



Department  
for Business  
Innovation & Skills



**TRADE UNION MEMBERSHIP**

Open Data User Guide

MAY 2014

# Open data user guide

## Introduction

The [Department for Business, Innovation & Skills](#) is responsible for publishing the annual National Statistics on [trade union membership](#). This guide describes how to use the open data tables, which contain estimates of the:

- proportion of employees who are trade union members;
- numbers of employees who are union members and non-members;
- characteristics of trade union members and non-members;
- proportion of employees whose workplace has a trade union present;
- average earnings of trade union members and non-members; and
- proportion of employees whose pay and conditions are affected by collective agreements.

These estimates are also provided by demographic characteristics. These tables are released as part the Government's policy for [improving the transparency and accountability of government and its services](#).

## Data source

These estimates are derived from quarterly [Labour Force Survey](#) datasets and relate to October-December of each year. Historic series for the number of trade union members from 1892 onwards are also presented from other sources, the [Certification Officer](#) and the former Department for Employment. These statistics are derived from administrative records, which have a greater coverage than the Labour Force Survey estimates. For example, they include the unemployed or retired who are excluded from the Labour Force Survey questions (see the statistical bulletin's technical note).

The tables do not contain the Labour Force Survey raw data or respondents answers to specific questions. Researchers may gain access to the full datasets through the [UK Data Service](#).

## Statistical contact

If you have any feedback or questions about the open dataset or statistical bulletin, please contact: [labourmarket.analysis@bis.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:labourmarket.analysis@bis.gsi.gov.uk) or [Andrew.Rowlinson@bis.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Andrew.Rowlinson@bis.gsi.gov.uk)

## Table format

The dataset is provided in an open comma separate values (CSV) format, which can be opened in most programs and platforms.

## How to use this dataset

You can filter the dataset through column headings to reveal specific estimates.<sup>1</sup> For example, to identify union membership density for UK employees in 2012, filter the dataset by:

- Measurement = Trade union density; per cent
- Year = 2012
- Employment status = Employees
- Geography = UK
- Characteristics = All
- Gender = (Blanks)
- Full-time or part-time status = (Blanks)
- Permanent or temporary status = (Blanks)

When using estimates derived from the Labour Force Survey, which can be identified when the source column is equal to LFS, you should be aware that the estimates are derived from a sample of the population and have a margin of error. The standard error around the UK employee union density is around 0.5 percentage points. This means that for an estimates of 26 per cent, you would be 95 per cent sure that your estimate would lie in the range between 25.5 and 26.5 per cent if you repeated the survey.<sup>2</sup> Estimates of the standard errors are provided in the accompanying confidence interval tables.

## Revisions

The Labour Force Survey datasets are routinely revised so that estimates are kept consistent with the latest official population estimates. The most recent update introduced revised weighting variables to be consistent with population estimates, a person weight (PWT11) and person income weight (PIWT11).

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<sup>1</sup> For example, in Excel the filtering command can be found under the Data tab.

<sup>2</sup> 26 per cent  $\pm$  0.5 percentage points

The estimates presented in the open data tables have been revised back to 2009 to reflect the latest available datasets. The Office for National Statistics plans to release updated Labour Force Survey datasets in line with the latest population estimates in 2014.

Information on the population weight used to calculate each Labour Force Survey estimate has been provided in the column headed “weight”.

## Conventions

Members of the armed forces are excluded from the estimates.

## Symbols

The following symbols are used:

\* sample size too small for a reliable estimate

- data not available.

## Data specification

The first row of the datasets contains the column headings. Each additional row contains a single estimate, presented in the last column, and information about that estimate such as demographic or technical details. The table below describes the dataset in detail:

| Column Header | Description   | Possible Values  |
|---------------|---|--|
| Source        | This column describes the source of the estimate. This is either Labour Force Survey (LFS), or the two administrative sources of union membership data (Department of Employment or Certification Officer). | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. LFS.</li> <li>2. Department of Employment.</li> <li>3. Certification Officer.</li> </ol>   |
| Measurement   | You can use this column to filter the dataset by the six different types of estimate.   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Trade union density: the proportion of persons who belong to a trade union;</li> <li>2. Levels: the number of persons who are union or non-union members;</li> <li>3. Characteristics: proportion of persons belonging to a trade union membership status who share a specific characteristic (e.g. gender);</li> <li>4. Trade union presence: proportion of persons whose workplace has a trade union present;</li> <li>5. Average hourly earnings of persons;</li> <li>6. Collective agreement coverage: proportion of persons who have their pay affected by a collective agreement.</li> </ol> |
| Year          | Year of estimate.   | Various  |
| Weight        | This column describes the Labour Force Survey population weight used to calculate the estimate (see <a href="#">revisions</a> ).  | PWT07, PWT10, PWT11, PIWT07, PIWT10, PIWT11  |

| Column Header                           | Description  | Possible Values  |
|---|--|--|
| Employment status                       | You can use this column to filter the dataset by employment status.  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Employees: population aged 16 or over in paid employment)</li> <li>2. In employment: population aged 16 or over in paid employment, those in self-employment and government employment &amp; training programmes.</li> </ol> |
| Geography                               | You can use this column to filter the dataset by state, country, or region.  | United Kingdom (UK); Great Britain (GB); England; Wales; Scotland; Northern Ireland; Regions; Summary regions  |
| Regions                                 | You can use this column to filter the dataset by the 20 United Kingdom regions.  | Various  |
| Regions summary                         | You can use this column to filter the dataset by the nine England regions.   | Various  |
| Gender                                  | You can use this column to filter the dataset by gender.   | Male; Female   |
| Trade union or staff association member | You can use this column to filter the dataset by trade union membership status.  | Member, Non member   |
| Full-time or part-time status           | You can use this column to filter the dataset by full-time or part-time status of employment.  | Full-time; Part-time   |
| Permanent or temporary status           | You can use this column to filter the dataset by permanent or temporary status of employment.  | Permanent; Temporary   |
| Characteristic Variable                 | You can use this column to filter the dataset by other demographic characteristics, which may be further refined by filtering the next column. | Age; Age summary; All; Country of Birth; Dependent children; Disability; Ethnicity; Flexible working pattern; Highest qualification; Industry; Length of service; Managerial status; Nationality; Occupation; Sector; Weekly earnings; Workplace size                  |
| Characteristic                          | You can use this column to filter the dataset for specific characteristics, e.g. people aged between 16 and 19.                                | Various  |
| Estimate                                | This column provides the estimate relating to the other columns.   |  |

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