

Statistical bulletin

Regional labour market statistics in the UK: July 2017

Regional, local authority and parliamentary constituency breakdowns of changes in UK employment, unemployment, economic inactivity and other employment-related statistics.



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Release date:
12 July 2017

Next release:
16 August 2017

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1 . Main points

- For the 3 months ending May 2017, the highest employment rate in the UK was in the South West (79.2%) and the lowest was in Northern Ireland (68.7%).
- For the 3 months ending May 2017, the highest unemployment rate in the UK was in the North East (6.0%) and the lowest was in the South East (3.4%).
- For the 3 months ending May 2017, the highest economic inactivity rate in the UK was in Northern Ireland (27.4%) and the lowest was in the South West (17.8%).
- Between December 2016 and March 2017, the largest increase in workforce jobs in the UK was in the West Midlands, at 65,000, whilst the largest decrease was in the East of England at 36,000.
- In March 2017, the region with the highest proportion of workforce jobs in the service sector was London at 91.9%, which had decreased by 0.4 percentage points since December 2016, whilst the East Midlands had the highest proportion of jobs in the production sector at 13.9%.
- The highest average actual weekly hours worked, for the 12 months ending March 2017, was in London at 33.9 hours and the lowest was in both Yorkshire and The Humber and the North East, at 31.4 hours; for full-time workers, it was highest in London at 38.6 hours and for part-time workers it was highest in Northern Ireland at 17.0 hours.

2 . Summary of latest regional labour market statistics

Table 1 shows the latest estimates for employment, unemployment and economic inactivity for March to May 2017 and a comparison with the previous quarter (December 2016 to February 2017). Comparing non-overlapping periods (March to May 2017 with December 2016 to February 2017) provides a more robust short-term comparison.

Table 1: Summary of latest headline estimates for regions of the UK, seasonally adjusted, March to May 2017

UK regions

	Employment rate ¹ (%) aged 16 to 64	Change on Dec 2016 to Feb 2017	Unemployment rate ² (%) aged 16 and over	Change on Dec 2016 to Feb 2017	Inactivity rate ³ (%) aged 16 to 64	Change on Dec 2016 to Feb 2017
United Kingdom	74.9	0.3	4.5	-0.2	21.5	-0.2
Great Britain	75.1	0.3	4.4	-0.2	21.3	-0.2
England	75.4	0.3	4.5	-0.2	21.0	-0.2
North East	72.4	1.8	6.0	-0.5	22.9	-1.4
North West	74.0	0.6	4.3	-0.2	22.5	-0.4
Yorkshire and The Humber	73.3	-0.4	4.8	-0.3	22.9	0.7
East Midlands	74.7	-0.5	3.8	-0.2	22.3	0.7
West Midlands	71.8	0.0	5.9	0.2	23.6	-0.2
East of London	77.6	0.5	4.0	-0.3	19.1	-0.3
London	74.0	0.7	5.5	-0.4	21.5	-0.5
South East	78.9	0.3	3.4	0.0	18.3	-0.3
South West	79.2	0.4	3.5	0.0	17.8	-0.4
Wales	72.6	-0.5	4.6	-0.2	23.8	0.7
Scotland	74.1	0.7	3.8	-0.7	22.9	-0.1
Northern Ireland	68.7	-0.1	5.3	0.0	27.4	0.0

Source: Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Calculation of headline employment rate: Number of employed people aged from 16 to 64 divided by the population aged from 16 to 64. Population is the sum of employed plus unemployed plus inactive.
2. Calculation of headline unemployment rate: Number of unemployed people aged 16 and over divided by the sum of employed people aged 16 and over plus unemployed people aged 16 and over.
3. Calculation of headline economic inactivity rate: Number of economically inactive people aged from 16 to 64 divided by the population aged from 16 to 64. Population is the sum of employed plus unemployed plus inactive.

3 . Things you need to know about this release

This bulletin shows the latest main labour market statistics for the regions and countries of the UK, along with statistics for local authorities, travel-to-work areas and parliamentary constituencies.

Data for Northern Ireland, although included in this bulletin, are available separately, in full, in the [Northern Ireland Labour Market Report](#) on the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) website.

Updated this month

Labour Force Survey estimates for the period March to May 2017

Annual Population Survey estimates for the period April 2016 to March 2017

Tables 7 and 7(1) have been revised due to a seasonal adjustment review and updating of denominators from January 2013 for levels and January 1996 for rates.

Also in this release

Workforce jobs estimates for March 2017

Public and private sector employment for March 2017

Labour Market Statistics

Labour market statistics measure many different aspects of work and jobs and provide an insight into the economy. They are also very much about people, including their participation in the labour force, the types of work they do, the earnings and benefits they receive and their working patterns. We have developed a framework for labour market statistics to describe the concepts within the labour market and their relationship to each other. The framework is based on labour supply and demand.

Labour supply consists of people who are employed, as well as those people defined as unemployed or economically inactive, who are considered to be potential labour supply. Our framework distinguishes between these three categories of worker and also between the different working arrangements of those in employment such as employees, the self-employed and those on government schemes.

Labour demand is represented by employers, who have a need for work to be done, and who offer compensation for this work to the employees who undertake it. Employers group this work to form jobs.

This approach has wide international acceptance, including by the International Labour Organisation (ILO). Users of labour market statistics include central and local government, economists, financial analysts, journalists, businesses, trade unions, employer associations, students, teachers, industrial tribunals, academic researchers and lobby groups.

They use them for the analysis, evaluation, monitoring and planning of the labour market and economy. Labour market statistics are also used for social analysis and help inform a wide range of government policies towards population groups of particular concern (women, young people, older people and jobless households).

About labour market statuses

Everybody aged 16 or over is either employed, unemployed or economically inactive. The employment estimates include all people in work including those working part-time. People not working are classed as unemployed if they have been looking for work within the last 4 weeks and are able to start work within the next 2 weeks. A common misconception is that the unemployment statistics are a count of people on benefits; this is not the case, as they include unemployed people not claiming benefits.

Jobless people who have not been looking for work within the last 4 weeks or who are unable to start work within the next 2 weeks are classed as economically inactive. Examples of economically inactive people include people not looking for work because they are students, looking after the family or home, because of illness or disability, or because they have retired.

What is the relationship between the Annual Population Survey (APS) and the Labour Force Survey (LFS)?

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) is a household survey using international definitions of employment, unemployment and economic inactivity and compiles a wide range of related topics such as occupation, training, hours of work and personal characteristics of household members aged 16 years and over. Estimates are produced every month for a rolling 3-monthly period; for example, February to April data in a release will be followed by data for March to May in the next release.

The Annual Population Survey (APS), which began in 2004, is compiled from interviews for the LFS, along with additional regional samples. The APS comprises the main variables from the LFS, with a much larger sample size. Consequently, the APS supports more detailed breakdowns than can be reliably produced from the LFS. Estimates are produced every quarter for a rolling annual period; for example, January to December data will be followed by data for April to March when they are next updated.

This bulletin includes labour market estimates at a regional level from the LFS on total employment, unemployment and economic inactivity. More detailed regional estimates for employment by age, full-time and part-time working, economic activity and economic inactivity by age, and reasons for economic inactivity are provided using the APS. Any estimates for geographic areas below regional level are provided using the APS. In tables where APS estimates are provided for detailed geographic areas, regional and national estimates are also provided from APS for comparability.

Making comparisons with earlier data

The most robust estimates of short-term movements in estimates derived from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) are obtained by comparing the estimates for March to May 2017 with the estimates for December 2016 to February 2017, which were first published on 12 April 2017. This provides a more robust estimate than comparing with the estimates for February to April 2017. This is because the March and April data are included within both estimates, so observed differences are only between February and May 2017. The LFS is representative of the UK population over a 3-month period, not for single month periods.

Seasonal adjustment

All estimates discussed in this statistical bulletin are seasonally adjusted except where otherwise stated. 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. In order to compare movements other than annual changes in labour market statistics, the data are seasonally adjusted to remove the effects of seasonal factors and the arrangement of the calendar.

Where to find explanatory information

A [Guide to labour market statistics](#), which includes a [Glossary](#), is available.

4 . Employment

Things you need to know about employment

Employment measures the number of people in work; it differs from the number of jobs because some people have more than one job.

Employment consists of employees, self-employed people, unpaid family workers and people on government-supported training and employment programmes. Unpaid family workers are people who work in a family business who do not receive a formal wage or salary but benefit from the profits of that business. The government-supported training and employment programmes series does not include all people on these programmes; it only includes people engaging in any form of work, work experience or work-related training who are not included in the employees or self-employed series. People on these programmes not engaging in any form of work, work experience or work-related training are not included in the employment estimates; they are classified as unemployed or economically inactive.

A [comparison between estimates of employment and jobs](#) is available.

Regional employment

The employment rate for people aged from 16 to 64 for the UK was 74.9% for the period March to May 2017. This is an increase of 0.3 percentage points compared with the previous period (December 2016 to February 2017).

The UK region with the highest employment rate was the South West at 79.2%, followed by the South East at 78.9% and the East of England at 77.6%. The highest rate for the same period last year was in the South East, at 78.2%.

The region with the lowest employment rate was Northern Ireland at 68.7%, followed by the West Midlands at 71.8% and the North East at 72.4%. The lowest rate for the same period last year was also in Northern Ireland at 68.9%.

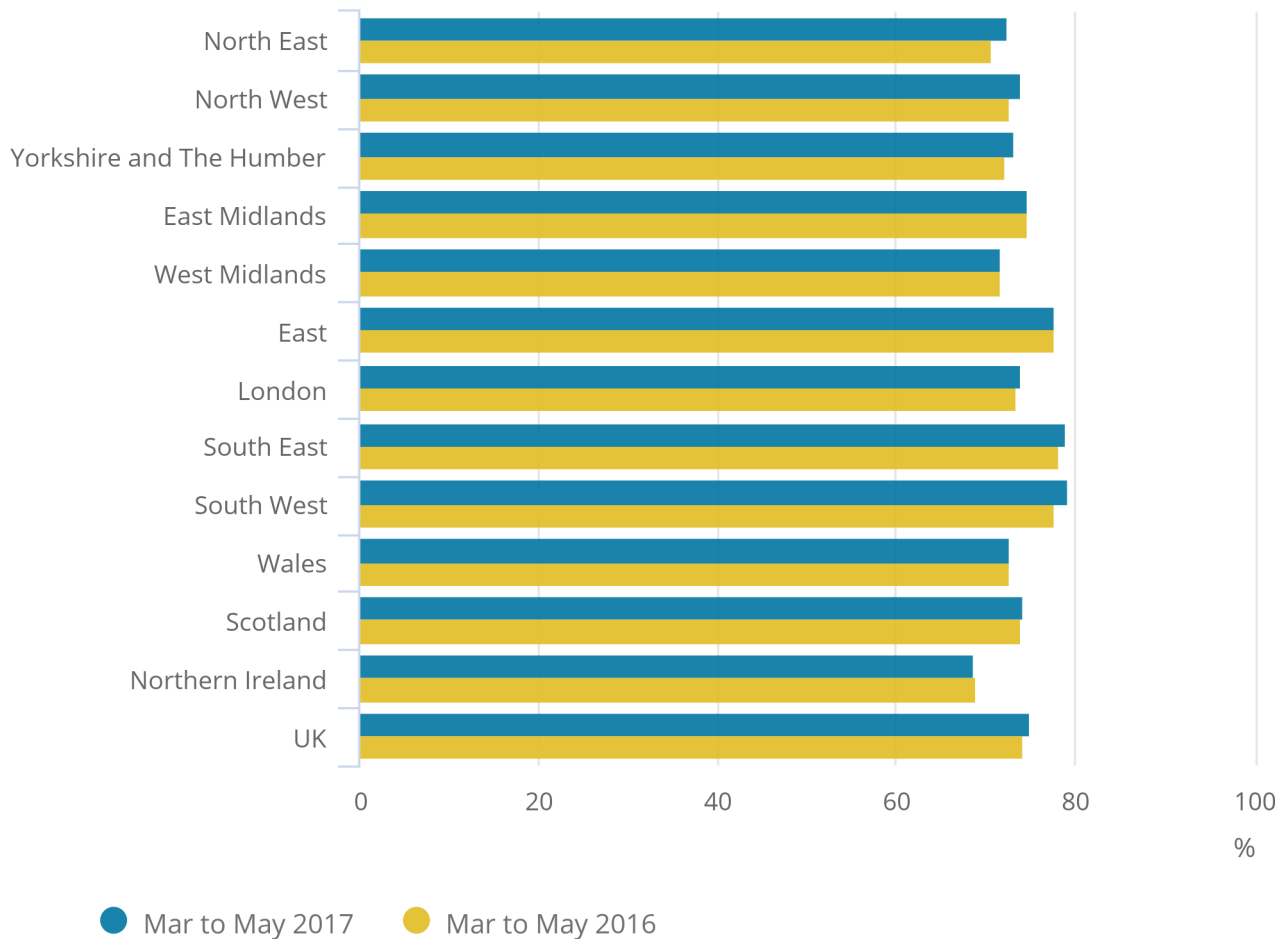
The largest increase in the employment rate estimates compared with the previous period (December 2016 to February 2017) was for the North East, at 1.8 percentage points, followed by London and Scotland, both at 0.7 percentage points. The general picture for all regions is still for flat or increasing employment rates.

The largest decrease in the employment rate estimates was for both the East Midlands and Wales, at 0.5 percentage points.

Figure 1: Employment rates by region and comparison year-on-year, seasonally adjusted, March to May 2016 and March to May 2017

UK regions

Figure 1: Employment rates by region and comparison year-on-year, seasonally adjusted, March to May 2016 and March to May 2017
UK regions



Source: Labour Force Survey: Office for National Statistics

Source: Labour Force Survey: Office for National Statistics

Over the year, the region with the largest increase in the employment rate was the North East, with an increase of 1.6 percentage points, followed by the South West, with an increase of 1.4 percentage points.

Northern Ireland and the East of England both had the largest decrease in the employment rate at 0.2 percentage points, followed by the East Midlands at 0.1 percentage points.

Where to find data about employment

Employment estimates are available for each region in [Dataset HI00 – Headline LFS indicators for all UK regions](#) and [HI01 to HI12 – Headline indicators for individual UK regions \(Tabs 1 and 2\)](#), and [Datasets LI01 to LI05 Local indicators for sub-regional areas of Great Britain](#), for this and further estimate breakdowns by age or geographies.

These tables contain data produced from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and Annual Population Survey (APS). A note in the section “Understanding and working with labour market statistics” on the relationship between the LFS and APS entitled “What is the relationship between the APS and the LFS?” is included in this bulletin.

5 . Workforce jobs (first published on 14 June 2017)

Things you need to know about workforce jobs

Workforce jobs measures the number of filled jobs in the economy. The estimates are mainly sourced from employer surveys such as the Short-Term Employment Surveys (STES) and the Quarterly Public Sector Employment Survey (QPSES). Workforce jobs is a different concept from employment, which is sourced from the Labour Force Survey (LFS), as employment is an estimate of people and some people have more than one job.

A [comparison between estimates of employment and jobs](#) article is available.

The service sector consists of the following industries:

- wholesale and retail trade
- repair of motor vehicles and motor cycles, transport and storage
- accommodation and food service activities
- information and communication
- financial and insurance activities
- real estate activities
- professional, scientific and technical activities
- administrative and support service activities
- public administration and defence
- compulsory social security
- education
- human health and social work activities
- arts, entertainment and recreation
- other service activities
- people employed by households

The production sector consists of the following industries:

- mining and quarrying
- manufacturing
- electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply
- water supply, sewerage, waste and remediation activities

The “other” sector consists of agriculture, forestry, and fishing and construction industries.

The Northern Ireland self-employed component of the workforce jobs is published by the [Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency](#) (NISRA) as part of the [Economic and Labour Market Statistics](#).

Regional workforce jobs

Workforce jobs increased in 9 of the 12 regions of the UK between December 2016 and March 2017. The largest increase of 65,000 was in the West Midlands, followed by Scotland, which increased by 56,000.

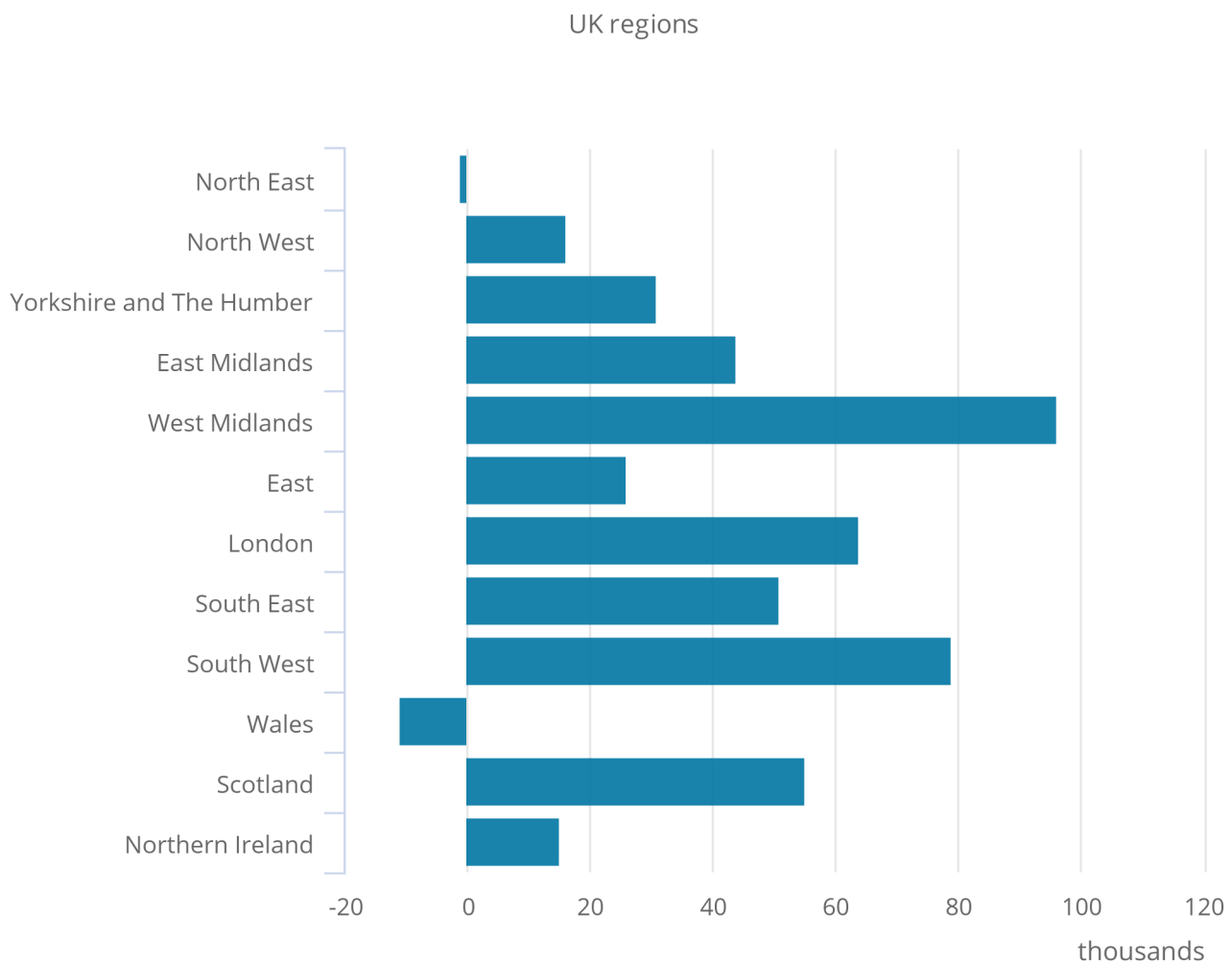
The largest decrease was in the East of England, which decreased by 36,000, followed by the South West, which decreased by 5,000.

Compared with the same month last year (March 2016), the largest increase in workforce jobs was in the West Midlands, with an increase of 96,000. The only decreases were in Wales, at 11,000 and the North East, at 1,000.

Figure 2: Change in workforce jobs, by region, seasonally adjusted, March 2016 and March 2017

UK regions

Figure 2: Change in workforce jobs, by region, seasonally adjusted, March 2016 and March 2017



Source: Office for National Statistics

Source: Office for National Statistics

The East Midlands had the highest proportion of jobs in the production sector, at 13.9%, while London had the lowest proportion, at 2.7%. This is due to London having primarily service-based industries within its region, such as financial and administrative sectors.

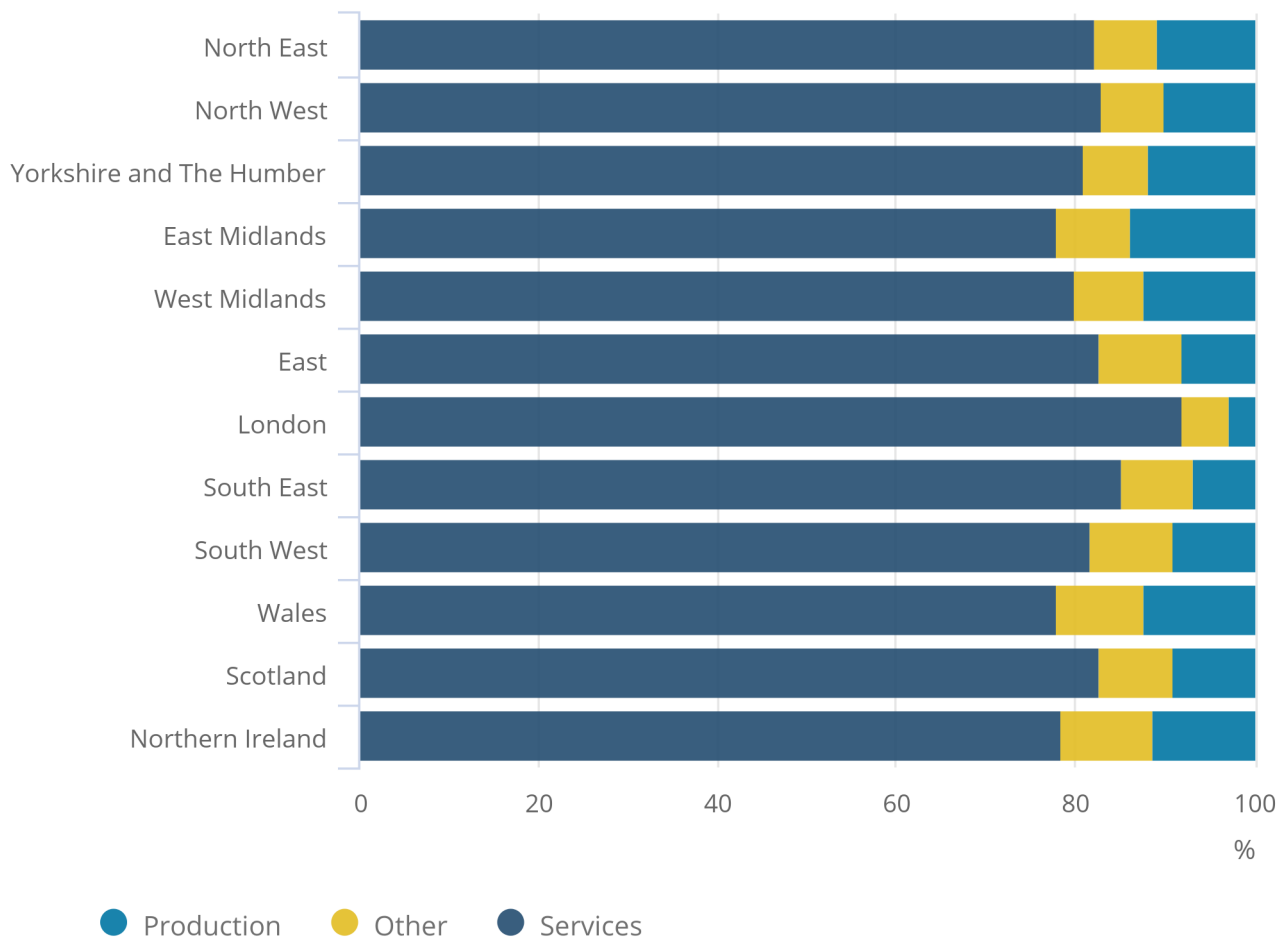
For the service sector, London had the highest proportion, at 91.9%, whilst Wales had the lowest proportion at 77.9%. The service sector currently accounts for 83.5% of the total workforce jobs in the UK.

Figure 3: Proportion of workforce jobs by broad industry group, by region, March 2017

UK regions

Figure 3: Proportion of workforce jobs by broad industry group, by region, March 2017

UK regions



Source: Office for National Statistics

Source: Office for National Statistics

Where to find data about workforce jobs

Workforce jobs estimates are available for each region in [Datasets HI01 to HI12 – Headline indicators for individual UK regions](#) (Tabs 4 and 5).

While comparable estimates for workforce jobs by industry begin in 1978, there is information back to 1841, based on census data (not comparable with the latest estimates), available from [2011 Census Analysis](#).

6 . Actual hours worked

Things you need to know about actual hours worked

Actual hours worked measures the number of hours worked in the economy. Changes in actual hours worked reflect changes in the number of people in employment and the average hours worked by those people.

Regional actual hours worked

For the period April 2016 to March 2017, the UK region with the highest average actual weekly hours worked (for all workers) was London at 33.9 hours, followed by Northern Ireland at 33.4 hours. Yorkshire and The Humber and the North East both had the lowest number of hours worked at 31.4 hours.

The UK region with the largest increase in the average hours worked, compared with the same period last year (April 2015 to March 2016) was the South West, with an increase of 0.6 hours, a percentage increase of 2.1%. This was followed by London, with an increase of 0.5 hours (percentage increase of 1.4%). The largest decrease in the average hours worked was in the East Midlands, with a decrease of 0.3 hours (0.9%).

The region with the highest average actual weekly hours worked in full-time jobs was London, at 38.6 hours. This represents an increase of 0.7 hours and a percentage increase of 1.9%, compared with the same period last year. The lowest were Scotland and the North East, both at 36.7 hours. For part-time jobs, the region with the highest average hours worked was Northern Ireland at 17.0 hours and the lowest was the South East at 15.7 hours.

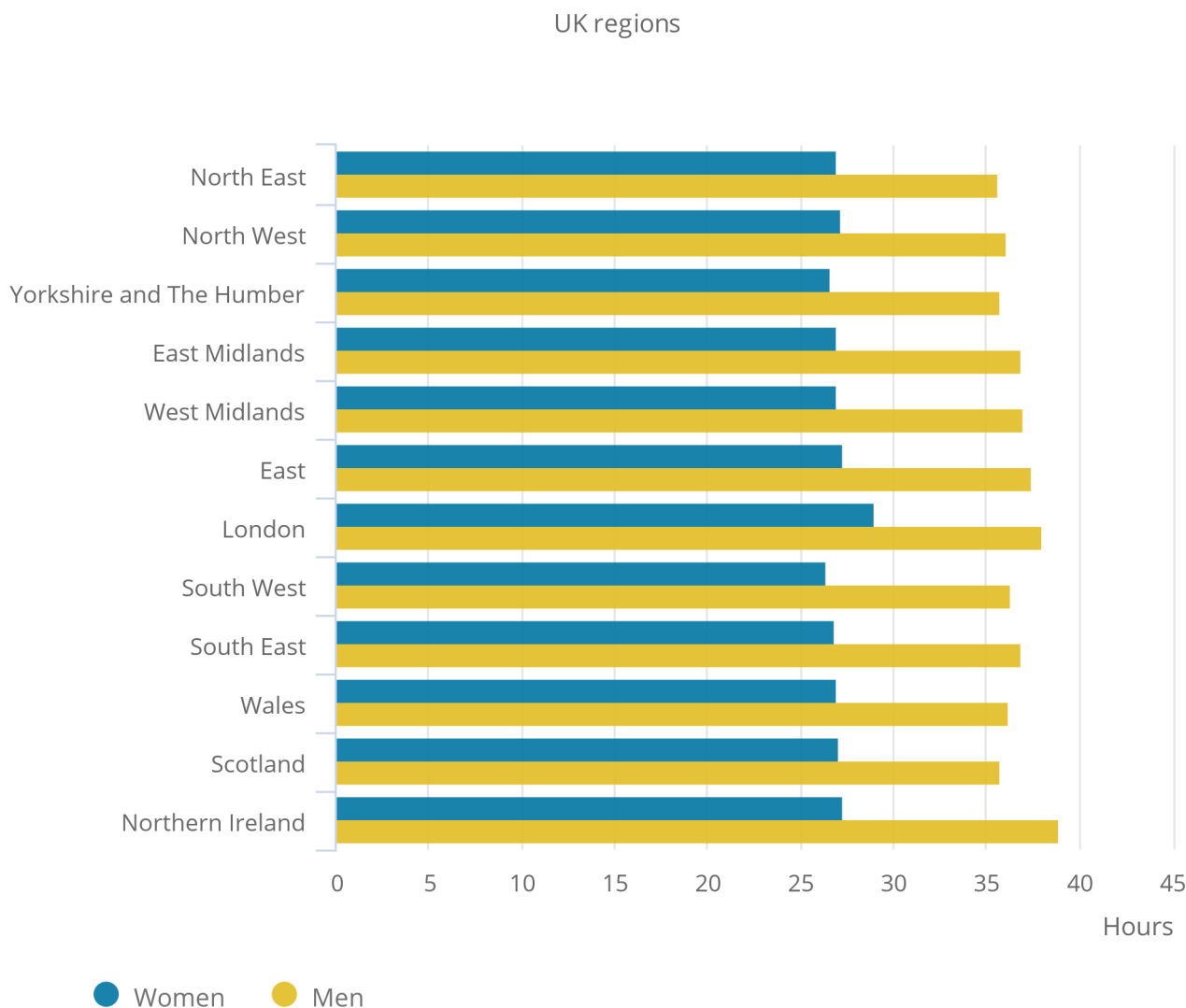
For men, the region with the highest average hours worked was Northern Ireland, at 38.9 hours and for women it was London, at 29.0 hours. The largest difference in average hours worked between men and women was in Northern Ireland, where men worked on average 11.9 more hours per week than women. The largest change compared with the same period last year (April 2015 to March 2016), was seen for men in London, where the average hours worked increased by 2.2% to 38.0 hours and for women in the South West, where the average hours worked decreased by 3.7% to 26.8 hours per week.

The region with the largest difference in total hours worked between men and women was London, where men worked a total of 34.0 million more hours than women. The regions with the smallest difference were Northern Ireland and the North East, where men worked only 7.0 million more hours than women.

Figure 4: Average (mean) actual weekly hours of work, by region and by sex, April 2016 to March 2017

UK regions

Figure 4: Average (mean) actual weekly hours of work, by region and by sex, April 2016 to March 2017



Source: Annual Population Survey: Office for National Statistics

Source: Annual Population Survey: Office for National Statistics

Where to find data about hours worked

Hours worked estimates are available for each region in [Datasets HI01 to HI12 – Headline indicators for individual UK regions](#) (Tab 6). These estimates are based on data from the Annual Population Survey (APS).

The national data is also available at the UK labour market statistical bulletin in Datasets [Hour1-Actual weekly hours worked](#) (seasonally adjusted) and [Hour2-Usual weekly hours worked \(seasonally adjusted\)](#). These estimates are based on data from the Labour Force Survey (LFS).

7 . Unemployment

Things you need to know about unemployment

Unemployment measures people without a job who have been actively seeking work within the last 4 weeks and are available to start work within the next 2 weeks.

Regional unemployment

Regional estimates for the unemployment rate are quite volatile, which needs to be allowed for when considering the pattern of change over time.

The unemployment rate for people aged 16 and over for the UK was 4.5%, for the period March to May 2017. This has decreased by 0.2 percentage points compared with the previous period (December 2016 to February 2017).

Allowing for some individual volatility, the overall pattern for the last few years has been for gently falling unemployment rates. The highest unemployment rate in the UK for March to May 2017 was for the North East at 6.0%. The next highest rates were seen in the West Midlands, at 5.9% and London, at 5.5%. The region with the lowest rate was the South East, at 3.4%, followed by the South West, at 3.5%.

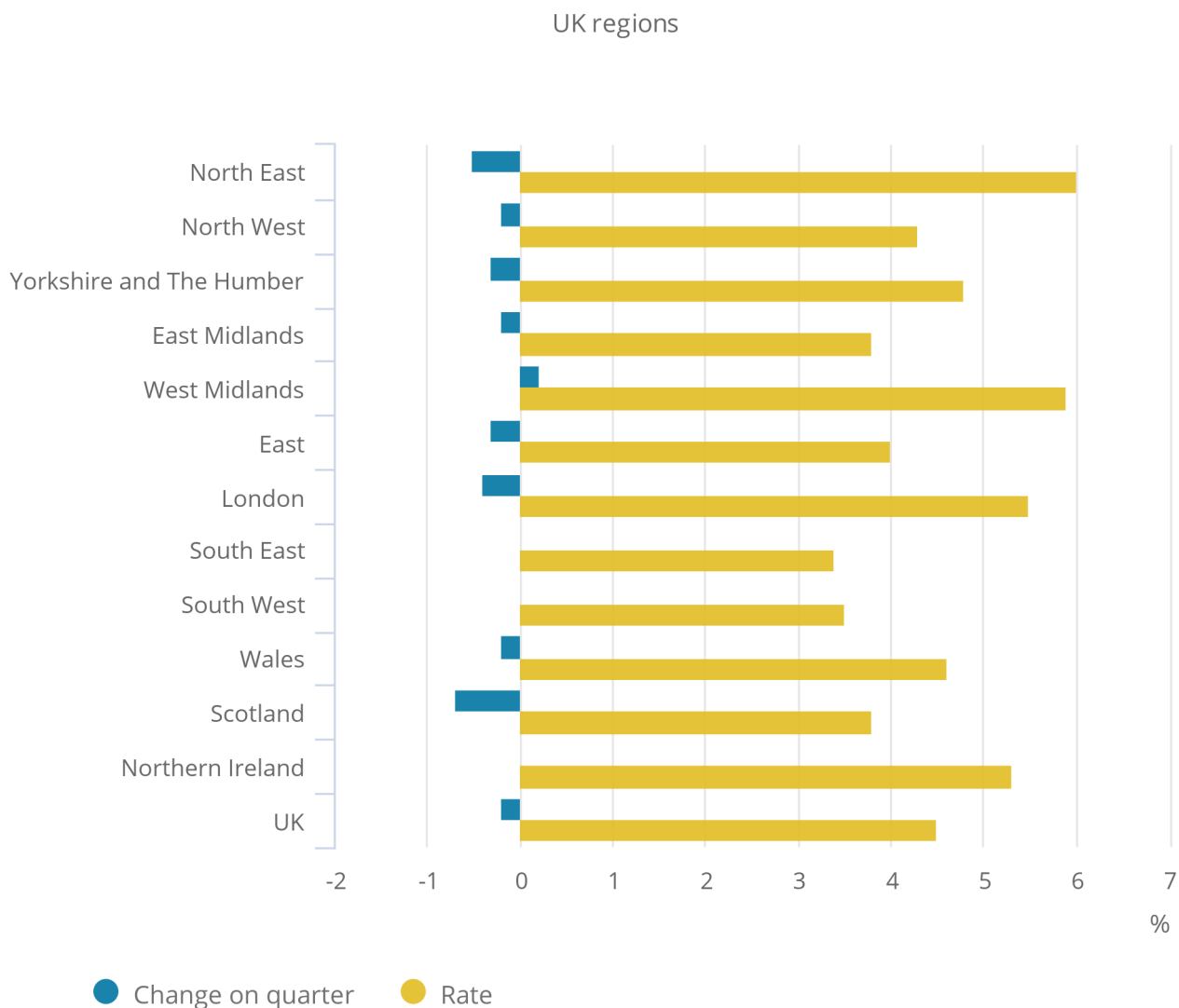
The region with the largest decrease in the unemployment rate on the previous period (December 2016 to February 2017), was Scotland at 0.7 percentage points, followed by the North East at 0.5 percentage points.

The only region with an increase in the unemployment rate on the previous period (December 2016 to February 2017), was seen in the West Midlands, at 0.2 percentage points.

Figure 5: Unemployment rates by region, seasonally adjusted, March to May 2017

UK regions

Figure 5: Unemployment rates by region, seasonally adjusted, March to May 2017



Source: Labour Force Survey: Office for National Statistics

Source: Labour Force Survey: Office for National Statistics

The majority of regions are showing decreases in the unemployment rate compared with a year ago, with the exception of the East of England, which increased by 0.4 percentage points, followed by Wales at 0.1 percentage points. The largest decrease was in Scotland at 1.6 percentage points, followed by the North East, at 1.5 percentage points.

Where to find data about unemployment

Unemployment estimates are available for each region in [Dataset HI00 – Headline LFS indicators for all UK regions](#) and [HI01 to HI12 – Headline indicators for individual UK regions](#) (Tab 2(2)), and Datasets [LI01 to LI05 – Local indicators for sub-regional areas of Great Britain](#), for further estimate breakdowns by age or geographies.

These tables contain data produced from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and Annual Population Survey (APS). A note in the section “Understanding and working with Labour Market Statistics” on the relationship between the LFS and APS entitled “What is the relationship between the APS and the LFS?” is included in this bulletin.

8 . Economic inactivity

Things you need to know about economic inactivity

Economically inactive people are not in employment but do not meet the internationally accepted definition of unemployment. This is because they have not been seeking work within the last 4 weeks and/or they are unable to start work within the next 2 weeks.

Regional economic inactivity

The economic inactivity rate for people aged from 16 to 64 for the UK was 21.5%, for the period March to May 2017, down 0.2 percentage points on the previous period (December 2016 to February 2017). The UK region with the highest rate was Northern Ireland at 27.4%, followed by Wales, at 23.8% and the West Midlands, at 23.6%. The region with the lowest rate was the South West at 17.8%, followed by the South East at 18.3% and the East of England at 19.1%.

The regions with the largest increase in the economic inactivity rate on the previous period (December 2016 to February 2017) were the East Midlands, Yorkshire and The Humber, and Wales, all with an increase of 0.7 percentage points. The North East had the largest decrease in the rate, down 1.4 percentage points, followed by London, with a decrease of 0.5 percentage points.

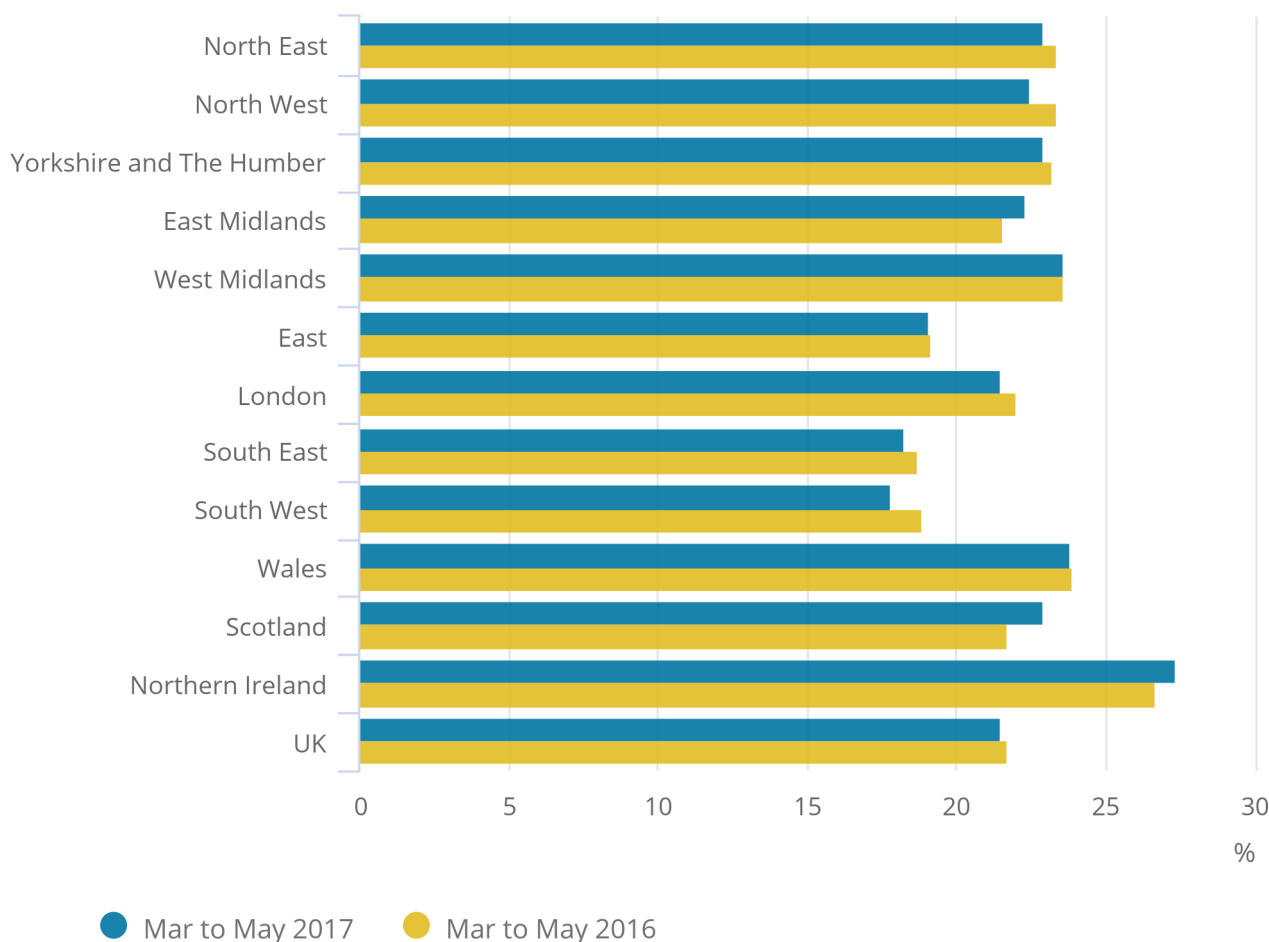
Over the year, the only regions with an increase in the economic inactivity rate were Scotland, with an increase of 1.2 percentage points, and both Northern Ireland and the East Midlands, with an increase of 0.7 percentage points. The largest decrease in the rate was in the South West, at 1.1 percentage points, followed by the North West, at 0.9 percentage points.

Northern Ireland also had the highest economic inactivity rate at 26.7%, in the same period in 2016. The current rate is now 5.9 percentage points higher than the UK rate.

Figure 6: Economic inactivity rate by region and comparison year-on-year, seasonally adjusted, March to May 2016 and March to May 2017

UK regions

Figure 6: Economic inactivity rate by region and comparison year-on-year, seasonally adjusted, March to May 2016 and March to May 2017



Source: Labour Force Survey: Office for National Statistics

Source: Labour Force Survey: Office for National Statistics

Where to find data about economic inactivity

Economic inactivity estimates are available for each region at [Dataset HI00 – Headline LFS indicators for all UK regions](#) and [HI01 to HI12 – Headline indicators for individual UK regions](#) (Tabs 10 and 11), and [Datasets LI01 to LI05 – Local indicators for sub-regional areas of Great Britain](#), for further estimate breakdowns by age, reason or geographies.

These tables contain data produced from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and Annual Population Survey (APS). A note in the section “Understanding and working with labour market statistics” on the relationship between the LFS and APS entitled “What is the relationship between the APS and the LFS?” is included in this bulletin.

9 . Local labour market indicators

Things you need to know about labour market indicators

Local labour market indicators cover employment, unemployment, economic inactivity and jobs density, for sub-regional geographic areas such as local and unitary authorities, counties and regions in the UK for the most recent 12-month period available of the Annual Population Survey (APS). The jobs density of an area is the number of jobs per head, of resident population, aged 16 to 64.

Indicators from the Annual Population Survey

For the period April 2016 to March 2017, the local authorities with the highest employment rates in Great Britain were Stroud at 88.5%, Eden at 87.8% and Blaby at 87.3%. Weymouth and Portland is the local authority with the lowest rate at 57.8%, followed by Nottingham at 60.9% and Sandwell at 61.5%.

For the period April 2016 to March 2017, the local authorities with the highest unemployment rates in Great Britain were Hartlepool at 10.1%, followed by Tower Hamlets at 9.1% and both Middlesbrough and South Tyneside at 8.9%. The local authorities with the lowest rates were Uttlesford at 2.1%, followed by South Lakeland, South Cambridgeshire and Eden, all at 2.2%. These were followed by a further 44 local authorities all under 3.0%.

Jobs densities (first published 18 January 2017)

The jobs density of an area is the number of jobs per head, of resident population, aged 16 to 64. In 2015, the highest jobs density in Great Britain was the City of London at 84.29 and the lowest was Lewisham at 0.40. Westminster (4.30) and Camden (2.23), both in London, were the next highest jobs densities. The highest jobs density outside London was the Isles of Scilly at 2.01. After Lewisham, the lowest jobs densities were East Renfrewshire at 0.43, followed by East Dunbartonshire at 0.45 and Waltham Forest at 0.46.

Where to find data about local labour market indicators

Annual Population Survey (APS) estimates are available at [Datasets LI01 to LI05 – Local indicators for sub-regional areas of Great Britain](#) and Claimant Count estimates are available at Datasets [CC01 – Claimant Count by unitary and local authority](#) and [CC02 – Claimant Count by parliamentary constituency](#), [CC02.1 – Claimant Count for constituencies of the Scottish Parliament](#), and [CC03 – Claimant Count for Local Enterprise Partnerships](#) in this statistical bulletin.

These tables contain data produced from the APS. A note in the section “Understanding and working with labour market statistics” entitled “What is the relationship between the APS and the LFS?” is included in this bulletin.

10 . Upcoming changes and further publication dates

Future Publication dates

16 August 2017
13 September 2017
18 October 2017
15 November 2017
13 December 2017
24 January 2018

11 . Links to related statistics

Further information on labour market statistics is available in the following publications:

- [UK Labour Market statistics](#)
- [Public sector employment](#)
- [Young people not in education, employment or training \(NEET\)](#)
- [Labour productivity](#)
- [Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings \(ASHE\)](#)
- [Business Register and Employment Survey \(BRES\)](#)
- [regional and local area statistics are also available at NOMIS®](#)

We have also produced:

- [ad hoc data and analysis related to employment and employee types](#)
- [methodological articles related to employment and employee types](#)

Historic articles published in Economic and Labour Market Review and Labour Market Trends

Articles about labour market statistics were published in Labour Market Trends (up until 2006) and in Economic and Labour Market Review (from 2007 to 2011). Editions of [Labour Market Trends](#) are available from July 2001 until January 2006, when the publication was discontinued. Editions of [Economic and Labour Market Review](#) are available from the first edition, published in February 2007, up until the last edition, published in May 2011.

12 . Quality and methodology

Accuracy and reliability of survey estimates

Most of the figures in this statistical bulletin come from surveys of households or businesses. 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.

Changes in the numbers reported in this statistical bulletin (and especially the rates) between 3-month periods are usually not greater than the margin of error. 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.

Quality information

One indication of the reliability of the main indicators in this bulletin can be obtained by monitoring the size of revisions. These summary measures are available in Dataset [S02 Regional labour market: Sampling variability and revisions summary](#) spreadsheet and show the size of revisions over the last 5 years.

The revised data may be subject to sampling or other sources of error. Our standard presentation is to show 5 years' worth of revisions (that is, 60 observations for a monthly series, 20 for a quarterly series). Further information on the quality of and methods for workforce jobs estimates can be found in the [quality and methodology information report](#).

Other 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

Quality and Methodology Information reports for various labour market topics are available:

[Labour market Quality and Methodology Information](#)
[Labour Force Survey Quality and Methodology Information](#)
[Vacancy Survey Quality and Methodology Information](#)
[Workforce Jobs Quality and Methodology Information](#)
[Average weekly earnings \(AWE\) Quality and Methodology Information](#)

Further information about the Labour Force Survey (LFS) is available from:

- [the Labour Force Survey user guide](#)
- [Labour Force Survey performance and quality monitoring reports](#)

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