

Guernsey Unemployment Bulletin

Issue date 23rd June 2020

The Guernsey Unemployment Bulletin provides headline information on unemployment in Guernsey using data sourced from Social Security.



States of Guernsey
Data and Analysis

1.1 Introduction

This new Unemployment Bulletin provides headline information on unemployment in Guernsey (including the islands of Guernsey, Herm, Jethou, Lihou and, in some cases, a small number of Alderney residents).

This is a special publication that has been produced using data from the Committee for Employment & Social Security to provide more comprehensive information on unemployment trends than would typically be published. Due to technical problems, exact unemployment figures could not be extracted from IT systems during March, April or May 2020, but estimates were provided. Those problems have now been resolved and, as well as the usual end of quarter snapshot in March, week by week unemployment figures between 7th March 2020 and 30th May 2020, are included in this bulletin along with historic figures.

The figures presented in this bulletin are based on administrative data relating to Unemployment Benefit and Income Support claimants across the whole population. Because of the need to handle a significantly increased volume of new claims during lockdown, the amount of information gathered from people applying for new claims as a result of COVID-19 was reduced to streamline the process. In addition, people were enrolled on Income Support benefit in circumstances which would not ordinarily occur – such as being furloughed without pay. The officers responsible for extracting unemployment numbers from the claims data have erred on the side of a claimant being unemployed if the classification is not clear. As a result of these factors, the figures presented in this bulletin may be overstated relative to what they might have been if calculated under normal circumstances.

Information on numbers of employers, employees and self-employees and the earnings of employees at the end of March 2020, along with quarterly unemployment figures up to the end of June 2020, will be included in the Population, Employment and Earnings Bulletin, which is due to be published at the end of July and will be made available on www.gov.gg/population.

1.2 Headlines

- There were 497 people registered as wholly unemployed* at the end of March 2020, 156 more than at the same time a year earlier and the highest since records began in 2007
- 1.6% of the workforce were registered as wholly unemployed* at the end of March 2020, compared to 1.1% at the end of March 2019
- Between 7th March 2020 and 30th May 2020, the week ending 30th May saw the largest number of people registered as wholly unemployed* (1,631 people), 5.2% of the workforce. This compares to 5.0% of the workforce (1,568 people) during the week ending 2nd May 2020. The week ending 11th April saw the largest weekly increase in the number of people wholly unemployed, with an additional 349 people registered as unemployed since the end of the previous week
- The number of wholly unemployed* people during the snapshot week at the end of May 2020 was greater across all age groups, for both men and women, than at the end of March 2020. For both males and females, the largest increase in unemployment between March 2020 and May 2020 was seen in the 20 to 29 age group

*The "wholly unemployed" figure used throughout this bulletin refers only to those that were registered as unemployed and did not do any work in the snapshot week. This includes anyone 'furloughed' as a result of the crisis (people technically still employed but without pay), anyone claiming a Hardship Benefit (the hardship fund was set up to provide emergency financial help for people who may not otherwise qualify for Unemployment Benefit, Sickness Benefit or Income Support), anyone who has either found work/returned to work, but yet to receive a wage and all Alderney Income Support claims created after 25th March.

2.1 Unemployment trends

Table 2.1.1 Percentage of workforce registered as unemployed at end of March

	Wholly unemployed	% of workforce	Total registered unemployed*	% of workforce
Q1 1966			101	
Q1 1967			55	
Q1 1968			44	
Q1 1969			53	
Q1 1970			79	
Q1 1971			144	
Q1 1972			298	
Q1 1973			93	
Q1 1974			66	
Q1 1975			82	
Q1 1976			165	
Q1 1977			406	
Q1 1978			340	
Q1 1979			255	
Q1 1980			311	
Q1 1981			960	
Q1 1982			905	
Q1 1983			1,014	
Q1 1984			925	
Q1 1985			647	
Q1 1986			544	
Q1 1987			240	
Q1 1988			106	
Q1 1989			93	
Q1 1990			123	
Q1 1991			299	
Q1 1992			516	
Q1 1993			670	
Q1 1994			439	1.5
Q1 1995			334	1.1
Q1 1996			284	0.9
Q1 1997			234	0.8
Q1 1998			157	0.5
Q1 1999			133	0.4
Q1 2000			153	0.5
Q1 2001			91	0.3
Q1 2002			88	0.3
Q1 2003			96	0.3
Q1 2004			118	0.4
Q1 2005			181	0.6
Q1 2006			202	0.6
Q1 2007	214	0.8	269	0.9
Q1 2008	183	0.6	267	1.0
Q1 2009	335	1.2	447	1.6
Q1 2010	339	1.2	498	1.8
Q1 2011	301	1.0	468	1.6
Q1 2012	416	1.4	616	2.1
Q1 2013	427	1.5	638	2.2
Q1 2014	441	1.6	735	2.6
Q1 2015	399	1.4	670	2.3
Q1 2016	434	1.4	710	2.4
Q1 2017	380	1.2	686	2.2
Q1 2018	292	1.0	624	2.0
Q1 2019	341	1.1	819	2.7
Q1 2020	497	1.6	974	3.1

The total number of people registered as unemployed has been available since 1966*. This was the headline measure for unemployment until 2007 when a new measure, aligning with the definition used by the International Labour Office (ILO), was introduced. This figure, of “wholly unemployed”, includes only those that were registered as unemployed and did not do any work in the snapshot week. It should be noted that the ILO measure is based on survey data (i.e. a sample of the population, who are asked to self-classify their employment status), whereas the information in this bulletin is based on administrative data relating to Unemployment Benefit and Income Support claimants across the whole population (see [page 2](#) for more information on "wholly unemployed").

As shown in [Table 2.1.1](#), there were 497 people registered as "wholly unemployed" during the week ending 28th March 2020, 156 more than at the same time a year earlier. 1.6% of the workforce were registered as wholly unemployed at the end of March 2020. This compares to 1.1% at the end of March 2019.

The number of "total registered unemployed"* people accounted for 3.1% of the workforce at the end of March 2020, 0.4 percentage points higher than at the same time the previous year and the highest since records began in 1994 (see [Table 2.1.1](#)).

The number of people unemployed, as presented in [Table 2.1.1](#), is displayed in a chart on [page 4](#).

A further increase in unemployment was seen during April and May 2020, details of which can be found on [page 5](#).

*The definition of what comprises "total registered unemployed" has gradually expanded over time to include those on government training schemes for the unemployed, anybody in part-time or casual employment who is available to work additional hours and still eligible to claim job seekers' benefit to supplement their income, and those who are fully employed and eligible for Income Support (previously Supplementary Benefit) on top of their low earnings. Additionally, the introduction of the Income Support scheme in 2018 included a work requirement for all claimants of working age. These factors may partly account for the increasing trend in unemployment seen in [Table 2.1.1](#)

2.1 Unemployment trends

Figure 2.1.1 Number of people registered as unemployed

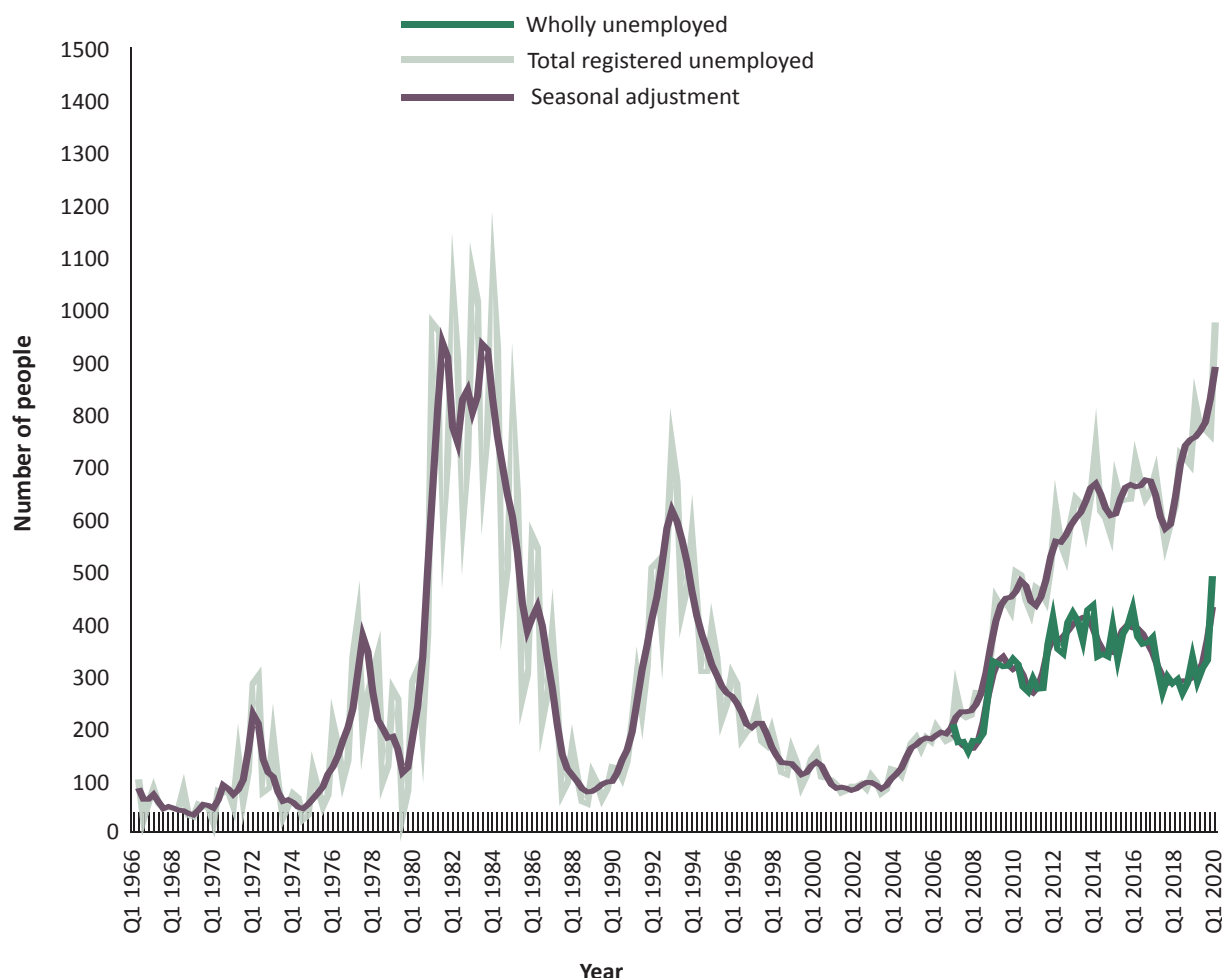


Figure 2.1.1 shows that there was an increase in the number of people registered as wholly unemployed between the end of December 2019 and the end of March 2020. The number of people wholly unemployed at the end of March 2020 was the highest since records began in 2007 (497 people). This figure includes only those that were registered as unemployed and did not do any work in the snapshot week.

Data on the "total registered unemployed"* has been available since 1966. As shown in **Figure 2.1.1** and **Table 2.1.1** on **page 3**, there was a total of 974 people registered as unemployed* during the week ending 28th March 2020, the highest since 1983. The trend in unemployment when adjusted to account for seasonal variation is also shown in **Figure 2.1.1**.

Page 5 provides information on the number of people unemployed during Guernsey's lockdown between March 2020 and May 2020.

*The definition of what comprises "total registered unemployed" has gradually expanded over time to include those on government training schemes for the unemployed, anybody in part-time or casual employment who is available to work additional hours and still eligible to claim job seekers' benefit to supplement their income, and those who are fully employed and eligible for Income Support (previously Supplementary Benefit) on top of their low earnings. Additionally, the introduction of the Income Support scheme in 2018 included a work requirement for all claimants of working age. These factors may partly account for the increasing trend in unemployment seen in **Figure 2.1.1**.

2.2 Unemployment - weekly snapshots

Table 2.2.1 Percentage of workforce registered as unemployed at weekly snapshots (between March 2020 and May 2020)

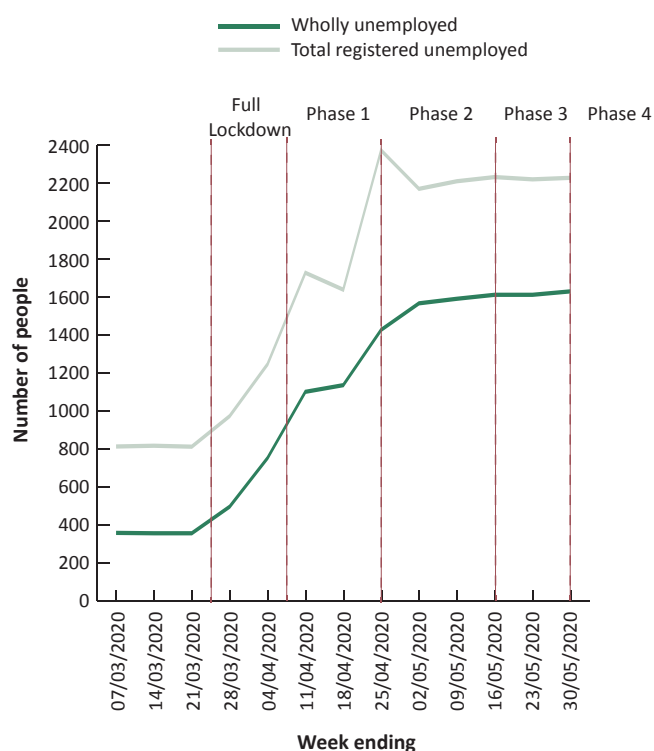
	Wholly unemployed*	% of workforce	Total registered unemployed*	% of workforce
07/03/2020	359	1.1	814	2.6
14/03/2020	357	1.1	818	2.6
21/03/2020	357	1.1	813	2.6
28/03/2020	497	1.6	974	3.1
04/04/2020	753	2.4	1,247	4.0
11/04/2020	1,102	3.5	1,729	5.5
18/04/2020	1,137	3.6	1,640	5.2
25/04/2020	1,428	4.5	2,374	7.5
02/05/2020	1,568	5.0	2,171	6.9
09/05/2020	1,592	5.1	2,211	7.0
16/05/2020	1,613	5.1	2,233	7.1
23/05/2020	1,613	5.1	2,221	7.1
30/05/2020	1,631	5.2	2,229	7.1

The Bailiwick of Guernsey went into lockdown on 25th March 2020 in order to help slow the spread of COVID-19. Restrictions on all but essential business activities were imposed and all non-essential shops and community spaces were told to close. People were required to stay at home except for limited purposes and all gatherings of more than two people in public were prohibited.

Table 2.2.1 and Figure 2.2.1 show the number of people registered as unemployed at the end of each week during March, April and May 2020. It can be seen that the number of people unemployed rose sharply between the week ending 21st March and the week ending 11th April, during which full lockdown was in force.

During the week ending 30th May, 5.2% of the workforce (1,631 people) were wholly unemployed* compared to 5.0% at the end of April and 1.6% at the end of March (see **Table 2.2.1**).

Figure 2.2.1 Number of people registered unemployed at weekly snapshots (between March 2020 and May 2020)



During April 2020, the total number of people registered unemployed* reached a peak of 2,374 (7.5% of the workforce). This is the highest level of unemployment seen since data first became available in 1966.

Figure 2.2.1 shows that the number of unemployed people has remained relatively stable, although high, since the week ending 2nd May. It is expected that levels of unemployment will fall in June as more businesses are able to reopen. The figures for May are likely to also include some who have already found work but are yet to receive their first wages and will therefore still be included in the statistics.

Information on the number of people unemployed broken down by age and gender can be found on [page 6](#).

*See [pages 2 and 3](#) for more information on the difference between the "total registered unemployed" and "wholly unemployed".

2.3 Unemployment by age and gender

Section 2.3 shows the number of people wholly unemployed during the snapshot week at the end of March, April and May 2020, compared to the same time in 2019, broken down by age and gender.

The number of wholly unemployed people during the snapshot week at the end of May 2020 was greater across all age groups, for both men and women, than at the end of March 2020 (see **Figure 2.3.1**). For both males and females, the largest increase in the number of people unemployed between March 2020 and May 2020 was seen in the 20 to 29 age group (an increase of 177 and 127 people respectively).

The largest percentage change in unemployment for females between March 2020 and May 2020 was in the 30 to 39 age group (an increase of 324%), whereas the largest percentage change in the number of unemployed males was in the 60 to 65 age category (a 325% increase).

The level of unemployment during the same months in 2019 is shown in **Figure 2.3.2**. There were significantly fewer people unemployed at the end of March, April and May 2019 compared to the same months in 2020 (see **Figure 2.3.1**). March 2019 saw the largest number of wholly unemployed people compared to April and May, however levels of unemployment were relatively stable across all three months in 2019, for all age groups.

Figure 2.3.1 Unemployment by age and gender during last week of March, April and May 2020

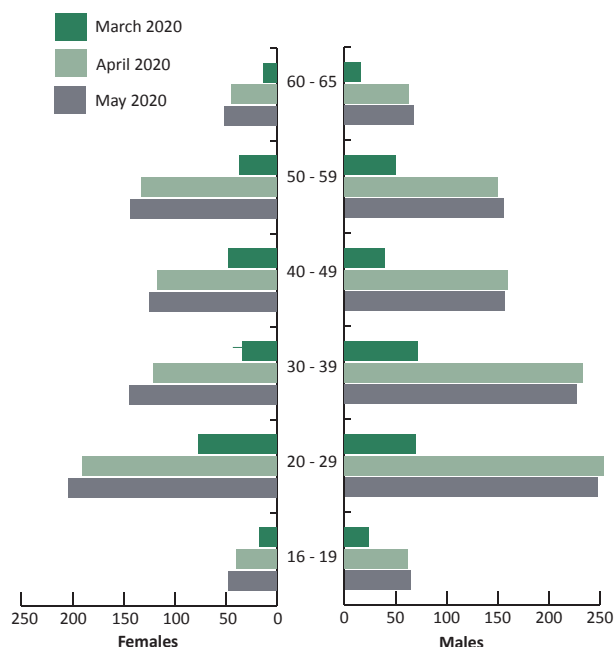
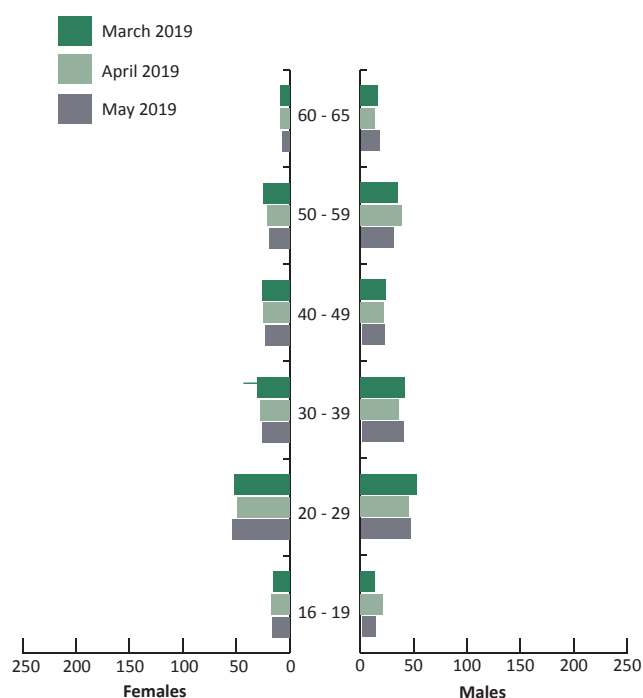


Figure 2.3.2 Unemployment by age and gender during last week of March, April and May 2019



3.1 Job vacancies

Figure 3.1.1 Number of vacancies placed with the Job Centre and in the Guernsey Press each quarter

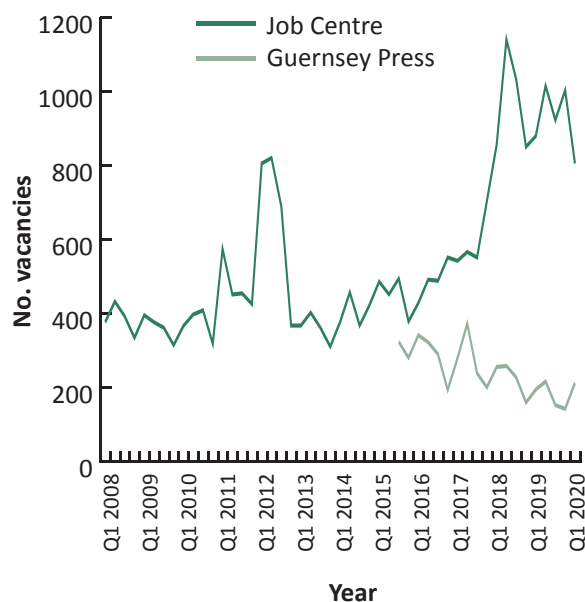
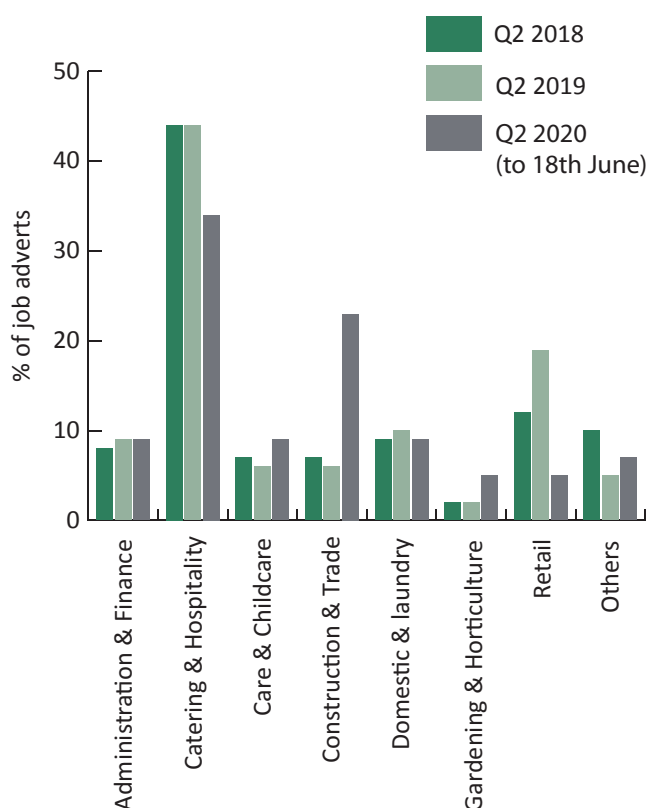


Figure 3.1.1 shows the number of vacancies placed with the Guernsey Job Centre and, from September 2015, the Guernsey Press each quarter. Although this is not a complete representation of the total number of vacancies in the Island, it does provide an indication of the strength of the employment market.

It can be seen that the number of positions advertised with the Job Centre decreased between Q4 2019 and Q1 2020, from 1,004 to 806. During Q1 2019 there were 880 jobs advertised. The number of vacancies advertised in the Guernsey Press (paper only, excluding online advertising) during Q1 2020 totalled 213, 70 more than the previous quarter and 18 more than at the same time the previous year.

Figure 3.1.2 Type of job adverts placed with the Job Centre during Q2



As at 18th June 2020, there were 22, 84 and 167 positions advertised at the Job Centre in April, May and June 2020 respectively. Of these, 34% were in catering and hospitality and 23% in construction and trade (see **Figure 3.1.2**). Conversely, during Q1 2020, only 9% of positions advertised were in construction and trade and 20% were retail positions. Retail accounted for just 5% of job adverts in Q2 2020.

Figure 3.1.2 shows the type of positions advertised with the Job Centre during Q2 in 2018, 2019 and 2020. Construction and trade has seen the largest rise in job adverts since 2018 and 2019, whilst the catering & hospitality and retail sectors have seen the largest decrease.

For more information on the function of the Job Centre see [page 8](#).

As at 30th May, 25% of people claiming Unemployment Benefit had skills relating to administration and finance, 17% had experience in construction and trade, 15% in retail and 11% reported having skills in catering and hospitality.

3.2 Job Centre function

The Job Centre offers support for working age people; to help them improve their chances of starting work or increasing their hours of work. Job Centre clients are either supported by an Employment Advisor, Work Rehabilitation Officer or Case Worker (if with other agencies). Job Centre Advisors assist people in returning to mainstream employment by helping them prepare CVs, cover letters and to develop an action plan. Support is also available to people who have been away from the work place for some time.

The Job Centre continually seeks new training and work rehabilitation initiatives in order to meet the ever increasingly diverse requirements of both the job market and its customers. There are a range of schemes available to help individuals develop their skills and experience to help them find work. These include placement opportunities such as the Kickstart and Work2Benefit schemes and a range of free training courses designed to teach skills that are valuable to local employers. The Job Centre also offers a free vacancy and job matching service to local employers and hosts regular Job Fairs to give job seekers and employers the opportunity to connect.

4.1 Contact details

You may also be interested in other publications from States of Guernsey Data and Analysis Services, which are all available online at www.gov.gg/data. Please contact us for further information.

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