

# Labour Force Survey performance and quality monitoring report: July to September 2024

Response rates, sample size and quality assessment of the Office for National Statistics quarterly Labour Force Survey.

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Release date:  
9 December 2024

Next release:  
To be announced

## Notice

### 9 December 2024

An update relating to survey operational changes in Northern Ireland in August 2024 was omitted in error in the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Labour Force Survey performance and quality monitoring report July to September 2024. This update has been added and can be found under Section 7 – Comparability. The update does not affect the interpretation of any data included in this release.

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# 1 . Executive summary July to September 2024

## Summary on quality

A number of measures were introduced in Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2023 and the sample was increased from January 2024. The combination of these actions is incrementally leading to increases in the achieved sample and subsequently the quality of the data. It will take around a year for the increased sample to feed through to all the waves of the Labour Force Survey (LFS). More information can be found in our [Labour Force Survey: planned improvements and its reintroduction methodology article published in November 2023](#).

Alongside the changes to the sample and data collection, we reweighted the LFS estimates from July to September 2022 onwards. The reweighted LFS estimates incorporate information on the size and composition of the UK population consistent with the population estimates published in November 2023. More information can be found in our [Impact of reweighting on Labour Force Survey key indicators: 2024 article](#).

Reweightings does not address the volatility we have seen in recent periods, which we expect to reduce in coming months, so we would advise users to apply caution when interpreting short-term changes observed in the estimates from the data and take note of our commentary around our LFS based statistics in coming months which will consider ongoing quality challenges.

## Summary of achieved sample size

The achieved sample size for the UK LFS during Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2024 was 59,139 individuals in 26,617 households. Please note that there were no NHS households in this period. Compared with the previous Quarter 2 (Apr to June) 2024, this represents an increase of 6.2% in household interviews and an increase of 6.7% in achieved person interviews.

## Summary of response rates

Please note that [historical reports](#) can also be accessed.

In Quarter 3 2024, main response rates were as follows:

- the total response rate for Great Britain excluding imputed cases (Table 4) was 19.5%; this is up 1.0 percentage points on the previous quarter
- the response rate excluding imputed cases (Figure 3) was 35.3% in Wave 1 and 11.0% in Wave 5; this compares with 35.3% and 8.2%, respectively, in the previous quarter
- the total response rate for Great Britain including imputed cases (Table 5) was 24.1%, up 1.7 percentage points on the previous quarter
- of non-response in Quarter 3 (Figure 5), non-contacts comprised 19.3% (down 13.6 percentage points on the previous quarter, caused by changes made to collection procedures in July 2024), circumstantial refusals were 4.1% (up 0.3 percentage point from the previous quarter), outright refusals comprised 40.9% (up 2.7 percentage points on the previous quarter) and other refusals comprised the remainder
- the English region with the highest accumulated response rate across the five waves (Table 8) was the Rest of Yorkshire and Humberside (32.5%); the lowest was Inner London (16.1%)
- overall proxy response rate (Table 9) was 37.6%; the highest proxy response rates occurred in the 16 to 17 years age group (95.2%), in males (41.6%), and in the combined total proxy response rate of all ethnic groups other than the White ethnic group (43.6%)
- the average income response rate (Table 10) was 83.7%
- the data on attrition rates are shown in Table 11; these data reveal in percentage change terms that those who drop out of the survey between Waves 1 and 5 are overrepresented in the 30 to 39 years age bands, unemployed, in households with six or more people, and in the South Yorkshire region

A breakdown of main characteristic changes has been included in the "Respondent characteristics" section.

There have been several methodological and operational changes that may have affected response rates. More details on these changes are outlined in [Section 7: Comparability](#).

## Respondent characteristics

To identify any potential impact on the estimates, a range of characteristics have been investigated, including age, sex, and tenure. The main changes to respondent characteristics are as follows.

### Age

Proportions for most age brackets for Wave 1 respondents have remained relatively stable since Quarter 3 2023 (see Table 1). Over the past year, we have seen a decrease in the number of respondents aged 65 years and over (down 4.0 percentage points from 28.0% in Quarter 3 2023 to 24.0% in Quarter 3 2024).

### Tenure

The proportion of responding household reference persons (HRPs) who own their property outright has decreased from 46.0% in Quarter 3 2023 to 42.0% in Quarter 3 2024. There is also a greater number of responding HRPs whose home is being bought with a mortgage or loan and who are renting (28.0% in Quarter 3 2024, compared with 26.0% in Quarter 3 2023, for both tenure categories) (see Table 2).

### Country of birth

In Quarter 3 2024, 13.6% of Wave 1 interviews comprised non-UK born respondents, which is a slight increase, compared with the same period in the previous year (12.7% in Quarter 3 2023) (see Figure A).

Waves 2 to 5

Looking at Waves 2 to 5, proportions in most age bands have remained relatively stable over the last year. Comparable to Wave 1 respondents, we have seen a decrease in the number of respondents aged 65 years and over in the past year. This is down 5.0 percentage points from 30.0% in Quarter 2 2023 to 25.0% in Quarter 3 2024).

For Waves 2 to 5, 45.0% of responding HRPs owned their property outright in Quarter 3 2024, which is 6.0 percentage points lower than Quarter 3 2023. The proportion of HRPs buying their home with a mortgage or loan increased from 26.0% to 28.0% over the same period. The proportion of renters has increased from 22.0% in Quarter 3 2023 to 25.0% in Quarter 3 2024.

Table 1: Age of respondents from July to September 2023 to July to September 2024, Wave 1

Wave 1 responding	Under 16	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 and over
JS23	17%	7%	10%	12%	12%	15%	28%
OD23	18%	8%	10%	12%	12%	15%	26%
JM24	17%	7%	11%	12%	13%	14%	26%
AJ24	18%	8%	11%	13%	12%	14%	24%
JS24	18%	8%	11%	13%	12%	14%	24%

Source: Labour Force Survey from the Office for National Statistics

Notes

- 1. Some totals for one quarter may equal more than 100% because of rounding.

Table 2: Tenure of household reference person from July to September 2023 to July to September 2024, Wave 1

Wave 1 responding HRP	Owned outright	Being bought with mortgage or loan	Part rent Rented Rent free		
<b>JS23</b>	46%	26%	1%	26%	1%
<b>OD23</b>	43%	27%	1%	29%	1%
<b>JM24</b>	43%	26%	1%	29%	1%
<b>AJ24</b>	42%	28%	1%	28%	1%
<b>JS24</b>	42%	28%	1%	28%	1%

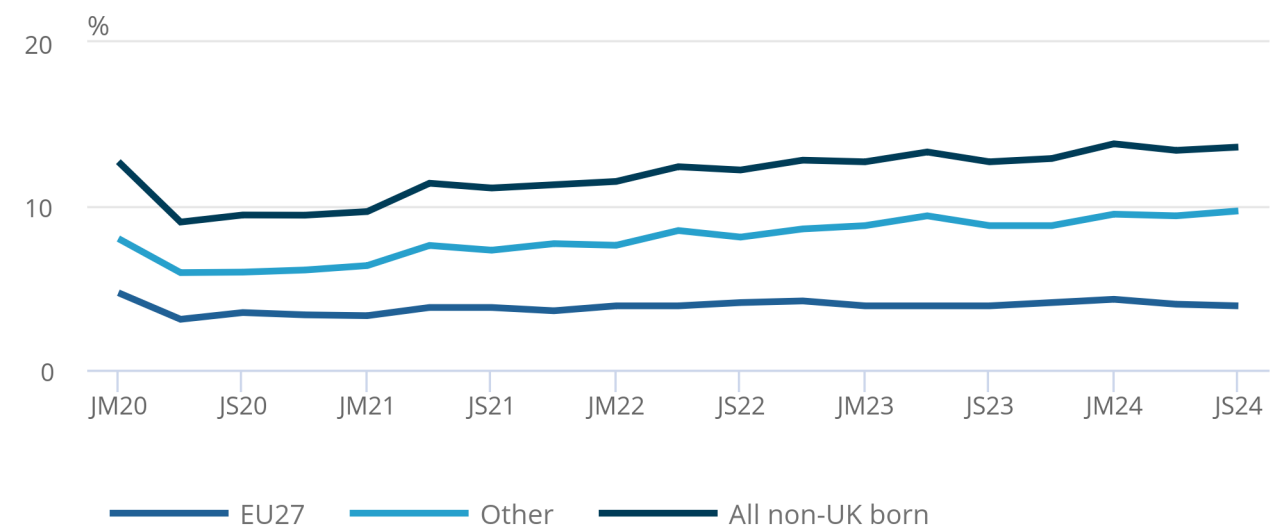
Source: Labour Force Survey from the Office for National Statistics

#### Notes

1. HRP means “household reference person”. Some questions like tenure are only asked of one person in the household. For example if there is a 4-person household, the HRP answers the question TEN1, saying that they rent the household. On the household (and person) datasets, everyone in that household will then have a value of TEN1=4 (although 3 of the respondents have not been asked the question).
2. Because of rounding, some totals for one quarter may equal more than 100%.

Figure A: Country of birth of respondents from January 2020 to September 2024, Wave 1

Figure A: Country of birth of respondents from January 2020 to September 2024, Wave 1



Source: Labour Force Survey from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

- 1. JM20 refers to January to March 2020; AJ20 refers to April to June 2020; JS20 refers to July to September 2020; OD20 refers to October to December 2020, JM21 refers to January to March 2021, AJ21 refers to April to June 2021; JS21 refers to July to September 2021, OD21 refers to October to December 2021; JM22 refers to January to March 2022; AJ22 refers to April to June 2022 JS22 refers to July to September 2022; OD22 refers to October to December 2022; JM23 refers to January to March 2023; AJ23 refers to April to June 2023, JS23 refers to July to September 2023, OD23 refers to October to December 2023; JM24 refers to January to March 2024; AJ24 refers to April to June 2024; JS24 refers to July to September 2024.

2 . Summary of quality

Relevance

(The degree to which the statistical product meets user needs for both coverage and content.)

Primary purpose

The primary purpose of the Labour Force Survey (LFS) is "the prompt publication of key aggregate, whole economy indicators, for the integrated assessment of labour market conditions" (Review of the Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics (ONS), 2002). The labour market covers all aspects of people's work, including the education and training needed to equip them for work, the jobs themselves, job-search for those out of work, and income from work and benefits.

## Users and uses

Users of LFS data often combine them with related data from other sources to provide an overall view of the state of the labour market. One of the most important users of this sort of assessment is the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee, that sets interest rates to meet the government's inflation target.

Other important users of LFS data are HM Treasury and the Department for Work and Pensions. Because they are responsible for UK economic and labour market policy, they are interested in a variety of indicators of the state of the labour market, including the number of people in employment, the number of hours worked and the number of unemployed people (defined according to the International Labour Organization (ILO)). They often analyse these series by age groups, by regions and by sex. Other government users include:

- Department for Business and Trade
- Home Office
- Health and Safety Executive
- Department for Transport
- Scottish Government
- Welsh Government

At the international level, LFS data are used by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the International Labour Organization (ILO).

Other users include:

Local authorities

- Trades Union Congress (TUC)
- Employer's Association
- Confederation of British Industry -Institute of Employment Studies
- Institute for Public Policy Research
- National Institute of Economic and Social Research
- Policy Studies Institute
- Institute for Fiscal Studies
- academic researchers
- media
- general public

## Strengths and limitations

The main strengths of the LFS include that:



- it has the largest coverage of any household survey in the UK and can therefore generate statistics for small geographical areas
- the sampling errors are relatively small, as a result of the wave structure and the size of the survey
- the survey covers a large range of employment-related variables and non-employment-related variables, allowing cross-linking analyses to be undertaken (for example, earnings against educational attainment)

The main limitations of the LFS include that:

- the sample design provides no guarantee of adequate coverage of any industry, as the survey is not industrially stratified
- the LFS coverage omits communal establishments, except NHS housing and students in halls of residence and at boarding schools; members of the armed forces are only included if they live in private accommodation and workers aged 16 years and under are not covered
- while the LFS data are used alongside other sources to feed into the estimates of population change, the main focus of the survey is to collect labour market information and as such is not designed to measure migration flows

## **Main definitions**

The definitions of the three economic activity groups – employed, unemployed and economically inactive – that are used in the LFS are the standard ILO definitions. It should be noted that although the LFS uses ILO definitions, these definitions are not interpreted and applied in exactly the same way in different countries. For example, although "working age" is a common term, different countries have different statutory school leaving and retirement ages. However, Eurostat collects data from different countries and adjusts them to produce comparable estimates.

## **Accuracy**

The closeness between an estimated result and the (unknown) true value.

The main threats to accuracy are sources of error, namely sampling error and non-sampling error, where non-sampling error includes:

- coverage error
- non-response error
- measurement error
- processing error
- model assumption error

Many of the sources of non-sampling error are difficult to measure. However, the LFS publishes detailed response rates for all waves of the survey and an overall response rate, including data time series (Tables 4 to 7 and Figures 3 and 5). Response rates are also published by government region for each wave during the particular quarter (Table 8). The LFS also publishes proxy response rates (Table 9), response rates for income questions by National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC) (Table 10), and attrition rates (Table 11).

Surveys, such as the LFS, provide estimates of population characteristics rather than exact measures. In principle, many random samples could be drawn, and each would give different results. This is because each sample would be made up of different people, who would give different answers to the questions asked. The spread of these results is the sampling variability, that generally reduces with increasing sample size.

A confidence interval is a range of values, defined by a lower and upper bound, that indicates the variability of an estimate. Statistical methods are used to calculate the sampling variability from which the confidence interval can be determined. For example, with a 95% confidence interval, it is expected that in 95% of the survey samples, the resulting confidence interval will contain the true value that would be obtained by surveying the whole population.

The LFS routinely publishes details of achieved sample sizes in terms of achieved number of household and person interviews (Table 3 and Figures 1 and 2) and sampling variability for estimates of main variables. Sampling variability (95% confidence intervals) can be found in the Sampling variability section (Dataset A11) of our [Labour market statistical bulletin](#).

### 3 . Achieved sample

Table 3: Achieved sample by type of household, July to September 2024

	GB		UK	
	Includes imputed	Excludes imputed	Includes imputed	Excludes imputed
Private households	24,202	19,523	26,617	21,804
Individuals in private households	53,747	42,398	59,139	47,443
NHS Households	0	0	0	0
Individuals in NHS households	0	0	0	0
Total households	24,202	19,523	26,617	21,804
Total individuals	53,747	42,398	59,139	47,443

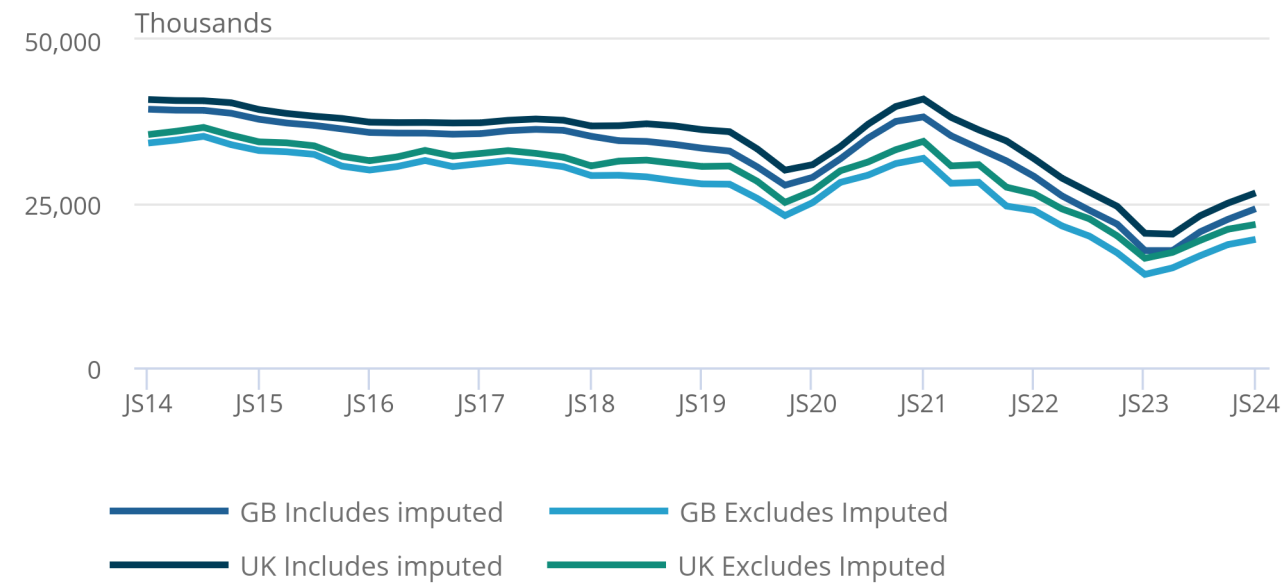
Source: Labour Force Survey from the Office for National Statistics

Figure 1: Achieved number of household interviews

Great Britain and UK, July to September 2014, to July to September 2024

Figure 1: Achieved number of household interviews

Great Britain and UK, July to September 2014, to July to September 2024



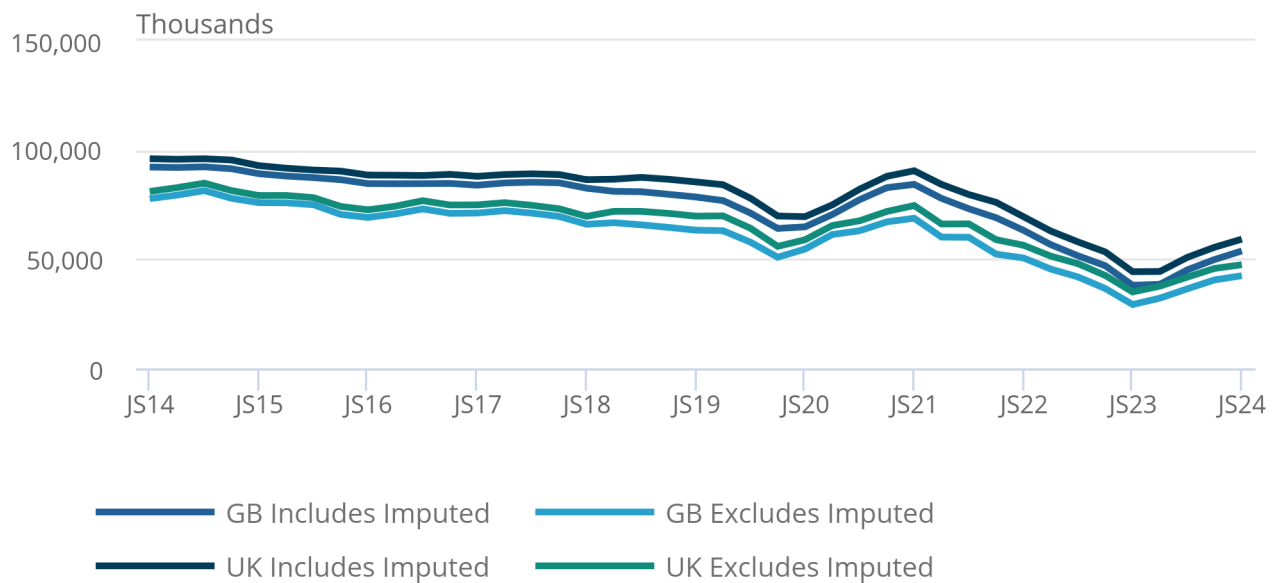
Source: Labour Force Survey from the Office for National Statistics

## Figure 2: Achieved number of person interviews

Great Britain and UK, July to September 2014, to July to September 2024

### Figure 2: Achieved number of person interviews

Great Britain and UK, July to September 2014, to July to September 2024



Source: Labour Force Survey from the Office for National Statistics

## 4 . Response rates

Table 4: Wave specific response rates, Great Britain, excluding imputed households, July to September 2024

	Wave 1 in JS24		Wave 2 in JS24		Wave 3 in JS24		Wave 4 in JS24		Wave 5 in JS24		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>Eligible households found at selected units</b>	24,020	100.0	23,166	100.0	23,177	100.0	15,013	100.0	14,939	100.0	100,315	100.0
<b>Responding units</b>												
<b>Total</b>	8,470	35.3	3,915	16.9	3,438	14.8	2,066	13.8	1,641	11.0	19,530	19.5
<b>Full</b>	8,072	33.6	3,587	15.5	3,196	13.8	1,935	12.9	1,504	10.1	18,294	18.2
<b>Partial</b>	398	1.7	328	1.4	242	1.0	131	0.9	137	0.9	1,236	1.2
<b>Non-responding units</b>												
<b>Circumstantial refusal</b>	2,082	8.7	1,077	4.6	747	3.2	389	2.6	257	1.7	4,552	4.5
<b>Outright refusal</b>	5,830	24.3	6,714	29.0	7,496	32.3	5,310	35.4	5,813	38.9	31,163	31.1
<b>Refusal to HQ</b>	377	1.6	6,695	28.9	7,713	33.3	4,968	33.1	5,229	35.0	24,982	24.9
<b>Non-contact</b>	7,261	30.2	4,235	18.3	3,296	14.2	1,843	12.3	1,272	8.5	17,907	17.9
<b>Addresses not issued for interviewing</b>												
<b>Refusal to re-interview</b>	n/a	n/a	530	2.3	487	2.1	437	2.9	727	4.9	2,181	2.2
<b>Co-operation rate</b>		50.5		21.3		17.7		16.2		12.7		24.3
<b>Contact rate</b>		68.2		51.7		51.5		53.3		54.3		56.3

Source: Labour Force Survey from the Office for National Statistics

### Notes

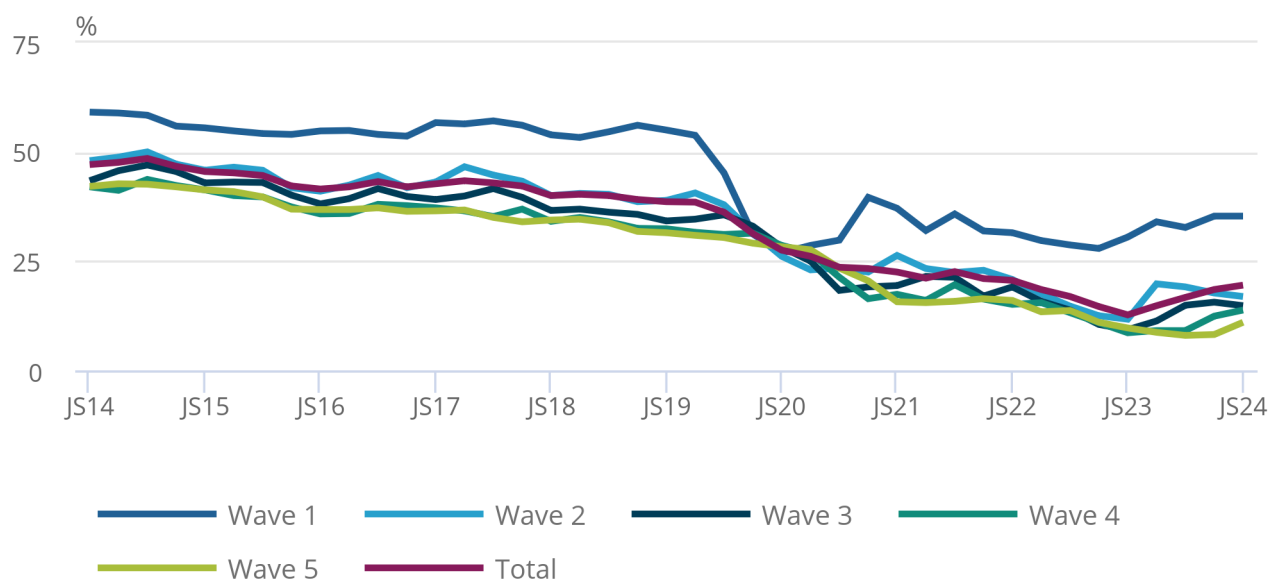
1. Excludes households for which the response has been imputed.
2. The total response rate is the aggregate response rate for the quarter, based on all eligible, in-scope households.
3. For a full definition of response categories and the method used to calculate the response rates, see Section 10: Technical definitions.

### Figure 3: Wave-specific response rates

Great Britain, excluding imputed households, July to September 2014, to July to September 2024

### Figure 3: Wave-specific response rates

Great Britain, excluding imputed households, July to September 2014, to July to September 2024



Source: Labour Force Survey from the Office for National Statistics

#### Notes:

1. The total response rate is the cumulative response rate for the quarter across all waves, based on all eligible, in-scope households.
2. For a full definition of response categories and the method used to calculate the response rates, see [Section 10: Technical definitions](#).

Table 5: Wave specific response rates, Great Britain, July to September 2024, including imputed households

	Wave 1 in JS24		Wave 2 in JS24		Wave 3 in JS24		Wave 4 in JS24		Wave 5 in JS24		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>Eligible households found at selected units</b>	24,020	100.0	23,166	100.0	23,177	100.0	15,013	100.0	14,939	100.0	100,315	100.0
<b>Responding units</b>												
<b>Total</b>	8,470	35.3	6,658	28.7	4,466	19.3	2,586	17.2	2,032	13.6	24,212	24.1
<b>Full</b>	8,072	33.6	3,587	15.5	3,196	13.8	1,935	12.9	1,504	10.1	18,294	18.2
<b>Partial</b>	398	1.7	328	1.4	242	1.0	131	0.9	137	0.9	1,236	1.2
<b>Imputed</b>	-	-	2743	11.8	1028	4.4	520	3.5	391	2.6	4,682	4.7
<b>Non-responding units</b>												
<b>Circumstantial refusal</b>	2,082	8.7	265	1.1	397	1.7	212	1.4	135	0.9	3,091	3.1
<b>Outright refusal</b>	5,830	24.3	6,714	29.0	7,496	32.3	5,310	35.4	5,813	38.9	31,163	31.1
<b>Refusal to HQ</b>	377	1.6	6,695	28.9	7,713	33.3	4,968	33.1	5,229	35.0	24,982	24.9
<b>Non-contact</b>	7,261	30.2	2,304	9.9	2,618	11.3	1,500	10.0	1,003	6.7	14,686	14.6
<b>Addresses not issued for interviewing</b>												
<b>Refusal to re-interview</b>	n/a	n/a	530	2.3	487	2.1	437	2.9	727	4.9	2,181	2.2
<b>Co-operation rate</b>		50.5		32.7		22.2		19.8		15.4		29.0
<b>Contact rate</b>		68.2		60.2		54.5		55.6		56.1		59.6

Source: Labour Force Survey from the Office for National Statistics

#### Notes

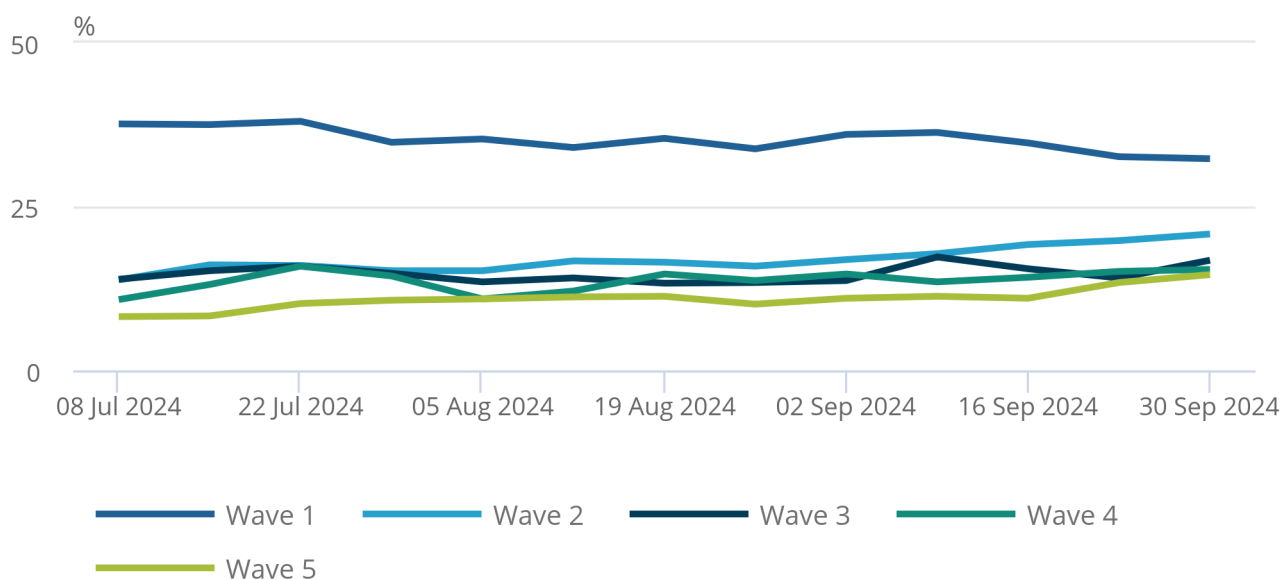
1. The total response rate is the cumulative response rate for the quarter across all waves, based on all eligible, in-scope households. For a full definition of response categories and the method used to calculate the response rates, see Technical Definitions.

## Figure 4: Wave specific response rates by week

Great Britain, excluding imputed households, July to September 2024

### Figure 4: Wave specific response rates by week

Great Britain, excluding imputed households, July to September 2024



Source: Labour Force Survey from the Office for National Statistics

#### Notes:

1. All selected addresses are distributed equally across the 13 weeks of the quarter.

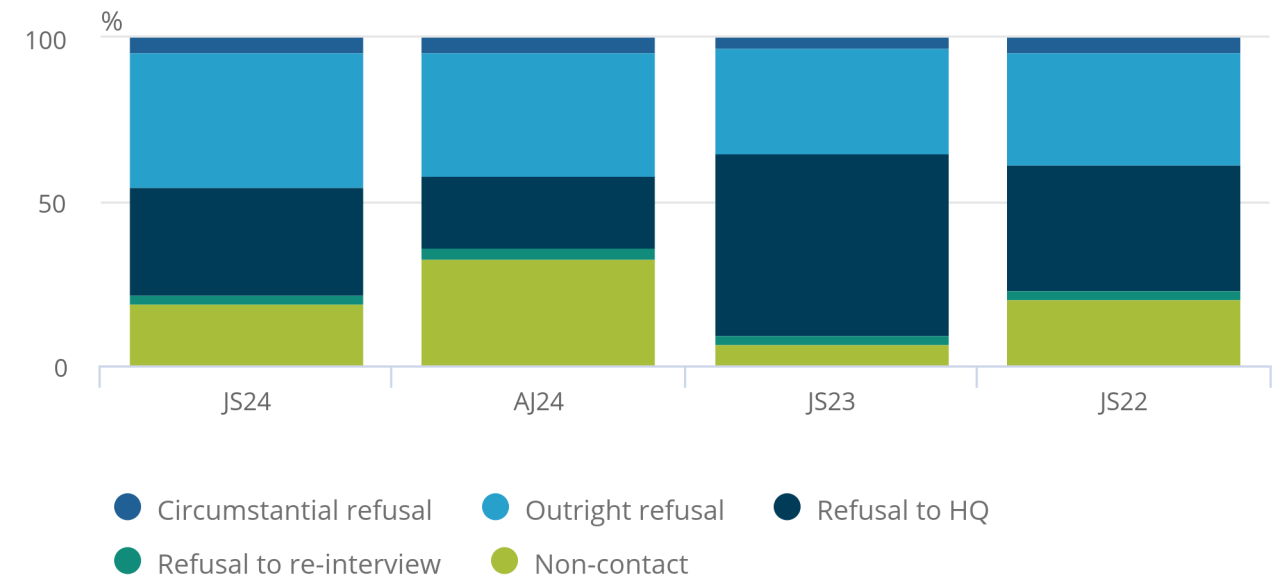


Figure 5: Composition of non-response

Great Britain, including imputed households

Figure 5: Composition of non-response

Great Britain, including imputed households



Source: Labour Force Survey from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. For definitions of the types of non-response, see [Section 10: Technical definitions](#). Figures are based on the aggregate response for the quarter covering all waves.
2. JS24 refers to the period July to September 2024.
3. AJ24 refers to the period April to June 2024.
4. JS23 refers to the period July to September 2023.
5. JS22 refers to the period July to September 2022.

Table 6: Wave-specific response rates, United Kingdom, excluding imputed households, July to September 2024

	<b>Wave 1 in JS24</b>		<b>Wave 2 in JS24</b>		<b>Wave 3 in JS24</b>		<b>Wave 4 in JS24</b>		<b>Wave 5 in JS24</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>Eligible households found at selected units</b>	25,040	100.0	24,465	100.0	24,827	100.0	16,828	100.0	17,002	100.0	108,162	100.0
<b>Responding units</b>												
<b>Total</b>	8,936	35.7	4,412	18.0	3,938	15.9	2,487	14.8	2,038	12.0	21,811	20.2
<b>Full</b>	8,482	33.9	4,043	16.5	3,660	14.7	2,301	13.7	1,874	11.0	20,360	18.8
<b>Partial</b>	454	1.8	369	1.5	278	1.1	186	1.1	164	1.0	1,451	1.3
<b>Non-responding units</b>												
<b>Circumstantial refusal</b>	2,146	8.6	1,095	4.5	769	3.1	408	2.4	266	1.6	4,684	4.3
<b>Outright refusal</b>	6,131	24.5	6,734	27.5	7,513	30.3	5,330	31.7	5,821	34.2	31,529	29.1
<b>Refusal to HQ</b>	388	1.5	6,695	27.4	7,713	31.1	4,968	29.5	5,229	30.8	24,993	23.1
<b>Non-contact</b>	7,439	29.7	4,309	17.6	3,370	13.6	1,897	11.3	1,338	7.9	18,353	17.0
<b>Addresses not issued for interviewing</b>												
<b>Refusal to re-interview</b>	n/a	n/a	1,220	5.0	1,524	6.1	1,738	10.3	2,310	13.6	6,792	6.3
<b>Co-operation rate</b>		50.8		23.3		19.8		18.9		15.3		26.3
<b>Contact rate</b>		68.7		52.7		52.4		54.5		55.3		57.2

Source: Labour Force Survey from the Office for National Statistics

#### Notes

1. Excludes households for which the response has been imputed.
2. The total response rate is the aggregate response rate for the quarter, based on all eligible, in-scope households.
3. For a full definition of response categories and the method used to calculate the response rates, see Section 10: Technical definitions.

Table 7: Wave-specific response rates, United Kingdom, including imputed households, July to September 2024

	<b>Wave 1 in JS24</b>		<b>Wave 2 in JS24</b>		<b>Wave 3 in JS24</b>		<b>Wave 4 in JS24</b>		<b>Wave 5 in JS24</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>Eligible households found at selected units</b>	25,040	100.0	24,465	100	24,827	100	16,828	100.0	17,002	100.0	108,162	100.0
<b>Responding units</b>												
<b>Total</b>	8,936	35.7	7,200	29.4	5,004	20.2	3,035	18.0	2,454	14.4	26,629	24.6
<b>Full</b>	8,482	33.9	4,043	16.5	3,660	14.7	2,301	13.7	1,874	11.0	20,360	18.8
<b>Partial</b>	454	1.8	369	1.5	278	1.1	186	1.1	164	1.0	1,451	1.3
<b>Imputed</b>	-	-	2,788	11.4	1,066	4.3	548	3.3	416	2.4	4,818	4.5
<b>Non-responding units</b>												
<b>Circumstantial refusal</b>	2,146	8.6	274	1.1	409	1.6	223	1.3	140	0.8	3,192	3.0
<b>Outright refusal</b>	6,131	24.5	6,734	27.5	7,513	30.3	5,330	31.7	5,821	34.2	31,529	29.1
<b>Refusal to HQ</b>	388	1.5	6,695	27.4	7,713	31.1	4,968	29.5	5,229	30.8	24,993	23.1
<b>Non-contact</b>	7,439	30	2,342	9.6	2,664	10.7	1,534	9.1	1,048	6.2	15,027	13.9
<b>Addresses not issued for interviewing</b>												
<b>Refusal to re-interview</b>	n/a	n/a	1,220.0	5.0	1,524.0	6.1	1,738.0	10.3	2,310.0	13.6	6,792.0	6.3
<b>Co-operation rate</b>		50.8		34.4		24.2		22.4		18.0		30.8
<b>Contact rate</b>		68.7		61.1		55.5		56.9		57.3		60.5

Source: Labour Force Survey from the Office for National Statistics

## Notes

1. The total response rate is the aggregate response rate for the quarter based on all eligible, in-scope households.
2. For a full definition of response categories and the method used to calculate the response rates, see Section 10: Technical definitions.

Table 8: Wave-specific response rates, United Kingdom by region, including imputed households, July to September 2024

<b>Region</b>	<b>Wave 1 in JS24</b>	<b>Wave 2 in JS24</b>	<b>Wave 3 in JS24</b>	<b>Wave 4 in JS24</b>	<b>Wave 5 in JS24</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Tyne &amp; Wear</b>	43.8	32.8	15.5	20.1	15.6	26.8
<b>Rest of North East</b>	37.5	37.8	21.1	18.5	15.8	27.6
<b>Greater Manchester</b>	29.4	24.2	15.1	11.6	6.9	18.8
<b>Merseyside</b>	31.7	22.2	18.9	12.4	9.0	20.3
<b>Rest of North West</b>	41.6	28.7	18.9	19.6	13.0	25.8
<b>South Yorkshire</b>	39.1	30.5	16.3	16.0	11.6	24.3
<b>West Yorkshire</b>	36.9	28.0	17.6	15.8	11.3	23.3
<b>Rest of Yorkshire and Humberside</b>	52.4	38.8	24.2	20.5	16.3	32.5
<b>East Midlands</b>	36.5	34.1	23.0	17.8	14.3	26.8
<b>West Midlands Metropolitan Council</b>	27.9	25.3	17.4	14.2	13.3	20.6
<b>Rest of West Midlands</b>	35.7	29.8	19.6	18.4	17.3	25.3
<b>East of England</b>	31.4	25.9	19.0	18.1	14.9	22.8
<b>Inner London</b>	25.7	20.5	11.6	9.5	8.4	16.1
<b>Outer London</b>	24.6	23.8	18.2	13.7	11.1	19.3
<b>South East</b>	37.5	29.5	20.5	20.0	16.2	26.0
<b>South West</b>	41.1	33.1	23.3	21.0	16.9	28.6
<b>England</b>	35.0	28.7	19.3	17.2	13.8	24.1
<b>Wales</b>	33.9	26.4	17.4	15.7	13.5	22.5
<b>Strathclyde</b>	38.5	29.8	15.3	14.8	9.1	23.1
<b>Rest of Scotland</b>	37.7	31.2	21.2	19.7	13.1	25.9
<b>Scotland</b>	38.0	30.6	18.7	17.6	11.4	24.7
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	45.7	41.7	32.6	24.7	20.5	30.8

Source: Labour Force Survey from the Office for National Statistics

#### Notes

1. The total response rate is the aggregate response rate for the quarter based on all eligible, in-scope households. Each wave reported here is an independent sample. For example, the Wave 2 response in July to September 2024 is based on responses in that quarter plus the previous quarter (April to June 2024) where it was issued as a Wave 1 case.

Table 9: Proxy response, Great Britain, July to September 2024

**All responses Proxy %**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Total (16+)</b>	44,114	16,599	37.6
	<b>16-17</b>	1,211	1,153	95.2
	<b>18-19</b>	955	859	89.9
	<b>20+</b>	41,948	14,587	34.8
<b>Sex</b>	<b>Total</b>	44,114	16,599	37.6
	<b>Male</b>	21,136	8,793	41.6
	<b>Female</b>	22,978	7,806	34.0
<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Total</b>	44,114	16,599	37.6
	<b>White</b>	38,495	14,147	36.8
	<b>Non-white</b>	5,591	2,439	43.6
	<b>Refused</b>	28	13	46.4
<b>Economic activity</b>	<b>Total</b>	44,114	16,599	37.6
<b>(INECAC05)</b>	<b>Employees</b>	22,544	8,972	39.8
	<b>Self-Employed</b>	3,713	1,485	40.0
	<b>Government schemes</b>	28	13	46.4
	<b>Unpaid family workers</b>	100	31	31.0
	<b>ILO Unemployed</b>	983	458	46.6
	<b>Inactive</b>	16,746	5,640	33.7

Source: Labour Force Survey from the Office for National Statistics

## Notes

1. For the definition of “unpaid family workers”, see Section 7: Comparability.

Table 10: Income response rates by National Statistics Socio-economic Classification, Great Britain, July to September 2024

	<b>Wave 1 in JS24 Wave 5 in JS24 Total</b>		
<b>NS-SEC</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Higher managerial and professional</b>	86.6	90.8	87.3
<b>Lower managerial and professional</b>	85.6	87.8	85.9
<b>Intermediate occupations</b>	82.5	93.0	83.9
<b>Small employers and own account workers</b>	90.0	66.7	84.6
<b>Lower supervisory and technical</b>	77.2	86.3	78.5
<b>Semi-routine occupations</b>	76.2	87.4	77.5
<b>Routine occupations</b>	77.3	86.5	78.5
<b>Total</b>	82.8	89.0	83.7

Source: Labour Force Survey from the Office for National Statistics

#### Notes

1. The percentages in this table are based on all eligible in-scope respondents at Wave 1 and all eligible in-scope respondents at Wave 5.
2. The total response rate is the aggregate response rate for income for the quarter (Wave 1 and Wave 5), based on all eligible, in-scope respondents.

Table 11: Summary of attrition by key characteristics, Great Britain, July to September 2024

		Wave 1 in JS23	Wave 5 in JS24		
		Responds	Responds	Responds all waves	Non-responder
<b>Age</b>	<b>&lt;16</b>	18.5	12.9	9.9	20.8
	<b>16-19</b>	4.2	4.0	3.7	4.3
	<b>20-29</b>	8.9	6.1	5.9	10.1
	<b>30-39</b>	12.3	8.5	7.5	14.0
	<b>40-49</b>	13.0	10.5	9.8	14.0
	<b>50-59</b>	15.7	15.6	15.3	15.7
	<b>60-69</b>	16.9	24.6	27.8	13.6
	<b>70+</b>	10.6	17.8	20.2	7.6
<b>Sex</b>	<b>Male</b>	48.8	48.5	48.9	48.9
	<b>Female</b>	51.2	51.5	51.1	51.1
<b>Economic Activity</b> <b>(INECAC05)</b>	<b>Employees</b>	43.0	38.1	36.7	45.1
	<b>Self-Employed</b>	7.2	6.4	6.0	7.5
	<b>Government schemes</b>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	<b>Unpaid family workers</b>	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.0
	<b>ILO Unemployed</b>	1.7	1.5	1.3	1.8
	<b>Inactive</b>	29.6	40.9	45.9	24.8
<b>Number of people in household</b> <b>(TOTNUM)</b>	<b>1</b>	11.4	14.5	16.4	10.1
	<b>2</b>	34.4	42.9	45.8	30.8
	<b>3</b>	19.8	16.9	16.7	21.1
	<b>4</b>	22.8	19.0	15.5	24.5
	<b>5</b>	8.1	5.5	4.7	9.3
	<b>6 or more</b>	3.3	1.1	0.8	4.2
<b>Region</b> <b>(GOVTOR)</b>	<b>Tyne &amp; Wear</b>	2.4	2.2	2.1	2.6
	<b>Rest of North East</b>	2.8	2.7	2.5	2.9
	<b>Greater Manchester</b>	3.1	2.4	2.3	3.4
	<b>Merseyside</b>	1.6	2.0	1.7	1.4
	<b>Rest of North West</b>	4.3	3.8	3.6	4.6

<b>South Yorkshire</b>	2.9	1.7	1.9	3.4
<b>West Yorkshire</b>	3.6	3.2	3.4	3.7
<b>Rest of Yorkshire and Humberside</b>	3.7	4.3	4.6	3.5
<b>East Midlands</b>	10.2	8.9	8.9	10.7
<b>West Midlands Metropolitan Council</b>	4.6	5.1	4.3	4.4
<b>Rest of West Midlands</b>	5.6	5.6	5.2	5.6
<b>East of England</b>	10.2	11.4	12.3	9.7
<b>Inner London</b>	3.2	2.5	2.7	3.6
<b>Outer London</b>	5.3	4.7	4.1	5.5
<b>South East</b>	13.8	16.3	16.7	12.8
<b>South West</b>	10.6	10.8	11.7	10.5
<b>Wales</b>	4.7	5.3	5.3	4.5
<b>Strathclyde</b>	3.0	2.4	2.5	3.2
<b>Rest of Scotland</b>	4.2	4.7	4.2	4.0

Source: Labour Force Survey from the Office for National Statistics

#### Notes

1. The column Wave 1 in July to September 2023 (JS23) Responds shows the percentage of responders in each key characteristics category at Wave 1.
2. The column Wave 5 in July to September 2024 (JS24) Responds shows the percentage of responders in each key characteristics category at Wave 5.
3. A substantial decline in the values between Waves 1 and 5 shows a higher rate of attrition than where values are consistent between Waves 1 and 5, or higher at Wave 5.

## 5 . Timeliness and punctuality

Timeliness refers to the lapse of time between publication and the period to which the data refer. Punctuality refers to the time lag between the actual and planned dates of publication.



## **To the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Labour Market and Households Division (LMHD)**

Scheduled delivery date for file: 18 October 2024.

Achieved delivery date for file: 18 October 2024.

Time lag between achieved delivery date and the end of the reference period: 12 days.

### **Data file for other users**

Scheduled availability date for regional public and government normal release user files: 12 November 2024

### **Recipients**

- Bank of England
- Department for Business and Trade
- Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
- Department for Education
- Department for Enterprise, Trade and Investment (Northern Ireland)
- Department for Culture, Media and Sport
- Department for Transport
- Department for Work and Pensions
- Department of Finance and Personnel (Northern Ireland)
- Economic and Social Research Council and Data Archive
- Health and Safety Executive
- HM Treasury
- Home Office
- Low Pay Commission
- Office for Standards in Education
- Office of Manpower Economics
- Scottish Government and Scottish Executive
- Small Business Service
- Welsh Government

## 6 . Accessibility and clarity

(Accessibility is the ease with which users are able to access the data, also reflecting the format(s) in which the data are available and the availability of supporting information. Clarity refers to the quality and sufficiency of the metadata, illustrations and accompanying advice.)

The [UK Data Archive](#) at the University of Essex provides free access to the various Labour Force Survey (LFS) datasets.

The [National Online Manpower Information System](#) (NOMIS) provide a free but highly disaggregated dataset, which covers a wealth of data for local areas.

Our Social Surveys Team provide [LFS data for a fee](#) and can be contacted by phone on +44 1633 455678 or by email at [socialsurveys@ons.gov.uk](mailto:socialsurveys@ons.gov.uk).

[Labour market data](#), including data from the LFS, are published every month through statistical bulletins. These include text, tables, and charts. Data contained within the bulletins are available to download, free of charge.

For questions relating to labour market statistics, please contact [labour.market@ons.gov.uk](mailto:labour.market@ons.gov.uk).

For general queries about the LFS, please contact [lfs@ons.gov.uk](mailto:lfs@ons.gov.uk).

## 7 . Comparability

Comparability is the degree to which data can be compared over time and domain.

### Background

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) began in 1973 and was carried out every two years until 1983. Between 1984 and 1991, data were collected annually, and the survey has been running in its present form, with quarterly sampling, since spring 1992.

During the UK's membership of the European Union, the survey was carried out under European Union regulations, which specified the way the survey should be conducted, the quality of the results that member states supply to Eurostat and the timetable for supplying results. Since the UK's exit from the European Union, these regulations do not apply anymore. Although the LFS began as a survey designed to meet international obligations, its primary purpose is now "the prompt publication of key aggregate, whole economy, indicators, for the integrated assessment of labour market conditions" (Review of the Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics, 2002).

### Definitions

The definitions of the three economic activity groups – employed, unemployed and economically inactive – that are used in the LFS are the standard International Labour Organization (ILO) definitions.

#### Economically active

Those aged 16 years and over, who are either employed or unemployed in the survey reference week.

#### Employed

Those aged 16 years and over, who are regarded as in employment if they did at least one hour of work in the reference week (as an employee, self-employed, unpaid workers in a family business or participants in government-supported training schemes) and those who had a job that they were temporarily away from (for example, if they were on holiday).

## Unemployed

Those aged 16 years and over, who are without work, want a job, have actively sought work in the last four weeks and are available to start work in the next two weeks, or are out of work but have found a job and are waiting to start it within the next two weeks.

## Economically inactive

Those who are neither in employment nor unemployed. This group includes, for example, all those who are looking after a home or family, have a long-term illness or disability that prevents them working, or are retired.

## Unpaid family workers

Those who are doing unpaid work in a family business.

## July to September 2024 questionnaire changes

Changes to existing questions: OYCIRC – Guidance removed relating to furlough as now outdated. Please see [User Guide Volume 2 and 3 2022](#) for further details.

## Fieldwork and operational changes

A timeline of significant operational changes that may have had an impact on response include:

- July 2010 – households with residents aged 75 years and over are removed after their initial interview from October to December 2010 (OD10); this affects response rates, as these households generally have high response rates; see the "Questionnaire changes" section for more details
- January 2011 – a proportion of initial interviews were conducted by the telephone unit rather than face-to-face as an efficiency measure
- June 2017 – introduction of £5 and £10 incentives randomly allocated across the sample
- January 2018 – from Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2018 onwards all initial interviews have been face-to-face, except for respondents north of the Caledonian Canal (NOCC)
- January 2018 – around 10% to 15% of the Wave 1 sample moved from telephone operations to face-to-face
- April 2018 – introduction of new administrative systems for recording field time and expenses
- June 2018 – changes to advance materials and procedures because of the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation
- July 2018 – change of incentive type from a paper voucher to a card voucher
- October 2018 – launch of a new fieldwork management tool for use in face-to-face mode
- March 2019 – issues with the telephone system used for some cases in Waves 2 to 5 resulted in poor connectivity, that may affect response rates
- March 2020 – social distancing measures were implemented in the UK; face-to-face data collection paused, and all interviewing moved to telephone mode
- May 2020 – unconditional incentive increased to £10 for all Wave 1 households in Great Britain July 2020 – Wave 1 LFS sample size doubled to account for lower response rates
- July 2020 – Northern Ireland moved from unconditional to conditional incentives for Waves 1, 2 and 5 and increased the amount from £10 to £20 in Wave 1

- April 2021 – Wave 1 sample reduced to 160%; knock-to-nudge introduced
- October 2021 – Wave 1 sample reduced to 150% of pre-coronavirus level
- April 2022 – Wave 1 sample increased to 155% of pre-coronavirus level
- November 2022 – roll out of [knock-to-nudge for the transformed LFS parallel run](#), affecting capacity being stretched in the field
- November to December 2022 – Royal Mail strikes resulted in advance letters to respondents being delivered late
- July 2023 – Wave 1 sample reduced to the pre-coronavirus pandemic level
- October 2023 – one of the measures that was in place since the pandemic was to code out unproductive cases in consecutive waves as refusal to headquarters (refusal to HQ), with the focus on improving the quality of the achieved LFS sample in October to December 2023, face-to-face interviewing was fully rolled-out again, enabling a better follow-up process for unproductive cases; this is reflected in the decrease in refusal rates observed in Waves 2 to 5
- October/November 2023 – return to face-to-face interviewing, increase of the unconditional incentive, introduction of an additional conditional incentive ([see here](#) for further information on other additional measures introduced in this period)
- January 2024 – Wave 1 sample increased to 155% (25,800 addresses in total per quarter)
- July 2024 – one measure previously in place since the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic to code out cases that were unproductive in two consecutive waves as refusals to HQ was paused in October 2023 when LFS recovery measures were introduced, which resulted in a decrease in refusal rates in Waves 2 to 5 at that time; following the Wave 1 sample increase in January 2024, which lead to an increase in unproductive cases in follow-up waves, we reintroduced coding cases that were unproductive in two consecutive waves as refusals to HQ in July 2024 to improve our fieldwork operations
- August 2024 – Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), who are responsible for LFS data collection in Northern Ireland, reduced Wave 1 issued sample in Northern Ireland by 20% (from 1,287 addresses to 1,040 addresses each quarter)

## Survey methodology changes

Changes to State Pension age were introduced in 2010, that affected labour market and LFS publications as well as other social surveys. Under the Pensions Act 2011, the State Pension age of women was expected to increase more quickly (than originally planned) to aged 65 years between April 2016 and November 2018. From December 2018, the State Pension age for both men and women started to increase, expected to reach age 67 years by 2028.

From Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2010, households that only contain respondents aged 75 years and over are removed from the sample after their Wave 1 interview. This change was introduced to reduce the cost of the survey and reduce the burden on respondents. Households only containing individuals aged 75 years and over are largely economically inactive. Therefore, the value of interviewing these households is greatly reduced when considering the main aims of the LFS. The Wave 1 interviews from aged 75 years and over households will receive a larger weight to make them representative of the UK population. This change results in around a 10% reduction in the household sample size and a 7% reduction in the individual sample size.

From Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2010, the treatment of "concealed multi-households" on the LFS has also changed. Previously, if one sampled address turned out on inspection to be, for example, not one house but six flats, all six flats would be recorded as households and interviews would be attempted with each household. The number of households encountered could be in the hundreds. This would not be a practical approach. We decided to harmonise the approach to multi-households across all our social surveys. From Q10, if a concealed multi-household is recorded, only one household will be randomly selected to be interviewed.

Since 2020, the weighting approach for the LFS has had to incorporate tactical methodological changes, reflecting the challenges in conducting household surveys and measuring population change through a pandemic. In particular, the enforced change from face-to-face interviewing to telephone interviewing led to an increase in non-response bias in survey responses.

Over the course of 2020 and 2021 some interim adjustments were introduced to the weighting process to mitigate the impact of the non-response bias in the LFS. These interim adjustments have been superseded by a reweighting exercise applied to the July 2022 to December 2023 data. More information can be found in this [article](#) published in February 2024.

## 8 . Coherence

Coherence is the degree to which data that are derived from different sources or methods, but that refer to the same phenomenon, are similar.

### Data sources

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) is one of several sources of data about the labour market. Some sources provide data that overlap with LFS data on employment, unemployment and earnings. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has published guidance about the strengths and limitations of each source in relation to these topics and has indicated which source is the most appropriate for different purposes. Details can be found in our [Labour market statistics guide](#).

### Employment, unemployment and economic inactivity

The LFS is the source recommended by the ONS for certain employment-related statistics (for example, estimates of the number of people in employment or unemployed). The LFS is also a unique source of comprehensive, coherent information about economic inactivity, where it provides information separately about people who want a job and those who do not.

### Number and industrial composition of jobs

The workforce jobs (WFJ) series provides estimates of the number of jobs in the UK economy and is the source recommended by the ONS for both the number of jobs and the industrial composition of jobs. Workforce jobs consist of the sum of employee jobs, self-employment jobs, jobs in the armed forces and government-supported trainees. Civilian workforce jobs are available by geographical region, sex and broad industry. Total workforce jobs are available by sex and broad industry.

## Earnings

For estimates of change in earnings (for example, pay growth in the economy), a non-LFS source, the Average Weekly Earnings (AWE) measure (formerly the Average Earnings Index (AEI)), is the most suitable source. It provides industry and whole-economy information but excludes small employers, the self-employed and government-supported trainees. Pay, commission, bonuses, overtime and pay award arrears are included, but redundancy payments and benefits in kind are excluded.

The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) includes information about the levels, distribution, and make-up of earnings and hours worked for employees in different occupations, industries, ages and regions. It should be used when the information required is not available from the AWE (such as for occupational groups, or regional analyses) and is the preferred source of the earnings of full-time employees and of the average hourly earnings of all employees. The LFS should be used when the information is not available from the AWE or from the ASHE and is the preferred source of data about the earnings of part-time and low-paid employees. There is an ONS [guide to sources of data on earnings and income](#).

## 9 . Summary of methods

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) covers private households, including persons who are temporarily absent. The resident population is made up of persons who regard the sample address as their main address and those who have lived in the dwelling for more than six consecutive months, even if they do not regard this as their principal dwelling. Persons absent for more than six months are not regarded as members of the resident population.

A private household comprises of one or more persons (not necessarily related) living at the same address who share cooking facilities and share a living room, sitting room or dining area. Students living in halls of residence and pupils at boarding schools are sampled through the private households of their parents. In Great Britain, an additional sample is drawn from persons living in NHS accommodation.

The year is divided into quarters of 13 weeks. Before January 2006, these were seasonal quarters:

- winter (December to February)
- spring (March to May)
- summer (June to August)
- autumn (September to November)

From January 2006, the LFS has been conducted based on calendar quarters:

- Quarter 1 – January to March
- Quarter 2 – April to June
- Quarter 3 – July to September
- Quarter 4 – October to December

For most of Great Britain, the survey base is the Royal Mail's Postcode Address File (PAF), a database of all addresses receiving mail. The list is limited to addresses receiving fewer than 25 items of post per day, to exclude businesses. Because of the very low population density in the far north of Scotland (north of the Caledonian Canal), telephone directories are used as sampling frames. Interviews in the far north of Scotland are also carried out by telephone because face-to-face interviews would be too expensive. In Northern Ireland POINTER, which is the government's central register of domestic properties, is used.

In Great Britain, a systematic sample is drawn each quarter from the three sampling bases, yielding 16,640 PAF addresses, 75 telephone numbers for the north of Scotland and 36 units of NHS housing. As the PAF is broken down geographically, the systematic sampling ensures that the sample is representative at regional level. In Northern Ireland, a simple random sample is drawn, each quarter, from each of three strata, giving 650 addresses in all.

A rotation system made up of five waves is used. Respondents are interviewed five times at 13-week intervals and one-fifth of the sample is replaced each quarter. Interviews are carried out on a face-to-face (CAPI) or telephone (CATI) basis with the help of portable computers for the interviews in the first wave. In the far north of Scotland (north of the Caledonian Canal) and for interviews in the second to fifth waves, wherever possible, interviews are carried out by telephone.

## 10 . Technical definitions

### Imputation

If a household (or someone within a household) is unavailable for interview but was interviewed in the previous wave, responses from the previous wave are rolled forward. This is referred to as "imputation". Imputation is carried out to minimise non-response bias in estimates while simultaneously improving precision by boosting the sample size. The rationale is that most Labour Force Survey (LFS) variables do not change from one quarter to another for most people.

Responses are rolled forward for one wave only. Data are not rolled forward after a second consecutive non-response. Tables and charts (at person or household level) containing responses that have been rolled forward from the previous wave are denoted by the term "including imputed". Tables and charts that do not contain responses that have been rolled forward from the previous wave are denoted by the term "excluding imputed".

### Method of calculating sampling variability

See [Section 2: Summary of quality](#) for information on the method of calculating sampling variability.

## Method of calculating response rates

The response rate indicates how many interviews were achieved as a proportion of those eligible for the survey. The formula used is as follows:

RR equals (FR plus PR) divided by (FR plus PR plus OR plus CR plus RHQ plus NC plus RRI\*).

Where RR is response rate, FR is full response, PR is partial response, OR is outright refusal, CR is circumstantial refusal, RHQ is refusal to HQ, NC is non-contact, RRI is refusal to re-interview, and the asterisk (\*) applies to Waves 2 to 5 only.

As the LFS is a panel survey, the calculation of response rates should take the panel design into account. Households may refuse further participation at any of the five quarterly visits they are due to receive.

Households that refuse further participation are not revisited at the next quarter, but they remain part of the eligible sample. The response rate for households comprises the ratio of the number of households responding at the current wave to the sum of the number of eligible households found at the same wave at the sampled addresses, plus any households that have refused outright to participate at a previous wave. Outright refusals (as distinct from circumstantial refusals and non-contacts, which are revisited at the next wave) may occur either when the interviewer calls or asks for permission to recall in three months.

This simple model does not take account of such situations as net addition or subtraction of eligible households at sampled addresses at waves after Wave 1, for example by a net increase or decrease in occupation of household spaces. However, the definition of household spaces is fluid and does not provide a firm basis for response rate calculations. LFS response rates that take the panel design into account are based on the simple model.

## Definitions of response outcome categories

### Full response

A household in which each household member has answered all applicable questions.

### Partial response

A household in which questions were not completed because someone refused to be interviewed, refused part way through the questionnaire, or refused to let someone else answer on his or her behalf. However, at least one question block must have been completed. If only part of the information has been collected for a one-person household, it is coded as a refusal or non-contact.

### Outright refusal

A household that refuses to respond to the survey and the interviewer feels that there is no chance of an interview at the current or in any future wave.

### Circumstantial refusal

A household where the respondent refuses to respond because of a temporary circumstance (for example, going on holiday or being too busy during the field period). A circumstantial refusal enables an interviewer to call back at the next wave.

### Refusal to HQ

A household that contacts headquarters to refuse to participate in the survey in response to the advance letter.

### Non-contact

When an address is occupied, but where it has not been possible to contact any member of the household in the field period.



## Refusal to re-interview

A household that takes part in the survey (at one or more of Waves 1 to 4) but that, when asked to take part in the next wave (Waves 2 to 5), refuses.

## Method of calculating income response rates

The income question is asked at Waves 1 and 5 only. Individuals aged 16 to 69 years, who are in employment in the reference week, form the subset of respondents who are eligible for these questions. The percentage response rates for the income questions are based on all eligible, in-scope respondents at Wave 1 and all eligible, in-scope respondents at Wave 5. The total response rate is the aggregate response rate for income for the quarter (Wave 1 and Wave 5), based on all eligible, in-scope respondents.

## NS-SEC

NS-SEC is the [National Statistics Socio-economic Classification](#), which replaces previous classifications that were based on social class and social and economic group.

## Standard Occupational Classification

An issue was identified with some occupational data on a number of Office for National Statistics (ONS) surveys, including the LFS. This was caused by the implementation of the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) from SOC 2010 to SOC 2020. A full [public statement on the impact of SOC miscoding](#), including a list of affected variables, was published on 26 September 2022. The article includes a link to [the list of four-digit SOC codes](#) and their estimated impact level.

The issue affects all LFS and Annual Population Survey (APS) datasets from January 2021 to September 2022. In October 2022, a revised SOC 2020 coding frame was introduced, correcting the error for collecting new data from that point.

## Proxy response

The LFS has to complete fieldwork to a tight timetable, and interview as many of the sampled households as possible, which leaves limited time for recalls. LFS interviewers try to interview every adult (aged 16 years and over) in each sampled household. However, when a household member is unavailable for interview, interviewers accept information by proxy from another responsible adult in the household. The proxy respondents are normally people living with a partner on behalf of their partner, and parents on behalf of their adult offspring who live with them.

## Attrition

Attrition is the term applied to respondents who begin the survey but subsequently drop out. It has been known for some time that these respondents tend to have different characteristics to those who remain in all waves of the survey, that can, therefore, result in attrition bias. For example, if respondents in a particular age group have a higher tendency to drop out (attrition rate) than respondents in other age groups, then they will be underrepresented in subsequent waves of the survey and in estimates.

## 11 . Related links

### [Labour Force Survey user guidance](#)

Methodology | Last revised 22 August 2024

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

### [Labour market overview, UK Statistical bulletins](#)

Bulletin | Monthly

Estimates of employment, unemployment, economic inactivity and other employment-related statistics for the UK.

### [Labour Force Survey Quality and Methodology Information \(QMI\)](#)

Methodology | Last revised 15 October 2024

Quality and Methodology Information for the Labour Force Survey, detailing the strengths and limitations of the data, methods used, and data uses and users.

Methodology for the calculation of sampling variability in the Labour Force Survey (PDF, 175KB)

The formulas used for the calculation of standard errors (SEs) on the quarterly LFS and describe how the impact of the sample design and weighting are captured in these calculations.

### [The National Online Manpower Information System \(NOMIS\)](#)

Web page | Updated regularly

Nomis is a service provided by the Office for National Statistics to give you free access to the most detailed and up-to-date UK labour market statistics from official sources.

### [Labour market QMI](#)

Methodology | Last revised 31 October 2011

Quality and Methodology Information for labour market statistics in the UK, detailing the strengths and limitations of the data, methods used, and data uses and users.

### [UK Data Archive, University of Essex](#)

Web page | Updated regularly

Home to the UK's largest collection of social, economic and population data for over 50 years.

## 12 . Cite this article

Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 12 November 2024, ONS website, article, [Labour Force Survey performance and quality monitoring report: July to September 2024](#)