

Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET): 2020

Theme: Labour Market

Frequency: Ad hoc

Geographical Area: Northern Ireland

Source: Labour Force Survey

This paper examines young people (aged 16 to 24) not in education, employment or training (NEET) in Northern Ireland between 2010 and 2020, as sourced from the Labour Force Survey (LFS). The paper also examines NEET rate estimates for the United Kingdom (UK) and by gender, age and local government district (LGD).

Key points

- There were an estimated 21,000 young people (aged 16 to 24) in NI who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) in 2020, which was 10.5% of all people aged 16 to 24.
- Following a high point for NI in 2014 (16.1%), the NEET rate for those aged 16 to 24 has generally been on a downward trend.
- The rates for those aged 16 to 24 in NI and the UK decreased by a similar level between 2010 and 2020, by 4.8 percentage points (pps) and 4.5pps respectively.
- The male NEET rate was higher than the female NEET rate between 2010 and 2018, but was lower than females in 2019 and 2020.
- The NEET rate for those aged 16 to 18 has been similar since 2012 (around 4%) and consistently lower than 19 to 24 year olds. The NEET rate for 19 to 24 year olds has shown a decrease since 2012, to 14.0% between 2018 and 2020.
- The NEET rate decreased across all Local Government Districts apart from Causeway Coast and Glens between 2011 to 2015 and 2016 to 2020.

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National Statistics Status

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

These statistics were designated as National Statistics in August 2010 following a full [assessment of Labour Market Statistics for Northern Ireland](#) against the [Code of Practice for statistics](#). 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 the 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:

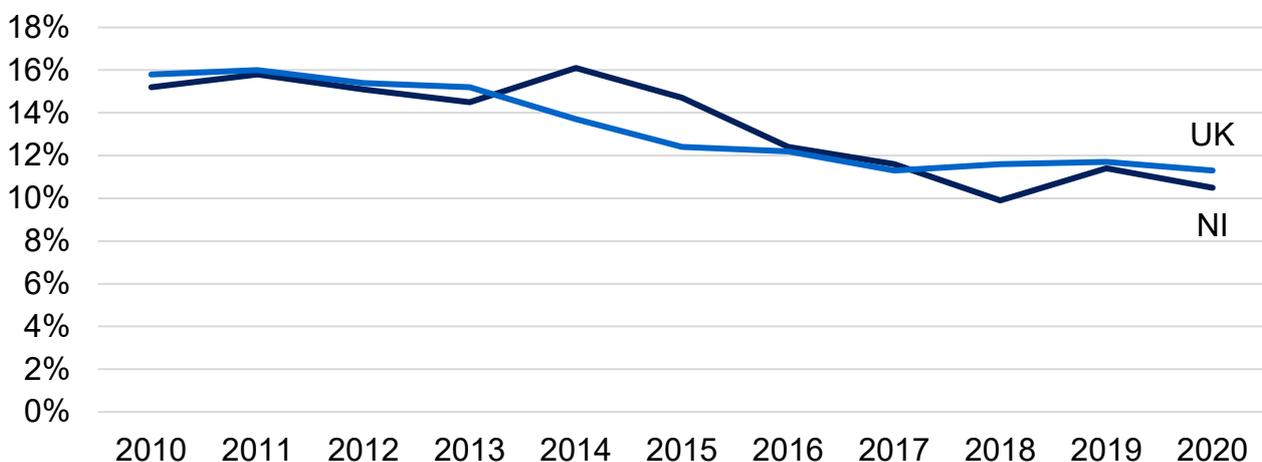
- Improved quality of the LFS data by boosting the sample size and improving precision around headline estimates (Please note since the COVID-19 pandemic sample sizes have decreased due to difficulty of collecting survey information from households).
- Reviewed and updated [quality protocols for release](#) for LFS data
- Improved accessibility of labour market statistics by [changing the release dates of statistics to avoid public holidays](#) and amended the format and structure of reports in line with accessibility regulations.

Young people not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

A person is considered to be NEET if they are not in education, employment or training. A person is considered to be in education, employment or training if any of the following apply:

- They 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.
 - They are enrolled on an education course and are still attending or waiting for term to (re)start
 - They are doing an apprenticeship
 - They are on a government-supported employment or training programme
 - They are working or studying towards a qualification
 - They have had job-related training or education in the last four weeks.
- The NEET rate for those aged 16 to 24 in NI and the UK decreased by a similar level between 2010 and 2020. The NI NEET rate for 2020 was 10.5%, with the UK reporting a higher rate at 11.3%.
 - Following a high point for NI in 2014 (16.1%), the NEET rate has generally been on a downward trend.

Figure 1: NEET rate, NI and UK, aged 16 to 24, 2010 to 2020



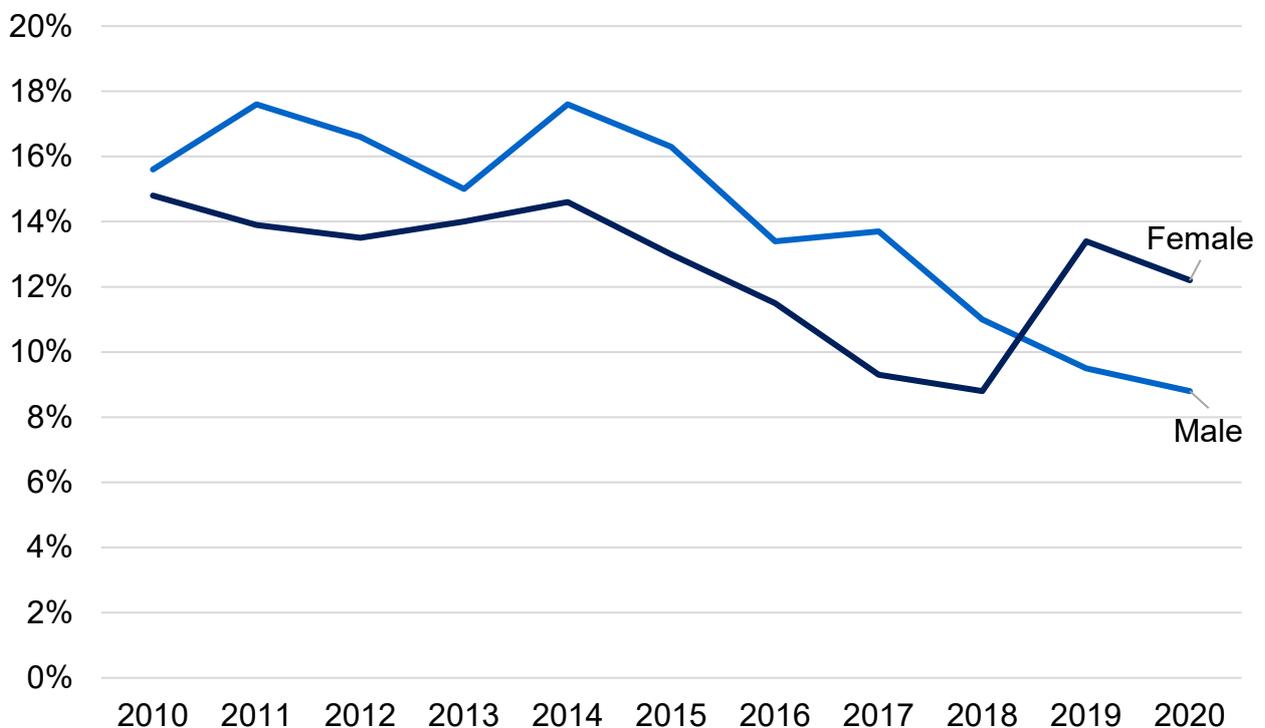
[Download figure 1 data](#)

Figure 1 presents the NEET rates for 2010 to 2020 for NI and the UK as a whole. Between 2010 and 2013, the rates were similar for NI and the UK. Following a high point for NI in 2014 (16.1%), the NEET rate has generally been on a downward trend. Between 2010 and 2020, the NI and UK rates have shown a similar decrease, by 4.8 percentage point (pps) and 4.5pps respectively. The NI NEET rate for 2020 was 10.5%, with the UK reporting a higher rate at 11.3%. In 2020, the number of persons aged 16 to 24 who were NEET was 21,000.

Gender

- The male NEET rate was higher than the female NEET rate between 2010 and 2018, but has been lower than females since 2019 and is at a low point in 2020 (8.8%)
- The male NEET rate is at a low point in 2020, at 8.8%. The female NEET rate was 3.5pps higher, at 12.2%.

Figure 2: NEET rate by gender, NI, ages 16 to 24, 2010 to 2020



[Download figure 2 data](#)

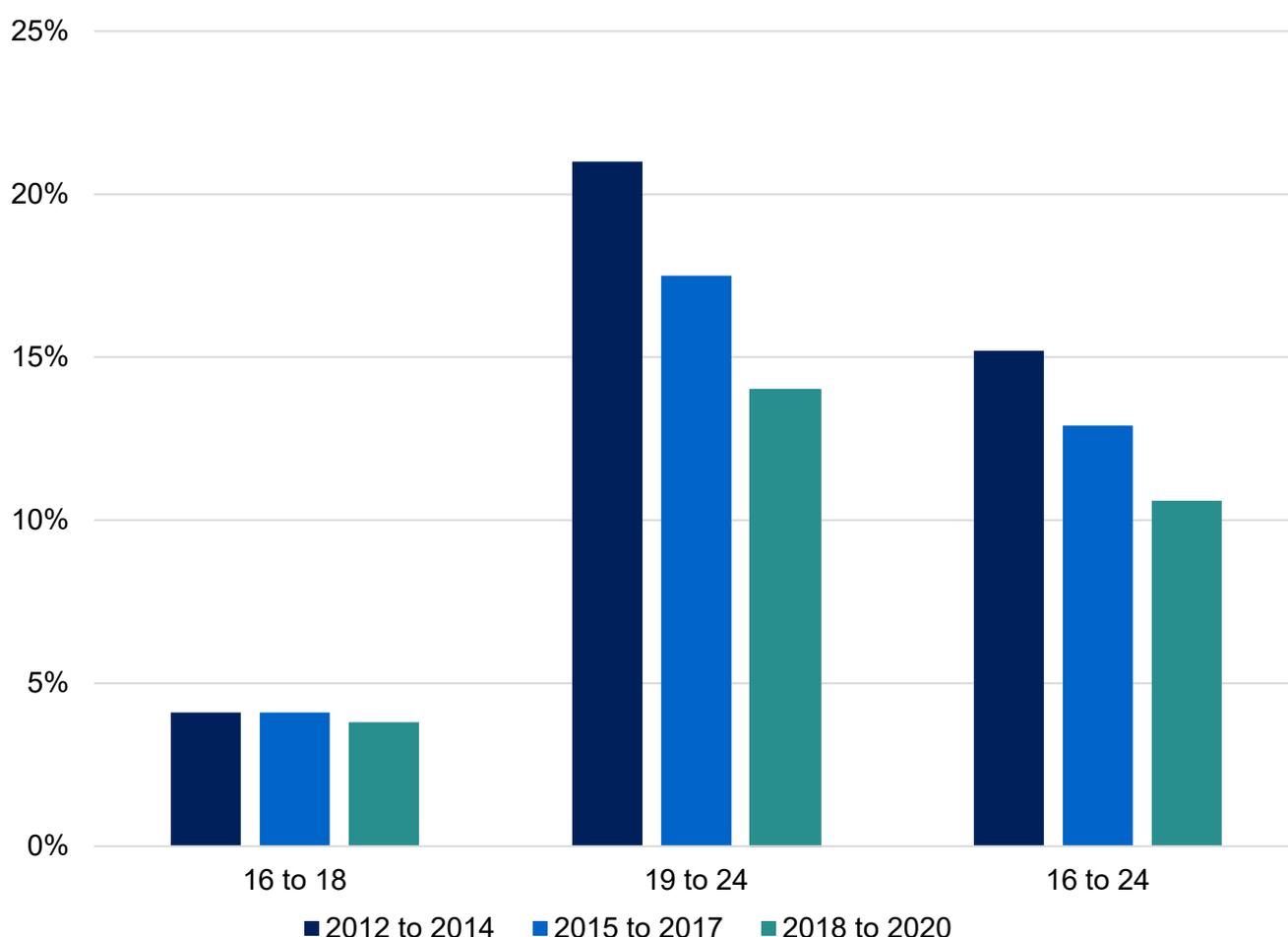
Figure 2 examines the NEET rates for males and females in NI since 2010, where the male rate has generally been higher than females for the majority of this period and the gap between male and female rates has fluctuated.

Between 2014 and 2018, the NEET rate for both males and females was generally declining. However, since 2018 the male rate has continued to show a decline to a low point in the above series in 2020 (8.8%), whilst the female rate has increased and was higher than males in 2019 and 2020. The female rate was 3.5pps higher than males in 2020, at 12.2%.

Age

- The NEET rate for those aged 16 to 18 has been similar since 2012 (around 4%) and consistently lower than 19 to 24 year olds
- The NEET rate for 19 to 24 year olds has shown a decrease since 2012, to 14.0% for 2018 to 2020

Figure 3: NEET rate by age group, NI, aged 16 to 24, 2012 to 2020



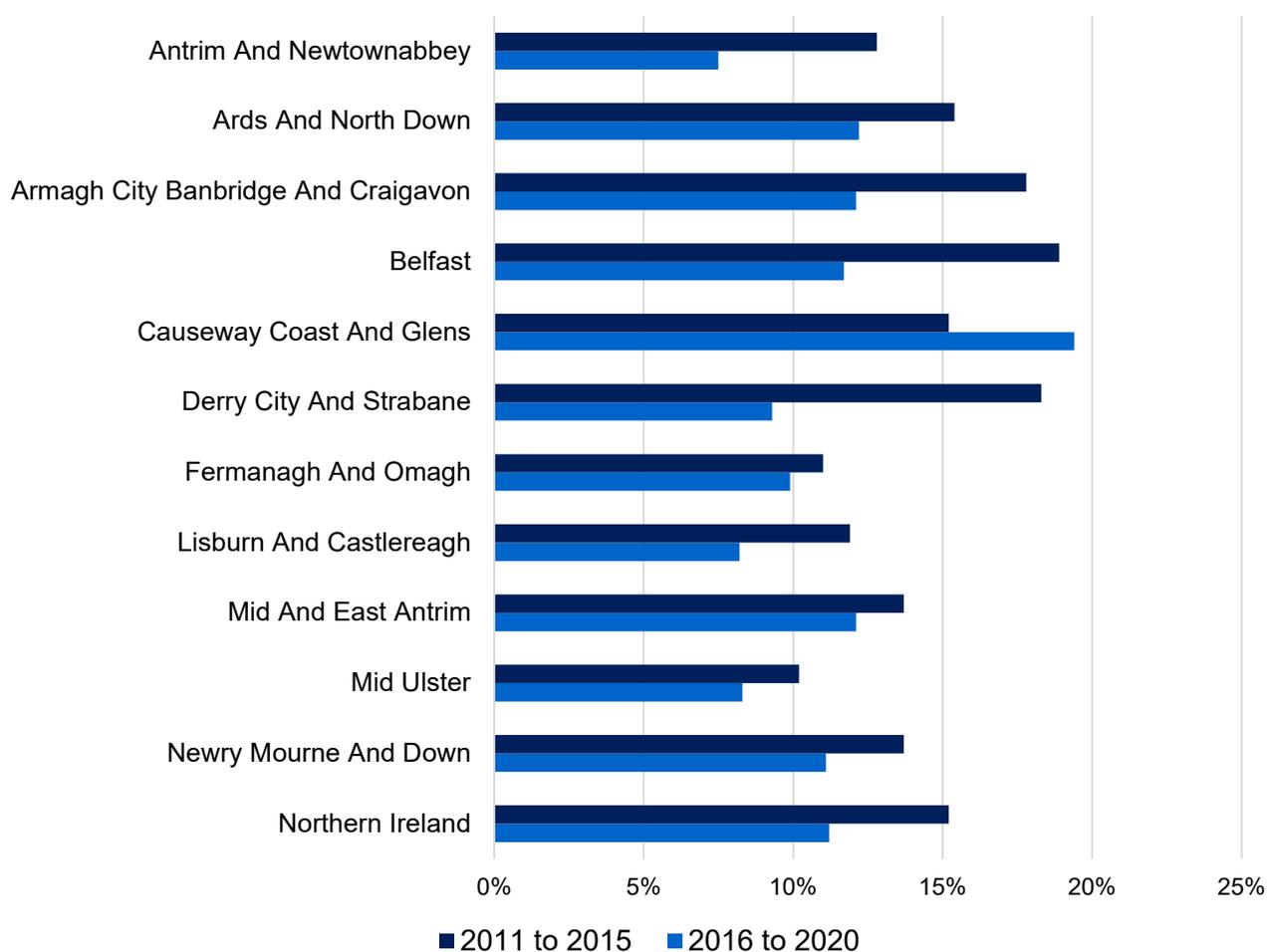
[Download figure 3 data](#)

Figure 3 presents the NEET rate for NI broken down by age across 3-year time periods since 2012. The NEET rate for those aged 16 to 18 has been fairly similar since 2012 and considerably lower than the NEET rate for those aged 19 to 24. The NEET rate for 19 to 24 year olds has shown seen a steady decrease since 2012. For the most recent period (2018 to 2020) the NEET rates for those aged 16 to 18 and 19 to 24 were 3.8% and 14.0% respectively.

Local Government District

- The NEET rate decreased in all Local Government Districts except Causeway Coast and Glens between 2011 to 2015 and 2016 to 2020.
- Derry City and Strabane council saw the largest decrease of 9.0pps between these two five year periods.

Figure 4: NEET rate by Local Government District, ages 16 to 24, NI, 2011 to 2015 and 2016 to 2020



[Download figure 4 data](#)

Figure 4 presents the NEET rate by Local Government District for five-year periods, from 2011 to 2015 and 2016 to 2020. The NEET rate decreased for all Local Government Districts between these two periods, with the exception of Causeway Coast and Glens which increased by 4.2pps to 19.4% between 2016 and 2020.

Additional information

Background

The LFS annual datasets used for this publication are derived from four consecutive quarters of the LFS. Individuals in each wave are interviewed in five successive quarters, such that in any quarter one wave will be receiving their first interview, one wave their second, and so on, with one receiving their fifth and final interview. The annual dataset is created by selecting the relevant cases from each quarter and combining them to create a dataset of unique cases. Selecting all wave one and five interviews allows the maximum number of respondents over a one-year period to be included whilst avoiding double counting. The resulting sample size of the 2020 dataset is approximately 8,000 individuals.

LFS revisions due to reweighting

Typically, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) would reweight the LFS every two years to take account of updated population estimates and projections. However, investigations by ONS during 2020 showed the composition of the achieved LFS sample had changed because of the change in survey methods introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Traditionally, the survey is conducted via a face-to-face household interview with follow-up telephone interviews, but this changed to solely telephone interviews in April 2020.

In October 2020 LFS data were reweighted to include additional factors (household tenure) to mitigate the changing sample composition, and estimates were revised from January 2020. More information on the October 2020 reweighting is available on the NISRA website: [LFS Revision Note – October 2020](#).

LFS responses are typically weighted to official population projections. However, in July 2021, ONS reweighted the LFS data from January to March 2020 to February to April 2021 based on an LFS specific population that takes changes shown in HMRC's PAYE Real Time Information source into account. The ONS published the [LFS reweighting methodology](#) in an article. NISRA published the [Impact of the LFS reweighting on annual data](#) paper in August 2021, to show the impact of the new weighting methodology for 2020 headline labour market estimates.

Precision of estimates

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. Estimates under a cell count of 3 are disclosive and therefore suppressed. In tables, estimates based on a small sample size are shaded. Small samples may result in less precise estimates,

which should be used with caution, in particular should not be used to make statements on relative size when compared to similar values. 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.

Reporting change

Reported change is calculated using unrounded data and 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.

Quarterly NEET estimates

The latest quarterly NEET statistics for NI for the [July to September 2021](#) period were also published on 25th November 2021.

LFS notes and definitions

Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

NEET is defined as those who are not in employment, Government supported training, full-time or part-time education. NEET rate is calculated as the proportion of all 16 to 24 years who are not in education, employment or training. A person is considered to be in education or training if any of the following apply:

- They are enrolled on an education course and are still attending or waiting for term to (re)start
- They are doing an apprenticeship
- They are on a government-supported employment or training programme
- They are working or studying towards a qualification
- They have had job-related training or education in the last four weeks.

Employment

The definition of ILO employed applies to anyone (aged 16 to 64) 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.

UK estimates and comparability

Where UK comparisons are provided of NEET estimates, these are based on the NISRA definition of NEET. Recent publications related to NEET across the UK can be found at the links below:

[Young people not in education, employment or training \(NEET\), UK: November 2021](#) (Office for National Statistics)

[Young people not in education, employment or training \(NEET\): July 2020 to June 2021](#) (Welsh Government)

[Scotland's Labour Market: People, Places and Regions](#) (Scottish Government)

Local Government District estimates

Due to the lower sample sizes for NEET data, Local Government District data has been combined for five year time periods within this paper. The NEET rate was calculated as the sum of those who were NEET across the five year period as a proportion of the sum of the population across these five years.

Further information

If you require further information about the figures contained in this publication or the accompanying tables, please contact the Labour Force Survey team using the details below:

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