

STATISTICAL PRESS RELEASE

13 April 2011

Coverage

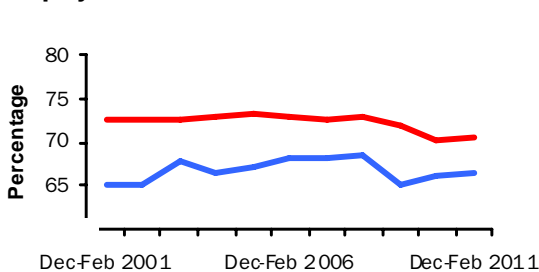
Northern Ireland, unless otherwise stated

Theme

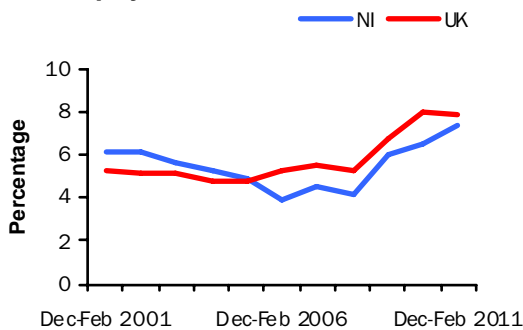
Labour Market

Seasonally Adjusted Working Age

Employment Rate



**Seasonally Adjusted
Unemployment Rate**



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Labour Market Statistics – April 2011

Seasonally adjusted Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimates for Northern Ireland for the period December 2010 - February 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 March Claimant Count recorded an increase of 100 claimants from the previous month's revised figure and now stands at 59,000.

In the latest reference period, the employment rate for those aged 16-64 was estimated at 66.4%, up 1.1 percentage points over the quarter and up 0.3 percentage points over the year.

The unemployment rate for the period December 2010 - February 2011 was estimated at 7.3%, down 0.5 percentage points over the quarter, but up 0.8 percentage points over the year. The NI rate is lower than the UK (7.8%) rate and also remains below the European Union (9.5%) and Republic of Ireland (13.5%) rates for January 2011.

The economic inactivity rate for those aged 16-64 in NI stands at 28.3%, down 0.8 percentage points over the quarter and down 0.9 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 59,000 (6.7%) at March 2011, up 100 from the previous month's revised figure. Over the year the NI claimant count increased by 5.9%, whereas the UK count decreased by 5.8%. NI had the largest percentage increase in claimants among the UK regions over the year. It also has the highest Claimant Count rate of the twelve UK regions.

The Department was notified of 299 proposed redundancies in the period mid March to mid April and there were 228 confirmed redundancies in March 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	Dec-Feb 2011	779,000	66.4%	12,000	1.1
Unemployment ²	Dec-Feb 2011	62,000	7.3%	-4,000	-0.5
Economically Active ¹	Dec-Feb 2011	841,000	71.7%	8,000	0.8
Economically Inactive ¹	Dec-Feb 2011	560,000	28.3%	-5,000	-0.8
Employee Jobs ³	December 2010	692,910		-1,880	
				Change on month	
Claimant Count ⁴	March 2011	59,000	6.7	+100	0.0
Redundancies ⁵	March 2011	228		-	-

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 December 2010 - February 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 March 2011 increased by 100 over the month to 59,000. The Department was notified of 299 proposed redundancies in the latest reference period and 228 confirmed redundancies in March 2011.

Employment

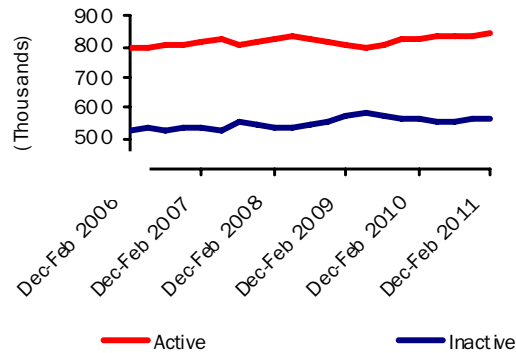
The number of persons in employment in the period December 2010 - February 2011 was estimated at 779,000. This estimate was up 12,000 over the quarter and up 4,000 over the year. The employment rate for those aged 16-64 was estimated at 66.4%, up 1.1 percentage points over the quarter and up 0.3 percentage 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 December 2010 - February 2011 was estimated at 7.3%, down 0.5 percentage points over the quarter, but up 0.8 percentage points over the year. The number of unemployed persons was estimated at 62,000, down 4,000 over the quarter, but up 8,000 over the year.

Unadjusted figures show that 47.2% of the unemployed have been unemployed for 1 year or more – up 5.9 percentage points over the year. They also estimate the unemployment rate for 18-24 year olds at 20.3% – up 5.9 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 December 2010 - February 2011 was estimated at 560,000. This figure fell by 5,000 over the quarter, but was unchanged over the year.

The NI economic inactivity rate for those aged 16-64 stands at 28.3%. 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, 24% are looking after the family/home, 12% are retired and 7% are 'other' reason.

Unadjusted figures also show that while 90% of the inactive do not want work, the remaining 10% (54,000) 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	Dec-Feb 2011	779,000	+/-23,000	4,000	+/-30,000
Unemployment	Dec-Feb 2011	62,000	+/-11,000	8,000	+/-14,000
Economically inactive	Dec-Feb 2011	560,000	+/-21,000	0	+/-27,000
Unemployment rate	Dec-Feb 2011	7.3%	+/-1.3pps	0.8pps	+/-1.7pps
Employment rate ¹	Dec-Feb 2011	66.4%	+/-1.8pps	0.3pps	+/-2.3pps
Economic inactivity rate ¹	Dec-Feb 2011	28.3%	+/-1.7pps	-0.9pps	+/-2.2pps
Claimant Count	March 2011	59,000		3,300	

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 Section 9 for details).

Unemployment Regional Comparison

The latest NI seasonally adjusted unemployment rate rate (7.3%) was lower than the overall UK average rate (7.8%) and was fourth lowest among the twelve UK regions. The NI rate was also below the European Union (9.5%) and Republic of Ireland (13.5%) rates for January 2011.

Claimant Count

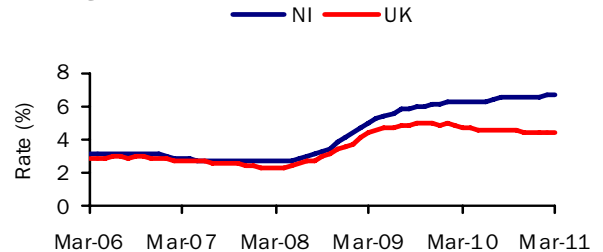
The more recent seasonally adjusted claimant count increased by 100 from the previous month's revised total. It now stands at 59,000 (6.7% of the workforce) in March 2011. The latest monthly increase was the same as the revised increase of 100 for the previous monthly period. Over the year the Claimant Count in NI has increased by 3,300 (5.9%) 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 (4.5%) and was the highest rate among the twelve UK regions. The March 2011 NI Claimant Count level increased by 0.2% (100 claimants) from last month's revised total, while the UK average increased by 0.05% (Figure 2). NI showed the fourth highest percentage monthly increase among the UK regions. Over the year the NI Claimant Count level increased by 5.9%, compared to a fall of 5.8% in the UK. The annual change in NI was the highest percentage increase among the twelve UK regions.

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 March 2011 were in Derry (7.7%), Strabane (7.1%), Belfast (7.0%) and Limavady (7.0%). Those that showed the highest percentage increase in levels over the year to March 2011 were Ards (13.2%), Armagh (12.7%) and Banbridge (11.6%). For further District Council data please see section 3 of the Labour Market Report.

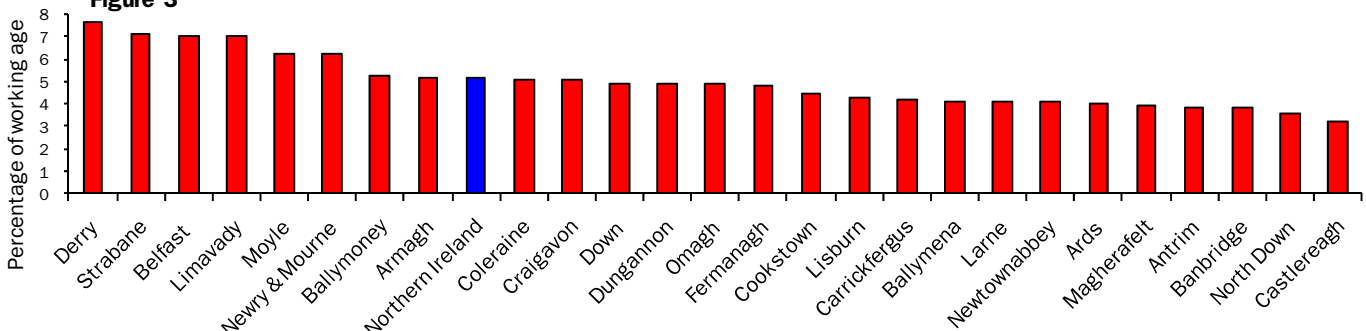
Employment and Training Measures

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 30.5% (3,088 persons) to 13,213 over the year to March 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

The Department was notified of 299 proposed redundancies over the period mid March 2011 to mid April 2011. This compares to 207 proposed redundancies notified to the Department in the previous monthly period.

There were 228 confirmed redundancies in the month of March (Figure 5). Over the latest twelve monthly period there were a total of 1,937 confirmed redundancies, a decrease of 47% from the previous year (3,686). The highest number of confirmed redundancies took place in the Belfast District Council area which had 33.2% (643) of all redundancies over the year.

Over the latest twelve month period there were a total of 2,660 proposed redundancies, a decrease of 39% from the previous year (4,373).

Currently there are 1,163 outstanding redundancies (that is, proposed but not confirmed), which is 19% lower than this time last year (1,431).

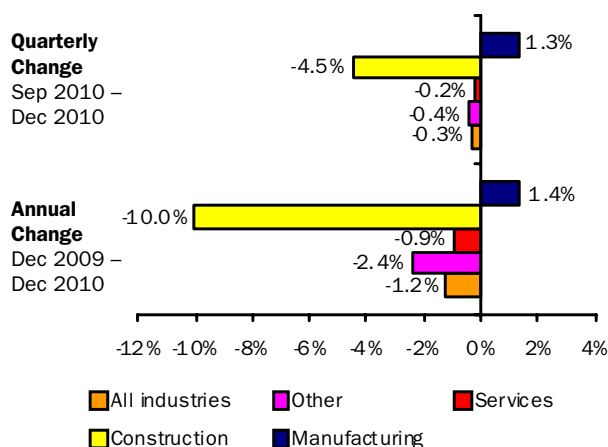
Note that since all proposed redundancies do not actually take place, the confirmed total provides a better indication of real job losses.

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 'Definitions' for details of QES revisions).

Annual and Quarterly changes in employee jobs (seasonally adjusted)

Figure 4

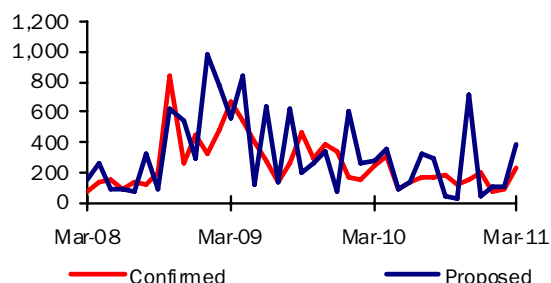


The seasonally adjusted quarterly change consisted of decreases in the Service sector (-1,270 jobs) in Construction (-1,480 jobs) and also on Other industries (-70 jobs). The Manufacturing sector increased over the quarter (950 jobs).

Confirmed and Proposed Redundancies

March 08 - March 11

Figure 5

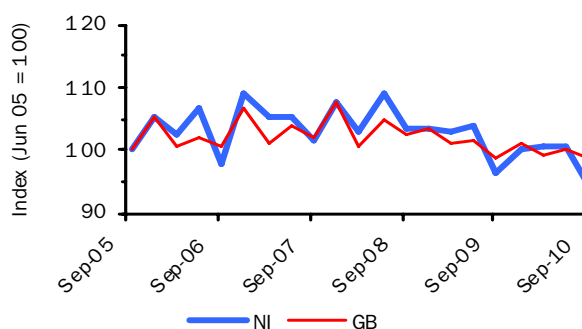


Hours Worked

The total workforce hours worked per week in Northern Ireland in September 2010 was estimated at 24.0 million hours, representing a decrease of 2.0% over the year (compared with no change in GB). Between September 2005 and September 2010, NI's total workforce hours worked per week decreased by 5.5%, compared to a 1.3% fall in GB (Figure 6). In the three months to January 2011, the average actual weekly hours worked in NI was 31.9 hours – slightly higher than the UK average (31.0) 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.

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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	
ALL PERSONS									
Dec-Feb 2008	1,363	1,131	824	790	34	539	4.2	71.4	68.4
Dec-Feb 2009	1,376	1,139	805	757	48	572	5.9	69.4	65.2
Dec-Feb 2010	1,389	1,146	829	775	54	560	6.5	70.8	66.1
Mar-May 2010	1,392	1,147	833	774	59	559	7.1	71.2	66.1
Jun-Aug 2010	1,395	1,149	838	779	58	557	7.0	71.5	66.4
Sep-Nov 2010	1,398	1,150	833	768	65	565	7.8	71.0	65.3
Dec-Feb 2011	1,401	1,152	841	779	62	560	7.3	71.7	66.4
Change on Quarter	3	1	8	12	-4	-5	-0.5	0.8	1.1
Change on Year	12	6	12	4	8	0	0.8	0.9	0.3
MALES									
Dec-Feb 2008	660	559	453	430	23	207	5.1	79.1	75.0
Dec-Feb 2009	668	564	440	406	34	228	7.7	76.3	70.4
Dec-Feb 2010	674	567	451	411	40	223	8.9	77.3	70.3
Mar-May 2010	676	568	458	414	44	218	9.5	78.5	70.8
Jun-Aug 2010	678	569	459	417	41	219	9.0	78.7	71.4
Sep-Nov 2010	679	570	459	413	45	220	9.9	78.4	70.4
Dec-Feb 2011	681	571	457	416	41	223	9.0	78.7	71.5
FEMALES									
Dec-Feb 2008	703	571	371	360	11	332	3.0	63.8	61.9
Dec-Feb 2009	709	575	365	351	14	344	3.9	62.6	60.1
Dec-Feb 2010	715	578	377	363	14	337	3.7	64.4	62.0
Mar-May 2010	716	579	375	360	15	341	4.1	64.1	61.4
Jun-Aug 2010	717	580	379	362	17	339	4.5	64.4	61.5
Sep-Nov 2010	719	581	374	354	20	345	5.3	63.7	60.3
Dec-Feb 2011	720	581	383	363	20	337	5.3	64.9	61.4

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.**

Please 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.

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Seasonally Adjusted Regional Summary, December 2010 – February 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	65.7	-1.4	10.4	1.2	26.6	0.6	1,015	6.5	-3.0	0.1	0.69
North West	69.5	0.9	7.8	-0.7	24.5	-0.4	2,875	5.1	-5.8	0.3	0.76
Yorkshire & the Humber	68.4	-0.1	9.2	-0.4	24.6	0.4	2,138	5.5	-6.0	0.2	0.75
East Midlands	71.5	0.2	7.9	0.0	22.3	-0.3	1,801	4.4	-9.4	0.3	0.75
West Midlands	67.7	-0.9	9.7	0.4	24.8	0.6	2,204	5.7	-9.0	-0.1	0.77
East	74.6	0.8	6.0	-0.6	20.4	-0.4	2,342	3.6	-8.0	-0.1	0.77
London	68.4	0.6	9.2	0.3	24.6	-0.9	3,986	4.4	-3.0	0.0	0.90
South East	75.2	0.2	5.9	-0.4	19.9	0.1	3,552	3.0	-11.9	0.0	0.82
South West	74.4	1.8	6.0	-0.4	20.7	-1.6	2,144	3.0	-7.8	-0.1	0.82
England	71.0	0.4	7.8	-0.2	22.9	-0.3	22,055	4.4	-6.9	0.1	0.79
Wales	67.7	0.3	8.6	-0.4	25.7	0.0	1,135	5.0	-6.9	-0.1	0.71
Scotland	71.0	0.5	8.1	0.3	22.6	-0.7	2,237	5.1	1.0	-0.2	0.80
Great Britain	70.8	0.4	7.8	-0.1	23.0	-0.3	25,430	4.5	-6.2	0.0	0.79
N Ireland	66.4	0.3	7.3	0.8	28.3	-0.9	695	6.7	5.9	0.2	0.76
United Kingdom	70.7	0.4	7.8	-0.1	23.2	-0.3	26,125	4.5	-5.8	0.0	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 March 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.

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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 December 2010 – February 2011 showed that the annual change in the estimate for the unemployment total was 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 has recently been revised to incorporate the latest population estimates. The revision effect LFS data from the period June to August 2006 onwards and were first published in February 2010. The magnitude of the revisions were relatively small, with the revisions to the unemployment rate falling within +/-0.05 percentage points and the working age employment rate within +/- 0.1 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:

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