

Statistical bulletin

Children living in long-term workless households in the UK: 2018

Annual UK estimates of the number of children living in households where all adults have not worked for at least 12 months.

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Release date:
30 October 2019

Next release:
28 October 2020

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1 . Main points

- 1.0 million children (8.2%) lived in long-term workless households in 2018, decreasing every year since 2010.
- Of all children in workless households, 78.6% lived in long-term workless households.
- The South East had the lowest percentage of children in long-term workless households at 4.7%.
- Northern Ireland had the highest percentage of children in long-term workless households at 13.6%.

2 . Things you need to know about this release

Introduction

This bulletin provides statistics on the number of children living in long-term workless households in the UK. These statistics have been produced using the Annual Population Survey (APS) household dataset for the period January to December 2018 unless otherwise stated. They only contain households where at least one person is aged 16 to 64 years and all people age 16 years and over are unemployed or economically inactive and had not worked for at least 12 months.

These estimates add a definition of long-term worklessness of adults in a household. This means that they are a subset of the number of children living in workless households, which was previously published in [Workless households for regions across the UK: 2018](#) using the APS household dataset. The lead statistic for the number of children in workless households is derived from the [Labour Force Survey \(LFS\) household dataset](#), which is published each quarter.

Datasets containing estimates for children living in long-term workless households are provided by a range of characteristics, such as combined economic status of adults in the household and age of child for the latest available data, covering January to December 2018, and as a time series from 2006 to 2018.

More information on the concepts and methodology used in the release can be found in [Children living in long-term workless households: UK](#).

Main definitions

Household

A single person or a group of people living at the same address who have the address as their only or main residence and either share one main meal a day or share living accommodation (or both). In this bulletin, households are further defined as where at least one person is aged 16 to 64 years.

Child

People aged 0 to 15 years (that is, those who have not yet reached their 16th birthday).

Workless household

A household where all members aged 16 years or over are currently economically inactive or unemployed.

Student household

Households where at least one person is aged 16 to 64 years and that contain only people in full-time education aged between 16 and 24 years. Communal establishments (for example, student halls of residence) are not included within the sample frame of the APS datasets. Students living in communal establishments during term-times are instead captured via the parental address.

Workless household (excluding student households)

A workless household excluding those households that contain only people aged between 16 and 24 years and in full-time education.

Unemployed

The definition is specified by the International Labour Organization (ILO). Unemployed people are those without a job who have been actively seeking work in the past four weeks and are available to start work in the next two weeks. This also includes those who are out of work but have found a job and are waiting to start it in the next two weeks.

Economically inactive

People not in employment, who have not been seeking work within the last four weeks and/or are unable to start work within the next two weeks.

Long-term workless household

A subset of workless households defined by adding a condition to capture the duration of inactivity for the adults in the household.

The definition of a long-term workless household is therefore a workless household where all adults (that is, those aged 16 years and over) are currently economically inactive or unemployed (workless), and these adults left their last job at least 12 months ago or have never worked (in a paid job).

Long-term workless household (excluding student households)

A long-term workless household excluding those households containing only people in full-time education aged between 16 and 24 years.

3 . Number of children in long-term workless households decreases

There were 1.0 million children living in long-term workless households in the UK in the period January to December 2018. This represents 8.2% of all children and 78.6% of the 1.3 million children living in all workless households.

The percentage of all children living in long-term workless households decreased by 0.2 percentage points between 2017 and 2018, and it has decreased each year since its peak of 14.0% in 2010 following the last downturn.

Table 1: Children living in long-term workless households, workless households and all households, UK, 2006 to 2018

	Number of children in long-term workless households (thousands)	Percentage of children in long-term workless households	Number of children in workless households (thousands)	Percentage of children in workless households	Total number of children
2006	1,544	13.3	1,828	15.7	11,630
2007	1,554	13.4	1,803	15.5	11,635
2008	1,552	13.3	1,844	15.8	11,662
2009	1,539	13.1	1,930	16.5	11,708
2010	1,645	14.0	1,946	16.6	11,758
2011	1,571	13.3	1,895	16.1	11,801
2012	1,530	12.8	1,800	15.1	11,921
2013	1,441	12.0	1,728	14.4	11,995
2014	1,375	11.4	1,615	13.4	12,091
2015	1,231	10.1	1,472	12.1	12,195
2016	1,110	9.0	1,427	11.6	12,332
2017	1,047	8.4	1,351	10.9	12,439
2018	1,036	8.2	1,318	10.5	12,573

Source: Office for National Statistics – Household Annual Population Survey

The three areas with the lowest percentage of children in long-term workless households were all in the south of England, with 4.7% of children in the South East, 6.2% in the South West and 6.7% in the East of England. The area with the highest percentage of children in long-term workless households in England was the North East at 13.4%. Northern Ireland had the highest percentage in the UK at 13.6%, with Wales at 9.7% and Scotland at 9.2%.

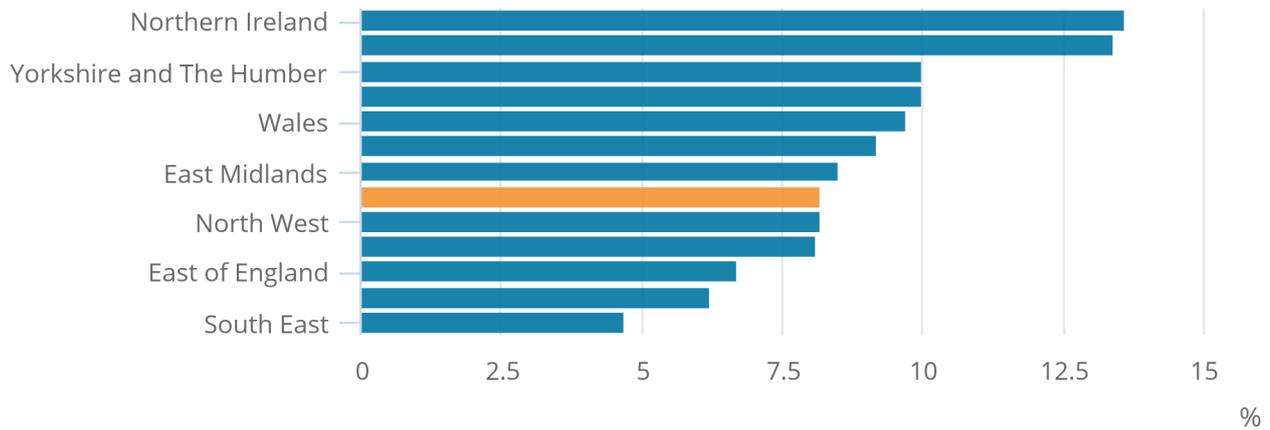
Since 2006, London has seen the greatest fall in the percentage of children in long-term workless households, decreasing 13.4 percentage points from 21.5% to 8.1% in 2018. The regions with the next greatest decrease were the North West at 6.2 percentage points and Wales at 4.7 percentage points.

Figure 1: The South East has the lowest percentage of children living in long-term workless households

Percentage of children living in long-term workless households by region, 2018

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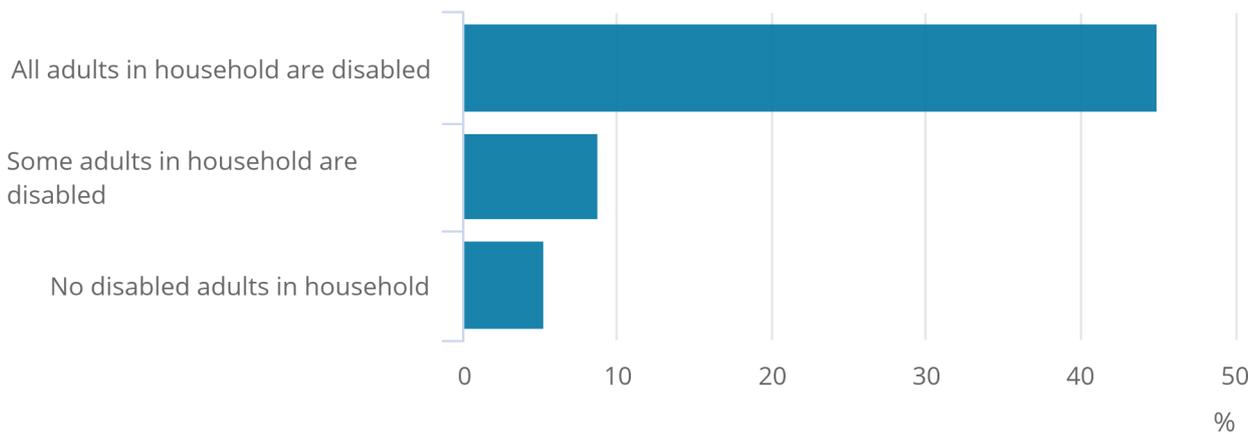
Children living in a household where all adults were disabled were more likely to live in a long-term workless household (45.0%) compared to those living in households where some adults are disabled (8.8%) and households where no adults are disabled (5.2%). However, more children live in long-term workless households with no disabled adults (465,000) compared to those who live in households where all adults are disabled (310,000), owing to the relatively small number of these households.

Figure 2: Children living in households where all adults were disabled were more likely to be living in long-term workless households

Percentage of children in a household, by disability status of adults, living in long-term workless households, 2018

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Percentage of children in a household, by disability status of adults, living in long-term workless households, 2018



Source: Office for National Statistics - Household Annual Population Survey

4 . Quality and methodology

Accuracy and reliability of survey estimates

The figures in this statistical bulletin come from a survey of households. 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. However, 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.

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
- how the output was created
- the users and uses of the data
- the quality of the output including the accuracy of the data

The Annual Population Survey (APS) is derived by using a subset of interviews from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) plus a number of additional interviews. Quality and methodology information reports for the LFS also apply to the APS:

- [Labour Force Survey Quality and Methodology Information \(QMI\) report](#)
- [Labour Force Survey performance and quality monitoring reports](#)

Further information about the LFS and APS is available from the [Labour Force Survey – user guide](#).

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