Article

Productivity flash estimate and overview, UK: January to March 2026 and October to December 2025

Productivity flash estimates for Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2026, based on the GDP first quarterly estimate and labour market statistics, and productivity overview for Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2025

Contact:
Productivity team
productivity@ons.gov.uk
+44 1633 582563

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19 May 2026

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18 August 2026

Correction

27 May 2026 15:30

An error has been identified in the title of Figure 5 in our Productivity flash estimate and overview, UK: January to March 2026 and October to December 2025 bulletin. This error incorrectly states the date as October to December 2025. The correct date is January to March 2026. This was caused by human error. Please contact productivity@ons.gov.uk for more information. We apologise for this correction.

9 June 2026 09:30

We have corrected an error in the seasonal adjustment specification files affecting our Output per hour worked by division, UK dataset. This was caused by an inconsistency in the placement of data related to the 2020 break week. This led to medium differences, of 1% to 3%, in the time series' "hours" and "output per hour" fields for 2020. No other outputs were affected. We apologise for this error.

Notice

16 June 2026

Following requests for clarification around which productivity metric is recommended for use, the ONS has published the following blog.

In recent years, in line with many other statistical institutes internationally, ONS has been finding it harder to elicit responses to the LFS, which affected its quality and made its estimate of the number of hours worked more uncertain. We have seen notable improvements to LFS quality in the last year, with response levels now close to pre-pandemic levels. However, productivity mainly focuses on year-on-year changes so these historic lower responses are still impacting annual growth rates in the headline productivity data. The ONS therefore recommends, at the current time, that users focus on the experimental RTI approach as the best estimate of how productivity is changing in the UK economy.

31 July 2026

An error has been identified in data used to calculate unit wage costs for Section C (Manufacturing) in our Labour costs and labour income, UK dataset and our Unit labour cost and unit wage cost time series time series dataset.

The error affects data from 1982 to 1996 in Table 10, Column C (Manufacturing) and data from Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 1982 to Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 1996 in Table 20, Column C (Manufacturing) in our Labour costs and labour income, UK dataset.

The error also affects the following data in our Unit labour cost and unit wage cost time series time series dataset:

- data from Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 1982 to Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 1996 in CDID DIX4: Unit wage costs: Manufacturing C SIC07, 2023=100, seasonally adjusted, UK
- data from Quarter 2 (Apr to June) 1982 and Quarter 1 1997 in CDID DJ4I: Unit wage costs: Manufacturing C SIC07, percentage change on quarter, seasonally adjusted, UK
- data from Quarter 1 1983 to Quarter 4 1997 in CDID DJ4J: Unit wage costs: Manufacturing C SIC07, percentage change on year, seasonally adjusted, UK

This happened because of an outdated data series being used in the calculation of pre-1997 manufacturing unit wage costs. The error will be corrected and updated data will be published in our Productivity flash estimate and overview, UK release on 18 August 2026. No other industries or series are affected.

For more information, please contact productivity@ons.gov.uk. We apologise for this error.

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1 . Main points

Flash estimate of labour productivity for Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2026

- Estimates based on the Labour Force Survey (LFS) indicate output per hour worked in Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2026 was 0.4% higher, compared with Quarter 1 2025, while output per worker decreased by 0.1%, compared with the same period.
- Estimates produced using administrative data-based methods, incorporating Pay As You Earn (PAYE) Real Time Information (RTI) and LFS data sources, indicate output per hour and output per worker were 2.1% and 1.6% higher in Quarter 1 2026, respectively, compared with Quarter 1 2025.

Labour productivity by industry section for Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2025

- The information and communication industry made the biggest positive contribution to productivity growth, compared with the 2019 average; this was caused by a large increase in gross value added (GVA) with a smaller increase in hours worked.
- Human health and social work activities made the biggest negative contribution to productivity growth, compared with the 2019 average; this was caused by a large increase in the number of hours worked, alongside a small increase in output.

2 . Flash estimate of labour productivity for Quarter 1 2026

Flash estimate using the Labour Force Survey

The results in this article are consistent with labour market data from our Labour market overview, UK: May 2026 bulletin. The gross value added (GVA) estimate used in this section is from our Gross domestic product (GDP) first quarterly estimate, UK : January to March 2026 bulletin.

We published our latest Labour Force Survey quality update: April 2026 article on 21 April 2026. This article provides users with information to better understand the current quality of labour market data and guidance on how best to use the data in their analysis.

Output per hour worked was 3.5% above its pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic levels (2019 average level) in Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2026 (Table 1). This growth was caused by a 6.8% increase in GVA and a 3.2% increase in hours worked over this period.

Output per hour worked increased by 0.4% in Quarter 1 2026, compared with Quarter 1 2025. This is because GVA increased by 1.1% and the amount of hours worked increased by 0.7%.

Table 1: Flash estimate of labour productivity, using Labour Force Survey sources
Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2025 to Quarter 1 2026

	Output per hour growth rates			Output per worker growth rates		
Period	**Quarter vs 2019 level (%)**	**Quarter-on-year ago (%)**	**Quarter-on-quarter (%)**	**Quarter vs 2019 level (%)**	**Quarter-on-year ago (%)**	**Quarter-on-quarter (%)**
2025 Q1	3.1	0.4	0.1	2.4	-0.1	0.2
2025 Q2	2.2	-0.6	-0.8	1.8	-0.8	-0.6
2025 Q3	3.0	1.1	0.8	2.1	0.1	0.2
2025 Q4	2.5	-0.4	-0.5	2.1	-0.1	0.0
2026 Q1	3.5	0.4	0.9	2.3	-0.1	0.2

Source: Productivity flash estimate and overview, UK from the Office for National Statistics

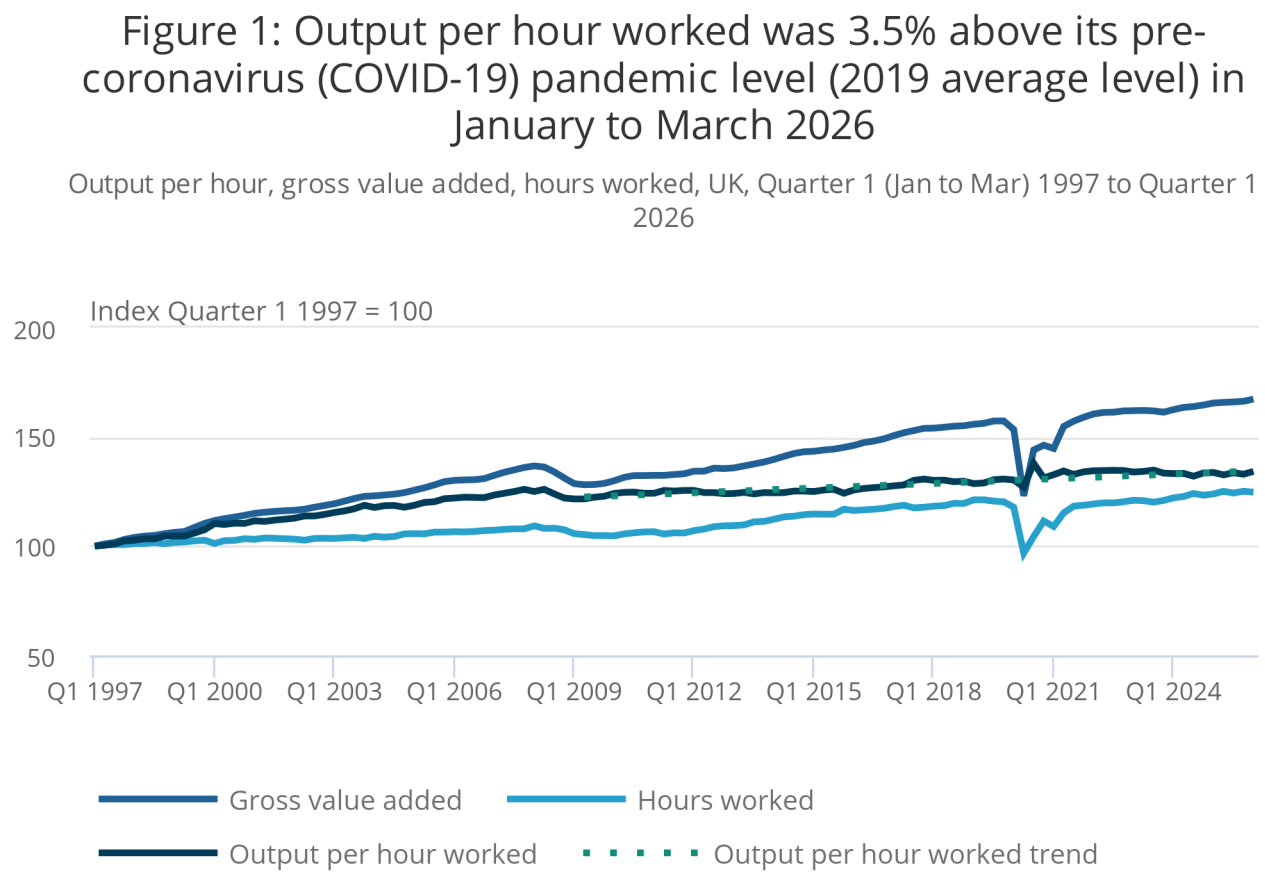
Notes

1. Comparisons with pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic levels use average 2019 levels as the base period.

Productivity growth in the most recent quarter is in line with the 2009 to 2019 trend (Figure 1). This is most evident in Figure 2, where the series continues to move between the trendline and the lower bound of the 95% confidence interval. However, growth remains weak compared with productivity trends before the 2008 global financial crisis.

Figure 1: Output per hour worked was 3.5% above its pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic level (2019 average level) in January to March 2026

Output per hour, gross value added, hours worked, UK, Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 1997 to Quarter 1 2026



Source: Productivity flash estimate and overview, UK from the Office for National Statistic

Notes:

1. The output per hour trendline was constructed using a linear regression of the period Quarter 1 2009 to Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2019 after using the Cochrane-Orcutt (CO) estimation, as described in our Productivity trends in the UK: July to September 2024 article. These trendlines are for visualisation purposes only. Statistical inference should be treated with caution because the post-2019 points are an extrapolation.

To account for the break in the trend growth rate around the 2008 global financial crisis, we have calculated a 95% confidence interval for the trend over the period from Quarter 1 2009 to Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2019. This provides context for recent growth. Output per hour worked in the latest quarter remains within the bounds of this 95% confidence interval.

Figure 2: Output per hour worked grew between January and March 2026, in line with its mediumterm trend

Output per hour, trend with upper and lower bound, with extrapolated trend plus upper and lower bound, Quarter 2 (Apr to June) 2009 to Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2026, UK

Notes

1. The trendline is constructed as in Figure 1, using the Labour Force Survey-derived statistic.

2. For information about how we construct confidence intervals in our figures, see Section 7: Data sources and quality.

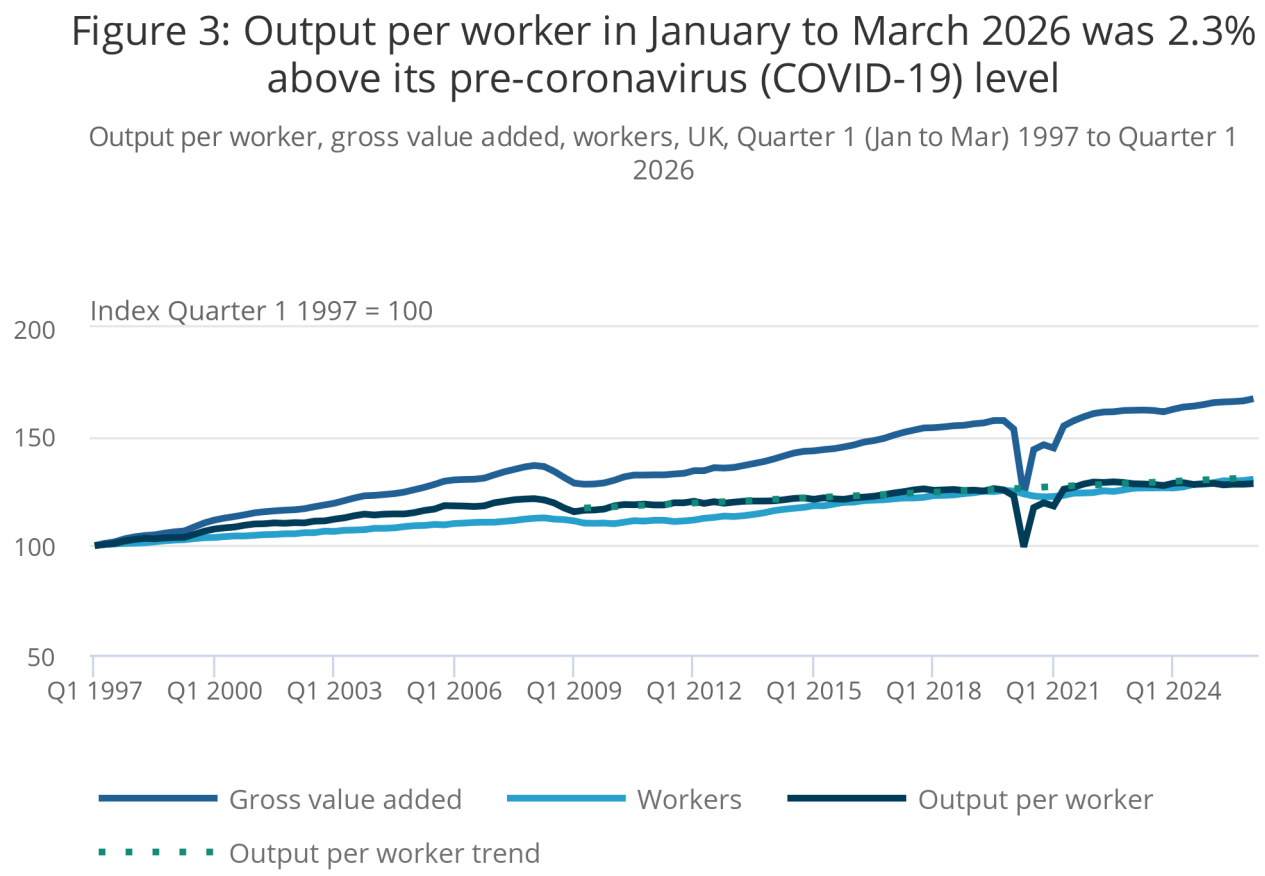
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Output per worker was 2.3% above its pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic levels (2019 average level) in Quarter 1 2026 (Table 1). This growth was caused by a 6.8% increase in GVA and a 4.5% increase in workers over the period.

Output per worker growth was negative 0.1% in Quarter 1 2026, compared with Quarter 1 2025. This is because GVA increased by 1.1%, which is a slower rate than the number of workers (1.2%).

Figure 3: Output per worker in January to March 2026 was 2.3% above its pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) level

Output per worker, gross value added, workers, UK, Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 1997 to Quarter 1 2026



Source: Productivity flash estimate and overview, UK from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. The trendline is constructed as in Figure 1, using the Labour Force Survey-derived statistic.

3 . Flash estimates, produced using administrative data methods, with different data sources

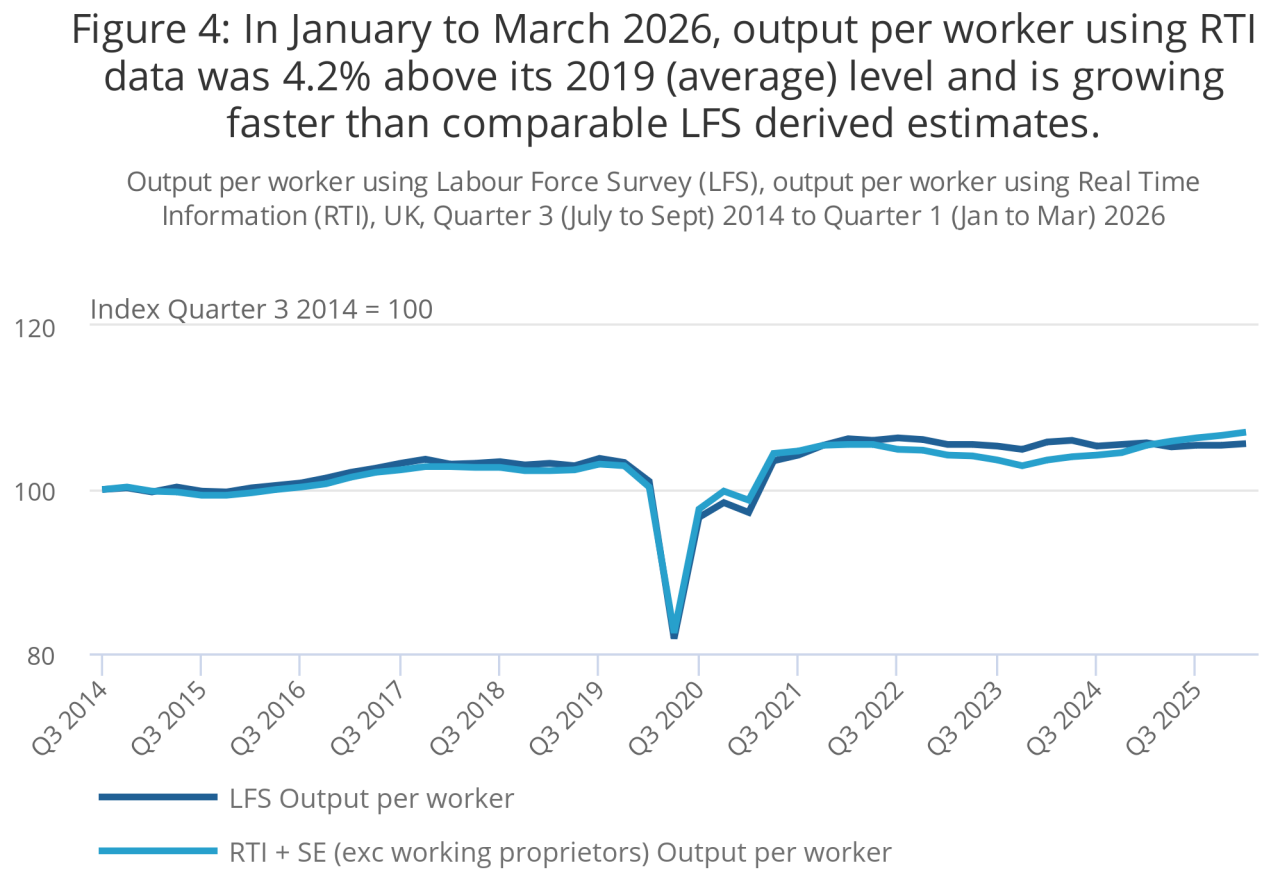
For information on our Real Time Information (RTI) method, please see Section 3 of our Productivity flash estimate and overview, UK: January to March 2025 and October to December 2024 bulletin. Users should be aware that the estimates within this section are official statistics in development.

Figure 4 shows that the latest output per worker quarterly estimates calculated using the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and the RTI have continue to diverge. The RTI measure increased by 4.2%, while the LFS measure increased by 2.3%, when comparing Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2026 levels for each series with their 2019 average.

Readers should note that the index base for Figures 4 and 5 has been changed from 2023 equals 100 to Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2014 equals 100. This helps illustrate the longer-term similarities and differences in growth between the quarterly estimates derived from the LFS and RTI, and aligns more closely with other figures in this article. The change does not affect the underlying growth rates.

Figure 4: In January to March 2026, output per worker using RTI data was 4.2% above its 2019 (average) level and is growing faster than comparable LFS derived estimates.

Output per worker using Labour Force Survey (LFS), output per worker using Real Time Information (RTI), UK, Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2014 to Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2026



Source: Productivity flash estimate and overview, UK from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. RTI worker estimates are supplemented by LFS self-employed data, minus working proprietors (for example, self-employed individuals who are sole directors of their own limited business).

2. No adjustment is made for those that are employed but not part of Pay As You Earn (PAYE).

3. Any individual who has a main job outside of the PAYE scheme and a second job on the PAYE scheme will be categorised as only having a main job.

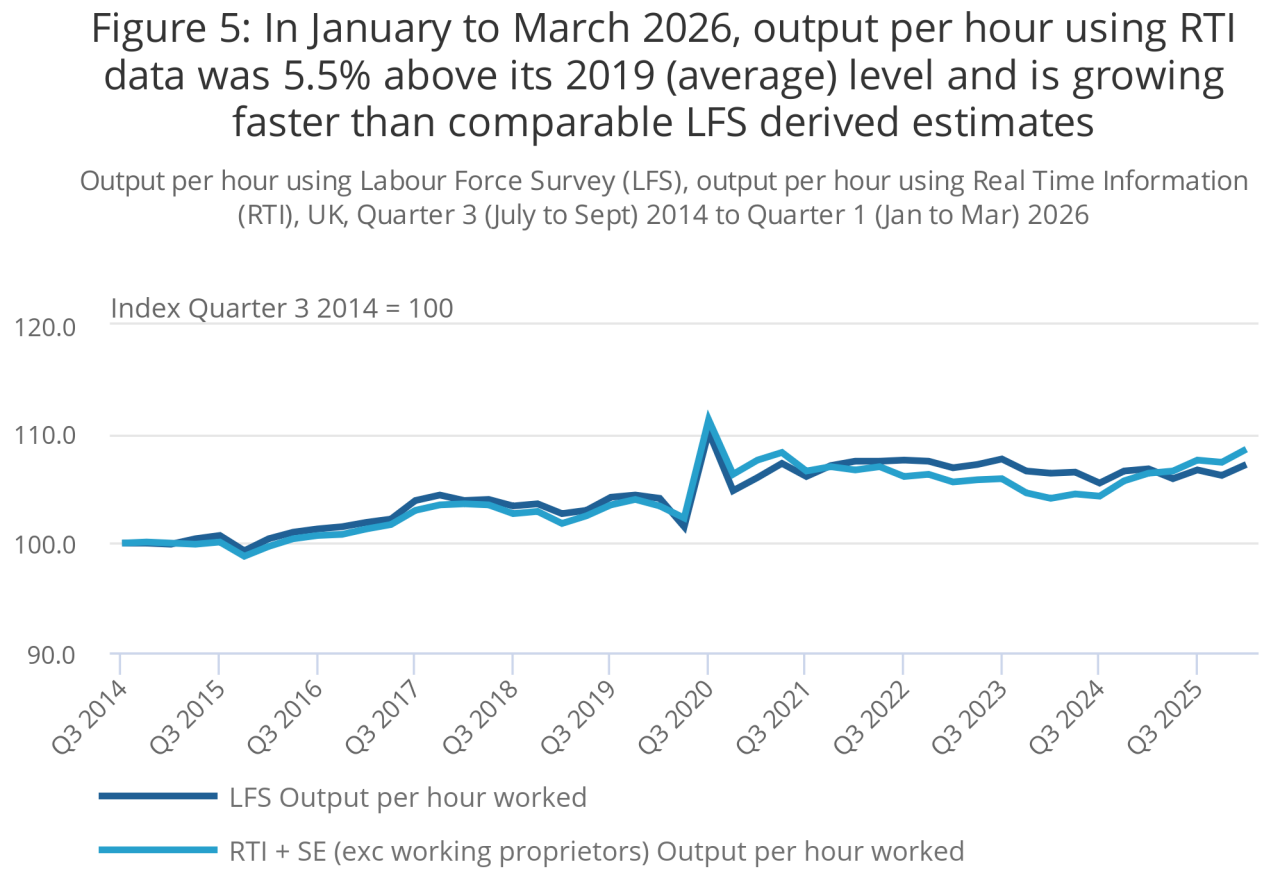
While RTI does not collect actual hours worked, the impact on output per hour can be observed by varying the data source for workers. This means that the whole-economy hours worked are calculated by multiplying LFS average hours worked with the relevant number of workers derived from either RTI or LFS to produce the two series. (Figure 5).

In recent quarters, the Pay As You Earn (PAYE) data on workers have indicated stronger growth than the LFS data. Growth in the two series was broadly similar from 2014 to 2022. However, their growth rates have diverged since 2022. The LFS-based measure has been broadly flat over the period. The PAYE-based measure initially showed a fall in output per worker, followed by a period of growth that continued into 2025. There is some evidence that the difference between the two series is returning, as the LFS has improved in quality as a data source. However, the two data series show broadly similar trends and comparable levels of volatility when comparing quarterly movements.

Users should apply caution not to overinterpret these results. PAYE data may better reflect economic theory, which would anticipate that the economic consequences of the supply shock induced by the Russian invasion of Ukraine would dampen productivity before it recovers. However, a relatively small movement in either series in future quarters could close or widen these differences radically. Users who wish to raise questions around the exact composition of these metrics should contact productivity@ons.gov.uk.

Figure 5: In January to March 2026, output per hour using RTI data was 5.5% above its 2019 (average) level and is growing faster than comparable LFS derived estimates

Output per hour using Labour Force Survey (LFS), output per hour using Real Time Information (RTI), UK, Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2014 to Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2026



Source: Productivity flash estimate and overview, UK from the Office for National Statistics

4 . Labour productivity by industry section for Quarter 4 2025

The results in this article are consistent with labour market data from our Labour market overview, UK: May 2026 bulletin. The gross value added (GVA) used in this section is from our Gross domestic product (GDP) quarterly national accounts, UK: October to December 2025.

Workforce jobs changes to productivity

Until December 2025, employee jobs data for the private sector were collected through three surveys:

- the Monthly Business Survey (MBS)
- the Quarterly Business Survey (QBS)
- the Construction Survey (CON)

To improve and streamline processes, the data collection platform for these three surveys was upgraded and went live throughout Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2025. Alongside this, employment questions have been consolidated into a single questionnaire under QBS. Businesses in industries previously sampled only in MBS or CON moved into an expanded QBS universe, which samples approximately 37,000 businesses. While extensive mitigations were put in place, small existing biases between new and continuing businesses have been amplified temporarily because of the volume of newly sampled businesses entrants. More information can be found in Section 7: Changes and their effects on comparability over time of our Workforce jobs in the UK quality and methods guide.

Contribution to UK productivity growth and decomposition

Figure 6 shows the contribution to growth in output per hour worked for 19 industries in Quarter 4 2025, relative to 2019 (average). The information and communication industry made the largest upward contribution to productivity growth (2.5%), compared with 2019 (average). Human health and social work activities made the largest negative contribution to productivity growth (negative 1.1%) over the same period.

Figure 6: In October to December 2025, the information and communication industry made the biggest upward contribution to output per hour compared with the 2019 average

Contribution to growth of output per hour worked, percentage points, Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2025 compared with 2019 average

Notes

1. The industry contributions may not add up to the total growth in output per hour because of the National Accounts balancing value and the impact of rounding.
2. The "other services" industry includes activities of households as employers, undifferentiated goods and services producing activities of households for own use, activities of membership organisations, repair of computers and personal and household goods, and a variety of personal service activities not covered elsewhere in ourStandard Industrial Classification (SIC) 2007.
3. The relative size of an industry shown is based on the current price (CP) value from 2019 (average).

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Figure 7 shows the decomposition of growth of output per hour worked. Growth in the information and communication industry was mainly caused by an increase in gross value added (GVA).

The large decrease in output per hour in the electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply industry should be treated with caution. This series is subject to high volatility. We are reviewing and investigating improvements to the data sources and methods. We will aim to publish the results of our investigations into this industry later this year.

Figure 7: Output per hour in the information technology industry grew by 35.7% in October to December 2025, compared with its 2019 average, because of a large increase in gross value added

Decomposition of growth of output per hour worked, hours worked and gross value added (GVA), percentage change, Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2025 compared with 2019 average, UK

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5 . Data on productivity flash estimate and overview

Output per hour worked, UK
Dataset | Released 19 May 2026
Estimates for gross value added (GVA), hours worked and output per hour worked for whole economy and section level industry, as defined by the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) 2007. Contains annual and quarterly statistics. Includes estimates for industry quarter on quarter, year on year and quarter on year contributions to whole economy output per hour worked.

Output per worker, UK
Dataset | Released 19 May 2026
Estimates for gross value added (GVA), workers, and output per worker for the whole economy and bespoke industry (market sector). Contains annual and quarterly statistics.

Output per job, UK
Dataset | Released 19 May 2026
Estimates for gross value added (GVA), jobs and output per job for the whole economy and by section level industry, as defined by the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) 2007. Contains annual and quarterly statistics. Contains estimates for industry quarter-on-quarter, year-on-year, and quarter-on-year contributions to output per job.

Labour costs and labour income, UK
Dataset | Released 19 May 2026
Unit labour cost, average labour compensation per hour worked, labour share and unit wage cost for the whole UK economy, and unit wage cost for manufacturing.

Output per job by division, UK
Dataset | Released 19 May 2026
Estimates for gross value added (GVA), jobs and output per job for bespoke industries and division level industry, as defined by the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) 2007. Contains annual and quarterly statistics.

Output per hour worked by division, UK
Dataset | Released 19 May 2026
Estimates for gross value added (GVA), hours worked and output per hour worked for bespoke industries and division level industry, as defined by the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) 2007. Contains annual and quarterly statistics.

6 . Glossary

Gross value added

Gross value added (GVA) is the value generated by any unit engaged in production and the contributions of individual sectors or industries to gross domestic product (GDP).

Labour productivity

Labour productivity measures how many units of output are produced for each unit of labour input and is calculated by dividing output by labour input.

Labour inputs

The preferred measure of labour input is hours worked ("productivity hours"), but workers and jobs ("productivity jobs") are also used.

Output

Output refers to gross value added (GVA), which is an estimate of the volume of goods and services produced by an industry and in aggregate for the UK.

Reallocation effect

The reallocation effect captures how even if every industry were to experience zero productivity growth, the whole economy could still grow if higher-productivity sectors expand while lower-productivity sectors contract.

A positive reallocation effect indicates that economic activity has shifted, on average, from lowerproductivity industries to higherproductivity ones. A negative reallocation effect indicates the reverse.

7 . Data sources and quality

Information on methods for the labour productivity data, its strengths and limitations, as well as the quality and accuracy of the data, is available in our Labour productivity Quality and Methodology Information (QMI).

New estimates of gross value added (GVA) are more volatile on a quarterly basis, especially in production industries. This reflects the use of new data and methods and the challenges in reconciling quarterly and annual data, as explained in our Recent challenges of balancing the three approaches of GDP article. As productivity is a structural feature of the economy, we continue to advise users to focus on long-term trends of productivity.

The Pay As You Earn (PAYE) Real Time Information (RTI) comes from our monthly Earnings and employment from Pay As You Earn Real Time Information, UK bulletin, with estimates of payrolled employees and their pay from HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC). More information on the methods used to derive monthly employee and earnings estimates from PAYE RTI administrative data can be found in our New methods for monthly earnings and employment estimates from PAYE RTI data: December 2019 article.

Imputed rental is excluded from "Industry L: real estate" because including it would distort productivity measures, since the output is mainly an imputed value rather than a result of labour or market service provision. For "Industry B: mining and quarrying", employee average hours are calculated at section level because reliable and detailed data on average hours worked is only available for the entire section, rather than for each division within the section.

Labour Force Survey reweighting

We published our Labour Force Survey: planned improvements and its reintroduction methodology on 2 November 2023. This enabled the reintroduction of the Labour Force Survey (LFS) following its suspension in October 2023, when falling response rates led to increased data uncertainty.

Productivity data in this release reflect reweighted LFS data consistent with our Labour market overview, UK: May 2026 bulletin. Whole-economy estimates of second jobs and total hours have been adjusted back to mid-2011. This will ensure that headline productivity statistics can be assessed without a discontinuity. This is for the purposes of productivity estimates only and they are not part of the labour market release. Therefore, the adjusted productivity jobs and the adjusted productivity hours worked diverge slightly from the estimates in our Full-time, part-time and temporary workers dataset and our Actual weekly hours worked dataset from 2011 to 2019.

Trendlines and confidence intervals

We construct the 95% confidence intervals around the trendlines in our figures by first calculating the standard error (SE) by dividing the standard deviation of residuals by the square root of the number of periods. Then, we determine the critical value corresponding to the 95% confidence level (1.96) and multiply it by the SE. Finally, we use this value to create the interval by adding and subtracting the result from the predicted trendline value at each point, providing the upper and lower bounds of the confidence interval.

Our trendlines are based on research we published in our Productivity trends in the UK: July to September 2024 article and updated with the revisions caused by Bluebook 2025. Please email productivity@ons.gov.uk with your comments and views.

Accredited official statistics

Our GVA estimates and Pay As You Earn (PAYE) Real Time Information (RTI) estimates for payrolled employees are accredited official statistics. These accredited official statistics were independently reviewed by the Office for Statistics Regulation in March 2015 for GVA and July 2025 for RTI. They comply with the standards of trustworthiness, quality, and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics and should be labelled "accredited official statistics".

Official statistics in development

The labour market and productivity statistics in this article are labelled as “official statistics in development”. Until October 2023, these were called "experimental statistics". Read more about the change in our guide to official statistics in development.

To help us meet user needs, please email productivity@ons.gov.uk with any feedback our statistics.

8 . Related links

GDP first quarterly estimate, UK: January to March 2026
Bulletin | Released 14 May 2026
First quarterly estimate of gross domestic product (GDP). Contains current and constant price data on the value of goods and services to indicate the economic performance of the UK..

Labour market overview, UK: May 2026
Bulletin | Released 19 May 2026
Estimates of employment, unemployment, economic inactivity, and other employment-related statistics for the UK.

GDP quarterly national accounts, UK: October to December 2025
Bulletin | Released 31 March 2026
Revised quarterly estimate of gross domestic product (GDP) for the UK. Uses additional data to provide a more precise indication of economic growth than the first estimate.

Earnings and employment from Pay As You Earn Real Time Information, UK: May 2026
Bulletin | Released 19 May 2026
Monthly estimates of payrolled employees and their pay from HM Revenue and Customs' (HMRC's) Pay As You Earn (PAYE) Real Time Information (RTI) data. This is a joint release between HMRC and the Office for National Statistics (ONS). These are official statistics in development.

Public service productivity, quarterly, UK: October to December 2025
Bulletin | Released 8 May 2026
UK total public service and healthcare productivity, inputs, and output, to provide a short-term, timely indicator of annual productivity estimates. These are official statistics in development.

9 . Cite this statistical bulletin

Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 19 May 2026, ONS website, article, Productivity flash estimate and overview, UK: January to March 2026 and October to December 2025