

# Approach to skills in Birmingham

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# The West Midlands Context

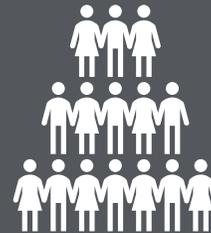
## Pre-Covid we were making strong progress in the region



**Employment  
rate up**



**Unemployment  
down**



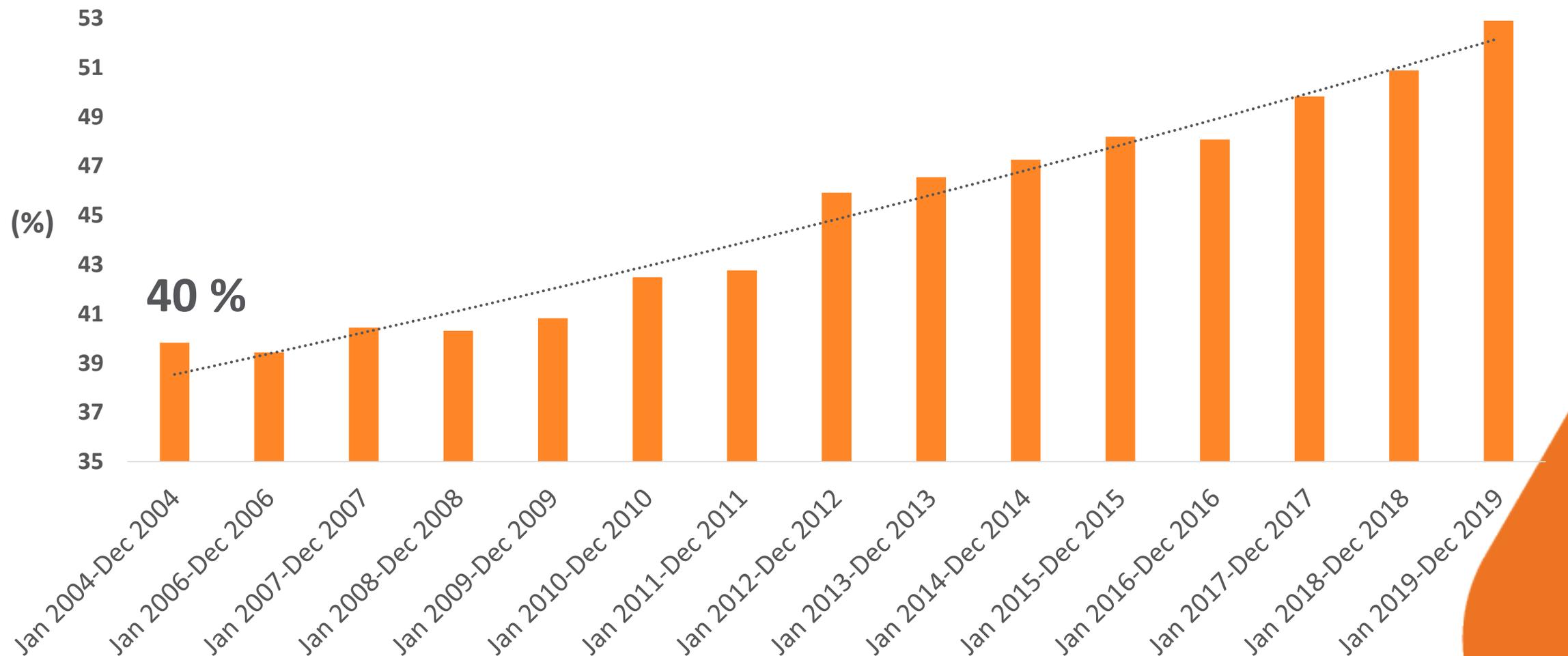
**Qualification  
levels up –  
Level 3 +**



**GVA  
increasing**

# More people with NVQ3+ Qualifications

% with NVQ3+ - aged 16-64



# Our Focus

- Responsiveness to local economy and needs.
- More training leading to jobs.
- More higher level skills.
- More collaboration across providers.
- Clearer progression routes from entry level to L3 and beyond.

## *Starting to work...*

- 64% increase in Level 3 provision.
- More courses focused on / delivering job outcomes (50% + in retraining pilots)
- More regional collaboration – shared curriculum, resources, signposting etc
- More effective employer engagement.

# But complex challenges remained

- Youth unemployment remained stubbornly high and was increasing.
- Benefits of economic growth not felt by all communities – e.g. 25% people were economically inactive – rising to over a third of BME groups.
- 1 in 4 jobs was below the real living wage.
- Increase in jobs requiring higher level skills increasing – region above average for low/no skills in workforce.
- Gaps in digital skills and in sectors like Financial Services, higher level Construction etc.
- Intra-regional variations – e.g. median full-time weekly wage was £499 in the Black Country compared to £545 in Greater Birmingham and Solihull and £589 in Coventry and Warwickshire.
- Life expectancy drops by 9 years as you move across the region.

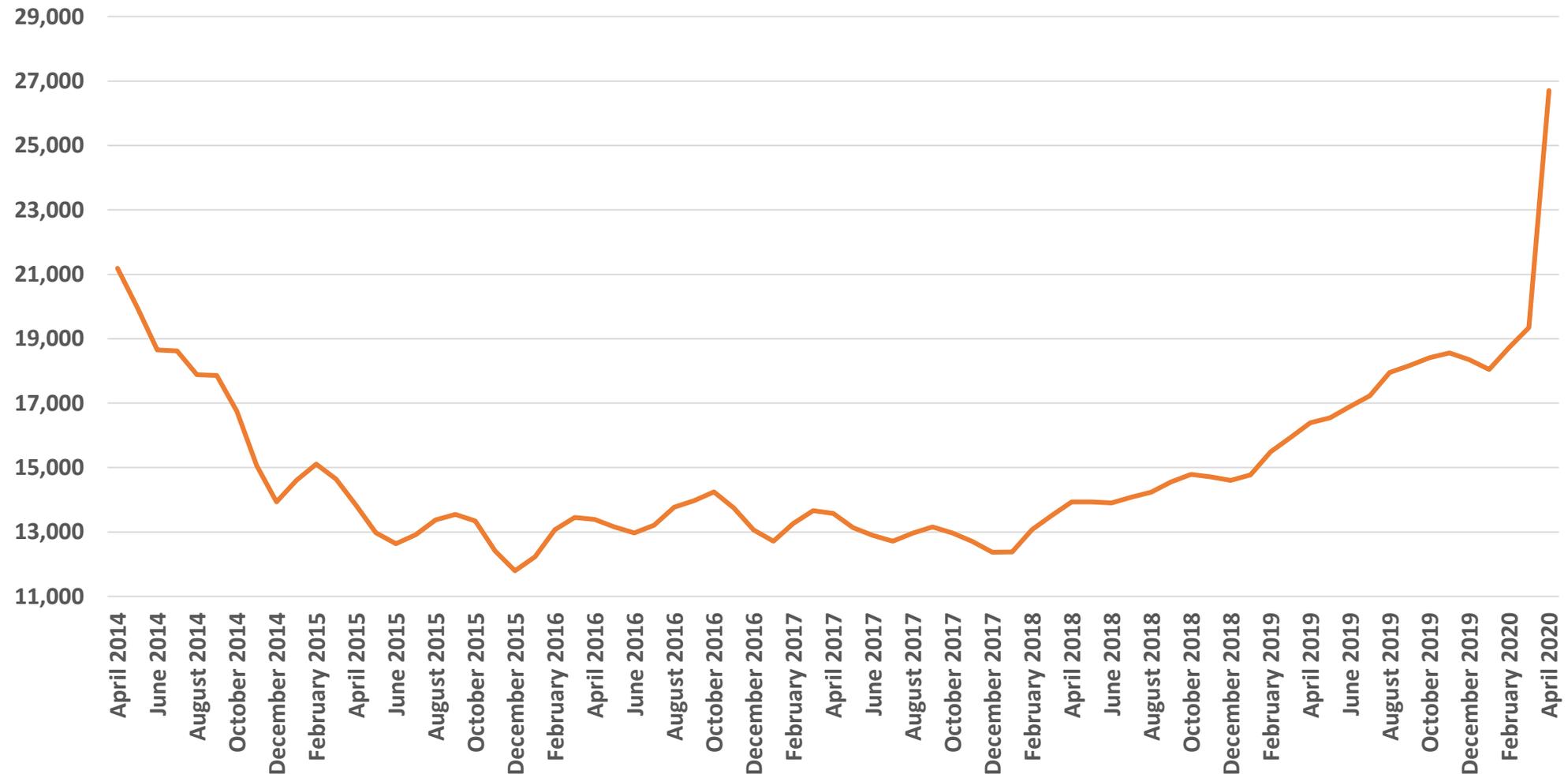
# Covid-19 will hit the region hard



- Will exacerbate existing issues and inequalities:
  - high youth unemployment
  - high unemployment amongst BAME groups
  - over-concentration of people in low-paid, insecure employment
  - levels of qualifications and skills lower than national averages
  - Education and training disrupted
  - Protected AEB budgets
  - Some providers may go bust

# Bleak outlook for our young people

WMCA Claimant Count aged 16-24



# Skills in Birmingham

# Birmingham: Employment and Skills challenges

- Population 16+ is around 729,600
- Overall claimant rate is 11.1% - higher than WM at 8.2% and UK (6.5%)
- Youth claimant rate is 9.6% - higher than WM at 8.8% and UK (7.5%)
- 12.9% residents have no quals – compared to 10.2% WM (7.7% UK)
- 79% Level 1 vs 82% WM (86% UK)
- And only 51% have Level 3 or above vs 53% WM (59% UK)
- Majority of new jobs expected to be at L3 and above
- City to be hard hit by impact of Covid and subsequent recession – with disadvantaged groups (young people, BME, low-skilled etc) most at risk.

# Birmingham: Current FE Skills Offer

- £70m+ Adult Education Budget (AEB) invested in Birmingham.
- 61% of the budget is spent on females and 74% on BME residents.
- Over two-thirds of provision is at Entry Level/Level 1 – 65%
- 31% at Level 2
- And only 4% at Level 3
- This suggests a lack of progression – and a gap in technical skills
- 47 providers across Birmingham, including South and City College, Birmingham Adult Education and BMet
- Many residents also travel to other colleges -e.g. 51% of students at Solihull College are from Birmingham, 21% of students at Sandwell etc
  
- We are working with local providers to increase range of technical skills courses available – especially in key growth area.
- Strong partnership with BCC – identifying and addressing local skills needs.

# Birmingham:

## Offer to young unemployed

- Shortly launch new youth offer – online and physical.
- Collaborative approach – JCP, LA, local partners.
- Four Youth Hubs planned in Birmingham at The Princes Trust (City Centre), The Lighthouse (Lozells), The Factory (Longbridge), the Pump (Shard End).
- These hubs will offer a range of services:
  - More careers support
  - Dedicated Youth Employability Coaches
  - More second level 2 and 3 qualifications – where no work available
  - Access to work experience / jobs – Kickstart and other recruitment
  - Technical training – linked to jobs
- Regional work to better track and intervene to support NEETs

# Birmingham: Offer to unemployed

- More provision focused on getting people in to work.
- Collaboration with LA, JCP and other local partners.
- Sector-based Work Academies – for example to support Civil Service recruitment (GoTrain working with DWP)
- Community-based employment support in Shard End and Washwood Heath.
- Support for localised interventions – East Bham, North Bham, Northfield.
- Targeted work with employers and sectors that are recruiting.

# Birmingham: Offer to employed

- New entitlement for those on real living wage or below.
- Encouraging greater flexibility in delivery (night school)
- More support available for higher level skills (Level 3+) for employed and unemployed (regional flexibility)
  - **Netcom Training Ltd** deliver Cyber Security training linked to local skills needs.
  - **Fircroft College** delivering Digital Technologies, Business Management, Accounting and Finance.
  - **BCTG** provide courses in Construction, Planning and the Built Environment, Information and Communication Technology, and Business, Administration and Law.
  - **Serco** offer includes Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies.
  - **BMET** delivering Level 3 Engineering Technology and Certificate in Robotics.
  - **South and City** through flexibilities in funding delivering a range of courses from Level 3 and 4 AAT Advanced Diploma in Accounting, Level 3 Certificate in End of Life Care, Access to Nursing and Level 4 and 5 Diploma in Construction plus more.
- £40m Apprenticeships Levy - 1,336 apprentices in 364 SMEs supported.
- Growing focus on emerging sectors – e.g. fintech, green jobs.
- Examples of offer for Construction and Digital sectors:

# Birmingham: Construction Gateway

- Employers shape curriculum in areas of key skills shortage.
- Target unemployed and low-paid residents looking to change careers.
- No impact on benefits.
- Linked to major projects such as HS2 – 50%+ job outcomes.
- Linked to on-site training hubs – at heart of the community.
  - Welland Road, Perry Barr in partnership with Lendlease.
  - Bath row in partnership with Bouygnes.
  - Broad Street in partnership with John Sisk and Son, The Mercian Development.
  - Chamberlain Square in partnership with Galliford Try, 3 Arena Central Development providing 50 new jobs.
- Over 1,500 people supported in Birmingham to date.
- Focus on job outcomes - removing Level 1 courses without any progression.

# Birmingham: Digital Skills

- New Digital Entitlement at level 1 and 2.
- £6.5m Digital Retraining Scheme – targeting unemployed and low-waged – 70%+ jobs/progression.
- Brought in new digital providers – with courses linked to real employer needs – coding, cloud infrastructure, cyber security etc
- Opportunity to support under-represented groups too
  - For example 6-month Coding Bootcamp programme in Birmingham for unemployed/low-paid black women.
  - Ashley Housing Group will be supporting BME individuals in re-skilling and up-skilling to become digital skills operatives.
  - School of Code bootcamp - 90% employment success rate with graduates taking up jobs at places such as Wealth Wizards, Santander, Barvissimo, B13 Technology, The Economist and more.
- Concerns about digital access.

# Birmingham:

## Commonwealth Games Jobs and Skills Academy

- Umbrella for range of employment and skills activities, including:
  - Linking new CWG job opportunities to local residents through targeted training (e.g. construction)
  - Increasing levels of technical skills (£1m invested to date)
  - Helping local residents prepare for / access Games volunteering opportunities – targeting young people, BME, disadvantaged wards etc
  - Wider campaign to encourage young people to volunteer.
  - Support for people post-Games.

# Questions