

# Northern Ireland Quarterly Index of Production

Quarter 3 (July – September) 2020

Theme: Economy

Frequency: Quarterly

Geographical Area: Northern Ireland

Date: 17 December 2020

## Introduction

The quarterly Index of Production (IOP) provides a timely indicator of growth in the output of the production industries in Northern Ireland. IOP indices, along with other published quarterly data and unpublished agricultural output data, are used to generate the [Northern Ireland Composite Economic Index \(NICEI\) \(opens in a new window\)](#). NICEI provides a proxy measure of total economic output in the NI economy on a quarterly basis.

## Key Points

Output estimates are calculated from the IOP aspect of the Quarterly Business Survey (QBS). The IOP has a sample size of approximately 1,100, covering all production businesses with 40 or more employees and a representative sample of smaller businesses. All estimates are compared to the revised Quarter 2 estimates.

- The NI IOP increased by 16.2% over the quarter (July - September) and decreased by 3.6% over the year. This follows respective decreases of 14.1% and 19.8% over the quarter and the year to Quarter 2 2020.
- The UK IOP reported an increase over the quarter (14.3%) and a decrease over the year (6.6%). This follows respective decreases of 16.4% and 18.7% over the quarter and over the year to Quarter 2 2020.
- The quarterly increase in production output of 16.2% has been driven by increases in all four of the main sectors: Manufacturing (18.0%); Water supply, sewerage and waste management (Inc. recycling) (7.1%); Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply (5.5%) and Mining and quarrying (50.0%).
- The annual decrease in NI production output of 3.6% was driven by decreases in three of the four main sectors: Manufacturing (2.3%); Water supply, sewerage and waste management (Inc. recycling) (16.9%); Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply (4.1%) and offset, in part, by an increase in Mining and quarrying (15.3%).
- The quarterly increase to Quarter 3 2020 of 16.2% is the largest quarterly change in the history of the NI IOP. This follows a decrease of 14.1% in Quarter 2020, which at the time had been the largest change seen in the NI IOP. Quarter 2 2020 was the lowest point in the NI IOP since the series began.

Published December 2020

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## NATIONAL STATISTICS STATUS

National Statistics status means that our statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value, and it is our responsibility to maintain compliance with these standards.



These statistics were designated as National Statistics on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2011 following a full [Index of Production assessment \(opens in a new window\)](#) against the UK [Code of Practice for statistics \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Since the assessment by the UK Statistics Authority, we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics, and have made the following improvements:

- Removed pre-release access to enhance trustworthiness and also brought the publication date forward as a result;
- Reduced [business burden \(1.13MB\) \(opens in a new window\)](#) by offering the option of online data returns.

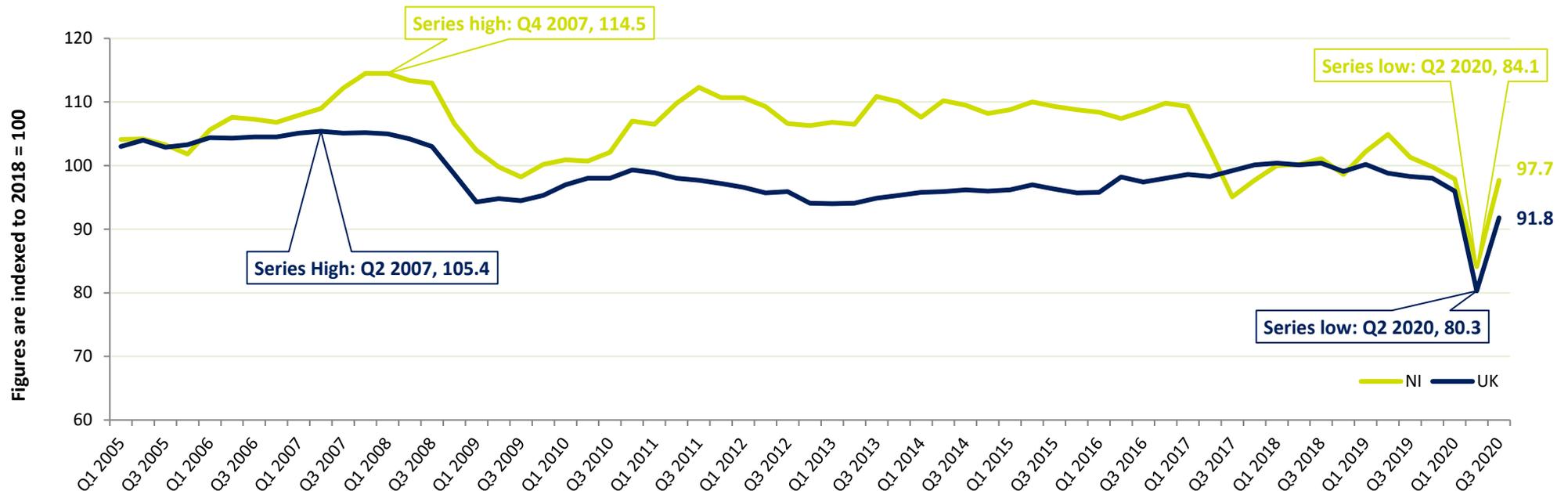
# 1 Summary of Index of Production

## Change in IOP

The seasonally adjusted estimate for the NI IOP for Quarter 3 2020 showed:

- an increase of 16.2% over the quarter from the Quarter 2 2020 revised estimate;
- a decrease of 3.6% over the year from the Quarter 3 2019 revised estimate;
- a decrease of 6.8% when the most recent four quarters are compared to the previous four quarters.

Figure 1.1 IOP NI & UK (Q1 2005 – Q3 2020)



[Download in Excel \(651KB\) \(opens in a new window\)](#)

## Commentary

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and subsequent measures taken to reduce the transmission of the virus impacted on the economy in 2020. June 2020 saw the reopening of non-essential retail and other businesses in NI which was part of the [five-stage plan for easing the COVID-19 lockdown in Northern Ireland \(2.70MB\) \(opens in a new window\)](#), published by the Executive. Throughout Quarter 3 2020 there were a number of localised restrictions which impacted on the ability of businesses to operate.

Output in the NI Production sector increased in real terms by 16.2% over the third quarter of 2020. The UK Production sector has reported an increase of 14.3% over the same period. There are decreases over the year in both NI (3.6%) and UK (6.6%).

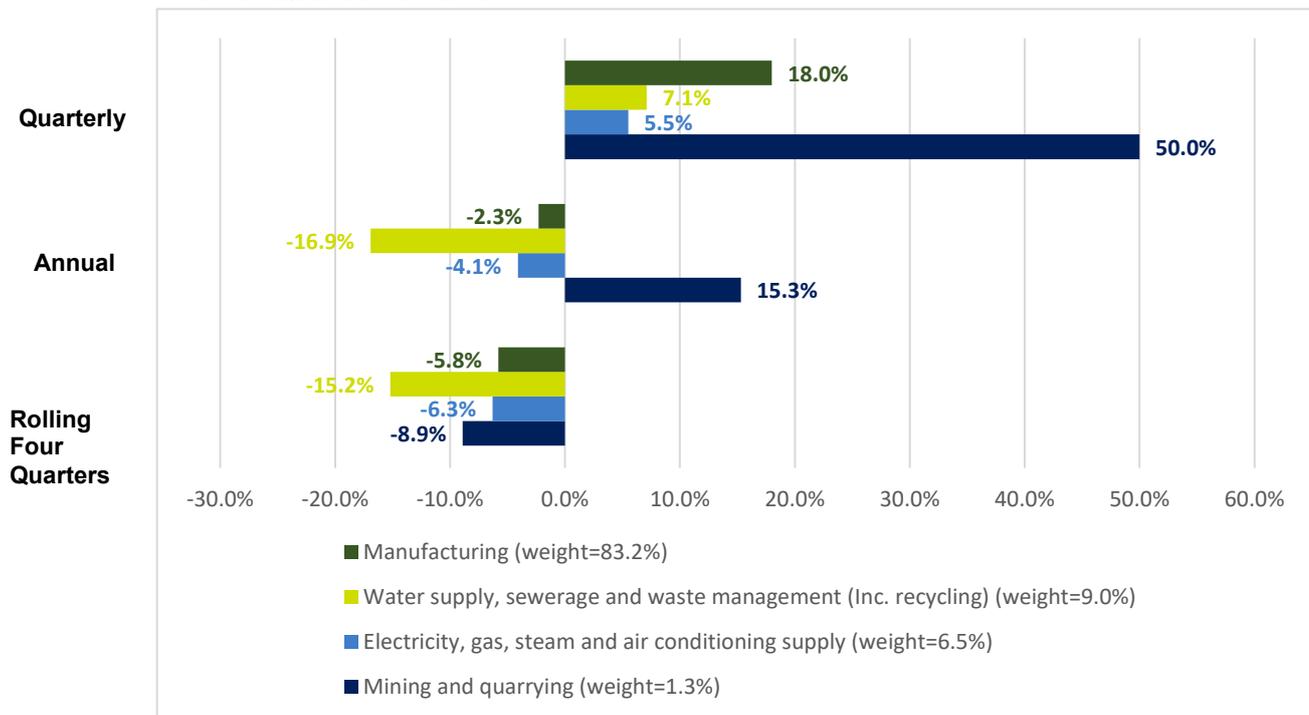
NI output is 16.2% above the series low (Quarter 2 2020). NI output is 14.7% lower than its series high (Quarter 4 2007) and 13.0% less than its ten year high (Quarter 3 2011).

Comparing the seasonally adjusted NI IOP from Quarter 2 2020 to Quarter 3 2020 all four of the main sectors showed increases, with the largest increase of 50.0% reported in the Mining and quarrying sector, followed by an 18.0% increase in the Manufacturing sector.

Comparing the seasonally adjusted NI IOP from Quarter 3 2019 to Quarter 3 2020 three of the four main sectors showed decreases, with the largest decrease of 16.9% reported in the Water supply, sewerage and waste management (Inc. recycling) sector. Only the Mining and quarrying sector reported an increase (15.3%).

Comparing the seasonally adjusted NI IOP for Quarter 4 2019 to Quarter 3 2020 with the Quarter 4 2018 to Quarter 3 2019; all four of the main sectors reported a decrease with the largest decrease of 15.2% reported in the Water supply, sewerage and waste management (Inc. recycling) sector.

**Figure 1.2 Quarterly, annual and rolling four quarters changes in IOP at sector level Quarter 3 2020<sup>1</sup>**



<sup>1</sup> For further information on weights see Regional GVA information on page 19

## Context

The IOP is an important short-term measure of change in the output of the production sector of the economy. The contents of this report will be of interest to government policymakers, Members of the Legislative Assembly, the business community, economic commentators, academics and members of the general public with an interest in the NI economy. A [summary of recent uses \(opens in a new window\)](#) is available on the NISRA website.

The Department for the Economy (DfE) [Economic Commentary \(Summer 2020\) \(opens in a new window\)](#) provides an overview of the NI economy, setting it in context with the UK and Republic of Ireland.

The most up-to-date official statistics on the economy and labour market are available on the [Economic Overview section \(opens in a new window\)](#) of the [Economic and Labour Market Statistics \(ELMS\) section of the NISRA website \(opens in a new window\)](#).

The IOP is published on a Standard Industrial Classification 2007 (SIC07) basis. IOP data prior to Quarter 2 2011 were collected on a SIC03 basis and have been converted to approximate the SIC07 coverage.

The background notes (Section 4) provide information on the methodology used to produce the statistics, as well as information on the quality and accuracy of the data. This bulletin contains results for the production sector as a whole, for Manufacturing; Water supply, sewerage and waste management (Inc. recycling); Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply and Mining and quarrying sectors. Production sector series are seasonally adjusted (unless otherwise stated) on a 2018=100 basis using X-13 ARIMA SEATS, giving data up to the most recent available quarter (Quarter 3 2020).

Comparative UK data, produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), are presented where these are available. The [latest UK IOP results \(opens in a new window\)](#) can be found on the ONS website.

This publication provides three measures of growth for the index.

1. The quarter-on-quarter change provides the most recent measure of how the sector is changing. It is appropriate to compare consecutive quarters as the indices are seasonally adjusted to remove the effects of changes in output as a result of the time of the year;
2. Comparisons with the same quarter one year ago; and
3. A comparison of the most recent twelve months with the twelve months before. The quarterly comparison over the year provides an additional control on the seasonal effects. The comparison of the rolling annual average is useful for identifying changes in output over a longer time period than the other two approaches.

## **Revisions**

Results are provisional and subject to revision, which can be made for a variety of reasons. The most common include late responses to surveys, estimates being replaced by actual data, revisions to seasonal adjustment factors, methodological changes and changes to business classifications. Volatility also arises when businesses inform NISRA of SIC code changes via business surveys, ONS or HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC). This new information helps to improve the estimates of growth each quarter but also adds volatility to quarterly and annual changes. Only rarely are there avoidable 'errors' such as human or system failures, and such mistakes are made quite clear when they do occur.

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic impacted on the data collection and the validation of business data, which are collected on the Quarterly Business Survey. As a result estimates for Quarter 3 2020 are likely to be subject to higher revisions than normal over the coming quarters.

## 2 Production output by sector

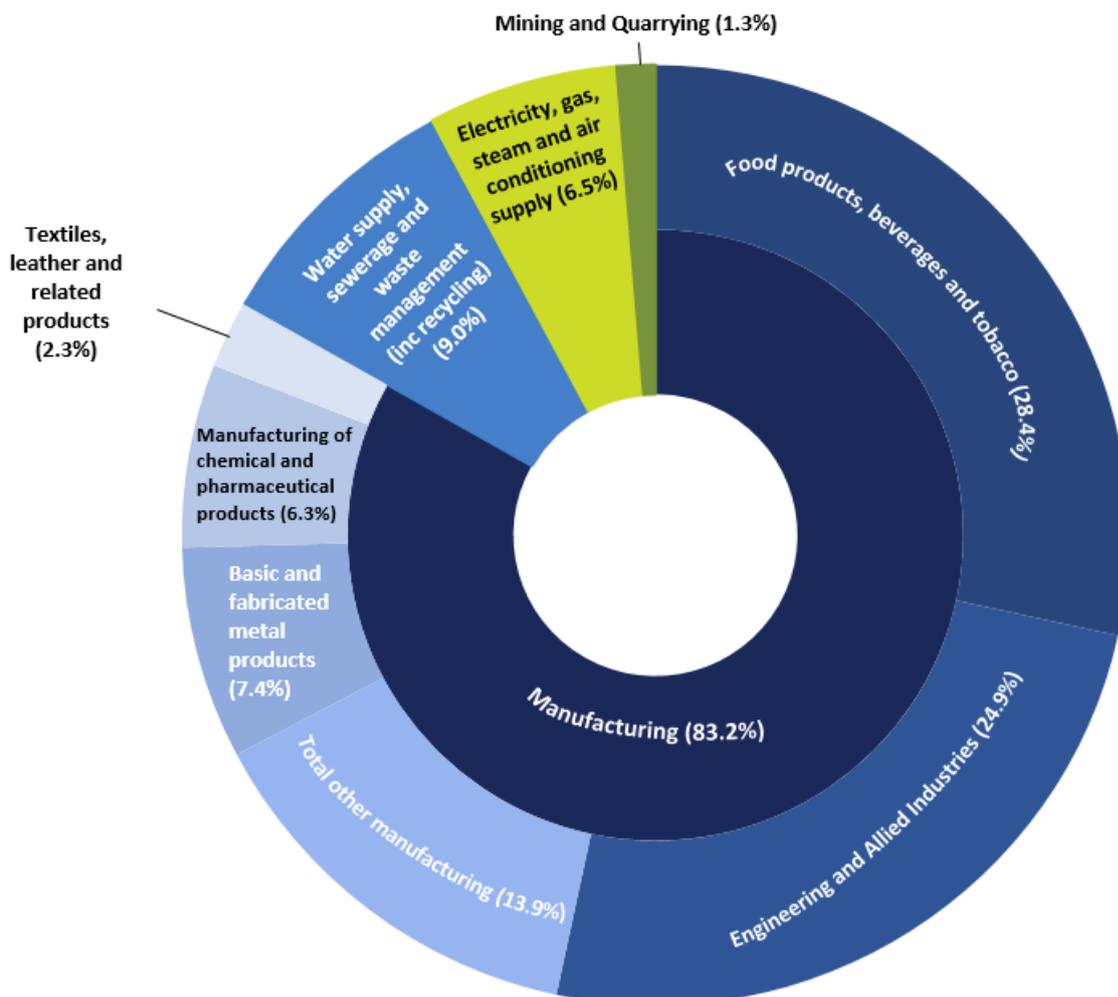
**Output:** Turnover, defined as the value of total sales generated from all NI based activity, excluding VAT. Turnover is rounded to the nearest thousand and is then deflated and seasonally adjusted.

### 2.1 Key findings

- The IOP increased by 16.2% over the quarter; decreased by 3.6% over the year and decreased by 6.8% on a rolling four quarter basis.
- The quarterly increase in production output of 16.2% has been driven by increases in all four of the main sectors: Manufacturing (18.0%); Water supply, sewerage and waste management (Inc. recycling) (7.1%); Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply (5.5%) and Mining and quarrying (50.0%).
- The annual decrease in NI production output of 3.6% was driven by decreases in three of the four main sectors: Manufacturing (2.3%); Water supply, sewerage and waste management (Inc. recycling) (16.9%); Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply (4.1%) and partially offset by an increase in Mining and quarrying (15.3%).

The Production sector is dominated by Manufacturing, which accounts for approximately 83.2% of total production Gross Value Added (GVA) at 2018 prices.

**Figure 2.1 IOP sector split (based on 2018 GVA)**



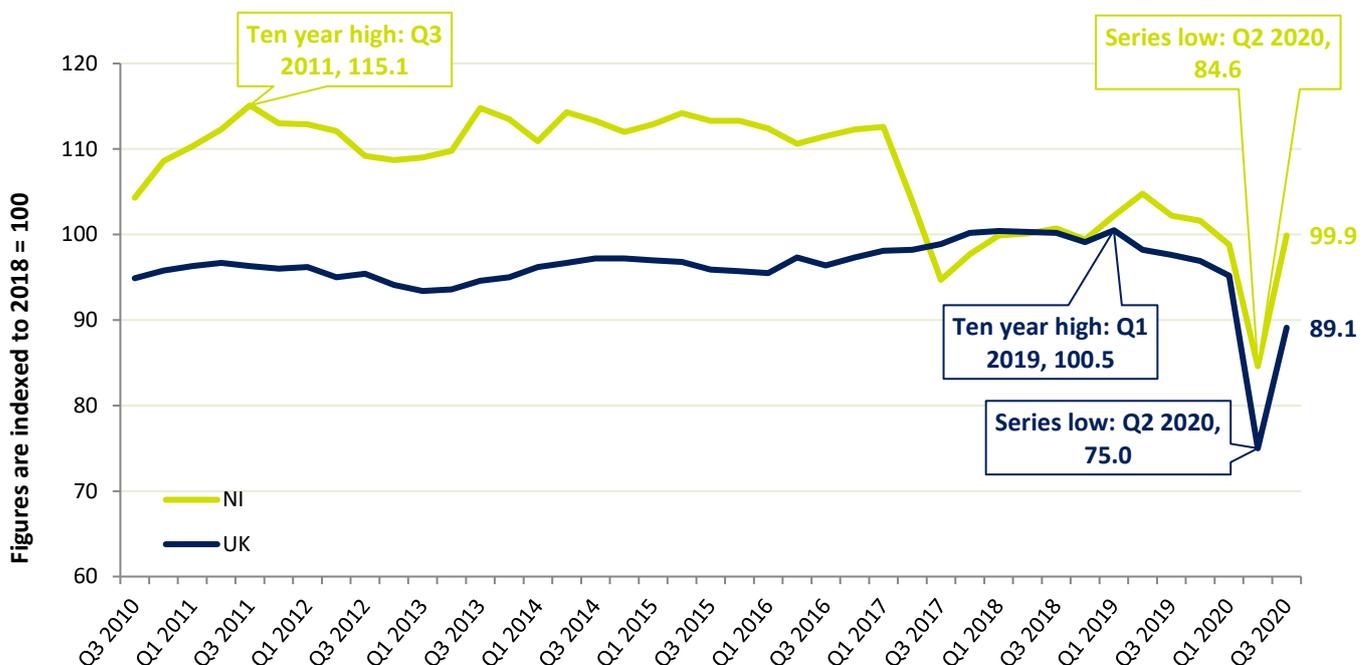
## 2.2 Manufacturing

**Manufacturing sector (SIC07 Section C) - (weight = 83.2% of IOP):** Manufacturing involves the transformation of materials into new products (outputs). It is comprised of six subsectors, as shown in Figure 2.1.

### Key findings

- The NI seasonally adjusted figures show an increase of 18.0% over the quarter, a decrease of 2.3% over the year and a decrease of 5.8% on a rolling four quarters basis.
- This increase compares to the 14.3% quarterly decrease observed in Quarter 2 2020.
- The UK seasonally adjusted figures show an increase of 18.8% over the quarter and decreases of 8.7% over the year and 9.9% on a rolling four quarters basis.
- NI output is 13.2% below its highest point recorded (Quarter 3 2011) over the ten year period.
- NI output is 18.0% above the series low recorded in Quarter 2 2020.
- Within manufacturing, all six of the broad subsectors (as shown in Figure 2.1) have increased on a quarterly basis.

**Figure 2.2 Manufacturing sector, NI & UK (Q3 2010–Q3 2020)**



[Download in Excel \(651KB\) \(opens in a new window\)](#)

The NI index has been outperforming the UK in the Manufacturing sector with the exception of the period between Quarter 3 2017 and Quarter 2 2018.

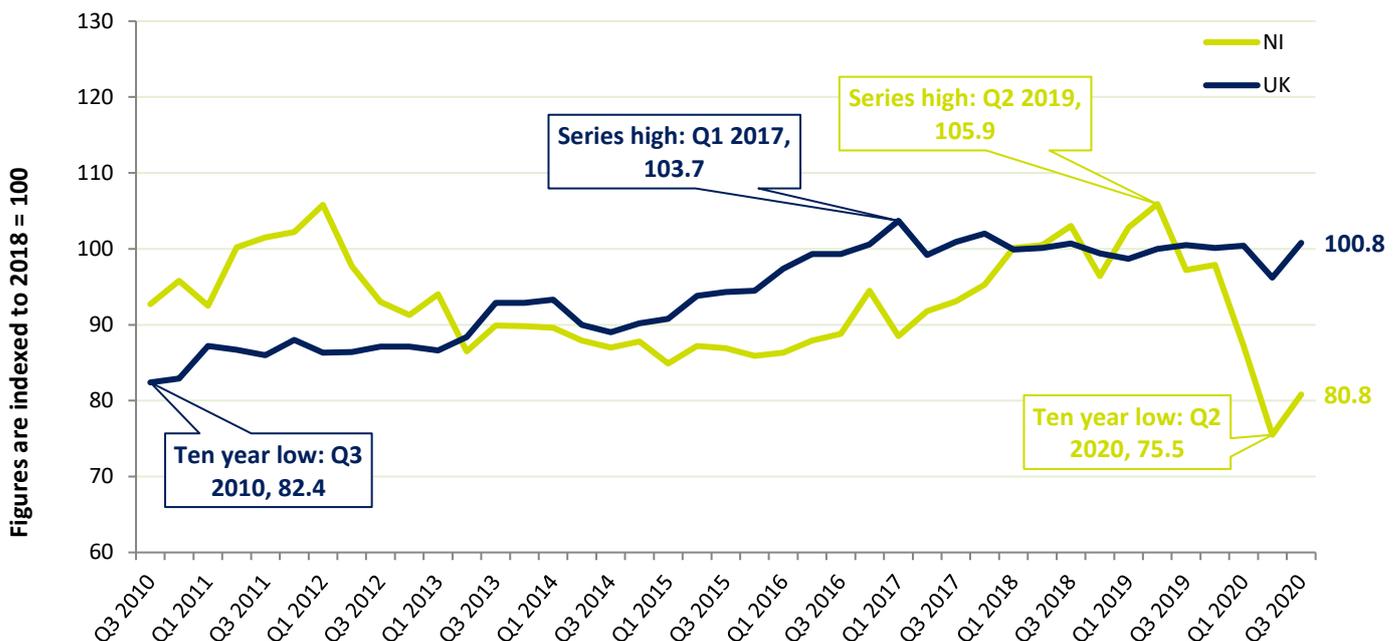
## 2.3 Water supply, sewerage and waste management (Inc recycling)

**Water supply, sewerage, and waste management (Inc. recycling) (SIC07 Section E) (weight = 9.0% of IOP):** This section covers activities related to the management (including collection, treatment and disposal) of various forms of waste, such as solid or non-solid industrial or household waste, as well as contaminated sites. Activities of water supply are also grouped in this section since they are often carried out in connection with, or by units also engaged in, the treatment of sewage.

### Key findings

- The NI seasonally adjusted figures show an increase of 7.1% over the quarter, a decrease of 16.9% over the year and a decrease of 15.2% on a rolling four quarters basis.
- This increase compares to the 13.4% quarterly decrease observed in Quarter 2 2020.
- The UK reports increases of 4.8% over the quarter and 0.3% over the year, with a decrease of 0.3% on a rolling four quarters basis.
- NI output is 7.1% above the ten year low recorded in Quarter 2 2020 and is 14.2% above the series low recorded in Quarter 3 2005.
- The NI estimate is 23.7% below the series high recorded in Quarter 2 2019.

**Figure 2.3 Water supply, sewerage and waste management (Inc. recycling), NI & UK (Q3 2010–Q3 2020)**



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The UK index has been performing better than the NI index in this sector since Quarter 2 2013, with the exception of the periods between Quarter 1 2018 to Quarter 3 2018 and Quarter 1 2019 to Quarter 2 2019. NI output has seen a substantially larger decrease in the early quarters of 2020 than UK output.

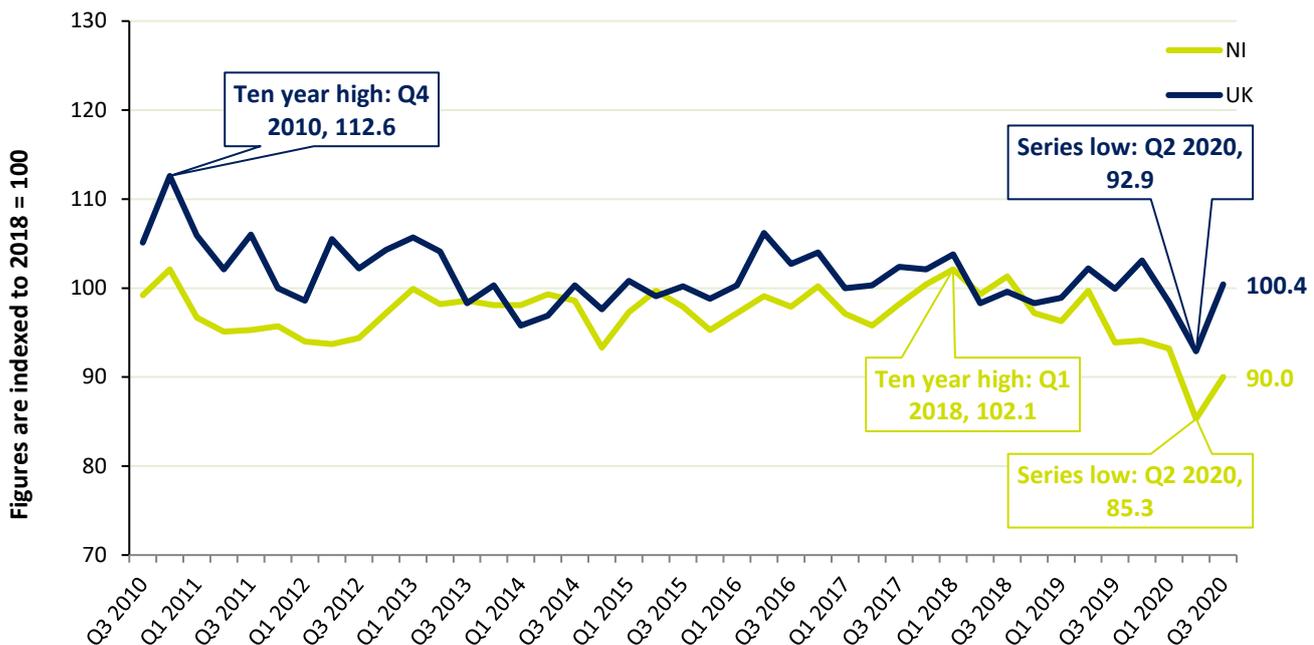
## 2.4 Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply

**Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply (SIC07 Section D) (weight = 6.5% of IOP):** This sector includes the activity of providing electric power, natural gas, steam, hot water and the like through a permanent infrastructure (network) of lines, mains and pipes. Also included is its distribution in industrial parks or residential buildings. Therefore, the operation of electric and gas utilities are included.

### Key findings

- The NI seasonally adjusted figures show an increase of 5.5% over the quarter and decreases of 4.1% over the year and 6.3% on a rolling four quarters basis.
- This increase compares to the 8.4% quarterly decrease observed in Quarter 2 2020.
- The seasonally adjusted figures for the UK show increases of 8.1% over the quarter, 0.5% over the year and a decrease of 1.1% on a rolling four quarters basis.
- The NI estimate is 14.1% below the series high recorded in Quarter 1 2010 and 11.8% below the ten year high recorded in Quarter 1 2018.
- NI output is 5.5% above the series low recorded in Quarter 2 2020.

**Figure 2.4 Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply, NI & UK (Q3 2010–Q3 2020)**



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The NI and UK indices have followed similar trends in the Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply sector throughout the series. The UK index has generally outperformed the NI index in this sector with the exception of a few quarters. NI output has seen a more substantial decrease in early 2020 than the UK index.

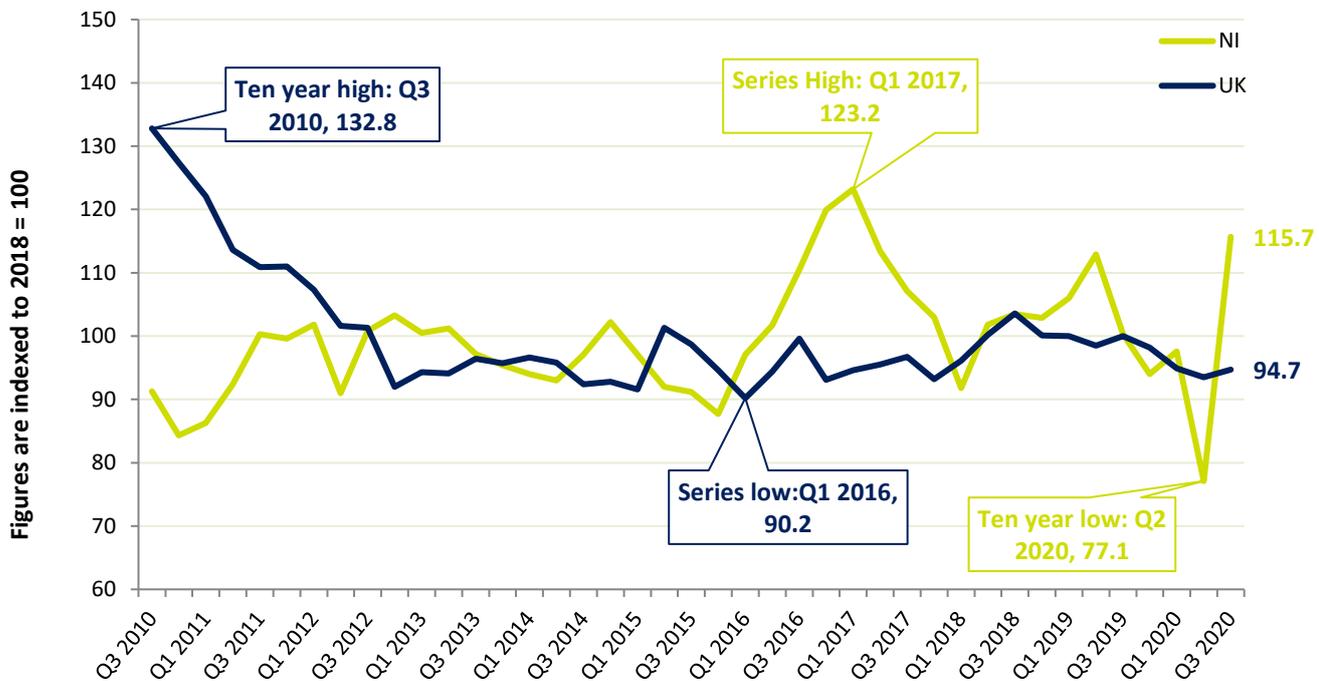
## 2.5 Mining and quarrying

**Mining and quarrying (SIC07 Section B) (weight = 1.3% of IOP):** This section covers the extraction of minerals occurring naturally as solids (coal and ores), liquids (petroleum) or gases (natural gas). Extraction can be achieved by different methods such as underground or surface mining, well operation, seabed mining, etc.

### Key findings

- The NI seasonally adjusted figures show increases of 50.0% over the quarter, 15.3% over the year and a decrease of 8.9% on a rolling four quarters basis.
- This increase compares to the 20.9% quarterly decrease observed in Quarter 2 2020.
- The UK seasonally adjusted figures show an increase of 1.3% over the quarter and decreases of 5.3% over the year and 4.3% over a rolling four quarters basis.
- NI output is 6.1% below the series high (Quarter 1 2017).
- NI output is 50.0% above its ten year low (Quarter 2 2020) and 64.5% above the lowest reported level (Quarter 1 2005) since the series began.

Figure 2.5 Mining and quarrying, NI & UK (Q3 2010–Q3 2020)



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Both the NI and the UK indices have shown volatility in the Mining and Quarrying sector. Since Quarter 1 2016, NI has generally performed better than the UK in this sector with the exception of Quarter 1 2018, Quarter 3 2018, Quarter 4 2019 and Quarter 2 2020.

## 3 Manufacturing subsectors

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### Key findings

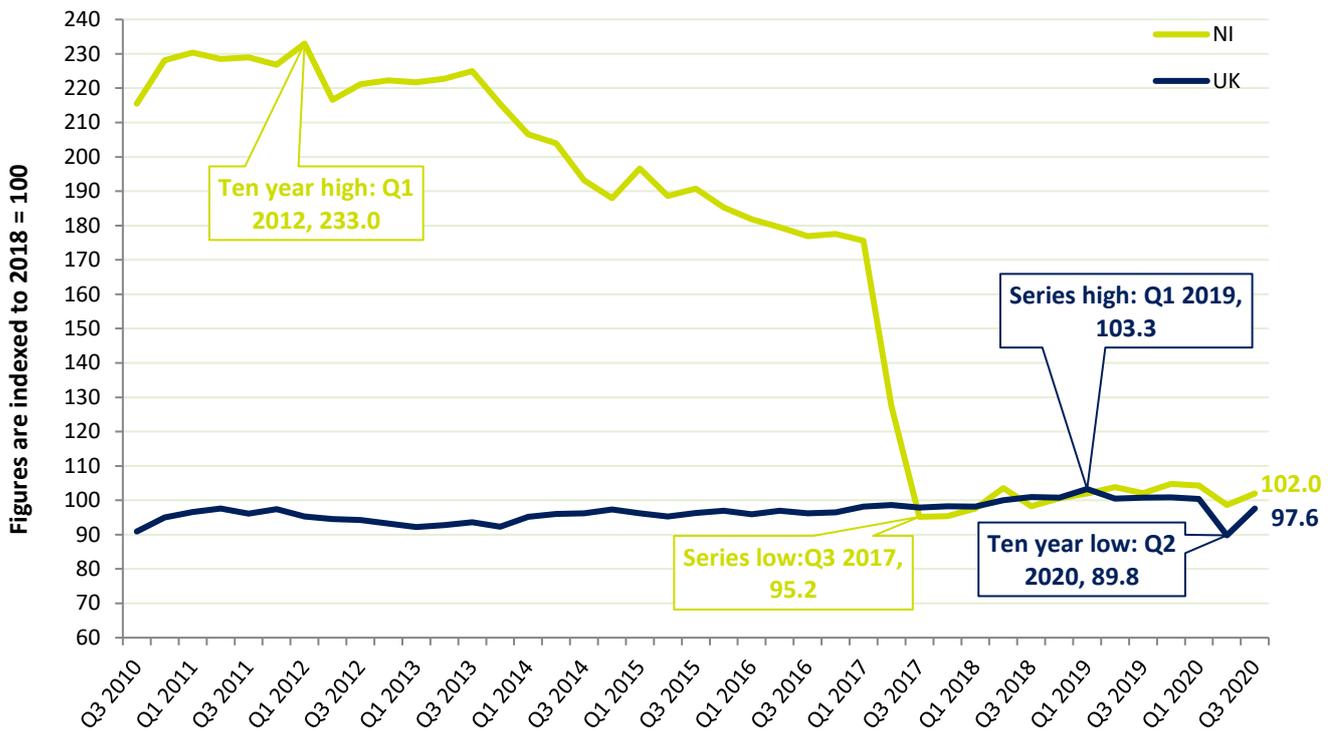
- The quarterly increase in Manufacturing output (18.0%) was driven by increases in all of the six main subsectors: Basic metals and fabricated metal products (41.0%); Manufacture of textiles, leather and related products (40.9%); Engineering and allied industries (28.1%); Total other manufacturing (25.3%); Food products, beverages and tobacco (3.5%) and Manufacture of chemical and pharmaceutical products (3.4%).
- Over the year the decrease in Manufacturing (2.3%) was driven by decreases in four of the six main subsectors: Engineering and allied industries (16.3%); Basic metals and fabricated metal products (13.8%); Total other manufacturing (3.4%) and Food products, beverages and tobacco subsector (0.1%).
- These decreases were somewhat offset by increases in the Manufacture of chemical and pharmaceutical products (42.1%) and Manufacture of textiles, leather and related products (31.5%) subsectors.

### 3.2 Food products, beverages and tobacco (Weight=28.4% of Manufacturing)<sup>2</sup>

#### Key findings

- NI output increased by 3.5% from Quarter 2 2020, decreased by 0.1% over the year and increased by 0.3% on a rolling four quarters basis.
- The UK estimated an increase of 8.7% over the quarter and decreases of 3.2% over the year and 4.1% on a rolling four quarters basis.
- NI output is estimated to be 7.1% above the series low (Quarter 3 2017).
- NI output remains 56.2% below its ten year high (Quarter 1 2012).

Figure 3.2 Food products, beverages and tobacco, NI & UK (Q3 2010–Q3 2020)



[Download in Excel \(651KB\) \(opens in new window\)](#)

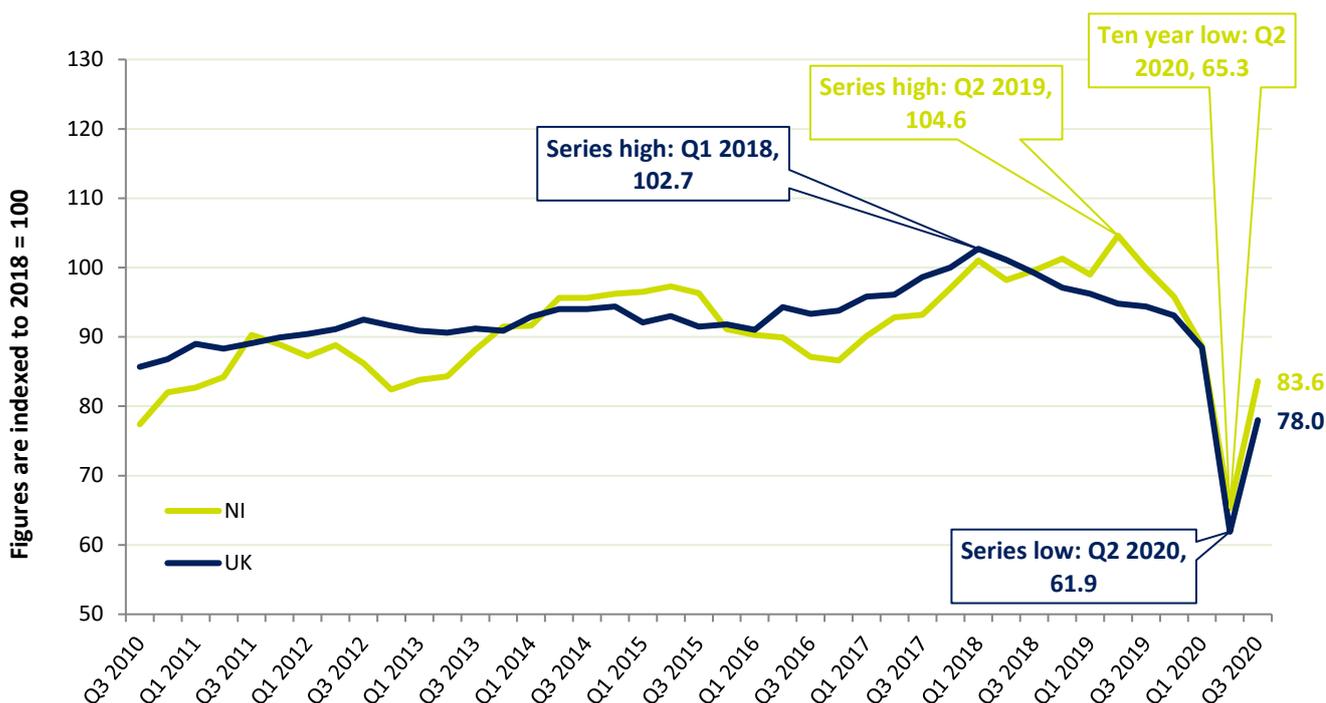
<sup>2</sup> Please note that estimates at subsector level can fluctuate due to sampling variability and also due to businesses moving industrial classification.

### 3.3 Engineering and allied industries (Weight=24.9% of Manufacturing)<sup>3</sup>

#### Key findings

- NI seasonally adjusted figures show an increase over the quarter of 28.1% and decreases over the year (16.3%) and on a rolling four quarters basis (17.6%).
- The UK estimate shows an increase of 26.0% over the quarter and decreases of 17.4% over the year and 15.9% on a rolling four quarters basis.
- NI output is 28.1% above its ten year low (Quarter 2 2020) and is 32.6% above the series low recorded (Quarter 3 2009).
- NI output is 20.0% below its highest point recorded (Quarter 2 2019).

Figure 3.3 Engineering and allied industries NI & UK (Q3 2010–Q3 2020)



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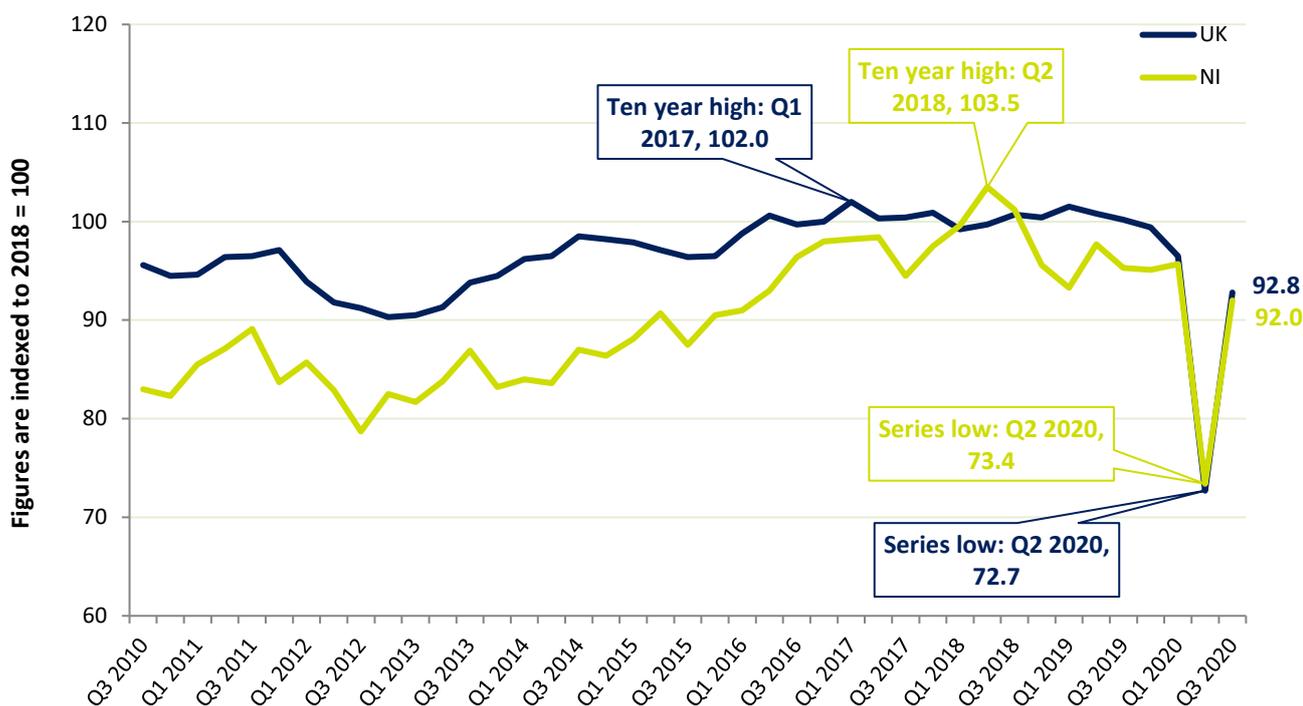
<sup>3</sup> Please note that estimates at subsector level can fluctuate due to sampling variability and also due to businesses moving industrial classification.

### 3.4 Total Other Manufacturing (Weight=13.9% of Manufacturing)<sup>4</sup>

#### Key findings

- Seasonally adjusted figures show an increase of 25.3% over the quarter, a decrease of 3.4% over the year and a decrease on a rolling four quarters basis (6.7%).
- The UK reported an increase over the quarter (27.6%) and decreases over the year (7.4%) and on a rolling four quarters basis (10.3%).
- NI output is 25.3% above its series low (Quarter 2 2020).
- NI output is estimated to be 11.1% below the highest point of the past ten years (Quarter 2 2018).

Figure 3.4 Total Other Manufacturing, NI & UK (Q3 2010–Q3 2020)



[Download in Excel \(651KB\) \(opens in a new window\)](#)

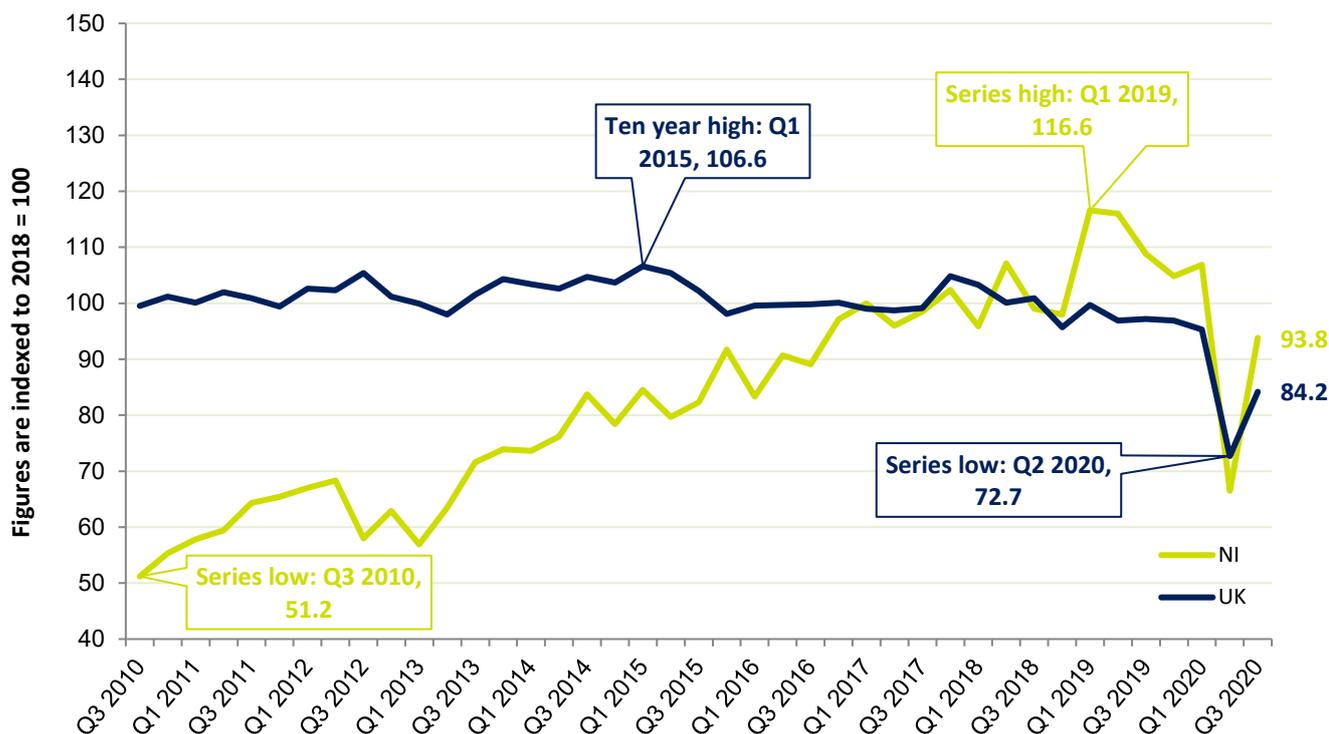
<sup>4</sup> Please note that estimates at subsector level can fluctuate due to sampling variability and also due to businesses moving industrial classification.

### 3.5 Basic and fabricated metal products (Weight=7.4% of Manufacturing)<sup>5</sup>

#### Key findings

- The NI seasonally adjusted figures show an increase of 41.0% over the quarter, a decrease of 13.8% over the year and a decrease of 15.3% on a rolling four quarters basis.
- UK seasonally adjusted figures show an increase of 15.8% over the quarter and decreases of 13.4% over the year and 10.4% on a rolling four quarters basis.
- NI output is 19.5% below its peak (Quarter 1 2019).
- NI output is 83.1% above the series low (Quarter 3 2010).

Figure 3.5 Basic and fabricated metal products, NI & UK (Q3 2010–Q3 2020)



[Download in Excel \(651KB\) \(opens in a new window\)](#)

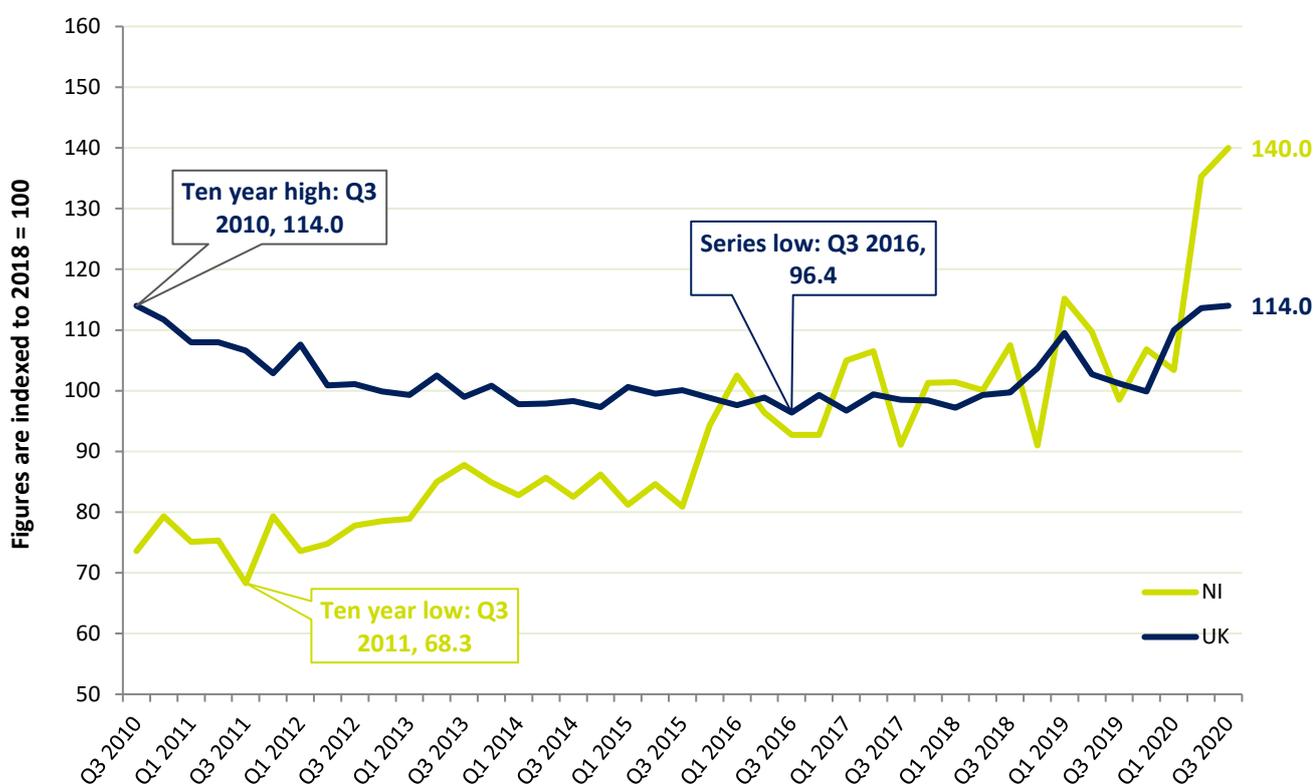
<sup>5</sup> Please note that estimates at subsector level can fluctuate due to sampling variability and also due to businesses moving industrial classification.

### 3.6 Manufacturing of chemical and pharmaceutical products (Weight=6.3% of Manufacturing)<sup>6</sup>

#### Key findings

- The NI non-seasonally adjusted figures show increases of 3.4% over the quarter, 42.1% over the year and 17.2% on a rolling four quarters basis.
- The UK figures show increases of 0.4% over the quarter, 12.6% over the year and 4.9% on a rolling four quarters basis.
- NI output has reached a series high in this subsector in Quarter 3 2020.
- NI output is 104.9% above the ten year low point (Quarter 3 2011).

**Figure 3.6 Manufacturing of chemical and pharmaceutical products, NI & UK (Q3 2010–Q3 2020)**



[Download in Excel \(651KB\) \(opens in a new window\)](#)

<sup>6</sup> Please note that estimates at subsector level can fluctuate due to sampling variability and also due to businesses moving industrial classification.

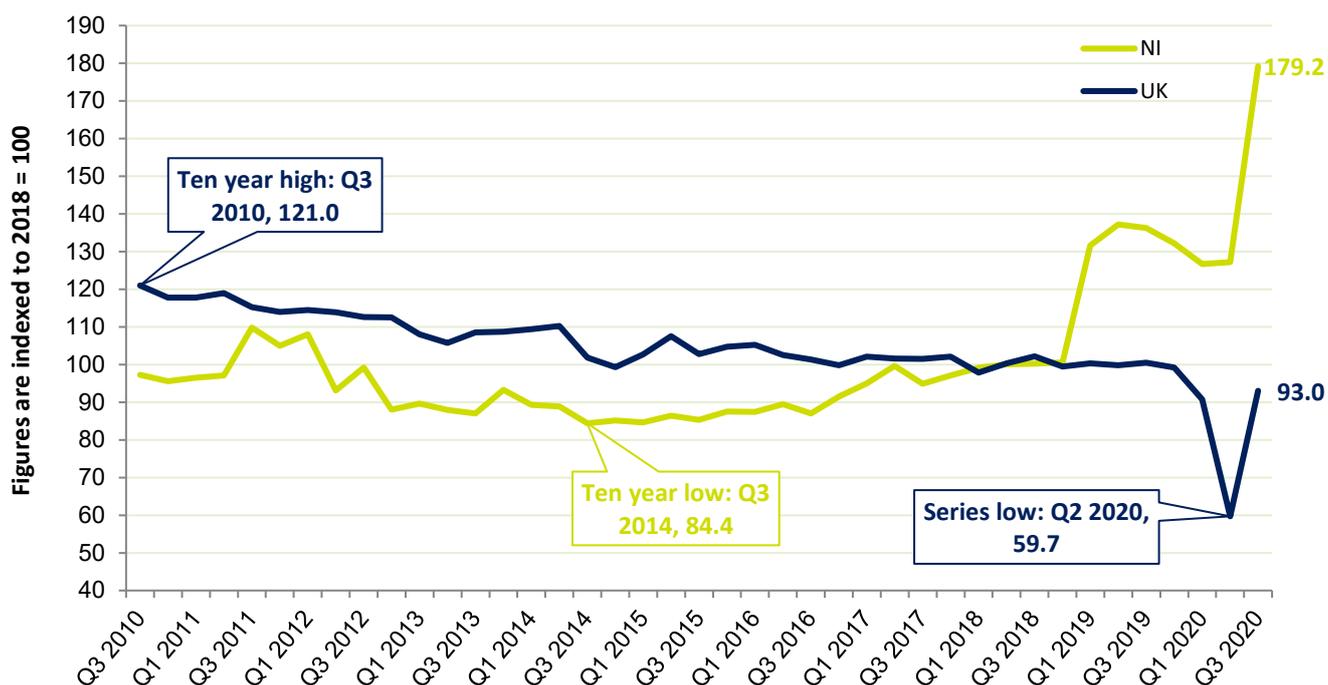
The Manufacturing of chemical and pharmaceutical products subsector has not been seasonally adjusted as this subsector shows no evidence of seasonality. The UK data has been seasonally adjusted.

### 3.7 Textiles, leather and related products (Weight=2.3% of Manufacturing)<sup>7</sup>

#### Key findings

- The NI seasonally adjusted figures show an increase over the quarter (40.9%), an increase over the year (31.5%) and an increase on a rolling four quarters basis (11.8%).
- UK seasonally adjusted figures show an increase over the quarter (55.8%) and decreases over the year (7.5%) and on a rolling four quarters basis (14.4%).
- NI output has reached a series high in this subsector in Quarter 3 2020.
- NI output is 112.4% above the ten year low (Quarter 3 2014).

Figure 3.7 Textiles, leather and related products, NI & UK (Q3 2010–Q3 2020)



[Download in Excel \(651KB\) \(opens in a new window\)](#)

<sup>7</sup> Please note that estimates at subsector level can fluctuate due to sampling variability and also due to businesses moving industrial classification.

## 4 Background notes

### Background

The quarterly IOP provides a measure of change in the output of the production industries in NI (this is defined as SIC07 sections B to E). In 2018 these production industries accounted for 18% of Regional GVA. For further information please see the [Methodology for the NI Index of Production \(IOP\) \(opens in a new window\)](#).

### Impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) on data collection and estimates

Coronavirus impacted on the data collection and the validation of turnover data, which are collected on the Quarterly Business Survey.

The following provides an overview of the coverage response rates for 2019, compared to Quarter 3 2020:

	Quarter 3 2020	2019 (median*)
Coverage response rate ( <i>returned turnover</i> )	68%	80%

\*median value achieved at IOP database closure of quarter 1, quarter 2, quarter 3 and quarter 4 2019.

Coronavirus has resulted in a decrease in coverage response rates in Quarter 3 2020 when compared to 2019 figures, primarily due to the restrictions in place for businesses. As a result, the estimates for Quarter 3 2020 are likely to be subject to higher revisions than normal over the coming quarters. Comparisons of provisional Quarter 1/Quarter 2 2020 and Quarter 2/Quarter 3 2020 estimates at lower industry levels in particular should be treated with caution.

### Gross Value Added (GVA)

From Quarter 4 2017 weighting has been carried out using the balanced GVA approach which balances the income and production approaches to measuring the economy into a single estimate. For more information please see [Regional GVA information \(opens in a new window\)](#). Figures in this publication are weighted using 2018 GVA which became available on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2019.

### Rebasing

Figures in this bulletin have been rebased from 2016=100 to 2018=100 in line with ONS figures. For further information on this please see the [Quarter 3 2020 Rebasing notice \(171KB\) \(opens in a new window\)](#).

### Deflation

All series, unless otherwise quoted, are measured at a constant market price (2018 = 100). Deflators adjust the value series to take out the effect of price change to give the volume series. The deflators used in this bulletin were sent directly by ONS on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2020. Details on the changes to the [ONS deflators methodology \(opens in a new window\)](#) can be found on the ONS Website.

### Seasonal adjustment Review

Following the seasonal adjustment review conducted in November 2018 changes have been made to some regressors and models used to seasonally adjust (where applicable) time series using X13 ARIMA SEATS. This improves the reliability of results. Further details on [this review and other methodological changes \(opens in a new window\)](#) implemented in March 2019 are available on the NISRA website.

### Productivity

The NI Index of Manufacturing Productivity has been removed from the Index of Production report. We are currently reviewing the methodology as part of a wider review of productivity.

## **Publications policy**

All ELMS publications are available to download free of charge from the [ELMS section of the NISRA website \(opens in a new window\)](#).

The IOP bulletin and tables from the current publication, which includes all the data from the start of the series in 2005, are available in Excel and Open Document format to download free of charge from the [IOP section of the NISRA website \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Future IOP publications are due to be published on the same day as the Index of Services in March, June, September and December of each year.

## **Next publication**

The next bulletin is due to be published on 18 March 2021.

The [ELMS publication schedule \(opens in a new window\)](#) is available on the NISRA website.

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Web: [Index of Production \(opens in a new window\)](#)

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