Office for National Statistics

Statistical bulletin

Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), UK: May 2023

Estimates of young people (aged 16 to 24 years) who are not in education, employment or training, by age and sex.

Contact:
Bob Watson
labour.supply@ons.gov.uk
+44 1633 455070

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Table of contents

1. Main points
2. Total young people who were not in education, employment or training
3. Young people who were not in education, employment or training data
4. Glossary
5. Measuring the data
6. Strengths and limitations
7. Related links
8. Cite this statistical bulletin

1 . Main points

- There was a decrease 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 2023, with the total currently estimated to be 770,000, down from 788,000 in October to December 2022.
- The percentage of all young people who were NEET in January to March 2023 was estimated at 11.3%, down 0.3 percentage points on the quarter (October to December 2022), but up 0.2 percentage points compared with pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic levels (October to December 2019).
- The decrease in the number of young people who were NEET was entirely driven by young men, who saw a decrease of 26,000 on the quarter (from October to December 2022).
- The number of young people who were NEET and unemployed in January to March 2023 was estimated to be 295,000, a decrease of 3,000 on the quarter (from October to December 2022).
- There were an estimated 475,000 young people in the UK who were NEET and economically inactive, a decrease on the quarter (October to December 2022) of 15,000.

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

An estimated 11.3% of all people aged 16 to 24 years in the UK were not in education, employment or training (NEET) in January to March 2023. This is down 0.3 percentage points on the quarter, but up 0.9 percentage points compared with January to March 2022, and up 0.2 percentage points on pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic levels (October to December 2019).

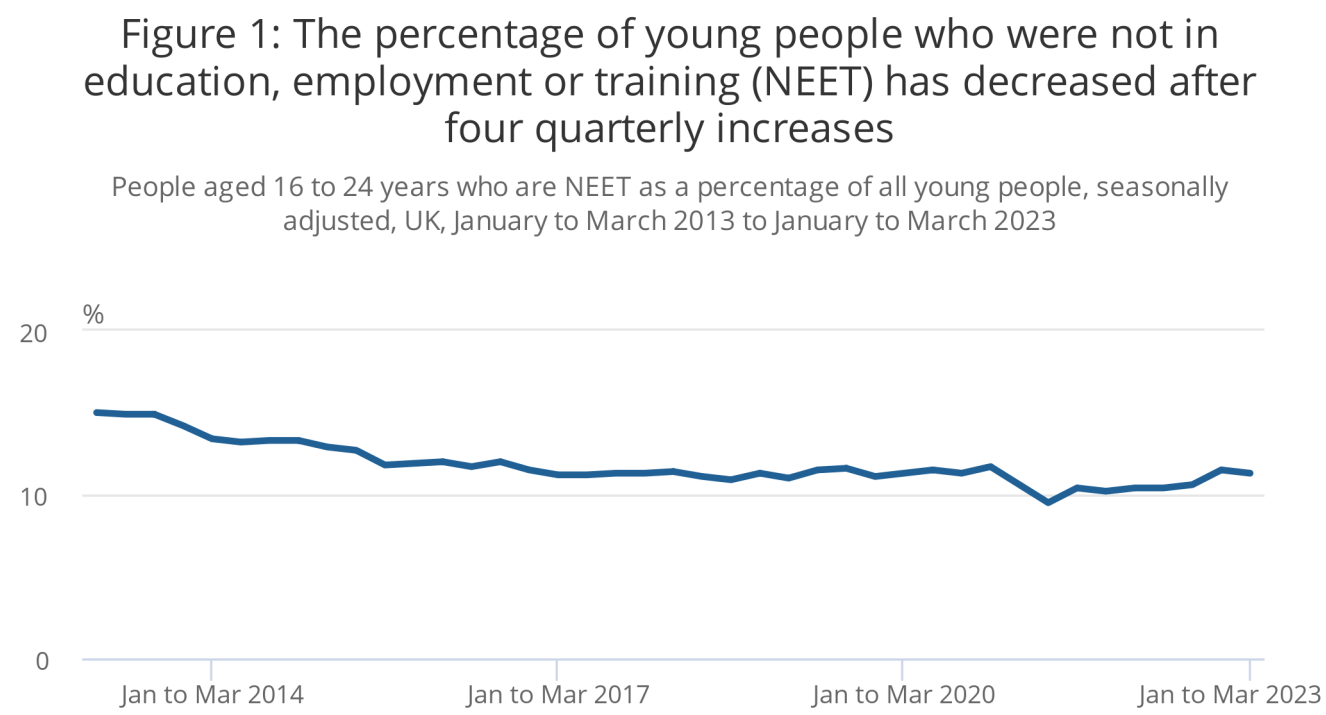
An estimated 11.1% of young men (down 0.8 percentage points on the quarter) and 11.4% of young women (up 0.3 percentage points on the quarter) were NEET. There were 770,000 young people who were NEET in total, a decrease of 18,000 on the quarter, which was entirely driven by young men. Of the total number of young people who were NEET, 389,000 were young men and 381,000 were young women.

The total number of people aged 18 to 24 years who were NEET was 722,000, down 8,000 on the previous quarter.

The percentage of those aged 18 to 24 years who were NEET was 13.4%, which was down 0.2 percentage points on the quarter.

Figure 1: The percentage of young people who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) has decreased after four quarterly increases

People aged 16 to 24 years who are NEET as a percentage of all young people, seasonally adjusted, UK, January to March 2013 to January to March 2023



Source: Labour Force Survey from the Office for National Statistics

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

There were an estimated 295,000 unemployed young people aged 16 to 24 years who were NEET in January to March 2023, down 3,000 from October to December 2022 but up 48,000 compared with January to March 2022. An estimated 181,000 of these unemployed NEETs were young men, and 114,000 were young women.

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

In January to March 2023, there were an estimated 475,000 economically inactive young people aged 16 to 24 years who were NEET. This was down 15,000 on the quarter from October to December 2022 and up 15,000 compared with January to March 2022. The number of young men who were NEET and economically inactive was 208,000 and the number of young women was 267,000.

Subnational not in education, employment or training estimates

Subnational estimates for people not in education, employment or training estimates are not published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), but can be accessed by following the links in Section 7: Related links.

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

Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) Dataset | Released 25 May 2023 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 May 2023 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.

4 . 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 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.

5 . 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.

Our Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), UK, methodology: May 2022 provides background information and explains how missing information for identifying someone as NEET is appropriated based on individual characteristics.

Data on response rates and other quality-related issues for the Labour Force Survey (LFS) are provided in our Labour Force Survey performance and quality monitoring reports.

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

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.

The population totals used for the latest LFS estimates use projected growth rates from Real-Time Information (RTI) data for UK, EU and non-EU populations based on 2021 patterns. The total population used for the LFS therefore does not take into account any changes in migration, birth rates, death rates, and so on, since June 2021, so levels estimates may be under- or over-estimating the true values and should be used with caution. Estimates of rates will, however, be robust.

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.

6 . Strengths and limitations

The figures in this bulletin come from the Labour Force Survey (LFS). Results from sample surveys are always estimates and 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.

Our Sampling variability dataset shows sampling variabilities for estimates of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) derived from the LFS.

7 . Related links

NEET estimates for England Collection | Last updated 2 March 2023 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 (PDF, 2.4MB) Publication | Last updated 30 August 2022 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 13 April 2023 Data for young people by age, gender, region and local authority from the Welsh Government.

NEET estimates for Northern Ireland Tables | Last updated 16 May 2023 Tables from the Labour Market Report, including Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET)

8 . Cite this statistical bulletin

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