

14<sup>th</sup> December 2021

# Northern Ireland Quarterly Employment Survey

Theme: Labour Market

Frequency: Quarterly

Geographical area: Northern Ireland

Reference period: Quarter 3 (September) 2021

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 and covers all employers with 25 or more employees, all public sector employers, all businesses with more than one industry activity and a representative sample of smaller firms.

The survey date for Quarter 3 was 6<sup>th</sup> September 2021. Those who are furloughed under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) are included in employee jobs estimates.

All figures are adjusted for seasonality, unless stated otherwise.

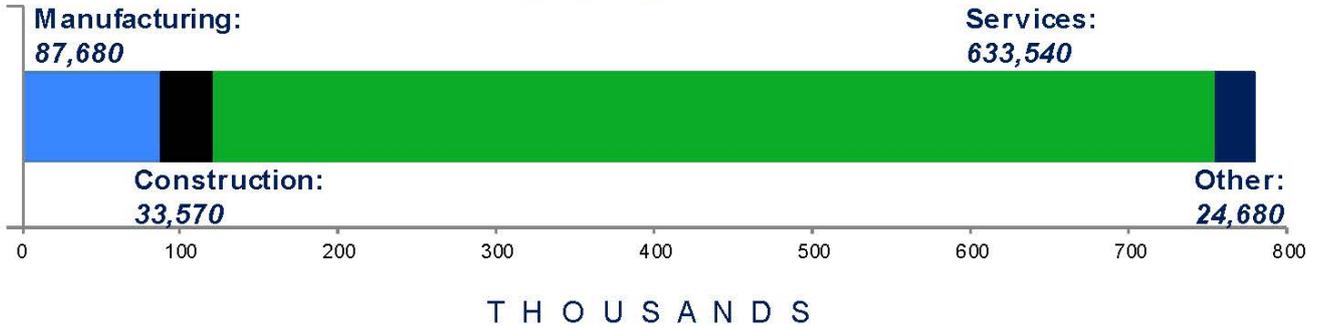
## Key Points

- The number of employee jobs in September 2021 was estimated at 779,470. This was an increase of 7,520 jobs (+1.0%) over the quarter and 8,070 jobs (+1.0%) over the year. Neither the quarterly nor the annual changes in employee jobs were found to be statistically significant. September 2021 estimates showed that employee jobs have almost returned to the pre-pandemic December 2019 level (-0.1% or -460 jobs).
- September 2021 marked the third consecutive quarterly increase in employee jobs, following four previous quarters of decline. September 2021 marked the first quarterly annual increase after four consecutive quarters of annual decline.
- September 2021 marked the fourth consecutive quarter of negative annualised growth rates (-0.5%).
- In the last five years, employee jobs have increased by 5.8% (+42,940 jobs). There has been an increase of 12.8% (+88,310 jobs) from the low in March 2012.
- Quarterly increases in employee jobs were seen within the services (+6,100 jobs) and manufacturing (+1,520 jobs) sectors to September 2021. The construction and other industries sectors reported marginal decreases over the quarter (-40 jobs and -60 jobs respectively).
- All broad industry sectors apart from construction experienced increases in employee jobs over the year to September 2021, with the services sector reporting the biggest annual increase (+7,630 jobs). The construction sector experienced an annual decrease of 5.4% (-1,930 jobs).
- Private sector jobs increased over both the quarter (+0.9% or +5,260 jobs) and the year (+0.7% or +3,680 jobs) to 563,120 jobs in September 2021. Public sector jobs also increased over both the quarter (+0.8% or +1,630 jobs) and the year (+2.0% or +4,300 jobs) to 216,710 jobs in September 2021.

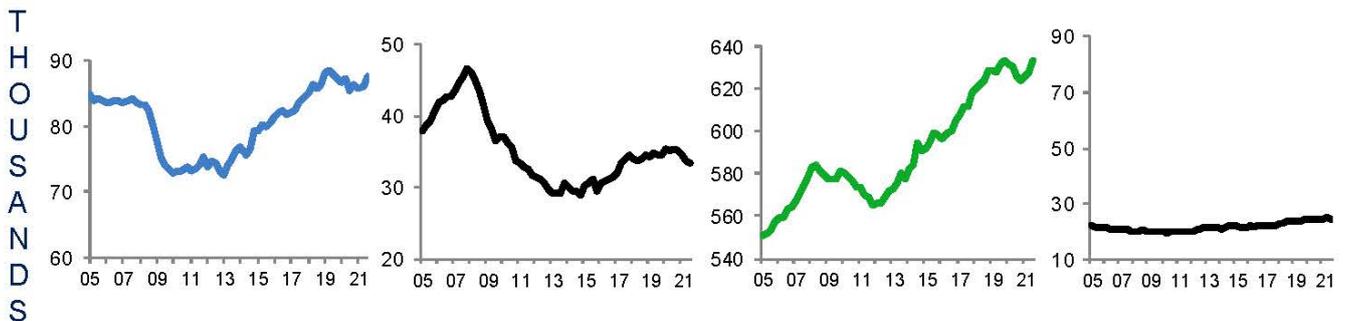
# NISRA Labour Market Statistics

## Quarterly Employment Survey – September 2021

Total employee jobs: 779,470



### Change on quarter



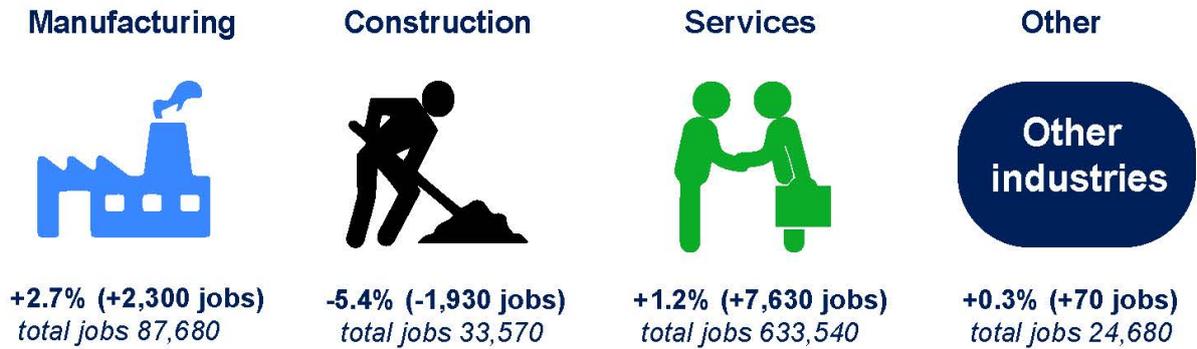
### Change on year



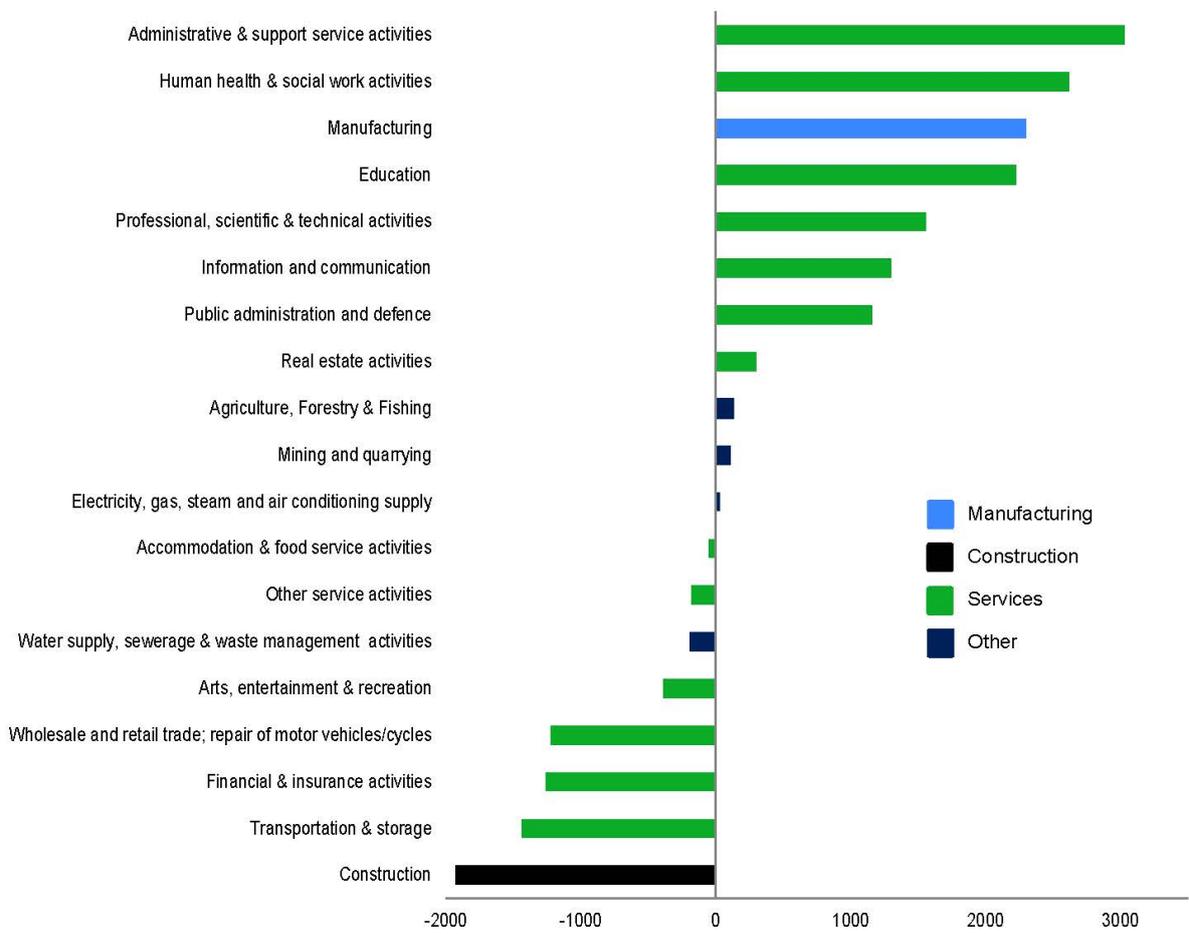
All data seasonally adjusted and subject to future revisions.  
Data published on 14th December 2021 by Economic and Labour Market Statistics Branch (NISRA).

# Northern Ireland employee jobs annual change by industry Q3 2020 - Q3 2021

## Change by broad industry sector (seasonally adjusted)



## Change by industry section (seasonally adjusted)



Data published on 14th December 2021 by Economic and Labour Market Statistics Branch (NISRA)

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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](#) against the [Code of Practice](#).

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:

- Quantified the level of uncertainty around estimates by providing confidence intervals for headline estimates;
- Removed pre-release access to enhance trustworthiness and also brought the publication date forward as a result;
- [Consulted users](#) at Labour Market User Groups and streamlined outputs in line with the UK series;
- Reduced [business burden](#) by offering the option of online data returns.
- Improved accessibility of Labour Market Statistics by [changing publication practices](#) so that reports are [no longer released on public holidays](#) and amended the format and structure of reports in line with accessibility regulations.
- Temporarily changed [timing of release](#) in line with change in ONS release practices in response to COVID-19.

# 1 Summary of Employee Jobs

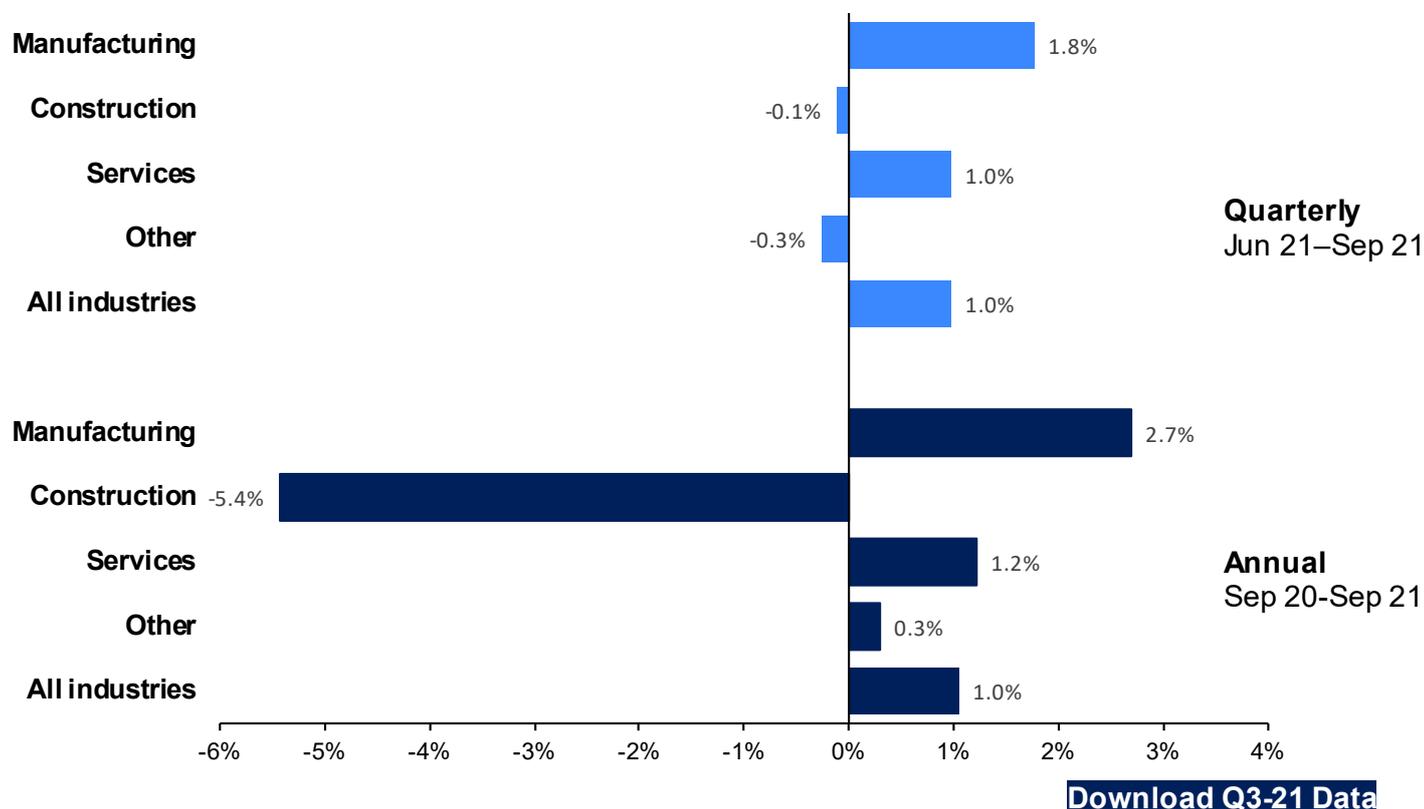
The survey date for Quarter 3 was 6<sup>th</sup> September 2021 for Northern Ireland (NI). Those who are furloughed under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) are included in employee jobs estimates.

## Change in employee jobs

The seasonally adjusted employee jobs estimate for NI at September 2021 was 779,470 (+/- 5,370<sup>1</sup>). This was:

- an increase of 1.0% (+7,520 jobs) over the quarter from the revised June 2021 estimate of 771,950.
- an increase of 1.0% (+8,070 jobs) over the year from the revised September 2020 estimate of 771,400.
- Neither the quarterly nor the annual changes in employee jobs were found to be statistically significant.

**Figure 1.1: Annual and Quarterly Changes in Employee Jobs at Section Level**



## Change over the quarter

Comparing seasonally adjusted September 2021 employee jobs to the revised June 2021 estimates showed:

- an increase in the services sector of 1.0% (+6,100 jobs) to 633,540 jobs.
- an increase in the manufacturing sector of 1.8% (+1,520 jobs) to 87,680 jobs.
- a decrease in the construction sector of 0.1% (-40 jobs) to 33,570 jobs.
- a decrease in the other industries sector of 0.3% (-60 jobs) to 24,680 jobs.

<sup>1</sup> Represents 95% confidence interval around estimate. More information is available in the [QES Confidence Intervals User Guidance PDF \(665KB\)](#).

## **Change over the year**

Comparing seasonally adjusted September 2021 employee jobs to the revised September 2020 estimates showed:

- an increase in the services sector of 1.2% (+7,630 jobs) to 633,540 jobs.
- an increase in the manufacturing sector of 2.7% (+2,300 jobs) to 87,680 jobs.
- an increase in the other industries sector of 0.3% (+70 jobs) to 24,680 jobs.
- a decrease in the construction sector of 5.4% (-1,930 jobs) to 33,570 jobs.

Comparing unadjusted data over the year, estimates showed:

- (i) Employment activities; (ii) education; and (iii) human health activities saw the greatest increases over the year, accounting for 33.0% of all increases in employee jobs.
- (i) Retail trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles; (ii) construction of buildings; and (iii) manufacture of other transport equipment saw the greatest decreases over the year, accounting for 40.1% of all decreases in employee jobs.
- Despite the decreases, there was a net increase of 8,240 employee jobs.

## **Annualised change**

Comparing the seasonally adjusted employee jobs data for Quarter 4 2019 – Quarter 3 2020 to Quarter 4 2020 – Quarter 3 2021 showed:

- an increase in the other industries sector of 0.9%.
- a decrease in the manufacturing sector of 0.2%.
- a decrease in the services sector of 0.5%.
- a decrease in the construction sector of 2.5%.

## **Public / private sector changes**

Seasonally adjusted employee jobs estimates for the public and private sectors at September 2021 showed:

- an increase of 0.8% (+1,630 jobs) in the public sector over the quarter and an increase of 2.0% (+4,300 jobs) over the year to 216,710 jobs.
- an increase of 0.9% (+5,260 jobs) in the private sector over the quarter and an increase of 0.7% (+3,680 jobs) over the year to 563,120 jobs.

# Commentary

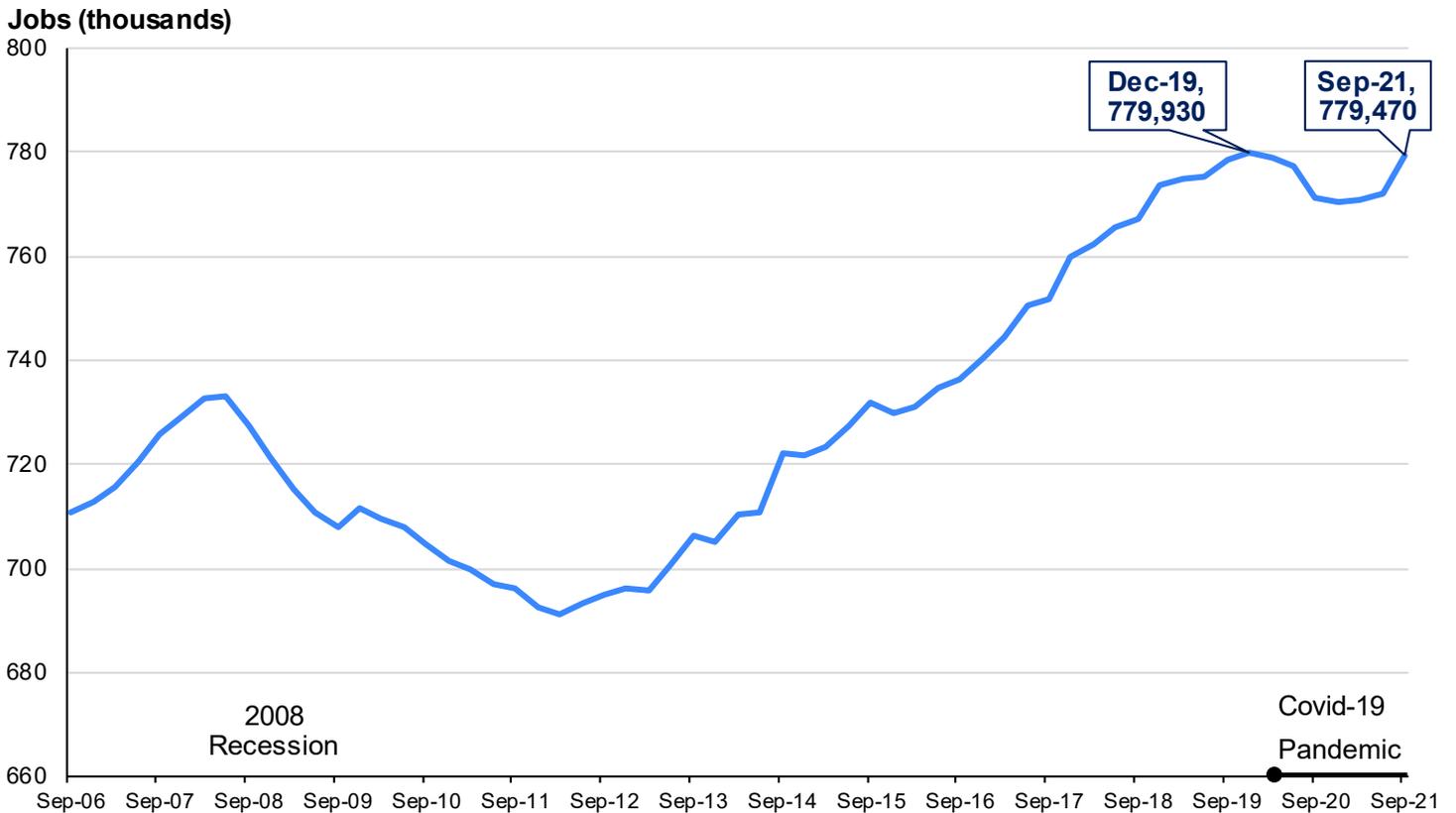
Preliminary estimates from the Quarterly Employment Survey (QES) showed that Northern Ireland (seasonally adjusted) employee jobs increased over the quarter (+1.0% or +7,520 jobs) to 779,470 jobs in September 2021. Estimates for September 2021 showed that employee jobs remain slightly below the pre-pandemic level seen in December 2019. September 2021 marked the third consecutive quarterly increase in employee jobs, following four previous quarters of decline between March 2020 and December 2020.

The quarterly increase in employee jobs in September 2021 was largely driven by the services industry sector (+6,100 jobs). Manufacturing also reported a quarterly increase in employee jobs (+1,520 jobs). The construction and other industries sectors reported marginal decreases in employee jobs over the quarter to September 2021 (-40 jobs and -60 jobs respectively).

Seasonally adjusted employee jobs increased over the year to September 2021 (+1.0% or +8,070 jobs). September 2021 marked the first quarterly annual increase after four consecutive quarters of annual decline. The annual increase in September 2021 was mainly driven by the services industry sector (+7,630 jobs).

September 2021 marked the fourth consecutive quarter of negative annualised growth rates (-0.5%).

**Figure 1.2: Seasonally Adjusted Jobs in NI, September 2006 – September 2021**



[Download Q3-21 Data](#)

Public sector jobs increased over both the quarter (+0.8% or +1,630 jobs) and the year (+2.0% or +4,300 jobs). Public sector jobs have been on a gradually increasing trend since September 2016, although they are still 5.0% (-11,480 jobs) lower than the series peak in September 2009. Private sector jobs also increased over the quarter (+0.9% or +5,260 jobs) and the year (+0.7% or +3,680 jobs). September 2021 marked the first annual increase in private sector jobs since March 2020, following five consecutive quarters of annual decline.

The UK also reported increases in employee jobs over the quarter (+0.9%) and the year (+2.0%) to 30.83 million jobs in September 2021.

## Context

This bulletin presents data from the Northern Ireland Quarterly Employment Survey (QES), which is conducted by the Economic & Labour Market Statistics (ELMS) Branch of the Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency (NISRA).

The survey date for Quarter 3 was 6<sup>th</sup> September 2021 for Northern Ireland. Those who are furloughed under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) are included in employee jobs estimates.

The QES provides short-term employee jobs estimates for Northern Ireland and covers all employers with 25 or more employees, all public sector employers, all businesses with more than one industry activity and a representative sample of smaller firms. As it is a sample survey, estimates are subject to sampling variability.

The QES excludes the self-employed, HM Armed Forces, private domestic servants, homeworkers and Training for Success trainees without a contract of employment (non-employed status). The survey collects information on the number of males/females in full-time and part-time employment by business activity and the results are collated into industry classes using the 2007 Standard Industrial Classification (SIC07). The number of jobs are counted rather than the number of persons with jobs. For example, a person holding both a full-time job and part-time job, or someone with two part-time jobs, will be counted twice.

All figures included in the QES are adjusted for seasonality, unless stated otherwise, where the seasonally adjusted series started in 2005.

Figures from the QES are included in the [Labour Market Report](#) alongside figures from the Labour Force Survey (LFS), the Claimant Count, the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) and redundancies data.

QES employee jobs are also a component of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) quarterly [workforce jobs estimates](#) for the UK.

QES employee jobs are included in the [DfE Economic Commentary](#) which provides an overview of the state of the Northern Ireland economy, setting it in context with the UK and Republic of Ireland. The most up-to-date official statistics on the economy and labour market are available on the [Economic Overview section](#) of the website.

Results are provisional and subject to revisions as more up-to-date data becomes available (e.g. through late returns). Figures can also change as a result of the seasonal adjustment process, methodological changes or changes to classifications. Further information is available from the [Quarterly Employment Survey Revisions page](#).

## Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS)

The CJRS (“furlough scheme”) was introduced from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2020 to support individuals and businesses impacted by disruption caused by the coronavirus pandemic. The government subsequently announced an extension to CJRS to support individuals and businesses impacted by disruption caused by coronavirus until 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

The QES employee jobs estimates include those who are furloughed under the CJRS. Experimental statistics on the CJRS are produced by HMRC, where those receiving CJRS are referred to as ‘employments’. HMRC publishes data on the number of CJRS claims made as at the end of each calendar month; as a result, this data is not directly comparable to the QES estimates which measure the number of jobs on a particular day each quarter (6<sup>th</sup> September 2021 for Quarter 3 2021).

However, the latest preliminary HMRC [Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme Statistics: November 2021](#) showed:

- on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021, the number of employments on furlough in Northern Ireland was 26,300.
- on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021, almost half of the total furloughed employments in Northern Ireland were in wholesale and retail; repair of motor vehicles (4,700 furloughed employments); accommodation and food services (3,700 furloughed employments), and manufacturing (3,500 furloughed employments).
- The CJRS ended on 30 September 2021.

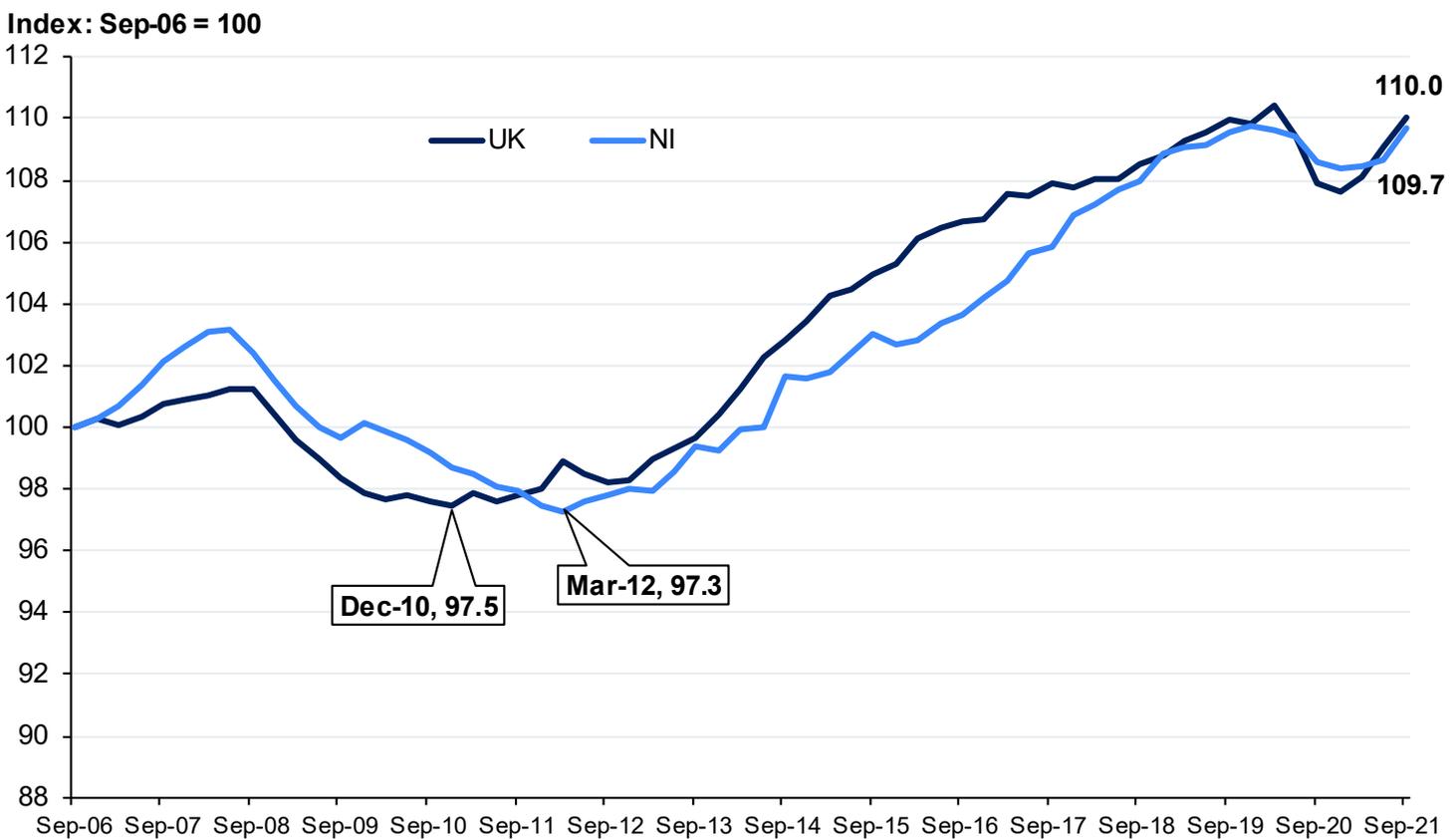
## 2 NI Employee Jobs

**Employee:** 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. The QES counts the number of jobs rather than the number of persons with jobs. Those who are furloughed under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) are included in estimates.

### Key Findings:

- Employee jobs increased both over the quarter (+1.0% or +7,520 jobs) and the year (+1.0% or +8,070 jobs) to 779,470 in September 2021.
- September 2021 marked the fourth consecutive quarter of negative annualised growth<sup>1</sup> rates (-0.5%).

Figure 2.1: Index of Employee Jobs, September 2006 – September 2021



[Download Q3-21 Data](#)

Figure 2.1 shows estimated seasonally adjusted employee jobs, indexed to allow comparison between NI and the UK. September 2021 marked the fourth consecutive quarter of negative annualised growth rates (-0.5%) in NI jobs. NI employee jobs increased over the year (+1.0%) after four previous consecutive quarters of annual decline. The UK also reported an increase in employee jobs (+2.0%) over the year. Following the 2008 downturn, the UK reached its lowest point in December 2010, more than a year before the NI low in March 2012. NI jobs are now 12.8% above the low point in March 2012 while UK jobs are 12.9% above their December 2010 level.

<sup>1</sup>Annualised growth is calculated as the difference in the average of the most recent 4 quarters and the previous 4 quarters average, as a proportion of the average of the previous 4 quarters. See Section 6 for further information.

## Manufacturing sector

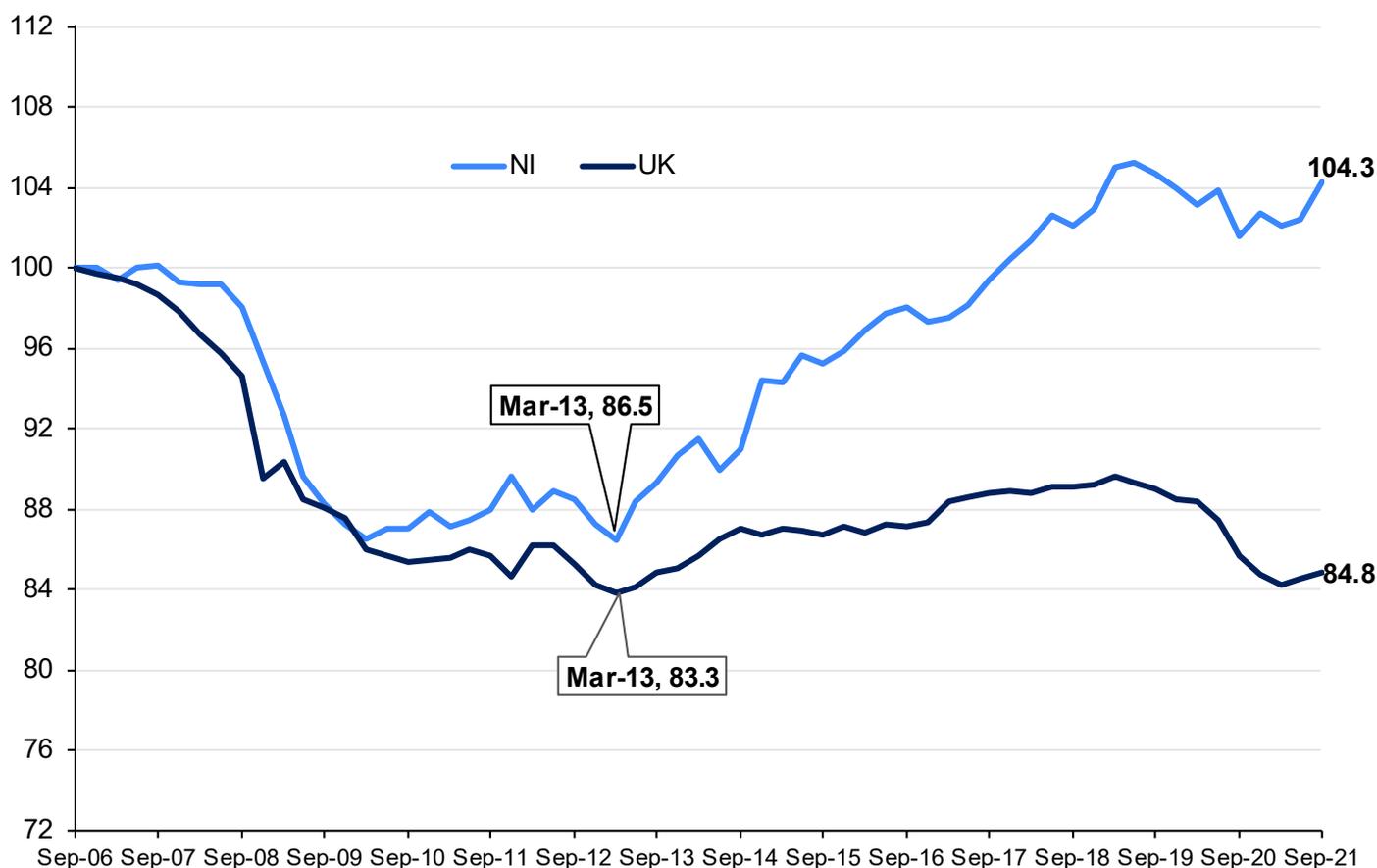
**Manufacturing sector:** contains businesses which produce merchandise for use or sale. It also contains businesses with activity of printing and reproduction of recorded media and businesses that repair and install machinery and equipment. Manufacturing is part of the broader production sector.

### Key Findings:

- The manufacturing sector accounted for 11.2% of all employee jobs in September 2021.
- Seasonally adjusted figures showed increases of 1.8% over the quarter and 2.7% over the year to 87,680 manufacturing jobs in September 2021.

Figure 2.2: Index of manufacturing employee jobs, September 2006 – September 2021

Index: Sep-06= 100



[Download Q3-21 Data](#)

Manufacturing jobs in NI experienced an increase over the quarter to September 2021 (+1.8% or +1,520 jobs). Both NI and the UK reached a series low in March 2013. Manufacturing jobs in NI are currently 20.6% (+14,980 jobs) above the March 2013 low point, however they are 0.9% (-820 jobs) lower than the series peak in June 2019. The UK manufacturing sector has experienced its second consecutive quarter of increase in employee jobs to September 2021, following eight previous consecutive quarters of decline.

## Key Findings

Seasonally adjusted data showed that the manufacturing sector increased by 1.8% (+1,520 jobs) over the quarter and by 2.7% (+2,300 jobs) over the year to 87,680 jobs in September 2021.

The following breakdowns are based on 2 digit SIC manufacturing data that have not been adjusted for seasonality. Please note that estimates at 2 digit SIC can fluctuate due to sampling variability and changes to industrial classification.

## Changes over the year

Over the year to September 2021 the unadjusted figures showed an increase of 2.7% (+2,290 jobs) in the manufacturing sector. The 3 largest contributors to this increase were:

- an increase of 4.5% (+940 jobs) in manufacture of food products.
- an increase of 11.4% (+770 jobs) in manufacture of machinery and equipment not elsewhere classified.
- an increase of 9.0% (+750 jobs) in manufacture of fabricated metal products, except machinery and equipment.

The overall increase was partially offset by some decreases in manufacturing subsectors; the 3 largest decreases over the year being:

- a decrease of 15.5% (-1,000 jobs) in manufacture of other transport equipment.
- a decrease of 14.1% (-390 jobs) in manufacture of electrical equipment.
- a decrease of 11.3% (-170 jobs) in printing and reproduction of recorded media.

**For figures broken down by 2 digit SIC please see table 5.10 on the NISRA - [Economic and Labour Market Statistics website](#).**

When using table 5.10 please consider the notes on 'Using 2 Digit SIC Level Data' in section 6 – Further Info.

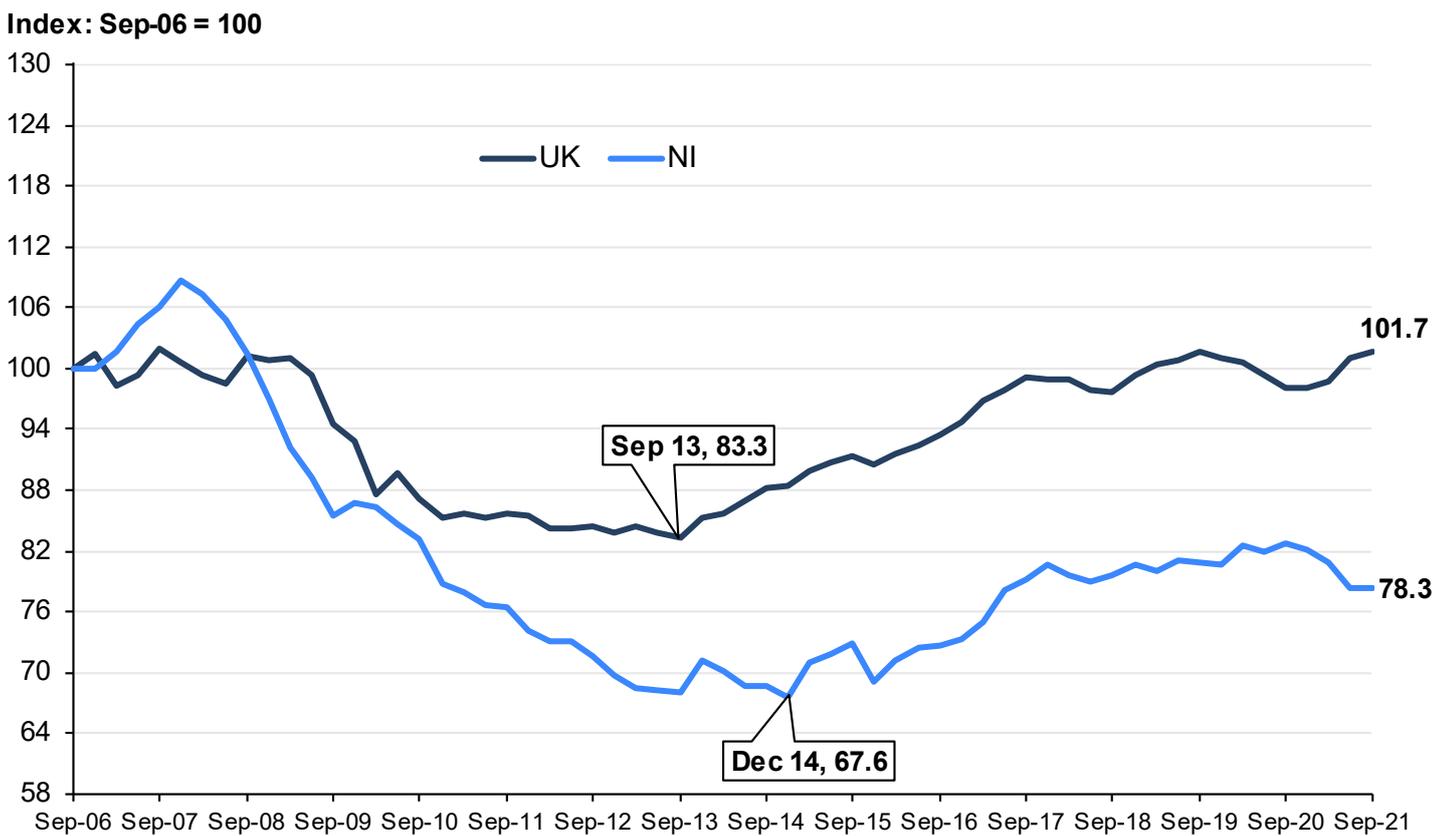
# Construction sector

**Construction sector:** construction is the process of creating and building infrastructure or a facility. It differs from manufacturing in that manufacturing typically involves mass production of similar items without a designated purchaser and construction is typically done on location for a known client. The construction sector consists of businesses with activity in the construction of buildings, civil engineering or specialised construction activities.

**Key Findings:**

- The construction sector accounted for 4.3% of all employee jobs in September 2021.
- Seasonally adjusted figures showed a marginal decrease of 0.1% over the quarter and a decrease of 5.4% over the year to 33,570 jobs in September 2021.

**Figure 2.3: Index of construction employee jobs, September 2006 – September 2021**



[Download Q3-21 Data](#)

September 2021 marked the fourth consecutive quarter of decline in NI construction sector jobs; however the September 2021 quarterly decline was marginal at 0.1% (-40 jobs). The most recent series low in the NI construction sector was in December 2014 (28,950 jobs). The latest estimates show a 16.0% improvement on this level; however, the number of employee jobs in the NI construction sector is currently 27.9% lower than the series peak in December 2007. Most recent estimates show that the UK construction sector is now 22.1% above the series low in September 2013.

## **Key Findings**

Seasonally adjusted data showed that the construction sector decreased marginally by 0.1% (-40 jobs) over the quarter and decreased by 5.4% (-1,930 jobs) over the year to 33,570 jobs in September 2021.

The following breakdowns are based on 2 digit SIC construction data that have not been adjusted for seasonality. Please note that estimates at 2 digit SIC can fluctuate due to sampling variability and changes to industrial classification.

## **Changes over the year**

Over the year to September 2021 the unadjusted figures showed a decrease of 5.3% (-1,900 jobs) in the construction sector.

The following changes occurred over the year:

- an increase of 0.7% (+60 jobs) in civil engineering.
- a decrease of 4.7% (-840 jobs) in specialised construction activities.
- a decrease of 12.8% (-1,120 jobs) in construction of buildings.

**For figures broken down by 2 digit SIC please see table 5.10 on the NISRA - [Economic and Labour Market Statistics website](#).**

When using table 5.10 please consider the notes on 'Using 2 Digit SIC Level Data' in section 6 – Further Info.

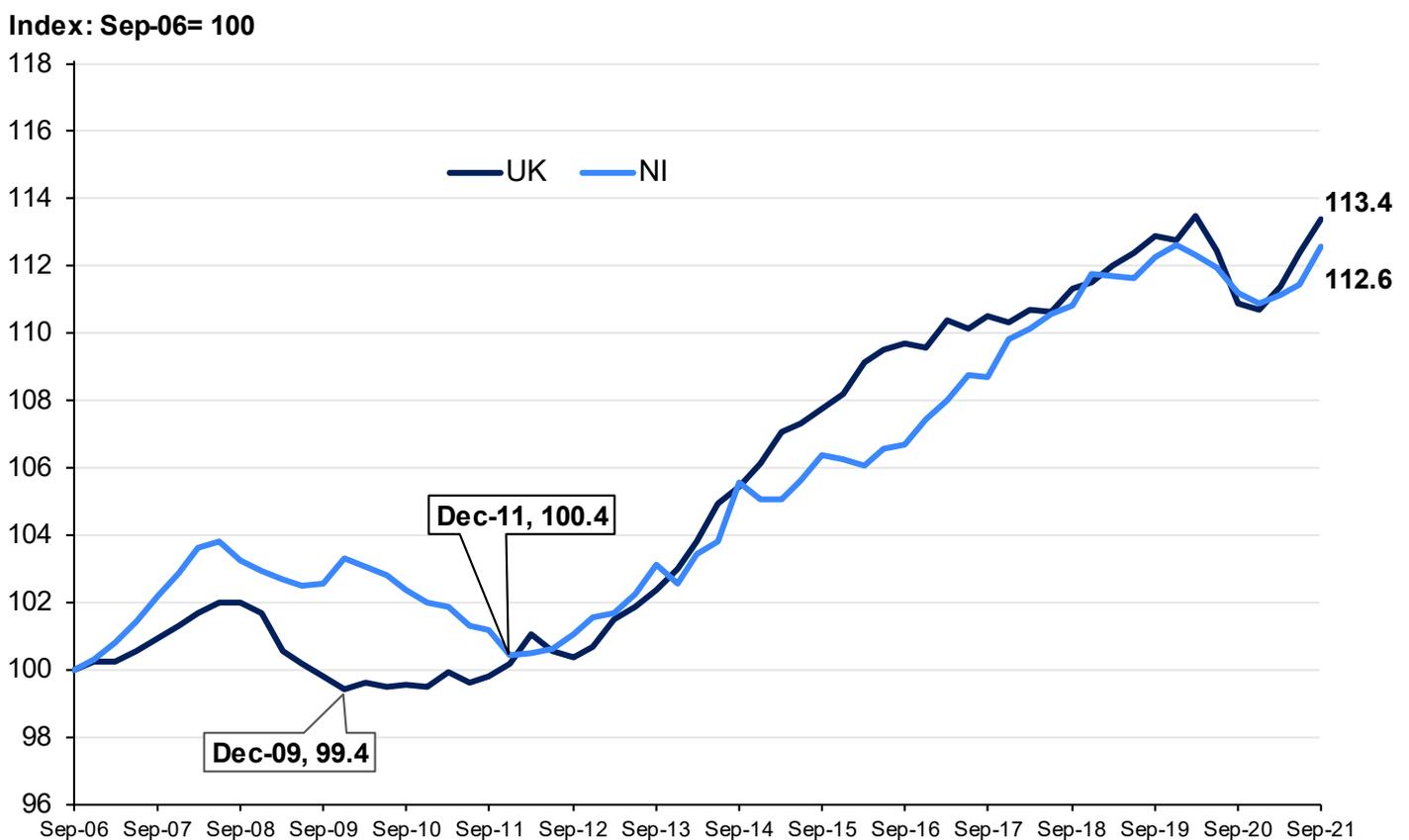
## Services sector

**Services sector:** the services sector contains businesses which sell services and skills; and includes education, public administration and health and social work activities. A full list of the industry sections G-S which are included in the services sector can be found in table 5.5 within the supplementary tables on the [Economic and Labour Market Statistics website](#).

### Key Findings:

- Seasonally adjusted figures showed increases of 1.0% over the quarter and 1.2% over the year to 633,540 service sector jobs in September 2021.
- Services sector jobs reached a peak in December 2019, however there has been a 0.1% decrease (-360 jobs) since this point to September 2021.
- The services sector accounted for 81.3% of all employee jobs in Northern Ireland in September 2021.

Figure 2.4: Index of services employee jobs, September 2006 - September 2021



[Download Q3-21 Data](#)

Services jobs in NI experienced an increase over the quarter to September 2021 (+1.0% or +6,100 jobs), however they are still 0.1% lower (-360 jobs) than the series high seen in December 2019. The number of employee jobs in the NI services sector has increased by 33,060 over the last 5 years. There has been an increase of 12.1% in employee jobs in the services sector since the low in December 2011.

The UK also experienced increases in service sector jobs over the quarter (+0.9%) and over the year (+2.3%) to September 2021.

## Key Findings

Seasonally adjusted data showed that the services sector increased by 1.0% (+6,100 jobs) over the quarter and by 1.2% (+7,630 jobs) over the year to 633,540 jobs in September 2021.

The human health and social work activities (section Q) and wholesale and retail trade (section G) services sections are the two largest industry sections of the NI economy, accounting for a third of all employee jobs in September 2021 (33.2% or 258,860 jobs).

- Human health and social work activities: 133,840 jobs in September 2021, representing an annual increase of 2.0% or 2,620 jobs.
- Wholesale and retail trade: 125,020 jobs in September 2021, representing an annual decrease of 1.0% or 1,220 jobs.

**For figures for all services industry sections (G-S), please see table 5.5b within the supplementary tables on the NISRA - [Economic and Labour Market Statistics website](#).**

The following breakdowns are based on 2 digit SIC services data that have not been adjusted for seasonality. Please note that estimates at 2 digit SIC can fluctuate due to sampling variability and changes to industrial classification.

### Changes over the year

Over the year to September 2021 the unadjusted figures showed an increase of 1.3% (+7,790 jobs) in the services sector. The 3 largest contributors to this increase over the year were:

- an increase of 13.2% (+2,480 jobs) in employment activities.
- an increase of 3.1% (+2,210 jobs) in education.
- an increase of 2.0% (+1,460 jobs) in human health activities.

The overall increase was partially offset by some decreases in services subsectors, the 3 largest decreases over the year being:

- a decrease of 2.4% (-2,040 jobs) in retail trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles.
- a decrease of 12.9% (-870 jobs) in activities auxiliary to financial services and insurance activities.
- a decrease of 5.1% (-870 jobs) in land transport and transport via pipelines.

**For figures broken down by 2 digit SIC please see table 5.10 on the NISRA - [Economic and Labour Market Statistics website](#).**

When using table 5.10 please consider the notes on 'Using 2 Digit SIC Level Data' in section 6 – Further Info.

## Other industries sector

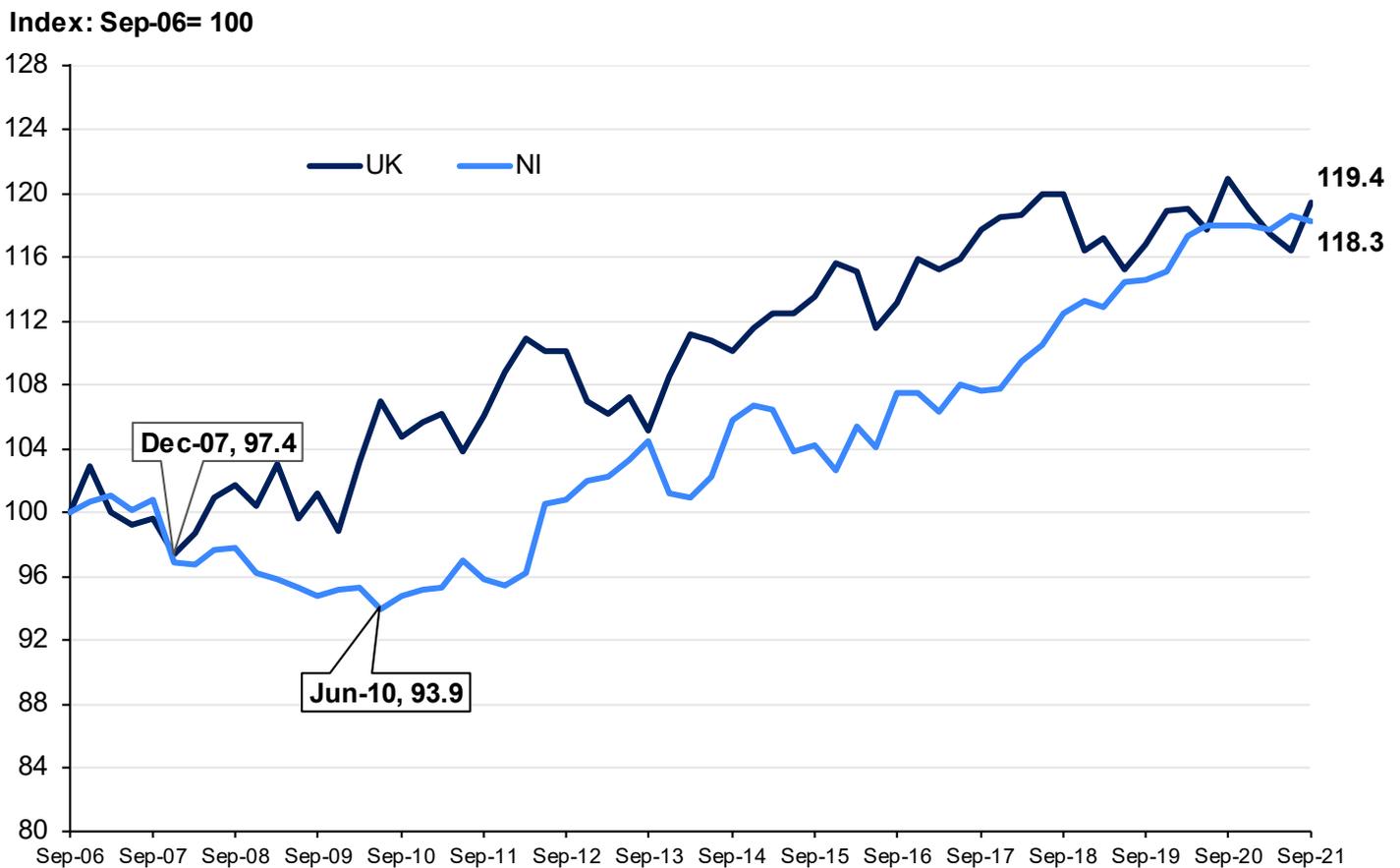
**Other industries sector:** this sector contains businesses with activity in agriculture, forestry and fishing, mining and quarrying, electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply and water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities (industry sections A,B,D and E).

Estimates from the annual Farm Census are included in industry section A (accounting for approximately 90% of the employee jobs in the section). The Farm Census figures are published annually in January and relate to the previous June.

### Key Findings:

- **Seasonally adjusted figures showed a marginal decrease of 0.3% in the other industries sector over the quarter and a marginal increase of 0.3% over the year to 24,680 jobs in September 2021.**
- **The other industries sector made up 3.2% of all employee jobs in September 2021.**

**Figure 2.5: Index of other industries sector jobs, September 2006 - September 2021**



[Download Q3-21 Data](#)

Over the last 10 years the other industries sector in NI and the UK increased overall. The number of employee jobs in the NI other industries sector increased by 4,700 (+23.5%) over the 10 year period to September 2021.

## Key Findings

Seasonally adjusted data showed that the other industries sector decreased marginally by 0.3% (-60 jobs) over the quarter and increased marginally by 0.3% (+70 jobs) over the year to 24,680 jobs.

The following breakdowns are based on 2 digit SIC other industries data that have not been adjusted for seasonality. Please note that estimates at 2 digit SIC can fluctuate due to sampling variability and changes to industrial classification.

## Changes over the year

Over the year to September 2021 the unadjusted figures showed a marginal increase of 0.3% (+70 jobs) in the other industries sector. The 3 largest contributors to this increase over the year were:

- an increase of 5.8% (+110 jobs) in other mining and quarrying.
- an increase of 0.6% (+80 jobs) in crop and animal production, hunting and related service activities.
- an increase of 19.1% (+50 jobs) in fishing and aquaculture.

The overall increase was partially offset by some decreases in other industries subsectors, the 3 largest decreases over the year being:

- a decrease of 3.1% (-170 jobs) in waste collection, treatment and disposal activities.
- a decrease of 14.7% (-50 jobs) in sewerage.
- a decrease of 4.4% (-10 jobs) in remediation activities and other waste management services.

**For figures broken down by 2 digit SIC please see table 5.10 on the NISRA - [Economic and Labour Market Statistics website](#).**

When using table 5.10 please consider the notes on 'Using 2 Digit SIC Level Data' in section 6 – Further Info.

### 3 Public/Private Sector Employee Jobs

**Public sector:** the NI public sector can be broken down into five areas:

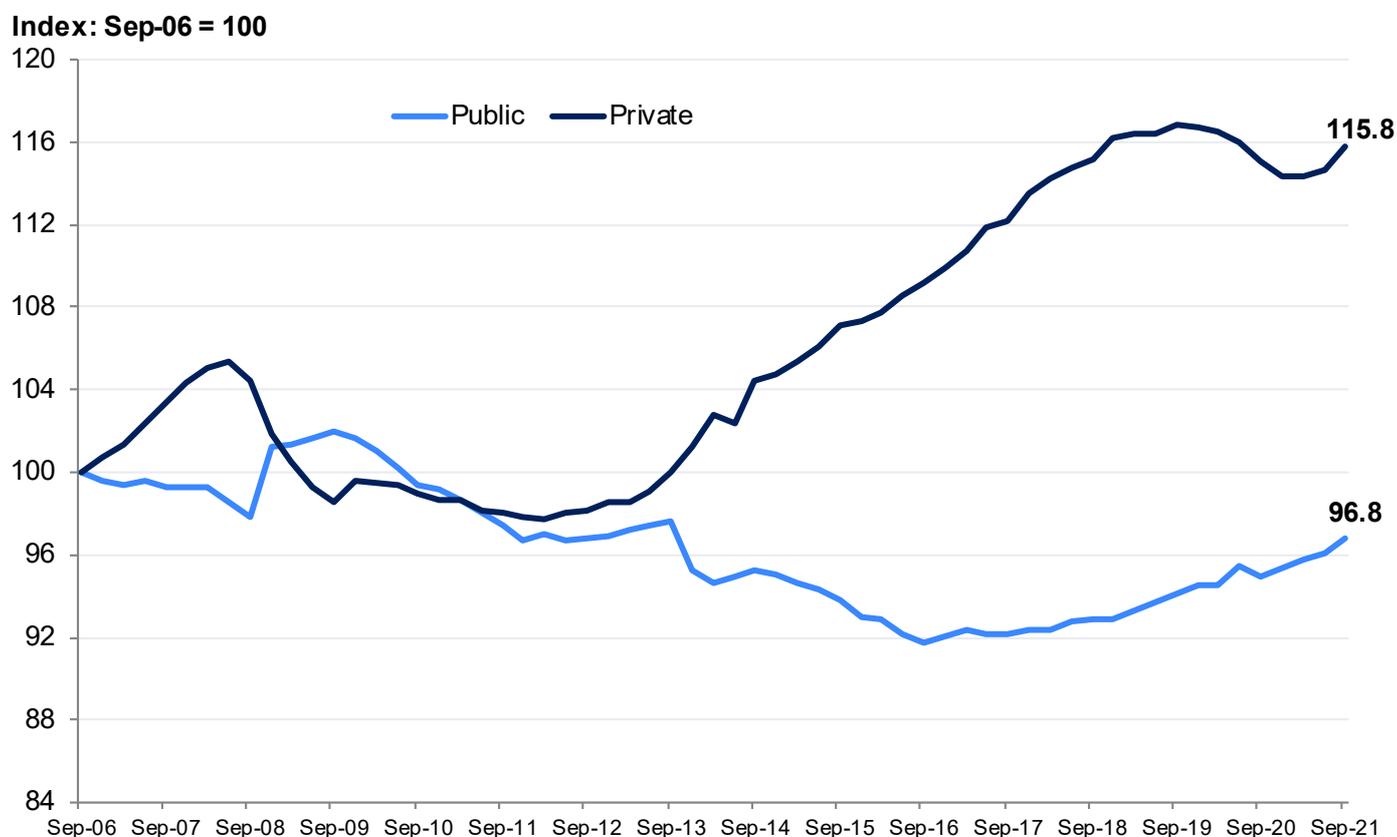
1. NI central government
2. Bodies under aegis of NI central government
3. UK central government employees based in Northern Ireland
4. Local government
5. Public corporations

**Private sector:** the private sector encompasses all for-profit businesses (not owned or operated by the government) and the voluntary sector; which includes charities and other non-profit organisations.

#### Key Findings:

- The NI public sector made up 28% and the private sector made up 72% of all employee jobs in September 2021. NI public sector jobs as a proportion of the NI population<sup>1</sup> was 11%. This compares to 8% in the UK.
- Seasonally adjusted employee jobs in the private sector increased over both the quarter and the year to 563,120 jobs.
- Seasonally adjusted employee jobs in the public sector increased over both the quarter and the year to 216,710 jobs.

Figure 3.1: Index of NI Public and Private Sector Jobs, September 2006 – September 2021



[Download Q3-21 Data](#)

The latest seasonally adjusted employee jobs figures estimate that there were:

- 563,120 employee jobs in the NI private sector.
- 216,710 employee jobs in the NI public sector.

<sup>1</sup> Latest population estimates available – [June 2020](#).

## **Changes over the quarter**

The latest seasonally adjusted figures represented:

- an increase of 0.9% (+5,260 jobs) in the private sector.
- an increase of 0.8% (+1,630 jobs) in the public sector.

## **Changes over the year**

The latest seasonally adjusted figures represented:

- an increase of 0.7% (+3,680 jobs) in the private sector.
- an increase of 2.0% (+4,300 jobs) in the public sector.

The annual increase in private sector jobs in September 2021 (+0.7% or +3,680 jobs) follows five previous consecutive quarters of annual decline. While private sector jobs experienced quarterly increases in both June 2021 and September 2021, private sector jobs are still 0.9% lower (-5,210 jobs) than the series high seen in September 2019.

Following a period of annual decline in public sector employee jobs between June 2015 and June 2017, since September 2017 there have been seventeen consecutive quarters of annual growth in public sector jobs to September 2021. There are 11,480 fewer public sector jobs (-5.0%) than the series peak in September 2009.

# 4 Composition of Employee Jobs

**Please note: data in this section have not been adjusted for seasonality.**

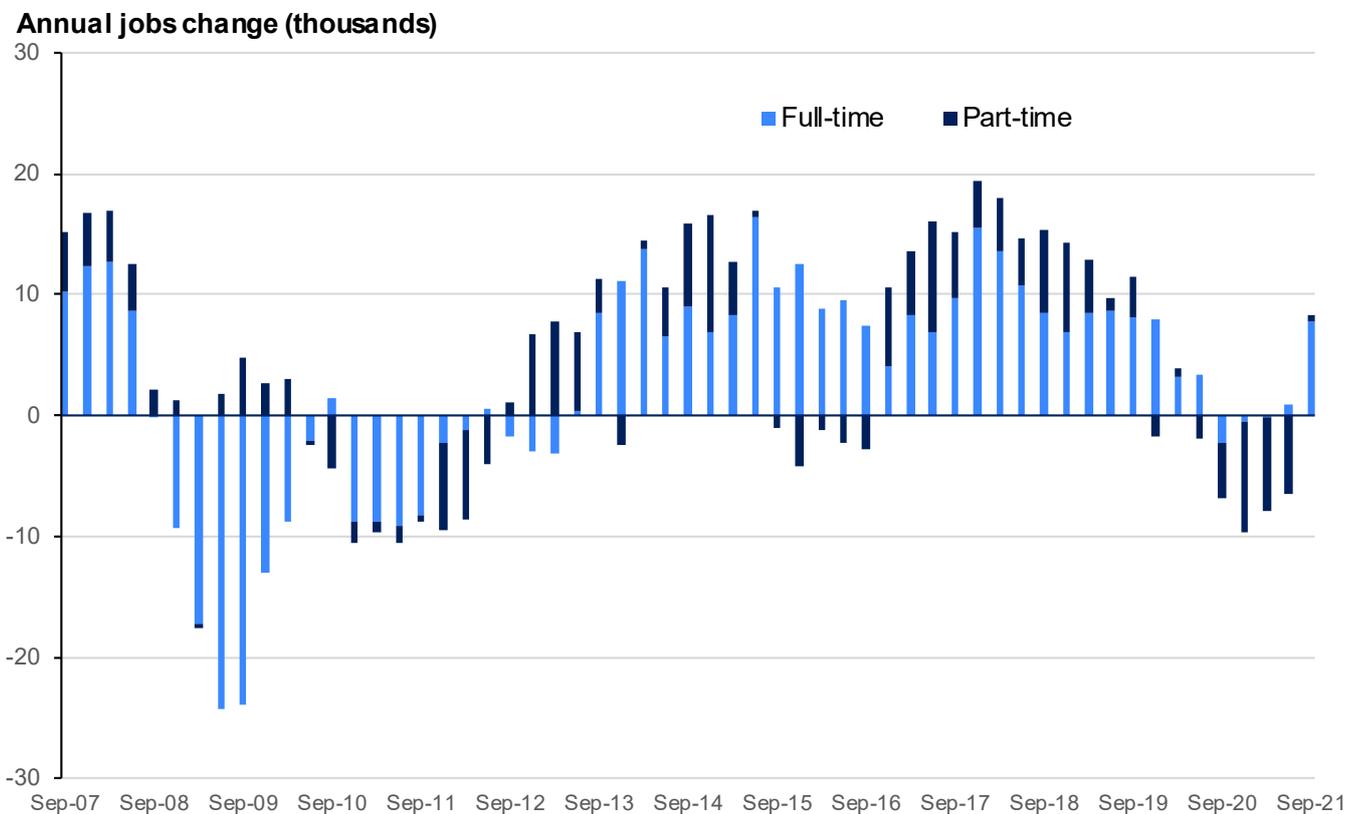
**Part-time:** part-time means those who normally work 30 hours a week or less.

**Full-time:** full-time means those who normally work more than 30 hours a week.

## Key Findings

- There were quarterly increases in both full-time (+0.1% or +710 jobs) and part-time jobs (+1.9% or +4,810 jobs) in September 2021.
- Increases were also seen over the year in both full-time (+1.5% or +7,740 jobs) and part-time jobs (+0.2% or +500 jobs) to September 2021.
- Full-time jobs reached the series high in September 2021.
- Part-time jobs accounted for 34% of all employee jobs in September 2021.
- The overall annual declines in employee jobs in recent quarters have been driven by part-time job losses.

**Figure 4.1: Full-time and part-time jobs annual change, September 2007 – September 2021**



[Download Q3-21 Data](#)

The latest estimates showed that:

- Part-time jobs increased by 9.1% (+21,930 jobs) since the most recent low point in March 2012.
- The low point for full-time jobs was a year later (March 2013) than for part-time jobs. The number of full-time jobs has increased by 15.2% (+67,900 jobs) since this point.

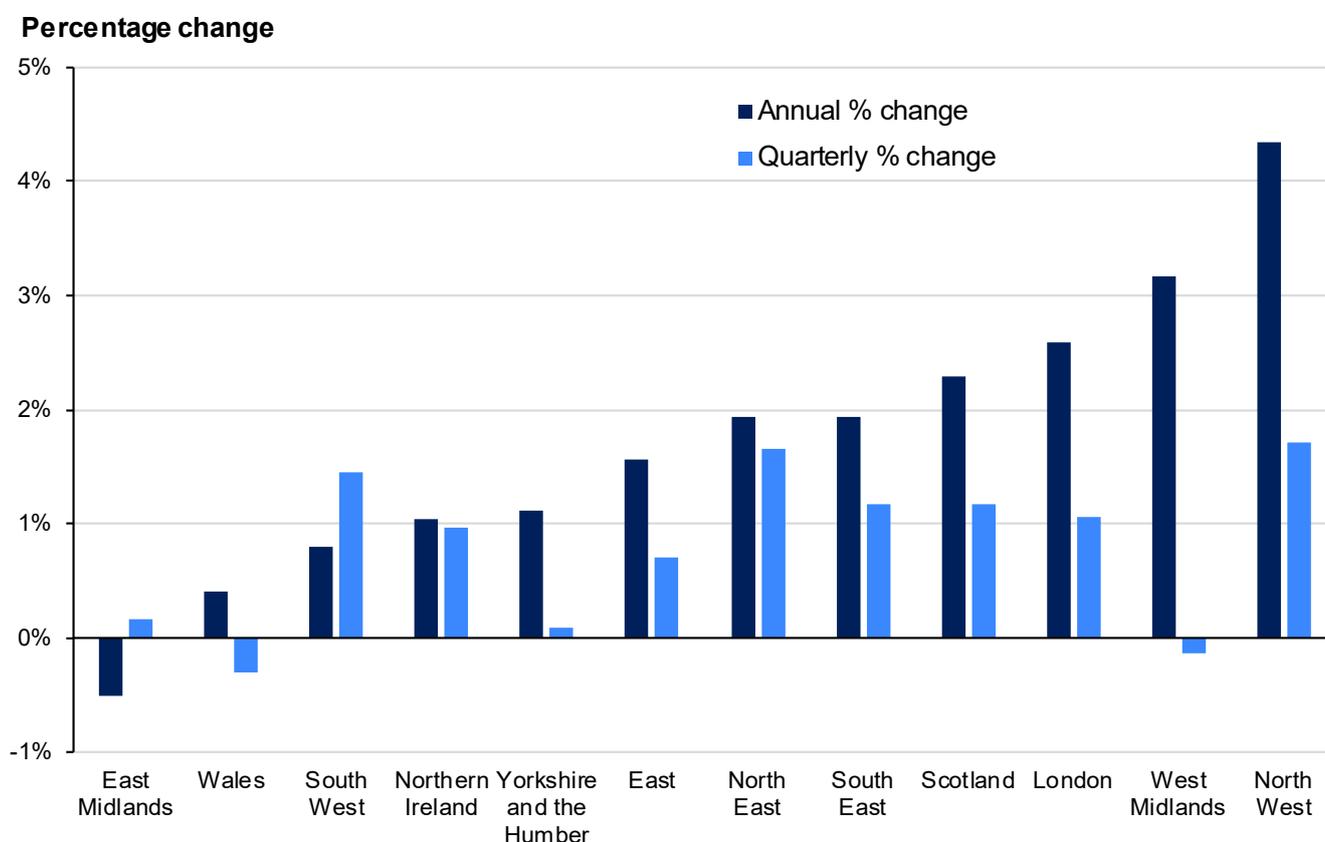
# 5 UK Comparisons

Employee jobs figures for GB regions are provided by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). ONS produces a publication on [Workforce Jobs by region](#). Unlike QES, Workforce Jobs include employee jobs, self-employed, government supported trainees and Her Majesty's Forces.

## Key Findings

- The UK reported increases in employee jobs over the quarter (+0.9%) and over the year (+2.0%) to 30.83 million jobs in September 2021.
- Ten out of the twelve UK regions showed an increase over the quarter. Northern Ireland employee jobs increased by 1.0% over the quarter.
- All UK regions showed an increase over the year except the East Midlands (-0.5%). The North West recorded the largest estimated annual increase (+4.4%). Northern Ireland employee jobs increased by 1.0% over the year.

**Figure 5.1: Annual and Quarterly Percentage Change in Employee Jobs by UK Region, September 2020 – September 2021 and June 2021 – September 2021**



[Download Q3-21 Data](#)

## 6 Further Information

### Background

Estimates of the number of employee jobs are obtained from the Quarterly Business Survey (QBS). The QBS is a statutory survey issued under the Statistics of Trade and Employment (Northern Ireland) Order 1988 and is designed to collect information on employees and turnover. The main outputs are published in four quarterly publications – the [Quarterly Employment Survey](#) (QES), [Index of Services](#) (IOS), [Index of Production](#) (IOP) and [Quarterly Construction Enquiry](#) (QCE).

### Impact of COVID-19 on data collection and estimates

Due to restrictions in place for businesses, COVID-19 impacted on the data collection and validation of employee jobs data, which are collected on the Quarterly Business Survey. The following table provides an overview of median coverage response rates for 2019 and 2020, compared to Quarter 3 2021:

Response rate type	Q3 2021	2020 (median*)	2019 (median*)
<b>Coverage response rate (returned employees)</b>	62%	64%	77%

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

As a result, employee jobs estimates for 2020/21 may be subject to higher revisions than normal over the coming quarters. These can be tracked through the revisions triangle on the [Quarterly Employment Survey Revisions page](#). Comparisons of provisional employee jobs estimates at lower industry levels in particular (e.g. 2 digit Standard Industrial Classification level), should be treated with caution.

### Sample

The QES, IOS, IOP and QCE are sampled independently and there is an overlap between QES and IOS/IOP/QCE of approximately 2,250 businesses. The QES covers all public sector bodies, all private sector firms with 25 or more employees, all businesses with more than one industry activity and a sample of the remainder. QES covers all industrial sections apart from agriculture. Employee estimates for the agricultural sector are provided, on an annual basis (figures for June are provided in the January of the following year), from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Agricultural Census. Agriculture employees include all workers on agricultural businesses other than (a) part-time farmers and partners and (b) farmers' spouses. They include full-time, part-time and casual workers, both paid and unpaid.

The QES sample is drawn from the Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR), as follows:

Employment Size/Sector	Percentage of businesses selected
0-9 employees	Sample (4%)
10-24 employees	Sample (9%)
Multiple Industry Activities	Full Count (100%)
25+ employees	Full Count (100%)
Public Sector	Full Count (100%)

As the QES is a sample survey, estimates obtained from it are subject to sampling variability i.e. if we drew many similar samples each would give a different result. [Confidence intervals PDF \(665KB\)](#) provide a measure of the size of the sampling variability. The 95% confidence interval for the September 2021 employee jobs estimate is 779,470 +/- 5,370. This means that in 100 similar samples we would expect 95 (95%) of the confidence intervals to contain the true population value of the number of employee jobs.

The survey collects information on numbers of persons in full-time and part-time employment. It should be noted that the survey counts the number of jobs rather than the number of persons with jobs. For example, a person holding both a full-time job and a part-time job, or someone with two part-time jobs, will be counted twice.

Employment results are collated into industry classes using the 2007 Standard Industrial Classification (SIC). As a result, no individual business can be identified.

### Updates to the sample frame

The annual Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) results are used to update employee and SIC code variables on the Inter Departmental Business Register annually in quarter 1. The impact of this update is greatest at 2 digit SIC level. Users should be aware that changes at this level may be due to a reallocation of jobs/businesses to SIC codes following the sample frame update.

### Using 2 Digit SIC Level Data

The introduction of sample rotation from March 2014 contributed to the volatility of the series. To counteract these effects from March 2016 the number of businesses selected in SIC and size bands experiencing the greatest impact of rotation increased.

Volatility also arises when businesses inform NISRA of SIC code changes via business surveys, ONS and HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC). This new information helps to improve the industry estimates of employee jobs each quarter but also adds volatility to quarterly and annual changes, particularly at 2 digit SIC level. SICs 74 (Other professional, scientific and technical activities) and 82 (Office administrative, office support and other business support activities) are most affected by updates to industry codes. More information can be found in Section 3 of the [Analysis of the Impact of Quarterly Employment Survey Data Revisions PDF \(555KB\)](#) document. It is therefore recommended that changes in employee jobs estimates at 2 digit SIC level are considered in the context of a longer time series.

### Revisions Policy

QES estimates are revised quarterly to reflect the latest information provided by employers. The June 2021 seasonally adjusted estimate published in September 2021 has been revised up (+0.04%). Estimates for the latest quarter as well as the previous four quarters are provisional and subject to revision in light of (a) late responses to surveys and administrative sources and (b) where cross survey congruence checks provide more accurate data. As a result of seasonal adjustment factors which are re-estimated every quarter, there may be amendments to the seasonally adjusted series outside of the revisable period (previous four quarters) and applicable back to March 2005. Only rarely are there avoidable 'errors' such as human or system failures, and such mistakes are made quite clear when they do occur. The revisions triangle can be accessed on the [Quarterly Employment Survey Revisions page](#).

### Public Sector Reclassifications

Public sector jobs comprise Central Government (including Bodies under the aegis of Central Government), Local Government and Public Corporations. The following table summarises the changes announced by the Public Sector Classification Committee and the date the changes took place.

<b>Date of change</b>	<b>Summary</b>	<b>Revision applied from</b>
Dec 2006	NI Housing Executive reclassified from SIC 75 to SIC 70	Mar 2004
Jan 2012	Water service became a Government owned company, as a result employees transferred from "NI Central Government" to "Bodies under the Aegis of NI Central Government"	Apr 2007
Mar 2014	Lloyds Banking Group and its subsidiaries reclassified to private sector	Dec 2013
Sep 2017	Registered housing associations in NI reclassified to public sector	Sep 1992
Sep 2018	Registered housing associations in NI moved from section N to L in sections level data	Mar 2005
Aug 2020	Registered housing associations in NI reclassified to private sector*	Sep 2020

\*See note on the [Quarterly Employment Survey Revisions](#) page for further information.

## Seasonal Adjustment

A seasonally adjusted series provides a better indication of underlying trends in employment. Time series data for seasonally adjusted employee jobs from 2005 to date for industry section (A-S) and main industrial sector are available on the [Quarterly Employment Survey webpage](#).

The following series are seasonally adjusted:

- Male employee jobs in Mining and quarrying (Section B); Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities (Section E); Construction (Section F); Wholesale and Retail Trade, Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles (Section G); Transportation and Storage (Section H); Accommodation and Food Service Activities (Section I); Information and communication (Section J); Administrative and Support Service Activities (Section N); Public Administration and Defence, Compulsory Social Security (Section O); Education (Section P) Human Health and Social Work Activities (Section Q); Arts, Entertainment and Recreation (Section R) and Other service activities (Section S).
- Female employee jobs in Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (Section A); Manufacturing (Section C); Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply (Section D); Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities (Section E); Construction (Section F); Wholesale and Retail Trade, Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles (Section G); Transportation and Storage (Section H); Accommodation and Food Service Activities (Section I); Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities (Section M); Public Administration and Defence, Compulsory Social Security (Section O); Education (Section P); Human Health and Social Work Activities (Section Q); Arts, Entertainment and Recreation (Section R) and Other service activities (Section S).

Seasonal adjustment models are periodically reviewed as seasonal trends can change over time. The latest review was carried out in July 2021 and more information can be found in the QES Seasonal Adjustment Review Report on the [Quarterly Employment Survey Revisions page](#). The next seasonal adjustment review is scheduled to take place in 2022.

## Alternative measures of employment

QES is only one of the measures of employment for Northern Ireland. Other measures are summarised below.

**[Business Register and Employment Survey \(BRES\)](#)** - a statutory business survey based on a larger sample than QES. Quarter 3 of the QES is taken at the same survey date as BRES. Information on employee jobs at a sub Northern Ireland level (e.g. District Council Area) and at the 5-digit SIC07 level are available from BRES. The QES sample size is designed so that estimates of total employee jobs are within +/- 1% of the BRES total.

**[Labour Force Survey \(LFS\)](#)** - a household survey carried out by interviewing individuals about their personal circumstances and work. The LFS defines employment as the number of people in work. This differs from the concept of jobs measured by business surveys as a person can have more than one job, and some jobs may be shared by more than one person. LFS employment figures are based on a rolling three month period whereas QES measures the number of jobs on a particular day. LFS employment figures include those who are employed, self-employed, unpaid family workers and those on government supported training programmes.

**[Agricultural Census](#)** - the numbers of employees in agriculture are available separately from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Agricultural Census. The Census is conducted in June of each year, with the results published in the January of the following year. The QES includes farm census figures in the total number of employee jobs.

[Northern Ireland Civil Service \(NICS\) Employee Bulletin](#) – provides further information on NICS employee jobs. The survey dates for the NICS Employee Bulletin differ from the QES survey dates. As such the figures for the NICS employee jobs may differ. NICS employee jobs figures are included in the QES employee jobs figures and breakdowns can be found in Table 5.12 on the [Economic and Labour Market Statistics website](#) (in the historical data section).

### **Annualised or Rolling 4 Quarters**

Annualised growth or rolling 4 quarters figures are calculated by taking the difference between the average over the most recent 4 quarters and the average over the same 4 quarters of the previous year, as a proportion of the average over the same 4 quarters of the previous year. For example annualised growth of -0.5% in September 2021 reported in this publication is the average number of jobs from Q4 2020 to Q3 2021 minus the average number of jobs from Q4 2019 to Q3 2020, divided by the average number of jobs from Q4 2019 to Q3 2020. This measure allows for comparison in growth to previous years and is useful in determining trends in the data.

### **Date of next publication**

Forthcoming release dates are published in the [Economic & Labour Market Statistics Branch Publication Schedule](#). The next Northern Ireland Quarterly Employment Survey publication is planned for 15<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

### **Further information**

If you require further information about the figures contained in this publication or the accompanying tables, please contact the Quarterly Employment Survey section using the details below:

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Twitter: [@NISRA](#)

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