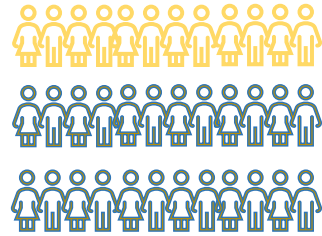


Older people Inequalities in the Northern Ireland Skills System

*Analytical Services Division, ASD
June 2023*

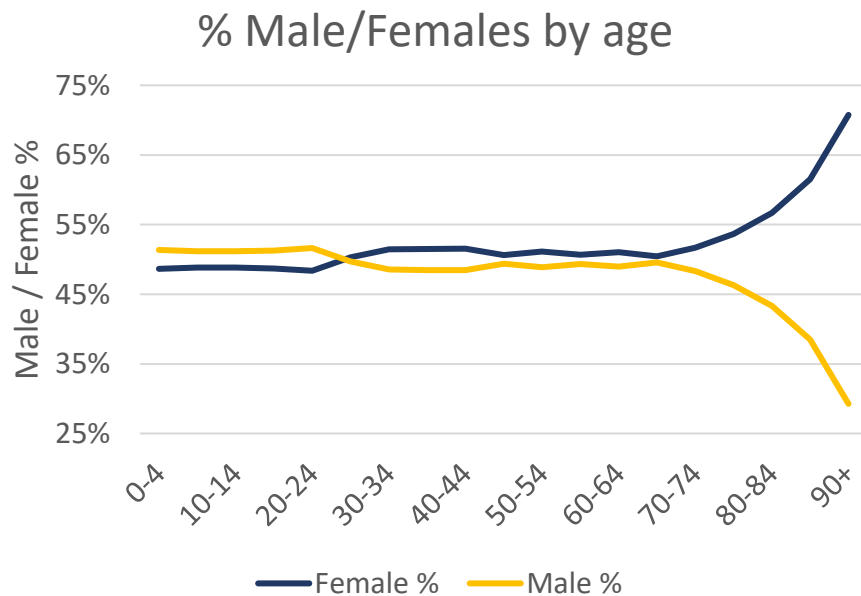
Context

One third are aged 50 and over



699,800 people aged 50 and over in NI

36.8% of the whole NI population



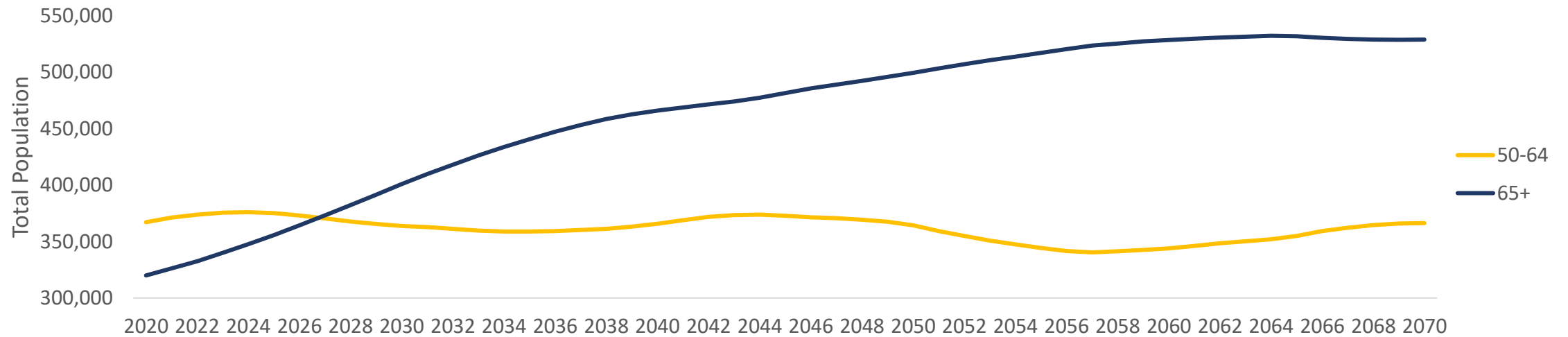
Male/female split is roughly 50/50 up to age 65, where there is then an increase in female split as they grow older



14% of those aged 40-64 year reported day-to-day activities limited a lot, with this increasing to 28% for those aged 65 and over. Average of 19% for 40s and over

*Source: NISRA Population Estimates, 2021
(axis does not start at zero)*

Older people population expected to increase year on year



- 50+ population projected to rise by c208,00 (30.3%) by 2070. This increase will mainly be shown in 65+ age group as people are living longer.

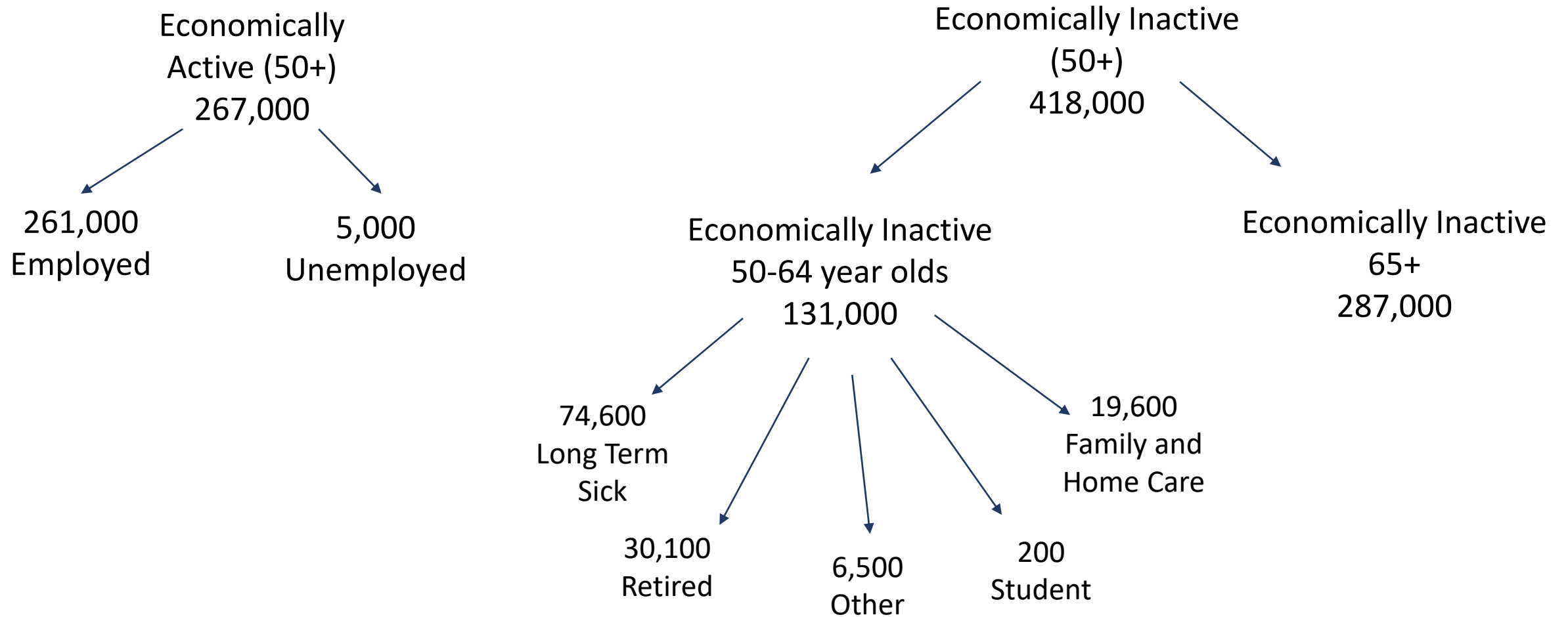
*Source: NISRA Population Projections, 2021
(axis does not start at zero)*

Managing an older workforce

- Upskilling - As people are living longer this increases the percentage of the workforce aged 50 and over. Companies will have to adjust to this aging workforce. They will need to adjust how they attract, manage and develop workers. With the constant advancements in technology, training and upskilling has never been as important to make sure staff have the required skills to keep up with these advancements.
 - Reskilling – Some workers will also have to consider changing careers due to automation as well as moving away from manual labour jobs to less physical jobs.
 - Flexible working – changes needed to working patterns, either reducing to part time hours, offering alternate working patterns outside of 9-5, and hybrid or home working.
 - Support for health and wellbeing – employers to offer better support for health and wellbeing to all employees but will be needed more in 50 and over age group.
-

Labour Market

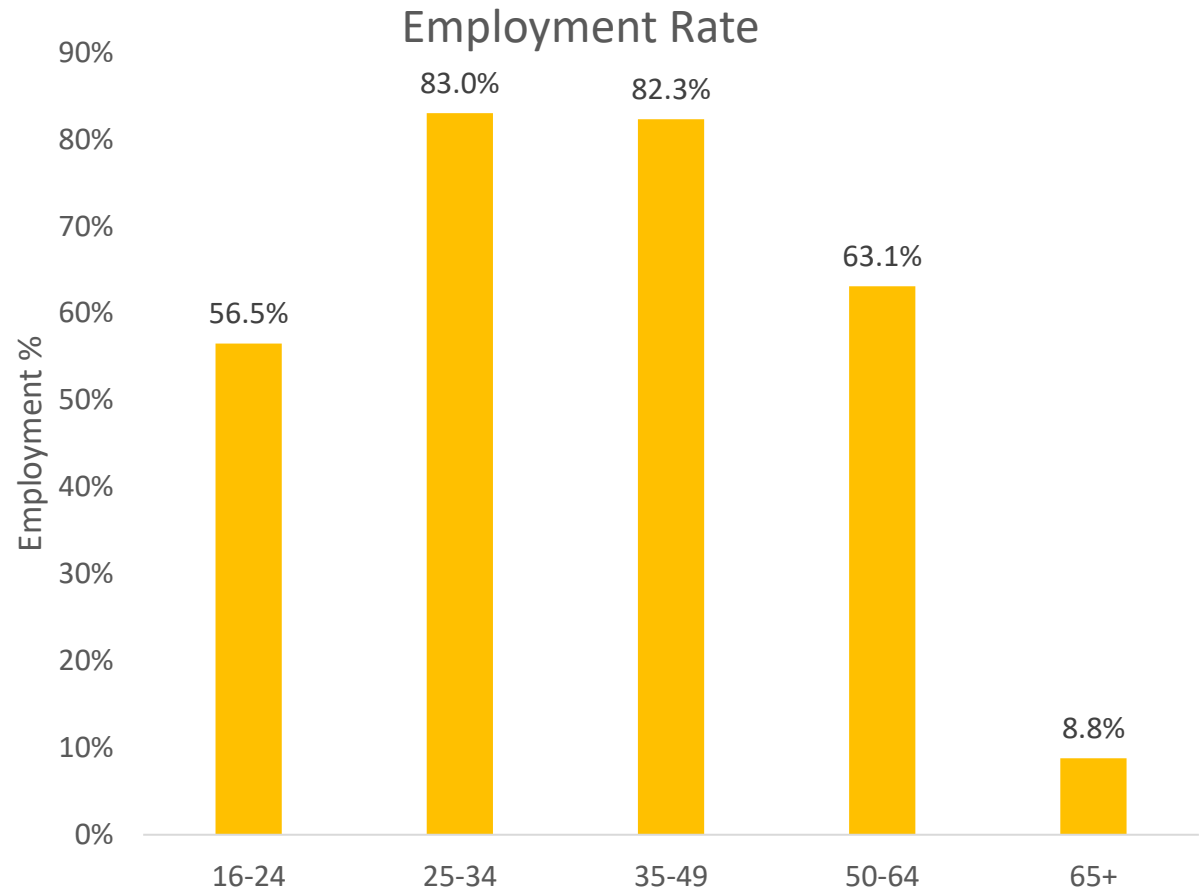
Overview (50s and over)



Source: NISRA Labour Force Survey, Dec 2022 to March 2023, UUEPC

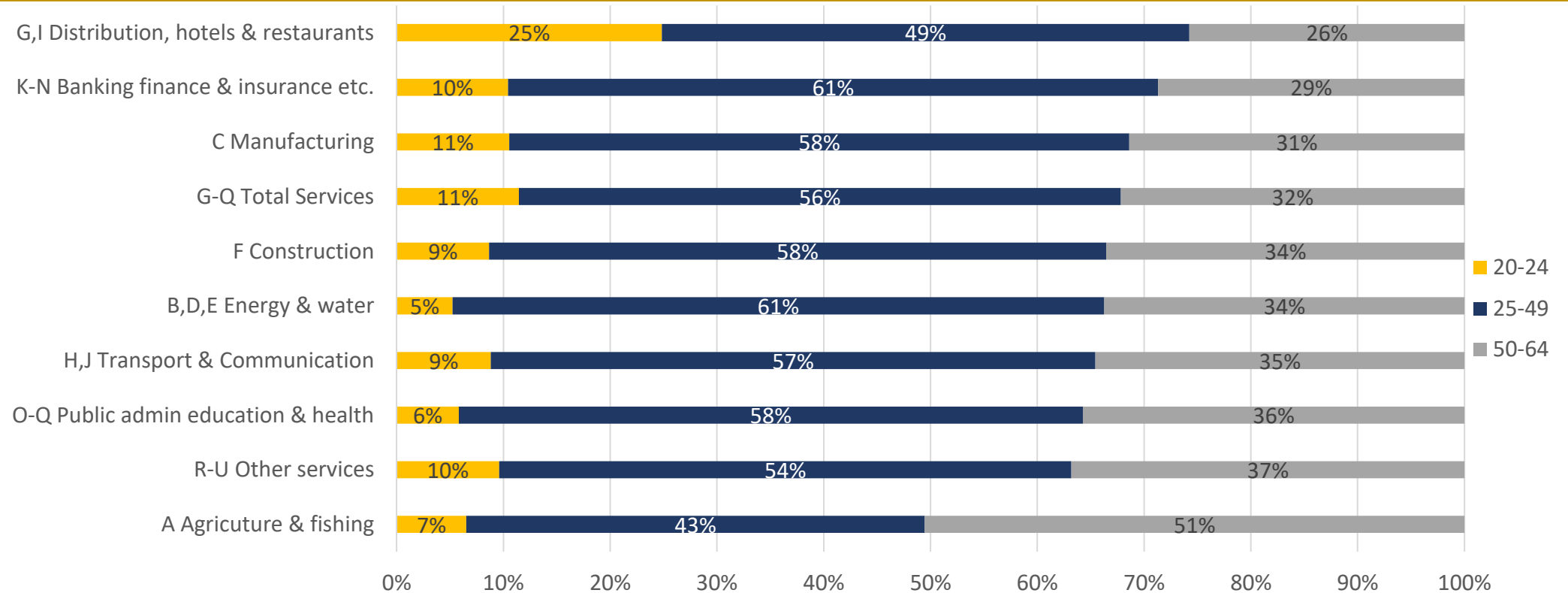
Employment

- Employment rate for 50-64 year olds lower than 25-49 year olds by nearly 20pps, although higher than 16-24 year olds.
- 65+ employment rate is lowest of all age groups but includes a large amount of retired workers.
- This is driven by higher rates of inactivity in 65+ age range as opposed to not being able to find work.
- 50-64 year olds employment rate peaked at 65.9% in March – May 2019 and fell to 57.8% by March-May 2021, a likely result of the Covid pandemic.
- Figures returning to pre-Covid levels, now only 1.5pps below Dec – Feb 2020 rate.



Source: NISRA Labour Market Report April 2023

Employment – Industry Breakdown by age



- Agriculture and fishing has highest % of 50-64 workers at 51%
- Distribution, hotels and restaurants have lowest percentage at 26%

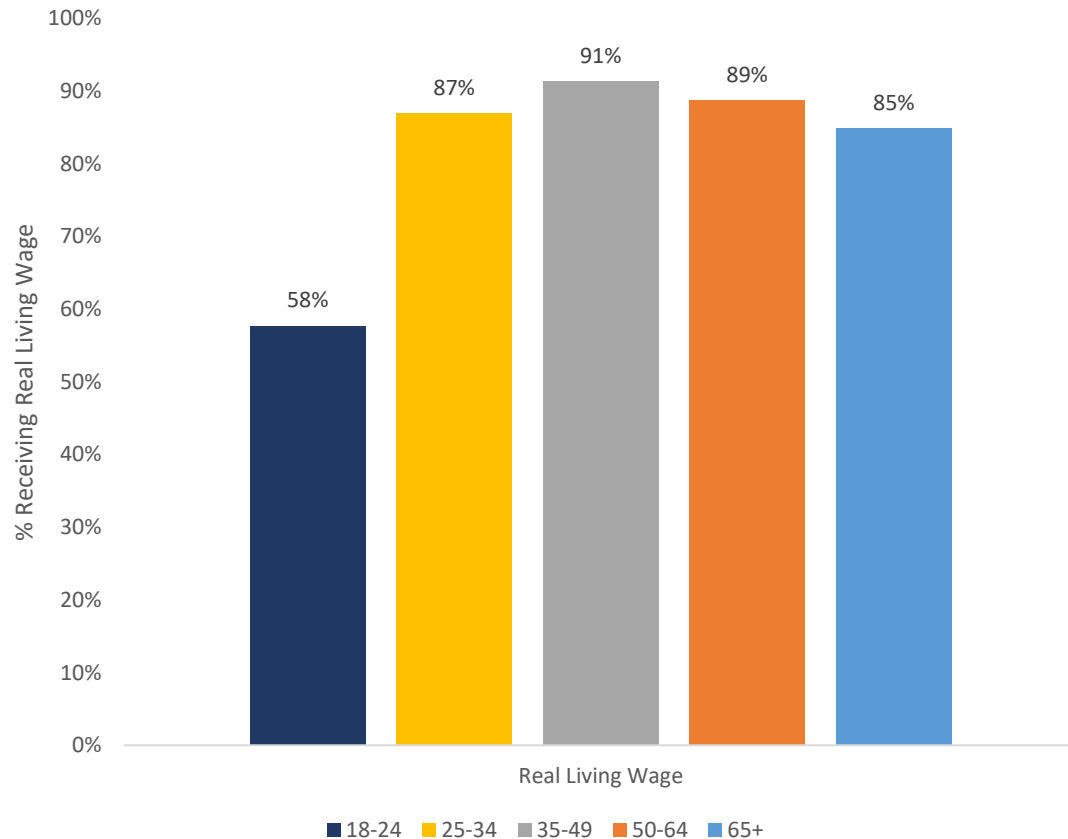
Source: Nomis – Annual Population Survey – Workplace Analysis (Jan 2022-Dec 2022)

Employment – Work Quality

- 82.7% of 50-64 year olds reported job satisfaction; 87.8% for 65+ year olds. These figures are higher than 25-49 year olds by almost 5pps. In 2020 and 2021, 65+ age group showed highest job satisfaction percentage however this was matched by 18-24 year olds in 2022.
- This is linked to meaningful work with 90.2% (50-64) and 94.8% (65+) reporting that they perform meaningful work. This is higher than all younger age groups. Figures for 2022 show that the older the employee the more likely they are to report performing meaningful work.
- 97.7% (50-64) and 96.2% (65+) are in secure employment, again the older the worker the more likely they are to be in secure employment with 50-64 age group 10pps above 18-24 year olds.

Source: NISRA – Work Quality in Northern Ireland

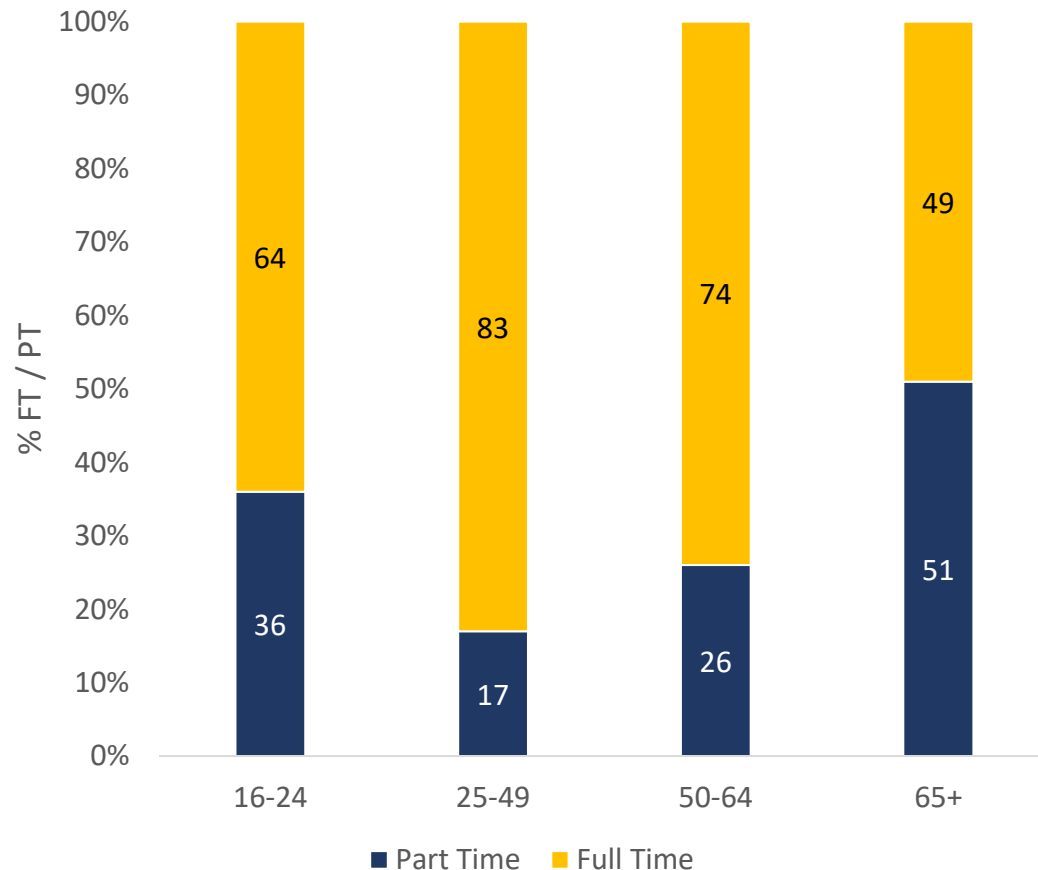
Employment – Real Living Wage



- Real living wage is UK wage rate based on cost of living.
- High percentage of all workers receive at least Real living wage rate.
- 50-64 year olds have a similar rate to all other age groups with 18-24 lagging behind.
- 65s and over 4pps behind 50-64 year olds

Source: NISRA – Work Quality in Northern Ireland

Employment – Part-time breakdown

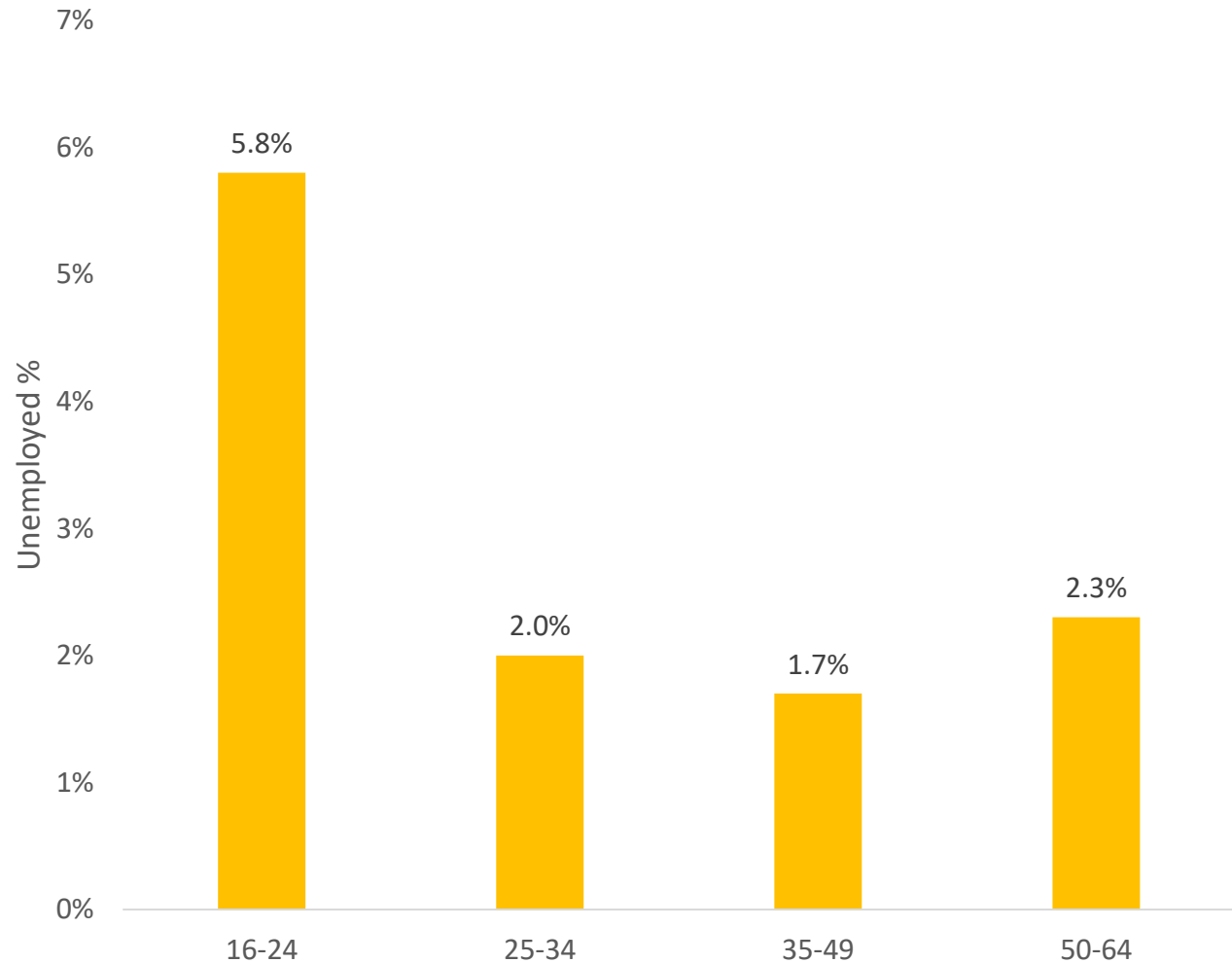


- Highest percentage of part time workers is in 65+ age group.
- With exception of 16-24 year old age group, (which includes a high percentage of students), the older the worker, the more likely they are to work part time.
- Main reasons for part time working include
 - Partial retirement
 - Caring responsibilities
 - Reduced hours due to ill health
- UK rate for 50-64 is the same as in NI, however 65+ rate is 9pps higher in UK compared to NI

*Source: Nomis – Annual Population Survey – regional – labour market status by age (Sept 2022)
DWP - Economic labour market status of individuals aged 50 and over*

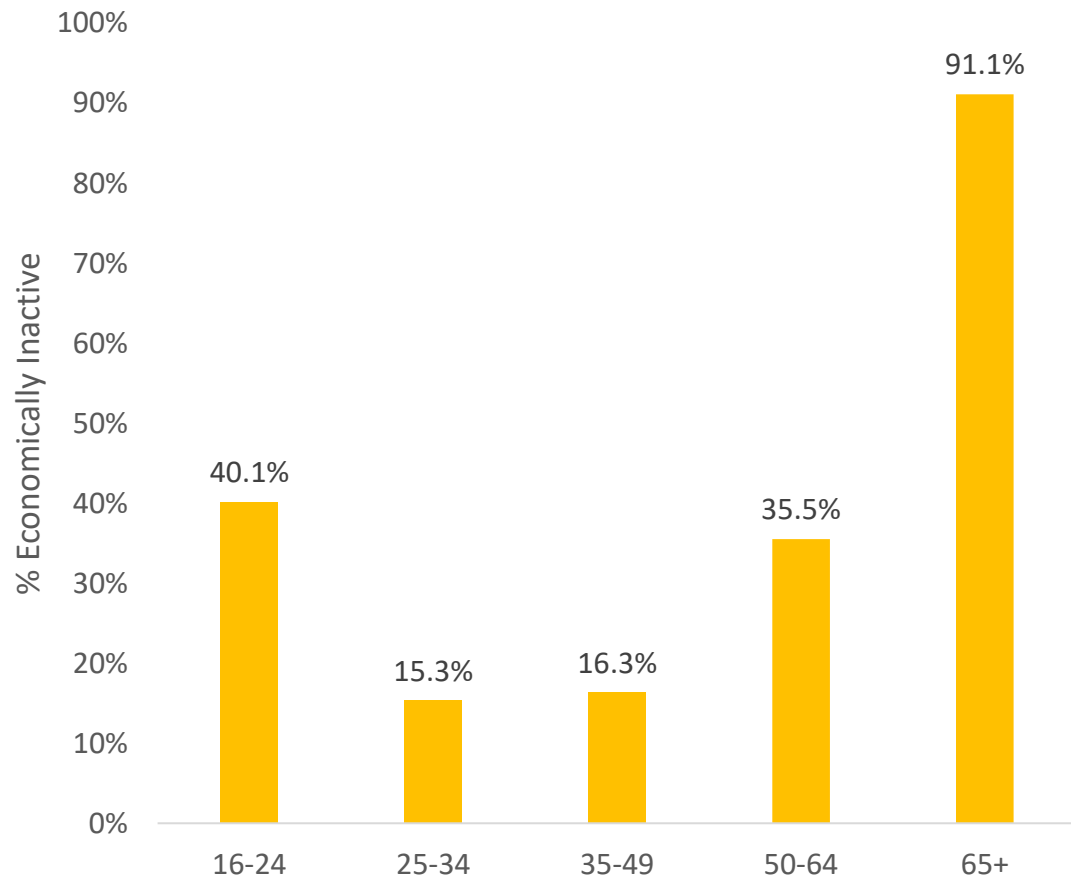
Unemployment

- Definition – Somebody is unemployed if they have actively sought work in the last 4 weeks and are available to start work in the next 2 weeks, or has found a job and is waiting to start in the next 2 weeks.
- National Average = 2.4%
- 50–64 year olds = 2.3%
- Figures for 65+ were not available due to small sample size



Source: NISRA Labour Market Report April 2023

Economic Inactivity

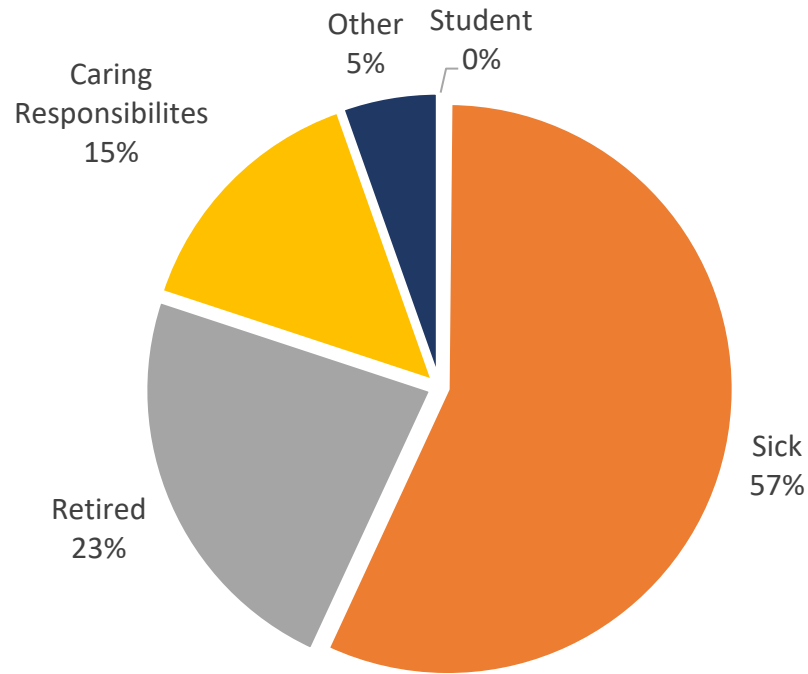


- 65+ highest rate among all age groups at 91.1% as it includes high percentage of retirees.
- 50-64 year old percentage is 35.5% which is more than double 25-34 and 35-49 year old age groups.
- 16-24 is higher but this includes a high percentage of students.
- Higher percentage of females (39.9%) aged 50-64 are economically inactive compared to males (30.9%).
- Similar with 65+ but only 3.3pps difference.
- NI has the highest rate among all UK regions and is nearly 7pps higher than UK average in 50-64 year old age group.

*Source: NISRA Labour Market Report April 2023, * UUEPC Q4 2022*

Economic Inactivity

Breakdown by Reason (50-64 Year Olds)



- Over half those aged 50-64 years old are economically inactive due to sickness
- Latest figures for March 2023 show that there are 401,200 patients waiting on a first consultant led outpatient appointment
 - This has increased 10.6% since December 2022
 - 7.3% increase since March 2022
- Residents of NI areas historically exposed to conflict have higher rates of disability living allowance (DLA) receipt after controlling for differences in demographics, health, and labour market conditions*

A healthy population underpins a strong economy, and a strong economy can help improve people's health by boosting living standards. We should not think of health and the economy as separate issues, but recognise the way they are fundamentally interlinked. – *UNDERSTANDING 'EARLY EXITERS' THE CASE FOR A HEALTHY AGEING WORKFORCE STRATEGY*
– Alice Dawson & Andrew Philips

Source: UUEPC Q4 2022, *Why are Disability rates for older working-age adults in NI so high? – ESRI

Employers Attitude to Older Workers

Employer Skills Survey 2019

- 31% of employers had recruited somebody aged over 50, the same as in 2016.
- Employers in NI were less likely to recruit an over 50 worker.
- The larger the employer the more likely they are to hire over 50s:
 - <5 employees 23%
 - >100 employees 75%
- Public Administration was most likely sector to employ over 50 (60%) followed by transport and Storage (53%) and Health and Social Work (47%).
- 95% of employers found older workers were prepared for their job role with just 3% felt they were poorly prepared.

Age in the Workplace (CMI)

- Only 42% of employers surveyed were open to a large extent to hiring somebody aged 50-64.
- Fewer open to hiring anybody aged over 65 (30%).
- 18% of these organisations not open to the idea at all.

Source: Employer Skills Survey 2019, Age in the Workplace – CMI

Entrepreneurship

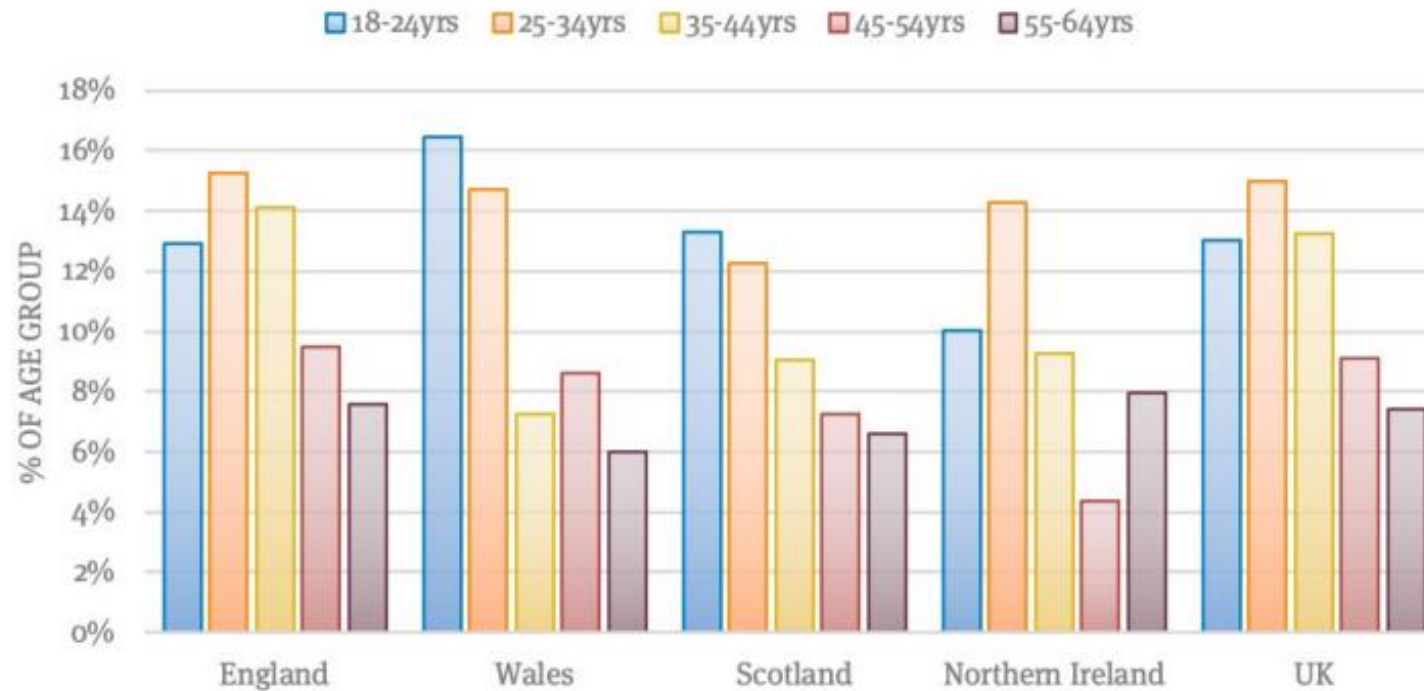
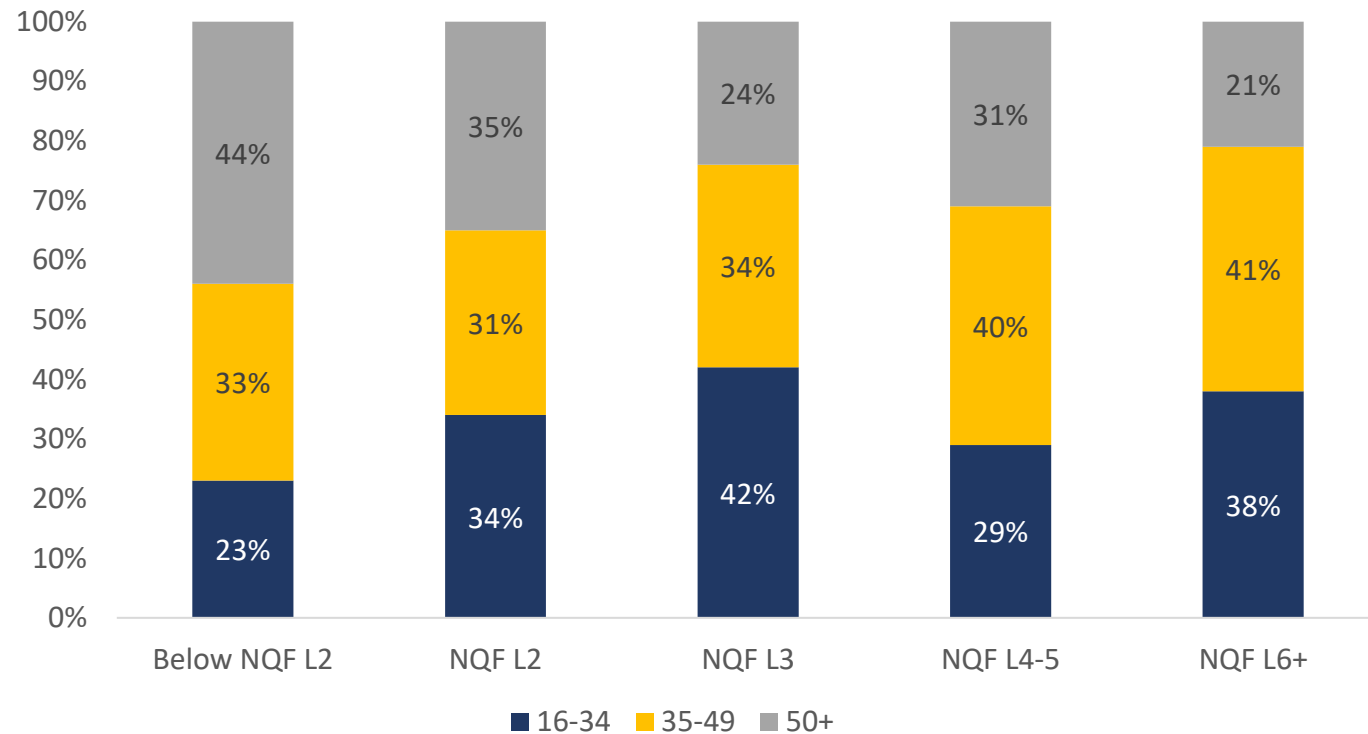


Figure 4.4: Total early-stage Entrepreneurial Activity in the UK Home Nations 2021 (Source: GEM APS)

- 8% of 55-64 year olds in NI were involved in early-stage entrepreneurship activity in 2021, which is higher than all other countries in UK
- However, 45-54 year olds have the lowest percentage across all age groups and countries at only 4%.

Over 50s in Education and Training

Qualifications profile



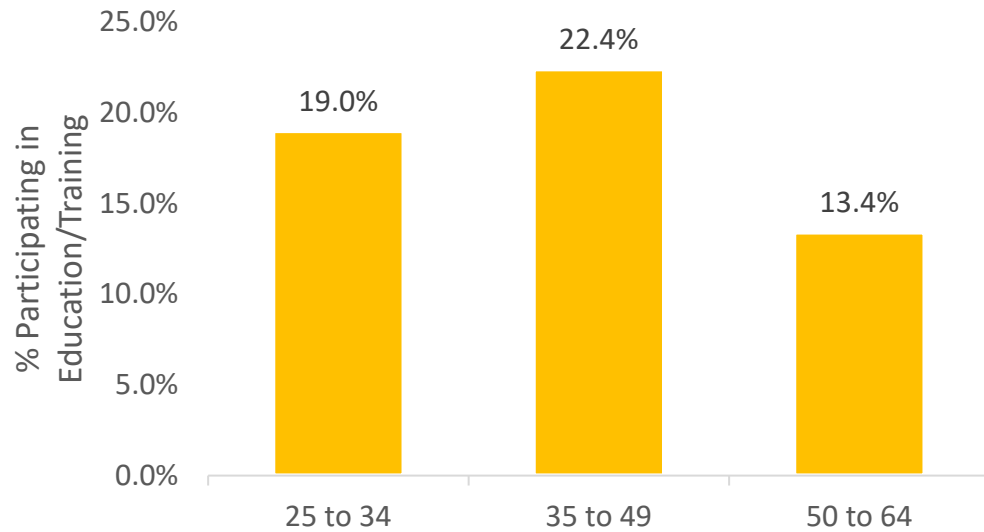
NQF Level equivalents

- NQF L6 – First Degree level and above
- NQF L4-L5 – Foundation degree / HE diploma / Certificate of HE
- NQF L3 – A Level
- NQF L2 – GCSE (A* - C)
- Below NQF L2 – GCSE (D and below)

- Over 40% people with below NQF L2 qualifications are over 50.
- Only 2/10 people with Degree level qualification or higher are over 50, although this number should increase as the population ages and those in 35-49 age group move into 50+ group

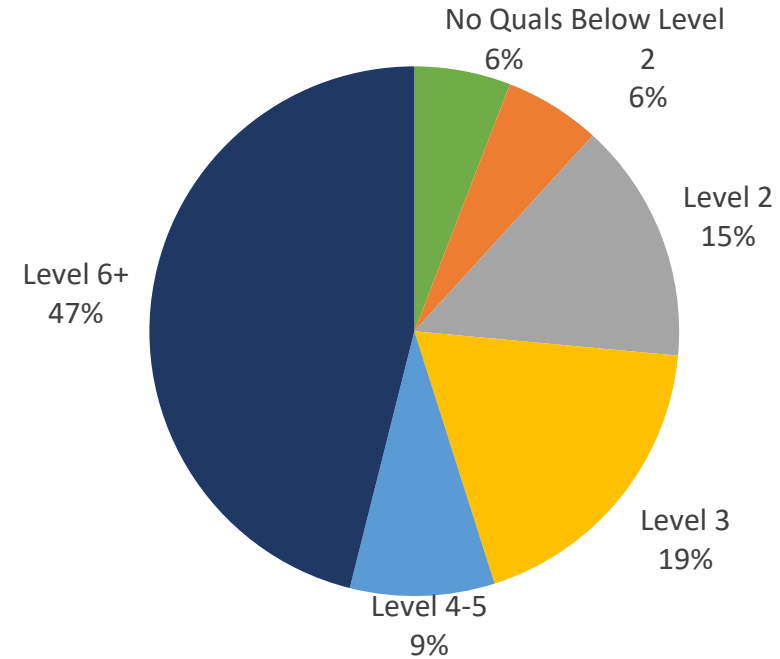
Lifelong Learning

**Participation in education or training by Age
(25-64 year olds)**



- In 2020 there 18.2% of population participating in education or training in NI, which lagged behind UK average of 25.3%
- NI had seen an increase from 2017 to 2019 but this returned to 2016 figures in 2020, likely due to the pandemic.
- There is a larger percentage of females aged 25-64 in education or training, nearly a third more females than males.
- Looking at the age breakdown, 50-64 year old is only 13%, the lowest of all age groups.

Highest Qualification held for those that participated in Lifelong Learning (50-64 year olds)

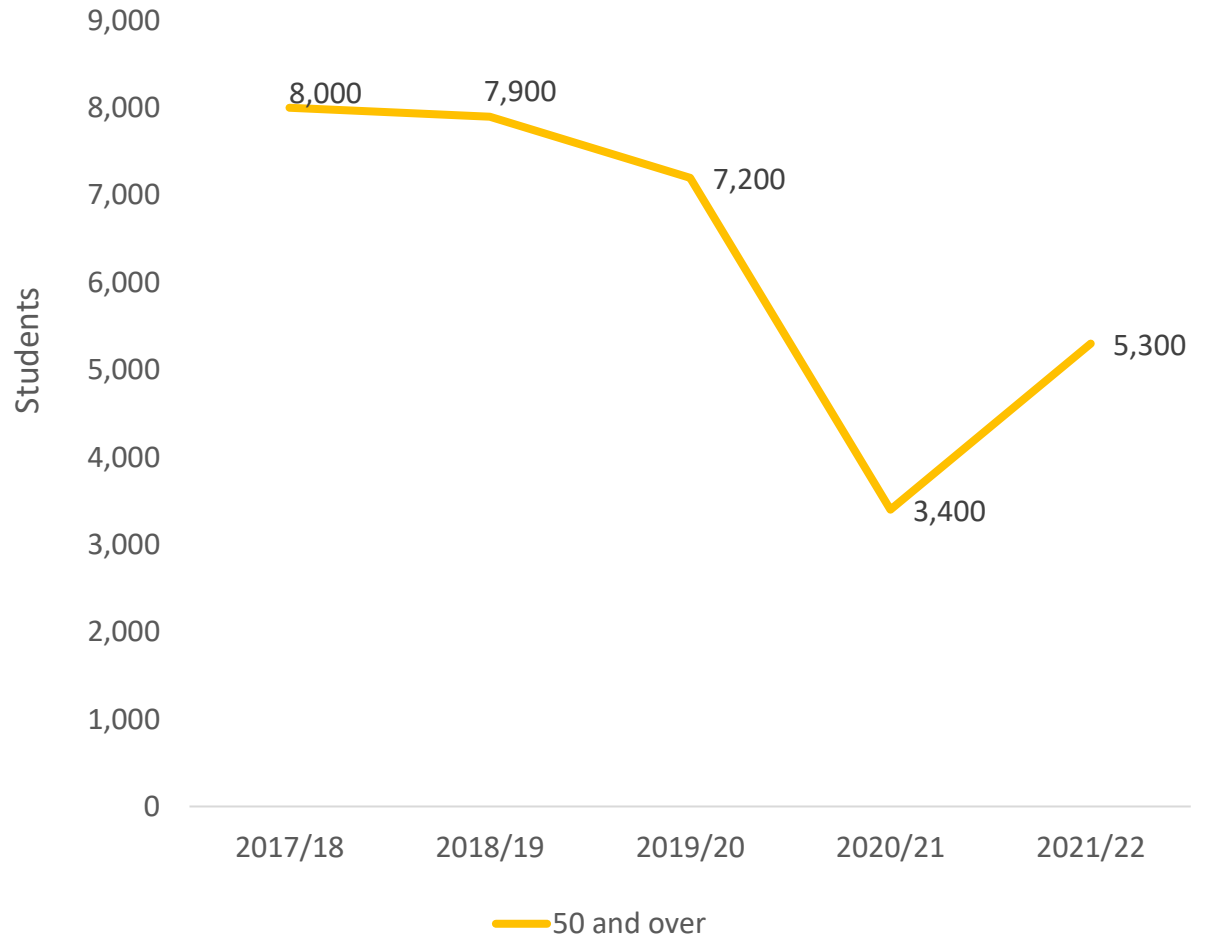


- Somebody with level 6 or higher qualification is more likely to take part in additional training or education in 50-64 year olds, of all those enrolled in 2020 nearly half had level 6 or higher, with only 6% having no qualification.
- Three quarters of all enrolments have at least a level 3 qualification

Further Education and Training

FE Students – 50+

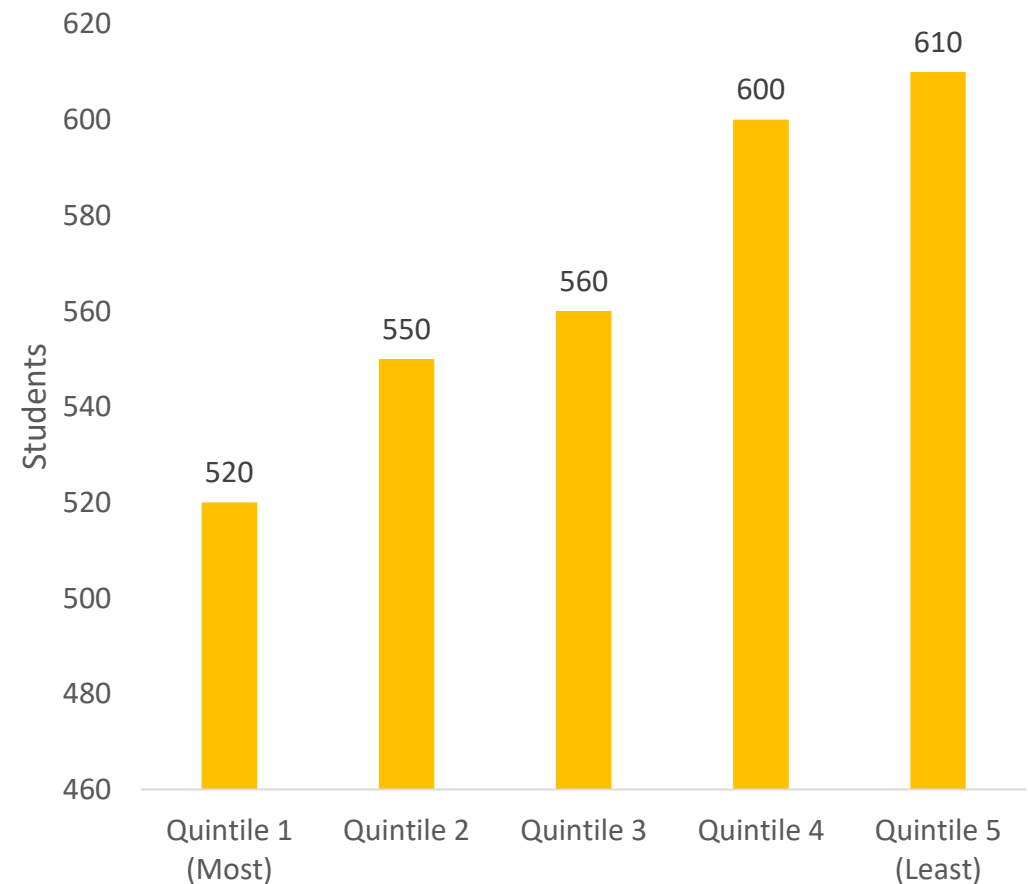
- 5,300 students that enrolled on regulated courses were aged 50+ in 2021/22 academic year
- 9% of students enrolled in 2021/22 are aged 50 or over
- Total enrolment across all age groups peaked at 78,000 in 2017/18 during the 5-year period, with 8,000 of those aged over 50
- Large decline in 2020/21 due to Covid pandemic across all age groups, however 50+ age group showed largest change with 52% decrease from previous year
- Showing recovery in 2021/22. Total enrolment is up 10% from previous year with 50+ showing largest increase at 54%



*Source: Further Education Sector Activity in NI 2017/18 to 2021/22, DfE
All FE students enrolled on regulated courses*

Deprivation (for students over 50)

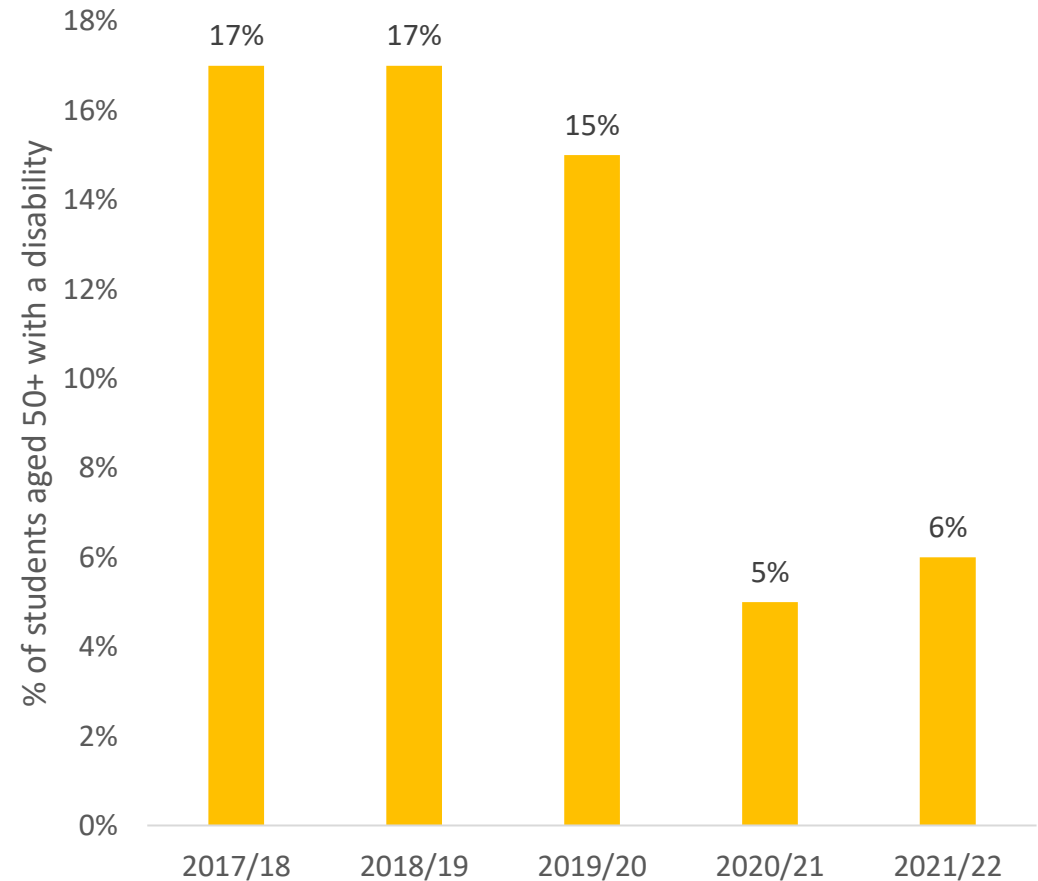
- Highest number of students aged 50 or over from least deprived quintile in 2021/22 academic year
- Opposite trend for 25-49 and 20-24
- This trend has been consistent over the past 5 years for those aged 50 and over



Source: Department for the Economy Further Education Sector Activity in NI 2021/22

FE disability

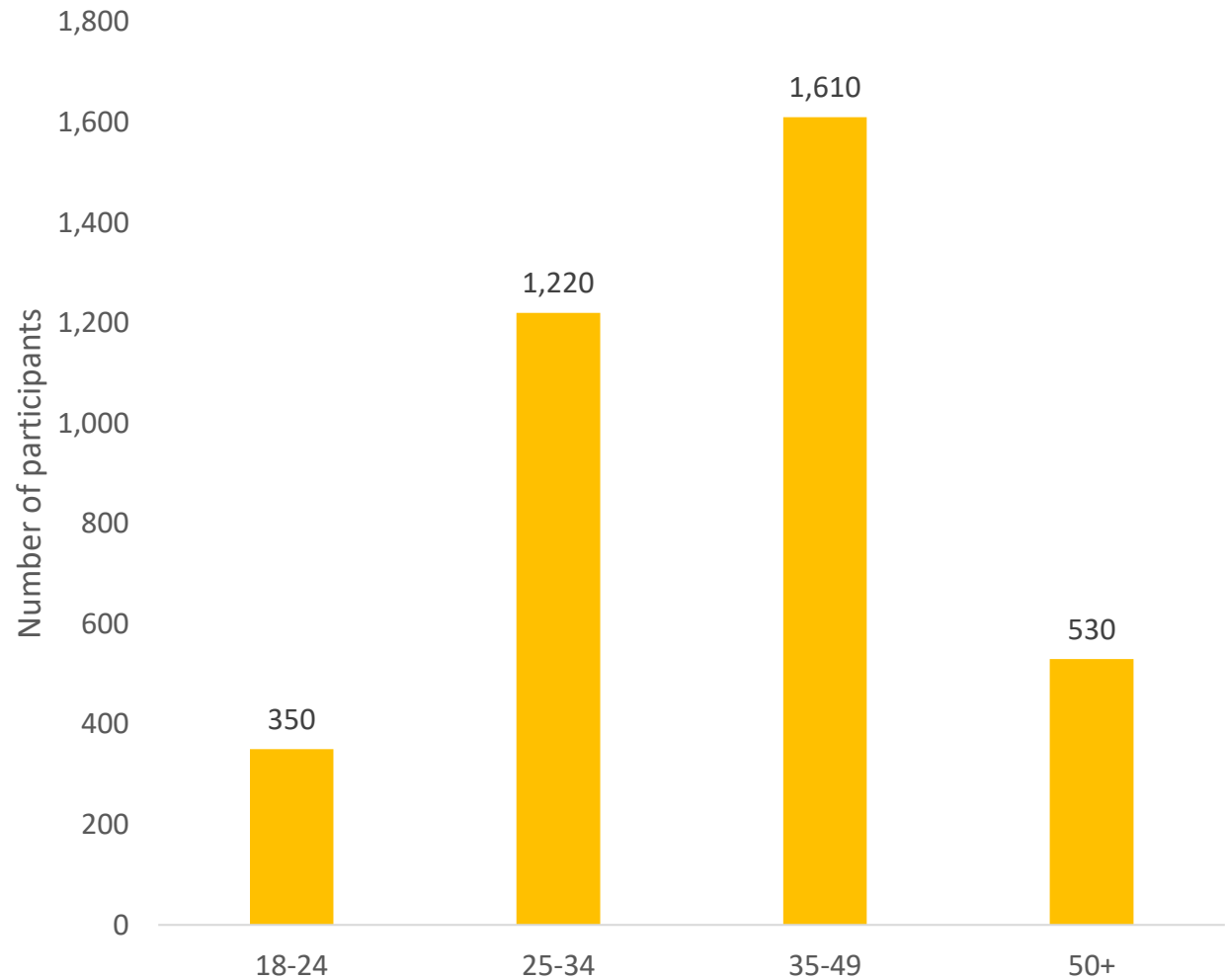
- Percentage of students aged 50 and over with a disability decreased by 10pps in 2020/21 compared with previous year.
- Decrease across all age groups but bigger decrease in 50+.



Source: Department for the Economy Further Education Sector Activity in NI 2021/22, DfE

Age Profile of Skill Up Participants

- Students ranged from 18 to 72
- Average age = 38
- 14% of students were aged 50 or over.
- This a larger proportion of 50s and over compared with FE enrolments (9%).

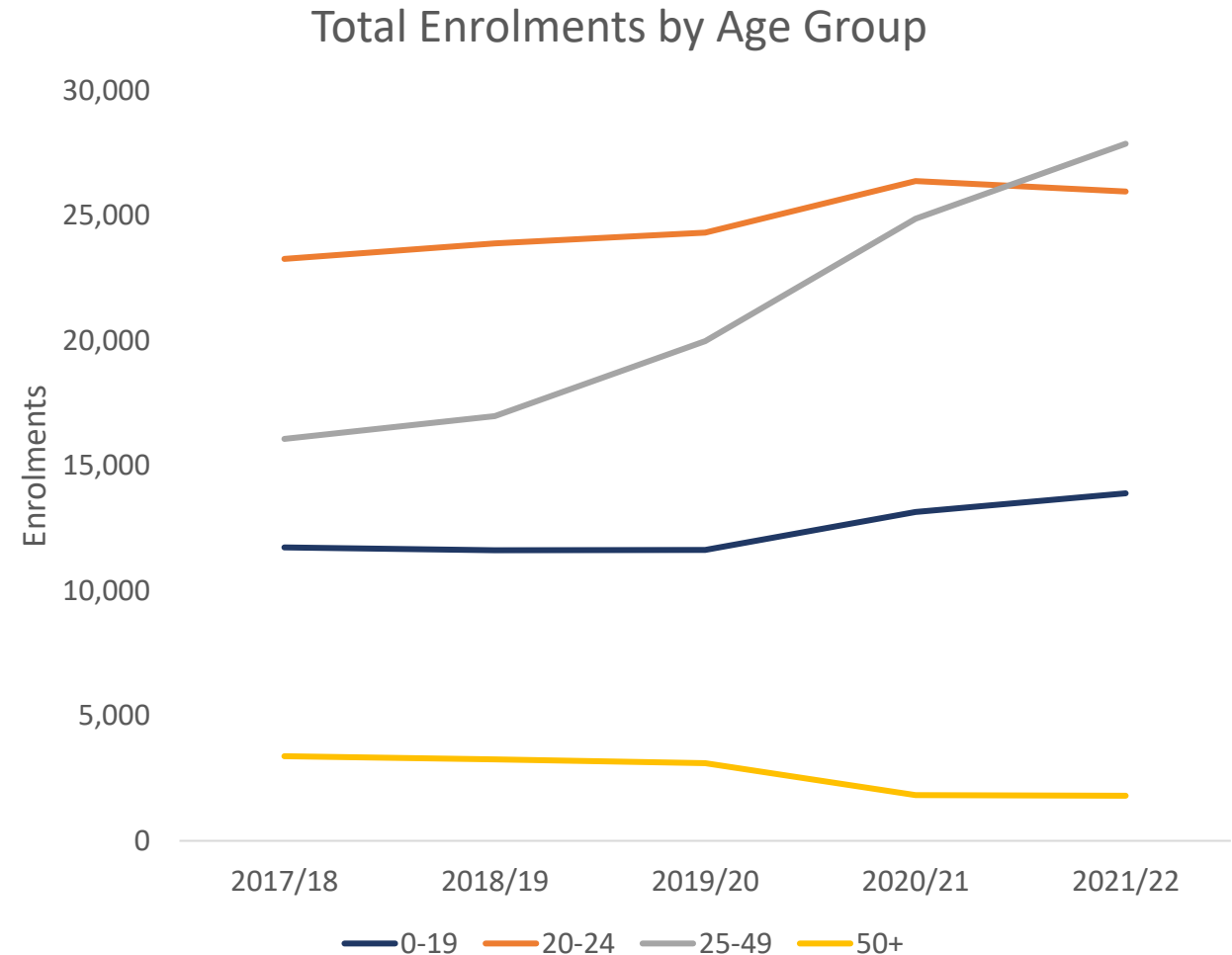


Source: DfE Skill Up

Higher Education

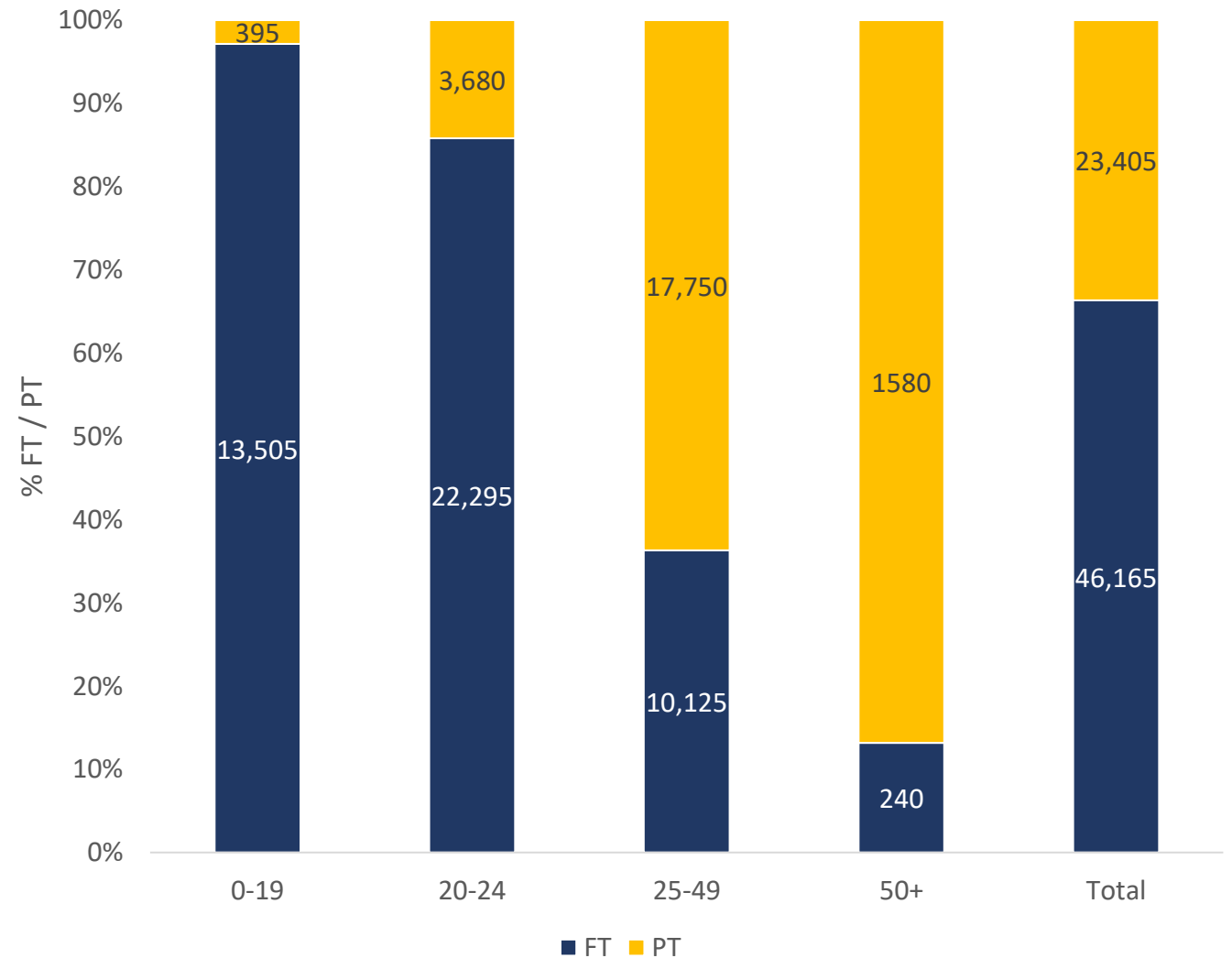
Enrolments at NI HEIs

- Total enrolments have increased by 28% since 2017/18.
- Driven mainly by increase in 25-49 year olds, which may have been due to introduction of post-graduate tuition fee loans locally and by part-time international “Other Graduate” enrolments at UU Magee’s NMC Competence Test Centre
- However, enrolments for 50s and over have decreased by 47% from 3,400 in 2017/18 down to 1,800 enrolments in 2021/22.



Total enrolment – Full-Time/Part-Time

- Part-time enrolments increased by 42% from 2017/18.
- 87% of 50+ enrolments are part-time in 2021/22.
- Full-time enrolments for 50+ increased by 20% since 2017/18.
- Part-time enrolments for 50+ decreased by 50% since 2017/18.



Source: HESA – HE Student Enrolments by age and domicile 2017/18 to 2021/22

Final Thoughts

Summary

- Growing older population driven by increase in 65+ year olds.
 - Higher rates of inactivity caused by sickness. Levels of inactivity higher in NI compared with UK with research indicating this to be at least partly correlated with areas exposed to conflict during the Troubles as well as longer waiting lists.
 - When in work, older workers are more likely to be part-time due to caring responsibilities, poor health or partial retirement.
 - Over 50s less likely to engage in lifelong learning and for those that do, they are more likely to be higher qualified.
 - Over 50s are lower qualified compared with UK and other age groups (NI).
 - Falling number of 50s and over studying in FE and HE.
-

How to Target over 50s

- Upskill/Reskill workers over 50
 - Upskill
 - Ignite your skills
 - Target lower deprivation quintile
- Offer flexible working
 - Part Time hours – older workers less likely to work full time hours
 - Flexible workings hours – more likely to have caring responsibilities
 - Hybrid Working