

16th June 2020

Northern Ireland Quarterly Employment Survey

Theme: Labour Market

Frequency: Quarterly

Geographical area: Northern Ireland

Reference period: Quarter 1 2020 (March)

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 survey date for Quarter 1 was 2nd March 2020 for Northern Ireland. This pre-dates the introduction of any COVID-19 restrictions, and the impact of COVID-19 on the labour market is therefore not fully reflected in these estimates.

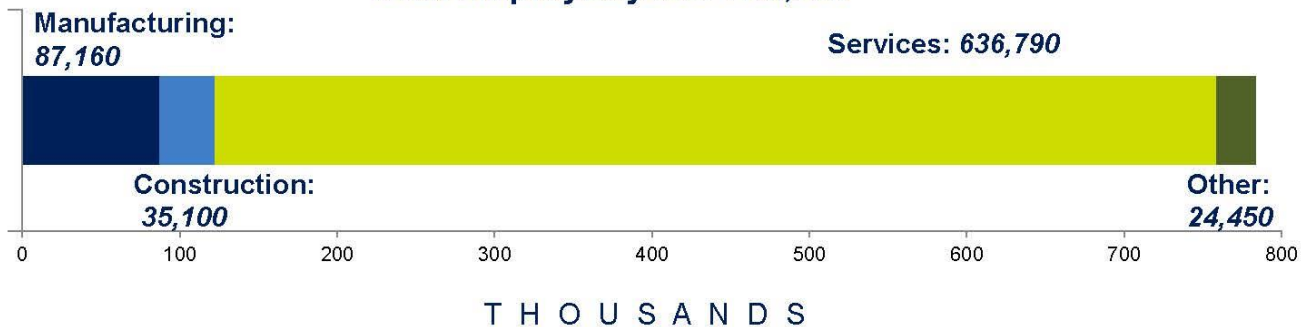
- The number of (seasonally adjusted) employee jobs in March 2020 was estimated at 783,500. This was an increase of 3,120 jobs (0.4%) over the quarter and 7,930 jobs (1.0%) over the year. Neither the quarterly nor the annual changes in employee jobs were found to be statistically significant.
- Manufacturing was the only broad industry sector to experience a decrease in employee jobs (seasonally adjusted) over the year of 1.4% (-1,220 jobs). This was the first annual decrease in manufacturing employee jobs since June 2013.
- The numbers of (seasonally adjusted) employee jobs in the services (636,790 jobs) and other (24,450 jobs) sectors reached the highest levels on record in March 2020.
- The two largest industry sections in the economy, wholesale and retail trade and human health and social work activities, accounted for a third of all employee jobs in March 2020.
- The annualised growth rate of total employee jobs has fallen every quarter between March 2018 (2.3%) and March 2020 (1.2%).
- Private sector jobs increased over the quarter (0.6% or 3,320 jobs) and increased over the year (1.0% or 5,540 jobs).
- Public sector jobs decreased over the quarter (0.2% or -430 jobs) but increased over the year (1.1% or 2,350 jobs). There are now 17,080 fewer public sector jobs than the series peak in September 2009 (-7.5%).
- In the last five years, employee jobs have increased by 8.3% (60,060 jobs) and by 13.3% (92,220 jobs) from the low in March 2012.

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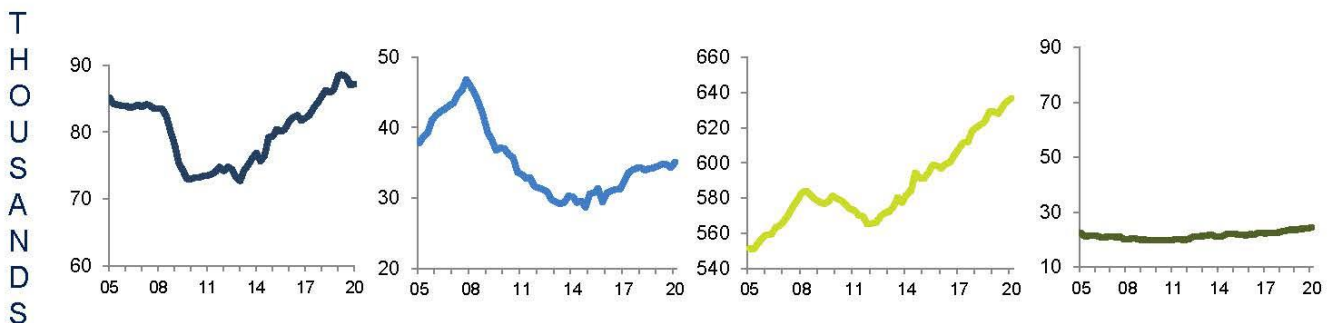
NISRA Labour Market Statistics

Quarterly Employment Survey – March 2020

Total employee jobs: 783,500



Change on quarter



Change on year



All data seasonally adjusted and subject to future revisions.
Data published on 16th June 2020 by Economic and Labour Market Statistics Branch (NISRA).

Northern Ireland employee jobs annual change by industry Q1 2019 - Q1 2020

Change by broad industry sector (seasonally adjusted)

Manufacturing



-1.4% (-1,220 jobs)
total jobs 87,160

Construction



+1.7% (580 jobs)
total jobs 35,100

Services



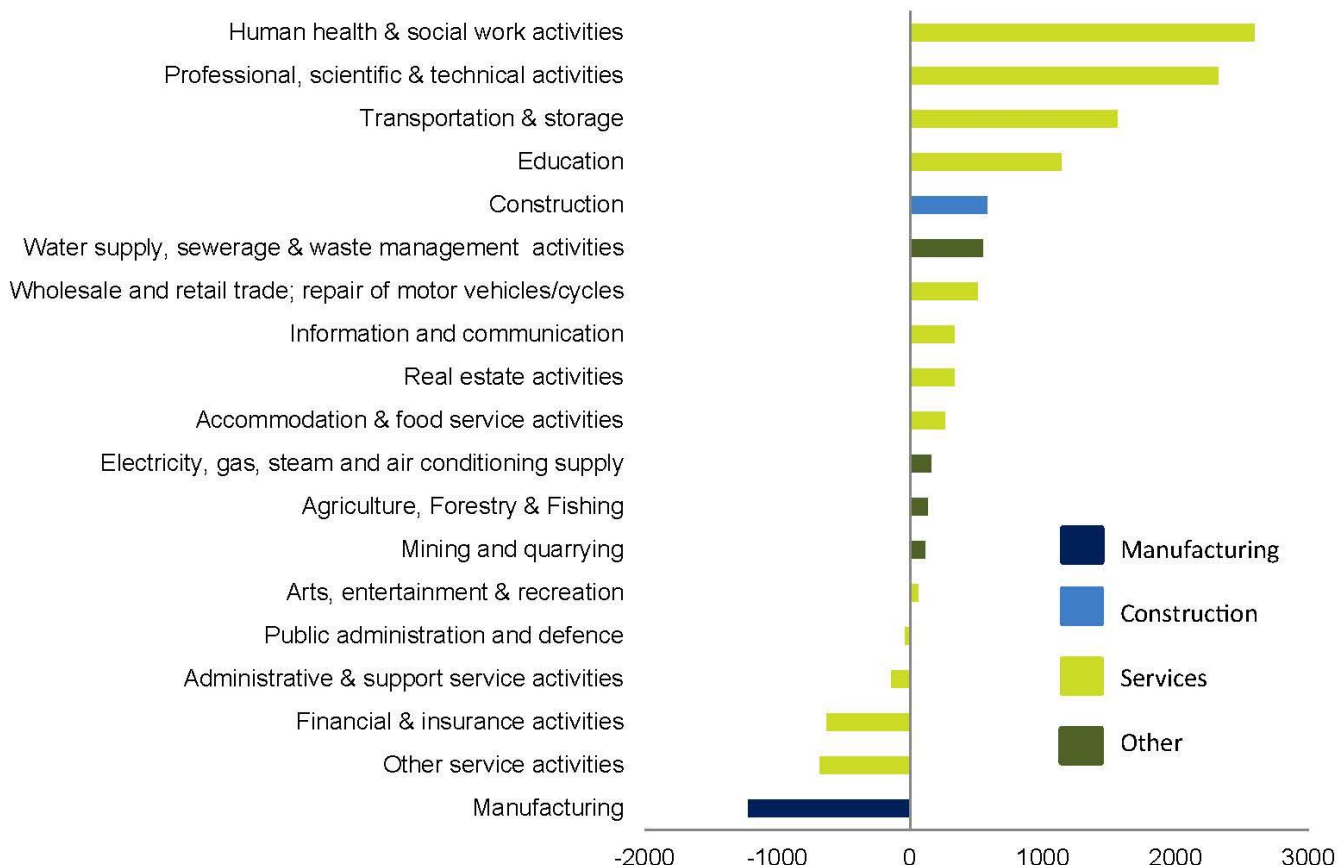
+1.2% (7,610 jobs)
total jobs 636,790

Other



+4.1% (950 jobs)
total jobs 24,450

Change by industry section (seasonally adjusted)



Data published on 16th June 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.
- Improved accessibility of Labour Market Statistics by [changing publication practices](#) so that reports are [no longer released on public holidays](#). Temporarily changed [timing of release](#) in line with change in ONS release practices in response to COVID-19.

1 Summary of Employee Jobs

Updated June 2020

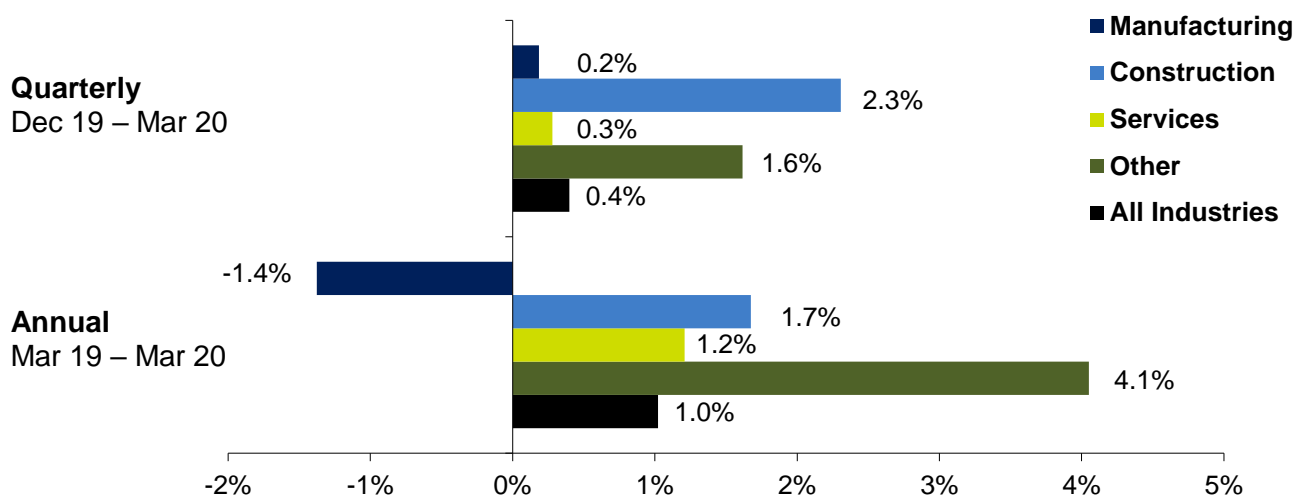
The survey date for Quarter 1 was 2nd March 2020 for Northern Ireland. This pre-dates the introduction of any COVID-19 restrictions, and the impact of COVID-19 on the labour market is therefore not fully reflected in these estimates.

Change in employee jobs

The seasonally adjusted employee jobs estimate for Northern Ireland (NI) at March 2020 was 783,500 (+/- 5,710¹). This was:

- an increase of 0.4% (3,120 jobs) over the quarter from the revised December 2019 estimate of 780,380.
- an increase of 1.0% (7,930 jobs) over the year from the revised March 2019 estimate of 775,570.
- 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 March 2020 employee jobs to the revised December 2019 estimates showed:

- an increase in the services sector of 0.3% (1,780 jobs) to 636,790 jobs.
- an increase in the construction sector of 2.3% (790 jobs) to 35,100 jobs.
- an increase in the other industries sector of 1.6% (390 jobs) to 24,450 jobs.
- an increase in the manufacturing sector of 0.2% (160 jobs) to 87,160 jobs.

Change over the year

Comparing seasonally adjusted March 2020 employee jobs to the revised March 2019 estimates showed:

- an increase in the services sector of 1.2% (7,610 jobs) to 636,790 jobs.
- an increase in the other industries sector of 4.1% (950 jobs) to 24,450 jobs.

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

- an increase in the construction sector of 1.7% (580 jobs) to 35,100 jobs.
- a decrease in the manufacturing sector of 1.4% (-1,220 jobs) to 87,160 jobs.

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 28.3% of all increases in employee jobs.
- (i) Manufacture of motor vehicles, trailers and semi-trailers; (ii) employment activities; (iii) food and beverage service activities saw the greatest decreases over the year, accounting for 36.1% of all decreases in employee jobs.
- Despite the decreases, there was a net increase of 8,070 employee jobs.

Annualised change

Comparing the seasonally adjusted employee jobs data for Quarter 2 2018 – Quarter 1 2019 to Quarter 2 2019 – Quarter 1 2020 showed:

- an increase in the other industries sector of 2.8%.
- an increase in the construction sector of 1.5%.
- an increase in the manufacturing sector of 1.2%.
- an increase in the services sector of 1.1%.

Public / private sector changes

Seasonally adjusted employee jobs estimates for the public and private sectors at March 2020 showed:

- a decrease of 0.2% (-430 jobs) in the public sector over the quarter and an increase of 1.1% (2,350 jobs) over the year to 211,090 jobs.
- an increase of 0.6% (3,320 jobs) in the private sector over the quarter and an increase of 1.0% (5,540 jobs) over the year to 571,850 jobs.

Commentary

Northern Ireland (seasonally adjusted) employee jobs are estimated to have increased over both the quarter (0.4%) and the year (1.0%) to a series high of 783,500 in March 2020; however neither the quarterly nor the annual changes were found to be statistically significant.

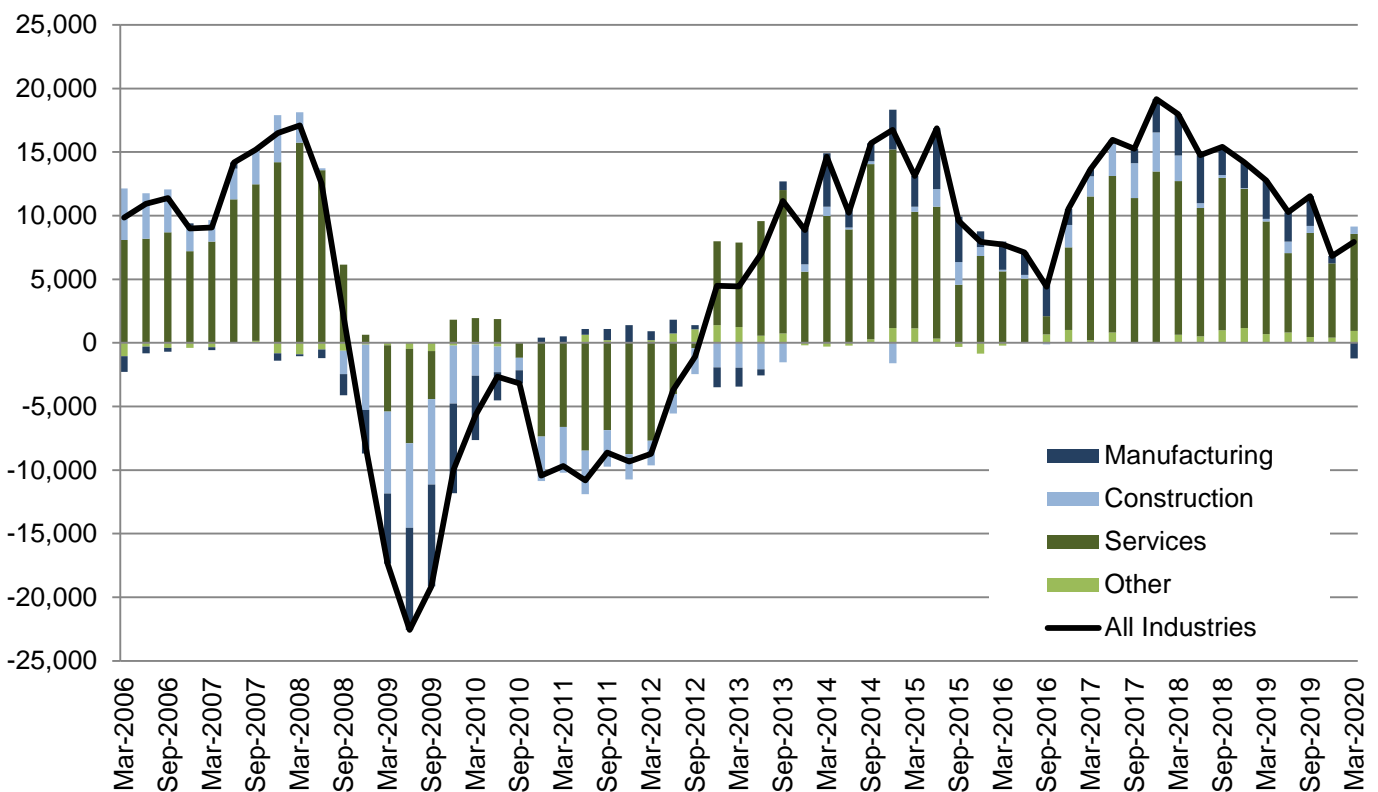
The majority of the growth in (seasonally adjusted) jobs over the quarter was driven by the services sector, with all sectors seeing an increase over the quarter. The manufacturing sector was the only sector to experience a decrease in employee jobs over the year of 1.4% (-1,220 jobs).

Annual growth in employee jobs has generally been slowing since the highest annual growth recorded in December 2017.

The UK reported an increase in employee jobs over the quarter (0.6%) to a series high of 31.10 million in March 2020.

The survey date for Quarter 1 was 2nd March 2020 for Northern Ireland. This pre-dates the introduction of any COVID-19 restrictions, and the impact of COVID-19 on the labour market is therefore not fully reflected in these estimates.

Fig 1.2 Annual Change in Employee Jobs in NI, March 2006 – March 2020



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When considering the seasonally adjusted series, private sector jobs are estimated to have increased by 0.6% (3,320 jobs) over the quarter to March 2020 and by 1.0% (5,540 jobs) over the year. Public sector jobs experienced a marginal quarterly decrease after ten consecutive quarters of increase between September 2017 and December 2019. There are 17,080 fewer public sector jobs (-7.5%) than the series peak in September 2009.

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 survey date for Quarter 1 was 2nd March 2020 for Northern Ireland. This pre-dates the introduction of any COVID-19 restrictions, and the impact of COVID-19 on the labour market is therefore not fully reflected in these estimates. COVID-19 impacted on the data collection and the validation of employee jobs data, which are collected on the Quarterly Business Survey. As a result, the employee jobs estimates for March 2020 are likely to be subject to higher revisions than normal over the coming quarters. Comparisons of provisional March 2020 employee jobs estimates at lower industry levels in particular (eg 2 digit Standard Industrial Classification level), should be treated with caution.

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

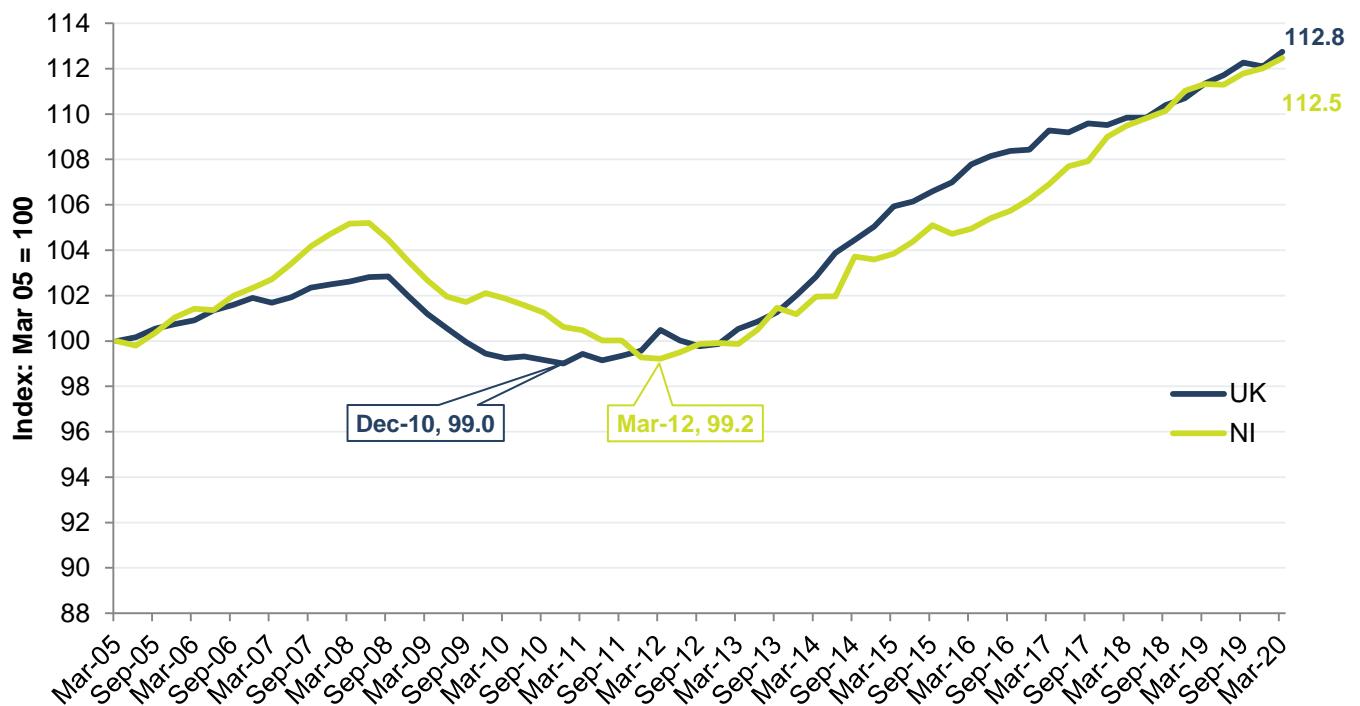
Employee: an employee is defined as anyone aged 16 years or over that is directly paid from a business's payroll for carrying out a full-time or part-time job or being on a training scheme in Northern Ireland.

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

Key Findings:

- Employee jobs increased over the quarter by 0.4% (3,120 jobs) and over the year by 1.0% (7,930 jobs) to a series high of 783,500.
- The annualised growth rate² of total employee jobs has fallen every quarter between March 2018 (2.3%) and March 2020 (1.2%).

Figure 2.1: Index of Employee Jobs, March 2005 – March 2020



Figures are indexed to March 2005

[Download in excel](#)

Figure 2.1 shows estimated seasonally adjusted employee jobs, indexed to allow comparison between NI and the UK. The pre-downturn peak for NI was in June 2008 and in September 2008 for the UK. Following the respective peaks, 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 6.9% above their June 2008 level while UK jobs are 9.6% above their September 2008 level.

Whilst there was a series high in employee jobs in March 2020, the annualised growth rate has fallen every quarter between March 2018 (2.3%) and March 2020 (1.2%).

² Annualised growth is calculated as the difference in the average of the most recent 4 quarters and the previous 4 quarters average, as a proportion of the average of the previous 4 quarters. See [here](#) for further detail.

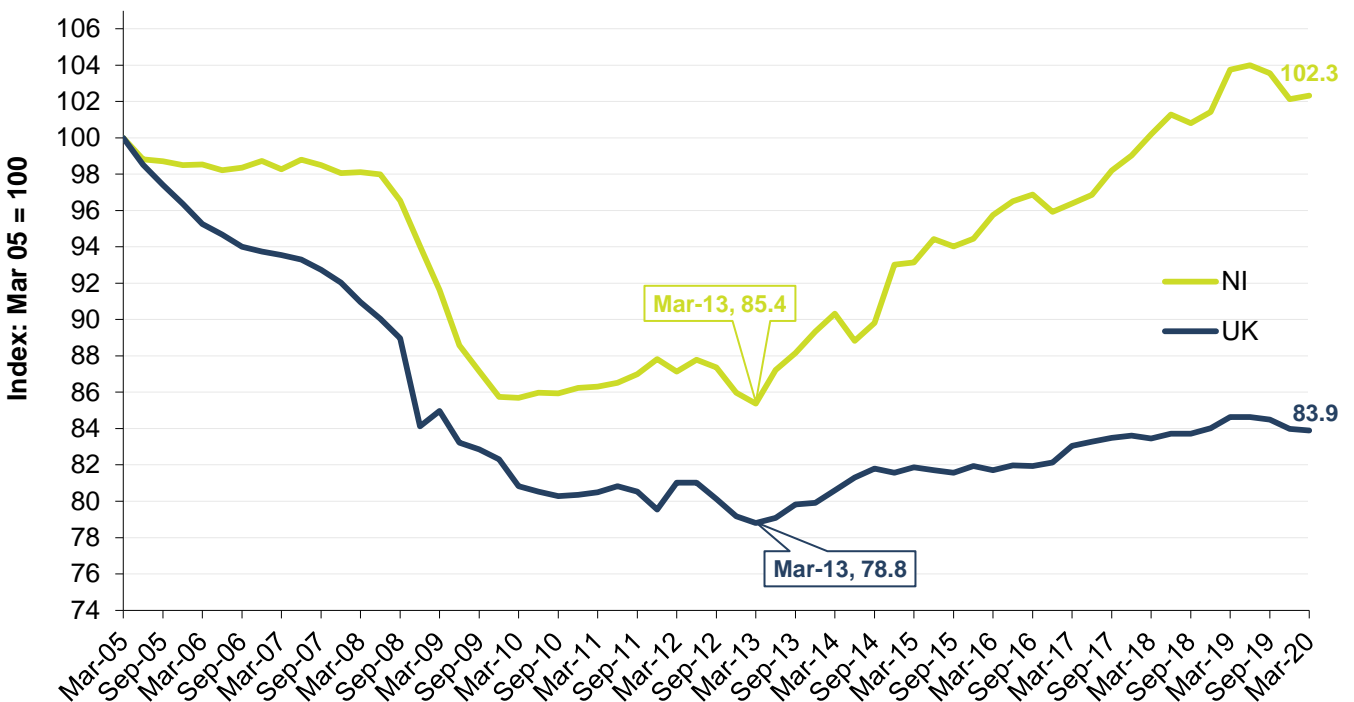
Manufacturing sector

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 an increase of 0.2% over the quarter and a decrease of 1.4% over the year to 87,160 jobs in March 2020.
- The decrease of 1.4% was the first annual decrease in manufacturing employee jobs since June 2013.

Figure 2.2: Index of manufacturing employee jobs, March 2005– March 2020



Figures are indexed to March 2005

[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. NI jobs increased by 21.8% between March 2013 and the peak in June 2019. However, following decline between June and December 2019, manufacturing jobs in NI are now 19.8% above the March 2013 low point.

Key Findings

Seasonally adjusted data showed that the manufacturing sector increased by 0.2% (160 jobs) over the quarter and decreased by 1.4% (-1,220 jobs) over the year to 87,160 jobs. The annual decrease of 1.4% was the first annual decrease in the manufacturing sector since June 2013.

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 March 2020 the unadjusted figures showed a decrease of 1.4% (-1,220 jobs) in the manufacturing sector. The 3 largest contributors to this decrease were:

- a decrease of 31.4% (-1,220 jobs) in manufacture of motor vehicles, trailers and semi-trailers.
- a decrease of 3.2% (-280 jobs) in manufacture of fabricated metal products, except machinery and equipment.
- a decrease of 2.9% (-210 jobs) in manufacture of other transport equipment.

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

- an increase of 71.4% (780 jobs) in repair and installation of machinery and equipment.
- an increase of 8.3% (160 jobs) in manufacture of paper and plastic products.
- an increase of 0.6% (130 jobs) in manufacture of food products.

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.

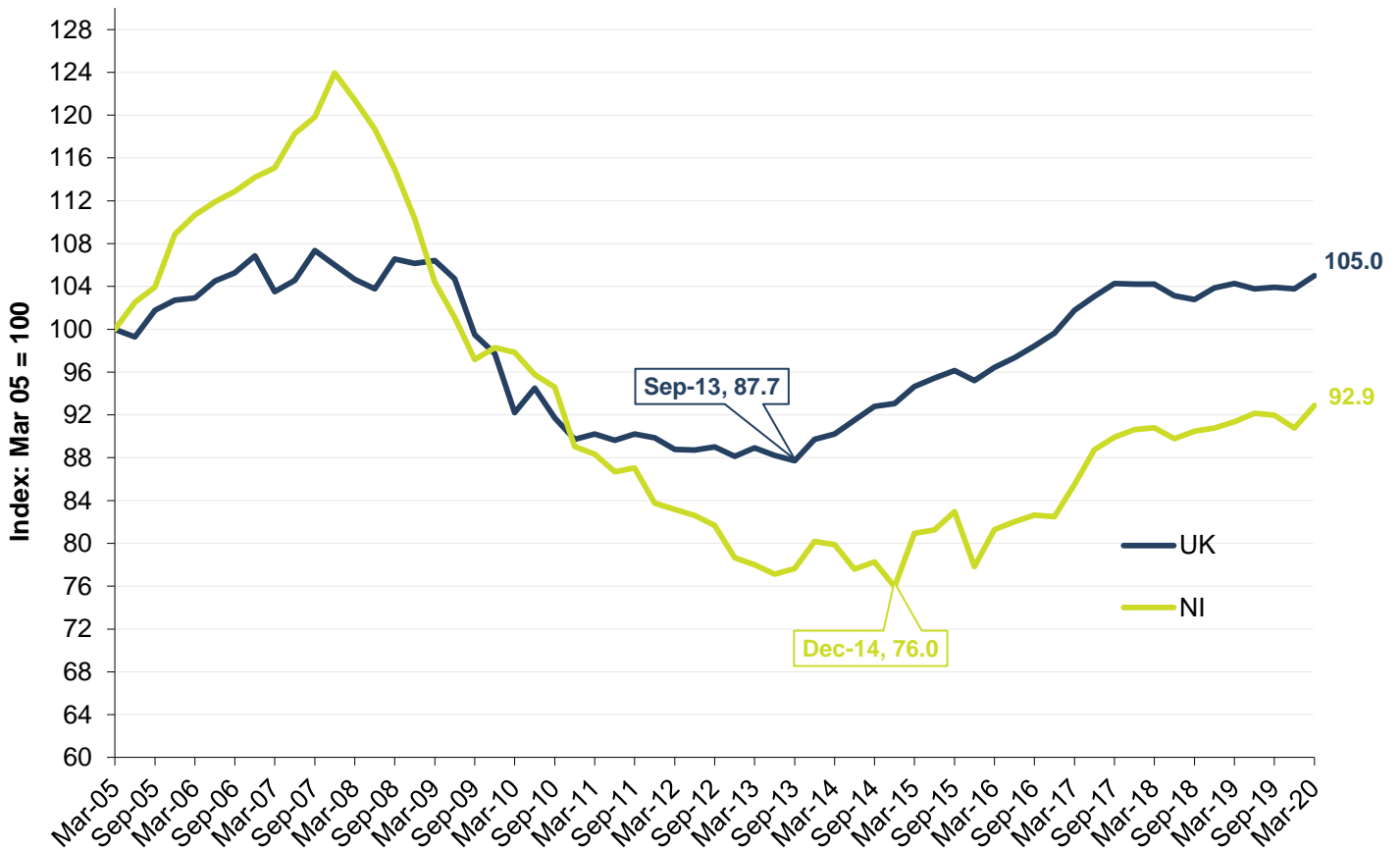
Construction sector

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 4.5% of all employee jobs.
- Seasonally adjusted figures showed increases of 2.3% over the quarter and 1.7% over the year to 35,100 jobs in March 2020.

Figure 2.3: Index of construction employee jobs, March 2005 – March 2020



Figures are indexed to March 2005

[Download in excel](#)

The most recent series low in the construction sector for NI was in December 2014 (28,710 jobs). Most recent estimates show a 22.3% improvement on this level; however the number of employee jobs in the construction sector is currently 25.1% 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 2.2% lower than the series peak in September 2007.

Key Findings

Seasonally adjusted data showed that the construction sector increased by 2.3% (790 jobs) over the quarter and by 1.7% (580 jobs) over the year to 35,100 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 March 2020 the unadjusted figures showed an increase of 1.7% (590 jobs) in the construction sector.

The following changes occurred over the year:

- an increase of 3.4% (600 jobs) in specialised construction activity.
- an increase of 3.1% (250 jobs) in construction of buildings.
- 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.

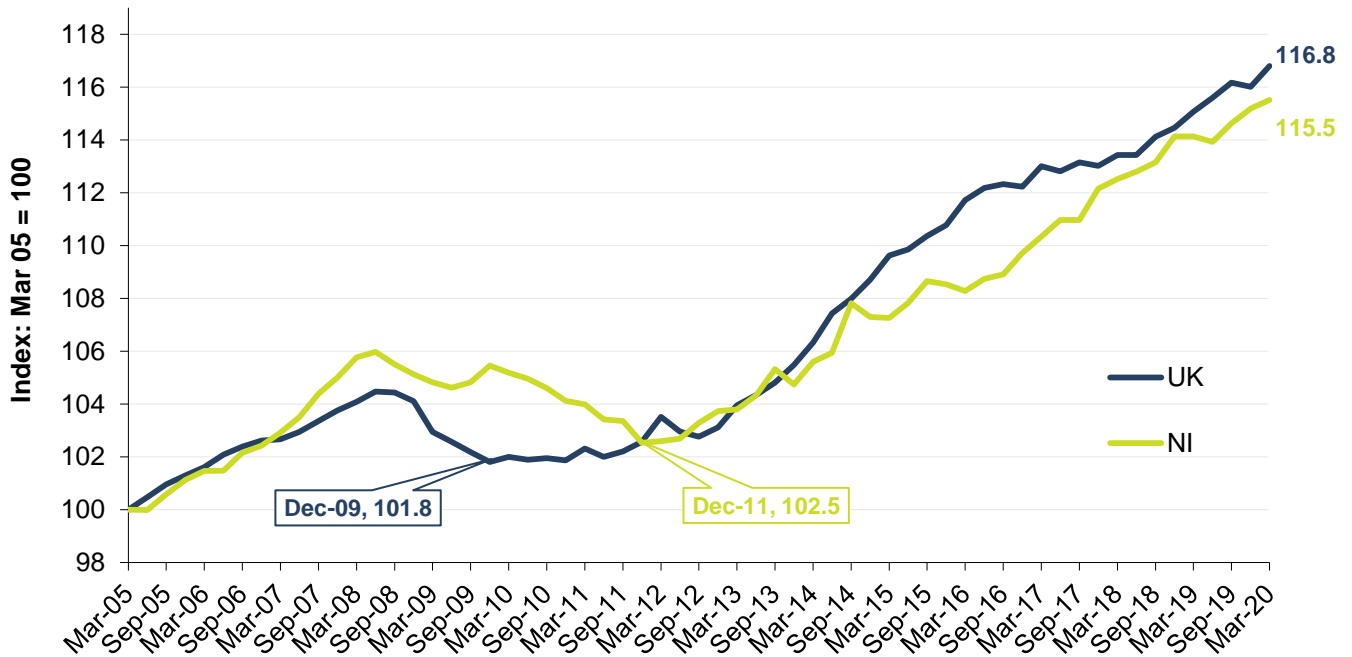
Services sector

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 March 2020 in the seasonally adjusted series.
- Seasonally adjusted figures showed an increase of 0.3% over the quarter to March 2020 and an increase of 1.2% over the year to 636,790 service sector jobs.
- The 2 largest industry sections in the economy were within the services sector (wholesale and retail trade; and human health) and accounted for a third of all employee jobs in March 2020.
- The services sector accounted for 81.3% of all employee jobs in Northern Ireland.

Figure 2.4: Index of services employee jobs, March 2005 - March 2020



Figures are indexed to March 2005

[Download in excel](#)

Despite some fluctuation, employee jobs in the services sector have been on an upward trend since the series low in both NI (December 2011) and the UK (December 2009). NI and the UK both recorded a peak level in employee jobs in the most recent quarter. The number of employee jobs in the NI services sector increased by 45,470 over the last 5 years.

When considering the pre-downturn period, NI employee jobs in the services sector reached a peak in June 2008. The decline of 3.2% between June 2008 and December 2011 is notably smaller than the declines experienced in the manufacturing or construction sectors during the downturn. There has been an increase of 12.7% 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 0.3% (1,780 jobs) over the quarter and by 1.2% (7,610 jobs) over the year to 636,790 jobs in March 2020.

The wholesale and retail trade (section G); and human health and social work activities (section Q) services sections are the two largest industry sections of the NI economy:

- Wholesale and retail trade: 130,940 jobs in March 2020, representing an annual increase of 0.4% or 510 jobs.
- Human health and social work activities: 130,240 jobs in March 2020, representing an annual increase of 2.0% or 2,600 jobs.
- These two sectors, when combined, accounted for a third of all employee jobs in March 2020 (33.3% or 261,180 jobs).

For figures for all services industry sections (G-S), please see table 5.5b within the supplementary tables on the NISRA - Economic and Labour Market Statistics [website](#).

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 March 2020 the unadjusted figures showed an increase of 1.2% (7,740 jobs) in the services sector. The 3 largest contributors to this increase over the year were:

- an increase of 6.2% (2,030 jobs) in social work activities without accommodation.
- an increase of 1.6% (1,120 jobs) in education.
- an increase of 1.5% (1,050 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 2.8% (-650 jobs) in employment activities.
- a decrease of 1.4% (-580 jobs) in food and beverage service activities.
- a decrease of 29.8% (-520 jobs) in motion picture, video and television programme production, sound recording and music publishing 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

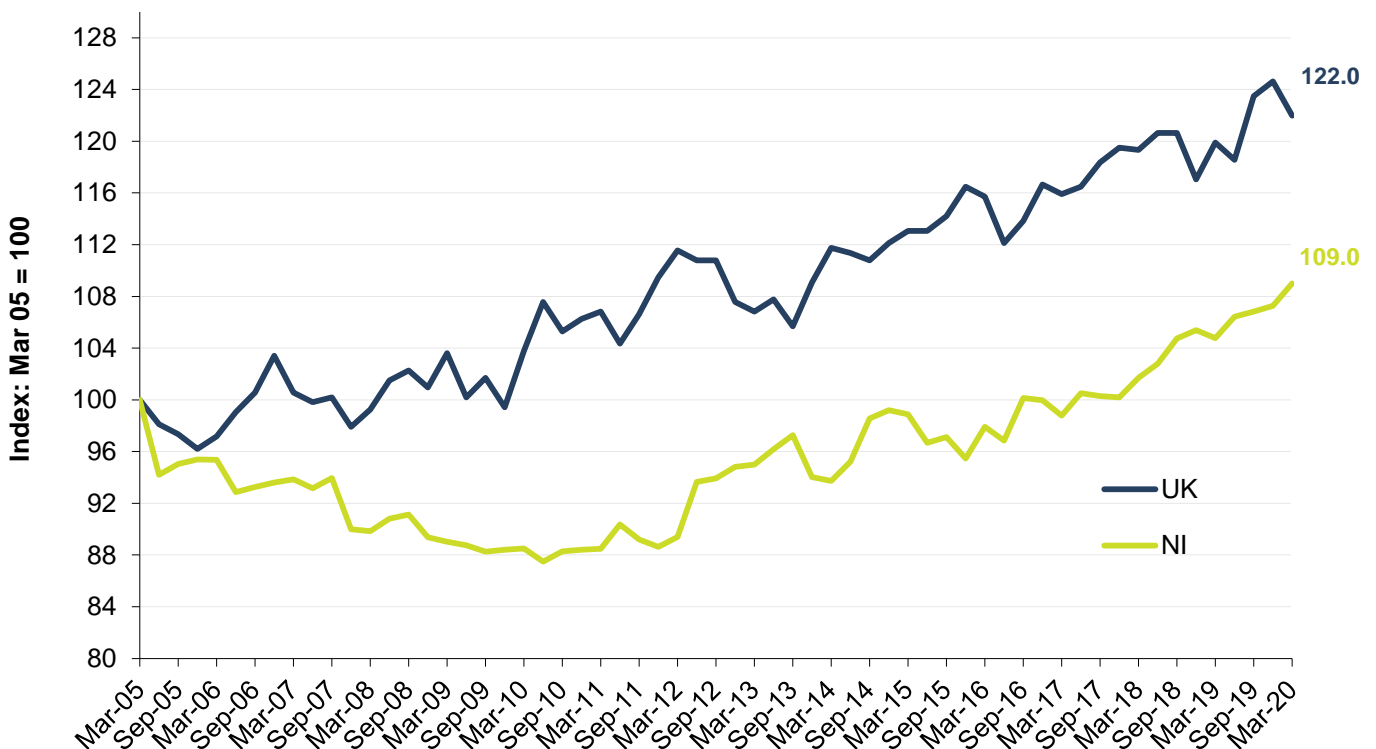
Other industries sector: this sector contains businesses with activity in agriculture, forestry and fishing, mining and quarrying, electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply and water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities (industry sections A,B,D and E).

Estimates from the annual Farm Census are included in industry section A (accounting for approximately 90% 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 1.6% in the other industries sector over the quarter to March 2020 and an increase of 4.1% over the year to 24,450 jobs.**
- **The other industries sector made up 3.1% of all employee jobs.**

Figure 2.5: Index of other industries sector jobs, March 2005 - March 2020



Figures are indexed to March 2005

[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 4,600 over the 10 year period to March 2020.

Key Findings

Seasonally adjusted data showed that the other industries sector increased by 1.6% (390 jobs) over the quarter and by 4.1% (950 jobs) over the year to 24,450 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 March 2020 the unadjusted figures showed an increase of 4.1% (950 jobs) in the other industries sector. The 3 largest contributors to this increase over the year were:

- an increase of 8.2% (400 jobs) in waste collection, treatment and disposal activities; materials recovery.
- an increase of 9.3% (160 jobs) in electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply.
- an increase of 5.4% (100 jobs) in other mining and quarrying.

There were no decreases reported over the year within other industries.

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:

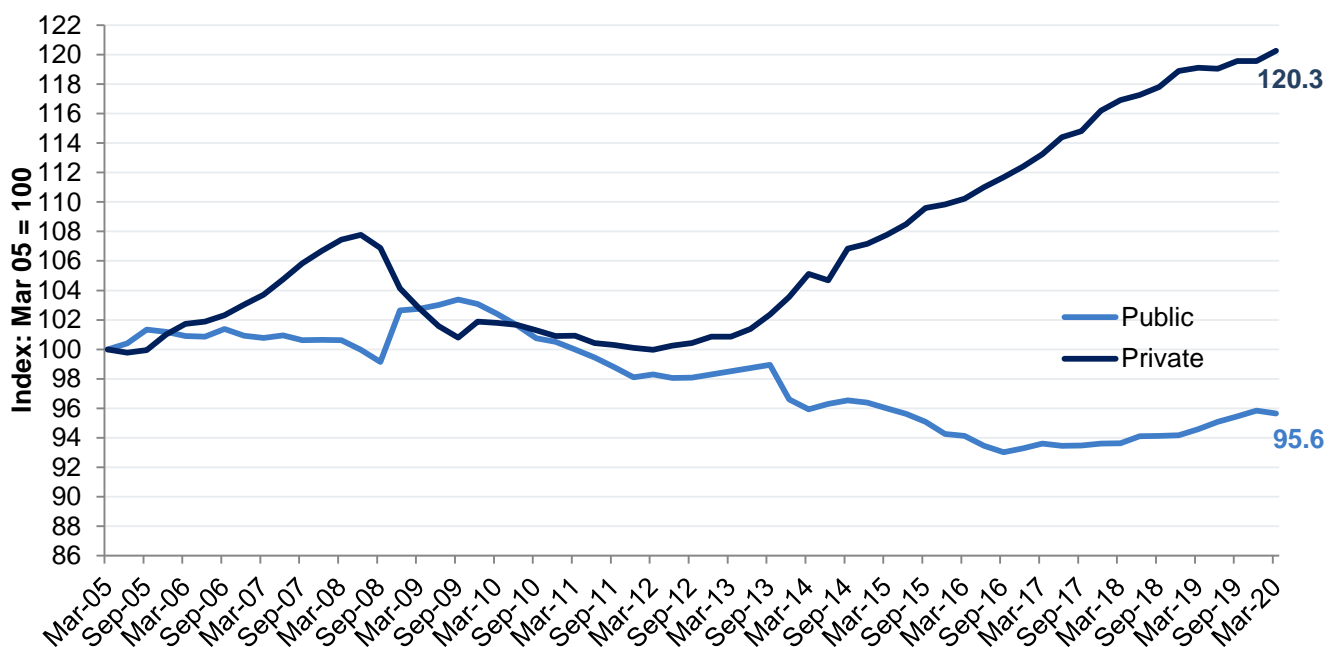
- NI central government
- Bodies under aegis of NI central government
- UK central government employees based in Northern Ireland
- Local government
- Public corporations

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 increased over the quarter and over the year to a series high of 571,850 jobs.
- Seasonally adjusted employee jobs in the public sector decreased over the quarter and increased over the year to 211,090 jobs.

Figure 3.1: Index of NI Private and Public Sector Jobs, March 2005 – March 2020



Figures are indexed to March 2005

[Download in excel](#)

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

- 211,090 employee jobs in the NI public sector.
- 571,850 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 0.6% (3,320 jobs) in the private sector.
- a decrease of 0.2% (-430 jobs) in the public sector.

Changes over the year

The latest seasonally adjusted figures represented:

- an increase of 1.0% (5,540 jobs) in the private sector.
- an increase of 1.1% (2,350 jobs) in the public sector.

There are 17,080 fewer public sector jobs (-7.5%) than the series peak in September 2009.

4 Composition of Employee Jobs

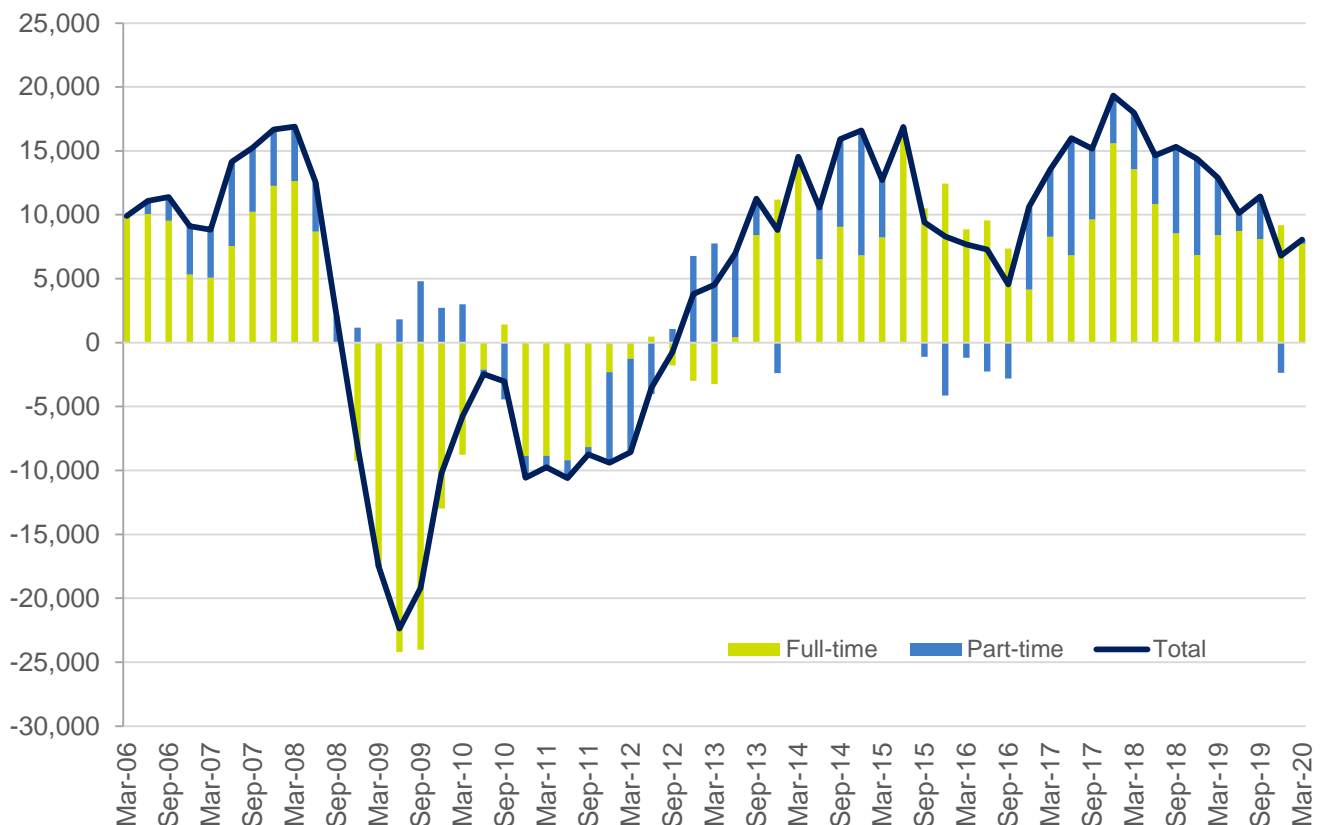
Please note: data in this section have not been adjusted for seasonality.

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

- Full-time jobs marginally increased (0.04% or 190 jobs) while part-time jobs decreased (1.2% or -3,170 jobs) over the quarter.
- Increases were seen in full-time jobs (1.5% or 7,730 jobs) and part-time jobs (0.1% or 340 jobs) over the year.
- Full-time jobs accounted for 66% of all employee jobs, with part-time accounting for 34% in March 2020.

Fig 4.1: Full-time and part-time jobs annual change, March 2005 – March 2020



[Download in excel](#)

The latest estimates showed that:

- Part-time jobs increased by 10.9% (26,330 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 15.5% (68,830 jobs) since this point.
- The number of full-time jobs was at a series high in March 2020.

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 an increase (0.6%) in employee jobs over the quarter and over the year (1.3%) to a series high of 31.10 million jobs in March 2020.
- 9 of the 12 UK regions showed an increase in employee jobs over the year, with the North East of England recording the largest estimated annual increase (4.0%). Northern Ireland employee jobs increased by 1.0% over the year.
- Employee jobs increased over the quarter in all regions of the UK except the West Midlands which reported a marginal fall (-0.1%). Northern Ireland employee jobs increased by 0.4% over the quarter.

Figure 5.1: Annual and Quarterly Percentage Change in Employee Jobs by UK Region, March 2019³ – March 2020 and December 2019 – March 2020



[Download in excel](#)

³ March 2019 figures for GB downloaded from [NOMIS](#) on 11th June 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).

Impact of COVID-19 on data collection and estimates

COVID-19 impacted on the data collection and the validation of employee jobs data, which are collected on the Quarterly Business Survey.

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

	Quarter 1 2020	2019 (median*)
Coverage response rate (<i>returned employees</i>)	58%	77%
Form response rate (<i>returned forms</i>)	56%	74%

*median value achieved at QES database closure of quarter 1, quarter 2, quarter 3 and quarter 4 2019.

COVID-19 has resulted in a decrease in coverage and form response rates in Q1 2020 when compared to 2019 figures, primarily due to the restrictions in place for businesses.

As a result, the employee jobs estimates for March 2020 are likely to be subject to higher revisions than normal over the coming quarters. Comparisons of provisional March 2020 employee jobs estimates at lower industry levels in particular (eg 2 digit Standard Industrial Classification level data), should be treated with caution.

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	Percentage of businesses selected
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 March 2020 employee jobs estimate is 783,500 +/- 5,710. 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 December 2019 seasonally adjusted estimate published in March 2020 has been revised down (-0.5%). 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. The revisions triangle can be accessed on the [revisions](#) page.

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 1.2% in March 2020 reported in this publication is the average number of jobs from Q2 2019 to Q1 2020 minus the average number of jobs from Q2 2018 to Q1 2019, divided by the average number of jobs from Q2 2018 to Q1 2019. 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 15th September 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:

Lynda Kennedy
Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency
Economic & Labour Market Statistics Branch
Colby House, Stranmillis Court
Belfast, BT9 5RR

 Telephone: 028 9052 9351

 Email: economicstats@nisra.gov.uk

 Website: www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/labour-market-and-social-welfare/quarterly-employment-survey

 Twitter: @NISRA

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