



English Business Survey – Quarter 3 2013

This release provides timely intelligence on business conditions in England, presenting key messages from the English Business Survey (EBS). The EBS interviews approximately 9,000 workplaces each quarter, providing an assessment of past, current and future business and economic conditions. The statistics refer to business conditions in Quarter 3 2013 (July to September), which is the reference quarter for the survey. Quarterly statistics are created by aggregating three months' of responses and using a Quarterly weighting scheme, instead of a monthly weighting scheme. The release focuses on changes in Business activity, Employment levels and Exporting activity. The Quarterly release differs from the regular monthly Statistical Release by providing sub-regional geographical information and statistics on exports in the accompanying tables.

Key Points

- For England and its regions, more businesses reported increases in output and employment in Quarter 3 2013 than a decrease, when compared to Quarter 2 2013, resulting in positive balance scores. In England, the estimated balance score for output and employment were +22% and +8, respectively.
- When asked about the volume of output levels in Quarter 3 2013 compared to Quarter 3 2012, England and its regions reported positive balance scores. The balance score estimate for England was +31%, the highest since the Survey began and higher than Quarter 2 2013 (+26%) – the previous high¹.
- Expectations of future output and employment levels for Quarter 4 2013 were also positive, with positive balance scores reported for England and its regions; England reported a balance score of +25% for expected output and +10% for expected employment levels.
- There was a higher proportion of exporting businesses reporting increase in exporting activity than a decline, leading to a balance score estimate of +6% for Quarter 3 2013 in England. This is 7 percentage points higher than the same period the previous year when the balance score was -1%. Expectations for future exports were equally positive with exporting businesses reporting a positive balance estimate of +19%.

¹ Estimates are not seasonally adjusted

Economic Context

This section provides contextual information on the economic performance over the survey period (Quarter 3 2013) to help the user to interpret the statistics.

- Official statistics showed the value of the UK economy, Gross Domestic Product (GDP), was estimated to have expanded in Quarter 3 2013 by 0.8% when compared with Quarter 2 2013².
- According to Eurostat, GDP increased by 0.1% in the Euro area and by 0.2% in the EU28³ during the third Quarter of 2013 when compared to the previous Quarter. Compared with Quarter 3 2012, GDP in the Euro area contracted by 0.4% and rose by 0.1% in the EU28 while GDP in the UK expanded by 1.5%⁴.
- Compared with outputs in Quarter 2 2013, retail sales in Quarter 3 2013 increased by 1.5%. This is the largest Quarter on Quarter rise since May 2008, before the economic downturn⁵.
- In Quarter 3 2013, production output and the volume of construction rose by 0.6%⁶ and 1.7%⁷, respectively. The volume of construction has grown steadily for the last two Quarters following a prolonged period of predominantly negative growth which began in Q3 2011.
- Annual inflation was estimated to have grown by 2.7% in the year to September 2013⁸, unchanged from August and above the Bank of England target rate of 2%⁹.
- The labour market expanded in Quarter 3 2013: the employment rate rose by 0.3 percentage points compared to Quarter 2 2013.
- The unemployment rate fell 0.2 percentage points to 7.6% in Quarter 3 2013¹⁰. The unemployment rate has become a more prominent economic

² <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/naa2/second-estimate-of-gdp/q3-2013/stb-second-estimate-of-gdp--q3-2013.html#tab-Key-findings>

³ From 1 July 2013 the European Union (EU28) also includes Croatia

⁴ http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/2-14112013-AP/EN/2-14112013-AP-EN.PDF

⁵ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/rsi/retail-sales/september-2013/index.html>

⁶ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/iop/index-of-production/september-2013/stb-iop-sep-2013.html>

⁷ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/construction/output-in-the-construction-industry/september-and-q3-2013/index.html>

⁸ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/cpi/consumer-price-indices/september-2013/stb---consumer-price-indices---september-2013.html>

⁹ <http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/about/Pages/strategy/default.aspx>

¹⁰ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/lms/labour-market-statistics/november-2013/index.html>

indicator since the Bank of England announced, as part of its forward guidance that it does not intend to raise interest rates while the unemployment rate remains above 7%¹¹

Terminology

What these statistics mean:

- The EBS is a survey of workplaces. A workplace can be a single business, or a workplace that is part of a larger enterprise, for example the local store of a large supermarket chain. Ninety-seven per cent of enterprises consist of a single workplace¹². The term business will be used throughout this release.
- In order to reflect the relative importance or contribution of different sized workplaces to the local economy, the survey uses the number of people employed at each workplace as the measure of its contribution to the economy. Where the size of business is reported in the release, this refers to the number of people employed at each workplace.
- Where 'Balances' are presented, they are the difference between the positive responses and the negative responses. Balances allow a general assessment of whether businesses feel positive or negative about something. More detailed information on the terminology used is included in the Background Notes to the release.

Latest EBS results

Output

Output results were positive in Quarter 3 2013 for England overall and the sub-national picture was also consistently positive.

Across England as a whole, businesses registered strong output performance for Quarter 3 2013 (+22%). Compared to the same period the previous year, this is an increase of 12 percentage points. This positive result was driven by 42% of businesses reporting an increase in the level of output activity¹³ in Quarter 3 2013. Quarter 2 2013 results showed an estimated balance score of +31%, which was 11 percentage points higher than Quarter 2 2012¹⁴.

At the regional level, the South West registered the highest estimated balance score (+27%). This performance seems attributable to Dorset and Somerset

¹¹ <http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/publications/Pages/news/2013/096.aspx>

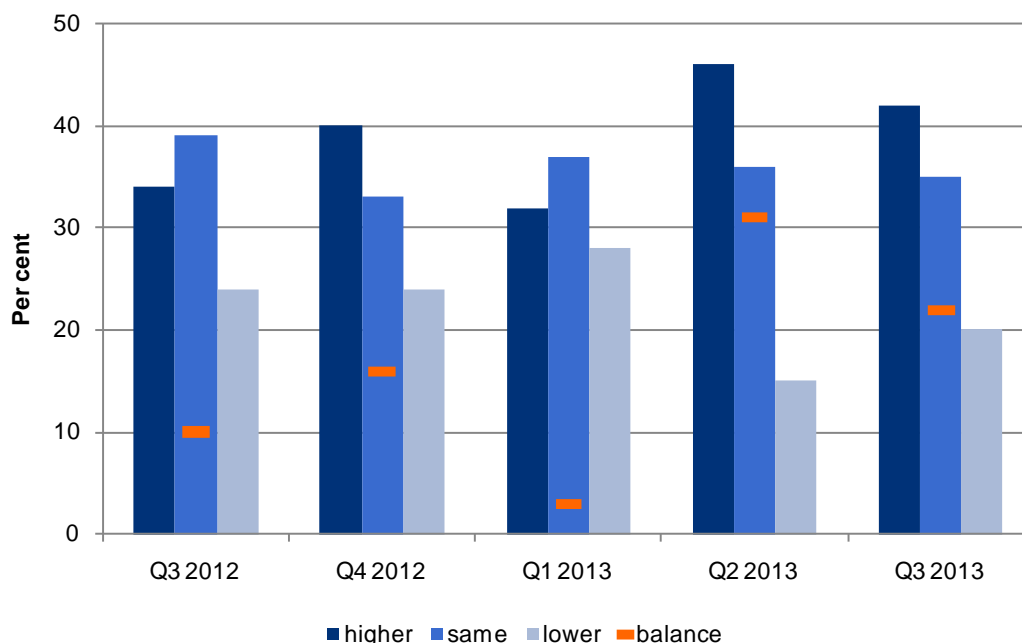
¹² Source: UK Business: Activity, Size and Location, 2013
(http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_329129.pdf)

¹³ Businesses are asked whether they believe their level of business activity or volume of output at a workplace is the same, higher or lower.

¹⁴ Estimates not seasonally adjusted

which had the highest balance estimate at the NUTS 2 level (hereafter referred to as sub-regions)¹⁵ of +37%. The West Midlands reported the lowest (+18%). Sub-regionally, Lancashire, Kent and South Yorkshire performed the weakest with balance scores of +12%, +12% and +13% respectively.

Chart 1: Level of output in England, Quarter 3 2012 to Quarter 3 2013



Notes:

1. Workplaces were asked about the level of output in the preceding Quarter when compared to the reference Quarter, for example Quarter 3 2013 results compare Quarter 3 2013 with Quarter 2 2013.
2. Estimates are not seasonally adjusted.
3. Survey results sum to 100%=(% Higher)+(% The same)+(% Lower)+(% Don't know). Estimates for 'Don't know' have been excluded from this chart, but are available in the tables that accompany the release.

Source: BIS - English Business Survey, Quarter 3 2013

Expected output performance

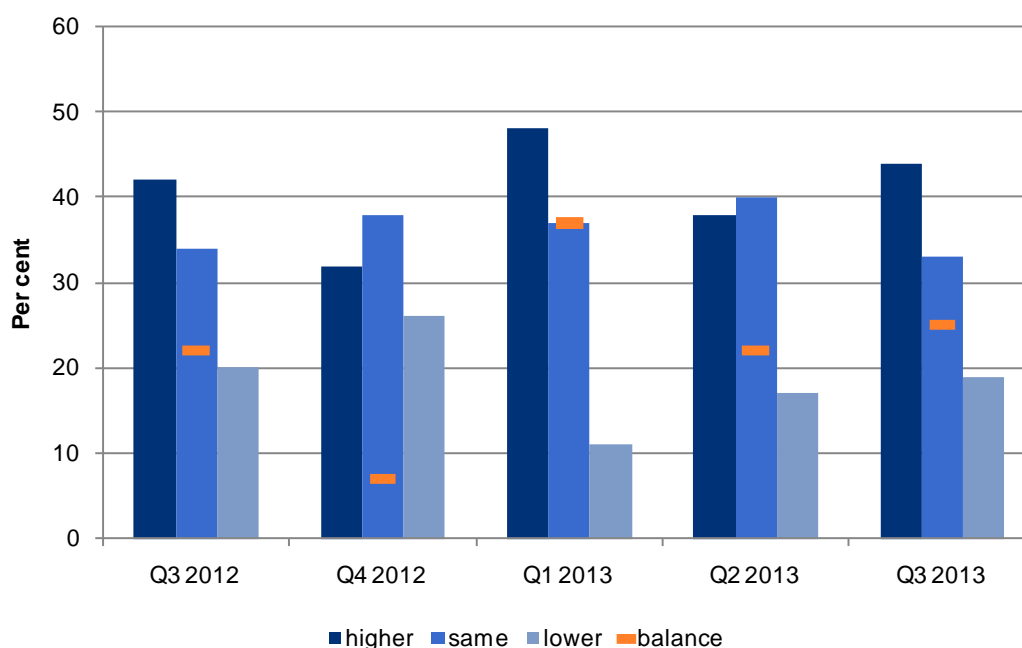
Businesses were optimistic about future levels of output activity in England and across English regions and sub-regions except for Cornwall and Isles of Scilly.

Output expectations for Quarter 3 2013 were positive with the balance score increasing by 3 percentage points to +25% compared with Quarter 3 2012. The Quarter 2 2013 balance score was +22%¹⁶.

¹⁵ NUTS1 refers to the 9 English Regions; NUTS2 refers to 30 areas in England that are mainly groups of counties and unitary authorities, referred to as sub-regions.

¹⁶ Estimates are not seasonally adjusted

Chart 2: Expected level of output in England, Quarter 3 2012 to Quarter 3 2013



Notes:

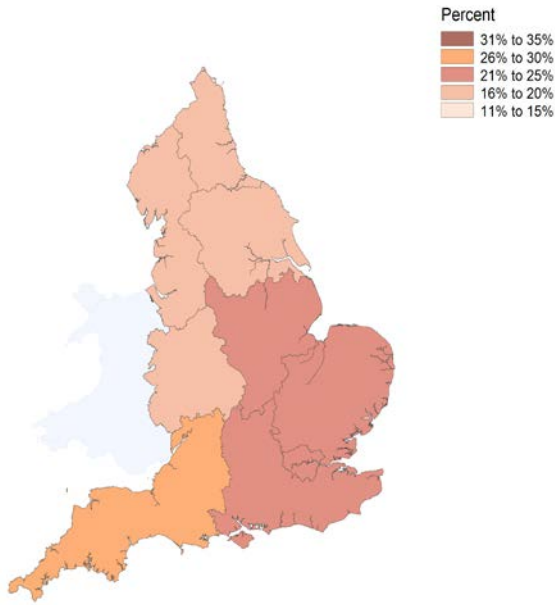
1. Workplaces were asked about their expectations for the level of output in the next Quarter when compared to the reference Quarter, for example Quarter 3 2013 results compare Quarter 3 2013 with what respondents expect for Quarter 4 2013.
2. Estimates are not seasonally adjusted.
3. Survey results sum to 100%=(% Higher)+(% The same)+(% Lower)+(% Don't know). Estimates for 'Don't know' have been excluded from this chart, but are available in the tables that accompany the release.

Source: BIS - English Business Survey, Quarter 3 2013

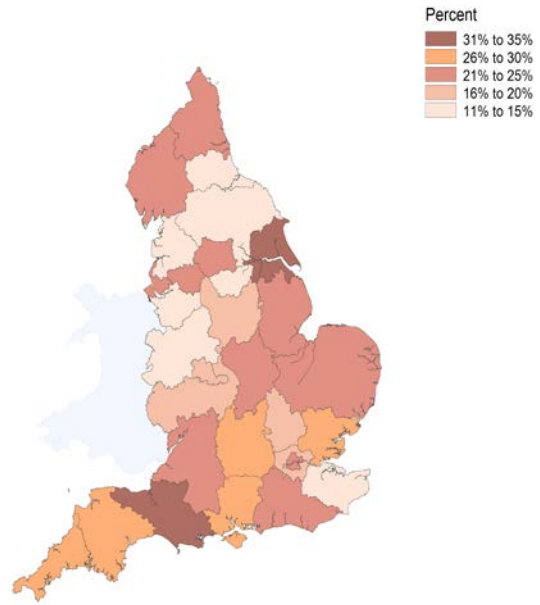
All regions were optimistic about future output activity. The strongest result was recorded for London with a balance score estimate of +33%, with Inner London particularly optimistic, reporting the highest balance score estimate of London's sub-regions of +39%. The South West registered the weakest balance score estimate of +15%; with Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly pessimistic about future output activity, reporting a negative balance score of -1%. This is similar to balance reported in Quarter 3 2012 where it is the only pessimistic sub-region with a balance score of -10%¹⁷.

¹⁷ Estimates are not seasonally adjusted

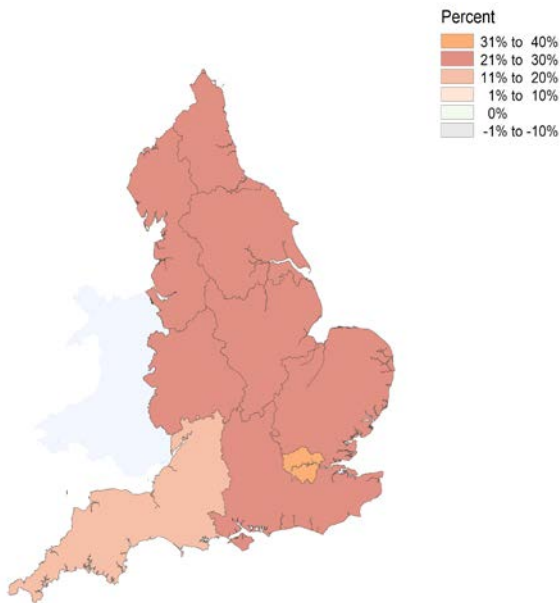
Map 1: Balance Statistics for level of output, Quarter 3 2013, by NUTS1 region



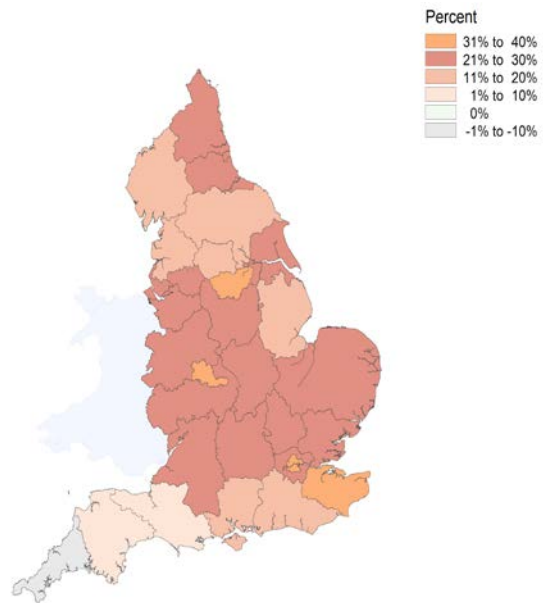
Map 2: Balance Statistics for level of output, Quarter 3 2013, by NUTS2 region



Map 3: Balance Statistics for expected level of output, Quarter 3 2013, by NUTS1 region



Map 4: Balance Statistics for expected level of output, Quarter 3 2013, by NUTS2 region



Notes:

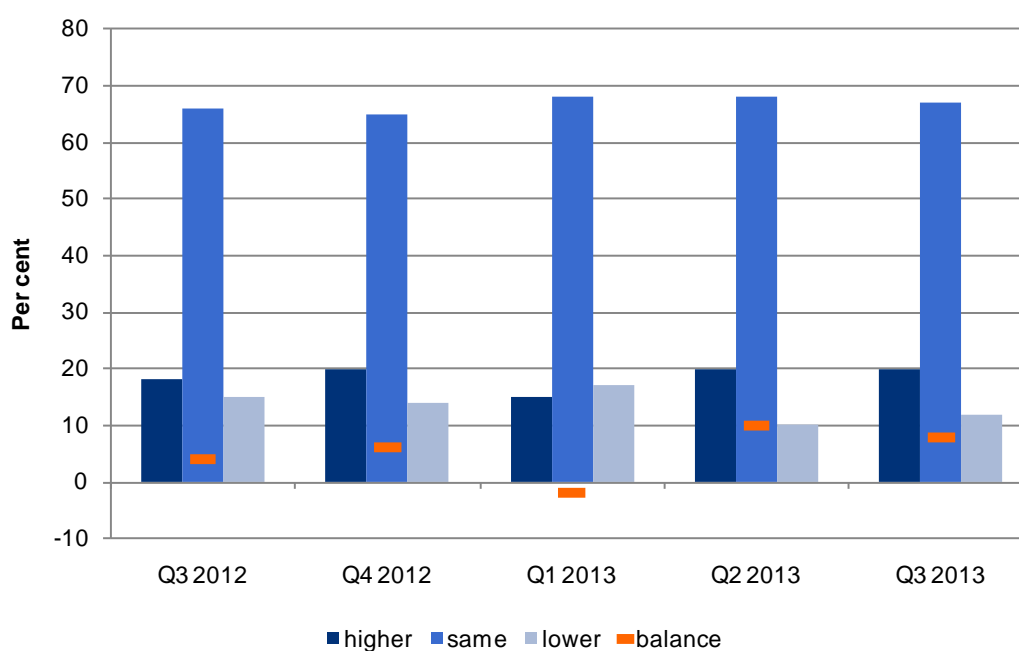
1. Map 1 & 2: Workplaces were asked about the level of employment in Quarter 3 2013 compared with Quarter 2 2013.
2. Map 3 & 4: Workplaces were asked about the level of employment in Quarter 3 2013 compared with what respondent expect for Quarter 4 2013
3. Results are weighted to be representative of total employment in England, not workplaces.
4. Balance statistics are simply the estimate for higher minus the estimate for lower. A positive balance indicates more business expected higher output than lower output.
5. Contains Ordnance Survey Data © Crown Copyright and database right

Source: BIS - English Business Survey

Employment

Employment results were positive for England and its regions, with more businesses reporting higher employment levels in Quarter 3 2013 than a decrease. Across the sub-regions all but one region reported positive balance scores.

Chart 3: Level of employment in England, Quarter 3 2012 to Quarter 3 2013



Notes:

1. Workplaces were asked about the level of employment in the preceding Quarter when compared to the reference Quarter, for example Quarter 3 2013 results compare Quarter 3 2013 with Quarter 2 2013.
2. Estimates are not seasonally adjusted.
3. Survey results sum to 100%=(% Higher)+(% The same)+(% Lower)+(% Don't know). Estimates for 'Don't know' have been excluded from this chart, but are available in the tables that accompany the release.

Source: BIS - English Business Survey, Quarter 3 2013

Employment performance for Quarter 3 2013 was positive with an estimated balance score of +8%. In comparison to the same Quarter the previous year, this is an improvement of 4 percentage points. The estimated balance score for Quarter 2 2013, was +10%¹⁸.

All regions and sub-regions except Hampshire and Isle of Wight reported positive employment balance score estimates in Quarter 3 2013: Yorkshire and The Humber registered the highest balance score estimate of +13%. The North East, North West, East Midlands and West Midlands all shared the lowest balance score estimate of +7%. Across the sub-regions, Hampshire and Isle of Wight registered the weakest balance estimate of -1%. Cornwall and Isle of Scilly reported the strongest balance score of +20%.

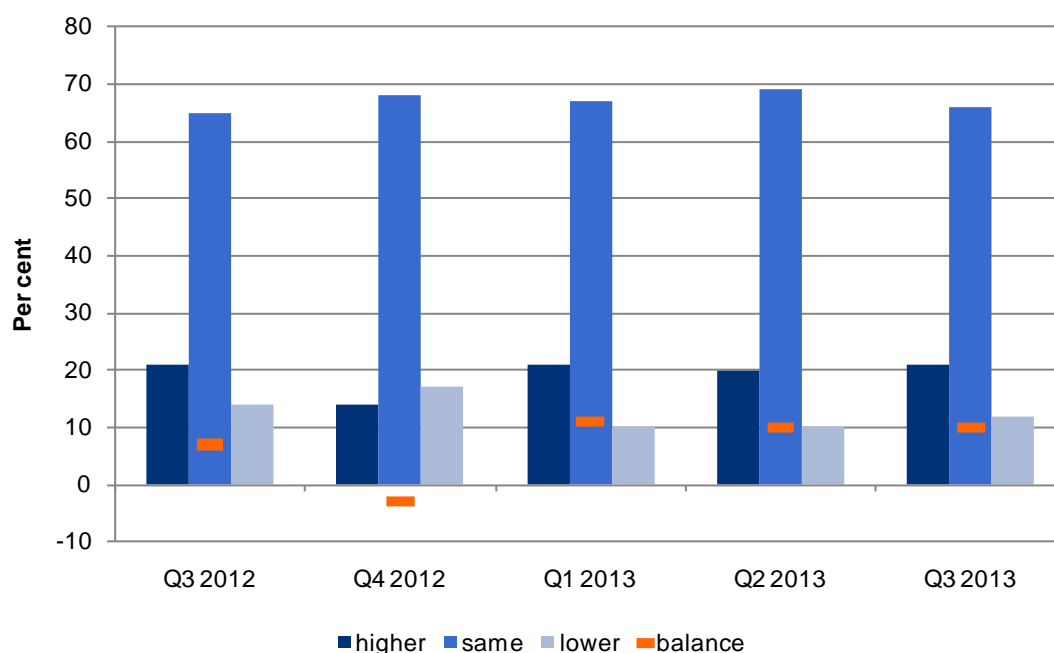
¹⁸ Estimates are not seasonally adjusted

There were reported increases in employment levels across all business sizes with medium sized businesses continuing from the previous Quarter to record the highest balance score, an estimated +13% for Quarter 3 2013. Large businesses also performed strongly registering an estimated balance score of +10%. Small businesses and micro businesses performed the weakest with balance score estimates of +8% and +1%, respectively.

Expectations for future employment

Businesses continue to be optimistic about future employment levels across England and the English regions. At the sub-regional level, businesses' perspectives are mixed but largely positive with only 5 out of 30 sub-regions expecting lower employment levels

Chart 4: Expected level of employment in England, Quarter 3 2012 to Quarter 3 2013



Notes:

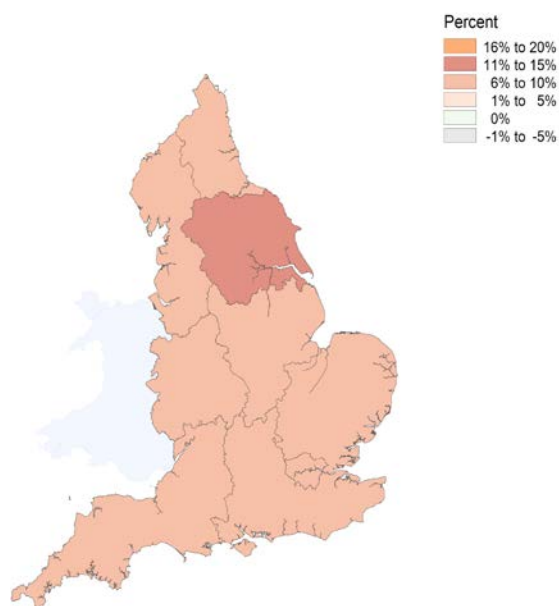
1. Workplaces were asked about their expectations for the level of employment in the next Quarter when compared to the reference Quarter, for example Quarter 3 2013 results compare Quarter 3 2013 with Quarter 4 2013.
2. Estimates are not seasonally adjusted.
3. Survey results sum to 100%=(% Higher)+(% The same)+(% Lower)+(% Don't know). Estimates for 'Don't know' have been excluded from this chart, but are available in the tables that accompany the release.

Source: BIS - English Business Survey, Quarter 3 2013

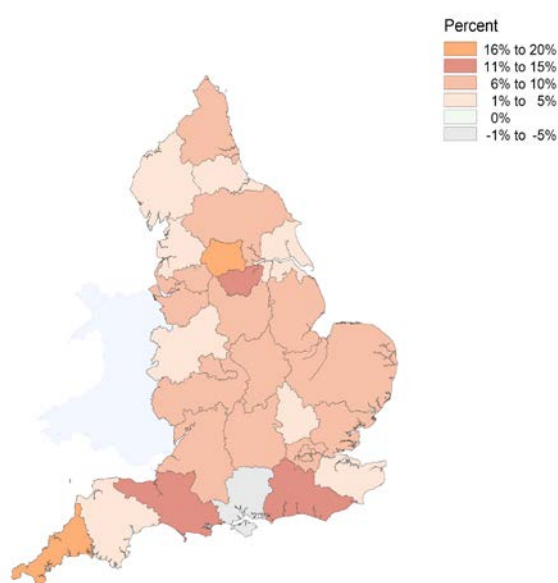
The balance score for expected employment in Quarter 3 2013 was estimated at +10%. This is similar to the balance score reported for the same Quarter the previous year (+7%). The balance score estimate for Quarter 2 2013 was +10%¹⁹.

¹⁹ Estimates are not seasonally adjusted

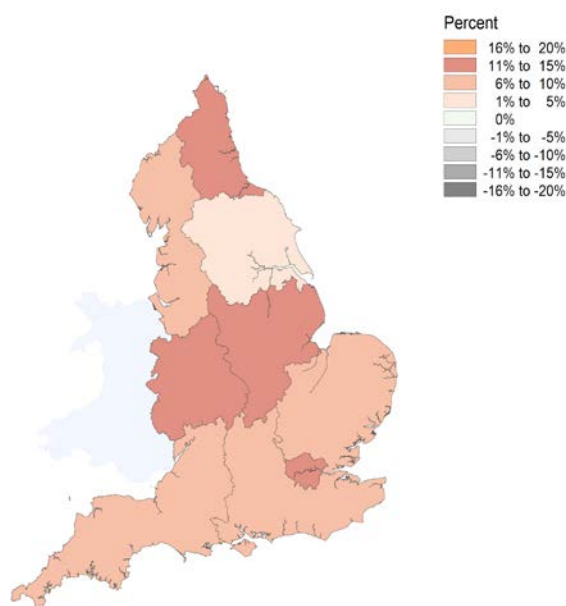
Map 5: Balance Statistics for level of employment, Quarter 3 2013, by NUTS1 region



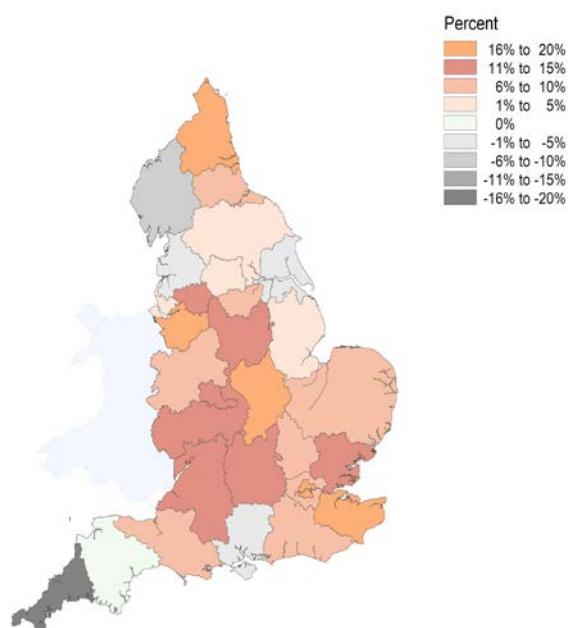
Map 6: Balance Statistics for level of employment, Quarter 3 2013, by NUTS2 region



Map 7: Balance Statistics for expected level of employment, Quarter 3 2013, by NUTS1 region



Map 8: Balance Statistics for expected level of employment, Quarter 3 2013, by NUTS2 region



Notes:

1. Map 5 & 6: Workplaces were asked about the level of employment in Quarter 3 2013 compared with Quarter 2 2013.
2. Map 7 & 8: Workplaces were asked about the level of employment in Quarter 3 2013 compared with what respondents expect for Quarter 4 2013
3. Results are weighted to be representative of total employment in England, not workplaces.
4. Balance statistics are simple the estimate for higher minus the estimate for lower. A positive balance indicates more business expected higher output than lower output.
5. Contains Ordnance Survey Data © Crown Copyright and database right

Source: BIS - English Business Survey

All regions reported positive balance score estimates for future expectations of employment. London was the most optimistic region with the highest estimated balance of (+15%), with Inner London the most optimistic of London's sub-regions reporting the highest balance estimate of +19%. Northumberland and Tyne and Wear, and Kent also reported the highest balance estimates of +19%. Yorkshire and The Humber recorded the lowest balance score (+3%). At the sub-regional level, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly had the lowest balance score estimate of -19%.

Exports

Exporting businesses reported positive results in England and across the regions.

Exporting businesses are a sub-set of the business population and it is estimated that approximately 19% of small and medium sized businesses, that have employees, export goods or services²⁰ – which means that statistics on exports can only be published on a Quarterly basis due to the small number of monthly responses. Within this section the estimates refer to exporting businesses only.

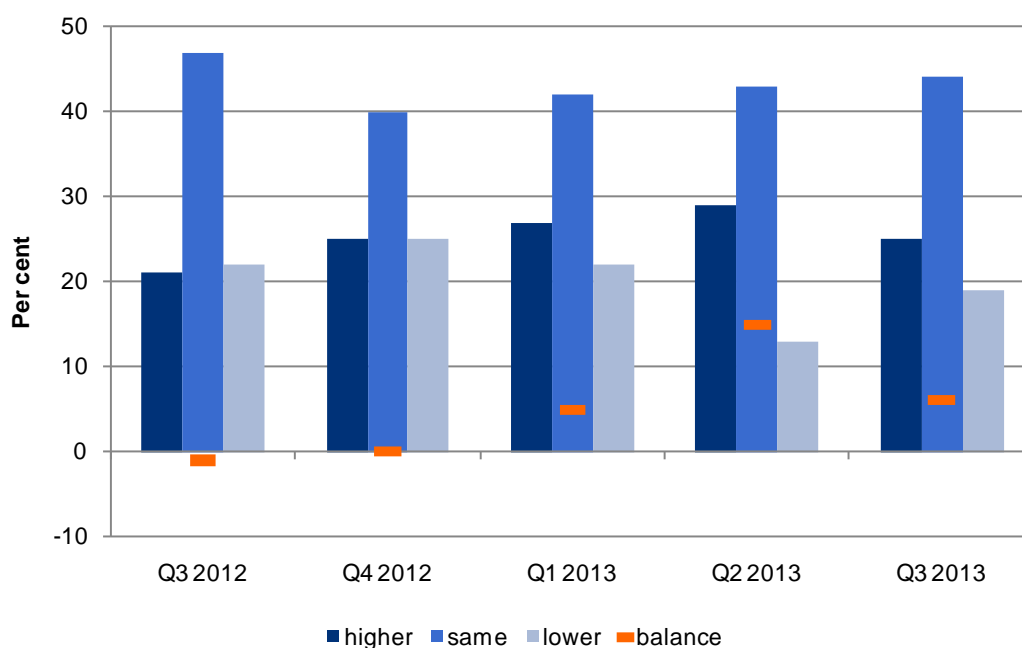
In England, a greater proportion of exporting businesses reported increases in exporting activity in Quarter 3 2013 compared to Quarter 2 2013 leading to a balance score estimate of +6%. This is 7 percentage points higher than Quarter 3 2012. Quarter 2 2013 estimated balance score was +15%.

All but 3 regions – North East, East Midlands and East of England – reported positive balance estimates. The strongest balance score estimate was recorded in the South West (+27%) while the East Midlands (-9%), East of England (-3%) and the North East (-2%) reported the weakest performance for Quarter 3 2013.

Exporting activity across all business sizes in Quarter 3 2013 was reported to have increased except for micro businesses. Small and Medium size exporting businesses reported the strongest balance score estimates (+8% and +9% respectively). Large exporting businesses reported a balance estimate of +6%. Micro exporting businesses reported the weakest balance estimate of -3%; a decrease of 9 percentage points compared to the previous Quarter.

²⁰ BIS Small Business Survey, 2012

Chart 5: Volume of exports in England, Quarter 3 2012 to Quarter 3 2013



Notes:

1. Workplaces were asked about the volume of exports in the preceding Quarter when compared to the reference Quarter, for example Quarter 3 2013 results compare Quarter 3 2013 with Quarter 2 2013.
2. Estimates are not seasonally adjusted.
3. Survey results sum to 100%=(% Higher)+(% The same)+(% Lower)+(% Don't know). Estimates for 'Don't know' have been excluded from this chart, but are available in the tables that accompany the release.

Source: BIS - English Business Survey, Quarter 3 2013

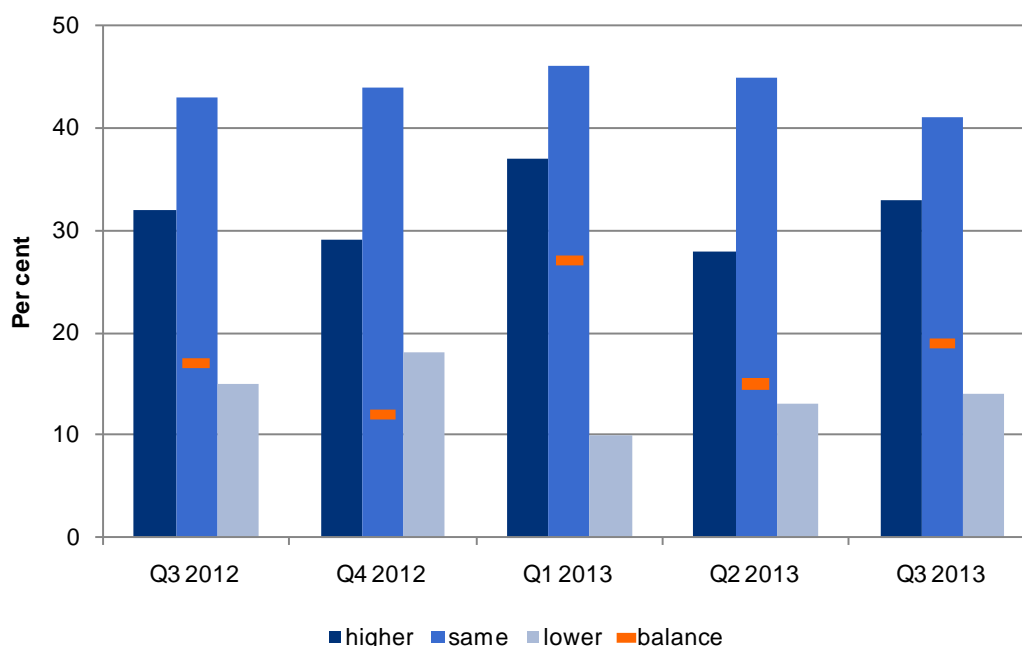
Expected export performance

Exporting businesses have positive expectations for the volume of future exports for England and its regions.

Quarter 3 2013 results show a positive balance score estimate of +19% for England. This is similar to the balance estimate of +17% in Quarter 3 2012.

All English regions in Quarter 3 2013 reported positive balance score estimates. London was the most optimistic region for future exporting activity with a balance estimate of +32%. The East Midlands and North East both registered the weakest balance estimates of +9%.

Chart 6: Expected volume of exports in England, Quarter 3 2012 to Quarter 3 2013



Notes:

1. Workplaces were asked about their expectations for the volume of exports in the next Quarter when compared to the reference Quarter, for example Quarter 3 2013 results compare Quarter 3 2013 with Quarter 4 2013.
2. Estimates are not seasonally adjusted.
3. Survey results sum to 100%=(% Higher)+(% The same)+(% Lower)+(% Don't know). Estimates for 'Don't know' have been excluded from this chart, but are available in the tables that accompany the release.

Source: BIS - English Business Survey, Quarter 3 2013

Coherence with similar data

Other business surveys, conducted by both trade bodies and private companies, collect information across a range of variables. Although some of this information overlaps with that collected through the EBS, the EBS has the advantage that it: brings the data together in a single place; allows sub-regional analysis each Quarter; and, covers all sectors of the economy, including the public/not-for-profit sectors.

Along with many other business surveys, data from the EBS is difficult to reconcile with official statistics, particularly output. The Confederation of British Industry's (CBI) *Industrial Trends Survey*²¹ reported an expansion in output volumes in October compared to July, with the strongest performance in the West Midlands and Yorkshire and The Humber. In the EBS, the South West had the strongest results, followed by the South East and London. In both the CBI and EBS, expectations of future output were positive with the strongest expectations recorded in Yorkshire and The Humber in the CBI, while London registered the strongest expectations in the EBS.

²¹ <http://www.cbi.org.uk/business-issues/economy/business-surveys/industrial-trends-survey/>

The monthly *Purchasing Manager's Index (PMI)*²² reports an expansion in business activity in each of the three months to October 2013. It has followed an increasing trend since March 2013, which is consistent with the EBS balance score for output in Quarter 3 2013. In each of the 3 months to October, the North East, continued to record the weakest regional performance. The EBS showed similar result with the North East registering closely with the weakest performers.

The British Chamber of Commerce (BCC) *Quarterly Economic Survey*²³ reported an increase in domestic sales over Quarter 3 2013. The *Quarterly Economic Survey* indicated that employment also increased in Quarter 3 2013 to an all time high for the survey. This is similar to the results from the EBS although the magnitude of the increase is higher in the BCC survey than reported in the EBS.

²² <http://www.markiteconomics.com/Survey/Page.mvc/AboutPMIData>

²³ <http://www.britishchambers.org.uk/policy-maker/policy-reports-and-publications/q3-2013-quarterly-economic-survey.html>

Background Notes

Product Development

The survey has undergone extensive development and testing, including pilot testing of the survey and cognitive testing of the survey questions. The Report on the EBS Questionnaire²⁴ contains details of the development and testing of the questionnaire; the *Technical Guide* details the methods which underpin the survey. Both documents are available on the EBS webpage.²⁵

EBS methods and questionnaire continue to be reviewed and analysed to ensure they remain the best possible. Should you have any comments on the statistics – including on the methods used and dissemination of the statistics – or would like to inform us how you use the statistics, please contact ebssurvey@bis.gsi.gov.uk.

Quality and use

The English Business Survey provides timely and robust information on a regular and geographically detailed basis, the survey enhances understanding of business perceptions and economic conditions throughout England and ultimately improves policy making through this understanding. The statistics are also useful to businesses, providing intelligence about local economic and business conditions.

These estimates are currently classified as experimental statistics as they are undergoing development and have not yet been assessed against the standards required for National Statistics. It is recommended that users exercise caution when interpreting time series data, as the data are likely to include seasonal patterns, which have not been removed through seasonal adjustment²⁶. It is expected that seasonal patterns will differ by industry, for example, all else being equal, some industries would expect output to be much lower in January compared to November due to seasonal patterns. It is recommended that until the statistics are assessed for seasonality that time series results are interpreted with caution.

Methodology

The English Business Survey is a monthly telephone survey that asks managers at sampled workplaces about their expectations and experiences on a range of measures such as output or sales. The data are weighted so that the weighted sample matches the population with respect to sub-region

²⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-business-survey-report-on-questionnaire-development>

²⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-business-innovation-skills/series/english-business-survey>

²⁶ The recommended approach for removing seasonality in UK Official Statistics requires three years of monthly data or 5 years of quarterly data.

and employment²⁷. This is designed to capture the importance of the workplace to the economy; employment is used as a proxy for economic importance as a robust measure of turnover is not available for all workplaces. The use of employment means that the results effectively estimate: the proportion of employees whose manager believes a particular measure is positive/negative/the same.

To aid understanding and assist in the interpretation of the survey findings there are two documents aimed at different types of user: a non-technical User Guide²⁸, which provides information about how to interpret results, and a Technical Guide²⁹, which contains detailed information about the methodology.

Strengths and Limitations

The EBS has a number of strengths:

- a relatively large monthly sample with the potential to provide timely sub-national statistics;
- a workplace focus, which will enable data on local conditions to be collected;
- an 'economic influence'-type weighting approach to try to better represent what is happening for sub-national economies;
- coverage of all sectors of the economy, including the public/not-for-profit sectors; and
- timely statistics, allowing policy makers and businesses to react promptly to issues as they arise in the current macroeconomic climate.

However, it also has some limitations:

- the nature of data collection being at workplace level mean that statistics about region, employment size and industry all relate to that of the workplace, rather than for the enterprise. Accordingly, inferences about the enterprise-level business population are more limited; and
- due to the coverage of the sampling frame – the Inter-Departmental Business Register – the EBS does not cover non-registered³⁰ businesses. This is potentially important as such businesses make up a significant

²⁷ The characteristics used for weighting include: location (NUTS2 Region) and employment size (0-49, 50-249 and 250+).

²⁸ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/210768/12-598-english-business-survey-user-guide.pdf

²⁹ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/227025/bis-13-1075-english-business-survey-technical-guide.pdf

³⁰ Non-registered businesses are not registered for either PAYE or VAT, which means they are generally, the very smallest non-employed businesses.

proportion of the overall business population (55% of businesses) although they account for a smaller share of employment (12%) and turnover (3%)³¹.

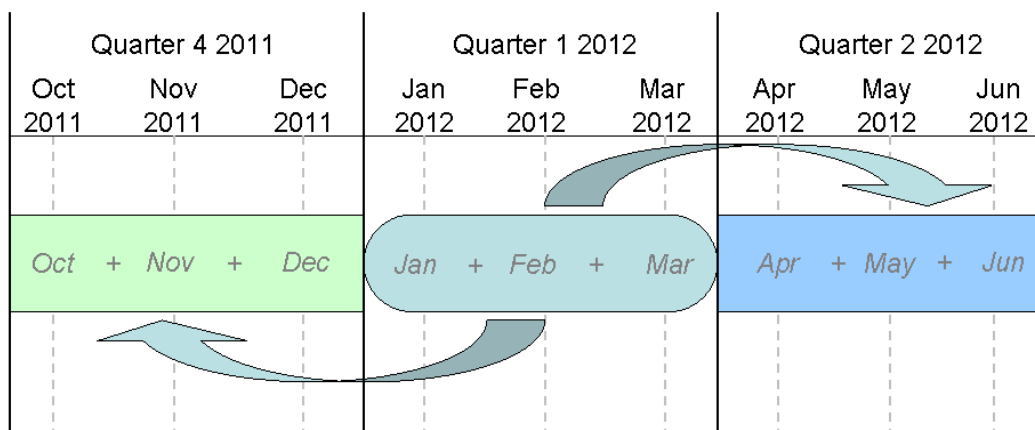
Interpreting the results

Workplace based survey

1. The main purpose of the EBS is to provide sub-national information. For this reason the EBS is a survey of workplaces and the region, employment size and industry all relate to that of the workplace.

Period covered

2. EBS Releases are labelled by the period which workplaces are asked about – the reference Quarter. In most questions workplaces are asked to compare the reference Quarter (Quarter T) with the previous Quarter (T-1) and the next Quarter (T+1). For example, in the Quarter 1 2012 EBS, most backward-looking questions compare Quarter 1 2012 with Quarter 4 2011 and forward-looking questions compare Quarter 2 2012 with Quarter 1 2012.



Key

- Quarter of Survey
- Quarter backward-looking question refers to
- Quarter forward-looking question refers to
- Feb* Months aggregated to form the quarterly data

3. Questions on capital investment and capacity constraints cover the reference period; however, these statistics present a single month's responses – rather than three months - and have a smaller sample size that does not allow sub-regional analysis. Periods being compared are clearly labelled on the tables. This is also explained in the EBS *User Guide*.

³¹ Statistics on the non-registered businesses are taken from Business Population Estimates for the UK and Regions 2012

Balance Statistics

4. A balance can be achieved through a number of different scenarios in the underlying results, for example a balance of zero can be achieved from Higher and Lower both being 0% or both being 50%. It is therefore important to consider the underlying figures. All figures in this document and the underlying data can also be found in the supporting tables.
5. It is important to remember that these questions only ask workplaces whether output was higher or lower and this does not take into account the size of any changes. Therefore a balance of 50% does not necessarily mean output growth will be higher than if the balance was 20%, as the growth rate seen by those contributing to the 20% positive balance may, in aggregate, outweigh the growth rates seen or expected by those contributing to the positive 50% balance. The difference in size between two higher percentages simply means that businesses accounting for a larger proportion of the economy, reported that output was higher.

Time Series Comparisons

6. Data from the EBS is still in its infancy and therefore it is not yet possible to seasonally adjust the data. The results presented in this release are not seasonally adjusted and users should be aware of this when interpreting the results, as it is likely that comparisons over time will show large changes for certain groups; these changes could be true changes, but they could be a result of seasonal patterns.

Accuracy

7. All estimates based on a sample of the population rather than a census are subject to sampling error. Calculation of these errors for the EBS is still being developed and will be released when available, however, provisional information on the likely size of these sampling errors is provided in the *Technical Guide*.
8. Like all statistics, the estimates in the EBS are subject to potential non-sampling errors – for example biases; measurement errors; and calculation errors. However, attempts have been made to minimise these by, for example, rigorous testing of the questionnaires, monitoring the work of interviewers and response rates to the survey.

Presentation

9. All figures and percentages in this release, including the accompanying tables, have been rounded. Unweighted counts have been rounded to the nearest 5 and percentages have been rounded to the nearest integer. Balances are calculated based on unrounded figures and rounded independently therefore differences in the components may not equal the difference between the rounded figures.

Timeliness

10. Quarterly statistics from the EBS are published within two months of the period to which they refer. The date of publication will be announced at least four weeks in advance. We are working towards a regular publication cycle; however, due to the experimental nature of the data, the publication date for each Quarter may initially vary. Future publication dates will be added to the National Statistics Publication Hub.³²

Revisions

11. While every care has been taken to produce reliable statistics, EBS is still being developed and has been designated an Experimental Official Statistic. As the EBS develops statistics may be subject to revision if improvements in methodology are identified. All revisions will be pre-announced where practicable and all known users notified.

Additional information

Geographical units and NUTS levels

12. The Nomenclature of Units for Territorial Statistics (NUTS) provides a single uniform breakdown for the production of regional statistics for the European Union. Results are published at two of the three NUTS levels in England:
 - NUTS1: 9 English Regions;
 - NUTS2: 30 areas in England that are mainly groups of counties and unitary authorities; can be referred to as sub-regions.
13. More information on NUTS areas can be found on ONS' Beginner's Guide to Geography - <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/geography/beginner-s-guide/eurostat/index.html>

Sub-regional data

14. The English Business Survey Reporting Tool³³ allows users to access detailed EBS statistics for individual periods (months and Quarters) as well as

³² <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/hub/index.html>

³³ <http://dservuk.tns-global.com/English-Business-Survey-Reporting-Tool/>

cumulative periods, starting in October 2011 for monthly statistics and Quarter 1 2012 for Quarterly statistics. The reporting tool includes a more extensive range of statistics than presented in the Statistical Release and the supporting tables.

15. The English Business Survey Interactive Map³⁴ allows users to determine how NUTS 2 areas are performing, relative to England, over time for a Output, Employment and levels of Stock. The Map uses quarterly statistics and is updated shortly after each quarterly release.

Micro data

16. EBS Micro data are available to 'approved researchers' via ONS' Virtual Micro Laboratory³⁵ and an aggregated version of the dataset is available to academics from the UK Data Archive³⁶.

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³⁴ <http://aalookup.bis.gov.uk/ebss/map/>

³⁵ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/about-ons/who-we-are/services/vml/index.html>

³⁶ <http://www.data-archive.ac.uk/>