

# RESEARCH PRESS NOTICE – Mental health status of the Northern Ireland population in employment: occupations and industries



9:30am Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2021

## Mental health status of the Northern Ireland population in employment

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) has today published research examining the mental health status of the Northern Ireland population in employment, in particular, looking at differences in prevalence between occupations and industries.

Of the Northern Ireland population in employment, 8.6% had received prescription drugs related to anxiety and depression in each year 2010 to 2012. This is nearly three times the proportion self-reporting an emotional, psychological or mental health condition according to the 2011 Census (3.1%).

Personal service occupations had the highest proportion prescribed antidepressants, hypnotics or anxiolytics (12.9%); the lowest proportion (5.5%) was found in skilled trades occupations.

The highest proportions self-reporting an emotional, psychological or mental health condition (4.3%) were found in elementary, sales and customer services occupations; the lowest proportion (2.0%) was found in professional occupations.

Significant variations in the prevalence of poor mental health between different occupations and/or industries persist after accounting for socio-economic factors, such as age, sex and marital status. Sales and customer services occupations were 55% more likely to have self-reported an emotional, psychological or mental health condition, and 29% more likely to be prescribed antidepressants, hypnotics or anxiolytics, compared to professional occupations (reference category).

The research has been funded by the [Economic & Social Research Council](#) via [ADR UK](#) (Administrative Data Research UK) and taken forward by NISRA, who together with the Administrative Data Research Centre Northern Ireland (comprising the Queen's University Belfast and Ulster University), form the ADR Northern Ireland (ADR NI).

**NISRA**

**September 2021**

## NOTES TO EDITORS

1. The research report 'Mental health status of the Northern Ireland population in employment: occupations and industries' can be found at: <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/mental-health-status-northern-ireland-population-employment>
2. All media queries to Department of Finance Press Office should be addressed to [dof.pressoffice@finance-ni.gov.uk](mailto:dof.pressoffice@finance-ni.gov.uk). The Executive Information Service operates an out-of-hours service **for media enquiries only** between 1800hrs and 0800hrs Monday to Friday and at weekends and public holidays. The duty press officer can be contacted on 028 9037 8110.
3. The analysis was based on a 28% sample of the Northern Ireland population linked to the 2011 Census of Population – the [Northern Ireland Longitudinal Study](#) (NILS) – that provided self-reported mental health condition and socio-economic characteristics. The BSO Enhanced Prescribing Database was used to identify those who were prescribed antidepressants, hypnotics or anxiolytics. Prescriptions in each year of a three-year period (2010-2012) were used to capture those being long-term or persistently affected by poor mental health. The final dataset was anonymised prior to handover to the research team, and did not contain identifiable individual level data. Access was only provided from within a controlled 'secure environment' and governed by strict protocols and procedures to ensure data confidentiality.
4. Occupation groups are based on the first digit of the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC2000). For example, personal service occupations include child care and hairdressers, professional occupations include teachers and engineers.
5. ADR UK (Administrative Data Research UK) is a partnership transforming the way researchers access the UK's wealth of public sector data, to enable better informed policy decisions that improve people's lives. ADR UK is made up of three national partnerships (ADR Scotland, ADR Wales, and ADR NI) and the Office for National Statistics (ONS). It is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council which is part of the UK Research and Innovation.
6. ADR NI is a partnership between the Administrative Data Research Centre Northern Ireland (ADRC NI, comprising Queen's University Belfast and Ulster University), and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA). Together they support the acquisition, linking and analysis of administrative data sets, developing cutting-edge research to improve knowledge, policymaking and public service delivery.
7. Further information on the statistics provided in this publication can be obtained from NISRA Customer Services at:

Telephone: +44 (0)300 200 7836

E-mail: [demography@nisra.gov.uk](mailto:demography@nisra.gov.uk)

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