

Article

Coronavirus and employment for those aged 70 years and over in the UK: October 2018 to September 2019

An analysis of the industries and occupations that those aged 70 years or over work in, with data tables looking at a wider range of characteristics.

Contact:
Tom Evans
policy.evidence.analysis@ons.
gov.uk
+44 (0)1633 651833

Release date:
24 March 2020

Next release:
To be announced

Table of contents

1. [Main points](#)
2. [Employment in the crop and animal production and hunting industry had the highest share of workers aged 70 years or over](#)
3. [Higher proportions of workers aged 70 years or over were employed in agricultural occupations](#)
4. [Data and methodology](#)

1 . Main points

- In the UK, there are around 528,000 people in employment aged 70 years or over, representing 1.6% of all people in employment aged 16 years or over.
- Industries and occupations covering agriculture tended to have the greatest share of older workers, with 11.4% of workers in the crop and animal production and hunting industry being aged 70 years or over.
- The creative, arts and entertainment industry and the Chief Executive and Senior Officials occupation group also had high shares of workers aged 70 years or over.
- There was more variety in those occupations and industries with the lowest shares of workers aged 70 years or over.
- The data tables accompanying this release show the shares of employment for those aged 70 years or over, 65 years or over and 60 years or over by industry, occupation, sector (public versus private), sex, region and ethnic group.

2 . Employment in the crop and animal production and hunting industry had the highest share of workers aged 70 years or over

Throughout this analysis, we consider the proportion of the workforce in a given industry or occupation group that were aged 70 years or over between October 2018 and September 2019. For the UK labour market as a whole, 1.6% of people in employment are aged 70 years or over. Comparing against this figure gives us insights into which industries and occupations are most reliant on older workers.

In the year ending September 2019, there were approximately 300,000 adults aged 16 years or over employed in the crop and animal production and hunting industry in the UK. Around 1 in 10 (11.4%) adults employed in this industry were aged 70 years or over; this is the highest proportion observed across all industries. This was followed by the fishing and aquaculture industry, which had approximately 16,000 people employed aged 16 years or over, of which 6.9% were aged 70 years or over.

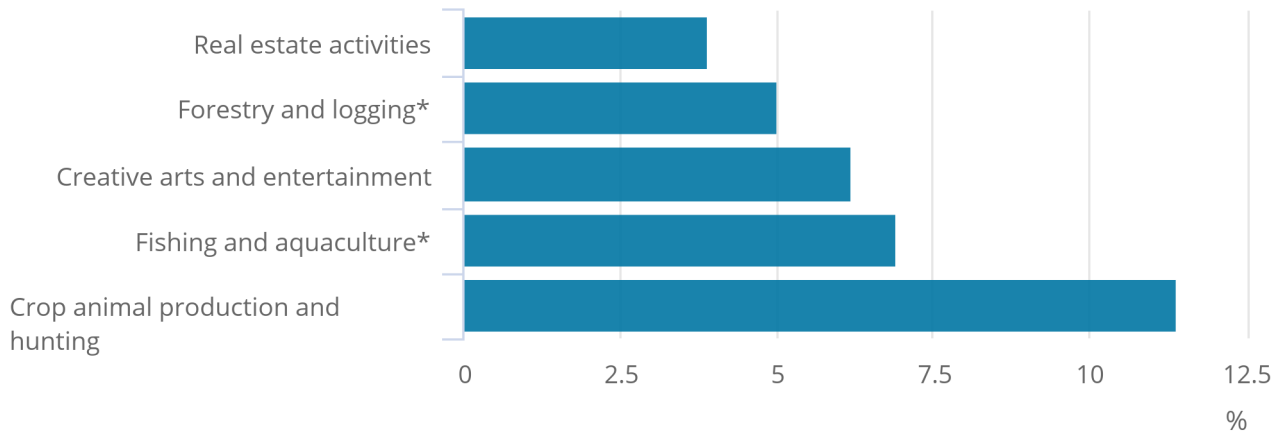
Other industries with higher shares of workers aged 70 years or over were creative, arts and entertainment (6.2%), forestry and logging (5.0%), and real estate activities (3.9%) (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Agricultural industries had the greatest share of workers aged 70 years or over

Top five industry divisions by the share of the workforce aged 70 years or over, UK, October 2018 to September 2019

Figure 1: Agricultural industries had the greatest share of workers aged 70 years or over

Top five industry divisions by the share of the workforce aged 70 years or over, UK, October 2018 to September 2019



Source: Office for National Statistics – Annual Population Survey

Notes:

1. *These industries have low sample sizes of adults aged 70 years or over. Estimates should therefore be treated with caution.

Conversely, the manufacturing of other transport industry had approximately 200,000 employees aged 16 years or over, of which 0.2% were aged 70 years or over. This industry had the lowest proportion of workers aged 70 years or over in the year ending September 2019 and was among the five industries with the lowest proportion of employees aged 70 years or over.

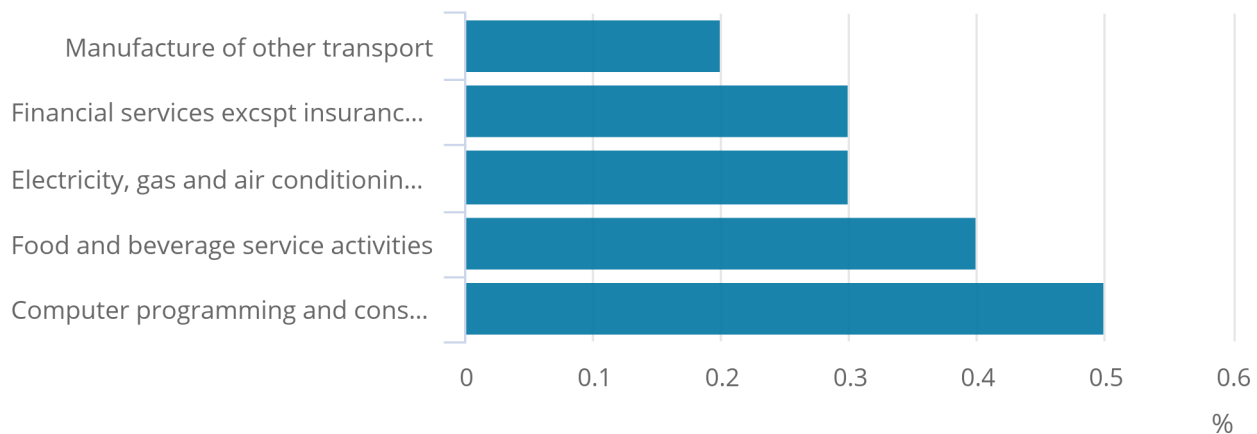
The other industries in the bottom five were financial services except insurance and pension funding (0.3%), electricity, gas and air conditioning supply (0.3%), food and beverage service activities (0.4%), and computer programming and consultancy (0.5%) industries.

Figure 2: Industries with the lowest share of workers aged 70 years or over came from a variety of different sectors

Bottom five industry divisions by the share of the workforce aged 70 years or over, UK, October 2018 to September 2019

Figure 2: Industries with the lowest share of workers aged 70 years or over came from a variety of different sectors

Bottom five industry divisions by the share of the workforce aged 70 years or over, UK, October 2018 to September 2019



Source: Office for National Statistics – Annual Population Survey

Notes:

1. *These industries have low sample sizes of adults aged 70 years or over. Estimates should therefore be treated with caution.
2. A full list of industries can be found in Table 1 of the accompanying data tables, along with additional age groups (aged 60 years or over and aged 65 years or over).

3 . Higher proportions of workers aged 70 years or over were employed in agricultural occupations

In the year ending September 2019, there were approximately 81,000 adults aged 16 years or over employed in the elementary agricultural occupations. In contrast, around 1 in 10 (9.7%) were aged 70 years or over; this is the highest proportion of all occupation groups. This was followed by agricultural and related trades occupations, which had around 379,000 employees aged 16 years or over, of which 7.8% were aged 70 years or over.

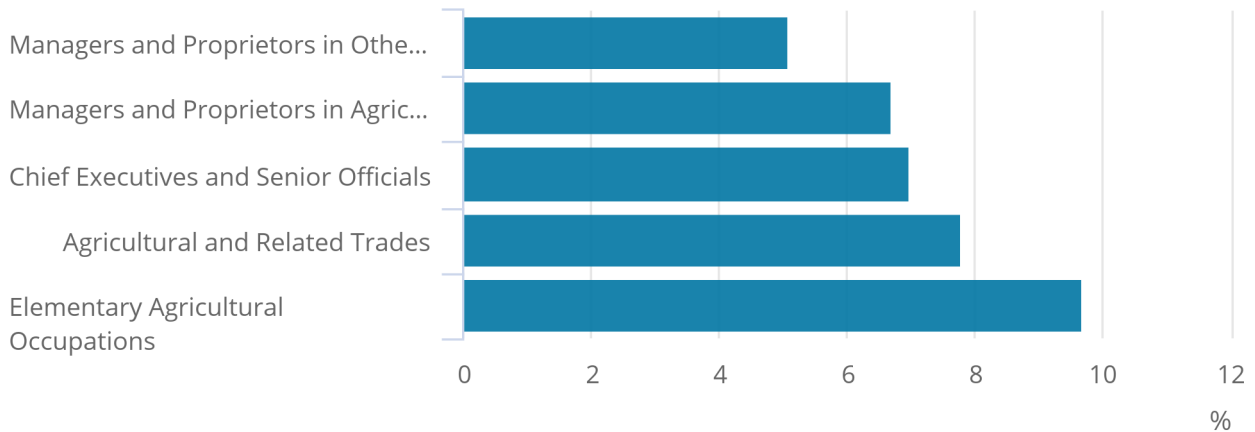
Of the five occupation groups with the greatest proportion of workers aged 70 years or over, the managers and proprietors in other services occupation group had the highest number of total employees, at around 624,000 (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Agricultural occupations tended to have the greatest share of workers aged 70 years or over

Top five minor occupation groups by the share of the workforce aged 70 years or over, UK, October 2018 to September 2019

Figure 3: Agricultural occupations tended to have the greatest share of workers aged 70 years or over

Top five minor occupation groups by the share of the workforce aged 70 years or over, UK, October 2018 to September 2019



Source: Office for National Statistics – Annual Population Survey

Notes:

1. *These occupations have low sample sizes of adults aged 70 years and over. Estimates should therefore be treated with caution.

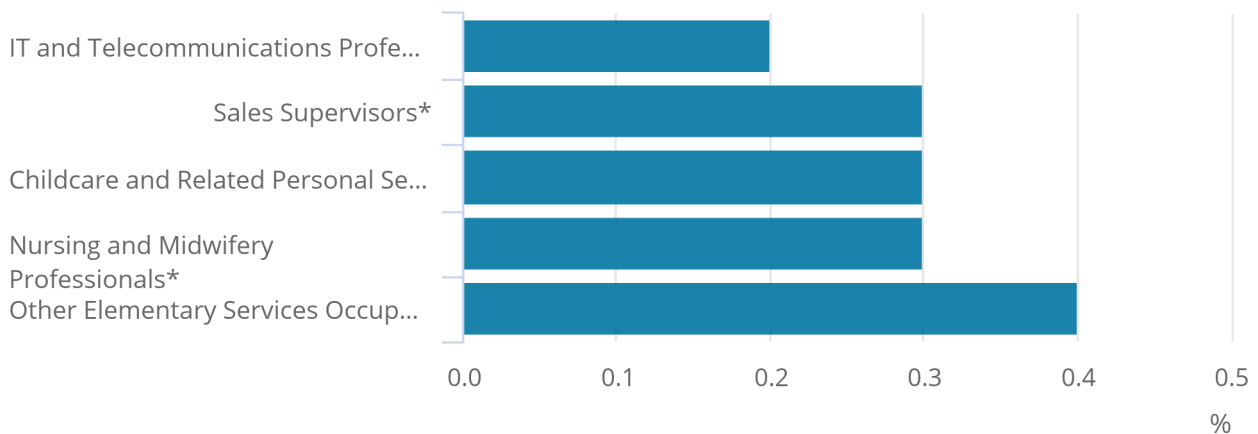
In the year ending September 2019, approximately 1,045,000 adults aged 16 years or over were employed in IT and telecommunications occupations, where 0.2% of these workers were aged 70 years or over. This occupation group had the lowest proportion of workers aged 70 years or over compared with all other occupations. This group was followed by nursing and midwifery, childcare and related personal services, and sales supervisor occupations, where 0.3% of workers employed were aged 70 years or over. Of these, sales supervisor occupations had the smallest number of employees aged 70 years or over, at 180,000 (Figure 4).

Figure 4: There was variety in the occupation groups that had the lowest share of workers aged 70 years or over

Bottom five minor occupation groups by the share of the workforce aged 70 years or over, UK, October 2018 to September 2019

Figure 4: There was variety in the occupation groups that had the lowest share of workers aged 70 years or over

Bottom five minor occupation groups by the share of the workforce aged 70 years or over, UK, October 2018 to September 2019



Source: Office for National Statistics – Annual Population Survey

Notes:

1. *These occupations have low sample sizes of adults aged 70 years or over. Estimates should therefore be treated with caution.
2. A full list of occupations can be found in Table 2 of the accompanying data tables, along with additional age groups (aged 60 years or over and aged 65 years or over).

4 . Data and methodology

The analysis presented here has been compiled using the October 2018 to September 2019 Annual Population Survey (APS) dataset. Differences between estimates for specific industries or occupations have not been tested for [statistical significance](#). Caution is therefore advised when comparing between industries or occupations, particularly where differences appear small. In the charts and accompanying data tables, we have indicated those estimates that are based on small sample sizes and are therefore likely to be subject to greater [uncertainty](#).

For industry breakdowns, we have used the two-digit industry division level of the [Standard Industrial Classification 2007 \(SIC 2007\)](#). For occupation breakdowns, we have used the three-digit minor occupation groups from the [Standard Occupation Classification 2010 \(SOC 2010\)](#). In both cases, we opted for the greatest level of detail that did not result in large numbers of suppressed or unreliable estimates.

