

Statistical bulletin

Labour market in the regions of the UK: February 2023

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



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Release date:
14 February 2023

Next release:
14 March 2023

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1 . Other pages in this release

Other commentary from the latest labour market data can be found on the following pages:

- [Labour market overview](#)
- [Average weekly earnings in Great Britain](#)
- [Vacancies and jobs in the UK](#)
- [Employment in the UK](#)
- [Earnings and employment from Pay As You Earn Real Time Information, UK](#)

2 . Main points

- For the three months ending December 2022, the highest employment rate estimate in the UK was in the South West (80.3%) and the lowest was in the North East (71.0%); Scotland (76.6%) saw a record-high employment rate.
- The largest increase in the employment rate compared with the same period last year was in Northern Ireland, up by 3.1 percentage points, with Wales seeing the largest decrease of 2.6 percentage points.
- For the three months ending December 2022, the highest unemployment rate estimates in the UK were in the North East and London (4.5%) and the lowest was in the South West (2.1%).
- The East of England had the largest increase in the unemployment rate compared with the same period last year, increasing by 0.5 percentage points, with the North East seeing the largest decrease of 1.1 percentage points.
- For the three months ending December 2022, the highest economic inactivity rate estimate in the UK was in Northern Ireland (26.3%) and the lowest was in the South West (18.0%).
- Wales saw the largest increase in the inactivity rate compared with the same period last year, up 2.3 percentage points, with Northern Ireland seeing the largest decrease of 2.6 percentage points.
- The number of payrolled employees continued to rise in all regions on the month to January 2023, with the strongest increases in the East of England, London and the South East.

3 . Latest headline estimate

Table 1: Summary of latest headline estimates and quarterly changes, for regions of the UK, seasonally adjusted, October to December 2022

	Employment rate (%) aged 16 to 64 years [Note 1]	Change on July to September 2022	Unemployment rate (%) aged 16 years and over [Note 2]	Change on July to September 2022	Inactivity rate (%) aged 16 to 64 years [Note 3]	Change on July to September 2022
UK	75.6	0.2	3.7	0.1	21.4	-0.3
Great Britain	75.7	0.1	3.8	0.1	21.2	-0.2
England	75.9	0.0	3.8	0.2	21.0	-0.2
North East	71.0	-0.7	4.5	0.2	25.7	0.5
North West	74.1	0.8	3.8	-0.2	23.0	-0.6
Yorkshire and The Humber	73.9	-0.7	4.0	-0.2	23.0	1.0
East Midlands	74.7	0.1	3.3	-0.2	22.7	0.1
West Midlands	74.5	0.4	4.4	-0.3	21.9	-0.2
East	78.1	-1.0	3.5	0.7	19.0	0.4
London	75.1	-0.2	4.5	0.3	21.4	0.0
South East	78.2	0.0	4.0	1.0	18.4	-1.0
South West	80.3	1.3	2.1	-0.4	18.0	-1.0
Wales	71.8	-0.5	3.5	-0.1	25.5	0.6
Scotland	76.6	1.3	3.3	-0.2	20.8	-1.0
Northern Ireland	71.9	1.8	2.5	-0.5	26.3	-1.5

Source: Office for National Statistics - Labour Force Survey

Notes

1. Calculation of headline employment rate: number of employed people aged 16 to 64 years divided by the population aged 16 to 64 years. Population is the sum of employed plus unemployed plus inactive.
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.
3. Calculation of headline economic inactivity rate: number of economically inactive people aged 16 to 64 years divided by the population aged 16 to 64 years. Population is the sum of employed plus unemployed plus inactive.
4. The estimates in this table come from a survey and are therefore subject to sampling variability.
5. More information on the quality of these estimates is available in Table A11 of the labour market overview and Dataset S02 from this release.

Table 2: Summary of latest headline estimates and annual changes, for regions of the UK, seasonally adjusted, October to December 2022

	Employment rate (%) aged 16 to 64 years [Note 1]	Change on October to December 2021	Unemployment rate (%) aged 16 years and over [Note 2]	Change on October to December 2021	Inactivity rate (%) aged 16 to 64 years [Note 3]	Change on October to December 2021
UK	75.6	0.2	3.7	-0.3	21.4	0.1
Great Britain	75.7	0.1	3.8	-0.3	21.2	0.2
England	75.9	0.0	3.8	-0.3	21.0	0.2
North East	71.0	-0.1	4.5	-1.1	25.7	0.9
North West	74.1	0.4	3.8	-0.9	23.0	0.2
Yorkshire and The Humber	73.9	1.0	4.0	0.2	23.0	-1.2
East Midlands	74.7	-0.8	3.3	-0.1	22.7	0.8
West Midlands	74.5	-0.6	4.4	-0.4	21.9	1.0
East	78.1	-0.9	3.5	0.5	19.0	0.5
London	75.1	-0.9	4.5	-0.6	21.4	1.5
South East	78.2	0.5	4.0	0.2	18.4	-0.8
South West	80.3	1.4	2.1	-0.7	18.0	-0.8
Wales	71.8	-2.6	3.5	0.4	25.5	2.3
Scotland	76.6	2.4	3.3	-0.8	20.8	-1.8
Northern Ireland	71.9	3.1	2.5	-0.7	26.3	-2.6

Source: Office for National Statistics - Labour Force Survey

Notes

1. Calculation of headline employment rate: number of employed people aged 16 to 64 years divided by the population aged 16 to 64 years. Population is the sum of employed plus unemployed plus inactive.
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.
3. Calculation of headline economic inactivity rate: number of economically inactive people aged 16 to 64 years divided by the population aged 16 to 64 years. Population is the sum of employed plus unemployed plus inactive.
4. The estimates in this table come from a survey and are therefore subject to sampling variability.
5. More information on the quality of these estimates is available in Table A11 of the labour market overview and Dataset S02 from this release.

More about economy, business and jobs

- All ONS analysis, summarised in our [economy, business and jobs roundup](#).
- Explore the latest trends in employment, prices and trade in our [economic dashboard](#).
- View [all economic data](#).

4 . Regional labour market data

[Headline Labour Force Survey indicators for all regions](#)

Dataset HI00 | Released 14 February 2023

Headline labour market indicators from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) for all the UK regions. These cover economic activity, employment, unemployment, and economic inactivity. Datasets HI01 to HI12 provide all regional level indicators for each region of the UK.

[Claimant Count by unitary and local authority \(experimental\)](#)

Dataset CC01 | Released 14 February 2023

Claimant Count for people resident in local and unitary authorities, counties, and regions of the UK.

[Regional labour market summary](#)

Dataset S01 | Released 14 February 2023

Labour market indicators for countries and regions of the UK, covering employment, unemployment, Claimant Count, and workforce jobs.

[Local indicators for counties and local and unitary authorities](#)

Dataset LI01 | Released 14 February 2023

Labour market indicators for local and unitary authorities, counties, and regions in Great Britain for a 12-month period.

[Earnings and employment from Pay As You Earn Real Time Information, seasonally adjusted](#)

Dataset | Released 14 February 2023

Earnings and employment statistics from Pay As You Earn (PAYE) Real Time Information (RTI) (Experimental statistics), seasonally adjusted.

All regional labour market datasets used in this bulletin are available on our [Related data page](#).

5 . Glossary

Actual and usual hours worked

Statistics for [usual hours worked](#) measure how many hours people usually work per week. Compared with [actual hours worked](#), they are not affected by absences and so can provide a better measure of normal working patterns. For example, a person who usually works 37 hours a week but who was on holiday for a week would be recorded as working zero actual hours for that week, while usual hours would be recorded as 37 hours.

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, or they are unable to start work in the next two weeks. The economic inactivity rate is the proportion of people aged between 16 and 64 years who are not in the labour force.

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. The employment rate is the proportion of people aged between 16 and 64 years who are in employment. A more detailed explanation is available in our [Guide to labour market statistics](#).

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. The unemployment rate is not the proportion of the total population who are unemployed. It is the proportion of the economically active population (those in work plus those seeking and available to work) who are unemployed.

Local labour market indicators

Local labour market indicators cover employment, unemployment, economic inactivity and jobs density for subregional geographical 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.

Pay As You Earn (PAYE) Real Time Information (RTI)

These data come from HM Revenue and Customs' (HMRC's) Pay As You Earn (PAYE) Real Time Information (RTI) system. They cover the whole population rather than a sample of people or companies, and they will allow for more detailed estimates of the population. The release is classed as [Experimental Statistics](#) because the methodologies used to produce the statistics are still in their development phase. As a result, the series are subject to revisions.

PAYE is the system employers and pension providers use to take Income Tax and National Insurance contributions before they pay wages or pensions to employees and pensioners. This publication relates to employees only and not pensioners.

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

6 . Measuring the data

The error we identified in the October 2021 to September 2022 Annual Population Survey (APS) estimates, which affected the version of the HI and LI series of tables published on 17 January, has now been corrected. The estimates in these tables are now consistent with those published on [Nomis](#). We apologise for any inconvenience caused.

This bulletin relies on data collected from the Labour Force Survey (LFS), and the Annual Population Survey (APS) derived from it, the largest household survey in the UK.

Quality and methodology information on strengths, limitations and appropriate uses is available in our [Labour Force Survey \(LFS\) Quality and Methodology Information \(QMI\)](#). The [LFS performance and quality monitoring reports](#) provide data on response rates and quality-related issues.

Data for Northern Ireland are available in full in the [Northern Ireland Labour Market Report on the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency \(NISRA\) website](#). You can [view local area statistics on the Nomis website](#).

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

For information on how labour market data sources are affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, see our [Coronavirus and the effects on UK labour market statistics article](#), published on 6 May 2020. This article details some of the challenges that we have faced in producing estimates.

Our [Comparison of labour market data sources article](#), last revised on 27 April 2022, compares our labour market data sources and discusses some of the main differences.

The population totals used for the latest LFS estimates use projected growth rates from Real-Time Information (RTI) data for UK, EU and non-EU populations based on 2021 patterns. The total population used for the LFS therefore does not take into account any changes in migration, birth rates, death rates, and so on, since June 2021, so levels estimates may be under- or over-estimating the true values and should be used with caution. Estimates of rates will, however, be robust.

Labour market transformation

We have published an [article](#) providing an update on the transformation of labour market statistics. We welcome your feedback on this latest update and our plans. Please email labour.market.transformation@ons.gov.uk to tell us what you think.

Making our published spreadsheets accessible

Following the Government Statistical Service (GSS) guidance on [releasing statistics in spreadsheets](#), we will be amending our published tables over the coming months to improve usability, accessibility and machine readability of our published statistics. To help users change to the new formats, we will be publishing sample versions of a selection of our tables, and where practical, initially publish the tables in both the new and current formats. If you have any questions or comments, please email labour.market@ons.gov.uk.

Occupational data in ONS surveys

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has identified an issue with the collection of some occupational data in a number of our surveys, including the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and Annual Population Survey (APS), which are used in the production of the labour market publication. While we estimate any impacts will be small overall, this will affect the accuracy of the breakdowns of some detailed (four-digit Standard Occupational Classifications (SOC)) occupations, and data derived from them.

On 26 September, we published an [article based on initial analysis of the potential impact on different four-digit SOC codes](#). We advise continued caution in the use of detailed SOC breakdowns until the issue has been corrected.

7 . Strengths and limitations

The estimates presented in this bulletin contain uncertainty, as defined in [our article, Uncertainty and how we measure for it in our surveys](#). The Labour Force Survey (LFS) gathers information from a [sample of households](#) across the UK. The sample is designed to be as accurate as possible given practical limitations. This can have an impact on how changes in the estimates should be interpreted, especially for short-term comparisons.

As the number of people in the sample gets smaller, the variability of the estimates that we can make from that sample gets larger. Estimates for small groups, which are based on small subsets of the sample, are less reliable and tend to be more volatile than for larger aggregated groups.

In general, changes in the numbers (and especially the rates) reported between three-month periods are small and are not usually greater than the level that is explained by sampling variability. For a fuller picture, short-term movements in reported rates should be considered alongside longer-term patterns in the series and corresponding movements in other sources.

Reliability of the main indicators in this bulletin can be obtained by monitoring the size of revisions. These measures are available in our [Regional sampling variability and revisions summary dataset](#).

The data in this bulletin follow internationally accepted definitions specified by the International Labour Organization (ILO). This ensures that the estimates for the UK are comparable with those for other countries. For more information, the [Resolution concerning statistics of work, employment and labour underutilization publication is available to download from the ILO website](#).

Our annual [Reconciliation of estimates of jobs, UK article](#) compares the latest Workforce Jobs series estimates with the equivalent estimates of jobs from the LFS. It is usually published in March each year following the benchmarking of Workforce Jobs. The 2022 article was postponed to October to allow for the reweighting of the data.

Reliability of the main indicators in this bulletin can be obtained by monitoring the size of revisions. These measures are available in our [Regional Sampling variability and revisions summary dataset](#).

8 . Related links

[Labour market overview, UK: February 2023](#)

Bulletin | Released 14 February 2023

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

[Earnings and employment from Pay As You Earn Real Time Information, UK: February 2023](#)

Bulletin | Released 14 February 2023

Experimental monthly estimates of payrolled employees and their pay from HM Revenue and Customs' (HMRC's) Pay As You Earn (PAYE) Real Time Information (RTI) data. This is a joint release between HMRC and the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

[Vacancies and jobs in the UK: February 2023](#)

Bulletin | Released 14 February 2023

Quarterly estimates of the number of people employed in the public and private sectors in the UK. The public sector comprises central government, local government and public corporations.

[Working and workless households in the UK: July to September 2021](#)

Bulletin | Released 1 December 2022

Commentary on quarterly estimates of the economic status of UK households and the people living in them.

[Young people not in education, employment or training \(NEET\), UK: November 2022](#)

Bulletin | Released 24 November 2022

Quarterly bulletin examining estimates of men and women aged between 16 and 24 years in the UK who are not studying or in employment.

9 . Cite this statistical bulletin

Office for National Statistics (ONS), published 14 February 2023, ONS website, statistical bulletin, [Labour market in the regions of the UK: February 2023](#)