

Statistical bulletin

Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), UK: February 2025

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

Contact:
Labour Market team
labour.market@ons.gov.uk
+44 1633 455400

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1 . Main points

- Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimates have been affected by increased volatility, resulting from smaller achieved sample sizes, meaning that estimates of change should be treated with additional caution; we recommend using them as part of our suite of labour market indicators alongside workforce jobs (WFJ), Claimant Count data, and Pay As You Earn Real Time Information (PAYE RTI) estimates.
- The LFS continues to be the sole source of data for unemployment, economic inactivity, and self-employment, and provides a range of breakdowns that are only possible from LFS data.
- It is likely that some of the recent movements in LFS estimates are being affected by the increased sample size and change in data collection methods taken over the last year, in addition to any underlying changes in the labour market.
- LFS estimates are weighted to 2022 mid-year population estimates for periods from January to March 2019; headline UK seasonally adjusted series before this have been modelled, but other series have a discontinuity at this point.
- There was an increase in the number of young people aged 16 to 24 years not in education, employment or training (NEET) in October to December 2024; the total is currently estimated to be 987,000, up from 877,000 in October to December 2023.

The ongoing challenges with response rates and levels mean that LFS-based labour market statistics will be badged as [official statistics in development](#) until further review. Read more in [Section 5: Data Sources and Quality](#) section.

2 . Total young people who were not in education, employment or training (NEET)

An estimated 13.4% of all people aged 16 to 24 years in the UK were not in education, employment or training (NEET) in October to December 2024. This is up 1.3 percentage points, compared with October to December 2023, and up 0.3 percentage points on the previous quarter.

An estimated 14.4% of young men (up 1.2 percentage points on the year) and 12.3% of young women (up 1.3 percentage points on the year) were NEET. There were 987,000 young people who were NEET in total, an increase of 110,000 on the year. This increase was caused by both young men, with an increase of 56,000 on the year, and young women, with an increase of 53,000 on the year. Of the total number of young people who were NEET, 542,000 were young men and 445,000 were young women.

The total number of people aged 18 to 24 years who were NEET was 907,000, up 90,000 on the previous year.

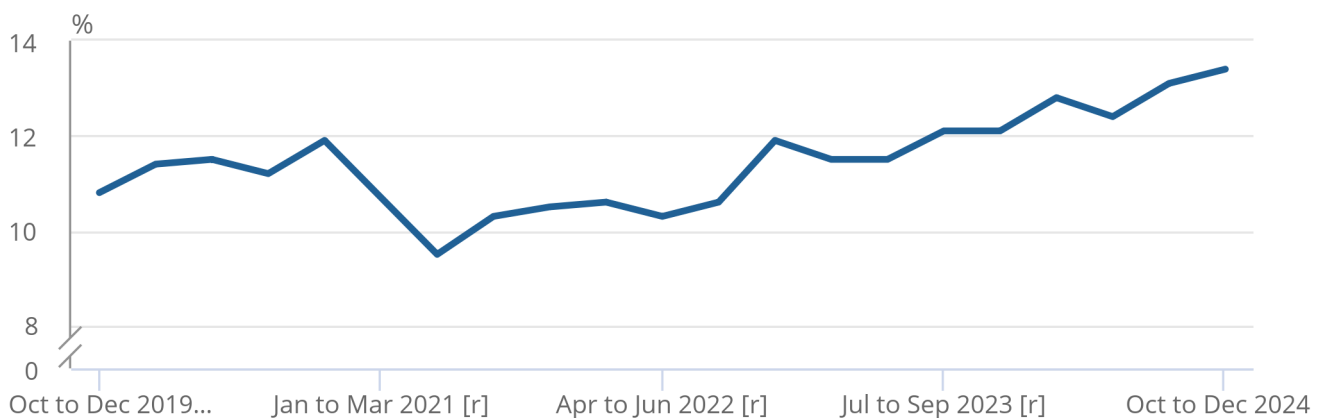
The percentage of those aged 18 to 24 years who were NEET was 15.8%, which was up 1.3 percentage points on the year and up 0.3 percentage points on the quarter.

Figure 1: The percentage of young people who are not in education, employment or training increased over the year (October to December 2023) [Note 1]

People aged 16 to 24 years not in education, employment or training (NEET) as a percentage of all people aged 16 to 24 years by age, seasonally adjusted, UK, October to December 2019 to October to December 2024

Figure 1: The percentage of young people who are not in education, employment or training increased over the year (October to December 2023) [Note 1]

People aged 16 to 24 years not in education, employment or training (NEET) as a percentage of all people aged 16 to 24 years by age, seasonally adjusted, UK, October to December 2019 to October to December 2024



Source: Labour Force Survey from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Increased volatility of Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimates, resulting from smaller achieved sample sizes, means that estimates of change should be treated with additional caution.

Unemployed young people who were not in education, employment or training

There were an estimated 392,000 young people NEET aged 16 to 24 years who were unemployed in October to December 2024. This was up 84,000 from October to December 2023, but down 14,000 from July to September 2024. An estimated 251,000 of these unemployed young people NEET were young men, and 141,000 were young women. The number of men NEET aged 16 to 24 years who were unemployed increased by 49,000 from October to December 2023. The number of women NEET aged 16 to 24 years who were unemployed increased by 35,000 on the year.

Economically inactive young people who were not in education, employment or training

There were an estimated 595,000 economically inactive young people aged 16 to 24 years who were NEET in October to December 2024. This was up 26,000 on the year from October to December 2023, and up 37,000 on the quarter from July to September 2024. The number of young men who were NEET and economically inactive was 291,000, and the corresponding number of young women was 304,000. The total increase of 26,000 on the year was led by young women, who saw an increase of 18,000 from October to December 2023. Young men aged 16 to 24 years who were NEET and economically inactive increased by 7,000 on the year.

Subnational not in education, employment or training estimates

We do not publish subnational estimates for people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). These estimates can be accessed by following the links in [Section 6: Related links](#).

3 . Data on young people who were not in education, employment or training

[Young people not in education, employment or training \(NEET\)](#)

Dataset | Released 27 February 2025

Quarterly estimates for young people (aged 16 to 24 years) who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) in the UK. These are official statistics in development.

[Sampling variability for estimates of young people not in education, employment or training](#)

Dataset | Released 27 February 2025

Labour Force Survey sampling quarterly variability estimates for young people (aged 16 to 24 years) who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) in the UK. These are official statistics in development.

4 . Glossary

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 by sex, and separately for the age groups 18 to 20 years, 21 to 22 years, and 23 to 24 years.

Education and training

People are considered to be in education or training if they:

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

Young people not in education, employment or training

Anybody who is not in any of the forms of education or training listed above and not in employment is considered to be not in education, employment or training (NEET). As a result, a person that is identified as NEET will always be either unemployed or economically inactive.

Economic inactivity

People not in the labour force (also known as [economically inactive](#)) are not in employment, but do not meet the internationally accepted definition of unemployment because they have not been seeking work within the last four weeks and/or they are unable to start work in the next two weeks.

Employment

[Employment](#) measures the number of people in paid work, or those who had a job that they were temporarily away from (for example, because they were on holiday or off sick). This differs from the number of jobs because some people have more than one job.

Unemployment

[Unemployment](#) measures people without a job who have been actively seeking work within the last four weeks and are available to start work within the next two weeks.

A [more detailed glossary](#) is available in our guide to Labour Market Statistics.

5 . Data sources and quality

This statistical bulletin contains estimates for young people who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) in the UK. The bulletin is published quarterly in February or March, May, August, and November. All estimates discussed in this statistical bulletin are for the UK and are seasonally adjusted.

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](#).

Background information that explains how missing information for identifying someone as NEET is appropriated based on individual characteristics can be found in our [Young people not in education, employment or training \(NEET\), UK: May 2022 methodology](#).

Official statistics in development

These statistics are labelled as "official statistics in development". Until September 2023, these were called "experimental statistics". Read more about the change in our [Guide to official statistics in development](#).

These statistics are based on information from the Labour Force Survey (LFS). The reweighting exercise has improved the coherence of our LFS estimates with workforce jobs (WFJ) and Pay As You Earn Real Time Information (PAYE RTI) estimates for periods from January to March 2019. The ongoing challenges with response rates and levels mean that LFS-based labour market statistics are now badged as [official statistics in development](#) until further review. This is also in line with the [letter from the Office for Statistics Regulation \(OSR\)](#), stating that LFS statistics should not be published as accredited official statistics until OSR has reviewed them.

We would advise caution when interpreting short-term changes in headline LFS rates and recommend using them as part of our suite of labour market indicators alongside WFJ, Claimant Count data, and PAYE RTI estimates.

We are transforming how we collect and produce the LFS data to improve the quality of these statistics. An update on the transformation of labour market statistics is available in our [Labour market transformation article](#).

More quality and methodology information on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in our [Labour Force Survey quality and methodology information \(QMI\) report](#).

Data on response rates, quality analysis, and survey operation changes for the LFS are available in our [LFS performance and quality monitoring reports](#).

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is responsible for NEET statistics for the UK, published within this release. Estimates of the number of young people who are NEET within the countries of the UK and for subnational areas are the responsibility of the Department for Education for England, and the devolved administrations for each of the other countries. There is further information on the availability of subnational estimates of young people who are NEET in [Section 6: Related links](#).

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Read more about how the labour market data sources are affected by the coronavirus pandemic in our [Coronavirus and the effects on UK labour market statistics article](#).

For a comparison of our labour market data sources and the main differences, read our [Comparison of our labour market data sources methodology](#).

Relationship to other labour market statistics for young people

Our monthly [Labour market statistical bulletin](#) includes the dataset [A06: Educational status and labour market status for people aged from 16 to 24](#). The NEET statistics and the dataset A06 statistics are both derived from the LFS and use the same labour market statuses.

However, the educational statuses are derived differently. For dataset 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. Therefore, the dataset 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.

Making our published spreadsheets accessible

Following the Government Statistical Service (GSS) guidance on [releasing statistics in spreadsheets](#) we will be amending our published tables over the coming months to improve usability, accessibility and machine readability of our published statistics. To help users change to the new formats, we will be publishing sample versions of a selection of our tables, and where practical, initially publish the tables in both the new and current formats. If you have any questions or comments, please email labour.market@ons.gov.uk.

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Strengths and limitations

The figures in this bulletin come from the LFS, which gathers information from a sample of households across the UK, rather than from the whole population. The sample is designed to be as accurate as possible, given practical limitations. Results from sample surveys are always estimates and not precise figures. This can have an impact on how changes in the estimates should be interpreted, especially for short-term comparisons.

As the number of people available in the sample gets smaller, the variability of the estimates gets larger. Estimates for small groups, which are based on small subsets of the LFS sample, are less reliable and tend to be more volatile than for larger aggregated groups.

In general, changes in the numbers (and especially the rates) reported in this bulletin between quarters are small and are not usually greater than the level that can be explained by sampling variability. Short-term movements in reported rates should be considered alongside longer-term patterns in the series and corresponding movements in other sources to give a fuller picture.

Sampling variabilities for estimates of young people who are NEET derived from the LFS are available in our [Sampling variability dataset](#).

6 . Related links

[Not in education, employment or training estimates for England](#)

Collection | Last updated 26 September 2024

Young people's participation in education, employment and training and those not in education, employment or training (NEET) from the Department for Education.

[Not in education, employment or training estimates for Scotland](#)

Publication | Last updated 27 August 2024

Annual statistical publication reporting on learning, training and work activity of those aged 16 to 19 years in Scotland.

[Not in education, employment or training estimates for Wales](#)

Statistics and research | Last updated 30 January 2025

Data for young people by age, gender, region and local authority from the Welsh Government.

[Not in education, employment or training estimates for Northern Ireland](#)

Tables | Last updated 21 November 2024

Tables from the Labour Market Report, including not in education, employment or training.

7 . Cite this statistical bulletin

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