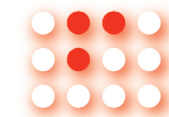


FACT

S E R V I C E



197 UK unemployment rate at nine-year low

198 Inflation on rise again

199 Weekly earnings growth back below 2%

200 Well-being and work
Prentis re-elected

Annual Subscription £84.50 (£71.50 for LRD affiliates)

Volume 77, Issue 50, 17 December 2015

UK unemployment rate at nine-year low

Unemployment posted big autumnal fall, official figures show.

The number of unemployed people under the Labour Force Survey count fell by 110,000 to 1.71 million in the three months to October.

The unemployment rate was down from 5.5% to 5.2% – the lowest jobless rate since the three-month period to January 2006, according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

The number of unemployed males fell by 50,000 to 939,000 and their unemployment rate was cut to 5.3% from 5.6%.

The number of unemployed women was down by 60,000 to 774,000 and their unemployment rate was down to 5.0% from 5.4%.

In November, unemployment under the claimant count, which includes claimants of Jobseeker's Allowance and those on the means-tested Universal Credit, increased for the fourth consecutive month. The total of 796,200 was 3,900 higher than the revised October figure of 792,400. However, the joblessness rate remained at 2.3%.

Male claimant numbers were up by just 600 to 513,000 and their joblessness rate remained at 2.8%. Women claimant numbers increased by 3,300 to 283,300 and their joblessness rate was up to 1.8% from 1.7%.

Unemployment seasonally adjusted

	Claimants ¹		LFS ³	
	(000s)	% ²	(000s)	%
November 2014	909	2.6	1,914	5.8
December	881	2.6	1,862	5.7
January 2015	846	2.5	1,856	5.7
February	821	2.4	1,838	5.6
March	806	2.3	1,827	5.5
April	798	2.3	1,813	5.5
May	797	2.3	1,853	5.6
June	797	2.3	1,852	5.6
July	791	2.3	1,823	5.5
August	792	2.3	1,774	5.4
September	792	2.3	1,749	5.3
October (r)	792	2.3	1,713	5.2
November (p)	796	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 The LFS unemployment count fell in 11 of the 12 regions/countries in the three-month period ending October.

LABOUR RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

Published weekly by LRD Publications Ltd, 78 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8HF. 020 7928 3649 www.lrd.org.uk

The only region to show an increase was the North East where the number of jobless rose by 5,000.

There was a 37,000 fall in the South East and a 20,000 fall in the East of England.

Three regions posted falls of 11,000 – Wales, the North West and East Midlands.

The unemployment rate was at or above the UK average of 5.2% in eight out of the 12 regions/countries. The highest rates were 8.7% in the North East and 6.3% in London.

In November, the claimant count increased in four of the 12 region/countries, was unchanged in two and fell in remaining six.

The claimant count rate was above the UK average of 2.3% in seven regions/countries. The highest rates were 4.4% in Northern Ireland and 3.9% in the North East.

Region	Nov claimants		LFS Aug – Oct	
	Number	%	Number	%
North East	47,800	3.9	113,000	8.7
North West	119,400	3.2	184,000	5.2
Yorkshire & the Humber	79,200	3.0	165,000	6.2
East Midlands	47,800	2.1	101,000	4.3
West Midlands	81,200	2.8	153,000	5.5
East of England	49,400	1.6	128,000	4.1
London	110,700	1.9	294,000	6.3
South East	59,100	1.2	170,000	3.7
South West	39,000	1.3	110,000	3.9
Wales	44,800	3.0	88,000	5.9
Scotland	78,800	2.8	156,000	5.6
Northern Ireland	39,100	4.4	53,000	6.1

www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_424920.pdf

Inflation on rise again

Retail price inflation put on a spurt last month, official figures show.

In November, the annual rate of inflation – as measured by the Retail Prices Index (RPI) – was up to 1.1% from 0.7% the previous month.

Higher transport costs, alcohol and tobacco prices were the main contributors to the rise, offset in part by a fall in clothing prices, the Office for National Statistics said.

Inflation under the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) turned positive in October, with an annual rise of 0.1% against minus 0.1% the previous two months.

TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady said: "Near-zero inflation is not a sign of economic progress. The UK economy still faces significant challenges.

"As we enter 2016, it is essential that ministers recognise the importance of investing in skills, innovation and infrastructure to boost productivity. Failure to do so will put future living standards at risk and hold back pay growth."

	Price inflation			
	RPI ¹	RPI	RPIX ²	CPI
Nov 2014	257.1	2.0	2.0	1.0
December	257.5	1.6	1.7	0.5
January 2015	255.4	1.1	1.2	0.3
February	256.7	1.0	1.0	0.0
March	257.1	0.9	0.9	0.0
April	258.0	0.9	0.9	-0.1
May	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

¹ January 1987=100 ² RPI except mortgage interest payments

Eight of the 14 groups that make up the basket of goods used to calculate the RPI increased by more than the overall rise of 1.1%.

Clothing and footwear's increase of 7.2% included an 11.1% rise in the price of women's clothing.

The housing group's increase of 2.7% included a 3.2% increase in rents.

The fuel and light group posted a 5.0% decrease and included a 27.8% decrease in oil and other fuels and a 6.5% decrease in gas prices.

The motoring group's 2.8% fall included a 13.0% cut in the price of petrol and oil.

The food group posted a fall of 1.8% with prices down for most components, including fresh milk (-8.7%), eggs (-7.5%), bread (-6.3%) and poultry (-4.9%).

More than 1.1%	%	Less than 1.1%	%
Clothing & footwear	7.2	Personal goods & services	1.0
Tobacco	4.4	Alcoholic drink	0.2
Leisure services	2.9	Leisure goods	-0.7
Household services	2.8	Food	-1.8
Housing	2.7	Motoring expenditure	-2.8
Fares etc	2.6	Fuel & light	-5.0
Household goods	1.3		
Catering	1.3		

www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_427175.pdf

Weekly earnings growth back below 2%

In October, most of the movement in the weekly earnings growth data was downwards.

The rise in average weekly earnings for the whole economy was provisionally 1.9% in October – down from the revised figure of 2.1% for September – according to the Office for National Statistics.

The manufacturing sector posted a rise of 1.6%, up from 1.2% the previous month. However, in services, growth was down to 1.7% from 2.1% the previous month, while in the private sector as a whole, growth down to 2.1% from 2.3%.

For the public sector, excluding financial services, growth was down to 1.4% from 1.7%.

Headline earnings growth (the rolling three-month average) for the whole economy was cut to 2.4% from 3.0% in the period ending October.

Manufacturing growth was unchanged at 1.5%, while service sector growth was down to 2.3% from 3.0%. For the private sector as a whole, growth was down to 2.7% from 3.4%.

For the public sector, excluding financial services, growth was up to 1.6% from 1.4%.

Earnings have failed to recover from the 2008 economic crisis. TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady said: "While it's good news that employment continues to rise, the slowdown in pay growth is a real cause for concern.

"With living standards still not fully recovered, many families will be worse off this Christmas than they were before the recession.

"For the recovery to deliver for everyone, we need stronger growth in pay and productivity in 2016."

£ a week	Average weekly earnings ¹				
	Whole economy	Manufacturing	Services	Private sector	Public sector ²
August 2014 (r)	479	563	464	476	485
September (r)	482	567	467	480	486
October (r)	484	566	470	483	487
November	484	566	469	482	487
December	489	572	473	487	489
January 2015	485	566	471	482	489
February	483	564	470	480	490
March	493	572	478	492	490
April	492	572	476	489	490
May	492	569	477	490	491
June	489	576	474	491	491
July	495	574	479	494	492
August	494	573	478	494	493
September (r)	492	573	477	491	494
October (p)	493	575	478	493	494
% annual change					
Single month	1.9	1.6	1.7	2.1	1.4
3-month average ³	2.4	1.5	2.3	2.7	1.6

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 strip out bonuses and arrears of pay. In October, growth for the whole economy was down to 1.7% from 1.9% the previous month.

The percentage rises in the year to October for various sectors, along with the previous month's rises in brackets, were: manufacturing 1.3% (1.5%); services 1.4% (1.7%); the private sector 1.8% (2.0%); and the public sector, excluding financial services, 1.4% (1.5%).

The average rise for regular pay in the whole economy for the three-month period ending October was down to 2.0% from 2.4%.

The sectoral increases were: manufacturing 1.5% (1.6%); services 1.8% (2.3%); the private sector 2.3% (2.8%); and the public sector, excluding financial services, 1.5% (1.4%).

The table on page 200 is based on the mean average earnings figures published in the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) 2014. The original figures have been "uprated" by the 0.2% increase in average weekly earnings for the whole

economy between April 2015 and October 2015 to give a rough estimate of earnings now.

Full-time average weekly earnings by occupation	
	£ a week
All employees	628.70
All male	681.40
All female	548.20
Managers	973.70
Professionals	795.50
Associate professionals	676.70
Admin & secretarial	460.20
Skilled/craft	529.40
Services	368.20
Sales	382.90
Operatives	494.30
Other manual jobs	377.60

www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_424920.pdf

Wellbeing and work

With health and work being closely linked, the importance of healthy workplaces cannot be understated.

The TUC has published new guidance – *Work and well-being* – which sets out the importance of healthy workplaces and provides advice on how to handle specific issues, such as stress, smoking, and obesity.

Stress caused by heavy workloads and demanding work patterns continues to be an important issue for workers, with more than 400,000 people in the UK suffering from work-related stress every year.

Obesity, diabetes and increased alcohol and tobacco use can also be linked to an unhealthy working environment.

Prevention is better than cure and can be achieved by changing the workplace through encouraging better working relationships, greater respect for workers, and improved involvement of unions.

Many of the other initiatives that are seen as being part of a well-being programme – such as encouraging cycling or walking to work, supporting gym membership or exercise classes and promoting healthy eating – are important. And union workplace reps can play a key role in encouraging management to provide them.

The guide also seeks to ensure that employers are supporting initiatives by Public Health England, Public Health Wales and Scottish Healthy Working Lives which are aimed at improving the health and well-being of workers.

TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady said: "Employers have much to gain by improving conditions at work, as healthy, happy and motivated staff have a positive impact on productivity."

www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/1115_TUC_WellBeingF%20LO.pdf

Prentis re-elected

Dave Prentis has been re-elected as general secretary of the public sector union UNISON.

He received 66,155 votes (49.4%) in the ballot, over 20,000 votes more than his nearest rival, Heather Wakefield, who received 35,433 votes (26.4%).

The other two candidates were: Roger Bannister 16,853 (12.6%) and John Burgess 15,573 (11.6%).

"The next five years will be difficult ones for our union and for the UK's public services. We need to stand up against a government set on consigning the public sector to the history books," Prentis said.

www.unison.org.uk/news/press-release/2015/12/general-secretary-election-results/

NEW BOOKLET FROM LRD

MONITORING AND SURVEILLANCE AT WORK

£9.75 a copy

Order at www.lrd.org.uk or telephone 0207 928 3649