

Households in Northern Ireland

Labour Force Survey, April - June 2015



Date: December 2015
Geographical Area: Northern Ireland
Theme: Labour Market



The Labour Force Survey is carried out on a quarterly basis by interviewing individuals in private households to obtain information about their circumstances and work. The individual data is aggregated to provide data at household level to facilitate the analysis of the economic activity patterns of whole households. This short topic paper provides household level information for Northern Ireland (NI) for April – June 2015.

Key points

- In April - June 2015 NI had an average of 2.41 persons per household.
- The most common type of household in NI consisted of a couple with children, which accounted for 30% of all households.
- Of the working age households in NI, 23% (132,000) were classified as workless, where no-one aged 16 and over was in employment. This compared to 16% in the United Kingdom (UK).
- Both males and females with dependent children had higher economic activity rates than those without.
- for females with dependent children, the economic activity rate was lowest when the youngest dependent child was 0-4 years.

Persons per private household

Analysis of the household data showed that, in April - June 2015:

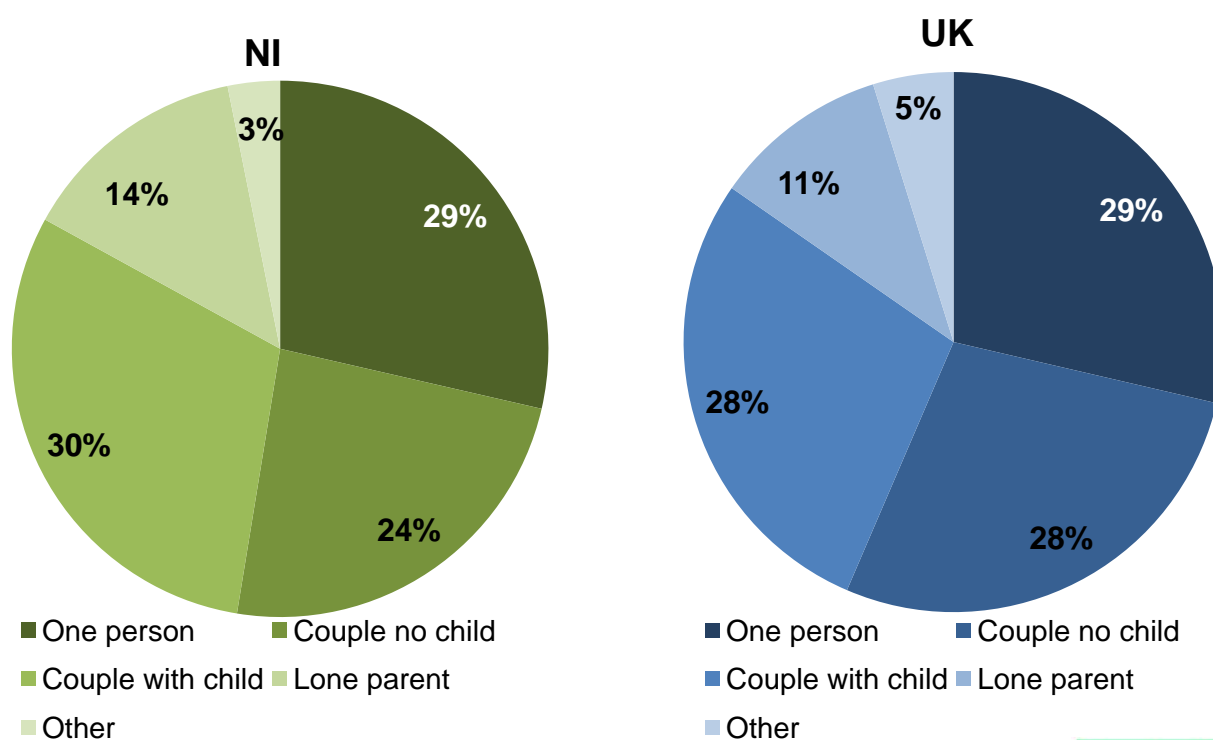
- there were 1,830,000 persons in NI living in 758,000 private households - an average of 2.41 persons per household.
- the average persons per household in NI (2.41) was above the UK average (2.37).
- the highest number of persons per household was recorded in London (2.64), followed by the South East (2.43) then Northern Ireland (2.41).

Type of household

Figure 1 summarises the composition of households in NI and the UK at April - June 2015, showing that:

- the most common type of household in NI consisted of a couple with children, which accounted for 30% of all households, followed by one person households (29%).
- one person households (29%) were the most common household type in the UK.
- proportionally there were more lone parent households in NI than in the UK (14% compared with 11%).
- these trends in relation to household type have been broadly consistent over the last 10 years.

Figure 1: Household type in NI and the UK, April - June 2015



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Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Households by economic activity

Of the 758,000 households 581,000 were classed as working age households which have at least one person aged 16-64. Table 1 shows the proportions of working age households according to the economic activity of their members. In April - June 2015:

- forty-nine per cent of all NI working age households were classified as working households, where all persons aged 16 and over were in employment.
- the UK had a higher proportion (56%) of working households than NI (49%).
- 23% (132,000) of working age households in NI were classified as workless, where no-one aged 16 and over was in employment. This compared to 16% in the UK as a whole.

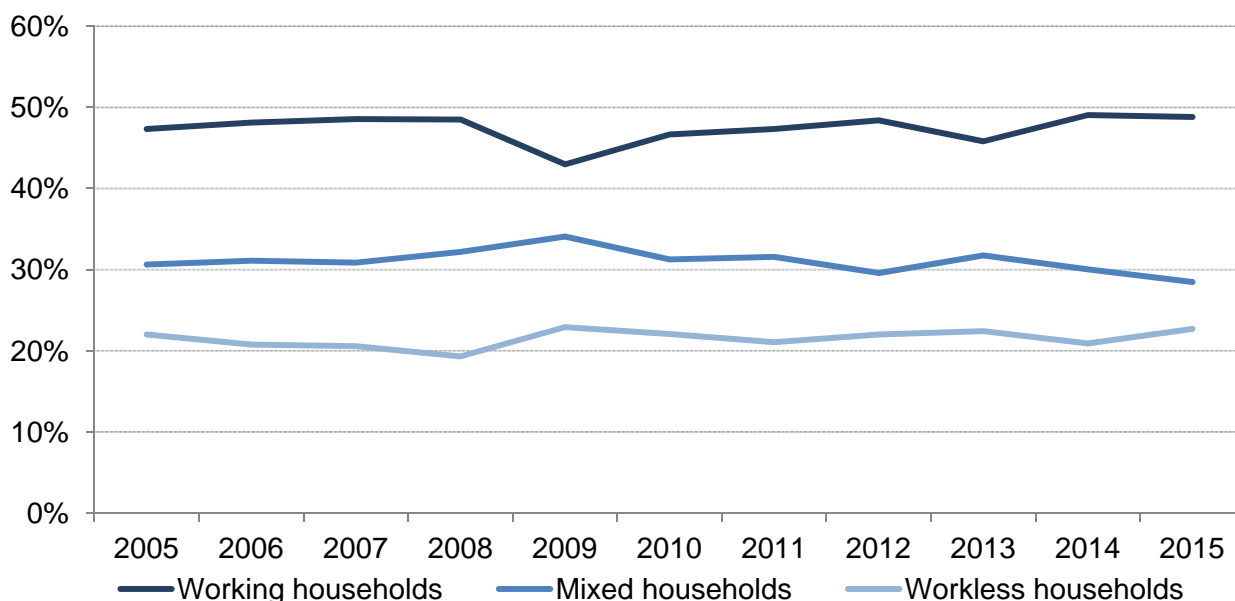
Table 1: Working age households by combined economic activity status of all members aged 16 and over, April - June 2015

Economic activity	NI	UK
Working households	49%	56%
Mixed households	28%	28%
Workless households	23%	16%
All households	581,000	20,682,000

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Figure 2 shows that the economic activity of households in NI in 2015 is similar to that in 2005. It also shows that the proportion of workless households in NI decreased steadily prior to the economic downturn, from 22% in 2005 to 19% in 2008 before increasing to 23% in 2009. Over the period 2008-2009 an increase in mixed households and a corresponding decrease in working households is also visible.

Figure 2: Working age households by combined economic activity status of members, April - June 2005 to April - June 2015



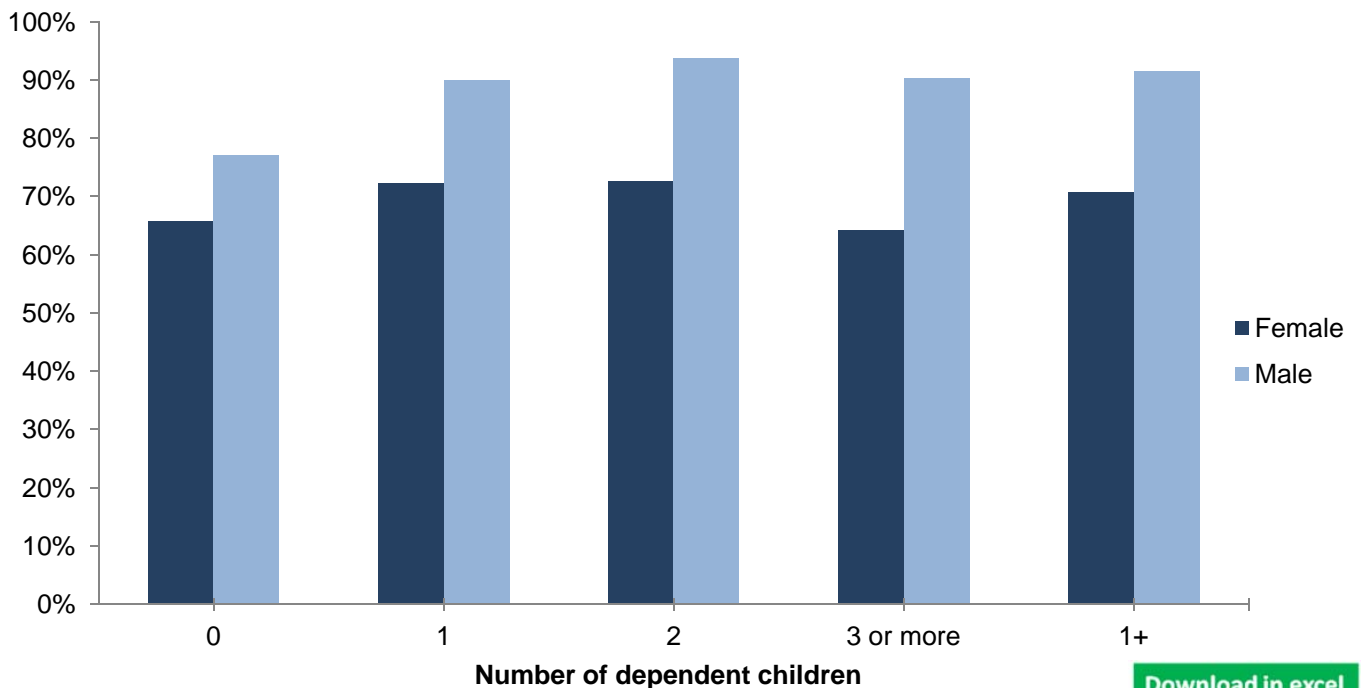
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Dependent children

Economic activity rates of the head of family unit or their partner¹ are affected by the presence of dependent children aged under 19, with the data showing that both males and females with dependent children had higher economic activity rates than those without. The trends have been broadly consistent over the last 10 years. In April – June 2015:

- females with dependent children had a higher economic activity rate (71%) than those without (66%),
- males with dependent children had an economic activity rate of 91%, compared to 77% for those without.
- females with three or more dependent children had a lower economic activity rate (64%) than those with one dependent child (72%).
- Male economic activity also varied by number of children but to a lesser degree than for females.

Figure 3: Economic activity rates (16-64) for head of family unit or their partner by number of dependent children, April - June 2015

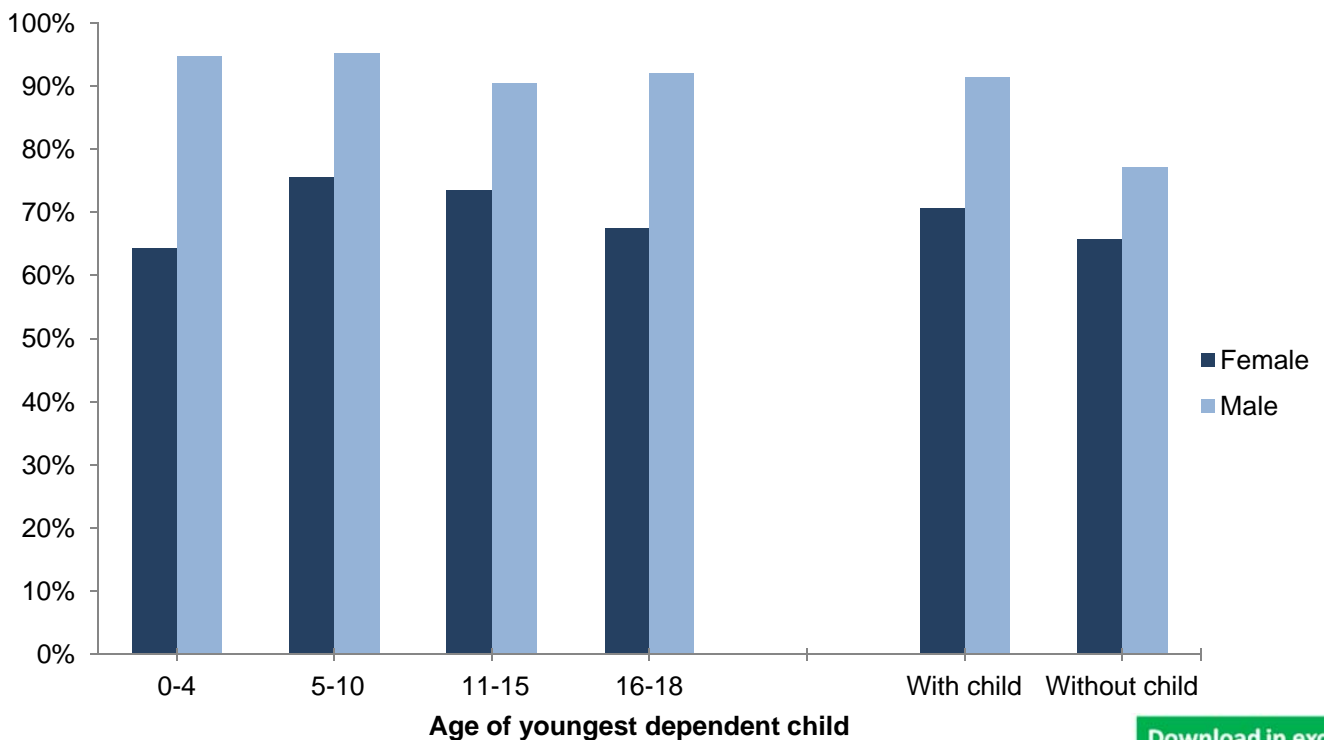


¹The analysis on the effect of dependent children (under 19) on the economic activity rates of males/females is based on the head or partner of the head of family unit only. It does not include family members who are aged 16-64 but who do not have parental responsibilities such as an elder sibling.

Figure 4 shows that:

- when the youngest dependent child was aged 0-4 years, the female head of family activity rate was 64%, while the corresponding rate when dependent children were 5-10 years was 76%.
- male economic activity rates were less affected by the age of the child, at 95% for those with youngest dependent child aged 0-4 and for those with youngest dependent child aged 5-10.

Figure 4: Economic activity rates for head of family unit or their partner by age of youngest dependent child, April - June 2015



Lone parents of working age

Further analysis of lone parents of working age at April - June 2015 showed that:

- the vast majority of lone parents were female (62,000).
- over three-fifths (60%) of female lone parents were economically active while the remainder (40%) were economically inactive.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) is a voluntary sample survey carried out by interviewing individuals in households. It is the most comprehensive source of information on their circumstances and work. Figures taken from the LFS are subject to sampling error that decreases as the sample size increases. Above estimates are not seasonally adjusted.

The individual data is aggregated to provide data at household level to facilitate the analysis of the economic activity patterns of whole households. Up to 2015, the LFS household datasets were produced twice a year (April-June and October-December) from the corresponding quarter's individual-level data. From January 2015 onwards, they are now produced each quarter alongside the main quarterly LFS. Data for July-September are currently available however historical data is not available for this quarter. For this reason, this report is based on April-June 2015.

Definitions

Economic activity: people aged 16 and over who are either in employment or unemployed.

Economically inactive: people who are neither in employment nor unemployed on the ILO measure. This group includes all those who are looking after a home, long term sick or disabled, students and retired.

A working age household is defined as a household with at least one person aged 16-64 in it.

Working households are households where all members aged 16 or over are employed.

Workless households are households where no-one aged 16 or over is in employment. These members may be unemployed or inactive. Inactive members may be unavailable to work because of family commitments, retirement or study, or unable to work through sickness or disability.

Mixed households contain both working and workless members.

Contact details

More labour market and economic statistics can be found at: [**NISRA – ECONOMIC AND LABOUR MARKET STATISTICS WEBSITE**](#)

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