

# Labour Market Statistics – Newsletter

August 2023

## Welcome to the Labour Market Statistics Newsletter

This is the third Labour Market Statistics Newsletter and follows feedback from attendees at Labour Market Statistics User Group meetings. Users told us that they would like more regular updates on developments in Labour Market Statistics. We are using this newsletter to provide an overview of things you may have missed since the last user group meeting in September 2022 and to outline our plans up to the next user group meeting, scheduled for 24<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

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## Labour Market Statistics User Group

This year's user group meeting will take place in person on Tuesday 24th October 2023 at 10am at:

Colby House  
Stranmillis Court  
BELFAST  
BT9 5RR.

The option to join virtually will also be available. Further details will be advertised at the end of September via email, on the NISRA website and on NISRA's twitter account.

October 2023						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

## Labour Market Statistics – Transformation in Northern Ireland

NISRA aims to provide the most accurate and up-to-date statistics about the local labour market. To achieve this, a number of initiatives are being taken forward including greater use of administrative data sources such as HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) Pay As You Earn data and the transformation of the Labour Force Survey (LFS).

Most of our labour market statistics will continue to be obtained from surveys completed by either households or businesses. Using surveys to collect labour market statistics is an effective and proven approach that delivers trusted results. In the next two years, NISRA are working towards transforming how we deliver key labour market surveys.

The transformation of the Labour Force Survey focuses on improving the design of the LFS and quality of its outputs. It will use enhanced address registers, improved sampling, and transform to a respondent led, online first approach supported by telephone collection and “knock to nudge” processes. To account for this, the transformation has also focused on a respondent-centred design of questions.

More details on the transformation plan will be published soon.

The goal of these initiatives is to reduce the time and effort needed to collect survey data, to improve overall response and to provide more accurate and relevant statistics.

## Business Register and Employment Survey 2022

The Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) 2022 surveyed 34,000 businesses. The larger sample size allows the data to be disaggregated to small geographical areas and to 5-digit SIC level. The 2022 results will be published on Tuesday, September 26, 2023 and will be available on the [NISRA website](#).

The BRES 2022 output will include Northern Ireland employment figures, where employment is the sum of *employee jobs* in a business and the number of *working proprietors*. The employment data will be disaggregated at District Council Area level and Headline industry level.

The BRES 2022 tabulated results will have presentational improvements to make it easier for users to understand the limitations of the data due to the uncertainties associated with sampling. The accessibility of the data will also be improved in line with NISRA requirements.

The BRES 2023 survey will issue in September 2023 with results expected in June 2024. The sample size will be smaller than in BRES 2022, therefore disaggregation will be at Headline and District Council Area levels only.

## Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) publication

The ASHE publication – “Employee Earnings in NI” – was published for the first time in an HTML format in 2022 and was accompanied by a suite of fully accessible data tables. Following on from 2021 when [Scrollytelling through Employee Earnings](#) was published, a second scrollytelling article was created in 2022, this time [Scrollytelling through Real Earnings](#). This article focuses on the change in real earnings over the last decade and discusses how different age groups have been affected.

## Employee and Earnings Study (EES) 2011

Data from the 2011 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) was linked with data from the 2011 Census of Population and Housing, and Capital Value data from the Land and Property Services to form the Earnings and Employees Study (EES) 2011 dataset. This is now available to accredited researchers who can apply to use it for research that is in the public interest.

To date, there have been three research projects approved to use the EES data.

**Organisation 1:** Queens University Belfast (QUB)

**Title:** Catholic-Protestant Earnings Differentials in Northern Ireland 2011

**Publications:** ADR NI data insights and data explained reports on the ADR UK website summer 2023

**Organisation 2:** University of Ulster (UU)

**Title:** Using the Earnings and Employees Study (2011) to analyse the association between unpaid caring and employment and earnings in NI.

**Publications:** ADR NI data insights and data explained reports on the ADR UK website summer 2023

### **Organisation 3:** Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA)

**Title:** Assessing Equality Pay Gaps in Northern Ireland

**Publications:** The report 'Disability Pay Gaps in Northern Ireland' is planned for publication in September 2023; The report 'Gender Pay Gaps in Northern Ireland' is planned for publication in October/November 2023.

Access to the EES dataset is limited to researchers and research teams with accredited researcher status under the Digital Economy Act (DEA) and subject to approval by each of the data providers and the UK Statistics Authority Research Accreditation Panel.

Further information on how to apply for approval is available from the [NISRA website](#). Or get in touch with the Research Support Unit [rsu@nisra.gov.uk](mailto:rsu@nisra.gov.uk).

### **Work quality**

The latest publication was released in February 2023. This release contained the first time series of the Work Quality indicators of which seven are sourced from the Labour Force Survey (LFS), alongside an earnings indicator from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE).

Papers focusing on the job quality concept of "Skills Usage", "Levels of support from immediate manager" and "Experiences of bullying and harassment" were published in May/June 2023 following the addition of three new questions to the LFS during 2022.

All publications related to Work Quality can be accessed from the [Work Quality area](#) on the NISRA website.

### **QES Statistical Production Project**

The Quarterly Survey team are undertaking a project to update their statistical production processes and improve statistical outputs. The project involves updating the current statistical processes, which use a mix of SAS and Excel, to using primarily R open source software. The project will also include the creation of a RAP (Reproducible Analytical Pipeline) process for the quarterly surveys (including the Quarterly Employment Survey (QES)), and the production of HTML outputs to replace the current PDF bulletins.

To facilitate this project, ELMS are using an external consultant with expertise in R coding and the creation of RAP processes to support the existing statistical team. The project is planned to take place over a 3 month timeline.

### **Migration from NINIS to NISRA Data Portal**

As you may already be aware, the Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service (NINIS) website shut down at the end of June 2023 and the statistics element (database) has been replaced by the [NISRA Data Portal](#).

NINIS has been NISRA's main method of disseminating statistical data relating to small areas across NI for a number of years. The NISRA Data Portal will host a wider range of NISRA data as well as hosting NINIS data. The Data Portal has been live now for a number of months and is populated with various datasets. The Portal meets accessibility requirements and gives users the ability to:

- slice and dice datasets,
- run meta-data searches,
- filter results,
- plot interactive charts,
- visualise data over interactive maps,
- save queries and create favourite tables,
- share results and automate processes by reading data via API queries, and
- download the data in multiple formats (CSV, JSON-stat, PX, and XLSX).

Over the last few months, the team within ELMS have carried out a review of the data held on NINIS and have been working in conjunction with NISRA's Dissemination team to migrate applicable data previously held on the NINIS website on to the new platform. We have also identified and added additional data not previously available on NINIS to the Data Portal and have taken the decision not to migrate some datasets which were not being used frequently. However, if any dataset that you use has been discontinued on the Data Portal, please email us at [economicstats@nisra.gov.uk](mailto:economicstats@nisra.gov.uk) and we will be happy to supply it to you directly or alternatively add it on to the Data Portal if demand exists.

At this point the NISRA Data Portal contains datasets from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, Business Register and Employment Survey, Claimant Count, Inter Departmental Business Register, Labour Force Survey, Quarterly Employment Survey and Redundancies, as well as numerous additional datasets taken from across the spectrum of NISRA outputs. The NISRA Data Portal is intended to be a dynamic platform though so additional datasets will be added dictated by user demand.

Training materials (NISRA Data Portal user guide, instructional video and FAQ section) have been published to help you navigate and use the new system (linked in the footer of the portal). Online training sessions and help, if needed, will also be available. If you have any questions please feel free to get in touch at [info@nisra.gov.uk](mailto:info@nisra.gov.uk).

## Publication dates and times

Due to a change in ONS release and briefing practices in light of COVID-19, from April 2020 NISRA market sensitive statistics are released at 7am and not the standard release time of 9.30am. NISRA requested the temporary change in time from the Office for Statistics Regulation. Correspondence between NISRA and OSR is available on the [OSR website](#).



The OSR carried out a consultation on the release time of official statistics and the [findings from this consultation](#) were published on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2022. ONS subsequently published a [response to the proposed change to 9.30am release practice](#) on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

Following the OSR consultation, the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) was updated and edition 2.1 came into effect on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2022. The May 2022 change enabled alternative release times (ARTs) to be used, when granted by the Director General for Regulation. [Release time exemptions](#) that were granted before May 2022 have been converted to [alternative release times](#), which includes the 7am release time for the NI Labour Market Report.

## **Publications since Labour Market User Group Meeting in September 2022**

- [Employee Earnings in NI 2022 \(ASHE\)](#)
- [Labour Force Survey Annual Summary Report 2022](#)
- [Work Quality in Northern Ireland 2021/22](#)
- [Skills Mismatch in Northern Ireland 2022](#)
- [Line Manager Support in Northern Ireland 2022](#)
- [Digital Skills in Northern Ireland 2021/22](#)
- [Quarterly Employment Survey – \(most recent June 2023\)](#)
- [Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace in Northern Ireland 2022](#)
- [Labour Market Report \(monthly – most recent August 2023\)](#)

## **Upcoming Publications**

- Business Register and Employment Survey – 26 September 2023
- Employee Earnings in NI 2023 (ASHE) – October 2023

## **Thanks for reading**

Please let us know if you have found this newsletter useful, and if there is anything else you would like to see in future editions. Please email us at [economicstats@nisra.gov.uk](mailto:economicstats@nisra.gov.uk)