

Statistical bulletin

# Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), UK: February 2024

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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## Table of contents

1. [Main points](#)
2. [Total young people who were not in education, employment or training \(NEET\)](#)
3. [Young people who were not in education, employment or training data](#)
4. [Glossary](#)
5. [Measuring the data](#)
6. [Strengths and limitations](#)
7. [Related links](#)
8. [Cite this statistical bulletin](#)

# 1 . Main points

- Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimates have been reweighted for periods from July to September 2022; a discontinuity has been introduced at this point therefore comparisons before this point are not possible.
- Increased volatility of LFS estimates, resulting from smaller achieved sample sizes, means that estimates of quarterly change should be treated with additional caution.
- There was an increase in the number of young people who were aged 16 to 24 years and not in education, employment or training (NEET) in October to December 2023, with the total currently estimated to be 851,000, up from 831,000 in October to December 2022.
- The percentage of all young people who were NEET in October to December 2023 was estimated at 12.0%, up 0.2 percentage points on October to December 2022.
- The increase in the number of young people who were NEET was driven by young men, among which there was an increase of 37,000 on the year to 467,000.
- The number of young people who were NEET and unemployed in October to December 2023 was estimated to be 292,000, a decrease of 19,000 on the year (October to December 2022).
- The number of young men aged 16 to 24 years who were NEET and unemployed decreased by 3,000 on the year (October to December 2022) to 195,000.
- There were an estimated 559,000 young people in the UK who were NEET and economically inactive, an increase on the year (October to December 2022) of 39,000.

The ongoing challenges with response rates and levels mean that LFS-based labour market statistics will be badged as [official statistics in development](#) until further review. Read more in [Section 5: Measuring the data](#) section.

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

An estimated 12.0% of all people aged 16 to 24 years in the UK were not in education, employment or training (NEET) in October to December 2023. This is up 0.2 percentage points compared with October to December 2022, but down 0.3 percentage points on the quarter.

An estimated 12.9% of young men (up 0.9 percentage points on the year) and 11.0% of young women (down 0.6 percentage points on the year) were NEET. There were 851,000 young people who were NEET in total, an increase of 20,000 on the year, which was driven by young men. Of the total number of young people who were NEET, 467,000 were young men and 384,000 were young women.

The total number of people aged 18 to 24 years who were NEET was 785,000, up 19,000 on the previous year.

The percentage of those aged 18 to 24 years who were NEET was 14.2%, which was up 0.3 percentage points on the year, but down 0.2 percentage points on the quarter.

**Figure 1: The percentage of young people who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) decreased over the quarter (October to December 2023).**

People aged 16 to 24 years who are NEET as a percentage of all young people, seasonally adjusted, UK, July to September 2022 to October to December 2023

Figure 1: The percentage of young people who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) decreased over the quarter (October to December 2023).

People aged 16 to 24 years who are NEET as a percentage of all young people, seasonally adjusted, UK, July to September 2022 to October to December 2023



Source: Labour Force Survey from the Office for National Statistics

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

There were an estimated 292,000 unemployed young people aged 16 to 24 years who were NEET in October to December 2023, down 19,000 from October to December 2022 and down 16,000 from July to September 2023.

An estimated 195,000 of these unemployed NEETS were young men and 98,000 were young women. The number of young men aged 16 to 24 years who were unemployed increased by 3,000 on the year from October to December 2022, while the number of young women aged 16 to 24 years who were unemployed decreased by 21,000 on the year from October to December 2022.

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

In October to December 2023, there were an estimated 559,000 economically inactive young people aged 16 to 24 years who were NEET. This was up 39,000 on the year from October to December 2022, but down 4,000 on the quarter from July to September 2023.

The number of young men who were NEET and economically inactive was 272,000 and the number of young women was 286,000. This was driven by young men, among which there was an increase of 34,000 on the year from October to December 2022. Young women aged 16 to 24 years who were NEET and economically inactive increased by 5,000 on the year from October to December 2022.

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

Subnational estimates for people not in education, employment or training estimates are not published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), but can be accessed by following the links in [Section 7: Related links](#).

## 3 . Young people who were not in education, employment or training data

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

Dataset | Released 22 February 2024

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](#)

Dataset | Released 22 February 2024

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

## 4 . 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 listed previously 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.

## 5 . Measuring the data

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](#).

Our [NEET methodological article](#) providing background information explains how missing information for identifying someone as NEET is appropriated based on individual characteristics.

## 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](#).

These statistics are based on information from the Labour Force Survey (LFS). The reweighting exercise has improved the representativeness of our LFS estimates for periods from July to September 2022, reducing potential bias in our estimates. Nonetheless, the ongoing challenges with response rates and levels mean that LFS-based labour market statistics are now badged as [official statistics in development](#) until further review. This is also in line with the [letter from the Office for Statistics Regulation \(OSR\)](#), stating that LFS statistics should not be published as accredited official statistics until OSR has reviewed them.

We would advise caution when interpreting short-term changes in headline LFS rates and recommend using them as part of our suite of labour market indicators alongside Workforce Jobs, claimant count data and Pay As You Earn Real Time Information (PAYE RTI) estimates.

We are transforming how we collect and produce the LFS data to improve the quality of these statistics. We have published a [Labour market transformation article](#) providing an update on the transformation of labour market statistics. The Transformed Labour Force Survey will become the primary source of information on the labour market from September 2024.

More quality and methodology information on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in our [LFS Quality and Methodology Information \(QMI\) report](#).

The [LFS performance and quality monitoring reports](#) provide data on response rates and other quality-related issues for the LFS.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is responsible for NEET statistics for the UK, published within 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 administrations 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

View [more information on how labour market data sources are affected by the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#).

View a [comparison of our labour market data sources and the main differences](#).

## 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 Labour Force Survey 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.

## 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 [labour.market@ons.gov.uk](mailto:labour.market@ons.gov.uk).

## 6 . Strengths and limitations

The figures in this bulletin come from the Labour Force Survey (LFS). Results from sample surveys are always estimates and not precise figures. As the number of people available in the sample gets smaller, the variability of the estimates that we can make from that sample size gets larger. In general, changes in the numbers and rates reported in this bulletin between three-month periods are small and are not usually greater than can be explained by sampling variability.

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 19 October 2023

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 29 August 2023

Annual statistical publication reporting on learning, training and work activity of 16 to 19 year olds in Scotland.

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

Statistics and research | Last updated 8 February 2024

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

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

Tables | Last updated 13 February 2024

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

## 8 . Cite this statistical bulletin

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