



STATISTICAL PRESS RELEASE

TRADE UNION MEMBERSHIP 2009

A National Statistics publication, *'Trade Union Membership 2009'* was published at 9:30am on Wednesday 30th April 2010 by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS). The report, which uses information taken from the Labour Force Survey for the fourth quarter 2009, had the following key findings:

- The rate of union membership (union density) for employees in the UK remained 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 for UK employees fell by 2.4 per cent (163 thousand) to 6.7 million in 2009 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 whilst amongst male employees it fell by 0.4 percentage points to 25.2 per cent. For the eighth consecutive year 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.
- Females had higher union densities in 2009 than males in all occupation groups except administrative & secretarial, skilled trades, operatives and elementary occupations.
- Of the four UK 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).

- Amongst the English regions, London recorded the largest decrease in union density of 2.2 per cent; 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.
- 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.

- Notes to Editors

1. "Trade Union Membership 2009" is available only on the internet and together with earlier reports can be downloaded as PDF file from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills' website:
<http://www.bis.gov.uk/policies/employment-matters/research/trade-union-stats>
2. The publication presents estimates of trade union density from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) based on the fourth quarter 2009. The publication uses the latest re-weighted LFS datasets, which are consistent with post-2001 Census population estimates, back to 1992.
3. An annual question on trade union membership was introduced into the LFS in 1989. The question has been asked in the final quarter every year since 1992.
4. The Certification Officer for Trade Unions and Employers' Associations provides a second source of data on trade union membership, which goes back to 1975. In addition, data from 1892 to 1974 from the former Department of Employment has been included. Data is available from the Certification Officer website at <http://www.certoffice.org>
5. The statistics in Trade Union Membership 2009 are National Statistics. This means they comply with the UK Statistics Authority standards.
6. The UK Statistics Authority is an independent body operating at arm's length from government as a non-ministerial department, directly accountable to Parliament. It was established on 1 April 2008 by the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007. For more information about National Statistics and the UKSA please go to <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/>
7. Next publication: It is expected that "Trade Union Membership 2010" will be published in April 2011