



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



Department of  
**Finance**

An Roinn  
**Airgeadais**

# The Transformation of Labour Market Statistics in Northern Ireland

User update: April 2024

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## CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF THIS PAPER</b> .....	<b>3</b>
	Our Thanks and Appreciation.....	3
<b>2</b>	<b>OVERVIEW OF LABOUR MARKET STATISTICS AND WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>SOURCES OF LABOUR MARKET STATISTICS</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>THE LABOUR FORCE SURVEY (LFS)</b> .....	<b>5</b>
	Overview of the LFS.....	5
	History of the LFS.....	5
	LFS Data Collection.....	6
	LFS Sample size.....	6
	LFS Sample design and wave patterns.....	6
	Impact of COVID-19 on LFS data collection.....	7
	LFS Response Rates.....	8
	Weighting of the LFS sample using population estimates.....	9
<b>5</b>	<b>TRANSFORMING THE LFS IN GB (WORK BEING LED BY THE ONS)</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>TRANSFORMING THE LFS IN NORTHERN IRELAND (WORK BEING LED BY NISRA)</b> .....	<b>11</b>
	Overview of NISRA's Social Surveys.....	11
	The Potential and Need for Change.....	11
	Initiating the Change – Moving the LFS Online.....	11
	The NI Labour Market Survey (LMS) – Questionnaire.....	12
	The NI Labour Market Survey (LMS) - Field Operation.....	14
	The NI Labour Market Survey (LMS) - Processing System/ Data Quality Assurance.....	16
	The NI Labour Market Survey (LMS) - User Engagement and planned Documentation.....	17
	<b>ANNEX 1: SUMMARY OF THE LMS WAVE 1 PILOT – MAY 2023</b> .....	<b>18</b>
	<b>ANNEX 2: INDICATIVE HIGH-LEVEL COMPARISON OF LFS AND LMS CONTENT</b> .....	<b>21</b>
	<b>ANNEX 3 – LMS COMMUNICATION MATERIALS</b> .....	<b>22</b>
	Pre-note Postcard.....	22
	Invitation letter (front).....	23
	Invitation letter (back).....	24
	Reminder letter (front).....	25
	Reminder letter (back).....	26

# 1 INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF THIS PAPER

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide an update on the work that the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) has been doing to transform the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and associated Labour Market Statistics in Northern Ireland by, amongst other things, moving the LFS online.
- 1.2 As users may be aware, the work is part of a wider programme of work to transform the survey across the UK, with the Office for National Statistics (ONS) leading the work for Great Britain. NISRA and the ONS (along with representatives from the other devolved authorities) have been working collaboratively on all aspects of the initiative in order to ensure that the survey, along with the information it provides, continues to be fit for purpose and consistent across the UK.
- 1.3 The paper outlines the important economic monitoring role that labour market statistics facilitate and details the key sources involved. It emphasises the importance of the LFS in this respect, providing:
  - information on the history of the survey;
  - the data collection methodology;
  - the sample design & wave approach;
  - the impact of the pandemic on LFS data collection operations & response rates; and
  - the approach taken to weight the results from the survey in order to provide the various population based key labour market estimates (e.g. Employment rate, Unemployment rate and Economic Inactivity rate).
- 1.4 Having provided this contextual background, the remainder of the paper focuses on the transformation work that NISRA has been undertaking which, when complete, will see our key labour market statistics produced from a new online first survey known as the NI Labour Market Survey (LMS). In terms of timing, NISRA are aiming to complete this transformation work by the end of the year.

## **Our Thanks and Appreciation**

- 1.5 NISRA would like to express its sincere thanks to the General Public for their support in completing our Labour Market Surveys. Your participation in the surveys helps to ensure that the information we produce takes account of your particular labour market circumstances and is of sufficient quality and utility to inform the monitoring and development of economic policy and decision making within Government, while also supporting societal debate.
- 1.6 We would also like to express our thanks to our key stakeholders (e.g. in Department for Economy (DFE), Ulster University Economic Policy Centre (UUEPC), HM Treasury and the Office for National Statistics (ONS)) who have helped us to prioritise and shape the content of the LMS questionnaire thus far. We believe that this much needed and user centric streamlining of the questionnaire has been a key factor in securing the high and consistent levels of response that we have thus far.
- 1.7 Finally, and related to this, we would like to thank our dedicated team of experienced Survey Interviewers for the important role that they fulfil in terms of following up all non-responding households in order to encourage and actively support the General Public to take part in the survey. Your work is vital, and it is making a valuable contribution.

## 2 OVERVIEW OF LABOUR MARKET STATISTICS AND WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT

- 2.1 Labour market statistics provide a variety of important information about the nature of the labour force, including the measurement of key metrics such as employment, unemployment and economic inactivity along with the main characteristics (e.g. age, sex, disability) and circumstances of those who fall into these categories. For example, for those in employment the statistics also provide insight into aspects such as working patterns and the type of work undertaken (e.g. occupation, industry) and for those categorised as economically inactive, the main reasons for their inactivity (e.g. long-term sickness, family & home care, retirement and studying).
- 2.2 Collectively all of these statistics are widely recognised as providing a pivotal role in the monitoring of the economy and determination of economic policy. They are compiled using a variety of data sources (including surveys and administrative data) in order to provide a comprehensive view of the labour market while supporting relevant analysis, monitoring, evaluation and planning.
- 2.3 Labour market statistics facilitate the work of a wide range of users - arguably the most prominent of which is the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee, who use the information to set interest rates in order to meet the government's inflation target. Other users include central and local government, economists, financial analysts, journalists, businesses, trade unions, employer associations, students, teachers, industrial tribunals, academic researchers and lobby groups. At the international level, the data is used by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the International Labour Organization (ILO).

## 3 SOURCES OF LABOUR MARKET STATISTICS

- 3.1 In Northern Ireland, Labour Market statistics come from a variety of surveys and administrative data sources. NISRA's monthly Labour Market Report (LMR) is a key resource for users, which provides a detailed summary of Northern Ireland's key labour market indicators along with comparative data, where possible, for the rest of the UK.
- 3.2 Details of the various indicators and associated sources are provided below and can be viewed in the [March 2023 Labour Market Report](#), released on 26 March 2024.
  - **The Labour Force Survey (LFS)** is a voluntary household survey which provides self-reported information on whether people are in work (i.e. employed), out of work and looking for work (i.e. unemployed) or out of work and not looking for work (i.e. economically inactive).
  - **HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) Pay As You Earn (PAYE) Real Time Information (RTI)** is an administrative data source which provides experimental monthly estimates of payrolled employees along with median monthly earnings at the NI level.
  - **Claimant count** is an administrative data source which measures the number of people claiming benefits principally for the reason of being unemployed. NI level results are available on a monthly basis.
  - **Redundancy data** is an administrative data source providing information on both proposed and confirmed redundancies, which businesses are legislatively obligated to report to the Department for the Economy (DFE). NI level results are available on a monthly basis.
  - **The Quarterly Employment Survey (QES)** is a statutory quarterly business survey that provides short-term employee jobs estimates for NI broken down by industry (e.g. Manufacturing, Construction, Services, Other Industries combined) and for the Public & Private Sectors. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) use these estimates in the determination of quarterly workforce jobs estimates for the UK as a whole. The latest [Quarterly Employment Survey Bulletin](#), which at the time of writing was released on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024 and related to Quarter 4 of 2023, illustrates the range of information available, which is summarised in the quarterly LMR referenced above.



3.3 Further Labour Market Statistics for Northern Ireland are available through:

- **The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE)** - an annual, UK wide statutory business survey that provides a wide range of information on employee earnings (both real and nominal) and hours worked broken down by (for example) occupation, industry, Local Government District, work pattern, sex, age. Detailed gender pay gap analyses are also included along with analyses for the Private/ Public sectors with comparable UK data where possible. The most recent publication at the time of writing provided information as at April 2023 and can be found at [Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings April 2023](#).
- **The Northern Ireland Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES)** - an annual statutory business survey in Northern Ireland that provides a wide range of information on employee jobs in NI broken down by (for example) sex, work pattern, industry, Local Government District and for the private and public sectors. The most recent publication at the time of writing provided information as at September 2022 and can be found at [BRES Publication and Tables 2022](#).

## 4 THE LABOUR FORCE SURVEY (LFS)

### Overview of the LFS

- 4.1 Across the UK, the Labour Force Survey (LFS) is a survey of households living at private addresses and is the key source for headline labour market indicators such as employment, unemployment and economic inactivity. It represents the largest regular voluntary household survey outside of the decennial Census in the UK, with thousands of households across the UK surveyed every quarter. It provides a rich source of information using internationally agreed definitions about whether people are in work (i.e. employed), out of work and looking for work (i.e. unemployed) or out of work and not looking for work (i.e. economically inactive). As outlined above, it also captures useful information about the characteristics and circumstances of those who fall into these categories which, when taken together, provide a rich picture of the information needed to monitor changes in the labour market and support assessments of their impact on the economy.
- 4.2 Though a quarterly survey, the design of the LFS and data collection fieldwork procedures enable estimates of the key indicators mentioned above to be produced for overlapping rolling three-monthly periods (e.g. October, November, December and November, December, January etc). These rolling estimates are routinely published each month in dedicated Labour Market Reports, produced by each of the National Statistics Institutes across the UK, which are all published at the same time on the same day.

### History of the LFS

- 4.3 The Office for National Statistics (ONS) Social Survey division manage the Labour Force Survey in Great Britain. In Northern Ireland the data collection phase of the survey (i.e. field work) is managed by NISRA's Central Survey Unit (CSU) with the analytical, reporting and dissemination phase managed by NISRA's Economic and Labour Market Statistics (ELMS) branch.
- 4.4 The Labour Force Survey has been in operation for over 50 years and was first conducted in 1973. Initially it was carried out every two years but over time and as its use by UK government departments increased, the regularity of data capture increased with an annual survey being undertaken from 1984. A quarterly survey was run in Great Britain and in Northern Ireland from 1992 and 1994 respectively. Alongside these changes in regularity, the panel/ wave design was developed and introduced in the early 1990s, with the result that respondents answered some of the same questions for five consecutive quarterly surveys.
- 4.5 For almost 26 years (i.e. since April 1998), NISRA has published a Northern Ireland Labour Market Statistics release to the same timetable as publication of the equivalent Labour Market Statistics releases by the ONS. The nature and content of these has evolved across the UK over the years

with information disseminated and communicated through other channels such as social media and tailored dashboards. A link to the March 2023 Labour Market Report for NI is provided above.

### **LFS Data Collection**

- 4.6 Oversight for the content of the LFS questionnaire has traditionally fallen to the ONS. Over the years they have been responsible for identifying, in conjunction with other government departments, the need for new questions or changes to existing questions (e.g. to reflect legislative changes and/ or new government employment programmes) and for determining priorities given the need to constrain the duration of the interview. The questionnaire comprises a "core" set of questions (which are included in every quarter of the survey) together with "non-core" questions which are not asked every quarter. These "non-core" questions provide information that is needed less frequently. The bulk of the questions on the LFS questionnaire request information about the activities of respondents in a seven-day period ending on a Sunday, known as the reference week.
- 4.7 The LFS fieldwork in NI is conducted by a dedicated team of experienced CSU survey interviewers with the data collected using tablet computers. Traditionally, most households have been interviewed face-to-face the first time they are included in the survey and by telephone, if possible, at quarterly interviews thereafter. The questionnaire instrument facilitates Computer Assisted Interviewing (CAI) and is identical in both face-to-face and telephone modes. The LFS allows interviewers to take answers to questions by proxy if a respondent is unavailable. This is usually from another related adult who is a member of the same household. If respondents from one quarter are non-respondents in a subsequent quarter (e.g. for wave 2 to wave 5 interviews) then data is carried forward from previous quarters.
- 4.8 In order to minimise non-response, interviewers call back at non-contactable addresses a minimum of four times, two of which must be in the evening or at weekends. All interviewers have completed Achieving Cooperation Training (ACT).
- 4.9 Internal data validity checks are undertaken by the survey software as the interview progresses and these are supplemented by additional checks that are conducted once the data have been received from interviewers in the field. The principles of the checks, which are performed by NISRA statisticians in Central Survey Unit and play an important role in maintaining the quality of the data, are to ensure (for example):
- that the data contain no duplicate records;
  - that the data have the correct household structure in terms of persons in the household; and
  - that certain key variables have valid values.

### **LFS Sample size**

- 4.10 The sample for the LFS in Great Britain consists of about 80,000 addresses in England, Wales and Scotland per quarter, drawn at random from the Postcode Address File (PAF). As highlighted below, in Northern Ireland just under 1,300 new addresses are selected to join the LFS each quarter.

### **LFS Sample design and wave patterns**

- 4.11 The LFS uses a rotational sampling design, whereby a household, once initially selected for interview, is retained in the sample for a total of five consecutive quarters. The interviews are scheduled to take place exactly 13 weeks apart, so that the fifth interview takes place one year on from the first. The first quarter an address is selected is defined as Wave 1, the second quarter in the selection is Wave 2, and so on. Therefore, Wave 5 is the last time that a household will be interviewed for the main LFS. It is important to stress that it is the address that is selected for five quarters and not necessarily the particular people who live there. Therefore, it is possible to 'find' new people in the sample in Waves other than Wave 1, though the majority of people are first found in Wave 1. It is also possible for people to drop out of the sample before Wave 5 if they move to a different address.

#### 4.12 The main reasons for use a rotating sample design are:

- the precision of estimates of change over time is improved where there is overlap in the sample. Thus, better estimates of quarter-on-quarter and quarter on same-quarter-a-year-ago change can be produced with this wave design; and
- longitudinal data sets can be produced, which may be used for analysis of gross change (i.e. changes in individuals' circumstances).

4.13 The same number of Wave 1 (new) addresses are selected each quarter. As such, in any given quarter, about one-fifth of the addresses in the entire sample are in Wave 1, one-fifth in Wave 2, and so on. Thus, between any two consecutive quarters, about 80% of the selected addresses are in common. Figure 1 shows this pattern.

**Figure 1: Illustration of the LFS Five Wave Structure -Wave for each cohort by quarter**

Quarter	LFS Cohort 1	LFS Cohort 2	LFS Cohort 3	LFS Cohort 4	LFS Cohort 5	LFS Cohort 6	LFS Cohort 7	LFS Cohort 8	LFS Cohort 9	LFS Cohort 10	LFS Cohort 11	LFS Cohort 12
Jan-Mar20	W5	W4	W3	W2	W1							
Apr-Jun20		W5	W4	W3	W2	W1						
Jul-Sep20			W5	W4	W3	W2	W1					
Oct-Dec20				W5	W4	W3	W2	W1				
Jan-Mar21					W5	W4	W3	W2	W1			
Apr-Jun21						W5	W4	W3	W2	W1		
Jul-Sep21							W5	W4	W3	W2	W1	
Oct-Dec21								W5	W4	W3	W2	W1

*The labelling of Cohorts in the diagram is arbitrary, and the same colour represent the same cohort of households. Using January- March 20 as an example, we see that Cohort 5 (the dark green boxes), are having their Wave 1 interviews. In the same quarter, Cohort 4 will be having their Wave 2 interviews, Cohort 3 their Wave 3 interviews, Cohort 2 their Wave 4 interviews, and Cohort 1 their Wave 5 / final interviews. Moving on one quarter to April -June 20, and Cohort 5 are now having their Wave 2 interviews, Cohort 4 Wave 3 and so on. Cohort 1 is not interviewed in this quarter, and in its place, Cohort 6 has been selected for the first time and is on Wave 1 interviews. Since each wave contains the same number of selected addresses, there is an 80% overlap between any two consecutive quarters. For example, between January-March 20 and April -June 20, Cohort 2, 3, 4 and 5 are in common, Cohort 1 has been dropped and Cohort 6 is newly selected.*

4.14 The LFS Waves in Great Britain were first created in the build-up period of the quarterly survey (autumn 1991 and winter 1991/92). The same pattern of waves is used in both Great Britain and Northern Ireland, but for the latter an additional sample, known as a booster, existed up to 2017. For the booster, 260 new Northern Ireland addresses (in addition to the usual new sample of 780 in 2017 and 650 prior to that) were added in Quarter 2 each year, and these were spread evenly amongst the five waves. Therefore, a booster address assigned to Wave 1 had four subsequent interviews, whereas one assigned to Wave 5 had no subsequent interviews. This booster has since been replaced with a permanent boost which began roll-out in 2018 with wave 1 and completed implementation with quarter 1 2019. Including this boost, a total of 1,287 new addresses are added to the sample each quarter.

#### **Impact of COVID-19 on LFS data collection**

4.15 In response to the COVID-19 global pandemic and in line with arrangements in GB, NISRA suspended all face-to-face household interviews from March 2020, with the result that all LFS interviews up until July 2021 were conducted by telephone. This change initially resulted in a reduction in the achieved sample size, when compared to pre-pandemic levels, which in turn

affected the precision of the estimates during the pandemic. However, the achieved sample size has returned to pre-pandemic levels with, for example, recent employment rate confidence intervals broadly comparable to those prior to the pandemic.

- 4.16 Since July 2021, NISRA survey interviewers returned to field duties on the LFS, deploying a Knock to Nudge strategy. This involved them calling at sampled addresses and completing a telephone interview at a later stage. This resulted in a considerable increase in Wave 1 response rates, almost reaching pre-pandemic levels. This improvement in response at Wave 1 from July 2021 has also increased the number of households participating in the longitudinal aspect of the survey (Waves 2-5) in subsequent quarters.
- 4.17 Since July 2022, LFS Wave 1 interviews have been carried out either face-face or by telephone. Waves 2-5 then move to telephone interview, with facilitated face-face interviews if necessary.

### LFS Response Rates

- 4.18 Table 1 below shows the overall response rates for the LFS from July-September 2021 for both NI and the UK, which have been calculated using the same methodology.

**Table 1: NI and UK LFS Response rates, July-September 2021 to October-December 2023**

Period	NI Response Rate (%)	UK Response Rate (%)
July-September 2021	24.6	26.8
October-December 2021	28.2	26.6
January-March 2022	33.3	27.2
April-June 2022	43.3	27.8
July-September 2022	46.4	26.1
October-December 2022	47.4	23.6
January-March 2023	48.0	21.5
April-June 2023	47.4	19.6
July-September 2023	43.9	17.4
October-December 2023	41.9	18.8

UK data source - [Labour Force Survey performance and quality monitoring reports - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#) (Table 7 in each report)

- 4.19 In 2019, **Wave 1** response rates across the UK were consistently between 50 - 60%, with the NI average 59.3% and the GB average 54.9%. During 2020-2021, response rates fell in both regions due to the impact of COVID-19. However, since the introduction of NISRA's successful Knock to Nudge strategy in July 2021 (see Table 2 below), Wave 1 response rates in NI have by and large been approaching pre-pandemic levels.



**Table 2: NI and UK LFS Wave 1 Response Rates, July-September 2021 to October-December 2023**

Period	NI Response Rate (%)	UK Response Rate (%)
July-September 2021	55.1	37.1
October-December 2021	50.5	32.0
January-March 2022	52.6	35.8
April-June 2022	48.5	31.9
July-September 2022	50.4	31.5
October-December 2022	54.0	29.7
January-March 2023	52.9	28.7
April-June 2023	50.8	27.9
July-September 2023	53.9	30.5
October-December 2023	48.4	34.0

### **Weighting of the LFS sample using population estimates**

- 4.20 The LFS collects information on a sample of the population. To enable inferences to be made from the sample to the entire eligible population the sample data must be weighted. This entails assigning each responding or imputed case, a weight, which can be thought of as the number of people in the population which that case represents. These weights are calculated so that they sum to a set of known population totals, and the weights of an entire dataset will sum to the eligible population of the UK.
- 4.21 Population weighting serves several purposes. It ensures that estimates reflect the sample design so that cases with a lower probability of selection will receive a higher weight to compensate. It also compensates for differential non-response among different sub groups in the population, and therefore helps to guard against potential non-response bias. The use of weights also allows totals, as well as means and proportions, to be estimated more easily; and weights may reduce standard errors when the calibration model is included in the variance estimator.
- 4.22 The LFS uses calibration weighting to assign a calibration weight to each responding individual. These calibration weights are set to sum to a set of calibration totals within calibration groups – for example, the weights of all 18-year old males in an LFS dataset (a calibration group) will sum to the population total of eligible 18-year old males in the UK (a calibration total) at the time the survey was taken. Calibration weighting typically involves calculating a design weight, making adjustments for non-response, and finally calibration to population totals.
- 4.23 The LFS assigns a calibration weight to all responding or imputed individuals but does not assign a weight to non-responding individuals. Standard LFS practice in the case of individuals dropping out between waves is to roll their data forward by one quarter – this is a form of imputation, and these individuals receive a weight. As the LFS sampling fraction in NI is different from that in the rest of the UK, the design weight is adjusted accordingly and will be different to that used in the rest of the UK.
- 4.24 Currently the LFS weighting consists of 5 calibration groups:
- Partition 1:** Individual Local Authority Districts (433 calibration groups in this partition).
  - Partition 2:** GB/NI by sex for the ages 0-15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25+ (44 calibration groups in this partition).

**Partition 3:** Male/Female by Government Office Region (GOR) and Age-Groups (288 calibration groups in this partition).

**Partition 4:** GB/NI by sex for the age groups 0-4, 5-9, 10-15, 16-19, 20-24, 25-29, 30-34, 35-39, 40-44, 45-49, 50-54, 55-59, 60-64, 65-69, 70-74, 75-79 and 80+ (68 calibration groups in this partition).

**Partition 5:** GB/NI by reference week. (As there are two regions and 13 weeks in this partition, there are  $2 \times 13 = 26$  calibration groups in this partition).

- 4.25 There are therefore  $26 + 68 + 288 + 44 + 433 = 859$  calibration groups, and each responding/imputed individual will be in five of them.
- 4.26 The LFS is calibrated using Statistics Canada's Generalised Estimation System (SAS-GES) software, a tailored set of programs designed for calibration weighting.

## **5 TRANSFORMING THE LFS IN GB (WORK BEING LED BY THE ONS)**

- 5.1 In 2014, ONS published a [National Statistics Quality Review of Labour Force Survey](#) containing some important recommendations to improve the design of the LFS and the quality of its outputs, such as:
- introducing online data collection;
  - exploring the potential of identifying priority areas in the field and allocating resources more flexibly to these areas;
  - moving to AddressBase as the sampling frame for residential households; and
  - exploring the option of using a rolling reference week rather than a fixed reference week.
- 5.2 Following that review, ONS undertook a transformation programme to address the recommendations. The transformation was initially developed using a prototype survey instrument known as the Labour Market Survey (LMS). The transformation also focused on a respondent-centred design for the development of survey questions.
- 5.3 ONS have conducted a series of large-scale quantitative tests, which were mostly online-only tests of households sampled from across Great Britain. They focused on survey design factors such as respondent materials, incentives and contact strategies.
- 5.4 In March 2020, ONS launched the Transformed Labour Force Survey (TLFS) in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. At that time, the survey only allowed online response in line with Government guidance.
- 5.5 From February 2022, the ability for respondents to answer the survey by telephone was formally provided as an option and in November 2022, targeted knock-to-nudge processes were rolled-out across the whole survey.
- 5.6 Further research, development, monitoring of ongoing progress of the survey, and improvements to the content of the questionnaire have been implemented on an ongoing basis throughout 2023 with a view to delivering the transformation in 2024.
- 5.7 Updates on the Labour Market transformation can be found at: [Labour market transformation – update on progress and plans - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#).

## **6 TRANSFORMING THE LFS IN NORTHERN IRELAND (WORK BEING LED BY NISRA)**

### **Overview of NISRA's Social Surveys**

- 6.1 NISRA, as the principal source of Official Statistics and social research on Northern Ireland, provides services to a wide range of Government Departments and Non-Departmental Public Bodies to assist the policy development process and delivery of their business objectives. These services and the resultant statistics and research produced play an integral part in informing and monitoring public policy, strategies and plans as well as academic and private sector research and, importantly, wider societal debate.
- 6.2 A core component of NISRA's work in the Department of Finance includes the end-to-end planning and delivery of all voluntary social surveys in NI for Government Departments and other clients. These span areas such as health, education, community safety, travel, living conditions, living costs & food, family resources and the labour market. As with all of these surveys, the data collection phase of the Labour Force Survey (LFS) in NI has been conducted by NISRA's CSU. Historically, however, the ONS has processed the data in line with the processing of the GB LFS data before passing it back to NISRA to facilitate the production and dissemination of results for NI.
- 6.3 Currently all NISRA surveys are carried out by a field force of circa 250 experienced survey interviewers covering some 50,000 addresses per annum across all of NI, in the form of telephone and face-to-face interviews. There are however some drawbacks to carrying out surveys in this way including some interviews taking up to 90 minutes, rising costs, falling response rates and managing the considerable turnover of interviewers since the pandemic. There is also a demand for more robust statistics with smaller confidence intervals, requiring larger sample sizes, which increase both workloads and costs further. Finally, there is a growing societal expectation that engagement with government will be online by default, with government responding by introducing online facilities for many of its 'everyday' services.

### **The Potential and Need for Change**

- 6.4 It is widely recognised and accepted that the 2021 Census in Northern Ireland was a huge success. It built on the initiative taken in the 2011 Census to provide the general public with the facility to complete their Census questionnaire online, with some 15% of returns being made in this way. The 'online first' approach adopted for the 2021 Census saw this proportion significantly rise to 81%, with the associated development and operational work considerably enhancing NISRA's ability and expertise in the space of online data collection.
- 6.5 From a proof of concept perspective, many important aspects of the 2021 Census operation (e.g. Census Test, Census Coverage Survey, Census Quality Survey, Enumeration of Communal Establishments) were successfully conducted on-line by NISRA. These large-scale exercises, along with other internal NICS deployments (e.g. for staff surveys), have provided a solid evidence base of NISRA's capability (both technically and professionally) to transform its social survey offering to an online first methodology. Specifically, the work has demonstrated that well designed easy to complete online surveys of a suitable length and duration – appropriately supported by dedicated field follow-up operations – can be successfully and efficiently deployed to collect and report robust data from households through voluntary self-completion questionnaires. The fact that NISRA's NI statutory Business Surveys are all now predominantly conducted online, albeit via a different platform and approach, reinforces this concept.
- 6.6 As highlighted in Section 5 above, the ONS have already embarked on a significant programme of work to transform the Labour Force Survey in GB with the aim of moving the survey online, which (when completed) will bring to an end their processing of GB and NI LFS data. Against this background and notwithstanding the 'need for change' points presented in para 6.3, this necessitated a corresponding and tailored change to the approach taken locally by NISRA.

### **Initiating the Change – Moving the LFS Online**

- 6.7 At the outset of NISRA's LFS transformation project it was agreed that the NI LFS replacement would be known as the NI Labour Market Survey (LMS). As the project progressed, it was recognised that the work would include:

- the development of a locally tailored and shortened NI questionnaire to make it suitable for online completion, while delivering agreed priority information needs for the continuance of UK level Labour Market Statistics;
  - the implementation of a dedicated and targeted field operation in order to optimise response to the survey and, in turn, the utility of the statistics delivered via the survey;
  - the development of a local processing system, in collaboration with colleagues at the ONS, in order to bring the processing in-house for the first time, building on experience gained through the successful processing of the 2021 Census in NI;
  - the production and quality assurance of preliminary LMS results in advance of 'go-live' to ensure they are fit for purpose; and
  - active engagement with users along with the development of appropriate supporting materials to document key developments and methodological changes in this space.
- 6.8 Each of these areas is summarised below and, as indicated, should be read in conjunction with the information included in the relevant Annexes. At the time of writing, the high-level aim of the project was to deliver the first NI LMS based Labour Market bulletin by the end of the financial year, subject to adequate funding & resources being available.
- 6.9 While acknowledged there are benefits to the ONS and NISRA timings being harmonised, NISRA's ability to do so will very much depend on (i) available resources, (ii) the results of the Data Processing/ Quality Assurance work that has still to be undertaken and (iii) ONS's timescales for switching to its TLFS.

### **The NI Labour Market Survey (LMS) – Questionnaire**

- 6.10 The NI LFS has historically collected a lot of information over and above key labour market data. Indeed, a certain amount of the information being collected was replicated and readily available via other surveys (e.g. questions relating to health) and was either (i) of insufficient quality/ utility to support meaningful analyses because of the level of response/ completion and/or (ii) not being used.
- 6.11 At the outset, it was recognised that a considerably shortened and locally tailored questionnaire would be required in order to make the survey suitable for online completion. NISRA's hypothesis was that the longer the questionnaire the less likelihood of receiving a response and, more specifically, the less likelihood of receiving a full response (i.e. all questions being answered fully).
- 6.12 The 2021 Census online questionnaire provided a constructive benchmark / target for the duration of the online LMS questionnaire - for a two-person household it typically could be completed in around 20 minutes.
- 6.13 In developing the online LMS questionnaire, the key drivers were to:
- endeavour to ensure that the vast majority of key outputs currently produced from the NI LFS by NISRA's ELMS branch could continue to be produced thus ensuring customer needs are met;
  - work closely with the ONS to ensure that the key labour market statistics (e.g. employment, unemployment and economic inactivity) are consistent across the UK; and
  - consult with stakeholders to ensure as far as possible that their needs will be met from the new online survey.
- 6.14 The work entailed undertaking a detailed assessment of the questions required to deliver the current key LFS based outputs produced by NISRA along with those required to produce agreed priority outputs at the UK level, with the latter managed by a dedicated team comprising subject matter experts from both NISRA and the ONS.

- 6.15 The resulting prioritised questions were then developed and incorporated into an online questionnaire, which underwent significant internal testing during March 2023 using NISRA staff before moving to an external pilot in May 2023 involving a sample of 1,000 address in Northern Ireland. Key findings from the successful external pilot, which paved the way for the official launch of W1 of the survey in October 2023, are in Annex 1.
- 6.16 The W1 questionnaire was adapted for W2, with the specific aims of (i) shortening the questionnaire to allow faster response by households whose composition hadn't changed and (ii) capturing user needs in respect of 'work quality/ good jobs'. In respect of the first of these, a question was included to establish if there has been any change in the household structure since Wave 1. If not, routing enabled the bypassing of questions relating to household relationships, country of birth, passport, national identity, ethnicity, and religion. Similarly, if respondents hadn't changed job in the last three months, then SIC and SOC questions were not asked again at Wave 2. Finally, the qualifications section was not repeated in full at Wave 2, unless the respondent indicated that they had gained any new qualifications in the last three months.
- 6.17 The following provides a high level summary of the content of the LMS questionnaire in terms of the information captured in respect of the composition of the household along with the demographic characteristics of those living there, health conditions, labour market characteristics, training, education and work quality/ good jobs (asked in Wave 2 only). This should be read in conjunction with the summary table in Annex 2 (which provides an indicative high-level comparison of LFS and LMS questionnaire content) and [LMS and LFS Mapping document](#) which details the questionnaire variables in the LMS and provides a comparison to the variables contained in the existing LFS, highlighting the changes and similarities between them.
- Household information – number of people, age, sex, relationship between the people and tenure.
  - Demographic information –marital status, country of birth, ethnicity, national identity, religion and passports held.
  - Health information – any illness or conditions, expected to last 12 months+, type of health conditions, does it reduce your ability to carry out day-to-day activities.
  - Labour market information - main and second job (if applicable), employee/self-employed, full/part time, manager/supervisor, whether the job is permanent, temporary or casual, zero hours contracts, hours worked in the previous week and normal hours per week, job title, main duties and main activities of organisation, length of employment, redundancies, along with various reason if applicable for not working, working part time, different hours, temporary or casual work.
  - Education/Training – courses, apprenticeships and training.
  - Qualifications – highest level of qualifications.
  - Work quality questions (specifically designed for Wave 2).
- 6.18 In arriving at the final questionnaire, content that was not considered business critical to a labour market survey or which can be obtained from other sources was removed. This was essential in order to manage the length of the questionnaire and included, for example:
- information on smoking and health, which can be obtained from the Health Survey;
  - information on income which can be obtained from the Family Resource Survey;
  - information on earnings, which can be obtained from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earning;
  - information on wellbeing, which can be obtained from the Continuous Household Survey; and
  - information on accidents at work, which can be obtained from the Health & Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI).



- 6.19 It is important to stress that another important parallel strand of work will examine the feasibility of linking the LMS data to other sources in order to enhance the survey with appropriate administrative data. NISRA has considerable experience in this space through its work on, for example, the NI Administrative Research Initiative (ADR). Accordingly, the Agency will seek to exploit such opportunities that may arise - resources and other priorities permitting.
- 6.20 Against all of this background, the questionnaire development work for the LMS undertaken to date represents the start of a journey for NISRA to move its household based social surveys to an online first approach. The proof of concept has been well tried and tested through the successful deployment of the 2021 Census online questionnaire and associated field operations, the LMS pilot conducted in May 2023 and the work already completed since the LMS questionnaire went into the field in October 2023. The deployment of a 'modular approach' to the LMS enables the questionnaire content to be tailored at individual waves if needs be and, in keeping with best practice, will be kept under review in order to endeavour to meet future priority information needs that may arise.

### **The NI Labour Market Survey (LMS) - Field Operation**

- 6.21 The LMS field operation is very similar in design to the successful field operation that has been deployed on the LFS, with the five quarterly wave structure and households being retained in the sample for a total of five consecutive quarters. The main difference is the online first approach and, in view of that, a significant boost of 70% being applied to the weekly sample size resulting in 170 households (rather than 100) being invited to take part each week. As with the LFS, all non-responding Wave 1 Households are followed-up through NISRA's successful knock-to-nudge strategy, which was first deployed in July 2021 and was a major contributing factor to the success of the 2021 Census Coverage Survey.
- 6.22 Three locally tailored communication materials support the operation and are issued to each sampled household as appropriate. The first is a pre-notification postcard informing the household they have been selected to take part while providing information about the survey and what will happen next. The second is an invitation letter with a link to the online survey and a unique household access code along with details of how to take part by phone should that be preferred. The final communication is a reminder letter, which will only be issued to those households that don't complete the survey by a certain date or who haven't contacted the office to say that they refuse to take part. An example of these important NI tailored communications is included in Annex 3. As with the LFS, a £10 incentive, in the form of a post-office cash voucher, is offered to all those households who complete the questionnaire.

### ***Wave 1 Response Rates across first 19 Completed Cohorts***

- 6.23 As highlighted above the Wave 1 questionnaire went into the field at the start of October 2023, followed by the Wave 2 questionnaire in early January 2024. At the time of writing 22 cohorts, each comprising of 170 households, had received the Wave 1 questionnaire. The results to date have been encouraging with an overall response rate<sup>1</sup> of 63% across all cohorts and with an impressive 96% of those households fully completing the W1 questionnaire. The latter provides solid evidence that the vast majority of those who start to complete the online LMS questionnaire finish it, which is true irrespective of which geographical region or Multiple Deprivation Measure (MDM) Decile they represent.
- 6.24 In terms of response rates across the Local Government Districts (LGDs), the results have ranged from 53.7% in Belfast to 70.4% in Lisburn & Castlereagh. Indeed, in all but three of the LGDs, the overall response has exceeded 63%. In terms of the Multiple Deprivation Measure (MDM) Deciles, the response rates have ranged from 47.3% in the 10% most deprived areas to 67.9% in the 10% least deprived areas. The variation in Wave 1 response rates across LGDs and the MDM deciles are well within the desired tolerances being pursued across the UK (i.e. the response rate in the

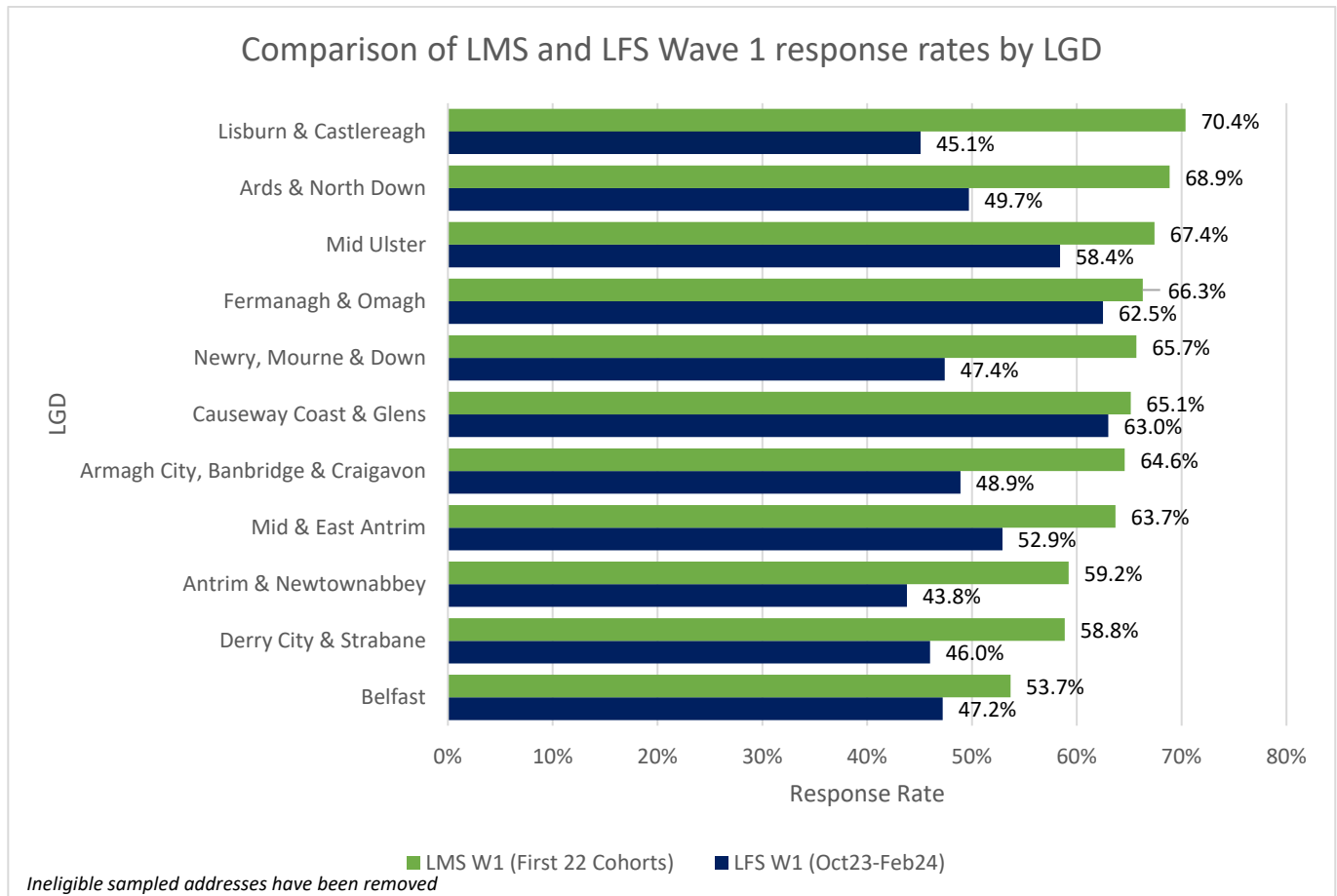
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<sup>1</sup> The response rate is based on the total number of full and partial completes achieved, divided by the effective sample. The effective sample is the total number of addresses sampled minus any addresses found to be ineligible (i.e. addresses which are not occupied or not capable of being occupied).

best performing area should be no more than twice that in the worst performing area). See Figures 1 and 2 below.

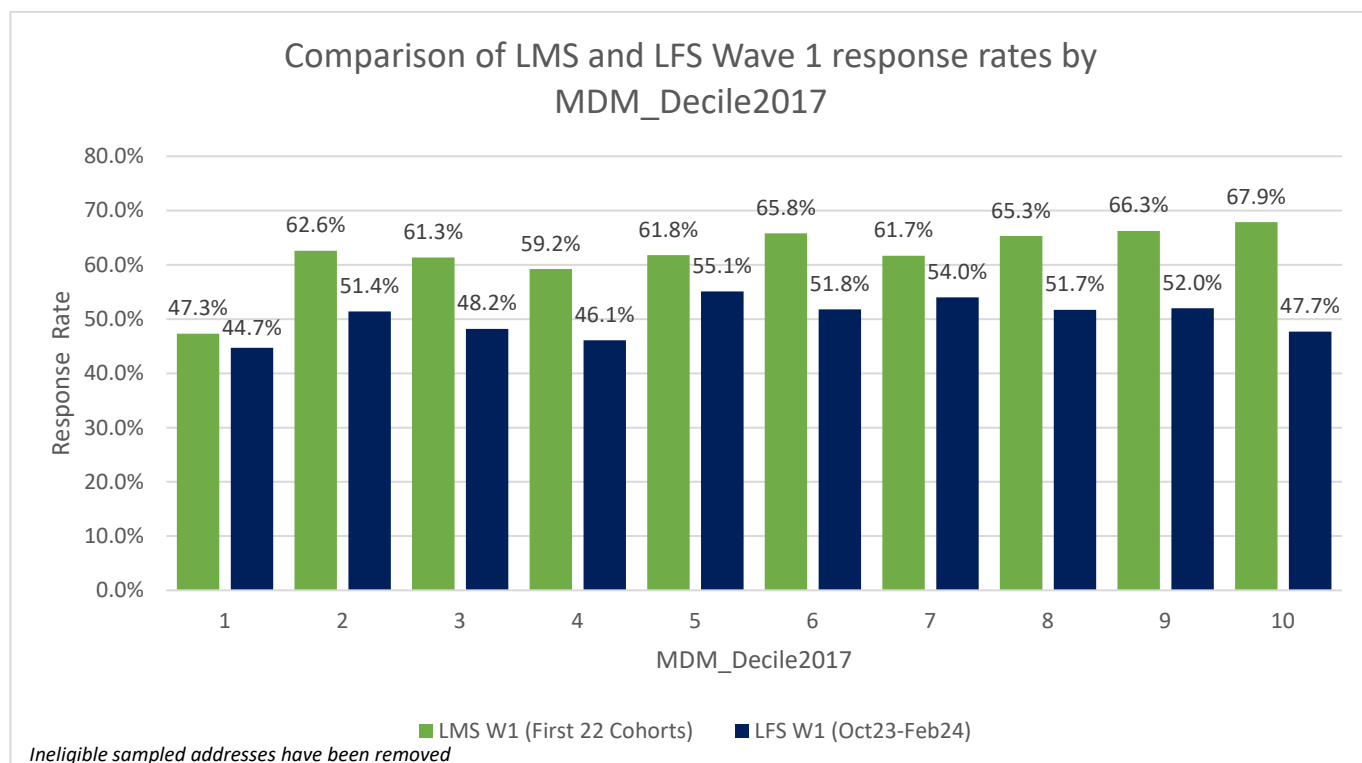
6.25 Figure 1 shows the corresponding LMS (first 22 cohorts) and LFS (Oct23-Feb24) Wave 1 response rates by LGD. Comparing the LMS with the LFS, the LMS has outperformed the LFS in each of the 11 LGDs. The largest difference in response rates between the two surveys occurred in Lisburn & Castlereagh, where a 45.1% response rate was achieved on LFS but the LMS response rate peaked at 70.4%. The smallest difference in response rates occurred in Causeway Coast & Glens, where the response rate of the LMS (65.1%) was only 2 percentage points more than that of the LFS (63.0%).

**Figure 1: LMS and LFS Wave 1 response rates by LGD**



6.26 Figure 2 shows the corresponding LMS (first 22 cohorts) and LFS (Oct23-Feb24) Wave 1 response rates by MDM Decile. Comparing the LMS with the LFS, the LMS has outperformed the LFS in each MDM Decile. The largest difference in response rates between the two surveys occurred in the least deprived decile, where a 47.7% response rate was achieved on LFS but 67.9% was achieved on the LMS. The smallest difference in response rates was observed in the most deprived decile, with a response rate on LFS of 44.7% but only 47.3% on LMS.

**Figure 2: LMS and LFS Wave 1 response rates by MDM Decile**



6.27 As mentioned above, the Wave 2 questionnaire was first deployed in the field in early January 2024 and, to date, has been issued to 14 cohorts. While early indications are that it too is working well in the field, further information will be provided to users in due course when sufficient data has been collated and processed.

### **The NI Labour Market Survey (LMS) - Processing System/ Data Quality Assurance**

6.28 As outlined above, the ONS has historically processed the NI LFS data alongside the corresponding data collected in GB. This NI processed data was then passed back to NISRA to facilitate the production and dissemination of results for NI, with all results across the UK being released on the same day at the same time to a pre-agreed and published schedule.

6.29 The ONS's transitioning to the TLFS in GB along with NISRA's transitioning to the LMS in NI gives rise to the need for a new data processing system for the information collected through the new surveys. In light of emerging differences between the TLFS and LMS sample sizes, field operation designs, questionnaire content and likely timescales for transitioning, the ONS and NISRA are collaborating on building the processing systems for their respective surveys. This new, but necessary, area of development for NISRA will build on local knowledge and experience of current LFS data processes, while capitalising on experience gained through NISRA's end-to-end processing of NI statutory Business Surveys and the successful 2021 Census.

6.30 In terms of the collaborative work and in recognition of the significant challenges with this particular strand of the project, NISRA and the ONS have created a dedicated team with subject matter experts from both organisations working towards delivery of the first UK Labour Market outputs from the NI LMS and GB TLFS. The LMS weighting methodology in NI will align as closely as possible to the weighting of the TLFS in GB, while reflecting the considerably smaller sample size in NI (when compared to that in GB). While the weighting of the current Labour Force survey is undertaken using SAS-GES, both the ONS and NISRA plan is to move to the open source software R package ReGenesees to produce population-level data for the TLFS and NI LMS.

6.31 The weighting process for the NI LMS data will comprise of three strata (namely LGD, sex and age) split across two partitions and a total of 43 calibration groups as outlined below, with the oldest age category being that of 75 and over. This will be used to assign a calibration weight to each responding individual.

6.32 The NI calibration groups are:

**Partition 1** –Local Government Districts -11 calibration groups.

**Partition 2** –Male/female for the age groups 0-4, 5-9, 10-15, 16-19, 20-24, 25-29, 30-34, 35-39, 40-44, 45-49, 50-54, 55-59, 60-64, 65-69, 70-74, 75 and over - 32 calibration groups.

6.33 The aim of the project is to complete the build of the end-to-end data processing system (e.g. the specification, development and testing of: all of the necessary LMS derived variables; the weighting system and outputs production & dissemination system) as quickly as possible in order to facilitate the first release of an LMS based Labour Market Bulletin by the end of the financial year. As highlighted above, these timings are subject to adequate funding & resources being available, which will have a bearing on NISRA's ability to harmonise with ONS's timings.

6.34 NISRA acknowledges the considerable proof of concept, development and testing work that the ONS has undertaken in this space and very much appreciates the considerable support and sharing of expertise willingly afforded by colleagues at the ONS.

6.35 Users will be kept apprised of these developments along with NISRA's LMS data quality assurance work through further information updates as appropriate.

### **The NI Labour Market Survey (LMS) - User Engagement and planned Documentation**

6.36 As outlined in the introduction, the purpose of this paper is to provide an update on the work that NISRA has been doing on the Transformation of Labour Market Statistics in Northern Ireland. It supplements, and should be read in conjunction with the [Labour Market User Group Presentation - 15th November 2023](#).

6.37 We trust that users will find it informative. Further updates will follow as the project matures via tailored papers, supporting documentation, user seminars and individual bespoke meetings as appropriate. Future engagement will embrace topics such as:

- NISRA's data processing/ methods (including specifications for derived variables, variable descriptions and the final weighting process for the LMS);
- the quality criteria that will underpin NISRA's decision to implement the LMS and stop the LFS along with the anticipated timings for the decision and its associated implementation; and
- information on LMS data coverage, utility and quality along with an assessment of how this compares to the LFS and impacts on the relevant economic narrative.

6.38 If on reading this information paper you have any queries regarding NISRA's work in this space we would love to hear from you. Equally, should this be new to you and you would like your contact details to be added to our mailing list please do let us know. All queries should be sent to [Labourmarketstatistics@nisra.gov.uk](mailto:Labourmarketstatistics@nisra.gov.uk).

## ANNEX 1: SUMMARY OF THE LMS WAVE 1 PILOT – MAY 2023

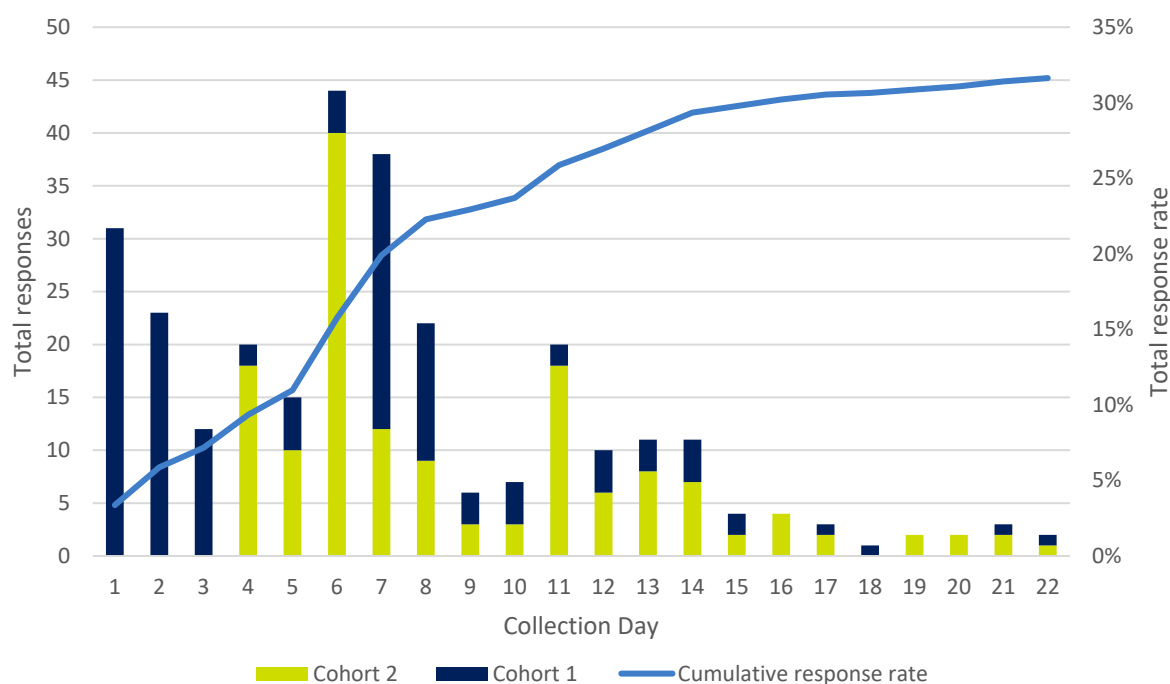
In May 2023, NISRA launched a pilot of the LMS, it ran from 4<sup>th</sup> May 2023 until 31<sup>st</sup> May 2023. The pilot consisted of a random sample of 1,000 addresses selected from the NISRA Address Register. This Annex summarises the results of that pilot and is instructive of the considerations that NISRA has had in developing the full LMS. Around 80 addresses were ineligible due to non-delivery or refusals. From the 920 eligible surveys, 256 were fully completed while a further 35 filled in some information (Table 1). During the pilot, households received a pre-notification postcard, an initial invitation letter and one reminder, there was no interviewer follow-up.

**Table 1: Response Rate to Pilot**

Eligible sample size	Full completes		Partial completes		Total full & partial completes	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
920	256	27.8%	35	3.8%	291	31.6%

Analysing the results by day (Chart 1), showed there was an initial spike when the invitation letter was delivered and then another spike when the reminder was delivered. Overall, there was just over 30% completion without any follow-up other than a reminder letter. The test involved differential incentives to see whether this also impacted on response rates: some households received a tote bag, while others did not.

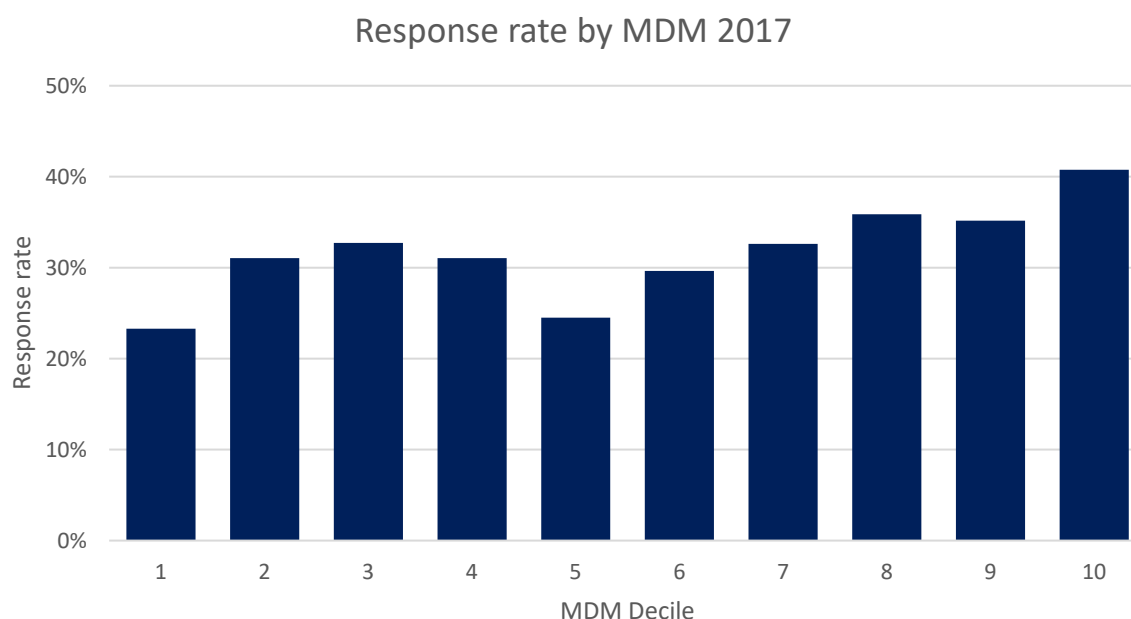
**Chart 1: Number of responses by collection day and cumulative response rate**



There was a difference in the decile responses, but all were over 20% (Chart 2). The response rate was lowest (23.3%) in decile 1 (the most deprived) and the highest response rate (40.8%) was achieved in decile 10 (the least deprived).



**Chart 2: Response rates by MDM**



The median and average time taken to complete the survey online was 15 and 17 minutes respectively (Table 2). A telephone interview was also available, and 20 households took part by phone, and these were much quicker around 4-5 minutes.

**Table 2: Household time taken for online and telephone completions**

Method of Completion	Time taken (minutes and seconds)			
	Median	Mean	Minimum	Maximum
Online	15:18	17:01	4:46	59:43
Telephone	4:15	5:12	2:46	12:34

Analysing the data by household size, it took less than 10 minutes for a 1-person household to complete, just over 15 minutes for 2-person household and this increased to over 20 minutes for those in 4- and 5-person household when completing online (Table 3).

**Table 3: Household interview time taken for full online completes by household size**

Household size	Households		Time taken (minutes and seconds)			
	Number	Percentage	Median	Mean	Minimum	Maximum
1	65	29.0%	9:52	11:15	4:46	30:05
2	76	33.9%	15:47	16:36	6:12	39:49
3	29	12.9%	16:50	18:55	6:15	44:44
4	40	17.9%	21:16	23:04	10:38	59:43
5	11	4.9%	22:24	25:54	14:22	38:02
6	3	1.3%	16:46	20:44	13:41	31:45
<b>Total</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>15:18</b>	<b>17:01</b>	<b>4:46</b>	<b>59:43</b>

The telephone interviews were mostly older participants but were very quick to complete - 5 minutes for a single person household and 7 minutes for a 2-person household (Table 4).

**Table 4: Household interview time taken for full telephone completes**

Household size	Number of households	Percentage of households	Time taken (minutes and seconds)			
			Median	Mean	Minimum	Maximum
<b>1</b>	12	60.0%	05:00	05:30	02:46	12:34
<b>2</b>	8	40.0%	07:07	07:15	05:47	08:59
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>04:15</b>	<b>05:12</b>	<b>02:46</b>	<b>12:34</b>

There was a short survey at the end of the questionnaire asking for comments, almost all were very positive, and participants said how easy and quick it was to complete and almost 80% of those completing online rated it easy or very easy and this increased to 100% for the telephone interview (Table 5).

**Table 5: Ease or difficulty of completing the survey by mode**

Ease of completing Survey	Online		Telephone		Total	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Very difficult or difficult	7	3.1%	0	0.0%	7	2.8%
Neither difficult or easy	39	17.2%	0	0.0%	39	15.8%
Very easy or easy	181	79.7%	20	100.0%	201	81.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

The experience of the pilot provided some useful lessons, which were used when the survey was launched in October 2023:

1. There was very little difference in response rates between households who received a tote bag and those who didn't.
2. Looking at households who failed to complete the questionnaire, showed that larger households were more likely to drop out and not complete later sections. This resulted in a restructuring of the questionnaire to collect minimum data on children in the hope that larger households would then complete for those aged 16+.
3. There were some issues with delivery of survey communications to addresses and this will help to shape the future delivery plan, particularly around bank holidays.
4. Finally, the importance of the telephone option was realised, particularly for older people and therefore dedicated interviewers will be assigned to this going forward.

## ANNEX 2: INDICATIVE HIGH-LEVEL COMPARISON OF LFS AND LMS CONTENT

Topic	On LFS	On LMS	Alternative Source
<b>Household information</b> – number of people, age, sex, relationship between the people and tenure	Yes	Yes	N/a
<b>Demographic information</b> –marital status, country of birth, ethnicity, national identity, religion and passports held.	Yes	Yes	N/a
<b>Labour market information</b> - main and second job (if applicable), employee/self-employed, full/part time, manager/supervisor, whether they job is permanent, temporary or casual, zero hours contracts, hours worked in the previous week and normal hours per week, job title, main duties and main activities of organisation, length of employment, redundancies, along with various reason if applicable for not working, working part time, different hours, temporary or casual work.	Yes	Yes	N/a
<b>Education/Training</b> – courses, apprenticeships and training.	Yes	Yes	N/a
<b>Qualifications</b> – highest level of qualifications.	Yes	Yes –no comparability at variable level but educational levels still obtainable.	N/a
<b>Work quality questions</b>	Yes	Yes	N/a
<b>Smoking and health</b>	Yes	No	Health Survey
<b>Income</b>	Yes	No	Family Resource Survey
<b>Earnings</b>	Yes	No	Annual Survey of Hours and Earning
<b>Wellbeing</b>	Yes	No	Continuous Household Survey
<b>Accidents at work</b>	Yes	No	Obtained from the Health & Safety Executive for Northern Ireland
<b>Under and Over employment</b>	Yes	No	<i>No alternative source of data</i>
<b>Trade Union membership</b>	Yes	No	<i>No alternative source of data</i>
<b>Employment patterns and Days worked</b>	Yes	No	<i>No alternative source of data – a version of Flex22 (agreed working patterns) remains</i>



**Northern Ireland**

# Labour Market Survey

32%

44%

COMMUNICATION  
INTERFACE  
CONNECTION

**whistl**

Delivered by  
Royal Mail  
C9 10002

**THE RESIDENT**  
 <<SUBNAME>> <<PROPNAM>>  
 <<ADD\_STRT>>  
 <<TOWN>>  
 <<POSTCODE>>


**NISRA**  
Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

**Your household has been selected to take part in the Northern Ireland Labour Market Survey**

**Who are we?**


We are the Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency (NISRA). NISRA are responsible for the General Register Office and running the Census every ten years. We also run the Labour Market Survey to provide official statistics on our economy.


**What happens next?**

 **In a few days** you will receive a letter explaining how you should take part, either online or by phone.

✓ Once you complete the survey, you will be offered a £10 cash voucher as a thank you for taking part.

**How to find out more?**

 For more information, visit [www.nisra.gov.uk/LMS](http://www.nisra.gov.uk/LMS) or call us on 028 9025 5118, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

Your information is protected by law 



**THE RESIDENT**

<<SUBNAME>> <<PROPNAME>>  
<<ADD\_STRT>>  
<<TOWN>>  
<<POSTCODE>>  
<<ID>>

If you need help, go to  
[www.nisra.gov.uk/LMS](http://www.nisra.gov.uk/LMS)  
or phone us on  
**028 9025 5118**

Dear Resident,

We need your help with the **Northern Ireland Labour Market Survey** which gathers vital information on our local economy and society.

You will be offered a **£10 cash voucher** for completing the survey. We have also enclosed a reusable bag as a further thank you for helping us.

**How to take part**



To **take part online**, complete these steps:

- 1 Go to [www.nisra.gov.uk/LMS](http://www.nisra.gov.uk/LMS) or scan the QR code
- 2 Select **'Start'** and enter your **household access code**:



<<UAC1>>

- 3 Answer the questions, then select **'Finish survey and submit'**



To **take part over the phone**, call us on 028 9025 5118, Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm.

**What you need to know**

- The survey takes around **15 minutes** to complete.
- One person should answer on behalf of your entire household.
- Please complete the survey as soon as possible.

Thank you.

Alexander Fitzpatrick – Director of Census and Social Statistics, NISRA



Your information is protected by law



**Who are we?**

We are the Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency (NISRA). The Agency is responsible for the General Register Office and running the Census every ten years. We also run the Labour Market Survey to provide official statistics on our economy and society.

The Agency is the principal source of Official Statistics and social research on Northern Ireland. We help inform public policy and research and contribute to debate in the wider community.

**Why have I been asked to take part?**

Your address has been randomly selected from a database of residential addresses in Northern Ireland.

**Why should I take part?**

This survey is where the official employment, unemployment and economic inactivity rates come from for our local economy. These are reported every month in the news and other media outlets.

It is important that we hear from as many people as possible, whether you are working, not working, searching for work, looking after your family at home, retired or studying so that our statistics accurately reflect what is happening in society.

There are no difficult questions and there are no right or wrong answers – we just want to know about your circumstances.

People who have previously taken part in the Labour Market Survey found that it was quick and easy to complete.

**What about confidentiality and data protection?**

Your personal information will remain confidential.

We adhere to the Data Protection Act 2018 and our Privacy Notice is available at: [www.nisra.gov.uk/nisra-privacy-notice](http://www.nisra.gov.uk/nisra-privacy-notice)

Your answers will be combined with all the responses we receive from the survey to produce statistics and we will never publish results that could identify anyone.



**THE RESIDENT**

<<SUBNAME>> <<PROPNAM>>  
<<ADD\_STRT>>  
<<TOWN>>  
<<POSTCODE>>  
<<ID>>

If you need help, go to  
[www.nisra.gov.uk/LMS](http://www.nisra.gov.uk/LMS)  
or phone us on  
**028 9025 5118**

Dear Resident,

We recently invited your household to take part in the **Northern Ireland Labour Market Survey**. If you have completed the survey, thank you – please ignore this letter.

If your household has not completed the survey, there is still time to take part. By taking part you will provide vital information on our local economy and society.

You will be offered a **£10 cash voucher** for completing the survey.

**How to take part**



To **take part online**, complete these steps:

- 1** Go to [www.nisra.gov.uk/LMS](http://www.nisra.gov.uk/LMS) or scan the QR code
- 2** Select **'Start'** and enter your **household access code**:



<<UAC2>>

- 3** Answer the questions, then select **'Finish survey and submit'**



To **take part over the phone**, call us on 028 9025 5118, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

**What you need to know**

- The survey takes around **15 minutes** to complete.
- One person should answer on behalf of your entire household.
- Please complete the survey as soon as possible. If you do not complete the survey online or by telephone, one of our NISRA interviewers will call at your door in the next few days to help you take part.

Thank you.

Alexander Fitzpatrick – Director of Census and Social Statistics, NISRA



Your information is protected by law

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Your answers will be combined with all the responses we receive from the survey to produce statistics and we will never publish results that could identify anyone.

