

Northern Ireland Quarterly Employment Survey

Theme: Labour Market

Frequency: Quarterly

Geographical area: Northern Ireland

Reference period: Quarter 3 (September) 2023

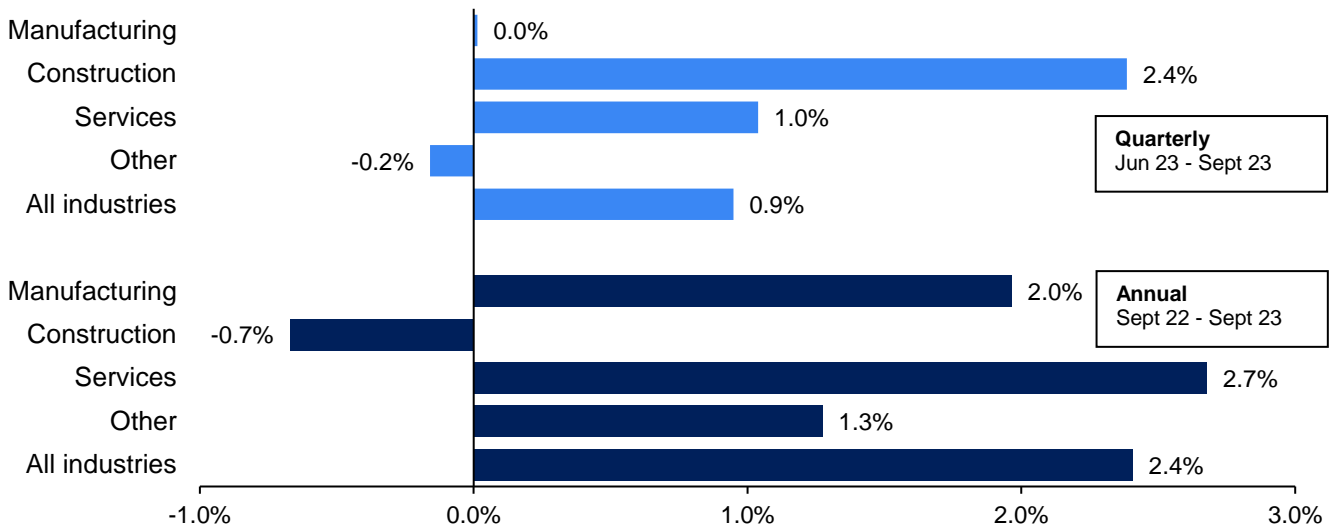
Employee jobs estimates are calculated from the Quarterly Employment Survey (QES) aspect of the Quarterly Business Survey (QBS). The QES has a sample size of approximately 6,000 and covers all employers with 25 or more employees, all public sector employers, all businesses with more than one industry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

The survey date for Quarter 3 was 4 September 2023. All figures are adjusted for seasonality, unless stated otherwise.

Key Points

- Employee jobs in Northern Ireland reached a new series high in September 2023 (822,870 jobs). This was an increase of 7,730 jobs (+0.9%) over the quarter and an increase of 19,340 jobs (+2.4%) over the year. The change over the year from September 2022 was statistically significant.
- The increase in employee jobs over the quarter and the year was mainly driven by increases in the Private sector.

Figure 1: **Quarterly** and **Annual** Changes in Employee Jobs at Section Level



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Quarter 3 2023	Total jobs	Manufacturing	Construction	Services	Other Industries	Public	Private
	822,870	89,540	35,950	672,960	24,410	226,070	597,250
Quarterly change	+0.9% +7,730	+0.0% +10	+2.4% +840	+1.0% +6,920	-0.2% -40	+1.0% +2,190	+0.8% +4,980
Annual change	+2.4% +19,340	+2.0% +1,730	-0.7% -240	+2.7% +17,550	+1.3% +310	+2.0% +4,520	+2.5% +14,740

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Accredited Official Statistics

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

These accredited official statistics were independently reviewed by the Office for Statistics Regulation in August 2010. They comply with the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics and should be labelled ‘accredited official statistics’.

The full [assessment](#) of Quarterly Employee Jobs estimates is available on our website.

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.
- [Consulted users](#) on streamlining the QES statistical bulletin.



NISRA Outputs Consultation

NISRA recently consulted on proposed changes to statistical outputs, this output was part of that consultation. The consultation, which ended on 15 October, sought views from users and stakeholders to help NISRA to address the financial constraints imposed by the budget settlement for 2023-24, whilst minimising the impact on users and stakeholders. The full report on the outcome of the consultation, including users' responses, actions planned and mitigations, can be found on the [consultation webpage](#).

We are proposing: The Quarterly Employment Survey statistical bulletin will be reduced to headline results only; some further analysis will be removed (for example Composition of Employee Jobs (Full-time/Part-time) and UK Comparisons). The bulletin will be reduced from 25 pages to approximately 5 pages. Data will continue to be provided in the existing supplementary tables, with the number of supplementary tables remaining the same (approximately 15 tables).

Action: Consistent with some of the responses received in this consultation, NISRA will proceed with scaling back the statistical bulletin as planned but recognises the wide range of uses of the supplementary data and will consider what detailed analysis should continue to be included in statistical bulletins.

Date proposed change will come into effect: 12 December 2023

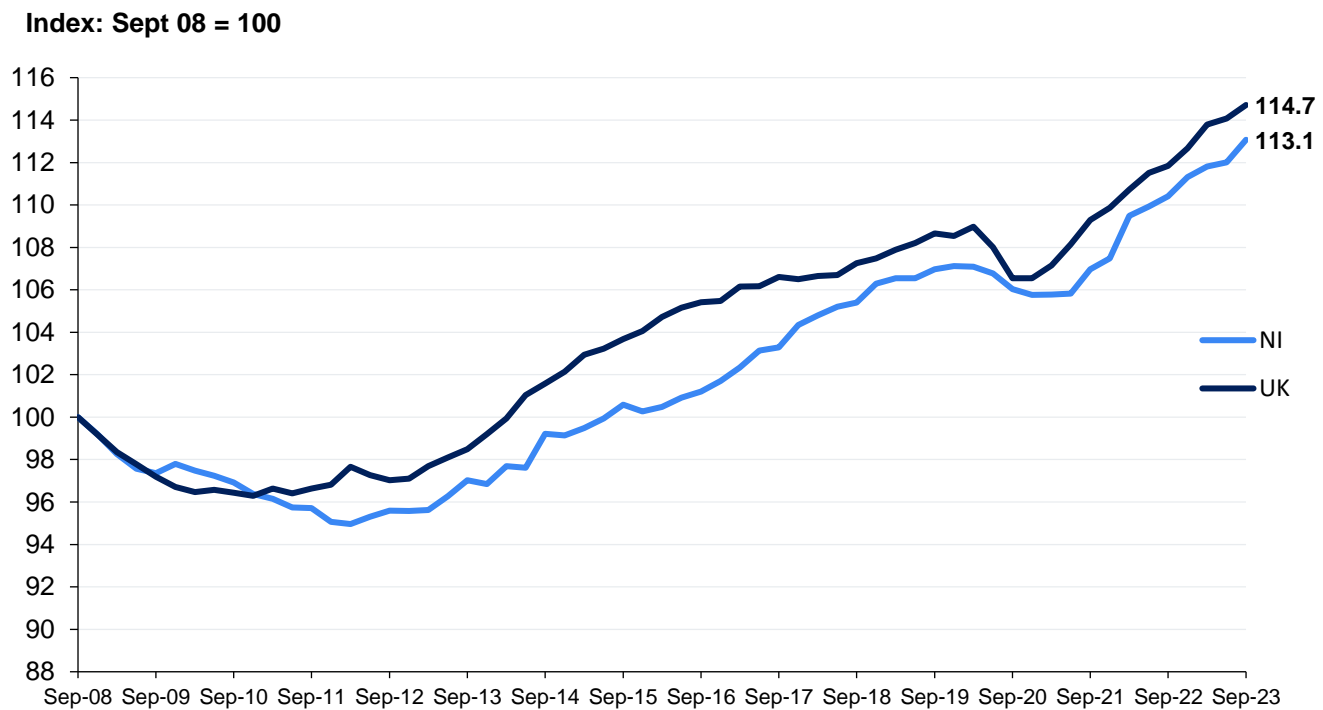
Index of Employee jobs

The latest employee jobs estimate for Northern Ireland (NI) at September 2023 was 822,870 (+/- 5,290)¹.

Figure 3 shows estimated employee jobs, indexed to allow comparison between NI and the UK. NI employee jobs increased by +0.9% over the quarter (7,730 jobs). This marks the eleventh consecutive increase in employee jobs since Quarter 1 2021. Over the year (September 2022 to September 2023), employee jobs have increased by +2.4% (19,340 jobs). The increases over the quarter and year in employee jobs were mainly driven by the services sector.

The UK reported an increase in employee jobs over both the quarter (+0.6%) and the year (+2.6%) to reach a series high in September 2023.

Figure 2: Index of Employee Jobs for Northern Ireland and the UK, September 2008 – September 2023



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Following the 2008 downturn, the UK series reached its lowest point in December 2010, more than a year before the NI low in March 2012. NI jobs are now +19.1% (or 131,790 jobs) above the low point in March 2012 while UK jobs are 16.1% (or 5,225,000 jobs) above their December 2010 level.

During the Covid-19 pandemic (beginning in March 2020), total NI jobs reduced over three quarters until March 2021 before showing signs of recovery. By comparison, the UK only showed a reduction in total employee jobs between June 2020 and December 2020, with quarter-on-quarter increases seen since then until September 2023. UK jobs have reached a new series-high of 32.5 million jobs.

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

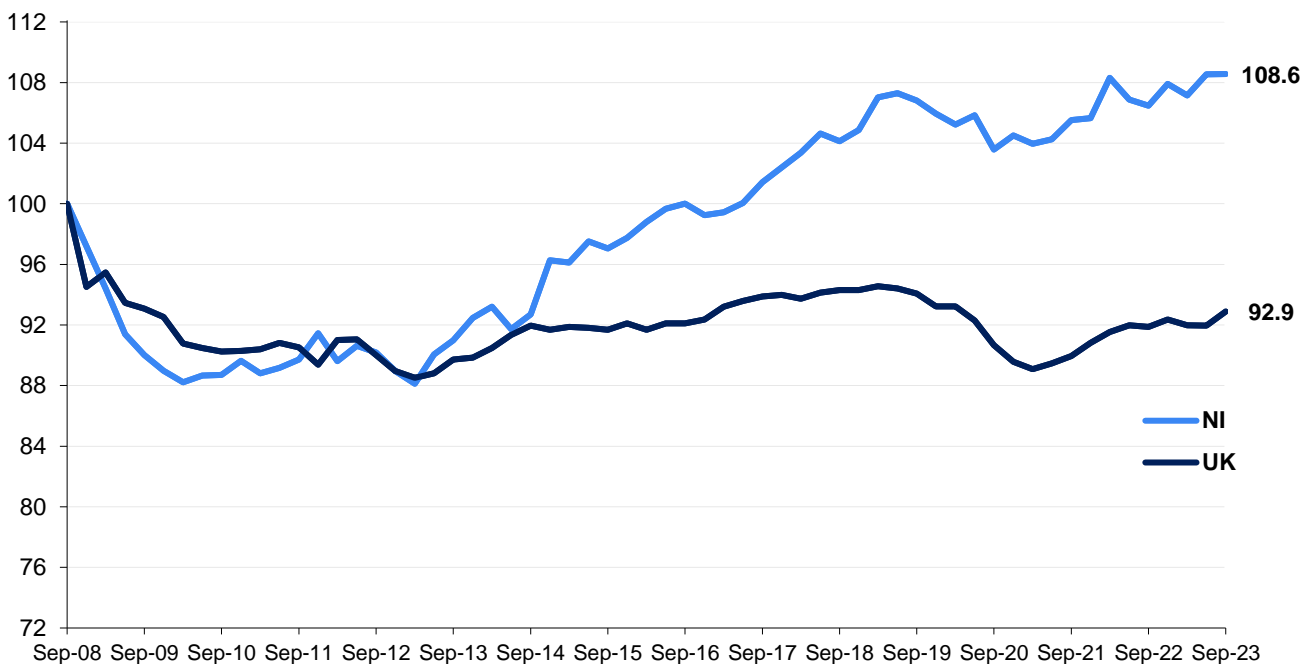
Manufacturing

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.

NI manufacturing sector jobs remained stable with only marginal change over the quarter to September 2023 (89,540 jobs). The UK manufacturing sector experienced an increase over the same period (+1.0% or +25,000 jobs). Over the year, NI manufacturing jobs increased by 2.0% (+1,730 jobs), with the UK manufacturing sector also increasing by +1.1% (+27,000 jobs).

Figure 3: Index of manufacturing employee jobs for Northern Ireland and the UK, September 2008 – September 2023

Index: Sept 08 = 100



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Both NI and the UK followed a similar trend in reaching 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 23.2% (+16,860 jobs) above the March 2013 low point.

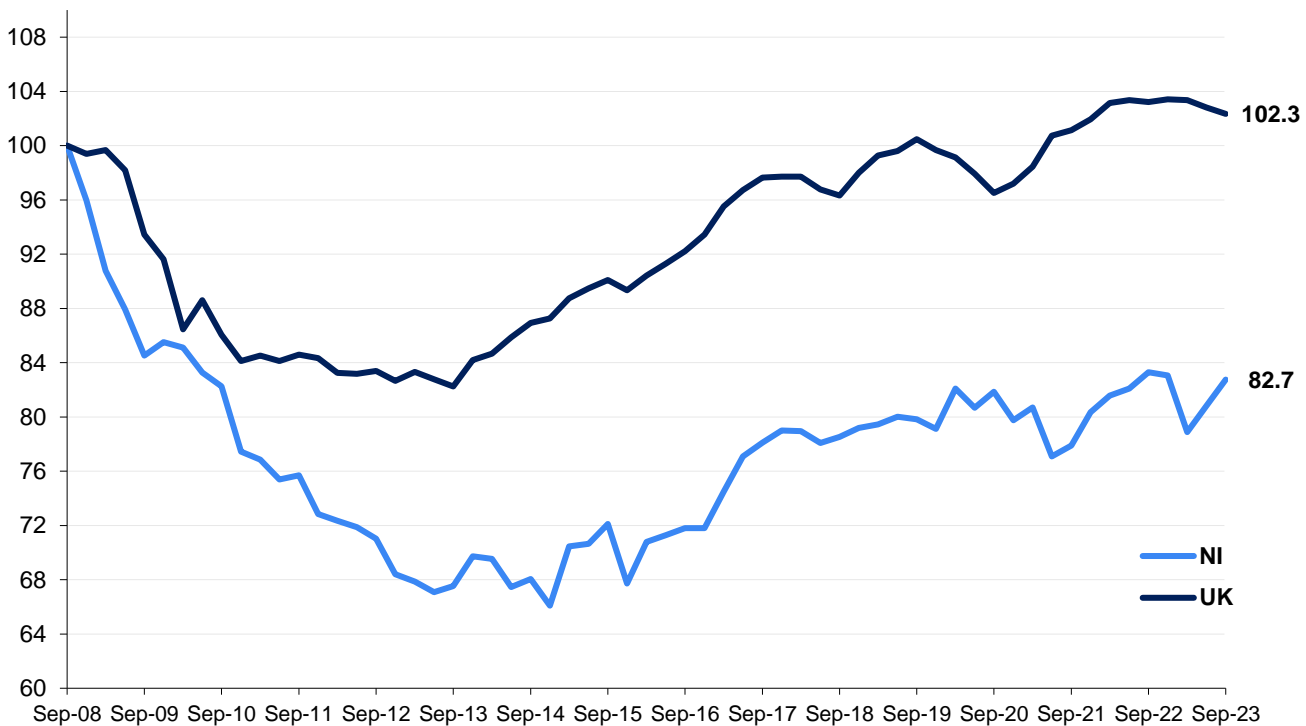
Construction

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.

NI construction sector jobs showed an increase over the quarter to September 2023 (+2.4% or +840 jobs) and a decrease over the year (-0.7% or -240 jobs) to 35,950 jobs. Conversely, the UK construction sector jobs decreased over the quarter by -0.5% (-7,000 jobs) and over the year by -0.8% (-13,000 jobs).

Figure 4: Index of construction employee jobs for Northern Ireland and the UK, September 2008 – September 2023

Index: Sept 08 = 100



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The series low in NI construction sector jobs was in December 2014 (28,720 jobs). The latest estimates show a +25.2% (+7,240 jobs) improvement on this level; however, the number of employee jobs in the NI construction sector remains -17.3% (-7,500 jobs) lower than the series peak in September 2008.

For the UK, the series low was in September 2013; however, since September 2013, UK construction sector jobs have recovered at a comparable rate to NI, by +24.4% (+300,000 jobs).

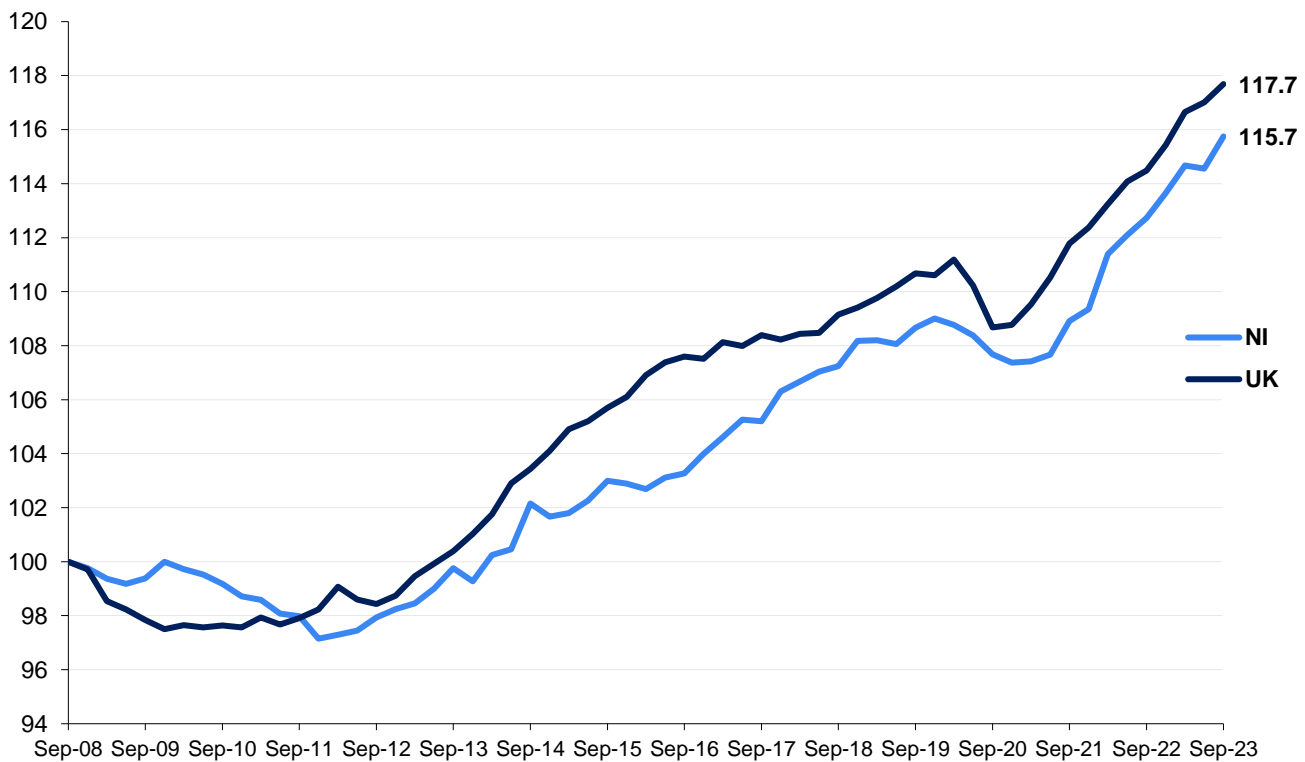
Services

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](#).

Services sector jobs in NI experienced an increase over the quarter to September 2023 (+1.0% or +6,920 jobs) to 672,960 jobs to reach a new series high in September 2023. Over the year the number of employee jobs in the services sector has increased by 2.7% (+17,550 jobs). The UK also experienced an increase in service sector jobs over the quarter (+0.6% or +160,000 jobs) and over the year (+2.8% or +758,000 jobs) to reach a series high in September 2023 of 27.87 million jobs.

Figure 5: Index of services employee jobs for Northern Ireland and the UK, September 2008 – September 2023

Index: Sept 08 = 100



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

Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic (March 2020), the number of service jobs in NI have increased by 6.4% (+40,550 jobs). Similarly, UK service sector jobs have increased by 5.8% (+1.54 million jobs).

Other industries

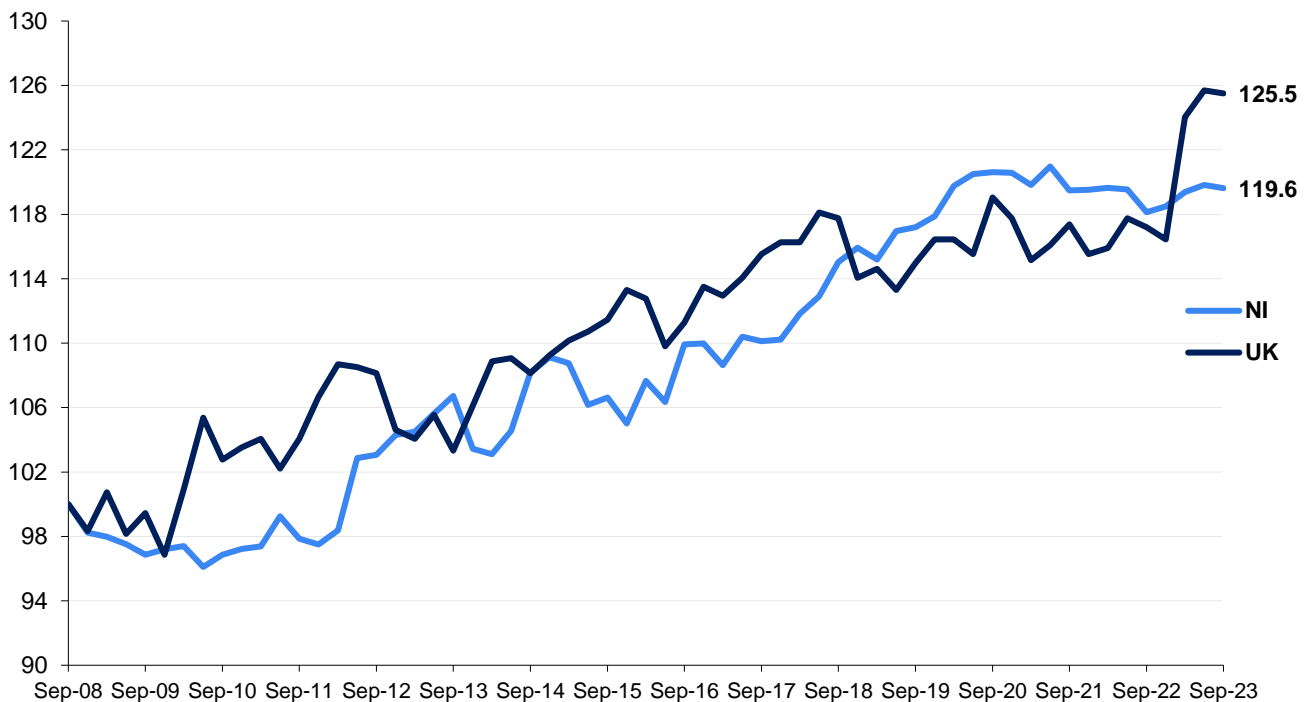
Other industries sector: this sector contains businesses with activity in agriculture, forestry and fishing, mining and quarrying, electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply and water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities (industry sections A,B,D and E).

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.

Other industry sector jobs in NI decreased by -0.2% (-40 jobs) over the quarter, however, increased by +1.3% (+310 jobs) over the year. Conversely, other industry sector jobs for the UK decreased by -0.1% over the quarter (-1,000 jobs), however increased over the year by 7.1% (+45,000 jobs).

Figure 6: Index of other industries employee jobs for Northern Ireland and the UK, September 2008 – September 2023

Index: Sept 08 = 100



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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 +12.1% (+2,630 jobs) over the 10-year period to September 2023. UK other industry jobs increased by 21.5% (+120,000 jobs) over the same period.

Public & Private sector jobs

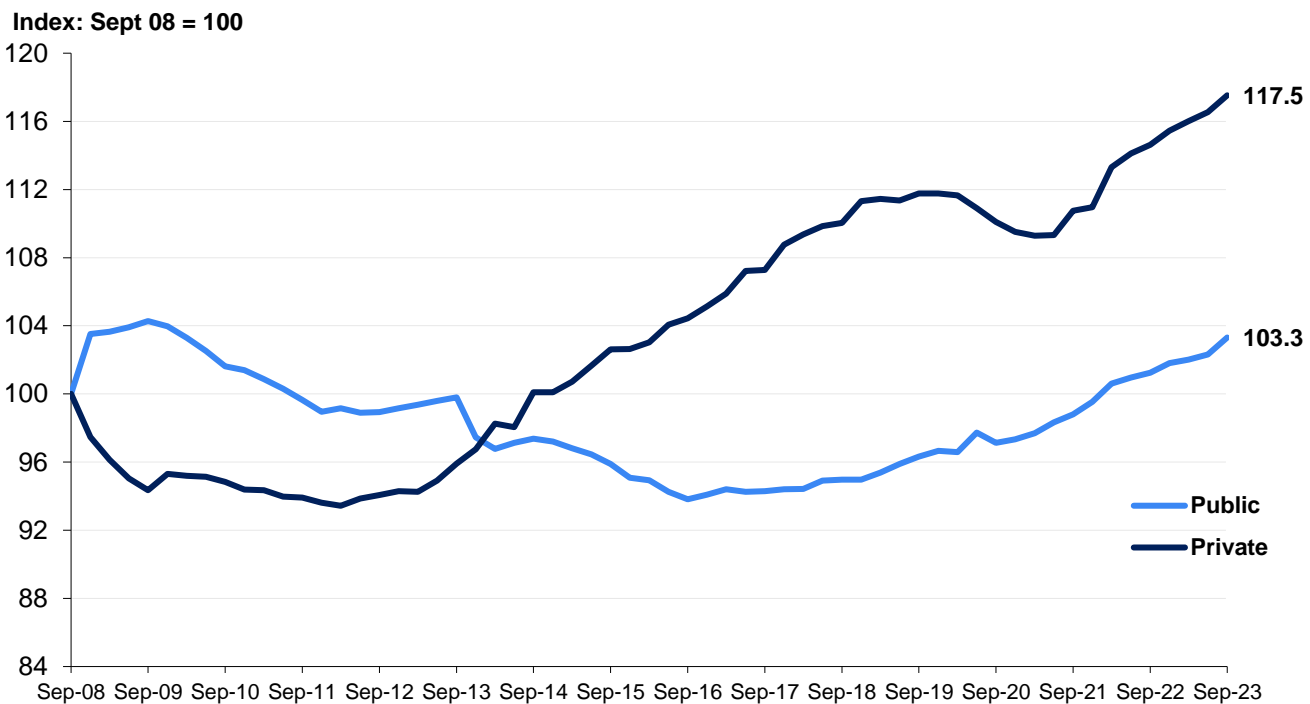
Public sector: the NI public sector can be broken down into five areas:

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.

Both public and private sector jobs increased over the quarter and the year to September 2023. Public sector jobs increased by +1.0% (+2,190 jobs) over the quarter and by +2.0% over the year (+4,520 jobs) to 226,070 jobs. Private sector jobs increased by +0.8% (+4,980 jobs) over the quarter and by +2.5% (+14,740 jobs) over the year to 597,250 jobs. Private sector jobs have reached a new series high in September 2023.

Figure 7: Index of Public and Private sector employee jobs for Northern Ireland, September 2008 – September 2023



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The NI public sector made up 27.5% of all employee jobs in September 2023, while the private sector made up 72.6%².

Northern Ireland has consistently had a higher proportion of public sector jobs per population than the UK as a whole. In September 2023, public sector jobs as a proportion of the population were 11.8%, which compares to 8.8% for the UK as a whole.

² The Public and Private sector jobs series are individually seasonally adjusted and as a result the sum of both series may not equal the Northern Ireland total employee jobs estimates and percentage breakdowns may not equal 100.

Full-Time & Part-Time jobs

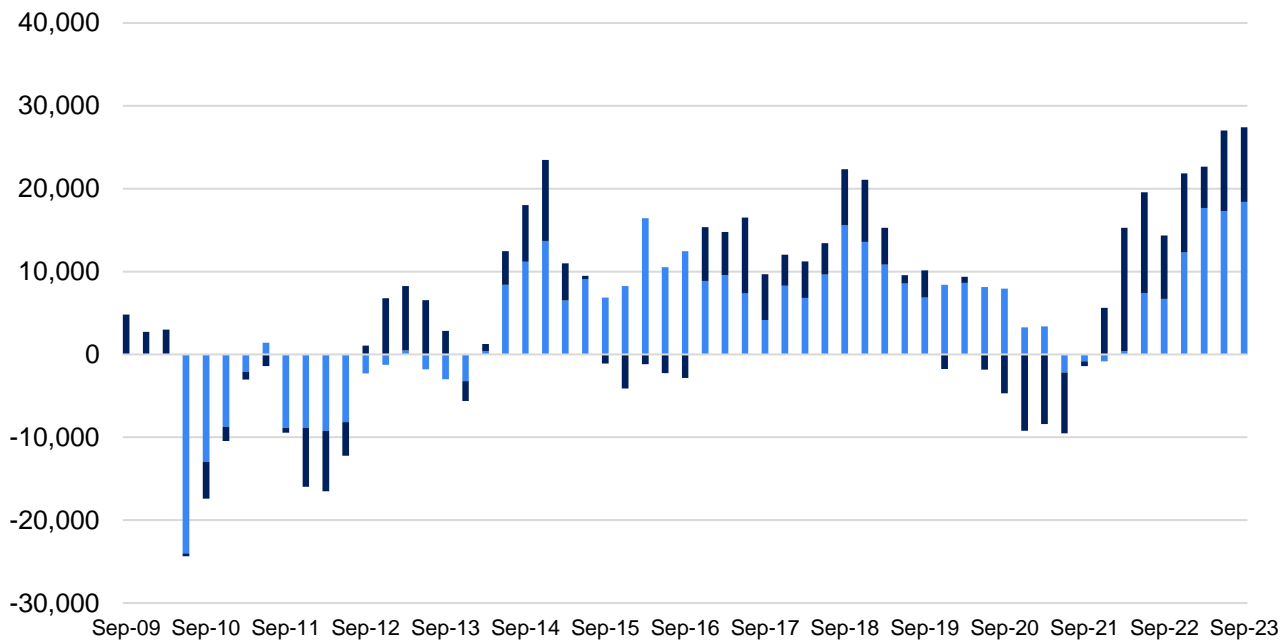
Part-time: part-time means those who normally work 30 hours a week or less.

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

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

Full-time employee jobs increased by +1.0% (+5,440 jobs) over the quarter to September 2023. However, part-time employee jobs decreased over the same period -0.2% (-640 jobs). Over the year, both full-time (+1.9% or +10,160 jobs) and part-time jobs (+3.3% or +9,010 jobs) have increased.

Figure 8: Annual change in Full-time and Part-time employee jobs, September 08 – September 23



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Throughout the series the low point for full-time jobs was seen in March 2013. Since then, the number of full-time jobs has increased by +21.3% (+95,010 jobs) to September 2023. The series low for part-time jobs was in March 2012, and since then there has been an increase in part-time jobs of +15.5% (+37,500 jobs) to September 2023. Part-time jobs currently account for 34.1% of all employee jobs.

Section level

Section level: Employee jobs are reported at Broad sector level which covers Manufacturing, Construction, Services and Other Industries. Each of these broad industries can be further disaggregated into 'Section level' as follows.

Manufacturing: Section C

Construction: Section F

Services: Sections G-S

Other industries: Sections A, B, D, E

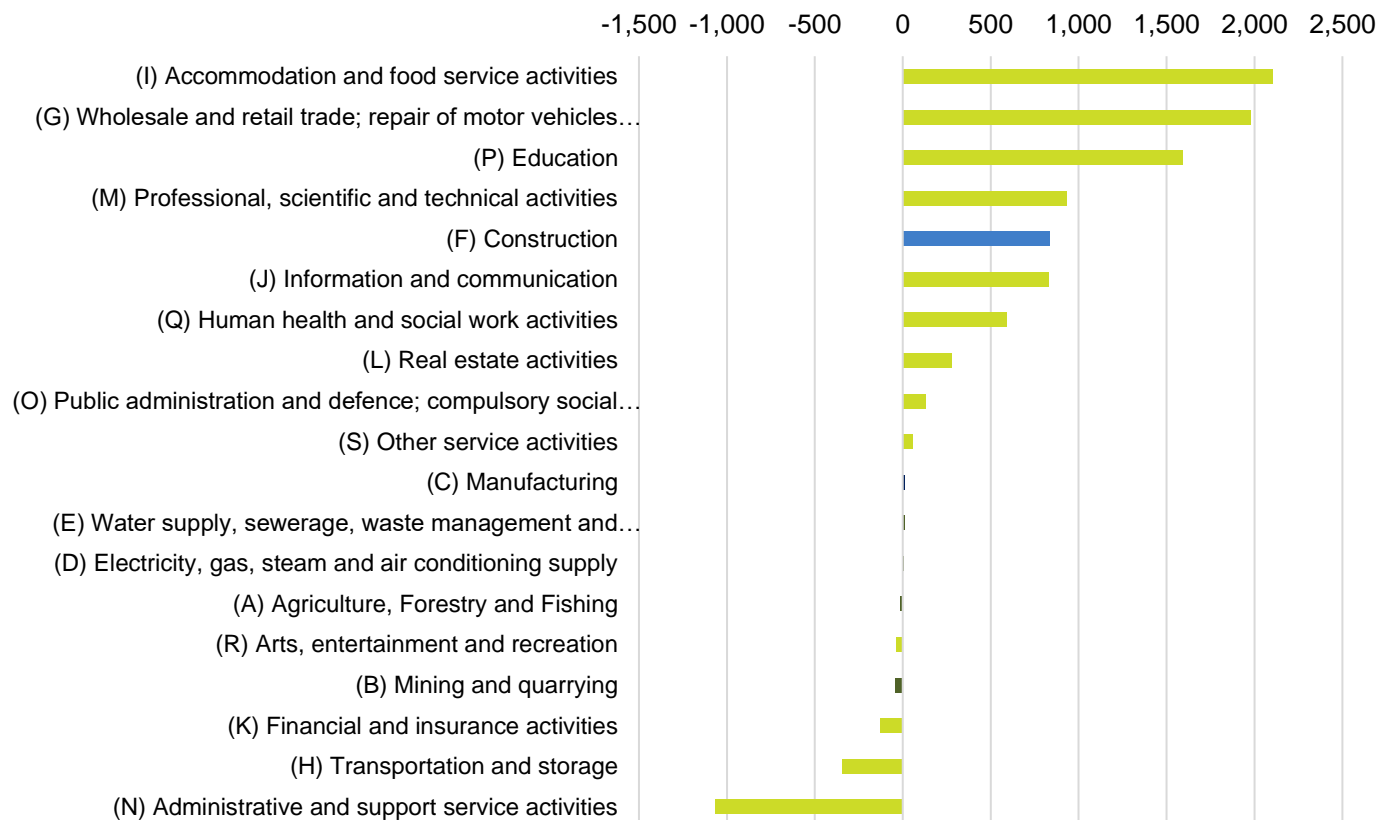
Further details on the section hierarchy can be found online at [Standard Industrial Classification](#).

Figure 9 shows the changes over the quarter (June 2023 to September 2023) by Section. The services sector makes up 82% of total employee jobs in Northern Ireland and as a result in September 2023, the majority of the largest changes were seen within the services sector.

The largest increase over the quarter was seen in Section I, Accommodation and food service activities, which increased by +3.9% (+2,110 jobs) between June and September 2023. This was closely followed by Section G, Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles, which increased by +1.5% (+1,980 jobs) over the same period.

The largest decrease over the quarter was seen in Section N, Administrative and support service activities, which decreased by -2.0% (-1,070 jobs).

Figure 9: Quarterly changes in employee jobs by Section across manufacturing, construction, services, and other industries (ranked by numerical change).



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Further Information

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

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

We have also published information on revisions to the QES series which users can access on our [website](#).

Figures from the QES are included in the [Labour Market Report](#) alongside figures from the Labour Force Survey (LFS). The Quarterly Employment Survey measures the number of jobs, not the number of people with jobs. A person can have more than one job and some jobs may be shared by more than one person. This differs to the concept of employment measured by the Labour Force Survey (LFS), which defines employment as the number of people in work. LFS employment figures are also based on a rolling three-month period whereas QES measures the number of jobs on a particular day.

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As a user of these statistics, we would welcome feedback on this release, in particular on the content, format and structure.

If you wish to receive regular Quarterly Employment Survey updates via email, please contact:

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