The role of financial services

The City of London, also known as the Square Mile, remains home to the UK’s financial services industry.

In 2019, the City accounted for 48% of all London’s financial services employment – while Tower Hamlets (home to Canary Wharf) accounted for 17%.

Financial services were one of the UK’s most productive industries in 2018, generating over £130k in output for every job. This sector contributed 7% of the UK’s Gross Value Added (GVA) in the same year.

In 2019, there were over 1 million financial services jobs in the UK, almost two thirds of which were outside London.

Financial and insurance services were the single biggest contributor to the UK’s surplus in services trade, accounting for almost half of the surplus.

In 2019, the UK exported £79bn in financial services and insurance, generating a trade surplus of £59bn in 2019.

The UK financial services industry paid £76bn in tax in 2020, equivalent to 10.1% of the total tax contribution to the UK.

Combined with professional services of £45bn, Financial and professional services exports rose to £124bn.

Note: Tax paid includes taxes borne by FS firms and taxes collected from FS employees and customers.
Sources: ONS, Business Register and Employment Survey 2019 (2020 release); City of London/PwC, The Total Tax Contribution of UK financial services in 2019 (2021 release); ONS, Regional GVA by Industry – all NUTS levels (balanced approach), 2018 (2019 release); ONS, Regional GVA by LA (balanced approach), 2018 (2019 release); ONS, Pink Book Chapter 3+9, 2019 (2020 release).

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City of London jobs

At a record high in 2019.

There were 542,000 workers in the City of London, or 10% of London’s total workforce in 2019.

1 in 57 GB workers were employed in the City.

Financial, professional and business services were the largest employers in the City of London, accounting for 386,000 jobs in 2019 – almost 3/4 of total jobs in the Square Mile.

Tech is the fourth largest sector after financial, professional and business services.

Financial, professional and business services provided the most jobs and drove employment growth at 4% in 2019. Double the 2% growth in the previous year.

The City generates 5% of England’s business rates. This equates to £1.22bn – more than the three biggest non-London Local Authorities combined – Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester (collectively £1.19bn).

Share of total jobs in the City of London:

- **35%** Financial services
- **24%** Professional services
- **12%** Business services
- **11%** Tech
- **7%** Retail, food services and accommodation
- **12%** Others

Notes: Financial services include finance and insurance services using SIC code K. Financial, professional and associated business services use SIC codes K,M and N. Tech refers to SIC code J. Business rates use National Non-Domestic Rates.

Sources: ONS, Business Register and Employment Survey, 2019 (2020 release); Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, National non-domestic rates collected by councils, forecast for 2020-2021

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City of London workers

The City of London workforce is young, skilled and highly international.

The City of London’s workforce is young...

61% of City workers were aged between 22 and 39, compared with 40% of workers across England and Wales, according to the 2011 census.

The City of London’s workforce is highly skilled...

72% of City workers were employed in high-skilled jobs*, compared with 63% across London and 49% in Great Britain in 2020.

The City of London’s workforce is international...

with 40% of workers born outside the UK in 2019.

60% of workers were UK-born
16% of workers came from the EEA
24% came from the rest of the world.

City workers born outside the UK came predominantly from France, Ireland, India, Australia, South Africa and the United States.

Within financial and professional services, banks have the highest share of international workers (50%). Followed by management consultancy (36%) and tech (35%).

In 2019, the gender balance of the City’s workforce was

63% male, an a rising 37% female

In 2020, 27% of the City’s workforce were of black, Asian or minority ethnic origin.

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*High-skilled jobs refers to roles as managers or directors, or in professional or technical occupations.

Sources: Annual Population Survey, Workplace Analysis, Jul 2019 – June 2020; ONS, user requested data on ethnicity from APS, Sep 19 – Oct 20 (2020 release); ONS user requested data from APS on jobs by country of birth, 2019 (2020 release); Census 2011, Workplace population (focus on countries of birth represented with 5,000+ workers in the City).
City of London firms

The City of London is a dynamic environment for firms. Although only 1% of City firms are large, they account for over half of employment.

The City was home to 24,020 businesses in 2019, with 99% of those SMEs and 300 large firms (250+ employees). Large firms provided over 50% of the City's jobs overall. With 90 firms each having more than 1000 jobs in the City, largely in financial and professional services.

Some sectors are highly concentrated in specific areas of the City of London.

Law firms tend to cluster in the West of the City, while insurance firms are located on the East side of the Square Mile.

There were around 818 new start-ups across the City in 2020. 48% of the City of London start-ups were in financial, professional and associated business services, and 9% were in tech.


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