



STATISTICAL PRESS RELEASE

15 July 2009

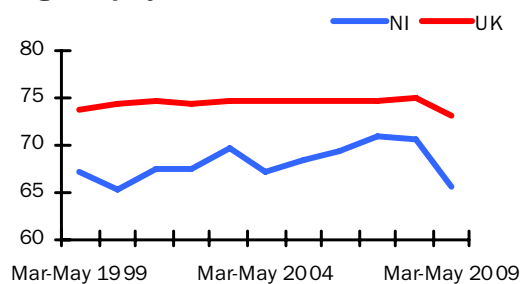
Coverage

Northern Ireland, unless otherwise stated

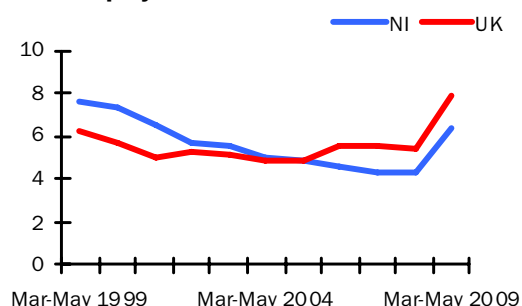
Theme

Labour Market

**Seasonally Adjusted Working
Age Employment Rate**



**Seasonally Adjusted
Unemployment Rate**



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Labour Market Statistics - July 2009

Seasonally adjusted Labour Force Survey (LFS) data for Northern Ireland for the period March - May 2009 indicated an increase in the unemployment and economic inactivity rates, whereas there was a fall in the employment rate. The June increase in the Claimant Count was the sixteenth consecutive monthly increase since February 2008. However, it was the smallest increase in the last eight months.

In the latest reference period, the working age employment rate was estimated at 65.5%, down 1.8 percentage points over the quarter.

The unemployment rate was 6.3%, up 0.5 percentage points over the quarter and 2.1 percentage points over the year. However, the NI rate remained below the UK rate of 7.6% and was also lower than the European Union (8.6%) and Republic of Ireland (11.1%) rates for April 2009.

The working age economic inactivity rate increased by 1.5 percentage points over the quarter and by 3.8 percentage points over the year to 30.0%. The NI working age economic inactivity rate (30.0%) remained the highest of the UK regions (UK rate was 20.9%).

The LFS is a sample survey with an associated degree of sampling error (see table 1 overleaf for details).

The more recent claimant count measure for June was 49,500, up 1,600 over the month and up 23,600 over the year. This represented a year on year percentage increase of 91.1%. The increase last month was 1,800.

There were 175 confirmed redundancies in June 2009, the lowest level in the last ten months. However, the total number of confirmed redundancies in the last twelve months was 4,573, up 185% from the previous year (1,602).

The total number of employee jobs in Northern Ireland at March 2009 was 715,050 (Quarterly Employment Survey), down 6,220 jobs (-0.9%) over the quarter and 19,030 jobs (-2.6%) over the year.

NI seasonally adjusted data

	Reference period	Levels	Rates (%)	Levels	Rates (pps)
				Change on quarter	
Employment ¹	Mar-May 2009	744,000	65.5%	-14,000	-1.8
Unemployment ²	Mar-May 2009	50,000	6.3%	4,000	0.5
Economically Active ¹	Mar-May 2009	794,000	70.0%	-10,000	-1.5
Economically Inactive ¹	Mar-May 2009	586,000	30.0%	14,000	1.5
Employee Jobs ³	Mar 09	715,050	-	-6,220	-
				Change on month	
Claimant Count ⁴	June 09	49,500	5.7%	+1,600	0.2
Redundancies ⁵	June 09	175	-	-	-

For footnotes, see 'Definitions' section (back page)

Labour Market

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Seasonally adjusted Labour Force Survey (LFS) data for Northern Ireland for the period March - May 2009 estimated increases over the quarter in the number of unemployed and economically inactive persons, while there was a decrease in the number of employed. The seasonally adjusted claimant count in June 2009 increased by 1,600 over the month to 49,500 and the Department was notified of 606 proposed redundancies in the latest reference period and 175 confirmed redundancies in June 2009.

Employment

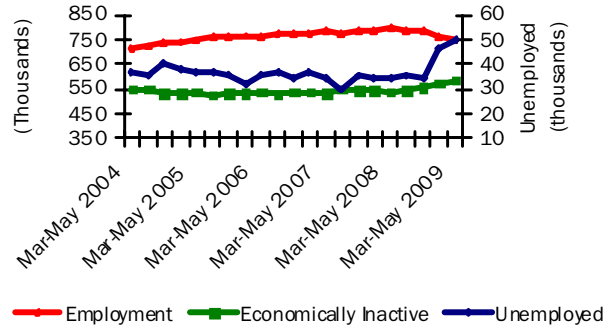
The number of persons in employment in the period March - May 2009 was estimated at 744,000. This estimate represented a fall of 14,000 over the quarter and a decrease of 51,000 over the year. This was the largest annual decrease since the quarterly series began in 1992. The working age employment rate was estimated at 65.5%, down 1.8 percentage points over the quarter and 5.1 percentage points over the year. NI's working age employment rate remained well below the UK average (72.9%) and was the lowest of the UK regions.

Unemployment

The unemployment rate for the period March - May 2009 was estimated at 6.3%. The latest figure showed an increase of 0.5 percentage points over the quarter and 2.1 percentage points over the year. The number of unemployed persons was estimated at 50,000, up 4,000 over the quarter and 16,000 over the year.

Unadjusted figures show that 28.0% of the unemployed have been unemployed for 1 year or more – a decrease of 1.9 percentage points over the year. They also estimate the unemployment

Seasonally Adjusted Labour Market Summary of Northern Ireland
Figure 1



rate for 18-24 year olds at 16.9% – an increase of 5.7 percentage points over the year.

Economically Inactive

The seasonally adjusted number of economically inactive persons in the period March - May 2009 was estimated at 586,000. This figure has increased by 14,000 over the quarter and by 49,000 over the year.

The working age economic inactivity rate for NI stands at 30.0%. This is significantly higher than the UK average rate (20.9%) and is the highest of the 12 UK regions.

Unadjusted figures show that while 91% of the inactive do not want work, the remaining 9% want employment but do not satisfy the full ILO job search criteria (by actively seeking work and being available to start a job). The number of economically inactive persons that want a job (52,000) is similar to the number

Northern Ireland Labour Market Summary (seasonally adjusted)

Table 1

	Period	Estimate	Sampling Variability of estimate	Change over year	Sampling Variability of change
Employment	Mar-May 2009	744,000	+/-22,000	-51,000	+/-27,000
Unemployment	Mar-May 2009	50,000	+/-9,000	16,000	+/-11,000
Economically inactive	Mar-May 2009	586,000	+/-20,000	49,000	+/-25,000
Unemployment rate	Mar-May 2009	6.3%	+/-1.2pps	2.1pps	+/-1.5pps
Employment rate ¹	Mar-May 2009	65.5%	+/-1.8pps	-5.1pps	+/-2.2pps
Economic inactivity rate ¹	Mar-May 2009	30.0%	+/-1.7pps	3.8pps	+/-2.1pps
Claimant Count	June 2009	49,500		23,600	

Note: pps = percentage points, ¹Rates based on working age population (16-59/64), see Definitions for details.

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officially classified as unemployed.

Estimates from the LFS have an associated degree of statistical error as they are based on a sample of the population. The annual changes for the main LFS categories of employment, unemployment and economic inactivity were tested for statistical significance. The results showed that the annual change in each of these categories was statistically significant i.e. the recorded change exceeded the variability expected from a sample survey of this size and was likely to reflect a real change (see table 1 and Section 9 for further details).

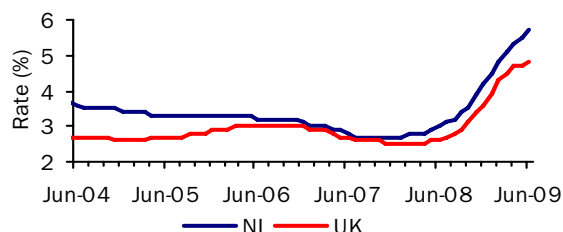
Regional

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in NI (6.3%) remained below the UK average rate (7.6%) and was the equal third lowest rate among the UK regions. The NI rate also compared to the European Union rate of 8.6% and the Republic of Ireland rate of 11.1% for April 2009.

Claimant Count

The more recent seasonally adjusted claimant count increased by 1,600 over the month to June 2009 to 49,500 (5.7% of the workforce). The monthly increase was similar to the previous monthly increase (1,800) and was the smallest increase in the last eight months. The percentage increase over the month to June in Northern Ireland (3.3%) was higher than the equivalent UK increase (1.5%). There has been an increase of 91.1% (23,600) since June 2008. This yearly increase was slightly larger than that recorded for the UK (85.0%). Over the last ten months the rise in the unemployment claimant count has been at least 0.2 percentage points each month and currently stands at 5.7% of the workforce. This compares to the UK rate of 4.8%. This month's increase is the sixteenth consecutive monthly increase since the minimum level of 23,500 in February 2008 (and also reached in November 2007).

**Seasonally Adjusted Claimant Count
Monthly Rates
Figure 2**



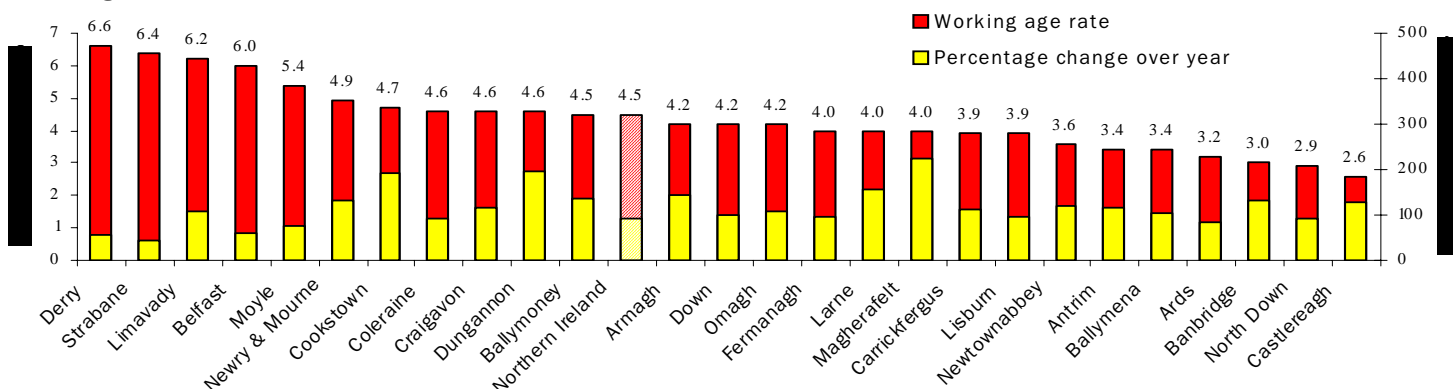
Claimant count rates for District Council Areas

Figure 3 (unadjusted numbers as a percentage of the resident working age population) show that the highest rates at June 2009 were in Derry (6.6%), Strabane (6.4%) and Limavady (6.2%). Those that showed the highest percentage increase in levels over the year to June 2009 were Magherafelt (222.4%), Dungannon (194.9%) and Cookstown (190.8%), but their unemployment rates were still in the region of the Northern Ireland rate (4.5%).

Employment and Training Measures

The Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) provides a number of services and programmes to help jobseekers find work. In September 2008 Steps to Work, the Department's new flexible approach to helping people to find work, was introduced in Northern Ireland and subsumes the main New Deal programmes. Overall, there has been an increase of 101.8% (3,512 persons) to 6,962 over the year to June 2009 in the number of those claimants who are eligible for mandatory participation on Steps to Work. However anyone over 18 years old (or lone parents aged 16 years old or over) who is not working (or working less than 16 hours each week) is eligible. New Deal statistics are currently accessible via the DEL web link below - Steps to Work statistics will be published when data is available. www.delni.gov.uk/index/statistics-and-research/labour-market/new-deal-statistics.htm

**Unadjusted Claimant Count Rates By District Council Area
Figure 3**



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Redundancies

The Department was notified of 606 proposed redundancies over the period mid June 2009 to mid July 2009. This compares to 59 proposed redundancies notified to the Department in the previous monthly period.

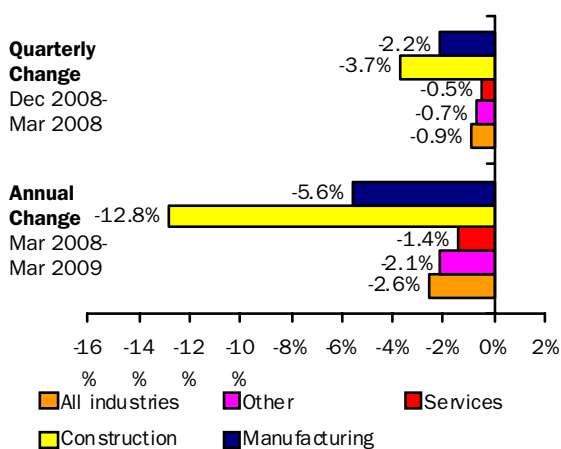
There were 175 confirmed redundancies in the month of June (Figure 5). Over the twelve monthly period there were a total of 4,573 confirmed redundancies, an increase of 185% from the previous year (1,602). The highest number of confirmed redundancies took place in Belfast District Council area which had 19.3% (882) of all redundancies over the year. Over the twelve monthly period there were a total of 5,884 proposed redundancies, an increase of 94% from the previous year (3,032). Since the start of 2009 to mid July there were a total of 3,918 proposed redundancies. Note that since all proposed redundancies do not actually take place, the confirmed total provides a better indication of real job losses.

Quarterly Employment Survey (QES)

The QES provides an estimate of the number of jobs (rather than persons in employment) and is the preferred measure of change in employee jobs. The estimated seasonally adjusted employee jobs total in Northern Ireland at March 2009 was 715,050. This represents a decrease of 6,220 over the quarter and a decrease of 19,030 over the year.

Annual and Quarterly changes in employee jobs (seasonally adjusted)

Figure 4

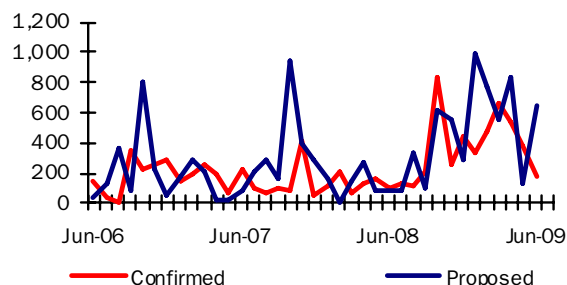


The seasonally adjusted quarterly change consisted of decreases in the Service sector (-2,770), Manufacturing (-1,790) and Construction (-1,520) sectors.

Confirmed and Proposed Redundancies

June 06 - June 09

Figure 5

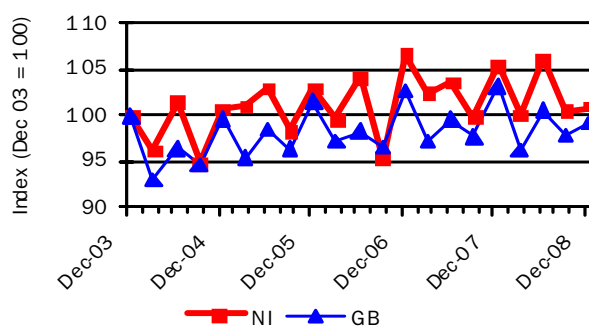


Hours Worked

The total workforce hours worked per week in Northern Ireland in December 2008 was estimated at 26.0 million hours, representing a decrease of 4.4% over the year (similar to the decrease experienced in GB of 3.9%). Between December 2003 and December 2008, NI's total workforce hours worked per week increased marginally by 0.8%. This compared with a 0.9% decrease in GB (Figure 6). In the three months to April 2009, the average actual weekly hours worked in NI was 33.8 hours, compared with 32.0 hours in the UK.

Index of total workforce hours worked per week, NI & GB

Figure 6



Source: Employment, Earnings and Productivity Division, ONS

Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE)

Earnings results for April 2008, which were released on 14th November 2008, show that yearly growth in median gross weekly earnings for all employees (i.e. both full- and part-time) in NI was 5.1% (to £346.5) compared to 3.3% in the UK (to £388.4). NI full-time employees' gross weekly earnings in April 2008 were £417.6, which was approximately 87% of the figure in the UK (£478.6). NI full-time earnings increased by 4.3% over the period, which was relatively similar to the increase in the UK (4.6%).

Full-time private sector gross weekly earnings in NI were £377.1, or 82.0% of the figure in the UK (compared to 82.7% in April 2007), reflecting a slight widening of the NI/UK private sector pay gap.

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Labour Market Structure – Seasonally adjusted
Table 2

(Thousands)

	Total aged 16 and over	Total persons of working age 16-59/64	All aged 16+					All working age 16-59/64	
			Total economically active	Total in employment	Unemployed	Economically inactive	Unemployment rate (%)	Activity rate 16-59/64 (%)	Employment rate (%) 16-59/64
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
ALL PERSONS									
Mar-May 2006	1,334	1,065	798	762	36	537	4.5%	72.6%	69.3%
Mar -May 2007	1,352	1,078	824	789	34	528	4.2%	73.9%	70.8%
Mar -May 2008	1,367	1,086	829	795	34	537	4.1%	73.8%	70.6%
Jun – Aug 2008	1,370	1,088	823	788	35	547	4.3%	73.3%	70.1%
Sep-Nov 2008	1,373	1,089	817	783	34	556	4.2%	72.8%	69.7%
Dec-Feb 2009	1,377	1,091	804	758	46	573	5.7%	71.5%	67.3%
Mar-May 2009	1,380	1,093	794	744	50	586	6.3%	70.0%	65.5%
Change on Quarter	3	2	-10	-14	4	14	0.5	-1.5	-1.8
Change on Year	13	7	-35	-51	16	49	2.1	-3.8	-5.1
MALES									
Mar-May 2006	645	549	439	414	25	206	5.6%	78.3%	73.8%
Mar -May 2007	654	555	449	428	20	206	4.6%	79.0%	75.3%
Mar -May 2008	661	560	454	430	24	208	5.3%	79.4%	75.1%
Jun – Aug 2008	663	560	450	426	24	213	5.3%	78.6%	74.3%
Sep-Nov 2008	665	561	448	422	27	217	5.9%	78.2%	73.5%
Dec-Feb 2009	667	562	438	406	32	229	7.3%	76.2%	70.5%
Mar-May 2009	669	563	434	399	35	234	8.1%	75.1%	68.9%
FEMALES									
Mar-May 2006	689	516	358	348	11	330	3.0%	66.5%	64.4%
Mar -May 2007	698	522	375	361	14	323	3.7%	68.6%	66.0%
Mar -May 2008	705	526	376	365	10	329	2.7%	67.7%	65.8%
Jun – Aug 2008	707	527	373	362	11	334	3.0%	67.6%	65.5%
Sep-Nov 2008	708	528	369	361	8	339	2.1%	67.0%	65.6%
Dec-Feb 2009	710	529	366	352	14	344	3.8%	66.5%	64.0%
Mar-May 2009	711	530	360	345	15	352	4.1%	64.6%	61.9%

Relationship between columns: A=C+F; C=D+E; G=E/C, H=economically active of working age/total population of working age, I=in employment of working age/total population of working age, * **A and B are underlying population estimates and are therefore not seasonally adjusted.** Figures may not sum due to rounding.

Figures for 2006 onwards have been revised to incorporate the latest mid year population estimates.

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DEFINITIONS

Notes to Table on Front Page

pps=percentage points

¹ Levels for all persons aged 16 and over, rates for working age (16-59 females, 16-64 males)

² People aged 16 and over. Unemployment rate=total unemployed as a proportion of the economically active

³ Quarterly Employment Survey

⁴ Seasonally adjusted. Rates are as a percentage of the total workforce.

⁵ Confirmed redundancies in the calendar month.

ILO Definition

The definition of unemployment used in the Labour Force Survey (LFS) is in accordance with that promulgated by the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The ILO unemployed include 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.

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).

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. The key time series data also incorporates the latest mid year population estimates, however the more disaggregated 'microdata' has yet to be re-weighted to these totals (see link below for further details).

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 table 1 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 unadjusted for seasonality, with the relevant sampling errors produced 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 in the main LFS categories of employment, unemployment and economic inactivity were all statistically significant at the 95% level in March – May 2009.

Please see attached link for further LFS notes and definitions.

[Labour Force Survey Notes and Definitions](#)

Claimant Count Definition

Claimant Count figures are derived from records of claimants held at Job Benefit Offices. The term 'claimants' in the claimant count is used to include those who claim Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) and National Insurance credits. The figures include severely disabled claimants, but exclude students seeking vacation work and the temporarily stopped. The Claimant Count is a very up-to-date measure of those eligible to claim a specific unemployment related benefit and data are available for a range of geographical sub-regions (e.g. District Council Areas, Parliamentary Constituency Areas, Travel-to-Work Areas and Wards). It also provides seasonally adjusted and unadjusted data and as a result is a useful measure for examining both short-term and long-term trends.

[Background Notes to the Quarterly Employment Survey \(QES\)](#)

[Definitions for the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings ASHE](#)

For Further Information:

AN ELECTRONIC VERSION OF THE LABOUR MARKET REPORT WITH ASSOCIATED HYPERLINKS IS AVAILABLE ON THE HOME PAGE OF THE BRANCH WEBSITE AT:

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