

Jobs in the public sector mid-2003

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Key points

- 162,000 additional jobs were created in the public sector in the year to June 2003, considerably more than the 89,000 for the previous year. Employment in the public sector is now 10 per cent higher than in 1998, due to the creation of an additional 509,000 jobs.
- The fastest growing areas of public sector employment are where there has been the largest additional public spending. Education and health had the bulk of the job gains in 2003, with 88,000 in education and 63,000 in health. Other central government employment and the police added 22,000 and 9,000 respectively.
- Job growth in the economy as a whole continued last year, despite the fact that the economy was only beginning to recover from a period of below trend growth. Most of these job gains were in the public sector, as the market sector had experienced most of the economic slow-down.
- Private sector jobs grew by 98,000 in the year to June – a much more rapid gain than over the previous 12 months. However, the increase (over 200,000) in the number of self-employed in the year to mid-2003 indicates that the number of employee jobs in the private sector would have fallen over this period.
- Despite the recent job gains in the public sector, the private sector still accounts for nearly 80 per cent of employee jobs. The private sector is the dominant employer in production and construction, and in many services. In contrast, the public sector is the dominant employer in health, education and public administration.
- Together, education and health now account for just under 60 per cent of total public sector employment compared with around 40 per cent 20 years ago.

This article gives the most recent analysis of the levels and distribution of jobs in the public sector.

Introduction

THIS IS the latest in a series of annual articles on jobs in the public and private sectors, and updates the figures to June 2003. Data for most employment categories are now available for that date although a few minor categories have had to be estimated (see *technical note* for details of the latest employment data available for each area of government). The article first looks at both the latest figures for public sector jobs and their historical context. It then goes on to look at relative movements in public and private sector jobs.

Developments in public sector employment

The data in this article are derived from administrative sources and a

survey of local authorities. More detail on these sources, including an explanatory table, is provided in *technical note*, which also gives a detailed definition of the public sector.

Table 1 summarises the history of UK public sector employment over the past 40 years and its current composition. The data for total public sector jobs in the table are for the UK as a whole. Many functions that are carried out by local authorities in Great Britain are classified to central government in Northern Ireland. In previous articles NHS employment was split between central government employees and employees of NHS trusts, which were classified as public corporations. Now NHS trusts have been reclassified as part of central government (see <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/>

Table 1 Public sector employment by major categories;^a United Kingdom; 1963 to 2003, mid-year headcount, not seasonally adjusted

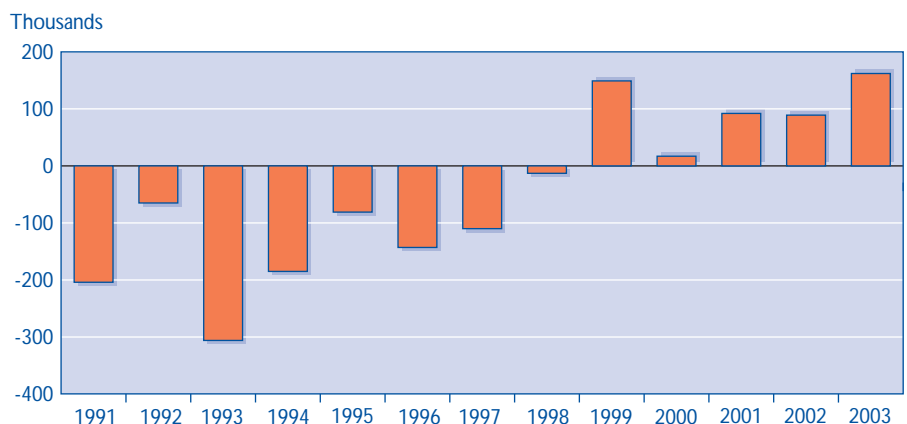
	Thousands							
	General government				Local government			
	Central government				Education ^{b,c,d}	Social services ^d	Construction ^d	Police (including civilians) ^d
	HM Forces	National Health Service and Trusts	Other central government	Total central government				
CGYN	FHBR	FHBS	FHBT	FHBU	FHBV	FHBW	FHBX	
1963	427	612	749	1,788	870	188	117	115
1973	361	848	815	2,024	1,436	315	130	162
1979	314	1,152	921	2,387	1,539	344	156	176
1982	324	1,227	849	2,400	1,434	352	132	186
1983	322	1,227	835	2,384	1,433	360	130	187
1984	326	1,223	810	2,359	1,430	368	126	187
1985	326	1,223	811	2,360	1,429	376	125	187
1986	322	1,215	800	2,337	1,452	387	125	188
1987	319	1,212	781	2,312	1,486	398	128	191
1988	316	1,228	778	2,322	1,504	405	125	194
1989	308	1,226	781	2,315	1,442	411	119	195
1990	303	1,221	776	2,300	1,431	417	114	199
1991	297	1,222	783	2,302	1,416	414	106	202
1992	290	1,231	801	2,322	1,391	410	97	204
1993	271	1,205	792	2,268	1,201	398	90	207
1994	250	1,177	758	2,185	1,176	408	87	206
1995	230	1,182	708	2,120	1,188	412	83	207
1996	221	1,186	612	2,019	1,191	406	76	206
1997	210	1,203	582	1,995	1,193	403	65	206
1998	210	1,201	581	1,992	1,204	395	61	207
1999	208	1,222	584	2,014	1,322	388	59	206
2000	207	1,251	586	2,044	1,301	386	59	204
2001	204	1,286	596	2,086	1,351	377	57	209
2002	204	1,356	606	2,166	1,362	367	47	217
2003	206	1,419	628	2,253	1,450	351	45	226

Methodology_by_theme/NHS_Foundation_Trusts/default.asp).

The data for the Civil Service in *Table 1* are supplied by the Cabinet Office and relate to Great Britain only. Northern Ireland civil servants are, however, included in the total public sector estimates. Civil servants work primarily in central government but some would also be in public corporations such as the Royal Mint.

162,000 new jobs were created in the public sector last year, an increase on the 89,000 for the previous year. Employment in the public sector is now 10 per cent higher than in 1998, owing to the creation of an additional 509,000

Figure 1 Annual changes in public sector employment; United Kingdom; 1991 to 2003



Source: Office for National Statistics

Table 1 (continued)

							Thousands
Other local government	Local authorities community programme ^e	Total local government	Total general government	Total public corporations	Total public sector	of which: Civil Service ^d	
FHBY	CUKE	DYBG	FHCA	DYBH	FHCE	CGXU	
719	..	2,009	3,797	2,136	5,933	703	1963
848	..	2,891	4,915	1,890	6,805	709	1973
782	..	2,997	5,384	2,065	7,449	739	1979
761	..	2,865	5,265	1,756	7,021	672	1982
768	27	2,905	5,289	1,663	6,952	654	1983
773	58	2,942	5,301	1,599	6,900	630	1984
774	67	2,958	5,318	1,251	6,569	608	1985
770	88	3,010	5,347	1,187	6,534	610	1986
763	96	3,062	5,374	985	6,359	599	1987
764	89	3,081	5,403	912	6,315	593	1988
771	..	2,938	5,253	831	6,084	586	1989
806	..	2,967	5,267	785	6,052	579	1990
809	..	2,947	5,249	599	5,848	576	1991
797	..	2,899	5,221	562	5,783	592	1992
783	..	2,679	4,947	530	5,477	579	1993
768	..	2,645	4,830	462	5,292	553	1994
749	..	2,639	4,759	452	5,211	554	1995
744	..	2,623	4,642	426	5,068	535	1996
726	..	2,593	4,588	370	4,958	516	1997
712	..	2,579	4,571	374	4,945	502	1998
728	..	2,703	4,717	377	5,094	498	1999
732	..	2,682	4,726	385	5,111	510	2000
742	..	2,736	4,822	381	5,203	519	2001
749	..	2,742	4,908	384	5,292	529	2002
743	..	2,815	5,068	386	5,454	553	2003

Source: Office for National Statistics

a See *technical note* for details of the definitions and coverage of sectors.

b Polytechnics were transferred to the private sector in April 1989.

c Further education colleges and sixth-form school employees were transferred to the private sector from April 1993.

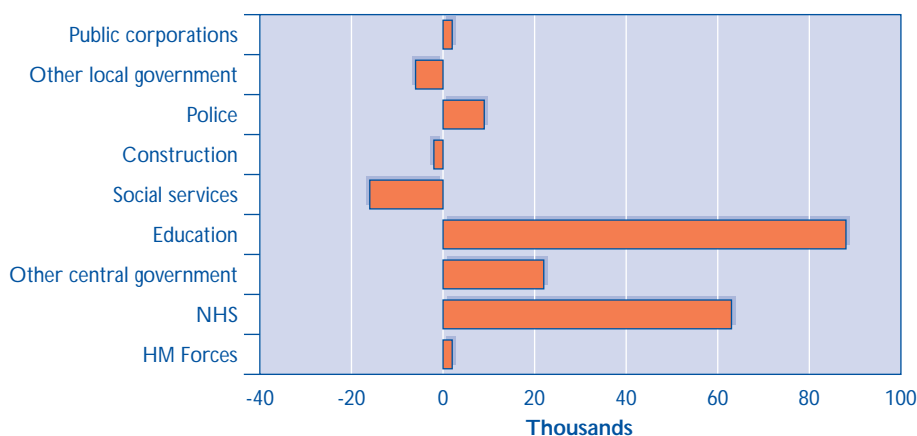
d Great Britain only.

e Community programme employees were transferred to the Employment Training Scheme (out of the public sector) during the third quarter of 1988.

.. Not available.

Note: the four letters at the head of each column are the series identifiers which can be used to access data on the Time Series Data area of the National Statistics website.

Figure 2 Public sector job changes; United Kingdom; year to mid-2003



Source: Office for National Statistics

jobs. The growth in the past five years is a clear break from the trend of the immediately preceding period when jobs in this sector had fallen for over 15 years in a row. This increase in employment in recent years is in line with the faster rate of growth in public spending.

The fastest growing areas of public sector employment are where there has been the largest additional public spending. Education and health again had the bulk of the job gains in 2003, with 88,000 in education and 63,000 in health. Other central government employment and police added 22,000 and 9,000 respectively. It should be

Table 2 Numbers of Civil Servants by main department;^a United Kingdom; April 1999 to October 2003, not seasonally adjusted

	Total Civil Service	Department of Social Security and Employment Service	Department for Work and Pensions	Inland Revenue/ Customs and Excise	Home Office including Prison service	Ministry of Defence ^b	Thousands Other
April 1999	498	127	..	90	53	105	124
October 1999	504	126	..	95	53	104	125
April 2000	510	127	..	95	56	104	128
October 2000	516	128	..	95	61	103	130
April 2001	519	128	..	95	62	102	131
October 2001	519	..	130	96	64	93	135
April 2002	529	..	137	97	64	93	139
October 2002	539	..	140	99	66	92	141
April 2003	553	..	140	106	69	95	143
October 2003	558	..	142	106	72	93	145

Source: Cabinet Office

a Staff in post headcount.

b Ministry of Defence data are affected by the reclassification of 8,000 staff to the public corporations sector in October 2001.

.. Not applicable.

noted that about 3,000 of the 22,000 rise in other central government is due to Northern Ireland education. Areas of the public sector which saw jobs disappear last year include social services and local authority construction. A fall in the latter category has occurred in most years over the past decade or so and reflects a policy change under recent governments to move from directly employed construction staff to buying services from the private sector.

Despite the fact that the number of public sector jobs has increased in recent years, the current totals are still well below the levels seen in the 1970s and 1980s. However, care has to be taken in making such long-term comparisons, as moves are sometimes a result of definitional changes. For example, the biggest single cause of the fall over that period was the reclassification of corporations following privatisation. But, at the same time, employment in the Civil Service has fallen significantly in the past two decades and the number of service personnel has fallen by over 100,000 jobs since the end of the cold war. Employment in health has been much steadier, while employment in education, after falling in the early 1990s, has steadily risen in more recent years. Together, these two now account for just under 60 per cent of total public

Table 3 Numbers of people employed by main sector; United Kingdom; summer quarter 1992 to 2003,^a not seasonally adjusted

	Total ^b		Public sector		Thousands Private sector	
	Labour Force Survey Jobs ^c	Increase over year	Level ^d	Increase over year	Level ^e	Increase over year
1992	26,571		5,783		20,788	
1993	26,296	-275	5,477	-306	20,819	31
1994	26,567	271	5,292	-185	21,275	456
1995	27,152	585	5,211	-81	21,941	666
1996	27,337	185	5,068	-143	22,269	328
1997	27,786	449	4,958	-110	22,828	559
1998	28,028	242	4,945	-13	23,083	255
1999	28,415	387	5,094	149	23,321	238
2000	28,684	269	5,111	17	23,573	252
2001	28,862	178	5,203	92	23,659	86
2002	28,995	133	5,292	89	23,703	44
2003	29,255	260	5,454	162	23,801	98

Source: Labour Force Survey; administrative data

a LFS data refer to March-May for the years 1992 to 1994 and May-July for 1995 to 2003.

b All aged 16 and over.

c LFS jobs equals LFS employment data plus the additional jobs of workers with second jobs.

d Administrative data used in this article.

e Estimated as the difference between LFS total employment and the administrative estimate of public sector jobs.

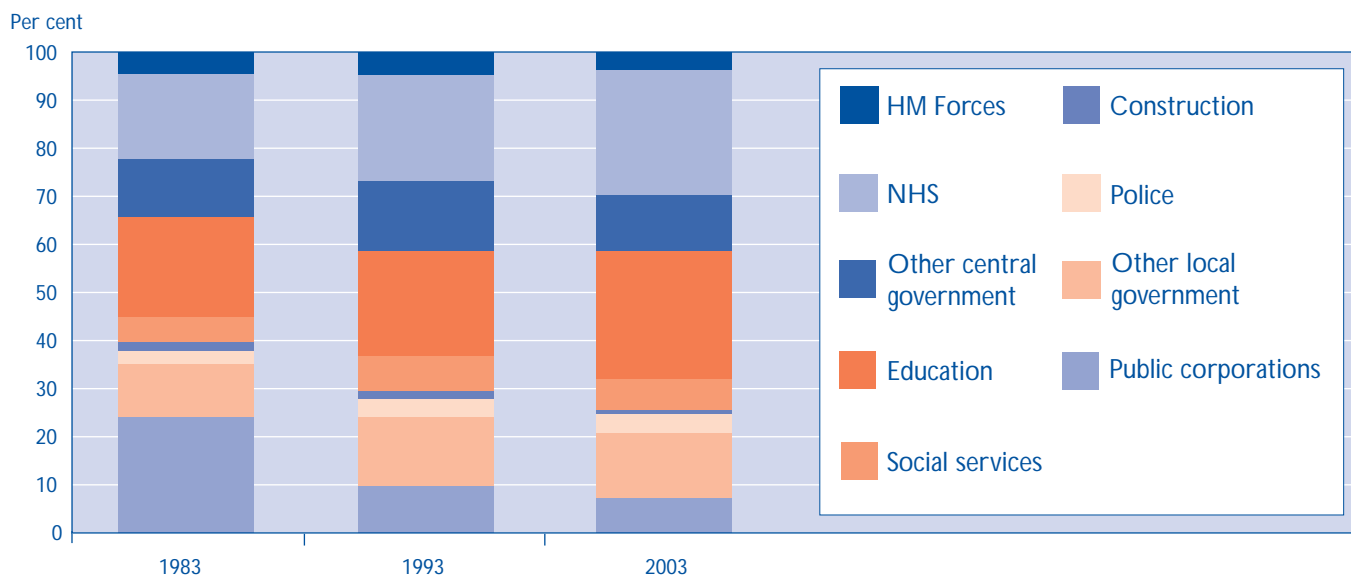
sector employment, compared with around 40 per cent 20 years ago.

Table 2, which is included for the first time, provides a more detailed breakdown of Civil Service jobs. The numbers are for Great Britain only and are supplied by the Cabinet Office. The number of Civil Service jobs in October 2003 was up by 19,000 when compared with the same month in 2002.

Public and private sector jobs – across the whole economy

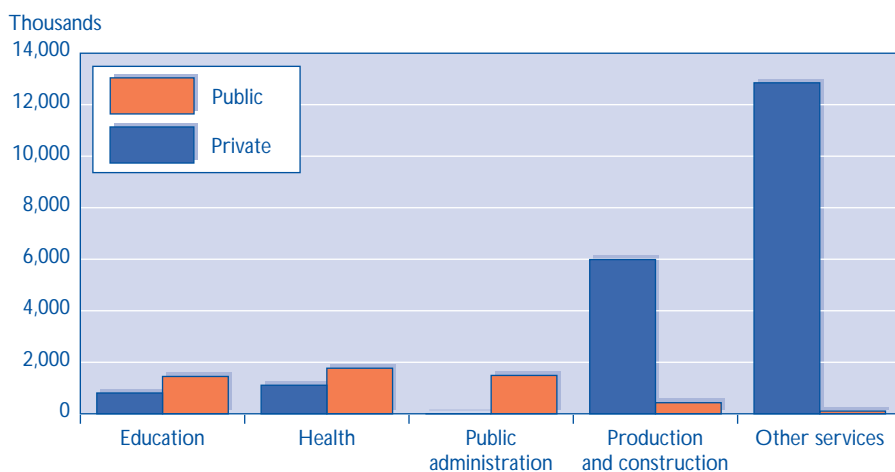
The best measure of the number of jobs in the economy as a whole is that provided by the Labour Force Survey (LFS), which is a survey of households. An alternative measure, workforce jobs,

Figure 3 Composition of public sector jobs; United Kingdom; 1983, 1993 and 2003



Source: Office for National Statistics

Figure 4 Public and private sector jobs by broad industry; United Kingdom; 2003



Source: Office for National Statistics

initiated in spring 2004. Initial fieldwork has been completed and analysis of the results is continuing. If successful, the linking project should reduce the extent of sectoral misclassification in the LFS.

The workforce jobs series is not disaggregated between public and private sectors but is analysed by industrial category. One category covers public administration, defence and compulsory social security, which should be assumed to be wholly public sector. Two other categories are health and education, but these include both public and private sector jobs.

In these circumstances the only satisfactory method of estimating the number of private sector jobs is as the difference between the number of jobs in the economy as a whole and the number of public sector jobs estimated independently. In this article private sector jobs have been calculated as the difference between public sector jobs and the total number of jobs measured by the LFS – ONS's preferred measure of aggregate employment. This is discussed later in the article in the context of jobs by industry. This methodology was first employed in last year's article, (see pp453-66, *Labour Market Trends*, September 2003) but earlier articles published in *Economic*

derived from surveys of businesses, provides the best estimate of the industrial composition of jobs. Neither the LFS nor workforce jobs, however, provides a satisfactory estimate of public sector jobs, or of the allocation of total jobs between public and private sectors.

The LFS overestimates the number of public sector jobs because of errors in self-classification by households. Errors occur, for example, when employees of publicly funded bodies such as

universities incorrectly classify themselves as being in the public sector. Universities are, in fact, part of the private sector in the National Accounts. Similarly, employees of private sector companies providing contracted out services to the public sector can incorrectly classify themselves as public sector employees. As part of the National Statistics Quality Review of Employment and Jobs, a pilot project to link LFS responses to the interdepartmental business register was

Public and private sector jobs – by industry

Trends considered private sector jobs as the difference between directly measured public sector jobs and total workforce jobs.

Table 3 gives the figures for the whole economy derived from the LFS and the estimates of public sector jobs reported in this article for the period up until the middle of 2003. The number of jobs in the economy as a whole grew over this period, despite the fact that output was only beginning to recover from a period of below trend growth.

During the year to mid-2003 the total number of jobs grew by 260,000. The bulk of these job gains were accounted for by the 162,000 rise in public sector jobs while, in contrast, private sector jobs grew by 98,000. Nevertheless, this growth in private sector jobs exceeded the 44,000 recorded in the previous year. However, given that the number of self-employed went up by over 200,000 in the year to mid-2003, the number of employee jobs in the private sector would have fallen over this period.

Table 4 presents an analysis of the industrial make up of public and private sector jobs, based on the workforce jobs data source, which provides more reliable industry detail than the LFS. This table derives total employee jobs as workforce jobs less the self-employed, HM Forces and government-supported trainees. The total number of

Table 4 Employment by sector and industry group; United Kingdom; 1983 to 2003, mid-year headcount, not seasonally adjusted

	Workforce jobs ^a	Self-employment jobs	HM Forces	Government-supported trainees	Employee jobs	Thousands			
						Employee jobs			Health and
						Education	Private	Public	
CGYL	CGYM	CGYN	CGYO	CGYP	CGYQ	CGYR	CGYS	CGYT	
					01-99	80			85
1983	25,304	2,605	322	16	22,362	1,665	231	1,434	1,906
1984	25,974	2,927	326	175	22,546	1,689	259	1,430	1,955
1985	26,277	3,039	326	176	22,737	1,715	286	1,429	2,041
1986	26,319	3,077	322	226	22,693	1,764	312	1,452	2,105
1987	26,838	3,307	319	311	22,901	1,827	341	1,486	2,192
1988	27,795	3,525	316	343	23,612	1,893	389	1,504	2,326
1989	28,675	3,848	308	462	24,056	1,934	492	1,442	2,327
1990	28,985	3,894	303	423	24,364	1,960	529	1,431	2,363
1991	28,072	3,729	297	353	23,693	1,949	533	1,416	2,423
1992	27,579	3,662	290	325	23,303	1,925	535	1,390	2,493
1993	27,163	3,632	271	311	22,948	1,906	705	1,201	2,503
1994	27,333	3,739	250	302	23,041	1,932	756	1,176	2,514
1995	27,673	3,807	230	225	23,412	1,944	756	1,188	2,550
1996	27,894	3,760	221	181	23,732	1,969	778	1,191	2,551
1997	28,361	3,711	210	159	24,281	1,973	780	1,193	2,580
1998	28,587	3,584	210	121	24,672	1,950	746	1,204	2,582
1999	28,998	3,609	208	123	25,057	2,098	776	1,322	2,600
2000	29,397	3,521	207	112	25,555	2,137	836	1,301	2,694
2001	29,700	3,527	204	96	25,875	2,153	802	1,351	2,752
2002	29,823	3,584	204	92	25,943	2,192	830	1,362	2,810
2003	30,100	3,798	206	96	26,000	2,258	808	1,450	2,879

employee jobs is then subdivided by industry, giving the breakdown between private and public sector employment for each.

The yearly movements in private sector jobs shown by *Table 4* differ from those shown in *Table 3*, in which the LFS is used as the source of total jobs across the economy. This is because the two data sources do not always move together in the short term. For example workforce jobs shows faster jobs growth across the whole economy than

the LFS in 2003, after showing slower jobs growth in 2002. On a longer time scale, however, the two series are much more consistent.

As *Figure 4* shows, despite the recent job gains in the public sector, the private sector still accounts for almost 80 per cent of employee jobs. The composition of the two sectors in 2003 is, not surprisingly, very similar to that in 2002. The private sector is the dominant employer in production and construction and in 'other' – the category that contains

the bulk of private sector service jobs. In contrast, the public sector is the dominant employer in health, education and public administration. It is worth noting that, in the area of health, employment increased in both the private and public sectors last year. In contrast, while the number of public sector education jobs went up sharply last year, the number of jobs in this area in the private sector fell. However, this particular estimate does seem to be particularly volatile from year to year.

Table 4 (continued)

									Thousands	
Social work		Public administration defence and compulsory social security		Production, construction transport and utilities			Other	Workforce jobs		
Private	Public	Public Total		Total	Private	Public	Total public and private	Total private sector ^b	Total public sector ^c	
CGYU	CGYV	CGYW		CGYX	CGYY	CGYZ	CGZA	CGZD	CGZE	
			75	10 - 45 60 - 64			01 - 05, 50 - 55 65 - 74, 90 - 99			
319	1,587	1,537		8,461	6,668	1,793	8,793	18,352	6,952	1983
364	1,591	1,519		8,304	6,579	1,725	9,079	19,074	6,900	1984
442	1,599	1,489		8,203	6,827	1,376	9,289	19,708	6,569	1985
503	1,602	1,483		7,964	6,652	1,312	9,377	19,785	6,534	1986
582	1,610	1,503		7,865	6,752	1,113	9,514	20,479	6,359	1987
693	1,633	1,486		7,955	6,918	1,037	9,952	21,480	6,315	1988
690	1,637	1,407		8,000	7,050	950	10,388	22,591	6,084	1989
725	1,638	1,447		7,913	7,014	899	10,681	22,933	6,052	1990
787	1,636	1,467		7,350	6,645	705	10,504	22,224	5,848	1991
852	1,641	1,469		6,946	6,287	659	10,470	21,796	5,783	1992
900	1,603	1,464		6,569	5,949	620	10,506	21,686	5,477	1993
929	1,585	1,445		6,551	6,002	549	10,599	22,041	5,292	1994
952	1,598	1,408		6,601	6,066	535	10,909	22,462	5,211	1995
959	1,592	1,414		6,626	6,124	502	11,172	22,826	5,068	1996
974	1,606	1,366		6,759	6,324	435	11,603	23,403	4,958	1997
986	1,596	1,399		6,920	6,485	435	11,821	23,642	4,945	1998
1,003	1,597	1,360		6,824	6,388	436	12,175	23,904	5,094	1999
1,057	1,637	1,377		6,859	6,415	444	12,488	24,286	5,111	2000
1,089	1,663	1,385		6,774	6,336	438	12,811	24,497	5,203	2001
1,087	1,723	1,432		6,539	6,108	431	12,970	24,531	5,292	2002
1,109	1,770	1,490		6,418	5,987	431	12,955	24,646	5,454	2003

Source: Office for National Statistics

a Workforce jobs equals self-employment jobs plus HM Forces, government-supported trainees and employee jobs.

b Total private sector equals private sector employee jobs plus self-employed and government-supported trainees.

c Total public sector equals public sector employee jobs plus HM Forces.

Note: the four letters at the head of each column are the series identifiers which can be used to access data on the Time Series Data area of the National Statistics website.

Table 5 Public sector employment revisions^a by major categories; United Kingdom; 1979 to 2002, mid-year headcount, not seasonally adjusted

	Thousands							
	General government				Local government			
	Central government				Education	Social services	Construction	Police (including civilians)
	HM Forces	National Health Service and Trusts	Other central government	Total central government				
CGYN	FHBR	FHBS	FHBT	FHBU	FHBV	FHBW	FHBX	
1979	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1982	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1983	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1984	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1985	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1986	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1987	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1988	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1989	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1990	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1991	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1992	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1993	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1994	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1995	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1996	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-1
1997	0	4	0	4	0	0	0	0
1998	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
1999	0	2	-1	1	0	0	0	-1
2000	0	4	13	17	0	0	0	0
2001	0	-13	2	-11	0	0	0	1
2002	0	-4	-8	-12	0	0	0	-1

Revisions from last year's article

The revisions to public sector jobs since last year's article are shown in *Table 5*. The revisions are relatively

small, and largely reflect additional quality assurance. The column showing Civil Service jobs has been revised for 1995 and later years to include casual staff, to be consistent with earlier data. These were already included in total public sector jobs and so do not affect

the overall total. Revisions to workforce jobs were published in April 2004 (see <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=892>). For earlier revisions to self-employed figures, see <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=207>.

References

Civil Service Statistics 2002 is available at <http://www.civil-service.gov.uk/statistics>. Enquiries can be made to Personnel Statistics Branch, Cabinet Office, Room G06 Admiralty Arch, The Mall, London, SW1A 2WH, tel. 020 7276 1532 or fax 020 7276 1679, e-mail psb@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk.

Public Bodies 2003 is available at <http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/agencies-publicbodies/>. Enquiries can be made to Agencies and Public Bodies Team, Corporate Development Group, Cabinet Office, 1.15 Admiralty Arch, The Mall, London, SW1A 2WH, tel. 020 7276 2040, e-mail apbt@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk.

The United Kingdom National Accounts Sector Classification Guide can be downloaded at http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_economy/MA23.xls.

United Kingdom National Accounts Concepts, Sources and Methods – a PDF file can be viewed at http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_economy/Concepts_Sources_&_Methods.pdf.

Table 5 (continued)

								Thousands
Other local government	Local authorities community programme	Total local government	Total general government	Total public corporations	Total public corporations	of which: Civil Service		
FHBY	CUKE	DYBG	FHCA	DYBH	FHCE	CGXU		
0	..	0	0	0	0	0	0	1979
0	..	0	0	0	0	0	0	1982
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1983
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1984
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1985
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1986
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1987
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1988
0	..	0	0	0	0	0	0	1989
0	..	0	0	0	0	0	0	1990
0	..	0	0	0	0	0	0	1991
0	..	0	0	0	0	0	0	1992
0	..	0	0	0	0	0	0	1993
0	..	0	0	0	0	0	0	1994
0	..	0	0	0	0	0	22	1995
0	..	-1	-1	0	-1	23	23	1996
0	..	0	4	0	4	23	23	1997
0	..	0	1	0	1	18	18	1998
0	..	-1	0	0	0	17	17	1999
0	..	0	17	0	17	12	12	2000
0	..	1	-10	1	-9	13	13	2001
2	..	1	-11	5	-6	13	13	2002

Source: Office for National Statistics

a Since article in the September 2003 issue of *Labour Market Trends*.

.. Not applicable.

Note: the four letters at the head of each column are the series identifiers which can be used to access data on the Time Series Data area of the National Statistics website.

Further information

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Technical note

How does ONS measure public sector employment?

The public sector numbers that are published in this article are derived from the relevant administrative departments plus a comprehensive inquiry of all 443 local authorities in England and Wales. This is consequently the most comprehensive source available, although unfortunately some of the data are only available with a considerable lag. Local authorities supply a single figure for all non-police staff. This is then broken down into the categories of education, social services, construction, police and other local government by using the interdepartmental business register local unit information. Subtracting the public sector figures from the employment totals obtained from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and workforce jobs derives the estimates for private sector employment that are used here.

Table 6 shows the data source, the date of the latest data available and the figure used to calculate the public sector jobs total as of June 2003. It can be seen that in a few cases the latest

data available were for a date before that point but these areas constitute only a very small part of the overall total. ONS is investigating the best way to obtain more timely estimates of public sector employment.

More than one source of total UK employment data is available. The concept can be measured in more than one way. For example, it can be measured by directly surveying employees or by surveying employers. Conceptually, this article looks at the number of jobs rather than the number of employed people as only jobs can be allocated to a sector. The two main jobs series produced by ONS are workforce jobs and the series derived from the LFS. The former estimate combines the public sector jobs with quarterly and monthly short-term employment surveys of businesses. The results for businesses are updated every December as a result of the much more comprehensive Annual Business Inquiry (ABI). In contrast, the LFS is a continuous household survey. This survey does ask respondents to classify the sector of their employers, but in the past such self-

Table 6 Sources of public sector data

	Area	Main source	Latest data	Estimate at June 2003 (thousands)
Central government				
HM Forces	UK	Ministry of Defence	December 2003	206
National Health Service (including NHSTrusts)	England	Department of Health	September 2003	1133
	Wales	Welsh Assembly Government	September 2002	81
	Scotland	NHS in Scotland Common Services Agency	September 2003	141
Other central government	Northern Ireland	Northern Ireland Office (DETI)	December 2003	65
	GB	Cabinet Office	October 2003	519
	Northern Ireland	Northern Ireland Office (DETI) - includes education and police	December 2003	109
Local government				
Education	England and Wales	Quarterly Local Authority Inquiry	December 2003	1343
	Scotland	Joint Staffing Watch	December 2002	107
Social Services	England and Wales	Quarterly Local Authority Inquiry	December 2003	299
	Scotland	Joint Staffing Watch	December 2002	52
Construction	England and Wales	Quarterly Local Authority Inquiry	December 2003	35
	Scotland	Joint Staffing Watch (housing)	December 2002	10
Police	England and Wales	Home Office	September 2003	206
	Scotland	Joint Staffing Watch	December 2002	21
Local government	England and Wales	Quarterly Local Authority Inquiry	December 2003	613
	Scotland	Joint Staffing Watch (excluding transport)	December 2002	103
	Northern Ireland	District and Parish Councils employment	December 2003	27
Public corporations				
Public corporations	UK	Returns from Public Bodies (annual publication)	March 2003	386

Source: Office for National Statistics

Technical note

classification has proven to be less reliable because respondents often do not know the correct classification of their employer.

By collecting jobs data from both employees and employers a much more rounded picture of economic developments can be obtained, but there is also a disadvantage, at least in the short term, in that the process results in two different measures of the level of employment. Indeed sometimes, the two surveys can even send out different messages about the direction of recent employment moves. Following recommendations from the National Statistics Quality Review of Employment and Jobs, an exercise is underway to identify and then quantify as far as possible the difference between the two jobs measures.

This reconciliation considers differences relating to coverage, survey structure, definitions and estimation, both at national and government office region level and also over time. The current position of ONS is that its preferred estimate of total employment is the one derived from the LFS, while workforce jobs is most useful as a measure of industrial detail. (A detailed breakdown of the various data categories can be obtained at the following website <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/STATBASE/Product.asp?vlnk=7163>.)

Definition of the public sector

The domestic economy features units, which can be described as being either public or **private sector** units. The public sector comprises central government, local government and **public corporations** as defined for the UK National Accounts.

Central government includes all administrative departments of government and other central agencies and most non-departmental public bodies. City academies, the first three

of which were opened in 2002, are also classified to central government.

Local government includes all government units with a local remit. The subsector includes all areas of administrative authorities including parish councils and local authorities with special functions. It includes magistrates courts, the probation service in England and Wales and police forces and their civilian staff. All functions of local authorities are classified to the subsector, although trading activities which produce market output (for example, housing and municipally owned markets) are regarded as quasi-corporations and appear under public corporations.

Local education authorities are part of local government, as are voluntary aided schools, county schools and, from September 1999, grant-maintained schools (which were reclassified from central government).

Polytechnics and higher education colleges were transferred from local authority control in April 1989, as were further education and sixth-form colleges from April 1993. Like universities, these institutions are part of the private sector and are classified as non-profit institutions serving households.

Public corporations are companies or quasi-corporations (organisations which behave like corporations) controlled by government. Examples include British Nuclear Fuels plc and Royal Mail. These companies receive more than half their income from the sales of goods or services into the market place.

Lists of central and local government units and public corporations are shown in the *UK National Accounts Sector Classification Guide* on the National Statistics website.