

Summary of usage of the Northern Ireland Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings

The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) is a UK wide survey that provides a wide range of information on hourly, weekly and annual earnings by gender, work pattern, industry and occupation, including public and private sector pay comparisons. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) carries out ASHE in Great Britain. In Northern Ireland it is carried out by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), an agency within the Department of Finance (DoF).

The ASHE results are widely used by anyone who has an interest in NI economic and labour market policy. For example, they are used to chart changes in NI earnings levels as well as the number of hours spent at work. The NI Assembly and Government Departments require a variety of indicators, which measure the state of the labour market, including earnings across industries and occupations as well as for the public and private sector.

The Minister for the Economy receives annual ASHE results, monthly Labour Market statistics, and a range of other Business and Economic Output statistics, all advising on the position of the Northern Ireland economy. The Department for the Economy (DfE) Press Office also requires ASHE data for dissemination to the media. Please see below links to articles about the 2020 NI ASHE results.

[BBC News Northern Ireland published 3 November 2020](#)

[Belfast Telegraph published 3 November 2020](#)

[Irish News published 4 November 2020](#)

[Belfast Telegraph published 4 November 2020](#)

[Irish News published 10 November 2020](#)

The ASHE data feed into the DfE [Economic Commentary](#), which provides an overview of the condition of the NI economy. ASHE figures are used by DfE economists in regular briefings to the Minister on the economy, on policy formulation and in response to Assembly Questions and external information requests. For example, ASHE data have been used in presentations to the Executive Sub-Committee on the Economy and to the Economic Advisory Group, which includes economists and business leaders. ASHE results are also included in a number of other publications released by NI Government Departments – for example, see below link to the 2020 Women in Northern Ireland publication.

[Women in Northern Ireland 2020 published 4 June 2020](#)

In addition, ASHE was used by the Northern Ireland Executive as a main data source for one of the Key Action Areas – the gender pay gap – identified within its current gender equality strategy. Please see the following link.

[Department for Communities Gender Equality Strategy 2006-2016 updated July 2015](#)

Other public sector users of ASHE data include: the Low Pay Commission, which advises the Government about minimum wage levels; and the Gender Policy Unit within the Department for Communities, which analyses changes in the gender pay gap.

ASHE also provides a vital input into the personal sector of the National Accounts, as well as being widely used for setting employees' rates of pay (notably for local authority workers and those in the health sector).

Significant non Northern Ireland governmental users of ASHE data include employers' associations, universities and academics, academic researchers both at home and abroad, the media and the general public.