

Northern Ireland Labour Market Report



Date: 17 June 2015
Geographical Area: Northern Ireland
Theme: Labour Market
Frequency: Monthly



Key Points

- The main findings from this release are that over the year unemployment continued to fall and employment continued to increase. The rate of improvement was slower than in the UK.
- The Labour Force Survey (LFS) indicated that the unemployment rate (16+) in Northern Ireland (NI) increased marginally over the quarter to the end of April and fell over the year to 6.1%. The UK rate was 5.5%.
- The number of people claiming unemployment related benefits (from Jobs and Benefits Offices) decreased by 1,000 over the month and by 12,000 over the year to 43,400 in May.
- Both measures of unemployment continued to show reductions in the rate of unemployment over the medium term. The LFS measure was down from a peak of 8.3% two years ago (margin of error +/-1.8 percentage points) and the number of people claiming unemployment related benefits decreased for the 27th consecutive month¹.
- The long term unemployment rate (LFS) was 64.5%, the highest since the series began.
- The proportion of people aged 16 to 64 in work (employment rate) increased to 68.4%.
- Businesses reported (in the Quarterly Employment Survey) that the number of employee jobs increased over the 1st quarter of 2015 (+3,180) and over the year (+8,680) to 721,410.
- The proportion of 16 to 64 year olds who were economically inactive (students, sick/disabled, looking after the home, etc) was 27.0% which decreased by 0.8 percentage points over the quarter but increased by 0.2 percentage points over the year.

¹ Following this year's [seasonal adjustment review](#)

This Labour Market Report (LMR) contains the following chapters:

1. Summary of labour market statistics

- Labour market summary table
- Infographic summary
- Context

2. Unemployment

- LFS unemployment
- Claimant count unemployment
- Comparison between LFS unemployment and claimant count
- Redundancies

3. Employment

- LFS employment
- Quarterly Employment Survey (QES)
- Vacancies

4. Economic Inactivity

- LFS economic inactivity

5. Earnings

- Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings

6. Further information

7. Index of Tables

National Statistics

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods, and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

Change over quarter / month

Seasonally adjusted LFS estimates for Northern Ireland for the period February - April 2015 showed that over the quarter:

- the unemployment rate (6.1%) increased by 0.1 percentage points (pps)
- the employment rate (68.4%) increased by 0.6 pps
- the economic inactivity rate decreased by 0.8 pps to 27.0%.

The most recent measure of claimant count showed that in May 2015, there was:

- a decrease in the seasonally adjusted claimant count by 1,000 to 43,400.

During May 2015 there were:

- 19 confirmed redundancies notified to the Department, representing a decrease on the previous monthly period total of 140 confirmed redundancies.

Employee jobs total in Northern Ireland at March 2015 was 721,410, which was:

- an increase of 0.4% (3,180) from the revised December 2014 estimate of 718,230.

Table 1: Northern Ireland Labour Market Summary

	Reference period	Persons / Jobs	Rates (%)	Change on quarter		Change on year	
				Persons / Jobs	Rates (pps)	Persons / Jobs	Rates (pps)
Unemployment ¹	Feb-Apr 2015	54,000	6.1%	2,000	0.1	-7000	-0.8
Employment ²	Feb-Apr 2015	827,000	68.4%	12,000	0.6	7000	0.4
Economically Active ²	Feb-Apr 2015	881,000	73.0%	14,000	0.8	1000	-0.2
Economically Inactive ²	Feb-Apr 2015	563,000	27.0%	-12,000	-0.8	7000	0.2
Employee Jobs ³	Mar-15	721,410		3,180	0.4	8,680	1.2
				Change on month			
Claimant Count ⁴	May-15	43,400	4.8%	-1,000	-0.1	-12,000	-1.3
Redundancies ⁵	May-15	19	-	-		-	

None of the changes in the LFS estimates were statistically significant i.e. the recorded change did not exceed the variability expected from a sample survey of this size (see Table 3 and Section 6 for details).

LFS and claimant count data are seasonally adjusted.

¹ People aged 16 and over. Unemployment rate = total unemployed as a proportion of the economically active.

² Levels for all persons aged 16 and over, rates for working age (16-64).

³ Quarterly Employment Survey – first published June 2015.

⁴ Rates are as a percentage of the total 2013 workforce.

⁵ Confirmed redundancies in the calendar month.

[Download in excel](#)

Change over year

Seasonally adjusted LFS estimates for Northern Ireland for the period February - April 2015 showed that over the year:

- the unemployment rate (6.1%) decreased by 0.8 pps
- the employment rate (68.4%) increased by 0.4 pps
- the economic inactivity rate increased by 0.2 pps to 27.0%.

The most recent measure of claimant count shows that in the year to May 2015, there was:

- a decrease in the seasonally adjusted claimant count by 12,000 to 43,400.

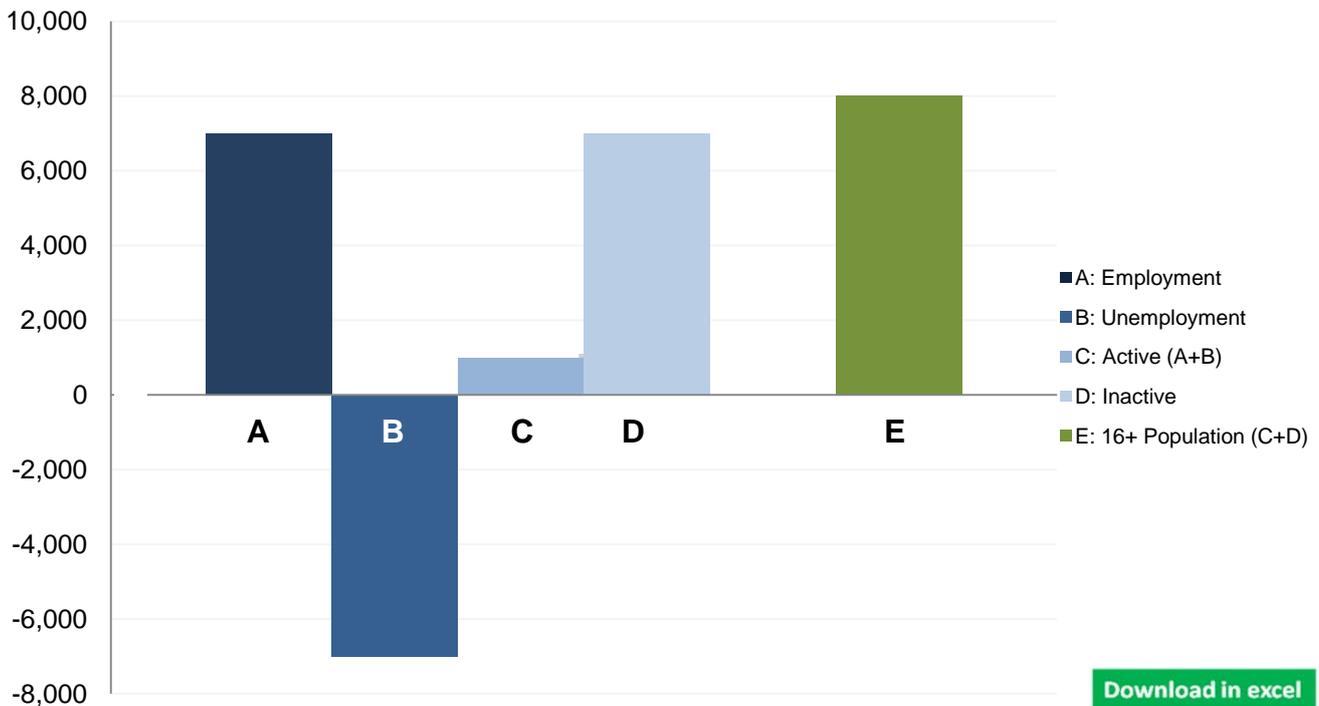
Over the latest twelve month period there were:

- 1,831 confirmed redundancies which was a decrease of 12% from the previous year (2,075).

Employee jobs total in Northern Ireland at March 2015 was 721,410, which was:

- an increase of 1.2% (8,680) from the revised March 2014 estimate of 712,730

Figure 1: Labour Market Structure: Change over year



UK summary

Seasonally adjusted LFS estimates for the UK for the period February - April 2015 showed:

- the unemployment rate (5.5%) decreased by 0.1 pps over the quarter and 1.1 pps over the year
- the employment rate (73.4%) increased by 0.1 pps over the quarter and 0.7 pps over the year
- the economic inactivity rate (22.2%) remained unchanged over the quarter and increased by 0.1 percentage points over the year.

Employee jobs (Business survey based)

Businesses reported (in the Quarterly Employment Survey) that the number of employee jobs increased over the 1st quarter of 2015 (+3,180) and over the year (+8,680) to 721,410.

Comparing seasonally adjusted March 2015 employee jobs to the revised December 2014 estimates showed:

- An increase in the construction sector by 5.6% (1,620 jobs)
- An increase in the manufacturing sector by 1.0% (830 jobs)
- An increase in the service sector by 0.1% (880 jobs)
- A decrease in the other industries sector by 0.7% (-150 jobs).

Over the year, March 2014 to March 2015, the seasonally adjusted employee jobs figures showed increases across all industry sectors, which were:

- The construction sector increased by 3.6% (1,070 jobs)
- The manufacturing sector increased by 2.4% (1,870 jobs)
- The services sector increased by 1.0% (5,640 jobs)
- Other industries increased by 0.5% (100 jobs).

Commentary

Both measures of unemployment continued to show reductions in the rate of unemployment over the medium term. However, the NI long-term unemployment rate (64.5%) was almost twice that of the UK (32.3%) on the LFS measure, having increased from 50.7% a year earlier.

The current number of working age people in employment (797,000) has exceeded the pre downturn peak of 787,000 in February - April 2008 due to the increasing employment rate and growing population. The NI rate (68.4%) was nevertheless still well behind that of the UK (73.4%).

Jobs growth was strongest in the construction sector, which showed an increase of 1,620 jobs (5.6%) over the quarter.

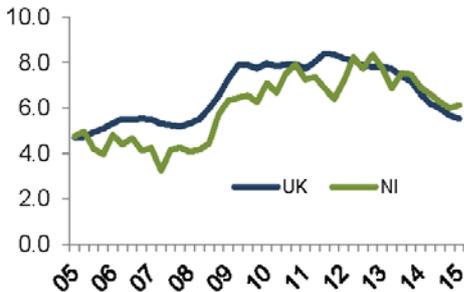
Employee jobs have continued to increase over the year in Northern Ireland, however this increase was at a slower rate than increases in Great Britain.

Further information is available on the NISRA - Economic and Labour Market Statistics website: [LMR Headline Tables](#).

NISRA Labour Market Statistics

Labour Force Survey

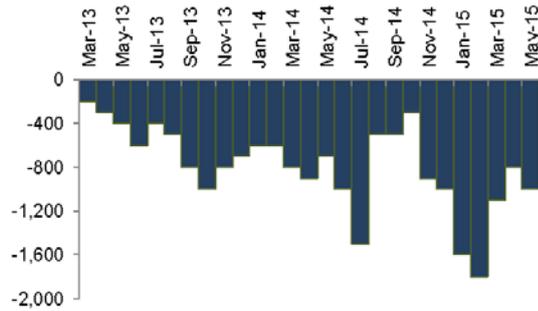
NI unemployment **6.1%** versus UK unemployment **5.5%**



↑ NI Unemployment
Change on Quarter: **+0.1pps (2,000)**

Claimant Count

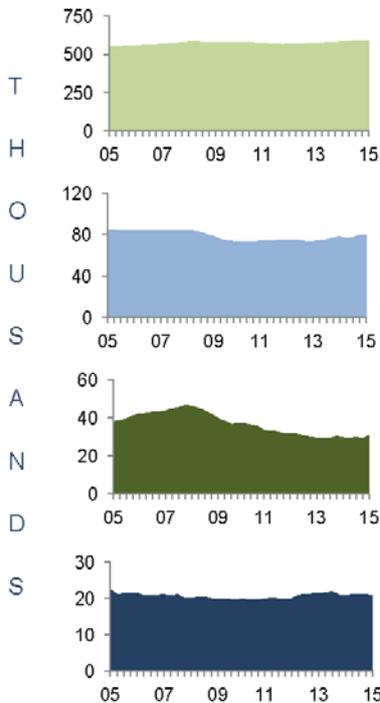
27th consecutive monthly decrease



43,400 people claiming unemployment related benefits

Quarterly Employment Survey

QES latest quarterly change and trends over time



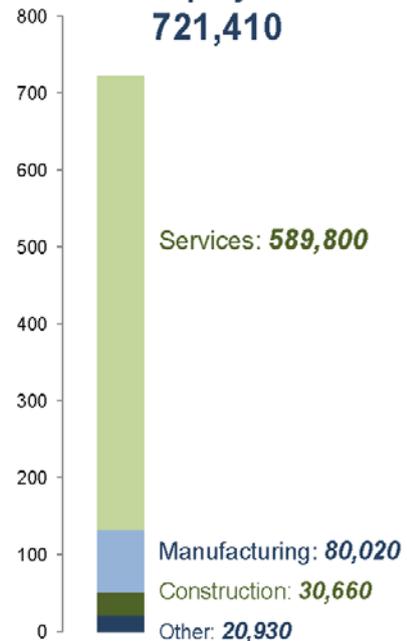
↑ Services
Change on Quarter: **+0.1% (880)**

↑ Manufacturing
Change on Quarter: **+1.0% (830)**

↑ Construction
Change on Quarter: **+5.6% (1,620)**

↓ Other Industries
Change on Quarter: **-0.7% (150)**

Total Employee Jobs:
721,410



All data seasonally adjusted and subject to future revisions.

Data published on 17th June 2015 by Economic and Labour Market Statistics branch which is part of NISRA.



Context

The Labour Market Report is a monthly overview of Northern Ireland key labour market statistics. It includes figures from the Labour Force Survey (LFS), the Claimant Count, the Quarterly Employment Survey (QES) and the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) as well as up to date redundancies data. More information about the data sources can be found in section 6.

Comparative UK data produced by the ONS are presented where these are available. The latest labour market statistics are available on the [ONS website](#).

Key users of Northern Ireland labour market statistics include government departments, in particular the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) and the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL), to design and monitor the impact of economic and labour market policy. Other Government departments such as the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM), the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD), as well as bodies such as Invest NI and Belfast City Council, regularly require specific ad hoc labour market analysis in order to monitor policies for example, equality and employment. In addition, significant 'non-governmental' users of labour market statistics include the media, banks, academics, private consultants and the general public, primarily for reporting or researching the performance of the economy in general. Labour market statistics attract widespread media coverage, with a number of broadcasters publishing articles on the labour market on a monthly basis, generally on the day of publication of the Labour Market Report.

LFS and the QES are used in the measurement of targets set in the Northern Ireland Executive's [Programme for Government](#) (PSA targets). The LFS and QES data feed into productivity estimates for NI and are therefore indirectly used to measure progress towards PSA 1: Productivity growth. In addition, LFS data is used to measure the proportion of the working age population qualified to Skill levels 2 and 3. These data therefore feed into the measurement of PSA 2: Skills for prosperity.

Labour market statistics feature in the [DETI 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.

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

- [Explaining the concepts of employment, unemployment and economic inactivity](#)
- [Interpreting Labour Market statistics](#)
- [Guide to Labour Market Statistics](#)
- [Glossary](#)

2

Unemployment

Labour Force Survey

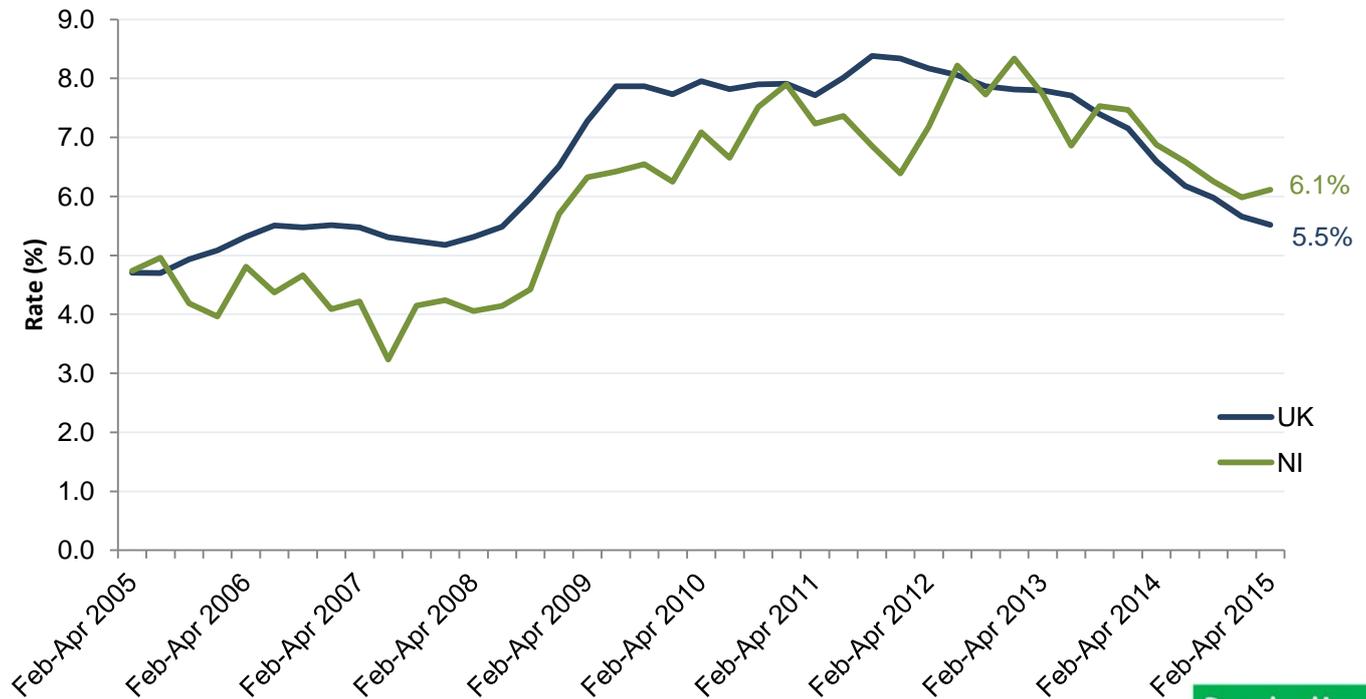
The Labour Force Survey (LFS) is a household sample survey carried out by interviewing individuals about their personal circumstances and work. It provides a rich source of information on the labour force using internationally agreed definitions. However, the estimates from it are subject to sampling error and care should be taken when making inferences from them (see section 6 for details).

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

Key Findings

- LFS unemployment in NI increased over the quarter and fell over the year
- LFS unemployment in NI above the UK average and below the EU and RoI
- NI long-term unemployment rate nearly twice that of the UK

Figure 2: Seasonally adjusted unemployment rate, Feb-Apr 2005 to Feb-Apr 2015



LFS unemployment

The unemployment rate for the period February - April 2015 was estimated at 6.1%. This was:

- an increase of 0.1 percentage points (pps) over the quarter and
- a decrease of 0.8 pps over the year.

The number of unemployed persons was estimated at 54,000, which was:

- up 2,000 over the quarter
- down 7,000 over the year.

UK national and international LFS comparisons

Figure 2 shows unemployment rates on the current 3 month rolling average for NI and UK over the last decade. The unemployment rate in NI was at its lowest point of 3.2% in May - July 2007 and peaked at 8.3% in November - January 2013. NI had a lower unemployment rate than the UK for much of the last decade. The UK rate has been falling consistently each quarter for the last 2 years while the same sustained decline has not been experienced in NI.

The most recent NI unemployment rate (6.1%) was:

- above the overall UK average rate (5.5%)
- the sixth highest rate among the twelve UK regions
- below the European Union (9.8%) and Republic of Ireland (9.8%) rates for March 2015.

Long-term and youth unemployment

The long term unemployment rate (percentage of unemployed who have been unemployed for 1 year or more) was 64.5%, which was:

- up 13.8 percentage points over the year
- higher than the UK average (32.3%).

The youth unemployment rate (percentage of economically active 18 - 24 year olds who are unemployed) was 19.3% and was:

- up 0.1 percentage points over the year
- higher than the UK average rate (13.6%).

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

[LFS unemployment](#)

Claimant Count

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

Claimant count: The claimant count consists of all people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) at Job Benefit offices. They must declare that they are out of work, capable of, available for and actively seeking work during the week in which their claim is made.

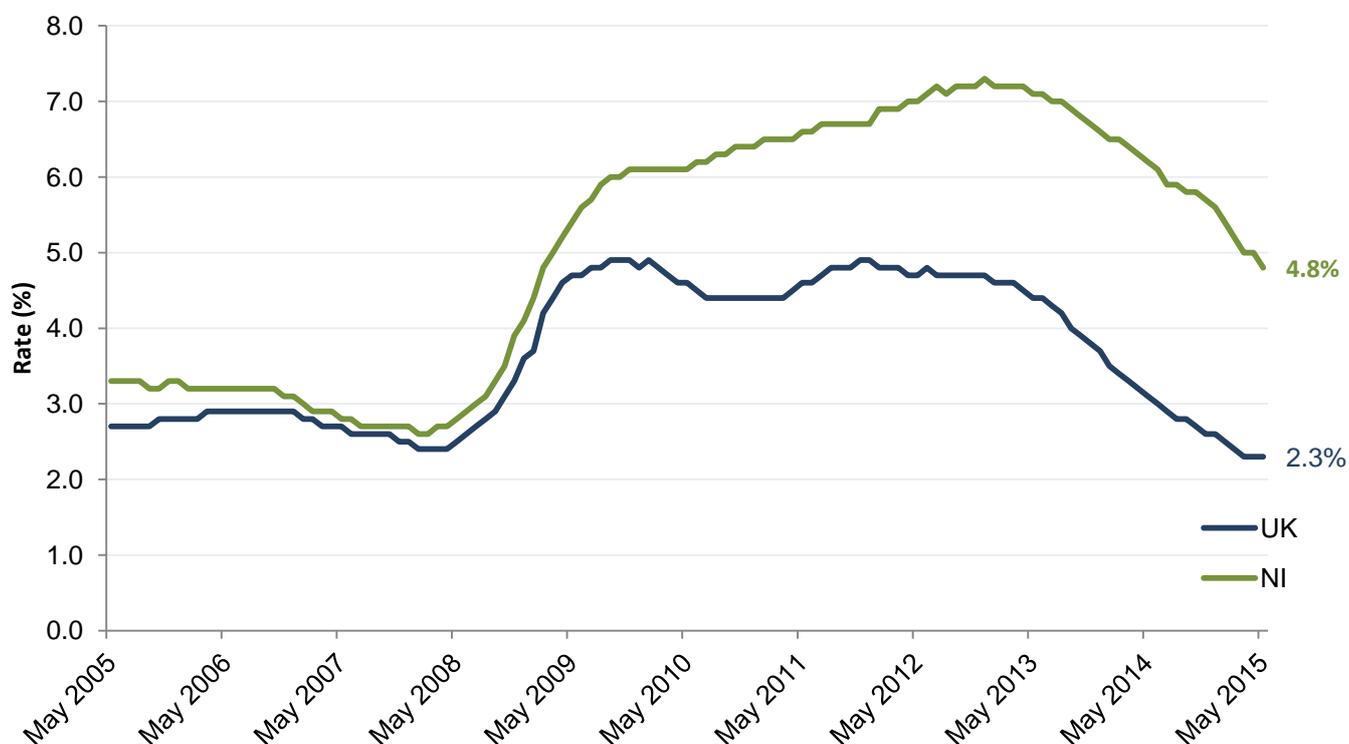
Percentage of workforce: This measure expresses the number of claimants as a percentage of workforce jobs plus claimants. Workforce jobs are the sum of employee jobs, self-employment jobs, HM Forces, & government-supported trainees. This measure is only available at the NI level.

Residence-based proportions: This is the official measure below national/regional level. It expresses the number of claimants as a percentage of the population aged 16-64, sourced from the mid-year population estimates. This measure is used for sub regional analysis.

Key Findings

- Claimant count unemployment decreased for the 27th consecutive month
- Youth claimants decreased over the month and year
- Nearly 40% of claimants had been claiming benefits for over a year
- NI claimant count was higher than the UK average and the highest rate among the twelve UK regions
- Claimant count rate highest in Derry and Strabane District Council Area

Figure 3: Seasonally adjusted claimant count monthly rates, May 2005 - May 2015



[Download in excel](#)

Claimant count unemployment

The most recent seasonally adjusted claimant count stood at 43,400 (4.8% of the workforce) in May 2015, representing:

- a decrease of 1,000 from last month's revised total
- a decrease of 12,000 (21.7%) over the year
- a decrease of 1.3 pps in the workforce unemployment rate over the year.

Figure 3 shows the NI claimant count has consistently been above the UK average over the last 10 years. The NI figure has fallen by 21,300 since its most recent peak in February 2013 following this year's seasonal adjustment review. This was the first time there had been a fall in twenty-seven consecutive months since the series began. The most recent level remained above the low-point in September 2007 (23,500).

The following breakdowns are based on claimant count data that have not been adjusted for seasonality:

Youth claimants

A total of 10,957 under 25's (25.6% of all claimants) were claiming benefits in May 2015, which showed:

- a decrease of 3.6% (412 claimants) over the month
- a decrease of 19.0% (2,574) over the year.

Long-term claimants

At May 2015, 16,939 (39.6% of all claimants) were claiming benefit for a year or more, which showed:

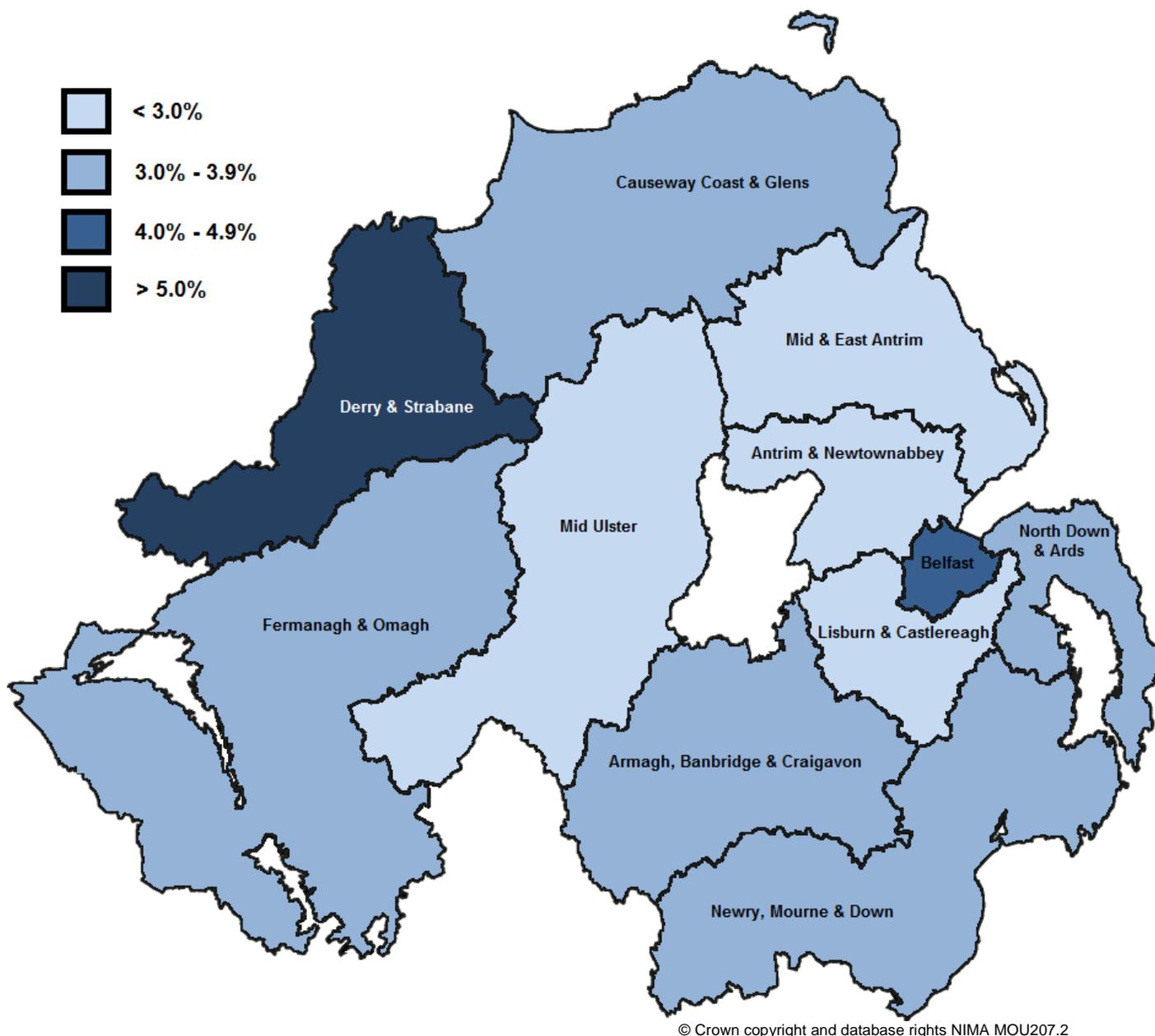
- an increase of 5.4% (863 claimants) over the month
- a decrease of 9.0% (1,666) over the year.

Claimant Count regional comparison

The seasonally adjusted claimant count rate in NI (4.8%):

- was higher than the UK average rate (2.3%)
- was the highest rate among the twelve UK regions
- was either the highest or second highest unemployment rate on this measure since April 2010
- showed a higher monthly decrease (2.3%) than the UK average decrease (0.8%)
- showed the second lowest annual decrease (21.7%) of the twelve UK regions (the annual decrease in the UK was 26.9%).

Figure 4: Claimant count rate by Council Area, May 2015



Claimant count Council Area comparison

[Download in excel](#)

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

- the highest claimant count rates were in Derry and Strabane (7.0%) and Belfast (4.9%),
- all 11 District Council Areas showed a decrease over year, with the largest decreases in Newry, Mourne and Down (27.5%), and Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon (27.3%).

Annual and monthly claimant count data are available on the NINIS website in the form of interactive maps for Parliamentary Constituency and District Council Area and can be accessed via the [NISRA - Economic and Labour Market Statistics website](#).

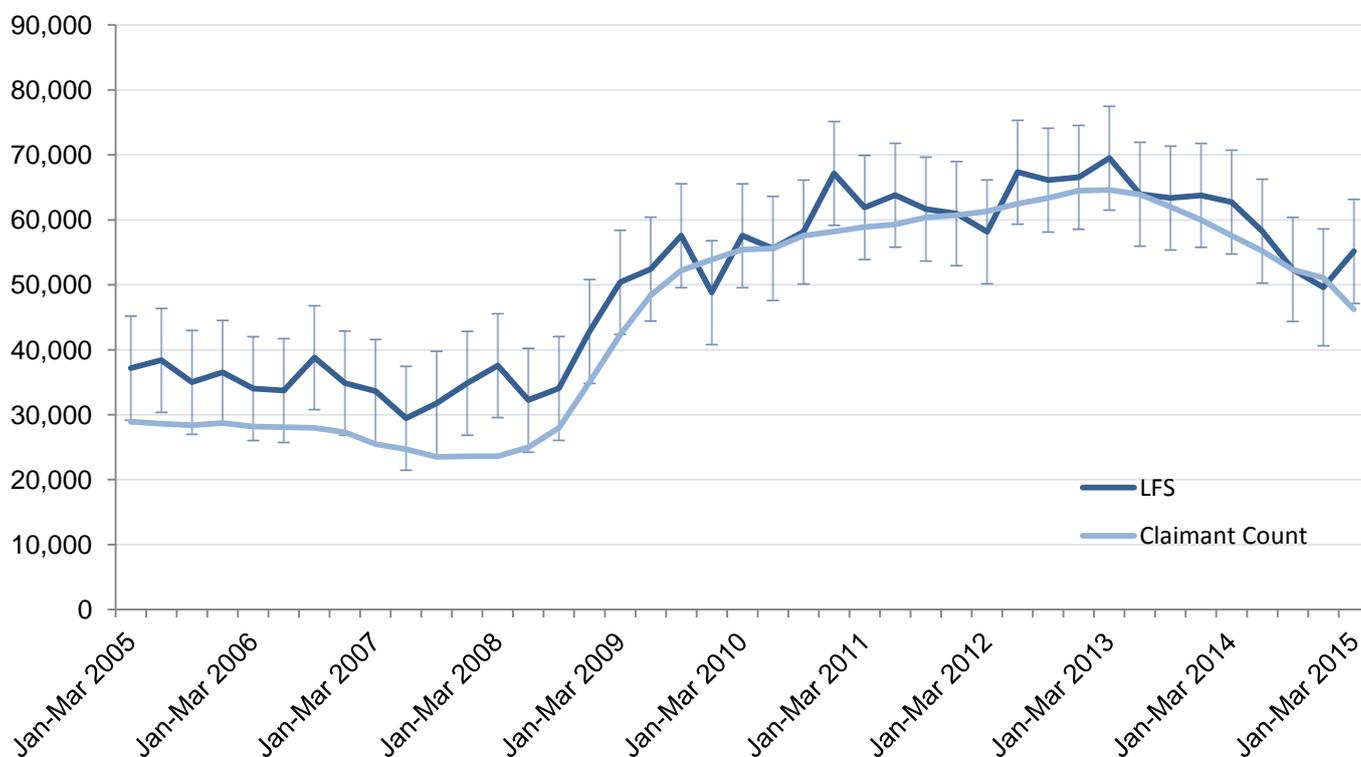
Further information is available on the NISRA - Economic and Labour Market Statistics website: [Claimant count unemployment](#)

Comparison between LFS unemployment and claimant count

Economic and Labour Market Statistics (ELMS) publishes two measures of unemployment – the LFS unemployment and the claimant count. Although there is a large degree of overlap between the two series, they measure unemployment using different criteria. An overview of the differences between the LFS and claimant count measures of unemployment is provided at the following link: [Differences between LFS and claimant count unemployment](#)

Figure 5 compares quarterly movements in unemployment and the monthly headline claimant count since 2005. The unemployment estimates shown in this comparison are based on aged 16 and over and refers to the total unemployed as a proportion of the economically active. The claimant count includes all claimants aged 16-64.

Figure 5: Seasonally adjusted LFS unemployment and claimant count, 2005 – 2015



[Download in excel](#)

Notes:

1. LFS unemployment is based on aged 16 and over and is the total unemployed as a proportion of the economically active.
2. Claimant count includes all claimants aged 16-64.

The chart shows that, although the two series are measuring different things, the overall trend is similar over time. The LFS confidence intervals demonstrate the variability of the LFS estimate, showing that on many occasions the claimant count level falls within the range of the LFS estimate. Over the last 10 years, the lowest rates were recorded for both measures just prior to the economic downturn in 2008 – LFS unemployment was 27,000 in May - July 2007 and Claimant Count reached 23,500 in September 2007. The most recent LFS unemployment was reported as 54,000 and claimant count as 43,400.

Redundancies

Under the Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 (Amended 8 October 2006) companies are only legally required to notify the Department of impending redundancies of 20 or more employees. Companies who propose less than 20 redundancies are not included in the statistics. As a result, the figures provided are likely to be an underestimate of total job losses, however it is not possible to quantify the extent of the shortfall.

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

Key Findings

- During June 2015 the department was notified of 19 confirmed redundancies in Northern Ireland
- Confirmed redundancies decreased over the year
- Highest proportion of redundancies found in the Wholesale and Retail sector
- Outstanding redundancies up 20% since this time last year

Figure 6: Confirmed and Proposed redundancies – annual totals, 2005 - 2014



[Download in excel](#)

Confirmed and proposed redundancies

The latest figures show that there were:

- 154 proposed redundancies notified between mid May 2015 and mid June 2015, representing an increase on the previous monthly period total of 81 proposed redundancies
- 19 confirmed redundancies in May 2015.

Over the latest twelve month period there were:

- 3,575 proposed redundancies, an increase of 16% from the previous year (3,085)
- 1,831 confirmed redundancies which was a decrease of 12% from the previous year (2,075).

Currently there are 1,959 outstanding redundancies (that is, proposed but not confirmed), which is 20% higher than this time last year (1,635). It should be noted that since all proposed redundancies do not actually take place, the confirmed total provides a better indication of real job losses.

Redundancies by sector

Of the 1,831 confirmed redundancies:

- 370 or 20% were in the Wholesale and Retail sector
- 326 redundancies (18% of all redundancies) occurred in Retail Trade (except for motor vehicles and motor cycles)
- a further 159 redundancies (9% of all redundancies) occurred in the Construction sector.

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

[Redundancies](#)

3

Employment

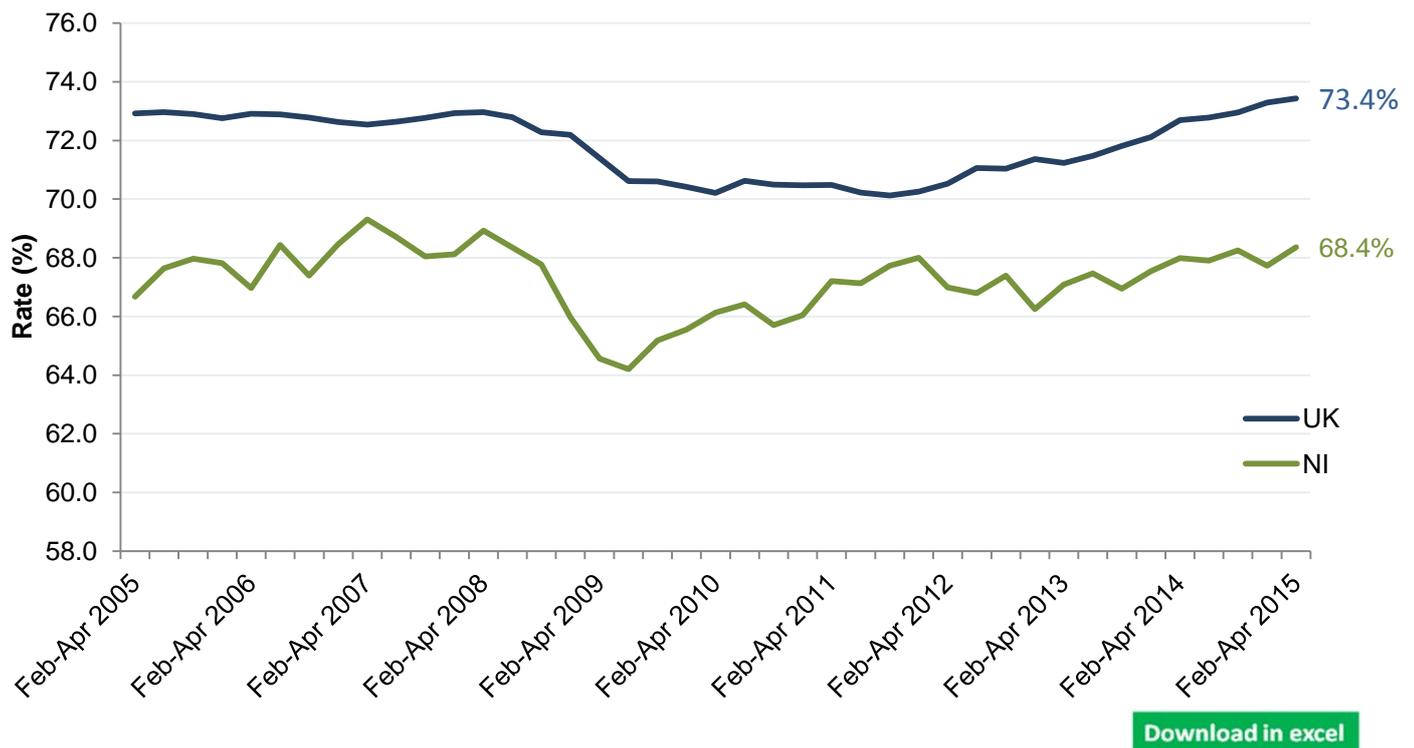
LFS employment

LFS employed: people aged 16 or over who did at least one hour of paid work in the reference week (whether as an employee or self employed); those who had a paid job that they were temporarily away from; those on government-supported training and employee programmes and those doing unpaid family work.

Key Findings

- Highest NI employment rate on rolling 3 month series since 2008
- Male employment rate increased while female employment rate fell
- NI employment rate was below the UK average and the lowest of the twelve UK regions

Figure 7: Seasonally adjusted employment rate, Feb-Apr 2005 to Feb - Apr 2015



[Download in excel](#)

Employment

Figure 7 shows that the NI employment rate has consistently been below the UK average over the last 10 years. The most recent NI employment rate for those aged 16-64 for the period February - April 2015 was estimated at 68.4%, representing:

- an increase of 0.6 pps over the quarter
- an increase of 0.4 pps over the year.
- the highest employment rate since February – April 2008 (68.9%) just prior to the downturn.

The number of persons in employment in the period February – April 2015 was estimated at 827,000, which is:

- an increase of 12,000 over the quarter and
- an increase of 7,000 over the year.

Employment by gender

Of the total, 53% (441,000) were male and 47% (386,000) were female, within which:

- the male employment rate (73.5%) increased by 1.5 percentage points over the year
- the female rate (63.3%) decreased by 0.7 percentage points over the year.

Regional comparison

The employment rate in NI (68.4%) was:

- below the UK average (73.4%)
- the lowest rate among the twelve UK regions.

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

[LFS employment](#)

Quarterly Employment Survey (QES)

The QES is a business survey which samples approximately 5,500 companies who are asked to supply the Department with employment data for each of their business activities. This information is then collated by Economic and Labour Market Statistics, from which employee jobs estimates are produced.

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

Key Findings

- Employee jobs increased over the quarter and year

Figure 8: Index of Employee Jobs, March 2005 – March 2015



[Download in excel](#)

Most recent GB jobs total not available at time of publication.

Figure 8 shows the estimated seasonally adjusted employee jobs, indexed to allow comparison between NI and GB. Both series peaked in June 2008 with GB reaching its lowest point in December 2010 – just over one year before the NI low in March 2012. GB is now above its pre downturn peak.

Employee Jobs

The seasonally adjusted employee jobs total in Northern Ireland at March 2015 was 721,410, which was:

- an increase of 0.4% (3,180) from the revised December 2014 estimate of 718,230
- an increase of 8,680 (1.2%) jobs over the year.

Employee jobs by sector

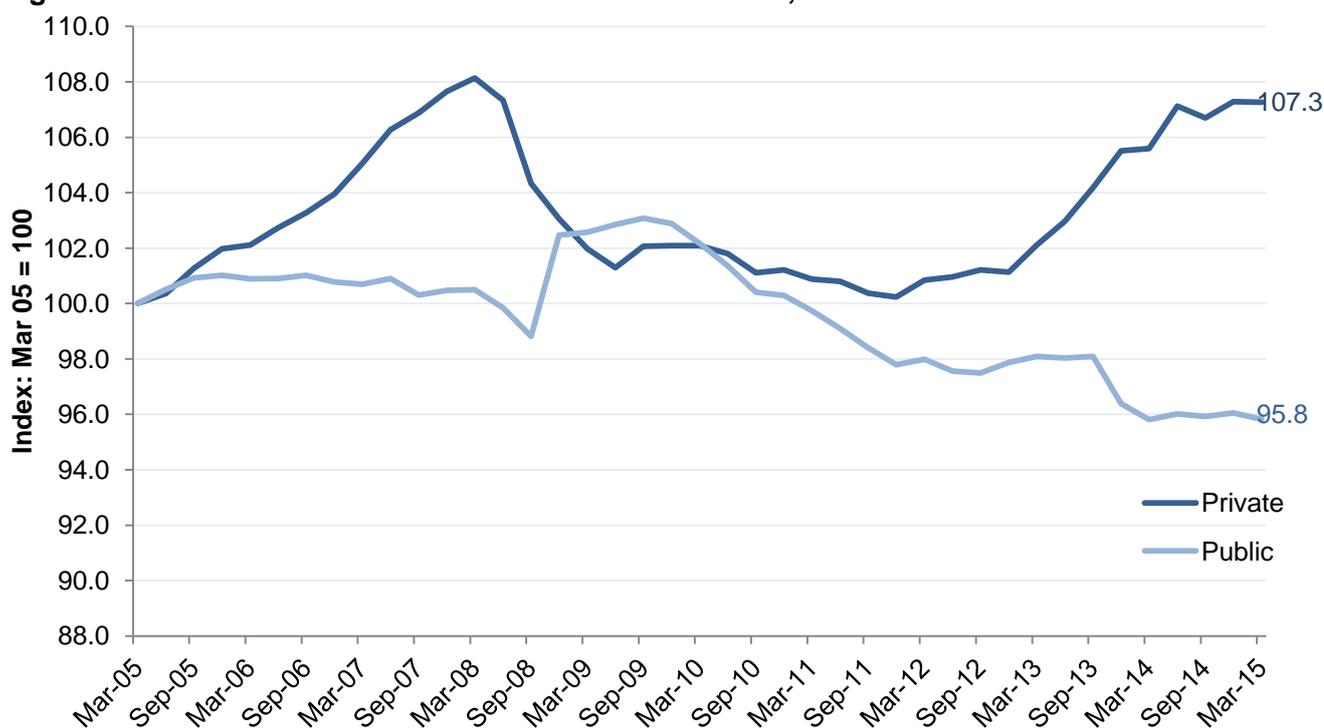
The seasonally adjusted quarterly change consisted of:

- increases of 5.6% in the construction sector (1,620 jobs), 1.0% in the manufacturing sector (830 jobs) and 0.1% (880 jobs) in the services sector
- a decrease of 0.7% in the other industries sector (-150 jobs)
- a decrease of 510 jobs in the public sector
- a slight decrease of 90 jobs in the private sector.

Over the year to December 2014:

- the public sector increased slightly (20 jobs)
- the private sector increased by 1.6% (8,000 jobs).

Figure 9: Index of NI Private and Public Sector Jobs, March 2005 – March 2015



[Download in excel](#)

¹ Users of QES data should be aware that the sample coverage used to derive employee jobs estimates in Northern Ireland has been extended. This has resulted in a discontinuity in the QES employee jobs series from the reference period Q3 2009 onwards.

² Royal Mail plc was reclassified from the public sector to the private sector in October 2013. It is therefore included in the public sector for September 2013 and earlier periods, but not for subsequent periods.

³ Lloyds Banking Group and its subsidiaries were classified to the public sector from October 2008 to March 2013. They are therefore included in public sector estimates from December 2008 to December 2013 but not in earlier or subsequent periods.

Figure 9 shows that private sector jobs peaked in Q1 2008 and public sector reached its peak in Q3 2009. In the latest quarter, private sector jobs experienced a slight decrease of 90 jobs while public sector jobs decreased by 510 jobs (-0.2%).

Further information is available on the [NISRA - Economic and Labour Market Statistics website: Quarterly Employment Survey](#)

Further breakdowns of employee jobs by geography and industry are available from the [Business Register and Employment Survey](#).

Comparisons between LFS Employment and QES Employee Jobs

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

The LFS and QES measure employment in different ways. The LFS is a sample survey carried out by interviewing individuals about their personal circumstances and work. The QES is a quarterly survey of businesses which provides short term employee jobs estimates for Northern Ireland. It surveys all public sector jobs, all private sector firms with 25 or more employees and a sample of the remainder. LFS employment figures are based on a rolling three month period and QES measures the number of jobs on a particular day.

LFS employment includes those who are employed, self-employed, unpaid family workers and those on Government supported training programmes. QES employee jobs include full-time and part-time jobs and those on a training scheme and excludes self-employed.

Vacancies – First Published April 2015

Headline figures are presented for vacancies which have been notified to JobCentres / Jobs & Benefits Offices (J&BO) of the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL). A small proportion of vacancies notified are based in the UK mainland or in the Republic of Ireland. The statistics do not represent the total unsatisfied demand for staff by employers, but are only those vacant positions notified by employers to DEL. In December 2013 improvements were made to the methodology for recording and validating data on vacancies placed through the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL). These changes led to a break in the time series for vacancy statistics. This is the first financial year of statistical data released from the new time series. As such, data within this publication should not be directly compared with those from the previous vacancy time series.

There were 13,897 vacancies notified in the 1st quarter of the 2014/15 financial year, 14,731 in quarter 2, 12,095 in the 3rd quarter and 13,953 in quarter 4.

Table 2: Monthly Notified Vacancies, 2014/15

Financial Year 2014/15	Notified Vacancies (1)			Total
	Full-Time	Part-Time	Casual	
Apr-14	2,615	1,253	310	4,178
May-14	2,844	1,547	445	4,836
Jun-14	2,934	1,597	352	4,883
Jul-14	2,717	1,195	298	4,210
Aug-14	2,827	1,691	352	4,870
Sep-14	3,118	2,052	481	5,651
Oct-14	3,032	2,030	450	5,512
Nov-14	2,160	1,301	342	3,803
Dec-14	1,823	763	194	2,780
Jan-15	2,638	1,460	368	4,466
Feb-15	2,677	1,451	364	4,492
Mar-15	2,915	1,648	432	4,995
Total	32,300	17,988	4,388	54,676

Figures in the above table are not National Statistics.

[Download in excel](#)

(1) Monthly notified vacancies are all new vacancy positions notified and added to JobCentres / Jobs & Benefits Offices of the Department for Employment and Learning. Notified is subdivided by financial years which run from 1st April to 31st March. All statistics are derived from data extracted from the Department for Employment and Learning Client Management System (CMS) on 3rd April 2015.

Further statistics are available on the DELNI website: [DEL Statistics](#)

4

Economic Inactivity

LFS economic inactivity

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

Key Findings

- NI economic inactivity decreased over the quarter
- NI economic inactivity highest of the twelve UK regions
- Of the economically inactive, 17% wanted to work

Figure 10: Seasonally adjusted economic inactivity rates (16-64), Feb-Apr 2005 - Feb-Apr 2015

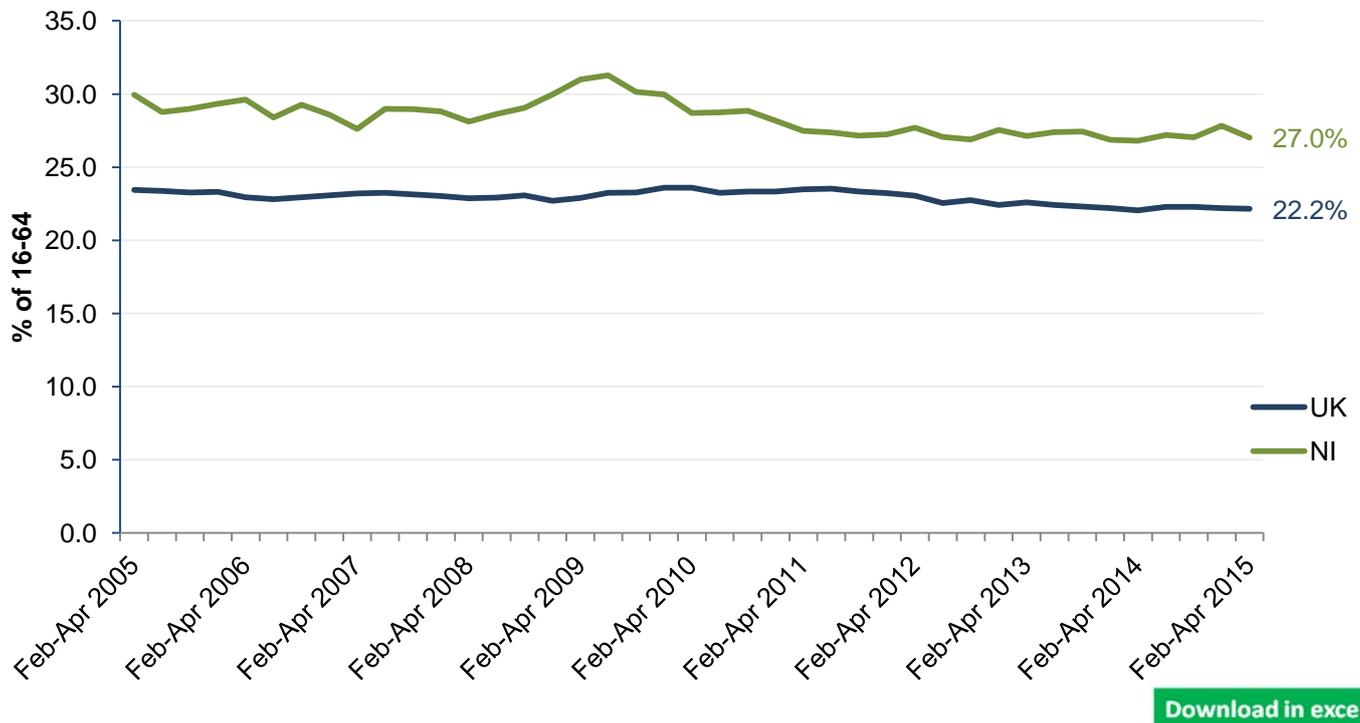


Figure 10 shows that over the last 10 years the NI economic inactivity rate was consistently higher than the UK.

Economically Inactive

The seasonally adjusted economically inactive rate (16-64) in the period February - April 2015 was estimated at 27.0%, which was:

- a decrease of 0.8 percentage points over the quarter and
- an increase of 0.2 percentage points over the year.

The number of economically inactive persons was estimated at 315,000. This was:

- a decrease of 9,000 over the quarter
- an increase of 3,000 over the year.

Of the economically inactive:

- 38% (121,000) were male and 62% (194,000) were female

Not seasonally adjusted figures show that, of the economically inactive:

- 83% did not want a job while 17% did
- 33% were sick / disabled, 26% were students, 24% were looking after the family / home, 10% were retired and 7% cited an 'other' reason for inactivity.

Regional comparison

The NI economic inactivity rate for those aged 16-64 stood at 27.0%. This was:

- significantly higher than the UK average rate (22.2%)
- the highest of the twelve UK regions.

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

[LFS economic inactivity](#)

5

Earnings

Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE)

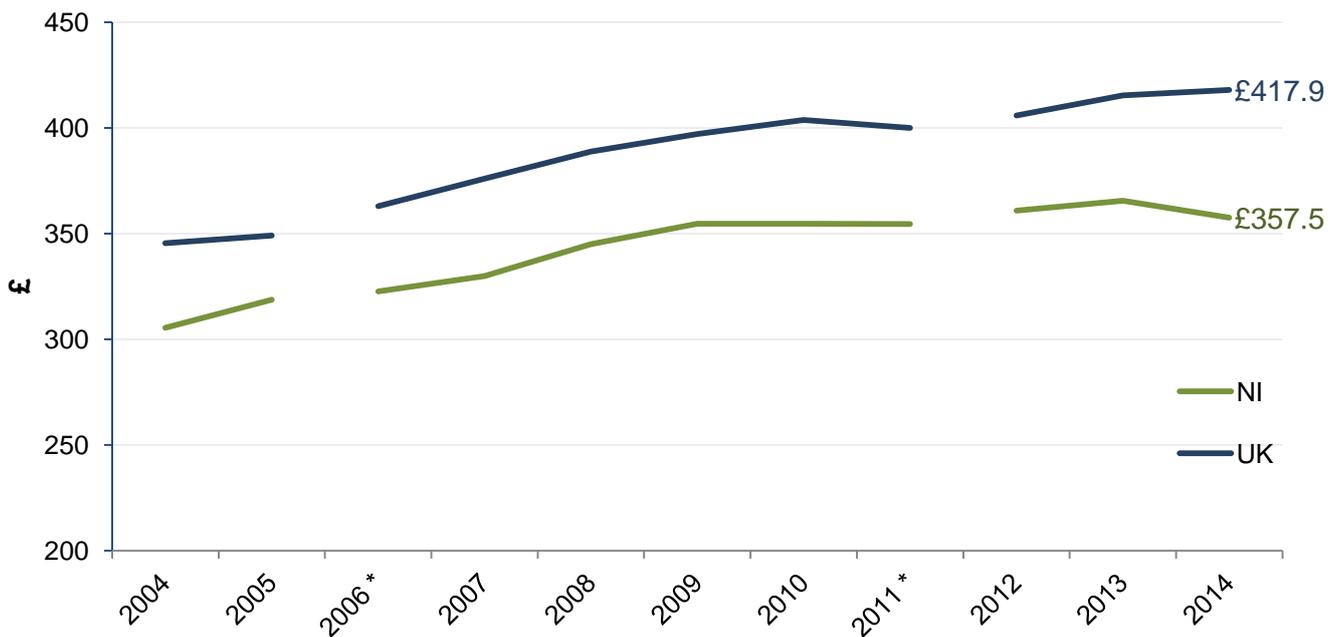
ASHE provides information on employees' hourly, weekly and annual earnings by gender, work pattern, industry and occupation. It has been designed by the Office for National Statistics and is carried out in Northern Ireland by NISRA statisticians.

Median earnings: Both median and mean results are reported by ASHE. The mean is the arithmetic average while the median is the value below which 50 per cent of employees fall. The median is often preferred for skewed data such as earnings as it is influenced less by extreme values.

Key Findings

- Median weekly earnings for all employees in NI at April 2014 were down from 2013
- Full-time weekly earnings in NI decreased over the year while part-time increased
- Weekly earnings for all employees decreased over the year in NI while the UK reported an increase

Figure 11: Median gross weekly earning for all employees, 2004 - 2014



* The introduction of methodological changes to improve the quality of ASHE data has resulted in discontinuities in trends.

[Download in excel](#)

Earnings

Figure 11 shows that over the last 10 years the median gross weekly earnings in NI has consistently been below the UK average. Results for 2014 showed that:

- over the year to April 2014, median gross weekly earnings for all employees (i.e. both full- and part-time) in NI decreased by 2.2% (to £358)

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

6

Further Information

LFS Unemployment

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

Unemployment rate - the percentage of economically active people who are unemployed.

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

LFS Employment

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

The ILO measures are particularly useful for examining short term and long term trends over time and key LFS time series data are available both seasonally adjusted and unadjusted.

Sampling variability

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. The ranges shown for the LFS data in the table below represent 95% confidence intervals i.e. we would expect that in 95% of samples the range would contain the true value. These confidence intervals have been calculated using data that is not seasonally adjusted, with the relevant sampling errors produced applied to the seasonally adjusted data.

If the 'annual change' for an estimate has increased or decreased by more than the 'sampling variability of the change', this change would be statistically significant. The annual changes for the main LFS categories of employment, unemployment and economic inactivity were tested for statistical significance. The results showed that none of the annual changes, for February - April 2015, were statistically significant over the year, i.e. the recorded change did not exceed the variability expected from a sample survey of this size and was likely to reflect a real change.

Table 3: Sampling variable of labour market estimates, Feb-Apr 2015

	Period	Estimate	Sampling Variability of estimate	Change over year	Sampling Variability of change
Unemployment ¹	Feb-Apr 2015	54,000	+/-11,000	-7,000	+/-15,000
Employment ²	Feb-Apr 2015	827,000	+/-25,000	7,000	+/-32,000
Economically inactive ²	Feb-Apr 2015	563,000	+/-23,000	7,000	+/-29,000
Unemployment rate ¹	Feb-Apr 2015	6.1%	+/-1.2pps	-0.8pps	+/-1.7pps
Employment rate ²	Feb-Apr 2015	68.4%	+/-1.9pps	0.4pps	+/-2.4pps
Economic inactivity rate ²	Feb-Apr 2015	27.0%	+/-1.8pps	0.2pps	+/-2.3pps

¹ People aged 16 and over. Unemployment rate = total unemployed as a proportion of the economically active.

² Levels for all persons aged 16 and over, rates for working age (16-64).

[Download in excel](#)

Please see attached link for further LFS notes and definitions:

[Labour Force Survey Background Information](#)

LFS Comparisons

Estimates of employment, unemployment, and economic inactivity are derived from the LFS, a survey of households. The most robust estimates of short-term movements in these estimates are obtained by comparing the estimates over rolling three month periods. For example the 3 months ending April 2015 should be compared with the estimates for November - January 2014, which were first published on 13 May 2015. This provides a more robust estimate than comparing with the estimates for January - March 2015. This is because the February and March data are included within both estimates, so effectively observed differences are those between the individual months of January 2015 and April 2015. The LFS is sampled such that it is representative of the NI population over a three month period, not for single month periods.

Seasonal adjustment

All estimates discussed in this Statistical Bulletin are seasonally adjusted except where otherwise stated. Like many economic indicators, the labour market is affected by factors that tend to occur at around the same time every year; for example school leavers entering the labour market in July and whether Easter falls in March or April. In order to compare movements other than annual changes in labour market statistics, such as since the previous quarter or since the previous month, the data are seasonally adjusted to remove the effects of seasonal factors and the arrangement of the calendar.

LFS revisions

LFS microdata have recently been revised to incorporate estimates from the 2011 Census. The revisions affect LFS data from the period June to August 2001 onwards and were first published in October 2014. The magnitude of the revisions are relatively small, with the revisions to the unemployment rate falling within +/-0.1 percentage points and the working age employment rate within +/- 0.2 percentage points. The procedures being applied to the NI LFS results are consistent with those applied by the Office for National Statistics to other UK regions.

More information on the revision policy concerning labour market statistics can be found through the link below:

[Labour market statistics revisions policy](#)

Definition of 'working age'

The 'working age' definition, used in the calculation of employment and economic inactivity rates, was changed in August 2010 to include those aged from 16 to 64 for both men and women. Previously these rates were based on upper age limits of 59 for women and 64 for men, reflecting the state pension ages in the UK.

Claimant count definition

Claimant count figures are derived from records of claimants held at Jobs and Benefits Offices. The term 'claimants' in the claimant count is used to include those who claim Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) and National Insurance credits. The figures include severely disabled claimants, but exclude students seeking vacation work and the temporarily stopped. The claimant count is a very up-to-date measure of those eligible to claim a specific unemployment related benefit and data are available for a range of geographical sub-regions (e.g. District Council Areas, Parliamentary Constituency Areas, Travel-to-Work Areas and Wards). It also provides seasonally adjusted and unadjusted data and as a result is a useful measure for examining both short-term and long-term trends.

Seasonally adjusted claimant count figures are provisional when published and subject to revision, mainly the following month and are only available at NI level. Seasonally adjusted totals are subject to an annual update, which revises back for 3 years (usually May) to take account of latest assessment trends. The most recent revision took place on 17th June 2015. The magnitudes of the revisions are relatively small, with the change of the monthly total claimants within +/- 0.8%. For further information see: [Claimant Count Revisions](#)

Universal Credit

In November 2010 the government announced plans to reform the welfare system by creating a new Universal Credit (UC). The new benefit replaces many of the current separate welfare benefits, as well as subsuming in-work support currently administered through tax credits. Among those benefits being replaced is the means-tested element of Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) which makes up a significant proportion of the monthly claimant count.

To date UC has not been implemented in NI. The first UC applications were processed in GB in 2013, with some new claimants initially beginning to move to UC instead of JSA. From June 2015, the seasonally adjusted claimant count series for GB includes people who continue to claim JSA, along with the subset of claimants of UC who are claiming principally for the reason of being unemployed, i.e. jobseeker UC claimants. The NI claimant count includes JSA claimants only. The claimant count series in NI and GB remain comparable.

Redundancy Legal Requirements

Under the Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 (Amended 8 October 2006) companies are only legally required to notify the Department of impending redundancies of 20 or more employees. Companies who propose less than 20 redundancies are not included in the statistics.

Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE)

Please note, changes in NI earnings over the year and relative to the UK can be influenced by a range of factors including the timing of pay settlements, the extent of overtime, and differences in the composition of

the workforce. As ASHE is a sample survey, results are also subject to an associated level of sampling variability. Further information is available at:

[Northern Ireland Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings](#)

[ASHE Background Information](#)

Quarterly Employment Survey (QES) Revisions

QES estimates are revised quarterly to reflect the latest information provided to the Department by employers. The December 2014 seasonally adjusted estimate first published in March 2015 has subsequently been revised down (-0.3%). For further details of QES revisions please see link below:

[QES Background Information](#)

For further information:

AN ELECTRONIC VERSION OF THIS DOCUMENT WITH ASSOCIATED HYPERLINKS IS AVAILABLE ON THE [NISRA – ECONOMIC AND LABOUR MARKET STATISTICS WEBSITE](#)

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