



Department
for Education

NEET statistics annual brief, England

Technical document

March 2020

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Introduction

This document provides background information on the Department for Education's (DfE) NEET statistics annual brief. It explains concepts used in this publication and the method used to calculate estimates. It provides an overview of the data sources and other relevant information.

Coverage

The data from all sources used in this publication cover young people who reside in England, and are based on the academic age as of 31st August. The publication's underlying data contains individual age data between 16 and 24 years of age as well as summary age groups, 16/17, 16-18, 16-24, 18-24 and 19-24. It also includes labour market status, gender and regional breakdowns.

As a result of user feedback and internal review, from March 2018 DfE changed the periodicity of the England NEET Brief Statistics publication to an annual release to be published in February/March each year following the release of final quarter Labour Force Survey data, relating to the October to December quarter.

[Quarterly NEET estimates for the UK](#) are published by the Office for National Statistics. They differ to the figures in the DfE NEET brief as they are for the whole of the UK, are based on calendar age and are seasonally adjusted.

Data Sources

Labour Force Survey

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) is a survey of households living at private addresses in the UK. Its purpose is to provide information on the UK labour market which can then be used to develop, manage, evaluate and report on labour market policies. In England, the survey is managed by the Social Surveys division of the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

Not in education, employment or training (NEET) and not in education or training (NET) estimates are calculated using a harmonised methodology agreed between ONS, the Department for Education (DfE), the old Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

NEET estimates are calculated by first deriving a variable to distinguish those in education or training (ET) from those not in education or training (NET). Then by cross tabulating the derived ET/NET variable by economic status (in employment, unemployed or economically inactive), a NEET estimate can be calculated.

Full details about the Harmonised NEET Methodology are published in the technical specification: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/201110/Technical_Note_for_ONS_harmonised_measure_of_NEET_Final.pdf

The series provides quarterly estimates of NEET and NET amongst young people from the LFS and the results are not directly comparable with DfE's definitive measure found in the Participation in education and training national statistics release (more information on this below).

The estimates provide data on the trends in NEET and NET for young people aged 16-24 compared to the Participation in education and training statistical release which just covers those aged 16-18. The latter release should be used for the department's definitive estimates for the 16-18 age group, further detail on this release is given below.

Trends in NEET and NET from the quarterly LFS data should be assessed by comparing the current time period with the same time period in the previous year, to account for seasonal effects. For example, October-December figures should not be compared with January-March figures. In addition the NET series should be used as context for any NEET data.

More information about the LFS in general can be found in the ONS user guide: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/specific/labour-market/labour-market-statistics/index.html>

Annual Population Survey

The Annual Population Survey (APS) is a continuous household survey, covering the UK comprising 12 months of survey data.

The APS is not a stand-alone survey; it uses data combined from 2 waves of the main Labour Force Survey (LFS), collected on a local sample boost. Due to boosted sample sizes, the APS allows more robust analysis of sub groups such as by characteristics or lower level geography.

Further information on the APS can be found here:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/methodologies/annualpopulationsurveyapsqmi>

Participation in education, employment or training national statistics release

The [Participation in education, employment or training national statistics](#) release contains definitive estimates for the number and proportion of 16 to 18 year olds participating in education, training and employment and of those NEET in England. The estimates relate to a snapshot of activities at the end of the calendar year.

Information is drawn together from various post-16 data sources to give a coherent and comprehensive picture of participation, including schools, further education, work-based learning and higher education.

| | |
|---|--|
| The primary sources for participation and NEET estimates are: | The Schools' Census Pupil Level Annual Schools' Census The Individualised Learner Record (ILR) Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Higher Education Students Early Statistics (HESES) Labour Force Survey Mid-year estimates and projections of population from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) |
|---|--|

The key analyses are by age, gender, type of learning, institution type, labour market status and highest qualification being studied.

These are the Department for Education's definitive measures of participation for 16 to 18 year olds, and sets recent changes in the context of historical trends. These measures are used to monitor progress against the Department's objectives of raising participation and reducing the number of young people NEET (not in education, employment or training).

For further information please see the technical document alongside the [Participation in Education, Training and Employment by 16-18 year olds in England: 2018 statistical release](#).

Other published sources

Client Caseload Information System (CCIS) Regional NEET

The CCIS figures are an estimate of the number and proportion of 16 and 17 year olds who are NEET in each local authority in England.

The estimates relate to a 3 month average snapshot estimate of the regional NEET rate taken from the Local Authority CCIS data.

These estimates are not directly comparable to the LFS or Participation statistics release. The estimates depend on the quality of each local authority's data collection. The data only includes young people who are known to their local authority (usually those who were educated in government-funded schools).

Estimates of NEET in the CCIS data are reported alongside proportions whose current activity is not known to incentivise local authorities to ensure all their young people are tracked.

For more information go to the NEET data by local authority webpage:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/neet-and-participation-local-authority-figures>

Note: Local Authority NEET figures post 2018 are published at the link above. These statistics cover academic age 16 and 17 only. Data for previous years can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/neet-data-by-local-authority-2012-16-to-18-year-olds-not-in-education-employment-or-training>.

Definitions

| | |
|---|--|
| A person is considered to be in education or training if any of the following apply | <p>Enrolled on an education course and are still attending or waiting for term to (re)start</p> <p>Doing an apprenticeship</p> <p>On a government supported employment or training programme</p> <p>Working or studying towards a qualification, or</p> <p>Had job-related training or education in the last 4 weeks</p> |
| In employment* | All people in some form of paid work, including those working part-time |
| Unemployed* | People who have been looking for work in the past 4 weeks and who are available to start work within the next 2 weeks |
| Economically inactive* | <p>People who have not been looking for work and/or who are not available to start work.</p> <p>This includes those not looking for work because they are students and those who are looking after dependants at home</p> |
| NEET | <p>Anybody who is not in any of the forms of education or training listed above and who is not in employment is considered to be NEET.</p> <p>As a result, a person identified as NEET will always be either unemployed or economically inactive.</p> |

*The definitions of labour market status are based on those recommended by the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

The NEET brief includes a time series on the economic activity of those NEET using variable ILODEFR - Basic economic activity (ILO definition):

- (1) In employment
- (2) ILO unemployed
- (3) Inactive
- (4) Under 16

The variable INECAC05 is used to classify those whose economic activity was reported as 'Inactive' in ILODERR. The following table shows classification of those inactive:

| Inactive: looking after family/home' | Inactive: long-term or temporarily sick | Inactive: other reason |
|--|---|--|
| 7 Inactive - seeking, unavailable, looking after family, home | 8 Inactive - seeking, unavailable, temporarily sick or injured | 6 Inactive - seeking, unavailable, student |
| 14 Inactive - not seeking, would like work, looking after family, home | 9 Inactive - seeking, unavailable, long-term sick or disabled | 10 Inactive - seeking, unavailable, other reason |
| 25 Inactive - not seeking, not like work, looking after family, home | 15 Inactive - not seeking, would like work, temporarily sick or injured | 11 Inactive - seeking, unavailable, no reason given |
| | 16 Inactive - not seeking, would like work, long term sick or disabled | 12 Inactive - not seeking, would like work, waiting results of job application |
| | 26 Inactive - not seeking, not like work, temporarily sick or injured | 13 Inactive - not seeking, would like work, student |
| | 27 Inactive - not seeking, not like work, long term sick or disabled | 17 Inactive - not seeking, would like work, believes no jobs available |
| | | 18 Inactive - not seeking, would like work, not yet started looking |
| | | 19 Inactive - not seeking, would like work, does not need or want employment |
| | | 20 Inactive - not seeking, would like work, retired from paid work |
| | | 21 Inactive - not seeking, would like work, other reason |
| | | 22 Inactive - not seeking, would like work, no reason given |
| | | 23 Inactive - not seeking, not like work, waiting results of job application |
| | | 24 Inactive - not seeking, not like work, student |
| | | 28 Inactive - not seeking, not like work, believes no jobs available |
| | | 29 Inactive - not seeking, not like work, not yet started looking |
| | | 30 Inactive - not seeking, not like work, does not need or want employment |
| | | 31 Inactive - not seeking, not like work, retired from paid work |
| | | 32 Inactive - not seeking, not like work, other reason |
| | | 33 Inactive - not seeking, not like work, no reason given |

The APS person data from 2012 has been used to look at the health conditions of 16-24 year olds NEET. As explained in the data sources section, the APS has been used as boosted sample sizes allow more robust analysis of sub groups.

The variable 'HEALTH - Main health problem'¹ has been used and categorised in line with ONS Nomis² health conditions as below:

| NOMIS category | APSP 'HEALTH' variable |
|---|---|
| Problems or disabilities connected with arms, legs, hands, feet, back or neck | (01) Problems or disabilities (including arthritis or rheumatism) connected with... arms or hands (02)legs or feet (03)back or neck |
| Difficulty in seeing or hearing | (04) Difficulty in seeing (while wearing spectacles or contact lenses) (05) Difficulty in hearing (06) A speech impediment |
| Blood or circulatory problems, stomach, liver, kidney or digestive problems, diabetes | (09) Heart, blood pressure or blood circulation problems (10) Stomach, liver kidney or digestive problems (11) Diabetes |
| Depression, learning problems, mental problems and nervous disorders | (12) Depression, bad nerves or anxiety (14) Severe or specific learning difficulties (mental handicap) (15) Mental illness, or suffer from phobia, panics or other |
| Skin conditions, epilepsy, other progressive illnesses & other health problems | (07) Severe disfigurement, skin conditions, allergies (08) Chest or breathing problems, asthma, bronchitis (13) Epilepsy (16) Progressive illness not included elsewhere (e.g. cancer, multiple sclerosis, symptomatic HIV, Parkinson's disease, muscular dystrophy) (17) Other health problems or disabilities |

Time series compatibility

The first LFS in the UK was conducted in 1973 and the survey was carried out every two years in the spring quarter (March-May) until 1983. Between 1984 and 1991 the survey was carried out annually and consisted of two elements: a quarterly survey of approximately 15,000 private households, conducted in Great Britain throughout the year and a "boost" survey in the spring quarter between March and May, of over 44,000 private households in Great Britain and 5,200 households in Northern Ireland. In 1992 the sample in Great Britain was increased to cover 60,000 households every quarter enabling quarterly publication of LFS estimates.

Prior to spring 2000, the 'QULNOW' variable (currently working/study towards qualification indicator), was not fully populated. A comparable time series is therefore only available from Q2 2000. However, it should be noted that due to changes in the LFS questionnaire over time, different versions of syntax are required to create this comparable time series.

¹ HEALTH is the main health condition reported from the HEAL question. The HEAL question is only asked for those who responded 'Yes' to LINGLST: 'Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expecting to last 12 months or more?'

² Nomis is a service provided by the Office for National Statistics, ONS, to give free access to the most detailed and up-to-date UK labour market statistics from official sources. (<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>)

Reweighting

Labour Force Survey (LFS) datasets are routinely reweighted in line with population estimates. In February 2019, a new weighting variable was introduced, PWT18, to LFS datasets from July - September 2011 onwards. More information about the impact of the reweighting on the NEET and NET rates is available in an additional spreadsheet published alongside the [2018 annual brief](#).

The 2018 reweighting project completed by the Office for National Statistics incorporated the latest mid-year 2017 population estimates published in June 2018; the 2016 based sub-national population projections published in May 2018; and the revised mid-year population estimates back to mid-2012 published in March 2018 (as LFS estimates are created by interpolating monthly population estimates between mid-year points this also means that LFS population estimates back to mid-2011 are also revised).

Sampling variability

Surveys, such as the LFS, provide estimates of population characteristics rather than exact measures. In principle, many random samples could be drawn and each would give different results, due to the fact that each sample would be made up of different people, who would give different answers to the questions asked. The spread of these results is the sampling variability, which generally reduces with increasing sample size. For example, with a 95% confidence interval, it is expected that in 95% of the survey samples, the resulting confidence interval will contain the true value that would be obtained by surveying the whole population.

Confidence intervals based on simple random sampling are presented in the quarterly brief to give an approximation of the sampling variability.

Statistical significance

If a comparison between two estimates is statistically significant, we can be 95% sure that the change reflects reality and is not a result of sampling variability.

Rounding

Numbers produced purely from the LFS are rounded to the nearest thousand as they are estimates based on survey data and weighted to population estimates. Numbers published within the participation statistical series are rounded to the nearest hundred as they are based largely on administrative sources. Because of rounding, totals in text and in tables may not always equal the sum of their component parts. Similarly, differences quoted in text may not always be the same as differences shown in tables. Where any number is shown as zero the original figure was zero. Where a number rounds to zero, the figure has been replaced by a '-'. This suppression and rounding is consistent with Departmental statistical policy.

Percentages are presented to one decimal place. Changes in percentages are calculated on unrounded data therefore percentage point changes quoted in the text may not always be the same as differences calculated from published tables.

Underlying data provided alongside publications

The following underlying data files have been published alongside the NEET brief tables:

| File name | Content |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| NEET_and_NET_estimates_from_the_LFS | Quarterly time series from Q2 2000. National NEET and NET estimates for 16-24 year olds in England broken down by (academic) age. Gender breakdowns for all summary age groups. |

| File name | Content |
|--|--|
| | <p>Regional and labour market status estimates for the summary age groups 16-24, 18-24 and 19-24 year olds.</p> <p>Detailed labour market status and reason by gender for summary age group 16-24</p> <p>Corresponding 95% confidence intervals.</p> <p>Estimates are all unrounded.</p> |
| NEET_Primary_health_condition_estimates_from_the_APS | <p>Annual time series from 2012.</p> <p>National NEET and NET estimates for 16-24 year olds broken down by health condition.</p> |

Please see accompanying underlying data metadata specification document for further information.

This data is released under the terms of the Open Government License and is intended to meet at least 3 stars for Open Data.

Uses of data

The main use of these statistics is to provide Ministers, government departments and the wider public a comprehensive picture of the latest trends in NET and NEET for ages 16-24 across the range of sources available.

Revisions

We do not plan to make any revisions to this publication. If we later discover that a revision is necessary, this will be made in accordance with our revisions policy. However, figures included in this release from the Participation in education and training national statistics publication are provisional for end 2017. When the figures are finalised for the previous year, these revisions will be reflected in future NEET Statistics briefs. In addition, the LFS is periodically re-weighted, which affects historical estimates. When such re-weighting takes place, a revised historical series will be reflected in the next NEET Statistics Annual Brief, but previous editions of the Brief will not be retrospectively revised. Hence, for the latest historical series only the most recent publication should be used.

Publication timetable

| Data | Period Covered | Published |
|--|----------------------|---|
| NEET Annual Brief | Jan-Mar (Q1) | Approximately 6 weeks after the Q4 reporting period |
| | Apr-Jun (Q2) | |
| | Jul-Sep (Q3) | |
| | Oct-Dec (Q4) | |
| 16-18 Participation statistical release | End of year snapshot | Following June |

Further information is available

| | |
|----------|--|
| Wales | <p>The Welsh Assembly Government (WG) publishes an annual release which is produced in a similar way to DfE's Participation release. The Participation of Young People in Education and the Labour Market is regarded as the definitive measure of NEET estimates in Wales. It covers academic age 16-18 and 19-24.</p> <p>The WG also publishes NEET figures based on the Annual Population Survey (APS). It covers academic age 16-18 and 19-24.</p> |
| Scotland | <p>The Scottish Government (SG) publishes an annual release based on the Annual Population Survey (APS) Regional employment patterns in Scotland: statistics from the Annual Population Survey 2018. This provides national NEET estimates that cover actual age 16-19.</p> <p>The SG also publishes Annual school leaver statistics which are used to give the proportion of young people in 'positive destinations'. These estimates include some young people in part-time education. The coverage is actual age 16-19.</p> |
| ONS | <p>ONS National Statistics: UK Labour Market, February 2020: Monthly UK Labour Force Survey (LFS) statistics for young people not in full-time education and not in employment.</p> <p>Table AO6: Educational status and labour market status for people aged 16 to 24 (not seasonally adjusted). This table shows estimates for people in full-time education and people not in full-time education by labour market status, roughly equivalent to NEET (but some young people in part-time education are also included).</p> <p>ONS National Statistics: Young People not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs): UK level quarterly statistics based on the Labour Force Survey (LFS). The definition of NEET corresponds to that used in this DfE NEET release, however ONS estimates are seasonally adjusted meaning quarter on quarter comparisons can be made. In addition, DfE estimates for England are based on academic age whilst ONS estimates are based on calendar age.</p> |
| OECD | <p>The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) publishes annual NEET estimates. Their Education at a Glance UK country note publication covers young people aged 15-19 and 15-29 in the UK.</p> |

Feedback and user engagement

We would welcome feedback on any aspect of this publication at Post16.STATISTICS@education.gov.uk.



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