

Statistical bulletin

Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), UK: May 2022

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 a small increase in the number of young people who were aged 16 to 24 years and not in education, employment or training (NEET) in January to March 2022 compared with October to December 2021, with the total currently estimated to be 704,000.
- The percentage of all young people who were NEET in January to March 2022 was estimated at 10.4%, up 0.2% on the previous quarter (October to December 2021) and down 1.0 percentage points compared with pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic levels.
- There were an estimated 247,000 unemployed young people who were NEET, a record low for the series and for women (78,000).
- There were an estimated 229,000 young people in the UK aged 18 to 24 years who were NEET and unemployed, record lows for the series and for women (75,000).
- There were an estimated 457,000 economically inactive young people who were NEET, up 25,000 on the quarter and up 43,000 on the year.
- The number of young men who were NEET and economically inactive was 218,000 and the number of women was 239,000, which was an increase on the previous quarter (October to December 2021) of a record 48,000.

2 . Coronavirus and measuring the labour market

Latest Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimates are based on interviews that took place from January to March 2022. Many of the government lockdown restrictions had eased prior to this period, including the end of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS).

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, which was partially mitigated by the introduction of housing tenure-based weights into the survey in October 2020, as detailed in [our article 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 [our article Impact of reweighting on Labour Force Survey key indicators. UK: 2020](#). All estimates in this release are based on the new methodology.

Subnational NEET estimates are not published by the Office for National Statistics but can be accessed by following the links in [Section 8: Related links](#).

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

An estimated 10.4% of all people aged 16 to 24 years in the UK were not in education, employment or training in January to March 2022. This is 0.2% up on the quarter, but down 0.4 percentage points compared with January to March 2021, and 1.0% down on pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic levels. An estimated 11.2% of men and 9.5% of women were NEET.

There were an estimated 704,000 young people who were NEET. This was up on the previous quarter by 13,000 and down 31,000 compared with January to March 2021.

Of the 704,000 people who were NEET, 387,000 were men and 317,000 were women.

The total number of people aged 18 to 24 years who were NEET was 649,000, up 7,000 on the previous quarter and down 73,000 on pre-coronavirus levels.

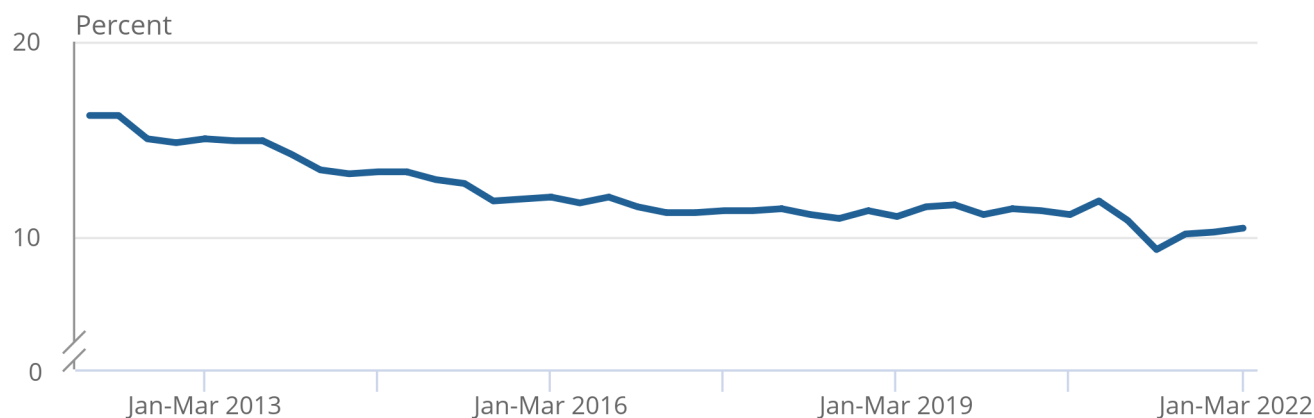
The percentage of those aged 18 to 24 years who were NEET was 12.2%, up 1.0 percentage point on the quarter. This is still down 1.1% on pre-coronavirus levels.

Figure 1: The percentage of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) has slowly increased to above 10% over the last three quarters.

People aged 16 to 24 years NEET as a percentage of all young people by age, seasonally adjusted, UK, January to March 2012 to January to March 2022

Figure 1: The percentage of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) has slowly increased to above 10% over the last three quarters.

People aged 16 to 24 years NEET as a percentage of all young people by age, seasonally adjusted, UK, January to March 2012 to January to March 2022



Source: Office for National Statistics - Labour Force Survey

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

Unemployed young people who were not in education, employment or training There were an estimated 247,000 unemployed young people who were NEET in January to March 2022, a record low for the series. This was down 12,000 compared with October to December 2021, down 74,000 compared with January to March 2021, and down 76,000 compared with pre-coronavirus pandemic levels.

There were estimated to be 169,000 unemployed NEETS who were men and 78,000 who were women, a record low for the series. There were an estimated 229,000 young people in the UK aged 18 to 24 years who were NEET and unemployed, record lows for the series and for women (75,000)

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

There were an estimated 457,000 economically inactive young people who were NEET in January to March 2022. This was up 25,000 on the quarter from October to December 2021, up 43,000 compared with January to March 2021 and down 4,000 compared with pre-coronavirus levels.

The number of young men who were NEET and economically inactive was 218,000 and the number of women was 239,000, which was an increase on the previous quarter (October to December 2021) by a record 48,000 for women. For the 18 to 24 years age group, there were estimated to be 226,000 inactive women, which represented a record quarterly increase of 49,000 and a record annual increase of 47,000.

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

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

Dataset | Released 26 May 2022

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 26 May 2022

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 (NEET)

Anybody who is not in any of the forms of education or training listed previously and not in employment is considered to be 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 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 is available. The article explains how missing information for identifying someone as NEET is appropriated based on individual characteristics.

Our [LFS performance and quality monitoring reports](#) provide data on response rates and other quality-related issues for the Labour Force Survey (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: Related links](#).

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.

LFS and APS reweighting

We plan to reweight Labour Force Survey (LFS) and Annual Population Survey (APS) datasets that include data from March 2020 using [Real Time Information data](#). We intend to release the initial reweighted LFS estimates in the June Labour market publication. On 23 May 2022, we published an article [Impact of reweighting on Labour Force Survey key indicators: 2022](#), with indicative estimates of the LFS reweighting methodology on key indicators for the UK and countries of the UK, between January to March 2020 and October to December 2021.

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.

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

The Office for National Statistics is responsible for not in education, employment or training (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.

[NEET estimates for England](#)

Collection | Last updated 3 March 2022

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 16 to 19 year olds in Scotland.

[NEET estimates for Wales](#)

Statistics and research | Last updated 21 April 2022

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

[NEET estimates for Northern Ireland](#)

Tables | Last updated 11 January 2022

Tables from the Labour market report, including not in education employment or training (NEET)