

Statistical bulletin

Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), UK: February 2026

Estimates of young people (aged 16 to 24 years) who are not in education, employment or training, by age and sex. These are official statistics in development.

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Release date:
26 February 2026

Next release:
28 May 2026

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1 . Main points

- Estimates from January to March 2025 include the full effect of the improvements in Labour Force Survey (LFS) data collection and sampling methods introduced from January 2024; however, estimates may be subject to the effect of further ongoing improvements.
- An increased amount of volatility will remain in the estimates from mid-2023 and throughout 2024, so we would advise caution when interpreting change involving those periods.
- Estimates such as young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) will likely continue to see greater volatility than more aggregated measures because of smaller population subgroups compared with the headline rates, despite improved sample sizes.
- LFS estimates are weighted to 2022 mid-year population estimates for periods from January to March 2019; the number of young people aged 16 to 24 years not in education, employment or training (NEET) estimates have a discontinuity at this point.
- There was an increase in the number of young people aged 16 to 24 years who were NEET in October to December 2025; the total is currently estimated to be 957,000, up from 946,000 in July to September 2025.

The ongoing challenges with response rates and levels mean that LFS-based labour market statistics will be badged as [official statistics in development](#) until further review. Read more in [Section 6: Data Sources and Quality](#)

2 . Labour Force Survey quality

Increased volatility of Labour Force survey (LFS) estimates, resulting from smaller achieved sample sizes, means that estimates of change should be treated with additional caution.

Alongside our labour market publication in January 2026, we published our [Labour Force Survey quality update article](#). The article provides users with information about current response rates and known biases in LFS data, to help them better understand the current quality of the data.

Estimates from January to March 2025 include the full effect of the improvements in LFS data collection and sampling methods introduced from January 2024. However, since then we have increased the number of interviewers for the LFS, which has continued to increase the number of responses to the survey. Consequently, estimates may be subject to the effect of these further improvements, which may have an ongoing impact on the survey. An increased volatility will remain in the LFS estimates for mid-2023 and throughout 2024, so we would advise additional caution when interpreting survey change measures.

As stated in our quality update article, detailed estimates will continue to see greater volatility compared with more aggregated measures. However, this has always been a feature of LFS-based analysis. The lower achieved response level for the latest period, compared with before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, will make this volatility more acute.

For example, we can consider estimates of redundancies or estimates of young people not in employment, education or training. Both concepts focus on much smaller population subgroups compared with the headline rates. Therefore, both are more vulnerable to the effects of higher sampling variability, despite improved sample sizes.

3 . Total young people who were not in education, employment or training (NEET)

An estimated 12.8% of all people aged 16 to 24 years in the UK were not in education, employment or training (NEET) in October to December 2025. This is up 0.1 percentage points compared with July to September 2025, and down 0.4 percentage points on the year.

An estimated 13.3% of young men (down 0.1 percentage points on the quarter) and 12.2% of young women (up 0.3 percentage points on the quarter) were NEET.

There were 957,000 young people who were NEET in total, an increase of 11,000 on the quarter. This increase was largely caused by young women, with an increase of 13,000 on the quarter, while young men saw a decrease of 2,000. Of the total number of young people who were NEET, 510,000 were young men and 448,000 were young women.

The total number of people aged 18 to 24 years who were NEET was 891,000, up 11,000 on the previous quarter.

The percentage of all those aged 18 to 24 years who were NEET was 15.2%, which again was up 0.1 percentage points on the quarter and down 0.3 percentage points on the year.

Figure 1: The percentage of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) increased over the quarter (July to September 2025) [Note 1]

People aged 16 to 24 years who are NEET, as a percentage of all people aged 16 to 24 years, by age, seasonally adjusted, UK, January to March 2019 to October to December 2025

Figure 1: The percentage of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) increased over the quarter (July to September 2025) [Note 1]

People aged 16 to 24 years who are NEET, as a percentage of all people aged 16 to 24 years, by age, seasonally adjusted, UK, January to March 2019 to October to December 2025



Source: Labour Force Survey from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Increased volatility of Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimates, resulting from smaller achieved sample sizes, means that estimates of change should be treated with additional caution.

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

There was an estimated 411,000 young people NEET aged 16 to 24 years who were unemployed in October to December 2025. This was up 45,000 from July to September 2025, and up 19,000 from October to December 2024.

An estimated 266,000 of these unemployed young people NEET were young men, and 145,000 were young women. The number of NEET men aged 16 to 24 years who were unemployed increased by 28,000 from July to September 2025, while the number of NEET women aged 16 to 24 years who were unemployed increased by 17,000 on the quarter.

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

There were an estimated 547,000 economically inactive young people aged 16 to 24 years who were NEET in October to December 2025. This was down 34,000 on the quarter from July to September 2025, and down 33,000 on the year from October to December 2024.

The number of young men who were NEET and economically inactive was 244,000 and the corresponding number of young women was 303,000. The total decrease of 34,000 on the quarter was largely caused by young men, who saw a decrease of 30,000 from July to September 2025, while young women aged 16 to 24 years who were NEET and economically inactive decreased by 3,000.

Subnational not in education, employment or training (NEET) estimates

We do not publish subnational estimates for people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). These estimates can be accessed by following the links in [Section 7: Related links](#).

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

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

Dataset | Released 26 February 2026

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

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

Dataset | Released 26 February 2026

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

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 they:

- are enrolled on an education course and are still attending or waiting for term to start or restart
- are doing an apprenticeship
- are on a government-supported employment or training programme
- are working or studying towards a qualification
- 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 previously listed and not in employment is considered to be NEET. As a result, 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 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 in our guide to Labour Market Statistics.

6 . Data sources and quality

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 [SDGs reporting platform](#).

Background information that explains how missing information for identifying someone as NEET is appropriated based on individual characteristics can be found in our [Young people not in education, employment or training \(NEET\), UK: May 2022 methodology](#)

Official statistics in development

These statistics are labelled as "official statistics in development". Until September 2023, these were called "experimental statistics". Read more about the change in our [Guide to official statistics in development](#).

The ongoing challenges with response rates and levels mean that Labour Force Survey (LFS) based labour market statistics are now badged as [official statistics in development](#) until further review. This is also in line with the [letter from the Office for Statistics Regulation \(OSR\)](#), stating that LFS statistics should not be published as accredited official statistics until OSR has reviewed them.

We are continuing to improve the quality of the LFS, building on our work to date. The achieved sample, including imputed cases (the dataset size), has increased from 75,757 individuals in July to September 2025, to 77,927 individuals in October to December 2025. This is shown in our [LFS performance and quality monitoring report: October to December 2025 methodology](#). We advise using these statistics with caution while this work continues, particularly when interpreting change in the LFS, and we encourage users to make use of a wide range of data sources where possible.

We are transforming how we collect and produce the LFS data to improve the quality of these statistics. Our [Labour market transformation - update on progress and plans: November 2025 article](#) provides an update on the transformation of labour market statistics.

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

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is responsible for NEET statistics for the UK, published in 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 governments for each of the other countries. There is further information on the availability of subnational estimates of young people who are NEET in [Section 7: Related links](#).

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Read more about how the labour market data sources are affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in our [Coronavirus and the effects on UK labour market statistics article](#).

For a comparison of our labour market data sources and the main differences, read our [Comparison of our labour market data sources methodology](#).

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 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.

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.

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Strengths and limitations

The figures in this bulletin come from the LFS, which gathers information from a sample of households across the UK, rather than from the whole population. The sample is designed to be as accurate as possible, given practical limitations. Results from sample surveys are always estimates and not precise figures. This can have an impact on how changes in the estimates should be interpreted. For more information on sampling, see [Section 2 of our Uncertainty and how we measure it for our surveys methodology](#).

As the sample gets smaller, the variability of the estimates gets larger. Estimates for small groups, which are based on small subsets of the LFS sample, are less reliable and tend to be more volatile than for larger aggregated groups.

In general, changes in the numbers (and especially the rates) reported in this bulletin between quarters are small and are not usually greater than the level that can be explained by sampling variability. Short-term movements in reported rates should be considered alongside longer-term patterns in the series and corresponding movements in other sources, to give a fuller picture.

Our [Sampling variability dataset](#) shows sampling variabilities for estimates of young people who are NEET derived from the LFS.

7 . Related links

[NEET estimates for England](#)

Collection | Last updated 26 June 2025

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 26 August 2025

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

[NEET estimates for Wales](#)

Statistics and research | Last updated 29 January 2026

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

[NEET estimates for Northern Ireland](#)

Tables | Last updated 26 February 2026

Tables from the Labour Market Report, including Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET)

8 . Cite this statistical bulletin

Office for National Statistics (ONS), published 26 February 2026, ONS website, statistical bulletin, [Young people not in education, employment or training \(NEET\), UK: February 2026](#)