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Weak average weekly earnings growth

Pay growth has weakened, official figures show. In August, growth in average weekly earnings was down to 2.0% from the previous month's revised rise of 2.4%.

Manufacturing, earnings growth edged higher with a rise of 2.5% against a 2.4% rise the previous month.

In services, growth was down to 1.9% from 2.3%.

In the private sector as a whole, growth was down by 0.6 percentage points to 2.0% from 2.6%.

The public sector, excluding financial services, saw growth leap up to 2.3% from 1.3% in July.

Headline earnings growth (the rolling three-month average) for the whole economy was down to 2.3% in August against 2.4% in the three-months ending July.

Manufacturing growth was back down to 2.3% from 2.5%, but in services growth was up to 2.2% from 2.1%.

In the private sector as a whole, earnings growth was down to 2.3% from 2.5%, while in the public

sector, excluding financial services, growth was up to 1.9% from 1.6%.

£ a week	Average weekly earnings ¹				
	Whole economy	Manufacturing	Services	Private sector	Public sector ²
June 2015 (r)	490	575	475	491	491
July (r)	493	574	477	493	492
August (r)	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	500	581	484	500	499
April	503	583	486	502	500
May	502	586	485	502	499
June (r)	502	586	486	502	501
July (r)	505	587	488	506	499
August (p)	504	587	487	504	504
% annual change					
Single month	2.0	2.5	1.9	2.0	2.3
3-month average ³	2.3	2.3	2.2	2.3	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

LABOUR RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

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The regular pay figures, which strip out bonuses, show a 2.4% rise in August against a 2.2% rise in July.

The percentage rises in the year to August for various sectors, along with the previous month's rises in brackets, were: manufacturing 2.6% (2.8%); services 2.3% (2.0%); the private sector 2.5% (2.3%); and the public sector, excluding financial services, 1.8% (1.4%).

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

The sectoral increases were: manufacturing 2.6% (2.6%); services 2.1% (1.9%); the private sector 2.4% (2.3%); and the public sector, excluding financial services, 1.6% (1.5%).

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 updated by the 2.9% increase in average weekly earnings for the whole economy between April 2015 and August 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	645.60
All male	699.70
All female	563.00
Managers	999.60
Professionals	816.90
Associate professionals	694.90
Admin & secretarial	472.60
Skilled/craft	543.60
Services	378.20
Sales	393.20
Operatives	507.60
Other manual jobs	387.70

www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/uklabourmarket/october2016

Low pay in government

Thousands of workers across central government are paid less than the voluntary Living Wage, new figures have revealed in responses to an MP's parliamentary written questions.

Answering questions from Labour MP Frank Field, government departments revealed more than 3,000 in-house, outsourced and agency staff were paid below the Living Wage Foundation's recommended £8.25 an hour or £9.40 in London.

The replies, which are unlikely to reveal the full extent of the problem, included:

- 1,272 staff employed in the Ministry of Defence and its agencies paid below the Living Wage;
- 913 workers at the Ministry of Justice;
- 490 at the National Offender Management Service; and
- 111 outsourced staff in the Department for Communities and Local Government.

The PCS civil service union said the figures underline just how low pay is across government and its contractors – made worse by six years of pay freezes and caps.

The answers also revealed that more than 100 staff were employed on zero-hours contracts.

www.pcs.org.uk/en/news_and_events/pcs_comment/pcs_comment.cfm/government-workers-paid-below-living-wage?

Jobless numbers on the rise in summer

Blips or not, unemployment on both of the main official counts posted increases, the latest official figures show.

The overall number of unemployed people under the Labour Force Survey count increased by 10,000 to 1.66 million in the three months to August compared with the previous three-month period.

The rise in numbers was not enough to affect the unemployment rate which remained at 4.9%.

The overall rise was all down to women. The number of unemployed women increased by 23,000 to 765,000, and their unemployment rate increased to 4.9% from 4.8%.

On the other hand, the number of unemployed men was down by 12,000 to 891,000 and their unemployment rate fell to 5.0% from 5.1%, according to the Office for National Statistics figures.

The other main unemployment measure – the claimant count – only includes claimants of Job-seeker's Allowance and those on the means-tested Universal Credit.

In September, unemployment under the claimant count rose by 700 to 776,400 from the revised figure for August of 775,700.

August's revision upwards and the increase in numbers for September led to upwards revisions to the joblessness rate to 2.3% for both months.

Once again, the increase was down to women. Their numbers increased by 700 to 274,200, but their joblessness rate was unchanged at 1.7%.

The number of male claimants was unchanged at 502,200, but their joblessness rate for both August and September was revised upwards to 2.8%.

Unemployment seasonally adjusted				
	Claimants ¹		LFS ³	
	(000s)	% ²	(000s)	%
Sept 2015	792	2.3	1,750	5.3
October	793	2.3	1,718	5.2
November	785	2.3	1,685	5.1
December	770	2.2	1,694	5.1
January 2016	741	2.2	1,691	5.1
February	735	2.1	1,700	5.1
March	751	2.2	1,692	5.1
April	760	2.2	1,671	5.0
May	771	2.2	1,646	4.9
June	772	2.2	1,641	4.9
July	769	2.2	1,632	4.9
August (r)	776	2.3	1,656	4.9
September (p)	776	2.3		

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

Regions Unemployment increased in seven of the UK's 12 regions/countries in the three-months to August, was unchanged in one and fell in four.

The largest increases were 13,000 in London and 11,000 in the East.

The largest fall in numbers was in Scotland where numbers were down by 25,000.

The unemployment rate was above the UK average of 4.9% in six of the 12 regions/countries. The highest rates were 6.8% in the North East and 6.1% in London.

In September, the claimant count increased in four of the 12 region/countries, was unchanged in one

and fell in the remaining seven. The regions posting increases were the Yorkshire and the Humber, West Midlands, the South East and Scotland.

The claimant count rate was above the UK average of 2.3% in seven regions/countries. The highest rates were 4.1% in the North East and 3.9% in Northern Ireland.

Region	Sept claimants		LFS June – Aug	
	Number	%	Number	%
North East	50,400	4.1	88,000	6.8
North West	106,200	2.8	182,000	5.1
Yorkshire & the Humber	76,600	2.9	160,000	5.9
East Midlands	45,600	2.0	109,000	4.5
West Midlands	84,800	2.9	168,000	5.9
East	46,600	1.5	123,000	3.9
London	103,300	1.8	292,000	6.1
South East	61,900	1.3	176,000	3.7
South West	40,800	1.4	118,000	4.2
Wales	43,300	2.9	65,000	4.3
Scotland	81,900	2.9	127,000	4.6
Northern Ireland	34,900	3.9	49,000	5.5

www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/uklabourmarket/october2016

Safety and health at work week

Healthy workplaces for all ages is the central theme of the 2016 European Week for Safety and Health at Work, which takes place from 24 to 28 October.

The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work has produced an e-guide which provides practical information on how age-related challenges can be addressed at work.

The e-guide is structured around four themes, which present different aspects of ageing at work and provide guidance on health and safety management and related issues for ageing workforce. In addition, each of the themes includes examples of good practices and useful links for further reading.

The four themes are:

- ageing and work;
- health workplaces for all ages;
- health promoting workplaces; and
- return to work.

The Healthy workplaces for all ages webpage also has links to campaign materials; research; practical tools and guidance.

<https://healthy-workplaces.eu/en>

Pricier fuel and clothing pushes inflation higher

Retail price inflation rose in September on the back of dearer fuel and clothing, Office for National Statistics figures show.

The annual rate of inflation – as measured by the Retail Prices Index (RPI) which is favoured by union negotiators – increased to 2.0% in September from 1.8% in August.

It's the first time the RPI rate has hit 2.0% since November 2014 – 22 months ago.

	Price inflation			
	RPI ¹	% increase on a year earlier		
	RPI	RPIX ²	CPI	
August 2015	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
July	263.4	1.9	1.9	0.6
August	264.4	1.8	1.9	0.6
September	264.9	2.0	2.2	1.0

¹ January 1987=100 ² RPI except mortgage interest payments

Meanwhile, inflation under the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) – the government's preferred measure – increased by 0.4 percentage points to 1.0% last month from 0.6% in August. The CPI last hit 1.0% in November 2014.

Seven of the 14 groups that make up the basket of goods used to calculate the RPI increased by September's rise of 2.0% or more.

The 7.1% annual rise in clothing and footwear group included rises of 9.6% in the cost of women's clothing and 7.9% for children's.

The motoring expenditure group's rise of 3.4% included an 18.2% rise in car tax and insurance premiums.

The housing group's overall increase was 3.3%. However, mortgage interest payments were down by 2.7%.

The fuel and light group's 1.8% decrease included a 4.7% decrease for gas.

The food basket's overall fall of 2.2% saw prices down for most items. Butter and eggs were down by 10.5% and 8.2% respectively, while bacon was down by 6.8%.

Tea was up by 1.6%, and sugar and preserves by 1.3%. The largest rise of 3.0% was recorded by fruit.

2% or more	%	Less than 2.0%	%
Clothing & footwear	7.1	Personal goods & services	1.4
Tobacco	6.0	Leisure goods	0.7
Household services	3.9	Alcoholic drink	0.6
Motoring expenditure	3.4	Fares etc	0.3
Housing	3.3	Household goods	0.0
Catering	2.3	Fuel & light	-1.8
Leisure services	2.0	Food	-2.2

www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/bulletins/consumerpriceinflation/sept2016

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