

Article

Revisions to workforce jobs, UK: December 2024

Impact of regular annual adjustments to Workforce Jobs estimates, published in our Vacancies and Jobs in the UK bulletin, and the impact of the Labour Force Survey reweighting exercise.

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

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1 . Main points

- In December of each year, regular adjustments are made to Workforce Jobs (WFJ) estimates to improve quality and coherence with other Office for National Statistics (ONS) business surveys, resulting in revisions to the series.
- Adjustments include benchmarking the short-term employee jobs series to the latest estimates from the annual Business Register and Employment Survey, changes to seasonal parameters following a seasonal adjustment review, and incorporating revisions to Public Sector Employment estimates, Northern Ireland employee jobs estimates, government-supported trainees (GST) administrative data, and Short-Term Employment Surveys estimates.
- As well as the annual adjustments, the WFJ estimates published this month also incorporate the reweighted Labour Force Survey (LFS) data from March 2019 onwards, feeding into self-employment jobs, government-supported trainees, and a subset of employee jobs.
- Revisions to WFJ have mostly decreased the estimates, with the largest impact in June 2024, which saw a decrease of 369,000 (1.0%), driven by a decrease of 409,000 (1.2%) in employee jobs.

2 . Revisions by component

Workforce jobs (WFJ) is a quarterly measure of the number of jobs in the UK and is the preferred measure of the change in jobs by industry. It is a compound source that draws on a range of employer surveys, household surveys, and administrative sources. WFJ is the sum of:

- employee jobs (EJ) measured primarily by the Short-Term Employment Surveys (STES) and the Quarterly Public Sector Employment Survey (QPSES)
- self-employment jobs (SEJ) from the Labour Force Survey (LFS)
- government-supported trainees (GSTs) and His Majesty's Forces (HMF) from the devolved administrations, administrative sources and LFS

A variety of outputs by industry, region, sex, and full-time or part-time status are produced for a range of publications and users, with latest estimates published as part of our [Vacancies and jobs in the UK: December 2024 bulletin](#).

Benchmarking Great Britain employee jobs to the Business Register and Employment Survey

In December of each year, revisions are made to Workforce Jobs (WFJ) estimates for the previous two years, to benchmark the short-term employee jobs series to the latest estimates from the Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES).

Benchmarking is an annual process used to align the quarterly Great Britain employee jobs (EJ) series to the latest estimates from BRES. BRES is based on a sample of approximately 87,000 reporting units, which hold the mailing addresses to which survey questionnaires are sent (questionnaires can cover the enterprise or parts of the enterprise identified by lists of local units). This is a much larger sample than the Short-Term Employment Surveys (STES), and therefore is generally considered to produce more accurate and detailed estimates of the level of employment.

BRES estimates refer to September of a given year. In the latest data, the private sector element of the Great Britain EJ series has been benchmarked to the equivalent series from BRES for the periods September 2022 and September 2023, the latest periods available.

Alongside benchmarking this year, we made an enhancement to the benchmarking methodology. A review of our methods highlighted a redundant part of the process, which is no longer required given previous improvements made to the main benchmarking function. The removal of this method aims to minimise revisions in subsequent years.

Revisions to Public Sector Employment

WFJ estimates include our official Public Sector Employment (PSE) estimates for Great Britain, which are not benchmarked as they are the definitive measure of PSE. Each year, alongside benchmarking, WFJ incorporates the latest PSE numbers and takes on any revisions to the series, including reclassifications, late returns and changes to seasonal parameters following a seasonal adjustment review. For these reasons, the data received up to September 2024 has led to revisions back to March 2008. Further information is available in the [Data sources and quality section of our Public Sector Employment, UK: December 2024 bulletin](#).

Revisions to Short-Term Employment Surveys

The private sector employee jobs data come from Short-Term Employer Surveys (STES). Each quarter, revisions to supplied data, or late data, are incorporated for the previous quarter and each December any additional such revisions are incorporated for the previous five quarters. These revisions are in line with our revisions policy, as set out in our [Workforce Jobs QMI](#).

In December 2024, revisions have been incorporated for the previous quarter, June 2024 only, given time restraints in applying other adjustments this period.

Revisions to government-supported trainees

Estimates of government-supported trainees (GSTs) are taken from data supplied by the Devolved Administrations (DAs) and from the LFS. In December 2024, estimates of GSTs taken on from the DAs caused revisions back to September 2021. The GSTs component estimated from the LFS has been revised from March 2019 onwards; see the Labour Force Survey reweighting subsection.

Seasonal adjustment

Seasonal adjustment is the process of identifying and removing the seasonal components from a series to leave the underlying trend and irregular components. Each year, official statistics undergo a seasonal adjustment review to assess the suitability of seasonal parameters applied to the data. The annual WFJ review is aligned with the benchmarking process, with changes from the review producing minor revisions back to September 1981.

Labour Force Survey reweighting

The LFS is a household survey which feeds into the self-employment jobs, government-supported trainees, and a subset of employee jobs components of workforce jobs. Given that the LFS is a sample, its responses are weighted to estimates of the UK population to produce representative estimates of the labour market.

We have now reweighted the LFS using more recent population information, updating the population weights used for periods from January to March 2019 onwards. The reweighted LFS estimates incorporate information on the size and composition of the UK population, based on 2022 mid-year estimates.

The reweighting exercise creates a discontinuity in total Workforce Jobs, employee jobs, and self-employment jobs between December 2018 and March 2019, where there will be a step change. Therefore, comparisons with estimates from before March 2019 should be avoided. The LFS estimates are [official statistics in development](#).

For more information, see our [Impact of reweighting on Labour Force Survey key indicators: December 2024 article](#).

3 . Overview of revisions to workforce jobs

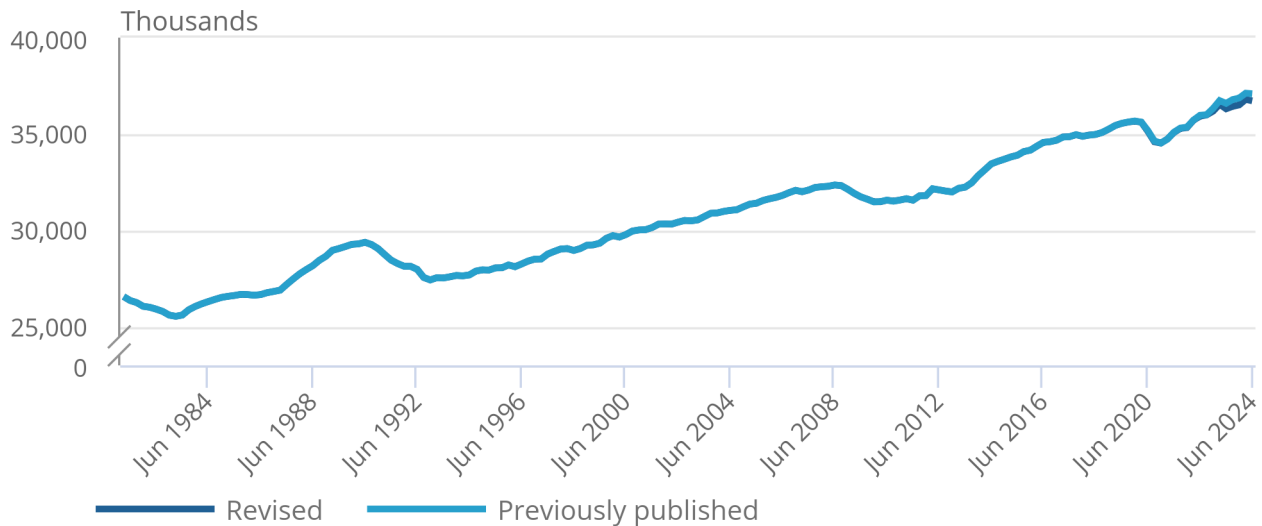
In December of each year, regular adjustments are made to Workforce Jobs (WFJ) estimates to improve quality and coherence with other Office for National Statistics (ONS) business surveys, resulting in revisions to the series. The impact of these revisions, alongside the incorporation of reweighted Labour Force Survey data, is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Between June 2019 and June 2024, the adjustments have revised down the number of workforce jobs compared with previously published estimates

Number of jobs in the UK, seasonally adjusted, March 1981 to June 2024

Figure 1: Between June 2019 and June 2024, the adjustments have revised down the number of workforce jobs compared with previously published estimates

Number of jobs in the UK, seasonally adjusted, March 1981 to June 2024



Source: Workforce Jobs from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. The latest Labour Force Survey (LFS) reweighting exercise creates a discontinuity in total workforce jobs between December 2018 and March 2019, where there will be a step change in the revised series.
2. The previous LFS reweighting exercise created a discontinuity in total workforce jobs between June 2022 and September 2022, where there will be a step change in the previously published series.

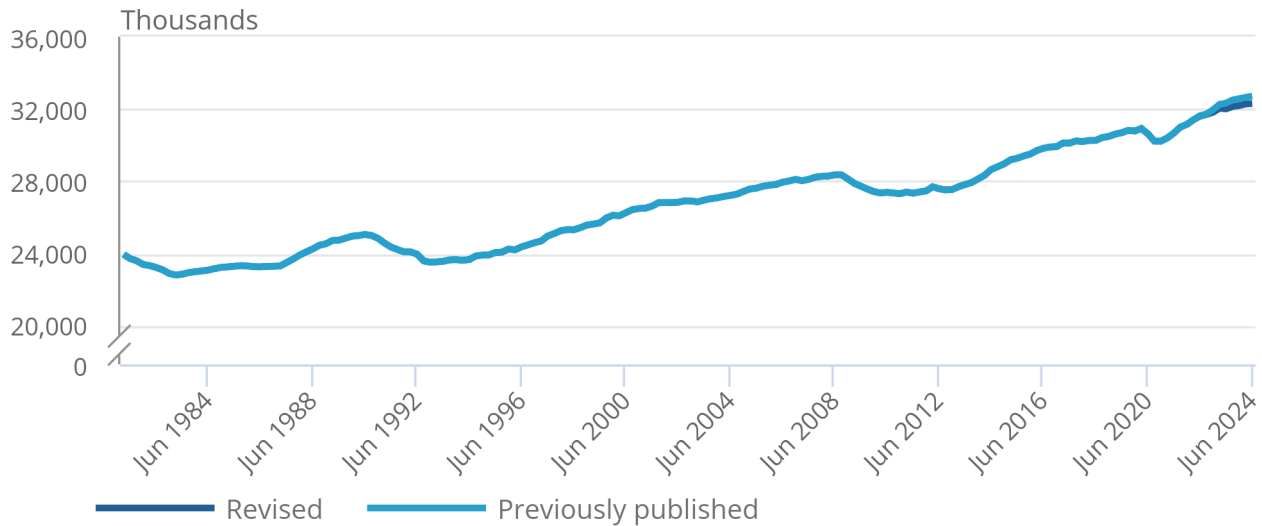
The revisions to WFJ have mostly decreased the estimates, with the largest revisions from December 2022 onwards. The largest impact is in June 2024 with a decrease of 369,000 (1.0%) between previously published and revised estimates.

Figure 2: Between December 2022 and June 2024, the adjustments have revised down the number of employee jobs compared with previously published estimates

Number of employee jobs in the UK, seasonally adjusted, March 1981 to June 2024

Figure 2: Between December 2022 and June 2024, the adjustments have revised down the number of employee jobs compared with previously published estimates

Number of employee jobs in the UK, seasonally adjusted, March 1981 to June 2024



Source: Workforce Jobs from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. The latest Labour Force Survey (LFS) reweighting exercise creates a discontinuity in total workforce jobs between December 2018 and March 2019, where there will be a step change in the revised series.
2. The previous LFS reweighting exercise created a discontinuity in total workforce jobs between June 2022 and September 2022, where there will be a step change in the previously published series.

The revisions to Employee Jobs have mostly decreased the estimates, with the largest revisions from December 2022 onwards. The largest impact is in June 2024 with a decrease of 409,000 (1.2%) between previously published and revised estimates.

Figure 3: Revised estimates of self-employed jobs show an increase in growth compared with previous estimates in the latest periods

Number of self-employment jobs in the UK, seasonally adjusted, March 1996 to June 2024

Figure 3: Revised estimates of self-employed jobs show an increase in growth compared with previous estimates in the latest periods

Number of self-employment jobs in the UK, seasonally adjusted, March 1996 to June 2024



Source: Workforce Jobs from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. The latest Labour Force Survey (LFS) reweighting exercise creates a discontinuity in total workforce jobs between December 2018 and March 2019, where there will be a step change in the revised series.
2. The previous LFS reweighting exercise created a discontinuity in total workforce jobs between June 2022 and September 2022, where there will be a step change in the previously published series.

The revisions to self-employment jobs have mostly increased the estimates, with increases observed from September 2022 onwards. The largest impact is in June 2024, with an increase of 45,000 (1.5%) between previously published and revised estimates.

4 . Data on revisions to Workforce Jobs

[Revision tables, workforce jobs by component, UK](#)

Dataset | Released 17 December 2024

Estimates of revisions to workforce jobs by component.

5 . Glossary

Workforce Jobs

Workforce Jobs is a quarterly measure of the number of jobs in the UK and is the preferred measure of the change in jobs by industry.

Jobs

A [job](#) is an activity performed for an employer or customer by a worker in exchange for payment, usually in cash, or in kind, or both. The number of jobs is not the same as the number of [people in employment](#). This is because a person can have more than one job. The number of jobs is the sum of employee jobs from employer surveys, self-employment jobs from the Labour Force Survey (LFS), those in HM Forces and government-supported trainees. The number of people in employment is measured by the LFS; these estimates are available in our [Employment in the UK bulletin](#).

Please find a more [detailed glossary in our Guide to Labour market statistics](#).

6 . Data sources and quality

This article explains, in detail, the revisions that have been made to the Workforce Jobs (WFJ) series as a result of:

- benchmarking to the latest estimates from the annual Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES); these revisions will go back to December 2022
- revisions to Public Sector Employment (PSE); these revisions will go back to March 2008
- revisions to Short-Term Employment Surveys (STES) because of updates in data supplied or late data; these revisions will go back to June 2024
- revisions to Northern Ireland employee jobs; these revisions will go back to March 2024
- revisions to government-supported trainees from data taken on from the Devolved Administrations and the Labour Force Survey (LFS); these revisions will go back to September 2021 and March 2019, respectively
- revisions to HM Forces; these revisions will go back to June 2023
- changes to seasonal parameters following a seasonal adjustment review; these revisions will go back to September 1981
- revisions to the LFS as a result of the latest reweighting exercise; these revisions will go back to March 2019

Workforce Jobs sources

These are the four components of the WFJ series and the sources of their respective data.

Component 1: Employee jobs, Great Britain

Private sector source

Short-Term Employer Surveys (STES), benchmarked to the Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES).

Public sector source

Public Sector Employment (PSE) from Quarterly Public Sector Employment Surveys (QPSES) and administrative sources from other government departments and Devolved Administrations.

Agriculture source

Labour Force Survey (LFS), benchmarked to BRES and/or Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) farms data.

Air transport source

Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), benchmarked to BRES.

Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).

Component 2: Self-employment jobs

Labour Force Survey (LFS) – main and second jobs by industry, by region.

Component 3: Government-supported trainees

England

Labour Force Survey (LFS).

Wales

Welsh Government (WG), split by industry using LFS.

Scotland

Scottish Government (SG), split by industry using LFS.

Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).

Component 4: His Majesty's Forces

Defence Analytical Services and Advice (DASA).

7 . Related links

[Vacancies and jobs in the UK: December 2024](#)

Bulletin | Released 17 December 2024

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

[Estimates of sampling variability for workforce jobs](#)

Dataset | Released 10 September 2024

Workforce jobs sampling variability estimates (95% confidence intervals and coefficients of variation). These sampling variability estimates are usually updated once a year.

[Quality and Methodology information report for workforce jobs](#)

Report | Released 5 March 2013

This report provides a range of information that describes the quality of workforce jobs, how the output is created including validation and quality assurance, concepts and definitions and other information relating to quality trade-offs and user needs.

8 . Cite this article

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