

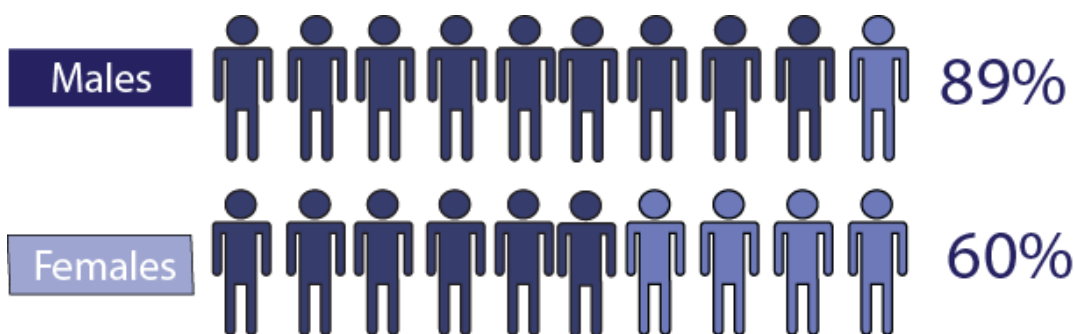
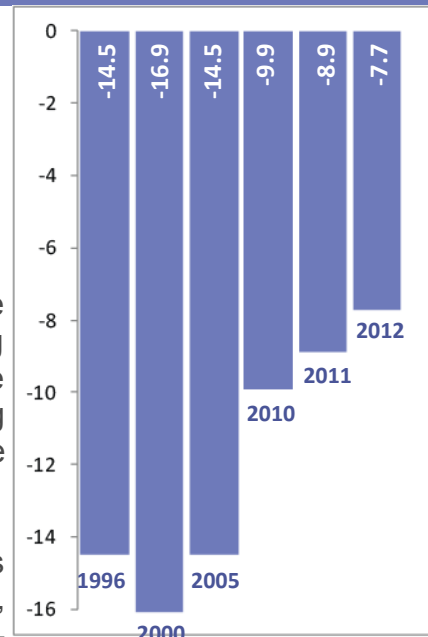
MIND THE ↔ GAP

By Michael Thompson, Statistics & Research Branch, OFMDFM

The Northern Ireland labour market is no longer the male led preserve it once was. The gap between male and female participation is changing; in fact, over the past 15 years that gap has halved. In addition, the rate of pay for women has increased in this same period. Taken together, these two developments represent a significant increase in equality.

The really noteworthy changes are not always apparent from the headline figures. While women make up 51 per cent of the working age population and 47 per cent of the workforce, distinctions have to be made between full-time and part-time employment. Following an historic trend, women tend to be under-represented in full-time employment and over-represented in part-time employment.

However the share of females making up full time employees has grown, so the full-time gap is narrowing. In terms of part-time work, the most recent data show females are over-represented; 81 per cent of part-time employees are female and this has been fairly constant over the time period.

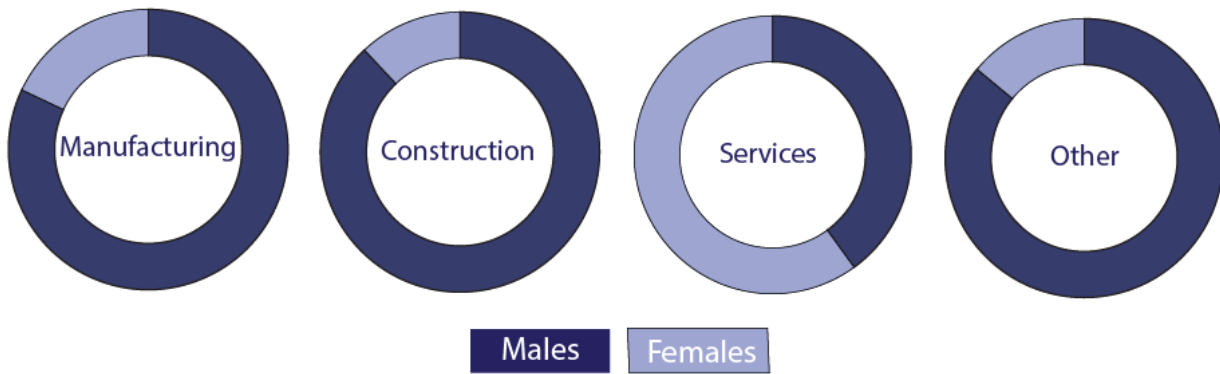


Male employees are overwhelmingly full-time, almost nine in every ten, compared to around six in every ten females.

With males tending to work in full-time employment compared to females, is this still a consequence of family models and child care responsibilities, personal choice or is this due to the sectors in which females choose to work? When we look at the occupational classifications across the genders, the most common occupation for both genders is 'professional'. However, considerable proportions of female employees work in administrative/secretarial and caring, leisure and other service occupations. A large proportion of male employees are found in skilled trade occupations. Across the sectors, manufacturing and construction are strongly male dominated sectors. Recent data show the only sector that females were in the majority was 'services'.

'Working Age Employment'

Working age is 16-64. Employment is those who want to work, are able to work and who are in employment. It does not include those who cannot work or who do not wish to work



‘Cause they’re worth it?

How do these employment patterns impact on pay and earnings over the past few years? Men continue to have higher take home pay at the end of the week, but that does not tell the full story. Hourly rates suggest a more finely balanced difference between the genders. Those women who are in full-time employment earn the same or slightly higher than their male counterparts. This is in contrast to the situation in England, where women’s hourly rate is only 90 per cent that of men. Does this mean we have pay equality? Despite the almost exact equivalence of male and female hourly rates, a gender gap remains: the median full-time weekly income for women is £441, and for men it is £36 per week more, at £477. The gender gap is closing, but it is not yet closed.

For further information on gender equality statistics, OFMDFM currently produce an annual report, the latest version can be found [here](#).

Further information on labour force statistics can be found [here](#).

Who features in the top 10% of earners in NI?

Myth Busters

“You must need to be a millionaire.....or at least close?”

Actually no....not even close. If you have a household income of **over £700** per week you are in that top 10%. A household income of £440 per week sees you in the top half of households in the UK.

“Crime is getting worse!”

While 57 per cent of us think levels of crime are rising, only 10 per cent of us have been a victim of crime in the last year and this has dropped from 23 per cent in 1998.