

Statistical bulletin

Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), UK: February 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 little change in the number of young people aged 16 to 24 years and not in education, employment or training (NEET) in October to December 2021 compared with July to September 2021, with the total estimated to be 692,000.
- The percentage of all young people who were NEET in October to December 2021 was estimated at 10.2%, largely unchanged on the quarter (July to September 2021) and down 0.9 percentage points compared with pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic levels (October to December 2019).
- There were an estimated 260,000 unemployed young people who were NEET, which is a record low for the series, with a record low for men (158,000) and a joint record low for women (102,000).
- There were an estimated 432,000 economically inactive young people who were NEET, up 11,000 on the quarter, with a record high for men (242,000).
- There were an estimated 245,000 young people aged 18 to 24 years in the UK who were NEET and unemployed, which is a record low for the series.

2 . Coronavirus and measuring the labour market

Latest Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimates are based on interviews that took place from October to December 2021. Many of the government lockdown restrictions had eased prior to 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, which 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 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 October to December 2021, an estimated 10.2% of all people aged 16 to 24 years were not in education, employment or training (NEET). The proportion is largely unchanged on the quarter and decreased by 1.6 percentage points compared with October to December 2020, and it is down on pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic levels. An estimated 11.5% of men were NEET, and for women the proportion was 8.8%.

There were an estimated 692,000 young people in the UK who were NEET. This was up on the previous quarter by 2,000 and down 115,000 when compared with October to December 2020.

Of the 692,000 people who were NEET, 400,000 were men and 292,000 were women.

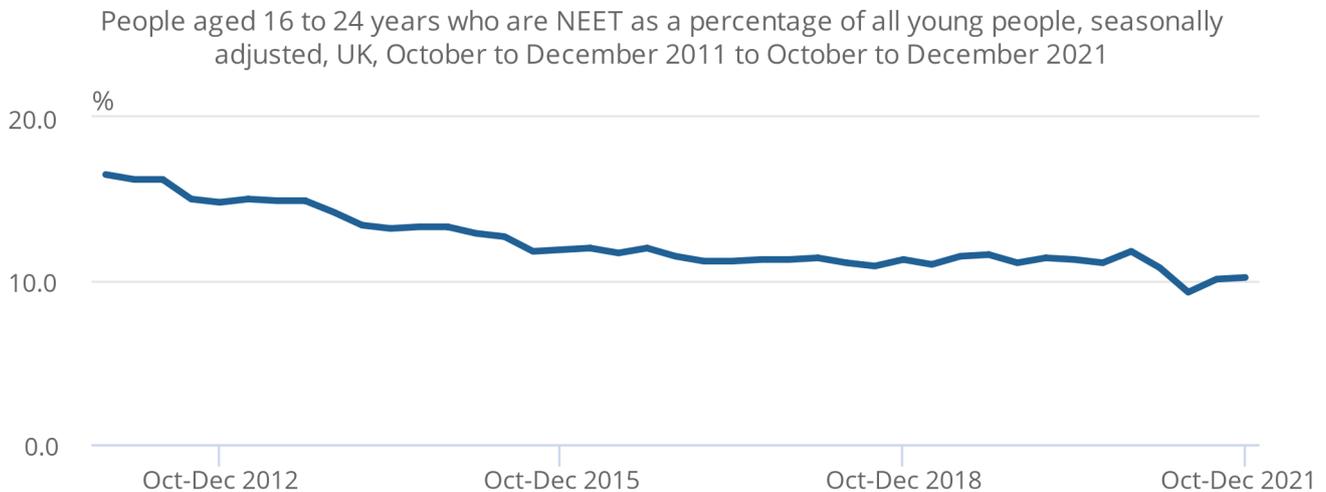
The total number of people aged 18 to 24 years who were NEET was 642,000, down 6,000 on the previous quarter and down 57,000 on pre-coronavirus pandemic levels (October to December 2019).

The percentage of those aged 18 to 24 years who were NEET was 12.0%, which was down 0.1 percentage points on the quarter. This is still down 0.7% on pre-coronavirus pandemic levels.

Figure 1: The percentage of young people who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) had decreased sharply after October to December 2020 but has recently stabilised at around 10%

People aged 16 to 24 years who are NEET as a percentage of all young people, seasonally adjusted, UK, October to December 2011 to October to December 2021

Figure 1: The percentage of young people who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) had decreased sharply after October to December 2020 but has recently stabilised at around 10%



Source: Office for National Statistics – Labour Force Survey

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

In October to December 2021, there were an estimated 260,000 unemployed young people who were NEET, which is a record low for the series. This is down 9,000 from July to September 2021 and down 97,000 compared with October to December 2020. Unemployed men were estimated to be at a record low of 158,000, and unemployed women were estimated to be at a joint record low of 102,000.

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

In October to December 2021, there were an estimated 432,000 economically inactive young people who were NEET. This was up 11,000 from July to September 2021 and down 18,000 compared with October to December 2020. The number of young men who were NEET and who were economically inactive was 242,000, which was a record high for the series and an increase of 37,000 compared with July to September 2021.

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

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

Dataset | Released 24 February 2022

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

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

Dataset | Released 24 February 2022

Labour Force Survey sampling quarterly variability estimates for young people (aged 16 to 24 years) who are not in education, employment or training 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 above 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. This is 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 [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\) reporting platform](#).

An article called [Young people who are NEET \(PDF, 88.67KB\)](#), which provides 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 (QMI) on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in the Labour Force Survey ([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, which are 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 SA: Educational status and labour market status for people aged from 16 to 24](#) (seasonally adjusted). The NEET statistics and the dataset A06 statistics are both derived from the LFS 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.

Labour Force Survey (LFS) and Annual Population Survey (APS) reweighting

We plan to reweight LFS and APS datasets that include data from March 2020. We will provide further details on our plans, including a timeline, in our March Labour Market publication.

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, we will 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 not in education, employment or training (NEET) derived from the LFS.

8 . Related links

[Statistics: NEET and participation](#)

Collection | Last updated 12 August 2021

Estimates for England on young people's participation in education, employment and training, and those not in education, employment or training (NEET), from the Department for Education.

[Annual Participation Measure](#)

Publication | Last updated 31 August 2021

Annual statistical publication reporting on learning, training and work activity of people aged 16 to 19 years in Scotland on the Skills Development Scotland website.

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

Statistics and research | Last updated 20 January 2022

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

[Quarterly Labour Force Survey Tables – November 2021](#)

Tables | Last updated 11 January 2022

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency's (NISRA's) tables from the Labour Market Report, including Not in Education Employment