

19 December 2019

Northern Ireland Broad Economy Sales and Exports Statistics 2018

Geographical Area: Northern Ireland
Theme: Economy
Frequency: Annual

The latest estimates of local businesses' sales to markets outside Northern Ireland for 2018 are presented. All values are in current prices and relate to the sales of both **goods and services**.

Key points

- Total sales by companies in Northern Ireland (NI) were estimated to be worth £68.4 billion in 2018, an increase of 3.5% (£2.3 billion) over the calendar year.
- Sales within NI increased by £2.5 billion to £46.7 billion, up 5.7% over the year and are at the highest level since the survey commenced in 2011.
- Sales to Great Britain (GB) decreased by £1.1 billion to £10.6 billion, down 9.3% over the year.
- Sales to markets outside the UK (exports) increased by £837 million (8.1%) over the year, to £11.2 billion.
- Sales to all markets outside NI (external sales) i.e. GB sales plus exports, fell by £241 million (1.1%) to £21.7 billion, and accounted for almost a third of total sales in 2018 (31.7%).
- This is the second consecutive year of falling external sales. These falls continue to be driven by a substantial decline in the Food, Beverages and Tobacco subsector.
- Exports to Ireland (IE) increased by £330 million (8.6%) over the year, to £4.2 billion.
- Exports to the Rest of the EU (EU, excluding IE) increased over the year by £425 million (20.9%) to £2.5 billion. Exports to the Rest of the World (ROW) increased by £82 million (1.8%) over the year, to £4.5 billion.
- Trade estimates split by District Council Area have been produced for the first time. See Appendix B for further details.

This Northern Ireland Broad Economy Sales and Exports Statistics 2018 publication contains the following chapters:

1	Introduction and context	Page 3
2	Summary and commentary	Page 6
2.1	Sales and Exports Performance	Page 6
2.2	Annual Changes in Sales over Time	Page 7
2.3	Analysis by Destination	Page 8
2.4	Analysis by Industry Section	Page 10
2.5	Analysis by Business Size	Page 11
2.6	Analysis by District Council Area	Page 12
2.7	Draft Programme for Government	Page 14
3	Results Tables: 2011 to 2018	Page 15
	Table 1: Sales by broad destination, 2011 – 2018 (£ millions)	Page 15
	Table 2: Sales by broad Destination and Industry Section, 2018 (£ millions)	Page 16
	Table 3: Sales outside the UK (Exports) by Industry Section, 2011 – 2018 (£ millions)	Page 17
	Table 4: Share of Total Sales by Broad Destination as %, 2011 - 2018	Page 18
	Table 5: Exports to markets within the rest of the EU, 2011 – 2018 (£ millions)	Page 19
	Table 6: Exports to markets outside the EU, 2011 – 2018 (£ millions)	Page 20
	Table 7: Sales by Broad Destination and Business Size, 2018 (£ millions)	Page 21
	Table 8: Number of businesses selling to destinations outside NI (External sales) by industry section, 2011 - 2018	Page 22
	Table 9: Number of businesses exporting from NI by industry section, 2011 – 2018	Page 23
	Table 10: Exports by District Council Area, 2011 – 2018 (£ millions)	Page 24
	Table 11: Number of exporters by District Council Area, 2011 – 2018	Page 25
4	Background Notes	Page 26
5	Appendices	Page 29
5.1	Appendix A	Page 29
5.2	Appendix B	Page 30

1 Introduction and Context

Experimental Status

The Broad Economy Sales and Exports Statistics (BESES) is an experimental annual measure of local businesses' sales to markets outside Northern Ireland (NI).

BESES data is gathered through the [Northern Ireland Annual Business Inquiry](#) and has been running since 2011. The ABI surveys all businesses with 50 or more employees; all multi-site businesses with 20-49 employees; all manufacturing businesses with more than 5 employees; and a representative sample of other smaller businesses. In all, the ABI samples about 20% of the eligible business population each year.

Ongoing development of the methodology (as outlined in the associated published [methodology paper](#) of March 2015) will be informed by user feedback, both in terms of the usefulness and reliability of the estimates and their comparability with other sources and the statistics will remain experimental until user feedback indicates that they are useful and credible. Any comments should be sent to economicstats@nisra.gov.uk.

NISRA has engaged extensively throughout the evolution of this output with expert users of NI economic statistics whose views have already helped to inform the current approach. Users include DfE, DoF, and DAERA economists, the Ulster University Economic Policy Centre and a number of NI economic commentators and ONS methodologists. NISRA will continue to consult on any further methodological changes which may improve the quality and value of the statistics.

Status of figures in current bulletin

- The figures presented relate to sales of both goods and services. A goods and services split will be available in Spring 2020.
- The most recent figures, 2018, are provisional and are subject to revision in the next reporting period. As such, previously published figures for 2017 have been revised as a result of additional information becoming available since the last publication.
- Sales and exports values are reported in £ million unless otherwise specified.
- All values are in current prices (data reported in current prices for each year are in the value of the currency for that particular year and therefore include the effects of inflation).
- Percentage changes are reported to one decimal place.
- The Broad Economy Sales and Exports series is classified as experimental (see above).
- Total UK sales can be derived by summing NI and GB sales.

District Council Level Data

NISRA has produced exports data split by District Council Area (DCA) for the first time in this publication for the time series running from survey year 2011 - 2018. NISRA is making these experimental statistics available so that users and stakeholders can be involved in assessing their usefulness, with the intention of including this analysis as part of our suite of published

statistics in future years. Users should refer to Tables 10 and 11 and Appendix B for more information.

Definitions used in this publication

Total sales are defined as the sum of sales to Northern Ireland, Great Britain, Ireland, the Rest of the European Union (REU) and the Rest of the World (ROW). Total sales include all taxes and duties on goods invoiced with the exception of VAT which is excluded from total sales.

External sales are comprised of those sales made outside Northern Ireland, that is, sales to Great Britain, Ireland, the Rest of the European Union and the Rest of the World.

Exports consist of all sales made outside the United Kingdom.

Broad Economy: The information needed to produce BESES is collected via the NI Annual Business Inquiry (NIABI). Like the NIABI, the BESES results are classified according to the Standard Industrial Classification of Economic Activities (SIC) system. The SIC 2007 sections covered by the NIABI defines the term 'Broad Economy' and are as follows:

- A. Agriculture (support activities), forestry and fishing
- B. Mining and quarrying
- C. Manufacturing
- D. Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply
- E. Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities
- F. Construction
- G. Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motor cycles (Distribution industries)
- H. Transport and storage
- I. Accommodation and food service activities
- J. Information and communication
- L. Real estate activities
- M. Professional, scientific and technical activities
- N. Administrative and support service activities
- P. Education (excludes local authority and central government bodies)
- Q. Human health and social work activities (excludes local authority and central government, and medical and dental practice activities (group 86.2))
- R. Arts, entertainment and recreation
- S. Other service activities

Users should refer to the document "[Background information - Broad Economy Sales and Exports Statistics](#)" for further detail on survey coverage and definitions.

Reference Tables

To support this release a set of reference tables with further sectoral and geographic breakdowns are available on the [NISRA website](#).

Further Information

Further information on the BESES can be accessed on the [NISRA website](#).

2 Summary and Commentary

2.1 Sales and Exports Performance

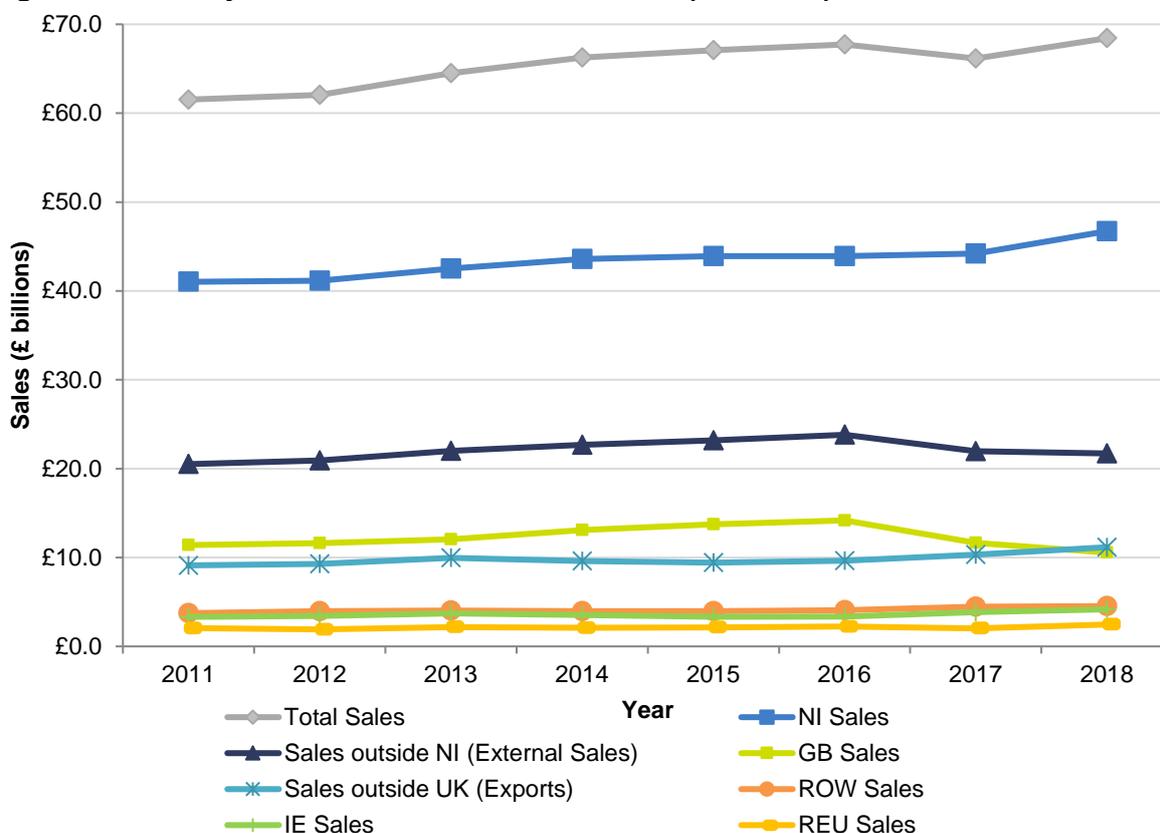
Total sales by companies in Northern Ireland (NI) were estimated to be worth £68.4 billion in 2018. This represents an increase of 3.5% (£2.3 billion) over the year and compares to a previous annual decrease of 2.3% in 2017.

In 2018, 31.7% of total sales were made to customers outside NI (external sales). This equated to £21.7 billion, representing a decrease of 1.1% (£241 million) over the year. This figure has fallen below the previously recorded peak in 2016 (£23.8 billion), and this is the second consecutive year of falling external sales on survey record since recording began in 2011.

Sales outside the UK (exports) were estimated to be worth £11.2 billion in 2018. This represented an increase of 8.1% over the year, and follows an increase in the previous period (2016 – 2017) of 7.1%.

Figure 1 shows the values of total sales, and their broad destinations over the 8 year period (2011 to 2018). Over the period 2011 – 2018, sales to all broad destinations increased with the exception of sales to GB. Sales to GB have fallen for the second consecutive year and these falls continue to be driven by a substantial fall in turnover in the Manufacturing subsector of Food, Beverages and Tobacco.

Figure 1: Sales by broad destination, 2011 – 2018 (£ billions)



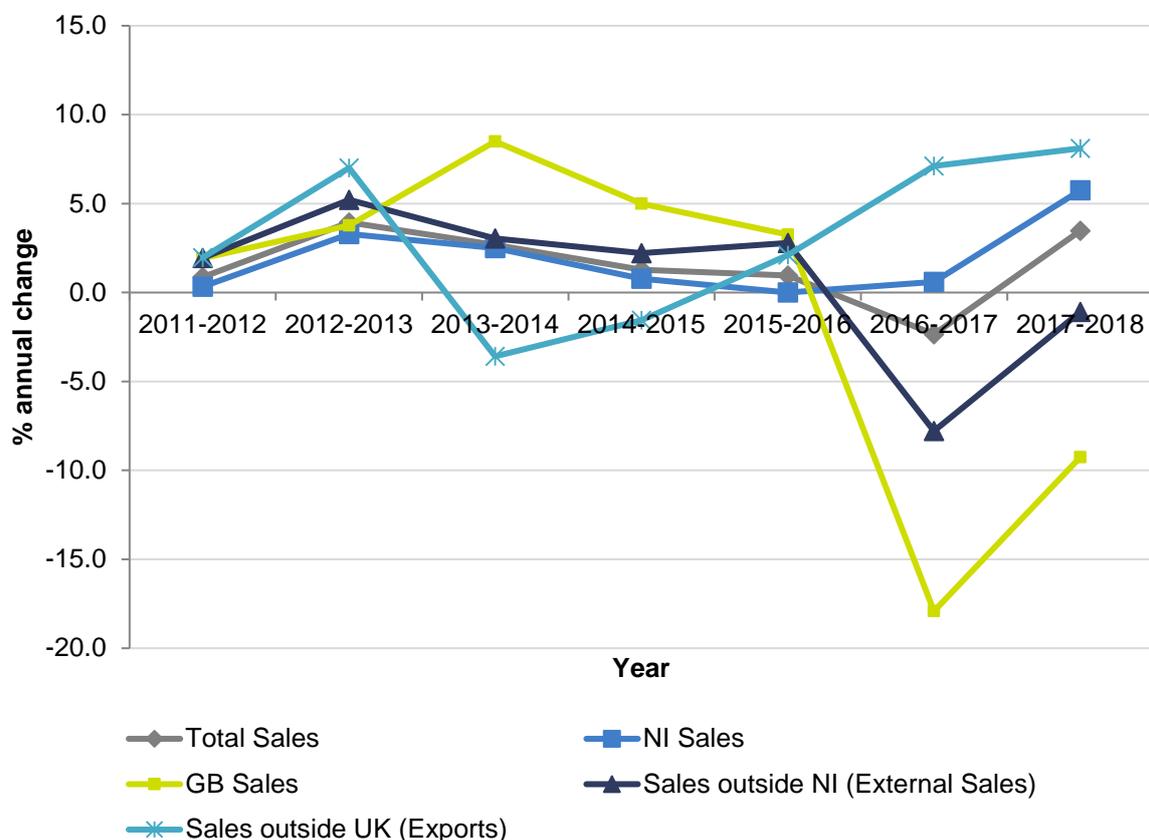
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2.2 Annual Changes in Sales over Time

Figure 2 provides information on annual percentage changes in total sales to selected destinations.

The annual rate of growth of sales increased in the period 2011/12 – 2012/13 for all destinations. This was followed by a fall in growth across the board in the period 2013/14, with the exception of sales to GB, which peaked in 2013/14. Since then there has been a general pattern of declining rate of sales growth. However, all high-level destinations saw growth in 2015/16 albeit with a decreasing annual rate of growth in some cases. In 2016/17, total sales experienced negative growth for the first time in the time series - this was mainly driven by a substantial decrease in GB sales. GB sales (and hence external sales) have continued to experience negative growth from 2017-18, although the rate of negative growth has reduced compared to 2016-17.

Figure 2: Annual Rate of Growth of Sales to Selected Destinations, 2011 – 2018



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2.3 Analysis by Destination

Over the last year (i.e. between 2017 & 2018), total sales increased by 3.5% (£2.3 billion). This was largely driven by increasing sales within NI (up 5.7% or £2.5 billion) and increasing exports (up 8.1% or £0.8 billion). These increases were partially offset by decreased sales to GB (down 9.3% or £1.1 billion).

Over the last year, exports to IE (£4.2 billion) have increased by 8.6% (£330 million). This follows an increase of 14.9% between 2016 and 2017 and 0.4% between 2015 and 2016. Exports to the REU increased by 20.9% over the year while exports to the ROW increased by 1.8%.

Sales to GB decreased for the second consecutive year, falling by 9.3% (£1.1 billion) to £10.6 billion in 2018. GB remained the most significant single market for external sales from Northern Ireland businesses, accounting for 15.4% of total sales.

Sales to outside the UK (exports) accounted for 16.3% of total sales. Exports to IE accounted for 6.1% of total sales and over a third (37.4%) of sales outside the UK.

Over the last year exports to the REU¹ increased by 20.9% (£425 million) to £2.5 billion. Exports to the REU accounted for 3.6% of total sales and over a fifth of exports (22.0%).

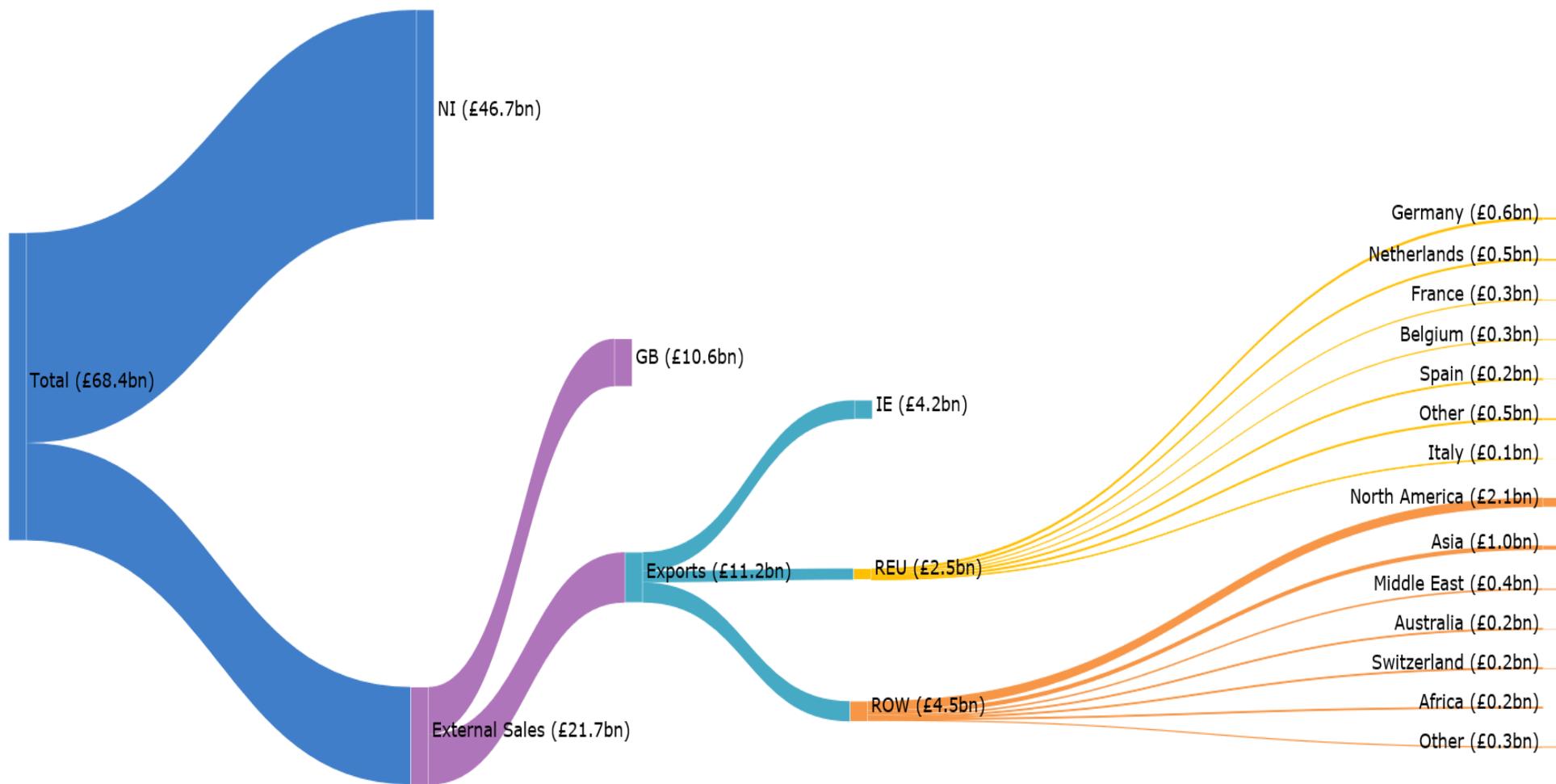
Exports to the ROW² increased by £82 million (1.8%) over the year, to £4.5 billion. ROW sales accounted for 6.6% of total sales, and 40.6% of all exports.

External sales to markets outside NI are comprised of sales to GB plus the value of exports combined. These decreased by £241 million to £21.7 billion, and accounted for almost one third of total sales in 2018 (31.7%). This figure has fallen below the previously recorded peak in 2016 (£23.8 billion) and is the second consecutive year of falling external sales. These falls continue to be driven by a substantial decline in the Food, Beverages and Tobacco subsector.

¹ A list of EU member countries is available at: http://europa.eu/about-eu/countries/index_en.htm

² The Rest of World refers to all destinations outside the European Union

Figure 3: Total Sales by Destination, 2018 (£ billion)



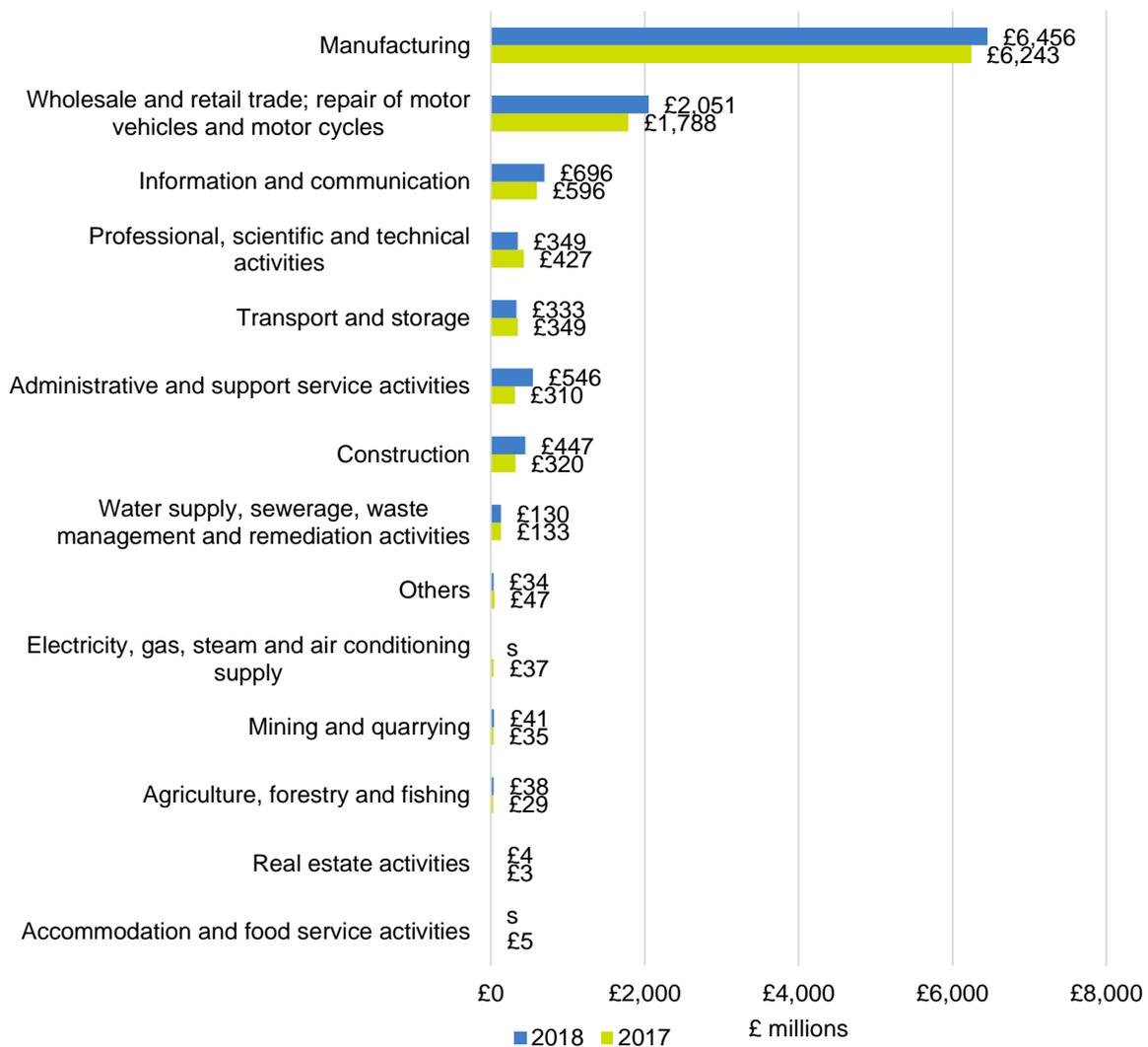
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2.4 Analysis by Industry Section

In 2018, the largest proportion of export sales was from the Manufacturing sector (Section C) which made up 57.8% (£6.5 billion) of all exports sales (£11.2 billion). Manufacturing exports increased by 3.4% over the year, and have increased by 16.5% between 2011 and 2018.

The next largest exporter was Wholesale and Retail Trade (Section G) with 18.4% (£2.1 billion) of all exports sales. Exports in this section increased by 14.7% over the year. This was followed by Information and Communication (Section J) which accounted for 6.2% of export sales (£696 million) and Administrative and Support Service Activities (Section N) which accounted for 4.9% (£546 million) of export sales.

Figure 4: Trends in Export Sales by Industry Section, 2017 – 2018 (£ millions)



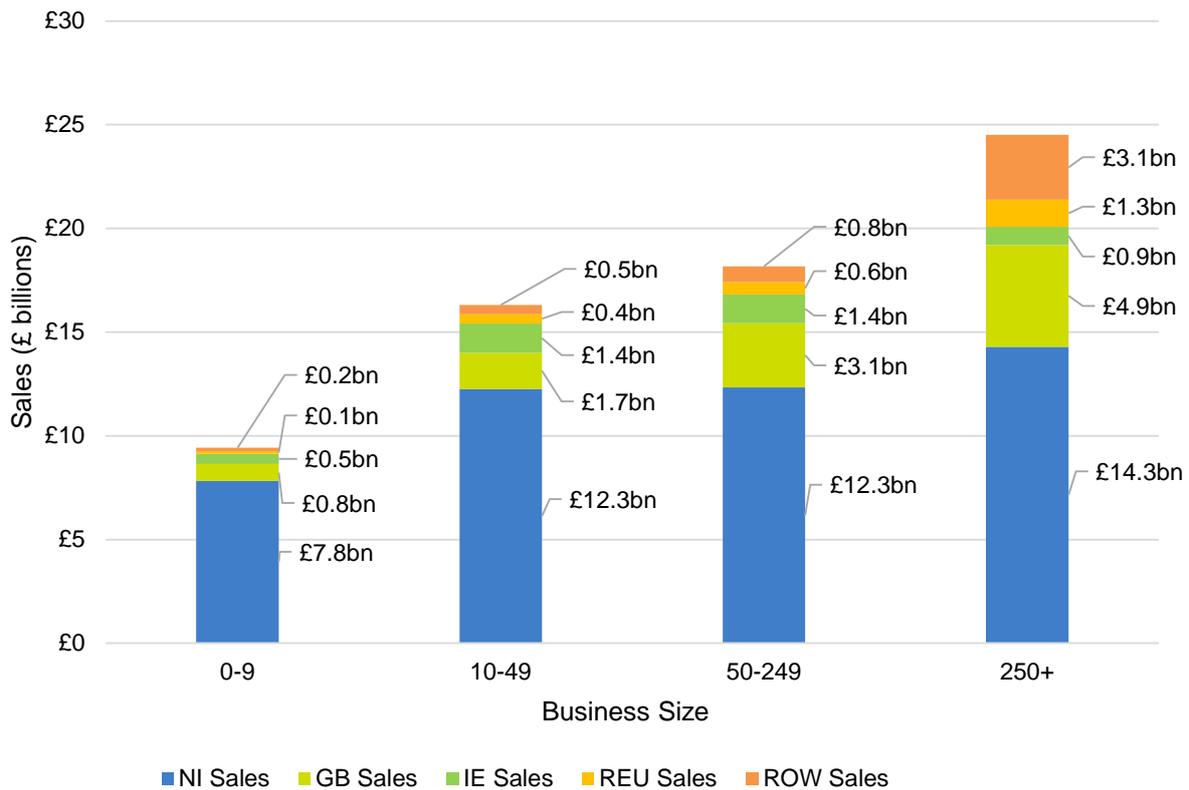
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2.5 Analysis by Business Size

In 2018, large business (those with 250+ employees) had the largest total sales (£24.5 billion) and exports (£5.3 billion). Large businesses also exported more to the REU than all other businesses combined. This pattern was also true for exports to ROW. However exports to IE were largely driven by businesses with fewer than 250 employees. Micro (0-9) and small (10-49) businesses were much more reliant on NI sales than the medium (50-249) and large businesses.

Figure 5: Destination of Sales by Business Size, 2018 (£ billions)



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2.6 Analysis by District Council Area

Maps showing the value of exports by District Council Area (DCA) and the number of exporters by District Council Area are presented in figures 6 and 7 respectively. In 2018, the largest value of exports came from businesses located in Belfast. Three of the top five exporters were DCAs situated next to the border with IE.

A similar pattern emerges when looking at the number of exporters, with Belfast and DCAs adjacent to the border having a larger number of exporters.

In some instances it is not possible to assign a business to a postcode. This is usually because the head office is outside NI. Such trade is labelled as “Unassigned”. Users should refer to Appendix B for more information.

Figure 6: Value of exports by District Council Area, 2018 (£ millions)

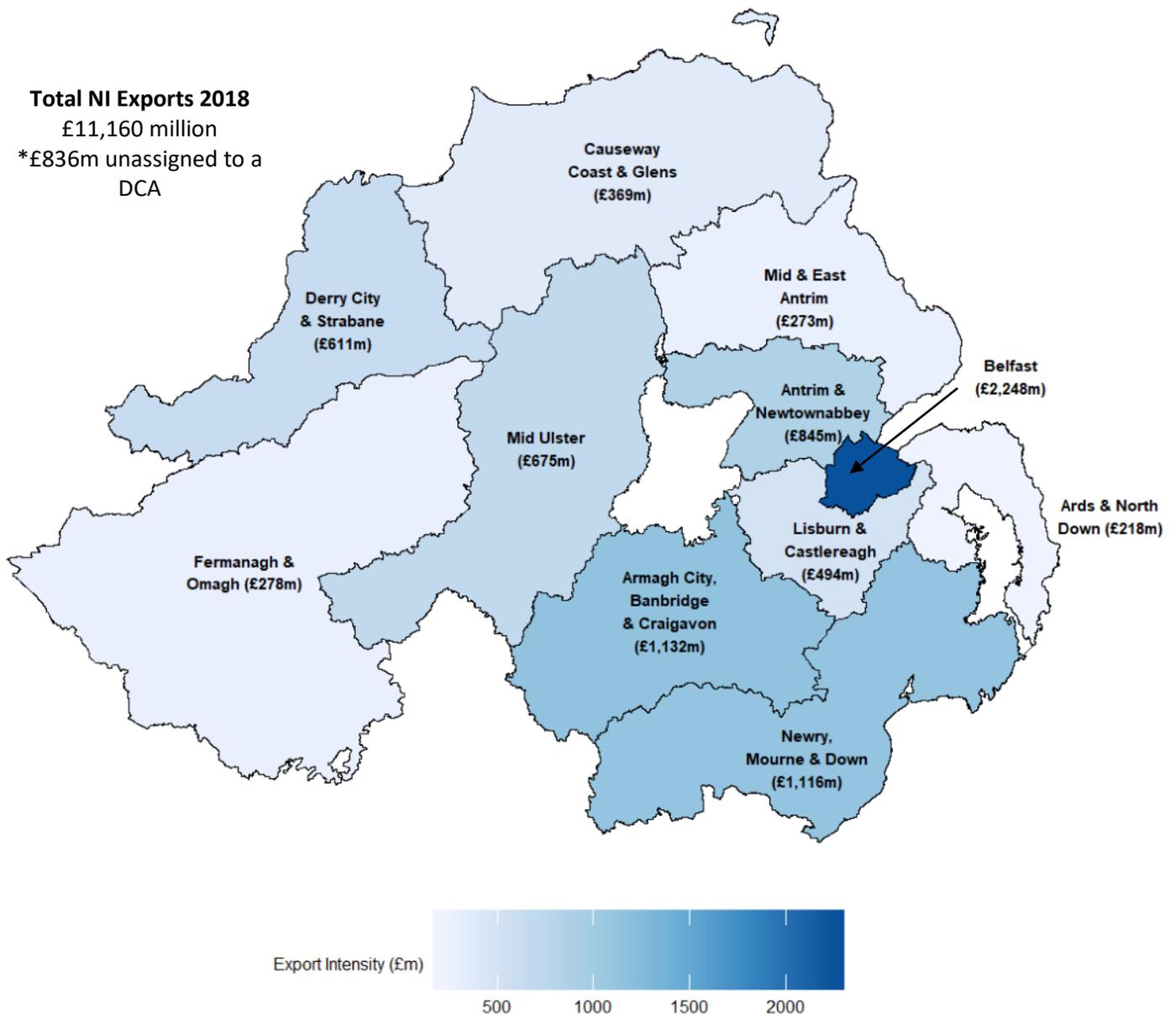
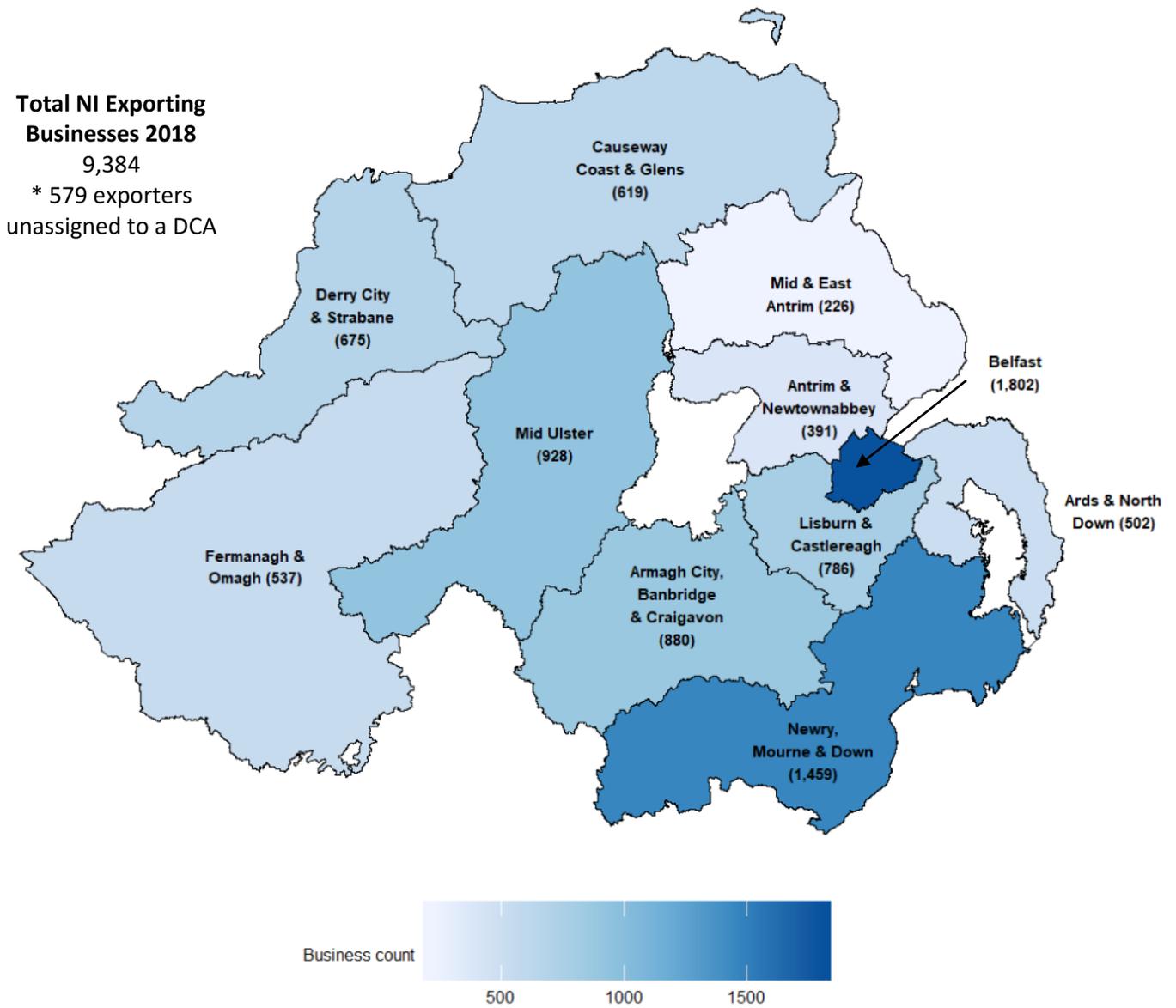


Figure 7: Number of exporters by District Council Area, 2018



2.7 Draft Programme for Government

External sales, as measured by the Broad Economy Sales and Exports Statistics series, has been selected as an indicator in the [draft Programme for Government \(PfG\) Framework](#) and [NICS Outcome Delivery Plan 2018/19](#).

It is used alongside a number of other indicators to inform progress against Outcome 1:

“We prosper through a strong, competitive, regionally balanced economy’ which will be measured using these statistics.”

This indicator is measured in two ways:

- The value of external sales in current prices
- External Sellers Rate - defined as the proportion of all survey-eligible businesses that sell outside NI

Figure 8: Data for Draft Programme for Government Indicator 21: External Sales

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
External Sales (£m)	20,508	20,907	21,997	22,664	23,167	23,812	21,958	21,717
External Sellers Rate (%)	23.1	25.0	24.0	23.5	22.9	22.5	25.4	23.4

Figure 8 shows the performance of external sales from 2011-2018. The PfG baseline year, against which progress is measured, is 2015. External sales decreased by £1.5 billion between 2015 and 2018, while the external sellers rate increased by 0.5 percentage points.

3 Results Tables: 2011 - 2018

Table 1: Sales by broad destination, 2011 – 2018 (£ millions)

Broad Destination	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017 ^(r)	2018 ^(p)
NI Sales (a)	£41,022	£41,159	£42,517	£43,579	£43,918	£43,918	£44,183	£46,721
GB Sales (b)	£11,392	£11,612	£12,051	£13,075	£13,728	£14,174	£11,634	£10,556
UK sales (=a+b)	£52,414	£52,771	£54,568	£56,653	£57,646	£58,092	£55,818	£57,277
IE Sales (c)	£3,330	£3,428	£3,716	£3,520	£3,328	£3,341	£3,840	£4,169
REU Sales (d)	£2,044	£1,911	£2,177	£2,090	£2,134	£2,226	£2,034	£2,460
ROW Sales (e)	£3,741	£3,956	£4,053	£3,979	£3,977	£4,071	£4,450	£4,532
Exports (=c+d+e)	£9,116	£9,295	£9,946	£9,589	£9,440	£9,638	£10,323	£11,160
External Sales (=b+c+d+e)	£20,508	£20,907	£21,997	£22,664	£23,167	£23,812	£21,958	£21,717
Total Sales (=a+b+c+d+e)	£61,530	£62,067	£64,514	£66,242	£67,085	£67,730	£66,141	£68,437

Figures may not sum due to rounding

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(r) = Previously published figures for 2017 have been revised as a result of additional information becoming available since the last publication.

(p) = The most recent figures, 2018, are provisional and are subject to revision in the next reporting period.

Table 2: Sales by broad Destination and Industry Section, 2018 (£ millions)

Standard Industrial Classification	Description	NI Sales	GB Sales	UK Sales	IE Sales	REU Sales	ROW Sales	Exports	External Sales	Total Sales
A – S	Agriculture, fishing, production, construction, distribution and services	£46,721	£10,556	£57,277	£4,169	£2,460	£4,532	£11,160	£21,717	£68,437
A (part)	Agriculture, forestry and fishing	£127	£9	£136	£16	*	*	£38	£46	£173
B	Mining and quarrying	£325	£59	£384	£39	*	*	£41	£100	£425
C	Manufacturing	£4,432	£4,581	£9,013	£1,641	£1,533	£3,282	£6,456	£11,037	£15,469
D	Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	£2,316	*	*	*	*	*	*	£40	£2,355
E	Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	£646	£58	£704	£7	£72	£51	£130	£187	£834
F	Construction	£4,950	£2,257	£7,207	£387	£53	£7	£447	£2,705	£7,655
G	Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motor cycles	£21,866	£1,498	£23,364	£1,280	£430	£341	£2,051	£3,549	£25,415
H	Transport and storage	£2,092	£778	£2,870	£165	£138	£30	£333	£1,111	£3,203
I	Accommodation and food service activities	£1,874	*	*	*	*	*	*	£17	£1,891
J	Information and communication	£1,002	£353	£1,355	£155	£53	£488	£696	£1,049	£2,051
L	Real estate activities	£1,018	£50	£1,068	£4	*	*	£4	£54	£1,071
M	Professional, scientific and technical activities	£1,610	£534	£2,144	£128	£70	£151	£349	£882	£2,493
N	Administrative and support service activities	£1,873	£308	£2,181	£294	£89	£163	£546	£854	£2,727
P - S	Others	£2,589	£52	£2,641	£21	£3	£11	£34	£86	£2,675

* = Cells have been suppressed to protect confidentiality

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The most recent figures, 2018, are provisional and are subject to revision in the next reporting period.

Table 3: Sales outside the UK (Exports) by Industry Section, 2011 – 2018 (£ millions)

Standard Industrial Classification	Description	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017 ^(r)	2018 ^(p)
A – S	Agriculture, fishing, production, construction, distribution and services	£9,116	£9,295	£9,946	£9,589	£9,440	£9,638	£10,323	£11,160
A (part)	Agriculture, forestry and fishing	£25	£29	£33	£24	£18	£6	£29	£38
B	Mining and quarrying	£52	£56	£49	£37	£30	£32	£35	£41
C	Manufacturing	£5,543	£5,660	£6,109	£5,714	£5,805	£5,894	£6,243	£6,456
D	Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	£73	£44	£40	£26	*	*	£37	*
E	Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	£184	£141	£116	£136	£105	£72	£133	£130
F	Construction	£218	£297	£252	£310	£225	£273	£320	£447
G	Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motor cycles	£2,017	£1,964	£2,045	£1,975	£1,736	£1,577	£1,788	£2,051
H	Transport and storage	£303	£307	£324	£306	£294	£349	£349	£333
I	Accommodation and food service activities	£10	£14	£17	£15	*	*	£5	*
J	Information and communication	£248	£252	£475	£450	£502	£585	£596	£696
L	Real estate activities	£15	£24	£15	£17	£9	£2	£3	£4
M	Professional, scientific and technical activities	£237	£249	£205	£314	£347	£437	£427	£349
N	Administrative and support service activities	£170	£225	£227	£223	£279	£288	£310	£546
P - S	Others	£22	£33	£37	£41	£58	£49	£47	£34

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Table 4: Share of Total Sales by Broad Destination as %, 2011 - 2018

Broad Destination	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017 ^(r)	2018 ^(p)
Total Sales	100.0	100.0						
NI Sales	66.7	66.3	65.9	65.8	65.5	64.8	66.8	68.3
GB Sales	18.5	18.7	18.7	19.7	20.5	20.9	17.6	15.4
IE Sales	5.4	5.5	5.8	5.3	5.0	4.9	5.8	6.1
REU Sales	3.3	3.1	3.4	3.2	3.2	3.3	3.1	3.6
ROW Sales	6.1	6.4	6.3	6.0	5.9	6.0	6.7	6.6
External Sales	33.3	33.7	34.1	34.2	34.5	35.2	33.2	31.7
Exports	14.8	15.0	15.4	14.5	14.1	14.2	15.6	16.3

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Table 5: Exports to markets within the rest of the EU, 2011 – 2018 (£ millions)

Country	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017 ^(r)	2018 ^(p)
REU Sales	£2,044	£1,911	£2,177	£2,090	£2,134	£2,226	£2,034	£2,460
Germany Sales	£475	£510	£473	£492	£552	£539	£575	£561
France Sales	£375	£345	£486	£413	£384	£469	£313	£328
Belgium Sales	£136	£119	£113	£92	£118	£129	£140	£306
Luxembourg Sales	£3	£2	£3	£2	£2	£4	£4	£6
Netherlands Sales	£224	£222	£398	£416	£345	£293	£260	£490
Italy Sales	£138	£121	£118	£97	£108	£112	£102	£118
Denmark Sales	£71	£73	£64	£65	£48	£65	£80	£89
Portugal Sales	£54	£48	£44	£46	£34	£42	£54	£37
Spain Sales	£204	£156	£185	£172	£178	£168	£162	£183
Greece Sales	£18	£22	£19	£14	£15	£13	£9	£13
Austria Sales	£24	£33	£22	£18	£22	£48	£35	£34
Sweden Sales	£69	£49	£54	£41	£70	£73	£64	£50
Finland Sales	£50	£33	£31	£39	£30	£36	£39	£53
Cyprus Sales	£5	£7	£6	£7	£15	£10	£14	£4
Czech Republic Sales	£22	£25	£26	£39	£39	£26	£42	£26
Estonia Sales	£2	£7	£3	£7	£4	£4	£4	£14
Hungary Sales	£31	£44	£22	£33	£23	£29	£31	£25
Latvia Sales	£9	£7	£6	£4	£5	£5	£6	£10
Lithuania Sales	£4	£8	£8	£8	£9	£6	£7	£10
Malta Sales	£5	£3	£12	£8	£10	£8	£5	£9
Poland Sales	£95	£49	£46	£44	£85	£95	£49	£45
Slovakia Sales	£5	£5	£7	£5	£4	£14	£8	£7
Slovenia Sales	£3	£3	£3	£2	£2	£2	£2	£4
Bulgaria Sales	£4	£4	£5	£5	£6	£9	£6	£7
Romania Sales	£18	£17	£24	£17	£22	£20	£17	£23
Croatia Sales	-	-	-	£1	£3	£6	£5	£7

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(p) = The most recent figures, 2018, are provisional and are subject to revision in the next reporting period.

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Table 6: Exports to markets outside the EU, 2011 – 2018 (£ millions)

Country	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017 ^(r)	2018 ^(p)
ROW Sales	£3,741	£3,956	£4,053	£3,979	£3,977	£4,071	£4,450	£4,532
Switzerland Sales	£748	£865	£784	£884	£903	£735	£371	£229
Turkey Sales	£41	£32	£40	£18	£35	£49	£48	£69
Eastern Europe	£5	£9	£19	£8	£14	£9	£8	£12
Norway Sales	£42	£55	£93	£67	£33	£47	£47	£46
Russia Sales	£81	£104	£121	£93	£68	£37	£41	£42
Rest of Europe Other	£19	£23	£19	£24	£22	£15	£13	£20
Australia Sales	£225	£251	£189	£183	£128	£94	£115	£249
New Zealand Sales	£20	£16	£13	£15	£11	£20	£54	£40
Rest of World Other	£13	£19	£18	£44	£28	£62	£137	£23
North America Total	£1,323	£1,320	£1,548	£1,523	£1,605	£1,862	£2,191	£2,091
Central and South America Total	£110	£153	£94	£88	£80	£53	£42	£64
Middle East Total	£289	£273	£276	£265	£258	£302	£349	£417
Asia Total	£550	£566	£582	£549	£578	£608	£848	£1,036
Africa Total	£275	£272	£256	£219	£214	£179	£186	£194

Figures may not sum due to rounding

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Table 7: Sales by Broad Destination and Business Size, 2018 (£ millions)

Business Size	Total Sales	NI Sales	GB Sales	IE Sales	REU Sales	ROW Sales	External Sales	Exports
0-9	£9,435	£7,823	£817	£491	£120	£184	£1,612	£795
10-49	£16,315	£12,260	£1,742	£1,421	£435	£458	£4,055	£2,314
50-249	£18,170	£12,341	£3,095	£1,381	£599	£754	£5,829	£2,734
250+	£24,517	£14,297	£4,903	£876	£1,306	£3,136	£10,220	£5,317
Total	£68,437	£46,721	£10,556	£4,169	£2,460	£4,532	£21,717	£11,160

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Figures may not sum due to rounding

The most recent figures, 2018, are provisional and are subject to revision in the next reporting period.

Table 8: Number of businesses selling to destinations outside NI (External sales) by industry section, 2011 - 2018

Standard Industrial Classification	Description	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017 ^(r)	2018 ^(p)
A – S	Agriculture, fishing, production, construction, distribution and services	11,689	12,320	11,798	11,534	11,579	11,734	13,791	12,986
A (part)	Agriculture, forestry and fishing	117	94	86	76	126	75	126	151
B	Mining and quarrying	32	24	39	54	72	58	50	56
C	Manufacturing	2,239	2,243	2,294	2,249	2,282	2,387	2,494	2,663
D	Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	12	21	23	23	34	59	99	6
E	Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	101	68	60	59	64	79	63	163
F	Construction	1,244	1,338	1,282	1,405	1,352	1,501	1,727	1,836
G	Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motor cycles	3,943	4,257	3,486	3,358	3,079	2,949	3,682	2,704
H	Transport and storage	683	731	684	522	538	648	814	713
I	Accommodation and food service activities	225	80	65	49	30	50	167	19
J	Information and communication	579	756	899	893	879	895	1,089	1,001
L	Real estate activities	223	234	292	280	231	252	256	266
M	Professional, scientific and technical activities	1,455	1,665	1,708	1,797	1,888	1,923	2,279	2,295
N	Administrative and support service activities	374	208	268	223	410	252	374	453
P	Education	112	311	270	167	271	183	200	172
Q	Human Health And Social Work Activities	80	45	62	71	45	96	57	173
R	Arts, Entertainment And Recreation	139	149	161	193	135	184	214	161
S	Other Service Activities	133	95	119	115	144	142	99	155

Figures may not sum due to rounding

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Table 9: Number of businesses exporting from NI by industry section, 2011 - 2018

Standard Industrial Classification	Description	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017 ^(r)	2018 ^(p)
A – S	Agriculture, fishing, production, construction, distribution and services	9,170	9,917	9,457	8,749	8,452	8,502	10,037	9,384
A (part)	Agriculture, forestry and fishing	86	70	51	61	99	60	79	91
B	Mining and quarrying	32	24	39	54	71	57	42	50
C	Manufacturing	2,074	2,035	2,005	2,015	2,031	2,146	2,205	2,374
D	Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	9	12	18	12	16	57	36	4
E	Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	82	63	45	48	54	54	61	68
F	Construction	766	959	796	941	721	842	1,107	1,034
G	Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motor cycles	3,295	3,767	3,145	2,880	2,556	2,400	2,793	2,004
H	Transport and storage	458	446	443	446	344	494	646	597
I	Accommodation and food service activities	121	53	20	28	5	7	10	13
J	Information and communication	486	590	874	511	682	681	833	709
L	Real estate activities	69	61	50	60	49	28	18	34
M	Professional, scientific and technical activities	1,061	1,273	1,297	1,185	1,131	1,128	1,570	1,593
N	Administrative and support service activities	301	107	161	127	288	163	237	389
P	Education	106	222	201	102	140	107	122	168
Q	Human Health And Social Work Activities	72	44	58	69	42	55	51	12
R	Arts, Entertainment And Recreation	100	130	159	132	135	132	144	143
S	Other Service Activities	53	60	96	78	88	89	82	103

Figures may not sum due to rounding

[Download in Excel](#)

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Table 10: Exports by District Council Area, 2011 – 2018 (£ millions)

District Council Area	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017 ^(r)	2018 ^(p)
Antrim and Newtownabbey	£572	£653	£680	£756	£730	£845	£778	£889
Ards and North Down	£244	£248	£263	*	£223	£218	£193	£229
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	£1,134	£1,038	£1,172	£1,148	£1,274	£1,132	£1,469	£1,423
Belfast	£2,314	£2,326	£2,663	£2,230	£2,193	£2,248	£2,495	£2,699
Causeway Coast and Glens	£374	*	*	£302	£248	£369	£497	£602
Derry City and Strabane	*	£684	£737	£727	£647	£611	£496	£433
Fermanagh and Omagh	£333	£307	£299	£297	£220	£278	£426	£442
Lisburn and Castlereagh	£436	£391	£425	£486	£532	£494	£502	£519
Mid and East Antrim	£472	£439	£501	£432	£330	£273	£259	£228
Mid Ulster	£1,179	£1,302	£1,232	£1,128	£1,087	£675	£908	£1,151
Newry, Mourne and Down	£793	£891	£952	£883	£949	£1,116	£1,432	£1,709
Unassigned **	*	*	*	*	£1,006	£1,378	£868	£836
Total	£9,116	£9,295	£9,946	£9,589	£9,440	£9,638	£10,323	£11,160

* = Cells have been suppressed to protect confidentiality

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** In some instances it is not possible to assign a business to a postcode. This is usually because the head office is outside NI. Such trade is labelled as "Unassigned". Users should refer to Appendix B for more information.

Figures may not sum due to rounding

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Table 11: Number of exporters by District Council Area, 2011 – 2018

District Council Area	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017 ^(r)	2018 ^(p)
Antrim and Newtownabbey	543	573	446	667	574	595	442	391
Ards and North Down	404	699	560	445	405	491	500	502
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	1,144	918	881	1,117	1,094	1,150	1,120	880
Belfast	1,730	1,807	2,296	1,568	1,577	1,288	1,721	1,802
Causeway Coast and Glens	461	593	400	408	396	545	503	619
Derry City and Strabane	606	779	672	789	624	499	647	675
Fermanagh and Omagh	698	751	712	826	688	695	770	537
Lisburn and Castlereagh	755	940	1,125	759	808	756	794	786
Mid and East Antrim	428	447	356	279	271	214	278	226
Mid Ulster	1,069	1,058	803	794	928	1,059	1,104	928
Newry, Mourne and Down	1,088	1,015	925	921	843	997	1,318	1,459
Unassigned*	243	336	282	175	245	210	840	579
Total	9,170	9,917	9,457	8,749	8,452	8,501	10,037	9,384

[Download in Excel](#)

* In some instances it is not possible to assign a business to a postcode. This is usually because the head office is outside NI. Such trade is labelled as "Unassigned". Users should refer to Appendix B for more information.

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These counts are population-level estimates that are based on the BESES survey coverage, which does not cover financial and insurance services; the public sector and most of agriculture.

As with any survey estimate, the counts are central estimates with associated confidence intervals. Such estimates can be influenced by survey weighting and the identification of outliers. These estimates should therefore not be treated as an exact administrative count.

The population in this context refers to the business population as measured by the Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR) - a register of all UK businesses registered for VAT or PAYE or both. The NI IDBR estimates that there are about 75,000 such businesses in NI but the eligible BESES population falls to about 50,000 businesses once the exclusions listed above are applied (public sector; finance and agriculture). There are traders in these sectors that are not captured by BESES.

4 Background Notes

Background

The Northern Ireland Executive's [Economic Strategy](#) referred to the need to improve the measurement of Northern Ireland's exports beyond that of the manufacturing sector. NISRA subsequently published initial estimates of 'broad economy' sales and exports by industry sector in [March 2015](#).

This release provides revised estimates for 2017 and provisional estimates for 2018. In addition, estimates of the number of businesses selling to markets outside Northern Ireland are presented. NISRA has produced trade estimates split by District Council Area for the first time in this publication.

The contents of this report will be of interest to government policy makers, Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs), the business community, economic commentators, academics and members of the general public with an interest in the NI economy.

The BESES data has been of significant interest to Departments involved in EU Exit preparations and negotiations. Users of the data include the Department for the Economy (DfE), the Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), the Department for Exiting the EU (DExEU), HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), HM Treasury (HMT) and the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

The latest Department for the Economy Economic Commentary provides an overview of the state of the Northern Ireland economy, setting it in a global context. This can be found at: <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/df-e-economic-commentary>.

DfE have also relied heavily on the BESES data as part of their EU Exit related research. Some of their research and analysis can be found [here](#).

Other sources

Further information relating to Northern Ireland exports has historically been available from the Exporting Northern Ireland Services Study (ENIS). The Exporting Northern Ireland Services (ENIS) Study is a survey which was first introduced by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment in 2003 to further understand and estimate the value to the Northern Ireland economy of exporting services. The study is based on information collected via the International Trade in Services Survey (ITIS), which additionally collects information on the nature of services. However, service sector sales outside Northern Ireland are now collected via the BESES. In light of developments on the production of the BESES NISRA have ceased publication of the ENIS series (last published in August 2015). The ITIS data will continue to be collected for UK level purposes and NISRA will consult with users on any future plans in relation to this.

The International Trade in Services (ITIS) survey is a UK wide survey which collects information on overseas transactions of consultants and companies offering business services. Information collected from the survey is fed into the UK balance of payments and published at the UK level. The full bulletin can be accessed on the [ONS website](#).

While directly comparable UK data for the BESES does not exist (the BESES covers goods and services produced in Northern Ireland), HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) are responsible for collecting the UK's international trade in goods data, which are published as two National Statistics series - the 'Overseas Trade Statistics (OTS) of the UK' and the 'UK Regional Trade Statistics (RTS)'. These UK regional statistics can be accessed [here](#).

Interactive mapping tool

NISRA has developed an interactive trade in goods map to allow users to explore official trade in goods data by country and world region using data from HMRC's Regional Trade Statistics. The tool was developed by NISRA based on the existing [UN Comtrade](#) tool developed by [DIT \(Department for International Trade\)](#) and [BEIS \(Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy\)](#) and can be found below.

- [UK Regions Imports and Exports of Goods by Country and World Region](#)

Counts of Businesses Exporting

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has recently begun to produce an experimental count of importers and exporters in GB. For conceptual reasons, ONS were not able to derive data for NI as part of this series. While the methodologies used by NISRA and ONS to produce their respective counts are broadly similar, users should be aware that differences still exist and caution should be exercised when comparing the two measures.

An information paper describing the methodology used by ONS can be found [here](#).

The Scottish Government also publish export statistics from the Exports Statistics Scotland series (formerly called the Global Connections Survey). These statistics can be accessed on the [Scottish Governments website](#).

The Government Statistical Service (GSS) has issued guidance on comparing official statistics produced by each nation of the UK. This guidance can be accessed [here](#).

NISRA's exports statistics are considered as "Partially Comparable at Level D" with the ONS's statistics on importers and exporters in GB on the [ONS website](#).

Level D comparability is described as:

"Figures which are produced from separate sources of data. Methods and standards are broadly comparable, but users should be made aware of the limitations."

User Engagement

We welcome any feedback you might have in relation to this report, and would be particularly interested in knowing how you make use of these data to inform your work. Please contact us at economicstats@nisra.gov.uk.

Next Publication

A further disaggregation of the data in this bulletin into its goods and services components will be published in Spring 2020.

Imports data for survey year 2018 will be published in Summer 2020.

The next bulletin, with results for survey year 2019, will be published in December 2020.

All publications will be available at:

<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/business-statistics/broad-economy-sales-and-exports-statistics>

For Further Information

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5 Appendices

5.1 Appendix A: Overview of Methodology to Estimate the Number of Businesses Selling Outside NI

Ongoing advancements in the Broad Economy Sales and Exports Statistics series include the development of an estimate of the number of businesses that trade to particular destinations.

The method for creating the counts is an adaptation of the method used to derive population estimates for the destination variables. Full details of the BESES methodology can be found in Appendix B of the methodology paper on the [Production of Northern Ireland Broad Economy Exports Estimates](#).

Users should pay particular note to the gaps in survey coverage when using these data.

To derive the counts, only the design weight is used when weighting returned data. The design or 'a' weight is a simple expansion estimator (i.e. $\frac{N}{n}$) for similar groups in the population

An example of how the number of exporters in a particular stratum is found is shown below:

- In stratum x there are 6 returns (n_x) from a population of 12 businesses (N_x).
- The a weight for stratum x (a_x) is given by:

$$a_x = \frac{N_x}{n_x} = \frac{12}{6} = 2$$

- If, say, 3 of the 6 responders in stratum x are exporters, then the estimated number of exports in x is given by:

$$\text{exporters}_x = a_x \times \text{number of returned exporters in } x, \text{ so}$$

$$\text{exporters}_x = 2 \times 3 = 6$$

- The total number of exporters in the population is thus given by summing the number of exporters in each stratum.

The methodology used to compute these counts is in its infancy and, at this stage, the estimates should be considered as experimental statistics.

NISRA is constantly working to improve and develop BESES output and welcomes any feedback users might have. Ongoing development of the methodology will be informed by user feedback, both in terms of the usefulness and reliability of the estimates and their comparability with other sources. Any comments should be sent to economicstats@nisra.gov.uk.

5.2 Appendix B: Overview of Methodology used to produce estimates split by District Council Area

Ongoing advancements in the Broad Economy Sales and Exports Statistics series include the development of an estimate of both the value of trade and the number of businesses that trade split by District Council Area. This data is presented for the first time in this publication.

A business is assigned to a geographical location within Northern Ireland based on the postcode of the address of the site which reports Northern Ireland activity, i.e. the Northern Ireland Reporting Unit. This is usually the main operating site or 'head office' within Northern Ireland.

The postcodes are matched to geographical areas in Northern Ireland using the [NISRA Central Postcode Directory](#).

In some instances it is not possible to assign a business to a postcode. This is usually because the head office is outside NI. Such trade is labelled as "Unassigned".

Users should also be aware of a "Head Office" effect. Trade data is based on reporting unit (i.e. head office) information which means that all trade activity is coded based on the classification and location of the reporting unit. However, in reality, a business may have multiple sites or indeed a dedicated transport/logistics site from which goods are transported. This trade will still be reported under the reporting unit.

NISRA is constantly working to improve and develop BESES output and welcomes any feedback users might have. As part of an experimental series, the use and utility of the DCA splits will be monitored both in terms of the usefulness and reliability of the estimates and their comparability with other sources. User feedback will determine whether these statistics are credible and useful and whether we will continue with their production. Any comments should be sent to economicstats@nisra.gov.uk.