

Statistical bulletin

# Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), UK: May 2026

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

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# 1 . Main points

- Estimates from January to March 2025 include the full effect of the improvements in Labour Force Survey (LFS) data collection and sampling methods introduced from January 2024 onwards.
- Some volatility remains in the LFS estimates, particularly those for mid-2023 and throughout 2024, as well as for granular breakdowns in which sample sizes are smaller, such as estimates of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET).
- There were an estimated 1,012,000 young people aged 16 to 24 years in the UK who were NEET in January to March 2026; this number increased by 89,000 when compared with January to March 2025 and was up by 55,000 on October to December 2025.
- The percentage of all young people in the UK who were NEET in January to March 2026 was 13.5%; this proportion was up by 1.0 percentage point from January to March 2025 and by 0.7 percentage points from October to December 2025.

These labour market statistics, based on the Labour Force Survey, are considered [official statistics in development](#). Read more in [Section 6: Data sources and quality](#).

## 2 . Labour Force Survey quality

Alongside our labour market publication in January 2026, we published our [Labour Force Survey quality update article](#). The article provides users with information about current response rates and known biases in LFS data, to help them better understand the current quality of the data.

Estimates from January to March 2025 include the full effect of the improvements in LFS data collection and sampling methods introduced from January 2024 onwards. Some volatility remains, particularly for estimates for mid-2023 and throughout 2024, as well as for granular breakdowns, in which sample sizes are smaller.

For example, we can consider estimates of redundancies or estimates of young people not in employment, education or training. Both concepts focus on much smaller population subgroups compared with the headline rates. Therefore, both are more vulnerable to the effects of higher sampling variability, despite improved sample sizes. Therefore, we advise users to use caution when drawing conclusions from short-term changes, and to focus on long-term movements in the data.

### **3 . Total young people who were not in education, employment or training (NEET)**

An estimated 13.5% of all people aged 16 to 24 years in the UK were not in education, employment or training (NEET) in January to March 2026. This is up by 1.0 percentage point on the year, and up by 0.7 percentage points compared with October to December 2025.

An estimated 14.4% of young men (up by 1.2 percentage points on the year and 1.1 percentage points on the quarter) and 12.5% of young women (up by 0.8 percentage points on the year and 0.3 percentage points on the quarter) were NEET.

There were 1,012,000 young people who were NEET in January to March 2026, an increase of 89,000 on the year and 55,000 on the quarter. This increase was largely among young men, with an increase of 55,000 on the year, as well as an increase among young women of 34,000 on the year. Of the total number of young people who were NEET, 553,000 were young men and 459,000 were young women.

The total number of people aged 18 to 24 years who were NEET was 928,000, up 74,000 on the year and up 38,000 on the previous quarter.

The percentage of all those aged 18 to 24 years who were NEET was 15.8%, which was down by 1.0 percentage point on the year, but up by 0.6 percentage points on the quarter.

**Figure 1: The percentage of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) increased over the year (January to March 2025) [Note 1]**

People aged 16 to 24 years who are NEET, as a percentage of all people aged 16 to 24 years, by age, seasonally adjusted, UK, January to March 2019 to January to March 2026

**Figure 1: The percentage of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) increased over the year (January to March 2025) [Note 1]**

People aged 16 to 24 years who are NEET, as a percentage of all people aged 16 to 24 years, by age, seasonally adjusted, UK, January to March 2019 to January to March 2026



Source: Labour Force Survey from the Office for National Statistics

**Notes:**

1. Given the volatility of LFS estimates, we advise users to use caution when drawing conclusions from short-term changes, and to focus on long-term movements in the data.

**Unemployed young people who were not in education, employment or training**

There was an estimated 400,000 young people NEET aged 16 to 24 years who were unemployed in January to March 2026. This was up by 45,000 from January to March 2025, but down by 11,000 from October to December 2025.

An estimated 257,000 of these unemployed young people NEET were young men, and 143,000 were young women. The number of NEET men aged 16 to 24 years who were unemployed increased by 27,000 from January to March 2025, while the number of NEET women aged 16 to 24 years who were unemployed decreased by 18,000 on the year.

## Economically inactive young people who were not in education, employment or training

There were an estimated 613,000 economically inactive young people aged 16 to 24 years who were NEET in January to March 2026. This was up by 44,000 on the year from January to March 2025, and up by 66,000 on the quarter from October to December 2025.

The number of young men who were NEET and economically inactive was 297,000 and the corresponding number of young women was 316,000. The total increase of 44,000 on the year was largely among young men, with an increase of 28,000 from January to March 2025. Young women aged 16 to 24 years who were NEET and economically inactive increased by 16,000 on the year.

## Subnational not in education, employment or training (NEET) estimates

We do not publish subnational estimates for people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). These estimates can be accessed by following the links in [Section 7: Related links](#).

## 4 . Data on young people who were not in education, employment or training

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

Dataset | Released 28 May 2026

Quarterly estimates for young people (aged 16 to 24 years) who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) in the UK. These are official statistics in development.

[Sampling variability for estimates of young people not in education, employment or training \(NEET\)](#)

Dataset | Released 28 May 2026

Labour Force Survey quarterly sampling variability estimates for young people (aged 16 to 24 years) who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) in the UK. These are official statistics in development.

## 5 . Glossary

### Young people

For this release, young people are defined as those aged 16 to 24 years. Estimates are also produced for the age groups 16 to 17 years and 18 to 24 years by sex, and separately for the age groups 18 to 20 years, 21 to 22 years and 23 to 24 years.

### Education and training

People are considered to be in education or training if they:

- are enrolled on an education course and are still attending or waiting for term to start or restart
- are doing an apprenticeship
- are on a government-supported employment or training programme
- are working or studying towards a qualification
- have had job-related training or education in the last four weeks

## Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)

Anybody who is not in any of the forms of education or training previously listed and not in employment is considered to be NEET. As a result, a person identified as NEET will always be either unemployed or economically inactive.

### 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 and/or they are unable to start work in the next two weeks.

### Employment

[Employment](#) measures the number of people in paid work, or those 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.

### 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.

[A more detailed glossary](#) is available in our guide to Labour Market Statistics.

## 6 . Data sources and quality

This statistical bulletin contains estimates for young people who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) in the UK. The bulletin is published quarterly in February or March, May, August and November. All estimates discussed in this statistical bulletin are for the UK and are seasonally adjusted.

Statistics in this bulletin are used to help monitor progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Explore the UK data on our [SDGs reporting platform](#).

Background information that explains how missing information for identifying someone as NEET is appropriated based on individual characteristics can be found in our [Young people not in education, employment or training \(NEET\), UK: May 2022 methodology](#).

## Official statistics in development

These statistics are labelled as "official statistics in development". Until September 2023, these were called "experimental statistics". Read more about the change in our [Guide to official statistics in development](#). This is in line with the [letter from the Office for Statistics Regulation \(OSR\)](#), stating that Labour Force Survey (LFS) statistics should not be published as accredited official statistics until OSR has reviewed them.

We published an update of our [LFS quality update article: April 2026](#). This article provides users with information about current response rates and known biases in LFS data, to help them better understand the current quality of the data.

As part of our work to address quality concerns with the LFS, we have seen improvements in response levels and rates, with responses now close to their pre-pandemic level. The achieved sample, including imputed cases (the dataset size), has increased from 77,927 individuals in October to December 2025 to 80,078 individuals in January to March 2026. This is shown in our [LFS performance and quality monitoring report: January to March 2026 methodology](#). More quality and methodology information on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in our [Labour Force Survey quality and methodology information \(QMI\) report](#).

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is responsible for NEET statistics for the UK, published in this release. Estimates of the number of young people who are NEET within the countries of the UK and for subnational areas are the responsibility of the Department for Education for England, and the devolved governments for each of the other countries. There is further information on the availability of subnational estimates of young people who are NEET in [Section 7: Related links](#).

## Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Read more about how the labour market data sources are affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in our [Coronavirus and the effects on UK labour market statistics article](#).

For a comparison of our labour market data sources and the main differences, read our [Comparison of our labour market data sources methodology](#).

## Relationship to other labour market statistics for young people

Our monthly [Labour market statistical bulletin](#) includes the dataset [A06: Educational status and labour market status for people aged from 16 to 24](#). The NEET statistics and the dataset A06 statistics are both derived from the LFS and use the same labour market statuses; however, the educational statuses are derived differently.

For dataset A06, the educational status is based on participation in full-time education only. For NEET statistics, the educational status is based on any form of education or training. Therefore, the dataset A06 category "not in full-time education" includes some people who are in part-time education and/or some form of training, and who, consequently, should not be regarded as NEET.

## Strengths and limitations

The figures in this bulletin come from the LFS, which gathers information from a sample of households across the UK, rather than from the whole population. The sample is designed to be as accurate as possible, given practical limitations. Results from sample surveys are always estimates and not precise figures. This can have an impact on how changes in the estimates should be interpreted. For more information on sampling, see [Section 2 of our Uncertainty and how we measure it for our surveys methodology](#).

As the sample gets smaller, the variability of the estimates gets larger. Estimates for small groups, which are based on small subsets of the LFS 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 in this bulletin between quarters are small and are not usually greater than the level that can be explained by sampling variability. Short-term movements in reported rates should be considered alongside longer-term patterns in the series and corresponding movements in other sources, to give a fuller picture.

Our [Sampling variability dataset](#) shows sampling variabilities for estimates of young people who are NEET derived from the LFS.

## 7 . Related links

### [NEET estimates for England](#)

Collection | Last updated 12 March 2026

Young people's participation in education, employment and training and those not in education, employment or training (NEET) from the Department for Education.

### [NEET estimates for Scotland](#)

Publication | Last updated 26 August 2025

Annual statistical publication from Skills Development Scotland, reporting on learning, training and work activity of those aged 16 to 19 years in Scotland.

### [NEET estimates for Wales](#)

Statistics and research | Last updated 29 April 2026

Data for young people by age, gender, region and disability from the Welsh Government.

### [NEET estimates for Northern Ireland](#)

Tables | Last updated 28 May 2026

Tables from the Labour Market Report, including Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET).

## 8 . Cite this statistical bulletin

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