

Statistical bulletin

Employees in Great Britain by industry: 2023

Number of employees in Great Britain, full-time and part-time by industry. Provisional results for Great Britain 2023 and revised results for the UK 2022. Data from the Business Register and Employment Survey.

Contact:
Labour Market team
bres@ons.gov.uk
+44 1633 455400

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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 Great Britain: 2023](#)
- [Employees in Great Britain by region: 2023](#)

As BRES employment estimates are not yet available for Northern Ireland 2023, these 2023 provisional estimates cover Great Britain only. We plan to update our 2023 release with UK estimates by early 2025. For 2022, the published revised estimates represent the UK and remain unaffected.

2 . Main points

Between 2022 and 2023:

- There were increases in the estimated number of employees in 13 of the 18 broad industry groups in Great Britain.
- The largest increases in employee estimates by broad industry group in Great Britain were in health (up 181,000, or 4.3%), professional, scientific and technical (up 94,700, or 3.4%) and “other” (up 61,200, or 4.5%).
- The largest decreases in employee estimates by broad industry group in Great Britain were in business administration and support services (down 63,100, or 2.3%) and retail (down 40,100, or 1.5%).
- The estimated number of private sector employees increased by 140,100 (0.6%) to 25.6 million and the estimated number of public sector employees increased by 284,100 (5.2%) to 5.8 million, in Great Britain.
- As of September 2023, the estimated number of employees in 5 of the 18 broad industry groups were still below their pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic September 2019 levels; with health showing the largest increase in employees since pre-coronavirus (up 422,000, or 10.8%) and retail showed the largest decrease in employees since pre-coronavirus (down 180,900, or 6.5%).

3 . Data on employees and employment in Great Britain

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

Dataset | Released on 4 November 2024

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 on 4 November 2024

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 on 4 November 2024

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 on 4 November 2024

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 on 4 November 2024

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 on 4 November 2024

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.

[NOMIS](#)

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

4 . Glossary

Employee

An employee is defined as anyone aged 16 years or 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.

5 . Data sources and quality

Accredited official statistics

These [accredited official statistics](#) were independently reviewed by the Office for Statistics Regulation in April 2022. They comply with the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in [the Code of Practice for Statistics](#) and should be labelled “accredited official statistics”.

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 and the main differences article](#).

Sources

The Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) is a sample survey. For the 2023 survey period, approximately 85,000 businesses were sampled for Great Britain and the response rate was 83.3%. All estimates for 2023 are provisional. Data from the 2022 survey have been subject to small revisions since the [provisional estimates](#) were published on 25 October 2023.

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 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.

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.

More quality and methodology information

“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 the [Quality and Methodology Information \(QMI\) report](#).

6 . Related links

[Labour market overview](#)

Bulletin | Released 15 October 2024

Estimates of employment, unemployment and economic inactivity for the UK.

[Vacancies and jobs](#)

Bulletin | Released 15 October 2024

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

[Regional labour market](#)

Bulletin | Released 15 October 2024

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

[Public sector employment](#)

Bulletin | Released 10 September 2024

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

7 . Cite this statistical bulletin

Office for National Statistics (ONS), published 4 November 2024, ONS website, statistical bulletin, [Employees in Great Britain by industry: provisional results 2023](#).