

Northern Ireland Quarterly Index of Production

Quarter 1 (January - March) 2024

Theme: Economy

Frequency: Quarterly

Geographical Area: Northern Ireland

Date: 13 June 2024

Introduction

The quarterly Index of Production (IOP) provides a timely indicator of growth in the output of the production industries in Northern Ireland (NI). Output estimates are calculated from the IOP aspect of the Quarterly Business Survey (QBS). The IOP has a sample size of approximately 1,200 covering all production businesses with 40 or more employees and a representative sample of smaller businesses. The latest quarterly estimates are compared to revised Quarter 4 2023 and Quarter 1 2023 estimates.

Key Points

- The NI IOP decreased by 1.5% over the quarter (January - March) and decreased by 4.5% over the year.
- The UK IOP increased by 0.9% over the quarter and 0.5% over the year.
- When the most recent four quarters are compared to the previous four quarters, the NI production sector decreased by 3.6% while the UK production sector increased by 0.2%.
- The NI IOP is 0.9% below the pre-Coronavirus pandemic level seen in Quarter 4 2019, while the UK remains 8.1% below its Quarter 4 2019 level.
- The quarterly decrease in NI production output of 1.5% was driven by decreases in Manufacturing (0.4%) and Mining and quarrying (11.8%). This was partially offset by an increase in Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply (0.9%). Water supply, sewerage and waste management (Inc. recycling) was unchanged over the quarter (0.0%).
- The annual decrease in NI production output of 4.5% was driven by decreases in all four sectors - Manufacturing (3.7%), Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply (0.2%), Water supply, sewerage and waste management (Inc. recycling) (1.8%) and Mining and quarrying (21.9%).

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Accredited Official Statistics

Accredited official statistics are a sub-set of official statistics that have been independently reviewed by the Office for Statistics Regulation and confirmed as complying with the standards of trustworthiness, quality, and value in the **Code of Practice for Statistics**. Accredited official statistics are called National Statistics in the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007.

These accredited official statistics, the quarterly Index of Production (IOP), were **independently reviewed** by the Office for Statistics Regulation in August 2011. They comply with the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics and should be labelled 'accredited official statistics'.

Our statistical practice is regulated by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR). OSR sets the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics that all producers of official statistics should adhere to. You are welcome to contact us directly with any comments about how we meet these standards. Alternatively, you can contact OSR by emailing regulation@statistics.gov.uk or via the OSR.

Since the assessment by the UK Statistics Authority, we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics and have made the following improvements:

- Removed pre-release access to enhance trustworthiness and also brought the publication date forward as a result;
- Reduced **business burden** by offering the option of online data returns.
- Improved accessibility of Index of Production Statistics by amending the format and structure of reports in line with accessibility regulations.
- **Consulted users** on streamlining the IOP statistical bulletin.

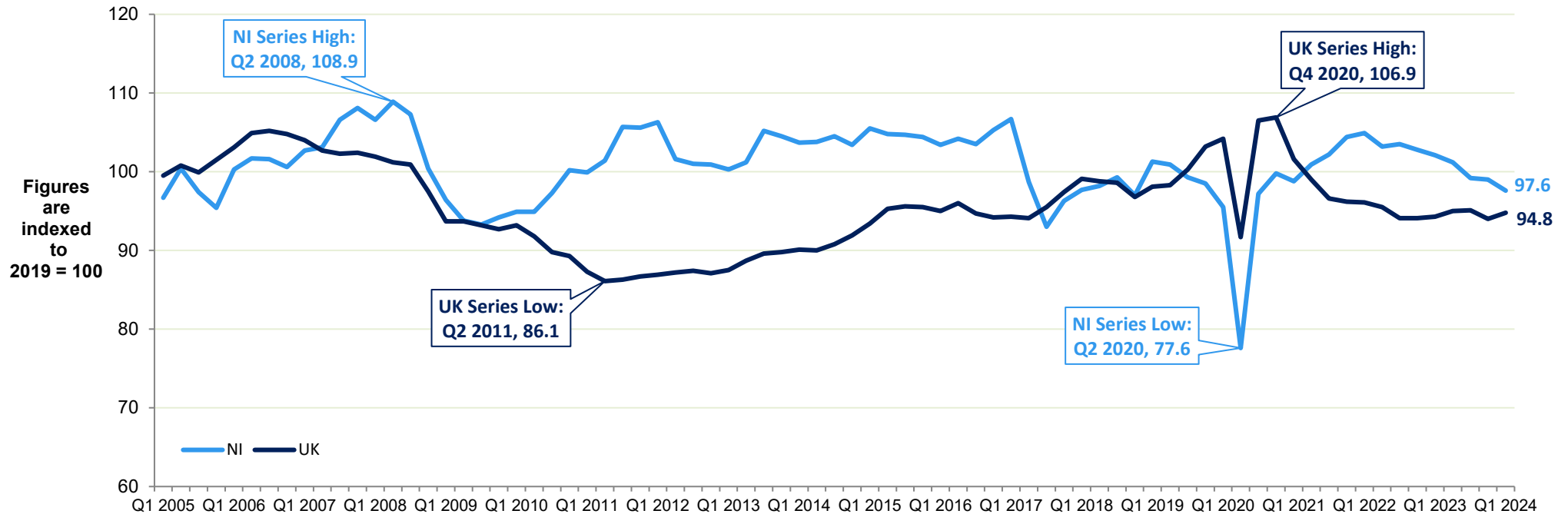
1 Summary of Index of Production

Change in IOP

The seasonally adjusted estimate for the NI IOP for Quarter 1 2024 showed:

- a decrease of 1.5% over the quarter from the Quarter 4 2023 revised estimate;
- a decrease of 4.5% over the year from the Quarter 1 2023 revised estimate; and
- a decrease of 3.6% when the most recent four quarters are compared to the previous four quarters.

Figure 1.1 IOP, NI & UK, Q1 2005 – Q1 2024



[Download Q1 2024 Data](#)

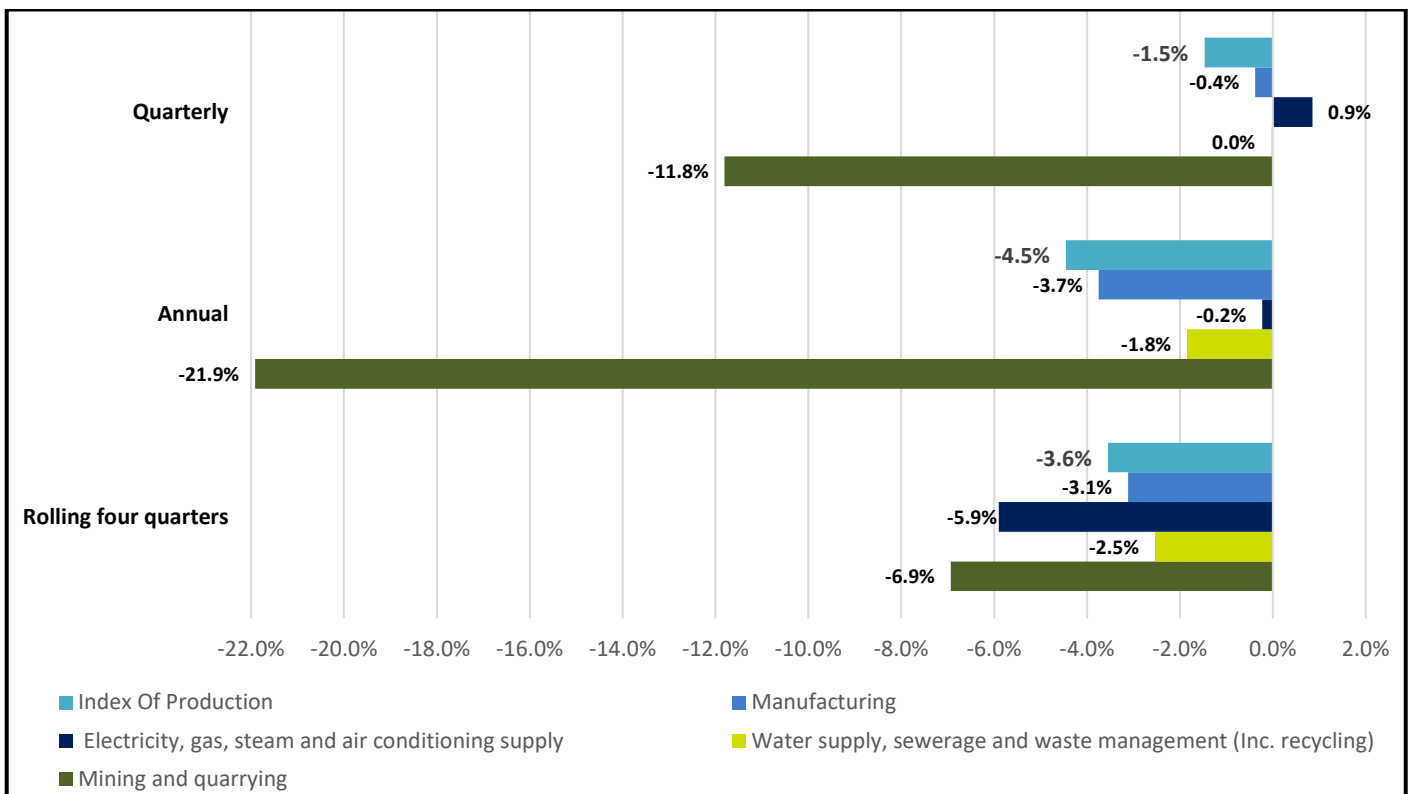
Commentary

Output in the NI Production sector decreased by 1.5% in real terms over the first quarter of 2024. The UK Production sector increased by 0.9% over the same period. Over the year there was a decrease in NI output (4.5%) and an increase in the UK (0.5%). NI output has been on a downward trend since Quarter 1 2022, with decreases seen in 7 of the last 8 quarters.

The NI IOP typically outperformed the UK series until Quarter 3 2017. After this, the two series followed broadly similar trends, although the NI index saw a steeper decline in Quarter 2 2020. The NI IOP fell to its series low in Quarter 2 2020 but has since recovered to be 0.9% below the pre-pandemic level seen in Quarter 4 2019. Subsequently, the NI index has continued to outperform the UK series, which remains 8.1% below its pre-pandemic level.

In Quarter 1 2024 NI output is 25.7% above the series low (Quarter 2 2020) but remains 10.4% below the series high (Quarter 2 2008).

Figure 1.2 NI IOP Quarterly, Annual and Rolling Four Quarter Changes at sector level Quarter 1 2024^{1,2,3}



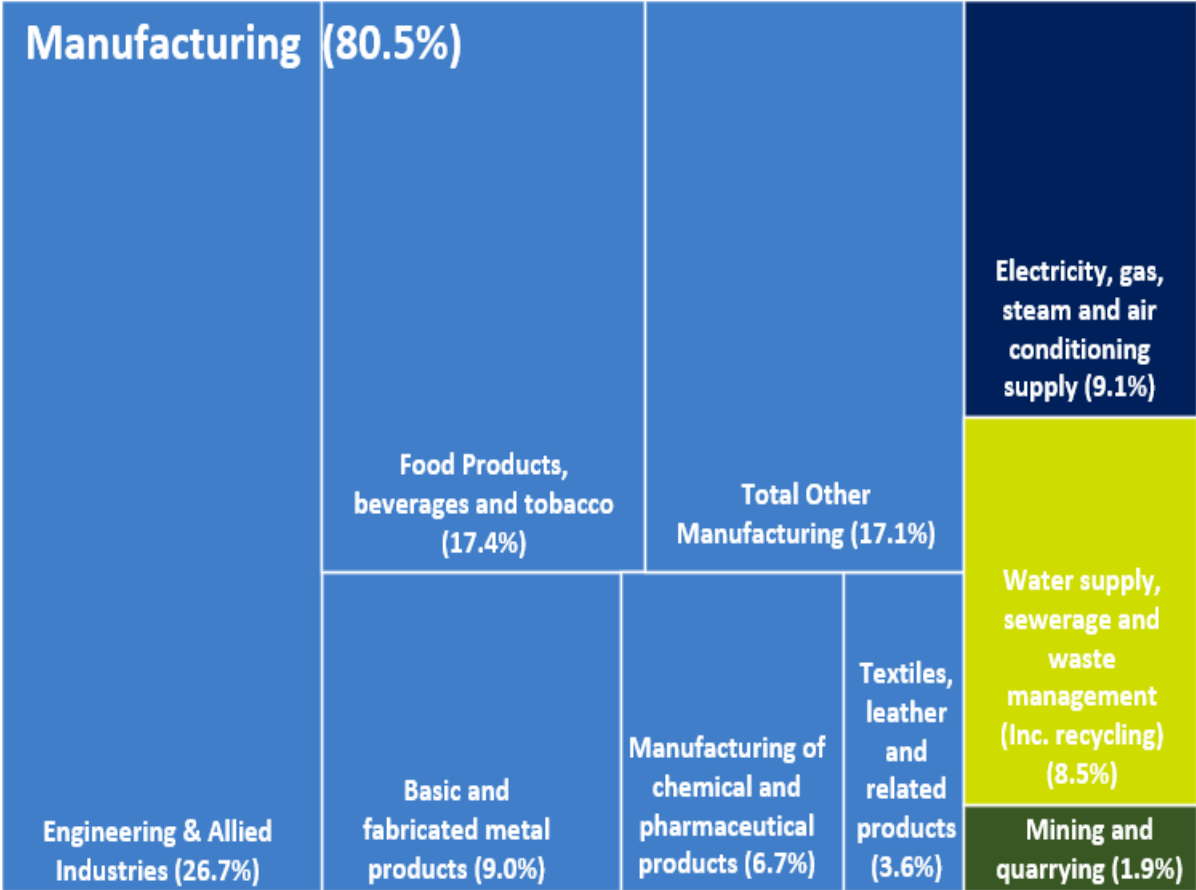
¹ For further information on weights see Regional GVA information on page 5.

² Note that each broad sector index and the overall IOP index are seasonally adjusted independently of each other. It is not appropriate to directly compare the changes in the broad sectors to the changes in the overall IOP index.

³ A number of changes have been made by ONS to the methods and data sources used in compiling the UK series as part of [Blue Book 2023](#). This has resulted in greater revision to the UK data than is normally expected. Further detail on the changes can be found in the [ONS GDP Monthly Estimate UK: Sept 2023](#).

The Production sector is dominated by Manufacturing, which accounts for approximately 80.5% of total production Gross Value Added (GVA) at 2019 prices. It is comprised of six subsectors, as shown in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 IOP sector split (based on 2019 GVA)



Further information on these subsectors is available in the [IOP Tables](#).

2 Production output by sector

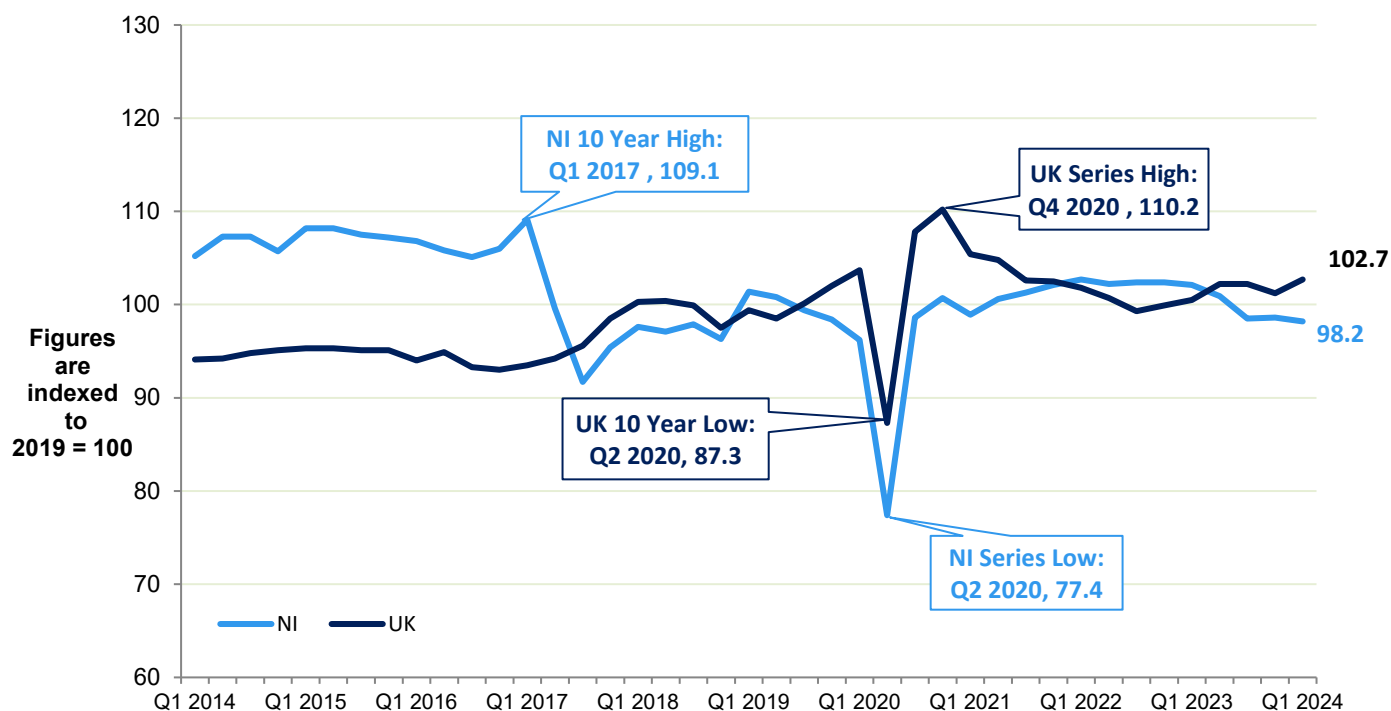
2.1 Manufacturing

Manufacturing sector (SIC07 Section C) - (weight = 80.5% of IOP): Manufacturing involves the transformation of materials into new products (outputs).

Key findings

- The NI seasonally adjusted figures show decreases of 0.4% over the quarter, 3.7% over the year and 3.1% on a rolling four quarters basis.
- The UK seasonally adjusted figures show increases of 1.5% over the quarter, 2.2% over the year and 2.0% on a rolling four quarters basis.
- NI output is 9.9% below the highest point recorded (Quarter 1 2017) over the last ten years.
- NI output is 26.9% above the series low recorded in Quarter 2 2020.

Figure 2.1 Manufacturing sector, NI & UK, Q1 2014 – Q1 2024



[Download Q1 2024 Data](#)

The UK and NI indices have had a broadly similar trend in the Manufacturing sector since Quarter 3 2017. The NI index fell to a series low in Quarter 2 2020 which was also a ten year low for the UK index. Following the recovery period, the UK index has been generally outperforming the NI series. In Quarter 1 2024 NI Manufacturing was 0.2% below the pre-pandemic level seen in Quarter 4 2019 while the UK Manufacturing index was 0.7% above its Quarter 4 2019 level.

2.2 Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply

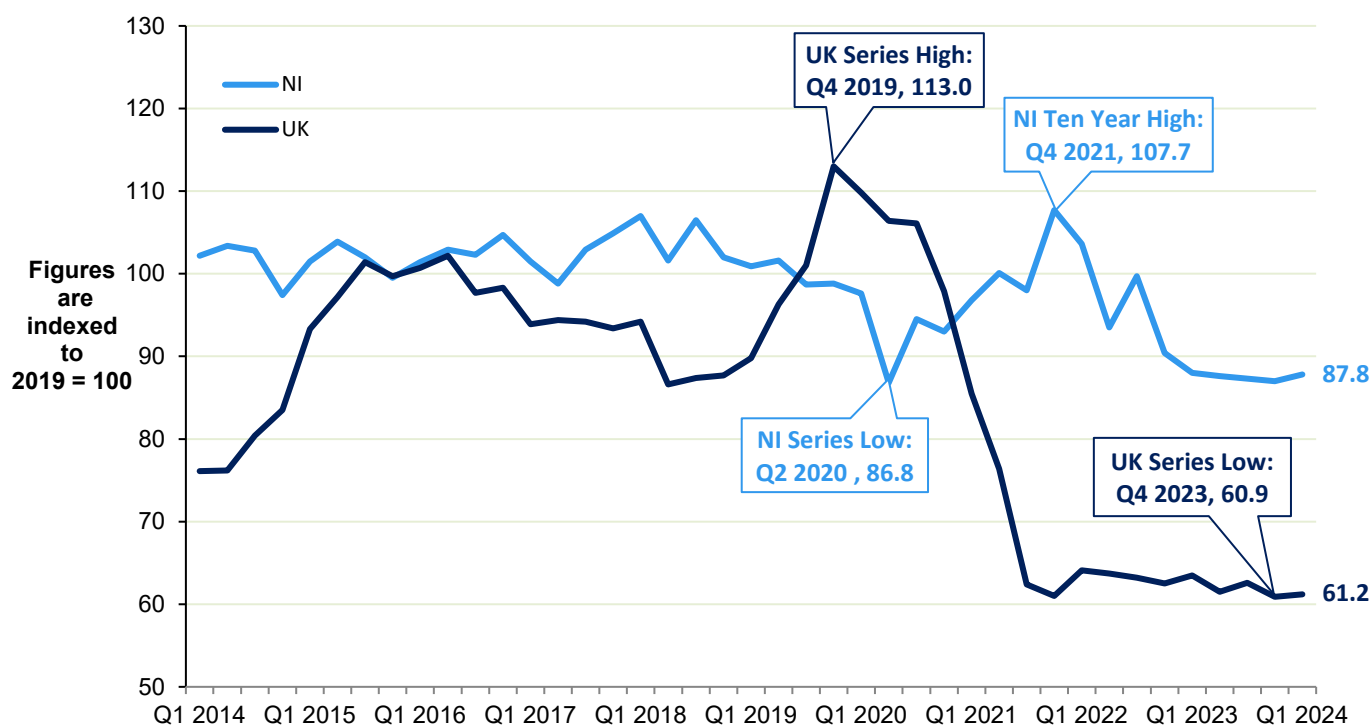
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply (SIC07 Section D) (weight = 9.1% of IOP):

This sector includes the activity of providing electric power, natural gas, steam, hot water and the like through a permanent infrastructure (network) of lines, mains and pipes. Also included is its distribution in industrial parks or residential buildings. Therefore, the operation of electric and gas utilities are included.

Key findings

- The NI seasonally adjusted figures showed an increase of 0.9% over the quarter with decreases of 0.2% over the year and 5.9% on a rolling four quarters basis.
- The seasonally adjusted figures for the UK show an increase of 0.5% over the quarter but decreases of 3.6% over the year and 2.6% on a rolling four quarters basis.
- The Quarter 1 2024 NI estimate is 18.5% below the ten year high recorded in Quarter 4 2021.
- NI output is 1.1% above the series low recorded in Quarter 2 2020.

Figure 2.2 Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply, NI & UK, Q1 2014 – Q1 2024



[Download Q1 2024 Data](#)

The NI index remained relatively stable between Quarter 1 2014 and Quarter 2 2019 while, during the same period, the UK index showed greater variation. The NI index has outperformed the UK index over the last ten years, except during the period of Quarter 3 2019 to Quarter 4 2020. NI output has been on a downward trend since the ten year high seen in Quarter 4 2021. NI output in this sector is 11.2% below the pre-pandemic level of Quarter 4 2019, while UK output is 45.8% below its Quarter 4 2019 level.

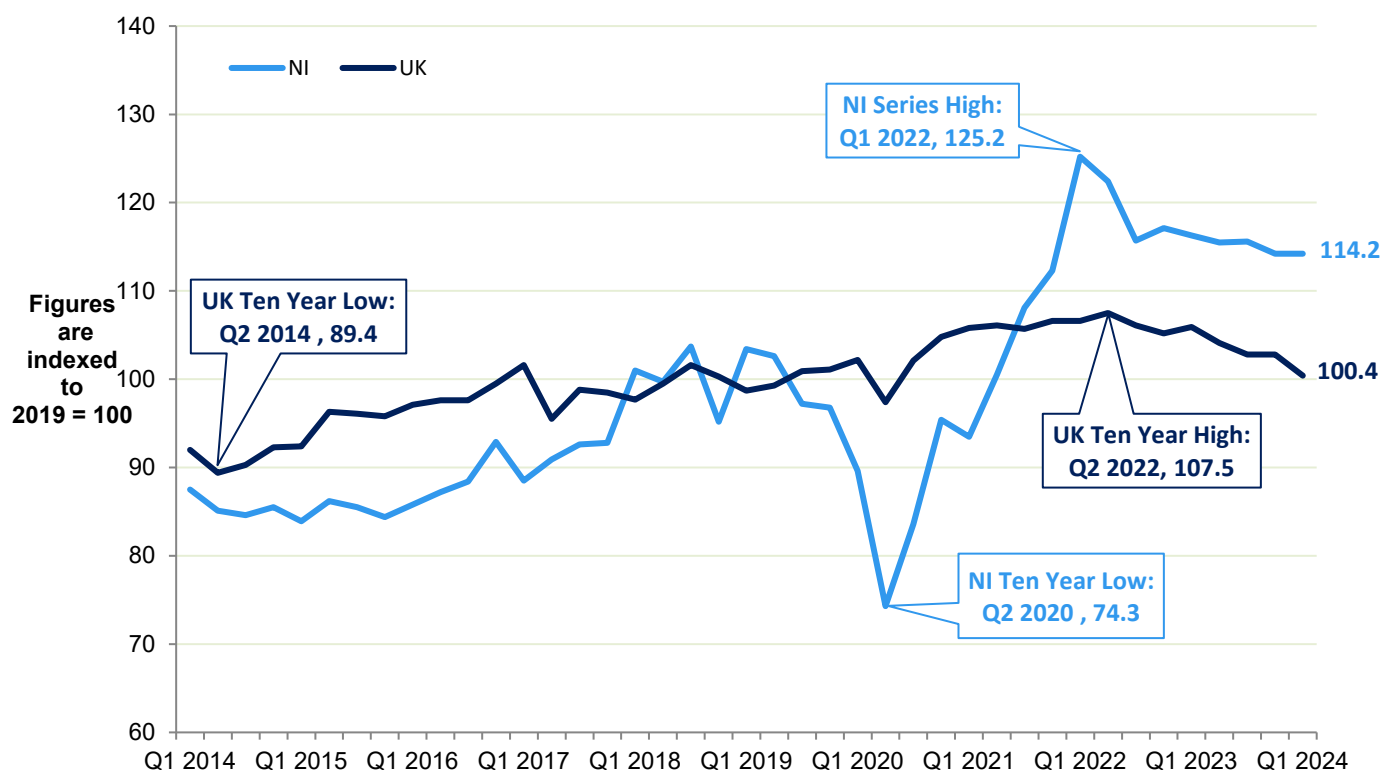
2.3 Water supply, sewerage and waste management (Inc. recycling)

Water supply, sewerage, and waste management (Inc. recycling) (SIC07 Section E) (weight = 8.5% of IOP): This section covers activities related to the management (including collection, treatment and disposal) of various forms of waste, such as solid or non-solid industrial or household waste, as well as contaminated sites. Activities of water supply are also grouped in this section since they are often carried out in connection with, or by units also engaged in, the treatment of sewage.

Key findings

- The NI seasonally adjusted figures was unchanged over the quarter (0.0%) and decreased by 1.8% over the year and 2.5% on a rolling four quarters basis.
- The UK reported decreases of 2.3% over the quarter, 5.2% over the year and 3.4% on a rolling four quarters basis.
- The NI estimate is 8.8% below the series high seen in Quarter 1 2022.
- NI output is 53.6% above the ten year low recorded in Quarter 2 2020 and 65.7% above the series low recorded in Quarter 3 2005.

Figure 2.3 Water supply, sewerage and waste management (Inc. recycling), NI & UK, Q1 2014 – Q1 2024



[Download Q1 2024 Data](#)

The UK index has generally been outperforming the NI index in this sector since Quarter 1 2014. NI output saw a substantially larger decrease in 2020 than the UK output but subsequently recovered to reach a series high in Quarter 1 2022. Since then, NI output has been on a downward trend, but remains 17.9% above the pre-pandemic level seen in Quarter 4 2019. The UK series is 0.7% below its Quarter 4 2019 level.

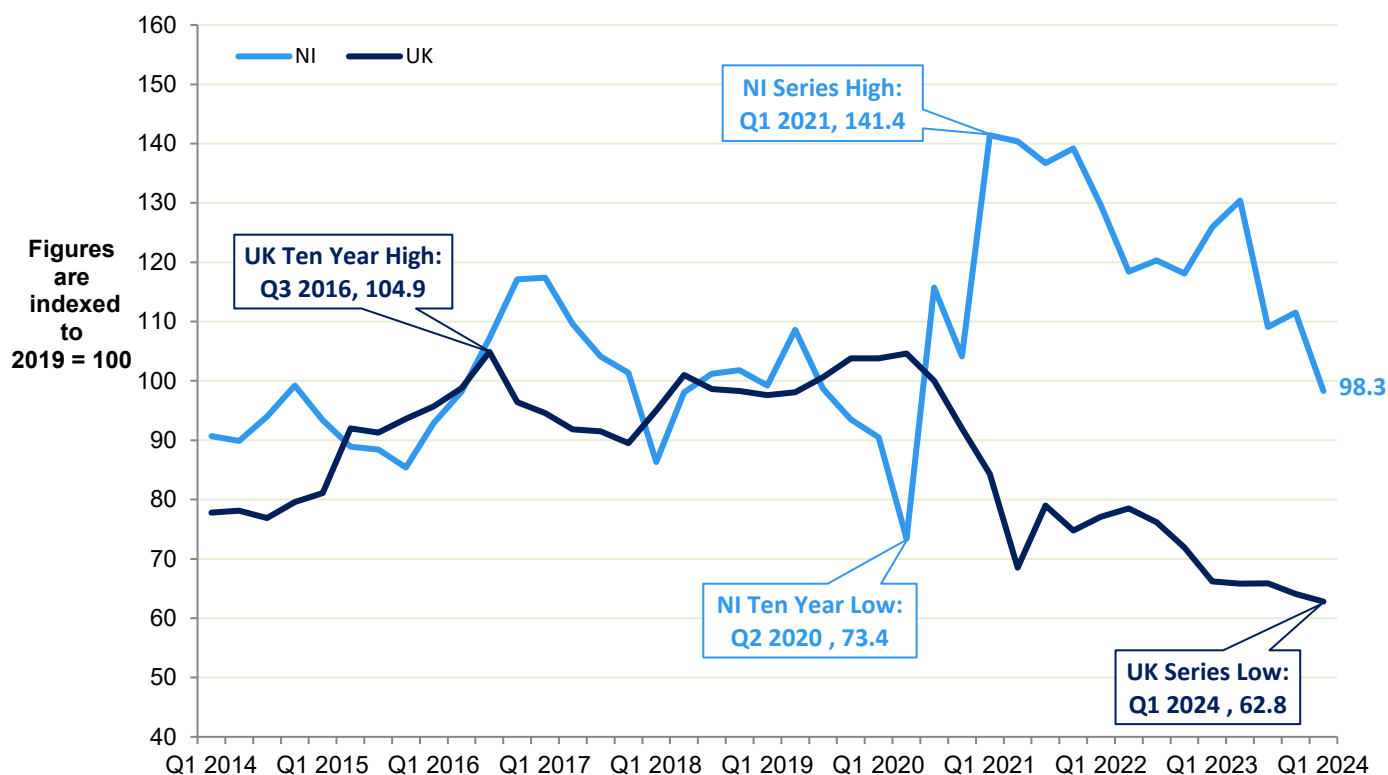
2.4 Mining and quarrying

Mining and quarrying (SIC07 Section B) (weight = 1.9% of IOP): This section covers the extraction of minerals occurring naturally as solids (coal and ores), liquids (petroleum) or gases (natural gas). Extraction can be achieved by different methods such as underground or surface mining, well operation, seabed mining, etc.

Key findings

- The NI seasonally adjusted figures show decreases of 11.8% over the quarter, 21.9% over the year and 6.9% on a rolling four quarters basis.
- The UK seasonally adjusted figures reached a series low in Quarter 1 2024, showing decreases of 2.0% over the quarter, 5.1% over the year and 11.7% on a rolling four quarters basis.
- NI output is 30.5% below the series high recorded in Quarter 1 2021.
- NI output is 34.0% above its ten year low (Quarter 2 2020) and 44.6% above the series low (Quarter 1 2005).

Figure 2.4 Mining and quarrying, NI & UK, Q1 2014 – Q1 2024



[Download Q1 2024 Data](#)

Both the NI and the UK indices have shown volatility in the Mining and quarrying sector. Since Quarter 3 2016 NI has generally performed better than the UK in this sector. In NI this sector is currently 5.1% above the pre-pandemic level reported in Quarter 4 2019, whereas in the UK this sector is 39.5% below its Quarter 4 2019 level and has reached a series low.

3 Background Notes

Further Information

Data published within this bulletin is available to download from our [website](#) and the new NISRA [Data Portal](#).

Detailed [background information](#) documents and [methodology](#) information have also been published online for users to refer to for more detailed information on the IOP.

Data collection and estimates

The following provides an overview of the IOP coverage response rates for Quarter 1 2024, compared to overall median rates for 2023, 2022 and 2021:

	Quarter 1 2024	2023 (median)*	2022 (median)*	2021 (median)*
Coverage response rate (returned turnover)	64%	68%	66%	69%

*median value achieved at IOP database closure of quarters 1 to 4 for 2021, 2022 and 2023

Changes to recent releases

Quarter	Change	Detail
Quarter 2 2023	Seasonal Adjustment Review	Following the seasonal adjustment review conducted in July 2023 changes have been made to some regressors and models used to seasonally adjust time series using X13 ARIMA SEATS.
Quarter 2 2023	Revised 2019 GVA	Figures in this publication have been weighted using the revised Northern Ireland 2019 GVA which became available on 25 April 2023.
Quarter 3 2023	Updated 2019 GVA Reference Year, and methodological changes.	The UK National Accounts, The Blue Book: 2023 was published on 31 October 2023. For the third consecutive year the reference year and base year have remained at 2019 due to the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. There were methodological changes made by the ONS detailed here, that resulted in greater revision to the UK data than expected.
Quarter 3 2023	Outputs Consultation	Following a public consultation on NISRA outputs, the Index of Production bulletin has been streamlined.
Quarter 1 2024	Revised 2019 GVA	Figures in this publication have been weighted using the revised Northern Ireland 2019 GVA which became available on 24 April 2024.

Next publication

The next bulletin is due to be published on 12 September 2024.

If you require any further information, please contact:

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