

Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) Q4:2025

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Statistician-General



stats sa

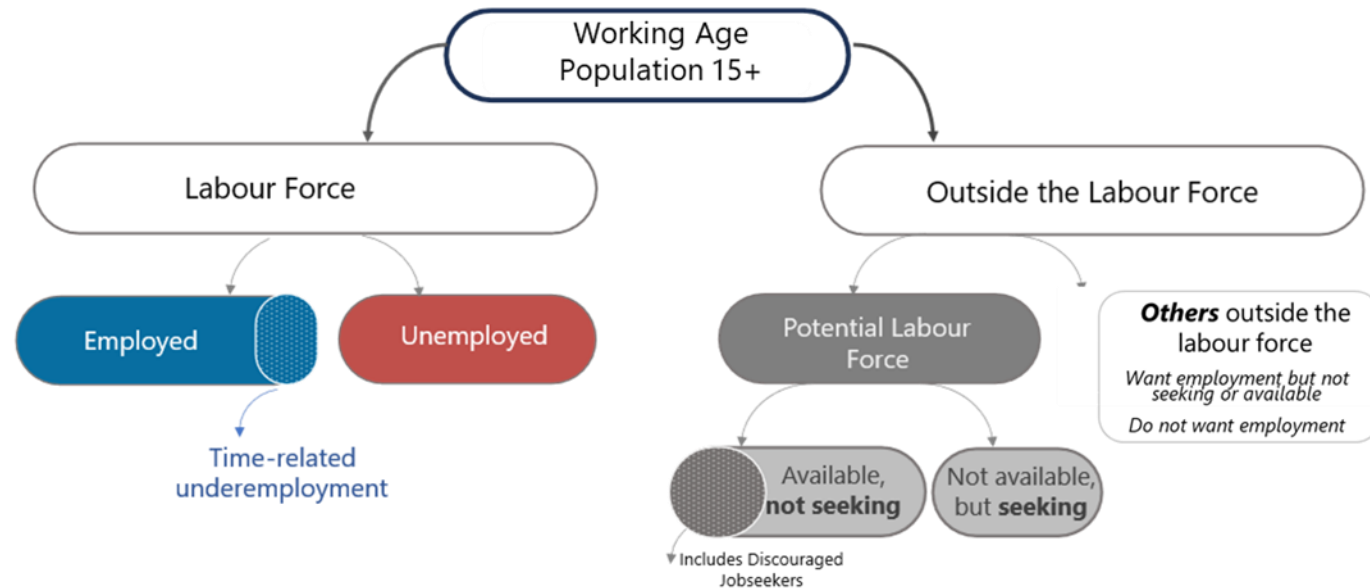
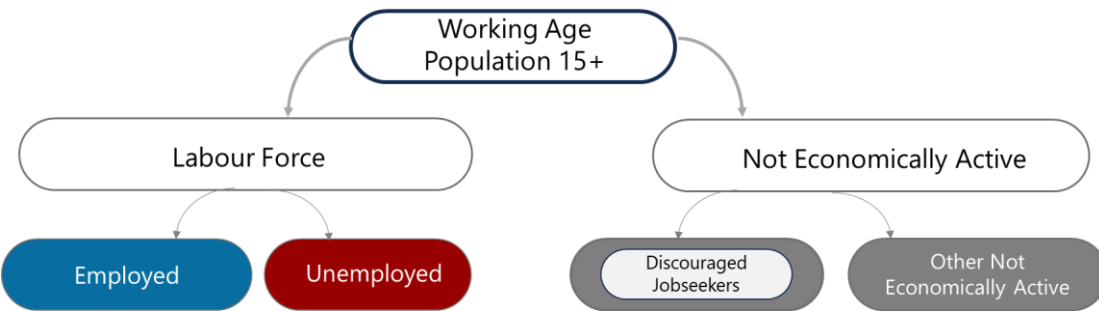
Department:
Statistics South Africa
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



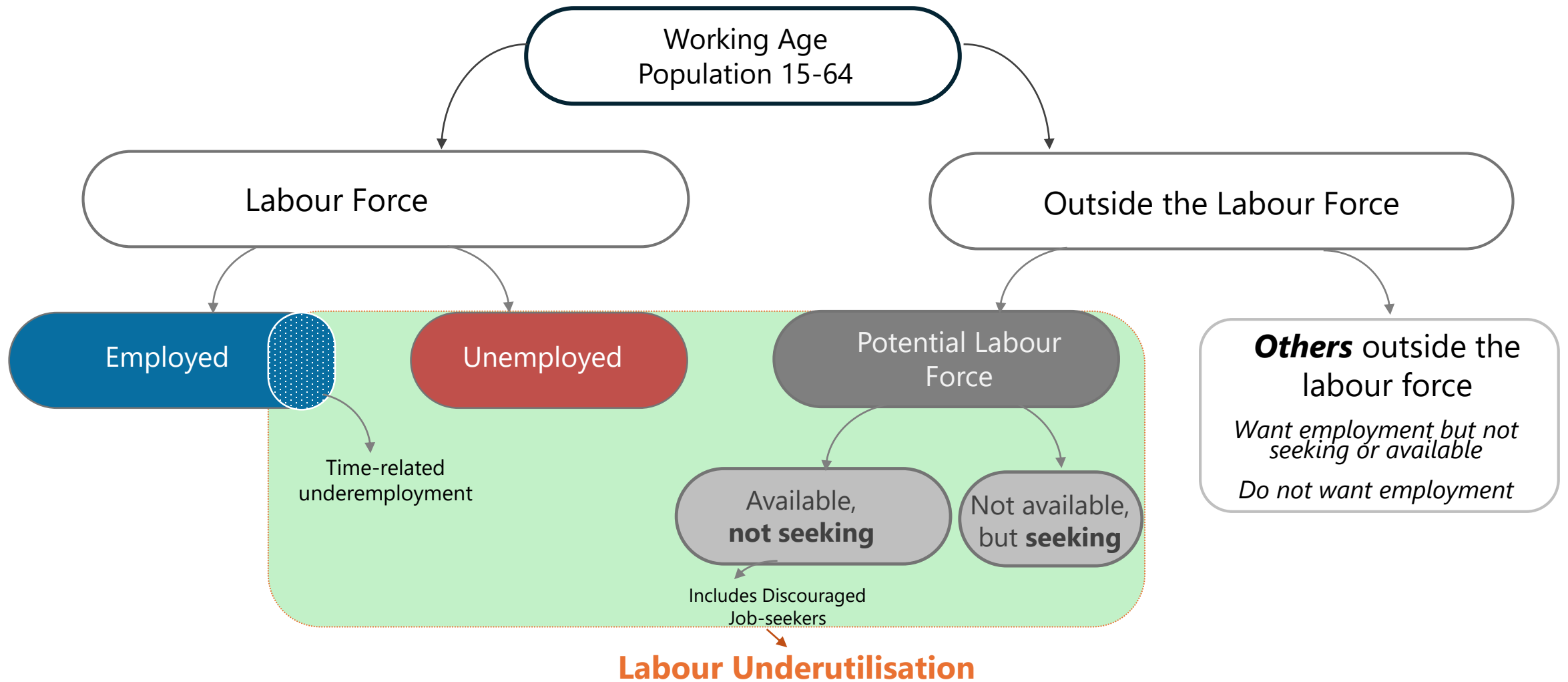
Stats SA adopting more recent ICLS resolutions for reporting

◀ Before

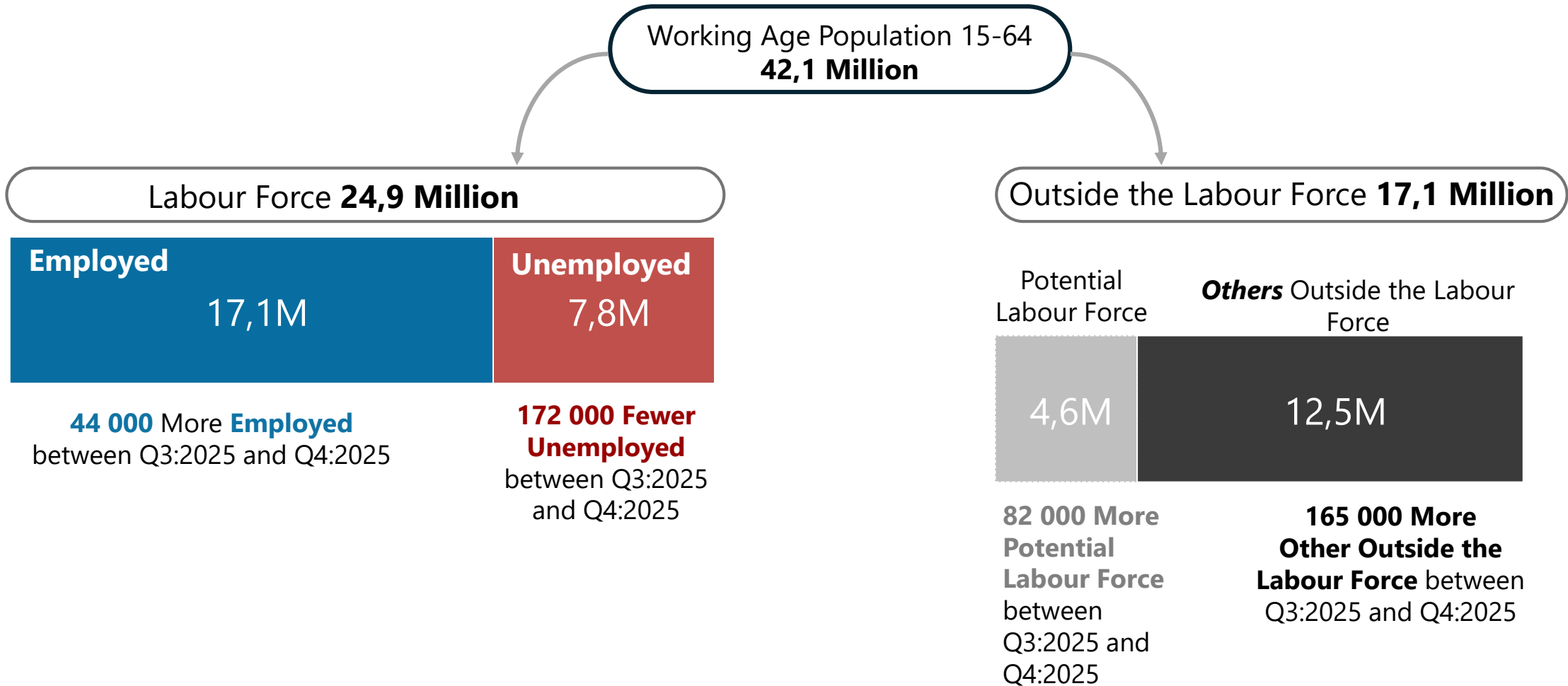
▶ Now



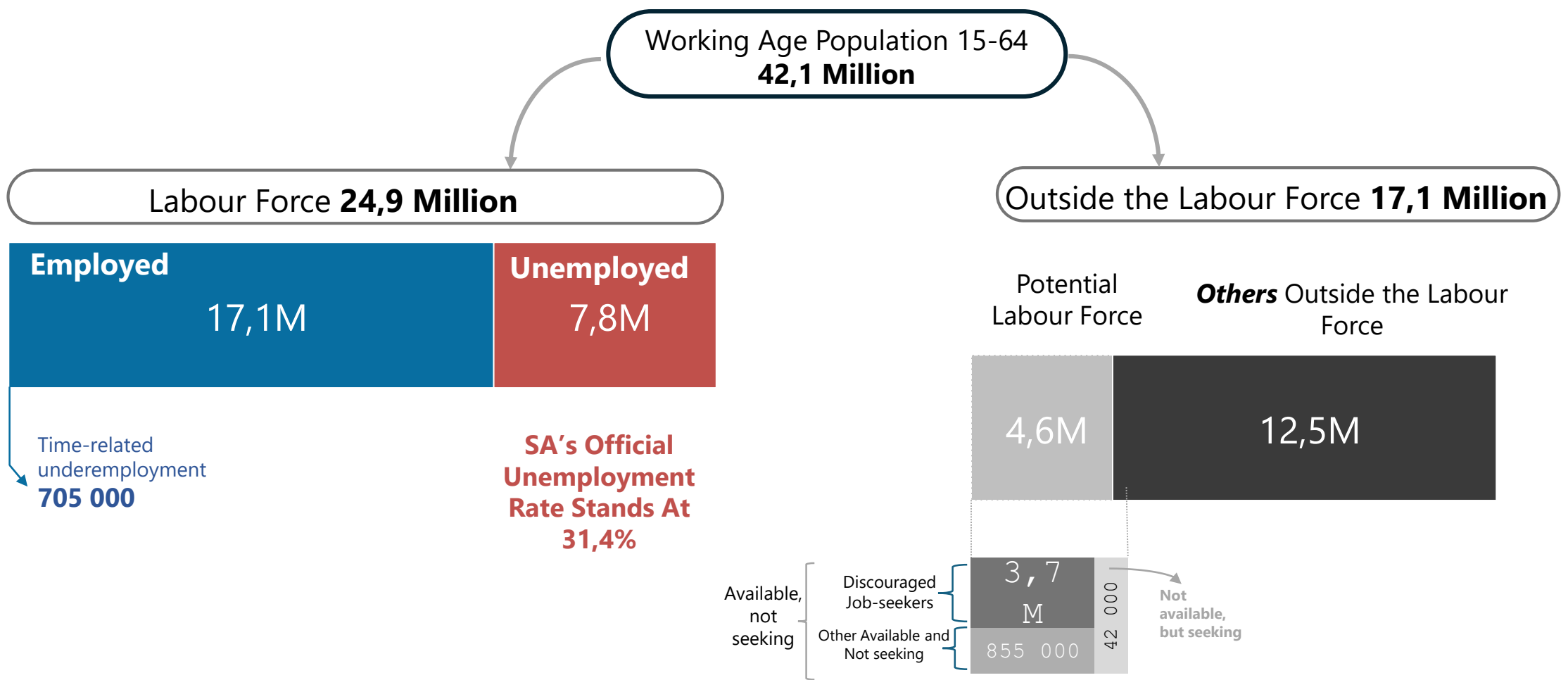
Labour Statistics now report on a greater variety of labour indicators



There were **172 thousand fewer people unemployed** in Q4:2025 than in Q3:2025.



The official **unemployment rate decreased** by 0,5 of a percentage point to **31,4%** in Q4:2025 compared to Q3:2025.



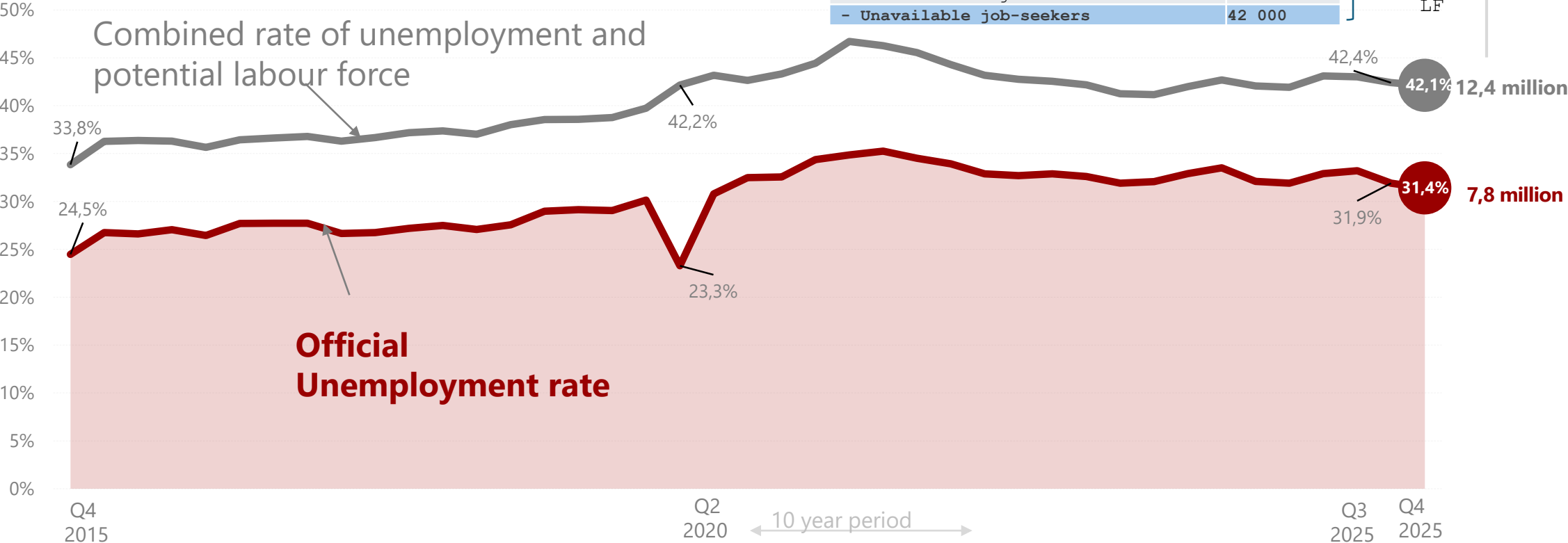
The combined rate of unemployment and potential labour force (LU3) **decreased by 0,3 of a percentage point to 42,1%** in Q4:2025 compared to Q3:2025.

Combined rate of unemployment and potential labour force includes the following:

- Official unemployment (searched and available)	7,8 M
- Available to work but are/or	
• Discouraged job-seekers	3,7 M
• Have other reasons for not searching	855 000
- Unavailable job-seekers	42 000

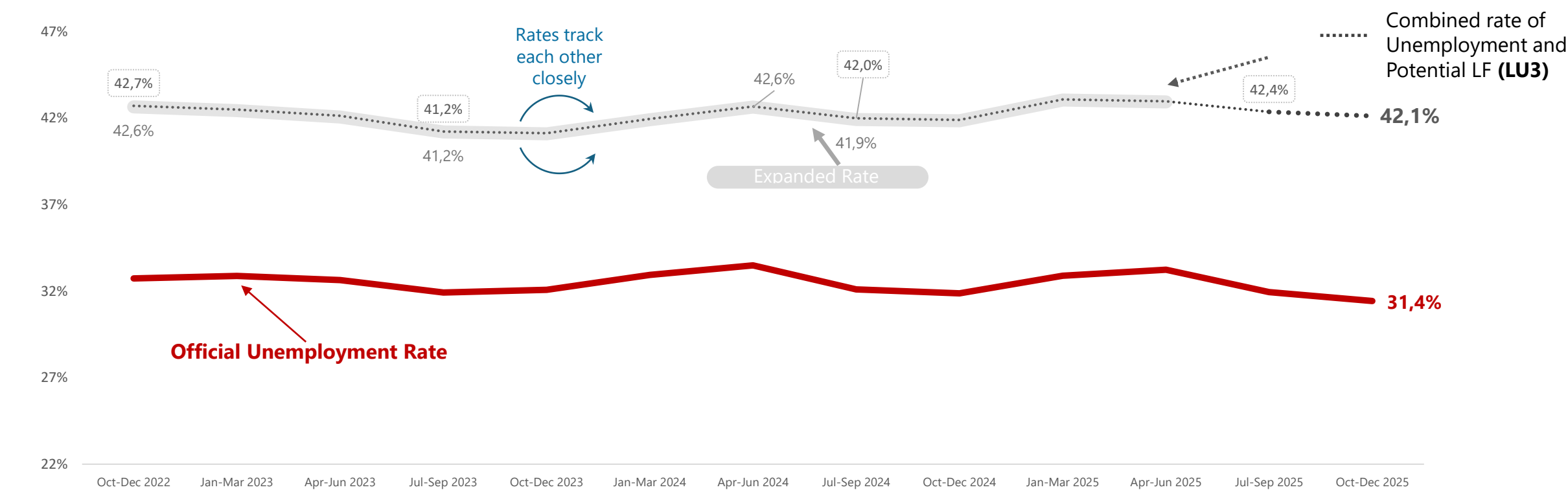
Potential LF

Official UR vs combined rate of unemployment and potential LF (LU3): Q4:2015-Q4:2025



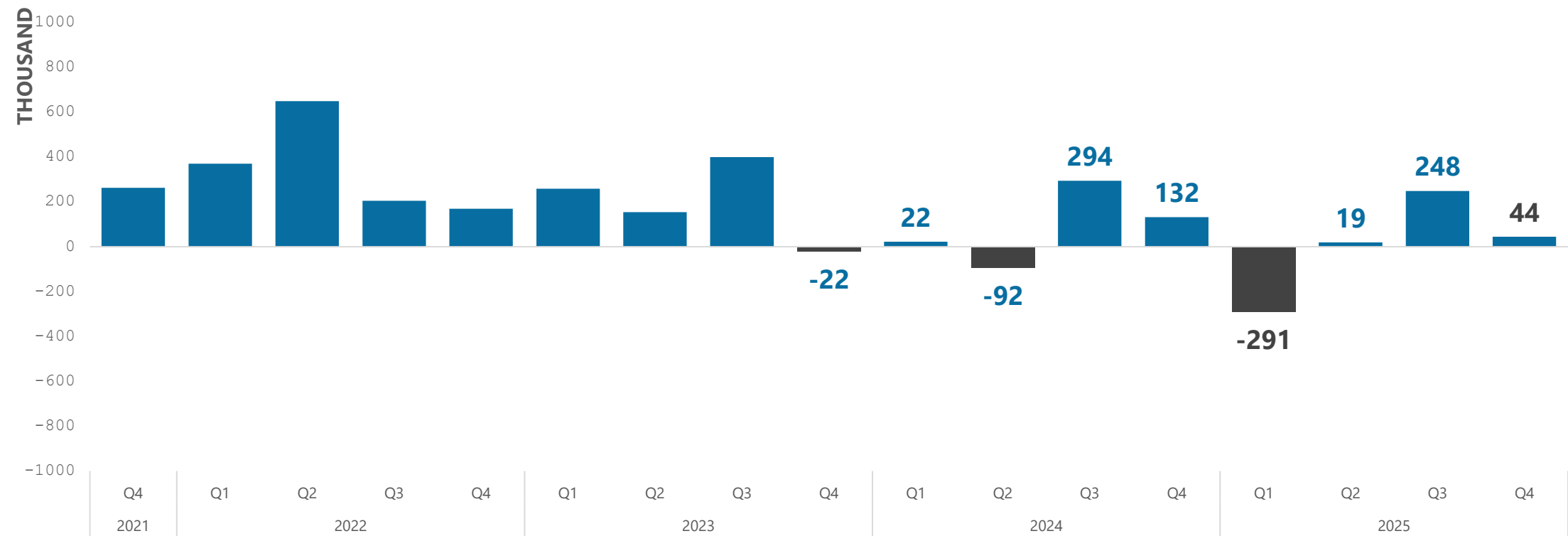
Stats SA reported the **Expanded Unemployment Rate** up to Q2; from Q3 onward, the Combined Rate (LU3) is used, with little variation between the two measures.

Official UR and Expanded UR vs Combined rate of Unemployment and Potential LF (LU3): Q4:2022-Q4:2025



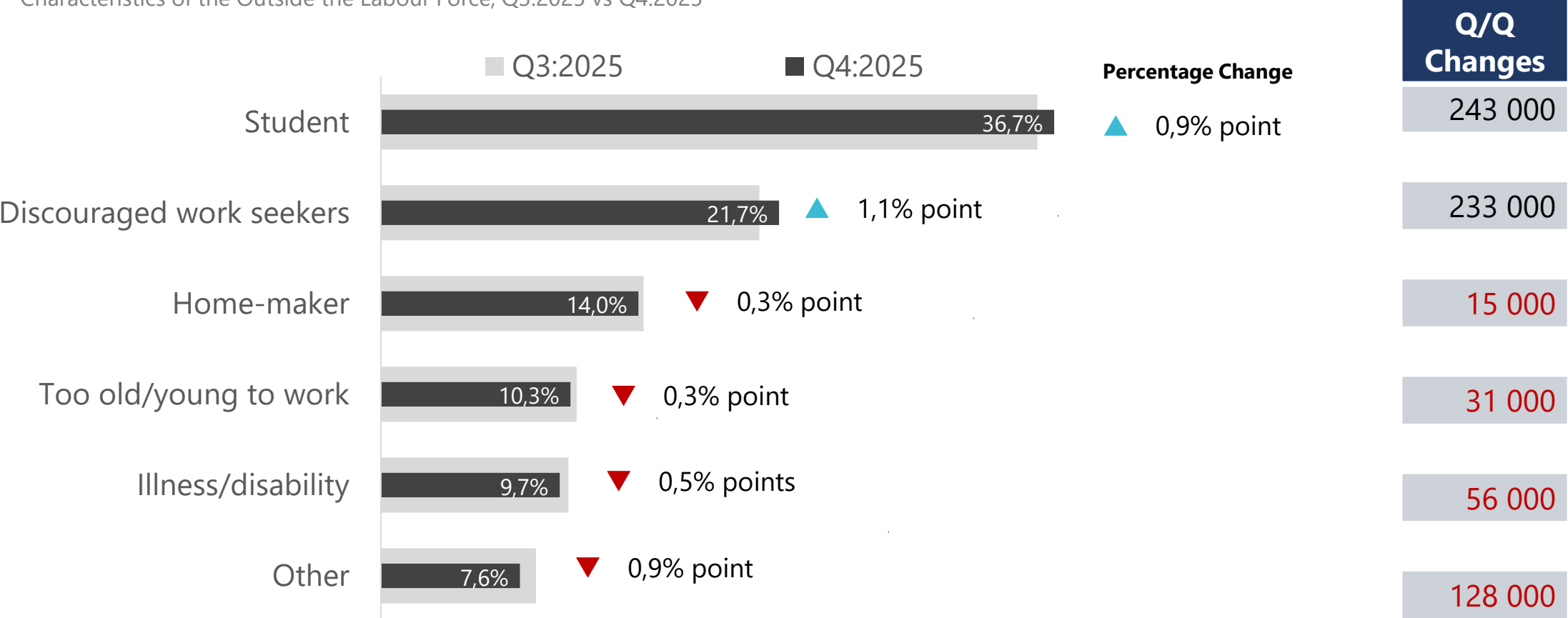
Employment increased by 44 000 in the last quarter of 2025, following an increase of **248 000** in the third quarter of 2025.

Employment changes: Q4:2021-Q4:2025 (Quarter-on-quarter)



The number of persons **Outside the Labour Force** increased by **248 000** in Q4:2025 compared to Q3:2025.

Characteristics of the Outside the Labour Force, Q3:2025 vs Q4:2025

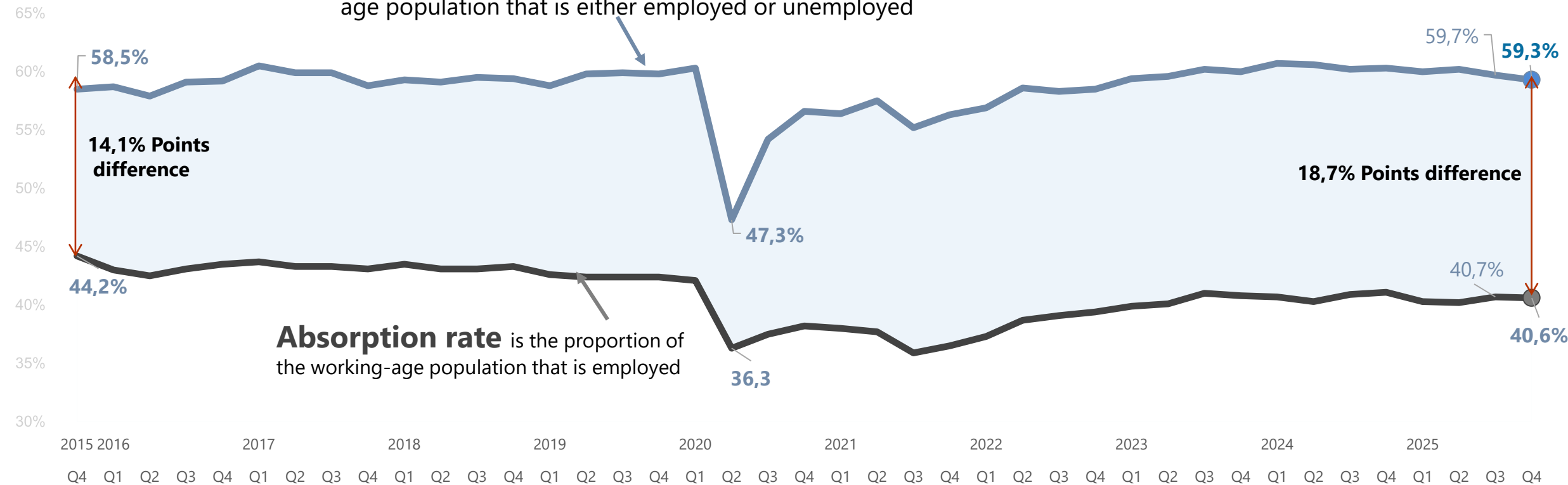


Due to rounding numbers may not add up

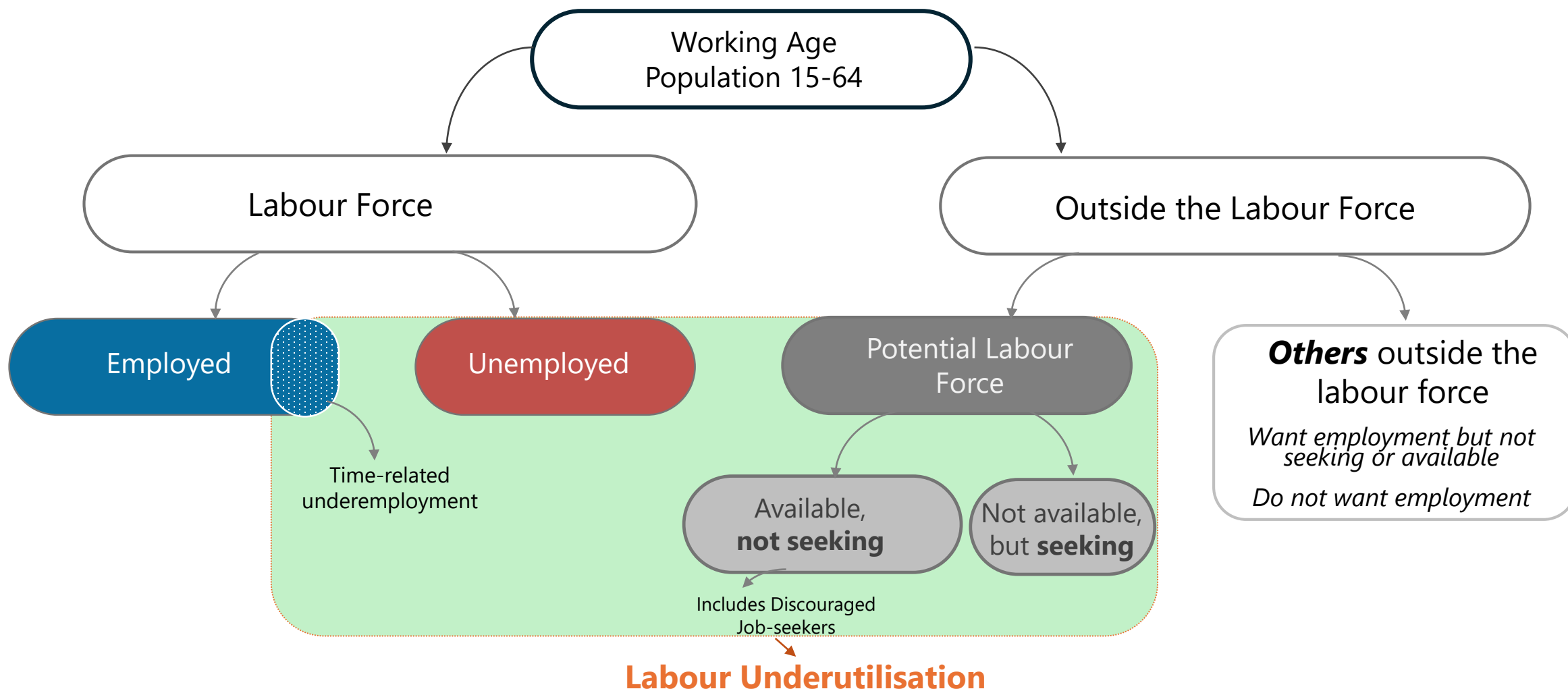
The **labour force participation rate** decreased by 0,4 of a percentage point to **59,3%** in Q4:2025 compared to Q3:2025.

Labour force participation and absorption rates Q4:2015-Q4:2025

Labour force participation rate is the proportion of the working-age population that is either employed or unemployed

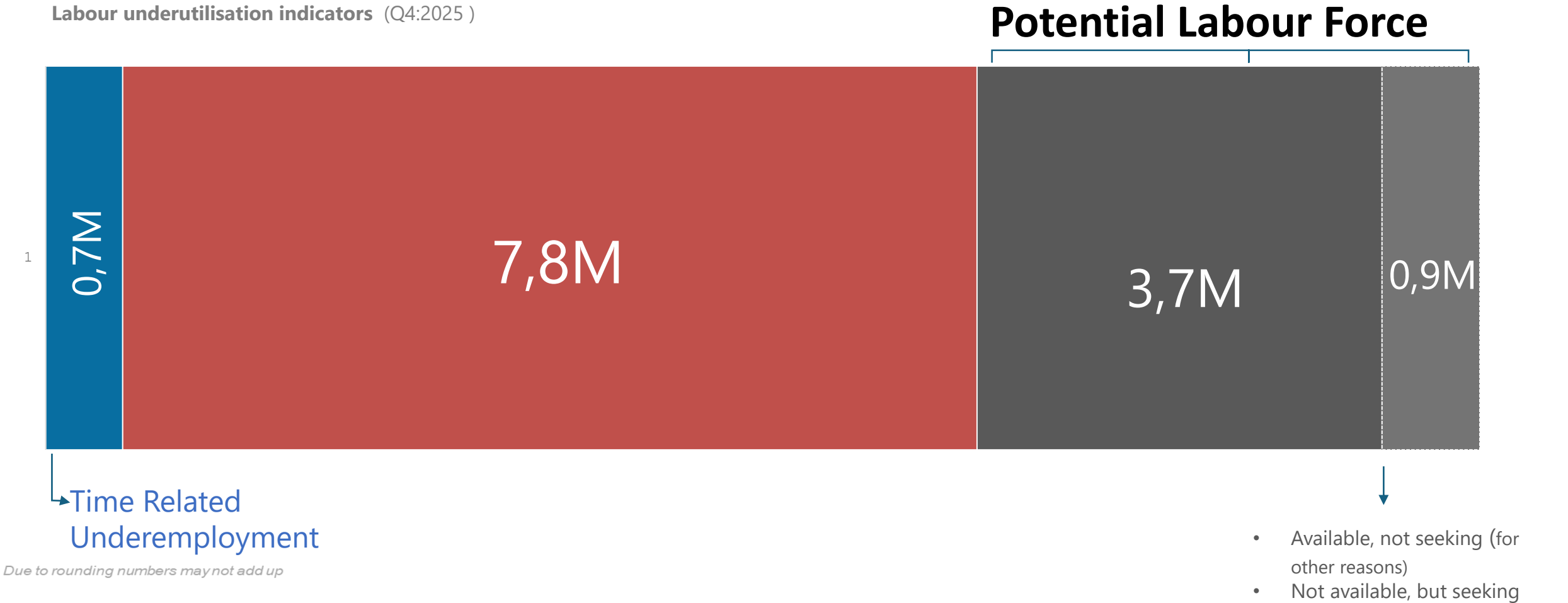


In addition to Unemployment, the 19th ICLS resolution introduces other measures of Labour Underutilisation



The **Discouraged job-seekers** dominate the **Potential Labour force**, accounting for 80,5% of the potential labour force.

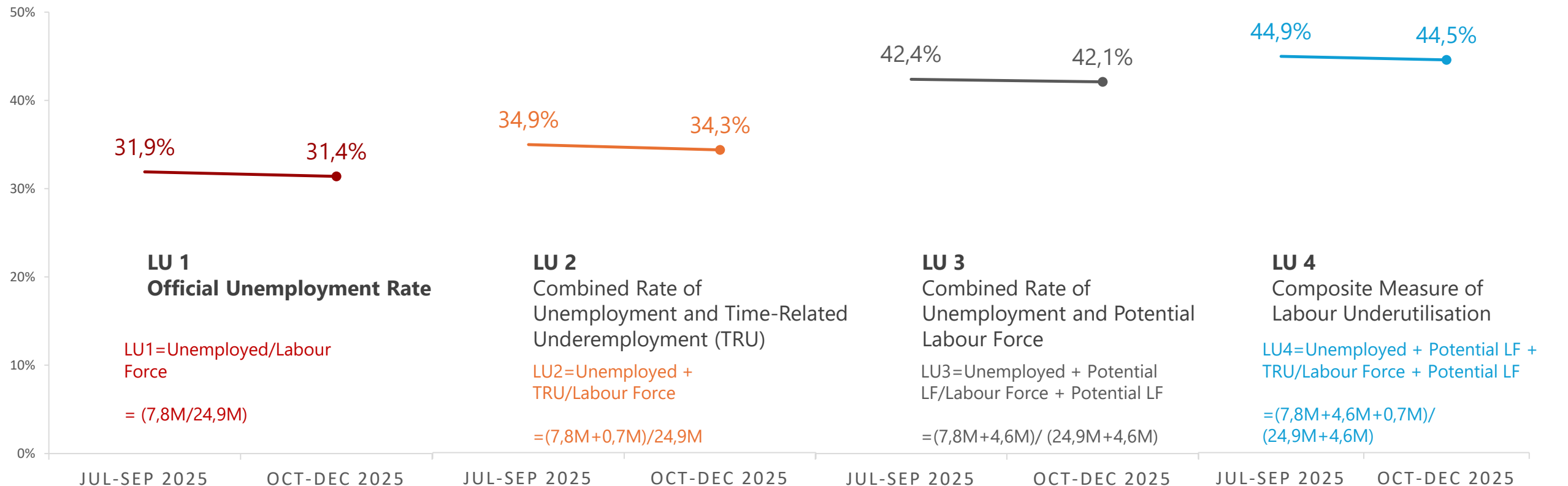
Labour underutilisation indicators (Q4:2025)



Labour underutilisation reflects the total number of people in the labour force who are not being fully utilised, as well as some who are outside of the labour force who can be considered 'potential labour supply'.

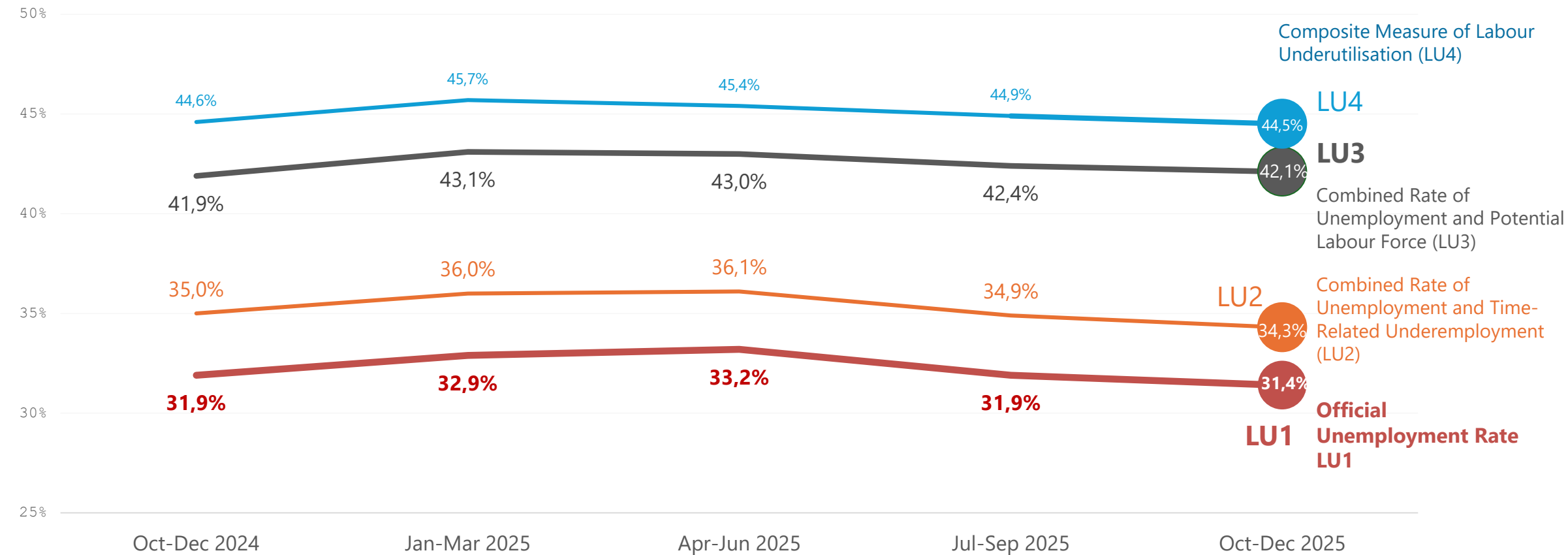
While the official unemployment rate sits at 31,4%, other measures of labour underutilisation are higher, ranging between 35% and 45%.

Labour underutilisation indicators (Q3:2025 vs Q4:2025)



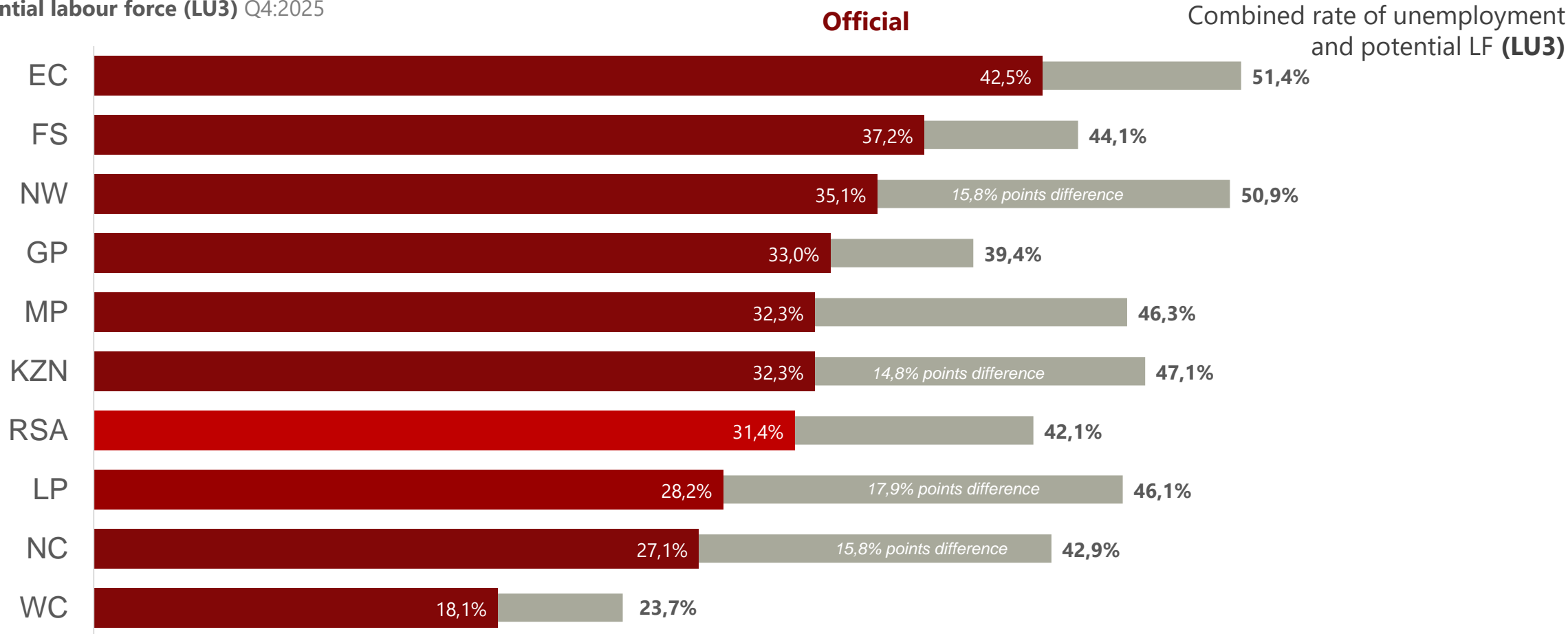
The labour underutilisation rate (i.e. composite measure of labour underutilisation (LU4)) stood at **44,5%** in the last quarter of 2025 compared to 44,6% in the same quarter of 2024.

There is a considerable gap (10,7 percentage points) between LU1 and LU3 indicating that there is a sizeable proportion of people who are not employed, want to work but not taking enough steps to look for work or are not available for work.



EC (51,4%) recorded the **highest combined rate of unemployment and potential LF** in Q4:2025, followed by **NW** (50,9%). *LP, NC, NW and KZN recorded more than 14 percentage points difference between the combined rate of unemployment and potential LF and official unemployment rates.*

Provincial unemployment rates: **Official Unemployment rate** vs **Combined rate of unemployment and potential labour force (LU3)** Q4:2025

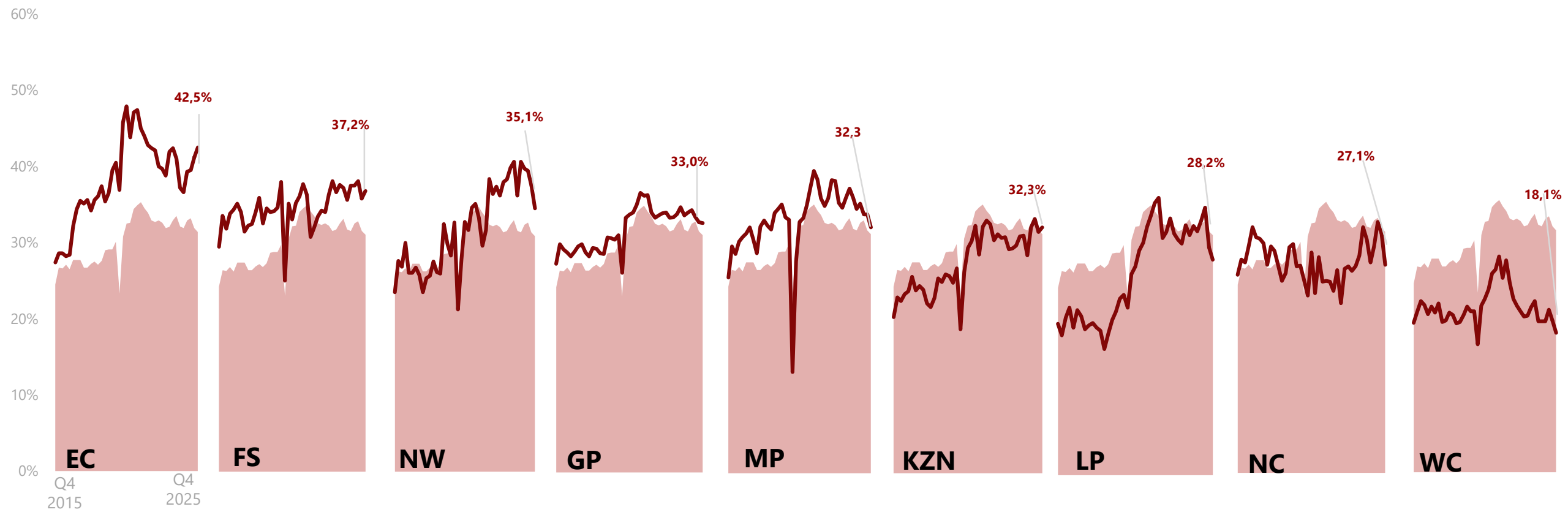


Over the past ten years, the unemployment rate in the **WC** has consistently remained below South Africa's national average, while the **EC** has consistently recorded unemployment rates above the national level.

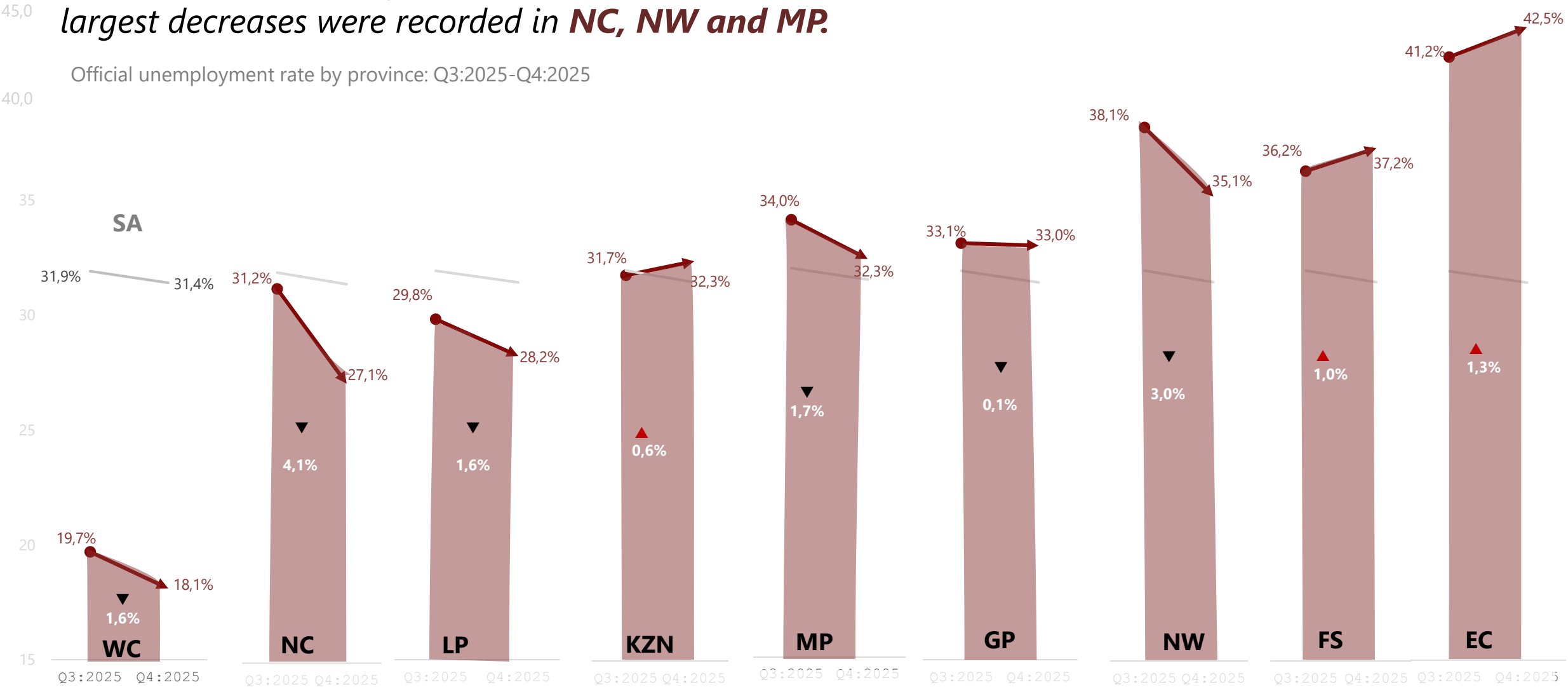
Official Unemployment rate by province, Q4:2015-Q4:2025

SA
Unemployment Rate

Provincial Unemployment Rate

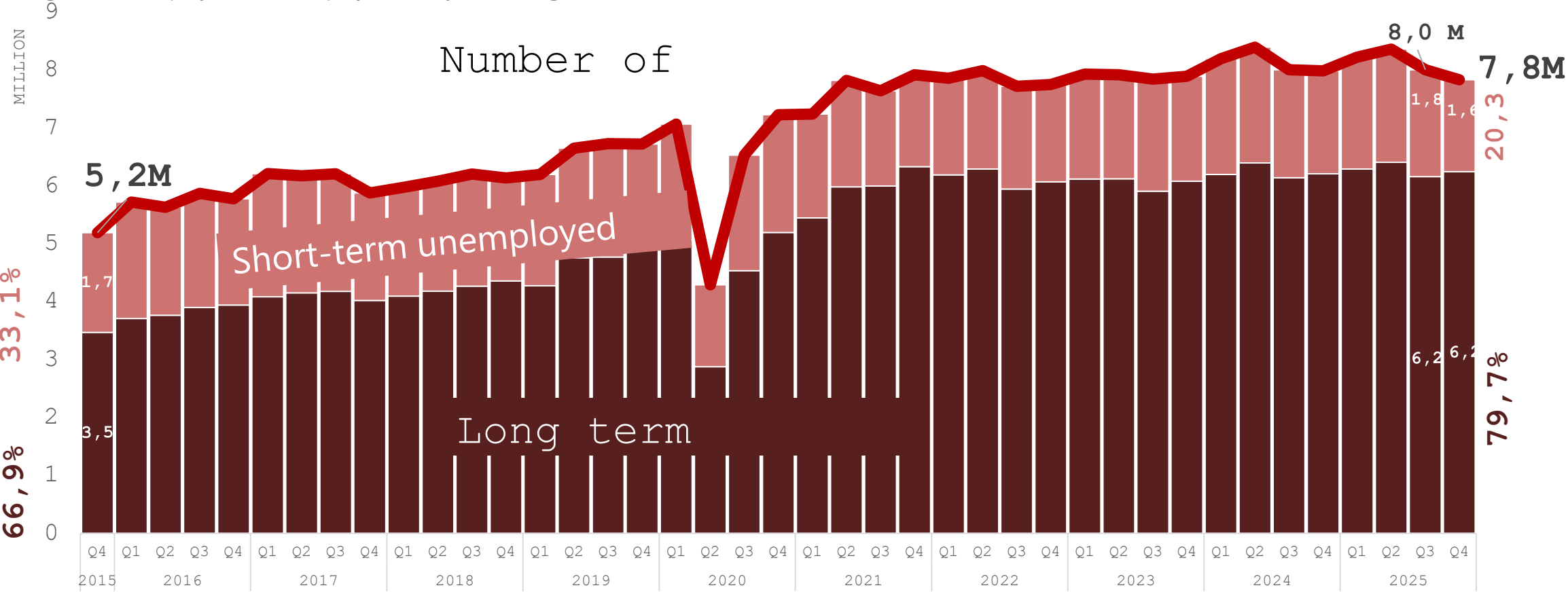


The **official unemployment rate** decreased in six provinces between Q3:2025 and Q4:2025. *The largest decreases were recorded in **NC, NW and MP.***



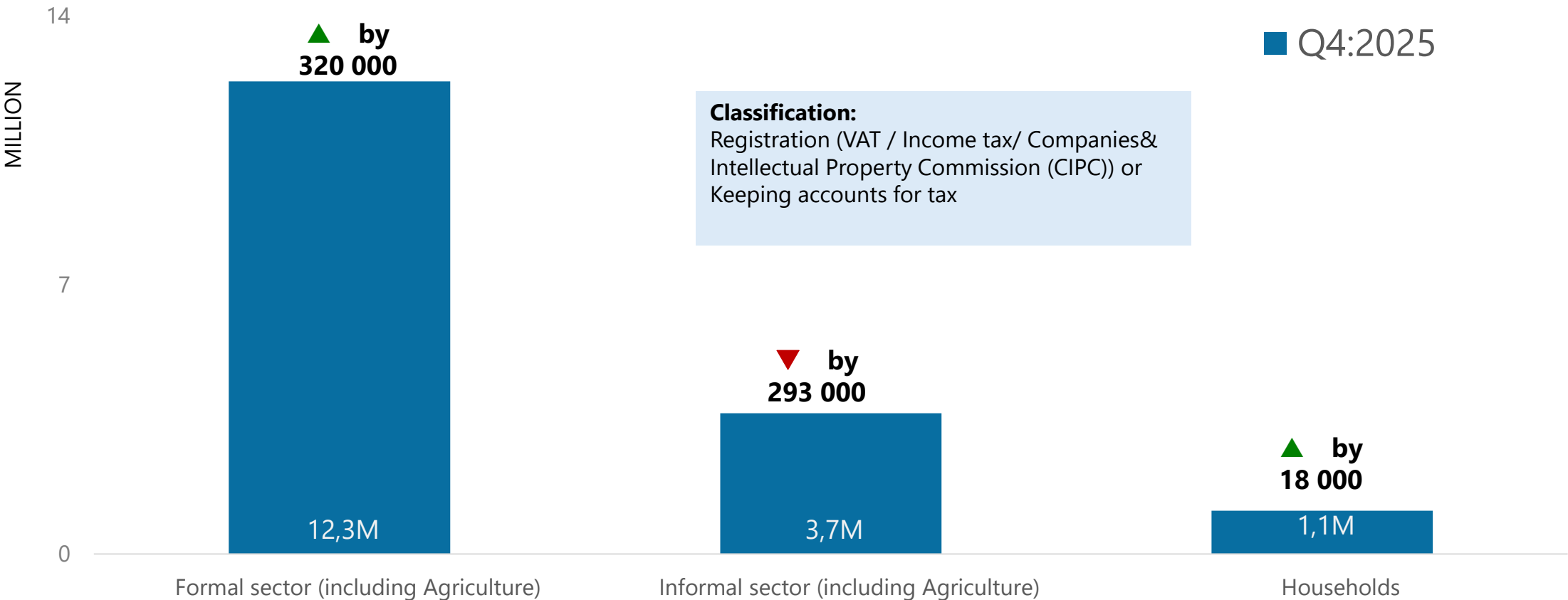
Between Q4:2015 and Q4:2025, the **number of unemployed persons** in South Africa **increased from 5,2 million to 7,8 million**, with the proportion of those in long-term unemployment increasing from 66,9% to 79,7% over the same period.

*Long term unemployment–unemployed for a year or longer



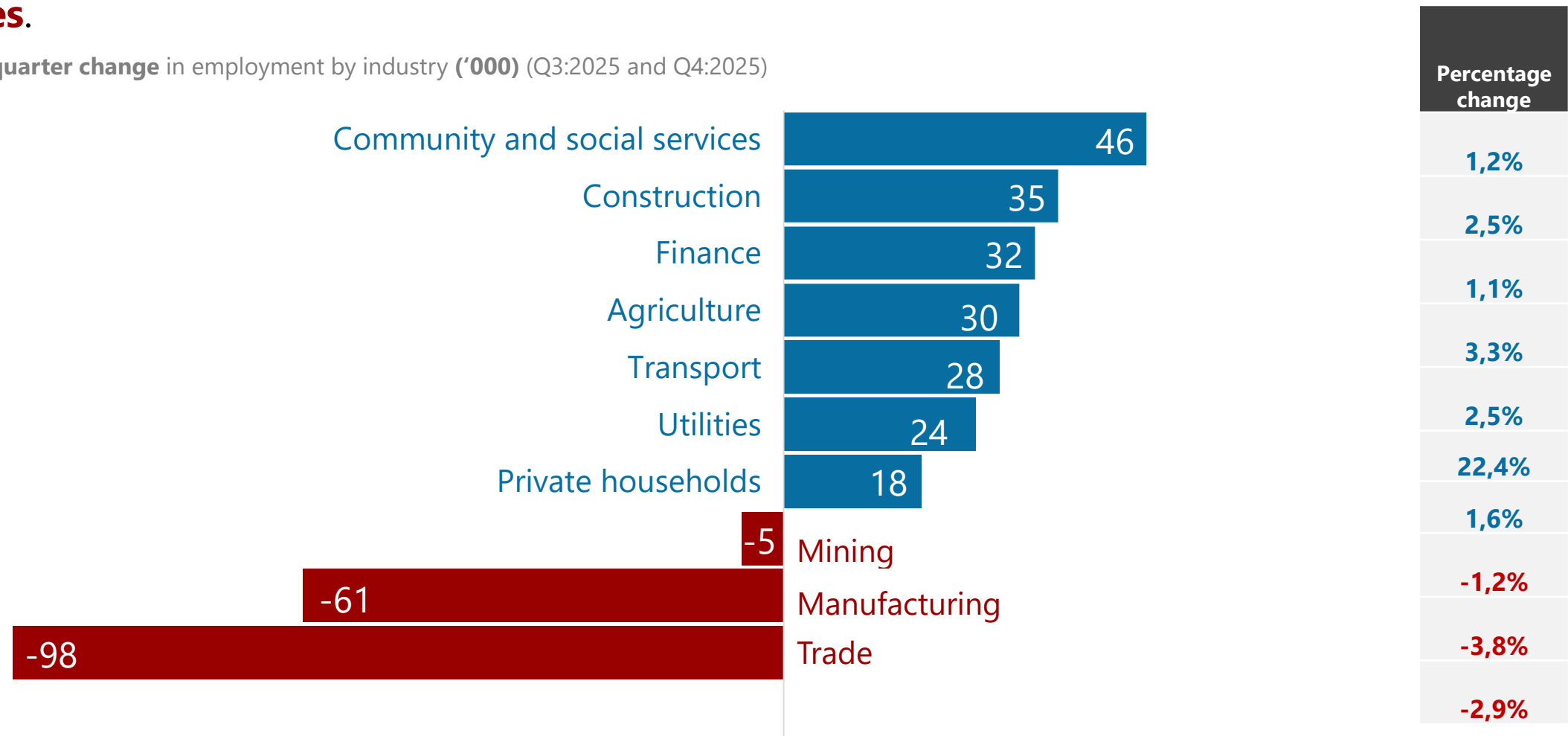
Previously Agriculture was treated as a sector (as well as industry); however, the **new standard recommends only three sectors** (*i.e. formal, informal and household sectors*). **Formal sector employment increased by 320 000 jobs in the last quarter of 2025.**

Employment by sector, (Quarter-on-quarter), *(New standard)*



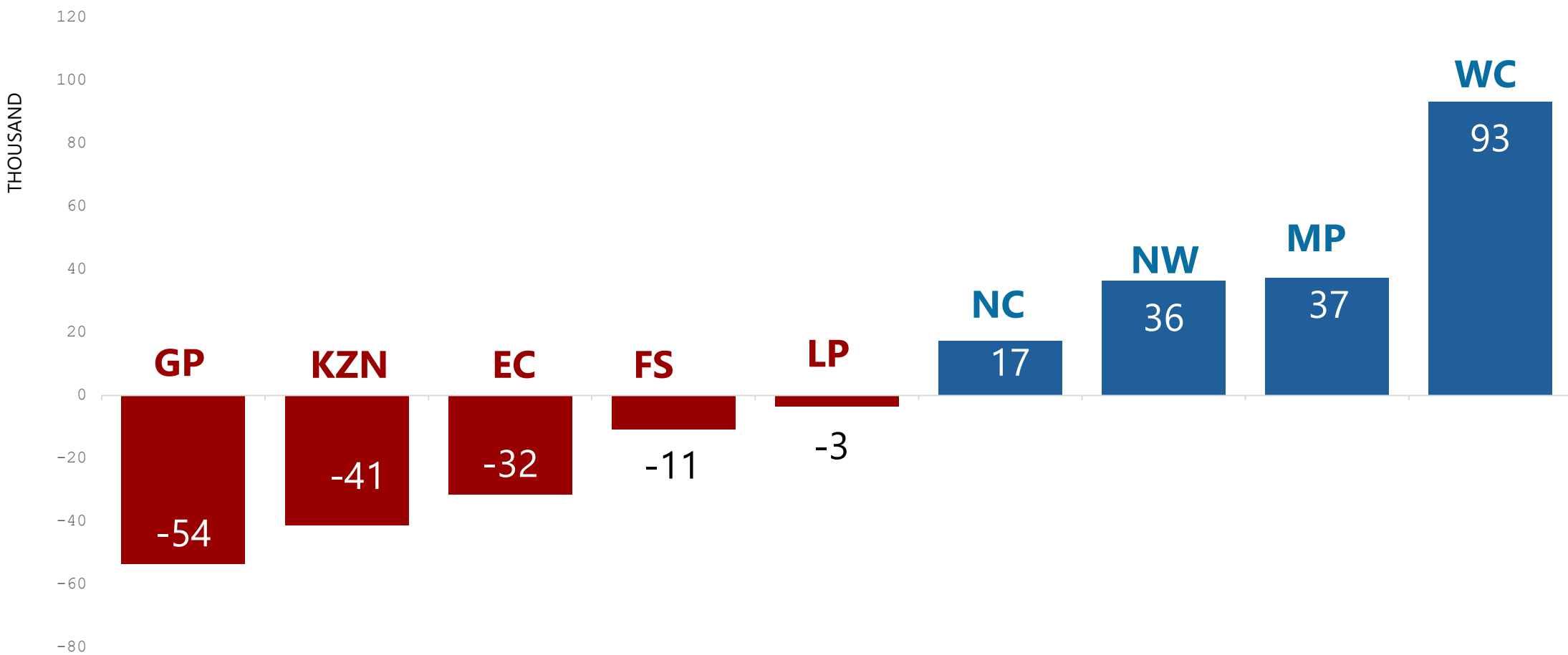
Employment increases were mainly in the **Services, Construction and Finance industries**. However, the largest **decreases in employment** were recorded in the **Trade, Manufacturing, and Mining industries**.

Quarter-on-quarter change in employment by industry ('000) (Q3:2025 and Q4:2025)



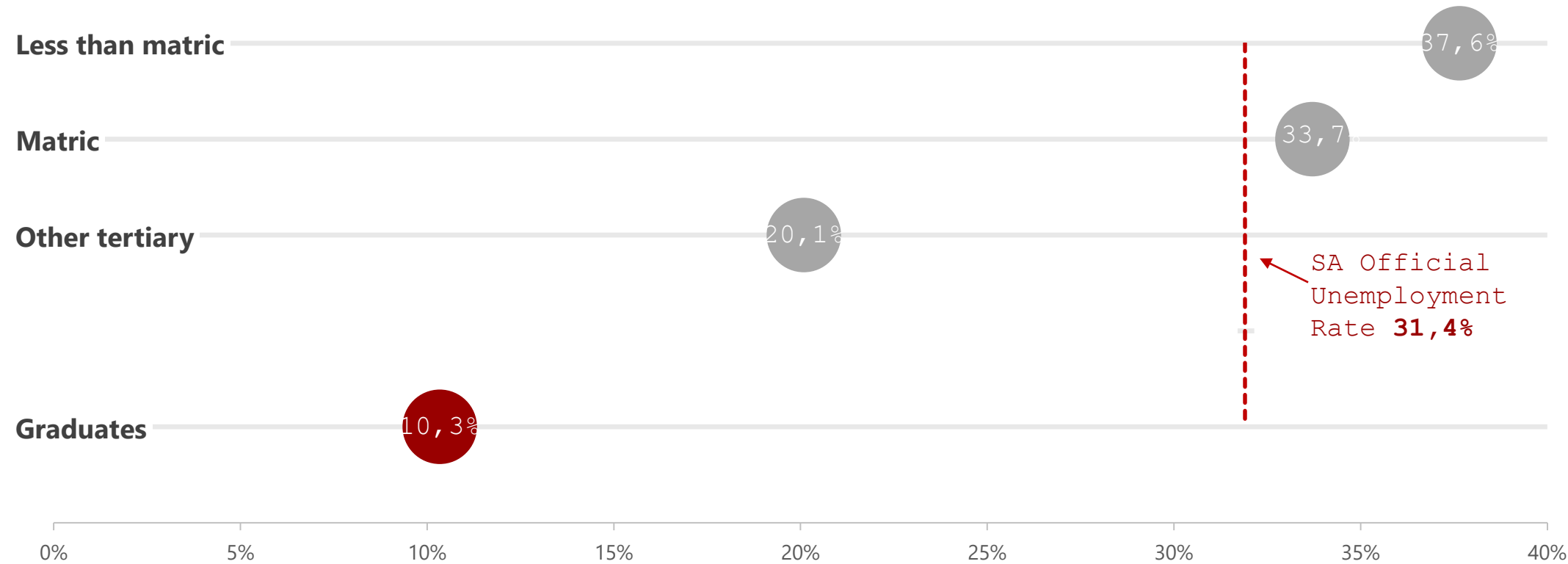
WC, MP and NW recorded the largest increases in employment in Q4:2025, while **GP, KZN and EC** recorded the largest decreases.

Quarter-on-quarter change in employment by province (Q3:2025 and Q4:2025)

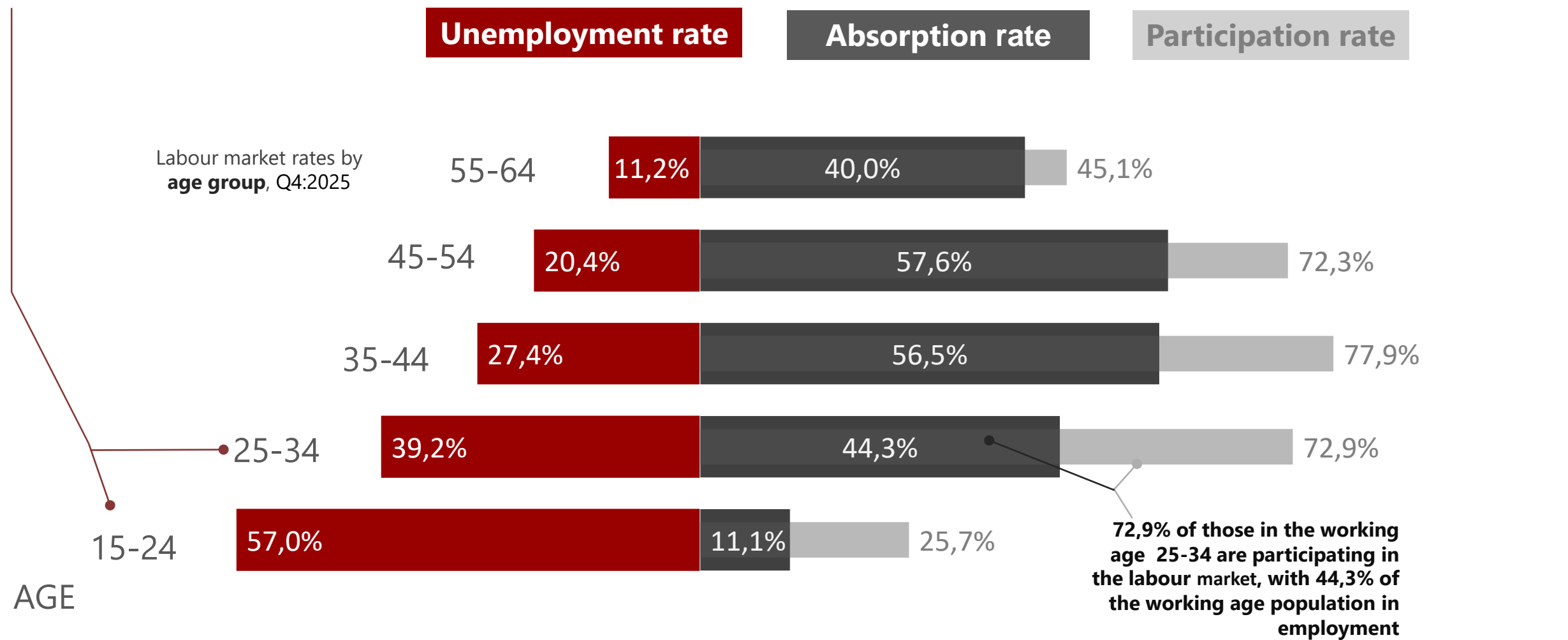


The Graduate unemployment rate decreased by 0,1 of a percentage point from 10,4% in Q3:2025 to **10,3%** in Q4:2025. Those with **matric** and **less than matric** remain vulnerable with unemployment rates of 33,7% and 37,6%, respectively.

Official Unemployment rate by level of education, Q4:2025

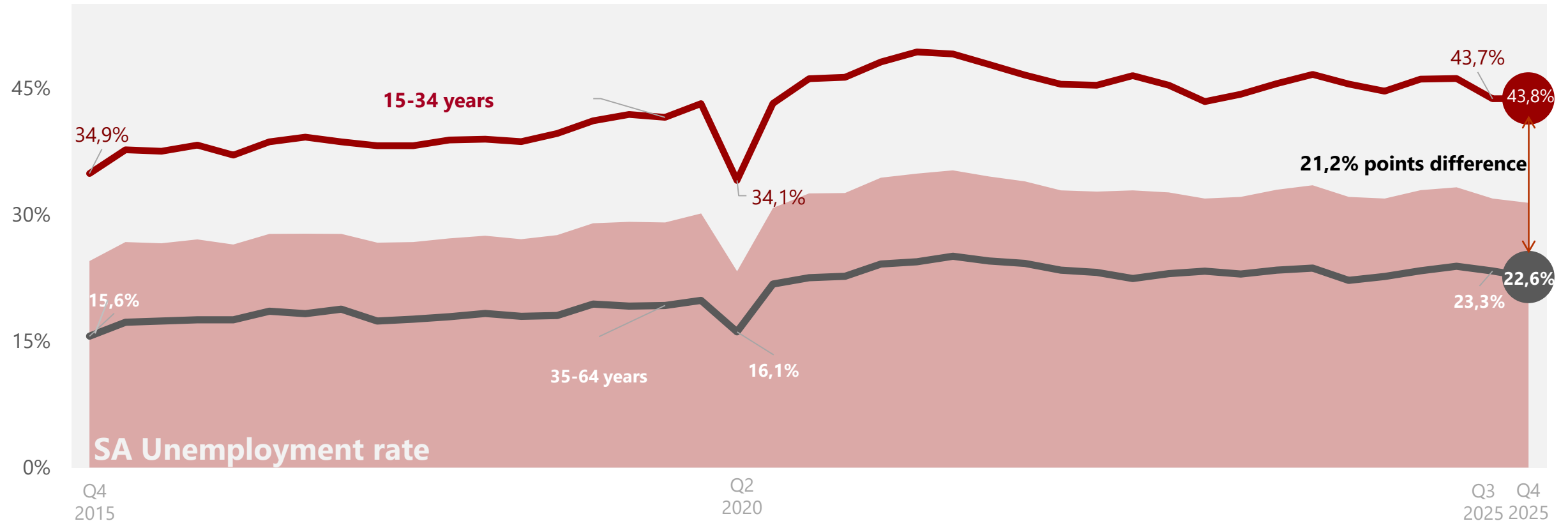


Youth aged 15-24 years and 25-34 years continue to have the highest unemployment rates at **57,0%** and **39,2%** respectively.

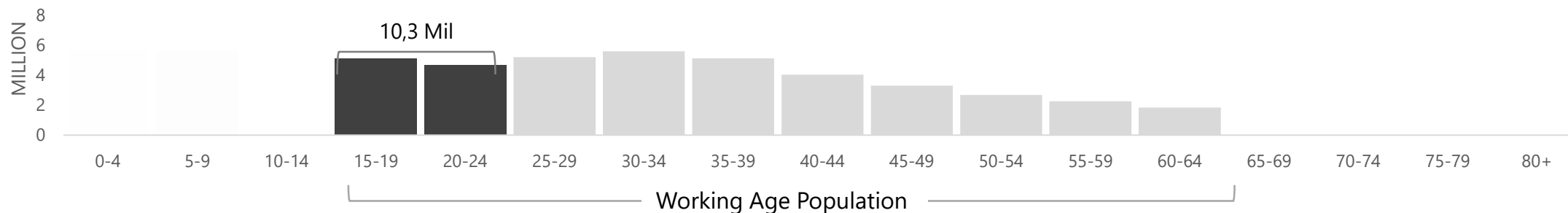


Youth aged **15-34 years** are more vulnerable to unemployment when compared to older age groups

Official Unemployment rates by age group, **Q4:2015-Q4:2025**



Approximately **3,5 million out of 10,3 million (or 34,0%)** young people aged 15-24 years were not in employment, education or training (NEET).



Number of NEET for ages 15-24
Q4:2025

**3,5 Million
NEET**

6,8 Million

**Employed or in
Education or Training**

Due to rounding numbers may not add up

The overall NEET rate (15 – 24 years) increased by 0,5 of a percentage point between Q4:2024 and Q4:2025.

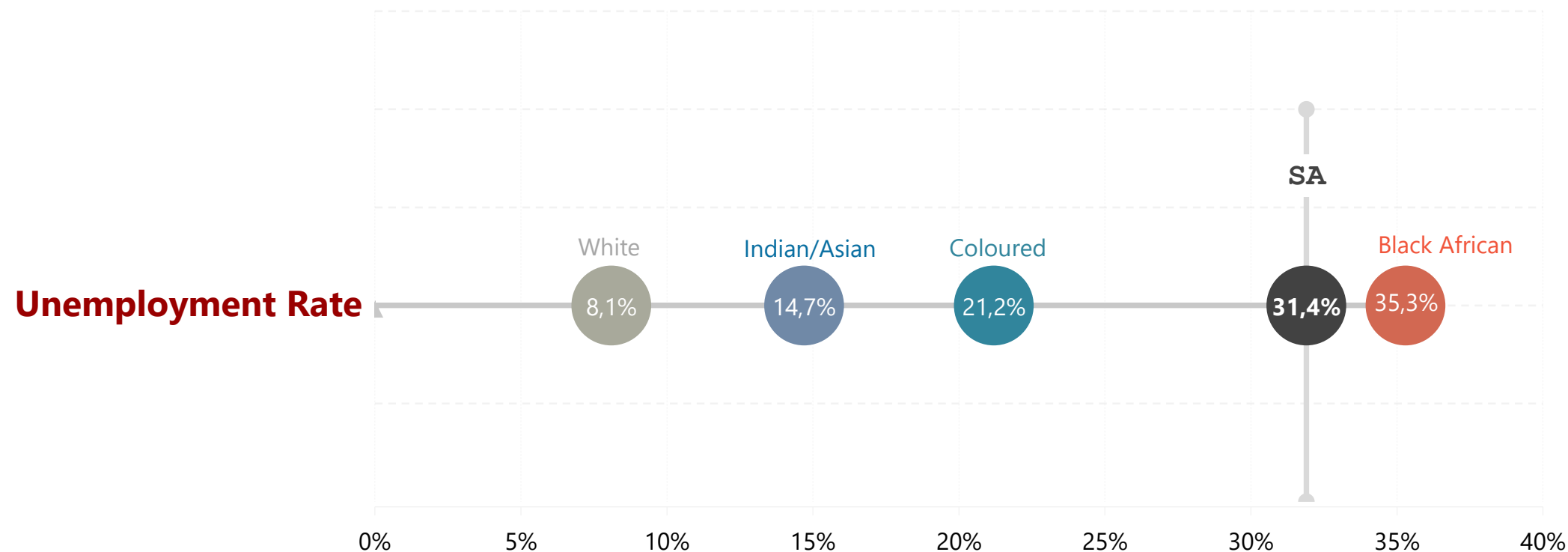
Q4:2021-Q4:2025 NEET rate for ages 15-24 & 15-34 year old



Due to rounding numbers may not add up

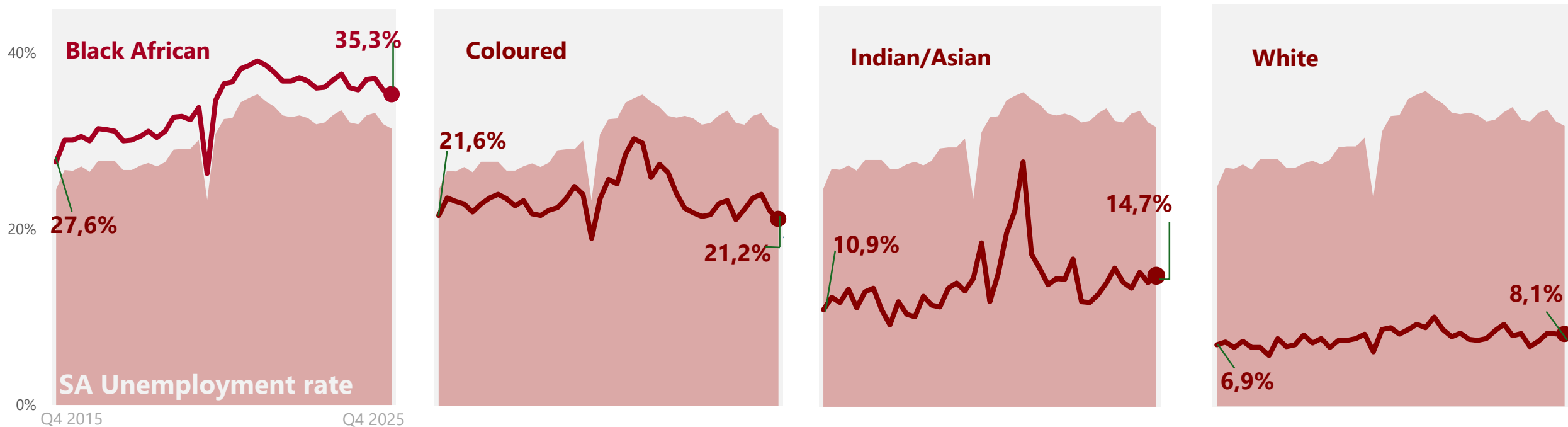
The unemployment rate among the **Black African (35,3%)** population group remains higher than the national average and other population groups.

OFFICIAL unemployment rate by population group, Q4:2025



Black African unemployment rate has consistently been higher than the national average and other population groups over the past 10-year period.

Official Unemployment rates by population group,
Q4:2015-Q4:2025



RECAP (QLFS, Q4:2025)

- ❖ The unemployment rate **decreased** by 0,5 of a percentage point to 31,4% in Q4:2025.
- ❖ There is a considerable gap of 10,7 percentage points between **LU1 (31,4%)** and **LU3 (42,1%)**, indicating that there is an unmet need for employment among the working-age population.
- ❖ The absorption rate and the labour force participation rate **decreased** by 0,1 and 0,4 of a percentage point respectively, between Q3:2025 and Q4:2025.
- ❖ The number of unemployed **decreased** by 172 000 persons in Q4:2025 compared to Q3:2025. While the number of employed persons **increased** by 44 000 over the same period.
- ❖ The largest **employment gains** were recorded in Services (46 000), Construction (35 000) and Finance (32 000) industries. The largest **employment losses** were recorded in Trade (98 000) and Manufacturing (61 000) industries.





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Information
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Governance,
Public Safety and
Justice Survey
(April 2025-
March 2026)



Quarterly Labour
Force
Survey(Collected
quarterly)



General
Household
Survey (January-
December)



Domestic
Tourism Survey
(January-
December)



Consumer Price
Index (Collected
monthly)

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