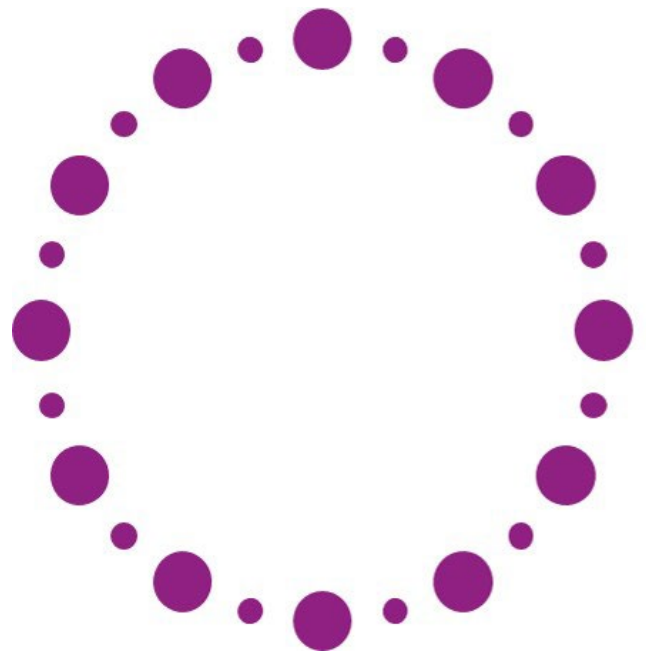


**census**  
2021



**Main statistics for Northern Ireland**  
**Statistical bulletin**  
**Labour market**

**21 March 2023**



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## 1. Introduction

On 21 March 2023, the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) released further results from Census 2021, which was held on 21 March 2021. The statistics released provide a profile of the Northern Ireland population covering:

- **household relationships:** household composition, living arrangements, marital and civil partnership status
- **sexual orientation**
- **labour market:** economic status (e.g. in employment, unemployed, economically inactive), hours worked, industry and occupation
- **qualifications:** highest level of qualifications gained
- **place of work or study:** distance to place of work or study and method of travel
- **communal establishments:** establishments providing supervision of residential accommodation (e.g. student halls of residence, hospitals, care homes)
- **migration:** address one year before the census, and year of arrival for those born outside Northern Ireland

The information covers Northern Ireland and the 11 Local Government Districts (LGDs).

This report relates to **labour market** and covers the following topics for persons aged 16 and over in Census 2021:

- economic status (e.g. in employment, unemployed, inactive);
- hours worked; and
- industry and occupation.

Clearly the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic will have affected the local labour market and will have impacted on responses to the labour market questions on the census. For example, it is possible that some people on furlough may have identified as economically inactive, instead of temporarily away from work.

For display purposes, figures are appropriately rounded but full figures are available in the [Census 2021 tables](#) on the NISRA website.

## 2. Key points

The key points relating to the **labour market** topic are as follows:

### 2.1. Economic status

- Census 2021 recorded 1.515 million adults aged 16 and over, of which 849,100 (56.1%) were in employment, 41,900 (2.8%) were unemployed and 623,700 (41.2%) were economically inactive (e.g. retired, looking after home and family, long-term sick or disabled)
- Of the 849,100 adults in employment, 80.9% were employees, 15.0% were self-employed and 4.2% were full-time students who also had a job.
- While the sex breakdown of employees is broadly similar – with females having a marginally higher share, the self-employed group are mostly males (with around 3 in 4 of people in that group being male).
- Of the 41,900 unemployed, 16,900 were female (40.3%) and 25,000 were male (59.7%). Around 7,700 of the 41,900 unemployed were full-time students who were unemployed – of these, 54.6% were female and 45.4% were male.
- Derry City & Strabane had the highest percentage of adults who were unemployed (3.7%), while Fermanagh & Omagh, Mid Ulster and Lisburn & Castlereagh had the lowest (at 2.2% each).
- Of the 623,700 economically inactive adults, around half (306,100 adults) were 'retired', with a further 18.1% (112,600 adults) who were 'Long-term sick or disabled'.
- In the decade since Census 2011, there have been increases in the number of those in employment and those economically inactive (increases of 49,900 and 66,000 respectively). However, there has been a drop in the

number of unemployed since Census 2011, falling from 74,600 in 2011 to 41,900 in 2021 – a fall of nearly 44%.

- In terms of the economically inactive, the rise of 66,000 in that group is mostly due to the increases in ‘retired’ (31,100), ‘looking after home or family’ (17,700) and ‘long-term sick or disabled’ (12,800). This links through to the main messages from Census 2021 so far relating to an ageing population and a population that is less healthy/providing more care.
- Looking at Northern Ireland in comparison to England and Wales shows that Northern Ireland is more likely to have people in employment than Wales (56.1% and 53.5% respectively). In addition, Northern Ireland has the lowest percentage who are unemployed across the three regions at 2.8%.

## 2.2. Hours worked

- Almost 7 in 10 (69.1%) adults in employment were working full-time hours (i.e. working 31 hours or more per week), with the remaining 30.9% working part-time (i.e. working 30 hours or less per week). Just over 10% of adults in employment were working a maximum of 15 hours per (86,800 adults).
- Of the part-time workers, almost 7 out of 10 (69.7%) were female. Of the full-time workers, nearly two thirds were male (61.8%).
- From 2011 to 2021 there has been greater growth in part-time workers than full-time workers. Part-time workers increased by +13.2% (from 232,100 in 2011 to 262,700 in 2021), while full-time workers increased by +3.4% (from 567,200 to 586,400). Those working 15 hours or less per week grew from 66,500 in 2011 to 86,800 in 2021 (an increase of +30.5%);
- Mid Ulster Local Government District (LGD) had the highest percentage of full-time workers at 71.5%. Belfast LGD had the highest percentage of part-time workers, with 1 in 3 of its population aged 16 and over in employment.
- Each LGD in Northern Ireland has between 9% and 12% of its population aged 16 or over in employment, working 15 hours or less per week with

Causeway Coast & Glens (11.4%) having the highest percentage and Lisburn & Castlereagh (9.2%) having the lowest.

- Each LGD in Northern Ireland has between 6% and 13% of its population aged 16 or over in employment working 49 or more hours per week with Fermanagh & Omagh (12.7%) having the highest percentage and Belfast (6.9%) having the lowest.

## 2.3. Industry

- In Census 2021 the two largest industry sectors of workers who lived in Northern Ireland were:
  - 'human health & social work activities', with 139,800 people working in that sector; and
  - 'wholesale & retail trade / repair of motor vehicles & motor cycles' with 137,100 people working in that sector.
- These two sectors experienced contrasting fortunes over the last decade. The number of workers in 'human health & social work activities' grew from 14.2% of the workforce in 2011 to 16.5% of the workforce in 2021. Conversely, 'wholesale and retail trade / repair of motor vehicles and motor cycles' fell from 17.5% to 16.1%. These changes mirror the increasing healthcare needs of our population and the increasing challenges of our retail sector.
- Amongst females the two most common employment sectors were also 'human health & social work activities' (112,100 females) and 'wholesale and retail trade / repair of motor vehicles & motor cycles' (64,600 females). However, amongst males 'wholesale & retail trade / repair of motor vehicles and motor cycles' (72,500 males) and 'construction' (64,300 males) were the two most common sectors.

## 2.4. Occupation

- By far the largest occupation group in Census 2021 was 'professional occupations' with 172,200 workers (e.g. healthcare professionals, engineers, teachers, IT professionals).
- Amongst females the two most common occupations were 'professional occupations' (97,300 females) and 'caring, leisure and other service occupations' (74,600 females). However amongst males 'skilled trades' (99,100 males) and 'professional occupations' (74,900 males) were the two most common groups.



### 3. Economic status

#### 3.1. Economic status – Census 2021

Census 2021 included a suite of questions which were asked of everyone aged 16 years and over to determine their economic status. This information led to a three-way classification of economic status:

- **economically active: in employment** (an employee, self-employed or full-time student in employment);
- **economically active: unemployed** (those who were looking for work and could start within two weeks, or waiting to start a job that had been offered and accepted); and
- **economically inactive** (those who did not have a job between 15 March and 21 March 2021 and had not looked for work between 22 February and 21 March 2021 or could not start work within two weeks).

In Census 2021 there were 1.5 million people aged 16 years and over. Of these:

- around 849,100 were **in employment** (56.1%);
- 41,900 were **unemployed** (2.8%); and
- 623,700 were **economically inactive** (41.2%).

## Economically active: in employment

People aged 16 years and over were economically active and in employment if they were working in the week before census day.

Table 1 looks at those aged 16 and over in employment by type and sex. It shows that of the 849,100 people aged 16 and over in employment, 407,100 (47.9%) were female and 442,000 (52.1%) were male.

**Table 1: Employment type by sex (Census 2021)**

<b>Employment type</b>	<b>All people</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Percent Female</b>	<b>Percent Male</b>
Employee	686,600	353,400	333,200	51.5%	48.5%
Self-employed	127,200	33,100	94,000	26.1%	73.9%
Full-time student in employment	35,300	20,500	14,800	58.2%	41.8%
<b>All people aged 16 and over in employment</b>	<b>849,100</b>	<b>407,100</b>	<b>442,000</b>	<b>47.9%</b>	<b>52.1%</b>

Table 1 also shows that those in employment were comprised of 686,600 employees (80.9% of those aged 16 and over in employment), 127,200 self-employed (15.0%) and 35,300 full-time students in employment (4.2%). In addition, it shows that while the sex breakdown of employees is broadly similar – with females having a marginally higher share, the self-employed group are mostly males (with around 3 in 4 people in that group being male).

## Economically active: unemployed

People aged 16 years and over were economically active and unemployed if, in the week before census day, they were not in employment, and they were:

- looking for work and could start within two weeks; or
- waiting to start a job that had been offered and accepted.

Table 2 looks at those aged 16 and over and unemployed by student status and sex. Around 41,900 people (2.8% of those aged 16 and over) were economically active and unemployed at the time of Census 2021. Of these, 16,900 were female (40.3%) and 25,000 were male (59.7%).

**Table 2: Unemployed by sex and full-time student status (Census 2021)**

	<b>All people</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Percent Female</b>	<b>Percent Male</b>
<b>Unemployed</b>	<b>41,900</b>	<b>16,900</b>	<b>25,000</b>	<b>40.3%</b>	<b>59.7%</b>
Of which unemployed and full-time student	7,700	4,200	3,500	54.6%	45.4%

Table 2 also shows that 7,700 (18.2%) of the unemployed were unemployed full-time students, and that marginally more of the unemployed full-time students were female (4,200) than male (3,500).

## Economically inactive

People aged 16 years and over were economically inactive if, in the week before census day, they were not in employment, and they were:

- not looking for work; or
- looking for work, but were not able to start work in the next two weeks.

Those that were inactive were recorded as having one of the following inactivity statuses:

- retired (whether receiving a pension or not);
- studying;
- looking after home or family;
- long-term sick or disabled; and
- other

In total, 623,700 people aged 16 years and over in Northern Ireland were economically inactive at the time of the 2021 Census (41.2%).

Table 3 shows what the people who were economically inactive were doing in the week before the census. Almost half of those aged 16 and over who were economically inactive were 'retired' (306,100 people, or 49.1%), with over 1 in 5 being 'long-term sick or disabled' (112,600 people, or 18.1%).

**Table 3: Economic inactivity status (Census 2021)**

<b>Economic inactivity status</b>	<b>All people</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Retired	306,100	49.1%
Studying	80,600	12.9%
Looking after home or family	76,700	12.3%
Long-term sick or disabled	112,600	18.1%
Other	47,700	7.6%
<b>All people aged 16 and over who were economically inactive</b>	<b>623,700</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

There were a further 80,600 (12.9%) who were economically inactive and studying, 76,700 (12.3%) were 'looking after home or family', and 47,700 (7.6%) were economically inactive for another reason.

### 3.2. Economic status – Change over time

Table 4a shows the change in economic status in the decade from Census 2011 to Census 2021. It shows increases in the number of those in employment and those economically inactive (49,900 and 66,000 respectively). However, there has been a drop in the number of unemployed since the 2011 Census, falling from 74,600 in 2011 to 41,900 in 2021 – a fall of nearly 44%.

**Table 4a: Change in economic status (Census 2011 to Census 2021)**

<b>Economic status</b>	<b>Census 2011</b>	<b>Census 2021</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>Percentage change</b>
<b>In employment</b>	<b>799,200</b>	<b>849,100</b>	<b>+49,900</b>	<b>+6.2%</b>
Employee	641,900	686,600	+44,700	+7.0%
Self-employed	118,700	127,200	+8,500	+7.1%
Full-time student in employment	38,700	35,300	-3,300	-8.6%
<b>Unemployed</b>	<b>74,600</b>	<b>41,900</b>	<b>-32,700</b>	<b>-43.8%</b>
<b>Economically inactive</b>	<b>557,700</b>	<b>623,700</b>	<b>+66,000</b>	<b>+11.8%</b>
Retired	274,900	306,100	+31,100	+11.3%
Studying	81,400	80,600	-800	-0.9%
Looking after home or family	59,100	76,700	+17,700	+29.9%
Long-term sick or disabled	99,800	112,600	+12,800	+12.9%
Other	42,500	47,700	+5,100	+12.1%
<b>All people aged 16 and over</b>	<b>1,431,500</b>	<b>1,514,700</b>	<b>+83,200</b>	<b>+5.8%</b>

In terms of the economically inactive, the rise of 66,000 in that group is mostly due to the increases in 'retired' (31,100), 'looking after home or family' (17,700) and 'long-term sick or disabled' (12,800). This links through to the main messages from

Census 2021 so far relating to an ageing population and a population that is less healthy/providing more care.

Although we see these changes in the numbers of people in each of the economic status groups between the censuses, Table 4b accounts for the effects of a growing population by looking at the percentage of the population in each group at the time of each census (the population in Northern Ireland has grown by 5% between the censuses).

**Table 4b: Population share of economic status (Census 2011 and Census 2021)**

<b>Economic status</b>	<b>Census 2011</b>	<b>Census 2021</b>	<b>Percentage point difference</b>
<b>In employment</b>	<b>55.8%</b>	<b>56.1%</b>	<b>+0.2</b>
Employee	44.8%	45.3%	+0.5
Self-employed	8.3%	8.4%	+0.1
Full-time student in employment	2.7%	2.3%	-0.4
<b>Unemployed</b>	<b>5.2%</b>	<b>2.8%</b>	<b>-2.4</b>
<b>Economically inactive</b>	<b>39.0%</b>	<b>41.2%</b>	<b>+2.2</b>
Retired	19.2%	20.2%	+1.0
Studying	5.7%	5.3%	-0.4
Looking after home or family	4.1%	5.1%	+0.9
Long-term sick or disabled	7.0%	7.4%	+0.5
Other	3.0%	3.1%	+0.2
<b>All people aged 16 and over</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>0.0</b>

Table 4b shows that while there have been noticeable changes in the percentage of the population aged 16 and over who are unemployed or economically inactive over the decade (roughly 2% change in each group), the rest of the groups are within 1% of their proportions in the 2011 Census.

### 3.3. Economic status – Comparison with England and Wales

Table 5 shows how the main economic status categories differ across Northern Ireland, England, and Wales in terms of their share of the population aged 16 and over.

**Table 5: Economic status of the population aged 16 and over by country (Census 2021)**

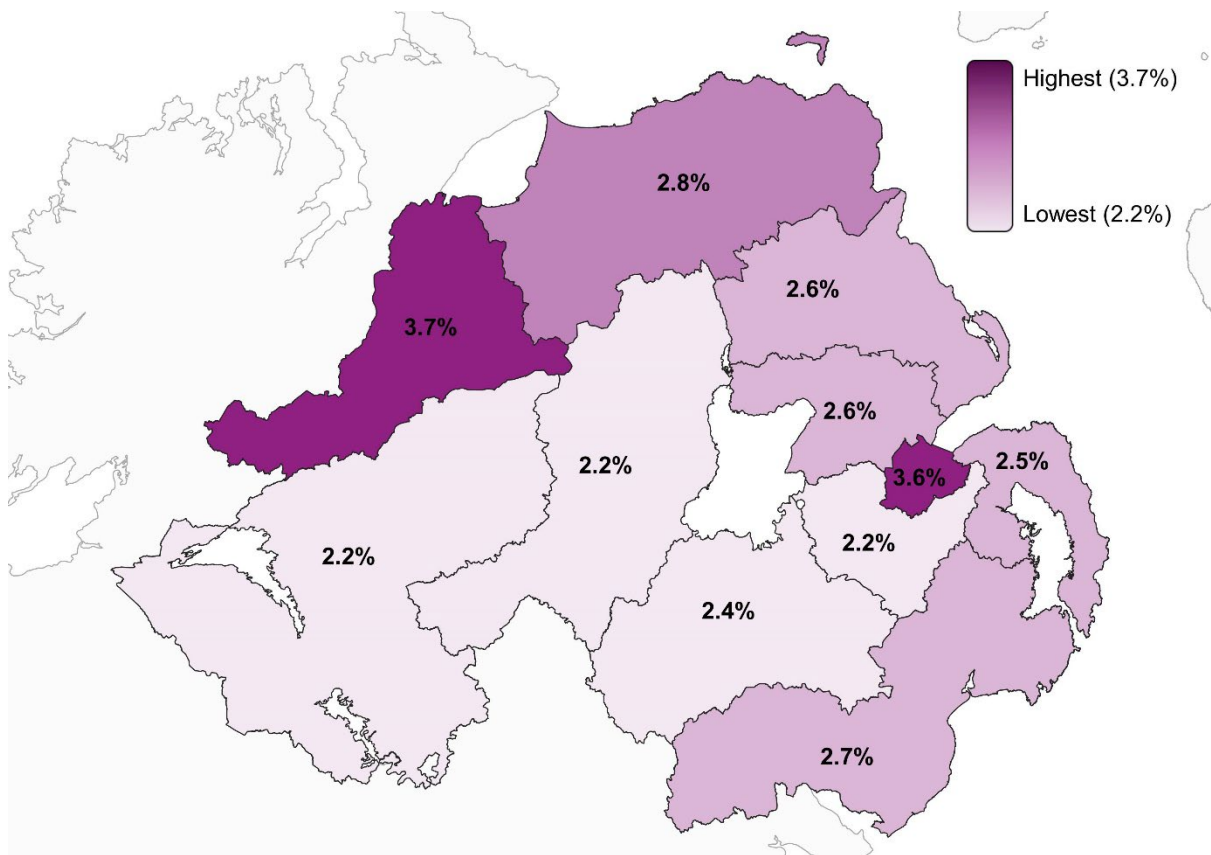
<b>Country</b>	<b>In employment</b>	<b>Unemployed</b>	<b>Economically inactive</b>
Northern Ireland	56.1%	2.8%	41.2%
England	57.4%	3.5%	39.1%
Wales	53.5%	3.1%	43.5%

It shows that Northern Ireland is more likely to have people in employment than Wales (56.1% and 53.5% respectively) and that Northern Ireland has the lowest percentage who are unemployed among the regions at 2.8%.

### 3.4. Economic status by Local Government District – Census 2021

Focussing on unemployment, around 2.8% of the population aged 16 and over (41,900 out of 1,514,700 people) were economically active and unemployed at the time of Census 2021. Figure 1 shows how this varies across the Local Government Districts (LGDs) in Northern Ireland.

**Figure 1: Economically active and unemployed by LGD (Census 2021)**



Derry City & Strabane LGD had the highest percentage of its population aged 16 and over who were unemployed (3.7%), with Fermanagh & Omagh, Mid Ulster and Lisburn & Castlereagh having the lowest at 2.2% each.



## 4. Hours worked

### 4.1. Question asked

Census 2021 included a question on hours worked which is presented in Figure 2 (online) and Figure 3 (paper).

**Figure 2: Census 2021 online questionnaire – hours worked**

#### In your main job, how many hours a week do you usually work?

If the **coronavirus** pandemic has affected your working hours, select the answer that best describes your **current circumstances**

Include paid and unpaid overtime

0 to 15 hours a week

16 to 30 hours a week

31 to 48 hours a week

49 hours or more a week

Save and continue

**Figure 3: Census 2021 paper questionnaire – hours worked**

#### 41 In your main job, how many hours a week do (did) you usually work?

↻ Include paid and unpaid overtime.

0 to 15	16 to 30	31 to 48	49 or more
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## 4.2. Hours worked – Census 2021

At the time of Census 2021, 849,100 people were aged 16 and over in employment in Northern Ireland. Table 6 shows that of these, 69.1% were working full-time (i.e. working 31 hours or more per week) and 30.9% were working part-time (i.e. working 30 hours or less per week).

**Table 6: Hours worked (Census 2021)**

Hours worked per week	All people	Percent
<b>Part-time</b>	<b>262,700</b>	<b>30.9%</b>
15 hours or less	86,800	10.2%
16 to 30 hours	176,000	20.7%
<b>Full-time</b>	<b>586,400</b>	<b>69.1%</b>
31 to 48 hours	508,200	59.8%
49 or more hours	78,200	9.2%
<b>All people aged 16 and over in employment</b>	<b>849,100</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Table 6 also shows that most people aged 16 and over in employment were working 31 to 48 hours in their current job (508,200 people or 59.8%). In addition, over 78,000 people (or almost 1 in 10 of those aged 16 and over in employment) were working 49 hours or more per week.

If working part-time, it was much more likely that people were working 16 to 30 hours per week than 15 hours or less. Around 1 in 10 of the population aged 16 or over in employment were only working a maximum of 15 hours per week in their current job. It must be noted that this could be either by choice or by availability – something the census does not collect information on.

Table 7 shows hours worked broken down by sex. It shows that almost 7 out of 10 part-time workers were female (69.7%) and nearly two thirds of full-time workers were male (61.8%).

**Table 7: Hours worked by sex (Census 2021)**

<b>Hours worked per week</b>	<b>All people</b>	<b>Percent Female</b>	<b>Percent Male</b>
<b>Part-time</b>	<b>262,700</b>	<b>69.7%</b>	<b>30.3%</b>
15 hours or less	86,800	63.7%	36.3%
16 to 30 hours	176,000	72.7%	27.3%
<b>Full-time</b>	<b>586,400</b>	<b>38.2%</b>	<b>61.8%</b>
31 to 48 hours	508,200	40.8%	59.2%
49 or more hours	78,200	21.4%	78.6%
<b>All people aged 16 and over in employment</b>	<b>849,100</b>	<b>47.9%</b>	<b>52.1%</b>

#### 4.3. Hours worked – Change over time

Table 8 shows the changes in hours worked between the 2011 and 2021 Censuses. Overall, the number of people aged 16 and over in employment has risen by +6.2% (or 49,900 people). However, over the decade there has been more growth in the number of people working part-time hours than full-time.

**Table 8: Change in Hours worked (Census 2011 and Census 2021)**

Hours worked per week	Census 2011	Census 2021	Change	Percentage Change
<b>Part-time</b>	<b>232,100</b>	<b>262,700</b>	<b>+30,700</b>	<b>+13.2%</b>
15 hours or less	66,500	86,800	+20,300	+30.5%
16 to 30 hours	165,600	176,000	+10,400	+6.3%
<b>Full-time</b>	<b>567,200</b>	<b>586,400</b>	<b>+19,200</b>	<b>+3.4%</b>
31 to 48 hours	488,600	508,200	+19,500	+4.0%
49 or more hours	78,500	78,200	-300	-0.4%
<b>All people aged 16 and over in employment</b>	<b>799,200</b>	<b>849,100</b>	<b>+49,900</b>	<b>+6.2%</b>

The number of part-time workers has increased by +13.2% (30,700 people), with full-time workers increasing by +3.4% (19,200 people). Most of the increase in part-time workers can be attributed to those working 15 hours or less, where the numbers have increased by 20,300 to reach 86,800 people (a +30.5% increase).

#### 4.4. Hours worked by Local Government District – Census 2021

In Northern Ireland, 69.1% of the population aged 16 and over in employment worked full-time hours (i.e. 31 or more hours worked per week) with 30.9% working part-time hours (i.e. 30 hours or less worked per week).

This varied across the Local Government Districts (LGDs) with Mid Ulster having the highest percentage of full-time workers at 71.5%. Belfast LGD had the highest percentage of part-time workers, with 1 in 3 of its population aged 16 and over in employment.

Figures 4 and 5 focus on those working 15 hours or less per week and those working 49 or more hours per week respectively, as a percentage of the population aged 16 and over in each LGD.

**Figure 4: Percentage of LGD population working 15 hours or less per week (Census 2021)**

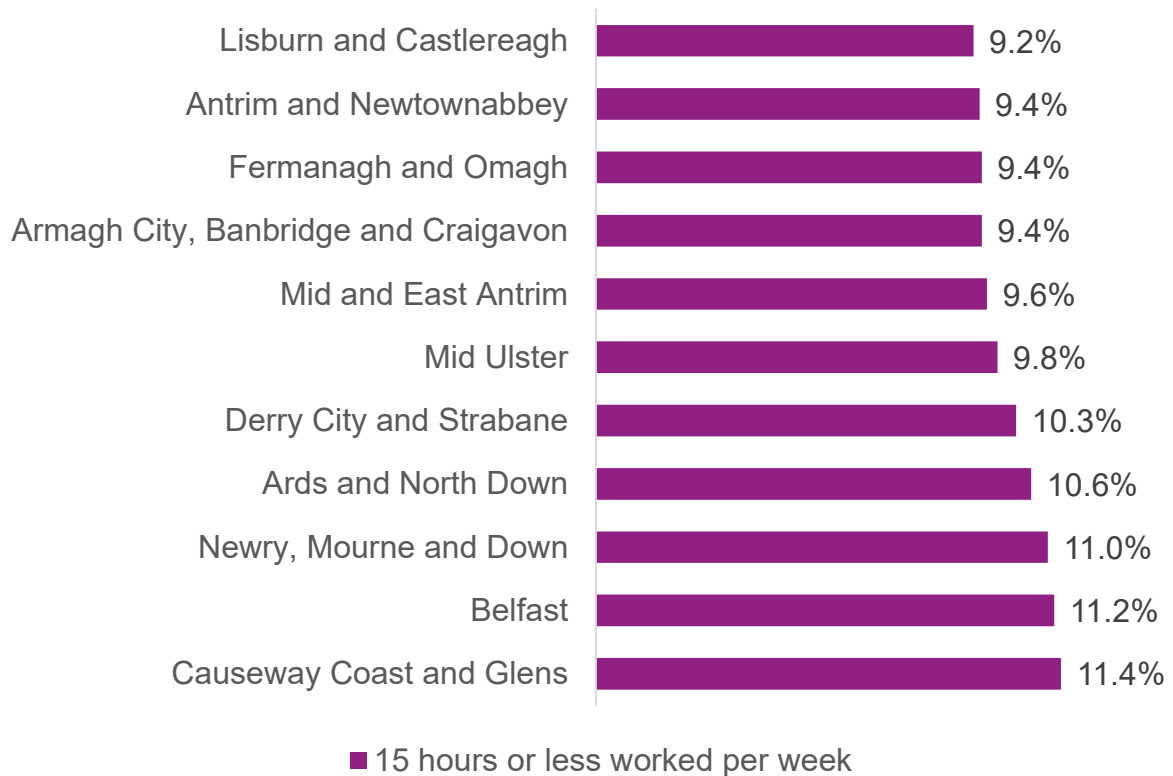


Figure 4 shows that each LGD has between 9% and 12% of its population aged 16 or over in employment working 15 hours or less per week, with Causeway Coast & Glens (11.4%) having the highest percentage and Lisburn & Castlereagh (9.2%) having the lowest.

**Figure 5: Percentage of LGD population working 49 or more hours per week (Census 2021)**

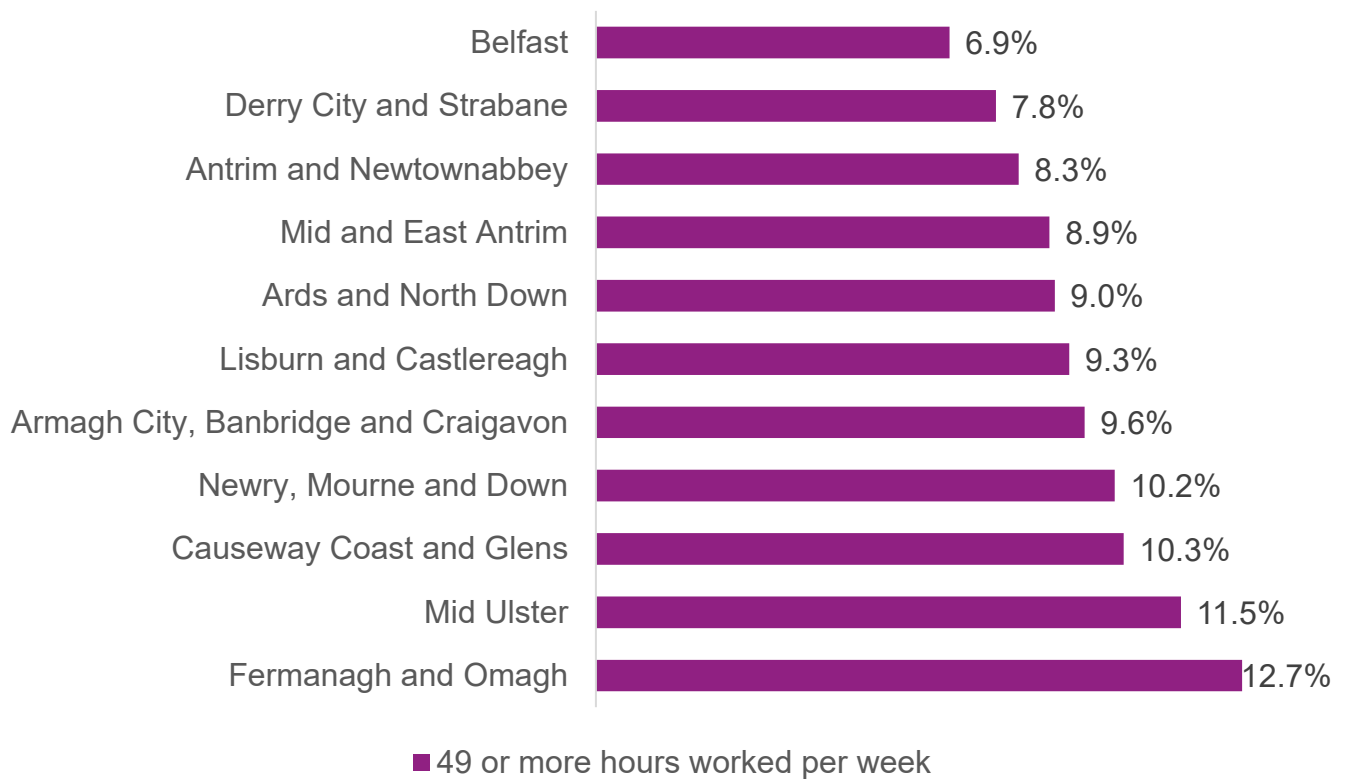


Figure 5 shows that each LGD has between 6% and 13% of its population aged 16 or over in employment, working 49 or more hours per week, with Fermanagh & Omagh (12.7%) having the highest percentage and Belfast (6.9%) having the lowest.



## 5.2. Industry – Census 2021

In Northern Ireland there were 849,100 people aged 16 and over in employment in the week before the 2021 Census. Table 9 shows the broad industries that employed the largest number of people in Northern Ireland at that time.

**Table 9: Industry groups (Census 2021)**

<b>Industry (more than 35,000 people)</b>	<b>All people</b>
Human health and social work activities	139,800
Wholesale and retail trade / repair of motor vehicles and motor cycles	137,100
Education	76,600
Manufacturing	74,300
Construction	71,400
Public administration and defence / compulsory social security	65,200
Professional, scientific and technical activities	44,800
Accommodation and food service activities	38,900
Other	201,100
<b>All people aged 16 and over in employment</b>	<b>849,100</b>

By far, the largest industry sectors for those people aged 16 and over in employment was ‘human health and social work activities’ with 139,800 people, and the ‘wholesale and retail trade / repair of motor vehicles and motor cycles’ with 137,100 people.

Looking at the most common industry groups by sex reveals differing pictures. Table 10 lists the largest industry sectors among females and males aged 16 and over in employment, where either group contributed at least 20,000 people.



**Table 10: Industry groups with over 20,000 females or males (Census 2021)**

<b>Industry (over 20,000 females or males)</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Males</b>
Human health and social work activities	112,100	27,700
Wholesale and retail trade / repair of motor vehicles and motor cycles	64,600	72,500
Construction	7,100	64,300
Education	57,800	18,800
Manufacturing	19,400	54,900
Public administration and defence / compulsory social security	30,800	34,400
Transport and storage	5,500	27,600
Professional, scientific and technical activities	20,900	23,900
Accommodation and food service activities	21,300	17,500
Information and communication	8,700	21,000
Other	58,900	79,400
<b>All people aged 16 and over in employment</b>	<b>407,100</b>	<b>442,000</b>

Table 10 shows that the most common industry groups among females aged 16 and over in employment were 'human health and social work activities' (112,100 females), 'wholesale and retail trade / repair of motor vehicles and motor cycles' (64,600 females) and 'education' (57,800 females).

Table 10 also shows that the most common industry groups among males aged 16 and over in employment were 'wholesale and retail trade / repair of motor vehicles and motor cycles' (72,500 males), 'construction' (64,300 males) and 'manufacturing' (54,900 males).

### 5.3. Industry – Change over time

Table 11 lists the industry groups with the largest percentage point change since the 2011 Census.

**Table 11: Industry groups with largest percentage point change (Census 2011 and Census 2021)**

<b>Industry</b>	<b>Census 2011</b>	<b>Census 2021</b>	<b>Percentage point change</b>
Human health and social work activities	14.2%	16.5%	+2.3
Wholesale and retail trade / repair of motor vehicles and motor cycles	17.5%	16.1%	-1.4
Information and communication	2.5%	3.5%	+1.0
Manufacturing	9.7%	8.7%	-0.9
Accommodation and food service activities	5.4%	4.6%	-0.8
Professional, scientific and technical activities	4.6%	5.3%	+0.7

It shows that 'human health and social work activities' grew proportionally the most, increasing from 14.2% of the population aged 16 and over in employment in 2011 to 16.5% in 2021. Conversely, 'wholesale and retail trade/ repair of motor vehicles and motor cycles' fell by the most, decreasing its population share from 17.5% in 2011 to 16.1% in 2021.

## 6. Occupation

### 6.1. Question asked

Census 2021 included questions to determine the occupation of those aged 16 and over in employment, in the week before the census. The questions presented in Figure 8 (online) and Figure 9 (paper) are the relevant questions that determined the occupation of employment.

**Figure 8: Census 2021 online questionnaire – occupation**

#### What is your full job title?

For example, retail assistant, office cleaner, district nurse, primary school teacher. Do not state your grade or pay band

Job title

#### Briefly describe what you do in your main job.

Job description

You have 120 characters remaining

**Figure 9: Census 2021 paper questionnaire – occupation**

**37** What is (was) your full job title?

➤ For example, RETAIL ASSISTANT, OFFICE CLEANER, DISTRICT NURSE, PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHER.

➤ Do not state your grade or pay band.

**38** Briefly describe what you do (did) in your main job.

## 6.2. Occupation – Census 2021

In Northern Ireland there were 849,100 people aged 16 and over in employment in the week before Census 2021. Table 12 shows the broad occupations that employed people in Northern Ireland at that time, broken down by sex.

**Table 12: Occupation groups by sex (Census 2021)**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>People</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Males</b>
Managers, directors and senior officials	76,100	27,500	48,600
Professional occupations	172,200	97,300	74,900
Associate professional and technical occupations	81,800	37,800	44,100
Administrative and secretarial occupations	94,300	67,400	26,900
Skilled trades occupations	109,000	9,900	99,100
Caring, leisure and other service occupations	88,200	74,600	13,600
Sales and customer service occupations	79,000	47,600	31,300
Process, plant and machine operatives	64,200	7,900	56,400
Elementary occupations	84,200	37,100	47,200
<b>All people aged 16 and over in employment</b>	<b>849,100</b>	<b>407,100</b>	<b>442,000</b>

By far the largest occupation group for those people aged 16 and over in employment was ‘professional occupations’ with 172,200 people, followed by ‘skilled trades occupations’ with 109,000 people.

Looking at the most common occupation groups by sex reveals differing pictures. Table 12 shows that the most common occupation groups among females aged 16 and over in employment were ‘professional occupations’ (97,300 females), ‘caring, leisure and other service occupations’ (74,600 females) and ‘administrative and secretarial occupations’ (67,400 females).

In terms of males, the most common occupation groups were ‘skilled trades occupations’ (99,100 males), ‘professional occupations’ (74,900 males) and ‘process, plant and machine operatives’ (56,400 males).

## 7. Associated outputs

[Census 2021 outputs on labour market](#) are available to download from the NISRA website, they include:

- MS-H02 Economic activity by sex;
- MS-H03 Economic activity of Household Reference Person (HRP);
- MS-H04 Economic activity by sex - full-time students;
- MS-H05 Hours worked by sex;
- MS-H06 Industry of employment by sex; and
- MS-H09 Occupation (1-digit) by sex.

## 8. Further information

Census statistics are produced by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency free from political influence. In May 2022, following a full assessment, the United Kingdom Statistics Authority designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the [Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007](#) and the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#). National Statistics status means that the statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value, and it is our responsibility to maintain compliance with these standards.

The census plays a fundamental role in the provision of official statistics – census data are used to inform key policies, plan key services and allocate public funds.

### 8.1. Quality of the results

The census data collection operation was supported by an independent [coverage survey](#). The coverage survey along with administrative data and information from the field operation were combined to allow statistical estimates to be made of the small percentage of people who did not make a return. The statistical estimates discussed here, as with all Census 2021 outputs, reflect the full population of Northern Ireland.

Further information on accuracy, coverage and imputation is provided on the NISRA website in the [Census 2021 quality assurance report \(PDF 275 KB\)](#).

Clearly the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic will have affected the local labour market. This will have impacted on responses to the labour market questions on the census. For example, it is possible that some people on furlough may have identified as economically inactive, instead of temporarily away from work.

## 8.2. Confidentiality

Census Office has taken steps to ensure that the confidentiality of respondents is fully protected. All published results from the census have been subject to statistical processes to ensure that individuals cannot be identified. For more information, please refer to the [statistical disclosure control methodology](#). These processes may result in very marginally different results between tables for the same statistic.

## 8.3. Comparability with previous censuses

The census is designed to provide the most accurate possible picture of the population on the day the census is taken. Whilst this report contains a small number of historical tables that give comparisons at the Northern Ireland level of some key statistics, users should be aware that comparisons may be affected by other differences, in particular, between the census questionnaires, impacts of issues of the day, etc.

As the last three censuses (2001, 2011 and 2021) were all adjusted for under-enumeration and reflect the Northern Ireland population on census day, this supports comparisons between those censuses.

However, it is not possible to make direct comparisons on occupation groups between the 2011 and 2021 Censuses. This is due to the fact that 2011 Census occupations were coded to the SOC 2010 framework and 2021 Census occupations are coded to the SOC 2020 framework.

## 8.4. Supporting material

A number of [supporting documents](#) are available on the census pages of the NISRA website. These documents describe the census methodology in more detail, the quality assurance processes applied, the paper questionnaire used in the census, and a full list of definitions and output classifications.

## 8.5. More details

Further information on the statistics provided in this publication can be obtained from Census Customer Services at:

Telephone: 028 9025 5156  
Email: [census@nisra.gov.uk](mailto:census@nisra.gov.uk)  
Responsible Statistician: Dr David Marshall

This report was made possible by the co-operation of the public in responding to the census, the commitment of the census field and headquarters staff, and the assistance of many other people and organisations throughout all aspects of the census. The Registrar General for Northern Ireland, who is responsible for the planning, conduct and reporting of the census, would like to thank all of those who contributed to the census.

## 8.6. Copyright

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