

STATISTICAL PRESS RELEASE

18 May 2011

Coverage

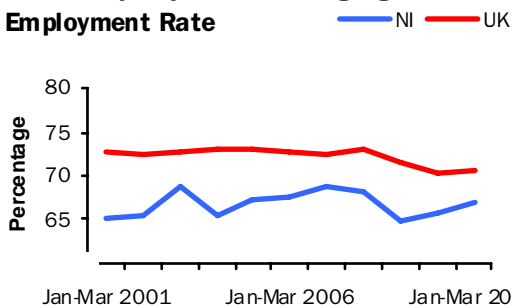
Northern Ireland, unless otherwise stated

Theme

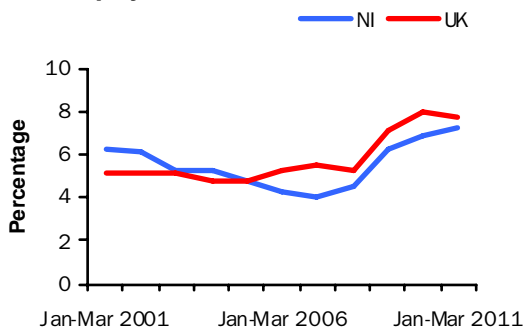
Labour Market

Seasonally Adjusted Working Age

Employment Rate



**Seasonally Adjusted
Unemployment Rate**



Issued by:

Economic & Labour Market Statistics Branch,
Tel: 028 90529421

Email: martin.monaghan@dfpni.gov.uk

Enquiries by the media should be directed to:
Press Office, DETI,
Tel: 028 90529604

Email: pressoffice@detini.gov.uk

www.statistics.detini.gov.uk

Next publication date: 15th June 2011



Labour Market Statistics – May 2011

Seasonally adjusted Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimates for Northern Ireland for the period January – March 2011 showed a decrease over the quarter in the number of unemployed and economically inactive persons, while there was an increase in the number of employed persons. The April Claimant Count recorded an increase of 200 claimants from the previous month's figure and now stands at 59,200.

In the latest reference period, the employment rate for those aged 16-64 was estimated at 67.0%, up 1.2 percentage points over the quarter and up 1.1 percentage points over the year.

The unemployment rate for the period January – March 2011 was estimated at 7.2%, down 0.8 percentage points over the quarter, but up 0.3 percentage points over the year. The NI rate is lower than the UK (7.7%) rate and also remains below the European Union (9.5%) and Republic of Ireland (14.9%) rates for February 2011.

The economic inactivity rate for those aged 16-64 in NI stands at 27.8%, down 0.6 percentage points over the quarter and down 1.4 percentage points over the year. However, the NI rate remains above the UK average rate (23.2%) and is the highest of 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 59,200 (6.7%) at April 2011, up 200 from the previous month's figure. Over the year the NI claimant count increased by 6.5%, whereas the UK count decreased by 3.0%. NI had the largest percentage increase in claimants among the UK regions over the year. It also has the joint highest Claimant Count rate of the twelve UK regions.

The Department was notified of 104 proposed redundancies in the period mid April to mid May and there were 124 confirmed redundancies in April 2011.

The total number of employee jobs in NI at December 2010 was estimated at 692,910 (Quarterly Employment Survey), down 1,880 jobs (-0.3%) over the quarter and down 8,200 jobs (-1.2%) over the year.

NI seasonally adjusted data

	Reference period	Levels	Rates (%)	Levels	Rates (pps)
				Change on quarter	
Employment ¹	Jan-Mar 2011	785,000	67.0%	12,000	1.2
Unemployment ²	Jan-Mar 2011	61,000	7.2%	-6,000	-0.8
Economically Active ¹	Jan-Mar 2011	846,000	72.2%	5,000	0.6
Economically Inactive ¹	Jan-Mar 2011	555,000	27.8%	-2,000	-0.6
Employee Jobs ³	December 2010	692,910		-1,880	
				Change on month	
Claimant Count ⁴	April 2011	59,200	6.7	+200	0.0
Redundancies ⁵	April 2011	124		-	-

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

Labour Market

Statistical Press Release

Seasonally adjusted Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimates for Northern Ireland for the period January - March 2011 showed a decrease over the quarter in the number of unemployed and economically inactive persons, while there was an increase in the number of employed persons. The seasonally adjusted claimant count in April 2011 increased by 200 over the month to 59,200. The Department was notified of 104 proposed redundancies in the latest reference period and 124 confirmed redundancies in April 2011.

Employment

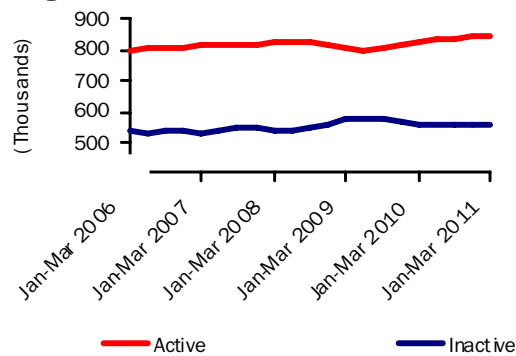
The number of persons in employment in the period January - March 2011 was estimated at 785,000. This estimate was up 12,000 over the quarter and up 13,000 over the year. The employment rate for those aged 16-64 was estimated at 67.0%, up 1.2 percentage points over the quarter and up 1.1 percentage points over the year. However, NI's employment rate remained well below the UK average (70.7%) and was the second lowest rate among the twelve UK regions.

Unemployment

The unemployment rate for the period January - March 2011 was estimated at 7.2%, down 0.8 percentage points over the quarter, but up 0.3 percentage points over the year. The number of unemployed persons was estimated at 61,000, down 6,000 over the quarter, but up 4,000 over the year.

Unadjusted figures show that 47.7% of the unemployed have been unemployed for 1 year or more – up 9.8 percentage points over the year. They also estimate the unemployment rate for 18- 24 year olds at 17.8% – up 1.7 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 January - March 2011 was estimated at 555,000. This figure fell by 2,000 over the quarter and by 5,000 over the year.

The NI economic inactivity rate for those aged 16-64 stands at 27.8%. This is significantly higher than the UK average rate (23.2%) and is the highest of the twelve UK regions. Unadjusted figures estimate that 29% of the economically inactive, aged 16-64, in NI are sick/disabled, 28% are students, 25% are looking after the family/home, 12% are retired and 6% are 'other' reason.

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

Northern Ireland Labour Market Summary (seasonally adjusted)

Table 1

	Period	Estimate	Sampling Variability of estimate	Change over year	Sampling Variability of change
Employment	Jan-Mar 2011	785,000	+/-23,000	13,000	+/-30,000
Unemployment	Jan-Mar 2011	61,000	+/-11,000	4,000	+/-15,000
Economically inactive	Jan-Mar 2011	555,000	+/-21,000	-5,000	+/-27,000
Unemployment rate	Jan-Mar 2011	7.2%	+/-1.3pps	0.3pps	+/-1.8pps
Employment rate ¹	Jan-Mar 2011	67.0%	+/-1.8pps	1.1pps	+/-2.3pps
Economic inactivity rate ¹	Jan-Mar 2011	27.8%	+/-1.7pps	-1.4pps	+/-2.2pps
Claimant Count	April 2011	59,200		3,600	

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

Statistical Press Release

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 none of the annual changes in the estimates were statistically significant i.e. the recorded change did not exceed the variability expected from a sample survey of this size (see table 1 and 'Definitions' for details).

Unemployment Regional Comparison

The latest NI seasonally adjusted unemployment rate (7.2%) was lower than the overall UK average rate (7.7%) and was fourth lowest among the twelve UK regions. The NI rate was also below the European Union (9.5%) and Republic of Ireland (14.9%) rates for February 2011.

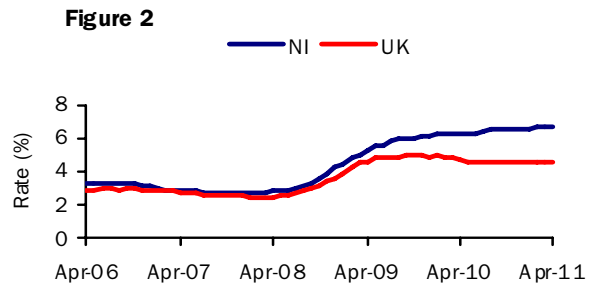
Claimant Count

The more recent seasonally adjusted claimant count increased by 200 from last month's total. It now stands at 59,200 (6.7% of the workforce) in April 2011. The latest monthly increase was higher than the increase of 100 for the previous monthly period. Over the year the Claimant Count in NI has increased by 3,600 (6.5%) and the workforce unemployment rate has increased by 0.4 percentage points.

Claimant Count Regional Comparison

The seasonally adjusted claimant count rate in NI (6.7%) was higher than the UK average rate (4.6%) and was the joint highest rate among the twelve UK regions. The April 2011 NI Claimant Count level increased by 0.3% (200 claimants) from last month's total, while the UK average increased by 0.9% (Figure 2). NI showed the sixth highest percentage monthly increase among the UK regions. Over the year the NI Claimant Count level increased by 6.5%, compared to a fall of 3.0% in the UK. The annual change in NI was the highest percentage increase among the twelve UK regions.

Seasonally Adjusted Claimant Count Monthly Rates



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 April 2011 were in Derry (7.6%), Strabane (7.0%), Belfast (6.9%) and Limavady (6.9%). Those that showed the highest percentage increase in levels over the year to April 2011 were Ards (13.6%), Castlereagh (10.7%), Armagh (10.6%) and Newry and Mourne (10.6%). For further District Council data please see section 3 of the Labour Market Report.

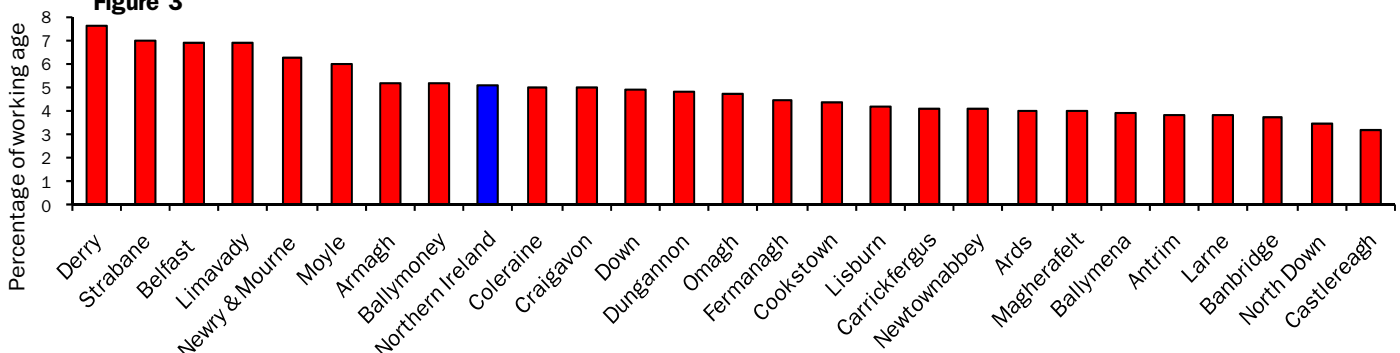
Employment and Training Measures

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 25.0% (2,699 persons) to 13,503 over the year to April 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



Statistical Press Release

Redundancies

The Department was notified of 104 proposed redundancies over the period mid April 2011 to mid May 2011. This compares to 299 proposed redundancies notified to the Department in the previous monthly period.

There were 124 confirmed redundancies in the month of April (Figure 5). Over the latest twelve monthly period there were a total of 1,770 confirmed redundancies, a decrease of 49% from the previous year (3,449). The highest number of confirmed redundancies took place in the Belfast District Council area which had 34.7% (614) of all redundancies over the year.

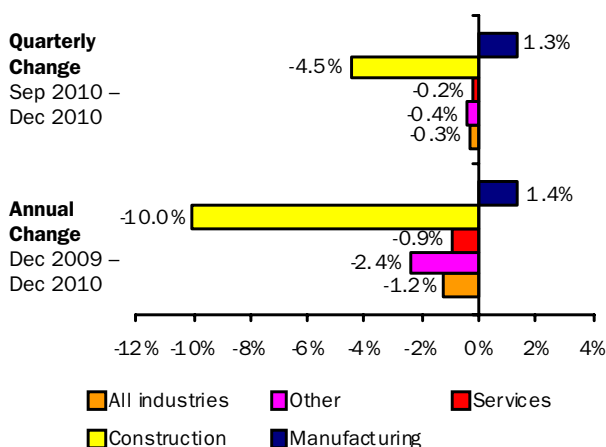
Over the latest twelve month period there were a total of 2,434 proposed redundancies, a decrease of 38% from the previous year (3,896). Currently there are 1,044 outstanding redundancies (that is, proposed but not confirmed), which is 2% lower than this time last year (1,069).

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

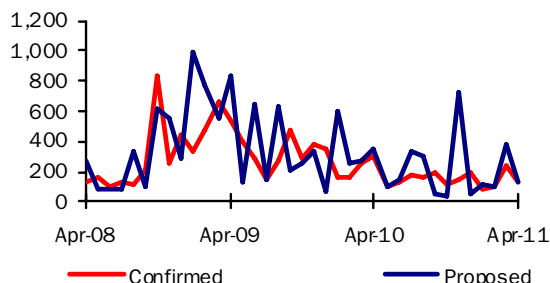
The QES provides an estimate of the number of jobs (rather than persons in employment) and is the preferred measure of change in employee jobs. The estimated seasonally adjusted employee jobs total in Northern Ireland at December 2010 was 692,910. This represents a decrease of 1,880 from the revised figure for the previous quarter and a decrease of 8,200 over the year (see Section 9 for details of QES revisions).

Annual and Quarterly changes in employee jobs (seasonally adjusted)
Figure 4



The seasonally adjusted quarterly change consisted of decreases in the Service sector (-1,270 jobs) in Construction (-1,480 jobs) and also on Other industries (-70 jobs). The Manufacturing sector increased over the quarter (950 jobs).

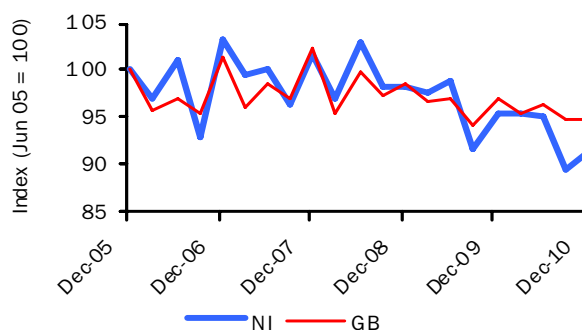
Confirmed and Proposed Redundancies
April 08 - April 11
Figure 5



Hours Worked

The total workforce hours worked per week in Northern Ireland in December 2010 was estimated at 24.5 million hours, representing a decrease of 4.3% over the year (compared to a fall of 2.3% in GB). Between September 2005 and September 2010, NI's total workforce hours worked per week decreased by 8.6%, compared to a 5.3% fall in GB (Figure 6). In the three months to February 2011, the average actual weekly hours worked in NI was 32.2 hours – higher than the UK average (31.1) 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 2010, which were released on 8th December 2010, show that yearly growth in median gross weekly earnings for all employees (i.e. both full- and part-time) in NI was 0.6% (to £356.6) compared to 1.8% in the UK (to £404.3). NI full-time employees' gross weekly earnings at April 2010 were £440.8, which was approximately 88% of the figure in the UK (£498.8). NI full-time earnings increased by 0.8% over the period, compared with an increase of 2.1% in the UK.

Full-time weekly private sector earnings increased by 0.6% to £383.4 and part-time earnings fell by 7.1% to £120.0 over the year in NI. This resulted in a further widening of the NI/UK private sector pay gap to 81.0% of the UK figure.

Statistical Press Release

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	
ALL PERSONS									
Jan-Mar 2008	1,364	1,131	823	786	37	541	4.5	71.4	68.1
Jan-Mar 2009	1,377	1,139	804	754	50	574	6.2	69.1	64.7
Jan-Mar 2010	1,390	1,146	829	772	57	561	6.9	70.8	65.9
Apr-Jun 2010	1,393	1,148	833	777	56	560	6.7	71.2	66.4
Jul-Sep 2010	1,396	1,149	836	778	59	560	7.0	71.2	66.1
Oct-Dec 2010	1,399	1,151	841	774	67	558	8.0	71.7	65.8
Jan-Mar 2011	1,402	1,152	846	785	61	555	7.2	72.2	67.0
Change on Quarter	3	1	5	12	-6	-2	-0.8	0.6	1.2
Change on Year	12	6	17	13	4	-5	0.3	1.4	1.1
MALES									
Jan-Mar 2008	661	560	452	426	26	209	5.7	79.0	74.4
Jan-Mar 2009	668	564	439	405	35	229	7.9	75.9	69.8
Jan-Mar 2010	675	568	456	413	42	219	9.3	77.9	70.5
Apr-Jun 2010	676	568	457	416	41	219	9.0	78.4	71.2
Jul-Sep 2010	678	569	458	416	41	221	9.1	78.4	71.1
Oct-Dec 2010	680	570	459	412	47	220	10.2	78.6	70.4
Jan-Mar 2011	681	571	461	418	42	220	9.2	79.4	72.1
FEMALES									
Jan-Mar 2008	703	572	372	360	12	332	3.2	64.0	61.9
Jan-Mar 2009	709	575	365	349	15	344	4.2	62.5	59.8
Jan-Mar 2010	715	578	374	359	15	341	3.9	63.8	61.3
Apr-Jun 2010	717	579	376	361	15	341	4.0	64.2	61.6
Jul-Sep 2010	718	580	379	361	17	339	4.5	64.2	61.2
Oct-Dec 2010	719	581	382	361	21	337	5.4	64.8	61.3
Jan-Mar 2011	721	581	386	367	19	335	4.9	65.2	62.0

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 'Definitions'.

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

Figures may not sum due to rounding.

Statistical Press Release

Seasonally Adjusted Regional Summary, January 2011 – March 2011

Table 3

	Labour Force Survey (LFS) ¹						Employee Jobs ³	Claimant count rate (%) ⁴	Claimant count level Percentage Change over the year	Claimant count level Percentage Change over the month	Jobs Density Indicator ⁵
	Employment		Unemployment		Economically Inactive						
	Rate	Annual Change ²	Rate	Annual Change ²	Rate	Annual Change ²					
North East	65.5	-1.2	10.4	0.8	26.8	0.6	1,015	6.7	1.7	2.4	0.69
North West	68.9	0.0	7.8	-0.9	25.2	0.7	2,875	5.2	-2.6	1.1	0.76
Yorkshire & the Humber	68.8	0.0	9.2	-0.6	24.1	0.5	2,138	5.5	-4.1	0.3	0.75
East Midlands	71.8	0.9	7.7	0.3	22.1	-1.3	1,801	4.5	-5.3	1.3	0.75
West Midlands	67.9	-0.9	9.5	0.3	24.7	0.7	2,204	5.8	-5.6	1.0	0.77
East	74.5	1.2	6.2	-0.4	20.4	-1.0	2,342	3.6	-6.7	0.0	0.77
London	68.8	1.0	9.1	0.0	24.3	-1.1	3,986	4.5	1.7	2.4	0.90
South East	75.1	0.1	5.7	-0.6	20.2	0.3	3,552	2.9	-10.5	-0.2	0.82
South West	73.4	0.3	6.6	0.4	21.3	-0.7	2,144	3.0	-5.2	-0.2	0.82
England	70.9	0.3	7.8	-0.2	23.0	-0.2	22,055	4.4	-3.8	1.0	0.79
Wales	68.5	1.9	7.7	-1.6	25.6	-0.7	1,135	5.0	-5.3	0.1	0.71
Scotland	71.2	1.2	7.7	-0.5	22.7	-0.9	2,237	5.1	1.8	0.1	0.80
Great Britain	70.8	0.4	7.8	-0.3	23.1	-0.3	25,430	4.5	-3.4	0.9	0.79
N Ireland	67.0	1.1	7.2	0.3	27.8	-1.4	695	6.7	6.5	0.3	0.76
United Kingdom	70.7	0.4	7.7	-0.3	23.2	-0.3	26,125	4.6	-3.0	0.9	0.79

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

² Data refer to percentage point change of respective rate.

³ As at September 2010 (thousands).

⁴ As at April 2011: percentage of the workforce.

⁵ Not seasonally adjusted – data relates to 2008. Jobs Density – total number of jobs in an area divided by the resident population of working age in that area.

DEFINITIONS

Notes to Table on Front Page

pps=percentage points

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

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.

⁶ 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.

Statistical Press Release

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 for January - March 2011 showed that none of the annual changes in these categories 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

LFS microdata have recently been revised to incorporate the latest population estimates. The revision effect LFS data from the period June to August 2001 onwards and were first published in May 2011. The magnitude of the revisions were relatively small, with the revisions to the unemployment rate falling within +/-0.1 percentage points and the working age employment rate within +/- 0.2 percentage points. The procedures being applied to the NI LFS results were consistent with those applied by the Office for National Statistics to other UK regions.

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

[Labour market statistics revisions policy](#)

Definition of 'working age'

The 'working age' definition, used in the calculation of employment and economic inactivity rates, was changed in August 2010 to include those aged from 16 to 64 for both men and women. Previously these rates were based on upper age limits of 59 for women and 64 for men, reflecting the state pension ages in the UK. 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. A consistent time series for the new headline rates has been produced and all future reference to working age rates will be based on the 16 to 64 definition. Please see link for further details:

[Change in female state pension age](#)

For a limited period, employment and inactivity rates based on the old working age economic definition (i.e. 16-59/64) will be available on the DETI website at:

[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.

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 that is published in section three relates to the date the claimant actually joined or left the claimant count. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) use a different methodology when collating flows. They count flows based on the month in which the flow was added to the system regardless of the actual period to which the flow related. Since the majority of flows are recorded on the system in the month they actually happen, there is not much difference between these two methodologies.

Quarterly Employment Survey (QES) Revisions

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 September 2010 estimate first published in December 2010 has subsequently been revised down by (0.4%). For further details of QES revisions please see link below.

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

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

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

You can also contact Statistics Research Branch by: -

Writing to:

Martin Monaghan
Economic and Labour Market Statistics Branch,
Room 110, Netherleigh, Massey Avenue, Belfast
BT4 2JP.

Tel: (028) 9052 9421

Fax: (028) 9052 9658

Textphone: (028) 9052 9304

Email: martin.monaghan@dfoni.gov.uk