



Department  
for Business  
Innovation & Skills



## TRADE UNION MEMBERSHIP 2015

Statistical Bulletin

MAY 2016

# Contents

<b>Contents</b> .....	<b>i</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Key findings</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>1. Long Term and Recent Trends</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>2. Private and Public Sectors</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>3. Personal and job characteristics</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>4. Country and Regional Trends</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>Tables</b> .....	<b>22</b>
1. Long term and recent trends .....	22
2. Private and Public Sectors .....	37
3. Personal and job characteristics .....	44
4. Country and Regional Trends .....	46
<b>Annex: Technical Note</b> .....	<b>49</b>
<b>Annual National Statistic reports</b> .....	<b>57</b>

# Introduction

The [Department for Business, Innovation & Skills](#) is responsible for publishing the National Statistics on [trade union membership](#).

An annual question on trade union membership was introduced into the [Labour Force Survey](#) (LFS) in 1989 and it has been asked in the fourth quarter (Q4) every year since 1992. Questions on trade union presence and recognition were added in 1993, and the question on collective agreements was introduced in 1996. The LFS trade union questions have United Kingdom coverage from 1995 onwards.

Trade Union Membership statistics have been produced as an annual [National Statistics](#) bulletin since 2004. This bulletin succeeded the annual article in the [Office for National Statistics](#) journal Labour Market Trends. It contains annual estimates of trade union membership from the Labour Force Survey up to the fourth quarter of 2015 (October to December 2015).

Official government statistics on trade union membership have been collected on a regular basis since 1892 from administrative records. These statistics are presented in [Table 1.1](#) and have a greater coverage than the population of employees reported elsewhere in the report, with statistics since 1974 provided by the Certification Officer (see [technical note](#)).

This bulletin presents estimates on the proportion (density) of employees who are trade union members, and the proportion whose pay and conditions are affected by collective agreements as reported by employees. These estimates are also presented by age, gender, ethnicity, income, major occupation, industry, full and part-time employment, sector, nation and region. Industrial sectors are presented based on Standard Industrial Classification 2007. The occupations figures between 2011 and 2013 are based on the new Standard Occupational Classification 2010 (SOC2010), which has replaced the previous version, SOC2000, in LFS datasets from 2011. Some estimates for those in employment, which includes the self-employed, are provided in Chapter 1.

The data behind this bulletin are available in the accompanying Excel spreadsheet.

## About Labour Market Analysis

Labour Market Analysis is a multi-disciplinary team of economists, social researchers and statisticians based in the Labour Market Directorate of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. Members of the team are responsible for producing this bulletin.

## Statistical contacts

If you have any feedback or questions about this statistical bulletin, please contact: [lm.correspondence@bis.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:lm.correspondence@bis.gsi.gov.uk).

## Code of Practice for Official Statistics

National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the [Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#). They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference.

The UK 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 Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- Meet identified user needs;
- Are well explained and readily accessible;
- Are produced according to sound methods, and
- Are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

## Conventions

The statistics presented in this bulletin are based on fourth quarter estimates (October to December) from the Labour Force Survey unless otherwise specified. Members of the armed forces are excluded from analysis. All tables and charts relate to employees (population aged 16 or over in paid employment) in the United Kingdom with the exception of those specified in Chapter 1 (Long Term Trends).

Estimates are presented for those in employment. This is defined as the population aged 16 or over in paid employment (employees) in addition to those in self-employment or Government employment & training programmes. Unpaid family workers are excluded from the population in employment in this bulletin.

More detailed information on the concepts, methods, and quality of data used in this bulletin is available in the [technical note](#).

## Symbols

The following symbols are used:

- \* sample size too small for a reliable estimate
- data not available

## Revisions

Estimates derived from the Labour Force Survey are usually revised once a year. The ONS undertook a reweighting exercise on Labour Force Survey data in 2016. This ensures estimates accurately reflect the population. This is the first release of this bulletin to account for this revision.

# Key findings

## 1. Trade Union Membership: Long term and recent trends

Around 6.5 million employees in the UK were trade union members in 2015. The level of overall union members was broadly unchanged from 2014, with a non-statistically significant increase of 36,000 over the year (a 0.6% increase). Current membership levels are well below the peak of over 13 million in 1979.

The number of UK employees increased between 2014 and 2015. As a result, the proportion of employees who were trade union members fell slightly to 24.7% in 2015, from 25.0% in 2014. This is the lowest rate of trade union membership recorded since 1995. Over this period, the proportion of employees who were trade union members in the UK has decreased 7.7 percentage points, from 32.4% in 1995.

Female employees are more likely to be a trade union member. The proportion of female employees who were in a trade union was around 27.7% in 2015, compared with 21.7% for male employees.

A higher proportion of UK born employees were in a trade union compared with non-UK born employees. About 26.2% of UK born employees were in a trade union in 2015, compared with 16.6% for non-UK born employees.

## 2. Trade union membership: Public and private sectors

Union membership levels in the private sector were almost 2.7 million members, an increase of 6,000 since 2014. Despite the small increase in numbers, the proportion of trade union members amongst private sector employees fell slightly from 14.2% to 13.9%, reflecting employment growth outpacing the growth in union membership. The yearly changes were not statistically significant.

In the public sector, union membership levels increased by 29,000 year-on-year to 3.80 million in 2015. Trade union density in the public sector rose from 54.3% to 54.8% in 2015. The changes were not statistically significant.

## 3. Trade union membership: Personal and job characteristics

Older workers account for a larger proportion of union members than younger workers. About 39% of trade union member employees were aged over 50 in 2015, but 28% of employees are in this age group. The proportion of trade union members aged below 50 has fallen since 1995, whilst the proportion aged above 50 has increased.

Employees in professional occupations were more likely to be trade union members than other employees. Employees in the professional occupations account for 37.3% of union members, but only 20.4% of employees in the UK worked in these occupations.

# 1. Long Term and Recent Trends

Trade union membership levels reached their peak in 1979 and declined sharply through the 1980s and early 1990s before stabilising from the mid-1990s to the mid-2000s. After falling during the recession and years following, the trade union membership levels among employees have again stabilised since 2011. Despite the broad stability in membership levels between 1995 and 2007, and 2011 to 2015, the proportion of UK employees who were in the trade union declined because union membership levels did not keep pace with the increase in the total number of UK employees.

## **Trade union membership levels increased slightly between 2014 and 2015**

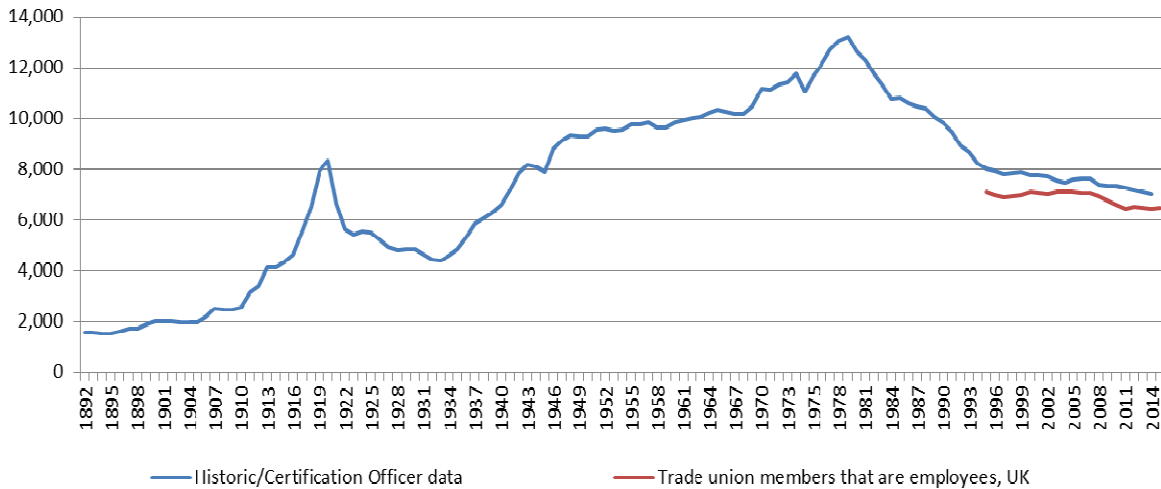
The number of employees who were trade union members was just under 6.5 million, 36 thousand more than in 2014 (a 0.6% increase). However, given growth in the total number of people in employment, the proportion of employees who are trade union members has fallen slightly to 24.7% in 2015 (a 0.3 percentage point decrease from 25.0% in 2014).

## **Higher number of private sector memberships offsets the lower level of public sector memberships**

Private sector memberships increased for a fifth successive year, albeit marginally. Meanwhile the falling trend in trade union numbers in the public sector, which started in 2010, ended, with membership levels rising by 29 thousand on the year.

Despite the increase in nominal terms, the overall proportion of private sector employees who are trade union members declined to 13.9% from 14.2% in 2014. However, the overall proportion of public sector employees who are trade union members increased to 54.8% from 54.3% in 2014, reflecting both the decreasing number of total public sector employees, but also the rise in union membership levels in the public sector. The long-term trend for a much lower proportion of private sector employees who are trade union members, relative to the public sector, continues.

**Chart 1.1: Trade union membership levels in UK from 1892 to 2015**

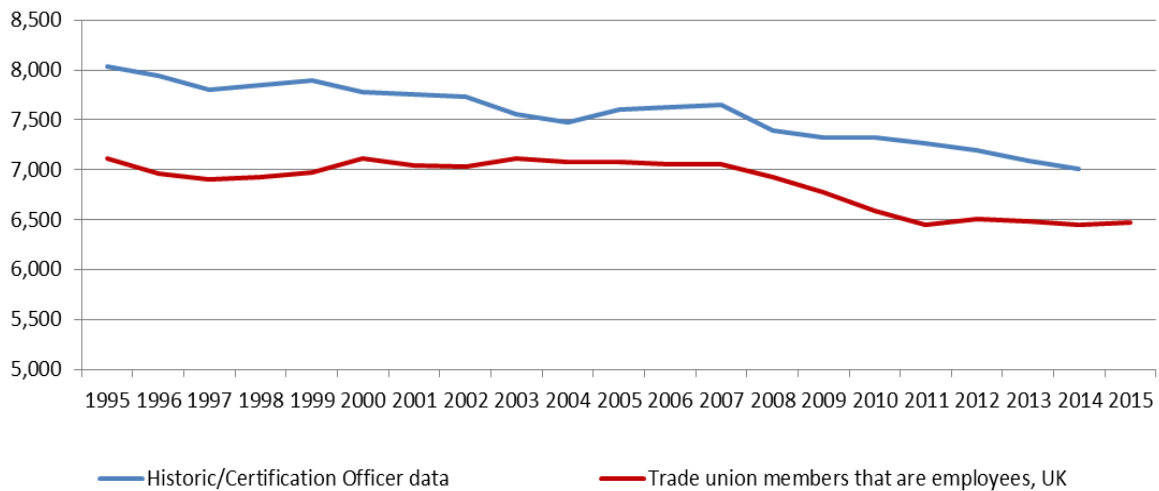


*Membership, Thousands*

*Source: Historic data is administrative data from Department for Employment (1892-1973); and the Certification Office (1974-2014).*

*Data on UK employees that are trade union members is based on the Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics*

**Chart 1.1a Trade union membership levels in UK from 1995 to 2015**



*Membership, Thousands*

*Source: Historic data is administrative data from Department for Employment (1892-1973); and the Certification Office (1974-2014).*

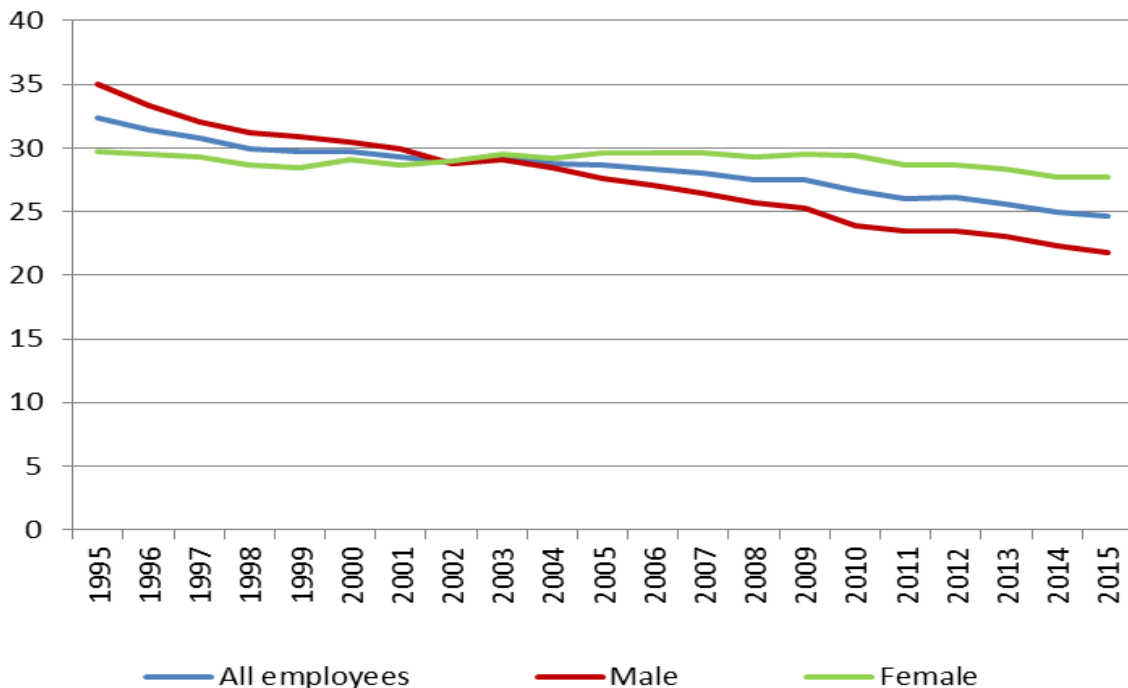
*Data on UK employees that are trade union members is based on the Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics*

### The long-term trend of reducing rates of male trade union membership continued

At 21.7%, the proportion of male employees who were in a trade union was the lowest in the data series that started in 1995. The decline in male membership levels was marginal (-0.03%) and was offset by growth in female members (+1.0%). Overall, male membership remained around 2.9m for the third successive year. The number of female trade union members increased by 36,000, but remained stable as a proportion of female employees at 27.7%.

The relative declines in the proportion of employees who are in a trade union since 1995 have been much weaker for women. In 1995, the proportion of male employees who belonged to a trade union was around 35%, compared with just fewer than 30% for female employees. High falls in union membership among males steadily narrowed the gap between males and females. In 2002, the proportion of employees who belonged to a trade union was around 29% for both genders. The trend continued between 2002 and 2015, with union membership among male employees falling by 7 percentage points from 28.7% in 2002 to 21.7% in 2015. This compares with relative stability in the rate for females, where trade union membership as a proportion of female employees remained stable until 2010 before decreasing slowly in subsequent years until steadying in 2015 (Table 1.2b).

**Chart 1.2: Employee trade union density by gender, 1995 to 2015**



*Per cent of UK employees who are trade union-members*  
 Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics



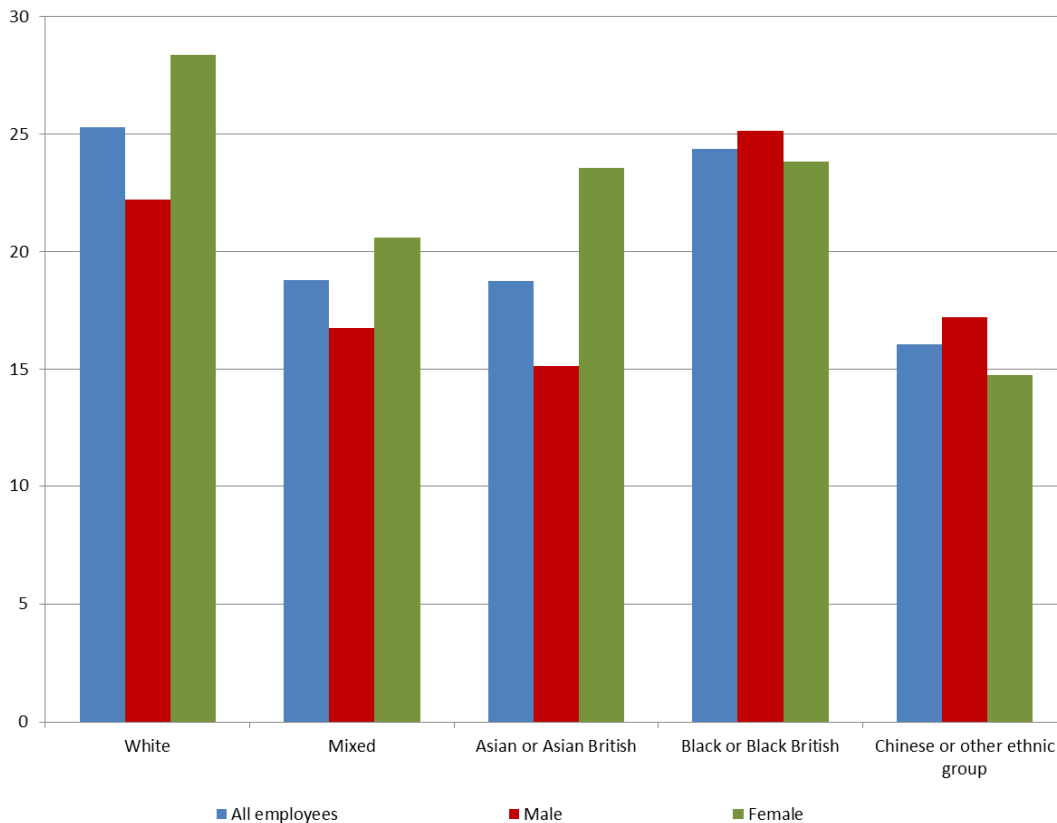
**UK born and Black ethnic group employees are more likely to be union members**

A higher proportion of UK born employees are in a trade union compared with non-UK born employees. About 26.2% of UK born employees were in a trade union in 2015, compared with 16.6% for non-UK born employees (Table 1.5).

The proportion of employees who were trade union members was highest in the White ethnic group at around 25.3% in 2015, followed by the Black or Black British ethnic group at 24.4%. The proportion of trade union members amongst employees in Asian or Asian British, Mixed and Chinese/other ethnic groups was lower, at 18.8%, 18.8% and 16.1% respectively.

Higher proportions of female employees belonged to a trade union than males in the White, Mixed and Asian or Asian British ethnic groups, while the reverse held for the Black or Black British and Chinese or other ethnic groups. The largest difference was within the Asian or Asian British group in 2015, where the proportion of female employees who belonged to a trade union was around 23.6%, compared with around 15.1% for male employees (Table 1.5).

**Chart 1.3: Trade union density by gender and ethnicity, 2015**



*Per cent of UK employees who are trade union-members  
Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics*

### **Highly educated employees are more likely to be union members**

The proportion of employees who were trade union members was greater for people with a higher qualification, such as a degree, compared with those with lower level qualifications, or no qualifications.

About 31% of employees with a degree or equivalent, and 31.2% with some other Higher Education qualification were in a trade union, compared with just 18.1% of employees without formal qualifications (Table 1.5).

### **Larger workplaces are more likely to negotiate pay through collective bargaining**

Employees who worked in larger workplaces (with 50 or more staff) were more likely to be in a trade union and were more likely to have a trade union present in the workplace. Employees in larger workplaces were also more likely to have their pay affected by a collective agreement (Table 1.10).

The proportion of employees who belonged to a trade union in larger workplaces was 32.7% in 2015, compared with 15.8% in the workplaces with less than 50 employees. About 58.5% of employees in larger workplaces reported that a trade union was present, compared with 25.4% in smaller workplaces.

The proportion of employees who had their pay affected by a collective agreement was around 38.7% in larger workplaces, compared with 16% in workplaces with less than 50 employees (Table 1.10).

Employees are more likely to have their pay affected by collective agreements if they work in 'public administration and defence' compared with the other sectors, in Northern Ireland compared to the other nations, and in the North East compared to the other regions (Table 1.10).

### **Employees are more likely to be trade union members in permanent jobs and full-time jobs**

Permanent employees were more likely than those in temporary jobs to be union members in all occupations. The proportion of permanent employees who were trade union members was 25.3% in 2015, compared with 15.2% for temporary employees (Table 1.4).

Full-time employees were also more likely than those in part-time work to be union members, the only exceptions for full-time employees were amongst professional occupations, and the financial and insurance industries, where part-time employees were more likely to be union members (Table 1.4).

About 77.5% of union member employees worked full-time, compared with 73.9% of all employees (Table 3.1).

### **Middle-income earners are more likely to be trade union members**

Middle-income earners were more likely to be trade union members than either high or low paid employees. About 36.6% of employees who earned between £500 and £999 per week were members of a trade union, compared with 20.1% of employees earning £1,000 or more per week. The proportion of employees earning less than £250 per week who were trade union members was 13.1% (Table 1.5).

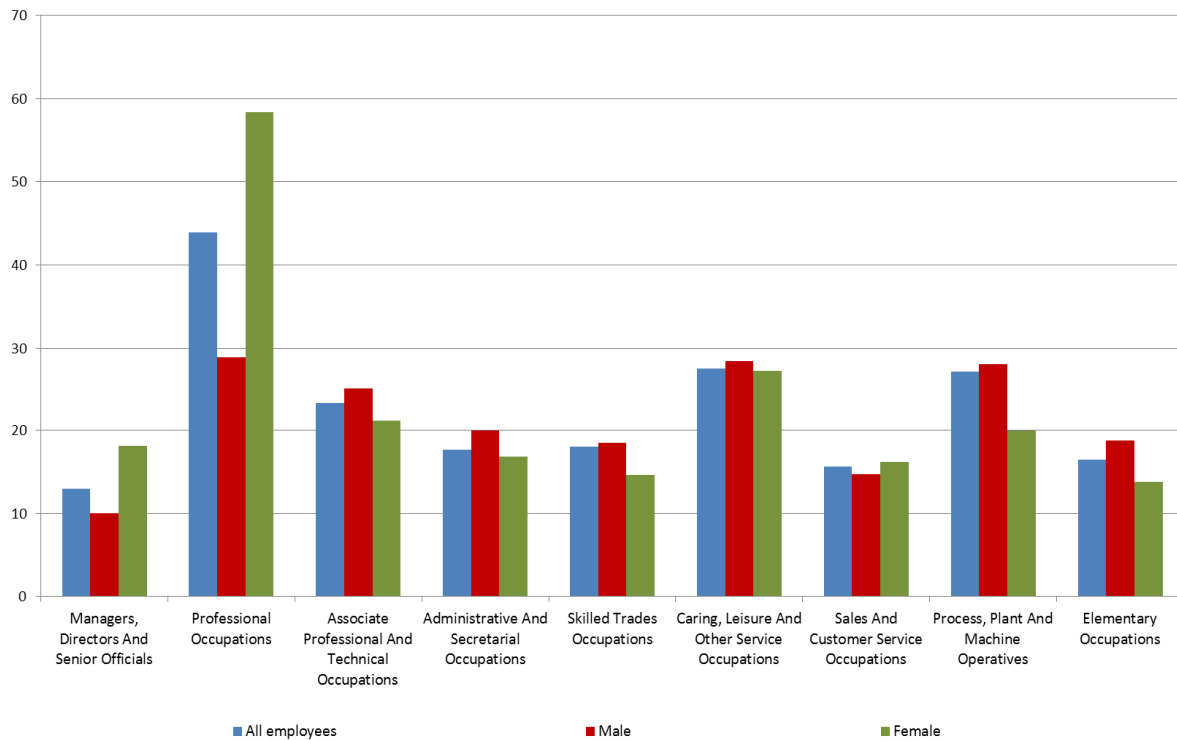
### **Employees in professional occupations are more likely to be trade union members**

Employees in professional occupations were more likely to be trade union members than employees in other occupations. Employees in the professional occupations account for 37.3% of all union members, but only 20.4% of all employees in the UK worked in this sector (Table 3.1).

The proportion of employees who were trade union members was almost 44% within the professional occupations sector, compared with 13% in the 'managers, directors and senior officials' occupation. The proportion of trade union members in professional occupations is similar to recent years despite the change in Standard Occupational Classification in 2011. The new classification, among other changes, moved nurses and midwives, and therapy professionals, both relatively highly unionised occupations, into the professional group, from 'associate professional and technical'. This partly accounts for the 17 percentage point decrease in associate professional and technical occupations, from about 40% in 2010 to 23.3% in 2015 (Tables 1.7a and 1.7b).

Despite generally being more likely to be a union member than male employees, females were only represented in higher proportions in three of the nine occupation groups: 'Professional Occupations', 'Sales and Customer Service Occupations' and 'Managers, Directors and Senior Officials' (Table 1.4).

Chart 1.4: Trade union density by gender and occupation, 2015



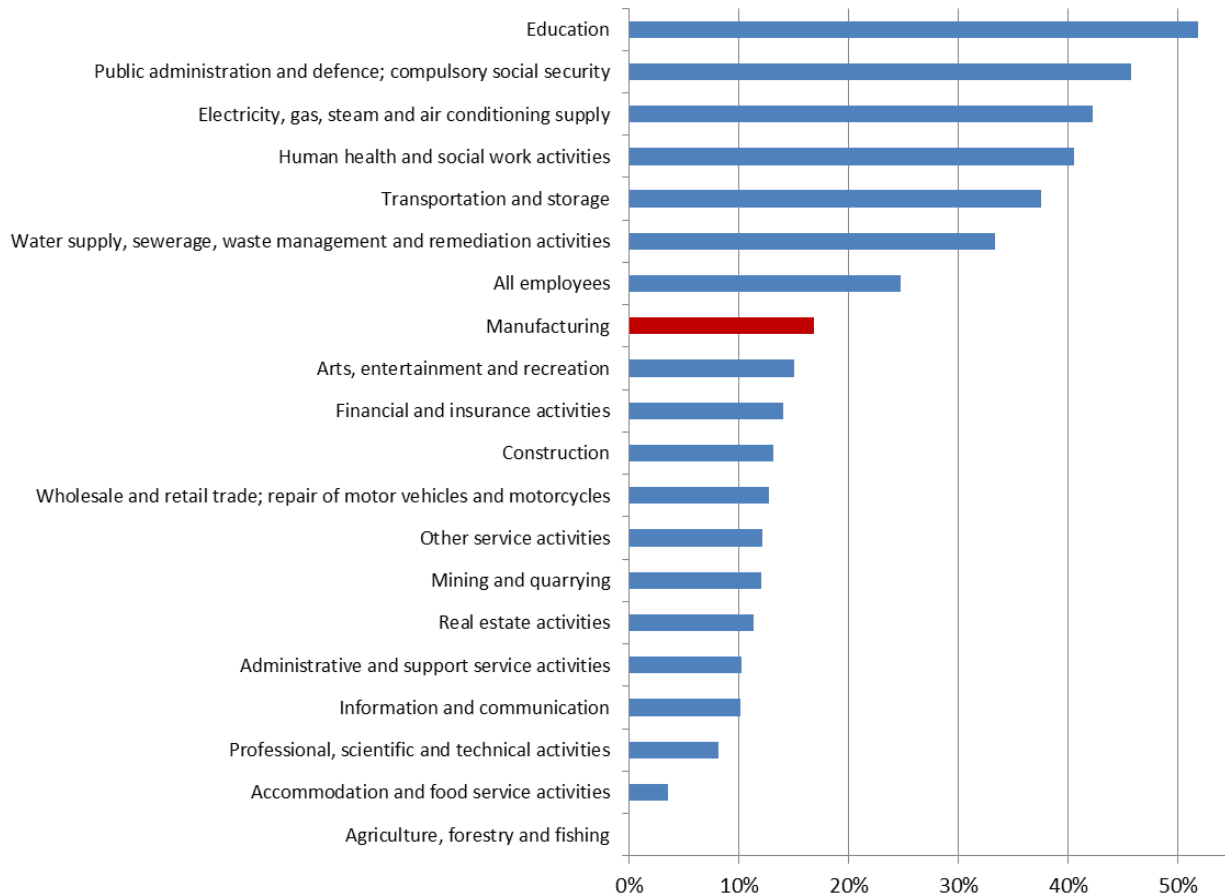
*Per cent of UK employees who are trade union-members  
Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics*

**Employees in public sector and utility industries more likely to be in a trade union**

The likelihood of belonging to a trade union varies substantially by sector. Employees in industries with higher proportions of public sector workers are more likely to belong to trade unions, including the ‘public administration and defence’ and ‘education’ industries. The rate of union membership in manufacturing, which has traditionally been seen as a high union membership industry, has fallen substantially in recent years and now has a below average proportion of trade union members. Density has fallen by 16 percentage points, from 32.8% in 1995 to 16.8% in 2015.

As in previous years, ‘education’ and ‘public administration and defence’ were the sectors with the highest proportions of trade union members, 51.8% of employees in ‘education’ and 45.7% of employees in ‘public administration and defence’ are union members. Accommodation and food services had the lowest at 3.5% (Table 1.8).

**Chart 1.5: Trade union density by industry, 2015**



*Per cent of UK employees who are trade union-members  
Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics*

**‘Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply’ industry records greatest decline in membership rates since 1995**

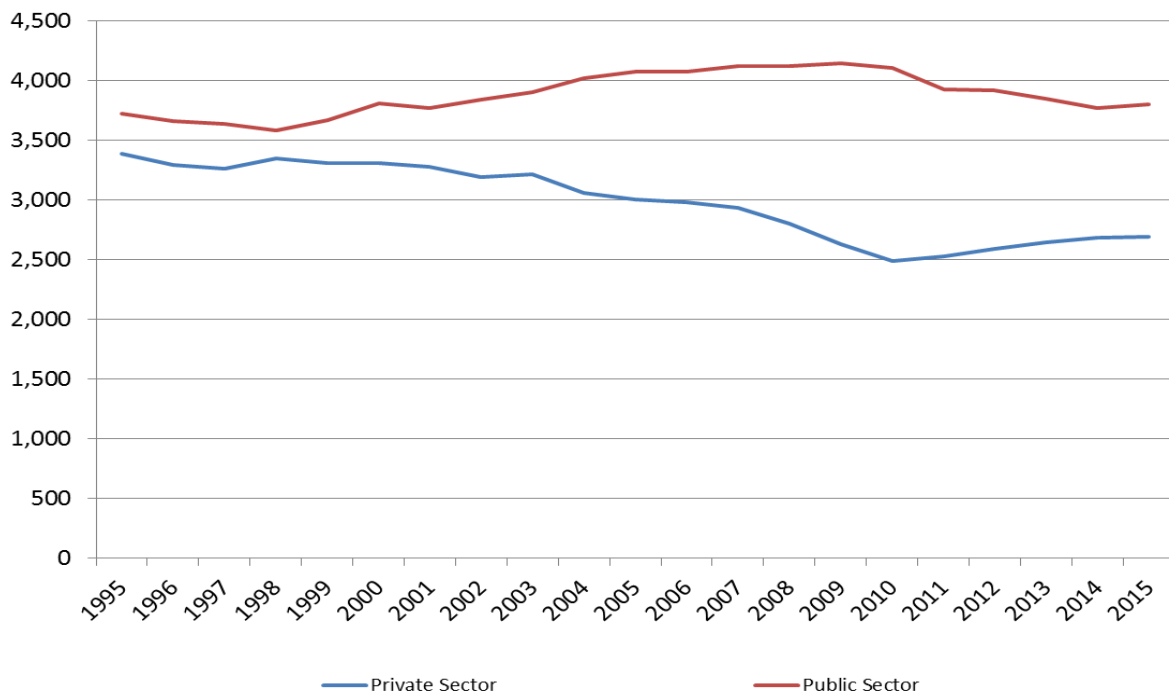
Between 1995 and 2015, the likelihood of employees being a trade union member has decreased or been stable across all sectors, with the exception of the ‘wholesale, retail trade and motor repair’ sector, which seen a modest rise of 1.7 percentage points between 1995 and 2015 to 12.7%. Since 1995, the sharpest fall in the rate of trade union membership has been in ‘electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply’, down 29.6 percentage points from 71.9% in 1995 to 42.3% in 2015, although the proportion actually rose by 2 percentage points between 2014 and 2015 (Table 1.8).

## 2. Private and Public Sectors

Public sector union members accounted for an increasing proportion of overall union membership in the period up to 2010. This was driven by a steady rise in the public sector membership in the 2000s up to 2005 and stability until 2010. The overall public sector membership level grew between 1995 and 2010 by 381,000. The private sector membership level declined by 905,000 over the same period.

Public sector membership declined sharply between 2010 and 2011, levelled off between 2011 and 2012, and fell again in 2013 and 2014 before rising slightly in 2015. There was a 302,000 fall in the public sector membership level between 2010 and 2015. The private sector union membership level increased by 206,000 from 2010 to 2015 (Table 2.1a).

**Chart 2.1: Trade union membership levels by sector, 1995 to 2015**

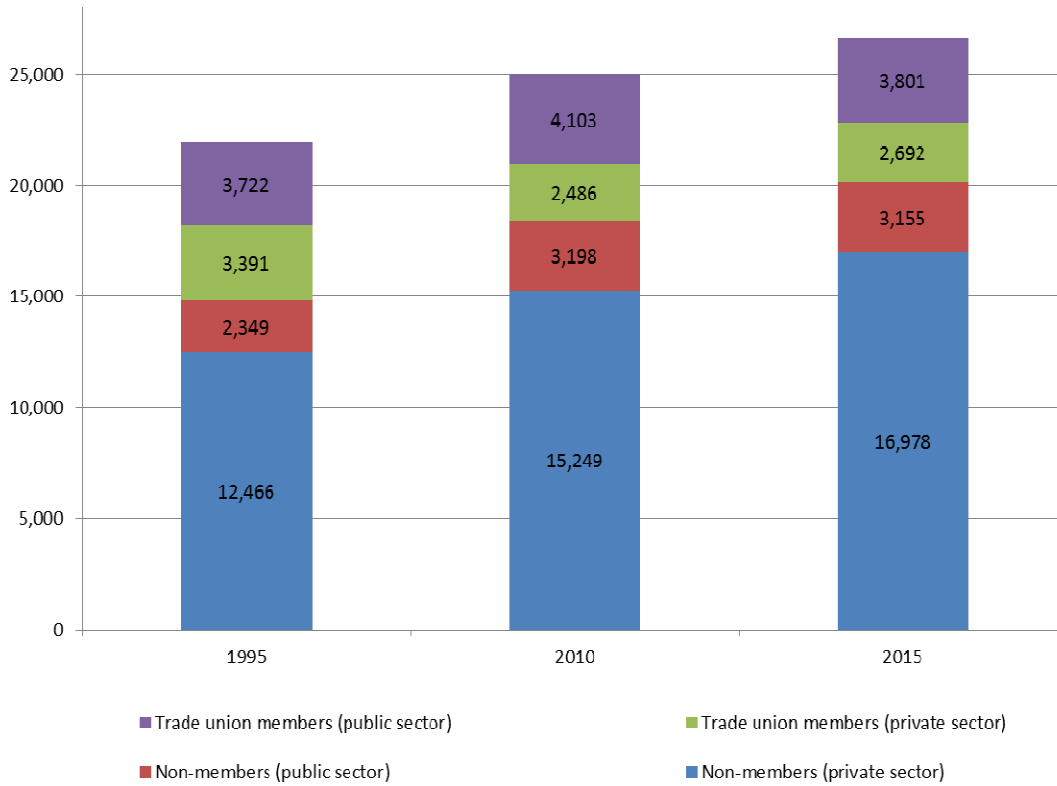


*Membership, Thousands*

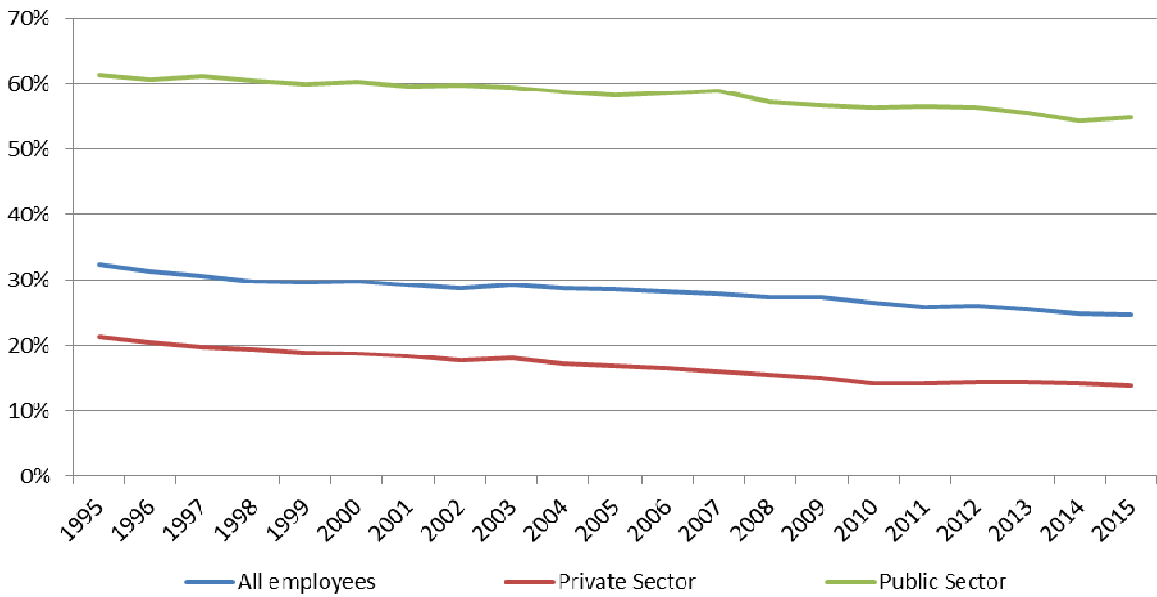
*Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics.*

In 2015, 3.80 million public sector employees belonged to a union in the UK, 29,000 more than in 2014. The rate of trade union membership in the public sector rose from 54.3% in 2014 to 54.8% in 2015. In the private sector, there were 2.7 million members, an increase of 6,000 since 2014. Despite the small increase in numbers, the proportion of trade union members amongst private sector employees fell slightly from 14.2% to 13.9%, reflecting employment growth outpacing the growth in union membership (Tables 2.1a, 2.1b and 2.2).

**Chart 2.2: Employee composition by trade union membership and sector, 1995, 2010 and 2015**



*Membership, thousands*  
*Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics*

**Chart 2.3: Trends in trade union densities by sector, 1995-2015**

*Per cent of sectors who are trade union members*  
*Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics*

### **For the first time in four years, the trade union wage gap decreased**

The trade union wage gap, defined as the percentage difference in average gross hourly earnings of union members compared with non-members, is 16.1% in 2015 in the public sector, down from 21.6% in 2014. The private sector trade union wage gap is 7.7% in 2015, down only slightly from 8.2% in 2014.

For the public sector this amounts to a 5.5 percentage points fall when compared with 2014. A number of factors influence this figure, and the size of the premium is likely to be strongly influenced by other differences in the characteristics of unionised and non-unionised employees. It should also be noted that where pay is determined by collective agreements, these apply to both unionised and non-unionised employees in the workplace (Table 2.3).



### 3. Personal and job characteristics

#### Female employees are more likely to be a trade union member

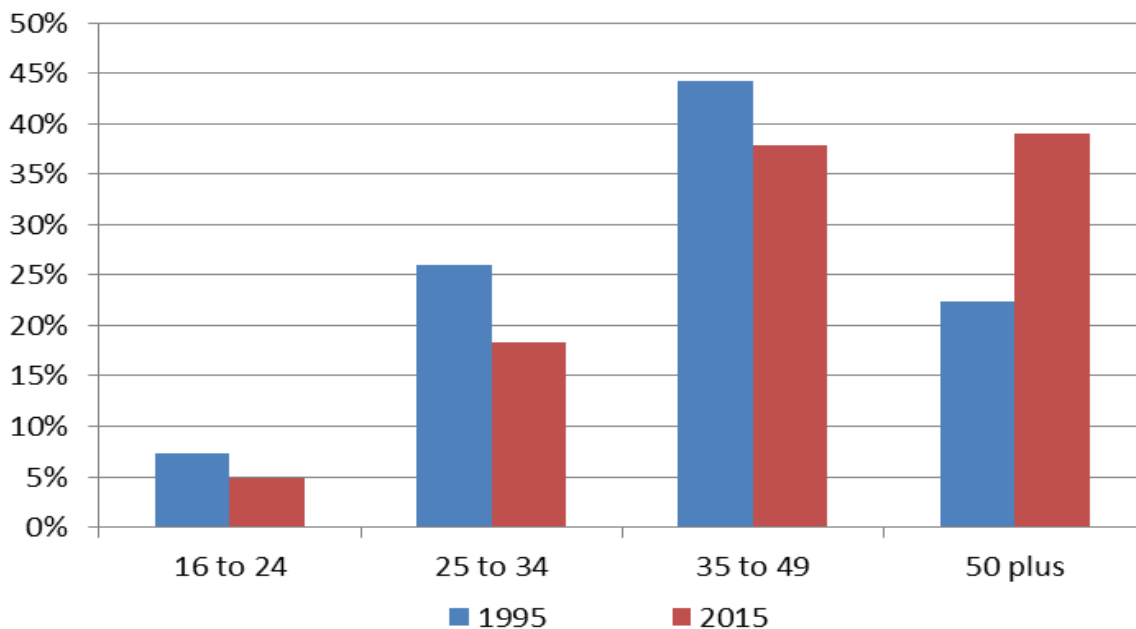
As noted previously, female employees are more likely to be a trade union member. 55% of union members were female in 2015, up from 45% in 1995. The proportion of female employees who were in a trade union was around 27.7% in 2015, unchanged from 2014. In comparison, 21.7% of male employees were in a trade union in 2015, down from 22.3% in 2014 (Table 1.2b).

#### Trade union members are increasingly older employees

Older workers account for a larger proportion of union members than younger workers. About 39% of trade union member employees were aged over 50 in 2015, but 28% of employees are in this age group (Table 3.1). The proportion of trade union members aged below 50 has fallen since 1995, whilst the proportion aged above 50 has increased.

Those employees with ten or more years of service make up about 52% of all union members but only 30.7% of all employees (Table 3.1).

**Chart 3.2: Age of trade union members, 1995 and 2015**



*Per cent*

*Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics*

**Employees with a disability are more likely to be union members**

The proportion of employees who were trade union members was higher for those classified as having a disability, 29.2%, than those without a disability, 24% (Table 1.5).

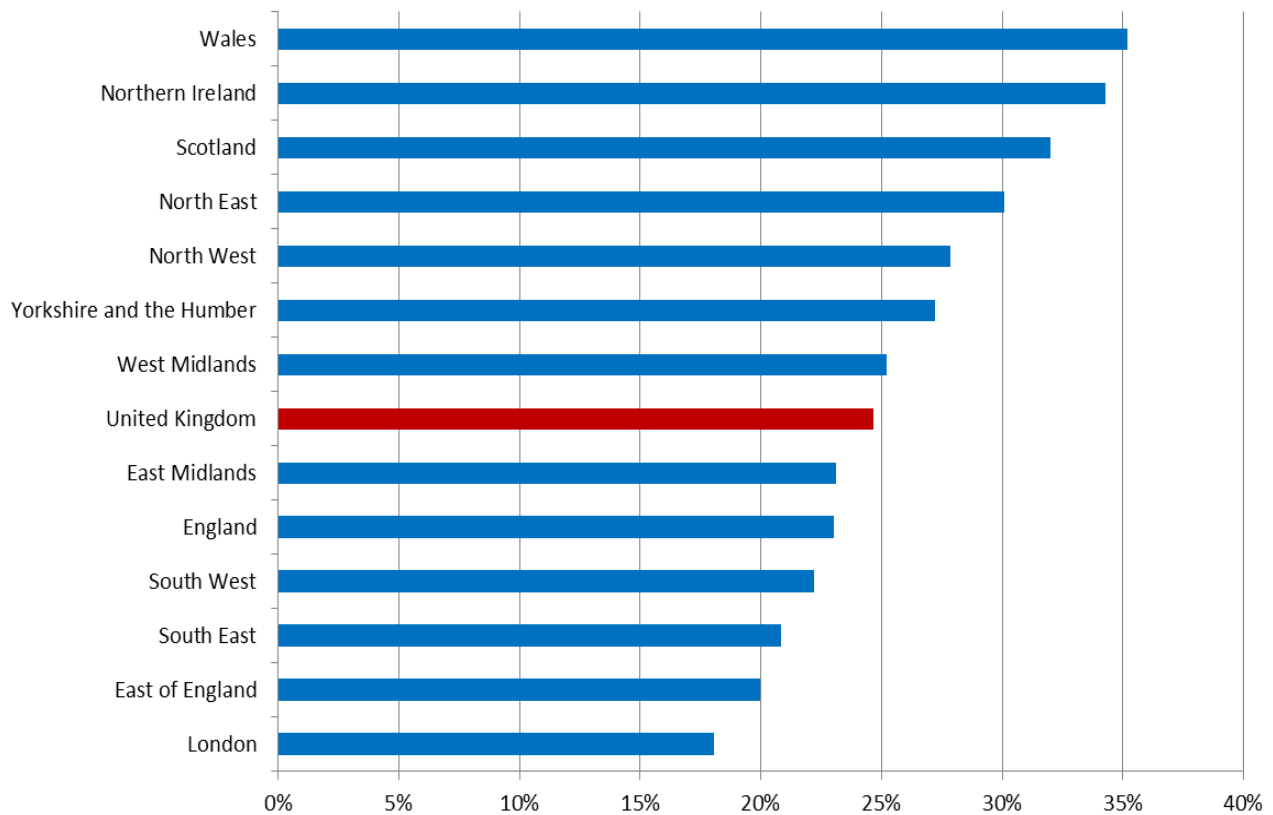
Employees who had a disability made up an increasing amount of all trade union members in 2015, at 15.1%, slightly higher than the 12.6% of all employees in the UK who had a disability (Table 3.1).

## 4. Country and Regional Trends

### Employees in the devolved countries and the northern regions of England more likely to be trade union members

Employees in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales are more likely to be trade union members than the UK as a whole. Within England, regions in the North and Midlands have the highest proportions of employees who were trade union members. Five English regions had a proportion of employees who were members of a trade union which was higher than the average in England. These regions were the North East, North West, Yorkshire and the Humber, the West Midlands and the East Midlands, although the rate in the East Midlands was only 0.1 percentage point higher than the average.

**Chart 4.1: Trade union density by nation and region, UK employees, 2015**



*Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics*

### Membership levels down since 1995 in England, Scotland and Wales, but up in Northern Ireland

Trade union membership levels in England decreased by around 587,000 between 1995 and 2015, compared with a 36,000 decrease in Scotland and a 17,000 reduction in Wales.

In Northern Ireland, trade union membership levels increased 22,000 between 1995 and 2015, but the levels are still 19,000 below the 2007 peak in membership (Table 4.2).

Despite levels rising, trade union membership as proportion of employees in Northern Ireland fell by 7.9 percentage points between 1995 and 2015, indicating that employee numbers overall in Northern Ireland are rising at faster rate than employees that are union members.

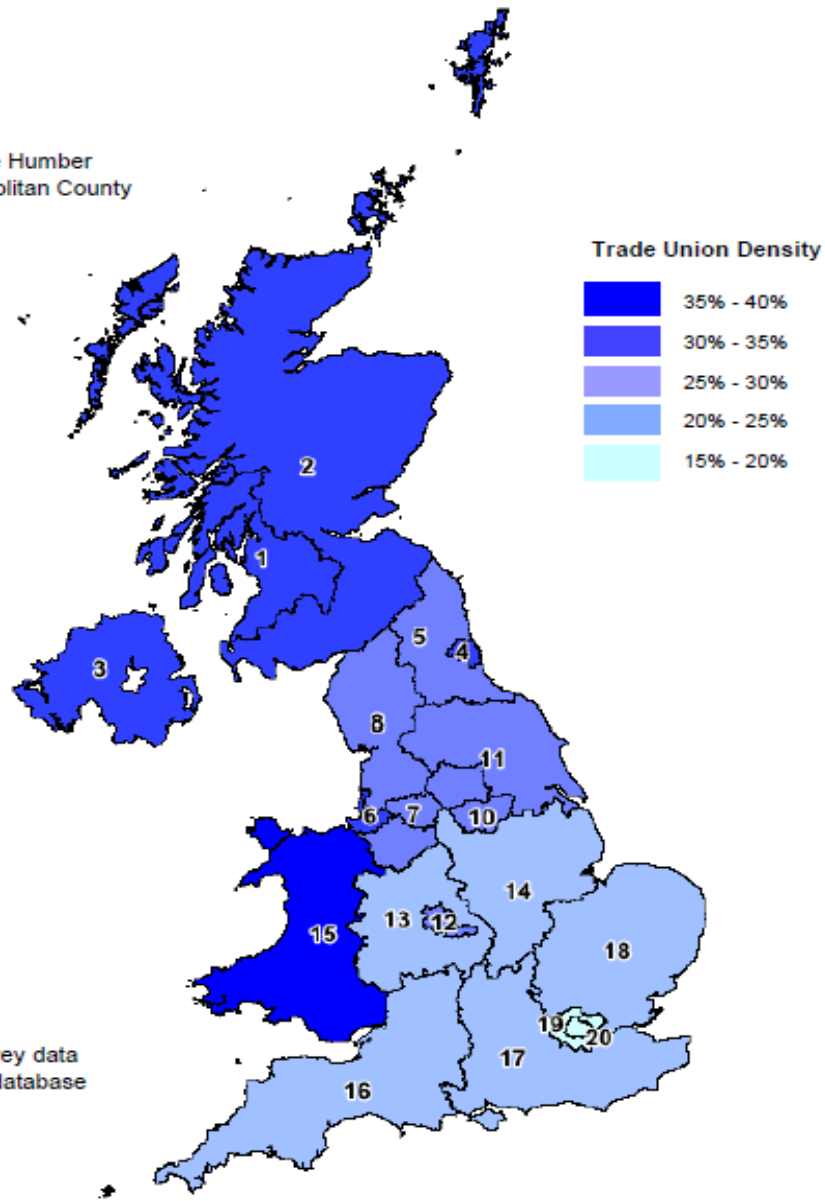
Between 1995 and 2015, the proportion of employees who were in a trade union has decreased by 7.8 percentage points in England. In Wales there was a 9.1 percentage point reduction, and a 7.0 percentage point reduction in Scotland.

Between 2014 and 2015, the proportion of employees who were union members rose by 1.6 percentage points to 32% in Scotland, but fell, albeit by less than 1 percentage point, in each of the other nations.

Chart 4.2 shows the proportion of employees who were in a trade union across 20 geographical regions of the UK in 2015. The highest rate was 35.2% in Wales, whilst the lowest was 16.0% in Inner London (Table 4.3).

**Chart 4.2: Trade union membership as a proportion of employees, by region, UK employees, 2015**

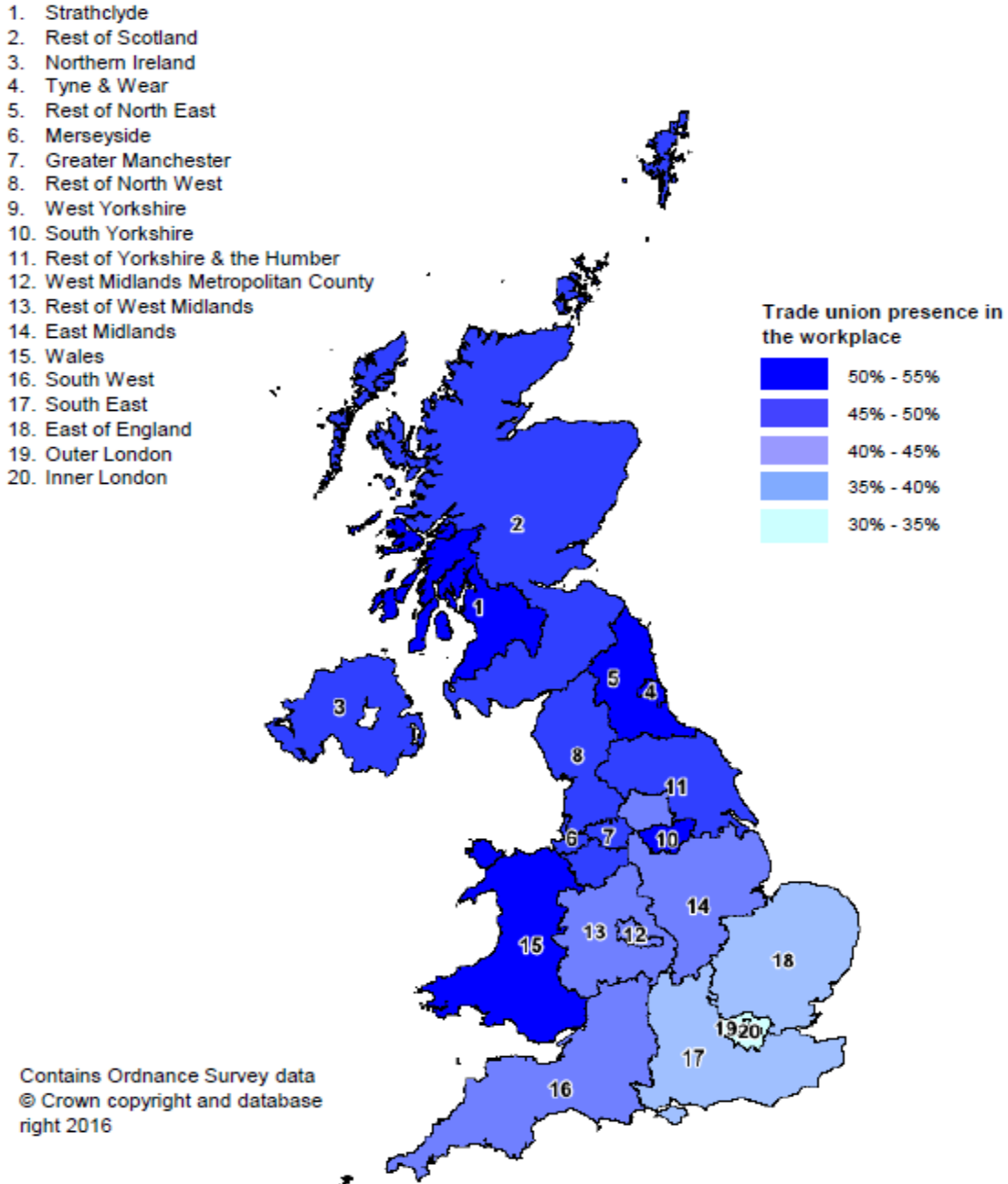
1. Strathclyde
2. Rest of Scotland
3. Northern Ireland
4. Tyne & Wear
5. Rest of North East
6. Merseyside
7. Greater Manchester
8. Rest of North West
9. West Yorkshire
10. South Yorkshire
11. Rest of Yorkshire & the Humber
12. West Midlands Metropolitan County
13. Rest of West Midlands
14. East Midlands
15. Wales
16. South West
17. South East
18. East of England
19. Outer London
20. Inner London



Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

Chart 4.3 shows trade union presence in the workplace for UK employees in 2015. In Wales, 54.5% of employees had a trade union presence in the workplace, which was the highest rate within the UK. Of the English regions, the highest rate was seen in South Yorkshire at 53.5%. The lowest rate observed was in Inner London, where 31.2% of employees had a trade union present at their workplace (Table 4.3).

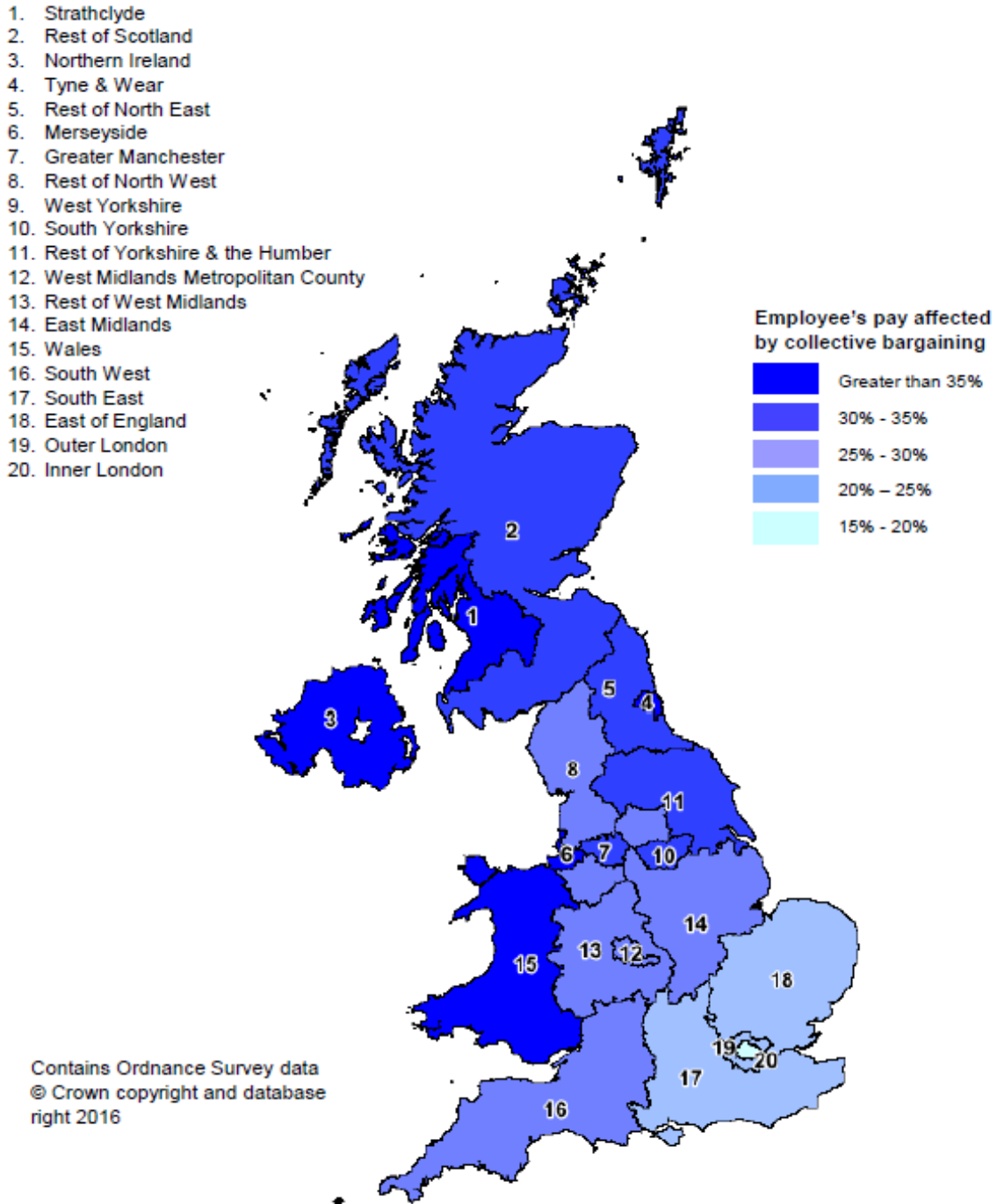
**Chart 4.3: Trade union presence in the workplace by region, 2015**



Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

Chart 4.4 shows trade union collective agreement coverage for UK employees in 2015. This shows that Northern Ireland had the highest proportion of employees covered at 50.1%. Inner London again had the lowest coverage at 17.0% (Table 4.3).

**Chart 4.4: Collective agreement coverage by region, 2015**



Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

# Tables

## 1. Long term and recent trends

**Table 1.1 Trade union membership, UK, 1892 to 2013-14**

Thousands					
Trade union members		Trade union members		Trade union members	
1892	1,576	1934	4,590	1975	11,656
1893	1,559	1935	4,867	1976	12,133
1894	1,530	1936	5,295	1977	12,719
1895	1,504	1937	5,842	1978	13,054
1896	1,608	1938	6,053	1979	13,212
1897	1,731	1939	6,298	1980	12,636
1898	1,752	1940	6,613	1981	12,311
1899	1,911	1941	7,165	1982	11,744
1900	2,022	1942	7,867	1983	11,300
1901	2,025	1943	8,174	1984	10,774
1902	2,013	1944	8,087	1985	10,819
1903	1,994	1945	7,875	1986	10,598
1904	1,967	1946	8,803	1987	10,480
1905	1,997	1947	9,145	1988	10,387
1906	2,210	1948	9,362	1989	10,044
1907	2,513	1949	9,318	1990	9,810
1908	2,485	1950	9,289	1991	9,489
1909	2,477	1951	9,535	1992	8,929
1910	2,565	1952	9,588	1993	8,666
1911	3,139	1953	9,527	1994	8,231
1912	3,416	1954	9,566	1995	8,031
1913	4,135	1955	9,741	1996	7,938
1914	4,145	1956	9,778	1997	7,801
1915	4,359	1957	9,829	1998	7,852
1916	4,644	1958	9,639	1999-2000	7,898
1917	5,499	1959	9,623	2000-2001	7,779
1918	6,533	1960	9,835	2001-2002	7,751
1919	7,926	1961	9,916	2002-2003	7,736
1920	8,348	1962	10,014	2003-2004	7,559
1921	6,633	1963	10,067	2004-2005	7,473
1922	5,625	1964	10,218	2005-2006	7,603
1923	5,429	1965	10,325	2006-2007	7,628
1924	5,544	1966	10,259	2007-2008	7,656
1925	5,506	1967	10,191	2008-2009	7,388
1926	5,219	1968	10,193	2009-2010	7,329
1927	4,919	1969	10,472	2010-2011	7,261
1928	4,806	1970	11,179	2011-2012	7,197
1929	4,858	1971	11,128	2012-2013	7,086
1930	4,842	1972	11,350	2013-2014	7,011
1931	4,624	1973	11,444		
1932	4,444	1974	11,755		
1933	4,392	1974	11,044		

**Table source:** Department of Employment Statistics Division (1892-1974); Certification Office (1974-2015). For more information on this series see the [technical note](#) and the [Certification Office's Annual Reports](#).



Table 1.2a Trade union membership levels, employees, 1989 to 2015

	Thousands			
	United Kingdom			Great Britain
	All employees	Male	Female	All employees
1989	-	-	-	8,700
1990	-	-	-	8,577
1991	-	-	-	8,310
1992	-	-	-	6,980
1993	-	-	-	7,004
1994	-	-	-	7,083
1995	7,113	3,922	3,191	6,895
1996	6,961	3,766	3,195	6,745
1997	6,900	3,723	3,177	6,689
1998	6,932	3,717	3,214	6,695
1999	6,978	3,748	3,231	6,762
2000	7,119	3,752	3,367	6,891
2001	7,044	3,691	3,353	6,800
2002	7,030	3,606	3,423	6,773
2003	7,119	3,611	3,508	6,873
2004	7,080	3,572	3,508	6,834
2005	7,083	3,486	3,597	6,800
2006	7,059	3,445	3,614	6,803
2007	7,051	3,394	3,657	6,792
2008	6,928	3,293	3,636	6,695
2009	6,770	3,134	3,636	6,514
2010	6,589	2,989	3,600	6,362
2011	6,447	2,931	3,516	6,220
2012	6,507	2,951	3,556	6,264
2013	6,490	2,933	3,557	6,253
2014	6,457	2,901	3,557	6,217
2015	6,493	2,900	3,593	6,253

**Table source:** Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

**Table notes:**

1. Membership levels are based on the methodology described in the [technical note](#)
2. There was a small data issue with the LFS questionnaire in Northern Ireland in 1997 causing an undercount of up to 10,000 union members or 0.1 percentage points (see [technical note](#) for an explanation)

Table 1.2b Trade union membership as a proportion of employees, 1989 to 2015

Per cent, not seasonally adjusted

	United Kingdom			Great Britain
	All employees	Male	Female	All employees
1989	-	-	-	38.6
1990	-	-	-	37.8
1991	-	-	-	37.2
1992	-	-	-	36.2
1993	-	-	-	35.3
1994	-	-	-	33.8
1995	32.4	35.0	29.7	32.2
1996	31.4	33.3	29.5	31.2
1997	30.7	32.1	29.3	30.2
1998	29.9	31.2	28.6	29.7
1999	29.7	30.9	28.4	29.5
2000	29.8	30.4	29.1	29.5
2001	29.3	29.9	28.6	29.0
2002	28.8	28.7	29.0	28.5
2003	29.3	29.1	29.6	29.1
2004	28.8	28.5	29.2	28.5
2005	28.6	27.7	29.6	28.3
2006	28.3	27.1	29.6	28.0
2007	28.0	26.5	29.6	27.7
2008	27.5	25.7	29.3	27.3
2009	27.4	25.3	29.6	27.1
2010	26.6	23.9	29.4	26.4
2011	26.0	23.4	28.6	25.8
2012	26.1	23.5	28.7	25.8
2013	25.6	23.0	28.3	25.4
2014	25.0	22.3	27.7	24.7
2015	24.7	21.7	27.7	24.4

**Table source:** Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

**Table notes:**

1. There was a small data issue with the LFS questionnaire in Northern Ireland in 1997 causing an undercount of up to 10,000 union members or 0.1 percentage points (see [technical note](#) for an explanation)

Table 1.3a Trade union membership levels, in employment, 1989 to 2015

	Thousands			
	United Kingdom			Great Britain
	All in employment	Male	Female	All in employment
1989	-	-	-	9,045
1990	-	-	-	8,931
1991	-	-	-	8,686
1992	-	-	-	7,897
1993	-	-	-	7,647
1994	-	-	-	7,405
1995	7,393	4,138	3,255	7,165
1996	7,266	4,004	3,262	7,042
1997	7,185	3,921	3,264	6,972
1998	7,188	3,909	3,279	6,945
1999	7,291	3,973	3,318	7,069
2000	7,408	3,947	3,461	7,175
2001	7,341	3,911	3,430	7,091
2002	7,300	3,789	3,511	7,038
2003	7,447	3,842	3,604	7,205
2004	7,363	3,764	3,599	7,101
2005	7,390	3,719	3,672	7,123
2006	7,390	3,661	3,728	7,123
2007	7,371	3,618	3,753	7,101
2008	7,265	3,534	3,731	7,019
2009	7,103	3,356	3,747	6,828
2010	6,896	3,194	3,702	6,657
2011	6,741	3,120	3,621	6,506
2012	6,811	3,159	3,651	6,557
2013	6,785	3,142	3,643	6,536
2014	6,761	3,094	3,668	6,513
2015	6,809	3,107	3,702	6,567

**Table source:** Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

**Table notes:**

1. Membership levels are based on the methodology described in the [technical note](#)
2. There was a small data issue with the LFS questionnaire in Northern Ireland in 1997 causing an undercount of up to 10,000 union members or 0.1 percentage points (see [technical note](#) for an explanation)

**Table 1.3b Trade union membership as a proportion of those in employment, 1989 to 2015**

Per cent, not seasonally adjusted

	United Kingdom			Great Britain
	All in employment	Male	Female	All in employment
1989	-	-	-	34.1
1990	-	-	-	33.4
1991	-	-	-	33.2
1992	-	-	-	32.4
1993	-	-	-	31.3
1994	-	-	-	30.0
1995	28.8	29.7	27.8	28.7
1996	28.1	28.6	27.6	28.0
1997	27.7	27.8	27.6	27.2
1998	27.1	27.1	27.0	26.8
1999	27.1	27.2	27.0	26.9
2000	27.2	26.8	27.7	27.0
2001	26.7	26.3	27.2	26.5
2002	26.3	25.2	27.6	26.0
2003	26.6	25.4	28.0	26.4
2004	26.0	24.6	27.6	25.8
2005	25.9	24.2	27.9	25.7
2006	25.7	23.6	28.1	25.4
2007	25.3	23.1	27.9	25.1
2008	25.0	22.6	27.7	24.8
2009	24.8	22.1	27.8	24.5
2010	23.9	20.7	27.6	23.7
2011	23.3	20.2	26.7	23.1
2012	23.3	20.3	26.6	23.0
2013	22.8	19.8	26.1	22.5
2014	22.2	19.2	25.6	22.0
2015	21.9	18.8	25.5	21.7

**Table source:** Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

**Table notes:**

1. There was a small data issue with the LFS questionnaire in Northern Ireland in 1997 causing an undercount of up to 10,000 union members or 0.1 percentage points (see [technical note](#) for an explanation)

**Table 1.4 Trade union membership as a proportion of employees, by gender, full/part time and permanent/ temporary status, 2015**

Per cent, not seasonally adjusted

	All	Gender		Full time/ part time		Permanent/temporary	
		Male	Female	Full-time	Part-time	Permanent	Temporary
<b>All employees</b>	24.7	21.7	27.7	26.1	20.8	25.3	15.2
<b>Age bands</b>							
16 to 24	9.0	8.2	9.7	12.0	4.5	9.7	5.1
25 to 34	19.8	17.3	22.4	20.5	16.7	20.0	17.0
35 to 49	27.3	23.3	31.4	27.9	25.4	27.6	20.2
50 plus	32.6	29.7	35.4	34.5	28.2	33.0	23.8
<b>Sector</b>							
Private	13.9	15.2	12.2	15.4	9.6	14.4	6.4
Public	54.8	52.6	56.0	58.3	46.9	56.9	32.0
<b>Occupation <sup>1</sup></b>							
Managers, Directors And Senior Officials	13.0	10.0	18.1	13.3	10.0	13.1	*
Professional Occupations	43.9	28.9	58.3	41.0	56.9	44.1	41.5
Associate Professional And Technical Occupations	23.3	25.0	21.2	24.1	19.0	23.9	11.3
Administrative And Secretarial Occupations	17.6	20.0	16.8	18.7	15.7	18.5	*
Skilled Trades Occupations	18.1	18.5	14.6	19.3	*	18.5	*
Caring, Leisure And Other Service Occupations	27.4	28.5	27.2	29.9	24.2	28.8	13.8
Sales And Customer Service Occupations	15.7	14.7	16.2	18.6	13.1	16.3	*
Process, Plant And Machine Operatives	27.1	28.0	20.0	29.2	9.1	28.4	*
Elementary Occupations	16.5	18.7	13.8	22.8	9.7	18.0	4.5
<b>Industry <sup>2</sup></b>							
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	*	*	*	*	0.0	*	0.0
Mining and quarrying	12.0	13.3	*	12.6	0.0	11.6	*
Manufacturing	16.8	19.1	9.2	17.9	5.3	17.3	*
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	42.3	44.6	35.0	42.4	*	44.0	0.0
Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	33.3	36.7	*	34.8	*	33.8	*
Construction	13.1	14.4	7.3	13.9	*	13.3	*
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	12.7	11.8	13.7	12.9	12.6	13.3	*
Transportation and storage	37.5	39.7	30.2	39.8	24.0	40.1	*
Accommodation and food service activities	3.5	2.2	4.7	4.2	2.9	3.7	*
Information and communication	10.1	10.5	9.1	10.4	*	10.4	*
Financial and insurance activities	14.0	10.1	18.6	13.2	19.0	14.5	0.0
Real estate activities	11.3	12.1	10.7	13.7	*	11.3	*
Professional, scientific and technical activities	8.1	8.4	7.8	8.3	7.0	8.2	*
Administrative and support service activities	10.2	13.0	7.3	11.6	6.7	10.3	*
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	45.7	46.5	44.9	46.4	42.7	46.9	18.7
Education	51.8	53.0	51.4	58.7	39.5	54.1	34.3
Human health and social work activities	40.6	37.4	41.4	44.0	34.3	41.7	24.4
Arts, entertainment and recreation	15.0	17.1	12.6	18.7	9.7	15.4	*
Other service activities	12.1	15.0	10.2	13.5	10.0	12.4	*

**Table source:** Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

**Table notes:**

1. Based on Standard Occupational Classification 2010.
2. Based on Standard Industrial Classification 2007.

**Table 1.5 Trade union membership as a proportion of employees by personal, work and job characteristics, 2015**

	Per cent, not seasonally adjusted				
	All	Gender		Full-time / part-time	
		Male	Female	Full-time	Part-time
<b>All employees</b>	24.7	21.7	27.7	26.1	20.8
<b>Ethnicity</b>					
White	25.3	22.2	28.4	26.5	21.8
Mixed	18.8	16.8	20.6	21.9	*
Asian or Asian British	18.8	15.1	23.6	21.5	11.3
Black or Black British	24.4	25.1	23.8	29.1	13.5
Chinese or other ethnic group	16.1	17.2	14.8	17.1	13.5
<b>Nationality</b>					
UK, British	26.0	22.9	29.2	27.6	21.7
Other	12.7	11.6	13.8	13.4	10.3
<b>Country of Birth</b>					
UK	26.2	23.0	29.5	27.8	22.1
Other	16.6	15.1	18.2	17.9	12.6
<b>Disability</b>					
Has a disability	29.2	26.3	31.5	31.2	25.6
Doesn't have a disability	24.0	21.1	27.0	25.5	19.8
<b>Highest qualification</b>					
Degree or equivalent	31.0	23.4	38.3	30.1	34.6
Other higher education	31.2	23.5	37.7	30.8	32.1
A-level or equivalent	20.2	21.4	18.7	22.7	14.0
GCSE grades A-C or equivalent	20.1	20.0	20.1	22.7	15.0
Other qualifications	19.5	20.1	18.6	22.4	12.3
No qualification	18.1	20.4	15.6	21.3	12.8
<b>Dependent children</b>					
No dependent children	25.3	22.2	28.6	26.2	22.0
Dependent child under six	21.7	18.8	24.9	22.1	20.8
Dependent child six or over	24.6	21.9	27.1	27.6	19.3
<b>Workplace size</b>					
Less than 50	15.8	12.3	19.0	17.3	13.0
50 or more	32.7	29.4	36.3	32.7	32.7
<b>Managerial status</b>					
Manager	24.6	18.8	32.8	24.3	27.4
Foreman or supervisor	32.7	27.1	38.7	31.6	37.4
Not manager or supervisor	23.4	22.1	24.4	25.9	18.5
<b>Flexible working hours</b>					
Flexible working hours	29.6	25.8	33.1	30.6	26.5
Not flexible working hours	35.4	30.9	38.2	41.8	26.2
<b>Length of service</b>					
Less than 1 year	10.6	9.2	11.9	12.3	7.3
Between 1 and 2 years	14.8	12.9	16.6	16.7	10.1
Between 2 and 5 years	16.8	14.5	19.3	17.8	13.8
Between 5 and 10 years	26.1	22.6	29.6	26.5	24.7
Between 10 and 20 years	36.4	31.4	41.0	36.8	35.1
20 years or more	47.7	43.3	52.7	48.4	45.1
<b>Permanent or temporary status</b>					
Permanent	25.3	22.4	28.4	26.6	21.6
Temporary	15.2	11.2	18.6	16.1	14.4
<b>Weekly earnings in main job</b>					
Less than £250	13.1	8.1	15.0	14.3	12.7
£250 to £499	25.8	21.6	29.7	22.8	42.2
£500 to £999	36.6	32.0	43.9	36.2	44.8
£1000 and above	20.1	19.0	23.6	19.6	*

Table source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

**Table 1.6 Trade union membership as a proportion of employees, by age group and gender, 1995 to 2015**

	Per cent, not seasonally adjusted											
	1995	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>All employees</b>	<b>32.4</b>	<b>28.6</b>	<b>28.3</b>	<b>28.0</b>	<b>27.5</b>	<b>27.4</b>	<b>26.6</b>	<b>26.0</b>	<b>26.1</b>	<b>25.6</b>	<b>25.0</b>	<b>24.7</b>
16 to 19	6.4	3.3	5.2	3.8	4.4	4.1	3.9	3.1	2.9	3.0	2.9	2.4
20 to 24	19.3	13.2	13.1	13.0	12.1	11.7	12.1	11.2	10.2	9.4	11.0	11.6
25 to 29	28.4	21.9	21.9	19.5	20.2	20.9	19.5	18.2	18.9	19.3	17.2	17.7
30 to 34	33.2	27.0	24.8	25.1	24.9	24.1	22.6	24.1	24.0	22.9	21.3	21.9
35 to 39	37.1	29.4	29.0	30.1	27.5	27.6	27.0	26.8	27.1	25.8	24.3	25.2
40 to 44	39.7	35.0	35.2	33.5	33.3	30.6	31.2	29.5	29.1	29.3	27.7	26.1
45 to 49	41.2	37.6	37.7	37.0	35.4	36.2	34.1	33.7	32.8	32.4	33.4	30.3
50 to 54	39.6	40.6	39.9	39.0	38.4	37.6	37.6	36.2	36.5	35.1	34.6	36.0
55 to 59	38.6	37.5	36.5	38.6	38.2	38.9	37.1	35.4	36.0	36.6	35.1	34.0
60 to 64	30.2	27.5	28.4	30.1	29.0	30.3	28.2	29.1	29.8	28.8	29.9	30.0
65 to 69	*	15.6	15.3	12.9	19.1	16.3	13.6	14.2	17.0	20.7	20.4	20.1
Over 70	*	*	*	9.3	*	12.7	7.2	13.4	12.5	10.0	10.2	12.2
<b>Male</b>	<b>35.0</b>	<b>27.7</b>	<b>27.1</b>	<b>26.5</b>	<b>25.7</b>	<b>25.3</b>	<b>23.9</b>	<b>23.4</b>	<b>23.5</b>	<b>23.0</b>	<b>22.3</b>	<b>21.7</b>
16 to 19	6.8	4.0	7.0	4.7	5.4	5.4	4.7	4.8	4.2	3.9	3.4	2.9
20 to 24	20.1	13.0	13.3	11.8	12.9	12.2	11.0	11.2	11.2	8.9	10.4	10.2
25 to 29	28.0	18.9	20.1	16.9	17.0	17.6	16.9	14.9	14.7	16.3	14.3	14.9
30 to 34	34.3	23.4	21.3	21.6	21.8	20.0	18.2	20.3	20.1	19.0	17.3	19.8
35 to 39	39.5	28.2	27.5	28.6	24.3	24.2	24.1	21.7	22.6	22.0	21.2	21.1
40 to 44	45.9	33.8	33.8	31.2	31.2	28.1	27.1	26.6	25.8	25.4	24.5	22.4
45 to 49	45.9	37.7	36.1	35.8	33.1	34.2	31.1	31.9	29.8	29.0	30.0	26.2
50 to 54	45.1	41.7	39.1	37.8	36.4	35.8	34.9	33.7	34.9	33.3	31.5	32.5
55 to 59	42.4	38.4	36.1	39.5	38.6	37.2	35.6	32.6	32.9	35.2	33.4	30.3
60 to 64	32.8	27.8	29.0	31.0	30.7	30.7	28.1	28.1	29.2	27.8	28.8	29.2
65 to 69	*	14.5	15.2	9.6	17.0	12.9	10.5	13.5	15.3	18.7	19.3	20.3
Over 70	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	17.8	17.9	*	*	12.4
<b>Female</b>	<b>29.7</b>	<b>29.6</b>	<b>29.6</b>	<b>29.6</b>	<b>29.3</b>	<b>29.6</b>	<b>29.4</b>	<b>28.6</b>	<b>28.7</b>	<b>28.3</b>	<b>27.7</b>	<b>27.7</b>
16 to 19	6.0	2.7	3.5	3.1	3.3	3.1	3.3	*	*	*	2.4	*
20 to 24	18.4	13.3	12.9	14.2	11.3	11.2	13.2	11.2	9.2	9.9	11.6	13.0
25 to 29	28.7	25.1	23.9	22.5	23.7	24.4	22.3	21.8	23.3	22.6	20.5	20.6
30 to 34	32.0	31.1	28.6	29.0	28.2	28.5	27.5	28.1	28.3	27.1	25.5	24.2
35 to 39	34.6	30.5	30.6	31.7	30.8	31.2	30.1	32.2	31.9	30.1	27.6	29.6
40 to 44	33.6	36.2	36.7	35.7	35.4	33.0	35.2	32.5	32.4	33.1	30.8	30.0
45 to 49	36.8	37.6	39.3	38.1	37.5	37.9	37.0	35.4	35.6	35.5	36.7	34.1
50 to 54	34.3	39.7	40.7	40.2	40.2	39.2	40.0	38.5	38.0	36.8	37.5	39.2
55 to 59	34.8	36.7	36.8	37.7	37.9	40.5	38.5	38.0	39.0	38.0	36.8	37.6
60 to 64	26.1	27.1	27.6	28.7	26.7	29.6	28.3	30.4	30.6	30.0	31.1	30.9
65 to 69	*	16.8	15.5	16.9	21.8	19.9	16.8	15.0	19.0	22.8	21.6	19.8
Over 70	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	14.4	*

Table source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

**Table 1.7a Trade union membership as a proportion of employees by major occupation group and gender, 2005 to 2010**

	Per cent, not seasonally adjusted					
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
<b>All employees</b>	28.6	28.3	28.0	27.5	27.4	26.6
Managers and Senior Officials	18.7	16.8	17.4	17.1	16.5	15.2
Professional occupations	48.3	46.8	47.0	44.3	44.8	43.6
Associate Professional and Technical	41.5	42.7	41.5	39.7	40.3	40.2
Administrative and Secretarial	24.1	23.6	22.8	23.1	22.6	21.1
Skilled Trades Occupations	24.2	23.8	24.7	23.4	22.3	22.0
Personal Service Occupations	29.9	30.4	30.4	30.6	30.9	30.7
Sales and Customer Service Occupations	11.6	12.7	12.2	13.3	13.2	13.0
Process, Plant and Machine Operatives	34.3	33.4	29.9	32.0	30.9	28.8
Elementary Occupations	20.5	20.5	20.4	19.3	19.2	18.3
<b>Male</b>	27.7	27.1	26.5	25.7	25.3	23.9
Managers and Senior Officials	16.7	15.1	15.9	15.2	15.0	12.6
Professional occupations	38.0	36.0	37.2	32.8	33.6	31.5
Associate Professional and Technical	35.7	37.0	35.6	34.3	33.6	34.5
Administrative and Secretarial	30.8	28.8	28.1	29.9	27.6	24.6
Skilled Trades Occupations	24.1	24.5	25.5	24.0	22.7	22.2
Personal Service Occupations	38.6	36.9	33.9	32.3	30.9	29.6
Sales and Customer Service Occupations	8.8	11.8	9.1	12.4	11.7	11.9
Process, Plant and Machine Operatives	35.7	34.6	31.0	33.0	32.3	30.6
Elementary Occupations	24.2	24.3	22.8	22.1	22.4	20.8
<b>Female</b>	29.6	29.6	29.6	29.3	29.6	29.4
Managers and Senior Officials	22.3	20.1	20.1	20.8	19.1	19.8
Professional occupations	60.7	59.8	58.9	57.8	58.1	57.3
Associate Professional and Technical	46.7	47.7	46.6	44.6	46.0	45.1
Administrative and Secretarial	22.3	22.2	21.4	21.3	21.2	20.0
Skilled Trades Occupations	25.9	16.8	16.6	16.5	17.9	19.4
Personal Service Occupations	28.4	29.2	29.7	30.3	30.9	31.0
Sales and Customer Service Occupations	12.8	13.2	13.7	13.7	13.8	13.5
Process, Plant and Machine Operatives	25.7	26.3	22.7	25.0	21.1	16.2
Elementary Occupations	16.2	16.0	17.4	15.9	15.5	15.4

**Table source:** Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

**Table notes:**

1. Based on Standard Occupational Classification 2000, figures for 2011 to 2014, using SOC 2010, are shown in [table 1.7b](#)



**Table 1.7b Trade union membership as a proportion of employees, by major occupation group and gender, 2011 to 2015**

Per cent, not seasonally adjusted

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>All employees</b>	<b>26.0</b>	<b>26.1</b>	<b>25.6</b>	<b>25.0</b>	<b>24.7</b>
Managers, Directors And Senior Officials	13.8	14.8	14.3	14.1	13.0
Professional Occupations	45.5	45.5	45.0	43.7	43.9
Associate Professional And Technical	25.8	25.5	24.4	23.5	23.3
Administrative And Secretarial Occupations	21.2	20.4	20.3	20.1	17.6
Skilled Trades Occupations	20.1	19.9	21.3	19.0	18.1
Caring, Leisure And Other Service Occupations	28.0	27.7	26.0	27.3	27.4
Sales And Customer Service Occupations	15.4	15.4	14.5	15.1	15.7
Process, Plant And Machine Operatives	28.6	30.1	28.0	26.9	27.1
Elementary Occupations	16.7	16.9	16.5	15.9	16.5
<b>Male</b>	<b>23.4</b>	<b>23.5</b>	<b>23.0</b>	<b>22.3</b>	<b>21.7</b>
Managers, Directors And Senior Officials	11.6	12.0	12.4	12.4	10.0
Professional Occupations	30.4	30.7	29.7	29.8	28.9
Associate Professional And Technical	26.4	25.8	25.1	24.5	25.0
Administrative And Secretarial Occupations	23.6	20.7	24.2	22.6	20.0
Skilled Trades Occupations	21.0	20.3	21.8	19.0	18.5
Caring, Leisure And Other Service Occupations	33.4	26.8	26.3	25.6	28.5
Sales And Customer Service Occupations	13.9	15.6	12.7	14.8	14.7
Process, Plant And Machine Operatives	30.7	32.2	29.3	28.2	28.0
Elementary Occupations	18.4	20.6	20.1	18.3	18.7
<b>Female</b>	<b>28.6</b>	<b>28.7</b>	<b>28.3</b>	<b>27.7</b>	<b>27.7</b>
Managers, Directors And Senior Officials	18.1	20.1	18.5	17.4	18.1
Professional Occupations	60.4	59.9	59.2	57.1	58.3
Associate Professional And Technical	25.0	25.1	23.5	22.1	21.2
Administrative And Secretarial Occupations	20.5	20.2	19.2	19.4	16.8
Skilled Trades Occupations	12.5	16.6	16.7	18.6	14.6
Caring, Leisure And Other Service Occupations	26.8	27.8	26.0	27.7	27.2
Sales And Customer Service Occupations	16.3	15.4	15.5	15.3	16.2
Process, Plant And Machine Operatives	14.1	16.1	19.3	17.1	20.0
Elementary Occupations	14.7	12.7	12.3	13.3	13.8

**Table source:** Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

**Table notes:**

1. Year on year changes are subject to rounding error
2. Based on Standard Occupational Classification 2010. Figures for 2005 to 2010, using Standard Occupational Classification 2000, are shown in [table 1.7a](#)

**Table 1.8 Trade union membership as a proportion of employees, by industry and gender, 1995 to 2015**

	Per cent, not seasonally adjusted								
	1995	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>All employees</b>	<b>32.4</b>	<b>27.5</b>	<b>27.4</b>	<b>26.6</b>	<b>26.0</b>	<b>26.1</b>	<b>25.6</b>	<b>25.0</b>	<b>24.7</b>
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	8.0	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Mining and quarrying	35.5	18.5	18.0	20.9	23.5	18.9	20.8	18.4	12.0
Manufacturing	32.8	20.7	21.3	19.8	18.7	18.7	18.3	17.9	16.8
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	71.9	45.8	47.4	43.6	43.2	43.4	49.0	40.2	42.3
Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	57.5	33.2	35.1	32.9	28.7	35.0	33.2	28.6	33.3
Construction	30.4	17.0	14.7	14.7	14.8	15.8	14.2	13.8	13.1
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	11.0	11.9	12.4	11.8	11.8	12.7	12.2	11.9	12.7
Transportation and storage	50.7	42.6	43.6	42.1	38.9	40.0	40.2	37.4	37.5
Accommodation and food service activities	7.9	5.4	3.9	3.8	3.6	3.5	4.2	3.5	3.5
Information and communication	25.5	14.6	13.0	12.8	11.7	12.7	11.3	11.4	10.1
Financial and insurance activities	37.3	21.0	20.3	17.4	16.9	16.0	16.8	16.9	14.0
Real estate activities	*	6.9	17.6	14.2	12.9	11.9	9.5	9.0	11.3
Professional, scientific and technical activities	9.4	8.7	10.9	8.9	9.3	8.8	8.0	9.3	8.1
Administrative and support service activities	12.4	9.5	12.2	12.4	11.7	11.1	11.6	12.0	10.2
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	59.1	55.8	52.4	51.7	53.4	52.4	50.2	49.8	45.7
Education	55.6	54.2	53.1	52.4	51.6	52.1	51.8	50.3	51.8
Human health and social work activities	48.3	41.0	42.0	41.4	41.5	41.0	39.9	39.9	40.6
Arts, entertainment and recreation	27.3	22.7	18.9	18.7	16.7	14.8	17.8	15.6	15.0
Other service activities	12.8	11.0	11.3	11.6	10.8	10.2	13.5	11.4	12.1
<b>Male</b>	<b>35.0</b>	<b>25.7</b>	<b>25.3</b>	<b>23.9</b>	<b>23.4</b>	<b>23.5</b>	<b>23.0</b>	<b>22.3</b>	<b>21.7</b>
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Mining and quarrying	38.7	19.7	19.7	22.0	27.2	23.2	23.2	21.2	13.3
Manufacturing	36.6	23.7	24.7	22.5	21.5	21.8	20.8	20.4	19.1
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	78.2	48.2	51.4	45.4	47.9	48.0	54.4	44.2	44.6
Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	67.0	35.1	37.1	34.3	30.1	39.1	36.0	33.4	36.7
Construction	32.0	16.7	15.0	15.7	16.0	16.3	15.0	15.0	14.4
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	9.5	11.4	12.6	11.1	11.2	11.1	11.5	11.3	11.8
Transportation and storage	55.3	45.8	45.2	45.7	41.8	42.1	42.5	39.5	39.7
Accommodation and food service activities	7.2	5.5	3.1	2.5	3.0	3.2	4.5	3.2	2.2
Information and communication	29.1	15.6	13.7	13.3	12.8	13.1	10.9	10.4	10.5
Financial and insurance activities	35.0	15.8	15.0	13.2	12.3	11.1	13.2	13.1	10.1
Real estate activities	*	*	23.0	12.7	16.3	11.1	*	11.5	12.1
Professional, scientific and technical activities	14.1	9.7	12.6	10.4	10.6	10.3	8.6	9.7	8.4
Administrative and support service activities	14.6	9.8	14.3	12.3	12.0	11.9	13.5	11.6	13.0
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	63.7	59.1	54.1	53.9	54.3	54.3	52.1	50.9	46.5
Education	67.6	54.9	51.8	51.1	50.9	50.8	52.1	50.1	53.0
Human health and social work activities	53.6	41.2	42.7	40.0	43.0	41.0	37.2	39.5	37.4
Arts, entertainment and recreation	28.6	25.2	20.6	21.4	17.8	15.0	18.9	18.7	17.1
Other service activities	16.1	14.7	11.1	13.5	11.7	11.8	16.5	14.5	15.0

	Per cent, not seasonally adjusted								
	1995	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>Female</b>	<b>29.7</b>	<b>29.3</b>	<b>29.6</b>	<b>29.4</b>	<b>28.6</b>	<b>28.7</b>	<b>28.3</b>	<b>27.7</b>	<b>27.7</b>
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Mining and quarrying	*	*	*	*	*	0.0	*	*	*
Manufacturing	22.6	12.0	10.7	11.3	9.8	9.2	10.7	10.6	9.2
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	*	37.6	36.1	37.4	31.6	31.5	33.8	29.4	35.0
Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Construction	24.2	18.5	13.3	9.5	8.9	13.3	10.3	7.7	7.3
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	12.3	12.4	12.2	12.6	12.5	14.2	13.0	12.5	13.7
Transportation and storage	32.9	32.4	38.0	30.5	28.3	32.3	31.6	31.3	30.2
Accommodation and food service activities	8.3	5.2	4.6	4.9	4.1	3.8	3.9	3.7	4.7
Information and communication	19.0	12.3	11.4	11.5	9.0	11.5	12.3	14.0	9.1
Financial and insurance activities	39.3	25.8	25.5	22.3	21.8	21.4	21.3	21.3	18.6
Real estate activities	*	*	13.5	15.1	*	12.5	9.9	*	10.7
Professional, scientific and technical activities	5.2	7.7	8.9	7.1	7.7	7.0	7.3	8.7	7.8
Administrative and support service activities	10.3	9.1	10.1	12.4	11.5	10.2	9.3	12.4	7.3
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	54.2	52.9	50.8	49.6	52.6	50.5	48.5	48.7	44.9
Education	50.5	53.9	53.5	52.9	51.8	52.6	51.7	50.3	51.4
Human health and social work activities	47.3	40.9	41.8	41.8	41.0	41.0	40.6	40.0	41.4
Arts, entertainment and recreation	26.1	20.0	17.2	16.1	15.5	14.6	16.6	12.2	12.6
Other service activities	11.0	9.0	11.5	10.3	10.2	8.9	11.0	9.2	10.2

**Table source:** Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

**Table notes:**

1. Based on Standard Industrial Classification 2007
2. Trade union membership levels by industry are presented in [table 2.5](#)

**Table 1.9 Average hourly earnings by union status, 2015**

	£s, Not seasonally adjusted			Per cent, not
	All employees	Trade union membership		seasonally adjusted
		Member	Non Member	Trade Union Wage Premium (%)
<b>All employees</b>	13.49	14.87	13.04	14.1%
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	14.80	15.67	14.57	7.6%
Female	12.13	14.18	11.38	24.6%
<b>Age bands</b>				
16 to 24	7.77	10.67	7.48	42.7%
25 to 34	12.69	13.94	12.37	12.8%
35 to 49	15.48	15.30	15.54	-1.6%
50 plus	14.67	15.46	14.28	8.2%
<b>Occupation <sup>1</sup></b>				
Managers, Directors And Senior Officials	20.67	21.07	20.58	2.4%
Professional Occupations	19.70	18.75	20.47	-8.4%
Associate Professional And Technical Occupations	16.50	15.99	16.70	-4.3%
Administrative And Secretarial Occupations	10.98	11.40	10.87	4.8%
Skilled Trades Occupations	10.81	13.90	10.15	37.0%
Caring, Leisure And Other Service Occupations	8.54	9.68	8.07	19.9%
Sales And Customer Service Occupations	8.11	9.33	7.91	17.9%
Process, Plant And Machine Operatives	10.09	12.20	9.39	29.9%
Elementary Occupations	7.82	9.34	7.50	24.6%
<b>Industry <sup>2</sup></b>				
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	9.62	*	9.04	*
Mining and quarrying	23.59	*	23.58	*
Manufacturing	14.09	14.66	14.03	4.5%
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	15.45	15.69	15.26	2.9%
Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	13.66	14.26	13.32	7.1%
Construction	13.56	14.25	13.47	5.8%
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	9.57	9.70	9.53	1.7%
Transportation and storage	12.06	13.46	11.24	19.7%
Accommodation and food service activities	7.92	7.41	7.95	-6.8%
Information and communication	20.36	17.85	20.81	-14.3%
Financial and insurance activities	20.94	16.18	21.87	-26.0%
Real estate activities	14.46	*	14.60	*
Professional, scientific and technical activities	18.57	20.32	18.39	10.5%
Administrative and support service activities	11.64	11.11	11.75	-5.5%
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	15.74	15.81	15.71	0.6%
Education	13.93	15.58	12.16	28.1%
Human health and social work activities	12.80	15.45	11.02	40.3%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	11.65	14.48	11.11	30.3%
Other service activities	10.68	15.23	9.97	52.7%

**Table source:** Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

**Table notes:**

1. Based on Standard Occupational Classification 2010.
2. Based on Standard Industrial Classification 2007.

**Table 1.10 Trade union presence and collective agreement coverage<sup>2</sup>, 2015**

	Per cent, not seasonally adjusted		
	Union density	Trade unions present in workplace	Employee's pay affected by collective agreement
<b>All employees</b>	24.7	42.7	27.9
<b>Sector</b>			
Private	13.9	28.0	16.1
Public	54.8	84.0	60.7
<b>Workplace size</b>			
Less than 50	15.8	25.4	16.0
50 or more	32.7	58.5	38.7
<b>Industry<sup>1</sup></b>			
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	*	10.2	*
Mining and quarrying	12.0	30.0	15.9
Manufacturing	16.8	36.4	21.2
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	42.3	70.3	50.3
Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	33.3	52.2	40.5
Construction	13.1	26.2	15.2
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	12.7	27.6	15.6
Transportation and storage	37.5	56.9	46.2
Accommodation and food service activities	3.5	8.4	5.4
Information and communication	10.1	21.7	12.6
Financial and insurance activities	14.0	36.7	23.2
Real estate activities	11.3	25.1	14.2
Professional, scientific and technical activities	8.1	18.5	9.2
Administrative and support service activities	10.2	22.0	13.0
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	45.7	77.8	61.3
Education	51.8	79.5	52.1
Human health and social work activities	40.6	60.2	37.3
Arts, entertainment and recreation	15.0	29.2	20.3
Other service activities	12.1	20.1	12.6
<b>Nation</b>			
England	23.0	41.2	25.9
Wales	35.2	54.5	36.8
Scotland	32.0	50.6	35.1
Northern Ireland	34.3	45.6	50.1
<b>Region</b>			
North East	30.1	51.8	32.9
North West	27.9	46.6	31.3
Yorkshire and the Humber	27.2	47.2	30.2
East Midlands	23.1	42.0	27.7
West Midlands	25.2	43.1	28.2
East of England	20.0	38.4	22.9
London	18.1	32.7	19.2
South East	20.8	37.3	23.0
South West	22.2	43.6	26.5

**Table source:** Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

**Table notes:**

1. Based on Standard Industrial Classification 2007.
2. Collective agreement coverage is defined as the proportion of employees whose pay and conditions are agreed in negotiations between the employer and a trade union

**Table 1.11 Collective agreement coverage<sup>2</sup> by full/ part time and permanent/ temporary status, 2015**

	Per cent, not seasonally adjusted				
	All employees	Full time/ part time		Permanent/temporary	
		Full-time	Part-time	Permanent	Temporary
<b>All employees</b>	27.9	29.0	24.7	28.1	24.8
<b>Gender</b>					
Male	25.9	26.7	19.6	26.1	22.5
Female	30.0	32.6	26.2	30.2	26.8
<b>Union membership</b>					
Member	67.4	68.8	62.6	67.7	59.5
Non-member	14.2	14.2	14.0	13.9	17.7
<b>Sector</b>					
Private	16.1	17.3	12.6	16.3	11.8
Public	60.7	63.8	53.3	61.7	49.3
<b>Workplace size</b>					
Less than 50	16.0	17.0	13.9	16.1	14.5
50 or more	38.7	38.0	41.5	38.9	35.1
<b>Industry<sup>1</sup></b>					
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	*	*	*	*	0.0
Mining and quarrying	15.9	16.6	0.0	16.1	0.0
Manufacturing	21.2	22.4	8.8	21.3	18.4
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning	50.3	50.3	*	50.4	*
Water supply, sewerage, waste	40.5	42.8	*	41.2	*
Construction	15.2	15.5	12.4	15.5	*
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor	15.6	13.4	18.9	15.8	11.3
Transportation and storage	46.2	47.9	35.7	48.2	*
Accommodation and food service	5.4	6.5	4.2	5.6	*
Information and communication	12.6	12.8	*	12.5	*
Financial and insurance activities	23.2	22.3	28.8	23.1	*
Real estate activities	14.2	17.0	*	14.5	*
Professional, scientific and technical	9.2	9.4	8.4	9.0	*
Administrative and support service	13.0	13.4	11.8	13.1	*
Public administration and defence;	61.3	62.0	58.7	61.8	50.0
Education	52.1	56.9	42.8	52.8	46.1
Human health and social work activities	37.3	39.9	32.5	37.8	31.1
Arts, entertainment and recreation	20.3	23.3	15.4	20.7	*
Other service activities	12.6	14.0	10.4	12.9	*

**Table source:** Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

**Table notes:**

1. Based on Standard Industrial Classification 2007.
2. Collective agreement coverage is defined as the proportion of employees whose pay and conditions are agreed in negotiations between the employer and a trade union

## 2. Private and Public Sectors

**Table 2.1a Trade union membership levels by sector and gender, 1995 to 2015**

	Thousands					
	Private Sector			Public Sector		
	All employees	Male	Female	All employees	Male	Female
1995	3,391	2,317	1,074	3,722	1,605	2,117
1996	3,297	2,237	1,061	3,664	1,529	2,135
1997	3,265	2,245	1,020	3,635	1,477	2,158
1998	3,352	2,254	1,099	3,579	1,464	2,115
1999	3,311	2,269	1,042	3,667	1,479	2,188
2000	3,308	2,239	1,069	3,810	1,512	2,298
2001	3,276	2,218	1,058	3,767	1,472	2,295
2002	3,193	2,165	1,028	3,837	1,441	2,395
2003	3,216	2,128	1,089	3,903	1,483	2,420
2004	3,063	2,099	964	4,017	1,473	2,544
2005	3,008	1,986	1,022	4,075	1,499	2,576
2006	2,984	1,982	1,002	4,075	1,463	2,612
2007	2,933	1,936	997	4,118	1,459	2,660
2008	2,805	1,823	982	4,124	1,470	2,654
2009	2,628	1,693	935	4,143	1,442	2,701
2010	2,486	1,591	895	4,103	1,397	2,706
2011	2,525	1,623	901	3,923	1,308	2,615
2012	2,589	1,627	962	3,918	1,325	2,594
2013	2,645	1,678	966	3,845	1,255	2,590
2014	2,686	1,663	1,023	3,772	1,238	2,534
2015	2,692	1,676	1,016	3,801	1,224	2,577

**Table source:** Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

**Table notes:**

1. Year on year changes are subject to rounding error
2. Membership levels are based on the methodology described in the [technical note](#)
3. There was a small data issue with the LFS questionnaire in Northern Ireland in 1997 causing an undercount of up to 10,000 union members or 0.1 percentage points (see [technical note](#) for an explanation)

Table 2.1b Trade union non-membership levels by sector and gender, 1995 to 2015

	Thousands					
	Private Sector			Public Sector		
	All employees	Male	Female	All employees	Male	Female
1995	12,466	6,535	5,932	2,349	757	1,591
1996	12,893	6,857	6,035	2,384	737	1,647
1997	13,426	7,257	6,169	2,484	780	1,704
1998	14,037	7,557	6,480	2,363	740	1,623
1999	14,251	7,720	6,531	2,470	761	1,708
2000	14,390	7,845	6,546	2,517	794	1,722
2001	14,604	7,988	6,617	2,559	754	1,805
2002	14,890	8,191	6,699	2,594	829	1,765
2003	14,583	8,002	6,581	2,676	818	1,859
2004	14,842	8,151	6,691	2,840	910	1,929
2005	14,892	8,224	6,668	2,945	980	1,965
2006	15,211	8,443	6,767	2,884	942	1,941
2007	15,515	8,651	6,863	2,880	926	1,954
2008	15,396	8,582	6,814	3,114	1,036	2,078
2009	14,964	8,232	6,732	3,192	1,130	2,063
2010	15,249	8,527	6,722	3,198	1,147	2,051
2011	15,492	8,599	6,893	3,019	1,049	1,970
2012	15,732	8,757	6,975	3,060	1,050	2,011
2013	15,980	8,915	7,065	3,106	1,049	2,057
2014	16,508	9,183	7,325	3,199	1,122	2,077
2015	16,978	9,494	7,484	3,155	1,114	2,040

**Table source:** Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

**Table notes:**

1. Year on year changes are subject to rounding error
2. Membership levels are based on the methodology described in the [technical note](#)
3. There was a small data issue with the LFS questionnaire in Northern Ireland in 1997 causing an undercount of up to 10,000 union members or 0.1 percentage points (see [technical note](#) for an explanation)



**Table 2.2 Trade union membership as a proportion of employees, by sector and gender, 1995 to 2015**

Per cent, not seasonally adjusted

	All employees			Private Sector			Public Sector		
	All employees	Male	Female	All employees	Male	Female	All employees	Male	Female
1995	32.4	35.0	29.7	21.4	26.3	15.3	61.3	68.0	57.0
1996	31.4	33.3	29.5	20.5	24.8	15.1	60.7	67.7	56.6
1997	30.7	32.1	29.3	19.8	23.8	14.5	61.2	68.0	57.3
1998	29.9	31.2	28.6	19.5	23.2	14.7	60.4	66.6	56.8
1999	29.7	30.9	28.4	19.0	22.9	13.9	59.9	66.3	56.3
2000	29.8	30.4	29.1	18.8	22.3	14.1	60.3	65.7	57.3
2001	29.3	29.9	28.6	18.4	21.9	13.9	59.7	66.3	56.2
2002	28.8	28.7	29.0	17.8	21.0	13.4	59.8	63.7	57.7
2003	29.3	29.1	29.6	18.2	21.1	14.4	59.4	64.5	56.7
2004	28.8	28.5	29.2	17.3	20.7	12.8	58.8	62.0	57.1
2005	28.6	27.7	29.6	16.9	19.6	13.4	58.2	60.6	56.9
2006	28.3	27.1	29.6	16.6	19.2	13.1	58.7	61.1	57.5
2007	28.0	26.5	29.6	16.1	18.6	12.9	59.0	61.4	57.8
2008	27.5	25.7	29.3	15.6	17.7	12.7	57.2	58.9	56.3
2009	27.4	25.3	29.6	15.1	17.3	12.4	56.7	56.3	56.9
2010	26.6	23.9	29.4	14.2	16.0	11.9	56.4	55.0	57.1
2011	26.0	23.4	28.6	14.2	16.0	11.7	56.6	55.5	57.2
2012	26.1	23.5	28.7	14.4	16.0	12.4	56.4	56.1	56.5
2013	25.6	23.0	28.3	14.4	16.1	12.2	55.5	54.8	55.9
2014	25.0	22.3	27.7	14.2	15.6	12.5	54.3	52.8	55.1
2015	24.7	21.7	27.7	13.9	15.2	12.2	54.8	52.6	56.0

**Table source:** Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

**Table notes:**

1. There was a small data issue with the LFS questionnaire in Northern Ireland in 1997 causing an undercount of up to 10,000 union members or 0.1 percentage points (see [technical note](#) for an explanation)

Table 2.3 Average hourly earnings by union status and sector, 1995 to 2015

	£s, Not seasonally adjusted			Per cent, not
	All employees	Trade union membership		seasonally adjusted
		Member	Non Member	Trade Union Wage Premium (%)
<b>All employees</b>				
1995	7.11	8.27	6.57	25.9
2004	10.23	11.38	9.75	16.7
2005	10.74	11.94	10.28	16.1
2006	11.15	12.40	10.65	16.4
2007	11.51	12.74	11.02	15.6
2008	12.02	13.07	11.62	12.5
2009	12.35	13.63	11.88	14.7
2010	12.55	14.05	12.02	16.9
2011	12.59	14.19	11.99	18.3
2012	12.92	14.41	12.43	15.9
2013	12.95	14.48	12.42	16.6
2014	13.20	14.78	12.67	16.7
2015	13.49	14.87	13.04	14.1
Change from 1995	6.38	6.60	6.47	-
Change from 2014	0.28	0.09	0.37	-
Per cent change from 2014	2.12%	0.62%	2.89%	-
<b>Private Sector</b>				
1995	6.72	7.52	6.52	15.3
2004	9.81	10.33	9.74	6.1
2005	10.33	10.88	10.24	6.3
2006	10.83	11.62	10.66	9.0
2007	11.16	11.86	11.03	7.5
2008	11.62	11.86	11.58	2.4
2009	11.93	12.43	11.84	5.0
2010	12.04	12.65	11.95	5.9
2011	12.01	12.83	11.86	8.2
2012	12.40	13.06	12.31	6.1
2013	12.46	13.22	12.34	7.1
2014	12.81	13.68	12.65	8.2
2015	13.11	13.98	12.97	7.7
Change from 1995	6.39	6.46	6.45	-
Change from 2014	0.30	0.30	0.32	-
Per cent change from 2014	2.35%	2.17%	2.55%	-
<b>Public Sector</b>				
1995	8.13	8.98	6.89	30.3
2004	11.37	12.22	9.87	23.8
2005	11.81	12.72	10.51	21.0
2006	12.04	13.01	10.63	22.4
2007	12.44	13.40	10.98	22.0
2008	13.06	13.93	11.87	17.4
2009	13.38	14.43	12.07	19.6
2010	13.83	14.89	12.41	20.0
2011	14.11	15.07	12.75	18.2
2012	14.32	15.30	13.10	16.8
2013	14.28	15.41	12.85	19.9
2014	14.31	15.56	12.80	21.6
2015	14.56	15.53	13.38	16.1
Change from 1995	6.43	6.55	6.49	-
Change from 2014	0.24	-0.03	0.58	-
Per cent change from 2014	1.70%	-0.19%	4.52%	-

Table source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

**Table notes:**

1. Year on year changes are subject to rounding error

**Table 2.4a Trade union presence by sector, 1996 to 2015**

	Per cent, not seasonally adjusted		
	All employees		
	All employees	Private Sector	Public Sector
1995	-	-	-
1996	50.2	35.5	89.7
1997	49.1	34.5	89.5
1998	47.8	33.4	89.4
1999	48.4	34.5	87.8
2000	48.9	34.9	87.8
2001	48.2	34.0	88.1
2002	48.0	33.6	88.3
2003	48.4	34.1	87.1
2004	47.6	32.6	86.8
2005	47.7	32.4	86.4
2006	47.0	31.7	86.7
2007	46.7	31.5	86.2
2008	46.8	30.7	86.9
2009	46.7	30.3	85.9
2010	46.2	29.7	85.8
2011	44.9	28.5	87.1
2012	44.7	28.5	86.4
2013	44.2	28.7	85.4
2014	43.3	28.1	84.9
2015	42.7	28.0	84.0

**Table source:** Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

**Table notes:**

1. Trade union presence is defined as the proportion of employees whose workplace has a union present
2. There was a small data issue with the LFS questionnaire in Northern Ireland in 1997 causing an undercount of up to 10,000 union members or 0.1 percentage points (see [technical note](#) for an explanation)

**Table 2.4b Collective agreement coverage by sector, 1996 to 2015**

Per cent, not seasonally adjusted			
	All employees		
	All employees	Private Sector	Public Sector
1995	-	-	-
1996	36.0	23.2	74.4
1997	37.0	22.0	74.9
1998	35.4	21.7	75.1
1999	36.1	23.0	72.7
2000	36.4	22.5	74.2
2001	35.5	21.9	72.6
2002	35.2	21.1	73.6
2003	35.5	21.9	71.5
2004	34.8	20.5	71.2
2005	35.0	20.6	70.9
2006	33.4	19.6	69.0
2007	34.7	20.0	72.0
2008	33.7	18.7	70.6
2009	32.8	17.8	68.1
2010	30.9	16.9	64.5
2011	31.2	17.0	67.8
2012	29.3	16.1	63.7
2013	29.5	16.6	63.7
2014	27.5	15.4	60.7
2015	27.9	16.1	60.7

**Table source:** Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

**Table notes:**

1. Collective agreement coverage is defined as the proportion of employees whose pay and conditions are agreed in negotiations between the employer and a trade union.
2. Prior to 1999 questionnaire was routed differently (see [technical note](#) for an explanation)
3. There was a small data issue with the LFS questionnaire in Northern Ireland in 1997 causing an undercount of up to 10,000 union members or 0.1 percentage points (see [technical note](#) for an explanation)

**Table 2.5 Trade union membership levels by Industry, 1995 to 2015**

	Thousands, not seasonally adjusted							
	1995	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	16	*	*	11	7	8	11	*
Mining and quarrying	37	19	19	24	21	22	24	16
Manufacturing	1,450	556	533	506	494	499	504	460
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	95	73	77	78	75	82	65	73
Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	96	63	66	64	73	62	60	70
Construction	335	202	194	186	197	176	182	168
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	378	442	432	432	461	441	438	474
Transportation and storage	572	516	496	453	479	504	455	495
Accommodation and food service activities	77	48	47	47	48	57	49	51
Information and communication	172	113	109	106	121	113	117	107
Financial and insurance activities	406	226	186	188	171	181	180	165
Real estate activities	12	37	34	32	31	26	23	34
Professional, scientific and technical activities	84	154	124	132	127	126	146	130
Administrative and support service activities	82	131	133	123	117	126	129	119
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	842	986	921	940	897	882	860	811
Education	1,061	1,540	1,582	1,492	1,557	1,522	1,545	1,624
Human health and social work activities	1,225	1,486	1,462	1,483	1,500	1,493	1,511	1,529
Arts, entertainment and recreation	119	113	109	98	81	100	95	94
Other service activities	53	58	56	52	50	70	61	64

**Table source:** Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

**Table notes:**

1. Based on Standard Industrial Classification 2007
2. Membership levels are based on the methodology described in the [technical note](#)
3. Trade union densities by industry are presented in [table 1.8](#)

### 3. Personal and job characteristics

**Table 3.1 Characteristics of union members and non-members, 2015**

	Per cent, not seasonally adjusted		
	Union members	Non-members	All employees
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	44.5	52.6	50.7
Female	55.5	47.4	49.3
<b>Age bands</b>			
16 to 24	4.9	16.2	14.2
25 to 34	18.3	24.3	23.9
35 to 49	37.8	33.0	33.9
50 plus	39.0	26.5	28.0
<b>Ethnicity</b>			
White	91.4	88.5	88.7
Mixed	0.7	1.0	0.9
Asian or Asian British	4.0	5.7	5.6
Black or Black British	2.7	2.8	2.9
Chinese or other ethnic group	1.2	2.1	1.9
<b>Nationality</b>			
UK, British	94.8	88.4	89.8
Other	5.2	11.6	10.2
<b>Country of Birth</b>			
UK	89.4	82.6	84.1
Other	10.6	17.4	15.9
<b>Disability</b>			
Has a disability	15.1	12.0	12.6
Doesn't have a disability	84.9	88.0	87.4
<b>Highest qualification</b>			
Degree or equivalent	42.3	31.0	33.2
Other higher education	12.6	9.1	9.8
A-level or equivalent	19.0	24.7	23.4
GCSE grades A-C or equivalent	16.2	21.2	20.2
Other qualifications	6.3	8.6	8.4
No qualification	3.6	5.4	5.0
<b>Sector</b>			
Private	41.4	84.2	74.3
Public	58.6	15.8	25.7
<b>Full-time/ part-time</b>			
Full-time	77.5	71.8	73.9
Part-time	22.5	28.2	26.1
<b>Length of service</b>			
Less than 1 year	7.6	21.0	17.5
Between 1 and 2 years	7.0	13.2	12.2
Between 2 and 5 years	13.5	21.9	20.6
Between 5 and 10 years	20.0	18.6	19.0
Between 10 and 20 years	30.8	17.6	20.2
20 years or more	21.3	7.7	10.5
<b>Workplace size</b>			
Less than 50	30.1	52.7	47.4
50 or more	69.9	47.3	52.6

## Trade Union Membership 2015: Statistical Bulletin

	Per cent, not seasonally adjusted		
	Union members	Non-members	All employees
<b>Occupation <sup>1</sup></b>			
Managers, Directors And Senior Officials	5.0	11.1	9.5
Professional Occupations	37.3	15.6	20.4
Associate Professional And Technical Occupations	12.6	13.6	13.3
Administrative And Secretarial Occupations	8.5	13.0	11.9
Skilled Trades Occupations	6.0	9.0	8.4
Caring, Leisure And Other Service Occupations	10.7	9.3	9.8
Sales And Customer Service Occupations	5.6	9.8	9.0
Process, Plant And Machine Operatives	6.5	5.7	6.0
Elementary Occupations	7.7	12.8	11.8
<b>Industry <sup>2,3</sup></b>			
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	*	0.8	0.6
Mining and quarrying	0.2	0.6	0.5
Manufacturing	7.1	11.5	10.4
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	1.1	0.5	0.7
Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	1.1	0.7	0.8
Construction	2.6	5.6	5.0
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	7.2	16.3	14.3
Transportation and storage	7.6	4.2	5.0
Accommodation and food service activities	0.8	6.9	5.6
Information and communication	1.7	4.8	3.9
Financial and insurance activities	2.5	5.1	4.5
Real estate activities	0.5	1.3	1.1
Professional, scientific and technical activities	2.0	7.4	6.0
Administrative and support service activities	1.8	5.3	4.6
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	12.6	4.9	6.7
Education	25.0	7.6	11.5
Human health and social work activities	23.6	11.3	14.3
Arts, entertainment and recreation	1.5	2.7	2.4
Other service activities	1.0	2.4	2.1

**Table source:** Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

**Table notes:**

1. Based on Standard Occupational Classification 2010.
2. Based on Standard Industrial Classification 2007.
3. Excludes classifications: households as employers, and extraterritorial organisations and bodies

## 4. Country and Regional Trends

**Table 4.1 Trade union membership as a proportion of employees, by nation and region, 1995 to 2015**

	Per cent, not seasonally adjusted											
	1995	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>United Kingdom</b>	<b>32.4</b>	<b>28.6</b>	<b>28.3</b>	<b>28.0</b>	<b>27.5</b>	<b>27.4</b>	<b>26.6</b>	<b>26.0</b>	<b>26.1</b>	<b>25.6</b>	<b>25.0</b>	<b>24.7</b>
England	30.8	27.4	26.9	26.6	26.1	26.2	25.3	24.9	24.8	24.1	23.5	23.0
Wales	44.3	34.3	35.9	37.4	37.4	35.4	34.7	34.9	33.0	35.6	35.8	35.2
Scotland	39.0	34.0	34.4	32.6	32.9	31.8	32.3	29.7	31.6	31.9	30.4	32.0
Northern Ireland	42.2	40.8	39.7	39.8	35.8	39.9	35.8	33.9	36.4	35.5	35.2	34.3
<b>England</b>	<b>30.8</b>	<b>27.4</b>	<b>26.9</b>	<b>26.6</b>	<b>26.1</b>	<b>26.2</b>	<b>25.3</b>	<b>24.9</b>	<b>24.8</b>	<b>24.1</b>	<b>23.5</b>	<b>23.0</b>
North East	43.1	36.5	38.8	35.9	35.5	35.7	32.8	34.5	32.7	30.9	32.1	30.1
North West	38.9	32.9	34.2	34.2	32.3	32.2	31.6	30.4	30.4	30.2	29.1	27.9
Yorkshire and the Humber	34.3	30.7	28.5	30.2	29.8	29.1	28.4	27.2	27.7	27.7	29.3	27.2
East Midlands	31.6	28.8	26.8	26.9	27.0	26.5	26.3	25.4	25.1	26.2	22.4	23.1
West Midlands	32.9	29.6	28.3	28.0	26.5	28.2	27.2	26.6	25.8	24.4	24.4	25.2
East of England	25.4	23.7	23.3	22.4	22.0	22.9	22.7	22.4	21.9	21.9	20.5	20.0
London	29.8	24.3	24.7	24.1	23.6	21.4	21.3	20.6	21.5	20.9	19.9	18.1
South East	23.2	21.7	21.4	21.0	21.6	21.9	21.3	20.7	21.0	20.3	19.3	20.8
South West	27.6	26.6	24.8	24.8	25.0	26.1	23.5	24.8	24.2	22.0	22.7	22.2

**Table source:** Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics



**Table 4.2 Trade union membership levels by nation and region, employees, 1995 to 2015**

Thousands, not seasonally adjusted

	1995	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>United Kingdom</b>	<b>7,113</b>	<b>7,083</b>	<b>7,059</b>	<b>7,051</b>	<b>6,928</b>	<b>6,770</b>	<b>6,589</b>	<b>6,447</b>	<b>6,507</b>	<b>6,490</b>	<b>6,457</b>	<b>6,493</b>
England	5,694	5,691	5,622	5,638	5,536	5,426	5,258	5,172	5,212	5,134	5,119	5,107
Wales	434	397	415	433	431	393	396	407	379	420	410	417
Scotland	766	742	767	720	728	695	707	640	673	698	688	730
Northern Ireland	218	254	255	259	233	256	227	228	243	237	240	240
<b>England</b>	<b>5,694</b>	<b>5,691</b>	<b>5,622</b>	<b>5,638</b>	<b>5,536</b>	<b>5,426</b>	<b>5,258</b>	<b>5,172</b>	<b>5,212</b>	<b>5,134</b>	<b>5,119</b>	<b>5,107</b>
North East	401	367	393	372	357	358	327	340	328	301	336	324
North West	973	917	965	966	894	881	866	845	836	816	805	806
Yorkshire and the Humber	647	647	595	637	623	590	574	549	567	583	630	579
East Midlands	523	534	497	494	513	492	470	459	461	488	430	443
West Midlands	665	652	614	624	578	601	580	564	568	527	552	572
East of England	525	552	533	533	527	530	530	535	524	527	509	502
London	760	712	740	737	742	662	677	643	696	707	688	638
South East	724	760	759	751	777	768	745	726	727	728	692	763
South West	478	549	524	524	526	546	489	510	505	456	477	481

**Table source:** Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

**Table notes:**

1. Membership levels are based on the methodology described in the [technical note](#)

**Table 4.3 Trade union membership as a proportion of employees, trade union presence and collective agreement<sup>1</sup> coverage by regions, 2015**

Region	Per cent, not seasonally adjusted		
	Union membership	Trade unions present in workplace	Employee's pay affected by collective agreement
Tyne and Wear	33.6	52.7	35.4
Rest of North East	27.3	51.0	30.9
Greater Manchester	26.0	45.8	30.0
Merseyside	32.5	49.8	37.0
Rest of North West	27.3	45.7	29.8
South Yorkshire	29.5	53.5	31.5
West Yorkshire	26.5	44.8	29.2
Rest of Yorkshire & Humberside	26.6	46.2	30.4
East Midlands	23.1	42.0	27.7
West Midlands Metropolitan County	25.6	42.1	28.6
Rest of West Midlands	24.9	43.9	27.9
East of England	20.0	38.4	22.9
Inner London	16.0	31.2	17.0
Outer London	19.5	33.7	20.8
South East	20.8	37.3	23.0
South West	22.2	43.6	26.5
Wales	35.2	54.5	36.8
Strathclyde	34.0	52.2	36.8
Rest of Scotland	30.6	49.4	33.8
Northern Ireland	34.3	45.6	50.1

**Table source:** Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

Collective agreement coverage is defined as the proportion of employees whose pay and conditions are agreed in negotiations between the employer and a trade union.

# Annex: Technical Note

## National Statistics

[National Statistics](#) is a quality marker applied to the United Kingdom's official statistics outputs. National Statistics are regulated by the [UK Statistics Authority](#), established on 1st April 2008. All official statistics accredited as 'National Statistics' are compliant with the UK Statistics Authority's [Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#).

## Concepts and definitions

- Employee: People who regard themselves as paid wage and salary earners. People with two or more jobs are counted only once.
- Employment: The number of people with jobs is measured by the Labour Force Survey and includes people aged 16 or over who did paid work (as an employee or self-employed), those who had a job that they were temporarily away from, those on government-supported training and employment programmes. For this publication, the numbers in employment exclude those doing unpaid family work.
- Labour Force Survey (LFS): The main source for information on the labour market in the United Kingdom. It is a random household survey of approximately 40,000 households conducted every three months by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). As well as private households, the survey includes people living in communal establishments (student halls of residence, National Health Service accommodation, etc.). The survey was conducted once every two years between 1973 and 1983 and annually from 1983 until 1991. It has been conducted quarterly since 1992, with a change to calendar quarters from seasonal quarters made in 2006. The LFS is a sample survey and consequently estimates are subject to both sampling and non-sampling error.
- Trade union: The Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 defines a trade union as an organisation which consists wholly or mainly of workers of one or more descriptions and whose principal purposes include the regulation of relations between workers and employers or employers' associations.
- Trade union member: A person in employment who self-defines that they belong to a trade union or staff association when asked in the Labour Force Survey (for the question please see table below).
- Union density: The rate or proportion of employees or those in employment who are a trade union member. Expressed as a percentage.
- Union presence: Whether or not a trade union or staff association is present within a workplace.
- Collective agreement: Whether the pay and conditions of employees are agreed in negotiations between the employer and a trade union.

## Trade union questions in the Labour Force Survey

A question on the LFS on trade union membership has been asked annually since 1989 of all individuals in employment. Questions on trade union presence and recognition were introduced in 1993 and the question on collective agreements was introduced in 1996. The questions relating to trade union membership were reordered and reworded in 1999; these changes affect the time-series for trade union presence and collective agreements.

The union questions were altered substantially in the 1999 questionnaire. The exact wording and sequence of the questions as they are now and as they were previously are shown below. The following should be noted:

- The wording of the question that asks respondents whether they are a member of a trade union remains the same, only its place in the sequence has changed.
- The question that asks whether any of the people at the respondent's place of work are members of a trade union or staff association is designed to measure trade union presence. The wording, routing and sequence of this question have changed. Previously, it was asked of all in employment; now it is only asked to those who say that they are not union members.
- Before 1999, the question on whether the respondent's pay and conditions were directly affected by collective agreements (TUCOV) was only asked where the respondent first identified unions as being present at the workplace (TUPRES), and then whether or not it was recognised (TUREC). This meant that the number of people whose pay and conditions were affected by collective agreement was an underestimate. For this reason the routing of the question was changed in the 1999 LFS and is now asked of all in employment. Users must therefore be aware that data derived from the TUCOV variable in the 1999 dataset are not directly comparable with those of previous years due to the change in the question's coverage.
- It is possible that some non-sampling error arises in the series of questions on trade unions because of measurement problems. Around a third of the sample are proxy respondents, and the data show that this group are less likely to be identified as union members than those responding on their own behalf. An estimate of the extent of bias is provided below.

On the question of coverage of collective agreements, it is known from surveys of employers that only a small proportion of public sector workplaces are not covered, and that these arrangements are generally made at head office level or across many organisations. It is therefore likely that employees who are not union members and who work in small workplaces in the public sector may be unaware that collective bargaining arrangements apply to their organisation. In addition, because sector is self-reported in the LFS, there may be a number of respondents wrongly classifying themselves as public sector workers. Consequently there may be a downward bias to this measure.

**Table A1: Structure of trade union questions in the Labour Force Survey**

<b>Previous union questions</b>	<b>Current union questions</b>
All in employment: TUPRES At your place of work, are there any unions, staff associations or groups of unions?	All in employment: UNION Are you a member of a trade union or staff association?
If yes: TUREC Is it/are any of them recognised by management for negotiating pay and conditions of employment?	If no: TUPRES Are any of the people at your place of work members of a trade union or staff association?
If yes: TUCOV Are your pay and conditions of employment directly affected by agreements between your employer and any trade union(s) or staff association?	All in employment: TUCOV Are your pay and conditions of employment affected by agreements between your employer and any trade union(s) or staff association?
All in employment: UNION Are you a member of a trade union or staff association?	

Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics.

### **Northern Ireland 1997 data issue**

In Autumn 1997, incorrect routing of Northern Ireland respondents meant that only those who answered yes to TUPRES were asked UNION. Therefore, there was under-response of unknown size to UNION. Those who should have been asked UNION were instead coded as not having answered the question. BIS analysis indicates this may mean that there is an undercount of up to 10,000 in 1997 levels or 0.1 percentage points in 1997 proportions.

### **Variables in the LFS**

Most of the classifications used to place respondents in different categories are based on a direct question relying on the person's self-assessment of their circumstances. Some are based on a combination of more than one question, and others are coded by the ONS based on standard conventions. Details are provided below.

Gender, age and ethnic group are self-defined. Highest qualification is principally based on a question asking individuals to nominate what qualifications they have from a list of around 50 categories. These have then been aggregated for the purposes of analysis. The categories for ethnic groups have been changed in the LFS in both 2001 and 2011 to be consistent with those used in the 2001 and 2011 Censuses respectively.

With the exception of occupation, all classifications used in this publication are self-defined. In particular, it should be noted that the two aspects of employment status – full-time or part-time, and permanent or temporary – are based on direct questions and do not rely on any set criteria (e.g. number of hours worked). The classification for flexible working hours only includes those who work under such arrangements, and the final category of “work mainly at home/same grounds” is taken from a separate question on homeworking. Region and whether an individual is an employee are both self-defined variables.

## Occupational classifications

In 2011, the LFS occupational classifications use the new 2010 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC2010). Between 2001 and 2010, they were defined using SOC2000, while prior to 2000 they were based on SOC90. The 2010 update has resulted in a name change to two of the broad occupation groups: 'Managers and senior officials' has been replaced by 'Managers, directors and senior officials' and 'Personal service occupations' has been replaced by 'Caring, leisure and other service occupations'. The occupation groups are assigned to respondents by ONS staff based on an open-ended question asking people what was their job, and what did they mainly do in their job. A breakdown by managerial status is also given in this publication and this is obtained from a separate LFS question where manager status is self-defined. In previous years the responses were validated against the occupational codes but from 2001 this is no longer undertaken and the manager status is now wholly self-defined by the respondent. This has resulted in the number of managers defined from this question in 2001 being significantly different from and not comparable with data from previous years.

The manager and senior officials group in SOC2000 relates to managers who primarily have responsibility for personnel, and this broad occupational group has been further tightened in SOC 2010's 'Managers, directors and senior officials' to focus on higher level, more strategic management. The self-defined manager variable is more widely defined including management responsibility for work-related activities as well as personnel. This accounts for the large difference in the union density levels for the SOC2000 and SOC2010 manager and senior officials group and the manager group within managerial status, with the latter being significantly higher. It is noted that the densities for foreman or supervisor and not manager or supervisor are in close agreement with data published in previous years.

## Public and private sectors

Defining the sector in which people work is based on two questions first introduced in 1993. These ask, first, if they worked in a private firm or business, a limited company, or some other kind of organisation; and second, if other, what kind of non-private organisation. The LFS defines public sector as that owned, funded or run by central or local government and the private sector is everything else. Some respondents may not know whether their industry is in the public or private sector and, for certain types of activity, there may be no clear answer and the interviewers are given some guidelines to help sort out some common confusion. From July 2009 in the regular labour market statistics published by the ONS, Royal Bank of Scotland Group Plc and Lloyds Banking Group plc (until March 2014) were classified to the public sector, previously they were in the private sector.

From June 2012 English colleges were classified to the private sector in the ONS's published statistics, as was Royal Mail plc from December 2013. However in the microdata sets that are used for the analyses in this publication the sector that a respondent is classified remains as they answered the question and no adjustments are made to incorporate the reclassifications described above. Analysis of the fourth quarter microdata from 2006 to 2011 suggests that financial services employees in the public sector has remained consistently low across the period, at below 4% of the total number of financial services employees.

## Industry classifications

Industry is based on respondents' answers to a question about what the firm or organisation for which they worked mainly made or did, and coded using the Standard Industrial Classification of economic activities 1992 (SIC92).

From 2009, the sectoral breakdown of the LFS data has been collected according to the new Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) 2007. From that point onwards, all cases were coded to a new code, even when the respondent's situation had not changed, due to the introduction of SIC 2007. There was no dual coding. The transition to the new classification was accompanied by the implementation of a new automatic coding tool for LFS interviewers. Prior to 2009, industry had been coded manually, using a paper-based SIC 92 volume. To enable users to compile a consistent back series ONS devised a program that maps SIC 92 codes onto SIC 2007 according to the assumed relationship between the two classifications. The analyses in this publication are based entirely on [SIC 2007](#).

### UK Standard Industrial Classification 2007 (UK SIC 2007)

ONS undertook some analysis based on comparing Q4 2008 (the last occasion when SIC92 was used) and Q1 2009 (when SIC 2007 was first used) to assess the impact of implementing SIC 2007 on historical series. This showed that some adjustments are required to overcome step changes arising from switching from SIC92 to SIC 2007. For example manufacturing sector which is traditionally seen as having large union membership showed a contraction of 9%. No attempt has been made to separate out the various different effects on each industry and ONS suggest applying the basic approach of simply scaling the entire back series by the appropriate factor to calculate levels. It should be noted that as trade union membership rates are calculated as a ratio of two levels the effect of scaling cancels out.

### Sample size and standard errors

The cell sizes in some tables in this publication are too small to prove reliable and have been marked with an asterisk. In this publication data fewer than 10,000 have not been published because standard errors are likely to be larger than the estimates themselves. Although the ONS has lifted its protocol of not releasing data under the 10,000 threshold, it is now the statistician's discretion whether to release anything under this threshold.

As an indication of the standard errors in the trade union estimates, the standard errors around the total employment and employee union membership proportions are likely to be around 0.3 percentage points. Standard errors for union membership proportions by gender are likely to be around 0.4 percentage points. Standard errors for union membership proportions by region average around 0.9 percentage points.

### Switch from seasonal to calendar quarters

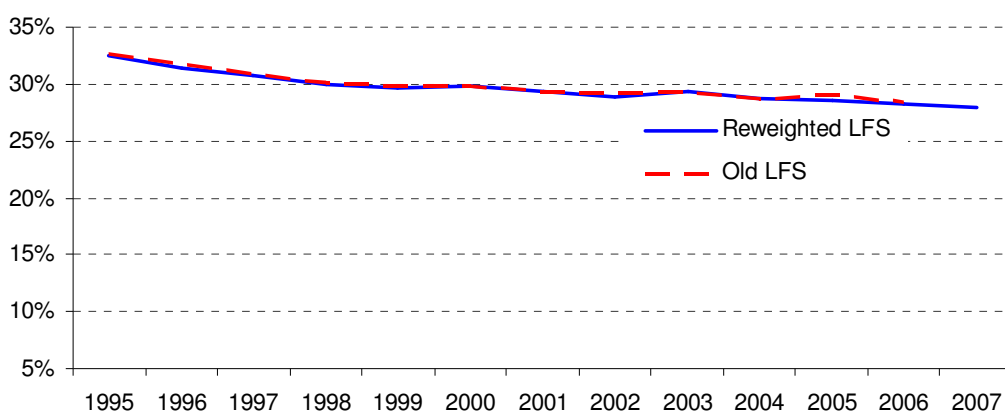
In 2006, the structure of the Labour Force Survey switched from a seasonal quarter basis to a calendar quarter basis. The last set of published LFS seasonal results covered December 2004 to February 2005. In accordance with European Union regulations, all



subsequent quarters have been published on a calendar quarter basis. In 2008, the Office for National Statistics carried out an extensive reweighting programme and all quarterly Labour Force Survey data are now published on a calendar quarter basis back to 1992. This has eliminated the structural break into the trade union membership time series associated with the change from seasonal to calendar quarters.

Chart A1 shows the trade union density of UK employees from 1995 to 2007, as shown in Table 1.2b and trade union density from the previous LFS. The chart gives evidence that the reweighting of historic LFS datasets has not materially changed the trade union densities from those that were previously published.

**Chart A1: Trade union density of UK employees, 1995-2007**



Per cent

Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

### Estimating union membership levels

Each household agreeing to take part in the LFS is interviewed on five consecutive quarters (or waves). However, there are cases on subsequent waves when households are not contactable or do not agree to continue taking part so further responses cannot be recorded. When this happens, current data may be imputed by carrying forward answers given by them in the previous interview. However, for questions that do not appear every quarter, as on trade union membership, there is no previous response to carry forward, and a 'does not apply' (DNA) response is therefore recorded.

There are two possible methods of estimating union membership levels. One method relies on calculating an adjusted weight, whereby cases with missing data are assumed to have the same distribution as valid responses. Therefore missing data is included in the estimates by allocation of their weight along the same distribution as valid respondents. Unfortunately, due to the restructuring of the LFS to calendar quarters (described earlier) this produced too much missing data in the seasonal quarter series to produce reliable estimates. Information was lost for September in converting seasonal to calendar quarters and no information was available to be brought forward from December. Therefore it was not possible to display a consistent time series including the data originally collected on a seasonal quarter basis using the adjusted weight method.



In order to mitigate these issues a second method was developed to closely approximate the results from an adjusted weights approach (see Table A2) but also allow a consistent time series with the calendar quarter information to be estimated. It consists of union density multiplied by the population (as estimated by the LFS). The method is improved by making the same calculation but by detailed age, gender and regional disaggregations and then aggregating them back up to national and regional levels. Age, gender and region were specifically chosen as they are the basis on which the LFS is weighted (see the Labour Survey User Guide Vol 1.). This approach is further supported by the fact that union density figures, are produced on a valid response basis and do not consider any missing data. Furthermore, union densities show a great deal of robustness under change, for example the recent reweighting of the LFS and the move to a calendar quarter basis (described earlier) had only a small effect on these estimates as shown in Chart A1. These estimates of union membership level are now provided as the headline figures in this publication (see Tables 1.2a, 1.3a, 4.2).

To produce trade union membership broken down by public/ private sector a further step was applied. It consists of union density split by public and private sector multiplied by the union membership population (estimated as above). The calculations involved are similar to that of the second method described above apart from the fact that a further breakdown by sector was used. A comparable method was used to calculate membership levels by industry with a breakdown by industry used rather than a breakdown by public/ private sector. The table below gives a comparison of the estimates from the two methods between 2006 and 2010 by gender and employment status.

**Table A2: Estimated trade union membership levels, United Kingdom, 2006 to 2010**

Thousands, not seasonally adjusted

	Employees			In employment		
	Density Population	× Adjusted Weights	Difference	Density Population	× Adjusted Weights	Difference
<b>All employees</b>						
2006	7,021	6,992	29	7,359	7,315	44
2007	7,005	6,978	27	7,334	7,292	42
2008	6,878	6,857	21	7,219	7,188	31
2009	6,715	6,696	19	7,054	7,017	37
2010	6,536	6,530	6	6,854	6,818	36
<b>Males</b>						
2006	3,430	3,400	30	3,649	3,611	38
2007	3,379	3,355	24	3,606	3,574	32
2008	3,278	3,254	24	3,522	3,487	35
2009	3,121	3,099	22	3,344	3,311	33
2010	2,976	2,967	9	3,188	3,162	26
<b>Females</b>						
2006	3,591	3,591	-	3,710	3,702	8
2007	3,625	3,621	4	3,728	3,716	12
2008	3,599	3,601	-2	3,697	3,697	-
2009	3,593	3,596	-3	3,709	3,704	5
2010	3,560	3,562	-2	3,666	3,654	12

Table source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

### Differences between the LFS and Trade union estimates from administrative data

Another official source of trade union membership data is provided by the [Certification Officer](#) and can be seen in Table 1.1. Data collected annually from trade unions by the Certification Officer (CO) provide a long and consistent back series of the number of trade unions and the number of union members. The LFS has a shorter back series, from 1989

onwards, but can provide extensive information on the respondent's individual and workplace characteristics, allowing more detailed analysis.

Data from the LFS is mainly presented from 1992 in this publication since re-weighted micro datasets, in line with post-Census 2001 population estimates, are currently only available from 1992.

There are differences in how the two sources report union membership. For example, the CO membership count includes all members of unions having their head office in Great Britain, including those members in Northern Ireland, the Irish Republic and 'elsewhere abroad'. These figures may also include union members who are unemployed or retired. The LFS asks questions on the union status of all those in employment, thus excluding the unemployed and retired.

The LFS union questions have United Kingdom coverage from 1995 onwards. The LFS estimates the number of individuals who are union members, rather than the individual memberships. Hence those belonging to two unions would appear twice in the CO data, but only once in the LFS data. Also, due to the specific wording of the union question, the LFS, unlike the CO data, could count individuals that were members of a staff association but not members of a trade union.

### **LFS quality measures**

Guidance and methodology on the LFS can be found on the ONS website at:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/specific/labour-market/labour-market-statistics/index.html>

And, information on LFS quality measures can be found at:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/specific/labour-market/labour-force-survey-quality-measures/index.html>

### **LFS reweighting and the Census**

In 2014, the ONS published revised LFS data for 2001-2014 to take account of the latest available official population estimates. This follows the publication of detailed results of the 2011 census in 2013. The microdata based on 2014 weights have been used to update the data from 2001 to 2011 in this publication. In 2016, the ONS published further revisions to LFS data for 2012-2015 to take account of the latest available official population estimates. The new microdata, containing updated weights based on these new population figures, has been used to update the data from 2012 onwards in this publication.

Further information can be found at:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/specific/labour-market/articles-and-reports/revisions-to-labour-force-survey-estimates.pdf>

# Annual National Statistic reports

1. [Trade Union Membership 2014](#), Connor Russell
2. [Trade Union Membership 2013](#), Andrew Rowlinson
3. [Trade Union Membership 2012](#), Andrew Rowlinson
4. [Trade Union Membership 2011](#), Nikki Brownlie
5. [Trade Union Membership 2010](#), James Achur. April 2011.
6. Trade Union Membership 2009, James Achur. April 2010.
7. Trade Union Membership 2008, Craig Barratt. April 2009.
8. Trade Union Membership 2007, Sally Mercer and Richard Notley. July 2008.
9. Trade Union Membership 2006, Heidi Grainger and Martin Crowther. April 2007.
10. Trade Union Membership 2005, Heidi Grainger
11. Trade Union Membership 2004, Heidi Grainger, Heather Holt
12. Trade Union Membership 2003, Tom Palmer, Heidi Grainger, Grant Fitzner

The BIS Publications order line is 0845 015 0010

## **Trade union membership articles in Labour Market Trends**

1. Analysis in brief: Trade union membership: estimates from the autumn 2003 Labour Force Survey, by Stephen Hicks and Tom Palmer. March 2004.
2. Labour Market Spotlight: Trade union membership. July 2003.
3. Article: Trade union membership: an analysis of data from the autumn 2001 LFS, by Keith Brook. July 2002.
4. Article: Trade union membership 1999-2000: an analysis of data from the Certification Officer and the Labour Force Survey, by Abby Sneade. September 2001.
5. Article: Trade union membership 1998-99: an analysis of data from the Certification Officer and Labour Force Survey, by Stephen Hicks. July 2000.
6. Article: Trade union membership and recognition 1997-8: an analysis of data from the Certification Officer and the Labour Force Survey, by Paul Bland. July 1999.

## **Trade union membership: additional analysis**

1. Use and users of BIS statistics on trade union membership, April 2013.
2. Trade union membership statistics: Measuring bias in the Labour Force Survey, March 2013
3. Sampling variance in the trade union membership statistics, March 2013
4. Trade union membership statistics: 2012 to 2013 user survey report, March 2013

© Crown copyright 2016

You may re-use this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. Visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication available from [www.gov.uk/bis](http://www.gov.uk/bis)

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to:

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills  
1 Victoria Street  
London SW1H 0ET  
Tel: 020 7215 5000

If you require this publication in an alternative format, email [enquiries@bis.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@bis.gsi.gov.uk), or call 020 7215 5000.

**BIS/16/271 – Trade Union Statistics 2015**