

January 2018

# Northern Ireland Labour Market Report

Geographical Area: Northern Ireland  
Theme: Labour Market  
Frequency: Monthly

## Key Points

- The latest Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimates for the period September - November 2017 indicate that, over the quarter, the economic inactivity rate and employment rate increased, while the unemployment rate decreased. The number of people claiming unemployment related benefits in Northern Ireland (NI) increased in December 2017.
- The proportion of people aged 16 to 64 in work (the employment rate) increased over the quarter (0.6 pps) but decreased over the year (0.3 pps) to 69.0%.
- The LFS indicated that the NI unemployment rate (16+) decreased over the quarter and the year to September - November 2017 to 3.8%, the lowest rate recorded since June - August 2007. These decreases were both statistically significant and are likely to reflect a real change.
- The equivalent UK unemployment rate decreased over the year yet remained steady over the quarter (at 4.3%), the lowest rate recorded since the series began (joint with June - August 2017). The NI unemployment rate was below the European Union (7.4%) rate and Republic of Ireland (6.0%) rate for October 2017.
- The NI economic inactivity rate (the proportion of people aged from 16 to 64 who were not working and not seeking or available to work) was 28.2%, representing an increase of 0.1pps over the quarter and 1.7pps over the year. The increases over the quarter and the year were not statistically significant.
- None of the reported changes in employment or inactivity were statistically significant over the quarter or the year. However, there have been statistically significant changes in the longer term – the increase in the employment rate compared to December - February 2013 and the decrease of economic inactivity from June - August 2009.
- The number of people claiming unemployment related benefits (from NI Jobs and Benefits Offices) increased by 100 over the month to 29,200 in December 2017. This is the 1<sup>st</sup> monthly increase since January 2013.

**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.

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

It is a producer's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

### **Pre-release Access**

NISRA professional and production staff have access to this publication before release. No additional pre-release access has been given to officials from 12<sup>th</sup> July 2017. Further details are provided in Section 6 Further Information.

# 1 Summary of Labour Market Statistics

Updated January 2018

## Change over quarter / month

Seasonally adjusted LFS estimates for Northern Ireland for the period September - November 2017 showed that over the quarter:

- the unemployment rate (3.8%) decreased by 0.9 percentage points (pps)
- the employment rate (69.0%) increased by 0.6 pps
- the economic inactivity rate increased by 0.1 pps to 28.2%.

The annual decrease in those who are unemployed (16+) and the unemployment rate (16+), were both statistically significant i.e. the recorded changes exceeded the variability expected from a sample survey of this size and were likely to reflect real changes. None of the reported changes in employment (16-64) or economic inactivity (16-64) over the quarter or the year were statistically significant.

The most recent measure of the claimant count showed that in December 2017, there was:

- an increase of 100 in the seasonally adjusted claimant count to 29,200.

During December 2017 there were:

- 186 confirmed redundancies notified to the Department, representing a decrease on the previous monthly period total of 191 confirmed redundancies.

The employee jobs total in Northern Ireland at September 2017 was 752,040 which was:

- an increase over the quarter (2,460) from the revised June 2017 estimate of 749,580.

**Table 1: Northern Ireland Labour Market Summary with sampling variability**

	Reference period	Estimate	Change over quarter	Change over year
Unemployment <sup>1</sup> (Sampling variability of change)	Sep-Nov 2017	33,000	-8,000 (+/-9,000)	-17,000 (+/-13,000)
Employment <sup>2</sup> (Sampling variability of change)	Sep-Nov 2017	837,000	7,000 (+/-18,000)	1,000 (+/-32,000)
Economically inactive <sup>2</sup> (Sampling variability of change)	Sep-Nov 2017	594,000	3,000 (+/-16,000)	23,000 (+/-29,000)
Unemployment rate <sup>1</sup> (Sampling variability of change)	Sep-Nov 2017	3.8%	-0.9pps +/-1.0pps	-1.8pps +/-1.5pps
Employment rate <sup>2</sup> (Sampling variability of change)	Sep-Nov 2017	69.0%	0.6pps +/-1.3pps	-0.3pps +/-2.3pps
Economic inactivity rate <sup>2</sup> (Sampling variability of change)	Sep-Nov 2017	28.2%	0.1pps +/-1.3pps	1.7pps +/-2.3pps
Employee jobs	Sep-17	752,040	2,460	11,600
			<b>Change on Month</b>	
Claimant Count	Dec-17	29,200	+100	-3,600
Redundancies <sup>3</sup>	Dec-17	186		

LFS, claimant count and employee jobs data are seasonally adjusted.

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

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

<sup>3</sup> Confirmed redundancies in the calendar month.

[Download in excel](#)

## Change over year

Seasonally adjusted LFS estimates for Northern Ireland for the period September-November 2017 showed that over the year:

- the unemployment rate (3.8%) decreased by 1.8 pps
- the employment rate (69.0%) decreased by 0.3 pps
- the economic inactivity rate increased by 1.7 pps to 28.2%.

The most recent measure of claimant count shows that in the year to December 2017, there was:

- a decrease in the seasonally adjusted claimant count of 3,600 to 29,200.

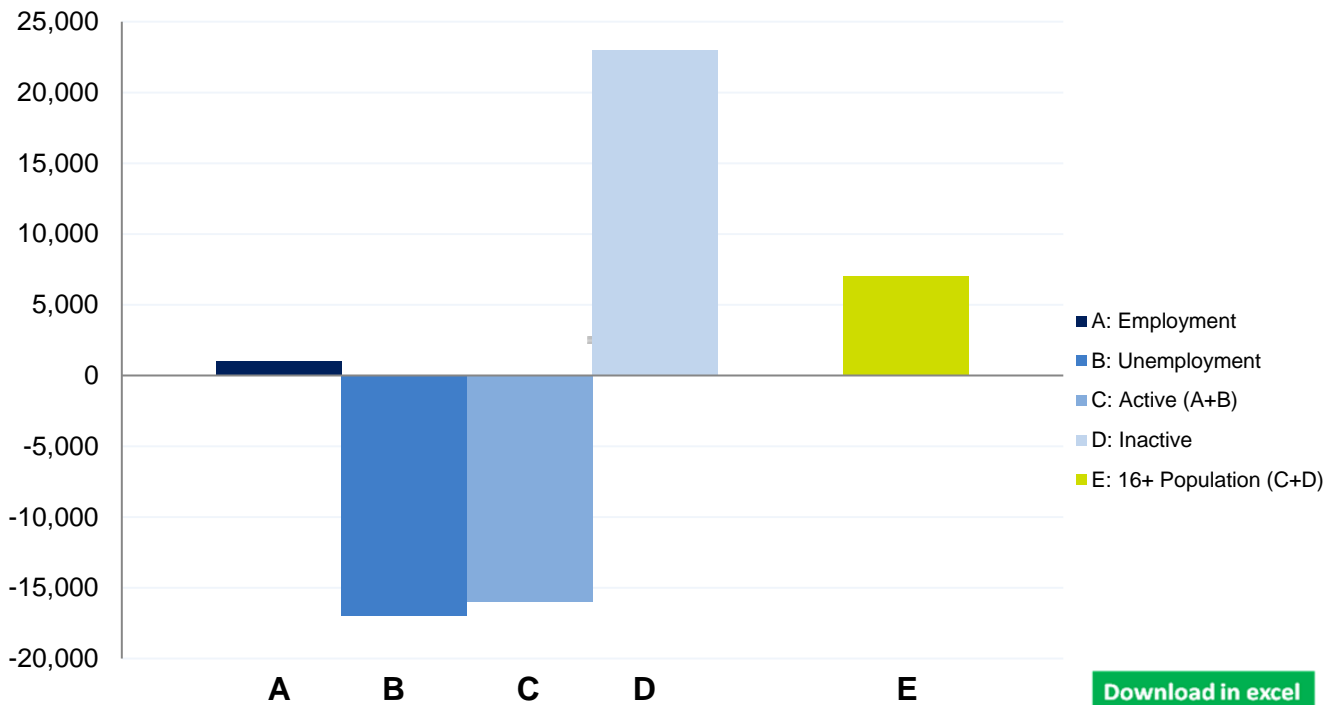
Over the latest twelve month period there were:

- 1,776 confirmed redundancies which was a decrease of 51% from the previous year (3,653).

The employee jobs total in Northern Ireland at September 2017 was 752,040 jobs which was:

- an increase of 1.6% (11,600) from the revised September 2016 estimate of 740,440.

**Figure 1: NI labour market structure: change over year**



Note: figures rounded so may not sum

## UK summary

Seasonally adjusted LFS estimates for the UK for the period September - November 2017 showed:

- the unemployment rate (4.3%) remained steady over the quarter and decreased by 0.5 pps over the year, the lowest rate recorded since the series began (joint with June - August 2017)
- the employment rate (75.3%) increased by 0.2 pps over the quarter and increased by 0.9 pps over the year, the highest rate recorded since the series began
- the economic inactivity rate (21.2%) decreased 0.2 pps over the quarter and decreased by 0.5 pps over the year, the lowest rate recorded since the series began.

## **Commentary**

The LFS shows a continuation in the trend of falling unemployment evident since 2013. The LFS estimate (3.8% for September - November) decreased over the quarter and the year resulting in the lowest unemployment rate since 2007. The decrease in unemployment over the year (1.8pps) is the sharpest annual decrease since 1997.

The claimant count increased marginally over the month (by 100 claimants) which is the first increase in almost 5 years. However, in this 5 year period the claimant count has more than halved, decreasing by over 35,000.

The decreases in unemployment over the year have been coupled with an increase in economic inactivity. The inactivity rate has been increasing since the record low in 2016, and following an increase of 1.7 percentage points over the year the rate at September - November 2017 is 28.2%. The current inactivity rate is the highest rate recorded since 2010, but remains significantly below peak rates recorded in mid-2009.

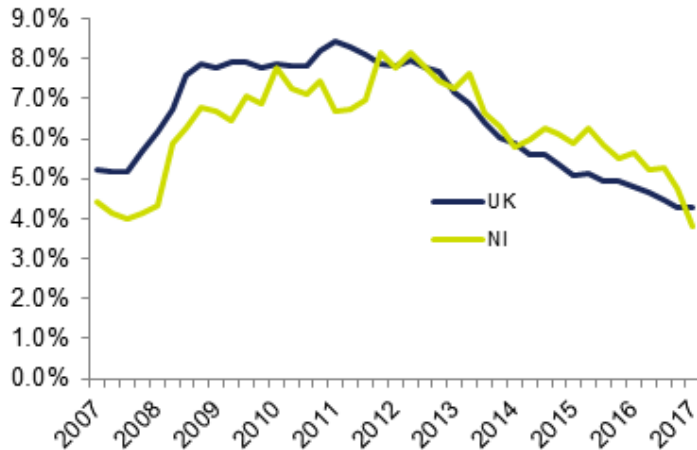
The employment rate increased over the quarter and decreased over the year. The magnitude of the annual change (-0.3pps) was much lower than those experienced in unemployment (-1.8pps) and inactivity (1.7pps). At 69.0% the current employment rate is similar to those recorded since 2015. Although the changes over the quarter and year were not significant, looking at the longer-term shows that there has been a significant increase since 2012-13, and particularly since the low rates recorded in 2009.

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

# NISRA Labour Market Statistics

## Labour Force Survey

**LFS unemployment – NI and UK, 2007 - 2017**



NI unemployment **3.8%**  
UK unemployment **4.3%**

NI unemployment down **0.9pps<sup>1</sup>** over quarter

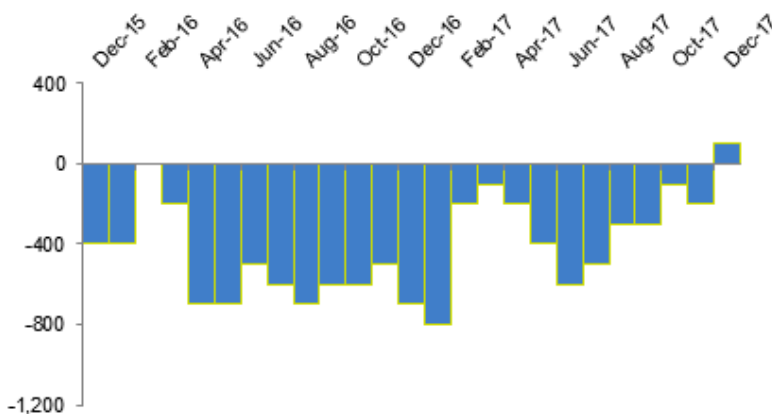


NI unemployment down **1.8pps** over year



## Claimant Count

**Claimant count change NI, December 2015 – December 2017**



**29,200** people claiming unemployment related benefits

Claimants increased by **100** over the month



**3,600** left the register in the last year



<sup>1</sup> pps = percentage points  
All data seasonally adjusted and subject to future revisions.  
Data published – 24<sup>th</sup> January 2018 by Economic & 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 for the Economy (DfE), to design and monitor the impact of economic and labour market policy. Other Government departments such as the Executive Office, the Department of Finance (DoF) and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), 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.

Labour market statistics feature 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 NISRA website.

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

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

## Labour Force Survey

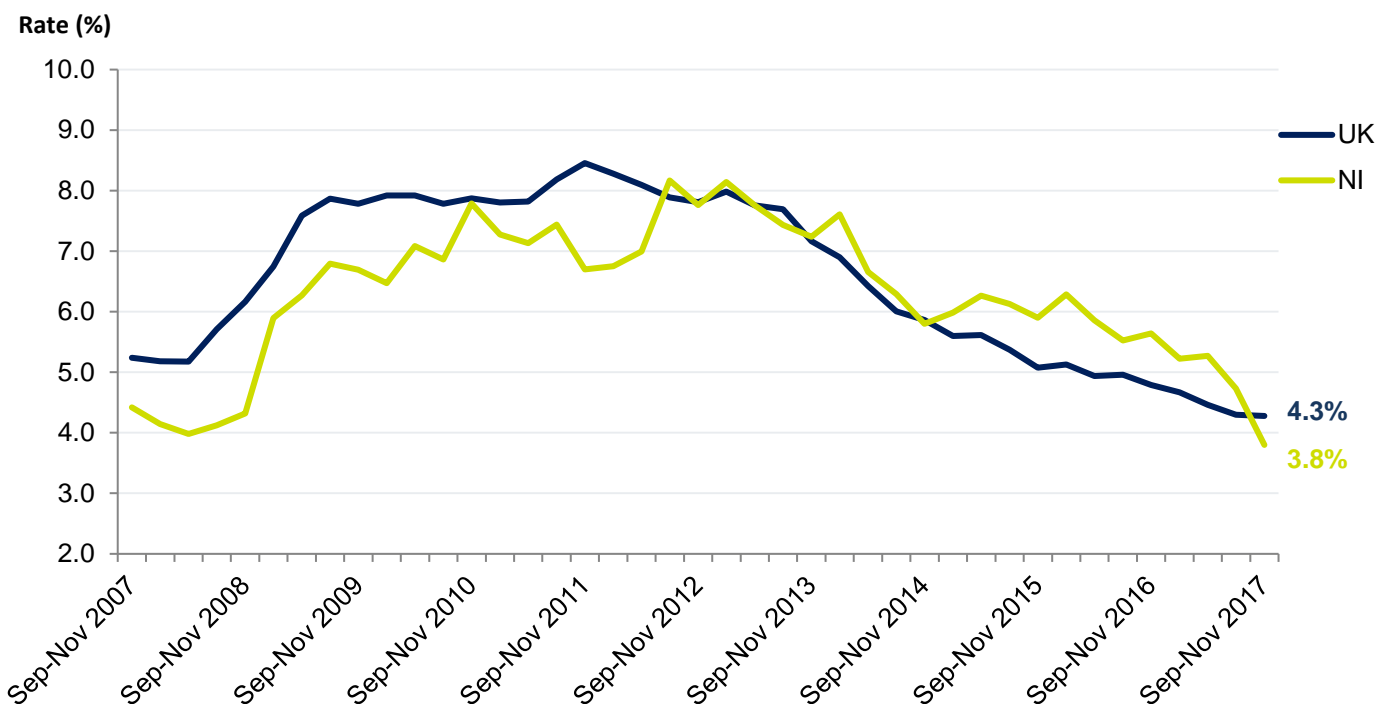
The Labour Force Survey (LFS) is a household sample survey carried out by interviewing individuals about their personal circumstances and work. It provides a rich source of information on the labour force using internationally agreed definitions. However, the estimates from it are subject to sampling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

**LFS unemployment:** The International Labour Organisation (ILO) defines 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 rate at lowest level within the last 10 years
- LFS unemployment rate in NI is below the UK for first time since September – November 2014
- NI long-term unemployment rate increased over the year

**Figure 2: Seasonally adjusted unemployment rate, Sep-Nov 2007 to Sep-Nov 2017**



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Figure 2 shows unemployment rates on the current 3 month rolling average for NI and the UK over the last decade. The unemployment rate in NI peaked at 8.2% in June - August 2012 and is now at its lowest point in the last 10 years (3.8% in September - November 2017). The unemployment rate in NI has only been lower on one occasion since the series began in 1995 on this quarterly series (please see section 6 Further Information on LFS comparisons) when it dropped to 3.6% in June - August 2007 (3.6%). The drop in unemployment is most likely driven by males as they account for the bulk of those unemployed and experienced a larger drop in the last quarter and year than females. Looking at age, youth unemployment appears to be the driver for recent drop in unemployment.



## **LFS unemployment**

- The unemployment rate (16+) for the period September - November 2017 was estimated at 3.8%, the lowest rate in the last 10 years. This was:
- a decrease of 0.9 percentage points (pps) over the quarter and
- a decrease of 1.8 (pps) over the year
- a statistically significant change over the year which is likely to reflect real change.

The number of unemployed persons aged 16+ was estimated at 33,000, which was:

- down 8,000 over the quarter
- down 17,000 over the year.

## **UK national and international LFS comparisons**

The most recent NI unemployment rate (3.8%) was:

- below the overall UK average rate (4.3%)
- the lowest rate in the last 10 years. The unemployment rate has only previously been lower in June - August 2007 (3.6%) and the all-time low in May - July 2007 (3.2%)
- the fourth lowest rate among the twelve UK regions, which is up from 8<sup>th</sup> lowest in the previous quarter (June - August 2017)
- below the European Union (7.4%) rate and Republic of Ireland (6.0%) rate for October 2017.

## **Long-term and youth unemployment**

The long-term unemployment rate (percentage of unemployed who have been unemployed for 1 year or more) was 49.9%, which was:

- up 8.8 percentage points over the year
- markedly higher than the UK average rate (26.2%).

The youth unemployment rate for September - November 2017 was:

- 9.0% down 5.0pps over the year
- lower than the UK average rate (10.9%)

**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).

## Introduction of Universal Credit

On the December claimant count reference date, [Universal Credit](#) had been rolled out in four of the 35 job centres in Northern Ireland. A provisional estimate of Universal Credit out-of-work benefits indicates that there are approximately 200 claimants. *This estimate is subject to revision.*

**Claimant count:** The NI claimant count consists of all people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) at Jobs and Benefits 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.

**Please note** from June 2015 the GB claimant count includes JSA claimants and out-of-work claimants of Universal Credit.

**Universal Credit:** Universal Credit is being introduced in NI for new claims of out-of-work benefits on a phased geographical basis between September 2017 and September 2018.

**Please note** the provisional estimate of the number of out-of-work claimants of Universal Credit is not included in the Claimant Count total.

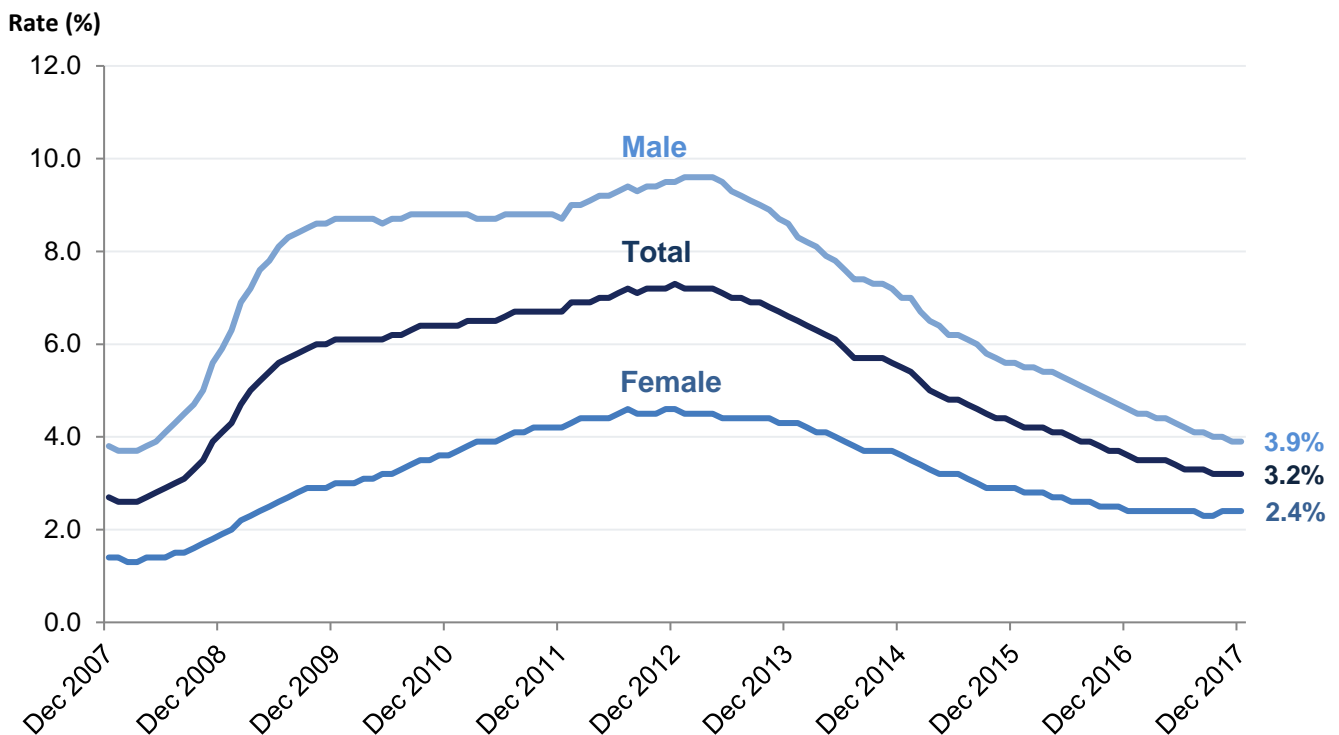
**Percentage of workforce:** This measure expresses the number of claimants as a percentage of workforce jobs plus claimants. Workforce jobs are the sum of employee jobs, self-employment jobs, HM Forces, and government-supported trainees. This measure is only available at the NI level.

**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

- Over the month to December 2017, the number of people claiming unemployment related benefits (JSA only) in NI increased by 100
- Claimant count (29,200) was down by 3,600 over the year to December 2017

Figure 3: Seasonally adjusted claimant count monthly rates, December 2007 – December 2017



[Download in excel](#)

### **Claimant count unemployment**

The NI seasonally adjusted claimant count stood at 29,200 (3.2% of the workforce) in December 2017, representing:

- an increase of 100 from last month's revised total
- a decrease of 3,600 (11.0%) over the year
- a decrease of 0.4 pps in the workforce unemployment rate over the year.

The NI figure has increased for the first time since January 2013. However, in that period the claimant count has decreased by 35,600.

### **Claimant count gender comparison**

The seasonally adjusted claimant count by gender showed:

- the claimant count is made up of 19,100 males and 10,100 females
- 3.9% of the male workforce were on the claimant count, much higher than the female rate (2.4%)
- female claimants decreased by 1.9% (200) over the last year, which was a much lower percentage decrease than male claimants, who decreased by 15.1% (3,400).

### **Youth claimants** (not adjusted for seasonality)

A total of 6,028 under 25's (21.2% of all claimants) were claiming benefits in December 2017, which showed:

- a decrease of 2.7% (165 claimants) over the month
- a decrease of 18.9% (1,407) over the year.

### **Long-term claimants** (not adjusted for seasonality)

At December 2017, 9,479 (33.4% of all claimants) were claiming benefits for a year or more, which showed:

- an increase of 1.0% (92 claimants) over the month
- a decrease of 16.1% (1,817) over the year.

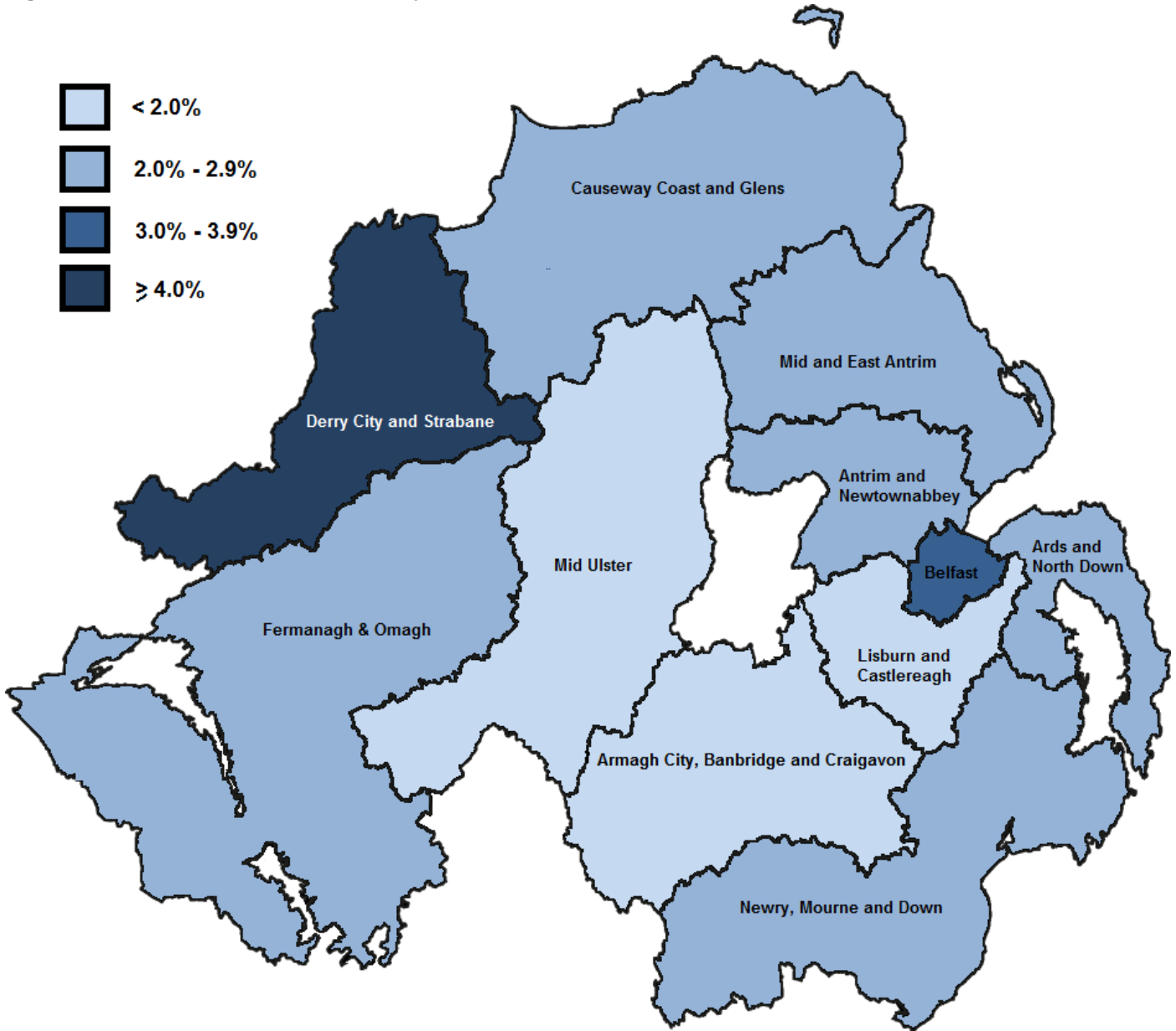
### **Claimant count Council Area comparison**

The Council Area comparison (see Table 2) using claimant count data unadjusted for seasonality found that:

- the highest claimant count rates were in Derry City and Strabane (4.7%) and Belfast (3.1%).
- all 11 Council Areas showed a decrease over the year, with the largest decreases in Causeway Coast and Glens (16.3%), Fermanagh and Omagh (15.3%) and Lisburn and Castlereagh (15.0%).

Annual and monthly claimant count data are available on the NINIS website in the form of interactive maps for [Parliamentary Constituency](#) and [Council Area](#).

Figure 4: Claimant count rate by Council Area, December 2017



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**Table 2: Claimant count by Council Area, December 2017**

Council Area	Number of claimants			% of working age			Change over month		Change over year	
	Males	Females	All	Males	Females	All	Number	%	Number	%
Antrim and Newtownabbey	1,223	574	1,797	2.8	1.3	2.0	41	2.3	-111	-5.8
Ards and North Down	1,383	718	2,101	2.9	1.4	2.2	-25	-1.2	-215	-9.3
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	1,454	905	2,359	2.2	1.4	1.8	70	3.1	-200	-7.8
Belfast	4,912	2,098	7,010	4.5	1.8	3.1	72	1.0	-1,096	-13.5
Causeway Coast and Glens	1,475	791	2,266	3.3	1.8	2.5	-118	-4.9	-441	-16.3
Derry City and Strabane	3,034	1,473	4,507	6.5	3.0	4.7	79	1.8	-562	-11.1
Fermanagh and Omagh	912	522	1,434	2.5	1.5	2.0	7	0.5	-259	-15.3
Lisburn and Castlereagh	828	438	1,266	1.9	1.0	1.4	-10	-0.8	-223	-15.0
Mid and East Antrim	1,342	670	2,012	3.1	1.5	2.3	92	4.8	-151	-7.0
Mid Ulster	794	555	1,349	1.7	1.2	1.5	5	0.4	-116	-7.9
Newry, Mourne and Down	1,432	835	2,267	2.6	1.5	2.0	-54	-2.3	-253	-10.0
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>18,789</b>	<b>9,579</b>	<b>28,368</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>-3,627</b>	<b>-11.3</b>

Notes:

1. This information is not adjusted for seasonality.

[Download in excel](#)

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

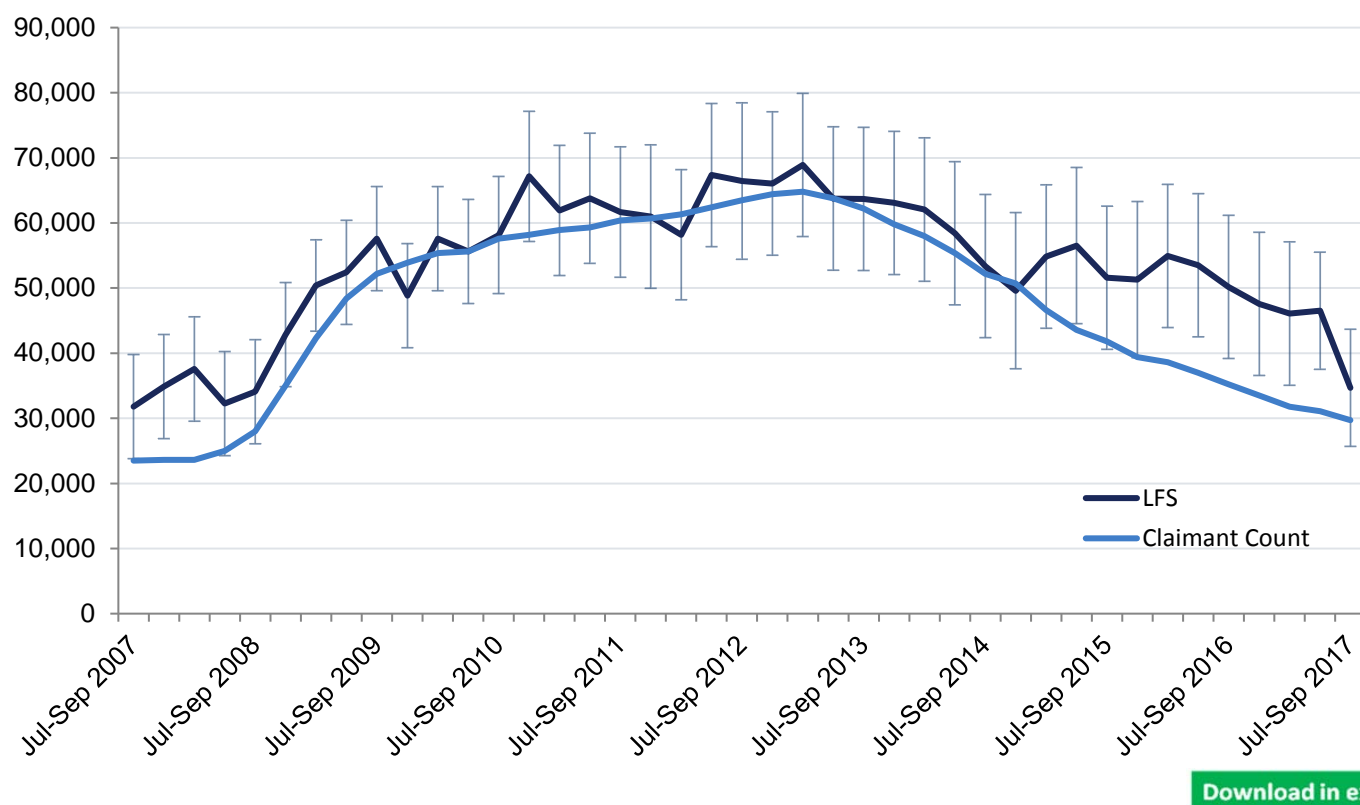
[Claimant Count](#)

## 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 counts since 2007. The unemployment estimates shown in this comparison are based on people 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, 2007– 2017**



[Download in excel](#)

Notes:

2. LFS unemployment is based on persons aged 16 and over and is the total unemployed as a proportion of the economically active.
3. 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 2008 – LFS unemployment was 32,000 in July – September 2007 and claimant count reached 23,500 in September 2007. The most recent LFS unemployment was reported as 33,000 (September - November 2017) and claimant count as 29,200 in December 2017.

## Redundancies

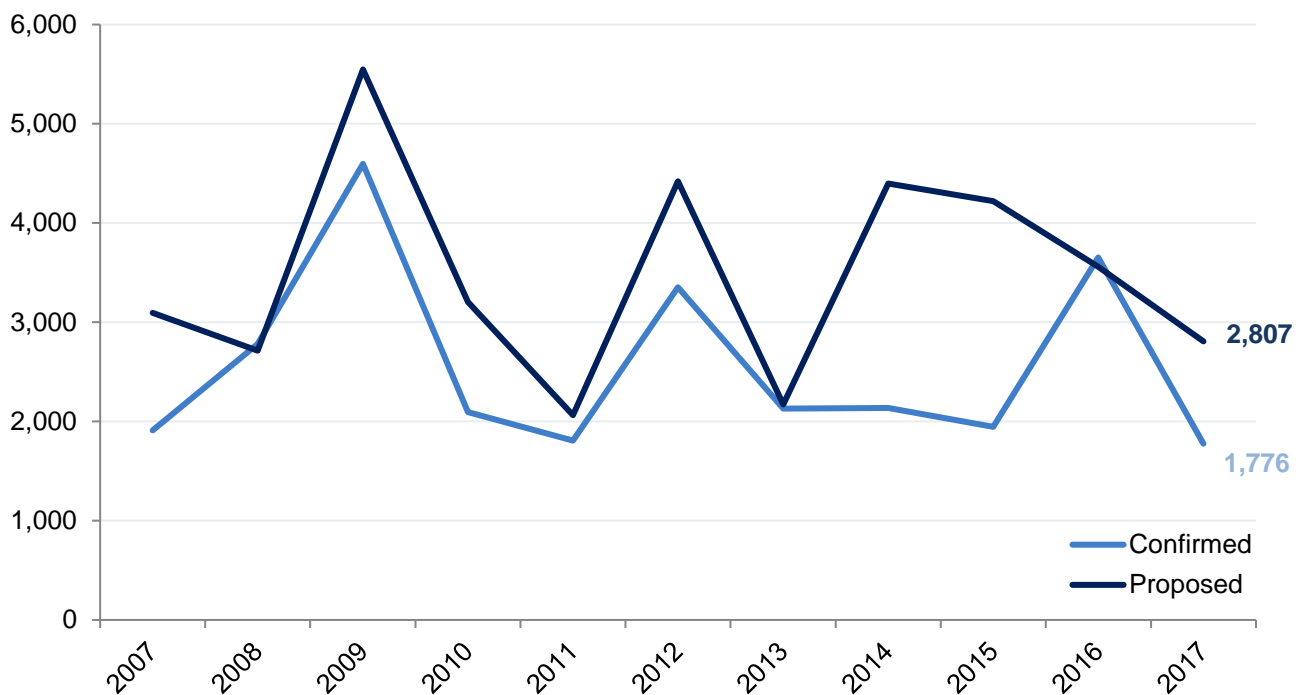
Under the Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 (Amended 8 October 2006) companies are only legally required to notify the Department of impending redundancies of 20 or more employees. Companies who propose less than 20 redundancies are not included in the statistics. As a result, the figures 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 December 2017 the Department was notified of 186 confirmed redundancies in Northern Ireland
- Confirmed redundancies decreased over the year
- Highest proportion of redundancies found in Manufacturing
- Outstanding (proposed but not confirmed) redundancies up 16% since this time last year

Figure 6: Confirmed and proposed redundancies – annual totals, 2007 - 2017 (Jan-Dec)



[Download in excel](#)

### Confirmed and proposed redundancies

The latest figures show that there were:

- 437 proposed redundancies notified between mid-December 2017 and mid-January 2018, representing an increase on the previous monthly period total of 201 proposed redundancies
- 186 confirmed redundancies in December 2017.

Over the latest twelve month period there were:

- 2,807 proposed redundancies, a decrease of 21% from the previous year (3,558)
- 1,776 confirmed redundancies which was a decrease of 51% from the previous year (3,653).

Currently there are 2,525 outstanding redundancies (that is, proposed but not confirmed), which is 16% higher than this time last year (2,178). 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 1,776 confirmed redundancies:

- 767 or 43% were in manufacturing
- 419 redundancies (24% of all redundancies) occurred in the financial and insurance activities
- a further 191 redundancies (11% of all redundancies) occurred in wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles

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

[Redundancies](#)



## LFS employment

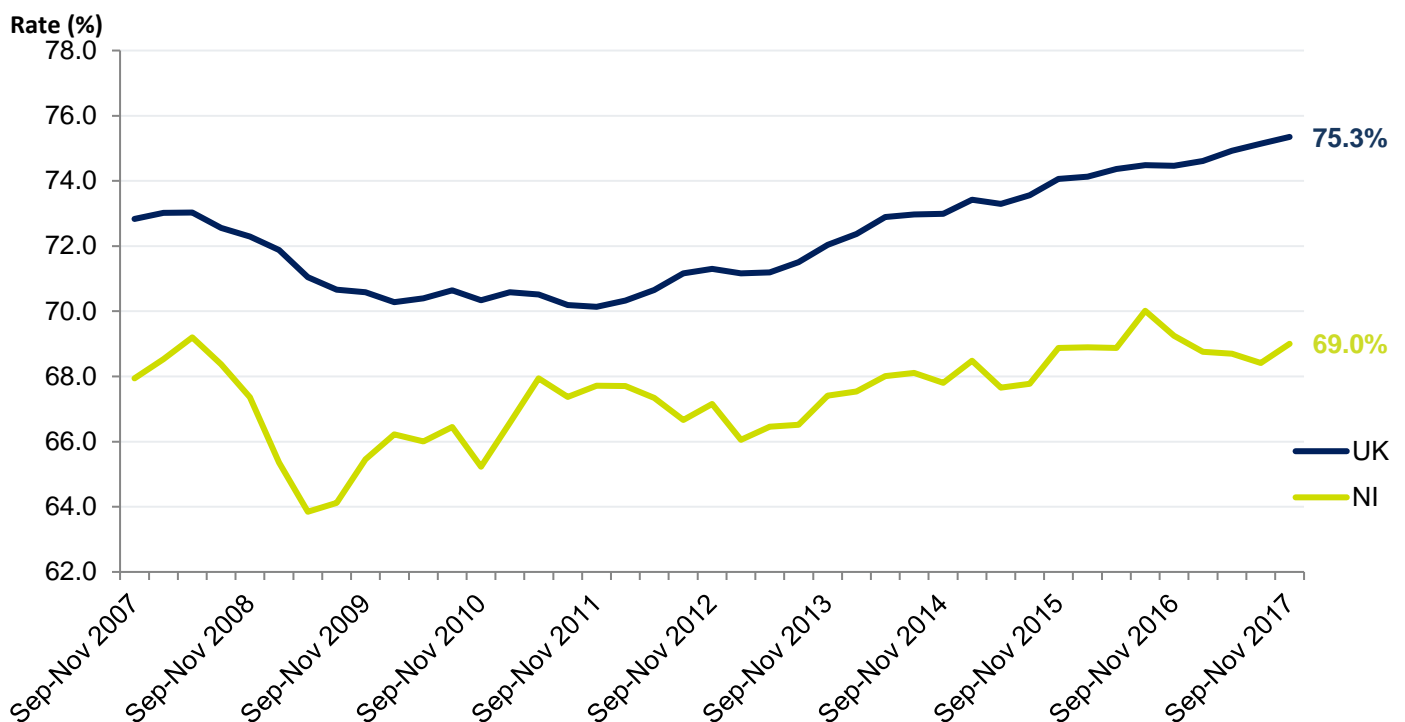
**LFS employed:** people aged 16 or over who did at least one hour of paid work in the reference week (whether as an employee or self-employed); those who had a paid job that they were temporarily away from; those on government-supported training and employee programmes and those doing unpaid family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

**Note:** For analysis purposes, numbers refer to people aged 16 and over while rates relate to people aged between 16 and 64

### Key Findings

- Employment rate increased over the quarter and decreased over the year
- The male employment rate increased over the year, whilst the female employment rate decreased over the year
- NI employment rate was below the UK average and the lowest of the twelve UK regions

**Figure 7: Seasonally adjusted employment rate, Sep-Nov 2007 to Sep-Nov 2017**



[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 September - November 2017 was estimated at 69.0%, this represents:

- an increase of 0.6 pps over the quarter.
- a decrease of 0.3 pps over the year.

The number of persons in employment (16+) in the period September - November 2017 was estimated at 837,000, which was:

- an increase of 7,000 over the quarter and
- an increase of 1,000 over the year.

### **Employment by gender**

Of the total number of those aged between 16+ in employment, 53% (440,000) were male and 47% (398,000) were female, within which:

- the male 16-64 employment rate (73.0%) increased by 0.5 pps over the year
- the female 16-64 rate (65.1%) decreased by 1.0 pps over the year

### **Regional comparison**

The employment rate in NI (69.0%) was:

- below the UK average (75.3%)
- 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) – First published December 2017

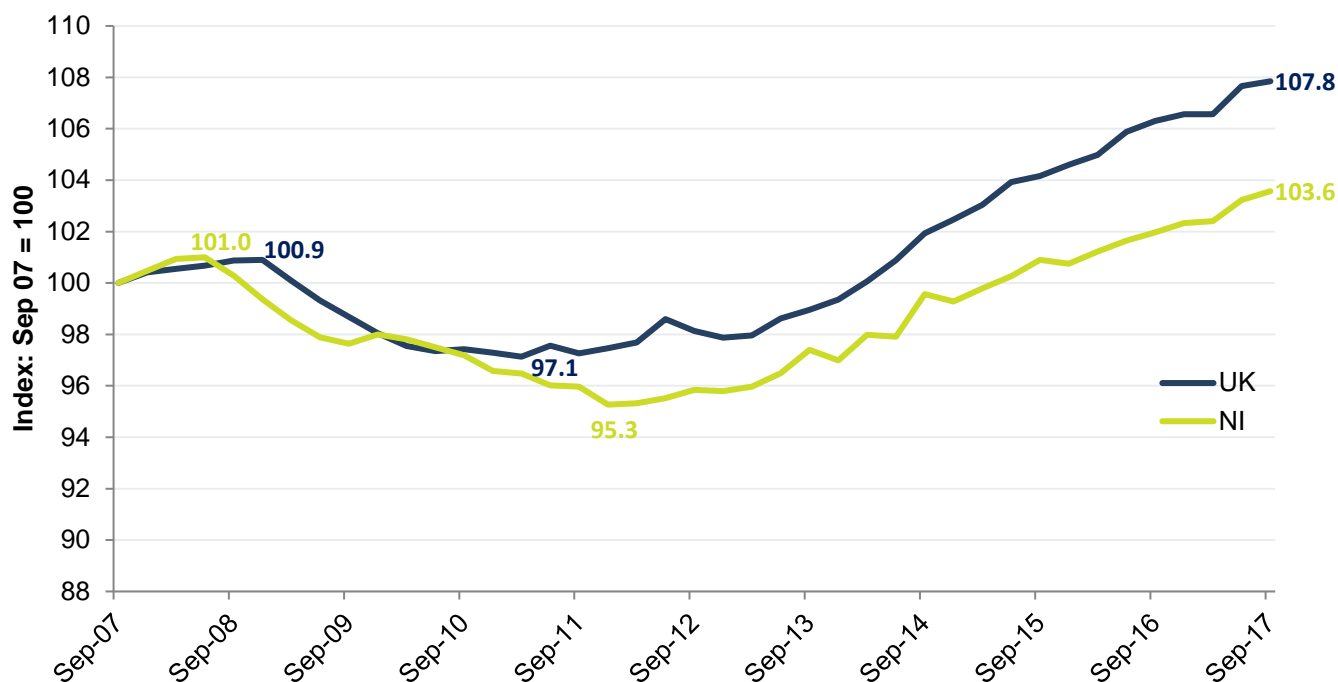
The QES is a business survey which samples approximately 5,700 companies who are asked to supply the Department with employment data for each of their business activities. This information is then collated by Economic and Labour Market Statistics, from which employee jobs estimates are produced.

**QES employee:** An employee is defined as anyone aged 16 years or over that is directly paid from a business'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 to an historical high in September 2017
- UK employee jobs now stand at 6.9% above their pre-downturn peak, whilst NI employee jobs are 2.6% above their pre-downturn peak.
- Private sector employee jobs increased over the third quarter and over the year to an historical high. Public sector jobs decreased over the quarter and increased marginally over the year.

Figure 8: Index of Employee Jobs, September 2007 to September 2017



Figures are indexed to September 2007

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Figure 8 shows the estimated seasonally adjusted employee jobs, indexed to allow comparison between NI and the UK. NI had a peak in June 2008 and the UK in December 2008. The UK reached its lowest point in March 2011 – almost one year before the NI low in December 2011. The UK has now been above its pre-downturn peak since September 2014, whilst NI has been above its pre-downturn peak since March 2016.

### Employee Jobs

The seasonally adjusted employee jobs total in Northern Ireland at September 2017 was 752,040, which was:

- an increase of 0.3% (2,460 jobs) from the June 2017 estimate of 749,580.
- an increase of 1.6% (11,600 jobs) over the year.

## Employee jobs by sector

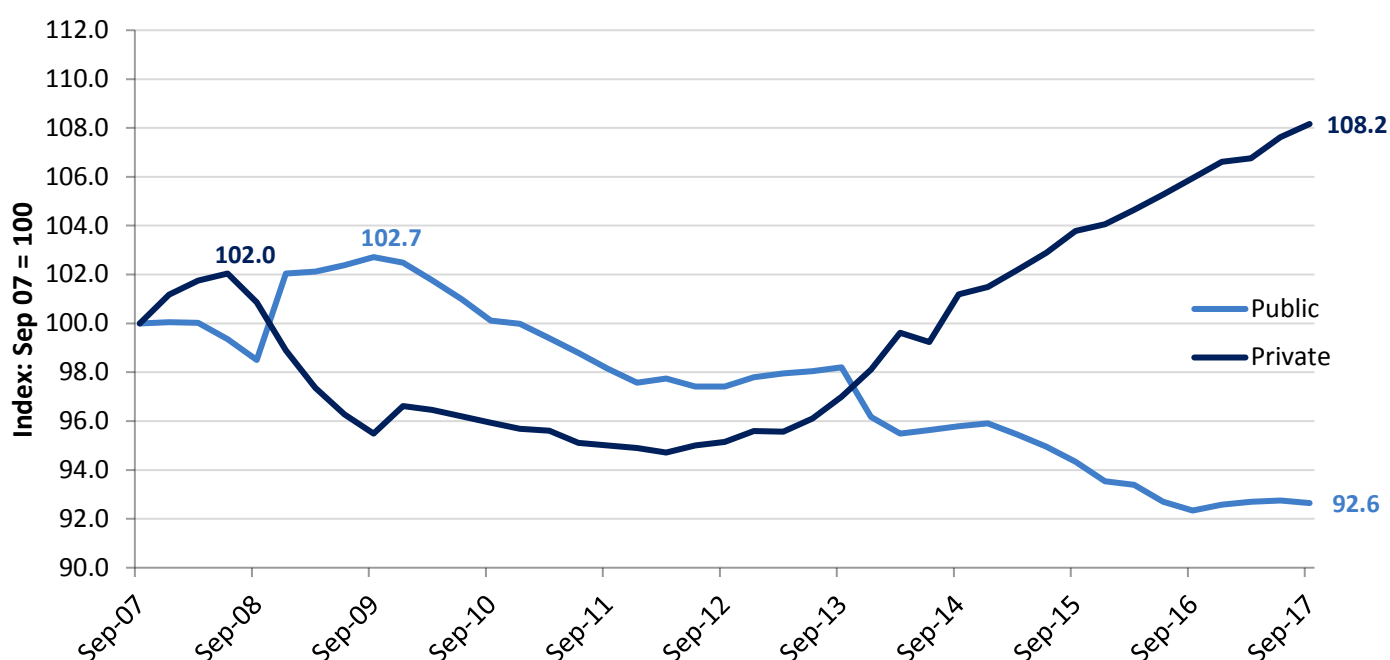
The seasonally adjusted quarterly change consisted of:

- increases in the manufacturing sector (1.2% or 1,020 jobs) and the services sector (0.3% or 1,780 jobs).
- decreases in the construction sector (-0.6% or -200 jobs) and in the other industries sector (-0.6% or -140 jobs).
- a decrease of 0.1% (-220 jobs) in the public sector; and an increase of 0.5% (2,740 jobs) in the private sector.

Over the year to September 2017:

- the public sector increased by 0.3% (680 jobs).
- the private sector increased by 2.1% (11,200 jobs).

**Figure 9: Index of NI Private and Public Sector Jobs, September 2007 – September 2017**



Figures are indexed to September 2007

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<sup>1</sup> Royal Mail plc is included in the public sector for September 2013 and earlier periods, but not for subsequent periods.

<sup>2</sup> Lloyds Banking Group and its subsidiaries are included in public sector estimates from December 2008 to December 2013 but not in earlier or subsequent periods.

<sup>3</sup> All registered housing associations in Northern have been reclassified to public sector from Q3 1992 onwards, more detail on the decision to reclassify can be found on the [ONS website](#).

Private sector employee jobs have grown to a series high in September 2017 (545,760 jobs), and are now 6.0% above a pre-downturn peak which occurred in June 2008. Annual growth in private sector jobs has slowed from 18,400 over the year to June 2015 to 11,200 over the year to September 2017. Public sector jobs decreased by 220 jobs (-0.1%) over the quarter and is now 10% below its series peak which occurred in September 2009.

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 October 2017

Headline figures are presented for vacancies which have been notified to JobCentres / Jobs & Benefits Offices (J&BO) of the Department for Communities (DfC). 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 DfC.

There were 15,485 vacancies notified in the second quarter of the 2017/18 financial year, a decrease of 9% when compared against the same period in the 2016/17 financial year.

**Table 3: Monthly Notified Vacancies, 2016/17 – 2017/18**

Financial Year 2016/17	Notified Vacancies (1)				Total
	Full-Time	Part-Time	Casual	Not Known	
Oct-16	2,888	2,130	422		5,440
Nov-16	2,889	2,023	521		5,433
Dec-16	1,552	861	220		2,633
Jan-17	2,844	1,637	370		4,851
Feb-17	2,522	1,516	357	1	4,396
Mar-17	3,188	1,690	378		5,256
Financial Year 2017/18					
Apr-17	2,535	1,241	344		4,120
May-17	3,403	1,754	375		5,532
Jun-17	3,258	1,730	373		5,361
Jul-17	2,474	1,241	214		3,929
Aug-17	3,698	1,815	403		5,916
Sep-17	3,344	1,928	368		5,640
<b>Total</b>	<b>34,595</b>	<b>19,566</b>	<b>4,345</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>58,507</b>

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**Figures in the above table are not National Statistics.**

(1) Monthly notified vacancies are all new vacancy positions notified and added to JobCentres / Jobs & Benefits Offices of the Department for Communities. 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 Communities Client Management System (CMS) on 6th Oct 2017.

(2) Vacancies data is published quarterly and reported by financial year. Data for Oct-Dec 2017 will be published on 31st Jan 2018.

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

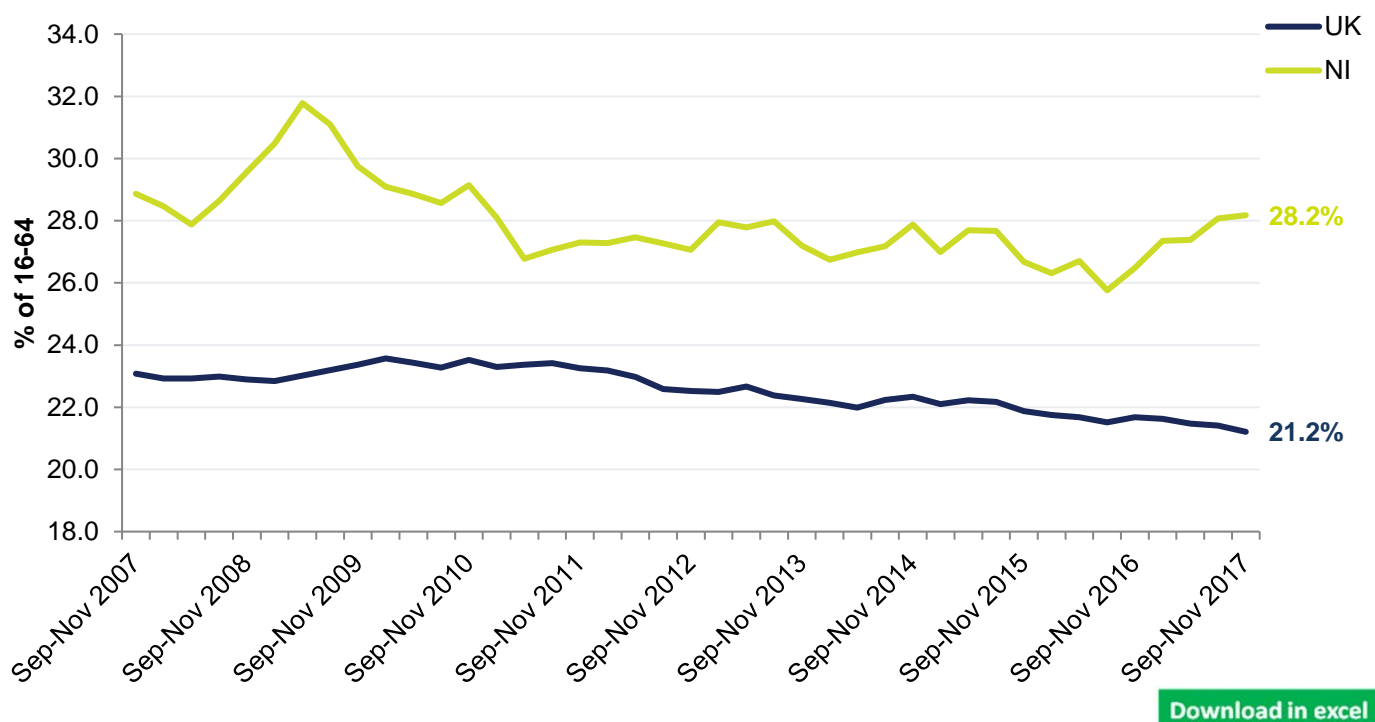
## LFS economic inactivity

**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

- The upward trend of economic inactivity continues but at a slower pace
- NI economic inactivity highest of the twelve UK regions
- Of the 16-64 economically inactive, 19% wanted to work

**Figure 10: Seasonally adjusted economic inactivity rates (16-64), Sep-Nov 2007 to Sep-Nov 2017**



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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 economic inactivity rate (16-64) for September - November 2017 was estimated at 28.2%, which represented:

- an increase of 0.1 percentage points over the quarter
- an increase of 1.7 percentage points over the year

The number of economically inactive persons (16-64) was estimated at 330,000, which was:

- an increase of 1,000 over the quarter and
- an increase of 20,000 over the year.

Of the economically inactive:

- 41% (136,000) were male and 59% (194,000) were female

Figures unadjusted for seasonality show that, of the economically inactive:

- 81% did not want a job while 19% did
- Of those who didn't want to work 30% were long-term sick / disabled, 27% were students, 24% were looking after the family / home, 10% were retired and 8% cited an 'other' reason for inactivity.

### **Regional comparison**

The NI economic inactivity rate for those aged 16-64 stood at 28.2%. This was:

- significantly higher than the UK average rate (21.2%)
- the highest of the twelve UK regions.

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

[LFS economic inactivity](#)



## 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.

**Gross weekly pay** includes basic pay, overtime pay, commissions, shift premium pay, bonus or incentive pay and allowances, and is before deductions for PAYE, National Insurance, pension schemes, student loan repayments and voluntary deductions.

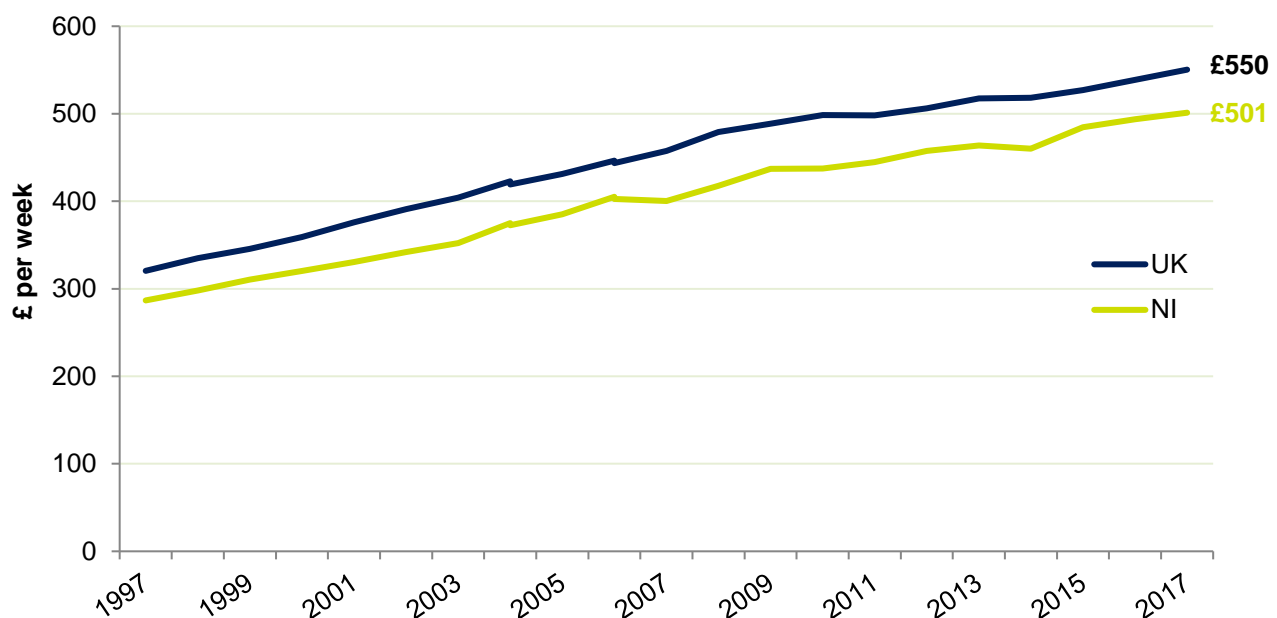
**Median** measures the amount earned by the average individual, i.e. the level of earnings at which half the population are above and half the population are below.

**Full-time employee** is defined as anyone aged 16 years or over that is directly paid from a business's payroll for carrying out more than 30 paid hours per week (or 25 or more for the teaching professions).

### Key Findings

- The median full-time weekly earnings in NI was £501 compared with £550 in the UK
- Earnings increased over the year in both NI and the UK
- When adjusted for inflation, weekly earnings decreased over the year in NI and the UK

Figure 11: Median gross weekly earnings for full-time employees in NI and the UK, 1997-2017



Note: there were a number of methodological changes during the series in 2004, 2006 and 2011 – see Section 9 Further information for full details

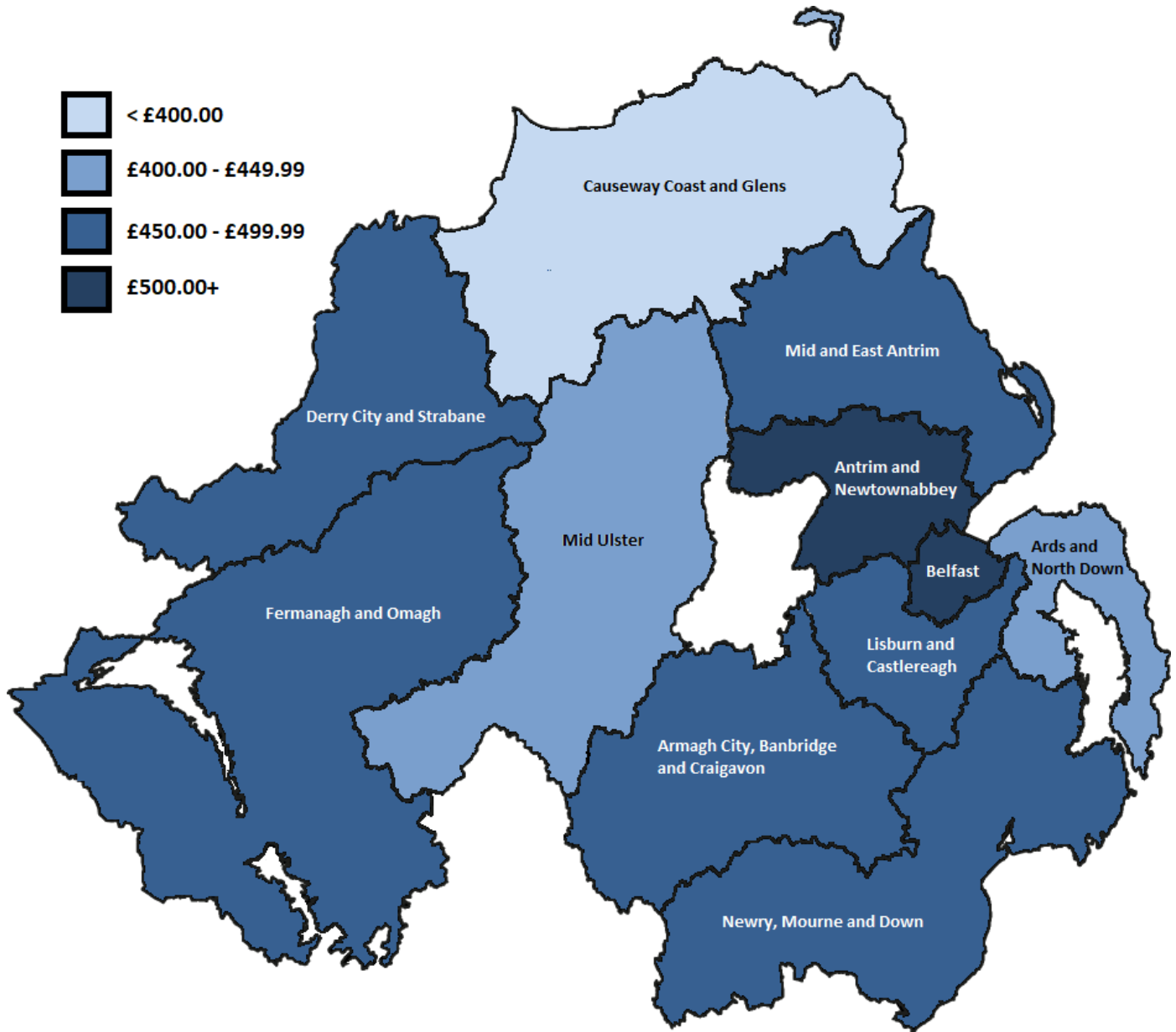
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The median gross weekly earnings for full-time employees in NI at April 2017 (£501):

- was the third lowest out of 12 UK regions
- was 8.9% lower than the UK median (£550)
- increased by 1.5% over the year which was lower than the 2.2% increase in the UK median
- when adjusted for inflation decreased by 1.0%

- was highest for those who work in Belfast (£550) and Antrim and Newtownabbey (£518) Local Government Districts (LGDs).
- Was lowest in the Causeway Coast and Glens LGD (£385), which was the only LGD where earnings were below £400 per week on average.

Figure 12: Median Gross Weekly Earnings in Northern Ireland by place of work, 2017



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

## 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 carried out at least one hour's paid work in the week prior to interview, or has a job they are temporarily away from (e.g. on holiday). Also included are people who do unpaid work in a family business and people on Government-supported employment training schemes.

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 overleaf 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 then 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 the annual changes in those who are unemployed (16+) and the unemployment rate (16+), were both statistically significant i.e. the recorded changes exceeded the variability expected from a sample survey of this size and were likely to reflect real changes. None of the reported changes in employment (16-64) or economic inactivity (16-64) over the quarter or the year were statistically significant.

Table 4 shows the sampling variability of the estimates, and quarterly and annual changes. The final column contains the sampling variability that can be used when assessing change between two independent samples. Due to the LFS five wave structure this means it can be used to assess changes over six quarters or more.

**Table 4: Sampling variability of labour market estimates, September - November 2017**

	Reference period	Estimate	Sampling variability of estimate	Change over quarter	Sampling variability of quarterly change	Change over year	Sampling variability of annual change	Sampling variability of change
Unemployment <sup>1</sup>	Sep-Nov 2017	33,000	+/-9,000	-8,000	+/-9,000	-17,000	+/-13,000	+/-14,000
Employment <sup>2</sup>	Sep-Nov 2017	837,000	+/-25,000	7,000	+/-18,000	1,000	+/-32,000	+/-35,000
Economically inactive <sup>2</sup>	Sep-Nov 2017	594,000	+/-23,000	3,000	+/-16,000	23,000	+/-29,000	+/-32,000
Unemployment rate <sup>1</sup>	Sep-Nov 2017	3.8%	+/-1.0pps	-0.9pps	+/-1.0pps	-1.8pps	+/-1.5pps	+/-1.6pps
Employment rate <sup>2</sup>	Sep-Nov 2017	69.0%	+/-1.8pps	0.6pps	+/-1.3pps	-0.3pps	+/-2.3pps	+/-2.6pps
Economic inactivity rate <sup>2</sup>	Sep-Nov 2017	28.2%	+/-1.8pps	0.1pps	+/-1.3pps	1.7pps	+/-2.3pps	+/-2.5pps

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

<sup>2</sup> 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 November 2017 should be compared with the estimates for June - August 2017, which were first published on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2017. This provides a more robust estimate than comparing with the estimates for August - October 2017 as the September and October data are included within both estimates, so effectively observed differences are those between the individual months of August 2017 and November 2017. 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 unless 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. To compare over months or quarters, the data are seasonally adjusted to remove the effects of seasonal factors and the arrangement of the calendar.

## Thresholds

Thresholds are used to determine whether LFS data are suitably robust for publication. The threshold used for the quarterly LFS datasets is 8,000. As such, data below 8,000 is suppressed.

## LFS revisions

LFS microdata have recently been revised to incorporate the latest population estimates. The revisions affect LFS data from the period May - July 2012 onwards and were first published in May 2017. 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 NI claimant count does not include Universal Credit Claimants.

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 12<sup>th</sup> July 2017. 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](#)

### **Claimant Count Statistics on NOMIS**

[NOMIS](#) have published NI claimant counts using the new seasonally adjusted methodology for JSA+UC from July 2017.

**Please note** the Claimant Count statistics in this publication are comparable with the JSA seasonally adjusted dataset for NI on NOMIS and are not comparable with the Claimant Count on NOMIS.

### **Universal Credit**

The roll-out of Universal Credit began in Northern Ireland on the 27th September 2017. This has only had a limited impact on the out of work claimant count statistics as it has currently only been rolled out in four of the 35 job centres. As the numbers increase, and the data becomes more robust, these out-of-work claimants of Universal Credit will be added to the current Jobseeker's Allowance data to create a new Claimant Count measure.

From 17 June 2015, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) replaced the claimant count based on JSA for Great Britain with an experimental claimant count based on JSA claimants and a measure of out-of-work claimants of Universal Credit, and national statistics status from the JSA based claimant count measure was removed. The full correspondence between ONS and the Statistics Authority can be accessed at the links below:

[Letter from National Statistician to UK Statistics Authority, 9 June 2015](#)

[Reply from UK Statistics Authority to National Statistician, 10 June 2015](#)

As the roll-out of Universal Credit progressed the ability of the experimental claimant count to provide a useful indicator of the labour market decreased. As such, with effect from 15 March 2017, ONS have removed the claimant count from the UK and Regional Statistical Bulletins.

### **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)**

Annualised growth or rolling 4 quarters figures are calculated by taking the average over the most recent 4 quarters and subtracting the average over the same 4 quarters of the previous year. For example annualised growth of 1.5% for Q3 2017 is the average of jobs figures from Q4 2016 to Q3 2017 minus the average of jobs figures from Q4 2015 to Q3 2016 divided by the average of jobs figures from Q4 2015 to Q3 2016. This measure allows for comparison in growth to previous years and is useful in determining trends in the data.

### **Revisions**

QES estimates are revised quarterly to reflect the latest information provided to the Department by employers. The June 2017 seasonally adjusted estimate first published in September 2017 has subsequently been revised down (-150 jobs).

For further details of QES revisions please see link below:

[QES Revisions](#)

### **Pre Release Access**

The UK Office for National Statistics (ONS) announced the removal of early access by Ministers and officials to all ONS official statistics from 1 July. For further information please see [correspondence](#) between John Pullinger the National Statistician on this issue and the [reply](#) from Sir David Norgrove, the Chair of the UK Statistics Authority.

As a number of ONS publications affected by this decision include Northern Ireland (NI) level statistics, NISRA also removed early release access for NI officials to the equivalent NISRA publications and associated economic output statistics. This is based on analysis of the proxy nature of NI data for UK trends. The Labour Market Report published on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2017 was the first release under these new arrangements.

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Web: [Labour Force Survey](#)

Twitter: [@ELMSNISRA](#)

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