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Annual Subscription £87.00 (£73.50 for LRD affiliates)

Volume 78, Issue 29, 21 July 2016

Earnings growth dips

In May, growth in average weekly earnings slipped back. The rise in average weekly earnings for the whole economy was provisionally down to 2.1% against the higher revised figure of 2.6% for April.

However, in manufacturing, earnings growth got a shot in the arm as it reached 3.1% in May against 1.8% the previous month.

There was no such luck for services, where growth was down to 1.7% from 2.3% in April as the influence of the introduction of the National Living Wage dropped out.

In the private sector as a whole, growth was cut to 2.3% from 2.9%.

In May, the public sector, excluding financial services, saw growth cut to 1.7% from 2.2% the previous month.

Headline earnings growth (the rolling three-month average) for the whole economy was up to 2.3% from 2.0% in the three-month period ending April.

Manufacturing growth was up to 2.2% from 1.7%, while growth in services reached 1.9% from 1.6% the previous month. In the private sector as a whole, growth was up to 2.5% from 2.1%.

In the public sector, excluding financial services, growth edged up to 1.9% from 1.8%.

£ a week	Average weekly earnings ¹				
	Whole economy	Manufacturing	Services	Private sector	Public sector ²
March 2015 (r)	490	572	475	489	490
April (r)	490	572	475	488	490
May (r)	492	568	477	490	491
June	489	576	474	491	491
July	495	574	479	494	492
August	494	573	478	494	493
September	492	573	477	491	495
October	494	574	478	493	494
November	495	575	479	494	495
December	496	578	479	494	494
January 2016	497	577	481	496	497
February	494	574	478	491	498
March (r)	500	581	484	500	499
April (r)	503	582	486	502	500
May (p)	502	586	485	501	499
% annual change					
Single month	2.1	3.1	1.7	2.3	1.7
3-month average ³	2.3	2.2	1.9	2.5	1.9

¹ Average weekly earnings in Great Britain, seasonally adjusted, including bonuses, but excluding arrears. ² Excludes financial services. ³ Average of the seasonally adjusted data for the latest three months compared with three months a year earlier. (p) provisional (r) revised

The regular pay figures, which strip out bonuses, posted a 2.1% increase in May against 2.5% the previous month.

The percentage rises in the year to May for various sectors, along with the previous month's rises in brackets, were: manufacturing 2.5% (2.2%); services 1.7% (2.3%); the private sector 2.3% (2.7%); and the public sector, excluding financial services, 1.5% (1.9%).

The average rise for regular pay in the whole economy for the three-month period ending May was down to 2.2% from 2.3% for the April period.

The sectoral increases were: manufacturing 2.2% (1.9%); services 1.9% (2.0%); the private sector 2.4% (2.4%); and the public sector, excluding financial services, 1.7% (1.8%).

The table below is based on the mean average earnings figures published in the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) 2015. The original figures have been "uprated" by the 2.4% increase in average weekly earnings for the whole economy between April 2015 and May 2016 to give a rough estimate of earnings now in the various occupational groups.

Full-time average weekly earnings by occupation	
	£ a week
All employees	642.50
All male	696.30
All female	560.20
Managers	994.70
Professionals	813.00
Associate professionals	691.50
Admin & secretarial	470.30
Skilled/craft	541.00
Services	376.30
Sales	391.30
Operatives	505.10
Other manual jobs	385.80

www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-labour-market-statistics-july-2016

Air fares fuel inflation

Both retail price inflation and consumer price inflation posted increases in June on the back of higher air fares and dearer fuel.

The annual rate of inflation – as measured by the Retail Prices Index (RPI) favoured by union

negotiators – was up to 1.6% in June from 1.4% the previous month.

Meanwhile, inflation under the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) – the government's preferred measure – edged higher to 0.5% from 0.3%.

The CPI rate has been below the Bank of England's 2% target since January 2014.

	Price inflation			
	% increase on a year earlier			
	RPI ¹	RPI	RPIX ²	CPI
May 2015	258.5	1.0	1.1	0.1
June	258.9	1.0	1.1	0.0
July	258.6	1.0	1.1	0.1
August	259.8	1.1	1.2	0.0
September	259.6	0.8	0.9	-0.1
October	259.5	0.7	0.8	-0.1
November	259.8	1.1	1.1	0.1
December	260.6	1.2	1.3	0.2
January 2016	258.8	1.3	1.4	0.3
February	260.0	1.3	1.4	0.3
March	261.1	1.6	1.7	0.5
April	261.4	1.3	1.4	0.3
May	262.1	1.4	1.5	0.3
June	263.1	1.6	1.7	0.5

¹ January 1987=100 ² RPI except mortgage interest payments

Seven of the 14 groups that make up the basket of goods used to calculate the RPI increased by more than the overall rise for June.

The 5.5% rise in clothing and footwear group included rises of 7.6% in the cost of women's clothing and a 6.7% rise for men's.

The housing group's overall increase was 3.4%. However, mortgage interest payments were down by 1.9%.

The fares and other travel costs group was up by 3.2%, but that included a 4.5% increase in other travel costs, such as air fares, and a 4.1% rise in bus and coach fares.

Three groups posted an annual decrease in June. The fuel and light group's decrease of 3.4% included an 11.2% fall in oil and other fuels and a 6.8% fall in gas prices.

The food basket's fall of 2.7% saw prices down for most items in the group. Bacon was down by 9.6%

while the bread to put round it was down by 1.4%. Basic items such as eggs were down by 10.0% and milk by 3.3%, but tea was up 2.1%.

More than 1.6%	%	Less than 1.6%	%
Clothing & footwear	5.5	Personal goods & services	1.0
Tobacco	4.9	Motoring expenditure	0.7
Household services	3.9	Household goods	0.3
Housing	3.4	Leisure goods	0.1
Fares etc	3.2	Alcoholic drink	-0.1
Leisure services	2.5	Food	-2.7
Catering	2.1	Fuel & light	-3.4

www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/bulletins/consumerpriceinflation/june2016

UK's 'badge of shame' on disability rights

A new national effort to promote disability rights is needed as "progress has stalled", says the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC).

The Commission has published its response to the Lords Select Committee report on the 2010 *Equality Act* and its effect on the lives of disabled people. EHRC chair David Isaac called for a new national focus on disability rights, so that disabled people are no longer treated as "second class citizens".

He called on the government to show stronger leadership by implementing all remaining provisions in the *Equality Act* without delay to allow better access to transport, housing and representation in politics for disabled people.

He has also called on restaurants, theatres, concert venues, sports stadia and all those providing services to raise their game so disabled people are not at a disadvantage. Businesses must use digitalisation as an opportunity to make it easier for disabled people to use their services online.

Denying access to a large customer base simply is not good business practice and large venues must make it easier for disabled customers to access and buy tickets.

Isaac said: "It is a badge of shame for our society that thousands of disabled people are still not being treated as equal citizens and the everyday rights non-disabled people take for granted, such as being able to access transport, housing,

restaurants, theatres and sporting events, are still being denied.

"Successive governments have failed to implement rights for disabled people in full, and now is the time to move this forward. Implementing the remaining provisions of the *Equality Act* relating to areas such as transport and reasonable adjustments to common areas of rented houses would help put an end to this discrimination, increasing disabled people's independence and ability to participate in society."

Isaac also recognised that the EHRC itself must use its position to bring people together, while businesses need to play their part.

"While there has been some improvement for physical access there is still a long way to go. Sporting stadia and concert venues need to do much more and raise their game. It is disgraceful that only one percent of space at sporting venues is available for disabled fans. We will be holding these venues to account if changes are not made," he said.

www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/ehrc-response-to-lords-select-committee-equality-act-and-disability-july-2016.pdf

Unemployment hits 11-year low as numbers fall

The UK unemployment rate has fallen to a new 11 year-low, official figures show.

The number of unemployed people under the Labour Force Survey count fell by 54,000 to 1.65 million in the three months to May.

The fall in numbers was enough to cut the unemployment rate to 4.9% from 5.1%. According to the Office for National Statistics, that is the lowest rate since June 2005.

The number of unemployed men fell by 25,000 to 903,000 and their unemployment rate fell from 5.2% to 5.1%.

The fall was bigger for unemployed women. Their numbers were down by 29,000 to 742,000, cutting their unemployment rate to 4.8% from 5.0%. The rate was last as low as 4.8% in May 2008.

In June, unemployment under the claimant count rose by 400 to 759,100 from the revised figure for April of 758,700.

The increase in numbers was not sufficient to affect the joblessness rate, which remained at 2.2%.

The claimant count only includes claimants of Jobseeker's Allowance and those on the means-tested Universal Credit.

The overall increase was due to an increase in the number of male claimants which rose by 900 to 482,500, although their joblessness rate remained at 2.6%.

On the other hand, the number of women claimants fell by 500 to 276,600, but their joblessness rate was unchanged at 1.7%.

largest fall – 18,000 – was in Scotland, followed by 16,000 in Yorkshire and the Humber and 14,000 in London.

Two regions posted rises. Numbers were up by 13,000 in the West Midlands and 8,000 in the South West.

The unemployment rate was above the UK average of 4.9% in six of the 12 regions/countries. The highest rates were 7.4% in the North East, 5.9% in Northern Ireland and the West Midlands and 5.8% in London.

In June, the claimant count rose in 10 of the 12 region/countries.

The claimant count rate was above the UK average of 2.2% in seven regions/countries. The highest rates were 4.1% in Northern Ireland and 4.0% in the North East.

Unemployment seasonally adjusted

	Claimants ¹		LFS ³	
	(000s)	% ²	(000s)	%
June 2015	793	2.3	1,848	5.6
July	785	2.3	1,822	5.5
August	786	2.3	1,774	5.4
September	784	2.3	1,750	5.3
October	783	2.3	1,718	5.2
November	780	2.3	1,685	5.1
December	763	2.2	1,694	5.1
January 2016	735	2.1	1,691	5.1
February	725	2.1	1,700	5.1
March)	740	2.2	1,692	5.1
April	747	2.2	1,671	5.0
May (r)	759	2.2	1,646	4.9
June (p)	759	2.2		

¹ Jobseeker's Allowance and Universal Credit claimants ² Percentage of working population – the employees, unemployed, self-employed and the armed forces.

³ The Labour Force Survey definition of unemployment – the number of unemployed people who want a job and are ready to start work in two weeks, and have looked for work in the past four weeks. Each figure is the average of the past three months – a rolling average. (p) provisional (r) revised

Region	June claimants		LFS Mar – May	
	Number	%	Number	%
North East	49,200	4.0	96,000	7.4
North West	109,000	2.9	174,000	4.9
Yorkshire & the Humber	73,100	2.7	151,000	5.7
East Midlands	44,800	2.0	106,000	4.5
West Midlands	80,200	2.8	165,000	5.9
East of England	46,000	1.5	112,000	3.5
London	104,600	1.8	279,000	5.8
South East	58,900	1.2	176,000	3.7
South West	39,200	1.4	112,000	4.0
Wales	42,800	2.9	70,000	4.6
Scotland	74,700	2.7	152,000	5.5
Northern Ireland	36,700	4.1	52,000	5.9

Regions Unemployment fell in 10 of the 12 regions/countries in the three-months to May 2016. The

www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-labour-market-statistics-july-2016

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