



Department of
**Enterprise, Trade
and Investment**
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Labour Market

Statistics Bulletin

Northern Ireland Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2008

14 November 2008



Department of Enterprise,
Trade and Investment

Northern Ireland Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2008

14 November 2008

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NORTHERN IRELAND ANNUAL SURVEY of HOURS and EARNINGS APRIL 2008

Published 14/11/08

The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings provides a wide range of information on hourly, weekly and annual earnings of employees in Northern Ireland at April 2008. Headline data from the survey show that:

- The estimated median gross weekly earnings for **all** (i.e. both full- and part-time) employees in NI at April 2008 was £346.5, some 89% of the UK figure (£388.4). Growth in NI median earnings for **all** employees was 5.1% over the year to April 2008, compared to growth in the UK of 3.3%.
- However, much of the growth was accounted for by an improvement in NI **part-time** employees' earnings. **Part-time** NI employees experienced 6.7% growth in their gross weekly earnings at April 2008, compared to 2.3% growth in UK earnings. This higher growth rate in earnings among NI **part-time** employees, which was largely due to increases in hourly rates of pay, helped contribute to a narrowing of the NI/UK pay gap for **all** employees.
- In contrast, NI and UK **full-time** employees experienced relatively similar levels of growth in their gross weekly earnings over the year to April 2008 (NI: 4.3%; UK: 4.6%).
- Median **full-time private sector** gross weekly earnings grew by 3.8% over the year in NI compared to 4.6% in the UK. This represented a slight widening of the NI/UK **private sector** pay gap, from 82.7% to 82.0%.
- Median **full-time** weekly earnings in the **public sector** in NI (£498.8) were over 32% higher than the **private sector** (£377.1). This was more marked than in the UK (14% higher in the **public** than the **private sector**).
- Over the period 2007–2008, the gender pay gap remained relatively unchanged in NI. Female **full-time** median **hourly earnings** excluding overtime were some 97.4% of male earnings (compared to 87.2% in the UK).
- The median gross **annual earnings** for **full-time** employees in NI grew by 5.9% to £22,169 in 2008, compared to 4.5% growth in the UK (to £25,123).

The ASHE estimates are based on a sample and are therefore subject to an associated level of sampling variability. For example, the estimate of median gross weekly earnings for full-time employees has a sampling error of +/- 3%.

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Executive Summary

1

INTRODUCTION

The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) is a UK wide survey that provides a wide range of information on hourly, weekly and annual earnings by gender, work pattern, industry and occupation including public vs private sector pay comparisons. The sample used covers approximately 1% of all employees in Northern Ireland who were covered by PAYE schemes, and therefore is subject to an associated level of sampling error.

ASHE replaced the New Earnings Survey (NES) from 2004 and ASHE comparisons are therefore only available on a consistent basis from that year onwards. The development of the survey follows the recommendations made in the National Statistics Quality Review of the Distribution of Earnings Statistics for improving the collection of earnings statistics, with ASHE results satisfying a variety of different user-needs identified in that document (e.g. low pay issues).

This report presents provisional results from the Northern Ireland element of the 2008 ASHE, which surveyed employee earnings for the pay period including 16th April 2008.

NI VERSUS UK All Employees

Results show that the median gross weekly earnings for all employees¹ in NI at April 2008 was £346.5, or approximately 89% of the UK figure (£388.4). This gap partly reflects differences in the composition and changing structures of the respective workforces, by full-/part-time status, gender, industry and occupation structure etc. Growth over the year to April 2008 in NI was 5.1%, compared with growth in the UK of 3.3%. Faster growth was also evident in the median hourly rate of pay excluding overtime for all employees in NI. Hourly earnings grew by 5.6% in NI, (compared to 3.7% in the UK) between April 2007 and 2008.

Full-time Employees

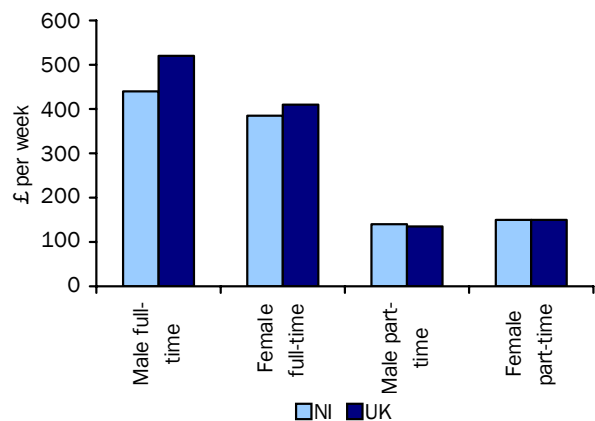
The median gross weekly full-time wage in NI in 2008 was £417.6, which was approximately 87% of the figure in the UK (£478.6). NI full-time earnings increased by 4.3% over the period, which was relatively similar to the increase in the UK (4.6%).

Part-time Employees

The median gross weekly part-time earnings in NI at April 2008 was £150.3, over 2% higher than the figure in the UK (£147.0). As such, growth over the year was substantially higher in NI (6.7%) than in the UK (2.3%) for part-time employees. Given the reduction in the number of total hours worked by part-time NI employees, this increase was largely due to increases in hourly rates of pay and helped contribute to the narrowing of the ratio of NI to UK pay for all employees.

Median gross weekly earnings by full-/part-time and gender, April 2008

Figure 1



COMPARISON WITH UK REGIONS

Although full-time employees in Northern Ireland continued to have the lowest median gross weekly earnings across the UK regions, their earnings were relatively similar to such employees in the North East (£420.6) and Wales (£421.0) at April 2008. Indeed, median gross weekly earnings for all employees in NI were marginally higher than in these regions.

Full-time male earnings in NI continued to be the lowest of any UK region. However, full-time female earnings were higher than in several of the UK regions.

GENDER DIFFERENCES

Over the period 2006-2008 the gender pay gap has been relatively unchanged in NI. At April 2008 female full-time median hourly earnings excluding overtime were slightly less than male earnings (97.4%) in NI. This gap continued to be narrower than in the UK (87.2%).

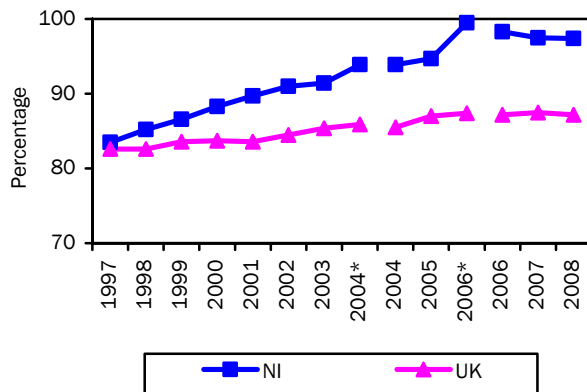
¹ Data from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) relates to all employees (i.e. full- and part-time) on adult rates whose pay was unaffected by absence during the survey period, unless otherwise specified.

It should be noted that males working full-time had median annual earnings² of £23,371, over 15% more than the equivalent female figure of £20,262. The differences between the annual and hourly gender pay gap partly reflect differences in the median amount of hours worked per week (37.5 hours per week among full-time females compared to 40.0 hours worked among males).

While at an overall level the gender pay gap is 2.6% in Northern Ireland, gender pay differences continue to exist for various occupational and industry groupings in NI.

Median full-time female hourly earnings excluding overtime (NI versus UK) as a percentage of male earnings, 1997-2008

Figure 2



* The introduction of methodological changes to improve the quality of ASHE data has resulted in discontinuities in trends. More details of this can be found in the background notes.

NI PRIVATE VERSUS UK PRIVATE

Median gross weekly earnings for full-time employees in the NI private sector increased at a slower rate (3.8% to £377.1) than in the UK, where growth was 4.6% over the year (to £460.0). This represented a slight widening of the NI/UK private sector pay gap, from 82.7% of the UK figure at April 2007 to 82.0% at April 2008.

PUBLIC VERSUS PRIVATE

In NI, the median weekly earnings for full-time employees in the public sector was over 32% higher than in the private sector at April 2008 and this was true for both men (34% higher) and women (52% higher). This was more marked than in the UK as a whole, where public sector earnings were 14% higher than in the private sector.

Growth in median full-time public sector weekly earnings in NI (3.4% to £498.8) was slightly lower than in the UK public sector (4.3% to £522.6), meaning that the NI/UK public sector pay gap widened to 95.4% (from 96.2% in 2007).

Some of the difference between the public and private sectors in NI and the UK may be due to differences in the composition of the respective workforces and the timing of pay settlements.

Median gross weekly earnings for full-time employees in the public and private sectors
Table 1

£	NORTHERN IRELAND		UNITED KINGDOM	
	PUBLIC	PRIVATE	PUBLIC	PRIVATE
April 2008				
Men	551.3	410.6	574.4	503.7
Women	481.4	316.2	480.7	366.1
All	498.8	377.1	522.6	460.0
April 2007				
Men	529.7	390.9	550.2	482.0
Women	457.7	296.1	461.6	350.6
All	482.4	363.4	501.2	439.6
% change				
Men	4.1	5.0	4.4	4.5
Women	5.2	6.8	4.1	4.4
All	3.4	3.8	4.3	4.6

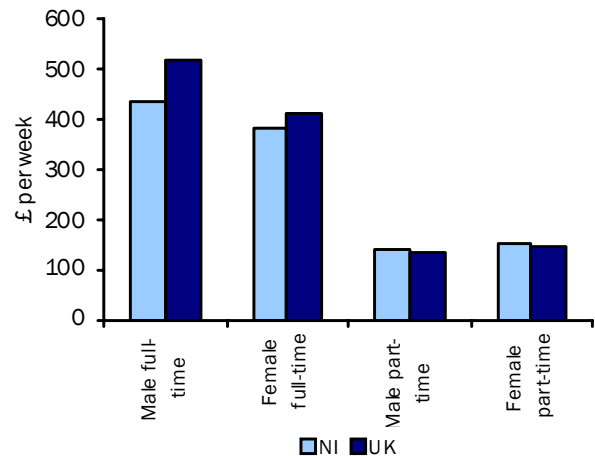
² Employees on adult rates who have been in the same job for at least 12 months, including those whose pay was affected by absence.

Median Weekly Earnings

2

- The median gross weekly earnings for all employees in NI in 2008 was £346.5, compared with a figure of £388.4 in the UK.
- Growth in NI median earnings for all employees was 5.1% over the year to April 2008. The growth in UK earnings was 3.3%.
- The median gross weekly earnings for full-time employees in NI (£417.6) was 12.7% lower than the UK (£478.6), similar to last year (12.5%).
- Full-time weekly earnings increased by 4.3% over the year compared with an increase of 4.6% in the UK.
- Part-time weekly earnings were £150.3, up 6.7% over the year compared with an increase of 2.3% in the UK (to £147.0).
- Full-time male weekly earnings were 18.8% higher in the UK compared to NI, while women's earnings were 6.9% higher in the UK than in NI.
- Men's median full-time earnings increased by 4.1% in the year to April 2008, compared with slightly higher growth for women's earnings of 4.8%.

Median gross weekly earnings by full-/part-time and gender, April 2008
Figure 3



Median gross weekly earnings (NI) by full-/part-time and gender
Table 2

£	FULL-TIME	PART-TIME	ALL
April 2008			
Men	438.8	141.2	404.3
Women	385.5	152.7	287.5
All	417.6	150.3	346.5
April 2007			
Men	421.7	126.9	394.2
Women	367.7	145.3	272.6
All	400.3	140.8	329.9
% change			
Men	4.1	11.2	2.6
Women	4.8	5.0	5.5
All	4.3	6.7	5.1

Median Annual Earnings

3

- The median gross annual earnings for full-time employees³ was £22,169 in 2008, 11.8% lower than the equivalent figure in the UK (£25,123).
- Males working full-time had median annual earnings of £23,371, over 15% more than the equivalent female figure of £20,262.
- 20% of full-time employees earned more than £34,233 per year, while 20% earned less than £14,702.
- 10% of full-time employees earned more than £41,776 per year, while 10% earned less than £12,110.

Median gross annual earnings for full-time employees by gender

Table 3

£	MALE	FEMALE	ALL
April 2008	23,371	20,262	22,169
April 2007	21,984	19,472	20,934
% change	6.3	4.1	5.9

³ Employees on adult rates who have been in the same job for at least 12 months, including those whose pay was affected by absence.

Median Hourly Earnings (excluding overtime)

4

- The median gross hourly rate of pay excluding overtime⁴ for all employees in NI grew by 5.6% between April 2007 and 2008, compared to 3.7% in the UK.
- Median gross hourly earnings excluding overtime for full-time employees was £10.17 per hour in April 2008, up by 4.5%.
- The increase over the year in full-time female hourly earnings excluding overtime was 4.1%, which was similar to the equivalent increase for males (4.2%).

Median gross hourly earnings excluding overtime by full-/part-time and gender

Table 4

£	FULL-TIME	PART-TIME	ALL
April 2008			
Men	10.25	7.67	9.91
Women	9.98	7.91	8.99
All	10.17	7.86	9.50
April 2007			
Men	9.84	6.80	9.50
Women	9.59	7.49	8.48
All	9.73	7.39	9.00
% change			
Men	4.2	12.9	4.3
Women	4.1	5.6	5.9
All	4.5	6.3	5.6

⁴ Excludes overtime pay, but includes basic pay, shift premium pay, bonus or incentive pay, and allowances.

Gender Pay Gap (Full-time Employees)

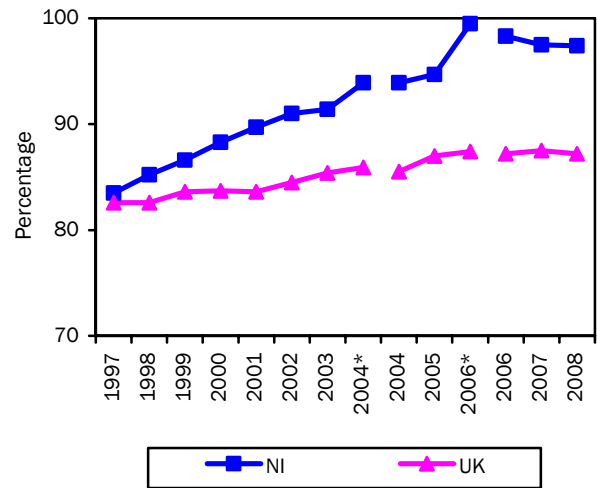
5

- The ratio of full-time female to male median hourly earnings excluding overtime (i.e. the gender pay gap) has been relatively unchanged since 2006, levelling off at 97.4% in 2008.
- However, female earnings as a percentage of male earnings continue to be higher in NI than in the UK (87.2%).

Full-time women's hourly earnings excluding overtime as a percentage of men's, 1997-2008
Table 5

	GROSS HOURLY EARNINGS EXCLUDING OVERTIME (£)				RATIO WOMEN TO MEN (%)	
	MEN		WOMEN		MEDIAN MEAN	
	MEDIAN	MEAN	MEDIAN	MEAN		
2008	10.25	12.57	9.98	11.63	97.4	92.5
2007	9.84	12.17	9.59	11.33	97.5	93.1
2006	10.00	12.15	9.83	11.23	98.3	92.4
Excluding methodological changes introduced in 2007						
2006	10.02	12.20	9.97	11.32	99.5	92.8
2005	9.70	11.75	9.19	10.59	94.7	90.1
2004	9.37	11.16	8.80	10.11	93.9	90.6
Excluding supplementary information						
2004	9.44	11.21	8.86	10.15	93.9	90.5
2003	8.88	10.91	8.12	9.52	91.4	87.3
2002	8.70	10.44	7.92	9.16	91.0	87.7
2001	8.35	10.13	7.49	8.59	89.7	84.8
2000	8.15	9.70	7.20	8.29	88.3	85.5
1999	8.00	9.37	6.93	7.99	86.6	85.3
1998	7.76	9.06	6.61	7.52	85.2	83.0
1997	7.46	8.76	6.23	7.22	83.5	82.4

Median full-time female hourly earnings excluding overtime (NI versus UK) as a percentage of male earnings, 1997-2008
Figure 4



* The introduction of methodological changes to improve the quality of ASHE data has resulted in discontinuities in trends. More details of this can be found in the background notes.

Median Weekly Hours Worked in NI

6

- The median total paid weekly hours worked by full-time employees in April 2008 was 38.9 hours. Median part-time hours for the same period was 18.4 hours, a decrease from 19.0 hours in April 2007.

Median total weekly hours worked by full-/part-time and gender

Table 6

	FULL-TIME	PART-TIME	ALL
April 2008			
Men	40.0	16.2	39.0
Women	37.5	18.8	32.6
All	38.9	18.4	37.1
April 2007			
Men	40.0	17.9	39.3
Women	37.3	19.4	32.7
All	38.8	19.0	37.0

- The proportion of full-time employees working overtime in April 2008 was 23.5%. For those full-time employees who worked overtime, the median number of paid overtime hours was 5.0 hours.

Median weekly overtime hours by full-/part-time and gender

Table 7

	FULL-TIME		PART-TIME	
	%	HOURS	%	HOURS
April 2008				
Men	28.8	5.6	14.4	x
Women	15.6	3.1	11.5	x
All	23.5	5.0	12.2	3.7
April 2007				
Men	27.8	5.5	16.2	x
Women	14.9	3.2	10.8	x
All	22.6	4.8	12.0	x

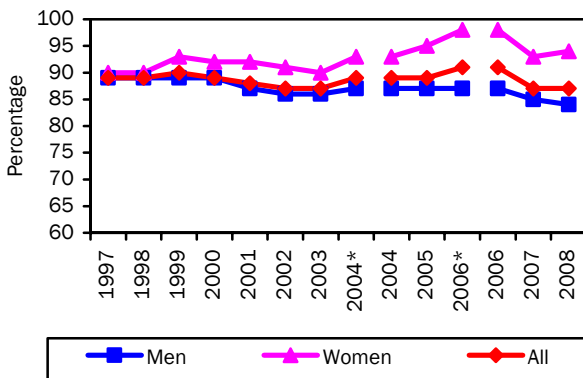
x Coefficient of variation too large to provide a reliable estimate

Comparison with the UK

7

- Over the period 2007–2008 the ratio of NI to UK gross weekly earnings for full-time employees was relatively unchanged (87%).
- This was true for both full-time males and females, where the ratios changed by less than half of a percentage point over the year to April 2008.
- The ratio of earnings for all NI employees (i.e. full- and part-time) compared to the UK increased by one percentage point to 89%, and this was largely driven by patterns in part-time earnings.
- Indeed, as shown in section 2, gross weekly earnings for part-time NI employees increased by 6.7%, resulting in higher part-time earnings among NI employees (£150.3) compared to UK counterparts (£147.0).

NI full-time median gross weekly earnings as a percentage of UK earnings, 1997-2008
Figure 5



* The introduction of methodological changes to improve the quality of ASHE data has resulted in discontinuities in trends. More details of this can be found in the background notes.

NI full-time median gross weekly earnings as a percentage of UK earnings, 1997-2008
Table 8

	MEN	WOMEN	ALL
2008	84	94	87
2007	85	93	87
2006	87	98	91
Excluding methodological changes introduced in 2007			
2006	87	98	91
2005	87	95	89
2004	87	93	89
Excluding supplementary information			
2004	87	93	89
2003	86	90	87
2002	86	91	87
2001	87	92	88
2000	89	92	89
1999	89	93	90
1998	89	90	89
1997	89	90	89

Comparison with UK Regions

8

- Although full-time employees in Northern Ireland continued to have the lowest median gross weekly earnings (£417.6) across the UK regions, their earnings were relatively similar to such employees in the North East (£420.6) and Wales (£421.0) at April 2008. Indeed, gross weekly earnings among all NI employees (i.e. both full- and part-time) were marginally higher than for all employees in the North East and Wales at April 2008.
- While full-time male earnings in NI continue to be the lowest of any UK region, full-time female earnings are higher than in several of the UK regions.

UK Regions – Median gross weekly earnings for full-time employees by gender, April 2008

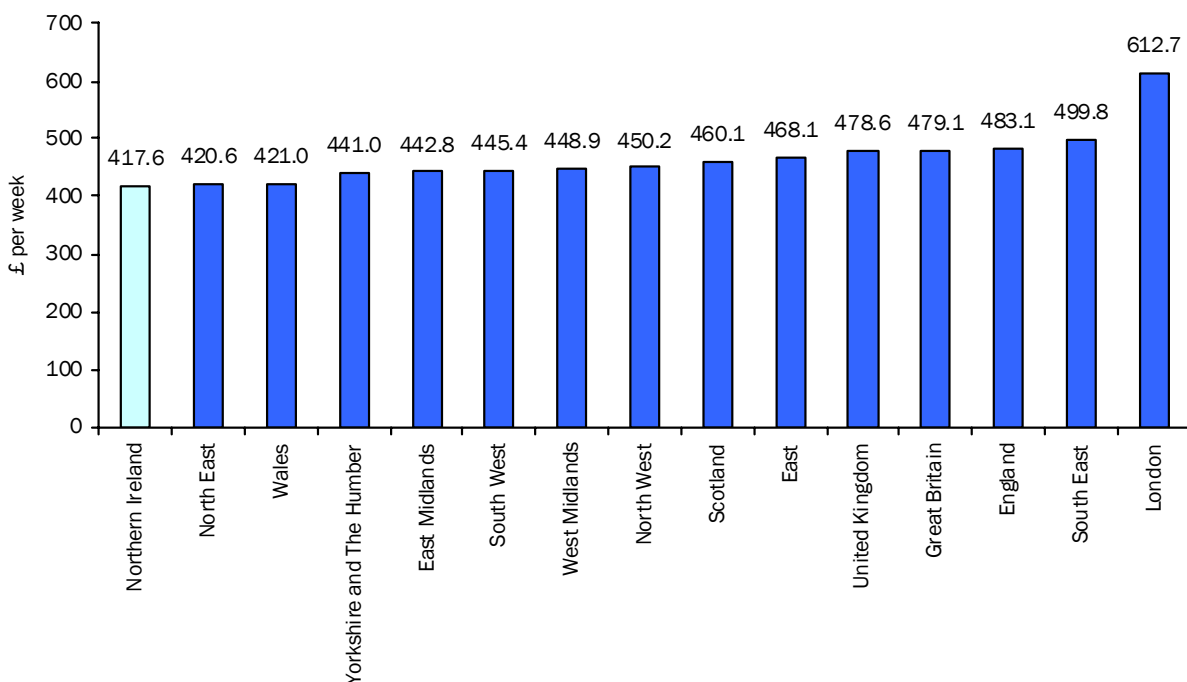
Table 9

	FULL-TIME MEN	FULL-TIME WOMEN	ALL FULL-TIME
North East	464.1	**364.3	420.6
North West	489.9	392.1	450.2
Yorkshire and The Humber	485.3	**371.4	441.0
East Midlands	488.7	**374.9	442.8
West Midlands	488.7	**379.4	448.9
East	513.8	398.5	468.1
London	676.5	542.1	612.7
South East	555.8	421.6	499.8
South West	488.4	**378.2	445.4
England	528.5	416.4	483.1
Wales	464.9	**369.0	421.0
Scotland	504.6	400.0	460.1
Great Britain	523.5	412.4	479.1
Northern Ireland	438.8	385.5	417.6
United Kingdom	521.2	412.0	478.6

** Indicates those regions where median earnings were lower than in Northern Ireland

UK Regions – Median gross weekly earnings for full-time employees, April 2008

Figure 6



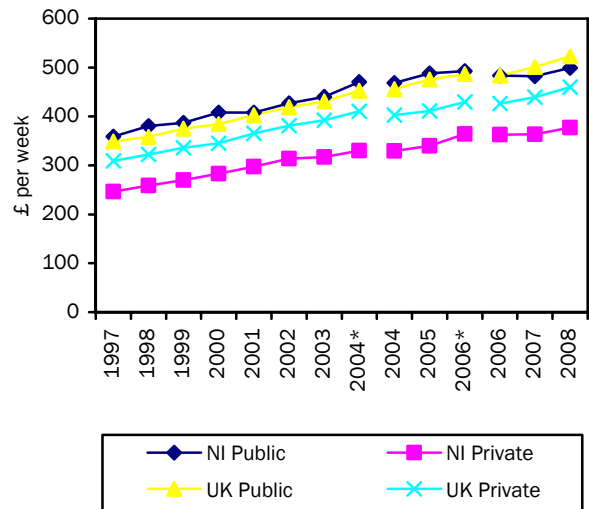
Comparison of Public/Private Sector Earnings (NI/UK)

9

- The rate of growth of median gross weekly earnings for all (i.e. full- and part-time) NI employees in the public sector between April 2007 and 2008 (4.6%) was lower than for their counterparts in the private sector (5.8%).
- Public sector earnings for all employees in NI were 2.1% lower than those in the UK.
- Private sector earnings for all employees in NI were almost 17% lower than in the UK.
- For full-time NI employees, median weekly earnings in the public sector were over 32% higher than in the private sector at April 2008, and this was true for both men (34% higher) and women (52% higher). In the UK, the equivalent median earnings was 14% higher in the public sector than in the private sector.
- Growth in median full-time public (3.4%) and private (3.8%) sector weekly earnings in NI was slightly lower than in the UK public (4.3%) and private sector (4.6%).
- Some of the difference between the public and private sectors in NI and the UK may be due to differences in the composition of the respective workforces and the timing of pay settlements.

Median gross weekly earnings (NI versus UK) for full-time employees in the public and private sectors, 1997-2008

Figure 7



* The introduction of methodological changes to improve the quality of ASHE data has resulted in discontinuities in trends. More details of this can be found in the background notes.

Median gross weekly earnings for full-time employees in the public and private sectors
Table 10

£	NORTHERN IRELAND		UNITED KINGDOM	
	PUBLIC	PRIVATE	PUBLIC	PRIVATE
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All	498.8	377.1	522.6	460.0
April 2007				
Men	529.7	390.9	550.2	482.0
Women	457.7	296.1	461.6	350.6
All	482.4	363.4	501.2	439.6
% change				
Men	4.1	5.0	4.4	4.5
Women	5.2	6.8	4.1	4.4
All	3.4	3.8	4.3	4.6

Average Earnings by Occupation

10

- The median gross weekly earnings for full-time Associate Professional and Technical occupations was £545.3, the only major occupational group to experience a decrease between 2007 and 2008 (1.0%).
- At 7.5%, the relatively low-paid Personal Service occupations experienced the largest increase in median full-time gross weekly wages (to £296.1) across the occupational groupings.
- Sales and Customer Services continued to be the lowest paid full-time occupational group (£253.8) and experienced marginal growth (0.3%) in median wages between April 2007 and 2008.

Average full-time earnings by occupation, April 2008

Table 11

	COUNT (THOUSANDS)	MEDIAN GROSS WEEKLY PAY (£)	MEAN GROSS WEEKLY PAY (£)	MEDIAN TOTAL WEEKLY HOURS	MEAN TOTAL WEEKLY HOURS
Managers and Senior Officials	69	554.8	653.4	37.7	38.8
Professional Occupations	78	660.1	686.0	37.0	36.8
Associate Professional and Technical Occupations	85	545.3	575.0	38.4	39.9
Administrative and Secretarial Occupations	61	322.2	348.5	37.6	38.9
Skilled Trades Occupations	54	399.4	438.1	40.0	41.9
Personal Service Occupations	31	296.1	321.8	37.5	38.3
Sales and Customer Service Occupations	20	253.8	298.7	37.6	38.6
Process, Plant and Machine Operatives	60	359.9	382.6	40.5	43.5
Elementary Occupations	48	305.5	324.3	40.0	41.6

Average Earnings by Industry

11

- Employees in Education had the highest full-time median earnings at April 2008 (£628.5), with growth of 3.7% over the course of the year.
- The largest increases in median earnings were reported among Public Administration and Defence; Compulsory Social Security (14.0%) and Financial Intermediation (11.5%).
- Full-time employees working in Hotels and Restaurants received the lowest median gross weekly pay across the industries (£267.7), and earnings for this group decreased by 1.1% over the year.

Average full-time earnings by industry, April 2008

Table 12

	COUNT (THOUSANDS)	MEDIAN GROSS WEEKLY PAY (£)	MEAN GROSS WEEKLY PAY (£)	MEDIAN TOTAL WEEKLY HOURS	MEAN TOTAL WEEKLY HOURS
Agriculture, hunting and forestry	x	x	352.9	40.0	44.1
Mining and quarrying	x	369.7	419.7	41.3	45.9
Manufacturing	88	411.7	464.7	40.0	41.7
Electricity, gas and water supply	6	605.8	632.2	37.3	40.5
Construction	32	400.0	465.1	40.0	41.8
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles, motorcycles and personal and household goods	68	341.1	414.8	39.8	39.8
Hotels and restaurants	14	267.7	309.3	38.7	39.1
Transport, storage and communication	20	402.1	479.5	40.0	42.0
Financial intermediation	13	439.8	552.4	35.0	36.1
Real estate, renting and business activities	48	402.5	474.8	37.5	39.0
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	54	556.3	582.0	42.0	42.9
Education	57	628.5	604.7	32.8	34.6
Health and social work	77	412.5	477.8	37.5	38.9
Other community, social and personal service activities	22	380.5	444.7	37.9	39.4
Private households with employed persons	x	274.6	292.0	33.6	35.2

x Coefficient of variation too large to provide a reliable estimate

d Disclosive

Background Notes for Northern Ireland Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) 2008

12

METHODOLOGY

The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) is a UK wide survey that provides a wide range of information on earnings and hours worked. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) carries out ASHE in Great Britain and it is carried out by the Department of Enterprise, Trade & Investment (DETI) in Northern Ireland.

ASHE is the first survey to be designed as part of the ONS statistical modernisation programme and benefits from improved methodologies and statistical tools. The development of the survey follows the recommendations made in the National Statistics Quality Review of the Distribution of Earnings Statistics for improving the collection of earnings statistics. This release contains summary statistics from the 2008 survey.

COVERAGE AND SAMPLING

As in previous years, the sample used for the survey included approximately 1% of all employees in Northern Ireland who were covered by PAYE schemes. Someone who is in more than one PAYE scheme may appear more than once. Information on earnings and hours is obtained in confidence from employers under the authority of the Statistics of Trade and Employment (Northern Ireland) Order 1988. Information collected is treated as strictly confidential and is used only for statistical purposes.

In March 2007, ONS released information on its statistical work priorities over the period 2008-2011. ONS announced that the ASHE sample size was to be reduced by twenty per cent. ASHE results for 2008 are based on approximately 146,000 returns, down from 175,000 in 2006. The impact of this change has been minimised by reducing the sample in an optimal way, with the largest sample reductions occurring in industries where earnings are least variable. The sample cut excludes returns for Northern Ireland.

The survey information related to the pay-week (or other pay-period if the employee was paid less frequently) which included 16th April 2008. The results are therefore not necessarily representative of pay over a longer period. They do not take account of subsequent changes in rates of pay which have become effective since April or changes which have been introduced with retrospective effect since the survey returns were completed.

The resulting analyses do not show information about identifiable people or private businesses.

Since the 2004 survey, supplementary information has been collected in order to improve coverage and hence make the survey more representative. This includes employees who have either moved jobs or entered the labour market between February, when the main ASHE sample is identified from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) records, and April, when the survey is conducted. In 2007, ONS also introduced a small number of methodological changes (to the sample design) to improve the quality of the results.

The ASHE results since 2004 are therefore discontinuous with earlier results, as are those for 2007 and 2008. However, for 2004 two sets of results are available (the first include supplementary information and the second exclude this information), and similarly for 2006 (the first set not reflecting the methodological changes to the sample design and the second set consistent with the new methodological changes).

The earnings information presented relates to gross pay before tax, National Insurance or other deductions, and excludes payments in kind. With the exception of annual earnings, the results are restricted to earnings relating to the survey pay period and so exclude payments of arrears from another period made during the survey period; any payments due as a result of a pay settlement but not yet paid at the time of the survey will also be excluded.

For particular groups of employees, changes in median earnings between successive surveys may be affected by changes in the timing of pay settlements, in some cases reflecting more than one settlement and in some others no settlement at all.

RESPONSE AND WEIGHTING

A total of 6,543 returns were received by the Department (94% of those sampled).

ASHE responses are weighted to the number of jobs measured by the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and this weighting is carried out by ONS. The weighting factors include age, sex, occupation and workplace and take account of differing response rates.

From 2006, the LFS moved from using seasonal quarters to calendar quarters. As ASHE uses LFS data in the calculation of aggregation weights, it was necessary to move from using data taken from LFS Spring to LFS Quarter 2.

In May 2008 the LFS was re-weighted to the latest (2007/08) population estimates. Previously LFS results were based on population totals published in 2003. ASHE uses LFS to calculate aggregation weights. The revised LFS figures have been used for 2007 (revised) and 2008 ASHE results. The impact of the new weights on the ASHE results for 2007 is small.

REVISIONS

In line with normal practice this release contains revised estimates from the 2007 survey results published on 7th November 2007. These results take account of some corrections to the original 2007 data that were identified during the validation of the results for 2008, as well as late returns. 2008 ASHE results will be made available from 14 November 2008. Revised estimates for 2007 ASHE will be available from 28 November 2008.

MEDIAN

The mean and the median measure different things and either can be appropriate depending on what the user is trying to measure. The mean measures the average amount earned by individuals, but in a skew distribution such as earnings this measure is susceptible to small numbers of very high earners. The median measures the amount earned by the average individual, i.e. the level of earnings above which half the population fall.

GENDER PAY GAP

Various methods can be used to measure the earnings of women relative to men. ONS and DETI prefer to use hourly earnings excluding overtime; including overtime can distort the picture as men work relatively more overtime than women. Although median and mean hourly pay excluding overtime provide useful comparisons of men's and women's earnings, they do not reveal differences in rates of pay for comparable jobs. This is because such measures do not allow for the different employment characteristics of men and women, such as the proportion in different occupations and their length of time in jobs.

DEFINITIONS

Gross weekly pay includes basic pay, overtime pay, shift premium pay, bonus or incentive pay and allowances, and is before deductions for PAYE, National Insurance, pension schemes, voluntary deductions and Income Tax.

Full-time employees are those working more than 30 hours each week excluding overtime and main meal breaks (25 hours for teachers and academics).

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available on request from:

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Website: www.statistics.detini.gov.uk

Additional Tables

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Data on the following:

- Weekly pay – Gross (£)
- Weekly pay – Excluding overtime (£)
- Weekly pay – Basic including other (£)
- Weekly pay – Overtime (£)
- Hourly pay – Gross (£)
- Hourly pay – Excluding overtime (£)
- Annual pay – Gross (£)
- Annual pay – Incentive (£)
- Hours worked – Total
- Hours worked – Basic
- Hours worked – Overtime

is currently available for:

2008

- Headline Statistics
- Industry
- Occupation
- Age
- Public/Private Sector

In addition, revised 2007 data and the 2008 growth rates will be published from 28th November 2008. Please note that provisional 2007 results released from November 2007 will remain on the website until revised 2007 results are released.

This data can be found on the website – www.statistics.detini.gov.uk – along with Headline Statistics for the years 1997 to 2006. Click on “Surveys, Inquiries”, then on “Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings”.