

Scotland's Labour Market Insights

April 2024

Key Points

The Scottish Government's [Labour Market Trends](#) mainly reports on headline Office for National Statistics (ONS) Labour Force Survey estimates for Scotland. This insights report contains more detailed estimates by protected characteristics. A range of official sources are presented.

The Labour Force Survey is not a large and robust enough sample to produce reliable estimates for smaller groups of the population. There has also recently been increased volatility in Labour Force Survey estimates, further information is available in the ONS [Labour Force Survey: planned improvements and its reintroduction estimates methodology](#) article.

The ONS Annual Population Survey (APS) provides a larger sample and more robust estimates for smaller groups of the population. The data in this report is drawn from the APS unless otherwise stated. The latest published APS estimates are for January to December 2023. Estimates are obtained from a sample survey and are therefore subject to some sampling variability.

People in work

- the disability employment rate gap has typically decreased from 37.9 percentage points (pp) in January to December 2014 to 30.2 pp in January to December 2023
- the minority ethnic employment rate gap was estimated at 13.8 pp in January to December 2023. The employment rate for the minority ethnic groups has been continually lower than the employment rate for white groups across the series
- over the year to January 2024, payrolled employee growth varied by industry sector. The Energy, production and supply industry sector has shown the largest percentage growth in payrolled employees over the year
- adjusted for inflation (using the [Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs \(CPIH\)](#)), real earnings have grown by 2.4 per cent over the year to March 2024

People not in work

- unemployment rate for those aged 16 to 24 in Scotland has been consistently higher than the unemployment rate for any other age group. Similarly since January to December 2012, the economic inactivity rate for 16 to 24 year olds has been consistently higher than the inactivity rate for any other age group
- “long-term sick or disabled” was reported as the main reason for economic inactivity in Scotland. In January to December 2023, 31.6 per cent of those people aged 16 to 64 who were inactive gave their reason for being inactive as “long-term sick or disabled”

- in January to December 2023, an estimated 16.5 per cent of people aged 16 to 64 who were inactive reported that they wanted to work, the lowest percentage in the series
- Adzuna online job adverts in Scotland in the week to 12 April 2024 decreased by 5% when compared with the previous week
- No One Left Behind (NOLB) and Fair Start Scotland (FSS) are Scottish Government funded employability support services. Both are distinct approaches to employability support, varying over time in support offered and groups targeted. So far, there have been a combined 111,105 starts between FSS and NOLB, with 63,763 starts for FSS from April 2018 to September 2023 and 47,342 starts for NOLB from April 2019 to September 2023

ONS Annual Population Survey (APS) estimates in this publication have not been reweighted to the latest population estimates.

APS estimates remain accredited official statistics at this time. However, ONS are carrying out analysis to assess the impact of falling sample sizes on the quality of APS estimates.

Contents

Key Points	1
People in work	1
People not in work	1
People in work	4
ILO Employment rate (LFS)	4
Payrolled Employees (HMRC PAYE RTI)	9
Median earnings for payrolled employees (HMRC PAYE RTI)	12
People not in work	13
ILO Unemployment rate (LFS)	13
ILO Economic Inactivity rate (LFS)	16
Online Job Adverts (Adzuna).....	21
Employability Support Services (NOLB and FSS).....	22
Further Labour Market Information	23
Data and Methodology	25
Data sources	27
Glossary	31
Tell us what you think	34

People in work

ILO Employment rate (LFS)

The employment rate (the proportion of people aged 16 to 64 in work) in Scotland based on the ONS Labour Force Survey was estimated at 74.2 per cent in December 2023 to February 2024. Scotland's employment rate was below the UK rate of 74.5 per cent.

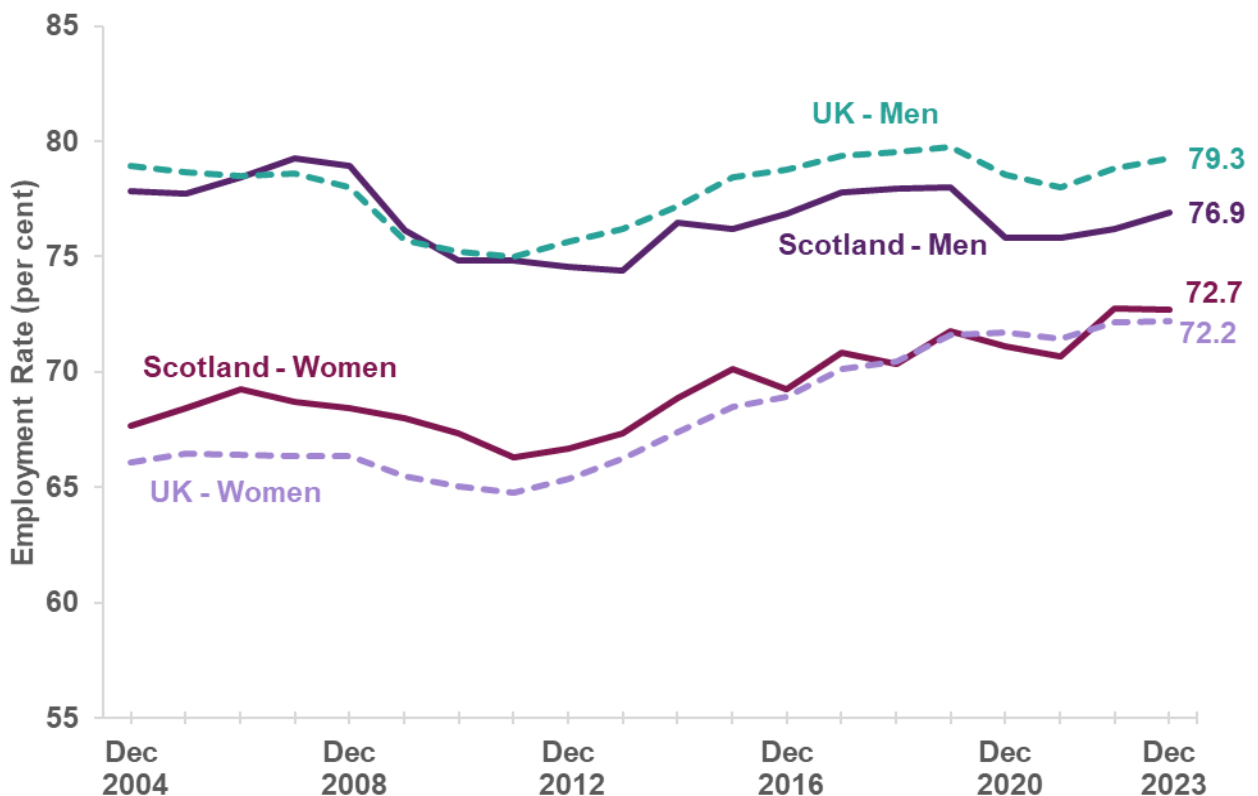
Employment rate by sex (APS)

The employment rate for men in the UK has typically been above the corresponding rate in Scotland, however the gap has increased in recent years.

The employment rate for women in Scotland had typically been above the employment rate for women in the UK. However, from 2016 employment rates for women in Scotland and the UK have been similar.

Figure 1: Employment rate for men in Scotland in January to December 2023 was 2.4 percentage points lower than the employment rate for men in the UK, while the employment rate for women in Scotland was 0.5 percentage points higher than the UK rate

Employment rates for persons aged 16 to 64 by sex, Scotland and the UK, year ending December 2004 to year ending December 2023



Source: Annual Population Survey, Jan-Dec datasets, ONS

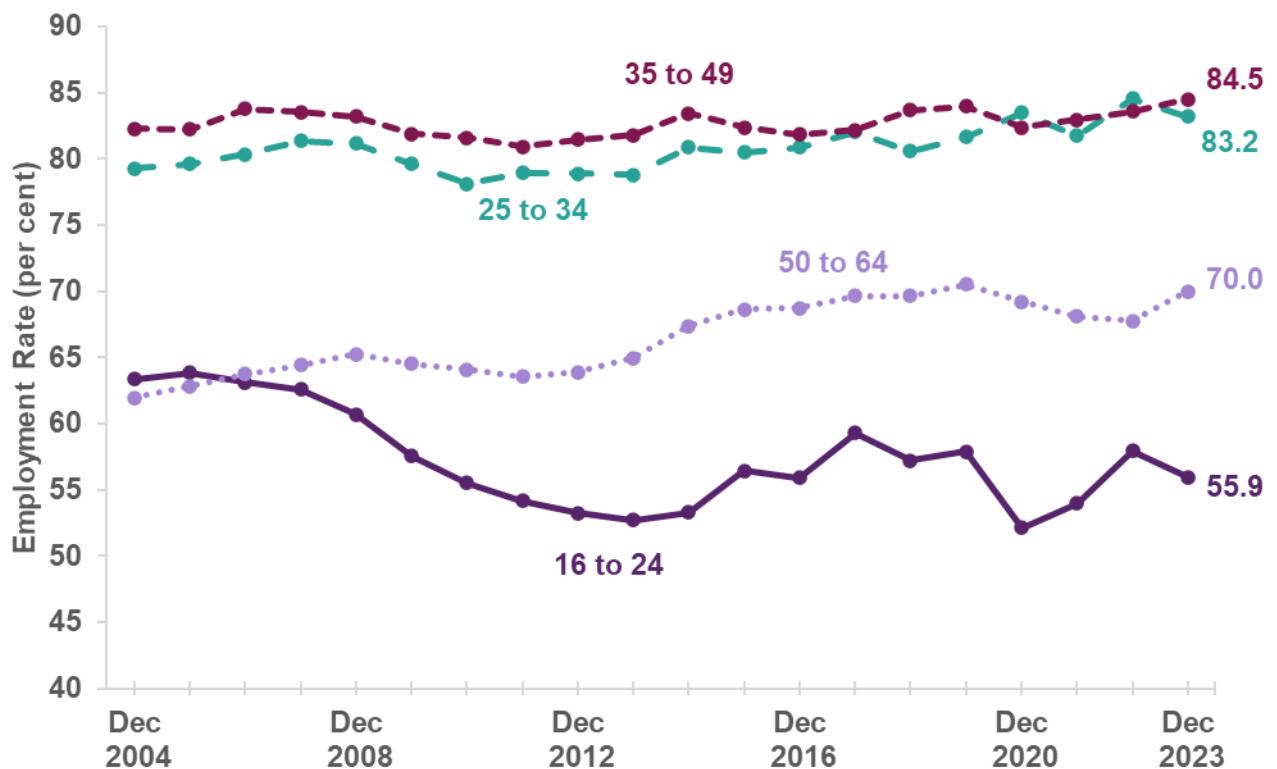
Employment rate by age (APS)

Employment in Scotland varies by age group. As may be expected, younger and older age groups have lower employment rates.

The employment rate for 16 to 24 year olds has been consistently lower than the employment rate for any other age group since January to December 2006. This is due to higher numbers of people aged 16 to 24 in education. The proportion of people aged 16 to 24 who were in full-time education was 46.6 per cent in 2023 - the highest proportion in the series.

Figure 2: Employment rate for those aged 16 to 24 in Scotland has been lower than any other age group since January to December 2006

Employment rates for persons aged 16 to 64 by age group, Scotland, year ending December 2004 to year ending December 2023



Source: Annual Population Survey, Jan-Dec datasets, ONS

Employment rate by disability (APS)

We define disability based on the Equality Act 2010. Level and rate estimates for employment by disability are all based on those aged 16 to 64 years. There is more information in the [Glossary](#) section.

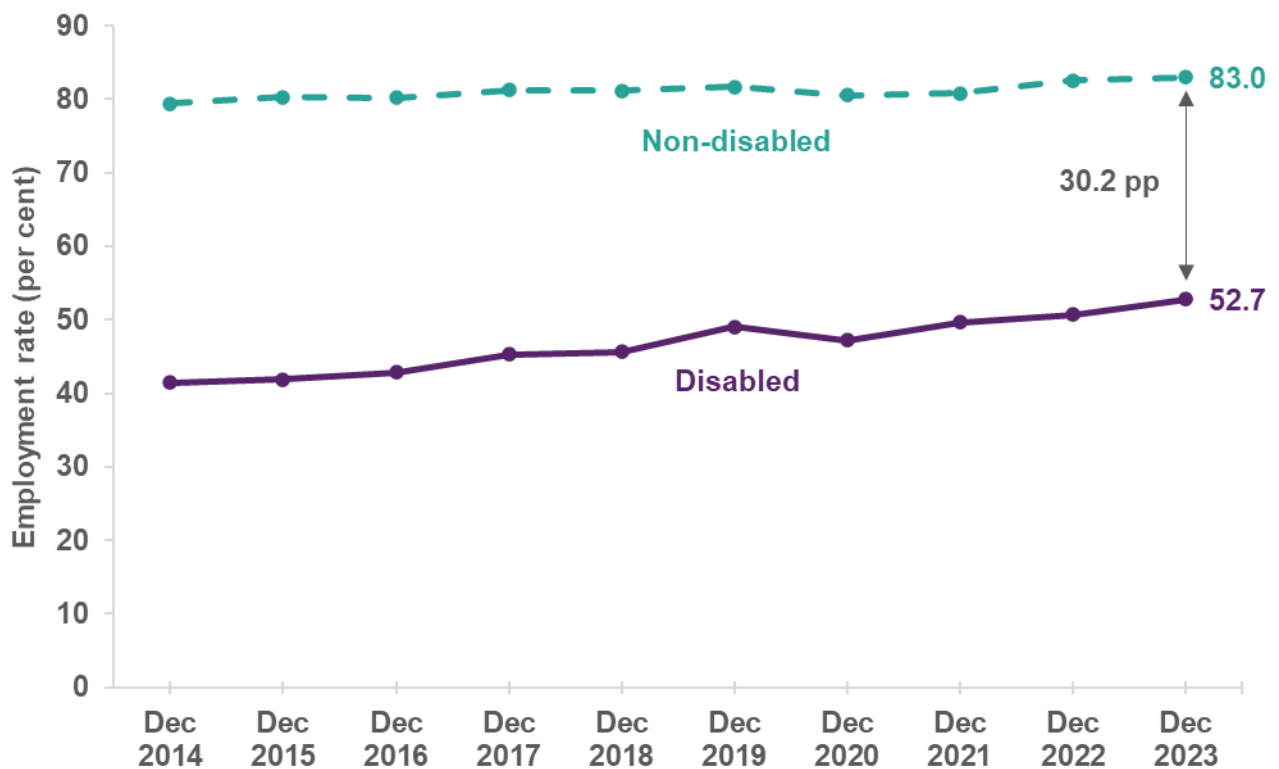
The employment rate for disabled people has been consistently lower than the employment rate for non-disabled people since January to December 2014. The employment rate for disabled people aged 16 to 64 was estimated at 52.7 per cent in January to December 2023. This was significantly lower than the employment rate for non-disabled people (83.0 per cent).

The disability employment rate gap is the difference between the employment rates for disabled and non-disabled people aged 16 to 64. It is calculated as the non-disabled employment rate minus disabled employment rate.

The disability employment rate gap has typically decreased from 37.9 percentage points (pp) in January to December 2014 to 30.2 pp in January to December 2023 – the narrowest gap in the series to date.

Figure 3: Employment rate for disabled people aged 16 to 64 has continually been lower than the employment rate for non-disabled people with the gap decreasing slowly over time

Employment rates for persons aged 16 to 64 by disability, Scotland, year ending December 2014 to year ending December 2023



Source: Annual Population Survey, Jan-Dec datasets, ONS

Employment rate by ethnicity (APS)

Respondents are asked questions about their ethnicity in the labour force survey interview. "Minority Ethnic" describes all ethnic groups excluding those who answered "White" to the first question. There is more information in the [Glossary](#) section.

There is likely to be variation between the individual ethnic groups included within the combined 'Minority ethnic' group which should be noted.

The employment rate for minority ethnic groups has been consistently lower than the employment rate for white groups. The employment rate for minority ethnic groups aged 16 to 64 was estimated at 62.0 per cent in January to December 2023 compared to 75.8 per cent for white groups.

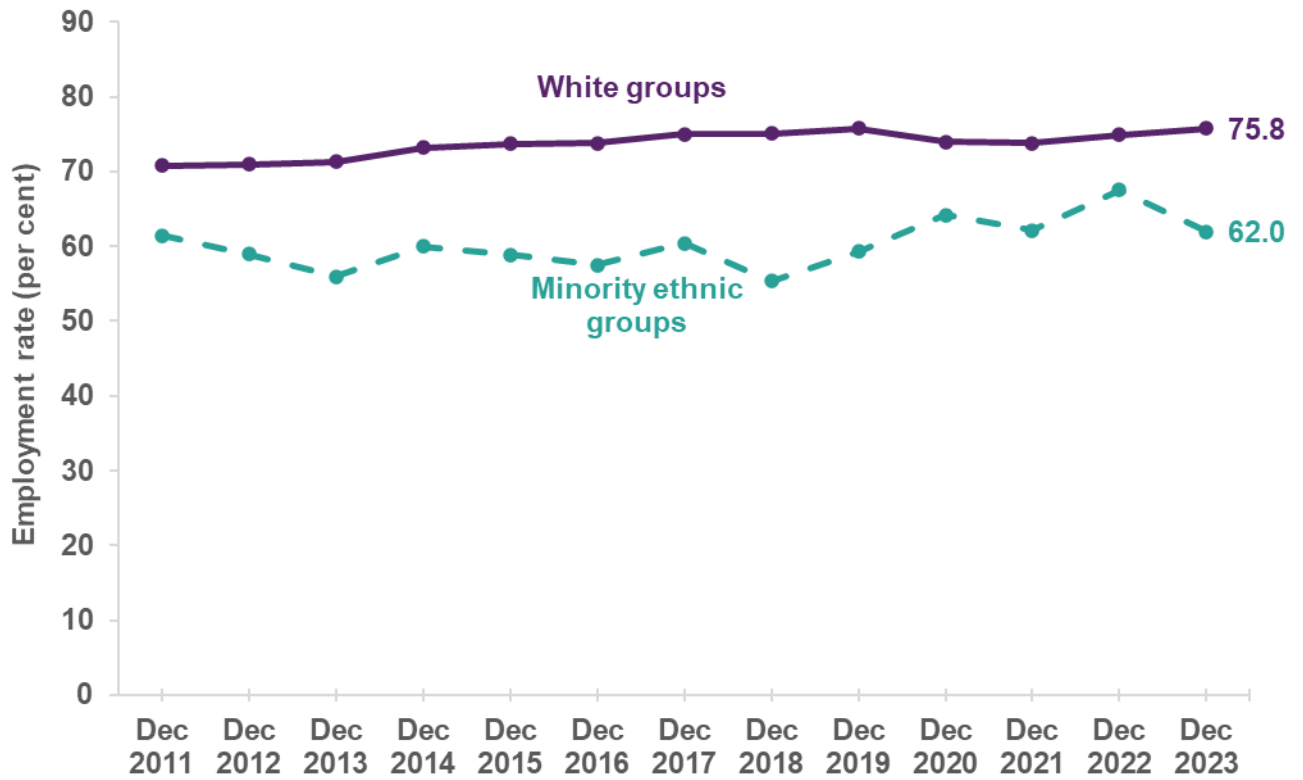
Due to minority ethnic groups being a smaller group within the Scottish population, there is more variability in the employment rate estimates for minority ethnic groups than for white groups.

The minority ethnic employment rate gap is the difference between the employment rates for minority ethnic groups and white groups aged 16 to 64. It is calculated as the employment rate for white groups minus employment rate for minority ethnic groups.

In 2023, the estimated gap between the employment rate for white groups compared with minority ethnic groups was 13.8 percentage points (pp).

Figure 4: The employment rate for minority ethnic groups aged 16 to 64 has continually been lower than the employment rate for white groups

Employment rates for persons aged 16 to 64 by ethnicity, Scotland, year ending December 2011 to year ending December 2023



Source: Annual Population Survey, Jan-Dec datasets, ONS

Payrolled Employees (HMRC PAYE RTI)

This information is based on experimental monthly estimates of paid employees and their pay from HM Revenue and Customs' (HMRC's) Pay As You Earn (PAYE) Real Time Information (RTI) data.

Early seasonally adjusted estimates for March 2024 indicate that there were 2.45 million payrolled employees in Scotland, an increase of 0.5 per cent (12,000) compared with March 2023.

Payrolled employees by age (HMRC PAYE RTI)

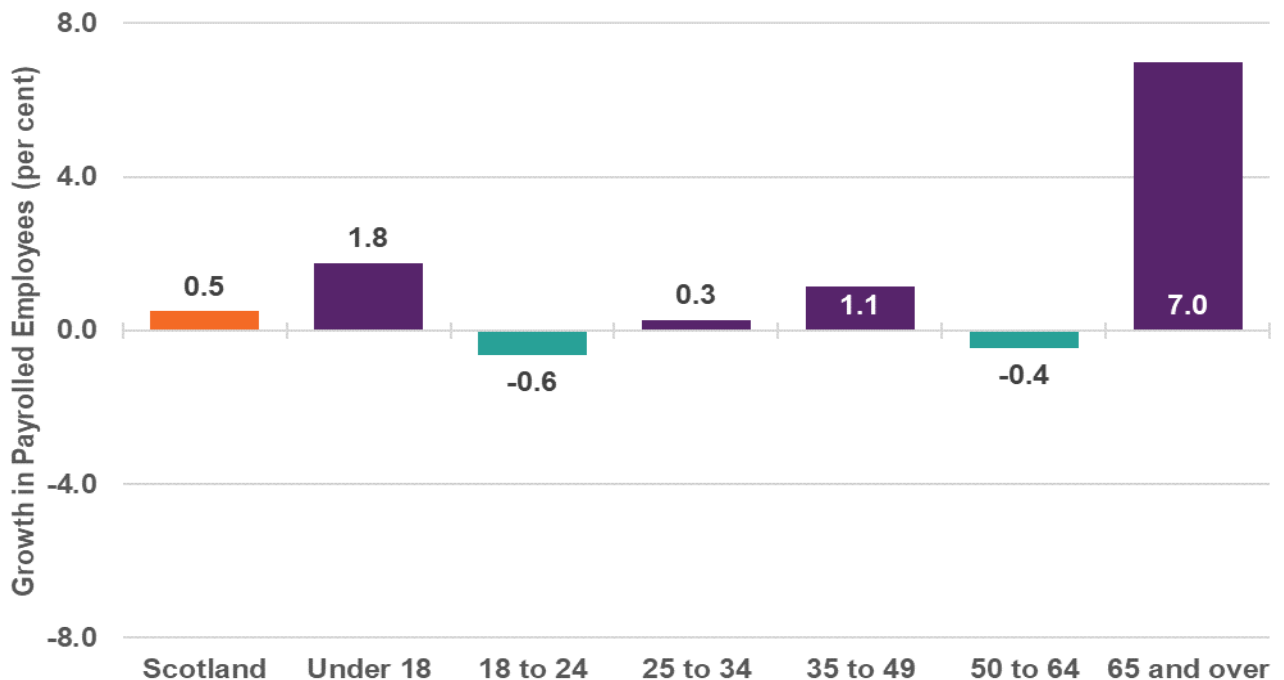
In April 2024, HMRC published monthly estimates for payrolled employees by age group up to March 2024. These estimates are based on the payrolled employees' age at the time of receiving their payment.

Of the total payrolled employees in Scotland in March 2024, 94.4 per cent were aged 18 to 64 years.

Over the year to March 2024, the number of payrolled employees increased across all age groups, except the 18 to 24 year old and 50 to 64 year old age groups.

Figure 5: The 65 and over age group saw the largest percentage increase in payrolled employees since March 2023

Annual Percentage Change in Payrolled employees by age group, Scotland, March 2023 to March 2024



Source: PAYE RTI, all industries, seasonally adjusted, HMRC

Payrolled employees by industry (HMRC PAYE RTI)

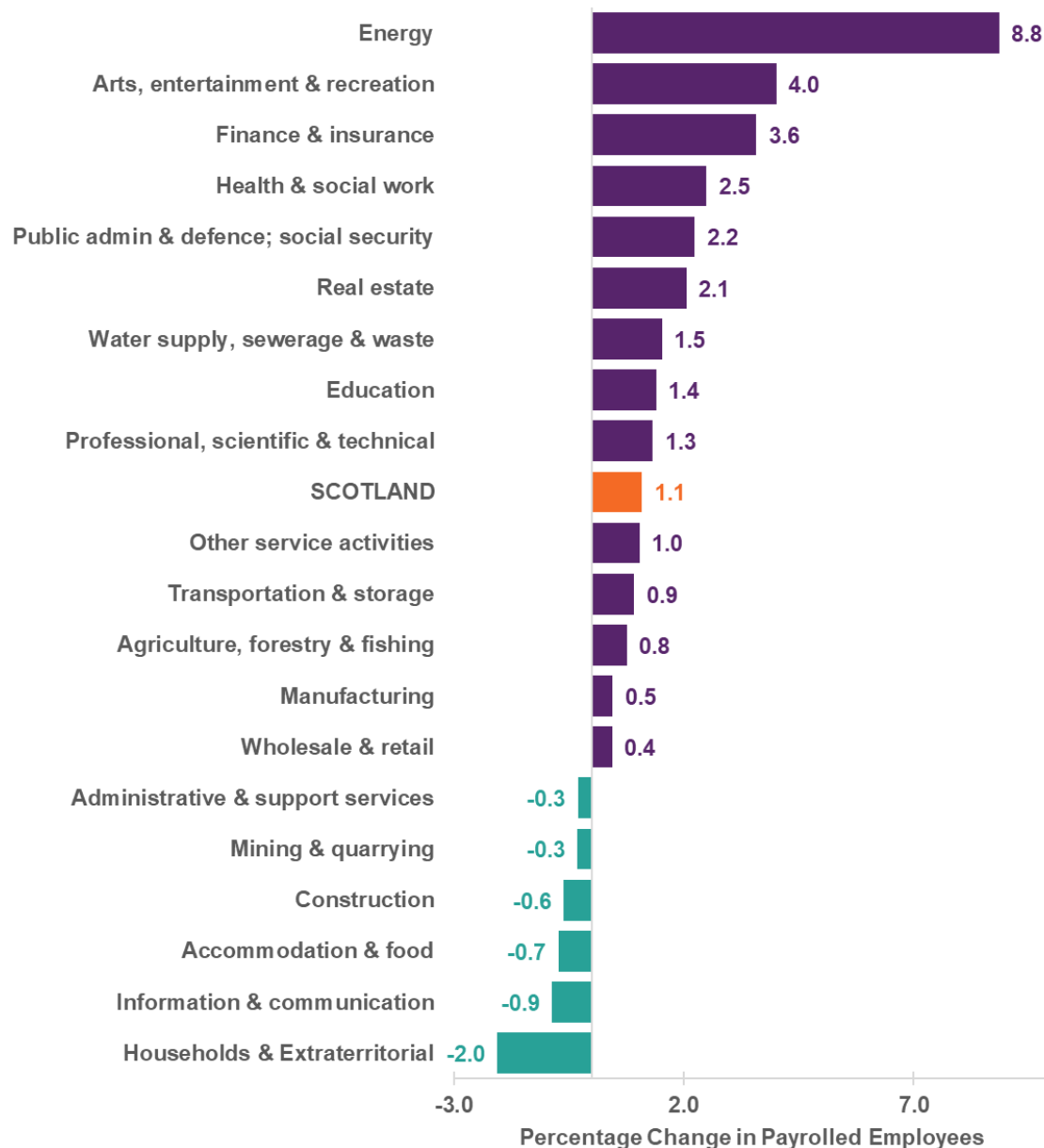
The latest available HMRC data published in February 2024 shows that payrolled employee growth varies by industry sector.

Of the 2.46 million payrolled employees in Scotland in January 2024, the highest numbers were employed in the Health and social work (15.2%); Wholesale and retail (13.5%) and Education (13.1%) industry sectors. The lowest numbers of payrolled employees were employed in the Mining and quarrying (0.8%); Energy, production and supply (0.7%); and Water supply, sewerage and waste (0.6%) and Households and extraterritorial organisations (0.3%) industries.

The Energy, production and supply industry sector has shown the largest percentage growth in payrolled employees over the year to January 2024. Six industry sectors showed a decrease over the year.

Figure 6: The energy sector has seen the largest percentage increase in payrolled employees since January 2023

Annual Percentage Change in Payrolled employees by industry sector, Scotland, January 2023 to January 2024



Source: PAYE RTI, all industries, seasonally adjusted, HMRC

Industry sectors are based on the ONS [UK Standard Industrial Classification \(SIC\) codes](#).

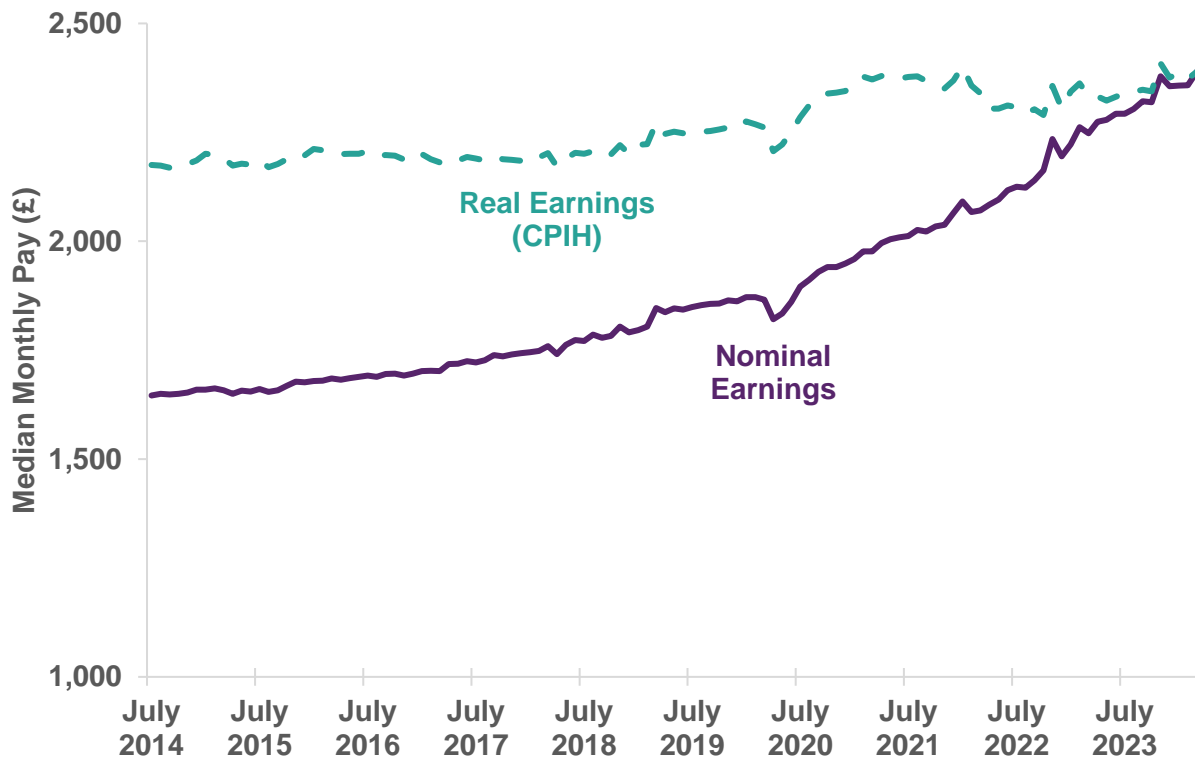
Median earnings for payrolled employees (HMRC PAYE RTI)

The latest early estimates for March 2024 indicate that median monthly pay for payrolled employees in Scotland was £2,389, an increase of 6.3 per cent compared to the same period the previous year.

Adjusted for inflation (using the [Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs \(CPIH\)](#)), real earnings have grown by 2.4 per cent over the year to March 2024 compared with nominal earnings which had grown by 6.3 per cent over the same period.

Figure 7: Real pay for payrolled employees had remained relatively constant up until the pandemic. However, real pay in March 2024 is higher than at the start of the coronavirus pandemic

Median Real and Nominal Monthly Pay for payrolled employees, seasonally adjusted, Scotland, July 2014 to March 2024



Source: PAYE RTI, all industries, seasonally adjusted, HMRC and CPIH, ONS

People not in work

ILO Unemployment rate (LFS)

ILO Unemployment measures those who are available for and actively seeking employment.

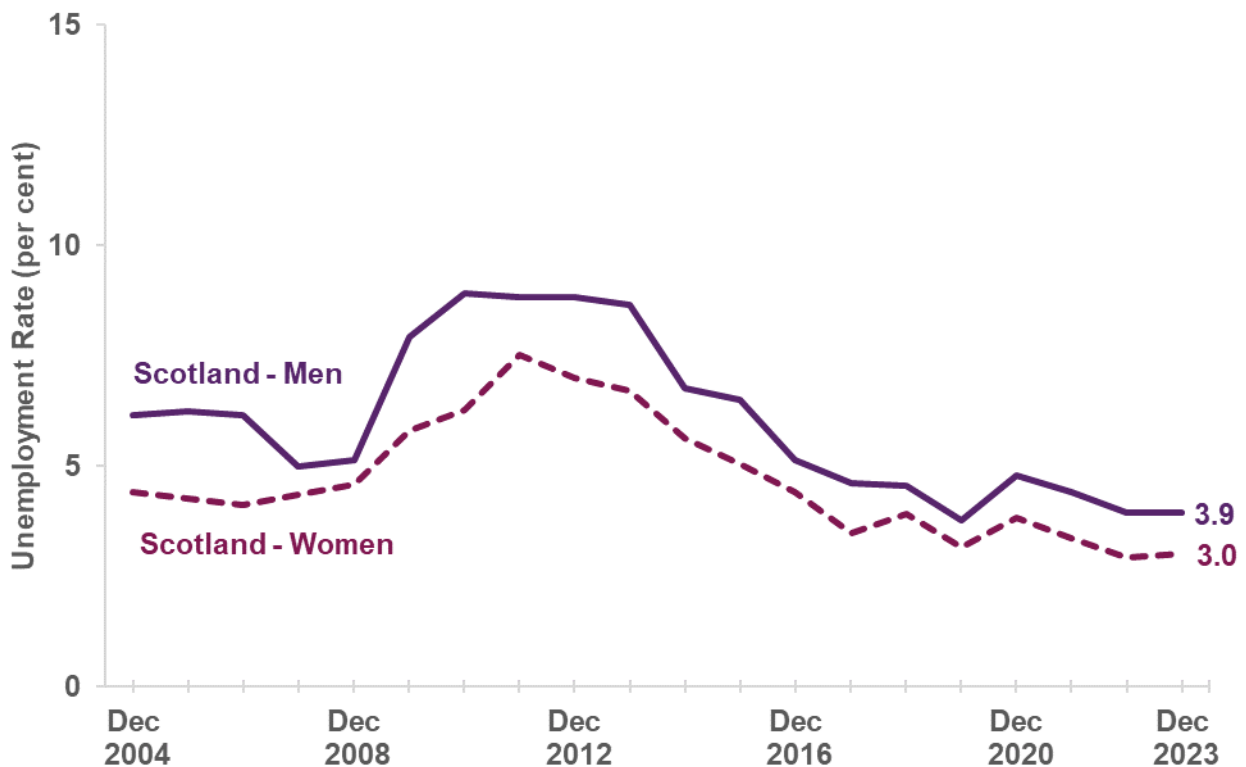
The unemployment rate for people aged 16 years and over in Scotland based on the ONS Labour Force Survey was estimated at 4.0 per cent in December 2023 to February 2024.

Unemployment rate by sex (APS)

The unemployment rate for men in Scotland has consistently been above the unemployment rate for women. In January to December 2023, the estimated unemployment rate for men in Scotland was 3.9 per cent and for women it was 3.0 per cent.

Figure 8: Unemployment rates are historically higher for men than for women in Scotland

Unemployment rates for persons aged 16 and over by sex, Scotland, year ending December 2004 to year ending December 2023



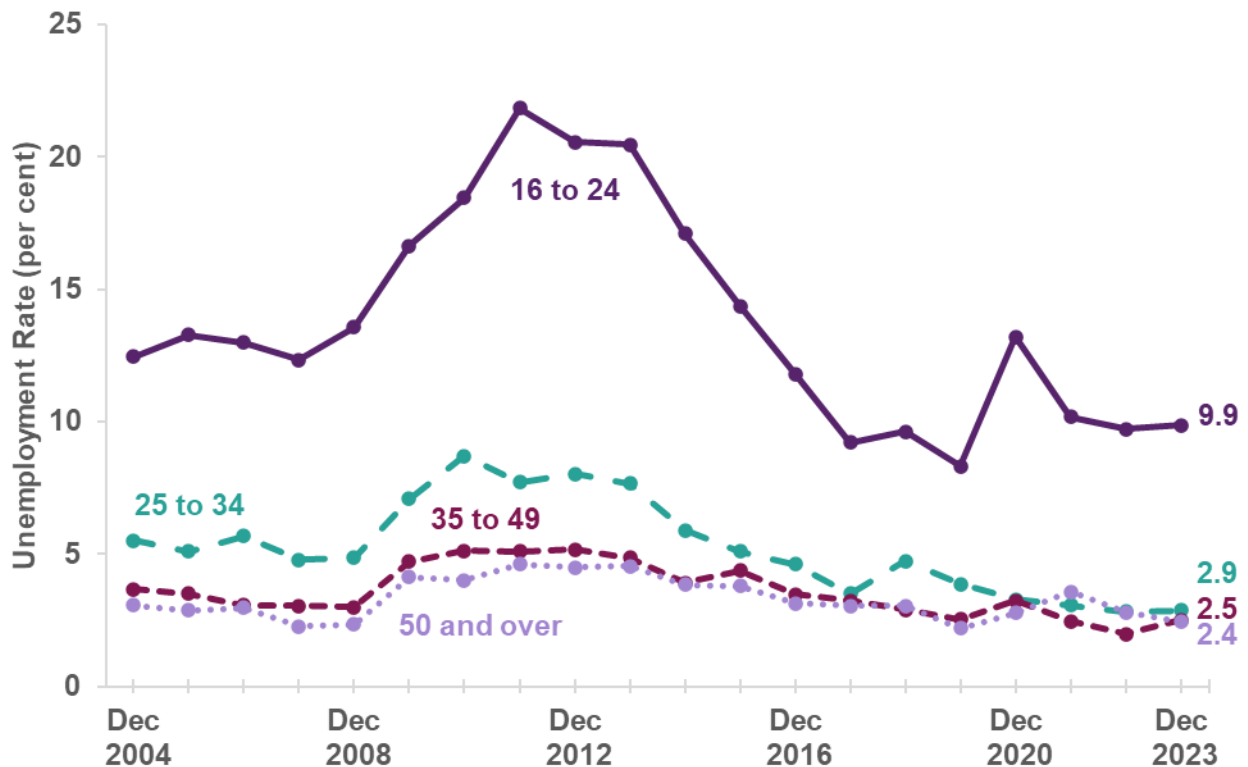
Source: Annual Population Survey , Jan-Dec datasets, ONS

Unemployment rate by age (APS)

Across the series, the unemployment rate for those aged 16 to 24 has been consistently higher than the unemployment rate for any other age group. However, the current rate is historically low for this age group.

Figure 9: Unemployment rate for those aged 16 to 24 in Scotland has been continually higher than any other age group

Unemployment rates for persons aged 16 and over by age group, Scotland, year ending December 2004 to year ending December 2023



Source: Annual Population Survey, Jan-Dec datasets, ONS

Unemployment rate by length of time unemployed (APS)

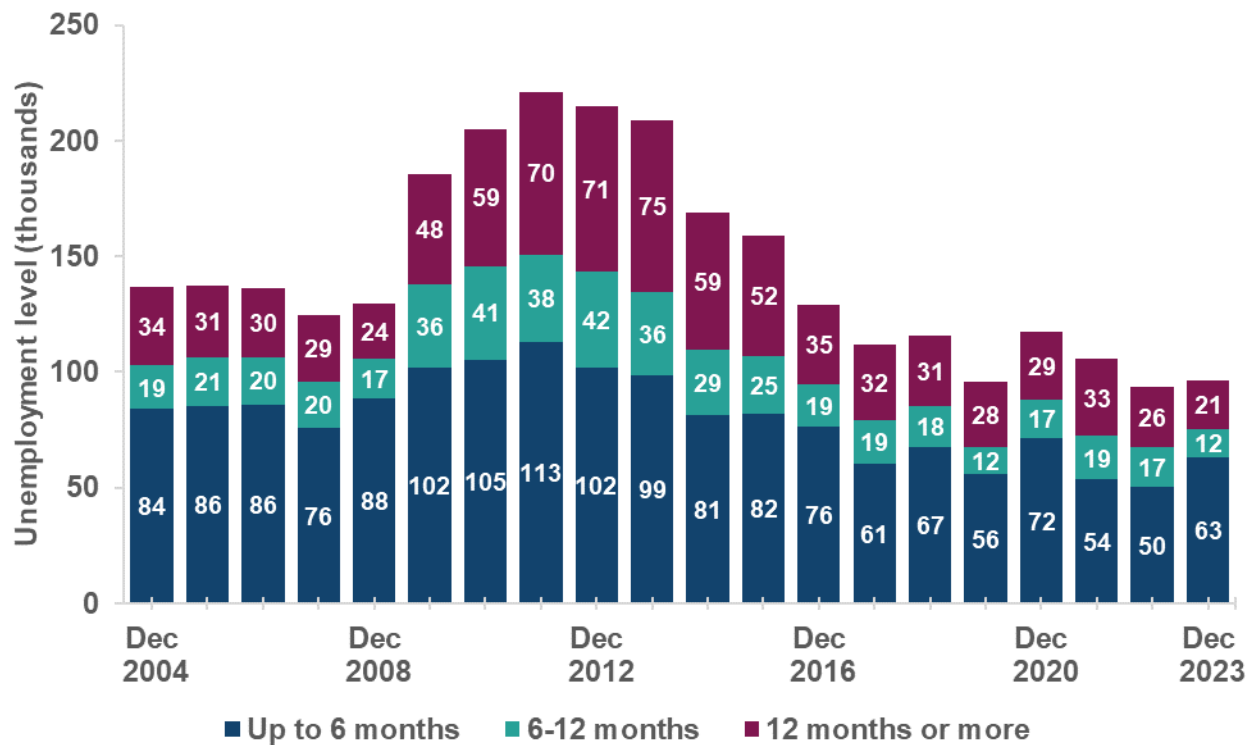
In January to December 2023, an estimated 96,400 people aged 16 and over were unemployed.

For Scotland, the majority of those who are unemployed were unemployed for a duration of less than 6 months (65.5 per cent). This proportion decreased during the coronavirus pandemic to 50.6 per cent in January to December 2021, indicating that at that time there were more people unemployed for longer durations.

Being unemployed for 12 months or more is often considered long-term unemployed. 21.6 per cent of unemployed people in January to December 2023 were estimated to be long-term unemployed.

Figure 10: The majority of people aged 16 and over who are unemployed have been unemployed for less than six months

Unemployment levels for people aged 16 and over, by duration of unemployment, Scotland, year ending December 2004 to year ending December 2023



Source: Annual Population Survey, Jan-Dec datasets, ONS

Notes: 1. The estimates for 6-12 months for January to December 2023 are based on a small sample size. Estimates may be less precise and should be used with caution.

ILO Economic Inactivity rate (LFS)

Economic inactivity measures those who are neither in work, available for work or actively seeking work.

The economic inactivity rate for people aged 16 to 64 years in Scotland based on the ONS Labour Force Survey was estimated at 22.6 per cent in December 2023 to February 2024. Scotland's economic inactivity rate was above the UK rate of 22.2 per cent.

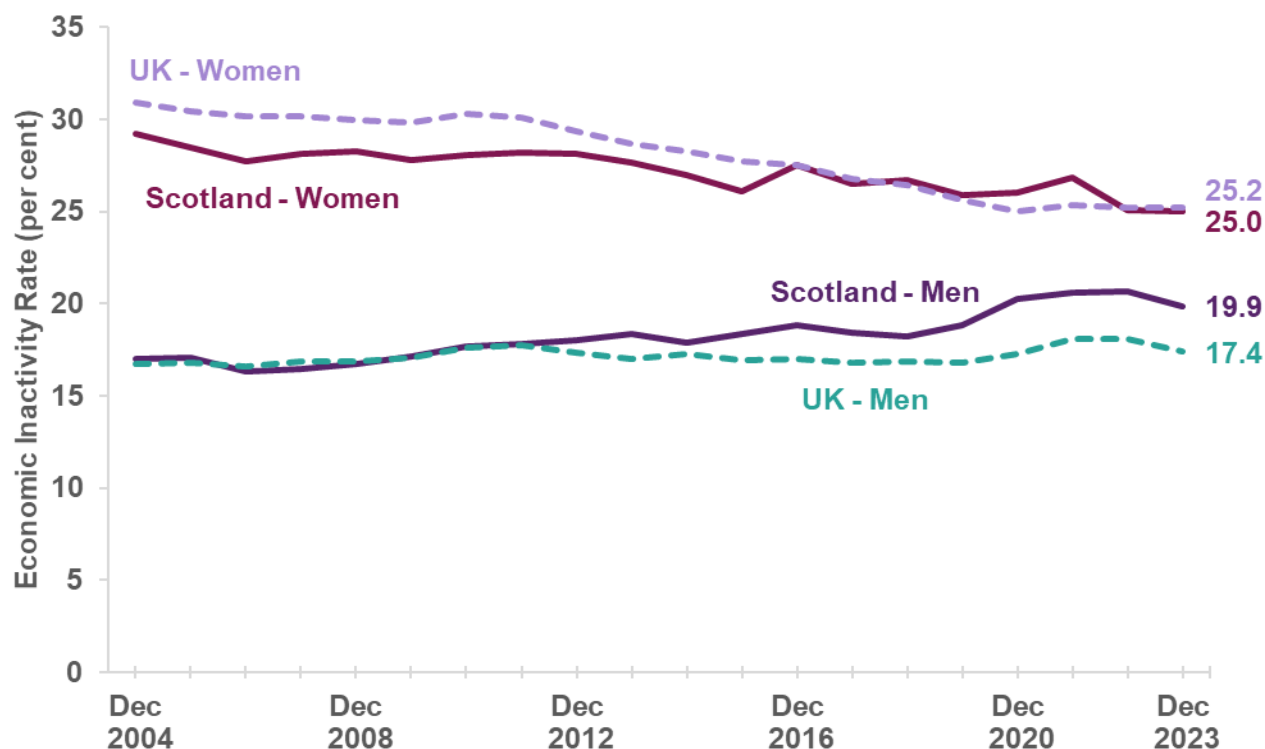
Economic Inactivity rate by sex (APS)

The inactivity rate for men in Scotland has typically been above the inactivity rate for men in the UK since January to December 2012, with the gap widening in recent years.

The inactivity rate for women in Scotland had typically been below the inactivity rate for women in the UK until January to December 2015. However from 2016, the gap has narrowed and inactivity rates for women in Scotland and the UK have been similar.

Figure 11: Economic inactivity rate for men in Scotland in January to December 2023 was 2.5 percentage points higher than the inactivity rate for men in the UK, while the inactivity rates for women in Scotland and the UK are similar

Economic inactivity rates for persons aged 16 to 64 by sex, Scotland and the UK, year ending December 2004 to year ending December 2023



Source: Annual Population Survey, Jan-Dec datasets, ONS

Economic Inactivity rate by age (APS)

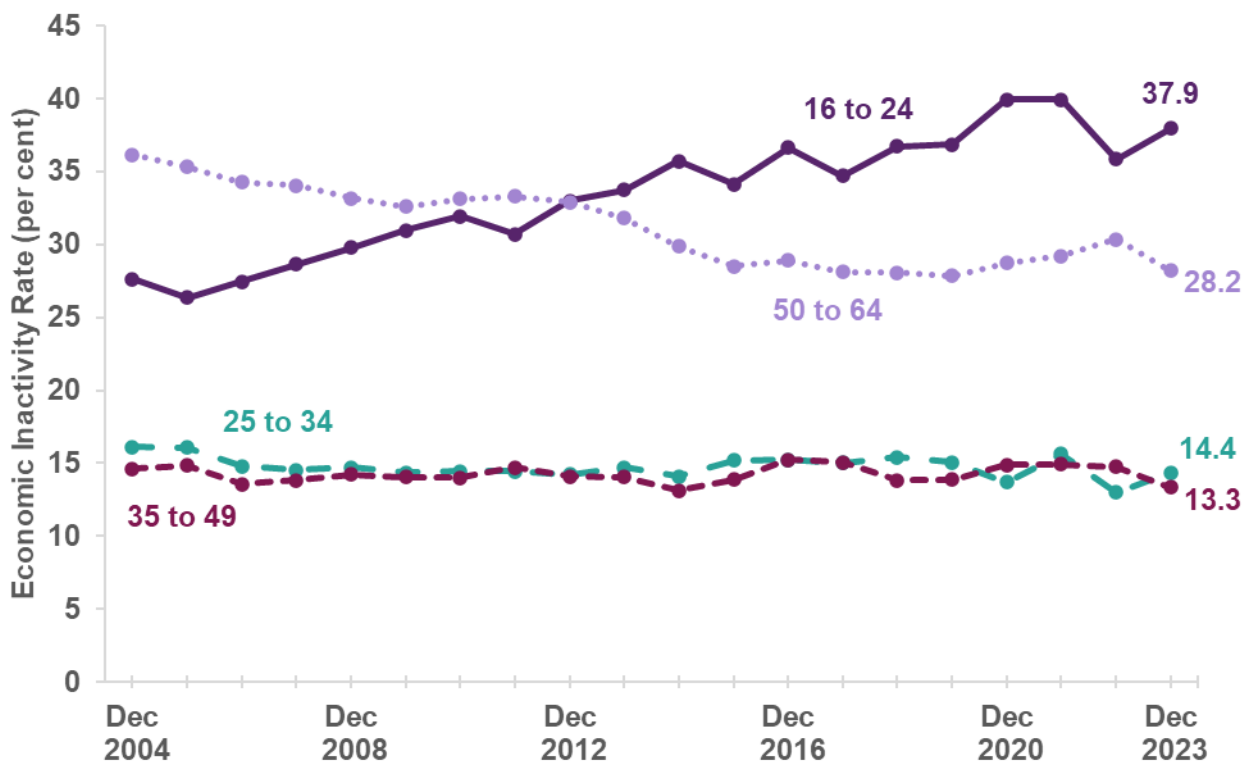
Economic inactivity in Scotland varies by age group. As may be expected, the younger and older age groups have higher inactivity rates.

Since January to December 2012, the inactivity rate for 16 to 24 year olds has been consistently higher than the inactivity rate for any other age group. This is due to higher numbers of people aged 16 to 24 being in education.

The estimated inactivity rate for those aged 50 to 64 had gradually decreased until January to December 2015 but has remained relatively constant since then.

Figure 12: Economic inactivity rate for those aged 16 to 24 in Scotland has been higher than any other age group since January to December 2012

Economic inactivity rates for persons aged 16 to 64 by age group, Scotland, year ending December 2004 to year ending December 2023



Source: Annual Population Survey, Jan-Dec datasets, ONS

Economic Inactivity rate by reasons for inactivity (APS)

“Long-term sick or disabled” was the main reason given for being inactive in Scotland. In January to December 2023, 31.6 per cent of inactive people aged 16 to 64 gave their reason for being inactive as “long-term sick or disabled”. This is higher than the UK rate of 27.5 per cent.

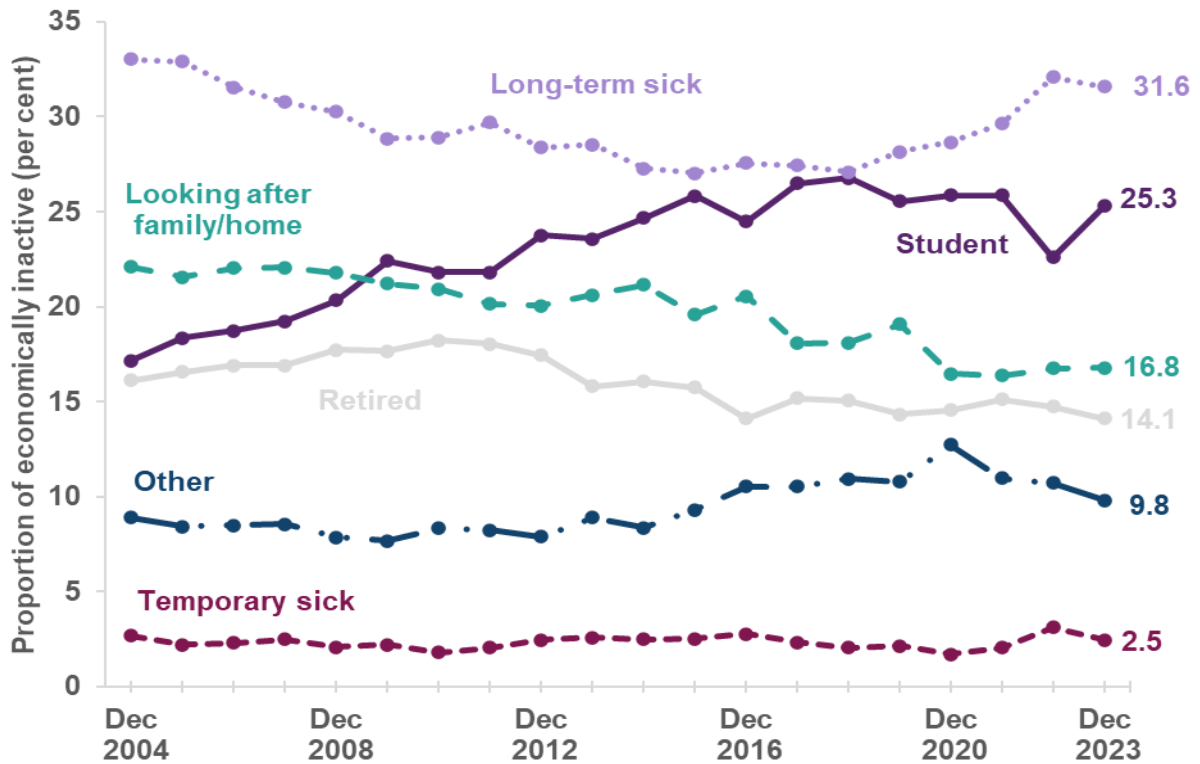
The proportions of inactive people who were long-term sick or disabled had been gradually decreasing over time. However, it has been increasing in recent years for both Scotland and the UK.

Being a student is the second most common reason for being inactive (an estimated 25.3 per cent of inactive people in January to December 2023). The proportion had been gradually increasing over time but has remained relatively constant in recent years.

“Looking after family / home” is the third most common reason reported for inactivity and has typically been decreasing over time.

Figure 13: Proportion of people aged 16 to 64 who are inactive and gave their reason for being inactive as Long-term sick/disabled had generally been decreasing over time while the proportion of students had been gradually increasing. Since January to December 2018, the proportion of students was relatively constant while long-term sick had been gradually increasing

Economic Inactivity for persons aged 16 to 64 by reason for inactivity, Scotland, year ending December 2004 to year ending December 2023



Source: Annual Population Survey, Jan-Dec datasets, ONS

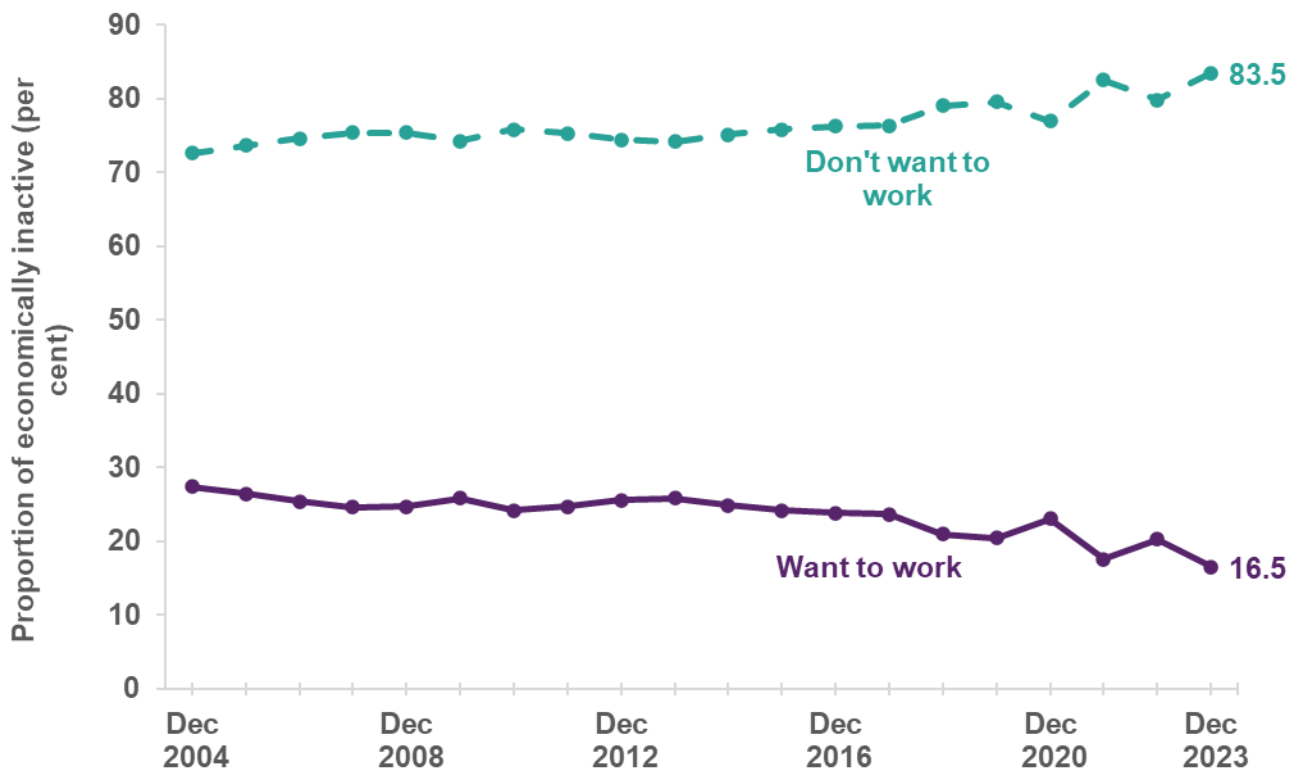
Note: 'Other' reason for being inactive includes those who are discouraged.

Economically Inactive people who want to work (APS)

The proportion of the inactive population who want to work had been relatively constant over time but has decreased in recent years. In January to December 2023, an estimated 16.5 per cent (128,400) of inactive people aged 16 to 64 reported that they wanted to work – the lowest proportion in the series.

Figure 14: Proportion of inactive people aged 16 to 64 who want to work had been relatively constant over time. However since January to December 2017, the proportion has been gradually decreasing

Economic Inactivity for persons aged 16 to 64 by whether they want to work, Scotland, year ending December 2004 to year ending December 2023



Source: Annual Population Survey, Jan-Dec datasets, ONS

Online Job Adverts (Adzuna)

These figures are innovative estimates of online job adverts provided by Adzuna, an online job search engine. The number of job adverts over time is an indicator of the demand for labour.

The total number of online job adverts in Scotland in the week to 12 April 2024 decreased by 5% when compared with the previous week and is 32% below the level seen for the equivalent period of 2023 (week ending 14 April 2023).

Figure 15: Online job adverts have recently returned to pre-Covid volumes

Online Job Adverts (Index February 2020 weekly average = 100), Scotland and UK, week ending 7 February 2018 to week ending 12 April 2024



Source: Adzuna weekly online job adverts, ONS

Note: Week-on-week changes in online job advert volumes are outlined as percentages, rather than as percentage-point changes. Percentage change figures quoted in the commentary will therefore not necessarily match the percentage-point changes observed in the chart and the ONS [Online job advert estimates dataset](#).

Employability Support Services (NOLB and FSS)

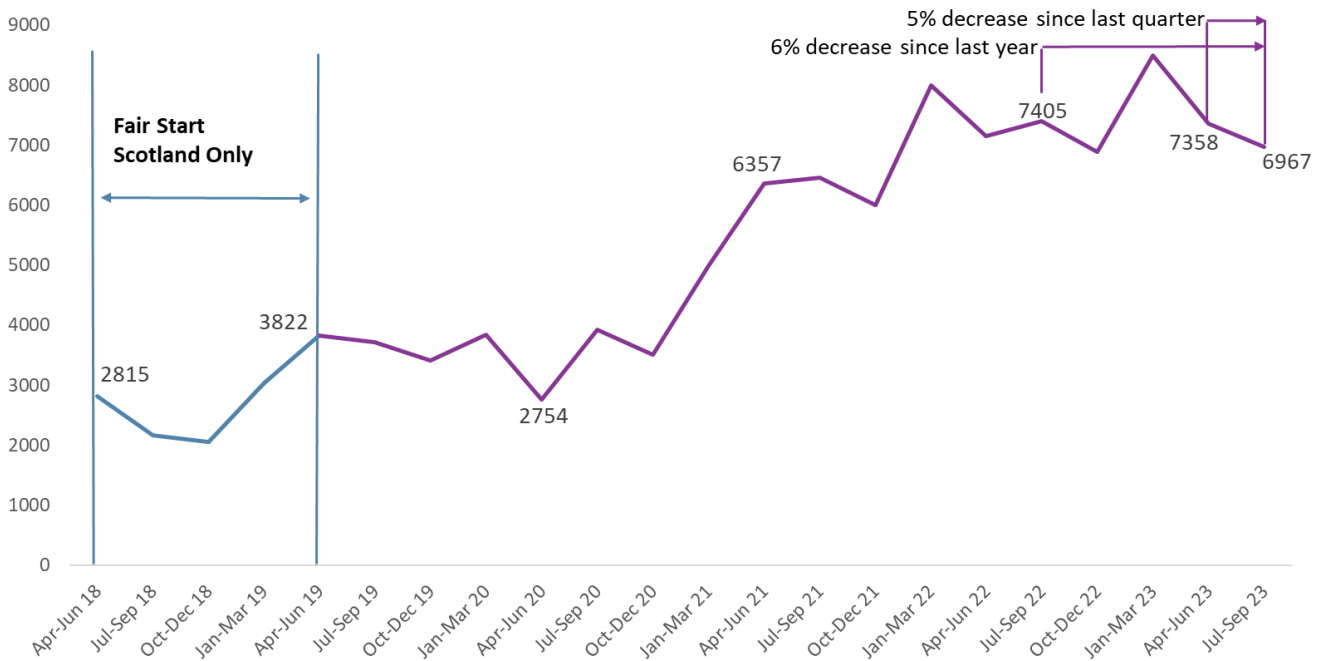
No One Left Behind (NOLB) and Fair Start Scotland (FSS) are Scottish Government funded employability support services. Both are distinct approaches to employability support, varying over time in support offered and groups targeted.

So far, there have been a combined 111,105 starts between Fair Start Scotland and No One Left Behind.

There have been 63,763 starts for FSS from April 2018 to September 2023 and 47,342 starts for NOLB from April 2019 to September 2023.

Figure 16: Starts on employability services in Scotland decreased over the quarter and year

Starts on No One Left Behind and Fair Start Scotland, by Quarter, April 2018 to September 2023



For more information, and breakdowns by equality characteristics, please see the latest Scotland's Devolved Employment Services publication: [No One Left Behind \(Official Statistics in Development\) - Scotland's Devolved Employment Services: Statistical Summary February 2024 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

Further Labour Market Information

We will continue to review the content of this publication for future releases, focussing on the main points of interest.

For further information relating to the labour market in Scotland, please find below a table which includes other Scottish Government labour market statistics publications.

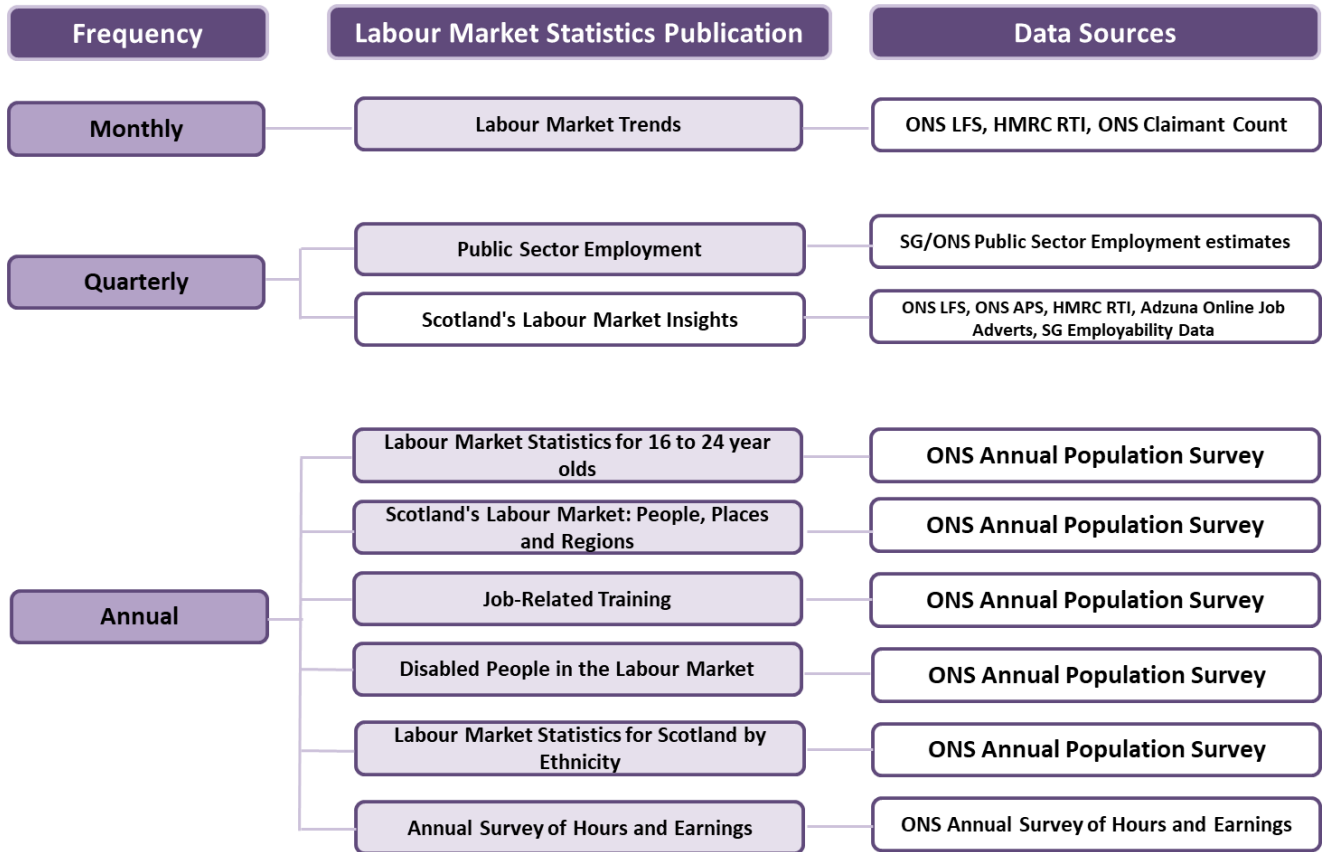
Table 1: Table of Scottish Government Labour Market Statistics publications

Publication	Link to publication
Labour Market Trends	Labour Market Trends: April 2024 - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)
Labour Market Statistics for 16 to 24 year olds: Scotland and the United Kingdom	Labour Market Statistics for 16 to 24 year olds: Scotland and the United Kingdom - January to December 2023 - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)
Labour Market Statistics for Scotland by Disability	Labour Market Statistics for Scotland by Disability: January to December 2022 - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)
Quarterly Public Sector Employment in Scotland Statistics	Public Sector Employment in Scotland Statistics for 4th Quarter 2023 - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)
Annual survey of hours and earnings	Annual survey of hours and earnings: 2023 - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

For more in depth economic analysis and insight on the Scottish economy as a whole, please see the latest Scottish Economic Insights report: [Scottish economic insights: November 2023 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot).

Figure 17: Scottish Government Labour Market Statistics publications

Infographic showing Scottish Government Labour Market Statistics publications, frequency of each release and sources of data

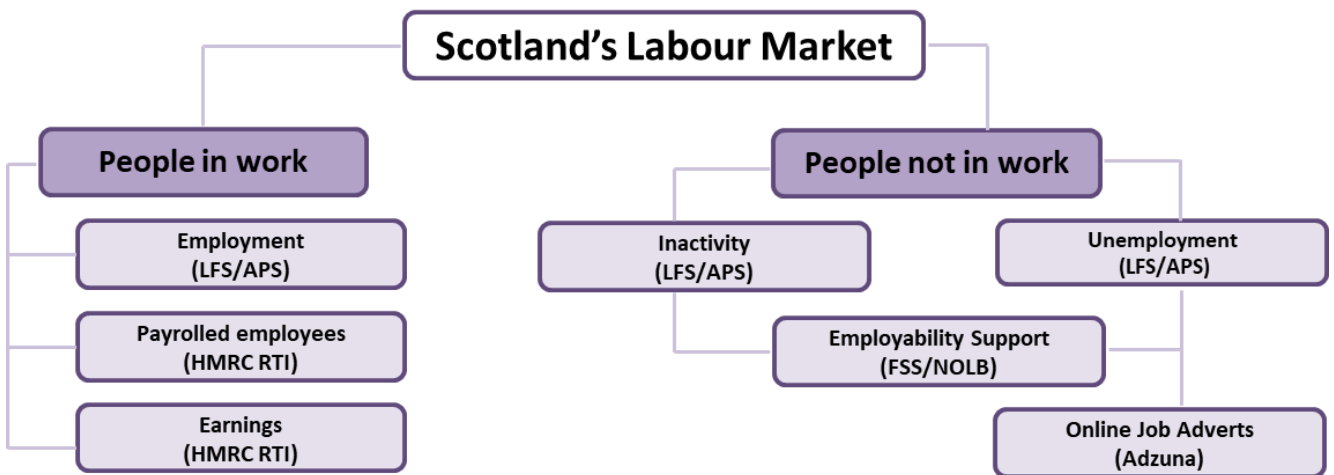


Data and Methodology

Further to the [Labour Market Trends publication](#) that was released on 16 April 2024, this publication provides more detailed trends and analysis for topics of interest from a wider range of labour market data sources for Scotland. Trends are shown for Scotland with some comparisons provided with the UK.

Figure 18: Measures and data sources presented in this publication

Infographic showing measures and data sources included in this publication for people in work and people not in work



Note that the majority of participants receiving employment support were unemployed or inactive before joining No One Left Behind, however a small proportion were employed when starting.

The statistics in this release are Accredited Official Statistics or Official Statistics in Development. Information on the data sources is given in the [Data sources](#) section.

Where can labour market data for Scotland be accessed

The data contained in this release can be obtained from the following sources:

Table 2: Table of data sources and where the data can be accessed

Data Source	Where data can be accessed
ONS Regional Labour Market publication	Labour market in the regions of the UK Statistical bulletins - Office for National Statistics
Quarterly ONS Annual Population Survey	Regional labour market: headline indicators for Scotland - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)
Monthly HMRC Pay As You Earn (PAYE) Real Time Information (RTI) – Payrolled employees and median pay	Earnings and employment from Pay As You Earn Real Time Information, UK Statistical bulletins - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)
Weekly Adzuna Online Job Adverts	Online job advert estimates - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)

Further labour market information for Scotland from the ONS Annual Population Survey is also published on [Nomis](#)

Data sources

ONS have published a [Comparison of labour market data sources methodology](#) document which compares data sources and discusses some of the main differences.

ONS Labour Force Survey

The Labour Force Survey is a survey of UK households collected and published by the Office for National Statistics. Information are obtained from a sample survey and are therefore subject to some error. LFS estimates are currently badged as official statistics in development until further review.

ONS Annual Population Survey

The APS combines results from the ONS Labour Force Survey (LFS) with the English, Welsh and Scottish LFS boosts. This provides a larger annual sample of households. Compared with the quarterly LFS, the annual data is statistically more robust. Estimates for local areas and smaller populations (including those aged 16 to 24 years) are more accurate as a result.

The APS is the Accredited Official Statistics source for labour market indicators by region and smaller groups of the population.

The population totals used for the latest APS estimates use projected growth rates from Real Time Information data for UK, EU and non-EU populations based on 2021 patterns. The total population used for the APS therefore does not take into account any changes in migration, birth rates, death rates, and so on, since June 2021, so level estimates may be under- or over-estimating the true values and should be used with caution. Estimates of rates will, however, be robust.

ONS Annual Population Survey (APS) estimates have not been reweighted to the new population estimates used for the LFS. Consequently, all APS estimates remain weighted to the previous population totals, which will be inconsistent with those used for ONS Labour Force Survey (LFS) in the latest periods.

APS estimates remain accredited official statistics at this time. However, ONS are carrying out analysis to assess the impact of falling sample sizes on the quality of APS estimates.

Labour Market Transformation

On 2 November 2023, ONS published an article on the [Labour Force Survey: planned improvements and its reintroduction](#). The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has been facing the challenge of falling response rates for household surveys, as have other comparable countries. ONS have therefore developed a comprehensive plan to address these concerns and to re-introduce the Labour

Force Survey. The Annual Population Survey is partly composed of Labour Force Survey estimates.

ONS are transforming the LFS. They are publishing [Labour market transformation articles](#) providing updates on the transformation of labour market statistics.

ONS also welcome any feedback on this latest update and their plans. Please email them at labour.market.transformation@ons.gov.uk to tell them what you think.

Scottish Government are stakeholders in the transformation of the labour force survey. To provide any feedback on labour market statistics for Scotland please feedback to LMStats@gov.scot

Other sources

This publication also contains HMRC PAYE Real Time Information (RTI) on median monthly earnings and payrolled employees. These are classed as Official Statistics in Development.

HMRC RTI

This release covers people paid through the HMRC's Pay As You Earn (PAYE) system where their pay is reported through the Real Time Information (RTI) system.

Information presented in this release are experimental monthly estimates of the number of payrolled employees and their median earnings. It includes UK and geographical regions (NUTS1) early estimates of payrolled employment and median pay for the most recent month.

Statistics in this release are based on people who are employed in at least one job paid through HMRC's PAYE system and the monthly estimates reflect the average for each day of the calendar month.

The publication and background information can be accessed on the [ONS website](#).

Adzuna Online Job adverts

Adzuna is an online job search engine who collate information from thousands of different sources in the UK. These range from direct employers' websites to recruitment software providers to traditional job boards thus providing a comprehensive view of current online job adverts. Adzuna is working in partnership with ONS and have made data available for analysis including online advert job descriptions, job titles, job locations, job categories and salary information. The data provided are a point-in-time estimate of all job adverts indexed in Adzuna's job search engine during the point of data extraction. For more information see:

[Online job advert estimates publication, ONS](#)

Reliability of estimates

Estimates from the ONS Annual Population Survey for January to December 2004 through to January to December 2023 are presented. For the latest time period, the sample size is around 8,500 households in Scotland.

The ONS Labour Force Survey (LFS) and Annual Population Survey (APS) are sample surveys. As such, these estimates are subject to an associated sampling error that decreases as the sample size increases. It is the nature of sampling variability that the smaller a group is the (proportionately) less precise an estimate is. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) have published a detailed guidance note on this. Shading is one method used by ONS to indicate where estimates should be used with caution. The Accredited Official Statistics marking for the APS reflects the larger sample size for headline estimates of Labour Market indicators for smaller groups of the population for Scotland.

Employees who were furloughed between April 2020 and the end of September 2021 were classed as employed, but temporarily away from work. This is consistent with labour market definitions [outlined by ONS](#).

Confidence Intervals

Confidence limits can be used to assess the range of values that the true value lies between. 95 per cent confidence intervals for rates are included in all tables and charts.

What does the 95 per cent confidence limit mean?

If, for example, we have an APS estimate and confidence limit of 63 per cent \pm 0.27, this means that 19 times out of 20 we would expect the true rate to lie between 62.73 per cent and 63.27 per cent. Only in exceptional circumstances (1 in 20 times) would we expect the true rate to be outside the confidence interval around the APS estimate. Thus the smaller the confidence limits, the more reliable the estimate is.

The confidence limits use a design factor of 1, which may not be likely in some cases but given the lack of further information an average design factor of 1 is assumed to be reasonable. Further information on estimating confidence intervals can be found in the [LFS user guidance](#).

Statistical Significance

Statistical significance is based on 95 per cent Confidence Intervals. Statistical significance means that the change was large enough that it is unlikely to have resulted only from the variable nature of the sample.

Quality Assurance

Annual Population Survey microdata is collected and produced by the ONS. Scottish Government statisticians receive early access to perform quality assurance checks.

When producing estimates for this publication, Scottish Government statisticians conduct in-depth quality assurance.

These checks include:

- analysis of the sample size obtained in the collection process
- production of estimates from the microdata using statistical software and relevant coding
- cross checking of coding between team members

Further checks relate to:

- crosschecking historical time series data with previously published results
- benchmarking the results against other relevant data sources

Glossary

Economically active: The population who are either in employment or unemployed.

Economically inactive: People not in employment and who do not meet the criteria for unemployment. This group includes:

- those who want a job but who have not been seeking work in the last 4 weeks
- those who want a job and are seeking work but not available to start
- those who do not want a job

For example, students not working or seeking work and those in retirement.

Employment: There are two main ways of looking at employment: the number of people with jobs or the number of jobs. These two concepts represent different things as one person can have more than one job. The number of people in employment is measured via the Labour Force Survey and consist of those aged 16 and over. Employment measures the number of people who did at least one hour of paid work or had a job they were temporarily away from. People who do unpaid work in a family business and people on Government-supported training and employment programs are also included. This is in accordance with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) definition.

Unemployment: The ILO definition of unemployment covers people who are 16 years and over:

- without a job, have been actively seeking work in the past four weeks and are available to start work in the next fortnight

or

- out of work, have accepted a job and are waiting to start it in the next two weeks

Employment rate: The proportion of people aged between 16 and 64 years who are in employment.

Unemployment rate: The proportion of economically active people aged 16 and over who are employed.

Economic inactivity rate: The number of economically inactive people expressed as a percentage of the relevant population.

Sex: Sex is self-reported by respondents participating in the Annual Population Survey (APS). No documentation is asked for by the interviewer or provided by the respondent. Hence, analysis is based on 'sex' rather than 'gender'.

Disability: From 2014, the definition of disability is based on the 2010 Equality Act definition. This harmonised definition is based on self-reported health conditions. A condition will have lasted 12 months or more and have a substantial impact on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. The 2010 Equality Act superseded the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995, for Great Britain but not Northern Ireland. The DDA was the basis of the published APS estimates prior to 2013.

Ethnicity: Estimates for white and minority ethnic groups are presented using the variables available on the Annual Population Survey data and are consistent with the ONS labour market output for [labour market status by ethnic group](#).

Questions on ethnic group have been asked in the APS since it started in 2004. Changes made in January and April 2011 brought the questions in line with 2011 Census data. As such, a break in the series exists before 2011 and only data from 2011 onwards is included.

Currently in the APS respondents are asked “what is your ethnic group?” and are given the following options to choose from:

- “White”
- “Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups”
- “Asian/Asian Scottish/Asian British”
- “African”
- “Caribbean or Black”
- “Arab”
- “Other ethnic group”

Other questions ask for more detail about respondent's ethnic group. It is important that results should be presented in as much detail as possible but this is often not possible due to the robustness of the sample. The problem of small estimates and samples can be overcome by combining categories. This is not ideal as it may hide inequalities that occur between separate ethnic groups.

For the purpose of the analysis presented here:

- "Minority Ethnic" includes “Mixed or Multiple”; “Asian”; “African”; “Caribbean or Black”; “Arab”, and “Other ethnic groups”. It describes all ethnic groups excluding those who answered “White” to the first question.
- “White” includes ethnic groups such as “White – Polish” and “White – Gypsy or Irish Traveller”. These ethnic groups may also suffer labour market disadvantages.

The term “Minority Ethnic” aids narrative and provides a concise terminology. The terminology used aligns with [Scottish Government guidance](#) for data collection.

Following work for the 2021 Censuses in [England and Wales](#) and [Northern Ireland](#), [Scotland’s Census 2022](#), and work being undertaken by ONS to [transform the Labour Force Survey](#), the question on ethnic group will likely evolve to better represent the people living in Scotland, the United Kingdom, and other stakeholder requirements

Further information on [Classifications and harmonisation](#) is available on the ONS website.

Median earnings: The median measures the amount earned by the average employee, i.e. the level of earnings at which half the population are above and half the population are below.

Rates: Rates represent the proportion of the population or subgroup with a certain characteristic. They allow changes in the labour market to be interpreted in a wider context by accounting for changes in the population or the number of people who are economically active. Rates can be calculated for different age groups.

For headline employment, economic activity and economic inactivity, the reference population is those aged 16 to 64. For unemployment, the reference population is the active population aged 16 and over. Thus, people aged 65 and over who continue to be economically active are included in the base while those who are economically inactive will not.

Percentage point change: Percentage points are used when comparing two percentages. The abbreviation is pp. For example, if a rate was 10% and it increased to 15%, then it increased by 5 percentage points.

Tell us what you think

We are always interested to hear from our users about how our statistics are used, and how they can be improved.

Feedback survey

We'd appreciate it if you would complete our short [feedback survey](#) on this publication.

Enquiries

For enquiries about this publication please contact:

Labour Market Statistics
Office of the Chief Economic Adviser
Telephone: 0131 244 6773
E-mail: LMStats@gov.scot

For general enquiries about Scottish Government statistics please contact:

Office of the Chief Statistician
e-mail: statistics.enquiries@gov.scot

Join our mailing list

If you would like to receive notification about statistical publications, or find out about consultations on our statistics please join the [ScotStat mailing list](#).

Future publications

Details of future publications can be found on our [forthcoming publications](#) page.