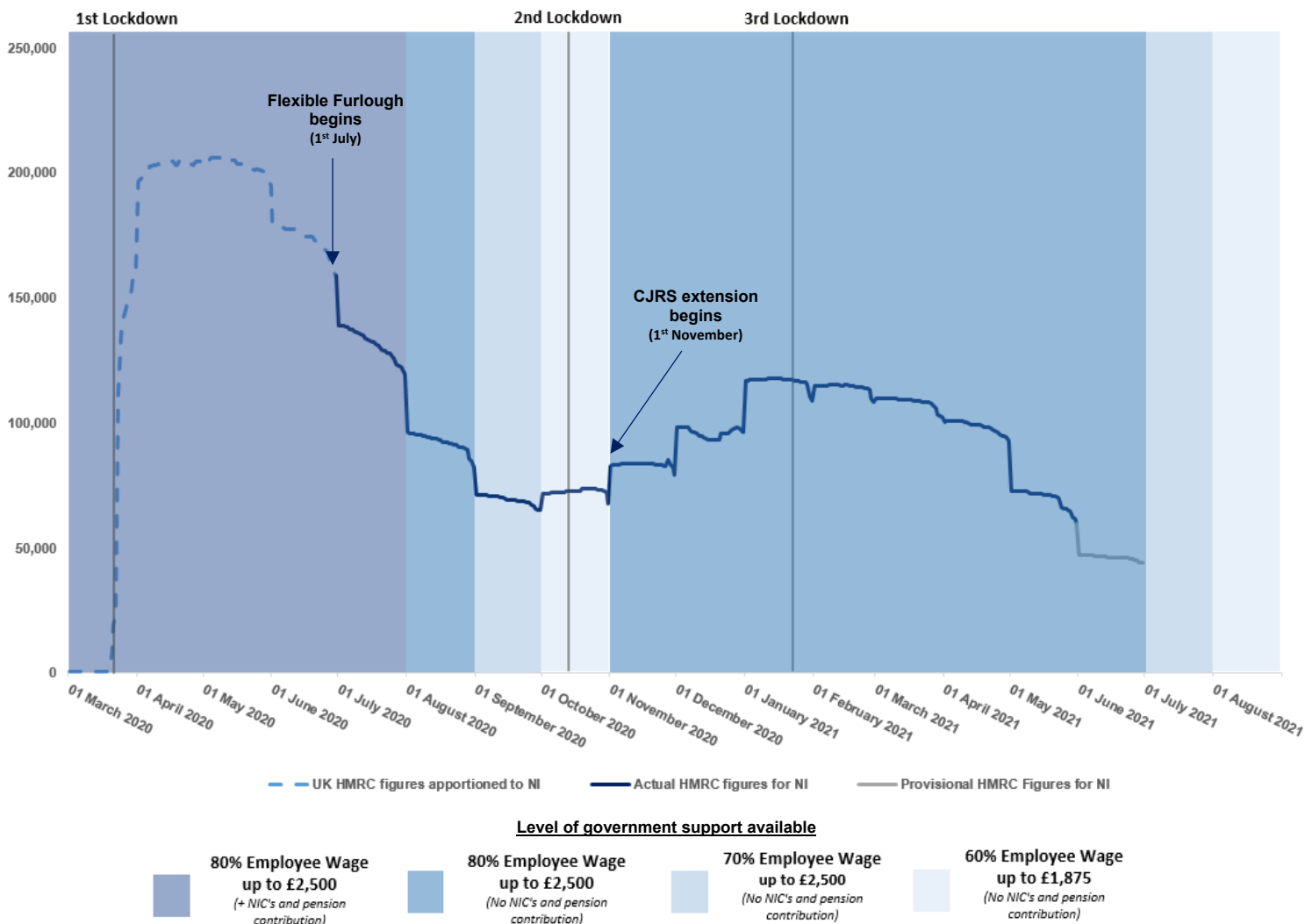


An Assessment of HMRC Furlough Statistics – August 2021

The UK Government announced the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) on 20 March 2020. An extension of the CJRS scheme began on 1 November 2020 to further support individuals and businesses who were impacted by disruption caused by coronavirus until 30 April 2021. It was announced on 3 March 2021 that the CJRS was to be extended further, beyond 30 April 2021 to 30 September 2021. For claim periods from 1 May to 30 June 2021, employers with a PAYE scheme were able to claim 80% of an employee’s usual hours worked, up to a maximum of £2,500 per month. The £2,500 cap is proportional to the hours not worked. From 1 July 2021, the scheme supported 70% of salaries for hours not worked, reducing to 60% from 1 August 2021.

On the 29th July HMRC published its fourteenth release of Official Statistics on the CJRS, which provides analysis of claims for periods up to 30 June 2021. Provisional figures show that there have been around 286,000 unique jobs supported by the CJRS since its inception and that some 44,000 employments were furloughed as at 30 June 2021 using the CJRS. This is a decrease from 59,700 employments furloughed at 31 May, 92,900 employments furloughed at 30 April and from 102,200 furloughed at 31 March and numbers are at their lowest since the time series began (1 July 2020).

**Timeline of total employees supported on the furlough scheme in Northern Ireland
March 2020 – June 2021**



Full/Flexible Furlough

The proportion of employments on flexible furlough has been increasing since February 2021, with a greater proportion of employments on flexible furlough at the end of June for the first time since the series began reporting. Some employments which were previously on full furlough may have moved to flexible furlough as restrictions eased.

	Employments on full furlough at 30 June (provisional)	Employments on flexible furlough at 30 June (provisional)	Total employments on furlough at 30 June (provisional)
Northern Ireland	21,700	22,300	44,000

Age

While those in the under 25 age group account for the highest percentage of those employees on furlough (12%) this is only 1pps above the majority of other age groups which make up 11% of furloughed employments. Those aged 25-29 and 55-59 are slightly lower (10%) while the lowest proportion of those on furlough were in the older age groups of 60 and over (6%).

Age	Employments on furlough in NI by age (30 June)	% of Total Employments on furloughs (30 June)
Under 25	5,400	12%
25 to 29	4,300	10%
30 to 34	4,700	11%
35 to 39	5,000	11%
40 to 44	5,000	11%
45 to 49	4,800	11%
50 to 54	5,000	11%
55 to 59	4,200	10%
60 to 64	3,100	7%
65 and over	2,500	6%
Total	44,000	100%

Gender

The current breakdown by gender is 47% female, 53% male. At a local level the percentage of total female employments furloughed range from a low of 43% (Derry City & Strabane and Mid & East Antrim) to a high of 49% (Ards & North Down). In all local government areas, there are more males on the furlough scheme than females.

LGD	Female employments on furlough	Female take-up rate	Male employments on furlough	Male take-up rate	Total employments on furlough)	Total take-up rate
Antrim and Newtownabbey	1700	5%	1800	6%	3,600	6%
Ards and North Down	1700	5%	1800	6%	3,500	6%
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	2300	5%	2700	6%	5,000	6%
Belfast	3900	6%	4300	6%	8,200	6%
Causeway Coast and Glens	1400	5%	1600	7%	3,100	6%
Derry City and Strabane	1300	4%	1700	6%	3,000	5%
Fermanagh and Omagh	1100	5%	1200	6%	2,300	5%
Lisburn and Castlereagh	1700	5%	1800	6%	3,500	6%
Mid and East Antrim	1500	5%	1900	7%	3,500	6%
Mid Ulster	1500	5%	1700	5%	3,200	5%
Newry, Mourne and Down	2300	7%	2700	9%	5,000	8%


Northern Ireland	20,600	5%	23,400	7%	44,000	6%
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Sector

The recent CJRS statistics show that the Arts, entertainment & recreation sector has the highest take-up rate of the furlough scheme with over 1 in 5 (21%) of employees still furloughed, this was followed by Accommodation & food services with 18%. However these sectors have been the last to see restrictions eased, and with the reopening of indoor hospitality on 24 May 2021, the numbers of furlough in the accommodation & food services and Arts, entertainment & recreation sectors have fallen rapidly between May and June (52% and 40% respectively). More concerning are those sectors that have in relative terms had restrictions lifted earlier but still have considerable numbers remaining on furlough; Construction and Manufacturing still have 10% and 8% take-up rates of the scheme and in number of employees manufacturing still has the second highest number (6,600) remaining on furlough.

 **Sectors frequently subject to restrictions** (Arts, entertainment & recreation/Accommodation & Food Services)

 **Sectors not directly subject to restrictions** (Manufacturing/Construction)

 **Sectors subject to restrictions depending on business type*** (Wholesale and retail; repair of motor vehicles/other service activities)

*During the pandemic some retailers were deemed essential (e.g. supermarkets) therefore not subject to restrictions. Other Service Activities include close contact services which are under continued restrictions.

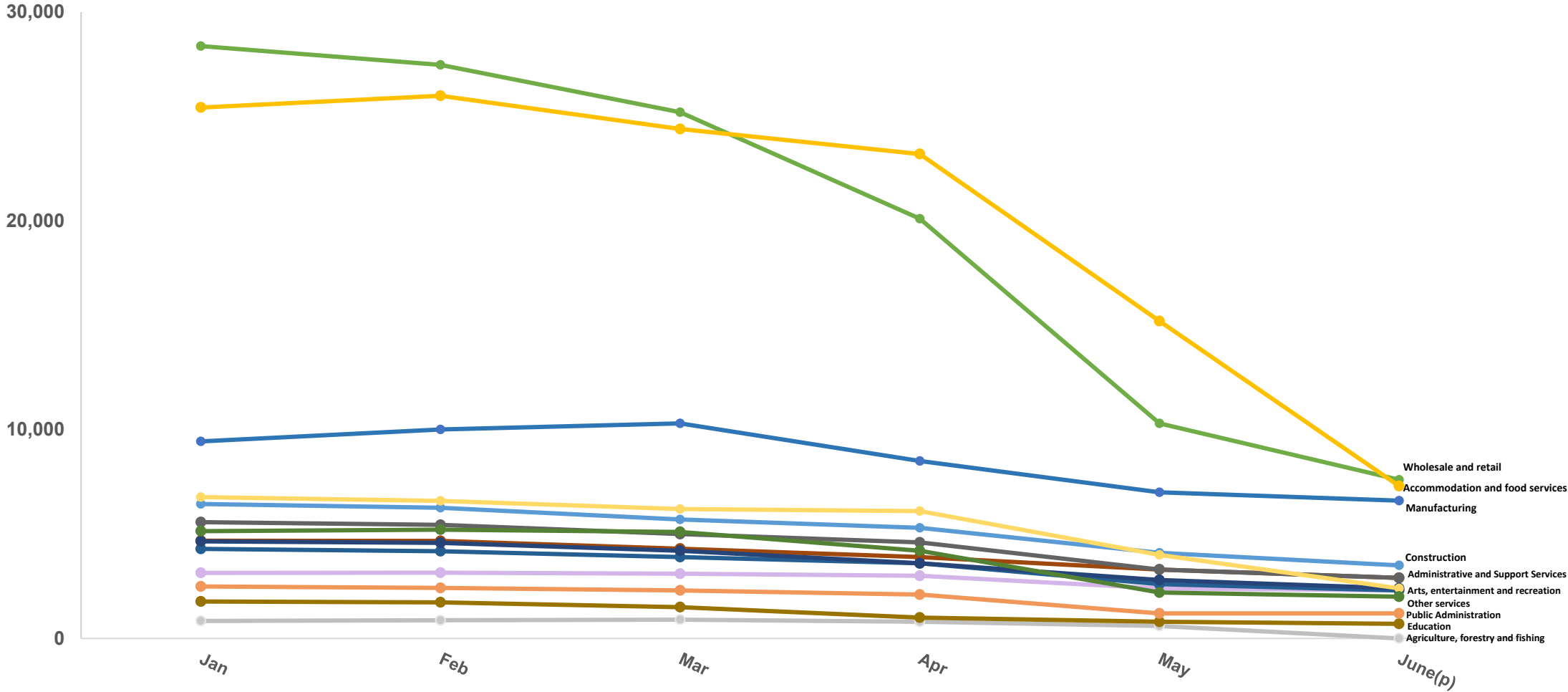
Number and Percentage of Employee Furloughed by Sector

Sector	Employments eligible for furlough	Employments on furlough	Take up-rate
Manufacturing	83,700	6,600	8%
Construction	33,600	3,500	10%
Wholesale and retail; repair of motor vehicles	123,100	7,600	6%
Transportation and storage	24,500	2,300	10%
Accommodation and food services	41,300	7,300	18%
Information and communication, Financial and insurance & Real estate	57,000	2,300	4%
Professional, scientific and technical	37,900	2,900	8%
Administrative and support services	50,800	2,900	6%
Education	77,500	700	1%
Health and social work	133,000	2,400	2%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	11,000	2,400	21%
Other service activities	13,300	2,000	15%

Time Series Employee Furloughed by Sector – Jan - Jun '21

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June(p)	% change between May and June
Agriculture, forestry and fishing, Mining and quarrying, Energy production and supply & Water supply, sewerage and waste	840	870	900	800	600	x	N/A
Manufacturing	9,440	10,010	10,300	8,500	7,000	6,600	-6%
Construction	6,440	6,260	5,700	5,300	4,100	3,500	-15%
Wholesale and retail; repair of motor vehicles	28,370	27,470	25,200	20,100	10,300	7,600	-26%
Transportation and storage	3,140	3,150	3,100	3,000	2,400	2,300	-4%
Accommodation and food services	25,430	25,990	24,400	23,200	15,200	7,300	-52%
Information and communication, Financial and insurance & Real estate	4,290	4,180	3,900	3,600	2,600	2,300	-12%
Professional, scientific and technical	4,680	4,670	4,300	3,900	3,300	2,900	-12%
Administrative and support services	5,570	5,440	5,000	4,600	3,300	2,900	-12%
Education	1,770	1,730	1,500	1,000	800	700	-13%
Health and social work	4,650	4,580	4,200	3,600	2,800	2,400	-14%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	6,770	6,590	6,200	6,100	4,000	2,400	-40%
Other service activities	5,140	5,210	5,100	4,200	2,200	2,000	-9%
Public administration and defence; social security, Households & Other	2,490	2,420	2,300	2,100	1,200	1,200	0%
Total	109,000	108,600	102,200	92,900	59,800	44,000	-26%

Graph showing number of furloughs by Sector: January - June 2021



- Agriculture, forestry and fishing
- Manufacturing
- Construction
- Wholesale and retail
- Transportation and storage
- Accommodation and food services
- Information and Communication
- Professional, scientific and technical
- Administrative and support services
- Education
- Health and social work
- Arts, entertainment and recreation
- Other service activities
- Public Administration

Employee Furloughs by LGD and Sector – June 2021

	Manufacturing	Construction	Wholesale and retail; repair of motor vehicles	Transportation and storage	Accommodation and food services	Information and communication, Financial and insurance & Real estate	Professional, scientific and technical	Administrative and support services	Education	Health and social work	Arts, entertainment and recreation	Other service activities	Other	Total
Antrim and Newtownabbey	540	180	590	360	530	180	240	290	50	180	150	150	120	3,560
Ards and North Down	480	190	630	150	580	260	280	260	60	180	220	190	70	3,550
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	1,100	410	940	210	630	220	270	280	50	370	190	200	100	4,970
Belfast	850	320	1,060	370	1,870	600	630	720	160	490	690	390	90	8,240
Causeway Coast and Glens	300	350	610	170	610	150	170	170	30	150	150	130	60	3,050
Derry City and Strabane	390	340	540	170	450	110	170	140	100	140	220	150	90	3,010
Fermanagh and Omagh	260	310	420	100	480	80	160	100	30	160	60	100	80	2,340
Lisburn and Castlereagh	490	200	630	190	520	220	310	270	60	210	240	160	40	3,540
Mid and East Antrim	650	250	660	230	470	170	180	290	50	120	130	180	130	3,510
Mid Ulster	570	430	620	170	430	140	160	100	60	210	90	110	110	3,200
Newry, Mourne and Down	1,010	550	860	230	680	210	300	240	50	200	240	220	260	5,050
Northern Ireland	6,640	3,520	7,570	2,350	7,260	2,330	2,860	2,850	690	2,410	2,360	1,970	1,160	44,000

*Highest Number of Furloughs in sector by LGD

Area

Across the council areas of Northern Ireland, the take-up rate varies. Three council areas (Derry City & Strabane, Fermanagh & Omagh and Mid Ulster) all have 5% take-up rate while the Newry, Mourne & Down council area has a take-up rate of 8%. Belfast has the largest number currently on furlough 8,240 (18% of the total furloughed population) the take-up rate is 6%, the same as the total Northern Ireland average. At sectoral level, Belfast council area also has the largest number of employees furloughed in Wholesale and retail (1,060), Accommodation and Food Service (1,870), Arts, entertainment and recreation (690) and Other Service Activities (390). However in the sectors of Manufacturing and Construction the areas of Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon and Newry, Mourne & Down have the most employees remaining on furlough in these sectors (1,100 and 550 respectively).

Sectors frequently subject to restrictions

	Arts, entertainment and recreation	Accommodation and food services	Total	% of Total Employees on Furlough in that Sector by LGD
Antrim and Newtownabbey	150	530	680	19%
Ards and North Down	220	580	800	23%
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	190	630	820	16%
Belfast	690	1,870	2,560	31%
Causeway Coast and Glens	150	610	760	25%
Derry City and Strabane	220	450	670	22%
Fermanagh and Omagh	60	480	540	23%
Lisburn and Castlereagh	240	520	760	21%
Mid and East Antrim	130	470	600	17%
Mid Ulster	90	430	520	16%
Newry, Mourne and Down	240	680	920	18%
Total	2,360	7,260	9,620	22%

Sectors not directly subject to restrictions

	Manufacturing	Construction	Total	% of Total Employees on Furlough in that Sector by LGD
Antrim and Newtownabbey	540	180	720	20%
Ards and North Down	480	190	670	19%
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	1,100	410	1,510	30%
Belfast	850	320	1,170	14%
Causeway Coast and Glens	300	350	650	21%
Derry City and Strabane	390	340	730	24%
Fermanagh and Omagh	260	310	570	24%
Lisburn and Castlereagh	490	200	690	19%
Mid and East Antrim	650	250	900	26%
Mid Ulster	570	430	1,000	31%
Newry, Mourne and Down	1,010	550	1,560	31%
Northern Ireland	6,640	3,520	10,160	23%

Sectors subject to restrictions depending on business type

	Wholesale and retail; repair of motor vehicles	Other service activities	Total	% of Total Employees on Furlough in that Sector by LGD
Antrim and Newtownabbey	590	150	740	21%
Ards and North Down	630	190	820	23%
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	940	200	1,140	23%
Belfast	1,060	390	1,450	18%
Causeway Coast and Glens	610	130	740	24%
Derry City and Strabane	540	150	690	23%
Fermanagh and Omagh	420	100	520	22%
Lisburn and Castlereagh	630	160	790	22%
Mid and East Antrim	660	180	840	24%
Mid Ulster	620	110	730	23%
Newry, Mourne and Down	860	220	1,080	21%
Northern Ireland	7,570	1,970	9,540	22%

Full and Flexible Furlough by Sector

While HMRC do not currently provide a breakdown of the number of furloughs by type in each sector for Northern Ireland, they do produce the figures at a UK level. Therefore by extrapolating the UK figures for full and flexible employments in each sector and apportioning furloughs in Northern Ireland as a percentage of the UK we are able to estimate the current numbers on full and flexible furlough for each sector in Northern Ireland. As the scheme begins to be wound down and come to an end in the coming months, the number of fully furloughed workers in sectors that have had restrictions lifted earlier such as Construction and Manufacturing are of more concern than those where a degree of mitigation remains, such as Accommodation & food services, Arts, entertainment & recreation and Wholesale & retail. In particular, it is estimated that more than double the number of employees remain fully rather than flexibly furloughed (2,400 compared to 1,100) in the Construction sector.

Pro-rata* Full and Flexible Furlough by Sector for NI based on UK figures

	Employments on full furlough at 30 June (provisional)	Employments on flexible furlough at 30 June (provisional)
Manufacturing	2,550	4,050
Construction	2,400	1,100
Wholesale and retail; repair of motor vehicles	3,900	3,700
Transportation and storage	1,200	1,100
Accommodation and food services	3,500	3,800
Information and communication, Financial and insurance & Real estate	1,400	900
Professional, scientific and technical	1,700	1,200
Administrative and support services	1,600	1,200
Education	320	370
Health and social work	1,200	1,200
Arts, entertainment and recreation	1,200	1,200
Other service activities	950	1,050
Other	800	400

*Based on NI furloughs (44,000) as a percentage of total UK furloughs therefore figures converted as 2.4% of UK Full and Flexible furlough figure.

Conclusion

While it is encouraging that over the last number of months those employments on furlough have fallen across all sectors, there are still a significant number of employees on some type of furlough, with the scheme due to be entirely phased out by the end of September 2021. Nevertheless, some sectors have been more severely impacted than others, with a greater and more prolonged impact felt in general by businesses that provide face-to-face services, such as tourism and hospitality, arts and leisure services, close contact services such as hairdressers and some retailers. Additionally it should be noted the number of employees furloughed that are in sectors that have had restrictions eased earlier in the year is a significant percentage of the total that remain furloughed. While some of these employees will ultimately return to their jobs, there remains a risk that some will be made redundant when the scheme ends.