

Guide to terms and sources

Annual Population Survey (APS)

The Annual Population Survey (APS) is a combined survey of households in Great Britain. Its purpose is to provide information on key social and socio-economic characteristics (such as labour market status and educational attainment) with particular emphasis on providing information relating to small geographical areas.

The APS comprises the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (LFS) plus data from the Annual Local Area Labour Force Survey (ALALFS) Boosts for England, Scotland and Wales (funded by DWP, DIUS, NAW and the Scottish Executive). A further sample boost, the APS Boost was collected between January 2004 to December 2005 for England only, funded by the ONS. The previous best source for local area data, the Annual Local Area Labour Force Survey (ALALFS) did not include the APS Boost

The APS including the APS Boost aimed to ensure that a sample of at least 510 economically active persons in English Local Authority Districts (except London Boroughs where the target is 450 economically active persons) was achieved. With the withdrawal of the APS Boost the APS is in essence the ALALFS. However, the name of the survey has remained as the APS.

The annual APS datasets used for these tables are based on full calendar year data (ie January to December) while the ALALFS data sets cover from March to the following February).

Since DIUS published Qualifications and participation in learning at a local level: 2006, the APS micro datasets have been reweighted back to 2004 and the ALALFS datasets have also been reweighted from 2003/4 backwards. This reweighting is described below.

Annual Population Survey (APS) Reweighting

The APS is derived from the Labour Force Survey (LFS), which is a sample survey, so the responses reflect only a small proportion of the total population. Each respondent is given a weight relating to the proportion of the total population that he or she represents. The sum of all the weights equals the total household population for the survey.

Reweighting means assigning different weights derived from more up-to-date population estimates. Prior to the current reweighting exercise, the LFS data were last reweighted using population estimates published in spring 2003. These updated tables have been produced using reweighted datasets produced by the Office for National Statistics based on population estimates published in 2007.

Age coverage

Table 1 Highest qualification held by population aged 19-59/64

Men aged 19-64 and women aged 19-59.

Table 2 Highest qualification of economically active adults

Economically active men aged 18-64 and economically active women aged 18-59

Table 3 Highest qualification of the population aged 16-59/64

Table 4 Employment rate by highest qualification population aged 16-59/64

Table 5 Job related training of employees aged 16-59/64

Tables 3-5 all based on Men aged 16-64 and women aged 16-59.

Table 6 Participation in learning population aged 16-69

Men and women aged 16-69

Geographies

These tables are all based on England and are disaggregated into Government Office Regions (GOR), Local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) office areas Learning Partnership (LP), Local Education Authority (LEA) and Local Authority District (LAD) geographies.

Absence of 2004 data in tables 1-4

There are problems combining the January and February 2004 qualification data variables with those for the rest of the year on the 2004 APS which ONS are currently investigating. The 2004/5 estimates previously published by DIUS were based on the 2004/5 ALALFS dataset which has not been reweighted by ONS. Consequently there is no data quoted for either 2004 or 2004/5 in tables. Once the data issues regarding the 2004 have been resolved 2004 data will be added.

95 % Confidence Interval (CI %)

Since all the figures in these tables are drawn from a sample survey there are sampling errors attached to each estimate. Sampling errors occur because the sample chosen is only one of a very large number of samples that might have been selected. It follows from this that an estimate of, say, the proportion of people with no qualifications, is only one of a large number of such estimates (one estimate for each possible sample). The issue that is of interest to most users of survey data is the precision of an estimate – that is to say, the range of estimates which could have arisen from the different samples that might have been drawn. The smaller the sample size used to estimate a statistic, the less precise that estimate will be. The common method of presenting this sampling variability is in the form of 95 per cent confidence intervals, where upper and lower limits are attached to an estimate. What this means in practice is that 19 times out of 20 we would expect that the true value that we are trying to estimate would lie between these upper and lower limits.

So for example, if the estimate is 70 per cent and the 95% confidence is +/- 2 percentage points this means that there is a 95% chance that the true figure lies between 68 per cent and 72 per cent. The confidence intervals quoted here are only approximate as they use a number of simplifying assumptions in the calculation.

Economically active

The economically active is those who are either in employment or who are unemployed. The unemployed are defined as those not employed who have been actively seeking work in the last four weeks and are available to start work in the next two weeks or who are out of work, but have found a job they will be starting in the next two weeks.

Employment rate

The proportion of the population concerned who are in employment.

For further information on labour market statistics concepts and definitions go to:

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_labour/LMS_FR_HS_Concepts_Definitions.pdf

Adult learning definitions (Table 6)

An adult learner is someone aged 16-69 who has done some taught and/or non-taught learning over the last 12 months. Due to questionnaire changes this series is only available for 2005 and 2006.

Taught Adult Learning

Taught courses that were meant to lead to a qualification; taught courses designed to help develop skills used in a job; courses; instruction or tuition in driving, playing a musical instrument, art or craft, sport or any practical skill, evening classes; learning involving an individual working on their own from a package of materials provided by an employer, college, commercial organisation or other training provider; other taught course, instruction or tuition.

Non-taught adult learning

Studying for qualifications without taking part in a taught course; supervised training while doing a job; time spent keeping up-to-date with developments in one's work or profession e.g. by reading books or attending seminars; deliberately trying to improve one's knowledge about anything or teach oneself a skill without taking part in a taught course.

National Qualifications Framework (NQF)/National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) level equivalences

Level 4 and above

People are counted as being qualified to level 4 or above if they have achieved a first or higher degree, an NVQ level 4 or 5, a recognised degree-level professional qualification; an HNC/HND or other higher-level vocational or management qualification, a teaching or nursing qualification; or a diploma in Higher Education.

Level 3 and above

People are counted as being qualified to level 3 or above if they have achieved at least 2 A-level passes, 4 AS levels; an Advanced GNVQ; an Access to HE qualification or an NVQ level 3 or equivalent vocational qualification (or a qualification at level 4 or above).

Level 2 and above

People are counted as being qualified to level 2 or above if they have achieved at least 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C, an Intermediate GNVQ, two or three AS levels or an NVQ level 2 or equivalent vocational qualification (or a qualification at level 3 and above).

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships reported without a specific level are split 50% level 3 and 50% as level 2. In 2007 the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and APS Estimates for 2007 appear to have been affected by a problem whereby apprenticeships have been under-reported relative to previous

years. We estimate that nationally the level 2 or above rate for 2007 for the 19-59/64 population would have been around 0.25 ppts higher without this problem. For level 3 and above we estimate that the effect on the rate would have been similar to that for Level 2 or above. The effect of this discontinuity may well have varied from one local area to another.

Other qualifications

As with all DIUS analyses these have been apportioned in the proportions 10% Level 3, 35% Level 2 (ie 45% level 2+) and 55% below level 2. Estimates available from NOMIS do not currently use this apportionment and therefore will tend to be lower at L3+ and L2+.