

Statistical bulletin

# Labour market in the regions of the UK: May 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:  
16 May 2023

Next release:  
13 June 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 March 2023, the highest employment rate estimates in the UK were in both the South East and South West (78.8%) and the lowest was in Wales (71.5%).
- The largest increase in the employment rate compared with the same period last year was in the North East, up by 2.7 percentage points, with Wales seeing the largest decrease of 2.6 percentage points.
- For the three months ending March 2023, the highest unemployment rate estimate in the UK was in the West Midlands (5.1%) and the lowest were in both the South West (2.5%) and Northern Ireland (2.5%).
- Wales had the largest increase in the unemployment rate compared with the same period last year, increasing by 1.6 percentage points; the North West saw the largest decrease of 1.0 percentage point, contributing to the region seeing a record low unemployment rate of 3.3%.
- For the three months ending March 2023, the highest economic inactivity rate estimate in the UK was in Northern Ireland (26.1%) and the lowest was in the East of England (17.9%), which was a joint record low economic inactivity rate for the region.
- The West Midlands saw the largest increase in the economic inactivity rate compared with the same period last year, up 1.6 percentage points, with the North East seeing the largest decrease of 2.3 percentage points.
- Following a period of growth, we have seen falls in the number of payrolled employees in all regions when comparing April 2023 with March 2023.

### 3 . Latest headline estimate

Table 1: Summary of latest headline estimates, and quarterly changes, for regions of the UK, seasonally adjusted, January to March 2023

	Employment rate (%) aged 16 to 64 years [Note 1]	Change on October to December 2022	Unemployment rate (%) aged 16 years and over [Note 2]	Change on October to December 2022	Inactivity rate (%) aged 16 to 64 years [Note 3]	Change on October to December 2022
<b>UK</b>	75.9	0.2	3.9	0.1	21.0	-0.4
<b>Great Britain</b>	76.0	0.2	3.9	0.2	20.8	-0.4
<b>England</b>	76.3	0.4	4.0	0.1	20.5	-0.6
<b>North East</b>	73.7	2.7	4.2	-0.2	22.9	-2.8
<b>North West</b>	74.9	0.8	3.3	-0.4	22.6	-0.4
<b>Yorkshire and The Humber</b>	74.8	0.9	3.9	0.0	22.2	-0.9
<b>East Midlands</b>	75.6	0.9	3.7	0.5	21.4	-1.4
<b>West Midlands</b>	74.2	-0.4	5.1	0.7	21.9	-0.1
<b>East</b>	78.7	0.6	4.0	0.5	17.9	-1.1
<b>London</b>	75.4	0.3	4.7	0.2	20.9	-0.5
<b>South East</b>	78.8	0.6	3.7	-0.3	18.0	-0.4
<b>South West</b>	78.8	-1.5	2.5	0.4	19.1	1.1
<b>Wales</b>	71.5	-0.3	4.6	1.1	24.9	-0.5
<b>Scotland</b>	75.3	-1.2	3.1	-0.2	22.2	1.4
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	72.0	0.1	2.5	0.0	26.1	-0.1

Source: Labour Force Survey from the Office for National Statistics

#### 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, January to March 2023

	<b>Employment rate (%) aged 16 to 64 years [Note 1]</b>	<b>Change on January to March 2022</b>	<b>Unemployment rate (%) aged 16 years and over [Note 2]</b>	<b>Change on January to March 2022</b>	<b>Inactivity rate (%) aged 16 to 64 years [Note 3]</b>	<b>Change on January to March 2022</b>
<b>UK</b>	75.9	0.3	3.9	0.2	21.0	-0.4
<b>Great Britain</b>	76.0	0.2	3.9	0.2	20.8	-0.4
<b>England</b>	76.3	0.4	4.0	0.1	20.5	-0.5
<b>North East</b>	73.7	2.7	4.2	-0.7	22.9	-2.3
<b>North West</b>	74.9	1.8	3.3	-1.0	22.6	-0.9
<b>Yorkshire and The Humber</b>	74.8	1.6	3.9	-0.1	22.2	-1.6
<b>East Midlands</b>	75.6	-0.6	3.7	1.1	21.4	-0.4
<b>West Midlands</b>	74.2	-2.0	5.1	0.6	21.9	1.6
<b>East</b>	78.7	0.8	4.0	0.7	17.9	-1.4
<b>London</b>	75.4	0.1	4.7	0.0	20.9	-0.2
<b>South East</b>	78.8	0.5	3.7	0.5	18.0	-1.0
<b>South West</b>	78.8	-0.3	2.5	-0.4	19.1	0.6
<b>Wales</b>	71.5	-2.6	4.6	1.6	24.9	1.4
<b>Scotland</b>	75.3	-0.2	3.1	-0.1	22.2	0.3
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	72.0	1.4	2.5	-0.1	26.1	-1.4

Source: Labour Force Survey from the Office for National Statistics

#### 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.
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## 4 . Regional labour market data

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

Dataset HI00 | Released 16 May 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 16 May 2023

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

### [Regional labour market summary](#)

Dataset S01 | Released 16 May 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 18 April 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 16 May 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 the [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

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

Quality and methodology information on strengths, limitations and appropriate uses is available in our [Labour Force Survey \(LFS\) Quality and Methodology Information \(QMI\)](#). Our [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](#).

Our [Comparison of labour market data sources methodology](#), 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 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. This means that levels estimates may be under- or over-estimating the true values and should be used with caution. Estimates of rates will, however, be robust.

## 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 us at [labour.market@ons.gov.uk](mailto: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 2022, we published our [The impact of miscoding of occupational data in Office for National Statistics social surveys. UK article](#), which is based on initial analysis of the potential impact on different four-digit SOC codes. We advise to continue exercising 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 following the benchmarking of Workforce Jobs.

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: May 2023](#)

Bulletin | Released 16 May 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: May 2023](#)

Bulletin | Released 16 May 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: May 2023](#)

Bulletin | Released 16 May 2023

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

### [Working and workless households in the UK: October to December 2022](#)

Bulletin | Released 1 March 2023

The economic status of households in the UK and the people living in them, where at least one person is aged 16 to 64 years. Taken from the Labour Force Survey.

### [Young people not in education, employment or training \(NEET\), UK: February 2023](#)

Bulletin | Released 23 February 2023

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

## 9 . Cite this statistical bulletin

Office for National Statistics (ONS), published 16 May 2023, ONS website, statistical bulletin, [Labour market in the regions of the UK: May 2023](#)