

Report Community Committee 20th October 2025

Employment & Skills Gaps

Executive summary

Faversham is part of the Swale and shares many of the borough-level labour market and skills challenges: relatively high employment but notable pockets of deprivation, out-commuting, and employer-reported skills shortages in key sectors. County and borough evidence point to skills shortages concentrated in manufacturing, construction and skilled trades, and a meaningful share of employers reporting gaps in their workforce. This report summarises the available data and highlights local implications for Faversham,. ([Office for National Statistics](#))

1. Key facts & data (sources and notes)

Data scope: Faversham-specific statistics are not always published separately; much of the most recent labour-market analysis is presented at Swale or Kent & Medway level. Where town-level detail is not available, the report uses borough and county sources and notes implications for Faversham.

Population & labour supply

- Faversham population (2021 census) ~21k. Borough-level labour market indicators show an employment rate for people aged 16–64 in Swale of about 80.7% (year ending Dec 2023)

Unemployment & claimant counts

- Swale's headline unemployment / claimant statistics trend is below national peaks but with local variation and some areas of high deprivation. ([2021 CENSUS FOR FAVERSHAM PARISH](#))

Economic structure & travel-to-work

- Evidence for Faversham shows 30% of people work from home and 16% of people work within 2km of home. In total 50% of residents in work travel no more than 10km to work.
- The Kent & Medway Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) and related employer surveys report that around 13% of employers nationally/regionally report skills gaps in existing staff, while skill-shortage vacancies account for a larger share of vacancies (e.g., ~24% overall rising to 36% in manufacturing and construction, and 48% for skilled trades). These sectors are relevant to Swale's local economy. ([Local Skills Improvement Plan](#))

Deprivation & structural challenges

- Swale is identified as one of the more deprived local authorities in Kent on IMD measures; some Lower Super Output Areas within the borough show high deprivation, which correlates with structural barriers to upskilling and employment for affected residents. ([swale.gov.uk](https://www.swale.gov.uk))

2. What this means for Faversham (implications)

1. **Local labour is available but unevenly skilled.** High overall employment masks pockets of lower skills and barriers to accessing higher-value local work. ([Office for National Statistics](#))
2. **Opportunities in specific sectors.** Manufacturing, construction and skilled trades show persistent recruitment difficulties, a chance to match local training to employer demand. ([Local Skills Improvement Plan](#))
3. **Out-commuting reduces local multiplier effects.** Residents commuting out for work reduces spending and local business resilience; creating better local jobs will strengthen the town centre economy. ([swale.gov.uk](https://www.swale.gov.uk))
4. **Deprivation concentrates barriers.** IMD-identified areas will need targeted, accessible training and support to avoid widening inequality. ([swale.gov.uk](https://www.swale.gov.uk))

3. Priority policy objectives

To address skills gaps and strengthen local employment the Town Council could prioritise:

1. **Local training pathways & apprenticeships** Promote apprenticeships within the town council, ensuring regular recruitment of 17-24 year olds. Promote short, accredited upskilling courses such as those provided for free by Adult Education at Faversham Umbrella (digital skills, customer service, first aid basics).
2. **Accessible careers information & wraparound support** — Officers and Members (when appropriate) to work with local schools, attending careers fairs and employability days.
3. **Retain and grow local jobs** — Support the Swale Employment Land Review outcomes by promoting town-centre workspace, micro-business support, and home-grown micro-manufacturing clusters. ([swale.gov.uk](https://www.swale.gov.uk))
4. **Targeted interventions for deprived areas** — Co-produce interventions where IMD shows need: pre-employment training, basic skills, and social prescribing referrals. Monitor uptake and progression to work. Enable partnership working with the Faversham Community Networking Group. ([swale.gov.uk](https://www.swale.gov.uk))