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TRADE UNION MEMBERSHIP 2009

James Achur



A NATIONAL
STATISTICS PUBLICATION

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Foreword

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills is responsible, in conjunction with the Office for National Statistics, for publishing the National Statistics on trade union membership.

An annual question on trade union membership was introduced into the Labour Force Survey in 1989 and it has been asked in the final quarter every year since 1992. Questions on trade union presence and recognition were added in 1993, and the question on collective agreements was introduced in 1996.

In the past, trade union membership statistics were published in an annual article in the ONS journal *Labour Market Trends*. This was replaced in 2004 by an annual National Statistic report, of which this is the sixth in the series.

This publication contains annual estimates of trade union membership from the Labour Force Surveys up to the fourth quarter of 2009 for both employees and all workers.

Estimates are presented on the proportion of people in employment who are trade union members (density) and for employees whose pay and conditions are affected by collective agreements. We also provide trade union densities by age, gender, ethnicity, income, major occupation, industry, full and part-time employment, sector, nation and region.

Official government statistics on trade union membership have been collected regularly for over a century. Data based on union administrative records began in 1892, compiled by the former Department of Employment until 1974; the Certification Office continued the series. This series is now presented in this publication.

I hope you find the report useful, and would welcome any comments or feedback you may have.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "W. E. Wells". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Bill Wells

Deputy Director, Employment Market Analysis and Research
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

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Symbols and conventions used

All figures published in this report come from the fourth quarter (Q4) of each year, unless otherwise specified. Members of the armed forces are excluded from all figures, and unpaid family workers and those on college based schemes are also excluded from the “in employment” population.

Figures presented in all the tables and charts relate to UK employees apart from the following: Tables 1.1 and 1.2 also show information on those “in employment” in the United Kingdom and Great Britain respectively, and Tables 1.3 and 1.4 include information for employees on GB basis.

Figures quoted for 2006 to 2008 reflect minor revisions from those in last year’s publication due to the Office for National Statistics amending population estimates and therefore the weighting of the Labour Force Survey.

Symbols

The following symbols are used:

- * sample size too small for a reliable estimate
- indicates data not available.

Overview and summary

Questions about trade union membership are only asked once a year, in the fourth quarter (Q4) of the Labour Force Survey (LFS). This report focuses on estimates of the rate of trade union membership (union density) in Great Britain and the United Kingdom for Q4 2009, both for employees and for all in employment.

Greater focus is made of the union densities of *UK employees* – paid wage and salary earners – than to all those in employment. Trade union density is defined as the proportion of the population in question who are union members, based upon those answering “yes” to the question on trade union membership in the LFS.

Membership levels are omitted from the majority of the main tables due to issues concerning non-response in the LFS. However, estimates of union membership levels for the UK and the regions split by age, region, gender and sectors (a new addition this year) can be found in a small number of tables.

Key findings

1. Trade union membership: National trends

- The union density for employees in the UK was unchanged at 27.4 per cent in 2009 compared with 2008. This is largely due to trade union membership falling at broadly the same rate as total employment over the last year. Amongst all those in employment, including self-employed, in the UK, union density fell from 24.9 per cent in 2008 to 24.7 per cent in 2009.
- Trade union membership levels for UK employees fell by 2.4 per cent (163 thousand) to 6.7 million compared with 2008. Membership for those in employment fell by 2.3 per cent (165 thousand) to 7.1 million, in the same period.
- Union density among female employees in the UK rose by 0.2 percentage points to 29.5 per cent in 2009 but amongst male employees it fell by 0.4 percentage points to 25.2 per cent. This was the eighth consecutive year where female union density was higher than males and the gap widened by a further 0.6 percentage points compared with 2008.
- Private and public sector union densities fell by around half a percentage point each to 15.1 and 56.6 per cent respectively in 2009.

2. Trade union membership: Personal, work and job characteristics

- Union density was highest in professional occupations at 44.9 per cent whilst sales occupations had the lowest at 13.1 per cent.

- Females had higher union densities in 2009 than males in all occupations except administrative & secretarial, skilled trades, operatives and elementary occupations.
- Trade union density was highest for men in public administration and defence whilst for women this was in education at around 54 per cent each.
- Employees of a UK nationality have a higher union density of 28.1 per cent compared with non UK nationals whose union density is 21.4 per cent.

3. Trade union membership: Trends over time

- In 2009, Northern Ireland had the highest union density (39.9 per cent of employees); this was followed by Wales (35.4 per cent) and Scotland (31.8 per cent) whilst England had the lowest (26.1 per cent).
- Between 1999 and 2009, trade union density grew only in Northern Ireland by 4.2 percentage points, it remained unchanged in England but fell in Wales and Scotland by 1.9 and 1.0 percentage points respectively.
- Amongst the English regions, London recorded the largest decrease in union density of 2.2 per cent over the decade; this was followed by Yorkshire and Humberside (down 0.9 per cent) and East Midlands (down 0.4 per cent). Union density rose in the remaining regions.
- Over the period 1999 to 2009, union density grew only in the retail industry by just over 10 per cent - mining industry recorded the sharpest fall.

4. Trade union presence and collective agreements

- Across all sectors, just under half of UK employees (46.6 per cent) were in a workplace where a trade union was present. A third of UK employees said their pay and conditions were affected by a collective agreement.
- Collective agreements covered just under a fifth of private sector employees, but in the public sector this was nearly four times greater at 68.1 per cent, although this has fallen by 2.4 percentage points from 2008.

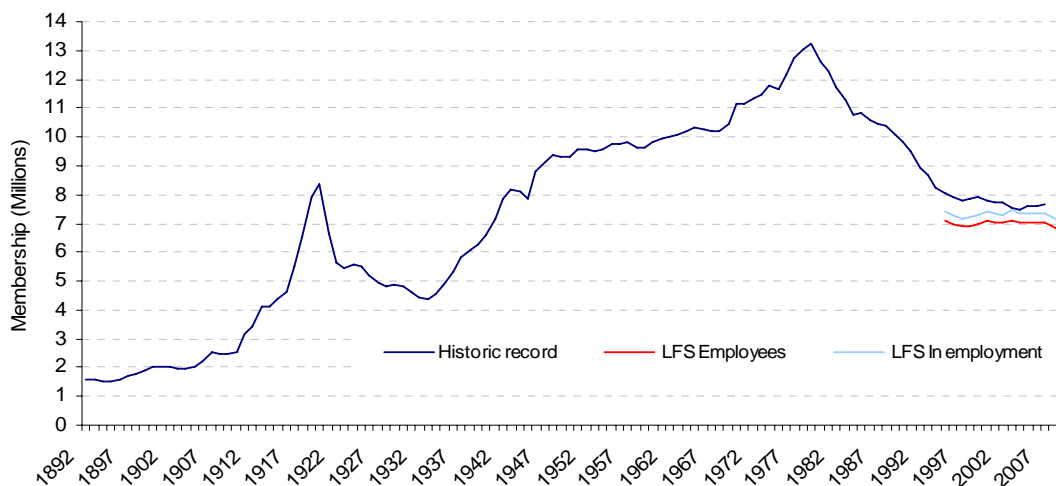
5. Trade union member and non-member comparisons

- The hourly earnings of union members, according to the LFS, averaged £13.60 in 2009, 15.3 per cent more than the earnings of non-members (£11.80 per hour).
- Public sector employees accounted for 61.2 per cent of union members but only 17.7 per cent of non members. Professional, associated professional and technical occupations account for 44.4 per cent of union members, although they only account for 22.7 per cent of non members.

1. Trade union membership: National trends

Chart 1.1 shows that historically trade union membership levels reached their peak in 1979 and have since declined through the 1980's and early 1990's. The trend in the historic series shows some similarity with the more recent LFS series where membership levels have stabilised since 1995 despite the fact that there are significant methodological differences between the two series.

Chart 1.1: Trade union membership levels in UK from 1892 to 2009



Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics; Department for Employment (1892-1974); Certification Office (1974-2007/08).

Tables 1.1 and 1.2 show trade union density and membership levels for employees and those in employment in the United Kingdom and in Great Britain respectively. Survey data for the United Kingdom is available from 1995 while for Great Britain it goes back to 1989. This report's focus is mainly on data for the whole of the United Kingdom.

The rate of union density for all employees in the United Kingdom fell for five consecutive years up to 2008 but remained unchanged at 27.4 per cent in 2009. This is largely due to trade union membership falling at broadly the same rate as total employment over the last year.

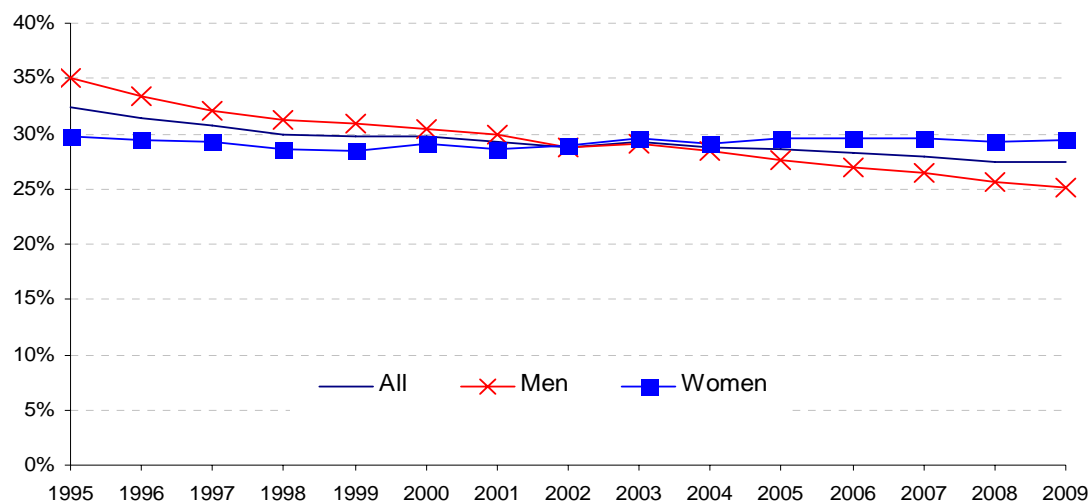
For all in employment, union density in the UK fell for the sixth consecutive year but by a modest rate. Union density fell by 0.2 percentage points to 24.7 per cent in 2009 compared with 24.9 per cent in 2008.

Trade union membership of UK employees fell by 163 thousand to 6.7 million in 2009 compared with 2008. For all in employment, union membership fell by 165 thousand to 7.1 million in 2009 compared with 2008.

Table 1.5 presents a longer historic time series on union membership levels back to 1892 using administrative data from the Department for Employment and Certification Office - there are significant methodological differences between these data and the levels reported by the LFS, these are described in Annex A.

Chart 1.2 provides union density for UK employees by gender. For the eighth consecutive year, women were more likely than men to be a trade union member. This difference is statistically significant.

Chart 1.2: Trade union density by gender, 1995 to 2009



Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics.

Table 1.1 also shows that union density among women employees in the UK rose slightly by 0.2 percentage points to 29.5 per cent in 2009; while for male employees it fell by 0.4 percentage points to 25.2 per cent. The gap between male and female union density continues to widen from 0.3 to 4.3 percentage points in 2002 and in 2009 respectively.

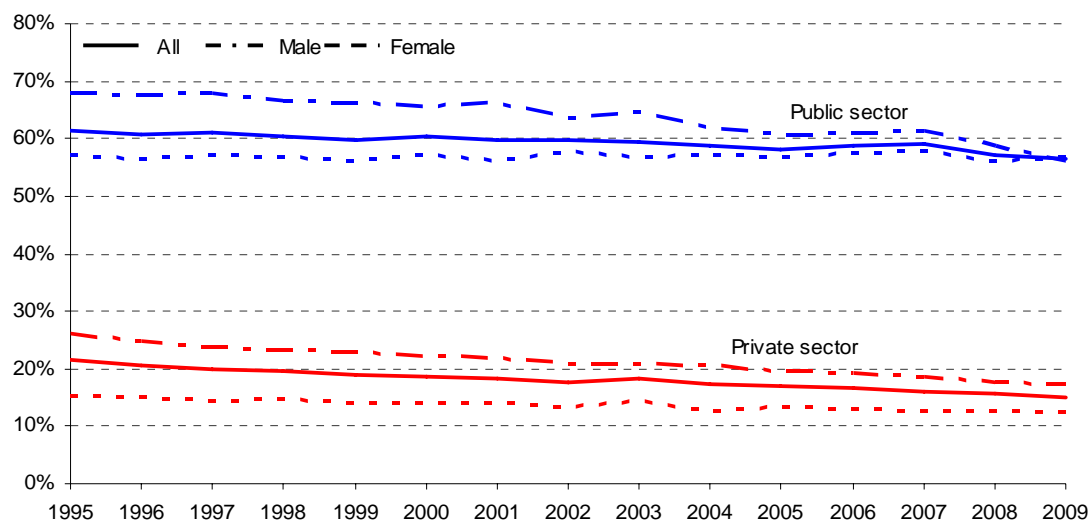
Although trade union density for women picked up slightly in 2009 it was still broadly at the level it has been at since 1995 (apart from 1998 and 1999) of around 29.5 per cent, while for men the decline continues and the union density in 2009 was 9.8 percentage points lower than in 1995.

There is a clear difference between male and female employees in terms of union membership. For UK employees, male membership in 2009 fell by 157 thousand compared with 2008 but only by six thousand for females over the same period – similar results for GB can be found in Table 1.2.

Chart 1.3 shows that although union density for males in either the private or public sectors is generally higher than for females, the gap in both sectors has shown a steady narrowing since 1995 and for the first time in 2009 union density for females in the public sector at 56.8 per cent was marginally higher than for males at 56.2 per cent. In the private sector union density for females was 12.4 per cent, compared with 17.2 per cent for males. In the public sector union density rose by 0.5 percentage points for females but fell by 2.5 percentage points for males.

Despite these figures, overall union density in the UK is higher for female employees, because a greater proportion of women work in the public sector. Of all female UK employees 38.1 per cent work in the public sector compared with only 20.0 per cent of male employees.

Chart 1.3: Trade union density by sector and gender, 1995 to 2009



Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics.

Table 1.3 presents trade union density in GB and in UK by gender for public and private sector employees from 1993 to 2009. It shows that trade union density has generally been falling in both sectors during this period. This contrasts with trade union membership levels which have been rising in the public sector whilst in the private sector they have been falling since 1995. The decline in the trade union density is largely due to trade union membership not keeping pace with total employment changes over this period.

In 2009, 15.1 per cent of all private sector employees in UK were union members, down 0.4 per cent compared with 2008, and down 6.3 per cent compared with 1995. Trade union density of public sector employees fell by 0.5 percentage points to 56.6 per cent from 57.1 per cent in 2008, and down 4.7 per cent compared with 1995.

Table 1.4 shows trade union membership levels in GB and in UK by gender for public and private sector employees. In 2009, 2.6 million private sector employees in UK were union members, down 175 thousand (6.3 per cent) from 2.8 million in 2008, and down 785 thousand (23.1 per cent) from 3.4 million in 1995. In the year to 2009, total private sector employment also fell but at a slower pace.

In the public sector, 4.1 million public sector employees in the UK were union members, up marginally by just under 11 thousand compared with 2008, but up by 374 thousand from 3.7 million in 1995. By comparison, total public sector employment also rose but at a slightly faster rate over the last year.

1.1 Trade union density and membership levels, United Kingdom, 1995 to 2009^a

Per cent, not seasonally adjusted

	Employees		In employment	
	Members ('000's)	Density (per cent)	Members ('000's)	Density (per cent)
People				
1995	7,125	32.4	7,424	28.8
1996	6,969	31.4	7,290	28.1
1997	6,900	30.7	7,185	27.7
1998	6,933	29.9	7,198	27.1
1999	6,981	29.7	7,304	27.1
2000	7,120	29.8	7,418	27.2
2001	7,046	29.3	7,349	26.7
2002	7,025	28.8	7,300	26.3
2003	7,115	29.3	7,447	26.6
2004	7,061	28.8	7,353	26.0
2005	7,056	28.6	7,371	25.9
2006	7,021	28.3	7,359	25.6
2007	7,005	28.0	7,334	25.3
2008	6,878	27.4	7,219	24.9
2009	6,715	27.4	7,054	24.7
Change from 1995	-410	-5.0	-370	-4.1
Change from 2008	-163	0.0	-165	-0.2
Men				
1995	3,927	35.0	4,157	29.7
1996	3,771	33.3	4,019	28.6
1997	3,723	32.1	3,921	27.8
1998	3,719	31.2	3,915	27.1
1999	3,749	30.9	3,980	27.2
2000	3,752	30.4	3,952	26.8
2001	3,693	29.9	3,917	26.3
2002	3,604	28.7	3,790	25.1
2003	3,611	29.1	3,844	25.4
2004	3,563	28.4	3,760	24.6
2005	3,474	27.6	3,711	24.1
2006	3,430	27.0	3,649	23.5
2007	3,379	26.4	3,606	23.0
2008	3,278	25.6	3,522	22.5
2009	3,121	25.2	3,344	22.0
Change from 1995	-806	-9.8	-813	-7.7
Change from 2008	-157	-0.4	-178	-0.5
Women				
1995	3,198	29.7	3,267	27.8
1996	3,197	29.5	3,270	27.6
1997	3,177	29.3	3,264	27.6
1998	3,214	28.6	3,283	27.0
1999	3,232	28.4	3,324	27.0
2000	3,367	29.1	3,465	27.7
2001	3,352	28.6	3,432	27.2
2002	3,420	29.0	3,511	27.6
2003	3,504	29.6	3,603	28.0
2004	3,498	29.2	3,593	27.6
2005	3,582	29.6	3,660	27.9
2006	3,591	29.6	3,710	28.1
2007	3,625	29.6	3,728	27.9
2008	3,599	29.3	3,697	27.6
2009	3,593	29.5	3,709	27.8
Change from 1995	395	-0.2	442	0.0
Change from 2008	-6	0.2	12	0.2

Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics.

^a Year on year changes are subject to rounding error.

1.2 Trade union density and membership levels, Great Britain, 1992 to 2009^a

Per cent, not seasonally adjusted

People	Employees		In employment	
	Members ('000's)	Density (per cent)	Members ('000's)	Density (per cent)
1992	6,980	36.2	7,897	32.4
1993	7,010	35.3	7,647	31.3
1994	7,083	33.8	7,405	30.0
1995	6,904	32.2	7,192	28.6
1996	6,747	31.2	7,060	28.0
1997	6,689	30.2	6,972	27.2
1998	6,696	29.7	6,955	26.8
1999	6,765	29.5	7,081	26.9
2000	6,892	29.5	7,185	27.0
2001	6,802	29.0	7,099	26.5
2002	6,769	28.5	7,038	26.0
2003	6,883	29.1	7,207	26.4
2004	6,816	28.5	7,092	25.8
2005	6,804	28.3	7,104	25.6
2006	6,769	28.0	7,095	25.4
2007	6,747	27.6	7,065	25.0
2008	6,647	27.2	6,975	24.7
2009	6,460	27.0	6,780	24.4
Change from 1995	-444	-5.2	-412	-4.2
Change from 2008	-187	-0.2	-195	-0.3
Men				
1992	3,912	40.2	4,576	34.4
1993	3,905	38.8	4,365	32.8
1994	3,946	36.6	4,201	31.1
1995	3,811	34.8	4,030	29.6
1996	3,652	33.1	3,894	28.5
1997	3,621	31.6	3,818	27.3
1998	3,596	30.9	3,786	27.0
1999	3,635	30.7	3,861	27.1
2000	3,635	30.2	3,829	26.6
2001	3,572	29.6	3,788	26.2
2002	3,474	28.4	3,655	24.9
2003	3,499	28.9	3,726	25.2
2004	3,441	28.1	3,624	24.4
2005	3,356	27.3	3,579	23.9
2006	3,317	26.7	3,527	23.3
2007	3,252	26.1	3,468	22.7
2008	3,181	25.5	3,413	22.4
2009	3,011	25.0	3,219	21.8
Change from 1995	-800	-9.3	-811	-7.8
Change from 2008	-170	-0.5	-194	-0.6
Women				
1992	3,069	32.0	3,321	30.0
1993	3,105	31.6	3,281	29.5
1994	3,137	30.7	3,204	28.6
1995	3,093	29.5	3,162	27.6
1996	3,095	29.2	3,166	27.4
1997	3,068	28.7	3,154	27.0
1998	3,100	28.3	3,169	26.7
1999	3,129	28.2	3,220	26.8
2000	3,257	28.8	3,356	27.5
2001	3,230	28.3	3,311	26.9
2002	3,295	28.6	3,383	27.2
2003	3,383	29.3	3,481	27.7
2004	3,375	28.9	3,467	27.4
2005	3,448	29.3	3,525	27.6
2006	3,452	29.2	3,568	27.7
2007	3,496	29.3	3,597	27.7
2008	3,466	29.0	3,562	27.4
2009	3,449	29.1	3,561	27.4
Change from 1995	356	-0.4	399	-0.2
Change from 2008	-17	0.1	-1	0.0

Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics.

^a Year on year changes are subject to rounding error.

1.3 Trade union density by sector, 1993 to 2009^a

Per cent, not seasonally adjusted

	United Kingdom			Great Britain		
	All	Male	Female	All	Male	Female
Private sector						
1993	-	-	-	23.9	29.3	17.1
1994	-	-	-	22.5	27.8	15.8
1995	21.4	26.3	15.4	21.3	26.1	15.3
1996	20.5	24.8	15.1	20.4	24.6	15.0
1997	19.8	23.9	14.5	19.4	23.5	14.1
1998	19.5	23.2	14.7	19.3	23.1	14.5
1999	19.0	22.9	13.9	18.9	22.8	13.8
2000	18.8	22.3	14.1	18.7	22.1	14.1
2001	18.4	21.9	13.9	18.3	21.7	13.7
2002	17.7	21.0	13.4	17.6	20.9	13.3
2003	18.2	21.0	14.4	18.1	21.0	14.3
2004	17.3	20.6	12.8	17.1	20.5	12.7
2005	16.9	19.5	13.4	16.8	19.3	13.4
2006	16.5	19.1	13.1	16.4	19.0	12.9
2007	16.1	18.5	12.8	15.9	18.3	12.8
2008	15.5	17.6	12.7	15.4	17.6	12.6
2009	15.1	17.2	12.4	14.9	16.9	12.2
Change from 1995	-6.3	-9.1	-3.0	-6.4	-9.2	-3.1
Change from 2008	-0.4	-0.4	-0.3	-0.5	-0.6	-0.4
Public sector						
1993	-	-	-	64.1	71.7	59.0
1994	-	-	-	63.8	70.9	59.4
1995	61.3	67.9	57.0	61.1	67.9	56.8
1996	60.7	67.7	56.6	60.5	67.5	56.3
1997	61.2	68.1	57.3	60.7	67.8	56.7
1998	60.4	66.6	56.8	60.1	66.4	56.4
1999	59.9	66.3	56.3	59.8	66.2	56.2
2000	60.3	65.7	57.3	60.1	65.5	56.9
2001	59.7	66.3	56.2	59.4	66.1	55.8
2002	59.8	63.7	57.7	59.3	63.2	57.2
2003	59.4	64.6	56.7	59.2	64.4	56.4
2004	58.7	61.9	57.1	58.4	61.6	56.7
2005	58.2	60.6	56.9	57.7	60.4	56.3
2006	58.7	61.0	57.5	58.3	60.6	57.1
2007	59.0	61.3	57.8	58.6	60.9	57.5
2008	57.1	58.7	56.3	56.8	58.5	55.8
2009	56.6	56.2	56.8	56.3	56.0	56.4
Change from 1995	-4.7	-11.7	-0.2	-4.8	-11.9	-0.4
Change from 2008	-0.5	-2.5	0.5	-0.5	-2.5	0.6

Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics.

^a Year on year changes are subject to rounding error.

1.4 Trade union membership levels by sector, 1993 to 2009^a

Thousands, not seasonally adjusted

	United Kingdom			Great Britain		
	All	Male	Female	All	Male	Female
Private sector						
1993	-	-	-	3,380	2,289	1,091
1994	-	-	-	3,432	2,374	1,057
1995	3,397	2,320	1,077	3,308	2,260	1,048
1996	3,301	2,240	1,061	3,208	2,174	1,034
1997	3,265	2,245	1,020	3,189	2,198	991
1998	3,353	2,254	1,099	3,255	2,190	1,065
1999	3,313	2,270	1,043	3,223	2,211	1,012
2000	3,309	2,240	1,069	3,216	2,173	1,043
2001	3,278	2,220	1,058	3,175	2,152	1,023
2002	3,191	2,164	1,027	3,099	2,103	996
2003	3,214	2,127	1,087	3,130	2,073	1,056
2004	3,057	2,095	961	2,967	2,035	932
2005	2,996	1,980	1,017	2,906	1,917	989
2006	2,970	1,974	996	2,876	1,917	959
2007	2,914	1,926	988	2,823	1,863	960
2008	2,787	1,816	971	2,708	1,767	941
2009	2,612	1,687	926	2,510	1,623	887
Change from 1995	-785	-633	-151	-798	-637	-161
Change from 2008	-175	-129	-45	-198	-144	-54
Public sector						
1993	-	-	-	3,624	1,614	2,009
1994	-	-	-	3,651	1,572	2,079
1995	3,728	1,607	2,121	3,596	1,551	2,045
1996	3,668	1,531	2,136	3,539	1,478	2,061
1997	3,635	1,477	2,158	3,500	1,423	2,078
1998	3,580	1,464	2,116	3,442	1,406	2,036
1999	3,668	1,479	2,189	3,542	1,425	2,117
2000	3,811	1,513	2,298	3,676	1,462	2,214
2001	3,768	1,473	2,294	3,627	1,420	2,207
2002	3,834	1,440	2,394	3,670	1,371	2,299
2003	3,901	1,484	2,418	3,753	1,426	2,327
2004	4,005	1,468	2,537	3,849	1,406	2,443
2005	4,060	1,495	2,565	3,898	1,440	2,458
2006	4,051	1,456	2,595	3,893	1,400	2,493
2007	4,091	1,453	2,638	3,925	1,389	2,536
2008	4,091	1,463	2,628	3,939	1,414	2,525
2009	4,102	1,435	2,667	3,951	1,388	2,562
Change from 1995	374	-172	546	355	-163	517
Change from 2008	11	-28	39	12	-26	37

Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics.

^a Year on year changes are subject to rounding error.

1.5 Trade union membership, 1892 to 2007/08

Thousands

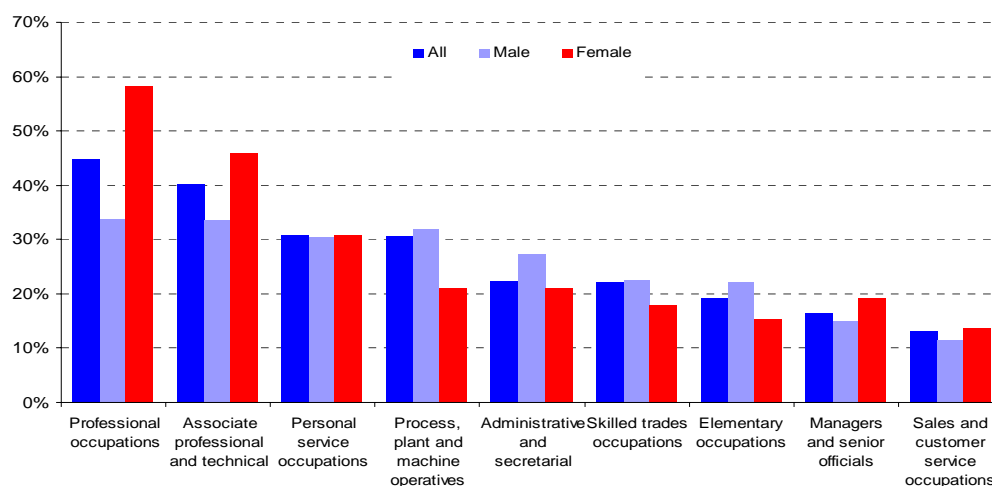
Trade union members		Trade union members	
1892	1,576	1950	9,289
1893	1,559	1951	9,535
1894	1,530	1952	9,588
1895	1,504	1953	9,527
1896	1,608	1954	9,566
1897	1,731	1955	9,741
1898	1,752	1956	9,778
1899	1,911	1957	9,829
1900	2,022	1958	9,639
1901	2,025	1959	9,623
1902	2,013	1960	9,835
1903	1,994	1961	9,916
1904	1,967	1962	10,014
1905	1,997	1963	10,067
1906	2,210	1964	10,218
1907	2,513	1965	10,325
1908	2,485	1966	10,259
1909	2,477	1967	10,191
1910	2,565	1968	10,193
1911	3,139	1969	10,472
1912	3,416	1970	11,179
1913	4,135	1971	11,128
1914	4,145	1972	11,350
1915	4,359	1973	11,444
1916	4,644	1974	11,755
1917	5,499	1974	11,044
1918	6,533	1975	11,656
1919	7,926	1976	12,133
1920	8,348	1977	12,719
1921	6,633	1978	13,054
1922	5,625	1979	13,212
1923	5,429	1980	12,636
1924	5,544	1981	12,311
1925	5,506	1982	11,744
1926	5,219	1983	11,300
1927	4,919	1984	10,774
1928	4,806	1985	10,819
1929	4,858	1986	10,598
1930	4,842	1987	10,480
1931	4,624	1988	10,387
1932	4,444	1989	10,044
1933	4,392	1990	9,810
1934	4,590	1991	9,489
1935	4,867	1992	8,929
1936	5,295	1993	8,666
1937	5,842	1994	8,231
1938	6,053	1995	8,031
1939	6,298	1996	7,938
1940	6,613	1997	7,801
1941	7,165	1998	7,852
1942	7,867	1999-2000	7,898
1943	8,174	2000-2001	7,779
1944	8,087	2001-2002	7,751
1945	7,875	2002-2003	7,736
1946	8,803	2003-2004	7,559
1947	9,145	2004-2005	7,473
1948	9,362	2005-2006	7,603
1949	9,318	2006-2007	7,628
		2007-2008	7,656

Source: 1892-1974 - Department of Employment Statistics Division; 1974-2007/08 - Certification Office
 - See Annex A for more detail on this series, and page 24 of CO's latest report at
<http://www.certoffice.org/annualReport/pdf/Full%20report%2008-09.pdf> .

2. Trade union membership: Personal, work and job characteristics

Chart 2.1 shows that union density was highest in professional occupations at 44.9 per cent whilst sales occupations had the lowest at 13.1 per cent.

Chart 2.1: Trade union density by gender and occupation, 2009



Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics.

Females were generally more likely to be union members than male employees and this relationship holds whether by age, in the public sector, workplace size, job or other individual characteristics. The only exceptions were in the younger ages (16 to 24 age band – see Chart 2.2 below), private sector, home workers, lower qualified (GCE A level or equivalent and below) employees.

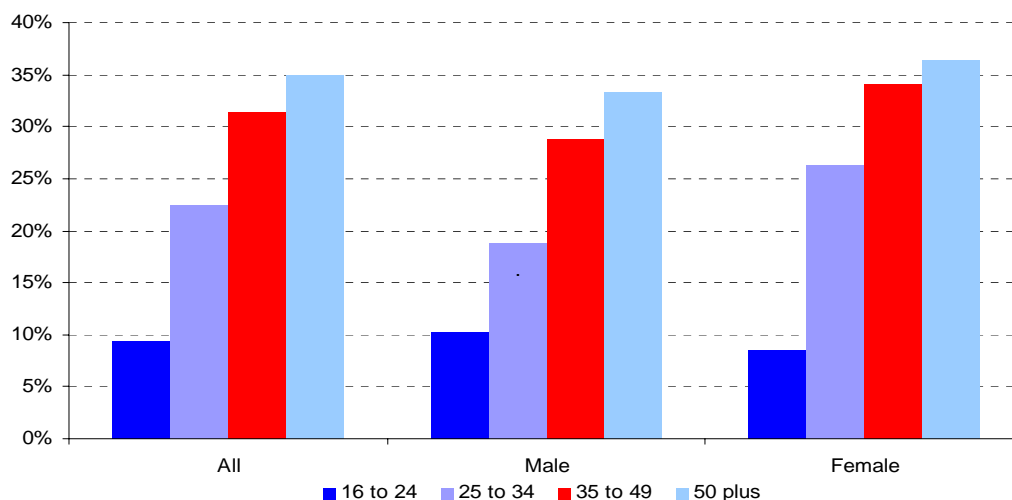
By occupation, females had higher union densities than males in 2009 in all groups except administrative & secretarial, skilled trades, operatives and elementary occupations.

In 2009, full time employees had higher union densities than part timers in nearly all the characteristics listed. The only exceptions were amongst professional and associate professional occupations, managers or supervisor, employees with a degree, those with dependent children under six and low/high income earners. Similarly, permanent employees were more likely than those in temporary job to be union members in all categories of employment.

Tables 2.1 and 2.2 give union density for UK employees by gender, full-time/part-time and permanent/ temporary status for a number of personal, work and job characteristics like age, sector, occupation and industry.

Chart 2.2 shows trade union density by gender and age bands in 2009.

Chart 2.2: Trade union density by gender and age bands, 2009

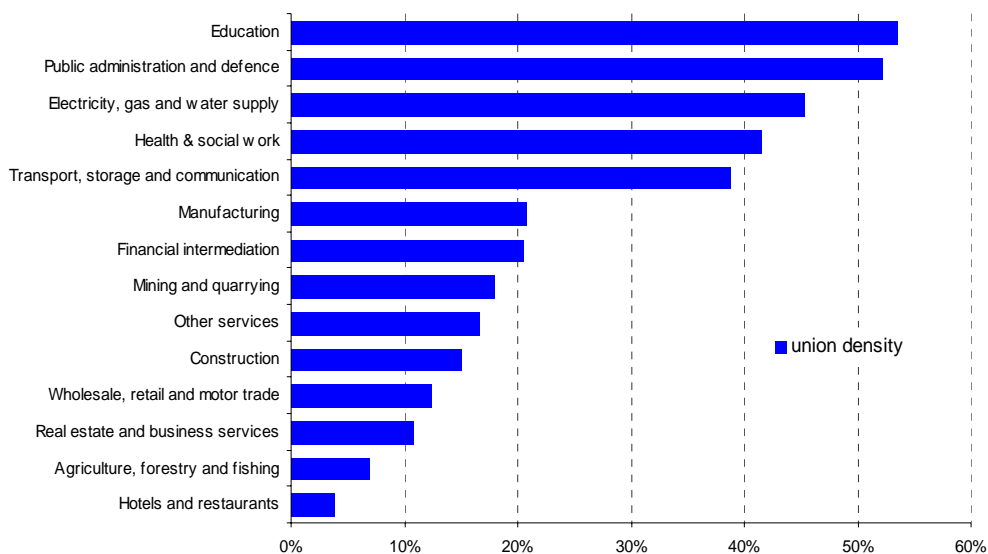


Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics.

Chart 2.3 shows trade union density by industry. Education and public administration and had the highest rates of union density at 53.6 and 52.2 per cent respectively whilst agriculture (7.0 per cent) and hotels and restaurants (3.9 per cent) had the lowest.

Females had higher union densities only in hotels, financial sector and in education. Trade union density was highest for men in the public administration and defence whilst for women this was in education at around 54 per cent each.

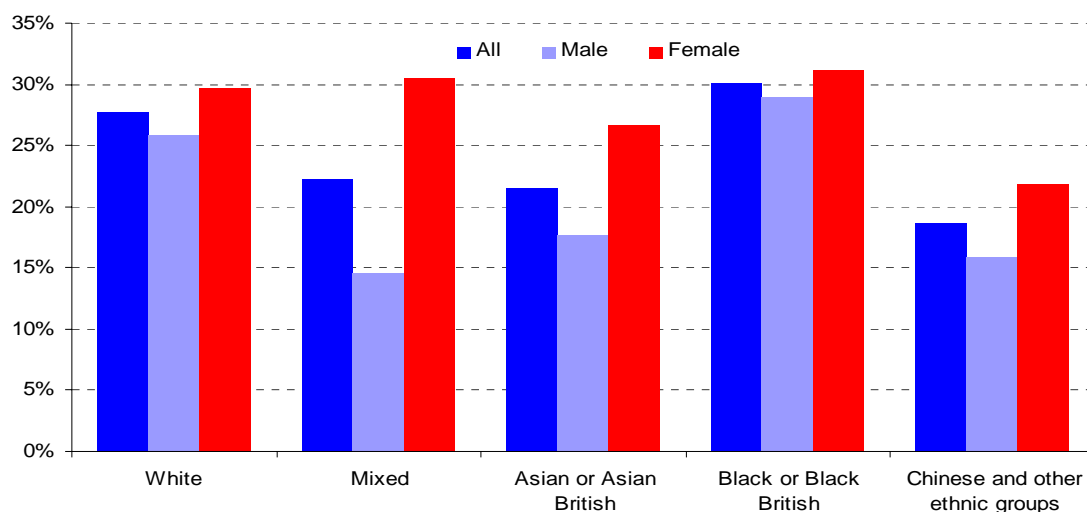
Chart 2.3: Trade union density by industry, 2009



Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics.

Chart 2.4 shows that union density was highest in black or black British employees at 30.1 per cent in 2009, this was followed by “white” employees at 27.8 per cent, and by Asian or Asian British and “mixed ethnic background” employees at around 22.0 per cent each. Chinese and other ethnic groups had the lowest union density at just 18.6 per cent.

Chart 2.4: Trade union density by ethnicity, 2009



Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics.

Employees of a UK nationality have a higher union density of 28.1 per cent compared with non UK nationals at 21.4 per cent. Similarly, UK born employees had higher union density (28.4 per cent) than non UK born (20.2 per cent).

Larger workplaces (with more than 50 employees) had higher union density (37.0 per cent) compared with 17.2 per cent for those with fewer than 50 employees.

Amongst managers or supervisors, women had higher union densities (over 36.0 per cent) compared with men (under 30.0 per cent). In non-managerial or non-supervisory roles, union density for women was slightly higher for the first time for women than men (25.5 per cent compared with 25.3 per cent). For all employees, the difference in union density between managerial and non-managerial jobs was fairly small, with 28.6 per cent of employees in managerial positions being union members, compared with 25.4 per cent of employees in non-managerial positions.

It is worthy to note that union density is greater in employees in managerial positions working part time than working full time (29.3 per cent compared with 28.6 per cent).

Union density is higher for permanent employees (28.1 per cent) when compared with temporary employees (16.1 per cent). This difference also exists when looking at male and female employees and whether they work in the public or private sector.

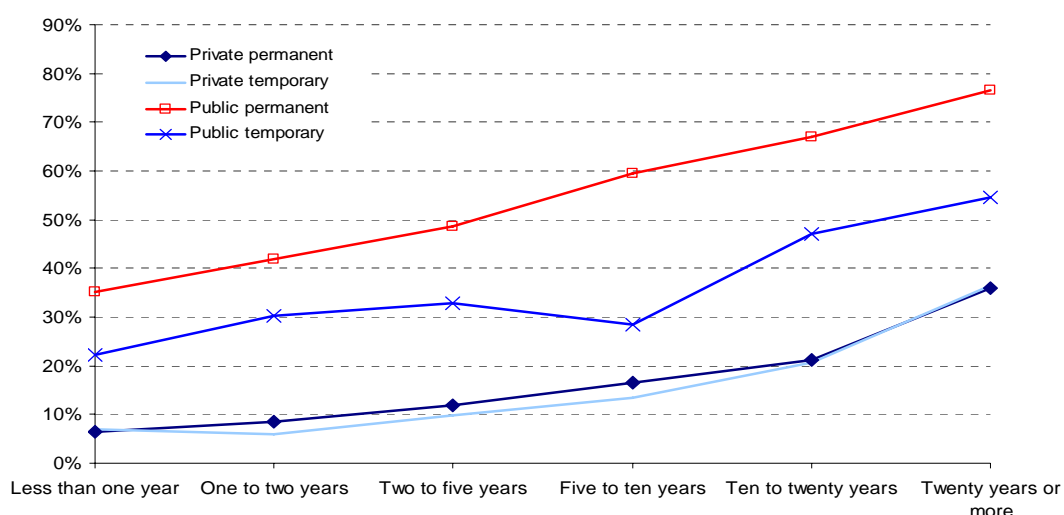
Employees, who have a degree or have been through higher education equivalent to NVQ level 4, reported higher rates of union membership, 34.7

and 39.0 per cent respectively. Female employees with a degree had a significantly higher union density (42.7 per cent) than their male counterpart at 27.0 per cent.

As noted before, union membership tended to rise with length of service and those employees with twenty years or more service had the highest union density at 53.3 per cent. This applies across gender and whether on full or part time basis. As expected, employees with less than one years' service were less likely to be union members, with just 11.6 per cent, although this has increased slightly from 11.0 per cent in 2008.

Chart 2.4 shows trade union density, length of service and employment status by sector. For both permanent and temporary employment statuses it demonstrates that trade union membership, regardless of length of service, is higher for public than private sector employees. In addition, there is hardly any difference in union density between permanent and temporary private sector employees irrespective of length of service.

Chart 2.4: Trade union density, permanency and length of service by sector, 2009



Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics.

Middle-income earners were more likely to be union members than either low paid or highly paid employees. Employees earning between £500 and £999 per week reported higher union densities (38.7 per cent) than those earning either less than £250 per week (14.8 per cent) or £1,000 or more per week (23.2 per cent).

2.1 Trade union density by gender, full/ part time and permanent/ temporary status, 2009

Per cent, not seasonally adjusted

	All	Gender		Full-time / part-time status		Permanent / temporary jobs	
		Male	Female	Full-time	Part-time	Permanent	Temporary
All employees	27.4	25.2	29.5	29.6	21.6	28.1	16.1
Age bands							
16 to 24	9.4	10.3	8.5	12.4	5.0	10.1	5.3
25 to 34	22.4	18.8	26.3	23.3	18.6	23.0	14.3
35 to 49	31.5	28.8	34.1	32.6	28.0	32.0	19.1
50 plus	34.9	33.3	36.4	38.7	26.8	35.2	28.7
Sector							
Private	15.1	17.2	12.4	17.0	9.8	15.5	8.1
Public	56.6	56.2	56.8	61.4	45.5	58.8	29.4
Occupation							
Managers and senior officials	16.5	15.0	19.1	17.0	11.2	16.6	*
Professional occupations	44.9	33.7	58.3	44.3	47.6	45.5	38.5
Associate professional and technical occupations	40.2	33.6	46.0	39.4	43.8	41.3	20.4
Administrative and secretarial occupations	22.5	27.3	21.1	24.4	19.1	23.4	7.1
Skilled trade occupations	22.2	22.6	17.9	23.4	*	22.5	*
Personal service occupations	30.8	30.5	30.8	34.6	26.2	31.8	18.8
Sales and customer service occupations	13.1	11.6	13.8	15.5	11.4	14.0	*
Process, plant and machine operatives	30.7	32.0	21.0	32.8	12.1	31.7	*
Elementary occupations	19.1	22.3	15.5	25.8	12.0	20.7	*
Industry							
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	7.0	*	*	8.2	*	7.5	*
Mining and quarrying	18.0	19.7	*	19.1	*	18.8	*
Manufacturing	20.8	24.2	10.6	22.1	6.3	21.2	11.2
Electricity, gas and water supply	45.3	50.5	31.4	46.0	*	46.9	*
Construction	15.1	15.3	14.0	15.7	*	15.3	*
Wholesale, retail and motor trade	12.4	12.6	12.2	13.5	10.8	13.0	*
Hotels and restaurants	3.9	3.1	4.6	4.7	3.1	4.1	*
Transport, storage and communication	38.8	42.0	29.3	40.6	27.1	40.6	*
Financial intermediation	20.5	15.4	25.6	19.1	27.6	21.0	*
Real estate and business services	10.9	11.7	9.9	11.5	8.8	11.1	7.4
Public administration and defence	52.2	54.0	50.6	53.9	45.1	54.2	17.1
Education	53.6	52.8	53.9	62.3	39.6	55.4	38.2
Health & social work	41.6	42.5	41.4	46.4	33.3	42.7	23.8
Other services	16.7	18.7	14.8	19.9	10.8	17.2	11.4

Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

2.2

Trade union density – Personal, work and job characteristics, 2009

Per cent, not seasonally adjusted

	All	Gender		Full-time / part-time status	
		Male	Female	Full-time	Part-time
All Employees	27.4	25.2	29.5	29.6	21.6
Workplace size					
Less than 50	17.2	13.4	20.5	18.8	14.0
50 or more	37.0	35.1	39.0	37.8	33.6
Ethnic group					
White	27.8	25.8	29.7	29.9	22.1
Mixed	22.3	14.5	30.6	22.4	*
Asian or Asian British	21.5	17.7	26.7	24.7	13.4
Black or Black British	30.1	29.0	31.2	33.6	19.7
Chinese and other ethnic groups	18.6	15.9	21.9	20.8	12.5
Nationality					
UK, British	28.1	26.0	30.2	30.4	22.2
Other	21.4	19.6	23.4	23.2	16.0
Country of Birth					
UK	28.4	26.2	30.5	30.7	22.3
Other	20.2	18.2	22.4	21.9	15.2
Managerial status					
Manager	28.6	23.3	36.6	28.6	29.3
Foreman or supervisor	35.1	29.7	40.8	35.1	35.5
Not manager or supervisor	25.4	25.3	25.5	28.8	19.1
Flexible working status					
Flexible working pattern	36.2	35.1	37.1	38.7	27.9
Not flexible working pattern	44.5	42.7	45.5	52.1	33.4
Home workers	8.8	10.8	7.3	10.3	6.9
Highest qualification					
Degree or equivalent	34.7	27.0	42.7	34.7	34.9
Higher Education	39.0	31.1	45.1	39.7	37.0
GCE A Level or equiv	24.4	25.7	22.7	27.5	15.9
GCSE grades A-C or equiv	21.5	22.6	20.7	24.5	15.6
Other qualifications	21.7	22.5	20.7	23.1	18.4
No qualification	19.5	21.5	17.6	23.1	14.2
Dependent children					
No dependent children	27.6	25.5	29.7	29.5	20.7
Dependent child under six	25.2	22.2	28.4	24.8	26.1
Dependent child six or over	27.8	25.8	29.5	31.5	21.3
Disability					
Disabled	33.3	32.2	34.2	37.7	24.7
Not disabled	26.5	24.3	28.7	28.4	20.9
Length of service					
Less than one year	11.6	10.3	12.9	14.5	6.8
One to two years	15.9	14.7	17.1	17.9	11.7
Two to five years	19.9	18.7	21.1	21.0	16.7
Five to ten years	30.4	27.0	33.6	31.9	25.8
Ten to twenty years	38.0	33.3	42.4	38.6	36.1
Twenty years or more	53.3	50.3	57.2	54.5	48.8
Permanent or temporary status					
Permanent	28.1	26.0	30.3	30.1	22.3
Temporary	16.1	13.4	18.6	16.2	16.0
Weekly earnings in main job					
Less than £250	14.8	9.4	16.9	13.4	15.3
£250 to £499	28.9	24.9	33.3	27.2	42.2
£500 to £999	38.7	34.3	47.4	39.0	31.9
£1000 and above	23.2	20.8	31.6	23.1	*

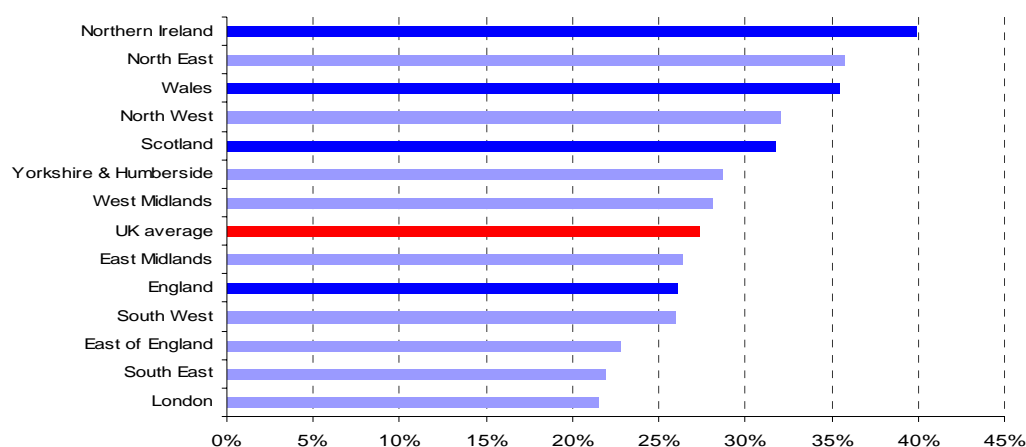
Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics.

3. Trade union membership: Trends over time

Chart 3.1 shows trade union density by nation and government office regions within the English regions. Amongst nations, Northern Ireland had the highest union density (39.9 per cent of employees); this was followed by Wales (35.4 per cent) and Scotland (31.8 per cent) whilst England had the lowest (26.1 per cent).

Among the English government office regions, the North East continued to have the highest union density (35.7 per cent) whereas London had the lowest (21.5 per cent), following a sharp fall of 2.2 percentage points from 2008. Four regions: the North East, North West, Yorkshire and the Humber and West Midlands had higher union density than the UK average.

Chart 3.1: Trade union density by nation and region, 2009



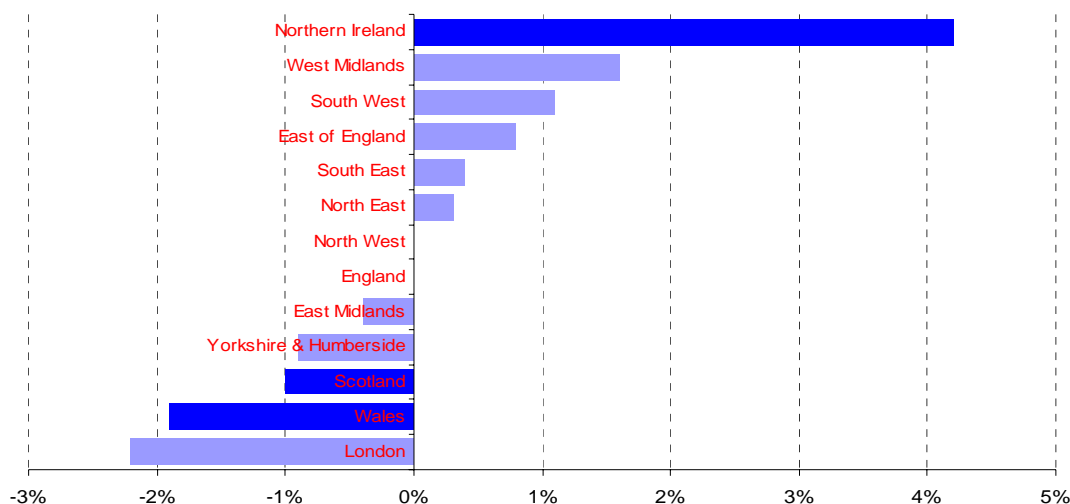
Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics.

Chart 3.2 shows changes in union density by nation and region between 1999 and 2009. Over this period, Northern Ireland was the only nation where union density grew by 4.2 percentage points. Union density remained unchanged in England but fell in Wales and Scotland by 1.9 and 1.0 percentage points respectively. Amongst the English regions, London recorded the largest decrease in union density of 2.2 percentage points; this was followed by Yorkshire and Humberside (down 0.9 percentage points) and East Midlands (down 0.4 percentage points). Union density rose in the remaining regions ranging from West Midlands (up by 1.6 percentage points), to the South West and East of England (up around one percentage point each) and to the South East and North East (up around half a percentage point) - the North West remained unchanged.

Tables 3.1 and 3.2 show union density and union membership levels respectively by nation and government office region from 1999 to 2009. In the last decade, trade union membership levels in England fell by 116 thousand and in Wales and Scotland fell by around 35 thousand each but in Northern Ireland it grew by 23 thousand employees.

Of the English regions, trade union membership grew in West Midlands and the South West by some 20 thousand and in the North East and East of England by under five thousand but fell in all other regions ranging from London and Yorkshire and Humberside with the largest decrease of 82 and 36 thousand respectively, to East Midlands, North West and South East which recorded falls up to 20 thousand.

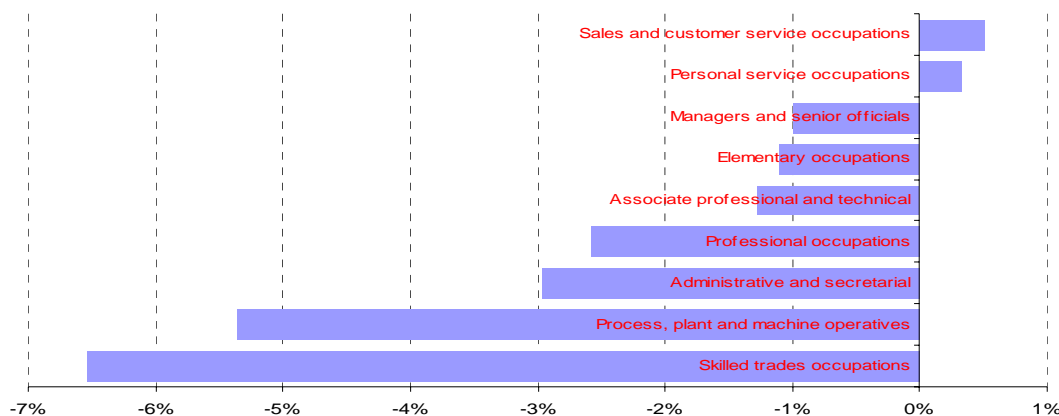
Chart 3.2: Change in trade union density by nation and region (percentage point change from 1999 to 2009)



Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics.

Chart 3.3 shows changes in union density by occupation between 2002 and 2009. Over this period, union density grew only in sales and personal service occupations by 0.5 and 0.3 percentage points respectively but fell in all other occupations ranging from managerial, associate professionals and elementary occupations by around 1.0 percentage point each down to skilled trades and operatives by just over 5.0 percentage point.

Chart 3.3: Change in trade union density by occupation (percentage point change from 2002 to 2009)

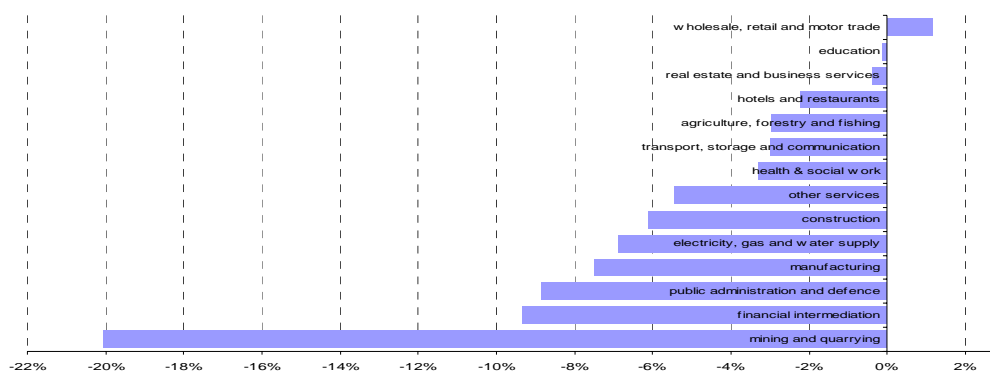


Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics.

Table 3.3 shows union density by major occupation groups and gender for all UK employees from 2002 to 2009.

Chart 3.4 shows changes in union density by industry between 1999 and 2009. During this period, union density grew only in retail industries by 1.1 percentage point but fell in all other industries. The sharpest fall in union density was in the mining industry (down 20 percentage points) with the rest falling by under 10 percentage points. Table 3.4 shows union density by industry between 1999 and 2009.

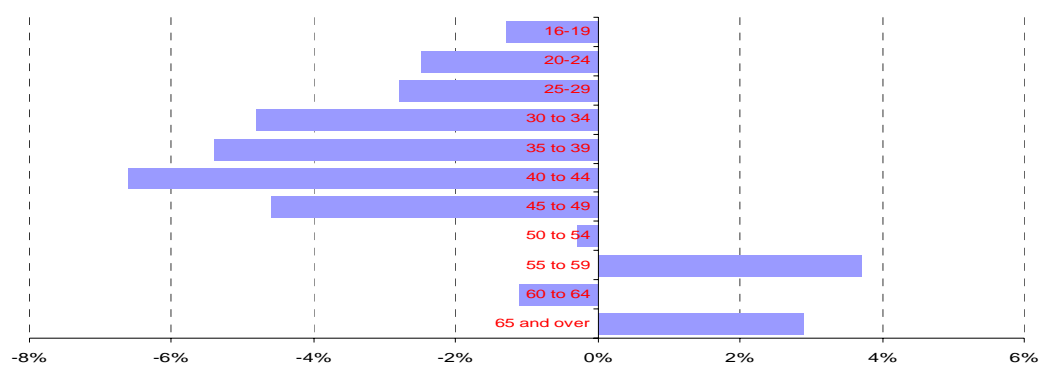
Chart 3.4: Change in trade union density by industry (percentage point change from 1999 to 2009)



Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics.

Chart 3.5 shows changes in union density by age band between 1999 and 2009. During this period, union densities fell in all ages except 55 to 59 and 65 to 69 groups - ranging from the 40 to 44 year old age group which showed the largest decrease of 6.6 percentage points; the 35 to 39 and 45 to 49 year old age groups which declined by around 5.0 percentage points but the remaining age groups showed smaller decreases. Union density increased in the 55 to 59 and 65 and over age groups by 3.7 and 2.9 percentage points respectively.

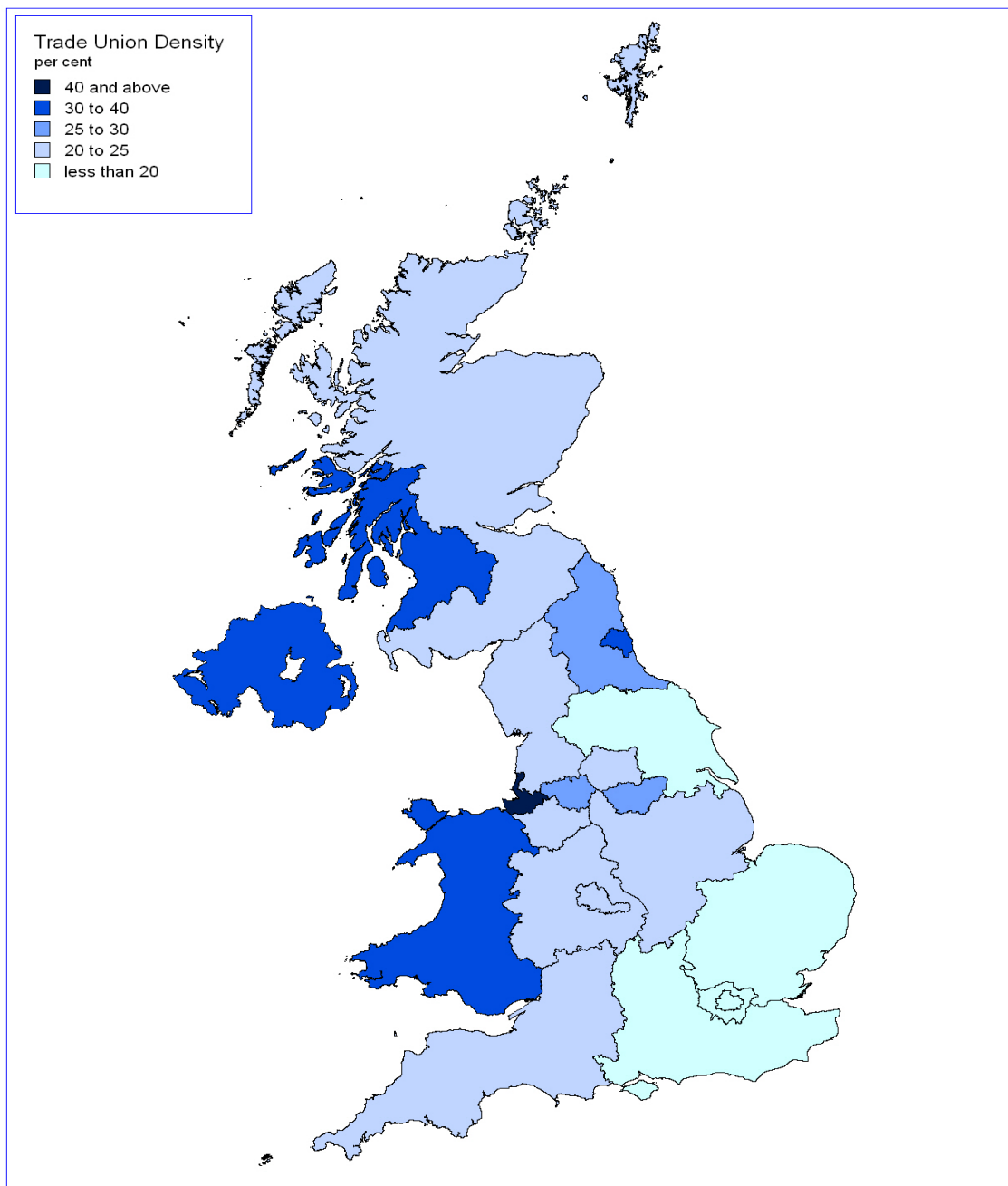
Chart 3.5: Change in trade union density by age band (percentage point change from 1999 to 2009)



Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics.

Table 3.5 shows union density by gender and age groups from 1995 to 2009 and Chart 3.6 shows union density across the regions of the UK.

Chart 3.6: Trade union density of UK employees, 2009

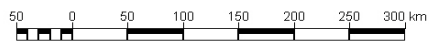


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April 2010



Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

3.1 Trade union density by nation and region, 1999 to 2009

Per cent, not seasonally adjusted

	1995	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Nation												
England	30.8	28.3	28.4	27.8	27.3	28.1	27.5	27.3	26.8	26.6	26.1	26.1
Wales	44.3	39.3	39.8	39.0	39.7	37.2	37.3	34.2	35.8	37.3	37.3	35.4
Scotland	38.9	35.4	34.8	35.3	34.2	34.4	33.0	34.0	34.4	32.6	32.8	31.8
Northern Ireland	42.3	37.8	38.4	40.7	41.7	39.5	39.7	40.9	39.6	39.8	35.7	39.9
Regions												
North East	43.1	39.8	40.2	40.6	38.7	37.4	36.8	36.5	38.6	35.7	35.4	35.7
North West	38.9	34.4	35.9	34.3	33.5	33.8	34.8	32.9	34.2	34.2	32.1	32.1
Yorkshire and The Humber	34.3	33.8	32.7	31.7	32.0	32.9	30.0	30.5	28.4	30.0	29.6	28.7
East Midlands	31.7	29.8	30.6	28.3	27.1	28.4	26.9	28.6	26.7	26.8	26.8	26.4
West Midlands	32.8	29.5	29.7	29.9	30.1	29.8	28.2	29.6	28.2	28.0	26.5	28.1
East of England	25.4	23.9	23.7	23.0	22.4	24.4	24.8	23.7	23.3	22.3	22.0	22.8
London	29.7	25.7	23.8	24.2	24.2	25.4	24.9	24.3	24.7	24.2	23.7	21.5
South East	23.2	22.1	22.7	22.7	21.5	21.6	22.6	21.7	21.4	21.0	21.5	21.9
South West	27.6	26.0	26.7	26.0	25.9	27.3	25.4	26.5	24.7	24.7	24.9	26.0

Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics.

3.2 Trade union membership by nation and region, 1999 to 2009^a

Thousands

	1995	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Nation												
England	5,703	5,632	5,731	5,661	5,601	5,735	5,662	5,671	5,593	5,607	5,504	5,381
Wales	434	412	425	408	437	420	430	392	408	426	424	386
Scotland	766	721	736	733	731	728	724	742	768	719	724	693
Northern Ireland	221	216	228	243	256	233	246	252	253	257	231	254
Regions												
North East	401	376	386	398	374	373	367	366	392	371	357	362
North West	974	919	974	926	919	937	971	912	956	955	885	864
Yorkshire and The Humber	648	670	657	631	650	681	624	645	596	638	626	589
East Midlands	525	512	529	498	486	510	485	532	496	493	512	490
West Midlands	666	623	635	648	659	635	614	648	608	616	570	589
East of England	526	532	551	538	514	567	576	553	533	533	527	530
London	761	746	689	718	727	742	733	711	737	734	730	652
South East	724	748	781	783	740	738	777	757	754	745	770	761
South West	479	508	528	522	532	553	516	546	522	523	527	544

Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics.

^a Membership levels are based on the new improved methodology as described in Annex A.

3.3

Trade union density by major occupation groups, 2002 to 2009

	Per cent, not seasonally adjusted							
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
All employees								
Managers and senior officials	17.5	19.2	18.6	18.7	16.8	17.4	17.1	16.5
Professional occupations	47.5	48.3	48.5	48.3	46.8	47.1	44.3	44.9
Associate professional and technical occupations	41.5	44.0	42.4	41.5	42.7	41.5	39.6	40.2
Administrative and secretarial occupations	25.5	24.4	23.6	24.1	23.6	22.8	23.1	22.5
Skilled trade occupations	28.7	27.3	25.8	24.2	23.8	24.7	23.3	22.2
Personal service occupations	30.5	29.7	30.0	29.9	30.4	30.4	30.6	30.8
Sales and customer service occupations	12.6	12.3	12.6	11.6	12.7	12.2	13.2	13.1
Process, plant and machine operatives	36.1	34.7	34.6	34.3	33.3	29.9	31.9	30.7
Elementary occupations	20.2	21.9	21.0	20.4	20.4	20.3	19.2	19.1
Male								
Managers and senior officials	15.4	17.4	17.0	16.7	15.1	15.9	15.1	15.0
Professional occupations	37.3	38.3	37.7	37.9	36.0	37.2	32.8	33.7
Associate professional and technical occupations	37.0	38.3	38.6	35.7	37.0	35.5	34.2	33.6
Administrative and secretarial occupations	30.2	30.1	28.6	30.6	28.6	27.9	29.8	27.3
Skilled trade occupations	28.9	27.9	26.5	24.0	24.4	25.4	23.9	22.6
Personal service occupations	36.4	39.3	35.3	38.4	36.8	33.8	32.1	30.5
Sales and customer service occupations	12.4	10.2	11.0	8.7	11.8	8.9	12.4	11.6
Process, plant and machine operatives	38.0	36.4	37.0	35.6	34.5	30.9	32.9	32.0
Elementary occupations	24.7	26.2	24.9	24.1	24.1	22.6	21.9	22.3
Female								
Managers and senior officials	21.8	22.7	21.9	22.3	20.1	20.1	20.8	19.1
Professional occupations	61.1	61.0	61.6	60.7	59.9	59.0	57.9	58.3
Associate professional and technical occupations	46.0	49.5	46.0	46.8	47.8	46.7	44.7	46.0
Administrative and secretarial occupations	24.3	23.0	22.4	22.3	22.3	21.4	21.3	21.1
Skilled trade occupations	27.2	21.7	18.5	26.0	16.8	16.5	16.6	17.9
Personal service occupations	29.4	27.9	29.0	28.4	29.2	29.7	30.4	30.8
Sales and customer service occupations	12.7	13.2	13.3	12.8	13.1	13.7	13.6	13.8
Process, plant and machine operatives	26.2	26.3	21.2	25.7	26.2	22.8	25.0	21.0
Elementary occupations	15.4	17.0	16.3	16.2	16.0	17.4	16.0	15.5

Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics.

3.4 Trade union density by industry, 1999 to 2009

Per cent, not seasonally adjusted

	1995	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
All employees												
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	7.7	10.0	10.4	9.3	*	*	*	9.4	8.8	7.9	7.0	7.0
Mining and quarrying	35.5	38.1	34.0	27.6	25.5	32.9	25.0	21.2	23.4	23.1	18.6	18.0
Manufacturing	32.3	28.3	27.6	26.8	25.8	25.4	24.7	24.9	22.2	21.8	20.4	20.8
Electricity, gas and water supply	66.1	52.2	57.2	53.2	50.4	43.4	47.8	47.0	49.1	45.6	41.7	45.3
Construction	26.4	21.2	20.0	19.3	16.9	19.0	17.0	14.8	15.8	15.5	14.5	15.1
Wholesale, retail and motor trade	11.0	11.3	11.4	11.6	11.1	11.8	11.4	10.8	11.1	11.3	11.9	12.4
Hotels and restaurants	7.9	6.1	6.0	5.7	6.3	5.5	5.0	4.2	5.6	4.9	5.3	3.9
Transport, storage & communication	48.9	41.8	41.3	41.9	40.9	42.6	41.5	40.9	41.0	40.1	39.2	38.8
Financial intermediation	37.3	29.8	30.9	25.7	27.3	26.5	25.2	24.9	24.0	22.3	20.8	20.5
Real estate and business services	13.2	11.3	10.4	10.5	10.3	10.9	10.6	9.5	10.0	10.2	10.0	10.9
Public administration and defence	59.1	61.1	59.3	59.7	59.7	57.3	56.0	56.5	57.1	56.8	55.8	52.2
Education	55.5	53.7	53.9	53.2	55.0	55.0	55.3	55.5	55.0	55.3	54.1	53.6
Health & social work	48.1	44.9	46.9	45.0	44.6	44.7	43.9	43.5	43.3	43.4	40.7	41.6
Other services	23.6	22.1	21.3	22.1	20.2	22.6	18.2	18.2	20.2	18.6	18.9	16.7
Male												
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	10.2	12.0	11.1	*	*	*	*	*	8.8	9.4	*	*
Mining and quarrying	38.7	41.7	37.0	31.1	28.5	36.2	26.6	23.8	25.5	24.7	19.9	19.7
Manufacturing	36.3	31.9	31.2	30.4	29.4	28.6	28.4	27.7	25.1	25.2	23.4	24.2
Electricity, gas and water supply	74.4	58.7	62.8	58.0	55.8	50.2	50.0	50.6	57.4	49.4	44.5	50.5
Construction	29.3	22.9	21.3	20.8	18.0	20.2	18.6	15.8	17.0	16.3	15.8	15.3
Wholesale, retail and motor trade	9.6	10.7	10.6	10.9	10.7	11.1	11.1	10.5	10.9	10.3	11.3	12.6
Hotels and restaurants	7.2	5.7	4.7	3.7	5.6	4.0	4.0	*	5.0	3.3	5.5	3.1
Transport, storage & communication	54.9	47.9	47.0	47.1	46.3	48.1	47.2	46.1	45.9	44.2	43.7	42.0
Financial intermediation	34.9	24.4	26.0	21.0	21.1	22.1	20.9	20.0	20.8	17.8	15.7	15.4
Real estate and business services	16.0	12.9	11.2	12.6	11.6	11.5	11.5	10.5	10.9	10.6	9.7	11.7
Public administration and defence	63.6	65.6	63.7	65.4	63.4	61.0	58.6	57.5	58.6	60.4	59.0	54.0
Education	67.5	60.8	62.1	61.1	60.6	60.2	59.9	59.0	58.2	59.6	54.6	52.8
Health & social work	53.4	51.9	54.2	52.2	51.4	51.1	48.0	48.3	46.0	43.2	41.1	42.5
Other services	32.8	29.2	28.1	29.1	25.0	28.5	24.0	23.2	26.0	23.6	24.1	18.7
Female												
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	*	*	*	*	*	*	-	*	*	*	*	*
Mining and quarrying	*	*	*	-	-	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Manufacturing	22.0	18.3	17.6	16.7	15.4	16.2	13.5	16.4	13.4	12.1	12.0	10.6
Electricity, gas and water supply	39.4	37.4	43.5	38.5	33.7	*	41.8	*	28.9	34.3	32.6	31.4
Construction	11.1	*	11.4	*	*	11.2	7.6	9.2	8.9	10.0	6.5	14.0
Wholesale, retail and motor trade	12.2	11.7	12.0	12.2	11.4	12.5	11.7	11.2	11.2	12.1	12.4	12.2
Hotels and restaurants	8.3	6.3	6.9	7.0	6.8	6.5	5.7	5.3	6.0	6.2	5.2	4.6
Transport, storage & communication	30.6	26.2	25.3	29.2	26.5	26.6	25.1	26.1	28.1	28.2	27.0	29.3
Financial intermediation	39.3	34.6	35.5	29.8	32.8	30.5	29.1	29.4	27.1	27.2	25.7	25.6
Real estate and business services	10.4	9.5	9.5	8.3	8.7	10.0	9.5	8.4	8.9	9.6	10.3	9.9
Public administration and defence	54.2	56.3	55.1	54.8	56.2	53.9	53.5	55.5	55.8	53.5	52.9	50.6
Education	50.5	51.0	50.9	50.3	53.0	53.1	53.8	54.2	53.8	53.9	53.9	53.9
Health & social work	47.1	43.5	45.4	43.5	43.2	43.2	42.9	42.4	42.7	43.5	40.7	41.4
Other services	16.6	16.5	15.6	16.2	16.0	17.4	13.3	13.8	14.9	14.2	13.8	14.8

Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics.

3.5 Trade union density by sex and age groups, 1999 to 2009

Per cent, not seasonally adjusted

	1995	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
All employees												
16 to 19	6.4	5.4	5.4	5.3	4.9	5.2	3.9	3.3	5.2	3.8	4.3	4.1
20 to 24	19.3	14.3	14.3	14.3	13.5	14.0	13.5	13.2	13.1	12.9	12.2	11.8
25 to 29	28.4	23.7	23.1	22.6	22.0	22.4	22.7	21.8	21.9	19.6	20.2	20.9
30 to 34	33.2	28.9	28.2	28.0	26.7	28.5	26.8	26.9	24.7	25.1	24.9	24.1
35 to 39	37.1	33.0	33.5	31.5	32.3	32.5	31.0	29.3	29.0	30.0	27.4	27.6
40 to 44	39.6	37.1	37.2	36.4	35.9	36.1	34.6	35.0	35.2	33.4	33.2	30.5
45 to 49	41.2	40.7	40.3	39.3	39.7	38.8	39.9	37.7	37.7	36.9	35.4	36.1
50 to 54	39.6	37.9	38.5	39.4	39.0	39.8	39.3	40.6	39.9	39.1	38.4	37.6
55 to 59	38.6	35.3	36.7	35.9	34.8	35.4	36.2	37.5	36.4	38.5	38.2	39.0
60 to 64	30.2	31.3	30.7	32.0	28.7	30.6	28.4	27.5	28.4	30.1	28.9	30.2
65 to 69	7.5	13.6	14.4	10.2	14.6	13.3	8.8	15.6	15.3	12.9	19.2	16.5
Over 70	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	9.3	7.9	12.6
Male												
16 to 19	6.8	7.1	7.0	7.0	6.1	6.4	5.3	4.0	7.0	4.7	5.4	5.3
20 to 24	20.1	14.5	15.1	14.1	13.3	13.1	13.4	13.0	13.2	11.8	13.0	12.3
25 to 29	28.0	22.8	22.5	20.5	20.6	20.8	20.5	18.8	20.1	17.0	17.1	17.7
30 to 34	34.3	29.2	26.4	27.3	24.8	26.1	24.9	23.3	21.1	21.6	21.8	20.1
35 to 39	39.5	33.6	34.1	31.9	30.7	32.2	29.7	28.2	27.4	28.5	24.2	24.2
40 to 44	45.9	38.7	38.1	37.4	37.8	35.8	34.5	33.8	33.8	31.1	31.1	28.0
45 to 49	45.9	43.6	42.5	41.3	40.3	38.5	41.4	37.7	36.1	35.8	33.1	34.2
50 to 54	45.1	40.7	39.7	41.2	40.2	41.5	38.4	41.7	39.1	37.9	36.4	35.8
55 to 59	42.4	38.2	39.8	39.2	36.2	37.7	38.2	38.3	36.1	39.4	38.5	37.3
60 to 64	32.8	35.2	32.6	34.6	29.5	33.7	30.4	27.8	29.0	31.1	30.6	30.7
65 to 69	9.0	15.6	16.9	11.6	13.2	10.9	10.2	14.5	15.2	9.5	17.0	13.0
Over 70	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	9.5	7.4	13.6
Female												
16 to 19	6.0	3.7	3.9	3.6	3.7	4.1	2.7	2.7	3.5	3.1	3.3	3.1
20 to 24	18.4	14.1	13.5	14.6	13.7	15.0	13.5	13.3	13.0	14.1	11.4	11.2
25 to 29	28.7	24.8	23.7	24.7	23.5	24.3	25.1	25.1	23.9	22.5	23.7	24.5
30 to 34	32.0	28.6	30.1	28.8	28.7	31.0	28.8	31.1	28.6	29.0	28.2	28.4
35 to 39	34.6	32.3	32.9	31.1	34.0	32.7	32.5	30.5	30.6	31.6	30.7	31.1
40 to 44	33.6	35.5	36.2	35.4	34.1	36.4	34.7	36.2	36.7	35.7	35.3	33.0
45 to 49	36.8	38.0	38.3	37.4	39.1	39.0	38.4	37.6	39.2	38.0	37.5	37.8
50 to 54	34.3	35.2	37.2	37.8	37.7	38.3	40.2	39.7	40.7	40.2	40.2	39.1
55 to 59	34.8	32.0	33.3	32.4	33.4	33.0	34.3	36.7	36.8	37.6	37.9	40.5
60 to 64	26.1	25.5	27.9	28.3	27.6	26.3	25.5	27.2	27.6	28.8	26.6	29.6
65 to 69	6.1	11.4	11.6	8.5	16.1	15.8	7.0	16.8	15.5	16.9	22.0	20.0
Over 70	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	9.0	8.6	11.4

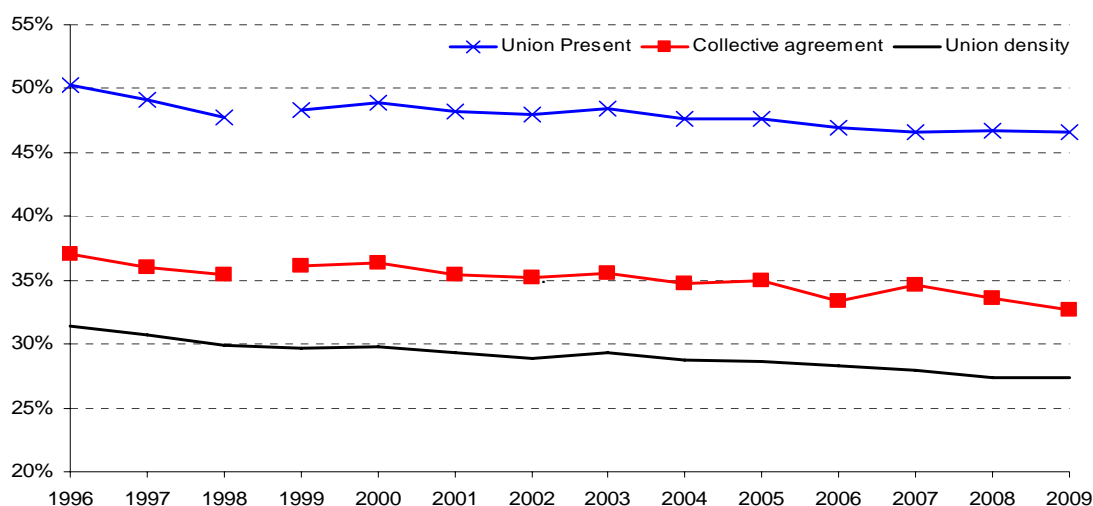
Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics.

4. Trade union presence and collective agreements

Chart 4.1 shows trade union density, collective agreement coverage and union presence in the workplace for UK employees from 1996 to 2009.

Tables 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 provide data on trade union presence and collective agreement coverage for UK employees. Union presence is defined as the proportion of employees whose workplace has a union present and collective agreement is defined as the proportion of employees whose pay and conditions are agreed in negotiations between the employer and a trade union. Note that there was a break in the time-series in 1999 due to changes in the structure of trade union presence and collective agreement questions - Annex A gives explanation for change on routing questions.

Chart 4.1: Union density, collective agreement coverage and union presence in the workplace, 1996 to 2009*



Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics.

*results for 1998 and earlier were routed differently in the LFS questionnaire. This substantially affected the estimate

Trade unions were present in 46.6 per cent of workplaces in 2009, a fall of 1.8 percentage points from 48.4 per cent in 1999. Trade union presence was nearly three times higher amongst public sector employees compared with the private sector at 85.8 and 30.2 per cent respectively. The gap between the sectors was even higher for collective agreements coverage at 68.1 per cent for public sector against 17.8 per cent for the private sector. But these represent only a slight decline in union presence since 1999 for both private and public sector workplaces of 4.3 and 2.0 percentage points respectively.

Table 4.1 also shows the number and proportion of UK employees whose pay and conditions are affected by collective agreements from 1996 to 2009. As discussed above, this could be said to mirror union presence somewhat.

Chart 4.2 shows trade union presence in the workplace for UK employees in 2009. Of the nations, Wales had the largest percentage of employees where a trade union was present in the workplace at 54.8 per cent whilst England had the lowest at 45.8 per cent. Amongst the English regions, North East had the

highest (56.1) percentage of employees with trade union at their workplaces and the lowest was in London and the South East at just over 40.0 per cent each.

As expected, public administration and defence industry and education had the highest trade union presence at around 82.0 per cent each, whilst hotels and restaurants industry had the lowest at just 9.6 per cent. The pattern for coverage of collective agreements within industry was similar.

Table 4.2 shows union density, trade union presence and coverage of collective agreements for UK employees by sector, industry, workplace size and region in 2009.

Chart 4.3 shows trade union collective agreement coverage for UK employees in 2009. This shows that Northern Ireland had the highest proportion of employees covered at 47.7 per cent, a rise of 4.4 percentage points compared with 2008, while London had the lowest coverage at 26.4 per cent, a fall of 1.7 percentage points compared with 2008.

Full-time employees had a higher proportion of collective agreement coverage at 34.2 per cent compared with part-time employees at 28.6 per cent. Similarly, collective agreement coverage was higher for permanent employees at 33.1 per cent compared with temporary employees at 26.4 per cent. There was a marginal decline in collective agreement coverage for all characteristics compared with 2008.

As noted before, females had higher collective agreement coverage than males and this held true whether on full-time/ part-time and permanent/ temporary basis.

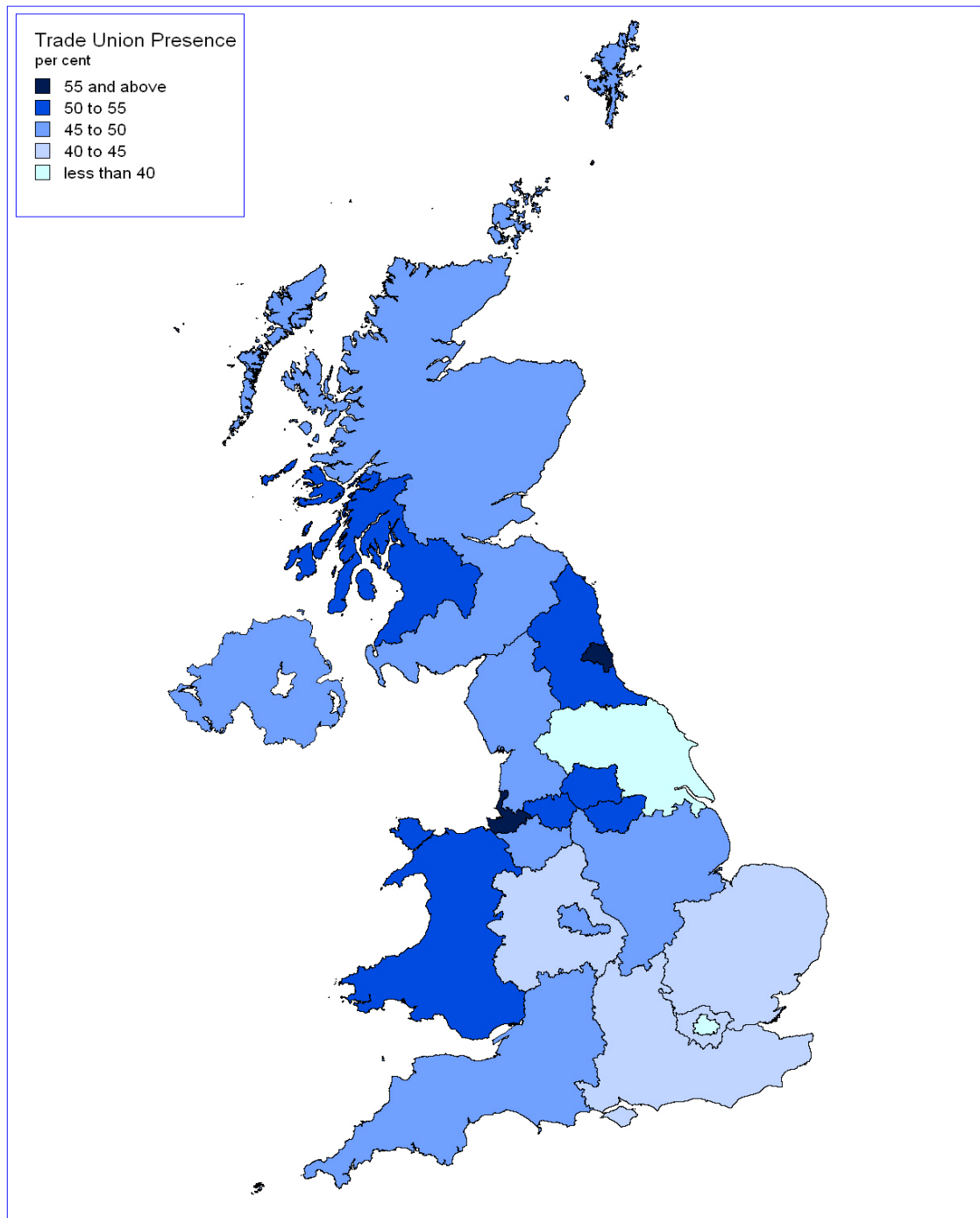
Collective agreement coverage was four and a half times greater for union members than for non-members, at 73.7 and 16.4 per cent respectively.

Workplaces with more than 50 employees had higher collective agreement coverage at 45.4 per cent than those workplaces with less than 50 employees (19.0 per cent).

Within industry, smaller sample sizes prevents detailed comparisons of collective agreement coverage for part time and temporary employees but the broad patterns of highest coverage in public administration and defence industry and lowest in hotels follow those for all employees.

Table 4.3 shows the coverage of collective agreements for UK employees in 2009 for full-time/part-time and permanent/temporary employees by gender, union membership, sector, workplace size and industry.

Chart 4.2: Trade union presence in the workplace, 2009

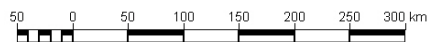


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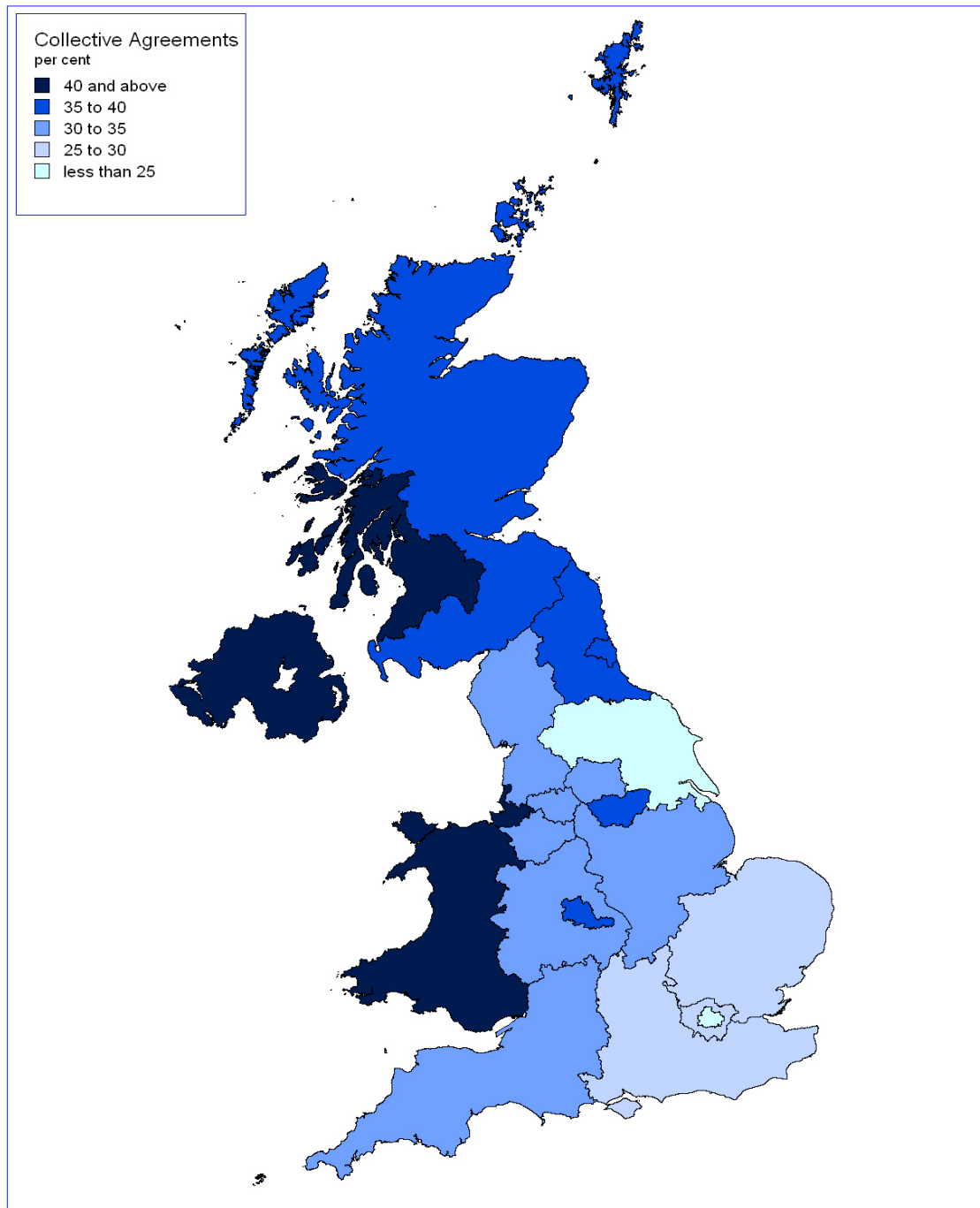
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Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

Chart 4.3: Trade union collective agreement coverage, 2009

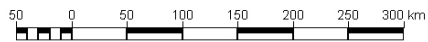


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Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics

4.1 Trade union presence and collective agreement coverage, 1996 to 2009

Per cent, not seasonally adjusted

	Trade unions present in workplace	Employee's pay affected by collective agreement ^a
All employees		
1996	50.2	37.0 ^b
1997	49.1	36.0 ^b
1998	47.8	35.4 ^b
1999	48.4	36.1
2000	48.9	36.4
2001	48.2	35.5
2002	48.0	35.2
2003	48.4	35.5
2004	47.6	34.7
2005	47.7	34.9
2006	47.0	33.3
2007	46.6	34.6
2008	46.7	33.6
2009	46.6	32.7
Private sector		
1996	35.5	23.2 ^b
1997	34.5	22.0 ^b
1998	33.4	21.7 ^b
1999	34.5	23.0
2000	34.9	22.5
2001	34.0	21.9
2002	33.6	21.1
2003	34.1	21.9
2004	32.6	20.5
2005	32.4	20.6
2006	31.7	19.6
2007	31.5	20.0
2008	30.6	18.7
2009	30.2	17.8
Public sector		
1996	89.7	74.4 ^b
1997	89.5	74.9 ^b
1998	89.4	75.1 ^b
1999	87.8	72.7
2000	87.8	74.2
2001	88.1	72.6
2002	88.2	73.6
2003	87.2	71.6
2004	86.8	71.2
2005	86.4	70.9
2006	86.7	69.0
2007	86.2	72.0
2008	86.9	70.5
2009	85.8	68.1

Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics.

^a Results for 1998 and earlier were routed differently – see Annex A for explanation

^b Revised from last year's publication.

4.2 Trade union presence and collective agreement coverage, 2009

Per cent, not seasonally adjusted

	Union density	Trade unions present in workplace	Employee's pay affected by collective agreement
All employees	27.4	46.6	32.7
Sector			
Private	15.5	30.2	17.8
Public	57.1	85.8	68.1
Industry			
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	7.0	13.4	11.6
Mining and quarrying	18.6	39.1	21.4
Manufacturing	20.4	39.6	24.0
Electricity, gas and water supply	41.7	78.7	56.5
Construction	14.5	30.1	19.4
Wholesale, retail and motor trade	11.9	28.2	16.7
Hotels and restaurants	5.4	9.6	6.0
Transport, storage and communication	39.2	59.4	45.6
Financial intermediation	20.9	43.3	28.4
Real estate and business services	10.0	23.4	13.5
Public administration and defence	55.8	81.9	69.4
Education	54.0	82.6	59.1
Health & social work	40.8	63.0	44.8
Other services	18.8	32.0	21.7
Workplace size			
Less than 50	18.0	28.1	19.0
50 or more	36.3	64.0	45.4
Nation			
England	26.1	45.8	31.2
Wales	37.3	54.8	41.1
Scotland	32.8	50.2	37.8
Northern Ireland	35.7	48.5	47.7
Region			
North East	35.4	56.1	38.0
North West	32.1	51.5	36.1
Yorkshire and the Humber	29.6	50.7	35.6
East Midlands	26.8	46.5	31.5
West Midlands	26.5	46.5	33.0
East of England	22.0	41.7	27.2
London	23.7	40.5	26.4
South East	21.5	40.7	26.9
South West	24.9	47.5	33.9

Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics.

4.3 Collective agreement coverage, 2009

Per cent, not seasonally adjusted

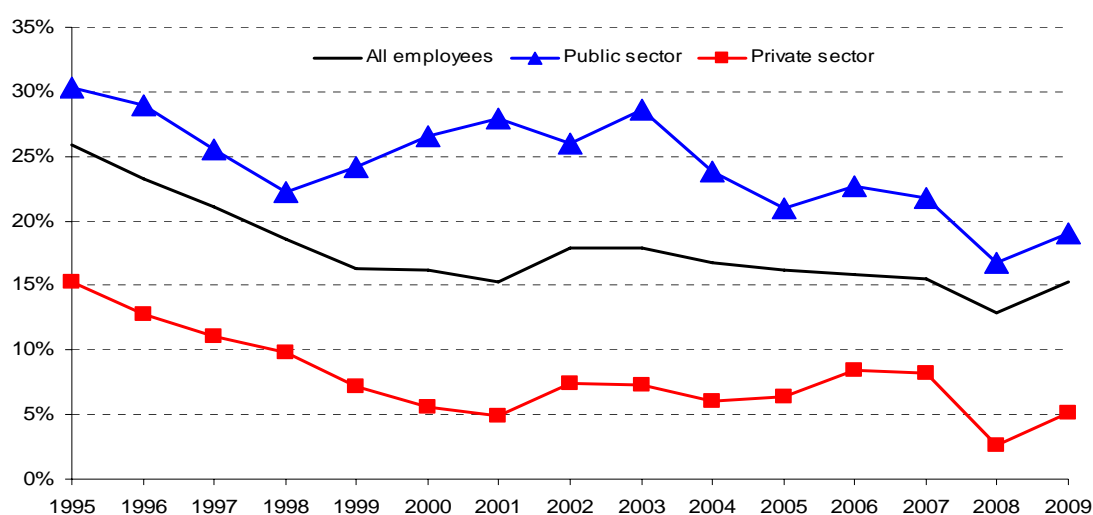
	All	Full-time / part-time status		Permanent/ temporary job	
		Full-time	Part-time	Permanent	Temporary
All employees	32.7	34.2	28.6	33.1	26.4
Gender					
Male	30.5	31.6	22.0	30.9	24.5
Female	34.9	38.3	30.3	35.4	28.1
Union membership					
Member	73.7	74.8	69.3	74.2	59.4
Non-member	16.4	16.4	16.5	16.2	19.2
Sector					
Private	17.8	19.3	13.2	18.1	11.1
Public	68.1	71.4	59.9	69.3	51.3
Workplace size					
Less than 50	19.0	19.8	17.6	19.1	18.3
50 or more	45.4	45.3	46.0	46.0	34.4
Industry					
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	11.6	12.9	*	12.4	*
Mining and quarrying	21.4	22.7	*	22.2	*
Manufacturing	24.0	25.5	8.9	24.3	17.6
Electricity, gas and water supply	56.5	55.4	*	57.6	*
Construction	19.4	20.2	*	19.4	*
Wholesale, retail and motor trade	16.7	15.5	18.7	17.1	9.9
Hotels and restaurants	6.0	6.4	5.7	6.1	*
Transport, storage and communication	45.6	46.5	39.5	46.2	33.8
Financial intermediation	28.4	26.8	36.2	28.9	*
Real estate and business services	13.5	14.3	10.3	13.6	11.8
Public administration and defence	69.4	70.2	66.0	70.5	46.6
Education	59.1	64.3	50.2	60.1	49.9
Health & social work	44.8	48.6	37.7	45.4	33.8
Other services	21.7	24.5	16.8	22.2	17.3

Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics.

5. Trade union member and non-member comparisons

Chart 5.1 shows that union wage premium is much larger for public sector employees than those in the private sector. Union wage premium is defined as the percentage difference in average hourly earnings of union members compared with non-members. In 2009, hourly wage rates for public sector employees were 19.0 per cent higher among union members than non-members compared with only 5.1 per cent in the private sector. Over the last decade, the wage premium for all employees fell to the lowest level in 2008 but this was reversed and it nearly doubled for the private sector employees in 2009 compared with a rise of only 1.7 percentage points for the public sector employees.

Chart 5.1: Average union wage premium, 1995 to 2009*



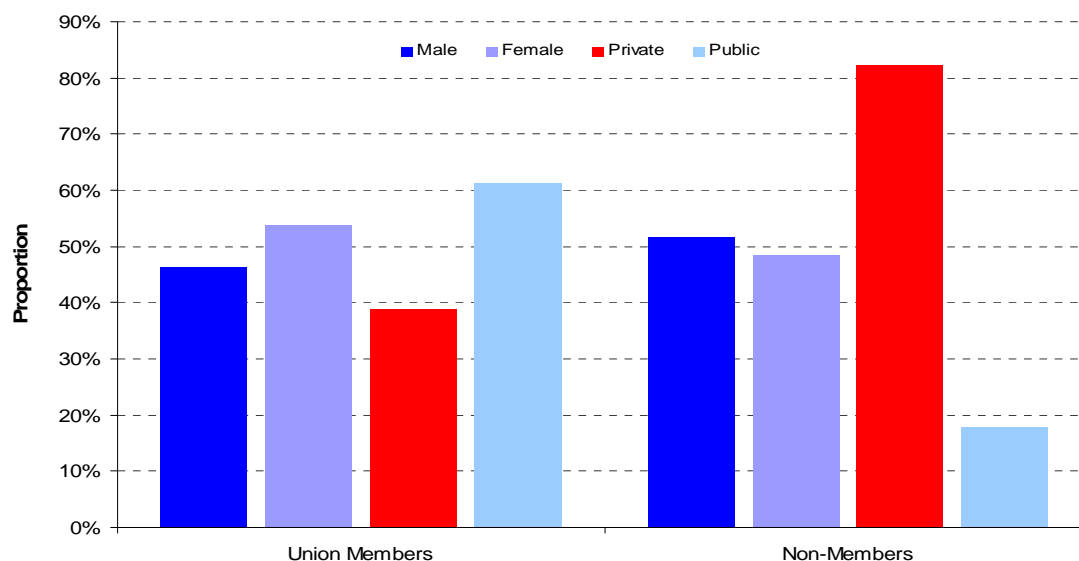
Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics.

*Percentage difference in average hourly earnings of union members compared with non-members.

Table 5.1 shows average hourly earnings by trade union membership for UK employees from 1995 to 2009, by sector. Union members earn a higher hourly rate on average than non-members. The hourly earnings of union members averaged £13.60 in 2009, 15.3 per cent more than the average hourly earnings of £11.80 paid to non-members.

It should be noted, however, that such raw estimates fail to adjust for various differences in characteristics, such as age and education levels, which will partly account for these differences in earnings.

Chart 5.2: Characteristics of union members compared with non members, 2009



Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics.

Table 5.2 gives the characteristics of union members and non-members for 2009. It shows that females accounted for 53.8 per cent of union members and males accounted for 46.2 per cent. Public sector employees accounted for 61.2 per cent of union members but only 17.7 per cent of non members.

Nearly four fifths (78.6 per cent) of union members work full-time, whilst 21.4 per cent work part-time. This split was broadly similar for non-members.

Employees aged 35 to 49 accounted for 43.0 per cent of union members, whereas employees aged 16 to 24 only accounted for only 4.8 per cent.

UK nationals accounted for 91.5 per cent of union members, and for 88.3 per cent of non union members.

Employees who are classified as being disabled make up 16.2 per cent of union members. This is higher than for non members and for all employees at around 13 per cent.

Professional, associated professional and technical occupations account for 44.4 per cent of union members but only for 22.7 per cent of non members.

The education and health and social work industries each account for around a fifth of union members but only for 7.3 and 11.7 per cent of non union members respectively.

5.1 Average hourly earnings (in £s) by union status, 1995 to 2009

	Not seasonally adjusted			
	All	Trade union membership		Trade union wage premium (%)
		Member	Non-member	
All employees				
1995	7.11	8.27	6.57	25.9
1996	7.32	8.36	6.78	23.3
1997	7.54	8.57	7.08	21.1
1998	7.92	8.87	7.48	18.6
1999	8.22	9.15	7.87	16.3
2000	8.77	9.64	8.30	16.2
2001	9.31	10.25	8.89	15.3
2002	9.59	10.72	9.09	17.9
2003	9.93	11.03	9.36	17.9
2004	10.23	11.38	9.75	16.7
2005	10.74	11.94	10.28	16.2
2006	11.15	12.39	10.65	16.3
2007	11.51	12.74	11.02	15.6
2008	12.02	13.07	11.62	12.5
2009	12.30	13.60	11.80	15.3
Change from 1995	5.19	5.33	5.23	
Change from 2008	1.03	1.04	1.02	
% change from 2008	8.5	7.9	8.8	
Private sector				
1995	6.72	7.52	6.52	15.3
1996	6.99	7.63	6.76	12.8
1997	7.18	7.80	7.02	11.0
1998	7.58	8.16	7.44	9.8
1999	7.93	8.44	7.87	7.2
2000	8.47	8.77	8.30	5.6
2001	9.06	9.40	8.95	4.9
2002	9.25	9.75	9.08	7.5
2003	9.57	10.09	9.40	7.3
2004	9.81	10.33	9.74	6.1
2005	10.33	10.89	10.24	6.4
2006	10.83	11.60	10.67	8.8
2007	11.16	11.85	11.03	7.4
2008	11.62	11.86	11.58	2.4
2009	11.90	12.40	11.80	5.1
Change from 1995	5.18	4.88	5.28	
Change from 2008	1.03	1.04	1.02	
% change from 2008	8.8	8.8	8.8	
Public sector				
1995	8.13	8.98	6.89	30.4
1996	8.23	9.04	7.01	29.0
1997	8.57	9.28	7.39	25.5
1998	8.92	9.53	7.79	22.3
1999	9.07	9.78	7.87	24.2
2000	9.64	10.44	8.25	26.5
2001	10.06	10.98	8.58	27.9
2002	10.55	11.55	9.17	26.0
2003	10.92	11.82	9.19	28.6
2004	11.37	12.22	9.87	23.8
2005	11.81	12.72	10.51	21.0
2006	12.04	13.01	10.64	22.3
2007	12.44	13.41	10.97	22.2
2008	13.05	13.92	11.87	17.3
2009	13.40	14.40	12.10	19.0
Change from 1995	5.27	5.42	5.21	
Change from 2008	1.02	1.04	1.02	
% change from 2008	7.8	7.5	8.5	

Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics.

5.2 Characteristics of union members and non-members, 2009

Per cent, not seasonally adjusted

	Union members	Non-members	All employees
Gender			
Male	46.2	51.6	50.4
Female	53.8	48.4	49.6
Sector			
Private	38.8	82.3	71.0
Public	61.2	17.7	29.0
Full-time/part-time			
Full-time	78.6	70.6	73.4
Part-time	21.4	29.4	26.6
Age bands			
16 to 24	4.8	17.3	14.4
25 to 34	17.7	23.1	22.6
35 to 49	43.0	35.3	37.1
50 plus	34.5	24.3	25.8
Ethnicity			
White	92.5	90.7	90.7
Mixed	0.6	0.8	0.8
Asian or Asian British	3.4	4.6	4.5
Black or Black British	2.4	2.1	2.3
Chinese and other ethnic groups	1.1	1.8	1.7
Nationality			
UK	91.5	88.3	88.7
Other	8.5	11.7	11.3
Country of Birth			
UK	91.0	86.7	87.2
Other	9.0	13.3	12.8
Disability			
Disabled	16.2	12.3	13.0
Not disabled	83.8	87.7	87.0
Highest qualification			
Degree or equivalent	33.8	24.0	26.4
Other higher education	15.0	8.9	10.3
A-level or equivalent	20.6	24.2	23.1
GCSE grades A-C or equivalent	17.3	23.9	22.3
Other qualifications	8.8	12.0	11.4
No qualification	4.5	7.0	6.5
Length of service			
Less than one year	6.0	17.4	14.1
One to two years	6.7	13.3	11.9
Two to five years	17.5	26.6	24.7
Five to ten years	24.3	21.0	21.9
Ten to twenty years	23.2	14.3	16.4
Twenty years or more	22.3	7.4	11.0
Workplace size			
Less than 50	29.8	54.6	47.9
50 or more	70.2	45.4	52.1

Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics.

5.2 Characteristics of union members and non-members, 2009 *(continued)*

Per cent, not seasonally adjusted

	Union members	Non-members	All employees
Occupation			
Managers and senior officials	9.2	17.6	15.4
Professional occupations	23.2	10.8	13.8
Associate professional and technical occupations	21.2	11.9	14.4
Administrative and secretarial occupations	10.4	13.5	12.4
Skilled trade occupations	6.3	8.3	7.9
Personal service occupations	10.4	8.8	9.2
Sales and customer service occupations	3.9	9.8	8.4
Process, plant and machine operatives	7.1	6.0	6.5
Elementary occupations	8.4	13.4	12.0
Industry			
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	0.2	0.9	0.7
Mining and quarrying	0.3	0.5	0.4
Manufacturing	8.6	12.4	11.3
Electricity, gas and water supply	1.4	0.7	0.9
Construction	3.0	6.3	5.6
Wholesale, retail and motor trade	6.6	17.6	14.8
Hotels and restaurants	0.7	6.6	5.1
Transport, storage and communication	8.6	5.1	6.2
Financial intermediation	3.3	4.8	4.5
Real estate and business services	4.8	14.8	12.1
Public administration and defence	14.6	5.0	7.4
Education	22.5	7.3	11.1
Health & social work	22.1	11.7	14.4
Other services	3.3	6.2	5.4

Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics.

Annex A: Technical note

National Statistics

'National Statistics' is a quality marker applied to the United Kingdom's official statistics outputs. National Statistics are regulated by the UK Statistics Authority, established on 1st April 2008. All official statistics accredited as 'National Statistics' are compliant with the UK Statistics Authority's 'Code of Practice for Statistics'. For further details on National Statistics please refer to the web link below:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/>

Concepts and definitions

Employee: People who regard themselves as paid wage and salary earners. People with two or more jobs are counted only once.

Employment: The number of people with jobs is measured by the Labour Force Survey and includes people aged 16 or over who did paid work (as an employee or self-employed), those who had a job that they were temporarily away from, those on government-supported training and employment programmes, and those doing unpaid family work.

Labour Force Survey (LFS): The main source for information on the labour market in the United Kingdom. It is a random household survey of approximately 57,000 households conducted every three months by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). As well as private households, the survey includes people living in communal establishments (student halls of residence, National Health Service accommodation, etc). The survey was conducted once every two years between 1973 and 1983 and annually from 1983 until 1991. It has been conducted quarterly since 1992, with a change to calendar quarters from seasonal quarters made in 2006. The LFS is a sample survey and consequently estimates are subject to both sampling and non-sampling error.

Trade union: The Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 defines a trade union as an organisation which consists wholly or mainly of workers of one or more descriptions and whose principal purposes include the regulation of relations between workers and employers or employers' associations.

Trade union member: A person in employment who self-defines that they belong to a trade union or staff association when asked in the Labour Force Survey (for the question please see table below).

Union density: The rate or proportion of employees or those in employment who are a trade union member. Expressed as a percentage.

Union presence: Whether or not a trade union is present within a workplace.

Collective agreement: Whether the pay and conditions of employees are agreed in negotiations between the employer and a trade union.

Trade union questions in the Labour Force Survey

A question on the LFS on trade union membership has been asked annually since 1989 of all individuals in employment. Questions on trade union presence and recognition were introduced in 1993 and the question on collective agreements was introduced in 1996. The questions relating to trade union membership were reordered and reworded in 1999; these changes affect the time-series for trade union presence and collective agreements.

- The union questions were altered substantially in the 1999 questionnaire. The exact wording and sequence of the questions as they are now and as they were previously are shown below. The following should be noted:
- The wording of the question that asks respondents whether they are a member of a trade union remains the same, only its place in the sequence has changed.
- The question that asks whether any of the people at the respondent's place of work are members of a trade union or staff association is designed to measure trade union presence. The wording, routing and sequence of this question have changed. Previously, it was asked of all in employment; now it is only asked to those who say that they are not union members.
- Before 1999, the question on whether the respondent's pay and conditions were directly affected by collective agreements (TUCOV) was only asked where the respondent first identified unions as being present at the workplace (TUPRES), and then whether or not it was recognised (TUREC). This meant that the number of people whose pay and conditions were affected by collective agreement was an underestimate. For this reason the routing of the question was changed in the 1999 LFS and is now asked of all in employment. Users must therefore be aware that data derived from the TUCOV variable in the 1999 dataset are not directly comparable with those of previous years due to the change in the question's coverage.
- It is possible that some non-sampling error arises in the series of questions on trade unions because of measurement problems. Around a third of the sample are proxy respondents, and the data show that this group are less likely to be union members than those responding on their own behalf.

On the question of coverage of collective agreements, it is known from surveys of employers that only a small proportion of public sector workplaces are not covered, and that these arrangements are generally made at head office level or across many organisations. It is therefore likely that employees who are not union members and who work in small workplaces in the public sector may be unaware that collective bargaining arrangements apply to their organisation. In addition, because sector is self reported in the LFS, there may be a number of respondents wrongly classifying themselves as public sector workers. Consequently there may be a downward bias to this measure.

A1 Structure of trade union questions in the Labour Force Survey Routing change in 1999

Previous union questions	Current union questions
All in employment: TUPRES At your place of work, are there any unions, staff associations or groups of unions?	All in employment: UNION Are you a member of a trade union or staff association?
If yes: TUREC Is it/are any of them recognised by management for negotiating pay and conditions of employment?	If no: TUPRES Are any of the people at your place of work members of a trade union or staff association?
If yes: TUCOV Are your pay and conditions of employment directly affected by agreements between your employer and any trade union(s) or staff association?	All in employment: TUCOV Are your pay and conditions of employment affected by agreements between your employer and any trade union(s) or staff association?
All in employment: UNION Are you a member of a trade union or staff association?	

Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics.

Variables in the LFS

Most of the classifications used to place respondents in different categories are based on a direct question relying on the person's self-assessment of their circumstances. Some are based on a combination of more than one question, and others are coded by the ONS based on standard conventions. Details are provided below.

Gender, age and ethnic group are self-defined. Highest qualification is principally based on a question asking individuals to nominate what qualifications they have from a list of 50 categories. These have then been aggregated for the purposes of analysis. The categories for ethnic groups were changed in the LFS from 2001 and are now consistent with those used in the 2001 Census.

With the exception of occupation, all classifications used in this publication are self-defined. In particular, it should be noted that the two aspects of employment status – full-time or part-time, and permanent or temporary – are based on direct questions and do not rely on any set criteria (e.g. number of hours worked). The classification for flexible working status only includes those who work under such arrangements, and the final category of “work mainly at home/same grounds” is taken from a separate question on homeworking.

From 2001, the occupational classifications use the new 2000 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC2000) while prior to 2000 they were based on SOC90. They are assigned by ONS staff based on an open-ended question asking people what was their job, and what did they mainly do in their job. A breakdown by managerial status is also given in this publication and this is obtained from a separate LFS question where manager status is self-defined. In previous years the responses were validated against the occupational codes but from 2001 this is no longer undertaken and the manager status is now wholly self-defined by the respondent. This has resulted in the number of managers defined from this question in 2001 being significantly different from and not comparable with data from previous years.

The manager and senior officials group in SOC2000 relates to managers who primarily have responsibility for personnel, whereas the self-defined manager variable also includes management responsibility for work-related activities. This accounts for the large difference in the union density levels for the SOC2000 manager and senior officials group and the manager group within managerial status, with the latter being significantly higher. It is noted that the densities for foreman or supervisor and not manager or supervisor are in close agreement with data published in previous years.

Defining the sector in which people work is based on two questions first introduced in 1993. These ask, first, if they worked in a private firm or business, a limited company, or some other kind of organisation; and second, if other, what kind of non-private organisation. Industry is based on respondents' answers to a question about what the firm or organisation for which they worked mainly made or did, and coded using the Standard Industrial Classification of economic activities 1992 (SIC92). Government Office region and whether an individual is an employee are both self-defined variables. From 2009, the sectoral breakdown of the LFS data has been collected according to the new Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) 2007 and then mapped to SIC92 according to the assumed relationship between the two classifications. The analyses in this publication are based on the mapped variables. More details on the ONS timetable for implementation of SIC 2007 across the Labour Market Statistics output are set out in their article which is available at <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/article.asp?ID=2341>.

Sample size and standard errors

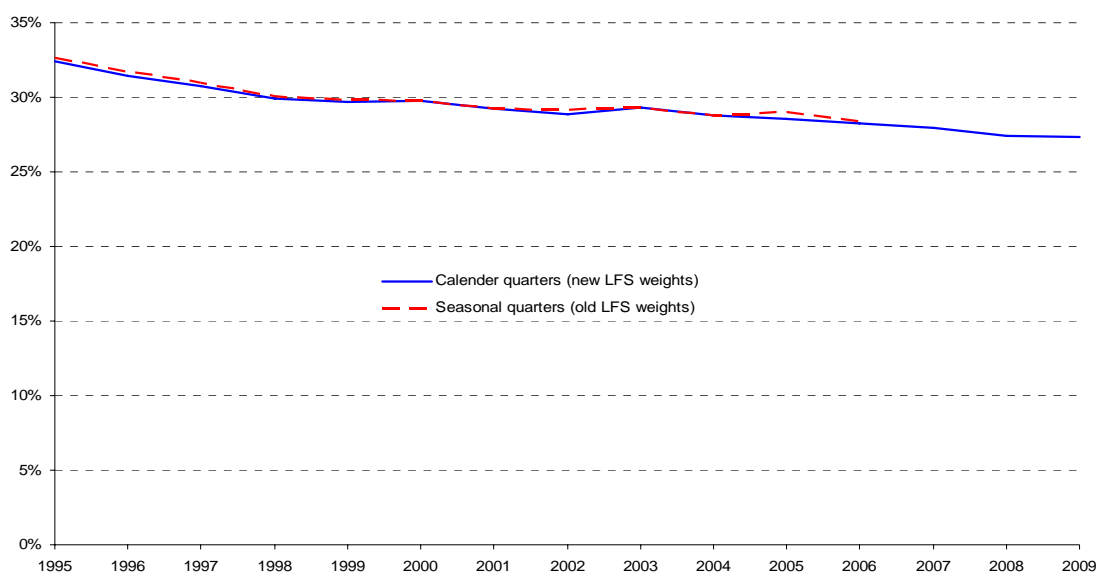
The cell sizes in some tables in this publication are too small to prove reliable and have been marked with an asterisk. In this publication data under 10,000 have not been published because standard errors are likely to be larger than the estimates themselves. Although the ONS has lifted its protocol of not releasing data under 10,000 threshold, it is now the statistician's discretion whether to release anything under this threshold.

As an indication of the standard errors in the trade union estimates, the standard errors around the total employment and employee union densities are likely to be around 0.25 percentage points. Standard errors for union densities by gender are likely to be around 0.5 percentage points. Standard errors for union densities by region are likely to be around one percentage point and standard errors for union densities by region and gender are likely to be around 1.5 percentage points.

Switch from seasonal to calendar quarters

In 2006, the structure of the Labour Force Survey switched from a seasonal quarter basis to a calendar quarter basis. The last set of published LFS seasonal results covered December 2004 to February 2005. In accordance with European Union regulations, all subsequent quarters have been published on a calendar quarter basis. In 2008, the Office for National Statistics carried out an extensive reweighting programme and all quarterly Labour Force Survey data are now published on a calendar quarter basis back to 1992. This has eliminated the structural break into the trade union membership time series associated with the change from seasonal to calendar quarters.

Chart A1. Trade union density of UK employees, 1995-2007



Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics.

Chart A1 shows the trade union density of UK employees from 1995 to 2007, as shown in Table 1.1 and trade union density from the previous LFS. The chart gives evidence that the reweighting of historic LFS datasets has not materially changed the trade union densities from those that were previously published.

Estimating union membership levels

Each household agreeing to take part in the LFS is interviewed on five consecutive quarters (or waves). However, there are cases on subsequent waves when households are not contactable or do not agree to continue taking part so further responses cannot be recorded. When this happens, current data may be imputed by carrying forward answers given by them in the previous interview. However, for questions that do not appear every quarter, as on trade union membership, there is no previous response to carry forward, and a 'does not apply' (DNA) response is therefore recorded.

There are two possible methods of estimating union membership levels. One method relies on calculating an **adjusted weight**, whereby cases with missing data are assumed to have the same distribution as valid responses. Therefore missing data is included in the estimates by allocation of their weight along the same distribution as valid respondents. Unfortunately, due to the restructuring of

the LFS to calendar quarters (described earlier) this produced too much missing data in the seasonal quarter series to produce reliable estimates. Information was lost for September in converting seasonal to calendar quarters and no information was available to be brought forward from December. Therefore it was not possible to display a time series with the seasonal quarter series using the adjusted weight method.

In order to mitigate these issues a second method was developed to closely approximate the results from an adjusted weights approach (see Table A2) but also allow a consistent time series with the calendar quarter information to be estimated. It consists of **union density multiplied by the population** (as estimated by the LFS). The method is improved by making the same calculation but by detailed age, gender and regional disaggregations and then aggregating them back up to national and regional levels. Age, gender and region were specifically chosen as they are the basis on which the LFS is weighted (see the Labour Survey User Guide Vol 1.). This approach is further supported by the fact that union density figures, are produced on a valid response basis and do not consider any missing data. Furthermore, union densities show a great deal of robustness under change, for example the recent reweighting of the LFS and the move to a calendar quarter basis (described earlier) had only a small effect on these estimates as shown in Chart A1. These estimates of union membership level are now provided as the headline figures in this publication (see Tables 1.1, 1.2 and 3.2).

To produce trade union membership broken down by public/ private sector a further step was applied. It consists of **union density split by public and private sector multiplied by the union membership population (estimated as above)**. The calculations involved are similar to that of the second method described above apart from the fact that a further breakdown by sector was used.

The table below gives a comparison of the estimates from the two methods between 2006 and 2009 by gender and whether in employment or an employee.

A2 Estimates of trade union membership levels, United Kingdom, 2006 to 2009

Thousands, not seasonally adjusted

	Employees			In employment		
	Density x Population	Adjusted Weights	Difference	Density x Population	Adjusted Weights	Difference
People						
2006	7,021	6,992	29	7,359	7,315	44
2007	7,005	6,978	27	7,334	7,292	42
2008	6,878	6,857	21	7,219	7,188	31
2009	6,715	6,696	19	7,054	7,017	37
Men						
2006	3,430	3,400	30	3,649	3,611	38
2007	3,379	3,355	24	3,606	3,574	32
2008	3,278	3,254	24	3,522	3,487	35
2009	3,121	3,099	22	3,344	3,311	33
Women						
2006	3,591	3,591	-	3,710	3,702	8
2007	3,625	3,621	4	3,728	3,716	12
2008	3,599	3,601	-2	3,697	3,697	-
2009	3,593	3,596	-3	3,709	3,704	5

Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics.

Differences between the LFS and Trade union estimates from administrative data.

Another official source of trade union membership data is provided by the Certification Officer (<http://www.certoffice.org>) and can be seen in Table 1.5. Data collected annually from trade unions by the Certification Officer (CO) provide a long and consistent back series of the number of trade unions and the number of union members. The LFS has a shorter back series, from 1989 onwards, but can provide extensive information on the respondent's individual and workplace characteristics, allowing more detailed analysis.

Data from the LFS is mainly presented from 1992 in this publication since re-weighted micro datasets, in line with post-Census 2001 population estimates, are currently only available from 1992.

There are differences in how the two sources report union membership. For example, the CO membership count includes all members of unions having their head office in Great Britain, including those members in Northern Ireland, the Irish Republic and 'elsewhere abroad'. These figures may also include union members who are unemployed or retired. The LFS asks questions on the union status of all those in employment, thus excluding the unemployed and retired.

The LFS union questions have United Kingdom coverage from 1995 onwards. The LFS estimates the number of individuals who are union members, rather than the individual memberships. Hence those belonging to two unions would appear twice in the CO data, but only once in the LFS data. Also, due to the specific wording of the union question, the LFS, unlike the CO data, could count individuals that were members of a staff association but not of a trade union.

Annual National Statistic reports

- 1) *Trade Union Membership 2008*, Craig Barratt. April 2009.
- 2) *Trade Union Membership 2007*, Sally Mercer and Richard Notley. July 2008.
- 3) *Trade Union Membership 2006*, Heidi Grainger and Martin Crowther. April 2007.
- 4) *Trade Union Membership 2005*, Heidi Grainger
- 5) *Trade Union Membership 2004*, Heidi Grainger, Heather Holt

The BIS Publications Orderline is 0845 015 0010

Trade union membership articles in Labour Market Trends

- 1) Analysis in brief: *Trade union membership: estimates from the autumn 2003 Labour Force Survey*, by Stephen Hicks and Tom Palmer. March 2004.
- 2) Labour Market Spotlight: *Trade union membership*. July 2003.
- 3) Article: *Trade union membership: an analysis of data from the autumn 2001 LFS*, by Keith Brook. July 2002.
- 4) Article: *Trade union membership 1999-2000: an analysis of data from the Certification Officer and the Labour Force Survey*, by Abby Sneade. September 2001.
- 5) Article: *Trade union membership 1998-99: an analysis of data from the Certification Officer and Labour Force Survey*, by Stephen Hicks. July 2000.
- 6) Article: *Trade union membership and recognition 1997-8: an analysis of data from the Certification Officer and the Labour Force Survey*, by Paul Bland. July 1999

Web link: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=550>

