BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Bedford Borough's Labour Market:

Q1 2025/26

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Bedford Borough's Economy: Key Statistics

82,000 employee jobs

Over 8,000 businesses

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

Source: NOMIS. Data extracted 23-07-2025

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Bedford Borough's Economy: *Yearly Comparison*

		2024/ 1 year prior	2025/ Most up to date	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		82%	78.2%	Down
% of the working age population qualified to Level 4+		53.0%	44.3%	Down
Unemployment rate		4.0%	4.3%	Up
Claimant rate		4.0%	4.7%	Up
Gross Weekly Pay (mean)	By resident	£823.7	£858.70	Up
	By workplace	£718.8	£768.0	Up

Source: NOMIS. Data extracted on 23-07-2025

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Job Market: *Most Advertised Jobs*

Occupation	Total/Unique (Apr 2025 - Jun 2025)	Posting Intensity	Median Posting Duration
Tractor-Trailer Truck Driver	515 / 245	2 : 1	23 days
Registered Nurse	550 / 188	3 : 1	27 days
Janitor / Cleaner	290 / 158	2 : 1	20 days
Home Health Aide	292 / 139	2 : 1	27 days
Preschool / Childcare Teacher	302 / 136	2 : 1	27 days
Warehouse Worker	251 / 135	2 : 1	24 days
Teacher Assistant	279 / 130	2 : 1	30 days
Office / Administrative Assistant	175 / 116	2 : 1	16 days
Physician	163 / 103	2 : 1	22 days
Sales Representative	161 / 102	2 : 1	16 days
Customer Service Representative	178 / 101	2 : 1	18 days
Retail Sales Associate	247 / 100	2 : 1	20 days
Healthcare Administrator	226 / 95	2 : 1	30 days
Caregiver / Personal Care Aide	215 / 93	2 : 1	28 days
Forklift / Pallet Jack Operator	152 / 90	2 : 1	20 days

Source: Lightcast 23/07/2025

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Job Market: *Top Advertised Industry*

Industry	Total/Unique (Apr 2025 - Jun 2025)	Posting Intensity	Median Posting Duration
Employment Activities	5,662 / 2,716	2 : 1	28 days
Human Health Activities	1,850 / 658	3 : 1	25 days
Retail Trade, Except of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles	736 / 280	3 : 1	18 days
Office Administrative, Office Support and Other Business Support Activities	381 / 220	2 : 1	24 days
Residential Care Activities	570 / 218	3 : 1	30 days
Food and Beverage Service Activities	383 / 177	2 : 1	23 days
Education	290 / 175	2 : 1	19 days
Other Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities	277 / 142	2 : 1	23 days
Activities of Head Offices; Management Consultancy Activities	248 / 130	2 : 1	29 days
Wholesale and Retail Trade and Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles	244 / 126	2 : 1	27 days
Public Administration and Defence; Compulsory Social Security	188 / 105	2 : 1	19 days
Financial Service Activities, Except Insurance and Pension Funding	213 / 100	2 : 1	25 days
Social Work Activities Without Accommodation	240 / 97	2 : 1	28 days
Wholesale Trade, Except of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles	168 / 92	2 : 1	14 days

Source: Lightcast 23/07/2025

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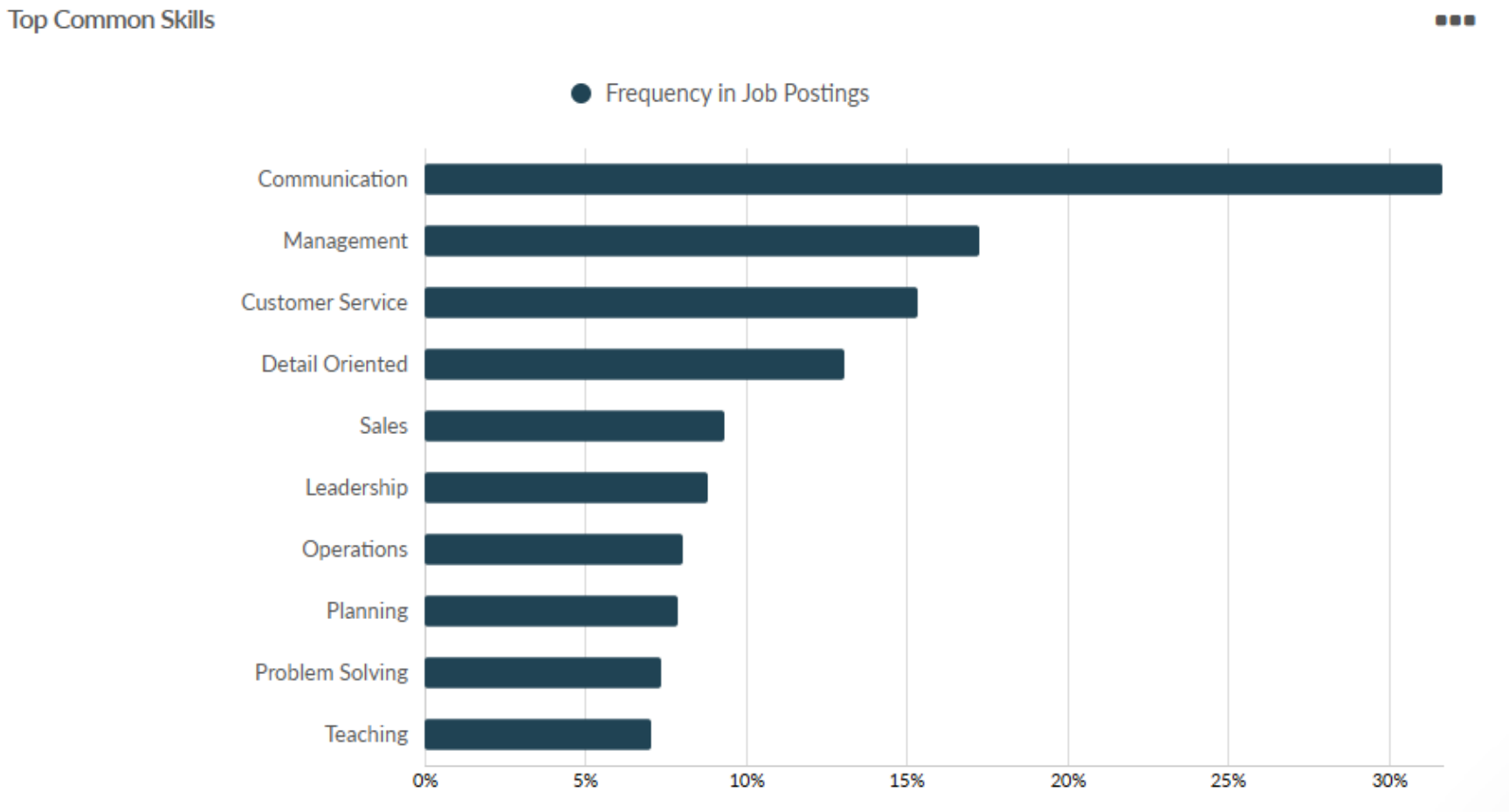
Job Adverts: *Top Common Skills*



Source: Lightcast 23/07/2025

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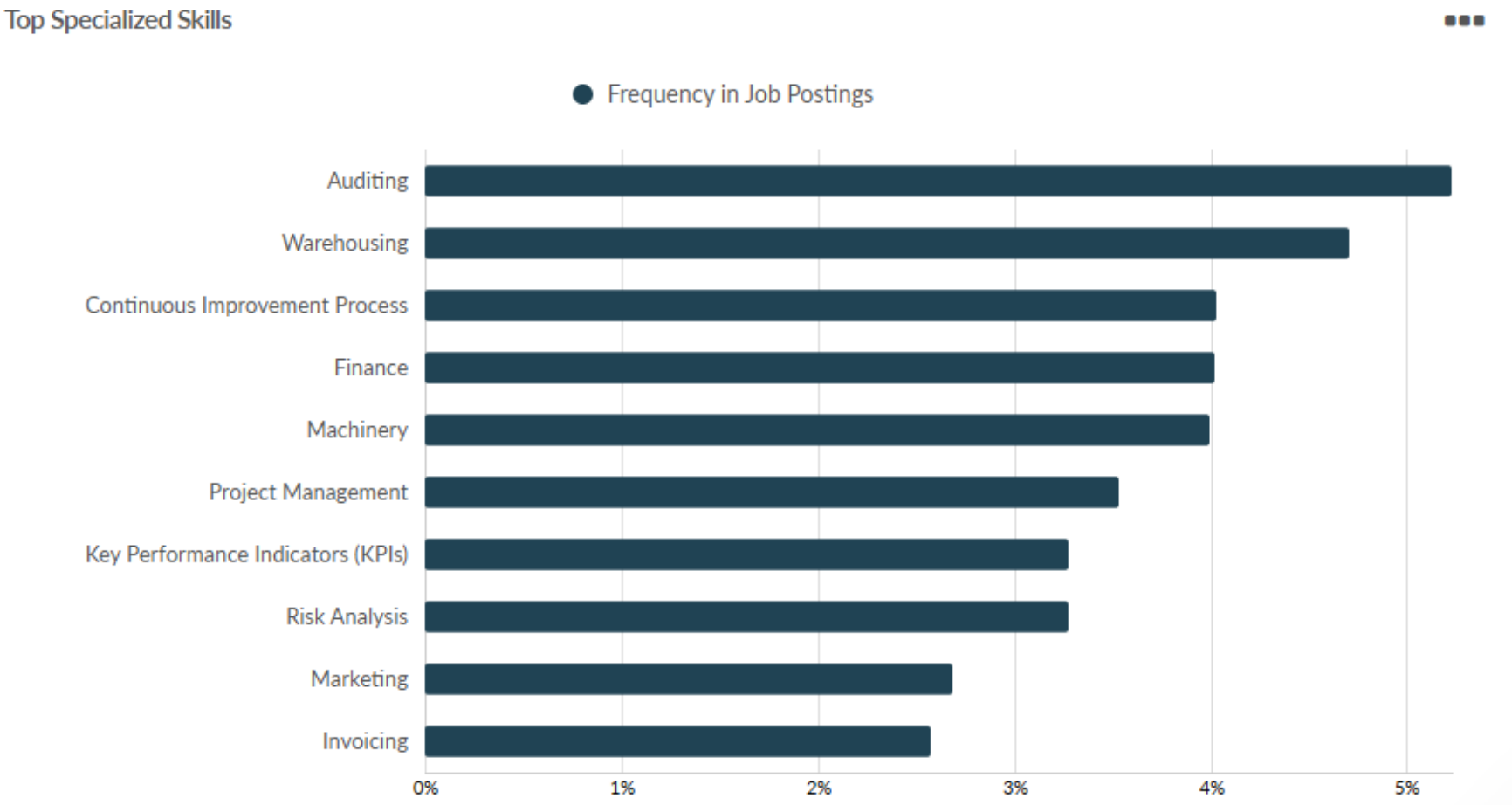
Job Adverts: *Top Specialised Skills*



Source: Lightcast 23/07/2025

Employability Skills

Basic Skills

Literacy | Numeracy | Spoken English | Basic Digital

Core Transferable Skills

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

Attitudes & Behaviours

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

Technical/Vocational Skills

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

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

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Bedford Borough's Economy:
Key Investments and Developments

Two New Town Centre Businesses

Heavenly Desserts, opposite the John Howard statue, is a national brand which opened its doors in 2008 and 'has led the way in dessert dining'. The new business now has more than 50 branches in the UK with the aim of delivering memorable dessert experiences. It's also proud to have become recognised as the UK's fastest-growing dessert brand through its signature creations, such as the revolutionary Croffle, to being crowned 'Best Dessert Restaurant' by Deliveroo.

Furniture Outlet signed a five-year lease on the 26,000 sqft ground floor on the former Wilko store site in the High Street. A small section of the shop front has been retained (circa 500 sq ft) and, once planning has been granted another retail unit will be available to let.

The two upper floors of the three-storey building – vacant since the collapse of the budget homeware chain in 2023 – are expected to be redeveloped for residential use.

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Bedford Borough's Economy: *Conclusion*

- Truck drivers, cleaners and nurses are the most advertised jobs this quarter.
- Range of employability skills that employers are looking for, including but not limited to qualifications only.
- Bedford's claimant count is now at 4.7%.

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.