

Statistical bulletin

# Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), UK: May 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.

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# 1 . Main points

- Estimates from January to March 2025 include the full effect of recent improvements in Labour Force Survey (LFS) data collection and sampling methods introduced from January 2024 and are therefore more likely to be representative of labour market conditions.
- An increased amount of volatility will remain in the estimates from mid-2023 and throughout 2024, so we would advise caution when interpreting change involving those periods.
- Estimates such as young people not in employment, education or training will likely continue to see greater volatility compared with more aggregated measures because of smaller population subgroups compared with the headline rates, despite improved sample sizes.
- LFS estimates are weighted to 2022 mid-year population estimates for periods from January to March 2019; the number of young people age 16 to 24 years not in education, employment or training (NEET) estimates have a discontinuity at this point.
- There was a decrease in the number of young people aged 16 to 24 years NEET in January to March 2025; the total is currently estimated to be 923,000, down from 930,000 in January to March 2024.

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 6: Data sources and quality](#) section.

## 2 . Labour Force Survey quality

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.

Alongside the labour market publication in May 2025, we published a [Labour Force Survey quality update article](#), which included coherence between LFS measures and other related sources of data. The timing of this quality article coincided with the first period of data incorporating the full impact of some of the larger changes made from January 2024, now fully reflected in estimates for January to March 2025. The article provides information about current response rates, trends and known biases in LFS data and provides users with information to better understand the current quality of the data.

As stated in the [Labour Force Survey quality update article](#) detailed estimates will continue to see greater volatility compared with more aggregated measures. However, this has always been a feature of LFS-based analysis. The lower achieved response level for the latest period, compared with before the pandemic, will make this volatility more acute.

For example, we can consider estimates of redundancies or estimates of young people not in employment, education or training. Both concepts focus on much smaller population subgroups compared with the headline rates, and therefore are more vulnerable to the effects of higher sampling variability, despite improved sample sizes.

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

An estimated 12.5% of all people aged 16 to 24 years in the UK were not in education, employment or training (NEET) in January to March 2025. This is down 0.3 percentage points compared with January to March 2024 and down 0.9 percentage points on the previous quarter.

An estimated 13.2% of young men (down 1.0 percentage points on the year) and 11.7% of young women (up 0.3 percentage points on the year) were NEET.

There were 923,000 young people who were NEET in total, a decrease of 7,000 on the year. This decrease was because of a decrease of 26,000 young men on the year, while young women saw an increase of 19,000 on the year. Of the total number of young people who were NEET, 498,000 were young men and 425,000 were young women.

The total number of people aged 18 to 24 years who were NEET was 854,000, a decrease of 4,000 on the previous year.

The percentage of those aged 18 to 24 years who were NEET was 14.8%, which was down 0.3 percentage points on the year but was down 1.0 percentage points on the quarter.

## Figure 1: The percentage of young people who are NEET decreased over the year (January to March 2024) [Note 1]

People aged 16 to 24 years who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) as a percentage of all people aged 16 to 24 years, by age, seasonally adjusted, UK, January to March 2019 to January to March 2025

### Figure 1: The percentage of young people who are NEET decreased over the year (January to March 2024) [Note 1]

People aged 16 to 24 years who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) as a percentage of all people aged 16 to 24 years, by age, seasonally adjusted, UK, January to March 2019 to January to March 2025



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 354,000 young people NEET aged 16 to 24 who were unemployed in January to March 2025, up 21,000 from January to March 2024, but down 38,000 from October to December 2024. An estimated 229,000 of these unemployed young people NEET were young men, and 125,000 were young women. The number of NEET men aged 16 to 24 who were unemployed increased by 17,000 on from January to March 2024, while the number of NEET women aged 16 to 24 who were unemployed increased by 4,000 on the year.

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

There were an estimated 569,000 economically inactive young people aged 16 to 24 years who were NEET in January to March 2025. This was down 29,000 on the year from January to March 2024, and down 27,000 on the quarter from October to December 2024. The number of young men who were NEET and economically inactive was 269,000 and the corresponding number of young women was 300,000. The total decrease of 29,000 on the year was because of young men, who saw a decrease of 43,000 from January to March 2024, while young women aged 16 to 24 who were NEET and economically inactive increased by 15,000 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 7: Related links](#).

## 4 . Young people who were not in education, employment or training data

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

Dataset | Released 23 May 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 23 May 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.

## 5 . 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 (NEET)

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 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.

## 6 . 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](#).

Our [NEET methodological article](#) providing background information explains how missing information for identifying someone as NEET is appropriated based on individual characteristics.

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, methodology: May 2022](#).

### 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](#).

The ongoing challenges with response rates and levels mean that Labour Force Survey (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 are continuing to improve the quality of the LFS, building on our work to date. This has led to an increase in achieved dataset size from 63,069 in October to December 2024, to 69,847 in January to March 2025, as shown in our [LFS performance and quality monitoring report: January to March 2025](#). With this work ongoing, we advise caution particularly when interpreting change in the LFS and encourage users to make use of a wide range of data sources where possible.

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](#).

We are transforming how we collect and produce the LFS data to improve the quality of these statistics. We have published a [Labour market transformation article](#) providing an update on the transformation of labour market statistics.

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 7: 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 Labour Force Survey 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](mailto:labour.market@ons.gov.uk).

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## Strengths and limitations

The figures in this bulletin come from the Labour Force Survey (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.

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.

Our [Sampling variability dataset](#) shows sampling variabilities for estimates of young people who are NEET derived from the LFS.

## 7 . Related links

### [NEET estimates for England](#)

Collection | Last updated 20 March 2025

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

### [NEET estimates for Scotland](#)

Publication | Last updated 27 August 2024

Annual statistical publication reporting on learning, training and work activity of 16-19 year olds in Scotland.

### [NEET estimates for Wales](#)

Statistics and research | Last updated 10 April 2025

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

### [NEET estimates for Northern Ireland](#)

Tables | Last updated 27 February 2025

Tables from the Labour Market Report, including Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET)

## 8 . Cite this statistical bulletin

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