



Northern Ireland Quarterly Index of Production

Quarter 1 (January - March) 2021

Theme: Economy Frequency: Quarterly

Geographical Area: Northern Ireland

Date: 17 June 2021

Introduction

The quarterly Index of Production (IOP) provides a timely indicator of growth in the output of the production industries in Northern Ireland. IOP indices, along with other published quarterly data and unpublished agricultural output data, are used to generate the **Northern Ireland Composite Economic Index (NICEI)**. The NICEI is an experimental quarterly measure of economic activity in NI.

Key Points

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. All estimates are compared to the revised Quarter 4 2020 and Quarter 1 2020 estimates.

- The NI IOP decreased by 1.1% over the quarter (January March) and increased by 2.8% over the year.
- The UK IOP reported decreases of 0.4% over the quarter and 1.6% over the year.
- When the most recent four quarters are compared to the previous four quarters, the NI production sector decreased by 6.1% while the UK production sector decreased by 7.3%.
- The quarterly decrease in production output of 1.1% has been driven by decreases in two of the four main sectors: Manufacturing (1.4%) and Water supply, sewerage and waste management (Inc. recycling) (6.8%). This was offset by increases in Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply (2.3%) and Mining and quarrying (29.2%).
- The annual increase in NI production output of 2.8% was driven by increases in three of the four main sectors: Manufacturing (2.0%); Water supply, sewerage and waste management (Inc. recycling) (0.8%) and Mining and quarrying (52.1%) and was partially offset by a decrease in Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply (0.8%).

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NATIONAL STATISTICS STATUS

National Statistics status means that our statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value, and it is our responsibility to maintain compliance with these standards.

These statistics were designated as National Statistics on 5th August 2011 following a full <u>Index of Production assessment</u> against the UK <u>Code of Practice for Statistics</u>.

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 <u>business burden</u> 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.

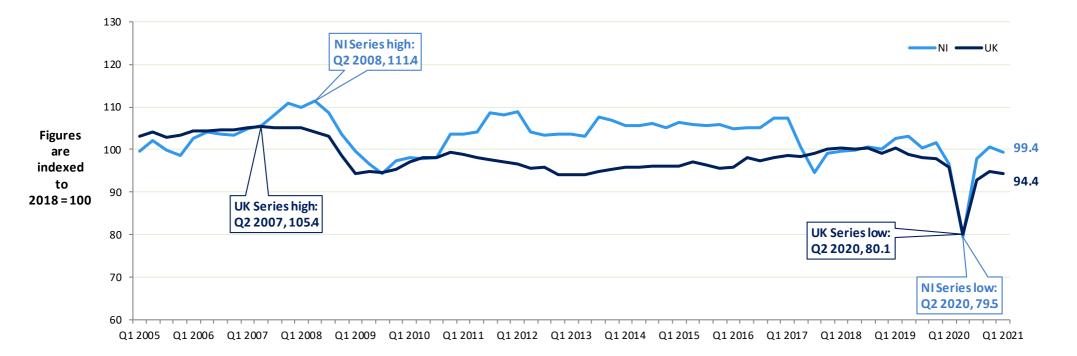
1 Summary of Index of Production

Change in IOP

The seasonally adjusted estimate for the NI IOP for Quarter 1 2021 showed:

- a decrease of 1.1% over the quarter from the Quarter 4 2020 revised estimate;
- an increase of 2.8% over the year from the Quarter 1 2020 revised estimate;
- a decrease of 6.1% when the most recent four quarters are compared to the previous four quarters.

Figure 1.1 IOP, NI & UK, Q1 2005 - Q1 2021



Download Figure 1.1 data

Commentary

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and subsequent measures taken to reduce the transmission of the virus impacted on the economy in 2020 and 2021. Throughout Quarter 1 2021, businesses in Northern Ireland were subject to a number of restrictions which impacted on their ability to operate. Further information can be found on **NI Direct**.

Output in the NI Production sector decreased in real terms by 1.1% over the first quarter of 2021. The UK Production sector reported a decrease of 0.4% over the same period. There was an increase over the year in NI (2.8%) and a decrease over the year in the UK (1.6%).

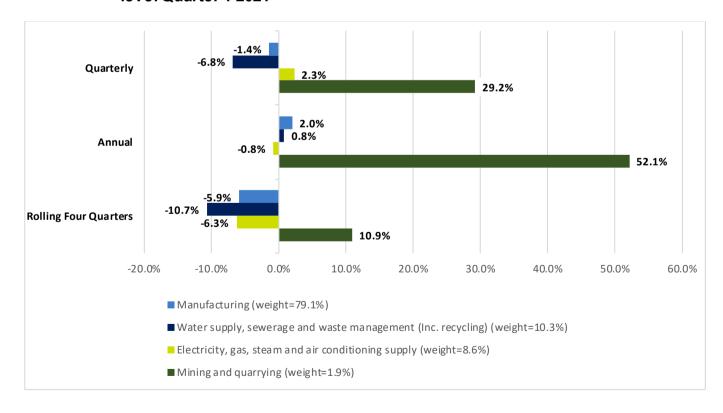
NI output is 25.0% above the series low (Quarter 2 2020), 10.8% below its series high (Quarter 2 2008) and 8.7% below its ten year high (Quarter 1 2012).

Comparing the seasonally adjusted NI IOP from Quarter 4 2020 to Quarter 1 2021, two of the four main sectors showed decreases, with the largest decrease of 6.8% reported in the Water supply, sewerage and waste management (Inc. recycling) sector. The largest increase over the quarter was reported by the Mining and quarrying sector (29.2%).

Comparing the seasonally adjusted NI IOP from Quarter 1 2020 to Quarter 1 2021, three of the four main sectors showed increases, with the largest increase of 52.1% reported in the Mining and quarrying sector. Only the Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply sector reported a decrease (0.8%).

Comparing the seasonally adjusted NI IOP for Quarter 2 2020 to Quarter 1 2021 with Quarter 2 2019 to Quarter 1 2020, three of the four main sectors reported a decrease, with the largest decrease of 10.7% reported in the Water supply, sewerage and waste management (Inc. recycling) sector. Only the Mining and quarrying sector reported an increase of 10.9%.

Figure 1.2 Quarterly, annual and rolling four quarters changes in IOP at sector level Quarter 1 2021¹



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¹ For further information on weights see Regional GVA information on page 19

Context

The IOP is an important short-term measure of change in the output of the production sector of the economy. The contents of this report will be of interest to government policymakers, Members of the Legislative Assembly, the business community, economic commentators, academics and members of the general public with an interest in the NI economy. A <u>summary of recent uses</u> is available on the NISRA website.

The Department for the Economy (DfE) <u>Economic Commentary</u> provides an overview of the NI 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** dashboard on the **Economic and Labour Market Statistics (ELMS) section** of the NISRA website.

The IOP is published on a Standard Industrial Classification 2007 (SIC07) basis. IOP data prior to Quarter 2 2011 were collected on a SIC03 basis and have been converted to approximate the SIC07 coverage. Volatility can arise when businesses inform NISRA of SIC code changes via business surveys, the Office of National Statistics (ONS) or HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC). This new information helps to improve the industry estimates of services output but can add volatility to quarterly and annual changes.

The background notes (Section 4) provide information on the methodology used to produce the statistics, as well as information on the quality and accuracy of the data. This bulletin contains results for the production sector as a whole, for Manufacturing; Water supply, sewerage and waste management (Inc. recycling); Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply and Mining and quarrying sectors. Production sector series are seasonally adjusted (unless otherwise stated) on a 2018=100 basis using X-13 ARIMA SEATS, giving data up to the most recent available quarter (Quarter 1 2021).

Comparative UK data, produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), are presented where these are available. The <u>latest UK IOP results</u> can be found on the ONS website.

This publication provides three measures of growth for the index.

- 1. **Quarter-on-quarter change** provides the most recent measure of how the sector is changing. It is appropriate to compare consecutive quarters as the indices are seasonally adjusted to remove the effects of changes in output as a result of the time of the year;
- 2. Year-on-year change compares the current quarter with the same quarter one year ago; and
- 3. **Rolling four quarter change** compares the most recent twelve months with the twelve months before. This comparison is useful for identifying changes in output over a longer time period than the other two approaches.

Revisions

Results are provisional and subject to revision which can be made for a variety of reasons. The most common include late responses to surveys, estimates being replaced by actual data, revisions to seasonal adjustment factors, methodological changes and changes to business classifications. Volatility also arises when businesses inform NISRA of SIC code changes via business surveys, ONS or HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC). This new information helps to improve the estimates of growth each quarter but also adds volatility to quarterly and annual changes. Only rarely are there avoidable 'errors' such as human or system failures, and such mistakes are made quite clear when they do occur.

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic impacted on the data collection and the validation of business data, which are collected on the Quarterly Business Survey. As a result, estimates for Quarter 1 2021 may be subject to higher revisions than normal over the coming quarters.

2 Production output by sector

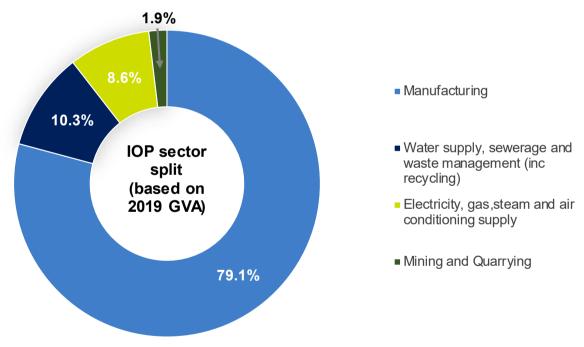
Output: Turnover, defined as the value of total sales generated from all NI based activity, excluding VAT. Turnover is rounded to the nearest thousand and is then deflated and seasonally adjusted.

2.1 Key findings

- The IOP decreased by 1.1% over the quarter, increased by 2.8% over the year and decreased by 6.1% on a rolling four quarters basis.
- The quarterly decrease in production output of 1.1% has been driven by decreases in two of the four main sectors: Manufacturing (1.4%) and Water supply, sewerage and waste management (Inc. recycling) (6.8%). This was offset by increases in Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply (2.3%) and Mining and quarrying (29.2%).
- The annual increase in NI production output of 2.8% was driven by increases in three of the four main sectors: Manufacturing (2.0%); Water supply, sewerage and waste management (Inc. recycling) (0.8%) and Mining and quarrying (52.1%) and partially offset by a decrease in Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply (0.8%).

The Production sector is dominated by Manufacturing, which accounts for approximately 79.1% of total production Gross Value Added (GVA) at 2019 prices.

Figure 2.1 IOP sector split (based on 2019 GVA)



^{*}Please note percentage does not tally to 100 due to rounding.

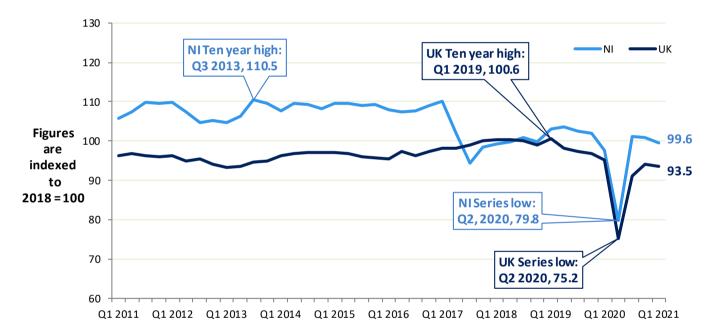
2.2 Manufacturing

Manufacturing sector (SIC07 Section C) - (weight = 79.1% of IOP): Manufacturing involves the transformation of materials into new products (outputs). It is comprised of six subsectors, as shown in Figure 2.1.

Key findings

- The NI seasonally adjusted figures show a decrease of 1.4% over the quarter, an increase of 2.0% over the year and a decrease of 5.9% on a rolling four quarters basis.
- The UK seasonally adjusted figures show decreases of 0.7% over the quarter, 1.7% over the year and 8.6% on a rolling four quarters basis.
- NI output is 9.8% below its highest point recorded (Quarter 3 2013) over the ten year period.
- NI output is 24.8% above the series low recorded in Quarter 2 2020.
- Within manufacturing, three of the six broad subsectors (as shown in Figure 3.1) have decreased over the quarter (See Section 3 on page 12).

Figure 2.2 Manufacturing sector, NI & UK, Q1 2011 - Q1 2021



Download Figure 2.2 data

The NI index has been outperforming the UK in the Manufacturing sector with the exception of the period between Quarter 3 2017 and Quarter 2 2018.

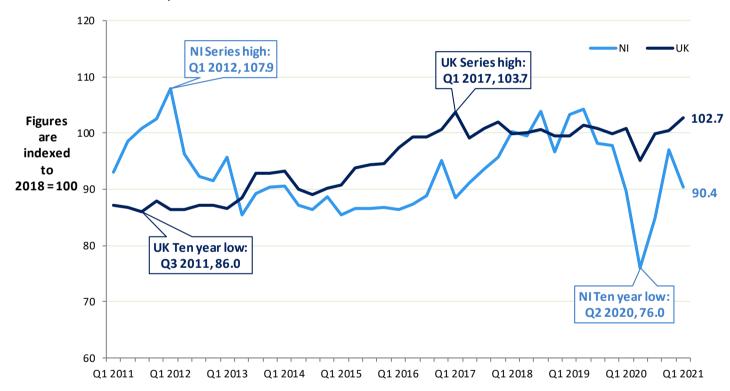
2.3 Water supply, sewerage and waste management (Inc. recycling)

Water supply, sewerage, and waste management (Inc. recycling) (SIC07 Section E) (weight = 10.3% 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 show a decrease of 6.8% over the quarter, an increase of 0.8% over the year and a decrease of 10.7% on a rolling four quarters basis.
- The UK reports increases of 2.2% over the quarter and 1.9% over the year, with a decrease of 1.1% on a rolling four quarters basis.
- NI output is 18.9% above the ten year low recorded in Quarter 2 2020 and is 27.7% above the series low recorded in Quarter 3 2005.
- The NI estimate is 16.3% below the series high recorded in Quarter 1 2012.

Figure 2.3 Water supply, sewerage and waste management (Inc. recycling), NI & UK, Q1 2011 – Q1 2021



Download Figure 2.3 data

The UK index has been performing better than the NI index in this sector since Quarter 2 2013, with the exception of Quarter 1 2018, Quarter 3 2018 and the period between Quarter 1 2019 to Quarter 2 2019. NI output has seen a substantially larger decrease in 2020 than UK output.

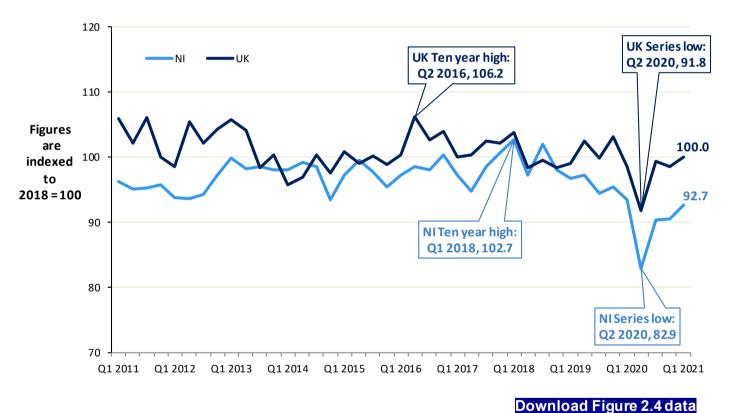
2.4 Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply

Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply (SIC07 Section D) (weight = 8.6% 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 show an increase of 2.3% over the quarter and decreases of 0.8% over the year and 6.3% on a rolling four quarters basis.
- The seasonally adjusted figures for the UK show increases of 1.4% over the quarter, 1.5% over the year and a decrease of 3.5% on a rolling four quarters basis.
- The NI estimate is 11.2% below the series high recorded in Quarter 1 2010 and 9.8% below the ten year high recorded in Quarter 1 2018.
- NI output is 11.8% above the series low recorded in Quarter 2 2020.

Figure 2.4 Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply, NI & UK, Q1 2011 – Q1 2021



The NI and UK indices have followed similar trends in the Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply sector throughout the series. The UK index has generally outperformed the NI index in this sector with the exception of a few quarters. NI output saw a more substantial decrease in early 2020 than the UK index.

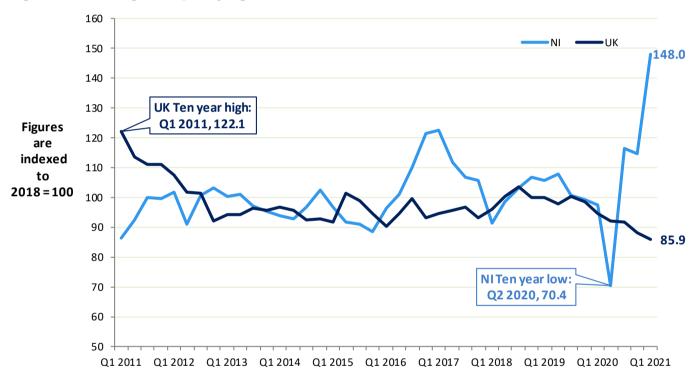
2.5 Mining and quarrying

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 increases of 29.2% over the quarter, 52.1% over the year and 10.9% on a rolling four quarters basis.
- The UK seasonally adjusted figures show decreases of 2.5% over the quarter, 9.0% over the year and 8.5% on a rolling four quarters basis. This quarter is a series low for the UK in this sector.
- NI output has reached a series high in this sector.
- NI output is 110.2% above its ten year low (Quarter 2 2020) and 110.7% above the series low (Quarter 1 2005).

Figure 2.5 Mining and quarrying, NI & UK, Q1 2011 - Q1 2021



Download Figure 2.5 data

Both the NI and the UK indices have shown volatility in the Mining and quarrying sector. Since Quarter 1 2016 NI has generally performed better than the UK in this sector with the exception of the period between Quarter 1 2018 and Quarter 3 2018 and Quarter 2 2020.

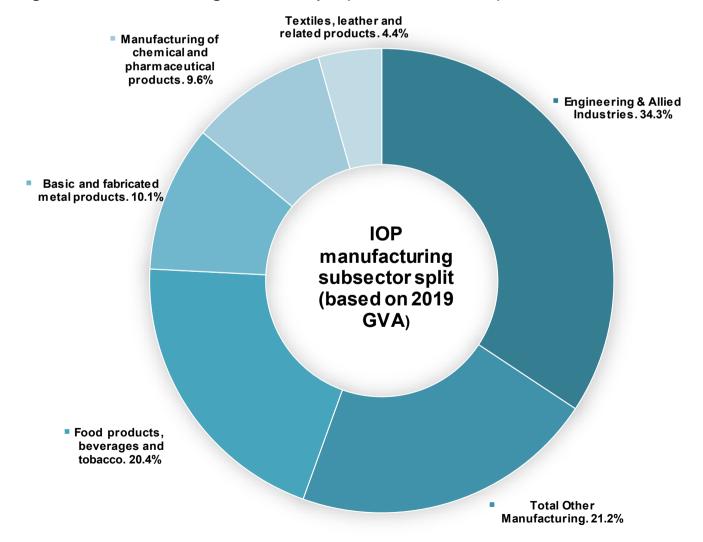
3 Manufacturing subsectors

Key findings

- The quarterly decrease in Manufacturing output (1.4%) was driven by decreases in three of the six main subsectors: Engineering and allied industries (5.2%); Manufacture of textiles, leather and related products (4.7%) and Manufacture of chemical and pharmaceutical products (4.2%).
- This decrease is offset by increases in the Basic metals and fabricated metal products (10.1%); Total other manufacturing (9.8%) and Food products, beverages and tobacco (2.3%) subsectors.
- Over the year the increase in Manufacturing (2.0%) was driven by increases in five of the six main subsectors: Manufacture of chemical and pharmaceutical products (26.9%); Manufacture of textiles, leather and related products (17.2%); Total other manufacturing (9.7%); Food products, beverages and tobacco (5.3%) and Basic metals and fabricated metal products (0.9%).
- These increases were offset by a decrease in the Engineering and allied industries (12.5%) subsector.

Over one third of the Manufacturing sector is made up by the Engineering & Allied Industries subsector, which accounts for 34.3% of total Manufacturing production Gross Value Added (GVA) at 2019 prices.

Figure 3.1 Manufacturing subsector split (based on 2019 GVA)

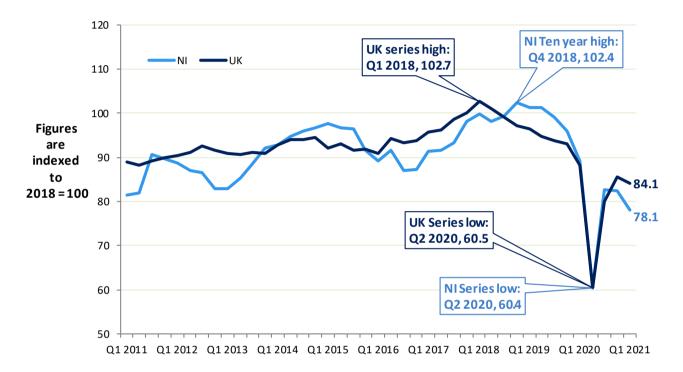


3.2 Engineering and allied industries (weight=27.1% of IOP, 34.3% of Manufacturing)²

Key findings

- NI seasonally adjusted figures show decreases over the quarter (5.2%), over the year (12.5%) and on a rolling four quarters basis (21.3%).
- The UK estimate shows decreases of 1.6% over the quarter, 4.8% over the year and 16.1% on a rolling four quarters basis.
- NI output is 29.2% above its series low (Quarter 2 2020).
- NI output is 23.7% below its highest point recorded in the last ten years (Quarter 4 2018).

Figure 3.2 Engineering and allied industries, NI & UK, Q1 2011 - Q1 2021



Download Figure 3.2 data

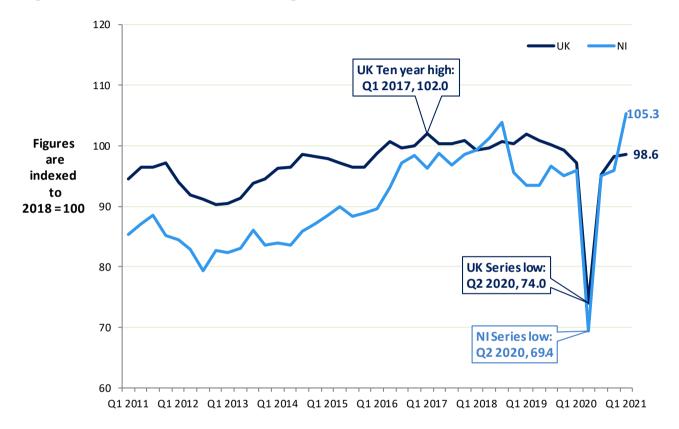
² Please note that estimates at subsector level can fluctuate due to sampling variability and also due to businesses moving industrial classification.

3.3 Total Other Manufacturing (weight=16.8% of IOP, 21.2% of Manufacturing)³

Key findings

- Seasonally adjusted figures show increases of 9.8% over the quarter, 9.7% over the year and a decrease of 4.1% on a rolling four quarters basis.
- The UK reported an increase over the quarter (0.4%) and over the year (1.5%) but a decrease on a rolling four quarters basis (7.9%).
- NI output has reached a ten year high in this subsector.
- NI output is 51.7% above its series low (Quarter 2 2020).

Figure 3.3 Total Other Manufacturing, NI & UK, Q1 2011 - Q1 2021



Download Figure 3.3 data

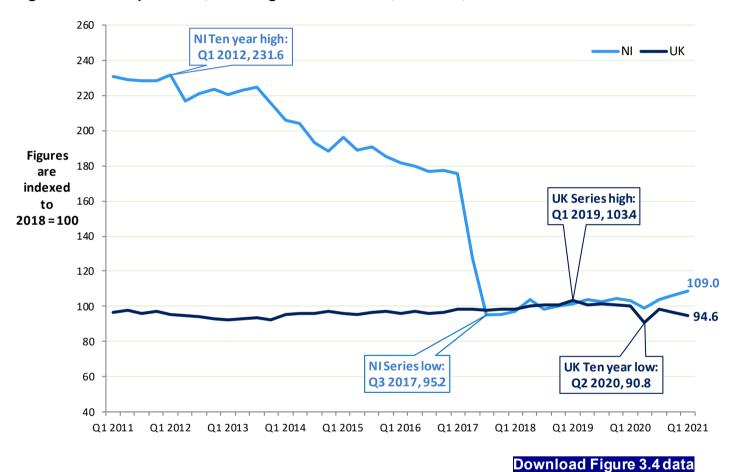
³ Please note that estimates at subsector level can fluctuate due to sampling variability and also due to businesses moving industrial classification.

3.4 Food products, beverages and tobacco (weight=16.1% of IOP, 20.3% of Manufacturing)⁴

Key findings

- NI output increased by 2.3% over the quarter, 5.3% over the year and 0.9% on a rolling four quarters basis.
- The UK decreased by 1.9% over the quarter, 5.6% over the year and 5.8% on a rolling four quarters basis.
- NI output is estimated to be 14.5% above the series low (Quarter 3 2017).
- NI output remains 53.0% below its ten year high (Quarter 1 2012).

Figure 3.4 Food products, beverages and tobacco, NI & UK, Q1 2011 - Q1 2021



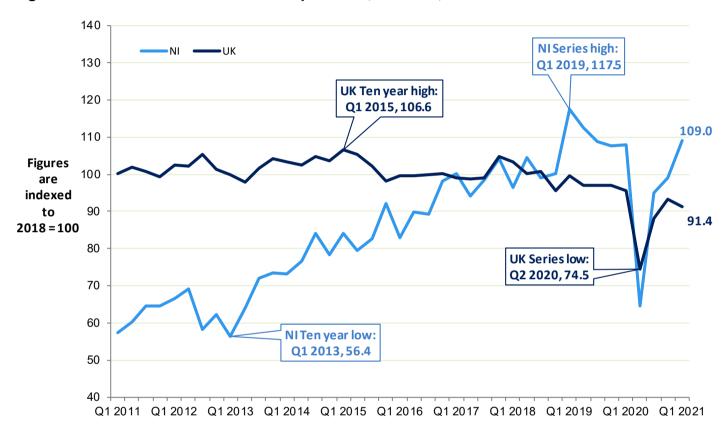
⁴ Please note that estimates at subsector level can fluctuate due to sampling variability and also due to businesses moving industrial classification.

3.5 Basic and fabricated metal products (weight=8.0% of IOP, 10.2% of Manufacturing)⁵

Key findings

- The NI seasonally adjusted figures show increases of 10.1% over the quarter, 0.9% over the year and a decrease of 15.8% on a rolling four quarters basis.
- UK seasonally adjusted figures show decreases of 2.1% over the quarter, 4.4% over the year and 10.1% on a rolling four quarters basis.
- NI output is 7.3% below its peak (Quarter 1 2019).
- NI output is 93.3% above the ten year low (Quarter 1 2013).

Figure 3.5 Basic and fabricated metal products, NI & UK, Q1 2011 - Q1 2021



Download Figure 3.5 data

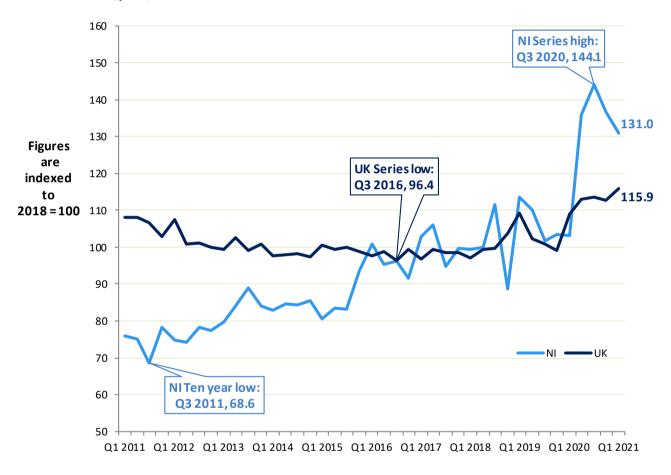
⁵ Please note that estimates at subsector level can fluctuate due to sampling variability and also due to businesses moving industrial classification.

3.6 Manufacturing of chemical and pharmaceutical products (weight=7.6% of IOP, 9.7% of Manufacturing)⁶

Key findings

- The NI seasonally adjusted figures have decreased by 4.2% over the quarter, increased by 26.9% over the year and by 30.8% on a rolling four quarters basis.
- The UK figures show increases of 2.9% over the quarter, 6.3% over the year and 10.7% on a rolling four quarters basis. The UK has reached a ten year high in this subsector.
- NI output is 9.1% below its series high (Quarter 3 2020).
- NI output is 91.0% above the ten year low point (Quarter 3 2011).

Figure 3.6 Manufacturing of chemical and pharmaceutical products, NI & UK, Q1 2011 – Q1 2021



Download Figure 3.6 data

⁶ Please note that estimates at subsector level can fluctuate due to sampling variability and also due to businesses moving industrial classification.

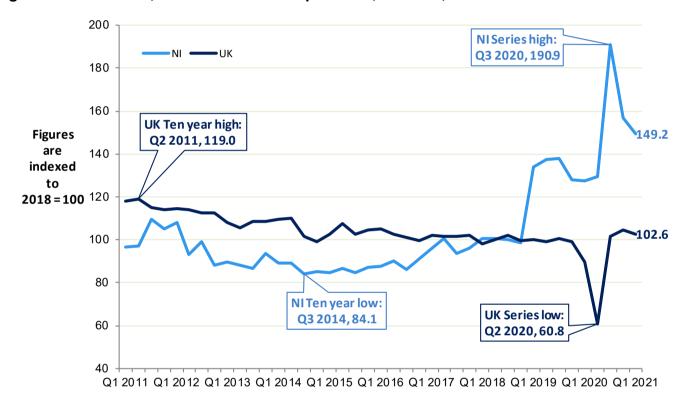
The Manufacturing of chemical and pharmaceutical products subsector has been seasonally adjusted for the first time this quarter. The UK data has also been seasonally adjusted.

3.7 Textiles, leather and related products (weight=3.5% of IOP, 4.4% of Manufacturing)⁷

Key findings

- The NI seasonally adjusted figures show a decrease over the quarter (4.7%) and increases over the year (17.2%) and on a rolling four quarters basis (18.0%).
- UK seasonally adjusted figures show a decrease over the quarter (1.9%), an increase over the year (14.3%) and a decrease on a rolling four quarters basis (4.9%).
- NI output is 21.8% below its series high (Quarter 3 2020).
- NI output is 77.4% above the ten year low (Quarter 3 2014).

Figure 3.7 Textiles, leather and related products, NI & UK, Q1 2011 - Q1 2021



Download Figure 3.7 data

⁷ Please note that estimates at subsector level can fluctuate due to sampling variability and also due to businesses moving industrial classification.

4 Background notes

Background

The quarterly IOP provides a measure of change in the output of the production industries in NI (this is defined as SIC07 sections B to E). In 2019 these production industries accounted for 16% of Regional GVA. For further information please see the **Methodology for the NI Index of Production (IOP)**.

Impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) on data collection and estimates

Coronavirus impacted on the data collection and the validation of turnover data, which are collected on the Quarterly Business Survey.

The following provides an overview of the coverage response rates for 2019 and 2020 compared to Quarter 1 2021:

Table 1: Coverage response rates

	Quarter 1 2021	2020 (me dian*)	2019 (me dian*)
Coverage response rate	70%	60%	80%
(returned turnover)			

^{*}median value achieved at IOP database closure of guarters 1 to 4 2019 and 2020

Coronavirus has resulted in a decrease in coverage response rates in Quarter 1 2021 when compared to 2019 figures, primarily due to the restrictions in place for businesses. As a result, the estimates for Quarter 1 2021 may be subject to higher revisions than normal over the coming quarters. Comparisons of provisional Quarter 1 2021 estimates at lower industry levels in particular should be treated with caution. However, coverage response rates in Quarter 1 2021 have increased when compared to 2020 figures.

Gross Value Added (GVA)

From Quarter 4 2017 weighting has been carried out using the balanced GVA approach which balances the income and production approaches to measuring the economy into a single estimate. For more information please see <u>Regional GVA information</u>. Figures in this publication are weighted using 2019 GVA which became available on 26th May 2021.

Deflation

All series, unless otherwise quoted, are measured at a constant market price (2018 = 100). Deflators adjust the value series to take out the effect of price change to give the volume series. The deflators used in this bulletin were provided by ONS on 8th June 2021. Details on the changes to the ONS deflators methodology can be found on the ONS Website.

Seasonal Adjustment Review

Following the seasonal adjustment review conducted in March 2021 changes have been made to some regressors and models used to seasonally adjust (where applicable) time series using X13 ARIMA SEATS. This improves the reliability of results. Further details on this review and other methodological changes implemented in June 2021 are available on the NISRA website.

Table 2: Changes to recent releases

Quarter	Change	Detail
Quarter 2 2018	NI Index Rebased to 2016	Figures rebased to 2016 = 100 in line with ONS.
Quarter 4 2018	NI Index of Manufacturing Productivity removed from the Index of Production report.	We are currently reviewing the methodology as part of a wider review of productivity.
Quarter 1 2019	Seasonal Adjustment Review	Following the seasonal adjustment review conducted in November 2018 changes have been made to some regressors and models used to seasonally adjust (where applicable) time series using X13 ARIMA SEATS.
Quarter 4 2019	2018 GVA	Figures in this publication are weighted using 2018 GVA which became available on 19th December 2019.
Quarter 3 2020	ONS Deflation Methodology Change	As recommended by Eurostat, previous method of rebasing for price statistics was changed to an <u>annual chain-linked</u> <u>business price methodology.</u>
Quarter 3 2020	NI Index Rebased to 2018	Figures rebased to 2018 = 100 in line with ONS. For further information on this please see the Quarter 3 2020 Rebasing Notice.
Quarter 1 2021	Seasonal Adjustment Review	Following the seasonal adjustment review conducted in March 2021 changes have been made to some regressors and models used to seasonally adjust (where applicable) time series using X13 ARIMA SEATS.
Quarter 1 2021	2019 GVA	Figures in this publication are weighted using 2019 GVA which became available on 26th May 2021.

Publications policy

All ELMS publications are available to download free of charge from the <u>ELMS section of the NISRA</u> <u>website</u>. The IOP bulletin and tables from the current publication, which includes all the data from the start of the series in 2005, are available in Excel and Open Document format to download from the <u>IOP</u> <u>section of the NISRA website</u>.

Future IOP publications are due to be published on the same day as the Index of Services in March, June, September and December of each year. The <u>ELMS Publication Schedule</u> is available on the NISRA website.

Next publication

The next bulletin is due to be published on 16 September 2021.

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