Labour force categories used in the Household Labour Force Survey

This document outlines the labour force categories used in the Household Labour Force Survey (HLFS). The category a person is assigned to depends on the actual activity a person was engaged in during a survey reference week.

Working-age population

**Definition**  
The usually resident (expecting to live in New Zealand for more than 12 months), non-institutionalised, civilian population of New Zealand aged 15 years and over who live in private dwellings. Working-age population excludes overseas diplomats, their families, and staff.

**Breakdown**  
Sex, age, qualification(s) gained, ethnic group, regional council area, formal study status.

**Series**  
Unadjusted (all breakdowns); seasonally adjusted and trend series are available for sex only.

Labour force

**Definition**  
Members of the working-age population who during the survey reference week were classified as 'employed' (including self-employed) or 'unemployed'.

**Breakdown**  
Sex, age, qualification(s) gained, ethnic group, regional council area, formal study status.

**Series**  
Unadjusted (all breakdowns); seasonally adjusted and trend series are available for sex only.

Labour force participation rate

**Definition**  
The total labour force (ie the number of employed and unemployed) expressed as a percentage of the working-age population.

**Breakdown**  
Sex, age, qualification(s) gained, ethnic group, regional council area, formal study status.

**Series**  
Unadjusted (all breakdowns); seasonally adjusted and trend series are available for sex only.

People employed

**Definition**  
All people in the working-age population who, during the reference week:
- worked for one hour or more for pay or profit in the context of an employee/employer relationship or self-employment
- worked without pay for one hour or more in work that contributed directly to a farm, business, or professional practice operation owned or operated by a relative
- had a job but were not at work due to: their own illness or injury, personal or family responsibilities, bad weather or mechanical breakdown, direct involvement in an industrial dispute, or leave or holiday.

**Breakdown**  
Sex, age, industry, occupation, status in employment, qualification(s) gained, ethnic group, regional council area, formal study status, hours of work, full-time/part-time status, preference for more hours.

**Series**  
Unadjusted (all breakdowns); seasonally adjusted and trend series are available for sex only.
**Employment rate**

**Definition** The number of employed people expressed as a percentage of the working-age population.

**Breakdown** Sex, age, ethnic group, regional council area, formal study status, marital status, qualification(s) gained.

**Series** Unadjusted (all breakdowns); seasonally adjusted and trend series are available for sex only.

**People unemployed**

**Definition** All people in the working-age population who, during the reference week:

- were without a paid job, and
- were available for work, and
- had either actively sought work in the four weeks ending with the reference week, or had a new job to start within the next four weeks.

Note that the number of unemployed differs from the number of people registered as unemployed or the number of unemployment benefit recipients. For more information, please refer to [A Guide to Unemployment Statistics](https://www.abs.gov.au)

**Breakdown** Sex, age, qualification(s) gained, ethnic group, regional council area, formal study status, occupation sought, duration of unemployment, method of seeking, reason for leaving last job.

**Series** Unadjusted (all breakdowns); seasonally adjusted and trend series are available for sex only.

**Unemployment rate**

**Definition** The number of unemployed people expressed as a percentage of the labour force.

**Breakdown** Sex, age, ethnic group, regional council area, formal study status.

**Series** Unadjusted (all breakdowns); seasonally adjusted and trend series are available for sex only.

**Jobless**

**Definition** The jobless are people who are either officially unemployed, available but not seeking work, or actively seeking but not available for work. The ‘available but not seeking work’ category is made up of the ‘seeking through newspaper only’, ‘discouraged’, and ‘other’ categories.

**Breakdown** Sex, available for but not actively seeking work (sub-breakdown: seeking through newspaper only, discouraged, other), actively seeking but not available for work.

**Series** Unadjusted.
**Not in the labour force**

**Definition** Anyone in the working-age population who is neither employed nor unemployed. This residual category includes people who:
- are retired
- have personal or family responsibilities such as unpaid housework and childcare
- attend educational institutions
- are permanently unable to work due to physical or mental disabilities
- were temporarily unavailable for work in the survey reference week
- are not actively seeking work.

**Breakdown** Sex, age, qualification(s) gained, ethnic group, regional council area, formal study status, main activity, reason for not seeking work.

**Series** Unadjusted (all breakdowns); seasonally adjusted and trend series are available for sex only.

**Hours worked**

**Definition** Actual hours are the number of hours a person worked in the reference week (including overtime). The concept of usual hours refers to the number of hours a person normally works in a week.

**Breakdown** None.

**Series** Seasonally adjusted, unadjusted, and trend series.

**Underemployment**

**Definition** Employed people who work part-time (i.e., usually work 30 hours or less in all jobs) and would prefer to work more hours.

**Breakdown** Sex.

**Series** Unadjusted.