

Statistical bulletin

Regional labour market statistics in the UK: August 2019

Regional, local authority and Parliamentary constituency breakdowns of changes in UK employment, unemployment, economic inactivity and other employment-related statistics.



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Table of contents

1. [Main points](#)
2. [Summary of latest regional labour market statistics](#)
3. [Things you need to know about this release](#)
4. [Employment](#)
5. [Workforce jobs \(first published 11 June 2019\)](#)
6. [Actual hours worked \(first published 16 July 2019\)](#)
7. [Unemployment](#)
8. [Economic inactivity](#)
9. [Local labour market indicators](#)
10. [Upcoming changes and future publication dates](#)
11. [Links to related statistics](#)
12. [Quality and methodology](#)

1 . Main points

- For the three months ending June 2019, the highest employment rate estimate in the UK was in the South West (80.5%) and the lowest was in the North East (70.8%).
- For the three months ending June 2019, the highest unemployment rate estimate in the UK was in the North East (5.3%) and the lowest was in the South West (2.7%).
- For the three months ending June 2019, the highest economic inactivity rate estimate in the UK was in Northern Ireland (25.5%) and the lowest was in the South West (17.2%).
- Between December 2018 and March 2019, the largest estimated increase in workforce jobs in the UK was in London at 87,000, while the largest decrease was in the North East at 22,000.
- In March 2019, the region with the highest estimated proportion of workforce jobs in the services sector was London at 91.1%, while the East Midlands had the highest proportion of jobs in the production sector at 14.4%.
- The highest average estimated actual weekly hours worked, for the 12 months ending March 2019, was in London at 33.9 hours and the lowest was in the South West at 31.5 hours; for full-time and part-time workers, it was highest in Northern Ireland, at 38.7 hours and 17.3 hours respectively.

2 . Summary of latest regional labour market statistics

Table 1 shows the latest estimates for employment, unemployment and economic inactivity for April to June 2019 and a comparison with the previous quarter (January to March 2019). Comparing non-overlapping periods (April to June 2019 with January to March 2019) provides a more robust short-term comparison.

Table 1: Summary of latest headline estimates for regions of the UK, seasonally adjusted, April to June 2019

UK regions

	Employment rate ¹ (%) aged 16 to 64 years	Change on Jan to Mar 2019	Unemployment rate ² (%) aged 16 years and over	Change on Jan to Mar 2019	Inactivity rate ³ (%) aged 16 to 64 years	Change on Jan to Mar 2019
UK	76.1	0.0	3.9	0.1	20.7	-0.1
Great Britain	76.2	0.0	3.9	0.1	20.6	-0.1
England	76.4	0.0	3.9	0.1	20.4	-0.1
North East	70.8	-0.3	5.3	-0.1	25.0	0.3
North West	74.7	-0.2	4.3	0.6	21.9	-0.3
Yorkshire and The Humber	73.3	-1.0	5.0	0.3	22.7	0.8
East Midlands	76.9	0.4	4.3	0.3	19.5	-0.7
West Midlands	74.4	0.5	4.6	-0.5	21.9	-0.1
East	79.2	-0.2	2.9	0.0	18.3	0.2
London	74.7	-0.3	4.5	0.2	21.7	0.1
South East	79.6	0.5	2.9	-0.3	17.9	-0.3
South West	80.5	0.9	2.7	0.3	17.2	-1.1
Wales	75.0	-0.4	3.9	-0.6	21.8	0.9
Scotland	75.4	0.0	3.6	0.4	21.6	-0.4
Northern Ireland	72.2	0.9	3.1	0.2	25.5	-1.1

Source: The Office for National Statistics - Labour Force Survey

Notes

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

3 . Things you need to know about this release

This bulletin shows the latest main labour market statistics for the regions and countries of the UK, 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 Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) website.

Updated this month

Labour Force Survey estimates for the period April to June 2019.

Also in this release

Annual Population Survey estimates for the period April 2018 to March 2019.

Workforce jobs estimates for March 2019.

Labour market statistics

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 concepts within the labour market and their relationship to each other. The framework is based on labour supply and demand.

Labour supply consists of people who are employed, as well as those people defined as unemployed or economically inactive, who are considered potential labour supply. Our framework distinguishes between these three categories of worker and 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. Employers group this work to form jobs.

This approach has wide international acceptance, including by the International Labour Organisation (ILO). 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
- 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 concern (women, young people, older people and jobless households).

About labour market statuses

Everybody aged 16 years 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 four weeks and are able to start work within the next two 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 four weeks or who are unable to start work within the next two 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 Annual Population Survey (APS) and the Labour Force Survey (LFS)?

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) is a household survey using international definitions of employment, unemployment and economic inactivity and compiles 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 three-monthly period; for example, February to April data in a release will be followed by data for March to May in the next release.

The Annual Population Survey (APS), which began in 2004, is compiled from interviews for the LFS, along with additional regional 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 economic inactivity by age, and reasons for economic inactivity are provided using the APS. Any estimates for geographic areas below regional level are provided using the APS. In tables where the APS estimates are provided for detailed geographic areas, regional and national estimates are also provided from the APS for comparability.

Making comparisons with earlier data

The most robust estimates of short-term movements in estimates derived from the Labour Force Survey are obtained by comparing the estimates for April to June 2019 with the estimates for January to March 2019, which were first published on 14 May 2019. This provides a more robust estimate than comparing with the estimates for March to May 2019. This is because the April and May 2019 data are included within both estimates, so observed differences are only between March and June 2019. The LFS is representative of the UK population over a three-month period, not for single month periods.

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, the data are seasonally adjusted to remove the effects of seasonal factors and the arrangement of the calendar.

Where to find explanatory information

A [Guide to labour market statistics](#), which includes a [glossary](#), is available.

4 . Employment

Things you need to know about employment

Employment measures the number of people in work; it 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.

A [comparison between estimates of employment and jobs](#) is available.

Regional employment

The employment rate estimate for people aged from 16 to 64 years for the UK was 76.1% for the period April to June 2019. This is unchanged compared with the previous period (January to March 2019).

The UK region with the highest employment rate estimate was the South West at 80.5%. The next highest employment rate estimate was seen in the South East at 79.6%, followed by the East of England at 79.2%. The highest estimated rate for the same period last year was also in the South West at 79.3%.

The region with the lowest employment rate estimate was the North East at 70.8%, followed by Northern Ireland at 72.2%. The lowest estimated rate for the same period last year was in Northern Ireland at 69.6%.

The largest increases in the employment rate estimates, compared with January to March 2019, were in the South West and Northern Ireland, both at 0.9 percentage points, followed by the West Midlands and the South East, both at 0.5 percentage points.

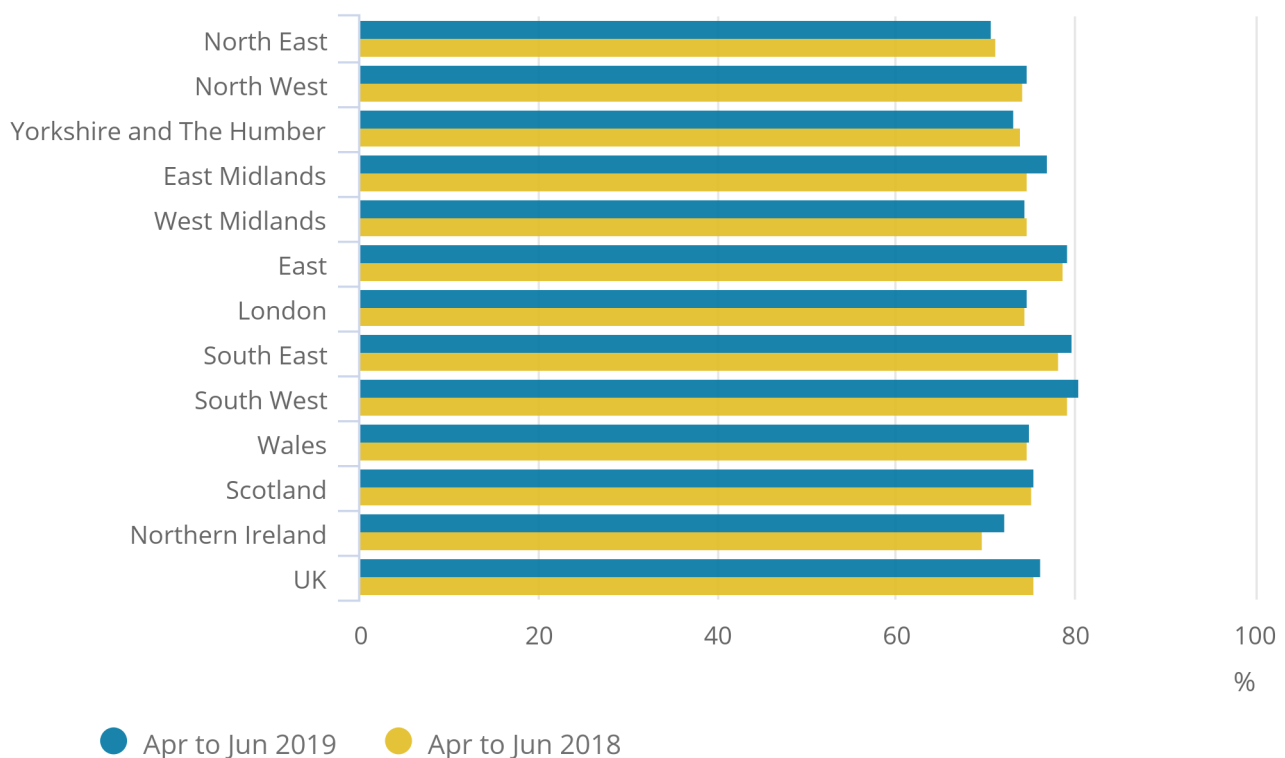
The largest decrease in the employment rate estimates, compared with January to March 2019, was for Yorkshire and The Humber at 1.0 percentage point, followed by Wales at 0.4 percentage points.

Figure 1: The South West had the highest employment rate in the UK

Employment rate estimates by UK region and comparison year-on-year, seasonally adjusted, April to June 2018 and April to June 2019

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Employment rate estimates by UK region and comparison year-on-year, seasonally adjusted, April to June 2018 and April to June 2019



Source: Office for National Statistics – Labour Force Survey

Over the year, the region with the largest increase in the employment rate was Northern Ireland at 2.6 percentage points, followed by the East Midlands with an increase of 2.1 percentage points (Figure 1).

Over the year, the only regions to show a decrease in the employment rate were Yorkshire and The Humber at 0.5 percentage points, the West Midlands at 0.4 percentage points and the North East at 0.3 percentage points.

Where to find data about employment

Employment estimates are available for each region in [Dataset HI00 – Headline LFS indicators for all UK regions](#) and HI01 to HI12 – Headline indicators for individual UK regions (Tabs 1 and 2), and Datasets LI01 to LI05 Local indicators for subregional areas of Great Britain, for this and further estimate breakdowns by age or geographies. These datasets can all be found on the page: [All data related to Regional labour market statistics in the UK: August 2019](#).

These tables contain data produced from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and Annual Population Survey (APS). A note in the “Things you need to know about this release” section on the relationship between the LFS and APS entitled “What is the relationship between the APS and the LFS?” is included in this bulletin.

5 . Workforce jobs (first published 11 June 2019)

Things you need to know about 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.

A [comparison between estimates of employment and jobs](#) article is available.

The services 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 administration and defence
- compulsory social security
- education
- human health and social work activities
- arts, entertainment and recreation
- other service activities
- people employed by households

The production sector consists of the following industries:

- mining and quarrying
- manufacturing
- electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply
- water supply, sewerage, waste and remediation activities

The “other” sector consists of agriculture, forestry and fishing, and construction industries.

The Northern Ireland self-employed component of the workforce jobs is published by the [Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency](#) (NISRA) as part of the [Economic and Labour Market Statistics](#).

Regional workforce jobs

For March 2019, there were an estimated 35.54 million workforce jobs in the UK, 255,000 more than for December 2018.

Workforce jobs increased in 10 of the 12 regions of the UK between December 2018 and March 2019. The largest estimated increase of 87,000 was in London, followed by the North West at 56,000.

The largest estimated decrease was in the North East at 22,000, followed by Yorkshire and The Humber, which decreased by 20,000.

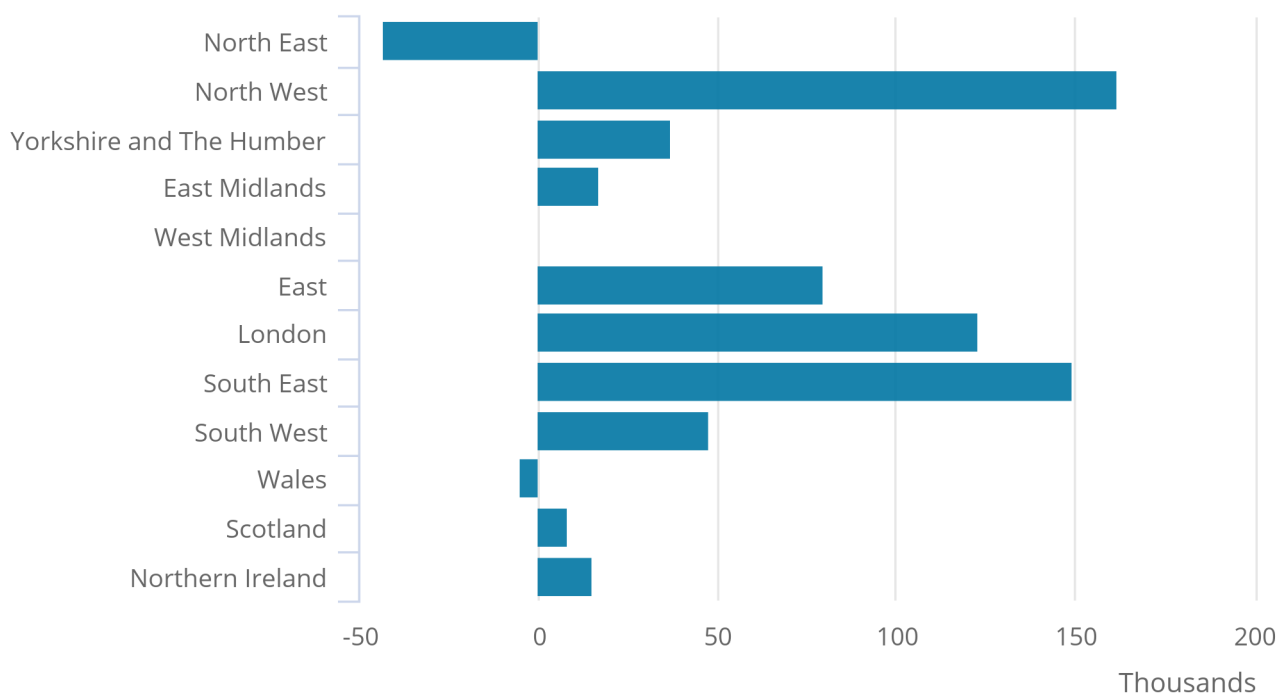
Compared with the same month last year (March 2018), the largest estimated increase in workforce jobs was in the North West at 162,000. The largest decrease was in the North East at 43,000 (Figure 2).

Figure 2: The North West saw the largest change in workforce jobs compared with last year

Change in estimated workforce jobs, by UK region, seasonally adjusted, March 2018 and March 2019

Figure 2: The North West saw the largest change in workforce jobs compared with last year

Change in estimated workforce jobs, by UK region, seasonally adjusted, March 2018 and March 2019



Source: Office for National Statistics – Workforce Jobs

The East Midlands had the highest proportion of jobs in the production sector at 14.4% (Figure 3), while London had the lowest proportion at 2.9%. This is due to London having primarily service-based industries within its region, such as financial and administrative sectors.

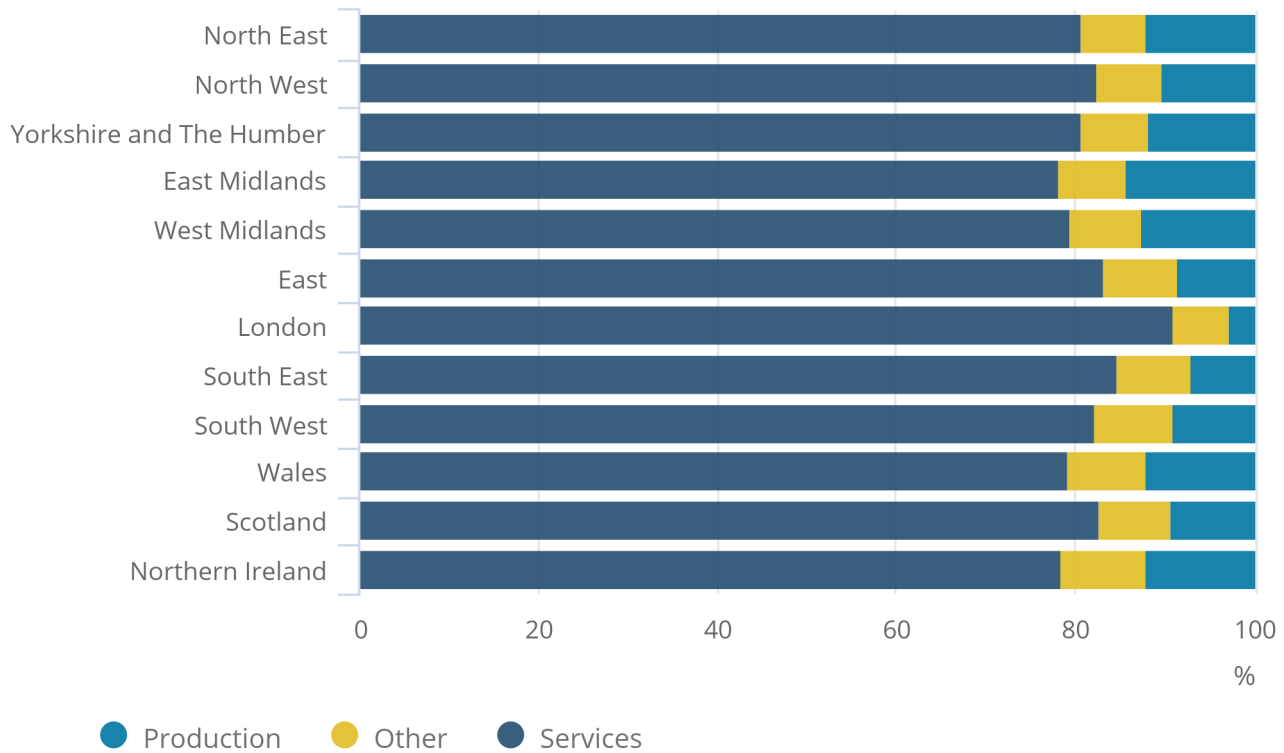
For the services sector, London had the highest proportion at 91.1%, while the East Midlands had the lowest proportion at 78.3%. The services sector currently accounts for 83.3% of the total workforce jobs in the UK.

Figure 3: Jobs in London are more dominated by the services sector than in other regions

Proportion of workforce jobs by broad industry group, by UK region, March 2019

Figure 3: Jobs in London are more dominated by the services sector than in other regions

Proportion of workforce jobs by broad industry group, by UK region, March 2019



Source: Office for National Statistics – Workforce Jobs

Where to find data about workforce jobs

Workforce jobs estimates are available for each region in [Datasets HI01 to HI12 – Headline indicators for individual UK regions](#) (Tabs 4 and 5).

While comparable estimates for workforce jobs by industry begin in 1978, there is information back to 1841, based on census data (not comparable with the latest estimates), available from [2011 Census Analysis](#).

6 . Actual hours worked (first published 16 July 2019)

Things you need to know about 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.

Regional actual hours worked

For the period April 2018 to March 2019, the UK region with the highest estimated average actual weekly hours worked (for all workers) was London at 33.9 hours, followed by Northern Ireland at 33.7 hours. The South West had the lowest number of hours worked at 31.5 hours.

The UK region with the largest increase in the average hours worked, compared with the same period last year (April 2017 to March 2018) was Scotland with an increase of 0.7 hours, a percentage increase of 2.4%. The largest decrease in the average hours worked was in the East of England and the South East, both with a decrease of 0.1 hours, a percentage decrease of 0.4% and 0.5% respectively.

The region with the highest average actual weekly hours worked in full-time jobs was Northern Ireland, at 38.7 hours. This represents a percentage increase of 1.2% compared with the same period last year. The region with the lowest average actual weekly hours worked in full-time jobs was the North East at 36.6 hours. For part-time jobs, the region with the highest average hours worked was Northern Ireland at 17.3 hours and the region with the lowest was the South West at 15.7 hours.

For men, the region with the highest average hours worked was Northern Ireland at 39.0 hours and for women it was London at 29.8 hours. The largest difference in average hours worked between men and women was in Northern Ireland, where men worked on average 11.1 more hours per week than women. The largest change compared with the same period last year (April 2017 to March 2018) was seen for women in Scotland, where the average hours worked increased by 3.5% to 27.4 hours. For men, the largest change was in Yorkshire and The Humber, where the average hours worked increased by 1.8% to 36.4 hours per week (Figure 4).

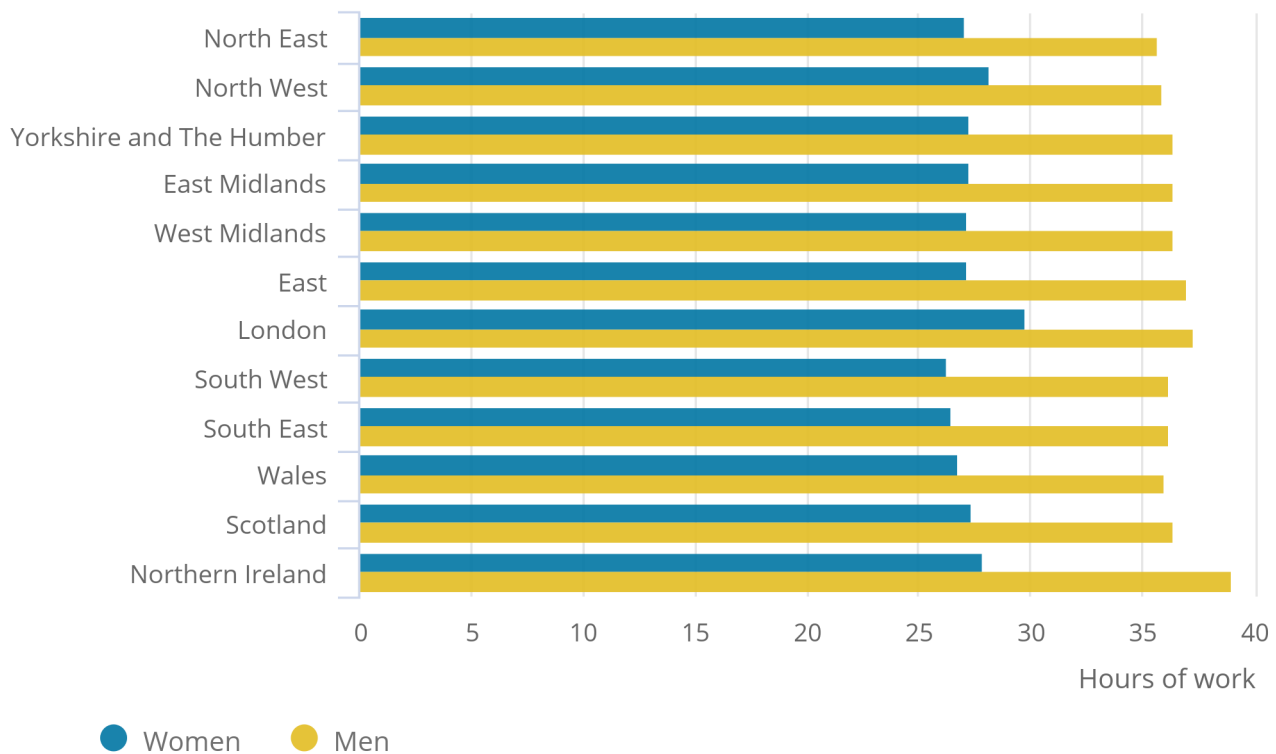
The region with the largest difference in total hours worked between men and women was London, where men worked a total of 33.0 million more hours than women. The regions with the smallest difference were Northern Ireland and the North East, where men worked only 6.0 million more hours than women.

Figure 4: Men in Northern Ireland work more hours than in any other region

Average (mean) estimated actual weekly hours of work, by UK region and by sex, April 2018 to March 2019

Figure 4: Men in Northern Ireland work more hours than in any other region

Average (mean) estimated actual weekly hours of work, by UK region and by sex, April 2018 to March 2019



Source: Office for National Statistics – Annual Population Survey

Where to find data about hours worked

Hours worked estimates are available for each region in [Datasets HI01 to HI12 – Headline indicators for individual UK regions](#) (Tab 6). These estimates are based on data from the Annual Population Survey (APS).

The national data are also available in the UK labour market statistical bulletin in Datasets [HOUR01 SA: Actual weekly hours worked \(seasonally adjusted\)](#) and [HOUR02 SA: Usual weekly hours worked \(seasonally adjusted\)](#). These estimates are based on data from the Labour Force Survey (LFS).

7 . Unemployment

Things you need to know about unemployment

Unemployment measures people without a job who have been actively seeking work within the last four weeks and are available to start work within the next two weeks.

Regional 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 estimate for people aged 16 years and over for the UK was 3.9%, for the period April to June 2019; an increase of 0.1 percentage points, compared with the previous period (January to March 2019) (Figure 5).

The highest unemployment rate estimate in the UK for April to June 2019 was for the North East at 5.3%, followed by Yorkshire and The Humber at 5.0%. The region with the lowest estimated unemployment rate was the South West at 2.7%, followed by the East of England and the South East, both at 2.9%.

The largest increase in the unemployment rate on the previous period (January to March 2019) was seen in the North West at 0.6 percentage points, followed by Scotland at 0.4 percentage points.

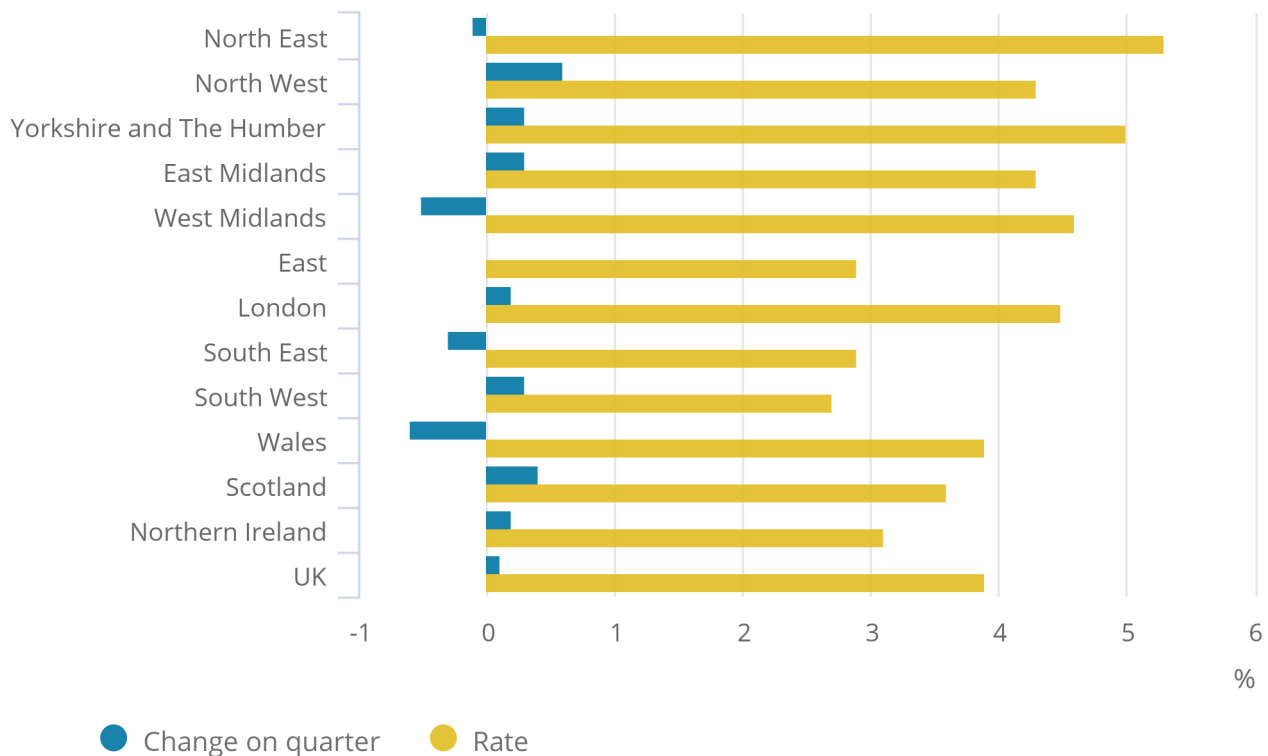
The largest decrease in the unemployment rate estimate was in Wales at 0.6 percentage points, followed the West Midlands with a decrease of 0.5 percentage points.

Figure 5: The North East had the highest unemployment rate in the UK

Unemployment rates by UK region, seasonally adjusted, April to June 2019

Figure 5: The North East had the highest unemployment rate in the UK

Unemployment rates by UK region, seasonally adjusted, April to June 2019



Source: Office for National Statistics – Labour Force Survey

The region with the largest increase in the unemployment rate estimates over the year was the North East at 1.0 percentage point, followed by Yorkshire and The Humber at 0.7 percentage points. The largest decrease was in the South East at 0.8 percentage points, followed by Northern Ireland at 0.6 percentage points.

Where to find data about unemployment

Unemployment estimates are available for each region in [Dataset HI00 – Headline LFS indicators for all UK regions](#) and HI01 to HI12 – Headline indicators for individual UK regions (Tab 2(2)), and Datasets LI01 to LI05 – Local indicators for subregional areas of Great Britain, for further estimate breakdowns by age or geographies. These datasets can all be found on the page: [All data related to Regional labour market statistics in the UK: August 2019](#).

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8 . Economic inactivity

Things you need to know about 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 four weeks and/or they are unable to start work within the next two weeks.

Regional economic inactivity

The estimated economic inactivity rate for people aged from 16 to 64 years for the UK was 20.7%, for the period April to June 2019; a decrease of 0.1 percentage points compared with the previous period (January to March 2019).

The UK region with the highest estimated rate was Northern Ireland at 25.5%, followed by the North East at 25.0%. Northern Ireland also had the highest economic inactivity rate, at 27.6%, in the same period last year. The current estimated rate in Northern Ireland is 4.8 percentage points higher than the UK rate.

The region with the lowest estimated rate was the South West at 17.2%, followed by the South East at 17.9% (Figure 6).

The region with the largest increase in the economic inactivity rate estimate on the previous period (January to March 2019) was Wales at 0.9 percentage points, followed by Yorkshire and The Humber at 0.8 percentage points. The regions with the largest decrease in the economic inactivity rate estimate were the South West and Northern Ireland, both at 1.1 percentage points, followed by the East Midlands at 0.7 percentage points.

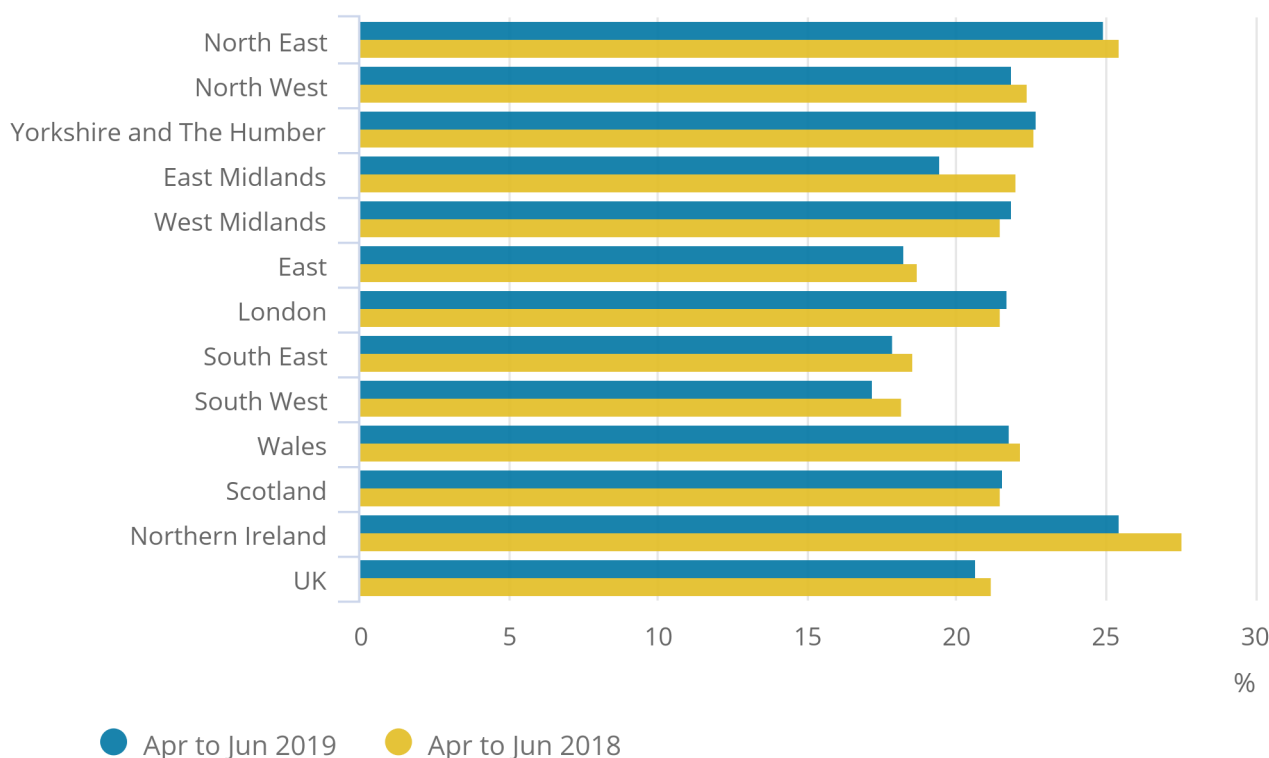
Over the year, the region with the largest increase in the economic inactivity rate estimate was the West Midlands at 0.4 percentage points, followed by London at 0.2 percentage points. The region with the largest decrease in the inactivity rate estimate was the East Midlands at 2.4 percentage points, followed by Northern Ireland at 2.2 percentage points. Yorkshire and The Humber was the only region to see no change in the economic inactivity rate compared with the same period last year.

Figure 6: Northern Ireland had the highest economic inactivity rate in the UK

Economic inactivity rate estimates by UK region and comparison year-on-year, seasonally adjusted, April to June 2018 and April to June 2019

Figure 6: Northern Ireland had the highest economic inactivity rate in the UK

Economic inactivity rate estimates by UK region and comparison year-on-year, seasonally adjusted, April to June 2018 and April to June 2019



Source: Office for National Statistics – Labour Force Survey

Where to find data about economic inactivity

Economic inactivity estimates are available for each region in [Dataset HI00 – Headline LFS indicators for all UK regions](#) and HI01 to HI12 – Headline indicators for individual UK regions (Tabs 10 and 11), and Datasets LI01 to LI05 – Local indicators for subregional areas of Great Britain, for further estimate breakdowns by age, reason or geographies. These datasets can all be found on the page: [All data related to Regional labour market statistics in the UK: August 2019](#).

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9 . Local labour market indicators

Things you need to know about labour market indicators

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

Indicators from the Annual Population Survey (first published 16 July 2019)

For the period April 2018 to March 2019, the local authorities with the highest employment rate estimates in Great Britain were West Oxfordshire at 89.3%, the Orkney Islands at 88.7% and East Staffordshire at 88.6%. Kensington and Chelsea was the local authority with the lowest rate at 61.7%, followed by Canterbury at 63.7%.

For the period April 2018 to March 2019, the local authorities with the highest unemployment rate estimates in Great Britain were Hartlepool at 9.1%, followed by Middlesbrough and Birmingham, both at 7.2%. The local authorities with the lowest rates were South Lakeland at 1.8%, followed by East Devon and Eden in Cumbria, both at 1.9%.

Jobs densities

The jobs density of an area is the number of jobs per head, of resident population, aged 16 to 64 years. In 2017, the highest jobs density estimate in Great Britain was the City of London at 125.12 and the lowest was Lewisham at 0.41. Westminster (4.36) and Camden (2.22), both in London, were the next highest jobs densities. The highest jobs density estimate outside London was Watford at 1.68. After Lewisham, the lowest jobs densities were East Renfrewshire at 0.43, followed by Waltham Forest at 0.47.

Where to find data about local labour market indicators

Annual Population Survey (APS) estimates are available in Datasets LI01 to LI05 – Local indicators for subregional areas of Great Britain.

Claimant Count estimates are available in Datasets CC01 – Claimant Count by unitary and local authority and CC02 – Claimant Count by Parliamentary constituency, CC02.1 – Claimant Count for constituencies of the Scottish Parliament, and CC03 – Claimant Count for local enterprise partnerships in this statistical bulletin.

These datasets can all be found on the page: [All data related to Regional labour market statistics in the UK: August 2019](#).

These tables contain data produced from the Annual Population Survey (APS). A note in the “Things you need to know about this release” section on the relationship between the LFS and APS entitled “What is the relationship between the APS and the LFS?” is included in this bulletin.

10 . Upcoming changes and future publication dates

Future publication dates

Tuesday 10 September 2019
Tuesday 15 October 2019
Tuesday 12 November 2019
Tuesday 17 December 2019
Tuesday 21 January 2020
Tuesday 18 February 2020

11 . Links to related statistics

Further information on labour market statistics is available in the following publications:

- [UK labour market statistics](#)
- [Public sector employment](#)
- [Young people not in education, employment or training \(NEET\)](#)
- [Labour productivity](#)
- [Employees' earnings in the UK \(previously Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings \(ASHE\)\)](#)
- [Business Register and Employment Survey \(BRES\)](#)
- [regional and local area statistics are also available at NOMIS®](#)

We have also produced:

- [ad hoc data and analysis related to employment and employee types](#)
- [methodological articles related to employment and employee types](#)

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 from July 2001 until January 2006, when the publication was discontinued. Editions of [Economic and Labour Market Review](#) are available from the first edition, published in February 2007, up until the last edition, published in May 2011.

12 . Quality and methodology

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 three-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.

Quality information

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 [Dataset S02 Regional labour market: Sampling variability and revisions summary](#) and show the size of revisions over the last five years.

The revised data may be subject to sampling or other sources of error. Our standard presentation is to show five years' worth of revisions (that is, 60 observations for a monthly series, 20 for a quarterly series).

Other quality information

The Quality and Methodology Information reports for labour market statistics contain important information on:

- the strengths and limitations of the data and how it compares with related data
- uses and users of the data
- how the output was created
- the quality of the output including the accuracy of the data

Quality and Methodology Information reports for various labour market topics are available:

- [Labour Force Survey Quality and Methodology Information](#)
- [Labour Force Survey performance and quality monitoring reports](#)
- [Vacancy Survey Quality and Methodology Information](#)
- [Workforce jobs Quality and Methodology Information](#)
- [Average weekly earnings \(AWE\) Quality and Methodology Information](#)
- [Labour disputes Quality and Methodology Information](#)

Further information about the Labour Force Survey (LFS) is available from the [Labour Force Survey – user guide](#).

