

# Press release: Employment remains at near-record high



Today's figures also show that groups across society are accessing new job opportunities:

- nearly 500,000 more people from a black and minority ethnic background (BAME) have started working since 2015
- the gender employment rate gap is at a near-record low, just 8.9%
- every region across the UK has seen employment increase since 2010
- youth unemployment has fallen by over 40% since 2010
- there are a record breaking number of workers aged 50 plus in work, reaching 10 million

Minister for Employment Alok Sharma said:

High employment rates are a reliable feature of today's economy – and this is an incredible achievement. It is equally important that across society everyone has the opportunity to get a good job and get on in life.

Today's figures show that this government is building a fairer economy that supports people from all backgrounds to get into work. We are closing the BAME and gender employment gaps, and people across the country are accessing new opportunities.

Separate figures out today showed that [730,000 people are now on Universal Credit](#). Of these, 40% were in employment (290,000).

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# Press release: January 2018

## Transaction Data



In January:

- HM Land Registry completed more than 1,782,080 applications to change or query the Land Register
- the South East topped the table of regional applications with 403,526

The transaction data shows HM Land Registry completed 1,782,088 applications in January compared with 1,266,641 in December and 1,563,358 last January, of which:

- 462,352 were applications to update existing titles compared with 319,721 in December
- 825,613 were applications to obtain an official copy of a register compared with 551,427 in December
- 211,393 were official searches compared with 197,327 in December
- 26,002 were postal applications from non-account holders, compared with 26,377 in December

## **Applications by region and country**

<b>Region and country</b>	<b>November applications</b>	<b>December applications</b>	<b>January applications</b>
South East	408,756	287,649	403,526
Greater London	339,086	250,636	339,286
North West	200,475	139,168	222,150
South West	173,351	124,681	173,058
West Midlands	152,816	107,079	150,292

<b>Region and country</b>	<b>November applications</b>	<b>December applications</b>	<b>January applications</b>
Yorkshire and the Humber	135,373	98,017	139,207
East Midlands	125,846	90,239	122,812
Wales	82,646	58,854	80,315
North	81,197	56,648	77,912
East Anglia	74,499	53,549	73,345
Isles of Scilly	92	79	110
England and Wales (not assigned)	86	42	75
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,774,223</b>	<b>1,266,641</b>	<b>1,782,088</b>

## Top 5 local authority areas

<b>Top 5 local authority areas</b>	<b>November applications</b>	<b>Top 5 local authority areas</b>	<b>December applications</b>	<b>Top 5 local authority areas</b>	<b>January applications</b>
Birmingham	27,715	Birmingham	19,714	Birmingham	27,561
City of Westminster	23,565	City of Westminster	17,977	City of Westminster	25,488
Leeds	20,137	Leeds	14,262	Leeds	20,256
Cornwall	18,823	Manchester	13,384	Manchester	19,350
Manchester	18,542	Cornwall	13,332	Cornwall	18,367

## Top 5 customers

<b>Top 5 customers</b>	<b>November applications</b>	<b>Top 5 customers</b>	<b>December applications</b>	<b>Top 5 customers</b>	<b>January applications</b>
Enact	49,360	Enact	36,313	Enact	50,327
Optima Legal Services	25,532	Optima Legal Services	19,826	Nationwide Building Society	31,589
O'Neill Patient	24,260	O'Neill Patient	19,764	Optima Legal Services	27,284
TM Group (UK) Ltd	19,701	HBOS PLC	16,649	O'Neill Patient	26,073
HBOS PLC	19,315	TM Group (UK) Ltd	16,444	My Home Move Limited	19,103

[Access the full dataset on data.gov.uk.](https://data.gov.uk)

## Notes to editors

- Transaction Data is published on the 15th working day of each month. The February Transaction Data will be published at 11 am on Wednesday 21 March 2018 at [HM Land Registry Monthly Property Transaction Data](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/681212/HM_Land_Registry_Monthly_Property_Transaction_Data.pdf).

2. The monthly Transaction Data showing how many applications for new titles, leases, splitting titles, updating existing titles, official copies of the register and searches were received, reflects the volume of applications lodged by customers using an HM Land Registry account number on their application form.
3. Completed applications in England and Wales, shown by region and by local authority include postal applications as well as those sent electronically.
4. Transaction Data excludes pending applications, bankruptcy applications, bulk applications and discharge applications (to remove a charge, for example, a mortgage, from the register).
5. Transactions for value are applications lodged involving a transfer of ownership for value. For an explanation of other terms used, see [abbreviations used in the transaction data](#).
6. Most searches carried out by a solicitor or conveyancer are to protect the purchase and/or mortgage. For example, a search will give the buyer priority for an application to HM Land Registry to register the purchase of the property. This can give an indication of market activity.
7. Reasonable skill and care are used in the provision of the data. We strive to ensure that the data is as accurate as possible but cannot guarantee that it is free from error. We cannot guarantee our data is fit for your intended purpose or use.
8. Transaction Data is available free of charge for use and re-use under the [Open Government Licence](#) (OGL). The licence allows public bodies to make their data available for re-use.
9. If you use or publish the Transaction Data, you must add the following attribution statement:  
Contains HM Land Registry data © Crown copyright and database right 2017. This data is licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0.
10. HM Land Registry's mission is to guarantee and protect property rights in England and Wales.
11. HM Land Registry is a government department created in 1862. It operates as an executive agency and a trading fund and its running costs are covered by the fees paid by the users of its services. Its ambition is to become the world's leading land registry for speed, simplicity and an open approach to data.

12. HM Land Registry safeguards land and property ownership worth in excess of £4 trillion, including around £1 trillion of mortgages. The Land Register contains more than 25 million titles showing evidence of ownership for some 85% of the land mass of England and Wales.

13. For further information about HM Land Registry visit [www.gov.uk/land-registry](http://www.gov.uk/land-registry).

14. Follow us on: Twitter [@HMLandRegistry](https://twitter.com/HMLandRegistry), our [blog](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#).

## Contact

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## [News story: Loss of speed restrictions on the Cambrian line](#)

During the morning of Friday 20 October 2017, a train driver travelling on the Cambrian coast line in North Wales reported that long standing temporary speed restrictions were not indicated on their in-cab display. As signalling staff at the control centre in Machynlleth investigated this report, they became aware that this failure applied to several trains under their control. The temporary speed restrictions were required on the approach to level crossings so that people crossing the line had sufficient warning of an approaching train.

The Cambrian lines were equipped in 2011 with a pilot installation of the European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS), a form of railway signalling. ERTMS removes the need for signals along the track by transmitting data directly to the train. This data is used to display movement authorities and other information such as temporary and permanent speed restrictions, on a screen in front of the driver.

Subsequent investigation found that the signalling system stopped transmitting temporary speed restriction data after a routine shutdown and restart at around 23:10 hrs the previous evening. The signallers had no indication of an abnormal condition and signalling control centre displays showed these restrictions as being applied correctly.

The RAIB has decided to undertake an independent investigation because to date, the signalling system supplier has not identified the cause of the failure. It is possible that finding the cause would have been assisted by downloading of suitable data from the signalling system before it was

restarted during correction of the failure.

An additional procedure, since introduced at the control centre, is intended to identify and avoid any recurrence of the failure.

The RAIB investigation will consider:

- the geographic extent of the failure and the effect it had on the safety of railway operations
- why trains were permitted to operate without information about temporary speed restrictions
- practices for the gathering of data needed for investigation before restarting computer based signalling systems after a potentially unsafe failure

Our investigation is independent of any investigation by the railway industry or by the industry's regulator, the [Office of Rail and Road](#).

We will publish our findings, including any recommendations to improve safety, at the conclusion of our investigation. This report will be available on our website.

You can [subscribe](#) to automated emails notifying you when we publish our reports.

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## [News story: Using the power of data science to answer world-wide challenges](#)

Dstl is working in partnership with Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) and the Alan Turing Institute – the national Institute for data science – on a number of defence challenges that exploit the power of data science.

As part of this work, Dstl took part in a Data Study Group, a regular series of events run by the Alan Turing Institute in which researchers work on real-world data science challenges over the space of a week. Dstl contributed a project for the Data Study Group to explore whether machine learning could be used to identify code vulnerabilities. The aim was to develop potential practical solutions; such as improved detection of software vulnerabilities that might decrease software resiliency or be exploitable by potential hackers.

Around seventy data science researchers took part in the Data Study Group, drawn from universities from around the UK and with specialisms ranging from

machine learning, computer science and deep learning.

Technical support for those participating was provided by Dstl staff, contributing and actively supporting the study groups.

Results are expected to be applied in real world situations and to indicate where more work with The Alan Turing Institute is needed.

Glen Hart, technical lead for Dstl, said:

This was, in effect, a data-centric hackathon where the brightest minds tackled some of the biggest data issues for defence today. It's fantastic to be partnering with the Institute and fascinating to see how different approaches can help defence, security and beyond.

And if you think you've got what it takes to answer questions like those set for the data study group, here's a brand new challenge set by Dstl's very best data scientists!

Repeated patterns can often be illustrative of underlying information within data. There is some information hidden in the following phrase, which relates to what Dstl, GCHQ and the Alan Turing Institute are looking for: "We draw cartoons to invent signals for insight and jest."

Follow us on Twitter @dstlmod and we will announce the answer soon!

Find out about current [data science roles](#)

Find out more about the Turing's Data Study Group series and our [partnership](#)

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## **[Press release: Country stores merger could reduce competition](#)**

Mole Valley and Countrywide Farmers each run country stores, operating a total of 99 premises primarily located across the South and West of England. These typically each have a bulk agricultural products supply business – through which they sell large-scale supplies of agricultural products, such as fertiliser or fencing – and a retail business, through which they sell a wide range of products including animal feed, clothing, pet food and gardening tools.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) is investigating Mole Valley's proposed purchase of 48 Countrywide Farmers' outlets, and has identified competition concerns in a total of 45 local areas. This involves both their

bulk agricultural and retail businesses.

The companies are two of the largest suppliers of agricultural products in bulk, and there are no or few other suppliers physically located in these 45 areas. The CMA's investigation found that, while the businesses face competition from other suppliers that operate without local premises, many customers prefer to be able to buy products directly from a supplier's store.

Therefore, these alternative suppliers may not provide enough competition to stop customers from losing out after the merger. The CMA's investigation found that competition concerns in the supply of agricultural products in bulk arise in 45 local areas in total.

The CMA also found that the companies' retail businesses compete closely, resulting in reduced competition for customers in 25 of the 45 local areas after the merger. Its investigation found that there would be either no or very few competing country stores in these local areas as, while the companies' retail businesses face competition for some products from suppliers specialising in one type of product (such as DIY stores, garden centres or pet food suppliers), many customers value being able to buy a range of items in one place. Therefore, these specialist suppliers may not provide enough competition to stop customers from losing out after the merger.

Mole Valley now has the opportunity to offer ways to address these competition concerns. If Mole Valley does not make such an offer, or if any undertakings do not sufficiently address the CMA's concerns, the merger will be referred for in-depth investigation through a 'phase 2' inquiry.

Rachel Merelie, Acting Executive Director of Mergers and Markets and the decision maker in this case, said:

It's our job to make sure that people continue to have enough choice, get fair prices and good quality products after companies merge. Mole Valley and Countrywide Farmers are two of the biggest operators of country stores, and so it's important that their customers can find good deals when they need to buy these kinds of products.

#### Notes to editors

1. The CMA is the UK's primary competition and consumer authority. It is an independent non-ministerial government department with responsibility for carrying out investigations into mergers, markets and the regulated industries and enforcing competition and consumer law. For CMA updates, follow us on Twitter @CMAgovuk, LinkedIn, Facebook, Youtube and Flickr.
2. Enquiries should be directed to the CMA press team at [press@cma.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:press@cma.gsi.gov.uk) or 020 3738 6460.