Chesterfield Economic Assessment 2026

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1). Key Point Summary

- The national economy is in a period of lower growth with various factors such as persistent inflation, higher interest rates, business tax rises and global events impacting the economic outlook in the near term.

- Chesterfield has an older demographic profile than the national average and has seen limited population growth (<2%) in the last 10 years.

- GVA per worker is estimated at £59,000, below the national average of £75,000, reflecting the lower value-added mix of economic activity in the borough.

- Chesterfield is a significant employment centre with 52,500 employee jobs plus 6,000 people self-employed. Chesterfield has a high level of employment in health & social care and wholesale & retail, but a lower share of jobs in professional services.

- Chesterfield's employment base is forecast to grow by 2.5% between 2025 and 2035, equating to an additional 1,300 jobs. The largest number of jobs are expected to be created in health & social care, followed by transport & storage and professional services.

- In 2025, Chesterfield town centre experienced an average vacancy rate of 14.4%, slightly ahead of the national average (13.7%). Town centre footfall was down compared to 2024, reflecting weaker economic growth and on-going challenges such as the growth of on-line retail.

- In 2024, there were 4.2m visitors to Chesterfield borough, with levels now showing full recovery from the impact of the Covid pandemic. Total annual visitor spend of £220m, directly supported almost 2,000 jobs, plus a further 500 jobs in the supply chain.

- There are over 4,100 businesses operating in Chesterfield, with the number increasing by 3% in the last 10 years (although this is below the 9% increase achieved nationally). The share of manufacturing businesses based in Chesterfield is almost double the national average, with a significant cluster of metal goods and engineering related companies.

- The Census 21 highlights that fewer Chesterfield residents are employed in knowledge based occupations than the national average (39% v 47%), although the local share of knowledge workers has shown a positive increase (+4% points) since the previous census in 2011.

- Chesterfield has a lower qualifications profile (Census 21) than the regional and national averages, with fewer residents qualified at Level 4 and above and more people with no qualifications. However, over the last 10 years there has been a notable improvement in the proportion of Chesterfield residents with a Level 3 or Level 4 qualification, as well as a significant fall in the proportion of people with no qualifications.

- The median weekly salary for jobs located in Chesterfield (£724) is below the national average (£767) but ahead of the regional figure (£704). This supports a view that Chesterfield is starting to see a shift towards higher wage employment.

- Chesterfield's claimant count unemployment rate has seen a gradual decline over the last year and currently stands at 3.3%, below the national average of 3.9%. Chesterfield's unemployment has been consistently below the national average since mid-2024.

- Youth unemployment is a particular issue for Chesterfield, with one of the highest rates in the East Midlands (8.0% compared to 5.4%) and consistently 2% points above the national average (5.7%).

- The Indices of Deprivation (2025) ranks Chesterfield as the 80th most deprived district in the country (out of 298 districts). Chesterfield has a particular issue with health related deprivation where it is ranked as the 12th most deprived district nationally.

2). National Context

The national economy saw GDP growth of 0.7% in the first quarter of 2025, boosted by exports as manufacturers sought to beat the imposition of higher US trade tariffs. However, activity was more subdued in the remainder of the year, with GDP growth of only 0.1% in both Q3 and Q4 of 2025. The persistence of higher inflation, elevated interest rates and uncertainties linked to global events are creating headwinds which are impacting the economic outlook in the near term. According to the latest Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) forecast, GDP is expected to grow by only 1.1% in 2026, before averaging 1.6% a year through to 2030.

The total number of jobs in the economy (employees and self-employed) currently (Sept 25) stands at 36.5m, which is approximately 1m more jobs than its 2019 pre-pandemic level. This growth is wholly accounted for by an increase in the number of employees, whilst the number of self-employed remains below the 2019 level (but has shown a degree of recovery from its Covid low point). However, there is increasing evidence of a slow-down in the demand for labour, with total employment showing a decline of 150,000 compared to a year previously. The number of job vacancies has also been decreasing steadily and is down by 8% year on year, with feedback suggesting that firms may not be recruiting new workers or replacing those who left. Whilst this has not yet fed through to any rise in the overall unemployment rate, there has been a steady rise in youth unemployment since mid-2025.

3). Population Profile

In 2024 (all figures are latest available), there were 106,000 people living in the borough, with a male / female split of 49% / 51%. Chesterfield has an older age profile than the national average, with 22% of the population aged 65+, compared to 19% nationally.

Over the last ten years (2014-24), Chesterfield has seen population growth of 1.7%, compared to growth of 7.3% nationally and 9.0% regionally. This lower level of growth is likely to be a consequence of the significant restructuring that has previously taken place in the local economy, meaning that the overall capacity to generate new employment opportunities has been reduced. This has resulted in fewer people being attracted to the area for work, alongside those leaving the area to find employment elsewhere (including those younger people entering higher education and not returning to Chesterfield after graduation).

Population projections suggest that the national population will grow by 6% in the 10 year period (2024-34), with all this growth resulting from an increase in net migration (with births and deaths broadly in balance). The share of the population aged 65+ will increase from 19% to 21%, whilst the working age population will also increase in absolute terms, although the share will remain relatively static at around 63%. Chesterfield is estimated to see a lower rate of growth of just under 3%, with the proportion of those aged over 65 increasing to almost 26%.

4). GVA Data

In 2023, Chesterfield’s economy generated GVA (Gross Value Added) of £3,074m, with the wholesale & retail sector accounting for the largest share at £538m. This was followed by the health & social care sector (£484m), manufacturing (£271m), real estate (£270m) and finance & insurance (£257m). Professional services (higher value services) accounted for £143m, whilst business administration (lower value services) stood at £243m.

GVA per worker in Chesterfield was estimated to be £59,000, below the regional average of £63,000 and the national average of £75,000. This lower level of productivity (79% of the national average), reflects the particular mix of business sectors in the borough which shows a bias towards lower value-added activities.

5). Economic Connectivity

Travel to work data has been published as part of the Census 2021, however this data has been impacted by the Covid pandemic with Government guidance at the time encouraging people to work from home wherever possible. As a result 23% of Chesterfield's employed residents were classified as mainly working from home in 2021, compared to 8% at the time of the 2011 Census. However, whilst not showing the same total number of journeys, similar patterns of commuting into and out of Chesterfield are evident in both the 2011 and 2021 data.

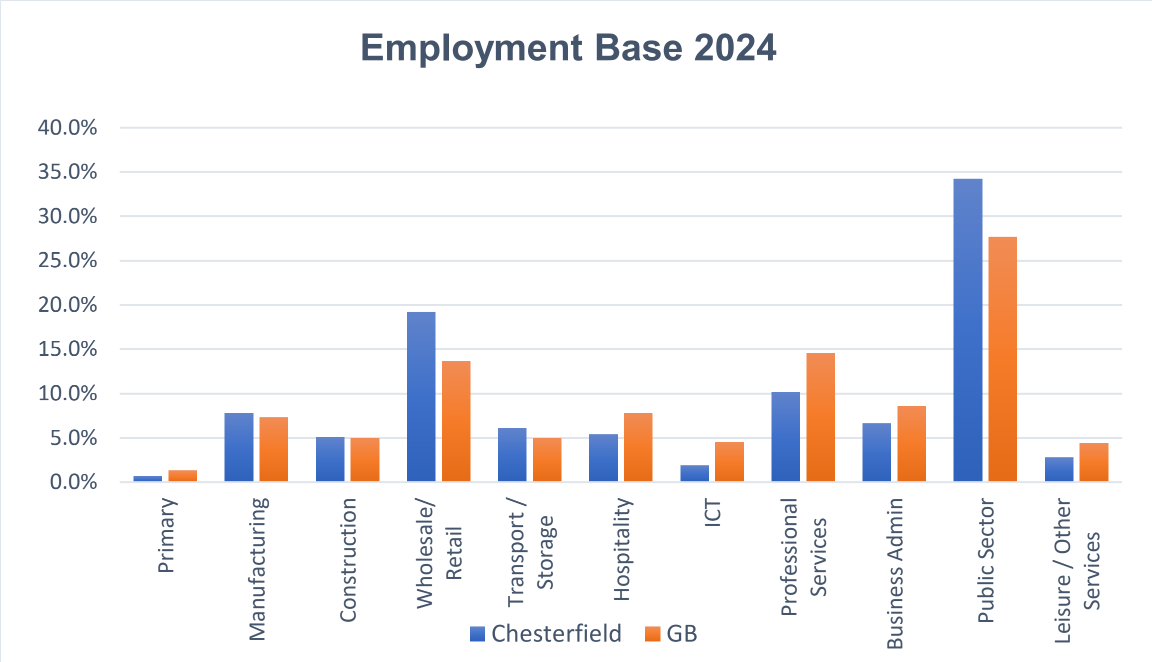
Chesterfield is the most important location of employment for Chesterfield residents with 27,500 working within the borough's boundary (including 10,800 homeworkers). Approximately 13,000 residents travelled outside the borough for work, with North East Derbyshire (3,500), Sheffield (2,500), Bolsover (1,600) and Derbyshire Dales (1,200) being the most significant employment destinations, accounting for two thirds of the total (the same proportion as in 2011). A further 7,000 employed residents are classified as having no fixed place of work.

As a sub-regional employment centre, Chesterfield also attracts commuters from surrounding areas, with approximately 17,000 workers travelling into the borough on a daily basis. North East Derbyshire (6,500) is the largest source of in-commuters, followed by Bolsover (3,200) and Sheffield (2,750). Together these three areas account for approximately three-quarters of all in-bound commuters, with secondary flows from Derbyshire Dales (750) and Rotherham (600).

At the time of the Census 2021, 32% of the national workforce (23% Chesterfield) were mainly working from home. Since that time, the number of people nationally working from home (all the time) has decreased and currently (2025) stands at 13%, with people working on a hybrid basis (both working from home and travelling to work) accounting for 28% of the total. The proportion of home / hybrid workers has remained relatively static over the last couple of years, suggesting that the hybrid model has become an established form of working for many people (although within the flexibilities offered by the hybrid model, reports suggest that the proportion of time spent in the workplace has been increasing).

6). Employment Base

In 2024, there were around 52,500 people employed in Chesterfield (plus approximately 6,000 residents classified as self-employed). The graph below provides an employment breakdown by key business sector, compared to the national average:



The public sector (comprising public administration, education and health & social care) is the largest employer in Chesterfield (34%), with the health and social care sector accounting for 24% of total employment, compared to 14% nationally. This is followed by the wholesale and retail sector (19% v 14%), reflecting Chesterfield's role as a sub-regional retail and distribution centre. Chesterfield has a particular specialism in 'motor trades' (both vehicle sales and repair), accounting for 5% of employment in the borough (2% nationally).

Despite the longer term decline of the local manufacturing sector, Chesterfield retains a slightly higher share of employment than the national average, with particular specialisms in the production of metal goods and engineering. Chesterfield has above average levels of employment in the transport & storage sector (6% v 5%), reflecting a significant local representation of post office related activities.

Higher-value private sector services (such as professional services and IT) are under-represented in Chesterfield, accounting for 12% of employment compared to 19% nationally, as are the lower value 'business support services' (7% v 9%). Chesterfield also has a lower share of employment in the hospitality and leisure sectors.

The table below shows changes in local employment over the period 2015-24. Although the data is subject to rounding (and may therefore over/under exaggerate the scale of change), it does provide an illustration of the general direction of travel for the main employment sectors.

Chesterfield Employment 2015-24			
Industry	2015	2024	Change (%)
Primary	400	350	-50 (-13%)
Manufacturing	4,900	4,100	-800 (-16%)
Construction	2,600	2,700	+100 (+4%)

Motor Trades	1,900	2,550	+650 (+34%)
Wholesale	2,800	3,200	+400 (+14%)
Retail	6,100	4,350	-1,750 (-29%)
Transport & Storage	2,250	3,200	+950 (+42%)
Hospitality	2,350	2,850	+500 (+21%)
IT	1,450	1,000	-450 (-31%)
Financial Services	1,200	1,150	-50 (-4%)
Professional Services	2,800	4,200	+1,400 (+50%)
Business Support Services	2,650	3,500	+850 (+32%)
Public Administration	2,000	1,650	-350 (-18%)
Education	4,600	3,900	-700 (-15%)
Health & Social Care	10,550	12,500	+1,950 (+18%)
Other Services & Leisure	1,400	1,500	+100 (+7%)
Total	49,950	52,700	+2,750 (+6%)

Chesterfield's overall level of employment has increased by 6% and this compares to national employment growth of 10%, highlighting a degree of under-performance relative to the national average. This under-performance is also evident across longer timescales, for example, over the 20 year period (2004-24), employment in Chesterfield has grown by 10% compared to 20% nationally. The main reason for this has been major restructuring in Chesterfield's manufacturing base (for example there were 7,000 manufacturing jobs in 2004 compared to 4,000 in 2024), whilst in more recent years, job losses in sectors such as retail and public services have also had an impact. Although the IT sector has been a key growth driver in the national economy, it has actually shown a significant employment decline (-30%) in Chesterfield. The main reason for this is the loss of a single large employer (Manor Offices site) in the borough.

The main source of employment growth has been the professional services sector (+50%), which has also been a key driver of growth in the national economy, and the transport & storage sector (+42%) largely related to the development of Markham Vale as a significant logistics and manufacturing location. The health and social care sector has seen the largest absolute growth (+1,950 jobs, (+18%)), reflecting the growing demand for services from an increasingly ageing population. Other notable growth sectors include the motor trades (+34%), business support services (+32%) and hospitality (+21%).

7). Employment Growth Forecast

The NFER (National Foundation for Educational Research), as part of its 'Skills Imperative 2035' research programme, has produced employment forecasts for the period 2025-35 for national and regional geographies. At national scale, employment is forecast to increase by 4.3% over the next 10 years, whilst the East Midlands achieves a lower rate of growth of 2.8% and for the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) the rate is 2.5%. The difference in the rates reflects both past performance and the particular mix of growth / declining business sectors at regional and national level.

Given that employment growth in Chesterfield has previously under-performed the national average, it is reasonable to assume that future local growth is most likely to align with the EMCCA forecast rate of 2.5%. The table below provides a sector based employment forecast for Chesterfield to 2035 based on the overall growth rate of 2.5% (a net gain of 1,300 jobs). It is recognised that the forecast represents an educated guess as to what might happen by 2035 and that the figures could be impacted by a range of variables not fully accounted for. This includes, for example, the future impact of AI on a range of job roles in service based sectors such as professional, financial and business support services: sectors that have previously been seen as key growth drivers in the national economy. It is anticipated that the impact of AI will not be limited to routine process based activities, but also jobs with a higher skills component such as entry level graduate employment. Equally, it is likely that new job roles will be created based on the greater utilisation of AI.

Employment Sector	**Chesterfield 2024 No. and (%)**	**Chesterfield 2035 No. and (%)**	**No. and (%) Change**
Primary	350 (0.7%)	350 (0.6%)	0 (0%)
Manufacturing	4,100 (7.8%)	3,900 (7.2%)	-200 (-5%)
Construction	2,700 (5.1%)	2,800 (5.2%)	+100 (+4%)
Motor trade	2,550 (4.8%)	2,600 (4.8%)	+50 (+2%)
Wholesale	3,200 (6.1%)	3,300 (6.1%)	+100 (+3%)
Retail	4,350 (8.3%)	4,100 (7.6%)	-250 (-6%)
Transport & Storage	3,200 (6.1%)	3,500 (6.5%)	+300 (+9%)
Hospitality	2,850 (5.4%)	2,950 (5.5%)	+100 (+4%)
Information & Comms	1,000 (1.9%)	1,100 (2.0%)	+100 (+10%)
Financial Services	1,150 (2.2%)	1,100 (2.0%)	-50 (-4%)
Professional Services	4,200 (8.0%)	4,450 (8.2%)	+250 (+6%)
Business Admin & Support	3,500 (6.6%)	3,650 (6.8%)	+150 (+4%)
Public Admin	1,650 (3.1%)	1,650 (3.1%)	0 (0%)
Education	3,900 (7.4%)	4,000 (7.4%)	+100 (+3%)
Health & Social Care	12,500 (23.7%)	13,000 (24.1%)	+500 (+4%)
Other Services, Arts, Leisure	1,500 (2.8%)	1,550 (2.9%)	+50 (+3%)
Total	**52,700**	**54,000**	**+1,300 (+2.5%)**

The health & social care sector sees the largest absolute growth (+500 jobs) driven by the increasing demand for services from an increasingly ageing population. Public administration maintains a steady state, pending the outcome of Local Government Reorganisation which could see either a reduction or consolidation of employment in Chesterfield, depending on the future location of activity.

The transport & storage sector sees further employment growth (+300 jobs) reflecting the scope for additional warehousing developments at Markham Vale North and Hartington Industrial Park.

Professional, IT and business support services are expected to see continued employment growth to 2035, although as noted above, this is likely to be at a lower rate than seen previously, reflecting the increased use of AI in a range of job roles. The revised local housebuilding target of 500 homes a year should act to support increased employment in the construction sector.

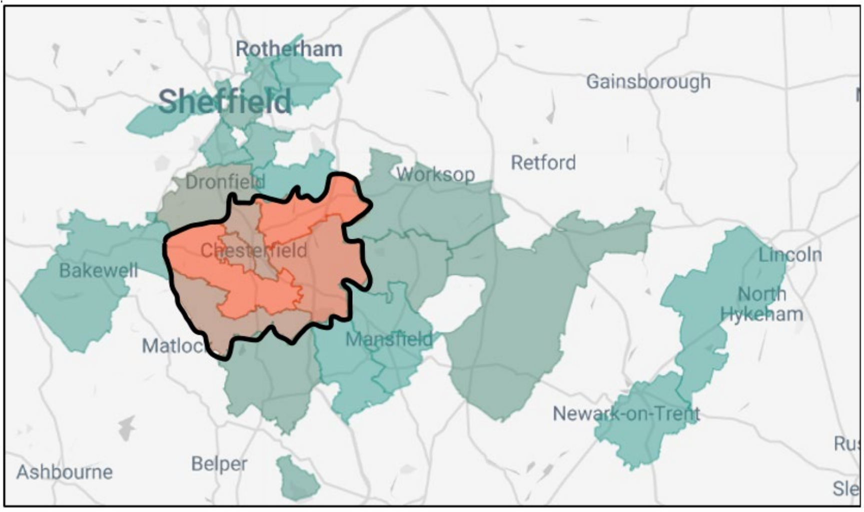
Sectors that are likely to experience employment decline over the period include manufacturing, retail and financial services. The decline in manufacturing represents the continuation of longer-term structural change in the sector, although this should be mitigated (to a degree) by the designation of sites in the Staveley area as part of the East Midlands Investment Zone (offering incentives to attract green industries and advanced manufacturing businesses).

The retail sector sees further job losses, with a continuing shift to on-line shopping and rationalisation of store networks. This will be partly off-set by some additional demand for convenience retailing, linked to the overall growth in Chesterfield's population. The town centre continues its development as an 'experience' based destination, supporting additional employment in sectors such as hospitality and leisure. It is anticipated there will be some further job losses in financial services on the back of AI roll-out and on-going consolidation of the bank branch network.

Other significant projects which could have a positive impact on employment in the forecast period (but aren't currently accounted for) include: PEAK, a gateway resort located on the edge of the Peak District supporting employment in the hospitality, leisure and retail sectors; and the development of the former Staveley Works site for manufacturing and logistics uses.

8). Chesterfield Town Centre

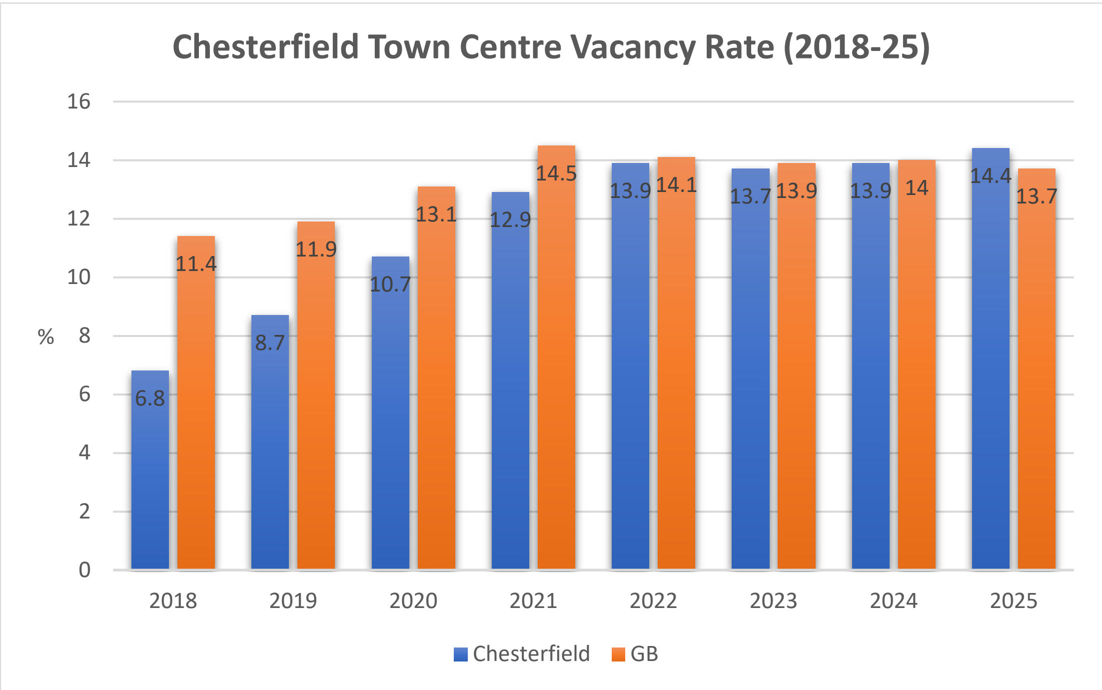
Chesterfield is the largest town in Derbyshire and acts as the main sub-regional centre in the north of the county providing a range of economic, retail, cultural, leisure and public service activities for surrounding communities. Chesterfield is classified by CACI as being in the second highest tier of retail destinations (Major Centres), although the town has a greater proportion of value retailers and therefore a bias towards the lower value end of the market. The positioning of the retail offer generally reflects the levels of spend which are available in the town's core catchment geography (the place where the majority of visits to the town centre originate from). The core catchment broadly comprises the postcodes S40-S45 and typically accounts for between 60%-65% of all visits to the town centre (shown on the map below).



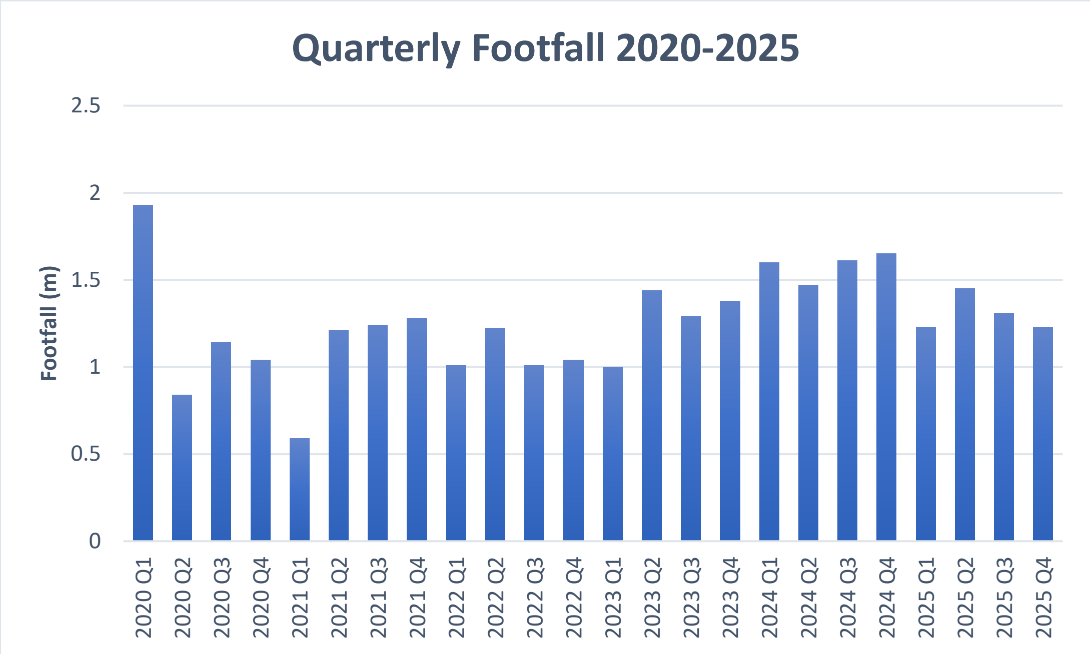
The core catchment is characterised by lower levels of purchasing power, with 77% of lower income visitors originating from this area compared to 42% of middle income and 36% of higher income visitors. The wider catchment can be seen to extend north to Dronfield/Sheffield, west to Bakewell, south to Alfreton and eastwards into north Nottinghamshire. Affluent residential areas are mainly located in the western part of the catchment (on the fringes of the Peak District), whilst lower income areas generally comprise former industrial / mining settlements to the east of the town centre.

In common with other traditional high streets, Chesterfield is presently facing some key challenges, notably the continuing rise of on-line shopping and the closure / exit of national multiples out of the town centre (for example the relocation of Next and Marks & Spencer to the Ravenside retail park). These trends have resulted in declining town centre footfall, impacting the viability of those businesses which remain and leading to a steady rise in high street vacancies.

Chesterfield town centre has previously had a lower vacancy rate than the national average (typically about 60% of the national average - see chart below), however the gap has narrowed since 2019 and reached a broad level of parity in 2022. In 2025, the vacancy rate has averaged 14.4%, slightly ahead of the national average of 13.7%. Two-thirds of the units have been vacant for more than a year and 40% vacant for more than three years, highlighting the structural nature of declining demand for high street premises. Despite the rising vacancy rate, there remains a relatively high demand for premises in the town centre, with 34 new lettings achieved in 2025 (compared to 25 in 2024).

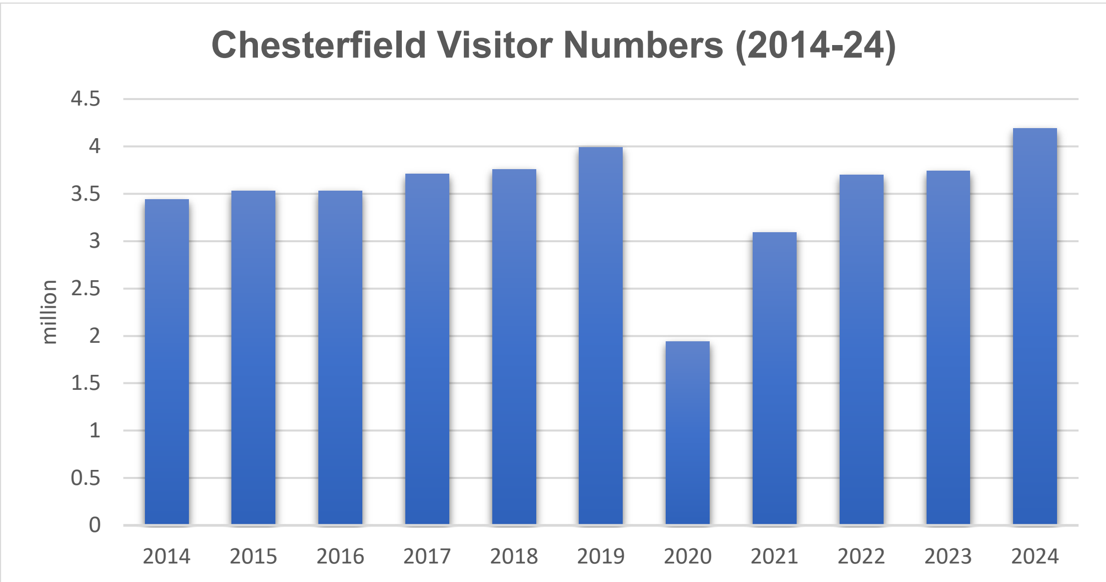


The chart below provides a quarterly breakdown of town centre footfall over the period 2020-25. Footfall has seen a steady recovery from the impact of the Covid pandemic in 2020 and 2021, although it remains some way below its pre-Covid start point (2020 Q1). Footfall rebounded quite strongly in 2024 but has been more subdued in 2025, reflecting weakening economic growth in the year. Declining footfall was an established trend prior to Covid, so it remains to be seen whether there is any further upside to the post-Covid recovery or whether the downward trend is reasserting itself.



9). The Visitor Economy

In 2024 there were 4.2m visitors to Chesterfield borough. The number of visitors fell significantly during the Covid pandemic, but have since shown a steady recovery and have now exceeded the pre-covid high point of 4.0m visitors achieved in 2019.



Chesterfield is primarily a day visit destination, with day visitors accounting for 92% of all visitors, with the balance being made up of people staying overnight in paid accommodation and those staying with friends and relatives. Although staying visitors in paid accommodation represented less than 4% of all visitors, they accounted for 17% of the economic impact, highlighting their value to the local economy.

In relation to total visitor spend (£220m), this directly supported almost 2,000 jobs (plus a further 500 indirect jobs as a result of spend through the supply chain), with the largest share of employment being in the retail sector (740 jobs supported), followed by food & drink (600 jobs) and recreation (300 jobs).

10). Business Demography

In 2025 there were 4,115 businesses operating in Chesterfield, approximately 80% of which were businesses based in Chesterfield, with the balance comprising branches of companies headquartered elsewhere (for example national retail chains). The table below provides a breakdown by business sector and comparison with the national profile.

Number of Businesses by Sector (2025)		
Sector	Chesterfield No. and (%)	National %
Primary	55 (1.3%)	4.8%
Manufacturing	330 (8.0%)	4.4%
Construction	485 (11.8%)	12.5%
Motor Trade	210 (5.1%)	2.9%
Wholesale	220 (5.3%)	3.8%
Retail	455 (11.1%)	9.4%
Transport & Storage	145 (3.5%)	4.1%
Hospitality	345 (8.4%)	7.1%
Information & Comms	160 (3.9%)	6.3%
Finance	110 (2.7%)	2.2%
Property	130 (3.2%)	4.2%
Professional Services	460 (11.2%)	14.1%
Business Admin	290 (7.0%)	8.4%
Public Admin, Education, Health	460 (11.2%)	8.8%
Other Services, Leisure, Arts	260 (6.3%)	7.0%
Total	4,115 (100%)	100%

Chesterfield has a significantly higher representation of manufacturing businesses than the national average (8.0% v 4.4%), highlighting the continuing importance (and strength in-depth) of the local manufacturing cluster, particularly in relation to its metal goods and engineering specialisms (which account for 60% of all manufacturing businesses).

Chesterfield has a greater share of businesses in the distribution related sectors (retail, wholesale and motor trades), totalling 22% of all businesses compared to 16% nationally. Construction is the largest business sector (11.8%), although construction only accounts for 5% of local employment, highlighting a high proportion of micro companies in the sector.

The key area where Chesterfield has a lower share of businesses than the national average is in relation to the higher-value IT (3.9% v 6.3%) and professional services (11% v 14%) sectors, reflecting a similar disparity in the employment base.

Across the business base as a whole, Chesterfield has a lower proportion of micro businesses (those employing <10 people) than the national average (78% v 84%), but then a greater share of businesses across each of the small, medium and large size categories. This difference is primarily due to the sectoral composition of the local economy, with Chesterfield having a greater share of those sectors which include larger business representation, for example, public health, manufacturing and the wholesale sectors.

Over the last ten years (2015-2025), the number of businesses in Chesterfield has increased by 3% or 120 businesses. Whilst positive, this is below the rate of growth seen at both regional (8%) and national levels (9%). In Chesterfield, the largest absolute growth has been seen in construction (+70 businesses), followed by hospitality (+40 businesses) and business administration (+25 businesses). This pattern was also reflected at the national scale, with construction seeing the largest absolute growth, followed by hospitality, property and business administration. Local sectors experiencing a decline included retail (-55 businesses), wholesale (-30 businesses) and public services (-20 businesses), although in relation to the latter this is most likely as a result of rationalisation of the building stock rather than closure.

11). Workforce

At the time of the Census 2021, 55.3% of Chesterfield residents (aged 16+) were in employment (47,530 people) which was below the national average of 57.4%. The table below sets out the occupational profile for Chesterfield residents (figures from Census 2011 also included for reference).

Occupations (Census 2021)				
	Chesterfield (2011)	**Chesterfield (2021)**	East Midlands (2021)	National (2021)
Managers	9.1%	**10.5%**	12.0%	12.9%
Professionals	14.5%	**16.8%**	17.5%	20.3%
Associate Professionals	10.7%	**11.2%**	11.9%	13.3%
Admin / Secretarial	11.4%	**9.5%**	9.1%	9.3%
Skilled Trades	12.0%	**11.2%**	10.8%	10.2%
Caring, Leisure and Other Services	11.1%	**11.9%**	9.5%	9.3%
Sales and Customer Service	9.5%	**9.0%**	7.7%	7.5%
Process, Plant and Machine Operatives	9.1%	**8.1%**	8.9%	6.9%
Elementary Occupations	12.5%	**11.6%**	12.6%	10.5%

Chesterfield has fewer ‘knowledge workers’ (managers, professionals, associate professionals – 38.5%) than both the regional (41.4%) and national (46.5%) averages, although the share of knowledge workers has increased by over 4% points since 2011. Conversely, Chesterfield has a greater proportion of lower skilled occupations (caring, leisure, sales, elementary occupations – 32.5%) compared to the regional (29.8%) and national (27.3%) averages, and this is only slightly down on the 2011 figure (32.7%).

Apart from the knowledge based occupations, the only other occupation that has increased its share of employment is ‘caring, leisure and other services’ and this is likely to reflect the high level of health related employment in Chesterfield. The largest decrease (-1.9% points) has been seen in ‘administrative and secretarial’ occupations reflecting the increased use of digital technologies and service automation.

Looking at the business sectors in which local people were employed (both in the borough and in the surrounding area, including the self-employed), the largest sector was health and social work, accounting for 18.5% of employment (compared to 14.5% nationally), followed by the wholesale and retail sector at 18% (compared to 15% nationally). Other significant employment sectors include construction at 9.2% (8.7% nationally) and manufacturing at 8.9% (7.3% nationally). Local employment in higher value services (IT, finance and professional services) was 10.4%, some way below the national average of 16.8%. Employment in sectors such as public administration (5.9%), transport & storage (5.4%) and hospitality (4.5%) were all broadly in line with the national average.

12). Qualifications

In the 2024/25 academic year, the average GCSE attainment 8 score nationally was 46.0 and 44.9 for schools across Derbyshire. The table below shows attainment 8 scores for secondary schools in Chesterfield, with four schools (St Marys, Brookfield, Newbold and Hasland) achieving attainment 8 scores above the national average.

	Attainment 8 Score
St Marys Catholic High School	59.4
Brookfield Community School	50.8
Outwood Academy Newbold	48.9
Outwood Academy Hasland Hall	47.5
Netherthorpe School	42.1
Parkside Community School	41.0
Whittington Green School	40.8
Springwell Community College	37.9

The table below provides a breakdown of the highest qualification levels for Chesterfield residents compared to the regional and national averages (figures from Census 2021, with Chesterfield Census 2011 figures included for comparison).

Qualifications (2021)	Chesterfield 2011	**Chesterfield 2021**	East Midlands 2021	National 2021
No qualifications	27.6%	**20.2%**	19.5%	18.1%
Level 1 qualifications	14.3%	**10.9%**	10.4%	9.7%
Level 2 qualifications	17.0%	**15.2%**	13.9%	13.3%
Apprenticeship	4.0%	**6.4%**	6.0%	5.3%
Level 3 qualifications	12.1%	**18.0%**	18.3%	16.9%
Level 4 qualifications and above	21.0%	**26.8%**	29.1%	33.9%
Other qualifications	3.9%	**2.5%**	2.8%	2.8%

Chesterfield has a lower qualifications profile than the regional and national averages, with fewer residents (aged 16+) qualified at Level 4 or above and more people with no qualifications. Compared to 2011, Chesterfield has seen a notable increase in both Level 3 (+5.9% points) and Level 4 and above (+5.8% points) qualifications, as well as a significant fall in the proportion of people with no qualifications (-7.4% points) and a decline in lower level qualifications (Levels 1 and 2). Chesterfield has a greater proportion of people with an apprenticeship as their highest qualification (6.4%) than the national average (5.3%).

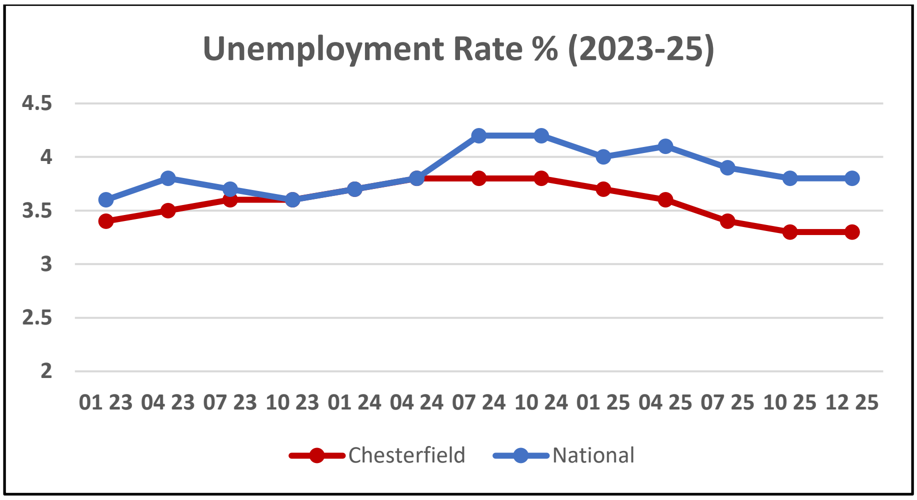
13). Earnings and Household Income

The median gross weekly earnings for Chesterfield residents in 2025 were £718, slightly below the regional (£721) and below the national (£767) average. However, whilst median wages for people working in Chesterfield (£724) are below the national average (£767), they are now above the regional average (£704) and this has been the case in both 2024 and 2025. This supports the view that Chesterfield is starting to see a shift towards higher-value, higher-wage employment.

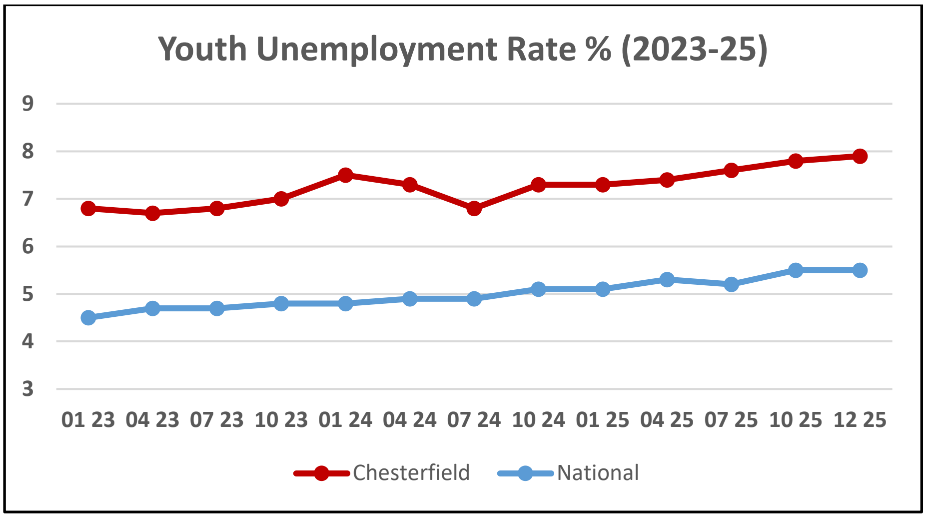
Disposable household income (2023) in Chesterfield was £20,300 per person, below the regional (£21,700) and national (£24,800) averages. However, over the past decade, disposable income in Chesterfield has grown faster than both benchmarks, for example, rising from 86% to 94% of the regional average.

14). Unemployment

Chesterfield's claimant count unemployment rate (see chart below) currently stands at 3.3% (2,150 claimants – Feb 2026). This is below both the regional (3.5%) and national (3.9%) rates. Over the last year, Chesterfield has seen a downward trend in unemployment with the rate falling from 3.7% (Feb 25) to 3.3%, whilst the national rate has been broadly static (4.0% to 3.9%) over the period. Chesterfield's rate has now been consistently below the national average since mid-2024. However, there are signs of 'loosening' in the national labour market, with the number of job vacancies down 8% on the year and currently at their lowest level since early 2021. The most recent OBR forecast is for a small increase in unemployment in 2026 (+0.5% points), before trending downwards in 2027.



The rate of youth unemployment (18-24 year olds) currently stands at 8.0% (Feb 26), above both the national (5.7%) and regional (5.4%) averages. Chesterfield's youth unemployment rate is one of the highest in the East Midlands and is consistently a couple of percentage points above the national average. Unlike the fall in Chesterfield's 'all claimants' rate over the last year, the youth unemployment rate has actually increased from 7.3% to 8.0% (although this increase is in line with the increase seen nationally). This correlates with vacancy data which shows that the sectors seeing the largest reduction in vacancies (retail and hospitality) are also those that employ a greater proportion of young people.



15). Indices of Deprivation 2025

The Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD 2025) ranks Chesterfield as the 80th most deprived district in the country (out of 296 districts). This compares to a ranking of 86th (out of 319 districts) on the 2019 Indices. However, given the overall reduction in the total number of authorities, Chesterfield's relative position is effectively unchanged, despite the move up the rankings.

Chesterfield is ranked as the third most deprived authority area in Derbyshire, after Bolsover (52nd) and Derby (79th), with Derbyshire Dales the least deprived district (ranked 213th) in the county.

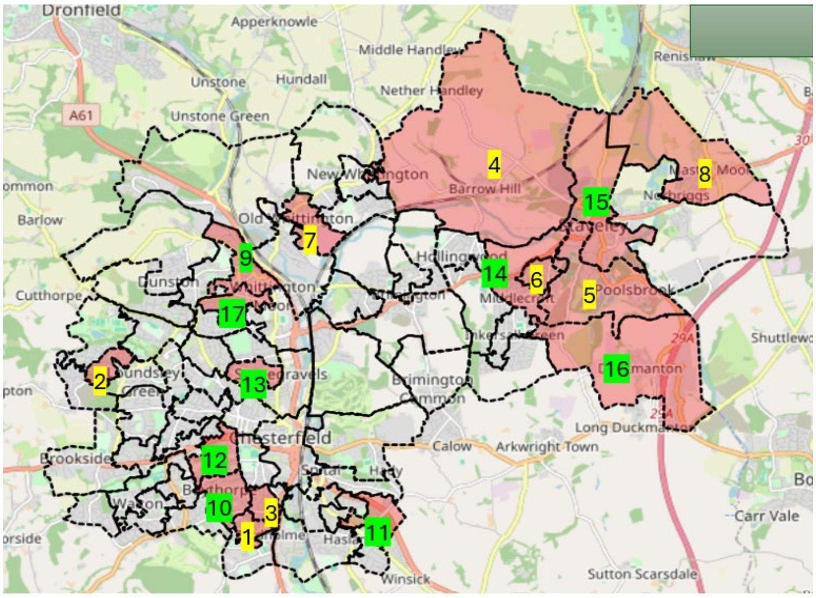
Looking at the specific aspects of deprivation which make up the IMD 2025, Chesterfield's ranking is as follows:

	Ranking
Overall IMD	80th
Income	87th
Employment	44th
Education & Skills	116th
Health & Disability	12th
Crime	105th
Housing & Services	277th
Living Environment	181st

Chesterfield is ranked as more deprived than its average rank on two measures of deprivation: employment, ranked 44th ; and health & disability, where Chesterfield is ranked as one of the most deprived districts in the country (12th). Health issues also impact on the employment measure, which identifies those people of working age involuntarily excluded from the labour market, for example, individuals claiming incapacity benefit. On all other measures of deprivation, Chesterfield exceeds its average rank, most notably in relation to 'living environment' (ranked 181st) and 'housing & services' (ranked 277th). This highlights that deprivation in Chesterfield is primarily about factors that directly relate to the circumstances of individuals (for example, health, income and employment), rather than the characteristics of the place in which they live (for example, housing affordability, air quality, noise pollution etc).

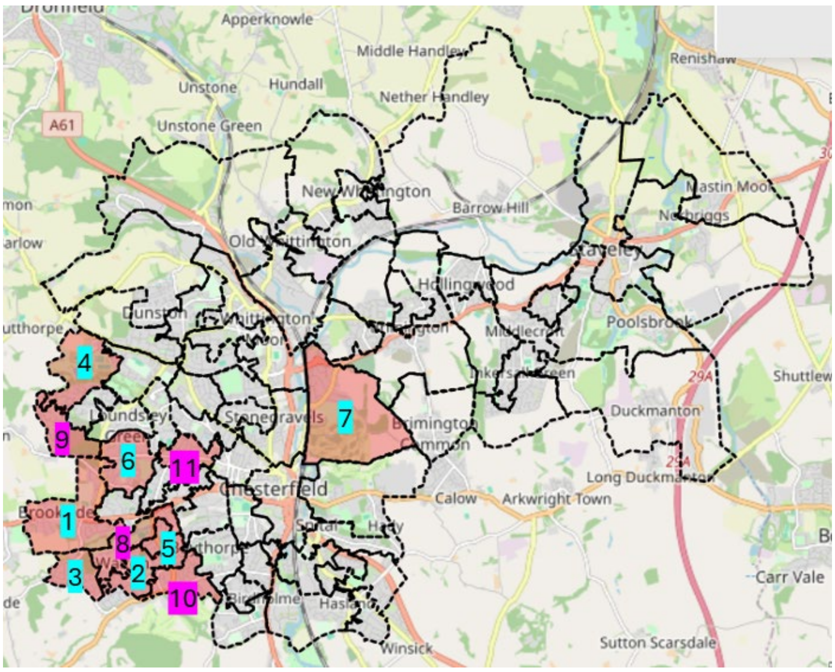
At the level of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs – with 69 LSOAs in Chesterfield), which approximate to local neighbourhoods, 17 LSOAs (25%) are ranked in the most deprived 20% nationally, with 8 of these in the most deprived 10% nationally. These are located in the former mining / industrial areas in the east of the borough; on the fringes of Chesterfield town centre; and include communities in the north west of the borough (see Map 1). At the other end of the scale, Chesterfield has 11 SOAs (16%) ranked in the least deprived 20% nationally, with 7 of these in the least deprived 10% nationally. These are mainly located in the south west of the borough (see Map 2). Whilst Chesterfield generally has a greater proportion of deprived neighbourhoods, it does also appear that the distribution is becoming more polarised at the margins, with an increase in the number of LSOAs in the most deprived 10% (+2 LSOAs) and least deprived 10% (+3 LSOAs), compared to the 2019 Indices.

Map 1 – LSOAs in the most deprived 20% nationally



Most Deprived 10%	Most Deprived 10%-20%
1. Grangewood	9. Dunston (East)
2. Holme Hall	10. Boythorpe (South)
3. St. Augustines	11. Hasland (Calow Lane)
4. Barrow Hill	12. Boythorpe (North)
5. Staveley-Poolsbrook	13. Stonegravels (West)
6. Middlecroft	14. Middlecroft (West)
7. Old Whittington	15. Netherthorpe
8. Mastin Moor	16. Duckmanton
	17. Whittington Moor

Map 2 – LSOAs in the least deprived 20% nationally



Least Deprived 10%	Least Deprived 10%-20%
1. Brookeside	8. Walton Park
2. Walton Central	9. Linacre
3. Somersall	10. Walton (Whitecotes Lane)
4. Linacre (Brushfield Rd)	11. Brockwell (South)
5. Walton Rd	
6. Ashgate	
7. Tapton	

Looking at the specific aspects of deprivation at the neighbourhood level (where the first decile equates to the most deprived 10%):

Decile	Overall IMD	Income	Employment	Education / Skills	Health	Crime	Housing & Services	Living Environment
1	8	6	12	5	25	6	0	2
2	9	9	13	10	18	5	0	2
3	16	14	10	11	6	13	1	9
4	8	7	9	8	7	10	3	6
5	2	6	5	8	7	6	1	7
6	7	5	5	4	3	9	5	8
7	6	8	3	3	2	3	13	10
8	2	2	5	7	1	6	11	10
9	4	4	7	9	0	5	19	5
10	7	8	0	4	0	6	16	10
Most deprived 20%	25%	22%	36%	22%	62%	16%	0%	6%
Least deprived 20%	16%	18%	10%	19%	0%	16%	51%	22%

Alongside the overall IMD measure, Chesterfield has a greater proportion of LSOAS in the most deprived 20% nationally on 4 of the deprivation measures - income, employment, education & skills and health & disability. As previously highlighted, health & disability is the most significant aspect of local deprivation, with 62% of all neighbourhoods in the most deprived 20% nationally. Also to note that there are no neighbourhoods in the least deprived 20% (and only 6 in the least deprived 50%) on this measure, highlighting that health is an issue impacting across all communities in Chesterfield borough, regardless of overall IMD ranking.

Chesterfield has a greater proportion of LSOAs in the least deprived 20% nationally on 2 of the deprivation measures (housing & services and living environment), underlining a previous point about the nature of deprivation in Chesterfield primarily relating to people rather than place. Half of all LSOAs are in the least deprived 20% on the housing & services measure and only 5 LSOAs (7%) in the most deprived 50% nationally.