

Date: 7th December 2017

Women in Northern Ireland 2017

Geographical Area: Northern Ireland
Theme: Labour Market
Frequency: Annual

Key Points:

- There were fewer economically active women than men and more economically inactive women. The most common reason for inactivity was family and home commitments. (LFS July-September 2017)
- Women are more likely than men to work part-time hours and in the service sector (particularly public administration, education and health sectors).
- The unemployment rate for women has been consistently lower than men over the last 10 years.
- Women with children are more likely to be economically active than women without.
- In the last 6 years the number of childcare providers has decreased but the number of places has increased, showing the trend towards group-based care, particularly afterschool care.
- Women are more likely than men to claim benefits as a lone parent or a carer (May 2017)
- Girls have consistently out-performed boys in the achievement of academic qualifications in the last 8 years.
- Women tend to be under represented in politics and public life with fewer females than males in positions such as Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs), Ministers in the Executive and local councillors.
- The proportion of women aged 18-64 who have been involved in setting up their own or a shared business or have been running their own new business has increased between 2002 and 2016.

Context

The Women in Northern Ireland report is an annual publication summarising key labour market statistics for females as well as additional information in relation to available childcare provision and income support, educational standards of women and participation by women in politics and business. As well as information from the Labour Force Survey (LFS), and the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), the report also incorporates data from the Department of Health, the Department of Education, The Executive Office and Invest NI.

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 [DfE 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 NISRA 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](#)

[Request for User Feedback](#)

Economics and Labour Market Statistics (ELMS) are continuing to reach out to users of this publication to better understand how the statistics are being used and whether there are any improvements that can be made.

Statisticians in ELMS are committed to following best practice when producing statistics. For all our statistical publications, we aim to follow the 'Code of Practice for Official Statistics'. Many of our publications are listed as 'National Statistics' and for those we *must* follow these rules. This ensures that our National Statistics meet the highest standards for statistical publications.

As part of our responsibilities under the Code of Practice, we want to hear from people who use the figures within Women in NI. We would like to find out what people use the statistics for and to make sure that the publication is as useful as it can be.

We would appreciate if you completed a short questionnaire to give us your views on the publication by 25th January.

An e-survey for submitting feedback is available at the following link:

[Women in Northern Ireland feedback](#)

Alternatively, a hard copy can be printed from the [NISRA website](#)
Or requested from economicstats@nisra.gov.uk

Many thanks for your time!

This Women in Northern Ireland report contains the following chapters:

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National Statistics

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

It is a producer's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

1 Summary

Women make up 51%¹ of the NI population (946,900 people). They have a slightly older age profile than men with 19% of females aged under 16, compared with 20% of males; and 17% of females aged over 64, compared with 15% of males.

Based on 2016 averages, a completely average woman could have a child at 30 years old, marry at 32 years old, could divorce at 44 years old, and die at 79 years old (most likely from cancer or a circulatory related disease)².

She is very likely to gain at least 5 GCSEs of grade C or above before leaving school. If she continues into higher or further education she is likely to study subjects allied to medicine (HE) or preparation for life and work (FE).

She is much more likely to work part-time hours than a man. She could put her child/children into one of the 61,000 registered childcare places, in particular, she could use one of the increasing number of afterschool childcare places.

She can expect to earn, on average, £12.67 per hour if working full-time or £8.94 if part-time, and is most likely to work in the public administration, education and health sectors. She is more likely now to know another woman who owns her own business, than she would have been 10 years ago.

If she becomes economically inactive at any time this will most likely be because of family or home commitments. If she claims income support this is most likely as a lone parent, and is much more likely than a man to claim carer's allowance for caring for someone else.

She may have voted for one of the quarter of councillors in Northern Ireland who are female.

¹ 2016 [Mid-Year Estimate of the Northern Ireland Population](#)

² 2016 [Registrar General's report](#) – based on average age for each life event in 2016, for example average age of marriage for women is 32 years old.

Women in Northern Ireland, 2017

Web: www.nisra.gov.uk Twitter: @elmsnisra

Employment



391,000
women
aged 16+
in employment

Part-time employment

140,000
female part-time
employees
aged 16-64
(212,000 full-time)



Child care places



61,000
childcare
places

Qualifications

85%
of girls leaving
school had at
least 5 GCSEs
grades A*-C



Average Hourly Earnings



£12.67
median hourly
earnings for
females

Entrepreneurship

4.9%
of women aged
18-64 either
setting up or
running their
own business



Source: Women in Northern Ireland Report, 2017

Date published: 7th December 2017

Economic and Labour Market Statistics, Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency



Northern Ireland
Statistics and Research Agency

Gníomhaireacht Thuaisceart Éireann
um Staitisticí agus Taighde

2 Women in the labour force

2.1 Economic activity

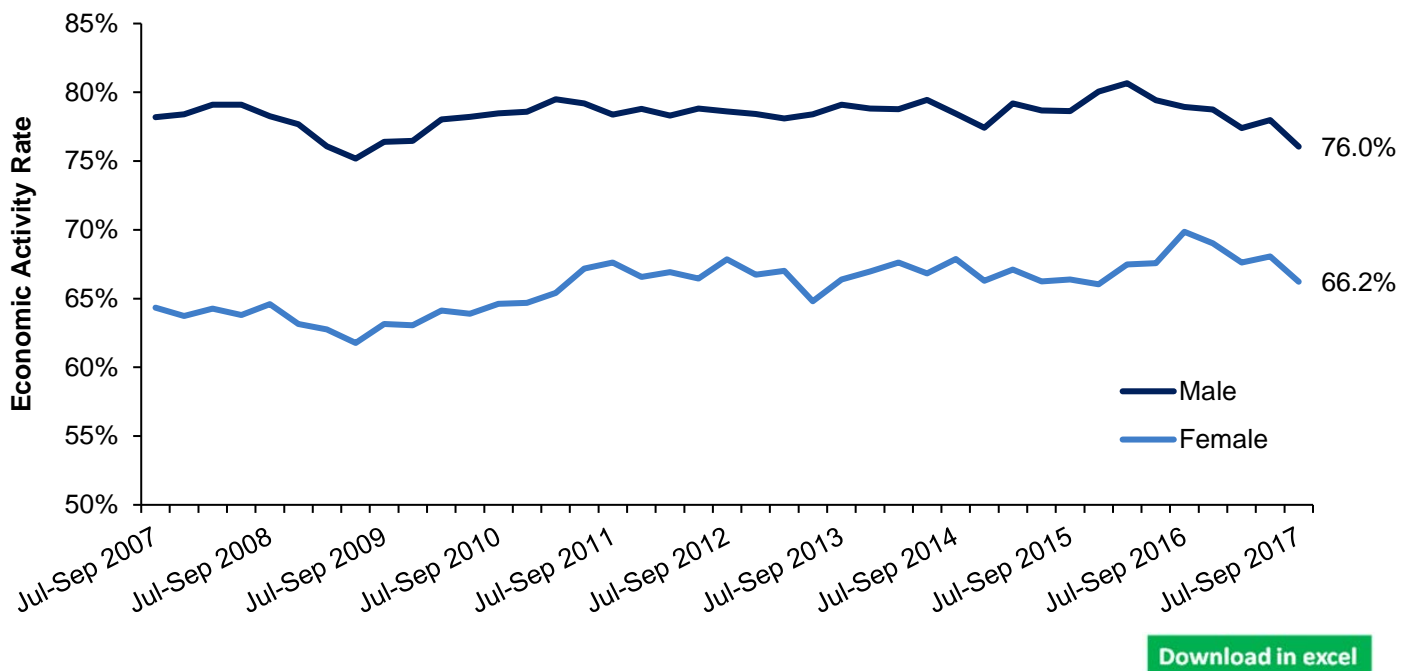
Source: Labour Force Survey (LFS)

Economically Active: people aged 16 or over who are either in employment or unemployed (rates refer to 16-64 population)

Key Findings:

- The LFS showed that at July - September 2017, an estimated 402,000 women (16+) were economically active (employed or unemployed)
- The number of economically active women was lower than economically active males (456,000).
- There was a larger (7.6%) increase in economically active women since 2007 than males (1.7%).

Figure 1: Economic activity rates by Gender (16-64), Jul-Sep 2007- Jul-Sep 2017 (non-zero axis)



In the last 10 years female economic activity rate has consistently been lower than the rate for males, however the gap has closed slightly in that time.

The 16-64 economic activity rate for women in NI was 66.2%, which was:

- lower than the corresponding rate for men (76.0%).
- a decrease of 1.6 pps over the last 5 years and a decrease of 3.6 pps over the last year. This compares with a decrease of 2.6 pps for men over the last 5 years and a decrease of 2.9 pps over the last year

2.2 Employment

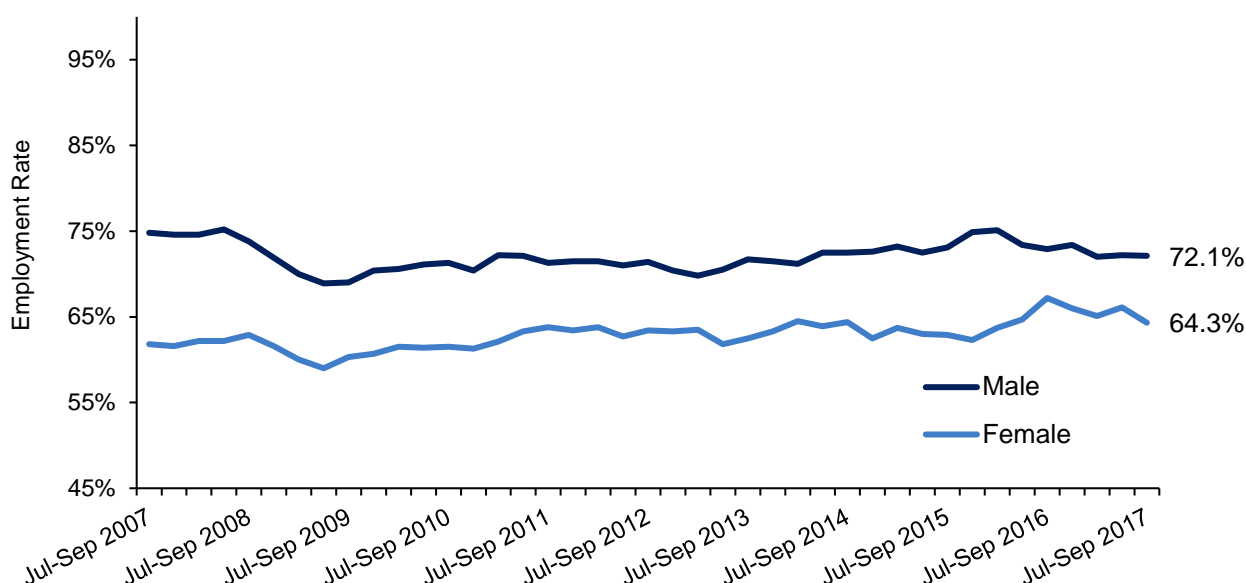
Sources: Labour Force Survey (LFS), Quarterly Employment Survey (QES)

LFS employed: people aged 16 or over who did at least one hour of paid work in the reference week (whether as an employee or self-employed); those who had a paid job that they were temporarily away from; those on government-supported training and employee programmes and those doing unpaid family work (rates refer to ages 16-64).

Key Findings:

- At July - September 2017, the estimated number of women (16+) in employment was **391,000**
- This was an increase of 9% from 359,000 in 2007, compared to an increase of 1% for men.
- Women accounted for 47% of those currently in employment.
- Women in employment was made up of 352,000 employees (90%), 35,000 self-employed (9%) and a small number on government training and employment schemes or unpaid family workers.

Figure 2: Employment rates by Gender (16-64), Jul-Sep 2007 – Jul-Sep 2017 (non-zero axis)



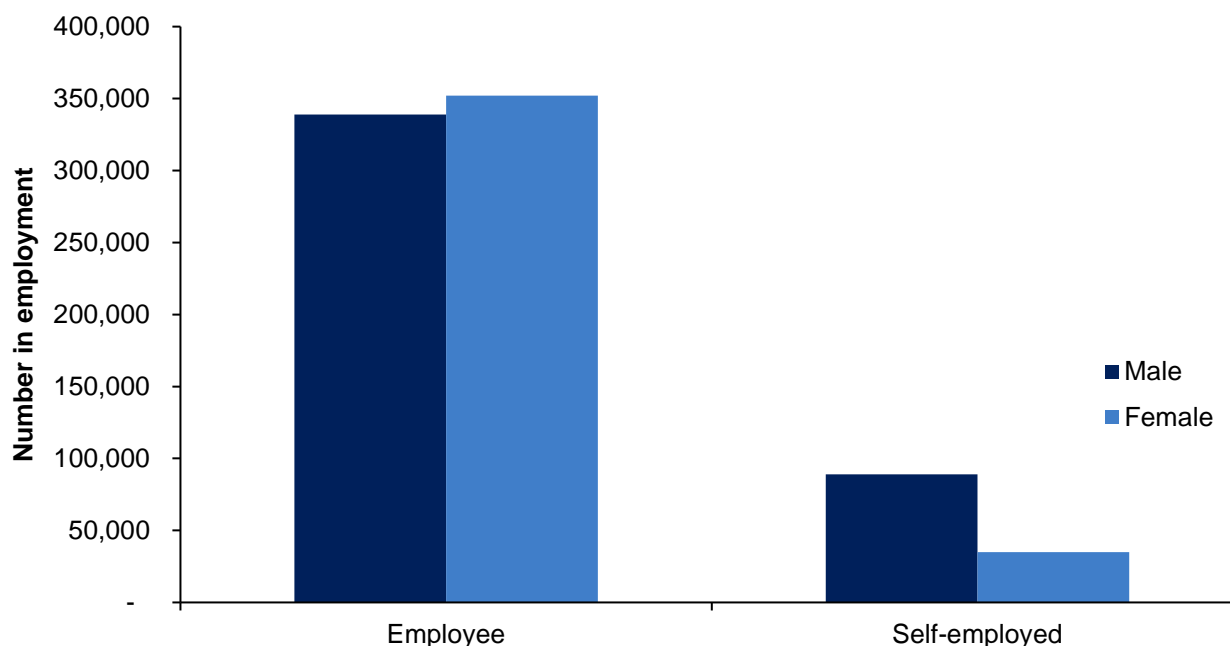
[Download in excel](#)

Similar to the economic activity rate, in the last 10 years the female employment rate has consistently been lower than the rate for males, however the gap has closed slightly in that time.

The employment rate for women aged 16 to 64 was 64.3%, which was:

- an increase of 2.5 pps over the last 10 years and a decrease of 2.9 pps over the last year.
- lower than the male employment rate (72.1%), which decreased by 2.7 pps over the last 10 years and by 0.8 pps over the last year.
- Over the last 10 years female employment rates have been consistently lower than male rates, but the gap has narrowed slightly.

Figure 3: Types of employment (16+), July – September 2017



* Those on government schemes, training and employment programmes too small for reliable estimate

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Employment by category

In terms of the type of job:

- women account for 51% of all employees, but only 28% of the total self-employed.
- employer based surveys estimate that 51% of all employee jobs are filled by women. (Source: June 2017 Quarterly Employment Survey).

Employment by working pattern

Data on working patterns shows that more females are making use of alternate working arrangements leading to an increase in the number working part-time hours.

In terms of working patterns for females aged 16-64:

- the proportion working full-time has decreased over the last ten years (by 1.8 pps) to 61.2% whereas the proportion of males working full-time has fallen by 2.7 pps to 91.4%.
- 39% of female employees work part-time compared to 9% of male employees.
- 82% of part-time employees are women.
- the number of female part-time employees is up 10% since 2007.
- The most commonly cited reason for female employees working part-time was 'Didn't want full-time work'.

Employment by industry

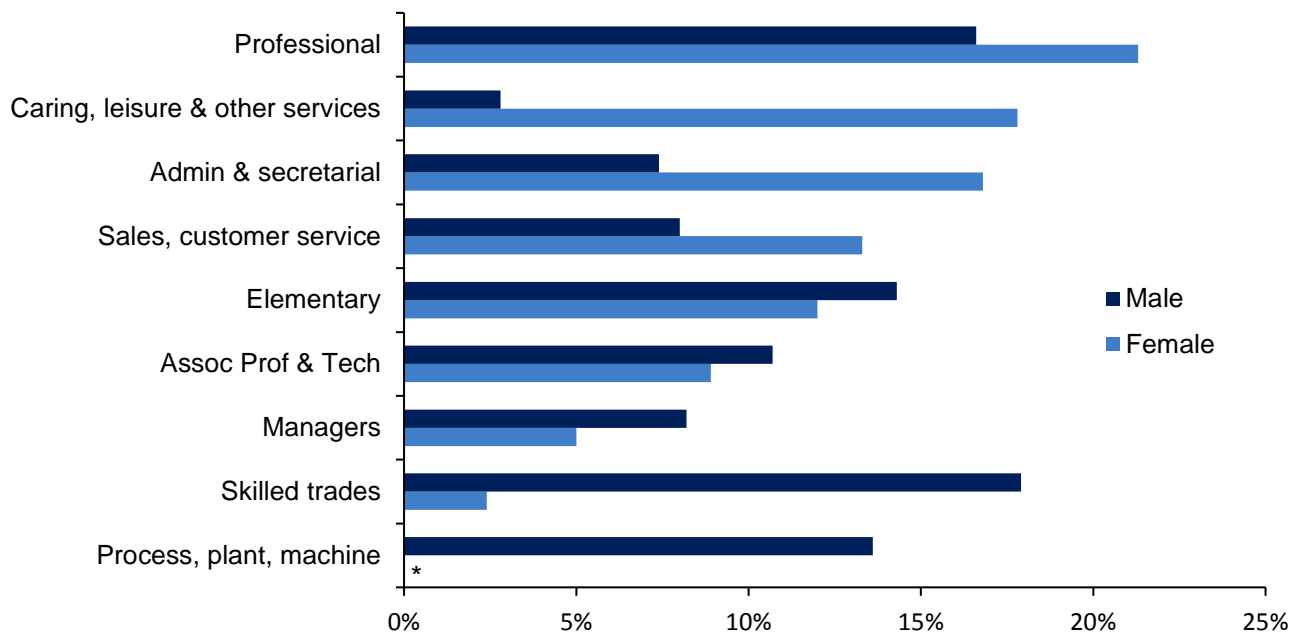
Data shows that females are more likely than males to work in the service sector, particularly the public administration, education and health sectors. Whereas males are more likely to work in manufacturing than females.

Of the total female employees (both full-time and part-time):

- 90% worked in the service sector³ (95% for part-time and 88% for full-time). This compares with 70% for male employees.
- Looking only at female full-time employees, 50% were employed in the public administration, education and health service sectors, compared with 21% of males.
- The other main work areas for female full-time employees in NI were banking & finance services (19%) and distribution, hotel & restaurants (13%). For males the figures in these sectors were 15% and 20% respectively.
- 8% of female full-time employees worked in manufacturing compared to 18% of men

Employment by occupation

Figure 4: Occupation of male and female employees, July – September 2017



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Type of occupation differed between males and females in NI, with figures showing that:

- 87% of those working in caring, leisure & other services were women.
- 21% of female employees were in professional occupations, compared with 17% of men
- 2% of female employees were in the skilled trades, compared with 18% of men.

³ This includes Distribution, hotel and restaurants, transport and communication, banking and finance, public admin, education and health, and other services.

*Too small for a reliable estimate (less than minimum quotation level of 8,000 cases)

2.3 Earnings

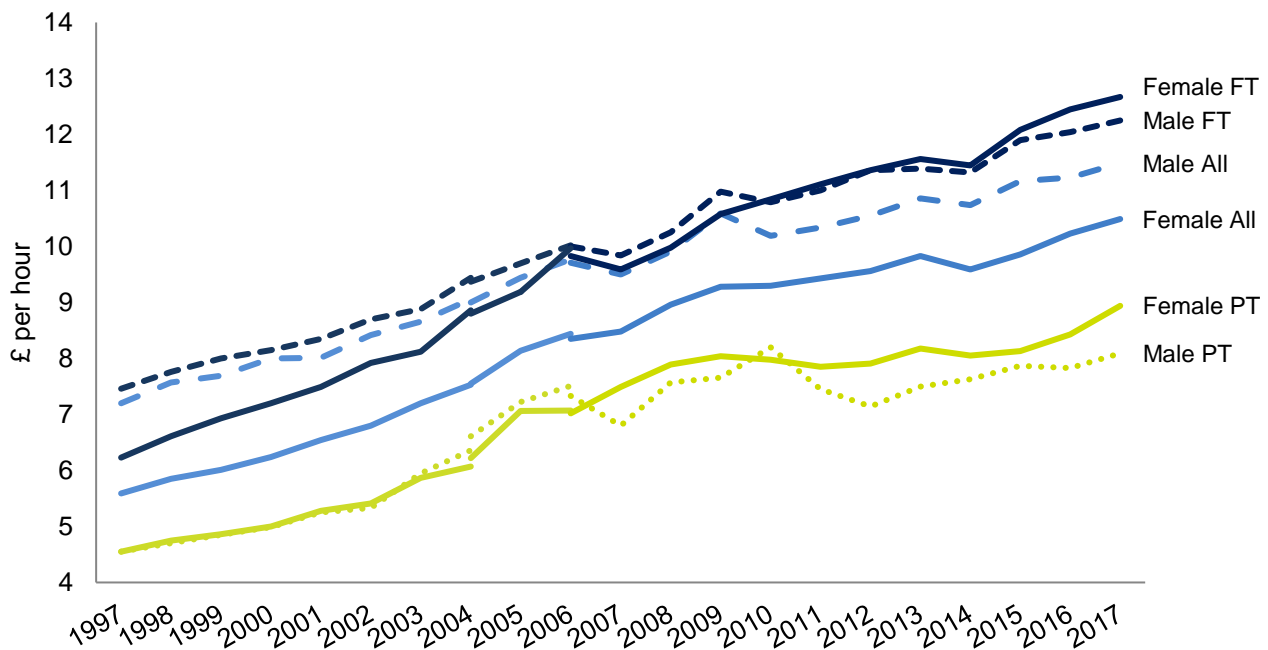
Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE)

Gender pay gap: This is calculated as the difference between the average hourly earnings (excluding overtime) of men and women, as a proportion of average hourly earnings (excluding overtime) of men's earnings. Using hourly earnings better accounts for the fact that men work on average more hours per week than women.

Key findings

- The full-time female median hourly earnings excluding overtime has been higher than male earnings since 2009
- Female and males earnings were much more closely aligned in NI than in the UK
- Northern Ireland is the only region in the UK where full-time females earn more than full-time males.

Figure 5: Median gross hourly earnings excluding overtime by gender in NI, April 1997 to 2017



Note: there were a number of methodological changes during the series in 2004, 2006 and 2011 – see Section 7 Further information for full details

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Figure 5 shows that:

- full-time hourly earnings for females (£12.67) were 3.4% greater than those for full-time males (£12.25). Northern Ireland is the only region in the UK where full-time females earn more than full-time males.
- the full-time female median hourly earnings, excluding overtime, had been higher than or equal to male median hourly earnings in each year since 2010
- females earn more than men due to a higher proportion of females working in the public sector which has higher wages on average.
- the part-time earnings for females (£8.94) were 85p greater than those for part-time males (£8.09)
- female hourly earnings (£10.49) was £1.00 lower than male hourly earnings (£11.49) for all employees (full-time and part-time). This is due to a higher proportion of males working full-time, and full-time workers earning more on average than part-time workers.

Context: Gender pay gap

Various methods can be used to measure the earnings of women relative to men. ONS and NISRA prefer to use median hourly earnings excluding overtime; including overtime can distort the picture as men work relatively more overtime than women and using hourly earnings better accounts for the fact that men work, on average, more hours per week than women. Although median hourly pay rates excluding overtime provide useful comparisons of men's and women's earnings, they do not reveal differences in rates of pay for comparable jobs.

Including part-time earnings and presenting earnings for all employees, reverses the gender pay gap in NI. The main reason for this difference is due to the 'part-time effect' (more details can be found in the ONS Position Paper '[Presentation of the Gender Pay Gap](#)'). The inclusion of part-time employees increases the gender pay gap as part-time employees earn less on average than full-time employees and a higher proportion of part-time employees are women.

[An article published by ONS](#) shows how the jobs men and women do affect the gender pay gap, based on 2016 ASHE data at the UK level.

2.4 Unemployment

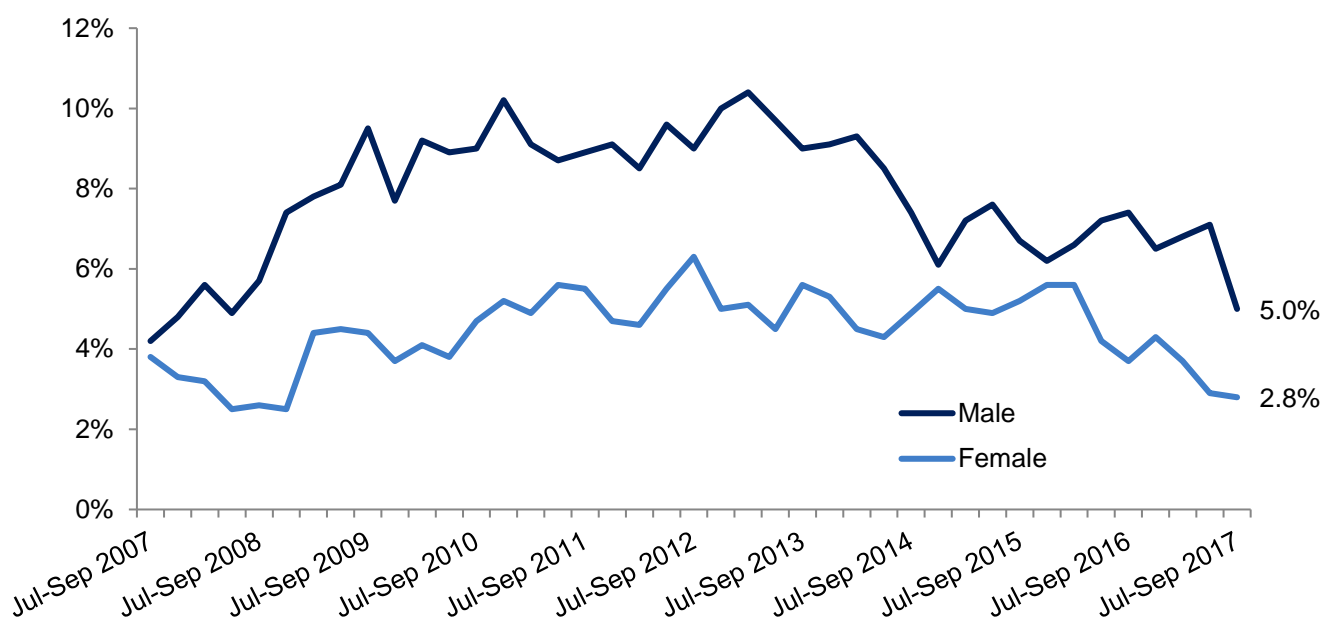
Source: Labour Force Survey (LFS)

LFS unemployment: The International Labour Organisation (ILO) define unemployed as 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 (numbers and rates refer to 16+ population)

Key Findings:

- The female unemployment rate has been consistently lower than the male unemployment rate for the last ten years

Figure 6: Unemployment rate by Gender (16+), Jul-Sep 2007 – Jul-Sep 2017



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LFS Unemployment numbers

- In July – September 2017, the LFS estimated that 11,000 women (16+) were unemployed compared with 23,000 men.
- the number of female unemployed is lower than in 2007, while the number of male unemployed has increased by 21%.

LFS unemployment rate

In July – September 2017, the unemployment rate (unemployed as a percentage of the economically active):

- for women aged 16+ in NI was 2.8% compared with 5.0% for men.

2.5 Economic Inactivity

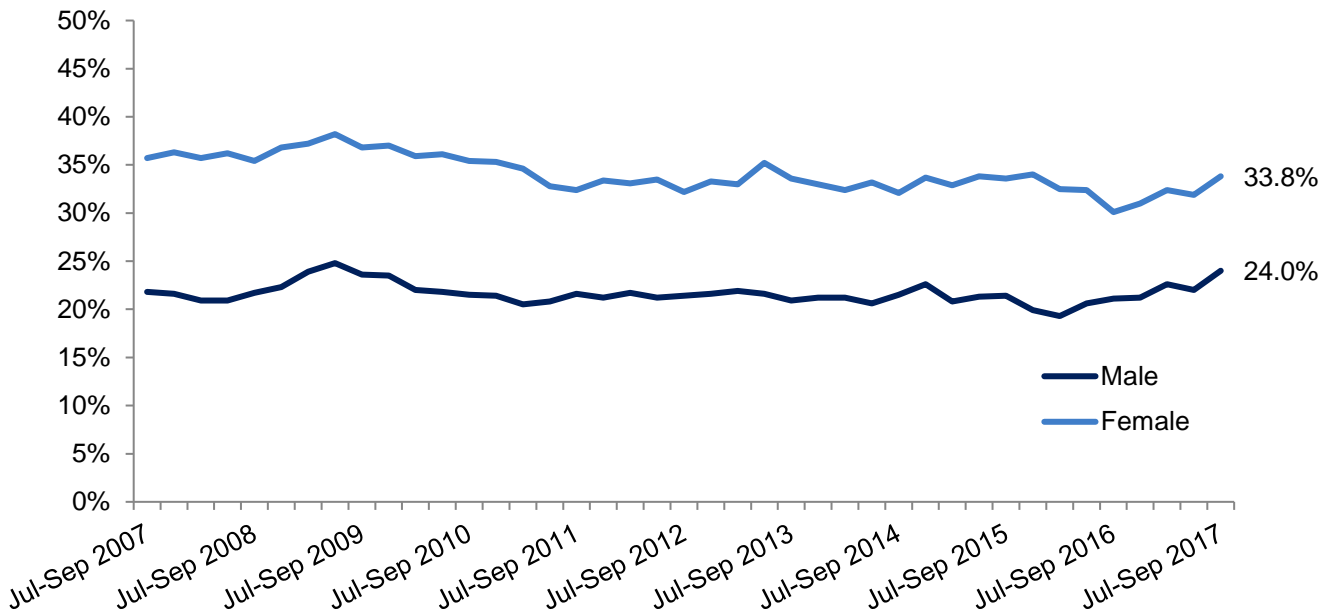
Source: Labour Force Survey (LFS)

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 (numbers refer to 16+ population, rates refer to 16-64 years).

Key Findings

- Women have had a consistently higher rate of economic inactivity than men for the last 10 years.
- Economic inactivity rates for both men and women increased over the year.

Figure 7: Economic inactivity rates by Gender (16-64), Jul-Sep 2007- Jul-Sep 2017



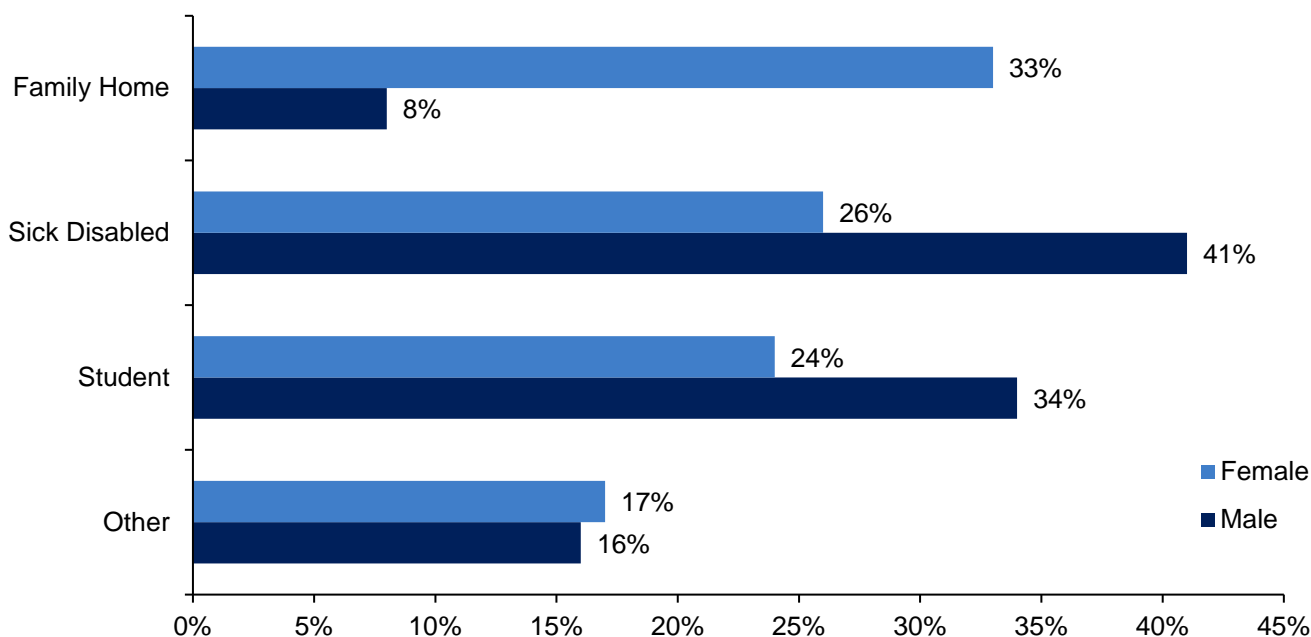
[Download in excel](#)

The economic inactivity rate for women has been consistently higher than for men, however it has narrowed slightly over the last decade.

In the period July – September 2017, the LFS showed that:

- 349,000 women and 256,000 men aged 16 or over are economically inactive. This compares with 332,000 women and 212,000 men in 2007 – an increase of 5% for women and an increase of 21% for men.
- the 16-64 inactivity rate for women has increased by 1.6 pps over the last 5 years and increased by 3.6 pps over the last year to 33.8%. The corresponding male rate (24.0%) has increased by 2.6 pps over the last 5 years, and increased by 2.9 pps during the last year.

Figure 8: Reasons for economic inactivity (16-64), July – September 2017



“Other” includes the ‘retired’ and ‘discouraged workers’ (those not in a job who would like work and whose reason for not seeking work in the past four weeks is that they believe there are no jobs available).

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The economically inactive can be broken down by those who do or do not want to work, showing that:

- of the 200,000 women, aged 16-64, who were economically inactive in NI, 16% (33,000) wanted a job, but were not seeking work in the past four weeks or were unable to start work. The remaining 84% stated that they did not want work. For economically inactive men of working age (16-64), 21% wanted a job and 79% did not want work.
- 33% of working age inactive women were unavailable for work due to family/home commitments. The main reason given by men for inactivity was those who were sick at 41%, compared to 26% for women.
- the other main reason for inactivity was those who were students, with 24% of working age inactive women citing this as their reason for inactivity, compared to 34% of men.

3 Women with Dependants

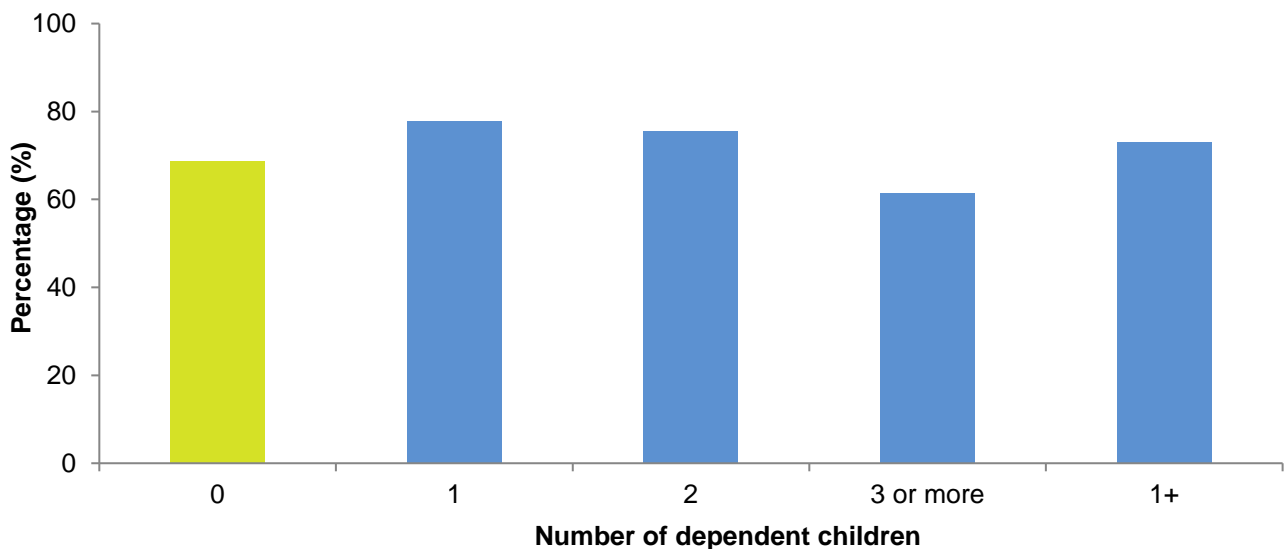
3.1 Economic activity and dependent children

Source: Labour Force Survey (LFS)

Key Findings:

- Women of working age with children were more likely to be economically active than women without.
- Women with one child are more likely to be economically active than those with no children or more than one child.

Figure 9: Economic activity rate¹ of women (16-64) by number of dependent children, April - June 2017



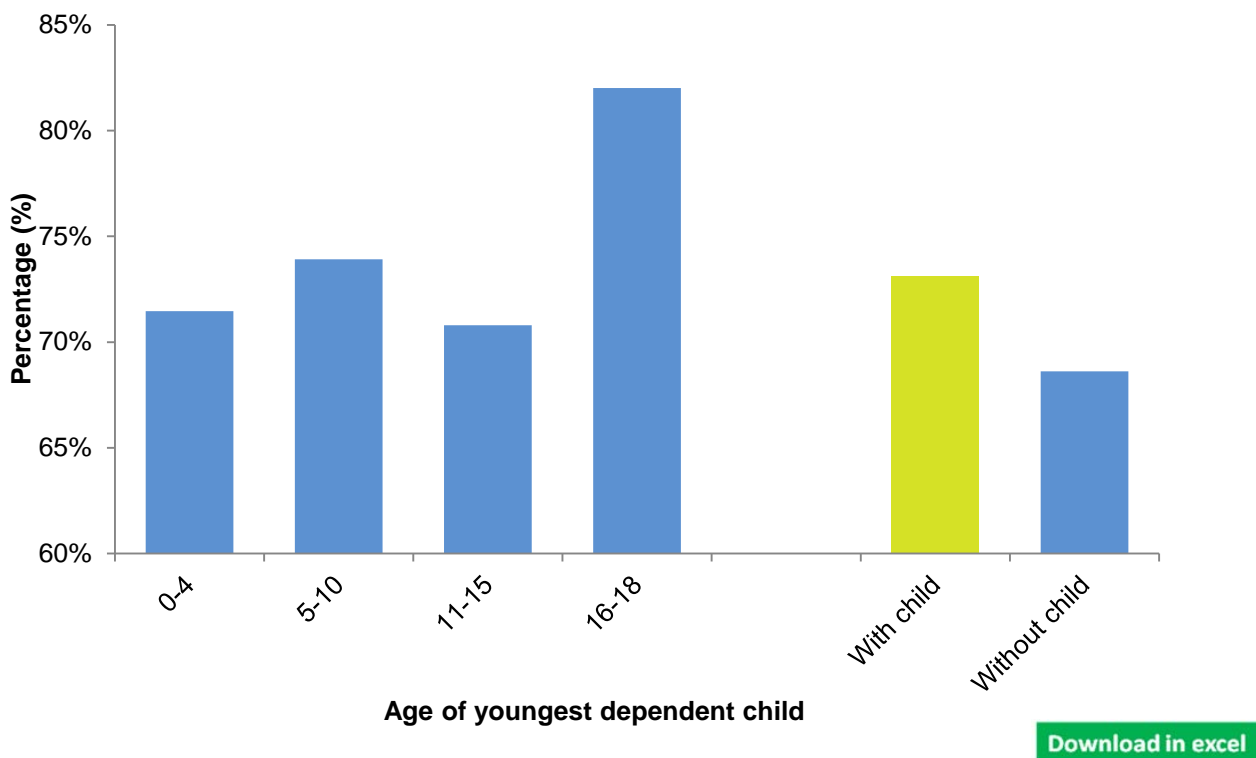
¹ The analysis on the effect of dependent children (under 19) on the economic activity rates of females is based on the head or partner of the head of family unit only. It does not include family members who are of working age but who do not have parental responsibilities such as an elder sibling.

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In terms of dependent children, at April – June 2017:

- An estimated 73% of females of working age with dependent children under 19 were economically active, which is higher than the rate for those without dependent children (69%).
- The economic activity rate was lower for women with three or more dependent children (61.3%) than those with one or two dependent children, which are 77.7% and 75.5% respectively. This difference in economic activity can mostly be explained by the number in employment, rather than higher numbers in unemployment.

Figure 10: Economic activity rates of women (16-64) by age of youngest dependent child, April – June 2017 (non-zero axis)



Economic activity for female heads of family were found to be influenced by the age of the youngest dependent child, with:

- An economic activity rate of 71.5% when the youngest dependent child was aged 0-4, which was 10.5 pps lower than the rate when the youngest dependent child was 16-18 (82.0%).

3.2 Childcare provision

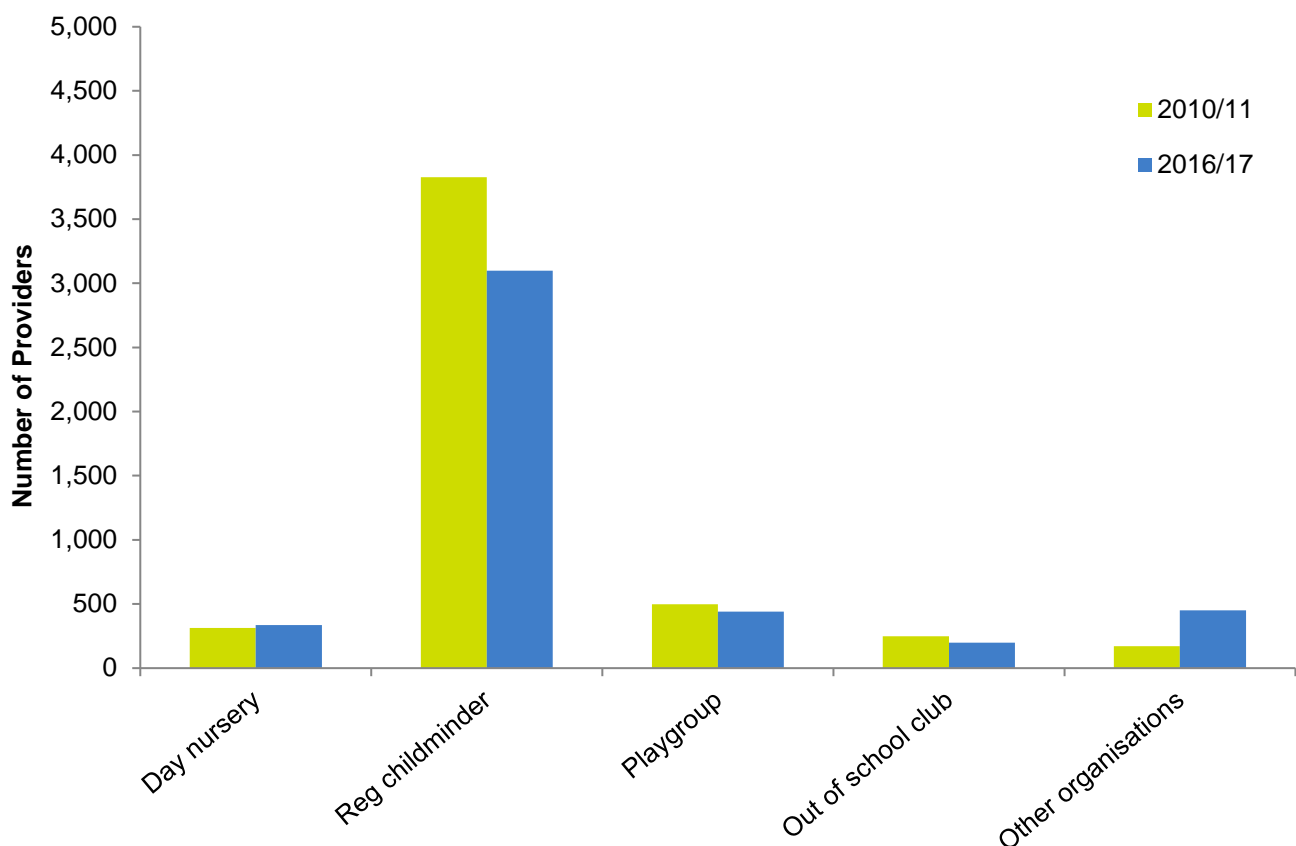
Day care places (source: Department of Health)

Day Care Places: In Northern Ireland people who look after children aged under twelve years have been required to register since November 1996.

Key Findings:

- There are 61,000 childcare places for under 12s
- In 2016/17 childminders still provide the highest number of childcare places in Northern Ireland (68% of providers were childminders)
- However, the number of providers and places with childminders has been on a slow decline since 2011/12
- Out of schools places has shown a sharp increase in recent years

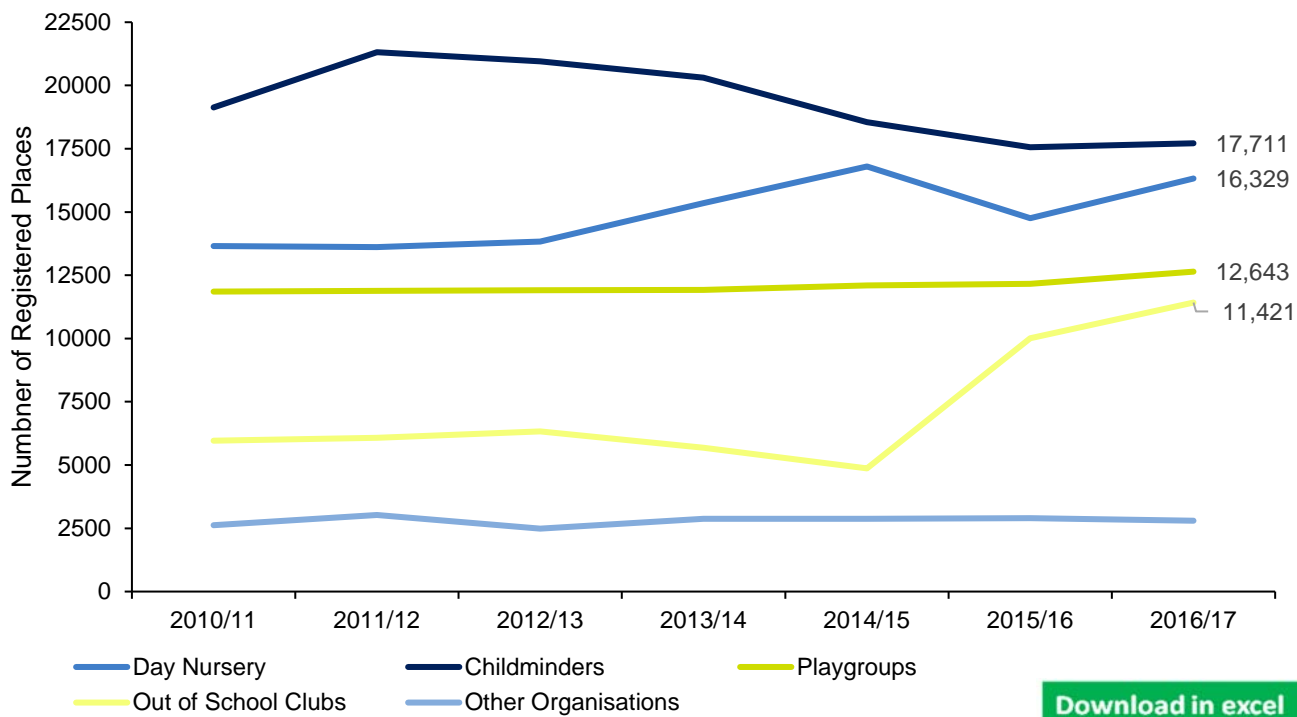
Figure 11: Day care providers in Northern Ireland by type in 2010/11 and 2016/17



¹ Other organisations includes crèches, summer schemes and two year old programmes.

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Figure 12: Number of Childcare Places Available 2010/11 – 2016/17



The charts illustrate the change in the type of childcare available over the last 6 years. There has been a decrease in the number of childminders and the number of places offered by childminders, but there has been an increase in the number of places registered with out of schools clubs and day nurseries.

At 31st March 2017;

- 4,500 people or facilities were registered for the provision of day care for children under the age of 12 with HSC Trusts in Northern Ireland providing 60,900 places.
- This represents a decrease of 7% on the previous year in the number of providers but an increase of 6% in the number of registered places.
- In the longer term, this is a decrease of 11% in the number of providers since 2010/11 but a 14% increase in the number of registered places.

This reflects more availability and use of childcare in group settings such as out of school clubs and day nurseries.

3.3 Assistance for parents

Benefit Claimants

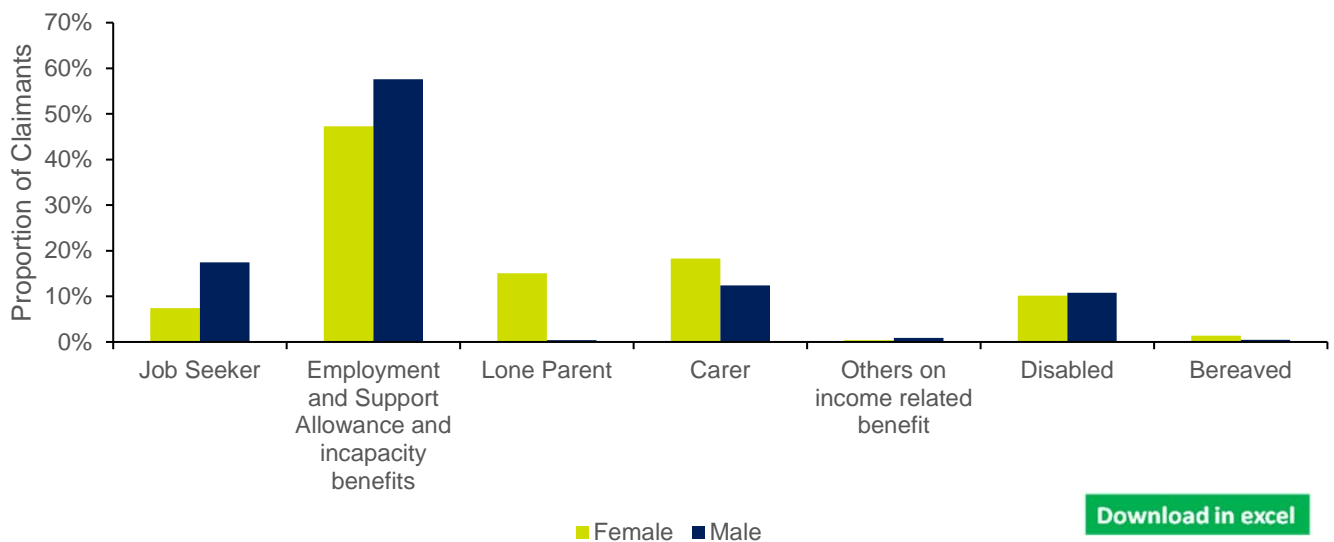
Source: Department for Communities⁴

Benefit Claimants: Many people who are employed, unemployed or economically inactive rely on benefits for income. The Department for Communities administer benefits to those who meet the relevant criteria. There are a range of benefits including Employment and Support Allowance, Incapacity benefits, Income Support, and Carers Allowance.

Key Findings:

- There were 246,160 working age benefit claimants in Northern Ireland
- Over half of working age claimants were female (52.6%)
- 54.8% of all claimants were female

Fig 13: Claimants by Client Group⁵ and Gender at May 2017



Many people in employment, unemployed or economically inactive rely on benefits for income. Benefits data showed that female claimants were primarily most likely to be claiming Employment and Support Allowance and incapacity benefits (which is also true for males), however, after that they were most likely to be claiming either as a carer or a lone parent.

At May 2017:

- The majority of income support claimants were female. Of a total of 36,320 income support claimants, almost three quarters (74.7%) were female. Most female income support claimants were likely to be lone parents with two thirds (65.9%) of females claimants in the lone parent group compared with 4.8% of male income support claimants.

⁴ <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/benefits-statistics-summary-publication-national-statistics-may-2017>

⁵ Claimants have been allocated to statistical groups to give an indication of the main reason why they are claiming benefit. Benefits are arranged hierarchically and claimants are assigned to the first benefit they receive. Thus a lone parent receiving both Income Support and Incapacity Benefit would be assigned to the 'Employment & Support Allowance and incapacity benefits' group. For this reason, the 'Lone parent' group will not contain all lone parents claiming Income Support. This also explains the disparity between the "Disabled" client group figures and the number of Disability Living Allowance recipients as the majority of working age DLA recipients are also receiving Employment and Support Allowance. The statistical group hierarchy is given in the table below.

- Less than half of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) claimants were female. ESA replaced incapacity benefit and Income Support paid the grounds of incapacity. At May 2017 47.7% of the 127,900 claimants were female.
- Claimants of carer's allowance were much more likely to be female. Carer's allowance is paid to people who look after another person for at least 35 hours a week⁶. Almost two thirds (64.0%) of all claimants were female in May 2017.

Please note figures are rounded to the nearest ten.

Child and working tax credits (source: Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs)

The latest Northern Ireland specific data available is for November 2016 and showed that on average, working families in Northern Ireland received a higher amount in childcare charges than in the UK:

- In Northern Ireland at 2 November 2016, 15,420 families were receiving higher Child and Working Tax Credits awards to help with childcare charges.
- The average weekly amount of childcare charges (capped at £175 per week for one child and £300 per week for two or more children) paid in Northern Ireland was £111 and the average weekly increase in Child and Working Tax Credits awards was £75 for families benefiting from the childcare element. The same was £91 and £60 in the UK respectively.

⁶ Other conditions includes that the claimant must be

- not gainfully employed (i.e. not earning more than £110 per week after certain deductions)
- 16 and over
- not in full-time education
- the person that is being cared for must be already getting one of these benefits (1) Disability Living Allowance - Middle or High rate care (2) Attendance Allowance (3) Constant Attendance Allowance at or above the normal maximum rate with an Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit, or basic (full day) rate with a War Disablement Pension (4) Armed Forces Independence Payment

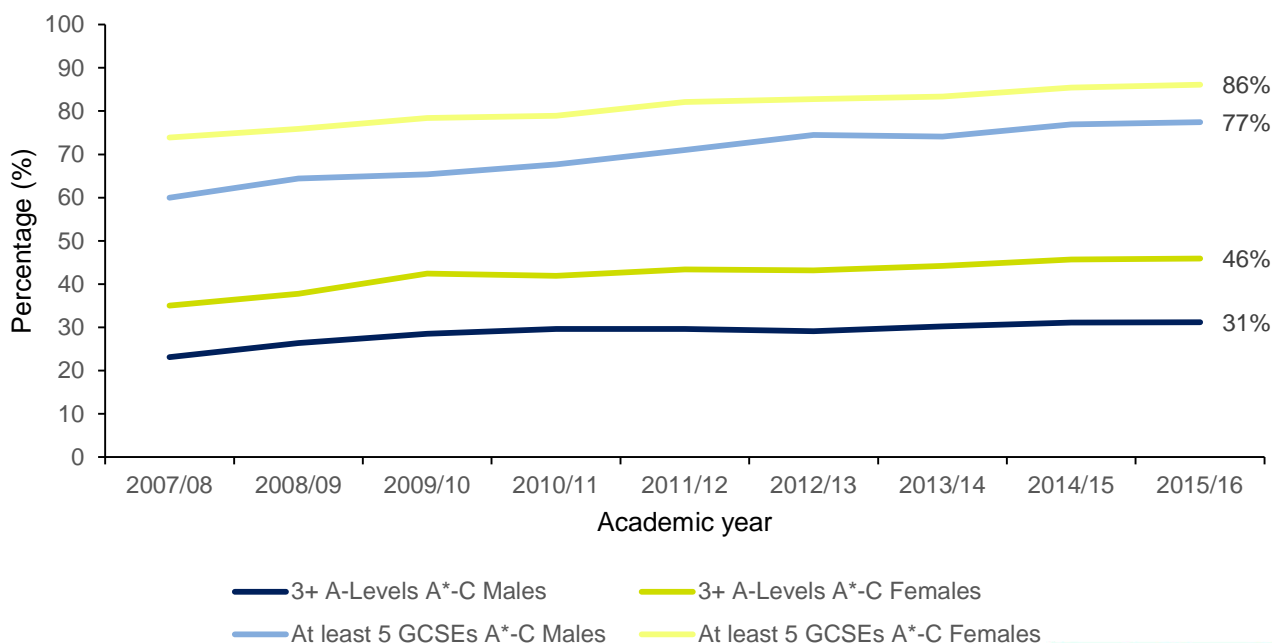
4 Educational standards

Source: Department of Education

Key Findings

- Girls continue to outperform boys in terms of qualifications achieved
- The proportion of girls gaining A levels grade A* - C (45.9%) is consistently higher than boys
- The proportion of girls gaining 5+ GCSEs grade A* - C (86.1%) is consistently higher than boys

Figure 14: Qualifications on leaving school, 2015/16



[Download in excel](#)

The proportion of females gaining qualifications on leaving school is consistently higher than males over the last decade.

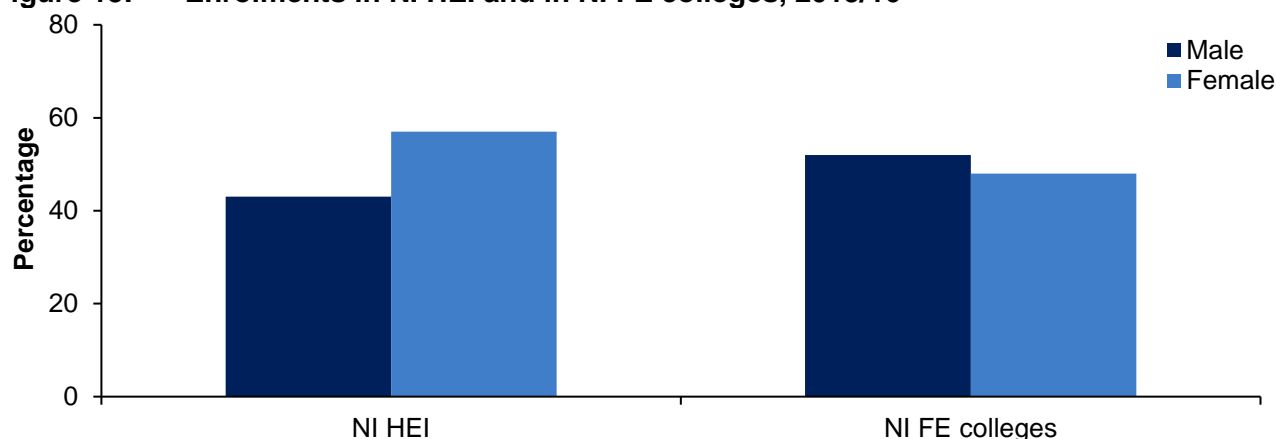
The School Leavers Survey 2015/16 reported that:

- The proportion of girls that achieved at least three A levels A* - C or equivalent on leaving school was 45.9%, compared with 31.2% of boys. Additionally, 66.1% of girls achieving two or more A levels A* - E or equivalent in 2015/16 was higher than the number of boys (48.8%) achieving the same results.
- Almost three-quarters (72.2%) of girls achieved at least five GCSEs at grades A* - C or equivalent including GCSE english and maths compared with 63.3% of boys, a difference of 8.9 percentage points.
- As in previous years, the proportion of girls leaving school with at least five GCSEs or equivalent at grades A* - C remains higher than the proportion of boys; 86.1% of girls leaving school in 2015/16 achieved this standard compared with 77.5% of boys.
- After leaving school 82.4% of girls progressed to further or higher education compared with 72.4% of boys.

Key Findings

- There is a greater number of female enrolments (57%) in Higher Education Institutions than male.
- Just under half (48%) of all enrolments at Further Education colleges were female.
- The subject with the highest proportion of female students in Higher Education was subjects allied to medicine (82%), the subject with the lowest was engineering and technology (21%).
- The subject with the highest proportion of female students in Further Education was Health, public services and Care (86%), the subject with the lowest was Construction, Planning and the Built Environment (3%).

Figure 15: Enrolments in NI HEI and in NI FE colleges, 2015/16



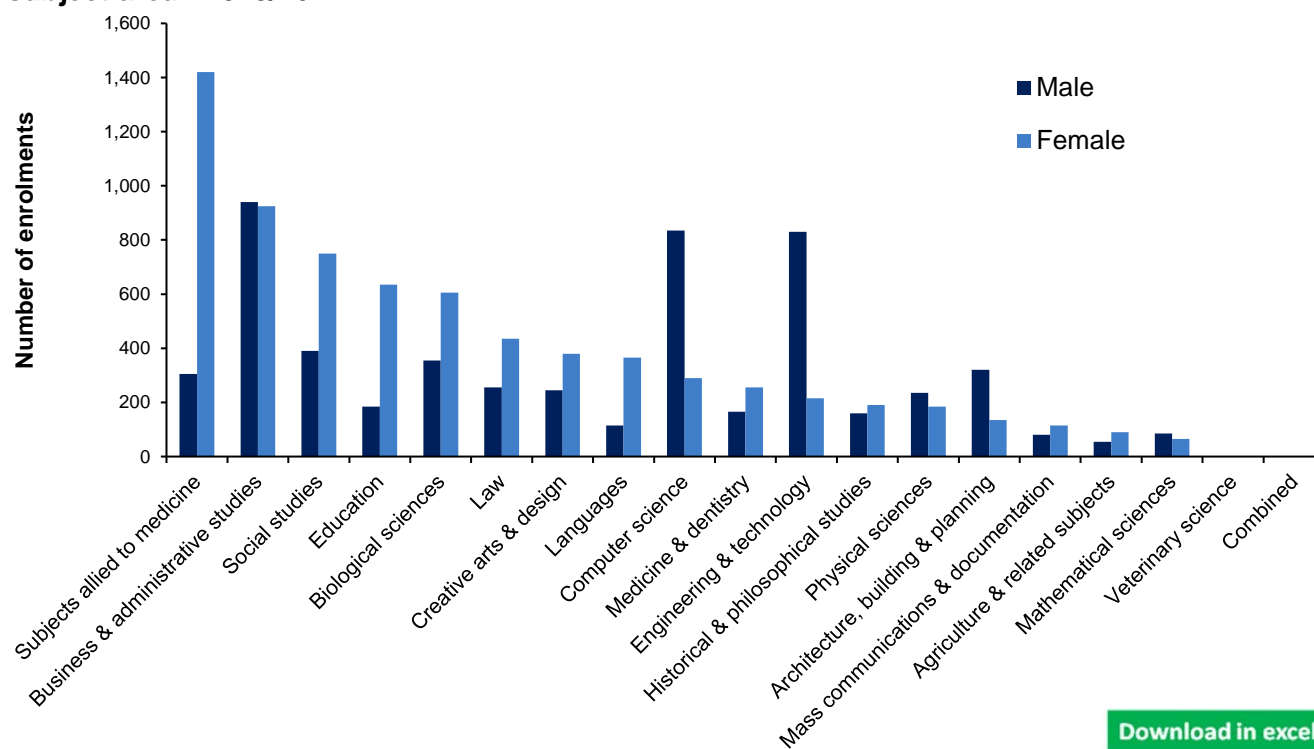
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Enrolments

The figures for 2015/16 showed that:

- 57% of all students enrolled at the NI Higher Education Institutions (HEI) were women. Of all enrolments at NI Further Education colleges, 48% were female. Looking over the longer term 10 year trend, there has been little change in the male/female profile of enrolments, where in 2006/07 60% of enrolments were female.

Figure 16: Enrolments of full-time undergraduate first year students at NI HEI by gender and subject area - 2015/16



[Download in excel](#)

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

1. Data has been obtained from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). HESA is the official agency for the collection of information on publicly funded HEIs in the UK.

2. From the 2014/15 academic year onwards, DfE no longer counts the Open University as a wholly English institution, but splits it between England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, depending on where the national centre is located. Historical data has been updated to reflect this change.

3. To prevent the identification of individuals, figures have been rounded to the nearest 5, in line with HESA rounding strategy, with 0, 1 and 2 rounded to 0.

4. Due to rounding, the sum of rows or columns may not match the totals shown.

Subject choice in Higher Education (source: Department for the Economy)

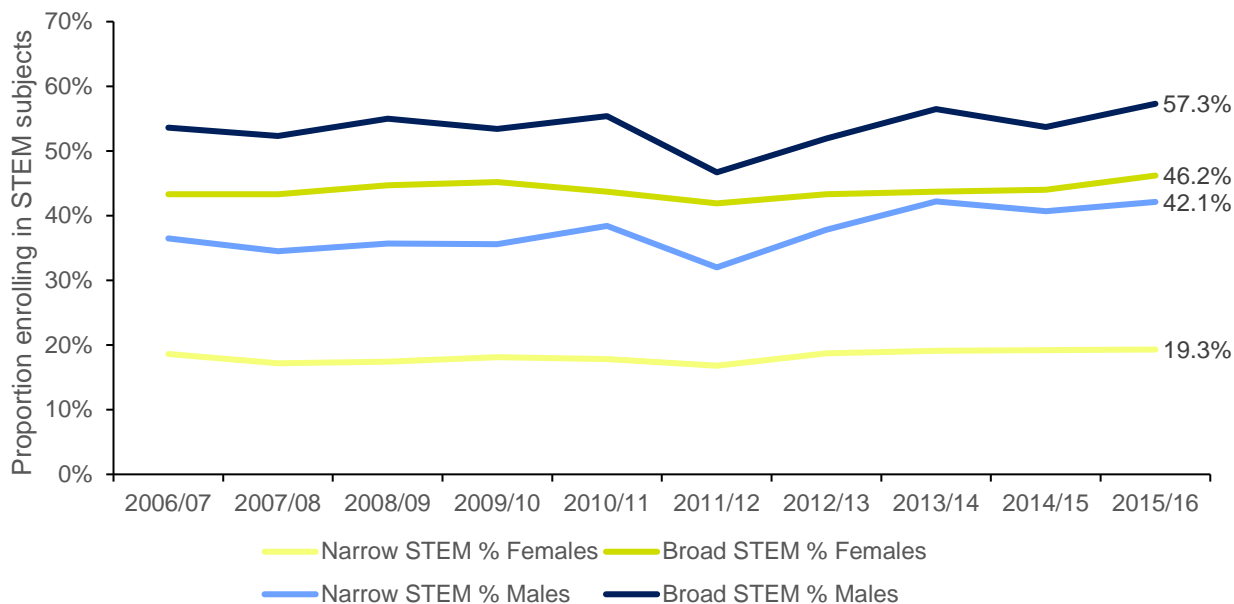
For full-time, first year undergraduate enrolments at NI HEI, the subject areas with the highest proportions of females in the 2015/16 academic year were:

- subjects allied to medicine (82%), education (78%) and languages (77%)

And the subject areas with the lowest proportions of females were;

- engineering and technology (21%), computer science (26%), and architecture, building and planning (30%).

Figure 17: Enrolments of first year, full-time undergraduate students in STEM subjects by gender



[Download in excel](#)

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

Broad STEM includes the following subject areas:

- Medicine and Dentistry; Subjects allied to Medicine; Biological Sciences; Veterinary Sciences; Agriculture and related subjects; Physical Sciences; Mathematical Sciences; Computer Science; Engineering and Technology; and Architecture, Building and Planning.

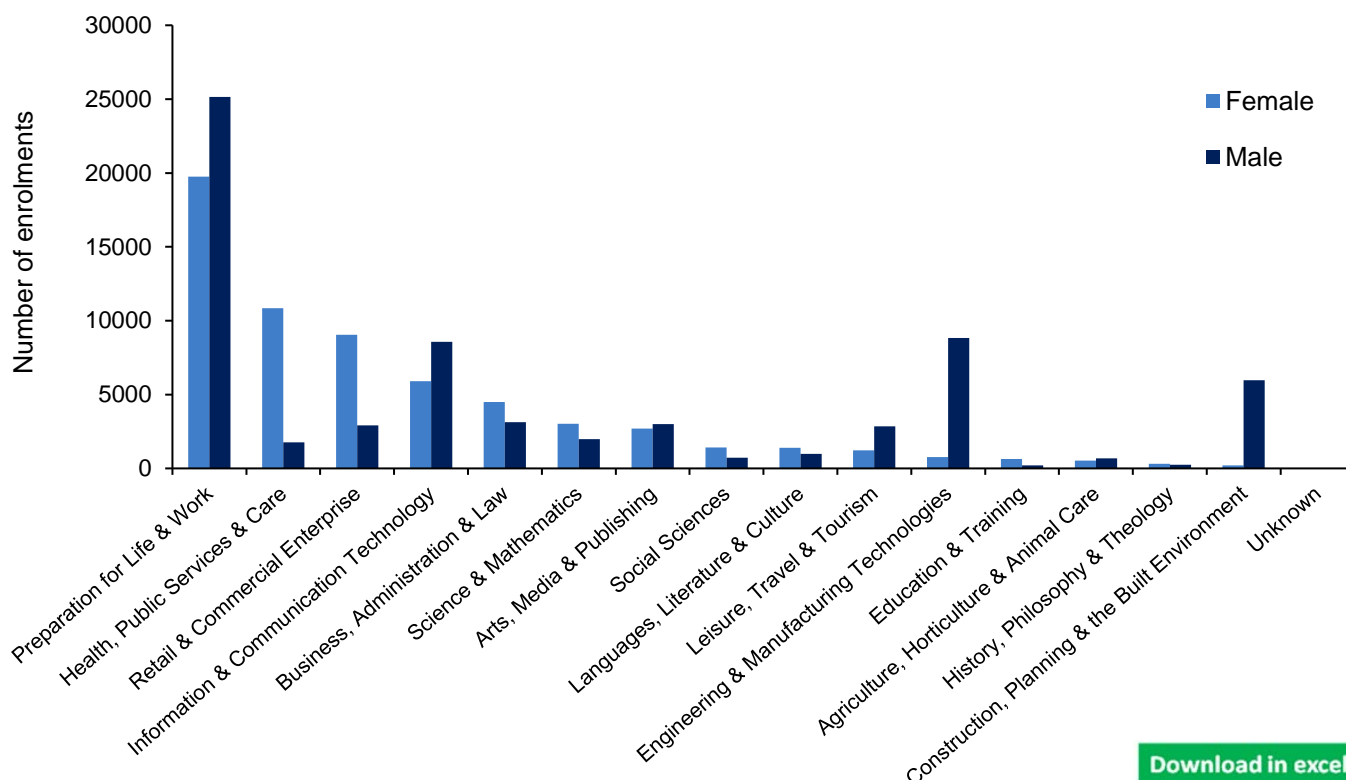
Narrow STEM is a subset of Broad STEM and includes the following subject areas:

- Biological Sciences; Physical Sciences; Mathematical Sciences; Computer Science and Engineering and Technology

- There have been consistently more male enrolments to STEM subjects than females over the past 10 years. This is particularly apparent when looking at narrow STEM subjects (Biological Sciences; Physical Sciences; Mathematical Sciences; Computer Science and Engineering and Technology) where 2015/16 42.1% of males enrolled in one of these subjects compared with 19.3% of females.

Subject Choices at NI Further Education Colleges (source: Department for the Economy)

Figure 18: Regulated enrolments by subject area at NI Further Education colleges, 2015/16



Source: Consolidated Data Return (CDR)

Note: FE enrolments relates to full-year Regulated enrolments for the 2015/16 academic year. Regulated enrolments are regarded as those on courses that are at 'level 3 or below' and appear on the Register of Regulated Qualifications (RRQ), which contains qualifications on both the Qualifications and Credit Framework and the National Qualifications Framework or part of the Department's Prescribed List of Approved Qualifications (PLAQ)/Access list and Higher Education qualifications ('level 4 and above'). Only Level 3 and below have an RRQ Code.

The gender profile of enrolments for various subject choices in Northern Ireland Further Education colleges showed a similar picture to the HEIs with education and health subject enrolments dominated by females.

Subjects with the highest proportions of females enrolled were:

- Health, public services and Care (86%), Education and Training (76%) and Retail and Commercial Enterprise (76%).

And the subject areas with the lowest proportions of females were:

- Leisure, Travel and Tourism (30%), Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies (8%) and Construction, Planning and the Built Environment (3%).

5 Women in politics and public life

Sources: Central Appointments Unit, The Executive Office www.parliament.uk www.europarl.europa.eu

Key Findings

- A quarter local councillors are female (25%)
- The percentage of female NI MPs was 22%

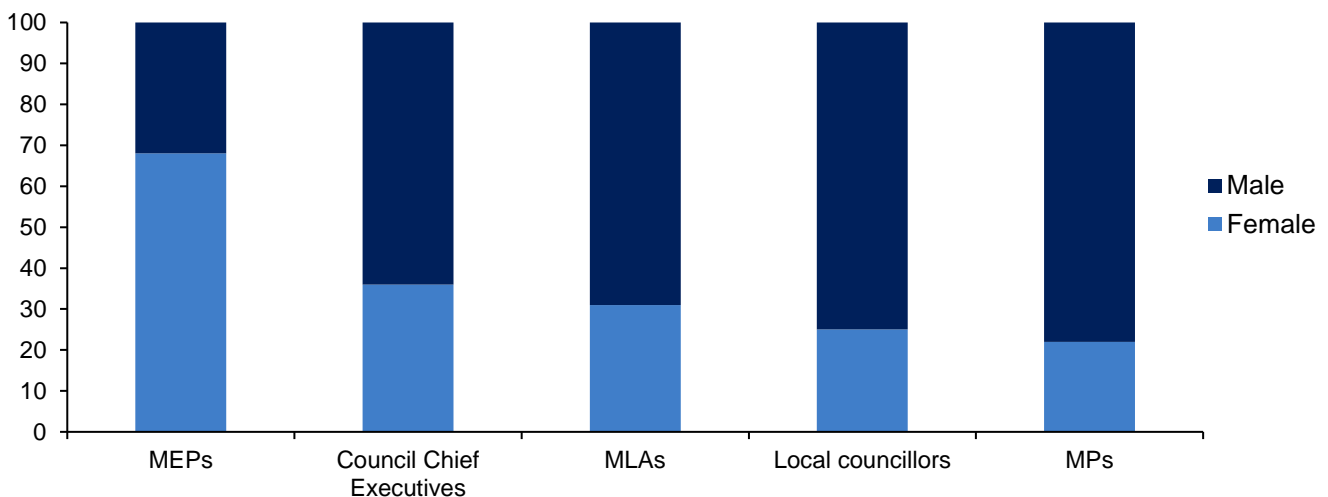
Council Elections

The 2014 local elections to the 11 new councils took place on 22 May 2014 with the next election due in 2018. Of the 462 candidates elected, 116 were women (25%).

Assembly and Parliamentary Elections

- Northern Ireland had four elected women MPs (representing 22% of all NI MPs). In addition, two of the three Northern Ireland MEPs were female. This compares with 32% of MPs and 39% of MEPs in GB.

Figure 19: Female representation in politics



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- The Northern Ireland Assembly has been suspended for the last nine months, however prior to this there was an election held on the 2 March 2017. Of the 90 elected members, 31% (28) were women, which is an increase, in terms of proportion, of all members from the 28% (30 out of 108) of elected members from May 2016.
- Results from the local elections to the 11 new councils show that Belfast City Council had the highest female representation with 19 out of 60 (32%) of female councillors.
- Of the 11 new councils, 4 had a female chief executive.

Public Appointments

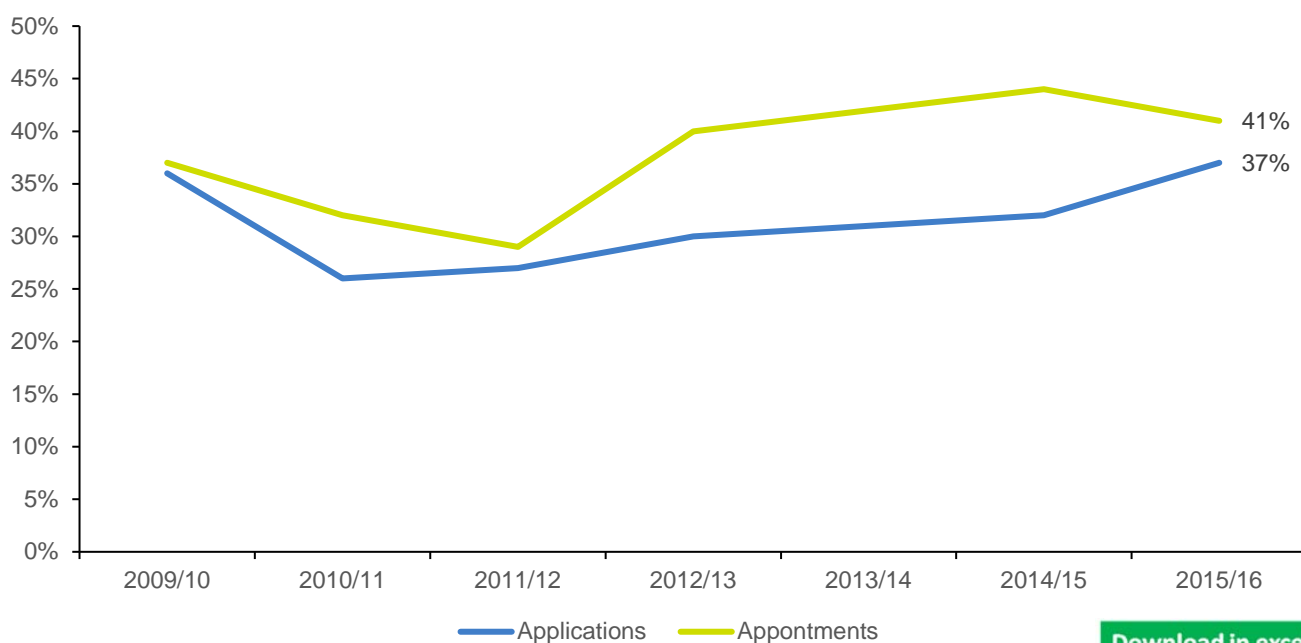
Source: Public Appointment Annual Report for NI 2015/16, TEO

Public appointment: A public appointment is generally an appointment, made by a government Minister, to the board of a public body. Public appointments in Northern Ireland cover everything from the arts to sport and consumer interests to more specialised areas, such as historic buildings and monuments.

Key Findings

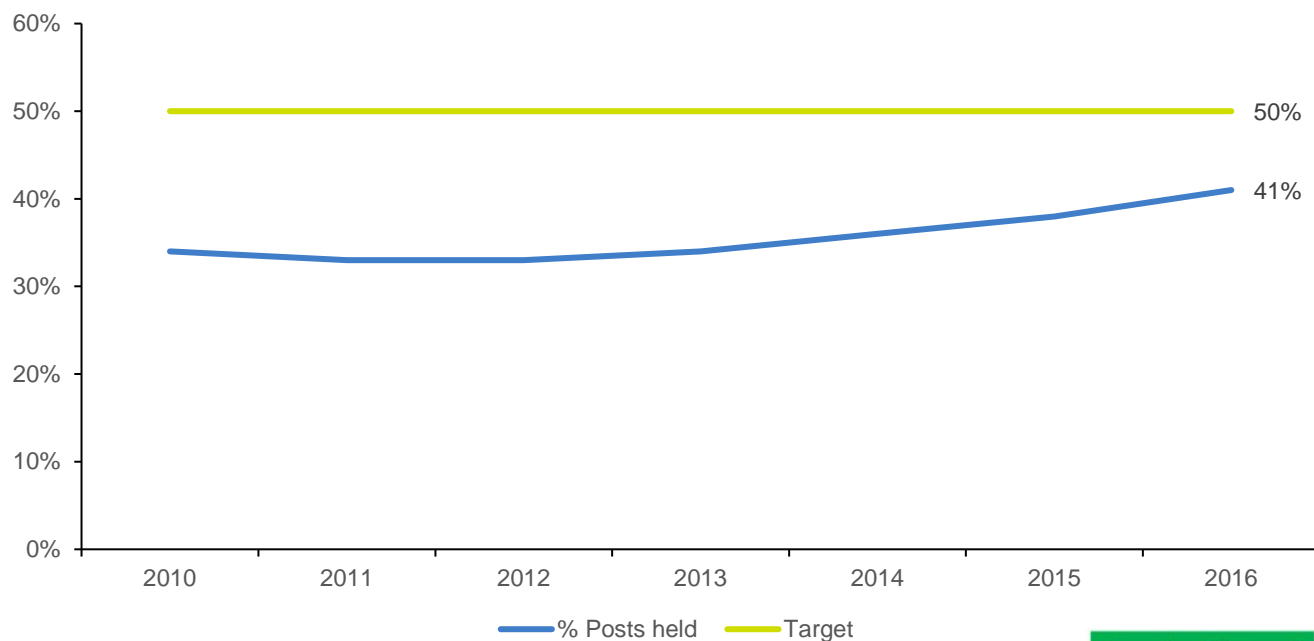
- There has been a general upward trend in the number of applications made by females to public appointments and in the number of public appointments held by females

Figure 20: Percentage of Public appointment applications and appointments made to females from 2009/10 to 2015/16



- There has been an increase, since 2010/11 in the number of applications submitted by females for public appointments. However, as figure 20 shows, the number of female public appointments as a proportion of all appointments reached a high in 2014/15 but has most recently experienced a decrease of 3 percentage points.
- It should be noted that although there appears to be a marked increase in the proportion of appointments going to females in 2012/2013, this relates to a reduced overall number of Public appointments made that year and the 2 following years. The slight decrease in 2015/16 is in relation to a baseline number of appointments that is more reflective of pre 2012/13.

Figure 21: Percentage of public appointments held by females, 2010 to 2016 (at 31st March each year)



[Download in excel](#)

- In Northern Ireland at 31st March 2016, 41% of public appointments (to the Board of a public body) were held by women. This compares with 34% in 2010. Figure 21 shows the trends in public appointments held by females since 2010.
- In Northern Ireland at 31st March 2016, 24% of chair posts for public appointments (to the Board of a public body) were held by women.

6 Women into business

Women into business (source: Invest NI, Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) 2016 NI report)

Total Entrepreneurship Activity (TEA): Percentage of 18-64 population who are either a nascent entrepreneur (i.e. actively involved in setting up a business they will own or co-own; this business has not paid salaries, wages, or any other payments to the owners for more than three months) or owner-manager of a new business (4-42 months)

Total early stage Entrepreneurship Activity for Female Working Age Population: Percentage of female 18-64 population who are either a nascent entrepreneur or owner-manager of a new business (as defined above)

Key Findings

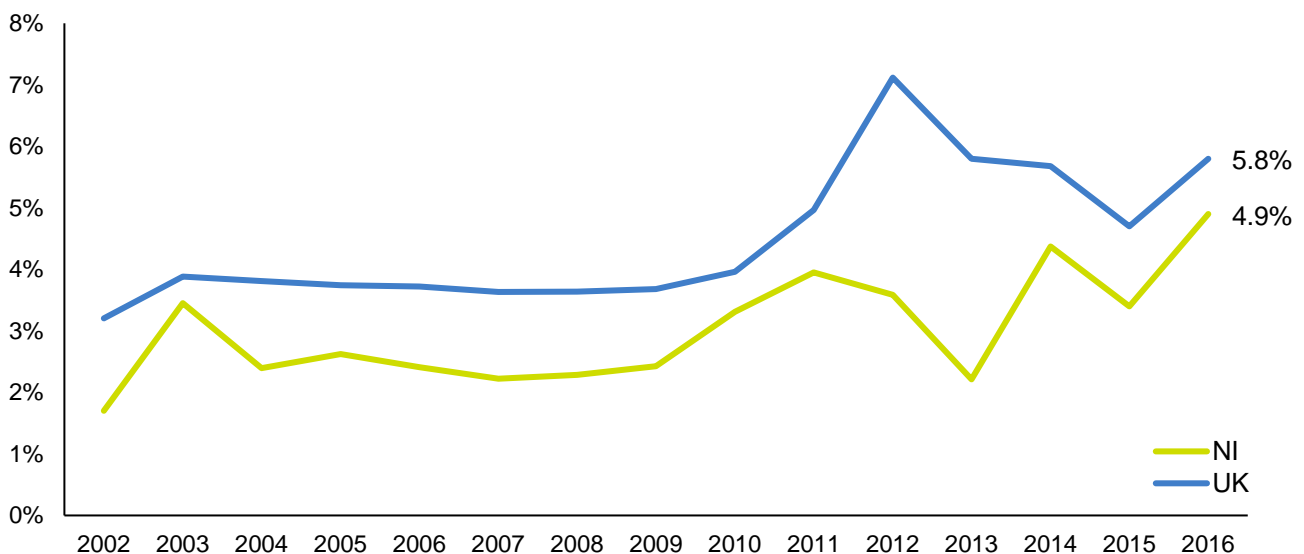
- The female Total Entrepreneurship Activity (TEA) rate in Northern Ireland stood at 4.9 per cent in 2016, 2.9pps lower than the male rate of 7.8%.
- The total early-stage female entrepreneurial activity rate is consistently lower than the male rate across all UK areas.

Levels of female entrepreneurship

Historically trends in female TEA rates in Northern Ireland have generally followed that of the UK, albeit at lower levels. Between 2011 and 2013 there was a divergence in the two series, however, since 2014 the gap appears to be returning to the long-run trend.

Northern Ireland has historically lagged behind the rest of the UK in terms of enterprise start-up activity and the GEM Global project confirms this through its research which focuses on the measurement of new business formation at the level of the individual through an Adult Population Survey (APS)⁷.

Figure 22: Total early-stage female entrepreneurial activity in Northern Ireland and the UK, 2002-2016 (Source: GEM APS)



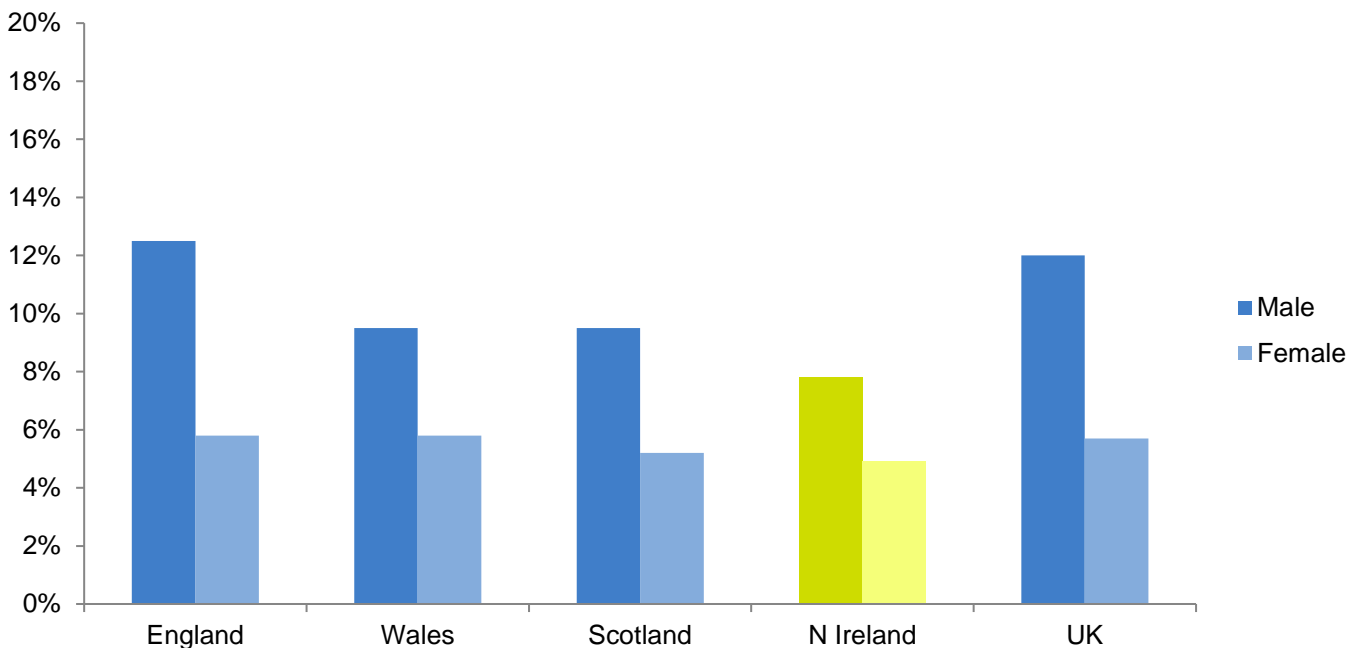
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⁷ The 2016 GEM Global study was based on an analysis of adult population survey (APS) results from 65 economies and more than 182,000 adults across the world. The core of the APS is identical in each country and asks respondents about their attitudes towards entrepreneurship; whether they are involved in some form of entrepreneurial activity, and if so, about their aspirations for their business. Source: Bonner K, Hart M, Levie J. GEM UK: Northern Ireland Report 2016

GEM APS figures show that:

- The female Total Entrepreneurship Activity (TEA) rate in Northern Ireland stood at 4.9% in 2016 compared to a male rate of 7.8%. This rate of male entrepreneurship is particularly low compared to the UK average resulting in a relatively high female to male TEA ratio of 62%, the highest in the UK (47% average).
- In 2016 males had a significantly higher TEA rate than females in all home nations, except Northern Ireland; due largely to a low male rate in Northern Ireland. The male TEA rate in Northern Ireland is significantly lower than the male rate in England and the UK; there is no significant difference in the female TEA rates across home nations.
- There is some variation in the ratio of female to male early-stage entrepreneurial activity across the home nations in 2016. The UK average ratio is 47%; the gap between male and female rates is narrower in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland due to the lower than average male TEA rates in those areas. The female to male ratio is 55% in Scotland; 61% in Wales and 62% in Northern Ireland.
- Annual ratios in female to male entrepreneurial activity may vary. Using the long run average ratios over the 2002 to 2016 period suggests a ratio of 38% in Northern Ireland compared to 49% in England, 54% in Wales and 53% in Scotland. The significantly lower female to male ratio in Northern Ireland over the long term is due to historically lower female TEA rates compared to males.

Figure 23: Total early-stage entrepreneurial activity in the Home Nations in 2016
Source: GEM APS UK 2016



[Download in excel](#)

Further information

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.

Sampling variability

The LFS is a sample survey, and as such, estimates obtained from it are subject to sampling variability. If we drew many samples each would give a different result. The ranges shown for the LFS data in the table overleaf represent 95% confidence intervals i.e. we would expect that in 95% of samples the range would contain the true value. These confidence intervals have been calculated using data that is not seasonally adjusted, with the relevant sampling errors produced then applied to the seasonally adjusted data.

If the 'annual change' for an estimate has increased or decreased by more than the 'sampling variability of the change', this change would be statistically significant. The annual changes for the main LFS categories of employment, unemployment and economic inactivity were tested for statistical significance. The results showed the annual change in the economic inactivity (16+) and the economic inactivity rate (16-64) were statistically significant i.e. the recorded changes exceeded the variability expected from a sample survey of this size and were likely to reflect real changes. None of the reported changes in unemployment or employment were statistically significant over the quarter or the year.

Table 4 shows the sampling variability of the estimates, and quarterly and annual changes. The final column contains the sampling variability that can be used when assessing change between two independent samples. Due to the LFS five wave structure this means it can be used to assess changes over six quarters or more.

Table 4: Sampling variability of labour market estimates, July - September 2017

	Reference period	Estimate	Sampling variability of estimate	Change over quarter	Sampling variability of quarterly change	Change over year	Sampling variability of annual change	Sampling variability of change
Unemployment ¹	Jul-Sep 2017	35,000	+/-9,000	-12,000	+/-9,000	-15,000	+/-13,000	+/-14,000
Employment ²	Jul-Sep 2017	825,000	+/-25,000	-9,000	+/-18,000	-16,000	+/-32,000	+/-35,000
Economically inactive ²	Jul-Sep 2017	604,000	+/-22,000	23,000	+/-16,000	39,000	+/-29,000	+/-32,000
Unemployment rate ¹	Jul-Sep 2017	4.0%	+/-1.0pps	-1.2pps	+/-1.1pps	-1.6pps	+/-1.5pps	+/-1.5pps
Employment rate ²	Jul-Sep 2017	68.1%	+/-1.8pps	-1.0pps	+/-1.3pps	-1.7pps	+/-2.3pps	+/-2.6pps
Economic inactivity rate ²	Jul-Sep 2017	28.9%	+/-1.8pps	2.0pps	+/-1.2pps	3.0pps	+/-2.2pps	+/-2.5pps

¹ People aged 16 and over. Unemployment rate = total unemployed as a proportion of the economically active.

² Levels for all persons aged 16 and over, rates for working age (16-64).

Please see attached link for further LFS notes and definitions:

[Labour Force Survey Background Information](#)

LFS Comparisons

Estimates of employment, unemployment, and economic inactivity are derived from the LFS, a survey of households. The most robust estimates of short-term movements in these estimates are obtained by comparing the estimates over rolling three month periods. For example the 3 months ending September 2017 should be compared with the estimates for April-June 2017, which were first published on 6th August 2017. This provides a more robust estimate than comparing with the estimates for June-August 2017. This is because the July and August data are included within both estimates, so effectively observed differences are those between the individual months of June 2017 and September 2017. The LFS is sampled such that it is representative of the NI population over a three month period, not for single month periods.

Seasonal adjustment

All estimates discussed in this Statistical Bulletin are seasonally adjusted except where otherwise stated. Like many economic indicators, the labour market is affected by factors that tend to occur at around the same time every year; for example school leavers entering the labour market in July and whether Easter falls in March or April. In order to compare movements other than annual changes in labour market statistics, such as since the previous quarter or since the previous month, the data are seasonally adjusted to remove the effects of seasonal factors and the arrangement of the calendar.

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 NI 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 below:

[Labour market statistics revisions policy](#)

Definition of 'working age'

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

Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE)

Please note, changes in NI earnings over the year and relative to the UK can be influenced by a range of factors including the timing of pay settlements, the extent of overtime, and differences in the composition of the workforce. As ASHE is a sample survey, results are also subject to an associated level of sampling variability. Further information is available at:

[Northern Ireland Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings](#)

[ASHE Background Information](#)

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