

Statistical bulletin

Employees in the UK by industry: 2018

UK employment and employee estimates by industry using figures from the Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES).



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1 . Other pages in this release

Commentary on topics covered in the Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) is split between three separate bulletins in 2019. This is part of our ongoing work to improve bulletins. Other commentary from the latest BRES data can be found on the following pages:

- [Employees in the UK: 2018](#)
- [Employees in the UK by Region: 2018](#)

2 . Main points

- Between 2017 and 2018, the largest increase in employee estimates by industry has been in the professional, scientific and technical industry (up 82,100, or 3.3%), followed by the wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles (up 52,000, or 1.1%).
- Between 2017 and 2018, the largest decrease in employee estimates by industry has been in the information and communication industry (down 21,200, or 1.6%).
- In 2018, the two industries with the largest share of the UK's employees were: wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and motor cycles (15.2%); followed by human health and social work activities (13.2%).

3 . Analysis of changes in employee numbers by industry

About the Business Register and Employment Survey

The data in this bulletin come from the Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES). Since these estimates are based on a sample of businesses, they can be affected by sampling variability. In particular, the quality of the estimates may deteriorate for smaller industries and this should be taken into account when making inferences about the figures.

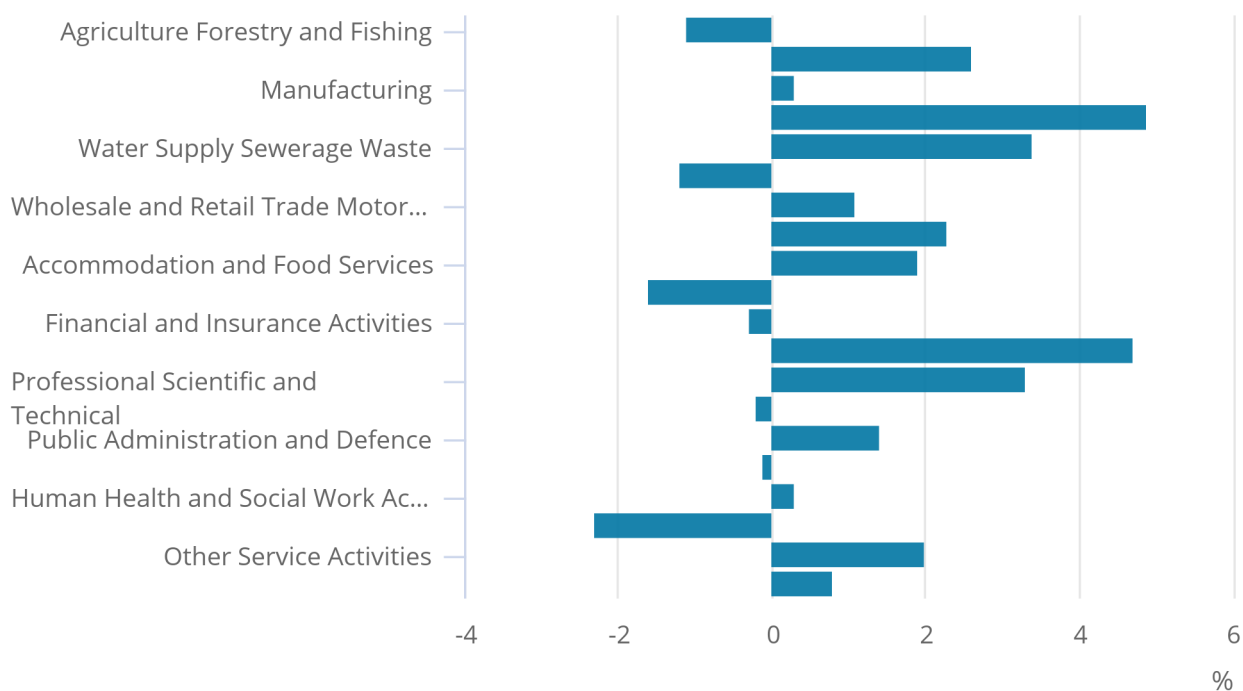
Employees by industry

Figure 1: The electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply industry saw the largest percentage increase in employees between 2017 and 2018, up 4.9%

Percentage change in employees by industry (section), 2017 to 2018, UK

Figure 1: The electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply industry saw the largest percentage increase in employees between 2017 and 2018, up 4.9%

Percentage change in employees by industry (section), 2017 to 2018, UK



Source: Business Register and Employment Survey, Office for National Statistics

Between 2017 and 2018, the estimated number of employees increased in twelve of the nineteen industries. The largest percentage increases were in electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply (up 6,700, or 4.9%) and real estate activities (up 23,400, or 4.7%).

The arts, entertainment and recreation industry showed the largest percentage decrease (down 17,900, or 2.3%), followed by the information and communication industry (down 21,200, or 1.6%).

4 . How the employees of the UK are distributed across industries

In 2018, 85% of the UK's employees worked in service industries. This has increased from 76.9% in 1998 (Source: Employee Jobs taken from Workforce Job figures).

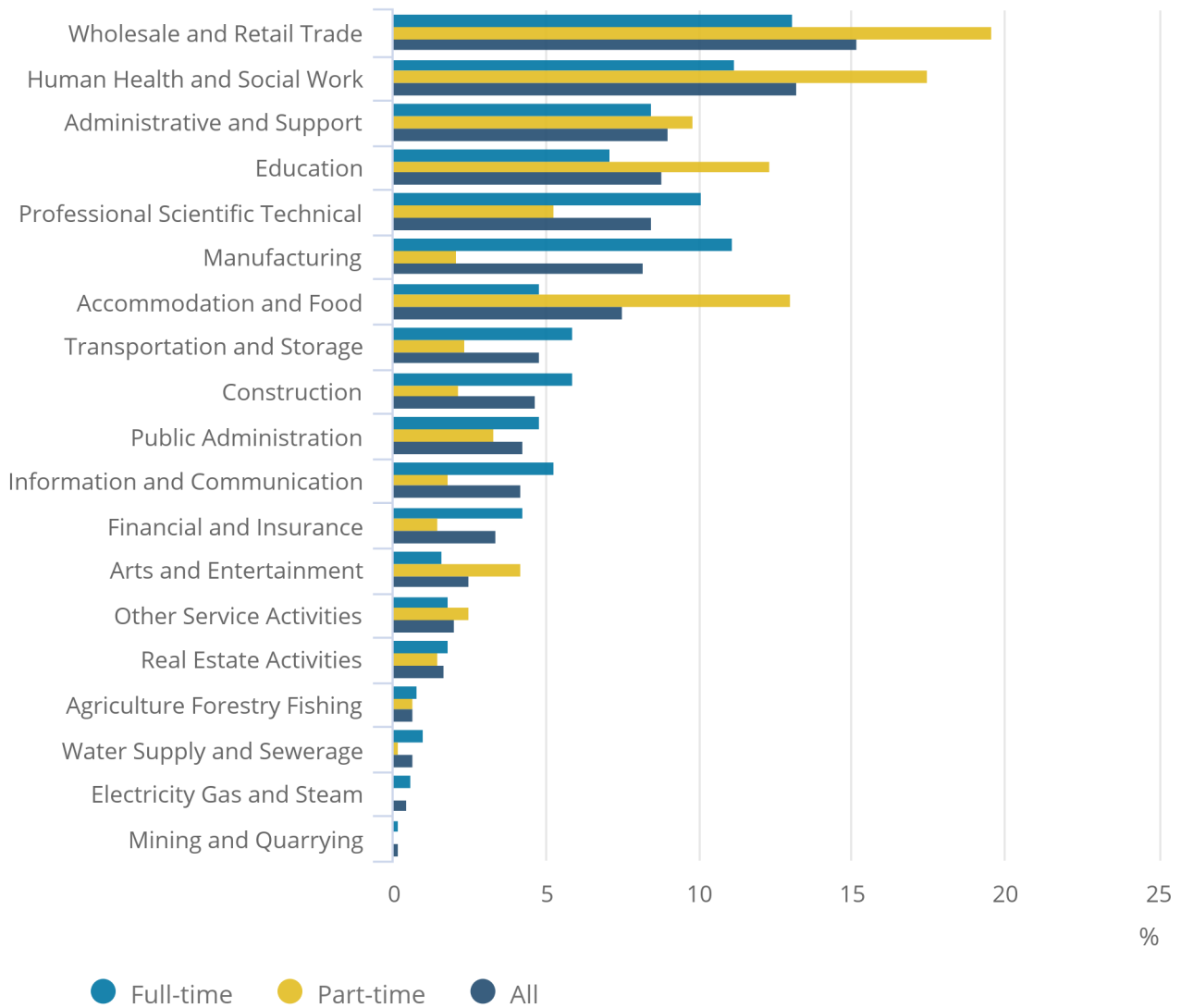
By contrast, in 2018 9.5% of the UK's employees worked in production industries. This has decreased from 17.1% in 1998 (Source: Employee Jobs taken from Workforce Jobs figures).

Figure 2: 15.2% of the UK's employees work in the wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and motor cycles industry

The UK's employees by industry, 2018

Figure 2: 15.2% of the UK's employees work in the wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and motor cycles industry

The UK's employees by industry, 2018



Source: Business Register and Employment Survey, Office for National Statistics

In 2018, the three industries with the largest share of the UK's employees were:

- wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and motor cycles (15.2%) human health and social work activities (13.2%)
- administrative and support service activities (9.0%) The contribution made by different industries changes when full-time employees are separated from part-time employees. Certain industries make greater use of full-time labour, while for others part-time workers are more important. For example:
- manufacturing accounted for 11.1% of full-time employees, compared with 2.1% of part-time employees
- accommodation and food service activities accounted for 4.8% of full-time employees, compared with 13.0% of part-time employees
- education accounted for 7.1% of full-time employees, compared with 12.3% of part-time employees

5 . Industry focus

Three industries had the largest changes in employee estimates between 2017 and 2018.

Professional, scientific and technical

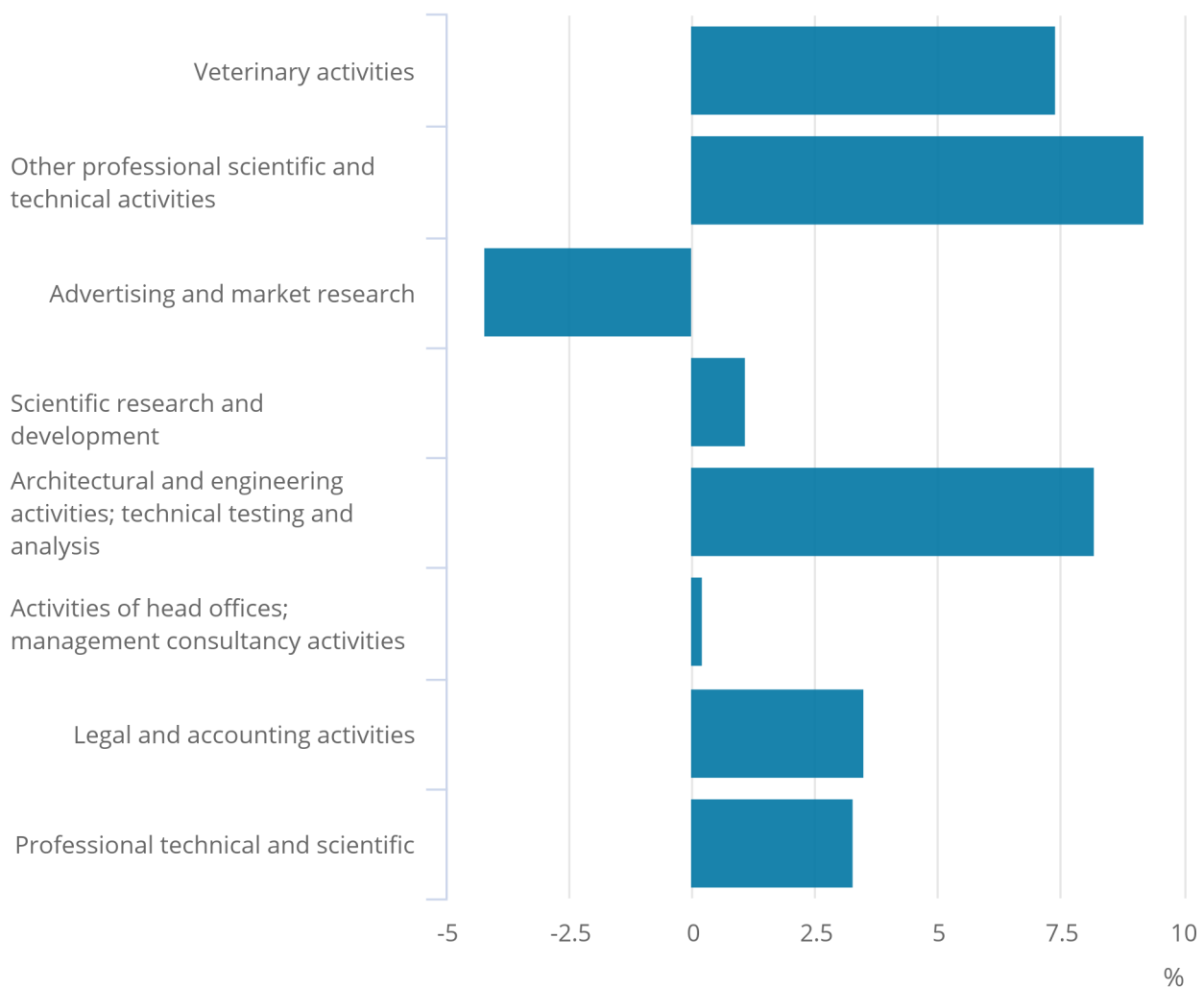
8.5% of the UK's employees worked in the professional, scientific and technical industry in 2018 (2017: 8.3%).

Figure 3: Employee numbers in the professional, scientific and technical industry increased by 3.3% between 2017 and 2018

Percentage change in employees by division in the professional, scientific and technical industry, 2017 to 2018, UK

Figure 3: Employee numbers in the professional, scientific and technical industry increased by 3.3% between 2017 and 2018

Percentage change in employees by division in the professional, scientific and technical industry, 2017 to 2018, UK



Source: Business Register and Employment Survey, Office for National Statistics

Between 2017 and 2018, the estimated number of employees in the professional, scientific and technical industry increased by 3.3%, or 82,100. This was the largest increase in employees of all the nineteen industries.

The increase is driven by architectural and engineering activities; technical testing and analysis (up 8.2%, or 40,800), which is one of seven divisions of this industry. The other large increase was in legal and accounting activities (up 3.5%, or 23,400).

In percentage terms, the division with the largest increase was other professional, scientific and technical activities (up 17,400, or 9.2%).

Information and communication

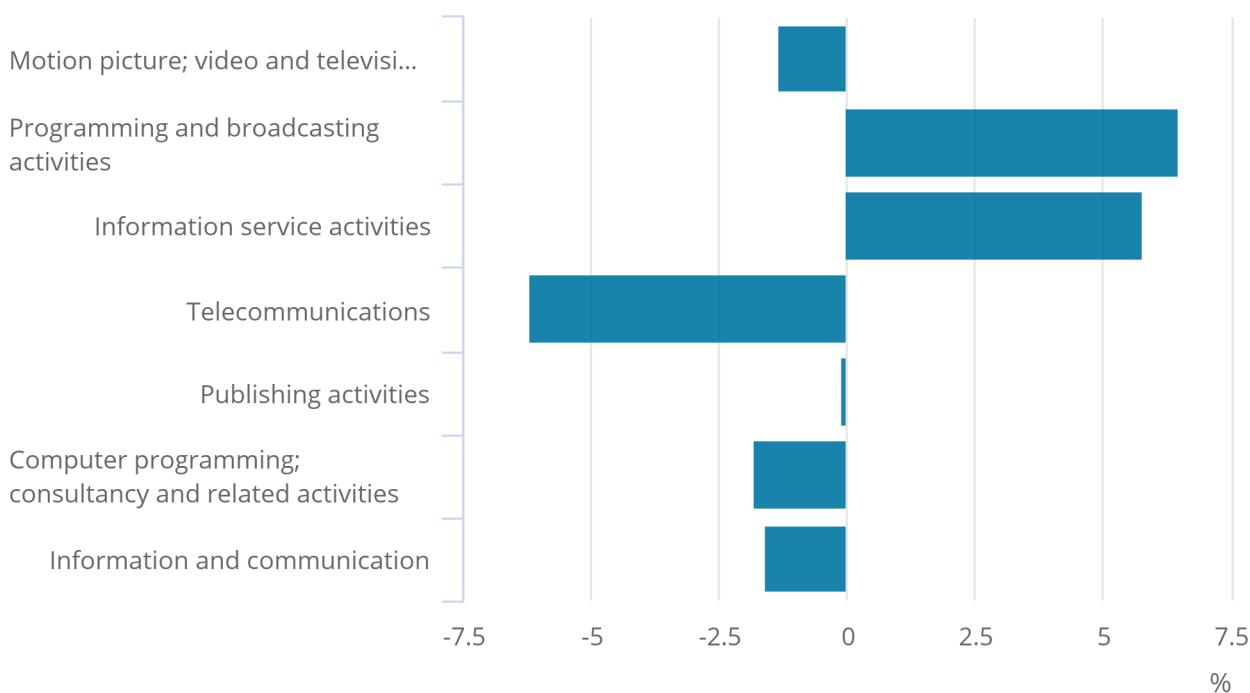
4.2% of the UK's employees worked in the information and communication industry in 2018 (2017: 4.3%).

Figure 4: Employee numbers in the information and communication industry decreased by 1.6% between 2017 and 2018

Percentage change in employees by division in the information and communication industry, 2017 to 2018, UK

Figure 4: Employee numbers in the information and communication industry decreased by 1.6% between 2017 and 2018

Percentage change in employees by division in the information and communication industry, 2017 to 2018, UK



Source: Business Register and Employment Survey, Office for National Statistics

Between 2017 and 2018, the estimated number of employees in information and communication decreased by 1.6%, or 21,200. This was the largest decrease in employees of all the nineteen industries.

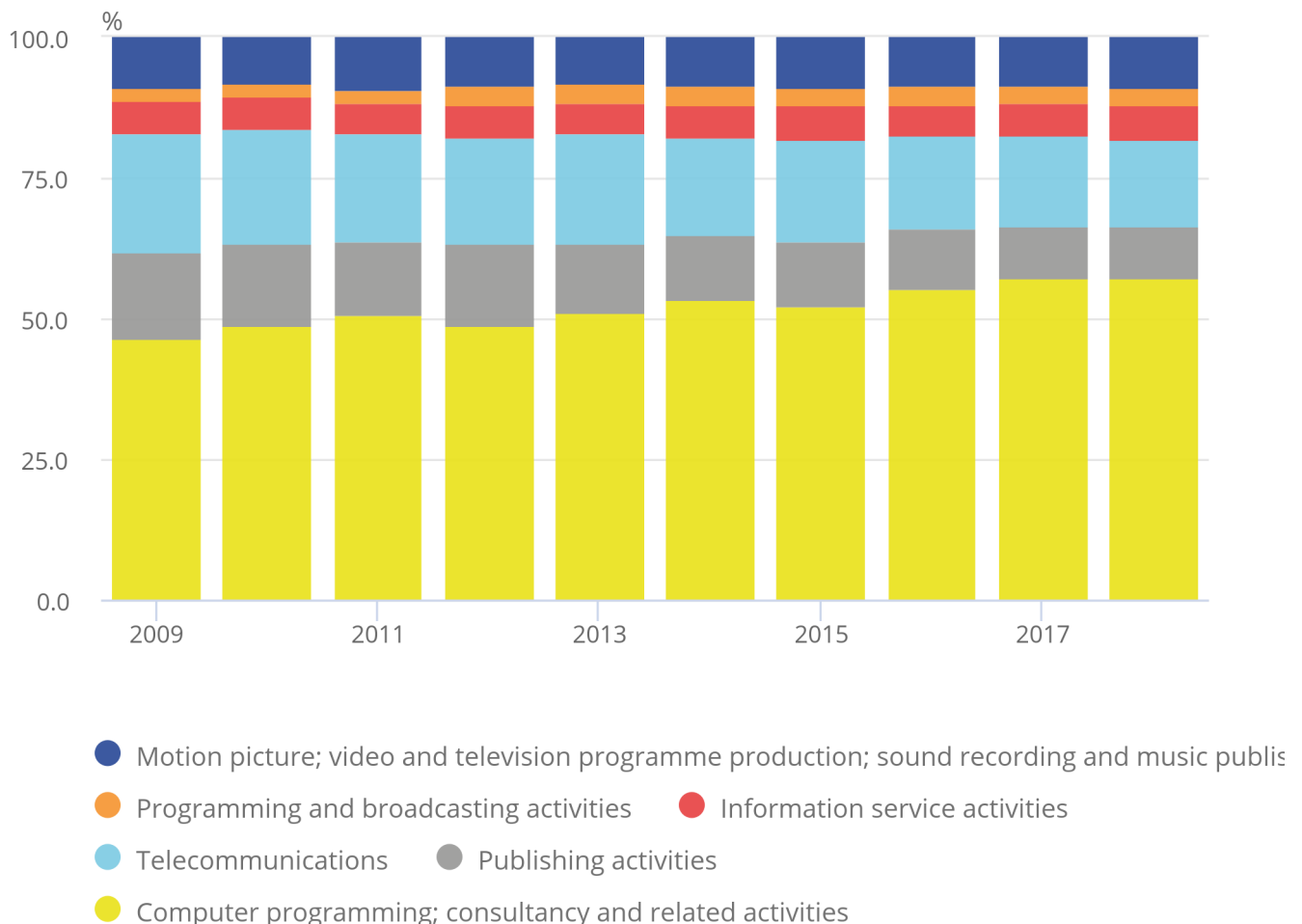
The decrease in employees in this industry was driven by telecommunications (down 6.2%, or 13,000) and computer programming, consultancy and related activities (down 1.8%, or 13,300).

Figure 5: In 2018, 57.2% of employees in the information and communication industry worked in computer programming, consultancy and related activities, up from 46.6% in 2009

Employees in the information and communication industry, 2009 to 2018, UK

Figure 5: In 2018, 57.2% of employees in the information and communication industry worked in computer programming, consultancy and related activities, up from 46.6% in 2009

Employees in the information and communication industry, 2009 to 2018, UK



Source: Business Register and Employment Survey, Office for National Statistics

Figure 5 shows how the composition of the information and communication industry has been changing over the last decade.

Computer programming, consultancy and related activities has become more important in terms of employees. This division contributed 57.2% of the industry's employees in 2018, compared with 46.6% in 2009.

Publishing activities, which includes publishing of books, periodicals and other publishing activities, contributed 9.4% of the industry's employees in 2018, compared with 15.2% in 2009.

Telecommunications contributed 15.5% of the industry's employees in 2018, compared with 21.4% in 2009.

Arts, entertainment and recreation

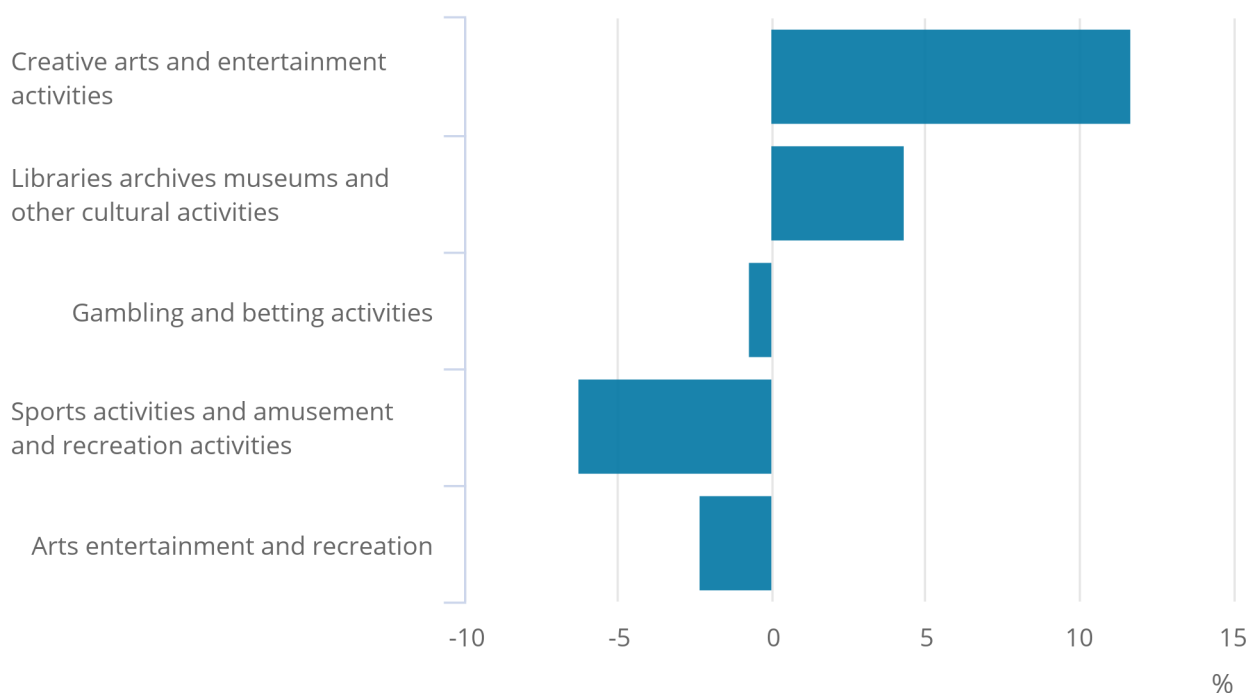
2.5% of the UK's employees worked in the arts, entertainment and recreation industry in 2018 (2017: 2.5%).

Figure 6: Employee numbers in the arts, entertainment and recreation industry decreased by 2.3% between 2017 and 2018

Percentage change in employees by division in the arts, entertainment and recreation activities industry, 2017 to 2018, UK

Figure 6: Employee numbers in the arts, entertainment and recreation industry decreased by 2.3% between 2017 and 2018

Percentage change in employees by division in the arts, entertainment and recreation activities industry, 2017 to 2018, UK



Source: Business Register and Employment Survey, Office for National Statistics

Between 2017 and 2018, the estimated number of employees in the arts, entertainment and recreation industry decreased by 2.3%, or 17,900. This was the largest decrease in percentage terms of all the nineteen industries.

The decrease in employee numbers is driven by sports activities and amusement and recreation activities, which fell by 6.3% (or 31,000) between 2017 and 2018. This was partly offset by increases in other parts of the industry, notably creative, arts and entertainment activities which increased by 11.7% (or 9,600) between 2017 and 2018.

6 . Business Register and Employment Survey data

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

Dataset | Released on 26 September 2019

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 26 September 2019

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 26 September 2019

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 26 September 2019

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 26 September 2019

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 26 September 2019

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.

7 . Glossary

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.

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 less per week.

Legal status

BRES includes breakdowns by public and private sector according to the legal status for national accounts classification purposes.

8 . Measuring the data

All estimates for 2018 are provisional and relate to the reference date 14 September 2018. Data from the 2017 survey have been subject to small revisions since the provisional estimates were published on 27 September 2018. For the charts in this bulletin, the following notes apply:

1. All charts show data for “total employees” rather than “total employment”. Employees is the more robust of the two measures and is recommended for use in analysis.
2. All charts use figures that are classified to the [2007 revision of the Standard Industrial Classification](#).
3. Industry figures are calculated at the two-digit “section” level as defined in the 2007 revision of the Standard Industrial Classification (Figures 1 and 2).
4. Subindustry figures are calculated at the three-digit “division” level as defined in the 2007 revision of the Standard Industrial Classification (Figures 3 to 6).

9 . Strengths and limitations

The strengths and limitations of the Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) can be found in the [Quality and Methodology Information report](#).

10 . Related links

[Labour market overview](#) Bulletin | Released 10 September 2019
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 10 September 2019
Estimates of the number of vacancies and jobs for the UK.

[Regional labour market](#) Bulletin | Released 10 September 2019
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 10 September 2019
Estimates of people employed in the public and private sectors in the UK.