Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES)

The Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) is the official source of employee and employment estimates by detailed geography and industry.

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1 . Introduction

The Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) is the official source of employee and employment estimates by detailed geography and industry. It is also used to update the Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR), the main sampling frame for business surveys conducted by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), with information on the structure of businesses in the UK.

The survey collects employment information from businesses across the whole of the UK economy for each site that they operate. This allows the ONS to produce employee and employment estimates by detailed geography and industry split by full-time/part-time workers and whether the business is public/private.

The ONS produces a number of different measures of employment including Workforce Jobs and the Annual Population Survey/Labour Force Survey. However, BRES is the recommended source of information on employment by detailed geography and industry.

This section provides information and guidance supporting BRES. The latest figures from the survey are available on the Business Register and Employment Survey release page and NOMIS.

2 . Business Register and Employment Survey

Survey at a glance

Purpose

The Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) is the official source of employee and employment estimates by detailed geography and industry. It is also used to update the Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR), the main sampling frame for business surveys conducted by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), with information on the structure of businesses in the UK.

The survey collects employment information from businesses across the whole of the UK economy for each site that they operate. This allows the ONS to produce employee and employment estimates by detailed geography and industry split by full-time/part-time workers and whether the business is public/private.

- Selection Criteria - The survey covers all businesses in Great Britain registered for VAT and/or PAYE. Northern Ireland data is collected independently by the Department for Finance and Personnel Northern Ireland (DFPNI). They supply estimates for Northern Ireland which allow UK estimates to be produced. The BRES sample design is stratified by country, business size band and industry.
- Population - Approximately 2 million businesses
- Sample - Approximately 80,000 business in Great Britain
- Frequency - Annual

Where is the data published?

Annual Employment statistics are published via the Nomis website.

The ONS publishes high level UK/GB BRES estimates, together with a statistical bulletin.

3 . BRES user enagement

The Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) team are committed to engaging with the users of our statistics. We do this through a number of different forums. Information about some of these is given below. We also welcome feedback from all users of our statistics. If you have a specific query please get in touch using the contact details found on this page. For the latest news on BRES, please check the latest news section on Nomis.

BRES government user group

The BRES government user group was set up to give a forum for some of our key users in government to:

- provide advice on policy and developments in BRES
- allow ONS to regularly explore the uses being made of the BRES results
- extend the use of BRES and advise on data sharing issues
- discuss BRES quality issues and provide advice on the outputs produced from BRES, considering suggestions for improvement where appropriate

Central and Local Information Partnership (CLIP)

BRES is covered as part of the CLIP Labour Market statistics Sub-group. This allows ONS to engage with some of the biggest users in local government. The aims of the group are to:

- establish a common understanding of the data requirements of central and local government, with particular emphasis upon the National Statistics provided by ONS
- exchange views and information about developments in data sources, and consult one another on any proposed changes
- identify the labour market issues that are of general concern, and assess the need for changes in National Statistics to assist central and local government functions and policy agendas
- provide views on how ONS and other data providers could improve the quality, consistency and accessibility of labour market data for use in the public domain
- clarify the relative priorities of improvements and developments identified

4 . BRES publications and further analysis

The Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) is the official source of employee and employment estimates by detailed geography and industry.

BRES figures are currently available on the 2007 Standard Industrial Classification (SIC 2007) basis. Figures are available down to the 5-digit subclass level. Farm agriculture (subclass 01000) is available at region and country level only.

Figures are available for full-time, part-time and total employees. Employment figures are also available, which are employees plus working owners.

Estimates are made available to users from 2 identifiable sources:

The National Statistics website

Estimates are available on the National Statistics website. They are presented in many different free-to-view tables, giving customers an overall picture of employment information at UK and local authority county/district levels. The tables are split by full-time/part-time workers and whether the business is public or private. These estimates have accompanying quality measures, to give users information about their quality.

The data is available back to 2008, when BRES replaced the Annual Business Inquiry part 1 (ABI/1). High level estimates from the ABI/1 are available on the National Statistics website.

NOMIS

Regular users of BRES, register with the NOMIS website, which gives them access to GB data at low levels of aggregation via a "Chancellor's Notice". The Chancellor's Notice grants customers access to the latest estimates as well as previous year's data. A Chancellor's Notice costs £60 and grants access until the next year's data is released. Access to identifiable data is only allowable after giving a valid statistical purpose and the signing of a confidentiality agreement.

Estimates are also available via Nomis at the 5-digit subclass level broken down by a large number of different geographies as far down as lower layer super output areas/ Scottish data zones. Some information by public /private status is available by various geographical breakdowns as a free-to-view dataset. Applications for access to the data can be made on the NOMIS website.

5 . BRES quality and methods

The documents below provide information on Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) methodology and guidance.

Additional guidance and advice can be obtained from BRES@ons.gov.uk.

- Discontinuity between BRES and ABI (64.4 Kb Pdf): December 2010

  Discontinuity analysis of the move from the Annual Business Inquiry to the Business Register Employment Survey.

- Working owners discontinuity 2011 (107.9 Kb Pdf): December 2012

  Article describing the discontinuity that exists between the 2010 and 2011 BRES estimates caused by a change in the way that directors of limited companies are treated in the 2011 BRES results.

- BRES quality and methodology information (262 Kb Pdf): September 2015

  A high level overview of the statistical methodology and quality for BRES.

- BRES revisions policy (15 Kb Pdf)

- 2015 BRES general questionnaire (219.6 Kb Pdf)

  An example of a 2015 BRES general questionnaire.

- Guide to using public/private estimates from BRES (2.29 Mb Pdf)

6 . Annual employment statistics history and background

BRES is available from 2008 onwards. However, annual employment statistics are available on NOMIS as far back as 1971. The history of these different outputs is given below, along with documentation relating to the development of these outputs.

- 1971 – 1991: Census of Employment
- 1991 – 1998: Annual Employment Survey
- 1998 – 2008: Annual Business Inquiry (ABI)

BRES replaced ABI in 2008:

- combined the Annual Business Inquiry (employment) and the Business Register Survey (BRS)
- collected all information at the local unit or site level
- a new questionnaire was introduced
- new improved estimation methodology was introduced

The documents below give further information on the history and formation of some of these annual employment sources.

Business Register Employment Survey background information 2008 onwards (303.9 Kb Pdf)

A compendium of information about the Business Register Employment Survey.

Annual Business Inquiry Information (1995-2007 (108.4 Kb Pdf))

Information about the Annual Business Inquiry including: how businesses are sampled; how results are estimated from businesses' responses; definitions of some key variables either collected via the survey or calculated; contact information for the devolved governments; quality measures and special analyses.

Development of the ABI (37.7 Kb Pdf)

How and why the Annual Business Inquiry (ABI) was developed from the earlier Annual Census of Production (ACOP) and the Distribution and Services Sector (DSS) surveys. The ABI was launched in 1997.

. Contact information

If you cannot find what you are looking for or require further help or information about BRES please contact us:

By email at: BRES@ons.gov.uk

By telephone on: +44 1633 456903

By post at:

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