

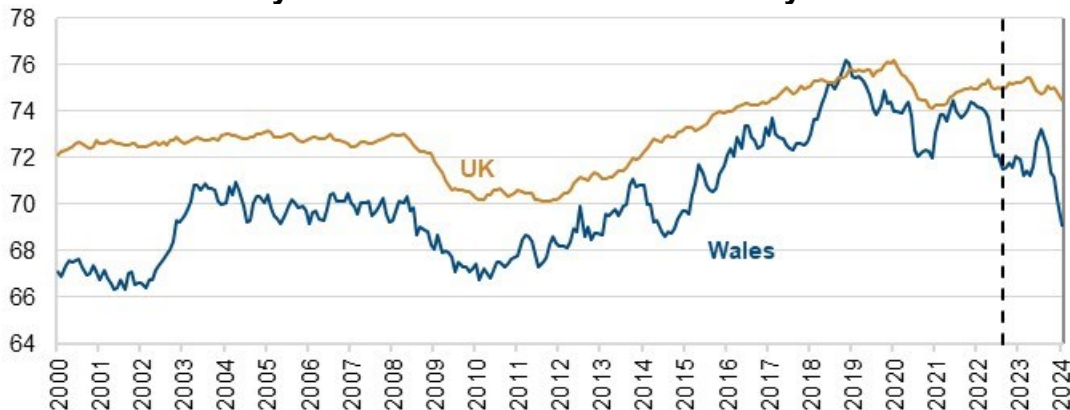
18 April 2024
SB 17/2024

Labour Market Overview, April 2024

Key points for December 2023 to February 2024

- The employment rate in Wales was 69.1% (approximately 1.41 million). This is down 2.3 percentage points on the quarter and down 2.8 percentage points on the year.
- The unemployment rate in Wales was 3.7% (approximately 54,800 people). This is up 0.5 percentage points on the quarter and up 0.3 percentage points on the year.
- The economic inactivity rate in Wales was 28.1% (approximately 535,100 people). This is up 1.9 percentage points on the quarter and up 2.7 percentage points on the year.

Figure 1: Employment rate (percentage of population age 16-64), 3 months to February 2000 to the 3 months to February 2024



Description of Figure 1: A line chart showing the employment rate in Wales and the UK from 1999 onwards. During this time period, the employment rate in Wales has generally remained lower than the UK. Both the rates in Wales and the UK have increased overall since 1999. Data for the period July to September 2022 onwards are not comparable with previous periods due to a discontinuity in the time series following a reweighting of the data.

Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

Other data sources

Other data sources and indicators are also presented in this report to provide a more complete picture.

- Early estimates for March 2024 indicate that the number of paid employees in Wales was unchanged over the month at 1.32 million.
- The claimant count now (March 2024) stands at 61,500, a decrease of 0.8% compared to the same month in the previous year. This is a rate of 3.7%, unchanged over the same period.

About this bulletin

This monthly bulletin is a compendium publication that brings together the latest key statistics relating to the Welsh labour market.

Key supporting material:

[Welsh Economy in Numbers](#)

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Key labour market (LFS) data

ONS published reweighted LFS estimates for Wales in February 2024 after pausing the LFS based estimates in September 2023 following a decrease in data quality. The data has been reweighted from July to September 2022, resulting in a step change in the data, which means data is only directly comparable from this period onwards. Comparisons with periods prior to July to September 2022 are not strictly valid due to this discontinuity in the time series. The full impact of this reweighting is detailed in the article 'Impact of reweighting on Labour Force Survey key indicators in Wales', available in the [February 2024 Labour Market Overview headline](#).

The ONS have highlighted that the challenges with maintaining response rates for the LFS continue to affect data quality despite the reweighting of the estimates. LFS-based labour market statistics will be labelled as official statistics in development until further review and we continue to recommend caution when interpreting this data.

The LFS is a sample survey and, as such, estimates obtained from it are subject to sampling variability. If we drew many samples, each would give a different result. Please note statistical significance and confidence intervals are only available for headline labour market indicators.

Table 1 shows the variability of the estimates, quarterly change and annual change using 95% confidence intervals. It is expected that in 95% of samples the range would contain the true value. If none of the reported changes over the year or the quarter were statistically significant, then the recorded changes did not exceed the variability expected from a sample survey of this size

More information about statistical significance and the accuracy of estimates is available in section 4.2 of [Key Quality Information](#).

Table 1: Estimates, confidence intervals and statistical significance for Labour Market Indicators in Wales, December 2023 to February 2024

	Latest Data		Quarterly Change			Annual Change		
	Estimate	Confidence Interval	Change	Confidence interval	Significance	Change	Confidence interval	Significance
Employment Rate ¹	69.1%	+/-3.4ppts	-2.3ppts	+/-4.4ppts	Not Statistically Significant	-2.8ppts	+/-4.2ppts	Not Statistically Significant
Unemployment Rate ²	3.7%	+/-1.8ppts	0.5ppts	+/-2.3ppts	Not Statistically Significant	0.3ppts	+/-2.3ppts	Not Statistically Significant
Economic Inactivity Rate ¹	28.1%	+/-3.2ppts	1.9ppts	+/-4.1ppts	Not Statistically Significant	2.7ppts	+/-3.9ppts	Not Statistically Significant

Source: WG analysis of Labour Force Survey, ONS

¹ Rates are the proportion of the total population aged 16-64.

² Rate is the proportion of the economically active population aged 16 and over.

Table 1 shows there were no statistically significant changes for headline labour market indicators in the three months to February 2024. This suggests that the quarterly and annual changes for these indicators are unlikely to reflect a real change in the data.

Due to the lack of statistically significant estimates and volatile figures in the LFS, employment, unemployment and economic inactivity figures by sex have been temporarily removed from this bulletin. We are continuing to monitor the performance and reliability of the LFS, and plan to reintroduce these estimates at a time when they provide a more accurate picture of the labour market in Wales.

1. Employment & Jobs

Key Points:

- The employment rate in Wales was 69.1% (approximately 1.41 million) in December 2023 to February 2024. This is down 2.3 percentage points on the quarter and down 2.8 percentage points on the year. (Labour Force Survey, ONS).
- Early estimates for March 2024 indicate that the number of paid employees in Wales was unchanged over the month at 1.32 million. (Pay As You Earn Real Time Information, HMRC).
- In March 2024, the age groups: under 18 and 18 to 24 both experienced decreases in the number of paid employees when compared to the previous year. The age groups: 25 to 34, 35 to 49 and over 65 all experienced increases over the same period, whilst the age group 50 to 64 was unchanged. (Pay As You Earn Real Time Information, HMRC).
- In the three months to February 2024, the average number of hours worked in the UK was 32.1 hours, up 0.5 hours (1.7%) from the previous quarter and up 0.3 hours (0.9%) from the same quarter in the previous year. (Labour Force Survey, ONS).
- There were 328,000 people employed in the public sector in Wales during December 2023, up by 7,000 (2.3%) from the same period the previous year (Regional Public Sector Employment, ONS).
- The number of workforce jobs in Wales fell by 16,300 (1.1%) between September 2022 and September 2023 to 1.46 million (Workforce Jobs, ONS).
- The number of self-employment jobs in Wales in September 2023 was 167,400 (11.4% of workforce jobs), a decrease of 10,400 (5.9%) over the year. (Workforce Jobs, ONS).

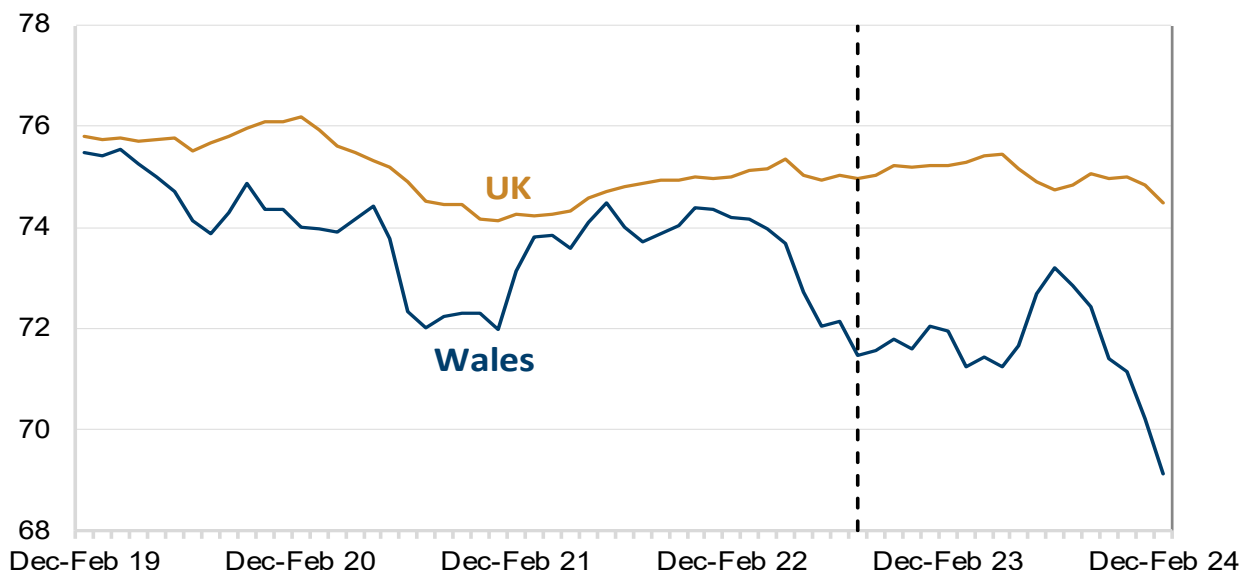
Labour Force Survey Employment (ONS)

LFS employment: people aged 16 to 64 who did at least one hour of paid work in the reference week (whether as an employee or self-employed); those who had a paid job that they were temporarily away from; those on government-supported training and employee programmes and those doing unpaid family work.

Note: During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic figures for employment include employees who have been furloughed.

The employment rate in Wales remained broadly stable towards the end of 2019 and the beginning of 2020 following a steady decrease since late 2018. The employment rate began to fall in early 2020 as a result of the coronavirus pandemic but returned to pre-pandemic levels in early 2021. The employment rate remained broadly stable until the end of 2021 but has been volatile since then.

Figure 1.1: Employment rate, persons (percentage of those aged 16-64), 3 months to February 2019 to the 3 months to February 2024



Description of figure 1.1: A line chart showing the fluctuating employment rates in both Wales and the UK over the last five years, with the UK generally having a higher employment rate than Wales. The Welsh rate peaked towards the end of 2018, rising above the UK for the first time, but has seen an overall decrease since then. Data for the period July to September 2022 onwards are not comparable with previous periods due to a discontinuity in the time series following a reweighting of the data.

Source: Welsh Government analysis of Labour Force Survey

There were 1.41 million people in employment in Wales in December 2023 to February 2024, down 13,700 (1.0%) from the same period a year earlier. This is a rate of 69.1% of those aged 16-64, which is down 2.3 percentage points on the previous quarter and down 2.8 percentage points on the previous year.

Over the year, the employment level in the UK decreased by 195,400 (0.6%) to 33.0 million. This is a rate of 74.5% of those aged 16-64, which is 5.4 percentage points higher than the employment rate for Wales (based on unrounded figures). The trend in employment rates have differed

between Wales and the UK in recent periods, however the changes for Wales are not statistically significant and should be considered alongside the longer-term trend.

Experimental Real Time Pay Information (HMRC)

HMRC's Pay As You Earn (PAYE) Real Time Information (RTI): These data come from HM Revenue and Customs' (HMRC's) Pay As You Earn (PAYE) Real Time Information (RTI) system. They cover the whole population rather than a sample of people or companies, and they will allow for more detailed estimates of the population. PAYE RTI covers employees payrolled by employers only. It does not cover self-employment income or income from other sources such as pensions, property rental and investments. Where individuals have multiple sources of income, only income from employers is included.

The release is classed as [official statistics in development](#) as the methodologies used to produce the statistics are still in their development phase. As a result, the series are subject to revisions.

The Office for National Statistics and HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) publish [data for Wales](#) on payrolled employees, mean pay, aggregate pay and single month estimates for median pay.

Figure 1.3: Paid employees, Wales, March 2018 to March 2024



Description of figure 1.3: A line chart showing the trend in the number of paid employees over the past few years has been generally increasing despite a steep decrease between March 2020 and July 2020.

Source: Pay As You Earn Real Time Information, HM Revenue and Customs

The number of paid employees has generally increased in recent years, but fell during the pandemic. The number of paid employees returned to pre-pandemic levels in July 2021, and has continued to increase since.

Early estimates for March 2024 indicate that the number of paid employees in Wales was unchanged over the month at 1.32 million.

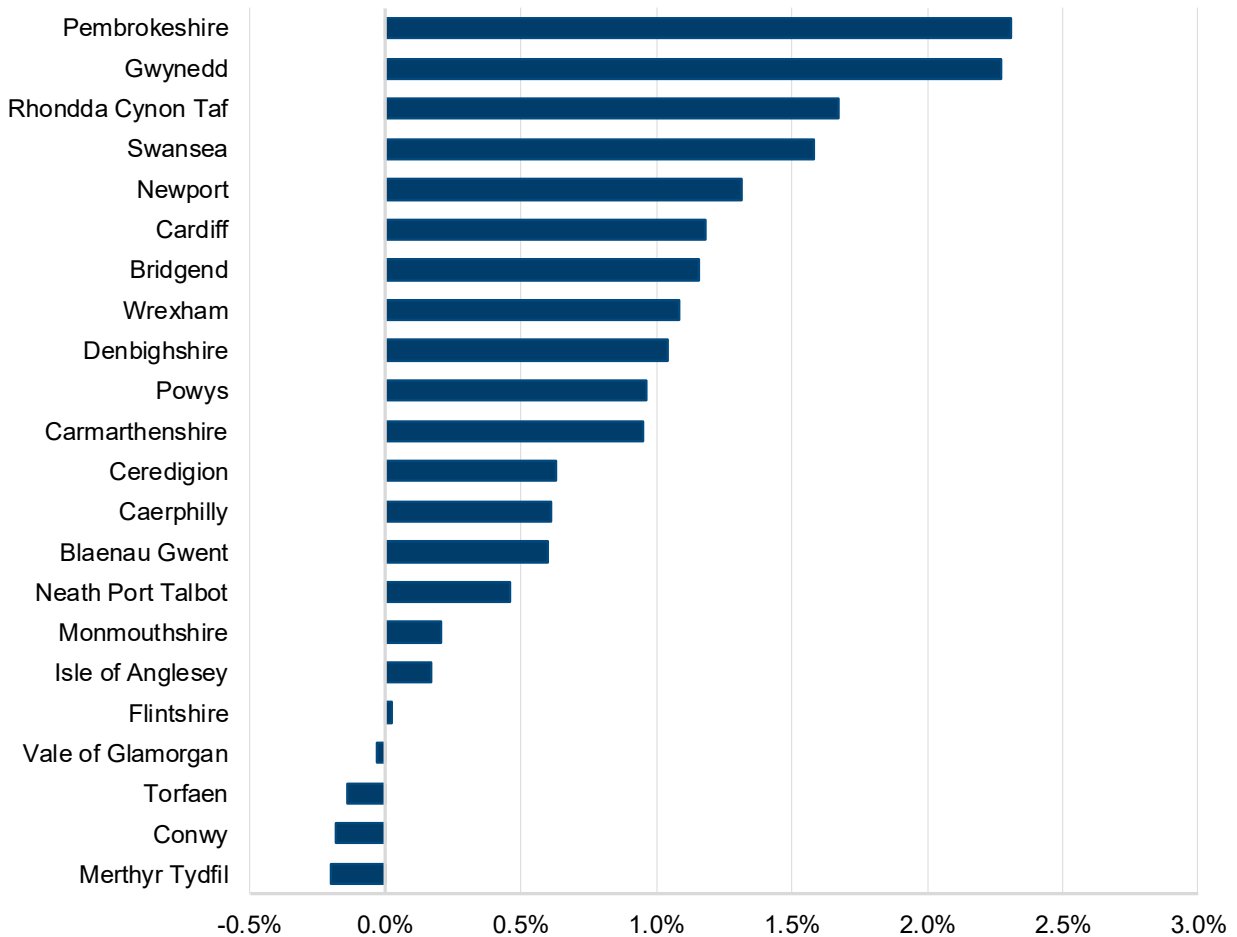
At a UK level, early estimates for March 2024 showed a monthly decrease of 66,700 (0.2%).

Quarterly RTI Updates

Employees by local authority

In March 2024, estimates of the number of paid employees by local authority area were published by HMRC. The latest data refers to February 2024 and the next update to this data will be in June 2024.

Figure 1.4: Percentage change of paid employees by local authority, Wales, February 2023 to February 2024



Description of figure 1.4: A horizontal bar chart showing the year on year percentage change of paid employees for each local authority. Pembrokeshire and Gwynedd had the largest increases over the year.

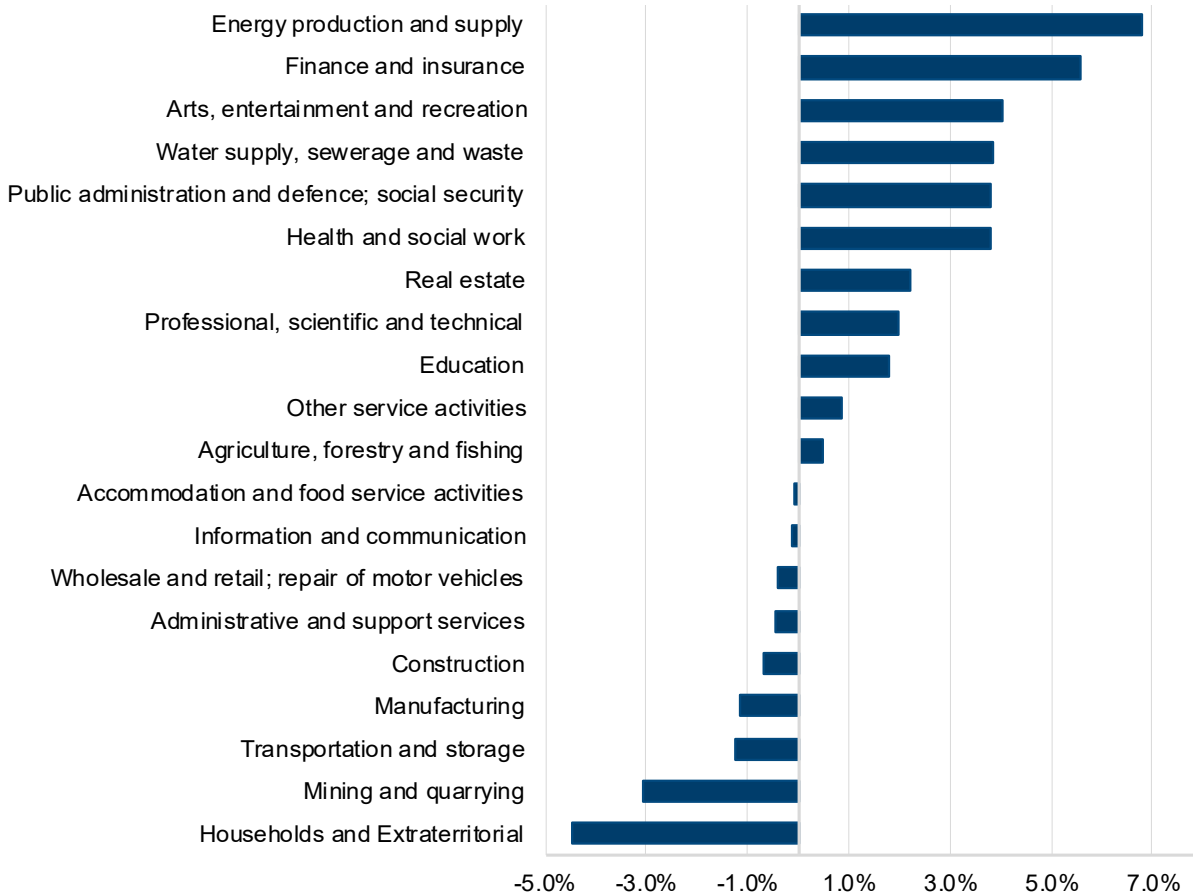
Source: Pay As You Earn Real Time Information, HM Revenue and Customs

In February 2023 18 of the 22 Welsh local authority areas saw an increase in the number of paid employees when compared with the same month in the previous year. Pembrokeshire and Gwynedd had the largest increases with both growing by 2.3% (to 1 decimal place).

Employees by industry sector

In February 2024, HMRC published data for the number of paid employees by industry sector for the UK countries and English regions. The latest data refers to January 2024 and the next update to this data will be in May 2024.

Figure 1.5: Percentage change of paid employees by industry sector, Wales, January 2023 to January 2024



Description of figure 1.5: A horizontal bar chart showing the year on year percentage change of paid employees for each industry sector in Wales. The Energy production and supply sector had the largest increase, and the Households and Extraterritorial sector had the largest decrease.

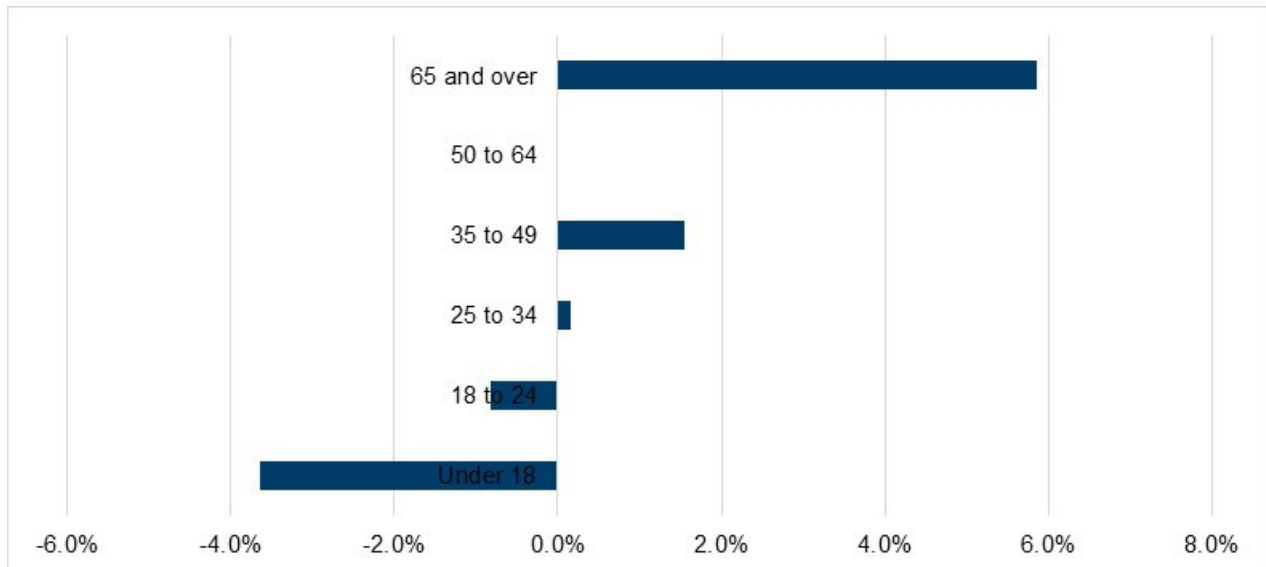
Source: Pay As You Earn Real Time Information, HM Revenue and Customs

In January 2024, the Energy production and supply sector had the largest increase (up 6.8%) in the number of paid employees when compared to the previous year. The largest decrease over the same period was in the Households and Extraterritorial sector (down 4.5%).

Employees by age

In April 2024, HMRC published data by age group for the UK countries and English regions. The latest data refers to March 2024 and the next update for these statistics will be in July 2024.

Figure 1.6: Percentage change of paid employees by age group, Wales, March 2023 to March 2024



Description of figure 1.6: A horizontal bar chart showing the year on year percentage change of paid employees for each age group in Wales. The 65 and over age group had the largest increase, and the under 18 age group had the largest decrease.

Source: Pay As You Earn Real Time Information, HM Revenue and Customs

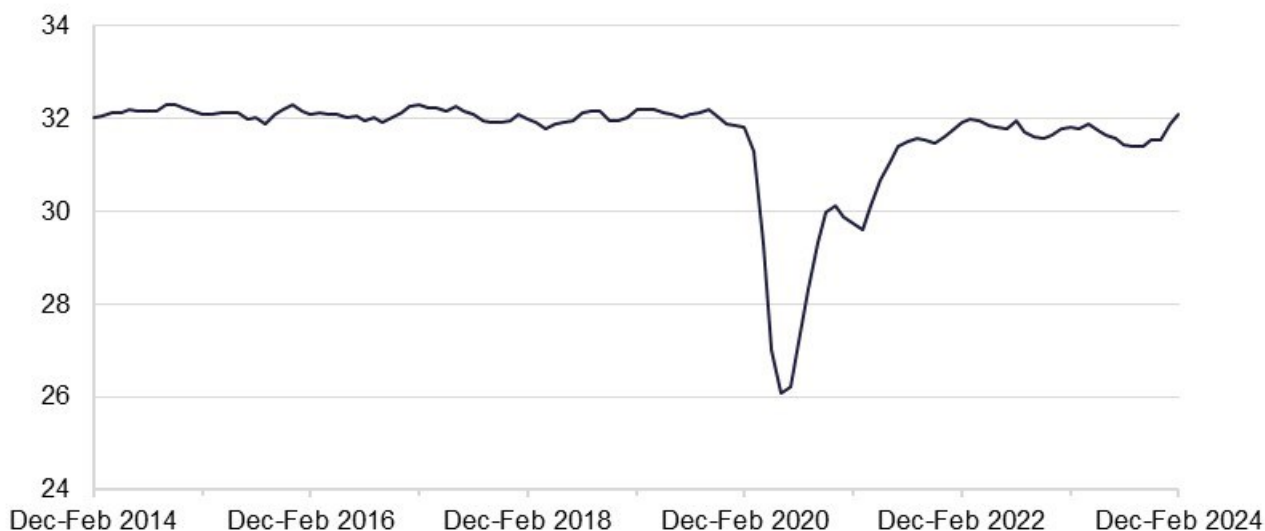
In March 2024, the age groups: under 18 and 18 to 24 both experienced decreases in the number of paid employees when compared to the previous year. The age groups: 25 to 34, 35 to 49, and over 65 all experienced increases over the same period, with the 65 and over age group having the largest percentage increase. The 50 to 64 age group was unchanged over the year.

Hours worked (ONS)

Hours worked: Labour Force Survey statistics for usual hours worked measure how many hours people usually work per week. They are not affected by absences and so can provide a good measure of normal working patterns.

Latest data for the UK are sourced from the LFS. Due to the sample size, data for Wales are derived from the APS and are therefore not as timely.

Figure 1.7: Average hours worked, UK, 3 months to February 2014 to the 3 months to February 2024



Description of figure 1.7: A line chart showing the average hours worked in the UK. Generally the hours worked remained relatively stable until a large drop in April-June 2020 (to a record low). Since then, the average hours worked have been recovering although generally remain slightly lower than previous levels.

Source: Labour Force Survey, ONS

The pandemic had a large impact on actual hours worked, with average weekly hours worked not returning to pre-pandemic estimates (February 2020) of 31.8 hours per week until December to February 2022. In the three months to February 2024, the average number of hours worked in the UK was 32.1 hours, up 0.5 hours (1.7%) from the previous quarter and up 0.3 hours (0.9%) from the same quarter in the previous year.

Total actual weekly hours worked was at 1.06 billion over the same period, an increase of 13.2 million hours (1.3%) compared to the previous quarter and an increase of 3.2 million hours (0.3%) compared to the previous year.

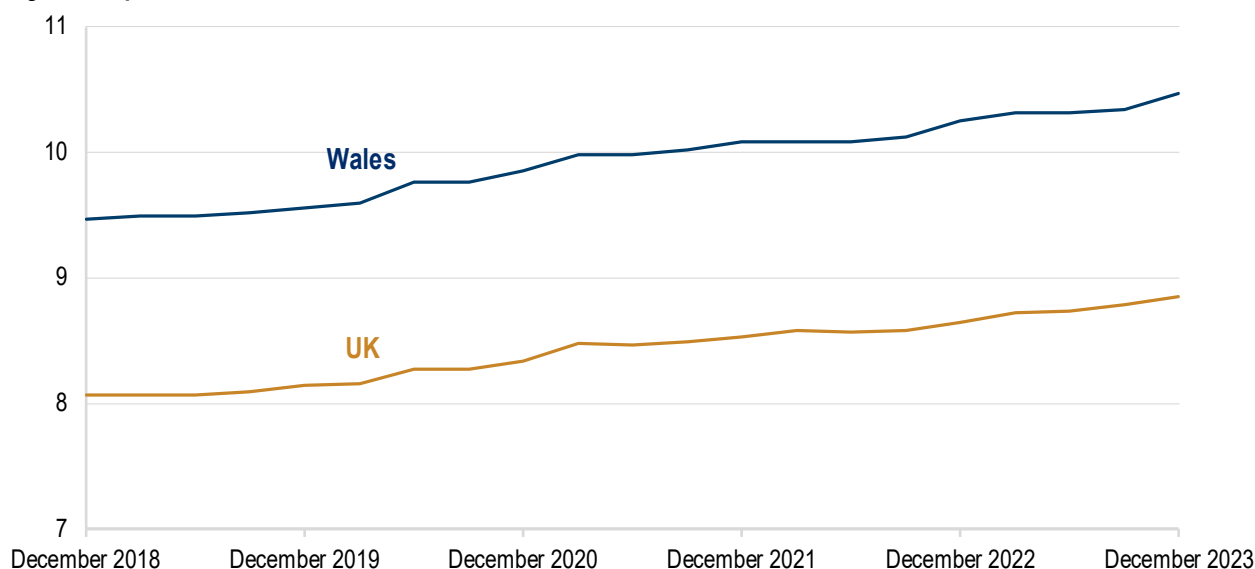
The Annual Population survey (APS) estimates that during the year to December 2023, the average number of hours worked in Wales was 31.4 hours per week, a decrease of 0.3 hours from the previous year. Males in Wales worked an average of 34.9 hours per week and females worked an average of 27.6 hours per week.

The number of hours worked may be affected by labour disputes. ONS publish [labour disputes statistics](#), which shows that in February 2024 there were 7,700 working days lost because of labour disputes in Wales, down from 9,300 the previous month.

Public Sector Employment (ONS)

Public Sector: The public sector comprises central government, local government and public corporations as defined for the UK National Accounts. The national accounts are compiled based on an internationally comparable accounting framework and describe the activities in a national economy. Data sourced from an ONS data collection on Public Sector Employment.

Figure 1.8: Public sector employment (percentage of population, not seasonally adjusted), December 2018 to December 2023



Description of figure 1.8: A line chart that shows both Wales and the UK have had an increasing rate of public sector employment over the last five years. Wales has a higher percentage of the population employed in the public sector than the UK.

Source: Welsh Government analysis of Regional Public Sector Employment, ONS

According to Public Sector Employment data, there were 328,000 people employed in the public sector in Wales in December 2023, up by 7,000 (2.3%) from a year earlier. This is 10.5% of the population, up 0.2 percentage points over the year.

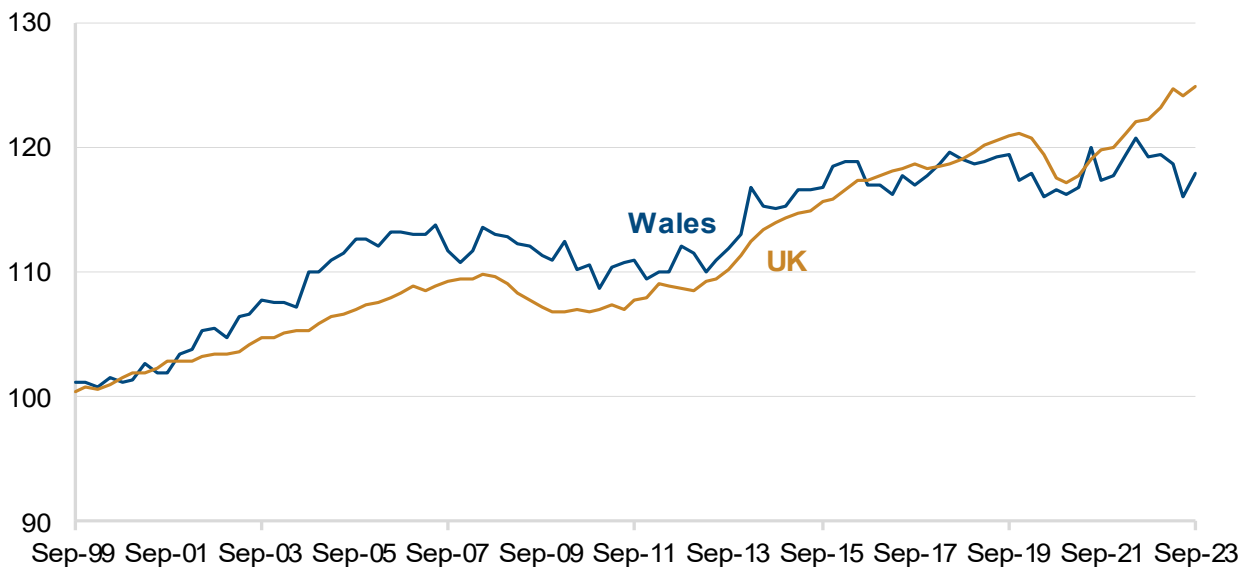
Public sector employment in the UK increased over the same period by 2.4% to 5.9 million. This is 8.9% of the population, up 0.2 percentage points on the previous year.

The population estimates used for Wales are based on the 2021 Census, whereas UK population estimates are based on the previous interim 2021 methodology as data from Scotland's Census is not yet available. Further information is available in in ONS' [National population projections release](#).

Workforce Jobs (ONS)

Workforce Jobs: The number of people with jobs is not the same as the number of jobs. This is because a person can have more than one job. The number of people with jobs is measured by the Labour Force Survey (LFS). The number of jobs is measured by Workforce Jobs (WFJ) and is the sum of employee jobs from employer surveys, self-employment jobs from the LFS, those in HM Forces and government- supported trainees. The LFS and WFJ measures are reconciled each quarter in an [article published](#) on ONS' website. Jobs vacancies are measured separately by the Vacancy Survey.

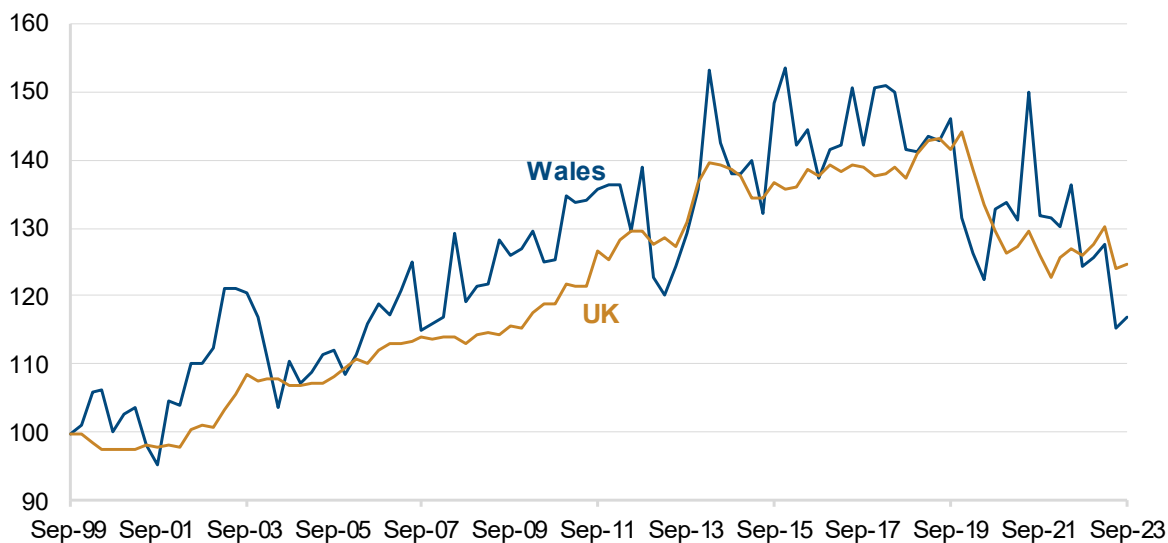
Figure 1.9: Workforce jobs (Index 1999=100), September 1999 to September 2023



Description of figure 1.9: A line chart showing that the number of workforce jobs in both Wales and the UK have generally increased since 1999. The trend in workforce jobs for both Wales and the UK have remained generally comparable since 1999, despite the Wales series being more volatile.

The number of workforce jobs in Wales in September 2023 was 1.46 million, a decrease of 16,300 (1.1%) over the year. Since September 1999, the number of workforce jobs in Wales rose by 206,600 (16.4%). The number of workforce jobs in the UK increased over the year by 778,800 (2.2%) to 36.8 million and has increased by 7.2 million (24.5%) since September 1999.

Figure 1.10: Self-employment jobs (Index 1999=100), September 1999 to September 2023

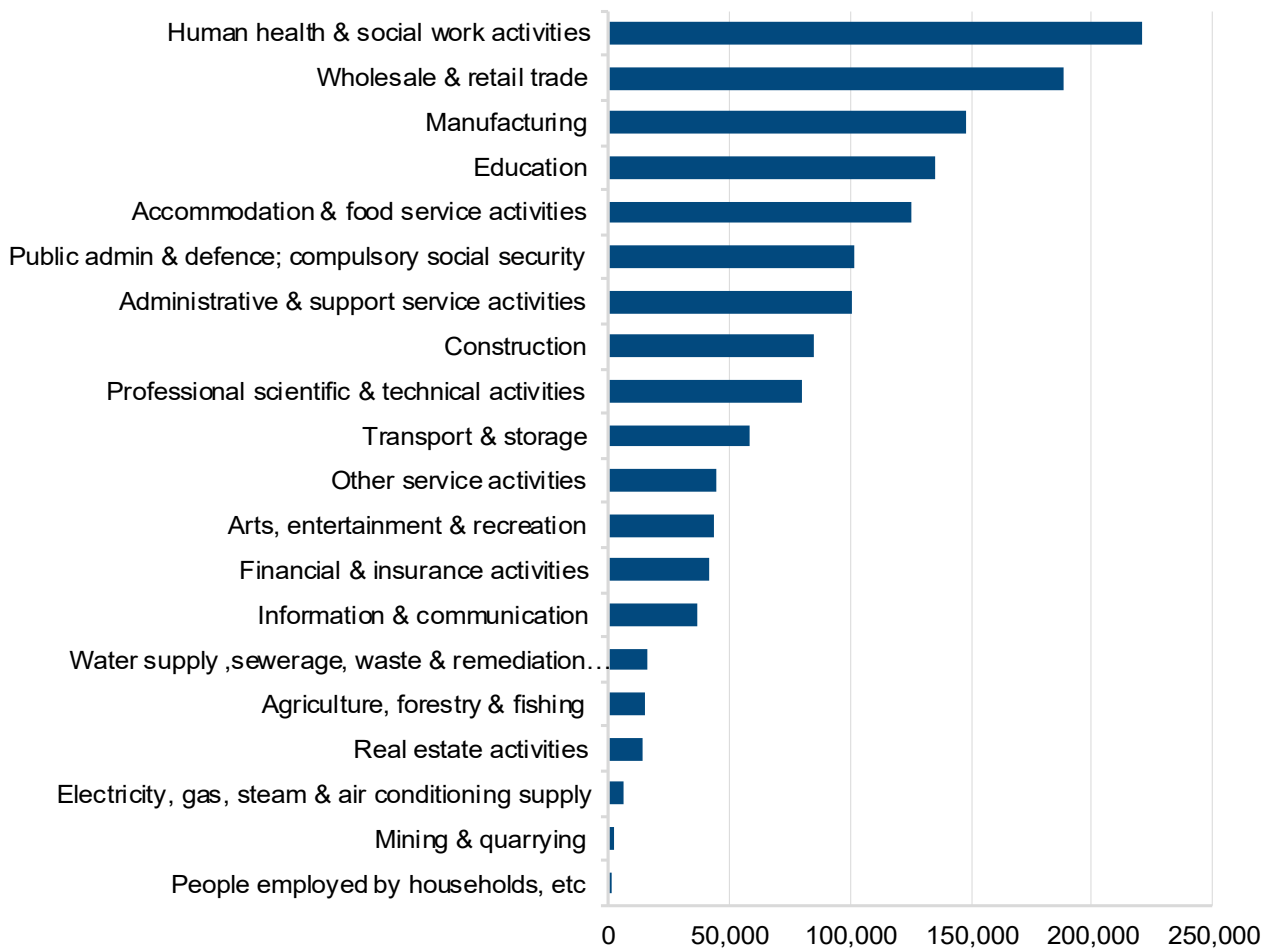


Description of figure 1.10: A line chart showing that the number of self-employment jobs in both the UK and Wales have generally increased since 1999 and have followed similar trends. The trend has seen an overall decrease over the last three years for both Wales and the UK, despite the series for Wales showing more volatility.

Source: Welsh Government analysis of Workforce Jobs, ONS

The number of self-employment jobs in Wales in September 2023 was 167,400, a decrease of 10,400 (5.9%) over the year. Since September 1999, self-employment jobs in Wales increased by 24,500 (17.2%), accounting for 11.4% of workforce jobs (the same as in September 1999). However, it is important to note the volatility of this series. The estimate of the number of self-employment jobs in the UK in September 2023 was 4.1 million (11.1% of workforce jobs), down 36,400 (0.9%) over the year.

Figure 1.11: Workforce jobs by Industry sector, Wales, September 2023



Description of figure 1.11: A horizontal bar chart showing the number of workforce jobs in each industry sector in Wales. Human health and social work activities was the industry with the largest number of jobs.

Source: Welsh Government analysis of Workforce Jobs, ONS

In September 2023, Human health & social work activities accounted for 15.1% of workforce jobs in Wales, the highest of any industry. This was followed by Wholesale & retail trade with 12.9% of workforce jobs.

2. Unemployment

Key Points:

- In December 2023 to February 2024, the unemployment rate in Wales was 3.7% (approximately 54,800 people). This is up 0.5 percentage points on the quarter and up 0.3 percentage points on the year.
- The claimant count now (March 2024) stands at 61,500, a decrease of 0.8% compared to the same month in the previous year. This is a rate of 3.7%, unchanged over the same period (based on unrounded figures). (Jobcentre Plus Administration System, Department for Work and Pensions)
- After the large initial increase at the start of the pandemic, the number of people on Universal Credit decreased between April 2021 and December 2021. Since then, the number of people on Universal credit has increased each month, to a new high in March 2024. (Department for Work and Pensions)
- In the week ending 5th April 2024 (the latest week), online job adverts in Wales decreased by 4.7% compared to the previous month (week ending 8th March 2024). (Weekly Online Job Advert Estimates, ONS)

Labour Force Survey Unemployment (ONS)

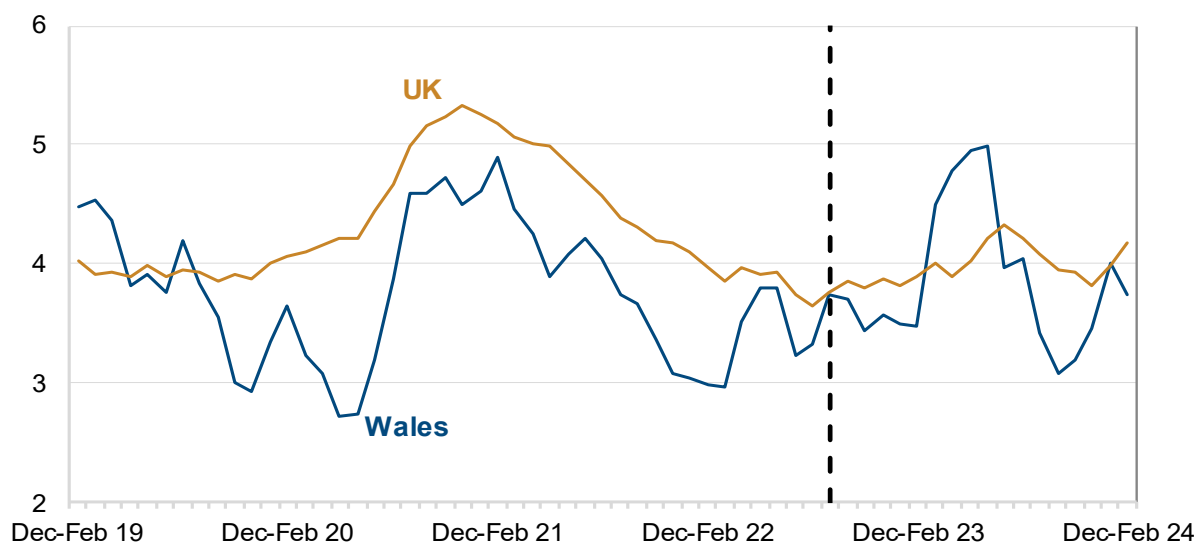
LFS Unemployment: The number of unemployed people in the UK is measured through the Labour Force Survey (LFS) following the internationally agreed definition recommended by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) – an agency of the United Nations. Unemployed people are without a job, have actively sought work in the last four weeks and are available to start work in the next two weeks; or are out of work, have found a job and are waiting to start it in the next two weeks.

The headline unemployment rate is calculated by dividing the unemployment level for those aged 16 and over by the total number of economically active people aged 16 and over.

Historically, the Welsh unemployment rate has generally tracked the UK rate and had been gradually falling since the early 2010s, before rising sharply as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. In August to October 2019, the Welsh unemployment rate fell below the UK rate and remained below until March to May 2022 where both rates were 3.8% (to 1 decimal place). Since then, the Wales rate has fluctuated around the UK rate, despite some volatility in the data.

Please note in recent years the data presented for the number of those unemployed and the unemployment rate have shown particularly high volatility as the number of unemployed people, as well as the sample sizes, have dropped. Due to this volatility, short-term changes should be considered alongside longer-term trends where possible.

Figure 2.1: ILO Unemployment rate (percentage of economically active population), 3 months to February 2019 to the 3 months to February 2024



Description of Figure 2.1: A line chart showing that the unemployment rate in both Wales and the UK have shown similar movements, however the unemployment rate in Wales has fluctuated more than the UK rate. Data for the period July to September 2022 onwards are not comparable with previous periods due to a discontinuity in the time series following a reweighting of the data.

Source: Welsh Government analysis of Labour Force Survey

During December 2023 to February 2024, there were 54,800 unemployed people in Wales, an increase of 3,400 compared to the same period a year earlier. This is a rate of 3.7% of the

economically active population, up 0.5 percentage points compared to the previous quarter and up 0.3 percentage points compared to a year earlier. Unemployment rate changes should be considered alongside longer-term trends where possible due to the volatility of the series.

There were 1.44 million unemployed people in the UK in December 2023 to February 2024, up 93,900 (7.0%) from the previous year. This is a rate of 4.2%, an increase of 0.3 percentage points compared to the previous year.

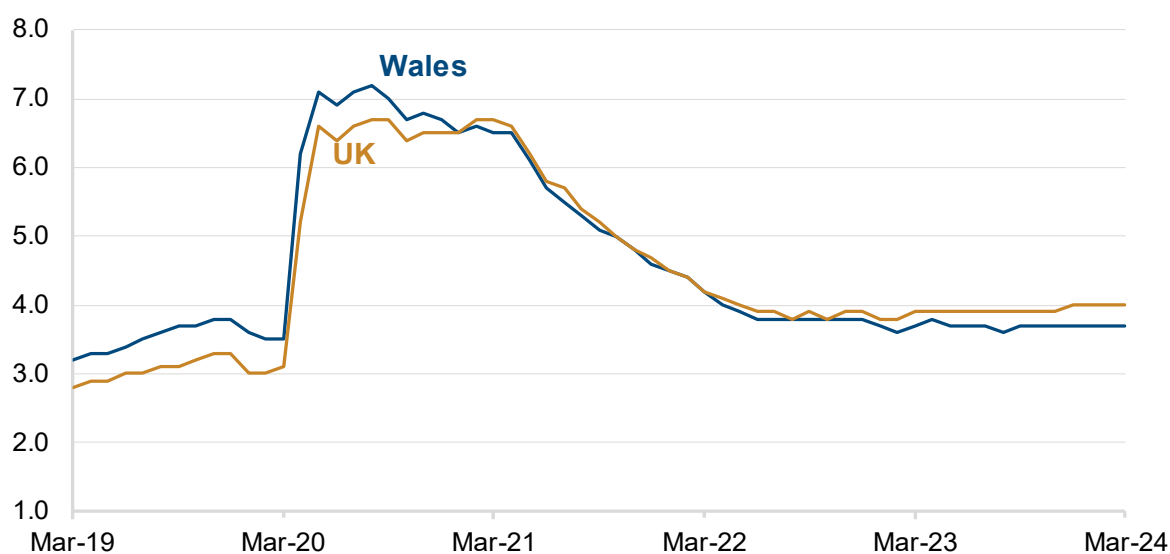
Claimant count (DWP)

Claimant Count: The number of people claiming unemployment-related benefits. Between 1996 and 2013, the Claimant Count was measured using claimants of Jobseeker's Allowance. In 2013 a new benefit, Universal Credit, which will replace a number of means-tested benefits, including the means-tested element of Jobseeker's Allowance, began to be rolled out. From the introduction of Universal Credit, those claimants who were receiving the benefit for unemployment reasons have been included in the Claimant Count.

The experimental claimant count rate is the number of claimants resident in an area as a percentage of the sum of claimants and workforce jobs in the country or region.

[Experimental statistics](#) are official statistics that are in the testing phase and not yet fully developed, these will potentially have a wider degree of uncertainty.

Figure 2.4: Experimental claimant count rates (percentage of civilian workforce), March 2019 to March 2024



Description of Figure 2.4: A line chart showing the claimant count rate for Wales and the UK over past 5 years. Claimant count rates show relatively little change for the UK and Wales until March 2020 where there was a large increase in the number of people claiming unemployment related benefits. The claimant count rate has generally decreased since for both Wales and the UK.

Source: Jobcentre Plus Administration System, Department for Work and Pensions

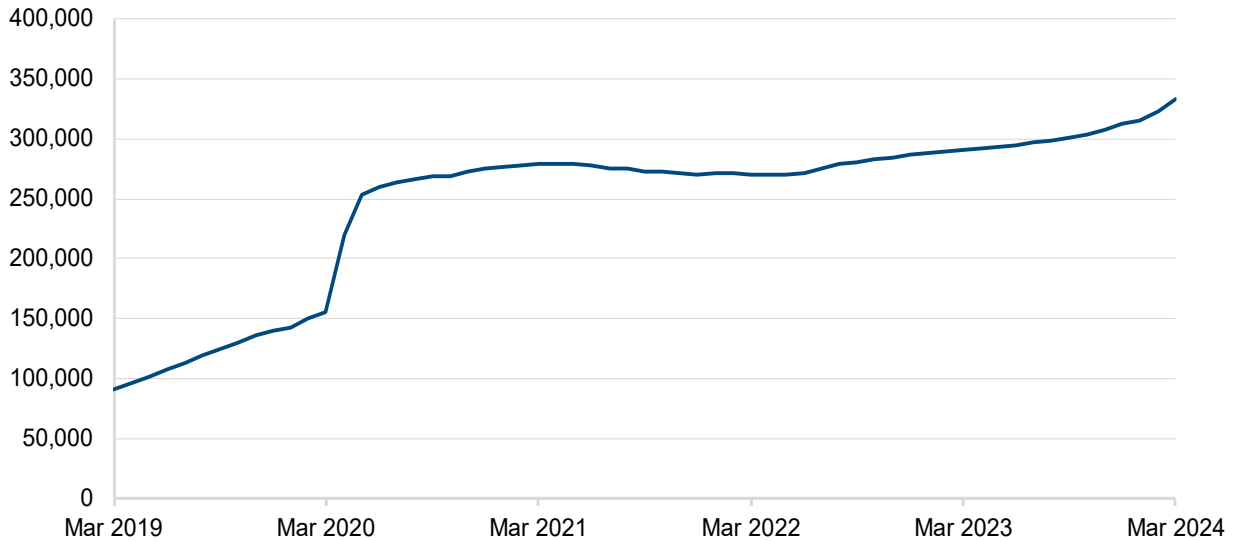
Experimental claimant count data showed a large increase at the start of the pandemic and has been gradually declining from the peak in August 2020. In February 2021, Wales' rate fell below the UK rate for the first time since November 1994; but has since tracked very closely.

In March 2024 the claimant count was 61,500 in Wales, down 500 (0.8%) over the year and down 200 (0.4%) compared to the previous month. This is a claimant count rate of 3.7%, unchanged compared to the previous year and unchanged from the previous month (based on unrounded figures). The claimant count rate in the UK now (March 2024) stands at 4.0%.

Universal Credit (DWP)

Universal Credit: Universal Credit is a new benefit, which began to be rolled out in 2013, which will replace a number of means-tested benefits, including the means-tested element of Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA). Those Universal Credit claimants who are required to be seeking work are included in the Claimant Count estimates along with all claimants of JSA.

Figure 2.5: People on Universal Credit, Wales, March 2019 to March 2024



Description of Figure 2.5: A line chart showing the number of people on universal credit in Wales. It shows a steady increase until the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, then a steep rise from March 2020 until May 2020. The chart shows a steady increase in numbers over the last year.

Source: Universal Credit, Department for Work and Pensions

After the large initial increase at the start of the pandemic, the number of people on Universal Credit decreased between April 2021 and December 2021. Since then, the number has generally increased to a new high of 333,500 in March 2024, an increase of 3.4% compared to the previous month.

Of the 333,500 people claiming Universal Credit in Wales, 146,200 (43.8%) were categorised as having no work requirements, 60,200 (18.1%) were categorised as searching for work, and 57,100 (17.1%) were categorised as working – no requirements.

Redundancies (ONS)

Redundancies (LFS): The number of people, whether working or not working, who were made redundant or had taken voluntary redundancy in the three months prior to the Labour Force Survey (LFS) interview. The redundancy rate is the ratio of the redundancy level for the given quarter to the number of employees in the previous quarter, multiplied by 1,000.

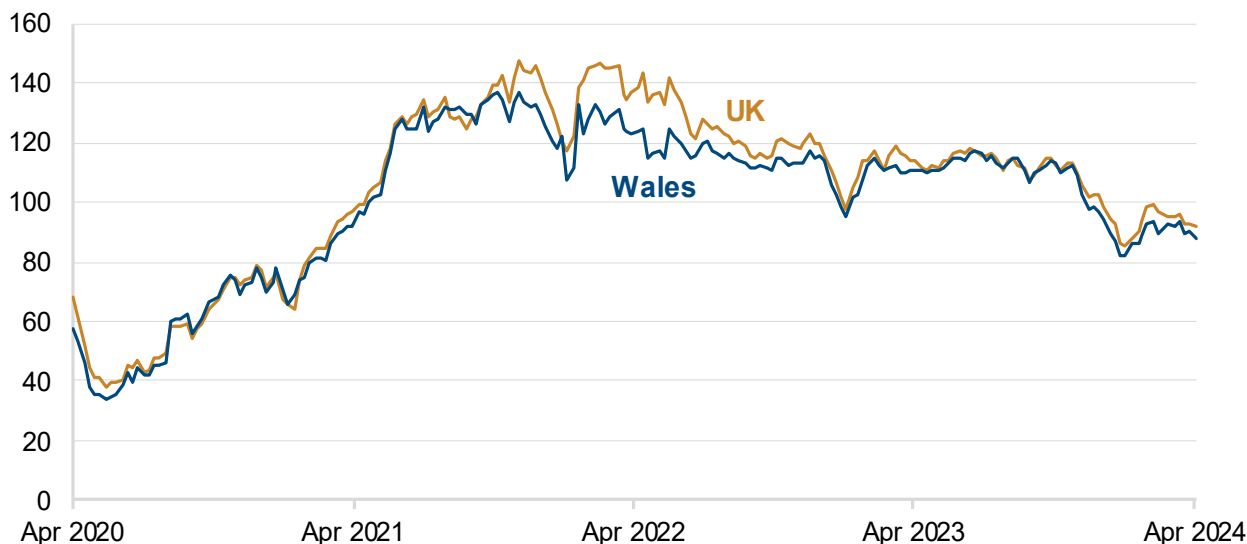
Potential Redundancies: ONS and The Insolvency Service have published experimental data for the first time in February 2022 on potential redundancies by region collected through HR1 forms. This data does not record the total number of redundancies; they record the number of potential redundancies filed on HR1 forms.

ONS publish estimates on the number of [redundancies](#) and [potential redundancies](#) for UK countries and English regions. The redundancy figures for Wales are based on a small sample size and are therefore volatile, in recent periods estimates have been suppressed on disclosure grounds. Due to the volatility and availability of the data at the Wales level, we have removed these figures from this publication. Data and further information on these topics can be accessed via the ONS published tables.

Online Job Adverts (ONS)

Online Job Adverts: These indices are created based upon job adverts provided by Adzuna. This data includes information on several million job advert entries each month, live across the UK since February 2018, broken down by job category and UK countries and English regions.

Figure 2.6: Online job adverts (Index February 2020 = 100), 3rd April 2020 to the 5th April 2024



Description of Figure 2.6: A line chart showing that online job adverts in Wales and the UK had a steep drop following the start of the pandemic, but since rose above pre-pandemic levels. The number of online job adverts generally decreased over the last year.

Source: Weekly Online Job Advert Estimates, ONS

In the week ending 5th April 2024 (the latest week), online job adverts in Wales decreased by 2.8% compared with the previous week and decreased by 4.7% compared to the previous month (week ending 8th March 2024).

In May 2022, ONS published [experimental analysis of labour demand changes](#) for the first time. This publication provides average estimates of online job adverts for local authorities in the UK, produced using Adzuna online job adverts data.

ONS also publish [UK level job vacancy estimates](#) from the Vacancy Survey. Job vacancies in the UK have followed a similar trend to online job adverts over the previous four years.

3. Economic Inactivity

Key Points:

- In December 2023 to February 2024, the economic inactivity rate in Wales was 28.1% (approximately 535,100 people). This is up 1.9 percentage points on the quarter and up 2.7 percentage points on the year.

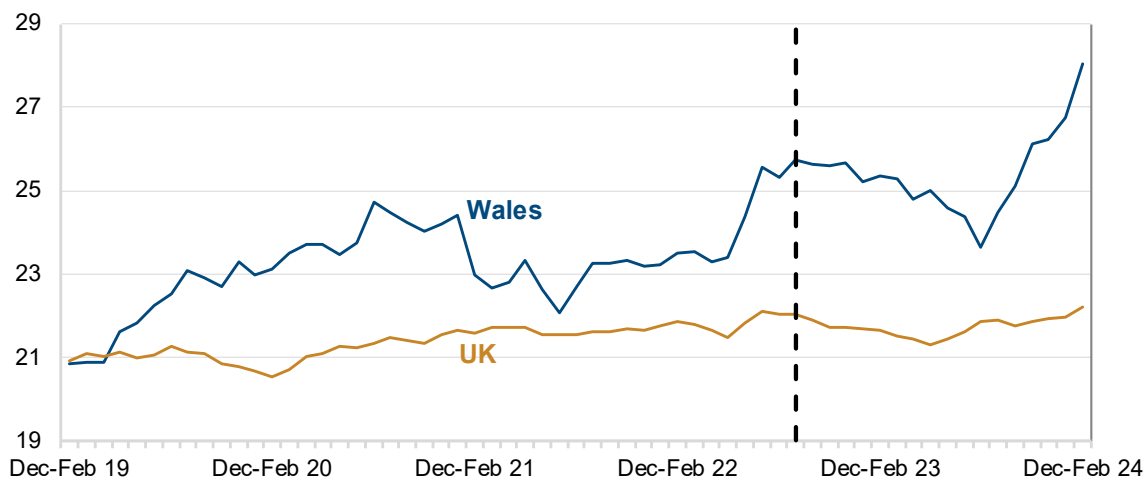
Labour Force Survey Economic Inactivity (ONS)

Economic Inactivity: Economically inactive people are those without a job who have not actively sought work in the last four weeks, and/or are not available to start work in the next two weeks.

The headline inactivity rate is calculated by dividing the inactivity level for those aged from 16 to 64 divided by the population for that age group.

Inactivity rates in Wales have been persistently higher than the UK for decades but fell steeply to below the UK rate at the end of 2018. The rate in Wales generally rose until mid-2020 and then decreased as it corresponded with opposite movements in the employment rate (figures 1.1 and 1.2). The trend in the economic inactivity rate has seen an overall increase since mid-2021, despite a downward trend over 2022 and the first half of 2023. Since June to August 2023, the economic inactivity rate in Wales has increased sharply, and remains more volatile than the UK.

Figure 3.1: Economic inactivity rate, persons (percentage of those aged 16-64), 3 months to February 2019 to the 3 months to February 2024



Description of Figure 3.1: A line chart showing over the past four years, inactivity rates have generally increased in both Wales and the UK. The rate in Wales has remained higher than the UK since December to February 2019. Data for the period July to September 2022 onwards are not comparable with previous periods due to a discontinuity in the time series following a reweighting of the data.

Source: Welsh Government analysis of Labour Force Survey

There were 535,100 people in Wales who were economically inactive in December 2023 to February 2024, up 53,600 (11.1%) from the same period a year earlier. This is a rate of 28.1% of

those aged 16-64, up 1.9 percentage points over the quarter and up 2.7 percentage points compared to the same period a year earlier. The number of economically inactive people in the UK increased by 275,000 (3.0%) over the year to 9.4 million. This is a rate of 22.2% of those aged 16-64, up 0.6 percentage points on the previous year.

4. Key quality information

4.1 Relevance

This monthly bulletin is a compendium publication that brings together the latest key statistics relating to the Welsh economy and labour market, mainly in the context of the UK economy and labour market. The headline Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimates in the bulletin are published by ONS in their Labour Market Statistical Bulletin which includes headline figures for Wales as a whole.

This bulletin provides a more detailed breakdown of the Wales data than the ONS bulletin and presents those estimates alongside other headline estimates for the economy and labour market for Wales. These statistics are used by the Welsh Government to monitor the headline statistics for the Welsh economy as well as providing comparisons to the UK economy. The bulletin complements the [Welsh Economy in Numbers dashboard](#), which provides a broad picture of the Welsh economy.

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) remains the main source for headline labour market indicators at a Wales level. The larger sample of the Annual Population Survey (APS) allows for estimates at a local authority level and for sub-groups of the population.

Information from the Annual Population survey that was included in previous versions of this bulletin, can be accessed via the quarterly [Labour market statistics \(Annual Population Survey\)](#) publication. This includes data for Welsh economic regions, long-term unemployment rates, youth unemployment and the reasons for economic inactivity for males and females.

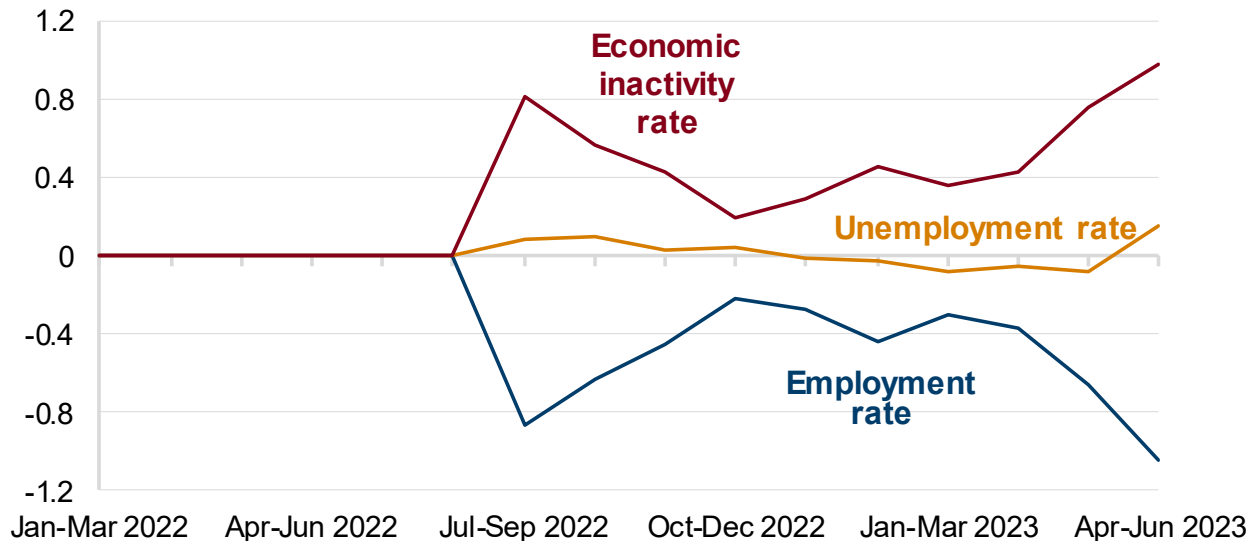
This bulletin is used by other public sector organisations, businesses, academia and private individuals as a means of identifying the key trends in the headline economic and labour market statistics for Wales. Our [2012 user consultation](#) provides more information on how our outputs are used.

Welsh Government published a more detailed analysis of [protected characteristics in the labour market in Wales](#) on 16 December 2021. We welcome your feedback on this publication and priorities for future analyses; please see contact details at the end of this release. Data is also currently available on [StatsWales](#) and [Nomis](#).

LFS estimates published on 13 February 2024 were reweighted for periods from July to September 2022 for UK countries and regions, and incorporated latest ONS estimates of the size and composition of the UK population. UK estimates were reweighted back to June to August 2011.

On 5 February 2024, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) published an article exploring the [Impact of reweighting on Labour Force Survey key indicators: 2024](#). On 13 February 2024, we published an article [exploring the full impact of this reweighting on key indicators in Wales](#).

Figure 4.1: Revisions to the employment rate, unemployment rate and economic inactivity rate, Wales, 3 months to March 2022 to the 3 months to June 2022



Description of Figure 4.1: A line chart that shows how the reweighting in June 2022 affected the Welsh employment rate, unemployment rate and economic inactivity rate.

Source: Labour Force Survey, ONS

On 18 July 2022, the [Office for National Statistics](#) announced an issue with the collection of some occupational data. On 26 September 2022, users were informed of the [impact of the coding error](#). A recoding exercise has been undertaken to correct the error and has revised affected Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimates in the July 2023 labour market release. An [article](#) published on 11 July 2023 gives more detail on the new methodology used and its impact.

The Annual Population Survey estimates were updated and published on [Nomis](#) alongside the August 2023 labour market release.

4.2 Accuracy

Some of the data in this bulletin is based on sample surveys meaning it is subject to sampling variability. The LFS is a sample survey and, as such, estimates obtained from it are subject to sampling variability. If we drew many samples, each would give a different result.

Table 4.1 shows the sampling variability of the estimates, and quarterly and annual changes using 95% confidence intervals. We would expect that in 95% of samples the range would contain the true value. Due to the LFS five wave structure, this means it can be used to assess changes over

six quarters or more. The confidence intervals have been calculated using data that are not seasonally adjusted, with the relevant sampling errors produced then applied to the seasonally adjusted data.

If the 'quarterly or annual change' of an estimate is larger than the 'confidence interval around the change', the change is statistically significant. If none of the reported changes over the year or the quarter were statistically significant, then the recorded changes did not exceed the variability expected from a sample survey of this size.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) indicate that there is an increasing challenge to maintain response rates for the Labour Force Survey and that headline numbers and trends for employment are starting to vary from other labour market data sources. In addition to the [Office for National Statistics blog](#) on this topic, please see the latest [Chief Statistician's update on understanding and managing the impact of these challenges for labour market data in Wales](#).

Due to the lack of statistically significant estimates and volatile figures in the LFS, employment, unemployment and economic inactivity figures by sex have been temporarily removed from this bulletin. We are continuing to monitor the performance and reliability of the LFS, and plan to reintroduce these estimates at a time when they provide a more accurate picture of the labour market in Wales.

Table 4.1: 95% confidence intervals for LFS figures: Wales, 3 months to February 2024

	<i>Numbers in thousands</i>								
	Estimates			Quarterly changes			Annual changes		
	Lower limit	Estimate	Upper limit	Lower limit	Quarterly change	Upper limit	Lower limit	Annual change	Upper limit
Employment level	1,348	1,411	1,474	-123	-42	39	-92	-14	64
Employment rate	65.8%	69.1%	72.5%	-6.6%	-2.3%	2.1%	-7.0%	-2.8%	1.4%
Unemployment level	30	55	80	-25	7	39	-28	3	35
Unemployment rate	2.0%	3.7%	5.5%	-1.7%	0.5%	2.8%	-2.0%	0.3%	2.5%
Economically active level	1,406	1,465	1,525	-112	-35	42	-84	-10	63
Economic activity rate	68.8%	71.9%	75.1%	-6.0%	-1.9%	2.2%	-6.6%	-2.7%	1.2%
Economically inactive level	457	535	614	-63	37	138	-42	54	149

Description of Table 4.1: A table showing the 95% confidence interval for the Labour Force Survey figures with the lower limit, estimate, and upper limit for the current estimate, quarterly changes, and annual changes.

Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

The [Welsh Government revisions policy](#) is available from the Statistics and Research website. Where the data is not from the Welsh Government, the revisions policy of the individual Government department is followed. The majority of the data in this release is from the ONS and their [revisions policy](#) applies.

From June 2015 the Claimant Count statistics were designated as experimental due to the impact of Universal Credit, which is designed so a broader span of claimants is required to look for work than under Jobseeker's Allowance.

This means that once Universal Credit was fully rolled out, the Claimant Count was higher than it would otherwise be under Jobseeker's Allowance. The impact has increased as roll-out of Universal Credit has progressed and the seasonally-adjusted claimant count series has become more volatile. The full [ONS statement](#) is available via their website.

This bulletin previously included statistics on working age benefits claimants by client group, based on Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) data. DWP no longer produces this series and the full statement is available via the [Nomis website](#).

DWP now publishes a Benefit Combinations dataset on their StatsXplore website which provides both Working Age and Pension Age statistics on the number of individuals claiming a DWP benefit in total and to show the key combinations of benefits claimed. We are in the process of assessing whether this new data source is appropriate for our uses and/or publication.

4.3 Timeliness and punctuality

This bulletin follows the ONS publication schedule of labour market data, available on the [National Statistics Release Calendar](#). Table 4.2 lists the date of last update and next update for each data source.

Table 4.2: Summary of data sources



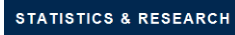

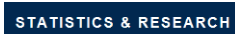


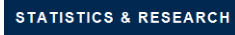



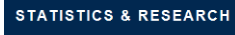


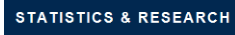


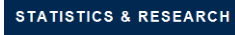

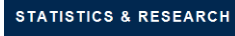





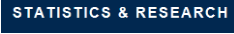
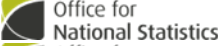
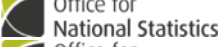
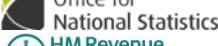

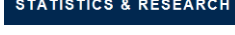











Data	Source	Last Updated	Next Updated
Claimant count	Jobcentre Plus Administrative System, DWP	16-Apr-2024	14-May-2024
Economic inactivity rate	Labour Force Survey, ONS	16-Apr-2024	14-May-2024
Employment rate	Labour Force Survey, ONS	16-Apr-2024	14-May-2024
Hours Worked	Labour Force Survey, ONS	16-Apr-2024	14-May-2024
Experimental Real Time Pay Information (RTI)	Real Time Pay As You Earn Information, HMRC	16-Apr-2024	14-May-2024
RTI – Employees by local authority	Real Time Pay As You Earn Information, HMRC	12-Mar-2024	11-Jun-2024
RTI – Employees by country/region & industry sector	Real Time Pay As You Earn Information, HMRC	13-Feb-2024	14-May-2024
RTI – Employees by country/region & age	Real Time Pay As You Earn Information, HMRC	16-Apr-2024	18-Jul-2024
ILO unemployment rate	Labour Force Survey, ONS	16-Apr-2024	14-May-2024
Online job adverts	Weekly Online Job Advert Estimates, ONS	11-Apr-2024	TBA
Potential redundancies	HR1 Potential Redundancies, ONS	16-Apr-2024	11-Jun-2024
Public sector employment	Regional Public Sector Employment, ONS	12-Mar-2024	11-Jun-2024
Redundancies	Labour Force Survey, ONS	16-Apr-2024	14-May-2024
Self-employment jobs	Workforce jobs, ONS	12-Mar-2024	11-Jun-2024
Universal Credit	Universal Credit, DWP	16-Apr-2024	14-May-2024
Vacancies	Vacancy Survey, ONS	16-Apr-2024	14-May-2024
Workforce jobs	Workforce jobs, ONS	12-Mar-2024	11-Jun-2024

Description of Table 4.2: A table showing the different data sources used in the Labour Market Overview release, when these data sources were last updated and when they will be next updated.

4.4 Accessibility and clarity

Much of the data behind the charts shown in this bulletin can be found on StatsWales. This bulletin covers key statistics for Wales as a whole, but additional breakdowns for age, gender, disability and ethnicity are also available on StatsWales and the ONS website. Links to StatsWales, Welsh Government statistical headlines (where applicable) and ONS analysis for information presented in this bulletin as well as other economic and labour market data are provided below.

Table 4.3: Links to StatsWales, WG headlines and ONS analysis

Measure	Data Link	WG Headline Link
Businesses Innovation Active (FG indicator)		
Claimant count		
Coronavirus job retention scheme		
Disability employment, unemployment and inactivity		
Economic inactivity rate		
Employment above ⅔ UK median wage (FG indicator)		
Employment (FG indicator)		
Employment rate		
Ethnicity pay gap		
Exports		
Gender Pay Gap (FG indicator)		
Gross Disposable Household Income		
Gross Value Added		
Gross weekly pay		
Hours worked		
Online job adverts		
Out of work benefit claimants		
PAYE real time information		
People on furlough (National Survey for Wales)		
Potential Redundancies		
Public sector employment		
Redundancies		
Self-employment income support scheme		
Self-employment jobs		
Short Term Output Indicators		
Unemployment rate		
VAT/PAYE registered enterprise births		
VAT/PAYE registered enterprises		
Vacancies		
Workforce jobs		

Description of Table 4.3: A table showing the different economic and labour market statistics with links to where they're published online.

4.5 Comparability and coherence

Comparable measures for other UK countries for the data published in this bulletin are published on StatsWales and on the ONS website, which can be accessed using the data links in Table 4.3.

Labour Force Survey (LFS) and Annual Population Survey (APS)

Estimates of employment, unemployment and economic inactivity are available from both the LFS and the Annual Population Survey (APS). Estimates from the LFS are based on a rolling quarter and are updated monthly. The sample sizes are too low in the LFS to produce reliable estimates for geographies below Wales level. Estimates from the APS are based on a rolling twelve months, updated each quarter. The APS uses a bigger sample than the LFS so is used to produce estimates for geographies in Wales. At Wales level, the APS is a slightly more robust measure than the LFS but it is less timely and slower to adapt to changes in the labour market.

Labour market statistics for Wales using APS estimates are published quarterly on the [Welsh Government website](#).

Employment and Workforce Jobs

Employment figures differ between the LFS estimates and Workforce Jobs. Primarily this is because people with more than one job are counted once in the LFS but more than once in Workforce Jobs. The LFS does not cover people living in most types of communal establishments and Workforce Jobs excludes unpaid family workers.

ILO Unemployment and Claimant Count

There are two different measures of unemployment used in official UK statistics, the headline International Labour Organisation (ILO) measure recorded by the LFS and the claimant count measure. Each is subject to advantages and disadvantages.

The headline ILO measure is a count of those who are out of work and want a job, or have actively sought work in the last four weeks and are available to start work in the next two weeks; plus those who are out of work, have found a job and are waiting to start in the next two weeks. It is the broader measure of unemployment. However, it is sourced from a survey so the results are subject to sampling error. Wales data is subject to higher variability than UK level data because of the smaller sample size.

The claimant count is a count of all those claiming unemployment related benefits (currently Jobseekers Allowance plus some claimants of Universal Credit). As such it excludes those who are unemployed who are not eligible to claim, and those who do not wish to claim. However, it is a count of all claimants and is not subject to any sampling variability. It can therefore be disaggregated to very high levels of detail, and in particular, changes measured over the short term are more robust than for the headline unemployment measure.

4.6 Technical notes

Some of the data in this bulletin are presented as index numbers. Index numbers take the data for each time period and divide them by the figure for the reference period, and multiply the result by 100. A figure of above 100 for a given time period then indicates that the figure is higher than that for the reference period, whilst a figure of below 100 indicates that it is lower than that for the reference period. Data on workforce jobs and self-employment jobs are presented as indices referenced to 1999 = 100. Data on exports is referenced to 2013=100 due to methodological differences before 2013. The indices of production, manufacturing and construction and the index of market services are each referenced to 2016 = 100.

Data series shown are seasonally adjusted unless stated otherwise. Seasonal adjustment is the process of removing variations associated with the time of year from a time-series and enables comparisons of labour market statistics to be made since the previous quarter or previous month. Labour market data for Wales is seasonally adjusted but for geographies within Wales only non-seasonally adjusted data is available.

4.7 National Statistics status

The [United Kingdom Statistics Authority](#) has designated these LFS statistics as [official statistics in development](#), in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007.

Official statistics in development are official statistics that are undergoing a development; they may be new or existing statistics, and will be tested with users, in line with the standards of trustworthiness, quality, and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics. Until September 2023, they were called 'experimental statistics'.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the UK Statistics Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate. The designation of these statistics as National Statistics was confirmed in March 2010 following a [full assessment against the Code of Practice](#).

Since the latest review by the Office for Statistics Regulation, we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics, and have made the following improvements:

- Focused the release on labour market data to provide users with a clear picture of how the pandemic is affecting the labour market.
- Used additional sources of data (e.g. HMRC PAYE data and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme) to illustrate the impact of the coronavirus pandemic in a timely way.
- Improved visuals by de-cluttering and standardising charts and tables.
- Added in information about statistical significance to clearly communicate to users the uncertainty in the data.

- Added in key points to each section so that users don't need to read the whole of each section for the key messages.
- Expanded the coverage of topics to include workforce jobs.

Expanded the coverage of topics to include workforce jobs It is Welsh Government's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Office for Statistics Regulation promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

4.8 Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. The Act puts in place seven wellbeing goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators ("national indicators") that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the wellbeing goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before Senedd Cymru. Under section 10(8) of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, where the Welsh Ministers revise the national indicators, they must as soon as reasonably practicable (a) publish the indicators as revised and (b) lay a copy of them before the Senedd. These national indicators were laid before the Senedd in 2021. The indicators laid on 14 December 2021 replace the set laid on 16 March 2016. This release includes data related to the following national indicator:

- (21) percentage of people in employment

Information on the indicators, along with narratives for each of the well-being goals and associated technical information is available in the [Well-being of Wales report](#).

This release includes contextual indicators, namely the basket of indicators presented in the Well-being report in the previous link.

As a national indicator under the Act they must be referred to in the analyses of local well-being produced by public services boards when they are analysing the state of economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being in their areas.

The Act states national milestones must be set that "...the Welsh Ministers consider would assist in measuring whether progress is being made towards the achievement of the well-being goals." In doing so Welsh Ministers must specify how we know that a national milestone has been achieved and the time by which it is to be achieved.

National milestones are not performance targets for any individual organisation, but are collective measures of success for Wales.

In this release indicator (21) percentage of people in employment corresponds to the milestone “Eradicate the gap between the employment rate in Wales and the UK by 2050, with a focus on fair work and raising labour market participation of under-represented groups”. Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local well-being assessments and local well-being plans.

4.9 Further details

Links

This document is available on our website: <https://gov.wales/labour-market-overview>

The National Survey for Wales [methodology and quality reports](#) can be found on the Welsh Government website.

More information on the data sources can also be found in the Quality and Methodology Information reports published by ONS on [Labour Market](#), [Claimant Count](#), [Public Sector Employment](#) and [Workforce Jobs](#) data.

Next update

14 May 2024 (Headline)

16 May 2024 (Labour Market Overview bulletin)

We want your feedback

We welcome any feedback on any aspect of these statistics which can be provided by email to labourmarket.stats@gov.wales.

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