



SUFFOLK ECONOMY, EMPLOYMENT & SKILLS: INTERIM UPDATE

11 February 2025

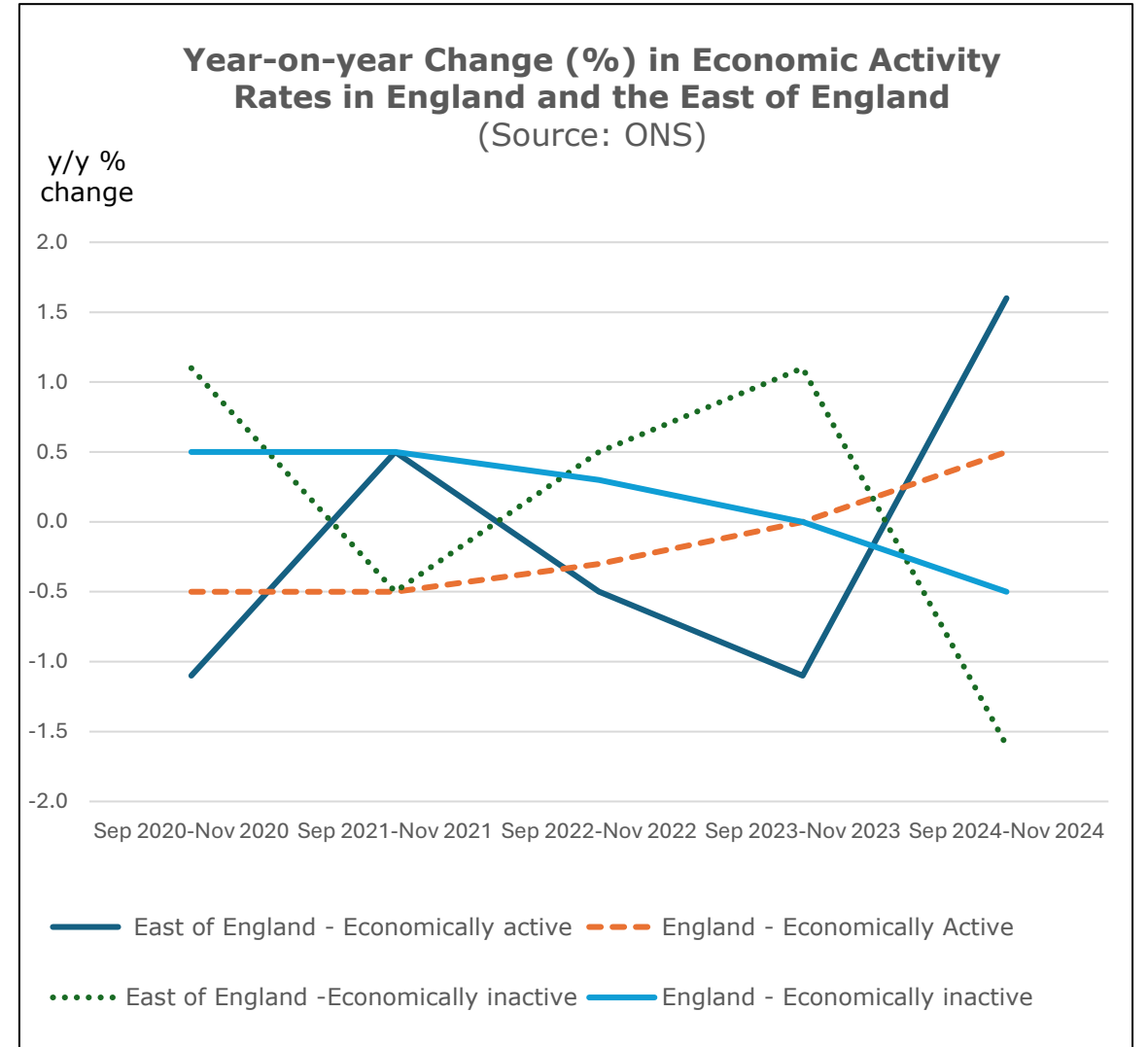
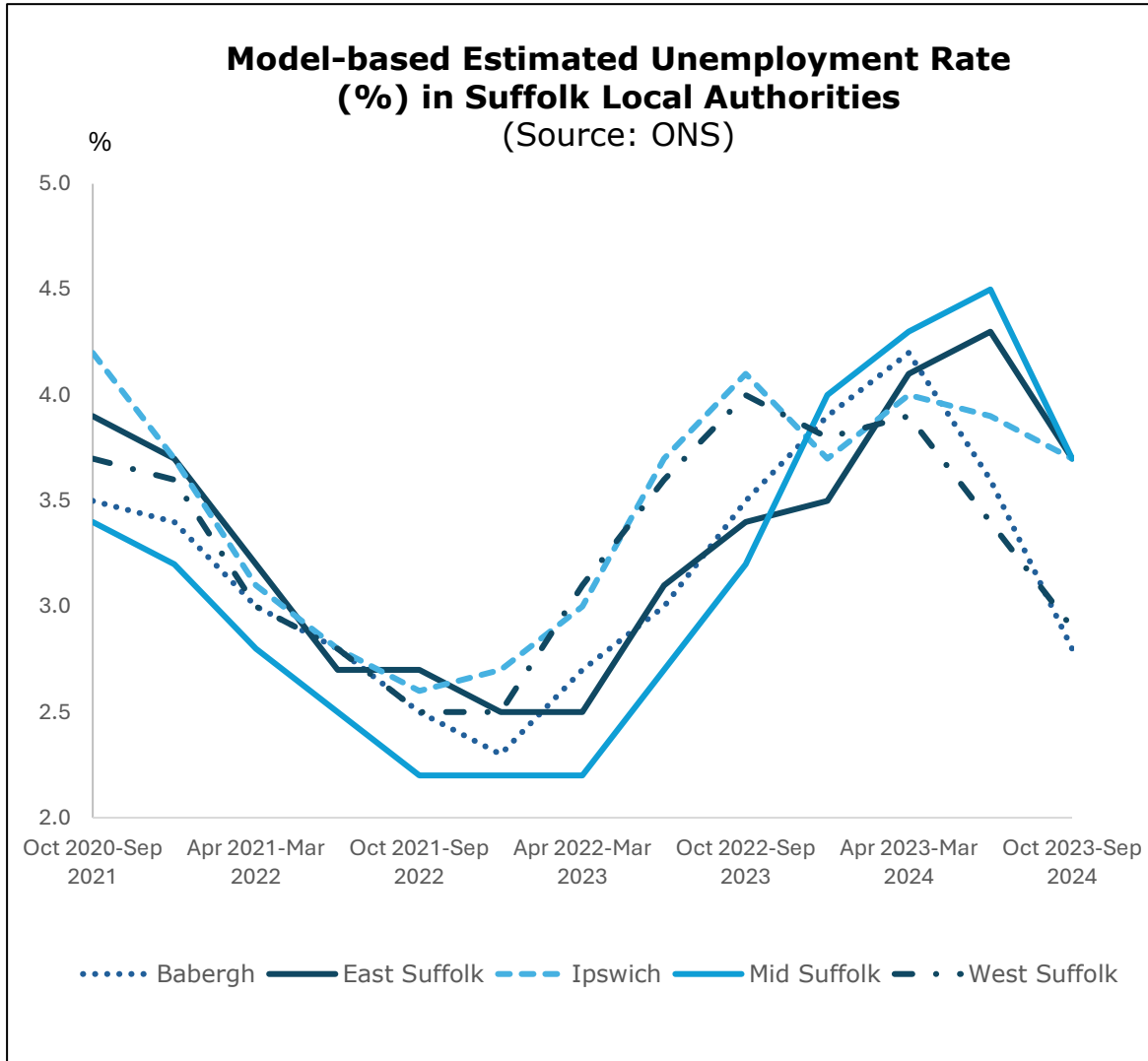
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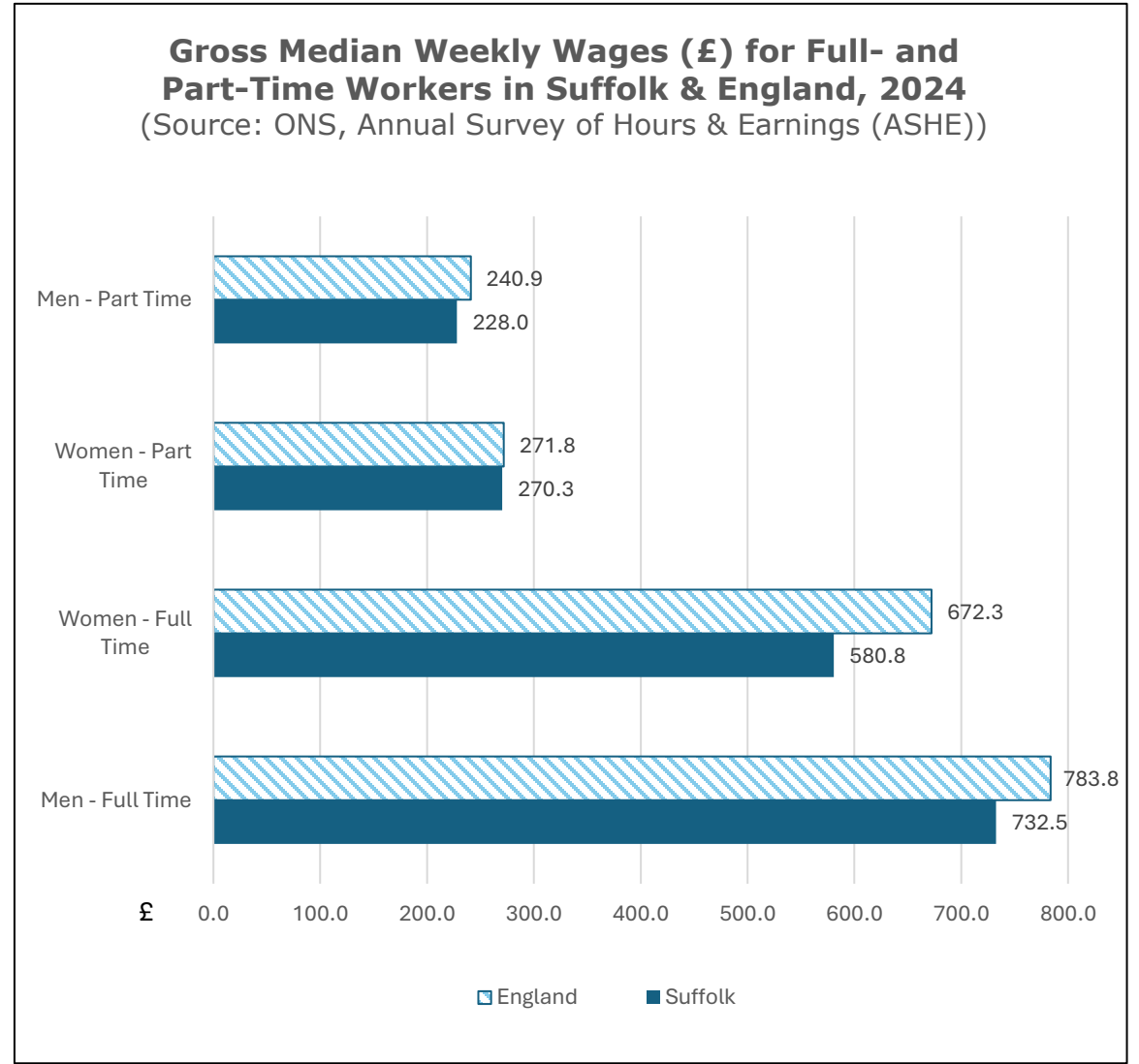
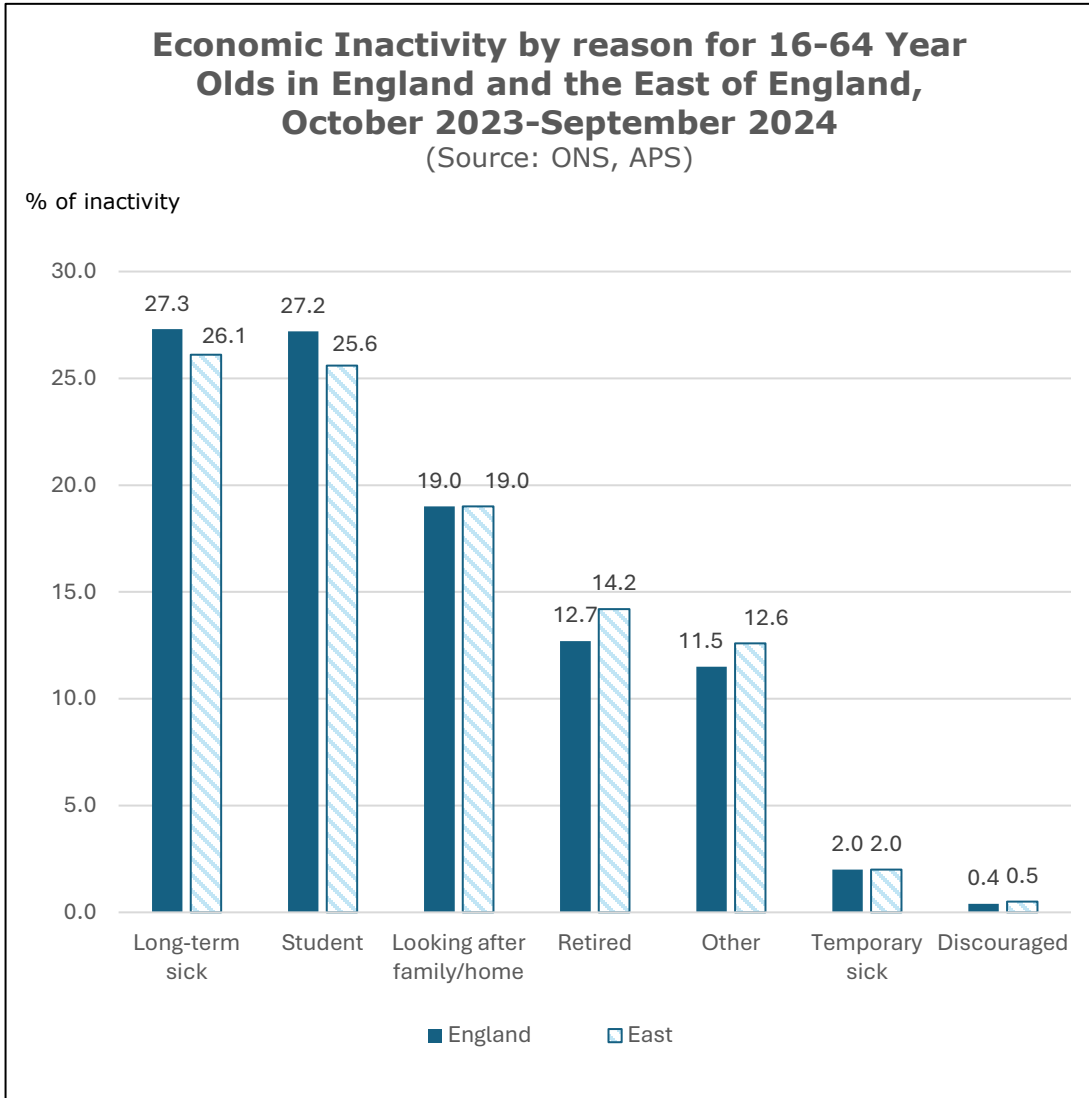
Note on Data Quality

- Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimates produced by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) have been affected by increased volatility, resulting from smaller achieved sample sizes. Ongoing challenges with response rates and levels mean that LFS-based labour market statistics will be badged by the ONS as official statistics in development until further review. The ONS recommends using LFS data as part of their suite of labour market indicators, alongside workforce jobs (WFJ), Claimant Count data, and Pay As You Earn Real Time Information (PAYE RTI) estimates.
- The recent LFS reweighting partially closes the gap between employment indicators, but the longer-term, broad coherence between WFJ and PAYE RTI, when looking at annual change, suggests that these sources are likely to be providing a more reliable read on employment, particularly for employees.
- Despite these coherence challenges, the LFS continues to be the sole source of data for unemployment, economic inactivity and self-employment, and provides a range of breakdowns that are only possible from LFS data. SODA will use the LFS data in conjunction with other indicators, especially when providing insight on trends/patterns. SODA will advise additional caution where appropriate.

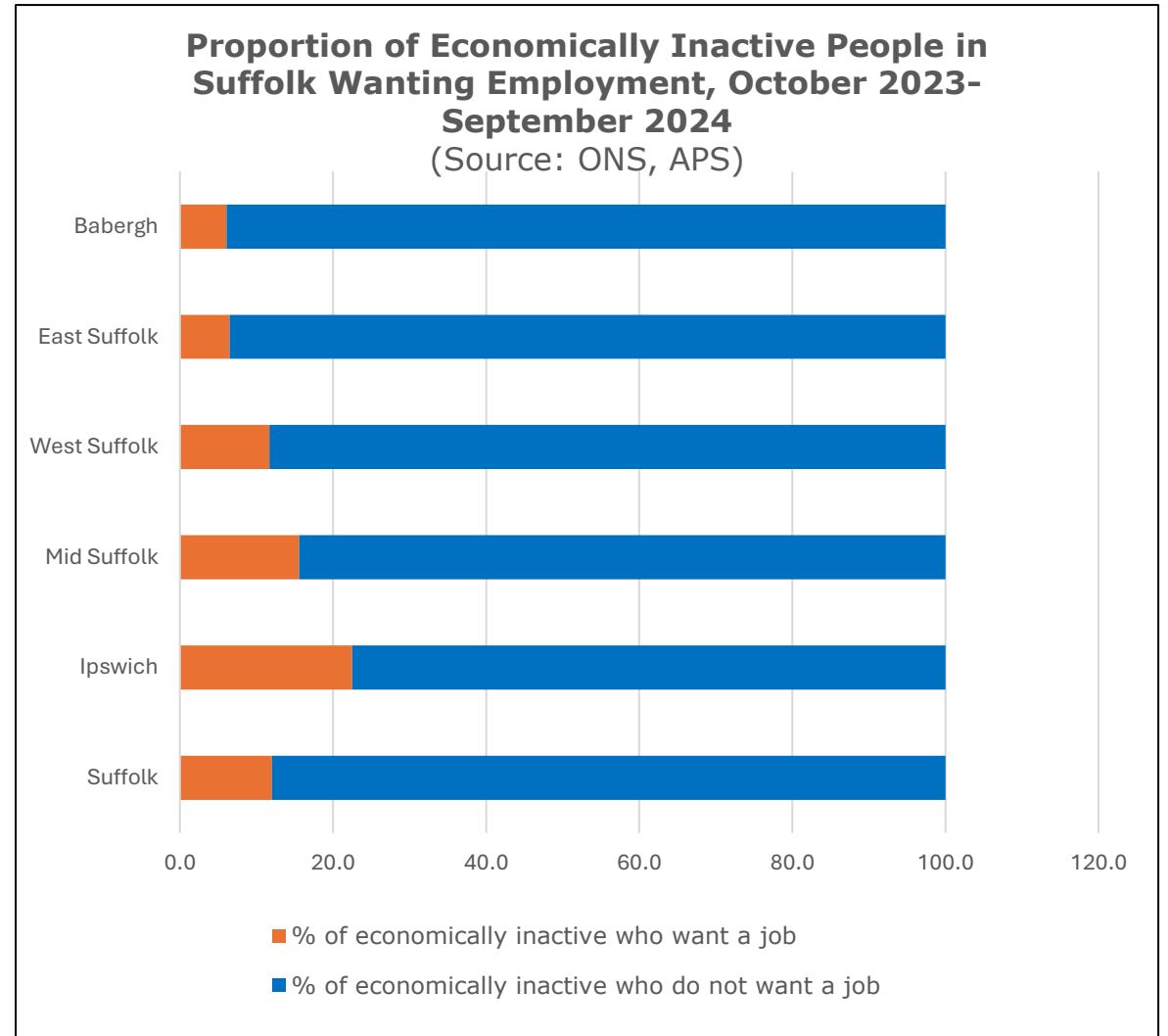
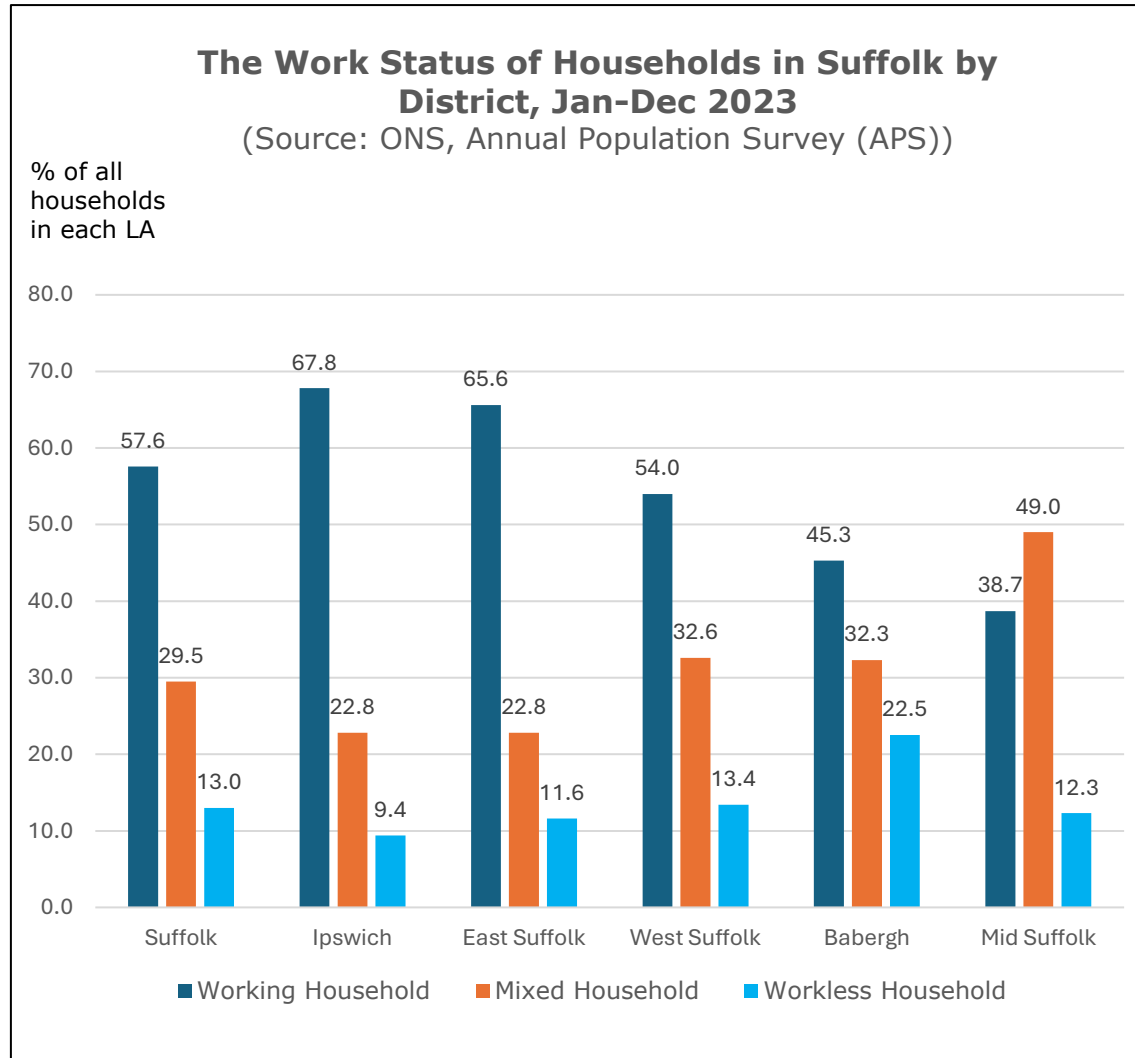
Official model-based estimates indicate that the steep rise in the unemployment rates in Suffolk have come to an end, with unemployment in West Suffolk and Babergh falling below 3% and all other local authorities to 3.7% in the year to September 2024. A similar trend can be seen in the East of England's economically active figures with a jump in the economic activity rate to 1.6% year-on-year in November 2024 compared with a 0.5% rise nationally.



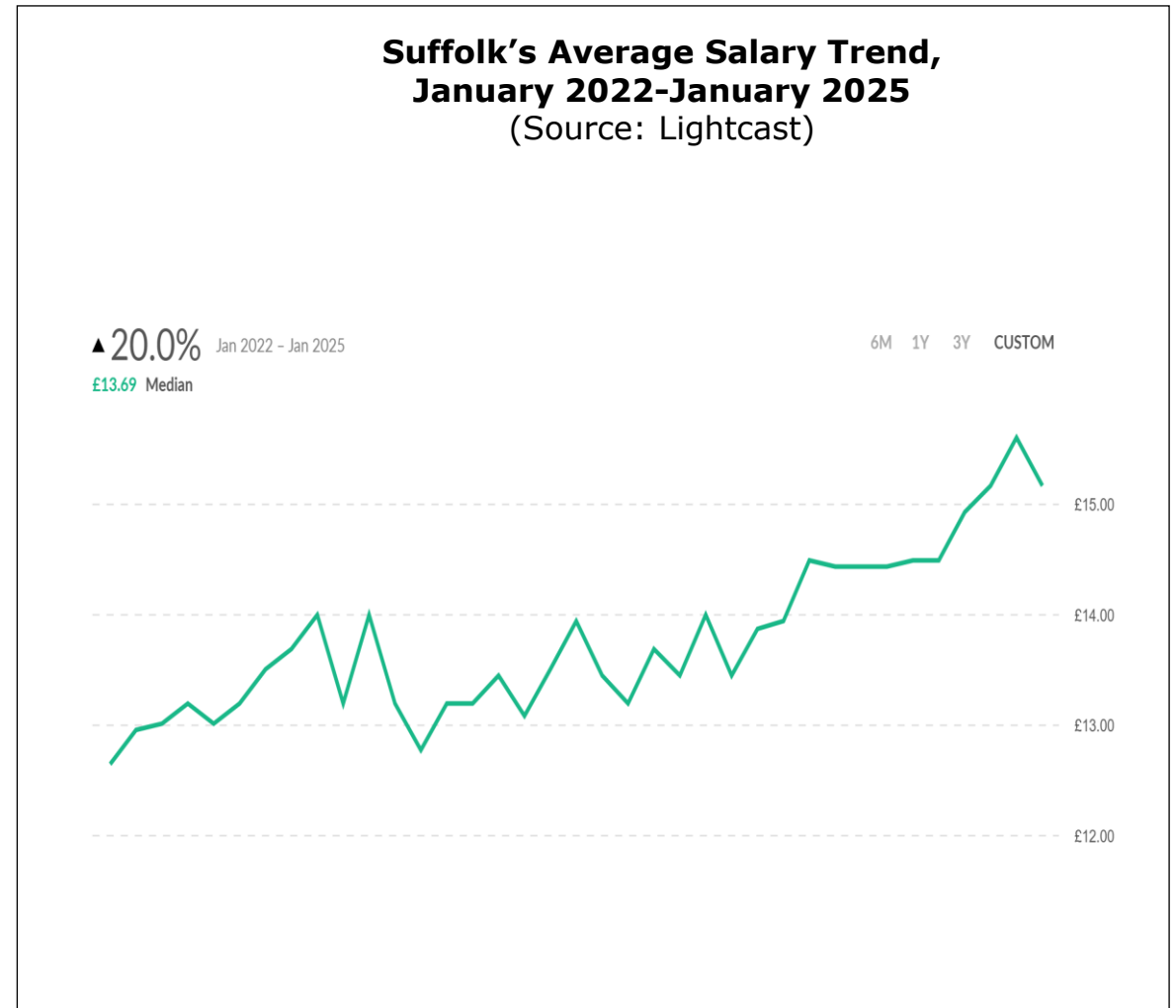
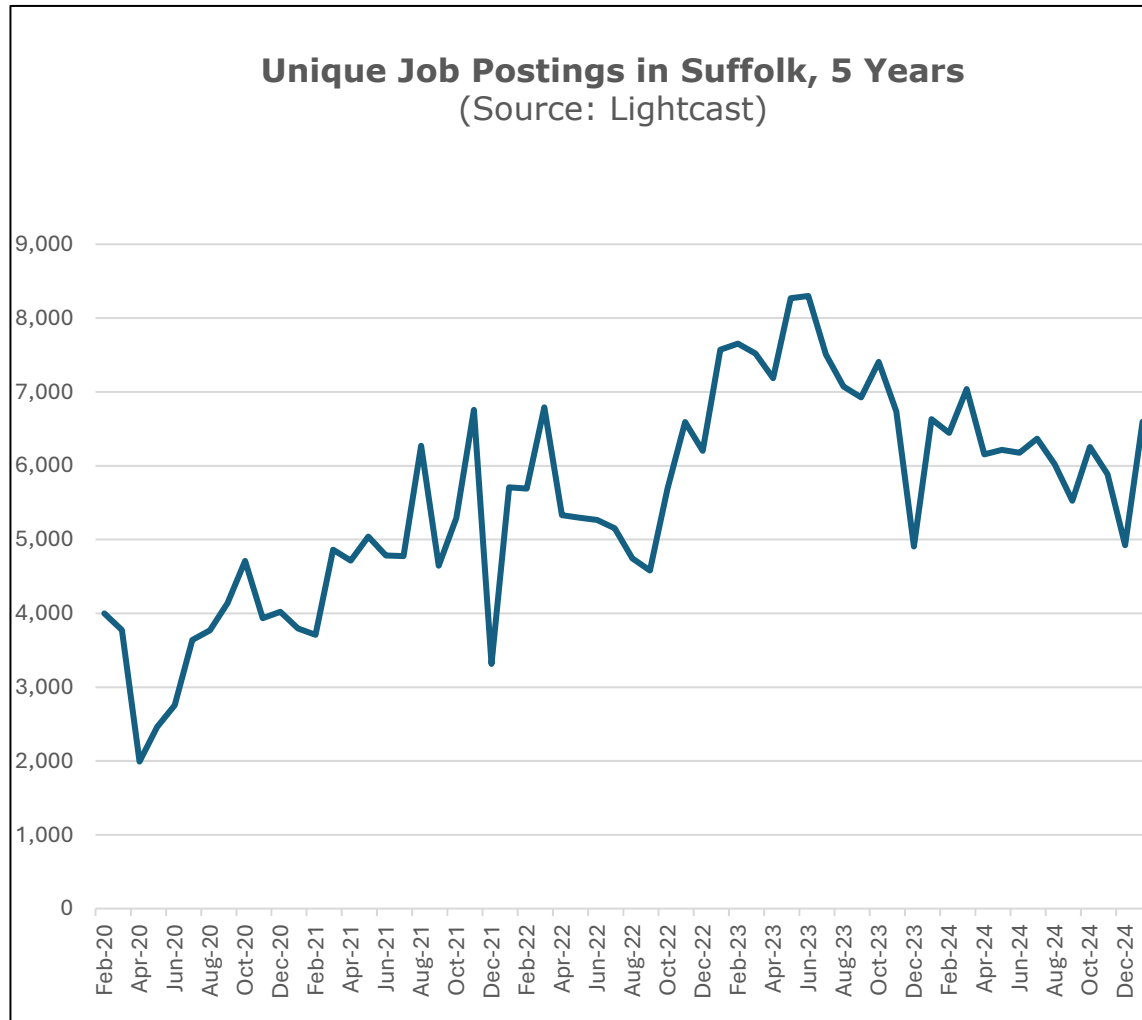
The percentage of economically inactive 16-64s, who are 'long-term sick', has continued to increase and, since 2023, has overtaken 'student' as the key reason for economic inactivity in England and the East. The greatest wage disparity between England and Suffolk is for women in full-time employment who are paid an average of £92 less per week. However, women in part-time work are paid almost the average national weekly wage, while men in part-time work fall significantly behind.



The proportion of households in Ipswich and East Suffolk with all adults working ('Working Households') is higher than the Suffolk average. Mid-Suffolk has the lowest number of working households but a significantly higher proportion of households with at least one adult in work ('Mixed Households'). Babergh stands out as having the highest proportion (22.5%) of workless households.



The number of unique job postings rose in January after a seasonal dip and remain on a relatively stable path. Although advertised salaries in job postings dropped to a median of £15.17 from £15.60 in December, this is a 20% increase since January 2022 and equates to a median annual salary of £28.5k in Suffolk compared with £30.3k in the East of England and £32.1k (£15.42 per hour) in England.



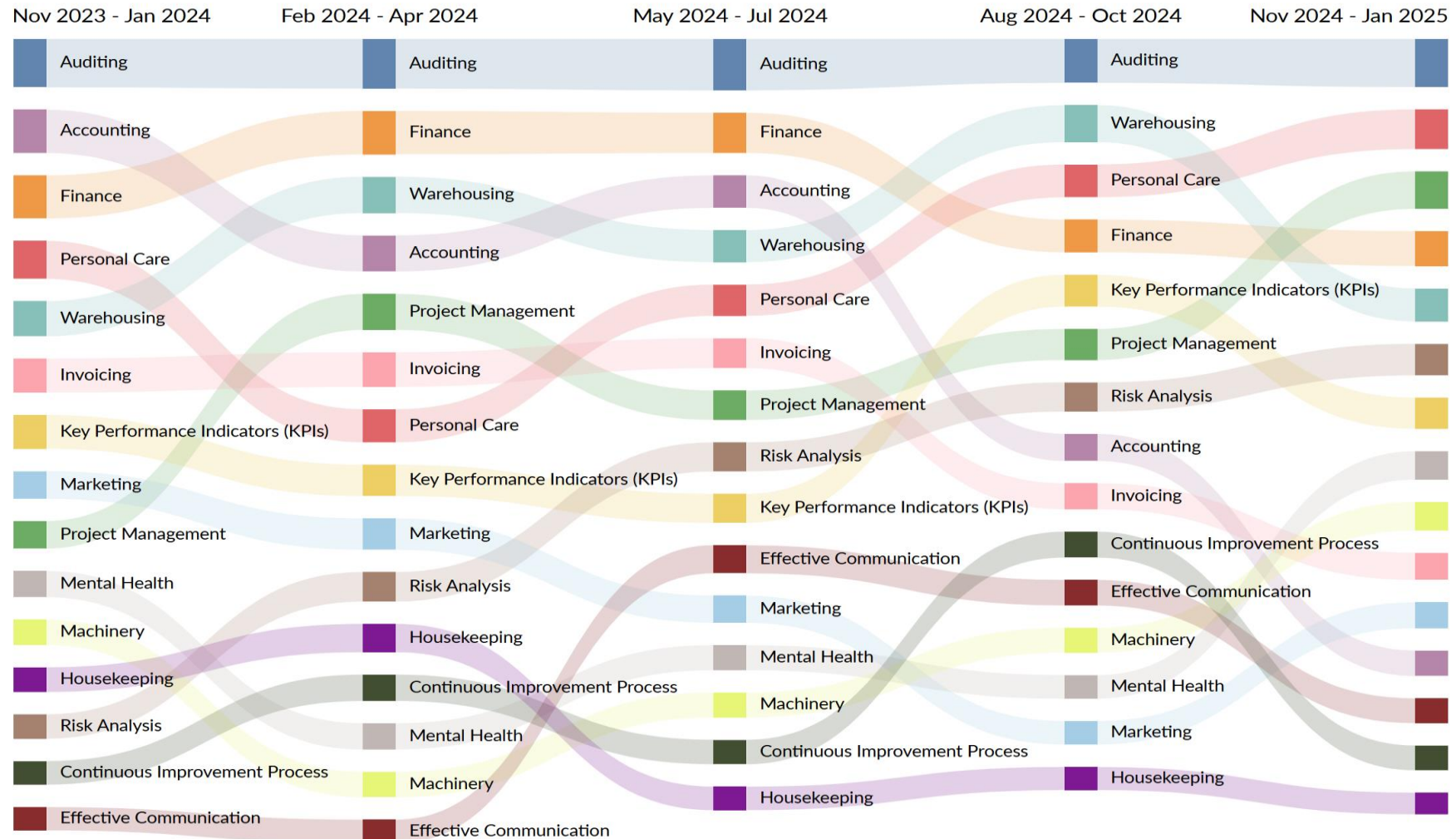
The labour market has loosened nationally over recent months, making it easier for employers to fill vacant positions. In Suffolk, Care Workers and Home Carers have retained the top spot for volume of job postings, while the relative volume of postings for drivers of large goods vehicles and for kitchen and catering assistants has increased significantly.

Job Posting Volume Trends for the Top Fifteen Occupations in Suffolk (Source: Lightcast)



Auditing and Finance remain key skills required in job postings for Suffolk, although Accounting and Invoicing have witnessed a steep drop in the last six months.

Job Posting Volume Trends for the Top Fifteen Skills Posted in Suffolk (Source: Lightcast)





To discuss this update or to see how SODA could help with a project, please don't hesitate to contact the team at soda@suffolk.gov.uk

SODA also manages the Suffolk Observatory: [Suffolk Observatory – Welcome to the Suffolk Observatory](#). Previous Economy & Employment Updates are available on the Suffolk Observatory.