

18th June 2019

Labour Force Survey Annual Report 2018

Geographical Area: Northern Ireland

Theme: Labour Market

Frequency: Annual

The Annual Report provides information on key labour market indicators such as employment and economic inactivity, disaggregated by council area for 2018. In addition, the report provides employment analyses in relation to industry, occupation and qualifications. The report is based on data collected from the Labour Force Survey in 2018 and informs six indicators from the Outcomes Delivery Plan (ODP), details of which have been included in Sections 2, 4 and 5 of this report.

Key points:

- In 2018, there were 817,000 people of working age (16-64) in employment in Northern Ireland (NI). This accounted for 70.0% of the working age population (the employment rate).
- The highest employment rate for a council area was recorded in Antrim and Newtownabbey (77.7%) and was 16.1 percentage points above the lowest rate, which was recorded in Derry City and Strabane (61.6%).
- In 2018, there were 318,000 economically inactive people of working age in NI, equivalent to 27.2% of the working age population (the economic inactivity rate).
- The highest inactivity rate for a council area was in Derry City and Strabane (34.1%) and was 14.2 percentage points above the lowest rate, which was in Antrim and Newtownabbey (19.9%).
- In 2018, there were 33,000 people who were unemployed. This accounted for 3.7% of the economically active 16+ population, the lowest annual unemployment rate on record.
- The average unemployment rate for urban areas (4.6%) was higher than in rural areas (2.5%).

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NATIONAL STATISTICS STATUS



National Statistics status means that our statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value, and it is our responsibility to maintain compliance with these standards.

These statistics were designated as National Statistics in August 2010 following a full [assessment](#) against the [Code of Practice](#).

Since the assessment by the UK Statistics Authority, we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics, and have made the following improvements:

- Redesigned the release of annual data outputs into both a summary and detailed report which has improved timeliness of dissemination of ODP indicators;
- Improved quality of the LFS data by boosting the sample size and improving precision around headline estimates

1 Commentary

In 2018, the employment rate for NI was 70.0%, the economic inactivity rate was 27.2% and the unemployment rate was 3.7%. Over a third (34.9%) of those aged 16-64 years were qualified to degree level or above while fewer than one in six (14.7%) had no qualifications.

Performance against the key economic statistics varied across the Local Government Districts in 2018. Derry City and Strabane and Belfast reported the lowest employment rates and the highest inactivity rates in NI. Derry City and Strabane had the lowest employment rate (61.6%), 3.1pps lower than Belfast (64.7%), which had the second lowest employment rate. Newry, Mourne and Down and Causeway Coast and Glens also had employment rates below the NI rate and inactivity rates higher than the NI rate.

Fermanagh and Omagh was the most similar to the NI averages, with an employment rate of 68.8% (within 1.1pps of the NI rate) and an inactivity rate (27.0%) within 0.2pps of the NI rate, followed by Mid and East Antrim and Ards and North Down. Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon and Mid Ulster councils showed similar characteristics, both were above the NI employment rate (73.9% and 74.2%) and below the NI inactivity rate (22.9% and 23.5%).

Lisburn and Castlereagh, and Antrim and Newtownabbey had both the highest employment rates and lowest inactivity rates. Antrim and Newtownabbey's employment rate was 77.7% and was 0.9pps higher than the second highest, Lisburn and Castlereagh (76.8%). The difference in inactivity rate was similar, Antrim and Newtownabbey had the lowest inactivity rate in NI at 19.9%, which was 1.2pps lower than Lisburn and Castlereagh (21.1%).

Context

This report provides detailed geographical analysis of headline labour market statistics from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) January - December 2018 Annual Dataset. The LFS is a sample survey carried out by interviewing individuals about their personal circumstances and work. It is the biggest regular household survey in Northern Ireland and provides a rich source of information on the labour force using internationally agreed concepts and definitions.

The results of the LFS are quoted to the nearest 1,000 following the grossing of sample numbers to population levels. As the LFS is a sample survey, estimates are subject to sampling error. LFS estimates of under 6,000 are usually not published as they are likely to be unreliable because the smaller the group whose size is being estimated, the less precise that estimate is. The Further Information section provides more detail on the precision of estimates.

Key users of Northern Ireland labour market statistics include government departments, in particular the Department for the Economy (DfE), the Department for Communities (DfC) and the Executive Office (TEO), to design and monitor the impact of economic and labour market policy. Other government departments such as the Department of Finance (DoF) and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), as well as bodies such as Invest NI and Belfast City Council, regularly require specific ad hoc labour market analysis in order to monitor policies for example, equality and employment. In addition, significant 'non-governmental' users of labour market statistics include the media, banks, academics, private consultants and the general public, primarily for reporting or researching the performance of the economy in general. Labour market statistics attract widespread media coverage, with a number of broadcasters publishing articles on the labour market on a monthly basis, generally on the publication day of the monthly Labour Market Report.

Labour market statistics feature in the [Economic Commentary](#) which provides an overview of the state of the Northern Ireland economy, setting it in context with the UK and Republic of Ireland. The most up-to-date official statistics on the economy and labour market are available on the [Economic Overview section](#) of the NISRA website. The NINIS website also contains [economic area profiles](#) containing a range of labour market data organised by council area.

Further information on using labour market statistics can be found on the Office for National Statistics (ONS) website:

- [Interpreting Labour Market statistics](#)
- [Guide to Labour Market Statistics](#)
- [Glossary](#)

Outcomes Delivery Plan Indicators (ODP)

The delivery plan set out the actions that departments intended to take during 2018/19 to give effect to the previous Executive's stated objective of improving wellbeing for all – by tackling disadvantage and driving economic growth. The [2018/19](#) ODP contained 12 strategic outcomes supported by 49 indicators overall. The framework reflects population conditions in 12 key areas of economic and societal wellbeing identified through consultation as priorities.

The LFS annual dataset informs seven indicators, six of which have been detailed in the next sections of this report. Two of the indicators were first published in the [Annual Summary 2018](#) document on the 20th March 2019. The 7th indicator (ODP 42, Life Satisfaction score of people with disabilities) is published in the [Personal Wellbeing section](#) of the NISRA website and will be published later in 2019.

Employment: people aged 16 or over who did paid work (as an employee or self-employed), those who had a job that they were temporarily away from; those on government-supported training and employment programmes, and those doing unpaid family work.

2.1 Northern Ireland

- In 2018, there were 817,000 people of working age in employment in NI, equivalent to 70.0% of the working age population (the employment rate).

ODP Indicator 16: Seasonally adjusted employment rate (16-64).

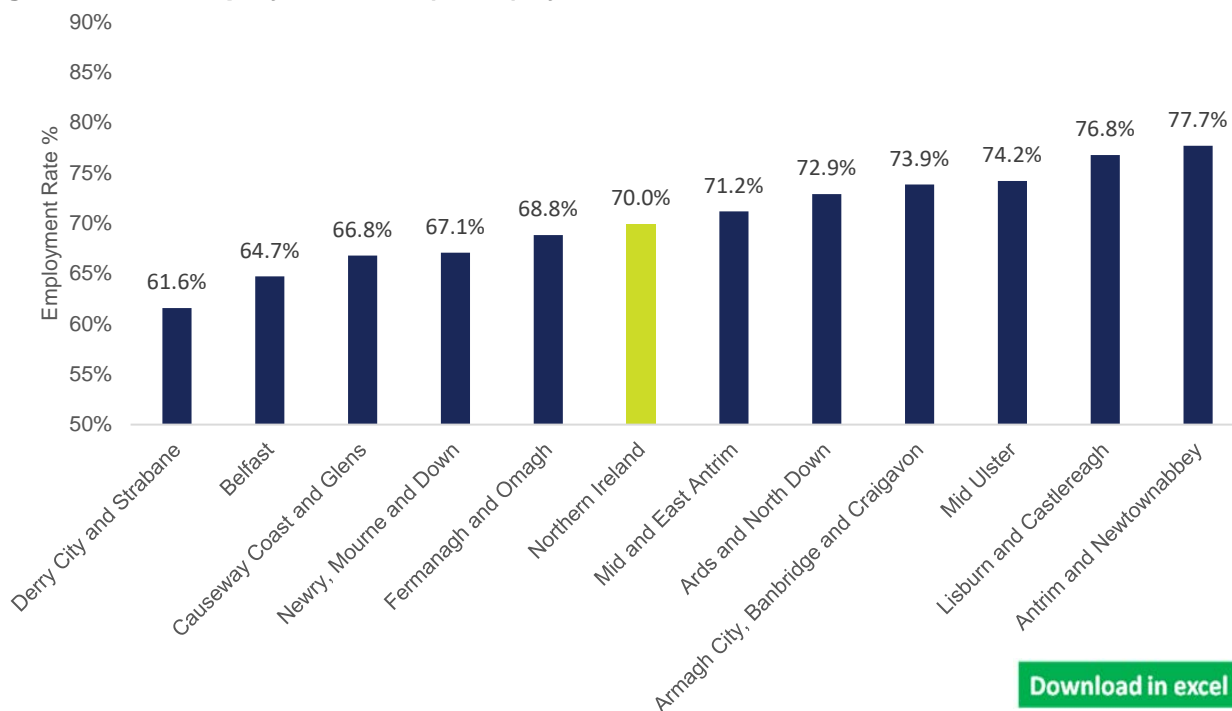
Current position: The Northern Ireland employment rate for those aged 16-64 in 2018 was 70.0%. This represents a 1.5 percentage point increase from the baseline year (2015). This is not a statistically significant change. A statistically significant change would be an increase or decrease of 2.0pps.

Outcome 6 – We have more people working in better jobs.

ODP Indicator 16 (Seasonally adjusted employment rate (16-64)) was previously reported in the [Annual Summary](#).

- In 2018, the employment rates by council area ranged from 61.6% in Derry City and Strabane to 77.7% in Antrim and Newtownabbey, a gap of 16.1pps. Fermanagh and Omagh was the council with an employment rate closest to the NI total of 70.0% with a difference of 1.1pps (68.8%).
- In comparison Derry City and Strabane had the largest difference in employment rate to the NI total with a difference of 8.4pps. Figure 1 below shows the employment rates for each council area in NI.

Figure 1: Employment rate (16-64) by council area, 2018



[Download in excel](#)

ODP Indicator 34: Employment rate by council area.

Current position:

In 2018, Antrim & Newtownabbey and Lisburn & Castlereagh had the highest employment rates. Their combined employment rate was 77.3%. Derry City & Strabane and Belfast had the lowest employment rates. Their combined employment rate was 63.8%. The range between the highest two and lowest two LGDs was 13.5pps. The range has increased by 0.3pps since the baseline year (2015). This is not a statistically significant change. For the change to be statistically significant the range would need to increase or decrease by 5.6pps.

Outcome 1 – We prosper through a strong, competitive, regionally balanced economy.

Outcome 3 – We have a more equal society.

Outcome 6 – We have more people working in better jobs.

2.2 Deprivation Quintile

Deprivation quintile: The Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure is the official measure of spatial deprivation for NI and comprises seven domains of deprivation as follows: income, employment, health, education, proximity to services, living environment and crime. Further information on deprivation can be found [here](#).

- Working age employment rates by deprivation quintile varied in 2018, from a high of 77.3% in the least deprived areas (quintile 5), to a low of 55.1% in the most deprived areas (quintile 1).
- This represented a 22.2pps difference between the most and least deprived quintiles in NI.

ODP Indicator 32: Employment rate of 16-64 year olds by deprivation quintile.*

Current position: The employment rate in deprivation quintile 1 in 2018 was 55.1%. The baseline rate in 2015 was 58.8%. This was not a statistically significant change. A statistically significant change in the employment rate for deprivation quintile 1 would be an increase or decrease of 5.0pps.

The employment rate in deprivation quintile 2 in 2018 was 69.7%. The baseline rate in 2015 was 64.4%. This was a statistically significant change. A statistically significant change in the employment rate for deprivation quintile 2 would be an increase or decrease of 4.4pps.

The employment rate in deprivation quintile 3 in 2018 was 70.5%. The baseline rate in 2015 was 71.3%. This was not a statistically significant change. A statistically significant change in the employment rate for deprivation quintile 3 would be an increase or decrease of 4.2pps.

The employment rate in deprivation quintile 4 in 2018 was 75.0%. The baseline rate in 2015 was 71.7%. This was not a statistically significant change. A statistically significant change in the employment rate for deprivation quintile 4 would be an increase or decrease of 4.1pps.

The employment rate in deprivation quintile 5 in 2018 was 77.3%. The baseline rate in 2015 was 75.8%. This was not a statistically significant change. A statistically significant change in the employment rate for deprivation quintile 5 would be an increase or decrease of 4.3pps.

Outcome 3 – We have a more equal society.

**Please note: The baseline year data (2015) are based on the 2010 multiple deprivation measure. Data from 2017 onwards are based on the 2017 multiple deprivation measure.*

2.3 Working Patterns

The previous 2 sections within the employment chapter discuss persons of working age (16-64). In line with ODP indicator 33 (% people working part time who would like to work more hours), this section considers those aged 16+.

- In 2018, approximately three quarters of the 16+ population in employment (74.7%) were working full time, the equivalent of 632,000 people.
- Just over a quarter (25.3%), or 214,000, of the 16+ population in employment were working part time.
- 16.0%¹ (33,000) of people working part time would like to work more hours.

ODP Indicator 33: % people working part time who would like to work more hours.

Current position: The Northern Ireland rate of people working part time (aged 16 and over) who would like more hours was 16.0% in 2018. This represents a 4.5 percentage point decrease from the baseline year (2015). This is a statistically significant change. A statistically significant change would be an increase or decrease of 4.0pps.

Outcome 6 – We have more people working in better jobs.

Further information is available on the Executive Office (TEO) – [Outcomes Delivery Plan 2018/19](#) website.

¹ % of a total which excludes those who were not classified as either Underemployed or Not Underemployed due to lack of information.

Unemployment: is defined following the internationally agreed definition by the ILO. Unemployed people are without a job, who were able to start work in the two weeks following their LFS interview and had actively sought work in the four weeks prior to interview or were waiting to start a job they had already obtained.

3.1 Northern Ireland

- In 2018 there were 33,000 people unemployed in NI. This accounts for 3.7% of the economically active 16+ population, and is the lowest annual unemployment rate on record.
- In urban areas the 16+ unemployment rate was 4.6%, which was higher than in rural areas, 2.5%. In urban areas the number aged 16+ who were unemployed was 24,000 people, while in rural areas there were 9,000 unemployed persons.

Unemployment estimates broken down by geographical areas, such as council area and parliamentary constituency, are unavailable as, due to the small number of cases, the survey estimates do not meet our threshold for release.

Further information is available on the [NISRA - Economic and Labour Market Statistics website](#)

Economically inactive: people who are neither in employment nor unemployed as determined by the ILO measure. This group includes all those who are looking after a home, are long term sick or disabled, are students or retired.

4.1 Northern Ireland

- In 2018, there were 318,000 economically inactive people of working age in NI, equivalent to over a quarter (27.2%) of the working age population (the economic inactivity rate).

ODP Indicator 17: Economic inactivity rate excluding students.

Current position: The Northern Ireland economic inactivity rate (16-64) excluding students in 2018 was 20.0%. This is a 0.1 percentage point decrease from the baseline year (2015). This is not a statistically significant change. A statistically significant change would be an increase or decrease of 1.7pps.

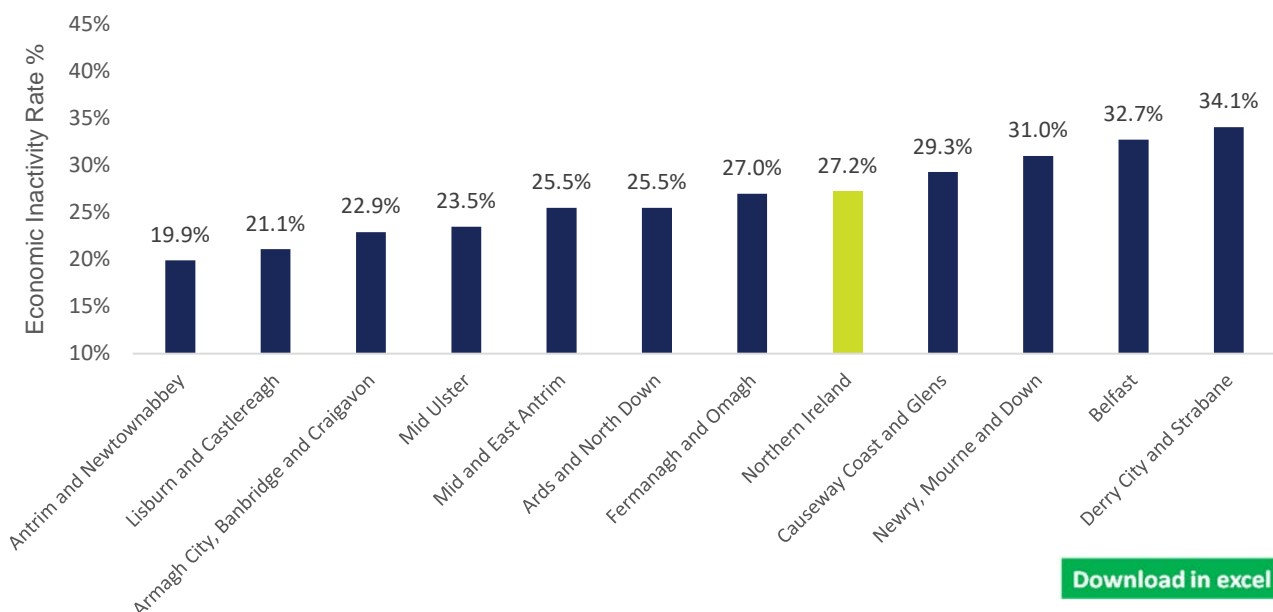
Outcome 3 – We have a more equal society.

Outcome 6 – We have more people working in better jobs.

ODP Indicator 17 (Economic inactivity rate (16-64) excluding students) was previously reported in the [Annual Summary](#). Further information is available on the TEO – [Outcomes Delivery Plan 2018/19](#) website.

- In 2018, the economic inactivity rates by council varied from 34.1% in Derry City and Strabane to 19.9% in Antrim and Newtownabbey, a gap of 14.2pps.
- Fermanagh and Omagh was the council with an economic inactivity rate (27.0%) closest to the NI total of 27.2%, with a difference of 0.2pps. Figure 2 shows the economic inactivity rates for each council area in NI.

Figure 2: Economic inactivity rate (16-64) by council area, 2018



[Download in excel](#)

Further information is available on the [NISRA - Economic and Labour Market Statistics website](#)

5 Qualification levels

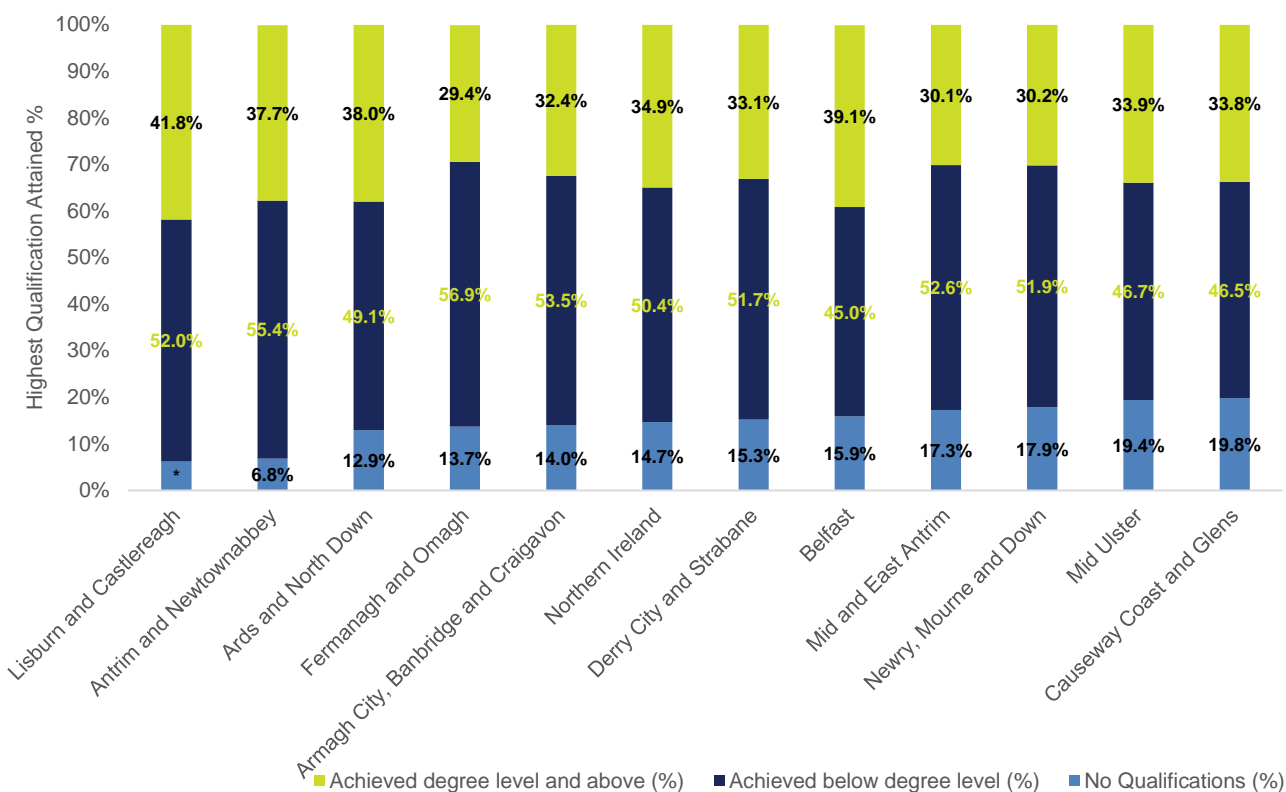
first published June 2019

Qualification level: Qualification analysis is split into degree level and above, below degree level, and no qualifications. Degree level and above includes foundation degrees, higher degrees, teaching and nursing degrees. Below degree level includes A-Levels, AS Levels, GCSE's, BTEC National, Entry level certificates and diplomas and international Baccalaureate.

5.1 Northern Ireland

- More than half (50.4%) of people aged 16-64 in NI had qualifications up to degree level. Over a third (34.9%) had degree level and above, and fewer than one in six (14.7%) had no qualifications.
- In 2018, Causeway Coast and Glens and Mid Ulster had the highest rates of 16-64 year olds who had no qualifications (19.8% and 19.4% respectively). Fermanagh and Omagh had both the lowest rate of persons aged 16-64 with qualifications above degree level (29.4%) and highest rate of persons qualified to below degree level (56.9%). Figure 3 below shows the qualification levels for each council area in NI.

Figure 3: Highest qualification level attained (16-64) by council area, 2018



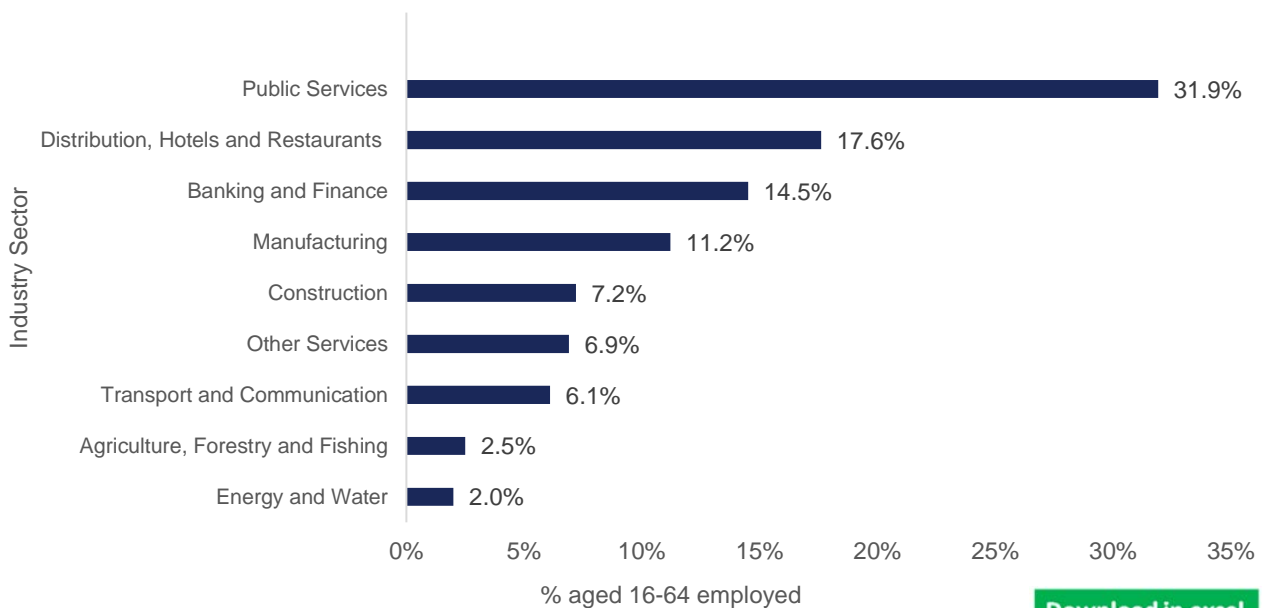
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Industry: The classification of respondents' industry of employment is based on the Standard Industrial Classification 2007 (SIC07), further information on SIC07 classification can be found on the ONS website: [UK SIC 2007](#).

6.1 Northern Ireland

- Public services (which incorporates public administration, health and education) accounted for almost one-third (31.9%) of all persons aged 16-64 in employment in NI in 2018.
- Along with the Public services, Distribution, hotels and restaurants (17.6%), and Banking and finance (14.5%) made up the top 3 industry sectors in NI, accounting for almost two-thirds (64.0%) and equivalent to 459,000 people.
- The Manufacturing sector and Construction sector combined accounted for almost one-fifth (18.4%) of persons employed while the Energy and water sector and Agriculture, forestry and fishing sector made up the smallest sectors with 2.0% and 2.5% respectively. Figure 4 below shows the percentage employed by industry sector in NI in 2018.

Figure 4: Employed (16-64) by industry sector, 2018



[Download in excel](#)

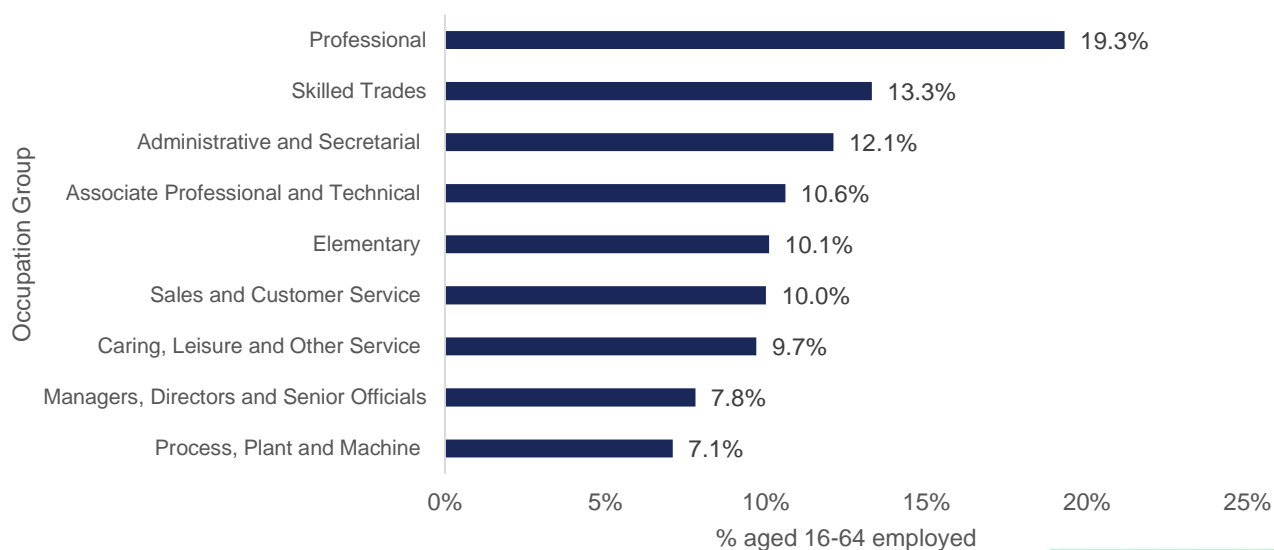
- Public services was the largest employment sector for all council areas. The proportion of those employed in Public services ranged from a high of almost two-fifths (38.1%) in Causeway Coast and Glens to 23.9% in Newry Mourne and Down.
- Mid Ulster had the largest proportion of people working in both the Distribution, hotels and restaurants (21.2%) and Manufacturing (20.0%) sectors.

Occupation: The classification of respondents' occupations is based on the SOC2010 (Standard Occupational Classification) codes adopted since January – March 2011, further information on SOC2010 classification can be found on the ONS website: [SOC 2010](#).

7.1 Northern Ireland

- The largest occupational group for NI in 2018 was the Professional occupations group with 19.3% of the total employed in this group. Professional occupations comprise science, research, engineering & technology professionals, health professionals, teaching and educational professionals and business media and public service professionals.
- Along with Professional occupations, Skilled trades occupations (13.3%) and Administrative and secretarial occupations (12.1%) comprise the top 3 occupational groups in Northern Ireland. Figure 5 below shows the percentage employed by occupation group in NI in 2018.

Figure 5: Employed (16-64) by occupation group, 2018



[Download in excel](#)

- Professional occupations formed a higher proportion in Lisburn and Castlereagh (26.1%) and Belfast (24.0%), compared to Mid and East Antrim (15.0%) and Newry Mourne and Down (15.9%).
- The Skilled trade occupations had a higher proportion in Fermanagh and Omagh (22.3%) and Newry Mourne and Down (18.4%) compared to Belfast (9.4%). The smallest occupational group in Northern Ireland was Process, Plant and Machine Operatives, accounting for only 7.1% of the total.

8 Further information

Background

The LFS Annual Report is derived from four consecutive quarters of the LFS. A boost to the NI LFS sample began implementation across the five waves in 2018, increasing the sample size from 3,000 in quarter 1 to 4,000 in quarter 4. The boost will be fully rolled out by quarter 2 (April-June) in 2019. Individuals in each wave are interviewed in five successive quarters, such that in any quarter one wave will be receiving their first interview, one wave their second, and so on, with one receiving their fifth and final interview. The annual dataset is created by selecting the relevant cases from each quarter and combining them to create a dataset of unique cases. Selecting all wave one and five interviews allows the maximum number of respondents over a one-year period to be included whilst avoiding double counting. The resulting achieved sample in 2018 was approximately 8,000 individuals.

The LFS collects information from a sample of the population living in households. To provide estimates for the entire population (excluding those living in communal establishments) the data must be grossed. This is achieved by creating grossing factors often referred to as weights, that can be applied to each sampled individual so that grossed results match published population data in terms of age distribution, sex and region of residence. Mid-year population estimates and projections are used to ensure that the LFS is grossed to the most up to date population data available.

Precision of estimates

Reported change is calculated using unrounded data and is presented to 1 decimal place. When a change is less than 0.05pps, it is rounded to 0.0pps and the data is reported as unchanged.

The LFS is a sample survey and, as such, estimates obtained from it are subject to sampling variability. If we drew many samples each would give a different result. The ranges shown for the LFS data in the tables LFSAR18 1.1 to 1.3 represent 95% confidence intervals i.e. we would expect that in 95% of samples the range would contain the true value.

Thresholds

Thresholds are used to determine whether LFS data are suitably robust for publication. The threshold used for the annual LFS datasets is 6,000. As such, data below 6,000 are suppressed. In general, the smaller the estimate, the greater the margin of error as a proportion of the estimate.

LFS revisions

LFS microdata are routinely revised to incorporate the latest population estimates. The latest annual revisions were published in March 2019 and affect annual datasets from 2012 to 2017. In addition the 2018 annual dataset reflects a boost to the LFS sample that began roll-out in January 2018. More information on the revision policy concerning labour market statistics can be found through the following link: [Labour market statistics revisions policy](#)

Definitions

Employment: people aged 16 or over who did paid work (as an employee or self-employed), those who had a job that they were temporarily away from; those on government-supported training and employment programmes, and those doing unpaid family work.

Employment rate: The employment rate is the percentage of working age (16-64) people who are employed.

Full-time/part-time: The classification of employees, self-employed, those on government work-related training programmes and unpaid workers in their main job as full-time or part-time is on the basis of self-assessment. People on government-supported training and employment programmes who are at college in the survey reference week are classified as part-time.

Unemployment: is defined following the internationally agreed definition by the ILO. Unemployed people are without a job, who were able to start work in the two weeks following their LFS interview and had actively sought work in the four weeks prior to interview or were waiting to start a job they had already obtained.

Unemployment rate: The unemployment rate is the percentage of economically active people (16+) who are unemployed.

Economically inactive: people who are neither in employment nor unemployed as determined by the ILO measure. This group includes all those who are looking after a home, are long term sick or disabled, are students or retired.

Economic inactivity rate: The economic inactivity rate is the percentage of people of working age who are economically inactive.

Economic inactivity excluding students: People who are neither in employment, nor unemployed on the ILO measure, nor economically inactive due to being a student. This group includes all those who are looking after a home, long term sick or disabled and retired. The rate is calculated as all people of working age who are economically inactive, except those who are economically inactive due to being a student, as a proportion of all people of working age.

Industry: The classification of respondents' industry of employment is based on the Standard Industrial Classification 2007 (SIC07), further information on SIC07 classification can be found on the ONS website: [UK SIC 2007](#)

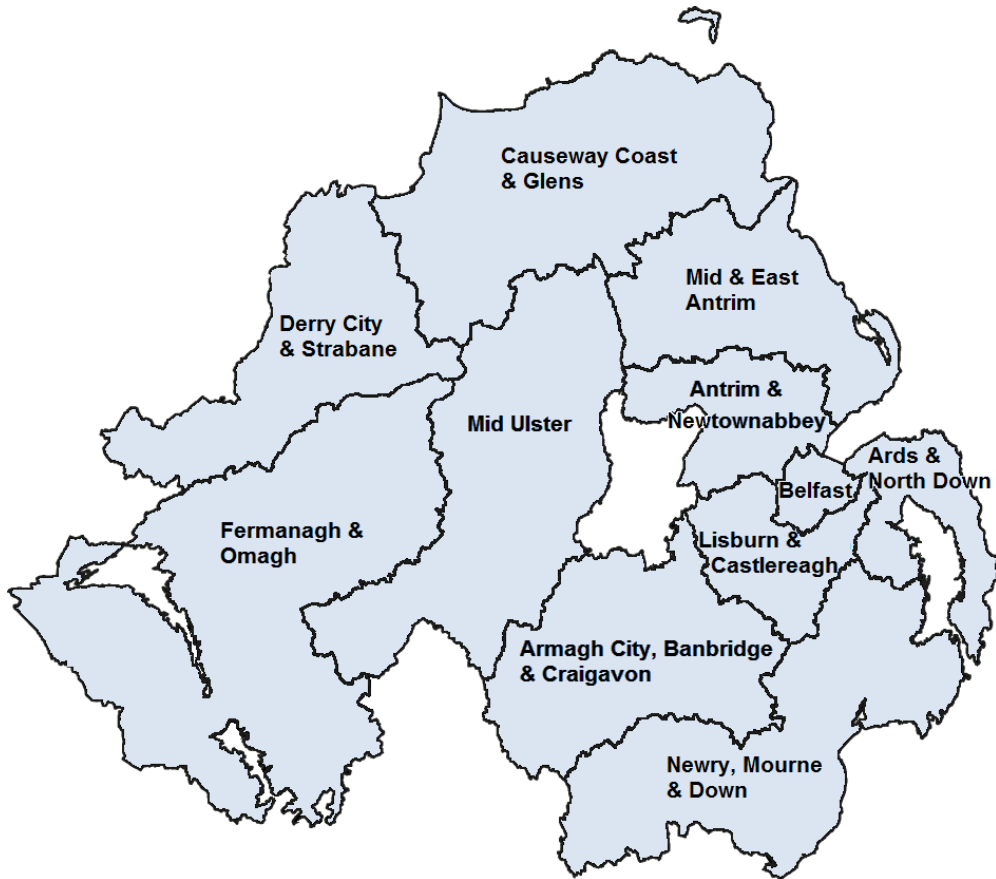
Occupation: The classification of respondents' occupations is based on the SOC2010 (Standard Occupational Classification) codes adopted since January – March 2011, further information on SOC2010 classification can be found on the ONS website: [SOC 2010](#)

Deprivation quintile: The Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure is the official measure of spatial deprivation for NI and comprises seven domains of deprivation as follows: income, employment, health, education, proximity to services, living environment and crime. Further information on deprivation can be found [here](#)

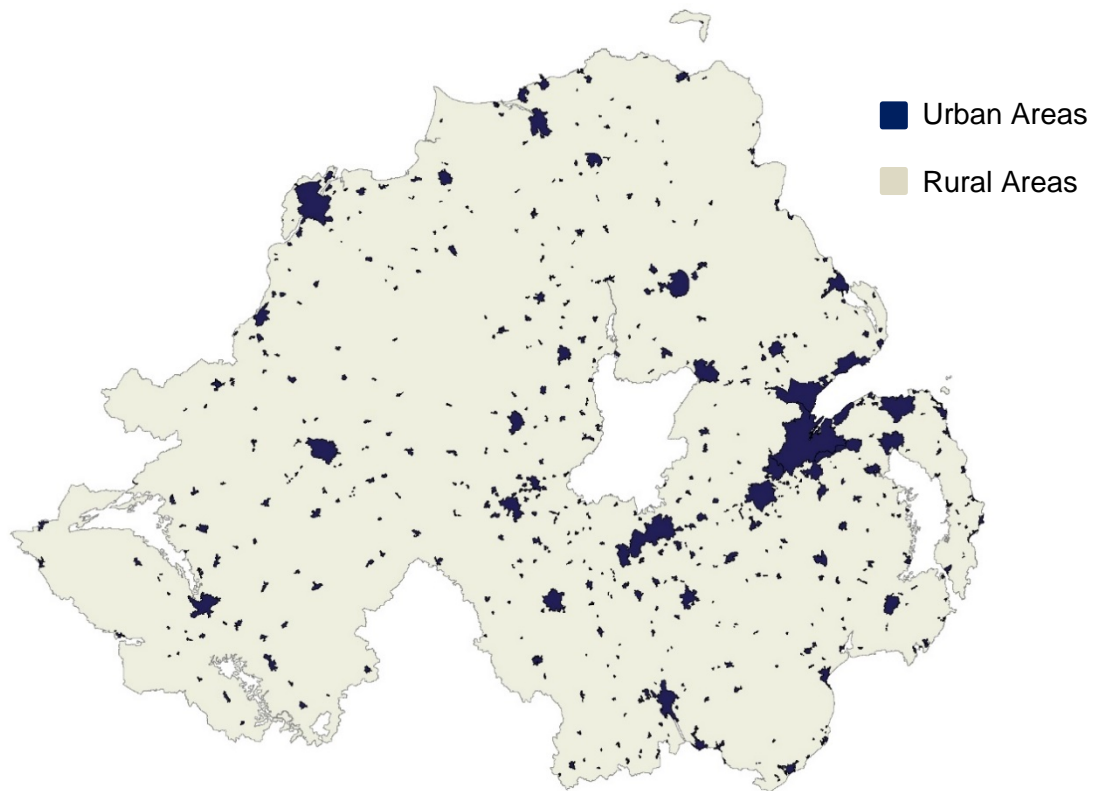
Local areas

As far as possible the tables for the annual dataset (see Annex for list) are broken down by council areas (LGD2014). However as some of the figures at this level fall below the 6,000 (grossed) suppression threshold not all data are available at this level. This report also contains analysis for urban and rural areas (2015), for deprivation quintiles according to the 2017 multiple deprivation measure, and for parliamentary constituencies (2008). The following maps show the boundaries for the 2014 LGDs, 2015 urban and rural settlements, 2017 deprivation deciles and 2008 parliamentary constituencies.

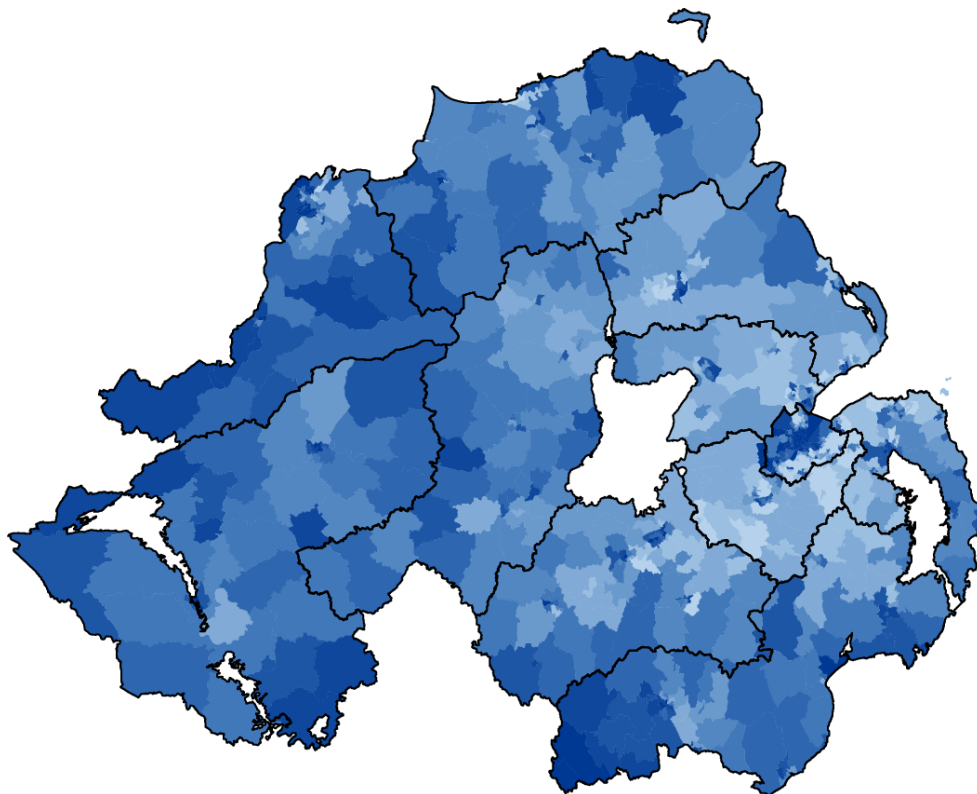
Map 1: Northern Ireland council (LGD2014) areas



Map 2: Northern Ireland Urban Rural Settlements

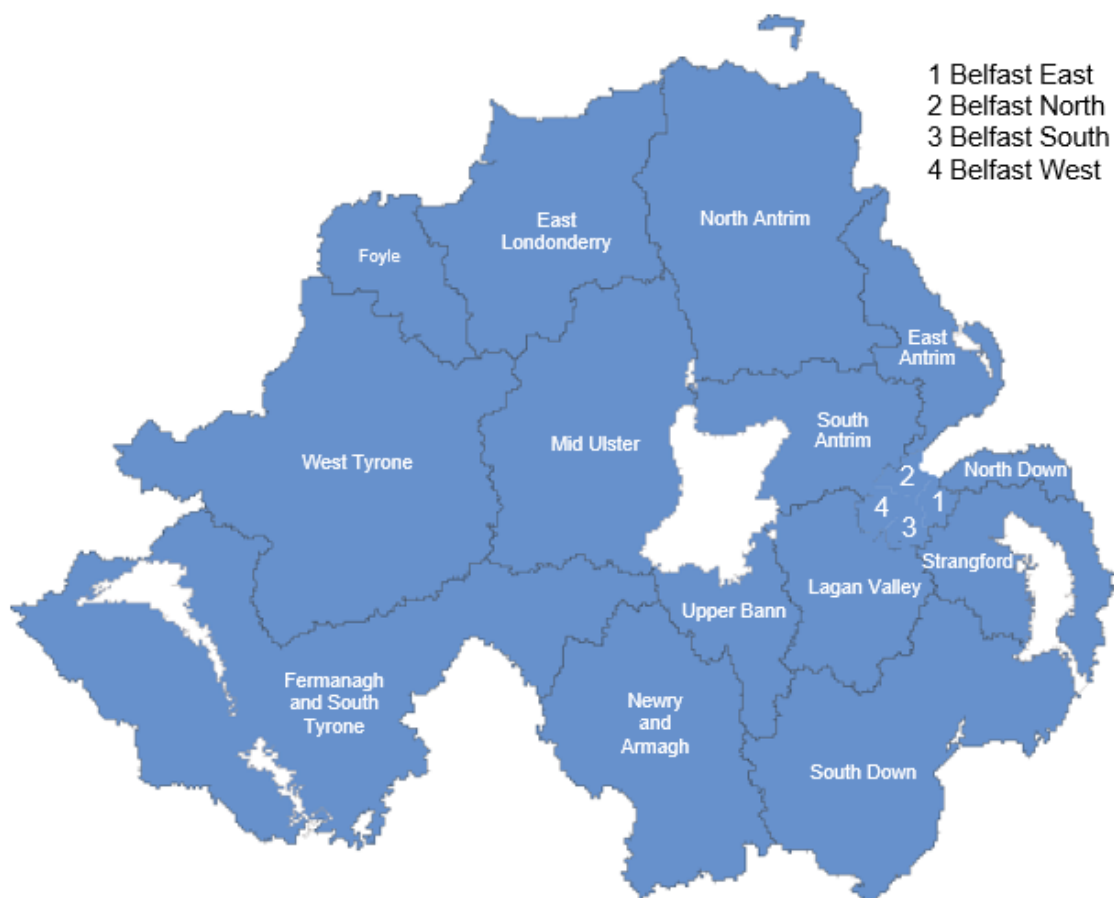


Map 3: Northern Ireland Deprivation Deciles³



³ Darkest areas are in the highest deprivation decile (1 – most deprived) and lightest areas are in the lowest deprivation decile (10 – least deprived) Deciles are grouped up into quintiles according to the following: Deciles 1 and 2 = Quintile 1, Deciles 3 and 4 = Quintile 2, Deciles 5 and 6 = Quintile 3, Deciles 7 and 8 = Quintile 4, Deciles 9 and 10 = Quintile 5

Map 4: Northern Ireland Parliamentary Constituencies



Further Information

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Publication now available on NISRA web site:

<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/labour-market-and-social-welfare/labour-force-survey>

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- [ODP 17.5 Economic inactivity rate excluding students \(16-64\) by parliamentary constituency](#)

ODP32

- [ODP 32.1 Employment rate of 16-64 year olds by deprivation quintile, Northern Ireland](#)
- [ODP 32.2 Employment rate of 16-64 year olds by deprivation quintile and council area](#)
- [ODP 32.3 Employment rate of 16-64 year olds by deprivation quintile and urban/rural area](#)
- [ODP 32.4 Employment rate of 16-64 year olds by deprivation quintile and parliamentary constituency](#)

ODP33

- [ODP 33.1 % people working part time who would like to work more hours, 16+, Northern Ireland](#)
- [ODP 33.2 % people working part time who would like to work more hours, 16+, by urban/rural area](#)
- [ODP 33.3 % people working part time who would like to work more hours, 16+, by deprivation quintile](#)

ODP34

- [ODP 34.1 Employment rate by council area, Northern Ireland](#)
- [ODP 34.2 Employment rate by council area and urban/rural area](#)
- [ODP 34.3 Employment rate by council area and deprivation quintile](#)