

Statistical bulletin

Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), UK: November 2021

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

- There was an increase in the number of young people in the UK who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) after two periods of significant decreases and is currently estimated to be 689,000.
- The percentage of all young people who were NEET in July to September 2021 was estimated at 10.1%, up by 0.9 percentage points on the quarter (April to June 2021), but still down 0.9 percentage points compared with pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) levels in October to December 2019.
- Of all young men in the UK who were NEET in July to September 2021, an estimated 44.3% were looking for, and available for work and therefore classified as unemployed, a record low; the remainder were either not looking for work and/or not available for work and were classified as economically inactive.
- There were an estimated 269,000 young people in the UK who were NEET and unemployed in July to September 2021, which is a record low; with NEET and unemployed men at a record low of 163,000.
- There were an estimated 255,000 young people in the UK who were NEET and unemployed aged 18 to 24 years, a record low for the series.
- There was a record quarterly increase of 70,000 in the number of young people in the UK who were NEET and economically inactive, currently estimated to be 421,000.

2 . Coronavirus and measuring the labour market

Latest Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimates are based on interviews that took place from July to September 2021. Many of the government lockdown restrictions were eased during this period.

Because of coronavirus (COVID-19) and the suspension of face-to-face interviewing, we had to make operational changes to the LFS, which moved to a by telephone approach. This introduced an increased non-response bias to the survey. This was partially mitigated by the introduction of housing tenure-based weights into the survey in October 2020, as detailed in [Coronavirus and its impact on the Labour Force Survey](#).

However, it was acknowledged that further improvement work was required to deal with the increase in non-response from those with a non-UK country of birth or nationality. As a result, a new [weighting methodology](#) was introduced in July 2021, which calibrates to UK, EU and non-EU-born weighting populations for periods from January to March 2020. The impact on headline measures of rates is relatively small but there is a larger impact on estimates of levels and changes in levels. Further information is available in [Impact of reweighting on Labour Force Survey key indicators, UK: 2020](#). All estimates in this release are based on the new methodology.

Subnational not in education, employment or training (NEET) estimates are not published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) but can be accessed by following the links in [section 8 of this bulletin](#).

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

In July to September 2021, an estimated 10.1% of all people aged 16 to 24 years were not in education, employment or training (NEET). The proportion increased on the quarter by 0.9 percentage points and decreased by 1.0 percentage points compared with July to September 2020, but is still down on pre-coronavirus levels. An estimated 10.6% of men were NEET, and for women the proportion was 9.7%.

The percentage of those aged 18 to 24 years who were NEET was 12.1%, which was up a record 1.3 percentage points on the quarter. However, this is still down 0.6% on pre-coronavirus levels.

There were an estimated 689,000 young people in the UK who were NEET. This was up on the previous quarter by 58,000 and down 71,000 when compared with July to September 2020.

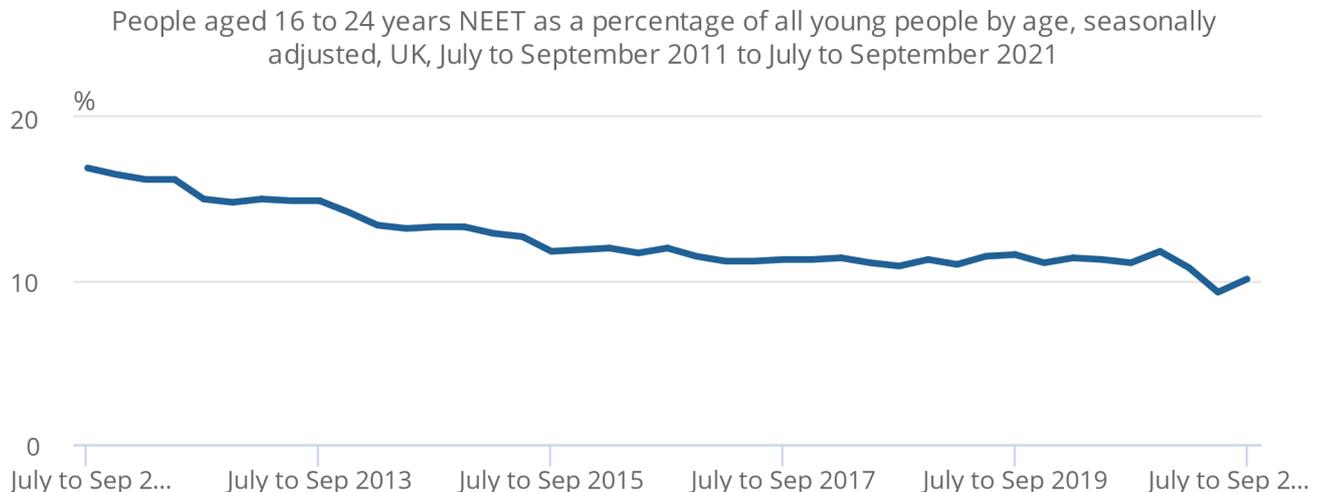
The total number of people aged 18 to 24 years who were NEET was 648,000, up a record 70,000 on the previous quarter.

Of the 689,000 people who were NEET, 368,000 were men and 322,000 were women.

Figure 1: The percentage of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) had decreased sharply over the previous two quarters before seeing an increase over the last quarter

People aged 16 to 24 years NEET as a percentage of all young people by age, seasonally adjusted, UK, July to September 2011 to July to September 2021

Figure 1: The percentage of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) had decreased sharply over the previous two quarters before seeing an increase over the last quarter



Source: Office for National Statistics – Labour Force Survey

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

In July to September 2021, there were an estimated 269,000 unemployed young people who were NEET, a record low for the series, down 12,000 from April to June 2021 and down 76,000 compared with July to September 2020. Unemployed men were estimated to be 163,000, which was a record low for the series.

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

In July to September 2021, there were an estimated 421,000 economically inactive young people who were NEET. This was up a record 70,000 on the quarter from April to June 2021 and up 5,000 compared with July to September 2020.

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

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

Dataset | Released 25 November 2021

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

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

Dataset | Released 25 November 2021

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.

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 any of the following apply:

- they are enrolled on an education course and are still attending or waiting for term to start or restart
- 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

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). Consequently, 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.

6 . Measuring the data

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](#).

An article called [Young people who are NEET](#) providing background information is available. The article explains how missing information for identifying someone as NEET is appropriated based on individual characteristics.

More quality and methodology information on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in the [LFS QMI](#).

The [LFS performance and quality monitoring reports](#) provide data on response rates and other quality-related issues for the LFS.

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 8](#).

Coronavirus

View [more information on how labour market data sources are affected by the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#).

View a [comparison of our labour market data sources and the main differences](#).

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.

7 . Strengths and limitations

The figures in this bulletin come from the Labour Force Survey (LFS). Results from sample surveys are always estimates, not precise figures. As the number of people available in the sample gets smaller, the variability of the estimates that we can make from that sample size gets larger. In general, changes in the numbers and rates reported in this bulletin between three-month periods are small and are not usually greater than can be explained by sampling variability.

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

8 . Related links

[NEET estimates for England](#)

Collection | Last updated 12 August 2021

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 31 August 2021

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

[NEET estimates for Wales](#)

Statistics and research | Last updated 21 October 2021

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

[NEET estimates for Northern Ireland](#)

Tables | Last updated 25 November 2021

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