

## STATISTICAL PRESS RELEASE

**18 January 2012**

**Coverage**

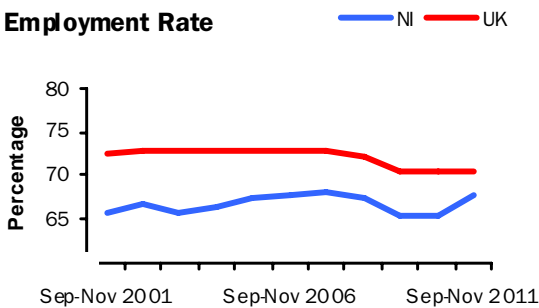
Northern Ireland, unless otherwise stated

**Theme**

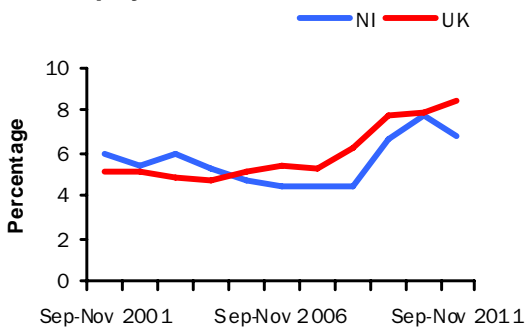
Labour Market

**Seasonally Adjusted Working Age**

**Employment Rate**



**Seasonally Adjusted  
Unemployment Rate**



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### Labour Market Statistics – January 2012

Seasonally adjusted Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimates for Northern Ireland for the period September - November 2011 recorded an increase over the quarter in the number of employed and economically inactive persons, while there was a fall in the number of unemployed persons. The December Claimant Count recorded an increase of 100 claimants from the previous month's revised figure and now stands at 60,700.

In the latest reference period, the employment rate for those aged 16-64 was estimated at 67.8%, up 0.5 percentage points over the quarter and up 2.5 percentage points over the year.

The unemployment rate for the period September - November 2011 was estimated at 6.8%, down 0.7 percentage points over the quarter and down 1.0 percentage points over the year. The latest NI rate was lower than the UK (8.4%) rate and also remained below the European Union (9.8%) and Republic of Ireland (14.3%) rates for October 2011.

The economic inactivity rate for those aged 16-64 in NI stands at 27.1%, up 0.1 percentage points over the quarter, but down 1.9 percentage points over the year. The NI rate remained above the UK average rate (23.1%) and was the highest rate among the twelve UK regions.

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

The more recent seasonally adjusted claimant count stood at 60,700 (6.9%) at December 2011, up 100 from the previous month's revised figure. On this measure NI had the second highest unemployment rate among the twelve UK regions. However, the annual increase in NI claimants (4.1%) was the second lowest among the UK regions (the annual increase in the UK was 9.8%).

693 proposed redundancies were notified in the period mid December to mid January and there were 245 confirmed redundancies in December 2011 – the highest since April 2009.

The total number of employee jobs in NI at September 2011 was estimated at 698,390 (Quarterly Employment Survey), down 750 jobs (-0.1%) over the quarter and down 8,670 jobs (-1.2%) over the year.

**NI seasonally adjusted data**

	Reference period	Levels	Rates (%)	Levels	Rates (pps)
				Change on quarter	
Employment <sup>1</sup>	Sep-Nov 2011	803,000	67.8%	4,000	0.5
Unemployment <sup>2</sup>	Sep-Nov 2011	59,000	6.8%	-7,000	-0.7
Economically Active <sup>1</sup>	Sep-Nov 2011	862,000	72.9%	-3,000	-0.1
Economically Inactive <sup>1</sup>	Sep-Nov 2011	547,000	27.1%	5,000	0.1
Employee Jobs <sup>3</sup>	September 2011	698,390		-750	
				Change on month	
Claimant Count <sup>4</sup>	December 2011	60,700	6.9	+100	0.1
Redundancies <sup>5</sup>	December 2011	245		-	-

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

# Labour Market

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Seasonally adjusted Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimates for Northern Ireland for the period September - November 2011 recorded an increase over the quarter in the number of employed and economically inactive persons, while there was a decrease in the number of unemployed persons. The seasonally adjusted claimant count in December 2011 increased by 100 over the month to 60,700. 693 proposed redundancies were notified in the latest reference period and there were 245 confirmed redundancies in December 2011.

### Employment

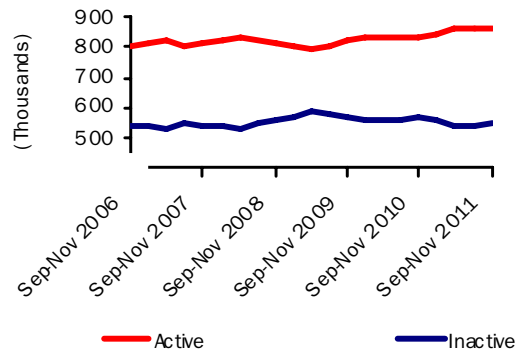
The number of persons in employment in the period September - November was estimated at 803,000. This estimate was up 4,000 over the quarter and 35,000 over the year. The employment rate for those aged 16-64 was estimated at 67.8%, up 0.5 percentage points over the quarter and 2.5 percentage points over the year. However, NI's employment rate remained below the UK average (70.3%) and was the fourth lowest rate among the twelve UK regions.

### Unemployment

The unemployment rate for the period September - November was estimated at 6.8%, down 0.7 percentage points over the quarter and down 1.0 percentage points over the year. The number of unemployed persons was estimated at 59,000, down 7,000 over both the quarter and year.

Unadjusted figures show that 37.0% of the unemployed have been unemployed for 1 year or more – down 12.8 percentage points over the year. They also estimate the unemployment rate for 18 - 24 year olds at 18.4% – down 2.5 percentage points over the year.

**Seasonally Adjusted Labour Market Summary for Northern Ireland (16+)**  
**Figure 1**



### Economically Inactive

The seasonally adjusted number of economically inactive persons in the period September - November was estimated at 547,000. This figure has increased by 5,000 over the quarter, but was down 17,000 over the year.

The NI economic inactivity rate for those aged 16-64 stands at 27.1%. This is significantly higher than the UK average rate (23.1%) and is the highest of the twelve UK regions. Unadjusted figures estimate that 31% of the economically inactive, aged 16-64, in NI are students, 30% are sick/disabled, 21% are looking after the family/home, 12% are retired and 7% are 'other' reason.

Unadjusted figures also show that while 91% of the inactive do not want work, the remaining 9% (51,000) want employment but do not satisfy the full ILO job search criteria (by actively seeking work and being available to start a job).

Estimates from the LFS have an associated

### Northern Ireland Labour Market Summary (seasonally adjusted)

**Table 1**

	Period	Estimate	Sampling Variability of estimate	Change over year	Sampling Variability of change
Employment	Sep-Nov 2011	803,000	+/-24,000	35,000	+/-30,000
Unemployment	Sep-Nov 2011	59,000	+/-11,000	-7,000	+/-15,000
Economically inactive	Sep-Nov 2011	547,000	+/-21,000	-17,000	+/-27,000
Unemployment rate	Sep-Nov 2011	6.8%	+/-1.3pps	-1.0pps	+/-1.8pps
Employment rate <sup>1</sup>	Sep-Nov 2011	67.8%	+/-1.8pps	2.5pps	+/-2.3pps
Economic inactivity rate <sup>1</sup>	Sep-Nov 2011	27.1%	+/-1.7pps	-1.9pps	+/-2.2pps
Claimant Count	December 2011	60,700		2,400	

Note: pps = percentage points, <sup>1</sup>Rates based on 16-64 population, see 'Definitions' for details.

# Statistical Press Release

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 the employment level and rate were statistically significant i.e. the recorded change exceeded the variability expected from a sample survey of this size (see table 1 and Section 9 for details).

## Unemployment Regional Comparison

The latest NI seasonally adjusted unemployment rate (6.8%) was lower than the overall UK average rate (8.4%) and was the third lowest rate among the twelve UK regions. The NI rate was also below the European Union (9.8%) and Republic of Ireland (14.3%) rates for October 2011. Comparable figures for the three months to October 2011 estimate the NI unemployment rate for 18-24 year olds at 18.2%, compared to a UK average rate of 20.5%.

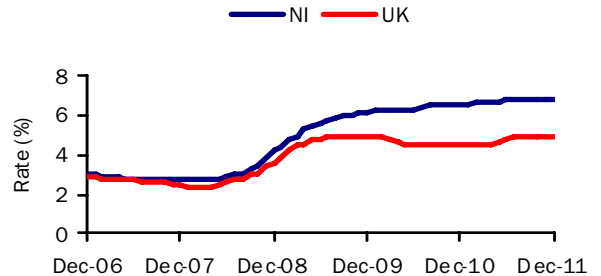
## Claimant Count

The more recent seasonally adjusted claimant count increased by 100 (0.2%) from last month's revised total. It now stands at 60,700 (6.9% of the workforce) in December 2011. Over the year the Claimant Count in NI has increased by 2,400 (4.1%) and the workforce unemployment rate has increased by 0.3 percentage points.

## Claimant Count Regional Comparison

The seasonally adjusted claimant count rate in NI (6.9%) was higher than the UK average rate (5.0%) and was the second highest rate among the twelve UK regions. The monthly increase in NI claimants (0.2%) was higher than the UK average increase of 0.1% during the same period. However, the annual increase in NI claimants (4.1%) was the second lowest among the UK regions (the annual increase in the UK was 9.8%).

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



## Claimant count rates for District Council Areas

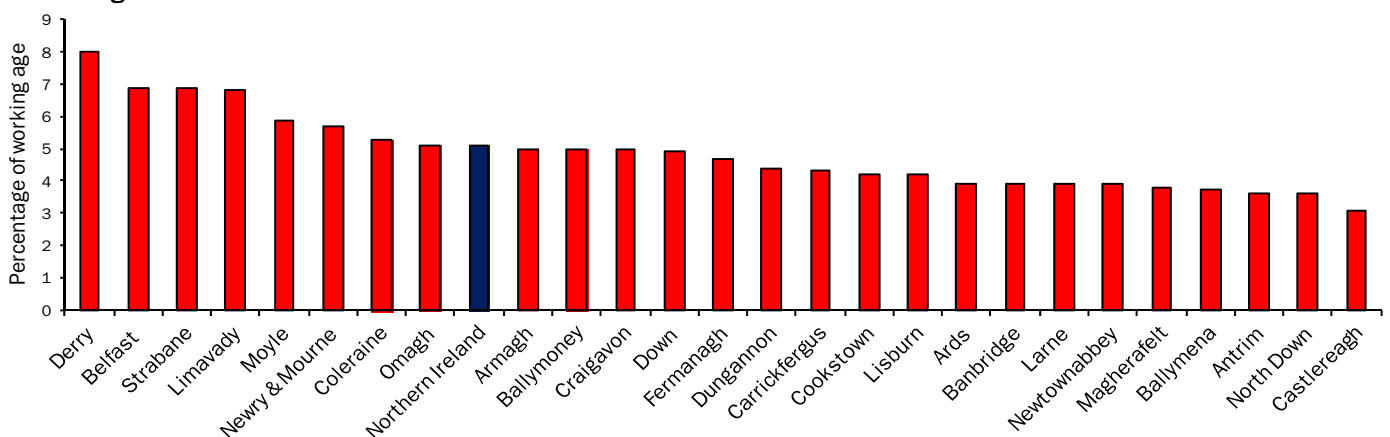
Figure 3 (unadjusted numbers as a percentage of the resident working age population) show that the highest rates at December 2011 were in Derry (8.0%), Belfast (6.9%), Strabane (6.9%) and Limavady (6.8%). Those that showed the highest percentage increase in levels over the year to December 2011 were Fermanagh (12.9%), Carrickfergus (10.1%) and Derry (9.6%). For further District Council data please see section 3 of the Labour Market Report.

## 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 0.7% (82 persons) to 12,101 over the year to December 2011 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. Steps to Work and New Deal statistics are currently accessible via the DEL web link below:

[Steps to Work / New Deal statistics](#)

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



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## Redundancies

There were 693 proposed redundancies notified during the period mid December 2011 to mid January 2012. This compares to 137 proposed redundancies that were notified in the previous monthly period. The current number of proposed redundancies is the highest since April 2009.

There were 245 confirmed redundancies in the month of December (Figure 5). Over the latest twelve month period there were a total of 1,728 confirmed redundancies, a decrease of 18% from the previous year (2,096).

Over the latest twelve month period there were a total of 2,008 proposed redundancies, a decrease of 37% from the previous year (3,205).

Currently there are 1,190 outstanding redundancies (that is, proposed but not confirmed), which is 0.5% lower than this time last year (1,196).

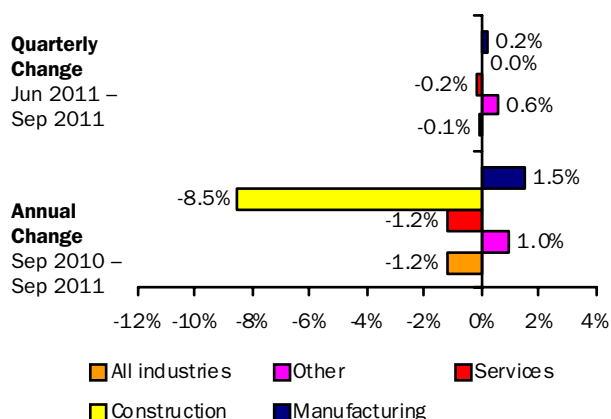
Note that since all proposed redundancies do not actually take place, the confirmed total provides a better indication of real job losses.

## Quarterly Employment Survey

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 September 2011 was 698,390. This represents a decrease of 750 jobs from the revised figure for the previous quarter and a decrease of 8,670 jobs over the year (see Section 9 for details of QES revisions).

### Annual and Quarterly changes in employee jobs (seasonally adjusted)

Figure 4

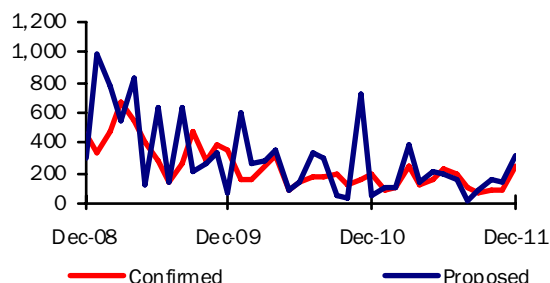


\*Please see background notes for QES

The seasonally adjusted quarterly change consisted of increases in Manufacturing (+130) and Other industries (+120). Construction did not change over the quarter, while Services experienced a decrease (-990). Over the same period the private sector increased by 1,120 jobs whilst the public sector decreased by 1,900 jobs.

## Confirmed and Proposed Redundancies December 08 - December 11

Figure 5

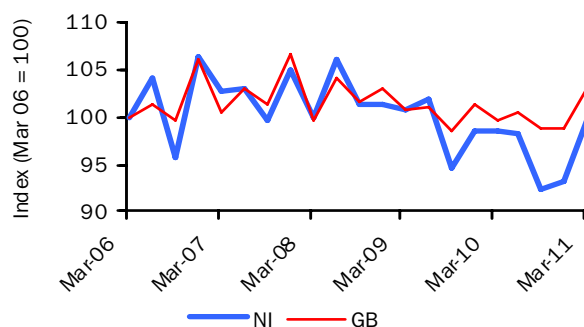


## Hours Worked

The total workforce hours worked per week in Northern Ireland in March 2011 was estimated at 25.9 million hours, representing an increase of 1.2% over the year (compared with an increase of 3.2% in GB). Between March 2006 and March 2011, NI's total workforce hours worked per week decreased by 0.4%, compared with an increase of 2.9% in GB (Figure 6). In the three months to October 2011, the average actual weekly hours worked in NI was 32.7 hours – similar to the UK average (31.7) for the period.

## 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 2011, which were released on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2011, show that yearly growth in median gross weekly earnings for all employees (i.e. both full- and part-time) in NI was 1.5% (to £360.0) compared to the UK, where earnings remained the same (at £403.9). NI full-time employees' gross weekly earnings at April 2011 were £450.6, which was 90.0% of the figure in the UK (£500.7). NI full-time earnings increased by 3.0% over the period, compared with an increase of 0.4% in the UK.

Full-time weekly private sector earnings increased by 3.5% to £394.2 and part-time earnings increased by 3.8% to £124.6 over the year in NI. This resulted in a narrowing of the NI/UK private sector pay gap to 82.8% of the UK figure.

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**Labour Market Structure – Seasonally adjusted**  
**Table 2**

(Thousands/Percentage)

	Total aged 16 and over	Total persons of working age 16-64	All aged 16+					All working age 16-64	
			Total economically active	Total in employment	Unemployed	Economically inactive	Unemployment rate (%)	Activity rate 16-64 (%)	Employment rate (%) 16-64
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
<b>ALL PERSONS</b>									
Sep-Nov 2008	1,373	1,137	816	780	36	557	4.4	70.4	67.3
Sep-Nov 2009	1,386	1,144	822	767	55	564	6.7	70.3	65.5
Sep-Nov 2010	1,398	1,150	833	768	65	565	7.8	71.0	65.3
Dec-Feb 2011	1,401	1,152	842	781	61	559	7.3	71.9	66.6
Mar-May 2011	1,404	1,153	864	803	61	540	7.1	73.3	68.0
Jun-Aug 2011	1,407	1,155	865	799	65	542	7.6	73.0	67.3
Sep-Nov 2011	1,409	1,156	862	803	59	547	6.8	72.9	67.8
<b>Change on Quarter</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>-7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>-0.7</b>	<b>-0.1</b>	<b>0.5</b>
<b>Change on Year</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>-7</b>	<b>-17</b>	<b>-1.0</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>2.5</b>
<b>MALES</b>									
Sep-Nov 2008	666	563	448	420	28	218	6.3	77.9	73.0
Sep-Nov 2009	673	567	447	406	41	226	9.1	76.8	69.6
Sep-Nov 2010	679	570	458	413	46	221	9.9	78.4	70.4
Dec-Feb 2011	681	570	458	417	41	223	9.0	78.9	71.7
Mar-May 2011	682	571	466	426	40	217	8.6	79.9	73.0
Jun-Aug 2011	684	572	461	418	43	223	9.2	78.3	70.8
Sep-Nov 2011	686	573	461	421	40	224	8.6	78.6	71.7
<b>FEMALES</b>									
Sep-Nov 2008	707	574	368	360	8	339	2.1	63.1	61.7
Sep-Nov 2009	713	577	375	360	15	338	3.9	64.0	61.5
Sep-Nov 2010	719	581	375	355	20	344	5.3	63.7	60.3
Dec-Feb 2011	720	581	384	364	20	336	5.3	65.0	61.5
Mar-May 2011	721	582	398	377	21	323	5.3	66.9	63.2
Jun-Aug 2011	723	582	404	381	23	319	5.6	67.8	63.9
Sep-Nov 2011	724	583	401	382	19	323	4.7	67.3	64.1

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.**

The estimates above have been revised to incorporate latest population figures - see note on revisions policy in Section 9.

Working age rates based on 16-64 population for both males and females - see Section 9 for details.

Figures may not sum due to rounding.

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## Seasonally Adjusted Regional Summary, September - November 2011

**Table 3**

	Labour Force Survey (LFS) <sup>1</sup>						Employee Jobs <sup>3</sup>	Claimant count rate (%) <sup>4</sup>	Claimant count level Percentage Change over the year	Claimant count level Percentage Change over the month	Jobs Density Indicator <sup>5</sup>
	Employment		Unemployment		Economically Inactive						
	Rate	Annual Change <sup>2</sup>	Rate	Annual Change <sup>2</sup>	Rate	Annual Change <sup>2</sup>					
North East	65.1	-0.9	12.0	2.3	25.8	-1.0	1,008	7.3	12.3	0.2	0.66
North West	68.8	-0.5	8.9	1.2	24.4	-0.4	2,883	5.8	13.1	0.3	0.75
Yorkshire & the Humber	67.5	-0.4	10.1	1.0	24.8	-0.2	2,115	6.2	12.3	0.3	0.73
East Midlands	71.1	0.5	8.3	0.1	22.4	-0.7	1,853	4.9	12.2	0.0	0.74
West Midlands	67.5	-0.4	9.2	-0.6	25.5	1.0	2,239	6.2	7.9	-0.1	0.75
East	74.3	0.4	7.2	0.7	19.8	-1.0	2,388	4.0	9.7	0.2	0.76
London	67.9	-0.7	9.9	0.8	24.5	0.0	4,207	4.9	11.1	0.4	0.88
South East	74.5	-0.6	6.4	0.3	20.3	0.3	3,634	3.3	9.2	0.2	0.80
South West	73.8	-0.4	6.5	0.6	20.9	-0.1	2,096	3.4	11.3	0.4	0.82
England	70.4	-0.4	8.5	0.6	23.0	-0.1	22,423	4.9	11.0	0.2	0.78
Wales	68.2	0.8	8.9	0.5	25.1	-1.0	1,144	5.5	9.2	-0.6	0.71
Scotland	70.9	0.1	8.6	0.2	22.3	-0.4	2,272	5.3	2.2	-1.0	0.78
Great Britain	70.3	-0.3	8.5	0.6	23.0	-0.2	25,838	4.9	10.0	0.1	0.78
N Ireland	67.8	2.5	6.8	-1.0	27.1	-1.9	698	6.9	4.1	0.2	0.73
United Kingdom	70.3	-0.2	8.4	0.5	23.1	-0.2	26,537	5.0	9.8	0.1	0.77

<sup>1</sup> Employment and economic inactivity rates are based on working age population (16-64); Unemployment rates are based on 16+ population.

<sup>2</sup> Data refer to percentage point change of respective rate.

<sup>3</sup> As at September 2011 (thousands).

<sup>4</sup> As at November 2011: percentage of the workforce.

<sup>5</sup> Not seasonally adjusted – data relates to 2009. Jobs Density – total number of jobs in an area divided by the resident population of working age in that area.

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## DEFINITIONS

### Notes to Table on Front Page

pps=percentage points

<sup>1</sup> Levels for all persons aged 16 and over, rates for working age (16-64)

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

<sup>3</sup> Quarterly Employment Survey

<sup>4</sup> Seasonally adjusted. Rates are as a percentage of the total workforce.

<sup>5</sup> Confirmed redundancies in the calendar month.

<sup>6</sup> Please note that it is possible for the number of unemployed to increase and the unemployment rate to fall during the same period, as the latter measure is a ratio e.g. if the number of economically active has increased at a faster rate than the number unemployed, the unemployment rate will fall.

### Unemployment

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.

Unemployment rate - the percentage of economically active people who are unemployed.

### Employment

The definition of ILO employed applies to anyone (aged 16 or over) who has done at least one hour's paid work in the week prior to interview, or has a job they are temporarily away from (e.g. on holiday). Also included are people who do unpaid work in a family business and people on Government-supported employment training schemes.

The ILO measures are particularly useful for examining short term and long term trends over time and key LFS time series data are available both seasonally adjusted and unadjusted.

### Sampling variability

The LFS is a sample survey, and as such, estimates obtained from it are subject to sampling variability. If we drew many samples each would give a different result. The ranges shown for the LFS data in 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 for the main LFS categories of employment, unemployment and economic inactivity were tested for statistical significance. The results showed that the annual change in the employment level and rate, for September - November 2011, were statistically significant at the 95% level.

Please see attached link for further LFS notes and definitions:

[Labour Force Survey Notes and Definitions](#)

### LFS revisions

Information on the revision policy concerning labour market statistics can be found through the link below:

[Labour market statistics revisions policy](#)

### Definition of 'working age'

The 'working age' definition, used in the calculation of employment and economic inactivity rates, was changed in August 2010 to include those aged from 16 to 64 for both men and women. Previously these rates were based on upper age limits of 59 for women and 64 for men, reflecting the state pension ages in the UK. However, between 2010 and 2020, the state pension age for women is increasing (by one month every two months) from 60 to 65, thereby making a change to the definition necessary.

The change in definition follows a UK wide public consultation on the issue and the approach being applied to Northern Ireland labour market statistics mirrors the approach that the Office for National Statistics (ONS) are applying to other UK regions. Please see links for further details:

[Change in female state pension age](#)

[Comparison of working age rates.](#)

Please note that there are no implications for the headline unemployment rate, which will continue to be based on the economically active population aged 16 and over.

### Hours Worked

The workforce hours data contained in Section 1 of this report is currently sourced to the Regional Workforce Hours series, which produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). Due to current resource pressures, ONS have indicated that they may have to discontinue the publication of this data series. Once a final decision is made, the Hours Worked section will be amended accordingly.

### **Claimant Count definition**

Claimant Count figures are derived from records of claimants held at Social Security 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.

Seasonally Adjusted claimant count figures are provisional when published and subject to revision, mainly the following month and are only available at Northern Ireland level. Seasonally Adjusted totals are subject to an annual update (usually April) to take account of latest assessment trends.

The 'Flows' data contained in section three is sourced to the Office of National Statistics (via the NOMIS website). Claimants appear as flows if they have either joined or left the count in the reference period or if they joined the count in a previous period, but were only processed during the reference period.

### **Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings**

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

[ASHE statistical bulletin](#)

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

### **Quarterly Employment Survey (QES) Revisions**

**Important Notice : Due to revisions in the QES sampling methodology, a discontinuity in the jobs series exists for all estimates from Q3 2009 onwards. For more details please follow link :**  
<http://www.detini.gov.uk/deti-stats-index/stats-surveys/stats-qes/stats-qes-discontinuity-notice.htm>

QES estimates are revised quarterly to reflect the latest information provided to the Department by employers. Estimates can be revised back to the last Census of Employment reference period (September 2009). The June 2011 estimate first published in September 2011 has subsequently been revised up (0.04%). For further details of QES revisions please see link below.

At the latest review of seasonal adjustment, both Construction and Other industries showed no seasonality.

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

### **Government Targets**

Data from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and the Quarterly Employment Survey (QES) are used in the measurement of targets set in the Northern Ireland Executive's Programme for Government (PSA targets) See [Programme for Government](#) for further details. The LFS and QES data feed into productivity estimates for NI and are therefore indirectly used to measure progress towards PSA 1: Productivity growth. In addition, LFS data is used to measure the proportion of the working age population qualified to Skill levels 2 and 3. This data therefore feeds into the measurement of PSA 2: Skills for prosperity.

Details of progress towards these targets can be found at:

[Programme for Government Delivery Report](#)

### **For further information:**

**AN ELECTRONIC VERSION OF THIS DOCUMENT WITH ASSOCIATED HYPERLINKS IS AVAILABLE ON THE HOME PAGE OF THE BRANCH WEBSITE AT:**

[www.statistics.detini.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.detini.gov.uk)

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