Labour Market Statistics – Newsletter

June 2022

Welcome to the Labour Market Statistics Newsletter

This is the second Labour Market Statistics Newsletter and follows feedback from attendees at Labour Market Statistics User Group meetings. Users told us that they would like more regular updates on developments in Labour Market Statistics. We are using this newsletter to provide an overview of things you may have missed since the last user group meeting in September 2021 and to outline our plans up to the next user group meeting, scheduled for 29th September 2022.

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Labour Market Statistics User Group

This year's user group meeting will take place on Thursday 29th September 2022.

We are considering the best format for this year's meeting following the success of the online events held in 2020 and 2021. Details will be advertised at the end of the summer via email, on the NISRA website and NISRA's twitter account.

Reweighting Labour Force Survey data

Headline indicators of unemployment, employment, and economic inactivity are derived from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) in a process where survey returns are weighted to population totals to provide estimates at NI and UK level.

Before the pandemic, the LFS was typically reweighted every two years to take account of updated population estimates and projections. However, due to the impacts of the pandemic on survey mode (switch from face-to-face to telephone), falling response rates, and additional administrative data from HMRC the LFS was reweighted in

- October 2020 - LFS Revision Note – October 2020

- July 2021 - LFS Revision note

- And in June 2022 - LFS Revision Note – June 2022

Ahead of the reweighted estimates being released, ONS published the article Impact of reweighting on Labour Force Survey key indicators: 2022 on 23rd May 2022 which included indicative estimates of the impact and a reweighting timeline.

The overall impact of the reweighting on Northern Ireland estimates has been to decrease the employment rate and to increase both the unemployment and economic inactivity rates. An overview of the impact of reweighting on the NI estimates of unemployment, employment, and economic inactivity is available on the NISRA website.

ONS Labour Market Statistics User Engagement

Over the last few years, the ONS has been developing a transformed version of the LFS and since March 2020, a version of this online survey has been running "live" while being further developed. First regular outputs are expected from the new transformed survey in September

2023.

The new version is designed following three core principles to best transform the survey operation and meet user needs:

- Putting quality first

- A respondent centric approach

- A responsive, data-driven design

Although the survey is designed to give the same aggregate statistics, the finer details of the survey will change.

ONS understand this may have an impact on some users of these statistics therefore, as part of this process, they are engaging with users of LFS statistics and asking for their opinions to ensure the transformed LFS will meet their needs going forward. This User Engagement survey is currently live and will close to responses on 29th June 2022. We would encourage all users of these statistics to complete the survey to ensure their views are considered.

Labour Market Report (LMR) Project

Behind the scenes we have been working to improve the production of the Labour Market Report (LMR) and associated tables, using reproducible analytical pipelines (RAP). This development has involved reviewing the format and content of the report and accompanying tables, with the aim of making the LMR more user friendly and interactive, increasing automation in the production, and enhancing accessibility of the report and tables.

This project is now reaching its conclusion. The most noticeable difference is that the monthly report will now be released as an HTML document instead of as a PDF, and will include some interactive features. This will increase the usability and accessibility of the report.

The first planned release date for the new HTML format and tables will be the August LMR (on 17th August 2022). We welcome feedback on this development.

Women in Northern Ireland

The Women in NI report was released on International Women's Day, 8th March 2022. The scope of this iteration of the publication was expanded and included data and analysis of work quality, childcare provision and earnings as well as the traditional labour market measures previously included.

Following feedback from the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) during Code of Practice for Statistics Compliance Check in February 2022 some improvements were made to the report. Confidence intervals were included alongside all of the estimates within the supplementary tables accompanying the release to give users more information on the quality and sampling variability of the estimates. More information on confidence intervals within the Labour Force Survey can be found in the LFS – Estimating and reporting uncertainty paper.

Business Register and Employment Survey 2021

The Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) 2021 surveyed 34,000 businesses, an increase on the 13,000 selected for BRES 2020. The larger sample size allows the data to be

disaggregated to small geographical areas and to 5-digit SIC level. The 2021 results will be published on 30th June 2022 and will be available on the NISRA website.

In response to user feedback, the BRES 21 output will include Northern Ireland employment figures, where employment is the sum of *employee jobs* in a business and the number of *working proprietors*.

Employees are defined as anyone aged 16 years or over who is paid directly from the payroll, in return for carrying out a full-time or part-time job or being on a training scheme. It excludes voluntary workers, self-employed and working owners who are not paid via PAYE.

Working Proprietors are NOT paid through the business PAYE and include sole traders, sole proprietors, partners including Limited Liability Partnerships (LLPs).

Employment figures will be published at Headline industry and Local Government District area level. Further developments to improve the quality of the working proprietor's data will continue in coming years to allow disaggregation to lower levels of geography and industry.

Additional Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) 2021 outputs

During the 2021 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), all returns were dual coded using the 2010 Standard Occupation Classification (SOC10) and the newly introduced 2020 Standard Occupation Classification (SOC20). The initial publication and detailed tables were produced based on the SOC10 specification, however, an additional suite of ASHE tables, based on the new SOC 2020 coding specification, has now been developed and is ready to be published. These tables will be available on the NISRA website from 27th June.

Users should note that the original data published in October 2021 is still the headline measure, and should be used until such times as the 2022 publication is released containing revised 2021 data.

Employee and Earnings Study (EES) 2011

In November 2011 NISRA made the Earnings and Employees Study (EES) 2011 dataset available to accredited researchers to apply for use in research in the public interest.

This dataset links together data from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) 2011 with data from the Census of Population and Housing 2011, and Capital Value data from the Land and Property Services.

Access to the EES dataset is limited to researchers and research teams with accredited researcher status under the Digital Economy Act (DEA) and subject to approval by each of the data providers and the UK Statistics Authority Research Accreditation Panel.

Further information on how to apply for approval is available from the NISRA website. Or get in touch with the Research Support Unit rsu@nisra.gov.uk.

Work quality

The latest publication was released in March 2022, and can be accessed from the Work Quality area on the NISRA website. This was the third work quality release since December 2020, containing seven indicators sourced from the Labour Force Survey (LFS), alongside an earnings indicator from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE).

Three new indicators will be available in 2023, following the addition of new questions to the LFS during 2022:

- Levels of support from immediate manager
- Experiences of bullying and harassment
- Skills required to perform their work duties

Qualifications and Lifelong Learning

The Qualifications in NI 2020 statistical publication was released in October 2021 examining the levels of highest qualifications held by working age adults. The highest qualification methodology can be accessed on the LFS Background Information page. A Lifelong Learning indicator was also included, designed to capture the level of participation in education and training following the completion of formal education.

New qualifications have been added to the LFS questionnaire during 2022 following an extensive review of the education questions, which identified gaps in the questionnaire. The methodology to derive highest qualifications will be kept under review and users updated accordingly.

Furlough Analysis from the Quarterly Employment Survey

HMRC provides the official source of statistics on the uptake of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) - 'furloughed employments' from the CJRS.

Throughout 2020 and 2021, the Quarterly Employment Survey (QES) also collected data on furloughed jobs. These were used to quality assure the employee jobs statistics produced during the pandemic.

A report on the furlough information collected through the QES was published alongside this month's employee jobs statistics. The report compares the estimates obtained from both sources and presents findings on the reasons behind differences.

Publication dates and times

Due to a change in ONS release and briefing practices in light of COVID-19, from April 2020 NISRA market sensitive statistics are released at 7am and not the standard release time of 9.30am. NISRA requested the temporary change in time from the Office for Statistics Regulation. Correspondence between NISRA and OSR is available on the OSR website.

The OSR carried out a consultation on the release time of official statistics and the findings from this consultation were published on 24th March 2022. ONS subsequently published a response to the proposed change to 9.30am release practice on 25th March 2022.

Following the OSR consultation, the Code of Practice for Statistics was updated and edition 2.1 came into effect on 5th May 2022. The May 2022 change enabled alternative release times (ARTs) to be used, when granted by the Director General for Regulation. Release time exemptions that were granted before May 2022 have been converted to alternative release times, which includes the 7am release time for the NI Labour Market Report.

Publications since Labour Market User Group Meeting in September 2021

[- Disability Employment Gap in Northern Ireland 2020](#)

[- Qualifications in Northern Ireland 2020](#)

[- Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2021](#)

[- Labour Force Survey Annual tables 2020](#)

[- Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET): 2020](#)

[- Work Quality in Northern Ireland – July 2020 to June 2021](#)

[- Women in Northern Ireland 2020/2021](#)

[- Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings Pensions 2021](#)

[- Quarterly Employment Survey – (most recent June 2022)](#)

[- Labour Market Report (monthly – most recent – June 2022)](#)

Upcoming publications

- Business Register and Employment Survey – 30 June 2022

- Labour Force Survey Annual Report – September 2022

Thanks for reading

Please let us know if you have found this newsletter useful, and if there is anything else you would like to see in future editions. Please email us at economicstats@nisra.gov.uk