

# Labour market quality information for Census 2021

Known quality information affecting labour market data from Census 2021 in England and Wales to help users correctly interpret the statistics.

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# 1 . Quality information

Census 2021 took place during a period of rapid change. The labour market data reflect a situation when many more people than at the time of the 2011 Census were working from home or on furlough.

## Responses from people on furlough

At the Office for National Statistics (ONS), we published extra guidance to help people on furlough to answer the census questions about work. This guidance said that they should identify themselves as "temporarily away from work". This would ensure they were still included in the economically active population.

We are unable to determine how furloughed people followed guidance. However, our research suggests that there are inconsistencies between the number of people answering "Temporarily away from work" in Census 2021 and other administrative data sources. This may result in scattering of furloughed responses through other labour market categories. HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) research suggests that furlough is associated with other characteristics, including:

- age
- health
- location
- industry
- occupation

It is possible that the interaction of furloughed responses with technical aspects of census processing, such as edit and imputation, could multiply values in the observed census data. There is no specific flag for furloughed people within the data, and we are unable to quantify the effect that they may have had on the labour market data.

People on furlough also affected travel behaviours. Read more in our [Travel to work quality information for Census 2021 methodology](#).

## Labour market definitions

As the census uses different labour market definitions from those that the Labour Force Survey uses, the estimates differ between these two sources. Further information is provided in our [Comparing Census 2021 and Labour Force Survey estimates of the labour market, England and Wales: March 2021 article](#).

## Employment by industry

Estimates of the number of people employed by industry differ from the official estimates from the Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES). Census relies on respondent information about the business they work for, which may differ from data collected from the business themselves. BRES data are consistent with definitions used in the UK National Accounts.

## Comparability with 2011 Census

Take care if you compare Census 2021 results for this topic with those from the 2011 Census, as described in our [Labour market variables Census 2021 supporting information](#).

Tell us what you think about this publication by [answering a few questions](#).

## 2 . Related links

### [Travel to work quality information for Census 2021](#)

Methodology | Released 8 December 2022

Known quality information affecting travel to work data from Census 2021 in England and Wales to help correctly interpret them.

### [Quality and methodology information Census 2021](#)

QMI | Last revised 28 November 2022

Details the data strengths, limitations, uses, users and methods used for Census 2021, England and Wales.

### [Travel to work variables Census 2021](#)

Supporting information| Released 5 December 2022

Lists variables and classifications used in Census 2021 data about travel to work.

### [Labour market variables Census 2021](#)

Supporting information| Released 5 December 2022

Lists variables and classifications used in Census 2021 data about labour market.

## 3 . Cite this methodology

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