

## ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET

# Labour Market Statistics for 16 to 24 year olds: Scotland and the United Kingdom

Statistics from the ONS Annual Population  
Survey,

April 2022 to March 2023,

first published 11 July 2023

This publication contains the latest estimates of employment, unemployment and economic inactivity for 16 to 24 year olds. Estimates are for Scotland and the United Kingdom and cover the period April 2022 to March 2023. Data are sourced from the Annual Population Survey, first released on 11 July 2023 by the Office for National Statistics.

The ONS Annual Population Survey is the National Statistics source for labour market indicators by region and age. National Statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

# Key points

The latest ONS Annual Population Survey (APS) data are for April 2022 to March 2023. Some Government policies relating to COVID-19 were still in place during this time. The impact of these policies may be seen in the estimates.

The latest estimates for 16 to 24 year olds in Scotland show the unemployment rate has increased over the year, the employment rate has increased and the economic inactivity rate has decreased.

In Scotland in April 2022 to March 2023:

- the estimated employment rate for 16 to 24 year olds was 56.9 per cent
- the estimated unemployment rate for 16 to 24 year olds was 9.6 per cent
- the estimated economic inactivity rate for 16 to 24 year olds was 37.1 per cent

Compared with the previous year:

- the employment rate for 16 to 24 year olds increased by 0.6 percentage points
- the unemployment rate for 16 to 24 year olds increased by 0.4 percentage points
- the inactivity rate for 16 to 24 year olds decreased by 0.9 percentage points

Compared with the United Kingdom as a whole:

- the employment rate for 16 to 24 year olds in Scotland was higher (56.9 per cent compared to 53.7 per cent)
- the unemployment rate for 16 to 24 year olds in Scotland was lower (9.6 per cent compared to 10.4 per cent)
- the inactivity rate for 16 to 24 year olds in Scotland was lower (37.1 per cent compared to 40.1 per cent)

Comparing men and women aged 16 to 24 years in Scotland:

- the estimated employment rate for men was lower than women (54.6 per cent compared to 59.3 per cent)
- the estimated unemployment rate for men was higher than women (10.5 per cent compared to 8.6 per cent)
- the estimated economic inactivity rate for men was higher than women (38.9 per cent compared to 35.2 per cent)

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# About this publication

This publication contains the latest estimates of employment, unemployment and economic inactivity for 16 to 24 year olds. Estimates are for Scotland and the United Kingdom and cover the period April 2022 to March 2023. Data are sourced from the Annual Population Survey (APS); first released on 11 July 2023 by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

The APS combines results from the 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 National Statistics source for labour market indicators by region and age. Compared to the APS, the LFS shows similar long-term labour market trends for 16 to 24 year olds in Scotland. The ONS publish LFS estimates for 16 to 24 year olds as Official Statistics in their [monthly publication](#).

In addition to the estimates in this publication, detailed tables on labour market statistics for 16 to 24 year olds are available on the [Scottish Government website](#).

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.

## Important Note:

In July and September 2022, APS responses for periods April 2019 to March 2020 to July 2020 to June 2021 were reweighted using updated [HM Revenue and Customs \(HMRC\) Real Time Information data](#). Estimates for April 2019 to March 2020 and April 2020 to March 2021 may differ from those published in the previous April to March edition of this publication. The ONS have written an [article](#) which provides further information on the reweighting exercise.

The UK Government and Scottish Government introduced policies in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of these policies were still in place during the period of the latest APS estimates. The impact of these policies may be seen in the estimates.

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](#).

## **Labour Market Transformation**

ONS are transforming the LFS. They have published a [Labour market transformation article](#) providing an update 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](mailto:labour.market.transformation@ons.gov.uk) to tell them what you think.

## National Statistics Status

National Statistics status means that our statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value and it is our responsibility to maintain compliance with these standards.

These statistics were reviewed, as part of a [compliance check](#), against the [Code of Practice](#) in May 2021. This review found a range of positive features that demonstrate the trustworthiness, quality and value of this bulletin.

Since then we have made a number of improvements including:

- incorporating key findings; presenting the figures as “estimates” and including confidence intervals in the tables and providing more detailed information on quality assurance carried out while preparing the publication
- additional estimates have also been included for employment levels and rates for people aged 16 to 24 in local authorities

# Employment

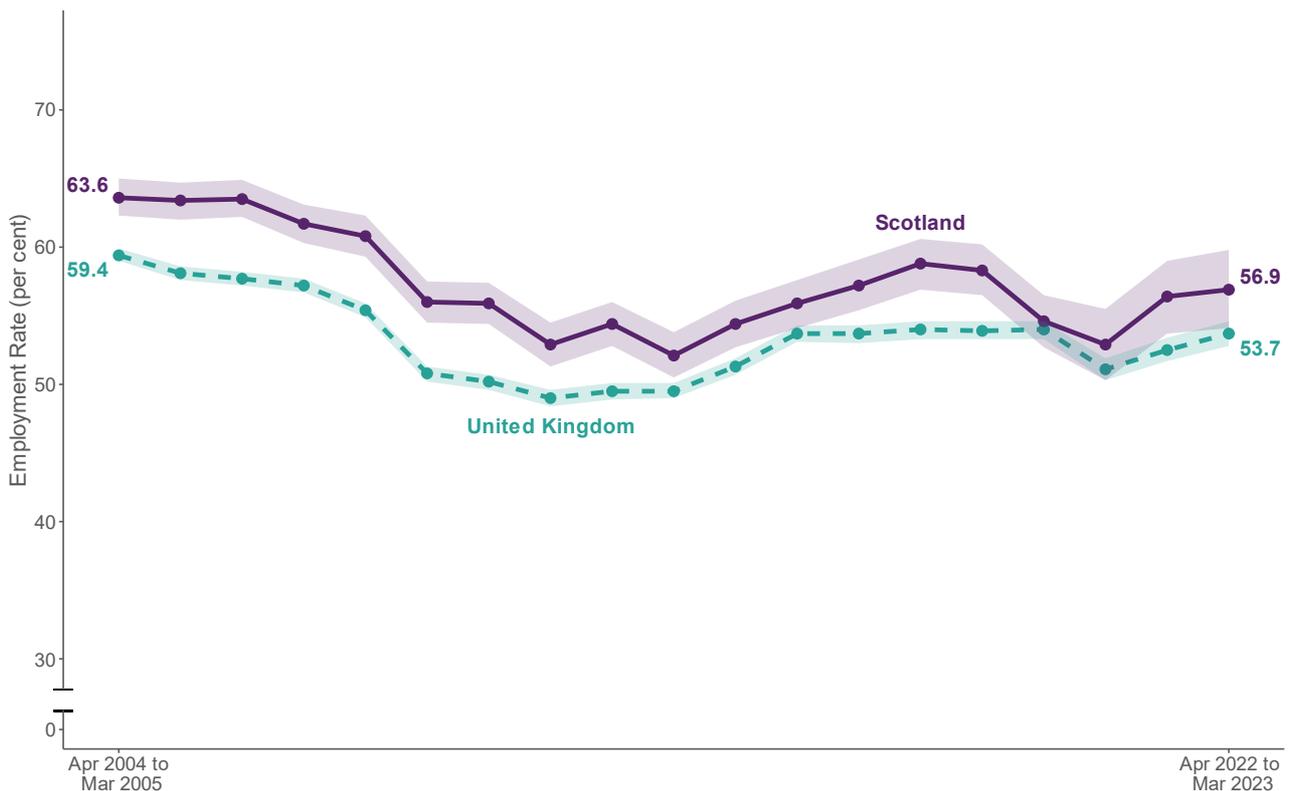
## Overall

In April 2022 to March 2023, an estimated 313,600 people aged 16 to 24 were in employment in Scotland. This is 4,700 more than the number of 16 to 24 year olds employed in April 2021 to March 2022.

The estimated employment rate for 16 to 24 year olds was 56.9 per cent in April 2022 to March 2023. This was 0.6 percentage points (pp) higher than the year before (56.4 per cent) but 1.4 pp lower than in April 2018 to March 2019 (58.3 per cent). April 2018 to March 2019 is the last data point in the April to March series before the COVID-19 pandemic.

For the United Kingdom as a whole, the estimated employment rate for 16 to 24 year olds was 53.7 per cent. This was 1.2 pp higher than a year ago (52.5 per cent) but 0.2 pp lower than in April 2018 to March 2019 (53.9 per cent).

Chart 1: Employment rate of people aged 16 to 24; Scotland and the United Kingdom; April 2004 to March 2005 through to April 2022 to March 2023



Source: Annual Population Survey, Apr-Mar datasets, ONS

Note: Shaded areas represent 95 per cent confidence intervals

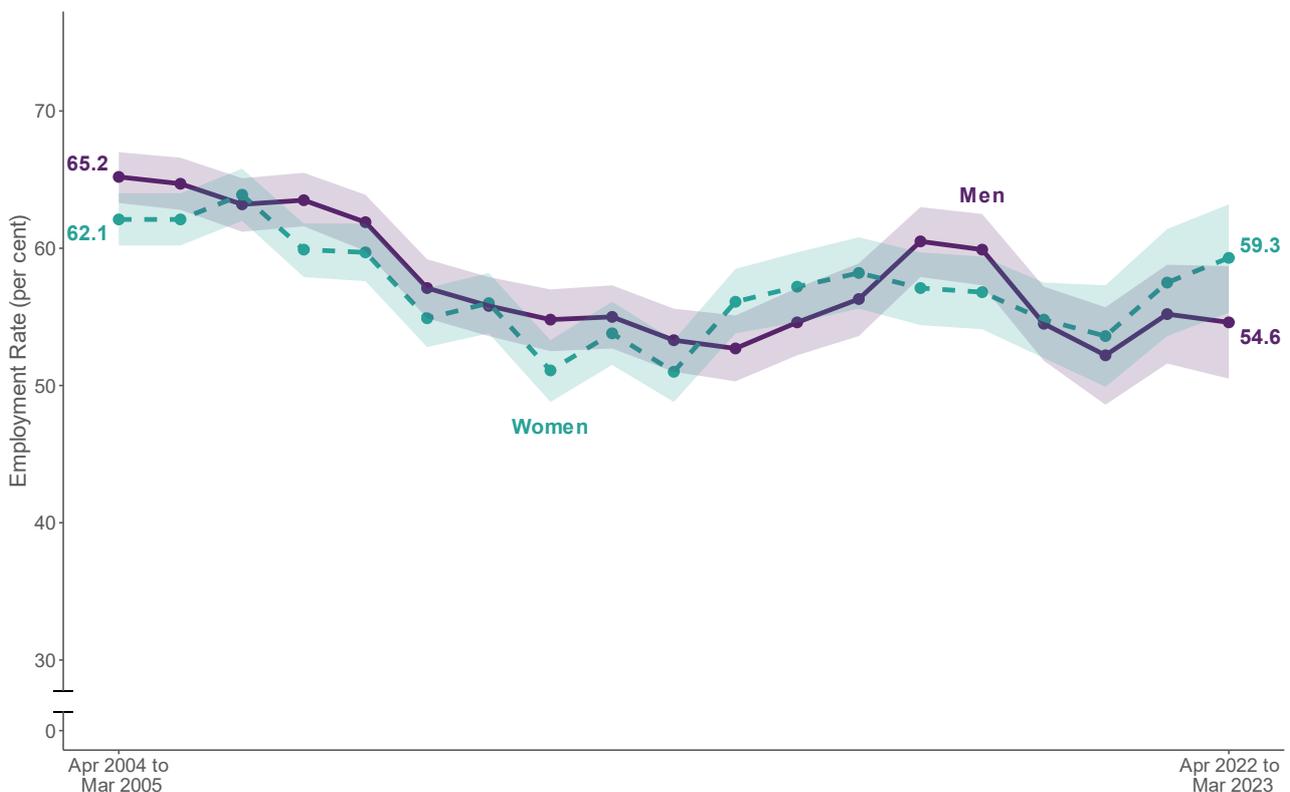
## Employment by Sex

In April 2022 to March 2023, an estimated 151,400 men and 162,200 women aged 16 to 24 were in employment in Scotland.

The estimated employment rate for 16 to 24 year old men was 54.6 per cent, 0.6 percentage points (pp) lower than a year ago and 5.3 pp lower than in April 2018 to March 2019. While the estimated employment rate for 16 to 24 year old women was 59.3 per cent, 1.8 pp higher than a year ago and 2.5 pp higher than in April 2018 to March 2019.

The change since April 2018 to March 2019 for 16 to 24 year old men represents a statistically significant change.

Chart 2: Employment rate of people aged 16 to 24 by Sex; Scotland; April 2004 to March 2005 through to April 2022 to March 2023



Source: Annual Population Survey, Apr-Mar datasets, ONS

Note: Shaded areas represent 95 per cent confidence intervals

## Employment by Local Authority areas

Some estimates in this section may come from a small sample size. When this occurs they may be less precise and users should be cautious when quoting them.

Estimates for local authority areas considered unreliable are not included. The five areas affected are:

- Highland
- Midlothian
- Moray
- Orkney Islands
- Shetland Islands

The three remaining local authority areas with the highest 16 to 24 year old employment rates in April 2022 to March 2023 were:

- Na h-Eileanan Siar (81.5 per cent)
- North Ayrshire (75.4 per cent)
- South Lanarkshire (69.6 per cent)

The three local authority areas with the lowest 16 to 24 year old employment rates were:

- Dundee City (43.9 per cent)
- Renfrewshire (44.7 per cent)
- Dumfries and Galloway (45.4 per cent)

All estimates listed above except for South Lanarkshire are from a small sample size. These estimates should be used with caution.

### Over the year (since April 2021 to March 2022)

The employment rate for 16 to 24 year olds had increased in 14 local authority areas. The employment rate decreased in 11 local authority areas. The area with the largest increase was North Ayrshire (30.2 percentage points (pp)). The area with the largest decrease was Renfrewshire (-27.8 pp). The changes for both North Ayrshire and Renfrewshire represent statistically significant changes.

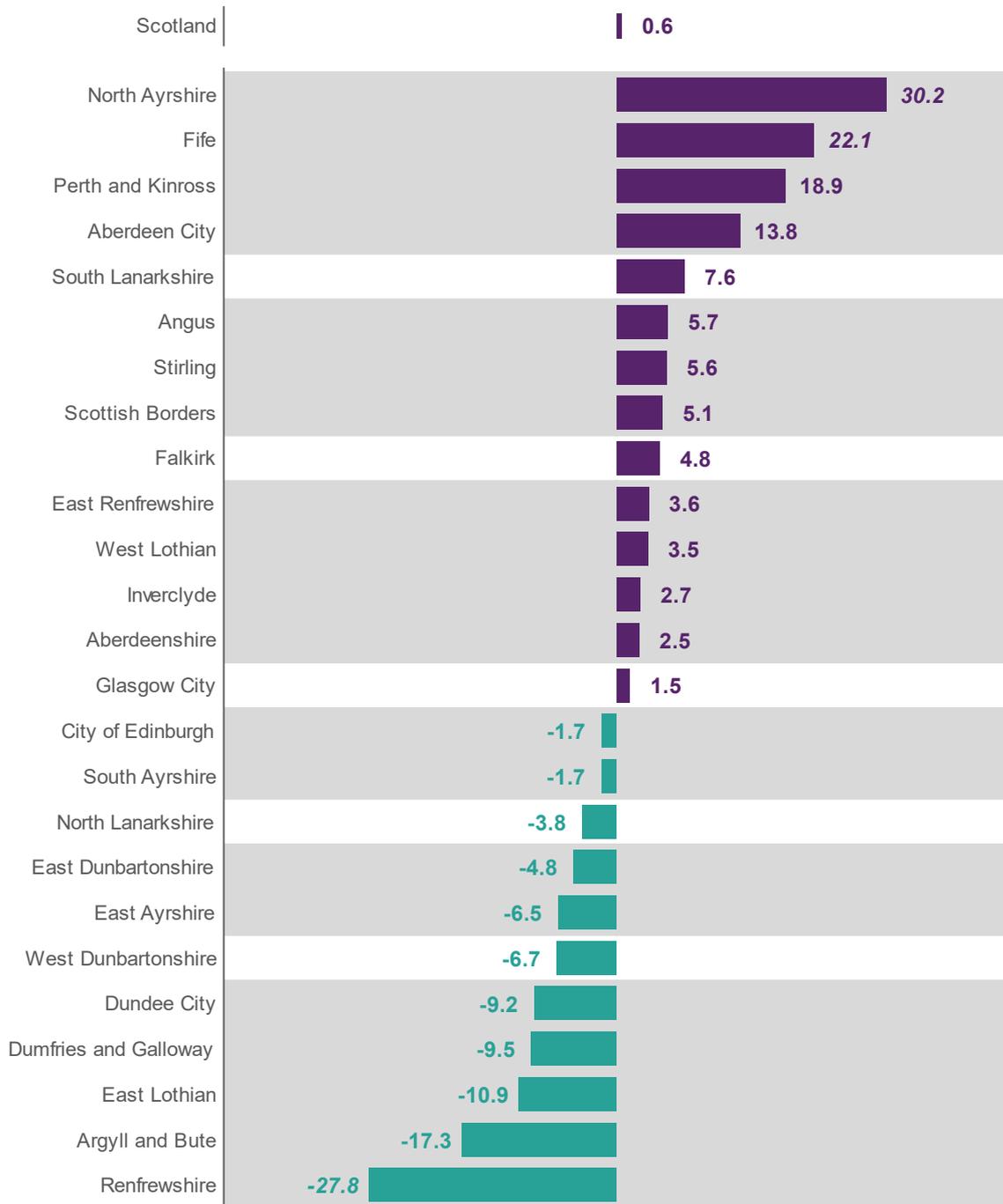
The estimates for both areas in April 2022 to March 2023 and North Ayrshire in April 2021 to March 2022 are from small sample sizes. Therefore, the change over the year for both estimates should be used with caution.

### **Change since April 2018 to March 2019 (pre-pandemic)**

The employment rate for 16 to 24 year olds had increased in 10 local authority areas. The employment rate decreased in 17 local authority areas. The area with the largest increase was North Ayrshire (21.8 pp). The area with the largest decrease was Renfrewshire (-15.0 pp). The change since April 2018 to March 2019 for North Ayrshire represents a statistically significant change.

The estimate for both North Ayrshire and Renfrewshire in April 2022 to March 2023 are from small sample sizes. Therefore, the change since April 2018 to March 2019 estimate should be used with caution.

Chart 3: Change in employment rates of those aged 16 to 24 between April 2021 to March 2022 and April 2022 to March 2023 by Local Authority area (percentage points)



Source: Annual Population Survey, Apr-Mar datasets, ONS

Note: Estimates for the following areas are not available as they are considered unreliable:

- Clackmannanshire
- Highland
- Midlothian
- Moray
- Na h-Eileanan Siar
- Orkney Islands
- Shetland Islands

*Italic text indicates a statistically significant change over the period.*

A shaded background indicates estimates are from small sample sizes and should be used with caution.

# Unemployment

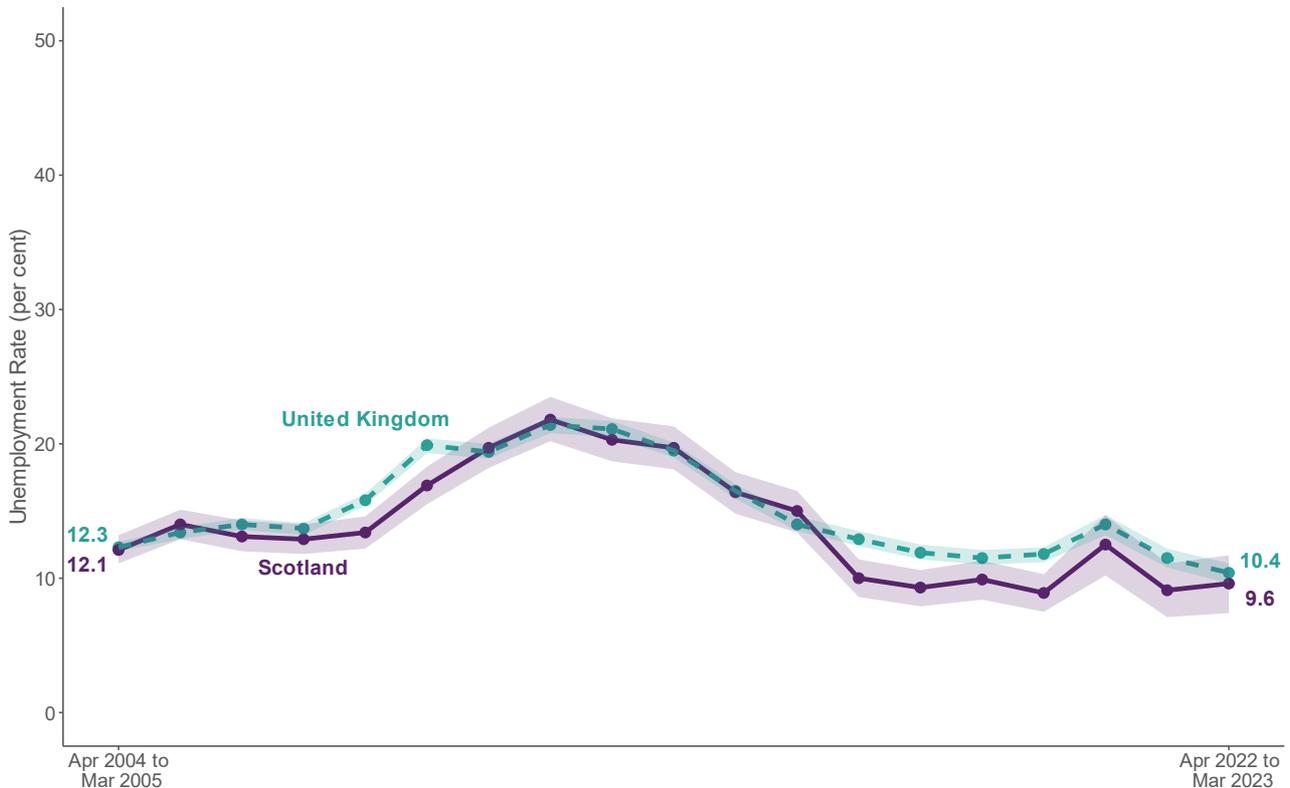
## Overall

In April 2022 to March 2023, an estimated 33,100 people aged 16 to 24 were unemployed in Scotland. This is 2,100 more than the number of unemployed 16 to 24 year olds in April 2021 to March 2022.

The estimated unemployment rate for 16 to 24 year olds was 9.6 per cent in April 2022 to March 2023. This was 0.4 percentage points (pp) higher than a year ago (9.1 per cent) but 0.3 pp lower than in April 2018 to March 2019 (9.9 per cent). April 2018 to March 2019 is the last data point in the April to March series before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

For the United Kingdom as a whole, the estimated unemployment rate for 16 to 24 year olds was 10.4 per cent. This was 1.1 pp lower than the year before (11.5 per cent) and 1.2 pp lower than in April 2018 to March 2019 (11.5 per cent). Both the change on year and change since April 2018 to March 2019 represent statistically significant changes.

Chart 4: Unemployment rate of people aged 16 to 24; Scotland and the United Kingdom; April 2004 to March 2005 through to April 2022 to March 2023



Source: Annual Population Survey, Apr-Mar datasets, ONS

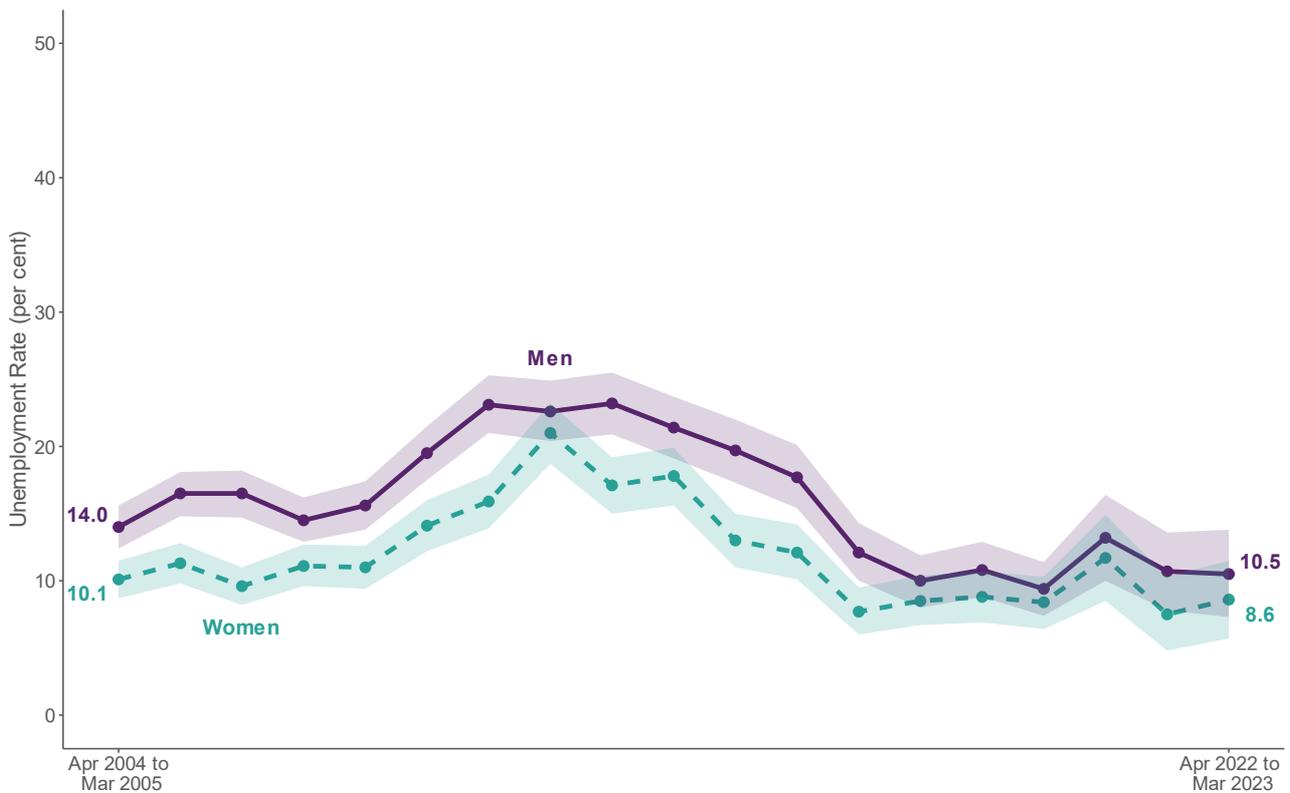
Note: Shaded areas represent 95 per cent confidence intervals

## Unemployment by Sex

In April 2022 to March 2023, there were an estimated 17,800 unemployed men aged 16 to 24 and 15,300 unemployed women aged 16 to 24 in Scotland.

The estimated unemployment rate for 16 to 24 year old men was 10.5 per cent, 0.1 percentage points (pp) lower than a year ago and 0.3 pp lower than in April 2018 to March 2019. While the estimated unemployment rate for 16 to 24 year old women was 8.6 per cent, 1.1 pp higher than a year ago but 0.2 pp lower than in April 2018 to March 2019.

Chart 5: Unemployment rate of people aged 16 to 24 by Sex; Scotland; April 2004 to March 2005 through to April 2022 to March 2023



Source: Annual Population Survey, Apr-Mar datasets, ONS

Note: Shaded areas represent 95 per cent confidence intervals

# Economic Inactivity

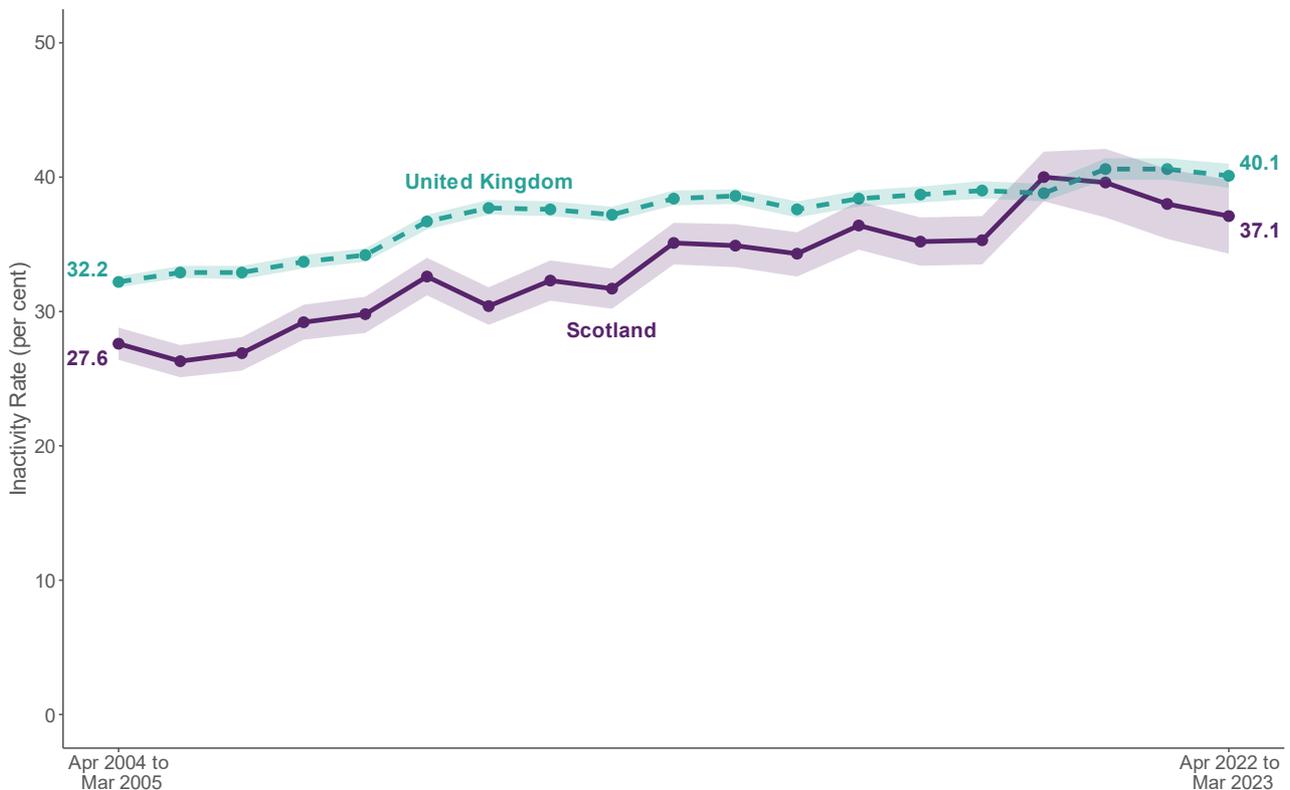
## Overall

In April 2022 to March 2023, there were an estimated 204,200 economically inactive 16 to 24 year olds in Scotland. This is 4,100 lower than the number of inactive 16 to 24 year olds in April 2021 to March 2022. Over three quarters (77.0 per cent) of inactive 16 to 24 year olds were estimated to be in full-time education in April 2022 to March 2023.

The estimated inactivity rate was 37.1 per cent in April 2022 to March 2023. This was 0.9 percentage points (pp) lower than a year ago (38.0 per cent) but 1.8 pp higher than in April 2018 to March 2019 (35.3 per cent). April 2018 to March 2019 is the last data point in the April to March series before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

For the United Kingdom as a whole, the estimated inactivity rate for 16 to 24 year olds was 40.1 per cent. This was 0.5 pp lower than a year ago (40.6 per cent) but 1.1 pp higher than April 2018 to March 2019 (39.0 per cent).

Chart 6: Economic inactivity rate of people aged 16 to 24; Scotland and the United Kingdom; April 2004 to March 2005 through to April 2022 to March 2023



Source: Annual Population Survey, Apr-Mar datasets, ONS

Note: Shaded areas represent 95 per cent confidence intervals

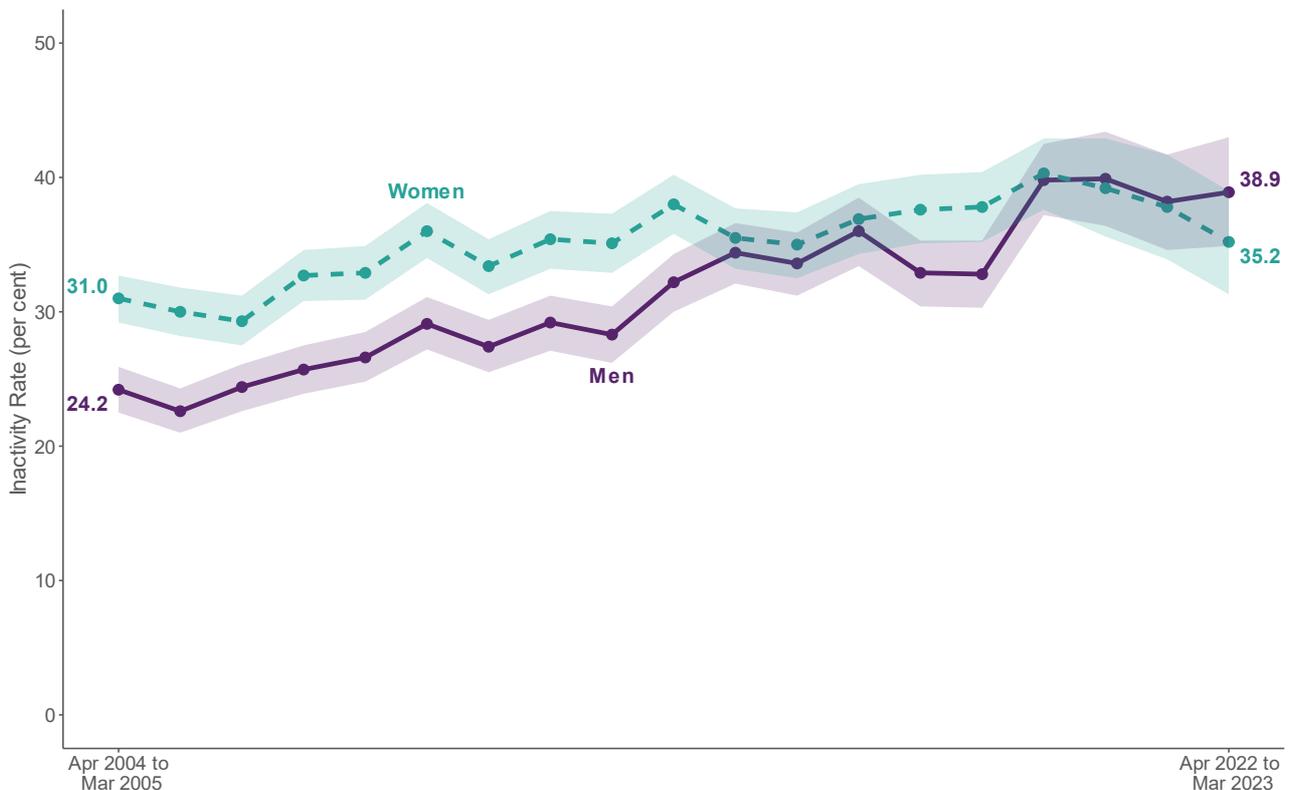
## Economic Inactivity by Sex

In April 2022 to March 2023, there were an estimated 107,900 inactive men aged 16 to 24 and 96,300 inactive women aged 16 to 24 in Scotland.

The estimated inactivity rate for 16 to 24 year old men was 38.9 per cent, 0.8 percentage points (pp) higher than a year ago and 6.1 pp higher than in April 2018 to March 2019. While the estimated inactivity rate for 16 to 24 year old women was 35.2 per cent, 2.6 pp lower than a year ago and also 2.6 pp lower than in April 2018 to March 2019.

The change since April 2018 to March 2019 for men aged 16 to 24 represents a statistically significant change.

Chart 7: Economic inactivity rate of people aged 16 to 24 by Sex; Scotland; April 2004 to March 2005 through to April 2022 to March 2023



Source: Annual Population Survey, Apr-Mar datasets, ONS

Note: Shaded areas represent 95 per cent confidence intervals

# Further Information

## Reliability of estimates

Estimates from the ONS Annual Population Survey for April 2004 to March 2005 through to April 2022 to March 2023 are presented. The sample size in this dataset is around 10,500 households in Scotland for the latest time period.

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) and the 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 National Statistics marking for the APS reflects the larger sample size for headline estimates of Labour Market indicators by age for Scotland.

## 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:

- coherence across all data tables
- crosschecking historical time series data with previously published results
- benchmarking the results against other relevant data sources for this age group

The estimates in Table 1 of the associated spreadsheet are verified by colleagues in the ONS.

## **Context**

These statistics are produced by Scottish Government Labour Market Statisticians. Labour Market Statistics is located within the Labour Market and Employability Statistics Unit, part of the Office of the Chief Economic Advisor. Labour Market Statistics are used for policy monitoring, research, services planning and delivery.

The APS is used to measure a number of indicators in the Scottish Government [National Performance Framework](#) (NPF). The estimates help to measure progress towards high level outcomes, Education and Fair Work and Business. Where possible, information on the NPF split by age is published on the [Equality Evidence Finder](#).

The APS is also used to measure the overarching indicator and four other key performance indicators in the [Young Persons Guarantee](#).

The [young person's local authority labour market dashboard](#) includes APS estimates for 16 to 24 year olds at local authority level. Other data measuring labour market outcomes for 16 to 24 year olds are available. This includes claimant count, earnings and participation measure data.

A range of labour market statistics for Scotland, including disability, are available on the [Scottish Government website](#).

# Concepts and Definitions

**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.

**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.

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

**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.

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

**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

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

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

# 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.

Please consider answering our short [feedback survey](#) on how you found this publication.

## An Official Statistics Publication for Scotland

Official and National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Both undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs and are produced free from any political interference.

In May 2021 these statistics were reviewed against the [Code of Practice](#). The review found many positive features that show trustworthiness, quality, and value in this bulletin.

Since then a number of improvements have been made including:

- incorporating a key findings section
- presenting the figures as “estimates”
- including confidence intervals in the tables
- providing more detailed information on quality assurance carried out while preparing the publication

Additional estimates have also been included for employment levels and rates for people aged 16 to 24 in local authorities.

### Correspondence and enquiries

For enquiries about this publication please contact:

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For general enquiries about Scottish Government statistics please contact:

Office of the Chief Statistician  
Telephone: 0131 244 0442  
E-mail: [statistics.enquiries@gov.scot](mailto:statistics.enquiries@gov.scot)

## How to access background or source data

Results are provided for April 2004 to March 2005 through to April 2022 to March 2023 based on the data released by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on 11 July 2023.

Annual Population Survey data for employment and economic inactivity by age for Scotland, alongside a range of other labour market indicators, are also made available on the [Scottish Government Open Data Platform](#).

ONS also release rolling quarterly Annual Population Survey datasets covering the periods January to December, July to June, and October to September. The data for these time periods have not been used or presented within this publication. The data for these time periods are available on [nomis](#).

## Complaints and suggestions

If you are not satisfied with our service or have any comments or suggestions, please write to:

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Telephone: (0131) 244 0302  
e-mail: [statistics.enquiries@gov.scot](mailto:statistics.enquiries@gov.scot)

If you would like to be consulted about statistical collections or receive notification of publications, please register your interest via [ScotStat](#).

Details of forthcoming publications can be found on the [Scottish Government website](#).

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