

Labour market information – why it matters and where to find it

Labour market information is about employment trends in different industries and jobs, and the types of job opportunities that are likely to be available to you now and in the future. Interested in finding out more?

Great, because taking a look at what's happening in the labour market, nationally and in your local area, is definitely worth the effort.

The state of the labour market determines the type, number and even the entry level of the job opportunities that are open to you. So, knowing what's going on in the labour market can help you make more realistic and well-informed career plans and decisions.

Labour market information (LMI) is an important aspect of career planning, and job hunting, because it raises your awareness of:

- the level of demand for workers in different industries and sectors
- which jobs are in demand, and which are likely to be in demand in the future
- the sorts of skills and qualities employers are looking for
- which jobs are likely to be available in a particular local area
- the wage levels for different kinds of work
- the level of qualifications you need to get into different jobs
- opportunities for self-employment
- working patterns, the number of people working full time, part time, short term or on zero hours contracts.

But first, a word of warning! The labour market changes all the time. It responds to so many different situations, from new developments in technology to severe weather conditions, that it can make your head spin. For example, due to the UK leaving the European Union in 2019, there is likely to be some uncertainty over the next few years for some industries.

It's important to remember that labour market forecasts are predictions of what might happen in the future. You can't rely on them to be right all of the time.

Where does the information come from?

Labour market information is collected by many different organisations, including:

- **The National Census** – every ten years this collects information such as people's ages, qualifications and job type
- **Government departments and agencies** – in Scotland and the UK as a whole, collect information on unemployment, employment and wage levels
- **Skills Development Scotland** – collects information on school leaver destinations, skill shortages in different industries and Modern Apprenticeship programmes
- **Chambers of Commerce** – conduct surveys of wage levels and employers plans to increase their workforce

- **Colleges and universities** – collect information on the destinations of students leaving their courses, for example higher education institutions collect information each year for the ‘What do graduates do?’ publication
- **Sector Skills Councils** – collect information on their specific industry sectors.

There’s so much labour market information out there that you need to know how, and where, to get hold of the best information available – information that’s dependable and easy to understand. Too many complex statistics might just make your head explode!

You also need to be clear about what you’re looking for, information on a specific industry or on students completing a specific type of course, or you’ll be swamped by too much information.

Useful sources of labour market information for young people

We’ve used a range of LMI sources to include relevant job market information in the Job Profiles and Career Area articles on Planit. Both list the sources of the information in case you want to know more.

Your school career adviser or career coach can help you find useful information.

[Skills Development Scotland’s resources](#) include local authority and Scotland LMI profiles; Scottish LMI Sector Profiles; Scottish information, advice and guidance factsheets and School Leaver Destination reports.

[Sector Skills Councils’ resources](#) - look for information under ‘research’, ‘publications’, ‘careers’, regional and industry fact sheets. Most but not all websites provide LMI, some have specific careers websites and these often hold the LMI.

[What do graduates do? UK](#)

[Prospects Job Sectors](#), a graduate career website – for information on graduate job prospects in a wide range of sectors.

Suggested activities

It’s a good idea to practice doing some research. How about:

- Researching the information that’s available from just one of the Sector Skills Councils – the industries or sectors it covers, the jobs in each sector, wage rates and routes into each sector.
- Researching one of the 26 career areas used in Planit – using the sources of information we mention in the article.
- Researching your school or local authority School Leaver Destination Statistics.