NISRA
Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
Gníomhaireacht Thuaisceart Éireann um Staitisticí agus Taighde

Northern Ireland Labour Market Report

Theme: Labour Market
Frequency: Monthly
Geographical Area: Northern Ireland

Key Points

- The number of people on the NI claimant count (experimental) increased by 800 over the month to 62,700 in August 2020. This August count is more than double the number recorded in March. The experimental Claimant Count includes Jobseeker's Allowance Claimants and those claimants of Universal Credit who were claiming principally for the reason of being unemployed.
- There were 700 proposed redundancies in August 2020 and 880 proposed between 1st and 14th September. From 1 September 2019 to 31 August 2020, 9,160 redundancies were proposed, the highest annual total since records began. The department was notified of 820 confirmed redundancies in August 2020, taking the number of confirmed redundancies to 3,880 in the 12 months to the end of August; compared to 1,780 the previous year.
- Earnings from the HMRC PAYE indicated that NI employees had a median monthly pay of £1,706 in the three months to July 2020, an increase of 0.3% on the previous three months and 1.8% from the same time last year.
- The latest Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimates relate to May-July 2020. The estimates indicate that, over the quarter, the unemployment rate increased and the employment and economic inactivity rates decreased.
- The NI unemployment rate (16+) increased over the quarter (0.6pps) to 2.9% in May-July 2020 and was unchanged over the year. The quarterly change was statistically significant. The NI unemployment rate was below the UK rate (4.1%), the Republic of Ireland rate (5.3%) and the EU (27) rate (6.7%).
- The proportion of people aged 16 to 64 in work (the employment rate) decreased over the quarter (0.1pps) and over the year (0.5pps) to 71.5%. Although recent changes were not statistically significant, the employment rate was significantly above rates in 2017. The latest employment rate recorded for the whole of the UK was 76.5%.
- The NI economic inactivity rate (the proportion of people aged from 16 to 64 who were not working and not seeking or available to work) decreased over the quarter (0.4pps) and increased over the year (0.4pps) to 26.3%. Although recent changes were not statistically significant, the economic inactivity rate was significantly below rates in 2017. The NI economic inactivity rate remained above the UK rate (20.2%).
- The total number of seasonally adjusted employee jobs in June 2020 was estimated at 779,880. This was a decrease of 1,540 jobs over the quarter, which is the first quarterly decrease since December 2015. There was an increase of 4,570 jobs over the year, but the rate of annual growth has generally been slowing since the highest rate recorded in December 2017. Neither the quarterly nor the annual changes in employee jobs were statistically significant.

Contents

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 in August 2010 following a full assessment against the Code of Practice. A compliance check in March 2020 recommended the continued designation of the report as a National Statistic. These statistics were considered as part of a wider assessment of UK employment and jobs statistics.

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:

- Redesigned the Labour Market Report, providing more context to results by setting recent changes within context of longer term trends;
- Removed pre-release access to enhance trustworthiness, and brought forward the publication date as a result;
- Improved timeliness of calendar quarter data (ranging from 1 week to 3 months) by incorporating quarterly tables in the main Labour Market Report Publication
- Improved quality of the LFS data by boosting the sample size and improving precision around headline estimates
- Reviewed and updated quality protocols for release
- Improved accessibility of labour market statistics by changing publication practices so that reports are no longer released on public holidays. Temporarily changed timing of release in line with change in ONS release practices in response to COVID-19.

1 Summary of Labour Market Statistics

Updated September 2020

Change over quarter

Seasonally adjusted LFS estimates for Northern Ireland for the period May-July 2020 showed that, over the quarter:

- the unemployment rate increased by 0.6pps to 2.9% — Statistically significant
- the employment rate decreased by 0.1pps to 71.5% — Not statistically significant
- the economic inactivity rate decreased by 0.4pps to 26.3% — Not statistically significant

The number of employee jobs at June 2020 was estimated at 779,880. This was:

- a decrease of 0.2% (-1,540 jobs) over the quarter from the revised March 2020 estimate of 781,420.

The seasonally adjusted experimental claimant count (Jobseeker's Allowance Claimants and those claimants of Universal Credit who were claiming principally for the reason of being unemployed) showed that in August 2020, there was:

- an increase of 800 over the month to 62,700.

Experimental earnings statistics from HMRC PAYE indicated that, in the three months to July 2020:

- median monthly pay for employees in NI was £1,706, an increase of 0.3% (£5) over the quarter.

During August 2020 there were:

- 820 confirmed redundancies notified to the Department, higher than the previous month's revised total (670).
- 700 proposed redundancies, and a further 880 proposed in the current month to 14th September.

Table 1: Labour Market Summary		Time Period	Estimate (95% Confidence interval)	Change over quarter (95% Confidence interval)	Change over year (95% Confidence interval)
Unemployment[1]		May-Jul 2020	26,000 (+/-6,000)	5,000 (+/-5,000)	0 (+/-8,000)
Employment[2]		May-Jul 2020	870,000 (+/-22,000)	2,000 (+/-17,000)	0 (+/-27,000)
Economically inactive[2]		May-Jul 2020	581,000 (+/-21,000)	-6,000 (+/-17,000)	6,000 (+/-26,000)
Unemployment rate[1]		May-Jul 2020	2.9% (+/-0.7)	0.6pps (+/-0.6)	0.0pps (+/-0.9)
Employment rate[2]		May-Jul 2020	71.5% (+/-1.7)	-0.1pps (+/-1.2)	-0.5pps (+/-2.1)
Economic inactivity rate[2]		May-Jul 2020	26.3% (+/-1.7)	-0.4pps (+/-1.2)	0.4pps (+/-2.1)
Employee jobs[3]		June 2020	779,880 (+/-5,770)	-1,540	4,570
Vacancies[4]		Apr-Jun 2020	7,911	-8,494	-10,696
Median Monthly pay[5]		May-Jul 2020	£1,706	£5	£30
			Estimate	Change over month	
Experimental Claimant Count[6]		August 2020	62,700	800	
Redundancies[7]	Confirmed	August 2020	820	150	
	Proposed	August 2020	700	-1,240	

Download in excel

LFS data are seasonally adjusted. More information on confidence intervals is available on the NISRA website – Estimating and reporting uncertainty paper.
[1] People aged 16 and over. Unemployment rate = total unemployed as a proportion of the economically active.
[2] Levels for all persons aged 16 and over, rates for working age (16-64).
[3] Employee jobs survey date for Quarter 2 was 1 June 2020. Those who are furloughed under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) are included in employee jobs estimates.
[4] Monthly notified vacancies are all new vacancy positions notified to Department for Communities. All statistics are derived from data extracted from the Department for Communities Client Management System (CMS).
[5] HMRC Pay As You Earn Real Time Information, Seasonally adjusted
[6] The number of claimants on 13th August, seasonally adjusted
[7] Redundancies in the calendar month, not seasonally adjusted.

NI Labour Market Structure: Change over year

Seasonally adjusted LFS estimates for Northern Ireland for the period May-July 2020 showed that over the year:

- the unemployment rate was unchanged at 2.9% — Not statistically significant
- the employment rate decreased by 0.5pps to 71.5% — Not statistically significant
- the economic inactivity rate increased by 0.4pps to 26.3% — Not statistically significant

The employee jobs total in Northern Ireland at June 2020 was 779,880 jobs representing:

- an increase of 0.6% (4,570) jobs from the revised June 2019 estimate of 775,310.

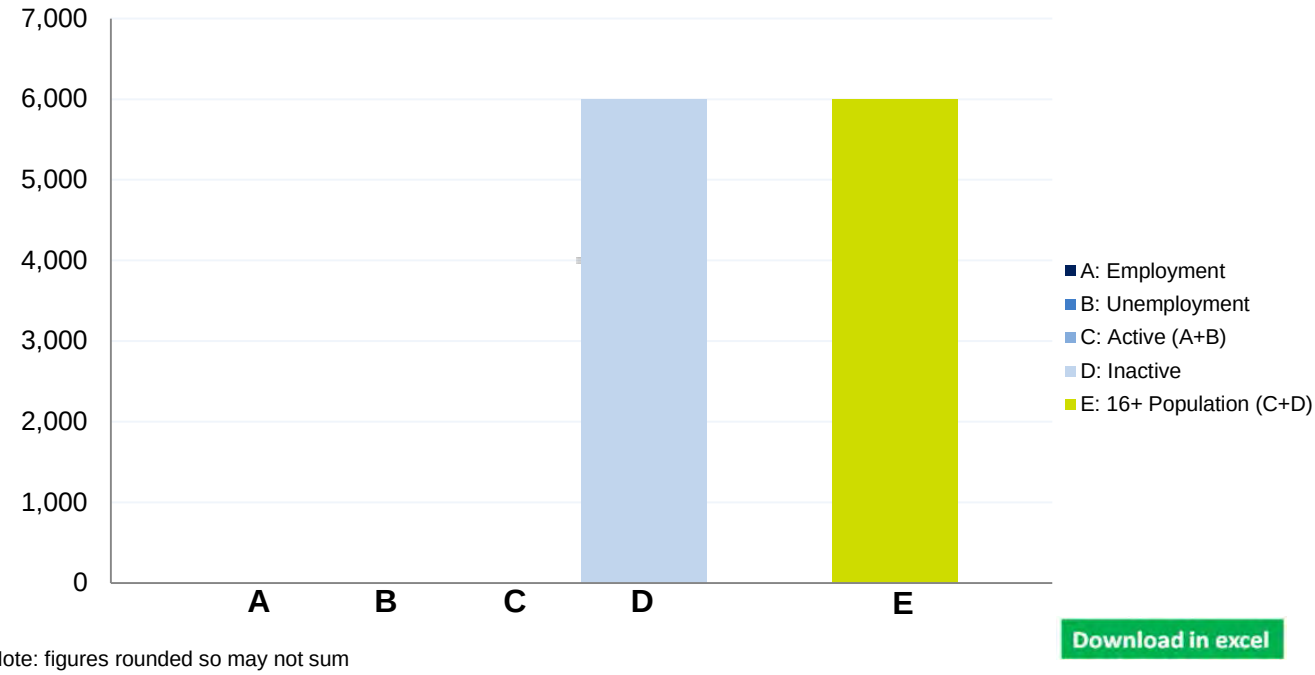
Experimental earnings statistics from HMRC PAYE indicated that, in the three months to July 2020:

- median monthly pay for employees in NI was £1,706, an increase of 1.8% (£30) from the same period one year earlier.

Over the latest twelve month period there were:

- 3,880 confirmed redundancies, which was an increase of 118% from the previous year (1,780)
- 9,160 redundancies were proposed, an increase of 141% from the previous year (3,800) and the highest annual total since comparable records began.

Figure 1: NI labour market structure (16+): change over year



Note: figures rounded so may not sum

UK summary

Seasonally adjusted LFS estimates for the UK for the period May-July 2020 showed:

- the unemployment rate (4.1%) increased by 0.2pps over the quarter and 0.3pps over the year
- the employment rate (76.5%) increased by 0.1pps over the quarter and by 0.4pps over the year
- the economic inactivity rate (20.2%) decreased by 0.3pps over the quarter and 0.6pps over the year

Commentary

Since the first case of the coronavirus was recorded in Northern Ireland at the end of February the headline employment rate has remained relatively high, at rates above 71%, the economic inactivity rate has remained below 27% and similarly unemployment has remained low during this period, below 3%.

Over the most recent quarter, employment (71.5%) and economic inactivity (26.3%) rates decreased and the unemployment rate (2.9%) increased. The most recent employment rate estimated for May-July 2020 represented a decrease over the quarter and the year, but remains above rates in 2017. Within those included in the employed total, it is important to note, almost two-fifths (37%) were working fewer than their usual hours and half of those (19%) were temporarily away from work they expected to return to. This has had a large impact on the number of hours worked across the economy; the average number of hours worked at 28.1 hours per week is a decrease of 5.5 hours per week or 16% over the year.

Notably the most recent estimates from the Labour Force Survey show an increase in the unemployment rate of 0.6pps to 2.9% between February-April and May-July, the first statistically significant quarterly increase in the unemployment rate since October 2012. The data indicate that the quarterly increase was driven by those under 35 years with the youth unemployment rate (16-24 years) estimated at 8.2%. Similarly employment and inactivity rates of those under 35 years worsened (decreasing and increasing respectively) over the quarter.

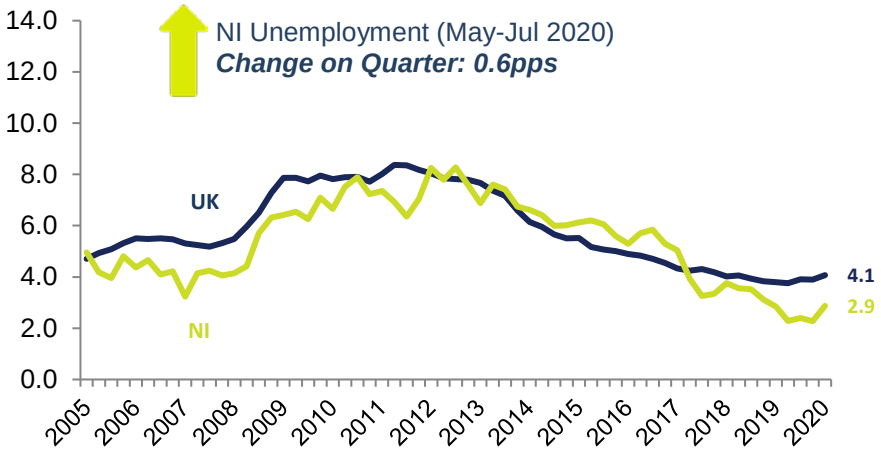
The claimant count (experimental) shows a continuation of trends since May and remained above 60,000 in August, more than double the number in March. One important difference contributing to the divergence since April between LFS and Claimant count, is that those furloughed would be included within the LFS employment estimates as ‘temporarily away from work’, and not the LFS unemployed estimates. In contrast, those who are furloughed could potentially be included within the Universal Credit ‘searching for work’ conditionality due to reduced earnings and therefore be counted within the experimental claimant count.

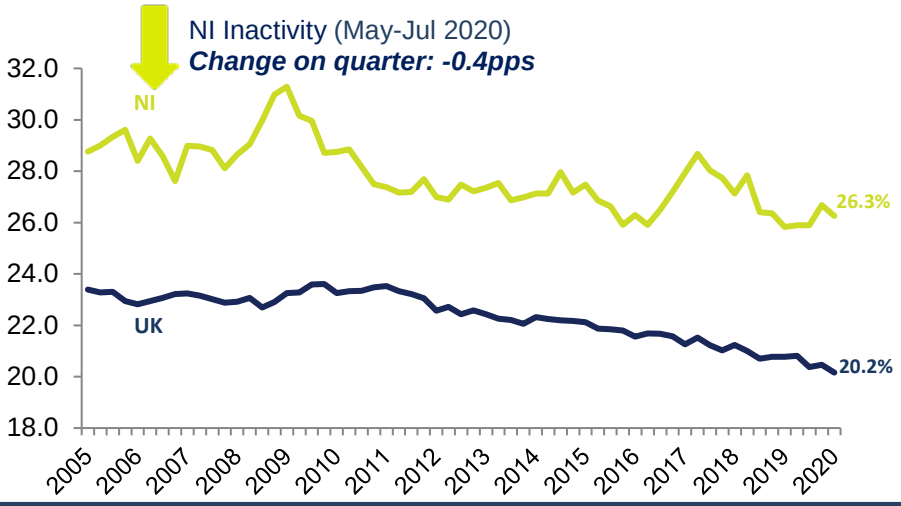
Businesses reported a decrease in the number of jobs in the quarter to June following the record high in March. Although a marginal decrease (0.2%) this is the first quarterly decrease since late 2015. Decreases were reported in Manufacturing, Construction and Services sectors. Those furloughed are included in the jobs total and the reference date for the quarterly jobs figures pre-dates the record number of redundancies proposed during June and July. Following 4,410 in June and July, the pace of proposed redundancies slowed somewhat in August (700), however notifications relating to almost 900 proposed redundancies were received in the first two weeks in September. In line with the upsurge in proposed redundancies between April and July the number of confirmed redundancies increased in July and August to approximately 1,500.

Further information is available on the NISRA - Economic and Labour Market Statistics website: LMR Headline Tables.

NISRA Labour Market Statistics

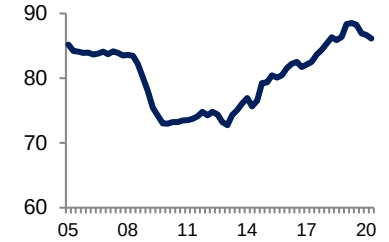
Labour Force Survey May-July 2020



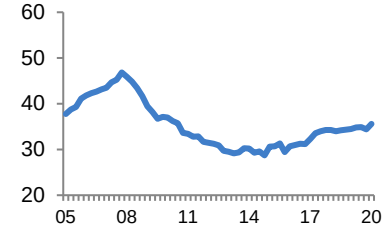


Quarterly Employment Survey – June 2020

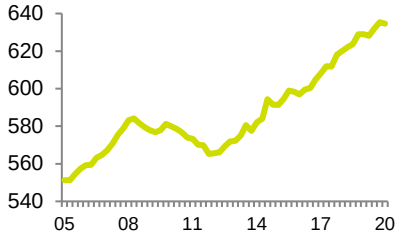
THOUSANDS



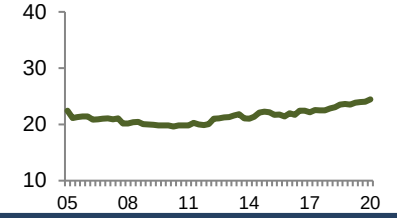
Manufacturing
Change on Quarter: -0.6% (-530)



Construction
Change on Quarter: -0.9% (-340)

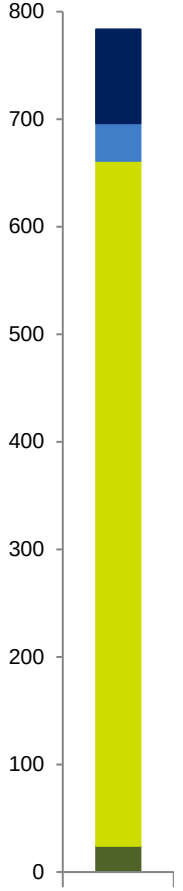


Services
Change on Quarter: -0.1% (-830)



Other
Change on Quarter: +0.6% (160)

Total employee jobs: 779,880



Manufacturing: 86,150

Construction: 35,260

Services: 633,860

Other: 24,610

pps[1] = percentage points
Labour Force Survey, seasonally adjusted and subject to future revisions.
Data published – 15th September 2020

NISRA Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
Gníomhaireacht Thuaisceart Éireann um Staitisticí agus Taighde

Labour Market User Group

Registration is now open for the online Labour Market User Group, taking place on Wednesday 21st October 2020 at 10am. Please sign up to the event at nidirect.gov.uk and include any topics or questions you would like addressed. The agenda will include plans and developments across a range of labour market statistics (employment, jobs, earnings, vacancies, redundancies and unemployment), and opportunities for discussion.

Things users need to know

Estimates below a grossed value of 8,000 were previously suppressed however this has been reviewed and tables accompanying this release have been subsequently updated. Now, only estimates based on fewer than 3 events are supressed to prevent disclosure. Shading is used to draw attention to lower statistical quality/precision of estimates that are based on a smaller sample size. These give the best estimate of the size of a group but comparison across time or between groups with similar values should be avoided. Further information is available on the NISRA website in the reporting reliability in user requested data guidance. Estimates in Section 2 for youth unemployment and long term unemployment have been included in the report however they are based on a smaller sample size and are therefore shaded in the accompanying tables. As such, associated confidence intervals for these estimates are wide and comparisons over time and with other regions are not encouraged as differences are not likely to be statistically significant.

The Labour Force Survey estimates for May to July 2020 are based on interviews during full lockdown in May and June, and July when restrictions began to ease. NISRA suspended all face to face household interviews in the middle of March due to COVID-19. From April all LFS interviews were conducted by telephone. The resulting individual sample size (16+) for May-July 2020 was 16% lower than the previous quarter and 24% lower than the same quarter last year. This has had a marginal impact on the precision of the estimates (for example employment rate 95% confidence interval increased by +/-0.1 percentage points) from the February-April 2020 quarter and +/-0.2pps from May-July 2019

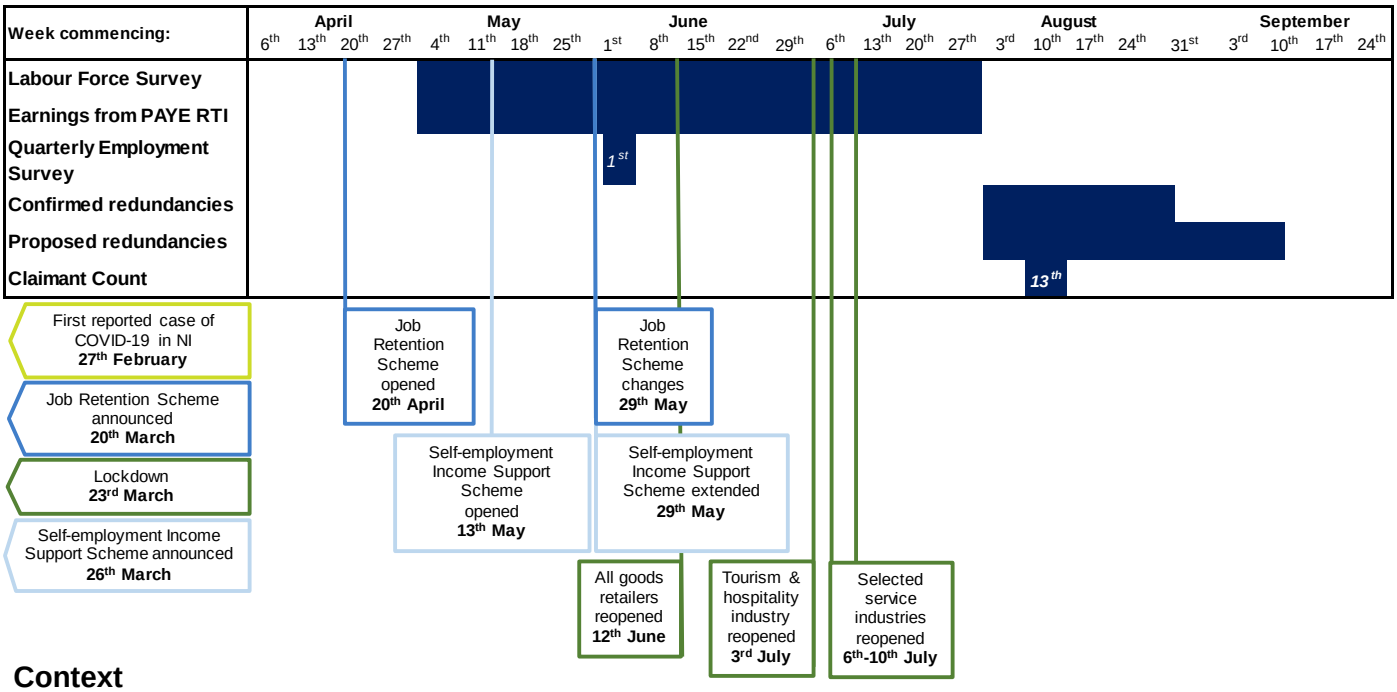
This month's release includes analysis to help users understand movements in the labour market. An experimental estimate of 'Those temporarily away from work', is provided to help users understand the composition of the employment rate. Those furloughed under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) are included in estimates of 'temporarily away from work' and total employment. Although we cannot say definitively that any observed differences are directly due to people furloughed, or otherwise away from work due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is likely to be the main driving factor for the change on the year in those 'temporarily away from work'. Early indications of the impact of the coronavirus on survey imputation methodology show that there is little impact from the use of existing methodology on the measure of employment (less than 0.1 percentage points). Measures relating to hours in this release understate the reduction in the actual number of hours worked by approximately 5 to 6%. Further information is available within ONS's latest Employment in the UK release.

This month sampling variability around regional and UK headline estimates have been included alongside this release in table 9 of the headline tables.

Covid-19 has resulted in a decrease in coverage and form response rates in Q2 2020 when compared to 2019 figures in the Quarterly Employment Survey, primarily due to the restrictions in place for businesses. Coverage response rates decreased from the 2019 median of 77% to 62% in Q2 2020.

Experimental statistics from HMRC Pay As You Earn system are included in today's release as well as the experimental claimant count up to 13th August and redundancy data for August and September to date. Although these sources provide more up-to-date indicators of the Labour Market, users should continue to note the experimental nature of the claimant count and earnings data. This means the data series are still in their development stage and as such revisions are expected. In addition, redundancy notifications, although a useful indicator, provide an incomplete picture of the total number of redundancies in the economy as they relate to collective redundancies (redundancies of 20 or more).

Data source reference periods and key dates



Context

The LMR is a monthly overview of Northern Ireland key labour market statistics. It includes figures from the Labour Force Survey (LFS), the Quarterly Employment Survey, the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, claimant count, redundancies counts and vacancies data. More information about the data sources can be found in Section 6. Where available, comparative UK data (produced by the ONS) have been included. The latest labour market statistics are available on the ONS website.

A Labour Market Outputs consultation in summer 2019 (Labour Market Statistics User Engagement page) showed labour market statistics are used for policy monitoring and research, academic and private sector research, service planning and delivery. Key users of Northern Ireland labour market statistics include government departments, in particular the Department for the Economy (DfE), which uses the statistics to design and monitor the impact of economic and labour market policy. Other Government departments such as the Executive Office, the Department of Finance (DoF) and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), as well as bodies such as Invest NI and Belfast City Council, regularly require specific ad hoc labour market analysis in order to monitor policies for example, equality and employment. In addition, significant 'non-governmental' users of labour market statistics (including the media, banks, academics, private consultants and the general public) use the data primarily for reporting or researching the performance of the economy in general. Labour market statistics attract widespread media coverage, with a number of broadcasters publishing articles on the labour market on a monthly basis, generally on the day of publication of the LMR.

Labour market statistics feature in the DfE Economic Commentary, which provides an overview of the state of the Northern Ireland economy, 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 of the NISRA website. More information on the production of LFS outputs in general can be found in the Background information – LFS section of the NISRA website.

Further information on using labour market statistics can be found on the Office for National Statistics (ONS) website:

- Guide to Labour Market Statistics
- Glossary

Ad–hoc data requests related to the labour market impacts of coronavirus and associated schemes are added to the COVID-19 related analysis section of the NISRA website.

For more on how COVID-19 has impacted the production of statistics please see the COVID-19 and the production of statistics section on the NISRA website and an ONS Statement on ensuring the best possible information during COVID-19 through safe data collection.

2 Unemployment

Updated September 2020

Labour Force Survey

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) is a household sample survey carried out by interviewing individuals about their personal circumstances and work. It provides a rich source of information on the labour force using internationally agreed definitions. Estimates are subject to sampling error (see section 6 and the Estimating and Reporting Uncertainty paper for details).

LFS unemployment: The International Labour Organisation (ILO) defines unemployed as those aged 16+ without a job who were able to start work in the two weeks following their LFS interview and had either looked for work in the four weeks prior to interview or were waiting to start a job they had already obtained.

Long-Term Unemployment: those who have been unemployed for 12 months or more.

Youth Unemployment: unemployed people aged 16-24 years.

Key Findings

- **LFS unemployment rate for May to July in NI increased over the quarter and was unchanged over the year at 2.9%.**
- **The NI unemployment rate has remained below the UK rate since mid-2017**
- **The UK unemployment rate is estimated at 4.1%**

Figure 2: Seasonally adjusted unemployment rate (16+), May-Jul 2005 to May-Jul 2020

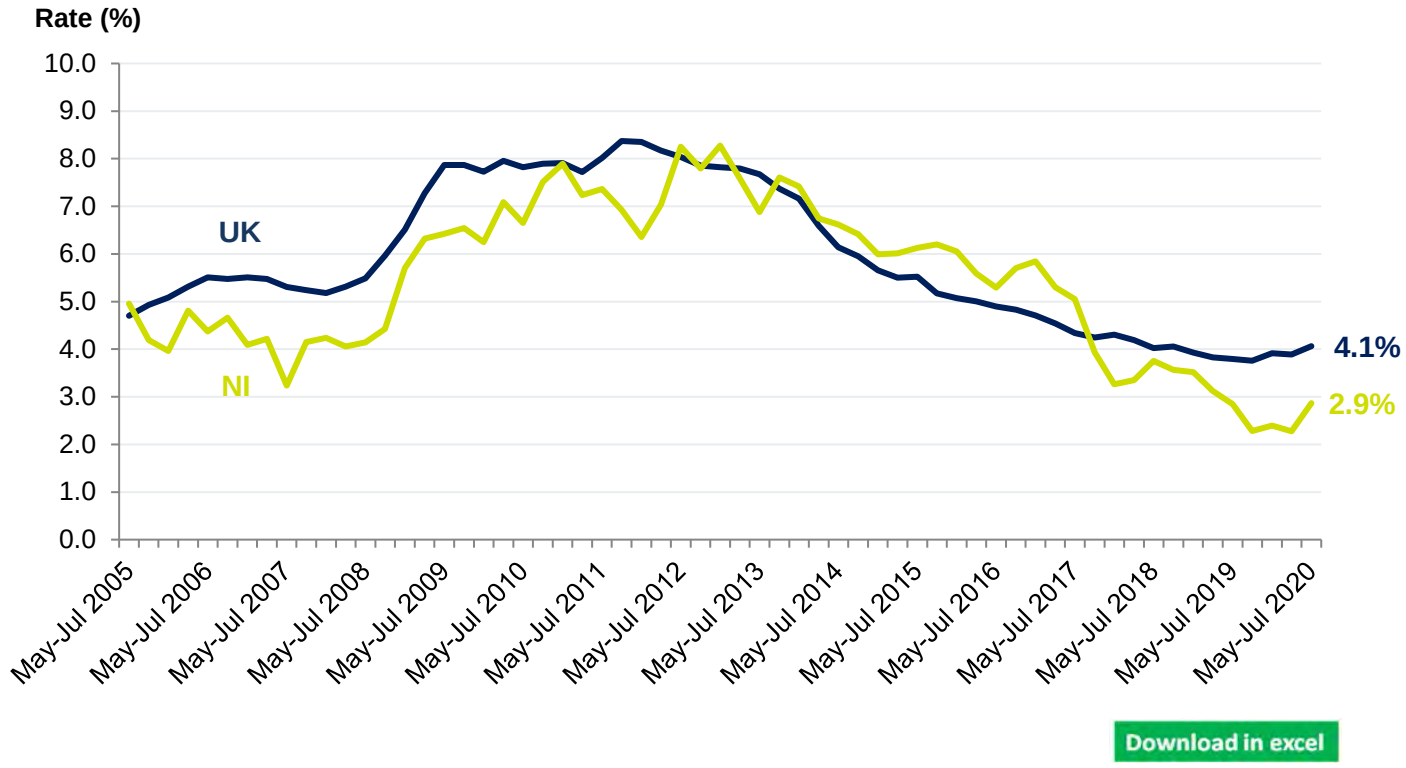


Figure 2 shows unemployment rates on the current 3 month rolling average for NI and the UK over the last 15 years. The unemployment rate in the UK reached over 8% in 2011 while the NI rate reached over 8% in November-January 2013. The NI rate has been below the UK rate since mid-2017. At 2.9% in May-July 2020 the NI unemployment rate is relatively low but has increased significantly over the quarter. Similarly the UK rate is at one of its lowest points of 4.1% in May-July 2020 but increased over the quarter.

LFS unemployment

The unemployment rate (16+) for the period May-July 2020 was estimated at 2.9%, this was:

- an increase of 0.6pps over the quarter (statistically significant change)
- unchanged over the year

The number of unemployed persons aged 16+ was estimated at 26,000, which was:

- up 5,000 from last quarter. Unadjusted data shows the increase occurred in those unemployed aged under 35 years.
- unchanged from the same period last year

UK regional and international LFS comparisons

The most recent NI unemployment rate (2.9%) was:

- below the overall UK average rate (4.1%)
- the lowest rate among the twelve UK regions
- below the European Union (27) rate (6.7%) for May 2020 and the Republic of Ireland rate (5.3%) for June 2020

Long-term and youth unemployment*

In May-July 2020, the percentage of unemployed who have been unemployed for 1 year or more (long-term) was 29.6% in NI and 16.4% in the UK. The youth unemployment rate was 8.2% in NI and 14.1% in the UK.

*Please note that estimates for both long-term and youth unemployment for Northern Ireland are based on a smaller sample size. This may result in less precise estimates which should be used with caution, in particular when comparing with other regions or over time.

Further information is available on the NISRA - Economic and Labour Market Statistics website: LFS unemployment

Comparison between LFS Unemployment and the Experimental Claimant Count

LFS is a sample survey and is conducted to International Labour Organisation (ILO) definitions. It provides the official unemployment measure in NI with a time lag of six weeks between the end of data collection and publication of estimates. The experimental claimant count is a measure of the number of people claiming benefits principally for the reason of being unemployed and is derived from Jobs and Benefits Offices systems. Statistics derived from it are influenced by changes to benefit system, such as the introduction of Universal Credit. It is a timelier labour market indicator than measures produced from the LFS, with estimates published one month after the claimant count date.

There is a similar overall trend between LFS unemployment and the claimant count for most of the twenty year period from 2000 – 2020. The most recent figures, however, show a clear divergence and highlights the difference in methodology and definitions between the two measures. One important difference contributing to the divergence since April is that those furloughed under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme would be included within the LFS employment estimates as 'temporarily away from work', and not the LFS unemployed estimates. In contrast, those who are furloughed could potentially be included within the Universal Credit 'searching for work' conditionality and therefore be counted within the experimental claimant count.

A fuller user guide setting out the differences between the experimental claimant count and the LFS unemployment is available from the differences between the ILO unemployment and claimant count page on the NISRA website.

Claimant count (experimental)

The claimant count is an administrative data source derived from Jobs and Benefits Offices systems, which records the number of people claiming unemployment-related benefits.

Claimant count (experimental): consists of all people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) plus those Universal Credit (UC) claimants who were claiming principally for the reason of being unemployed. Some claimants are wholly unemployed and seeking work, while others may be employed but with low earnings that make them eligible for unemployment related benefit support. ***The most recent reference date was 13th August.***

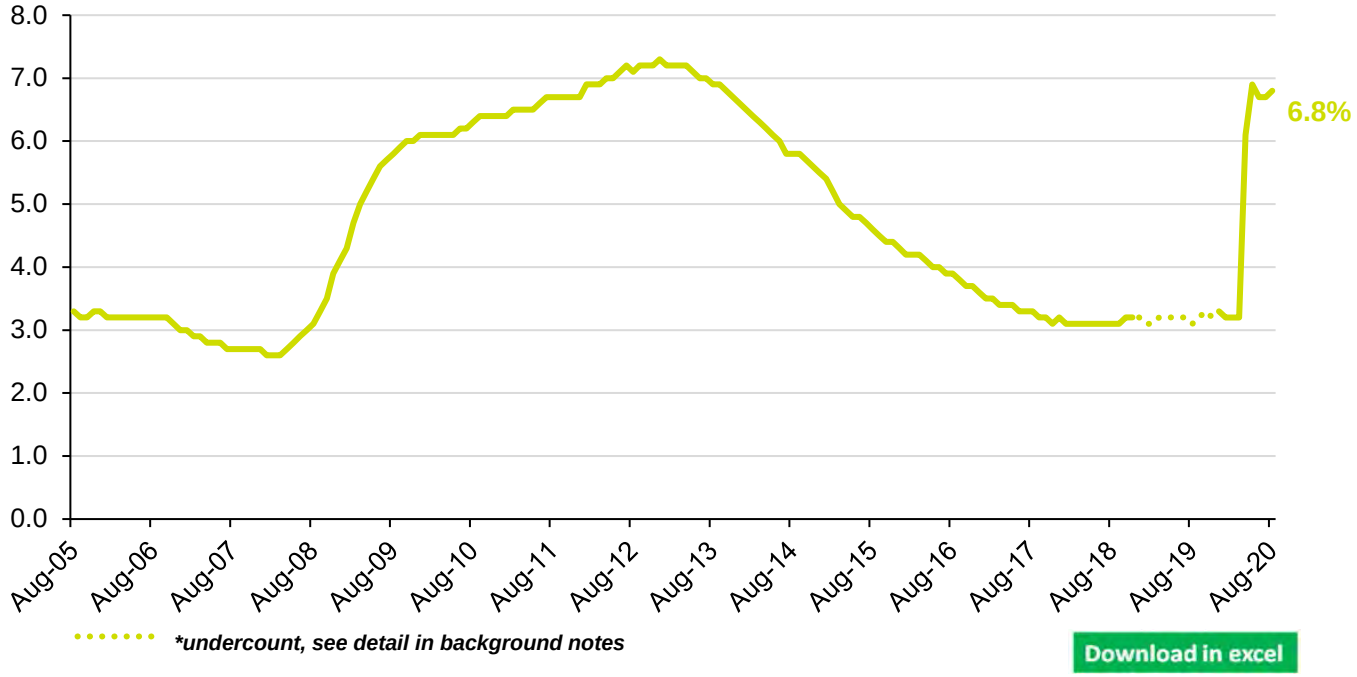
Universal Credit: Universal Credit was rolled out in NI for new claims of six benefits, including income-based JSA, on a phased geographical basis between September 2017 and December 2018.

Percentage of workforce: the number of claimants as a percentage of workforce jobs plus claimants. Workforce jobs are the sum of employee jobs, self-employment jobs, HM Forces, and government-supported trainees. This measure is only available at the NI level.

Key Findings

- **NI claimant count (experimental) increased over the month by 800 (1.2%) to 62,700**
- **In August 2020, 6.8% of the NI workforce were recorded on the claimant count**

Figure 3: Seasonally adjusted claimant count (experimental) monthly rates, Aug 2005 – Aug 2020



In March 2018 the NI claimant count measure changed from one based solely on Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) to an experimental measure based on JSA claimants and Universal Credit (UC) claimants who were claiming principally for the reason of being unemployed. Those claiming unemployment-related benefits (either UC or JSA) may be wholly unemployed and seeking work, or may be employed but with low income and/or low hours, that make them eligible for unemployment-related benefit support. Under UC a broader span of claimants became eligible for unemployment-related benefit than under the previous benefit regime.

The recent increases in claimant count can largely be attributed to the increase in the numbers of people becoming unemployed or having their hours reduced, resulting in very low earnings below the administrative earnings threshold. There may be some persons, previously not eligible for UC due to partner earnings, now eligible as a result of work allowance increases who would now be included within the count. Estimates to identify the extent to which each group has contributed to the increase in claimant count are not available for NI.

In August 2020, 62,700 people were recorded on the NI Claimant Count. This is the fourth consecutive month where the number of claimants has exceeded 60,000 and is more than double the count in March. Claimant counts since May have been similar to levels and rates seen in 2012 and 2013.

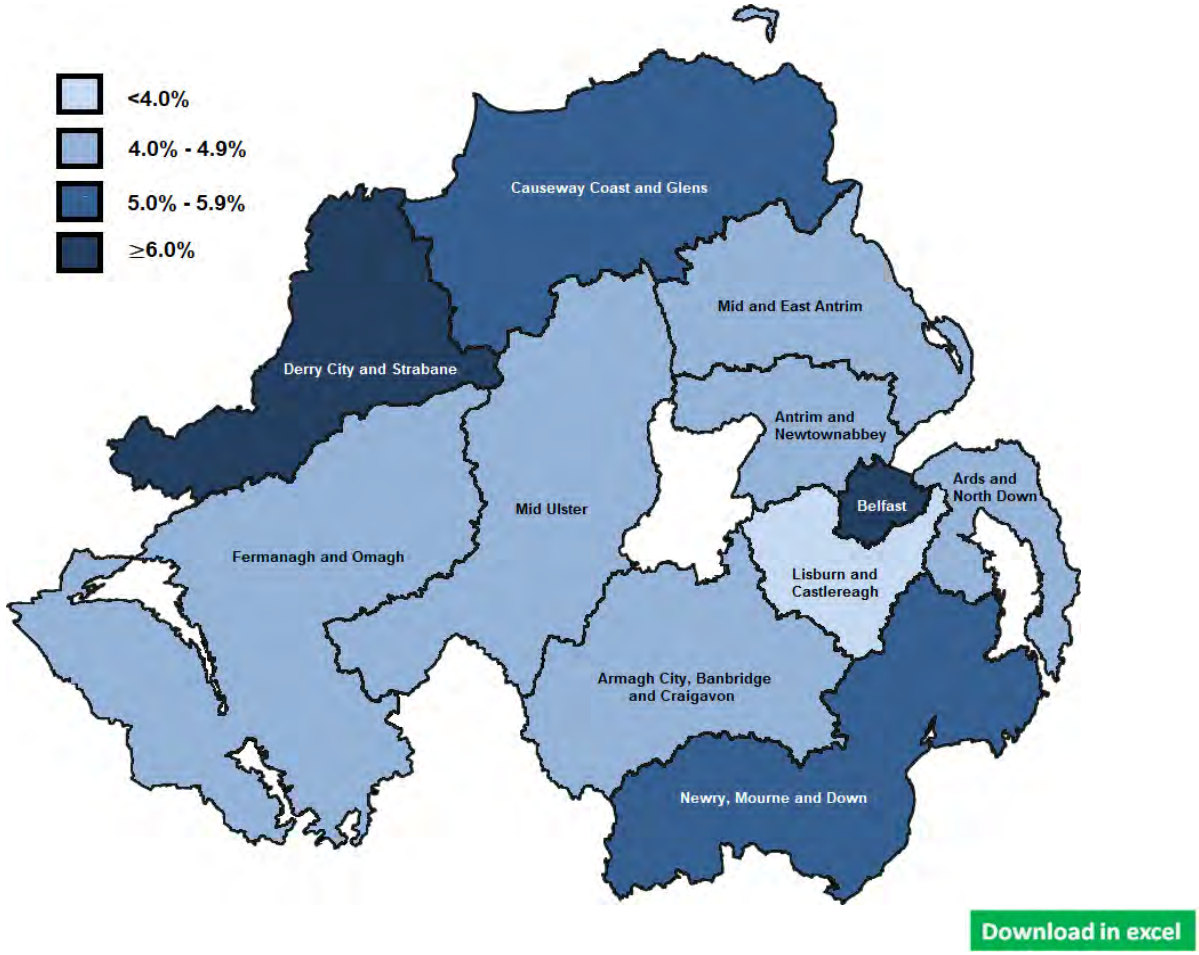
Claimant count (experimental) unemployment

The NI seasonally adjusted claimant count stood at 62,700 (6.8% of the workforce) in August 2020, representing:

- an increase of 800 (1.2%) from last month's revised total
- an increase of 1.3% in males and 1.0% in females
- a 0.1pps increase in the workforce claimant count rate over the month
- an increase of 33,000 since March.

The UK seasonally adjusted claimant count increased by 2.8% over the month to 2,737,900 (7.6%).

Figure 4: Claimant count rate by Council Area, August 2020



The Council Area comparison using claimant count data unadjusted for seasonality found that:

- the highest claimant count rates were in Derry City and Strabane (7.4%) and Belfast (6.6%).
- the lowest claimant count rates were in Lisburn and Castlereagh (3.9%) and Antrim and Newtownabbey and Fermanagh and Omagh (4.4%).

Annual and monthly claimant count data are available on the NINIS website in the form of interactive maps for **Parliamentary Constituency** and **Council Area**.

Further details on the experimental claimant count are available on the NISRA - Economic and Labour Market Statistics website: Claimant Count

Redundancies

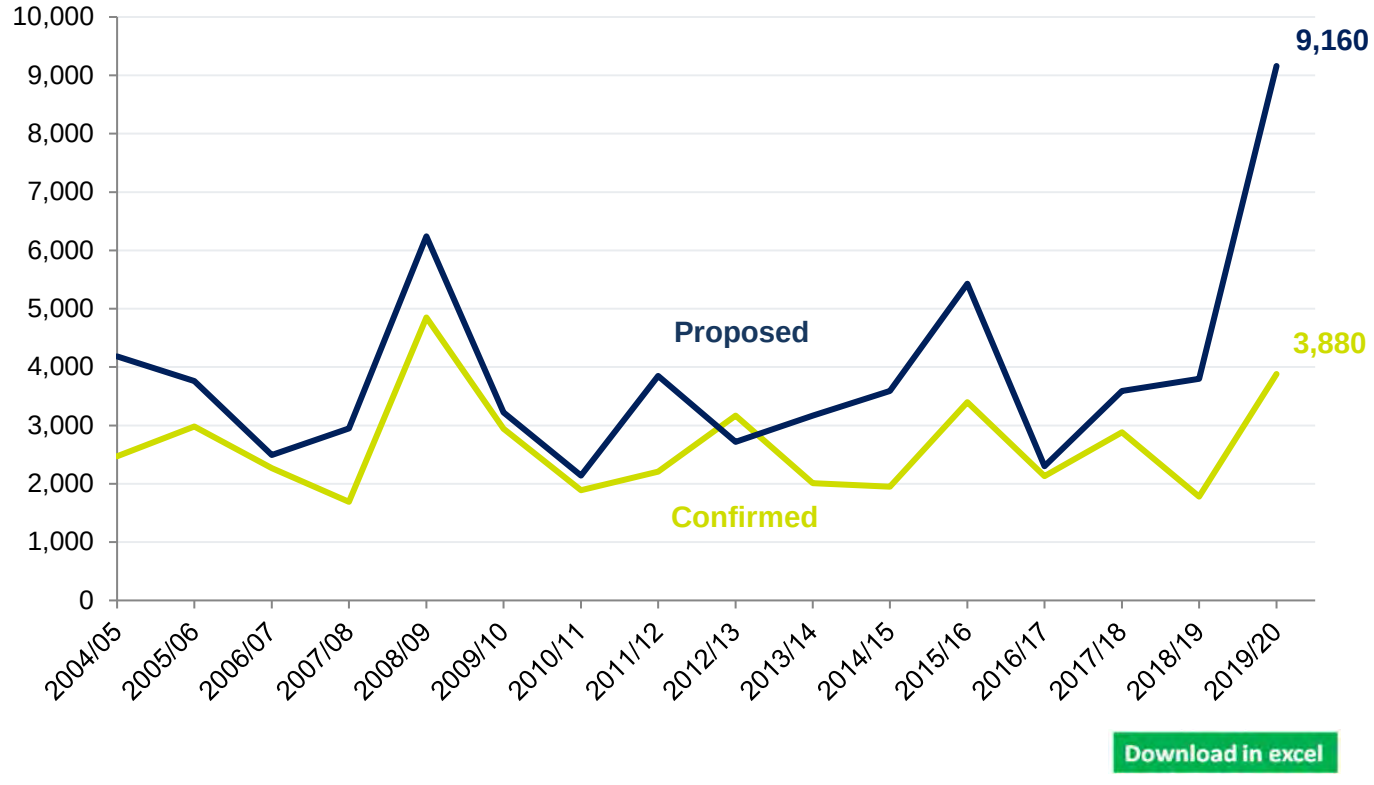
Under the Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 (Amended 8 October 2006) companies are only legally required to notify the Department of impending redundancies of 20 or more employees. Companies who propose less than 20 redundancies are not required to notify the Department, therefore the figures provided are likely to be an underestimate of total job losses, however, it is not possible to quantify the extent of the shortfall. Further information can be found in the Redundancies Background Quality Report.

Redundancies: Subject to the criteria mentioned above, employers must notify the Department of (a) redundancies proposed and (b) redundancies confirmed. Since all proposed redundancies do not actually take place, the confirmed total provides a better indication of real job losses.

Key Findings

- **820 redundancies were confirmed in August, the second highest monthly total in the past five years**
- **700 were proposed in August 2020 and a further 880 redundancies have been proposed in the current month up to 14th September 2020**
- **From 1 September 2019 to 31 August 2020, 9,160 redundancies were proposed, the highest number of proposed redundancies on record**

Figure 5: Confirmed and proposed redundancies – Annual totals, Sep-Aug 2005 to Sep-Aug 2020



Redundancy notification data shows a high degree of correlation between proposed and confirmed redundancies when grouped by year. On a monthly basis the correlation is lower as there is a time lag between proposing and making redundancies. The graph above shows that, generally the number of proposed redundancies is higher than confirmed redundancies indicating that not all proposed redundancies take place.

In the year to 31st August over 9,000 redundancies were proposed, the highest number of annual proposed redundancies on record. At nearly 4,000 the number of confirmed redundancies is much lower and in part reflects the advanced notification period between proposed and confirmed redundancies. Almost 50% of

the redundancy notifications (proposals) took place in June and July while around 40% of redundancies were confirmed in July and August. The annual confirmed total is below the total for September 2008 - August 2009 (4,850) but higher than all other years since comparable records began.

Confirmed redundancies

Employers are required by law to notify the Department of proposals to make 20 to 99 redundancies at least 30 days before the first dismissal, and, for 100 or more redundancies, 90 days before the first dismissal. This results in a time lag of at least a month between the redundancies being proposed and then being confirmed.

During August 2020, the Department was notified of:

- 820 confirmed redundancies; higher than the previous month's revised total of 670. The August total was the second highest number of redundancies in the past five years with the majority of the redundancies resulting from notifications submitted between March and June.

Over the latest twelve month period there were:

- 3,880 confirmed redundancies, which was more than double the previous year (1,780)
- 1,930 (or 50%) confirmed in manufacturing, which was higher than one year ago (700 or 40%)
- 540 (14% of all confirmed redundancies) in the wholesale and retail trade which was a higher than the previous year (530 and 30%)
- a further 290 (8% of all confirmed redundancies) in transportation and storage, higher than the previous year (approximately 2%).

Proposed redundancies

It should be noted that since not all proposed redundancies actually take place, the confirmed total provides a better indication of real job losses.

The most recent data shows there were:

- 700 proposed redundancies in August (below the record highs of 2,470 in June and 1,940 in July)
- more than twice the number recorded in August 2019 (330)
- a further 880 redundancies proposed between 1st and 14th September.

Over the latest twelve month period there were:

- 9,160 proposed redundancies, which was more than double the previous year (3,800) and the highest annual total on record
- 4,190 (46%) proposed in manufacturing, which was higher than one year ago (970 or 25%)
- 1,480 (16% of all proposed redundancies) in the wholesale and retail trade, higher than the previous year (1,410 or 37%)
- a further 1,000 (11% of all proposed redundancies) in transportation and storage which was higher than the previous year (approximately 1%).

Special Focus - Redundancies since March 2020

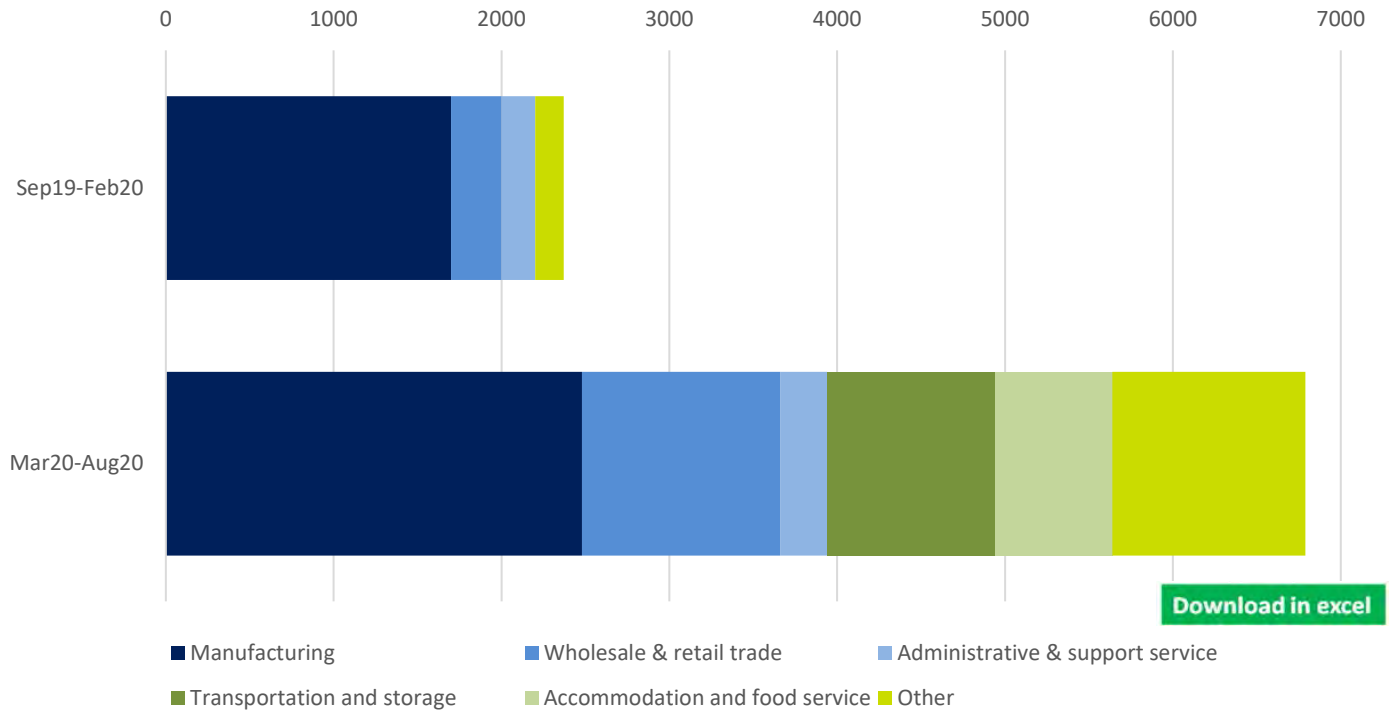
At 6,800, the number of proposed redundancies recorded in the six months since March was higher than the number of proposed redundancies in any calendar year since 2001 and almost three times higher than the total for the previous 6 months (2,370). Within the most recent six month period the number of proposed redundancies reached record highs in June and July, accounting for over 4,400 proposed redundancies. The August total of 700 was approximately a third of the number proposed in July, but was still more than double the average number seen each month over the last decade.

Since March, the breadth of proposed redundancies has increased, with a larger number of sectors proposing collective redundancies; in the most recent six months redundancy notifications were received from 15 of the 21 industry sectors and around 90 different employers, compared to 6 sectors in the previous six months and around 20 employers. In the 6 months up to March 2020, the majority of collective redundancy notifications related to 3 main sectors – manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade, and Administrative and support service activities, accounted for over 90% of proposed redundancies.

Notably, while the number of proposed redundancies remained highest in the manufacturing sector, having increased from 1,700 in the first six months of the year to 2,480 in the six months since March, the share of redundancies in this sector has approximately halved (72% to 37%). The Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles, and Transportation and storage industries have each proposed more than 1,000 redundancies since March, with a further 700 proposed in Accommodation and food services.

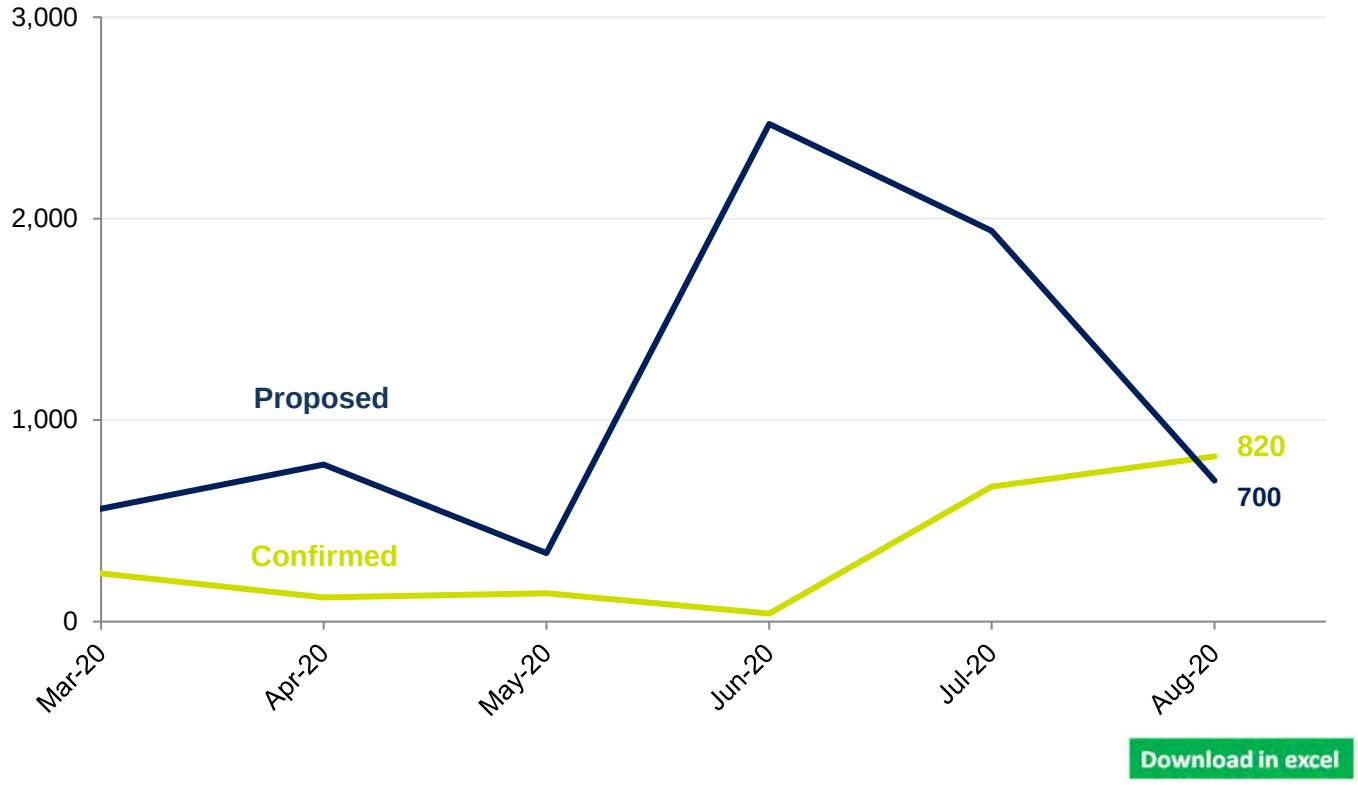
Similar to the industry make up of proposed redundancies, over the last six months redundancies were confirmed in 13 industries with the highest proportion confirmed in manufacturing (33%), followed by wholesale and retail trade (21%).

Figure 6: Industry breakdown of proposed redundancies – Sep-Feb 20 and Mar-Aug 20



The geographical spread of proposed redundancies has also changed since March. In the six months to March Mid and East Antrim, and Belfast accounted for almost 80% of proposed redundancies in NI. In the most recent 6 months 2,330 redundancies have been proposed in Belfast (a third of the total) followed by 1,440 in Antrim and Newtownabbey (a fifth of the total). Notable increases in the number of proposed redundancies occurred in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon, Lisburn and Castlereagh and Newry, Mourne and Down, where the number of proposed redundancies in the most recent six months is approximately 20 times the number in the first 6 months.

Figure 7: Confirmed and proposed redundancies – Monthly totals, March to August 2020



The graph above charts monthly proposed and confirmed redundancies over the last six months. The graph shows the lag between proposed redundancies and the confirmation of the redundancies which is not apparent when plotted on an annual basis (as in Figure 5). Of note are the proposed redundancies in June and July, which was the highest consecutive monthly total of proposed redundancies on record at over 4,400. This is now translating into confirmed redundancies which have started to increase following a period of relatively low numbers between March and June. At 820, the number of confirmed redundancies in August is the second highest monthly total in the last five years.

Further information is available on the NISRA - Economic and Labour Market Statistics website:
Redundancies

3 Employment

Updated September 2020

LFS employment

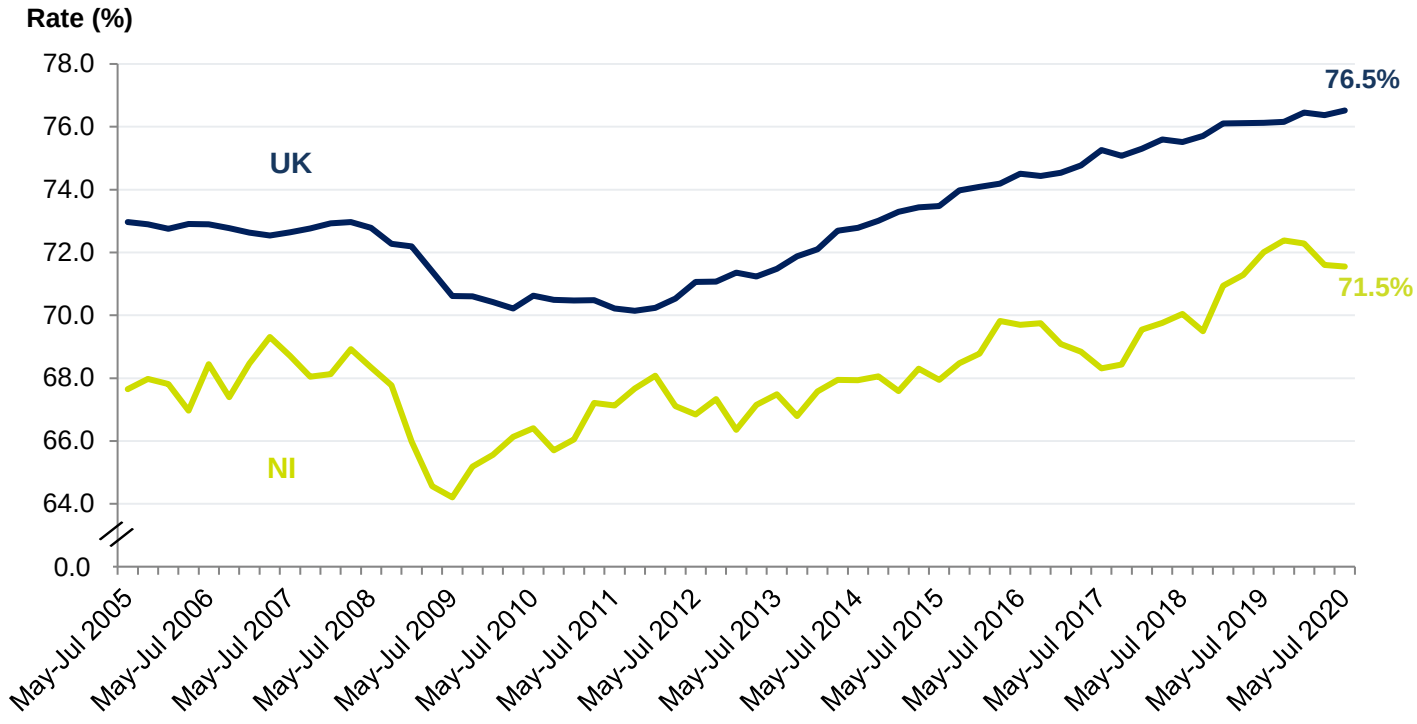
LFS employed: people aged 16 or over who did at least one hour of paid work in the reference week (whether as an employee or self-employed); those who had a paid job that they were temporarily away from; those on government-supported training and employee programmes and those doing unpaid family work. Those who are furloughed under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) are included in the estimates of 'temporarily away from work' within the employed total.

Note: *For analysis purposes, numbers refer to people aged 16 and over while rates relate to people aged between 16 and 64 years*

Key Findings

- **The employment rate decreased over the quarter and over the year to 71.5%**
- **Average number of hours worked was estimated at 28.1 hours per week for the period May-July 2020. This is 5.5 hours lower than the same period last year and one of the lowest average weekly hours estimated on record. Hours figures are not adjusted for seasonality.**

Figure 8: Seasonally adjusted employment rate (16-64), May-Jul 2005 to May-Jul 2020



Download in excel

Figure 7 shows that, over the last 15 years, the NI employment rate has been consistently below the UK average. Although showing a similar trend, the fall in the employment rate in NI between 2008 and 2009 (decrease of over 4 percentage points over one year) is steeper than the UK average.

The most recent NI employment rate for those aged 16-64 for the period May-July 2020 was estimated at 71.5%. The UK employment rate for those aged 16-64 for the same period was 76.5%. Both the male and female employment rates decreased over the year.

Employment rate (16-64 years)

The most recent NI employment rate for those aged 16-64 for the period May-July 2020 was estimated at 71.5%. This was:

- a decrease of 0.1pps over the quarter
- a decrease of 0.5pps over the year.

Annual changes by gender included:

- the male (16-64) employment rate (75.9%) decreased by 0.2pps over the year
- the female (16-64) employment rate (67.2%) decreased by 0.7pps over the year.

UK Regional comparison

The employment rate in NI (71.5%) was:

- below the UK average (76.5%)
- the lowest rate among the twelve UK regions

Employment 16+

The number of persons in employment (16+) during the period May-July 2020 was estimated at 870,000, of which 53% (462,000) were male and 47% (407,000) were female and represented;

- an increase of 2,000 over the quarter and no change over the year
- an increase over the year in the number of males who were employed by 6,000 to 462,000
- a decrease over the year in the number of females who were employed by 6,000 to 407,000.

Temporarily away from work (experimental measure)[5]

The ILO definition of employed includes those who did at least one hour of paid work and those temporarily away from work. Those who are furloughed under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) are included in the estimates of 'temporarily away from work'. Estimates not adjusted for seasonality for May to July show that:

- 165,000 or 19% were temporarily away from paid work, this includes furloughed workers.
- This compares to 45,000 (5%) in the same quarter last year.

Self-Employment[6]

Of those aged 16+ in employment, 15.3% (133,000) were self-employed, unchanged from the same quarter last year. Annual changes by gender included:

- the number of males who were self-employed increased over the year by 2,000 to 100,000
- the number of females who were self-employed decreased over the year by 2,000 to 33,000.

[5] Workers temporarily absent from a job as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, such as those on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), would still be classified as employed, but temporarily away from work. These persons could also be away from paid work for a variety of reasons such as bank holidays, maternity/paternity leave, sick/injured, between jobs, or furloughed This release includes an experimental estimate of 'Those temporarily away from work', to help users understand the composition of those in employment. Although we cannot say definitively that any observed differences are directly due to people furloughed, or otherwise away from work due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is likely to be the main driving factor for the change on the year. This figure compares the three months to June 2020 with the same period a year ago, thus eliminating any seasonal effects of people temporarily away from paid work (for example, school or bank holidays), and compares a post-lockdown period with the same period pre-lockdown.

[6] Please note that self-employment figures are not adjusted for seasonality and the % of self-employed is calculated as a percentage of the unadjusted total number aged 16+ in employment

Average weekly hours

Average weekly hours: the number of hours worked in the reference week by those aged 16 or over in employment, in their main and 2nd jobs, averaged over the quarter

Total weekly hours: average weekly hours multiplied by the total in employment aged 16 or over.

***Note**: all numbers refer to people aged 16 and over and have **not** been adjusted for seasonality. Imputation used for the Labour Force Survey was not designed to deal with the changes experienced in the labour market in recent months. Experimental work with adjusted methodology suggests the use of the existing methodology has understated the reduction in the actual numbers of hours worked by approximately 2 to 3%.*

Average weekly hours worked during May-July 2020 was estimated at 28.1 hours, this was:

- down 5.5 hours or 16% over the year;
- one of the lowest average weekly hours worked on record.

Figure 9: Average weekly hours worked (16+), May-Jul 2005 to May-Jul 2020

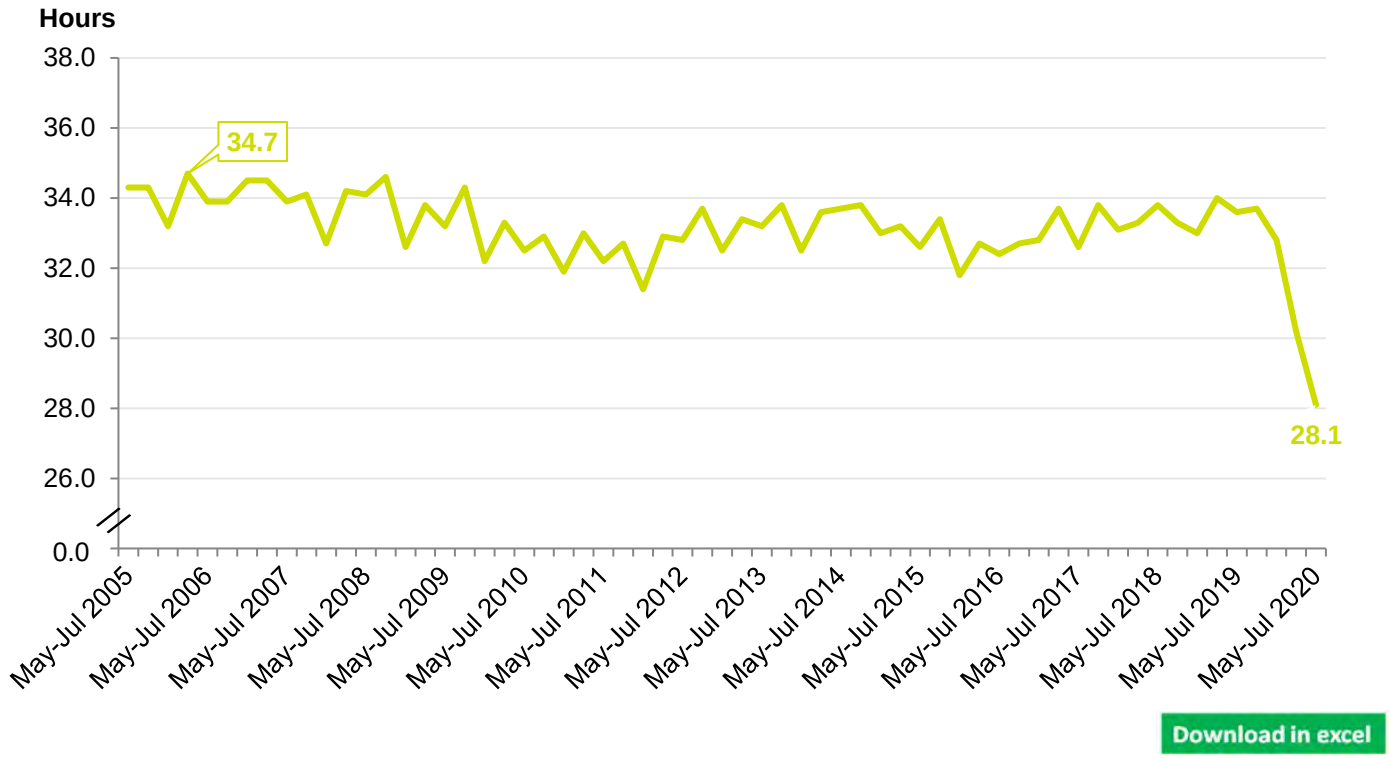


Figure 8 shows that, like many labour market indicators, estimated average hours worked shows a seasonal pattern. Outside of these seasonal variations a trend of decreasing average weekly hours worked is seen between 2005 and 2012, decreasing from between 33 and 35 hours per week to 31 and 33 hours, then increasing at a slower rate to between 33 and 34 hours per week in 2019.

The most recent time point (May-July 2020) shows the largest estimated annual decrease (5.5 hours or approximately 16%) over the last 15 years (in this quarterly series). The estimated average weekly hours worked by men and women decreased to record lows of 32.7 hours and 22.9 hours respectively (on this quarterly series).

In May-July 2020 an estimated 319,000 (37%) people worked fewer hours in the reference week than their usual hours, of which 165,000 were temporarily away from work[5]. A third (33%) worked less due to work being interrupted by economic and other causes; the most common reason for people working fewer hours.

Total weekly hours

Total weekly hours in Northern Ireland was estimated at 24.4 million hours, this was:

- down by 4.8 million hours, or 16% from May-July 2019
- the largest annual decrease on record (in this quarterly series)
- lower than the total weekly hours worked in 2009

Figure 10: Total weekly hours worked (16+), May-Jul 2005 to May-Jul 2020

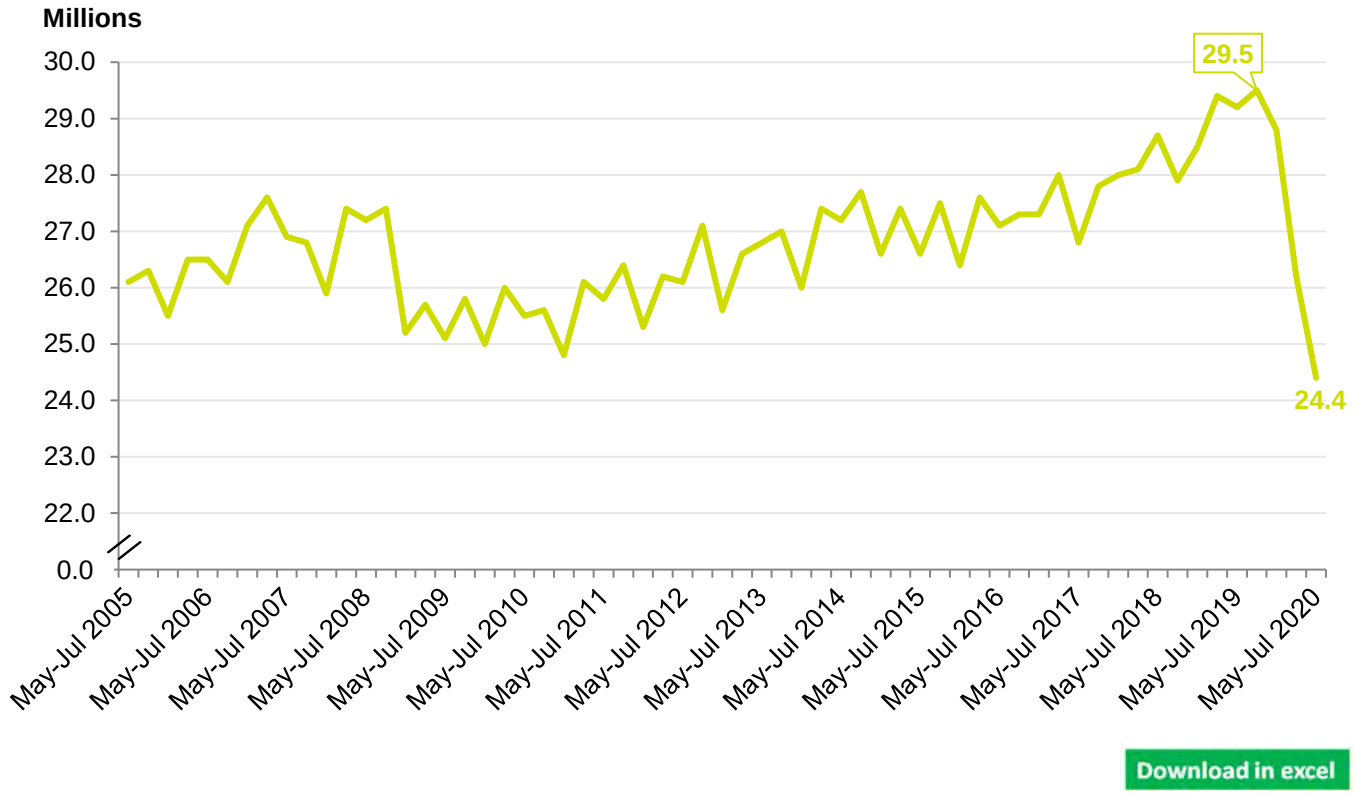


Figure 9 shows that between May-July 2019 and May-July 2020 the estimated total weekly hours worked decreased by 4.8 million to 24.4 million hours, the largest annual decrease on record (in this quarterly series). The decrease in total weekly hours worked over the year was driven by a decrease in average hours worked and not by changes in the number of people employed. The decrease in average weekly hours was driven by a decrease in men's total hours worked (2.4 million) and women's total hours worked (2.4 million).

Further information is available on the NISRA - Economic and Labour Market Statistics website:

LFS employment

Employment and hours worked

Quarterly Employment Survey (QES)

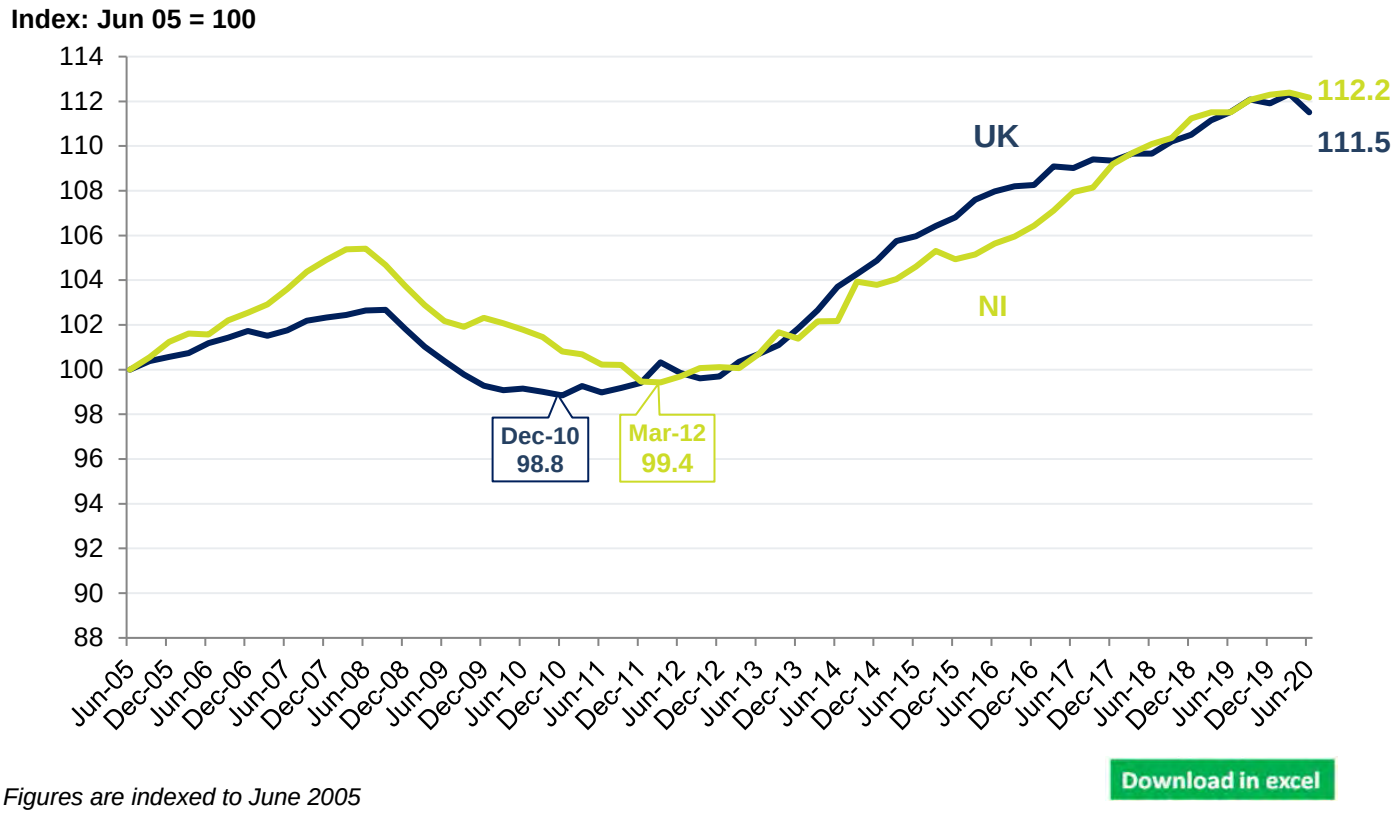
Employee jobs estimates are calculated from the Quarterly Employment Survey (QES) aspect of the Quarterly Business Survey (QBS). The QES has a sample size of approximately 6,000 companies that are asked to provide employment data for each of their business activities**. The survey date for Quarter 2 was 1st June 2020 for Northern Ireland. Those who are furloughed under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) are included in employee jobs estimates.**

QES employee: An employee is defined as anyone aged 16 years or over that is directly paid from a business's payroll for carrying out a full-time or part-time job or being on a training scheme in Northern Ireland.

Key Findings

- **Employee jobs in NI decreased marginally over the quarter to June 2020 following a peak in March 2020, which is the first quarterly decline since December 2015.**
- **The manufacturing, construction and services sectors all saw quarterly decreases to June 2020. Other industries was the only broad industry sector to report an increase over the quarter.**
- **Manufacturing was the only broad industry sector to record a decrease in employee jobs over the year, following four consecutive quarters of decline since the peak in June 2019.**
- **The annual increase of 0.3% in private sector employee jobs is the lowest rate of annual growth since September 2012.**
- **Following a period of annual decline in public sector employee jobs between June 2015 and June 2017, there have been consecutive annual increases since September 2017.**

Figure 11: Index of Employee Jobs, June 2005 to June 2020



Figures are indexed to June 2005

Figure 11 shows the estimated seasonally adjusted employee jobs, indexed to allow comparison between NI and the UK.

Since 2005, the UK reached a low point in December 2010, more than a year before the NI low in March 2012. There are now 88,580 more employee jobs in NI since the lowest point in March 2012, and 3,498,000 more jobs in the UK since December 2010.

Employee Jobs

The seasonally adjusted employee jobs total in Northern Ireland at June 2020 was 779,880, which was:

- a decrease of 0.2% (-1,540 jobs) over the quarter from the revised March 2020 estimate of 781,420. This decrease from the peak in employee jobs in March is the first quarterly decline since December 2015.
- an increase of 0.6% (4,570 jobs) over the year from the revised June 2019 estimate of 775,310.
- Neither the quarterly nor the annual changes in employee jobs were statistically significant.

Employee jobs by sector

The seasonally adjusted quarterly change consisted of:

- decreases in the services (0.1% or -830 jobs), manufacturing (0.6% or -530 jobs) and construction sectors (0.9% or -340 jobs).
- the other industries sector increased by 0.6% (160 jobs).
- an increase of 0.6% (1,360 jobs) in the public sector.
- a decrease of 0.2% (-1,000) in the private sector.

Over the year to June 2020:

- increases were seen in the services (0.9% or 5,780 jobs), other industries (3.0% or 730 jobs) and construction sectors (1.3% or 440 jobs).
- the manufacturing sector decreased by 2.7% (-2,370 jobs).
- the public sector increased by 1.4% (3,000 jobs).
- the private sector increased by 0.3% (1,960 jobs).

The annual increase of 0.3% in private sector employee jobs is the lowest rate of annual growth since September 2012. Following a period of annual decline in public sector employee jobs between June 2015 and June 2017, since September 2017 there has been twelve consecutive quarters of annual growth in public sector jobs to June 2020.

Further information is available on the NISRA - Economic and Labour Market Statistics website and further breakdowns of employee jobs by geography and industry are available from the Business Register and Employment Survey.

Impact of COVID-19 on data collection and estimates

COVID-19 impacted on the data collection and the validation of employee jobs data, which are collected on the Quarterly Business Survey. As a result, the employee jobs estimates for March and June 2020 are likely to be subject to higher revisions than normal over the coming quarters. These can be tracked through the revisions triangle which is published alongside the QES publication. Comparisons of provisional March and June 2020 employee jobs estimates at lower industry levels in particular (eg 2 digit Standard Industrial Classification level), should be treated with caution.

Comparisons between LFS Employment and QES Employee Jobs

The concept of employment (measured by the LFS as the number of people in work) differs from the concept of jobs, since a person can have more than one job, and some jobs may be shared by more than one person.

The LFS and QES measure employment in different ways. The LFS is a sample survey carried out by interviewing individuals about their personal circumstances and work. The QES is a quarterly survey of businesses which provides short term employee jobs estimates for Northern Ireland. It surveys all public sector jobs, all private sector firms with 25 or more employees, all businesses with more than one industry activity and a representative sample of smaller firms. LFS employment figures are based on a rolling three month period and QES measures the number of jobs on a particular day.
LFS employment includes those who are employed, self-employed, unpaid family workers and those on Government supported training programmes. QES employee jobs include full-time and part-time jobs and those on a training scheme and excludes self-employed.

Vacancies

Headline figures are presented for vacancies notified to the Department for Communities (DfC). A small proportion of vacancies notified are based in the UK mainland or in the Republic of Ireland. The statistics do not represent the total unsatisfied demand for staff by employers. This provides a partial picture of the true number of vacancies, as employers may advertise by other means and do not have to notify DfC of their vacancies. The 2016 Employer Skills Survey (ESS) estimated that administrative data sources account for approximately 55% of vacancies. Vacancies in a given month relate to those on the count date, are not seasonally adjusted and are subject to revision in the following periods.

For more information about vacancies data and publication dates, please see the Department for Communities website.

Full-time vacancies: Full-time vacancies include any vacancy 30 hours or over per week.

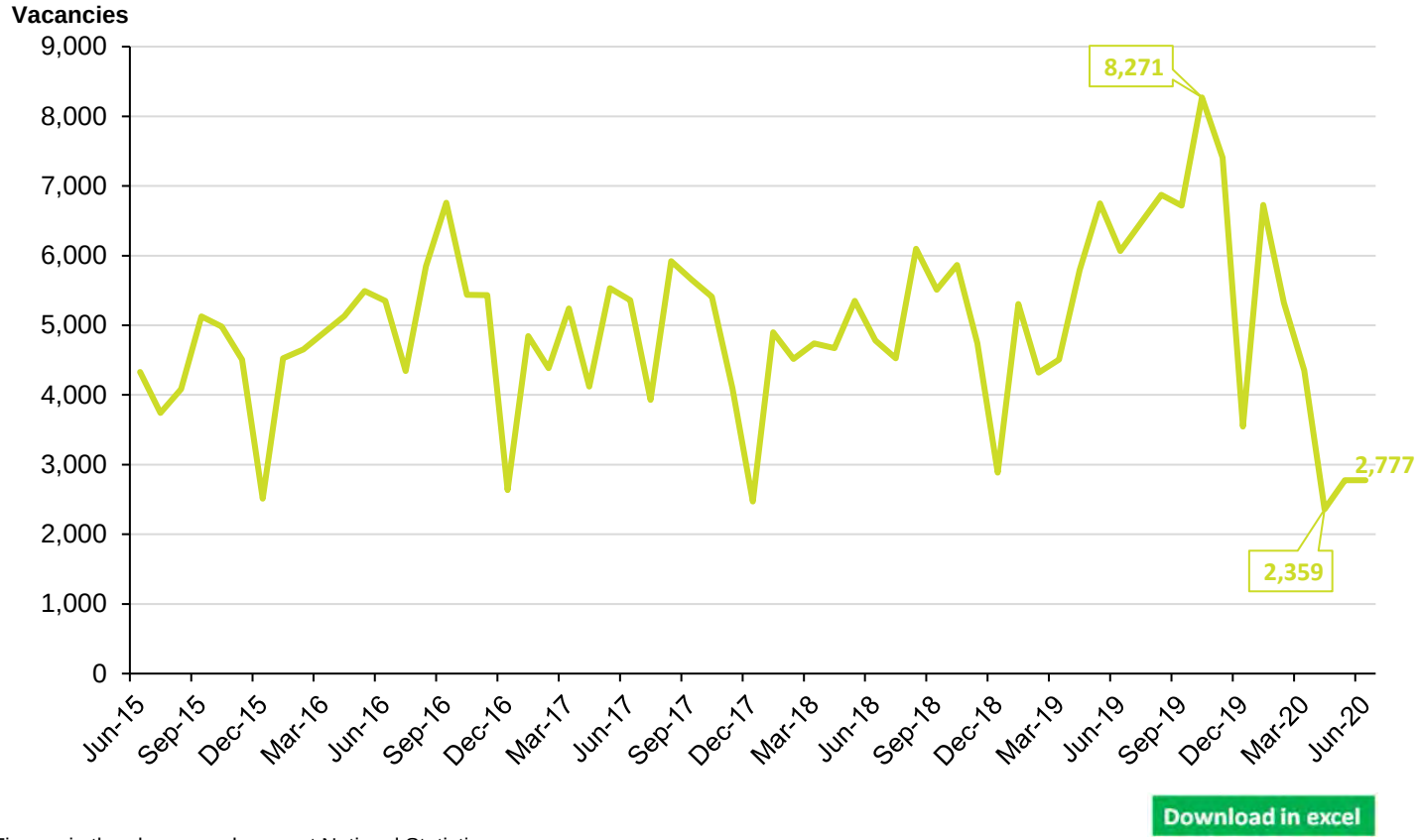
Part-time vacancies: Part-time vacancies include any vacancy between 1 and 29 hours per week.

Casual vacancies: Casual vacancies are vacancies where no regular hours are guaranteed.

Key Findings

- **There were 7,911 vacancies notified during April-June 2020. This includes full-time, part-time and casual vacancies.**
- **April showed the lowest number of vacancy postings since records began in 2014**

Figure 12: Monthly Notified Vacancies, June 2015 to June 2020



Figures in the above graph are not National Statistics.
(1) Monthly notified vacancies are all new vacancy positions notified to Department for Communities. All statistics are derived from data extracted from the Department for Communities Client Management System (CMS).
(2) Vacancies data is published quarterly and reported by financial year. Data for April-June 2020 was published in July 2020.

There were 7,911 vacancies notified during April-June 2020, less than half the number in the previous quarter and same quarter last year. During the previous quarter, 66% of vacancies were full-time. This has increased to 75% in April-June 2020, mainly due to the large decrease in part-time vacancies.

Generally, the number of vacancies notified to Jobs and Benefits Offices/ Job Centres/ DfC display a seasonal trend, with peaks in the months preceding December and troughs in December each year. During the most recent quarter (April to June) however, the numbers of vacancies each month have been more similar to those recorded at the annual low point in December.

Online job adverts data from Adzuna, released as part of ONS faster indicator series suggests a similar decrease in number of vacancies in recent months when compared to 2019 average.

Further breakdowns and background notes are available on the DfC website: DfC Statistics

UK-wide Vacancy Statistics

UK-level statistics are available on the ONS website: ONS Statistics and ONS Vacancy Survey Methodology.

Vacancy statistics at the UK level are based on a business survey. Estimates show the number of vacancies had been generally increasing in the UK since 2012, however, the number has been falling since early 2019.

The most recent figures (for the June-August period) were released on the 15th September 2020 and are available from the ONS website.

4 Economic Inactivity

Updated September 2020

LFS economic inactivity

Economically inactive: people who are neither in employment nor unemployed on the ILO measure. This group includes all those who are looking after a home, long term sick or disabled, students and retired.

Key Findings

- **The economic inactivity rate decreased over the quarter and increased over the year to 26.3%**
- **NI economic inactivity remains the highest of the twelve UK regions**

Figure 13: Seasonally adjusted economic inactivity rates (16-64), May-Jul 2005 to May-Jul 2020

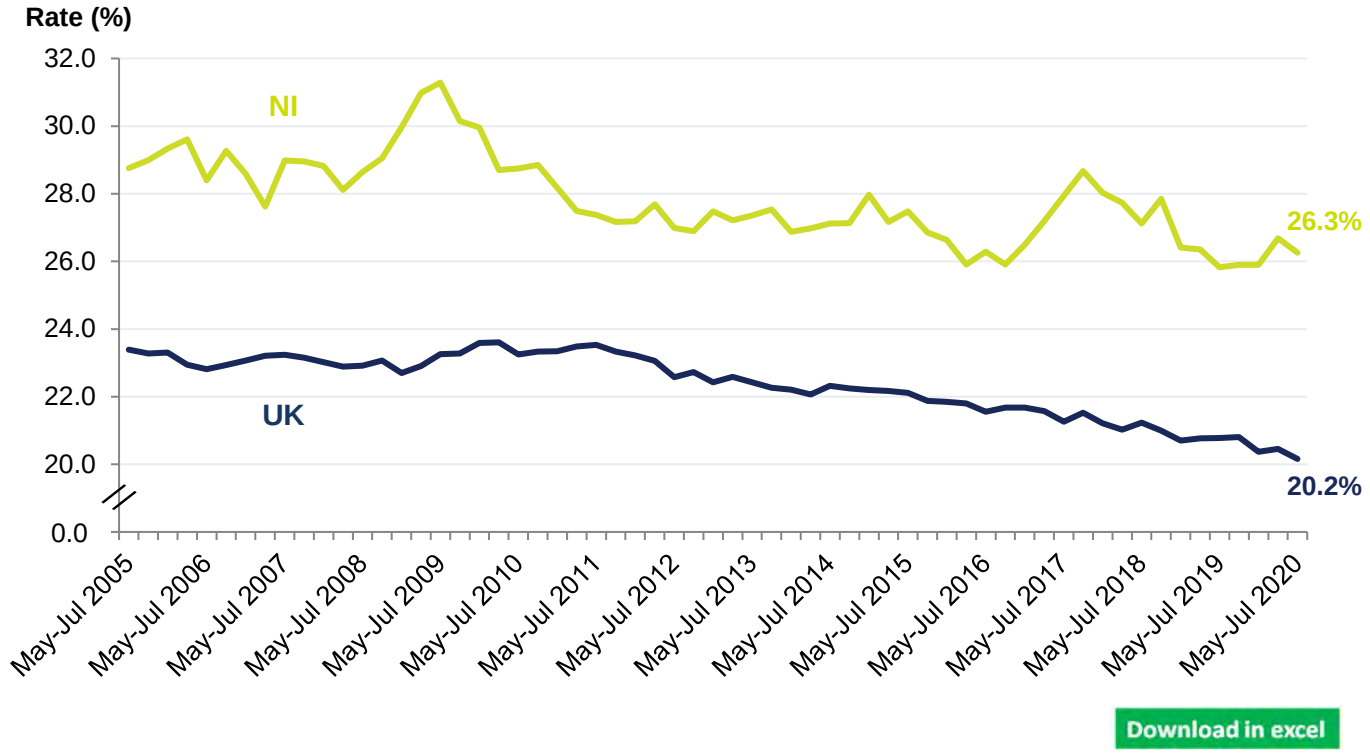


Figure 12 shows that, over the last 15 years, economic inactivity in NI has been consistently higher than the UK average. Economic inactivity peaked in NI during this time period in 2009 at over 31% compared to the peak in the UK as a whole at 23.6% in 2010. During the past 10 years, the UK inactivity rate has mostly been on a downward trend while there is a trend of decreasing economic inactivity in NI from mid-2017.

Economically inactive

The seasonally adjusted economic inactivity rate (aged 16-64) for May-July 2020 was estimated at 26.3%, which was:

- a decrease of 0.4pps over the quarter
- an increase of 0.4pps over the year.

Annual changes by age and gender included:

- the male (16-64) economic inactivity rate (21.5%) increased by 0.1pps over the year
- the female (16-64) economic inactivity rate (30.9%) increased by 0.7pps over the year
- unadjusted data show the economic inactivity rate increased for the under 35's and the 50-64's but decreased for those in the 35-49 age group

The number of economically inactive persons (aged 16-64) was estimated at 307,000, of which 41% (124,000 were male) and 59% (182,000) were female and represented:

- a decrease of 5,000 over the quarter and increase of 5,000 over the year.
- an increase over the year in the number of males who were economically inactive by 1,000 to 124,000
- an increase over the year in the number of females who were economically inactive by 4,000 to 182,000.

Reasons for economic inactivity*

The main reasons for being economically inactive (16-64), accounting for 87% or 267,000 people, include those who were inactive due to looking after a family and home, long-term/temporarily sick and disabled, being retired or being a student.

While the number of people who are inactive has increased over the year, those inactive due to being retired or a student, or looking after the family or home has decreased. The number of people inactive due to 'other' reasons including discouraged workers, not needing or wanting employment or any other reason, has increased to the second highest in this quarterly series of 38,000, an increase of 9,000 (32%) over the year.

UK Regional comparison

The NI economic inactivity rate for those aged 16-64 stood at 26.3%. This was:

- higher than the UK average rate (20.2%)
- the highest of the twelve UK regions

Further information is available on the NISRA - Economic and Labour Market Statistics website:

LFS Economic Inactivity
Economic Inactivity in Northern Ireland topic paper
Women in Northern Ireland

*Note that reasons for inactivity figures have not been adjusted for seasonality.

5 Earnings

Updated September 2020

Experimental Median monthly earnings from HMRC PAYE Real Time Information System

HM Revenue and Customs' (HMRC's) Pay As You Earn (PAYE) Real Time Information (RTI) system is the system employers use to take Income Tax and National Insurance contributions before they pay wages to employees. These data relate to employees paid by employers only, and do not include self-employment income. Data are based on where employees live and not the location of their place of work within the UK. Data are seasonally adjusted but not adjusted for inflation.

The HMRC PAYE covers the whole employee population rather than a sample of employees or companies. The data are classed as Experimental Statistics as the methodologies used to produce the statistics are still in their development phase. As a result, the series are subject to revisions.

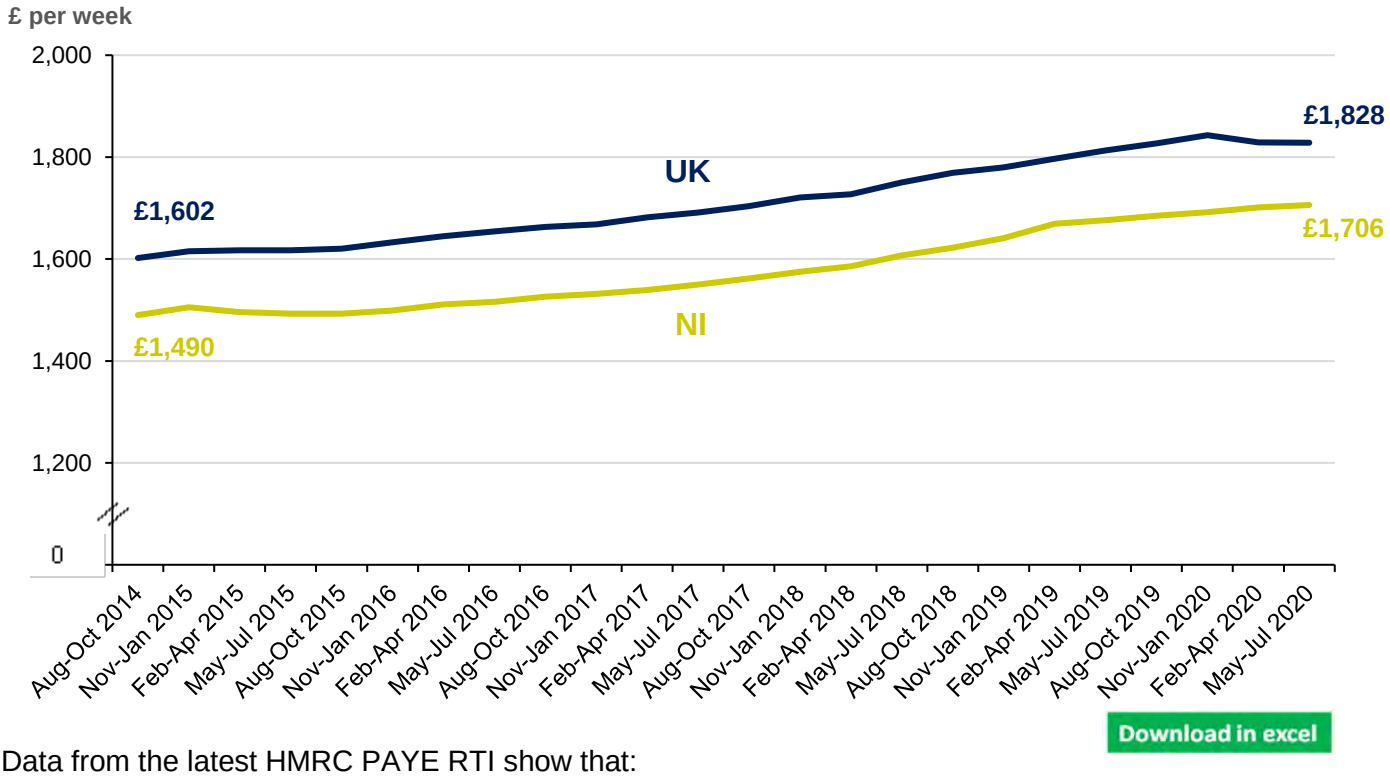
Median measures the amount earned by the average employee, i.e. the level of earnings at which half the population are above and half the population are below.

Note: *The percentage change of the median has been calculated using rounded figures.*

Key Findings

- **Median monthly pay increased by 0.3% (£5) over the quarter to July to £1,706 and was 1.8% higher than same period last year**
- **UK median monthly pay decreased by 0.1% over the quarter to July to £1,828**

Figure 14: Median Monthly Pay from PAYE RTI, Aug-Oct 2014 to May-Jul 2020



Data from the latest HMRC PAYE RTI show that:

- NI had a median monthly pay of £1,706 in the three months to July 2020, which was an increase of 0.3% on the previous three month period and an increase of 1.8% from the same time last year.
- UK had a median monthly pay of £1,828 in the three months to July 2020, which was a decrease of 0.1% on the previous three month period and an increase of 0.8% from the same time last year.
- NI had the lowest median monthly pay (£1,706) of the 12 UK regions in the three months to July 2020 and London had the highest (£2,192)
- All regional changes over the quarter were less than 1%.

Difference between PAYE and ASHE estimates.
Estimates from ASHE are the principal source of employee earnings information and are National Statistics. Estimates from PAYE provide a more timely indication of employee earnings trends and are still in the development stage. Estimates from PAYE are classed as Experimental Statistics.
ASHE is based on 1% sample of employees and produced on an annual basis, using a reference day in April. It can be used to analyse earnings by industry, occupation, geography, sex, and full- or part-time status. Headline statistics focus on gross weekly earnings for full-time employee jobs on adult rates of pay whose pay in the reference period was unaffected by absence. PAYE does not differentiate based on full-time or part-time job status, and includes those whose work was affected by absence. PAYE also measures pay per person which can include pay from more than one job, while ASHE measures pay per job.

The most comparable statistic to median earnings from PAYE is ASHE data on median gross weekly earnings of all employees surveyed, including those who work part-time. A comparison of ASHE and PAYE data based on April data in both sources shows that PAYE is typically lower, though both show the same trend. Likely reasons for this is that ASHE excludes workers whose pay is affected by absence and those not on adult rates of pay, while PAYE includes these. Further details have been published by HMRC and ONS

Further information on UK monthly pay, UK Pay distribution, methodology, data source, collection and coverage of the PAYE RTI data can be found on the ONS website.

Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE)

ASHE is a UK wide survey that provides a wide range of information on hourly, weekly and annual earnings by age, gender, work pattern, industry and occupation including public and private sector pay comparisons. The sample used comprises approximately 1% of all employees in NI who were covered by Pay As You Earn (PAYE) schemes.

Gross weekly pay includes basic pay, overtime pay, commissions, shift premium pay, bonus or incentive pay and allowances, and is before deductions for PAYE, National Insurance, pension schemes, student loan repayments and voluntary deductions.

Median measures the amount earned by the average individual, i.e. the level of earnings at which half the population are above and half the population are below.

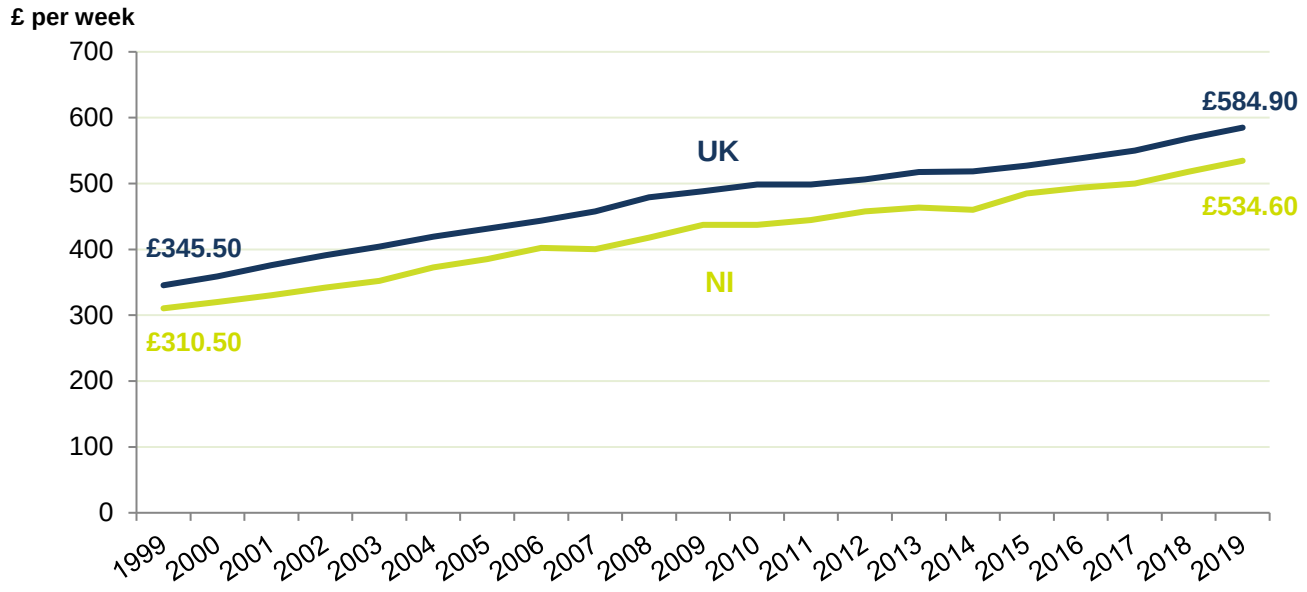
Full-time employee is defined as anyone aged 16 years or over that is directly paid from a business's payroll for carrying out more than 30 paid hours per week (or 25 or more for the teaching professions).

Gender pay gap: The headline measure is calculated as the difference between the median full-time hourly earnings (excluding overtime) of males and females, as a proportion of median full-time hourly earnings (excluding overtime) of males earnings.

Key Findings

- **Weekly earnings in NI increased by £16.80 (3.3%) over the year and by £16.60 (2.9%) in the UK**
- **Real earnings increased over the year (1.2%) and have almost returned to 2009 levels**
- **Median public sector earnings were almost a third higher than private sector earnings**
- **2019 was the tenth year where full-time females in NI earned at least as much as full-time males on average**

Figure 15: Median gross weekly earnings for full-time employees in NI and the UK, April 1999-April 2019



Note: there were a number of methodological changes during the series in 2004, 2006 and 2011 – see Section 4 of the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings publication for further information

Download in excel

Over the last 20 years, the median gross weekly earnings for full-time employees has increased by an average of £11 each year in NI. At April 2019, weekly earnings:

- were £535, £50 (8.6%) lower than the UK median (£585)
- were the second lowest of the 12 UK regions
- increased by more (3.3%) than the equivalent UK median (2.9%), however, had the joint third smallest increase of the UK regions over the year.
- when adjusted for inflation, increased by 1.2%, similar to the increase of 1.3% recorded the previous year and larger than the increase in the UK (0.9%)
- in the private sector increased by 3.4% over the year, while public sector weekly earnings increased by 0.7%
- in the public sector (£625) were 31% higher than in the private sector (£479).

Hourly earnings (excluding overtime) from the 2019 ASHE show that:

- the gender pay gap for full-time employees in NI is negative (2.9% in favour of females)
- females who work full-time earned 37p per hour more on average than males (£13.13 per hour compared to £12.76 per hour for males)
- in the UK full-time females (£13.97) earned less than full-time males (£15.34) on average; a gender pay gap of 8.9% in favour of males.

Further information is available on the NISRA - Economic and Labour Market Statistics website:
Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings

6 Further Information

Updated September 2020

LFS unemployment

The definition of unemployment used in the Labour Force Survey (LFS) is in accordance with that of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The ILO unemployed includes those without a job who were able to start work in the two weeks following their LFS interview and had either looked for work in the four weeks prior to interview or were waiting to start a job they had already obtained.

The definition of unemployment rate is the percentage of economically active people who are unemployed.

Please note that it is possible for the number of unemployed to increase and the unemployment rate to fall during the same period, as the latter measure is a ratio e.g. if the number of economically active has increased at a faster rate than the number unemployed, the unemployment rate will fall.

LFS employment

The definition of ILO employed applies to anyone (aged 16 or over) who has carried out at least one hour's paid work in the week prior to interview, or has a job they are temporarily away from (e.g. on holiday). Also included are people who do unpaid work in a family business and people on Government-supported employment training schemes.

The definition of employment rate is the percentage of all working age (16-64) people who are employed.

LFS economic inactivity

Economic inactivity is defined as those individuals who are neither in employment nor unemployed as determined by the ILO measure. This economic status includes all those who are looking after a home, are long term sick or disabled, are students or are retired.

Reporting Change and Sampling variability

Reported change is calculated using unrounded data and is presented to 1 decimal place. When a change is less than 0.05pps, it is rounded to 0.0pps and the data is reported as unchanged. 'Over the quarter' refer to comparisons between the latest quarterly estimates for the period May-July 2020 and the quarter previous to that (i.e. February-April 2020). 'Over the year' refer to comparisons between the latest quarterly estimates for the period May-July 2020 and those of the corresponding quarter one year previously (i.e. May-July 2019).

The LFS is a sample survey and, as such, estimates obtained from it are subject to sampling variability. If we drew many samples, each would give a different result. Table 2 shows the sampling variability of the estimates, and quarterly and annual changes using 95% confidence intervals. We would expect that in 95% of samples the range would contain the true value. The final column contains the confidence interval that can be used when assessing change between two independent samples. Due to the LFS five wave structure, this means it can be used to assess changes over six quarters or more. The confidence intervals have been calculated using data that are not seasonally adjusted, with the relevant sampling errors produced then applied to the seasonally adjusted data.

If the 'quarterly or annual change' of an estimate is larger than the 'confidence interval around the change', the change is statistically significant. If none of the reported changes over the year or the quarter were statistically significant, then the recorded changes did not exceed the variability expected from a sample survey of this size.

Table 2: Sampling variability of labour market estimates

May-July 2020	Estimate	Confidence interval around estimate	Change over quarter	Confidence interval around quarterly change	Change over year	Confidence interval around annual change	Confidence interval around change
Unemployment[1]	26,000	+/-6,000	5,000	+/-5,000	0	+/-8,000	+/-8,000
Employment[2]	870,000	+/-22,000	2,000	+/-17,000	0	+/-27,000	+/-29,000
Economically inactive[2]	581,000	+/-21,000	-6,000	+/-17,000	6,000	+/-26,000	+/-28,000
Unemployment rate[1]	2.9%	+/-0.7pps	0.6pps	+/-0.6pps	0.0pps	+/-0.9pps	+/-0.9pps
Employment rate[2]	71.5%	+/-1.7pps	-0.1pps	+/-1.2pps	-0.5pps	+/-2.1pps	+/-2.3pps
Economic inactivity rate[2]	26.3%	+/-1.7pps	-0.4pps	+/-1.2pps	0.4pps	+/-2.1pps	+/-2.2pps

[1] People aged 16 and over. Unemployment rate = total unemployed as a proportion of the economically active.
[2] Levels for all persons aged 16 and over, rates for working age (16-64).

Download in excel

Please see link for further LFS notes and definitions: LFS Background Information

Response Rates – Updated quarterly (last updated 11/08/2020)

The total eligible sample for the April-June 2020 LFS consisted of 4,262 addresses (1,278 chosen at random from the Land and Property Services (LPS) list of domestic properties and 2,984 carried forward from the previous quarter). A random start, fixed interval sampling technique of the addresses, which are ordered by Council Area and Ward, is used. This ensures a proportional representation across the Council Areas in Northern Ireland.

Only private household addresses were eligible, since the LFS is a survey of the private household population. Every selected address is interviewed on five successive occasions, such that in any one quarter, a fifth of the sample will be receiving their first interview, one fifth their second and so on, with one fifth receiving their fifth and final interview. This results in an 80% sample overlap between quarters.

Table 3: Response rates, April-June 2020

Fully and partially responding	2,013
Eligible sample	4,262
Response rate (%)	47.2%

*Of the addresses sampled, a small number contained more than one household and some contained households which moved during the quarter. Residents in NHS hospital accommodation (formerly called nurses' homes) and students living in halls of residence or boarding schools are included to improve the coverage of young people.

LFS Comparisons

Estimates of employment, unemployment, and economic inactivity are derived from the LFS. The most robust estimates of short-term movements in these estimates are obtained by comparing the estimates over separate three month periods. For example, estimates relating to May-July 2020 should be compared with the estimates for February-April 2020. This provides a more robust estimate than comparing with the estimates for April-June 2020, as the May and June data are included within both estimates. Effectively, observed differences are those between the individual months of April 2020 and July 2020. The LFS is

sampled such that it is representative of the NI population over a three month period, not for a single month period.

Seasonal adjustment

All estimates discussed in this Statistical Bulletin are seasonally adjusted unless otherwise stated. Like many economic indicators, the labour market is affected by factors that tend to occur at around the same time every year, for example, school leavers entering the labour market in July and whether Easter falls in March or April. To compare over months or quarters, the data are seasonally adjusted to remove the effects of seasonal factors and the arrangement of the calendar.

Thresholds

Thresholds are used to determine whether LFS data are suitably robust for publication. Estimates below a grossed value of 8,000 were previously suppressed however this has been reviewed and tables accompanying this release have been subsequently updated. Now, estimates under a cell count of 3 are disclosive and therefore supressed. Shaded estimates are based on a smaller sample size, which may result in less precise estimates, which should be used with caution. Unshaded estimates are based on a larger sample size. This is likely to result in estimates of higher precision, although they will still be subject to some sampling variability. Additionally estimates for youth unemployment and long term unemployment have been included in the report however they are based on a smaller sample size and are therefore shaded in the accompanying tables.

LFS revisions

Estimates derived from the Labour Force Survey (including estimates of employment, unemployment and economic inactivity) are calculated using 2016 based population projections and the 2017 mid-year population estimates. LFS microdata are routinely revised to incorporate the latest population estimates. The latest revisions were published in February 2019 and affect LFS data from the period June-August 2011 onwards. In addition, data from November-January 2018 onwards also reflects a boost to the LFS sample that has been rolled out from January 2018 beginning with wave 1 and was fully implemented through all 5 waves by April-June 2019. To illustrate this boost in sample size, the November-January 2017 eligible sample was 2,394 (with 1,517 of those fully or partially responding), while the December-February 2020 sample size was 3,846 (with 2,773 of those fully or partially responding). More information on the increased sample size is available in a separate paper.

A review of seasonal adjustment methodology also took place in February 2019 and affected seasonally adjusted data from June-August 2011 onwards. The majority of revisions to the unemployment rate fell within +/-0.1 percentage points and the largest revision was -0.3pps; the working age employment rate mostly fell within +/- 0.1 percentage points and the largest revision was 1.0pps. More information on the revision policy concerning labour market statistics can be found through the following link: Labour market statistics revisions policy

Data collection changes due to COVID-19

Data collection methods for the Labour Force Survey changed in March 2020 with the suspension of all face-to-face household interviews. From April, all face-to-face interviews have been replaced by telephone interviews and this is the first quarter of data where all interviews were conducted by telephone. In addition, from April, an online Labour Market Survey has been rolled out, designed to capture key labour market variables and to supplement main Labour Force Survey data.
For further information on the impacts of COVID-19 to collection and production of statistics see the COVID-19 and the production of statistics section on the NISRA website and an ONS Statement on ensuring the best possible information during COVID-19 through safe data collection.

Temporary change in release time

Due to a change in ONS release and briefing practices in light of COVID-19, from April NISRA market sensitive statistics are released at 7am and not the standard release of 9.30am. NISRA requested the temporary change in time from the Office for Statistics Regulation. Correspondence between NISRA and OSR is available on the OSR website, and more detail on the change in ONS practices is available on the ONS website.

Experimental Claimant Count (Jobseekers Allowance claimants plus some out-of-work Universal Credit claimants)

In March 2018, the NI JSA-only claimant count was replaced by an experimental measure based on JSA claimants plus out-of-work UC claimants who were claiming principally for the reason of being unemployed. The measure is categorised as experimental as the statistics are in the testing phase and not yet fully developed. ONS have produced a useful 'Guide to Experimental Statistics' and an FAQ document explaining the difference between the two measures is available on the NISRA website.

Additional data tables are published on the NISRA website and counts are available from NOMIS.

Claimant count correction note

A number of claims across the UK to the UC element of the Claimant Count were coded to incorrect locations for data relating to December 2018 to November 2019. This has been corrected for December 2019 onwards, but previous periods remain affected. The impact of the revision on NI for December 2019 was an increase of fewer than 1,000 cases.

Claimant count revisions

Seasonally adjusted estimates are revised on a regular basis. Each month the previous estimate is revised in line with the current seasonal adjustment model, giving the best estimate of change for the latest period. During the Covid-19 outbreak the seasonal adjustment parameters for the Claimant Count will be under constant review and may result in revisions to the seasonally adjusted Claimant Count. Further details and previous seasonal adjustment revisions are available from the change to claimant count measure in NI website.

Redundancy Legal Requirements

Under the Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 (amended 8 October 2006), companies are only legally required to notify the Department of impending redundancies of 20 or more employees. Companies who propose less than 20 redundancies are not required to notify the Department so there is likely to be an undercount.

Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE)

Please note, changes in NI earnings over the year and relative to the UK can be influenced by a range of factors including the timing of pay settlements, the extent of overtime and differences in the composition of the workforce. As ASHE is a sample survey, results are also subject to an associated level of sampling variability. Further information is available at: Northern Ireland Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings

HMRC PAYE

Experimental Statistics on earnings from HM Revenue and Customs' (HMRC's) Pay As You Earn (PAYE) Real Time Information (RTI) system are included in Section 5. HMRC PAYE RTI is the system employers use to take Income Tax and National Insurance contributions before they pay wages to employees. Data in section 5 relate to employees paid by employers only, and do not include self-employment income or

income from pensions, property rental or investments. Data are based on where employees live and not the location of their place of work within the UK. Data are seasonally adjusted but not adjusted for inflation. The HMRC PAYE covers the whole population rather than a sample of employees or companies. The data are classed as Experimental Statistics as the methodologies used to produce the statistics are still in their development phase. As a result, the series are subject to revisions. Background information including the methodology used to compile the statistics, strengths and limitation and a comparison with other labour market sources is available on the ONS website.

Quarterly Employment Survey (QES)

All QES data contained in the LMR are adjusted for seasonality. The seasonally adjusted series started in 2005. Public sector and private sector series are seasonally adjusted separately to the industry breakdowns. As such, the two series may differ at the NI level.

QES Revisions

QES estimates are revised quarterly to reflect the latest information provided to the Department by employers. The March 2020 seasonally adjusted estimate first published in June 2020 has subsequently been revised down 0.3%. For further details of QES revisions please see the following link: QES Revisions.

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency wishes to thank the participating households and businesses for their co-operation in agreeing to take part in the surveys and for facilitating the collection of the relevant data. For further information contact:

Labour Force Survey
Sarah Fyffe
Economic & Labour Market Statistics Branch
Floor 1
Colby House
Stranmillis Court
BT9 5RR

Tel: (028) 905 29449
Email: LFS@finance-ni.gov.uk
Web: Labour Force Survey
Twitter: @NISRA

Claimant Count, Redundancies, ASHE, HMRC PAYE
Ashleigh Warwick
Economic & Labour Market Statistics Branch
Floor 1
Colby House
Stranmillis Court
BT9 5RR

Tel: (028) 902 55174
Email: economicstats@nisra.gov.uk
Web: Labour Market and Social Welfare
Twitter: @NISRA

7 Index of Web Tables

Table No. **Title**

Labour Force Survey

Labour Market Status

Labour Market Status – Updated quarterly – *last updated 11.08.20*

Education and Training – *last updated 11.08.20*

Disability and the Labour Market – *last updated 11.08.20*

Graduates – *last updated 11.08.20*

2.36 Number of NI graduates
2.37 Number of graduates by age
2.39 Occupational groups for graduates and non-graduates

Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) – *last updated 20.08.20*

2.40 Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) 16-24
2.41 Labour Market status of young people aged 16-24
2.42 NEET rate by UK country 16-24

Households – *last updated 26.08.20*

2.43 Household type NI and UK
2.44 Households by combined labour market status of household members
2.45 Economic activity rates for females 16-64 by number of dependent children
2.46 Economic activity rates for females 16-64 with and without dependent children by age
2.47 Economic activity rates for females 16-64 by age of youngest dependent child

Claimant Count (Experimental)

3.1 Headline Time Series
3.2 Age Breakdown
3.3 Geographical Breakdown
  a. Local Government District (new 11 councils)
  b. Local Government District (old 26 councils)
  c. Parliamentary Constituency Area
  d. Travel-to-work Area
  e. Ward

Redundancies

4.1 Council Area
4.2 Parliamentary Constituency
4.3 Travel-to-Work Area
4.4 Standard Industrial Classification

Quarterly Employment Survey – *last updated 15.09.2020*

5.1 Northern Ireland Seasonally Adjusted Employee Jobs by Gender – June 2020
5.2 Northern Ireland Seasonally Adjusted Employee Jobs by Industry Section March 2005 – June 2020
5.3 Northern Ireland Unadjusted Employee Jobs by Industry Section – March 2005 – June 2020
5.4 Northern Ireland Employee Jobs (Unadjusted) by Industry Section – June 2020
5.5 Northern Ireland Unadjusted Employee Jobs by Industry Section – June 2019, March 2020 and June 2020
5.5b Northern Ireland Seasonally Adjusted Employee Jobs by Industry Section – June 2019, March 2020 and June 2020
5.6 Northern Ireland Unadjusted Employee Jobs by Industry Section – June 2020
5.7 Northern Ireland Unadjusted Public Sector Jobs – June 2020
5.8 Northern Ireland Seasonally Adjusted Public and Private Sector Employee Jobs March 2005 – June 2020

5.9	Northern Ireland Unadjusted Public and Private Sector Employee Jobs March 2005 – June 2020
5.10	Northern Ireland Employee Jobs by SIC code June 1971 to June 2020
5.11	Northern Ireland Employee Jobs by broad industry sector September 1978 to June 2020
5.12	Northern Ireland Employee Jobs for public sector December 2007 to June 2020
5.13	Northern Ireland Seasonally Adjusted Employee Jobs by Section Level June 2005 – June 2020

HMRC PAYE RTI

1.1	Median Monthly Pay from PAYE RTI - Seasonally Adjusted
1.2	Median Monthly Pay from PAYE RTI - Non-Seasonally Adjusted

Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings – *last updated 29.10.19*

1.1	ASHE 2019 (provisional)
2.1	ASHE 2019 (provisional) by industry
2.2	ASHE 2019 (provisional) by occupation (2 digit)
2.3	ASHE 2019 (provisional) by occupation (4 digit)
2.4	ASHE 2019 (provisional) by age
2.5	ASHE 2019 (provisional) by public/private sector
2.6	ASHE 2019 (provisional) by skill level
3.1	ASHE 2019 (provisional) Local Government District (by place of work)
3.2	ASHE 2019 (provisional) Local Government District (by residence)
3.3	ASHE 2019 (provisional) Parliamentary Constituency (by place of work)
3.4	ASHE 2019 (provisional) Parliamentary Constituency (by residence)