

**LITTLE WOODHOUSE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**  
**EMPLOYMENT ANALYSIS – GROUP 7**  
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## Introduction

Little Woodhouse is immediately east of Leeds city centre. It is a largely residential area with some sections used more for commercial purposes. The Little Woodhouse Neighbourhood Plan is in the consultation stage, and this report's objective is to undertake an analysis of and map places of employment in this area to inform that plan. This report contains seven parts:

- History of employment
- The Leeds Core Strategy Local Plan review
- Map of current employment
- Questionnaire of employment in Little Woodhouse
- Employment statistics
- Retention of skilled workers and families
- Conclusion
- Recommendations for the future

## History of Employment in Little Woodhouse



Figure 1 – Map of Little Woodhouse from c.1892-1914 (OS)

Figure 1 depicts the south-eastern part of Little Woodhouse around the beginning of the 20th century, following the development of most of the land area. It is evident that the standout places of employment at the time were Leeds General Infirmary, the clothing factories and the handful of schools.

Also visible is the now-defunct tramway on Burley Street which would have undoubtedly required management and maintenance. The map shows several larger houses, open spaces and churches/chapels which would each require upkeep, gardeners, and house staff including maids and butlers.

Housing is generally a mixture of small terraces, larger terraces and large detached residences which gives some indication of the types of people living in Little Woodhouse at that time.

The large clothing factory seen on the map was built in 1904 and operated by John Barran, a pioneer industrialist and Leeds benefactor (Bradford, 2013). It is now known as Joseph's Well and houses office space which offers rooms which can be let by multiple different companies when required.



Figure 2 – Joseph's Well, Chorley Lane in 2008

In the early 1900s, West Yorkshire was one of the global leaders in textiles, with Leeds's textile focus being on finer materials and more specialist tastes, and this clothing factory seen was once one of the largest clothing factories in the world at its working peak. These mills predominantly offered work to women and children at the time who represented cheap labour.



Figure 3 - Map of Little Woodhouse from c.1949-1955 (OS)

Moving into the 1950s, it can be seen that the landscape of Little Woodhouse has changed dramatically from what it had been at the start of the century. From reviewing Figure 3, a large concentration of industrial units, including the tramway depot and Wellington Foundry, has appeared between the Leeds and Liverpool Canal and the A65 Kirkstall Road, though this is outside the defined neighbourhood area. This was clearly an ideal location for such employers as it allowed the easy transportation of materials and goods both via road and the canal, and would have provided work to employees across Little Woodhouse and beyond.

Wellington Foundry was the location in which a well-known Leeds figure, Sir Peter Fairbairn, constructed his flax-spinning machinery. This machinery was then used within the textiles industry in Little Woodhouse. Although the introduction of machinery had reduced the number of employees required within the textiles industry in Little Woodhouse, this and the production of such machinery was still a prominent source of employment within the area. A statue of Sir Peter Fairbairn remains in Woodhouse Square (Figure 4).

Again, it is noted there are schools seen on the map and also the introduction of colleges, which again would all employ teachers and administrative staff.



Figure 4 – Statue of Sir Peter Fairbairn in Woodhouse Square

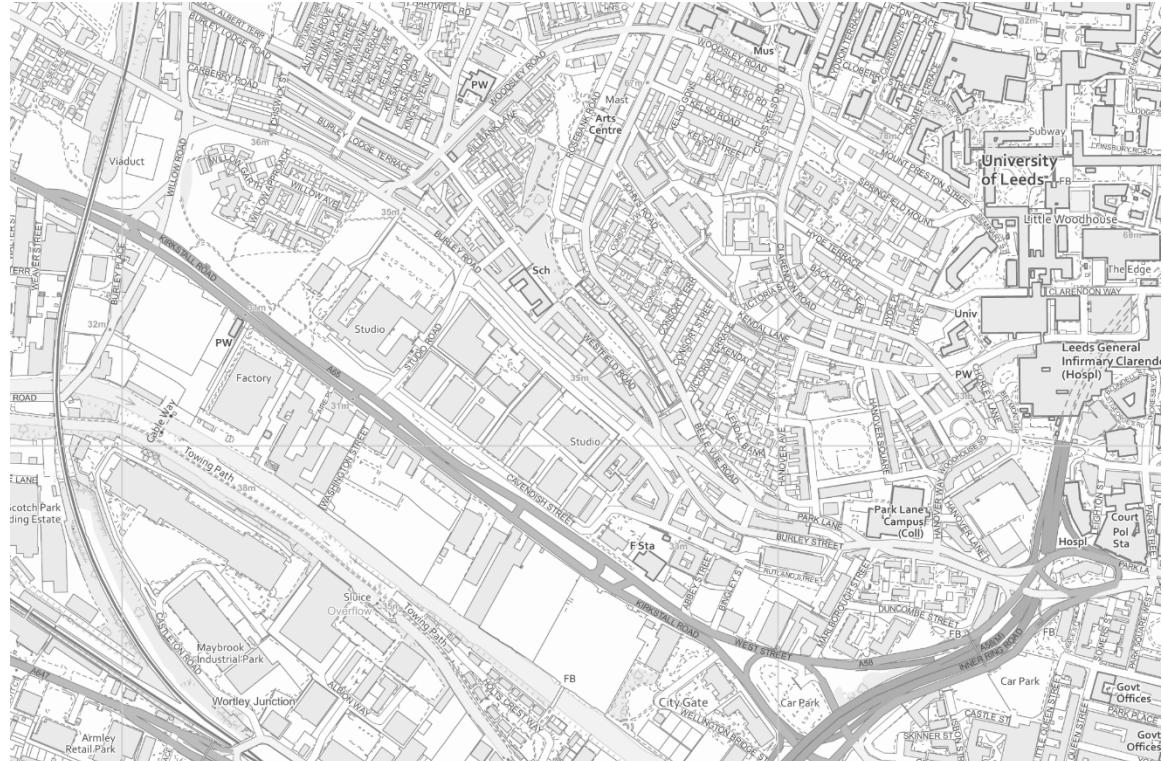


Figure 5 – Map of Little Woodhouse from 2021 (Digimap)



Figure 6 – Aerial photograph of Little Woodhouse (Google Maps)

In present-day Little Woodhouse, almost all of the industrial buildings below Kirkstall Road have been demolished, while housing on the northern side has given way to a linear area of large sheds, which now provide homes to the ITV Studios, student accommodation and a small number of hospitality venues (Kirkstall Brewery and MyLahore).

Some of the converted or replaced units along the south of Kirkstall Road include Motiv Productions, a video production service; Studio 81, a movie studio; Lookers Nissan, a car dealership; The Tannery, a former textile manufacturer now an office workspace; and Kwik Fit, a tyre shop; all of which offer a variety of employment close to Little Woodhouse.

It has also been noted that there has been an influx of student accommodation on and around Burley Street and Burley road, which again will offer a form of employment for maintenance and administrative staff. With this, there has been an influx of bars and restaurants around the same areas, due to an increasing demand for such amenities, which again, has brought further employment opportunities to the area.

From this, we can see Little Woodhouse has moved forward within the entertainment, hospitality and creative sectors, and away from its roots within textiles and industry. There may be many reasons for this, however, perhaps one of the most likely reasons was the move away from manual labour and towards automated machinery, and also the opportunities for reduced labour costs abroad which meant it had become more economically viable for many textiles companies to move their factories to other countries.

Either way, this has arguably created a more diverse range of employment opportunities within Little Woodhouse. However, one of the many constants across all of the above maps is the presence of Leeds General Infirmary, which has provided a great source of employment within Little Woodhouse, both from the date it was built in 1771 up until present day.

## The Leeds Core Strategy Local Plan review (September 2019)

The employment section of the Leeds Core Strategy, which is the statutory local plan, gives particular mention to the outer centre of the city and the future plans regarding potential for employment growth within these areas. It has been recognised that to grow the economic vitality of Leeds city centre as a whole, there are opportunities just outside of the city centre for businesses who wish to maintain the ease and connectivity of the area, but who may not want to pay a premium for a typical central city office or warehouse location.

This offers fantastic future opportunities for Little Woodhouse, as although just on the outskirts of the city centre, it remains within walking distance or a short bus ride of the centre. For employees, this offers scope for a prime location, without the associated costs often tied in with a more central location.

The section below has been taken from the Leeds Core Strategy (p86-7):

*"5.2.45 The breakdown of the existing supply of commitments includes for out of centre sites amount to 322,470 sqm, with a further 19,290 sqm located in or on the edge of town centres and 498,736 sqm located in the City Centre. Spatial Policy 9 states that an additional 160,000 sqm will be identified in, or on the edge of City and Town Centres. Policy CC1: City Centre Development proposes to accommodate at least 655,000 sqm of office-based development, with a further 3,710 sqm to be identified in or on the edge of town centres. The proposed total of offices in or on the edge of centres reflects the current percentage of commitments, scaled up to the new requirements."*

### **The proposed distribution of office development will be:**

<b>Gross Total Floorspace</b>			
<b>Location</b>	<b>Existing planning permissions</b>	<b>Proposed new locations</b>	<b>Net total Floorspace*</b>
Out of Centre	322,470 sqm	-	322,000 sqm
In or On Edge of Town Centres	19,290 sqm	3,710sqm	23,000 sqm
City Centre	498,736 sqm	156,264sqm	655,000 sqm
<b>Total office provision</b>	<b>Approx. 840,000 sqm</b>	<b>Approx. 160,000 sqm</b>	<b>Approx. 1,000,000 sqm</b>

\*All figures are rounded to the nearest 1,000 sqm

*"5.2.46 Spatial Policy 2 already advises that new proposals for offices will generally be encouraged to locate in or on the edge of the City and Town Centres. However, the Council does recognise that in a district as large and varied as Leeds, and noting the changing emphasis of national guidance, many employment areas exist out of centre. Such locations play a valuable role in the Leeds economy in offering a choice of location for business and in providing local job opportunities. Indeed, they can often be as accessible to a substantial local labour market as many of the smaller town centres. They can represent highly sustainable options particularly when located in the Main Urban Area."*

5.2.47 *National planning guidance expects out of centre or edge of centre office proposals to be subject to a sequential test to determine whether preferable sites exist either in-centre (first preference) or edge of centre (second preference). To complement this, and for the avoidance of doubt, sequential assessment for out-of-centre renewals and new development will be required subject to floorspace threshold requirements as set out in paragraph*

5.2.48 *All sequential assessments for large scale proposals will be directed in the first instance to the City Centre. Such development would be expected to attract employees commuting from a wide catchment area, but below this scale of development a smaller catchment area may be identified based on likely travel to work patterns."*

This document confirms that future employment goals and opportunities for areas such as Little Woodhouse are being encouraged as part of the future plans for Leeds.

It would also be encouraged for current brownfield sites, or sites no longer used, which had previously been used for the purpose of employment and business, to be reviewed and for future sites to be identified, which could one day be utilised for the purpose of industrial or retail use. It is recognised there is still a balance between the allocation of available brownfield sites being used for residential or business purposes, however, it is hoped that if the land had previously been used for the purpose of business usage, that this should be maintained where possible to ensure further employment opportunities in the area and the economy as a whole. This is also encouraged within the Core Strategy (p89):

#### ***"Safeguarding existing employment land and industrial areas***

5.2.54 *The Council has a commitment to deliver an appropriate local balance between potentially competing uses of land, particularly housing and employment. The market alone will not necessarily deliver that balance, especially where land values for housing are substantially higher than those achievable for employment uses.*

5.2.55 *Policy EC3 applies to proposals on sites currently or last in use for employment purposes or to employment allocations. The issue to be determined is whether there is a planning need for the site to remain in employment uses. There is a shortage of employment sites in certain locations but potential oversupply in others. The conclusions relating to land supply in the Leeds Employment Land Review (2010 Update) and subsequent updates will be a key consideration when making assessments of proposals for the development of existing employment sites.*

5.2.56 *Leeds as with other major cities can be characterised as a place where both 'strong' and 'weak' markets coexist. Therefore, as part of an integrated approach at local level, these market conditions will require an appropriate planning response (as set out in Policy EC3) to consider necessary interventions to manage them. Policy EC3 sets the criteria for the release of land from employment allocations and the release of land or buildings at present or last in employment uses, whilst maintaining safeguards for the supply of employment land and premises where the need is clear.*

5.2.57 *This is a criteria-based Policy which applies to the consideration of planning applications. Part A relates to all sites not identified in an area of shortfall and therefore assessed on a District-wide basis."*

A movement in this direction for Little Woodhouse in turn would support future employment opportunity within Little Woodhouse, and would be aligned with the Core Strategy Local Plan put into place for Leeds as a whole.

## Map of current employment areas

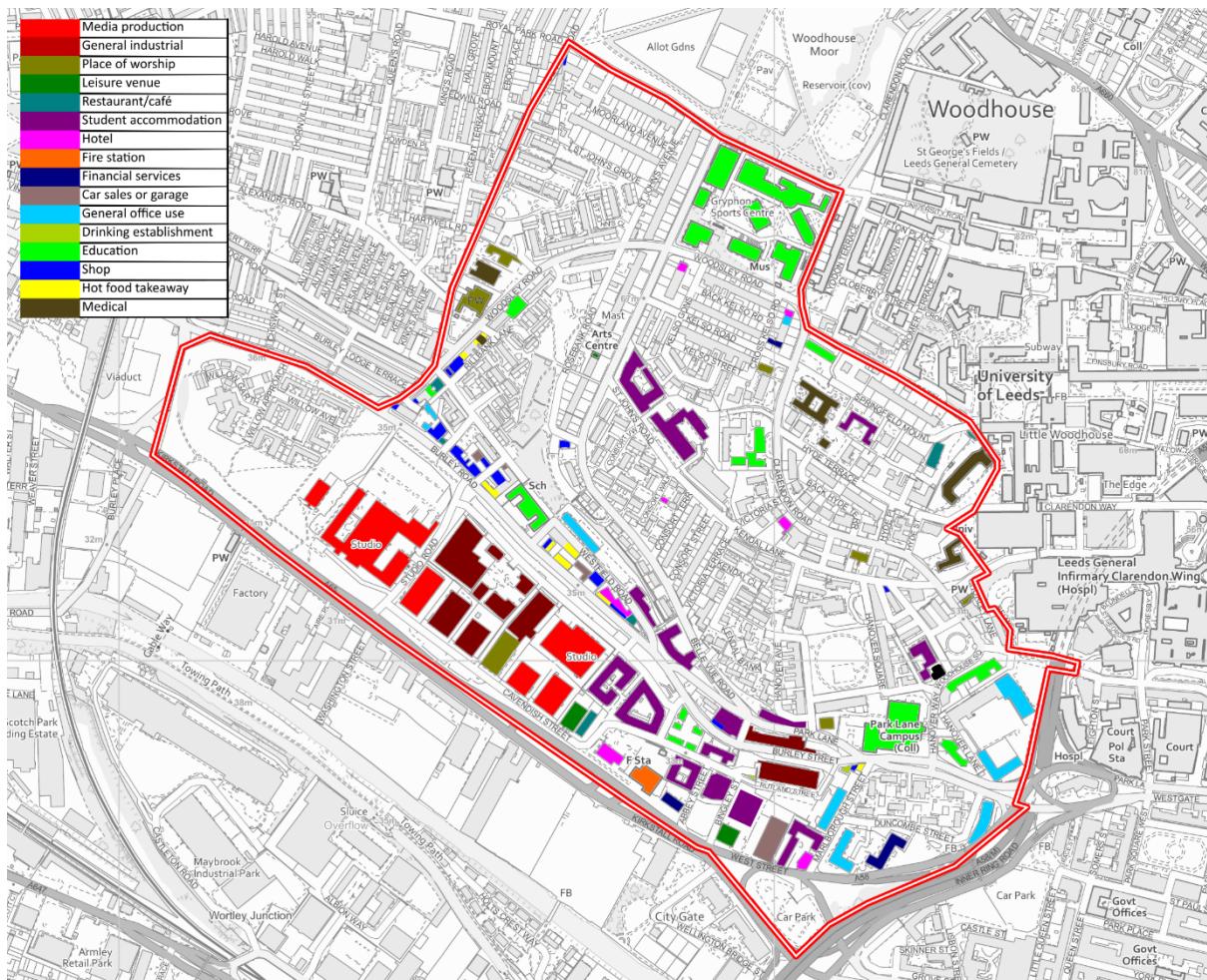


Figure 7: Map of current employment areas

This is a map to show every identifiable place of employment within the boundary, as surveyed this in April 2021. It is clear to see both that there is quite a variety of different uses, and that they are clustered into particular areas and corridors, leaving most of the centre of the neighbourhood area as housing.

The largest sectors are: media production at ITV and mixed industrial uses, which are exclusively clustered along A65 Kirkstall Road, which have been present since that end of the site was cleared of housing in the 1970s. These large companies employ a range of skilled workers and require the good wide access roads that surrounds them. The next largest sector is education, which is associated with the University of Leeds Western Campus, Leeds City College at Park Lane, Rosebank Primary School, and two community skills centres on Woodsley Road. There being only one serving primary school, points to the relatively low number of families with children resident in Little Woodhouse.

Related to the educational sector, there are a significant number staffed purpose-built student accommodation, a selection of retail shops, motor works and takeaways along the high streets of Burley Road and Woodsley Road, often occupying only the ground floor of their building, but tending to employ low-skilled and low-paid workers. A small section near the Inner Ring Road hosts several hotels and a casino, conveniently located for both commuting and the transportation of goods. Also, there are a collection of medical and professional services offices on parts adjoining the LGI and University.

However, there are criticisms to make of the current situation. Firstly, the range of types of business is not as diverse as it has potential to be for an area the size of Little Woodhouse, with the most major employers such as ITV and the University mainly pulling in their workers from other areas of the city and country. This leaves small concentrations of independent businesses such as takeaways as the main source of employment for residents of the area, but of course can only employ a limited number of people.

The sustainability of this situation in neighbourhoods such as this is questionable. The student population – making Little Woodhouse an area affected by the ‘town v gown’ debate on the effects of studentification, although not to the extent of neighbouring Hyde Park and Headingley – constitutes around three quarters of residents, while many of the working residents from other areas of the neighbourhood will commute out of it, to the city centre or other places, for their jobs.

Figure 8 illustrates the rough zones from which employment occurs in three general categories: those without much employment, which people must leave to work; those with workplaces which non-Little Woodhouse residents commute into, and those with workplaces which employ people who live above or within close proximity. This final zone consists only of the rows of small business along Burley and Woodsley Roads. This leaves the neighbourhood with a mixed character of dormitory and location of employment.

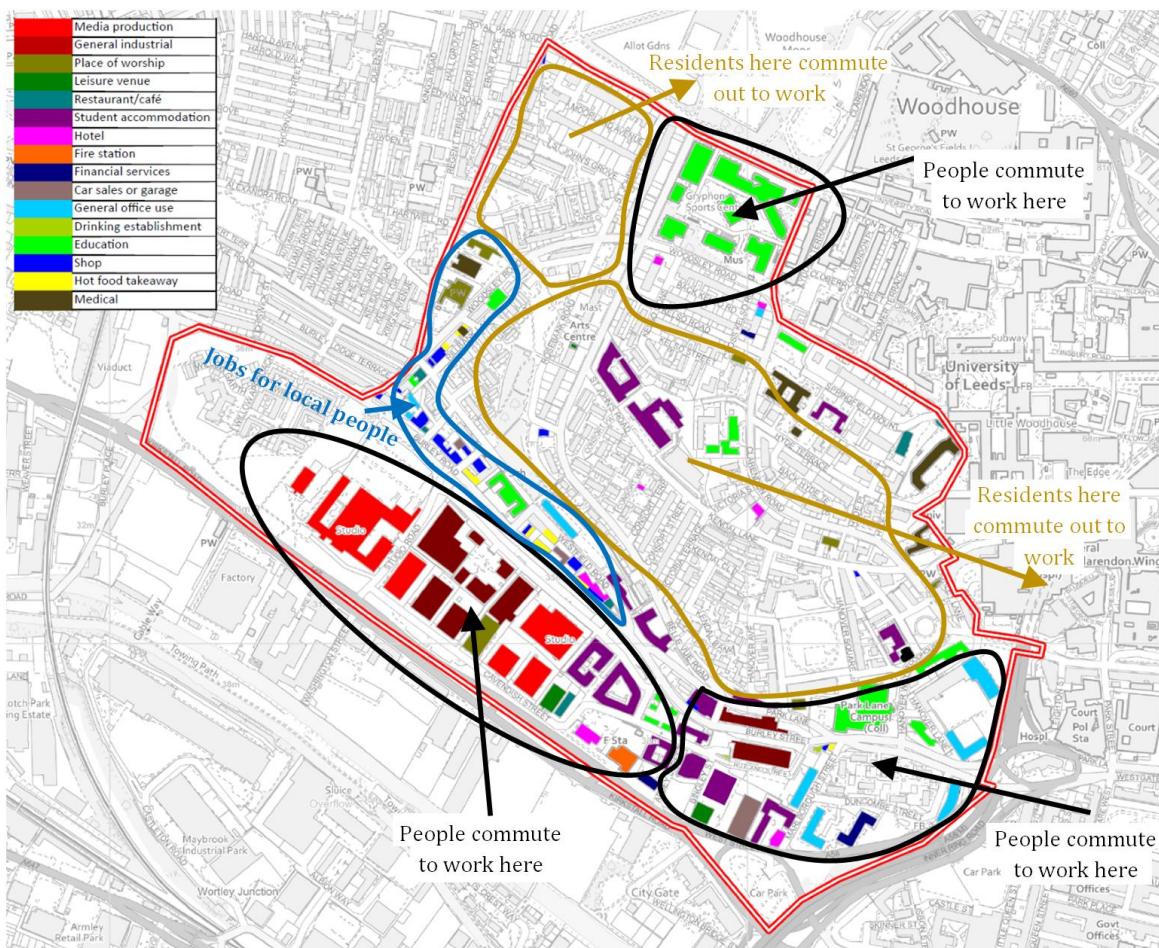


Figure 8 – Zones of employment location



Figure 9 – A range of Little Woodhouse employers, independent and national

### Little Woodhouse Employment Questionnaire

For this report, forty local businesses were contacted by email in an attempt to gain some employer insight and gauge further information about employment in the Little Woodhouse area. Unfortunately, no responses were received but the methodology of survey has been included as background information.

The questionnaire, which is reproduced on the right, sought to survey a good mix of industries within the Little Woodhouse boundary. As part of the survey, businesses were asked to confirm their sector and business address as an additional control measure to ensure premises had not moved out of area.

One question asked about the number of people employed at the business to see if surveyed business sizes fit in with the predominance of micro businesses

### Employment survey in Little Woodhouse

We are students at Leeds Beckett University. The aim of our project is to undertake an analysis of and map places of employment in Little Woodhouse, so your response has an important role to play.

Name of your business

Your answer

Your business sector

Your answer

revealed in the ONS survey and also about possible recruitment opportunities which may point to potential growth in the area as well as how the resilience of the job market in the post-Covid lockdown, which is a crucial problem in not only Little Woodhouse but also the rest of the world.

Another hoped to find out which skills were valued by employers due to being aware of comparatively less availability of skilled work in the area, which has an important role to play in the recruitment of each business because to find suitable employees for specific jobs employers have to specify hiring standards (Van Ours and Ridder, 1991). Besides, if progression was possible through graduate and trainee roles to find out if there was encouragement for students to remain in the area following their studies.

There were questions too about average salary, age and sex to better understand the range of people currently at work in Little Woodhouse. In reality, according to Milner and Gregory (2014), gender inequalities remain a matter of concern for policy-makers in many countries. Moreover, what could employees hope to absorb from the business in order to gauge the appeal of working in the area from an employer's perspective, which can help them get job promotion and go further in their career. Another question whether part-time and seasonal work was available for people seeking more flexible employment.

Working activities have been severely disrupted as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, and especially the unemployment rate has hit the highest level for four years (Partington, 2021). Therefore, a question was

included about business operations during the national lockdown and how businesses had been affected by the Coronavirus pandemic which has had many repercussions on UK businesses including loss of employees and premises closing or relocating.

Of particular interest was information pertaining to whether businesses currently employed people who lived locally, how far employees travelled to work and how, whether by walking, using public transport or driving. Also, whether the business provided car parking for employees who drove to work or if people working in the area were contributing to on street parking around Little Woodhouse. This line of

The address of your business

Your answer

Number of employees in your business

Your answer

Do you intend to recruit more employees?

- Yes
- No

If you intend to recruit more, how many employees will you need?

Your answer

What type of employees mainly in your business?

- Part-time employees
- Full time employees
- Trainees
- Temporary employees
- Seasonal employees

What are the primary requirements or which skills do you need from employees in your business?

Your answer

The average salary in your business (p/hr)

Your answer

The age group of employees at your business mainly

- 16-24 years old
- 25-34 years old
- 35-49 years old
- 50-64 years old

The majority of workers at your business are

- Men
- Women

What can employees absorb from jobs in your business?

Your answer

questioning could have potentially been taken further by asking employers whether they encouraged lift sharing or made schemes such as Cycle to Work available to their employees and could provide facilities for employees commuting by foot or bicycle.

### Employment Statistics in Little Woodhouse

#### Economic Activity

Data taken from the most recent available ONS Census 2011 shows that Little Woodhouse has an overwhelmingly high full-time student population, as echoed in Unipol's 2012 Re'new report which shows that students make up of 76% of the local population, a dramatic rise from 50% in 2007. The Census 2011 reports that students make up 25.9% of the economically active population of Little Woodhouse, which is higher than Leeds as a broader area and the rest of England on average and demonstrates that students are not only served by and residents of the local area but can often be employees themselves while studying.

During national lockdown, how did your business operate?

Your answer

Where do major employees in your business live?

Little Woodhouse  
 Outside Little Woodhouse

How far they must commute to the workplace?

Your answer

Does your business have any parking area?

Yes  
 No

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Figure 10 – The form containing questions sent to local businesses

# Business Stock



## Businesses by size in E02002392, Little Woodhouse (2020)

			Leeds	Yorkshire and The Humber
	Number	%	%	%
Large (250+)	10	2.5	0.6	0.4
Medium (50 - 249)	10	2.8	1.8	1.7
Small (10 - 49)	60	18	9.4	9.5
Micro (0 - 9)	250	76.8	88.2	88.3
Total	325			

Source: ONS IDBR

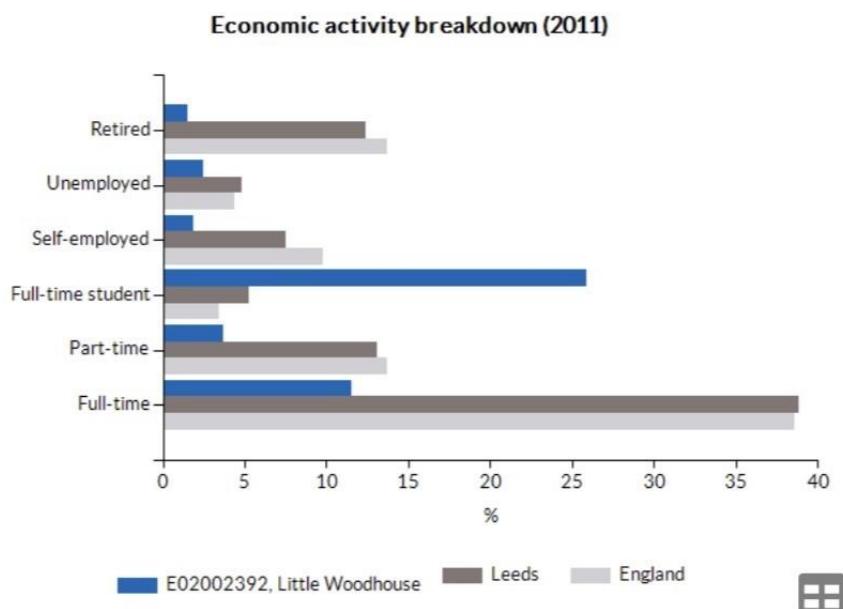


The Census report suggests that the economically active population of the area stands at 45.5%, slightly higher for males at 47.6% compared to females at 43.6% and that Little Woodhouse has a lower than England – wide average population of full – time employed, part – time employed, self – employed, unemployed and retired residents which correlates with the larger student population. Data collected in the ONS Claimant count 2021 shows accordingly that an unusually high proportion (87.4%) of the population of Little Woodhouse is of working age (16 – 64) with residents of youth and retirement ages represented as lower than the Leeds and England averages.

# Economic activity and employment

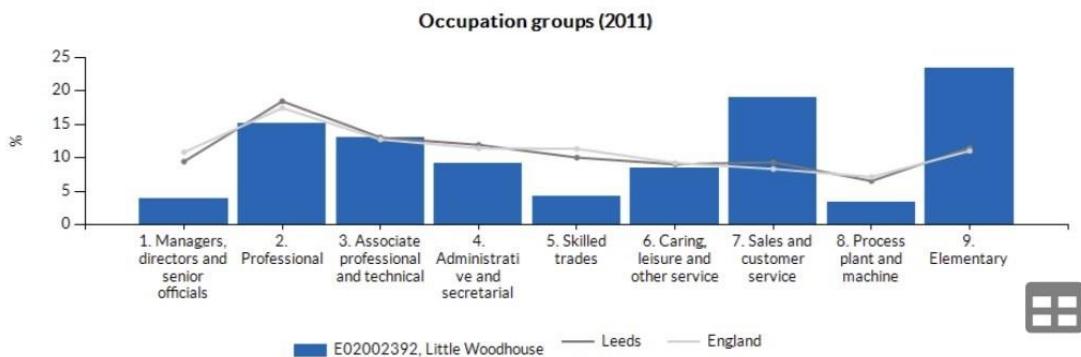
**45.5%**  
(3,958)  
Economically active population  
in E02002392, Little Woodhouse [i](#)

Source: ONS Census 2011



Source: ONS Census 2011

Occupation groups as measured in 2011 showed that the dominant occupations in the area at the time consisted primarily of elementary roles (23.5%) and sales and customer service occupations (19%) which corresponds with earlier findings suggesting an area catering and appealing to students but there were also a high proportion of professional occupations (15.2%) and associate professional and technical occupations (13%) in evidence. Administrative and secretarial occupations consisted of 9.2% of the total with caring, leisure and other service roles at 8.5%. There were relatively fewer managers, directors and senior officials (3.9%) or skilled trades occupations (4.3%) and it might be interesting to explore whether graduates have opportunity and/or inclination to remain in the area post-study.



Source: ONS Census 2011

### Economic Inactivity

54.5% of the population were economically inactive in 2011, 0.7% of whom were classed as long term unemployed and 2.9% having never worked. In February of 2021, the ONS claimant count measured the number of people claiming unemployment related benefits including Job Seekers Allowance and Universal Credit (where claimants were still required to seek work) and revealed a sharp rise in the percentage of the population claiming benefits in April 2020 from a fairly static 1.6% to 2.5% and rising, which coincides with the start of the Covid 19 pandemic and the initial UK lockdown. In February of 2021, the ONS claimant count rate was 4.7%, showing claimant figures still inflated as expected as restrictions continue.

### Business Stock

Business stock reportage in E02002392, Little Woodhouse 2020 showed a total of 325 businesses active in the ward, 250 of which were micro businesses employing under 10 people and from this we can deduce that small business is a definite feature of the area. A further 60 businesses employing 10-49 people were listed along with 10 medium businesses employing 50-249 employees and 10 large businesses employing over 250 people.

# Business Stock



## Businesses by size in E02002392, Little Woodhouse (2020)

			Leeds	Yorkshire and The Humber
	Number	%	%	%
Large (250+)	10	2.5	0.6	0.4
Medium (50 - 249)	10	2.8	1.8	1.7
Small (10 - 49)	60	18	9.4	9.5
Micro (0 - 9)	250	76.8	88.2	88.3
Total	325			

Source: ONS IDBR



### Retention of skilled workers and families

One of our employment aims would be to attract and retain skilled workers in Little Woodhouse and to do so we need to look at increasing the general appeal of the area to families. We know that certain areas may be pigeon-holed as designated “student areas”, in particular the Woodsley and Burley Road sections, and there are lower percentages of younger and older age groups in the general demographic of Little Woodhouse. To combat this, younger and older people could be encouraged to exercise their “right to the city” and reclaim their own spaces within the area, becoming visible on the streets, increasing perceived safety and encouraging more use of community spaces.

Discussion has taken place nationally regarding “Play Streets” in recent times and the restrictions heavy or fast traffic places on children’s freedom to play outside. Leeds City Council introduced pop-up parks in 2016/17 and had some success in encouraging children and families outside. Little Woodhouse already boasts several usable green areas with the potential to be upgraded, utilising child-friendly infrastructure and natural materials to create inter-generational meeting spaces, encouraging playful behaviour and wellbeing by providing places to play and increasing dwelling time outdoors.

Rosebank Primary school is currently the only primary school in the area, and the social capital provided by focusing on the school as the “hub” or centre of the community could be tapped into. This could involve continuing to utilise the school facilities and resources for community groups to meet and promoting topics such as adult education (the school currently runs parent groups focusing on activities such as cooking and literacy) and neighbourhood awareness, for example involving children in local environmental projects to encourage their sense of connection to the community.

It could also be useful to look at ways of encouraging family-focused business to the area close to the school, for example childcare settings such as creches, after-school clubs, sporting activities and play areas or child-friendly cafes. This would not only improve facilities and employment prospects for local people but other employees in the area may also be encouraged to use them after work, again increasing the footfall and dwelling time of families in Little Woodhouse itself, rather than as currently appears to be happening, people who work in the local area commuting in and out and participating in such activities elsewhere.

By encouraging more families to the area, demand for family homes in Little Woodhouse may also increase and while this raises questions regarding the current suitability of housing stock to facilitate this, there lies the potential for HMOs to gradually be turned back into family homes if the demand is there, further altering the demographic of the area to create more balance.

### **Conclusion**

Little Woodhouse has a population of working-age people higher than the England-wide average with comparably fewer children and people of retirement age. As a result, the area is possessing a large labour force in comparison with other regions in England, which has created a competitive job market. It is noticeable that students make up over a quarter of the population. Meanwhile, businesses in the area tend to be of micro size, particularly local independent brands, employing fewer than ten workers. It seems to be that these businesses are unable to meet the employment needs of residents in Little Woodhouse. Besides, the coronavirus pandemic appears to have had an understandable impact on the number of people claiming unemployment benefits in the area, but this is still lower than Leeds as a whole. During the national lockdown, businesses in this area have still operated, which helps to reduce unemployment rates.

### **Recommendations**

In order to tackle the employment problems in Little Woodhouse, the following methods are suggested:

- Think ahead to the impact of Channel 4 studios moving close to the boundary of little Woodhouse and the potential jobs, income and new focus this could bring to the area.
- Improve existing infrastructure to attract families and skilled workers to the area in order to redress equilibrium in the general demographic of Little Woodhouse.
- Improve existing infrastructure to attract families and skilled workers to the area in order to redress equilibrium in the general demographic of Little Woodhouse.
- Encourage the use of graduate schemes in existing local businesses to utilise student skills already in the area and encourage a view of the area as providing longevity and offering the potential for people to continue to reside post study.
- Look at licensing for takeaways and convenience stores in the area and whether there could be potential to attract more cafes and bars instead to increase dwelling time in the area for those who commute in as well as live locally

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