

## Statistical bulletin:

# Public sector employment, UK: December 2015

Estimates of employment in the UK public sector, covering central and local government, public corporations and civil service, by sector, industry and region.



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# 1. Main points for December 2015

Total UK public sector employment was 5.347 million. This was 3,000 higher than at September 2015 but 50,000 lower than at December 2014.

Employment in UK local government, at 2.229 million, was 15,000 lower than at September 2015. This is the lowest level shown since the series began in 1999.

Employment in UK central government, at 2.945 million, was 26,000 higher than at September 2015.

Employment in UK public corporations, at 173,000, was 8,000 lower than at September 2015.

Private sector employment, at 26.071 million, was 113,000 higher than at September 2015 and 529,000 higher than at December 2014. Private sector employment has risen in every quarter from December 2011. This is the highest recorded level in the series.

## 2. In this bulletin

Public sector employment (PSE) figures are derived from a range of sources. The main source is the Quarterly Public Sector Employment Survey which comprises three separate data collections: local authorities in England and Wales, the home Civil Service, and public bodies in Great Britain. The survey aims to obtain complete coverage of local government and the Civil Service, and coverage of all public bodies with 20 or more employees. It is difficult to achieve complete coverage for local and central government, for example in the education sector. Information on quality can be found in the [Quality and Methodology Information for Public Sector Employment \(http://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/publicsectorpersonnel/qmis/publicsectoremploymentqmi\)](http://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/publicsectorpersonnel/qmis/publicsectoremploymentqmi) report.

Headcount estimates of PSE are presented by sector classification, industry and region. Civil Service employment is shown by government department and agency. Employment in executive non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) has been aggregated by sponsoring department.

Reclassifications between the public and private sectors, which affect the trends, are also addressed. Full-time equivalent estimates of PSE are available in the accompanying datasets.

Revisions have been made to the series in line with the public sector employment revisions policy (background note 3 has further details).

Summary PSE statistics from this release are also published in the monthly UK Labour Market statistical release. The UK Labour Market release provides a comprehensive picture of the structure and size of the UK labour market each month. The quarterly PSE statistics are published on the same day as the UK Labour Market figures each quarter.

It is important to note that the public sector employment estimates are point-in-time employment estimates and relate to a specific day in the published month.

These statistics are mainly used to monitor changes in the number of people employed in the UK public and private sector. They are the official measure of UK public sector employment.

## 3. Total UK public sector employment

## Figure 1: Total UK public sector employment, March 1999 to December 2015, seasonally adjusted



**Source: Office for National Statistics**

### Notes:

1. Dec 2008: Lloyds Banking Group and Royal Bank of Scotland moved to public sector.
2. Jun 2012: English colleges moved to private sector.
3. Dec 2013: Royal Mail plc moved to private sector.
4. Mar 2014: Lloyds Banking Group moved back to the private sector.

In December 2015, total UK public sector employment (PSE) was 5.347 million, 1.024 million (16.1%) lower than the peak level of 6.371 million seen in September 2009. This represents a rise of 3,000 (0.1%) on the previous quarter and a fall of 50,000 (0.9%) on the previous year.

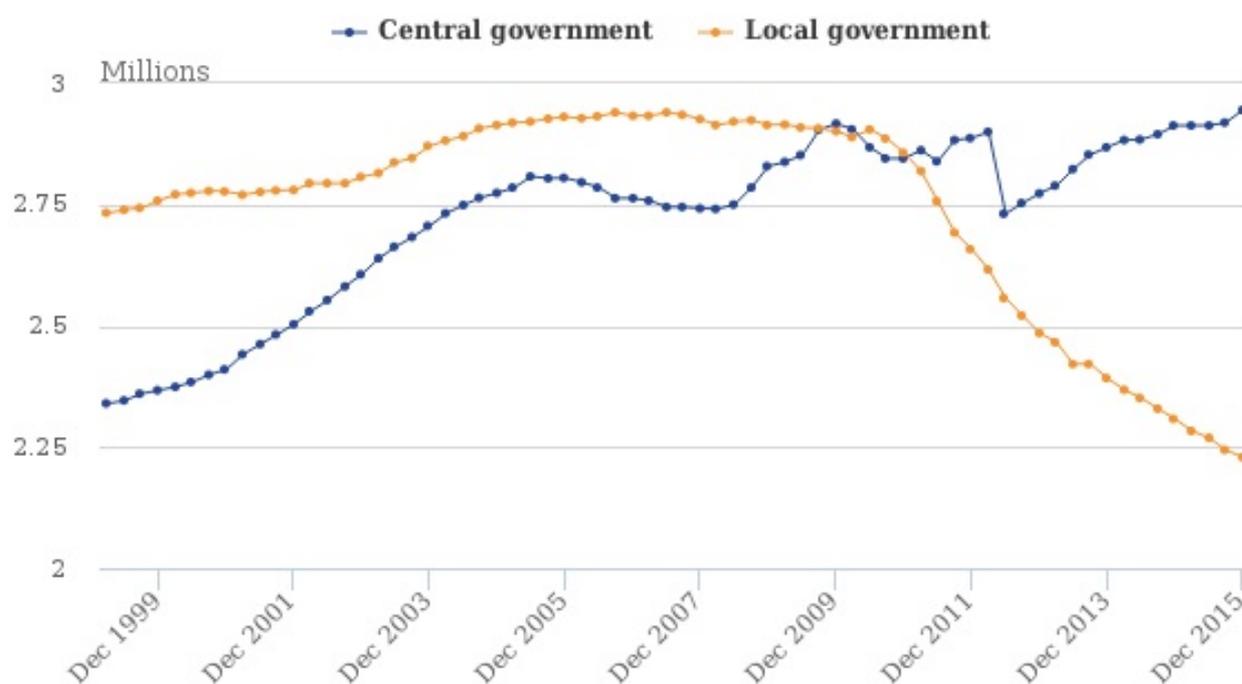
Without the effects of major reclassifications between public and private sectors, PSE fell by 40,000 (0.8%) on the previous year.

Figure 1 shows that in December 2015 total UK PSE is below the level when the series started in March 1999. There has been a downward trend in total UK PSE since its peak in September 2009.

## 4. Public sector employment by sector classification

The public sector comprises central government, local government and public corporations as defined for the UK National Accounts (<http://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/nationalaccounts/uksectoraccounts/articles/nationalaccountssectorclassifications/previousReleases>).

**Figure 2: UK public sector employment in local and central government, March 1999 to December 2015, seasonally adjusted**



**Source: Office for National Statistics**

### Notes:

1. Jul 2010: Academies Act 2010 passed.
2. Jun 2012: English colleges moved to the private sector.

## Local government

In December 2015, employment in local government was 2.229 million, which represents a fall of 15,000 (0.7%) on the previous quarter and 79,000 (3.4%) on the previous year. Figure 2 shows the decreasing trend in local government employment since June 2010. The December 2015 level is the lowest shown since the series began.

## Central government

In December 2015, employment in central government, at 2.945 million, increased by 26,000 (0.9%) on the previous quarter and 32,000 (1.1%) on the previous year. This is mainly due to an increase in NHS employment and academy conversions (see below) over the period. The December 2015 level is the highest shown since the series began.

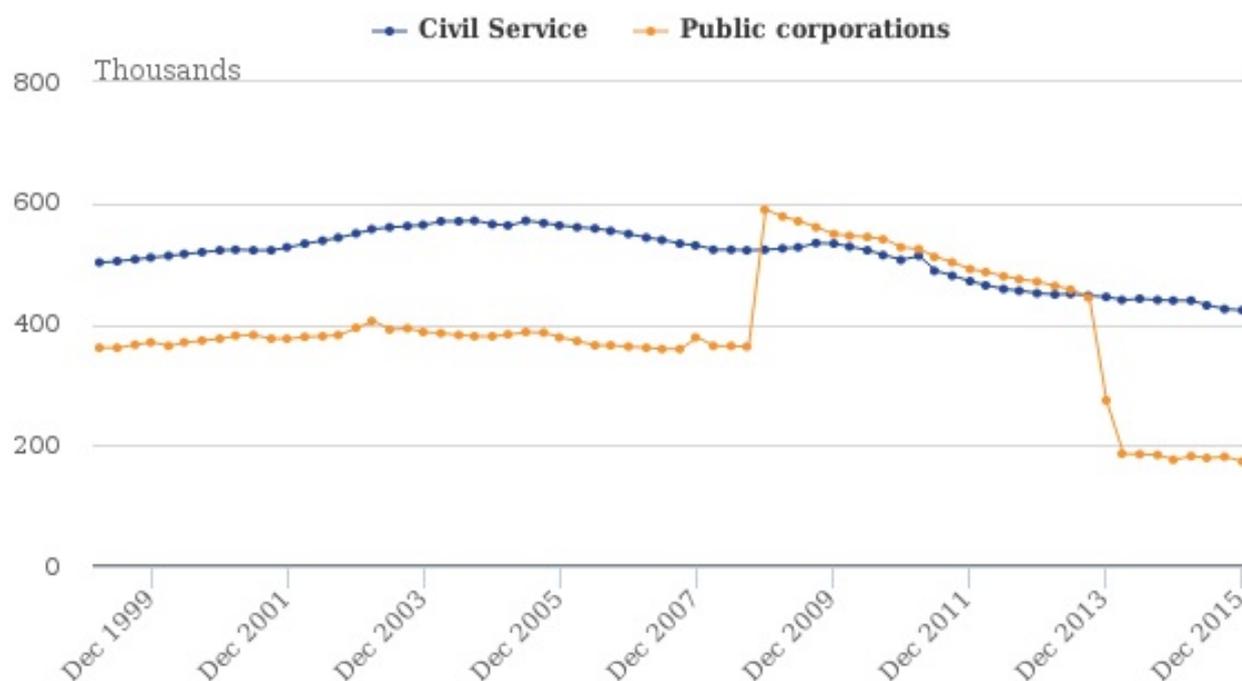
## Factors affecting employment in local and central government

There is an ongoing shift of employment from local government to central government, as a result of local authority maintained schools converting to academy status. Academies are classified to central government, whereas local authority maintained schools are classified to local government. As a result, whenever a local authority maintained school becomes an academy, its employees move from local government to central government.

In December 2015, employment shifted from local government to central government by 7,000 on the quarter and 40,000 on the year, due to academy conversions.

In June 2012, English further education colleges were reclassified and an approximate 176,000 employees moved from central government to the private sector. English sixth-form college corporations were also reclassified from local government to the private sector; there was a transfer of employees with an approximate headcount of 20,000. In March 2015, Welsh further education colleges were reclassified and an approximate 12,000 employees moved from central government to the private sector.

## Figure 3: UK public sector employment in Civil Service and public corporations, March 1999 to December 2015, seasonally adjusted



**Source: Office for National Statistics**

### Notes:

1. Dec 2008: Lloyds Banking Group and Royal Bank of Scotland moved to public sector.
2. Dec 2013: Royal Mail plc moved to private sector.
3. Mar 2014: Lloyds Banking Group moved back to private sector.

## UK public corporations

In December 2015, employment in UK public corporations was 173,000. This is a decrease of 8,000 (4.4%) on the previous quarter and 3,000 (1.7%) on the previous year. The December 2015 level is the lowest shown since the series began.

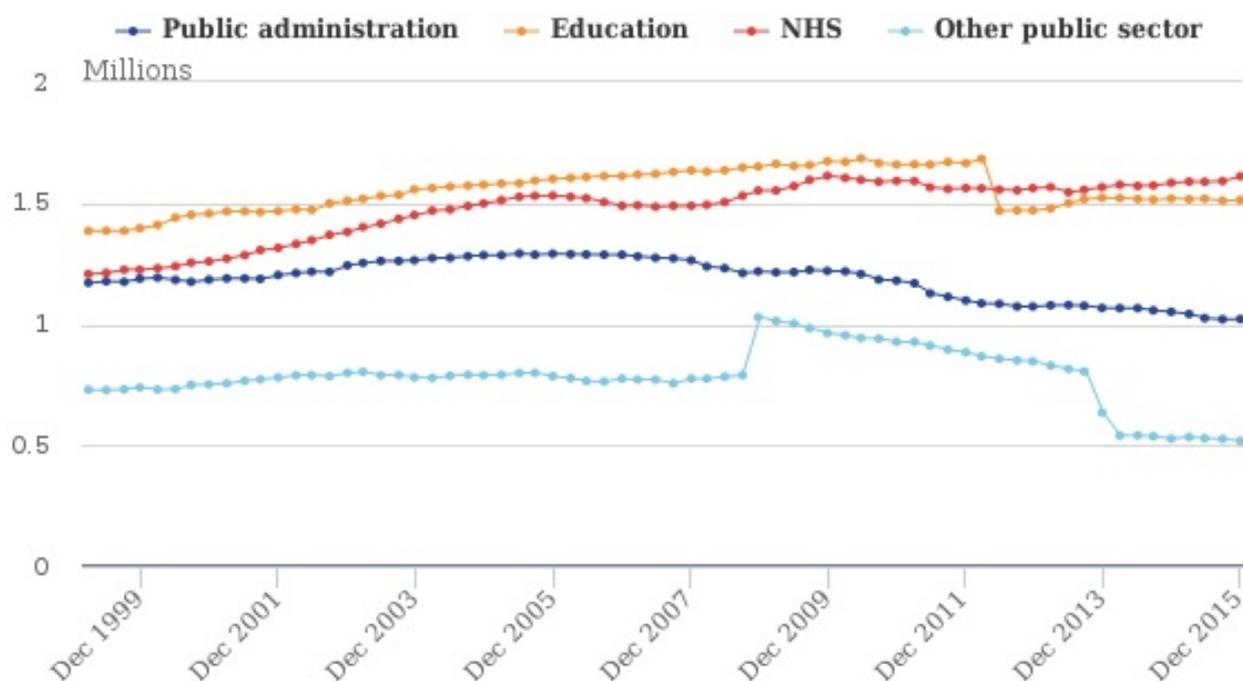
## Civil Service

In December 2015, Civil Service employment was 423,000. This is a decrease of 2,000 (0.5%) on the previous quarter and 16,000 (3.6%) on the previous year.

Figure 3 shows the downward trend in Civil Service employment since June 2005, when it was at its highest level of 571,000. The December 2015 level is the lowest shown since the start of the series in 1999.

## 5. Public sector employment by industry

## Figure 4: UK public sector employment by selected industries, March 1999 to December 2015, seasonally adjusted



**Source: Office for National Statistics**

### Notes:

1. Dec 2008: Lloyds Banking Group and Royal Bank of Scotland moved to public sector.
2. Jun 2012: English colleges moved to private sector.
3. Dec 2013: Royal Mail plc moved to private sector.
4. Mar 2014: Lloyds Banking Group moved back to private sector.

## NHS

In December 2015, employment in the NHS was 1.611 million. This represents a rise of 20,000 (1.3%) on the previous quarter and 27,000 (1.7%) on the previous year.

Since June 2012, the NHS has employed the largest number of public sector workers. At December 2015, the NHS accounted for around 30% of all PSE.

# Education

In December 2015, employment in public sector education was 1.513 million. This was 3,000 (0.2%) higher than for the previous quarter but 6,000 (0.4%) lower than for the previous year.

Prior to June 2012 public sector education employed the largest number of public sector workers.

Figure 4 shows the significant fall in public sector education in June 2012, as a result of the reclassification of English further education colleges and sixth form college corporations into the private sector.

# Public administration

Public administration includes all administrative duties of local and central government.

In December 2015, employment in public administration increased by 1,000 (0.1%) on the previous quarter to 1.021 million. On the same period a year ago, it decreased by 30,000 (2.9%).

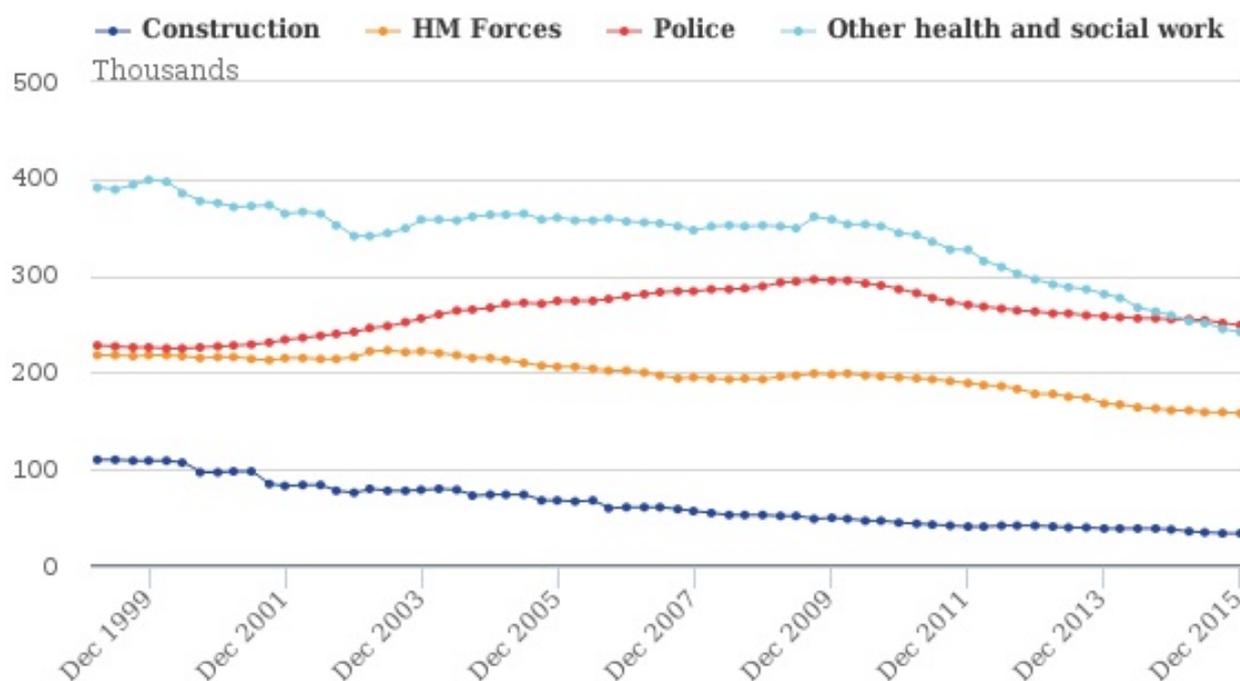
Figure 4 shows the general downward trend in employment in public administration since September 2009.

# Other public sector

The category 'other public sector' covers all industries that have not been specified elsewhere, such as financial institutions.

In December 2015, employment in the category 'other public sector' was 518,000. This represents a decrease of 8,000 (1.5%) on the previous quarter and 9,000 (1.7%) on the previous year.

**Figure 5: UK public sector employment by selected industries, March 1999 to December 2015, seasonally adjusted**



**Source: Office for National Statistics**

## Other health and social work

This category covers all health and social work not covered by the NHS.

In December 2015, employment in 'other health and social work' was 242,000. This was 3,000 (1.2%) lower than at September 2015 and 17,000 (6.6%) lower than the previous year.

## Police

In December 2015, employment in the Police, at 249,000, was 2,000 (0.8%) lower than at September 2015 and 6,000 (2.4%) lower than a year earlier. Employment in the Police has seen a decreasing trend since September 2009; however, the rate of decrease has now lessened. This is shown in Figure 5.

## HM Forces

In December 2015, employment in HM Forces was 158,000. This was 1,000 (0.6%) lower than at September 2015 and 3,000 (1.9%) lower than at December 2014. Figure 5 shows the steady fall in employment in HM Forces since March 2010.

## Construction

In December 2015, employment in public sector construction, at 34,000, was unchanged compared with the previous quarter. In the year to December 2015, it fell by 4,000 (10.5%).

Figure 5 shows the downward trend in employment in public sector construction from the beginning of the series in March 1999. From the start of 2012, the rate of decrease has lessened.

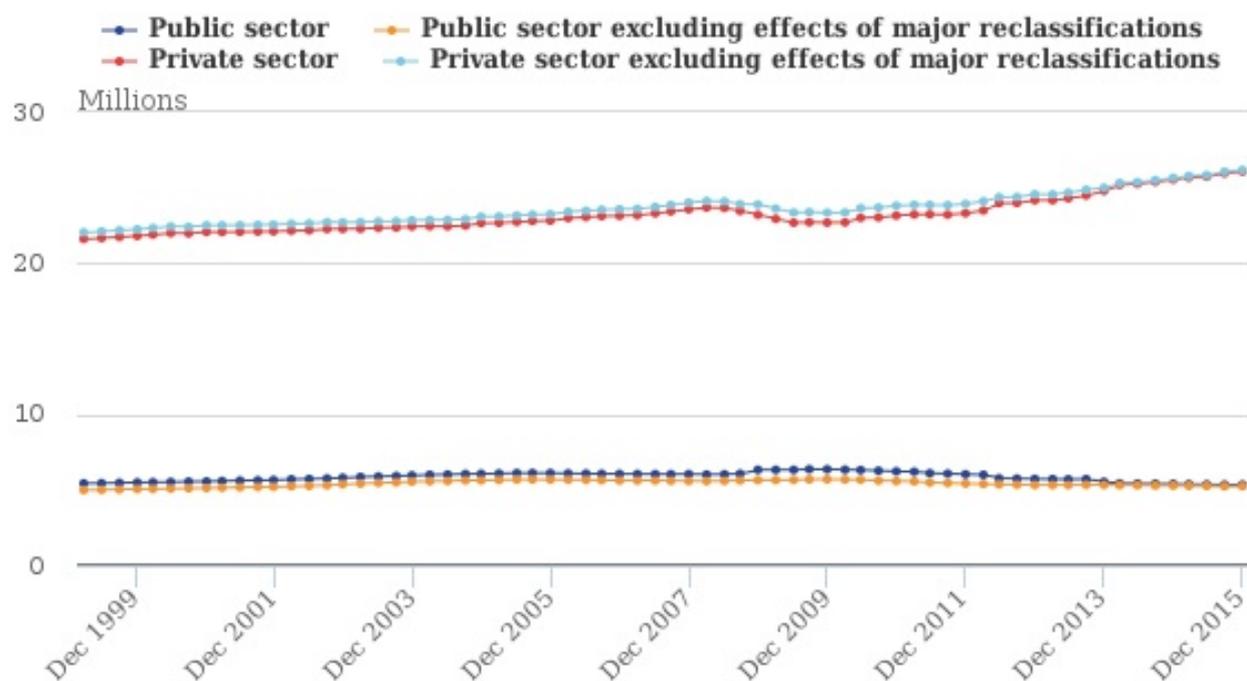
## 6. Public and private sector employment

Private sector employment estimates are derived as the difference between total UK employment estimates sourced from the Labour Force Survey and the public sector employment estimates collected from public sector organisations.

Total employment in the public sector showed a small increase between September and December 2015, with employment in the private sector continuing to rise. 17% of people in work are employed in the public sector; this is the lowest percentage since the series began in 1999.

### Total UK public and private sector employment

**Figure 6: UK public and private sector employment, March 1999 to December 2015, seasonally adjusted**



**Source: Office for National Statistics**

The number of people employed in the private sector in December 2015 is estimated to be 26.071 million and is the highest recorded since the start of the series in 1999. Total UK private sector employment increased by 113,000 (0.4%) compared with September 2015 and 529,000 (2.1%) compared with December 2014. Total UK public sector employment increased by 3,000 (0.1%) compared with September 2015 but decreased by 50,000 (0.9%) compared with December 2014.

The public and private sector employment series have been affected by a number of major reclassifications where bodies employing large numbers of people have moved between public and private sectors. Figure 6 shows the series excluding the effect of major reclassifications.

With the effect of major reclassifications removed, total UK private sector employment increased by 108,000 (0.4%) on the previous quarter and by 519,000 (2.0%) on the previous year. On this basis, total UK public sector employment increased by 8,000 (0.2%) on the previous quarter but decreased by 40,000 (0.8%) on the previous year.

# Public and private sector employment by UK region

Seasonally adjusted series are not available when public and private sector employment is split by region. Therefore any differences between quarters in the published regional tables may be due to seasonal effects and changes should be calculated from the previous year. Each series begins at March 2008.

## Public sector employment by UK region

**Figure 7: Change in UK public sector employment, by region, between December 2014 and December 2015, not seasonally adjusted**



**Source: Office for National Statistics**

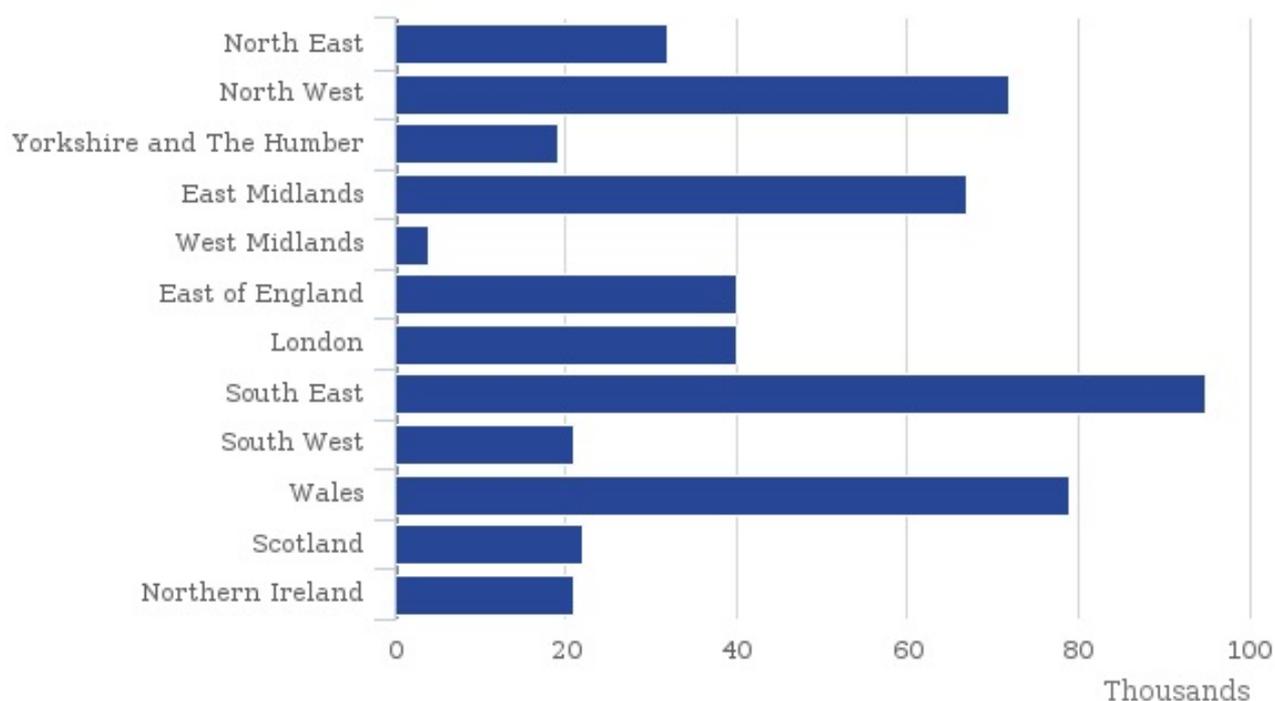
Almost all of the December 2015 regional PSE headcount estimates are lower than the corresponding December 2014 estimates, as shown in Figure 7.

In the year to December 2015, the largest level falls in PSE were shown in Wales (21,000; 6.7%), followed by Yorkshire and The Humber (7,000; 1.4%) and Northern Ireland (5,000; 2.5%). Small increases were shown in the East of England (1,000; 0.3%) and the South West (1,000; 0.2%).

The size of the fall in Wales is partly explained by the reclassification of 12,000 employees of Welsh further education colleges into the private sector in March 2015.

## Private sector employment by UK region

**Figure 8: Change in UK private sector employment, by region, between December 2014 and December 2015, not seasonally adjusted**

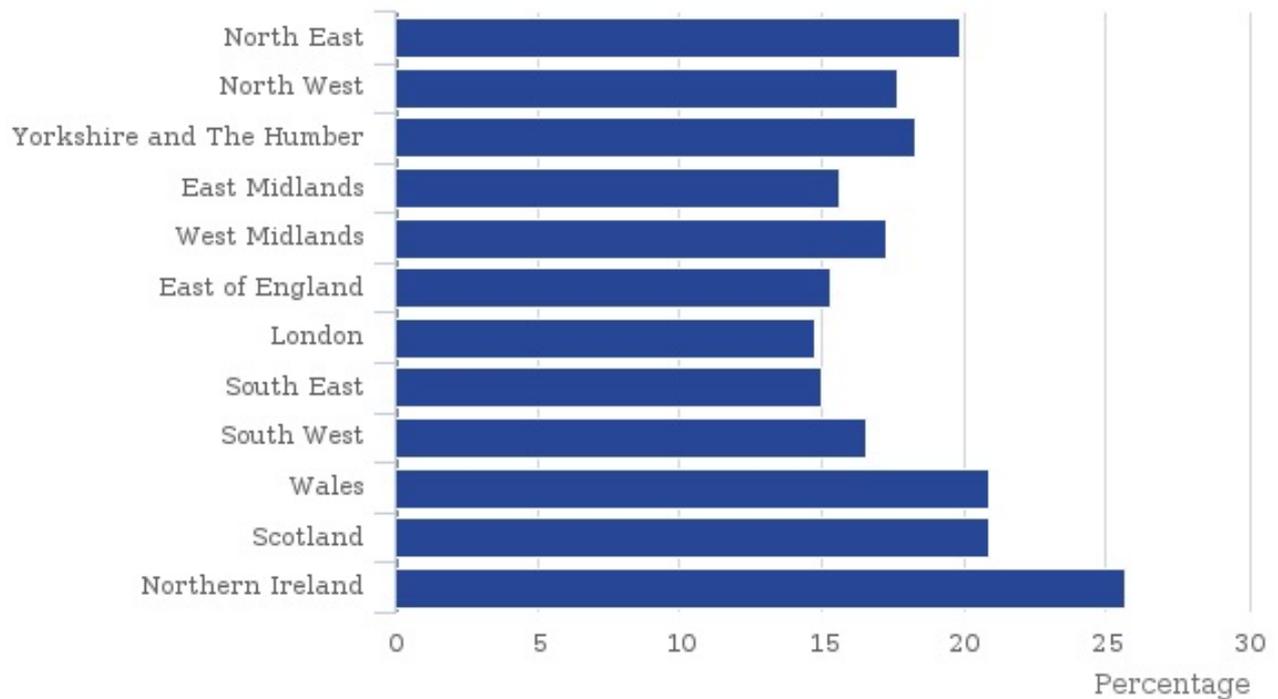


**Source: Office for National Statistics**

In the year to December 2015, private sector employment increased in all of the 12 UK regions, as seen in Figure 8. The largest increases in employment level were in the South East (95,000; 2.7%) and Wales (79,000; 7.6%), followed by the North West (72,000; 2.6%) and the East Midlands (67,000; 3.8%).

# Proportion of total employment employed by the public sector

**Figure 9: Proportion of UK total employment employed in the public sector, by region, December 2015, not seasonally adjusted**



**Source: Office for National Statistics**

Figure 9 shows the proportion of all those in employment employed in the public sector for each UK region at December 2015.

Northern Ireland (25.7%), Wales (20.9%) and Scotland (20.9%) showed the highest public sector employment proportions.

At December 2015, the North East (19.9%) remains the English region with the highest public sector employment proportion. London (14.8%) had the lowest proportion.

## 7. Employment in the Civil Service and executive non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs)

### Civil Service

At December 2015, employment in the UK Home Civil Service decreased by 2,000 (0.5%) compared with September 2015 to 423,000.

Historic Scotland merged with the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland to become Historic Environment Scotland, an executive NDPB of the Scottish Government, resulting in a loss of 1,200 employees from the Civil Service.

The next largest decreases were reported by the Home Office (780), the Ministry of Defence (excluding trading funds) (210) and HM Courts and Tribunals Service (190). The largest increases were reported by HM Revenue and Customs (excluding agencies) (400) and the Land Registry (200).

### Executive NDPBs

These bodies usually deliver a particular public service and are overseen by a board rather than ministers. Employment in executive NDPBs has been aggregated by sponsoring department.

Between September 2015 and December 2015, total employment in executive NDPBs increased by 1,510 to 79,080.

## 8. Background notes

### 1. Basic quality information

In 2005 the Office for National Statistics (ONS), in collaboration with other government departments and the devolved administrations, implemented major improvements to public sector employment (PSE) estimates. Standard definitions for public sector employment across all departmental statistics were agreed and a single definitive set of quarterly PSE estimates introduced. A new Quarterly Public Sector Employment Survey (QPSES) was established. ONS publishes official PSE estimates each quarter as National Statistics, in the form of a statistical bulletin, approximately 11 weeks after the period to which they refer.

Further details can be found in the [Quality and Methodology Information for Public Sector Employment](http://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/publicsectorpersonnel/qmis/publicsectoremploymentqmi) (<http://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/publicsectorpersonnel/qmis/publicsectoremploymentqmi>) report.

## 2. Relevance to users

The PSE estimates and data produced for the quarterly publication are used across government and feed into a number of wider publications and outputs. Some government departments use the total figures to facilitate policy making, whereas others use specific components of the data collection. The main users are as follows:

- Cabinet Office
  
- HM Treasury
  
- Scottish Government
  
- Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)
  
- Local Government Association (LGA)

## 3. Revisions

Public sector employment statistics have previously been published for all periods from 1999 up to and including September 2015. In line with the published [revisions policy for public sector employment statistics](http://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/methodologytopicsandstatisticalconcepts/revisions/revisionspoliciesforlabourmarketstatistics) (<http://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/methodologytopicsandstatisticalconcepts/revisions/revisionspoliciesforlabourmarketstatistics>), the statistics have been revised, to take account of late information from respondents. Tables 1R to 5R in the public sector employment dataset illustrate the size of the revisions in each category.

## 4. Concepts and definitions

The public sector comprises central government, local government and public corporations as defined for the UK National Accounts. The [Public Sector Classification Guide](http://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/nationalaccounts/uksectoraccounts/datasets/publicsectorclassificationguide) (<http://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/nationalaccounts/uksectoraccounts/datasets/publicsectorclassificationguide>) is published monthly by ONS, and provides information on the classification of organisations and institutions in the National Accounts.

The public sector employment estimates relate to the number of people employed according to returns from relevant organisations, but they include a number of workers with a second job in the public sector whose main job is in the private sector or in a separate public sector organisation. The private sector estimate, which is obtained by taking the difference between the Labour Force Survey estimate of people employed in the whole economy and the public sector total, will thus tend to be correspondingly understated by a small percentage.

Headcount estimates are based on the number of employees with an employment contract who are being paid by the organisation. Employees can be permanent, on a fixed-term contract or employed on a casual basis. Self-employed, contract workers and agency workers are excluded.

Permanent employees, as defined in the public sector employment dataset Tables 8 and 10, are employees with a contract with no agreed expiry date or a fixed-term contract of more than 12 months. Temporary or casual employees are those with a fixed-term contract of 12 months or less or employed on a casual basis.

As well as the headcount estimates, estimates have also been produced for the number of employees in full-time equivalents (FTE) back to 1999. This is based on converting part-time employees' hours into a full-time employees' equivalent and provides a better indication of total labour input than a simple headcount. Central government includes all administrative departments of government and other central agencies and Non-Departmental Public Bodies. As such it is wider than the Civil Service. This sector also includes HM Forces and the National Health Service (NHS). Within education, academies and free schools are classified to central government.

Local government covers those types of public administration that only cover a locality and any bodies controlled and mainly financed by them. The sub-sector includes all areas of administrative authorities including parish councils, though these units are not covered by the current estimates for local authorities. It includes police forces and their civilian staff. All functions of local authorities are classified to the sub-sector, although trading activities that produce market output (for example, housing and municipally owned markets) are regarded as quasi-corporations and appear under public corporations. Local education authorities are part of local government, as are voluntary aided schools, county schools and, from September 1999, foundation schools (formerly grant-maintained).

Public corporations are companies or quasi-corporations controlled by government, for example London Underground Ltd. These companies receive more than half their income from sales of goods or services into the market place.

The estimates of Civil Service employees count all home Civil Service employees. Civil Service employees can be classified to central government or public corporations. Examples of public corporations include the UK Intellectual Property Office and the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency. Civil Service estimates exclude the Northern Ireland Civil Service and other Crown servants. Employees in these groups are included in estimates of central government employment.

## 5. Accuracy

### Response rates:

PSE statistics are compiled from a range of sources. The primary source is the Quarterly Public Sector Employment Survey (QPSES). The QPSES comprises three separate data collections; the home Civil Service, Local Authorities in England and Wales, and Great Britain public corporations and Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs). Returned questionnaires go through a series of automated validation tests to check for completeness and consistency and to identify any significant movements compared with the previous period reported (and the same period the previous year). The automated checks are followed up with respondents where errors are detected or further explanation is required. The target is to clear 95% of test failures prior to processing results. ONS response targets for each of the three surveys ahead of compiling results are 85% (number of respondents) and 90% (of total employment). In addition, each survey has a list of critical respondents (usually those with the largest employment) for which special efforts are made to achieve 100% response and clearance of test failures.

**Table 1: Response rates for sources of UK public sector employment, December 2015**

	Response (% of questionnaires returned)	Response (% of employment returned)
Local Authorities Survey	95	97
Public Bodies Survey	93	93
Civil Service Survey	100	100
Other Sources (see below)	100	100

Source: Office for National Statistics

Data for non-responders are imputed based on previous returns and known annual changes in seasonality. It is extremely rare for a local authority, public body or Civil Service department to non-respond for two consecutive quarters. The data collection is statutory for local authorities and public bodies (Statistics of Trade Act 1947) and positive action is taken to address non-response issues as and when they occur.

So that estimates of total public sector employment can be made, it is necessary for further information to be gathered from external sources.

**Table 2: External sources of data for UK public sector employment statistics, December 2015**

	Geographic coverage	Source
Central government		
HM Forces	UK	Ministry of Defence: Defence Statistics
National Health Service	England	Health and Social Care Information Centre
	Wales	NHS Wales Informatics Service
	Scotland	Scottish Government
	Northern Ireland	Department of Finance and Personnel
Academies	England	School Workforce Census and list of all open academies (Department for Education)
Police (including civilians)	Scotland	Scottish Government
Police (British Transport Police)	England and Wales	Home Office
Other central government	Great Britain	Quarterly Public Sector Employment Survey (ONS)
	Northern Ireland	Department of Finance and Personnel
Local government		
Local authorities	England and Wales	Quarterly Public Sector Employment Survey (ONS)
	Scotland	Joint Staffing Watch (Scottish Government)
	Northern Ireland	Department of Finance and Personnel
Police (including civilians)	England and Wales	Home Office
	Northern Ireland	Department of Finance and Personnel
Public corporations		
	Great Britain	Quarterly Public Sector Employment Survey (ONS)
	Northern Ireland	Department of Finance and Personnel

Source: Office for National Statistics

ONS also produces regional estimates of PSE based on returns from public sector organisations (Table 6). These supersede those produced using the Labour Force Survey (LFS) which previously had been used in conjunction with national PSE estimates to produce estimates by region.

## 6. Coherence

Estimates of public sector employment for September 2015 and December 2015 are based partly on projections for some sources. As part of the development programme to improve the quality of public sector employment estimates, public sector organisations are working towards the production of timely quarterly estimates. Until this development programme is completed, there remains a requirement to include estimates for certain sources:

- i. Police (including civilians) workforce estimates for England and Wales are published every six months (for two quarters) by the Home Office.
- ii. NHS workforce statistics for England are derived from a pay system which covers all but two English NHS organisations. This produces very good estimates of staff numbers. Figures for the two other organisations are estimated based on annual NHS Workforce Census figures. This new source of estimates will reduce the need to revise estimates in the future.

All time series in the public sector employment release, except for the regional series, are seasonally adjusted to aid interpretation. As seasonal adjustment does not preserve additivity within aggregation structures, relationships that hold in the unadjusted series do not necessarily hold for the seasonally adjusted series. For example, total public sector employment equals the sum total of all public sector industry estimates before seasonal adjustment, but this is not necessarily true after seasonal adjustment.

The estimates of public sector employment in education (SIC division 85) differ from the school workforce estimates published by the Department for Education (DfE) mainly as a result of differences in coverage and data sources. DfE estimates focus on the number of FTE teachers and support staff for England only. By comparison, the ONS estimates are derived by allocating local authority employees to education using the Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR) and the QPSES in England and Wales. The DfE School Workforce Census school level estimates are used to estimate employment in academies in England. PSE estimates include all employees reported by local authorities as working in primary, secondary and adult education establishments including some groups who are not covered by the DfE statistics, such as adult education staff and certain categories of support staff. Employment estimates for education in Scotland and Northern Ireland are also included to give a wider UK coverage. The different coverage of the ONS and DfE education statistics serve the needs of different users. Those who require information on the workforce in England who are directly involved in pupils' teaching and learning should use DfE published statistics. Users should also refer to DfE published statistics to gauge trends in education employment. Those who seek data on UK public sector employment in education, in its widest sense, should use the ONS data in this release. For further information on the differences between DfE and ONS data on education please see pages 44 to 46 of the [Public Sector Employment Trends 2005 article](#)

(<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20081023170604/http://statistics.gov.uk/CCI/nscl.asp?ID=7136&RT=512&PG=1>) published in October 2005.

ONS estimates for the NHS also differ from the headline figure produced by the Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC). Again, this reflects the wider UK coverage (HSCIC figures are for England only) plus the exclusion by ONS of general practitioners (GPs). ONS, in accordance with National Accounts practice, classifies GPs as part of the private sector. ONS also include hospital practitioners and clinical assistants who work in hospitals on a salaried pay scale but generally work as GPs leading the HSCIC to exclude them from their totals to avoid double counting. When these factors are allowed for, ONS and NHS data can be shown to be identical.

Machinery of government changes in the period since 1 January 2015 are listed here:

### **Table 3: Machinery of government changes, 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2015, UK**

Organisation name	Details
Business Innovation and Skills	Between September 2015 and December 2015 approximately 40 staff transferred to the Department for Culture Media and Sport.

Department for Culture Media and Sport	Between September 2015 and December 2015 approximately 60 staff transferred to the Department for Education.
Driver Vehicle Licensing Agency	Between September 2015 and December 2015 approximately 20 staff transferred to the Government Internal Audit Agency.
Historic Scotland	On 1 October 2015, Historic Scotland merged with the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland to become Historic Environment Scotland, an executive NDPB of the Scottish Government. At this point it ceased to be part of the Civil Service.
National Archives	The sponsoring department of the National Archives changed from the Ministry of Justice to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport on 17 September 2015.
Defence Support Group	On 1 April 2015, approximately 2,000 employees within Defence Support Group (DSG) were privatised and transferred to the private sector via Babcock. The remaining approximately 450 employees covering the Defence Electronic Components Agency (DECA) transferred to the Ministry of Defence.
Defence Equipment and Support	Defence Equipment and Support, an arm's length body of the Ministry of Defence, is reported as a bespoke trading entity from June 2015. Prior to this it was included in the Ministry of Defence.
Food and Environment Research Agency	On 1 April 2015 the business and operations of the Food and Environment Research Agency (FERA), an Executive Agency of Defra, transferred to Fera Science Limited (FSL), a joint venture between Defra and Capita. As a result, around 580 employees left the Civil Service.
Food Standards Scotland	On 1 April 2015 Food Standards Scotland was established as a non-ministerial office, part of the Scottish Administration, alongside, but separate from, the Scottish Government, accounting for around 160 employees. At the same time, around 130 staff transferred from the Food Standards Agency to Food Standards Scotland.
Government Internal Audit Agency	The Government Internal Audit Agency, an executive agency sponsored by HM Treasury, launched on 1 April 2015.

Government Legal Department	The Treasury Solicitor became the Government Legal Department on 1 April 2015. Around 70 staff transferred from the Ministry of Defence to the Government Legal Department during June 2015.
Highways Agency	On 1 April 2015 the Highways Agency became Highways England, a government owned company, and ceased to be part of the Civil Service. As a result, around 3,750 employees moved to the wider public sector.
National Measurement and Regulation Office	The National Measurement Office became the National Measurement and Regulation Office on 1 April 2015.
Office of Rail and Road	The Office of Rail Regulation became the Office of Rail and Road on 1 April 2015.
Oil and Gas Authority	The Oil and Gas Authority, an executive agency sponsored by the Department of Energy and Climate Change, was established on 1 April 2015, accounting for around 100 employees. At the same time, around 60 employees transferred from the Department of Energy and Climate Change to the Oil and Gas Authority.
Ordnance Survey	Ordnance Survey became a government owned company on 1 April 2015, at which point it ceased to be part of the Civil Service. Around 1,230 employees moved from the Civil Service to the wider public sector.
Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service	The Scottish Court Service became the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service on 1 April 2015. At the same time around 90 staff transferred from the Scottish Government to the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service.
Scottish Government Revenue Scotland	Approximately 30 staff transferred out to a new public body Revenue Scotland as of 1 January 2015.
Revenue Scotland	Revenue Scotland was established on 1 January 2015.

Source: Office for National Statistics

## 7. Methods

Improvements to the way employment in public sector education in England is estimated were first implemented as part of the PSE, Q3 2012 release. Revisions to the estimates caused by these improvements were at that time incorporated into the revised PSE series, in line with the [revisions policy for public sector employment statistics](http://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/methodologytopicsandstatisticalconcepts/revisions/revisionspoliciesforlabourmarketstatistics) (<http://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/methodologytopicsandstatisticalconcepts/revisions/revisionspoliciesforlabourmarketstatistics>). Further details of the change in method and the impact on estimates of PSE are available in 'Public Sector Employment Statistics - Change in Method for Estimating Employment in Education in England (<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/na-classification/national-accounts-sector-classification/classification-update---may-2012/reclassification-of-further-education-corporations-and-sixth-form-colleges-in-england---article.html>)', published as part of the [Public Sector Employment, Q3 2012](http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/pse/public-sector-employment/q3-2012/index.html) (<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/pse/public-sector-employment/q3-2012/index.html>) release.

## 8. Reclassifications

In recent years the public and private sector employment series have been affected by a number of major reclassifications where bodies employing large numbers of people have moved between the public and private sectors. These major reclassifications are as follows:

- Further education corporations and sixth form college corporations in England are included in the private sector from June 2012 but in the public sector for earlier time periods. More information on this decision can be found in the [Reclassification of Further Education Corporations and Sixth Form Colleges in England](http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/na-classification/national-accounts-sector-classification/classification-update---may-2012/reclassification-of-further-education-corporations-and-sixth-form-colleges-in-england---article.html) (<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/na-classification/national-accounts-sector-classification/classification-update---may-2012/reclassification-of-further-education-corporations-and-sixth-form-colleges-in-england---article.html>) article published on 31 May 2012.
- Royal Mail plc is included in the private sector from December 2013 but in the public sector for earlier time periods.
- Lloyds Banking Group plc is included in the public sector from December 2008 to December 2013 but in the private sector for earlier and subsequent periods.
- Royal Bank of Scotland plc is included in the public sector from December 2008 but in the private sector for earlier time periods.
- Network Rail is included in the private sector before December 2002. From December 2002 onwards it is included in the public sector (except for the period from June 2003 to March 2004, when it is included in the private sector). More information can be found in the [Classification of Network Rail under European](#)

System of Accounts 2010 (<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/na-classification/national-accounts-sector-classification/classification-of-network-rail-under-european-system-of-accounts-2010/art--classification-of-network-rail-under-european-system-of-accounts-2010.html>) published in December 2013.

- Northern Rock is included in the public sector from December 2007 until December 2011 but in the private sector for earlier and later time periods.
- Bradford and Bingley is included in the public sector from September 2008 but in the private sector for earlier time periods.
- Welsh further education colleges were reclassified to the private sector on 27 January 2015. They are included in the private sector from March 2015 but in the public sector for earlier time periods.

Comparisons of public and private sector employment over time are complicated by a number of changes to the composition of these sectors over this period with several large employers moving between the public and private sectors. ONS therefore publishes estimates of public and private sector employment excluding the effects of major reclassifications alongside estimates of total public and private sector employment in Tables 5, 6a and 7a of the PSE release. On 13 October 2010, ONS announced the reclassification of further education colleges and sixth form college corporations to the public sector. As part of the December 2010 publication, ONS took on employment estimates for further education colleges back to 1993 or their inception if later.

On 31 May 2012, ONS announced the reclassification of English further education colleges and sixth form college corporations to the private sector, as Non-Profit Institutions Serving Households (NPISH), effective from 1 April 2012. As such, employment estimates for English further education colleges and sixth form college corporations are included in ONS estimates of public sector employment from 1993 or their inception if later, up to and including March 2012.

English further education colleges and English sixth form college corporations estimates of employment are not included in public sector employment estimates from June 2012 onwards.

## 9. Publication policy

The complete run of public sector employment data in the tables of this statistical bulletin is also available to view and download in other electronic formats free of charge using the ONS Time Series Data website service. Users can download the complete Public Sector Employment Time Series (<http://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/publicsectorpersonnel/bulletins/publicsectoremployment/december2015/relateddata>) in a choice of zipped formats, or view and download their own selections of individual series.

10. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available by visiting [www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html](http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html) (<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html>) or from the Media Relations Office email: [media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk)

The [UK Statistics Authority \(https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/\)](https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/) has designated these statistics as [National Statistics \(https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/national-statistician/types-of-official-statistics/\)](https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/national-statistician/types-of-official-statistics/), in accordance with the [Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 \(https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/about-the-authority/uk-statistical-system/legislation/key-legislative-documents/\)](https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/about-the-authority/uk-statistical-system/legislation/key-legislative-documents/) and signifying compliance with the [Code of Practice for Official Statistics \(https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/monitoring-and-assessment/code-of-practice/\)](https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/monitoring-and-assessment/code-of-practice/).

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.

11. As stated earlier in the bulletin the employment figures provided are point-in-time estimates and for this reason, ONS recently introduced a new naming convention for the releases, whereby the latest month of measurement is highlighted rather than the quarter.

## 9 . Methodology

[Public Sector Employment QMI](https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/publicsectorpersonnel/qmis/publicsectoremploymentqmi)

[\(https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/publicsectorpersonnel/qmis/publicsectoremploymentqmi\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/publicsectorpersonnel/qmis/publicsectoremploymentqmi)

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