

Statistical bulletin

Children living in long-term workless households in the UK: 2017

Annual UK estimates of the number of children living in households where all adults have not worked for at least 12 months.

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Table of contents

1. [Main points](#)
2. [Things you need to know about this release](#)
3. [Number of children in long-term workless households decreases](#)
4. [Quality and methodology](#)

1 . Main points

- In 2017, 1.1 million children (8.6%) lived in long-term workless households.
- Of all children in workless households, 79.2% lived in long-term workless households.
- The South East and the South West had the lowest percentage of children in long-term workless households, both at 5.4%.
- Northern Ireland had the highest percentage of children in long-term workless households at 14.5%.

2 . Things you need to know about this release

Introduction

This bulletin provides statistics on the number of children living in long-term workless households in the UK. These statistics have been produced using the Annual Population Survey (APS) household dataset for the period January to December 2017 unless otherwise stated. They only contain households where at least one person is aged 16 to 64 years and all people aged 16 years and over are unemployed or economically inactive and had not worked for at least 12 months.

These estimates add a definition of long-term worklessness of adults in a household. This means that they are a subset of the number of children living in workless households, which was previously published in [Workless households for regions across the UK: 2017](#) using the APS household dataset. It should be noted that the lead statistic for the number of children in workless households is derived from the [Labour Force Survey \(LFS\) household dataset](#), which is published each quarter.

Datasets containing estimates for children living in long-term workless households are provided by a range of characteristics, such as combined economic status of adults in the household and age of child for the latest available data, covering January to December 2017, and as a time series from 2006 to 2017.

More information on the concepts and methodology used in the release can be found in [Children living in long-term workless households: UK](#).

Main definitions

Household

A household is defined as a single person, or a group of people living at the same address who have the address as their only or main residence and either share one main meal a day or share living accommodation (or both). In this bulletin, households are further defined as where at least one person is aged 16 to 64 years.

Child

People aged 0 to 15 years (that is, have not yet reached their 16th birthday).

Workless household

A household where all members aged 16 years and over are currently economically inactive or unemployed.

Student household

Student households are households where at least one person is aged 16 to 64 years and contain only people in full-time education aged between 16 and 24 years. Communal establishments, for example, student halls of residence, are not included within the sample frame of the APS datasets. Students living in communal establishments during term-times are instead captured through the parental address.

Workless household (excluding student households)

A workless household excluding those households that contain only people aged between 16 and 24 years and in full-time education.

Unemployed

The definition is specified by the International Labour Organisation (ILO). Unemployed people are those without a job who have been actively seeking work in the past four weeks and are available to start work in the next two weeks. It also includes those who are out of work but have found a job and are waiting to start it in the next two weeks.

Economically inactive

People not in employment, who have not been seeking work within the last four weeks and/or are unable to start work within the next two weeks.

Long-term workless households

A long-term workless household is a subset of workless households defined by adding a condition to capture the duration of inactivity for the adults in the household.

The definition of a long-term workless household is therefore a workless household where all adults, aged 16 years and over, are currently economically inactive or unemployed (workless), and these adults left their last job at least 12 months ago or have never worked (in a paid job).

Long-term workless household (excluding student households)

A long-term workless household excluding those households containing only people in full-time education aged between 16 and 24 years.

3 . Number of children in long-term workless households decreases

There were 1.1 million children living in long-term workless households in the UK in the period January to December 2017. This represents 8.6% of all children and 79.2% of the 1.3 million children living in all workless households.

The percentage of all children living in long-term workless households decreased by 0.7 percentage points between 2016 and 2017 and has decreased each year since its peak of 14.0% in 2010 following the last downturn.

Table 1: Children living in long-term workless households, workless households and all households, 2006 to 2017, UK

	Number of children in long-term workless households (thousands)	Percentage of children in long-term workless households	Number of children in workless households (thousands)	Percentage of children in workless households	Total number of children (thousands)
2006	1,544	13.3	1,828	15.7	11,630
2007	1,554	13.4	1,803	15.5	11,635
2008	1,552	13.3	1,844	15.8	11,662
2009	1,539	13.1	1,930	16.5	11,708
2010	1,645	14.0	1,946	16.6	11,758
2011	1,571	13.3	1,895	16.1	11,801
2012	1,530	12.8	1,800	15.1	11,921
2013	1,441	12.0	1,728	14.4	11,995
2014	1,375	11.4	1,615	13.4	12,092
2015	1,232	10.1	1,473	12.1	12,195
2016	1,140	9.3	1,421	11.6	12,281
2017	1,066	8.6	1,346	10.9	12,395

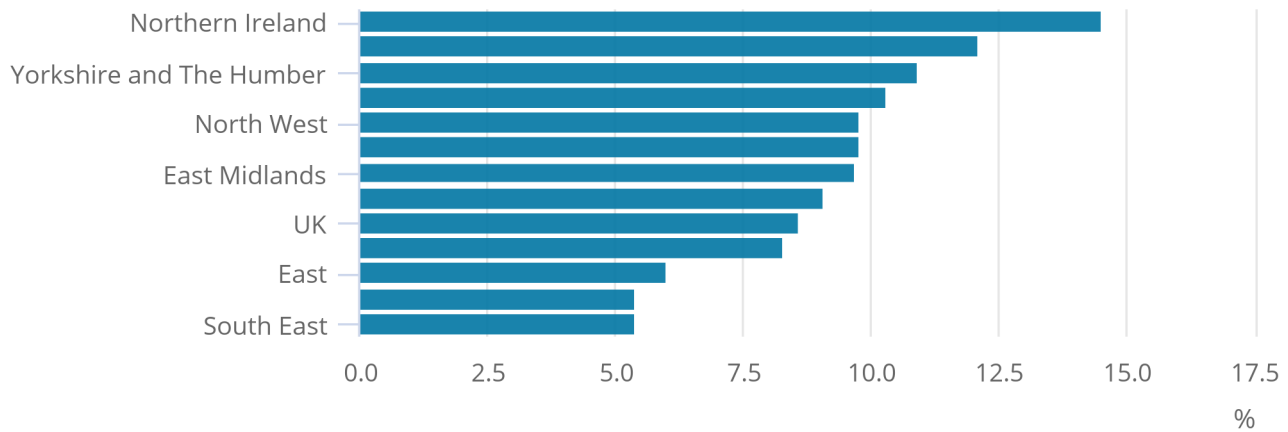
Source: Office for National Statistics, Annual Population Survey (Household)

The three areas with the lowest percentage of children in long-term workless households were all in the south of England, with 5.4% of children in both the South East and the South West, and 6.0% in the East of England. The two areas with the highest percentages of children in long-term workless households in England were both in the north of England, with 12.1% of children in the North East and 10.9% in Yorkshire and The Humber. Northern Ireland had the highest percentage in the UK at 14.5%, with Wales at 9.8% and Scotland at 9.1%.

Since 2006, London has seen the greatest fall in the percentage of children in long-term workless households, decreasing 13.2 percentage points from 21.5% to 8.3% in 2017. The regions with the next highest decrease were the North West and Wales, both at 4.6 percentage points.

Figure 1: Percentage of children living in long-term workless households by region, UK, 2017

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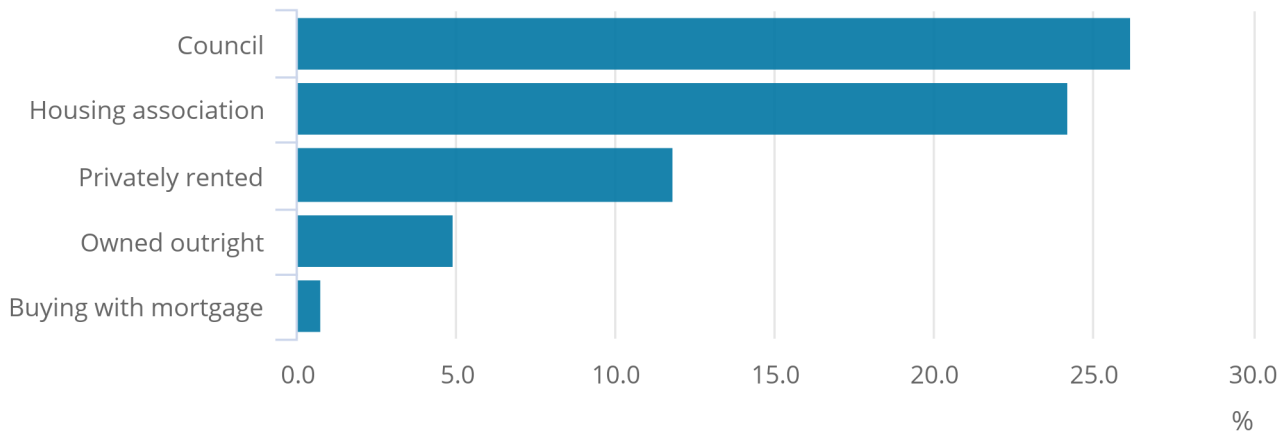


Source: Office for National Statistics, Annual Population Survey (Household)

Children living in a home that was being bought with a mortgage were the least likely to be living in a long-term workless household (Figure 2). Only 0.8% of children living in a mortgaged home were living in a long-term workless household. Whereas, children living in a council-owned home were the most likely to be living in a long-term workless household, at 26.2%. Households with “other” housing tenure, which includes unknown and squatting, have been excluded from this comparison due to small sample sizes.

Figure 2: Percentage of children living in long-term workless households by housing tenure, UK, 2017

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Source: Office for National Statistics, Annual Population Survey (Household)

4 . Quality and methodology

Accuracy and reliability of survey estimates

The figures in this statistical bulletin come from a survey of households. Surveys gather information from a sample rather than from the whole population. The sample is designed carefully to allow for this, and to be as accurate as possible given practical limitations such as time and cost constraints, but results from sample surveys are always estimates, not precise figures. This means that they are subject to a margin of error, which can have an impact on how changes in the numbers should be interpreted, especially in the short-term.

Quality information

The Quality and Methodology Information reports for labour market statistics contain important information on:

- the strengths and limitations of the data and how it compares with related data
- users and uses of the data
- how the output was created
- the quality of the output including the accuracy of the data

The Annual Population Survey (APS) is derived by using a subset of interviews from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) plus a number of additional interviews. Quality and Methodology Information reports for the LFS also apply to the APS:

- [Labour Force Survey Quality and Methodology Information](#)
- [Labour Force Survey performance and quality monitoring reports](#)

Further information about the LFS and APS is available from the [Labour Force Survey – user guide](#).

Details of the [policy governing the release of new data](#) are available from the [UK Statistics Authority](#) website.