

Northern Ireland Quarterly Index of Production

Quarter 4 (October - December) 2024

Theme: Economy

Frequency: Quarterly

Geographical Area: Northern Ireland

Date: 20 March 2025

Introduction

The quarterly Index of Production (IOP) provides a timely indicator of growth in the output of the production industries in Northern Ireland (NI). Output estimates are calculated from the IOP aspect of the Quarterly Business Survey (QBS). The IOP has a sample size of approximately 1,200 covering all production businesses with 40 or more employees and a representative sample of smaller businesses. The latest quarterly estimates are compared to revised Quarter 3 2024 and Quarter 4 2023 estimates.

Key Points

- The NI IOP increased by 1.4% over the quarter (October - December) and increased by 2.4% over the year.
- The UK IOP decreased by 0.7% over the quarter and 1.6% over the year.
- When the most recent four quarters are compared to the previous four quarters, the NI production sector decreased by 0.7% while the UK production sector decreased by 1.7%.
- The NI IOP is 4.9% above the pre-Coronavirus pandemic level seen in Quarter 4 2019, while the UK IOP remains 10.4% below its Quarter 4 2019 level.
- Over the quarter, the increase in NI production output was driven by increases in two of the four main sectors - Manufacturing (2.2%) and Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply (1.7%). This was partially offset by decreases in Water supply, sewerage and waste management (Inc. recycling) (1.4%) and Mining and quarrying (5.6%).
- Over the year the increase in NI production output was driven by a 3.6% increase in Manufacturing. This was offset by decreases in Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply (1.1%), Water supply, sewerage and waste management (Inc. recycling) (0.4%) and Mining and quarrying (13.0%).

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Accredited Official Statistics

[Accredited official statistics](#) are a sub-set of official statistics that have been independently reviewed by the Office for Statistics Regulation and confirmed as complying with the standards of trustworthiness, quality, and value in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#). Accredited official statistics are called National Statistics in the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007.

These accredited official statistics, the quarterly Index of Production (IOP), were [independently reviewed](#) by the Office for Statistics Regulation in August 2011. They comply with the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics and should be labelled 'accredited official statistics'.

Our statistical practice is regulated by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR). OSR sets the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics that all producers of official statistics should adhere to. You are welcome to contact us directly with any comments about how we meet these standards. Alternatively, you can contact OSR by emailing regulation@statistics.gov.uk or via the OSR.

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:

- Removed pre-release access to enhance trustworthiness and also brought the publication date forward as a result;
- Reduced business burden by offering the option of online data returns.
- Improved accessibility of Index of Production Statistics by amending the format and structure of reports in line with accessibility regulations.
- [Consulted users](#) on streamlining the IOP statistical bulletin.

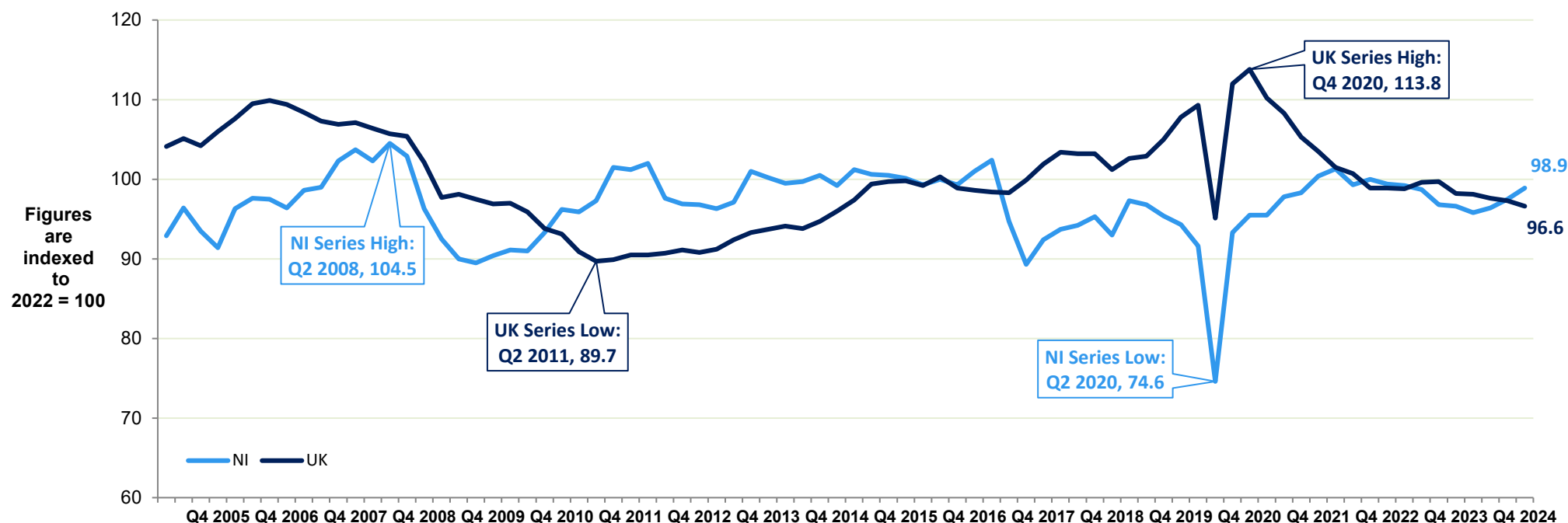
1 Summary of Index of Production

Change in IOP

The seasonally adjusted estimate for the NI IOP for Quarter 4 2024 showed:

- an increase of 1.4% over the quarter from the Quarter 3 2024 revised estimate;
- an increase of 2.4% over the year from the Quarter 4 2023 revised estimate; and
- a decrease of 0.7% when the most recent four quarters are compared to the previous four quarters.

Figure 1.1 IOP, NI & UK, Q1 2005 – Q4 2024



[Download Q4 2024 Data](#)

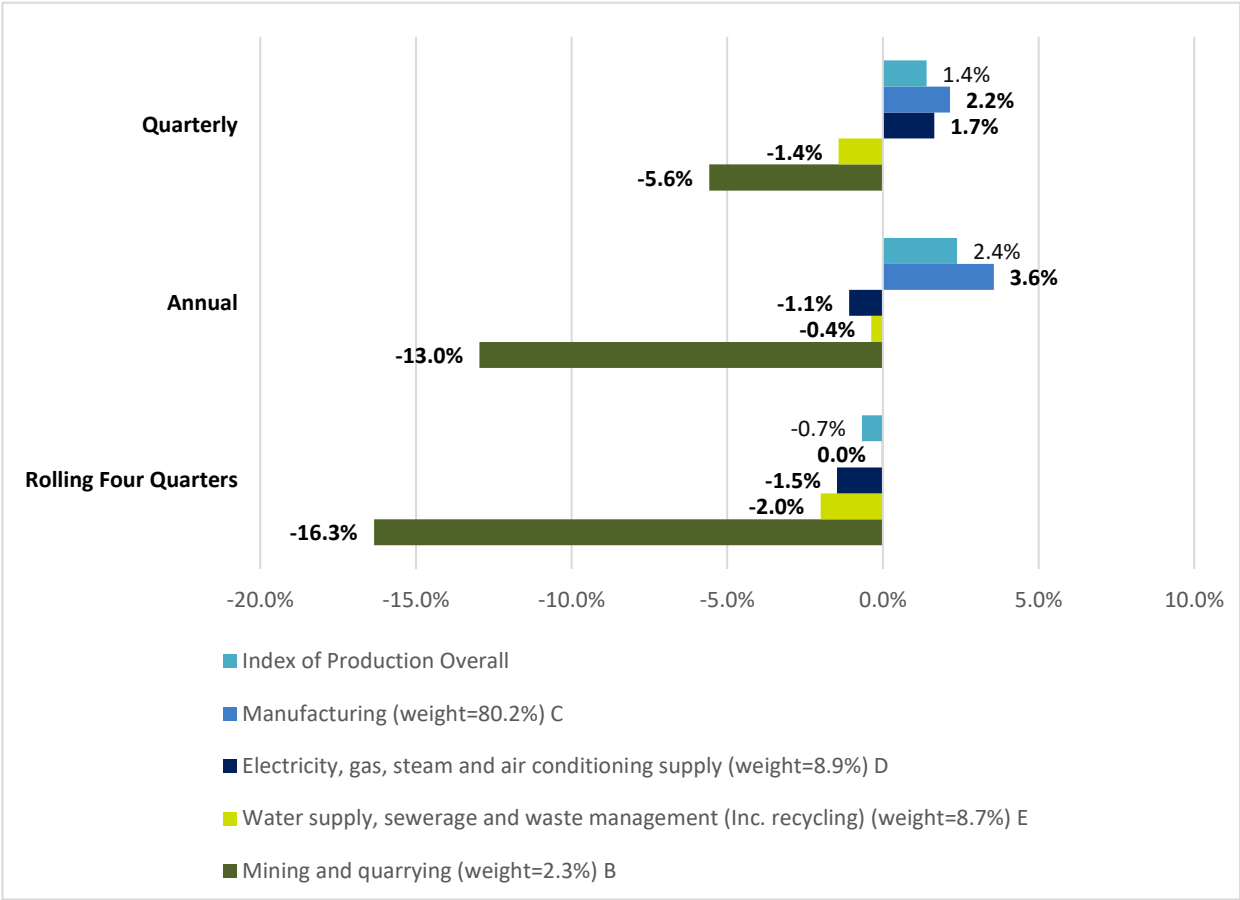
Commentary

Output in the NI Production sector increased by 1.4% in real terms over the fourth quarter of 2024. The UK Production sector decreased by 0.7% over the same period. Over the year there was an increase in NI output (2.4%) and a decrease in the UK (1.6%). NI output has now seen 3 consecutive quarters of growth following 6 consecutive quarters of decline.

The NI and UK series have followed broadly similar trends, although the NI index saw a steeper decline over the Covid-19 pandemic period. The NI IOP fell to its series low in Quarter 2 2020 but has since recovered to be 4.9% above the pre-pandemic level seen in Quarter 4 2019. In contrast, the UK index remains 10.4% below its pre-pandemic level.

In Quarter 4 2024 NI output is 32.7% above the series low (Quarter 2 2020) but remains 5.3% below the series high (Quarter 2 2008).

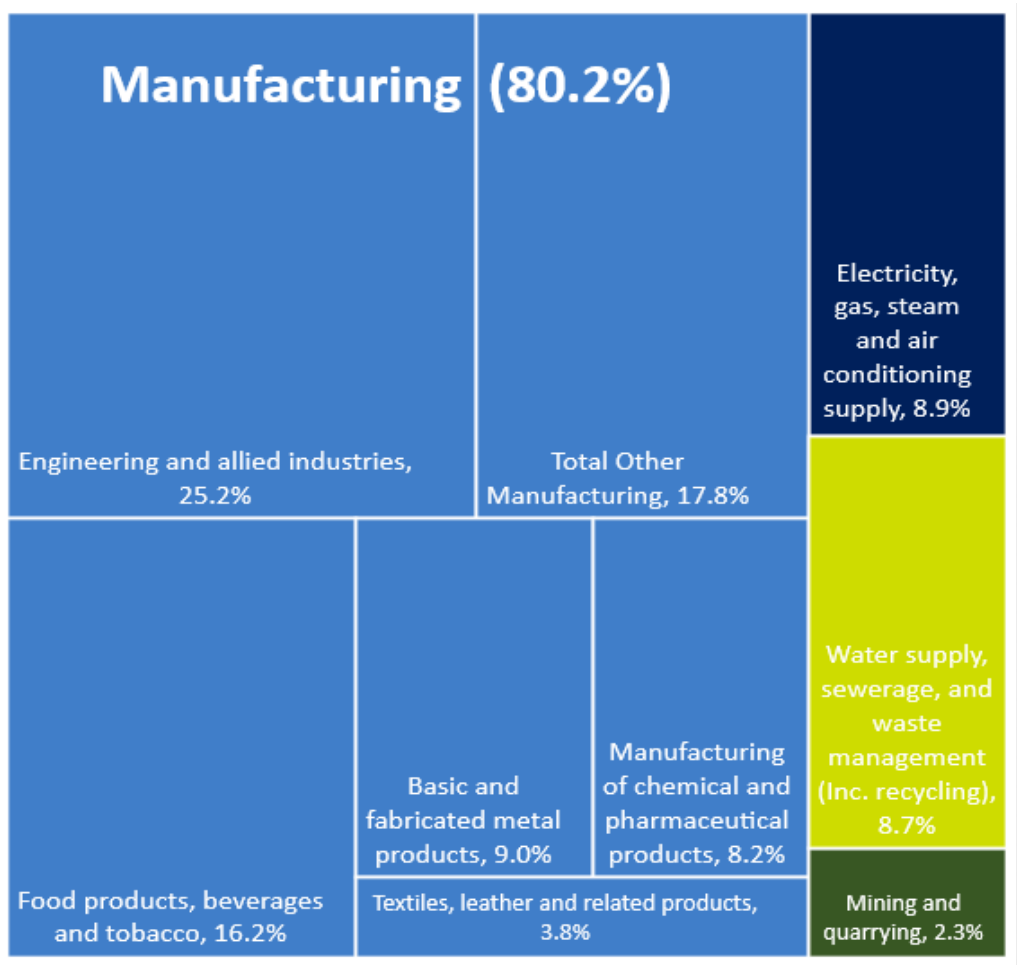
Figure 1.2 NI IOP Quarterly, Annual and Rolling Four Quarter Changes at sector level Quarter 4 2024¹



¹ Note that each broad sector index and the overall IOP index are seasonally adjusted independently of each other. It is not appropriate to directly compare the changes in the broad sectors to the changes in the overall IOP index.

The Production sector is dominated by Manufacturing, which accounts for approximately 80.2% of total production Gross Value Added (GVA) at 2022 prices. It is comprised of six subsectors, as shown in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 IOP sector split (based on 2022 GVA)



Further information on these subsectors is available in the [IOP Tables](#).

2 Production output by sector

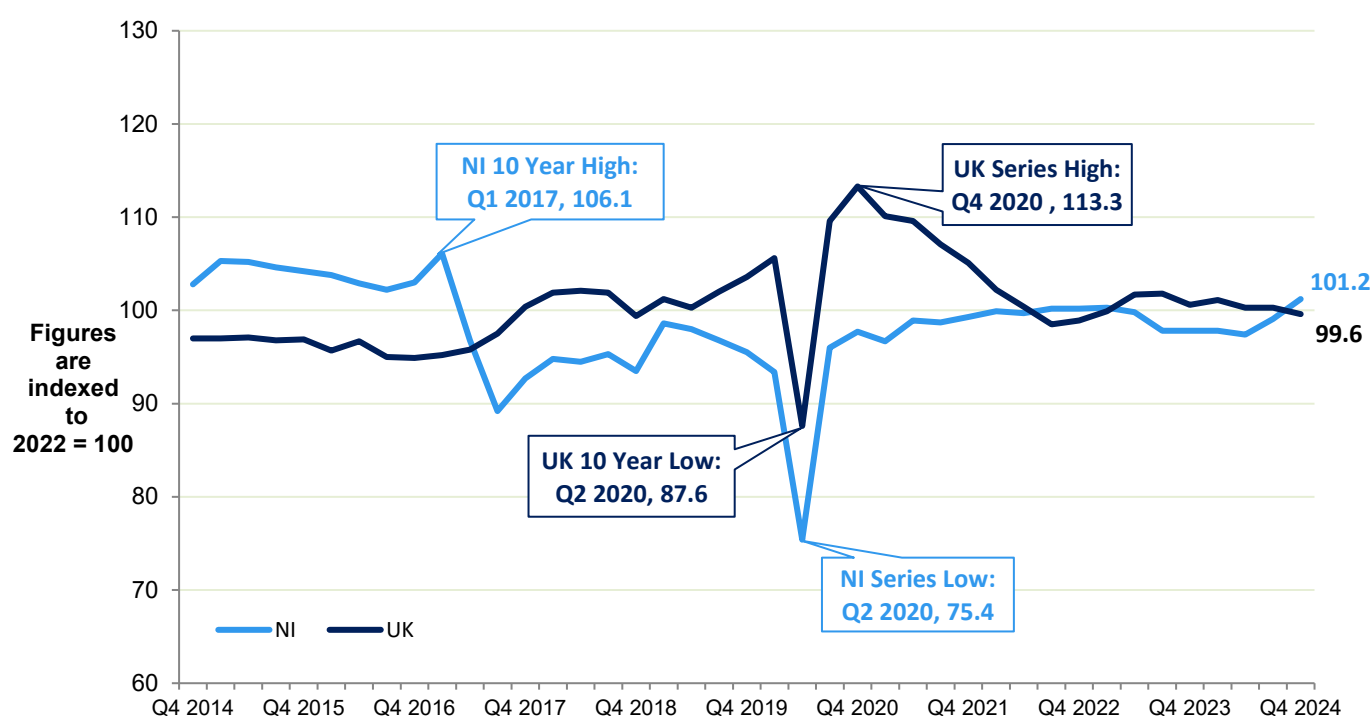
2.1 Manufacturing

Manufacturing sector (SIC07 Section C) - (weight = 80.2% of IOP): Manufacturing involves the transformation of materials into new products (outputs).

Key findings

- The NI seasonally adjusted figures show increases of 2.2% over the quarter, 3.6% over the year and saw no change on a rolling four quarters basis.
- The UK seasonally adjusted figures show decreases of 0.7% over the quarter, 1.0% over the year and 0.7% on a rolling four quarters basis.
- NI output is 4.6% below the ten year high seen in Quarter 1 2017.
- NI output is 34.3% above the series low recorded in Quarter 2 2020.

Figure 2.1 Manufacturing sector, NI & UK, Q4 2014 – Q4 2024



[Download Q4 2024 Data](#)

The UK and NI indices have had a broadly similar trend in the Manufacturing sector since Quarter 3 2017. The NI index fell to a series low in Quarter 2 2020 which was also a ten year low for the UK index. Following the recovery period, the UK index has been generally outperforming the NI series. In Quarter 4 2024 NI Manufacturing was 3.7% above the pre-pandemic level seen in Quarter 4 2019 while the UK Manufacturing index was 3.2% below its Quarter 4 2019 level.

2.2 Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply

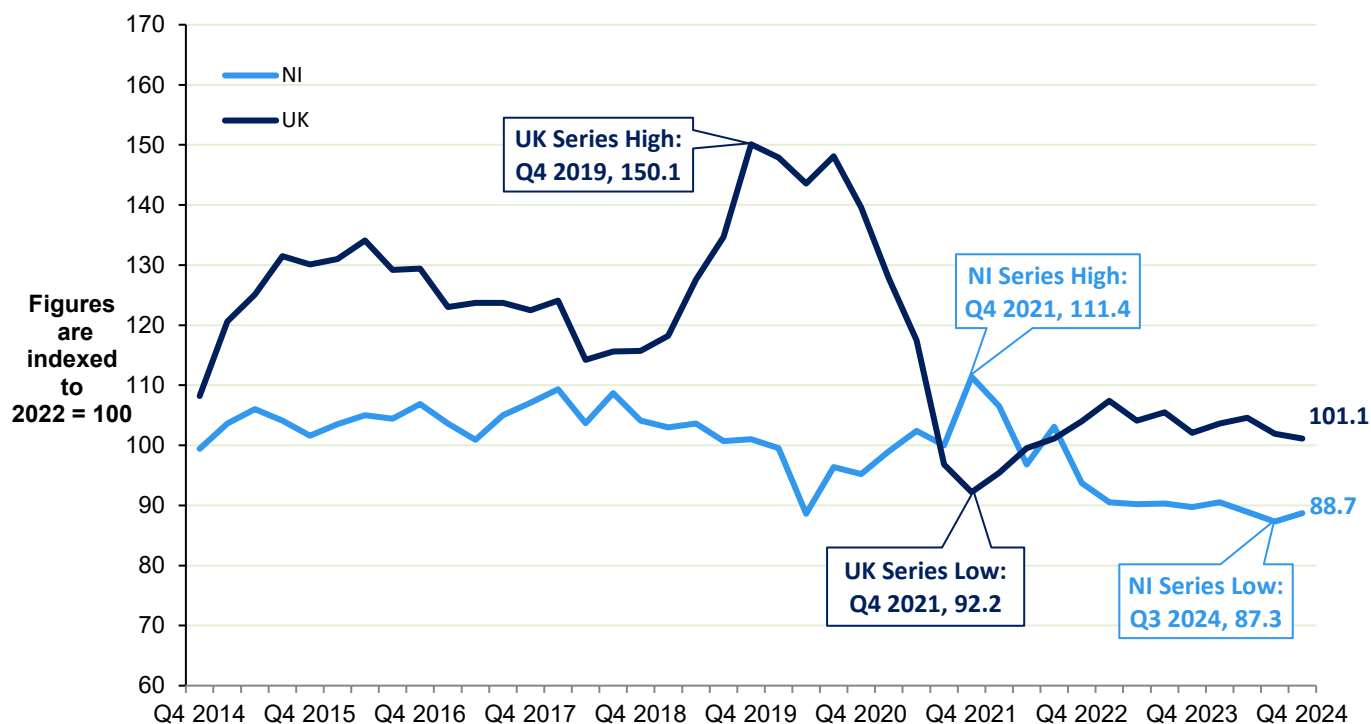
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply (SIC07 Section D) (weight = 8.9% of IOP):

This sector includes the activity of providing electric power, natural gas, steam, hot water and the like through a permanent infrastructure (network) of lines, mains and pipes. Also included is its distribution in industrial parks or residential buildings. Therefore, the operation of electric and gas utilities are included.

Key findings

- The NI seasonally adjusted figures show an increase of 1.7% over the quarter, with decreases of 1.1% over the year and 1.5% on a rolling four quarters basis.
- The seasonally adjusted figures for the UK show decreases of 0.8% over the quarter, 1.0% over the year and 1.9% on a rolling four quarters basis.
- The Quarter 4 2024 NI estimate is 20.3% below the series high recorded in Quarter 4 2021.
- NI output is 1.7% above the series low recorded in Quarter 3 2024.

Figure 2.2 Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply, NI & UK, Q4 2014 – Q4 2024



[Download Q4 2024 Data](#)

The NI index remained relatively stable between Quarter 3 2014 and Quarter 2 2019 while, during the same period, the UK index showed greater variation. NI output has been on a downward trend since the series high seen in Quarter 4 2021. NI output in this sector is 12.1% below the pre-pandemic level of Quarter 4 2019, while UK output is 32.6% below its Quarter 4 2019 level.

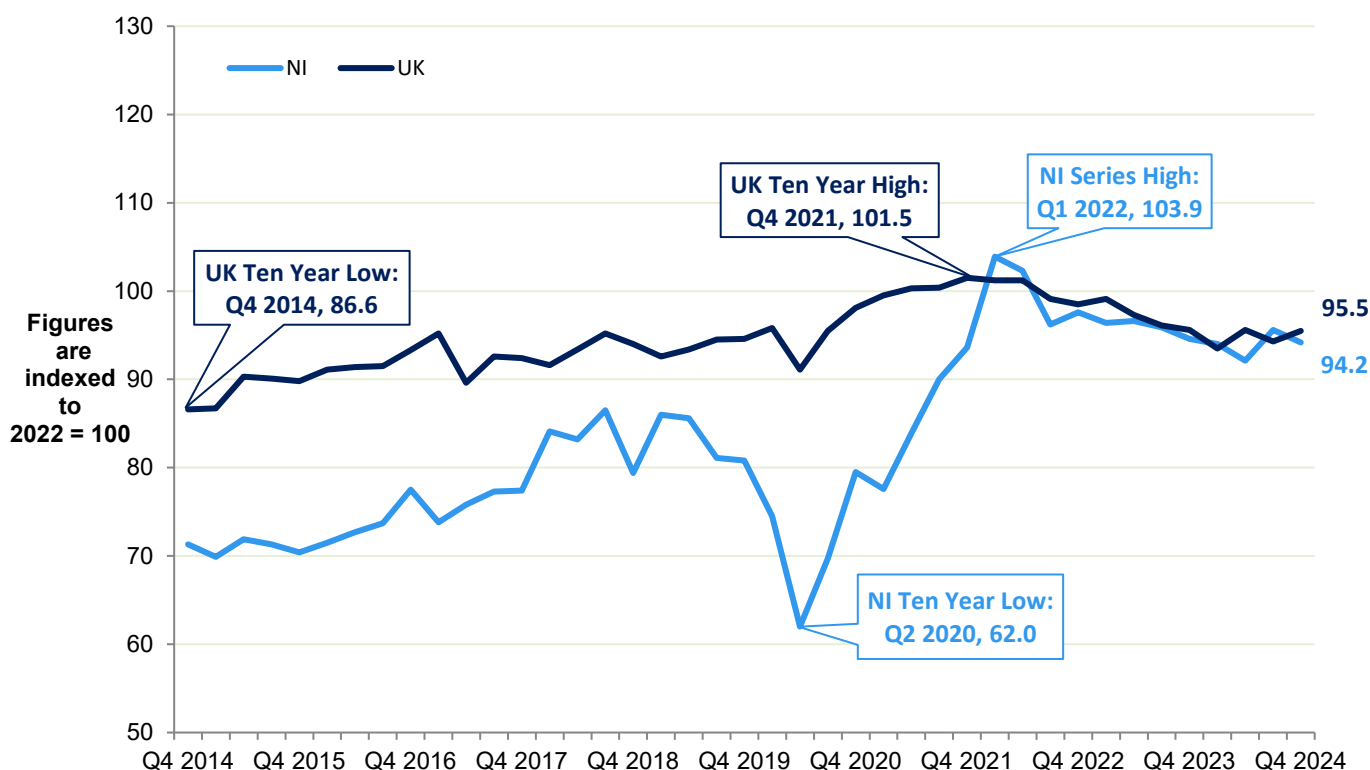
2.3 Water supply, sewerage and waste management (Inc. recycling)

Water supply, sewerage, and waste management (Inc. recycling) (SIC07 Section E) (weight = 8.7% of IOP): This section covers activities related to the management (including collection, treatment and disposal) of various forms of waste, such as solid or non-solid industrial or household waste, as well as contaminated sites. Activities of water supply are also grouped in this section since they are often carried out in connection with, or by units also engaged in, the treatment of sewage.

Key findings

- The NI seasonally adjusted figures decreased by 1.4% over the quarter, 0.4% over the year and 2.0% on a rolling four quarters basis.
- The UK reported an increase of 1.3% over the quarter and decreases of 0.1% over the year and 2.4% on a rolling four quarters basis.
- The NI estimate is 9.3% below the series high seen in Quarter 1 2022.
- NI output is 51.9% above the ten year low recorded in Quarter 2 2020.

Figure 2.3 Water supply, sewerage and waste management (Inc. recycling), NI & UK, Q4 2014 – Q4 2024



[Download Q4 2024 Data](#)

The UK index has generally been outperforming the NI index in this sector since Quarter 4 2014. NI output saw a substantially larger decrease in 2020 than UK output but subsequently recovered to reach a series high in Quarter 1 2022. Since then, NI output has been on a downward trend but remains 16.6% above the pre-pandemic level seen in Quarter 4 2019. The UK series is 1.0% above its Quarter 4 2019 level.

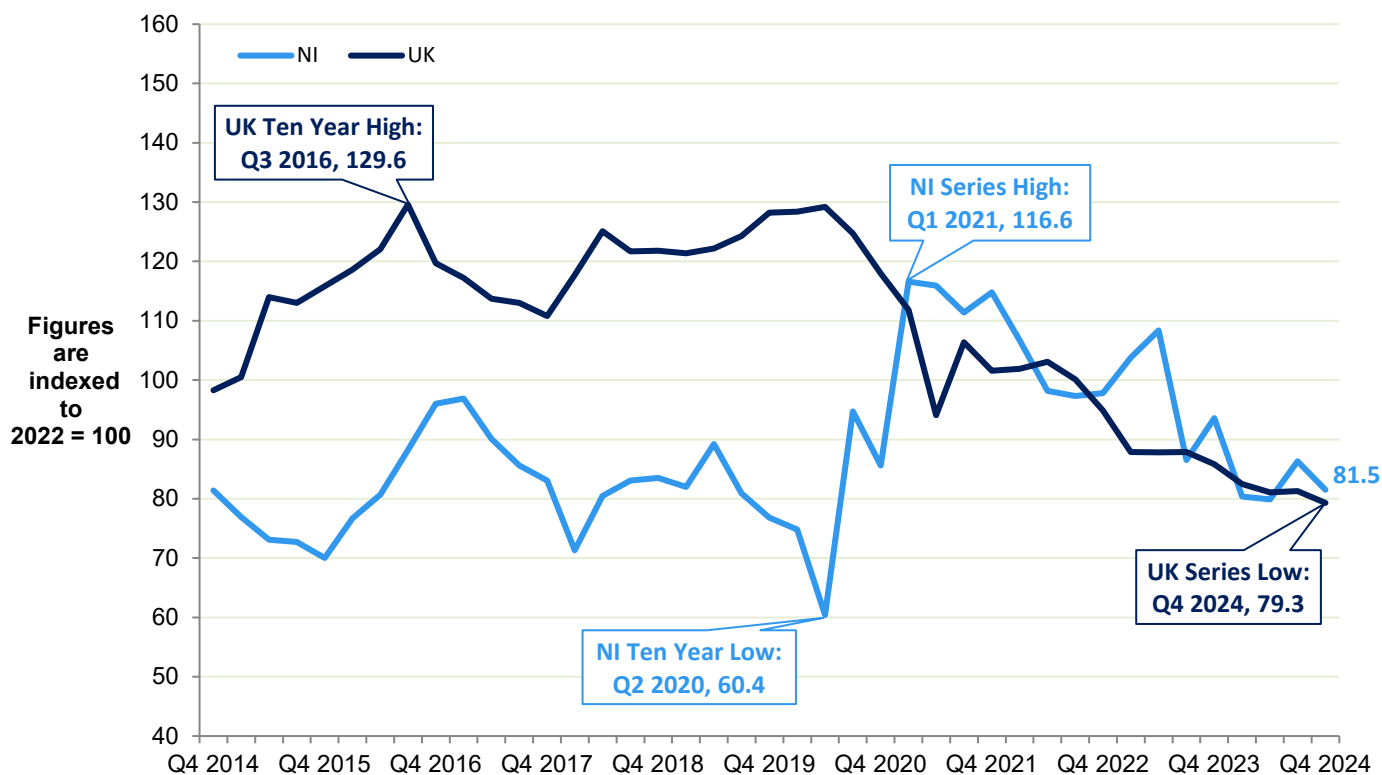
2.4 Mining and quarrying

Mining and quarrying (SIC07 Section B) (weight = 2.3% of IOP): This section covers the extraction of minerals occurring naturally as solids (coal and ores), liquids (petroleum) or gases (natural gas). Extraction can be achieved by different methods such as underground or surface mining, well operation, seabed mining, etc.

Key findings

- The NI seasonally adjusted figures show decreases of 5.6% over the quarter, 13.0% over the year and 16.3% on a rolling four quarters basis.
- The UK seasonally adjusted figures reached a series low in Quarter 4 2024 and showed decreases of 2.5% over the quarter, 7.6% over the year, and 7.2% on a rolling four quarters basis.
- NI output is 30.1% below the series high recorded in Quarter 1 2021.
- NI output is 35.0% above its ten year low (Quarter 2 2020).

Figure 2.4 Mining and quarrying, NI & UK, Q4 2014 – Q4 2024



[Download Q4 2024 Data](#)

Both the NI and the UK indices have shown volatility in the Mining and quarrying sector. Since Quarter 4 2014 the UK has generally performed better than NI in this sector until Quarter 1 2021. In NI this sector is currently 6.1% above the pre-pandemic level reported in Quarter 4 2019, whereas the UK sector is 38.1% below its Quarter 4 2019 level and has dropped again to another series low.

3 Background Notes

Further Information

Data published within this bulletin is available to download from our [website](#) and the new NISRA [Data Portal](#).

Detailed [background information](#) documents and [methodology](#) information have also been published online for users to refer to for more detailed information on the IOP.

Changes to recent releases

Quarter	Change	Detail
Quarter 1 2024	Revised 2019 GVA	Figures in this publication have been weighted using the revised Northern Ireland 2019 GVA which became available on 24 April 2024.
Quarter 3 2024	Updated 2022 GVA Reference Year	The UK National Accounts, The Blue Book: 2024 was published on 31 October 2024. For the last three years the reference year and base year have remained at 2019 due to the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on the economy. In line with Blue Book 2024 we have moved the base year on to 2022 as part of our production process. Because the base year has been moved forward over a longer time period than usual, the revisions to volume estimates as a result of changing base years may be larger than usual.

Next publication

The next bulletin is due to be published on 12 June 2025.

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