

Article

Children living in long-term workless households: UK

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1. Abstract

This methods note describes how estimates of children living in long-term workless households have been produced using the Annual Population Survey (APS) household dataset. Adding a definition for the duration of worklessness of the adults in a household means these estimates are a sub-set of the number of children living in workless households already published in [Workless households for regions across the UK](#) using the APS household dataset.

Datasets containing estimates for children living in long-term workless households are provided by a range of characteristics such as economic status of adults in the household and age of child for the latest available data, covering January to December 2014 and as a time-series from 2006 to 2014.

2. Introduction

This note describes how estimates of children living in long-term workless households have been produced using the Annual Population Survey (APS) household dataset. It defines what a long-term workless household is and then provides estimates using this method for the number and percentage of all children aged 0 to 15 years old who live in long-term workless households in the UK.

Adding a definition for the duration of worklessness of the adults in a household means estimates of children living in long-term workless households are a sub-set of the number of children living in workless households already published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in Table C1 of its regular bulletin using the APS household dataset [Workless households for regions across the UK](#).

The APS has been used to estimate the number of long-term workless households as it offers a larger sample size than the Labour Force Survey (LFS), enabling a more detailed breakdown of the characteristics of the adults and children living in these households. For consistency, data for children living in workless households given in this methods note use the APS household dataset throughout and use the same underlying APS micro-data used to publish [Workless households for regions across the UK](#).

While the definitions of variables are identical, the datasets accompanying this methods note - which provide estimates of children living in workless households using the APS - differ slightly from headline estimates of children living in workless households given in Table K of the [Working and workless households](#) release. The latter release uses the household LFS dataset. The differences are due to the different sample sizes, reference periods and weighting of the datasets.

3. User need for these statistics

These new statistics on children living in long-term workless households will help meet the government's reporting obligations under the [Welfare Reform and Work Act, 2016, Part A1](#). This part of the Act requires the Secretary of State for the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to publish and lay before Parliament a report containing data on children living in long-term workless households in England.

They will also be of public interest and help inform the wider public debate.

4. Methodology

The Annual Population Survey (APS) offers a greater sample size than the Labour Force Survey (LFS), so more detailed cross-tabulations can be produced without compromising the quality of the data. For more information about the methodology of the APS see the [APS Quality and Methodology Information](#).

To maintain consistency with already published National Statistics on workless households, this methods note uses the same definitions of main common terms.

Household

A household is defined as a single person, or a group of people living at the same address who have the address as their only or main residence and either share one main meal a day or share living accommodation (or both). In this methods note, households are further defined as where at least one person is aged 16 to 64.

Child

People aged 0 to 15 years old (that is, have not yet reached their 16th birthday).

Workless household

A household where all members aged 16 years or over are currently economically inactive or unemployed.

Student household

Student households are households where at least one person is aged 16 to 64 and contain only people in full-time education aged between 16 and 24. Communal establishments, for example student halls of residence are not included within the sample frame of the APS datasets. Students living in communal establishments during term-times are instead captured via the parental address.

Workless household (excluding student households)

A workless household filtering out those households containing only people in full-time education aged between 16 and 24.

Unemployed

The definition is specified by the International Labour Organisation (ILO). Unemployed people are those without a job who have been actively seeking work in the past 4 weeks and are available to start work in the next 2 weeks. It also includes those who are out of work but have found a job and are waiting to start it in the next 2 weeks.

Economically inactive

People not in employment who have not been seeking work within the last 4 weeks and/or are unable to start work within the next 2 weeks.

Long-term workless households

This methods note defines a long-term workless household as a subset of workless households by adding a condition to capture the duration of inactivity for the adults in the household. This concept has not been defined before.

The definition of a long-term workless household is therefore – a workless household where all adults, aged 16 and over, are currently economically inactive or unemployed (workless), and these adults:

- have been 12 months or more since they left their last job or
- have never worked (in a paid job).

The use of the “12 months or more” time-frame since they left their last job is consistent with the definition of “long-term” used by Eurostat in the case of [long-term unemployment](#). In this instance, “long-term” is seen as a period of “at least a year” for someone to have been out of work and actively seeking employment.

It should be noted that the definition of long-term workless households does not necessarily imply that adults within them are also long-term unemployed, using the Eurostat and ILO definition of long-term unemployment. Some will be long-term unemployed, but some adults may also have been out of work for 12 months or more (and included in the long-term workless figures), but have had periods of inactivity such as looking after family and home, or illness, and periods of unemployment (using ILO definitions) during that time. All these types of experience are counted as defining long-term worklessness.

The definition of long-term worklessness also includes those households where some or all adults in them are identified as never having a paid job. Some of these people may be young people who have only just turned 16 years old and be currently workless. They therefore have not been of working age for 12 months or more, but are included in the “never worked” group. This group is likely to be a small proportion of the “never worked” group as it will also contain those who have not participated in the labour market for greater than 12 months for other reasons (such as lack of skills or qualifications, having an illness or disability or having caring responsibilities for the family and home).

It should also be noted that the long-term definition is based on the durations of worklessness of people currently living in the household, regardless of whether they have been living in that particular household for 12 months or more and ignoring any other people who may have been living in that household during the previous 12 months and who may have been working. Therefore, it is possible that in some cases a child living in a long-term workless household may not have been living in a workless household for the whole of the last 12 months.

Consistent with already published National Statistics using the APS in [Workless households for regions across the UK](#), the estimate for children living in long-term workless households has also been provided excluding student households (that is, those households containing only people in full-time education aged between 16 and 24).

Long-term workless household (excluding student households)

A long-term workless household filtering out those households containing only people in full-time education aged between 16 and 24.

Children living in long-term workless households

Building on the definition of a long-term workless household, the number of children living in them is counted as follows.

Children living in long-term workless households

Count of the children aged 0 to 15 years living in long-term workless households.

Children in long-term workless households (excluding student households)

Count of the children living in long-term workless households which do not include households containing only people in full-time education aged between 16 and 24 years.

Annex A

Provides more detail of the variables used from the APS and the groupings used to define the estimates of long-term workless households. Annex A also provides the description of the variables used to define the disability status of adults within households.

5. Estimates of children living in long-term workless households

Table 1 shows the number of children who are living in workless, long-term workless and all households in the UK between 2006 and 2014 using the Annual Population Survey (APS) household dataset.

Table 1: Children living in workless households, long-term workless and all households between 2006 and 2014, UK

	Thousands			%
	Children in workless households	Of which, long-term workless households	Children in all households	Percentage of children in long-term workless households
2006	1,828	1,544	11,630	13.3
2007	1,803	1,554	11,635	13.4
2008	1,844	1,552	11,662	13.3
2009	1,930	1,539	11,708	13.1
2010	1,946	1,645	11,758	14.0
2011	1,895	1,571	11,801	13.3
2012	1,800	1,530	11,921	12.8
2013	1,724	1,437	11,965	12.0
2014	1,609	1,369	12,040	11.4

Source: Office for National Statistics

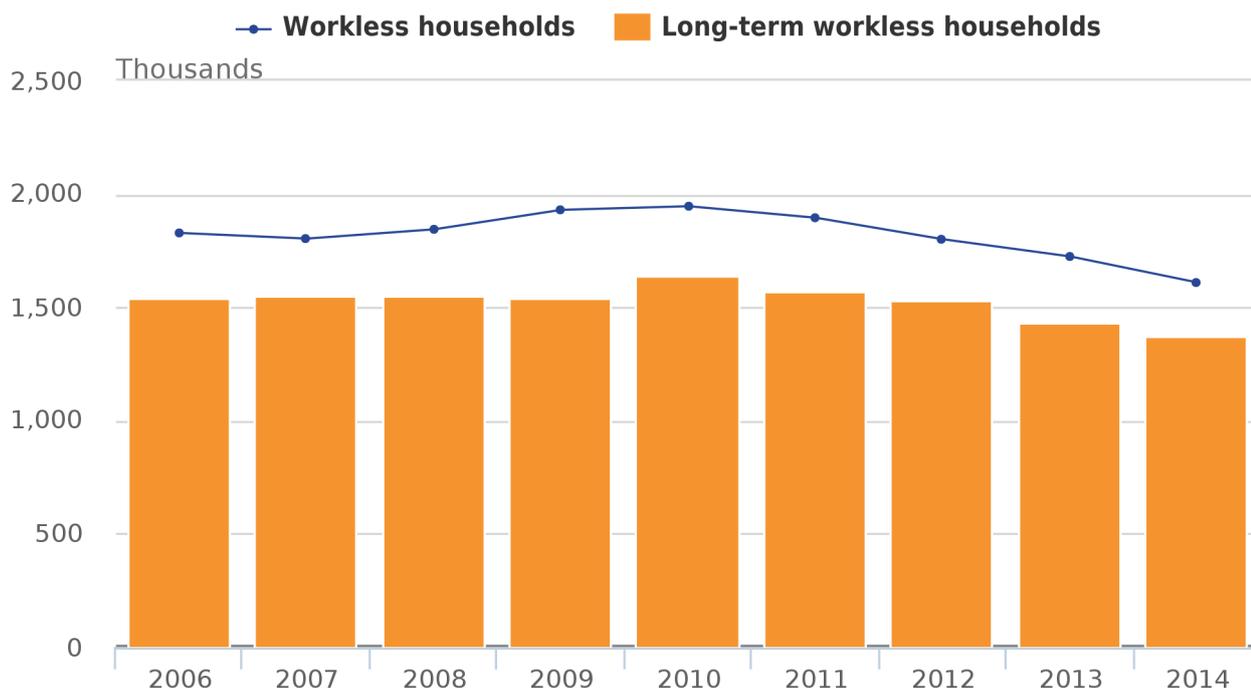
Notes:

1. Children refers to all children under 16.
2. Households include at least one person aged 16 to 64.
3. Workless households are households in which all persons over 16 are unemployed or inactive.
4. A long-term workless household is a workless household where all adults had either (i) left their most recent job a year or more ago or (ii) never been in paid employment.
5. Household: a single person, or a group of people living at the same address who have the address as their only or main residence and either share one main meal a day or share living accommodation (or both).

Table 1 shows that almost 1.4 million children lived in long-term workless households in the UK in 2014. This is 85% of the 1.6 million children who lived in workless households and represents 11.4% of all children living in the UK.

Figure 1: Children living in workless and long-term workless households, 2006 to 2014

UK



Source: Annual Population Survey, household dataset Jan to Dec 2014

Figure 1 shows that the number of children living in long-term workless households has broadly followed the pattern of children living in all workless households over the period since 2006. Numbers peaked in 2010 for both series and both have since fallen from a high of over 1.6 million children living in long-term workless households in 2010 (1.9 million in all workless households) to just under 1.4 million in 2014 (1.6 million in all workless households).

Excluding student households

There were around 17,000 fewer children (1.2%) living in long-term workless households in 2014 when student households are excluded from the definition (1,352,000), compared with all long-term workless households given in Table 1 (1,369,000). See Dataset 1 for more information.

Given the small differences between the levels of children in workless and long-term workless households when student households are excluded, most associated datasets in this methods note include student households. Data excluding student households are available on request.

6. Datasets

Dataset 1: [Estimates of children living in workless and long-term workless households, January to December 2014 in the UK](#) broken down by:

- non-student households, UK
- household type (for example, couple, lone parent)
- region and devolved administration of the UK
- age of the child
- ethnicity of the child
- economic status of adults in the household (that is, unemployed or economically inactive)
- highest qualifications of adults in the household
- disability status of adults in the household
- housing tenure
- combined household type, disability and age of child

In all cases (apart from economic status of adults in the households - as this is applicable to workless households only) an estimate of the number of children living in all households by each characteristic is also given for context.

Dataset 2 – [Time series of children living in workless and long-term workless households, UK, 2006 to 2014](#) by

- non-student households, UK
- household type (for example couple, lone parent)
- region and devolved administration of the UK
- age of the child
- ethnicity of the child
- economic status of adults in the household (that is, unemployed or economically inactive)
- highest qualifications of adults in the household
- disability status of adults in the household
- housing tenure

In all cases (apart from economic status of adults in the households - as this is applicable to workless households only) an estimate of the number of children living in all households by each characteristic is also given for context.

7. Next steps

In the light of any feedback on this methods note, we will review the user need for continued production of these statistics and their various breakdowns.

8. Background notes

Household datasets

The figures in this statistical bulletin come from APS household datasets. These are weighted differently to person datasets, in that each person in a household is given the same weight. This ensures that weighted estimates at the household level are consistent.

Therefore, when using the household datasets to give estimates of the total number of people, the different weighting procedure will give marginally different estimates to those from the person datasets.

Annual Population Survey (APS) re-weighting

All data included in this methods note and in the accompanying datasets have been weighted to take on board population estimates based on the 2011 Census. This includes all estimates for 2014 and earlier years (2006 to 2013) and data for these years should be extracted from the current dataset rather than earlier versions.

A further reweighting of the household APS dataset will be undertaken during 2016 to align with the mid-2014 population estimates. Data for January to December 2015 and previous years will be available later in 2016 on this basis.

Quality and Methodology Information (QMI)

A [QMI for the APS](#) is available. Overall, the APS:

- sample size is approximately 320,000 respondents
- has the largest coverage of any household survey and allows the generation of statistics for small geographical areas
- uses data from the Labour Force Survey (LFS)
- datasets consist of 12 months of survey data

The [APS](#) is a continuous household survey, covering the UK. The topics covered include employment and unemployment, as well as housing, ethnicity, religion, health and education.

9. Annex A: Variables used in the Annual Population Survey (APS)

Defining a long-term workless household

The variable from the [Annual Population Survey \(APS\)](#) dataset that defines the duration of worklessness, is "When left last job" (WNLEFT11, and prior to 2011, WNLEFT). This applies to all respondents who did no work in the reference week and were not away from any job or business but have worked in the past.

WNLEFT11 breaks down into a number of categories:

- (1) Less than 3 months
- (2) 3 months but less than 6 months
- (3) 6 months but less than 12 months
- (4) 1 year but less than 2 years
- (5) 2 years but less than 3 years
- (6) 3 years but less than 4 years
- (7) 4 years but less than 5 years
- (8) 5 years or more
- (9) Never had paid job

Grouping these can be presented as:

- categories (1) to (3) = have not worked for less than 1 year

- categories (4) to (8) = have not worked for one or more years
- category (9) = have never worked (never had a paid job)

Long term workless households are defined as having all adults in the second two groups – i.e. any of the categories (4) to (9) of variable WNLEFT11. Missing values are excluded from the definition of long-term workless households in this analysis.

Defining disability status of adults in a household

Disability status is defined as the person having a physical or mental health condition or illness lasting or expected to last 12 months or more. The illness or disability must also reduce their ability to carry out day to day activities.

Since 2013 the variables used are:

- LNGLST = 1 (Yes, to the question “Do you have any physical or mental health condition or illness lasting or expected to last 12 months or more) and
- LIMACT = 1 or 2 (Yes – a lot, or Yes – a little, to the question “Does your condition or illness reduce your ability to carry out day to day activities”

Prior to 2013 the variables used are:

- LNGLIM = 1 (Yes to the question, “Do you have any health problems or disabilities that you expect will last more than a year?” AND
- HEALIM = 1 (Yes to the question, “Do these health problems, taken singly or together, substantially limit your ability to carry out day to day activities”.

This definition is consistent with the [Disability Discrimination Act \(DDA\) 1995](#).

Further information on alternative definitions of disability and the issues of time series breaks in 2010 and 2013 using the Labour Force Survey can be found in the associated datasets to this methods note and the “Important note” to table [A08 Labour market status of disabled people](#) published by ONS.