

NORTHERN IRELAND Quarterly Employment Survey – Methodological Notice

DATE: 16 December 2015

Users are advised that a change in sampling methodology was introduced to the Quarterly Employment Survey (QES) from Quarter 1 (March) 2014.

The QES sample of businesses is selected directly from the Inter Departmental Business Register (IDBR), by stratifying companies by Standard Industry Classification (SIC) 07 and company size. The sample consists of a census of dominant companies and a Neyman stratified random sample of the remaining companies. The census element consists of all public sector bodies and all private sector companies employing 25 or more employees. The sample has been designed to give sufficiently accurate results within +/- 1% of the [Census of Employment](#) total. The sample element equates to approximately 3,500 businesses, while the census element account for 2,100 businesses.

Prior to Quarter 1 2014, the QES sample element was drawn biennially by stratifying companies by SIC 07 and company size. Businesses remained on the sample for two years. This helped to provide a relatively stable time trend for employee jobs, although this tended to underestimate growth in smaller companies.

From Quarter 1 2014, the QES sample has been drawn quarterly by stratifying companies by SIC 07 and company size. Rather than hold the sample constant for two years the new sampling methodology replaces 10% of the sample each quarter. In comparison to sampling every two years this should provide a more accurate point in time estimate of employee jobs as the more up to date sample better reflects businesses in the population. In addition it helps to reduce the burden on small businesses. However, rotating the sample each quarter also introduces a degree of variability to the underlying time trend.

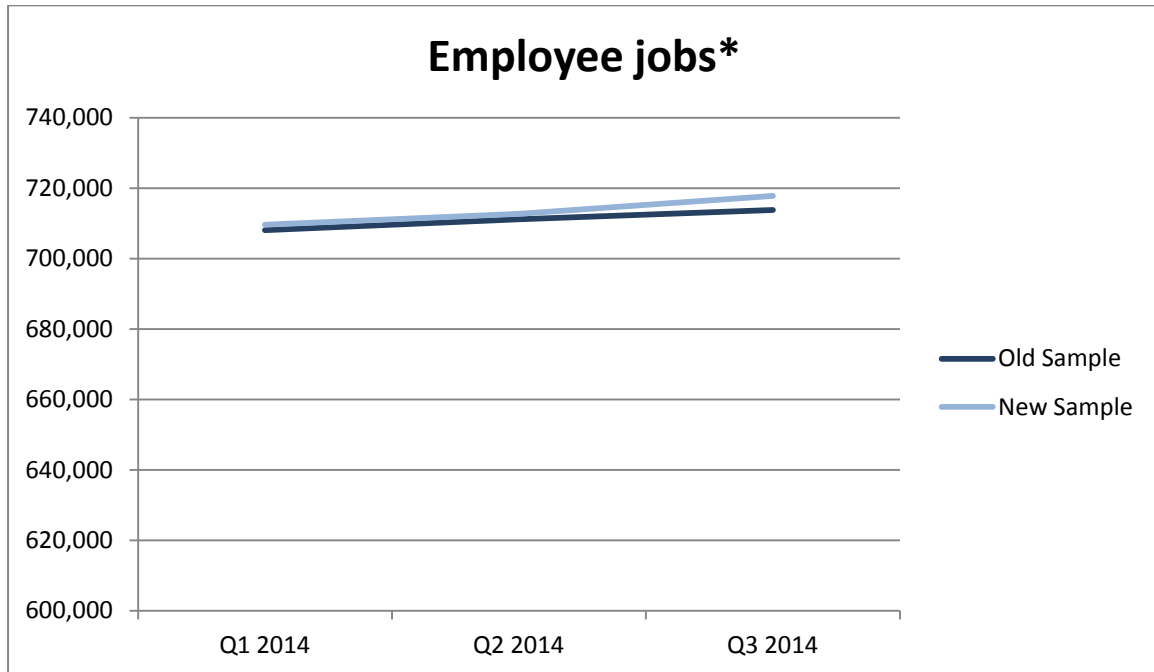
Effect of new sample methodology

For three quarters (Q1 2013 to Q3 2013), questionnaires were issued to businesses on both the new and old sample. With advice from Office for National Statistics

Methodologists, a methodology was developed to integrate the new samples with the old sample without significant changes to the back series data.

The net effect of the change in methodology is shown below:

	Old Sample	New Sample
Quarter 1 2014	708,090	709,600
Quarter 2 2014	711,170	712,730
Quarter 3 2014	713,840	717,820



*New sample as published December 2014

Further information on QES methodology is available in the [Quarterly Employment Survey Summary Methodology Guide](#).