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Figuring it Out: Looking Behind the Social Statistics in Northern Ireland

Ann Marie Gray, Goretti Horgan & Amanda Leighton

# Figuring it Out:

Looking Behind the Social Statistics in Northern Ireland

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# FOREWORD

I welcome the publication of this second Figuring It Out report, providing a commentary on various economic and social topics in Northern Ireland. This publication, produced by ARK in collaboration with the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, is a compilation of statistics on demography; employment; higher education; health and social care; crime and justice; tourism; housing; agriculture, fishing and farming. The **Demography** chapter discusses recent and longer term trends and changes within the Northern Ireland population and in the vital events of births, marriages and deaths. As well as providing broader context, the **Crime and Justice** chapter details actual and perceived levels of crime, reported fear of crime, and also covers information on prison population. The **Health** chapter examines the health of the population in Northern Ireland, access to services and the funding of services. The **Employment** chapter considers employment patterns, sectors of employment, gender and disability breakdowns, self employment, economic inactivity, entrepreneurship, migrant workers, NEETS, graduate jobs and wages. **Tourism** trends are highlighted in the tourism chapter and policies and strategies which may help develop the tourism industry are identified. The **Higher Education** section includes details on participation rates, tuition fees, student loans, STEM uptake, and includes a discussion on the destination of leavers. The **Agriculture** chapter outlines the number of farms in Northern Ireland, farm incomes and farm diversification activity. Statistics on the fishing industry and recreational use of woodland are also included. The **Housing** chapter outlines statistics on housing stock, homelessness, fuel poverty, second homes, empty homes, and also considers the impact of welfare reform on housing. ARK's goal is to make social science information more widely available, and this publication draws together relevant data in an easily accessible format. The value of statistics and research in contributing to effective policy development across all platforms, including government and the voluntary and community sectors, is well recognised. Alongside contributing to the evidence base required for improved decision making, this publication facilitates greater visibility of information relating to social issues within Northern Ireland, enabling greater scrutiny by the public. I hope this report will stimulate debate on the issues covered and should be particularly useful to those who use or provide services in these areas, or those with an interest from a policy perspective.



**Dr TN Caven**

Chief Executive, Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

October 2015

# CONTENTS

**DEMOGRAPHY ..... 1**

**EMPLOYMENT ..... 7**

**TOURISM ..... 40**

**HIGHER EDUCATION ..... 58**

**HOUSING ..... 81**

**HEALTH ..... 97**

**AGRICULTURE ..... 117**

**CRIME ..... 141**

## RECENT TRENDS IN POPULATION

The number of people living in Northern Ireland continues to rise and at 30 June 2014 stood at 1,840,500, representing an increase of 126,500 people (7.4%) over the decade from mid 2004. The annual rate of population increase was not uniform over the last decade. In the period between mid-2004 and mid-2009, the average annual rate of population increase was 0.91 %, due in part to large flows of people coming to Northern Ireland to live, particularly from the A8 countries of Europe. This was nearly double the annual rate of increase in the period mid-2001 to mid-2004 (0.5%).

Population change between mid-2010 and mid-2013 was dominated by natural change and a return to a position of net out migration, similar to that seen in the period between mid-1996 and mid-2001. However, whilst the year on year growth between 2013 and 2014 was driven by natural change, this was also the first year since the year ending mid-2010 that the number of people coming to live in Northern Ireland was greater than the number of people leaving. The number of people leaving Northern Ireland to live elsewhere was at its lowest level in five years, falling by 10% between July 2013 and June 2014. Combined with an increase in the number of people coming to Northern Ireland to live (5.5%), this led to a net population gain of 1,600 people due to migration.

The latest population projections for Northern Ireland (2012-based) show that the population is projected to continue to increase, exceeding 1.9 million in 2020 and 2.0 million persons in 2036. Females outnumber males in Northern Ireland, and make up 51% of the population.

The age structure of Northern Ireland's population continues to get older due to a 22 year period of below replacement level fertility (from 1992 to 2014) and continued increasing life expectancy. The expectation of life at birth for males and females based on mortality rates of recent years were 78.0 and 82.3 years respectively. The corresponding figures for men and women 30 years ago were lower at 69.8 and 76.0 years respectively. Northern Ireland has generally lower expectation of life at birth for both males and females compared to other European (EU15) countries. The figures also show that only Scotland, amongst the other United Kingdom countries, has lower life expectancy than Northern Ireland for both males and females.

In June 2014, 34,400 people (1.9% of the population) were aged 85 years or over. Within the population aged 85 and over, women significantly outnumber men, accounting for 68 per cent of this population group.

## RECENT TRENDS IN POPULATION

The number of births registered to mothers in Northern Ireland in 2014 was around 10% lower than 30 years ago in 1984. Fertility has not reached replacement level (i.e. 2.10 children on average per woman) since 1991. However, the general trend in births over the past decade has been one of increasing birth registrations, from a record low of 21,385 births in 2002.

There has been a recent trend towards later childbearing by mothers. The average age of first time mothers in 2014 was 28.2 years, compared with 27.2 in 2004 and 24.1 in 1984. In 2014, 21% of all live births were to mothers aged 35 and over. This contrasts with the position in 1984 when 11% of births were to mothers aged 35 and over. The number of births to teenage mothers has been generally declining from 1,791 births in 1999 to a record low of 839 in 2014.

There were 3.3 stillbirths per 1,000 births in 2014, a substantial reduction from the 20.5 stillbirths per 1,000 births that occurred in the early 1960s. There has also been a noticeable fall in the number of infant deaths per 1,000 live births since the early 1960s (down from 26.5 to 4.8 in 2014). The 2014 figure represents a slight increase on the 2013 figure of 4.6 infant deaths per 1,000 live births.

## ADOPTIONS

Registers of children adopted under the provisions of the Adoption (NI) Order 1987 and Adoption (Hague Convention) Act (NI) 1969 and of previous adoption Acts of 1929, 1950 and 1967 are kept in the General Register Office, to which adoption orders made to the courts are transmitted.

A certified copy of an entry in the Adopted Children Register is evidence of adoption, and is also evidence of the date of birth of the adopted child.

The number of children recorded in the Adopted Children Register during 2014 was 104, a decrease of 26 from the 2013 figure of 130. The number of adoptions has generally been falling since 1970 when over 500 children were adopted. The 2008 figure of 97 adoptions was the lowest recorded figure since the early 1930's.

## MARRIAGES

There were 8,550 marriages celebrated in 2014. The 2014 figure represents a 17% increase on the record low of 7,281 marriages registered in 2001, but is still notably below the peak of 12,297 marriages in 1970.

In the last 30 years there has been a notable increase in the age at which both men and women are marrying. For example, men and women were on average 7 years older when they married in 2014 than was the case in 1984. The average age at marriage for all brides in 2014 was 32.0 years of age. This compares with 27.7 years in 1994 and 24.7 years in 1984. The average age of the groom in 2014 was 34.1 years, compared with 29.8 years in 1994 and 26.9 years in 1984.

The average age for first marriages has also increased and is now 30.1 years for single females and 31.7 years for single males, both slightly more than 6 years older than their counterparts 30 years ago.

The age difference between brides and grooms at first marriage is around 2 years. This has remained fairly constant over the last 30 years.

Over four fifths (81%) of all marriages were the first for both partners in 2014. Remarriages for both parties accounted for a further 7.2% of all marriages, with the remaining 12% involving couples where only one partner had been married previously. The percentage of people marrying who were divorcees rose from 6.7% in 1984 to 13% in 2004 and has remained at about this level over the last decade.

In January 2004, marriage legislation was reformed in Northern Ireland. The new law allowed civil marriage ceremonies to be conducted outside Registrar's Offices in a number of approved venues. In 2014, some 1,287 civil marriage ceremonies (48% of all civil marriage ceremonies) were held in approved venues other than Registrar's Offices.

Some 2,455 divorces were granted in 2014. This represents a 2.2% increase on the number of divorces in 2013 (2,403) and is notably lower than the peak of 2,913 divorces in 2007. Of the divorcing couples in 2014, 5.7% were married less than 5 years, 21% between 5 and 9 years and 74% were married for 10 years or more. A quarter of divorces involved couples who had been married for 25 years or more.

## CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS

On 5 December 2005 the Civil Partnership Act came into force across the United Kingdom, enabling same-sex couples to obtain legal recognition of their relationship. Between December 2005 and the end of 2014, some 937 civil partnerships were registered in Northern Ireland. During 2014, a total of 110 civil partnerships were registered in Northern Ireland, 47 of which were of males and 63 of which were of females. The average age of males entering civil partnership in 2014 was 37.0 years, while for females it was 35.4 years.

Whilst since late 2005 the Civil Partnership Act has made provision to dissolve a Civil Partnership, no such dissolutions were registered in Northern Ireland until 2010. During 2014 there were 11 civil partnership dissolutions registered in Northern Ireland. Nine of the civil partnership dissolutions in 2014 were of female partners, whereas 2 were of male partners.

## DEATHS

In 2014, the 2 most common causes of death were cancer and diseases of the circulatory system. Indeed more than two thirds of all deaths in 2014 can be attributed to three causes, namely cancer, diseases of the circulatory system and diseases of the respiratory system.

The number of deaths in Northern Ireland has fallen by 20% over the last 90 years, from 18,790 deaths in 1923, to 14,678 in 2014. This was less than the 14 year high recorded in 2013 (14,968) which was the highest number of deaths registered in Northern Ireland since 1999 (15,663), and was an increase of 3.3% on the record low in 2011 (14,204). This may be due to several factors, but is primarily due to the increasing and ageing population of Northern Ireland.

The current population is 15% larger than it was in 1984 and those aged 75 and over represent 6.9% of the population now compared to only 4.9% in 1984. If the age-specific death rates of 1984 still applied today, the number of deaths registered in 2014 would have been more than 25,000; over 10,000 higher than the actual number registered.

The average age at death in 2014 was 73.0 years for males and 79.2 years for females, an increase of 5 years on the average age at death for males (67.9 years) and females (74.2 years) in 1984. This reflects the increased survival of males and females over the period and the consequential ageing of the population.



## MIGRATION

Measuring migration is challenging. There are a number of sources available to count people coming to or leaving Northern Ireland. However, the sources use different definitions of how, when and where migrants are recorded. That said, recent data from all administrative and statistical sources show that migration increased from mid-2004 onwards and then slowed down since mid-2007. The sources also give a consistent picture on which parts of Northern Ireland new migrants are working and living in.

The School Census (May 2015) shows that about 8,000 primary school children have a language other than English as their 'first' language. This accounts for 4.9% of the primary school population, and is an increase of 18% on the corresponding figure (6,854) for the previous year. For secondary school children, the number of pupils who have a language other than English as their 'first' language remained constant (around 2,500 pupils or 3% of the secondary school population) between 2010 and 2014.

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter looks at how the picture relating to employment and unemployment has changed since 2009, which groups have been most affected by the economic downturn and provides some comparison with employment trends in other regions. In Northern Ireland there has been an increase in the working age population (aged 16-64) in line with general population trends since 1993. In 2011, the number of people aged 16-64 made up 64% (1,167,800) of the total population. The 2011 Employment Census<sup>1</sup> confirms that the financial crisis of 2007/08 has had a major impact on the Northern Ireland labour market. Between 2009 and 2011 employment fell by 2.1% bringing the total number of employee jobs down from 708,054 to 693,083. However in 2013 this had increased to 704,017. In the ten years to 2013, employment in Northern Ireland had increased by 8.2% compared to 1.4% for the UK as a whole. A Treasury report attributes this growth in part to 'low wages, generous investment grants, and to some extent post-Troubles normalisation'. The report also noted some aspects of the growth (in retail and construction for example) as not sustainable<sup>2</sup>. Labour market figures since 2010 highlight continuing challenges. While the employment rate (16-64 year olds) for the period December 2014-February 2015 was 68.8%, the highest rate since 2008 it is well below the UK average of 73.4% and is the lowest employment rate among the twelve UK regions. December 2014 was the fifty-sixth consecutive month in which Northern Ireland had the highest or second highest UK regional unemployment rate – at 6.0% compared to a UK average of 5.6%. Just over sixty-two per cent of the unemployed have been unemployed for one year or more – up 16.6 percentage points over the year<sup>3</sup>. The proportion of long-term unemployed in Northern Ireland is markedly higher than the UK average. This has been a persistent feature of the Northern Ireland labour market.

## EMPLOYMENT PATTERNS

A key feature of labour market developments in the decade to 2007 was the increase in the number of part-time jobs between 2007 and 2009 (by 6,864 jobs) while the number of full time jobs decreased by 24,073 (5.0%). Between 2009 and 2011 there was a decrease in both full-time and part-time jobs of 8,519 (1.9%) and 9,452 (3.8%) respectively. The fall in full-time employment rates applied to both men and women.

# EMPLOYMENT

This reversed between 2011-2013 with an increase in both full-time jobs (6,900) and part-time jobs (4,034), an overall increase of 10,934 jobs (1.6%). Male jobs increased by 7,104 whilst female jobs increased by 3,830.<sup>4</sup> One of the notable changes in the 2007-2013 period was the growth in part-time male employment. Table 1 shows trends 2007-2013 with regard to male and female full-time and part-time jobs.

**Table 1: Employee Jobs, Male/Female, Full/Part-Time Split  
September 2007 - September 2013**

|                | Male<br>Full-time | Male<br>Part-time | Males   | Female<br>Full-time | Female<br>Part-time | Females | All jobs |
|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------|---------------------|---------------------|---------|----------|
| Census<br>2007 | 290,273           | 62,753            | 353,026 | 188,386             | 180,648             | 369,034 | 722,060  |
| Census<br>2009 | 271,188           | 66,399            | 337,587 | 185,147             | 185,320             | 370,467 | 708,054  |
| Census<br>2011 | 267,850           | 65,252            | 333,102 | 179,966             | 180,015             | 359,981 | 693,083  |
| Census<br>2013 | 270,261           | 69,945            | 340,206 | 184,355             | 179,356             | 368,811 | 704,017  |

*Source: Northern Ireland Census of Employment 2013*

Table 1 shows that the number of people in work declined across all work patterns since 2009, except in the number of male part time jobs which increased from 65,252 in 2011 to 69,945 in 2013. There was an overall decline of 2.8% in the number of female jobs (full-time 2.8%/part-time 2.9%) and a decline of 1.3% in the number of male jobs. Figures published in March 2015 based on data for the period October to December 2014 show that the number of employee jobs in Northern Ireland (720,130) had increased by 0.2 percentage points from the September 2014 figure and increased by 1.7% over the year. However, at 67.4% the Northern Ireland employment rate is lower than the UK average of 72.2%<sup>5</sup>.

Quarterly employment figures published in December 2014 record the number of public sector employee jobs in 2014 as 212,430, a decrease of 0.1% on the December

2013 figure. In the same period there was a 2.5% increase in the number of private sector employee jobs. While there was an increase of 17,060 jobs in the private sector over the year, this remained 1.4% (7,330) jobs lower than the peak experienced in June 2008. In the ten years from 2004-2014 there was a 5% increase in the number of employee jobs in Northern Ireland compared to a 6% increase in Great Britain<sup>6</sup>.

## WHERE ARE THE JOBS?

Traditionally, the Northern Ireland economy was dominated by the manufacturing and agriculture industries but over the last thirty years there has been a decline in these industries and a shift to a more service based economy including the public sector. The figure below shows that the services industry is the main source of employment in Northern Ireland accounting for 89% of jobs in 2014. This sector is the main source of jobs across the UK but in Northern Ireland there has been a 10% increase on the 2004 figure of 79% (with a decline between 2008-2012 and subsequent growth to 2014). Table 2 shows the percentage change in the number of employee jobs by broad industry sector between 2011 and 2013. The largest number of job losses were in the construction sector.

**Table 2: Employee Jobs 2011 and 2013 by Sector**

| Sector         | Census<br>September<br>2011 | Census<br>September<br>2013 | 2011- 2013<br>Change | % Change |
|----------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|----------|
| Manufacturing  | 73,997                      | 75,031                      | 1034                 | 1.4%     |
| Construction   | 32,930                      | 29,382                      | -3,548               | -10.8%   |
| Services       | 566,153                     | 577,389                     | 11,236               | 2.0%     |
| Other*         | 20,003                      | 22,215                      | 2,212                | 11.1%    |
| All industries | 693,083                     | 704,017                     | 10,934               | 1.6%     |

\* Covers Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing, Mining and Quarrying, Electricity, Gas, Steam & Air Conditioning Supply and Water Supply, Sewerage, Waste Management and Remediation Activities.

Source: Northern Ireland Census of Employment 2013

# EMPLOYMENT

In terms of geographical location, jobs continue to be concentrated in the eastern part of Northern Ireland. As shown in Table 3 between 2011 and 2013 seven of the twenty-six District Council Areas in Northern Ireland showed a decrease in employee jobs. In seven District Council Areas the increase was more than two per cent.

**Table 3: Change in Employee Jobs by District Council Area Sept 2011 to Sept 2013**

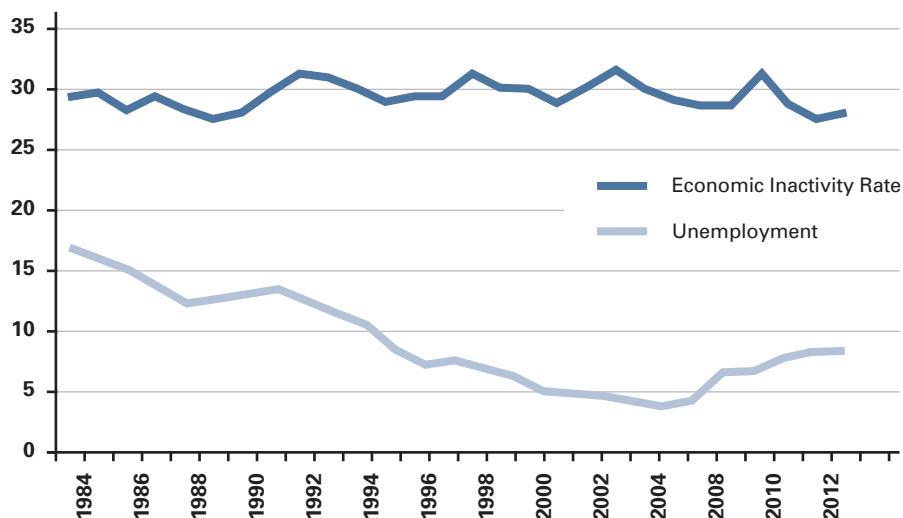
| District Council Area | Census<br>September<br>2011 | Census<br>September<br>2013 | Change | % Change |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------|----------|
| Antrim                | 26,219                      | 27,121                      | 902    | 3.4      |
| Ards                  | 16,468                      | 16,582                      | 114    | 0.7      |
| Armagh                | 18,954                      | 18,888                      | -66    | -0.3     |
| Ballymena             | 25,602                      | 25,835                      | 233    | 0.9      |
| Ballymoney            | 6,858                       | 6,768                       | -90    | -1.3     |
| Banbridge             | 10,421                      | 10,523                      | 102    | 1.0      |
| Belfast               | 196,947                     | 196,976                     | 3,029  | 1.5      |
| Carrickfergus         | 8,419                       | 8,493                       | 74     | 0.9      |
| Castlereagh           | 24,475                      | 24,381                      | -94    | 0.4      |
| Coleraine             | 20,785                      | 21,557                      | 772    | 3.7      |
| Cookstown             | 11,466                      | 11,864                      | 398    | 3.5      |
| Craigavon             | 36,863                      | 38,595                      | 1,732  | 4.7      |
| Derry                 | 41,310                      | 41,314                      | 4      | 0.0      |
| Down                  | 18,180                      | 18,301                      | 121    | 0.7      |
| Dungannon             | 21,085                      | 23,078                      | 1,993  | 9.5      |
| Fermanagh             | 20,754                      | 20,980                      | 226    | 1.1      |
| Larne                 | 8,285                       | 8,103                       | -182   | -2.2     |
| Limavady              | 7,510                       | 7,640                       | 130    | 1.7      |
| Lisburn               | 37,189                      | 37,551                      | 362    | 1.0      |
| Magherafelt           | 13,427                      | 13,459                      | 32     | 0.2      |
| Moyle                 | 3,178                       | 3,374                       | 196    | 6.2      |
| Newry & Mourne        | 31,756                      | 32,669                      | 913    | 2.9      |
| Newtownabbey          | 28,122                      | 27,962                      | -160   | -0.6     |
| North Down            | 20,707                      | 20,476                      | -231   | -1.1     |
| Omagh                 | 17,513                      | 17,469                      | -44    | -0.3     |
| Strabane              | 9,148                       | 8,941                       | -207   | -2.3     |
| All DCA's             | 681,641                     | 691,903                     | 10,262 | 1.5      |

Source: Northern Ireland Census of Employment September 2013

## INACTIVITY RATE

In terms of economic inactivity Northern Ireland continues to be above the UK average. Almost 27% of the working working-age population is economically inactive compared to the UK average of 22%. The level of economic inactivity in Northern Ireland has remained within a range of between 26% and 32% of the working age population since the mid 1980s, including during the period of economic growth prior to 2008. Those defined as 'economically inactive' and who 'do not want to work' include students (30%), carers and those defined as economically inactive as a result of a sickness or disability. The highest proportion of those economically inactive aged 16-64 is in the 16 to 24 year age group (17.3%), while 15.3% of 55-64 year olds are economically inactive. Northern Ireland has a higher proportion of people economically inactive as a result of a sickness or disability than the UK as a whole – 27.7% compared to 21.8%<sup>7</sup>. Interestingly, a third (33.4%) of economically inactive people of working age have no qualifications and so might be described as “discouraged” workers<sup>8</sup>.

**Figure 1: Economic Inactivity and Unemployment rates in Northern Ireland, 1984-2012**

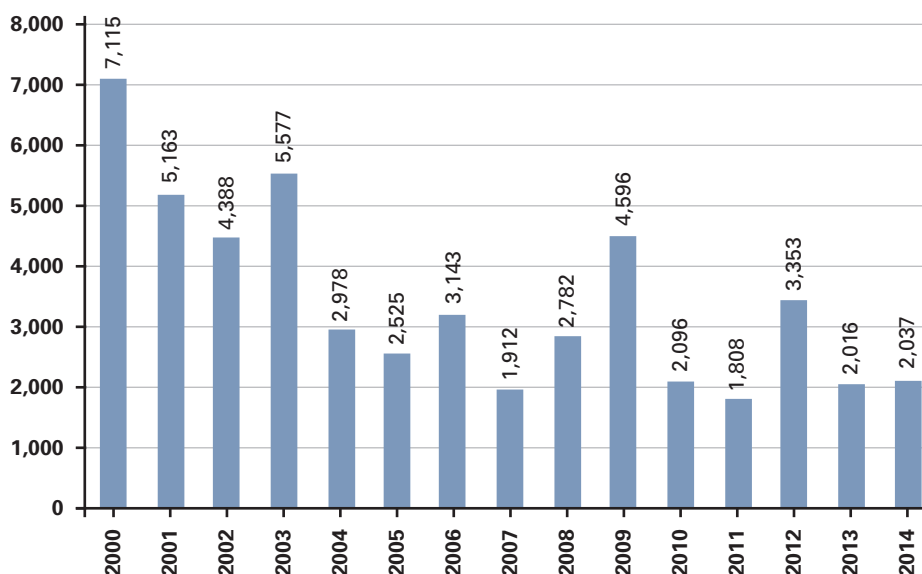


Source: DEL (2013) *A Strategy to tackle economic inactivity in Northern Ireland : Baseline Study*

## REDUNDANCIES

The number of redundancies is one of the indicators used to assess the strength or weakness of the labour market. Over the eleven years from 2000 to 2011, the number of confirmed redundancies involving 20 or more employees fluctuated from a high of 7,115 in 2000 to a record low of 1,808 in 2011. In 2012 the numbers rose to nearly double the 2011 figure (3,353). There was a 37% decrease in the number of confirmed redundancies over the year from December 2012-2013.<sup>9</sup> Over the twelve month period up to March 2015 there were a total of 2,037 confirmed redundancies, an increase of one per cent compared to the previous year.<sup>10</sup>

**Figure 2: Redundancies, 2000-2013**



Source: DETI. Labour Market Statistics – March 2015.

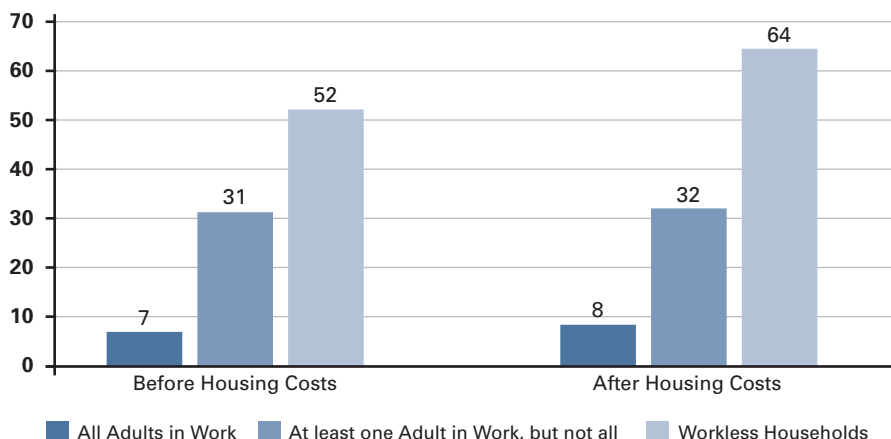
It is important to note that these figures do not fully capture the real level of redundancies as employers are only obliged to report twenty or more redundancies.

## JOB-RICH, JOB-POOR HOUSEHOLDS

In Northern Ireland the main source of household income for the majority of the population is earned income. For a minority of the population, approximately one fifth, benefits and tax credits account for the largest proportion of their gross household income. Income inequality at quintile level in Northern Ireland has remained much the same for over a decade. For example, in 2002-2003 those households in the top 20% of the income distribution had a weekly income 3.8 times higher than those households in the bottom fifth of the income distribution and this remained the same in 2011-2012.<sup>11</sup> In 2011-2012, while the bottom 53.4% of incomes were under £20,000 a year, the top 1.1% of incomes were over £100,000 a year and the top 0.3% over £200,000 a year.<sup>12</sup>

Figure 3 demonstrates that as in Britain, the only families in Northern Ireland with a low risk of low income are those where all the adults are working. As is clear, only those households where all adults are in work can be confident they will escape income poverty. Those where at least one adult works have a very similar risk of poverty before and after housing costs but for workless households with children, after housing costs poverty is considerably higher than before housing costs. Gray et al (2009) showed this was largely lone parent households, 56% of whom were living in the private rented sector<sup>13</sup>.

**Figure 3: Percentage of children in low income group by economic status of household**



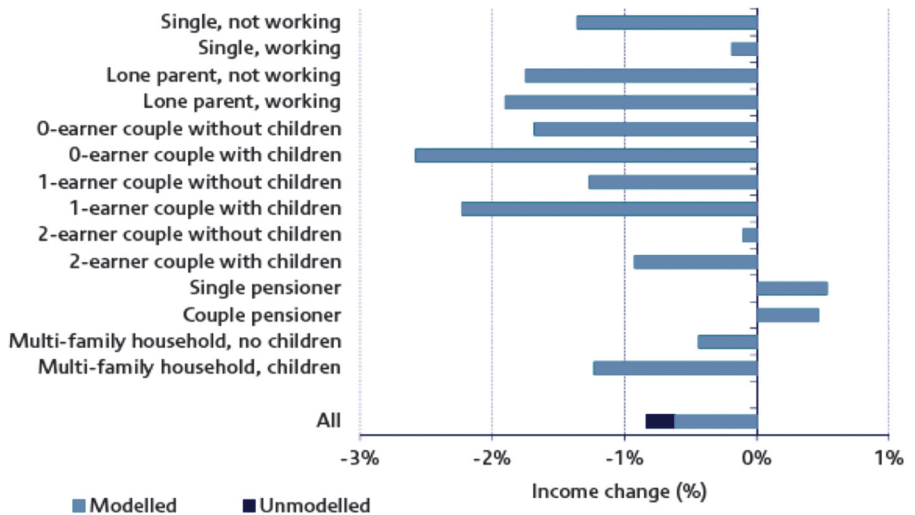
Source: NI Households below average income (HBAI), 2011-12.



Figures show that in Northern Ireland weekly median incomes increased by 2% (£8) in real terms Before Housing Costs (BHC) from 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 -from £387 in 2011-2012 to £395 in 2012-13. Using the After Housing Costs (AHC) measure, the average (median) income increased by 3% (£9) between 2011-2012, and 2012-2013, from £349 to £358. This is the first increase in median incomes in Northern Ireland since 2008-2009. However, average income in Northern Ireland remains comparatively low compared to the UK average; in 2012-2013 the average (median) weekly household income in the United Kingdom was £440 (BHC) and £374 (AHC). Northern Ireland has a higher proportion of working age adults with an income between £100 and £500 per week than the UK average, and a lower proportion of working age adults with incomes of more than £500. 25% of Northern Ireland working age adults live in households with equivalised weekly incomes greater than £500.00 compared to 35% in the UK as a whole<sup>14</sup>. Data published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation also show that the number of families where all adults were unemployed doubled in Northern Ireland between 2006-2007 and 2011-2012 although they make up only 5% of the total in Northern Ireland. Other labour market features include the growth in the number of families where the main earner is self-employed (6% increase in Northern Ireland compared with 2% in the UK), the 30% increase in the number of families where the main earner was working part time (compared to 20% in the UK) and the 6% fall in the number of families where all adults were in full-time work (compared with 2% in the UK). These figures show a decrease in the number of families on higher incomes in Northern Ireland and an increase in the number on lower incomes and while this has happened across the UK it was most pronounced in Northern Ireland<sup>15</sup>.

Figure 4 shows the distributional impact of the tax and benefit reforms introduced as a result of welfare reform by household type. On average, those who gain the most from the reforms are pensioner households and those who lose the most are households with children.<sup>16</sup>

**Figure 4: Distributional impact of tax and benefit reforms to be introduced in 2012-2013, by household type and work status**



**Note:** Assumes full take-up of means-tested benefits and tax credits.

Source: Joyce (2012), *Tax and benefit reforms due in 2012–13, and the outlook for household incomes*, IFS, London

## GENDER AND EMPLOYMENT

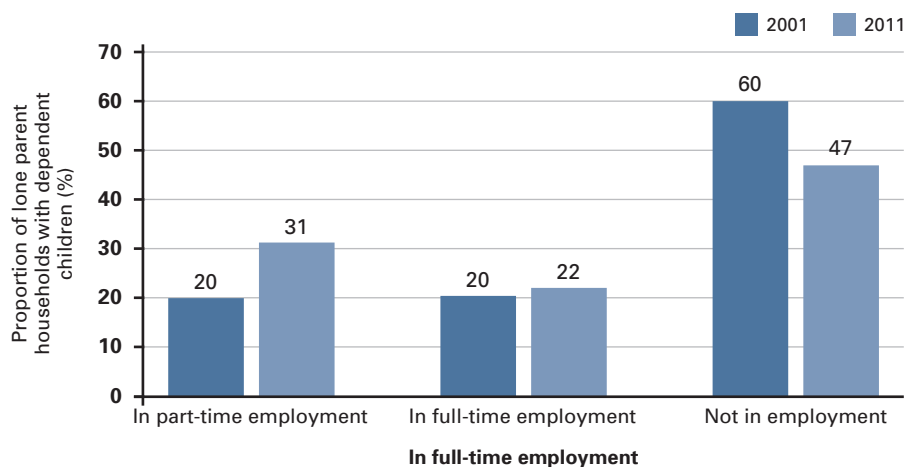
Despite the fall in employment levels during the economic recession and subsequent downturn, female employment levels have generally been increasing at a slightly faster rate than males, although fewer women than men are employed. Figures for December 2014 to February 2015 show a 9.5 percentage points gap between male and female employment (the employment rate for women aged 16-64 is 63.9% compared to 73.4% for men). More women are economically inactive. In 2015 the economic activity rate for men was 78.8%; for women it was 66.3%<sup>17</sup>. This differential is considerably lower than the 20.6 percentage points gap ten years ago<sup>18</sup>. One of the most striking developments has been the increase in male part-time employment. However, it is still disproportionately women who occupy part-time jobs. At December 2014, just under half of female jobs were part-time (49.7%) while 21% of males worked on a part-time basis<sup>19</sup>. The main reasons given by females for working part-time were that they did not want a full-time job (73.4%) and that they could not find a full-time job (12.9%) but clearly factors such as availability of childcare may be a factor in the 'choices' that women make. Women are much less likely than men to be self-employed. Only 6% of females in employment in 2014 (26,000) were self-employed compared to 22% of males, with little change from ten years ago.

## LONE PARENTS AND EMPLOYMENT

The 2011 Census data shows that the number of lone parent households with dependent children in Northern Ireland is 63,921- out of a total of 703,275 households. This figure represents an increase of 27% since 2001. Women account for 91% (58,282) of lone parents, a picture which has changed little since the 2001 Census (92%). The employment rate for lone parents is just over 53% leaving almost 47% not in employment, a decrease on the 60% of lone parents not in employment in 2001<sup>20</sup>. This decrease is likely to be due to a combination of a number of policy initiatives focused on getting lone parents into employment and increasing conditionality linked to social security benefits. However, despite the strong policy focus over the past fifteen years on getting lone parents into paid work the number in employment has hovered around the 40-53% figure for over a

decade. The greatest increase in lone parent employment has been in relation to part-time work where the proportion of lone parents rose from 20% in 2001 to 31% in 2011; during the same period the number of lone parents working full-time increased from 20% to 22% (see Figure 5).

**Figure 5: Employment status of parent in lone parent households with dependent children**



Source: NISRA, *Census 2011: Key Statistics for Northern Ireland 2012*.

Figures published in 2011 show just one in seven lone parents in Northern Ireland not in employment wants paid work, a smaller proportion than in any of the regions of Great Britain. Lack of infrastructure, such as childcare and public transport, as well as the quality of work available may be factors contributing to this<sup>21</sup>. Even when lone parents are in full-time work they have twice the rate of poverty of couple families.<sup>22</sup>

## GENDER SEGREGATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Statistics demonstrate the persistence of occupational gender segregation. Table 4 illustrates the gender segregated nature of the industrial sectors in Northern Ireland. The largest sectors, in terms of employment for women are public administration, education and health (51.6%) and distribution, hotels and restaurants (22.2%). There are over twice as many women as men working in public administration, education and health industries - 51.6% of females compared to 20.4% of males.

**Table 4: Industry employment by gender**

| Industry                             | Male  | Female |
|--------------------------------------|-------|--------|
| Agriculture, forestry and fishing    | 5.2%  | *      |
| Manufacturing                        | 16.6% | 5.8%   |
| Construction                         | 14.5% | *      |
| Distribution, hotels and restaurants | 16.1% | 22.1%  |
| Transport and communication          | 9.2%  | 2.8    |
| Banking and Finance                  | 11.7% | 9.7%   |
| Public admin, education and health   | 19.8% | 51.8%  |
| Other services                       | 4.2%  | 5.3%   |

\*Indicates numbers are too small to be estimated.

Source: DETI NI Labour Force Survey October-December 2014.

This gender segregation means that women will be disproportionately affected by planned reduction in public sector jobs. In Britain it is estimated that between 70% and 80% of workers at risk from public sector cuts are women<sup>23</sup>. Some 31.4% of all Northern Ireland jobs are in the public sector, just a little less than the proportion of public sector jobs in West Wales and the Valleys, and less than the Highlands and Islands where 34.3% of all employees are public sector workers, though higher than the UK average of 23%<sup>24</sup>. Women comprise almost two-thirds of public sector employees in Northern Ireland and it is estimated that women's share of the public sector job losses could be around 12,680. The reduction in the size of the public sector after 2009 almost entirely consisted of an estimated fall of 6.9% (2,000 jobs) in part-time employment. This mainly affected women, with a fall of 9% compared with 2% for their male counterparts<sup>25</sup>.

## SELF-EMPLOYMENT

An Office of National Statistics (ONS) report<sup>26</sup> shows that since the start of the economic downturn in 2008 the number of workers who are self-employed in the UK has risen by 367,000 reaching a record level of 4.2 million. In contrast, the number of self-employed workers in Northern Ireland decreased in 2008-2009 during the economic downturn, and again between 2011 and 2012. Overall, the number of self-employed males decreased by 0.7% between 2004 and 2014 while the number of self-employed females increased by 24.2% in the same period (albeit from a small base). So, while the growth in numbers of self-employed females between 2002 and 2013 was proportionately greater, as Table 5 shows there are considerably more self-employed men than women.

The number of self employed people has subsequently increased with labour market figures for March-May 2014 show a record 122,000 self-employed people in Northern Ireland (a 16% increase on the previous year)<sup>27</sup>.

**Table 5: Self-employed numbers (16+) 2002/2014**

|                 | Male   | Female | All     |
|-----------------|--------|--------|---------|
| April-June 2002 | 83,000 | 18,000 | 101,000 |
| April-June 2007 | 98,000 | 22,000 | 121,000 |
| April-June 2008 | 97,000 | 25,000 | 123,000 |
| April-June 2009 | 95,000 | 18,000 | 114,000 |
| April-June 2010 | 93,000 | 26,000 | 118,000 |
| April-June 2011 | 90,000 | 29,000 | 119,000 |
| April-June 2012 | 87,000 | 22,000 | 109,000 |
| April-June 2013 | 83,000 | 25,000 | 108,000 |
| April-June 2014 | 95,000 | 26,000 | 121,000 |

Source: DETI NI Labour Force Survey Quarterly Report published, April - June 2014

# EMPLOYMENT

The majority of self-employed people are in the 30-44 and 45-59 age groups. Those in self-employment are less likely to have a degree or higher education but more likely to have GCE A level(s) or equivalent. Furthermore, those who are self-employed are more likely to have no qualifications compared to those in employment.

Table 6 details the rise and fall in self-employment by industry between 2005 and 2014. The services sector had been the only category showing an increase in the number of self-employed, peaking at 77,000 in 2011. However, in the following two years, it suffered a decrease of almost 20,000 jobs; while there has been some recovery, the number of jobs in that sector continues to fluctuate well below the 2011 high. The production and construction sector which had shown a fall of 14,800 self-employed jobs has recovered somewhat and is now back at 2007 levels.

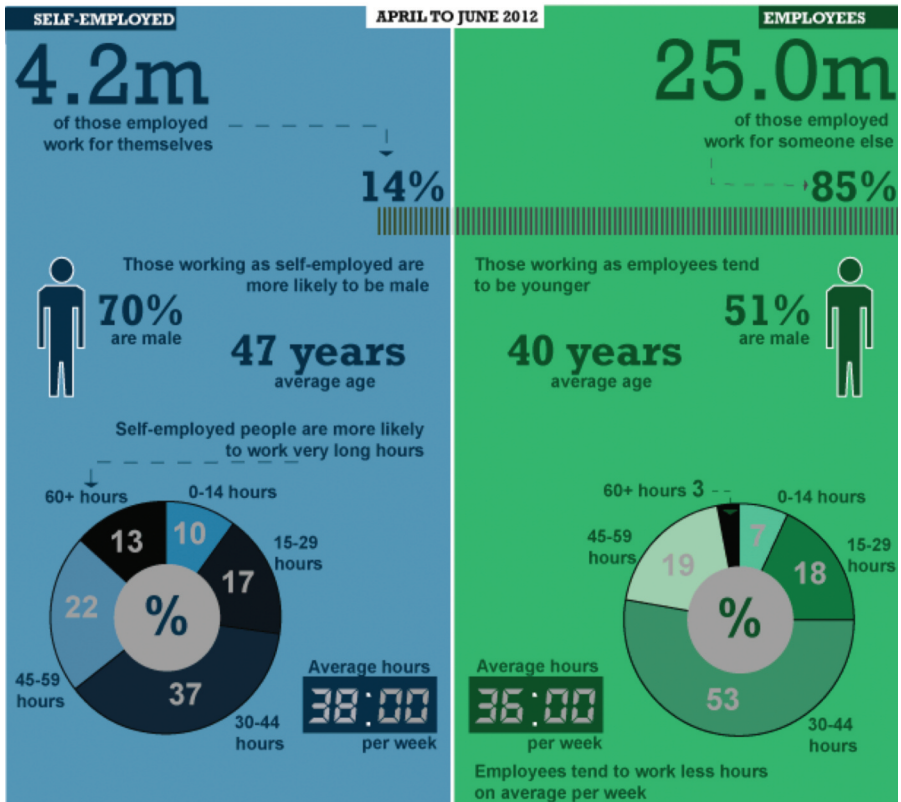
**Table 6: Self-employed Jobs in Northern Ireland by Broad Industry Group (June of Each Year)**

|      | Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing | Production & Construction | Services | All Industries |
|------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|----------|----------------|
| 2005 | 19,200                          | 42,800                    | 62,000   | 124,100        |
| 2006 | 18,700                          | 39,400                    | 65,400   | 123,400        |
| 2007 | 17,300                          | 36,200                    | 61,200   | 114,700        |
| 2008 | 17,900                          | 39,300                    | 65,900   | 123,100        |
| 2009 | 17,900                          | 34,900                    | 59,800   | 112,700        |
| 2010 | 16,700                          | 35,100                    | 72,900   | 124,700        |
| 2011 | 16,000                          | 32,100                    | 77,600   | 125,800        |
| 2012 | 16,600                          | 26,500                    | 67,100   | 110,200        |
| 2013 | 17,100                          | 35,800                    | 58,800   | 111,600        |
| 2014 | 17,600                          | 37,800                    | 63,500   | 118,900        |

Source: DETINI (2015), Northern Ireland Quarterly Employment Survey (QES) March 2015

# EMPLOYMENT

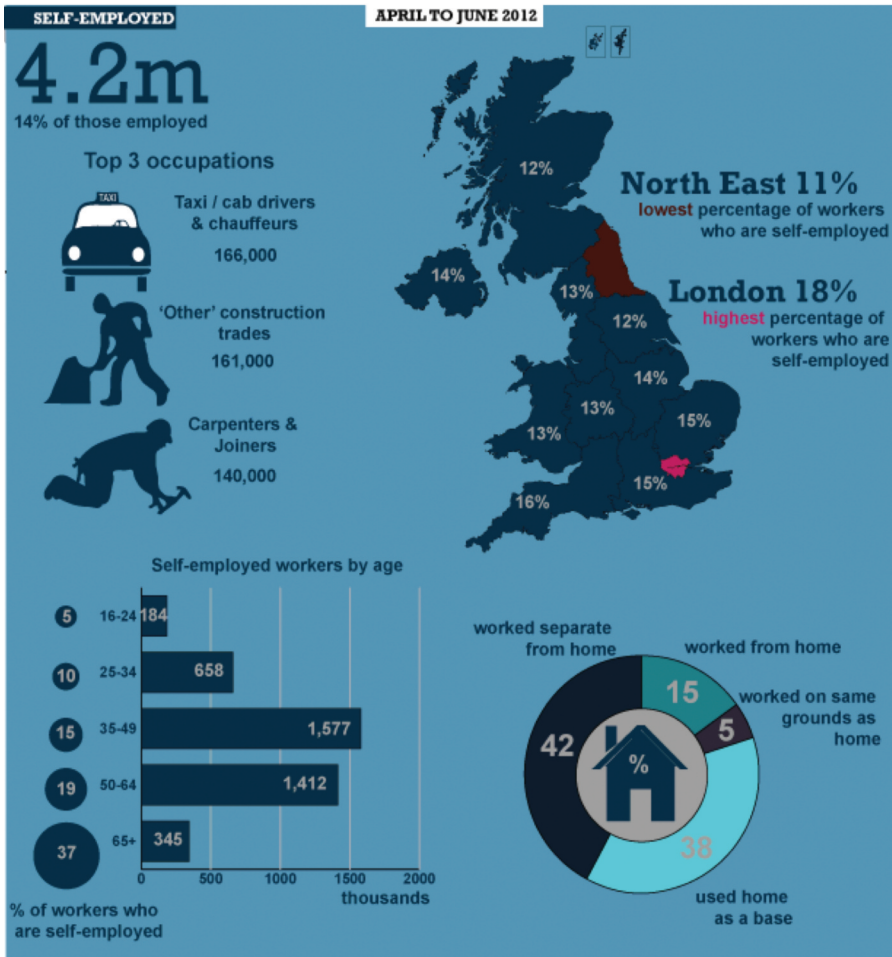
ONS statistics published in 2013 show that compared to people employed to work for someone, the self-employed work longer hours, tend to be older and are more likely to be male. The average age of self-employed workers is 47, compared to an average age of 40 for the UK's 25m employees. The most popular occupations for self-employed workers are taxi driver, construction trades, carpenters, joiners and farmers. Around 58% of self-employed people use their home for work (see infographics below).



Source: ONS (2013), *Self-employed Workers in the UK*  
[http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776\\_298533.pdf](http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776_298533.pdf)



# EMPLOYMENT



Source: ONS (2013), *Self-employed Workers in the UK*  
[http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776\\_298533.pdf](http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776_298533.pdf)

The rise in self-employment has offset around 40% of the loss of employee jobs. However, an Audit Report by the Chartered Institute for Personnel Development<sup>28</sup> argues that while this outcome is preferable to higher unemployment much of the rise in self-employment is due to weak demand in the jobs market rather than resilience or emerging strength in the economy. The report adds that it is likely that most self-employed workers would take a job with an employer if they could get one.

## ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITY

In the UK, as in many other countries, there is increasing recognition among politicians and policy makers of the importance of a successful entrepreneurial sector to create jobs and promote economic prosperity. For that reason this edition of Figuring it Out includes a snapshot of entrepreneurial activity in Northern Ireland as well as other parts of the UK and Ireland.

Entrepreneurial activity in Northern Ireland in 2014 was lower than the UK average. The Global Entrepreneurship Monitoring Report calculates that the Total Early-stage Entrepreneurial activity (TEA)<sup>1</sup> declined sharply in the UK between 2012 and 2013 but increased significantly in 2014 to 8.6%. Within the UK Northern Ireland improved its rate of TEA activity in 2014 with a rate of 6.7% ahead of that in Scotland (5.4%), close to Wales (7.1%), although lagging behind England (9.1%). Northern Ireland has the lowest ratio of female to male TEA at 48%, but this figure represents a significant increase from a 2013 ratio of 27%. Interestingly, while the highest rate of entrepreneurial activity in the UK overall can be found in the 35-44 age group, in Northern Ireland it was those in the 25-34 age group who had the highest rate of entrepreneurial activity in 2013 and those aged 45-54 in 2014.<sup>29</sup> According to the 2014 Global Entrepreneurship Monitoring Report, 8.5% of working age adults in the UK as a whole expected to start a business in the next three years (compared to 9.8% in 2011 and 5.4% in 2013).

1 TEA is defined as (the sum of the nascent entrepreneurship rate and the new business owner-manager rate – without double counting).

**Table 7: Measures of entrepreneurial activity in the UK, 2013**

|                  | <b>I expect to start a new business (%)</b> | <b>Business closure rate (Business closed in the last 12 months) (%)</b> |
|------------------|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| England          | 5.7                                         | 1.4                                                                      |
| Wales            | 3.9                                         | 0.9                                                                      |
| Scotland         | 4.3                                         | 1.0                                                                      |
| Northern Ireland | 3.4                                         | 0.5                                                                      |
| UK               | 5.4                                         | 1.3                                                                      |

*Source: Global Entrepreneurship Monitor – United Kingdom 2013 Monitoring Report.*

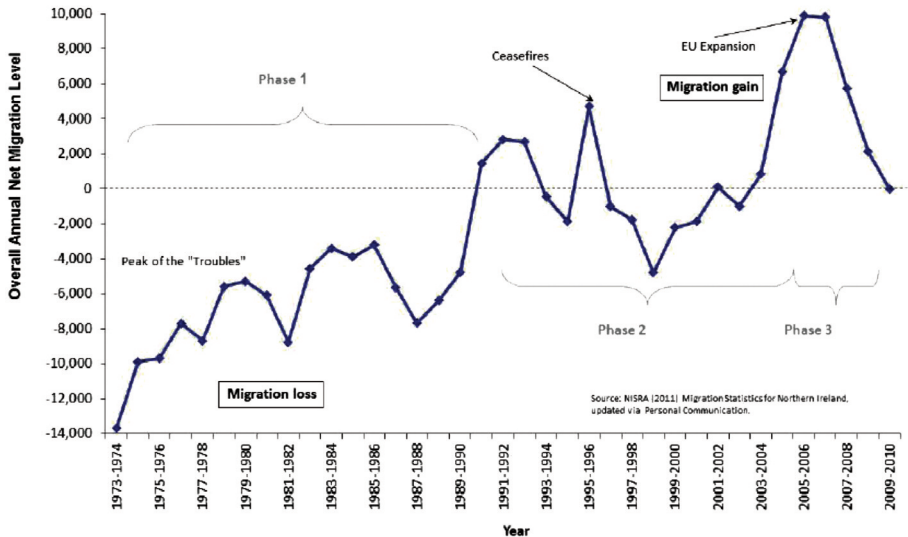
## SECTION 75 GROUPS: ‘EMPLOYMENT INEQUALITIES’

This section of the report provides a brief overview of the employment status of a number of groups relevant to the Section 75 categories for Northern Ireland. Reference is also made to how the recession has impacted more widely on some groups protected by UK equality legislation.

## EMPLOYMENT OF MIGRANT AND MINORITY ETHNIC WORKERS

Figure 6 shows three phases of migration that took place in Northern Ireland between the mid 1970s and 2010. In the first phase, during the 1970s and 1980s, Northern Ireland experienced constant outward migration. The second phase from the early 1990s to 2004 was more balanced, with new arrivals matched by those leaving the region. In phase three from 2004 onwards, Northern Ireland experienced a substantial rise in inward migration from Central and Eastern Europe, (Poland and Lithuania in particular) due to the enlargement of the European Union. Immigration peaked in 2007, when an estimated 32,000 migrants arrived in Northern Ireland. New immigrants have joined long-standing communities of people from minority ethnic backgrounds (such as the Irish Traveller and Chinese community) and changed the ethnic mix of many places in the region, both urban and rural.

**Figure 6: Trends in Annual Total Net Migration, 1973-2010**



Source: Russell, R (2012) *Migration in NI: an update*, Northern Ireland Assembly Research Paper

The figure above shows that since the economic downturn began in 2007-2008, there has been a downward trend in migration, which is expected to continue<sup>30</sup>. The 2011 Census showed that 1.8% (32,000) of the total population of Northern Ireland (1.8 million) belonged to the minority ethnic population, more than double the proportion in 2001 (approximately 14,000).

Data from the Workers Registration Scheme (WRS) reveal that between 2004 and 2011 Northern Ireland received around a quarter more migrants on a per capita basis from Central and Eastern Europe seeking work relative to the rest of the UK.

**Table 8: WRS Registrations per 1,000 population (May 2004–March 2011)**

| Country          | WRS Registrations<br>(May 2004 - Mar 2011) | 2010 Population<br>Estimate | WRS<br>Registrations<br>per 1,000 |
|------------------|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| England          | 1,005,000                                  | 52,234,000                  | 19.2                              |
| Scotland         | 97,000                                     | 5,222,100                   | 18.6                              |
| Wales            | 30,000                                     | 3,006,400                   | 10.2                              |
| Northern Ireland | 42,500                                     | 1,799,400                   | 23.6                              |
| United Kingdom   | 1,175,115                                  | 62,626,000                  | 18.9                              |

*Source: Russell, R (2012) Migration in NI: an update, Northern Ireland Assembly Research Paper*

Over half of all WRS registrants (55%) between 2004 and 2014 were from Poland, 19% were from Lithuania, 13% from Slovakia, Latvia 6% and almost 4% from the Czech Republic. The vast majority (77%) of migrant workers from Central and Eastern European countries were in the 18-34 age category and predominantly (62%) male. Research indicates that sizeable proportions of people from minority ethnic groups have higher education and vocational qualifications but are in jobs below their skill levels<sup>31</sup>.

A problem for many migrants is the lack of recognition of skills and qualifications amongst employers. This underemployment of migrant workers has an impact on their own earning capacity and job progression but it also represents an underutilised resource for the economy.

Table 9 distinguishes the 'old' migrant communities and those who arrived after 2004. Those who arrived after 2004 are employed mainly in low-wage employment such as food processing.

**Table 9: Employment sectors for migrants.**

| Pre-2004 Migrant                |                                     | Post-2004 Migrant                    |                                     |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Sector                          | % employment<br>(average 2006-2008) | Sector                               | % employment<br>(average 2006-2008) |
| Hotels & Restaurants            | 7%                                  | Manufacture of food & beverages      | 18%                                 |
| Computer & related activities   | 6%                                  | Manufacture of furniture             | 7%                                  |
| Manufacture of furniture        | 5%                                  | Hotels & Restaurants                 | 7%                                  |
| Manufacture of food & beverages | 5%                                  | Manufacture of machinery & equipment | 5%                                  |
| Health & Social Work            | 4%                                  | Computer & related activities        | 3%                                  |

*Source: Northern Ireland Peace Monitoring Report, 2012 p. 98.*

There is still a dearth of data and research on ethnic minorities in Northern Ireland. A Joseph Rowntree Foundation study which examined poverty and ethnicity in Northern Ireland<sup>32</sup> notes that due to the lack of household data it is unclear what the patterns of work are between spouses. Drawing on evidence from small-scale surveys, the research suggests that approximately half of recent migrants are married with families and the lack of affordable and appropriate childcare was a barrier to further engagement in the labour market. The evidence also highlighted the prevalence of low-paid employment and suggested that in-work and child poverty could be a concern.

## COMMUNITY BACKGROUND AND EMPLOYMENT

There has been a narrowing of difference between the proportion of Protestants and Roman Catholic in the working age population. In 1990 the difference was 13 percentage points; by 2012 this had reduced to 1 percentage point with the religious composition of the population of working age being 44% Protestant, 43% Catholic and 13% other/non-determined.

The religious composition of the public and private sectors in Northern Ireland is very similar. Between 1990 and 2012 the numbers of Catholics of working age increased by an additional 114,000, or 33%, while the Protestant increase was only 4%. In terms of the impact of the recession on community background there is no real difference as between 2007 and 2009 as Protestant employment fell by 3.5% and Catholic employment fell by 3.2%<sup>33</sup>. Figures for economic inactivity show that in 1992 the rate for Roman Catholics was 34% and for Protestants 24%, corresponding figures for 2012 were 30% and 25%. The main reason for both Protestant and Catholics inactivity was sickness and disability. Between 1992 and 2012 the number of Protestants economically inactive due to sickness or disability increased by 12,000 (50%) and the number of Catholics by 21,000 (88%)<sup>34</sup>.

## YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Young people have been disproportionately affected by the economic downturn. Figures for the three months to November 2013 show that while the overall unemployment rate in Northern Ireland is 7.4% the unemployment rate for 18-24 year olds is 22.5%; the UK average is 18.2%.<sup>35</sup> In 2007, just before the current economic downturn occurred, the youth unemployment rate was about 12% which means there has been an increase of about 120% since 2007.

## YOUNG PEOPLE NOT IN EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT OR TRAINING

Data provided by ONS<sup>36</sup> indicates that 975,000 people aged 16-24 were not in employment, education or training in the first quarter of 2014. This amounts to 13.5% of people in this age group. The number of young people not in education, employment or training increased significantly across the UK after 2006 but the latest figures cited above are the lowest since the first quarter of 2008. A person is defined as not in employment, education or training if they are aged 16 to 24 and not in employment, education or training (full-time or part-time).<sup>37</sup> This definition is used across the UK but it should be noted that prior to 2014 figures on young people not in employment, education or training included young people who were in part-time education. Labour Force Survey figures show that in the quarter July - Sept 2014, 36,000 young people (16.8% of the 16-24 year old population) in Northern Ireland

were not in education, employment or training. This 36,000 figure is up 1,000 on the previous year and 4,000 since the last quarter. In the same period in England the figure was 15.4%<sup>38</sup>.

It is estimated that Northern Ireland's expanding NEET group costs the local economy close to £5 million a week<sup>39</sup>. The cost of so many young people not in employment, education or training is considerable. The Prince's Trust states that youth unemployment alone results in loss of £10 million per day to the UK economy (before inactivity is even taken into account). In June 2012 the Department for Employment and Learning published Northern Ireland's first NEET strategy<sup>40</sup> which sets out a broad inter-departmental strategy for reducing the number of young people not in education, employment or training by 2020.

## DISABILITY AND EMPLOYMENT

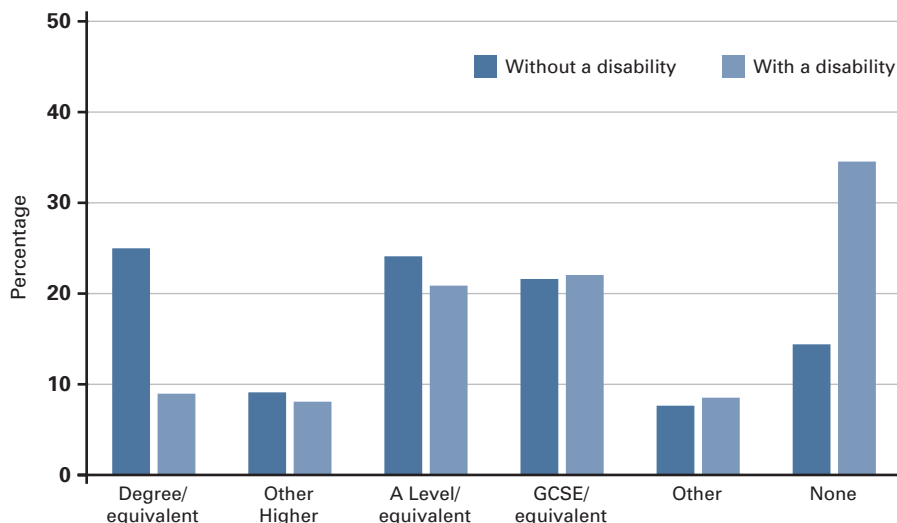
In 2014, one in five persons aged 16-64 in Northern Ireland (232,000, or 21.1%) described themselves as having a long-term disability, which is higher than the figure of 18.7% for the UK as a whole. Of those describing themselves as having a long-term disability, 20.3% were males and 19.9% were females. Over a third (37.7%) of disabled people were in employment compared to 75% of those without disabilities. The majority of disabled people (56.2%) are categorised as economically inactive. This compares to 19.3% of able bodied people.<sup>41</sup>

The proportion of people in Northern Ireland identifying sickness or disability as the main reason for not wanting work is almost six percentage points higher than the UK average (27.7% compared to 21.8%). The Northern Ireland Survey of Activity Limitation and Disability (NISALD) in 2007 found that 59% of economically inactive working age people with a disability who said their education had been affected by their disability, said they had not been offered advice about the future at any stage. Furthermore 60% of respondents with a disability were not aware of incentives and tax credits available to enter employment.

Figure 7 show that only 8.4% of those with a disability held a degree or equivalent qualification compared with 23.7% of non-disabled persons. Thirty-two per cent of working age disabled people do not hold any qualifications, compared to 13.4% of working age non-disabled people.



**Figure 7: Qualifications of Persons with and Without Disabilities, January-March 2014**



Source: DETINI, Labour Force Survey, Quarterly Supplement January-March 2014.

There is evidence of the additional challenges facing people with a disability resulting from the economic downturn. Experience from previous recessions found that people with disabilities tend to experience a greater increase in, and longer duration of, unemployment during economic downturns. The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland<sup>42</sup> found that there has been a decline in the number of work placements available for disabled people and increased insecurity for those in work. As 20% of the working population are disabled, and eight of 10 disabled people acquired their disability during the course of their working life, it is inevitable that employers will encounter the issue of disability at some stage.

## DEGREES OF INSECURITY

The level of educational attainment of the working age population (aged 16 to 64) provides a crude measure of the knowledge and skills available in Northern Ireland. Skills are particularly important to drive productivity and economic success in any region and even more important when the economy is in recession. However, despite recent improvements the skills profile in Northern Ireland remains weaker than the UK as a whole. Fewer people of working age have higher level qualifications (level 4 and above) and proportionately more have no formal qualifications or achieve the necessary qualifications in numeracy or literacy.

The number of graduates aged 16-64, has increased by 37,000 (18.6%) from 201,000 in October - December 2008 to 238,000 in October - December 2013 and the proportion of the working-age population who are graduates has increased from 17.6% to 20.5% in the same period. The percentage of graduates as a proportion of the population aged 16-64 is lower in Northern Ireland than in the UK as a whole, 20.5% compared to 26.2%. The Northern Ireland figure is the third lowest of the twelve UK regions. The equivalent figure in Scotland is 24.0%<sup>43</sup>. The employment rate of graduates is considerably higher than that of non graduates (87.1% compared to 62.5%).<sup>44</sup> They also earn more – on average £14,000 a year more than non graduates.

Table 10 shows that of those in employment in 2014, 36.4% had higher qualifications, compared to 13.5% of the economically inactive. The equivalent figures for 2007 are 32% and 11% respectively. Of the economically inactive, 8.7% had degree level qualifications, compared to 6% in 2007. The percentage of those economically inactive with no qualifications in October - December 2014 (32.4%) was lower than that of October - December 2007, when it was approximately 38%.

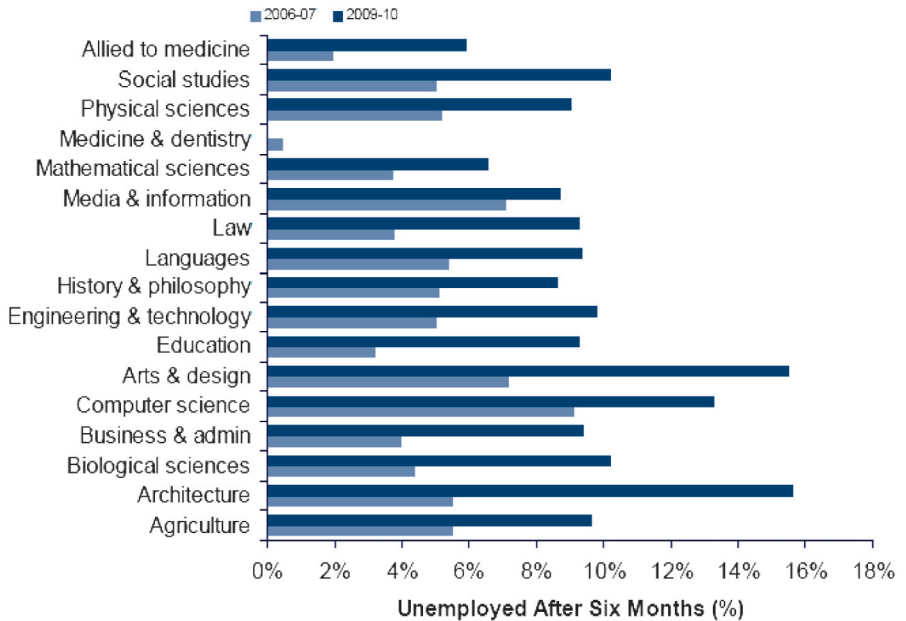
**Table 10: Qualifications by Economic Activity Oct-Dec 2014**

|                           | In<br>Employment | Economically<br>Active | Economically<br>Inactive | All<br>Persons |
|---------------------------|------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| Degree or higher          | 27.8             | 26.9                   | 8.7                      | 21.8           |
| Other higher Below degree | 10.9             | 9.5                    | 4.8                      | 8.2            |
| A level or equivalent     | 25.1             | 25.4                   | 21.7                     | 24.3           |
| GCSE A-C or equivalent    | 21.5             | 22.2                   | 25.4                     | 23.1           |
| Other qualifications      | 5.2              | 5.2                    | 6.9                      | 5.7            |
| No qualifications         | 10.4             | 10.8                   | 32.4                     | 16.8           |
| All (100%)                | 773,000          | 821,000                | 316,000                  | 1,138,000      |

*Source: NISRA, Labour Force Survey Quarterly Supplement: October - December 2014*

However, evidence suggests that ‘upskilling’ does not insulate people from an economic downturn and, and as in previous recessions, graduate unemployment is a problem. Figure 8 shows the number of graduates unemployed after 6 months linked to areas of study. In 2009-2010 the majority of unemployed graduates came from arts and design, computer science and architecture.

**Figure 9: Graduates unemployed after six months 2006-07/2009-10 by subject area.**



**4.4%**

Graduates unemployed  
after six months  
(2006-07)

**9.7%**

Graduates unemployed  
after six months  
(2009-10)

**Subjects**

Most unemployed  
graduates from arts &  
design, computer science  
and architecture

Source: DEL, *Economic Strategy Rebuilding and Rebalancing the Economy: An Evidence Base* November 2011

## WHERE ARE THE GRADUATE JOBS?

There has been a steady increase in the number of graduates in the UK over the past decade. Statistics show that graduates are more likely to be employed than those who left education with no or lesser qualifications. The ONS Graduates in the Labour Market Report (2013 ) points out that nearly half of employed recent graduates were working in a non-graduate role<sup>2</sup> and that the percentage of graduates working in one of these roles increased from 37% in April to June 2001 to 47% in April to June 2013. An upward trend has been evident since the 2008-2009 recession and may reflect lower demand for graduate skills as well as an increased supply of graduates. The fact that many graduates enter jobs at a lower skill level or field than they are qualified for, or undertake part-time employment, can have the effect of displacing other workers without similar qualifications out of employment opportunities. Further, graduates who fail to find employment in their chosen field may lack the skills, experience and depth of knowledge attained through suitable employment required to replace a retiring workforce.

## PAY IN NORTHERN IRELAND

In December 2013, the median gross weekly full-time wage in Northern Ireland was £460 compared to a UK figure of £518. This means that full-time employees in Northern Ireland had the lowest median gross weekly earnings across the UK regions and earnings were 2.2% lower than the next lowest region, North East England (£470)<sup>45</sup>.

The gender pay gap for all employees in Northern Ireland remains pretty much the same; female median hourly earnings excluding overtime in the year to April 2014 were 91.1% of male earnings (compared to 90.5% in 2013 and 90.6% in 2012). Median gross weekly earnings for all employees (i.e. both full- and part-time) in NI were just 85.6% of the UK figure; such earnings decreased by 2.2% (to £358), compared with growth of 0.6% in the UK (to £418). The gap in relation to NI *full-time* employees' gross weekly earnings is not so great; at April 2014 full-time earnings were £457, which was 88.2% of the figure in the UK (£518). NI full-time earnings experienced a decrease of 1.4% over the period, compared with an increase of 0.1%

2 Defined a non-graduate job as one in which the associated tasks do not normally require knowledge and skills developed through higher education to enable them to perform these tasks in a competent manner.

in the UK, while median gross annual earnings for full-time employees (who had been in the same job for at least 12 months) in Northern Ireland grew by 0.3% to £24,000 in 2014, compared to 0.7% growth in the UK (to £27,200). Males working full-time had median annual earnings of £24,800, 8.7% more than the equivalent female figure of £22,800. While 20% of full-time employees earned more than £36,900 per year, 20% earned less than £15,900, and while 10% of full-time employees earned more than £43,200 per year, 10% earned less than £13,200.

As shown in Table 11, median full time public sector wages in Northern Ireland continue to be higher than in the private sector with private sector wages considerably lower than the UK average.

**Table 11: Median gross weekly earnings for full-time employees in the public and private sector (2012 - 2014).**

| £                 | Northern Ireland |         | United Kingdom |         |
|-------------------|------------------|---------|----------------|---------|
|                   | PUBLIC           | PRIVATE | PUBLIC         | PRIVATE |
| <b>April 2014</b> |                  |         |                |         |
| Men               | 573.8            | 431.0   | 634.9          | 536.2   |
| Women             | 569.6            | 338.7   | 539.8          | 407.3   |
| All               | 570.3            | 405.1   | 578.6          | 493.1   |
| <b>April 2013</b> |                  |         |                |         |
| Men               | 562.7            | 439.5   | 623.0          | 536.1   |
| Women             | 590.6            | 331.1   | 536.0          | 400.7   |
| All               | 584.7            | 402.5   | 573.6          | 490.1   |
| <b>April 2012</b> |                  |         |                |         |
| Men               | 584.9            | 429.5   | 613.7          | 522.2   |
| Women             | 558.6            | 323.3   | 527.4          | 391.0   |
| All               | 570.4            | 393.3   | 564.3          | 479.1   |

*Source: DFP. Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings November 2014*

An increasing trend in employment has been the use of zero-hours contracts, which has been on the increase since 2008. Under these contracts, an individual typically undertakes to be available for work but the employer does not undertake to provide any work and only pays for the hours worked. The Office for National Statistics

(ONS) estimates that in April 2014 employers in the UK held 1.4 million contracts that did not guarantee a minimum number of hours. The Labour Force Survey estimates that the number of people in employment on zero hours contracts is 622,000 for the period April to June 2014<sup>46</sup>. Based on previous Labour Force survey data the ONS figure had been 583,000<sup>47</sup>. Some explanations have been proposed to explain the widely differing figures including that it may be because people have more than one zero-hours contract each, or because they have a zero-hours contract in addition to a more standard contract. An earlier survey of one thousand employers conducted by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) in August 2013 suggested that there could be around one million workers in the UK employed on zero-hours contracts, a marked increase on previous estimations from the Office of National Statistics of 250,000 (CIPD, 2013). It is estimated that one in 20 workers in Northern Ireland (mainly female) some 34,000 in all is on a 'zero-hours' contract<sup>48</sup>.

## ISSUES FOR POLICY

In 2009 the policy challenges included low pay, occupational segregation, youth unemployment and high numbers of young people not in education, employment or training and the low number of people with disabilities in the labour market. These challenges all remain. In addition, Northern Ireland has experienced significant economic and employment pressures since then and the problems created by these also need to be considered in the context of public expenditure cuts and tax and benefit changes. More people in Northern Ireland are economically inactive because of sickness and disability or because they have caring responsibilities than in the rest of the UK. This is particularly the case for people over 50. It is unlikely that increasing conditionality alone will be an effective way of addressing this. There is a policy commitment to 'rebalancing' the Northern Ireland economy but research has suggested that this will have a disproportionate impact on women who make up 85% of part-time workers in the public sector. This policy is also likely to have financial implications for many households given the higher levels of pay in the public sector.

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## INTRODUCTION

The tourism sector in Northern Ireland is viewed as having a critical role generating employment and economic growth on the region. Tourism contributed 5.2% of the Northern Ireland economy and supported 43,000 jobs in 2013<sup>1</sup>. The economic importance being attached to the tourist industry is evident in the Draft Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland<sup>2</sup> which highlights the potential contribution of the tourism sector by 2020. In order to help achieve this, £300 million has been invested in tourism capital infrastructure over the past six years and key targets have been set. These include increasing the number of visitors (domestic and out-of state) from a base of 3.2 million to 4.5 million by 2020, increasing the level of employment supported by tourism to 50,000 and increasing tourism revenue to £1 billion per annum by 2020. This chapter looks at trends in tourism, identifies key policies and strategies aimed at developing the tourism industry.

Inevitably tourism in Northern Ireland was negatively impacted by the Troubles. Few international visitors came to Northern Ireland between the 1970s and 1990s, other than tourists from Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland coming to visit friends and family. However, following the Republican and Loyalist ceasefires in the mid 1990s the number of visitors increased from 1.29 million in 1994 to 1.55 million in 1995. This number subsequently fell a little when the IRA ended its ceasefire in February 1996 but resumed its upward trend once the ceasefire was reinstated on 20 July 1997<sup>3</sup>.

Table 1 overleaf shows visitor numbers and revenue from 1998-2012.

**Table 1: Visits to Northern Ireland and revenue generated**

| Year | Out of State Visits | Revenue (£m) | Domestic Visits | Revenue (£m) |
|------|---------------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 2012 | 1,984,000           | 488.0        | 1,981,000       | 195.0        |
| 2011 | 1,931,000           | 463.0        | 2,029,000       | 177.0        |
| 2010 | 1,809,000           | 412.0        | 1,390,000       | 208.0        |
| 2009 | 1,918,000           | 337.0        | 1,375,000       | 192.0        |
| 2008 | 2,076,000           | 396.0        | 1,024,000       | 144.0        |
| 2007 | 2,107,000           | 376.0        | 1,154,000       | 159.0        |
| 2006 | 1,979,000           | 371.0        | 1,350,000       | 139.0        |
| 2005 | 1,972,000           | 357.0        | 1,390,000       | 146.0        |
| 2004 | 1,985,000           | 313.0        | 749,000         | 81.0         |
| 2003 | 1,896,000           | 284.0        | 847,000         | 99.0         |
| 2002 | 1,615,000           | 262.0        | 910,000         | 121.0        |
| 2001 | 1,511,000           | 271.0        | 892,000         | 123.0        |
| 2000 | 1,480,000           | 251.0        | 952,000         | 123.0        |
| 1999 | 1,655,000           | 265.0        | 510,000         | 57.0         |
| 1998 | 1,477,000           | 217.0        | 543,000         | 63.0         |

2010-2012 out of state visits - source NISRA.

1998-2009 out of state visits - source NITB, due to changes in methodology out of state visits after 2010 are not directly comparable with previous years' figures.

2011-2012 domestic visits - source NISRA.

*Source: Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) Visits to Northern Ireland and revenue generated 1959-2012*

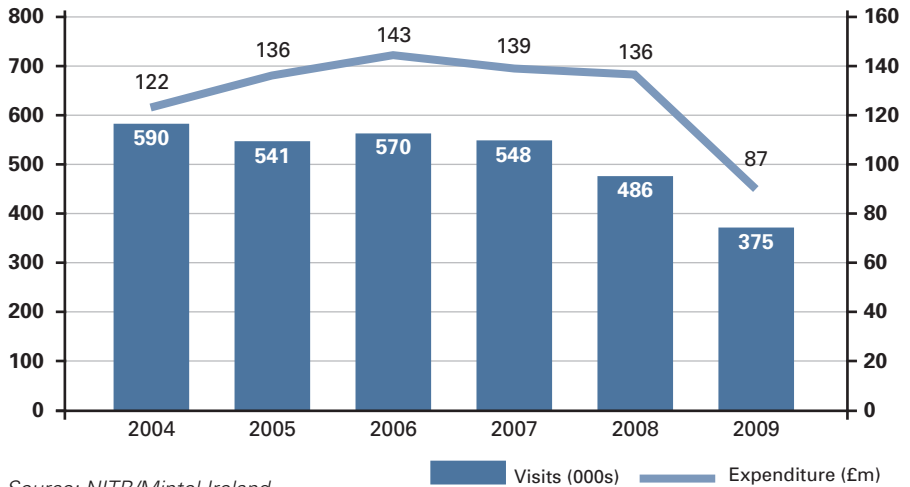
Between 1998 and 2007 the tourism industry experienced substantial growth across the whole of Northern Ireland. However, the global financial crisis at the end of 2007 and a resurgence of violence in 2009 resulted in fewer business travellers and more holidays at home (often referred to as 'staycations'). Out of state visitors to Northern Ireland during the period 2007-2011 declined by approximately 176,000. The decrease was driven largely by the significant downturn in the Great Britain market. Figures published in the Northern Ireland Tourism Statistics Bulletin in May 2015 show the number of visitors from outside Northern Ireland has started to increase again. Figures show that in 2014 there were 2.2 million overnight trips to Northern Ireland by

external visitors, a 4% increase on the previous year and the greatest number of overnight external trips on record. At four per cent, growth in Northern Ireland was lower than external tourism growth in the UK which increased by 6% and the Republic of Ireland which was up 11%. However, with specific regard to external holiday makers the growth of external visitors in Northern Ireland at 12% exceeded both the UK (up 8%) and the Republic of Ireland (up 9%). There was also an increase in domestic overnight trips (estimated at 18%) on the 2013 figure; over half (57%) of these were for holiday related purposes. Republic of Ireland residents' trips grew by an estimated 11% between 2007 and 2010<sup>4</sup>. This situation improved further in 2012 as the number of out of state visits increased by 53,000 compared to 2011 and holiday spend increased from £177m in 2011 to £195 million in 2012. Since 2011 there has been a fairly stable picture with regard to overall visitor numbers. Figures published in 2014<sup>5</sup> show that the total number of overnight visitors, including Northern Ireland residents, increased by 2% in 2013 (to 4.1m) compared to 2012 (4.0m). Furthermore, estimated tourist expenditure increased by 5% (£33m) between 2012 and 2013 from £689 million to £723 million. If Northern Ireland residents are excluded the increase in the number of visitors from outside Northern Ireland staying one night resulted in an increased expenditure of +9%. The increase in tourist expenditure was driven by visitors from GB (+12% to £273m) and overseas visitors (+ 15% to £201m).

## BUSINESS TOURISM IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Business tourism is a sector of the wider tourism industry. Business tourism comprises visitors to Northern Ireland whose trip is related to conferences, exhibitions and trade fairs, incentive travel (recreational travel provided by employers as incentives or bonuses), corporate events, meetings and individual business travel (also referred to as corporate travel). Between 2004 and 2006 in Northern Ireland the value of business tourism was on the rise, but, following the global financial crisis at the end of 2007, the volume and value of business travel to Northern Ireland declined as companies attempted to make efficiency savings. As shown in Figure 1, the decline in business tourism was most apparent in 2009 with 23% (111,000) fewer business visitors travelling to Northern Ireland than in 2008, but even with the decline overseas business tourism was worth £87 million and accounted for 375,000 visits.

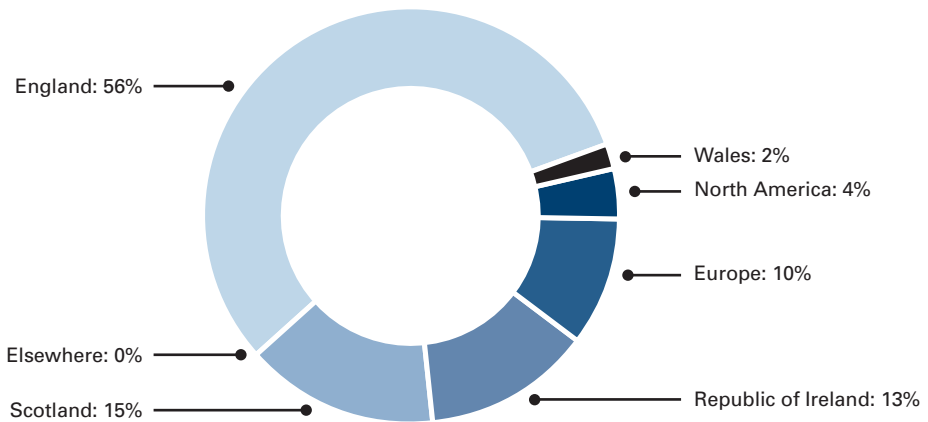
**Figure 1: Business visits and expenditure by overseas visitors, 2004 to 2009**



The above findings reflect a global decline in international business travel. The number of business visits from overseas residents to the UK fell from a record high of 9 million in 2006 to 6.6 million in 2009. In 2014, whilst external overnight trips generally increased for Northern Ireland this did not include external overnight trips for business purposes which fell by 5% from 0.32 million in 2013 to 0.30 million in 2014. Despite the fact that a very gradual recovery has ensued, in real terms, the value of inbound business tourism remains roughly one-fifth lower than it was six years ago<sup>6</sup>.

A report produced in 2011 for the Northern Ireland Tourism Board (NITB) showed that Great Britain accounts for 73% of the business tourism market. Business visitor numbers from all three countries which form this market have been in decline for Northern Ireland business tourism. Between 2008 and 2009 visits by English visitors fell by a quarter, while the number of Scottish and Welsh business visitors declined by 22% and 39% respectively. Further afield, business visits from Europe declined by 37% resulting in these business visitors accounting for 10% of the business tourism market. However, business visits from the Republic of Ireland increased by 29%, accounting for 13% of overseas business visits to Northern Ireland<sup>7</sup>.

**Figure 2: Overseas business visitors by source of country, 2009**



Source: NITB, *Business Tourism 2011*

Compared to other visitors to Northern Ireland, business visitors on average spend more per visitor per night. Between 2009 and 2011 there was a positive picture with regards to business tourism with the number of business tourists increasing by 33,000 (14%)<sup>8</sup>. In fact in 2011, business tourism accounted for approximately one fifth (19%) of all overseas visitors. Between 2011 and 2013 there was an overall increase in number of trips taken to Northern Ireland for business purposes. However, over the same period there was a decrease in the total number of nights spent in Northern Ireland, particularly those on business trips from other European countries (721 to 419). Estimated expenditure by business visitors from Great Britain between 2011 and 2013 shows an overall increase in contrast to those business visitors from the Republic of Ireland and other European countries which both show a decrease in the levels of estimated expenditure.



**Table 2: Estimated GB, ROI and “other Europe” overnight business visitors (000s) to NI & associated number of nights (000s) and expenditure value (£m) 2011 to 2013.**

|                   | Great Britain |      |      | Republic of Ireland |      |      | Other Europe |      |      |
|-------------------|---------------|------|------|---------------------|------|------|--------------|------|------|
|                   | 2011          | 2012 | 2013 | 2011                | 2012 | 2013 | 2011         | 2012 | 2013 |
| Total Trips       | 213           | 219  | 219  | 24                  | 22   | 29   | 42           | 37   | 47   |
| Total Nights      | 803           | 714  | 783  | 51                  | 36   | 34   | 721          | 292  | 419  |
| Total Expenditure | 66            | 73   | 90   | 6                   | 6    | 4    | 24           | 17   | 18   |

*Source: Estimated External Overnight Visitors to NI 2013 (2014).*

Statistics reveal that during 2013 there was an increase in business trips (+20%), mainly driven by Northern Ireland residents. However, when these residents are excluded the increase in external visits for business purposes was 6%.

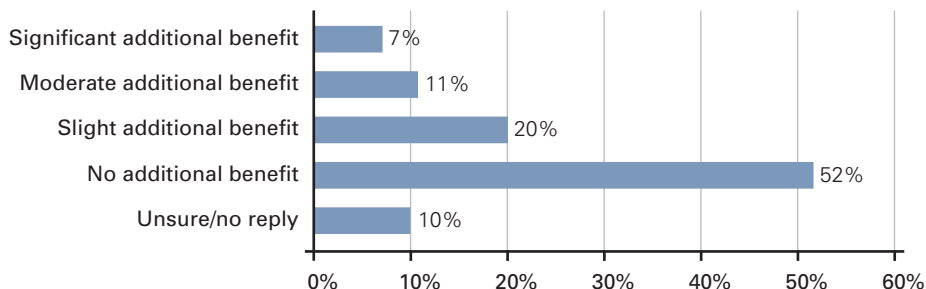
The Business Visitor Attitude Survey (2009-10)<sup>9</sup> commissioned by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board provides a profile of business tourists in Northern Ireland. The survey found that out- of-state delegates stayed an average of 2.58 days at events and spent on average £140.50 per day. Just over one of every ten out-of state visitors chose to extend their stay in Northern Ireland (pre or post visit) with only a marginal share of visitors participating in organised events. In addition, only 8% of business visitors had partners/spouses travelling with them, with the conference ‘spouses’ programmes on offer rated less than ‘Good’. Among the issues identified within the survey as needing improvement were: increasing the number of flights to and from Europe; increasing the frequency of train services; and enhancing station facilities and the quality of the train stock. In terms of the quality of accommodation whilst overall accommodation is highly rated, some accommodation was identified as in need of upgrading. Overall 90% of business travellers would recommend Northern Ireland as a business destination.

## PROMOTIONAL INITIATIVES - OUR TIME OUR PLACE

The NITB (now Tourism NI) spends a significant amount on promoting Northern Ireland in the Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland and Great Britain markets. The 2012 marketing campaign which included the roll-out of a new global advertising campaign and the extensive Northern Ireland 2012 promotional campaign, was estimated to have reached 100 million people across the world. The campaign sought to promote Northern Ireland as a positive place to visit and cost an estimated £2m which included television and cinema adverts, online videos and billboards. The programme aimed to generate an additional 833,000 visitors by 2015, an additional £140 million in revenue for the economy and create over 3,500 jobs<sup>10</sup>. It is estimated by the NITB that over the past three years campaigns in Northern Ireland and in the Republic of Ireland have generated on average £14 for every £1 spent on the Northern Ireland campaigns, and £12 for every £1 spent on the Republic of Ireland campaigns<sup>11</sup>.

The NITB produces tourism industry barometer reports which give an insight into the recent performance of tourism businesses throughout the industry, and the outlook and expectations of these businesses over the next 12 months. Findings from the 2012 Tourism Barometer, suggest that four fifths (81%) of all tourism businesses were aware of the special calendar of tourism and events. However, just under two-fifths (38%) of all tourism businesses stated that it benefitted their businesses (7% significantly, 11% moderately and 20% slightly) and more than half (52%) believed that it offered no additional benefit.

**Figure 3: Benefit of special calendar of tourism and cultural events happening under the 'NI 2012 Our Time Our Place' banner**



Source: NITB Tourism Barometer 2012: Wave 3-December

In terms of the effectiveness of the campaign in improving Northern Ireland's reputation as a destination for tourists, three quarters of tourism businesses stated that it was effective (42% quite effective and 33% very effective). Although just over half (54%) recognised the benefits of the advertising campaign in generating additional tourism revenue, more than two fifths (41%) of all tourism providers believed that it had no impact. An examination of findings by industry sector reveals that hotels, B&Bs, caravan and camping, hostel, golf and attraction operators all believed that the special calendar of events was effective in generating additional income. Interestingly however, approximately two thirds of tourism businesses stated that the special calendar of tourism and cultural events was effective in terms of the social benefits yielded, such as making Northern Ireland citizens feel more proud of their country (68%) and creating a sense of excitement in the country (65%).

Another indicator of the positive perception of special events can be seen in 'The Tourism Barometer' published in December 2014. The data presented here confirmed that the World Police and Fire Games held in Belfast in Summer 2013 and Derry/Londonderry's year as UK City of Culture were perceived as very positive for tourism. A majority (68%) of respondents to the 2013 survey also cited the number of repeat visitors as a positive feature of the year and almost half (49%) of respondents rated the weather as a positive factor. However, 39% of respondents reported that civil unrest had been an issue of concern especially in relation to international visitors and the negative impact on the global perception of Northern Ireland. Figures from the 2014 Barometer<sup>12</sup> show that when asked to identify positive and negative factors that affected overall performance in 2014 the two most cited positive factors were 'repeat visits' (74%) and 'recommendations' (71%). Fifty nine per cent of respondents identified their own marketing as the most positive impact. Looking at negative factors, the results show that the domestic economy continued to be a concern with 50% cent of respondents saying this was their main issue of concern a decrease on the previous years figure of 59%. Other key concerns included fuel and energy costs (44%) and the state of the global economy (43%).

## SIGNATURE PROJECTS

Significant investment of over £300 million has been made in tourism in Northern Ireland since 2008. The focus of this investment has resulted in 5 key “Signature Projects”. In 2004 a vision for the future of the Northern Ireland tourism industry was outlined in a plan called the Strategic Framework for Action. That document identified the need for investment and creation of iconic attractions or ‘Signature Projects’. The aim of this was to align tourism investment to developments that would act as the catalyst to create ‘international stand out’ for Northern Ireland and make a key contribution to growing visitor numbers and spend. The five Signature Projects identified were: the Titanic (Maritime) Belfast; Giant’s Causeway/Antrim and Causeway Coast area; the Walled City of Derry; Christian Heritage/Saint Patrick; and proposed Mourne National Park area. The early development of the Signature Projects was facilitated through the use of a number of funding sources administered by NITB (for example Tourism Development Scheme, International Fund for Ireland and European Peace II monies). However, the funds allocated to the Signature Projects by this process (to 2008-2009) totalled only £5.7 million. The first significant capital funding for the Signature Projects was through the Programme for Government (PfG) (2008-2011) when around £70 million was allocated.

**Table 3: Overall Signature Project Costs**

| Signature Projects                              | No. of Projects | Total Project Cost (£m) | NITB Funding (£m) |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Titanic (Maritime) Belfast                      | 6               | 92                      | 40                |
| Giant’s Causeway/Antrim and Causeway Coast Area | 42              | 27                      | 13                |
| The Walled City of Derry                        | 19              | 27                      | 13                |
| Christian Heritage/Saint Patrick                | 21              | 8                       | 2                 |
| Mourne National Park area                       | 18              | 5                       | 3                 |
| <b>Total</b>                                    | <b>106</b>      | <b>159</b>              | <b>71</b>         |

*Source: Northern Ireland Audit Office, 2011 Review of the Signature Projects*

The most recent Signature Project to be opened in Northern Ireland in April 2012 was the Titanic Belfast. Half a million people visited the Titanic exhibition in its first six months – and more than 60% were from outside Belfast. The story of the Titanic also led to a substantial increase in the number of cruise ships visiting Northern Ireland in 2012. According to trade figures for 2012, 45 liners and 75,000 passengers came to Northern Ireland, an increase of 40% on the year before. During the first nine months of 2013, 54 cruise ships brought 69,431 passengers to Belfast and five cruise ships brought up to 1,757 passengers to Londonderry<sup>13</sup>.

The signature projects have not been without controversy. In November 2013 the Environment Minister announced that he was putting plans to introduce national parks in Northern Ireland on hold. This was largely due to opposition from those living in proposed national park areas.<sup>14</sup> Those against national parks argued that they were unnecessary for the development of tourism and for environmental protection and that they would place unacceptable restrictions on farming and development. Northern Ireland is the only part of the UK without a national park. There are 15 national parks in Great Britain and 6 in the Republic of Ireland.

## COULD DO BETTER... ?

In an effort to develop baseline measures of the experience provided by the 5 Signature Projects the NITB commissioned research to gather the views and attitudes of 1,500 visitors and domestic holiday makers. Generally, the findings suggest that the range of attractions and places to visit and their proximity together with the range of accommodation available were well received. However, the survey also indicated that overall, in each of the Signature Projects, there is significant potential to generate additional visits, encourage visitors to stay longer and provide opportunities to spend more.<sup>15</sup>

## TOURISM EMPLOYMENT

Tourism is the UK's sixth largest industry, employing 1 in 11 of all people working in the UK and generating £115bn every year for the economy<sup>16</sup>. In March 2013, tourism and leisure accounted for 52,880 jobs in Northern Ireland; by 2015 this figure had increased to 55,870. The food and beverage service activities in Northern Ireland experienced the greatest growth; the only sector to experience a reduction in employee jobs was in sports and leisure activities.

**Table 4: NI Tourism and Leisure Employee Jobs March 2013 and March 2015**

|                                                                                                    | March 2013    | March 2015    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Accommodation                                                                                      | 4,960         | 4,340         |
| Food and beverage services activities (excluding event catering and other food service activities) | 56*           | 13,530        |
| Travel agency, tour operators and other reservation service and related activities                 | 79            | 270           |
| Libraries, archives, museums and other cultural activities                                         | 91            | 870           |
| Gambling and betting services                                                                      | 92            | 1,000         |
| Sports activities and amusement and recreation activities                                          | 93            | 5,290         |
| <b>Total</b>                                                                                       | <b>23,330</b> | <b>54,370</b> |

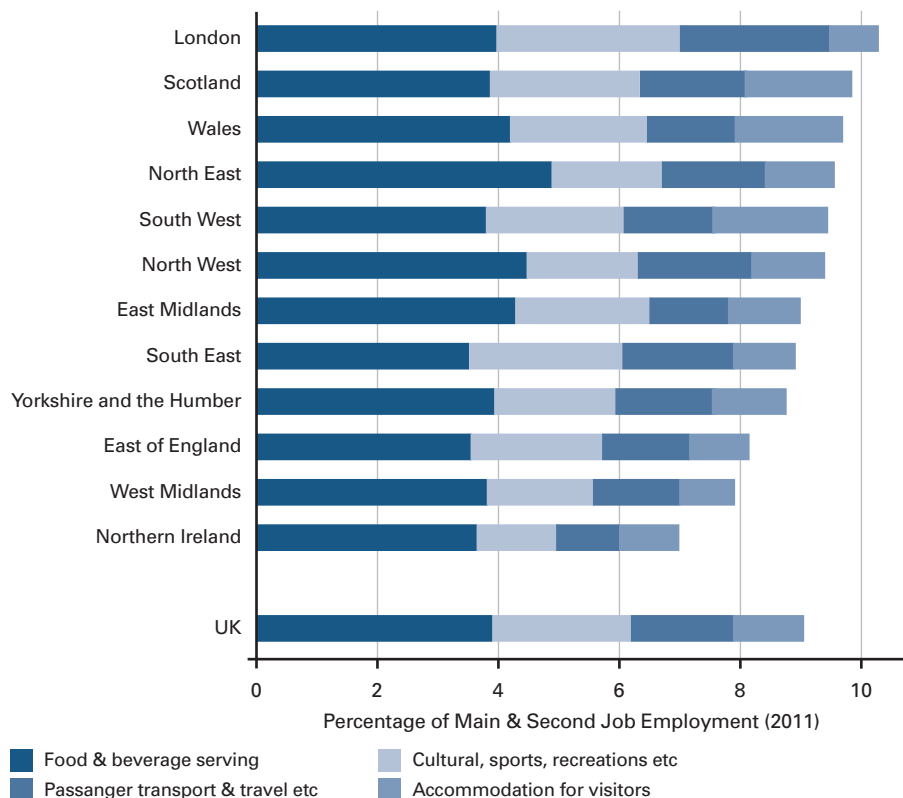
^ Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 and may not sum due to rounding

\* Excluding event catering and other food service activities

Source: DFP. Quarterly Employment Survey, Statistical Bulletin March 2013 and March 2015

Figure 4 charts the proportions of employment in tourism in each of the 12 regions of the UK in 2011. This shows that Northern Ireland has the lowest level of employment within tourism characteristic industries of all the regions of the UK. London, Scotland, Wales and the English regions of the North East, South West and North West all have proportions of employment in tourism industries higher than the UK average.

**Figure 4: Proportion of Employment in Tourism Industries by Region of Workplace 2011**



Source: Office for National Statistics, 2012

It has been estimated that between 2013 and 2020, the hospitality sector workforce is projected to grow by 5,100<sup>17</sup>. While such growth is positive this is a sector characterised by a part-time workforce (40% of the workforce is employed on a part-time basis), according to the Low Pay Commission (2013).<sup>18</sup> The Low Pay Commission (2013) cites the low-paying occupations with the most minimum wage jobs were hospitality, retail and cleaning, which between them accounted for over three quarters of a million minimum wage jobs in the UK. Attention has also been drawn to the need to ensure that opportunities for appropriate training and progression are developed to ensure that the future workforce is sufficiently skilled and qualified.<sup>19</sup>

## TOURISM VAT

The Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland 2010-2020 led by the Department for Enterprise, Trade and Investment, tourism outlines the potential to generate growth and create jobs across Northern Ireland. The tourist industry directly contributes £0.7 billion GVA to the Northern Ireland economy, accounting for 1.3% of the UK total. However, it has been argued that one of the barriers to growth and competitiveness is the rate of VAT on hotel accommodation and admissions to cultural services, currently at 20% in Northern Ireland compared to the reduced VAT rate of 9% in the Republic of Ireland introduced in 2011. The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport in the Republic of Ireland has estimated that somewhere in the region of 6,300 jobs were created in the first year that the VAT reduction was in operation.

Tourist Board research in Northern Ireland shows that one third of businesses believe that what is perceived as a high rate of VAT is an impediment to growth in their business. During a Northern Ireland Assembly debate on a motion to reduce the VAT rate for the hospitality sector it was argued that a reduction in the VAT rate to 5% could generate 3,300 new jobs in the hospitality sector in Northern Ireland and help achieve tourism targets set by the Northern Ireland Executive<sup>20</sup>. A report on the impact of reduced VAT rates on tourism services in the UK argued there is strong evidence of a clear relationship between the high rate of VAT and the decline in UK competitiveness. The report's author, Professor Adam Blake, argues that a reduction in VAT on tourism services to 5% would lead to lower prices, encourage British residents to holiday at home rather than going overseas, increase the number of foreign visitors, create jobs and grow GDP<sup>21</sup>.

Clearly, there are merits in the proposal for increasing incoming tourism and staycations, but the question remains as to what the measure would cost Northern Ireland in terms of the loss of revenue. Currently, the UK government has no plans to introduce a VAT cut for the tourism sector.



## OUTBOUND TRAVEL

A study by the Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR) published in June 2015 provided an overview of the economic contribution to the Northern Ireland economy of outbound travel<sup>22</sup>. Figures show that the GVA contribution of the outbound travel sector in Northern Ireland fell by 13% in 2009, increased by 5% in 2010 and remained flat in 2011. By 2014, the GVA contribution of the outbound travel sector had grown by 2% year-on-year to total £260 million - just 3% lower than that in 2008. Aggregate employment in this sector also recovered to just 3% less than the 2008 figure (4,800 FTEs).

In addition to this economic contribution, the outbound sector makes a significant contribution to jobs in Northern Ireland, accounting for over 17,000 people in full time employment, which is equivalent to 2.7% of the full time Northern Ireland workforce. When taking into account jobs that are reliant on supplying the industry, the sector accounts for nearly 28,000 full time jobs or approximately 4% of the Northern Ireland workforce. The figures highlight that the industry sustains a larger number of jobs (albeit relatively low-paid jobs), than its economic contribution alone would suggest. Findings from the study also show that UK holiday makers spend an average of £532 per head, equivalent to £31.2bn annually, in the UK on products and services before they start their holiday overseas, which is nearly the same as their spend abroad (£31.6bn). Nearly, £1.6bn is spent in UK duty free outlets before holiday makers even get on a plane<sup>23</sup>.

Many people assume that going abroad means money taken out of the Northern Ireland economy, this report proves otherwise. Overall the study shows that the outbound sector is a healthy contributor to the Northern Ireland economy and a significant source of jobs and employment. CEBR argues that it is important that the contribution of outbound travel is recognised and supported in current and future policies and planning strategies to deliver growth to the wider economy.

## POLICY CHALLENGES

This chapter has considered the employment potential of the tourism industry for Northern Ireland. It has also flagged up some barriers to the growth of this industry in the region. The tourism sector is perceived as an important growth area for employment. However, many of the jobs in the sector are relatively low paid and are part-time/zero contract jobs. The Draft Strategy for Tourism does not have a substantive focus on employment but it does acknowledge the need to upskill the workforce and broaden the appeal of the sector. There is also some way to go to meet the expressed needs of business travellers, including improving public transport, especially rail. It has been argued that the reduced VAT rate in the Republic of Ireland puts Northern Ireland at a distinct disadvantage. However, addressing this is not within the powers of the Northern Ireland Executive.

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## INTRODUCTION

Higher education is perceived to be central to economic growth in Northern Ireland as in all developed countries. The Universities are intellectually and culturally important and are also key partners in supporting economic development and future competitiveness through the provision of a well-educated workforce. In 2012-2013 the total number of Northern Ireland students enrolled in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the UK was 64,400. The majority (67%) are studying at institutions in Northern Ireland, 26% at an institution in Britain and 7% are enrolled with the Open University<sup>1</sup>. Most (84%) of the 51,715 students enrolled in HEIs in Northern Ireland are from the region; 5% are from the Republic of Ireland, 4% from GB, 1% from another EU country and 6% from non EU countries<sup>2</sup>. This chapter looks at trends in participation in higher education and at some of the key issues in recent years including efforts to widen participation, the introduction of tuition fees, subjects studied and the destinations of leavers.

Higher Education in Northern Ireland is delivered principally through two Universities, Queen's University Belfast (QUB) and the Ulster University (Ulster), and two University Colleges, St. Mary's and Stranmillis. The Open University is also an important part of the Northern Ireland Higher Education system. Higher education provision is also available at Northern Ireland's six regional Further and Higher Education Colleges.

Higher Education is defined as a course leading to a qualification at National Qualifications Framework/ Qualifications and Credit Framework (National NQF/QCF) Level 4 (and equivalent) and above; that is above A2 level standard. This includes postgraduate study, first degrees, BTEC Higher National Diploma (HND) and Certificate (HNC) courses, Foundation degrees and a number of professional qualifications. Higher Education provision in Further Education Colleges (FECs) covers a wide range of subject areas and primarily takes the form of Foundation Degrees, HNDs and HNCs.

## HIGHER EDUCATION PARTICIPATION RATES

Approximately 50% of Northern Ireland's students go on to Higher Education, which is the highest participation rate among the 12 regions of the UK. Together, QUB and the Ulster had 49,160 enrolments in 2012-2013. Stranmillis University College and St Mary's University College had 2,560. About 4,500 local students study with the Open University. The number of Northern Ireland students studying at Higher Education Institutions has increased by 2% over the past ten years. After yearly increases in enrolment since 2007-2008 there was a 2% decrease between 2011-2012 and 2012-2013. In the UK as a whole, between 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 student numbers decreased by 6%<sup>3</sup>. The greatest decrease in undergraduate numbers was in England where the decline was 7.5%. This compares to reductions of 1.8% in Wales, 0.1% in Scotland and an increase of 0.3% in Northern Ireland. Postgraduate enrolments declined in all parts of the UK; again the greatest reduction was in England where the figure was 6.3% compared to 2.5% in Scotland, 1.9% in Wales and 2.7% in Northern Ireland<sup>4</sup>.

In 2012-2013, 11,453 students were enrolled on HE courses in Colleges of FECs<sup>5</sup>. Interestingly, in Northern Ireland and Scotland, substantially higher proportions of Higher Education students undertake their studies in FECs, compared with England and Wales.

The majority of students enrolled at HEIs were female and this has been a long standing trend as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Gender breakdown of entrants to higher education in Northern Ireland**

| Gender       | 2005/06       | 2006/07       | 2007/08       | 2008/09       | 2009/10       | 2010/11       | 2011/12       |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Male         | 20,635        | 19,390        | 19,160        | 19,315        | 20,850        | 21,475        | 22,005        |
| Female       | 32,210        | 29,465        | 29,040        | 28,925        | 30,140        | 30,525        | 29,905        |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>52,845</b> | <b>48,885</b> | <b>48,200</b> | <b>48,240</b> | <b>50,990</b> | <b>52,000</b> | <b>51,910</b> |

Source: DEL (2013), *Enrolments at NI Higher Education Institutions by available equality categories 2005/06 to 2011/12*

## ENROLMENTS BY COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

The table below depicts the background of students enrolled in Northern Ireland's institutions of higher education over the period 2006-2007 to 2011-2012. In 2011-2012 those from a Catholic background accounted for the majority of the student population, approximately 41 %, compared to 28% of those from a Protestant background. Catholic participation levels have increased by 1,220 from 20,055 in 2006-2007 to 21,275 in 2011-2012, whereas participation levels of those from a Protestant background has remained more or less static over the same period. On the other hand the number of those coming from 'Other' category has increased over the same period from 1,020 to 3,510<sup>6</sup>.

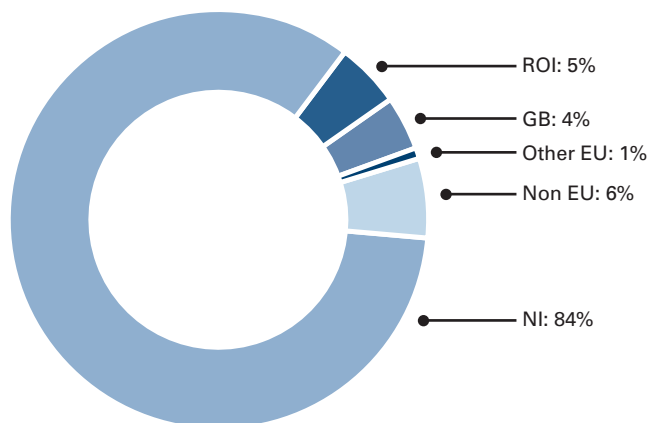
**Table 2: Enrolments at higher education institutions in Northern Ireland by religion 2006/07 – 2011/12<sup>7</sup>**

| Religion <sup>(2) (3)</sup> | 2006/07       | 2007/08       | 2008/09       | 2009/10       | 2010/11       | 2011/12       |
|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Protestant                  | 14,590        | 14,200        | 13,570        | 14,415        | 14,740        | 14,505        |
| Roman Catholic              | 20,055        | 19,820        | 19,380        | 20,995        | 21,380        | 21,275        |
| Other                       | 1,020         | 1,345         | 1,395         | 2,270         | 2,765         | 3,510         |
| Not known                   | 7,335         | 6,720         | 7,335         | 5,990         | 5,070         | 3,970         |
| Non NI Domiciles            | 5,860         | 6,110         | 6,540         | 7,320         | 8,040         | 8,645         |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>48,860</b> | <b>48,200</b> | <b>48,240</b> | <b>50,990</b> | <b>52,000</b> | <b>51,905</b> |

*Source: DEL (2013), Enrolments at NI Higher Education Institutions by available equality categories 2006/07 to 2011/12*

Eighty-four per cent of students in higher education institutions here are from Northern Ireland. While the number of students from outside the region has increased significantly in the last ten years, this has been from a low base. In 2003-2014 students from Northern Ireland accounted for 88% of the total population of students at HEIs<sup>8</sup>. In 2012-2013 this figure was 84%. Over this period Northern Ireland HEIs have seen a large increase in students from outside Northern Ireland. Between 2003/2004 and 2012-2013 the number of students from both Great Britain and Non EU countries increased by over 100% (950 to 2,000 and 1,370 to 3,160 respectively), the number of students from the Republic of Ireland decreased by 21 % and other EU countries by 2%<sup>9</sup>. Figure 1 shows enrolment by country of domicile for 2012/13.

**Figure 1: Enrolment at Northern Ireland HEIs by country of domicile – 2012/13**

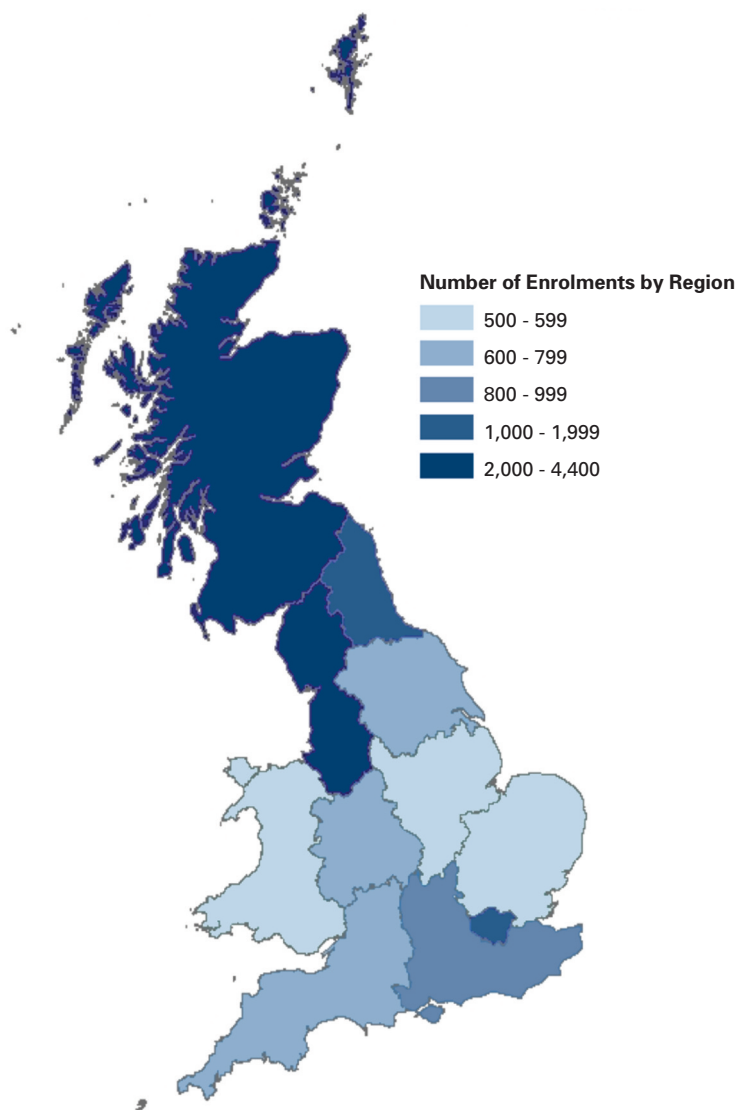


*Source: DEL, 2014 Statistical Bulletin, Enrolment at UK Higher Education Institutions: NI Analysis 2012/2013*

Not surprisingly, data for the 1970's records a substantial increase in the migration of Northern Ireland students with between 40-45% of entrants being recorded as migrants during this decade.<sup>10</sup> In more recent times, the flow of those leaving Northern Ireland dropped back to 23% in 2003-2004; the figure in 2012-2013 was 26%<sup>11</sup>. Figure 2 shows the number of Northern Ireland students studying in each region of Great Britain in 2012-2013. The darker the shade of blue the higher the number of Northern Ireland students enrolled at a HEI in that region. The most popular regions were the North West of England (4,365) and Scotland (4,195).



**Figure 2: Students enrolled at HE Institutions in GB 2012/2013**



Source: DEL, 2013 Statistical Bulletin, Enrolment at UK HEIs: NI Analysis 2012/2013

## WIDENING PARTICIPATION

The migration of students to study represents one important feature of HE participation in Northern Ireland. A further issue has been the participation of people from groups who have been under-represented at University such as students from disadvantaged background and students with a disability. Widening participation is a key priority for the Department of Employment and Learning. As noted earlier, Northern Ireland has the highest participation rate of the 12 regions of the UK. It also has a higher proportion of young people from lower socio-economic, classes 4-7, attending university than other parts of the UK. Higher Education Statistics Authority data for 2012-2013<sup>12</sup> shows that Northern Ireland had the highest percentage of young full time degree entrants from NS-SEC classes 4,-7. The Northern Ireland figure of 36.1% compares to an overall UK figure of 32.3%; 27.4% in Scotland and 33.2% in Wales<sup>1</sup>. In terms of individual institutions, within Northern Ireland, the Ulster has the highest rate (45.9%) of participation of entrants from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

**Table 3: Percentage of young full-time first degree entrants domiciled in the UK from under-represented groups 2012/13 (NS-SEC classes 4-7)**

| Region and Institution         | Total Young Entrants | NS-SEC 4,5,6,7 (%) |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| UK                             | 277,140              | 32.3               |
| Wales                          | 13,620               | 33.2               |
| Scotland                       | 21,095               | 27.4               |
| Northern Ireland               | 10,380               | 36.1               |
| Queens University Belfast      | 3,200                | 31.3               |
| University of Ulster           | 3,645                | 45.9               |
| St Mary's University College   | 215                  | 41.1               |
| Stranmillis University College | 200                  | 26.2               |

*Source: Higher Education statistics Authority(2014) UK Performance Indicators: Widening Participation of Under-represented groups 2012/13.*

<sup>1</sup> As noted, Northern Ireland has the highest proportion of people from the SEC groups 4-7 in higher education in the United Kingdom. However, when SEC group 4 is excluded from the "lower-SEC" definition, the percentage of Northern Ireland students coming from lower SEC groups drops quite substantially, from over 39% to about 25%. The 2001 Census indicates that SEC groups 5-7 make up 45% of the general population.

The number of funded full-time higher education places in Northern Ireland is capped by the government - the Maximum Aggregate Student Number (MASN) - and as a result the demand for places exceeds the supply of places.

The above figures only include those studying a Higher Education course at a University, it does not include higher education enrolments in FECs.

FECs contribute to widening participation in important ways. In 2010/11 (the latest figures available) the distribution of students enrolled in higher education in the colleges was skewed towards those from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Compared to HEIs, students in colleges are older, more likely to be studying part-time and, in the case of undergraduate entrants, more likely to have come from areas of low participation in Higher Education. One fifth of Higher Education enrolments (20%) in FECs were drawn from lower socio-economic backgrounds (4-7) compared to 17% from higher socio-economic backgrounds. Overall, in terms of participation some groups remain under-represented in comparison with the Northern Ireland population within higher education : people from low socio-economic groups; young Protestant males, those with disabilities, physical and mental, and older learners.

The widening participation agenda in Northern Ireland is addressed through a number of policy initiatives and a range of specific funding. In September 2012, 'Access to Success' was published.<sup>13</sup> This new integrated regional strategy for widening participation in Higher Education aims to improve fair access to Higher Education across all sectors by promoting the relevance of Higher Education and increasing the number and effectiveness of widening participation initiatives and objectives. There is a specific focus on individuals from Socio-Economic Classification Groups 4 to 7; students with a disability, individuals from areas of high deprivation and young Protestant males from areas of high deprivation. Initiatives to support widening participation include an increase in domestic Higher Education (and FE) provision; the expansion of Foundation Degrees; a widening participation premium for students from disadvantaged backgrounds; a widening access premium for students with disabilities; and special initiative funding to develop partnerships between the Universities and schools with traditionally low levels of participation in Higher Education.

As Table 4 below shows, the numbers of students with a disability who are enrolled in HEIs in Northern Ireland has increased steadily year on year, over the last five years.

**Table 4: Number of students with a disability enrolled in HEIs in Northern Ireland**

| Disability <sup>1</sup> | 2009/10       | 2010/11       | 2011/12       | 2012/13       | 2013/14       |
|-------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Disabled                | 2,650         | 3,025         | 3,100         | 3,370         | 3,515         |
| Not disabled/not known  | 48,340        | 48,975        | 48,805        | 48,350        | 48,745        |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>50,990</b> | <b>52,000</b> | <b>51,910</b> | <b>51,715</b> | <b>52,260</b> |

\*Disability status based on student self-assessment.

Source: DELNI (2015), *Enrolments at NI HEIs by equality categories – 2009/10 to 2013/14; Statistical Factsheet 4.*

Financial support available to students with disabilities includes the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) grants. These aim to help meet the extra course costs students can face as a direct result of a disability or specific learning difficulty. Statistics for the percentage of full-time undergraduate students in Britain and in Northern Ireland in receipt of DSA grants show that 4.7% in Northern Ireland receive a DSA grant compared to 4.4% in Scotland, 7.3% in Wales and 6.7% in England.<sup>14</sup>

The Universities are attempting to encourage the participation of disabled young people through a number of initiatives. For example, the Ulster University's 'Inspire to Aspire' project, seeks to raise awareness of the potential value, and accessibility of Higher Education to all. It does this through working with Mitchell House and Fleming Fulton Special Schools and presenting Higher Education as 'a real possibility' to young children with physical disabilities, their parents and advocates, through a programme of informative presentations and workshops led by disabled students and graduates.

## STUDENT RETENTION

Students failing to complete their chosen course of study can be an expensive problem for all involved. For example, it can be expensive for the student who will have paid fees for no valuable outcome; second, it can be expensive for the institution that will have invested time, money and other resources and finally, it can be expensive for society

with the loss of a valuable place that cannot be taken up by another student. Table 5 details the numbers of students dropping out of university in 2011-2012. A number of programmes exist to curb this drop-out rate, including premiums paid to each university for students considered most at risk of dropping out. The sums are usually spent on pastoral care or remedial classes to fill in gaps in undergraduates' knowledge.

**Table 5: Percentage of full-time first degree entrants failing to continue in HE in 2013/14 following entry in 2012/13**

|             | Young Entrants<br>No longer in HE (%) | Mature Entrants<br>No longer in HE (%) | All Entrants<br>No longer in HE (%) |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| UK          | 5.7                                   | 11.9                                   | 7.0                                 |
| NI          | 6.0                                   | 8.5                                    | 6.5                                 |
| QUB         | 4.1                                   | 8.5                                    | 4.9                                 |
| St Mary's   | 2.3                                   | 7.7                                    | 2.8                                 |
| Stranmillis | 3.6                                   | 3.6                                    | 3.6                                 |
| UU          | 8.2                                   | 8.6                                    | 8.3                                 |

Source: DELNI (2015), *Performance Indicators in Higher Education Northern Ireland Analysis 2013/14*

In 2013-2014, approximately 6.0% of all full-time first degree students at HEIs in Northern Ireland were no longer in higher education after the first year. The UK average is 5.7%. Figures published by the Higher Education and Skills Authority<sup>15</sup> show that in England the drop-out rate of young entrants is 5.7%, in Wales it is 5.4% and in Scotland 6.6%.

In terms of part-time students, figures show that retention figures in Northern Ireland HEIs (19.3% leaving within a year of entry) are better than the UK average of 35.1%.<sup>16</sup> Of those students undertaking Higher Education in FECs, 18.2% were no longer in higher education following their year of entry in 2010-2011. In the same year, among part-time first degree students, 7.7% were no longer in higher education after two years. A higher proportion of males (13%) drop out of HE courses compared with females (9%). It is also the case that those with a disability who participate in HE are less likely to complete than those without a disability. Although Catholics are more likely to participate in HE they are also more likely to drop out than Protestants<sup>17</sup>.

## PAYING FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

In recent years much attention has focused on the funding of higher education and particularly the increasing financial cost to individual students. A particularly controversial area has been the introduction and raising of tuition fees.

## TUITION FEES

As a result of the establishment of devolved national administrations for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, different arrangements were implemented with regard to the charging of tuition fees in each of the countries of the United Kingdom. Prior to 2012 the legislation allowed for variable fees to be introduced and raised the cap to £3,000 with effect from 2004 in England and 2006 in Northern Ireland. However, since 2012 the cap has been raised to £9,000 in England for new entrants (from a 2011-2012 cap of £3,375). According to the UCAS End of Cycle Report (2012)<sup>18</sup> the average tuition fee set by English Universities was £8,389. Devolved areas have also made changes to tuition fee arrangements. The Northern Ireland Executive decided to set tuition fees at £3,465 from 2012 onwards for students from Northern Ireland and non-UK EU countries. For students from other parts of the UK, and international students, a different scale of fees is chargeable. Welsh students' fees above £3,465 are paid by the Welsh Assembly wherever Welsh students study in the UK. However, students from England, Scotland and Northern Ireland studying in Wales, are required to pay the full cost up to a maximum of £9,000. In Scotland, students from Scotland or from the EU do not have to pay tuition fees but students from other parts of the UK studying in Scottish universities do. While the fee charged varies between Scottish universities, a number charge students from other parts of the UK the full £9,000 fee.

The Table below shows the fees students have been required to pay since 2012, depending on the student's country of residency and / or place of study, as a result of the changes in tuition fees from 2012.

**Table 6: Changes to student finance from 2012.**

| Country of Residence                    | Studying in Northern Ireland | Studying in England | Studying in Scotland | Studying in Wales |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Northern Ireland                        | £3,465                       | Up to £9,000        | Up to £9,000         | Up to £9,000      |
| England or Wales                        | Up to £9,000                 | Up to £9,000        | Up to £9,000         | Up to £9,000      |
| Scotland                                | Up to £9,000                 | Up to £9,000        | No fee               | Up to £9,000      |
| European Union for example, ROI, France | £3,465                       | Up to £9,000        | No fee               | Up to £9,000      |

*Source: Student Finance NI (2012)*

Changes to tuition fees have had a differential impact on different groups of applicants. According to the UCAS End of Cycle Report (2013)<sup>19</sup>, in Northern Ireland entry rates of 18 year olds to home institutions increased from 23.2 per cent in 2012 to 25 per cent in 2013, (proportionally this represents a 7.5 per cent increase compared to 2012). The entry rate to external institutions increased slightly from 10.5 per cent to 11.2 per cent but not enough to reverse the fall in 2012. In 2013 the entry rates for disadvantaged 18 year olds continued to increase to new highs in England and Northern Ireland with entry rates in Scotland and Wales remaining steady. In general, disadvantaged 18 year olds are more likely to enter HE in 2013 than they were in 2004. However, entry rates for 18 year olds from non-disadvantaged areas remain higher than for their counterparts from disadvantaged places. This relative difference has decreased between 2004 and 2013. While international comparison of student fees is not straightforward, OECD calculations<sup>20</sup> suggest that in 2008-2009 the level of fee charged in English universities was above the level charged in any type of university in almost all European countries. Analysis included in a House of Commons briefing paper<sup>21</sup> on the impact of the 2012 increases to tuition fees suggests that average fee levels for new students in England are likely to be the highest for public or state-dependent private institutions among developed countries.

## STUDENT LOANS

Student loans are part of the government's financial support package for students embarking on a course of higher education. In Northern Ireland the loans are issued by Student Finance NI. Student loans are available to help with living costs such as accommodation, food, books and travel. Eligible students can apply for a maximum non means-tested tuition fee loan of up to the lesser of £3,465 or the actual fee charged by the HEI. All eligible students are able to take out a maintenance loan to help with living costs. The amount students can borrow is dependent on household income and where they live while studying.

Students from Northern Ireland start repaying their loans from the April following the date they graduate or leave their course if they are earning more than £17,335; they pay 9% of anything they earn over £17,355 before tax per year. This will rise to £17,495 in April 2016. Table 7 gives an indication of monthly repayments based on a range of different earnings.

**Table 7: Indicative student loan monthly repayments based on income**

| Income each year before tax | Monthly income | Repayment as a percentage of income |
|-----------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|
| Up to £17,335               | £1,444         | 0%                                  |
| £17,500                     | £1,458         | £1,458                              |
| £21,000                     | £1750          | £27                                 |
| £24,000                     | £2000          | £49                                 |
| £27,000                     | £2250          | £72                                 |
| £30,000                     | £2500          | £94                                 |

Source: Student Loans Company, Student Loan Repayment  
<http://www.studentloanrepayment.co.uk>



The total amount of student loans paid out to eligible Higher Education students in Northern Ireland during financial year 2011-2012 was £227.8m, of which £105.3m related to Tuition Fee Loans and the remaining £122.5m related to Maintenance Loans<sup>22</sup>. The threshold at which graduates have to start paying their loans back also varies between parts of the UK. For example, students from Scotland repay on the same basis as students from Northern Ireland, while repayment rates for students from England and Wales depend on whether the first year of their course started before or after 1st September 2012. Those whose course started before Sept 2012 repay on the same basis as students from Northern Ireland and Scotland. Those whose course started after Sept 2012 start to repay when their earnings reach more than £21,000 a year. After this, they repay 9% of all earnings over £21,000.

## **NORTHERN IRELAND STUDENTS STUDYING IN THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND**

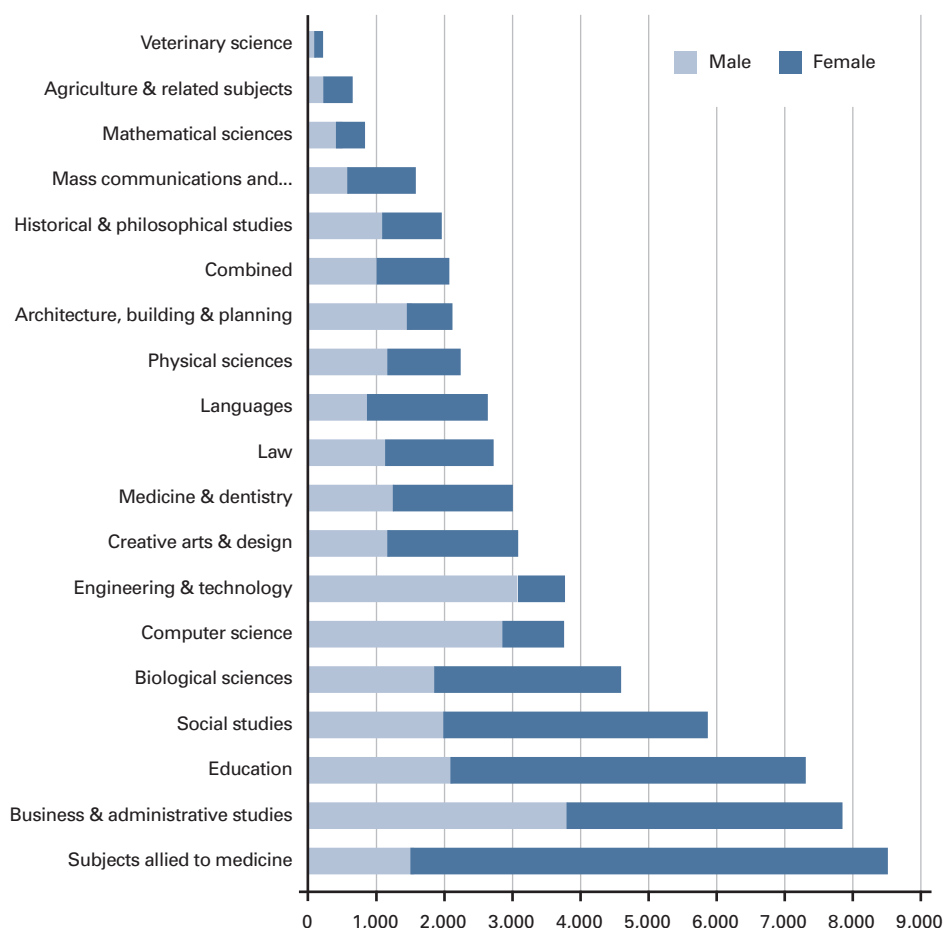
Around 1,000 students from Northern Ireland enrol each year at HEIs in the Republic of Ireland (approximately 2% of the total Northern Ireland Higher Education student population). Under the Irish Government's "Free Fees Initiative" there have been no tuition fees in the Republic of Ireland since 1996-1997. Instead students pay an annual "student contribution charge". This charge increased from €2,000 to €2,250 in the academic year 2012-2013 and rose to €2,750 in 2014-2015 and €3,000 in 2015-2016<sup>23</sup>. Since 1996, the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) has paid the student contribution fee on behalf of students from Northern Ireland. In 2012, DEL announced that it was inconsistent to maintain the current system of providing a full non-repayable grant to cover this charge when students from Northern Ireland studying at home and in other parts of the UK were expected to cover the cost of their tuition fees themselves. Therefore, Northern Ireland students who begin Higher Education in the Republic of Ireland since September 2013 no longer receive a full non-repayable grant to cover this charge. However, students from Northern Ireland starting undergraduate courses in the Republic of Ireland are eligible for a loan to cover the full cost of the student contribution charge<sup>24</sup>.

It is interesting to note, that it is estimated that students taking three-year courses with associated fees of £9,000, plus full maintenance loans, will leave university with approximately £43,000 of debt. The Institute for Fiscal Studies<sup>25</sup> assuming fees of £7,500 for approximately half of graduates, argues that the system of grants and loans is essentially a graduate tax for 30 years, as these students are not likely to have finished paying their debt off by the 30 year cut-off point.

## WHAT ARE THE MOST POPULAR SUBJECT AREAS IN NORTHERN IRELAND AND WHO IS STUDYING THEM?

As shown in Figure 3, in 2012-13 the three most popular subject areas for those attaining a 'first degree qualification' were business and administrative studies (8,460 enrolments), 'subjects allied to medicine' (7,710 enrolments) and education (6,620 enrolments),

**Figure 3: Enrolments at NI HEIs by gender and subject area 2012/2013**



Source: DEL. Enrolments at UK Higher Education Institutions: Northern Ireland analysis 2012/2013.

Figure 3 shows that females accounted for 84% of those studying subjects allied to medicine and males accounted for 82% of those studying engineering and technology. The most popular full-time HE courses in FECs in 2012-2013 were: Information & Communication Technology (747 enrolments); followed by Arts, Media & Publishing (660); and Health, Public Services & Care (629). In terms of part-time HE enrolments, the Business, Administration & Law subject area accounted for 2,097 enrolments, followed by Health, Public Services & Care (1,965) and Engineering & Manufacturing Technologies (1,216)<sup>26</sup>.

**Table 8: Enrolments on HE courses in Colleges of Further Education in Northern Ireland 2012/13**

| Sector & Subject Category                      | HE Full-Time (2012/13) | HE Part-time (2012/13) | Overall Total |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------------|
| Health, Public Services & Care                 | 629                    | 1,965                  | 2,594         |
| Science & Mathematics                          | 91                     | 129                    | 220           |
| Agriculture, Horticulture & Animal Care        | 31                     | 42                     | 73            |
| Engineering & Manufacturing Technologies       | 299                    | 1,216                  | 1,515         |
| Construction, Planning & the Built Environment | 417                    | 342                    | 759           |
| Information & Communication Technology         | 747                    | 349                    | 1,096         |
| Retail & Commercial Enterprise                 | 90                     | 398                    | 488           |
| Leisure, Travel & Tourism                      | 456                    | 314                    | 770           |
| Arts, Media & Publishing                       | 660                    | 269                    | 929           |
| History, Philosophy & Theology                 | -                      | -                      | -             |
| Social Sciences                                | -                      | 73                     | 73            |
| Languages, Literature & Culture                | -                      | 76                     | 76            |
| Education & Training                           | -                      | 207                    | 207           |
| Preparation for Life & Work                    | -                      | 46                     | 46            |
| Business, Administration & Law                 | 510                    | 2,097                  | 2,607         |
| <b>Total</b>                                   | <b>3,930</b>           | <b>7,523</b>           | <b>11,453</b> |

Source: DEL, *Professional and Technical Enrolments in the Northern Ireland Further Education Sector for 2012/13*.

## THE STEM SUBJECT PUSH

Policy makers have prioritised the promotion of STEM subjects in Higher Education as integral to economic development in Northern Ireland. Between 2006-2007 and 2011-2012 the number of students enrolled on STEM related courses at HEIs in Northern Ireland fell slightly from 23,760 to 23,290 (a 2% decrease)(see Table 9). The number of postgraduate enrolments on STEM related courses throughout this period increased from 4,120 to 4,745 (a rise of 15%). However, over the same period the number of undergraduate enrolments fell by 6%, from 19,640 to 18,550. STEM enrolments accounted for 49% of all enrolments at HEIs in 2006-2007, however by 2012/13 this figure had fallen to 46%<sup>27</sup>. Despite this drop, Northern Ireland still performs relatively well in terms of the proportion of students enrolled in STEM subjects compared with the UK average of 42% (proportions for England, Scotland and Wales are 41%, 48% and 40% respectively).<sup>28</sup>

**Table 9: Enrolments in STEM courses at NI HEIs – 2006/07 to 2011/12**

|         | Broad STEM Enrolments |               |        |            | All Enrolments |
|---------|-----------------------|---------------|--------|------------|----------------|
|         | Postgraduate          | Undergraduate | Total  | Proportion |                |
| 2009/10 | 4,880                 | 19,025        | 23,900 | 46.9%      | 50,990         |
| 2010/11 | 4,940                 | 18,990        | 23,930 | 46.0%      | 52,000         |
| 2011/12 | 4,745                 | 18,550        | 23,290 | 44.9%      | 51,905         |
| 2012/13 | 4,830                 | 18,615        | 23,450 | 45.3%      | 51,715         |
| 2013/14 | 5,135                 | 19,045        | 24,180 | 46.3%      | 52,260         |

Source: DEL (2015), *Enrolments on STEM courses at NI HEIs – 2009/10 to 2013/14*

Medicine, dentistry and subjects allied to medicine account for 41% of overall STEM enrolments in Northern Ireland, compared with 35% in the UK as a whole. However, the proportion of students in other science, technology, engineering and mathematical disciplines (as a proportion of overall enrolments) was similar to the UK average at approximately 27%.<sup>29</sup>

As shown above, more males than females take higher education qualifications in a STEM related subject. The gender gap with regard to STEM subjects is even larger at sub-degree level. Only 9% of participants in apprenticeships in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and related areas are female. In 2013, 2% of participants on programme led apprenticeships in what has been defined by Government as 'economically important' areas were female<sup>30</sup>. It has been acknowledged by Government that given the dominance of men in the above areas most of the growth sectors identified for the Northern Ireland economy '*will be heavily populated by male employees.*'

DEL's 'Success through STEM' strategy includes a number of recommendations aimed at increasing the proportion of those qualifying with graduate and postgraduate qualifications in STEM subjects from 18% in 2008 to at least 22% by 2020. To help achieve this, DEL, in its 2012 Higher Education Strategy has committed additional funding to finance a further 700 student places in STEM disciplines up until 2014-2015. In December 2012, funding was announced for an additional 300 PhD places in subjects of 'economic relevance' over the following three years<sup>31</sup>.

## STEM GRADUATES

There is evidence to suggest that STEM graduates earn more than other graduates. A report by the Department for Business Innovation and Skills<sup>32</sup> estimated that the graduate premium for engineering students is 38.1 per cent, 20.7 per cent for technology students, 27 per cent for physical and environmental students and 41.1 per cent for mathematical and computer sciences students. The average graduate premium was estimated at 27.4 per cent which suggests that the premiums associated with STEM subjects, apart from technology, are either above or around the average. A report from the Centre for Economics and Business Research found that STEM graduates have been slightly more resilient to the negative impact of the economic downturn and that students of STEM subjects were more likely to be employed six months after they graduated, and to be more satisfied with their university course, than arts students<sup>33</sup>. Statistics published by the Higher Education Statistics Authority suggest that a significant amount of growth in student numbers in STEM subjects is accounted for by the increase in overseas students.

## CURRENT TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS IN RELATION TO HE COURSES

Research by the University and Colleges Union (UCU)<sup>34</sup> shows the number of full-time undergraduate courses on offer at UK universities has fallen by more than a quarter (27%), from 70,052 in 2006 to 51,116 in 2012. The reduction in undergraduate course availability has been sharpest in England (-31%) and Northern Ireland (-24%), but has been less severe in Wales (-11%) and Scotland (-3%). There has been debate about the impact of higher tuition fees and the varying rates of tuition fees across the UK on Higher Education courses. England, the part of the UK with the highest tuition fees, has seen the greatest reduction in the number of undergraduate courses while Scotland, the country with arguably the most benign fee regime, has the lowest level of course cutting.

**Table 10: Provision of Full-time Undergraduate Degree Courses, UK**

|                  | 2006   | 2010   | 2011   | 2012   | Change:<br>2006 - 2012 |
|------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|------------------------|
| England          | 59,068 | 51,099 | 45,230 | 41,060 | -30.5%                 |
| Wales            | 4,673  | 4,765  | 4,540  | 4,184  | -10.5%                 |
| Scotland         | 5,143  | 5,553  | 5,108  | 4,981  | -3.1%                  |
| Northern Ireland | 1,168  | 1,042  | 1,016  | 891    | -23.7%                 |
| UK               | 70,052 | 62,459 | 55,894 | 51,116 | -27.0%                 |

*Source: University and Colleges Union, 2012.*

As well as looking at the overall number of courses available, the research analysed the provision of principle or single subject degree courses in science, technology, engineering and mathematics subjects, arts and humanities, and social sciences. Findings show that among the single subject courses examined in the UK, science, technology, engineering and maths have seen a fall of 14.6%, while social science courses had dropped by 12.8%, and arts and humanities were down by 14%.

Northern Ireland showed only a relatively small decline in the provision of principal degree subjects. The report suggested that this may be linked to the small number of HEIs and a sense that, because of the separation of the region from the rest of the UK, its HEIs feel an obligation to maintain a breadth in provision for home students.

**Table 11: Provision of Principle Subject Degree Courses in NI**

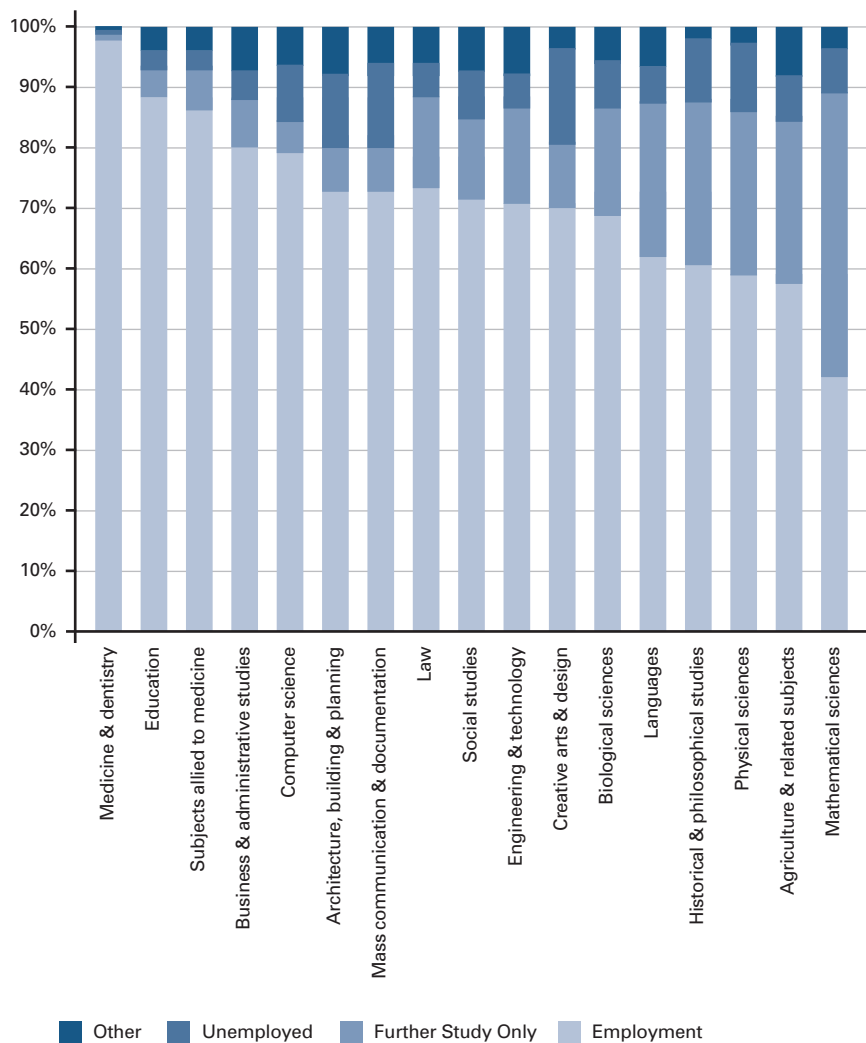
| Northern Ireland  | 2006       | 2010       | 2011       | 2012       | Change: 2006 - 2012 |
|-------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|---------------------|
| STEM              | 61         | 58         | 57         | 56         | -8.2%               |
| Social Science    | 28         | 25         | 25         | 25         | -10.7%              |
| Arts & Humanities | 30         | 29         | 29         | 30         | 0.0%                |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>119</b> | <b>112</b> | <b>111</b> | <b>111</b> | <b>-6.7%</b>        |

Source: University and Colleges Union 2012.

## DESTINATIONS OF LEAVERS FROM HIGHER EDUCATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND 2011/12

In Northern Ireland as elsewhere the employability rate of graduates is considerably higher than for non graduates. Labour force statistics published in 2014 show that the employment rate for graduates in Northern Ireland (16-64 years) of just over 87.1% is much higher than that for non-graduates (62.5%). It is also higher than the UK average which is 84.9% but what of those just leaving higher education? Figure 4 below provides details of the destination of leavers from Northern Ireland HEIs by subject area in 2011-2012 (six months after leaving). Full-time leavers from Northern Ireland HEIs were more likely to be in employment (76%) than leavers from England (72%), Scotland (72%) and Wales (71%). However, they were also more likely to be unemployed (8%) than their counterparts from HEIs in England (7%), Wales (7%) and Scotland (6%). Of those full-time leavers from Northern Ireland 88% were employed in Northern Ireland, eight per cent in Great Britain, two per cent in the Republic of Ireland and two per cent elsewhere.

**Figure 4: Destination of leavers from NI HEIs by subject area in 2011/12**



Source: Department for Employment and Learning, (2013) Statistical Bulletin: Destination of Leavers from UK Higher Education Institutions: Northern Ireland Analysis 2011/12



Sixty three per cent of full-time leavers took up positions in the top three SOC groups (Managers & Senior Officials, Professional Occupations or Associate Professional & Technical Occupations) as did 84% of part-time leavers.

From the data available the average<sup>2</sup> salary of full-time leavers from Northern Ireland was £19,855 (with a median of £20,000). The average salary for male leavers in full-time employment was somewhat higher at £20,505 than that for females which was £19,470.

## ISSUES FOR POLICY

There has been significant emphasis across the UK on increasing participation rates in Higher Education, especially among those from disadvantaged backgrounds. This chapter has illustrated that Northern Ireland has a good record of widening participation but the challenge lies in maintaining this in an age of austerity. It is noted that there has generally been less success in Northern Ireland in increasing the number of people with disabilities who access higher education. This is an important issue. In the context of welfare reform and increasing conditionality, if disabled people are to compete in an increasingly competitive labour market they need to have the opportunity and support to acquire appropriate qualifications. Given the emphasis being placed on STEM subjects and their importance to economic growth and the provision of high quality jobs, the persistent gender gap with regards to students taking these subjects is a key issue.

2 The DEL Leavers Destination Report notes that salary is not a mandatory question in the DLHE survey resulting in a high non-response rate. Leavers in full-time employment whose salary was unknown have been excluded from the analysis; therefore the data presented applies to 42% of those respondents in full-time employment.

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## INTRODUCTION

The impact of the economic downturn and the major impact on house prices, lending and mortgage debt and the housing benefit changes resulting from welfare reform has ensured that housing policy and provision has been a focus of political and research attention and public debate. Housing policy and legislation in the UK is complex partly because of the inter-relationship between housing and other policy areas, but also because some aspects of housing policy are devolved. Therefore there are variations in terms of how housing policy impacts on housing choices and experiences across the devolved administrations (Muir, 2012).

This chapter looks at housing in relation to each of the three main tenures in Northern Ireland: owner occupation, the private rented sector and social housing. Drawing on recent statistics it highlights the salient points and explores associated issues such as homelessness, fuel poverty and second homes in Northern Ireland and provides comparison with other parts of the UK and Ireland where appropriate. Finally the chapter considers the implications of welfare reform on housing and concludes with a summary of key policy issues.

In Northern Ireland, housing is the responsibility of the Department for Social Development (DSD). The Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE), an appointed body, is the Regional Strategic Housing Authority and the largest social landlord in Northern Ireland. Housing associations also have a significant role in social housing provision. Both the NIHE and Registered Housing Associations are regulated by the DSD. The 2011-2015 Programme for Government (OFMDFM, 2012) contained a number of important housing related commitments, including the delivery of 8,000 social and affordable homes before 2015 and the introduction of a range of initiatives aimed at reducing fuel poverty across Northern Ireland. The draft housing strategy published by DSD (2012) 'Facing the Future' envisaged a key role for housing policy in supporting economic growth and community regeneration; providing support for individuals and families to access housing, particularly the most vulnerable in society; and setting minimum standards for the quality of new and existing homes and for how rented housing is managed. The strategy also envisages housing playing a fourth role in driving regeneration within communities.

In October 2010 a Fundamental Review of the NIHE was initiated by the DSD in order to identify a strategic direction of travel for the delivery of services currently delivered by the NIHE. It concluded that current structures did not allow optimal delivery of either strategic or landlord services by the NIHE nor did they provide the NIHE with the necessary financial flexibility to effectively perform its landlord role going forward. The Minister for Social Development in his statement on the review argued there was a strong case for separating the strategic and landlord functions of the NIHE<sup>1</sup>. New proposals see DSD with responsibility for overall housing strategy, policy and legislation; the establishment of a regional housing body staffed by housing professionals to deliver regional housing services, programmes and operational strategies (in effect the non-landlord functions of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive); the development of a new landlord function outwith the public sector focusing on service to tenants and enabling access to private funding to allow for suitable investment; the establishment of an Independent Social Housing Rent Panel which will agree annual rent levels based on a rental policy<sup>2</sup>.

## CHANGING HOUSEHOLDS AND HOUSING POLICY

The household structure of the Northern Ireland population has changed substantially over the last fifty years. Particularly striking is the increase in the number of one person households; between 1961 and 2011 there was an increase of 16 percentage points in the number of households occupied by only one resident from 12% of the population in 1961 to 28% in 2011. In 1961 29% of the population were living in households with 5 or more residents compared to 10% in 2011.

As Table 1 demonstrates this trend is expected to continue as projections for 2023 show that the number of single person households is set to increase and that the number of households consisting of five or more persons will decrease by 9%.

**Table 1: Structure of Households 2008 & 2023**

|              | 2008 No (% of total)  | 2023 No (% of total)  | %+/- in No  |
|--------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| 1 person     | 204,500 (30%)         | 273,800 (34%)         | +25%        |
| 2 person     | 197,300 (29%)         | 242,300 (30%)         | +23%        |
| 3 person     | 109,100 (16%)         | 116,500 (14%)         | +7%         |
| 4 Person     | 101,400 (15%)         | 108,100 (13%)         | +7%         |
| 5 Person     | 76,400 (11%)          | 69,800 (9%)           | -9%         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>688,700 (100%)</b> | <b>810,500 (100%)</b> | <b>+18%</b> |

*Source: Northern Ireland Housing Market Review and Perspectives 2012-2015, p 40.*

## NORTHERN IRELAND'S HOUSING STOCK

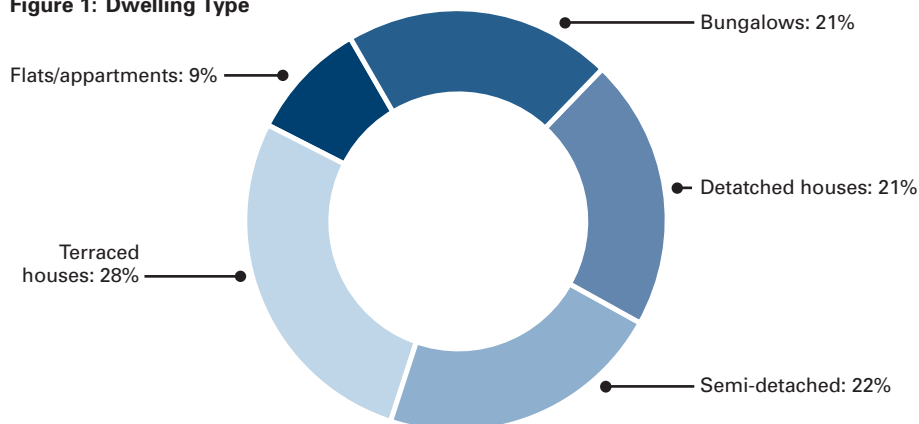
Table 2 shows the proportion of dwellings in each sector. Findings from the 2011 House Condition Survey indicate that Northern Ireland's total dwelling stock increased by 20,000 (3%), over the period since 2009, bringing the total stock to approximately 760,000. The number of owner-occupied dwellings has changed little between 2009 and 2011 at 461,800 or 62.4% of dwellings in 2009 and 469,100 or 61.7% in 2011. The number and proportion of private rented sector dwellings has also remained broadly the same at around 17% as have social housing tenancies at about 16%. Most social housing (11.6% of total stock) is owned and managed by the NIHE and the remaining 3.3% by registered housing associations (NIHE, 2011). While the share of dwellings owned by the NIHE in 2011 had decreased by 5.2 percentage points since 2001/02, the share owned by housing associations had increased by almost one percentage point<sup>3</sup>. In England 83% of dwellings are owner occupied. Figure 1 shows a breakdown of the type of housing in Northern Ireland.

**Table 2: Tenure excluding vacants 2009-2011**

|                        | 2009           | %          | 2011           | %          |
|------------------------|----------------|------------|----------------|------------|
| Owner-occupied         | 461,800        | 62.4       | 469,100        | 61.7       |
| Private Rented & Other | 124,600        | 16.8       | 125,500        | 16.5       |
| Housing Executive      | 85,650         | 11.6       | 85,900         | 11.3       |
| Housing Association    | 24,550         | 3.3        | 24,800         | 3.3        |
| Vacant                 | 43,400         | 5.9        | 54,700         | 7.2        |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>740,000</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>760,000</b> | <b>100</b> |

Source: NIHE, 2011 House Condition Survey

**Figure 1: Dwelling Type**



Source: Northern Ireland Housing Market Review & Perspectives, 2012-2015, p 47.

According to the 2011 House Condition Survey almost 5% of all properties in Northern Ireland are unfit<sup>1</sup>. This is an increase from 2.4% in 2009. However, the majority of this increase relates to the unfitness of vacant dwellings which has

<sup>1</sup> House Condition Surveys have assessed dwelling conditions against the Statutory Fitness Standard since 1974. Further information on how housing fitness is defined can be found at [http://www.nihe.gov.uk/northern\\_ireland\\_house\\_condition\\_survey\\_main\\_report\\_2011.pdf](http://www.nihe.gov.uk/northern_ireland_house_condition_survey_main_report_2011.pdf)

doubled from 2009 to apply to 28,000 dwellings. The majority of these were built before 1919. Generally speaking house conditions have continued to improve. The Decent Homes Standard was introduced in June 2004 to promote measurable improvements to housing in Northern Ireland. A decent home is one which meets modern standards of fitness, structure, energy efficiency and facilities. According to the 2009 House Condition Survey there has been a continuing decline in the number of all dwellings that fail the Decent Homes Standard. In 2006, 23% (162,000) of dwellings failed compared to 15.1% (112,000) in 2009. More than two-thirds (68%) of dwellings which failed the Decent Homes Standard did so on the basis of the thermal comfort criterion. Of the dwellings that failed the Standard, 15% were in the social housing sector, 17% in the private rented sector and 13% in the owner-occupied sector.

While the composition of households has changed significantly, as noted earlier this is not reflected in housing stock in Northern Ireland - especially in the social housing sector. Just over half (57%) of NIHE stock is traditional terraced or semi-detached houses with bungalows and flats accounting for one fifth of properties. Around one tenth of NIHE dwellings have one bedroom, 39% have two bedrooms, while almost half of the stock (49%) has three or more bedrooms. The Continuous Tenant Omnibus Survey (2012)<sup>4</sup> confirmed that the majority of NIHE housing tenants are low income households. Forty nine per cent had a gross annual income of £10,400 or less. Almost one third (using data based on Household Reference Person) were retired from work; 23% were unemployed and 18% were employed. Most tenants were in receipt of Housing Benefit (78%) and 36% were receiving Income Support or Jobseeker's Allowance.

In Northern Ireland, as elsewhere in the UK the Conservative government in 1979 introduced a policy on public sector house sales under the Right to Buy Scheme. This allowed tenants to buy their own homes at a discount against the market value after five years' occupancy. Since 1979, approximately 117,000 dwellings have been sold by the Housing Executive to sitting tenants. These houses make up approximately 15% of the market as a whole. The decline in public sector housing stock is a feature of the housing landscape across the UK. In addition to sale of local authority stock in Britain there was also significant transfer of stock from local councils to housing associations. This has been a much more recent development in Northern Ireland.



## SOCIAL HOUSING NEED

Waiting list figures<sup>5</sup> show that at March 2013 there were 41,356 applicants registered on the social housing waiting list. There has been a steady increase in the demand for social housing in Northern Ireland. Analysis of the waiting list for social housing shows that the overall waiting list rose to an all-time peak of more than 40,000 in September 2012. The number of applicants in housing stress was 22,100.<sup>6</sup> In 2012, of those on the social housing waiting list there were around 5,500 owner occupiers and over 14,000 private rented sector tenants<sup>7</sup>. The household composition of those on the waiting list has remained fairly constant over recent years with single person households constituting the single largest group (45%), small families the next largest (26%) followed by older people (15%). It is estimated that a minimum of 2,000 new units of social housing are required for the next five year period in order to meet the demand for social housing<sup>8</sup>.

## HOMELESSNESS

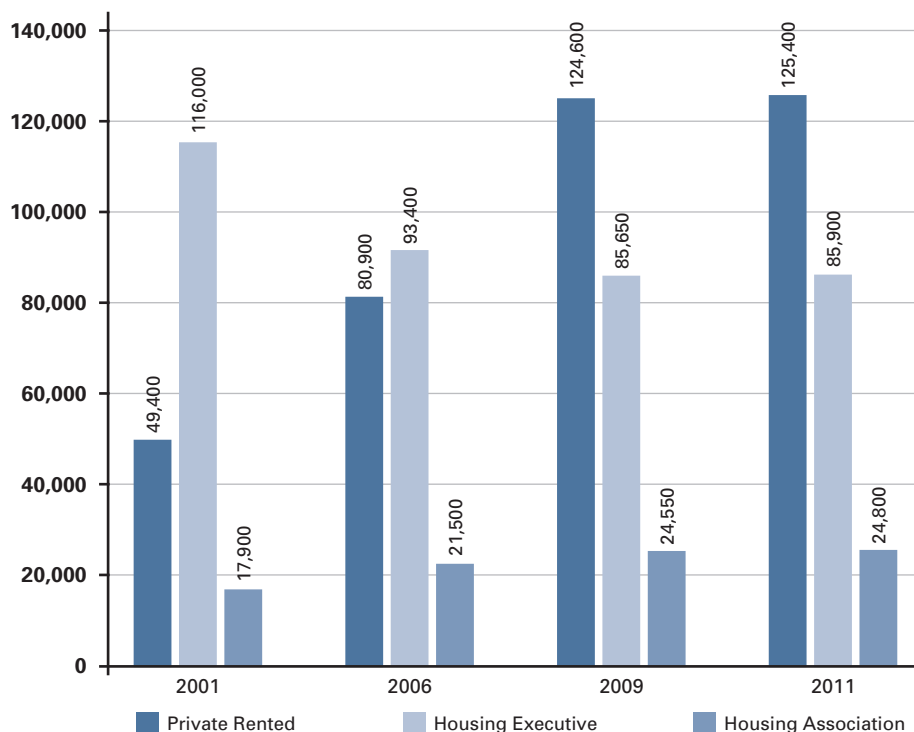
During the year up to March 2015, 19,621 households presented as homeless; 11,016 of these were accepted as statutorily homeless<sup>9</sup>. The annual number of households presenting as homeless has tended to increase, albeit with the occasional year when the numbers have fallen. The numbers of those accepted as statutorily homeless has maintained a steady increase in numbers however<sup>10</sup>. There are many different reasons why a person becomes homeless, but generally the explanations lie in a combination of structural factors (such as poverty or unemployment) and personal factors (such as family breakdown or health problems). Similar to other jurisdictions within the UK, in 2012-2013 the primary reason of those presenting as homeless in Northern Ireland was sharing breakdown and family dispute (3,733). Other causal factors include accommodation not being reasonable (3,069), marital /relationship breakdown, and loss of rented accommodation (normally private rented) - there was a 20% increase in the number of people presenting as homeless because they had lost privately rented housing compared to 2011-2012. Single males were the group most likely to present as homeless (6,968) and 6,019 families presented as homeless<sup>11</sup>.

It is acknowledged by the NIHE that the impact of the recession and a lack of affordable housing present significant challenges in addressing homelessness. A homelessness strategy (published in May 2012) aims to eliminate long term homelessness and rough sleeping across Northern Ireland by 2020<sup>12</sup>. One of the stipulations of the new Act is that other statutory agencies will be required to take into account the homelessness strategy in the implementation of their own functions. Therefore, the strategy aims to ensure that the risk of a person becoming homeless will be minimised through effective preventative measures and enhanced interagency co-operation and services to the most vulnerable homeless households. The NIHE invests almost £36m per annum in homelessness services. This includes Supporting People investment, Housing Benefit, payment for homelessness services and administrative costs. The focus on prevention in the homelessness strategy mirrors approaches elsewhere in the UK. For example, in Scotland a decline in homelessness figures (of 20% in terms of applications and assessments as of June 2012) has been credited to prevention measures. England and Wales have adopted similar approaches, with a focus on prevention coupled with a duty to provide suitable accommodation to those in priority need.

## **PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR HOUSING**

One in six dwellings in Northern Ireland are now in the private rented sector, making it the second largest housing tenure, after owner occupied. Since 2001 the sector has grown dramatically more than doubling from 49,400 to over 124,600 (17% of total stock). Over half of those living in the sector are under the age of 40. Changes in the tenure mix of the Northern Ireland housing market means there are now more people living in the private rented sector than living in the social rented sector. Figure 2 illustrates the growth of the sector since 2001.

**Figure 2: Change in rented profile over time.**



Source: NIHE, House Condition Surveys 2001-2011

Terraced houses are the most common dwelling type in the private rented sector (40%). Although the number of occupied privately rented flats/apartments increased from 7,000 in 2001 to 13,800 in 2011, the proportion of flats/apartments in the private rented sector actually fell from 14% to 11 per cent. One factor relevant to this is the reduction of social housing stock as a result of the NIHE 'House Sales Scheme' but in recent years expansion in the private rented sector has also been due to ongoing affordability issues for first time buyers, an increase in the number of buy-to let investors and a rise in the number of what are termed 'accidental landlords' - people who find themselves unable to sell their houses and chose to rent them out instead<sup>13</sup>. The growth of the private rented sector in

Northern Ireland is similar to developments in the rest of the UK and in the Republic of Ireland. In England the number of households in the private rented sector increased from 2 million (10%) in 1999 to 3.62 million (17%) in 2010-2011 (English Household Survey 2010-2011). In Scotland the private rented sector has grown from 5% in 1999 to 11% in 2011, while in the south of Ireland there has been a change in policy away from supporting home-ownership to directing people towards the private rented sector. However, there is a gap in the market in terms of supply, quality and variety of rental stock.<sup>14</sup>.

In Northern Ireland the private rented sector comprises a higher number of mixed religion/identity households than across the owner-occupied and social rented sectors. There is also a growing number of low-income tenants living in the private rented sector compared to the housing sector as a whole, with 27% of tenants earning less than £15,000 a year. The importance attached to the private rented sector was set out in the 'Building Sound Foundations' strategy for the private rented sector<sup>15</sup>. The Strategy set out plans to improve conditions in the private rented sector and introduce more powers to regulate it. One of the most important measures contained in the strategy was the introduction of mandatory landlord registration and a tenancy deposit scheme.

## HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS

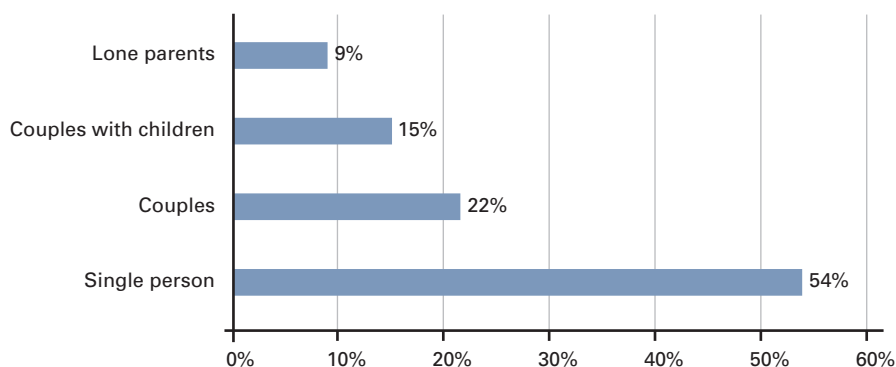
The Department for Social Development lists 26 registered Housing Associations in Northern Ireland, including the Northern Ireland Co-Ownership Housing Association. The ten largest housing associations manage more than three quarters of all housing association stock. In 2011 the Northern Ireland Housing Executive completed the first large scale transfer of 55 of its homes to Apex Housing Association. Since 2002, registered housing associations have been the main supplier of new build for social housing through the Social Housing Development programme funded by a mixture of Government Grant (Housing Association Grant) and private borrowing. This private borrowing is secured by housing associations against future income from rents. During 2011-2012 Housing Associations brought in approximately £66 million of private finance. This was supported by £143 m of Housing Association Grant to fund 1,410 new social homes. In recent years grant

rates for new social housing have been reduced from around 60-70% to just over 50% in 2012. In Northern Ireland a much greater role is envisaged for housing associations in the administration and delivery of housing.

## CO-OWNERSHIP HOUSING

The Northern Ireland Co-Ownership Housing Association otherwise known as Co-Ownership Housing, is Northern Ireland's regional body for shared ownership and the organisation that runs the Co-Ownership Scheme. The scheme has been running since 1978 and the current Programme for Government has a target of assisting 2,000 home purchases through this scheme. The Co-ownership scheme supports low-income households to buy their homes by enabling clients to become a home owner through 'equity sharing', which involves part-renting and part-buying the property. Those eligible can buy any property in Northern Ireland within a purchase price cap of £175,000 set by the Department for Social Development, apart from Housing Executive or housing association properties. All purchasers commence by buying at least a 50% share of the property and at any time can increase their share by purchasing more equity in steps of 5% each time ('staircasing'), or purchase all of the remaining equity in one step. A total of 492 properties were bought through the scheme between April 2010 and March 2011, (an increase of 31 from the previous year)<sup>16</sup>. It is likely that applicants took advantage of falling property prices given the increase in the proportion of purchases in the 55% to 70% starter share band from 30% (138) in 2010 to 37% (182) in 2011. Around half of all households who purchased Co-Ownership housing were single persons, 22% were couples, 15% couples with children and the remaining 9% were lone parents. Figure 3 shows the profile of homeownership purchasers.

**Figure 3: Profile of Co-Ownership Purchasers**



*Source: Co-Ownership Housing Annual Report & Accounts 2011.*

The data also reveals that two thirds (68%) of purchasing households had only one earner and that the average household income of those purchasing through Co-Ownership was £24,636.

## THE END OF THE AFFAIR? - THE DECLINE OF THE OWNER OCCUPIED SECTOR

The growth in home-ownership came to a halt in 2007 due to a combination of changing labour market conditions, a decline in the construction of new private sector dwellings and the banking crisis in 2007. The University of Ulster figures for the last quarter of 2013 show some recovery in the housing market. Loans for house purchase were up 8% on the equivalent period in 2012. However, an indication of how much house prices fell in Northern Ireland is that the median size of mortgage in February 2014 was £77,000 compared to £133,000 at the peak of the market in 2007<sup>17</sup>.

Personal indebtedness is an issue for many in Northern Ireland. In the post-credit crisis environment, high levels of unsecured debt will make it difficult for many people to access mortgage finance or to remortgage if they are already home owners. A related problem is that of mortgage possession and negative equity.

In the first three quarters of 2013, 3,000 house repossession cases had begun. This is in addition to the cases disposed of by the court in previous years; 3,157 in 2012, 2,698 in 2011 and 3,004 in 2010<sup>18</sup>. One response to this has been the setting up of a Housing Repossessions Taskforce to identify actions which might assist in alleviating the difficulties associated with negative equity and repossession.<sup>19</sup> Since then, the number of mortgage cases presented to, and disposed of, by the courts has fallen considerably. Figures for the first half of 2015 show a decrease of 60% in cases presented and a decrease of 22.5% in the cases disposed of, compared to the first half of 2014<sup>20</sup>. Northern Ireland is reported to have the highest rate of negative equity in the UK. According to figures from mortgage administration company HML, 41 % (68,024) of borrowers in Northern Ireland who have taken out mortgages since 2005 owed more than their house was worth during the last quarter of 2013. This is the highest rate of 12 UK regions<sup>21</sup>.

## THE IMPLICATIONS OF WELFARE REFORM

The Welfare Reform Bill for Northern Ireland was introduced to the Assembly on the 1st October 2012. Although the Bill failed to complete its legislative passage, DSD continues to anticipate the future implementation of its main provisions\*. The measures contained within the Bill, and the changes to the social security system announced as part of the Coalition Government's June 2010 budget and October 2010 Spending Review will see a number of benefits scrapped, with new benefits and payment systems introduced. Provision within the Welfare Reform legislation includes the phasing out of Housing Benefit and other benefits to be replaced by one single benefit - Universal Credit. Under the measures introduced in Great Britain, recipients of Universal Credit will receive a single payment, including a housing element. However, many stakeholders have contended that this arrangement will create financial hardship for many households, increase rent arrears and evictions and may even deter private sector landlords from accepting tenants in receipt of benefit. Further, increased rent arrears would result in a loss of income reliability within the social housing sector which would make it difficult to maintain existing housing and affect housing associations' ability to support the development of more social rented homes. In Northern Ireland, the DSD Minister, who is responsible for Welfare Reform, has stated that agreement has been secured from Westminster which will result in the housing element of Universal Credit being paid automatically/ directly to landlords rather than the claimant<sup>22</sup>.

\*(see <https://www.dsdni.gov.uk/articles/welfare-changes-overview>)

## UNDER OCCUPANCY/'BEDROOM TAX'

One of the most debated and controversial aspects of changes to Housing Benefit has been the 'under-occupation' penalty which will apply to working age claimants. Prior to the introduction of the Welfare Reform legislation in Northern Ireland, if NIHE or Housing Association tenants claim Housing Benefit there is no restriction on the amount of benefit they are entitled to in relation to the size of their home.

Apart from a few exceptions, (people over pension age are exempt) the new system will only allow one bedroom for each person or couple living as part of the household. For example, based on the 2013 average rent of £58.76, tenants would see their Housing benefit entitlement reduced by 14% (£8.25) a week for under-occupation by one bedroom and by 25% (£14.70) for under occupation by two or more bedrooms. This change is likely to increase the number of tenants seeking to move to smaller properties. However, the key problem is, as shown earlier, the limited supply of affordable one bedroom properties that people of working age can move to. The Chartered Institute of Housing NI estimated that almost two-thirds of Northern Ireland's working age housing benefit claimants in the social sector would be affected by the 'bedroom tax'<sup>23</sup>. While, at the time of writing, the Northern Ireland Executive has not reached agreement on the Welfare Reform legislation it appears that some concession has been granted resulting in the 'bedroom tax' not being applied to existing tenants<sup>24</sup>.

## EMPTY HOMES

House building rates in the UK are at the lowest since the 1920s. Other than building more homes, reusing empty homes provides one of the few other sources of housing. It is estimated that there are more than 32,000 empty homes in Northern Ireland<sup>25</sup>. The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors estimates that properties adjoining poorly maintained empty homes can be devalued by 18%. According to the Empty Homes Strategy for Northern Ireland<sup>26</sup> the main reasons for properties becoming vacant are: failing housing markets; rural/unfitness/disrepair and investors relying on capital gain to make sufficient return rather than rental income at a time of rapidly rising house prices; and, finally, second homes. Findings from the 2011 House Condition Survey<sup>27</sup> shows a continued steady increase in the total number of vacant properties between 2009 and 2011. Approximately 43,400 properties were vacant in 2009 rising to 54,700 in 2011, giving a total increase of 11,300 in two years.



The vacancy rate has risen from 5.9 per cent in 2009 to 7.2 per cent in 2011. A high vacancy rate is particularly evident in the private rented sector where approximately 19,000 properties (13.2%) are vacant. The owner-occupied sector had 5.9% vacant and in the social sector the vacancy rate was 5.2%.

The Review into Affordable Housing published in 2007<sup>28</sup> commented on the number of empty homes in Northern Ireland and recommended the introduction of a new system of rating to cover private sector properties left vacant for 6 months or more, rising to a 200% liability if vacant for a year or more. Consequently, from 1 October 2011, empty property rates are payable on all domestic properties with a rateable capital value of £20,000 or more. The Empty Homes Strategy and Action Plan contains a number of measures to get empty homes back into use. These include schemes to assist in the reoccupation process such as loan schemes and private sector leasing, legislation that can be used for different areas of enforcement on empty properties and the development of a pilot scheme that focuses on derelict and empty properties that were previously in Housing Executive ownership, bought under the House Sales scheme, that have since fallen into disrepair. The aim of this scheme will be to work proactively with owners in order to purchase a number of properties with a view to them eventually being refurbished and returned to social housing stock in areas of current housing need.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY

Housing in Northern Ireland faces considerable change and challenges. These include the implications of Welfare Reform and continuing economic challenges in relation to house building. The gap between housing supply and projected new household formation is widening, potentially leading to an increase in sharing or overcrowding. Many pressures in the housing market are likely to result in an increased demand for some form of public intervention. This includes a growing older population, more likely to remain in their own homes, with some additional requirement for supported housing. Major changes are planned in relation to the governance and delivery of housing in Northern Ireland which will see the most fundamental review of housing administration in over forty years.

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## INTRODUCTION

Health and social care in Northern Ireland, as in Scotland and Wales, is a wholly devolved matter. Since the publication of the first edition of *Figuring it Out* in 2009 there has been a fundamental independent review of health and social care in Northern Ireland (DHSSPS, 2011). The rationale for the review included growing pressures on the health and social care system and a growing and ageing population. The review resulted in proposals for a new model for the delivery of health and social care which have a substantive focus on preventative services and a shift in provision from the acute hospital sector to the community and people's homes (DHSSPS, 2012). Devolution has resulted in greater divergence in health and social care but perhaps especially in relation to adult social care. Much attention has been paid to the divergent free personal and nursing care provisions introduced in Scotland. Historically the most distinctive divergent feature in Northern Ireland has been the structural integration of health and social care. In Britain adult social care has received considerably more policy attention than in Northern Ireland.

The structure of health and social care services in Northern Ireland is distinctly different from that in the rest of the UK. A central Department, the Department for Health and Social Services and Public Safety has strategic control of services. The Health and Social Care Board is responsible for commissioning services and managing resources. Five Health and Social Care Trusts (HSCT) in Northern Ireland provide health and social services (there is also 1 ambulance Trust) and while services are commissioned by the Health and Social Care Board there are local commissioning groups in each of the HSCT areas. The average population per trust is 359,878, compared to 307,753 in England<sup>1</sup>. The Public Health Agency informs the board's commissioning, maintains a register of nursing and allied health professions and has health promotion responsibilities. The structural integration of health and social care services in Northern Ireland is unique in the UK. In Great Britain, local authorities have responsibility for social services and they have also increasingly been given more responsibility for population health and wellbeing.

This chapter looks at the health of the population in Northern Ireland, access to services and the funding of services. Within the social care section there is a focus on services for older people.

## SOCIETY AND POPULATION HEALTH

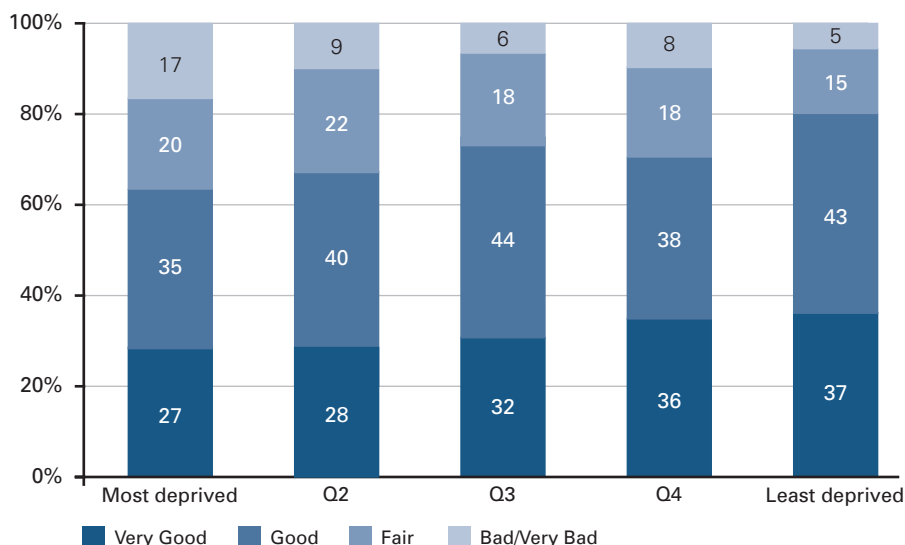
The main causes of death in Northern Ireland are circulatory disease, cancer and respiratory disease, which together accounted for 69% of all deaths. In 2012, 28% of all deaths were from cancer compared to 19% in 1982 whereas there has been a 57% decrease in the number of deaths from Ischaemic Heart Disease over the same period.<sup>2</sup>

In Northern Ireland as in other parts of the developed world, preventable diseases are a significant cause of death. This includes illness and disability resulting from smoking, obesity and excessive alcohol use. The prevalence of obesity among adults has increased sharply during the 1990s and early 2000s. A quarter of adult respondents to the DHSSPS 2012-2013 Health Survey were obese with a further two-fifths (37%) classified as overweight. The likelihood of being either overweight or obese increased with age so while this applied to 39% of those in the 16-24 age group, 76% of those in the 55-64 age-group were overweight or obese. Those in the most deprived areas (31%) were more likely to be in the obese or overweight category than those in the least deprived areas (21%). In England the 2004 Wanless report 'Securing Good Health for the Whole Population' likened obesity to smoking in terms of associated disease burden as a determinant of future health. For example, obesity is a significant factor contributing to the increase in Type 2 diabetes and the number of people with diabetes is predicted to increase significantly due to the higher prevalence of obesity, more sedentary lifestyles and an older population. Currently about 4% (75,000) of the population in Northern Ireland has diabetes (Type 1 and 2).<sup>3</sup>

Inequalities in health continue to be a challenging issue for Northern Ireland. While the health of the population has been improving, there continue to be significant differences in health outcomes between socio-economic groups. As acknowledged by the DHSSPS in its consultation on a new public health strategy for Northern Ireland, the last ten years have not seen a noticeable narrowing of the health status between those living in the least and most deprived areas of Northern Ireland<sup>3</sup>. For example, males living in the 10% least deprived areas in Northern Ireland could expect on average to live almost 12 years longer than their counterparts living in the 10% most deprived areas. For females, the gap is more than 8 years. People in the most deprived areas are more likely to die from coronary heart disease, suicide, lung cancer and other cancers. Specifically, for people under 75 years cancer related mortality in

the most deprived decile of the population was more than twice that in the least deprived and one and a half times that in Northern Ireland as a whole. Lung cancer related mortality in the most deprived decile was five and a half times that in the least deprived. Death rates for circulatory disease in the 10% most deprived areas was nearly four times that experienced in the 10% least deprived areas and the death rate for respiratory disease in the most deprived decile was nearly six times that in the least deprived<sup>4</sup>. Alcohol and drug related mortality are respectively 9 and 11 times greater in the most deprived than in the least deprived areas. As shown in Figure 1, while 80% of those in the least deprived areas describe their health as good or very good, this is the case for only 63% of those in the most deprived areas.

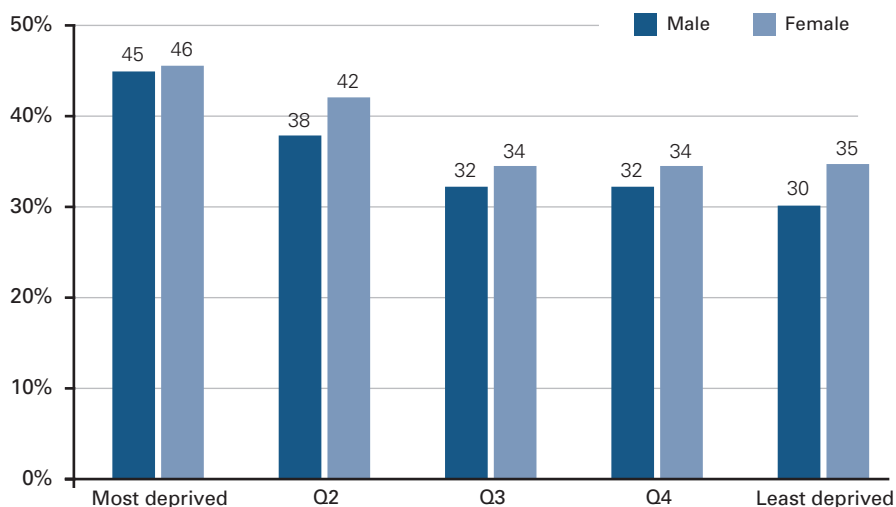
**Figure 1: Health in General by Deprivation**



Source: DHSSPS (2014) *The Health Survey Northern Ireland (2012-2013)*

Those living in the most deprived areas are also more likely to have a long-standing illness - 46% compared with a third (33%) of those in the least deprived areas. As can be seen from Figure 2 male respondents from the most deprived areas were much more likely to report a longstanding illness than their counterparts in the least deprived areas.

**Figure 2: Longstanding illness by Deprivation and Gender**



Source: DHSSPS (2014) *The Health Survey Northern Ireland 2012-2013*

Smoking continues to be a major contributing factor to morbidity and mortality and the incidence of smoking is linked to deprivation with both men and women living in the most deprived areas about three times more likely to be smokers than those living in the least deprived areas. Whereas 37% of both males and females in the most deprived areas were smokers 13% of males and 12% of females in the least deprived areas smoked. People living in the least deprived areas were also most likely to have never smoked (48% of males and 62% of females).

There has been increasing emphasis on subjective wellbeing and quality of life with a diminished sense of emotional wellbeing argued to affect behaviour, lifestyle and self esteem in a way which is detrimental to health. This interest in wellbeing is reflected in the increasing use of wellbeing and quality of life assessments in social and clinical research and health practice. The majority of respondents (87%) to the DHSSPS Health Survey were satisfied with their life with just 5% stating that they were dissatisfied. There was little difference between males and females across age groups and urban and rural areas but those living in the most deprived areas were less likely to say they were very satisfied with their life - 28% compared to 39% in the least deprived areas.

**Table 1: Satisfaction with Life**

|                                    | Total | Male | Female | Urban | Rural | Most Deprived | Least Deprived |
|------------------------------------|-------|------|--------|-------|-------|---------------|----------------|
| Very Satisfied                     | 35    | 33   | 37     | 34    | 37    | 28            | 39             |
| Satisfied                          | 52    | 54   | 51     | 52    | 53    | 52            | 53             |
| Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | 8     | 8    | 8      | 9     | 7     | 11            | 5              |
| Dissatisfied/ Very dissatisfied    | 5     | 6    | 4      | 6     | 3     | 9             | 3              |

Source: DHSSPS (2014) Health Survey Northern Ireland 2012-2013

## MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

Levels of poor mental health in Northern Ireland continue to be higher than elsewhere in the UK or Ireland and the annual cost of mental ill-health in Northern Ireland is estimated to be approximately £2.7billion<sup>5</sup>. Data from the 2007 National Psychological Wellbeing and Distress Survey showed a higher prevalence of self-reported mental health problems in Northern Ireland than in the Republic of Ireland and higher levels of medication use for mental health problems in Northern Ireland. A 2011 survey conducted by Ulster University's Bamford Centre points to Northern Ireland having a 25% higher overall prevalence of mental health problems than England: one in five respondents showed signs of a possible mental health problem, by scoring highly on the General Health Questionnaire 12 (GHQ 12). Data produced in the Northern Ireland Public Health Strategy<sup>6</sup> shows that women are more likely to show signs of a possible mental health problem (23%) than men (17%). Sixteen per cent of respondents in the youngest age-group (16-24 years) score highly on GHQ 12 and again there were gender differences with one in ten young men (9%) compared with around one in five young women scoring highly.

The suicide rate in Northern Ireland has been a longstanding concern and this is reflected in a number of policy documents<sup>7</sup>. Between 2006 and 2010 the average annual suicide rate was 15.7 deaths per 100,000 population. However, there is a



significant difference in the suicide rate between the most and the least deprived areas and the rate of 35.6 deaths per 100,000 population in the most deprived is three times that in the least deprived. This is also the case with self harm with data on admissions to hospitals showing the rate in the most deprived areas to be three times that in the least deprived areas<sup>8</sup>.

People with mental health problems are the fastest growing group of claimants of disability-related benefits. They are also more likely not to be in paid work than people with other types of health problems. There is a growing body of evidence showing that individuals who experienced a traumatic event relating to the conflict in Northern Ireland are more likely to have a mental illness at some point in their lives<sup>9</sup>.

In line with the broader shift to community based services envisaged under Transforming Your Care (TYC), the strategic implementation plan<sup>10</sup> notes that the resettlement of all people currently living in mental health hospitals should be completed by March 2015. There will also be a reduction in the number of acute mental health inpatient beds over the next three to five years.

## FUNDING HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

The DHSSPS is the largest government Department and has an annual budget of about £4.3 billion. The DHSSPS divides health care into Programmes of Care (POCs) for management purposes. In total there are nine Programmes of Care. Table 2 shows actual expenditure by Programme of Care from 2007-2008 to 2010-2011 and Table 3 shows spending on health and social care in each of the four countries of the UK.

**Table 2: Actual expenditure by HSC Trusts 2006/07 to 2010/11**

|                                         | Actual Expenditure as per Trust Financial Returns |                |                |                |                |                           |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------------|
|                                         | 2006-07                                           | 2007-08        | 2008-09        | 2009-10        | 2010-11        | Change 2006-07 to 2010-11 |
| Programme of Care                       | £m                                                | £m             | £m             | £m             | £m             |                           |
| Acute Services                          | 1,035.3                                           | 1,114.8        | 1,240.0        | 1,292.4        | 1,282.0        | 23.8%                     |
| Maternity and Child Health              | 117.9                                             | 121.8          | 138.2          | 145.0          | 148.0          | 25.5%                     |
| Family and Child Care                   | 155.0                                             | 166.6          | 180.9          | 188.5          | 195.0          | 25.8%                     |
| Elderly Care                            | 628.6                                             | 644.9          | 687.2          | 704.9          | 721.0          | 14.7%                     |
| Mental Health                           | 190.8                                             | 197.0          | 222.7          | 225.5          | 228.0          | 19.5%                     |
| Learning Disability                     | 185.6                                             | 200.2          | 215.3          | 228.3          | 240.0          | 29.3%                     |
| Physical and Sensory Disability         | 83.1                                              | 92.9           | 98.1           | 10.9           | 106.0          | 27.6%                     |
| Health Promotion and Disease Prevention | 420                                               | 46.6           | 47.1           | 46.9           | 47.0           | 11.9%                     |
| Primary Health and Adult Community      | 77.1                                              | 98.1           | 120.4          | 138.4          | 154.0          | 99.7%                     |
| <b>Total Expenditure</b>                | <b>2,515.4</b>                                    | <b>2,682.8</b> | <b>2,949.9</b> | <b>3,070.9</b> | <b>3,121.0</b> | <b>24.1%</b>              |

Source: DHSSPS Expenditure Plans 2012-13<sup>11</sup>

**Table 3: Spending on Health and Social Services £ per capita in each country of the UK**

|                  | Health (2007/08) | Health (2011/12) | Social Services (2007/08) | Social Services (2011/12) | Total Health & Social Services (2011/12) |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Northern Ireland | 1738             | 2114             | 799                       | 533                       | 2647                                     |
| Wales            | 1754             | 1964             | 605                       | 559                       | 2523                                     |
| Scotland         | 1891             | 2091             | 577                       | 613                       | 2704                                     |
| England          | 1622             | 1874             | 471                       | 457                       | 2331                                     |

Source: HM Treasury 2013 Public Expenditure Statistical Analysis, Tables 10.8-10.18

A National Audit Office report which used combined data on a range of factors associated with variations in health needs, including measures of population age, levels of disability and wealth, identifies substantial difference in health needs between the four countries of the UK. Northern Ireland was estimated as having the highest average need per person with England the lowest although the local areas with the highest and lowest needs were both in England.<sup>12</sup> The report also showed that England has consistently had the largest proportion of public spending devoted to health with Northern Ireland the lowest. One of the challenges in making sense of spending per head on health in the different parts of the UK is the need to take into account differences in need. The Barnett Formula used to allocate the block grant to Northern Ireland takes account only of population size. Bevan et al (2014, p.95) in a report for the Nuffield Trust note that the Select Committee on the Barnett Formula concluded 'any well-based combination of the measures would show that England and Scotland have lower overall needs than Wales or Northern Ireland.'

The implementation plan for TYC identifies a shift of 5% (approx. £83m) from current hospital spend to primary, community and social care services by 2014-2015. It notes that this reduction in hospital spending was to be accompanied by a corresponding increase in spending by 2014-2015 on Personal Social Services (£21m – 2% increase on existing budget), a £21m increase in spending on Primary Care / Family Health Services (3% increase) and a £41m increase in spending on health and social care services that are provided in a community setting, (9% increase)<sup>13</sup>.

As noted earlier Northern Ireland faces demands on acute health care services similar to many developed countries. Measures to cope with these have included increasing the number of people treated as day cases and increasing bed use. In 2012-2013 just over half of people (50.7%, 310,239) admitted to hospital were admitted for day case treatments. Hospital activity statistics published by DHSSPS in 2015 show that between 2009 and 2013 the number of day cases increased by 8.4% overall and in the acute programme of care increased by 10%. Figures also show that throughput has increased each year, from 40.4 admissions per bed in 2008-2009 to 47.9 in 2012-2013. The average length of stay in hospitals has fallen each year from 7.4 days in 2008-2009 to 6.4 days in 2012/13<sup>14</sup>. Between 2009 and 2013 the average length fell by 10%.

Historically Northern Ireland has had some of the longest waiting lists in the UK and reducing waiting times in Northern Ireland has been a priority with Ministerial targets set for waiting times in Emergency Care Departments and in-patient and out-patient appointments. For example, the target for Emergency Care for 2014-2015 is that 95% of patients attending Types 1, 2 or 3 Accident and Emergency (A&E) departments are either treated and discharged home, or admitted, within four hours of their arrival in the department; no patient attending any A&E department should wait longer than 12 hours either to be treated and discharged home, or admitted. Figures for A&E waiting times are provided by three categories of emergency care. Type 1 is a consultant-led service with designated accommodation for the reception of emergency care patients, providing both emergency medicine and emergency surgical services on a round the clock basis. Type 2 is a consultant-led service with designated accommodation for the reception of emergency care patients, but which does not provide both emergency medicine and emergency surgical services and/or has time-limited opening hours. Type 3 is minor injury unit with designated accommodation for the reception of patients with a minor injury and/or illness. It may be doctor or nurse-led.

DHSSPS statistics published in March 2015 show that the Ministerial target for emergency care waiting times was not achieved during any of the 3 months from January - March 2015. If figures for March 2014 are compared to March 2015, performance against the 4 hour target for Type 1 emergency care departments declined by 0.8 percentage points (from 70.5% in March 2014 to 69.7% in March 2015). More people waited in excess of 12 hours in March 2015 than in March 2014 - 611 compared to 408. For Type 2 departments there was a 1.6 percentage point improvement in relation to performance regarding the 4 hour target (from 87.0% in March 2014 to 88.6% in March 2015). Three people in type 2 departments waited more than 12 hours in March 2015 compared to zero in March 2014. In the same period 100 per cent of Type 3 departments met the 4 and 12 hour targets.<sup>15</sup>

There are also targets for inpatient and out patient care as follows:

## *In-patient waiting times*

- From April 2013 at least 70% of in-patients and day cases should be treated within 13 weeks, increasing to 80% of patients by March 2014;
- No patient should wait longer than 30 weeks, decreasing to 26 weeks by March 2014.

Figures show that at the end of March 2015 no Health and Social Care Trust in Northern Ireland had achieved the target of 80% of patients waiting less than 13 weeks for in-patient or day case treatment. Across the Trusts, the proportion of people waiting more than 13 weeks for in-patient care was 48% (27,780 patients) compared to 33.1% in March 2014.

## *Out-patient waiting times*

- From April 2013 at least 70% of people should be treated within 9 weeks (the previous target was that 50% of people should be seen within 9 weeks); no patient should wait longer than 18 weeks
- From March 2014 80% of patients should wait no longer than 9 weeks and no patient should wait longer than 15 weeks.

At the end of March 2015 no Health and Social Care Trust had met either the 9 or 15 week target for a first out -patient appointment. Just over 56% (107,957) of patients had waited more than nine weeks for a first outpatient appointment, significantly more than the 31.3% (39,768) at the end of March 2014. 82,486 patients had been waiting longer than 15 weeks in March 2015, compared to 19,173 waiting longer than 15 weeks at the end of March 2014.<sup>16</sup>

While there have been efforts in all four countries of the UK to reduce waiting times it is difficult to compare performance. A study for the Nuffield Trust and the Health Foundation<sup>17</sup> pointed to 'serious problems' of comparability and has called for greater availability of comparable data. One of the issues relates to differences in definition of

outpatient attendances, in-patients and day cases. Whereas Scotland, Wales and England measure performance in terms of time from referral to treatment (although each country does have different targets), Northern Ireland has separate targets for in-patient and out-patient treatment.

## ADULT SOCIAL CARE

As noted earlier, in Northern Ireland, at the core of the Transforming your Care proposals is a shift from institutional to community care. Adult social care has become a major issue on governments' agendas, not just in the UK and Ireland but in many countries, and has increasingly been the subject of public debate. A number of factors have contributed to this including demographic change, the promotion of independence and concerns about access to and quality of services. In Northern Ireland, as elsewhere, the historic policy neglect of social care and the overreliance on institutional care presents challenges. Adult social care refers to the care of older people, adults with disabilities or limiting health conditions, including mental ill-health. It includes a range of activities from nursing and residential home care to domiciliary care and day care. It also includes unpaid carers, whose input is essential but often goes unrecognised. This section of the chapter focuses on some of the issues regarding the provision of services for older people.

## NEED FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE

Northern Ireland faces a similar profile of projected demographic change to Great Britain, which will create a greater need for care and support for adult care services, especially in relation to older people. The numbers of people aged 65 and over will increase by around 42% by 2025; the number of people over 75 by 40% by 2020; and the number of people over 85 by will have doubled by 2027<sup>18</sup>. As in the rest of the UK there are increasing numbers of people with chronic conditions. The rate of disability amongst those over 85 in Northern Ireland is 67%. The number of people with dementia is predicted to rise from 17,765 in 2010 to 24,980 by 2021, an increase of 41%. It is projected that by 2051 60,000 people will be suffering from dementia. The nature and amount of care a person receives is determined on the basis of an individual

assessment of need. If that determines that publicly funded care should be arranged, it is the responsibility of the relevant Health and Social Care Trust to design a package of care. Care packages are provided in the form of places in nursing and residential homes as well as domiciliary care in an individual's own home, including home help and meals on wheels.

## HOW IS CARE PROVIDED?

Currently, eighty per cent of care packages are in the Elderly Programme of Care. The profile of older people requiring recurring care is becoming more complex, with many people now living with chronic conditions. Domiciliary care consists of services to support an individual to live in their own home. They can include assistance with personal care such as bathing and dressing and services such as meals on wheels. Over a third of those receiving domiciliary care receive intensive services. Most of these clients (83%) are people over 65. However, the majority of users of domiciliary services receive less than 5 hours per week with 13% receiving 20 or more hours of care per week. In Northern Ireland most domiciliary care (67%) is provided by the Independent sector although the proportion of care provided by the Independent and statutory sectors varies across HSCTs. In the Northern Trust for example, 53% is provided by the Independent Sector compared to 85% of care in the South Eastern Trust<sup>19</sup>. Statistics collected by the DHSSPS in September 2013 shows an average of 9.8 domiciliary contact hours per client. Most of this is provided during normal working hours. Seventy two percent of 'out of hours' care and 94% of overnight, live in and 24 hour services was provided by the Independent sector<sup>20</sup>.

The number of people in receipt of a meals on wheels service has declined in recent years. At the end of March 2014, 3,101 people were in receipt of the service, a 34% decrease compared to four years earlier. Figures for March 2014 show that 8,254 people were registered at statutory day care services, mostly day centres, - a very similar figure to the previous year but 7% less than in 2010. Of those receiving the service, over nine in ten (92%) were aged 65 and over with the highest proportion (39%) of persons aged 85 and over. Figures for March 2013 show a small decrease (2%) in the number of people registered at statutory day care facilities (7,917) compared to the same period in 2012 with a decrease of 15% over the last five years.

Over 40% of those registered at statutory day care facilities had a learning disability while almost a tenth (9%) had a physical or sensory disability<sup>21</sup>.

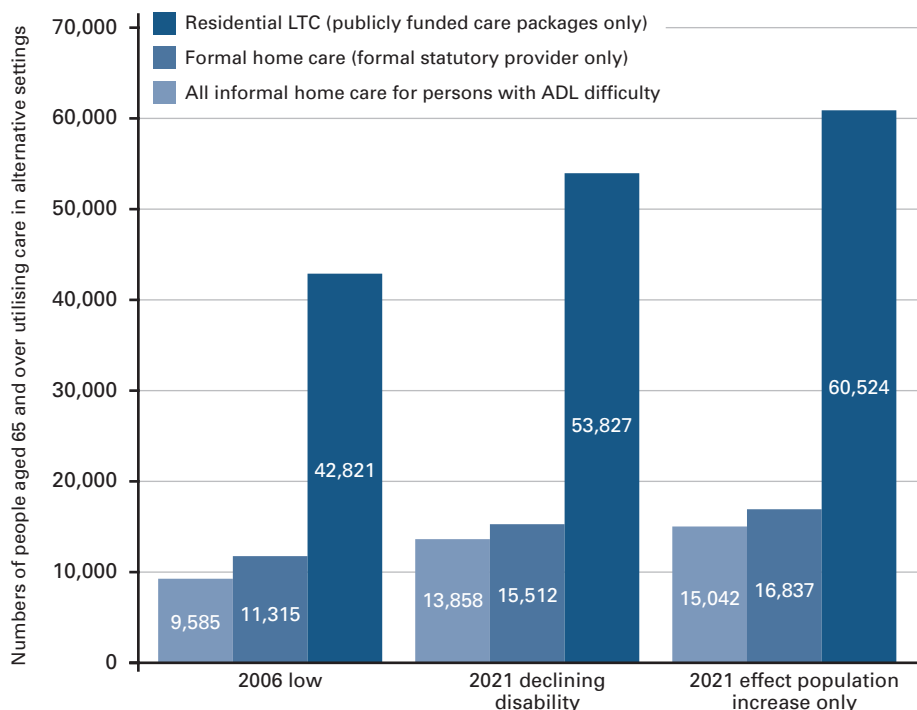
A higher proportion of Northern Ireland's elderly live in nursing homes compared with England and Wales.<sup>22</sup> The McKinsey Report had estimated the proportion of older people in Northern Ireland living in nursing homes to be 3.5 times higher than in England<sup>23</sup>. In June 2014 there were 12,489 residential and nursing home care packages in effect, 80% of these were in the elderly Programme of Care. Almost two thirds (69%) were nursing home packages and 31% were residential care packages. The vast majority (87%) of residential and nursing home packages are provided by the private sector with the voluntary sector and statutory sector providing 8% and 5% of packages respectively.<sup>24</sup> Almost half of people with dementia (47%) in Northern Ireland receive care at home and the remainder live in care homes, largely provided by the Independent sector. The proportion of those with dementia living in care homes rises steadily with age (i.e. 39% of those aged 65-74 compared to 68% of those aged 90 and over).<sup>25</sup>



Policy discussion in Northern Ireland about the long term care of older people has emphasised the need to ensure more older people can live in the community. The policy case for shifting the balance between residential and domiciliary care, and avoiding premature entry into care homes, is reinforced by public opinion as expressed in the 2010 Northern Ireland Life and Times findings. Asked what kind of help they would ideally prefer as they get older, only ten per cent of respondents said they would like to move into a nursing home. Nine out of ten hoped their family or friends would help or that paid carers would come into their home to help them.<sup>26</sup>

Figure 4 reproduces data used by Wren et al (2012)<sup>27</sup> to show how the need for and utilisation of long term care will change up to 2021. The projected increase is approximately 4,270 more residential care places, 4,200 more people using formal home care and 11,000 more people using informal care.

**Figure 3: Projected changes in Longterm Care Utilisation 2006-2021**



Note: There is an overlap between people using formal and informal home care.

In Northern Ireland, a distinction is made between “residential” care homes and “nursing” homes. Residential care homes are for people who can no longer manage to live independently in their own home. Nursing homes are for people with a disability or illness who require nursing care on a regular basis. The nursing care component is provided free of charge, but care recipients are means tested for personal care as well as accommodation and food costs.

In 2013, the Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety, proposed to reduce the number of statutory residential homes by around 50% over the next three to five years. However, controversy about the pace of closure and consultation with residents and families resulted in a new ministerial statement that while the policy shift towards re-ablement, and support in the community would continue the Health and Social Care Board would lead on a new process for consulting on and implementing change. This would include the co-ordination of a regional approach on residential care homes, with Trusts having more time to engage with individuals, families, community and staff and a regional approach to the future provision of statutory residential care.<sup>28</sup>

Data published by the Health and Social Care Board shows that in the last five years at least 11 statutory homes have closed. The average cost per week in a statutory residential care home is cited as £400 more than an independent sector residential care home<sup>29</sup>. Domiciliary care spending by Trusts has increased by 22% from 2008 to 2012. The DHSSPS has recommended that over a transition period of 5 years, £83 million (equating to 5% of the hospital services budget) is shifted from current hospital spend and reinvested into primary, community and social care services to facilitate the implementation of Transforming Your Care.

## DIRECT PAYMENTS

Users of social care services can apply for a Direct Payment which they can use to purchase elements of their care, most commonly through the employment of personal assistants. The numbers receiving direct payments in Northern Ireland has doubled since 2008 but remain small. Those clients most likely to have a Direct Payment are older people, people with learning disability and those with a physical disability. At December 2013, 2,704 people received a Direct Payment compared to 2,351 in December 2011. Table 4 shows the number of Direct Payments paid during each quarter from December 2011 to March 2014 for each of the Northern Ireland HSCTs.

**Table 4: Number and Value of Direct Payments made by Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland.**

| HSCT          | 31 Dec 2011  | 31 Mar 2012  | 31 Jun 2012  | 30 Sep 2012  | 30 Dec 2011  | 31 Mar 2011  | 30 Jun 2013  | 30 Sep 2013  | 31 Dec 2013  | 31 Mar 2014  |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Belfast       | 453          | 470          | 468          | 533          | 568          | 537          | 480          | 499          | 506          | 501          |
| Northern      | 504          | 553          | 548          | 547          | 546          | 545          | 567          | 561          | 586          | 609          |
| South Eastern | 443          | 400          | 471          | 449          | 518          | 503          | 501          | 568          | 549          | 586          |
| Southern      | 623          | 670          | 679          | 612          | 638          | 668          | 699          | 661          | 689          | 695          |
| Western       | 328          | 330          | 318          | 334          | 338          | 344          | 347          | 367          | 374          | 379          |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>2,351</b> | <b>2,423</b> | <b>2,484</b> | <b>2,475</b> | <b>2,608</b> | <b>2,597</b> | <b>2,594</b> | <b>2,656</b> | <b>2,704</b> | <b>2,770</b> |

Promoting independence and personalisation is a key theme of social care policies across the UK, including the Northern Ireland Transforming Your Care policy. Direct payments were developed as a mechanism through which people could take more control of their care but, as shown, a relatively small number of care users have opted for Direct Payments. Some of the reasons for this include reluctance to take on the financial control and lack of information and knowledge about Direct Payments<sup>30</sup>.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY

In Great Britain, there has been considerable policy focus on adult social care. In England, new legislation and policy has included the Health and Social Care Act 2012, a white paper on adult social care, *Caring for our Future: Reforming care and support*<sup>31</sup> and a new Care Act in 2014<sup>32</sup>. Some of this change in England and Wales can be attributed to the Law Commission report (2011)<sup>33</sup> which recommended a clear, modern and effective legal framework for the provision of adult social care with greater entitlement to services for users and carers. Most of the recommendations in the Law Commission report are being implemented by the Care Act 2014. Wales has also produced a major strategy document, *Sustainable Social Services for Wales*<sup>34</sup> while Scotland has developed policy through a number of legislative measures in relation to integration, self-directed support and carers. In Northern Ireland, in addition to *Transforming Your Care*, a separate discussion paper was produced for consultation on adult social care and support, *Who Cares? The Future of Adult Care and Support in Northern Ireland*<sup>35</sup>. To date, there has been no policy or legislative development from this.

Devolution has resulted in increasingly notable divergence in health and social care policy and delivery between the four parts of the UK. The role of markets and competition is now a much stronger feature of the English health and social care system than elsewhere although the internal market does remain in Northern Ireland. Discussion of future provision will have to include critical examination of underpinning principles. Among these are questions about the balance of responsibility between the individual and the state, the most appropriate mechanisms for funding and delivering care, the implications arising from considerable reliance on unpaid care and the legal entitlement to social care services.

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## INTRODUCTION

The agricultural policy agenda has increasingly been broadened to link with other areas of policy such as environmental protection, food safety, tourism and energy production. These areas are viewed as important to economic objectives. For example, the agri-food industry is seen as one of the most important contributors to the Northern Ireland economy in terms of revenue and employment. It has been identified as a priority in the Programme for Government 2011-2015<sup>1</sup> and in the Economic Strategy<sup>2</sup> as an industry with potential for further growth.

The Department for Agriculture and Rural Development has responsibility for farming, fisheries and forestry policy. Its remit also extends to broader issues relating to rural development. This includes leading on the actions linked to the Rural White Paper<sup>3</sup> which set out the strategic vision for rural development, improved infrastructure and transport systems, access to services, and economic growth and development. Significant investment in rural development in Northern Ireland has been made through the Rural Development Programme jointly funded by the European Union, through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD). The 2007-2013 programme in Northern Ireland was worth over £500 million. The key themes of the programmes were; improving the competitiveness of agriculture and forestry, improving the environment and the countryside through land management and improving the quality of life through investment in measures such as farm diversification. A consultative document on a new rural Development Programme for the period 2014-2020<sup>4</sup> is linked to the EU priorities for rural development including innovation in agriculture, farm competition and economic development and social inclusion and economic development.

In this chapter the focus is on agriculture and farming, fisheries and forestry. The statistics show that recent years have been challenging for farmers and fishers. Looking to the future both these sectors will be greatly impacted by policy and economic developments including reform of the European Union Common Agricultural Policy and the Common Fisheries Policy. Forestry and woodland in Northern Ireland has traditionally been somewhat neglected resulting in environmental concerns and the under use of forests with regard to tourism potential. The policy focus in Northern



Ireland on the growth and sustainability of these sectors reflects wider European Union objectives.

## AGRICULTURE AND FARMING

The Northern Ireland economy is more dependent upon agriculture than any other UK region. In 2014 approximately 47,900 people were employed in the agriculture sector and it is worth an estimated £1.92 billion per year to the economy. Structurally, agricultural industry is characterised by small owner-occupied family farms with working owners and a high level of input from family members. Around a quarter of full and part-time farmers in Northern Ireland are aged over 65 years<sup>5</sup>.

**Table 1: Distribution of farm labour by business size, June 2014**

| Labour item                                    | Business Size |              |              |              |               |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
|                                                | Very small    | Small        | Medium       | Large        | All sizes     |
| <b>Farmers &amp; partners &amp; directors:</b> |               |              |              |              |               |
| Full-time                                      | 9,145         | 3,222        | 1,543        | 2,296        | 16,206        |
| Part-time                                      | 11,627        | 711          | 251          | 305          | 12,894        |
| <b>Total</b>                                   | <b>20,772</b> | <b>3,933</b> | <b>1,794</b> | <b>2,601</b> | <b>29,100</b> |

*Source: Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) (2015) Statistical Review of Northern Ireland Agriculture 2014*

Agriculture occupies 75% of the land area (1.35 million hectares) of Northern Ireland but the majority of this farmland (70%) has Less Favoured Area (LFA) status because of the relatively poor agricultural conditions. The LFA is a term used to describe areas of poorer agricultural land which qualify for special aid under European Union schemes. One of the key eligibility requirements for the scheme is that farmers keep a certain number of animals<sup>1</sup>. Around 13,000 farmers apply to the LFACA scheme every year which results in £25 million entering the rural economy<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The (LFACA) scheme includes an area based payment for eligible hectares of Severely Disadvantaged Land (SDA) and Disadvantaged Land (DA)/Common Land and one of its key requirements is the maintenance of a 0.2 stocking density throughout the seven month qualifying period of 1 April to 31 October.

Figures for 2014 identify 24,228 active farm businesses in Northern Ireland, 275 less than 2013, with an average size of 40.7 ha.- notably smaller than the UK average farm size of 77 ha. The number of farms in Northern Ireland has been in long-term decline for many years (1.5 % per year), a factor attributed to economic drivers encouraging larger scale production units to minimise costs and maintain farm income<sup>7</sup>. A similar trend is evident in the Republic of Ireland where the number of farms declined by 1.2%, from 141,527 in 2000 to 139,829 in 2010.<sup>8</sup>

**Table 2: Number of farms by business size, June 2007-2013**

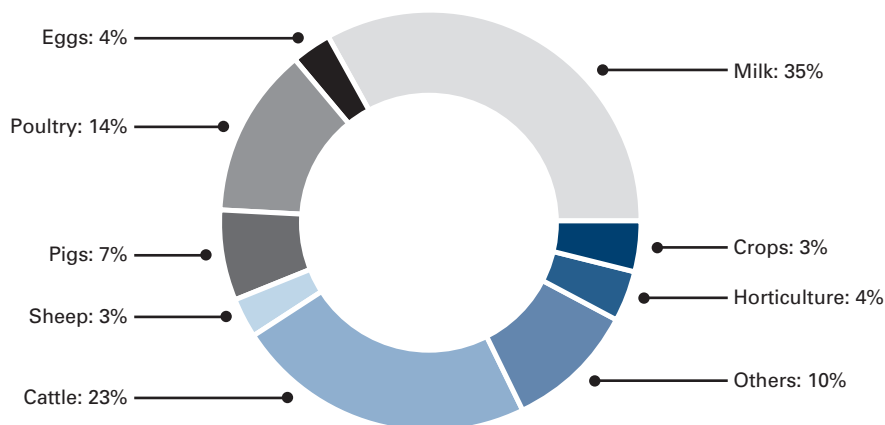
| Business size | 2008          | 2009          | 2010          | 2011          | 2012          | 2013          | 2014          |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Very small    | 19,984        | 19,321        | 18,617        | 18,563        | 18,441        | 18,719        | 18,521        |
| Small         | 3,188         | 3,175         | 3,085         | 3,094         | 3,076         | 3,063         | 2,935         |
| Medium        | 1,289         | 1,302         | 1,276         | 1,261         | 1,210         | 1,187         | 1,226         |
| Large         | 1,491         | 1,466         | 1,493         | 1,518         | 1,558         | 1,534         | 1,546         |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>26,146</b> | <b>25,264</b> | <b>24,471</b> | <b>24,436</b> | <b>24,285</b> | <b>24,503</b> | <b>24,228</b> |

*Source: Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) (2015) Statistical Review of Northern Ireland Agriculture 2014*

As Table 2 shows the overall picture of farming in Northern Ireland is of predominantly small farms, many farmed 'part-time'. In fact approximately 76% of farms (18,521) are categorised as 'very small'. These farms account for 49% of the farmed area with 60% of beef cows and half of total sheep found on these farms. The majority (74%) of very small farms are in Less Favoured Areas. The majority of 'large' farms are dairy businesses.

The gross agricultural output of Northern Ireland in 2014 is an estimated £1.89 billion, a decrease of 3.1% on 2013 largely due to the value of beef output. The greatest proportion of output links to livestock and livestock products. This includes cattle and sheep milk, poultry, pigs and eggs. Arable crops (principally potatoes and barley) and horticulture (fruit, vegetables mushrooms and flowers) accounted for 8% of gross agricultural output. The remaining 10% is accounted for by other livestock products, contracting, quota leasing and receipts from non-agricultural activities which use farm resources.

**Figure 1: Gross output of Northern Ireland Agriculture, 2014**



Source: Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (2015) *Statistical Review of Northern Ireland Agriculture 2014*

The sustainability of farming has gained much attention particularly given the challenges of recent years. Figures for 2013 showed a more positive picture than the preceeding year when the 'Total Income from Farming'<sup>2</sup> decreased by over 50%, from £290 million in 2011 to £143 million - the lowest for 20 years. The reduction in farm income in 2012 has been put down to a number of factors including a 13% increase in the cost of feed, a reduction of 6% (£33m) in the value of milk output and an 8.3 % (£22m) decrease in the Single Farm Payment caused by an appreciation of Sterling against the Euro. The weather was also an important factor; the summer of 2012 was the wettest in the UK in 100 years and one of the dullest since 1987. Both factors directly impacted on crop yields, grass growth and milk yield<sup>9</sup>. Prices and exchange rates also presented challenges. The average gross milk price was 5.4% lower than the 2011 price at 26.16 pence per litre. Overall, the value of output of milk fell, by £33 million or 6%, to £511 million. The weaker euro reduced single farm payment receipts. Other contributory factors have been cited as the lack of transparency in the supply chain, and the difference in prices of what the farmers receive between Northern

<sup>2</sup> TIFF measures the return to farmers, partners and directors, their spouses and other family workers for their labour, management input and own capital

Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain.<sup>10</sup> While a more optimistic picture emerges from data published in January 2014 which showed farming income for 2013 had risen by 31% on the previous year to £298m (due primarily to an increase in the farm-gate milk price), total income from farming decreased again in 2014. DARD statistics published in 2015 show that income had decreased by 15.8% to £283 million in 2014. This has been attributed to a reduced producer price for cattle and a £20 million fall in the value of Single Farm Payments resulting from a less favourable exchange rate between Sterling and the Euro<sup>11</sup>.

The small size of many farms in Northern Ireland means that they cannot sustain full-time employment for family members and there is considerable reliance on off-farm income.<sup>3</sup> In 2012-2013 off-farm income of the farmer and spouse averaged £6,808 per farm; off-farm income includes both earned and unearned sources, such as other employment and social payments. There is a lot of variation across farms with almost half (46%) having no off-farm income. As Table 3 below shows, of those farms which did have this kind of income, the amount ranged from under £1,000 to more than £20,000 per year. In 2012-13, in 23% of farms, only the 'spouse' of the farmer had off-farm employment, on a further 5% of farms the farmer had off-farm employment and on another 2% of farms both the farmer and spouse had off-farm employment<sup>12</sup>.

**Table 3: Off-farm income by type and level of income, 2013/14.**

|                    | £0         | £1-999    | £1,000-4,999 | £5,000-19,000 | £20,000+   |
|--------------------|------------|-----------|--------------|---------------|------------|
| Employment         | 73%        | -         | 4%           | 16%           | 7%         |
| Self-employment    | 95%        | -         | 1%           | 3%            | 1%         |
| Investments        | 96%        | 3%        | -            | 1%            | -          |
| Pensions           | 74%        | -         | 4%           | 21%           | 1%         |
| Social payments    | 91%        | 2%        | 3%           | 4%            | -          |
| <b>All sources</b> | <b>43%</b> | <b>2%</b> | <b>5%</b>    | <b>38%</b>    | <b>11%</b> |

*Source: Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (2015) Farm Incomes in Northern Ireland 2013/2014*

## FARM DIVERSIFICATION

Many farmers have looked to new ways to increase their income outside traditional farming pursuits and farm diversification enterprises are seen as one way to help the rural economy to be sustainable. These include activities such as food processing, horse breeding, or tourist activities. Some financial support for diversification has been provided through the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013. Table 4 provides information on farms with diversification by business size and Table 5 shows the number of farms with diversification and areas of diversification between 2003 and 2010.

**Table 4: Farms with Diversification by business size**

| Farms with diversification by business size        | Business Size |              |              |               |
|----------------------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
|                                                    | Very Small    | Small        | Med/Large    | All           |
| Agricultural contracting/haulage                   | 282           | 447          | 358          | 1,087         |
| Tourism                                            | 109           | 102          | 88           | 299           |
| Equine sport                                       | 93            | 23           | 12           | 128           |
| Other sport                                        | 19            | 12           | 10           | 41            |
| Direct sales                                       | 38            | 69           | 45           | 152           |
| Food processing                                    | 24            | 45           | 26           | 95            |
| Other commercial activities                        | 255           | 221          | 246          | 722           |
| Any diversification                                | 736           | 891          | 682          | 2,309         |
| Any diversification other than contracting/haulage | 449           | 403          | 336          | 1,188         |
| <b>Total farms</b>                                 | <b>11,880</b> | <b>8,607</b> | <b>3,984</b> | <b>24,471</b> |

Note: A business may have more than one diversification activity.

Source: Department of Agriculture and Rural Development EU Farms Structure Survey 2010 NI.

**Table 5: Farms with Diversification by survey date**

|                                        | Farms         |               |               |               | Percent    |            |            |            |
|----------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
|                                        | 2003          | 2005          | 2007          | 2010          | 2003       | 2005       | 2007       | 2010       |
| Agricultural contracting/Haulage       | 1,010         | 1,032         | 905           | 1,087         | 4          | 4          | 3          | 4          |
| Tourism                                | 366           | 342           | 298           | 299           | 1          | 1          | 1          | 1          |
| Equine sport                           | 408           | 267           | 220           | 128           | 1          | 1          | 1          | 1          |
| Other sport                            | 173           | 42            | 48            | 41            | 1          | 0          | 0          | 0          |
| Direct sales                           | 457           | 321           | 144           | 152           | 2          | 1          | 1          | 1          |
| Food Processing                        | 213           | 145           | 100           | 95            | 1          | 1          | 0          | 0          |
| Other commercial activities            | 804           | 719           | 973           | 722           | 3          | 3          | 4          | 3          |
| Any diversification                    | 3,016         | 2,517         | 2,339         | 2,309         | 11         | 9          | 9          | 9          |
| Any diversification other than haulage | 2,126         | 1,631         | 1,604         | 1,188         | 8          | 6          | 6          | 5          |
| <b>Total farms*</b>                    | <b>28,281</b> | <b>27,064</b> | <b>26,146</b> | <b>24,471</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> |

\*Total farms is not the sum of proceeding rows

Source: DARD, EU Farms Structure Survey 2010 NI.

The number of farms involved in diversification activities (including contracting) declined by 707 (2%) between 2003 and 2010<sup>13</sup>. Statistics published by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) in January 2012 show a similar picture of a decrease in the uptake of diversified activity in England from 28% in 2007 to 24% in 2010.

**Table 6: Number and percentage of farms with diversified activities 2007-2010**

|      | % of holdings with diversified activities | No. of holdings with diversified activities | Total number of holdings |
|------|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 2007 | 28                                        | 37,500                                      | 135,000                  |
| 2010 | 24                                        | 24,892                                      | 105,449                  |

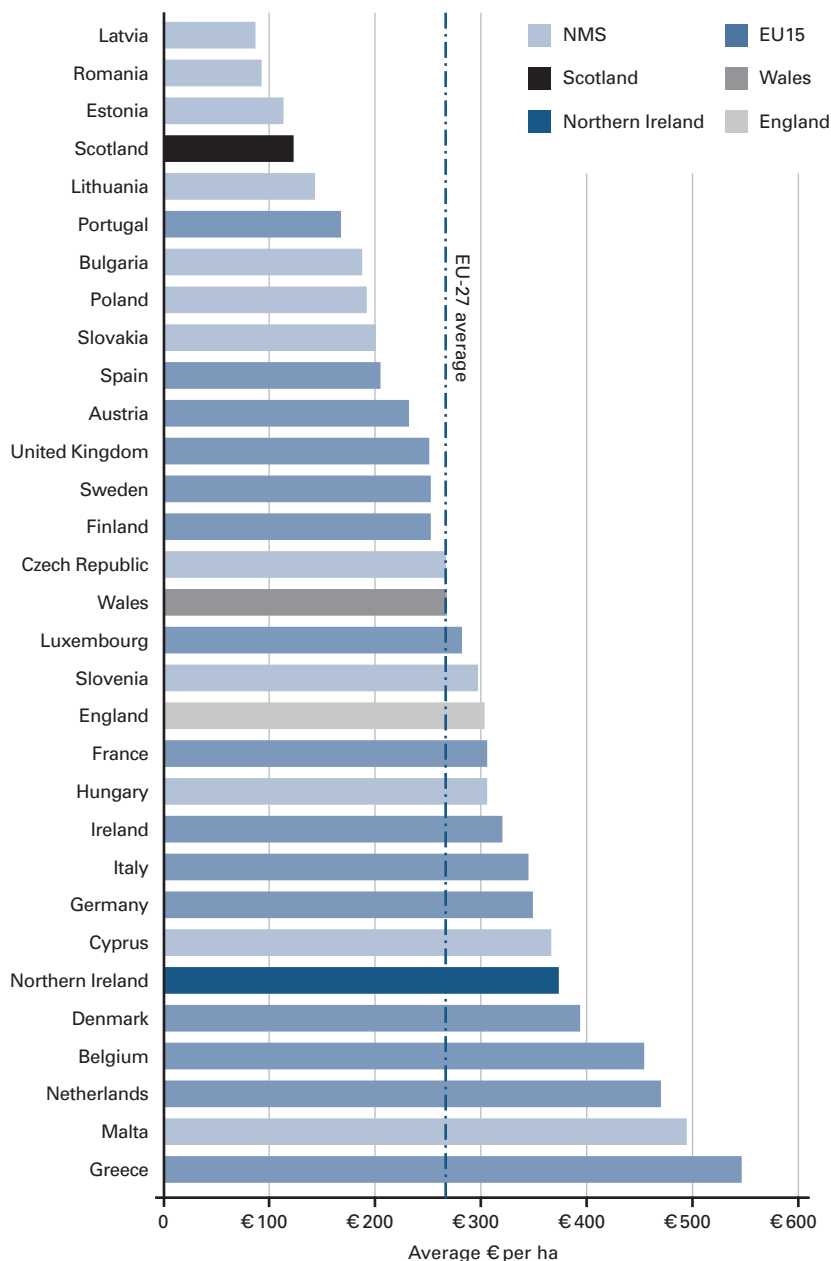
*Source: DEFRA, 2012 Farming Statistics: diversification and renewable energy production on farms in England, 2010*

## THE COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY (CAP)

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is the agricultural policy of the European Union and is Union's most expensive scheme, accounting for more than 40% of the entire EU budget. Since its origins in 1962 it has also been one of the most controversial schemes. The initial focus of the scheme was on the European Community intervening to buy farm output when the market price fell below an agreed target level but this led to difficulties relating to over production. Since the 1990s there have been attempts to reform the CAP with a stronger focus on cutting the link between subsidies and production, diversifying the rural economy, food safety, animal welfare standards and environmental protection.

The CAP is organised under two pillars - pillar 1 is focused on direct payments to farmers largely in the form of the Single Farm Payment (SFP), and Pillar 2 on wider rural development measures including diversification, habitat/environmental conservation, and rural sustainability. In 2013 the budget for the two pillars was £49 bn, most of this allocated to direct farm payments. This equates to about 42% of the total EU budget and although the proportion of the budget allocated to CAP has been declining it will remain level until 2020. As can be seen from Figure 2, Northern Ireland farmers have benefited from the SFP as; they receive on average around 372 Euro per hectare as long as they meet standards on the environment, food quality and animal welfare. In 2011 the payment was worth about £266 million to farmers in Northern Ireland; in 2014, because of the less favourable exchange rate, it was worth about £246 million.

**Figure 2: Average SPF €/ha values – EU and within UK comparisons**



Source: Northern Ireland Assembly RAISE Briefing Paper 129/11



In 2011 major reforms to CAP were proposed by the European Commission<sup>14</sup> which included the cited aim of a simpler and more efficient CAP. Proposals agreed by the European Commission in 2013 included a cap on the total subsidy a large farm could receive, a move to flat rate payments, which would be subject to 'greening' obligations, top-up payments for young farmers and special arrangements for farmers with small holdings. As a result of the reform from 1 January 2015, the Single Farm Payment will be replaced by three new compulsory payments (the Basic Payment, Greening Payment and Young Farmer Payment). There is to be progress towards a flat rate payment regime by 2019. New measures also include allowing member states to move funds between Pillar 1 and Pillar 2 (known as modulation). The European Council agreed a limit of 15% in either direction, with the possibility of moving an additional 10% from Pillar 2 to Pillar 1 for Member States with less than 90% of the EU average Pillar 1 payment per hectare.

Member states of the EU and regions within states have been allocated quite a high degree of flexibility with regard to implementation resulting in potential variation across the devolved regions of the UK and between the UK and Ireland. Within Northern Ireland modulation between Pillar 1 and 2 has been controversial with much debate about the level of transfer. Farming organisations were unhappy about the potential transfer of funds from Pillar 1 to 2 while environmental organisations have argued that transfer of funds the other way would reduce the ability for Pillar 2 to deliver environmental protection<sup>15</sup>. The Ulster Farmers Union had argued for a transfer of no more than 9 per cent from Pillar 1 to 2.<sup>16</sup> On 20th December 2013, the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development announced a 7 per cent transfer rate from Pillar 1 to Pillar 2 (£137.5 million) to facilitate investment in rural development given the inadequacy of the level of funding made available from the European Commission under Pillar 2. This decision was legally challenged by the Finance Minister and the court ruled that the proposal for the transfer of funds should have brought to the full Executive before a final decision had been made; the decision was therefore invalidated. Member states were required to notify the European Commission by 31 December. This was not met and so a zero per cent transfer was recorded for Northern Ireland. This compares to a 9.5% transfer in Scotland, a 15% transfer in Wales and 12% in England<sup>17</sup>.

## THE FISHING INDUSTRY IN NORTHERN IRELAND

In Northern Ireland the fishing industry is an important source of economic activity, making a significant contribution to the economy in terms of output, employment and exports. The Northern Ireland licensed sea-fishing industry is mainly concentrated in three fishing ports on the east coast of County Down: Ardglass, Kilkeel and Portavogie. Ardglass and Kilkeel are among the top twenty UK ports based on the quantity landed by UK vessels. In 2012, 381 vessels were registered in Northern Ireland of which 149 were over 10 metres in length (mainly fishing for prawn) and 232 under 10 metres in length (mainly doing inshore fishing). However, over the last 10 years the fishing industry in Northern Ireland, as in other regions, has found itself faced with reduced catch as fish stocks decline and more restrictive fishing policies are introduced. Figures from the UK Marine Management Organisation show that the total number of fishermen in 2013 was 12,150, a 7 per cent decrease on the number in 2003 which is attributed to reductions in fleet size and decreased fishing opportunities. In the same time frame, Northern Ireland numbers increased by 63 per cent, although employment remains some 20% lower than during the 1990s.<sup>18</sup> In the UK fishing is identified as one of the top three occupations with the highest rates of bankruptcy.<sup>19</sup>

The Northern Irish fleet depends mainly on fishing opportunities in the Irish Sea and the North Channel and is the main UK fishery interest in the Irish Sea. Salmon are also farmed off the Antrim coast and areas such as Strangford Lough are an important resource for shellfish. Data published by DARD shows that the value of all landings of fish/shellfish into Northern Ireland in 2013 was £24.5 million, compared to just over £20 million in 2010. This excludes landings that the Northern Ireland fleet made outside Northern Ireland and it is estimated that the inclusion of those figures would conservatively add another £15 million to the total.<sup>20</sup>

## EMPLOYMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND FISHING INDUSTRY

In 2014 the entire industry employed just over 1,610 people (both full- and part-time), with over 600 employed in the processing sector and over 800 in the catching sector. Consequently, there is a high level of dependency on fishing employment in the three main fishing ports in Northern Ireland.<sup>21</sup>

**Table 7: Employment in Northern Ireland Fishing Industry, 2009-2014**

|                        | 2009         |            | 2010         |            | 2011         |            | 2012         |            | 2013         |            | 2014         |            |
|------------------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|
|                        | Full-time    | Part-time  | Full-time    | Part-time  | Full-time    | Part-time  | Full-time    | Part-time  | Full-time    | Part-time  | Full-time    | Part-time  |
| Catching               | 541          | 113        | 535          | 113        | 578          | 110        | 654          | 154        | 675          | 460        | 683          | 149        |
| Processing & marketing | 485          | 157        | 404          | 121        | 412          | 127        | 445          | 163        | 460          | 170        | 463          | 175        |
| Others                 | 166          | 39         | 110          | 41         | 110          | 30         | 108          | 32         | 110          | 37         | 104          | 44         |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>1,192</b> | <b>309</b> | <b>1,049</b> | <b>275</b> | <b>1,100</b> | <b>267</b> | <b>1,207</b> | <b>349</b> | <b>1,245</b> | <b>346</b> | <b>1,250</b> | <b>368</b> |

*Source: Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Policy & Economics Division, Northern Ireland Agri-Food Sector. Key Statistics June 2015*

In recent years there has been increasing recruitment of migrant workers, mainly Filipino workers to crew boats. The exact number of Filipino workers employed within the industry is uncertain but in 2009 it was estimated that up to 1,000 Filipinos work in Scotland, at least 200 in the Republic of Ireland and 160 in Northern Ireland. Some reports have noted instances of physical and verbal abuse of migrant fishermen, extremely poor working conditions, poor or erratic payment, lack of safety concerns and coercion.<sup>22</sup> August 2012 saw the end of a concessionary scheme where limited numbers of migrant workers were employed to crew boats within UK territorial waters. Now that this scheme has ended, the immigration laws applying to non-EEA fishermen have been tightened. They can no longer work on boats which operate within 12 nautical miles of UK coast. However, they are still permitted to enter the UK on a transit visa in order to join a ship which will operate outside of UK waters.

## CURRENT DEBATES

### **Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs)**

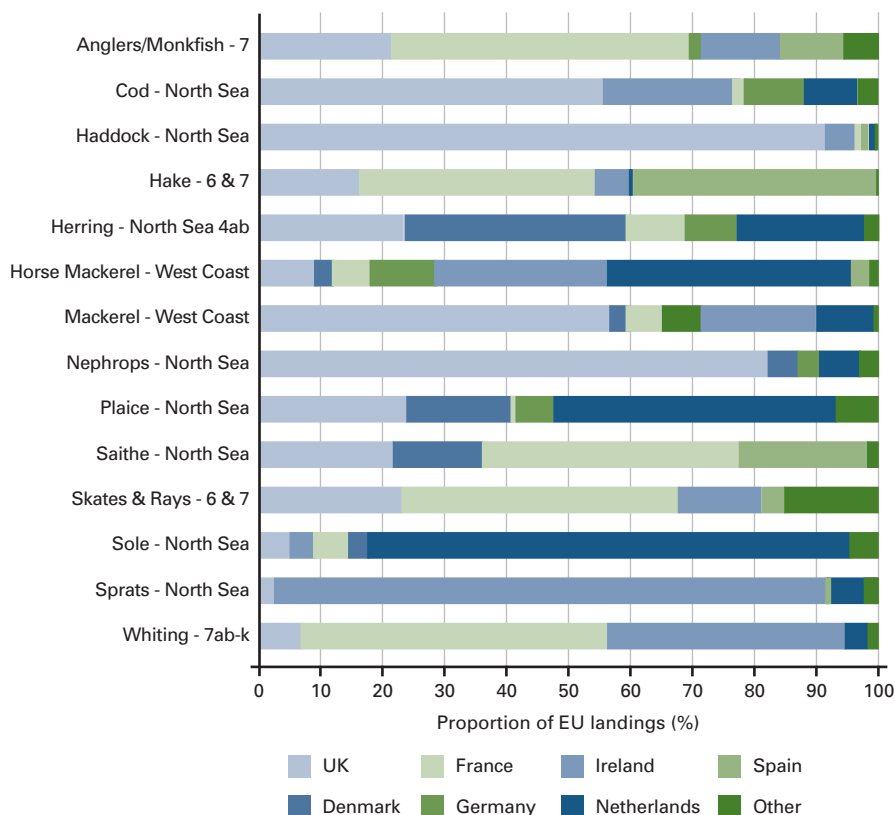
In Northern Ireland, the Department of the Environment (DOE) has set out proposals for marine planning and marine nature conservation within Northern Ireland's territorial waters (within the 12 nautical mile limit) including proposals for Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) similar to those in England<sup>23</sup>. This is aimed at reducing destruction, damage or impact on distribution of marine species and/or habitats; by 2020 the Department of the Environment aims to have a network of effectively managed Marine Protection Areas (MPAs) in place comprising European marine sites and MCZs. Current proposals include the closure of MCZs to benthic fisheries (towing a net at the very bottom of the ocean). The Northern Ireland fishing industry has expressed concern about the MCZ proposals, arguing that they would have a disproportionately negative impact on the future viability of the industry including on the whole prawn fleet in Northern Ireland.<sup>24</sup>

### **The EU Common Fisheries Policy (CFP)**

The EU's Common Fisheries Policy is the main policy mechanism impacting upon the sea fishing industry within Northern Ireland. The catch limits, or quotas, for the most significant commercial fish stocks (the Total Allowable Catch or TAC) are negotiated in Brussels each December. Quotas are set by the European Commission to help achieve the objectives of the CFP for the conservation and sustainable management of fish stocks. These quotas are then shared out among member states. These are often contentious; in 2012 UK fishermen faced automatic 25% reductions in the time they can spend at sea, as well as significant decreases in Total Allowable Catches (TACs) and quotas. In the end the TAC cut in relation to the economically important prawn stock was 6% - half of the originally proposed cut.

The figure below shows the landings by each member state during 2012. The shares of the quota held by each member state vary considerably across stocks with different countries landing different quantities of each stock as a consequence. In 2012 the UK landed 93% of all North Sea Haddock (27 thousand tonnes) and 82% of all North Sea prawns (11 thousand tonnes) landed by member states.

**Figure 3: Share of landings of key stocks by EU member states: 2012**



Source: UK Sea Fisheries Statistics, 2012

A key element of the reformed Common Fisheries Programme from January 2014 is the introduction of new landings obligations. This is essentially a policy working towards the progressive elimination of discarding fish overboard. These obligations will be introduced in fisheries of interest to the UK fishing fleet from 2015 onwards starting with pelagic stocks. An industry report on the potential economic implications of this for UK fleets has pointed to a lack of clarity surrounding the permitted flexibilities contained within the legislation.<sup>25</sup> The landing obligation does not apply to all species but to those species that have a quota. Most of the shellfish species that

are not nephrops, such as scallops, crabs and lobsters, are excluded and can be returned. Fish that have high survivability can also be returned but the lack of clarity around survivability stems from the fact that it can vary from species to species and be influenced by a range of factors. There is also potential for what is termed 'a de minimis exemption' if it can be demonstrated that selectivity measures cannot be improved any further, or if there are going to be disproportionate handling costs when fish are brought onto the quayside. Policy attention is being given to the impact of this measure on fishing in Northern Ireland including potential uses for fish brought ashore and the development of highly selective gear.<sup>26</sup>

A variety of EU and national schemes have been available to assist local fishermen to become more efficient and sustainable. The main focus is on modernising the sector and supporting structural adjustment including more closely matching fleet capacity with sustainable fishing opportunities. The new Maritime and Fisheries Fund (2014-2020) will have a wider scope than the European Fisheries Fund as it will also support the EU integrated maritime policy. It is to have a budget in the region of 6.5 billion euros the largest component of which will be allocated to the Common Fisheries Policy. Under this new fund the national allocations will not depend on national GDP but on indicators such as fisheries production, employment and the size of its fishing industry. It is argued that this will be a better reflection of the importance of the sector in each member state.<sup>27</sup>

## FORESTRY AND FOREST RELATED TOURISM IN NORTHERN IRELAND

### Forestry and woodlands

The importance of protecting forests and woodland areas has been increasingly recognised by government and the public, with greater recognition of their potential economic, environmental and social value. Forestry in Northern Ireland is governed by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD). Apart from public forests owned and managed by Forest Service (an executive agency of DARD) there are a variety of bodies which own and manage forests and woodlands in Northern Ireland, which are open to the public. These include the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), The Woodland Trust, The National Trust, The Colin Glen Trust and

various councils such as Belfast City Council and Newry, Mourne and Down District Council. The vast majority of forests in Northern Ireland are state owned and around half lie in Counties Tyrone and Fermanagh. The 75,310 hectares of forest land in Northern Ireland is mainly comprised of conifer plantations, open space, broadleaved woodland and recreational and amenity areas.

The area of woodland cover in the UK is approximately 3,079,000 ha. This represents 13% of the total land area in the UK which is low compared to much of Europe<sup>4</sup>. Within the UK, woodland cover accounts for 9.9% of total land area in England, 17.8% in Scotland, 14.3% in Wales but only 6.5% in Northern Ireland making it one of the least forested regions within the UK.<sup>28</sup> Table 8 shows the area of woodland in each of the countries of the UK under statutory protection.

Forests and woods within Northern Ireland have faced challenges, such as climate change, fire, diseases, and the lack of afforestation projects. In 2011, approximately £1 million was lost from the value of plantations due to fires during dry and windy weather. A 2006 strategy aimed to achieve sustainability and growth in forestry and included a commitment to double the area of forestry over a period of fifty years, largely through transfer from agriculture. Currently, the Northern Ireland Programme for Government contains objectives relating to forest expansion and the use of forests to promote biodiversity, sustain and grow the timber and related industries and the development of forestry related tourism.<sup>29</sup>

4 Total woodland or forest cover for the EU is 37% of land area. Total woodland or world forest cover is around 30%

**Table 8: Area of woodland under statutory protection by designations**

| Type of protection | England | Scotland | Wales | Northern Ireland | UK  |
|--------------------|---------|----------|-------|------------------|-----|
| 000's hectares     |         |          |       |                  |     |
| SAC                | 24      | 22       | 1     | 0                | 47  |
| SPA                | -       | -        | 1     | -                | -   |
| NNR                | 9       | 19       | 1     | 0                | 30  |
| SSI                | 80      | 38       | 9     | 2                | 129 |

\* SAC - Special Area of Conservation; SPA - Special Protection Area; NNR - National Nature Reserve; SSI - Special Scientific Interest

Source: Woodland Trust, 2011

A number of policies and initiatives, including grant schemes, are in place to encourage the growth and sustainability of forestry through financial assistance to landowners. A significant proportion of this funding support has come from the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme, which is part funded by the European Commission. For example, during 2012-2013 £1.4 million in grants was made available to 1,278 private landowners to encourage 252 hectares of new planting and to maintain plantations established in previous years. However, the Forest Service has acknowledged that the rate of new planting was significantly below the amount that is needed to achieve the policy aim of 31 % woodland and forest cover by the middle of the century.<sup>30</sup> Support for forestry is outlined in the consultation document for the new Rural Development Programme up to 2020.<sup>31</sup> Projects proposed include a Forestry Competitiveness Scheme which will provide investment to improve the economic value of forests; the Woodland Expansion Scheme and Woodland Environmental Grants aimed at enhancing biodiversity; the Agricultural Forestry Scheme to encourage the planting of trees in combination with extensive agriculture.

## Social and Recreational Use of Forests

Expanding the social and recreational use of forests and woodlands has been a policy goal for a number of years and features in DARD strategies and programmes and in Northern Ireland Tourist Board plans. Forests are widely used as a recreational resource in Northern Ireland with two million visits made to forests in every year.



In 2009 there are estimated to have been 810,000 forest related tourists in Northern Ireland, mostly day visitors (458,000) but also including 168,000 out of state visitors. One of the strategic aims in 2009 was to develop and create new opportunities for the recreational and social use of forests<sup>32</sup>. In 2013, opportunities for recreation on forestry land were extended through a new right of pedestrian access to most of the land managed by Forest Service.”

**Figure 4: Location of the main forest recreation areas in Northern Ireland**



*Source: Department of Agriculture and Rural Development: A Strategy to Develop the Recreational and Social Use of Our Forests, 2009.*

A Northern Ireland Tourist Board and Forest Service commissioned report completed by KPMG<sup>33</sup> argued that ‘there is a strong and reinforcing policy framework for the development of forest related tourism in Northern Ireland’ with the potential to bring

significant economic benefits to rural economies. Table 9 below disaggregates the gross economic impact of individual forest related activities in 2009. It shows that out of all the activities that take place, general visitors/walking/outdoor activities create the most economic impact – a gross direct economic impact of £13.6m.

**Table 9: Gross economic impact by Activity - 2009**

| Economic Impact 2009                        | Total Spend | Direct GDP  |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Cycling                                     | £5,871,949  | £2,505,365  |
| Horse riding                                | £4,807,143  | £2,051,048  |
| Nature watching                             | £5,801,429  | £2,475,277  |
| General visitors/walking outdoor activities | £31,943,882 | £13,629,390 |
| Water sports                                | £3,724, 783 | £1,589,241  |
| Rally event                                 | £1,793,852  | £765,377    |

*Source: KPMG et al (2013) Assessment of the Existing and Potential Tourism Development Opportunities Available from Northern Ireland Forests*

The KPMG report concluded that in gross terms in 2009 forest related tourism was estimated to have contributed £23.0m of direct GDP in the Northern Ireland economy, which was circa 3.7% of the visitor economy in Northern Ireland in the same year and which supported about 1,321 full-time equivalent jobs<sup>34</sup>. The findings anticipated that forest related tourism will grow at least in line with the target growth for the visitor economy in Northern Ireland. If based on DETI's Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2020 the authors estimate that the gross GDP associated with forest related tourism is projected to grow to £50.8m by 2020. They point out that a lower projection based on Oxford Economics forward forecasts for the visitor economy in Northern Ireland would suggest that the figure would be £40.3m by 2020 (see Table 10).

**Table 10: The growth of Forest related Tourism in a 'Policy neutral' context**

| Northern Ireland                                    | Scenario 1: 2020<br>(Oxford Economics) |                                | Scenario 2: 2020<br>(NI Tourism Strategy) |                                |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
|                                                     | Direct GDP                             | Direct, Indirect & induced GDP | Direct GDP                                | Direct, Indirect & induced GDP |
| Visitor economy                                     | £1.0bn                                 | £2.1bn                         | £1.0bn                                    | £2.1bn                         |
| Gross forest tourism economy                        | £40.3bn                                | £2.1bn                         | £1.0bn                                    | £2.1bn                         |
| Gross forest tourism economy - % of visitor economy | 4%                                     | 4.5%                           | 5.1%                                      | 5.6%                           |
| Net forest tourism economy                          | £9.8m                                  | £22.7m                         | £10.8m                                    | £25.2m                         |
| Gross forest tourism economy - % of visitor economy | 1%                                     | 1.1%                           | 1.1%                                      | 1.2%                           |

Forestry related tourism is a small proportion of the tourist economy in Northern Ireland, almost 4% in 2009. However, there is a strong perception that this could increase substantially and it is a component of the draft Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland up to 2020<sup>35</sup>. Four million pounds in funding has been made available from the Executive's Economy and Jobs Initiative to improve recreation and tourist facilities for the years 2013-2015<sup>36</sup>.

## POLICY CHALLENGES

Recent years have been particularly challenging for farming. There is no doubting the importance of the Single farm Payment to farmers in Northern Ireland so inevitably there is concern about the impact of the CAP reform. Much of the precise outworking of this has yet to be agreed. In many respects the fishing industry faces similar concerns about the impact of the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy, including the impact of Government's proposed extension of Marine Conservation Zones on the sector, with uncertainty about the extent to which this will lead to opportunities for more localised decision making.

These sectors have been identified as having the potential to bring significant economic benefit to Northern Ireland, particularly through the growth of the agri-food sector and the tourism potential of forests and woodlands. However, potential reduction in the amount of money available through the Rural Development Programme may have an impact on the amount available for tourism and diversification projects.

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## BACKGROUND

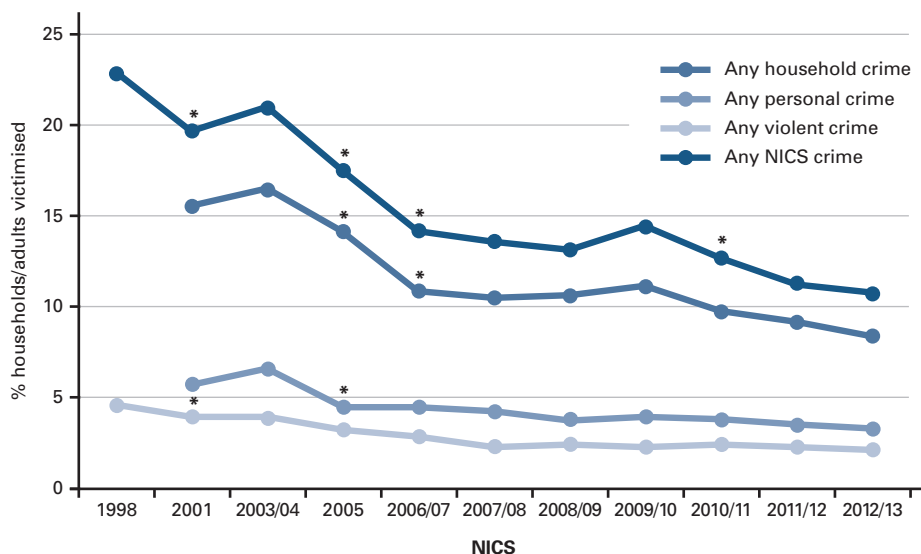
This chapter explores the statistics around crime, both actual and feared, in Northern Ireland; it also looks at the results of crime, including how many people are in prison and who they are. On 12 April 2010, an amendment to schedule 3 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 devolved justice functions in Northern Ireland to the Northern Ireland Assembly, and the Department of Justice (DOJ) came into existence as a new Northern Ireland department, responsible for policing, prosecutions and prisons.

Levels of crime in Northern Ireland have dropped considerably since 1998 (see Figure 1 below). This is the case whether we look at recorded crime figures from the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) or at rates of victimisation estimated from reports through the Northern Ireland Crime Survey (NICS).

The NICS is an important source of information about levels of crime and public attitudes to crime in Northern Ireland. Most of its questions mirror those of the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), formerly the British Crime Survey. The NICS aims to measure the extent to which people experience crime, whether or not these crimes were reported to, or recorded by, the police; in doing so, it can monitor trends in the level of crime, even when there are changes in how many people are reporting crime or in police recording practices.



**Figure 1: Households/adults victims of crime in NI for household, personal, violent or any NICS crime (%) 1998 – 2012/13**



1. Rates for household crime are based on all households.
2. Rates for persona and violent are based on all adults and are weighted for household size.
3. The any NICS crime rate is calculated treating a household crime as a personal crime.
4. Rates for household and personal crime are not available for NICS 1998.
5. \* Denotes statistically significant change at the 5% level ( $p < 0.05$ ) compared with previous year.

Source: DoJ (2013), *Experience of Crime: Findings from the 2012/13 Northern Ireland Crime Survey*

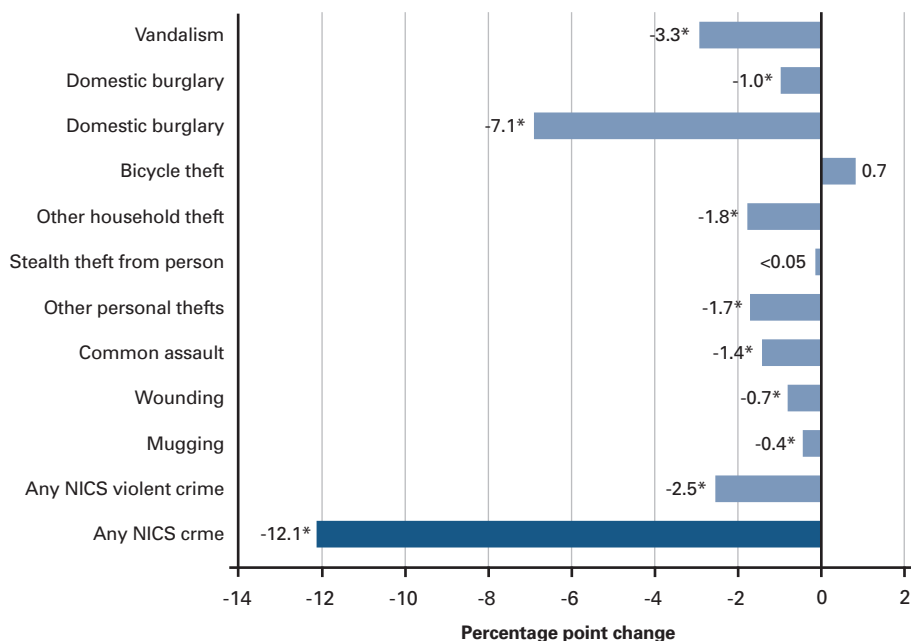
The NICS also measures people's perceptions of and reactions to crime, including issues like the extent to which they worry about crime and the effect of crime on their quality of life.

It is estimated that less than one third of all crimes committed against households and their adult occupants end up in the recorded crime count (CSEW, 2006). The remaining 70% are either unreported or unrecorded. Whether or not an incident is reported to the police depends on a range of factors including: the victim's age, sex and background such as his/her social class and community background; the attitude of the victim to the police; and factors specific to that particular crime, for example,

the likelihood of an insurance claim, the relationship between victim and offender, the gravity of the crime etc.

The NICS helps provide a picture of the large proportion of crime not reported to the police but it only covers non-fatal crimes against private households and their adult occupants; therefore, it excludes homicide, crimes against children, fraud, crimes against businesses, organised crime and so-called 'victimless' crimes (such as drug abuse).

**Figure 2: Change in NICS victimisation (prevalence) rates for offences between 1998 and 2012/13**



1. Rates for vehicle related theft are based on all vehicle-owning households.
2. Rates for bicycle related theft are based on all bicycle-owning households.
3. Rates for other property offences are based on all households.
4. Rates for violent offences are based on all adults and are weighted for household size.
5. Statistical significance of change at the 5% level (two-tailed test) is indicated by an asterisk (\*).

Source: DoJ (2013), *Experience of Crime: Findings from the 2012/13 Northern Ireland Crime Survey*

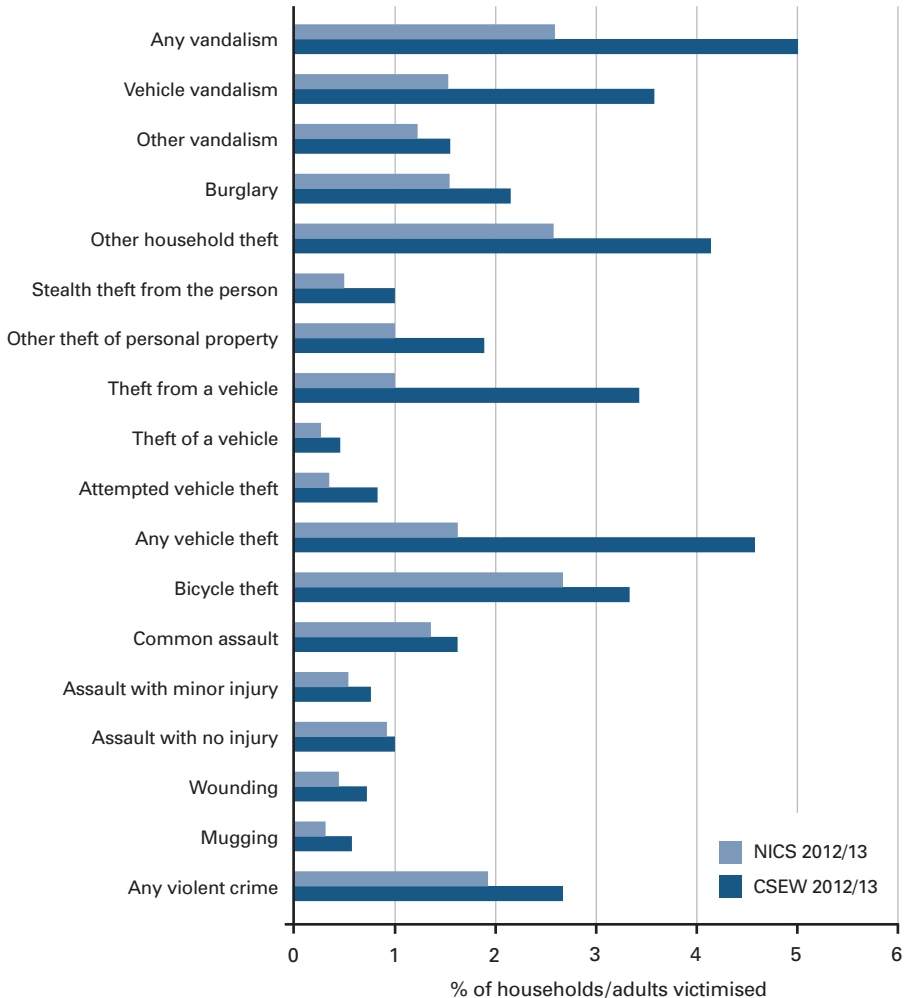
There has been a marked drop in crime in Northern Ireland generally since 1998, with the risk of being a victim of violent crime more than halving from 4.4% in 1998 to 1.9% in 2012-2013. There has also been a noticeable decrease in car/van theft which has dropped from 6.5% for all households and 8.7% for vehicle owners in 1998 to just 1.3% for all households and 1.6% for vehicle owners. Much of this is probably due to improved vehicle security but work towards meeting a PSA/Policing Plan/Community Safety Strategy target to reduce vehicle crime (by 10% between 2001-2002 and 2006-2007) is also likely to have played a role. While there has been a rise in the incidence of bicycle theft (see Figure 2), this is not statistically significant.

## **NORTHERN IRELAND - LOWER LEVELS OF CRIME THAN ENGLAND AND WALES**

Findings from NICS 201-20/13 and the CSEW 2012-2013 show that for someone living in England and Wales the risk of becoming a victim of crime (18.7%) is much greater than for someone living in Northern Ireland (10.9%).

The 2012-2013 surveys also show that incidence rates per 10,000 households / adults were markedly higher in England and Wales than in Northern Ireland for all crime types examined. So, for example, there were 2,168 household crimes per 10,000 households in England and Wales, compared to 1,102 per 10,000 households in Northern Ireland.

**Figure 3: Households/adults victims of crime in NI and England and Wales by crime type (%)**



1. Rates for vehicle related theft are based on all vehicle-owning households.
2. Rates for bicycle related theft are based on all bicycle-owning households.
3. Rates for other property offences are based on all households.
4. Rates for violent offences are based on all adults and are weighted for household size.

Source: DoJ (2013), *Experience of Crime: Findings from the 2012/13 Northern Ireland Crime Survey*

There were also large differences in relation to all vandalism (737 v 375); vehicle vandalism (510 v 195); all personal crime (755 v 461); and all vehicle-related theft (431 v 143). As a result, the overall prevalence rate for household crime in Northern Ireland (8.0%) was 6.4 percentage points lower than the equivalent rate in England and Wales (14.4%).

As can be seen in Figure 3, it is not only crimes against property which are less common in Northern Ireland than in England and Wales, but also crimes against people. The prevalence of all such violent crimes is low in all jurisdictions of the UK but, despite stereotyping of Northern Ireland as a violent place, prevalence rates for all violent crime (1.9%) and personal crime (3.2%) in Northern Ireland are lower than in England and Wales (2.7% and 5.2% respectively).

## PERCEPTIONS OF CRIME

The NICS also surveys respondents' perceptions of crime, of the causes of crime, of recent changes in crime levels and the extent of anti-social behaviour in the local area. Typically, people are inclined to believe crime is on the increase, even when it is not, and that the situation is worse at the regional level than in their own local area.

Despite the decrease in actual crime rates, around three fifths (59%) of NICS 2012-2013 respondents, unchanged from 2011-2012, thought crime levels in Northern Ireland had increased in the preceding two years. There was a marked disparity between people's perceived likelihood of being a victim of crime and their actual risk, whereby the perceived risk far exceeds the actual risk. For instance, 11% of people thought they were likely to be a victim of burglary in the next 12 months, compared with just one per cent of people that were actually burgled. A similar pattern emerged in terms of car crime (12% v 2%) and violent crime (7% v 2%).

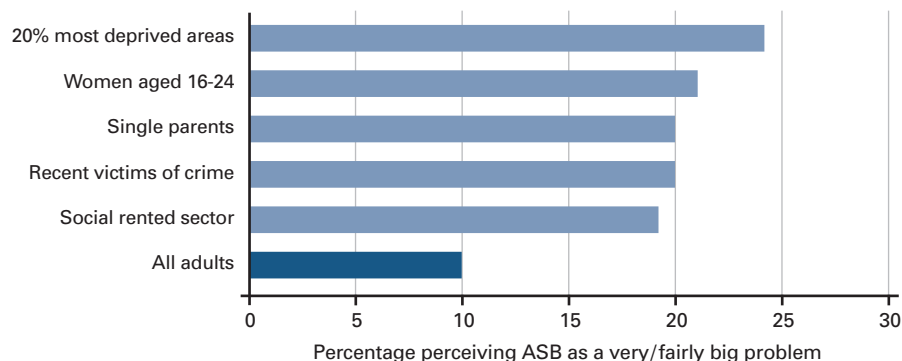
Since 2003-2004, responses to the following seven strands have been used to form a composite measure to gauge the overall perceived level of anti-social behaviour (ASB) in the local area:

1. abandoned or burnt-out cars;
2. noisy neighbours or loud parties;
3. people being drunk or rowdy in public places;
4. people using or dealing drugs;
5. teenagers hanging around on the streets;
6. rubbish or litter lying around; and
7. vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property.

Findings from NICS 2012-2013 using this composite measure show that 10% of respondents perceived the level of ASB in their local area to be high. This compares with 13% in England and Wales (CSEW 2012/13).

The ASB types most likely to be perceived by NICS 2012-2013 respondents as problems in the local area were 'rubbish or litter lying around' (24%) and 'people using or dealing drugs' (22%) whereas 'abandoned or burnt-out cars' (3%) and 'noisy neighbours or loud parties' (8%) were considered the least problematic forms of ASB. NICS respondents were then asked to select the type of ASB that, in their view, causes the single biggest problem in their local area. With the exception of over a third of adults (37%) who responded that none of the seven ASB strands represented the single biggest problem, the most common responses cited by NICS 2012-2013 participants, were 'rubbish or litter lying around' and 'teenagers hanging around on the streets' (18% and 16% respectively). At less than 5%, 'abandoned or burnt-out cars' was least likely to be considered the single biggest local problem

**Figure 4: Those most likely to see ASB as a problem in their local area (%)**



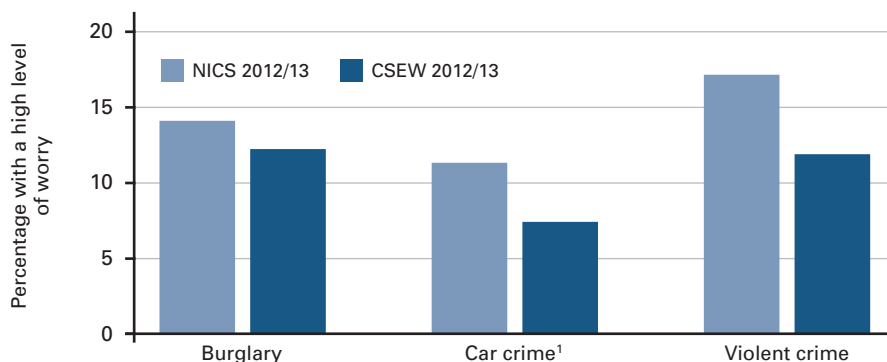
Source: DoJ (2014), *Perceptions of Crime: Findings from the 2012-2013 Northern Ireland Crime Survey*

As can be seen in Figure 4 above, of the socio-demographic groups examined in NICS 2011-2012, people living in the 20% most deprived areas of Northern Ireland were most likely of all the groups examined to view ASB as a problem in their area (24%), contrasting with 5% of those in the 20% least deprived areas; a higher proportion of people living in social rented accommodation (19%) considered their local area to have a high level of ASB than those in private rented accommodation (15%) or owner-occupiers (7%); a higher proportion of single parents, recent victims of crime reported to the police, and young women aged 16-24 said ASB was a problem in their area than others.

## FEAR OF CRIME

People in Northern Ireland tend to have higher levels of fear of crime than their counterparts in England and Wales. Although the actual risk of becoming a victim of crime remains lower in Northern Ireland than in England and Wales, NICS 2012-2013 respondents were more likely than their CSEW 2012-2013 counterparts to express high levels of worry about violent crime or car crime - see Figure 5 below. As is clear, in both jurisdictions, respondents were more likely to worry about being a victim of violent crime than either burglary or car crime.

**Figure 5: Worry about Crime (%) in NI and England and Wales**



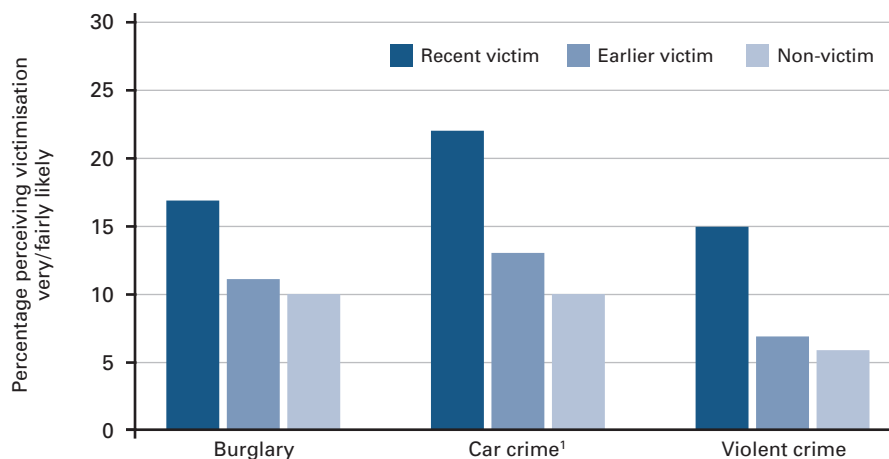
<sup>1</sup> Based on respondents residing in households owning or with regular use of a vehicle.

Source: DoJ (2014), *Perceptions of Crime: Findings from the 2012-2013 Northern Ireland Crime Survey*

Over two-thirds (70%) of NICS 2012-2013 respondents felt that ‘fear of crime’ has a minimal impact on their quality of life, with a further 25% claiming it has a moderate effect. The remaining four per cent stated that their quality of life is greatly affected by their ‘fear of crime’. Among those NICS 2012-2013 respondents most likely to state that their lives are greatly affected by ‘fear of crime’ were: residents in areas of self-perceived high ASB (10%); recent victims of crimes reported to the police (12%); people living in social rented accommodation (10%); and those with a limiting illness or disability (9%).

As Figure 6 illustrates, there is a marked disparity between a person’s feeling that they are likely to be a victim of crime and their actual risk, with the perceived risk far greater than the actual risk across each of the crime types considered. As seen above, NICS 2012-2013 results show that 11% of people thought they were very or fairly likely to be a victim of burglary, although the actual risk is just one per cent. Similarly, 12% thought they were likely to become a victim of car crime and 7% thought they were likely to become a victim of violent crime although just 2% of people are actually victims of either of these crimes.

**Figure 6: Perceptions of the risk of victimisation (%) by experience of crime**



1 Based on respondents residing in households owning or with regular use of a vehicle.

Source: DoJ (2014), *Perceptions of Crime: Findings from the 2012-2013 Northern Ireland Crime Survey*



## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence is defined by the joint (Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety and Northern Ireland Office) strategy for addressing domestic violence and abuse in Northern Ireland, 'Tackling Violence at Home', as:

*"threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on one person by another where they are or have been intimate partners or family members, irrespective of gender or sexual orientation" <sup>1</sup>*

Since 2001, the NICS has administered a self-completion module on domestic violence using computer-assisted self-interviewing (CASI), a technique which affords anonymity and confidentiality to respondents. Since NICS 2008-2009, there have been a number of methodological changes which mean that results since then are not comparable with those before. In addition, the definition of domestic abuse was widened to include the additional offence 'repeatedly belittled you so that you felt worthless'; a 3-year recall period was introduced as an additional measure of recent prevalence of domestic violence; and additional questions were introduced to measure the prevalence and nature of wider family (i.e. non-partner) domestic violence. A proportion of the NICS self-completion module also asks follow-up questions to victims of domestic violence in order to ascertain further details about the nature of the single worst incident of both partner and wider family abuse. Table 1 illustrates how the three concepts of "threatening behaviour, violence and abuse" translate into a variety of individual offences of domestic abuse.

**Table 1: Offence groups and types making up domestic violence within the NI Crime Survey**

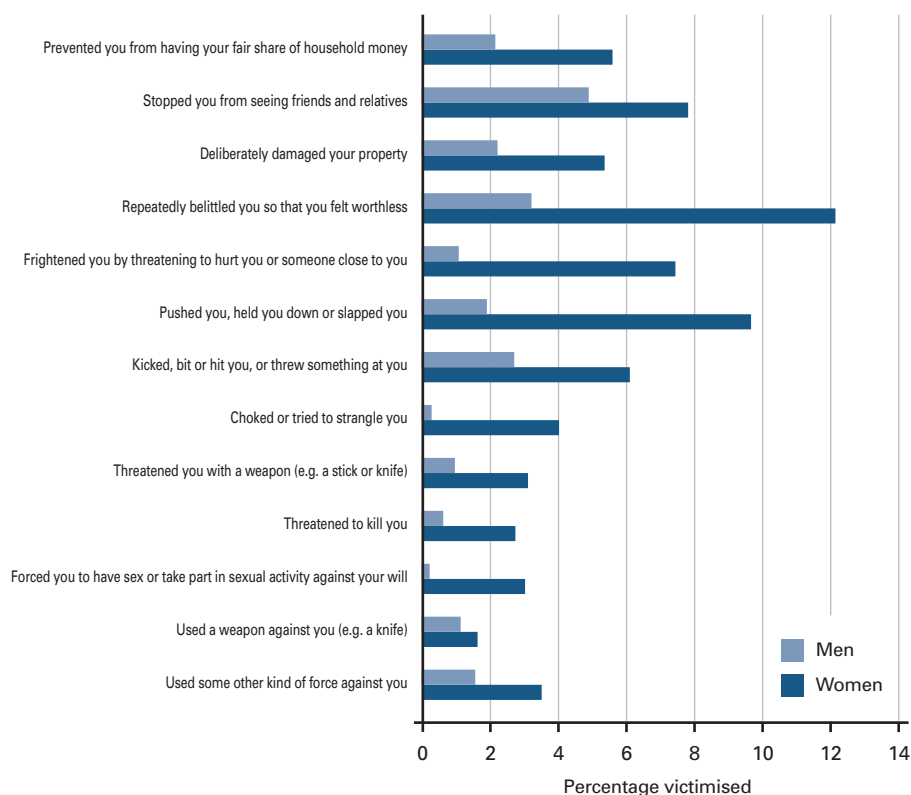
| Offence Group             | Offence Type                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Non-Physical Abuse</b> | Prevented from having your fair share of household money<br>Stopped you from seeing your friends and relatives<br>Deliberately damaged your property<br>Repeatedly belittled you so that you felt worthless                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Threats</b>            | Frightened you by threatening to hurt you or someone close to you                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Force</b>              | <b>Minor force:</b><br>Pushed you, held you down or slapped you<br><br><b>Severe force:</b><br>Kicked, bit or hit you, or threw something at you<br>Choked or tried to strangle you<br>Threatened you with a weapon (e.g. a stick or knife)<br>Threatened to kill you<br>Forced you to have sex or take part in another sexual activity against your will (including attempts)<br>Used a weapon against you (e.g. a knife)<br>Used some other kind of force against you. |

*Source: DoJ (2013), Experience of Domestic Violence: Findings from the 2008/09 to 2010/11*

Findings from NICS 2010-2011 (the latest available) estimate that 16% of people aged 16-64 have experienced at least one form of domestic violence or abuse, by a partner, at some stage in their lives since age 16. Women were much more likely than men to report domestic violence or abuse, with 19.3% of women reporting such experiences compared to 11.5% of men. Women were significantly more likely to have experienced each of the different kinds of domestic violence at some time in their lives. They were twice as likely as men to have suffered non-physical abuse (16.3% v 8.8%); seven times as likely to have received threats (7.5% v 1.0%); and more than twice as likely to have been victims of physical force (12.9% v 5.6%). The most common offence was non-physical abuse (12.8% in 2010-2011), followed by physical force (9.5%) and frightening threats (4.5%). As Figure 7 shows, in relation to lifetime experience, it is only in relation to the experience 'used a weapon against you (e.g. a knife)' (1.0% of men v 1.6% of women) that men experienced anything close to the level of abuse suffered by women. In relation to every other type of offence,

women were considerably more likely to have experienced higher levels of partner abuse than men. The greatest disparity in each NICS survey for the three years 2008-2009 to 2010-2011 was found in the proportions who had been forced to have sex or take part in a sexual activity against their will (3.0% of women v 0.1% of men) - women were 30 times more likely to have experienced sexual violence than men.

**Figure 7: Lifetime experience of partner abuse by offence type and gender**



Source: DoJ (2013), *Experience of Domestic Violence: Findings from the 2008/09 to 2010/11*

## NORTHERN IRELAND CRIME SURVEYS

NICS 2010-2011 results also show that the police are unaware of almost three-quarters of all lifetime victims of partner abuse, with only 27.1% of victims responding to the survey stating that they had reported their experience(s) to the police. Women were three times more likely than men to have reported partner abuse to the police.

Findings from the NICS suggest that not only are women at greater risk of domestic abuse but a broader range of women tend to suffer such abuse.

Single mothers have the highest risk of partner abuse (26.6%), significantly above the NICS 2010-2011 average of 6.9%. Consistent with findings from England and Wales, younger respondents of both sexes tend to reveal a greater likelihood of victimisation. For women, the risk of partner abuse was significantly higher among those aged between 16 and 24 than for those within the 55 to 64 age group (8.8% v 1.3%).

There is some evidence that marital status may play a role in the likelihood of an adult suffering domestic abuse. It appears that those who were living as a couple or, more specifically, those who were married were significantly less likely than their unmarried counterparts to have experienced some form of domestic abuse in the previous three years. Married men were more than three times less likely (2.1% v 7.3%) and married women almost six times (2.7% v 17.2%) less likely to have experienced domestic abuse than those who were 'cohabiting, separated, divorced or widowed' - although it is not possible to say whether some of those who are separated or divorced had left abusive relationships.

The results of the NICS 2010-2011 also suggest that there may be a 'tentative' relationship between household income and domestic abuse, with women from low income households (under £15,000 per year) appearing almost five times more likely (15.3%) to have experienced domestic violence within the last 3 years than women in households earning £45,000 or more per year (3.4%). Women who have a disability or limiting illness were also significantly more likely (10.9%) to have experienced partner abuse than those who do not (5.9%)<sup>2</sup>.

The Department of Justice, DHSSPS and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive jointly fund the Domestic Violence Helpline, which is a 24 hour 365 days a year freephone

helpline open to anyone affected by domestic violence, managed by Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland. In 2010-2011, a total of 38,289 callers contacted the helpline, an increase of 18% on the 32,349 callers recorded for 2009-2010. There was also an increase in the number of male callers to the helpline during 2010-2011, with 395 male callers, up from 265 in 2009-2010<sup>3</sup>.

## PRISON POPULATIONS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

The Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) was established as an Executive Agency of the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) in April 1995 under the Government's Next Steps Initiative. When justice was devolved to the Assembly in 2010, the NIPS became an Executive Agency of the Department of Justice.

There are currently three prison establishments in Northern Ireland - HMP Magilligan, HMP Maghaberry and Hydebank Wood Young Offenders Centre and Prison. Female prisoners are held in a separate unit within the Hydebank Wood Prison. Children aged under seventeen years will normally be placed in a juvenile justice centre, not a prison. The prison population consists mainly of offenders sentenced by the courts to immediate custody for criminal offences. It also includes fine defaulters, remand prisoners, and a number of non-criminal prisoners.

Fine defaulters are those who have been given a fine by the courts "(which may be instead of or in addition to a custodial sentence), but have failed to pay the fine within a stipulated time, and have been the subject of a warrant issued by the court as a result. The length of the sentence depends on the amount of the unpaid fine, ranging from one week where the defaulted fine is £200 or less, to ten years where the defaulted fine exceeds £1 million.

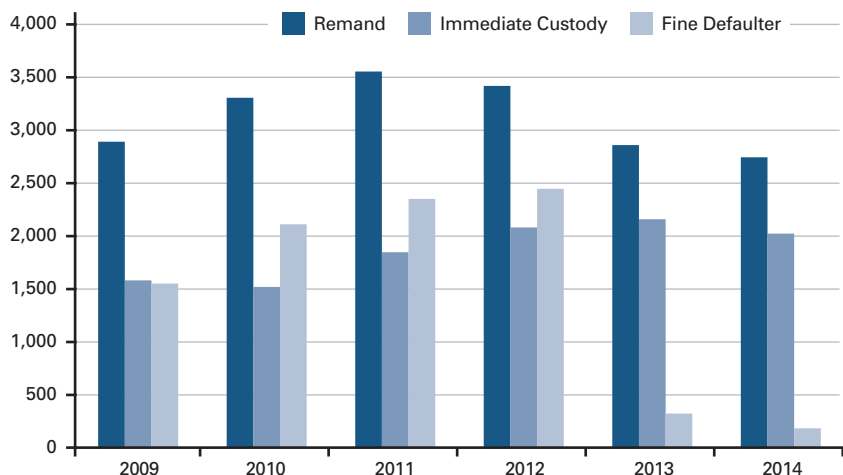
Remand prisoners are mainly those who have been charged with a crime and remanded in custody while awaiting trial; those whom the courts have permitted to be released on bail pending trial but have yet to meet the conditions of the bail; those who had been released on bail but have subsequently been returned to prison because they breached bail conditions; those who have been found guilty by the court but not yet sentenced are still considered on remand until sentencing. Non-criminal prisoners include those who have been imprisoned for non-payment of maintenance, non-payment of a debt, contempt of court, or are being held under the terms of an Immigration Act.

## PRISON NUMBERS SINCE 1998

Around one in five prison sentences are for less than one year and there will always be new prisoners coming and those who have served their sentences leaving prison. The Department of Justice therefore estimates<sup>4</sup> what the average number in prison is at any one time in the year by taking a census on the same day each week and working out an annual average on that basis. So, for example, the total number of people received into prison in 2008 was 6,185 over the course of the year; but because of releases and short stays, this amounted to an annual average population of 1,490 in that year. In 2009, the number of receptions into prison was 5,892, which resulted in an annual average population of 1,465.

In 1998, after the releases under the Belfast Agreement had taken place, there was an annual average of c1,000 sentenced prisoners in Northern Ireland. The annual average fell to c.662 in 2002 and then rose steadily since then to 1,193 in 2012. Over the same period, the number of prisoners on remand rose from 341 in 2002 to 545 in 2012. As can be seen from Figure 8 (remand/fine default/immediate custody), the overall average prison population grew by 73% between 2002 and 2012.

**Figure 8: Average prison population by prisoner type 2002 - 2012 (remand/fine default/immediate custody)**



Source: DoJ (2013), *The Northern Ireland Average Prison Population in 2012*

As Figure 8 shows, each year, there is a small average population of fine defaulters. These amounted to an average of just 21 in 2008 and 23 in 2009. However, it should be noted that in 2008 a total of 1,742 receptions into prison were for fine default; for 2009 the figure was 1,394 - their share of the average population is low because of the very short times spent in prison by most fine defaulters.

A report early in 2010 from the Criminal Justice Inspectorate for Northern Ireland (CJINI)<sup>5</sup> pointed out that fine defaulters amount to c.30% of receptions into prison each year, a situation which is seen as outdated by all the agencies involved. The CJINI found that the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) regard it as a poor use of a police officer’s time to be collecting small fines, and that the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) said processing such a large number of admissions each year for very short sentences (in 2006, the average time served for fine default was 4 days) placed a disproportionate burden on its administrative staff. The Inspectorate made a number of recommendations for change in how fine defaulters are dealt with, to bring Northern Ireland into line with neighbouring jurisdictions. Nonetheless, when the CJINI produced a follow-up report in middle of 2012<sup>6</sup>, it found not a reduction in the numbers of fine defaulters being imprisoned each year but a considerable rise. The figures in Table 2 below are taken from the follow-up report.

**Table 2: Number of fine defaulters imprisoned in NI by year**

|      |       |
|------|-------|
| 2007 | 1,724 |
| 2008 | 1,742 |
| 2009 | 1,247 |
| 2010 | 1,891 |
| 2011 | 2,179 |

*Source: Criminal Justice Inspectorate for Northern Ireland (2012): The Enforcement of fines: a follow up review of Inspection Recommendations*

## WHO IS THE AVERAGE PRISONER?

Based on the statistics published by the NIPS, it seems the average prisoner is a young Roman Catholic man aged 21-29 who committed a crime of violence against another person. Over the last ten years, 97-98% of the prison population has been male, apart from those in prison in relation to fine default where the male proportion has ranged from 90% to 96%.

A number of Freedom of Information releases by the NIPS in October 2013 on the religious breakdown of prisoners in Northern Ireland and in March 2014 on the religious breakdown of prisoners in Maghaberry prison suggest that, even if all those whose community background is not determined came from the Protestant community, those from a Roman Catholic background would still be over-represented within the prison population.

**Table 3: Religious breakdown of overall NI prison population and Maghaberry prisoners 2013/14**

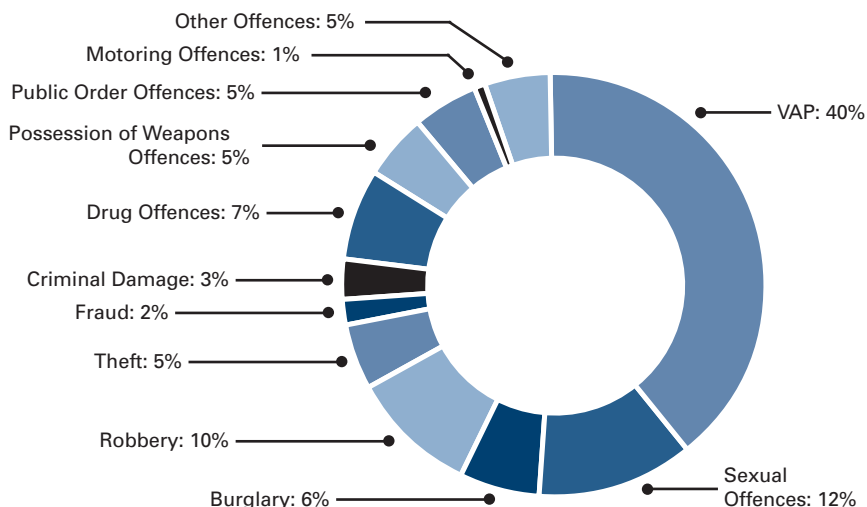
| Religion             | NI Prison population overall % | NI Prison population overall number | Maghaberry only % | Maghaberry Only number |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Protestant           | 33.28                          | 623                                 | 33.99             | 364                    |
| Catholic             | 53.10                          | 994                                 | 52.66             | 564                    |
| Other/not determined | 13.62                          | 255                                 | 13.35             | 143                    |

A Freedom of Information request relating to 2010-2012 revealed that the NIPS does “not hold any information on prisoners who designate themselves as being part of or from the LGBT community”. Another published Freedom of Information request revealed that, in the history of the Prison Service, just one prisoner had declared themselves to be transgendered. There are a small number of prisoners each year who are foreign nationals.

As can be seen from Figure 9, in 2012, the principal offence of 52% of the sentenced population was violence against the person or sexual offences.



**Figure 9: Average prison population under sentence of immediate custody by principal offence 2012**



Source: DoJ (2013), *The Northern Ireland Average Prison Population in 2012*

## POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Comparison of figures from the CSEW and NICS show that in Northern Ireland people are around 50 per cent less likely to become a victim of crime compared to England and Wales. While at first sight the data suggests that crime figures are down and prison figures are up, a link between levels of crime and numbers of people in prison cannot be made with any degree of certainty. An important factor is the relatively high proportion of fine defaulters in the prison population. In Northern Ireland this is a Department of Justice policy level issue which would require new legislation to be fundamentally addressed. It is also the case that the spread and concentrations of crime are not generally well captured in the statistics used in the surveys cited. This in turn means while nationally we may have higher worry about crime, particular communities and areas suffer disproportionately from crime.

Perceptions of crime seem to suggest lack of knowledge about the reality of crime. There are a number of explanations which could be forwarded to account for this. Public perception of growing 'crime' may in fact be largely related to issues which are not criminal offences but a wider community safety issue and not the technical or legal responsibility of the police. Fear of crime may also be linked to changing infrastructure and a reduced sense of community and social responsibility. There may need to be better public understanding of how the media can unduly influence perceptions of crime and fuel disproportionate perceptions. For example, criminological studies show that tabloid readers have higher levels of fear related to crime than broadsheet readers.

The statistics relating to domestic violence are worrying. Significant reduction in such crime requires not just action in the part of the police and criminal justice system but changes in attitude and culture.

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- 4 *ibid*
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