

# Overemployment in Northern Ireland

Labour Force Survey, January - March 2015

Date: June 2015

Geographical Area: Northern Ireland

Theme: Labour Market



Overemployment refers to people who would like to work less. This short topic paper examines the scale of this issue in Northern Ireland.

## Key Points

- Northern Ireland has the second lowest rate of overemployment among the twelve UK Government Regions – 8.0% compared with 9.8% in the UK.
- Those reporting that they are overemployed are more likely to be female.
- Workers older than 45 are more likely to be overemployed.
- Northern Ireland overemployment rate has been consistently below the UK average over the last 10 years.

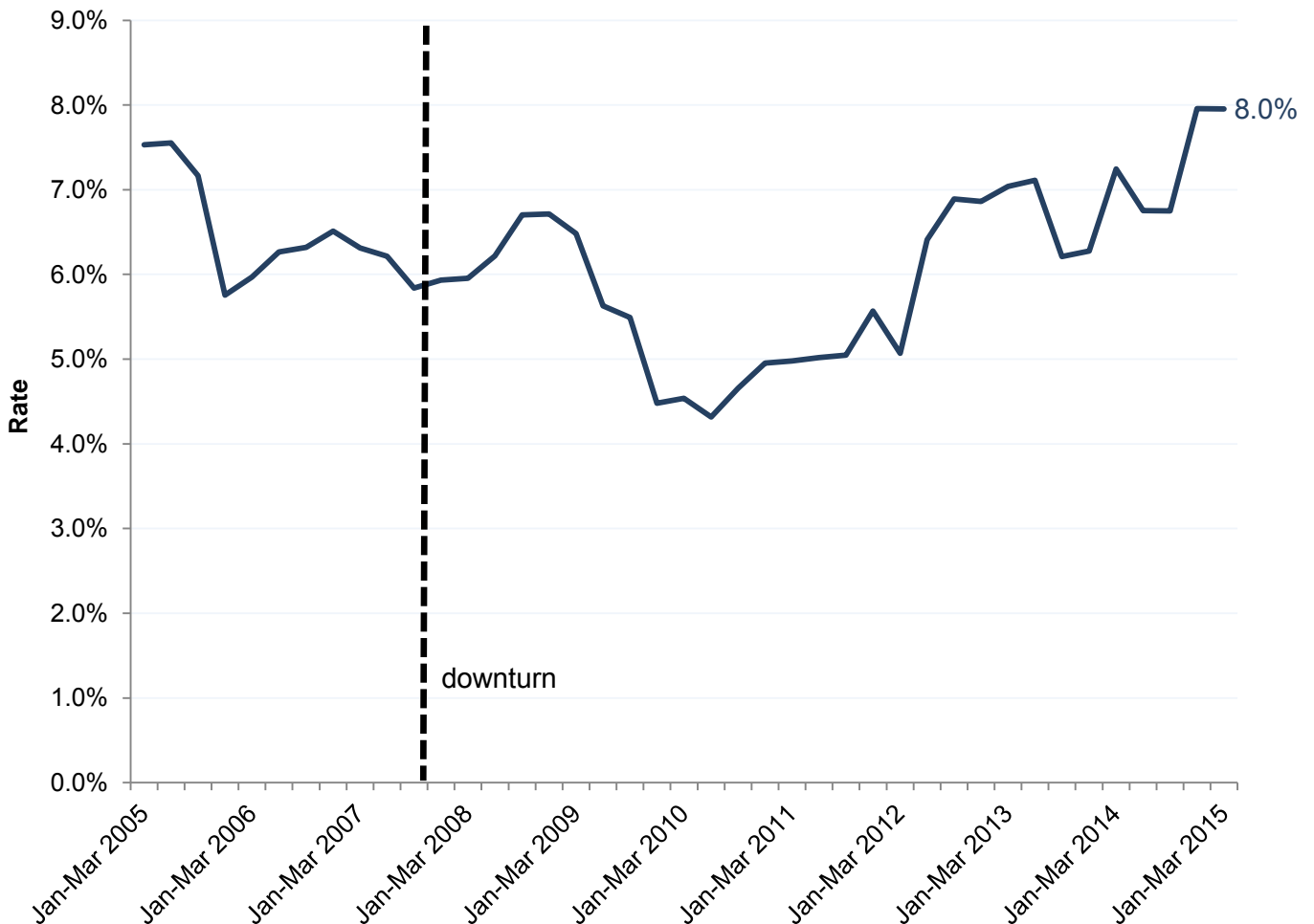
# Overemployment in Northern Ireland

In this topic paper, overemployment refers to people who would like to work less, specifically those who would like to work fewer hours but cannot do so. The International Labour Organisation definition is given in the box below.

**Definition of overemployment:** A person who is in employment who would like to work fewer hours and would accept less pay for shorter hours, either in a different job or in their current job.

It is estimated based on the Labour Force Survey (January – March 2015) that 831,000 people were employed in Northern Ireland. Of these 66,000 were overemployed or 8.0% of workers. The change over time of the proportion of workers who were overemployed is shown in Figure 1 below.

**Figure 1: Overemployment rate in Northern Ireland (2005 to 2015)**

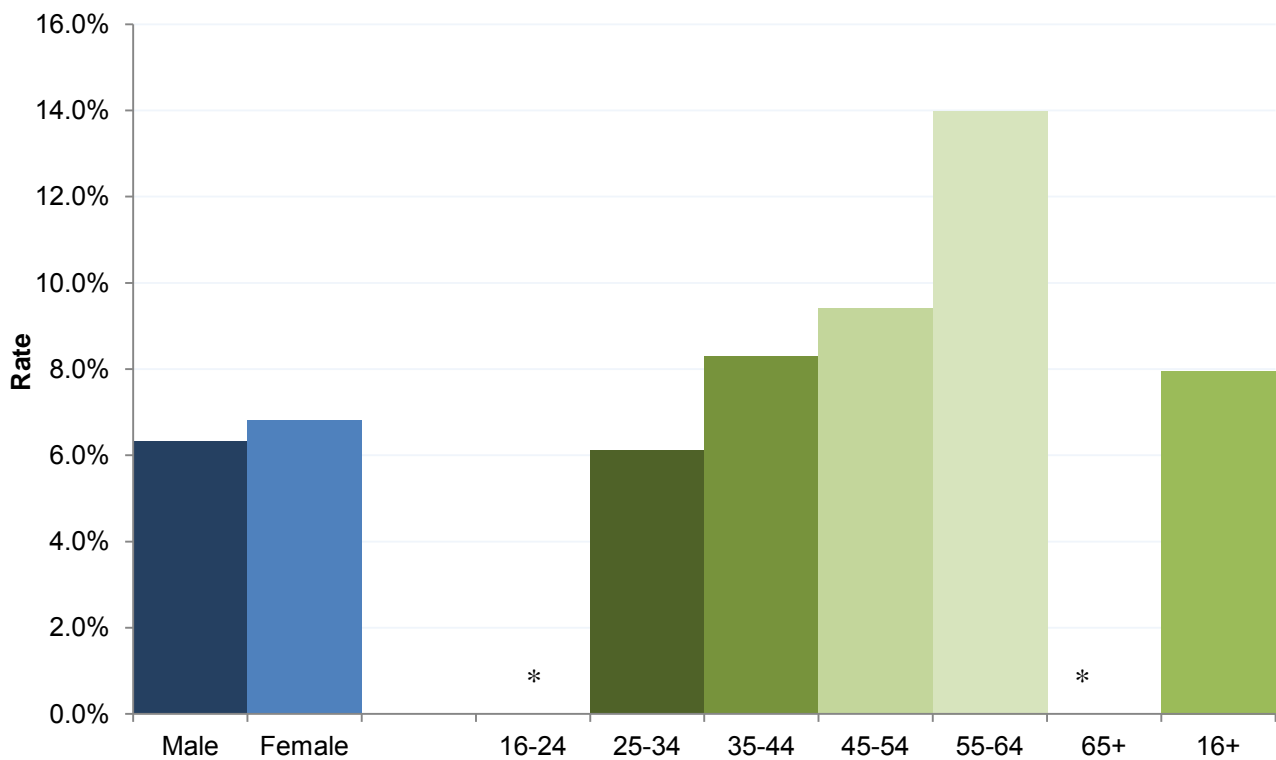


## Characteristics of the overemployed

Looking in more detail at the overemployed indicates that

- females are more likely to want to work less hours than males (9% of female workers are overemployed and 7% of male workers are overemployed)
- workers older than 45 are more likely to be overemployed (9% of 45-54 year olds and 14% of 55-64 year olds are overemployed).

**Figure 2: Overemployment rate by age of the working population**



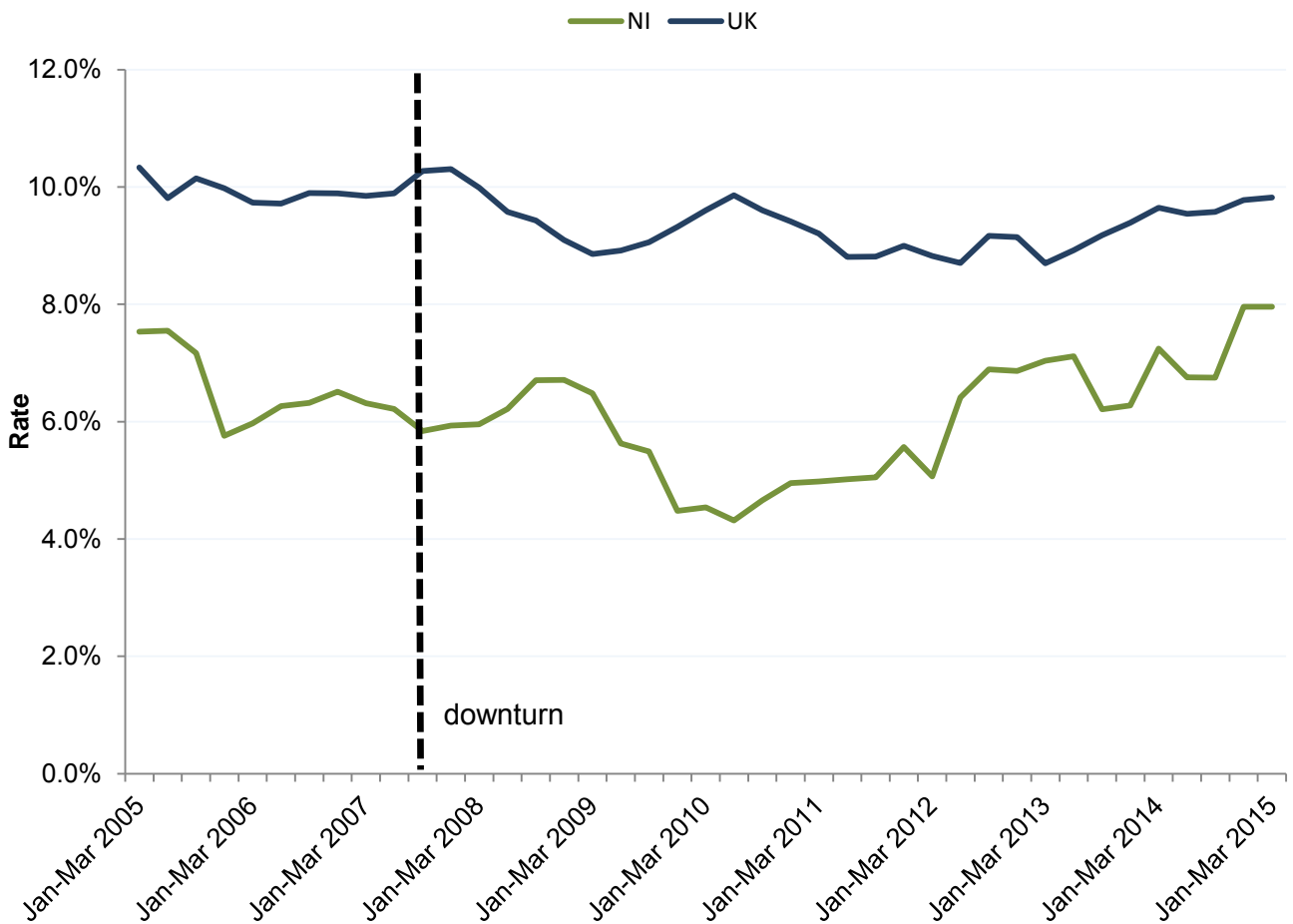
\* LFS sample size is too small to provide a reliable estimate

## Comparison with United Kingdom

Northern Ireland has a lower rate of overemployment than the UK average (see Figure 3). In total 9.8% of workers across the UK are overemployed - there are 3.0 million overemployed workers across the United Kingdom. In Northern Ireland there are 66,000 overemployed workers or around 8.0% of all workers.

Figure 3 also shows that Northern Ireland has had a lower rate of overemployment than the UK over the last decade. The gap between Northern Ireland and the UK rate has ranged from 1.7 to 5.2 percentage points throughout this period.

**Figure 3: Overemployment rate in United Kingdom and Northern Ireland (2005 to 2015)**



**NISRA  
June 2015**

## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) is a voluntary sample survey carried out by interviewing individuals in private households and is the most comprehensive source of information on their circumstances and work. Figures taken from the LFS are subject to sampling error that decreases as the sample size increases. Above estimates are not seasonally adjusted.

### **ILO definition**

Overemployed workers are those people in employment who would like to work fewer hours and would accept less pay for shorter hours, either in a different job or in their current job.

More labour market and economic statistics can be found at:

[www.statistics.detini.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.detini.gov.uk)

You can also contact Economic and Labour Market Statistics as follows:

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