

15<sup>th</sup> December 2020

# Northern Ireland Quarterly Employment Survey

## Reclassification of Registered Housing Associations Impacting Public and Private Sector Series

### 1. Introduction

Following passage of the [Housing \(Amendment\) Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2020 \(opens in a new window\)](#), the Office for National Statistics (ONS) completed an assessment of registered housing associations (RHAs) in Northern Ireland. This assessment concluded that RHAs in Northern Ireland are private, market producers and as such they were reclassified from the public sector to the private sector, with effect from 28<sup>th</sup> August 2020. The reclassification was communicated in a [letter \(PDF, 52KB\)](#) to the Northern Ireland Executive on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2020. This paper summarises the impacts of this reclassification on Quarterly Employment Survey estimates.

### 2. Background to the Quarterly Employment Survey (QES)

QES provides short-term employee jobs estimates for Northern Ireland and is used by the ONS to calculate quarterly workforce jobs estimates for the UK. Each calendar quarter (Q1=Jan-Mar, Q2=Apr-Jun, Q3=Jul-Sep, Q4=Oct-Dec), QES has a sample size of approximately 6,000 businesses and includes all public sector units, all private sector units with 25 or more employees, all private sector units with more than one industry activity and a representative sample of smaller firms. QES results are released in mid March, June, September and December of each year via a bulletin and a suite of tables which can be accessed via the [QES website \(opens in a new window\)](#). Employee job estimates are disaggregated by gender, working pattern, public/private sector, and industrial activity at the two-digit SIC level. Seasonally adjusted figures are available at section level, sector level and for the public and private sector series.

### 3. Impact of reclassification on QES estimates

As a result of the reclassification of RHAs in Northern Ireland, approximately 3,000 employee jobs that were previously classified as 'public sector' in the QES have been reclassified to the 'private' sector from Q3 2020. This change applies from Q3 2020 onwards; employee jobs in RHAs remain classified as public sector in the QES series from Q3 1992 to Q2 2020. The impacts of the reclassification on the public and private series of QES on Q3 2020 can be seen in figures 1 and 2 on the following page.

**Figure 1: QES Public Sector Jobs (unadjusted for seasonality) - Before and After RHA Reclassification**



Figure 1 shows that Northern Ireland public sector jobs usually see a decline in Q3, however the reclassification of employee jobs in registered housing associations to the private sector in August 2020 has resulted in a larger decline than would otherwise have been seen in Q3 2020.

**Figure 2: QES Private Sector Jobs (unadjusted for seasonality) - Before and After RHA Reclassification**

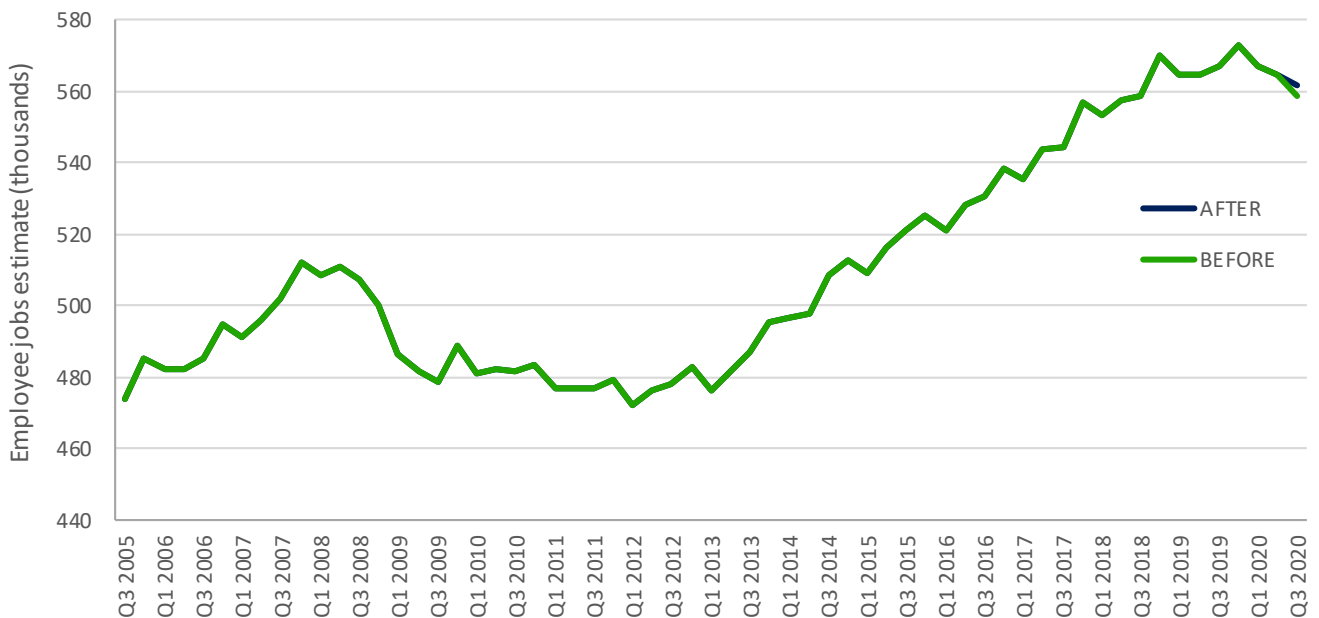


Figure 2 shows that the reclassification of employee jobs in registered housing associations to the private sector in August 2020 has resulted in a smaller quarterly decline in Q3 2020 for the private sector than would otherwise have been seen.

#### **4. Publication of future estimates**

Employee jobs in RHAs in Northern Ireland will be classified as private sector jobs with effect from Q3 2020 onwards. In addition to this note to users, users will be informed of this change in the [QES statistical bulletins \(opens in a new window\)](#) and via social media channels.

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