

# Statistical Press Release Northern Ireland Composite Economic Index:



**October 2017**

**9.30am - Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2017**

The NI Composite Economic Index was published today by the Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency. The key findings are that:

## **Economic output<sup>1</sup> decreased by 1.0% over the quarter**

- The NICEI results indicate that NI economic activity decreased by 1.0% from Quarter 1 (January - March) 2017 to Quarter 2 (April – June) 2017.
- The decrease in the NICEI over the quarter (1.0%) was driven by decreases in the Production<sup>2</sup> sector (a contribution of 0.6 percentage points (pps)), the Services sector (a contribution of 0.5 pps) and the Public sector (a contribution of 0.1 pps). These decreases were partially offset by an increase in the Construction sector (a contribution of 0.4 pps).

## **NI annual average growth rate similar to the UK but below the ROI**

- Although the measures are not produced on a fully equivalent basis, comparisons with the UK show that annual average growth in UK GDP<sup>3</sup> for the four quarters to Quarter 1 2017 was 1.7% compared to the previous four quarters. The NI growth rate was also 1.7% over the same period.
- The growth rate for the ROI for the four quarters to Quarter 2 2017 was 5.9% compared to the previous four quarters.

## **Increase in the annualised rate of growth to Q2 2017**

- When the trend in the index is considered over the last three years there is some evidence that the rate of growth has increased. Annualised average growth over the last four quarters to Quarter 2 2017 compared to the previous four quarters was 1.7%. This was higher than the annual growth over the previous two year period (to Quarter 2 2016), which was 1.1%.

## **Private sector growth over the year**

- The Private sector grew by 0.7% over the year but decreased by 1.2% over the latest quarter (Quarter 1 2017 to Quarter 2 2017). The Public sector jobs index decreased by 0.3% over both the year and the quarter.
- The Private sector also reported average growth of 2.6% for the four quarters to Quarter 2 2017 compared to previous four quarters. However, the Public sector (employee jobs) index reported a fall of 1.2% over the same period.

## **Comments**

- Growth in the UK economy was slightly ahead of NI over the quarter and the year, with NI experiencing a 1.0% reduction in economic activity over the quarter and a 0.5% increase over the year. However both NI and the UK experienced similar growth rates over the last 2 years

<sup>1</sup> The NICEI is an experimental quarterly measure of the performance of the NI economy based on combining official private sector output statistics with public sector jobs weighted using Regional Accounts GVA to provide a proxy measure of total economic output.

<sup>2</sup> The Production sector had the largest contribution to the quarterly decrease. The quarterly and annual decline in production output was driven by a substantial decline in the Food, Beverages and Tobacco sub sector (19.6% fall over the quarter) as reported in the [IOP Q2 2017 publication](#).

<sup>3</sup> [ONS Quarterly National Accounts](#), Quarter 2 (April to June) 2017 (Figures calculated using the chained volume index of GDP at market prices)

(1.7%). This was an improvement on the NI growth rate in the two years to Q2 2016 (1.1%). NI's Private sector performed positively over the year (increasing by 0.7%), but fell 1.2% over the quarter.

- Despite this positive performance over the medium/longer term the NICEI is currently 6.1% below the maximum value recorded in Quarter 4 2006. In Quarter 2 2017, UK GDP was estimated to have been 9.3% higher than its pre-economic downturn peak of Quarter 1 2008. The latest NICEI results continue to show that the UK has had a shorter downturn with a faster recovery than in NI.

#### Notes to editors:

1. The Northern Ireland Composite Economic Index (NICEI) is an experimental quarterly measure of the performance of the Northern Ireland (NI) economy based on available official statistics.
2. The NICEI output measures relate to the second quarter (April-June) of 2017. These estimates are based on surveys of businesses and estimates of change are subject to sampling error. Figures for a quarter may be revised if more complete information subsequently becomes available.
3. This is the third quarter of Northern Ireland (NI) economic output results following the EU referendum on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2016. The post-referendum picture is still emerging and will continue to do so over the coming quarters and years. It is not possible to separate out the specific impact of the referendum in this quarter.
4. For media enquiries, please contact DfE Press Office on 028 9052 9604. Outside office hours, please contact the Duty Press Officer via pager number 07623 974 383 and your call will be returned.
5. This report will be of interest to Ministers, policy makers, public bodies, the business community, banks, economic commentators, academics and the general public with an interest in the local economy.
6. The detailed statistical bulletin is available at: [Northern Ireland Composite Economic Index](#)
7. Further information and tables from each of the data sources are available on the [NISRA – Economic and Labour Market Statistics Website](#).
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9. Feedback is welcomed and should be addressed to:

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