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Labour Market

Statistics Bulletin

Women in Northern Ireland

September 2008



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Department of Enterprise,
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Women in Northern Ireland

September 2008

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Executive Summary

1

Employment

Women in Northern Ireland (NI) have been experiencing historically high levels of employment (i.e. those who reported one hour or more of paid employment in the reference week) with an estimated 362,000 women employed in April - June 2008 up 1.4% over the year.

However, the female working age employment rate here (65.3%) is 5.1 percentage points lower than that in Great Britain (GB 70.4%).

The female working age employment rate in NI has fallen by 0.1 percentage points over the last year, while the male employment rate (74.9%) has fallen by 0.7 percentage points. The female employment rate in GB increased by 0.6 percentage points over the same period, while for males the rate remained unchanged.

Women in NI comprise 45.7% of those of working age currently in employment compared to 45.1% in GB.

Earnings

The ratio between male and female median hourly earnings excluding overtime has decreased to 97.2% (from 98.3% in 2006), which represents a slight widening of the gender pay gap. (Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings)

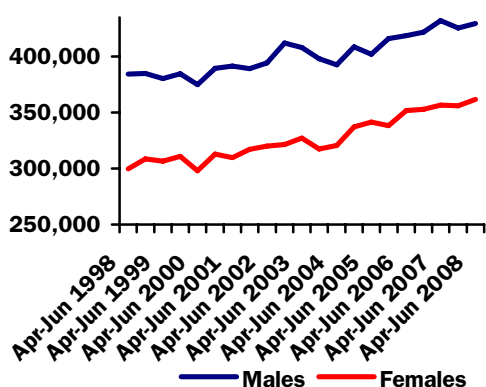
Unemployment

An estimated 9,000 women were unemployed in Northern Ireland at April - June 2008 with an associated unemployment rate of 2.5%. The male unemployment rate is 5.0% and is 2.5 percentage points above the female unemployment rate. The gap between male and female unemployment rates has increased from the same period five years ago when there was a 1.9 percentage point difference.

The seasonally adjusted Claimant Count rate for women at July 2008 was 1.5% of the workforce, compared with 4.4% of men.

**Number in Employment (16+)
1998-2008**

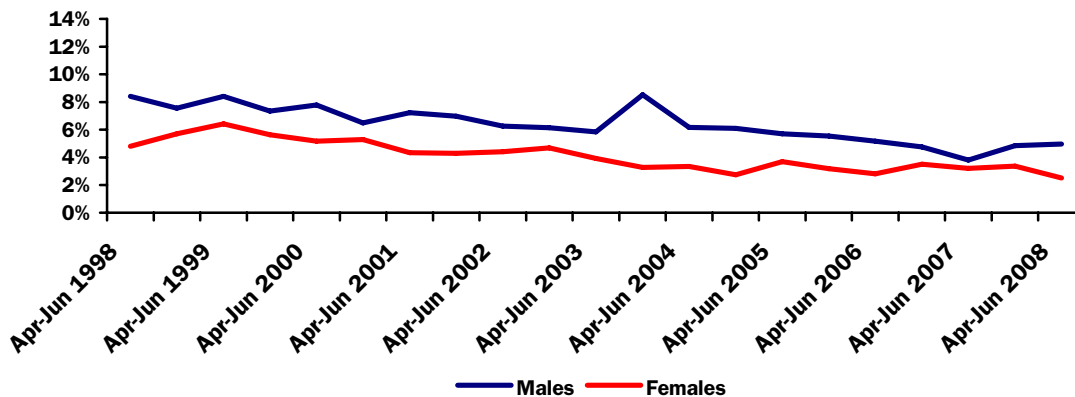
Figure 1



There are notable gender differences in employment rates and in the nature of employment between the sexes in NI. 74.9% of working age males are in employment compared with 65.3% of females. This represents a narrowing of the gap between female employment rates and those of males compared to five years ago (62.0% for females and 75.2% for males).

Unemployment rates (16+) 1998-2008

Figure 2



Economic Activity

Women in Northern Ireland are experiencing historically high levels of economic participation with an estimated 371,000 women economically active in April - June 2008. However, the female working age economic activity rate here of 67.1% is 7.0 percentage points lower than that in GB (74.1%). At 67.1% the working age economic activity rate for females is 11.9 percentage points lower than that for males (78.9%). The difference in economic activity rate between males and females has decreased over time, as five years previously the difference was 15.2 percentage points.

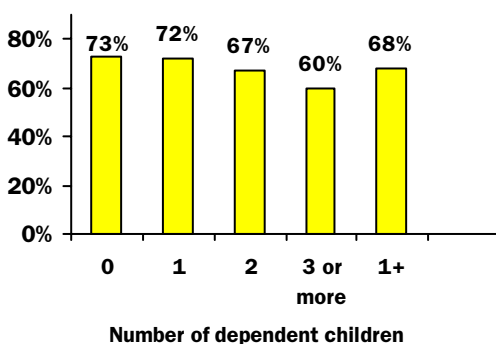
five years, while the rate for those with dependent children has increased by 4.0 percentage points.

Economic Inactivity

At April - June 2008 there were 174,000 women of working age (16-59) who were economically inactive in Northern Ireland, with a resulting inactivity rate of 32.9% (25.9% in GB). Fourteen percent of these economically inactive women (25,000) wanted a job (27% in GB), but did not satisfy the criteria of availability for work and actively seeking work to be classified as unemployed.

Economic activity Rate (Working age) by No. of Dependent Children, April-June 2008

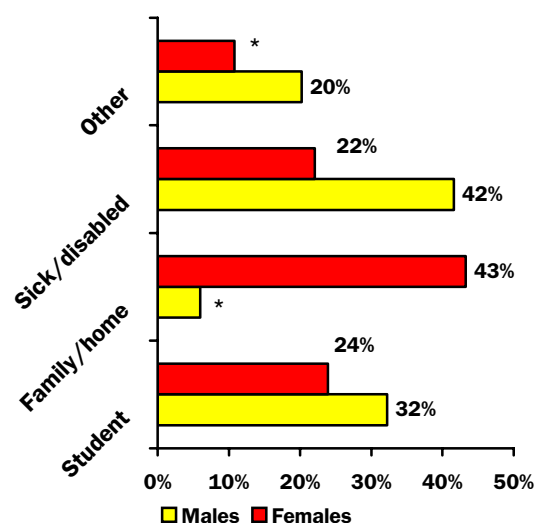
Figure 3



Forty seven per cent of working age economically active females have dependant children. This represents a decrease of 4 percentage points from five years ago. Women with dependent children have a 5.0 percentage point lower working age economic activity rate than those without dependent children, compared to a 5.7 percentage point difference five years ago. The economic activity rate for women with no dependent children has increased by 3.3 percentage points during the last

Reasons for Economic Inactivity (Working Age), April - June 2008

Figure 4



Childcare provision

In 2007 there were 46,914 day-care places for children aged under twelve in Northern Ireland, a fall of 1% since 2002.

Educational Standards

In 2006/7 girls left school with higher levels of academic qualifications than boys. 71% of girls left school with at least 5 GCSE grades A*-C compared to 58% of boys. Similarly 53% of girls left school with two or more A levels compared to 37% of boys.

Politics and Public Life

Women tend to be under represented in politics and public life. Thirty three percent of public appointments in Northern Ireland are held by women and 21% of councillors in local government districts are women. Northern Ireland has 3 elected female MP's, and 1 female MEP.

Women in Business

In 2007, the female level of entrepreneurial activity in Northern Ireland is 2.1% compared to 7.7% for males. Only 3.1% of women (3.7% in 2006) in Northern Ireland are expecting to start a business in the next three years compared with 8.7% of men (7.6% in 2006).

Women in the Labour Force

2

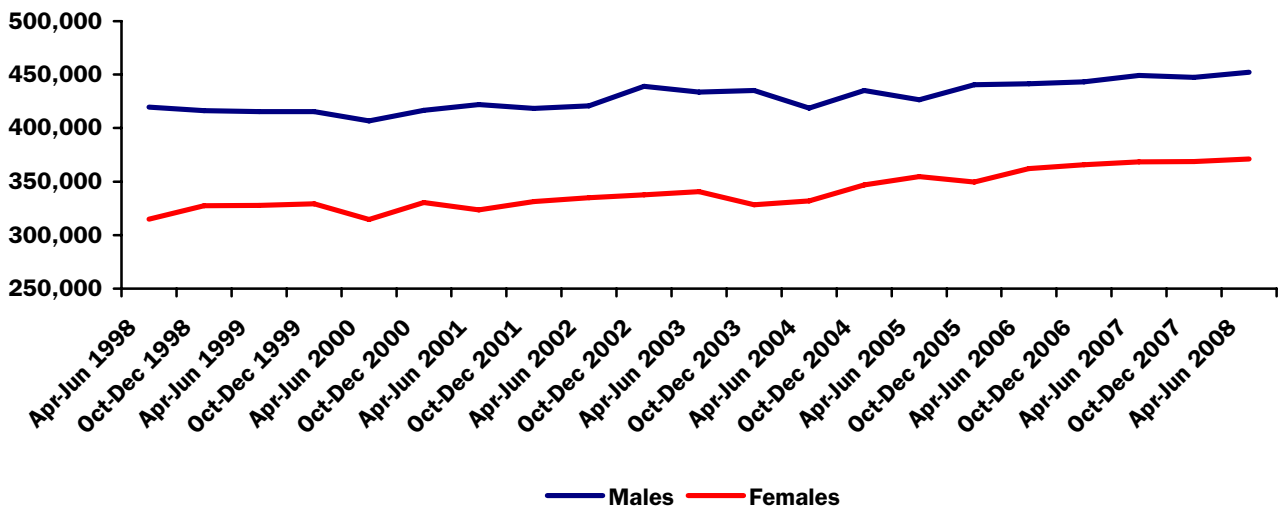
Women in the labour force

Those in employment or unemployed are termed economically active and together make up the labour force. (See Section 10 for full definitions). At April-June 2008;

- 371,000 women (16+) are economically active. This compares with 452,000 men. [13.9m women and 16.4m men in GB.]
- For women the number of economically active has increased by 41% from 1984 compared to a 13% increase for males. [This compares to an increase in GB of 26% for females and no change for males.]
- Married women make up 23% of the labour force (working age) showing no change since 1984. [In GB, 22% in 2008 compared to 26% in 1984].

Economic Activity (16+) 1997-2007

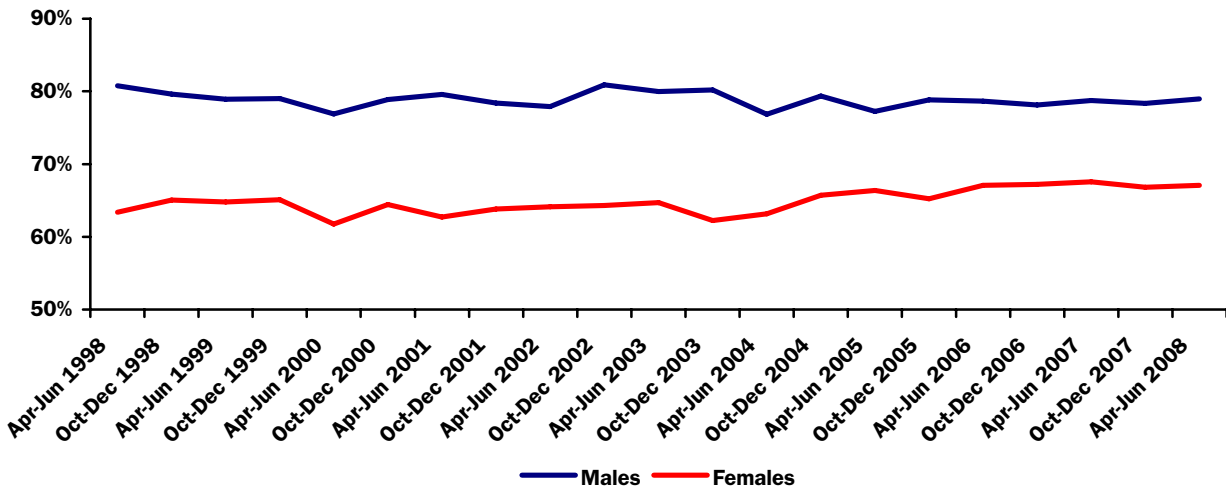
Figure 5



- For women of working age (16-59) the activity rate is 67% compared to 79% for men of working age (16-64). [74% compared to 84% in GB.]
- The female economic activity rate (working age) has risen by 10 percentage points since 1984. [+8 percentage points in GB.] The male rate has fallen by 5 percentage points since 1984 [it is also down 5 percentage points in GB].
- The working age economic activity rate for women has increased by 2.4 percentage points over the last 5 years but fallen by 0.5 percentage points over the last year.
- The economic activity rate for men has fallen by 1.0 percentage points over the last 5 years but increased by 0.2 percentage points over the last year.

Economic Activity rates (working age) 1998-2008

Figure 6

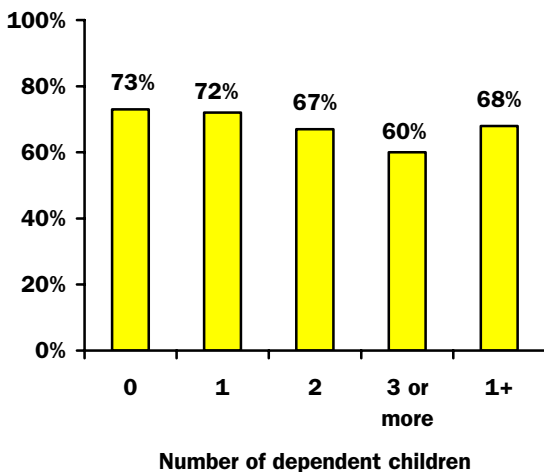


- The economic activity rate for women of working age with dependent children is 68%, compared with 73% for those without children. [69% and 80% in GB.]
- The economic activity rate is lower for women with three or more dependent children (60%) than those with one or two dependent children, which are 72% and 67% respectively.

- The economic activity rate varies according to the age of the youngest dependent child. The rates are 64% for women with children aged 0-4 and 68% and 73% for those with youngest child aged 5-10 and 11-19 respectively. [In GB the rates are 59%, 74% and 80% respectively.]

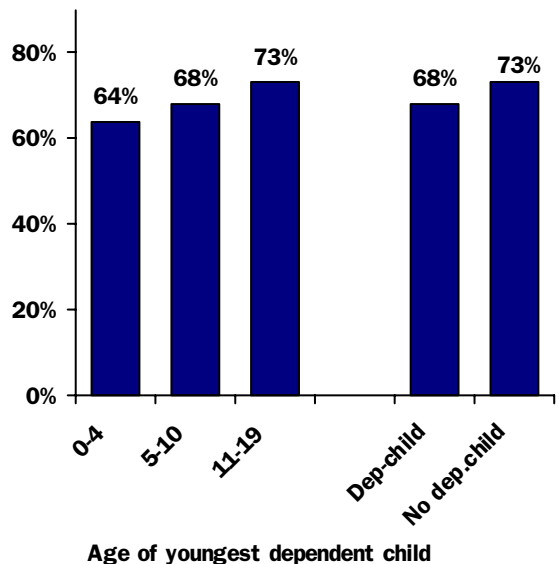
Economic Activity rate¹ (working age) by No. of dependent children April-June 2008

Figure 7



Economic Activity rates (working age) by age of youngest dependent child April-June 2008

Figure 8



¹ The analysis on the effect of dependent children (under 16) on the economic activity rates of females is based on the head or partner of the head of family unit only. It does not include family members who are of working age but who do not have parental responsibilities such as an elder sibling.

Women in Employment

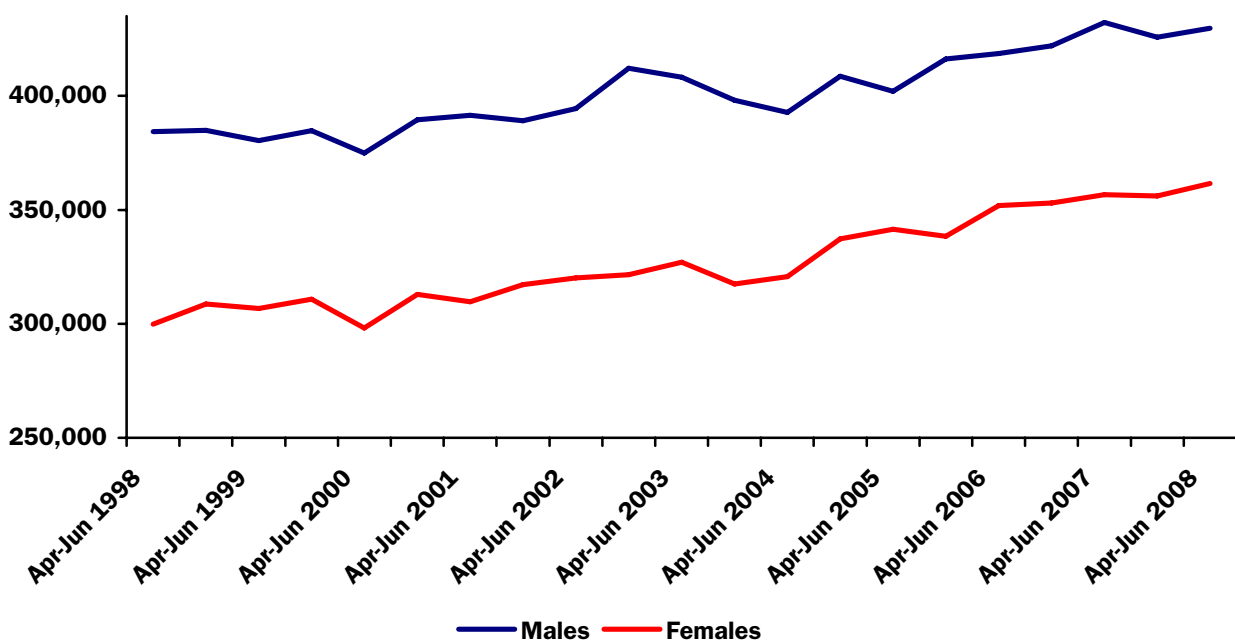
3

Women in Employment

- The number of women in employment (16+) has increased by 59% from 228,000 in 1984 to 362,000 in April - June 2008. This compares with an increase of 33% for men. [In GB the increase was 36% for women and 12% for men.]
- 46% of those currently in employment are women, compared to 41% in 1984. [46% and 41% respectively in GB.]
- The 362,000 women in employment consist of 328,000 employees (91%), 25,000 self-employed (7%) and a small number on government training and employment schemes or unpaid family workers. In GB 91% of women in employment are employees, 8% are self-employed with less than 1% on government training and employment schemes or unpaid family workers.

Numbers in Employment (16+) 1998-2008

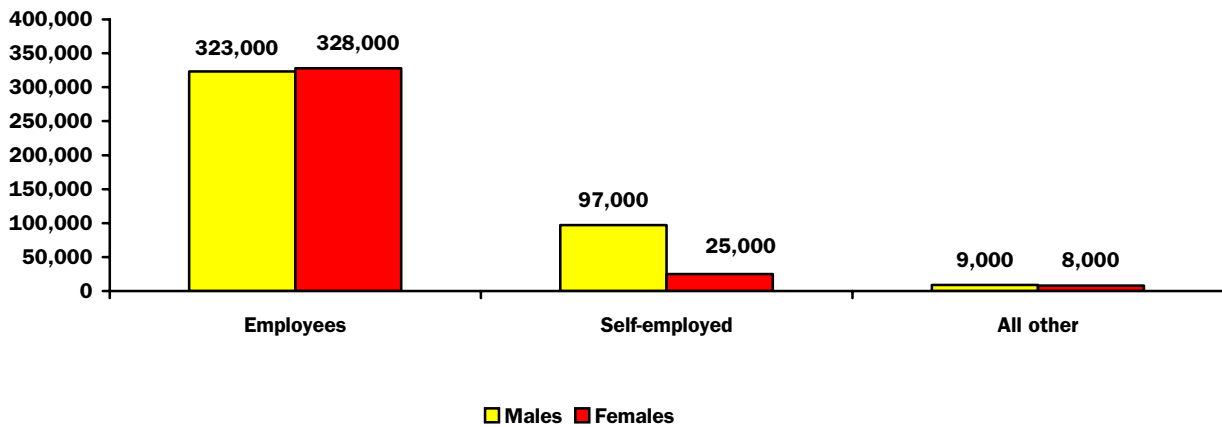
Figure 9



- The working age employment rate for women has increased by 3.2 percentage points over the last 5 years, but fell by 0.1 percentage points over the last year to 65.3%. The corresponding male rate (74.9%) fell by 0.2 percentage points over the last 5 years and 0.7 percentage points over the last year.
- The working age employment rate for women in GB has increased by 0.6 percentage points over the last 5 years and by 0.6 over the last year to 70.4%. The corresponding male rate (78.6%) fell by 0.7 percentage points over the last 5 years, but was unchanged over the year to April - June 2008.

Types of Employment, April - June 2008

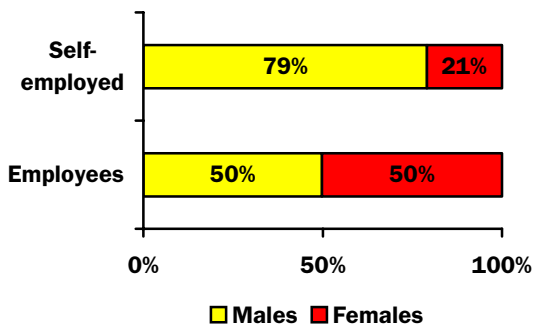
Figure 10



- Women account for 50% of all employees, but only 21% of the total self-employed. [In GB the figures are 49% and 28% respectively.]
- Employer based surveys estimate that 51.3% of all employee jobs are filled by women. (June 2008 Quarterly Employment Survey).

Types of Employment by gender, April - June 2008

Figure 11

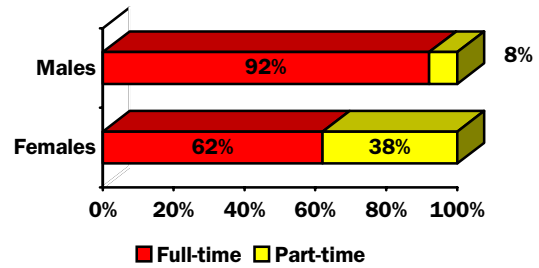


Working Patterns of Women

- 4% of women in employment work at or from home. [4% in GB.]
- 38% of female employees work part-time compared to 8% of male employees. [41% compared to 11% in GB.]
- 83% of part-time employees are women. [79% in GB.]
- The number of female part-time employees is up 69% since 1984, while the number of female full-time employees has risen by 44%. [In GB increases have been 26% for part-time and 42% for full-time female employees.]

Full-time/Part-time split of Employees, April - June 2008

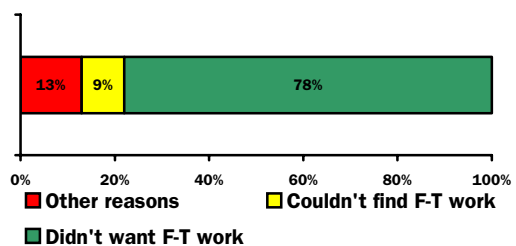
Figure 12



- 78% of female employees who work part-time say they do not want a full-time job. [77% of females in GB.]

Reason for Female Employees working part-time, April - June 2008

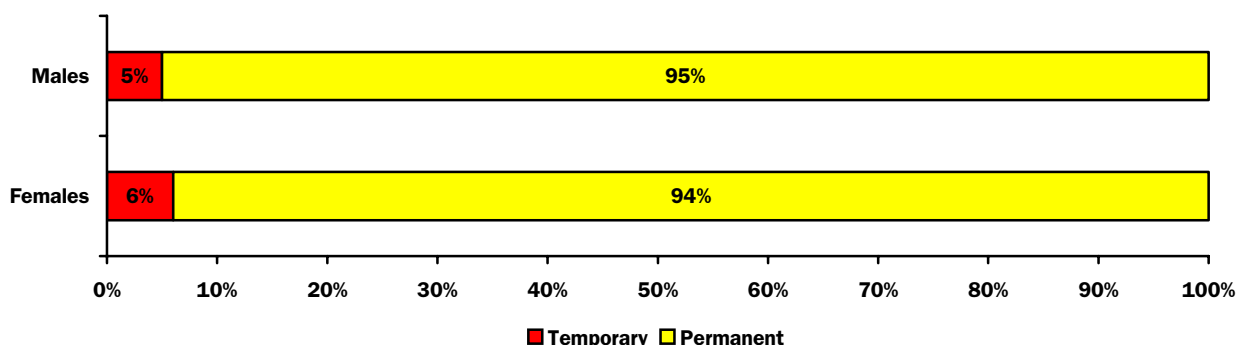
Figure 13



"Other reasons" comprise being a student, illness or disability.

Permanent/Temporary Employees, April - June 2008

Figure 14



- 6% of female and 5% of male employees are temporary. [In GB 6% of females and 5% of males are temporary.]
- 41% of female employees and 11% of male employees are not in full-time permanent jobs. [44% and 13% in GB.]

education and health service sectors, compared with 28% of males. [In GB 45% for females and 18% for males.]

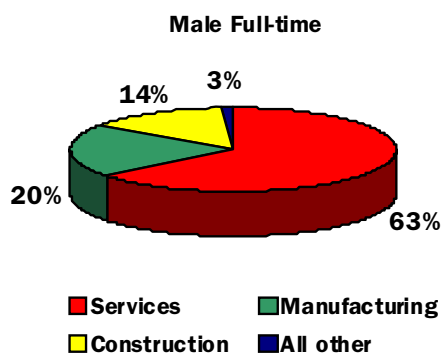
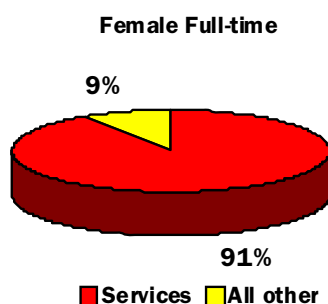
- The other main work areas for female full-time employees in the Service sector are banking, retail/distribution, hotel & restaurants (14%) and finance & business services (13%). For males the figures are 16% and 11% respectively. [In GB 15% for both males and females in retail/distribution, hotel & restaurants. For banking, finance & business services the figure was 18% for both males and females].
- 8% of female full-time employees work in manufacturing compared to 20% of men. [In GB 9% for females and 20% for males.]

Industrial and Occupational Distribution of Women in Employment

- 93% of female employees (96% for part-time and 91% for full-time) work in the service sector. This compares with 65% for male employees. [In GB 90% of female employees (94% for part-time and 88% for full-time) work in the service sector.]
- Of all female full-time employees, 56% are employed in the public administration,

Employees by Industry Sector, April - June 2008

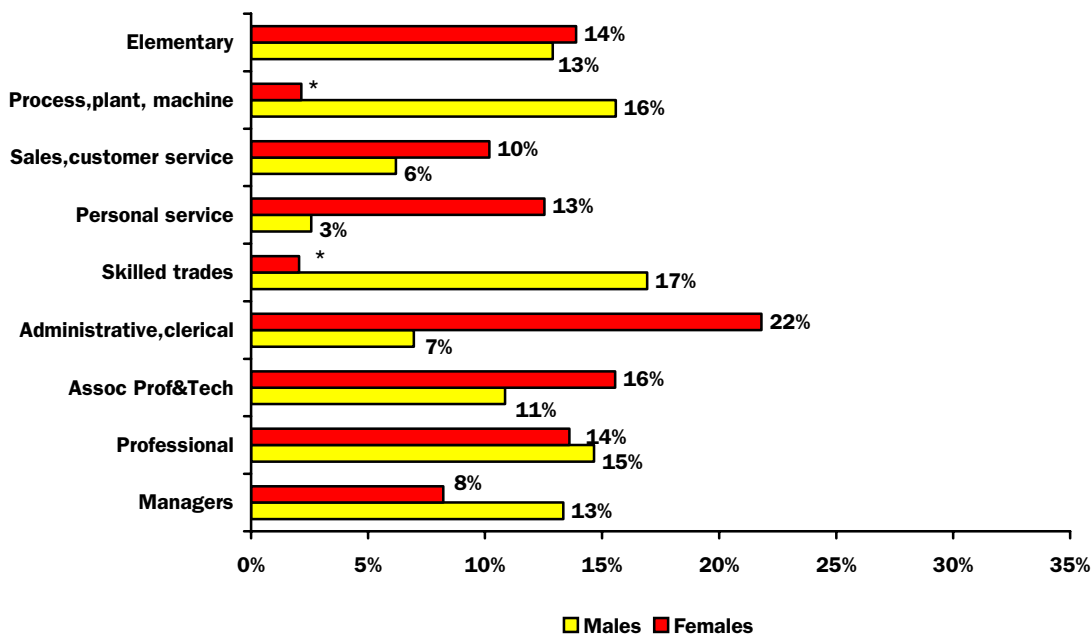
Figure 15



“All other” comprises Agriculture and fishing, Energy and water, Construction and Manufacturing.

- 22% of female employees are in administrative and secretarial occupations, compared with 7% of men. [In GB 20% of women and 5% of men.]
- 8% of female employees are managers and/or senior officials, compared with 13% of men. [In GB 11% of women and 20% of men.]
- 13% of female employees are in personal service occupations, such as catering, domestic service and hairdressing, compared with 3% of men. [In GB 15% of women and 3% of men.]

Occupation of male and female employees, April - June 2008
Figure 16



* Sample size too small for a reliable estimate

- 39% of all managers and/or senior officials are women. [35% in GB.]
- 76% of all those employed in administrative and secretarial occupations are women. [79% in GB.]

Job-related training

- 35,000 female employees of working age (11%) had received some job-related training in the past four weeks compared to 9% for men. [In GB 1.9m women (17%) compared to 13% for men.]

Earnings (source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings – ASHE)

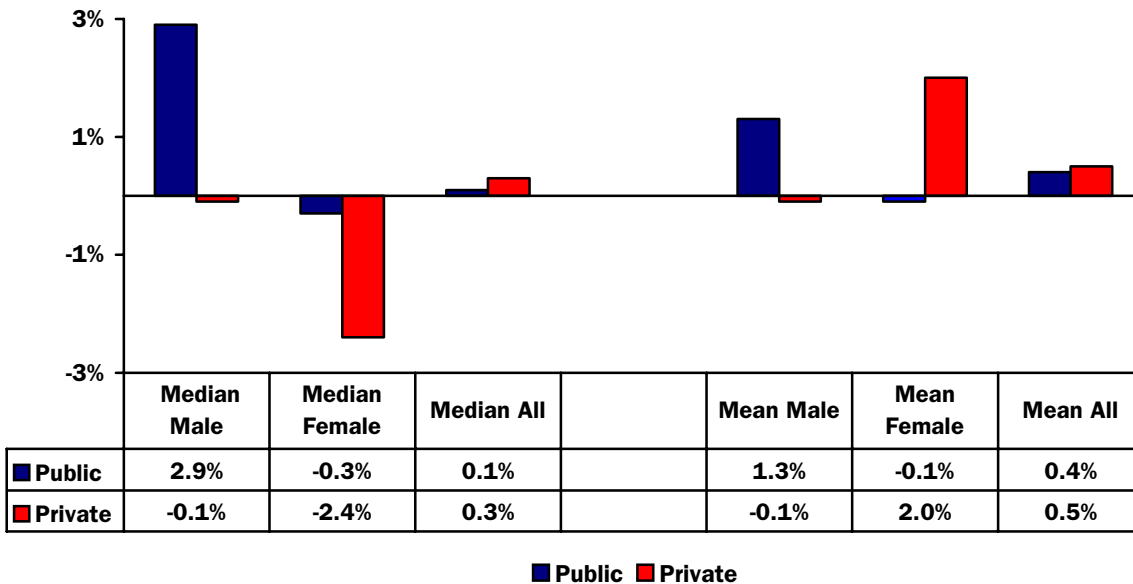
Comparison of Male/Female Earnings

- The median gross weekly wage for full-time females at April 2007 in NI was £372.6 while for full-time males the figure was £424.8.
- The ratio between male and female median hourly earnings excluding overtime has decreased to 97.2% (from 98.3% in 2006), which represents a slight widening of the gender pay gap.
- Female hourly earnings as a percentage of male hourly earnings continue to be higher in NI (97.2%) than in UK (87.4%).

Comparison of Public/Private Sector Earnings

- In NI, median earnings for women working full-time were higher in the public sector (£459.6) than in the private sector (£296.8).
- Full-time female employees in the public sector had similar earnings compared to the previous year (-0.3%), while private sector counterparts experienced a slight decrease over the year (-2.4%).
- When the mean is used instead of the median as a measure for the average, the change is 0.1% of a decrease in the public sector compared to a 2.0% increase in the private sector.

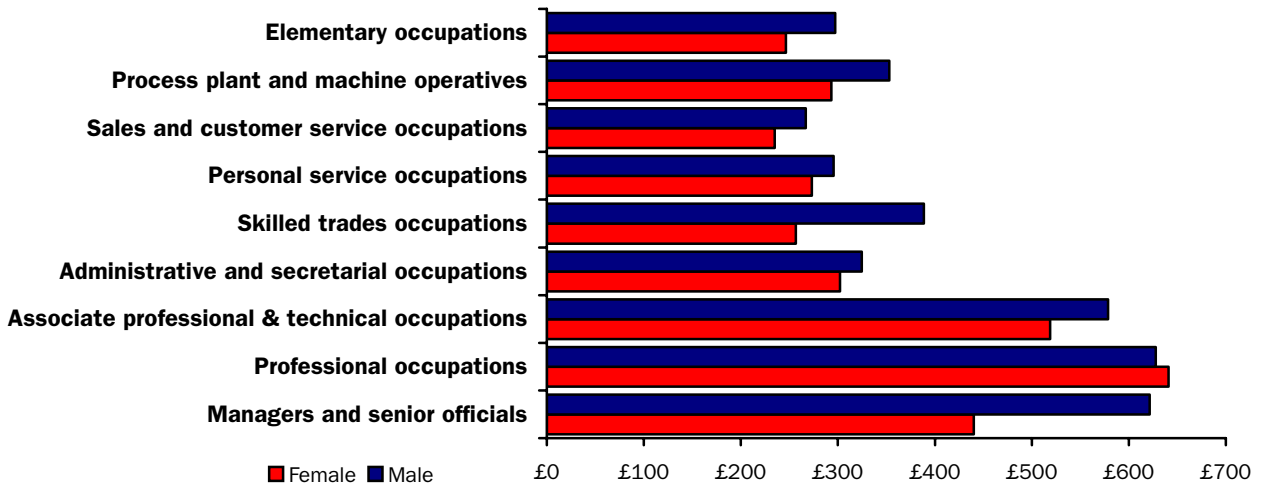
Percentage Increases/Decreases in Median and Mean Gross Weekly Earnings for Full-time Employees between April 2006 and 2007
Figure 17



Median Gross Weekly Pay by Occupation

Average Full Time Gross weekly Earnings by Occupational group in NI, April 2007

Figure 18

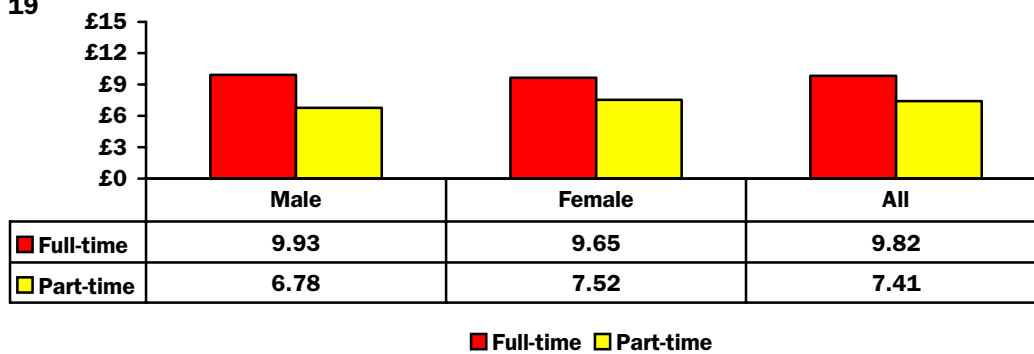


Full-time/Part-time Comparisons of hourly rate excluding overtime

- Median female hourly earnings excluding overtime of part-time workers were 78.0% of full-time workers.

Median Gross Hourly Earnings excluding overtime by full/part-time and gender in NI, April 2007

Figure 19



Women in Unemployment

4

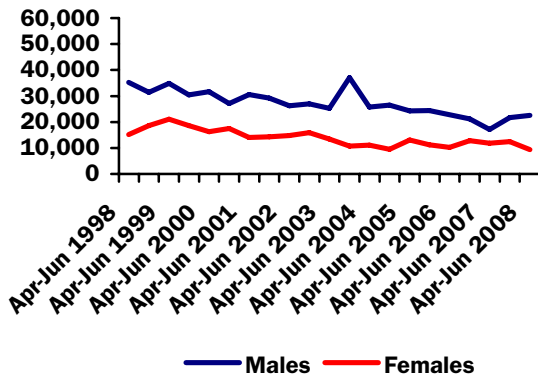
WOMEN IN UNEMPLOYMENT

Unemployed persons are persons without a job, who are available to start work within two weeks and have either looked for work in the previous four weeks, or, are waiting to start a job they have already obtained.

- 9,000 women (16+) are currently unemployed compared with 22,000 men. [665,000 women and 946,000 men in GB.]
- Since 1984 the numbers unemployed have decreased by 72% for women and 71% for men. [In GB a decrease of 48% for women and 49% for men.]

Unemployed (16+) 1998-2008

Figure 20

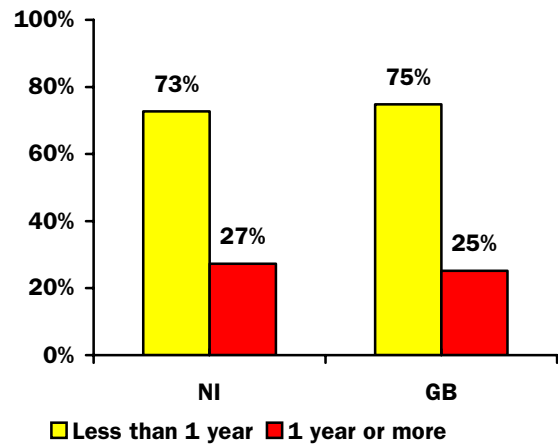


- The unemployment rate (16+) (unemployed as a percentage of the economically active) is 2.5% for women compared with 5.0% for men. [In GB 4.8% for women and 5.8% for men.]

- The unemployment rate for women of working age is 2.6%. [5.0% in GB.]
- Overall, 1.3% of females aged 16+ are unemployed compared to 3.4% of males. [2.7% and 4.1% in GB.]
- 9,000 people or 27% of the unemployed were long-term unemployed (one year or more) at April – June 2008. The data was too small to provide a breakdown on the duration of unemployment for women in NI.

Unemployment by Duration, April - June 2008

Figure 21



Claimant Count

Claimant Count figures are derived from records of claimants at Social Security Offices (SSOs). The term claimant is used to include those who claim Jobseekers Allowance and national insurance credits. The figures include the severely disabled unemployed, but exclude students seeking vacation work and the temporarily stopped.

- Using this measure, 6,000 or 1.5% of women in the workforce claimed unemployment related benefits compared with 20,600 or 4.4% of men in July 2008.
[In GB 225,200 or 1.5% for women and 612,900 or 3.6% for men.]

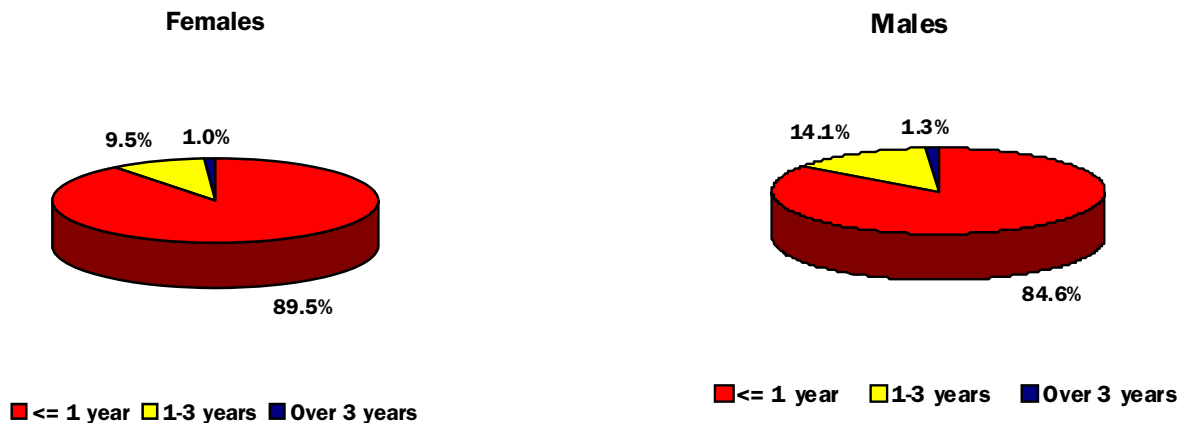
- The July 2008 rate of 1.5% was the same as the previous month and compares to 1.4% in the previous year. [In GB the July 2008 rate of 1.5% was the same as the previous month and the same as the previous year.]
- In July 2008, 89.5% of women out of work and claiming unemployment related benefits had been unemployed for up to one year, 9.5% for over one year but less than three years and 1.0% for three years or more. In contrast the figures for men are 84.6%, 14.1% and 1.3% respectively. [In GB, 90.8%, 8.1% and 1.2% for women, compared with 87.7%, 10.5% and 1.8% for men.]

Table 1 Claimant Count (seasonally adjusted) July 2008

	Number of Persons Claiming this month	Change since Last Month	Change since Last Year	% of Workforce		
				This Month	Last Month	Last Year
Total	26,600	700	3,000	3.1	3.0	2.7
Males	20,600	600	2,600	4.4	4.2	3.8
Females	6,000	100	400	1.5	1.5	1.4

Claimant Count by Duration, July 2008

Figure 23

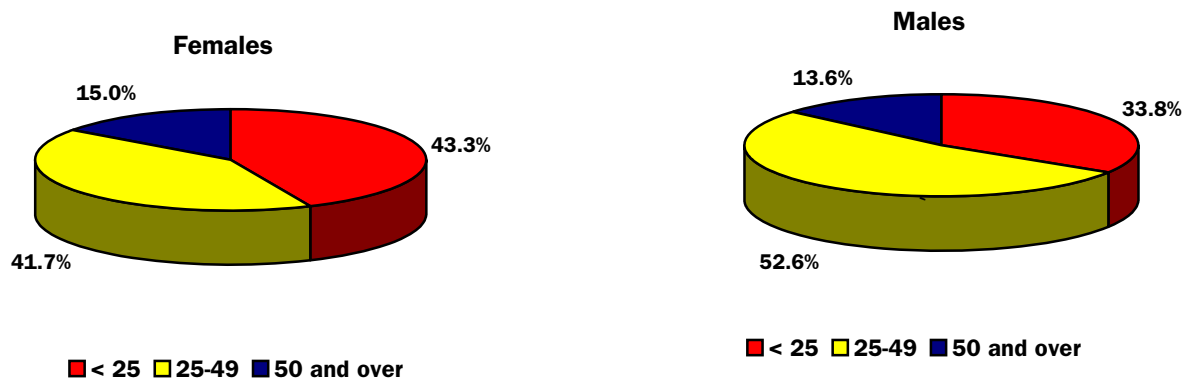


- 43.3% of women claimants are aged under 25, 41.7% are aged 25 to 49 and 15.0% are aged 50 and over. Of male claimants, 33.8% are aged under 25, 52.6% are aged 25 to 49 and

13.6% are aged 50 or over. [In GB 38.5%, 45.0% and 16.5% for women, compared with 29.1%, 56.4% and 14.5% for men.]

Claimant Count by Age group July 2008

Figure 24



Note that as from July 1999, claimant count data by age and duration for all UK regions and sub-regions (down to ward level) **cover computerised claims only**. A small percentage of claims (currently around 1%) are processed clerically in Social Security Offices and, whereas previously they had been included in age and duration tables, they are now **excluded** from the figures given. Therefore, age and duration data from July 1999 onwards are not directly comparable with earlier data.

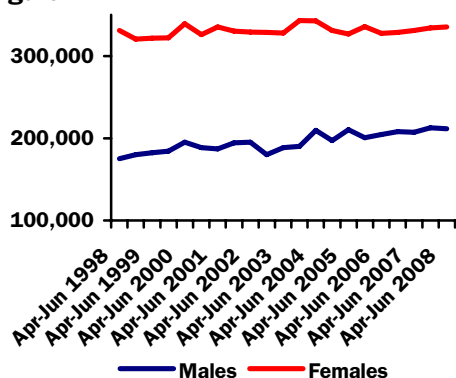
Economic Inactivity

5

The Economically Inactive are those neither in employment nor unemployed. In the period April-June 2008; 335,000 women and 212,000 men aged 16+ are economically inactive. This compares with 323,000 women and 136,000 men in 1984 – an increase of 4% for women and 56% for men. During the same period, in GB the number of economically inactive women decreased by 5% from 11.2m to 10.6m while the number of economically inactive men increased by 39% from 4.9m to 6.8m.

Economically Inactive (16+) 1998 - 2008

Figure 24

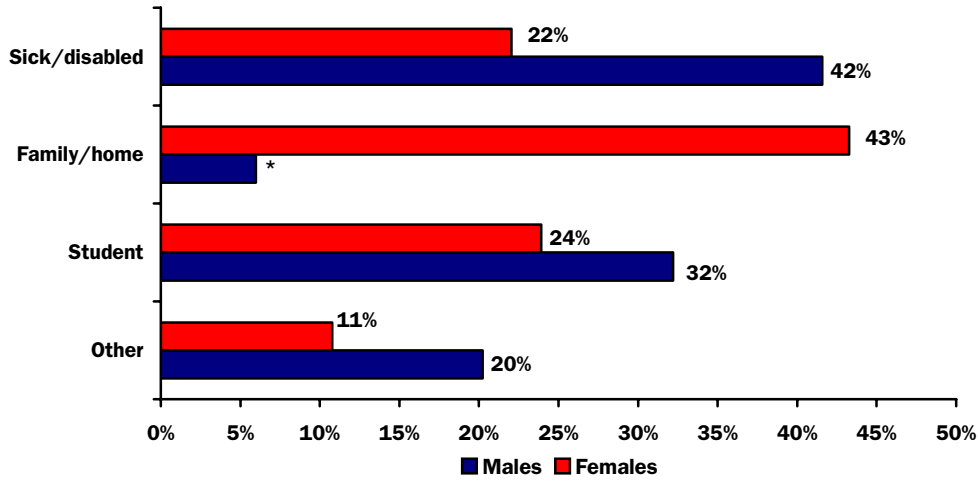


- The working age inactivity rate for women has decreased by 2.4 percentage points over the last 5 years, but has increased by 0.5 percentage points over the last year to 32.9%. The corresponding male rate (21.1%) has risen by 1.0 percentage points over the last 5 years, but fallen by 0.2 percentage points over the last year.

- The working age inactivity rate for women in GB has decreased by 1.2 percentage points over the last 5 years and has decreased by 0.5 percentage points over the last year to 25.9%. The corresponding male rate (16.5%) has risen by 0.4 percentage points over the last 5 years, but fallen by 0.2 percentage points over the year to April – June 2008.
- Of the 174,000 women of working age (16-59) who were economically inactive in NI, 14% (25,000) wanted a job, but were not seeking work in the past four weeks or were unable to start work. The remaining 76% stated that they did not want work. For economically inactive men of working age (16-64), 13% wanted a job and 77% did not want work. [In GB 73% of economically inactive women did not want work, while 27% did want work but were not seeking work in the past four weeks or were unable to start work.]
- 43% of working age inactive women were unavailable for work due to family/home commitments, the estimate for men in this category was too small for reliable quotation. The main reason given by men for inactivity was sickness or disability at 42% compared to 22% for women.
- The other main reason for inactivity was those who were students. 24% of working age inactive women cited this as their reason for inactivity compared to 32% of men.

Reason for Economic Inactivity (working age), April - June 2008

Figure 25



* Sample size too small for a reliable estimate.

“Other” includes the ‘retired’ and ‘discouraged workers’ (those not in a job who would like work and whose reason for not seeking work in the past four weeks is that they believe there are no jobs available).

Childcare Provision and Income Support

6

CHILDCARE PROVISION AND INCOME SUPPORT

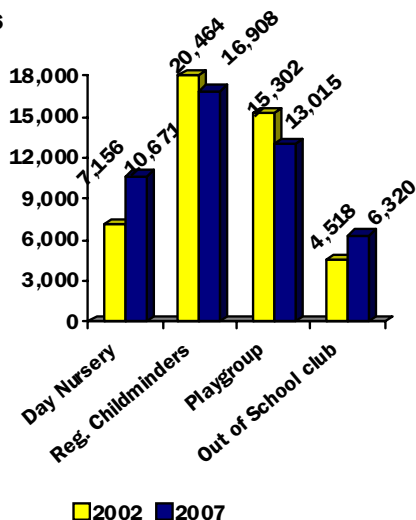
Day Care places (source: Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety)

In Northern Ireland people who look after children aged under twelve years have been required to register since November 1996. The latest available figures in relation to these people are shown below together with corresponding figures for five years earlier for comparison.

- Between 2002 and 2007 the overall number of day care places in Northern Ireland fell by 1% from 47,170 in 2002 to 46,914 in 2007.
- There are 10,671 day nursery places, up from 7,156 in 2002, an increase of 49%.
- There are 16,908 places with registered childminders, down 17% from 2002.
- There are 13,015 playgroup places in Northern Ireland, down 13% from 2002.
- There are 6,320 places available in 'out of school clubs', up 40% from 2002.

Day Care places in Northern Ireland by type in 2002 and 2007

Figure 26



Childcare Charges (source: HM Revenue and Customs)

- From October 1984 help with childcare charges has been available to families receiving Family Credit, Disability Working Allowance and Housing Benefit. From October 1999 Family Credit and Disability working Allowance were replaced by Working Families' Tax Credit (WFTC) and Disabled Person's Tax credit (DPTC) which are administered by the Inland Revenue. From April 2003 WFTC and DPTC were incorporated within the new tax credits, Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit. Child Tax Credit provides support to families for the children (up to 31 august after their 16th birthday) and qualifying young people (those in full-time non advanced education until their 20th birthday) for which they are responsible. Working Tax Credit tops up the earnings of families on low or moderate incomes and includes an element for childcare costs.
- In Northern Ireland at 3 September 2008, 13,200 families were receiving higher Child and Working Tax Credits awards as a result of help with childcare charges. [The corresponding figure for UK was 442,000.]
- The average weekly amount of childcare charges (capped at £175 per week for one child and £300 per week for two or more children) paid in Northern Ireland was £109 and the average weekly increase in Child and Working Tax Credits awards was £80 for families benefiting from the childcare element. [£95 and £69 in the UK respectively.]

Income Support (source: Department for Social Development)

From 6 October 2003, Pension Credit replaced Minimum Income Guarantee (Income Support for people aged 60 and over). Where appropriate references to Income Support have been changed to Income Support/Pension Credit to reflect this.

- At August 2007, there were 114,240 women on Income Support/Pension Credit, this accounted for 59.2 % of all cases. The proportion of women claiming Income Support/Pension Credit has declined by 1.0% since February 2007, compared with a 0.03% increase in the proportion of male claimants over the same period.
- A total of 26,160 (26.9%) Income Support claimants were classified as Lone Parents, the majority of these were women (95.2%). The overall number of lone parents has increased by 0.3% or 80 lone parent claimants since February 2007.
- A higher proportion of women (75.6%) than men (70.8%) had been claiming Income Support for two years or more. The difference was particularly marked in the 18-24 years age group with 48.2% of women claiming for two years or more compared with 34.6% of men.

Educational Standards

7

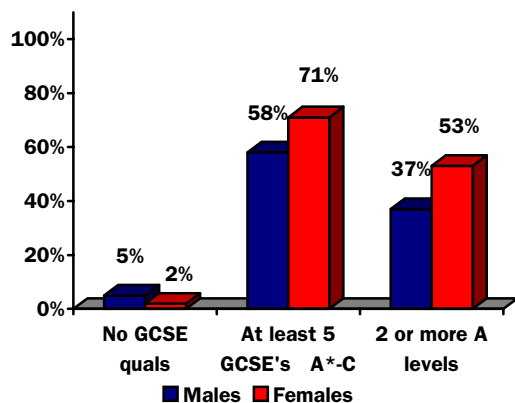
Educational Standards of Women

The figures shown below are from the School Leavers survey.

- Females leaving school tend to be better qualified than males and are more likely to progress to higher education.
- In 2006/07, 56% of girls left school with at least one A-level and 53% with two or more A-levels, compared with 39% and 37% of boys.
- Only 2% of girls left school with no GCSE qualifications compared to 5% of boys.
- 71% of girls left school with at least 5 GCSE grades A*-C compared with 58% of boys.

Qualifications on leaving school, 2006/07

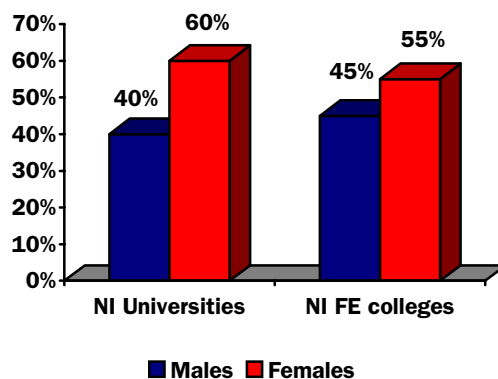
Figure 27



- After leaving school 75% of girls progressed to further or higher education compared to 57% of boys (2006/07).
- In 2006/07, the participation rate of 16 and 17 year olds in full-time education/vocational training was 97% for females, 88% for males and 92% overall.
- 60% of all students enrolled at the NI universities are women (2006/07). Of all enrolments at NI Further Education Colleges, 55% are female (2006/07).
- 36% of full-time academic staff in NI universities (2006/07) and 49% in NI Further Education Colleges are women (2005/06).

Participation in NI Universities¹ and in NI FE Colleges, 2006/07

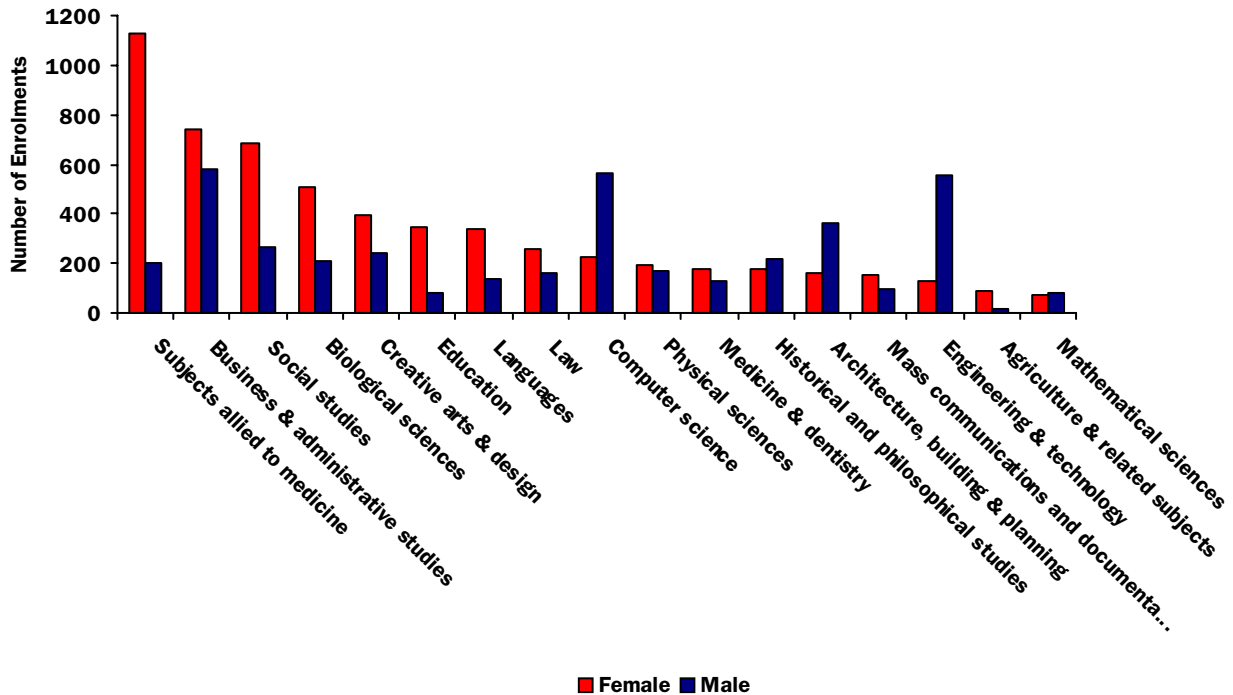
Figure 28



Subject choice in Higher Education (source: Department for Employment and Learning)

Full-time new entrant undergraduate enrolments on Higher Education courses at NI Universities¹ by subject area 2006/07

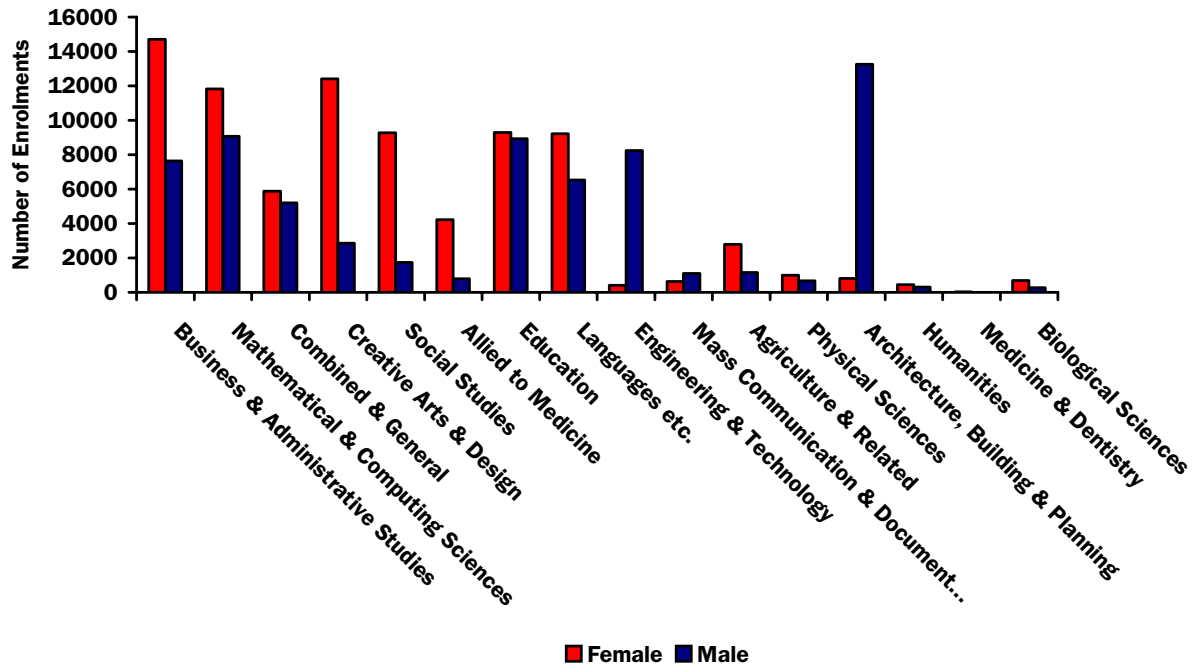
Figure 29



- Of those full-time undergraduates enrolled on the first year of science courses² at the NI universities 41% of students are female (2006/07).
- In the first year of non-science subjects³ 64% of full-time undergraduates at the NI universities are women (2006/07).
- In the first year of medicine & dentistry and subjects allied to medicine, 80% of full-time undergraduates at the NI universities are female (2006/07).
- Women at Northern Ireland universities accounted for 16% of first degree graduates in engineering and technology, 29% in mathematics and computing science and 56% in physical science in 2006/07.
- In medicine and dentistry and related subject areas, 84% of total enrolments at the NI Further Education Colleges are female (2006/07).
- In non science subjects³, 64% of all enrolments at NI Further Education Colleges are women (2006/07).
- In mathematical and computing sciences, 57% of total enrolments at NI Further Education Colleges are female (2006/07).
- Of the total enrolments on science courses² at the NI Further Education Colleges, 35% are female (2006/07).

Subject choice Tertiary Education: Further Education Colleges (source: Department for Employment and Learning)

Enrolments by subject area at NI Further Education Colleges 2006/07
Figure 30



¹ NI Universities includes Queen's University Belfast, the University of Ulster, Stranmillis University College and St Mary's University College.

² Science courses include biological sciences, veterinary science, agriculture & related subjects, physical sciences, mathematical sciences, computer science and engineering & technology and architecture, building & planning.

³ Non science subjects include social studies, law, business & administrative studies, mass communications & documentation, languages, historical & philosophical studies, creative arts & design, education and combined studies.

Note: Both HE and FE data relates to full-year statistics for the 2006/07 academic year.

Politics and Public Life

8

Women in Politics and Public life

- 21% of Councillors in Local Government Districts in Northern Ireland are women. [29% in England according to Census of local authority councillors in office after May 2004 elections.]
- Of the 26 Districts Councils in Northern Ireland, 5 have a female Mayor/Chair and a further 5 have a female Deputy Mayor/Deputy Chair as at July 2008.
- Northern Ireland has three elected women MPs (representing 17% of all NI MPs). In addition, one of the three Northern Ireland MEPs is female. [In GB 20% of MPs and 27% of MEPs are women.]
- 33% of public appointments in Northern Ireland are held by women. This compares with 15% in 1985, 23% in 1990 and 32% in 1995.
- On the 119 publicly appointed bodies in Northern Ireland, 23 Chair and 7 Deputy Chair posts are held by women.
- Elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly took place on the 7 March 2007 - of the 108 elected members, 18 (17%) are women.

Sources: Local Government Branch,
Department of the
Environment
Local Government
Management Board,
London
House of Commons
Information Office
European Parliament
Library
Central Appointments Unit,
Office of First Minister and
Deputy First Minister

Women into Business

9

Women into Business

How entrepreneurial are women in Northern Ireland?

- In 2007, the female level of entrepreneurial activity in Northern Ireland is 2.1% compared to 7.7% for males.
- Despite the slight fall since 2006 (not statistically significant), women are now around one-quarter as likely to be entrepreneurs as males.
- This is a significant widening of the gap since 2006 and returns to the levels observed in 2004 and 2005.
- Northern Ireland is ranked bottom of the 12 United Kingdom regions in 2007 in terms of the rate of early stage entrepreneurial activity among women.
- Males in Northern Ireland are almost three times as likely as women to report that they intend to start a business within the next three years.
- In 2007, 3.1% of women (3.7% in 2006) in Northern Ireland are expecting to start a business in the next 3 years compared to 8.7% of men (7.6% in 2006)
- This gap is again the largest of the UK regions.
- The position of female entrepreneurs in Northern Ireland vis-à-vis the rest of the UK regions has therefore declined in 2007.
- Women are still experiencing a negative culture to their involvement in business ownership. There is a continued need for role models to emulate and demonstrate success thereby encouraging more women to consider self employment as a realistic and viable option.
- Whilst acknowledging the particular differences involved as women approach entrepreneurship, it is interesting to note the following as a demonstration of the real gap and the economic potential. If as many women as men were engaged in early stage entrepreneurial activity in Northern Ireland this would lead to 30,000 more female entrepreneurs, making Northern Ireland the leading region in terms of entrepreneurship. If as many women in Northern Ireland as the UK average were engaged in entrepreneurial activity, this would mean an extra 10,000 women entrepreneurs.
- While most are employed, women are more likely than men to be in part-time employment or looking after the home as they set up a new enterprise.
- Entrepreneurial activity is particularly low among young women. It is also relatively low among the 45 to 54 age group, and in this age band the gap between women in Northern Ireland and those across the UK is widest.
- Higher educational attainment is associated with higher levels of entrepreneurial activity. However, female graduates in Northern Ireland are about one third less likely to be entrepreneurs than male graduates and have one of the lowest levels of entrepreneurial activity of all UK regions.
- 1 in every 2 female entrepreneurs is likely to be in the middle household income bracket.
- Women in the lowest household income group in Northern Ireland record the lowest level of entrepreneurial activity compared to all other UK regions.

Source: GEM Northern Ireland Summary 2007

Impact of entrepreneurial culture on female entrepreneurship in Northern Ireland

- The likelihood of a woman setting up in business is strongly linked to knowing an entrepreneur, believing that there are good business opportunities and believing she has the right skills.
- The fear of failure has a negative impact on a woman's likelihood of starting a business.
- The proportion of Northern Ireland women who believe they have the necessary skills to start a business is particularly low compared to the other regions.
- On a more encouraging note, women in Northern Ireland are as positive as men, and in fact more positive than women generally across the UK, about entrepreneurship being a good career choice and having high status.
- Source: Women and Entrepreneurship in Northern Ireland GEM 2004 Maureen O'Reilly, ERINI and Mark Hart, SBRC July 2005

Investing in Women Initiative

Since 2001, the Investing in Women Initiative has formed part of Invest NI's Accelerating Entrepreneurship Strategy (AES) which has the aim of making Northern Ireland 'an exemplar location for starting and growing a successful business'.

Women are the largest under-represented group when it comes to enterprise in Northern Ireland and represent an enormous pool of untapped potential. The Investing in Women Initiative has since its inception increased the number of women starting a business in Northern Ireland via the roll-out of a comprehensive programme of activity including the following:

Business Networks

There are five business networks for female entrepreneurs which provide opportunities to raise awareness of female entrepreneurship, to source local role models and highlight key initiatives within mainstream business support. In addition the networks provide networking opportunities for business women, a framework to develop peer-mentoring relationships and capture the interest and enthusiasm from business women to support others in business or thinking about starting a business. Work is ongoing in terms of network collaboration and membership of the networks continue to grow.

From 01 June 2006 until 31 May 2008 Invest NI ran a programme called 'New Pathways to Female Entrepreneurship'. This project took a strategically focused approach to "harder to reach" groups using innovative methods and integrated the linkages with and between stakeholder and support providers.

A range of events and conferences were also arranged to promote female entrepreneurship. These were designed to encourage women including school leavers to consider undertaking entrepreneurial activities. The events also brought together existing female entrepreneurs facilitating peer mentoring, shared learning and the growth of strong business networks.

Results

Two key indicators for Invest NI in terms of female attitudes and action in terms of entrepreneurship are the proportion of females attending key entrepreneurship events and the proportion of females taking business ideas forward within the Northern Ireland Start a Business Programme.

The Northern Ireland Start a Business Programme provides training, mentoring and start up support to new businesses in Northern Ireland. Results have been very encouraging over the year 2007/2008 with overall female participation of 47% against 43% the previous year.

In addition, an average of 5,230 women participated in female entrepreneurship activities over the year including participation on programmes and attendance at various networking events.

For further information on Invest NI's Investing in Women Initiative please contact:

Claire Herron claire.herron@investni.com or
Joy Knox joy.knox@investni.com
www.investni.com/femaleentrepreneurs

Technical Notes

10

Technical Note

Definitions

In Employment

Those aged 16 and over who did some paid work in the reference week (either as an employee or self-employed); those who had a job which they were temporarily away from (on holiday for example); those participating in government training and employment programmes; and those doing unpaid family work.

Employees

The division between employees and self-employed is based on survey respondents' own assessment of their employment status.

Unpaid Family Workers

Persons doing unpaid work for a business they own or a business that a relative owns.

Full-time/Part-time

The classification of employees, self-employed, those on government work-related training programmes and unpaid workers in their main job as full-time or part-time is on the basis of self-assessment.

Economically Active

People aged 16 or over who are either in employment or ILO unemployed.

Economic Activity Rate

The percentage of people in a specified age group who are economically active.

Economically Inactive

People who are neither in employment nor unemployed. This group includes, for example, all those who were looking after a home or retired.

Employment Rate

The percentage of people in a specified age group who are in employment.

Unemployment

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) measure of unemployment used throughout this statistics notice refers to people without a job who were available 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. This definition of unemployment is in accordance with that adopted by the 14th International Conference of Labour Statisticians and promulgated by the ILO in 1987.

Unemployment Rate

The percentage of economically active people who are unemployed.

Duration of Unemployment

Duration of unemployment is defined as the shorter of the following two periods:

- (a) duration of active search for work; and
- (b) length of time since employment.

The short-term unemployed are those people who have been unemployed for under 1 year, while the long-term unemployed are defined as those who have been unemployed for 1 year or more.

Working Age

This refers to ages 16 to 59 for women and 16 to 64 for men.

Industry

The classification of respondents' industry of employment is based on the Standard Industrial Classification 2003: SIC(03)

Occupation

The classification of respondents' occupations are based on the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC), introduced in June 2000.

Grossing To Population Totals

Most of the results presented in this report are expressed in terms of percentages, following the grossing of sample numbers to population levels. Each individual participating in the survey is given a weight or "grossing factor" which is related to that person's age and sex. In this way the final grossed results give the population total for NI and reflect the distributions by sex and age shown by the population figures.

Re-weighting of LFS data to updated population estimates

LFS data back to 1992 has been revised in order to incorporate the latest population estimates. The magnitude of the revisions are relatively small, with the revisions to the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate and the working age employment rate falling within +/- 0.02 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. Details of the 're-weighting' methodology used to adjust key LFS estimates was published in the May 2008 edition of Labour Market Trends and can be accessed via the link below:

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/article.asp?id=1992>

Sampling Error

Because the LFS is a sample survey, results are subject to sampling error, i.e. the actual proportion of the population in private households with a particular characteristic may differ from the proportion of the LFS sample with that characteristic. Accordingly, although percentages in most tables are quoted to the nearest whole number, they should not be regarded as having this degree of accuracy, and indeed some apparent trends over time may be misleading due to sampling error.

Publication Threshold

It is the nature of sampling variability that the smaller the group whose size is being estimated, the (proportionately) less precise that estimate is. LFS estimates of under 8,000 are not published in this supplement as they are likely to be unreliable. This revised publication threshold came into effect from 1 September 1999 and estimates below this threshold contained in earlier publications should, therefore, be treated with caution.

Further Information:

Further information on Northern Ireland economic statistics can be obtained by writing to:

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Trade and Investment,
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Netherleigh, Massey Avenue,
Belfast BT4 2JP

telephoning: (028) 9052 9585

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fax: (028) 9052 9459

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Publication now available on visiting web site:

www.statistics.detini.gov.uk