

## STATISTICAL PRESS RELEASE

**12 October 2011**

**Coverage**

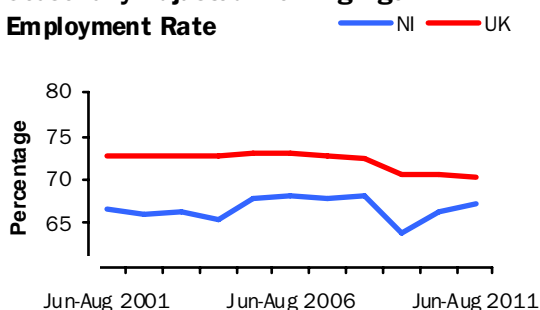
Northern Ireland, unless otherwise stated

**Theme**

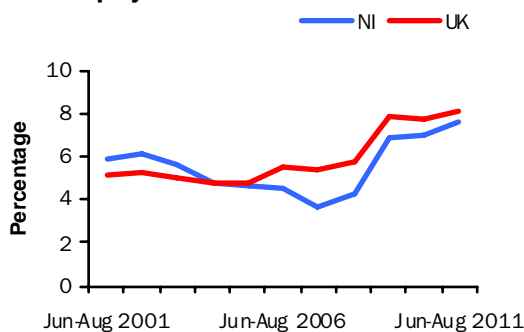
Labour Market

**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](mailto:martin.monaghan@dfpni.gov.uk)

Enquiries by the media should be directed to:

Press Office, DETI,

Tel: 028 90529604

Email: [pressoffice@detini.gov.uk](mailto:pressoffice@detini.gov.uk)

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

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### Labour Market Statistics – October 2011

Seasonally adjusted Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimates for Northern Ireland for the period June - August 2011 recorded a quarterly fall in employment levels, while there was an increase in unemployment and economic inactivity. The September Claimant Count recorded an increase of 500 claimants from the previous month's revised figure and now stands at 60,900.

In the latest reference period, the employment rate for those aged 16-64 was estimated at 67.3%, down 0.7 percentage points over the quarter, but up 1.0 percentage points over the year.

The unemployment rate for the period June - August 2011 was estimated at 7.6%, up 0.5 percentage points over the quarter and up 0.6 percentage points over the year. The NI rate was lower than the UK (8.1%) rate and also remained below the European Union (9.5%) and Republic of Ireland (14.5%) rates for July 2011.

The economic inactivity rate for those aged 16-64 in NI stands at 27.0%, up 0.3 percentage points over the quarter, but down 1.6 percentage points over the year. However, the NI rate remained above the UK average rate (23.3%) 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 60,900 (6.9%) at September 2011, up 500 from the previous month's revised figure. On this measure NI had the second highest unemployment rate among the twelve UK regions. However, the monthly increase in NI claimants (0.8%) was lower than the UK average increase (1.1%) and the annual increase in NI (5.2%) was lowest among the UK regions (the annual increase in the UK was 8.8%).

70 proposed redundancies were notified in the period mid September to mid October and there were 65 confirmed redundancies in September 2011.

The total number of employee jobs in NI at June 2011 was estimated at 699,650 (Quarterly Employment Survey), down 1,830 jobs (-0.3%) over the quarter and down 9,890 jobs (-1.4%) over the year.

**NI seasonally adjusted data**

	Reference period	Levels	Rates (%)	Levels	Rates (pps)
				Change on quarter	
Employment <sup>1</sup>	Jun-Aug 2011	799,000	67.3%	-3,000	-0.7
Unemployment <sup>2</sup>	Jun-Aug 2011	65,000	7.6%	4,000	0.5
Economically Active <sup>1</sup>	Jun-Aug 2011	865,000	73.0%	1,000	-0.3
Economically Inactive <sup>1</sup>	Jun-Aug 2011	542,000	27.0%	2,000	0.3
Employee Jobs <sup>3</sup>	June 2011	699,650		-1,830	
				Change on month	
Claimant Count <sup>4</sup>	September 2011	60,900	6.9	+500	0.1
Redundancies <sup>5</sup>	September 2011	65		-	-

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 June to August 2011 recorded a fall over the quarter in the number of employed persons, while there was an increase in the number of unemployed and economically inactive persons. The seasonally adjusted claimant count in September 2011 increased by 500 over the month to 60,900. 70 proposed redundancies were notified in the latest reference period and 65 confirmed redundancies in September 2011.

### Employment

The number of persons in employment in the period June - August 2011 was estimated at 799,000. This estimate was down 3,000 over the quarter, but was up 21,000 over the year. The employment rate for those aged 16-64 was estimated at 67.3%, down 0.7 percentage points over the quarter, but up 1.0 percentage points over the year. NI's employment rate remained below the UK average (70.4%) and was the joint second lowest rate among the twelve UK regions.

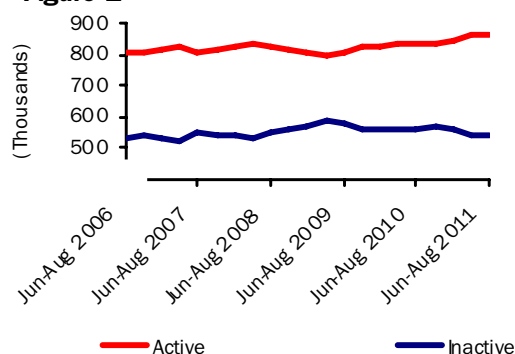
### Unemployment

The unemployment rate for the period June - August 2011 was estimated at 7.6%, up 0.5 percentage points over the quarter and 0.6 percentage points over the year. The number of unemployed persons was estimated at 65,000, up 4,000 over the quarter and up 7,000 over the year.

Unadjusted figures show that 45.1% of the unemployed have been unemployed for 1 year or more – up 2.4 percentage points over the year. They also estimate the unemployment rate for 18- 24 year olds at 18.1% – down 0.8 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 June - August 2011 was estimated at 542,000. This figure has increased by 2,000 over the quarter, but was down 16,000 over the year.

The NI economic inactivity rate for those aged 16-64 stands at 27.0%. This is significantly higher than the UK average rate (23.3%) and is the highest of the twelve UK regions. Unadjusted figures estimate that 32% of the economically inactive, aged 16-64, in NI are sick/disabled, 29% are students, 21% are looking after the family/home, 11% are retired and 6% 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	Jun-Aug 2011	799,000	+/-23,000	21,000	+/-30,000
Unemployment	Jun-Aug 2011	65,000	+/-11,000	7,000	+/-15,000
Economically inactive	Jun-Aug 2011	542,000	+/-21,000	-16,000	+/-27,000
Unemployment rate	Jun-Aug 2011	7.6%	+/-1.3pps	0.6pps	+/-1.8pps
Employment rate <sup>1</sup>	Jun-Aug 2011	67.3%	+/-1.8pps	1.0pps	+/-2.3pps
Economic inactivity rate <sup>1</sup>	Jun-Aug 2011	27.0%	+/-1.7pps	-1.6pps	+/-2.2pps
Claimant Count	September 2011	60,900		3,000	

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 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 Section 9 for details).

## Unemployment Regional Comparison

The latest NI seasonally adjusted unemployment rate (7.6%) was lower than the overall UK average rate (8.1%) and was the fourth lowest rate among the twelve UK regions. The NI rate was also below the European Union (9.5%) and Republic of Ireland (14.5%) rates for July 2011. Comparable figures for the three months to July 2011 estimate the NI unemployment rate for 18-24 year olds at 18.3%, compared to a UK average rate of 19.2%.

## Claimant Count

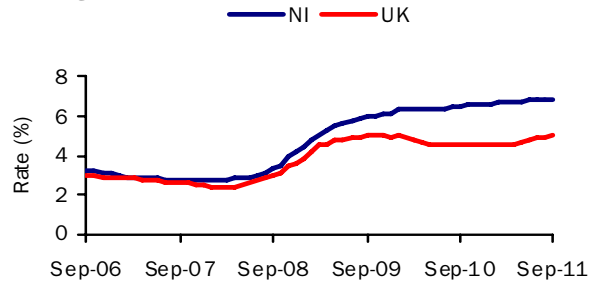
The more recent seasonally adjusted claimant count increased by 500 (0.8%) from last month. It now stands at 60,900 (6.9% of the workforce) in September 2011. The latest monthly increase was higher than the increase of 100 for the previous monthly period. Over the year the Claimant Count in NI has increased by 3,000 (5.2%) and the workforce unemployment rate has increased by 0.4 percentage points.

## Claimant Count Regional Comparison

The seasonally adjusted claimant count rate in NI (6.9%) was higher than the UK average rate (5.0%) and was the second highest rate among the twelve UK regions. However, the monthly increase in NI claimants (0.8%) was lower than the UK average increase (1.1%) over the same period. In addition, the annual increase in NI claimants (5.2%) was the lowest among the UK regions (the annual increase in the UK was 8.8%).

## 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 September 2011 were in Derry (8.4%), Belfast (7.2%), Limavady (7.2%) and Strabane (7.2%). Those that showed the highest percentage increase in levels over the year to September 2011 were Ballymoney (10.0%), North Down (9.5%) and Derry (9.2%). For further District Council data please see section 3 of the Labour Market Report.

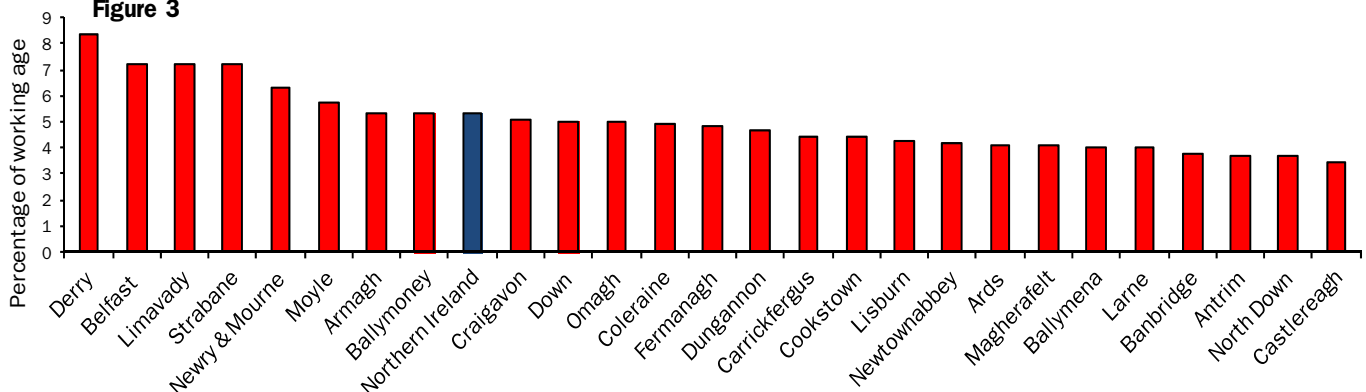
## Employment and Training Measures

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 7.1% (883 persons) to 13,330 over the year to September 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 70 proposed redundancies notified during the period mid September 2011 to mid October 2011. This compares to 44 proposed redundancies that were notified in the previous monthly period.

There were 65 confirmed redundancies in the month of September (Figure 5). Over the latest twelve monthly period there were a total of 1,756 confirmed redundancies, a decrease of 34% from the previous year (2,653). The highest number of confirmed redundancies took place in the Belfast District Council area which had 36.4% (640) of all redundancies over the year.

Over the latest twelve month period there were a total of 2,184 proposed redundancies, a decrease of 29% from the previous year (3,063).

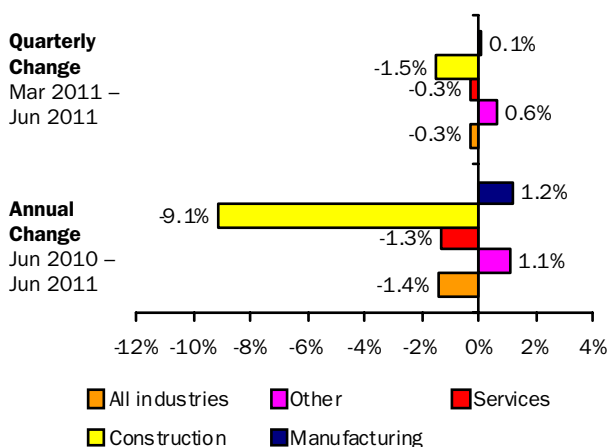
Currently there are 757 outstanding redundancies (that is, proposed but not confirmed), which is 12% lower than this time last year (860).

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 June 2011 was 699,650. This represents a decrease of 1,830 from the revised figure for the previous quarter and a decrease of 9,890 over the year (see Section 9 for details of QES revisions).

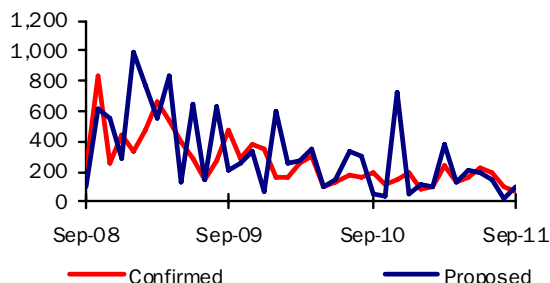
**Annual and Quarterly changes in employee jobs (seasonally adjusted)**  
**Figure 4**



\*Please see QES further info (Section 9)

The seasonally adjusted quarterly change consisted of decreases in Construction (-500) and Services (-1,520). Manufacturing (+70) and Other industries (+110) both experienced increases over the quarter.

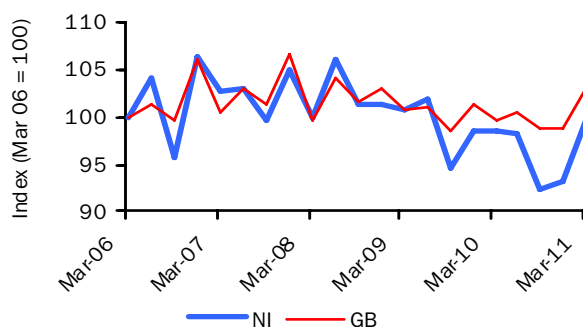
**Confirmed and Proposed Redundancies**  
**September 08 - September 11**  
**Figure 5**



## 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 July 2011, the average actual weekly hours worked in NI was 32.2 hours – similar to the UK average (32.1) 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 8<sup>th</sup> 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**

	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
<b>ALL PERSONS</b>									
Jun-Aug 2008	1,370	1,135	823	788	35	547	4.2	71.3	68.2
Jun-Aug 2009	1,383	1,142	804	748	56	579	6.9	68.8	64.0
Jun-Aug 2010	1,395	1,149	837	778	59	558	7.0	71.4	66.3
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
<b>Change on Quarter</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>-0.3</b>	<b>-0.7</b>
<b>Change on Year</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>-16</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1.0</b>
<b>MALES</b>									
Jun-Aug 2008	664	562	451	428	23	214	5.1	78.6	74.5
Jun-Aug 2009	671	566	442	400	42	230	9.4	75.9	68.6
Jun-Aug 2010	678	569	458	417	41	219	9.0	78.6	71.4
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
<b>WOMEN</b>									
Jun-Aug 2008	706	573	372	361	12	333	3.1	64.1	62.1
Jun-Aug 2009	711	576	362	348	14	349	3.9	61.9	59.5
Jun-Aug 2010	717	580	379	361	17	339	4.6	64.3	61.3
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

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.

# Statistical Press Release

## Seasonally Adjusted Regional Summary, June - August 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	-2.8	11.3	2.2	26.5	1.4	1,007	7.3	11.0	1.7	0.66
North West	69.1	-0.2	8.2	0.2	24.6	0.1	2,923	5.7	10.4	1.8	0.75
Yorkshire & the Humber	68.1	-0.6	9.7	0.4	24.4	0.4	2,131	6.1	10.6	1.4	0.73
East Midlands	72.1	1.0	7.9	0.3	21.7	-1.3	1,852	4.9	9.6	1.0	0.74
West Midlands	67.9	-2.0	8.9	0.7	25.4	1.5	2,246	6.3	6.9	0.3	0.75
East	74.5	0.8	6.7	0.0	20.0	-0.9	2,369	4.0	7.3	1.4	0.76
London	67.8	-0.6	10.0	1.0	24.5	-0.1	4,138	4.8	9.5	0.7	0.88
South East	74.5	-0.4	5.8	-0.5	20.8	0.8	3,684	3.3	6.5	1.5	0.80
South West	73.3	-1.1	6.6	0.8	21.4	0.5	2,109	3.3	10.8	2.6	0.82
England	70.6	-0.5	8.1	0.4	23.1	0.2	22,459	4.8	9.1	1.3	0.78
Wales	67.3	0.1	9.0	0.9	25.9	-0.7	1,145	5.6	9.1	1.0	0.71
Scotland	71.2	0.8	7.9	-0.7	22.6	-0.3	2,292	5.4	7.6	-0.1	0.78
Great Britain	70.5	-0.4	8.1	0.3	23.2	0.1	25,896	4.9	8.9	1.1	0.78
N Ireland	67.3	1.0	7.6	0.6	27.0	-1.6	700	6.9	5.2	0.8	0.73
United Kingdom	70.4	-0.3	8.1	0.3	23.3	0.1	26,596	5.0	8.8	1.1	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 March 2011 (thousands).

<sup>4</sup> As at August 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.

## 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. 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.

### 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

## Statistical Press Release

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 none of the annual changes in the estimates for June - August 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

LFS data from the period June to August 2001 onwards have recently been revised to incorporate the latest population estimates. The magnitude of the revisions are 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 are 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 economic inactivity rates based on the old working age 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 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.

#### **Notes on the 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](#)

#### **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 March 2011 estimate first published in June 2011 has subsequently been revised down (0.3%). 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:**

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You can also contact Economic & Labour Market Statistics Branch by: -

#### **Writing to:**

Martin Monaghan  
Economic & 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: [statistics@detini.gov.uk](mailto:statistics@detini.gov.uk)