

Statistical bulletin

Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), UK: May 2020

Estimates of young people (aged 16 to 24 years) who are not in education, employment or training, by age and sex.



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1 . Main points

- There were an estimated 771,000 young people (aged 16 to 24 years) in the UK who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) in January to March 2020; this was an increase of 6,000 compared with January to March 2019 and was up by 8,000 compared with October to December 2019.
- The percentage of all young people in the UK who were NEET in January to March 2020 was estimated at 11.2%; the proportion was up by 0.2 percentage points compared with January to March 2019 and up by 0.1 percentage points compared with October to December 2019.
- Of all young people in the UK who were NEET in January to March 2020, an estimated 41.6% were looking and available for work and therefore classified as unemployed; the remainder were either not looking for work and/or not available for work and were classified as economically inactive.

2 . Total young people who were not in education, employment or training

There were an estimated 771,000 young people (aged 16 to 24 years) in the UK who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) in January to March 2020. The number was up by 6,000 when compared with January to March 2019 and an increase on the quarter of 8,000.

The total number of people aged 18 to 24 years who were NEET was 706,000.

Of the 771,000 people aged 16 to 24 years who were NEET in January to March 2020, 404,000 were men and 366,000 were women (a record low).

In January to March 2020, an estimated 11.2% of all people aged 16 to 24 years were NEET. The proportion was up by 0.2 percentage points from January to March 2019 and increased on the quarter by 0.1 percentage points.

The percentage of those aged 18 to 24 years who were NEET was up to 12.9%. Figure 1 shows the percentage of people aged 16 to 24 years who were NEET over the last 10 years. The percentage had been gradually decreasing since the peak of 16.9% in July to September 2011 but has been relatively flat since the beginning of 2017, averaging 11.2%.

Figure 1: The percentage of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) had been decreasing since 2011 but has been relatively flat since 2017

People aged 16 to 24 years who are NEET, as a percentage of all people aged 16 to 24 years, seasonally adjusted, UK, between January to March 2010 and January to March 2020

Figure 1: The percentage of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) had been decreasing since 2011 but has been relatively flat since 2017

People aged 16 to 24 years who are NEET, as a percentage of all people aged 16 to 24 years, seasonally adjusted, UK, between January to March 2010 and January to March 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Labour Force Survey

3 . Unemployed young people who were not in education, employment or training

Unemployment measures people without a job who have been actively seeking work within the last four weeks and are available to start work in the next two weeks. In January to March 2020, there were an estimated 320,000 unemployed young people (aged 16 to 24 years) who were not in education, employment or training (NEET), up by 20,000 from January to March 2019 and up by 18,000 from October to December 2019.

In January to March 2020, there were an estimated 202,000 unemployed men aged 16 to 24 years who were NEET and 118,000 unemployed women aged 16 to 24 years who were NEET.

4 . Economically inactive young people who were not in education, employment or training

Economic inactivity measures people not in employment who have not been seeking work within the last four weeks and/or are unable to start work within the next two weeks. In January to March 2020, there were an estimated 450,000 economically inactive young people (aged 16 to 24 years) who were not in education, employment or training (NEET), down by 14,000 from January to March 2019 and down by 10,000 from October to December 2019.

In January to March 2020, there were an estimated 202,000 economically inactive men aged 16 to 24 years who were NEET and 248,000 economically inactive women aged 16 to 24 years who were NEET.

5 . Young people not in education, employment or training data

[Young people not in education, employment or training \(NEET\)](#)

Dataset | Released 28 May 2020

Quarterly estimates for young people (aged 16 to 24 years) who are NEET in the UK.

[Sampling variability for estimates of young people not in education, employment or training](#)

Dataset | Released 28 May 2020

Labour Force Survey (LFS) sampling quarterly variability estimates for young people (aged 16 to 24 years) who are NEET in the UK.

6 . Glossary

Young people

For this release, young people are defined as those aged 16 to 24 years. Estimates are also produced for the age groups 16 to 17 years and 18 to 24 years and by sex.

Education and training

People are considered to be in education or training if any of the following apply:

- they are enrolled on an education course and are still attending or waiting for term to start or restart
- they are doing an apprenticeship
- they are on a government-supported employment or training programme
- they are working or studying towards a qualification
- they have had job-related training or education in the last four weeks

Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)

Anybody who is not in any of the forms of education or training listed previously and not in employment is considered to be NEET. Consequently, a person identified as NEET will always be either unemployed or economically inactive.

Economic inactivity

People not in the labour force (also known as [economically inactive](#)) are not in employment but do not meet the internationally accepted definition of unemployment because they have not been seeking work within the last four weeks and/or they are unable to start work in the next two weeks.

Employment

[Employment](#) measures the number of people in paid work or who had a job that they were temporarily away from (for example, because they were on holiday or off sick). This differs from the number of jobs because some people have more than one job.

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.

A [more detailed glossary](#) is available.

7 . Measuring the data

This statistical bulletin contains estimates for young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) in the UK. The bulletin is published quarterly in February or March, May, August and November. All estimates discussed in this statistical bulletin are for the UK and are seasonally adjusted.

Statistics in this bulletin are used to help monitor progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Explore the UK data on our [SDGs reporting platform](#).

An article called [Young people who are NEET \(PDF, 89KB\)](#), providing background information, is available. The article explains how missing information for identifying someone as NEET is appropriated based on individual characteristics.

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

In response to the developing coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, we are working to ensure that we continue to publish economic statistics. For more information, please see [COVID-19 and the production of statistics](#).

We have reviewed all publications and data published as part of the labour market release in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This has led to the [postponement of some publications and datasets](#) to ensure that we can continue to publish our main labour market data. This will protect the delivery and quality of our remaining outputs and ensure we can respond to new demands as a direct result of COVID-19.

For more information on how labour market data sources, among others, will be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, see the [statement](#) published on 27 March 2020. A further [article](#), published on 6 May 2020, detailed some of the challenges that we have faced in producing estimates at this time.

Our latest data and analysis on the impact of COVID-19 on the UK economy and population is available on our dedicated [COVID-19 web page](#). This is the hub for all special COVID-19-related publications, drawing on all available data.

Impact of COVID-19 on Labour Force Survey estimates

Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimates presented in this bulletin are based on interviews that took place throughout the period from the start of January to the end of March 2020. Consequently, most interviews relate to the period prior to the implementation of COVID-19 social distancing measures. Interviews in the final week of March 2020 relate to the period following the government's closure of schools, introduction of lockdown, and announcement of measures aimed at protecting businesses and jobs.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) definition of employment includes those who worked in a job for at least one hour and those temporarily absent from a job. Workers furloughed under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), or who are self-employed but temporarily not in work, have a reasonable expectation of returning to their jobs after a temporary period of absence. Therefore, they are classified as employed under the ILO definition.

Relationship to other labour market statistics for young people

Our monthly [Labour market statistical bulletin](#) includes the dataset [A06: Educational status and labour market status for people aged from 16 to 24](#). The NEET statistics and the dataset A06 statistics are both derived from the LFS and use the same labour market statuses; however, the educational statuses are derived differently.

For dataset A06, the educational status is based on participation in full-time education only. For NEET statistics, the educational status is based on any form of education or training, as listed previously. Therefore, the dataset A06 category "not in full-time education" includes some people who are in part-time education and/or some form of training and who, consequently, should not be regarded as NEET.

More quality and methodology information on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in the [LFS QMI](#).

Further information about the LFS is available from the [user guidance](#) and [performance and quality monitoring reports](#).

After EU withdrawal

As the UK leaves the EU, it is important that our statistics continue to be of high quality and are internationally comparable. During the transition period, those UK statistics that align with EU practice and rules will continue to do so in the same way as before 31 January 2020.

After the transition period, we will continue to produce our labour market statistics in line with the UK Statistics Authority's [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) and in accordance with International Labour Organization (ILO) definitions and agreed international statistical guidance.

8 . Strengths and limitations

Accuracy of the statistics: estimating and reporting uncertainty

The figures in this statistical bulletin come from the Labour Force Survey (LFS), a survey of UK households. 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 some [uncertainty](#). This can have an impact on how changes in the estimates should be interpreted, especially for short-term comparisons.

We can calculate the level of uncertainty (also called "sampling variability") around a survey estimate by exploring how that estimate would change if we were to draw many survey samples for the same time period instead of just one. This allows us to define a range around the estimate (known as a [confidence interval](#)) and to state how likely it is in practice that the real value the survey is trying to measure lies within that range. Confidence intervals are typically set up so that we can be 95% sure that the true value lies within the range – in which case we refer to a "95% confidence interval".

The total number of people not in education, employment or training (NEET) aged 16 to 24 years for January to March 2020 was estimated at 771,000. This figure had a stated 95% confidence interval of plus or minus 53,000. This means that we can be 95% confident that the true total number of people NEET aged 16 to 24 years for January to March 2020 was between 718,000 and 824,000. However, the best estimate from the survey was that the total number of people NEET aged 16 to 24 years was 771,000.

The percentage of people NEET aged 16 to 24 years for the same period was estimated at 11.2%, with a stated 95% confidence interval of plus or minus 0.8 percentage points. This means that we can be 95% confident that the percentage of people NEET was between 10.4% and 12.0%. Again, the best estimate from the survey was that the percentage of people NEET aged 16 to 24 years was 11.2%.

Working with uncertain estimates

In general, changes in the numbers (and especially the rates) reported in this statistical bulletin between three-month periods are small and are not usually greater than the level that is explainable by sampling variability. 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.

Seasonal adjustment and uncertainty

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. To compare movements other than annual changes in labour market statistics, such as since the previous quarter or since the previous month, the data are seasonally adjusted to remove the effects of seasonal factors and the arrangement of the calendar. Estimates discussed in this statistical bulletin are presented seasonally adjusted. While seasonal adjustment is essential to allow for robust comparisons through time, it is not possible to estimate uncertainty measures for the seasonally adjusted series.

[Dataset table NEET 2](#) shows sampling variabilities for estimates of young people who are NEET derived from the LFS.

9 . Related links

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is responsible for not in education, employment or training (NEET) statistics for the UK, published within this release. Estimates of the number of young people who are NEET within the countries of the UK and for subnational areas are the responsibility of the Department for Education (DfE) for England and the devolved administrations for each of the other countries. There is further information on the availability of subnational estimates of young people who are NEET.

[NEET estimates for England](#)

Collection | Last updated 5 March 2020

Young people's participation in education, employment and training and those who are NEET from the DfE.

[NEET estimates for Scotland](#)

Publication | Last updated 27 August 2019

Annual statistical publication reporting on learning, training and work activity of 16 to 19 year olds in Scotland.

[NEET estimates for Wales](#)

Statistics and research | Last updated 16 January 2020

Data for young people by age, gender, region and local authority from the Welsh Government.

[NEET estimates for Northern Ireland](#)

Tables | Last updated 19 May 2020

Tables from the Labour Market Report, including NEET.