

17th March 2020

Northern Ireland Quarterly Employment Survey

Theme: Labour Market

Frequency: Quarterly

Geographical Area: Northern Ireland

Key Points

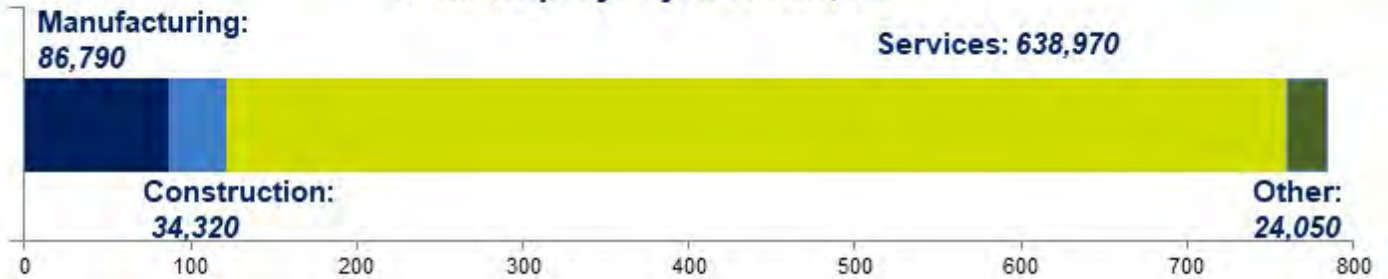
Employee jobs estimates are calculated from the Quarterly Employment Survey (QES) aspect of the Quarterly Business Survey (QBS). The QES has a sample size of approximately 6,000 and covers all employers with 25 or more employees, all public sector employers, all businesses with more than one industry activity and a representative sample of smaller firms.

- The number of (seasonally adjusted) employee jobs in December 2019 was estimated at a record high of 784,140. This was an increase of 1,790 jobs over the quarter and 10,730 jobs over the year. Neither the quarterly nor the annual changes in employee jobs were found to be statistically significant.
- Construction was the only broad industry sector to experience a decrease in employee jobs over the year, although this decrease was small at 0.2% (-50 jobs).
- The numbers of (seasonally adjusted) employee jobs in the services (638,970 jobs) and other (24,050 jobs) sectors reached the highest levels on record in December 2019.
- Private sector jobs decreased marginally over the quarter (-0.1% or -430 jobs) and increased over the year (1.2% or 6,810 jobs).
- Public sector jobs increased over the quarter (0.5% or 960 jobs) and the year (1.8% or 3,710 jobs). There are now 16,510 fewer public sector jobs than the series peak in September 2009 (-7.2%).
- In the last five years, employee jobs have increased by 8.7% (62,450 jobs) and by 13.4% (92,860 jobs) from the low in March 2012.
- The annualised growth rate of 1.7% in 2019 is below that seen in 2018 (2.1%) and 2017 (2.2%).

NISRA Labour Market Statistics

Quarterly Employment Survey – December 2019

Total employee jobs: 784,140



Change on quarter



Change on year



Northern Ireland employee jobs annual change by industry Q4 2018 - Q4 2019

Change by broad industry sector (seasonally adjusted)

Manufacturing



+0.4% (380 jobs)
total jobs 86,790

Construction



-0.2% (-50 jobs)
total jobs 34,320

Services



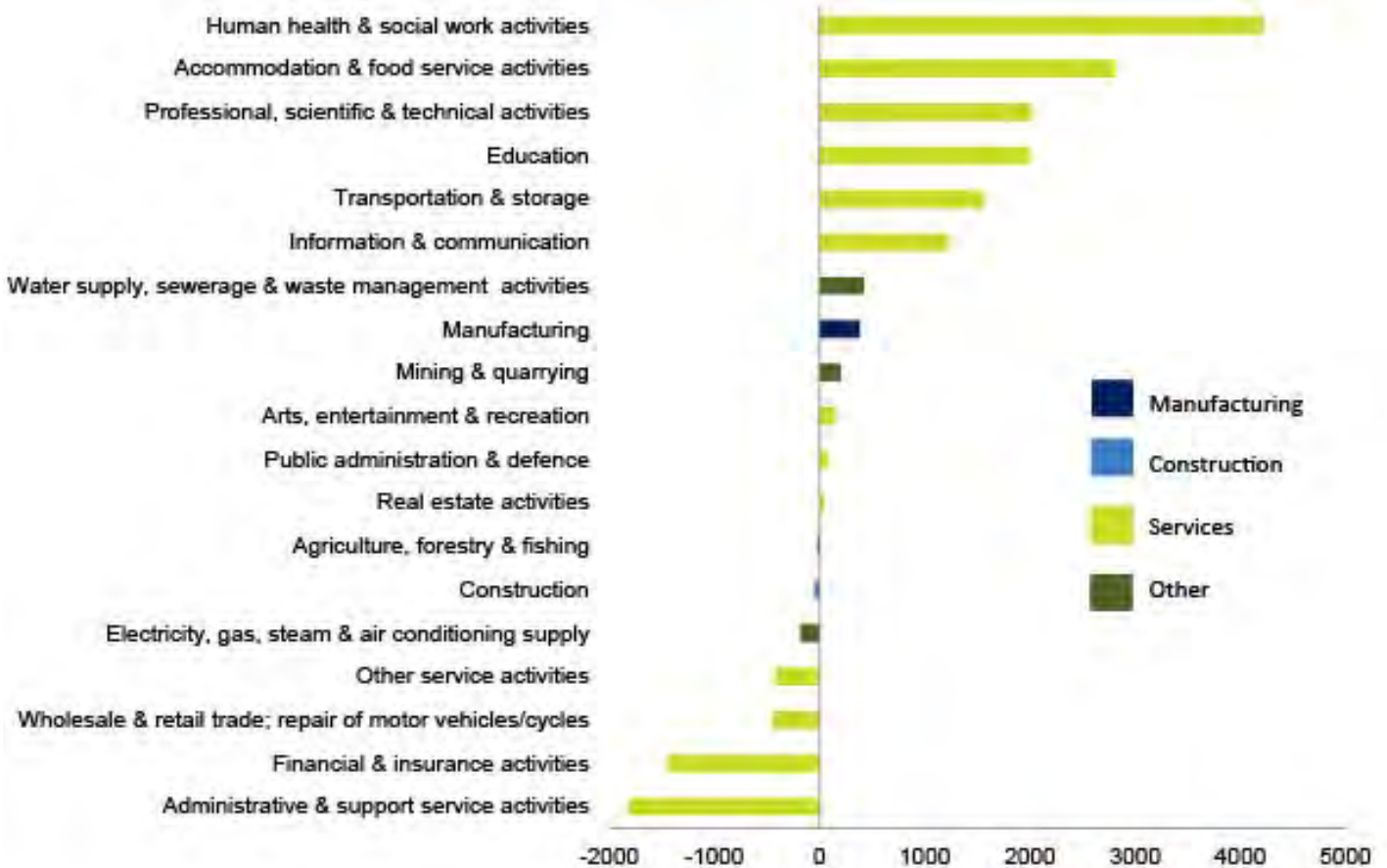
+1.6% (9,986 jobs)
total jobs 630,971

Other



+1.8% (420 jobs)
total jobs 24,050

Change by industry section (seasonally adjusted)



Data published on 17th March 2020 by Economic and Labour Market Statistics Branch (NISRA)

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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 in August 2010 following a full [assessment](#) against the [Code of Practice](#).

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:

- Quantified the level of uncertainty around estimates by providing confidence intervals for headline estimates;
- Removed pre-release access to enhance trustworthiness and also brought the publication date forward as a result;
- [Consulted users](#) at Labour Market User Groups and streamlined outputs in line with the UK series;
- Reduced [business burden](#) by offering the option of online data returns.

1 Summary of Employee Jobs

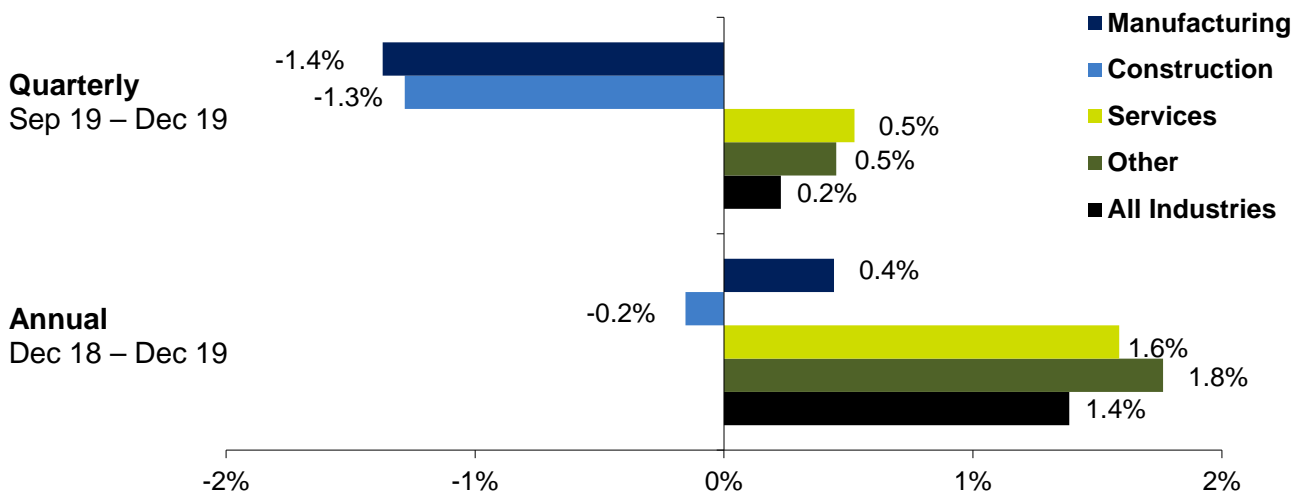
Updated March 2020

Change in employee jobs

The seasonally adjusted employee jobs estimate for Northern Ireland (NI) at December 2019 was 784,140 (+/- 7,780¹). This was:

- an increase of 0.2% (1,790 jobs) over the quarter from the revised September 2019 estimate of 782,350.
- an increase of 1.4% (10,730 jobs) over the year from the revised December 2018 estimate of 773,410.
- Neither the quarterly nor the annual changes in employee jobs were found to be statistically significant.

Fig 1.1 Annual and Quarterly Changes in Employee Jobs at Section Level



[Download in excel](#)

Change over the quarter

Comparing seasonally adjusted December 2019 employee jobs to the revised September 2019 estimates showed:

- a decrease in the manufacturing sector of 1.4% (-1,210 jobs) to 86,790 jobs.
- a decrease in the construction sector of 1.3% (-450 jobs) to 34,320 jobs.
- an increase in the services sector of 0.5% (3,330 jobs) to 638,970 jobs.
- an increase in the other industries sector of 0.5% (110 jobs) to 24,050 jobs.

Change over the year

Comparing seasonally adjusted December 2019 employee jobs to the revised December 2018 estimates showed:

- an increase in the manufacturing sector of 0.4% (380 jobs) to 86,790 jobs.
- a decrease in the construction sector of 0.2% (-50 jobs) to 34,320 jobs.
- an increase in the services sector of 1.6% (9,980 jobs) to 638,970 jobs.
- an increase in the other industries sector of 1.8% (420 jobs) to 24,050 jobs.

¹ Represents 95% confidence interval around estimate. More information is available in the [QES Confidence Intervals User Guidance](#).

Comparing unadjusted data over the year, estimates showed:

- (i) Social work activities without accommodation; (ii) education and (iii) human health activities saw the greatest increases over the year accounting for 33.3% of all increases in employee jobs.
- (i) Manufacture of motor vehicles, trailers and semi-trailers; (ii) financial service activities, except insurance and pension funding and (iii) retail trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles saw the greatest decreases over the year accounting for 45.4% of all decreases in employee jobs.
- Despite the decreases, there was a net increase of 10,730 employee jobs.

Annualised change

Comparing the seasonally adjusted employee jobs data for Quarter 1 2018 – Quarter 4 2018 to Quarter 1 2019 – Quarter 4 2019 showed:

- an increase in the manufacturing sector of 2.2%.
- an increase in the construction sector of 1.2%.
- an increase in the services sector of 1.6%.
- an increase in the other industries sector of 2.4%.

Public / private sector changes

Seasonally adjusted employee jobs estimates for the public and private sectors at December 2019 showed:

- an increase of 0.5% (960 jobs) in the public sector over the quarter and an increase of 1.8% (3,710 jobs) over the year to 211,670 jobs.
- a decrease of 0.1% (-430 jobs) in the private sector over the quarter and an increase of 1.2% (6,810 jobs) over the year to 571,540 jobs.

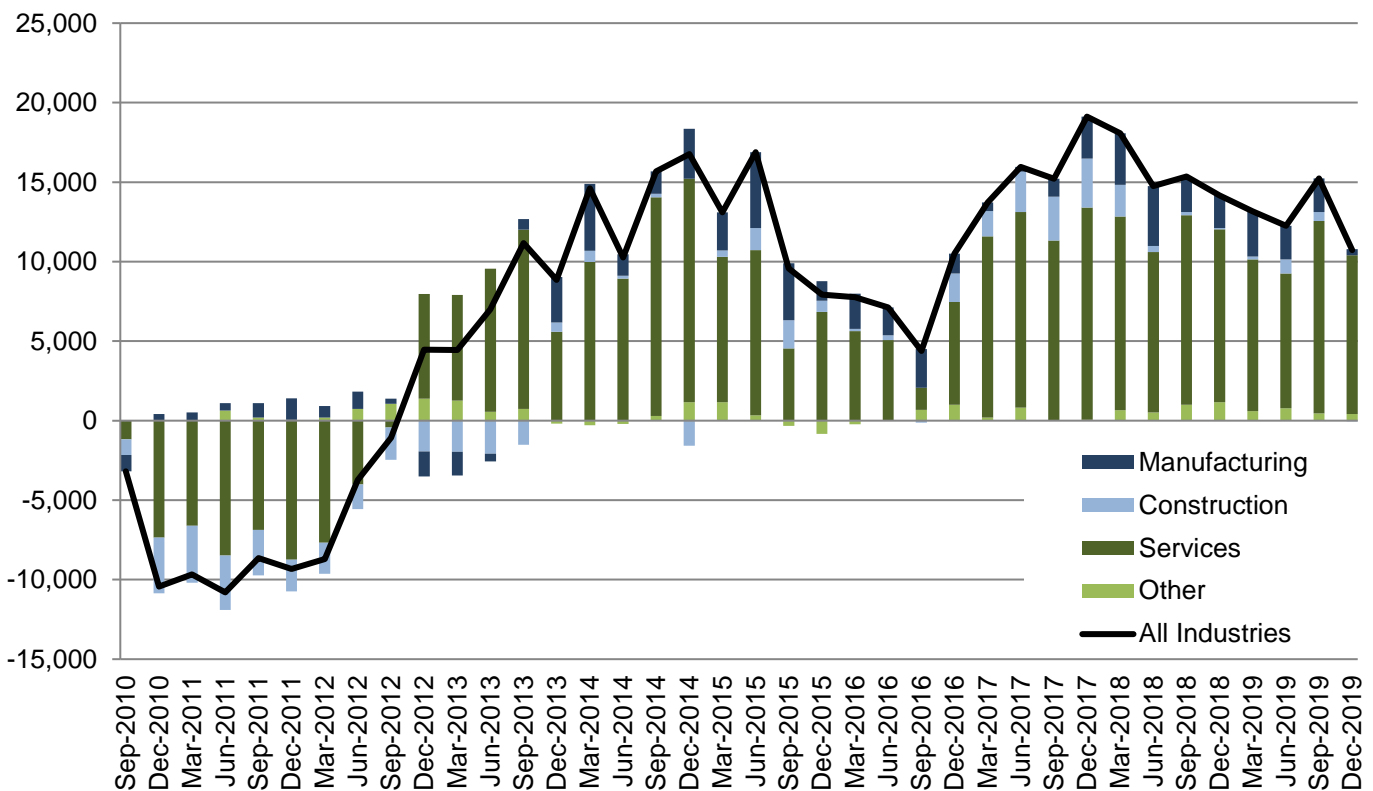
Commentary

Northern Ireland (seasonally adjusted) employee jobs are estimated to have increased over both the quarter (0.2%) and the year (1.4%) to a series high of 784,140 in December 2019; however neither the quarterly nor the annual changes were found to be statistically significant.

The (seasonally adjusted) quarterly increase from September to December 2019 (0.2%) is lower than the increases seen between these two quarters in 2018 (0.8%), 2017 (1.0%) and 2016 (0.5%).

The majority of the growth in (seasonally adjusted) jobs over the quarter was driven by the services sector, with both the manufacturing and construction sectors experiencing decreases in employee jobs over the quarter (-1,210 and -450 jobs respectively). The construction sector was the only sector to experience a decrease in employee jobs over the year, however this was small at 0.2% (-50 jobs).

Fig 1.2 Annual Change in Employee Jobs in NI, September 2010 – December 2019



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When considering the seasonally adjusted series, private sector jobs are estimated to have decreased marginally (-0.1% or -430 jobs) over the quarter to December 2019. This marks the first quarterly decrease in private sector jobs since June 2014. Private sector jobs are estimated to have increased by 1.2% (6,810 jobs) over the year to December 2019. Public sector jobs experienced their seventh consecutive quarter of increase in December 2019; however there are 16,510 fewer public sector jobs (-7.2%) than the series peak in September 2009.

The UK reported a marginal decrease in employee jobs over the quarter (-0.04%) to 30.95 million in December 2019. This marks the first quarter of decrease in UK employee jobs since December 2017.

Context

This bulletin presents data from the Northern Ireland Quarterly Employment Survey (QES), which is conducted by the Economic & Labour Market Statistics (ELMS) Branch of the Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency (NISRA).

The QES provides short-term employee jobs estimates for Northern Ireland and covers all employers with 25 or more employees, all public sector employers, all businesses with more than one industry activity and a representative sample of smaller firms. As it is a sample survey, estimates are subject to sampling variability.

The QES excludes the self-employed, HM Armed Forces, private domestic servants, homeworkers and Training for Success trainees without a contract of employment (non-employed status). The survey collects information on the number of males/females in full-time and part-time employment by business activity and the results are collated into industry classes using the 2007 Standard Industrial Classification (SIC07). The number of jobs are counted rather than the number of persons with jobs. For example, a person holding both a full-time job and part-time job, or someone with two part-time jobs, will be counted twice.

All figures included in the QES are adjusted for seasonality, unless stated otherwise.

Figures from the QES are included in the [Labour Market Report \(LMR\)](#) alongside figures from the Labour Force Survey (LFS), the Claimant Count, the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) and redundancies data.

QES employee jobs are also a component of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) quarterly [workforce jobs estimates](#) for the UK.

QES employee jobs are included 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 website.

Revisions

Results are provisional and subject to revision as more up-to-date data becomes available (e.g. through late returns). Figures can also change as a result of the seasonal adjustment process, methodological changes or changes to classifications.

Further information on using QES employee jobs statistics can be found on the NISRA - Economic and Labour Market Statistics [website](#).

Alternative measures of employment

QES is only one of the measures of employment for Northern Ireland. Other measures are summarised below.

Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES)

The BRES is a statutory business survey based on a larger sample than QES. Quarter 3 of the QES is taken at the same survey date as BRES. Breakdowns of employee jobs by geographical location and industry are available from BRES.

Labour Force Survey (LFS)

The LFS is a household survey carried out by interviewing individuals about their personal circumstances and work. The LFS defines employment as the number of people in work. This differs from the concept of jobs measured by business surveys as a person can have more than one job, and some jobs may be shared by more than one person. LFS employment figures are based on a rolling three month period whereas QES measures the number of jobs on a particular day. LFS employment figures include those who are employed, self-employed, unpaid family workers and those on government supported training programmes.

Farm Census

Figures for the number of employees in agriculture are available separately from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Farm Census. The Census is conducted in June of each year, with the results published in the January of the following year. The QES includes farm census figures in the total number of employee jobs.

Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Employee Bulletin

NICS employee jobs figures are included in the QES employee jobs figures and breakdowns can be found in Table 5.12 on the Economic and Labour Market Statistics [website](#) (in the historical data section).

Further information on NICS employee jobs can be found in the [NICS Employee Bulletin](#). This bulletin provides details on NICS staff numbers on a quarterly basis and provides comparisons with the previous quarter, the wider public sector, as well as a comparison with the previous year. The survey dates for the NICS Employee Bulletin differ from the QES survey dates. As such the figures for the NICS employee jobs may differ.

2 NI Employee Jobs

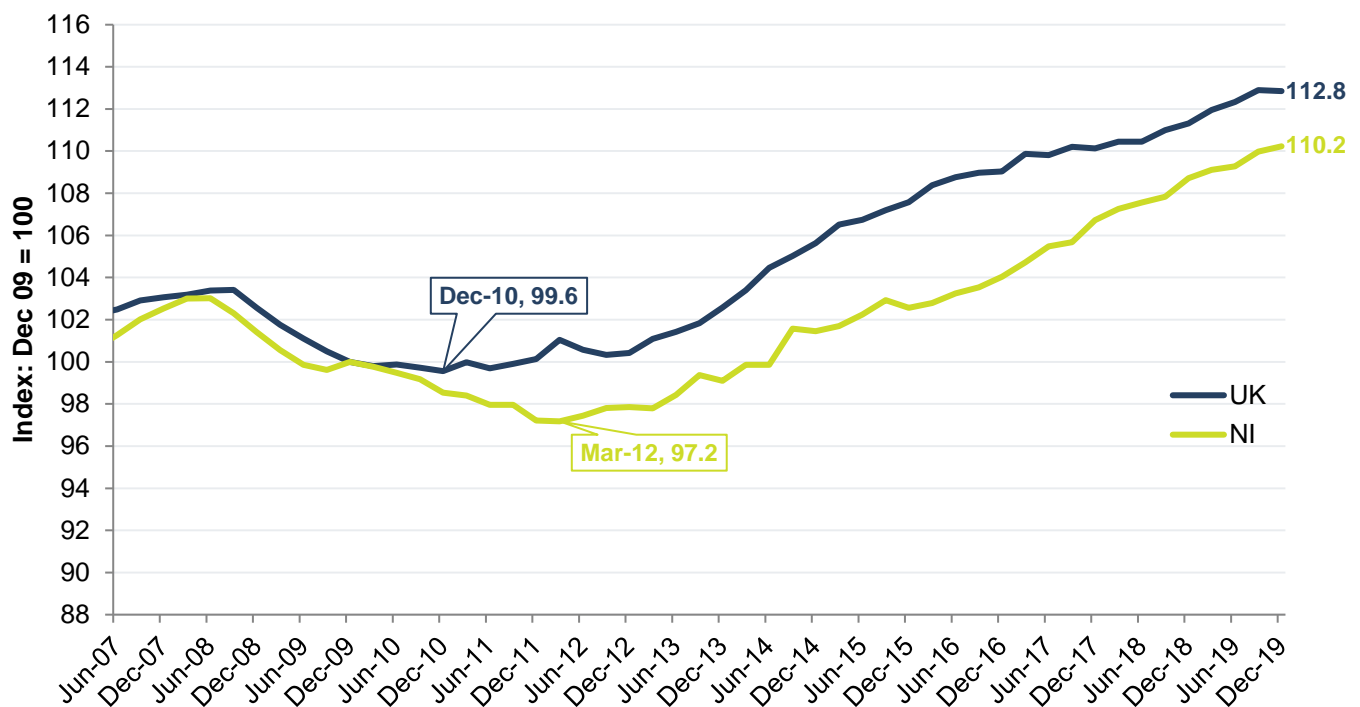
Employee: an employee is defined as anyone aged 16 years or over that is directly paid from a business's payroll for carrying out a full-time or part-time job or being on a training scheme in Northern Ireland.

The QES counts the number of jobs rather than the number of persons with jobs.

Key Findings:

- Employee jobs increased over the quarter by 0.2% (1,790 jobs) and over the year by 1.4% (10,730 jobs) to a series high of 784,140.

Figure 2.1: Index of Employee Jobs, June 2007 – December 2019



[Download in excel](#)

Figures are indexed to December 2009

Figure 2.1 shows estimated seasonally adjusted employee jobs, indexed to allow comparison between NI and the UK. For NI the pre-downturn peak was in June 2008 and the UK in September 2008. The UK reached its lowest point in December 2010, more than a year before the NI low in March 2012. Both NI and the UK have surpassed their pre-downturn peaks; NI jobs are now 7.0% above their June 2008 level while UK jobs are 9.1% above their September 2008 level.

Employee Jobs

The December 2019 seasonally adjusted employee jobs total in NI was estimated at 784,140 which was:

- an increase of 0.2% (1,790 jobs) from the revised September 2019 estimate of 782,350.
- an increase of 1.4% (10,730 jobs) over the year from the revised December 2018 estimate of 773,410.

Employee jobs by broad industry sector

The seasonally adjusted quarterly change consisted of:

- a decrease of 1.4% in the manufacturing sector (-1,210 jobs) to 86,790 jobs.
- a decrease of 1.3% in the construction sector (-450 jobs) to 34,320 jobs.
- an increase of 0.5% in the services sector (3,330 jobs) to 638,970 jobs.
- an increase of 0.5% in the other industries sector (110 jobs) to 24,050 jobs.

The seasonally adjusted annual change consisted of:

- an increase of 0.4% in the manufacturing sector (380 jobs) to 86,790 jobs.
- a decrease of 0.2% in the construction sector (-50 jobs) to 34,320 jobs.
- an increase of 1.6% in the services sector (9,980 jobs) to 638,970 jobs.
- an increase of 1.8% in the other industries sector (420 jobs) to 24,050 jobs.

The number of employee jobs has been increasing since December 2015 in the seasonally adjusted series, with the services sector accounting for three quarters of the growth in employee jobs since this point.

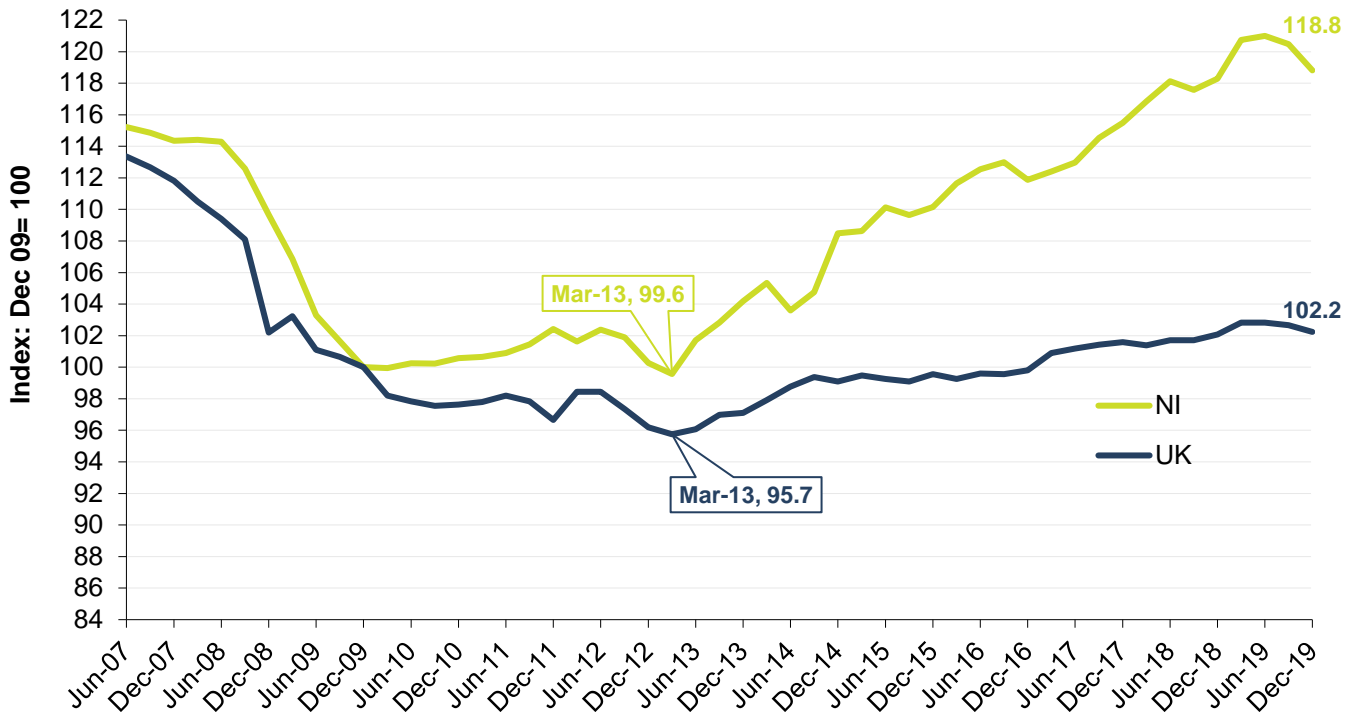
Manufacturing sector

Manufacturing sector: the manufacturing sector contains businesses which produce merchandise for use or sale. It also contains businesses with activity of printing and reproduction of recorded media and businesses that repair and install machinery and equipment. Manufacturing is part of the broader production sector.

Key Findings:

- The manufacturing sector accounted for 11.1% of all employee jobs.
- Seasonally adjusted figures showed a decrease of 1.4% over the quarter and an increase of 0.4% over the year to 86,790 jobs in December 2019.

Figure 2.2: Index of manufacturing employee jobs, June 2007– December 2019



Figures are indexed to December 2009

[Download in excel](#)

The manufacturing sector in NI experienced a period of sharp decline between June 2008 and December 2009 whilst the UK showed a sharp decrease in the number of employee jobs in the manufacturing sector between December 2007 and September 2010. Both NI and the UK reached a series low in March 2013, and NI jobs are now 19.3% above this level.

Key Findings

Seasonally adjusted data showed that the manufacturing sector decreased by 1.4% (-1,210 jobs) over the quarter and increased by 0.4% (380 jobs) over the year to 86,790 jobs.

The following breakdowns are based on 2 digit SIC manufacturing data that have not been adjusted for seasonality. Please note that estimates at 2 digit SIC can fluctuate due to sampling variability and changes to industrial classification.

Changes over the year

Over the year to December 2019 the unadjusted figures showed an increase of 0.4% (350 jobs) in the manufacturing sector. The 3 largest contributors to this increase were:

- an increase of 93.3% (820 jobs) in repair and installation of machinery and equipment.
- an increase of 10.3% (250 jobs) in manufacture of textiles.
- an increase of 3.3% (230 jobs) in manufacture of machinery and equipment n.e.c..

The overall increase was partially offset by decreases in the manufacturing sector; the 3 largest decreases over the year being:

- a decrease of 36.3% (-1,510 jobs) in manufacture of motor vehicles, trailers and semi-trailers.
- a decrease of 4.2% (-230 jobs) in manufacture of rubber and plastic products.
- a decrease of 6.2% (-180 jobs) in manufacture of electrical equipment.

For figures broken down by 2 digit SIC please see table 5.10 on the NISRA - Economic and Labour Market Statistics [website](#).

When using table 5.10 please consider the notes on 'Using 2 Digit SIC Level Data' in section 6 – Further Info.

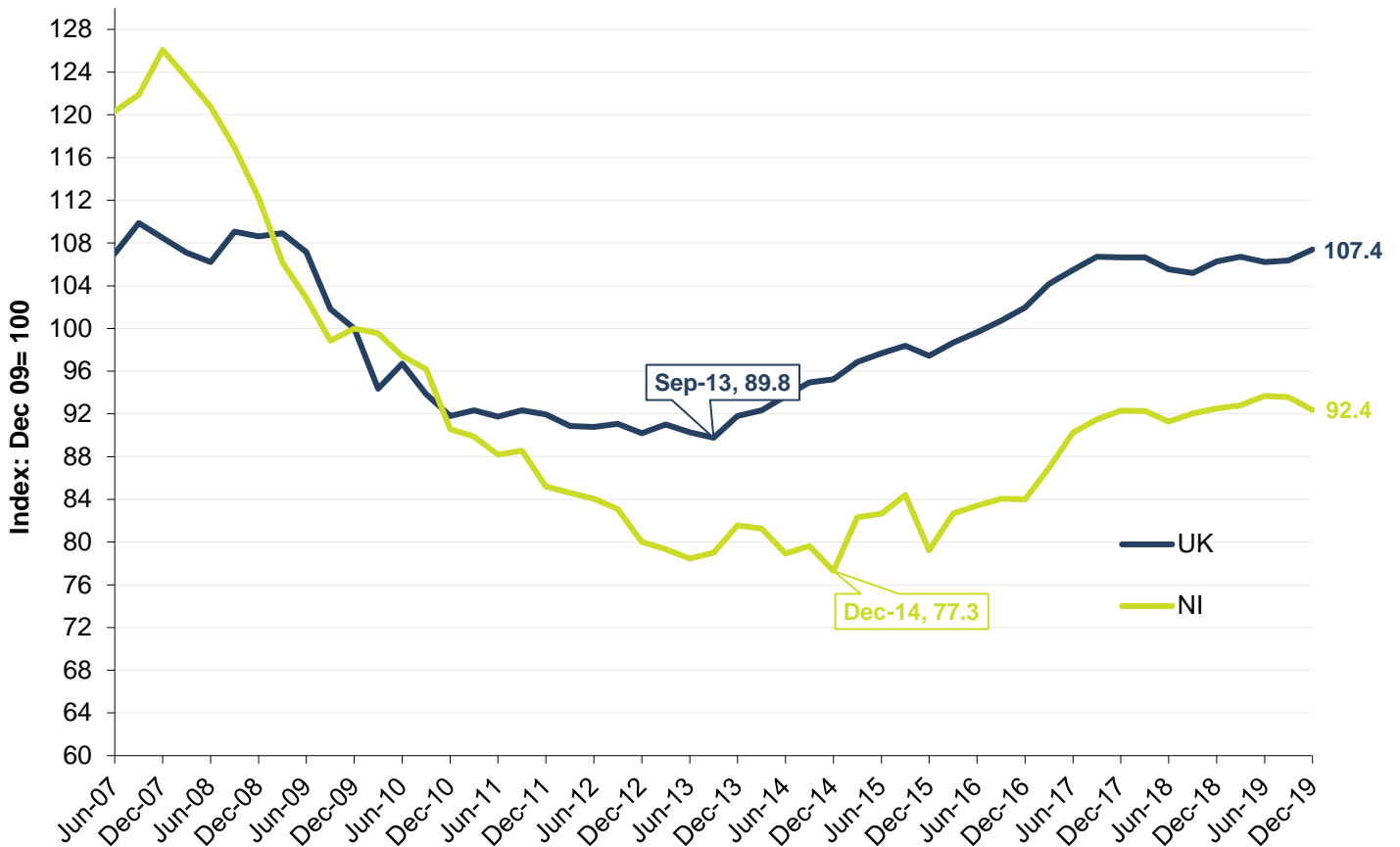
Construction sector

Construction sector: construction is the process of creating and building infrastructure or a facility. It differs from manufacturing in that manufacturing typically involves mass production of similar items without a designated purchaser and construction is typically done on location for a known client. The construction sector consists of businesses with activity in the construction of buildings, civil engineering or specialised construction activities.

Key Findings:

- The construction sector accounted for 4.4% of all employee jobs.
- Seasonally adjusted figures showed a decrease of 1.3% over the quarter and a decrease of 0.2% over the year to 34,320 jobs in December 2019.

Figure 2.3: Index of construction employee jobs, June 2007– December 2019



Figures are indexed to December 2009

[Download in excel](#)

The most recent series low in the construction sector was in December 2014 (28,720 jobs). Most recent estimates show a 19.5% improvement on this level; however the number of employee jobs in the construction sector is currently 26.7% lower than the series peak in December 2007. The UK has almost regained pre-downturn levels, with the most recent estimate showing that the UK construction sector is currently 2.3% lower than the series peak in September 2007.

Key Findings

Seasonally adjusted data showed that the construction sector decreased by 1.3% (-450 jobs) over the quarter and by 0.2% (-50 jobs) over the year to 34,320 jobs.

The following breakdowns are based on 2 digit SIC construction data that have not been adjusted for seasonality. Please note that estimates at 2 digit SIC can fluctuate due to sampling variability and changes to industrial classification.

Changes over the year

Over the year to December 2019 the unadjusted figures showed a decrease of 0.1% (-50 jobs) in the construction sector.

The following changes occurred over the year:

- an increase of 2.1% (160 jobs) in construction of buildings.
- an increase of 0.2% (40 jobs) in specialised construction activities.
- a decrease of 3.0% (-260 jobs) in civil engineering.

For figures broken down by 2 digit SIC please see table 5.10 on the NISRA - Economic and Labour Market Statistics [website](#).

When using table 5.10 please consider the notes on 'Using 2 Digit SIC Level Data' in section 6 – Further Info.

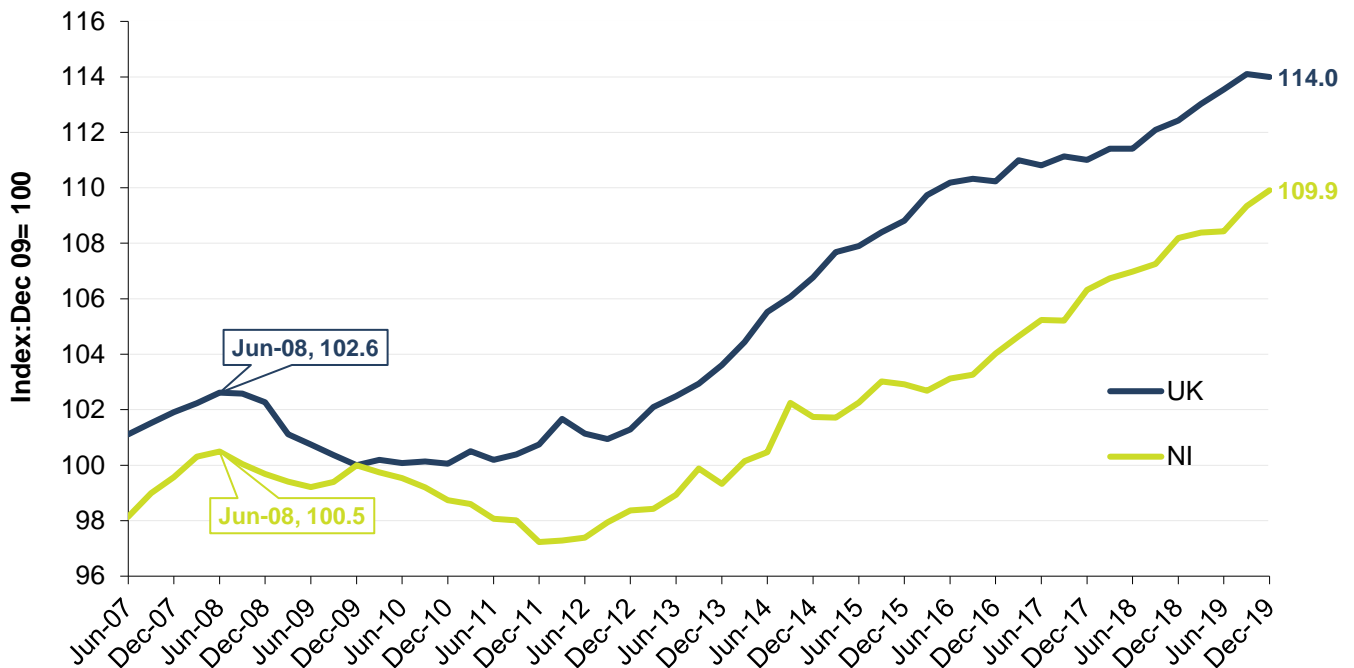
Services sector

Services sector: the services sector contains businesses which sell services and skills; and includes education, public administration and health and social work activities. A full list of the industry sections G-S which are included in the services sector can be found in table 5.5 within the supplementary tables on the NISRA - Economic and Labour Market Statistics [website](#).

Key Findings:

- The services sector recorded a peak number of employee jobs during December 2019 in the seasonally adjusted series.
- Seasonally adjusted figures showed an increase of 0.5% over the quarter to December 2019 and an increase of 1.6% over the year to 638,970 service sector jobs.
- The services sector accounted for 81.5% of all employee jobs.

Figure 2.4: Index of services employee jobs, June 2007 - December 2019



Figures are indexed to December 2009

[Download in excel](#)

When considering the last five years, the services sector in both NI and the UK increased overall, with NI recording a peak level in employee jobs in the most recent quarter. The number of employee jobs in the NI services sector increased by 47,490 over the last 5 years.

When considering the pre-downturn period, NI employee jobs in the services sector reached a peak in June 2008; declining to a series low in December 2011. The decline of 3.2% during this period is notably smaller than the declines experienced in the manufacturing or construction sectors during the downturn. There has been an increase of 13.0% in employee jobs in the services sector since the low in December 2011.

Key Findings

Seasonally adjusted data showed that the services sector increased by 0.5% (3,330 jobs) over the quarter and by 1.6% (9,980 jobs) over the year to 638,970 jobs in December 2019.

The following breakdowns are based on 2 digit SIC services data that have not been adjusted for seasonality. Please note that estimates at 2 digit SIC can fluctuate due to sampling variability and changes to industrial classification.

Changes over the year

Over the year to December 2019 the unadjusted figures showed an increase of 1.6% (10,010 jobs) in the services sector. The 3 largest contributors to this increase over the year were:

- an increase of 9.2 % (3,020 jobs) in social work activities without accommodation.
- an increase of 2.9% (2,020 jobs) in education.
- an increase of 2.3% (1,610 jobs) in human health activities.

The overall increase was partially offset by decreases in the services sector, the 3 largest decreases over the year being:

- a decrease of 11.0% (-1,390 jobs) in financial service activities, except insurance and pension funding.
- a decrease of 1.4% (-1,300 jobs) in retail trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles.
- a decrease of 8.3% (-1,020 jobs) in services to buildings and landscape activities.

For figures broken down by 2 digit SIC please see table 5.10 on the NISRA - Economic and Labour Market Statistics [website](#).

When using table 5.10 please consider the notes on 'Using 2 Digit SIC Level Data' in section 6 – Further Info.

Other industries sector

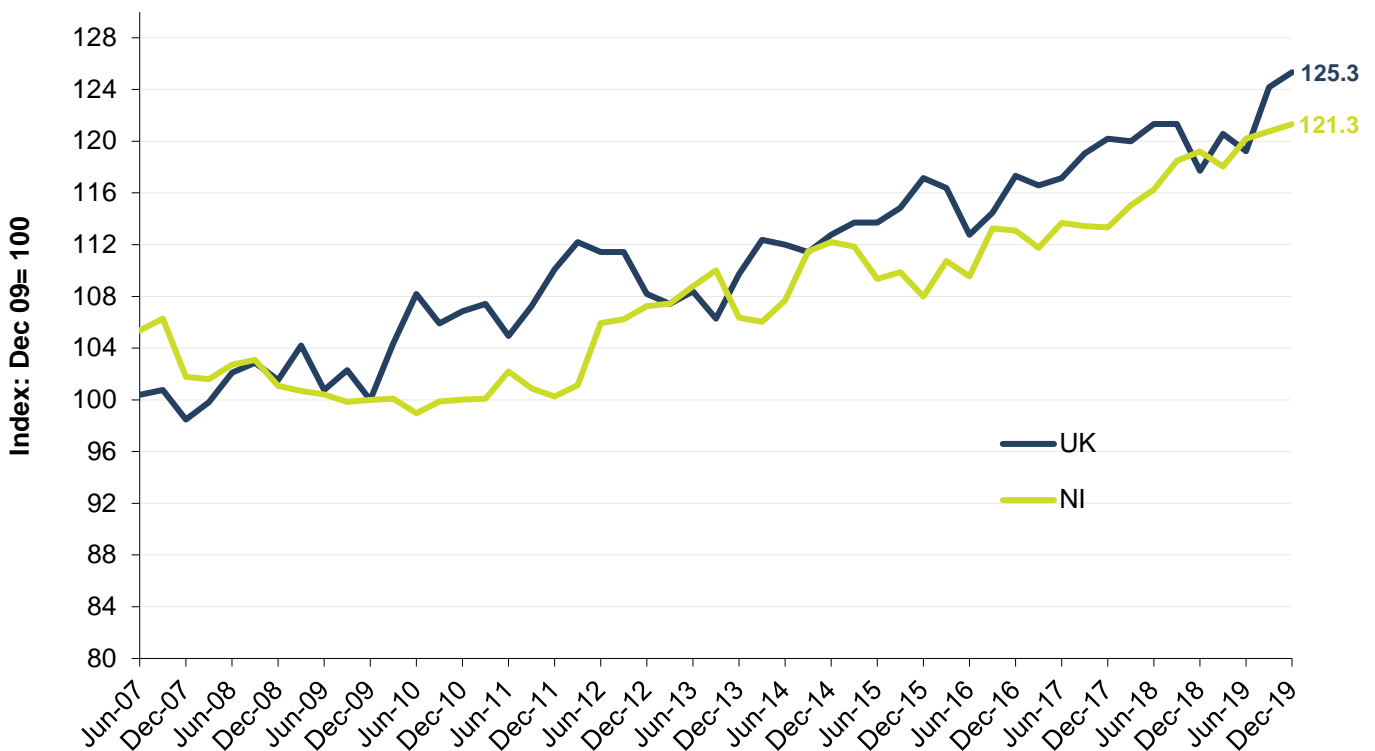
Other industries sector: this sector contains businesses with activity in agriculture, forestry and fishing, mining and quarrying, electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply and water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities (industry sections A,B,D and E).

Estimates from the annual Farm Census are included in industry section A (accounting for 91% of the employee jobs in the section). The Farm Census figures are published annually in January and relate to the previous June.

Key Findings:

- **Seasonally adjusted figures showed an increase of 0.5% in the other industries sector over the quarter to December 2019 and an increase of 1.8% over the year to 24,050 jobs.**
- **The other industries sector made up 3.1% of all employee jobs.**

Figure 2.5: Index of other industries sector jobs, June 2007 - December 2019



Figures are indexed to December 2009

[Download in excel](#)

Over the last 10 years the other industries sector in NI and the UK increased overall. The number of employee jobs in the NI other industries sector increased by 4,230 over the 10 year period to December 2019. NI and the UK have followed similar trends in the other industry sector throughout the series, particularly in recent years.

Key Findings

Seasonally adjusted data showed that the other industries sector increased by 0.5% (110 jobs) over the quarter and by 1.8% (420 jobs) over the year to 24,050 jobs.

The following breakdowns are based on 2 digit SIC other industries data that have not been adjusted for seasonality. Please note that estimates at 2 digit SIC can fluctuate due to sampling variability and changes to industrial classification.

Changes over the year

Over the year to December 2019 the unadjusted figures showed an increase of 1.8% (420 jobs) in the other industries sector. The 3 largest contributors to this increase over the year were:

- an increase of 7.3% (360 jobs) in waste collection, treatment and disposal activities; materials recovery.
- an increase of 7.5% (140 jobs) in other mining and quarrying.
- an increase of 55.6% (80 jobs) in fishing and aquaculture.

The overall increase was partially offset by decreases in the following other industries sectors:

- a decrease of 9.4% (-180 jobs) in electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply.
- a decrease of 0.7% (-90 jobs) in crop and animal production, hunting and related service activities.
- a decrease of 6.4% (-20 jobs) in forestry and logging.

For figures broken down by 2 digit SIC please see table 5.10 on the NISRA - Economic and Labour Market Statistics [website](#).

When using table 5.10 please consider the notes on 'Using 2 Digit SIC Level Data' in section 6 – Further Info.

3 Public/Private Sector Employee Jobs

Public sector: the NI public sector can be broken down into five areas:

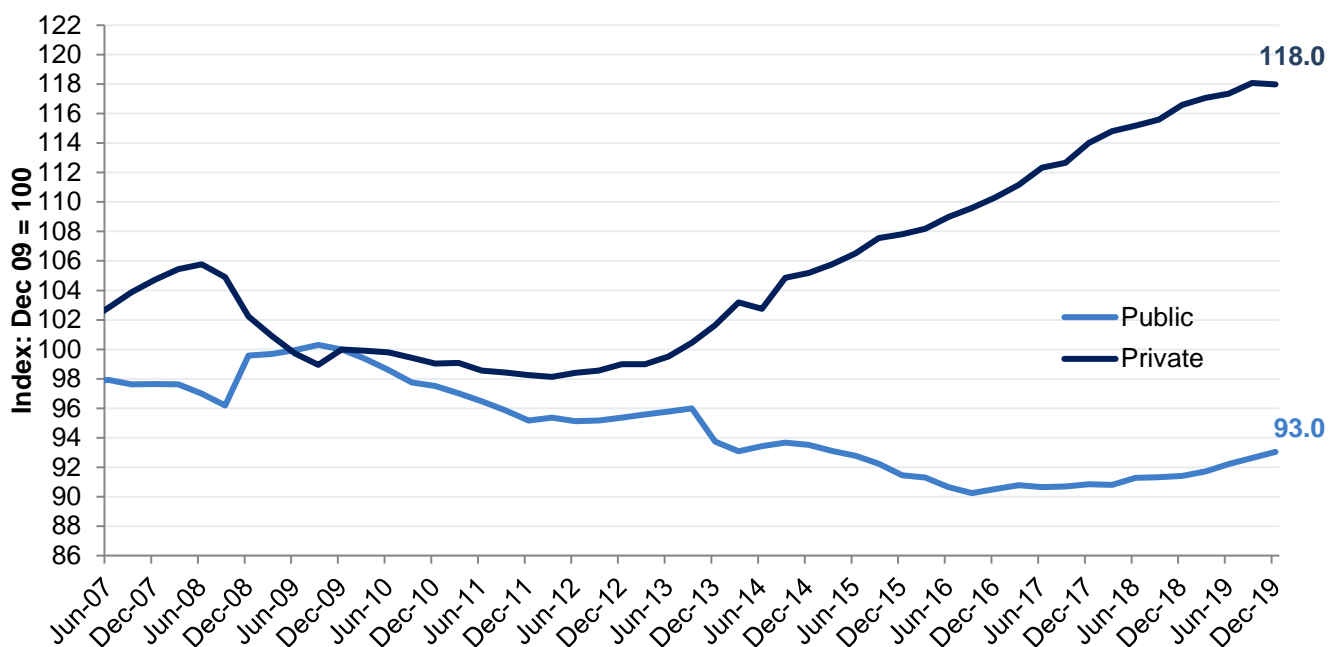
- NI central government
- Bodies under aegis of NI central government
- UK central government employees based in Northern Ireland
- Local government
- Public corporations

Private sector: the private sector encompasses all for-profit businesses (that are not owned or operated by the government) and the voluntary sector; which includes charities and other non-profit organisations.

Key Findings:

- The NI public sector made up 27% and the private sector made up 73% of all employee jobs. NI public sector jobs as a proportion of the NI population¹ was 11%. This compares to 8% in the UK.
- Seasonally adjusted employee jobs in the private sector decreased marginally over the quarter and increased over the year to 571,540 jobs.
- Seasonally adjusted employee jobs in the public sector increased over the quarter and year to 211,670 jobs.

Figure 3.1: Index of NI Private and Public Sector Jobs, June 2007 – December 2019



Figures are indexed to December 2009

[Download in excel](#)

The latest seasonally adjusted employee jobs figures estimate that there were:

- 211,670 employee jobs in the NI public sector.
- 571,540 employee jobs in the NI private sector.

¹ Latest population estimates available – [June 2018](#).

Changes over the quarter

The latest seasonally adjusted figures represented:

- an increase of 0.5% (960 jobs) in the public sector.
- a decrease of 0.1% (-430 jobs) in the private sector.

Changes over the year

The latest seasonally adjusted figures represented:

- an increase of 1.8% (3,710 jobs) in the public sector.
- an increase of 1.2% (6,810 jobs) in the private sector.

4 Composition of Employee Jobs

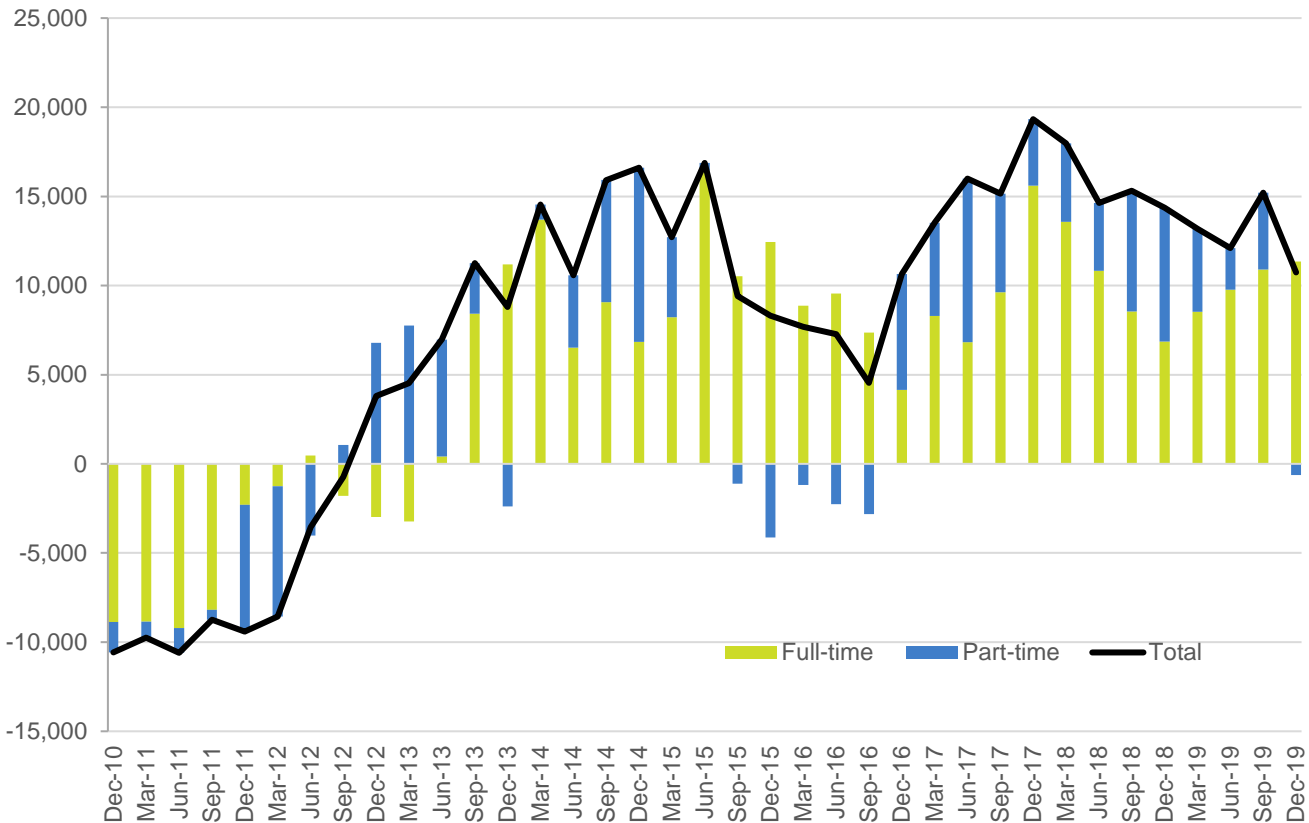
Please note: data in this section have not been adjusted for seasonality.

Part-time: part-time means those who normally work 30 hours a week or less.
Full-time: full-time means those who normally work more than 30 hours a week.

Key Findings

- Increases were seen over the quarter in both full-time (1.1% or 5,690 jobs) and part-time jobs (1.5% or 4,110 jobs).
- Full-time jobs increased over the year (2.2% or 11,350 jobs) while part-time jobs decreased marginally over the year (-0.2% or -620 jobs).
- Full-time jobs accounted for 65% of all employee jobs, with part-time accounting for 35% in December 2019.

Fig 4.1: Full-time and part-time jobs annual change, December 2010 – December 2019



[Download in excel](#)

The latest estimates showed that:

- Part-time jobs increased by 12.9% (31,250 jobs) since the low point in March 2012.
- The low point for full-time jobs was a year later (March 2013) than for part-time jobs. The number of full-time jobs has increased by 15.9% (70,810 jobs) since this point.
- The number of full-time jobs was at a series high in December 2019.

5 UK Comparisons

Employee jobs figures for GB regions are provided by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). ONS produces a publication on [Workforce Jobs by region](#). Unlike QES, Workforce Jobs include employee jobs, self-employed, government supported trainees and Her Majesty's Forces.

Key Findings

- The UK reported a marginal decrease (-0.04%) in employee jobs over the quarter and an increase (1.4%) over the year to 30.95 million jobs in December 2019.
- All UK regions showed an increase in employee jobs over the year, with the South West of England recording the largest estimated annual increase (2.7%). Northern Ireland employee jobs increased by 1.4% over the year.
- Employee jobs increased over the quarter in half of the twelve regions of the UK. Northern Ireland employee jobs increased by 0.2% over the quarter.

Figure 5.1: Annual and Quarterly Percentage Change in Employee Jobs by UK Region, December 2018¹ – December 2019 and September 2019 – December 2019



[Download in excel](#)

¹December 2018 figures for GB downloaded from [NOMIS](#) on 11th March 2020

6 Further Information

Background

Estimates of the number of employee jobs are obtained from the Quarterly Business Survey (QBS). The QBS is a statutory survey issued under the Statistics of Trade and Employment (Northern Ireland) Order 1988 and is designed to collect information on employees and turnover. The main outputs are published in four quarterly publications – the [Quarterly Employment Survey](#) (QES), [Index of Services](#) (IOS), [Index of Production](#) (IOP) and [Quarterly Construction Enquiry](#) (QCE).

Sample

The QES, IOS, IOP and QCE are sampled independently and there is an overlap between QES and IOS/IOP/QCE of approximately 2,250 businesses.

The QES covers all public sector bodies, all private sector firms with 25 or more employees, all businesses with more than one industry activity and a sample of the remainder. QES covers all industrial sections apart from agriculture. Employee estimates for the agricultural sector are provided, on an annual basis (figures for June are provided in the January of the following year), from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Farm Census. Agriculture employees include all workers on agricultural businesses other than (a) part-time farmers and partners and (b) farmers' spouses. They include full-time, part-time and casual workers, both paid and unpaid.

The QES sample is drawn from the Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR), as follows:

Employment Size/Sector	Coverage
0-9 employees	Sample (4%)
10-24 employees	Sample (9%)
Multiple Industry Activities	Full Count (100%)
25+ employees	Full Count (100%)
Public Sector	Full Count (100%)

As the QES is a sample survey, estimates obtained from it are subject to sampling variability i.e. if we drew many similar samples each would give a different result. [Confidence intervals](#) provide a measure of the size of the sampling variability. The 95% confidence interval for the December 2019 employee jobs estimate is 784,140 +/- 7,780. This means that in 100 similar samples we would expect 95 (95%) of the confidence intervals to contain the true population value of the number of employee jobs.

The survey collects information on numbers of persons in full-time and part-time employment. It should be noted that the survey counts the number of jobs rather than the number of persons with jobs. For example, a person holding both a full-time job and a part-time job, or someone with two part-time jobs, will be counted twice.

Employment results are collated into industry classes using the 2007 Standard Industrial Classification (SIC). As a result, no individual business can be identified.

Updates to the sample frame

The annual Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) results are used to update employee and SIC code variables on the Inter Departmental Business Register annually in quarter 1. The impact of this update is greatest at 2 digit SIC level. Users should be aware that changes at this level may be due to a reallocation of jobs/businesses to SIC codes following the sample frame update.

Using 2 Digit SIC Level Data

The introduction of sample rotation from March 2014 contributed to the volatility of the series. To counteract these effects from March 2016 the number of businesses selected in SIC and size bands experiencing the greatest impact of rotation increased.

Volatility also arises when businesses inform NISRA of SIC code changes via business surveys, ONS and HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC). This new information helps to improve the industry estimates of employee jobs each quarter but also adds volatility to quarterly and annual changes, particularly at 2 digit SIC level. SICs 74 (Other professional, scientific and technical activities) and 82 (Office administrative, office support and other business support activities) are most affected by updates to industry codes. More information can be found in Section 3 of the [Analysis of the Impact of Quarterly Employment Survey Data Revisions](#) document. It is therefore recommended that changes in employee jobs estimates at 2 digit SIC level are considered in the context of a longer time series.

Discontinuity

The sample coverage used to derive employee jobs estimates in NI was extended in 2009. This change was introduced to provide more comprehensive estimates of employee jobs and also to ensure a consistency of methodology between the QES and BRES. The extension in sample coverage has resulted in a discontinuity in the employee jobs series from the reference period Q3 2009 onwards.

Revisions Policy

QES estimates are revised quarterly to reflect the latest information provided by employers. The September 2019 seasonally adjusted estimate published in December 2019 has been revised down (-0.04%). Estimates for the latest quarter as well as the previous four quarters are provisional and subject to revision in light of (a) late responses to surveys and administrative sources, (b) where cross survey congruence checks provide more accurate data and (c) there are revisions to seasonal adjustment factors which are re-estimated every quarter. Only rarely are there avoidable 'errors' such as human or system failures, and such mistakes are made quite clear when they do occur.

Public Sector Reclassifications

Public sector jobs comprise Central Government (including Bodies under the aegis of Central Government), Local Government and Public Corporations. The following table summarises the changes announced by the Public Sector Classification Committee and the date the changes took place.

Date of change	Summary	Revision applied from
Dec 2006	NI Housing Executive reclassified from SIC 75 to SIC 70	Mar 2004
Jan 2012	Water service became a Government owned company, as a result employees transferred from "NI Central Government" to "Bodies under the Aegis of NI Central Government"	Apr 2007
Dec 2013	Royal Mail Plc reclassified to private sector	Oct 2013
Mar 2014	Lloyds Banking Group and its subsidiaries reclassified to private sector	Dec 2013
Sep 2017	Registered housing associations in NI reclassified to public sector	Sep 1992
Sep 2018	Registered housing associations in NI moved from section N to L in sections level data	Mar 2005 (in line with seasonally adjusted series)

Seasonal Adjustment

A seasonally adjusted series provides a better indication of underlying trends in employment. Time series data for seasonally adjusted employee jobs from 2005 to date for industry section (A-S) and main industrial sector are available on the [Quarterly Employment Survey webpage](#).

The following series are seasonally adjusted:

- Male employee jobs in Manufacturing (Section C); Wholesale and Retail Trade, Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles (Section G); Transportation and Storage (Section H); Accommodation and Food Service Activities (Section I); Administrative and Support Service Activities (Section N); Public Administration and Defence, Compulsory Social Security (Section O); Education (Section P) and Arts, Entertainment and Recreation (Section R).
- Female employee jobs in Mining and Quarrying (Section B); Manufacturing (Section C); Construction (Section F); Wholesale and Retail Trade, Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles (Section G); Accommodation and Food Service Activities (Section I); Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities (Section M); Public Administration and Defence, Compulsory Social Security (Section O); Education (Section P); Human Health and Social Work Activities (Section Q) and Arts, Entertainment and Recreation (Section R).

Seasonal adjustment models are periodically reviewed as seasonal trends can change over time. The [latest review](#) was carried out in November 2018.

[Business Register and Employment Survey](#)

Information on employee jobs at a sub Northern Ireland level (e.g. District Council Area) and at the 5-digit SIC07 level are available from the Northern Ireland Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES). The QES sample size is designed so that estimates of total employee jobs are within +/- 1% of the BRES total.

Annualised or Rolling 4 Quarters

Annualised growth or rolling 4 quarters figures are calculated by taking the difference between the average over the most recent 4 quarters and the average over the same 4 quarters of the previous year, as a proportion of the average over the same 4 quarters of the previous year. For example annualised growth of 1.7% in 2019 reported in this publication is the average number of jobs from Q1 2019 to Q4 2019 minus the average number of jobs from Q1 2018 to Q4 2018, divided by the average number of jobs from Q1 2018 to Q4 2018. This measure allows for comparison in growth to previous years and is useful in determining trends in the data.


Date of next publication

Forthcoming release dates are published in the [Economic & Labour Market Statistics Branch Publication Schedule](#). The next Northern Ireland Quarterly Employment Survey publication is planned for June 2020.

Further information


If you require further information about the figures contained in this publication or the accompanying tables, please contact the Quarterly Employment Survey section using the details below:

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