

Statistical bulletin

Employees in the UK: 2019

Number of employees in the UK, full-time and part-time, by sector, industry, country and English region, from the Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES).



Contact:
Neil Hedges
bres@ons.gov.uk
+44 1633 456741

Release date:
6 November 2020

Next release:
9 November 2021

Table of contents

1. [Other pages in this release](#)
2. [Main points](#)
3. [Business Register and Employment Survey data](#)
4. [Measuring the data](#)
5. [Related links](#)

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 in:

- [Employees in the UK by region: 2019](#)
- [Employees in the UK by industry: 2019](#)

2 . Main points

- The estimated number of employees in the UK increased by 369,700 (1.2%) between 2018 and 2019, from 30.5 million to 30.9 million; the increase was mainly driven by private sector employees, which increased by 334,700 (1.3%), while public sector employees increased by 35,000 (0.7%).
- Between 2018 and 2019, the estimated number of full-time employees increased by 276,200 (1.3%) and the estimated number of part-time employees increased by 93,500 employees (0.9%).
- Between 2018 and 2019, the largest increase in employees by industry has been in the accommodation and food services industry (up 69,700, or 3.1%); the largest decrease by industry was in the wholesale industry (down 27,700, or 2.3%).
- Of the 12 regions in the UK, 10 saw an increase in employees between 2018 and 2019 – the North West saw the largest percentage increase in employees (up 74,400, or 2.2%), followed by London (up 104,700, or 2.0%); only Wales (down 1,000, or 0.1%) and Scotland (down 5,400, or 0.2%) saw decreases in the number of employees.

3 . Business Register and Employment Survey data

[Broad Industry Group \(SIC\) - Business Register and Employment Survey \(BRES\): Table 1](#)

Dataset | Released on 6 November 2020

Annual employee and employment estimates for Great Britain and UK split by Broad Industry Group (SIC2007). Results given by full-time or part-time and public or private splits

[Industry \(2, 3 and 5 - digit SIC\) - Business Register and Employment Survey \(BRES\): Table 2](#)

Dataset | Released on 6 November 2020

Annual employee and employment estimates for Great Britain and UK split by 2, 3 and 5-digit (SIC2007). 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 6 November 2020

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 \(SIC\) - Business Register and Employment Survey \(BRES\): Table 4](#)

Dataset | Released on 6 November 2020

Annual employee and employment estimates for the UK split by Region and Broad Industry Group (SIC2007). 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 6 November 2020

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 6 November 2020

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.

4 . Measuring the data

Coronavirus

In response to the developing coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, we are working to ensure that we continue to publish economic statistics. For more information, please see [COVID-19 and the production of statistics](#).

The effect of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on our capacity means we have reviewed the existing labour market releases and will be suspending some publications. This will protect the delivery and quality of our remaining labour market outputs as well as ensuring we can respond to new demands as a direct result of the coronavirus. More details about the impact on labour market outputs can be found in our [statement](#). A further article published on 6 May 2020, [detailed some of the challenges that we have faced in producing estimates](#) at this time.

Our latest data and analysis on the impact of the coronavirus on the UK economy and population is now available on our dedicated [COVID-19 webpage](#). This will be the hub for all special coronavirus-related publications, drawing on all available data.

Impact on production of Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) estimates

The Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) survey reference date of 13 September 2019 meant that COVID-19 had negligible effect on producing estimates. The response rate for the 2019 BRES was 83.6%, which was similar to the 2018 BRES survey response rate of 85.1%. Survey contributor-level comments provided to us over the telephone or electronically suggested the estimates were not affected by coronavirus planning and response.

Sources

BRES is a sample survey. For the 2019 survey period, approximately 85,000 businesses were sampled for Great Britain. The response rate for the 2019 BRES survey was 83.6%. Northern Ireland data were collected independently by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. All estimates for 2019 are provisional. Data from the 2018 survey have been subject to small revisions since the [provisional estimates](#) were published on 26 September 2019. “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.

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 LFS, which collects information mainly from residents of private households, is the preferred source of statistics on employment at the whole economy level.

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.

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 fewer 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.

Sampling variability

Due to 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. The quality of the estimates may deteriorate for smaller geographies and this should be taken into account when making inferences about the figures.

5 . Related links

[Labour market overview](#)

Bulletin | Released 13 October 2020

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

[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.

[Vacancies and jobs](#)

Bulletin | Released 13 October 2020

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

[Regional labour market](#)

Bulletin | Released 13 October 2020

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 15 September 2020

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