

**NISRA**Northern Ireland
Statistics and Research Agency
Gníomhaireacht Thuaisceart Éireann
um Staitisticí agus Taighde

Northern Ireland Quarterly Employment Survey

Theme: Labour Market

Frequency: Quarterly

Geographical area: Northern Ireland

Reference period: Quarter 1 (March) 2023

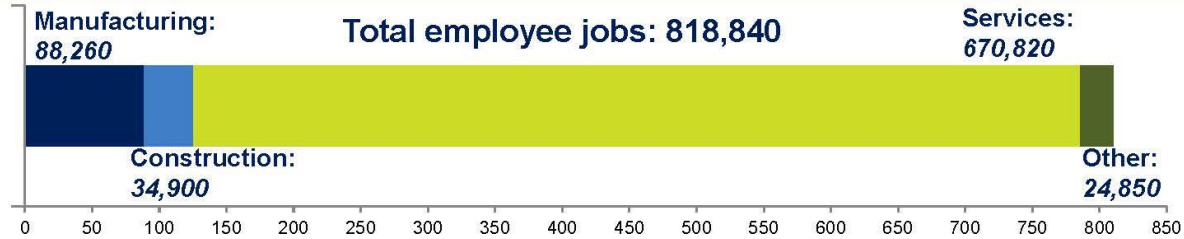
Employee jobs estimates are calculated from the Quarterly Employment Survey (QES) aspect of the Quarterly Business Survey (QBS). The QES has a sample size of approximately 6,000 and covers all employers with 25 or more employees, all public sector employers, all businesses with more than one industry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

The survey date for Quarter 1 was 6 March 2023. All figures are adjusted for seasonality, unless stated otherwise.

Key Points

- Latest estimates show the number of employee jobs reached a series high in March 2023 of 818,840. This was an increase of 4,960 jobs (+0.6%) over the quarter and 22,870 jobs (+2.9%) over the year compared to March 2022.
- March 2023 marked the eighth consecutive quarterly increase in employee jobs, following five quarters of decline.
- In the last five years, employee jobs have increased by 7.5% (+56,910 jobs). There has been an increase of 18.5% (+127,880 jobs) from the series low in March 2012.
- Both the services (670,820 jobs) and other industries (24,850 jobs) sectors reached a new series high in March 2023.
- Quarterly increases in employee jobs were seen within the services (+6,720 jobs) and other industries (+220 jobs) sectors. However, employee jobs in both the construction (-1,360 jobs) and manufacturing (-620 jobs) sectors decreased over the quarter to March 2023.
- Over the year, there have been increases within the services (+23,850 jobs) and other industries (+410) sectors, while there have been decreases within the manufacturing (-1,020 jobs) and construction (-360) sectors to March 2023.
- Private sector jobs reached a new series high in March 2023. Private sector jobs increased over both the quarter (+0.7% or +4,190 jobs) and the year (+3.3% or +19,230 jobs) to 594,680 jobs in March 2023.
- Public sector jobs also increased over both the quarter (+0.3% or +610 jobs) and the year (+1.5% or +3,410 jobs) to 223,510 jobs in March 2023.

NISRA Labour Market Statistics - Quarterly Employment Survey, March 2023



Change by Broad Industry Sector (seasonally adjusted)

Manufacturing



Q: -0.7% (-620 jobs)
Y: -1.1% (-1,020 jobs)

Construction



Q: -3.7% (-1,360 jobs)
Y: -1.0% (-360 jobs)

Services



Q: +1.0% (+6,720 jobs)
Y: +3.7% (+23,850 jobs)

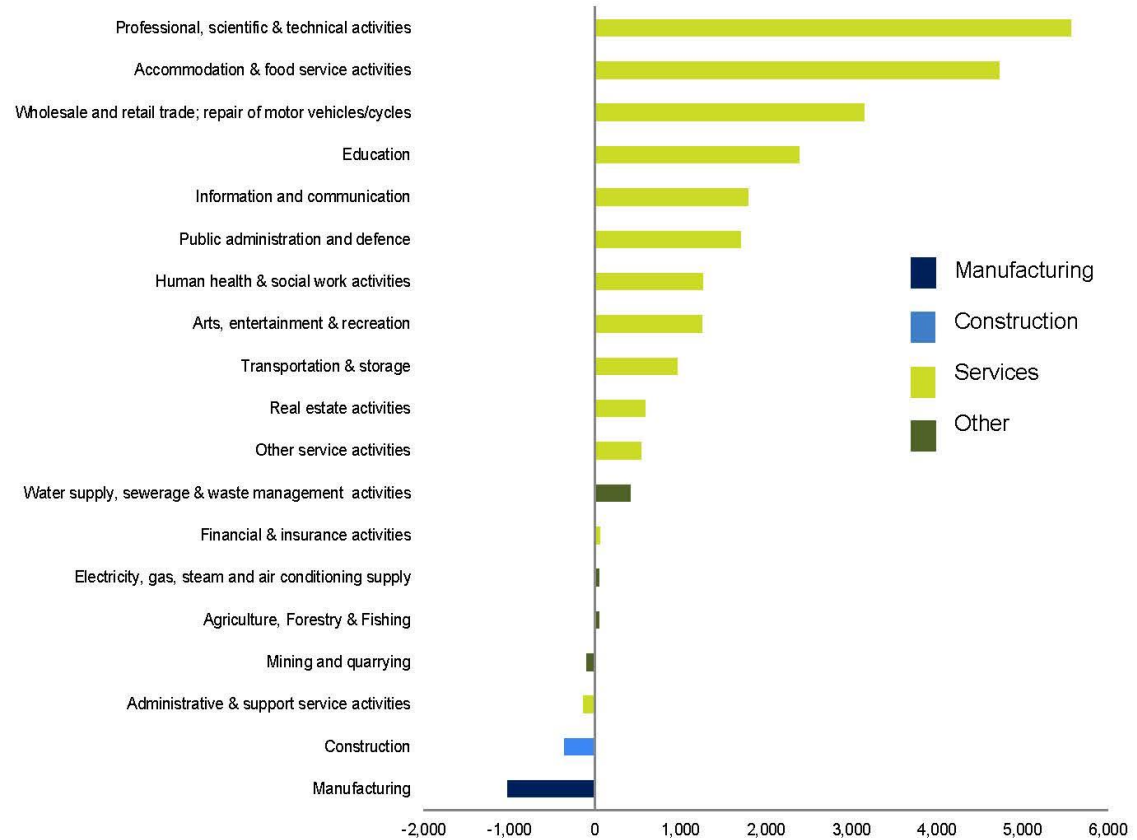
Other industries



Q: +0.9% (+220 jobs)
Y: +1.7% (+410 jobs)

Q = quarterly change / Y = yearly change

Annual change by industry section (seasonally adjusted)



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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](#) and amended the format and structure of reports in line with accessibility regulations.
- Changed [timing of release](#) in line with change in ONS release practices in response to COVID-19.

1 Summary of Employee Jobs

The survey date for Quarter 1 was 6 March 2023 for Northern Ireland (NI).

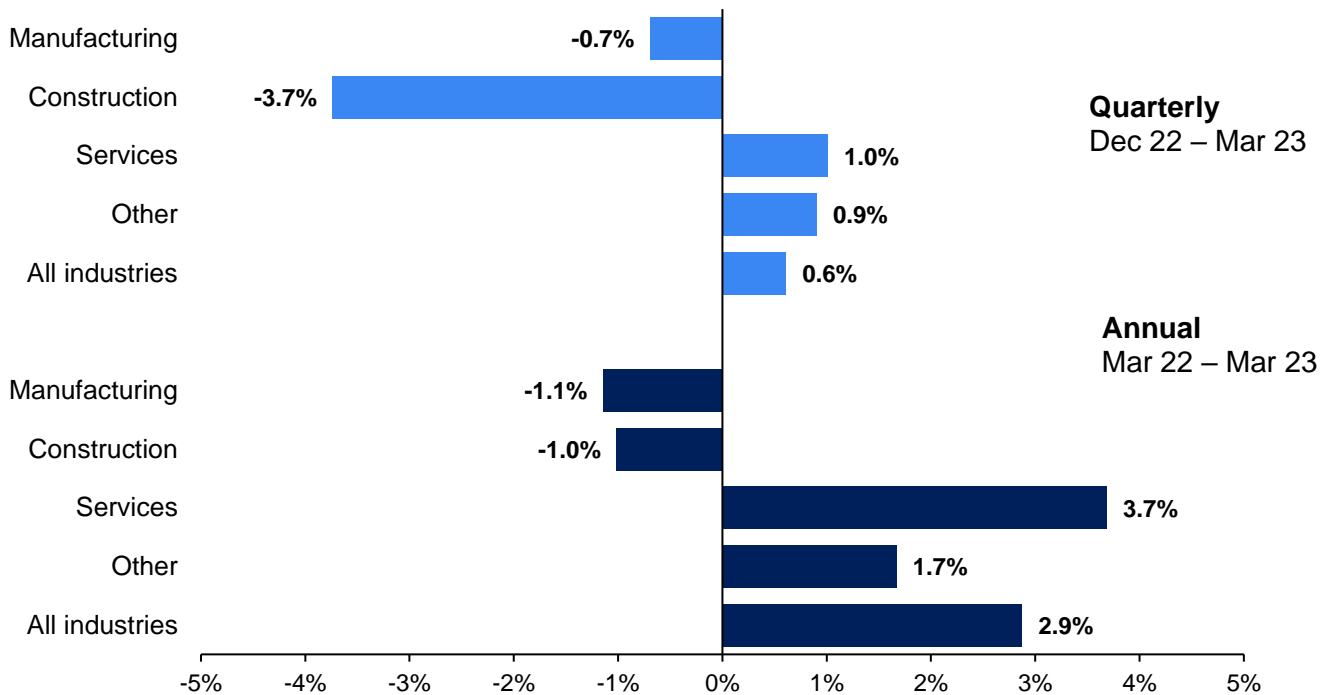
Change in employee jobs

The latest employee jobs estimate for NI at March 2023 was 818,840 (+/- 4,850¹).

This was:

- an increase of 0.6% (+4,960 jobs) over the quarter from the revised December 2022 estimate of 813,870.
- an increase of 2.9% (+22,870 jobs) over the year from the revised March 2022 estimate of 795,960.
- The quarterly change in employee jobs was not found to be statistically significant, however, the change over the year from March 2022 was found to be statistically significant.

Figure 1.1: Annual and Quarterly Changes in Employee Jobs at Section Level



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Change over the quarter

Comparing March 2023 employee jobs to the revised December 2022 estimates show:

- a decrease in the manufacturing sector of 0.7% (-620 jobs) to 88,260 jobs.
- a decrease in the construction sector of 3.7% (-1,360 jobs) to 34,900 jobs.
- an increase in the services sector of 1.0% (+6,720 jobs) to 670,820 jobs.
- an increase in the other industries sector of 0.9% (+220 jobs) to 24,850 jobs.

¹ Represents 95% confidence interval around estimate. More information is available in the [QES Confidence Intervals User Guidance PDF \(665KB\)](#).

Change over the year

Comparing March 2023 employee jobs to the revised March 2022 estimates show:

- a decrease in the manufacturing sector of 1.1% (-1,020 jobs) to 88,260 jobs.
- a decrease in the construction sector of 1.0% (-360 jobs) to 34,900 jobs.
- an increase in the services sector of 3.7% (+23,850 jobs) to 670,820 jobs.
- an increase in the other industries sector of 1.7% (+410 jobs) to 24,850 jobs.

Annualised change

Comparing the employee jobs data for Quarter 2 2021 – Quarter 1 2022 to Quarter 2 2022 – Quarter 1 2023 showed:

- an increase in the manufacturing sector of 1.1%.
- an increase in the construction sector of 4.4%.
- an increase in the services sector of 4.1%.
- an increase in the other industries sector of 0.6%.

Public / private sector changes

Employee jobs estimates for the public and private sectors in March 2023 show:

- an increase of 0.3% (+610 jobs) in the public sector over the quarter and an increase of 1.5% (+3,410 jobs) over the year to 223,510 jobs.
- an increase of 0.7% (+4,190 jobs) in the private sector over the quarter and an increase of 3.3% (+19,230 jobs) over the year to 594,680 jobs. Private sector jobs have now reached a series high in March 2023.

Commentary

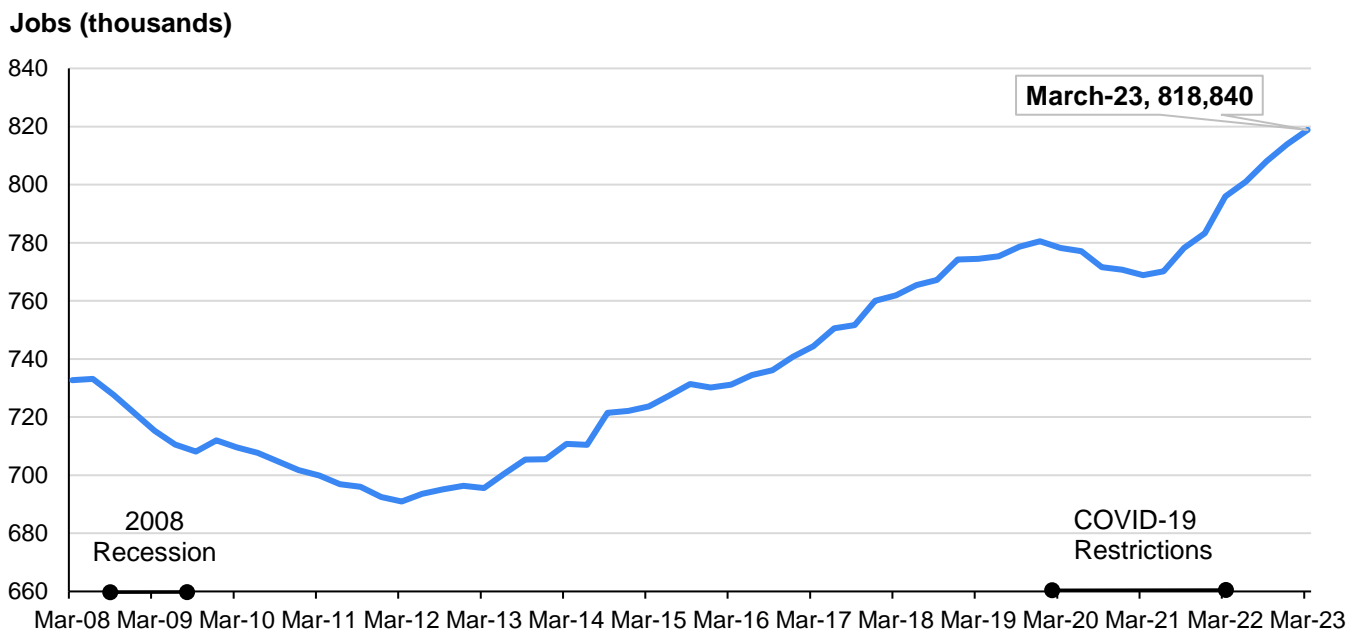
Estimates for March 2023 showed that employee jobs have reached a series high for the sixth consecutive quarter. March 2023 marked the eighth consecutive quarterly increase in employee jobs, following five quarters of decline throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, reaching a low point in March 2021. March 2023 estimates showed that employee jobs are now +38,350 jobs (+4.9%) above the pre-pandemic level seen in December 2019.

Preliminary estimates from the Quarterly Employment Survey (QES) showed that NI employee jobs increased over the quarter (+0.6% or +4,960 jobs) to 818,840 jobs in March 2023. The services (670,820 jobs) and other industries (24,850 jobs) sectors both reached a series high in March 2023. The quarterly increase in employee jobs was largely driven by the services industry sector (+6,720 jobs).

Employee jobs also increased over the year to March 2023 (+2.9% or +22,870 jobs), and increases were seen in the services (+23,850 jobs) and other industries (+410 jobs) sectors. The annual increase in March 2023 was mainly driven by the services industry sector.

Despite total employee jobs being at a series high, the manufacturing and construction sectors reported a decrease in employee jobs over both the quarter (-620 and -1,360 jobs, respectively) and the year (-1,020 and -360 jobs, respectively).

Figure 1.2: Seasonally Adjusted Jobs in NI, March 2008 – March 2023



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Public sector jobs increased over both the quarter (+0.3% or +610 jobs) and the year (+1.5% or +3,410 jobs). Public sector jobs have been on a gradually increasing trend since September 2016, although they are still 2.0% (-4,660 jobs) lower than the series peak in September 2009.

Private sector jobs also increased over the quarter (+0.7% or +4,190 jobs) and the year (+3.3% or +19,230 jobs) reaching a series high 594,680 jobs.

The UK also reported increases in employee jobs over the quarter (+1.0%) and the year (+2.8%) to 32.38 million jobs in March 2023.

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 6 March 2023 for NI.

The QES provides short-term employee jobs estimates for NI 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 Skills for Life and Work and Traineeship programme 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, where the seasonally adjusted series started in 2005. It should be noted that from Quarter 2 2020 to Quarter 3 2021 the QES estimates included those who were furloughed under the [Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme \(CJRS\)](#).

Figures from the QES are included in the [Labour Market Report](#) 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 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 section](#) of the website.

Results are provisional and subject to revisions 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 is available from the [Quarterly Employment Survey Revisions page](#).

2 NI Employee Jobs

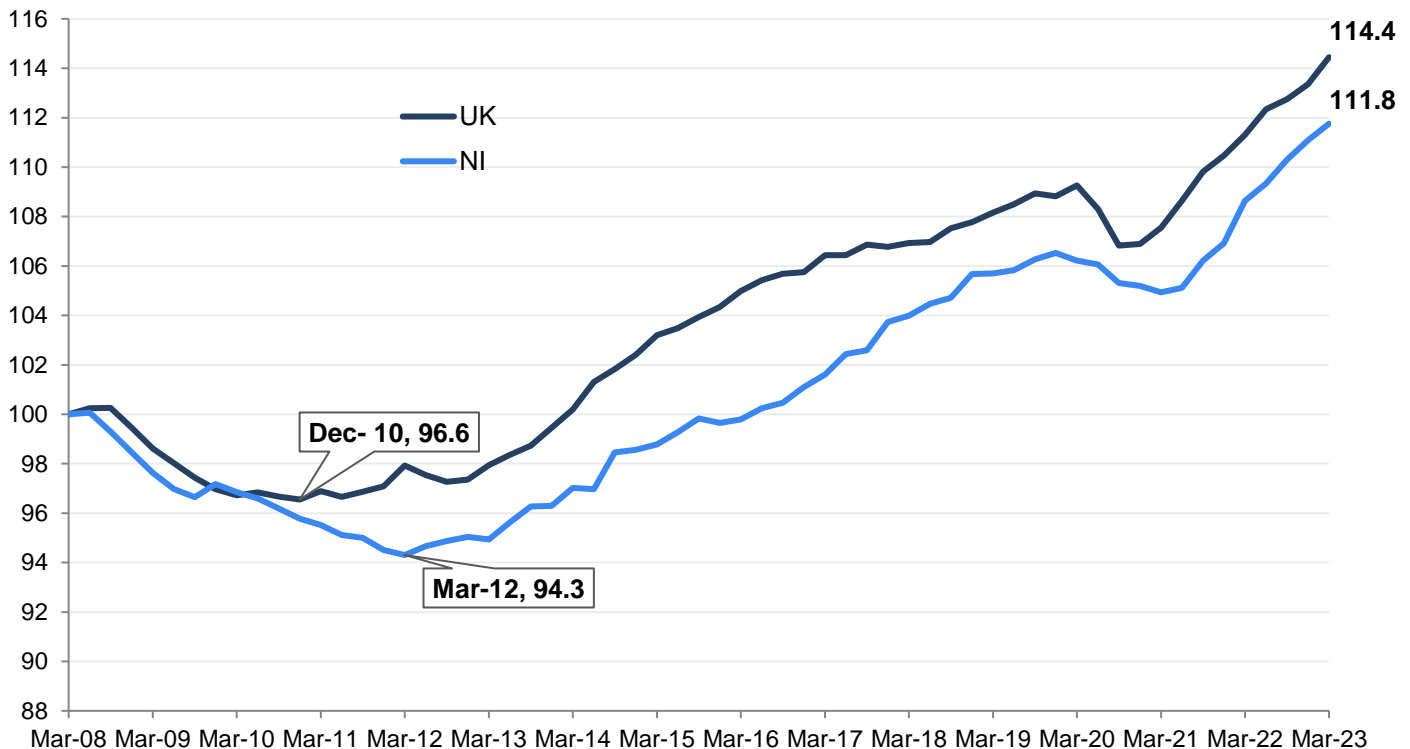
Employee: anyone aged 16 years or over that is directly paid from a business's payroll for carrying out a full-time or part-time job or being on a training scheme in Northern Ireland. The QES counts the number of jobs rather than the number of persons with jobs.

Key Findings:

- Employee jobs increased both over the quarter (+0.6% or +4,960 jobs) and the year (+2.9% or +22,870 jobs) to 818,840 in March 2023, reaching a series high.
- Both the services sector (670,820 jobs) and other industries sector (24,850 jobs) reached a new series high in March 2023.

Figure 2.1: Index of Employee Jobs, March 2008 – March 2023

Index: Mar 08 = 100



[Download Q1-23 Data](#)

Figure 2.1 shows estimated employee jobs, indexed to allow comparison between NI and the UK. NI employee jobs increased over both the quarter (0.6%) and the year (2.9%). The UK also reported an increase in employee jobs over the quarter (1.0%) and over the year (2.8%) to reach a series high in March 2023. Following the 2008 downturn, the UK reached its lowest point in December 2010, more than a year before the NI low in March 2012. NI jobs are now 18.5% above the low point in March 2012 while UK jobs are also 18.5% above their December 2010 level.

Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic (March 2020), the total NI jobs are shown to have reduced quarter-on-quarter until March 2021 before showing signs of recovery. In comparison, the UK only showed a reduction in total employee jobs between March 2020 and September 2020, with quarter-on-quarter increases seen since then until March 2023.

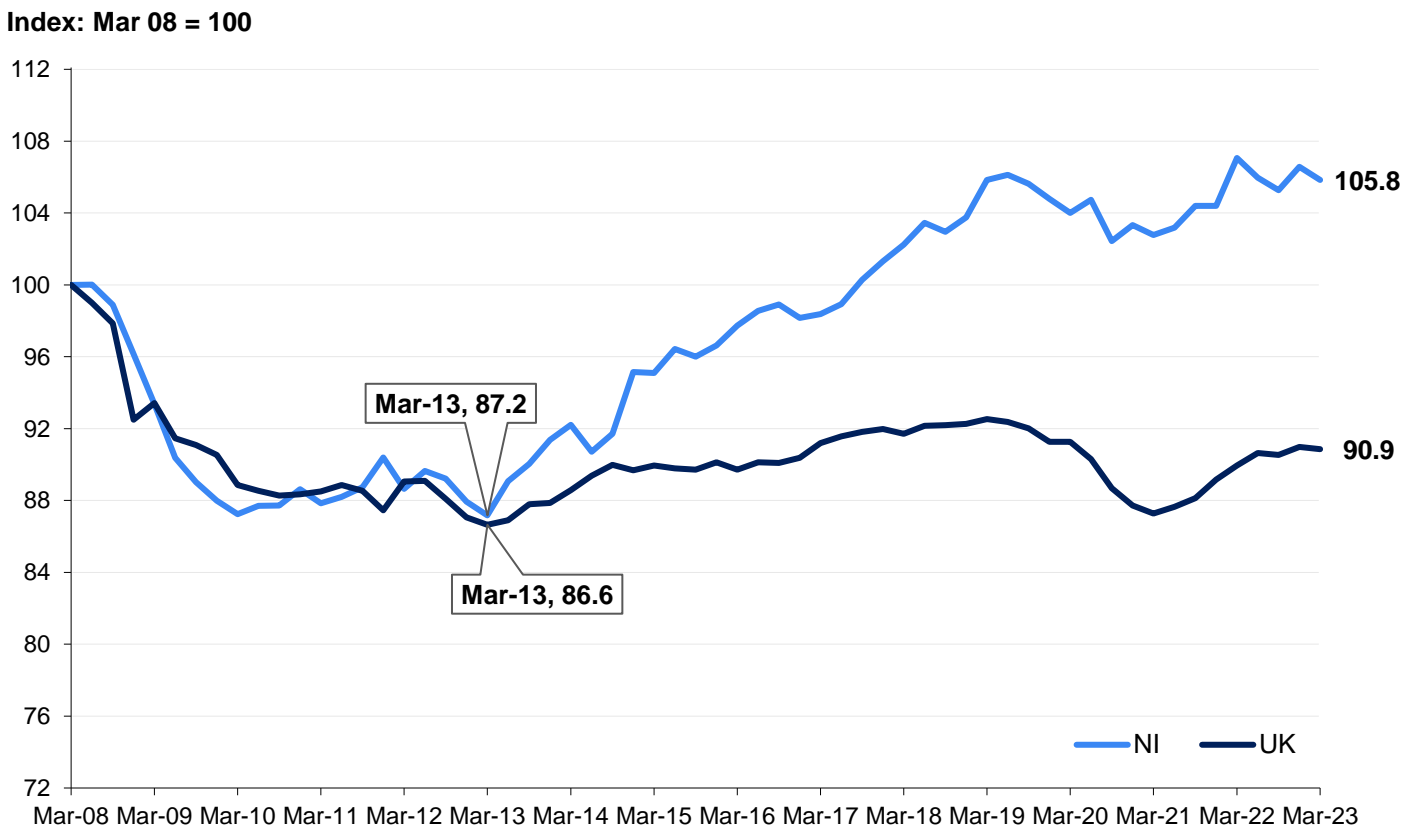
Manufacturing sector

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:

- **Manufacturing sector jobs showed a decrease of 0.7% (-620 jobs) over the quarter and a decrease of 1.1% (-1,020 jobs) over the year to 88,260 jobs in March 2023.**
- **The manufacturing sector accounted for 10.8% of all employee jobs in March 2023.**

Figure 2.2: Index of manufacturing employee jobs, March 2008 – March 2023



[Download Q1-23 Data](#)

Both Northern Ireland and UK manufacturing sectors experienced a decrease in employee jobs over the quarter to March 2023. NI jobs decreased by -0.7% (-620 jobs), while the UK manufacturing sector experienced a decrease of 0.1% (-3,000 jobs) over the same period.

Both NI and the UK followed a similar trend and reached a series low in March 2013. However, from then the two series begin to diverge, with NI showing stronger growth in the manufacturing sector compared to the UK. Manufacturing jobs in NI are currently 21.4% (+15,560 jobs) above the March 2013 low point.

Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic (March 2020), the number of manufacturing jobs in NI have increased by 1.8% (+1,520 jobs), in comparison to the UK which have decreased by 0.4% (-11,000 jobs).

Key Findings

The manufacturing sector decreased by 0.7% (-620 jobs) over the quarter and decreased by 1.1% (-1,020 jobs) over the year to 88,260 jobs in March 2023.

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 2023 the **unadjusted figures** showed a decrease of 1.1% (-1,010 jobs) in the manufacturing sector. The 3 largest decreases were:

- a decrease of 4.5% (-1,030 jobs) in manufacture of food products
- a decrease of 25% (-790 jobs) in manufacture of wood and of products of wood and cork, except furniture; manufacture of articles of straw and plaiting materials
- a decrease of 35.8% (-670 jobs) in repair and installation of machinery and equipment

The decreases over the year were partially offset by some increases in manufacturing subsectors; the 3 largest increases over the year being:

- an increase of 10.3% (+800 jobs) in manufacture of machinery and equipment n.e.c
- an increase of 12.1% (+690 jobs) in manufacture of other transport equipment
- an increase of 13.8% (+400 jobs) in manufacture of basic pharmaceutical products and pharmaceutical preparations

For figures broken down by 2 digit SIC please see table 5.10 within historical data on the NISRA website – [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

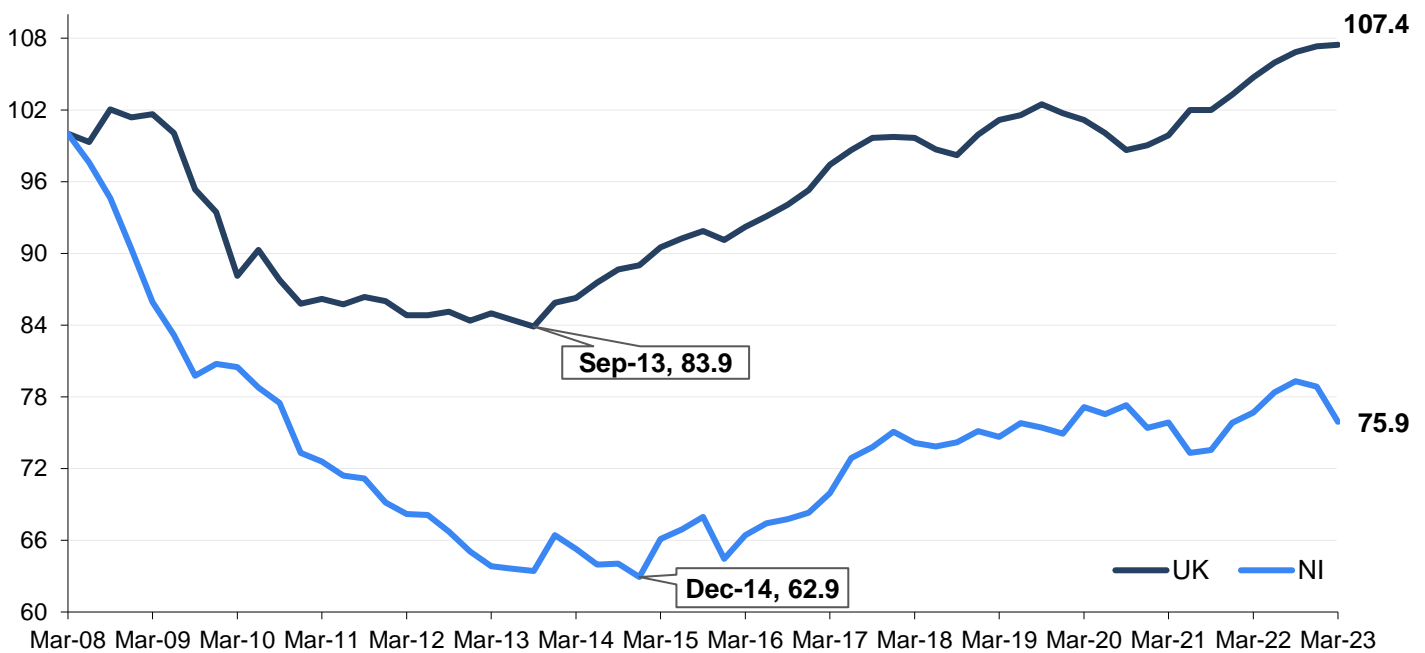
Construction sector: construction is the process of creating and building infrastructure or a facility. It differs from manufacturing in that manufacturing typically involves mass production of similar items without a designated purchaser and construction is typically done on location for a known client.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

Key Findings:

- Construction sector jobs showed a decrease of 3.7% (-1,360 jobs) over the quarter and a decrease of 1.0% (-360 jobs) over the year to 34,900 jobs in March 2023.
- The construction sector accounted for 4.3% of all employee jobs in March 2023.

Figure 2.3: Index of construction employee jobs, March 2008 – March 2023

Index: Mar 08 = 100



[Download Q1-23 Data](#)

Construction sector jobs showed a decrease over the quarter to March 2023 (-3.7% or -1,360 jobs) and a decrease over the year (-1.0% or -360 jobs). The most recent series low in the NI construction sector was in December 2014 (28,940 jobs). The latest estimates show a 20.6% (+5,970 jobs) improvement on this level; however, the number of employee jobs in the NI construction sector remains 24.1% (-11,080 jobs) lower than the series peak in March 2008.

Most recent estimates show that the UK construction sector has reached a series high in March 2023 and is now 28.1% (+345,000 jobs) above the series low in September 2013.

Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic (March 2020), the number of construction jobs in NI have decreased by 1.6% (-570 jobs). In comparison, construction jobs in the UK have increased by 6.2% (+92,000 jobs).

Key Findings

The construction sector decreased by 3.7% (-1,360 jobs) over the quarter and decreased by 1.0% (-360 jobs) over the year to 34,900 jobs in March 2023.

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 2023 the **unadjusted figures** showed a decrease of 1.1% (-390 jobs) in the construction sector.

The following changes occurred over the year:

- a decrease of 4.4% (-350 jobs) in construction of buildings.
- a decrease of 0.6% (-120 jobs) in specialised construction activities.
- an increase of 0.9% (+80 jobs) in civil engineering.

For figures broken down by 2 digit SIC please see table 5.10 within historical data on the NISRA website - [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

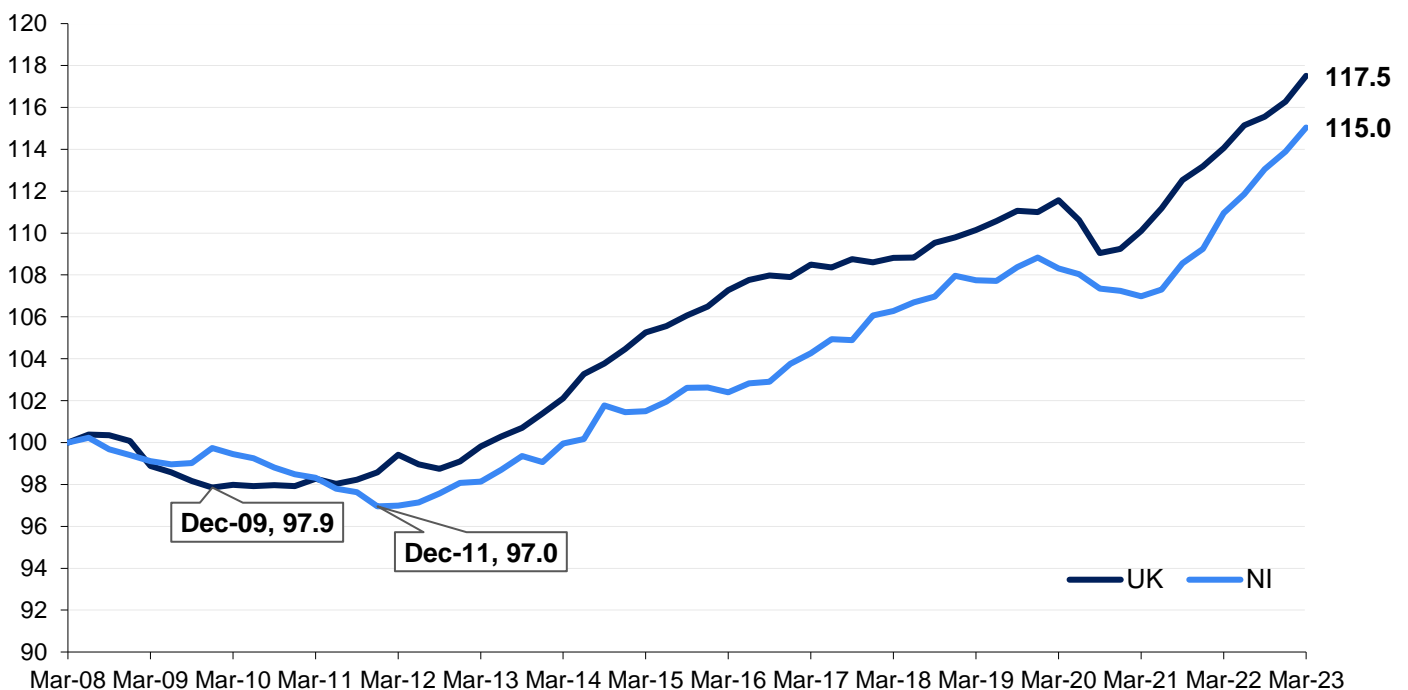
Services sector: the services sector contains businesses which sell services and skills; and includes education, public administration and health and social work activities. A full list of the industry sections G-S which are included in the services sector can be found in table 5.5 within the supplementary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

Key Findings:

- **Services sector jobs showed an increase of 1.0% (+6,720 jobs) over the quarter and 3.7% (+23,850 jobs) over the year to 670,820 jobs in March 2023.**
- **March 2023 marked the eighth consecutive quarterly increase in services sector employee jobs.**
- **The services sector accounted for 81.9% of all employee jobs in NI in March 2023**

Figure 2.4: Index of services employee jobs, March 2008 – March 2023

Index: Mar 08 = 100



[Download Q1-23 Data](#)

Services sector jobs in NI experienced an increase over the quarter to March 2023 (+1.0% or +6,720 jobs) to reach a new series high. The number of employee jobs in the NI services sector has increased by 8.2% (+51,110 jobs) over the last 5 years. There has been an increase of 18.7% (+105,460 jobs) in employee jobs in the services sector since the low in December 2011. The UK also experienced increases in service sector jobs over the quarter (+1.1% or +290,000 jobs) and over the year (+3.0% or 813,000 jobs) to reach a series high in March 2023.

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic services jobs in NI experienced a more prolonged decline compared to the rest of the UK. NI services jobs declined each quarter from March 2020 through to March 2021, before beginning to recover in June 2021. In contrast, UK services jobs began to recover much sooner, after only two quarters of decline, in December 2020.

Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic (March 2020), the number of service jobs in NI have increased by 6.2% (+39,250 jobs). Similarly, UK service sector jobs have increased by 5.3% (+1,402,000 jobs).

Key Findings

The services sector increased by 1.0% (+6,720 jobs) over the quarter and by 3.7% (+23,850 jobs) over the year to 670,820 jobs in March 2023.

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 2023 the **unadjusted figures** showed an increase of 3.7% (+23,880 jobs) in the services sector. The 3 largest contributors to this increase over the year were:

- an increase of 11.7% (+4,640 jobs) in food and beverage service activities.
- an increase of 3.7% (+3,220 jobs) in retail trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles.
- an increase of 43.8% (+3,080 jobs) in activities of head offices; management consultancy activities.

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

- a decrease of 15.8% (-1,040 jobs) in activities auxiliary to financial services and insurance activities.
- a decrease of 6.1% (-730 jobs) in office administrative, office support and other business support activities.
- a decrease of 1.4% (-360 jobs) in residential care activities.

For figures broken down by 2 digit SIC please see table 5.10 within historical data on the NISRA website - [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).

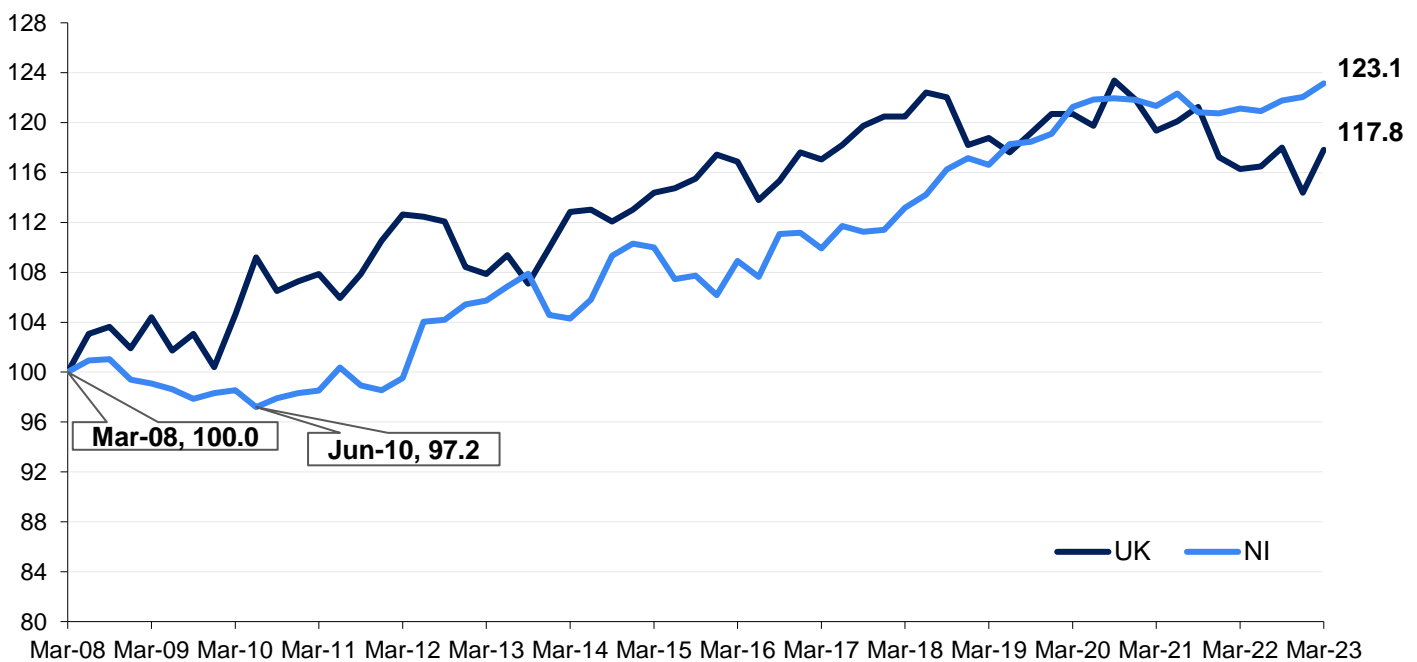
Estimates from the annual Farm Census are included in industry section A (accounting for approximately 90% of the employee jobs in the section). The Farm Census figures are published annually in January and relate to the previous September.

Key Findings:

- The other industries sector showed an increase of 0.9% (+220 jobs) over the quarter and of 1.7% (+410 jobs) over the year to 24,850 jobs in March 2023.
- The other industries sector made up 3.0% of all employee jobs in March 2023.

Figure 2.5: Index of other industries sector jobs, March 2008 – March 2023

Index: Mar 08 = 100



[Download Q1-23 Data](#)

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 16.5% (+3,520 jobs) over the 10-year period to March 2023. UK other industry jobs increased by 9.2% (+52,000 jobs) over the same period.

Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic (March 2020), the number of jobs in other industries for NI have increased by 1.6% (+380 jobs), whilst UK jobs have decreased by 2.4% (-15,000 jobs).

Key Findings

The other industries sector increased by 0.9% (+220 jobs) over the quarter and by 1.7% (+410 jobs) over the year to 24,850 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 2023 the **unadjusted figures** showed an increase of 1.7% (+410 jobs) in the other industries sector. The 3 largest contributors to this increase over the year were:

- an increase of 5.5% (+300 jobs) in waste collection, treatment and disposal activities; materials recovery.
- an increase of 6.8% (+90 jobs) in water collection, treatment and supply.
- an increase of 0.7% (+80 jobs) in crop and animal production, hunting and related service activities.

The overall increase was partially offset by some decreases in services subsectors, the 2 decreases over the year being:

- a decrease of 5.8% (-110 jobs) in other mining and quarrying.
- a decrease of 13.2% (-40 jobs) in forestry and logging.

For figures broken down by 2 digit SIC please see table 5.10 within historical data on the NISRA website - [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:

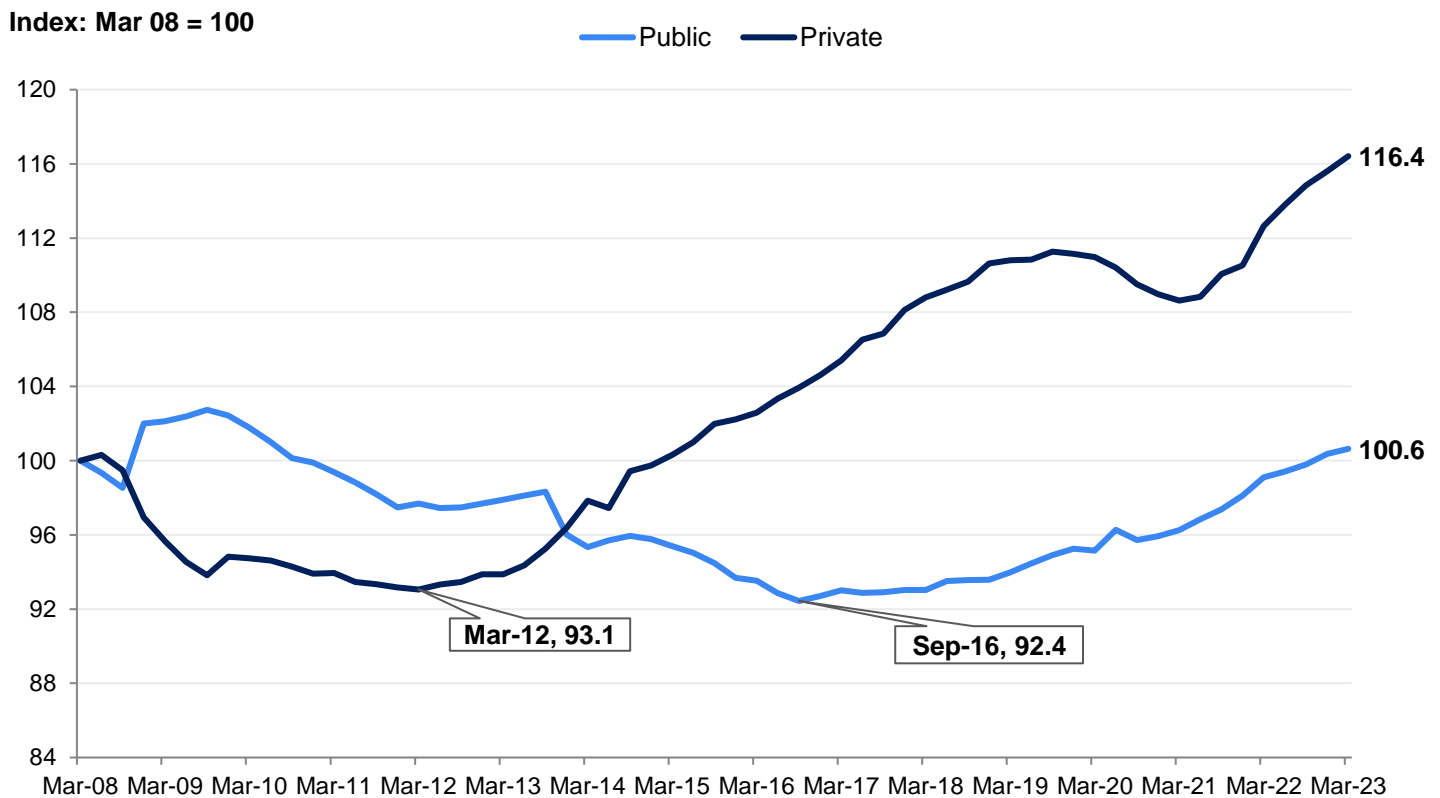
1. NI central government
2. Bodies under aegis of NI central government
3. UK central government employees based in Northern Ireland
4. Local government
5. Public corporations

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

Key Findings:

- Private sector jobs increased over both the quarter and the year to 594,680 jobs. Private sector jobs reached a new series high in March 2023.
- Public sector jobs increased over both the quarter and the year to 223,510 jobs.
- The NI public sector made up 27.3%, and the private sector 72.6%, of all employee jobs in March 2023.
- NI public sector jobs as a proportion of the NI population¹ was 12%. This compares to 9% in the UK.

Figure 3.1: Index of NI Public and Private Sector Jobs, March 2008 – March 2023



[Download Q1-23 Data](#)

¹ Latest population estimate available – [June 2021](#).

Changes over the quarter

The latest figures represented:

- an increase of 0.7% (+4,190 jobs) in the private sector.
- an increase of 0.3% (+610 jobs) in the public sector.

Changes over the year

The latest figures represented:

- an increase of 3.3% (+19,230 jobs) in the private sector.
- an increase of 1.5% (+3,410 jobs) in the public sector.

March 2023 marked the seventh quarterly annual increase in private sector jobs, following five consecutive quarters of annual decline. Private sector jobs have increased 7.0% (+38,920 jobs) in the last five years reaching a new series high in March 2023.

Following a period of annual decline in public sector employee jobs between June 2015 and June 2017, there has been continuous growth in public sector jobs between September 2017 and March 2023. However, there are 4,660 fewer public sector jobs (-2.0%) than at the series peak in September 2009.

4 Composition of Employee Jobs

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

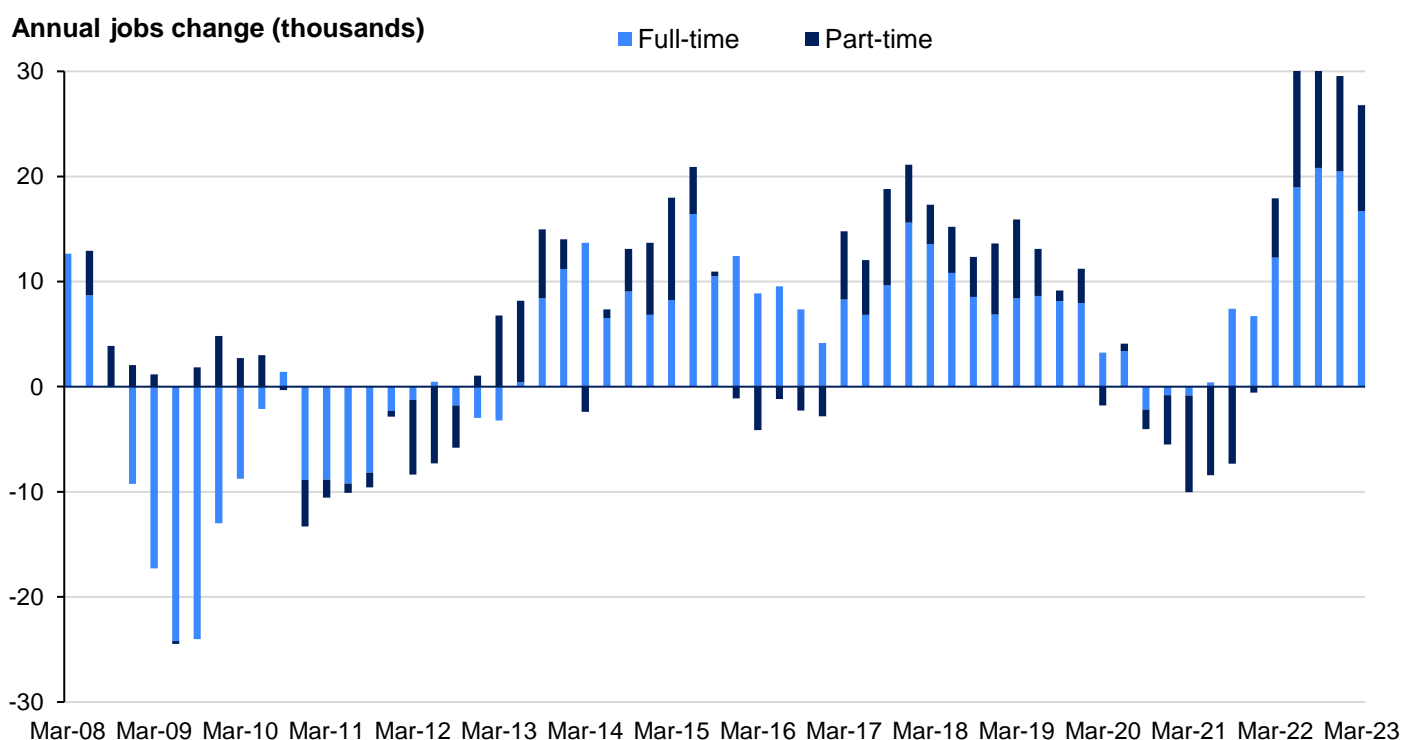
Part-time: part-time means those who normally work 30 hours a week or less.

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

Key Findings

- The number of full-time jobs decreased (-0.2% or -1,280 jobs) over the quarter to March 2023, while the number of part-time jobs increased (+1.0% or 2,720 jobs).
- Over the year to March 2023, both full-time (+3.2% or +16,690 jobs) and part-time jobs (+2.3% or +6,190 jobs) increased.
- Part-time jobs reached a new series high and accounted for 34% of all employee jobs in March 2023.

Figure 4.1: Full-time and part-time jobs annual change, March 2008 – March 2023



[Download Q1-23 Data](#)

The latest estimates showed that:

- Part-time jobs have increased by 16.3% (+39,340 jobs) since the series low point in March 2012.
- The low point for full-time jobs was a year later than for part-time jobs in March 2013. The number of full-time jobs has increased by 20.8% (+92,500 jobs) since this point.
- Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic (March 2020) until March 2023, full-time jobs have increased by 5.5% (+28,150 jobs), with part-time jobs also increasing by 4.7% (+12,630 jobs).

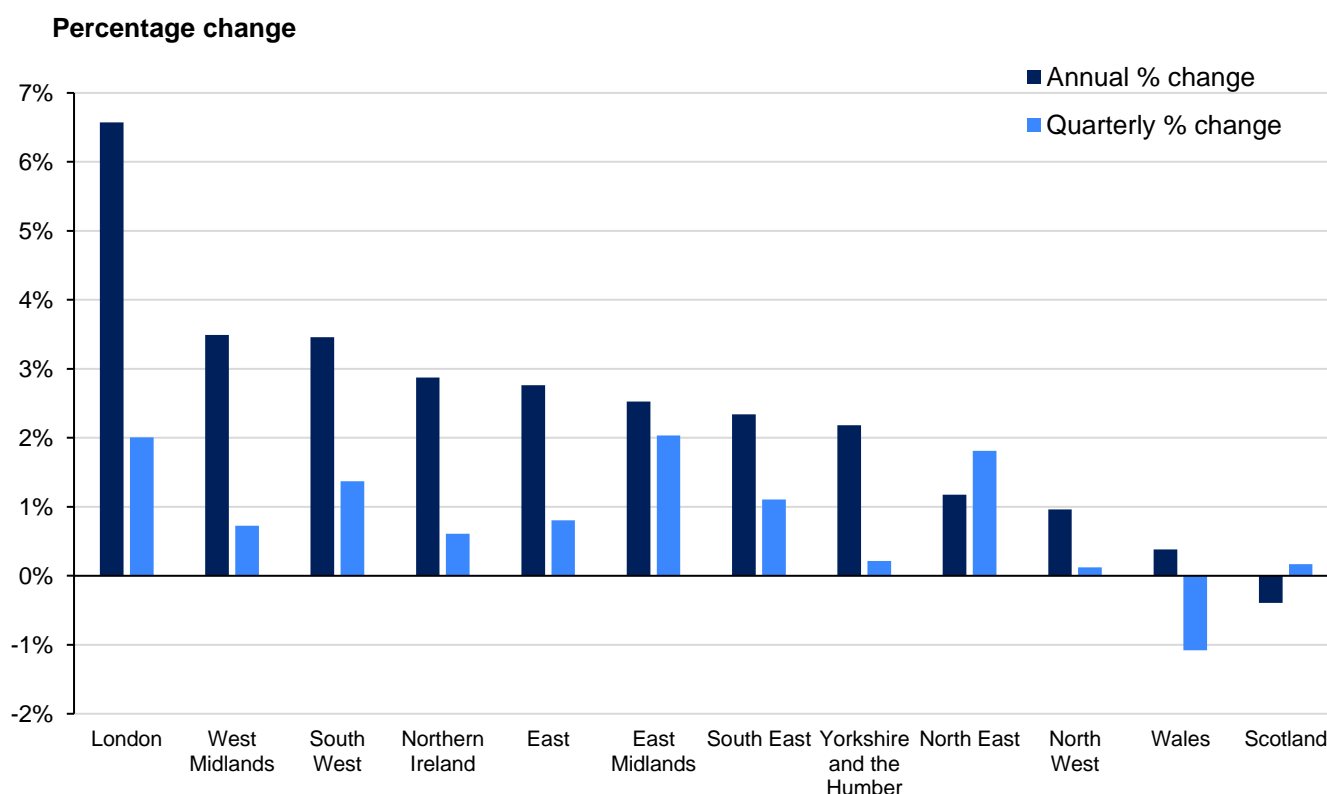
5 UK Comparisons

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 increases in employee jobs over the quarter (+1.0%) and over the year (+2.8%) to 32.38 million jobs in March 2023.
- Out of all twelve UK regions, eleven regions showed an increase over the quarter. NI employee jobs increased by 0.6% over the quarter.
- Out of all twelve UK regions, eleven regions showed an increase over the year, in which London recorded the largest estimated annual increase (+6.6%).
- Out of the twelve UK regions, NI is currently reporting the fourth highest employee job increase over the year (2.9%).

Figure 5.1: Annual and Quarterly percentage change in Employee Jobs by UK Region, March 2022 – March 2023 and December 2022 – March 2023



[Download Q1-23 Data](#)

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

Due to restrictions in place for businesses, COVID-19 impacted on the data collection and validation of employee jobs data, which are collected on the Quarterly Business Survey. The following table provides an overview of median coverage response rates for 2019, 2020, and 2021, compared to Quarter 1 2023:

Response rate type	Q1 2023	2022 (median*)	2021 (median*)	2020 (median*)
Coverage response rate (<i>returned employees</i>)	68.8%	68.5%	66%	64%

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

Revisions to employee job estimates can be tracked via the revisions triangle on the [Quarterly Employment Survey Revisions page](#). Comparisons of provisional employee jobs estimates at lower industry levels in particular (e.g. 2 digit Standard Industrial Classification level), should be treated with caution.

It should be noted that from Quarter 2 2020 to Quarter 3 2021 the QES estimates included those who were furloughed under the [Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme \(CJRS\)](#).

An [analysis of the furlough data](#) collected on QES and a comparison to the official estimates produced by HMRC was published on 14 June 2022.

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 PDF \(665KB\)](#) provide a measure of the size of the sampling variability. The 95% confidence interval for the March 2023

employee jobs estimate is 818,840 +/- 4,850. 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 PDF \(555KB\)](#) 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.

Revisions Policy

QES estimates are revised quarterly to reflect the latest information provided by employers. The December 2022 seasonally adjusted estimate published in March 2023 has been revised up (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 and (b) where cross survey congruence checks provide more accurate data. As a result of seasonal adjustment factors which are re-estimated every quarter, there may be amendments to the seasonally adjusted series outside of the revisable period (previous four quarters) and applicable back to March 2005. 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 [Quarterly Employment Survey 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
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

Date of change	Summary	Revision applied from
Sep 2018	Registered housing associations in NI moved from section N to L in sections level data	Mar 2005
Aug 2020	Registered housing associations in NI reclassified to private sector*	Sep 2020

*See note on the [Quarterly Employment Survey Revisions](#) page for further information.

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](#).

Seasonal adjustment models are periodically reviewed as seasonal trends can change over time. The latest review was carried out in April 2022 and more information can be found in the QES Seasonal Adjustment Review Report on the [Quarterly Employment Survey Revisions page](#). The next seasonal adjustment review is scheduled to take place in 2023.

Alternative measures of employment

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

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

[Labour Force Survey \(LFS\)](#) - 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.

[Agricultural Census](#) - the numbers of employees in agriculture are available separately from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Agricultural 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](#) – provides further information on NICS employee jobs. 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. 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).

Annualised or Rolling 4 Quarters

Annualised change 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 +3.6% in March 2023 reported in this publication is the average number of jobs from Q2 2022 to Q1 2023 minus the average number of jobs from Q2 2021 to Q1 2022, divided by the average number of jobs from Q2 2021 to Q1 2022. 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 12 September 2023.

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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