

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

Statistics from the Office for National
Statistics Annual Population Survey,
July 2022 to June 2023,
first published 13 September 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 July 2022 to June 2023. Data are sourced from the Annual Population Survey, first released on 13 September 2023 by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

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 July 2022 to June 2023. The latest estimates for 16 to 24 year olds in Scotland show the unemployment rate had increased over the year, the employment rate had decreased, and the economic inactivity rate had increased.

In Scotland in July 2022 to June 2023:

- the estimated employment rate for 16 to 24 year olds was 55.8 per cent
- the estimated unemployment rate for 16 to 24 year olds was 10.1 per cent
- the estimated economic inactivity rate for 16 to 24 year olds was 37.9 per cent

Compared with the previous year:

- the employment rate for 16 to 24 year olds decreased by 2.5 percentage points
- the unemployment rate for 16 to 24 year olds increased by 1.4 percentage points
- the inactivity rate for 16 to 24 year olds increased by 1.9 percentage points

Compared with the United Kingdom as a whole:

- the employment rate for 16 to 24 year olds in Scotland was higher (55.8 per cent compared to 53.3 per cent)
- the unemployment rate for 16 to 24 year olds in Scotland was lower (10.1 per cent compared to 11.2 per cent)
- the inactivity rate for 16 to 24 year olds in Scotland was lower (37.9 per cent compared to 39.9 per cent)

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

- the estimated employment rate for men was lower than women (52.3 per cent compared to 59.3 per cent)
- the estimated unemployment rate for men was higher than women (12.3 per cent compared to 8.1 per cent)
- the estimated economic inactivity rate for men was higher than women (40.4 per cent compared to 35.5 per cent)

Contents

Key points	2
Introduction	4
An Official Statistics Publication for Scotland	4
About the Annual Population Survey	4
Labour Market Transformation	5
Employment	6
Overall	6
Employment by Sex	7
Employment by Local Authority areas	8
Over the year (since July 2021 to June 2022)	8
Change since July 2018 to June 2019 (pre-pandemic)	9
Unemployment	11
Overall	11
Unemployment by Sex	12
Economic Inactivity	13
Overall	13
Economic Inactivity by Sex	14
Glossary	15
Data and Methodology	17
Reliability of estimates	17
Confidence Intervals	17
Statistical Significance	17
Quality Assurance	18
How to access background or source data	18
Context	18
Tell us what you think	20
Feedback survey	20
Enquiries	20
Join our mailing list	20
Future publications	20
Crown Copyright	20

Introduction

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 July 2022 to June 2023. Data are sourced from the Annual Population Survey (APS); first released on 13 September 2023 by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

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.

These statistics are designated as Official Statistics in accordance with the Statistics and Service Registration Act 2007. They have been produced to high professional standards set out in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#).

Further information on Official Statistics is published by the [UK Statistics Authority](#).

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 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.

About the 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 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](#).

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.

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 to tell them what you think.

Employment

Overall

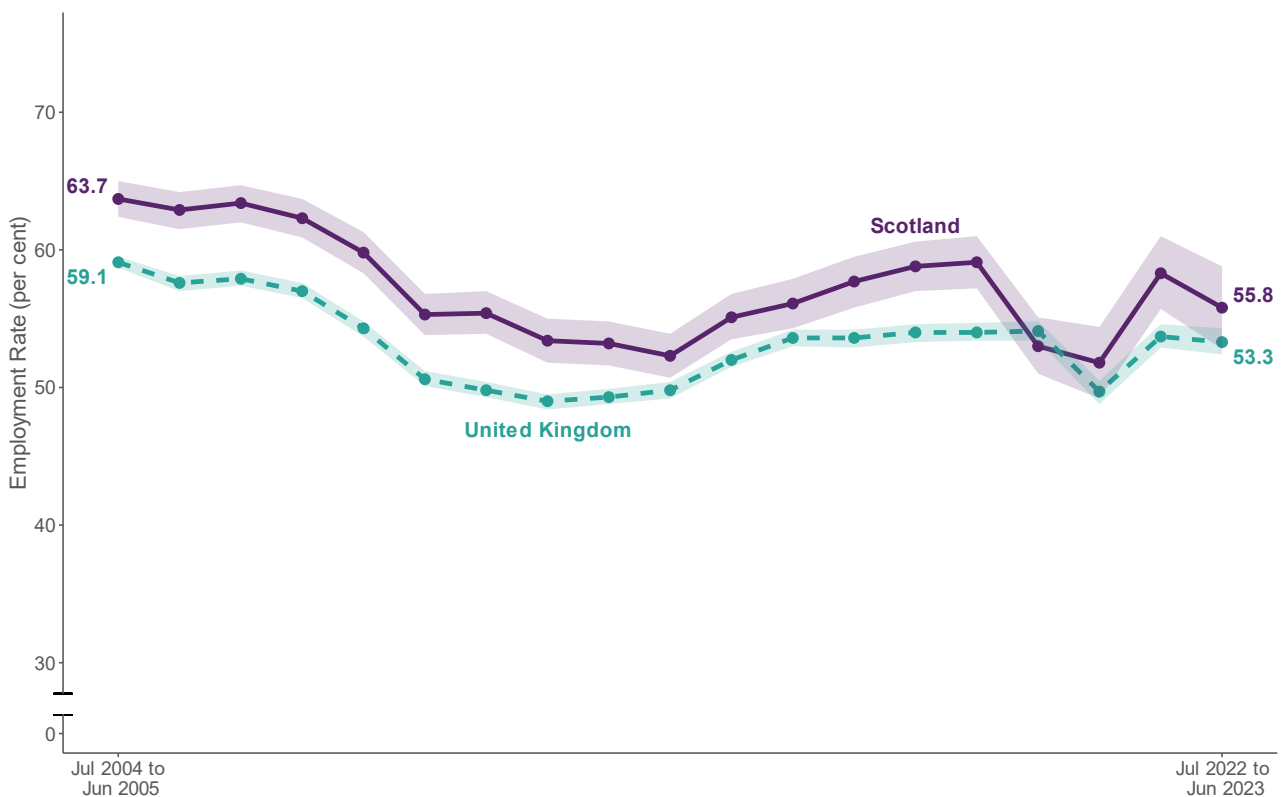
In July 2022 to June 2023, an estimated 307,400 people aged 16 to 24 were in employment in Scotland. This is 12,600 less than the number of 16 to 24 year olds employed in July 2021 to June 2022.

The estimated employment rate for 16 to 24 year olds was 55.8 per cent in July 2022 to June 2023. This was 2.5 percentage points (pp) lower than the year before (58.3 per cent) and 3.3 pp lower than in July 2018 to June 2019 (59.1 per cent). July 2018 to June 2019 is the last data point in the July to June series before the COVID-19 pandemic.

For the United Kingdom as a whole, the estimated employment rate for 16 to 24 year olds was 53.3 per cent. This was 0.4 pp lower than a year ago (53.7 per cent) and 0.7 pp lower than in July 2018 to June 2019 (54.0 per cent).

Chart 1: The employment rate for people aged 16 to 24 in Scotland continues to exceed the United Kingdom rate

Employment rate estimates for persons aged 16 to 24, Scotland and the United Kingdom, July 2004 to June 2005 through to July 2022 to June 2023



Source: Annual Population Survey, July to June datasets, ONS

Shaded areas represent 95 percent confidence intervals.

Employment by Sex

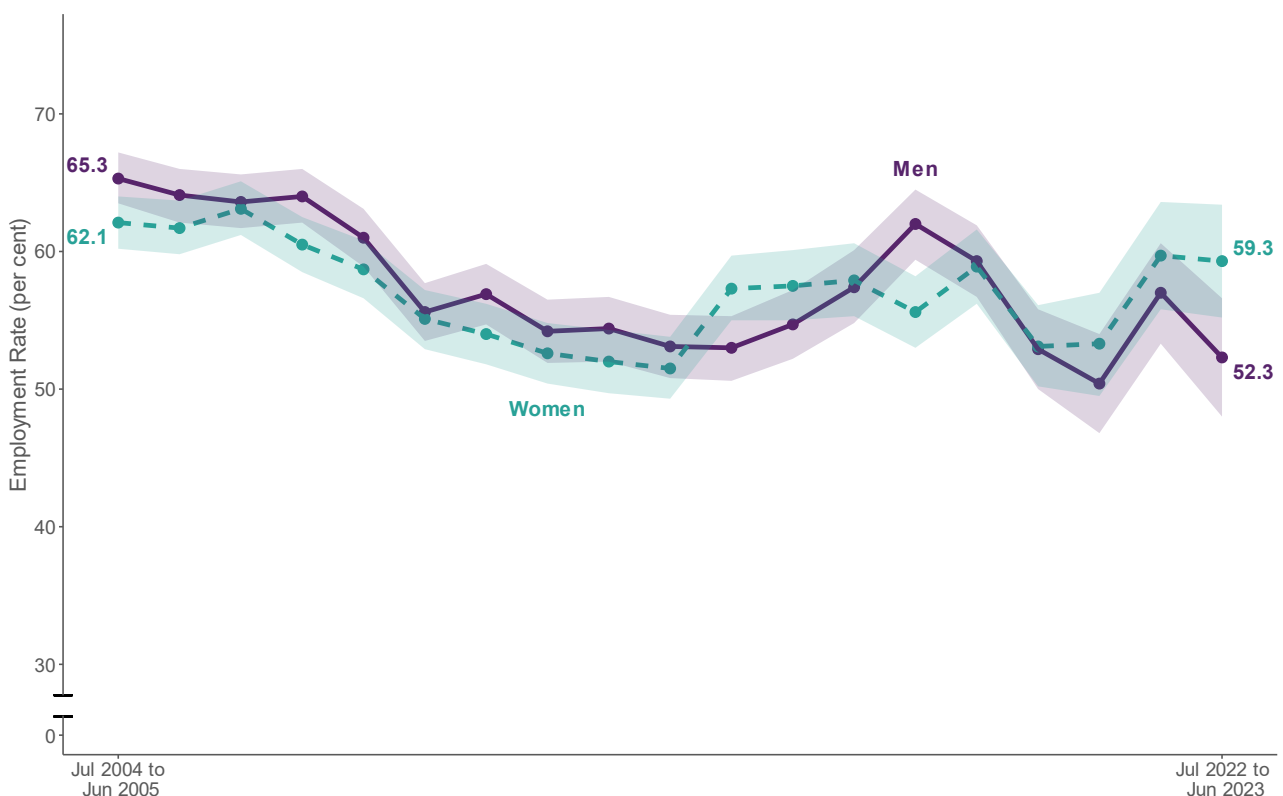
In July 2022 to June 2023, an estimated 145,000 men and 162,400 women aged 16 to 24 were in employment in Scotland.

The estimated employment rate for 16 to 24 year old men was 52.3 per cent, 4.7 percentage points (pp) lower than a year ago (57.0 per cent) and 7.0 pp lower than in July 2018 to June 2019 (59.3 per cent). While the estimated employment rate for 16 to 24 year old women was 59.3 per cent, 0.4 pp lower than a year ago (59.7 per cent) but 0.4 pp higher than in July 2018 to June 2019 (58.9 per cent).

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

Chart 2: The employment rate for women aged 16 to 24 has exceeded the rate for men since July 2020 to June 2021

Employment rate estimates for men and women aged 16 to 24 in Scotland, July 2004 to June 2005 through to July 2022 to June 2023.



Source: Annual Population Survey, July to June datasets, ONS

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 four areas affected are:

- Highland
- Orkney Islands
- Shetland Islands
- South Ayrshire

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

- Na h-Eileanan Siar (85.7 per cent)
- Aberdeenshire (72.3 per cent)
- Angus (71.2 per cent)

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

- Dundee City (39.7 per cent)
- East Renfrewshire (44.9 per cent)
- Argyll and Bute (45.5 per cent)

All estimates listed are from a small sample size. These estimates should be used with caution.

Over the year (since July 2021 to June 2022)

The employment rate for 16 to 24 year olds had increased in seven local authority areas. The employment rate decreased in 20 local authority areas. The area with the largest increase was Fife (21.3 percentage points (pp)). The area with the largest decrease was Argyll and Bute (-25.6 pp). The changes for both Fife and Argyll and Bute represent statistically significant changes.

The estimates for Argyll and Bute in July 2021 to June 2022 and July 2022 to June 2023 are from small sample sizes. Therefore, the change over the year estimate should be used with caution.

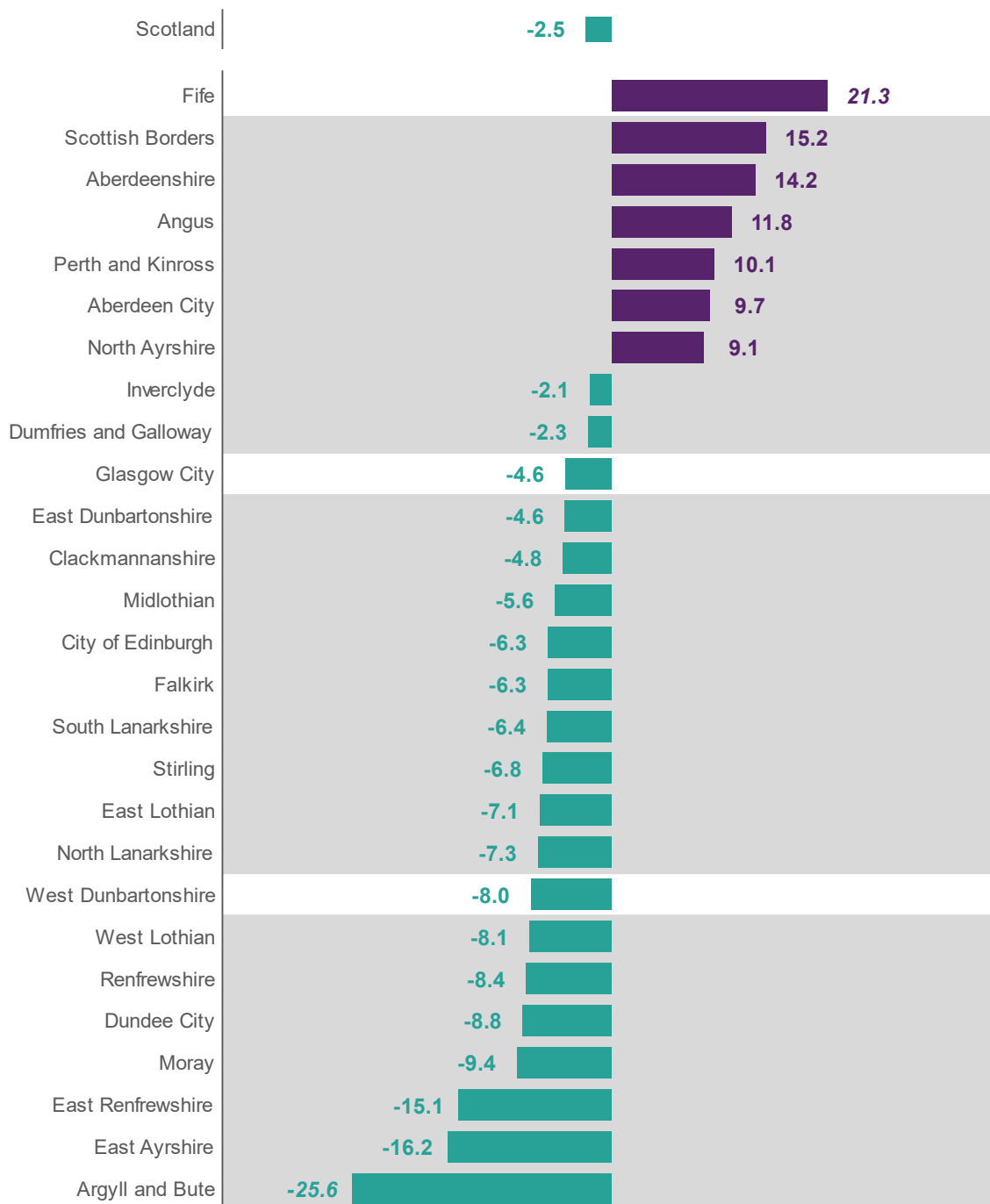
Change since July 2018 to June 2019 (pre-pandemic)

The employment rate for 16 to 24 year olds had increased in 13 local authority areas. The employment rate decreased in 15 local authority areas. The area with the largest increase was Na h-Eileanan Siar (22.2 pp). The area with the largest decrease was Aberdeen City (-22.0 pp). The change since July 2018 to June 2019 for Aberdeen City represents a statistically significant change.

The estimates for Aberdeen City in July 2022 to June 2023 and the estimates for Na h-Eileanan Siar in July 2028 to June 2019 and July 2022 to June 2023 are from small sample sizes. Therefore, the change since July 2018 to June 2019 estimates should be used with caution.

Chart 3: Over the year, a higher number of local authority areas in Scotland have seen a decrease in their employment rates than an increase

Annual change in employment rate estimates for 16 to 24 year olds in Scottish local authorities, change from July 2021 to June 2022 to July 2022 to June 2023



Source: Annual Population Survey, July to June datasets, ONS

Estimates are shown for Scotland and all Local Authority areas except where estimates are considered unreliable.

Italic text indicates a statistically significant change over the period and a shaded background indicates estimates are from small sample sizes and should be used with caution.

Unemployment

Overall

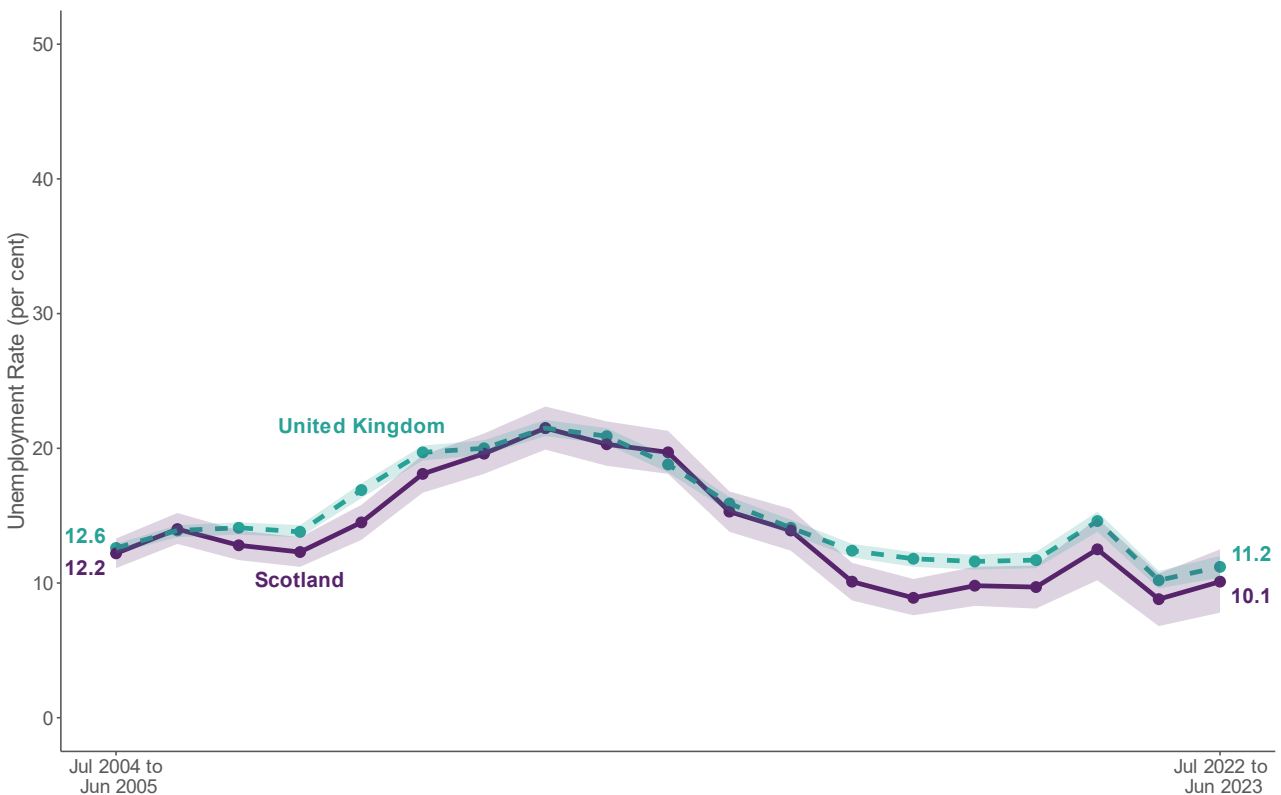
In July 2022 to June 2023, an estimated 34,700 people aged 16 to 24 were unemployed in Scotland. This is 3,900 more than the number of unemployed 16 to 24 year olds in July 2021 to June 2022.

The estimated unemployment rate for 16 to 24 year olds was 10.1 per cent in July 2022 to June 2023. This was 1.4 percentage points (pp) higher than a year ago (8.8 per cent) and 0.4 pp higher than in July 2018 to June 2019 (9.8 per cent). July 2018 to June 2019 is the last data point in the July to June 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 11.2 per cent. This was 1.0 pp higher than the year before (10.2 per cent) but 0.3 pp lower than in July 2018 to June 2019 (11.6 per cent).

Chart 4: The unemployment rate for people aged 16 to 24 in Scotland has been lower than the United Kingdom since July 2016 to June 2017

Unemployment rate estimates for persons aged 16 to 24, Scotland and the United Kingdom, July 2004 to June 2005 through to July 2022 to June 2023.



Source: Annual Population Survey, July to June datasets, ONS

Shaded areas represent 95 percent confidence intervals.

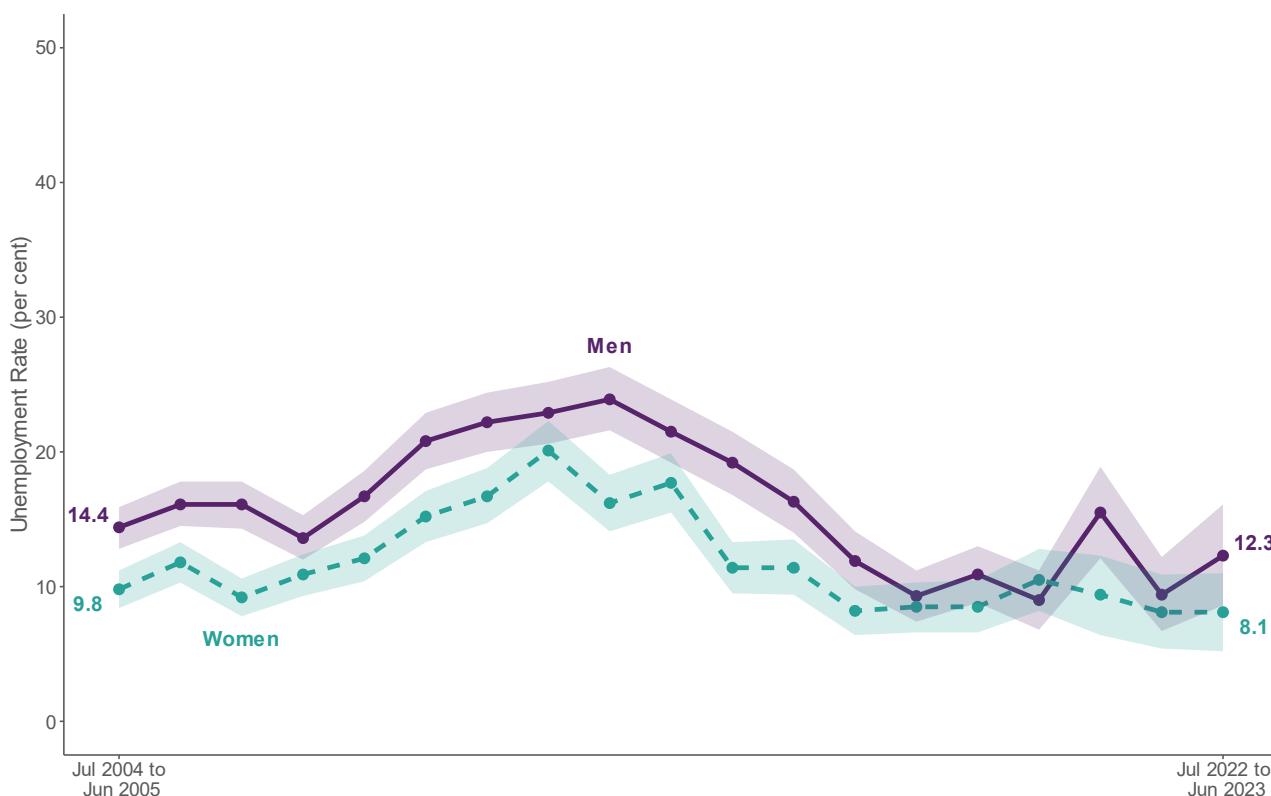
Unemployment by Sex

In July 2022 to June 2023, there were an estimated 20,400 unemployed men aged 16 to 24 and 14,300 unemployed women aged 16 to 24 in Scotland.

The estimated unemployment rate for 16 to 24 year old men was 12.3 per cent, 2.9 percentage points (pp) higher than a year ago (9.4 per cent) and 1.4 pp higher than in July 2018 to June 2019 (10.9 per cent). While the estimated unemployment rate for 16 to 24 year old women was 8.1 per cent, 0.1 pp lower than a year ago and 0.5 pp lower than in July 2018 to June 2019 (8.5 per cent).

Chart 5: The unemployment rate for men aged 16 to 24 continues to exceed the rate for women

Unemployment rate estimates for men and women aged 16 to 24 in Scotland, July 2004 to June 2005 through to July 2022 to June 2023



Source: Annual Population Survey, July to June datasets, ONS

Shaded areas represent 95 percent confidence intervals.

Economic Inactivity

Overall

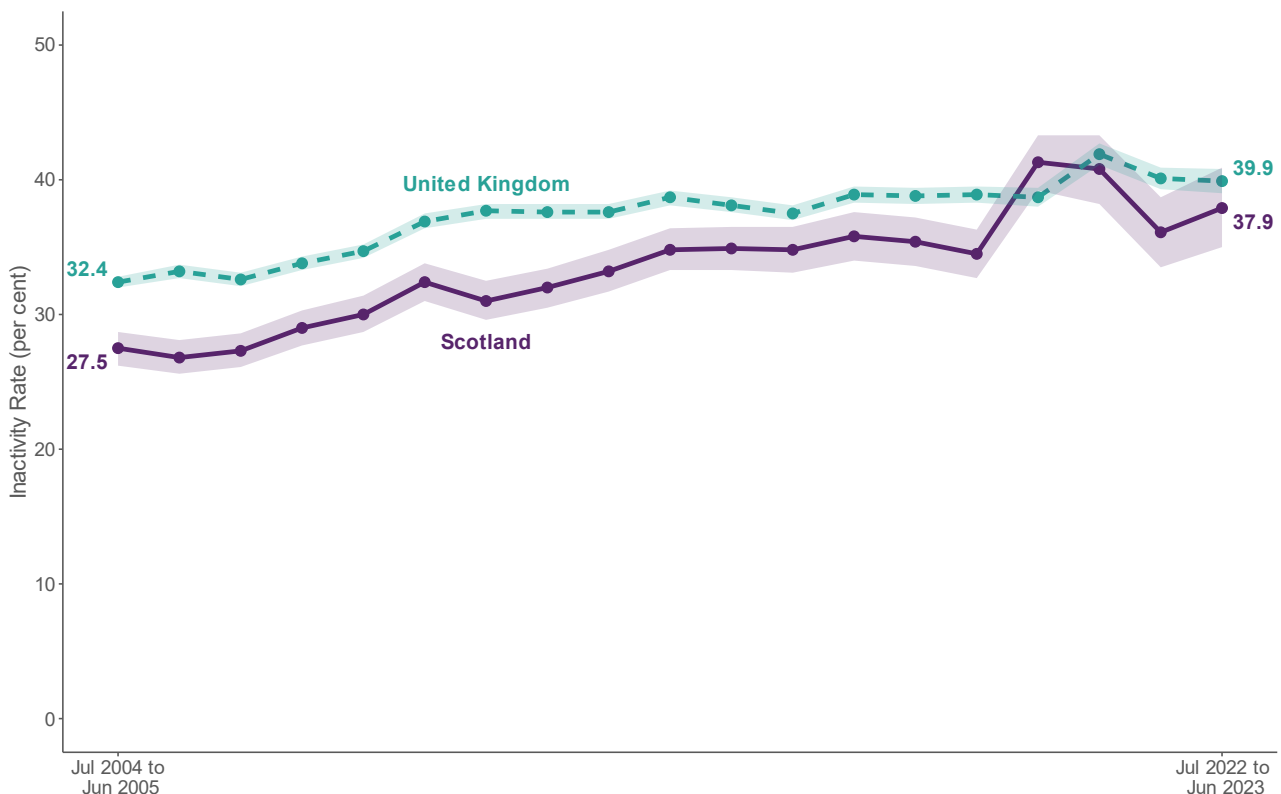
In July 2022 to June 2023, there were an estimated 209,200 economically inactive 16 to 24 year olds in Scotland. This is 11,200 higher than the number of inactive 16 to 24 year olds in July 2021 to June 2022. Over three quarters (76.5 per cent) of inactive 16 to 24 year olds were estimated to be in full-time education in July 2022 to June 2023.

The estimated inactivity rate was 37.9 per cent in July 2022 to June 2023. This was 1.9 percentage points (pp) higher than a year ago (36.1 per cent) and 3.4 pp higher than in July 2018 to June 2019 (34.5 per cent). July 2018 to June 2019 is the last data point in the July to June 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 39.9 per cent. This was 0.2 pp lower than a year ago (40.1 per cent) but 1.0 pp higher than July 2018 to June 2019 (38.9 per cent).

Chart 6: The economic inactivity rate for people aged 16 to 24 in Scotland is generally lower than for the United Kingdom. However, the gap has been narrowing over time

Economic inactivity rate estimates for persons aged 16 to 24, Scotland and the United Kingdom, July 2004 to June 2005 through to July 2022 to June 2023



Source: Annual Population Survey, July to June datasets, ONS

Shaded areas represent 95 percent confidence intervals.

Economic Inactivity by Sex

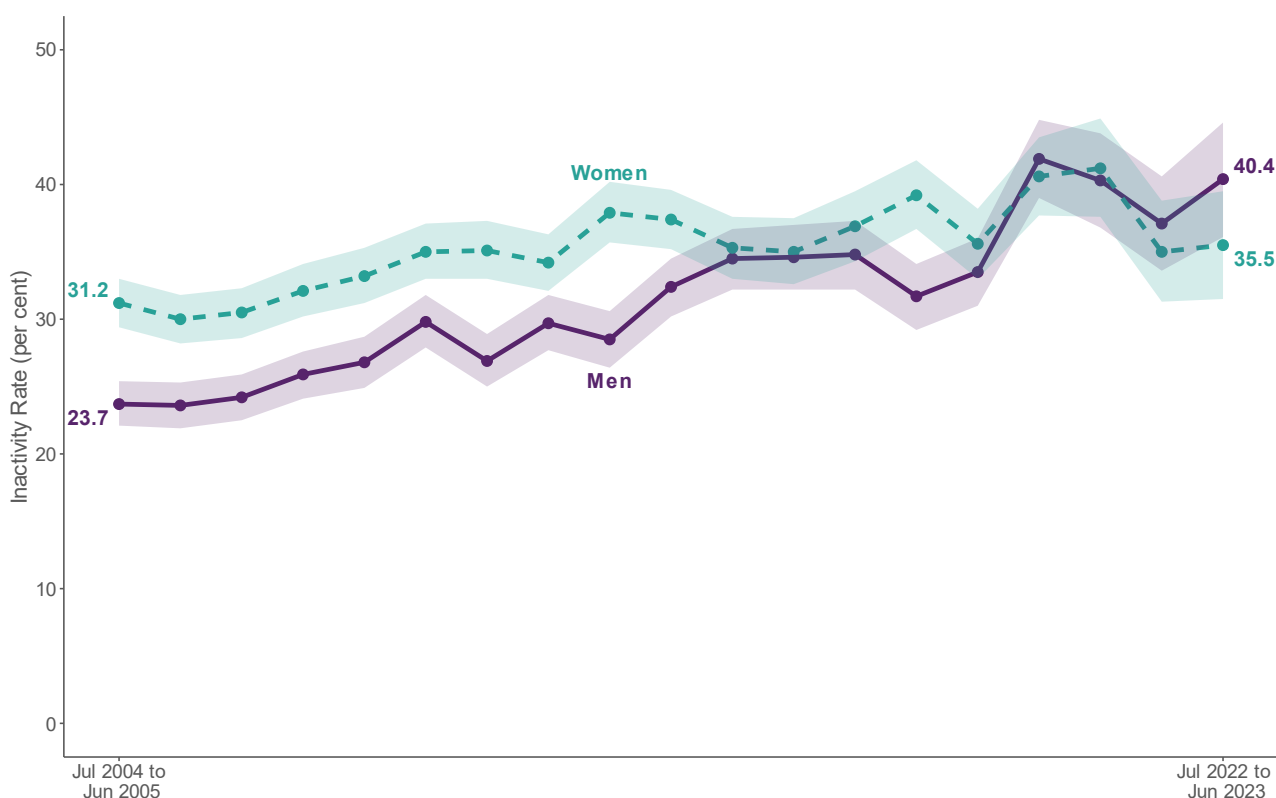
In July 2022 to June 2023, there were an estimated 111,900 inactive men aged 16 to 24 and 97,300 inactive women aged 16 to 24 in Scotland.

The estimated inactivity rate for 16 to 24 year old men was 40.4 per cent, 3.2 percentage points (pp) higher than a year ago (37.1 per cent) and 6.9 pp higher than in July 2018 to June 2019 (33.5 per cent). While the estimated inactivity rate for 16 to 24 year old women was 35.5 per cent, 0.5 pp higher than a year ago (35.0 per cent) but 0.1 pp lower than in July 2018 to June 2019 (35.6 per cent).

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

Chart 7: The gap between the economic inactivity rates for men and women aged 16 to 24 has narrowed over time

Economic inactivity rate estimates for men and women aged 16 to 24 in Scotland, July 2004 to June 2005 through to July 2022 to June 2023



Source: Annual Population Survey, July to June datasets, ONS

Shaded areas represent 95 percent confidence intervals.

Glossary

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.

Data and Methodology

Reliability of estimates

Estimates from the ONS Annual Population Survey for July 2004 to June 2005 through to July 2022 to June 2023 are presented. For the latest time period, the sample size is around 9,900 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 National Statistics marking for the APS reflects the larger sample size for headline estimates of Labour Market indicators by age 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:

- 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.

How to access background or source data

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](#).

ONS Annual Population Survey data for employment, unemployment, 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, April to March, 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](#).

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 Adviser. 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](#).

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.

Crown Copyright

You may use or re-use this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the [Open Government Licence](#).