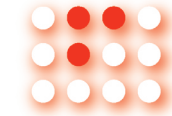


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## Manufacturing output rise best for four years

Manufacturing continued its recovery in the early months of 2010, the latest official figures show.

The output of the UK's manufacturing sector rose by 1.2% in the first quarter 2010 on the final quarter of 2009. That is the highest increase since March 2006 when it rose by 1.6%.

There was a 3.7% quarter-on-quarter rise in the food, drink and tobacco industries and a 2.4% increase in base metals and other products. Engineering and allied industries posted a 1.2% rise.

The index of manufacturing showed a 1.5% rise on the same quarter a year earlier.

The more volatile monthly figures produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) showed that in March 2010 manufacturing output rose by 3.3% on a year earlier.

Output rose in nine of the 13 manufacturing sub-sectors and fell in the other four. The largest increase 16.0% was in transport equipment industries. Within this sub-sector there were particularly strong rises of 52.3% in car manufacture.

The basic metals and metal products industries posted a 4.6% rise in output.

Output of the production industries (manufacturing, mining and utilities) rose by 1.2% in the three months to March 2010 on the previous three-month period, but was flat compared with the same three-month period a year earlier. On a monthly basis, production was up by 2.0% on a year earlier.

The ONS said that this will more than likely lead to a 0.1% revision upwards in the gross domestic product figures for the first quarter of the year, meaning that the economy grew by 0.3% in the first quarter of 2010 against the final quarter of 2009.

[www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/iop0610.pdf](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/iop0610.pdf)

## Union wins legal battle on redundancy pay

One of the many problems a new government will have to face will be to revise plans to drastically cut civil service redundancy payments, after the largest civil service union, the PCS, won a major legal victory.

Following a two-day judicial review hearing in the High Court in April, Mr Justice Sales ruled on 10 May that the previous government acted unlawfully when it introduced, without PCS's agreement, a

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new redundancy scheme reducing the rights staff had accrued over time.

In what is a dramatic win for the union's 270,000 public sector members, the judgment quashes a revised scheme that the government had sought to impose from 1 April. It means the new Tory/Liberal Democrat coalition government must reopen negotiations with the union if it is to agree a new arrangement that protects existing members' rights.

The union has long argued that the new terms would amount to the loss of tens of thousands of pounds for many civil servants if they were made redundant.

And it had warned that the proposed cuts would make it easier and cheaper for the government to cut more jobs and privatise more public services.

It has also argued consistently that the government had no authority to act independently.

PCS general secretary Mark Serwotka said they had always accepted that changes were necessary.

"But all we ever asked is that they were fair and protected those who have given loyal service," he said. "We will now be knocking on the door of the next government to remind ministers they are legally obliged to reach an agreement with us. If they do not meet their obligations, the union will have to consider further industrial and legal action."

[www.pcs.org.uk/en/news\\_and\\_events/news\\_centre/index.cfm/id/B487C672-FD54-4A34-87B4A0D65749229E](http://www.pcs.org.uk/en/news_and_events/news_centre/index.cfm/id/B487C672-FD54-4A34-87B4A0D65749229E)  
[www.thompsons.law.co.uk/ntext/victory-union-civil-service-redundancy-pay.htm](http://www.thompsons.law.co.uk/ntext/victory-union-civil-service-redundancy-pay.htm)

## Labour Party has good night in local elections

It may have been a bad night at the polls for the Labour Party in the general election, but they had a good night in the local elections held across 164 councils in England on 6 May.

Labour won control at 17 councils, including Liverpool back from the Liberal Democrats.

There were gains from the Conservatives in three London boroughs: Ealing, Enfield and Harrow.

Thirteen councils moved from no overall control (NOC) into Labour hands: Brent, Camden, Coventry, Doncaster, Hartlepool, Hastings, Hounslow, Islington, Lewisham, Oxford, Southwark, St Helens and Waltham Forest.

The Conservatives lost seven councils to NOC: Bury, Hyndburn, Lincoln, Mole Valley, North Tyneside, Nuneaton and Bedworth, and Solihull.

They managed a few gains – Richmond, London from the Liberal Democrats – and three from NOC – Craven, Gosport and Hart.

For the Liberal Democrats it was a case of win two, lose two. They won Winchester from the Conservatives and Cheltenham from NOC.

However, they lost Rochdale and Sheffield both to NOC.

As for the BNP they were wiped off the council in Barking and Dagenham, losing the 12 seats they held. Overall, the far right party showed a net loss of 19 seats in the election.

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/shared/election2010/council/html/region\\_99999.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/shared/election2010/council/html/region_99999.stm)

## Unemployment is at its highest for 16 years

Unemployment has risen to its highest level since December 1994, latest figures from the Office for National Statistics show.

Under the Labour Force Survey (LFS) count, unemployment rose by 53,000 to 2.5 million in the first quarter of 2010 compared with the previous quarter at the end of 2009. As a result the jobless rate rose to 8.0% from 7.8%.

The rise was biased towards men with their numbers up by 48,000 to 1.55 million and the male unemployment rate rose to 9.2% from 8.9%. Meanwhile, the number of jobless women rose by 5,000 to 963,000 and their unemployment rate was up to 6.7% from 6.6% previously.

The LFS count includes people who are looking for work but are not eligible for benefits, and is the government's preferred measure.

TUC general secretary Brendan Barber said: "The dole queues have not been as high as they might have been, thanks to action by government, employers and unions, but this cannot be taken for granted."

And he warned the Tory/Liberal Democrat coalition that "it would be a huge mistake for the new government to cut support for the unemployed,

particularly the Future Jobs Fund, a policy that has prevented unemployment scarring a generation of young people as it did in the 1980s".

	Unemployment seasonally adjusted Claimants (000s)		LFS <sup>2</sup> (000s)	
		% <sup>1</sup>		%
2004	853	2.7	1,424	4.8
2005	862	2.7	1,465	4.9
2006	945	3.0	1,671	5.4
2007	865	2.7	1,653	5.3
2008	906	2.8	1,781	5.7
2009	1,529	4.7	2,395	7.6
2009				
March	1,454	4.5	2,231	7.1
April	1,506	4.6	2,280	7.3
May	1,539	4.7	2,376	7.6
June	1,560	4.8	2,431	7.8
July	1,582	4.9	2,467	7.9
August	1,602	4.9	2,466	7.9
September	1,617	5.0	2,461	7.8
October	1,628	5.0	2,482	7.9
November	1,619	5.0	2,459	7.8
December	1,601	5.0	2,457	7.8
2010				
January	1,617	5.0	2,449	7.8
February	1,577	4.9	2,502	8.0
March (r)	1,544	4.8	2,510	8.0
April (p)	1,517	4.7		

<sup>1</sup> Percentage of working population – the employees, unemployed, self-employed and the armed forces. <sup>2</sup> The Labour Force Survey definition of unemployment – the number of unemployed people who want a job and are ready to start work in two weeks, and have looked for work in the past four weeks. Each figure is the average of the past three months – a rolling average. (p) provisional, (r) revised

One piece of good news was the fall in the claimant count, which only includes those claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) – the third monthly fall in a row. In April, it fell by 27,100 to 1.52 million and the unemployment rate fell to 4.7% from 4.8% the previous month.

Again it was male unemployment which gained the most with men on benefit down by 23,400 to 1.09 million and their unemployment rate was down to 6.2%. The number of women claiming JSA was down by 3,700 to 423,400 and their jobless rate fell to 2.8% from 2.9%.

**Regions** The claimant count fell in all 12 regions in April. However, the unemployment rate was above the UK average of 4.7% in six regions. The highest rates were 6.7% in the North East, 6.2% in Northern Ireland and 6.0% in the West Midlands.

The LFS count showed rises in nine regions and falls in three. The unemployment rate was above the UK average of 8.0% in seven regions. The highest rates were 9.7% in Yorkshire and the Humber,

9.6% in the North East and 9.3% in both the West Midlands and Wales.

Region	March claimants		LFS Jan- Mar	
	Number	%	Number	%
North East	81,100	6.7	121,000	9.6
North West	185,600	5.2	297,000	8.7
Yorkshire & the Humber	151,200	5.7	258,000	9.7
East Midlands	104,200	4.7	166,000	7.3
West Midlands	16,600	6.0	249,000	9.3
East	113,900	3.9	194,000	6.6
London	218,300	4.5	372,000	9.1
South East	145,400	3.2	283,000	6.4
South West	85,300	3.1	166,000	6.3
Wales	74,500	5.3	133,000	9.3
Scotland	135,400	4.9	216,000	8.1
Northern Ireland	55,400	6.2	55,000	6.7

[www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/lmsuk0510.pdf](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/lmsuk0510.pdf)

## 2010 general election sees records broken

The 2010 general election was the first to produce a hung parliament since 1974. And subsequent wheeling and dealing saw the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats reach an agreement on the first coalition government since the Second World War.

The Conservatives made a net gain of 97 seats taking them to 306.

However, the Liberal Democrats saw their number of seats fall to 59 – a net loss of five seats. Nevertheless as a result of the coalition deal the Liberal Democrats will have a possible five cabinet seats, including Nick Clegg as deputy prime minister.

The Labour Party made a net loss of 91 seats on a turnout of 65.1%.

The Green Party made a breakthrough and has its first MP with the election of Dr Caroline Lucas in Brighton Pavilion.

In Wales, Plaid Cymru keep their representation in Westminster at three MPs, and the Scottish Nationalists still have six MPs.

The Conservatives will probably keep the Thirsk and Malton seat where the election will be held on 27 May following the death of the UKIP candidate.

The number of seats and percentages of votes gained by the parties are set out over on a national and regional basis.

	1997	2005	2010	Net gain/loss <sup>1</sup>
<b>Labour</b>				
Seats	419	356	258	-91
% vote	43.6	35.2	29.0	
<b>Conservative</b>				
Seats	165	198	306	+98
% vote	30.7	32.3	36.1	
<b>Liberal Democrats</b>				
Seats	46	62	57	-5
% vote	16.8	22.0	23.0	
<b>Nationalist</b>				
Seats	10	9	9	0
% vote	2.5	2.2	2.3	
<b>Others</b>				
Seats	20	21	19	-2
% vote	6.8	8.3	9.7	

<sup>1</sup> Because of boundary changes calculations may not tally with 2005 figures

Despite a record number of candidates only 142 women were elected this time around. Women make up 22% of the new parliament. However, this is a net gain of 14 on the 2005 figure of 128 (20% of MPs), according to the Centre for Women and Democracy pressure group.

The number of Conservative women MPs has risen from 17 to 48 – an increase from 9% to 16%.

The number of Labour women MPs has fallen from 98 to 81 – but the fall in the overall number of Labour MPs means that there is an increase of three percentage points from 28% to 31%.

The number of Liberal Democrat women MPs has fallen from 10 to seven – a decrease in percentage terms from 16% to 12% of Lib Dem MPs.

In addition to the women elected for the main three parties, there is one woman elected for the Green Party, one for the SNP, one for Sinn Fein, one for the SDLP, one for the Alliance Party, and one Independent. None of Plaid Cymru's three MPs or the Democratic Unionist party's eight MPs is a woman.

Overall the number of Black and minority ethnic (BME) MPs has nearly doubled from 14 to 27 – a net gain of 13. That is the greatest number and highest percentage increase – 92.8% – of any general election.

And within those historic figures, firsts have been achieved particularly for BME women. The Labour candidate Shabana Mahmood becomes the first Muslim woman to be elected to Westminster. And Labour's Chi Onwurah is the first woman of African descent to win a parliamentary seat. For the Conservatives, Helen Grant becomes the first woman of African descent to represent the Conservatives at Westminster and Priti Patel the first Conservative Asian woman.

<b>Regional results</b>				
<b>England</b>				
	Lab	Con	Lib Dem	Other
<b>North East</b>				
Seats	25	2	2	0
Net change	-2	1	1	0
% vote	43.6	23.7	23.6	9.1
<b>North West</b>				
Seats	47	22	6	0
Net change	-13	12	1	0
% vote	39.5	31.7	21.6	7.2
<b>Yorkshire &amp; the Humber <sup>1</sup></b>				
Seats	32	18	3	0
Net change	-9	10	-1	0
% vote	34.7	32.5	23	9.9
<b>East Midlands</b>				
Seats	15	31	0	0
Net change	-11	12	-1	0
% vote	29.8	41.2	20.8	8.2
<b>West Midlands</b>				
Seats	24	33	2	0
Net change	-14	15	0	-1
% vote	30.6	39.5	20.5	9.5
<b>Eastern</b>				
Seats	2	52	4	0
Net change	-11	10	1	0
% vote	19.6	47.1	24.1	9.2
<b>London</b>				
Seats	38	28	7	0
Net change	-6	7	0	-1
% vote	36.6	34.5	22.1	6.6
<b>South East</b>				
Seats	4	75	4	1
Net change	-13	14	-2	1
% vote	16.2	49.9	26.2	7.6
<b>South West</b>				
Seats	4	36	15	0
Net change	-8	11	-3	0
% vote	15.4	42.8	34.7	7

<sup>1</sup> Still one seat to declare

Country/Party	Seats	Net change	% vote
<b>Scotland</b>			
Labour	41	0	36.2
Liberal Democrat	11	0	18.9
SNP	6	0	19.9
Conservative	1	0	16.7
Other	0	0	2.4
<b>Wales</b>			
Labour	26	-4	36.2
Conservative	8	5	26.1
Liberal Democrats	3	-1	20.1
Plaid Cymru	3	1	11.3
Other	0	-1	6.2
<b>Northern Ireland</b>			
Democratic Unionist	8	-1	25
Sinn Fein	5	0	25.5
SDLP	3	0	16.5
Alliance	1	1	6.3
Other	1	1	26.7

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/election2010/results/>, LRD analysis  
[www.cfwd.org.uk/enewsletter-67](http://www.cfwd.org.uk/enewsletter-67)

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