

Statistical bulletin

Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), UK: February 2019

Estimates of young people (aged 16 to 24 years) who are not in education, employment or training, by age and sex.



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1 . Main points

For October to December 2018:

- There were 788,000 young people (aged 16 to 24 years) in the UK who were not in education, employment or training (NEET); this number increased by 31,000 from July to September 2018 but was down 5,000 when compared with October to December 2017.
- The percentage of all young people in the UK who were NEET was 11.3%; the proportion was up 0.5 percentage points from July to September 2018 and up 0.1 percentage points from October to December 2017.
- Of all young people in the UK who were NEET, 39.9% were looking for work and available for work and therefore classified as unemployed; the remainder were either not looking for work and/or not available for work and therefore classified as economically inactive.

2 . Things you need to know about this release

This statistical bulletin contains estimates for young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) in the UK. An [article providing background information \(PDF, 89KB\)](#) is available. The bulletin is published quarterly in February/March, May, August and November. All estimates discussed in this statistical bulletin are for the UK and are seasonally adjusted.

There have been revisions to these estimates from July to September 2011 resulting from taking on board the latest population estimates and from a review of the seasonal adjustment process. In addition, a boost to the Northern Ireland Labour Force Survey sample will have caused some minor revisions to these estimates from January to March 2018.

Statistics in this bulletin are used to help monitor progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Explore the UK data on our [SDGs reporting platform](#).

Accuracy and reliability of the survey estimates

The figures discussed in this statistical bulletin are obtained from the Labour Force Survey (a survey of households) and are therefore estimates, not precise figures. Further information is available in the quality and methodology section of this statistical bulletin.

Explanatory information

Young people

For this release, young people are defined as those aged 16 to 24 years. Estimates are also produced for the age groups 16 to 17 years and 18 to 24 years and broken down by sex.

Education and training

A person is considered to be in education or training if any of the following apply:

- they are enrolled on an education course and are still attending or waiting for term to (re)start
- they are doing an apprenticeship
- they are on a government-supported employment or training programme
- they are working or studying towards a qualification
- they have had job-related training or education in the last four weeks

About labour market statuses

“In employment” includes all people in some form of paid work, including those working part-time. People not in employment are classed as either unemployed or economically inactive. Unemployed people are those who have been looking for work in the past four weeks and who are available to start work within the next two weeks.

Economically inactive people are those who have not been looking for work and/or who are not available to start work. Examples of economically inactive people include those not looking for work because they are students and those who are looking after dependants at home. These definitions are based on those recommended by the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)

Anybody who is not in any of the forms of education or training listed previously and not in employment is considered to be NEET. Consequently, a person identified as NEET will always be either unemployed or economically inactive.

Relationship to other labour market statistics for young people

Our monthly labour market statistical bulletin includes the dataset [Table A06: Educational status, economic activity and inactivity of young people](#). The NEET statistics and the Table A06 statistics are both derived from the Labour Force Survey and use the same labour market statuses; however, the educational statuses are derived differently.

For Table A06, the educational status is based on participation in full-time education only. For NEET statistics, the educational status is based on any form of education or training, as listed previously. Therefore, the Table A06 category “not in full-time education” includes some people who are in part-time education and/or some form of training and who, consequently, should not be regarded as NEET.

3 . Total young people who were NEET

There were 788,000 young people (aged 16 to 24 years) in the UK who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) in October to December 2018. The number increased by 31,000 from July to September 2018 but was down 5,000 when compared with October to December 2017.

In October to December 2018, 11.3% of all people aged 16 to 24 years were NEET. The proportion increased 0.5 percentage points from July to September 2018 and was up 0.1 percentage points from October to December 2017. Figure 1 shows the percentage of people aged 16 to 24 years who were NEET over the last five years.

Figure 1: People aged 16 to 24 years not in education, employment or training as a percentage of all people aged 16 to 24 years, seasonally adjusted

UK, October to December 2013 to October to December 2018

Figure 1: People aged 16 to 24 years not in education, employment or training as a percentage of all people aged 16 to 24 years, seasonally adjusted

UK, October to December 2013 to October to December 2018



Source: Office for National Statistics - Labour Force Survey

4 . Unemployed young people who were NEET

Unemployment measures people without a job who have been actively seeking work within the last four weeks and are available to start work in the next two weeks. For October to December 2018, there were 315,000 unemployed young people (aged 16 to 24 years) who were not in education, employment or training (NEET), up 31,000 from July to September 2018 but down 10,000 from October to December 2017.

For October to December 2018, there were:

- 191,000 unemployed men aged 16 to 24 years who were NEET
- 124,000 unemployed women aged 16 to 24 years who were NEET

5 . Economically inactive young people who were NEET

Economic inactivity measures 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. For October to December 2018, there were 474,000 economically inactive young people (aged 16 to 24 years) who were not in education, employment or training (NEET), unchanged from July to September 2018 and up 5,000 from October to December 2017.

For October to December 2018, there were:

- 184,000 economically inactive men aged 16 to 24 years who were NEET
- 290,000 economically inactive women aged 16 to 24 years who were NEET

6 . Links to related statistics

Further statistics on young people in the labour market for the UK were published on 19 February 2019 within the main labour market statistics release and are available in [dataset table A06](#). Information on [the availability of subnational estimates of young people who are NEET \(PDF, 89KB\)](#) is also available:

- [NEET estimates for England](#)
- [NEET estimates for Scotland](#)
- [NEET estimates for Wales](#)
- [NEET estimates for Northern Ireland](#)

7 . Quality and methodology

The [Labour Force Survey \(LFS\) Quality and Methodology Information report](#) contains important information on:

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

Further information about the LFS is available from:

- the [LFS User Guide](#)
- [LFS Performance and Quality Monitoring Reports](#)

Accuracy of the statistics: estimating and reporting uncertainty

The figures in this statistical bulletin come from the Labour Force Survey (LFS), a survey of UK 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 some uncertainty. This can have an impact on how changes in the estimates should be interpreted, especially for short-term comparisons.

We can calculate the level of uncertainty (also called “sampling variability”) around a survey estimate by exploring how that estimate would change if we were to draw many survey samples for the same time period instead of just one. This allows us to define a range around the estimate (known as a “confidence interval”) and to state how likely it is in practice that the real value that the survey is trying to measure lies within that range. Confidence intervals are typically set up so that we can be 95% sure that the true value lies within the range – in which case we refer to a “95% confidence interval”.

The total number of people not in education, employment or training (NEET) aged 16 to 24 years for October to December 2018 was estimated at 788,000. This figure had a stated 95% confidence interval of plus or minus 53,000. This means that we can be 95% confident that the true total number of people NEET aged 16 to 24 years for October to December 2018 was between 735,000 and 841,000. However, the best estimate from the survey was that the total number of people NEET aged 16 to 24 years was 788,000.

The percentage of people NEET aged 16 to 24 years for the same period was estimated at 11.3%, with a stated 95% confidence interval of plus or minus 0.8 percentage points. This means that we can be 95% confident that the percentage of people NEET was between 10.5% and 12.1%. Again, the best estimate from the survey was that the percentage of people NEET aged 16 to 24 years was 11.3%.

Working with uncertain estimates

In general, changes in the numbers (and especially the rates) reported in this statistical bulletin between three-month periods are small, and are not usually greater than the level that is explainable by sampling variability. In practice, this means that small, short-term movements in reported rates (for example, within plus or minus 0.3 percentage points) should be treated as indicative, and considered alongside medium- and long-term patterns in the series and corresponding movements in administrative sources, where available, to give a fuller picture.

Seasonal adjustment and uncertainty

Like many economic indicators, the labour market is affected by factors that tend to occur at around the same time every year; for example, school leavers entering the labour market in July and whether Easter falls in March or April. To compare movements other than annual changes in labour market statistics, such as since the previous quarter or since the previous month, the data are seasonally adjusted to remove the effects of seasonal factors and the arrangement of the calendar. Estimates discussed in this statistical bulletin are presented seasonally adjusted. While seasonal adjustment is essential to allow for robust comparisons through time, it is not possible to estimate uncertainty measures for the seasonally adjusted series.

[Dataset table NEET 2](#) shows sampling variabilities for estimates of young people who are NEET derived from the LFS.