

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,

January to December 2022,

first published 15 March 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 January to December 2022. Data are sourced from the Annual Population Survey, first released on 15 March 2023 by the Office for National Statistics.

The 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 January to December 2022. 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 decreased over the year, the employment rate has increased and the economic inactivity rate has decreased.

In Scotland in January to December 2022:

- the estimated employment rate for 16 to 24 year olds was 57.9 per cent
- the estimated unemployment rate for 16 to 24 year olds was 9.7 per cent
- the estimated economic inactivity rate for 16 to 24 year olds was 35.8 per cent

Compared with the previous year:

- the employment rate for 16 to 24 year olds increased by 4.0 percentage points, a statistically significant change
- the unemployment rate for 16 to 24 year olds decreased by 0.5 percentage points
- the inactivity rate for 16 to 24 year olds decreased by 4.1 percentage points, a statistically significant change

Compared with the United Kingdom as a whole:

- the employment rate for 16 to 24 year olds was higher (57.9 per cent compared to 53.7 per cent)
- the unemployment rate for 16 to 24 year olds was lower (9.7 per cent compared to 10.4 per cent)
- the inactivity rate for 16 to 24 year olds was lower (35.8 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 (55.1 per cent compared to 60.8 per cent)
- the estimated unemployment rate for men was higher than women (11.4 per cent compared to 8.1 per cent)
- the estimated economic inactivity rate for men was higher than women (37.8 per cent compared to 33.8 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 January to December 2022. Data are sourced from the Annual Population Survey (APS); first released on 15 March 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 levels 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 2021 to June 2022 were reweighted using updated [HM Revenue and Customs \(HMRC\) Real Time Information data](#). Estimates for January to December 2020 and January to December 2021 may differ from those published in the previous January to December 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](#).

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

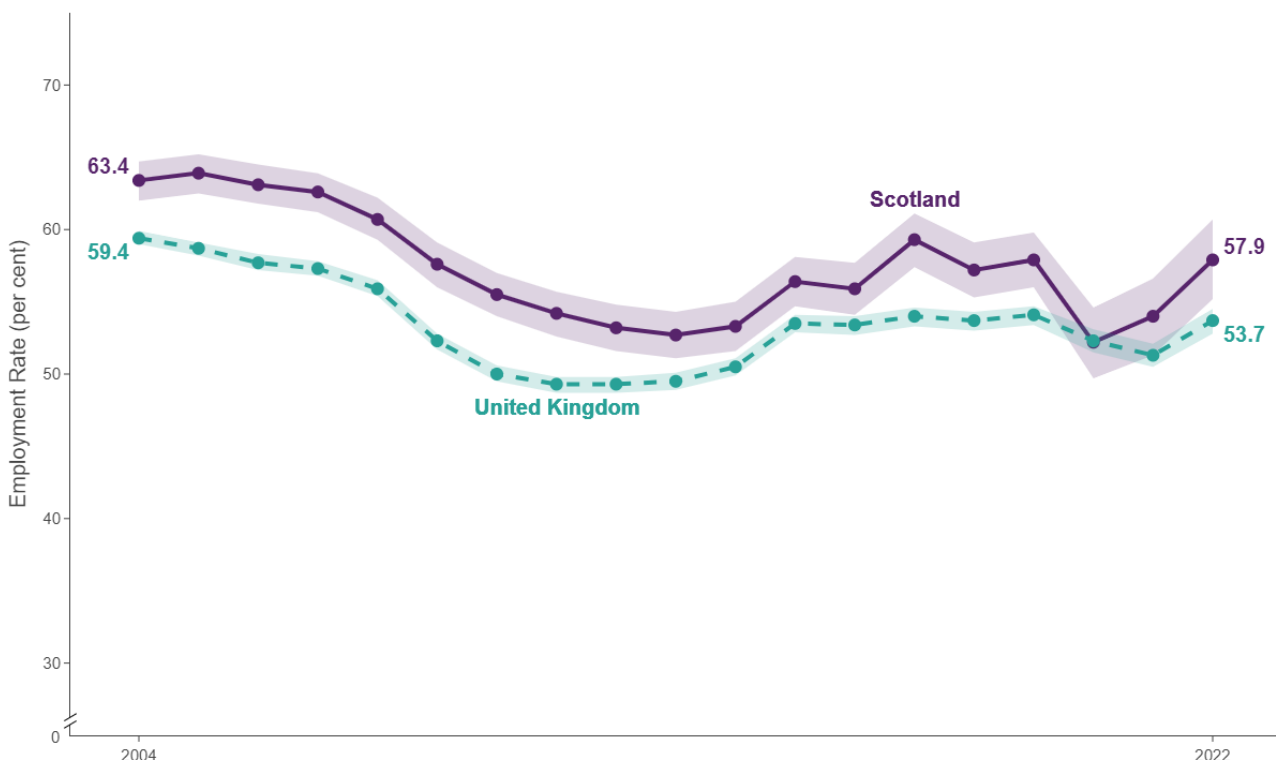
In January to December 2022, an estimated 318,700 people aged 16 to 24 were in employment in Scotland. This is 23,200 more than the number of 16 to 24 year olds employed in 2021.

The estimated employment rate for 16 to 24 year olds was 57.9 per cent in 2022. This was 4.0 percentage points (pp) higher than the year before (54.0 per cent) but the same as in 2019. January to December 2019 is the last data point in this 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 2.4 pp higher than a year ago (51.3 per cent) but 0.4 pp lower than 2019 (54.1 per cent).

The change on year for both Scotland and the United Kingdom represent statistically significant changes.

Chart 1: Employment rate of people aged 16 to 24; Scotland and the United Kingdom; 2004 to 2022



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

Note: Shaded areas represent 95 per cent confidence intervals

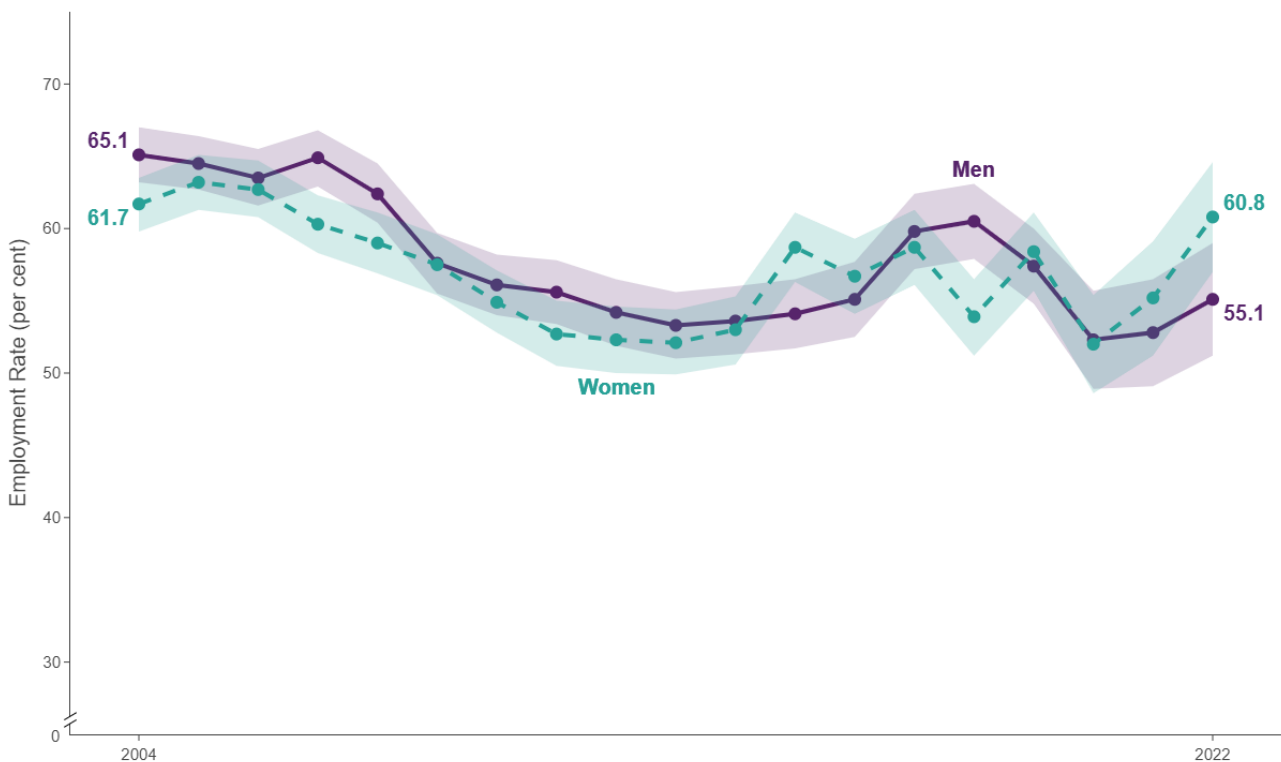
Employment by Sex

In January to December 2022, an estimated 152,400 men and 166,300 women aged 16 to 24 were in employment in Scotland.

The estimated employment rate for 16 to 24 year old men was 55.1 per cent, 2.3 percentage points (pp) higher than a year ago but 2.3 pp lower than 2019. While the estimated employment rate for 16 to 24 year old women was 60.8 per cent, 5.7 pp higher than a year ago and 2.4 pp higher than 2019.

The change on year for 16 to 24 year old women represents a statistically significant change.

Chart 2: Employment rate of people aged 16 to 24 by Sex; Scotland; 2004 to 2022



Source: Annual Population Survey, Jan-Dec 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 two areas affected are:

- Orkney Islands
- Shetland Islands

The three local authority areas with the highest 16 to 24 year old employment rates in January to December 2022 were:

- Na h-Eileanan Siar (74.0 per cent)
- South Lanarkshire (71.7 per cent)
- North Ayrshire (66.1 per cent)

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

- Dumfries and Galloway (46.5 per cent)
- South Ayrshire (46.6 per cent)
- Aberdeen City (51.2 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 January to December 2021)

The employment rate for 16 to 24 year olds had increased in 18 local authority areas. The employment rate decreased in 10 local authority areas. The area with the largest increase was North Ayrshire (23.9 percentage points (pp)). The area with the largest decrease was Renfrewshire (-14.0 pp). The change for North Ayrshire represents a statistically significant change.

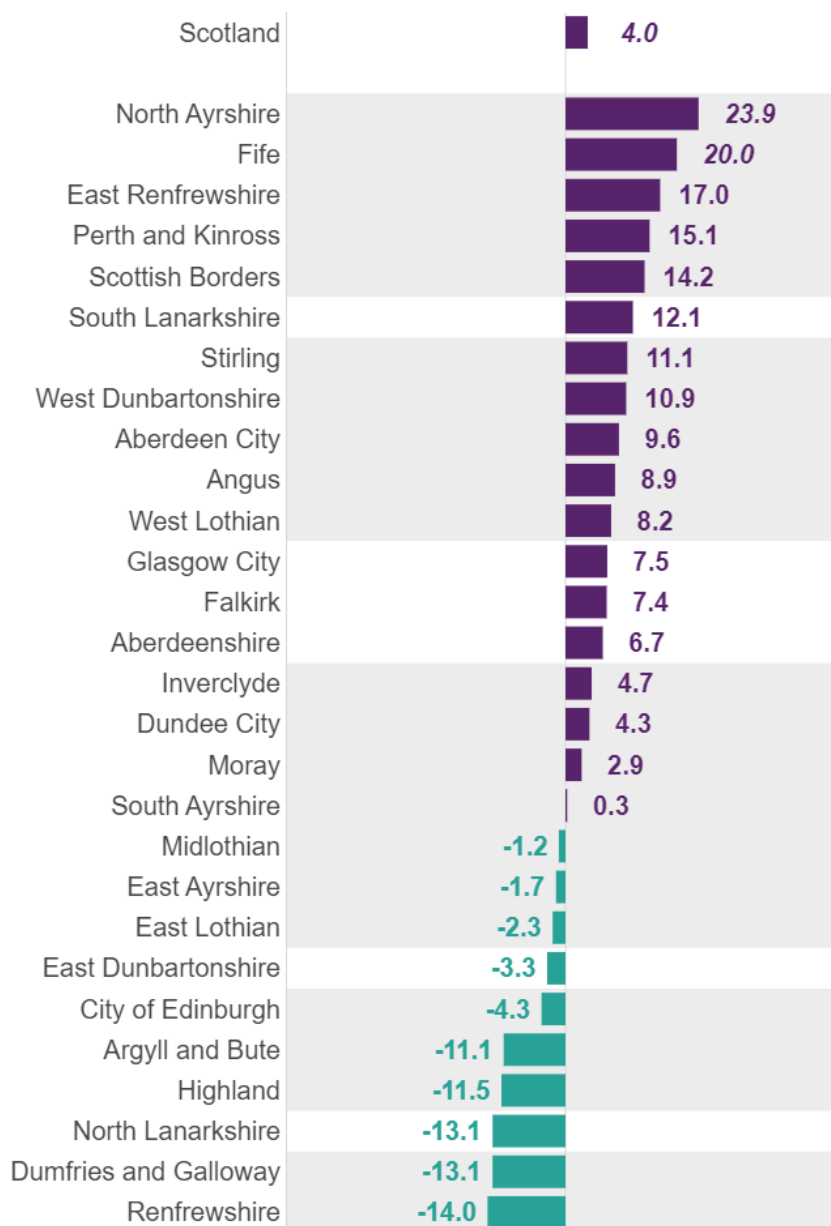
The estimates for both areas in 2022 and North Ayrshire in 2021 are from small sample sizes. Therefore, the change over the year for both estimates should be used with caution.

Change since January to December 2019 (pre-pandemic)

The employment rate for 16 to 24 year olds had increased in 12 local authority areas. The employment rate decreased in 18 local authority areas. The area with the largest increase was South Lanarkshire (18.7 pp). The area with the largest decrease was Aberdeen City (-21.8 pp). The change since 2019 for both South Lanarkshire and Aberdeen City represent statistically significant changes.

The estimate for Aberdeen City in 2022 is from a small sample size. Therefore, the change since 2019 estimate should be used with caution.

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



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

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

- Clackmannanshire
- 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 January to December 2022, an estimated 34,300 people aged 16 to 24 were unemployed in Scotland. This is 800 more than the number of unemployed 16 to 24 year olds in 2021.

The estimated unemployment rate for 16 to 24 year olds was 9.7 per cent in 2022. This was 0.5 percentage points (pp) lower than a year ago (10.2 per cent) but 1.4 pp higher than in 2019 (8.3 per cent). January to December 2019 is the last data point in this 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 2.1 pp lower than the year before (12.5 per cent) and 0.9 pp lower than in 2019 (11.3 per cent). Both the change on year and change since 2019 represent statistically significant changes.

Chart 4: Unemployment rate of people aged 16 to 24; Scotland and the United Kingdom; 2004 to 2022



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

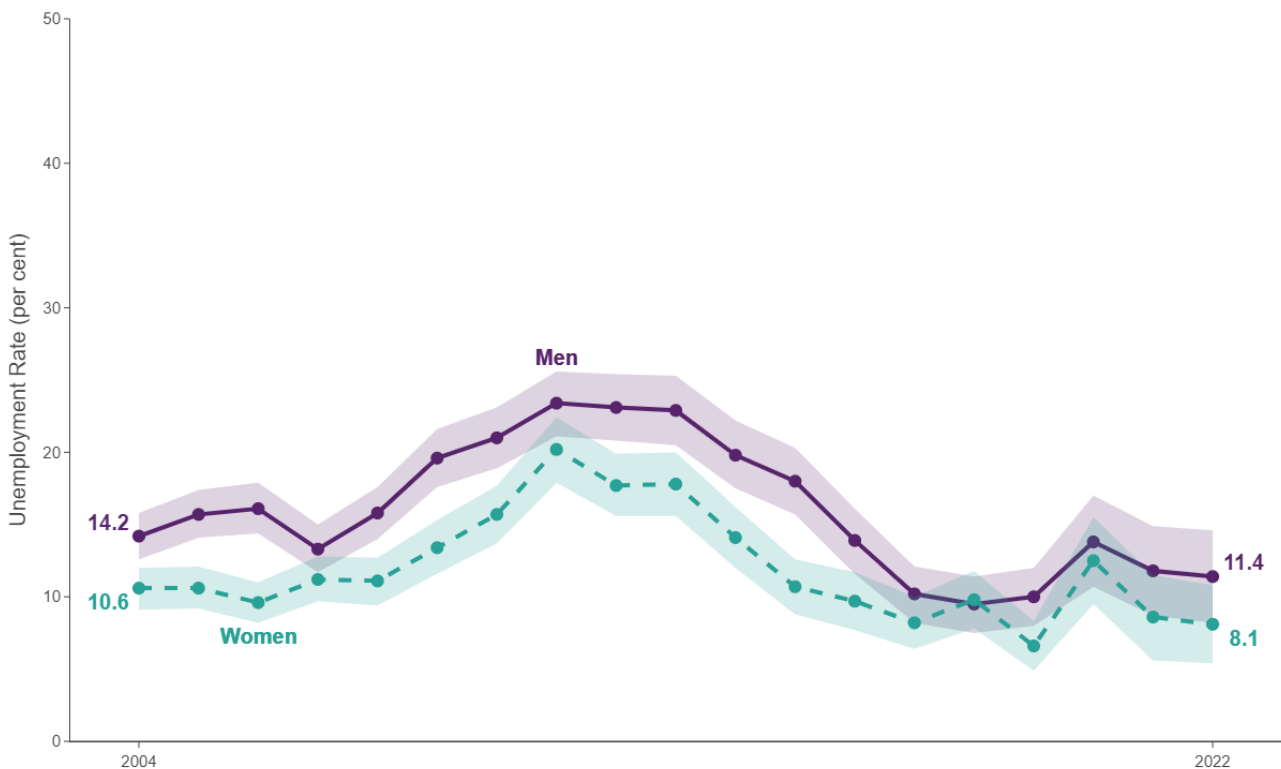
Note: Shaded areas represent 95 per cent confidence intervals

Unemployment by Sex

In January to December 2022, there were an estimated 19,600 unemployed men aged 16 to 24 and 14,600 unemployed women aged 16 to 24 in Scotland.

The estimated unemployment rate for 16 to 24 year old men was 11.4 per cent, 0.4 percentage points (pp) lower than a year ago but 1.5 pp higher than 2019. While the estimated unemployment rate for 16 to 24 year old women was 8.1 per cent, 0.5 pp lower than a year ago but 1.5 pp higher than 2019.

Chart 5: Unemployment rate of people aged 16 to 24 by Sex; Scotland; 2004 to 2022



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

Note: Shaded areas represent 95 per cent confidence intervals

Economic Inactivity

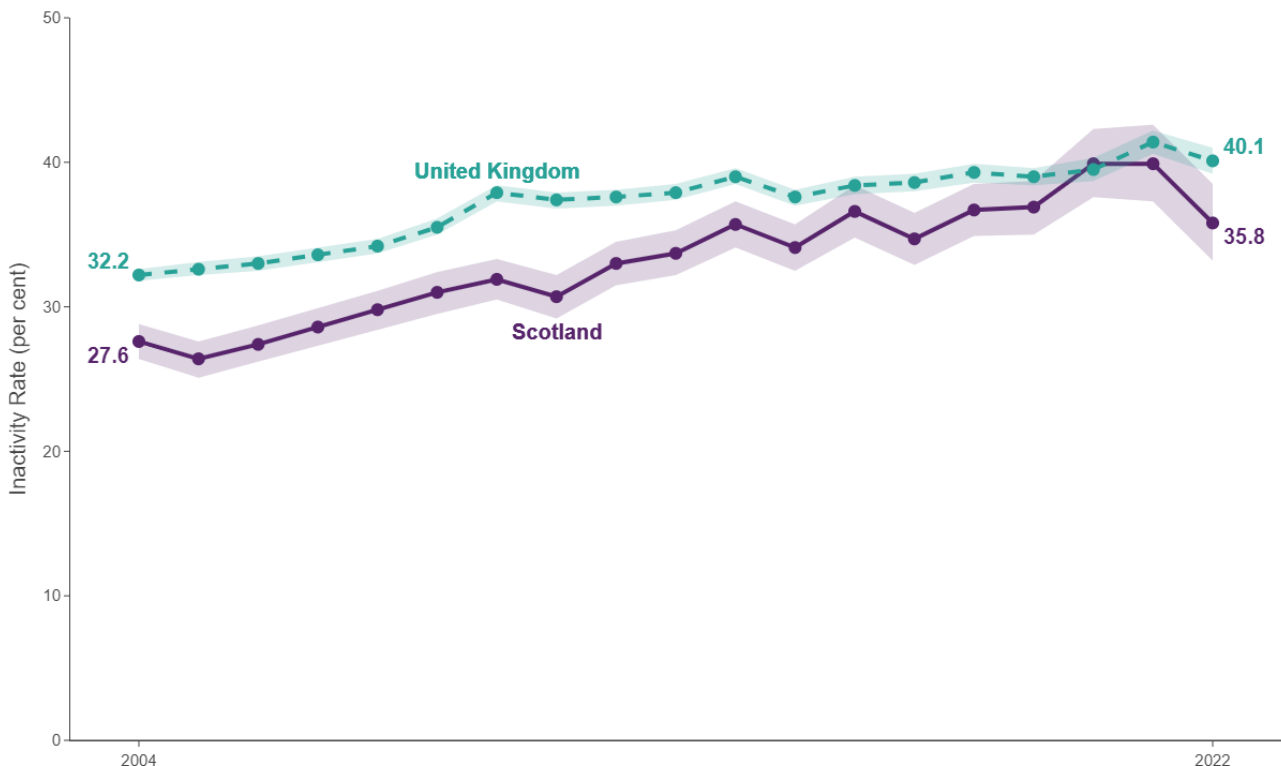
Overall

In January to December 2022, there were an estimated 197,200 economically inactive 16 to 24 year olds in Scotland. This is 21,500 lower than the number of inactive 16 to 24 year olds in 2021. Around three quarters (75.1 per cent) of inactive 16 to 24 year olds were estimated to be in full-time education in 2022.

The estimated inactivity rate was 35.8 per cent in 2022. This was 4.1 percentage points (pp) lower than a year ago (39.9 per cent) and 1.0 pp lower than in 2019 (36.9 per cent). January to December 2019 is the last data point in this series before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The change on year represents a statistically significant change.

For the United Kingdom as a whole, the estimated inactivity rate for 16 to 24 year olds was 40.1 per cent. This was 1.3 pp lower than a year ago (41.4 per cent) but 1.1 pp higher than 2019 (39.0 per cent). Both the change over the year and since 2019 represent statistically significant changes.

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



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

Note: Shaded areas represent 95 per cent confidence intervals

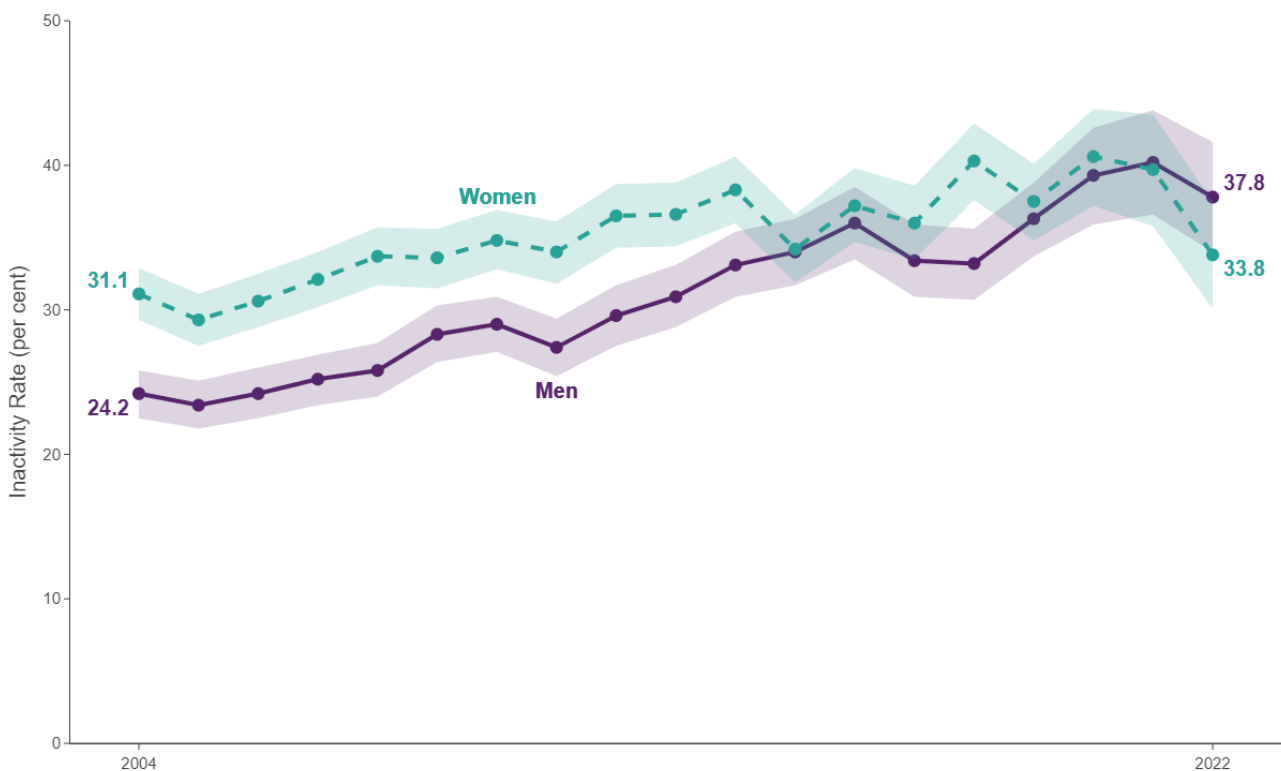
Economic Inactivity by Sex

In January to December 2022, there were an estimated 104,700 inactive men aged 16 to 24 and 92,500 inactive women aged 16 to 24 in Scotland.

The estimated inactivity rate for 16 to 24 year old men was 37.8 per cent, 2.3 percentage points (pp) lower than a year ago but 1.5 pp higher than 2019. While the estimated inactivity rate for 16 to 24 year old women was 33.8 per cent, 5.8 pp lower than a year ago and 3.6 pp lower than 2019.

The change on year for women aged 16 to 24 represents a statistically significant change.

Chart 7: Economic inactivity rate of people aged 16 to 24 by Sex; Scotland; 2004 to 2022



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

Note: Shaded areas represent 95 per cent confidence intervals

Further Information

Reliability of estimates

Estimates from the ONS Annual Population Survey for January to December 2004 through to January to December 2022 are presented. The sample size in this dataset is around 11,100 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

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How to access background or source data

Results are provided for January to December 2004 through to January to December 2022 based on the data released by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on 15 March 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 April to March, 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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Details of forthcoming publications can be found on the [Scottish Government website](#).

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