

Almost 600,000 council workers lost in England and Wales



Councils across England and Wales have lost almost 600,000 staff since 2012, a GMB study shows.

Thirteen years ago, local authorities in [England and Wales employed 1,894,700 workers, according to the Office of National Statistics](#).

By 2024 the number had plummeted to just 1,295,300 – a drop of 599,400 and more than 30 per cent of all jobs.

Birmingham was the worst hit council, losing almost 27,000 workers – or 60 per cent of total staff – followed by Derbyshire and then Staffordshire



The figures emerge as GMB and other unions begin talks with the Local Government Association over council workers' pay claim for 2025/26.

Change in Headcount	% decrease in Headcount	Auth Name
-26980	-60.7	Birmingham
-18405	-49.9	Derbyshire
-16086	-63.1	Staffordshire
-12391	-34.4	Hertfordshire
-11985	-39.0	Essex
-11939	-64.0	Cumbria
-11629	-39.6	Surrey
-10275	-33.9	Kent
-9616	-45.7	Bradford
-8991	-38.1	Norfol

Kevin Brandstatter, GMB National Officer, said:

“These figures are clearly appalling and show the deep and lasting damage austerity has done to our country.

“Council workers look after our loved ones, help our children learn, clear away our rubbish and keep our green spaces clean.

“They are the absolute backbone of society and should have had this year’s pay lift already – instead, we are waiting for a response from the Local Government Association.

“GMB members working in local government face huge pressures, with the cost-of-living rocketing.

“They deserve a decent pay rise.



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