



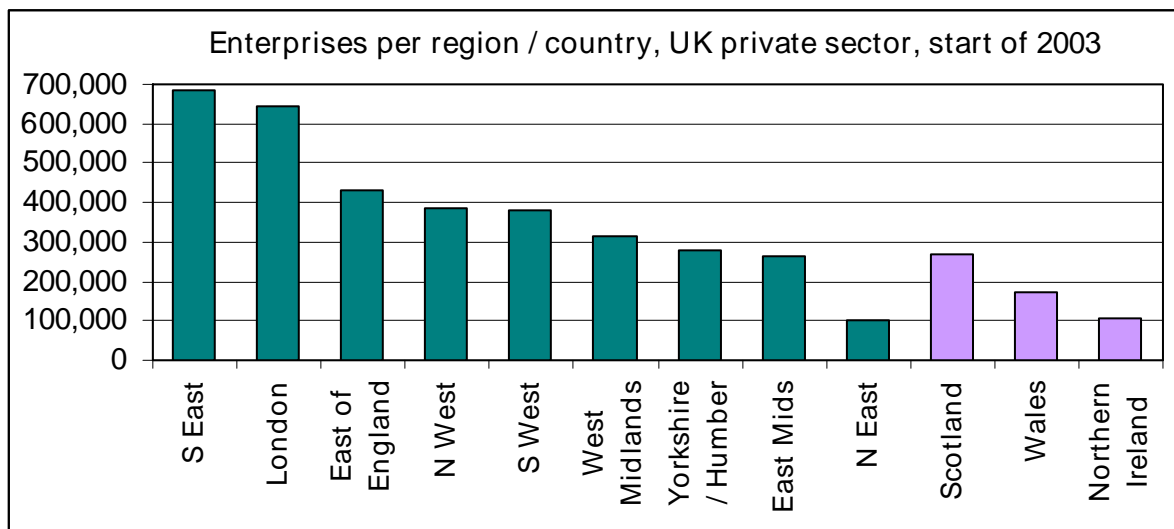
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STATISTICAL PRESS RELEASE

The Small Business Service (SBS), an executive agency of the Department of Trade and Industry, today published the 2003 Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) Statistics for the English Regions, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Of the estimated 4.0 million enterprises¹ in the UK at the start of 2003, 3.5 million are in England. 33% of all UK enterprises are in London and the South East. Both these regions have over 600,000 enterprises each.



For each region and country in the UK, no more than 0.2 per cent of enterprises are large (250 or more employees), and at least 98.9 per cent of enterprises are small (0 to 49 employees). The proportions of enterprises that are medium-sized (50 to 249 employees) range from 0.5 per cent (in the South East and South West) to 0.9 per cent (in the North East).

The number of UK enterprises was 3.7 million at the start of 2001, and is 4.0 million at the start of 2003, but a significant part of this increase is due to improved estimation. This involved re-weighting Labour Force Survey (LFS) data following the 2001 census, as discussed in the UK statistics, URN 04/92, published on 26 August 2004. For some regions, much of the increase is due to this reweighting. Therefore one cannot make direct

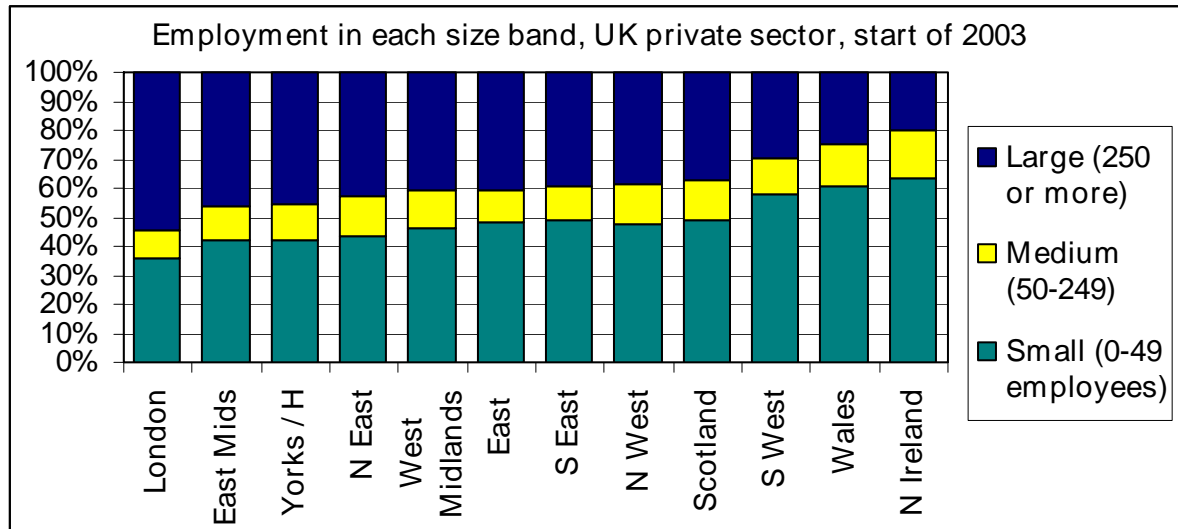
¹ This statistical press release relates solely to the private sector, comprising companies (including public corporations and nationalised bodies), partnerships and sole proprietors.

comparisons between the figures published today and the previous SME Statistics for the Regions publication.

Employment in SMEs

Enterprises that have employees in more than one region or country are counted here only in the region where they are registered. These estimates may therefore differ from actual employment in a region, since some employees in one region will work for enterprises that are registered in another region.

In the UK as a whole, SMEs account for over half of employment. This is also true for each region and country in the UK except London, where SMEs only account for 45 per cent. For the South West, Wales and Northern Ireland, this figure exceeds 70 per cent.



This statistical press release supplements the UK statistics, URN 04/92, published on 26 August 2004. More information is available in the SME Statistics UK statistical press release, accompanying methodology and tables at www.sbs.gov.uk/analytical/statistics/smestats.php.

A National Statistics publication

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