



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

STATISTICS

# Coronavirus and employment: analysis of protected characteristics

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is impacting people across Wales of all ages, from all backgrounds and from all communities.

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Analysis of employment is helping us understand who may be more affected by the coronavirus pandemic and the measures put in place to control its spread.

The data explores the characteristics of two different cohorts of people in Wales: critical (key) workers, and people working in industries told to close in Wales as of March 2020.

## 1. Critical (key) workers

Employees whose work is critical to the coronavirus response are classed as critical workers in Wales. This includes health and social care workers, teachers, people working in supermarkets and many more occupations. The Welsh Government provides guidance on the [types of work that fall within the definition of critical workers](#) who are eligible for access to childcare provision. A wider definition is used for COVID-19 testing purposes.

Every year the Annual Population Survey gathers data on around 18,000 households in Wales. We've used this information to estimate how many critical workers there are in Wales and who makes up this group.

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## Our analysis estimates

There are approximately 490,000 critical workers in Wales, which is around one-third of the workforce.

Women are more likely to be critical workers than men. 40% of all women in employment in Wales are critical workers, compared to 28% of men.

The 50-54 year old age group makes up the largest share of critical workers at 13.5%. That same age group accounts for 12% of all employees in Wales.

While employees with a white ethnicity account for almost 95% of all critical workers in Wales, some other ethnic groups are more likely to be critical workers.

The number of people in Wales interviewed for the APS is very small for more detailed ethnic groups, which means that these estimates are less reliable. However, the available data indicates that more than half of employees of Bangladeshi ethnicity are critical workers, and half of Black, African, Caribbean and Black British employees work in critical occupations. Employees of a Pakistani ethnicity are least likely to be critical workers, with 22% of the cohort.

Within some ethnic groups there are an even higher proportion of females. Around two thirds (66%) of critical workers of an Asian background other than Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Chinese were female.

Disabled people account for 15% of critical workers. They make up a similar proportion of all employees but there are differences within industries.

## 2. People working in industries told to close

The Welsh Government published [guidance in March 2020 on the types of businesses that should remain closed](#) during the initial stages of the coronavirus pandemic. Business such as pubs, restaurants and leisure centres were included.

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From the data we have, we can't say for definite if a business has closed. For example, some restaurants may have chosen to offer a takeaway service rather than closing completely. But we can give a good indication of the number of business that might have been affected and the number of people they employ.

Around 230,000 people were employed in industries in Wales in 2019 that were told to close after the initial coronavirus pandemic, representing around 16% of the total workforce. Women, young people and employees from a minority ethnic background are more likely to be employed in those industries.

There were more women (55%) than men (44%) working in industries told to close. That equates to 18% of all female employees in Wales compared to 14% of all male employees.

Employees aged under 25 account for 12% of all employees in Wales, but made up over a quarter (27%) of employees within industries told to close. In particular, women under 25 account for 12% of all female employees in Wales, but 28% of all those in industries told to close.

20% of all employees of a black, Asian and minority ethnic background work in industries told to close, compared to 15% of white employees. 93% of all employees within these industries were white (compared to 95% of all employees across Wales).

17% of all disabled employees work within industries told to close, which is slightly higher than the proportion employees who are not disabled (15%).

### 3. Other analysis

ONS have created an estimate of **occupations that have the highest potential exposure to COVID-19**.

In Wales, women and those from a minority ethnic background are more likely to be employed within occupations that have the highest risk.

The accompanying datasets also include information on self-employed people.

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In Wales, self-employed people are more likely to be male.

While this analysis has focused on employment, we know that certain groups of people are more affected by coronavirus in different ways. Our statisticians and researchers have also been supporting the COVID-19 BAME Advisory Group established to investigate the evidence around factors that may disproportionately impact people of black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds during the pandemic. The statistical evidence drawn together for the Advisory Group will be published on Monday 22 June.

As the coronavirus pandemic progresses, our statisticians and researchers will continue to analyse the impact across Wales.

## 4. Contact details

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