Quarterly Supplement to the Labour Market Report
October - December 2017
7th March 2018

The Quarterly Supplement provides a more detailed range of statistics from the Labour Force Survey than is available from the monthly Labour Market Report including information disaggregated by gender, age and by Local Government District.

The additional information is provided as Excel tables, which can be accessed directly from the attached index of tables (Page 12). The information included is **not seasonally adjusted** unless otherwise stated. The Further Information section provides detail on sampling variability.

The key points from the supplementary tables are:

Unemployment

- Unemployment was at its lowest for males in Quarter 4 since 2007 and for females since 2008, with the 2017 rate sitting at 4.8% for males and 3.3% for females.
- The unemployment rate for males has been consistently higher than for females.
- Over half of unemployed persons were aged 30+ (55%).
- Long-term unemployment was more common among males than females, with half of unemployed males (50%) being unemployed for one year or more (long term unemployed).
- Long-term unemployment was more common in the older age group with over half (59%) of those unemployed aged 30 years and over being unemployed for one year or more; whereas the majority (73%) of unemployed 16 – 29 year olds were unemployed for less than a year.

Employment

- There were an estimated 804,000 persons aged 16-64 in employment in Northern Ireland in October - December 2017.
- The number of those in employment increased by approximately 28,000 in the last five years.
- There were more males in employment beyond the age of 60 than females.
- A higher proportion of females (37%) in employment worked part time than males (11%).
- The main reason cited by female employees for working part-time was that they did not want a full-time job (75%).
- The major industries of all those in employment were public administration, education and health (31%) and distribution, hotels and restaurants (18%).

- Almost half (47%) of females in employment were in the public administration, education and health sector, compared with 17% of males in employment.
- Professional occupations accounted for the largest proportion of persons in employment (18%).
- This was also true for females in employment with 20% in professional occupations, but the highest proportion of males in employment were in skilled trades occupations (25%).
- In October - December 2017, the working age employment rate by Local Government District was highest in Antrim and Newtownabbey (85%) and lowest in Newry, Mourne and Down (59%), Causeway Coast and Glens (61%) and Derry City and Strabane (61%).

Economic activity

- At 76%, the 16-64 economic activity rate for males in October - December 2017 was 9 percentage points higher than that for females (67%). The current differential between the activity rates of males and females has decreased from a 15 percentage point gap ten years ago.
- Economic activity rates were highest in Antrim and Newtownabbey Local Government District (87%) and lowest in Newry, Mourne and Down (61%).

Economically inactive

- The October – December 2017 economic inactivity rate (16-64), although economic inactivity rates for males has reached a series high, the trend for higher rates among females than males continues (33% and 24% respectively).
- Under half (44%) of the economically inactive (aged 16+) were aged 65 and over in Northern Ireland compared to 55% in the UK.
- Northern Ireland had a higher percentage of economically inactive (16-64) who were sick / disabled than in the UK (33% compared to 25%).
- In October - December 2017 the highest level of economic inactivity (16-64) by Local Government District was reported in Newry, Mourne and Down (39%) and the lowest in Antrim and Newtownabbey (13%).

Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

- In October - December 2017, there were 24,000 young people (aged from 16 to 24) in Northern Ireland who were NEET.
- The NEET rate among females aged 16-24 (9%) is 1 percentage point lower than last year and down almost 8 percentage points from 3 years ago.
- Among males aged 16-24 the NEET rate is up almost 2 percentage points from last year but down more than 3 percentage points from 3 years ago.
- The percentage of all young people in Northern Ireland who were NEET in October – December 2017 was 11.7%.
- Of the 24,000 16-24 year olds who were NEET, 15,000 were economically inactive, with a further 10,000 who were economically active but unemployed[1].
- Within the UK, England had the lowest 16-24 NEET rate at 10.7%, while Northern Ireland and Scotland had a joint rate of 11.7%. Wales had the highest 16-24 NEET rate of 12.0% and the UK average was 10.9%.

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[1] Note: figures may not add due to rounding

Education and training

- Persons who were economically active aged 16-64 were more likely to be educated to a higher level than the economically inactive.
- Specifically, almost 30% of economically active were educated to degree level or above, whereas less than 9% of economically inactive had the same level of education.
- Almost one third (30%) of economically inactive persons had no formal qualifications at October - December 2017, compared with 10% of economically active.
- A higher proportion of younger male employees (aged 16-34) received job-related training than older male employees. Conversely, a higher proportion of older female employees (age 35-64) received job-related training than younger female employees.

Self-employment

- The number of self-employed people increased by 11,000 (9%) in the period 2007 to 2017, this compared with an increase in employees of 6%. This is driven by an increase in the number of self-employed females of 61%.
- However, even with the increase in self-employed females, only 10% of females in employment were self-employed, compared to 20% of males.
- There were fewer younger people aged 16-29 among the self-employed in October – December 2017 (13%), compared with 5 years ago (17%).
- Of those who are self-employed 67% were educated to A-level or above, compared with 64% if employees.
- The largest occupation group for the self-employed was skilled trade occupations (36%).
- Self-employment rates for Northern Ireland ranked fourth highest out of the twelve UK regions in terms of self-employment rates for October - December 2017.

Graduates

- The number of Northern Ireland graduates has increased by 14% in the last five years, to 268,000 in October - December 2017.
- The highest proportion of graduates in Northern Ireland (28%) were in the 30-39 age group.
- The Northern Ireland working age employment rate was considerably higher for graduates (87%) than for non-graduates (63%).
- The Northern Ireland employment rate for non-graduates was the lowest of the twelve regions in the UK, however, the employment rate among graduates ranked in the middle of the UK regions.
- Graduates were most likely to be in professional occupations (48%), whereas, non-graduates were most likely to be in other occupations[2] (50%).

Households[3] - first published November 2017

- In April – June 2017, the most common type of household in Northern Ireland consisted of one person which accounted for 31% of all households.
- Northern Ireland had the highest proportion of working age workless households (21%) among the UK regions. This compared to 15% in the UK as a whole.
- The economic activity rate for female heads of family with dependent children declines with the number of children.
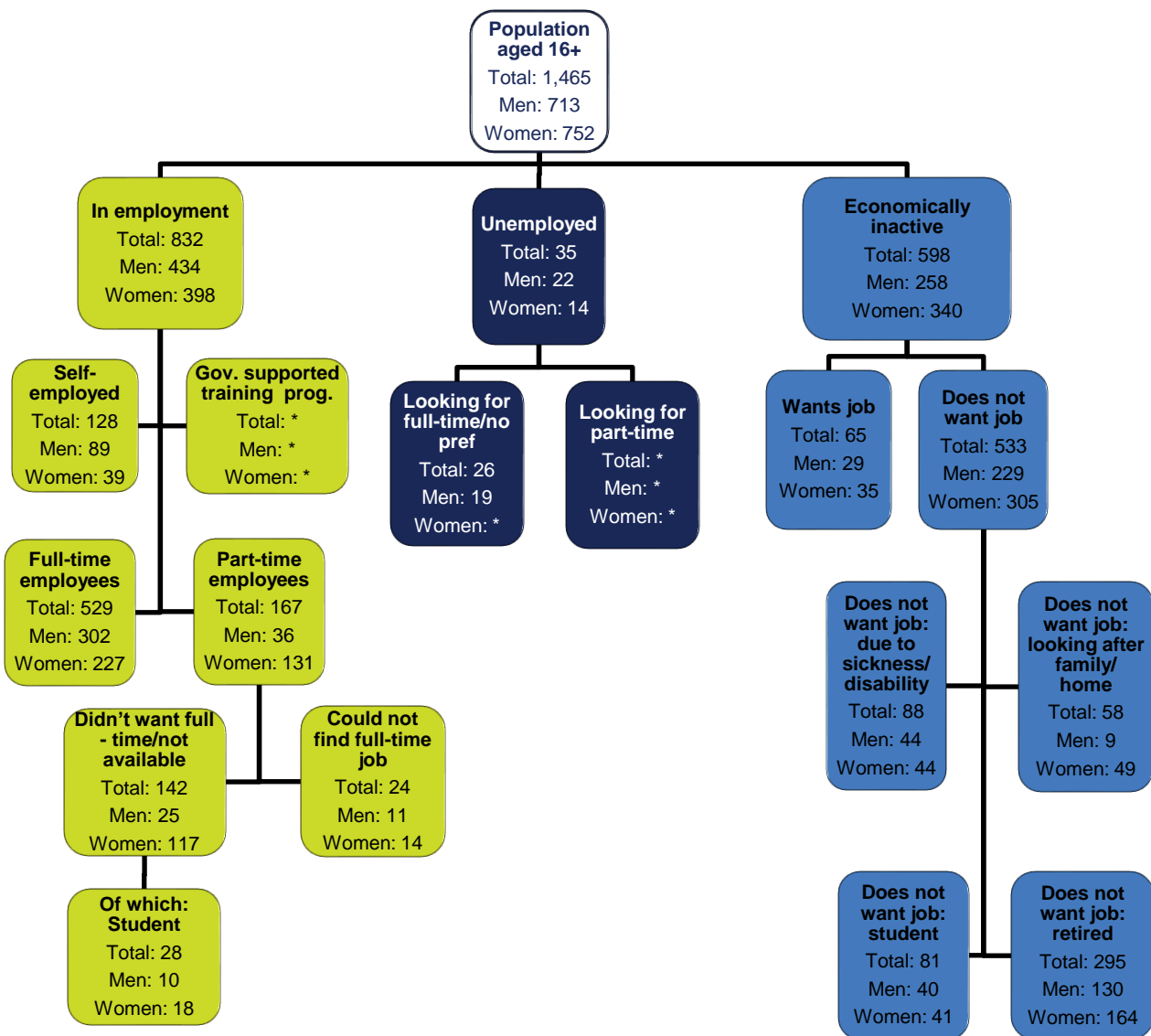
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[2] Other occupations include caring, leisure and other services, sales and customer service occupations, process, plant and machine operatives, and elementary occupations.
[3] The household data refers to a different quarter than the rest of the document as the source for household data is published twice a year. Data relating to individuals is published on a quarterly basis.

- Overall, economic activity rates were higher for females with dependent children. However, younger age groups showed a higher economic activity rate among females without children, than females who had dependent children.
- When the youngest dependent child was aged 0-4, the economic activity rate of the female head of family (71%) was 11 percentage points lower than the rate for the 16-18 age group (82%).

Figure 1:   Overall labour market structure, 16+ (thousands)

Population aged 16+
Total: 1,465
Men: 713
Women: 752

In employment
Total: 832
Men: 434
Women: 398

Unemployed
Total: 35
Men: 22
Women: 14

Economically inactive
Total: 598
Men: 258
Women: 340

Self-employed
Total: 128
Men: 89
Women: 39

Gov. supported training prog.
Total: *
Men: *
Women: *

Looking for full-time/no pref
Total: 26
Men: 19
Women: *

Looking for part-time
Total: *
Men: *
Women: *

Wants job
Total: 65
Men: 29
Women: 35

Does not want job
Total: 533
Men: 229
Women: 305

Full-time employees
Total: 529
Men: 302
Women: 227

Part-time employees
Total: 167
Men: 36
Women: 131

Does not want job: due to sickness/disability
Total: 88
Men: 44
Women: 44

Does not want job: looking after family/home
Total: 58
Men: 9
Women: 49

Didn't want full-time/not available
Total: 142
Men: 25
Women: 117

Could not find full-time job
Total: 24
Men: 11
Women: 14

Does not want job: student
Total: 81
Men: 40
Women: 41

Does not want job: retired
Total: 295
Men: 130
Women: 164

Of which: Student
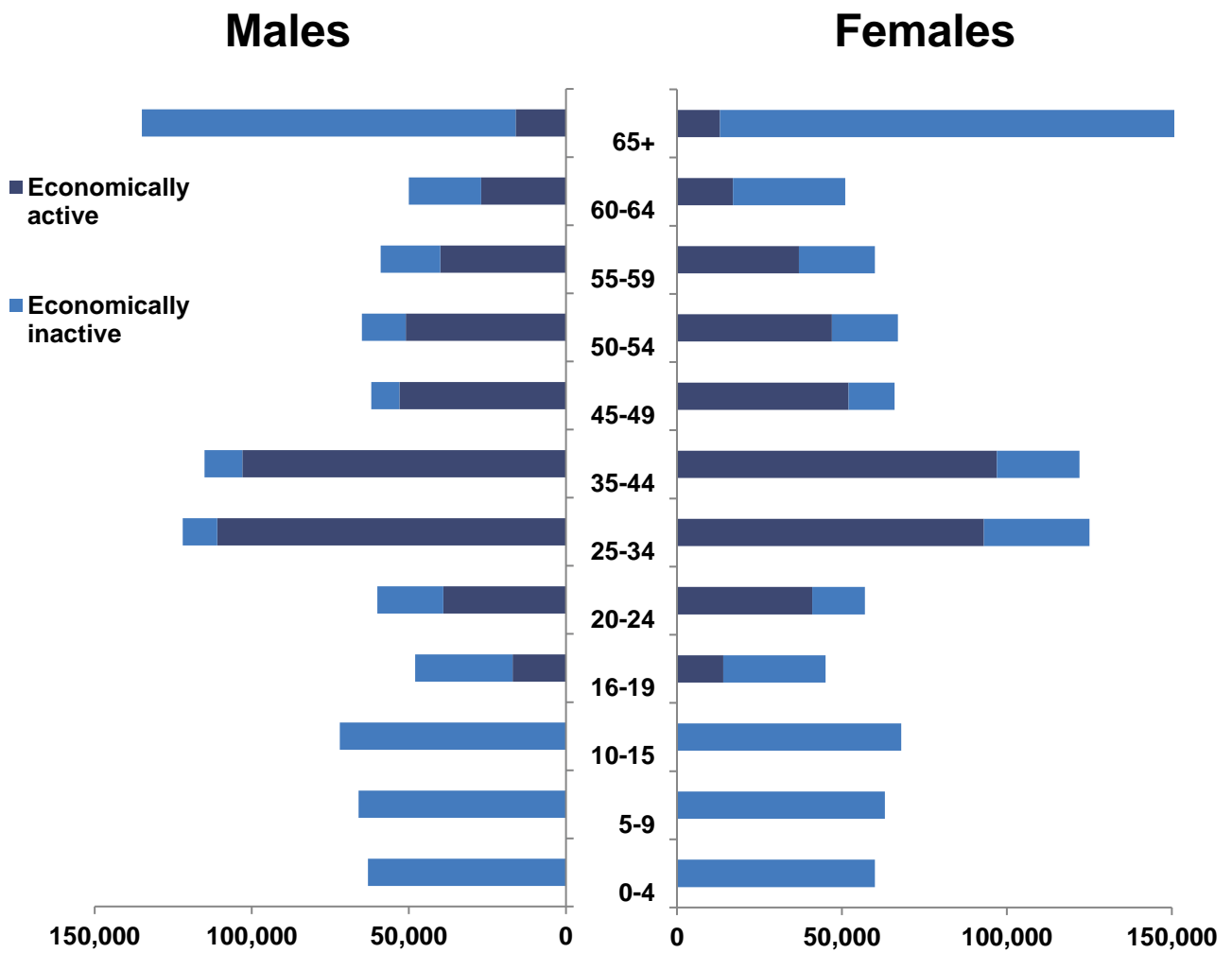Total: 28
Men: 10
Women: 18

Notes:
This chart illustrates the structure of the private household population in relation to the key ILO defined categories of in employment, unemployed and economically inactive (see Further Information for definitions).
* Sample size is too small to provide a reliable estimate (this explains why a gender split for some categories is omitted).
Figures may not sum due to rounding.

Figure 2:   Northern Ireland population structure by age, sex and economic activity

Males

Females

- Economically active
- Economically inactive

Age groups (top to bottom): 65+, 60-64, 55-59, 50-54, 45-49, 35-44, 25-34, 20-24, 16-19, 10-15, 5-9, 0-4

Males axis: 150,000 100,000 50,000 0

Females axis: 0 50,000 100,000 150,000

Source: Labour Force Survey, October - December 2017

Context

The Quarterly Supplement to the Labour Market Report (LMR) provides more detailed statistics from the most recent quarterly Labour Force Survey (LFS). The Quarterly Supplement analyses data which has not been adjusted for seasonality whereas the monthly LMR provides headline data adjusted for seasonality. The quarterly publication provides additional data in key areas such as employment, unemployment and economic activity / inactivity. In addition, it provides the most up-to-date information on specific areas such as those Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), self-employment and graduates.

In keeping with feedback from various user consultation exercises, which highlighted a demand for data in re-usable format, the quarterly supplement has moved from a traditional publication style to being primarily tabular, with key points highlighted in this summary report alongside figures and notes which are useful for context. The detailed tables are available on the NISRA-ELMS webpage and can be accessed via the attached index of tables (Page 12).

Key users of Northern Ireland labour market statistics include government departments, in particular the Department for the Economy (DfE), to design and monitor the impact of economic and labour market policy. Other Government departments such as the Executive Office, the Department of Finance (DoF) and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), as well as bodies such as Invest NI and Belfast City Council, regularly require specific ad hoc labour market analysis in order to monitor policies for example, equality and employment. In addition, significant 'non-governmental' users of labour market statistics include the media, banks, academics, private consultants and the general public, primarily for reporting or researching the performance of the economy in general. Labour market statistics attract widespread media coverage, with a number of broadcasters publishing articles on the labour market on a monthly basis, generally on the day of publication of the Labour Market Report.

Labour market statistics feature in the economic commentary which provides an overview of the state of the Northern Ireland economy, setting it in context with the UK and Republic of Ireland. The most up-to-date official statistics on the economy and labour market are available on the Economic Overview section of the website.

Further information on using labour market statistics can be found on the Office for National Statistics (ONS) website:
- Explaining the concepts of employment, unemployment and economic inactivity
- Interpreting Labour Market statistics
- Guide to Labour Market Statistics
- Glossary

Further Information

Labour Force Survey

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) is a household sample survey carried out by interviewing individuals about their personal circumstances and work. It provides a rich source of information on the labour force using internationally agreed definitions.

LFS unemployment

The definition of unemployment used in the Labour Force Survey (LFS) is in accordance with that of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The ILO unemployed includes those without a job who were able to start work in the two weeks following their LFS interview and had either looked for work in the four weeks prior to interview or were waiting to start a job they had already obtained.

Unemployment rate - the percentage of economically active people who are unemployed.

Please note that it is possible for the number of unemployed to increase and the unemployment rate to fall during the same period, as the latter measure is a ratio e.g. if the number of economically active has increased at a faster rate than the number unemployed, the unemployment rate will fall.

LFS employment

The definition of ILO employed applies to anyone (aged 16 or over) who has done at least one hour's paid work in the week prior to interview, or has a job they are temporarily away from (e.g. on holiday). Also included are people who do unpaid work in a family business and people on Government-supported employment training schemes.

The ILO measures are particularly useful for examining short term and long term trends over time and key LFS time series data are available both seasonally adjusted and unadjusted.

LFS economic activity

The economic activity rate is the percentage of people aged 16-64 who are economically active.

Definition of 'working age'

The 'working age' definition was changed in August 2010 to include those aged from 16 to 64 for both men and women. Previously this was based on upper age limits of 59 for women and 64 for men, reflecting the state pension ages in the UK.

Sampling

Because the LFS is a sample survey, results are subject to sampling error, i.e. the actual proportion of the population in private households with a particular characteristic may differ from the proportion of the LFS sample with that characteristic. Accordingly, although percentages in most tables are quoted to one decimal place, they should not be regarded as having this degree of accuracy, and indeed some apparent trends over time may be misleading due to sampling error. In general, the larger the group, the more precise (proportionately) is the LFS estimate.

The following table shows the proportions obtained from the October – December 2017 survey for some key LFS variables and indicates their sampling accuracy. The confidence intervals represent the ranges either side of the LFS proportions which are 95% certain to include the true values of the quantities estimated.

LFS proportions of total private household population (16+), including 95% confidence intervals, October - December 2017

	Estimate	Change over quarter	Change over year
In employment (Sampling variability of change)	832,000	8,000 (+/-18,000)	-9000 (+/-32,000)
Unemployment (Sampling variability of change)	35,000	1,000 (+/-10,000)	-13,000 (+/-14,000)
Economically inactive (Sampling variability of change)	598,000	-7,000 (+/-16,000)	30,000 (+/-29,000)
Unemployment rate (Sampling variability of change)	4.1%	0.1pps +/-1.2pps	-1.4pps +/-1.6pps
Economic activity rate (Sampling variability of change)	59.2%	0.5pps +/-1.3pps	-1.8pps +/-2.3pps

* As a percentage of all in employment.
Confidence intervals for other proportions produced in this publication may be obtained on request from contacts given at the end of this note.

Response Rates

The total sample for the October-December 2017 LFS consisted of 2,674 addresses, (705 chosen at random from the Valuation & Lands Agency list of domestic properties, 1689 carried forward from the previous quarter). A random start, fixed interval sampling technique of the addresses, which are ordered by Council Area and Ward, is used. This ensures a proportional representation across the Council Areas in Northern Ireland.

Only private household addresses were eligible since the LFS is a survey of the private household population. Every selected address is interviewed on five successive occasions, such that in any one quarter, a fifth of the sample will be receiving their first interview, one fifth their second and so on, with one fifth receiving their fifth and final interview. This results in an 80% sample overlap between quarters.

Response rates, October - December 2017

Total addresses sampled	2,674
Fully and partially responding	1,517
Eligible sample	2,394
Response rate (%)	63.4%

*Of the addresses sampled, a small number contained more than one household and some contained households which moved during the quarter. Residents in NHS hospital accommodation (formerly called nurses' homes) and students living in halls of residence or boarding schools are included to improve the coverage of young people.

Breakdown of non-response and ineligible addresses, October - December 2017

Non-response/non-contact:	Number
- Outright refusal	247
- Circumstantial refusal	104
- Non-contact	526
Ineligible addresses:	
- Vacant/derelict/under construction	177
- Holiday accommodation	20
- Non-residential	7
- Second residence	44
- Other ineligible	21
- Household moves	9
Total	1157

LFS revisions

LFS microdata have recently been revised to incorporate the latest population estimates. The revisions affect LFS data from the period May - July 2012 onwards and were first published in May 2017. The magnitude of the revisions are relatively small, with the revisions to the unemployment rate falling within +/-0.1 percentage points and the working age employment rate within +/- 0.2 percentage points. The procedures being applied to the Northern Ireland LFS results are consistent with those applied by the Office for National Statistics to other UK regions.

More information on the revision policy concerning labour market statistics can be found through the link: Labour market statistics revisions policy

Disability Data

Please note: in line with ONS, NISRA has suspended publication of these estimates due to an apparent discontinuity between April to June 2017 and July to September 2017. ONS is investigating this issue and the tables will be reinstated as soon as possible. Please see UKSA PQ response on the issue for more information.

Changes to the Disability data

As of May 2016 the definition of Disability used on the Labour Force Survey in Northern Ireland has changed from the DDA-based definition to the GSS Harmonised Standard definition of Disability. This is to ensure consistence and comparability with the UK. It has caused a discontinuity in the time series at April 2013.

The GSS Harmonised Standards focus on a 'core' definition of people whose condition currently limits their activity. In summary the core definition covers people who report:
- (current) physical or mental health condition(s) or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more; and
- the condition(s) or illness(es) reduce their ability to carry out day-to-day activities.

This differs from the DDA-based definition of disability previously used in the LFS in that it excludes the following groups which are "non-core" under the new Act:
- people with a progressive condition (specified in the Equality Act as HIV/AIDS, cancer or multiple sclerosis) that does not currently reduce their ability to carry out day-to-day activities.
- people whose activities would be restricted only without medication or treatment.

For further information:

AN ELECTRONIC VERSION OF THIS DOCUMENT WITH ASSOCIATED HYPERLINKS IS AVAILABLE ON THE NISRA – ECONOMIC AND LABOUR MARKET STATISTICS WEBSITE

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