

# LIVERPOOL CITY REGION

CITY REGION EMPLOYMENT PROFILE | NOVEMBER 2023

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## SUMMARY

The Liverpool City Region has the fourth largest population of the nine English Combined Authorities. Its employment (73.7%) and unemployment rates (3.1%) are lower than the English average, while inactivity (24%) is higher.<sup>1</sup> Workers in the region earn a weekly wage of £571,<sup>2</sup> which is £59 below the English average.

The Liverpool City Region has a lower rate of severely insecure work at 18.8% compared to the English average of 19.8%.

The Work Foundation defines insecure work through a single holistic measure which combines:

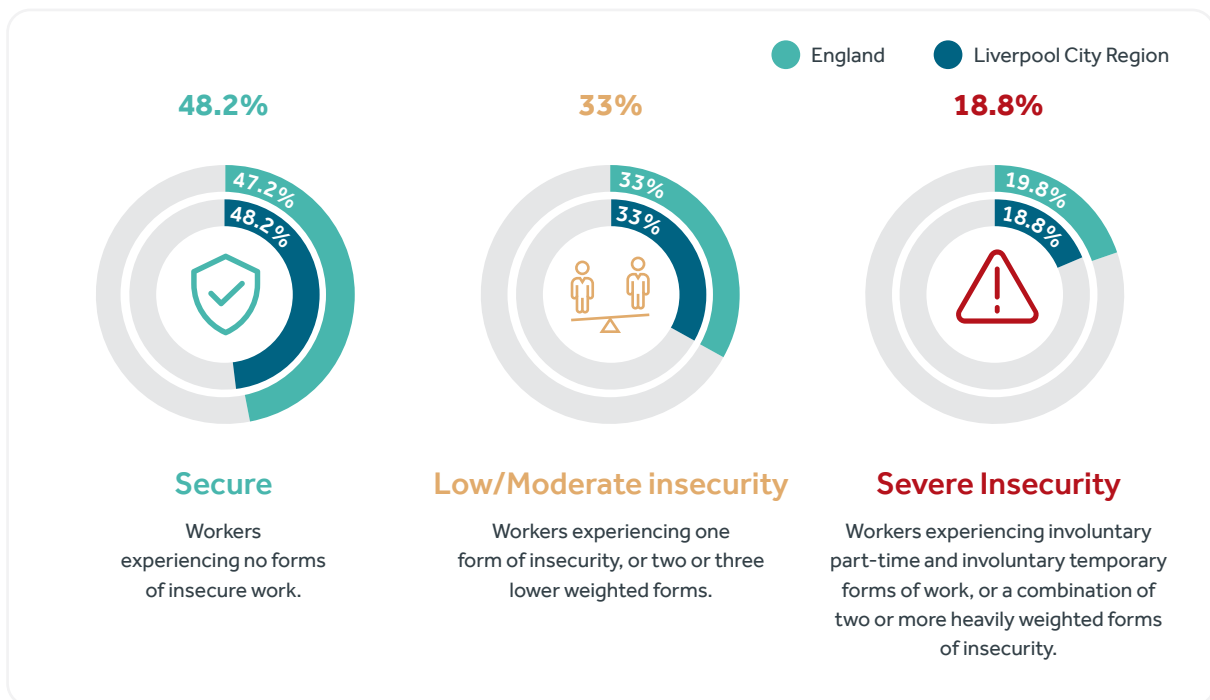
- contractual insecurity, where people are not guaranteed future hours or future work - such as jobs in the gig economy, zero contract work or part-time work
- financial insecurity, where people have unpredictable pay or their pay is simply too low to get by
- lack of access to employment rights and protections.

Despite a lower incidence of severely insecure work relative to England, the Liverpool City Region has higher than average incidences of second jobs, low paid jobs and temporary work.

Across the Liverpool City Region, there is some variation in the incidence of severely insecure work amongst the six local authorities. Wirral is the hotspot in the city region with 20.9% of its workers in severely insecure work. Halton is five percentage points below the national average for workers in severely insecure work and is nine points above the average for those in secure employment.

Analysis shows that women, workers from ethnic minority backgrounds, disabled people and younger workers are more likely than other workers to be in severely insecure work in the Liverpool City Region.

Figure 1: Insecurity amongst the Liverpool City Region workforce, 2021-2022



Source: Work Foundation calculations of the Office for National Statistics Labour Force Survey; 2021- 2022.

1. ONS 2023, Annual Population Survey, January-December 2022  
 2. Centre for Cities (2023). Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Factsheet. Available at: <https://www.centreforcities.org/combined-authority/liverpool-city-region/>

## 1. LIVERPOOL CITY REGION OVERVIEW

The Liverpool City Region became a Combined Authority in April 2014 and brings together six local authorities: Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral.<sup>3</sup>

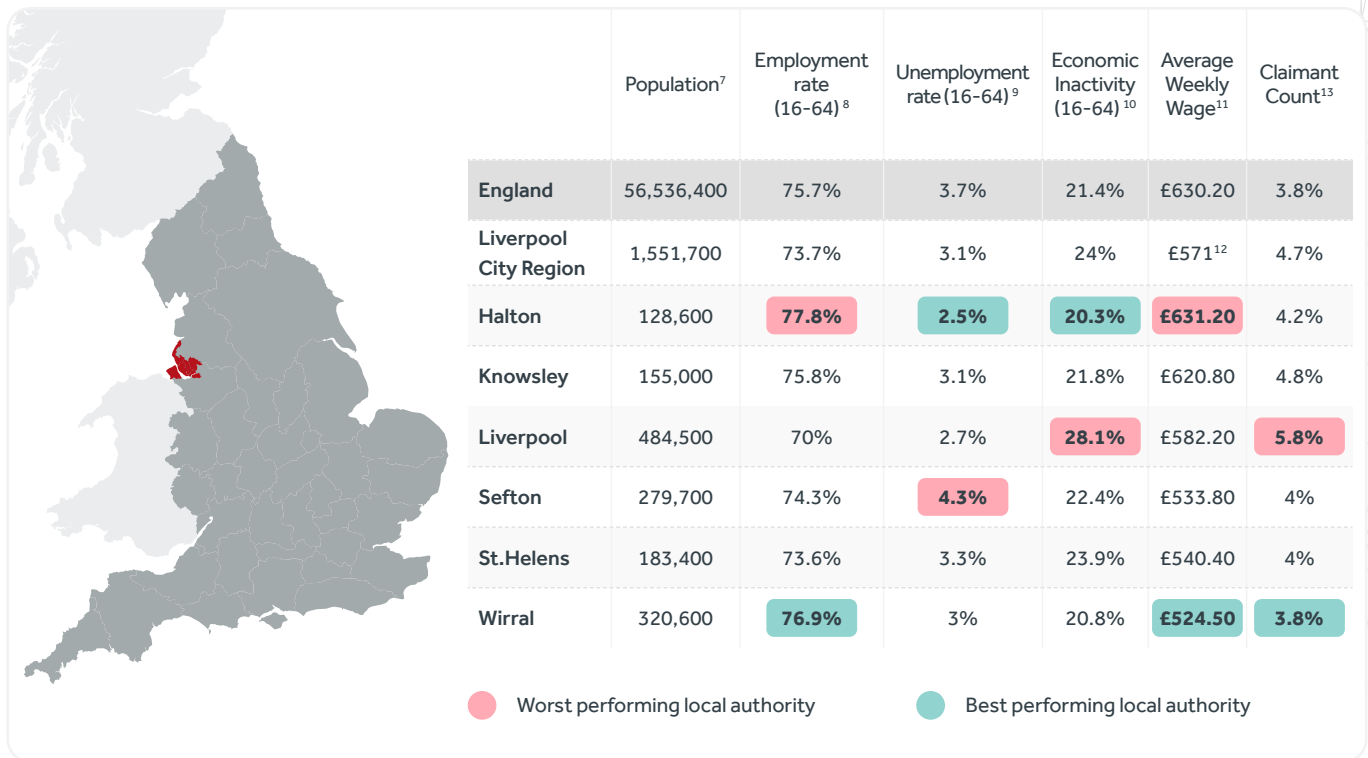
It has a population of 1,551,700 with a working age population of 977,100. The elected mayor, Steve Rotheram, came to office in 2017, and in 2019 announced a Strategic Investment Fund, devoting £500 million to invest in transport infrastructure, skills and economic development.<sup>4</sup> The Combined Authority has also devised a Fair Employment Charter that explicitly mentions secure work as a key priority, and a 'Plan for Prosperity' which emphasises the importance of promoting good employment.<sup>5</sup>

Nearly half of the workforce in the Liverpool City Region work in the public administration, education, wholesale and retail, and health and social care sectors. 34.6% of the jobs in the Liverpool City Region are publicly funded while 10.7% of jobs are high-skilled jobs in the private sector.<sup>6</sup>

The Liverpool City Region economy has an average annual economic growth rate (2001-2021) of 3.2%, which is slightly below the English average. Its unemployment rate is 3.1% which is lower than the English average.

Just under one in five workers (18.8%) of workers in the Liverpool City Region are in severely insecure work, which is below the English average of 19.8%. This Combined Authority has the lowest level of insecure work out of the nine English Combined Authorities.

Figure 2: The Liverpool City Region economy



Source: Work Foundation calculations of the Office for National Statistics Labour Force Survey; 2021- 2022.

3. Liverpool City Region Combined Authority: Who we are (2023). Available at: <https://www.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/who-we-are/#top>

4. Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (2018) . Available at:

<https://www.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/news/steve-rotheram-launches-transformational-500m-fund-for-the-liverpool-city-region>

5. Centre for Cities (2023). Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Factsheet. Available at:

<https://www.centreforcities.org/combined-authority/liverpool-city-region/>

6. Centre for Cities (2023). Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Factsheet. Available at:

<https://www.centreforcities.org/combined-authority/liverpool-city-region/>

7. ONS 2022, Population estimates-local authority based by five-year age band, 2021 data.

8. ONS 2023, Annual Population Survey, January-December 2022.

9. ONS 2023, Annual Population Survey, January-December 2022.

10. ONS 2023, Annual Population Survey, January-December 2022.

11. ONS 2022, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), average gross weekly workplace-based earnings, 2022 data.

12. Centre for Cities (2023). Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Factsheet. Available at:

<https://www.centreforcities.org/combined-authority/liverpool-city-region/>

13. ONS 2023, Claimant Count, June 2022 data.

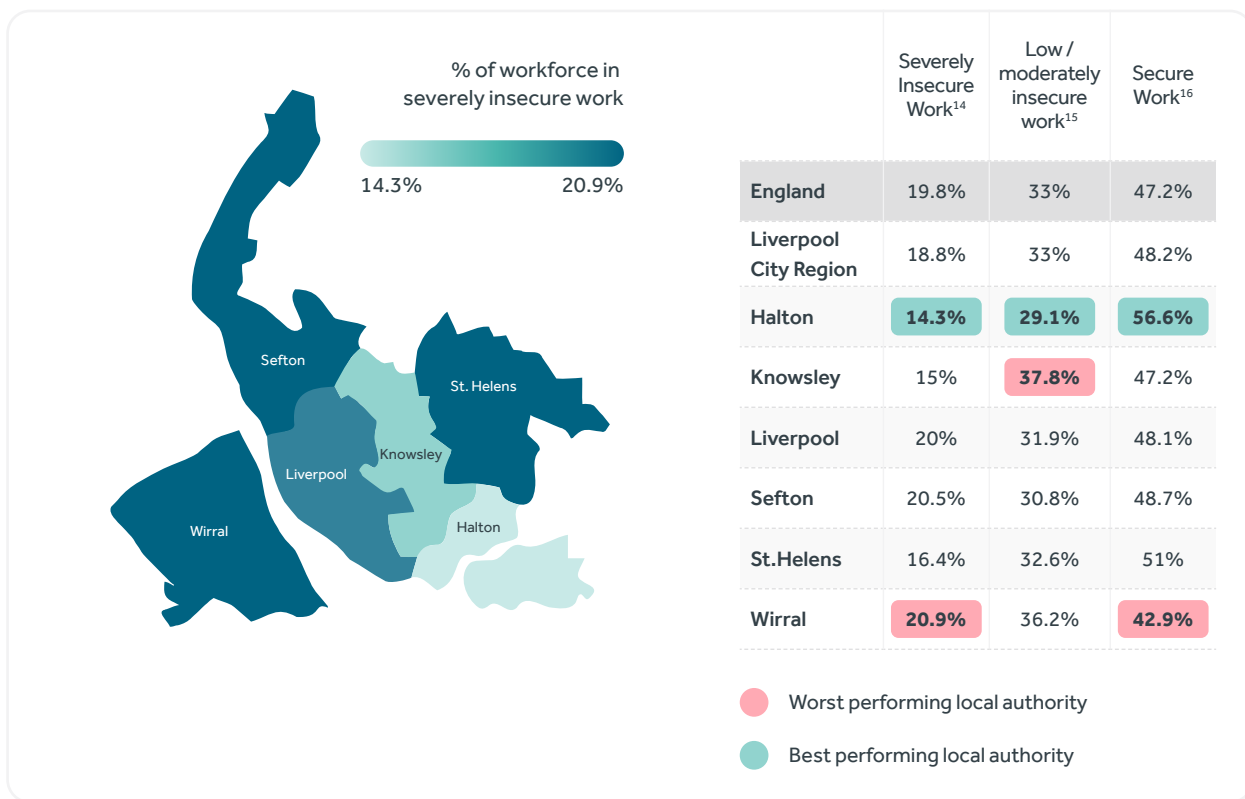
## 2. INSECURE WORK IN THE LIVERPOOL CITY REGION

Between 2021-2022, we found that the Liverpool City Region was home to a comparatively higher number of second jobs, low paid jobs and temporary work than the national average. On the other hand, we saw lower involuntary part-time work and solo self-employment. There is some variation in the incidence of severely insecure work within the local authorities of the Liverpool City Region too.

Wirral has the highest proportion of workers in severely insecure work, while in Halton only 14.3% of workers are in severely insecure work and more than half are in secure work. The city of Liverpool has the lowest employment rate in the Liverpool City Region while one in five workers are also in severely insecure work.

Halton has the lowest inactivity rate, while its workers also earn the highest average weekly wage (£631).

Figure 3: Liverpool City Region labour market



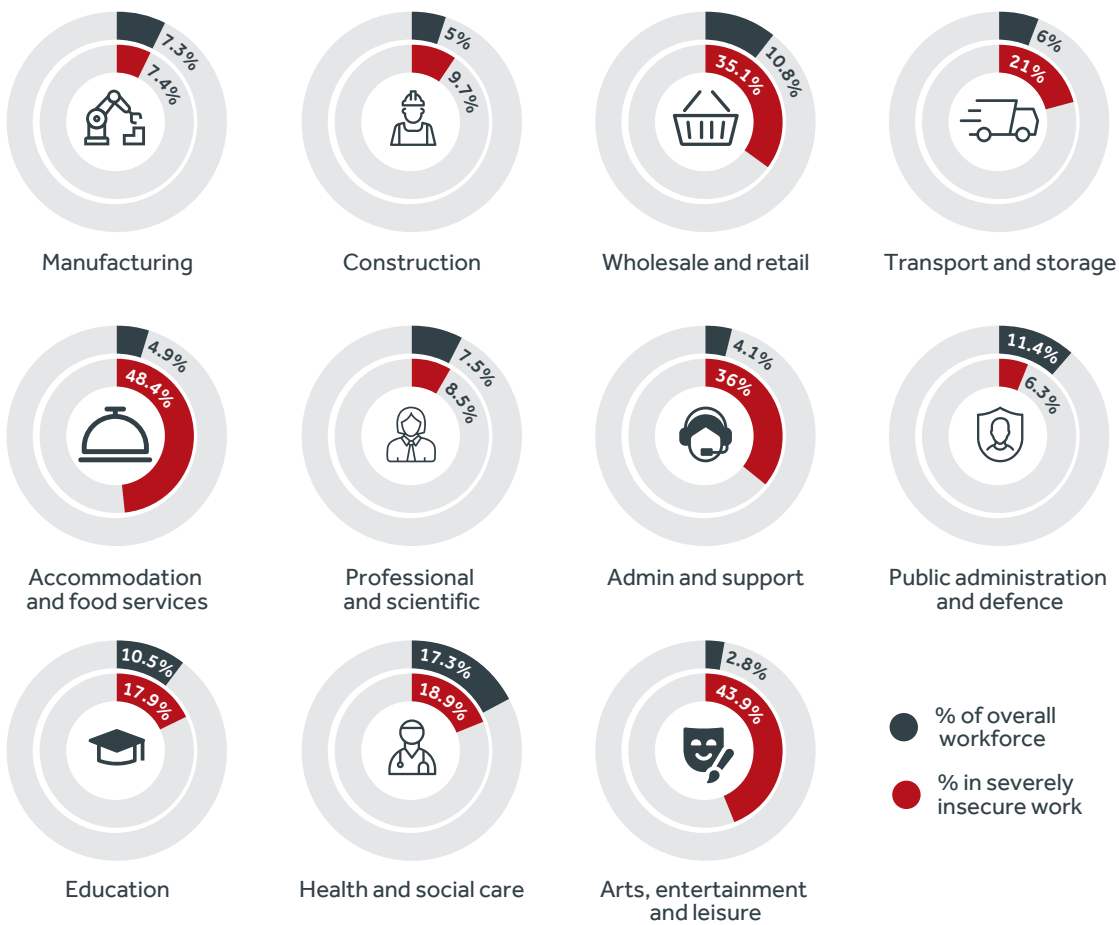
Map created with Datawrapper.

14. Work Foundation calculations of the ONS Labour Force Survey; 2021-2022.  
 15. Work Foundation calculations of the ONS Labour Force Survey; 2021-2022.  
 16. Work Foundation calculations of the ONS Labour Force Survey; 2021-2022.

## Sectors

Insecure work in the Liverpool City Region is driven by insecurity in the wholesale and retail sector. One in ten workers in the Liverpool City Region are employed in the sector with one in three of those workers in severely insecure work. The education and health and social care sectors make up nearly 30% of the workforce with about one in five workers in severely insecure work in those sectors. Severe insecurity is widespread in the arts, entertainment and leisure, and food and accommodation sectors, although these sectors make up a small, though important, proportion of the overall workforce.

Figure 4: Insecurity across sectors in the Liverpool City Region



Source: Work Foundation calculations of the Office for National Statistics Labour Force Survey; 2021- 2022.

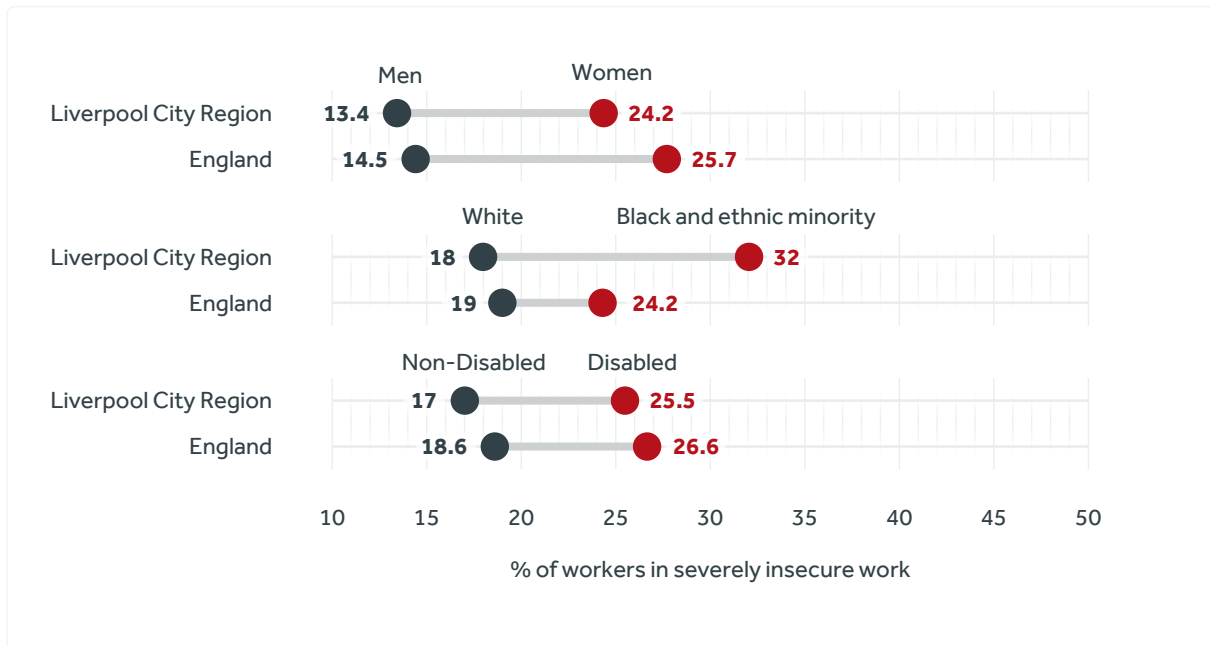
### The insecurity gap

Women in the Liverpool City Region are 1.8 times more likely to be in severely insecure work than men.

Compared with the average in England, there is a much smaller share of workers from a Black and ethnic minority background in the Liverpool City Region (5.8% compared with 13.8%). However, Black and ethnic minority workers are 1.3 times more likely to experience severely insecure work (32% compared to 24.2%).

Disabled workers are 1.5 times more likely to be in severely insecure work than non-disabled workers, making the disability insecurity gap in the Liverpool City Region slightly larger relative to England.

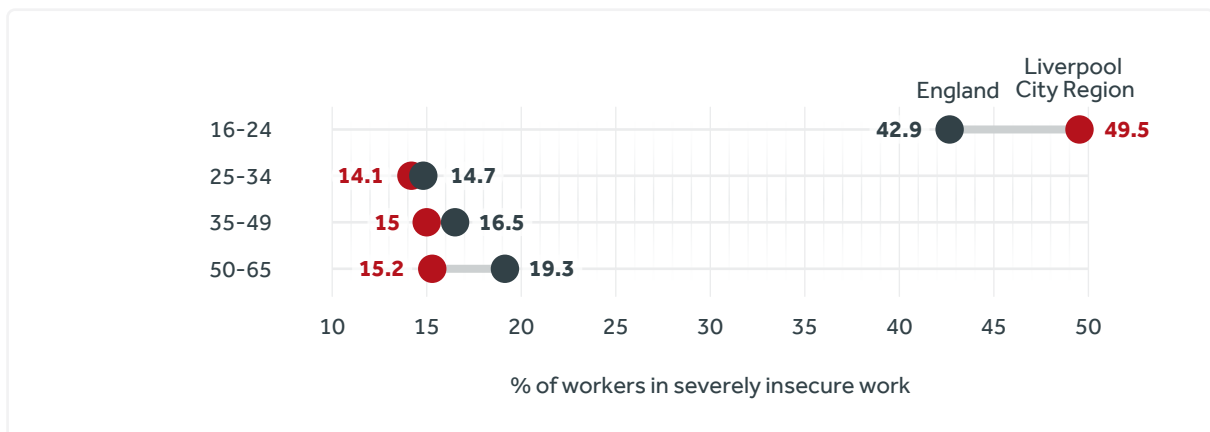
Figure 5: The gender, ethnicity and disability insecurity gaps



Source: Work Foundation calculations of the Office for National Statistics Labour Force Survey; 2021-2022.

Despite Liverpool City Region being home to a larger proportion of older workers compared to the rest of England (34.6% vs 30.1%), severely insecure work appears to be particularly concentrated amongst younger workers. The prevalence of insecure work among those aged 16-24 years old is about six percentage points higher in the Liverpool City Region than elsewhere in the country.

Figure 6: The age insecurity gap



Source: Work Foundation calculations of the Office for National Statistics Labour Force Survey; 2021-2022.

### 3. HOW SECURE WORK CAN REDUCE REGIONAL INEQUALITY

Insecure work is a national issue, but the consequences are felt locally. In order to reduce regional inequalities and limit the impacts of severely insecure work on individuals in the Liverpool City Region, the UK Government and Combined Authority Mayors must focus on two complementary ambitions over the next five years:

1. To significantly reduce levels of severely insecure jobs across the UK by 2030
2. To ensure that no English Mayoral Combined Authority is home to higher levels of severely insecure work than the national average.

#### Recommendations for Combined Authorities

- **Recognise insecure work in economic development and skills strategies** based on the sectors and roles within where it is concentrated, and the worker groups who are primarily impacted
- **Include the regular tracking of insecure work indicators** as part of existing Combined Authority labour market analysis
- **Explore partnerships and engagement with employment charters** to share lessons and best practice
- **Harness procurement and investment incentives** by building clear employment standards requirements into the commissioning and procuring goods and services
- **Support national enforcement bodies** by helping to build relationships with local employers and reporting non-compliance or violations of rights in your area.

For further research and recommendations on insecure work across England's Mayoral Combined Authorities, please see: [Delivering Levelling up? How secure work can reduce regional inequality \(2023\)](#).

For further information on our methodology, please see our [Technical Annex for the UK Insecure Work Index](#). Please note: our insecurity measure counts people where they live as opposed to where they work. Household composition and demographic traits can therefore affect results meaning that insecurity at a local level will not always correlate with the level of economic deprivation in that area.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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### CITATION

If you are using this document in your own writing, our preferred citation is: Florisson, R. and Navani, A. (2023). Liverpool City Region employment profile. The Work Foundation at Lancaster University.

### MORE INFORMATION

For further information, please contact the Work Foundation at Lancaster University at: [info@theworkfoundation.com](mailto:info@theworkfoundation.com).