



**BRIEFING PAPER**

Number 5871, 18 October 2017

# Youth Unemployment Statistics

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A photograph of a bright green sign with the words 'job centre plus' written in a bold, sans-serif font. The sign is mounted on a brick wall. The word 'job' is in white, 'centre' is in yellow, and 'plus' is in white. The sign is slightly tilted and has a dark shadow cast on the wall below it.

*job  
centre  
plus*

# 1. Youth Unemployment Statistics

524,000 young people aged 16-24 were unemployed in June-August 2017, 38,000 fewer than the previous quarter and 97,000 fewer than the year before.<sup>1</sup>

The unemployment rate (the proportion of the economically active population who are unemployed) for 16-24 year olds was 11.9%, down from 13.7% a year ago.

Excluding young people in full-time education, 343,000 people aged 16-24 were unemployed in June-August 2017, 21,000 fewer than the previous quarter and down 67,000 from the year before.

The unemployment rate for 16-24 year olds not in full-time education was 10.2%, compared to 12.0% a year ago.

**Annual change in economic activity, June-August 2017** (Thousands)



To put these changes in context, the total population aged 16-24 is also falling (down 95,000 in the year to June-August 2017). Figures are based on a survey so some of the reported changes may arise from survey error rather than actual movements in the levels.

## Unemployment by age

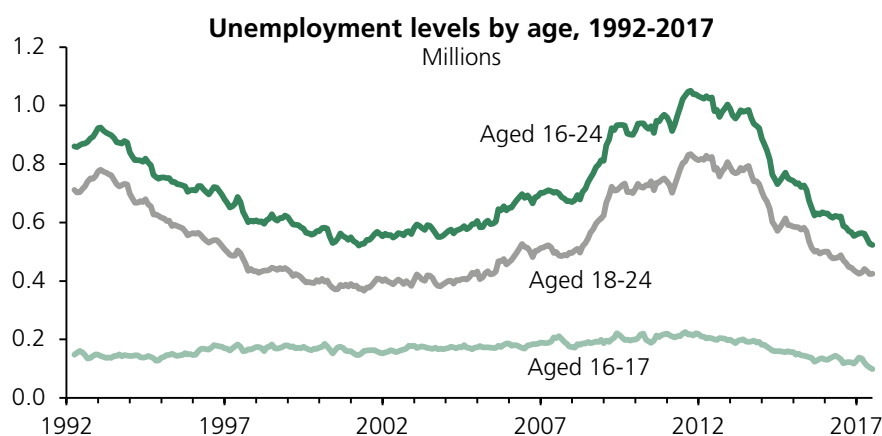
The unemployment rate for people aged 18-24 was 10.8% in June-August 2017, down from 12.0% a year ago. 425,000 18-24 year olds were unemployed, while 1.73 million were economically inactive (not in work and not looking or available for work). 3.52 million were in work.

99,000 16-17 year olds were unemployed in June-August 2017, while 972,000 were economically inactive and 344,000 were in work.

The unemployment rate for 16-17 year olds was estimated at around 22%. The rate is higher than it was in the 1990s and early 2000s, despite there being a lower number of 16-17 year olds unemployed. This is explained by more 16-17 year olds staying in full-time education so that fewer are economically active (the unemployment rate is calculated as a proportion of the economically active population).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> All data are taken from ONS [Labour Market Statistics bulletins](#) and are seasonally adjusted unless otherwise stated.

<sup>2</sup> The estimates for 16-17 year olds are more volatile than those for 18-24 year olds, since they are based on a smaller number of survey responses.



#### Long term youth unemployment

85,000 people aged 16-24 had been unemployed for over 12 months at June-August 2017, similar to the previous quarter and 21,000 lower than a year ago.

16% of unemployed 16-24 year olds had been unemployed for over 12 months, down from 17% a year ago.

#### Men and women

299,000 men aged 16-24 were unemployed in June-August 2017, down 66,000 from a year ago. The unemployment rate for men in this age group was 13.2%, compared to 15.6% a year ago.

225,000 women aged 16-24 were unemployed, down 31,000 from a year ago. The unemployment rate for women aged 16-24 was 10.6%, compared to 11.6% a year ago.

#### People claiming unemployment benefits

Not adjusting for seasonal effects, 166,500 people aged 18-24 were claiming Jobseeker's Allowance or were claiming Universal Credit and required to seek work in September 2017, down 6,300 from a year ago.

These numbers are, however, highly seasonal and are impacted by the ongoing rollout of Universal Credit. Under Universal Credit, a broader span of claimants are required to look for work than under Jobseeker's Allowance. This has the effect of increasing the number of unemployed claimants compared to the previous system. Universal Credit also appears to follow a different seasonal pattern to Jobseeker's Allowance.

The effect of Universal Credit is most visible in areas operating Universal Credit "Full Service" (where rollout is more advanced). Most jobcentre areas have not yet moved to "Full Service" but will do so over the course of 2017 and 2018. For more details see the Library's briefing paper on [Universal Credit and the claimant count](#).

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) believes that due to the impact of Universal Credit, the claimant count data "may now be providing a misleading representation of the UK labour market".<sup>3</sup>

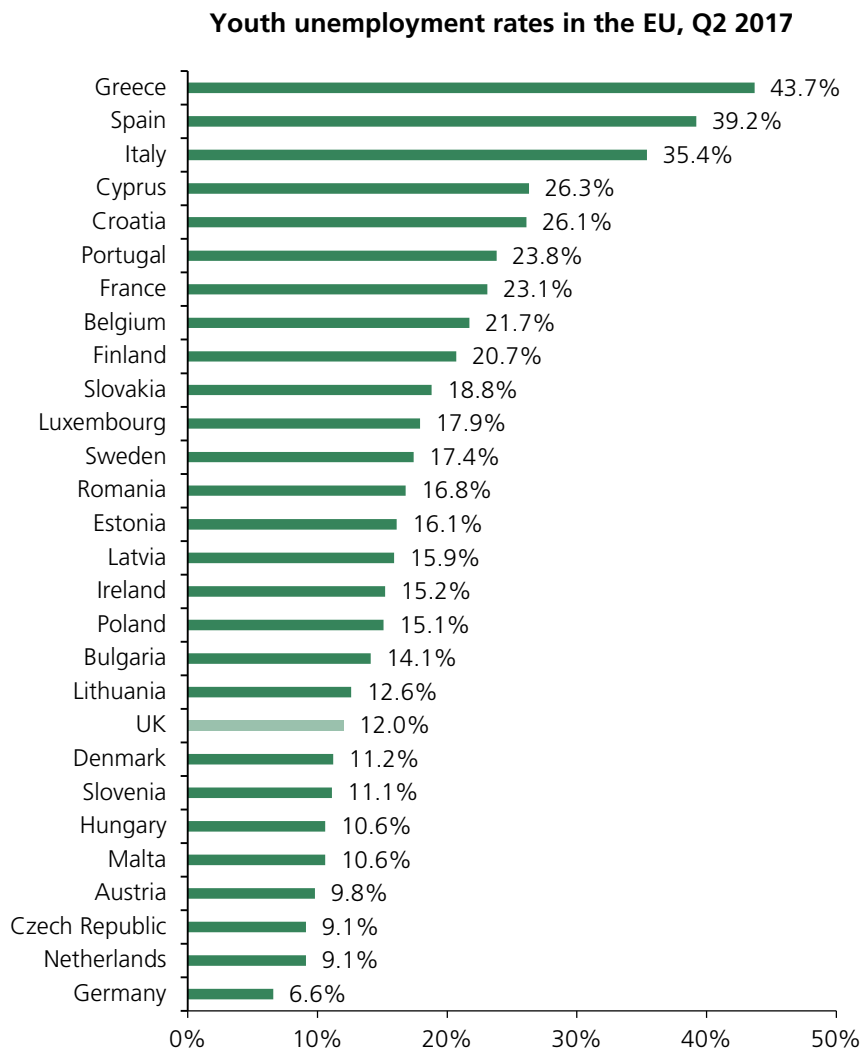
<sup>3</sup> ONS, [Publication arrangements for the Claimant Count](#), 23 February 2017

## 2. Youth Unemployment across Europe

The chart below shows the youth unemployment rate across European Union countries. Figures are published by Eurostat (the European statistical authority) and therefore may differ from what is published elsewhere in this note.

Greece had the highest rate of youth unemployment in April-June 2017 at 43.7%. Germany had the lowest youth unemployment rate at 6.6%.

The UK youth unemployment rate was 12.0%, compared to 17.0% for the European Union as a whole.



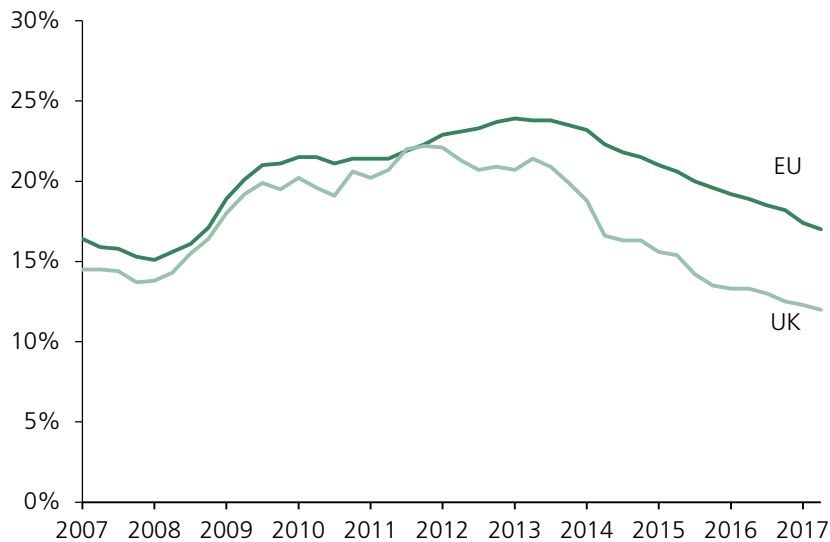
**Notes:** Seasonally adjusted. Rate refers to the percentage of economically active young people aged 15-24 who are unemployed.

**Source:** Eurostat

### Recent trend in youth unemployment in the EU

Since 2013, the youth unemployment rate has been decreasing in the UK and for the EU as a whole, although the rate has fallen faster in the UK. Between Q2 2013 and Q2 2017 the youth unemployment rate fell by 9.4% points in the UK, compared to a fall of 6.8% points across the EU as a whole.

**Youth unemployment rate, UK and EU, 2007-2017**



**Notes:** Seasonally adjusted. Rate refers to the percentage of economically active young people, aged 15-24, who are unemployed.

**Source:** Eurostat

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