

Statistical bulletin

# Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), UK: February 2020

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](mailto:labour.supply@ons.gov.uk)  
+44 (0)1633 455070

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# 1 . Main points

- There were an estimated 763,000 young people (aged 16 to 24 years) in the UK who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) in October to December 2019; this was a decrease of 26,000 compared with October to December 2018 and was down 38,000 compared with July to September 2019.
- The percentage of all young people in the UK who were NEET in October to December 2019 was estimated at 11.1%; the proportion was down 0.3 percentage points compared with October to December 2018 and down 0.5 percentage points compared with July to September 2019.
- Of all young people in the UK who were NEET in October to December 2019, an estimated 39.6% were looking for, and available for, work and therefore classified as unemployed; the remainder were either not looking for work and/or not available for work and were classified as economically inactive.

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

There were an estimated 763,000 young people (aged 16 to 24 years) in the UK who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) in October to December 2019. This is close to the lowest level in the series, of 758,000, seen in July to September 2018. The number was down 26,000 when compared with October to December 2018 and the decrease on the quarter, of 38,000, was the largest since October to December 2016.

The total number of people aged 18 to 24 years who were NEET was 699,000, which is the lowest since the series began in October to December 2001.

Of the 763,000 people aged 16 to 24 years who were NEET in October to December 2019, 392,000 were men and 371,000 were women. The annual decrease for women, of 43,000, was the largest since July to September 2017 and the level reached a record low.

In October to December 2019, an estimated 11.1% of all people aged 16 to 24 years were NEET. This is close to the lowest proportion in the series, of 10.9%, seen in July to September 2018. The proportion was down 0.3 percentage points from October to December 2018 and decreased on the quarter by 0.5 percentage points, the largest quarterly decrease since October to December 2016.

The percentage of those aged 18 to 24 years who were NEET was down to a joint record low of 12.7%.

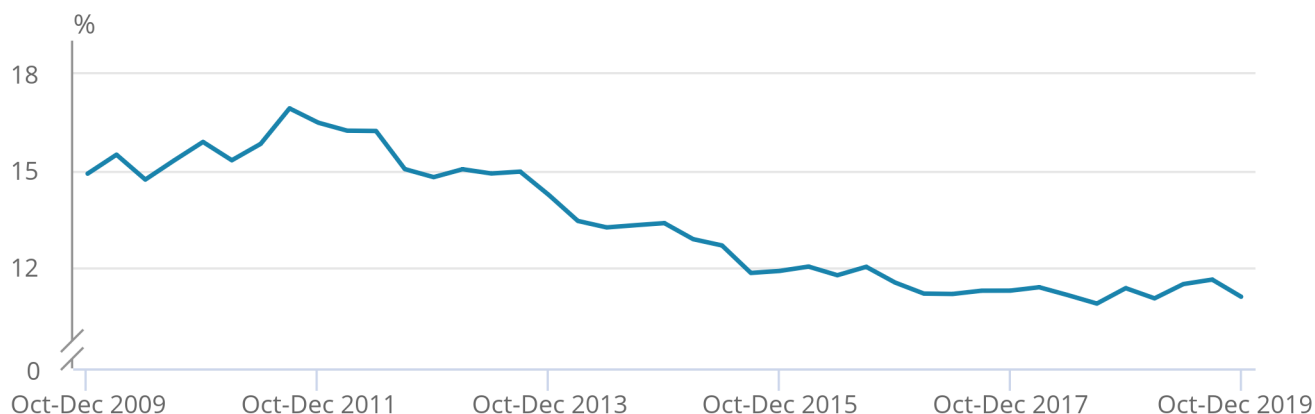
Figure 1 shows the percentage of people aged 16 to 24 years who were NEET over the last 10 years. The percentage had been gradually decreasing since the peak of 16.9% in July to September 2011 but has been relatively flat since the beginning of 2017, averaging 11.2%.

**Figure 1: The percentage of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) had been decreasing since 2011 but has been relatively flat since 2017**

People aged 16 to 24 years NEET as a percentage of all people aged 16 to 24 years, seasonally adjusted, UK, October to December 2009 to October to December 2019

Figure 1: The percentage of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) had been decreasing since 2011 but has been relatively flat since 2017

People aged 16 to 24 years NEET as a percentage of all people aged 16 to 24 years, seasonally adjusted, UK, October to December 2009 to October to December 2019



Source: Office for National Statistics – Labour Force Survey

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

Unemployment measures people without a job who have been actively seeking work within the last four weeks and are available to start work in the next two weeks. In October to December 2019, there were an estimated 302,000 unemployed young people (aged 16 to 24 years) who were not in education, employment or training (NEET), down 13,000 compared with October to December 2018 and down 15,000 compared with July to September 2019.

In October to December 2019, there were an estimated:

- 200,000 unemployed men aged 16 to 24 years who were NEET
- 102,000 unemployed women aged 16 to 24 years who were NEET; the lowest number since records began in October to December 2001

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

Economic inactivity measures 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. In October to December 2019, there were an estimated 461,000 economically inactive young people (aged 16 to 24 years) who were not in education, employment or training (NEET), down 13,000 compared with October to December 2018 and down 23,000 compared with July to September 2019.

In October to December 2019, there were an estimated:

- 192,000 economically inactive men aged 16 to 24 years who were NEET
- 269,000 economically inactive women aged 16 to 24 years who were NEET

## 5 . Young people who are not in education, employment or training data

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

Dataset | Released 27 February 2020

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 27 February 2020

Labour Force Survey sampling variability estimates for young people (aged 16 to 24 years) who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) in the UK.

## 6 . 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 and by sex.

### 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 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.

## 7 . Measuring the data

This statistical bulletin contains estimates for young people 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](#).

An article called [Young people who are NEET \(PDF, 88KB\)](#) providing background information is available. The article explains how missing information for identifying someone as NEET is appropriated based on individual characteristics.

## 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, as listed previously. 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.

More quality and methodology information on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in the [Labour Force Survey \(LFS\) QMI](#).

Further information about the LFS is available from:

- [LFS User Guide](#)
- [LFS Performance and Quality Monitoring Reports](#)

## After EU withdrawal

As the UK leaves the EU, it is important that our statistics continue to be of high quality and are internationally comparable. During the transition period, those UK statistics that align with EU practice and rules will continue to do so in the same way as before 31 January 2020.

After the transition period, we will continue to produce our labour market statistics in line with the UK Statistics Authority's [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) and in accordance with International Labour Organization (ILO) definitions and agreed international statistical guidance.

# 8 . Strengths and limitations

## Accuracy of the statistics: estimating and reporting uncertainty

The figures in this statistical bulletin come from the Labour Force Survey (LFS), a survey of UK 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, but results from sample surveys are always estimates, not precise figures. This means that they are subject to some [uncertainty](#). This can have an impact on how changes in the estimates should be interpreted, especially for short-term comparisons.

We can calculate the level of uncertainty (also called "sampling variability") around a survey estimate by exploring how that estimate would change if we were to draw many survey samples for the same time period instead of just one. This allows us to define a range around the estimate (known as a [confidence interval](#)) and to state how likely it is in practice that the real value the survey is trying to measure lies within that range. Confidence intervals are typically set up so that we can be 95% sure that the true value lies within the range - in which case we refer to a "95% confidence interval".

The total number of people not in education, employment or training (NEET) aged 16 to 24 years for October to December 2019 was estimated at 763,000. This figure had a stated 95% confidence interval of plus or minus 52,000. This means that we can be 95% confident that the true total number of people NEET aged 16 to 24 years for October to December 2019 was between 711,000 and 815,000. However, the best estimate from the survey was that the total number of people NEET aged 16 to 24 years was 763,000.

The percentage of people NEET aged 16 to 24 years for the same period was estimated at 11.1%, with a stated 95% confidence interval of plus or minus 0.8 percentage points. This means that we can be 95% confident that the percentage of people NEET was between 10.3% and 11.9%. Again, the best estimate from the survey was that the percentage of people NEET aged 16 to 24 years was 11.1%.

## Working with uncertain estimates

In general, changes in the numbers (and especially the rates) reported in this statistical bulletin between three-month periods are small and are not usually greater than the level that is explainable by sampling variability. In practice, this means that small, short-term movements in reported rates (for example, within plus or minus 0.3 percentage points) should be treated as indicative and considered alongside medium- and long-term patterns in the series and corresponding movements in administrative sources, where available, to give a fuller picture.

## Seasonal adjustment and uncertainty

Like many economic indicators, the labour market is affected by factors that tend to occur at around the same time every year; for example, school leavers entering the labour market in July and whether Easter falls in March or April. To compare movements other than annual changes in labour market statistics, such as since the previous quarter or since the previous month, the data are seasonally adjusted to remove the effects of seasonal factors and the arrangement of the calendar. Estimates discussed in this statistical bulletin are presented seasonally adjusted. While seasonal adjustment is essential to allow for robust comparisons through time, it is not possible to estimate uncertainty measures for the seasonally adjusted series.

[Dataset table NEET 2](#) shows sampling variabilities for estimates of young people who are NEET derived from the LFS.

## 9 . 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 27 June 2019

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 27 August 2019

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 16 January 2020

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

[NEET estimates for Northern Ireland](#)

Tables | Last updated 29 May 2019

Tables from the Labour Market Report, including not in education, employment or training (NEET).