2 Mayes Yard, High Street and Silver Street, Bedford. The proposed policy allocation details that the land at Mayes Yard will be developed for a mix of uses to create an extended cultural quarter in this part of the town, including residential, hotel, retail, and leisure.

Bedford Borough's Economy: Conclusion

- Support workers, warehouse operatives and care assistants remain some of the most advertised jobs. This is a continuation of the trends seen in previous reports.

- Range of employability skills that employers are looking for, including but not limited to qualifications only.

- Bedford claimant count is now at 4.1%.

LMI Statistics Definitions

Total working age population:

This is the number of 16-64 year olds living within the Borough boundary, who are in employment. This is taken from the Annual Population Survey from the Office of National Statistics. This is updated every quarter but as a whole year, for example January 2020- December 2020.

% of the working age population that are in employment

This is the number of 16-64 year olds living within the Borough boundary. This is taken from the Annual Population Survey from the Office of National Statistics (ONS). This is updated every quarter but as a whole year, for example January 2020- December 2020.

Gross Value Added (GVA)

GVA is the measure of the value of goods and services produced in an area, industry or sector of an economy. The GVA used is current price by industry. This is taken from ONS and is updated annually but is often delayed (2019 released in 2021).

% of the working age population qualified to Level 4/ No qualification

This is the number of 16-64 year olds living within the Borough boundary, who have the related level of qualification. This is taken from the Annual Population Survey from the Office of National Statistics, this is updated once a year.

Business Numbers

This is the number of businesses in Bedford Borough at the time data was collected. These are sorted into:
- Micro (0-9 employees)
- Small 10-49 employees)
- Medium (50-249 employees)
- Large (250+ employees)

This is from the Inter Departmental Business Register, from ONS, and is released yearly.

Job Numbers

This is the number of employee jobs by sector. This is taken from the ONS Business Register and Employment Survey and is updated yearly.
These are sorted into the 'type' of job, eg administration or manufacturing.

LMI Statistics Definitions

Unemployment rate

The unemployment rate consists of those people, aged 16-64 years who are out of work, who are actively looking for work and are available to start immediately. The data is taken from the Annual Population survey from ONS.

The results are model based and uses the APS results to do this, where a percentage of the population is interviewed and results extrapolated to the whole population. This is updated every quarter but as a whole year, for example January 2020- December 2020.

Claimant count

The Claimant Count is the number of people who are receiving benefits principally for the reason of being unemployed. This includes Job Seekers Allowance and Universal Credit.

This is released every month detailing information from the month prior.

Unemployment Rate vs Claimant Count

There is a large degree of overlap between the claimant count and unemployment rate. In some circumstances people can claim benefits while they have relatively low earnings from part time work; these claimants in a paid job would not appear in the model based measure of unemployment.

Similarly claimants of unemployment benefits may not appear in the model based measure if, when interviewed for the survey, they stated that they are not seeking, or are not available to start work. Both of these types of people would appear within the Claimant Count but would not be classified as unemployed.

Similarly, people who are not claimants can appear among the model based unemployed if they are not entitled to, or choose not to claim unemployment benefits. For example:
- People whose partner was working
- People who are looking for work alongside full-time study
- People beyond or around State Pension Age who are looking for work.