

Regional Labour Market, July 2015



Coverage: **UK**

Date: **15 July 2015**

Geographical Area: **Local Authority and County**

Theme: **Labour Market**

Main Points

- The employment rate in the United Kingdom, for the 3 months ending May 2015, was highest in the South West (77.4%) and lowest in Northern Ireland (67.9%). The employment rate estimates showed very few large movements for the regions and countries of the UK.
- The unemployment rate in the United Kingdom, for the 3 months ending May 2015, was highest in the North East (7.7%) and lowest in the South East (4.4%). None of the changes in the unemployment rate estimates were particularly large.
- The inactivity rate in the United Kingdom, for the 3 months ending May 2015, was highest in Northern Ireland (27.4%) and lowest in the South West (18.8%). The largest change in the inactivity rate, compared to the same period last year, was in the North East, which has increased by 2.8 percentage points.
- The Claimant Count rate in the United Kingdom, for June 2015, was highest in Northern Ireland (4.9%) and lowest in the South East and South West (1.3%). The total Claimant Count rates for June 2015, compared with May 2015 show no change across each region of the UK, except for the North West, which has increased by 0.1 percentage points.
- The largest increase in workforce jobs, in the United Kingdom, for March 2015, was in the West Midlands, at 40,000. The largest decrease was in the South East, at 32,000.
- The highest proportion of workforce jobs in the service sector was in London, at 91.7%, which is a decrease of 0.2 percentage points from the previous period, December 2014. The East Midlands had the highest proportion of jobs in the production sector, at 13.8%.
- The highest average actual weekly hours worked, for the 12 months ending March 2015, were in London and Northern Ireland, both at 33.3 hours and lowest in the North East, at 31.4 hours. For full-time workers, it was highest in London and the East of England, both at 38.1 hours and for part-time workers it was highest in Northern Ireland, at 17.6 hours.

In this bulletin

This bulletin shows the latest main labour market statistics for the regions and countries of the United Kingdom, along with statistics for local authorities, travel-to-work areas and parliamentary constituencies.

Data for Northern Ireland, although included in this bulletin, are available separately, in full, in the [Northern Ireland Labour Market Report](#) on the NISRA Economic and Labour Market Statistics website.

Updated this month

Labour Force Survey estimates for the period March to May 2015.

Claimant Count for June 2015.

Annual Population Survey estimates for the period April 2014 to March 2015.

Also in this release

Public and private sector employment for March 2015.

Workforce jobs estimates for March 2015.

(i) Summary of the latest regional labour market statistics

Table A shows the latest estimates for March to May 2015, for employment, unemployment and economic inactivity and shows how these estimates compare with the previous quarter (December 2014 to February 2015). Comparing non-overlapping periods; March to May 2015 with December 2014 to February 2015, provides a more robust short-term comparison. Table B shows the latest rates for the Claimant Count, for June 2015, and shows how these figures compare to the previous month (May 2015) and the previous year (June 2014).

Table A: Summary of latest headline estimates for March to May 2015, seasonally adjusted

UK regions

	Employment rate¹ (%) aged 16 to 64	Change on Dec 2014 to Feb 2015	Unemployment rate² (%) aged 16 and over	Change on Dec 2014 to Feb 2015	Inactivity rate³ (%) aged 16 to 64	Change on Dec 2014 to Feb 2015
North East	68.7	-1.1	7.7	-0.1	25.5	1.3
North West	71.2	-0.4	6.0	0.1	24.2	0.4
Yorkshire and The Humber	71.7	-0.8	6.9	0.7	23.0	0.3
East Midlands	74.7	0.3	4.8	-0.1	21.4	-0.2
West Midlands	71.0	0.3	5.9	-0.3	24.3	0.0
East of England	76.6	0.1	4.5	-0.4	19.6	0.2
London	71.7	-0.4	6.7	0.5	23.0	0.0
South East	76.9	-0.1	4.4	0.2	19.6	0.0
South West	77.4	0.6	4.6	0.0	18.8	-0.6
Wales	70.7	0.9	6.6	0.4	24.1	-1.4
Scotland	74.3	0.1	5.5	-0.5	21.3	0.3
Great Britain	73.5	-0.1	5.6	0.1	22.0	0.0
Northern Ireland	67.9	-0.7	6.2	0.2	27.4	0.6

Employment rate ¹ (%) aged 16 to 64	Change on Dec 2014 to Feb 2015	Unemployment rate ² (%) aged 16 and over	Change on Dec 2014 to Feb 2015	Inactivity rate ³ (%) aged 16 to 64	Change on Dec 2014 to Feb 2015	
United Kingdom	73.3	-0.1	5.6	0.1	22.2	0.1

Table source: Office for National Statistics

Table notes:

1. Calculation of headline employment rate: Number of employed people aged from 16 to 64 divided by the population aged from 16 to 64. Population is the sum of employed plus unemployed plus inactive.
2. Calculation of headline unemployment rate: Number of unemployed people aged 16 and over divided by the sum of employed people aged 16 and over plus unemployed people aged 16 and over.
3. Calculation of headline economic inactivity rate: Number of economically inactive people aged from 16 to 64 divided by the population aged from 16 to 64. Population is the sum of employed plus unemployed plus inactive.

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Table B: Summary of latest Claimant Count estimates for June 2015, seasonally adjusted (Experimental statistics)

UK regions

	Level (thousands) aged 18 and over	Change on May 2015	Change on June 2014	Rate (%) aged 18 and over	Change on May 2015	Change on June 2014
North East	47.4	0.4	-14.7	3.9	0.0	-1.2
North West	111.6	3.5	-17.6	3.0	0.1	-0.5
Yorkshire and The Humber	83.3	-0.5	-27.7	3.1	0.0	-1.0
East Midlands	49.2	0.3	-19.3	2.2	0.0	-0.8
West Midlands	80.2	-0.4	-30.8	2.8	0.0	-1.1
East of England	49.8	1.0	-19.4	1.6	0.0	-0.6
London	115.7	0.7	-33.3	2.0	0.0	-0.6
South East	60.8	1.0	-21.4	1.3	0.0	-0.5
South West	39.1	0.9	-14.4	1.3	0.0	-0.5
Wales	45.9	0.7	-11.8	3.1	0.0	-0.8
Scotland	77.2	-0.8	-19.4	2.8	0.0	-0.7
Great Britain	760.2	6.8	-229.8	2.3	0.0	-0.7
Northern Ireland	44.0	0.2	-10.4	4.9	0.0	-1.2

	Level (thousands) aged 18 and over	Change on May 2015	Change on June 2014	Rate (%) aged 18 and over	Change on May 2015	Change on June 2014
United Kingdom	804.2	7.0	-240.2	2.3	0.0	-0.7

Table source: Department for Work and Pensions

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(ii) Understanding and working with labour market statistics

Introduction

Labour market statistics measure many different aspects of work and jobs and provide an insight into the economy. They are also very much about people, including their participation in the labour force, the types of work they do, the earnings and benefits they receive and their working patterns.

We have developed a framework for labour market statistics to describe the major concepts that exist within the labour market and their relationship to each other. The framework is based on the concepts of labour supply and demand.

This approach has wide international acceptance, including by the International Labour Organisation (ILO). Labour supply consists of people who are employed, as well as those people defined as unemployed or economically inactive, who can be considered to be potential labour supply. The ONS framework distinguishes between these 3 categories of worker, and also between the different working arrangements of those in employment such as employees, the self-employed and those on government schemes.

Labour demand is represented by employers, who have a need for work to be done, and who offer compensation for this work to the employees who undertake it. This work is grouped by employers to form jobs. Users of labour market statistics include central and local government, economists, financial analysts, journalists, businesses, trade unions, employer associations, students, teachers, industrial tribunals, academic researchers and lobby groups.

They use them for the analysis, evaluation, monitoring and planning of the labour market and economy. Labour market statistics are also used for social analysis and help inform a wide range of government policies towards population groups of particular concern (women, young people, older people and jobless households).

A [glossary](#) is also available to explain the main labour market terms.

Where to find explanatory information

[Explaining the concepts of employment, unemployment and economic inactivity](#) is available on our website as a short video.

[Interpreting Labour Market statistics](#), available on our website, is designed to help users interpret labour market statistics and highlight some common misunderstandings.

A more detailed [guide to labour market statistics](#), which expands on “Interpreting Labour Market Statistics” and includes a [Glossary](#), is also available on our website.

About labour market statuses

Everybody aged 16 or over is either [employed](#), [unemployed](#) or [economically inactive](#). The employment estimates include all people in work including those working part-time. People not working are classed as unemployed if they have been looking for work within the last 4 weeks and are able to start work within the next 2 weeks. A common misconception is that the unemployment statistics are a count of people on benefits; this is not the case as they include unemployed people not claiming benefits.

Jobless people who have not been looking for work within the last 4 weeks or who are unable to start work within the next 2 weeks are classed as economically inactive. Examples of economically inactive people include people not looking for work because they are students, looking after the family or home, because of illness or disability, or because they have retired.

What is the relationship between the APS and the LFS?

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) is a household survey using international definitions of employment, unemployment and economic inactivity, together with a wide range of related topics such as occupation, training, hours of work and personal characteristics of household members aged 16 years and over. Estimates are produced every month for a rolling 3 monthly period, for example, January to March data in a release will be followed by data for February to April in the next release.

The Annual Population Survey (APS), which began in 2004, is compiled from interviews for the LFS, along with additional regional boost samples. The APS comprises the main variables from the LFS, with a much larger sample size. Consequently the APS supports more detailed breakdowns than can be reliably produced from the LFS. Estimates are produced every quarter for a rolling annual period, for example, January to December data will be followed by data for April to March when they are next updated.

This bulletin includes labour market estimates at a regional level from the LFS on total employment, unemployment and economic inactivity. More detailed regional estimates for employment by age, full-time and part-time working, economic activity and inactivity by age, and reasons for inactivity are provided using the APS. Any estimates for geographic areas below regional level are provided using the APS. In tables where APS estimates are provided for detailed geographic areas, regional and national estimates are also provided from APS for comparability.

Making comparisons with earlier data

The most robust estimates of short-term movements in estimates derived from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) are obtained by comparing the estimates for March to May 2015 with the estimates for December 2014 to February 2015, which were first published on 17 April 2015. This provides a more robust estimate than comparing with the estimates for February to April 2015. This is because the March and April data are included within both estimates, so effectively observed differences are those between the individual months of February and May 2015. The LFS is sampled such that it is representative of the UK population over a 3 month period, not for single month periods.

Accuracy and reliability of survey estimates

Most of the figures in this statistical bulletin come from surveys of households or businesses. Surveys gather information from a sample rather than from the whole population. The sample is designed carefully to allow for this, and to be as accurate as possible given practical limitations such as time and cost constraints, but results from sample surveys are always estimates, not precise figures. This means that they are subject to a margin of error which can have an impact on how changes in the numbers should be interpreted, especially in the short-term.

Changes in the numbers reported in this statistical bulletin (and especially the rates) between 3 month periods are usually not greater than the margin of error. In practice, this means that small, short-term movements in reported rates (for example, within plus or minus 0.3 percentage points) should be treated as indicative, and considered alongside medium and long-term patterns in the series and corresponding movements in administrative sources, where available, to give a fuller picture.

Further information is available in the Quality information section of this statistical bulletin.

Seasonal adjustment

All estimates discussed in this statistical bulletin are seasonally adjusted except where otherwise stated. Like many economic indicators, the labour market is affected by factors that tend to occur at around the same time every year; for example, school leavers entering the labour market in July and whether Easter falls in March or April. In order to compare movements other than annual changes in labour market statistics, such as, since the previous quarter or since the previous month, the data are seasonally adjusted to remove the effects of seasonal factors and the arrangement of the calendar.

(iii) Detailed commentary

This section of the statistical bulletin consists of the following parts.

People in work

1. Employment
2. Workforce jobs
3. Hours of work

People not in work

4. Unemployment
5. Claimant Count
6. Economic inactivity

Other labour market statistics

7. Local authority labour market indicators

Index of tables**LFS headline indicators (employment, unemployment and inactivity):**

[Headline indicators for all regions \(HI00\) \(7.49 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)

LFS headline indicators (employment, unemployment and inactivity); employment and workforce jobs estimates; Claimant Count; and economic activity and inactivity estimates for each region are available in the following tables:

[Headline indicators for the North East \(HI01\) \(2.39 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)

[Headline indicators for the North West \(HI02\) \(2.17 Mb Excel sheet\)](#) [Headline indicators for Yorkshire and The Humber \(HI03\) \(2.6 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)

[Headline indicators for the East Midlands \(HI04\) \(2.75 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)

[Headline indicators for the West Midlands \(HI05\) \(2.57 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)

[Headline indicators for the East of England \(HI06\) \(2.59 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)

[Headline indicators for London \(HI07\) \(2.19 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)

[Headline indicators for the South East \(HI08\) \(2.17 Mb Excel sheet\)](#) [Headline indicators for the South West \(HI09\) \(2.16 Mb Excel sheet\)](#) [Headline indicators for Wales \(HI10\) \(2.4 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)

[Headline indicators for Scotland \(HI11\) \(2.59 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)

The following tables contain local labour market indicators for all regions:

[Local indicators for unitary and local authorities \(LI01\) \(246 Kb Excel sheet\)](#) [Local indicators for parliamentary constituencies \(LI02\) \(310 Kb Excel sheet\)](#) [Local indicators for constituencies of the Scottish Parliament \(LI02.1\) \(129.5 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)

[Local indicators for travel-to-work areas \(LI03\) \(175.5 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)

[Local indicators for NUTS3 areas \(LI04\) \(175 Kb Excel sheet\)](#) [Local indicators for Local Enterprise Partnerships \(LI05\) \(100.5 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)

The following tables contain local Jobseeker's Allowance data for all regions:

[Jobseeker's Allowance by unitary and local authority \(Not designated as National Statistics\) \(JSA01\) \(260 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)

[Jobseeker's Allowance by parliamentary constituency \(Not designated as National Statistics\) \(JSA02\) \(639.5 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)

[Jobseeker's Allowance by constituencies of the Scottish Parliament \(Not designated as National Statistics\) \(JSA02.1\) \(114.5 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)

[Jobseeker's Allowance by Local Enterprise Partnership \(Not designated as National Statistics\) \(JSA03\) \(99.5 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)

Other tables:

[Guide to Tables in Regional Labour Market Statistical Bulletin \(89.5 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)

[Summary of headline indicators \(S01\) \(81.5 Kb Excel sheet\)](#) [Sampling variability and revisions summary \(S02\) \(61 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)

[Claimant Count denominators \(S03\) \(69.5 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)

[Model based estimates of unemployment \(M01\) \(2.86 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)

[Estimates of employment by age \(experimental statistics\) \(X01\) \(6.86 Mb Excel sheet\)](#) [Estimates of unemployment by age \(experimental statistics\) \(X02\) \(6.82 Mb Excel sheet\)](#) [Estimates of inactivity by age \(experimental statistics\) \(X03\) \(6.84 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)

[Regional public and private sector employment \(RPUB1\) \(124.5 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)

Employment

What is employment?

[Employment](#) measures the number of people in work and differs from the number of jobs because some people have more than one job.

Employment consists of employees, self-employed people, unpaid family workers and people on government supported training and employment programmes. Unpaid family workers are people who work in a family business who do not receive a formal wage or salary but benefit from the profits of that business. The government supported training and employment programmes series does not include all people on these programmes; it only includes people engaging in any form of work, work experience or work-related training who are not included in the employees or self-employed series. People on these programmes NOT engaging in any form of work, work experience or work-related training are not included in the employment estimates; they are classified as unemployed or economically inactive.

[Explaining the concepts of employment, unemployment and economic inactivity](#) is available on our website as a short video.

A [comparison between estimates of employment and jobs](#) is available in an article on our website.

Where to find data about employment

Employment estimates are available for each region at Tables [HI00 \(7.49 Mb Excel sheet\)](#) and [HI01 to HI11](#) (Tables 1 and 2), and Tables [LI01 to LI05](#), for this and further estimate breakdowns by age.

These tables contain data produced from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and Annual Population Survey (APS). A note in the section “Understanding and working with labour market statistics” on the relationship between the LFS and APS entitled “What is the relationship between the APS and the LFS?” is included in this bulletin.

Regional commentary: employment

The employment rate for people aged from 16 to 64 for the UK was 73.3%, for the period March to May 2015. This is a decrease of 0.1 percentage point from the previous period.

The region with the highest rate in the United Kingdom was the South West, at 77.4%, followed by the South East, at 76.9% and the East of England, at 76.6%. The highest employment rate for the same period last year was in the South East, at 76.8%.

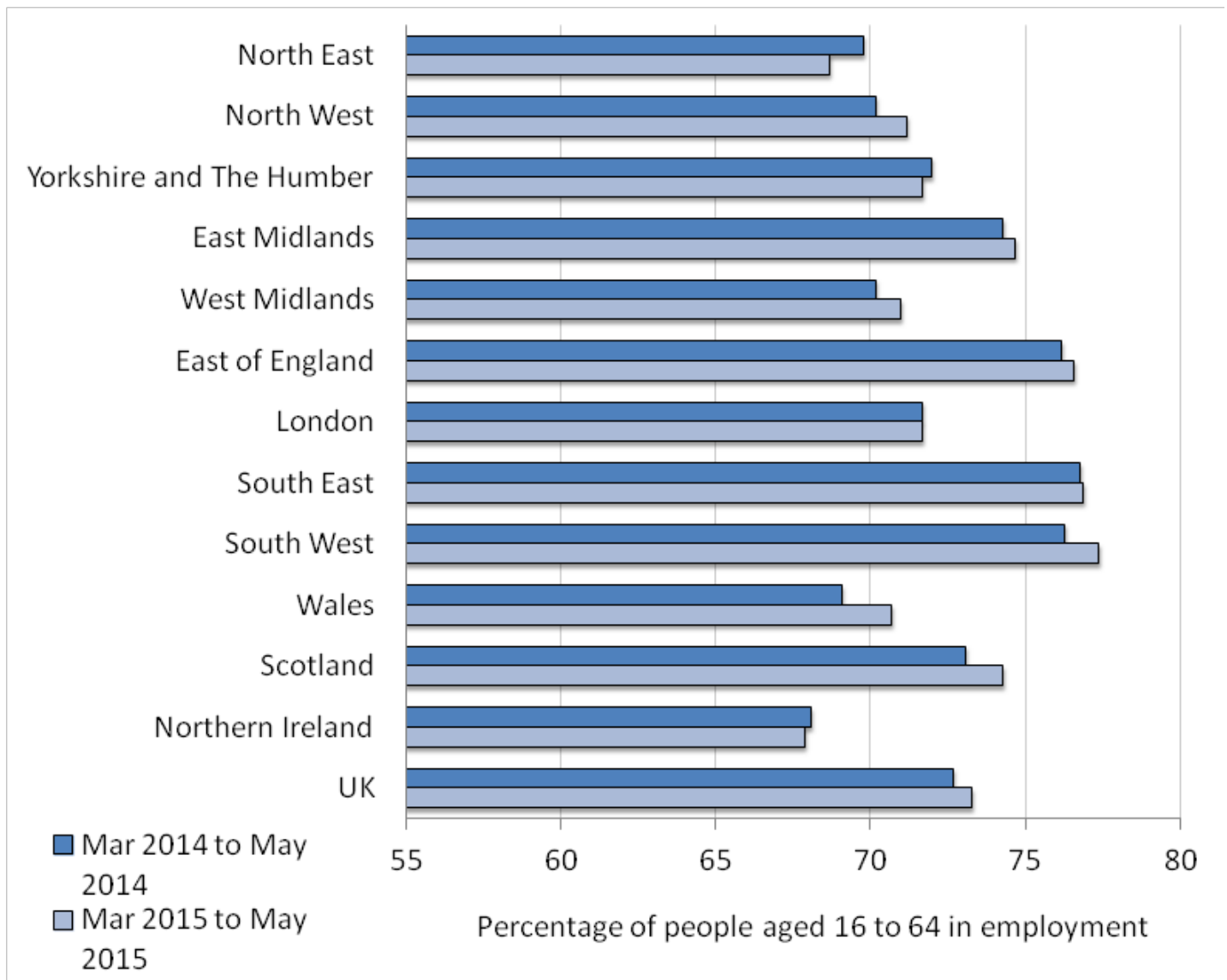
The region with the lowest rate was Northern Ireland, at 67.9%, followed by the North East, at 68.7%, and Wales, at 70.7%. The lowest employment rate for the same period last year was also in Northern Ireland, at 68.1%.

The region with the largest increase in the employment rate on the previous period (December 2014 to February 2015), was Wales, with an increase of 0.9 percentage points, followed by the South West, with an increase of 0.6 percentage points and the East Midlands and West Midlands, both with an increase of 0.3 percentage points. Employment rates for Wales have been growing in recent periods, following just over a year of lower rates. They are now again approaching the record high rates seen toward the end of 2013.

The North East had the largest decrease in the employment rate, with a decrease of 1.1 percentage points, followed by Yorkshire and The Humber, with a decrease of 0.8 percentage points and Northern Ireland, with a decrease of 0.7 percentage points. For the North East, the pattern prior to the latest estimates has been for gently increasing employment rates to record highs in late 2014 and early 2015. The latest estimates are a little below those record figures. For Yorkshire and The Humber, the employment estimates recently went through a notable peak, which corresponded with a trough in the unemployment estimates. The latest estimates are more in line with the estimates prior to those previous movements.

Figure 1: Employment rates by region and comparison year on year, seasonally adjusted, March to May 2014 and March to May 2015

UK regions



Source: Labour Force Survey - Office for National Statistics

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(17.5 Kb)

Over the year, the region with the largest increase in the employment rate was Wales, with an increase of 1.6 percentage points, followed by Scotland, with an increase of 1.2 percentage points and the South West, with an increase of 1.1 percentage points.

There were only 3 regions that had a decrease in the employment rate: the North East, at 1.1 percentage points, Yorkshire and The Humber at 0.3 percentage points and Northern Ireland, at 0.2

percentage points. London was the only region which remained unchanged, compared to the same period last year.

Workforce jobs (first published on 17 June 2015)

What is workforce jobs?

[Workforce jobs](#) measures the number of filled jobs in the economy. The estimates are mainly sourced from employer surveys such as the Short-Term Employment Surveys (STES) and the Quarterly Public Sector Employment Survey (QPSES). Workforce jobs is a different concept from employment, which is sourced from the Labour Force Survey (LFS), as employment is an estimate of people and some people have more than one job.

The service sector consists of the following industries: Wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and motor cycles, transport and storage, accommodation and food service activities, information and communication, financial and insurance activities, real estate activities, professional scientific and technical activities, administrative and support service activities, public admin and defence, compulsory social security, education, human health and social work activities, arts, entertainment and recreation, other service activities, and people employed by households, etc.

The production sector consists of the following industries: mining and quarrying, manufacturing, electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply, and water supply, sewerage, waste and remediation activities. "Other" consists of the following industries: agriculture, forestry, and fishing and construction.

The Northern Ireland self-employed component of the workforce jobs are published by NISRA - Economic and Labour Market Statistics

A [comparison between estimates of employment and jobs](#) is available in an article published on our website.

Where to find data about workforce jobs

Workforce jobs estimates are available for each region at Tables [HI01 to HI11](#) (Tables 4 and 5).

While comparable estimates for workforce jobs by industry begin in 1978, some information back to 1841, based on census data, not comparable with the latest estimates, are available from 2011 Census Analysis, 170 years of industry published on our website.

Regional commentary: workforce jobs

Workforce jobs increased in 8 of the 12 regions of the United Kingdom between December 2014 and March 2015. The largest increase of 40,000 was in the West Midlands, followed by the East of England, which increased by 36,000.

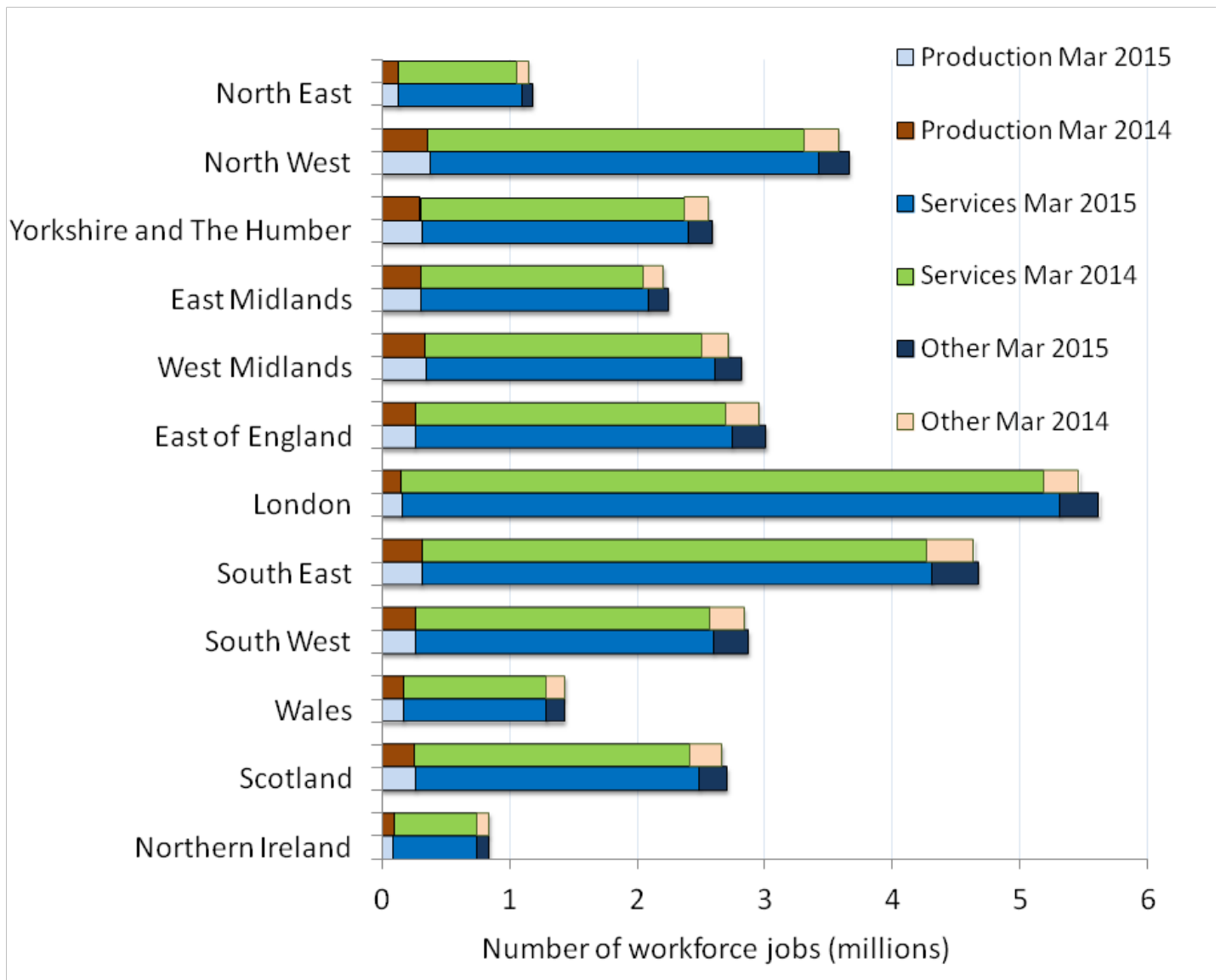
The largest decrease of 32,000 was in the South East, followed by Yorkshire and The Humber, which decreased by 5,000.

The East Midlands had the highest proportion of jobs in the production sector, at 13.8%, whilst London had the lowest proportion, at 2.8%. This is due to London having primarily service-based industries within its region, such as financial and administrative sectors.

For the service sector, London had the highest proportion, at 91.7% whilst Northern Ireland had the lowest proportion, at 77.7%. The service sector currently accounts for 83.4% of the total workforce jobs in the United Kingdom.

Figure 2: Workforce jobs by broad industry group, by region and comparison year on year, seasonally adjusted, March 2014 and March 2015

UK regions



Source: Short Term Employment Survey (GAPS) - Office for National Statistics

Download chart

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(26 Kb)

Actual hours worked (first published on 15 July 2015)

What is actual hours worked?

[Actual hours worked](#) measures the number of hours worked in the economy. Changes in actual hours worked reflect changes in the number of people in employment and the average hours worked by those people.

Where to find data about hours worked

Hours worked estimates are available for each region at Tables [HI01 to HI11](#) (Table 6). These estimates are based on data from the Annual Population Survey (APS)

The national data is also available at Tables 7 and 7(1) at Tables [HOUR01 \(222 Kb Excel sheet\)](#) and [HOUR02 \(572 Kb Excel sheet\)](#) of the UK Labour Market Statistical bulletin. These estimates are based on data from the Labour Force Survey (LFS).

Regional commentary: actual hours worked

For the period April 2014 to March 2015, the regions with the highest average actual weekly hours worked, for all workers, were in London and Northern Ireland, both at 33.3 hours, followed by the North West and the East of England, both at 32.4 hours. The lowest was in the North East, at 31.4 hours, followed by Wales and the South West, both at 31.5 hours.

The region with the largest increase in the average hours worked, compared to the same period last year (April 2013 to March 2014) was the North West, with an increase of 0.4 hours (1.1%), followed by the West Midlands, with an increase of 0.2 hours (0.6%). The only decreases in the average hours worked, were in London, with a decrease of 0.6 hours (1.8%) and Yorkshire and The Humber, with a decrease of 0.2 hours (0.5%)

The regions with the highest average actual weekly hours worked in full-time jobs, were London and the East of England, both at 38.1 hours, a decrease of 1.1% and an increase of 0.3% respectively, compared to the same period last year. The lowest was the North East, at 36.6 hours, which has decreased by 0.3%. For part-time jobs, the region with the highest average hours worked was Northern Ireland, at 17.6 hours and the lowest was the South East, at 15.6 hours.

The regions with the largest change in the total weekly hours worked were the East Midlands and the South West, which both increased by 3.2%. Wales was the only region that decreased; by 0.1%. The region with the largest difference in total hours worked between men and women was in London, where men worked a total of 32.0 million more hours than women. The regions with the

smallest difference were in the North East and Northern Ireland, where men worked only 7.0 million more hours than women.

Figure 3: Average (mean) actual weekly hours of work, by region and by sex, April 2014 to March 2015

UK regions



Source: Annual Population Survey (APS) - Office for National Statistics

Download chart

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(22.5 Kb)

Unemployment

What is unemployment?

[Unemployment](#) measures people without a job who have been actively seeking work within the last 4 weeks and are available to start work within the next 2 weeks.

[Explaining the concepts of employment, unemployment and economic inactivity](#) is available on our website as a short video.

Where to find data about unemployment

Unemployment estimates are available for each region at Tables [HI00 \(7.49 Mb Excel sheet\)](#) and [HI01 to HI11](#) (Table 2(2)), and Tables [LI01 to LI05](#), for further estimate breakdowns by age.

These tables contain data produced from the LFS and APS. A note in the section “Understanding and working with Labour Market Statistics” on the relationship between the LFS and APS entitled “What is the relationship between the APS and the LFS?” is included in this bulletin.

Regional commentary: unemployment

Regional estimates for the unemployment rate are quite volatile, which needs to be allowed for when considering the pattern of change over time.

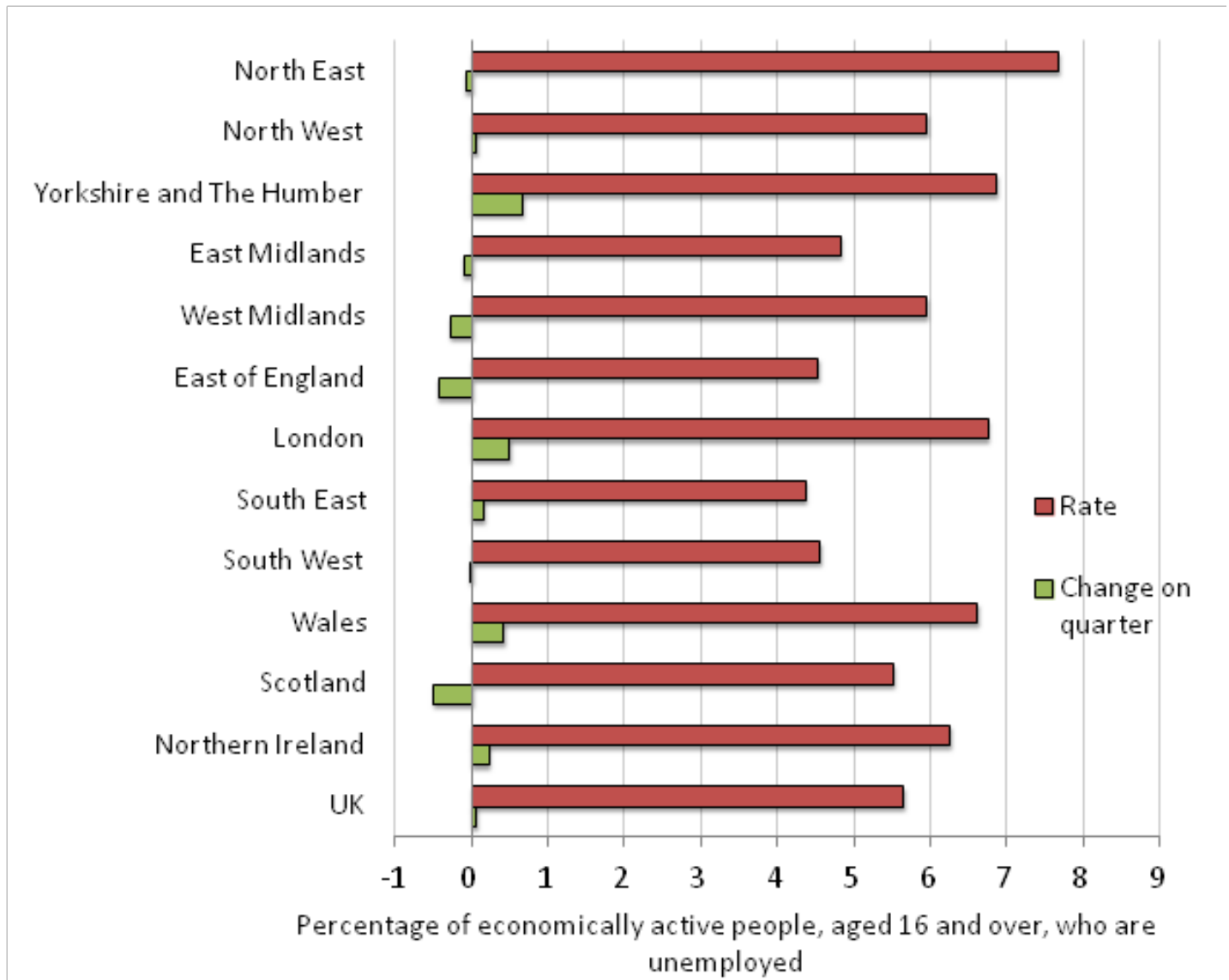
The unemployment rate for people aged 16 and over for the UK was 5.6%, for the period March to May 2015. This has increased by 0.1 percentage points compared to the previous period for comparison (December 2014 to February 2015).

The region with the highest rate in the United Kingdom was the North East, at 7.7%. This was also the region with the highest unemployment rate, for the same period last year, at 9.6%. The next highest unemployment rates were seen in Yorkshire and The Humber, at 6.9%, London, at 6.7% and Wales, at 6.6%. The regions with the lowest rate were the South East, at 4.4%, followed by the East of England, at 4.5% and the South West, at 4.6%.

The region with the largest decrease in the unemployment rate on the previous period (December 2014 to February 2015), was Scotland, at 0.5 percentage points, followed by the East of England, at 0.4 percentage points and the West Midlands, at 0.3 percentage points. This is due to a recent trough in unemployment rates. None of the decreases in the unemployment rate estimates were particularly large; the largest increase was in Yorkshire and The Humber, with an increase of 0.7 percentage points, followed by London, with an increase of 0.5 percentage points. For all other regions, the general pattern is for flat or gently falling unemployment rates.

Figure 4: Unemployment rates by region, seasonally adjusted, March to May 2015

UK regions



Source: Labour Force Survey - Office for National Statistics

Download chart[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)

(17 Kb)

All regions are showing decreases in the unemployment rate compared with a year ago, with the exception of Wales, which has remained unchanged. The largest decreases were in the North East, at 2.0 percentage points, the West Midlands, at 1.5 percentage points and Scotland, at 1.4 percentage points. The smallest decrease in the unemployment rate was in the South East, at 0.1 percentage points.

An interactive chart showing [regional unemployment rates over time](#) is available on our website.

Claimant Count (experimental statistics)

Special note: Changes to the Claimant Count

In editions of this statistical bulletin, prior to June 2015, the headline measure of the Claimant Count included claimants of Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) only. Since the June 2015 edition, the headline measure of the Claimant Count includes some claimants of Universal Credit as well as JSA claimants. These Universal Credit estimates are still being developed by the Department for Work and Pensions. We have therefore decided that the Claimant Count estimates including Universal Credit (which have been published as an alternative measure since July 2014) will continue to be designated as experimental statistics even though they are now the headline measure.

The coverage of the Universal Credit estimates does not precisely match the Claimant Count definition, because it includes some claimants who are not required to seek work. However, our analysis indicates that any bias in the new experimental measure of the Claimant Count is now less than in the old measure which only included JSA claimants.

What is the Claimant Count?

The [Claimant Count](#) measures the number of people claiming benefit principally for the reason of being unemployed:

- from November 2013 the Claimant Count includes all out of work Universal Credit claimants as well as all JSA claimants
- between May 2013 and October 2013 the Claimant Count includes all claimants of Universal Credit (including those who were in work) as well as all JSA claimants
- between October 1996 and April 2013 the Claimant Count is a count of the number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- between January 1971 (when comparable estimates start) and September 1996 it is an estimate of the number of people who would have claimed unemployment-related benefits if the current benefit system had existed at that time

Ideally only those Universal Credit claimants who are out of work and required to seek work should be included in the Claimant Count but it is not currently possible to produce estimates on this basis. The Claimant Count therefore currently includes some out of work claimants of Universal Credit who are not required to look for work; for example, due to illness or disability.

The Claimant Count includes people who claim unemployment-related benefits but who do not receive payment. For example, some claimants will have had their benefits stopped for a limited period of time by Jobcentre Plus. Some people claim JSA in order to receive National Insurance Credits.

See "Notes for Claimant Count" 1,2,3,4 at the end of this section and background notes for further details.

Where to find data about Claimant Count

Claimant Count estimates are available for each region at Tables [HI01 to HI11](#) (Table 7).

Tables showing estimates of Jobseeker's Allowance are still available at Tables 7(1), 8 and 8(2), and in Tables [JSA01 \(260 Kb Excel sheet\)](#), [JSA02 \(639.5 Kb Excel sheet\)](#), [JSA02.1 \(129.5 Kb Excel sheet\)](#) and [JSA03 \(99.5 Kb Excel sheet\)](#), for further estimate breakdowns by sub-regional geographic areas. However these estimates are not designated as National Statistics. The back data for Jobseeker's Allowance, at a regional level, is available from [Nomis](#).

Regional commentary: Claimant Count

The seasonally adjusted Claimant Count rate for the UK was 2.3% in June 2015; unchanged from May 2015, with the level up 7,000.

The region with the highest rate in the United Kingdom was Northern Ireland, at 4.9%; unchanged from the previous month. The next highest rates were in the North East, at 3.9%, Yorkshire and The Humber, and Wales, both at 3.1% and the North West, at 3.0%. Northern Ireland was also the region with the highest Claimant Count rate for the same period last year, at 6.1%.

The regions with the lowest rate were the South East and South West, both at 1.3%. The next lowest rates were seen in the East of England at 1.6% and London, at 2.0%.

The largest change in the Claimant Count level from the previous month was seen in the North West, with an increase of 3,500.

The Claimant Count levels for men and women are showing increases across most regions of the UK, except in Yorkshire and The Humber, the West Midlands and Scotland, where there have been slight decreases. The level for women also decreased in Northern Ireland by 100.

Figure 5: Claimant Count rates by region, seasonally adjusted, June 2015

UK regions



Source: Department for Work and Pensions

Download chart[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)

(17 Kb)

Notes for Claimant Count (experimental statistics)

1. The Claimant Count now includes people claiming Universal Credit. See background notes to this statistical bulletin for further details.

2. The Claimant Count includes people who claim Jobseeker's Allowance but who do not receive payment. For example, some claimants will have had their benefits stopped for a limited period of time by Jobcentre Plus; this is known as "sanctioning". Some people claim Jobseeker's Allowance in order to receive National Insurance Credits.
3. An article explaining how [unemployment and the Claimant Count \(140.7 Kb Pdf\)](#) series are defined and measured and the difference between the 2 series is available, along with an article to help users [interpret labour market statistics](#) and highlight some common misunderstandings.
4. Universal Credit has not yet been introduced in Northern Ireland and so the "Claimant Count" for Northern Ireland will only be the number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance.

Economic inactivity

What is economic inactivity?

[Economically inactive](#) people are not in employment but do not meet the internationally accepted definition of unemployment. This is because they have not been seeking work within the last 4 weeks and/or they are unable to start work within the next 2 weeks.

[Explaining the concepts of employment, unemployment and economic inactivity](#) is available on our website as a short video.

Where to find data about economic inactivity

Inactivity estimates are available for each region at Tables [HI00 \(7.49 Mb Excel sheet\)](#) and [HI01 to HI11](#) (Tables 10 and 11), and Tables [LI01 to LI05](#), for further estimate breakdowns by age and reason.

These tables contain data produced from the LFS and APS. A note in the section "Understanding and working with labour market statistics" on the relationship between the LFS and APS entitled "What is the relationship between the APS and the LFS?" is included in this bulletin.

Regional commentary: economic inactivity

The inactivity rate for people aged from 16 to 64 for the UK was 22.2%, for the period March to May 2015. This has increased by 0.1 percentage points compared to the previous period for comparison (December 2014 to February 2015). The region with the highest rate in the United Kingdom was Northern Ireland, at 27.4%, followed by the North East, at 25.5%. The region with the lowest rate was the South West, at 18.8%, followed by the East of England and the South East, both at 19.6%.

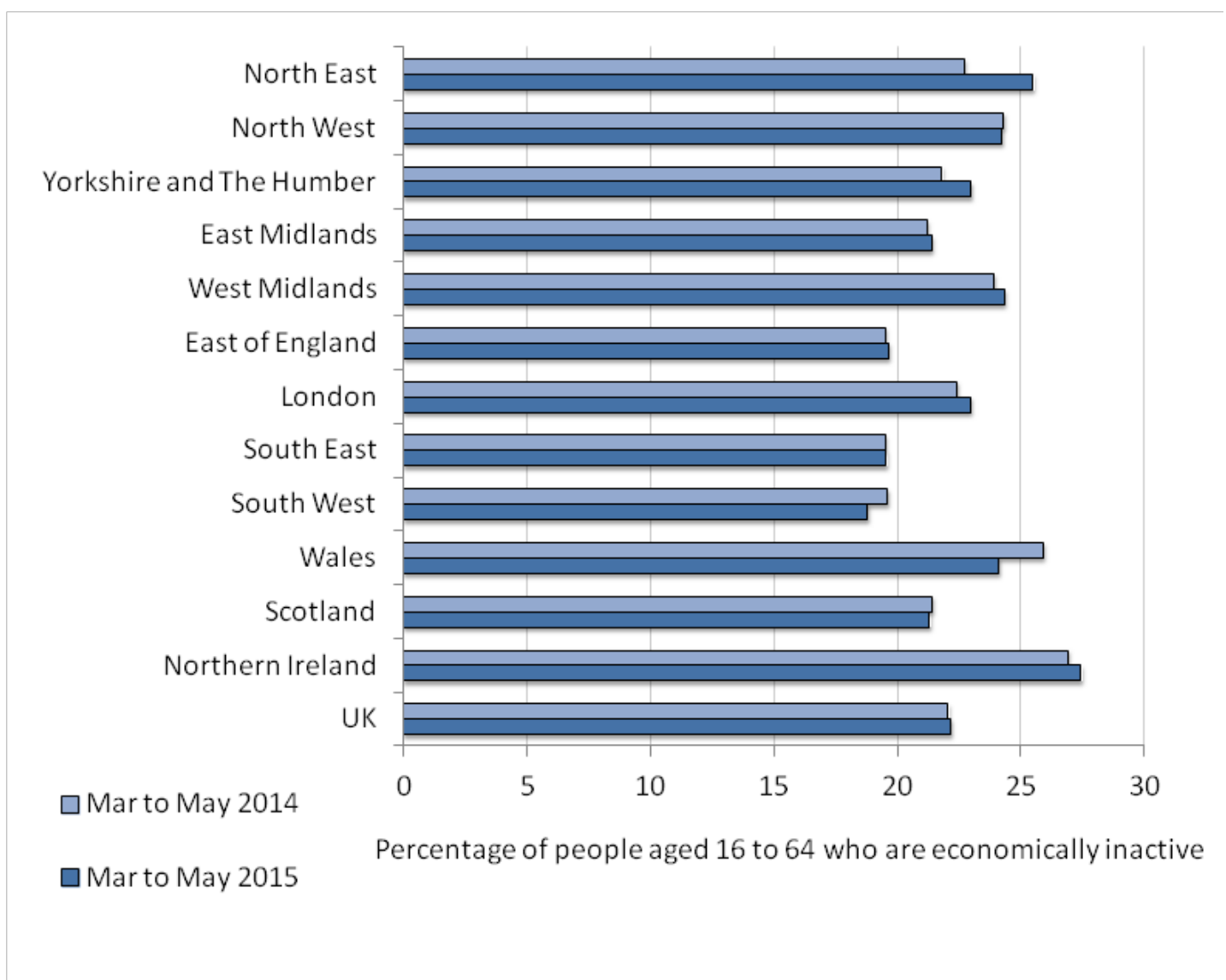
The region with the largest increase in the inactivity rate on the previous period (December 2014 to February 2015), was the North East, with an increase of 1.3 percentage points, followed by Northern Ireland, at 0.6 percentage points and the North West, at 0.4 percentage points. Wales had the largest decrease in the inactivity rate, with a decrease of 1.4 percentage points, followed by the South West, at 0.6 percentage points.

Over the year, the regions with the largest increase in the inactivity rate were the North East, with an increase of 2.8 percentage points, followed by Yorkshire and The Humber, with an increase of 1.1 percentage points and Northern Ireland, with an increase of 0.6 percentage points. The largest decrease in the inactivity rate was in Wales, at 1.8 percentage points, followed by the South West, at 0.8 percentage points.

Northern Ireland also had the highest inactivity rate, at 26.9%, in the same period in 2014, increasing by 0.6 percentage points over the last year. The inactivity rate is now 5.2 percentage points higher than the UK rate.

Figure 6: Economic inactivity by region and comparison year on year, seasonally adjusted, March to May 2014 and March to May 2015

UK regions



Source: Labour Force Survey - Office for National Statistics

Download chart

XLS [XLS format](#)

(18 Kb)

Local labour market indicators**What are local labour market indicators?**

Local labour market indicators cover employment, unemployment, economic inactivity, Jobseeker' Allowance and jobs density, for sub-regional geographic areas such as local and unitary authorities, counties and regions in the United Kingdom for the most recent 12 month period available of the Annual Population Survey (APS). The job density of an area is the number of jobs per head, of resident population, aged 16 to 64.

Where to find data about local labour market indicators

Estimates are available at Tables [LI01 to LI05](#) in this statistical bulletin.

These tables contain data produced from the APS. A note in the section "Understanding and working with labour market statistics" on the relationship between the LFS and APS entitled "What is the relationship between the APS and the LFS?" is included in this bulletin.

Commentary: local labour market indicators**Indicators from the Annual Population Survey (first published on 15 July 2015)**

For the period April 2014 to March 2015, the local authorities with the highest employment rate in Great Britain were the Orkney Islands, at 89.3%, Surrey Heath, at 86.6%, Winchester, at 86.4% and Tonbridge and Malling, Epsom and Ewell, and Chichester, all at 85.4%. Liverpool is the local authority with the lowest employment rate, at 60%. For the same period last year, the highest rates were in Uttlesford and North Dorset, at 86.7%; these areas are now 79.0% and 81.9%, respectively.

For the period April 2014 to March 2015, the local authority with the highest unemployment rate in Great Britain was Middlesbrough, at 11.8%, followed by Wolverhampton, at 11.3% and Hartlepool, at 11.1%. The local authority with the lowest unemployment rate was Stratford-on-Avon, at 2.4%, followed by South Northamptonshire, at 2.5%. These were followed by 5 local authorities, all at 2.6%, 3 local authorities, all at 2.7% and a further 10 local authorities, all under 3.0%. For the same period last year, there were only 5 local authorities with an unemployment rate of less than 3.0%.

Indicators using Jobseeker's Allowance data (not designated as National Statistics)

Currently it is not practical to produce detailed analysis for local areas using a Claimant Count based on claimants of Jobseeker's Allowance and Universal Credit. Consequently, this local analysis

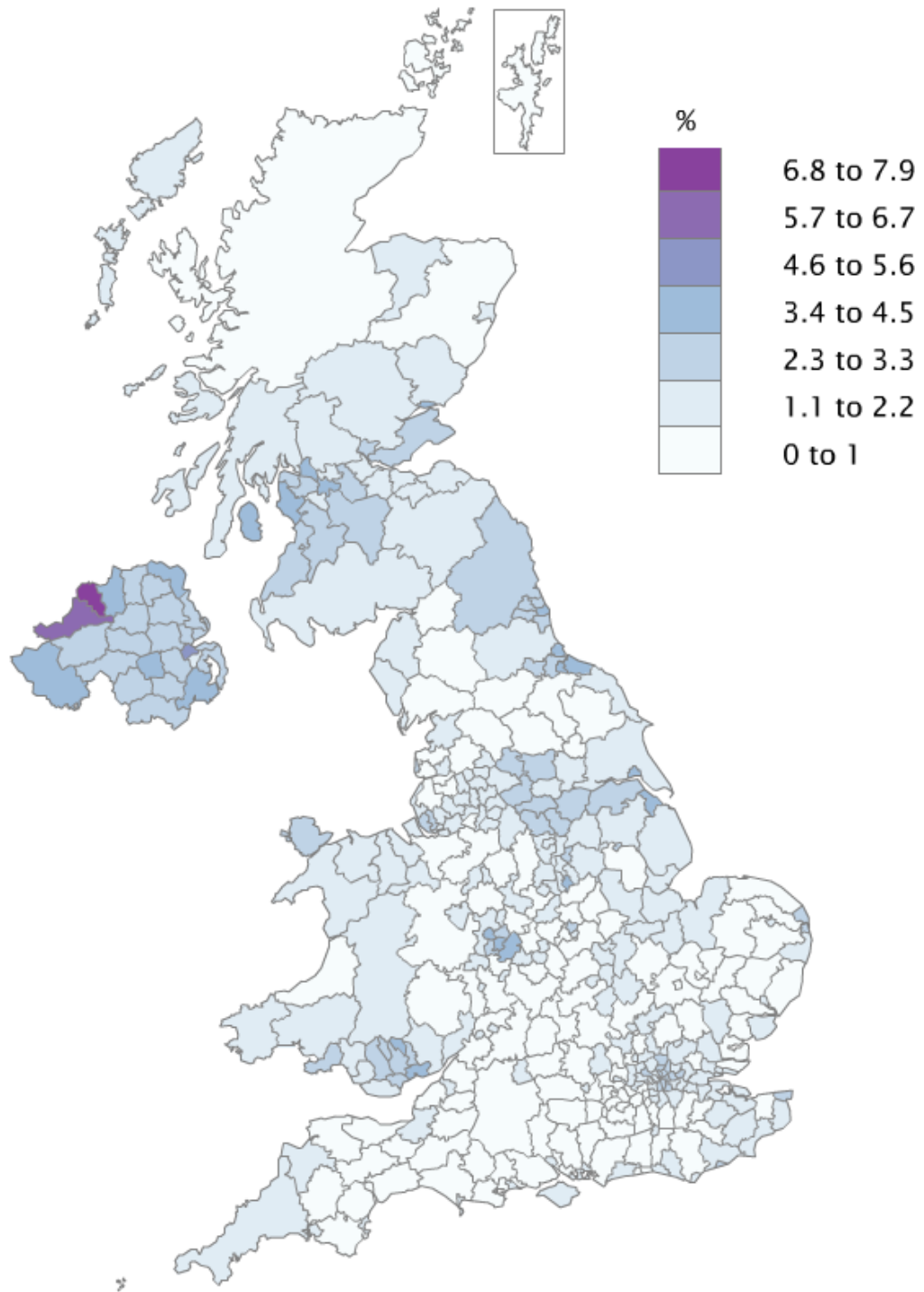
reflects claimants of Jobseeker's Allowance only, which will be affected by the roll-out of Universal Credit.

In June 2015, excluding the Isles of Scilly, the local authority with the lowest proportion of the population, aged from 16 to 64 years, claiming Jobseeker's Allowance in the United Kingdom, was Stratford-on-Avon, at 0.3%, followed by Eden, South Lakeland, Harrogate, Richmondshire, Hart in Hampshire, South Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse, Mid Sussex and the Orkney Islands, all at 0.4% and 20 other local authorities, all at 0.5%. There were a further 88 local authorities with a proportion of less than 1.0%.

The proportion was highest in Derry and Strabane, at 7.1%, followed by Belfast, at 4.9% and Kingston upon Hull, at 4.3%, which is the local authority with the highest rate in Great Britain, There were a further 5 local authorities in the United Kingdom, all with a proportion of 4.0% or more.

Figure 7: Jobseeker's Allowance Map, June 2015

Proportion of people aged 16 to 64 claiming Jobseeker's Allowance in local authorities in the United Kingdom



Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2015.

Source: Department for Work and Pensions

Download map

[PNG](#) [PNG format](#)

(183.8 Kb)

An interactive version of this map showing [Jobseeker's Allowance proportions by local authority over time](#) is available on our website. This map also shows Jobseeker's Allowance proportions for males, females, 18 to 24 year olds and those claiming over 12 months.

Job densities (first published on 17 April 2015)

The job density of an area is the number of jobs per head, of resident population, aged 16 to 64. In 2013, the highest jobs density in Great Britain was the City of London, at 81.79 and the lowest was East Renfrewshire, at 0.40. Westminster (4.35), Camden (2.15) and Islington (1.36), all in London, were the next highest jobs densities. The highest jobs density outside London was Watford, at 1.32. After East Renfrewshire, the lowest jobs densities were Lewisham, at 0.41, followed by Barking and Dagenham, at 0.44 and East Dunbartonshire, Waltham Forest, Redbridge and Haringey, all at 0.45.

(iv) Where to find more information about labour market statistics

Other regularly published labour market releases

[UK Labour Market statistics](#)

[Public Sector Employment](#)

[Young People who were Not in Employment, Education or Training \(NEET\)](#)

[Labour Productivity](#)

[Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings \(ASHE\)](#)

[Business Register and Employment Survey \(BRES\)](#)

Note: Regional and local area statistics are also available at [NOMIS®](#)

Historic articles published in Economic and Labour Market Review and Labour Market Trends

Articles about labour market statistics were published in Labour Market Trends (up until 2006) and in Economic and Labour Market Review (from 2007 to 2011). Editions of [Labour Market Trends](#) are available on our website, from July 2001 until December 2006 when the publication was discontinued. Editions of [Economic and Labour Market Review](#) are available on our website from the first edition, published in January 2007, up until the last edition published in May 2011.

Published ad hoc data and analysis

[Additional statistical data and analyses for labour market statistics](#) that have not been included in our standard publications are available on our website.

Methodological articles

A number of [methodological articles](#) about labour market statistics are available on our website.

(v) Quality information

Quality issues

One indication of the reliability of the main indicators in this bulletin can be obtained by monitoring the size of revisions. These summary measures are available in the [Regional labour market sampling variability spreadsheet \(61 Kb Excel sheet\)](#) available with this bulletin and show the size of revisions over the last 5 years.

The revised data itself may be subject to sampling or other sources of error. Our standard presentation is to show 5 years worth of revisions (that is, 60 observations for a monthly series, 20 for a quarterly series). Further information on the quality of and methods for workforce jobs estimates can be found in the [summary quality report \(295.4 Kb Pdf\)](#).

Other quality information

[Quality and methodology information papers \(227.1 Kb Pdf\)](#) for labour market statistics are available on our website. Further information about the Labour Force Survey (LFS) is available from:

- [the LFS user guide](#)
- [LFS performance and quality monitoring reports](#)

Background notes

1. This month's bulletin

There are no changes in this month's bulletin

2. Next month's bulletin

In the August 2015 edition of this bulletin, Tables JSA01, JSA03, LI01, LI03 and LI05 will be updated with the latest 2013 mid-year population estimates for local and unitary authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPS), NUTS, regions and countries. The population estimates for regions and countries in Tables LI02, LI02.1, LI04, JSA02 and JSA02.1 will also be updated. These population estimates are used in the calculation of JSA proportions and jobs densities.

From the August 2015 edition of this bulletin, we intend to introduce an addition set of Headline Indicator tables covering Northern Ireland. These tables will be labelled HI12 and will contain the same set of indicators as tables HI01 to HI11 contain for other regions and countries. We also intend to introduce Tables CC01 and CC02 containing Claimant Count information for local

authorities and Westminster parliamentary constituencies. These tables will include information on the number of men and women claimants, along with Claimant Count proportions, similar to the current Tables JSA01 and JSA02.

3. Incorporation of estimates of Universal Credit into the Claimant Count

Since the June 2015 release, the headline measure of the Claimant Count has been changed to include some claimants of Universal Credit (UC) as well as JSA claimants, resulting in upward revisions to the Claimant Count. Previously the headline measure did not include UC claimants.

The Claimant Count measures the number of people claiming benefits principally for the reason of being unemployed. Between October 1996 and April 2013, the only unemployment-related benefit in the UK was Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) and the Claimant Count was therefore a count of the number of people claiming JSA.

The introduction of Universal Credit started on 29 April 2013 with the introduction of this new benefit in one Jobcentre Plus office. This has been extended to further Jobcentre Plus offices across Great Britain. A [list of Jobcentres where Universal Credit is available](#) can be found on the GOV.UK website.

Universal Credit is replacing a number of means-tested benefits including the means-tested element of Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA). It will not replace contributory-based JSA.

Following a consultation in 2012, it was decided that, with the introduction of Universal Credit, the Claimant Count would include:

- people claiming contribution-based JSA (which is not affected by the introduction of Universal Credit)
- people claiming income-based JSA during the transition period while this benefit is being gradually phased out
- people claiming Universal Credit who are not working and who are subject to a full set of labour market jobseeker requirements, that is required to be actively seeking work and available to start work

The experimental estimates of Universal Credit are still being developed by the Department for Work and Pensions and they currently include all out of work Universal Credit claimants including those who are not required to look for work (who should ideally be excluded from the Claimant Count).

The number of Jobcentre Plus offices introducing Universal Credit has increased substantially over the last few months. Consequently we have concluded that the experimental measure of the Claimant Count has now become the best estimate of the number of people claiming benefits principally for the reason of being unemployed. We are therefore no longer publishing 2 measures of the Claimant Count. Instead we are publishing a single measure of the Claimant Count which includes the experimental estimates of Universal Credit claimants. These experimental Claimant Count estimates are available at reference Tables [HI01 to HI11](#) (Table 7) of this statistical bulletin.

It is not currently possible to produce estimates of inflows and outflows for the new measure of the Claimant Count, however, estimates of JSA inflows and outflows continue to be available and are now published at reference Tables [HI01 to HI11](#) (Table 7(1)) of this statistical bulletin.

Similarly, it is not currently possible to produce an age or duration breakdown for the new measure of the Claimant Count. Estimates of JSA by age and duration continue to be available and are now published at [HI01 to HI11](#) (Tables 8 and 8(2))

In addition to this, it is not currently possible to produce a breakdown for local geographies for the new measure of the Claimant Count. Therefore, estimates of JSA continue to be available and are published at Tables [LI01 to LI05](#) and Tables [JSA01 to JSA03](#).

The JSA estimates published at data Tables [JSA01 to JSA03](#) are no longer designated as National Statistics because they are no longer the best estimate of the number of people claiming unemployment related benefits, as explained in correspondence between the National Statistician and the UK Statistics Authority:

[Letter from National Statistician to UK Statistics Authority, 9 June 2015](#)

[Reply from UK Statistics Authority to National Statistician, 10 June 2015](#)

"Jobseeker's Allowance, Universal Credit and the Claimant Count: Changes to the Measurement of the Claimant Count" provides further information and is available at the [Labour Market articles and reports](#) page on our website.

4. **Claimant Count**

Estimates of Claimant Count by region are available on a comparable basis back to April 1974. The figures from April 1974 to September 1996 are estimates of the number of people who would have claimed unemployment related benefits if JSA had existed. The national records start in 1971, and some data back to 1881 (which do not have National Statistics status) are available from the "Historic Data" worksheet within [data table CLA01 in the UK Labour Market bulletin \(267 Kb Excel sheet\)](#).

5. **Publication policy**

A list of the job titles of those given pre-publication access to the contents of this statistical bulletin is available on our website.

6. **Special events**

We have published commentary, analysis and policy on "Special events" which may affect statistical outputs. For full details, go to the [Special events page](#) on our website.

7. The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods; and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

8. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available by visiting www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html or from the Media Relations Office email: media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk

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