



# **NORTHERN IRELAND LABOUR FORCE SURVEY: JULY - SEPTEMBER 2008**

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This report provides a detailed analysis of the most recent (July - September 2008) quarterly information from the Northern Ireland Labour Force Survey. To allow detailed analysis most of the information used in the report is not seasonally adjusted unless otherwise stated for regional comparison purposes. The figures show:

- In Northern Ireland there are an estimated 764,000 persons of working age in employment. This figure has increased by 7.6% (54,000 persons) during the last five years.
- The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in NI was estimated at 4.1%. This has fallen slightly (by 0.1 percentage points) from the estimate for the previous quarter, but is up 0.2 percentage points from the previous year. It remains below the UK rate (5.8%) and is the lowest among the UK regions.
- The seasonally adjusted economic inactivity rate for all working age persons (26.9%) has fallen in NI over the past five years (27.7% in 2003). However, it remains the highest of all the UK regions (the UK average rate is 20.9%).
- A higher proportion of economically inactive persons of working age in NI identify sickness or disability (31%) as their main reason for not wanting work, compared to the UK (26%). NI also has a higher percentage of economically inactive persons of working age who cite being a student (27%) as their reason for not wanting work, compared to the UK (24%). This is partly a reflection of the younger population in NI.
- At April – June 2008, there were 696,000 private households in Northern Ireland with an average of 2.51 persons per household (2.36 persons per household in the UK). An estimated 17.4% of NI working age households were workless, compared to 16.1% in the UK



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# Executive Summary

# 1

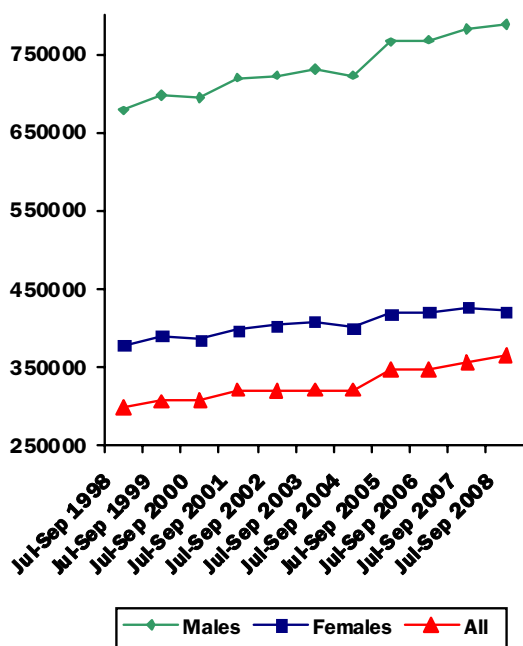
## Introduction

The following estimates are based on the latest Labour Force Survey (LFS) July - September 2008 results. The LFS is a sample survey carried out by interviewing individuals in private households about their personal circumstances and work. It is the biggest regular household survey in Northern Ireland (NI) and provides a rich source of information on the labour force using internationally agreed concepts and definitions.

## Employment

In NI there are an estimated 764,000 persons of working-age in employment. This figure is up 0.6% (5,000 persons) since the last year and has increased by 7.6% (54,000 persons) from the estimate for five years ago. However, the seasonally adjusted working-age employment rate (70.1%) for NI remains the lowest of all the UK regions and is 4.3 percentage points below the UK rate of 74.4% (the South East region at 79.0% has the highest rate).

**Employment (16+) 1998-2008**



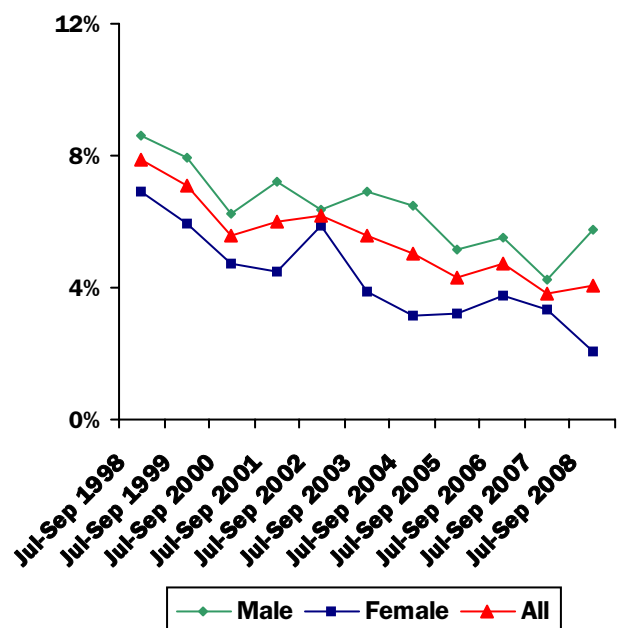
Both male and female employment levels have been increasing during the last ten years and the gap between male and female levels has narrowed slightly over the period. The difference between the working age employment rate of males and females is currently estimated at 7.2 percentage points, compared to an 14.4 percentage point difference 5 years ago.

Almost two-fifths (37%) of female employees work part-time compared to 9% of males. (This is similar to the figures of 38% for females and 6% for males five years ago.) Only 6% of females in employment are self-employed compared with 22% of males (no change from 5 years ago).

## Unemployment

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in NI was 4.1%. This has fallen slightly (by 0.1 percentage points) from the estimate for the previous quarter, but is up 0.2 percentage points from the previous year. It is lower than the rate for the UK (5.8%) and is the lowest rate of all the UK regions.

**Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rate (16+) 1998-2008**

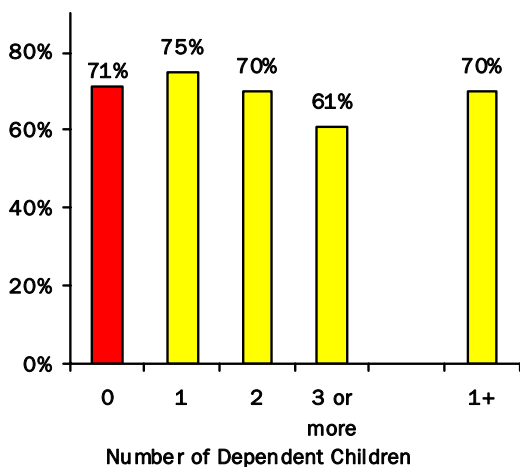


The unadjusted male unemployment rate (5.8%) has fallen by 1.1 percentage points during the last five years whilst the female rate (2.6%) has fallen by 1.8 percentage points during the same period. The unadjusted male unemployment rate of 5.8% is 3.2 percentage points above the female unemployment rate, compared to a 2.5 percentage point difference in the unemployment rates five years ago. Almost two fifths of unemployed men (39%) are long-term unemployed, which is similar to the proportion five years ago (41%).

**Economic Activity**

There are an estimated 799,000 persons of working age economically active in NI at July - September 2008, up 44,000 from five years ago. The seasonally adjusted working age economic activity rate (73.1%) for NI is the lowest across the UK regions and is 6.0 percentage points below the UK rate of 79.1%. At 78.1% the working age economic activity rate for males is approximately 10 percentage points higher than that for females (68.1%). The current 10 percentage point differential between the activity rates of males and females has narrowed from a 17 percentage point gap 5 years ago.

**Unseasonally adjusted Working Age Female Economic Activity Rates by Number of Dependent Children,**

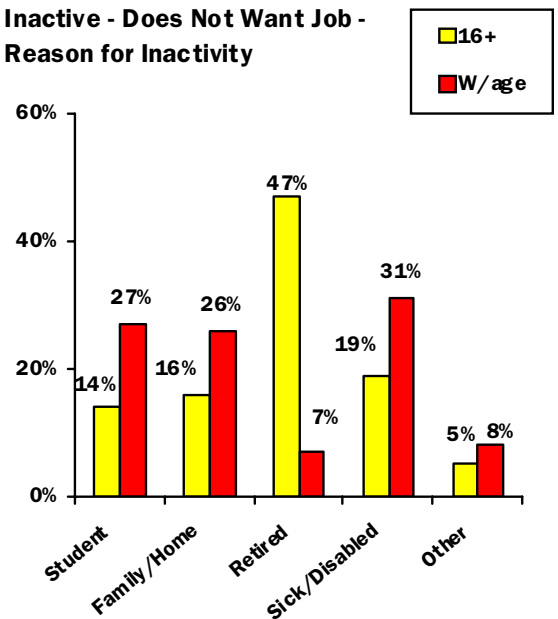


The working age economic activity rate fell from 75% for females with 1 dependent child to 61% for those with 3 or more. An estimated 70% of females of working age with dependent children under 16 were economically active.

**Economic Inactivity**

At July - September 2008 there were 550,000 persons aged 16 and over who were economically inactive in NI, with a resulting economic inactivity rate of 40% for this age group. Around 6% of these economically inactive persons (31,000) wanted a job, but did not satisfy the criteria of being available for work and actively seeking work to be classified as unemployed. The importance of this grouping is emphasised when we consider that there are almost as many economically inactive persons who want a job as there are classified as unemployed (36,000).

**Inactive - Does Not Want Job - Reason for Inactivity**



The largest category of the economically inactive 16+ population that do not want a job were retired persons (47%). However, for those of working age the largest economically inactive category were those with sickness or disability (31%). NI has a higher proportion of those who identify sickness or disability (31%) as the main reason for not wanting work, compared to the UK (26%). NI also has a higher percentage of economically inactive of working age that do not want a job who are students (27%) compared to the UK (24%) and this is partly a reflection of the younger population in NI.

### **Education and Training**

In July - September 2008 almost two-fifths (37%) of economically inactive persons had no formal qualifications. Only 11% of the economically inactive had degree level or other higher qualifications compared to 32% of the economically active. Of employees of working age, 7% had undergone job-related education or training in the last 4 weeks.

### **Disabled Persons in the Labour Market**

Almost one in five persons (19%) of working age in NI described themselves as having a current long-term disability, matching the figure of 19% for the UK as a whole. Approximately 61% of working age persons with a disability are economically inactive compared to 19% of those without disabilities. Furthermore under two fifths (36%) of disabled persons are in employment compared to 78% of non-disabled persons.

### **Special Feature: Households**

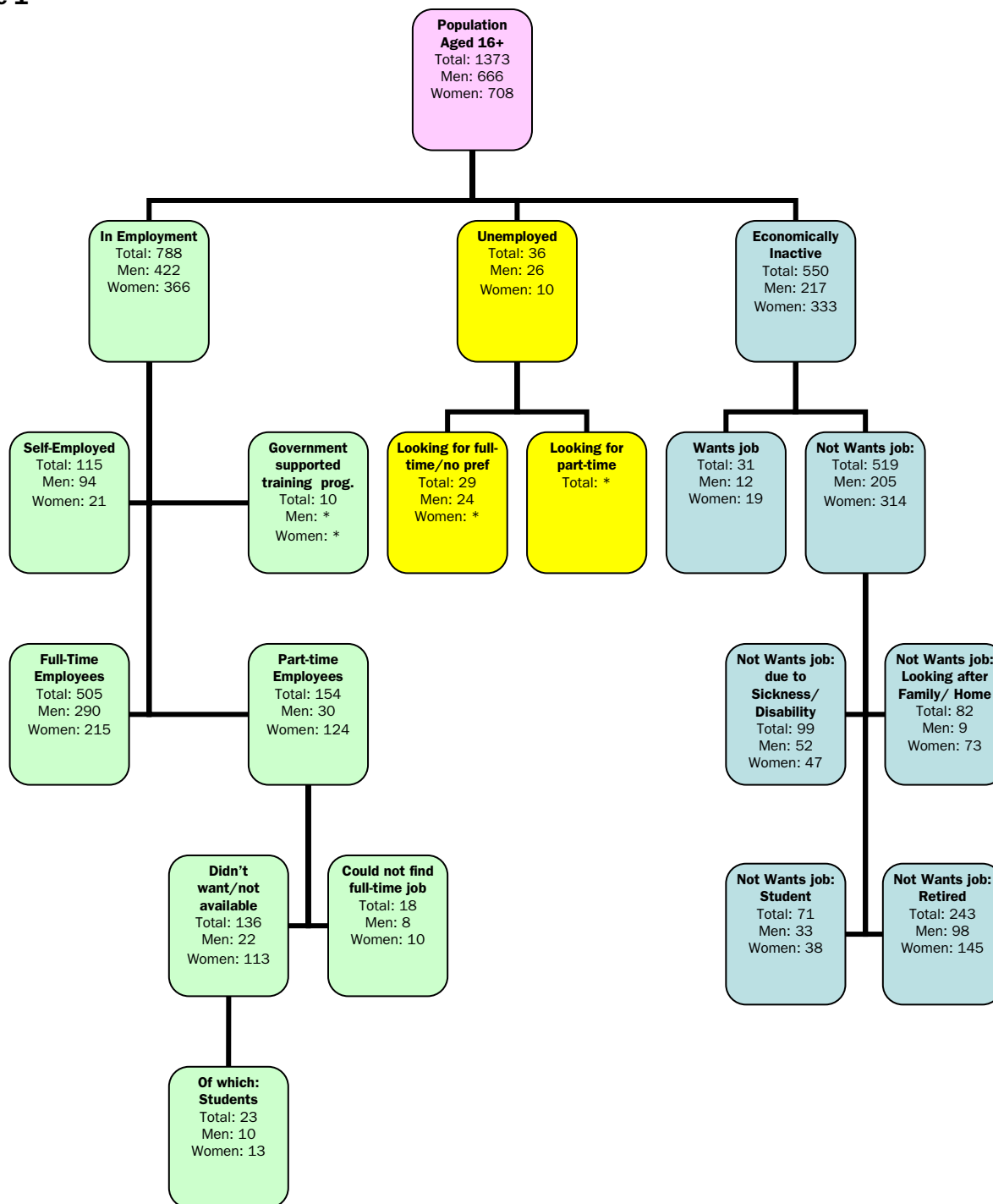
At April – June 2008 NI had an average of 2.51 persons per private household compared to a UK average of 2.36 persons per household. NI (2.51) and London (2.52) were the regions with the highest number of persons per household. In terms of household types; couples with children accounted for the largest proportion (33.1%) of NI households, whereas one person households (29.1%) were the most common for the UK as a whole. There were also proportionally more lone parent households in NI than in the UK (11.9% compared with 10.1%).

Households were also classified according to the economic activity of their members. Half of NI households are classified as workrich households (where all persons are in employment). In contrast, 17.4% of NI households were workless.

# Overall Labour Market Structure

## 2

Overall Labour Market Structure (16+ Population), July - September 2008  
Figure 1



**Notes:**

This chart illustrates the structure of the private household population in relation to the key ILO defined categories of in employment, unemployed and economically inactive (see Technical Notes for definitions).

\* Too small for a reliable estimate (this explains why a gender split for some categories is omitted).

- **A higher proportion of men than women are in economically active.**

Table 1 and Figure 2 summarise the economic activity of the population in Northern Ireland (NI). It shows that 60% of LFS respondents aged 16 and over, were economically active (either in employment or seeking work). However, results for males and females differ significantly with 67% of males compared to 53% of females falling into this category.

- **A higher proportion of men than women are unemployed.**

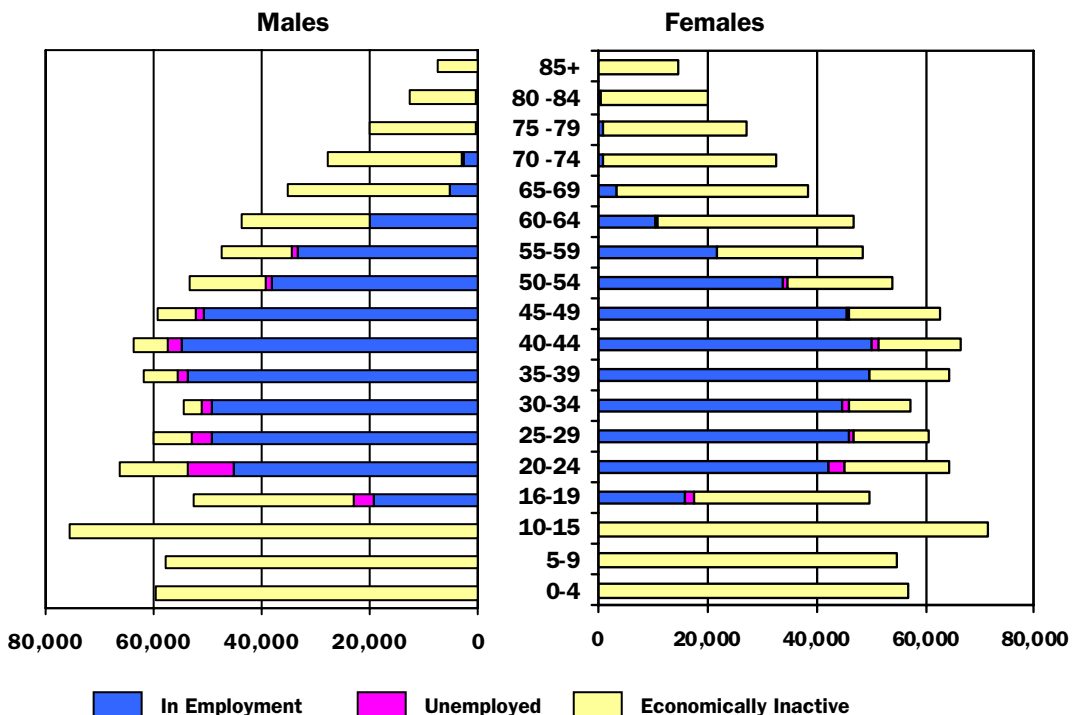
Overall, 3% of the population aged 16 and over are unemployed, however, again this differs for men and women – 4% of males are unemployed compared to 1% of females. In addition, 63% of the male population are in employment compared to 52% of the female population.

**Private Household Population (16+) by Economic Status, July - September 2008**  
**Table 1**

	Male	Female	All persons
Economically active	67%	53%	60%
In employment	63%	52%	57%
Unemployed	4%	1%	3%
Economically inactive	33%	47%	40%
Total household population	100% (666,000)	100% (708,000)	100% (1,373,000)

Percentages may not sum due to rounding.

**NI population structure by age, sex and economic activity**  
**Figure 2**



# Economically Active

# 3

People aged 16 and over who are in employment or unemployed are classified as economically active. In July - September 2008 there were 823,000 economically active people in NI.

**July - September 2008**

**Economically active-male:  
448,000 (67%)**

**Economically active-female:  
375,000 (53%)**

**Economically active-all persons:  
823,000 (60%)**

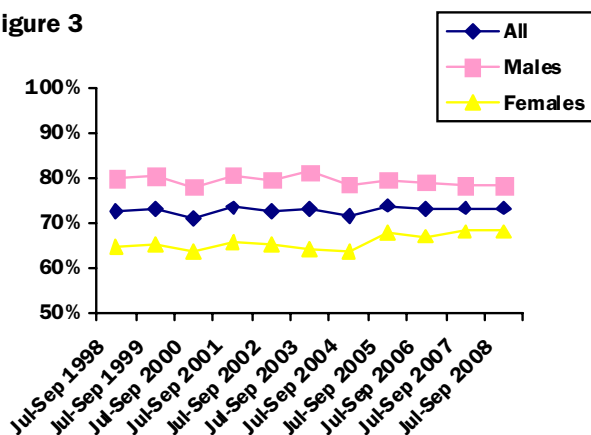
**16+ population**

- **The working-age economic activity rate for males is 10 percentage points higher than that for females.**

The economic activity rate is the proportion of persons in any specified age group who are economically active. The economic activity rate for persons of working-age was higher for males (78%) than females (68%) for July - September 2008. Figure 3 shows the economic activity rates for males and females of working-age from July-September 1998 to July-September 2008. The current 10 percentage point differential between the activity rates of males and females has narrowed from a 15 percentage point gap 10 years ago.

## Economic Activity Rates (Working-age), 1995 - 2008

Figure 3



## Economic Activity Rates (Working-age), 2003 - 2008

Table 2

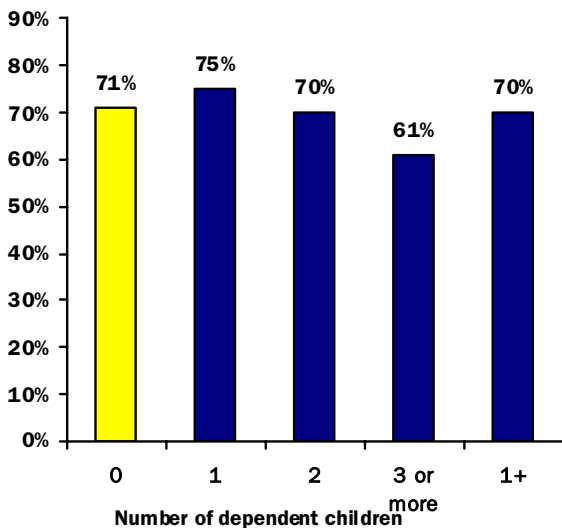
	Economic Activity Rates		
	Male	Female	All
July - September 2003	81.2%	64.1%	72.9%
July - September 2004	78.5%	63.6%	71.3%
July - September 2005	79.5%	67.6%	73.7%
July - September 2006	79.0%	66.9%	73.1%
July - September 2007	78.1%	68.0%	73.2%
October - December 2007	78.3%	66.8%	72.7%
January - March 2008	79.0%	67.1%	73.2%
April - June 2008	78.9%	67.1%	73.2%
July - September 2008	78.1%	68.1%	73.3%

The working age economic activity rate gap between males and females has been historically larger for NI than for the UK (in July - September 2003 the gap in NI was 17.2 percentage points, compared to an 11.3 percentage point difference in the UK). By July - September 2008 the NI differential had narrowed to 10.1 percentage points, only slightly higher than the equivalent UK figure (9.7 percentage points).

- **Women with 3+ dependent children have a 10 percentage point lower economic activity rate than those without dependent children.**

Economic activity rates are affected by the presence of dependent children aged under 16. This impact has different consequences for the male and female heads of family units<sup>1</sup>. Males with dependent children had a higher economic activity rate (92%) than those without (75%), whereas the opposite is true for females as those with dependent children have a lower economic activity rate (70%) than those without (71%). This compares to a UK activity rate of 69% for women with dependent children and 80% for those without. Having more than two dependent children resulted in a considerably lower economic activity rate (61%) for females as shown in Figure 4.

**Economic Activity Rates (Working age) for Females by Number of Dependent Children, July - September 2008**  
Figure 4

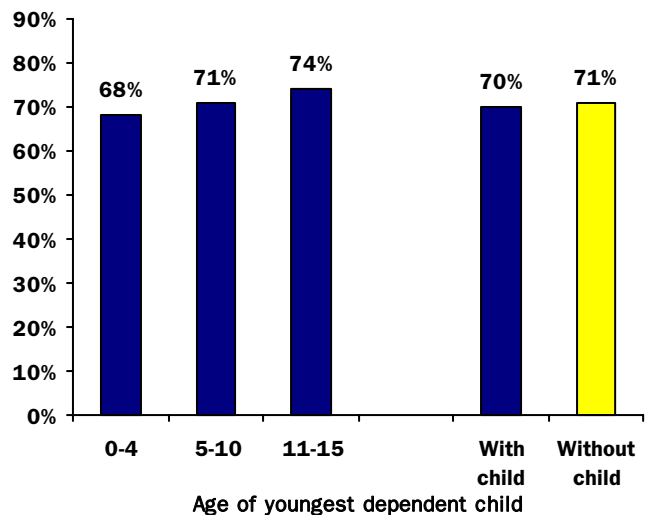


<sup>1</sup> The analysis on the effect of dependent children (under 16) on the economic activity rates of males/females is based on the head or partner of the head of family unit only. It does not include family members who are of working age but who do not have parental responsibilities such as an elder sibling.

- **Economic activity rates of the female head of family were also affected by the age of the youngest dependent child.**

Economic activity rates for female heads of family were found to be influenced by the age of the youngest dependent child. When the youngest dependent child was aged 0-4 the activity rate (68%) was 6 percentage points lower than the rate for the 11-15 (74%) age group.

**Economic Activity Rates for Females by Age of Youngest Dependent Child, April - June 2008**  
Figure 5



The household dataset affords the opportunity to examine the economic activity of lone parents with dependent children. At April – June 2008 there were an estimated 49,000 female lone parents of working age; the equivalent number for males was too small for reliable quotation. Almost three-fifths of these female lone parents (59%) were economically active while the remainder (41%) were classified as economically inactive.

# In Employment

## 4

People in employment are defined as those aged 16 and over who did at least one hour's paid work in the reference week (either as an employee or self-employed); those who had a job which they were temporarily away from (on holiday for example); those participating in government employment or training programmes; and those doing unpaid family work.

### July - September 2008

**In employment-male:**

**422,000 (63%)**

**In employment-female:**

**366,000 (52%)**

**In employment-all persons:**

**788,000 (57%)**

**16+ population**

- **There were 764,000 persons of working-age in employment in NI, an increase of approximately 54,000 in the last five years.**

Table 4 shows estimates of employment rates over a five-year period from July - September 2003 to July - September 2008 and provides a comparison of rates over the last four quarters. At July - September 2008 there were 764,000 persons of working-age in employment and the corresponding working-age employment rate was estimated at 70.0%. This compares with 710,000 persons of working age in employment five years ago and equates to an increase of 1.5 percentage points in the employment rate.

### Employment Rates and Numbers (Working age), 2003 – 2008

Table 4

	Employment rate	Total in employment
July - September 2003	68.5%	710,000
July - September 2004	67.4%	704,000
July - September 2005	70.3%	742,000
July - September 2006	69.4%	742,000
July - September 2007	70.1%	759,000
October – December 2007	69.6%	755,000
January – March 2008	69.8%	758,000
April – June 2008	70.3%	765,000
July – September 2008	70.0%	764,000

- **Fewer females than males work beyond the age of 60.**

Table 5 shows that the age distribution of employed males is very similar to that for employed females. The only apparent difference relates to the older age categories where fewer females work beyond the age of 60, reflecting the current state pension age for females.

### Age Distribution of Those in Employment (16+), July - September 2008

Table 5

	Male	Female	All persons
16-19	5%	4%	4%
20-24	11%	12%	11%
25-29	12%	13%	12%
30-34	12%	12%	12%
35-39	13%	14%	13%
40-44	13%	14%	13%
45-49	12%	12%	12%
50-54	9%	9%	9%
55-59	8%	6%	7%
60+	7%	4%	6%
All 16+	100% (422,000)	100% (366,000)	100% (788,000)

Percentages may not sum due to rounding

Table 6 provides an analysis of the private household population aged 16 and over who were in employment. The breakdown of employees into full-time and part-time employment is based on the respondent's own description of their main employment rather than on the number of hours actually or usually worked.

- **Only 6% of females in employment are self-employed, compared to 22% of males.**

It is noticeable that, while 22% of males in employment are self-employed, just 6% of females are in this category. The LFS also gathers information on persons with a second job in addition to their main activity and 4% of all employees stated that they had a second job.

### Employment Status of Those In Employment (16+), July - September 2008

Table 6

	Male	Female	All persons
All employees:	76%	93%	84%
- Full-time employees	91%	63%	77%
- Part-time employees	9%	37%	23%
Self-employed	22%	6%	15%
Govt. schemes	*	*	1%
Total in employment	100% (422,000)	100% (366,000)	100% (788,000)

\*Cell size too small for a reliable estimate

Percentages may not sum due to rounding

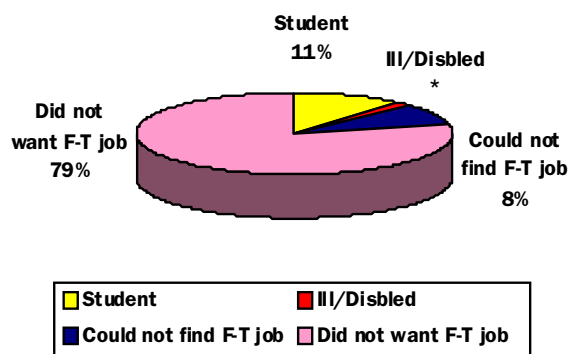
Total includes a small number of unpaid family workers.

- **Almost two-fifths (37%) of female employees are part-time compared to 9% of males.**

One of the main features of the NI labour market is the contribution which part-time jobs make to female employment. Of all female employees, 37% are part-time compared with just 9% of males. Figure 6 shows the reasons given by female employees for working part-time. The main reasons given by females for working part-time were that they did not want a full-time job (79%) and that they were students working part-time (11%).

### Reasons For Females Working Part-time, July - September 2008

Figure 6



## Employment by Industry

- **The largest industrial sections are Wholesale and Retail Trade (15%), Health and Social Work (14%) and Public administration and defence (13%).**

Table 7 provides an analysis of persons in employment by industry (SIC03). The major industries in terms of employment were Wholesale and Retail Trade (15%), Health and Social Work (14%) and Public administration and defence (13%). Industries employing relatively few persons included Electricity, Gas and Water Supply and Mining and Quarrying.

- **Construction (18%) and Manufacturing (16%) are the largest employment sectors for males, while Health and Social Work (25%) is the largest sector for females.**

There are obvious differences between males and females in terms of the industries in which they are employed. While 18% of males work in the Construction sector, the number of females working in the Constuction industry was too small to be reliably quoted. In contrast, an estimated one quarter (25%) of females work in Health and Social Work compared to only 5% of males.

## Persons in Employment by Industry Section, July - September 2008

Table 7

	Male	Female	All persons
Agriculture, hunting & forestry	5%	*	3%
Fishing	*	*	*
Mining and quarrying	*	*	*
Manufacturing	16%	6%	12%
Electricity, gas & water supply	*	*	*
Construction	18%	*	10%
Wholesale and retail trade	14%	16%	15%
Hotels and restaurants	4%	5%	4%
Transport, storage & communication	7%	3%	5%
Financial intermediation	*	5%	3%
Real estate, renting & business	8%	6%	7%
Public administration and defence	13%	13%	13%
Education	4%	15%	9%
Health and social work	5%	25%	14%
Community, social & personal services	4%	4%	4%
All industries <sup>1</sup>	100% (418,000)	100% (361,000)	100% (779,000)

\*Cell size too small for a reliable estimate

Percentages may not sum due to rounding

<sup>1</sup>Total excludes those on college based government training and employment programmes and those who did not state industry.

## Employment by Occupation

Table 8 provides an analysis of persons in employment by occupation using SOC2000 (Standard Occupational Classification) codes adopted since Spring 2001. These estimates are based on a different classification from those used previously and as a result, are not directly comparable.

- **Skilled Trade occupations accounted for the largest number of persons in employment (15%).**

Skilled Trade occupations were the largest group with 15% of persons in employment, followed by Associate Professional and Technical occupations (13%).

- **A large proportion of males (26%) work in Skilled Trade occupations whereas the largest group for females was Administrative and Secretarial (20%).**

There are obvious differences between males and females in terms of the occupations in which they are employed. Over one quarter of males (26%) work in Skilled Trade occupations. Conversely, 20% of females work in Administrative and Secretarial occupations compared to 6% of males.

A higher proportion of males in employment are Managers and/or Senior Officials compared to females (13% for males as opposed to 10% for females).

## Persons in Employment by Occupation, July - September 2008

**Table 8**

	Male	Female	All persons
Managers and/or Senior Officials	13%	10%	12%
Professional Occupations	11%	14%	12%
Assoc. Professional and Technical	10%	17%	13%
Administrative and Secretarial	6%	20%	12%
Skilled Trade	26%	*	15%
Personal Service	2%	13%	7%
Sales and Customer Service	5%	10%	7%
Process, Plant & Machine Operatives	14%	2%	9%
Elementary	12%	12%	12%
All occupations <sup>1</sup>	100% (417,000)	10% (361,000)	100% (779,000)

\*Cell size too small for a reliable estimate

Percentages may not sum due to rounding

<sup>1</sup>Total excludes those on college based government training and employment programmes and those who did not state occupation.

# Unemployment

# 5

The unemployed are defined as those without a job in the reference week who were available to start work within the next fortnight and who had either looked for work at some time in the last four weeks or were waiting to start a job already obtained.

July - September 2008	
<b>Unemployed-male:</b>	<b>26,000 (4%)</b>
<b>Unemployed-female:</b>	<b>10,000 (1%)</b>
<b>Unemployed-all persons:</b>	<b>36,000 (3%)</b>
<b>16+ population</b>	

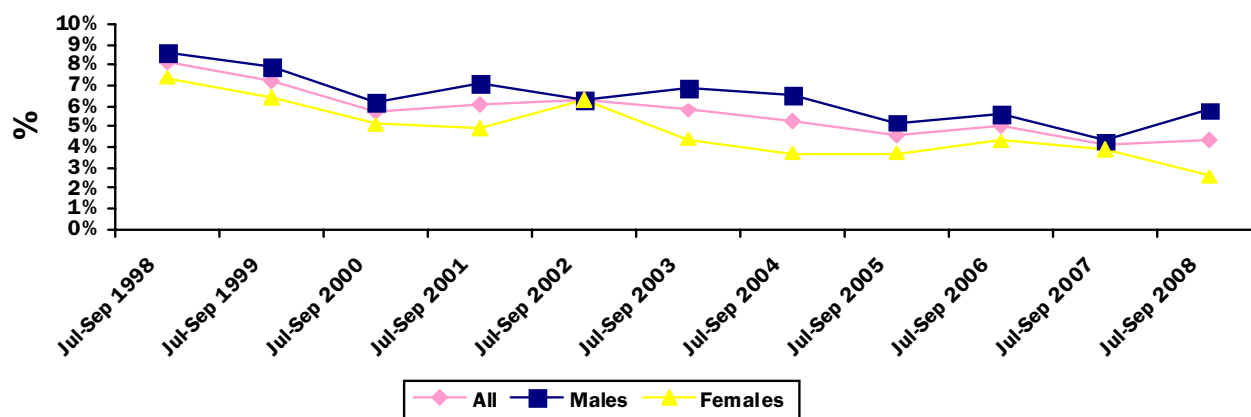
Overall, 3% of respondents aged 16 and over were unemployed and 4% of men were unemployed compared to 1% of women.

- **The unemployment rate for males is 5.8% compared to 2.6% for females.**

Unemployment rates can be obtained from the survey by expressing the number unemployed as a percentage of all those economically active (see Table 9). Unadjusted results show a 0.5 percentage point increase in the overall unemployment rate between April - June 2008 and July - September 2008.

## Unemployment Rates, 1998-2008

Figure 7



## Unemployment Rates, 2003 – 2008

Table 9 (Unadjusted for Seasonality)

	Male	Female	All persons
July - September 2003	6.9%	4.4%	5.8%
July - September 2004	6.5%	3.7%	5.3%
July - September 2005	5.2%	3.7%	4.6%
July - September 2006	5.6%	4.3%	5.0%
July - September 2007	4.3%	3.9%	4.1%
October – December 2007	4.9%	3.4%	4.2%
January – March 2008	5.7%	3.2%	4.6%
April – June 2008	5.0%	2.5%	3.9%
July – September 2008	5.8%	2.6%	4.3%

Fluctuations in the unemployment rates from each quarter will be partly due to seasonal factors – please refer to the seasonally adjusted figures in Section 8.

The unemployment rate for July - September 2008 (4.3%) represented an increase of 0.1 percentage points from the same period one year ago.

- Over three-fifths (61%) of unemployed persons are aged 16-29.

Table 10 shows that three-fifths of unemployed persons are aged 16-29 (61%) with those aged 30 or over comprising the remaining 39%.

### Age Distribution of the Unemployed, July - September 2008

Table 10

	Male	Female	All persons
16-29	62%	*	61%
30+	38%	*	39%
All 16+	100% (26,000)	100% (10,000)	100% (36,000)

\* Cell size too small for a reliable estimate

### Duration of Unemployment

- Almost two-fifths (39%) of unemployed persons are long-term unemployed.

In July - September 2008, almost two-fifths (39%) of unemployed persons had been out of work and seeking employment for more than one year – see Table 11.

### Duration of Unemployment in Northern Ireland, July - September 2008

Table 11

	Male	Female	All persons
Short-term unemployed	61%	*	61%
Long-term unemployed	39%	*	39%
All unemployed <sup>1</sup>	100% (26,000)	100% (9,000)	100% (35,000)

\*Cell size too small for a reliable estimate.

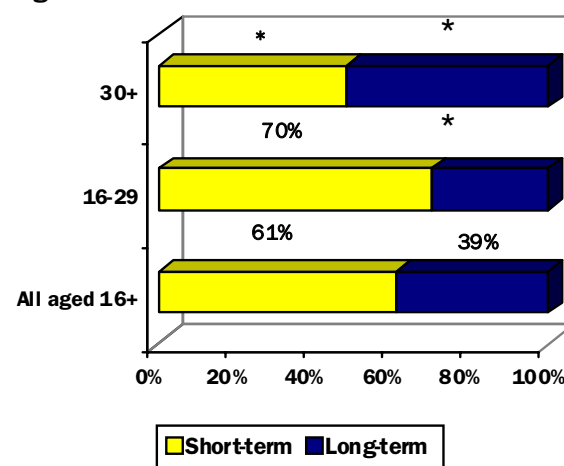
Percentages may not sum due to rounding.

<sup>1</sup>Excludes those that did not answer the questions on duration of unemployment.

The proportion of unemployed persons who were unemployed for one year or more is shown separately for younger and older age groups in Figure 8. Long-term unemployed accounted for 39% of the total unemployed and short-term unemployed for 61%. Of those aged 16-29, 70% were short-term unemployed; estimates of the long and short-term unemployed for the 30+ category were too small for reliable quotation.

### Long-term and Short-term Unemployed by Age Group, July - September 2008

Figure 8



### Methods Used By The Unemployed To Seek Work

- The two main methods of looking for work are visiting JobCentre Offices and answering advertisements/ studying 'situations vacant' columns in newspapers and journals.

For unemployed persons, the two most common methods of looking for work were visiting JobCentre Offices (43%) and answering advertisements/studying 'situations vacant' columns in newspapers and journals (42%) as can be seen in Table 12. A small number of persons approached firms/employers directly and used personal contacts (such as asking friends, relatives and colleagues) to find out about the availability of work.

**Main Method Of Seeking Work for Unemployed Persons (16+), July - September 2008**

**Table 12**

	Male	Female	All persons
Advertisements/ Situations vacant	41%	*	42%
JobCentre Offices	46%	*	43%
Other methods	*	*	*
All methods	100% (26,000)	100% (9,000)	100% (35,000)

\*Cell size too small for a reliable estimate.

Total includes those who were not seeking work in the previous four weeks because they were awaiting results of a job application, but excludes those who did not answer the question.

**Occupation of Unemployed Persons in Last Job**

The survey also asks unemployed persons their occupation in their most recent job, if applicable. Approximately 23,000 persons gave a previous occupational group. Estimates for a breakdown by occupational grouping were too small to be reliably quoted.

# Economically Inactive

## 6

People aged 16 and over who are not in employment and are not unemployed are classified as economically inactive.

### July - September 2008

**Economically inactive-male:**  
217,000 (33%)  
**Economically inactive -female:**  
333,000 (47%)  
**Economically inactive -all persons:**  
550,000 (40%)

### 16+ population

In July - September 2008 there were 550,000 economically inactive people in NI – this represented 40% of the 16+ population.

- **Economic inactivity is highest for those aged 65 and over.**

For both males and females, economic inactivity is relatively high during the ages associated with full-time education (16-24), it drops during the “prime” working years and picks up towards retirement. For women this trend is affected by the impact of domestic commitments during the “prime” working years – see Table 13.

### Age Distribution of the Economically Inactive NI, July - September 2008

Table 13

	Male	Female	All persons
16-24	19%	15%	17%
25-34	5%	8%	6%
35-44	6%	9%	8%
45-54	10%	11%	10%
55-64	17%	19%	18%
65+	43%	38%	40%
All 16+	100% (217,000)	100% (333,000)	100% (550,000)

Percentages may not sum due to rounding.

\* Too small for a reliable estimate.

- **One half (50%) of the economically inactive in the UK are aged 65 or over.**

Table 14 shows the comparable age distribution of the economically inactive for the UK. It highlights that a higher proportion of the inactive in the UK are concentrated in the older age groups, with 50% being aged 65 and over, compared to 40% in NI. The UK also has a lower proportion of their economically inactive population in the youngest age group (12% of the UK economically inactive population are aged 16-24, compared to 17% for NI). These differences are partly explained by NI's younger population structure.

### Age Distribution of the Economically Inactive UK, July - September 2008

Table 14

	Male	Female	All persons
16-24	14%	11%	12%
25-34	4%	8%	7%
35-44	5%	9%	8%
45-54	6%	8%	7%
55-64	16%	17%	16%
65+	55%	46%	50%
All 16+	100% (6,863,000)	100% (10,840,000)	100% (17,703,000)

Percentages may not sum due to rounding.

### Reasons for Economic Inactivity

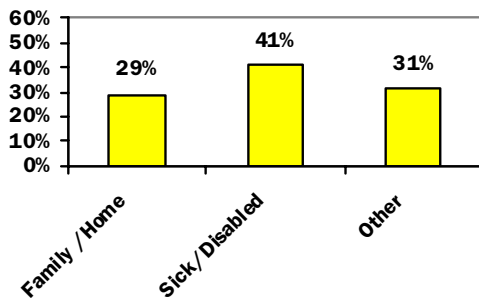
- **Around 6% of the economically inactive want a job.**

The economically inactive population is comprised of two main groups; those who do not want a job (94% in July – September 2008) and those who do want a job (6%). Equivalent figures for the UK show that 13% of the economically inactive want a job, whereas the remaining 87% do not. The main reasons given by those who want work in NI, but are not seeking work or available to start work are shown in Figure 9.

- **Sickness or disability is one of the main reasons for not looking for a job.**

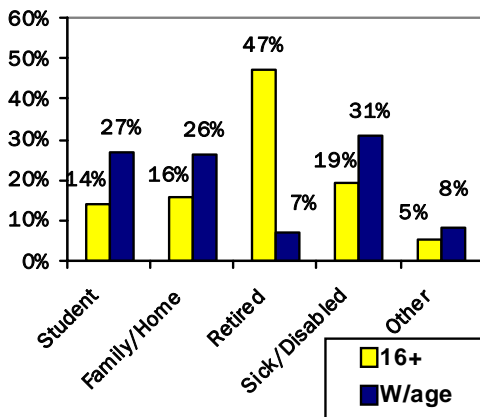
Of the economically inactive who want a job, 29% were not looking for work due to family/home commitments and 41% were not looking because of sickness or disability. "Other" includes students and discouraged workers (those not in a job who would like work and whose reason for not seeking work in the past four weeks is that they believe there are no jobs available).

**Inactive - Wants Job (16+)**  
**Figure 9**



As mentioned previously, 94% of the economically inactive do not want a job and this group can be divided into the categories shown in Figure 10.

**Inactive - Does Not Want Job - Reason for Inactivity (16+ and Working-age)**  
**Figure 10**



- **Of the 16+ population who do not want a job 47% are retired.**

Overall for the total population, the main reason for the inactive not wanting work was retirement (47%).

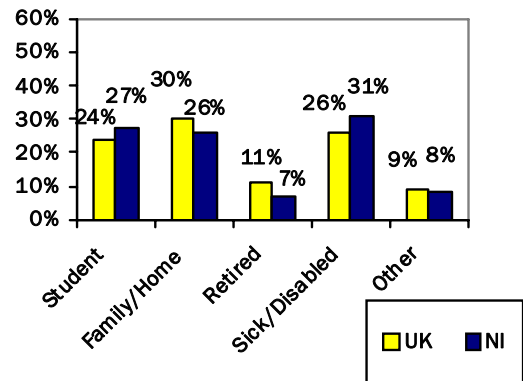
- **Thirty-one per cent of the working-age population who do not want a job are sick or disabled.**

For the working-age population the main reasons for not wanting work were sick/disabled (31%), students (27%) and those with family/home commitments (26%). Men were more likely to cite sickness/disability as their main reason (42%) for inactivity and women family commitments (41%).

- **In comparison to the UK, NI has a higher percentage of the economically inactive, who do not want a job, because they are sick or disabled or students.**

Figure 11 compares the working-age inactive population of NI with the UK. NI has a higher proportion of those who identify sickness or disability (31%) as the main reason for not wanting work, compared to the UK (26%). NI also has a higher percentage of economically inactive people who do not want a job because they are students (27%) compared to the UK (24%) and this is partly a reflection of the younger population in NI.

**Inactive - Does Not Want Job - Reason for Inactivity (UK and NI by Working age)**  
**Figure 11**



# Education and Training

## 7

### Qualifications of the Employed and the Unemployed

- **Almost two-fifths (37%) of economically inactive persons had no formal qualifications at July - September 2008.**

Table 15 shows that the qualification levels of those of working-age in employment or economically active are consistently higher than those who are economically inactive. Of those in employment 33% had higher qualifications, compared to 10% of the economically inactive. Conversely, 37% of economically inactive people had no formal qualifications, compared with 16% of those in employment. The economically active comprise the employed and the unemployed. The qualification levels of this group are higher than the economically inactive. Of the economically inactive, only 11% had degree and other higher qualifications, while 37% had no qualifications at all. This compares to figures of 33% and 16% for the economically active population.

### Qualifications By Economic Activity (Working-age), July - September 2008

Table 15

	In employment	Econ. active	Econ. inactive	All
Degree or higher	24%	23%	7%	19%
Other higher below degree	9%	9%	3%	8%
A level or equivalent	26%	26%	23%	25%
GCSE A-C or equivalent	20%	20%	24%	21%
Other qualifications	6%	6%	5%	6%
No Qualifications	16%	16%	37%	22%
	100%	100%	100%	100%
All (000s)	(749)	(783)	(283)	(1,066)

\* Cell size too small for a reliable estimate.

Figures may not sum due to rounding.

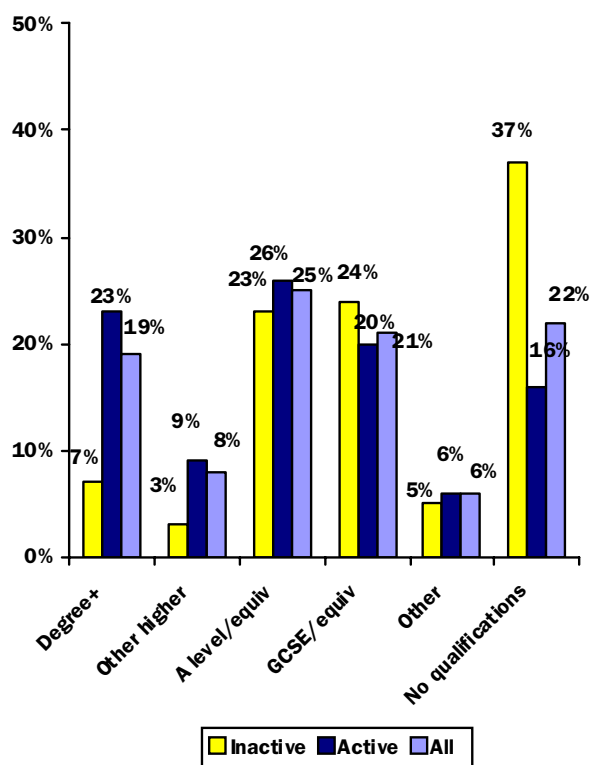
Total excludes those who did not state their highest level of qualification.

Please refer to Technical Notes for full definition of educational attainment categories.

Only men and women of working-age, and those of any age with a job were asked the question on qualifications.

### Qualifications By Economic Activity, July - September 2008

Figure 12



### Job-related Training

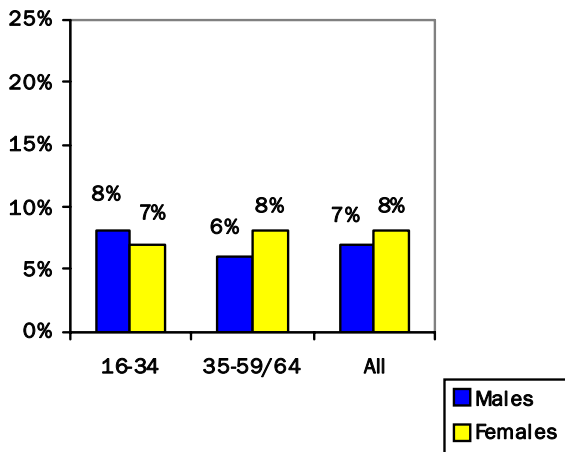
- **Approximately 7% of employees had received job-related training.**

The LFS can be used to identify those employees who receive education or training connected with their job. Table 16 and Figure 13 overleaf show how the proportion of employees receiving job-related education or training varies with age and gender. In July - September 2008, 7% of employees of working-age had undergone some job-related training within the previous four weeks.

**Employees Receiving Job-related Training By Age Group (Working-age), July - September 2008**  
**Table 16**

	Male	Female	All persons
16-34	8%	7%	7%
35-59/64	6%	8%	7%
All	7%	8%	7%

**Employees Receiving Job-related Training By Working Age, July - September 2008**  
**Figure 13**



# Regional and International Summary

## 8

Table 17 and Figure 14 provide some labour market comparisons on a seasonally adjusted basis between NI and other UK regions.

- **The unemployment rate in NI was well below the UK average and is lowest of all the UK regions.**

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in NI at July - September 2008 (4.1%) was lower than the UK average (5.8%) and was the lowest of all the UK regions. The NI employment rate for those of working-age (70.1%) was also the lowest of all the UK regions. In contrast, the NI (26.9%) working age economic inactivity rate was the highest of all regions (the UK average is 20.9%)

- **The NI employment rate is 1.3 percentage points higher than the average rate for the European Union.**

Figure 15 overleaf shows how the harmonised employment rate in NI compares to other employment rates in the EU (based on those aged 15-64). The NI rate (66.8% - see Note 2 overleaf) is 1.3 percentage points higher than the EU average (65.5%). However, it is 1.3 percentage points below the current rate in the Republic of Ireland (68.1%).

The NI unemployment rate (4.1%) is 2.1 percentage points lower than the rate for the Republic of Ireland and 2.8 percentage points lower than the average rate for the European Union.

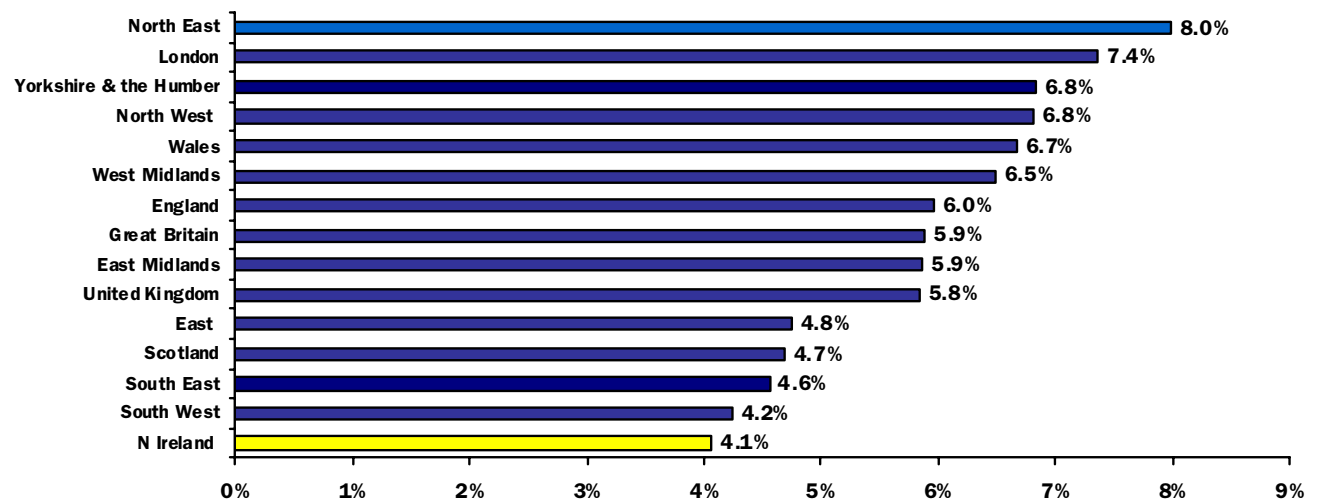
### Regional Seasonally Adjusted Economic Activity Rates, July - September 2008

Table 17

	Econ. activity rate (working-age) %	Employment rate (working-age) %	Unemployment rate %
North East	76.7	70.4	8.0
North West & Mersey	77.0	71.6	6.8
Yorkshire & Humber	78.8	73.2	6.8
East Midlands	81.0	76.1	5.9
West Midlands	77.0	71.8	6.5
East	81.4	77.4	4.8
London	76.8	71.0	7.4
South East	82.8	79.0	4.6
South West	82.3	78.7	4.2
England	79.4	74.5	6.0
Wales	75.8	70.6	6.7
Scotland	80.2	76.3	4.7
Great Britain	79.3	74.5	5.9
Northern Ireland	73.1	70.1	4.1
United Kingdom	79.1	74.4	5.8

## Regional Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rates, July - September 2008

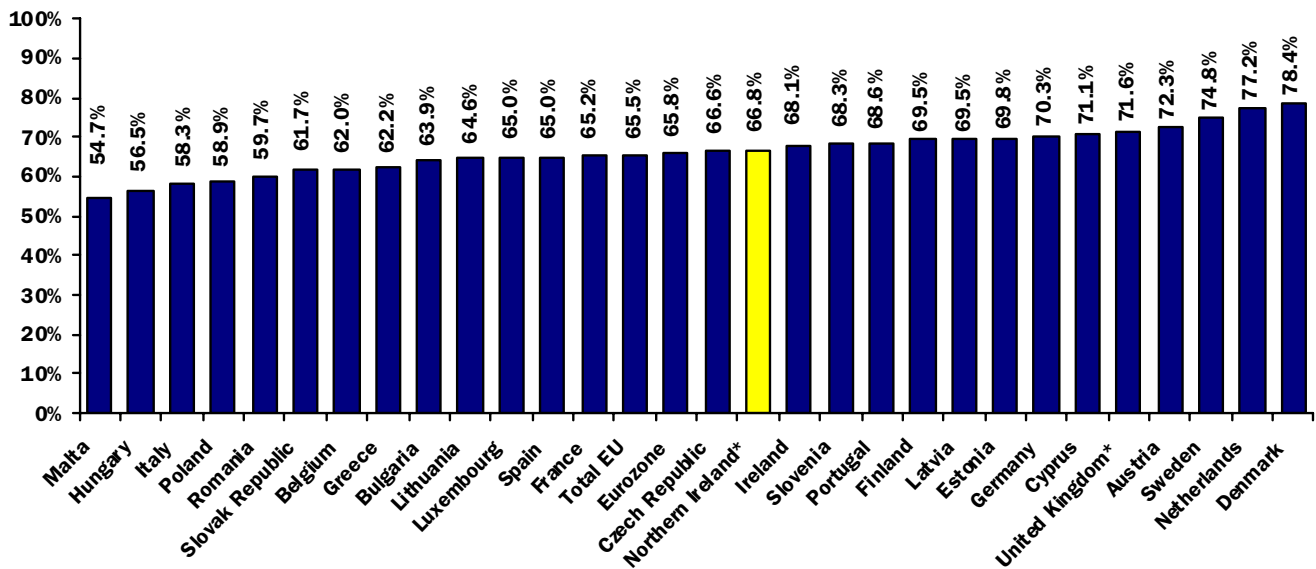
Figure 14



## International Comparisons of ILO Employment

### ILO Employment Rates (%) - Unadjusted<sup>1</sup>

Figure 15



Source: Eurostat and StatBLS

<sup>1</sup> Employment rates are not seasonally adjusted.

The employment rates published by EUROSTAT are based on the population aged 15-64.

\* A NI employment rate comparable to the EUROSTAT figures has been produced from the Calendar Quarter 2 2008 LFS dataset. It is based on the population aged 15-64 and differs from the working age rates (16-64 for men and 16-59 for women) published elsewhere in this publication, which take account of both the school-leaving and state pension age.

The employment rate for the UK as published by EUROSTAT will differ from the working age rate (16-59/64) published by ONS for the same reason.

Eurostat compiles 'harmonised' unemployment rates for most countries (but not NI and UK) by extrapolating from the most recent LFS data using monthly registered unemployment data. For further information see the Monthly Eurostat news release.

The Total EU compiles of all 27 EU countries. The Eurozone series consists of the following EU countries: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain.

# Disability and the Labour Market

## 9

This section focuses on the characteristics and labour market experiences of people with disabilities. Disability as a concept is complex and can be defined in a number of ways and here it relates to current long-term disabilities among the working-age population that are covered by the 1995 Disability Discrimination Act and/or work-limiting disabilities – please refer to the Technical Notes section for a full definition.

### Estimates of Numbers Disabled

- **Almost one in five persons (19%) of working-age are disabled in NI.**

The July - September 2008 LFS estimates that almost one in five (19%) persons (211,000) of working-age in NI had a current long-term disability. This proportion was the similar for both males (20%) and females (19%), equating to 112,000 disabled men and 100,000 disabled women.

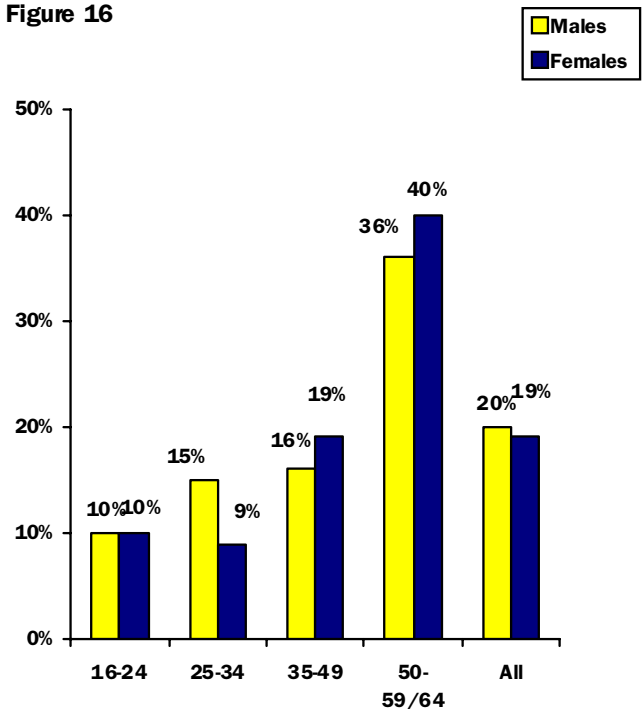
- **The likelihood of having a disability or health problem increases with age for both males and females.**

Figure 16 shows how numbers having a long-term disability or health problem increase with age for both males and females. The proportion of males with disabilities increased from 10% for the 16-24 age group to 36% for the 50-64 age group.

For females the proportion with disabilities increased from 10% for ages 16-24 to 40% for ages 50-59.

**Disability Rates By Age Group, July - September 2008**

**Figure 16**



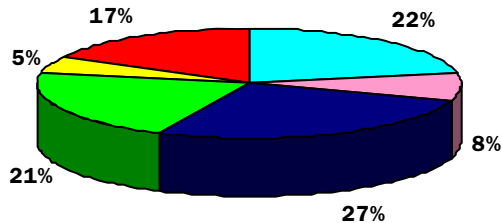
### Qualifications of Persons With and Without Disabilities

- **Over twice the proportion of disabled persons have no qualification compared to non-disabled persons at July – September 2008.**

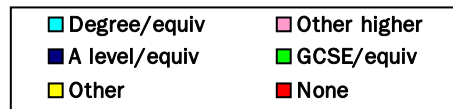
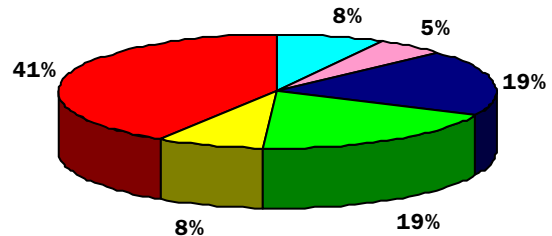
Figure 17 shows the qualification levels held by disabled and non-disabled persons at July - September 2008. Overall, persons with a disability are less qualified than those without. In particular, 13% of disabled persons held higher qualifications compared with 30% of non-disabled persons. Over two-fifths (41%) of disabled persons had no qualifications, more than twice the proportion of non-disabled persons (17%).

**Qualifications Of Persons With Or Without Disabilities, July - September 2008**  
**Figure 17**

**Non-Disabled**



**Disabled**



**Economic Activity of the Disabled and Non-Disabled**

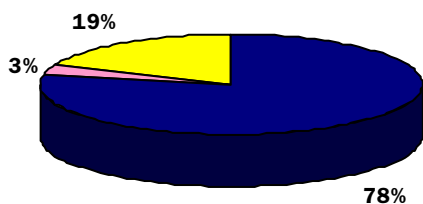
- **The employment rate for those without disabilities (78%) is over twice that of people with disabilities (36%).**

Please refer to Technical Notes for full definition of qualifications.  
 Excludes those who did not state their highest level of qualification.  
 Figures may not sum due to rounding.

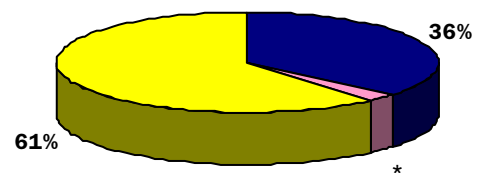
Figure 18 shows the relative importance of the three main economic categories for disabled and non-disabled persons of working age at July - September 2008. A much smaller proportion of the disabled (36%) are in employment compared with the non-disabled (78%). Conversely, the majority of the disabled (61%) are economically inactive, compared with 19% of the non-disabled.

**Economic Activity Of Those With and Without Disabilities, July - September 2008**  
**Figure 18**

**Non-Disabled**



**Disabled**



# Special Feature: Households

# 10

This feature looks specifically at household level data for the period April – June 2008. Datasets specifically designed for analyses at the household level are available from the Labour Force Survey (LFS).

- **NI had an average of 2.51 persons per private household compared to a UK average of 2.36 persons per household. London (2.52) was the regions with the highest number of persons per household.**

At April - June 2008 there were 696,000 private households in Northern Ireland (NI). There were 1,746,000 persons living in these households, giving an average of 2.51 persons per household. This compared with a UK average of 2.36 as a whole. Indeed, NI (2.51) and London (2.52) were the regions with the highest number of persons per household.

Figure 19 looks at household types according to the relationships between the persons living in them, for both NI and the UK. The most common type of household in NI consisted of a couple with children, which accounted for 33.1% of all households. The other two main household types were one person households (26.9%), followed by couples with no children (24.1%).

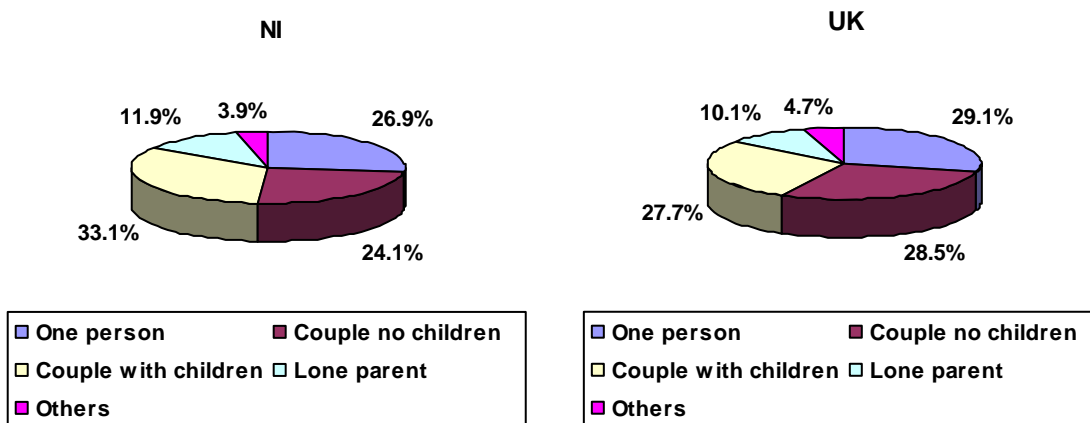
- **Couples with children accounted for the largest proportion (33.1%) of NI households, while one person households (29.1%) were the most common for the UK as a whole.**

The main difference between the distribution of household types in NI and the UK is the higher proportion of households in NI composed of couples with children than in the UK (33.1% compared with 27.7%). This is balanced by a lower proportion of households composed of couples with no children in NI (24.1% compared with 28.5% in the UK).

- **Proportionally there were more lone parent households in NI than in the UK (11.9% compared with 10.1%).**

There were an estimated 83,000 lone parent households in NI. NI has a higher proportion of lone parent households than the UK (11.9% compared with 10.1%).

**Household Types, NI and UK, April - June 2008**  
**Figure 19**



“Others” comprise households with two or more people in all different family units, two or more family units and same sex couples.

Table 17 shows the proportions of working age households according to the economic activity of their members. (A working age household is defined as a household with at least one person of working age in it.)

- **50% of all NI working age households are classified as workrich households where all persons are in employment.**

The most common type of household in NI was one where all persons were employed (referred to as a workrich household), accounting for 50% of all working age households. Note these households may contain only one person who is employed, or several persons, all of whom are employed. There is an 8 percentage point difference between the proportion of workrich working age households in NI and the UK. In fact, NI has the lowest proportion of working age households of all UK regions in this category.

The other two main categories of households were those containing employed and economically inactive persons (30%) and those where all persons were economically inactive (15%). Both of these proportions were higher than the equivalent figures for the UK as a whole. A workless household is defined as a household where no one is in employment and comprises types 3, 5 and 6 from Table 18.

- **NI had the sixth highest proportion of working age workless households (17.4%) among the UK regions. This compared to 16.1% in the UK as a whole.**

In April - June 2008, there were 94,000 workless working age households, or 17.4% of all working age households in NI. This compared with 16.1% in the UK as a whole and was the sixth highest proportion among the UK regions.

## Working age Households by Combined Economic Activity, April - June 2008

Table 17

Type of Economic Activity	NI	UK
1. All Employed	50%	58%
2. Employed and Economically Inactive	30%	22%
3. All Economically Inactive	15%	13%
4. Employed and Unemployed	2%	3%
5. All Unemployed	*	2%
6. Unemployed and Economically Inactive	*	1%
7. Employed, Unemployed and Econ. Inactive	2%	1%
All households (100%) <sup>1</sup>	539,000	18,050,000

<sup>1</sup> Excludes cases where the combined household economic activity is not known.

\* Too small for a reliable estimate.

Note that the proportions in these household categories are affected by the number of persons in a household. Consequently the fact that NI has a larger average number of persons per household and a smaller proportion of one person households than the UK, means that there is more likely to be a combination of economic activity states within households than all persons of one activity state.

# Technical Notes

# 11

## Background

Following the UK's accession to the European Community, the Labour Force Survey (LFS) was carried out for the first time in 1973, under the terms of an EC Regulation. The Statistical Office of the European Communities co-ordinates information from all the Labour Force Surveys carried out by member states in order to assist in such matters as the allocation of Social Fund resources.

From 1973 to 1983, the LFS was carried out biennially in both Northern Ireland (NI) and Great Britain. Following a change in the requirements of the EC Regulation, from 1984 an annual survey was conducted and results referred to the spring months of each year. In March 1992 the GB portion of the survey moved onto a quarterly cycle and in December 1994 a quarterly survey was introduced in (NI).

As part of an EU requirement, where all member states must have an LFS based on calendar quarters, the NI Labour Force Survey moved to a calendar quarter basis from May 2006 onwards.

The LFS was previously based on seasonal quarters where, for example, the March – May months covered the Spring quarter, June - August was Summer and so forth. This has changed to calendar quarters where microdata will be available for January – March (Q1), April – June (Q2), July – September (Q3) and October - December (Q4). Initially, a back series of calendar quarter micro datasets will be available for the years 1997, 1999, 2001 – 2004, for Q2 and Q4, then for all quarters from 2005 onwards. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) are responsible for producing these back series and currently aim to have all periods revised and available as soon as possible.

The LFS is a sample survey carried out by interviewing individuals about their personal circumstances and work. It is the biggest regular household survey in NI and provides a rich source of information on the labour force using internationally agreed concepts and definitions. This statistics notice presents supplementary results from the July - September 2008 Quarterly LFS in Northern Ireland.

The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment is responsible for ensuring that the survey is conducted in NI and for the analysis and interpretation of the results. However, the day-to-day management of the fieldwork, including data collection and database creation, rests with the Central Survey Unit (CSU) of the NI Statistics and Research Agency. CSU are also in charge of the creation of a Computer Assisted Interviewing questionnaire (designed to mirror that used in GB), the sampling of addresses and the carrying out of fieldwork using a team of specialist interviewers.

## Response Rates

The sample for the July - September 2008 LFS consisted of 2,644 addresses, (650 chosen at random from the Valuation & Lands Agency list of domestic properties, 1,994 carried forward from the previous quarter). A random start, fixed interval sampling technique of the addresses, which are ordered by District Council and Ward, is used. This ensures a proportional representation across the District Council areas in NI.

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

## Response Rates, July - September 2008

Total addresses sampled	2644*
Fully and partially responding	1800
Eligible sample	2342
Response rate	76.9%

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

### Breakdown of Non-response and Ineligible Addresses, July - September 2008

<b>Non-response/non-contact:</b>	
- Outright refusal	153
- Circumstantial refusal	88
- Non-contact	301
<b>Ineligible addresses:</b>	
- Vacant/derelict/under construction	239
- Holiday accommodation	16
- Non-residential	5
- Second residence	22
- Other ineligible	14
- Household moves	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>844</b>

### Sampling

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

The following table shows the proportions obtained from the July - September 2008 survey for some key LFS variables and indicates their sampling accuracy. The confidence intervals represent the ranges either side of the LFS proportions which are 95% certain to include the true values of the quantities estimated.

### LFS Proportions Of Total Private Household Population (16+), Including 95% Confidence Intervals, July - September 2008

	LFS Estimate	Confidence Interval
Economically active	60%	+/- 1.6%
In Employment	57%	+/- 1.6%
Employees*	84%	+/- 1.6%
Self-employed*	15%	+/- 1.5%
Unemployed	3%	+/- 0.5%
Economically inactive (16+)	40%	+/- 1.6%
Unemployment rate	4.3%	+/- 0.9%

\* As a percentage of all in employment.

Confidence intervals for other proportions produced in this publication may be obtained on request from addresses given at the end of this note.

### Publication Threshold

It is the nature of sampling variability that the smaller the group whose size is being estimated, the (proportionately) less precise that estimate is. LFS estimates of under 8,000 are not published in this supplement as they are likely to be unreliable. This revised publication threshold came into effect from 1 September 1999 and estimates below this threshold contained in earlier publications should, therefore, be treated with caution.

### Grossing To Population Totals

Most of the results presented in this report are expressed in terms of percentages, following the grossing of sample numbers to population levels. Each individual participating in the survey is given a weight or "grossing factor" which is related to that person's age and sex. In this way the final grossed results give the population total for NI and reflect the distributions by sex and age shown by the population figures.

### **Re-weighting of LFS data to updated population estimates**

LFS data back to 1992 was revised this year in order to incorporate the latest population estimates. The magnitude of the revisions are relatively small, with the revisions to the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate and the working age employment rate falling within +/- 0.02 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. Details of the 're-weighting' methodology used to adjust key LFS estimates was published in the May 2008 edition of Labour Market Trends and can be accessed via the link below:

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/article.asp?id=1992>

### **Seasonal Adjustment**

In conjunction with the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and consistent with all other UK regions, seasonally adjusted LFS estimates for the UK regions (including NI) have been reintroduced from Winter 2002/3. The seasonally adjusted estimates are quoted in Section 1 and Section 8 of this publication. Estimates in all other sections of this publication are not seasonally adjusted.

The seasonally adjusted data have been 'weighted' to the latest population figures and therefore provide a better indication of the current labour market status.

### **Definitions**

#### Working age

This refers to ages 16 to 59 for women and 16 to 64 for men.

#### In Employment

The LFS defines employment as those aged 16 and over who did at least one hour's paid work in the reference week (either as an employee or self-employed); those who had a job which they were temporarily away from (on holiday for example); those participating in government training and employment programmes; and those doing unpaid family work.

#### Employment Rate

The percentage of people aged 16 and over who are in employment.

#### Employees/Self-employed

The division between employees and self-employed is based on survey respondents' own assessment of their employment status.

#### Unpaid Family Workers

The separate identification of this group in the LFS is in accordance with international recommendations. It comprises persons doing unpaid work for a business they own or a business that a relative owns.

#### Full-time/Part-time

The classification of employees, self-employed, those on government work-related training programmes and unpaid workers in their main job as full-time or part-time is on the basis of self-assessment.

#### Full-time Education

In the LFS this includes those people over the age of 16 who state that they are still at school or in some other form of full-time education, including sandwich courses.

### Unemployment

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) measure of unemployment refers to people without a job who were available 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. This definition of unemployment is in accordance with that adopted by the 13th International Conference of Labour Statisticians, further clarified at the 14<sup>th</sup> ICLS, and promulgated by the ILO in 1987.

### Unemployment Rate

The percentage of economically active people who are unemployed.

### Duration of Unemployment

Duration of unemployment is defined as the shorter of the following two periods:

- (a) duration of active search for work; and
- (b) length of time since employment.

The short-term unemployed are those people who have been unemployed for less than 1 year, while the long-term unemployed are defined as those who have been unemployed for 1 year or more.

### Educational Attainment Categories

Degree or higher = degree or degree equivalent and above incl. First degree, Postgraduate Diplomas and Professional qualifications.  
Other higher below degree = other Higher Education below degree level incl. HND/HNC/BTEC (Higher), teaching and nursing qualifications.

A level or equivalent = incl. Trade Apprenticeships, vocational level 3

GCSE A-C or equivalent = incl. vocational level 2.  
Other qualifications = incl. vocational level 1 and below.

### Disabilities

Since Spring 1997, LFS working-age respondents have been asked questions to identify whether they have a current disability covered by the 1995 Disability Discrimination or a work-limiting disability (which affects either the kind or amount of paid work they can do) or both. This broad description covering any of these three definitions (defined as a current long-term disability) is used in this publication. This definition covers a wide range of impairments which themselves can differ greatly in severity.

### Industry

The classification of respondents' industry of employment is based on the Standard Industrial Classification 2003: SIC(03)

### Occupation

The classification of respondents' occupations are based on the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC), introduced in June 2000 which replaces SOC 90.

### **Further Information**

Further information about the survey can be obtained by:

writing to:

Department of Enterprise,  
Trade and Investment,  
Statistics Research Branch,  
Netherleigh, Massey Avenue,  
Belfast BT4 2JP

telephoning: (028) 9052 9585

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