



## 1. Introduction

The figures in this Statistical Factsheet cover participants on the Employment Service Support (ESS), which was introduced as an interim measure to facilitate the transition between the Steps to Work and Steps 2 Success employment programmes in Northern Ireland. ESS was introduced in June 2014 and referrals ended in March 2015, however participants will remain on ESS until they complete their provision.

Participation in ESS is voluntary and available to those aged 18 and over, not in employment of 16 hours or more each week.

## 2. Programme Design

The aim of the ESS is to assist people into employment at the earliest opportunity, through the delivery of provision tailored to each client. Eligible participants are identified by advisers in Jobcentres/ Jobs & Benefits offices and the appropriate provision is then arranged through local Lead Contractors.

The following seven strands are delivered under Employment Service Support.

<i>Strand</i>	<i>Age Group</i>	<i>Description</i>
<b>First Start</b>	18 – 24	Provides supported employment lasting up to 26 weeks to young people who are unemployed for 6 months or more. First Start job opportunities are permanent jobs where possible. Temporary job opportunities for at least 26 weeks are considered for financial support.
<b>Step Ahead 50+</b>	50+	Provides work experience within the voluntary/community sector organisations and gives participants a recent employment history. Step Ahead 50+ is temporary employment and will last for up to 26 weeks.
<b>Youth Employment Scheme (YES) – Work Experience strand</b>	18-24	This strand supports the delivery of the Youth Employment Scheme and provides participants with relevant work experience. YES Work Experience Strand opportunities are available for between 3-8 weeks.
<b>Youth Employment Scheme (YES) – Skills Development Strand</b>	18-24	Offers participants the opportunity to achieve a full Qualification and Credit Framework (QCF) certificate at Level 2 or above, or two QCF Awards at Level 2 or above.
<b>Short Accredited Training Courses (SATC)</b>	All Ages	Gives participants the chance to update or develop new occupational skills and obtain a recognised qualification.
<b>Into Work Skills (IWS)</b>	All Ages	Equips participants with ‘soft skills’ needed including, CV building, Jobsearch Skills and Interview techniques.
<b>Self Employment – Test Trading</b>	All Ages	The purpose is to allow participants to try out their business idea for a period of up to 26 weeks.

Participants are allowed to complete more than one strand if deemed appropriate by the adviser in Jobcentres/ Jobs & Benefits offices.

### 3. Methodology and Definitions

Clients' details are recorded on the Department's Client Management System (CMS) which is installed in JobCentres/Jobs & Benefits offices throughout Northern Ireland. This is an IT system which is used to facilitate the interface with the Department's customers. It maintains a basic client record; allows the preferred occupation stated by clients to be matched against suitable vacancies; and records actions such as interviews, referrals to training opportunities and placing into jobs etc.

The relevant data are extracted from CMS each month to form an Employment Service Support (ESS) database maintained by the Department's Programme Information & Analysis Branch within Analytical Services. The data presented in this Statistical Factsheet are derived from the ESS database.

The following notes explain the definitions underlying the data presented in this statistical factsheet except where these are self-explanatory – e.g. gender.

Participant: A participant is defined for statistical purposes as an individual on a single episode of ESS.

Episode: An individual can participate in Employment Service Support more than once. Each separate occasion is called an episode.

Moves to Unsubsidised Employment: Individuals do not have to inform the Department if they found work on leaving ESS, so not all moves to employment are recorded by DEL.

In order to gain a more accurate portrayal of participants moving into employment, the ESS Database is merged with benefit data from Department for Social Development (DSD) and employment data from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customers (HMRC).

A participant is considered to have moved into unsubsidised employment from ESS if:

- I. They are recorded on CMS as starting employment within 13 weeks of leaving ESS.
- II. They have a record on the HMRC database which indicates that they started employment while on ESS and that this employment continued after they left ESS.
- III. The HMRC database indicates that a participant started employment within 13 weeks of leaving ESS.

#### Sustained employment 13 weeks or more

It is necessary to wait for a period after participants leave to obtain information on employment outcomes, particularly sustained outcomes. A participant is considered to have sustained employment for 13 weeks if they are recorded on CMS or HMRC as sustaining unsubsidised employment for 13 weeks or more.

### 4. Revisions

Over time, as more information becomes available, estimates can be revised to improve quality and accuracy, which will provide a better picture of that being measured. As the ESS database is built and updated from a live administrative system there is potential for some revision of statistics in the future. Any necessary revision will therefore be incorporated into future ESS statistical publications. Revisions are expected to be minimal but may be due to database changes applied or to a lag in recording information on the system.

## 5. Quality Measures

Relevance: This ESS Factsheet has been drafted following consultation with customers. The key customers within Government use the data to monitor performance of provision and consider operational impacts of delivering ESS. There is ongoing interaction with users to ensure the data are still relevant to meet their needs.

Accuracy: The statistics included are representative of the administrative database (CMS) at the time of data extraction. The administrative system has in-built validation checks to minimise user error and can be interrogated to assess data quality and cross check statistics. Validation checks are also carried out on the ESS database. A small number of erroneous records are excluded from the ESS database.

Timeliness and Punctuality: The ESS stopped taking referrals in March 2015. All data on starts will be up to this date. To allow time for sufficient and robust data, the statistics for leavers are lagged by a quarter as there can be a delay in entering end dates on CMS. Statistics on moves to employment are less up to date due to the natural lag involved in allowing people time to find and sustain employment on leaving ESS. The publication schedule for the Department for Employment and Learning can be accessed via the following link: [Statistics Publication Schedule](#).

Accessibility and Clarity: The Statistical Factsheet is published quarterly on the Department for Employment and Learning website and is free of charge. The factsheet includes text and charts. The Factsheet is available in other formats upon request. The accompanying tables are provided in the MS Excel and Open Document Spreadsheet formats.

Comparability: The Factsheet provides data by month, since Employment Service Support was introduced in Northern Ireland, to enable comparisons over time. When methodological changes or changes in provision are made, every effort will be made to ensure that all previous data are amended to make them directly comparable.