

Workforce jobs in the UK quality and methods guide

What the workforce jobs statistics cover, how we produce them, and their quality and comparability. Includes definitions and latest, past and upcoming changes.

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1 . Overview

The UK workforce jobs (WFJ) is a quarterly measure of jobs in the UK and is the preferred measure of short-term employment change by industry. This quality and methods guide (QMG) provides quality and methods information for the workforce jobs element of our [Vacancies and jobs in the UK bulletin](#).

Estimates of WFJ are measured as the sum of employee jobs, self-employment jobs, government supported trainees, and HM forces (HMF). A variety of outputs are produced, including breakdowns by industry, region, sex, and full-time or part-time status.

The estimates are compiled from a number of sources, including the [Quarterly Business Survey \(QBS\)](#), the [Quarterly Public Sector Employment Survey \(QPSES\)](#), and the [Labour Force Survey \(LFS\)](#). Further detail on these and other WFJ sources will be outlined in this report.

Workforce jobs are [accredited official statistics](#). For more information, see [Section 6: Quality of the statistics](#).

2 . Latest changes to quality and methods

We published this guide on 19 March 2026, replacing our previous Workforce jobs quality and methodology information (QMI) report published on 5 March 2013. A number of important quality and methods changes were made in December 2025:

- the collection of employee jobs data for the private sector was migrated – previously, data were collected through the Monthly Business Survey (MBS), Quarterly Business Survey (QBS), and Construction Survey (CON); now they are only collected through a larger single-sample on QBS
- to improve and streamline processes, the data collection and results platform for QBS was upgraded; methods remain constant, except for the collection method described in the previous bullet point

For more information on the latest, past and upcoming changes, see [Section 7: Changes and their effects on comparability over time](#).

3 . What the statistics cover

We publish estimates of workforce jobs (WFJ) broken down by component, industry (at various aggregations), region, sex, and full or part time status. We present statistics on workforce jobs in five different datasets:

- [JOBS01: Workforce jobs summary](#) – Workforce jobs summary, UK, published quarterly, seasonally adjusted
- [JOBS02: Workforce jobs by industry](#) – Workforce jobs by industry, employee jobs by industry and self-employment jobs by industry, UK, published quarterly, seasonally adjusted and not seasonally adjusted
- [JOBS03: Employee jobs by industry](#) – Employee jobs by industry and sex, UK, published quarterly, not seasonally adjusted
- [JOBS04: Self-employment jobs by industry](#) – Self-employment jobs by industry and sex, UK, published quarterly, not seasonally adjusted
- [JOBS05: Workforce jobs by region and industry](#) – Workforce jobs by industry, UK countries and English regions, published quarterly, seasonally adjusted

These data are also available through [Nomis](#). Breakdowns are for seasonally adjusted and not seasonally adjusted data, by component, sex, SIC07 industry sector, and UK countries and English regions.

These data are included quarterly as part of our [Labour market overview, UK bulletin](#), where estimates are compared with other measures of labour demand and supply. As part of this comparison we publish our [X03: Reconciliation of estimates of employment and jobs dataset](#), which aims to reconcile estimates of jobs (derived primarily from employer surveys) with estimates of employment (derived from the Labour Force Survey).

4 . Where the data come from

Overview

Workforce jobs (WFJ) draws on a range of sources and is the sum of:

- employee jobs - measured primarily by employer surveys
- self-employment jobs - from the Labour Force Survey (LFS)
- government-supported trainees (GSTs) - from administrative sources and the LFS
- HM forces (HMFs) - from administrative sources

Employee jobs

Employee jobs (EJ) is by far the largest component of WFJ. The private sector element is collected from the Quarterly Business Survey (QBS) and the public sector element is collected from the Quarterly Public Sector Employment Survey (QPSES); both elements are supplemented by administrative sources. These sources are:

- Quarterly Business Survey (QBS) – a sample of approximately 37,000 businesses, collecting information on private sector jobs in all industry sectors excluding agriculture, forestry and fishing (SIC07 section A), and activities of households as employers (SIC07 section T) in Great Britain
- Quarterly Public Sector Employment Survey (QPSES) – a sample of approximately 1,500 contributors, collecting information on public sector employment in Great Britain; these survey data are supplemented with a range of administrative sources, which are set out in our [Public sector employment quality and methodology information \(QMI\) report](#)
- Labour Force Survey (LFS) – a sample of approximately 29,000 responding households, collecting information on private sector jobs in agriculture, forestry and fishing (section A), and activities of households as employers (section T) in the United Kingdom
- Civil Aviation Authority – the number of employee jobs in Great Britain in the air transport industry

Both QBS and QPSES are supplemented by the equivalent data for Northern Ireland, collected and supplied through the [Quarterly Employment Survey \(QES\)](#) by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).

Previously, the private sector jobs component was collected from the Short-Term Employment Surveys (STES). For more information, see [Section 7: Changes and their effects on comparability over time](#)

Each year, the private sector element of WFJ is benchmarked to the latest estimates from the annual Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES). For more information, see Quarterly Business Survey benchmarking in [Section 5: How we produce these statistics](#).

Self-employment jobs

Self-employment jobs (SEJ) is the next largest component of WFJ. This component is collected exclusively from the LFS and is measured as the sum of main and second jobs by region and industry.

As part of our derivation, we remove anyone on LFS self-defining as a working proprietor, that is anyone who is the sole director of their own limited business. The reason for excluding this cohort is that they are sampled and therefore collected on QBS as part of the EJ component. This methodology removes the risk of double counting this cohort.

HM forces

HM forces (HMF) data are available from the beginning of the series, which started in June 1959. These data come directly from the public sector employment dataset. Current HMF data are supplied to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) by Personnel Statistics and Analysis (PSA) within the Ministry of Defence (MoD). They have been supplied to WFJ by region from March 1996, enabling regional WFJ series to be produced. Previously, the WFJ series excluded HMF and were termed Civilian WFJ. HMF based overseas are included in the regional UK estimates, so the sum of the regional WFJ estimates is slightly less than the UK WFJ. More information can be found in our [Public sector employment QMI report](#).

Government-supported trainees

Government-supported trainees (GST) data are provided by a range of sources. AGST (or more broadly, someone on a government-supported training or employment programme) is an individual participating in a specific, officially funded, or organised scheme designed to provide work-related training. This covers employees without a contract. Those with a contract are collected as part of EJ.

We receive data from the Welsh Government, the Scottish Government, and the Department for the Economy in Northern Ireland for Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland, respectively. We previously received data from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) for England, but we now get these data from the LFS. We also use LFS data to apportion total headcount data from all sources by industry and sex, as this is the only source with this breakdown available.

5 . How we produce the statistics

Quarterly Business Survey sample design

Estimates cover Great Britain businesses registered for Value Added Tax (VAT) and/or Pay-As-You-Earn (PAYE) and are classified to the Standard Industrial Classification 2007 (SIC 2007). It covers all major industry groups, excluding agriculture, forestry and fishing (SIC07 section A), and activities of households as employers (SIC07 section T).

The required details on these businesses are obtained from the Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR), which is then used as the survey sampling frame. Businesses are sampled from the IDBR on a reporting unit (RU) basis. More information on the coverage, structure, and size of the IDBR can be found on the [Inter-Departmental Business Register \(IDBR\)](#) webpages.

The Quarterly Business Survey (QBS) is made up of approximately 37,000 RUs from across the Great Britain economy. A stratified random sample is drawn from the IDBR with strata being defined by SIC 2007 and employment size. All RUs with registered employment above a given threshold (which varies by industry) are included in the sample. Strata containing these RUs are referred to as fully-enumerated.

The design is similar to a stratified one-stage cluster sample, where the stage one units (or clusters) are RUs and the elements in each cluster are local units (LUs). The returned employment data (or imputed data for non-responders) for the sampled RUs are apportioned between their local units (LUs) using the ratio of LU to RU employment from the IDBR. This process produces more refined employment estimates by region and by industry. See Quarterly Business Survey (QBS) estimation and calibration in [Section 5: How we produce these statistics for further details](#).

Quarterly Business Survey questionnaire

The Quarterly Business Survey (QBS) collects information on employment of businesses in Great Britain on a quarterly basis.

To complete the survey, respondents are asked for the following important information:

- number of full-time and part-time male employees
- number of full-time and part-time female employees
- total number of employees for the business
- explanation of any changes in their figures in the comments section

Respondents are also provided with supplementary information on the Office for National Statistics's (ONS's) definition of an employee. The definition of an employee is: "anyone aged 16 years or over who is working directly for the business on the specific reference date – the first Friday after the second Thursday of the reference month. They may be paid direct from the business, from elsewhere within the wider group, or by an external payroll provider on behalf of the company."

Respondents are asked to consider the following inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Inclusions:

- full-time and part-time employees aged 16 years and over
- individuals working from home and those temporarily absent but still employed (for example those on parental or sick leave)
- those on apprenticeships or training schemes
- directors and working owners paid via PAYE
- employees without guaranteed hours (for example those on zero-hour contracts) if they worked on the reference date

Exclusions:

- workers paid by an employment agency (for example consultants or contingent labour)
- voluntary workers
- former employees only receiving a pension
- self-employed workers
- directors and working owners who are not paid via PAYE

Quarterly Business Survey validation and selective editing

When a respondent submits a return, their responses are firstly validated against a set of rules. A validation rule is applied to ensure that the sums of splits - for example the male and female split or the full-time and part-time split – sum to the total number of employees submitted. There are times when these splits will not add - for example, when the sex of all employees is not known - but the error allows us to confirm this with the responder and amend if required. In addition to this rule, respondents who responded with zero employees are flagged for validation if this is not consistent with previous data returns, or if they are returning for the first time.

A score-based selective editing methodology is applied to identify respondents that would have a significant impact on aggregate survey estimates if they were not checked. A score is calculated for each respondent, which compares their data on total employees with previous returns (or data on employees from the IDBR if previous returns are not available). This efficient approach to data validation considers a respondent's impact on survey outputs to identify potential data errors that would affect the quality of published survey estimates if they were not validated.

Depending on the outcome of the validation rules and selective editing method, returns are flagged as an error, a warning, or clean, allowing the team to prioritise quality assurance and analysis.

Quarterly Business Survey imputation and construction

Values for businesses that do not respond are imputed. A mean of ratios imputation approach is applied, which considers the responses given by groups of similar businesses and how their values have changed from one reporting period to the next; this is known as an imputation link. Imputation links are applied to previous returns for each non-responder to calculate an imputed value.

For newly sampled businesses that have not responded, values are constructed by considering the responses given by groups of similar businesses and how they compare with their registered IDBR employment; this is known as a construction link. Construction links are applied to IDBR employment for non-responders that are newly sampled to calculate a constructed value. For subsequent periods, imputed values will be based on movements in similar-sized businesses.

Quarterly Business Survey outlier treatment

The treatment of outliers is applied at RU level. Outliers are detected and amended through an automated process and are treated by adjusting their estimation weights. Further manual checks are also carried out and outliered businesses from previous periods are monitored.

Quarterly Business Survey estimation and calibration

A generalised regression estimator is used with calibration to industry sections by region. As it is not possible to survey every business in the population, it is necessary to weight the sample data to provide estimates for the full population. Apportioned reporting unit (RU) returns (see [Quarterly Business Survey sample design](#) at the beginning of this section) are weighted to represent non-sampled units. Since QBS is not stratified by region (only by industry and size of business), weights are generated using a model, which ensures that estimates are calibrated to local unit (LU) employment totals of "regional industries" from the IDBR. Weighted LUs are then summed by region and industry to produce published level aggregates.

The estimator for a given domain is derived as a combination of the design weight, the survey response, the outlier weight, the "region weight" and the calibration factor, also known as the g-weight. The design weight is based on a unit's probability of selection based on the IDBR universe and the g-weight is based on the IDBR employment value (or auxiliary value) for the local unit in the "regional industry" to which the local unit belongs. The g-weight is a sample dependent weight for each local unit. These weights ensure that the weighted totals of the auxiliary variable sum to the known population totals of industry (sections) by region from the IDBR.

Quarterly Business Survey benchmarking

Benchmarking is an annual process used to align the quarterly Great Britain employee jobs (EJ) series to the latest estimates from the Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES). BRES is based on a sample of approximately 86,000 reporting units. This is a much larger sample than Quarterly Business Survey and is therefore generally considered to produce more accurate and detailed estimates of the level of employment.

Estimates for BRES (previously ABI) refer to Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) in each year up to 2005 and Quarter 3 (September reference date) in subsequent years. The private sector element of the Great Britain EJ series is benchmarked to the equivalent of BRES for the September period in each year.

More information on benchmarking is included in our annual [Revisions to workforce jobs article](#).

Quarterly Public Sector Employment Survey methods

Our public sector employment (PSE) estimates are the definitive source for public sector employment. The PSE sources form a quarterly census of the public sector as defined by the UK National Accounts.

Detailed information on the quality and methods of PSE inputs can be found in our [Public sector employment quality and methodology information \(QMI\) report](#).

Labour Force Survey methods

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) provides WFJ with self-employment jobs data, employee jobs data for agriculture, forestry and fishing (SIC07 section A), and activities of households as employers (SIC07 section T), government-supported trainees (GSTs) data for England, and the industry and sex breakdown for use in apportionment for all GSTs data.

Detailed information on the quality and methods of LFS inputs can be found in our [Labour Force Survey – user guidance](#).

Statistical disclosure control

Statistical disclosure control methodology is applied to WFJ data. This ensures that information attributable to an individual or individual organisation is not identifiable in any published outputs. The [Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#), and specifically the Principle on Confidentiality, sets out practices for how we protect data from being disclosed. The "Principle" includes the statement that our ONS outputs should "ensure that official statistics do not reveal the identity of an individual or organisation, or any private information relating to them, taking into account other relevant sources of information". More information can be found in our [Disclosure control methodology](#).

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. The system seasonally adjusts WFJ components by industry, sex, and regions and then aggregates the series through these three hierarchical dimensions. This bottom-up approach maintains additivity throughout the seasonally adjusted dataset without the need for constraining. It also enables the regional statistical bulletin tables to be produced with the same breakdowns and layouts as the national.

Seasonal effects are detected and treated using the X-13-ARIMA-SEATS software package. The seasonal adjustment of WFJ is reviewed and implemented annually, with revisions taken on in December each year alongside benchmarking revisions. More information is included in our [Revisions to workforce jobs article](#).

6 . Quality of the statistics

Statistical designation

The Office for Statistics Regulation independently reviewed these accredited official statistics 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".

How we quality assure the data and statistics

Quality assurance

1. The data collection system carries out basic validation checks and applies selective editing when a respondent submits their return.
2. We carry out validation and consistency checks on respondent-level data to identify extreme values or changes since previous returns, raising any concerns with the respondent via our data collection colleagues.
3. We carry out more frequent and thorough checks on weighted and unweighted values, to measure the impact individual returns have on the overall statistics or specific breakdowns.
4. Once returns data have been validated and authorised, we run our pipelines, performing a series of automated and manual checks at all stages of the pipeline.
5. Following the production of the final outputs, we compare estimates with other measures of employment and jobs - for more information, see [Section 8: Comparability and coherence with other statistics producers](#).

Sampling error

Workforce jobs (WFJ) estimates are mainly based on statistical samples and as such are subject to sampling error. We published an article on [approximate confidence intervals by region and industry section](#), which we now publish on an annual basis in our [JOBS07: Workforce jobs sampling variability dataset](#).

Non-sampling error

Non-sampling error is the error attributable to all sources other than sampling. It includes frame error such as under-coverage, treatment of non-response and outliers, measurement error and processing error.

Response rates are monitored closely on a quarterly basis by the survey team. Furthermore, each survey has a list of critical respondents (usually those with the largest employment) where special efforts are made to achieve a 100% response rate and clearance of test failures.

Errors and revisions

In the event of a large error being detected with the data, all outputs and datasets will be revised in line with the [Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#).

Reliance on surveys to collect information with which to produce statistics means that events and economic trends cannot be measured in their entirety. As more information becomes available over time, estimates can be revised to improve quality and accuracy, which provides a better picture of what is being measured. A policy of accepting revisions improves the accuracy of the data as other information becomes available. Revisions are therefore standard practice when producing official statistics. More information on revisions can be found in our [Revisions policies for labour market statistics](#) and [The Office for National Statistics' Revisions Policy and Correction of Errors Policy](#).

In the case of WFJ, revisions are made to estimates for the previous period on a quarterly basis, incorporating late returns or revisions to previously supplied returns. Each quarter, we publish our [JOBS06: Workforce jobs revisions triangle dataset](#) to help users understand the latest revisions.

Further to this, each year revisions are made to the previous five quarters of WFJ estimates, incorporating late returns or revisions to previously supplied returns. We align the short-term employee jobs series to the latest estimates from the Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES).

We also have an annual seasonal adjustment review and aim to incorporate changes to seasonal parameters at the same time as our annual revisions. We publish our [Revisions to workforce jobs article](#), which explains our revisions in more detail.

As workforce jobs is a compound source that draws on a range of employer surveys, household surveys and administrative sources, there are often revisions to sources outside of the control of the team. Where possible, we aim to take on these revisions alongside our annual revisions in December each year. Where this is not possible, we pre-announce upcoming revisions within our bulletin, clearly identifying revisions in our publication tables and bulletin in the period they occur.

Strengths and limitations

Strengths

- Workforce jobs is the preferred measure of short-term employment change by industry, owing to the accuracy of industrial information achieved from linkage with IDBR.
- Workforce jobs response rates are good, with 71.5% achieved response in December 2025.

Limitations

- Workforce jobs cannot provide detailed industry or geographical breakdowns – SIC07 section and NUTS1 region are the lowest available – owing to sample sizes, with only some non-seasonally adjusted data available at a lower industry level.
- Workforce jobs is reliant on inputs from multiple sources, so issues such as discontinuities in source data can affect the quality of final outputs.

European Statistical System Quality Dimensions

We have developed [Guidelines for measuring statistical quality](#), based on the five European Statistical System (ESS) Quality Dimensions. These are:

- relevance
- accuracy and reliability
- timeliness and punctuality
- comparability and coherence
- accessibility and clarity

We have integrated these considerations into the guide.

7 . Changes and their effects on comparability over time

Latest changes

Move from Short-term Employment Surveys to Quarterly Business Survey

Up until December 2025, employee jobs data for the private sector was collected through three surveys: the Monthly Business Survey (MBS), Quarterly Business Survey (QBS), and Construction Survey (CON).

To improve and streamline processes, the data collection platform for these three surveys was upgraded and went live throughout Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2025. Alongside this, employment questions have been consolidated into a single questionnaire under QBS; they were removed from MBS and CON from December 2025. Businesses in sectors previously sampled only in MBS or CON have moved into an expanded QBS universe which samples approximately 37,000 businesses.

The core QBS methodology remains unchanged, but the sample is larger and unified. Forced inclusions (large businesses that must be included) will only apply where required for QBS. For the remaining sample, there will be an overlap of around 50% between the old MBS and CON samples and the new QBS sample in December 2025. There will be full overlap for forced inclusions to ensure a smooth transition. In March 2026, the forced inclusions in the overlap will be withdrawn and replaced by newly sampled businesses, but the forced inclusions for large businesses will remain. Normal QBS rotation will resume from June 2026.

There has been no impact from the platform upgrade itself, owing to methods remaining consistent. However, sampling a large number of new businesses has affected response rates and the number of responses available for imputation link factors. For more information, see Quarterly Business Survey imputation and construction in [Section 5: How we produce these statistics](#).

We have worked hard with our survey teams to reduce the impact of these changes, supporting the onboarding of newly selected businesses and prioritising follow-up where needed. However, there are small known biases between newly sampled and existing businesses within the existing rotation, construction, and imputation methods, that have been amplified during this period because of the volume of newly sampled businesses.

Past changes

These changes are ordered by date, with the most recent first.

Labour Force Survey reweighting

We reinstated reweighted Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimates into our monthly publication from 17 December 2024, as stated on 3 December 2024 in our [Impact of reweighting on Labour Force Survey key indicators: December 2024 article](#). The reweighting exercise created 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. Users should avoid making comparisons with estimates from before March 2019.

We aim to remove this discontinuity in 2026 as part of the full LFS reweighting exercise. For the latest plans on reweighting and implementation see our [Labour Force Survey transformation plans and progress article](#).

Government-supported trainees

Until September 2016, government-supported trainees (GSTs) data for England were supplied by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS). When these data were no longer available, we moved to measuring England GSTs from the Labour Force Survey, with estimates from the new source backdated to June 2006. More information is available in our [Revisions to workforce jobs: Dec 2016 methodology](#).

Removing Retail Sales Inquiry from Short Term Employer Surveys

Up until June 2018, information on employment from businesses in the retail sector was collected from the Retail Sales Inquiry (RSI). From June 2018 onwards the employment questions were dropped from RSI and these businesses became eligible for sampling on QBS instead.

As described earlier in this section, we had an overlap of sample in the initial go-live period before reverting to normal QBS sample rotation.

Major redevelopment of workforce jobs

A fundamental redevelopment of WFJ sources, classifications, methods and systems was undertaken in 2010. An article explaining the redevelopment in full was published as part of the [September 2010 Economic and Labour Market Review \(ELMR\)](#).

Upcoming changes

Labour Force Survey transformation plans and progress

We are currently in the process of transforming our labour market statistics. We are regularly publishing the latest information on the ongoing work on our Labour Force Survey (LFS) – including reweighting exercises - as well as updates and plans for the development and dual run of the new Transformed Labour Force Survey (TLFS).

The full set of updates and timelines can be found on our [Transformation of labour market statistics](#) webpages.

Other upcoming improvements

In June 2025, we published two detailed plans on improving the quality of our core economic outputs and the surveys underpinning them.

Our [Plan for ONS economic statistics](#) aims to restore confidence and improve the quality of our core statistics. It sets out where things stand today and highlights important areas for improvement. This forms a crucial part of our response to the recent Office for Statistics Regulation review into economic statistics. Our [Surveys Improvement and Enhancement Plan for Economic Statistics](#) does the same for our household and business surveys.

Elements of both these plans will affect our workforce jobs statistics, including the move to the Statistical Business Register, move to Standard Industrial Classification (SIC26), and any outcomes from [Business Surveys – past, present and future](#).

8 . Comparability and coherence with other statistics producers

Labour market statistics measure many different aspects of work and jobs and provide an insight into the economy.

A framework for labour market statistics is used to describe the major concepts that exist within the labour market and their relationship to each other. The framework is based on the concepts of labour supply and demand, which together provide a comprehensive picture from the perspective of both households and businesses. This approach is long-established and has wide international acceptance, including by the International Labour Organization (ILO).

To help users better understand this framework, we produced a [Comparison of labour market data sources guide](#). This helps users to understand the strengths and weaknesses of each of our sources and the definitional and methodological differences between them.

Each quarter, to aid this understanding, we publish our [X03: Reconciliation of estimates of employment and jobs dataset](#). The dataset aims to reconcile estimates of workforce jobs (derived primarily from employer surveys) with estimates of employment (derived from the Labour Force Survey).

9 . Users and uses of these statistics

Workforce jobs (WFJ) estimates and data produced for the quarterly publication are used across government, business and academia, and they feed into a number of wider publications and outputs. Some government departments use the total figures to facilitate policy-making, whereas others use specific components of the published data.

Some of the main external users are:

- HM Treasury – WFJ estimates are used to assess labour market conditions and are an important indicator in the context of macroeconomic assessment
- Bank of England (BoE) – the BoE Monetary Policy Committee is a user of WFJ estimates and the BoE use the WFJ estimates as an indicator for setting interest rates
- Department for Education (DfE) – DfE use WFJ to inform and monitor policy-making such as the success of their Welfare to Work programme
- devolved administrations – Scottish Government, Welsh Governments, and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA)

Workforce jobs estimates are delivered to, and used by, a variety of other Office for National Statistics (ONS) users within our own outputs, such as:

- Regional labour market
- Business Register and Employment Survey
- Productivity
- Monthly and quarterly gross domestic product (GDP)
- UK National Accounts, The Blue Book
- Welsh Short-Term Indicators
- Household Income

Data from the business surveys element of employee jobs component are also available on the [Secure Research Service \(SRS\)](#) for use by accredited researchers.

10 . Definitions

A full explanation of the major concepts that exist within the labour market and their relationship to each other can be found in our [Guide to labour market statistics methodology](#).

This quality and methods guide (QMG) includes descriptions of the most commonly used concepts.

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. Agreement is reached through the provision and negotiation of a contract, stipulating what an employer or customer demands, and what is to be supplied by the worker. Estimates of jobs are published in the workforce jobs series, which is mainly sourced from employer surveys.

Private sector

All people in employment are classified to the private sector except those employed by central government, local government, and public corporations.

Public sector

The public sector is made up of central government, local government, and public corporations as defined in our [Public sector classification guide and forward work plan](#) for UK National Accounts. The national accounts are compiled based on an internationally comparable accounting framework and they describe the activities in a national economy.

Inter-Departmental Business Register

The UK register for business surveys. The Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR) is used to:

- select businesses to include in the surveys
- mail forms
- enable estimates to be made for businesses that do not respond, or who were not asked to participate in any particular survey
- produce analyses

Industrial classification or breakdown

This is the internationally standardised method for classifying the extensive range of industrial sectors in an economy. At the highest level, the economy can be divided into the private and public sectors. It can also be broken down by industrial sector. We use the Standard Industrial Classification 2007 (SIC 2007) for industrial breakdowns of labour market statistics.

Full-time and part-time

On the Quarterly Business Survey (QBS) a full-time employee is defined as someone who works more than 30 hours a week and a part-time employee is someone who works 30 hours or less a week.

11 . Related links

[Vacancies and jobs in the UK](#)

Bulletin series | Released monthly

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

[Public sector employment QMI](#)

Methodology | Released 24 July 2018

Quality and Methodology Information report detailing the methods behind the Public sector employment (PSE) release.

[Labour Force Survey – user guidance](#)

Methodology | Last revised 29 January 2026

Guidance about the background and methodology of the Labour Force Survey (LFS).

[Comparison of labour market data sources](#)

Methodology | Last revised 27 April 2022

The strengths and weaknesses of the main data sources we use to produce the labour market figures, including the advantages of new administrative data sources and limitations of some of our published figures.

[A guide to labour market statistics](#)

Methodology | Last revised 16 June 2020

Explanation of the major concepts that exist within the labour market and their relationship to each other.

12 . Cite this page

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