

(Annual Business Inquiry)

NI Non-Financial Business Economy 2018 Provisional Local Unit Results

Date: 28 August 2020

Geographical Area: Northern Ireland

Theme: Business and energy

Frequency: Annual

Key Points

- In 2018, the income generated by non-financial businesses in Northern Ireland (NI), less the cost of goods and services used to create this income, was estimated to be £23.7 billion. This amount represents the approximate Gross Value Added (aGVA) at basic prices of the NI non-financial business economy, excluding farming and financial services.
- The NI non-financial business economy, as measured by the Northern Ireland Annual Business Inquiry (NIABI), recorded an increase of £1,687 million (7.7%) in aGVA from 2017 to 2018.
- The key driver of aGVA growth was in the NI non-financial services sector which increased by £723 million (8.5%) between 2017 and 2018. The majority of aGVA growth in this sector is attributable to the administrative and support services section which increased by £292 million (21.7%).
- Wholesale and retail trade within the distribution sector recorded aGVA growth of £662 million (13.2%).
- The construction sector recorded an increase in aGVA of £380 million (17.1%).
- The production sector saw a decline in aGVA, decreasing by £77million (-1.2%) from £6.19 billion to £6.11 billion. The majority of the aGVA decrease in this sector was attributable to the manufacturing section which saw a decrease of £158 million (-3.3%).
- Turnover in the NI non-financial business economy as a whole increased by £2.1 billion (3.1%) over the year and purchases of goods, materials, energy, water and services increased by £1.6 billion (3.6%).



NATIONAL STATISTICS STATUS

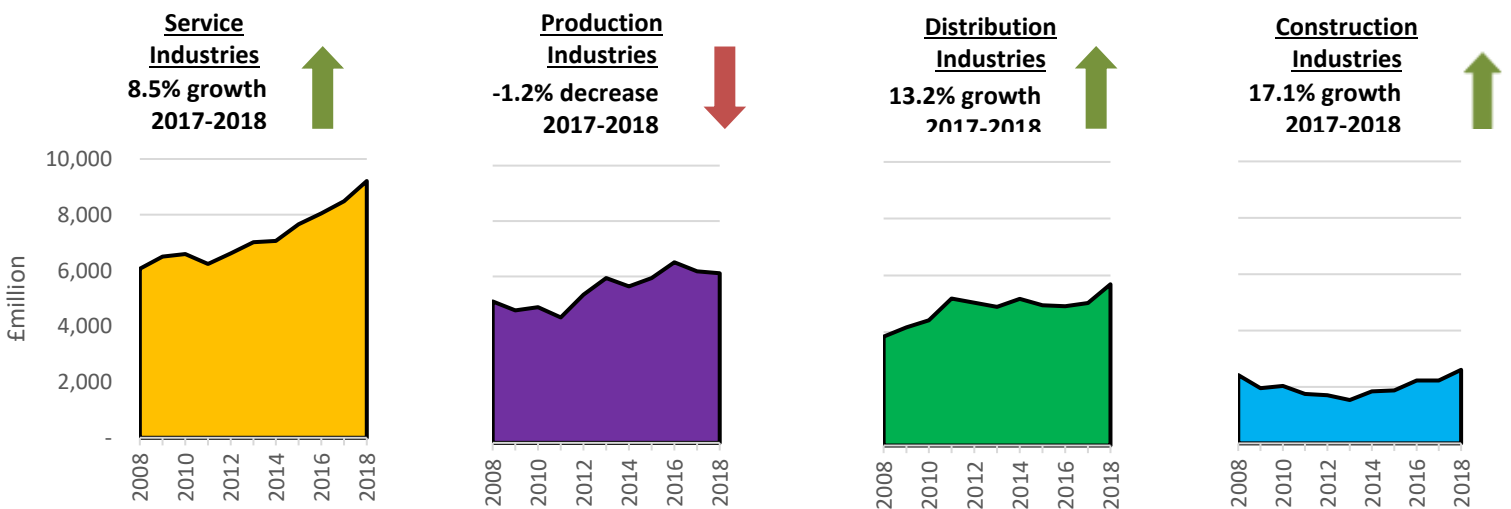
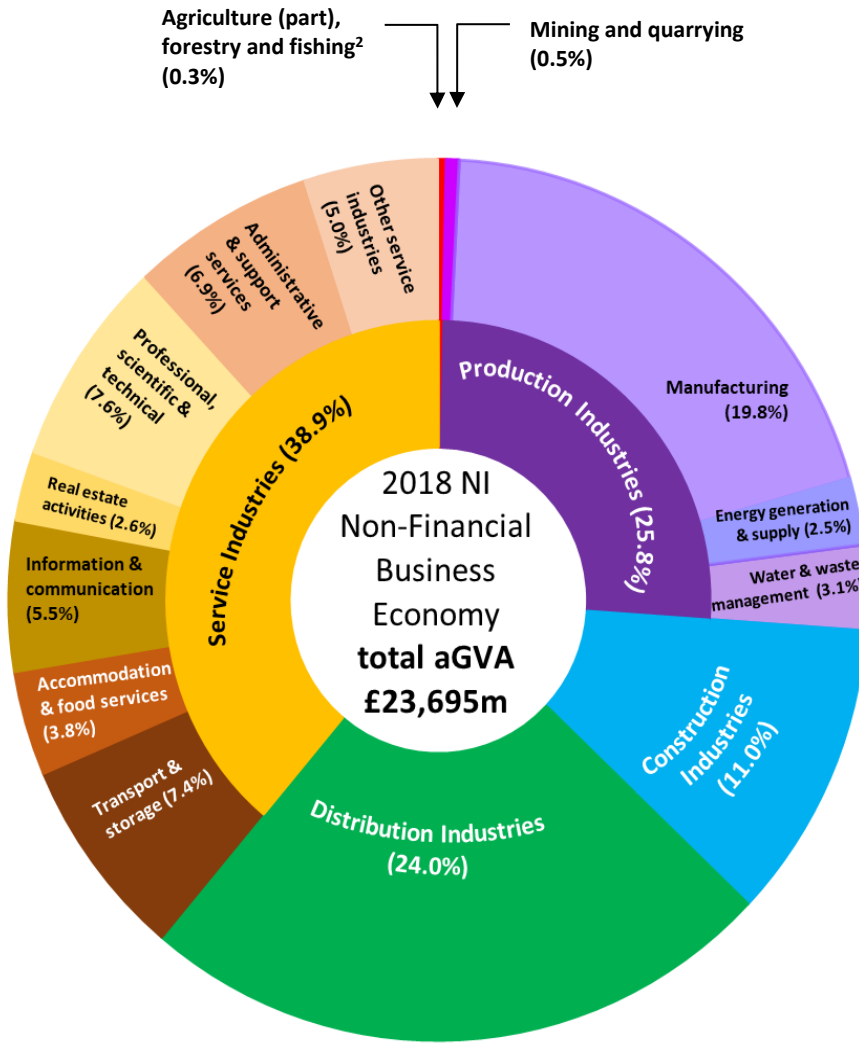
National Statistics status mean that our statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value, and it is our responsibility to maintain compliance with these standards.

These statistics were designated as National Statistics in 2012 following a full [assessment](#) against the [Code of Practice](#).

Since the assessment by the UK Statistics Authority, we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics, and have made the following improvements:

- Provided information on the use of the ABI and comparability with other similar statistics
- Enhanced quality by providing information to users on quality assurance, methodology and explanations of statistical terms.
- Redesigned the Annual Business Inquiry report, improving explanatory material including charts, tables and data visualisations.

Figure 1: aGVA 2018 and trends by broad industry 2008-2018 for NI NFBE¹



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¹ Agriculture (part) covers only hunting, forestry, fishing and the support activities to agriculture and excludes crop and animal production.

Contents

1	Introduction and Context	Page 5
2	Summary and Commentary	Page 6
	Overall Results	Page 6
	Production Industries	Page 10
	Construction Industries	Page 13
	Distribution Industries	Page 14
	Non-financial Services Industries	Page 15
3	Results by Industry	Page 18
4	Background Notes	Page 21

1 Introduction and Context

This release contains 2018 provisional and 2017 revised local unit² results from the Northern Ireland Annual Business Inquiry (NIABI). The NIABI is a key resource for measuring the size, performance and structure of the Northern Ireland non-financial business economy. It is a survey of businesses covering the Production, Construction, Distribution and Service industries and covers roughly two thirds of the total NI economy. Public sector bodies are excluded from the survey. Further information on survey coverage is contained in the background notes.

Key variables

The published estimates include the total value of sales and work completed by businesses (turnover); the value of the purchase of goods, materials and services and approximate Gross Value Added (aGVA) at basic prices. These estimates are further disaggregated at industry level, providing users with an insight into the size and evolution of the overall Non-financial business economy from 2008 to 2018 as well as a measure of the contribution made by different industry sectors. The financial estimates are collected and presented as monetary values. All financial data are reported at current prices (effect of price changes included).

Interpretation

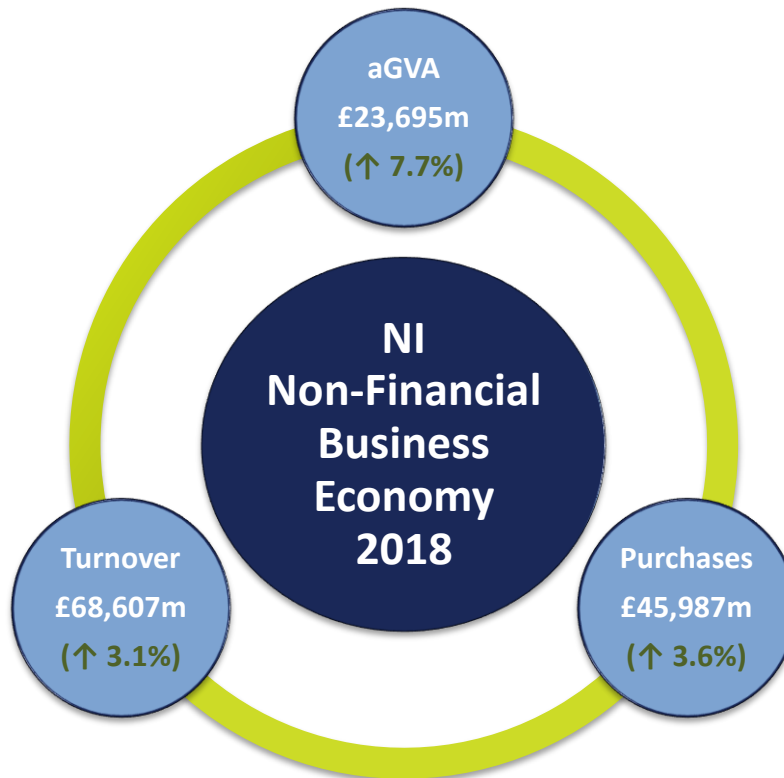
The Non-financial business economy is constantly changing, as businesses merge, are taken over, or change the main focus of their activity. These changes can result in the industry classification of a business changing over time. In industries where movements are common, or where large businesses are involved, these changes can themselves cause large changes in the NIABI estimates. This should be taken into consideration when changes over time are being considered.

Quality indicators

When interpreting NIABI results, users are advised to refer to the quality indicators known as coefficient of variation provided with the estimates in the tables. These indicate that some results have quite large margins of statistical error associated with them. Users should exercise caution when interpreting the annual changes associated with such results. Users should also be aware that methodological improvements governing the treatment of business closures were introduced for the 2011 report. These improvements have been implemented for 2010 to 2018 data. Consequently, although 2008 and 2009 figures are included in this report, users should exercise caution when making comparisons.

² See part (vi) of background notes for definitions and further information.

2 Summary and Commentary



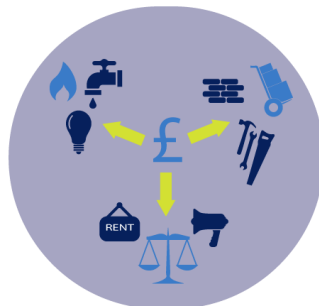
Income



Income includes turnover, insurance claims, work in progress, changes in stock and subsidies

minus

Expenditure



Expenditure includes purchases of goods, materials, energy, water and services and total taxes and levies paid

equals

aGVA



aGVA is a measure of the income generated by businesses less their expenditure

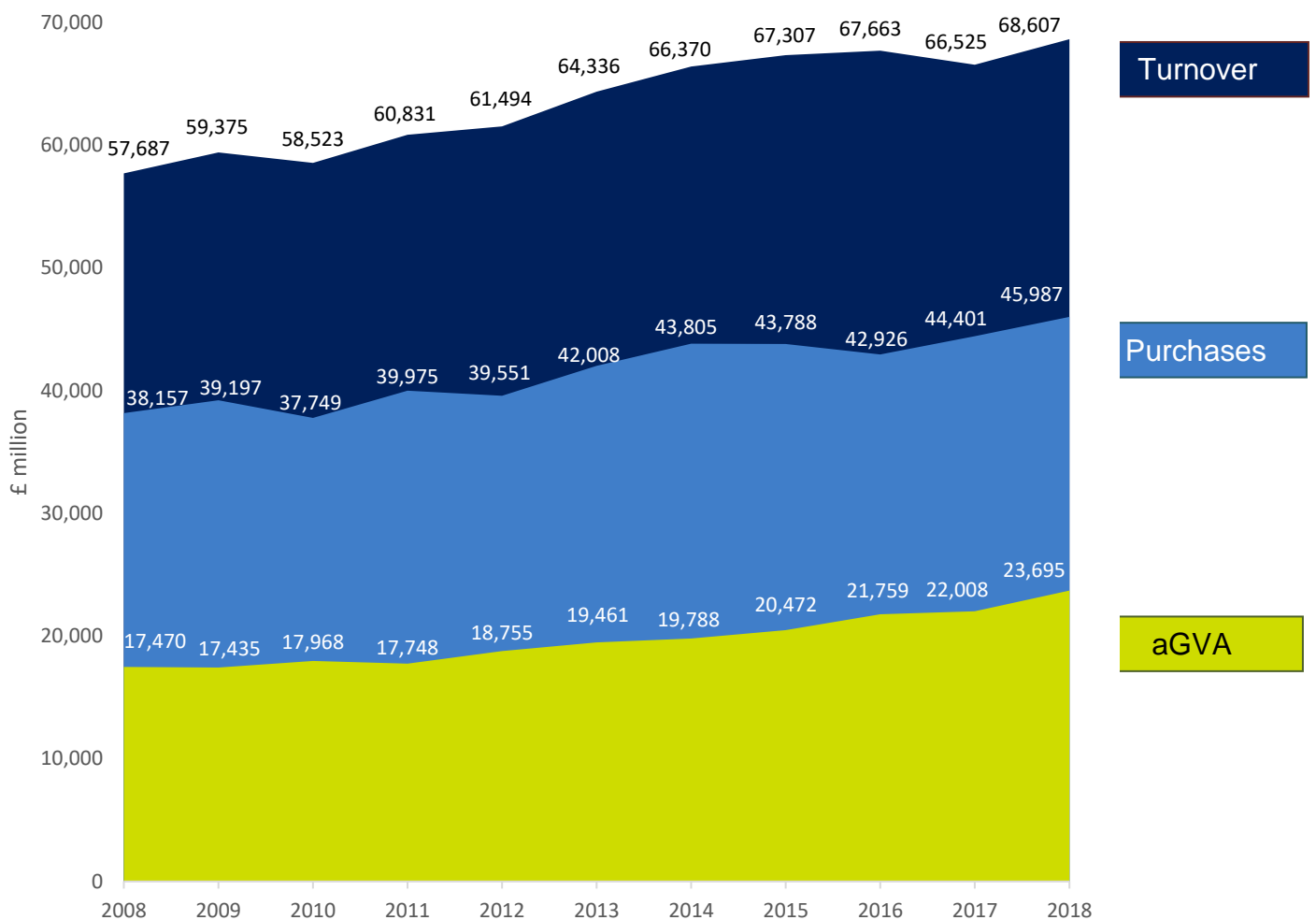
Turnover, purchases and approximate Gross Value Added (aGVA)

Turnover in the NI non-financial business economy increased from 2017 by £2,082 million to £68,607 million in 2018. This was mainly caused by a substantial increase in turnover in the distribution sector.

The value of purchases of goods, materials, energy, water and services grew by 3.6% from £44,401 million in 2017 to £45,987 million in 2018. This follows on from a 3.4% increase from 2016 to 2017.

The provisional results of the 2018 NIABI and revised results from the 2017 NIABI show that the turnover generated by businesses in Northern Ireland (NI), less the cost of goods and services used to create this income, was estimated to be £23,695 million in 2018. This is an increase of 7.7% from 2017 and represents the aGVA of the NI non-financial business economy (see section (iv) for full details of industry coverage).

Figure 2: Trends in Turnover, Purchases and aGVA 2008 – 2018 (NI NFBE)



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Employment (taken from Business Register and Employment Survey, 2018)

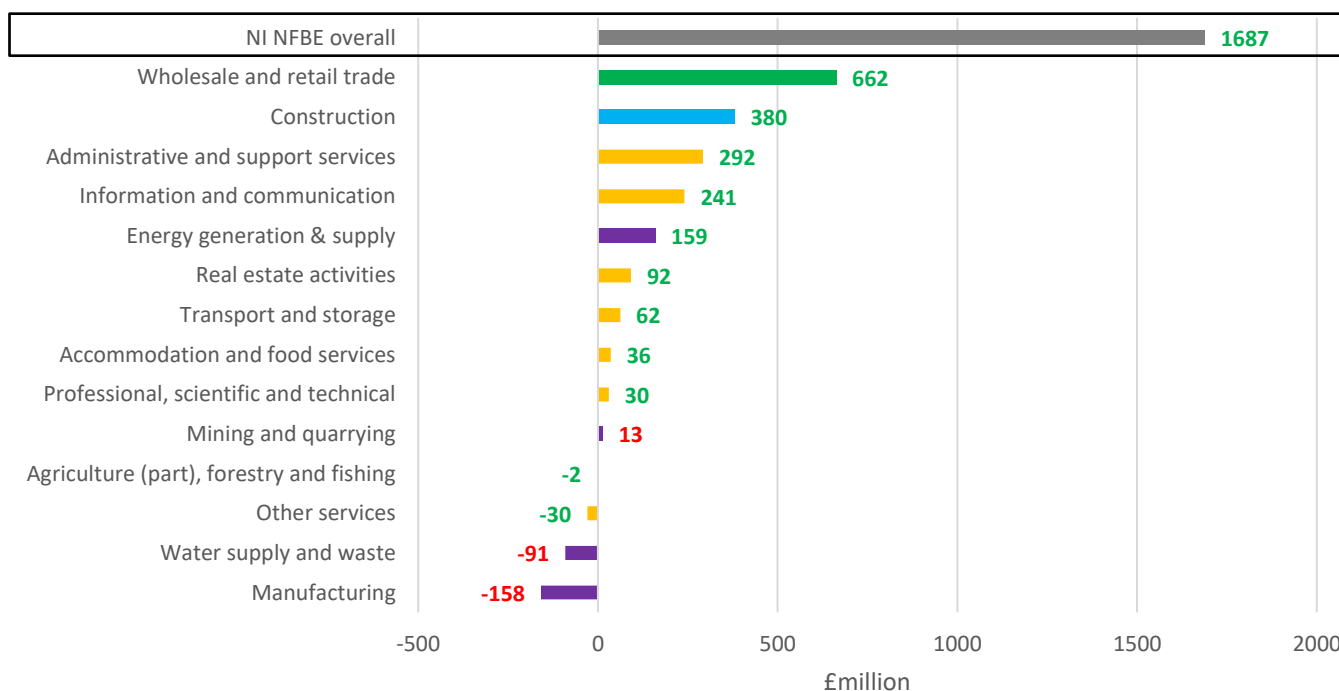
<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/annual-employee-jobs-surveys/business-register-and-employment-survey>

The number of private sector jobs in Northern Ireland was just under 565,000 in September 2018. This was an increase of 1.9% over the year. Please note that BRES excludes the following: agriculture (but includes animal husbandry service activities and hunting; trapping and game propagation); the self-employed; HM Armed Forces; private domestic servants; homeworkers and trainees with a contract of employment (non-employed status).

aGVA by Industrial Section

Looking by industrial section rather than broad industrial sector, wholesale and retail trade was the largest individual contributor to overall aGVA growth in the NI non-financial business economy; increasing by £662 million (13.2%) between 2017 and 2018. The construction section also exhibited strong aGVA growth between 2017 and 2018, increasing by £380 million (17.1%). Manufacturing saw a large decrease in aGVA of £158 million (-3.3%).

Figure 3: Change in aGVA by industrial section 2017 – 2018 (NI NFBE)

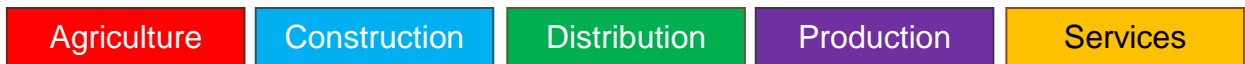
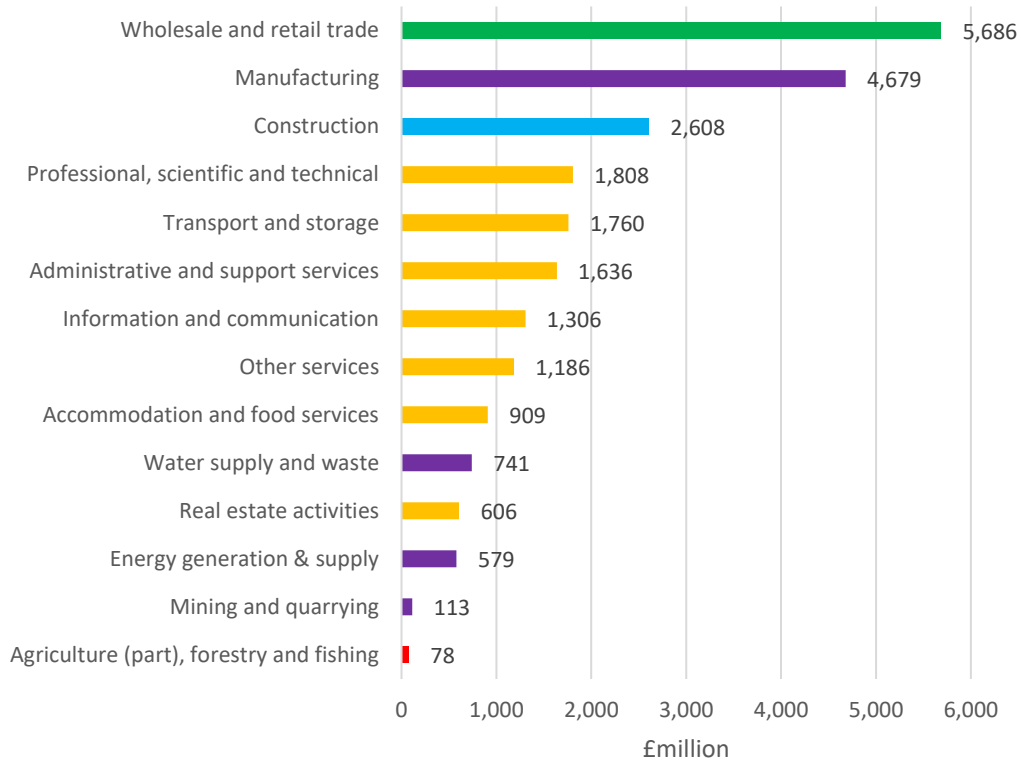


Agriculture
Construction
Distribution
Production
Services

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Together, the wholesale and retail trade section and manufacturing account for over two fifths of total aGVA in the NI non-financial business economy. Wholesale and retail trade was the largest industrial section by aGVA, accounting for £5,686 million (24.0%) of total aGVA in the NI non-financial business economy. This is followed by manufacturing, which was the largest in 2016, accounting for £4,679 million (19.7%) of aGVA.

Figure 4: aGVA by industrial section 2018 (NI NFBE)



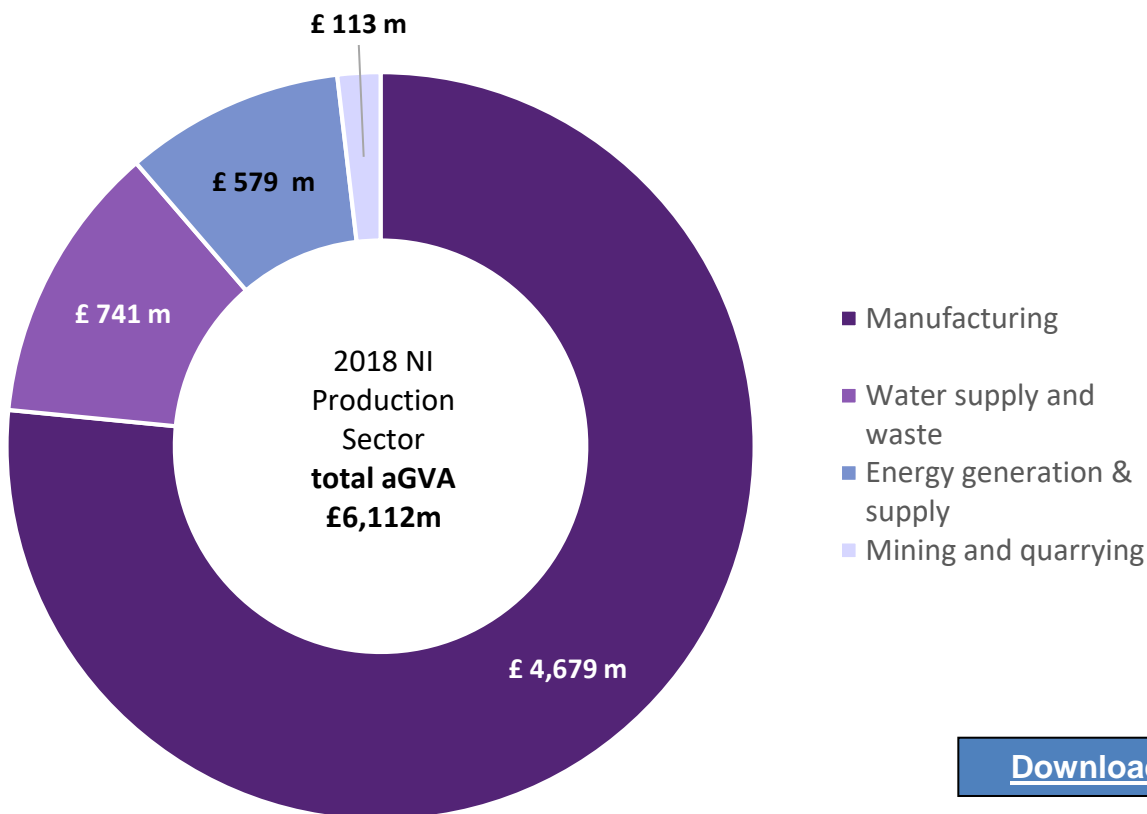
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Production Industries (Sections B-E)³

Sections B through E have been grouped to reflect the structure of the Northern Ireland production industries, these include: mining and quarrying (B); manufacturing (C); electricity, steam and air conditioning supply (D) and water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities (E).

The production sector, which accounts for 25.8% of aGVA in the NI non-financial business economy, recorded a decrease of £77m (-1.2%) in aGVA between 2017 and 2018. Turnover in the sector showed an increase of £82m (0.4%) over the period in question, whilst purchases increased by £1152m (9.6%).

Figure 5: NI Production Sector: aGVA by industrial section 2018



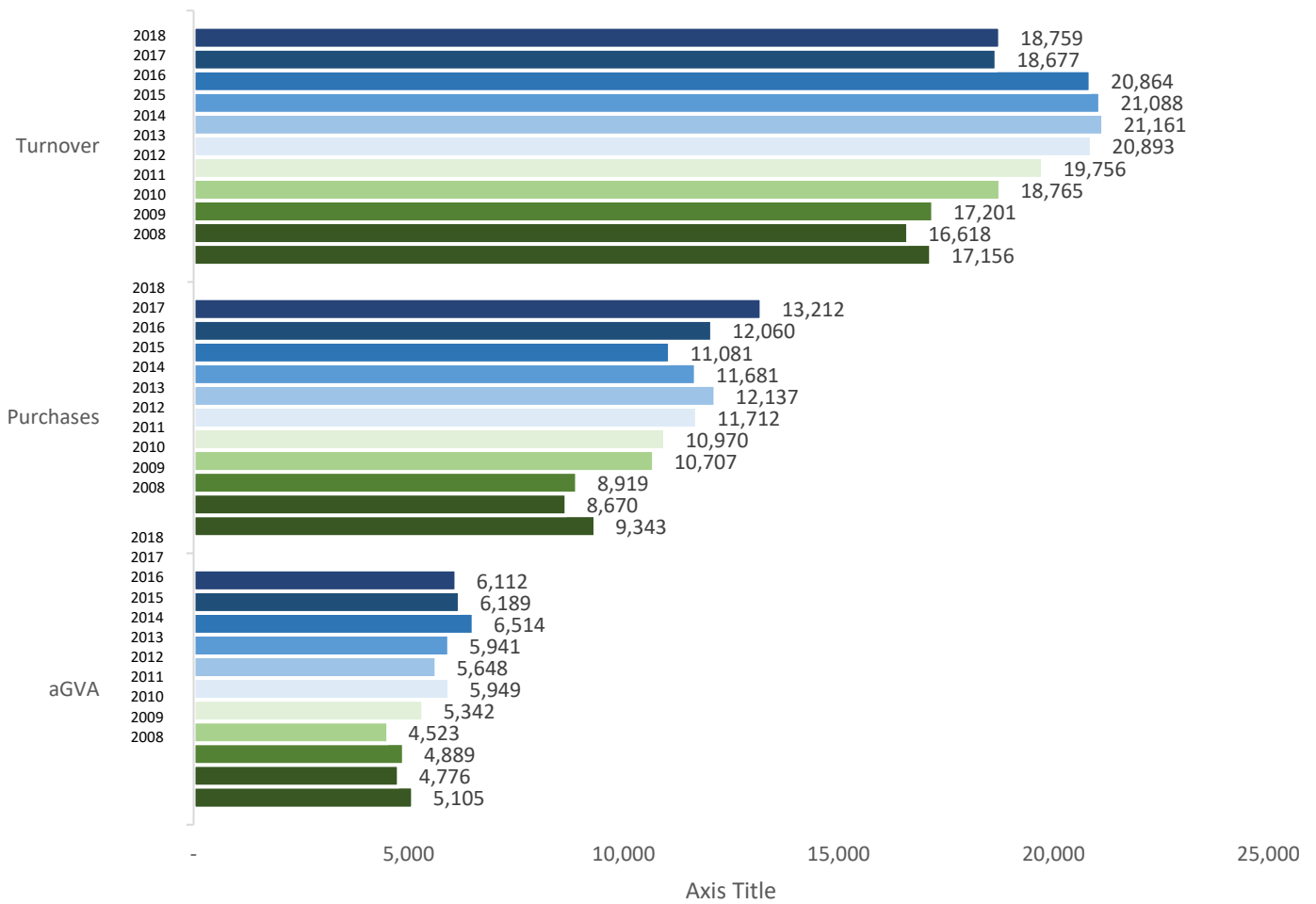
The manufacturing section accounts for over three quarters (76.6%) of total production sector aGVA and as a consequence changes in production tend to reflect movements in manufacturing. aGVA in the manufacturing section decreased by £158 million (-3.3%) from 2017 to 2018.

The mining and quarrying section increased in aGVA, by £13 million (13.3%) between 2017 and 2018. This was primarily driven by an increase in the value of turnover of £26 million (8.0%).

The water supply and waste section saw a large decrease in aGVA of £91 million (-10.9%) from 2017 to 2018, while the energy generation & supply section increased by £159 million (37.9%) from 2017 to 2018.

³ Sections are based on SIC 2007 classifications - see part (iv) of background notes for further information

Figure 6: Trends in the Production Sector: Turnover, Purchases and aGVA 2008 – 2018

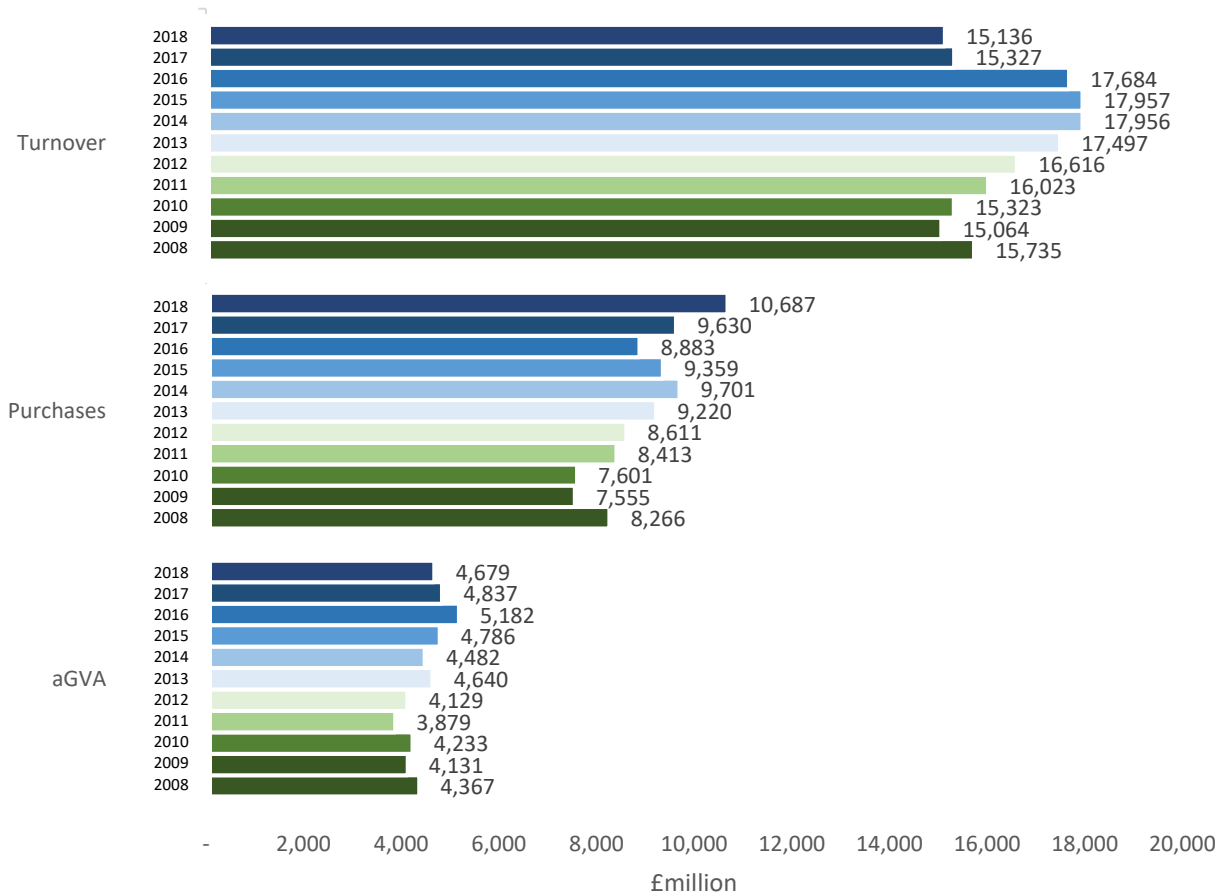


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Manufacturing

Manufacturing is the largest component industry in the production sector, and accounts for 19.7% of total aGVA in the non-financial business economy. aGVA in the manufacturing section showed a decrease of £158 million (-3.3%) between 2017 and 2018. This was primarily due to a combination of a decrease in turnover of £191 million (-1.2%) and increase in the value of purchases of £1,057 million (11.0%).

Figure 7: Trends in the Manufacturing Sector: Turnover, Purchases and aGVA 2008 – 2018



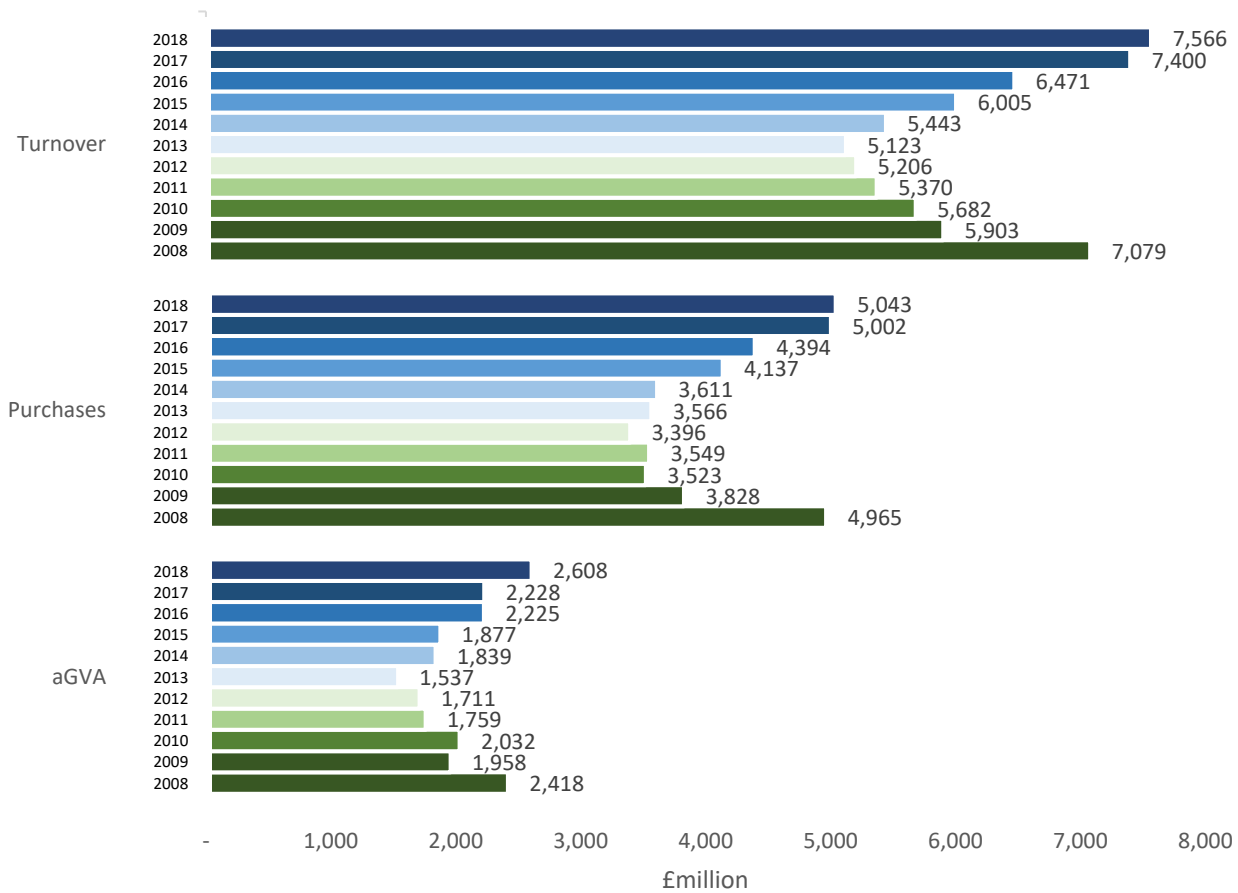
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Construction Industries (Section F)

The construction industries cover the entire Northern Ireland construction sector and include: construction of buildings, civil engineering and specialised construction activities (e.g. demolition and site preparation, electrical, plumbing and other construction installation activities, etc.).

Between 2017 and 2018 turnover in the construction sector increased by 2.3%, growing from £7,400 million to £7,566 million. Purchases increased by 0.8% over the year from £5,002 million to £5,043 million, while aGVA increased by 17.1% from £2,228 million to £2,608 million over the period in question.

Figure 8: Trends in the Construction Sector: Turnover, Purchases and aGVA 2008 – 2018



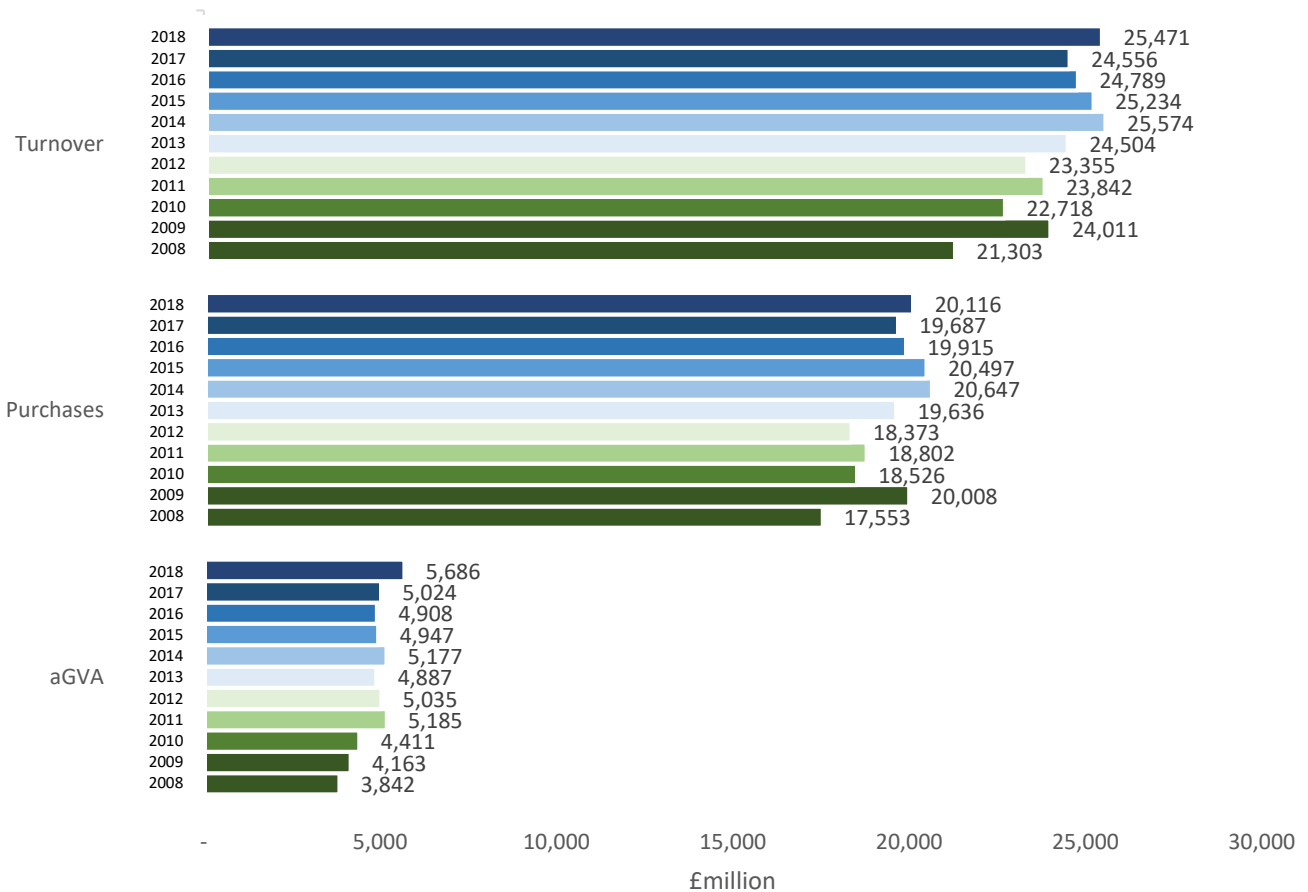
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Distribution Industries (Section G)

The distribution industries consist of companies engaged in wholesale and retail trade and cover the entire Northern Ireland wholesale and retail sector.

Wholesale and retail trade showed aGVA growth from 2017 to 2018, increasing by £662 million (13.2%) from £5,024 million to £5,686 million.

Figure 9: Trends in the Distribution Sector: Turnover, Purchases and aGVA 2008 – 2018



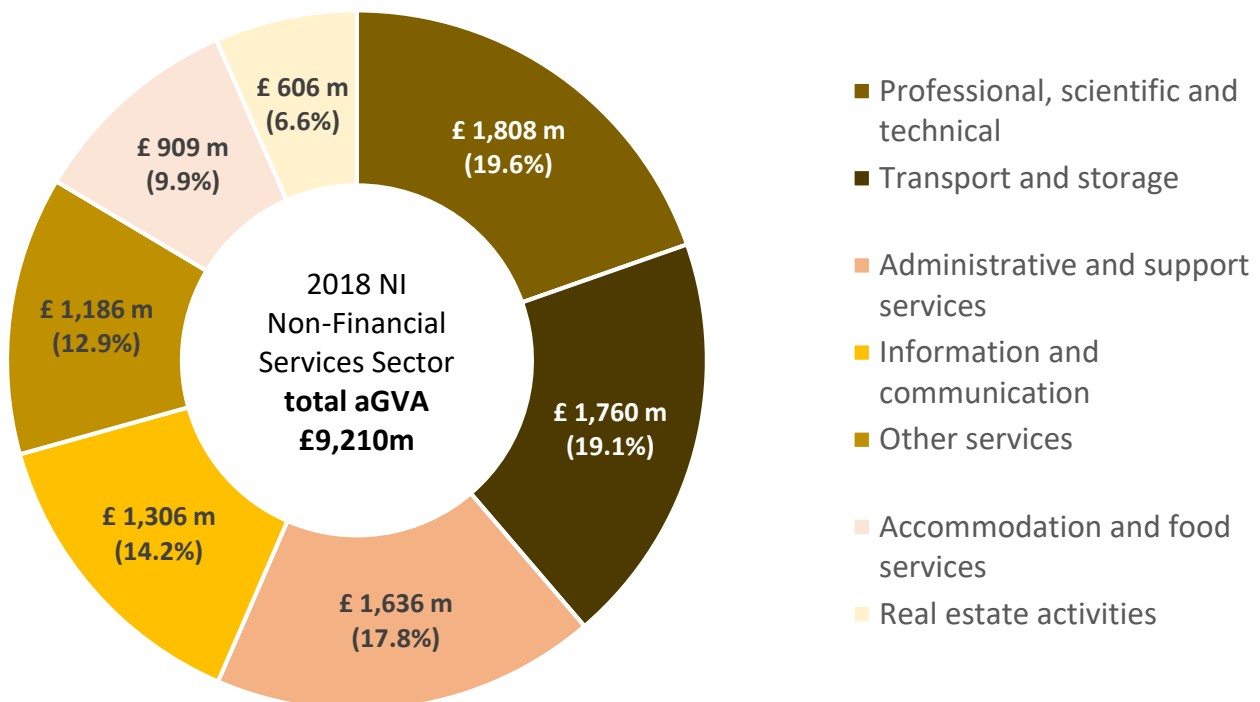
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Non-Financial Services Industries (Section H–S)

The non-financial services sector is composed of transport and storage (H); accommodation and food service activities (I); information and communication (J); real estate activities (L); professional scientific and technical activities (M); administrative and support service activities (N); and other service activities (n.b. other services are sections that are grouped to avoid disclosure of returns; P-S). Section K, Financial and Insurance Activities, is excluded.

Representing the majority (38.9%) of aGVA in the NI non-financial business economy, even small movements in the services sector can have a pronounced effect on overall trends. Between 2017 and 2018, aGVA increased by 8.5% to £9,210 million.

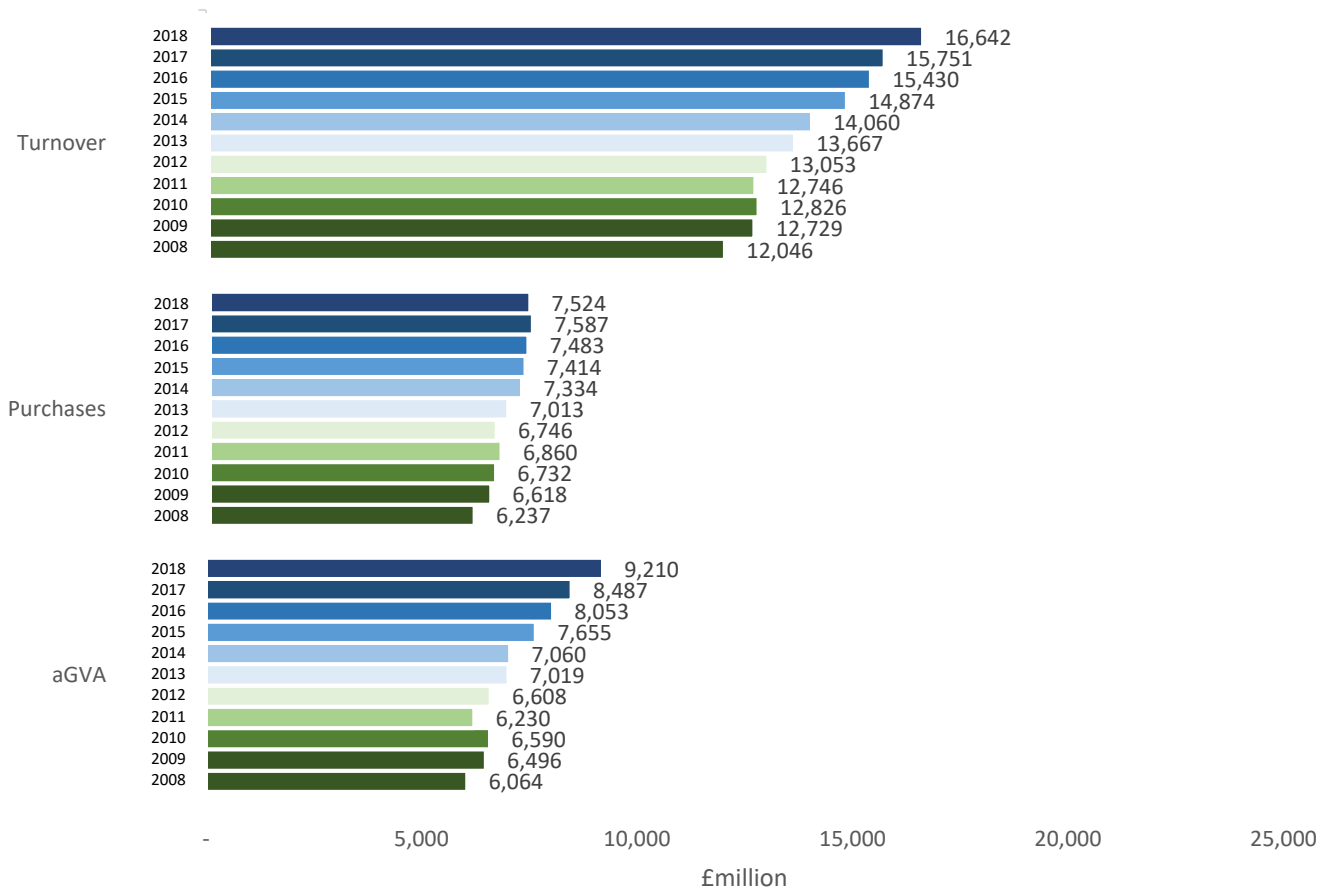
Figure 10: NI Non-financial Services Industries: aGVA 2018



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Turnover grew for the seventh consecutive year by 5.7% (£891 million) to £16,642 million. Purchases of goods and services recorded a decrease of -0.8% (£63 million) to £7,524 million.

Figure 11: Trends in Services Industries: Turnover, Purchases and aGVA 2008 – 2018

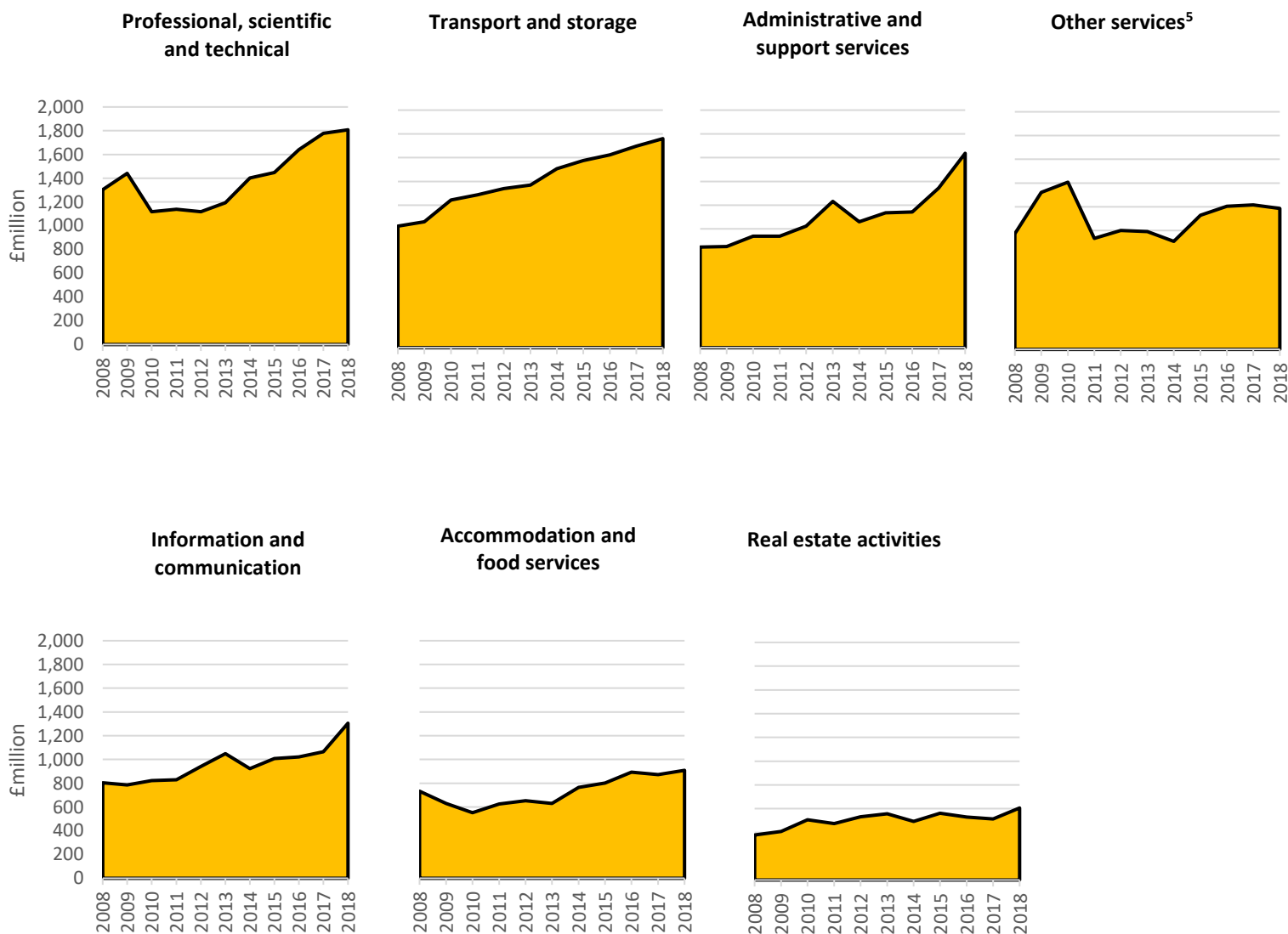


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Within the services industries sector, the professional, scientific & technical section and the transportation & storage section are the largest component industries; each accounting for approximately over 19% of the total aGVA in the NI non-financial services sector.

The largest contributor to the increase in the services industries' aGVA was the administrative and support services section, which grew by 21.7% (£292 million) from £1,344 million in 2017 to £1,636 million in 2018. Another major contributor to growth was the information and communication section increasing by £241 million (22.6%) year on year. Other services was the only services section to record a decline between 2017 and 2018, falling by £30 million (-2.4%).

Figure 12: Trends in the Service Industries: aGVA by sector 2008 - 2018



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⁴ Other services includes: education (excluding public education); Human health and social work activities (excluding public health and social work); Arts, entertainment and recreation and Other service activities. The Insurance & re-insurance industries were included for the 2009 and 2010 results; following a decision by the ONS these have been excluded from the 2011 results onwards.

3 Results by Industry

	CV ≤ 5%
	5% < CV ≤ 10%
	10% < CV ≤ 20%
	CV > 20%

Table 1: NIABI results by industry, 2017 and 2018

	Standard Industrial Classification	Description	Turnover (£million)	Approximate Gross Value Added (aGVA) (£million)	Purchases (£million)
2017	A – S	Agriculture, fishing, production, construction, distribution and services	66,525	22,008	44,401
2018			68,607	23,695	45,987
%change			↑ 3.1%	↑ 7.7%	↑ 3.6%
2017	A (part)	Agriculture, forestry and fishing	141	79	65
2018			168	78	92
%change			↑ 19.0%	↓ 2.0%	↑ 41.8%
2017	B – E	Production Industries	18,677	6,189	12,060
2018			18,759	6,112	13,212
%change			↑ 0.4%	↓ 1.2%	↑ 9.6%
2017	B	Mining and quarrying	319	100	220
2018			344	113	216
%change			↑ 8.0%	↑ 13.3%	↓ 1.8%
2017	C	Manufacturing	15,327	4,837	9,630
2018			15,136	4,679	10,687
%change			↓ 1.2%	↓ 3.3%	↑ 11.0%
2017	D	Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	2,071	420	1,659
2018			2,330	579	1,829
%change			↑ 12.5%	↑ 37.9%	↑ 10.2%
2017	E	Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	961	832	551
2018			949	741	480
%change			↓ 1.2%	↓ 10.9%	↓ 12.8%
2017	F	Construction	7,400	2,228	5,002
2018			7,566	2,608	5,043
%change			↑ 2.3%	↑ 17.1%	↑ 0.8%

Table 1 (continued): NIABI results by industry, 2017 and 2018

	Standard Industrial Classification	Description	Turnover (£million)	Approximate Gross Value Added (aGVA) (£million)	Purchases (£million)
2017	G – S	Distribution and service industries	40,307	13,511	27,274
2018			42,113	14,896	27,640
%change			↑ 4.5%	↑ 10.3%	↑ 1.3%
2017	G	Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motor cycles	24,556	5,024	19,687
2018			25,471	5,686	20,116
%change			↑ 3.7%	↑ 13.2%	↑ 2.2%
2017	H - S	Other service Industries	15,751	8,487	7,587
2018			16,642	9,210	7,524
%change			↑ 5.7%	↑ 8.5%	↑ 0.8%
2017	H	Transport and storage	3,408	1,698	1,837
2018			3,577	1,760	1,905
%change			↑ 5.0%	↑ 3.7%	↑ 3.7%
2017	I	Accommodation and food service activities	1,824	873	957
2018			1,865	909	925
%change			↑ 2.2%	↑ 4.1%	↓ 3.4%
2017	J	Information and communication	1,856	1,065	848
2018			2,081	1,306	820
%change			↑ 12.1%	↑ 22.6%	↓ 3.4%
2017	L	Real estate activities	869	514	350
2018			1,054	606	443
%change			↑ 21.2%	↑ 17.9%	↑ 26.7%
2017	M	Professional, scientific and technical activities	2,768	1,778	1,026
2018			2,780	1,808	974
%change			↑ 0.5%	↑ 1.7%	↓ 5.1%

Table 1 (continued): NIABI results by industry, 2017 and 2018

	Standard Industrial Classification	Description	Turnover (£million)	Approximate Gross Value Added (aGVA) (£million)	Purchases (£million)
2017	N	Administrative and support service activities	2,238	1,344	918
2018			2,689	1,636	1,019
%change			↑ 20.2%	↑ 21.7%	↑ 11.0%
2017	P - S	Others	2,788	1,215	1,650
2018			2,596	1,186	1,438
%change			↓ 6.9%	↓ 2.4%	↓ 12.8%

Coefficient of Variation

The coefficient of variation (cv) measures the variability of the values in the table above by expressing the standard error as a percentage of the estimated value. Unlike confidence intervals, which measure variability by providing the range of values between which the mean value for a predetermined percentage of all possible samples would fall, the coefficient of variation expresses variability as an easily comparable percentage. As the coefficient of variation is not measured in any specific unit, it facilitates comparison between surveys measuring different underlying variables. A larger coefficient of variation implies a larger variability.

$$Coefficient\ of\ Variation = \frac{Standard\ Error}{|Parameter\ Estimate|}$$

Standard Error: In statistics, sample estimates such as means and medians deviate from the actual population mean and median; and this deviation is the standard error. Standard error is a statistical term that measures the accuracy with which a sample represents a population and is essentially an indicator of the reliability of the estimate.

Parameter Estimate: The parameter estimate refers to the individual value for each of the variables in the table above. For example the 2018 parameter estimate for turnover in Section A is £168 million.

4 Background Notes

(i) About the Northern Ireland Annual Business Inquiry

The Northern Ireland Annual Business Inquiry (NIABI) collects both financial and employment information from businesses and other establishments and covers about two thirds of the economy. This includes the production, construction, distribution and service industries in Northern Ireland but excludes public sector activity for the most part. The coverage of the survey is detailed at section (iv) below.

The 2018 NIABI sampled approximately 9,200 businesses in Northern Ireland from a population of approximately 54,000 businesses in the sample frame: the Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR). The IDBR consists of companies, partnerships, sole proprietors, public authorities, central government departments, local authorities and non-profit making bodies in the UK. The NIABI is reliant on the IDBR receiving accurate and timely updates and providing a true reflection of the Northern Ireland business population. Businesses not registered for either Pay As You Earn or VAT are excluded from the frame. Additional information about the IDBR and the characteristics of the businesses covered by the IDBR is available at the link:

<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/business-statistics/inter-departmental-business-register>

(ii) Survey reference period

For survey reference period 2018, businesses were asked to make returns for the calendar year 2018. Where this was not possible, returns for business years ending between 6 April 2018 and 5 April 2019 were accepted. Similar procedures operated in previous years.

Returns covering fewer than twelve months were accepted for businesses which had started or ceased trading during the year. Estimates were made for those firms providing returns for more than six months while firms providing less than six months were treated as closures in the results process. These only accounted for a small proportion of all business returns in 2018 NIABI.

(iii) NIABI sample

Following user feedback and consultation with the Statistics Advisory Committee and the NISRA official statistics user group, the NIABI sample size was boosted from approximately 5,000 in the 2010 survey reference year to approximately 9,000 in 2011. This has resulted in improvements to the precision of the estimates, as indicated by the quality indicators for 2018. This improvement should also be borne in mind when interpreting annual trends.

To maximise survey precision, the Neyman allocation approach to sampling was utilised. Neyman allocation is a sample allocation method that may be used with stratified samples. The purpose of the method is to maximize survey precision, given a fixed sample size. The survey universe was stratified by 2 digit SIC code and employee size band, and all businesses with 50+ employees, or 20+ employees and more than one local unit (see section (vi) for full definition) were fully enumerated. The current NIABI sample design includes all Manufacturing businesses with 6 or more employees and those with a turnover of £10 million or larger. Businesses falling below the threshold of complete enumeration are selected on a stratified random basis. In addition, certain companies of special interest to policymakers and government agencies (for example, certain Invest NI clients) are added to the sample.

(iv) Standard Industrial Classification and the coverage of the NIABI

NIABI results are classified according to the Standard Industrial Classification of Economic Activities (SIC) system. The UK is required by European legislation to have a system of

classification consistent with the European Union's Industrial classification system. A review of the system was completed in 2007 and implemented in 2008. UK SIC 2007 is divided into 21 sections, each denoted by a single letter from A to U. Below this, further levels of detail are provided at division (denoted by 2 digits), groups (three digits), classes (four digits) and subclasses (five digits).

The SIC 2007 sections covered by the NIABI are as follows:

Section letter	Section description	Sector
A	Agriculture (support activities), forestry and fishing	Agriculture
B	Mining and quarrying	Production
C	Manufacturing	Production
D	Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	Production
E	Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	Production
F	Construction	Construction
G	Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motor cycles	Distribution
H	Transport and storage	Services
I	Accommodation and food service activities	Services
J	Information and communication	Services
L	Real estate activities	Services
M	Professional, scientific and technical activities	Services
N	Administrative and support service activities	Services
P	Education (excludes local authority and central government bodies)	Services
Q	Human health and social work activities (excludes local authority and central government, and medical and dental practice activities (group 86.2))	Services
R	Arts, entertainment and recreation	Services
S	Other service activities	Services

Following a decision by the Office for National Statistics to discontinue the publication of figures covering Insurance & Re-insurance industries due to ongoing volatility of the estimates, this NIABI publication also excludes estimates for this series. The other main areas that are *excluded* are Public Administration and Defence (section O) while Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (section A) excludes farming (groups 01.1, 01.2, 01.3, 01.4 and 01.5). Local authority and central Government bodies in Education (section P) and Human Health and Social Work Activities (section Q) have also been excluded from this publication, as has 86.2 (Medical and Dental Practice Activities) within section Q.

(v) Data collection, validation and calculation of NIABI results

Approximately 9,200 forms were issued from the NISRA Economic and Labour Market Statistics Branch in March 2019 and the returned forms were subjected to a range of validation and congruency checks. The 2018 response rate was 60%.

Data validation was carried out on the returned forms ensuring internal consistency within the form, checking data fell within expected limits or by contacting the company for clarification where appropriate. For non-returns above a selected employment threshold, data were imputed using a methodology which takes account of previous returned data and the performance of other similar businesses. This information was then grossed up to the reporting unit population, to ensure that results are representative of the sampled population.

Please note that the information presented throughout this bulletin is based on local unit information, and is therefore not directly comparable with earlier NIABI bulletins which are based on reporting unit information. Reporting and local unit definitions can be found in part vi below.

Also, to better meet user needs, and in consultation with ONS Methodology Consultancy Service, NISRA produced these results using Statistics Canada's Generalized Estimation System. This allows the production of estimates with an associated measure of their quality. For more detail of the estimation methodology please consult:

<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/abi-quality-improvement-fund-project>

Users are advised to take into account the quality indicators associated with the estimates when considering the significance of annual changes. These indicate that some results have quite large margins of statistical error associated with them. Users should exercise caution when interpreting the annual changes associated with such results.

Ongoing development of the methodology will be informed by user feedback, both in terms of the usefulness and reliability of the estimates and their comparability with other sources. Any comments should be sent to abihelpline@finance-ni.gov.uk

(vi) Definitions

Reporting and Local Units

An enterprise *reporting unit* reports for all the *local units* within the enterprise (for example, the reporting unit for a large supermarket chain will respond with aggregate figures incorporating all its Northern Ireland shops). A *local unit* is an individual site (factory, shop, office, etc.) at which an enterprise conducts its business. For example, a supermarket chain may have shops in Newtownards, Bangor, Limavady, etc, these are local units.

Approximate Gross Value Added at Basic prices represents the income generated by businesses, out of which is paid wages and salaries, the cost of capital investment and financial charges before arriving at a figure for profit. It includes taxes on production (e.g. business rates), net of subsidies but excludes subsidies and taxes on products (e.g. VAT and excise duty). This is an output-based measure of aGVA. All published aGVA is given at basic prices. The calculations applied to derive aGVA are noted below.

The calculations used in the NIABI are:

- aGVA AT MARKET PRICES: Total turnover + insurance claims + change in stocks + own account capital expenditure + Computer software programs and databases : developed by own staff for business use – total purchases
- aGVA AT FACTOR COST: aGVA at market prices + subsidies – total taxes + customs & excise drawback
- aGVA AT BASIC PRICES: aGVA at factor cost + business rates + vehicle excise duty

(Please note that aGVA at basic prices is the only published aGVA from the NIABI.)

Turnover is defined as total sales and work done. This is calculated by adding to the value of sales of goods produced, goods purchased and resold without further processing, work done and industrial and non-industrial services rendered.

Purchases represent the value of all goods, materials and services purchased during the year.

(vii) NIABI “Approximate Gross Value Added” and “Regional Gross Value Added”

The financial information from the NIABI provides a measure of approximate GVA, which is ultimately used to contribute to the picture of the whole economy to be built up for National Accounts purposes at the United Kingdom level. When regional economic accounts are subsequently derived, the resulting measure of Regional Gross Value Added (GVA) is a much broader based measure relating to the whole economy in a region, taking into account information from a series of economic and labour market surveys. The results of the NIABI only comprise one element of the regional economic account figures, and a number of adjustments are made in line with National Accounts methodologies before estimates of Regional GVA are produced. ONS’ most recent Regional GVA estimates for Northern Ireland at industry level relate to 2018 and were released in December 2019.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossvalueaddedgva/datasets/regionalgrossvalueaddedincomapproach>

(viii) Comparability with statistics from other sources

The NIABI is conducted by the Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency and while the survey process is similar to that for Great Britain, it is not identical. ONS receive data from NISRA in August and January of each survey year. These data are processed with the Great Britain data to produce UK-wide and regional estimates. NISRA separately process the Northern Ireland data to produce their own regional estimates. These differ from the ONS estimates for a number of reasons:

- Calculation of the weights used to estimate figures for the total population:
 - Calculation of the design or a-weights: The ONS National System computes the design weights for all UK data using the sample design of the GB sample. The NI sample design is quite different from that used by the ONS. The design weights calculated by the ONS system for NI units can therefore differ from those calculated by the NI system. The ONS adopted the use of NI design weights during 2018.
 - Calculation of the g-weights: The ONS National System computes two sets of g-weights: one based on IDBR turnover and another based on IDBR employment. The latter is used for employment costs, whereas the former is used for all the other variables. The Regional System computes g-weights based on local unit employment. In the NI methodology there is no distinction between national and regional weights: estimates at all levels are based on the same weights, with the g-weights computed with respect to local unit register employment but using a different calibration method to that used in the ONS regional system.

- Regional apportionment: ONS collects all ABS data at reporting unit (RU) level; the regional system apportions RU returns between local units using factors obtained from models. The NIABI no longer collects employment data at local unit level but uses local unit employment data from the Business Register Employment Survey; data of other variables are collected at RU level and then apportioned between the local units. When NI data are processed in the ONS system, new apportioned local unit values, based on the ONS methodology, are obtained and used to produce estimates.
- The NIABI does not collect data for all the variables in the GB questionnaire; in the ONS system, values are derived for the missing variables using a model, and these values contribute towards the estimation of some derived variables.

(ix) Comparability with other NISRA ELMSB publications

Within the relevant sectors the turnover figures provided by the NIABI are the most up to date available from ELMSB statistical publications, and ultimately contribute to updating the Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR). However for a more comprehensive measure of turnover within the NI economy users are recommended to refer to the IDBR. The IDBR contains information on all businesses in the UK which are VAT registered or operate a PAYE scheme; consequently the IDBR provides a more complete picture of the Northern Ireland business population. The IDBR can be accessed through the NISRA website at <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/inter-departmental-business-register/idbr-background-information>

(x) Other sources of information

The latest UK national and regional estimates from the Annual Business Survey 2018 can be found at

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/business/businessservices/bulletins/nonfinancialbusinesseseconomyukandregionalannualbusinesssurvey/2017revisedresults>

The latest DfE Economic Commentary (Summer 2020) provides an overview of the state of the Northern Ireland economy, setting it in a global context. This can be found at

<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/df-e-economic-commentary>

Estimates of the changes in employment and employee jobs are provided by the Labour Force Survey (LFS), Quarterly Employment Survey (QES) and Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES). As dedicated employment surveys, the LFS, QES and BRES provide more frequent and accurate measures of the change in employment. By utilising internationally recognised definitions the LFS provides employment figures consistent with international standards. The LFS, QES and BRES can be found at the links below:

Labour Force Survey

<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/labour-market-and-social-welfare/labour-force-survey>

Quarterly Employment Survey

<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/labour-market-and-social-welfare/quarterly-employment-survey>

Business Register and Employment Survey

<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/annual-employee-jobs-surveys/business-register-and-employmentsurvey>

Information relating to NI sales and exports is available from the Broad Economy Sales and Exports Statistics. This is an experimental annual measure of local businesses' sales to markets outside NI. These statistics can be accessed at <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/business-statistics/broad-economy-sales-and-exports-statistics>

Further information on the output of Manufacturing, along with Electricity, Gas, Water and Mining & Quarrying industries is available from the Northern Ireland Index of Production (<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/economic-output-statistics/index-production>) while the Northern Ireland Index of Services (<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/economic-output-statistics/index-services>) provides a general measure of changes in the output of the private sector service industries in Northern Ireland.

The Construction Output Statistics published in the Northern Ireland Construction Bulletin are intended to provide a general measure of quarterly changes in the volume and value of construction output in Northern Ireland. These statistics can be accessed at <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/economic-output-statistics/construction-output-statistics>

The Composite Economic Index provides a weighted measure of output by broad industry sector and employee jobs in the public sector to provide an overall measure of change in the Northern Ireland economic activity <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/economic-output-statistics/ni-composite-economic-index>

(xi) Uses of the NIABI

- The central structure and periodicity of the NIABI is driven by the legal requirements to provide data for the UK Annual Business Survey, UK National Accounts and European Structural Business Statistics (SBS)
- Additionally the NIABI is used by the Government as a means of monitoring the progress of economic policy and to help set and measure economic targets.
- Outside government the data is used by a variety of different private sector and academic analysts to assist with industrial and investment decisions.

For a more comprehensive explanation of customers' use of the NIABI please follow the link below:

<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/sites/nisra.gov.uk/files/publications/summary-of-usage-of-the-niabi.pdf>

(xii) User feedback

Development of the NIABI is designed to meet the needs of data users as identified during statistical user group meetings. Enhancements to the survey including an increase in sample size have been driven by feedback received through these consultations. Minutes of the meetings are available using the link below:

<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/nisra-economic-and-labour-market-statistics-elms/statistical-protocols-and-compliance>

(xiii) Quality reporting

A summary quality report for the NIABI can be found at

<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/usage-methods-and-quality-and-revisions-policy-abi>

This report describes in detail the quality of the statistics presented in this publication (in terms of relevance, accuracy, timeliness and punctuality, accessibility and clarity, coherence and

comparability, trade-offs between output quality components, assessment of user needs and perceptions, performance, cost and respondent burden and confidentiality, transparency and security).

(xiv) Status of figures in current bulletin

It is normal practice to revise the data from the previous year based on ongoing data validation and clarification of responses from individual businesses. This bulletin contains detailed provisional local unit results for the Northern Ireland ABI industries (2018). These 2018 provisional figures will be subject to revision to take account of additional information. The NIABI revisions policy can be accessed at <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/sites/nisra.gov.uk/files/publications/niabi-revisions-policy.pdf>

In line with this and with the NIABI revisions policy, provisional NIABI estimates for 2017 have been revised throughout this publication. The table below provides details of revisions to 2017 data.

Table 2: Size of revisions to previously published 2017 data

	Provisional 2017 (£)	Revised 2017 (£)	% change
Turnover	66,649	66,525	↓ 0.7%
Purchases	44,450	44,401	↓ 0.1%
aGVA	22,017	22,008	0.0%

Turnover, purchases and aGVA values are reported in £million unless otherwise specified. NIABI reporting unit results are published in November, while local unit results are published the following summer. The Economic and Labour Market Statistics Branch statistics publication schedule is available at <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/nisra-economic-and-labour-market-statistics-elms/about-nisra-elms> The list of people given pre-release access to this publication is available at: <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/nisra-economic-and-labour-market-statistics-elms/statistical-protocols-and-compliance>

(xv) Disclosure

The NIABI is conducted under the Statistics of Trade and Employment (Northern Ireland) Order 1988 and great care is taken to avoid disclosing information about individual enterprises (in line with the stipulations in Article 7 of the Order). Figures which would be likely to disclose particulars relating to an enterprise are not published (i.e. they are suppressed) unless prior written consent for their publication has been obtained directly from the business. The Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency Economic & Labour Market Statistics confidentiality statement can be accessed at the following link: <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/dof-confidentiality-statement>

For further information

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