



West Yorkshire Economic & Transport Insights Report

West Yorkshire Research & Intelligence Team

21st October 2022

Executive Summary – Economic Insights

- Employment levels within West Yorkshire have continued to increase, however compared to pre-pandemic levels, the number of people on in-work Universal Credit has climbed significantly. Part of this is due to policy changes, but also the types of jobs that people are doing.
- Job postings in September 2022 are almost 30% higher than September 2021. Nationally, vacancy levels are higher than unemployment levels. The sectoral mix of job postings points to some of the challenges hospitality is dealing with, as vacancies are declining in that sector, whilst increasing sharply in the IT sector.
- The Consumer Price Index shows inflation of 10.1% between September 2022 and 2021. Housing and household services was the main contributor, followed by food and drink and transport. Food and drink inflation reached 14.6%, with restaurants raising prices by almost 10% year on year.
- There are over 1,700 energy intensive firms employing around 60,000 people across the region. There are a further 6,300 employing close to 150,000 people that fall into the *enhanced risk* category, who may struggle if they become excluded from the business energy support package.

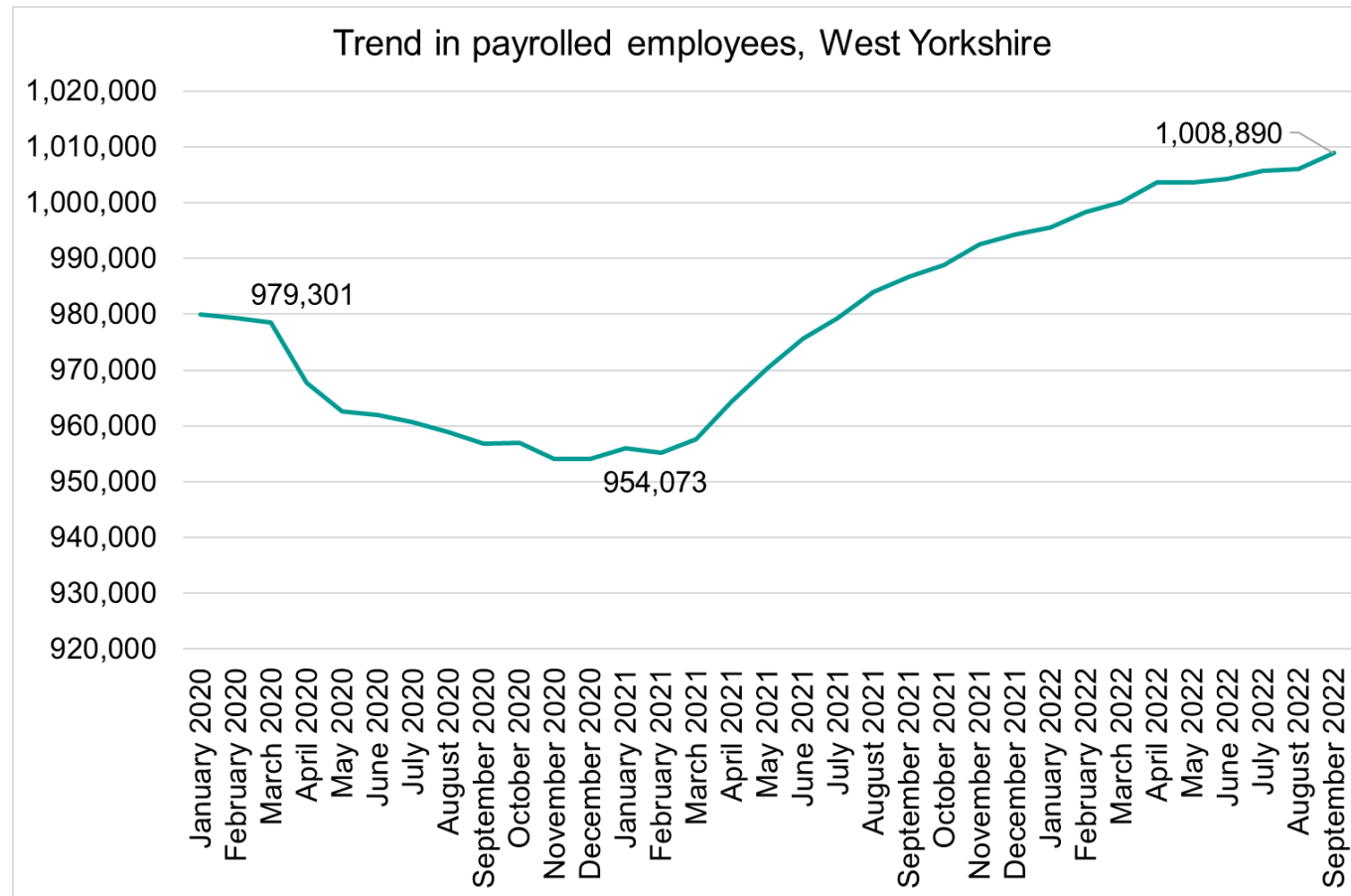
Executive Summary – Transport Insights

- Since the start of the school term, travel to workplaces (derived from mobile data) averaged at 77% of pre-pandemic baseline levels.
- Nationally, bus use outside London has rose considerably (to around 90% of pre-pandemic levels) over recent weekdays, with substantial weekend usage spikes.
- Locally, bus use rose to 88% of pre-pandemic levels, although there is variation by cohort; under 19s bus patronage exceeded pre-pandemic levels in October, Whilst under 26 / student and adult bus patronage also increased, levels still remain lower than pre-pandemic.
- Average weekday footfall at Leeds rail station reached a new record of 81% of baseline levels in the week commencing 10th October, driven by light night on the 13th and 14th October. In contrast, strike action saw footfall drop to 14% of baseline on the 1st and 5th October, and 27% on the Saturday 8th October.
- AM peak weekday traffic on Leeds radial roads continues to trend lower than pre-pandemic levels (21% down) whilst the 24hr weekday average is down 13%.
- Leeds Bradford Airport passenger numbers recovered to 87% of pre-pandemic levels in August 2022, with the strong recovery plateauing over the summer.

Economic Insights

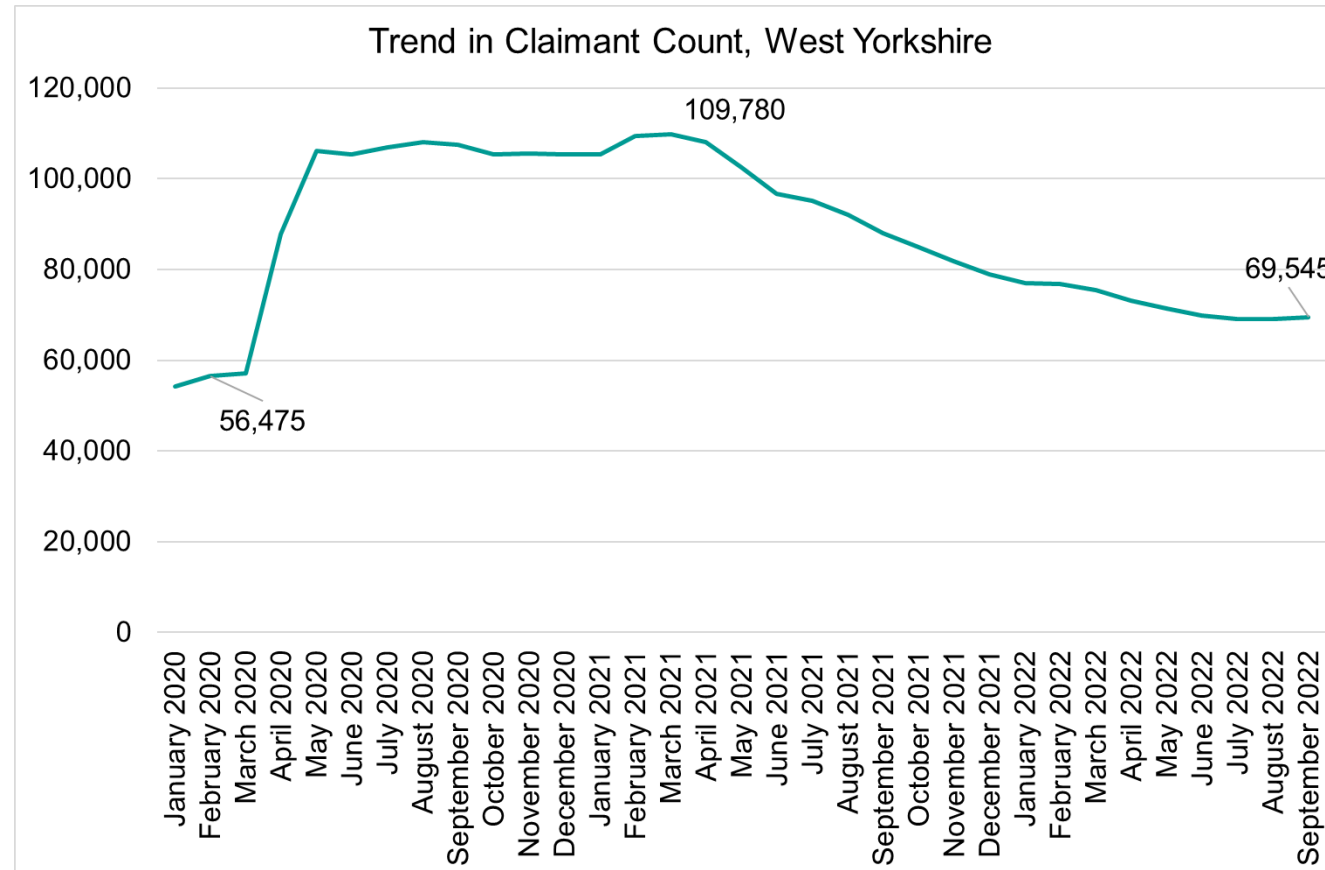
West Yorkshire's employee count continues to increase

- The number of payrolled employees in West Yorkshire increased by around 2,900 (0.3%) between August and September 2022, slightly above the national growth rate. The employee count is now 30,000 (3%) above pre-pandemic levels (Feb 2020), similar to the national position



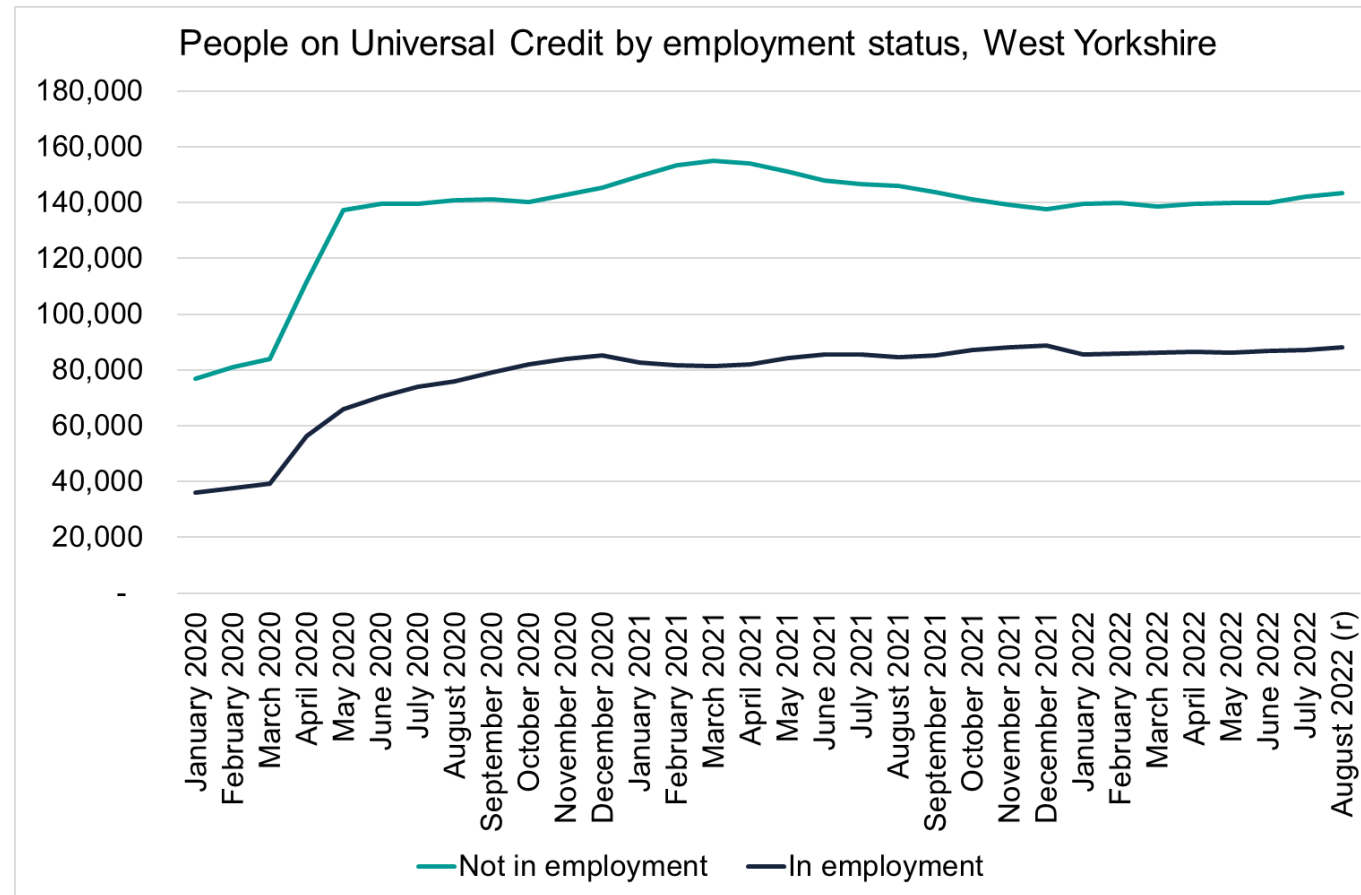
West Yorkshire's unemployed Claimant Count has remained flat over last 3 months

- The latest claimant count figures for West Yorkshire, which relate to the number of people on out-of-work benefits, show a fairly flat position between June and September 2022. The count remains 23% (13,100) higher than pre-pandemic (February 2020). West Yorkshire's claimant rate of 4.7% (6.7% in Bradford) is above the national average of 3.8%



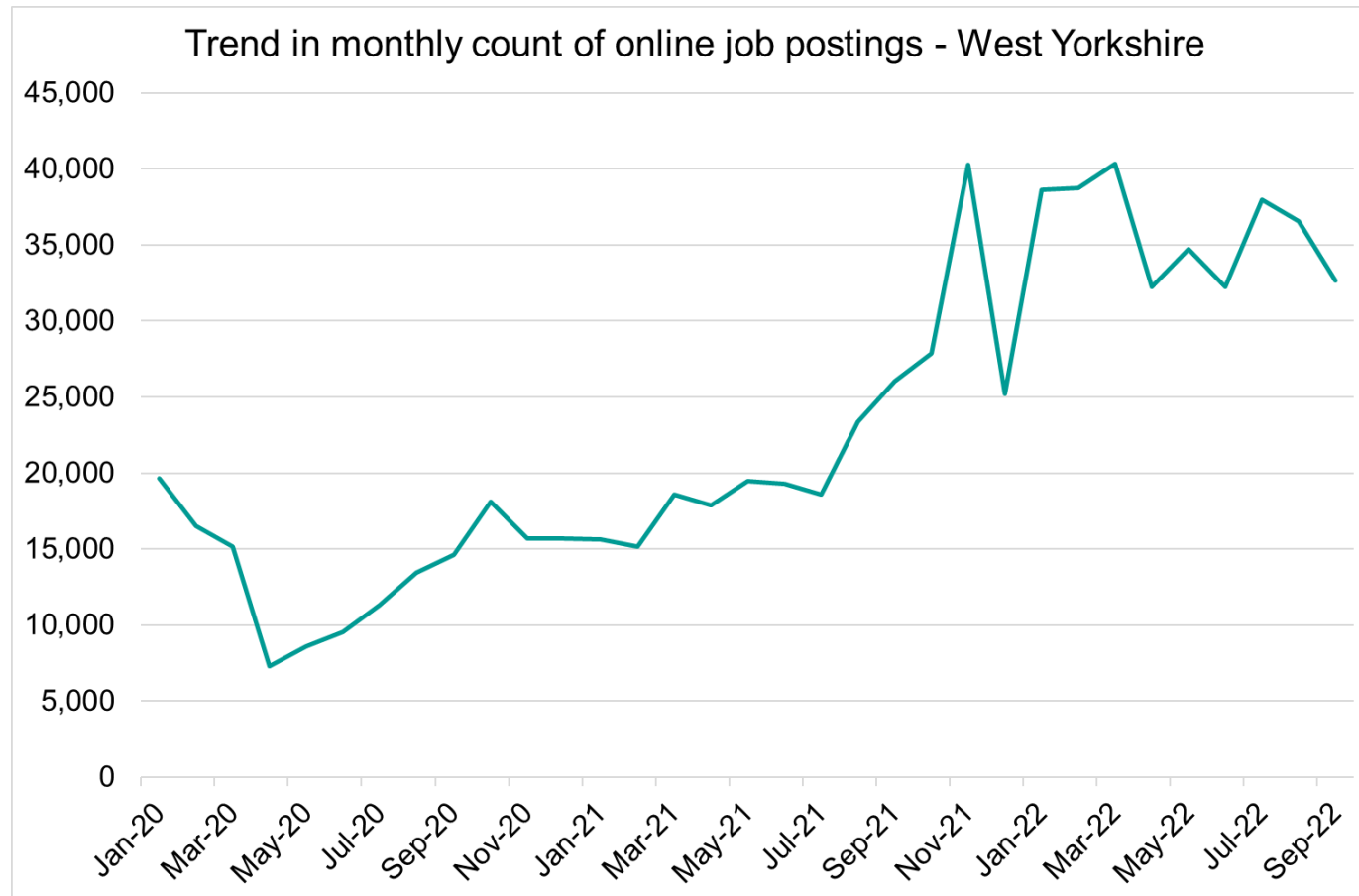
The number of people in employment on Universal Credit has increased by 4% in year to August 2022

- The latest figures for people on Universal Credit show that 88,000 claimants are in employment, 4% higher than a year earlier and 133% higher than in February 2020. Of the 231,000 people on Universal Credit, 38% are in a job. The number of people on Universal Credit who are not in employment fell by 2% in the last year.



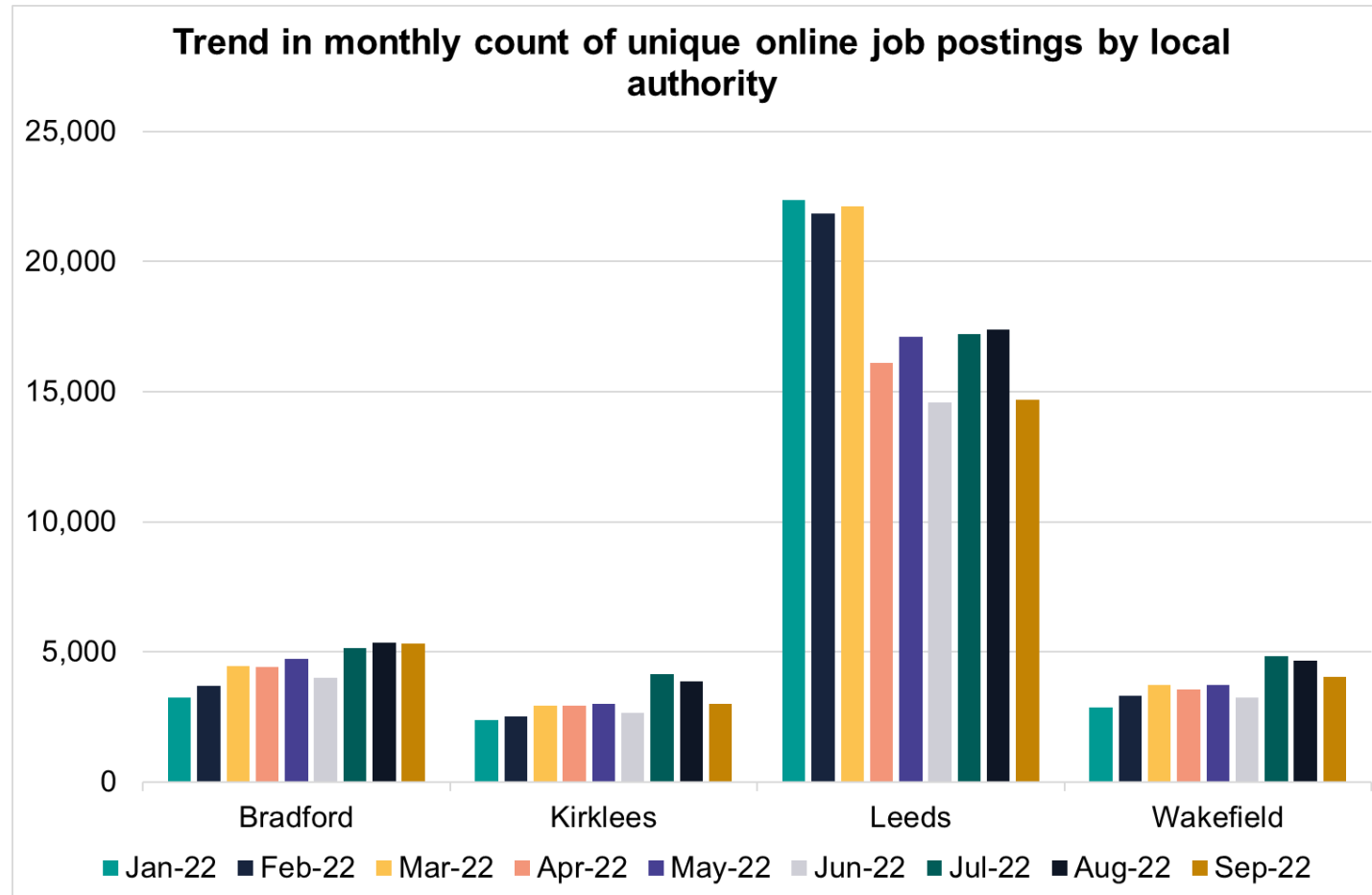
Recruitment activity remains high by historic standards

- The monthly count of online job postings fell during August and September 2022 but the level of postings remains very high in historic terms. There were 4,600 new postings recorded in September 2022, 27% higher than the level for September 2021.



Monthly count of job postings in Leeds is well below peak seen in early 2022; other local authorities have seen an increase since start of year

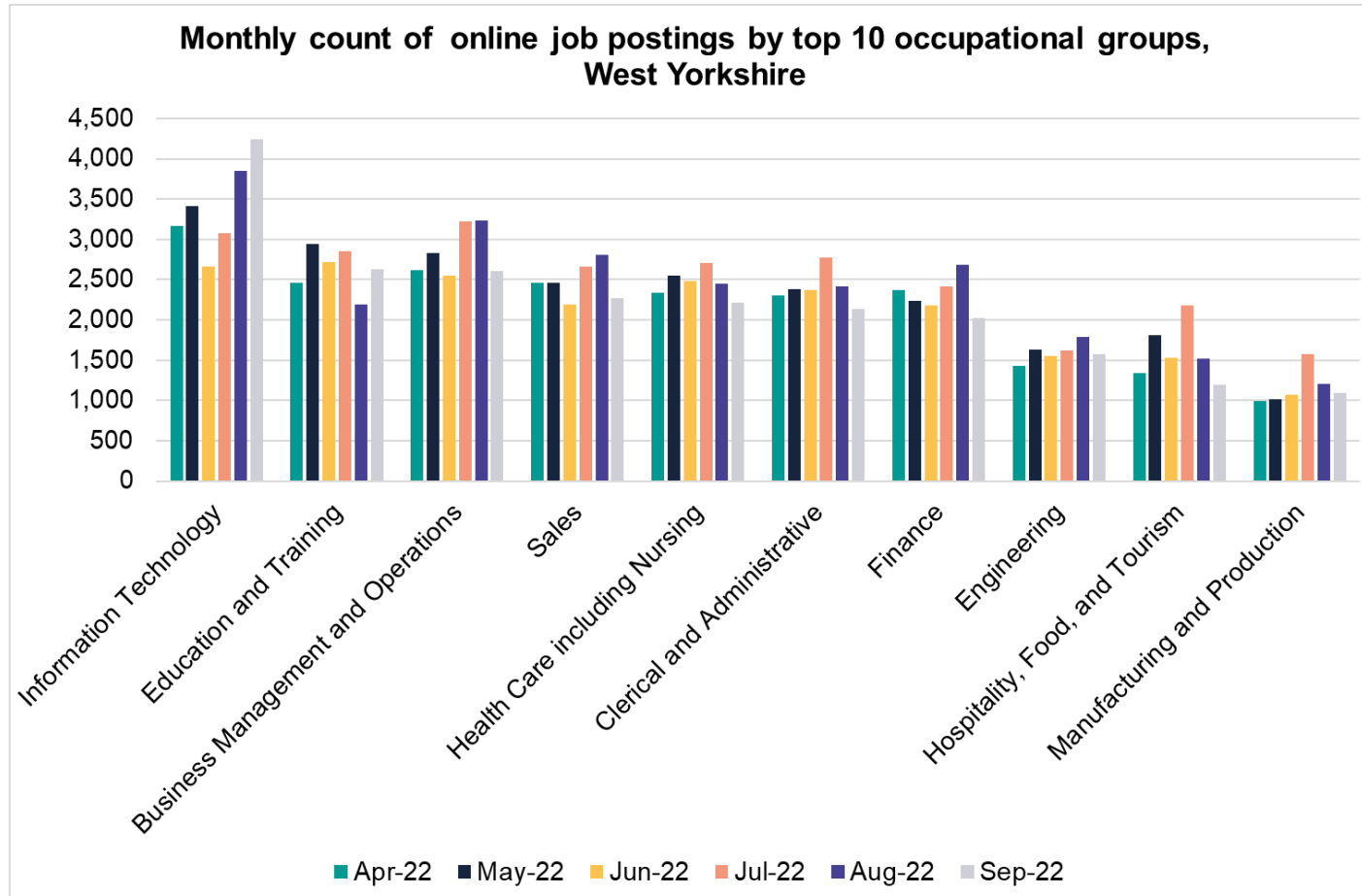
- The count of job postings in Leeds fell by around a third between January and September, whereas other local authorities have grown during this period (e.g. Bradford 64% higher). All local authorities saw a decline between August and September



NB: data not currently available for Calderdale due to technical issues. Also note that a proportion of West Yorkshire job postings cannot be assigned to a local authority location.

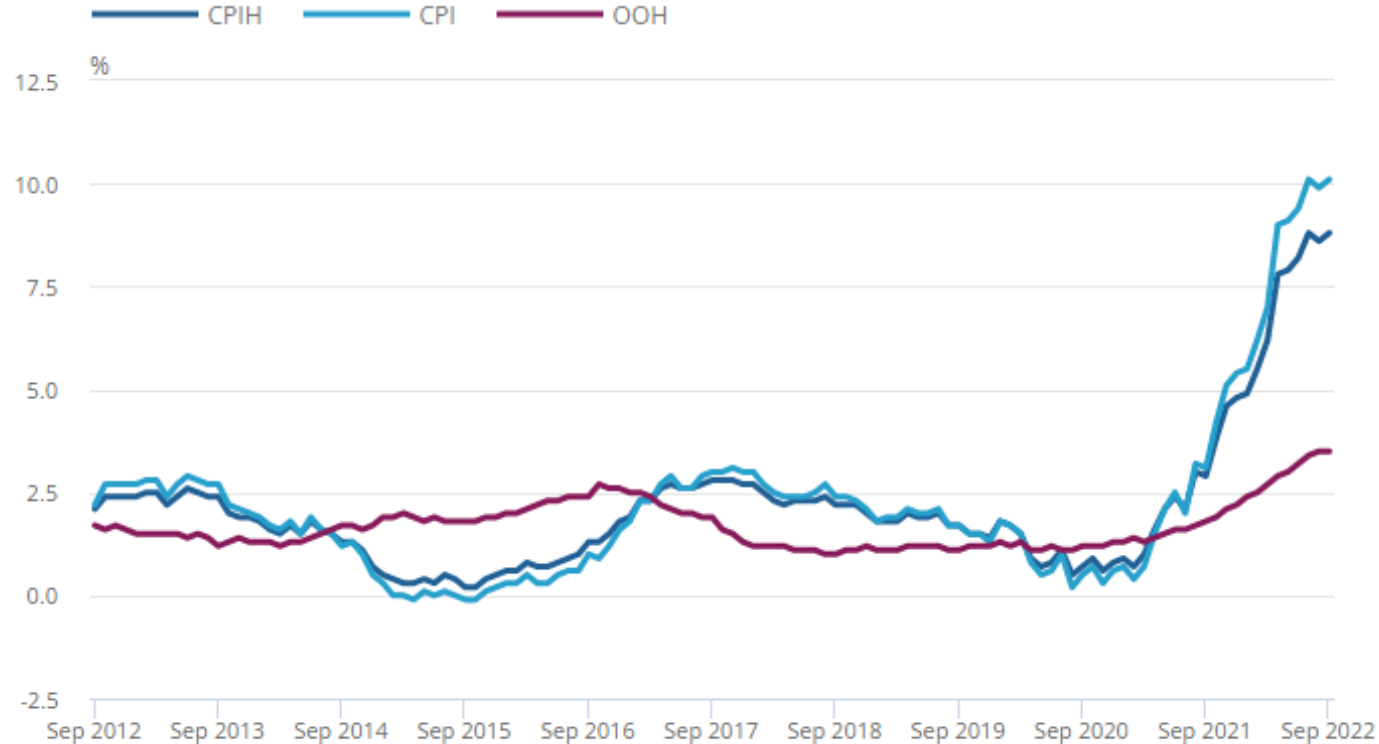
Performance across occupations shows a mixed picture

- Number of postings increased in Information Technology and Education and Training in September compared with previous month but other areas fell, with Finance and Hospitality, food and tourism seeing the biggest reductions in percentage terms



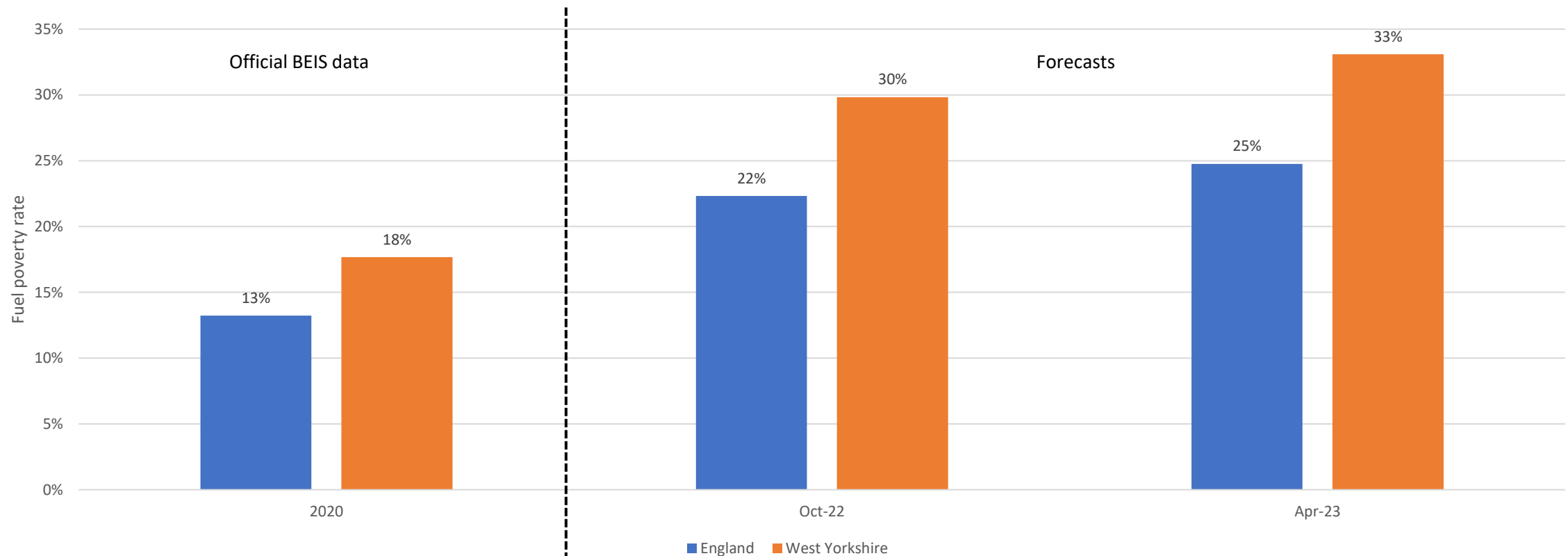
The CPI is back above 10% and is expected to increase further

- The Consumer Price Index increased to 10.1% in the 12 months to September 2022. The largest contribution to CPI increasing is housing and household services, followed by food and drink and transport. Whilst a lot of focus has been placed on the energy markets, inflation in the food and drink market reached 14.6% in September, with inflation in restaurants almost hitting 10%. In October, the unit price cap was increased, so we expect the CPI to rise pretty sharply when these figures are announced (in November)



Fuel poverty was more prominent in West Yorkshire before the current crisis, and forecasts show the issue will get worse

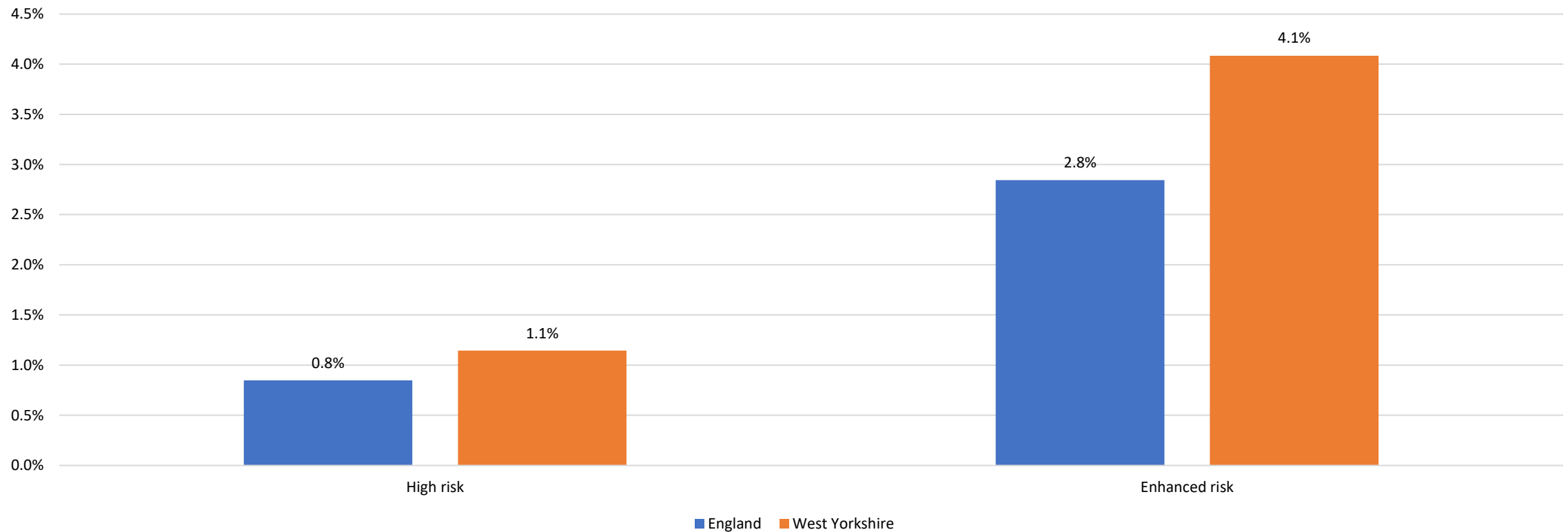
- The Energy Price Guarantee still represents a doubling of average energy bills compared with last winter. When the Energy Bill Support Scheme ends in March 2023, one in three West Yorkshire households will be in fuel poverty without further support for households. This is different to the Energy Price Guarantee, which sets a cap on the unit cost of energy.



Source: [End Fuel Poverty Coalition](#), 2022

Energy intensive businesses make up a greater proportion of West Yorkshire firms, as do those at an enhanced risk of rising energy bills

- High risk firms are those who are both highly energy intensive, and operate within internationally competitive markets, exposing them to competition from countries where energy prices may be relatively lower. Those at an enhanced risk include those who do not meet the energy intensity threshold, but face the risk from international competitors.



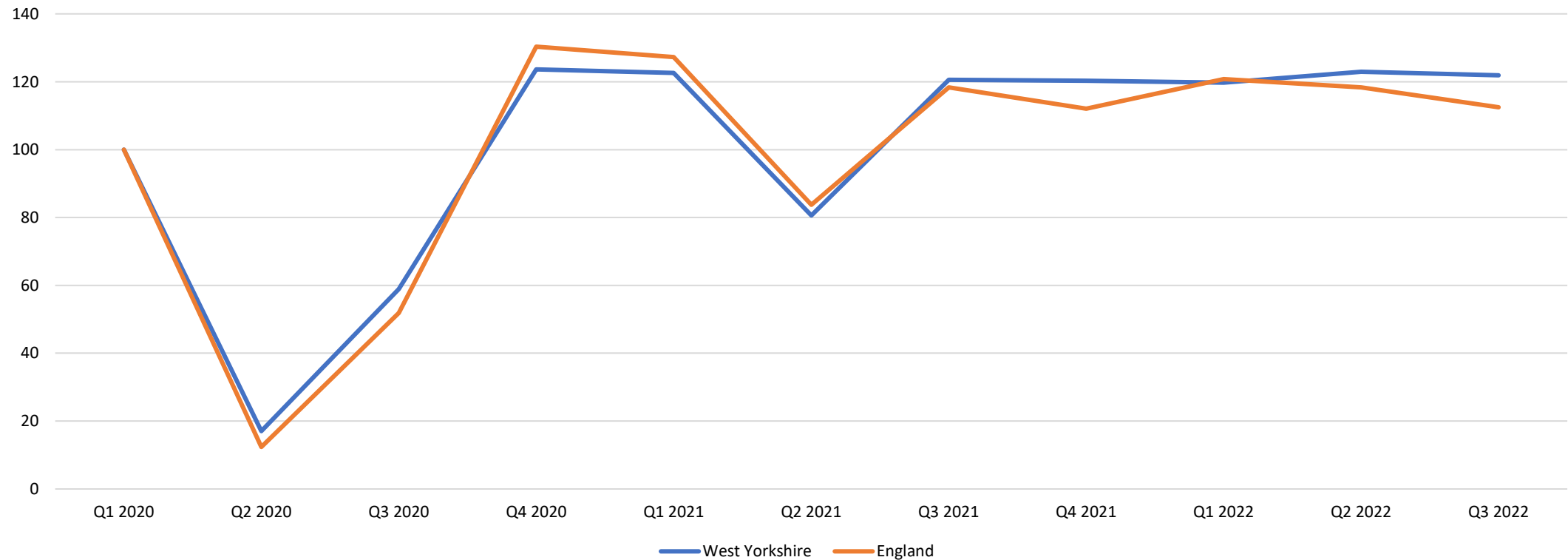
Source: Bureau van Dijk, 2022

There are over 1,700 energy intensive companies, employing 57,000 people in West Yorkshire

- Analysis of FAME data shows that 1,751 firms are energy intensive within West Yorkshire. These firms employ 56,946 people across the region.
- There are a further 6,266 that fall into the next category, which we define as *enhanced risk*. This is the group that could potentially fall through the cracks when the Government reviews the energy support package for businesses in the New Year. They employ 146,626 people across the region.
- Manufacturers are the businesses with the highest energy costs, and are spread out across the region, so this could have a large impact on inner-region levelling up.

Business liquidations in West Yorkshire have been 20% above pre-pandemic levels for the past 15 months.

Business liquidations in West Yorkshire have followed similar patterns to those at the national level. A concerning trend, however, is that liquidations in West Yorkshire have settled at a higher level than in England over the past year. Across both England and West Yorkshire, freight transport and management consultancy businesses saw the greatest levels of liquidations over the last two years.

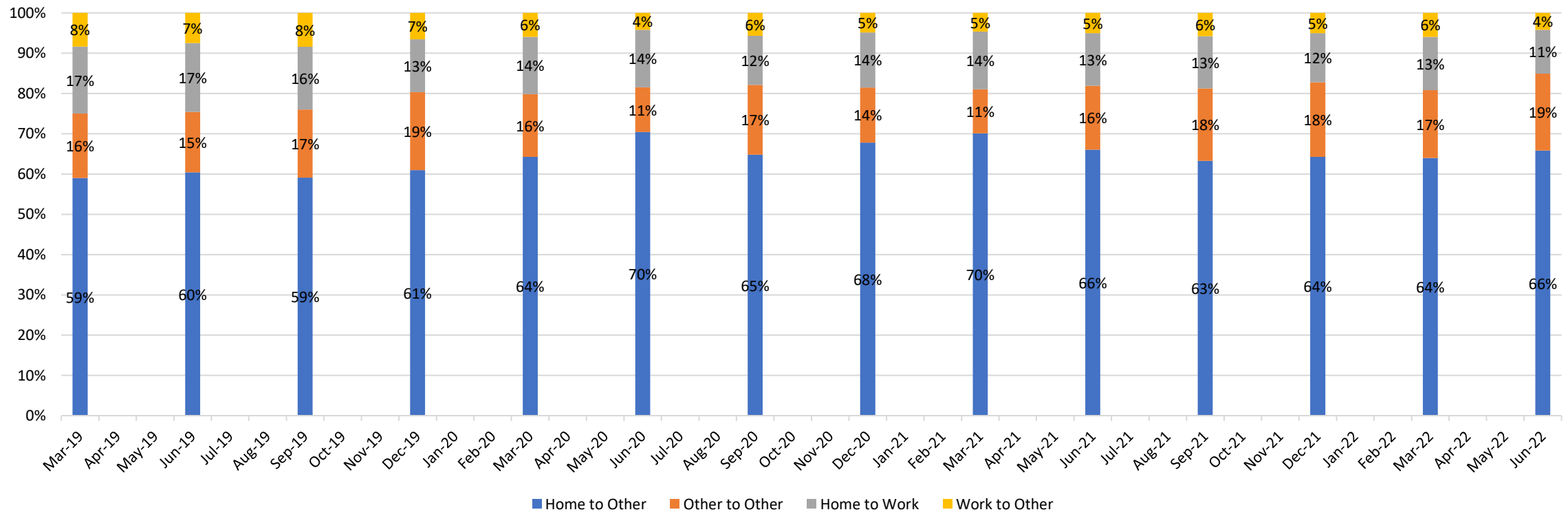


• Source: FAME, Bureau van Dijk, 2022

*Source: FAME, Bureau van Dijk, 2022. Analysis based on company registration address, location of activity may differ in some cases.

Home to Work journeys currently make up around 1 in 10 West Yorkshire journeys, the lowest share since the start of our data

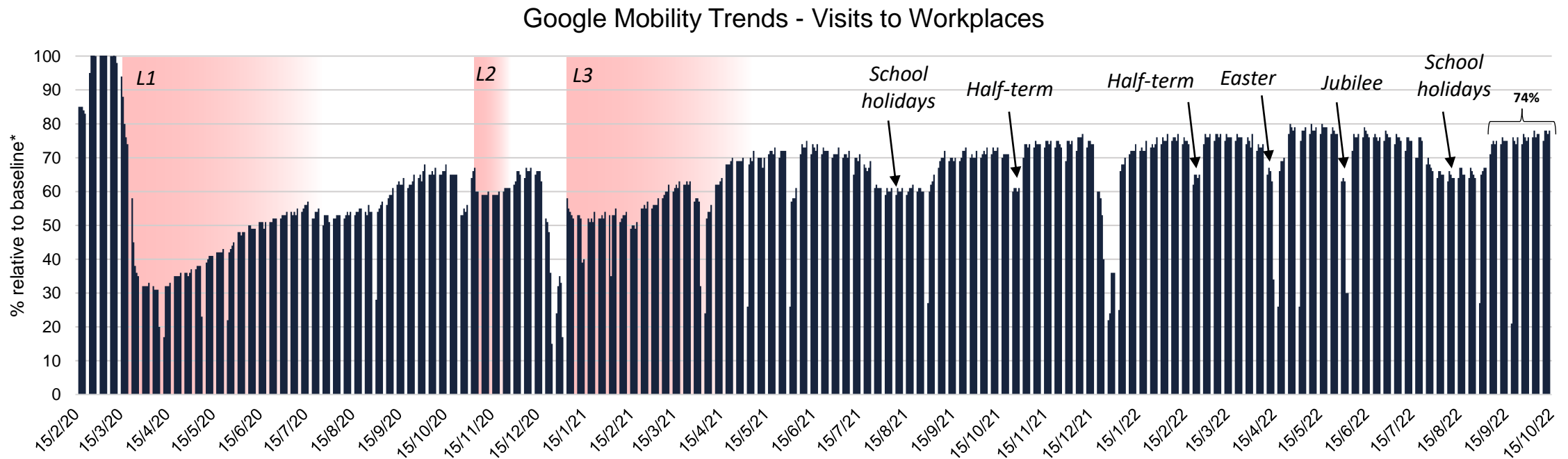
- The number of journeys for all purposes have fallen on both weekdays and weekends across West Yorkshire since before the pandemic, but analysis shows that, proportionally, travelling to work has fallen by more than other trip reasons. Home to Other has increased as a share of total West Yorkshire journeys.



Transport Insights

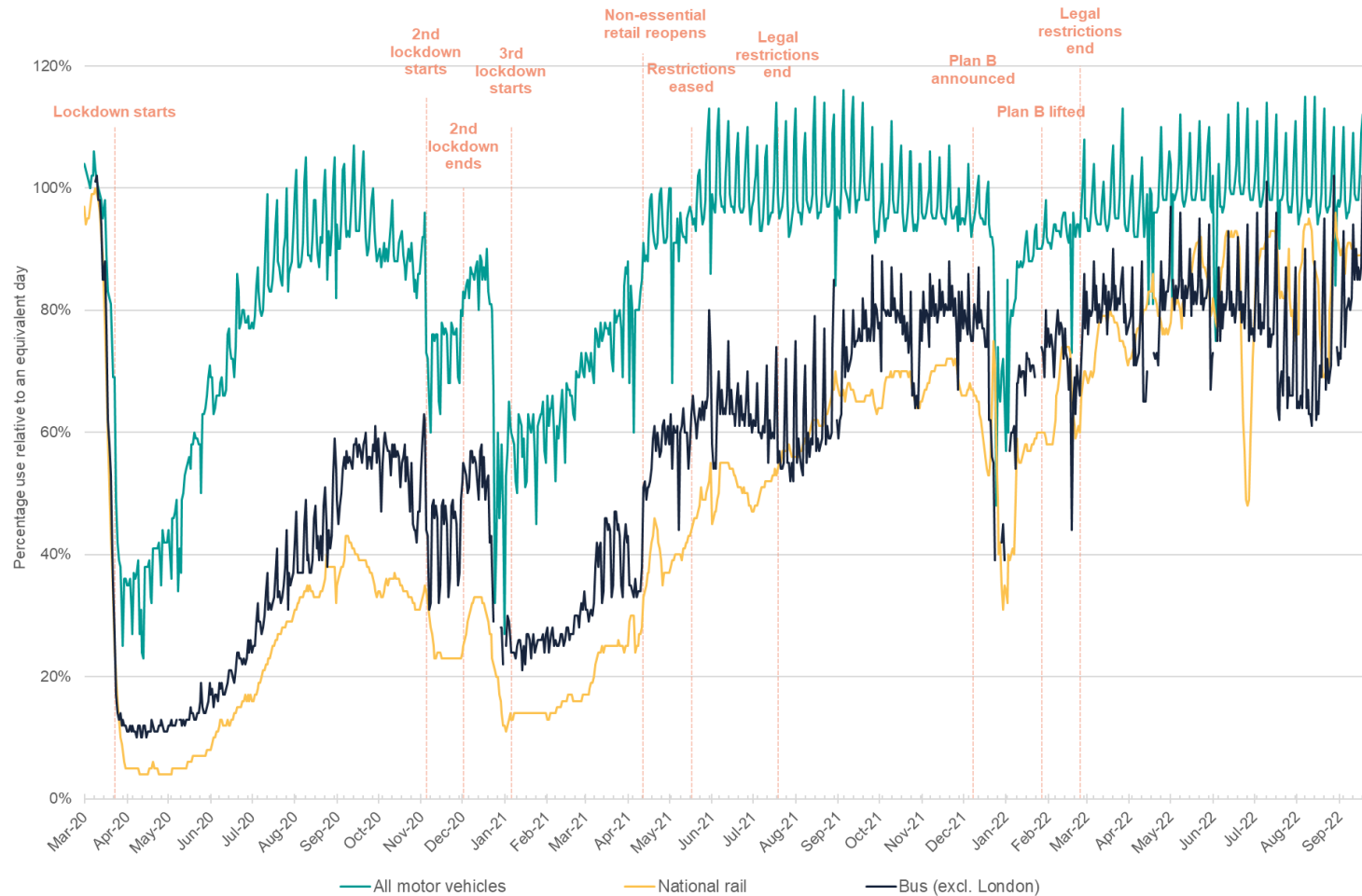
Since the start of the school term weekday work travel averages 74% of pre-pandemic levels

- The chart below reveals the trend in weekday visits to West Yorkshire workplaces (relative to pre-pandemic) derived from location history data on mobile devices published as part of the Google mobility trends series. The chart illustrates the degree of recovery in travel for work through the different stages of the pandemic. The most recent data for September & October 2022 (outside of the influence of school holidays) shows visits to workplaces averaged 74% of baseline levels, with a subtle increase during this period (with most recent week, commencing 10th October averaging 77%).



Source: Google mobility reports [COVID-19 Community Mobility Reports \(google.com\)](https://www.google.com/covid19/mobility/). Each black vertical bar represents a single day of weekday visits to a workplace expressed as a percentage of the baseline, where the baseline is the 5-week period Jan 3 – Feb 6, 2020 (pre-pandemic).

National bus use recovers over recent weeks

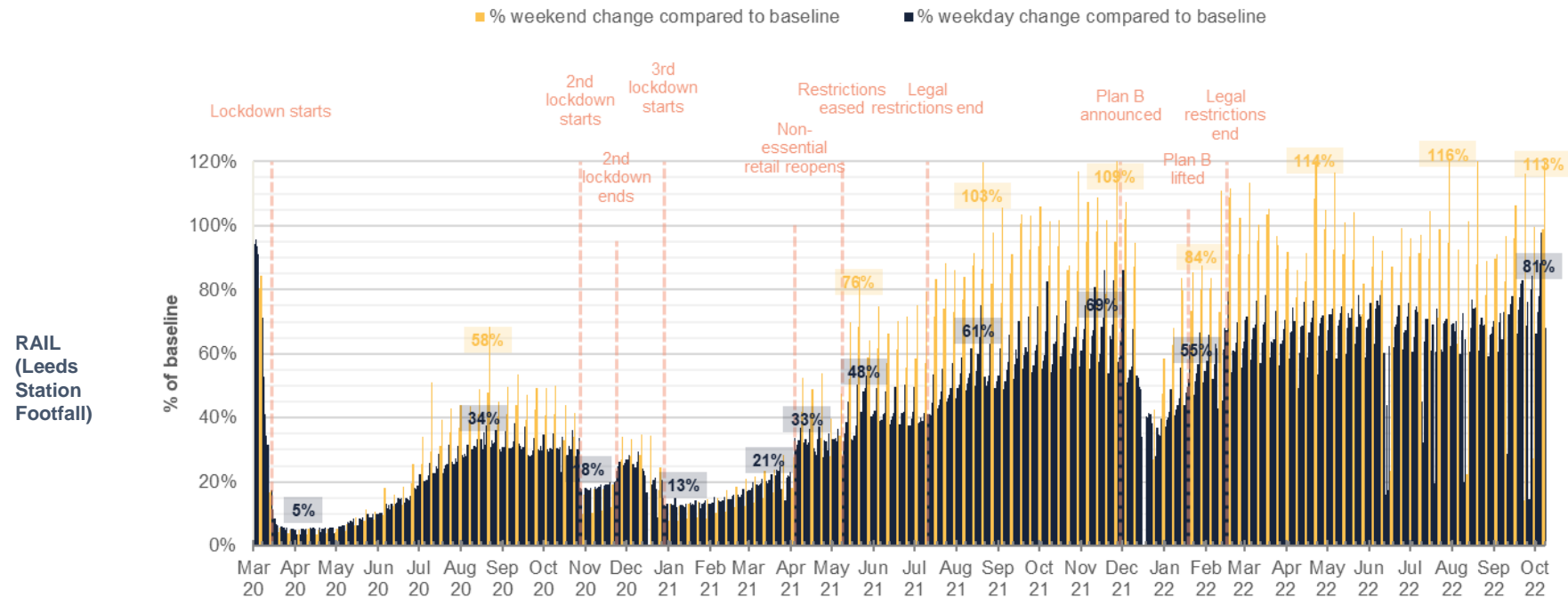


- Bus use outside London has risen markedly to around 90% over recent weekdays, with substantial weekend usage spikes.
- Rail use has fallen slightly to around 75% in the most recent weekdays with available data, following rail strikes, although the most recent weeks are subject to revision as is normal for this source.
- Nationally, motor vehicle use remains around pre-pandemic levels with weekend usage exceeding baseline conditions.

Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/transport-use-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic>

Leeds rail weekday footfall reaches new record for Light Night

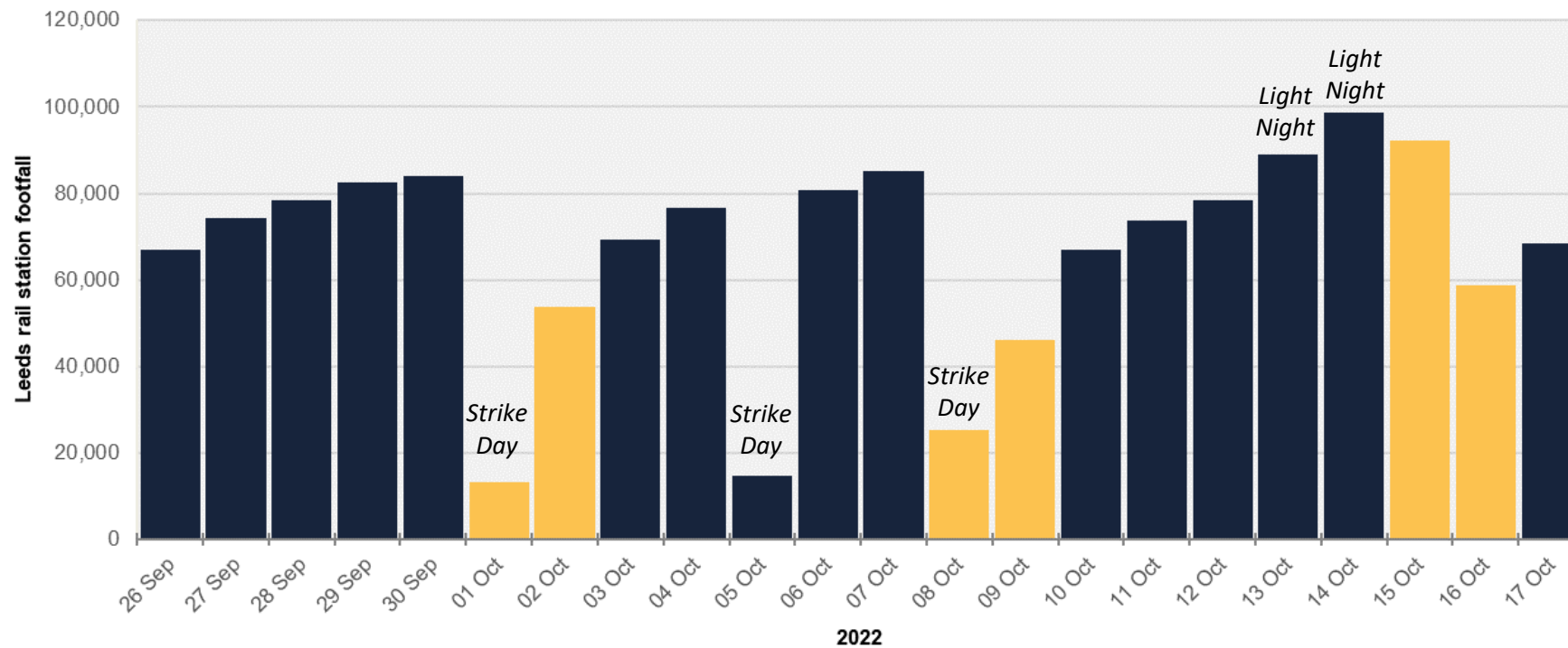
- Average weekday footfall at Leeds rail station reached a new record of 81% of baseline levels in the week commencing 10th October, driven by light night on the 13th and 14th October. Weekend average levels reached 113%.



Baseline period is Monday 2nd - Friday 6th March 2020 (weekdays) and 29th Feb -1st March and 6th-7th March (weekends)

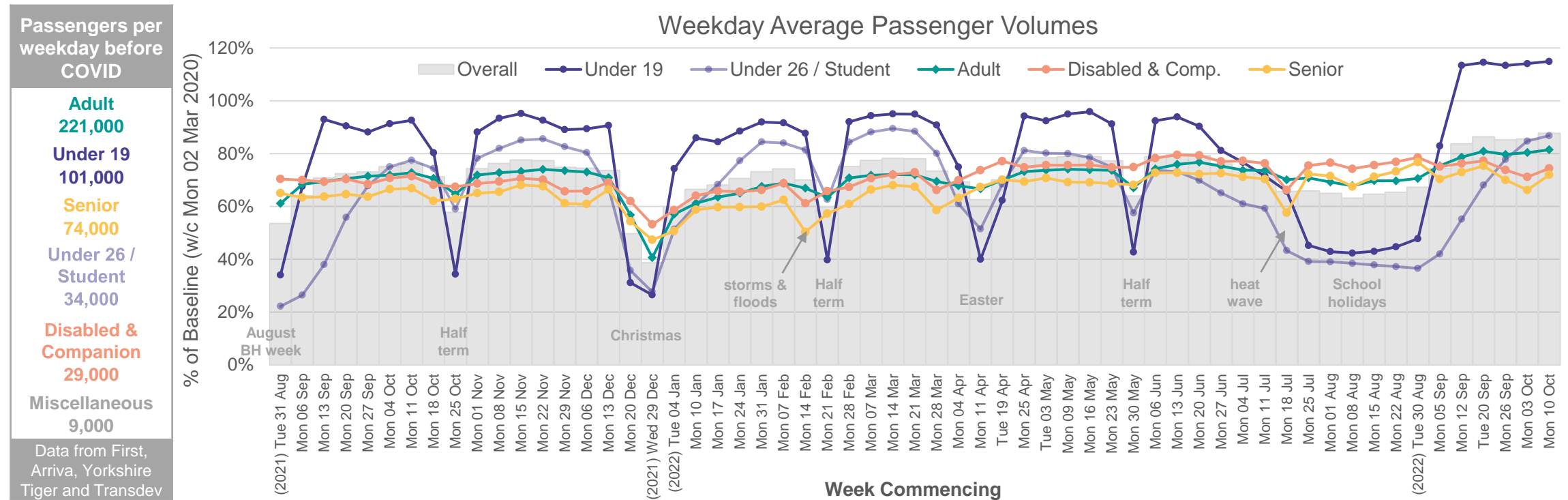
Rail footfall impacted by strikes and Light Night

- Strike action saw footfall drop to 14% of baseline on the 1st and 5th October, and 27% on the 8th. Light Night drove footfall to record pandemic levels, reaching 98% on Friday 14th October.



Under 19s bus patronage exceeds pre-pandemic baseline, whilst under 26 / student and adult cohorts also increased

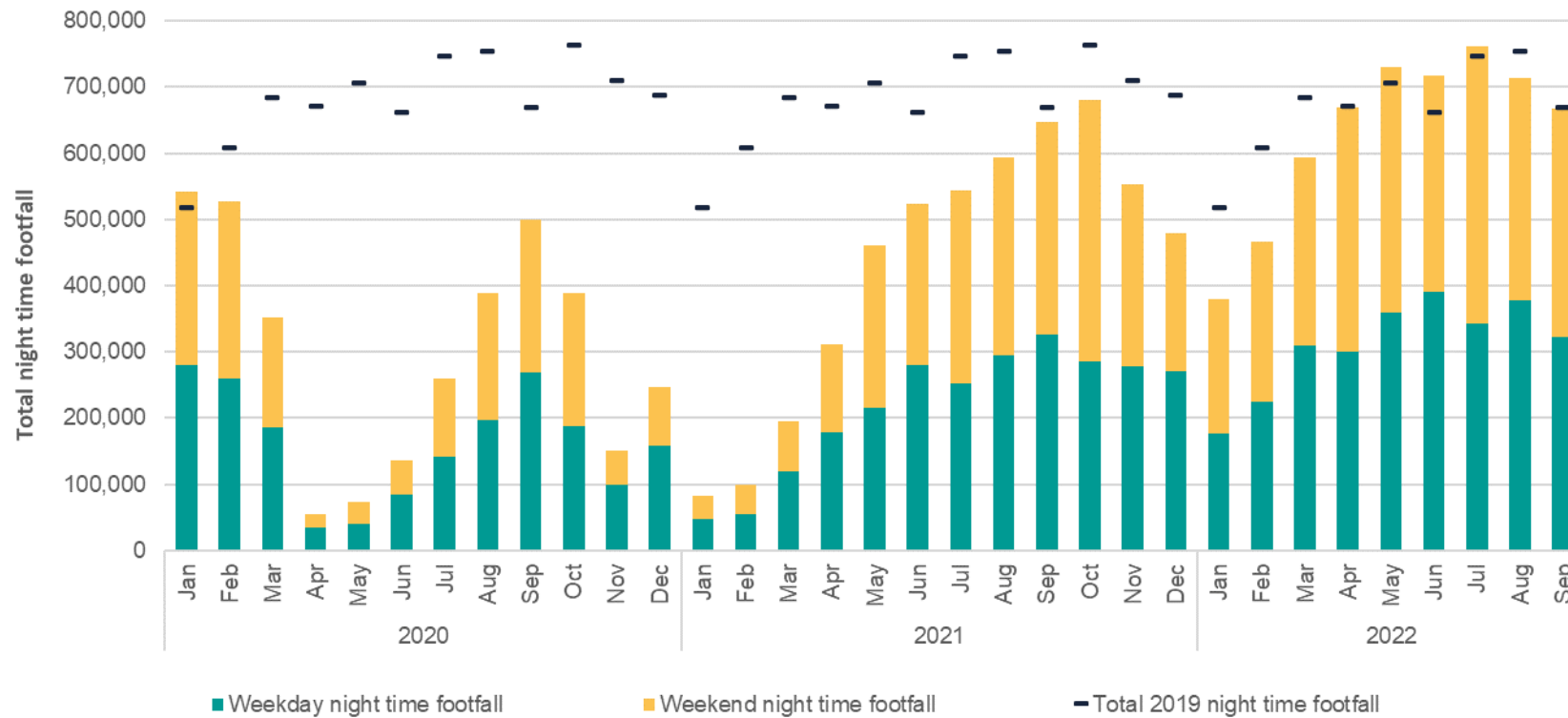
- The chart below shows bus use (via ticket machines) relative to pre-pandemic conditions. Weekday under 19s patronage currently stands at 114% of baseline levels. Pre-pandemic, late-September to early October was considered the busiest time of year for use by under 19s. Under 19 MCard use (from Nero) suggests this time of year in 2019 was around 104% of baseline, indicating more than seasonal affects. In recent weeks, adult bus patronage increased to around 81% of pre-pandemic levels, the highest since the start of COVID-19 restrictions, notably higher than then same period last year (72%). Under 26 / students bus patronage was 87% of baseline in the week commencing 10 October, compared with 78% in the similar week of 2021. It would be unwise to attribute changes in use by adults directly to the Mayor's Fares as the changes in use by adults and by under 26 / student tickets appear similar to those seen last year.



Source: Baseline period is w/c Mon 02 Mar. Source: Bus operators electronic ticket machine data, passenger boarding locations in West Yorkshire. First, Arriva, Yorkshire Tiger and Transdev account for over 90% of bus services in West Yorkshire. Graph shows First, Transdev and Yorkshire Tiger data. Data is for weekdays excluding bank holidays, with ticket types assigned to broad cohorts.

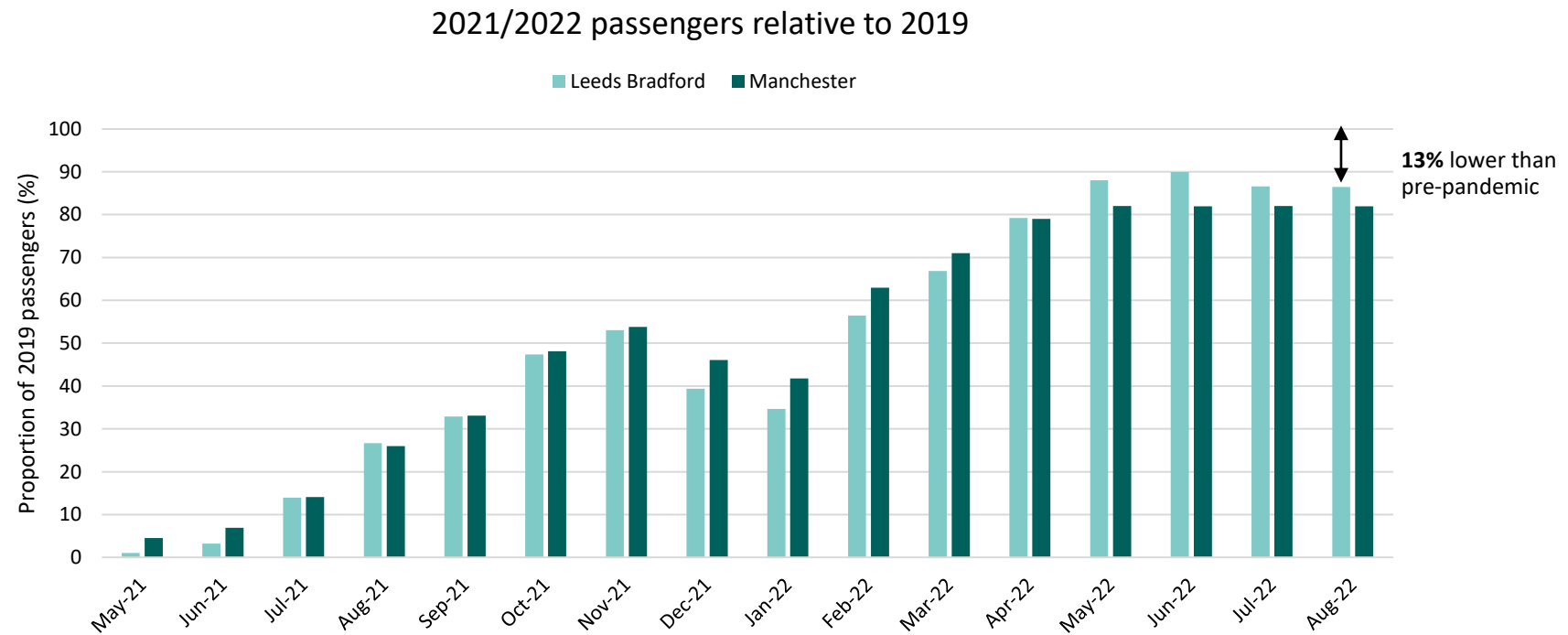
Leeds centre night time footfall matches pre-pandemic levels

- Over recent months, with the exception of August, Leeds city centre night time footfall has either matched or exceeded 2019 levels.



Leeds Bradford Airport passenger numbers recover to 87% of pre-pandemic levels in July & August 2022

- The UK Civil Aviation Authority release monthly passenger figures for all UK airports. The latest data (August 2022) reveals that terminal passengers at Leeds Bradford Airport (LBA) reached 87% of pre-pandemic levels (2019), down 3% percentage points from June. Over the summer months the recovery trend for air travel plateaued. Notably over the summer, LBA passenger recovery was relatively higher than at Manchester Airport (compared to 2019 levels).



Source: UK Civil Aviation Authority (Table 9 – Terminal & Transit Passengers)