

Statistical bulletin

Employees in the UK: provisional results 2021

Number of employees in the UK, full-time and part-time, by sector, industry, country and English region, from the Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES).



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1 . Other pages in this release

Commentary on topics covered in the Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) is split between three separate headline bulletins. Other commentary from the latest BRES data can be found on the following pages:

- [Employees in the UK by region: provisional results 2021](#)
- [Employees in the UK by industry: provisional results 2021](#)

2 . Main points

- The estimated number of employees in the UK has increased by 896,500 (3.0%) between 2020 and 2021, from 30.3 million to 31.2 million; private sector employees increased by 693,100 (2.8%) and public sector employees increased by 203,500 (3.7%).
- The estimated number of full-time employees increased by 678,800 (3.3%) and the estimated number of part-time employees increased by 217,700 (2.2%) between 2020 and 2021.
- The largest increase in employees by industry was in accommodation and food services (up 159,200, or 7.3%); the largest decrease by industry was in wholesale (down 33,200, or 2.9%) between 2020 and 2021.
- Of the 12 English regions and countries in the UK, all 12 saw an increase in employees between 2020 and 2021; the North East saw the largest percentage increase in employees (up 53,000, or 5.1%), followed by London (up 221,300, or 4.3%).
- There were five broad industry groups that in September 2021 were still below the level of September 2019 (pre-coronavirus (COVID-19)); the remaining 13 broad industry groups had shown an increase in employees compared with 2019.
- There were two regions that in September 2021 were still below the level of September 2019 (pre-coronavirus); the remaining 10 regions had shown an increase in employees compared with 2019.

3 . Business Register and Employment Survey data

[Broad Industry Group \(Standard Industrial Classification\) – Business Register and Employment Survey \(BRES\): Table 1](#)

Dataset | Released 13 October 2022

Annual employee and employment estimates for Great Britain and UK split by broad industry group Standard Industrial Classification: SIC 2007. Results given by full-time or part-time and public or private splits.

[Industry \(two, three and five-digit Standard Industrial Classification\) – Business Register and Employment Survey \(BRES\): Table 2](#)

Dataset | Released 13 October 2022

Annual employee and employment estimates for Great Britain and UK split by two, three and five-digit Standard Industrial Classification: SIC 2007. Results given by full-time or part-time and public or private splits.

[Region – Business Register and Employment Survey \(BRES\): Table 3](#)

Dataset | Released 13 October 2022

Annual employee and employment estimates for Great Britain and UK split by region. Results given by full-time or part-time and public or private splits.

[Region by broad industry group \(Standard Industrial Classification\) – Business Register and Employment Survey \(BRES\): Table 4](#)

Dataset | Released 13 October 2022

Annual employee and employment estimates for the UK split by region and broad industry group Standard Industrial Classification: SIC 2007. Results given by full-time or part-time and public or private splits.

[Local authority county – Business Register and Employment Survey \(BRES\): Table 5](#)

Dataset | Released 13 October 2022

Annual employee and employment estimates for the UK split by local authority county. Results given by full-time or part-time and public or private splits.

[Local authority district – Business Register and Employment Survey \(BRES\): Table 6](#)

Dataset | Released 13 October 2022

Annual employee and employment estimates for the UK split by local authority district. Results given by full-time or part-time and public or private splits.

4 . Measuring the data

Coronavirus

Our [Coronavirus and the effects on UK labour market statistics article](#) has more information about how labour market sources have been affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

View our [Comparison of our labour market data sources article, which explains the main differences between the sources.](#)

Sources

The Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) is a sample survey. For the 2021 survey period, approximately 85,000 businesses were sampled for Great Britain. The response rate for the 2021 BRES was 69.5%. Northern Ireland data were collected independently by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. All estimates for 2021 are provisional.

Data from the 2020 survey have been subject to small revisions since the [provisional estimates](#) were published on 9 November 2021. “Total Employees” rather than “Total Employment” is used when discussing the main points. Employees is the more robust of the two measures and is recommended for use in analysis. Further information about BRES can be found in our [Quality and Methodology Information \(QMI\)](#) report.

BRES is the primary source for employee estimates at a detailed regional and industrial level. More timely, less detailed, employment estimates are available in Workforce Jobs (WFJ). Workforce Jobs benchmarks the private sector employee component to the BRES private sector employee estimates on an annual basis. The WFJ series, which is compiled mainly from surveys of businesses, is the preferred source of statistics when comparing changes in employment over time. The BRES industry data are recommended in preference to industry data from household surveys such as the Annual Population Survey and Labour Force Survey (LFS). The LFS, which collects information mainly from residents of private households, is the preferred source of statistics on employment at the whole economy level.

The public sector employee job figures from BRES aggregated to regional or national level will not match those produced from the [Public sector employment release](#), which is the recommended source for public sector employment figures.

5 . Glossary

Employee

An employee is defined as anyone aged 16 years and over who is paid directly from the payroll, in return for carrying out a full-time or part-time job or being on a training scheme.

Employment

Employment includes employees plus the number of working owners who receive drawings or a share of the profits.

Full time and part time

Full time is defined as working more than 30 hours per week and part time is defined as working 30 hours or less per week.

Legal status

BRES includes breakdowns by public and private sector according to the legal status for national accounts classification purposes.

Standard Industrial Classification

Figures are classified to the [Standard Industrial Classification 2007: SIC 2007](#). In this bulletin, the term “industry” refers to a “Section” as defined in SIC 2007.

Sampling variability

Because of the survey’s large sample size, BRES is able to produce good-quality estimates for detailed breakdowns by industry and geography. The [coefficient of variation](#), a measure of quality, accompanies the BRES datasets on our website. The quality of the estimates may deteriorate for smaller geographies and this should be taken into account when making inferences about the figures.

6 . Related links

[Labour market overview, UK](#)

Bulletin | Released monthly

Estimates of employment, unemployment, economic inactivity and other employment-related statistics for the UK.

[NOMIS](#)

Web page | Updated as and when data become available

A service provided by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), to give free access to the most detailed and up-to-date UK labour market statistics from official sources.

[Vacancies and jobs in the UK](#)

Bulletin | Released monthly

Estimates of the number of vacancies and jobs for the UK.

[Labour market in the regions of the UK](#)

Bulletin | Released monthly

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

[Public sector employment, UK](#)

Bulletin | Released quarterly

Estimates of people employed in the public and private sectors in the UK.

7 . Cite this statistical bulletin

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