



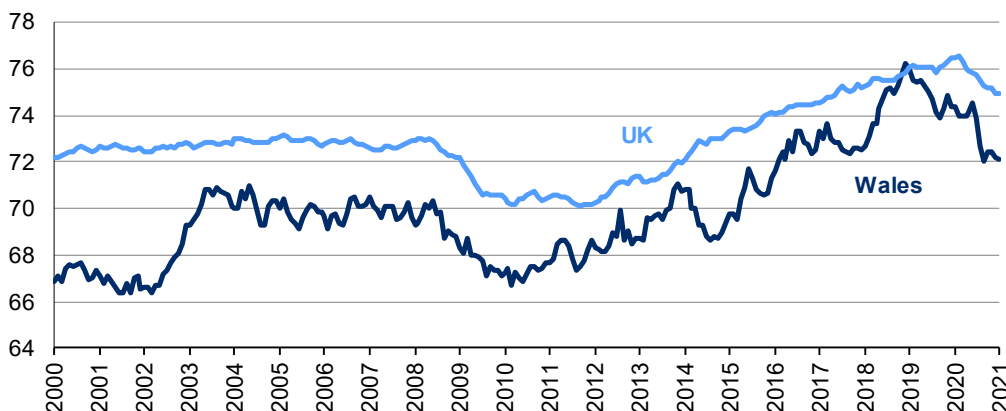
## Labour Market Overview, March 2021

### Key points for November 2020 to January 2021

The latest Labour Force Survey data (November to January 2021) continues to show the impacts of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on the labour market.

- The employment rate in Wales was 72.1%. This is 0.3 percentage points down on the quarter and 2.3 percentage points down on the year. September to November 2020 showed the largest annual decrease since June to August 2009, and the second largest annual decrease since comparable records began in 1992.
- The unemployment rate in Wales was 4.5%. This is down slightly on the quarter and up 1.1 percentage points on the year. September to November 2020 showed the largest annual increase since July to September 2011.

### Employment rate (percentage of population age 16-64)



Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

### Other data sources

The latest official labour market estimates cover the period November to January 2021. Other data sources, such as the number of paid employees, are also used to provide a more complete picture, and indicate some slight improvements to the labour market.

- Early estimates for February 2021 indicate that the number of paid employees in Wales continued to slowly increase after remaining relatively stable from June to November 2020, although remains well below the number pre-pandemic.
- While the sample size is small, the estimated redundancy rate in Wales has started to decrease following a peak in September to November 2020.

### About this bulletin

This monthly bulletin used to be a compendium publication that brought together the latest key statistics relating to the Welsh economy and labour market.

Since June 2020, this has been changed to focus mainly on the Labour Market and more specifically focus on the impacts of COVID19 on the labour market

Key supporting material:

[Welsh Economy in Numbers](#)

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We have suspended a large part of the bulletin in order to focus on the labour market impacts of the COVID-19 crisis. All data that is no longer in the bulletin is available elsewhere on our website. Links can be found within table 5.3 in the [Key Quality Information section](#).

## Note

In January 2021, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) released a [statement](#) about the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The LFS responses are weighted to official population estimates and projections that do not currently reflect the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The LFS is not designed to measure changes in the levels of population or long-term international migration. ONS are analysing the population totals used in the weighting process and may make adjustments if appropriate. Rates published from the LFS remain robust and reliable, however levels and changes in levels should be used with caution. For more detail, ONS have also released a [blog](#).

For this reason, we have removed the majority of references to levels throughout this release and maintained the focus on rates.

On 23 March 2021, ONS also published a [blog](#) explaining how the UK population and workforce are changing during the pandemic. New experimental analysis also suggests that LFS based estimates for the UK are likely to significantly overstate the change in the non-UK national population (see page 4). This will be used to inform a reweighting of the LFS in the summer.

The Labour Market series can be volatile, and in particular, short term changes should be treated with caution.

# 1. Employment

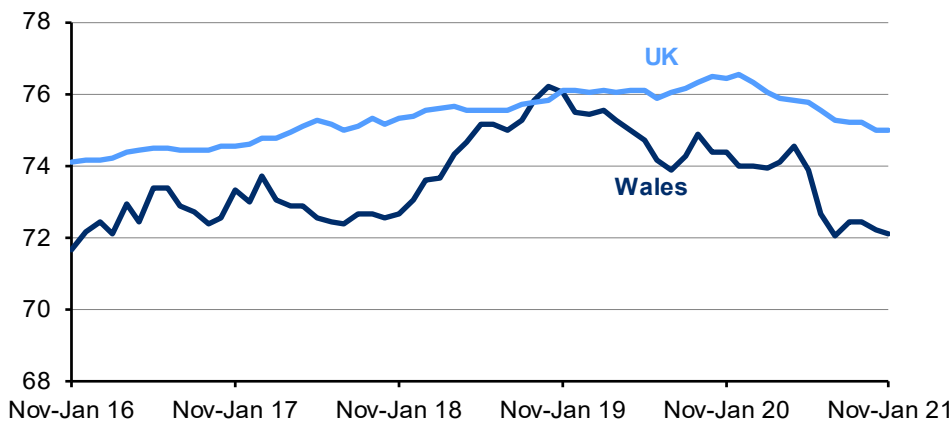
**Figures for employment include employees that have been furloughed.**

Data from the LFS shows that the employment rate remained broadly stable towards the end of 2019 and the beginning of 2020 following a steady decrease since late 2018. The employment rate began to fall in early 2020 as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, and the July to September 2020 period saw the largest quarterly decrease in the Welsh employment rate since records began in 1992. The latest employment rate for Wales is similar to the employment rates in 2016, while rates for the UK were similar to 2017. Wales had the third lowest employment rate of the 12 UK countries and English regions in November to January 2021.

Other sources explored in this section such as the number of people furloughed under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, the number of paid employees in Wales and the average number of hours worked give further indication of the impact on the labour market.

Looking at the latest Labour Force Survey statistics in more detail, the employment rate was 72.1% in Wales in November to January 2021. This is down 0.3 percentage points on the previous quarter and down 2.3 percentage points from the same period a year earlier. This compares to a rate of 75.0% in the UK over the same period, which is 2.9 percentage points higher than the rate for Wales (Chart 1.1).

**Chart 1.1: Employment rate, persons** (percentage of those aged 16-64)

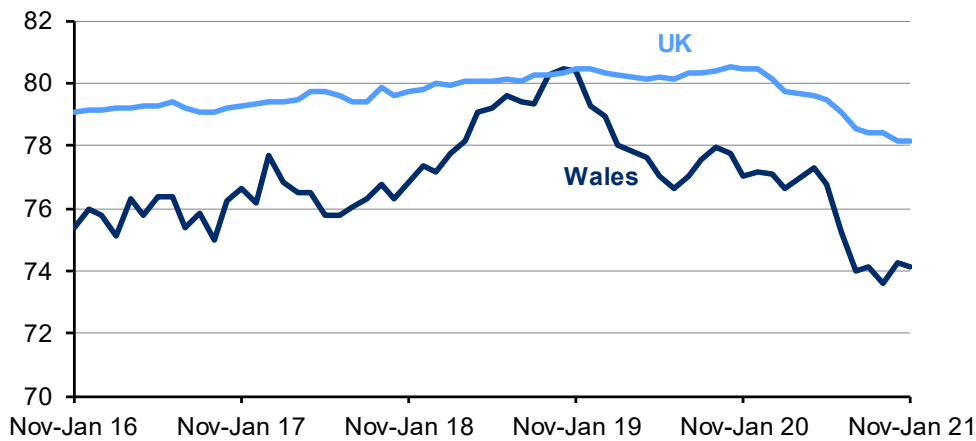


Source: Welsh Government analysis of Labour Force Survey

In November to January 2021, the employment rate in Wales was unchanged for men but decreased for women compared to the previous quarter. Compared to the same time last year, the employment rate decreased for both men and women, although it fell further for men. The employment rate for men has fallen in recent months to the lowest it's been in over five years.

The employment rate for men in Wales in November to January 2021 was 74.1%, unchanged on the previous quarter, and down 2.9 percentage points from the same period a year earlier. September to November 2020 showed the largest annual decrease on record for the male employment rate (4.3 percentage points). Comparatively, the employment rate for men in the UK was 78.2% over the same period, down 2.3 percentage points over the year. (Chart 1.2)

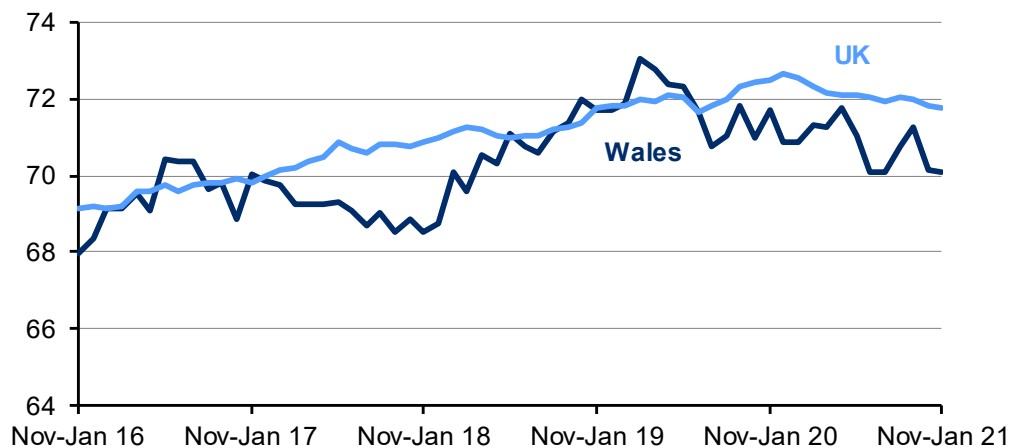
**Chart 1.2: Employment rate, men** (percentage of those aged 16-64)



Source: Welsh Government analysis of Labour Force Survey

Conversely, the employment rate for women has remained more stable. The employment rate for women in Wales in November to January 2021 was 70.1%, down 0.7 percentage points compared to the previous quarter and down 1.6 percentage points from a year earlier. The employment rate for women in the UK was 71.8% over the same period, down from 72.5% a year earlier. (Chart 1.3)

**Chart 1.3: Employment rate, women** (percentage of those aged 16-64)

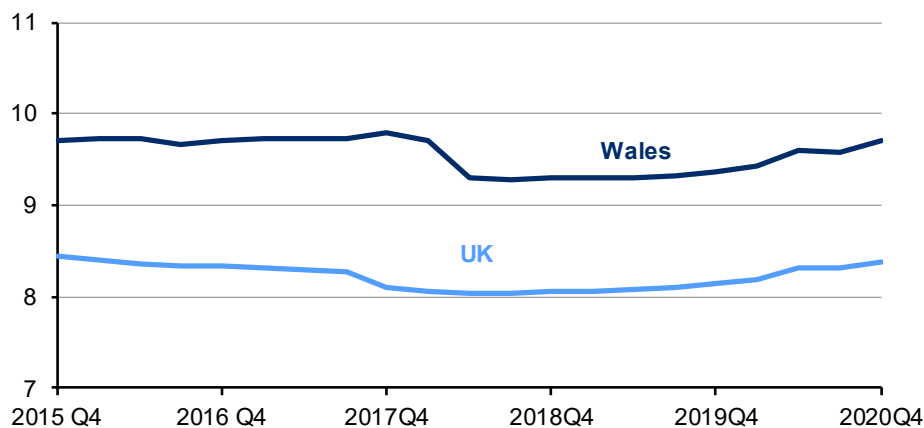


Source: Welsh Government analysis of Labour Force Survey

According to Public Sector Employment data, there were 306,000 people employed in the public sector in Wales in 2020 Q4, up 3.5% from a year earlier. This is 9.7% of the population, up 0.3 percentage points on the same quarter a year earlier.

Public sector employment in the UK over the same period increased by 2.9% to 5.6 million. This is 8.4% of the population, up 0.2 percentage points on the previous year. (Chart 1.4)

**Chart 1.4: Public sector employment** (percentage of population, not seasonally adjusted)



Source: Welsh Government analysis of Regional Public Sector Employment, ONS

### **Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (furlough)**

As at 28 February 2021, 175,200 employments in Wales were furloughed under the CJRS, a take up rate of 13% – slightly lower than the take up rate across the UK of 15%. There was a 4% decrease in the number of furloughed employments in Wales between 31 January and 28 February 2021, although the number of furloughed employments remains at a similar level to early August 2020.

93,100 females and 82,100 males in Wales were furloughed under the CJRS as at 28 February 2021, accounting for 53% and 47% of all furloughed employments, respectively.

HMRC publish data to local authority level. The take up rate of furloughed employments across Wales ranged from 10% (Blaenau Gwent) to 19% (Conwy).

### **Self-Employment Income Support Scheme**

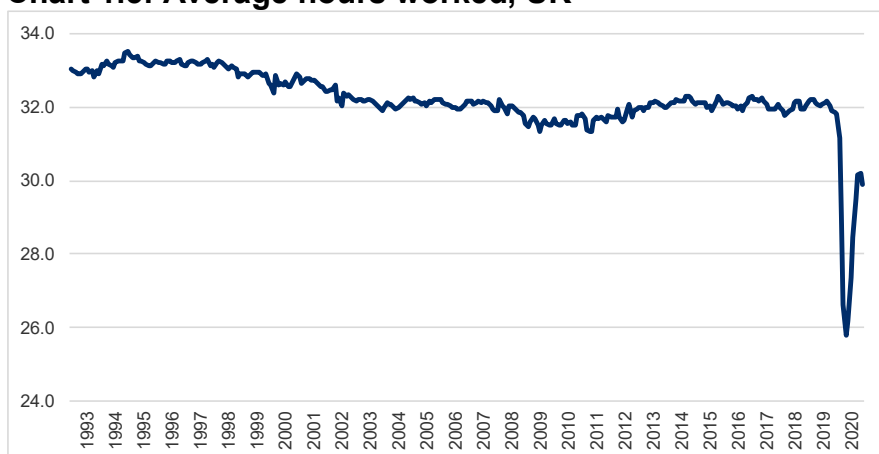
The third grant of the Self Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) launched on 30th November 2020. Up to 31st January 2021, there have been 88,000 successful claims for the third SEISS in Wales, which is 63% of those who are eligible for the scheme.

The take up rate for males (65%) was higher than females (59%). Self-employed people working in construction in Wales accounted for by far the largest share of all claims (29%)

### **Hours worked**

The pandemic has had a large impact on actual hours worked. In the three months to January 2021, the average number of hours worked in the UK showed a continued sign of recovery but was still below pre-pandemic levels at 29.9 hours per week. This was 0.4 hours (1.3%) up on the previous quarter but 2.0 hours (6.2%) down on the previous year. Men had a slightly larger decrease over the year than women (-6.8% compared to -5.0%, respectively).

**Chart 1.5: Average hours worked, UK**



Source: Labour Force Survey, ONS

Due sample size, an estimate of the number of hours worked in the three months to January 2021 is not available for Wales. The latest hours worked data for Wales from the Annual Population Survey (APS) relates to a 12-month period ending September 2020, which covers six months of the coronavirus pandemic. During the year to September 2020, the average number of hours worked in Wales was 28.8 hours per week. This was a decrease of 2.8 hours from last year. Men in Wales worked an average of 32.5 hours per week and women worked an average of 24.8 hours per week.

### **Experimental Real Time Pay Information**

The Office for National Statistics and HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) publish [data for Wales on payrolled employees, mean pay, aggregate pay and single month estimates for median pay](#).

The data on the number of paid employees is a clear indication of how the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has affected the number of employees in Wales.

The number of paid employees has generally increased in recent years, but has fallen steeply during the pandemic. The latest estimates suggest some small signs of recovery, with a slight increase after remaining relatively stable between June and November 2020, although still well below the number pre-pandemic.

Early estimates for February 2021 indicate that the number of paid employees in Wales was 1.24 million. This was a decrease of 25,000 (2.0%) on February 2020, but an increase of 10,100 (0.8%) compared with the lowest point in November 2020.

Between February 2020 and February 2021, the UK saw a 693,000 (2.4%) decrease in the number of employees. Of there, 437,000 (63.1%) were under 25 years old.

**Chart 1.6: Paid employees, Wales**



Source: Pay As You Earn Real Time Information, HM Revenue and Customs

New additional analysis of Real Time Information tax data matched with the Migrant Worker Scan (MWS) has also been published by ONS.

This analysis estimates that the number of EU employees in Wales fell by 5.2% (2,500) between December 2019 and December 2020, one of the largest annual decreases since the series began in 2014.

The number of UK employees in Wales fell by an estimated 2.3% (27,600) over the same time period while non-UK and non-EU employees increased by 4.4% (1,400).

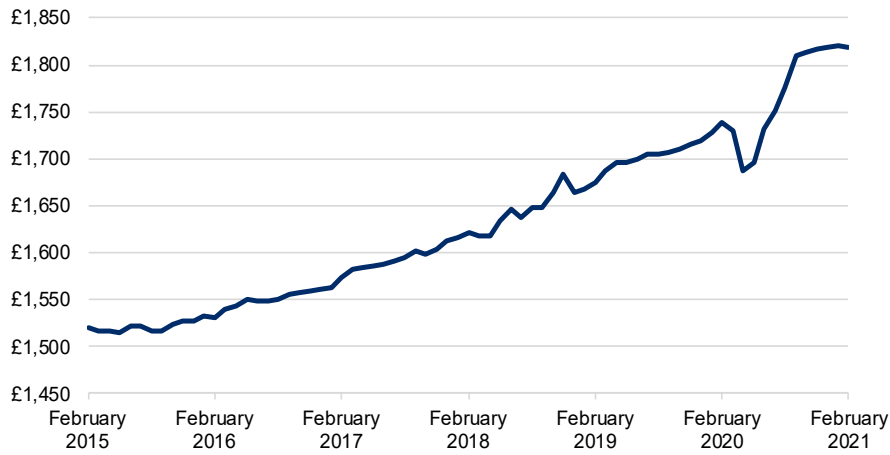
The reduction in non-UK nationals during the coronavirus (COVID-19) as estimated through the HMRC real time information data is smaller than equivalent estimates from the Labour Force Survey (LFS). ONS have stated that this suggests the LFS based estimates for the UK are likely to significantly overstate the change in the non-UK national population. This will be used to inform a reweighting of the LFS in the summer.

Median pay represents the half way pay point for those in payrolled employment – with half paid below the median pay value and half above. The median pay is considered a more accurate picture of the average wage as it removes extremes at both ends of the scale.

Median pay has grown in recent years but fell slightly during March and April 2020. In Wales, median pay has been above pre-pandemic levels since July 2020, peaking in January 2021. This data should be treated with caution. ONS have stated that the level of median pay growth in recent months is partially explained by the decrease in people entering payrolled employment. According to ONS, people entering into payrolled employment tend to be paid around 40% lower than the mean pay for those continually employed. Whilst the general trend of pay growth is dominated by those continually employed, as the number of people entering employment has reduced in recent months, this has resulted in fewer people in payrolled employment entering on lower pay, and therefore increasing average median pay across the labour market.



**Chart 1.7: Median pay, Wales**



Source: Pay As You Earn Real Time Information, HM Revenue and Customs

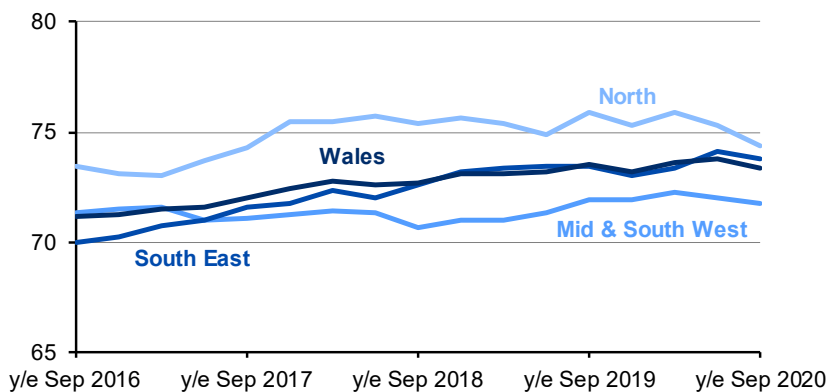
### Economic Regions

The data for the Welsh economic regions is for the year ending September 2020. The data for this period covers six months of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic as well as six months prior to the start of the pandemic, and therefore should be treated with caution.

The overall trend for Wales and the three Welsh economic regions over the last four years is a steady increase in employment, with North Wales remaining consistently higher than Wales and the other economic regions. (Chart 1.8)

In the year ending September 2020, the employment level decreased throughout Wales. North Wales decreased by 9,000 (or 2.7%) and Mid and South West Wales by 7,500 (or 1.8%), but South East Wales remained broadly unchanged compared with the previous year. Over the same period, the employment rate decreased slightly by 0.2 percentage points in Mid and South West Wales and 1.5 percentage points in North Wales. However, the employment rate increased by 0.3 percentage points in South East Wales. (Differences calculated using unrounded figures)

**Chart 1.8: Employment rate, economic regions** (four quarter rolling average, percentage of those aged 16-64, not seasonally adjusted)



Source: Welsh Government analysis of Annual Population Survey

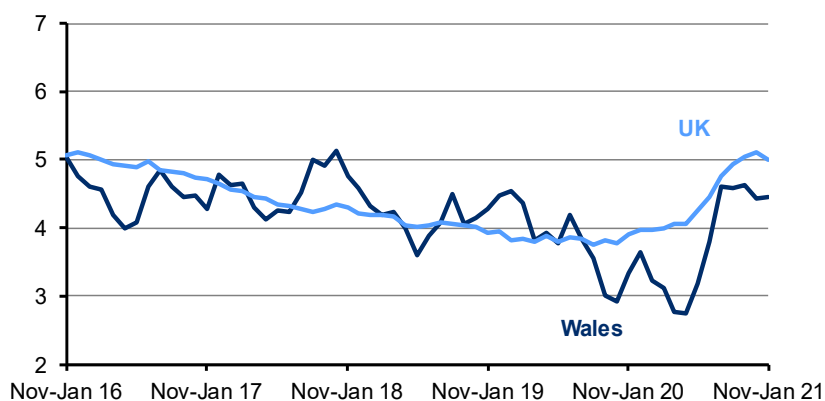
## 2. Unemployment<sup>1</sup>

The Welsh unemployment rate has generally tracked the UK rate and had been gradually falling since the early 2010s, before rising sharply in recent periods as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. In August to November 2019, the Welsh unemployment rate fell below the UK rate and has remained below ever since.

As with the employment rate, this series can be volatile and short-term changes should be treated with caution. But the unemployment data can be considered alongside other data sources to consider the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on unemployment. Experimental estimates indicate a large increase in the claimant count rate in Wales since March 2020. While not everyone claiming these benefits will be unemployed<sup>2</sup>, there was a 93% increase of people claiming Universal Credit in early February 2021 compared to March 2020. In February 2021 the experimental claimant count in Wales was 113,000, a rate of 7.4% of the workforce.

Looking at the latest labour market statistics in more detail, during November to January 2021 the unemployment rate in Wales was 4.5% of the economically active population. This is down slightly from the previous quarter but up 1.1 percentage points compared to a year earlier.

**Chart 2.1: ILO Unemployment rate** (percentage of economically active population)



Source: Welsh Government analysis of Labour Force Survey

The rate of unemployed people in the UK over the year increased by 1.1 percentage points to a rate of 5.0% of the economically active population. (Chart 2.1)

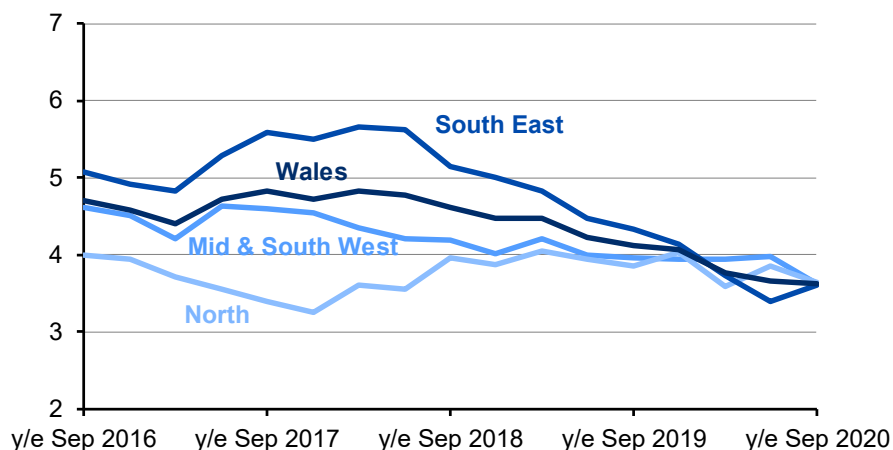
In the year ending September 2020, the unemployment rate decreased by 0.7 percentage points in South East Wales and 0.3 percentage points in Mid and South West Wales followed by a 0.2 percentage point decrease for North Wales. All three regions now have an unemployment rate of 3.6%. (Differences calculated using unrounded figures)

The overall trend for Wales and the three economic regions is a decrease in unemployment over the past four years. Before the end of 2019, the unemployment rate remained consistently higher in South East Wales than the other regions, and North Wales consistently had the lowest unemployment rate. (Chart 2.2)

<sup>1</sup> The International Labour Organisation (ILO) defines unemployment as people without a job who have actively sought work in the last four weeks and are available to start work in the next two weeks, plus those who are out of work, have found a job and are waiting to start in the next two weeks.

<sup>2</sup> Many more people in work can be eligible for Universal Credit and included in the claimant count. This is explained in ONS' blog on [Understanding the impact on jobs and pay](#)

**Chart 2.2: ILO unemployment rate, economic regions** (four quarter rolling average, percentage of economically active, not seasonally adjusted)

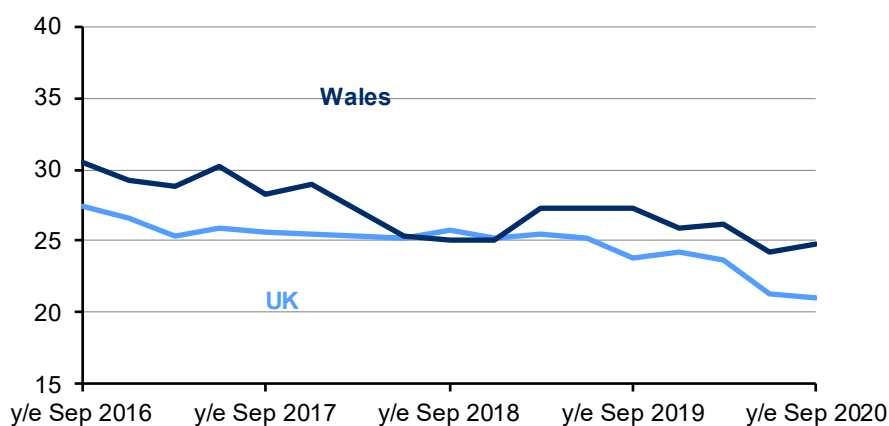


Source: Welsh Government analysis of Annual Population Survey

The Welsh long-term unemployment rate has generally been higher than the UK rate in recent years, apart from during a period in 2018 when the two rates were very similar.

In the year ending September 2020, the Annual Population Survey (APS) estimates that 24.7% of all those unemployed in the year were long-term unemployed (12 months or more), down 2.6 percentage points over the year. The equivalent UK rate was 21.0%, down 2.7 percentage points over the year. (Chart 2.3)

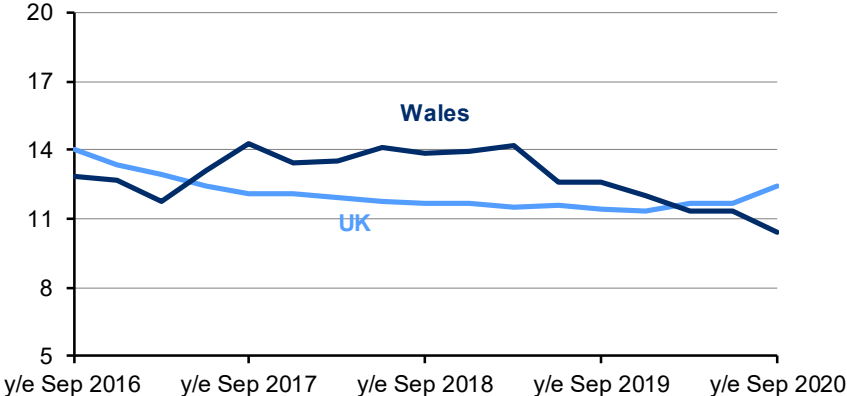
**Chart 2.3: Long-term ILO unemployment rates** (percentage of all unemployed: four quarter rolling average)



Source: Welsh Government analysis of Annual Population Survey

The youth unemployment (people aged 16-24) rate in Wales was generally higher in Wales than the UK from the middle of 2017 until the beginning of 2020 where it has dropped below the UK rate. In the year ending September 2020, the APS estimates that 10.4% of economically active adults aged 16-24 were unemployed, down 2.2 percentage points over the year. The equivalent UK rate was 12.4%, up 1.0 percentage points over the year. (Chart 2.4)

**Chart 2.4: Youth ILO unemployment rates** (percentage of economically active: four quarter rolling average, not seasonally adjusted)

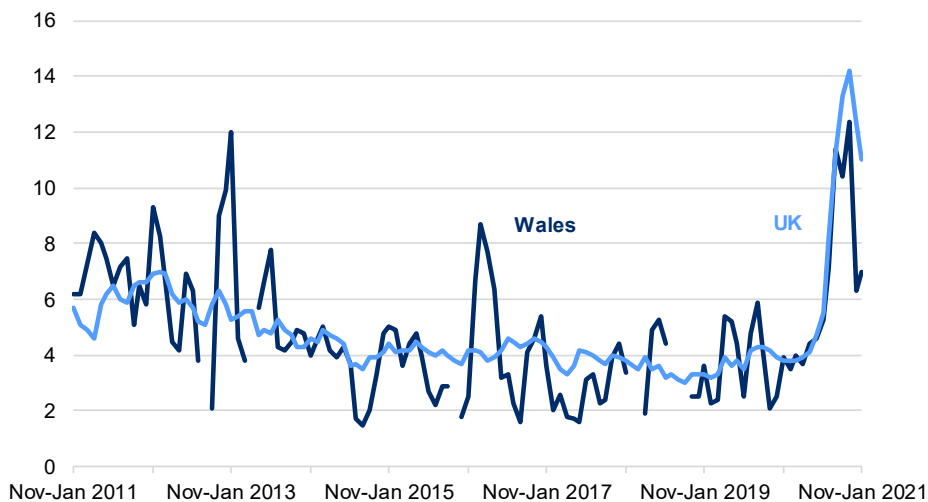


Source: Welsh Government analysis of Annual Population Survey

## Redundancies

The redundancy rate from the LFS is the ratio of the redundancy level for the given quarter to the number of employees in the previous quarter, multiplied by 1,000. The redundancy rate in Wales is volatile compared to the UK. The redundancy rates for both Wales and the UK reached their highest point during September to November 2020, with Wales having a slightly lower rate than the UK. At this point, the redundancy rate in Wales was the highest it has been since July to September 2020.

**Chart 2.5: Redundancy rates, Wales and UK**



Source: Welsh Government analysis of Labour Force Survey

In November 2020 to January 2021, the redundancy rate in Wales decreased by 3.4 redundancies per thousand compared with the previous quarter to a rate of 7.0, compared to 11.0 in the UK. October to December 2020 saw the first decrease in the redundancy rate since February to April 2020.

Note: The redundancy figures for Wales are based on a small sample size. This may result in less precise estimates, which should be used with caution.

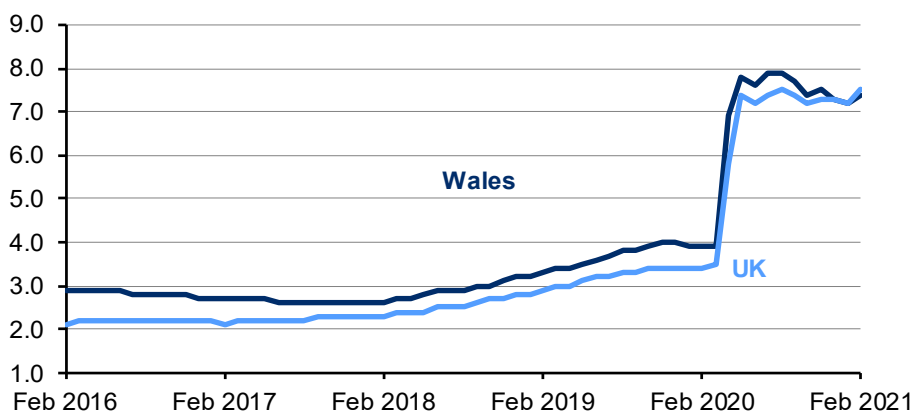
## Claimant counts

The experimental claimant count rates were initially removed from the bulletin due to their unreliability but have been added back in due to the timeliness of the data to give an early indication of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in Wales. More information can be found in Key Quality Information.

Experimental claimant count data for Wales shows that in February 2021, the claimant count was 113,000, a rate of 7.4% of the population. This was an increase on January 2021 of 3,300 (3.0%), but an increase on February 2020 of 54,000 (91.5%).

The UK experimental claimant count was 2.7 million in February 2021, a rate of 7.5% of the population. Over the year, it increased by 1.45 million (117.3%). (Chart 2.6)

**Chart 2.6: Experimental claimant count rates (percentage of civilian workforce)**



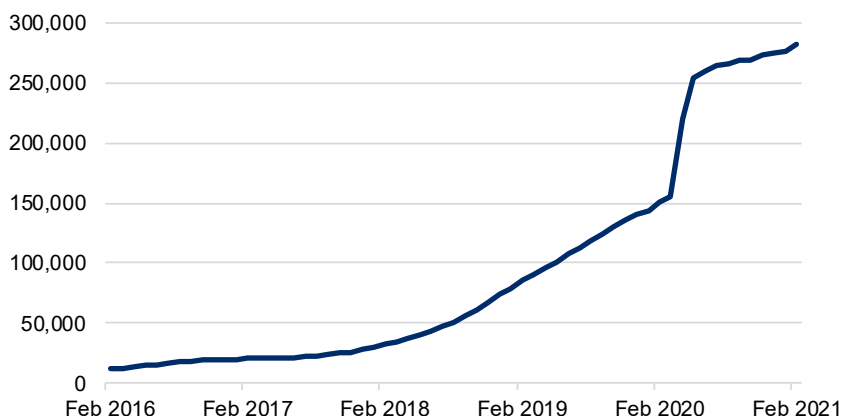
Source: Jobcentre Plus Administration System, Department for Work and Pensions

## Universal Credit

On 11th February 2021, there were 282,200 people on Universal Credit in Wales, an increase of 5,400 people (1.9%) in one month. The increase this month was significantly smaller than the increases in April and May 2020 (41.4% and 15.5%, respectively).

“Searching for work” remains the largest conditionality with 101,900 people; an increase of 5.7% on the previous month. Since 12 March 2020, the number of people in this group has nearly doubled (94.0%) from around 52,500.

**Chart 2.7: People on Universal Credit, Wales**



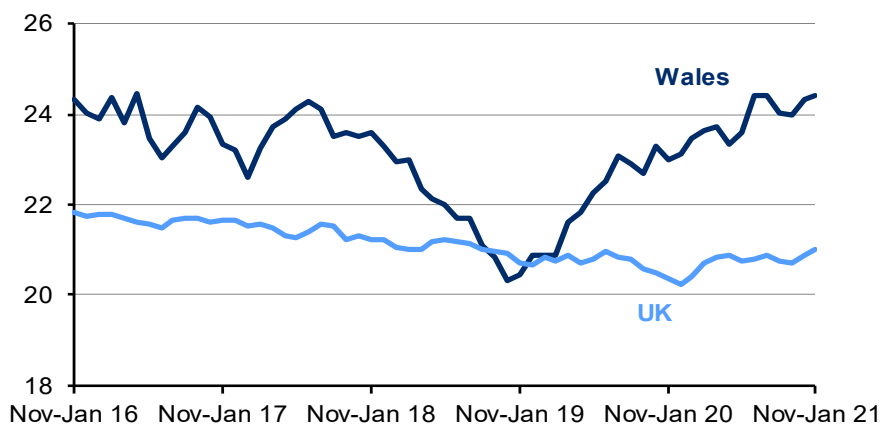
Source: Universal Credit, Department for Work and Pensions

### 3. Economic Inactivity

Inactivity rates in Wales have been persistently higher than the UK for decades but fell steeply to below the UK rate at the end of 2018. From 2018, the rate in Wales generally increased, corresponding with the fall in the employment rate (Charts 1.1 and 1.2).

The latest labour market statistics show that the economic inactivity rate was 24.4% in Wales in November to January 2021. This was an increase of 0.4 percentage points over the quarter, and an increase of 1.4 percentage points compared to the same period a year earlier. The rate of economically inactive people in the UK remained broadly stable at 21.0%, up 0.3 percentage points compared to the previous quarter, and up 0.6 percentage points on the previous year. (Chart 3.1).

**Chart 3.1: Economic inactivity rate, persons** (percentage of those aged 16-64)



Source: Welsh Government analysis of Labour Force Survey

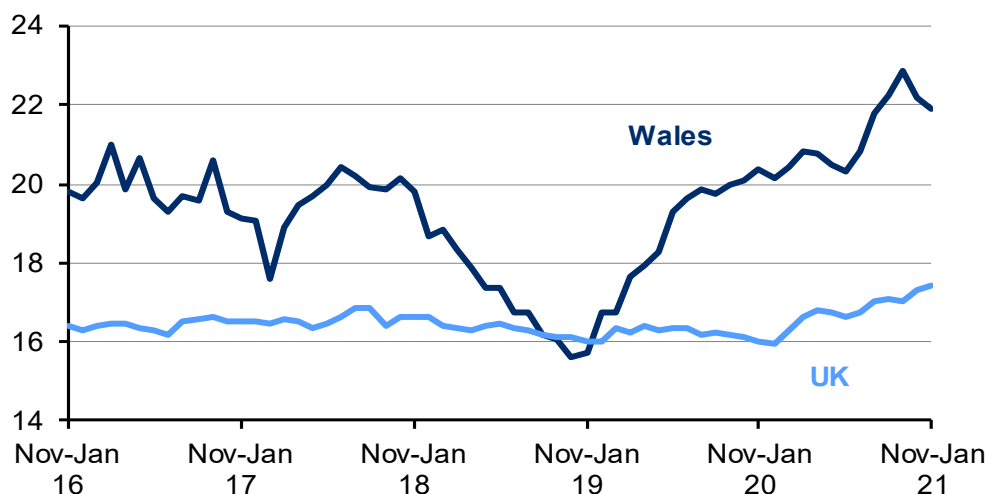
The most common reason given for economic inactivity in the UK was being a student (27.7%), up by 0.8 percentage points over the quarter and up by 1.8 percentage points over the year. Long-term sick was the second most common reason (24.9%), down by 0.2 percentage points compared to a year earlier. Looking after family/home and retired fell over the quarter (down 0.2 and 0.4 percentage points, respectively) and over the year (down 3.8 and 0.2 percentage points, respectively). The percentage of economically inactive people who want a job (22.0%) was down 0.8 percentage points from the last quarter, and down 0.2 percentage points from the year before.

Figures for the UK regions and countries aren't published as part of the monthly release, however, APS analysis for the year ending September 2020 for Wales shows that long term sick or disabled is the most common reason for being economically inactive (27.9%) followed by being a student (26.2%).

The latest quarterly figures show that the economic inactivity rate continued to increase for men compared to the previous year. Following recent decreases, the economic inactivity rate for women also increased. The trend of increasing economic inactivity in men can be seen in both Wales and across the UK as a whole. Two months ago (September to November 2020), estimates for men were the highest they have been since 1998 in Wales.

The economic inactivity rate for men in Wales was 21.9% for November to January 2021, down by 0.3 percentage points on the previous quarter, and up 1.5 percentage points from a year earlier. The rate of economically inactive men in the UK increased to 17.4% over the same period, up from 17.1% in the previous quarter and up by 1.4 percentage points over the year. (Chart 3.2)

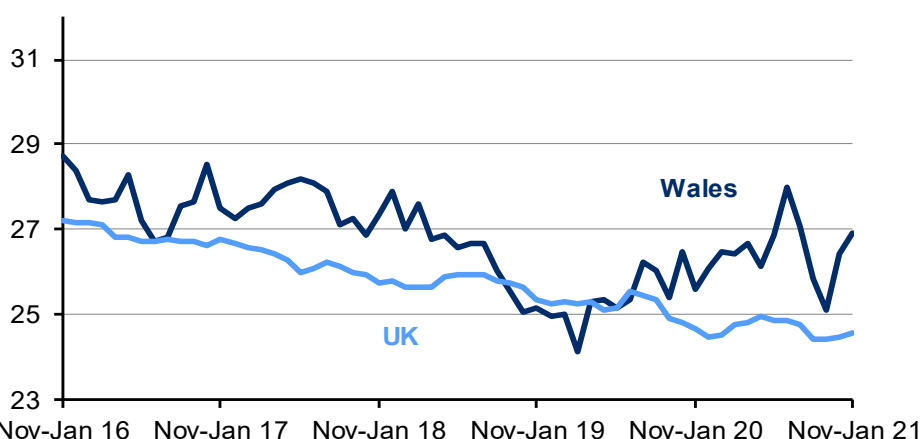
**Chart 3.2: Economic inactivity rate, men** (percentage of those aged 16-64)



Source: Welsh Government analysis of Labour Force Survey

Women have higher inactivity rates than men, primarily because they are more likely to have full-time caring responsibilities. The rate of female economic inactivity in Wales was 26.9% during November to January 2021, up 1.1 percentage points over the quarter, and up 1.3 percentage points from a year earlier. Over the longer term, the inactivity rate for women in Wales has experienced a large fall, from a high of 37.2% in 2002, however has increased since late 2018. Comparatively, the economic inactivity rate for women in the UK was 24.6% from November to January 2021, down slightly from 24.7% a year earlier (Chart 3.3).

**Chart 3.3: Economic inactivity rate, women** (percentage of those aged 16-64)



Source: Welsh Government analysis of Labour Force Survey

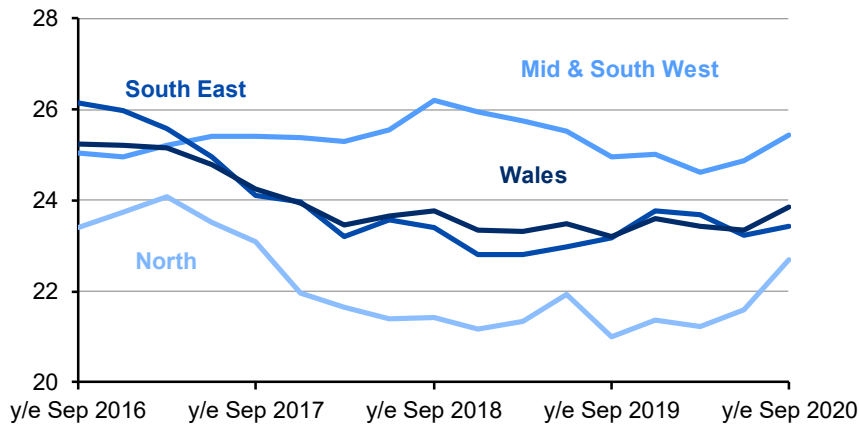
In the year ending September 2020, the economic inactivity rate increased in all three economic regions compared with the previous year. The rate increased by 1.7 percentage points in North



Wales, by 0.5 percentage points in Mid and South West Wales, and by 0.3 percentage points in South East Wales. (Differences calculated using unrounded figures)

Over the past four years the inactivity rate has fluctuated for the three economic regions. North Wales has consistently had the lowest inactivity rate of all three regions across that time period. All three economic regions have seen increases in economic inactivity in the latest period. (Chart 3.4)

**Chart 3.4: Economic inactivity rate, economic regions** (four quarter rolling average, percentage of those aged 16-64, not seasonally adjusted)



Source: Welsh Government analysis of Annual Population Survey

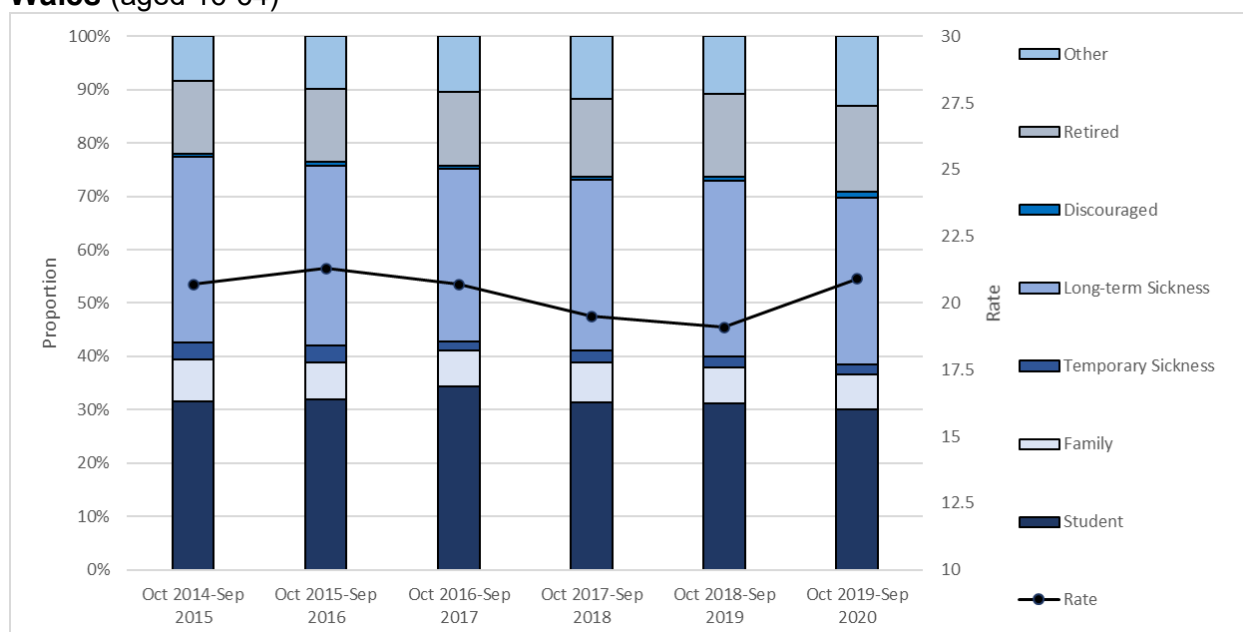
## Economic Inactivity Reasons

The economic inactivity rate in Wales, according to the LFS, has increased 1.3 percentage points since the three months to February 2020. In particular, the economic inactivity rate for men has increased sharply and September to November 2020 saw the highest rate in Wales since 1998. Initial analysis of the LFS and APS has been carried out to find out the reasons for economic inactivity in Wales and the UK. While it is too early to draw firm conclusions, this analysis is important in understanding the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the labour market and we will continue to monitor the data over the coming months.

Although the LFS provides headline economic inactivity rates for men and for women in Wales (aged 16 to 64), the sample sizes don't allow us to look at the reasons for the economic inactivity in Wales for men and women separately, although it is possible across the UK.

The most common reason for male economic inactivity in the UK during September to November 2020 was being a student, which increased by 0.6 percentage points over the year to 34.0% of all economically inactive men.

**Chart 3.5: Male Economic Inactivity by Reason and Male Economic Inactivity Rate in Wales (aged 16-64)**



Source: Welsh Government analysis of Annual Population Survey

The Annual Population Survey is a boosted version of the Labour Force Survey, and has a much larger sample size. This allows us to look in more detail at estimates for Wales, although over a rolling 12-month period (compared to three months in the LFS). Latest APS figures relate to the year ending September 2020.

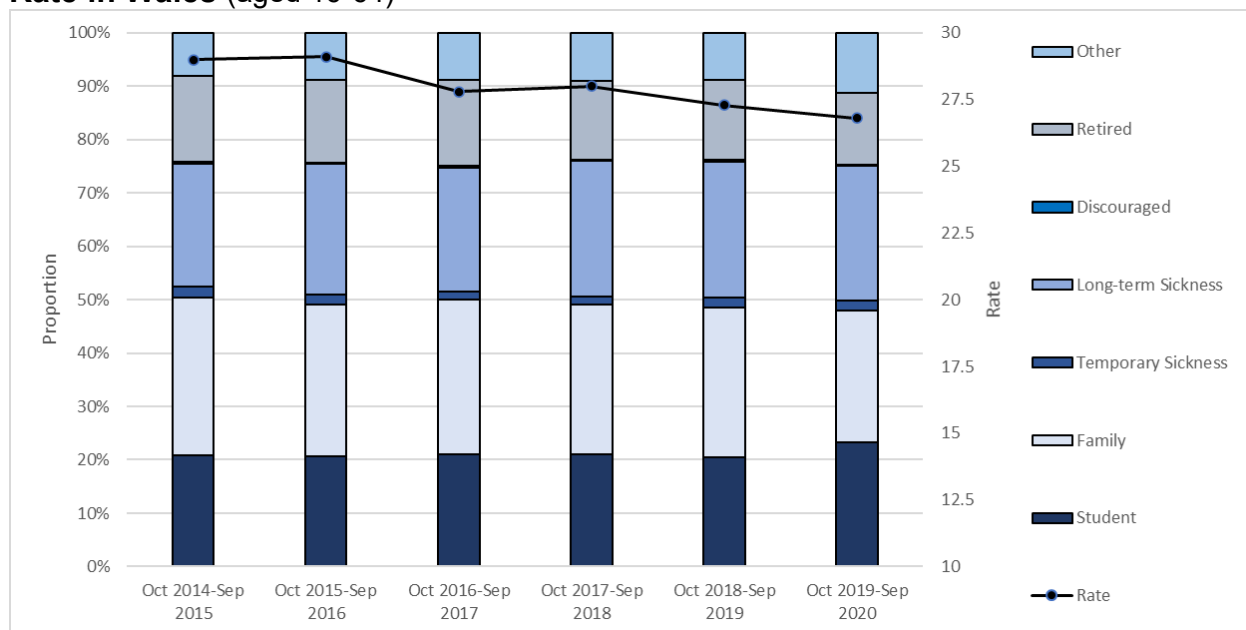
The economic inactivity rate for men in Wales increased by 1.8 percentage points to 20.9% in the year ending September 2020. This the first increase following three consecutive annual decreases. In the UK, the economic inactivity rate for men increased 0.5 percentage points to 17.2%.

The most common reason for economic inactivity for men in Wales was long-term sickness, although this decreased by 1.9 percentage points to 31.2% of all economically inactive men in the

year ending September 2020 (the UK also saw a decrease). Over the same period, the proportion of men discouraged from work (not looking for work because they believe no jobs are available) increased 0.4 percentage points to 1.2% of all economically inactive men in Wales.

Comparatively, the most common reason for economic inactivity for men in the UK was student in the year ending September 2020, followed by long-term sickness, which decreased by 0.3 percentage points to 28.8% of all economically inactive men.

**Chart 3.6: Female Economic Inactivity by Reason and Female Economic Inactivity Rate in Wales (aged 16-64)**



Source: Welsh Government analysis of Annual Population Survey

Whilst the economic inactivity rate for men appears to have increased as a result of the coronavirus pandemic in both Wales and the UK, economic inactivity rates for women have remained relatively stable.

The most common reason for female economic inactivity in the UK during November to January 2021 was looking after family/home, although this decreased by 5.4 percentage points over the year to 26.6% of all economically inactive women. The proportion of economically inactive females giving the reason as being a student increased by 2.3 percentage points compared to the previous year.

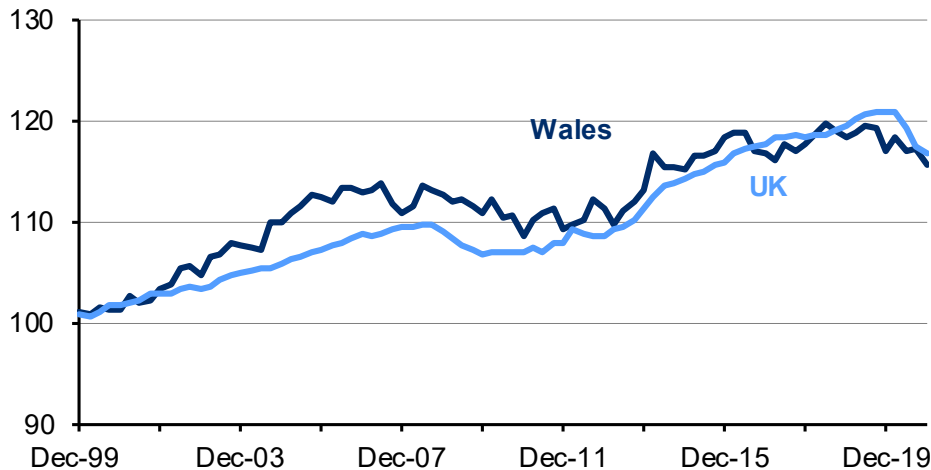
Looking at the APS for the year ending September 2020, the most common reason for economic inactivity for women in Wales was looking after family, which decreased 3.2 percentage points to 24.8% of all economically inactive women in Wales. Over the same period, the proportion of economically inactive female students increased 2.7 percentage points to 23.2% of all economically inactive women.

The most common reason for female economic inactivity in the UK, year ending September 2020 was looking after family at 30.1%, down 4.2 percentage points over the year.

## 4. Workforce Jobs

The number of workforce jobs in Wales fell by 18,000 (1.2%) between December 2019 and December 2020 to 1.44 million. Between December 1999 and December 2020, the number of workforce jobs in Wales rose by 182,000 (14.5%). The number of workforce jobs in the UK decreased over the year by 1.2 million (3.5%) to 34.4 million but has increased by 4.7 million (15.8%) since December 1999. (Chart 4.1)

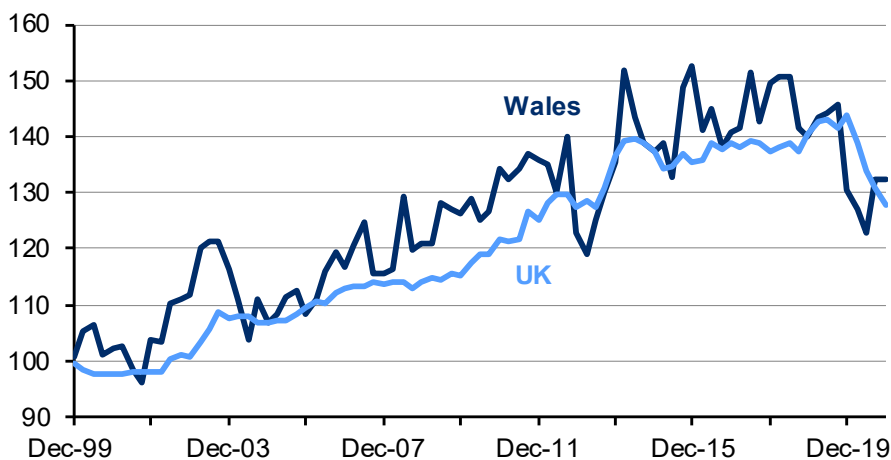
**Chart 4.1: Workforce jobs** (Index 1999=100)



Source: Welsh Government analysis of Workforce Jobs, ONS

The number of self-employment jobs in Wales decreased by 3,000 (1.6%) between December 2019 and December 2020 to 190,000 (13.2% of workforce jobs compared to 11.5% in December 1999). June 2020 saw the lowest level of self-employment jobs since June 2013, although the figure for December was slightly higher. However, it is important to note the volatility of this series. The estimate of the number of self-employment jobs in the UK was 4.2 million, down 523,000 (11.2%) over the year (12.1% of workforce jobs compared to 10.9% in December 1999). (Chart 4.2)

**Chart 4.2: Self-employment jobs** (Index 1999=100)



Source: Welsh Government analysis of Workforce Jobs, ONS

## 5 Key quality information

### 5.1 Relevance

This monthly bulletin is a compendium publication that brings together the latest key statistics relating to the Welsh economy and labour market, mainly in the context of the UK economy and labour market. The headline Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimates in the bulletin are published by ONS in their Labour Market Statistical Bulletin which includes headline figures for Wales as a whole.

This bulletin provides a more detailed breakdown of the Wales data than the ONS bulletin and presents those estimates alongside other headline estimates for the economy and labour market for Wales. These statistics are used by the Welsh Government to monitor the headline statistics for the Welsh economy as well as providing comparisons to the UK economy. The bulletin complements the recently published [Welsh Economy in Numbers dashboard](#), which provides a broad picture of the Welsh economy.

This bulletin is used by other public sector organisations, businesses, academia and private individuals as a means of identifying the key trends in the headline economic and labour market statistics for Wales. Our [2012 user consultation](#) provides more information on how our outputs are used.

The Welsh Government is considering how best to meet user need for analysis of the labour market by protected characteristics. Data is currently available on [StatsWales](#) and [Nomis](#).

### 5.2 Accuracy

Some of the data in this bulletin is based on sample surveys meaning it is subject to sampling variability. Table 5.1 shows 95% confidence intervals for the headline labour market measures from the Labour Force Survey. This means that there is a 95% chance that the true value is contained in the range shown.

**Table 5.1: 95% confidence intervals for LFS figures: Wales, November 2020 to January 2021**

|                             | <i>Numbers in thousands</i> |          |             |                   |                  |             |                |               |             |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------|-------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------|----------------|---------------|-------------|
|                             | Estimates                   |          |             | Quarterly changes |                  |             | Annual changes |               |             |
|                             | Lower limit                 | Estimate | Upper limit | Lower limit       | Quarterly change | Upper limit | Lower limit    | Annual change | Upper limit |
| Employment level            | 1,411                       | 1,455    | 1,499       | -65               | -6               | 53          | -85            | -24           | 36          |
| Employment rate             | 69.9%                       | 72.1%    | 74.3%       | -3.3%             | -0.3%            | 2.6%        | -5.2%          | -2.3%         | 0.7%        |
| Unemployment level          | 52                          | 68       | 84          | -25               | -2               | 20          | -4             | 17            | 38          |
| Unemployment rate           | 3.4%                        | 4.5%     | 5.5%        | -1.6%             | -0.1%            | 1.3%        | -0.3%          | 1.1%          | 2.5%        |
| Economically active level   | 1,478                       | 1,523    | 1,567       | -67               | -8               | 51          | -68            | -7            | 53          |
| Economic activity rate      | 73.3%                       | 75.6%    | 77.8%       | -3.4%             | -0.4%            | 2.6%        | -4.4%          | -1.4%         | 1.5%        |
| Economically inactive level | 411                         | 466      | 522         | -66               | 7                | 81          | -45            | 27            | 99          |

Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

The [Welsh Government revisions policy](#) is available from the Statistics and Research website. Where the data is not from the Welsh Government, the revisions policy of the individual Government department is followed. The majority of the data in this release is from the ONS and their [revisions policy](#) applies.

Claimant Count was removed from the ONS labour market release because it may be providing a misleading representation of the UK labour market. From June 2015 the Claimant Count statistics were designated as experimental due to the impact of Universal Credit, which is designed so a broader span of claimants is required to look for work than under Jobseeker's Allowance.

This means that once Universal Credit was fully rolled out, the Claimant Count was higher than it would otherwise be under Jobseeker's Allowance. The impact has increased as roll-out of Universal Credit has progressed and the seasonally-adjusted claimant count series has become more volatile. The Welsh Government will continue to publish Claimant Count data on StatsWales. The full [ONS statement](#) is available via their website.

This bulletin previously included statistics on working age benefits claimants by client group, based on Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) data. DWP no longer produces this series and the full statement is available via the [Nomis website](#).

DWP now publishes a Benefit Combinations dataset on their StatsXplore website which provides both Working Age and Pension Age statistics on the number of individuals claiming a DWP benefit in total and to show the key combinations of benefits claimed. We are in the process of assessing whether this new data source is appropriate for our uses and/or publication.

### 5.3 Timeliness and punctuality

This bulletin follows the ONS publication schedule of labour market data, available on the [National Statistics Release Calendar](#). Table 5.2 lists the date of last update and next update for each data source.






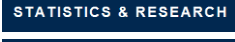



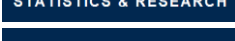

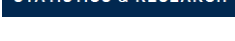


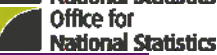


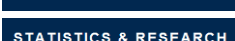












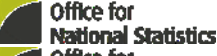
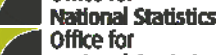

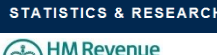







**Table 5.2: Summary of data sources**

| Data  | Source   | Last Updated | Next Updated |
|---|--|--------------|--------------|
| Coronavirus job retention scheme            | Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme Statistics, HMRC      | 25-Feb-2021  | 25-Mar-2021  |
| Economic inactivity rate                    | Labour Force Survey, ONS                               | 23-Mar-2021  | 20-Apr-2021  |
| Economic inactivity rate (economic regions) | Annual Population Survey, ONS                          | 21-Jan-2021  | 31-Mar-2021  |
| Employment rate                             | Labour Force Survey, ONS                               | 23-Mar-2021  | 20-Apr-2021  |
| Employment rate (economic regions)          | Annual Population Survey, ONS                          | 21-Jan-2021  | 31-Mar-2021  |
| Hours Worked                                | Labour Force Survey, ONS                               | 23-Mar-2021  | 20-Apr-2021  |
| Experimental Real Time Pay Information      | Real Time Pay As You Earn Information, HMRC            | 23-Mar-2021  | 20-Apr-2021  |
| ILO unemployment rate                       | Labour Force Survey, ONS                               | 23-Mar-2021  | 20-Apr-2021  |
| ILO unemployment rate (economic regions)    | Annual Population Survey, ONS                          | 21-Jan-2021  | 31-Mar-2021  |
| People on furlough                          | National Survey for Wales, WG                          | 24-Sep-2020  | tbc          |
| Public sector employment                    | Regional Public Sector Employment, ONS                 | 23-Mar-2021  | 20-Apr-2021  |
| Self-employment income support scheme       | Self-Employment Income Support Scheme Statistics, HMRC | 25-Feb-2021  | 25-Mar-2021  |
| Self-employment jobs                        | Workforce jobs, ONS                                    | 23-Mar-2021  | 15-Jun-2021  |
| Universal Credit                            | Universal Credit, DWP                                  | 23-Mar-2021  | 20-Apr-2021  |
| Workforce jobs                              | Workforce jobs, ONS                                    | 23-Mar-2021  | 15-Jun-2021  |

## 5.4 Accessibility and clarity

Much of the data behind the charts shown in this bulletin can be found on StatsWales. This bulletin covers key statistics for Wales as a whole, but additional breakdowns for age, gender and disability are also available on StatsWales. Analyses of employment and earnings by disability and ethnicity have also recently been published by the ONS, including some estimates for Wales. We are exploring the extent to which available data sources will enable more analysis by these and other protected characteristics for Wales, and we intend to report on this work in 2020. Links to StatsWales, Welsh Government statistical headlines (where applicable) and ONS analysis are provided below in Table 5.3.

**Table 5.3: Links to StatsWales, WG headlines and ONS analysis**

| Measure  | Data Link  | WG Headline Link  |
|--|--|---|
| Claimant count                                     |    |    |
| Economic inactivity rate                           |    |    |
| Employment rate                                    |    |    |
| Exports  |    |    |
| Gross Disposable Household Income                  |    |    |
| Gross Value Added                                  |    |    |
| Gross weekly pay                                   |    |   |
| Out of work benefit claimants                      |   |   |
| Public sector employment                           |  |   |
| Self-employment jobs                               |  |   |
| Short Term Output Indicators                       |  |  |
| Unemployment rate                                  |  |  |
| VAT/PAYE registered enterprise births              |  |  |
| VAT/PAYE registered enterprises                    |  |  |
| Workforce jobs                                     |  |   |
| Businesses Innovation Active (FG indicator)        |  |   |
| Employment above 2/3 UK median wage (FG indicator) |  |   |
| Gender Pay Gap (FG indicator)                      |  |   |
| Employment (FG indicator)                          |  |   |
| Disability employment, unemployment and inactivity |  |   |
| Disability and employment                          |  |   |
| Disability pay gap                                 |  |   |
| Ethnicity pay gap                                  |  |   |
| PAYE real time information                         |  |   |
| Hours worked                                       |  |   |
| Universal credit                                   |  |   |
| Coronavirus job retention scheme                   |  |  |
| People on furlough (National Survey for Wales)     |  |   |
| Self-employment income support scheme              |  |  |

## **5.5 Comparability and coherence**

Comparable measures for other UK countries for the data published in this bulletin are published on StatsWales and on the ONS website, which can be accessed using the data links in Table 5.3.

### **Labour Force Survey and Annual Population Survey**

Estimates of employment, unemployment and economic inactivity are available from both the LFS and the Annual Population Survey (APS). Estimates from the LFS are based on a rolling quarter and are updated monthly. The sample sizes are too low in the LFS to produce reliable estimates for geographies below Wales level. Estimates from the APS are based on a rolling twelve months, updated each quarter. The APS uses a bigger sample than the LFS so is used to produce estimates for geographies in Wales. At Wales level, the APS is a slightly more robust measure than the LFS but it is less timely and slower to adapt to changes in the labour market.

### **Employment and Workforce Jobs**

Employment figures differ between the LFS estimates and Workforce Jobs. Primarily this is because people with more than one job are counted once in the LFS but more than once in Workforce Jobs. The LFS does not cover people living in most types of communal establishments and Workforce Jobs excludes unpaid family workers.

### **ILO Unemployment and Claimant Count**

There are two different measures of unemployment used in official UK statistics, the headline International Labour Organisation (ILO) measure recorded by the LFS and the claimant count measure. Each is subject to advantages and disadvantages.

The headline ILO measure is a count of those who are out of work and want a job, or have actively sought work in the last four weeks and are available to start work in the next two weeks; plus those who are out of work, have found a job and are waiting to start in the next two weeks. It is the broader measure of unemployment. However, it is sourced from a survey so the results are subject to sampling error. Wales data is subject to higher variability than UK level data because of the smaller sample size.

The claimant count is a count of all those claiming unemployment related benefits (currently Jobseekers Allowance plus some claimants of Universal Credit). As such it excludes those who are unemployed who are not eligible to claim, and those who do not wish to claim. However, it is a count of all claimants and is not subject to any sampling variability. It can therefore be disaggregated to very high levels of detail, and in particular, changes measured over the short term are more robust than for the headline unemployment measure.

## **11.6 Technical notes**

Some of the data in this bulletin are presented as index numbers. Index numbers take the data for each time period and divide them by the figure for the reference period, and multiply the result by 100. A figure of above 100 for a given time period then indicates that the figure is higher than that for the reference period, whilst a figure of below 100 indicates that it is lower than that for the reference period. Data on workforce jobs and self-employment jobs are presented as indices referenced to 1999 = 100. Data on exports is referenced to 2013=100 due to methodological



differences before 2013. The indices of production, manufacturing and construction and the index of market services are each referenced to 2016 = 100.

Data series shown are seasonally adjusted unless stated otherwise. Seasonal adjustment is the process of removing variations associated with the time of year from a time-series and enables comparisons of labour market statistics to be made since the previous quarter or previous month. Labour market data for Wales is seasonally adjusted but for geographies within Wales only non seasonally adjusted data is available.

### **11.7 National Statistics status**

The [United Kingdom Statistics Authority](#) has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#).

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

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the UK Statistics Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate. The designation of these statistics as National Statistics was confirmed in March 2010 following a [full assessment against the Code of Practice](#).

Since the latest review by the Office for Statistics Regulation, we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics, and have made the following improvements:

- Added to and refined information about dimensions of quality and described links to policy and Welsh Government targets
- Expanded the coverage of topics to include workforce jobs and Welsh future generations indicators
- Improved visuals by de-cluttering and standardising charts and tables
- Used additional sources of data to illustrate the impact of the coronavirus pandemic in a timely way.

It is Welsh Government's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Office for Statistics Regulation promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

### **11.8 Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)**

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section

(10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators (“national indicators”) that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the Well-being goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before Senedd Cymru. The 46 national indicators were laid in March 2016 and this release includes the following national indicator:

- (21) percentage of people in employment

Information on the indicators, along with narratives for each of the well-being goals and associated technical information is available in the [Well-being of Wales report](#).

This release includes contextual indicators, namely the basket of indicators presented in the Well-being report in the previous link.

As national indicators under the Act they must be referred to in the analyses of local well-being produced by public services boards when they are analysing the state of economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being in their areas.

Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local well-being assessments and local well-being plans.

## **11.9 Further details**

### **Links**

This document is available on our website: <https://gov.wales/key-economic-statistics>

The National Survey for Wales [methodology and quality reports](#) can be found on the Welsh Government website.

More information on the data sources can also be found in the Quality and Methodology Information reports published by ONS on [Labour Market](#), [Claimant Count](#), [Public Sector Employment](#) and [Workforce Jobs](#) data.

### **Next update**

20 April 2021 (Headline)

22 April 2021 (Labour Market Overview bulletin)

### **We want your feedback**

We welcome any feedback on any aspect of these statistics which can be provided by email to [economic.stats@gov.wales](mailto:economic.stats@gov.wales).

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