



BRIEFING PAPER

Number 5871, 14 June 2017

Youth Unemployment Statistics

By Feargal McGuinness

1. Youth Unemployment Statistics
2. Youth Unemployment across Europe

A photograph of a bright green sign for 'job centre plus' mounted on a brick wall. The sign is tilted and features the text 'job centre plus' in a bold, sans-serif font. 'job' is in white, 'centre' is in yellow, and 'plus' is in white.

*job
centre
plus*

1. Youth Unemployment Statistics

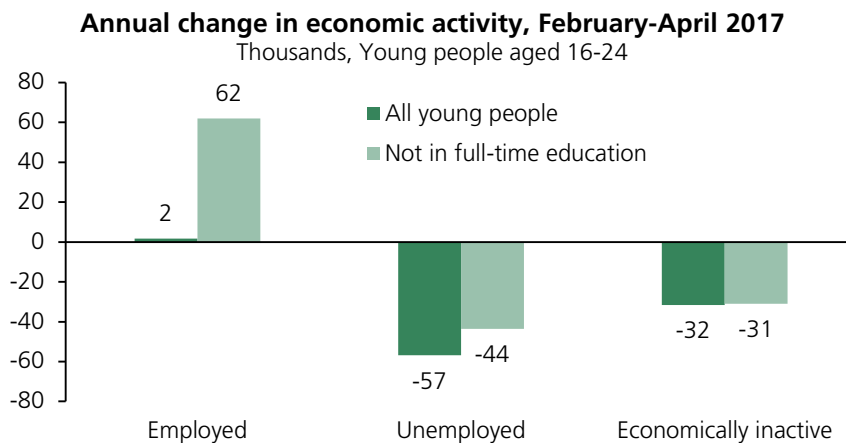
564,000 young people aged 16-24 were unemployed in February-April 2017, 10,000 more than the previous quarter but 57,000 fewer than a year ago.¹

The unemployment rate (the proportion of the economically active population who are unemployed) for 16-24 year olds was 12.5%, down from 13.6% a year ago.

Excluding young people in full-time education, 366,000 people aged 16-24 were unemployed in February-April 2017, about the same as the previous quarter and down 44,000 from a year ago.

The unemployment rate for 16-24 year olds not in full-time education was 10.7%, compared to 12.1% a year ago.

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 10.7% in February-April 2017, down from 11.9% a year ago. 429,000 18-24 year olds were unemployed, while 1.70 million were economically inactive (not in work and not looking or available for work). 3.58 million were in work.



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

3 Youth Unemployment Statistics

135,000 16-17 year olds were unemployed in February-April 2017, compared to 926,000 who were economically inactive and 366,000 in employment.

The unemployment rate for 16-17 year olds was estimated at 26.9%. 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 increasing numbers staying in full-time education so that fewer 16-17 year olds are economically active (the unemployment rate is calculated as a proportion of the economically active population).

These figures for 16-17 year olds are more volatile than the estimates for 18-24 year olds, since they are based on a smaller number of survey responses.

Long term youth unemployment

87,000 people aged 16-24 had been unemployed for over 12 months at February-April 2017, about the same as the previous quarter and down 15,000 on a year ago.

15.4% of unemployed 16-24 year olds had been unemployed for over 12 months.

Men and women

325,000 men aged 16-24 were unemployed in February-April 2017, down 23,000 from a year ago. The unemployment rate for men in this age group was 13.9%, compared to 14.7% a year ago.

239,000 women aged 16-24 were unemployed, down 34,000 compared to a year ago. The unemployment rate for women aged 16-24 was 11.0%, compared to 12.4% a year ago.

People claiming unemployment benefits

Not adjusting for seasonal effects, 167,300 people aged 18-24 were claiming Jobseeker's Allowance or were claiming Universal Credit and required to seek work in May 2017. This is 900 fewer than 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. Additionally, Universal Credit 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, seasonally adjusted data on the claimant count "may now be providing a misleading representation of the UK labour market".²

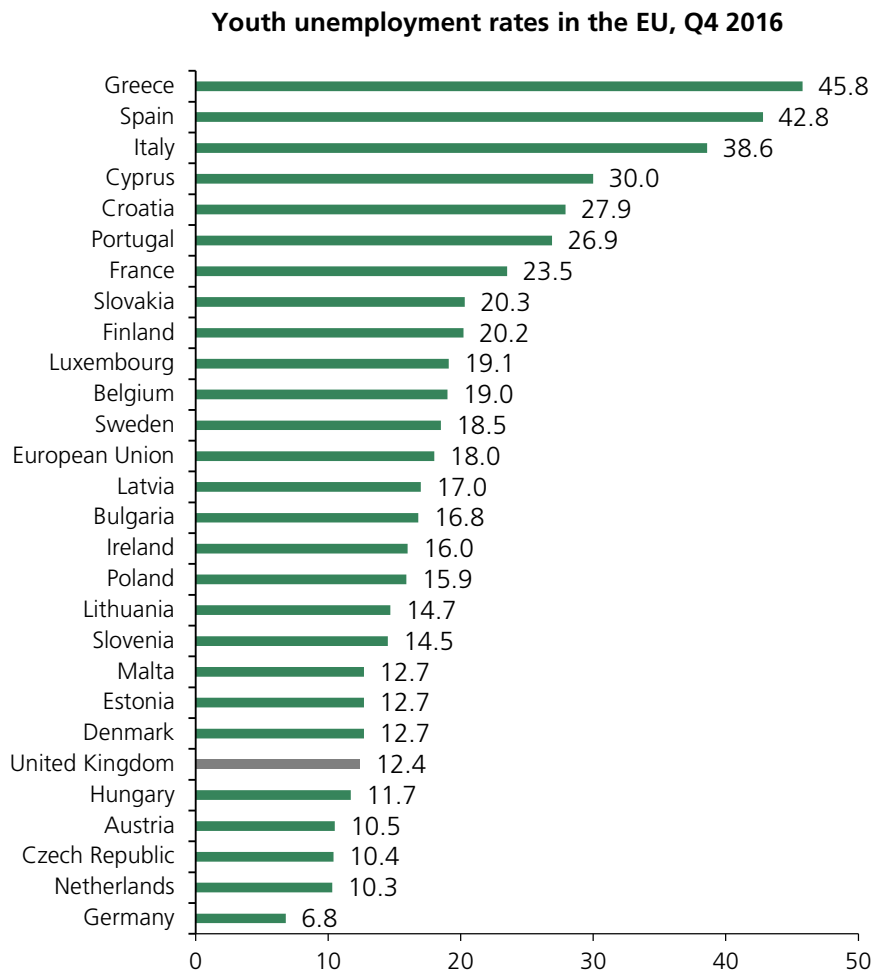
² ONS, [Publication arrangements for the Claimant Count](#), 23 February 2017

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 Quarter 4 of 2016, at 45.8%. Germany had the lowest youth unemployment rate at 6.8%.

The UK had a youth unemployment rate of 12.4% compared to the European Union average of 18.0%.



Notes: Seasonally adjusted

Rate refers to the percentage of economically active young people, aged 15-24, who are unemployed.

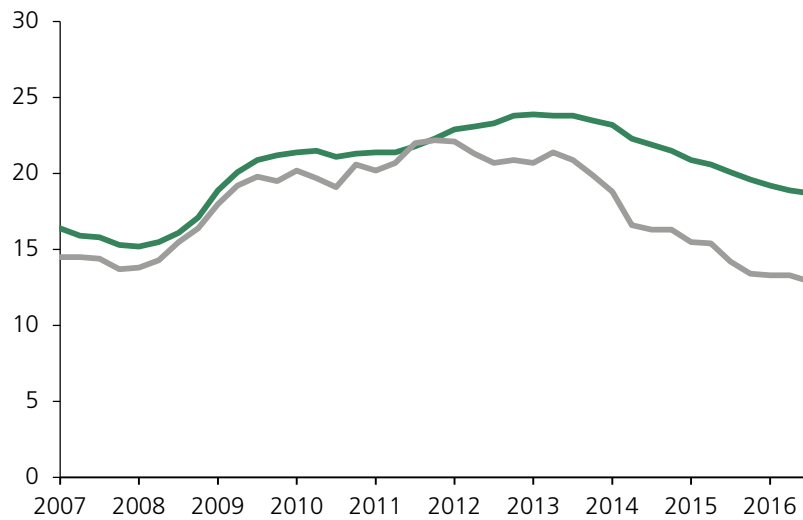
Data for Romania unavailable

Source: Eurostat

Recent trend in EU youth unemployment

Since 2013 the youth unemployment rate in the EU and UK has been falling. The UK rate of youth unemployment has been falling faster than in the EU as a whole. Between Q4 2013 and Q4 2016 the youth unemployment rate fell by 7.5 percentage points in the UK, compared to a fall of 5.5 percentage points in the EU as a whole.

Rate of youth unemployment , UK and EU, 2007- 2016



Notes: Seasonally adjusted

Rate refers to the percentage of economically active young people, aged 15-24, who are unemployed.

Source: Eurostat

About the Library

The House of Commons Library research service provides MPs and their staff with the impartial briefing and evidence base they need to do their work in scrutinising Government, proposing legislation, and supporting constituents.

As well as providing MPs with a confidential service we publish open briefing papers, which are available on the Parliament website.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in these publically available research briefings is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware however that briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

If you have any comments on our briefings please email papers@parliament.uk. Authors are available to discuss the content of this briefing only with Members and their staff.

If you have any general questions about the work of the House of Commons you can email hcinfo@parliament.uk.

Disclaimer

This information is provided to Members of Parliament in support of their parliamentary duties. It is a general briefing only and should not be relied on as a substitute for specific advice. The House of Commons or the author(s) shall not be liable for any errors or omissions, or for any loss or damage of any kind arising from its use, and may remove, vary or amend any information at any time without prior notice.

The House of Commons accepts no responsibility for any references or links to, or the content of, information maintained by third parties. This information is provided subject to the [conditions of the Open Parliament Licence](#).