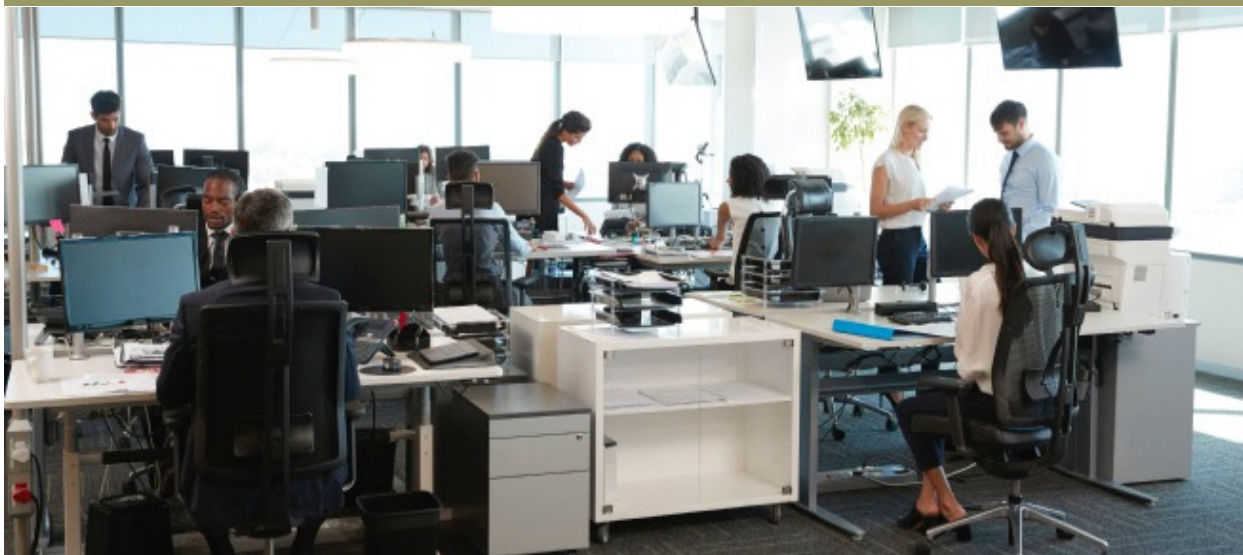


Personnel Statistics for the Northern Ireland Civil Service

2021



Based on staff in post at 1st
April 2021.

Published July 2021

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This report provides an overview of the personnel profile of the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) at 1st April 2021 and how it has changed since 2013. The key findings are summarised below.

1) Numbers

At 1st April 2021 there were 21,588 full-time equivalent staff (FTE) in the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS), which was an increase of 1.7% on the figure at 1st April 2020, and a decrease of 18% from 1st April 2013.

Like the previous eight years, in 2021 the Executive Officer (EOI/EOII) and Administrative Officer (AO) grade levels jointly accounted for over half of FTE staff. Since 2013 the proportions of FTE staff have generally decreased at Administrative Assistant (AA) and AO level, and increased at EOI/EOII level and above. In 2021, contrary to the overall trend, the proportion increased at AO level and decreased at EOI/EOII and SO level. Departments continued to differ markedly in size in 2021, ranging from just over 6,250 FTE staff (Department for Communities) to fewer than 300 (The Executive Office).

2) Part-time working

At 1st April 2021, 22.9% of staff were working on a part-time basis, an increase of 3.6 percentage points from 2013. In terms of gender 36% of women and just over 9% of men were part-time.

The proportion of women working part-time varied by grade level, ranging from 9% at Grade 5 and above to 53% at AA level. With the exception of Industrial staff and AA staff, the proportion of females working part-time decreased at all grade levels between 2020 and 2021. For all grades except Industrial staff, staff at G6/G7 and staff at Grade 5 and above, the proportion of females working part-time has increased since 2013.

3) Leavers

There was a decrease in the proportion of staff leaving the NICS during 2020/2021 (2.8%) compared with the previous financial year (2019/20, 3.6%). Age retirement accounted for the largest proportion of leavers, followed by resignations and leaving through early retirement.

2

Introduction

About this Report

This report provides an overview of the human resource profile of the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) in 2021 and how it has changed over time. Where appropriate, comparisons are made with the Civil Service in Great Britain (GB).

Data Coverage

The primary data source for this report, with the exception in part of the NI Prison Service (NIPS), was HRConnect, the Human Resource Service for the NICS. Data for NIPS staff not on HRConnect was obtained from NIPS's own personnel data systems.

Figures are based on actual staff in post at 1st April each year; analyses of leavers are on a financial year basis. Figures relate to employees with an employment contract who are being paid by the organisation. Employees can be permanent, on a fixed-term contract or employed on a casual basis. Permanent employees have a contract with no agreed expiry date or a fixed-term contract of more than 12 months. Temporary/casual employees are those with a fixed term contract of twelve months or less, or employed on a casual basis.

Self-employed, contract workers and agency workers are excluded from the figures. Civil servants working on secondment to other organisations and staff on career break have also been excluded.

Figures for 2021 relate only to NICS staff in the following organisations –

DAERA	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
DfC	Department for Communities
DfE	Department for the Economy
DE	Department of Education
DoF	Department of Finance
DoH	Department of Health
DfI	Department for Infrastructure
DoJ	Department of Justice
TEO	The Executive Office
PPS	The Public Prosecution Service
Other	Includes the Office of the Attorney General for Northern Ireland and Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland.

Details of the methods used to count civil servants - headcount and full time equivalent (FTE) - are presented in the Appendices along with a full list of grade levels, summary information on the work locations of NICS staff, occupations, and numbers at each grade level in the various Departments. Information relating to quality is also included.

The report does not include information on absence, pay, or equality. Separate reports on these topics can be found at:-
[Sickness Absence Statistics \(Opens a new window\)](#)
[Pay Statistics \(Opens a new window\)](#)
[Equality Statistics \(Opens a new window\)](#)

3

Number of Staff

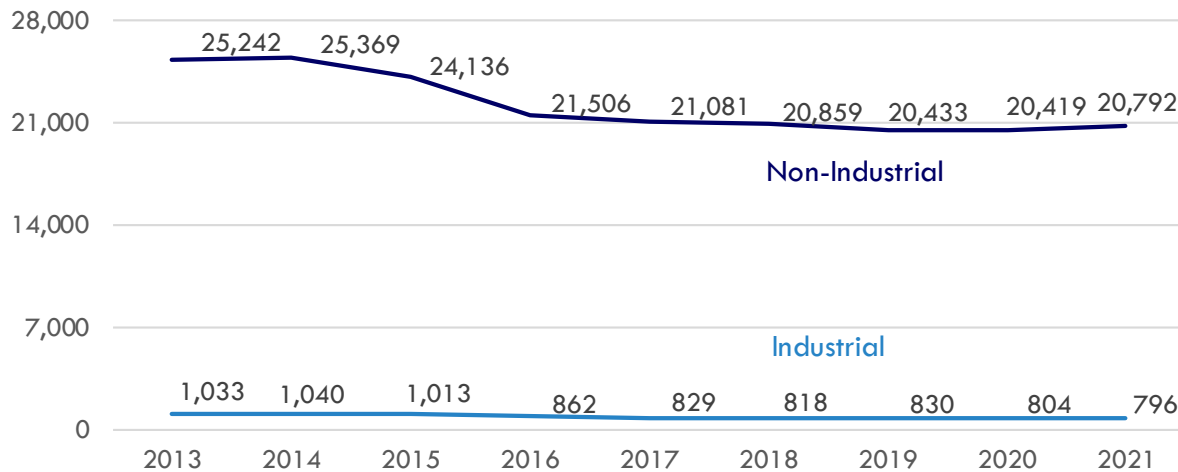
All Staff

On 1st April 2021 the headcount for the NICS was 23,216, a decrease of 1.0% from April 2017 (Figure 1).

The full time equivalent (FTE) number of staff in the NICS at 1st April 2021 was 21,588² and of these 796 were industrials. Figure 2 shows that non-industrial staff numbers are the lowest they have been during the last nine years.

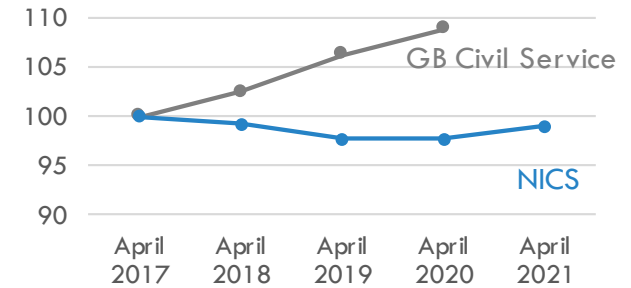
The FTE number of casual staff decreased each year from 2014 to 2019, reaching a low of 37 by April 2019. There was an increase to 43 in 2020 falling to 39 in 2021 (Figure 3).

Figure 2: All Industrial and Non-Industrial NICS Staff (FTE), 2013 to 2021



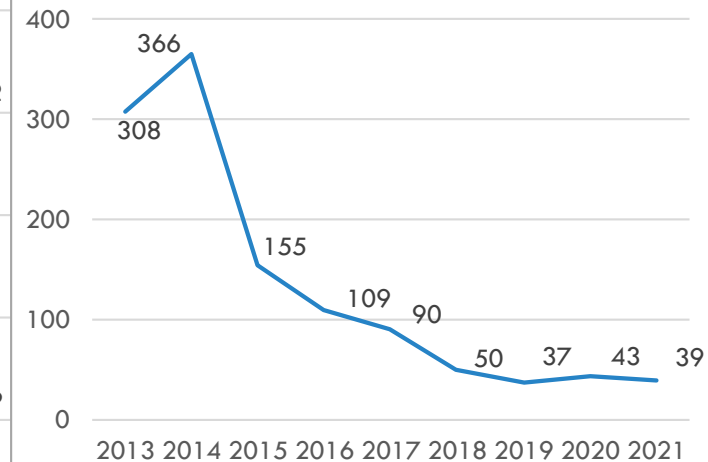
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Figure 1: All Staff (Headcount) Comparing the NICS and GB Civil Service¹
Index (April 2017=100; non zero y axis)



[Download Data](#)

Figure 3: Casual Staff (FTE), 2013 to 2021



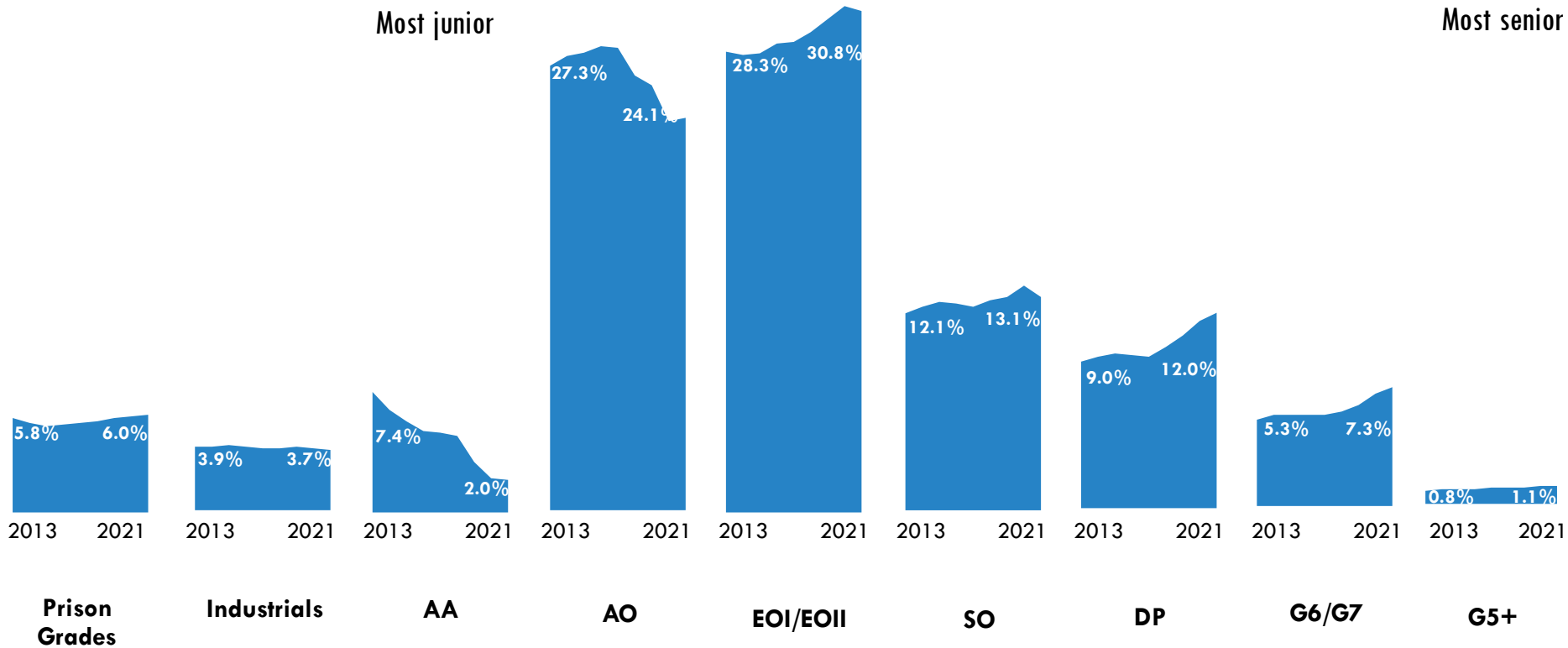
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¹ GB comparators are due to be published in August 2021 at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/civil-service-statistics-2021>.

²Non-Industrial and Industrial totals from figure 2 may not sum to overall total due to rounding.

3 | Number of Staff

Figure 4: All Staff (FTE) Grade Level Distribution, 2013 to 2021



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Grade Profile

Since 2013 the proportions of FTE staff has generally decreased at Administrative Assistant (AA) and AO level, and increased at EOI/EOII level and above. In terms of changes in percentage points, the largest decrease was at AA level (5.4 percentage points), while the largest increase was at DP level (3.0 percentage points). In 2021, contrary to the overall trend, the proportion increased at AO level and decreased at EOI/EOII and SO level. Like the previous eight years, in 2021 the Executive Officer (EOI/EOII) and Administrative Officer (AO) grade levels jointly accounted for over half of FTE staff.

3 | Number of Staff

Departmental Composition

Departments continued to differ markedly in size in 2021, ranging from just over 6,250 FTE staff (DfC) to fewer than 300 (TEO). Each of the smallest three ministerial departments and the PPS had fewer than 1,000 FTE staff; the largest five each had more than 2,800 FTE staff. Since April 2019, three departments and the PPS have experienced a reduction in FTE numbers, with the biggest reduction in DfC (5.1%). In contrast six departments experienced an increase. The highest increase was in DoH (24.0%).

Figure 5: All Staff (FTE) by Departmental Composition, 2016¹ to 2021

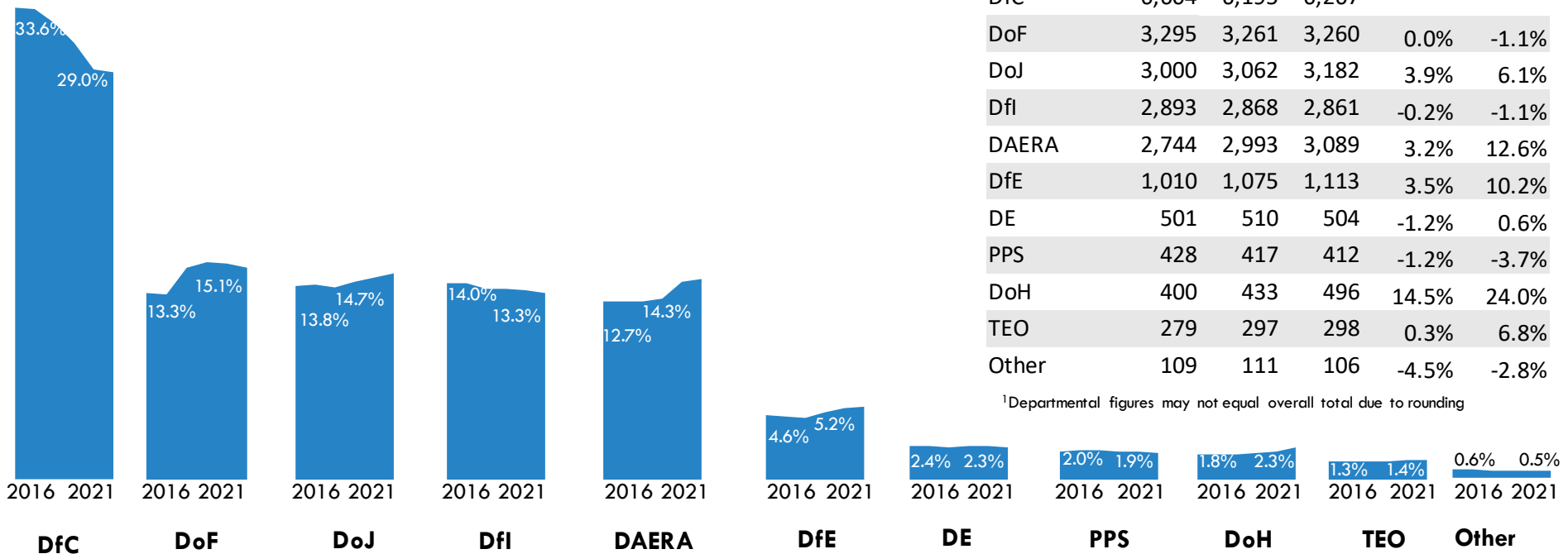


Table 1: Changes in Departmental Composition All Staff (FTE), 1st April 2019, 2020 and 2021¹

Department	% change				
	2019	2020	2021	20 21	19 21
DfC	6,604	6,195	6,267		
DoF	3,295	3,261	3,260	0.0%	-1.1%
DoJ	3,000	3,062	3,182	3.9%	6.1%
DfI	2,893	2,868	2,861	-0.2%	-1.1%
DAERA	2,744	2,993	3,089	3.2%	12.6%
DfE	1,010	1,075	1,113	3.5%	10.2%
DE	501	510	504	-1.2%	0.6%
PPS	428	417	412	-1.2%	-3.7%
DoH	400	433	496	14.5%	24.0%
TEO	279	297	298	0.3%	6.8%
Other	109	111	106	-4.5%	-2.8%

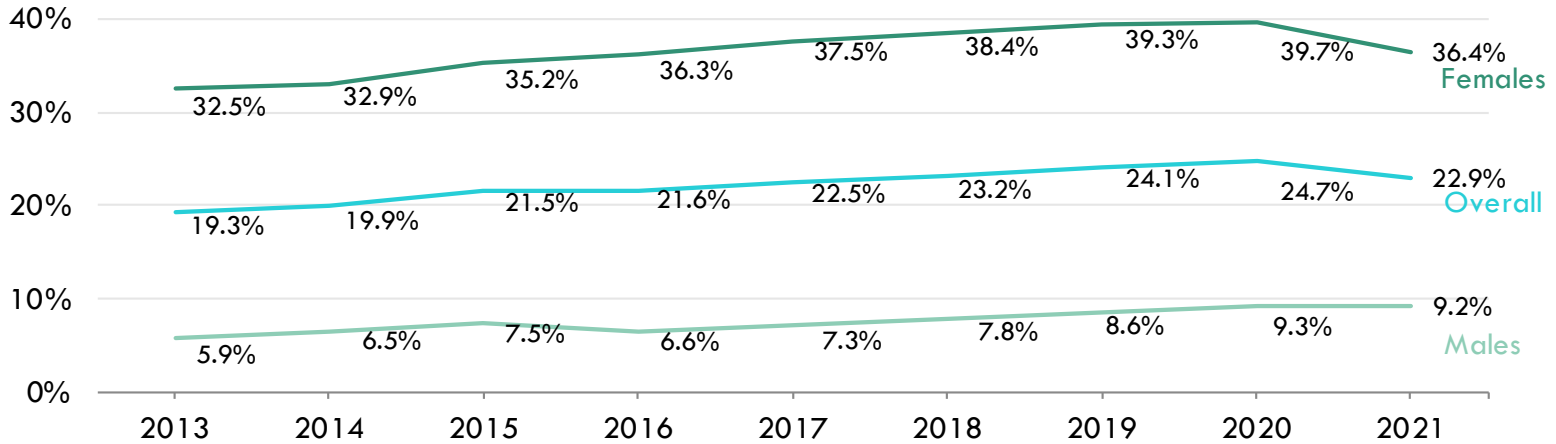
¹Departmental figures may not equal overall total due to rounding

[Download Data](#) ¹In May 2016, restructuring within the NICS saw the number of ministerial departments decrease from twelve to nine. Staff at 1st April 2016 were re-allocated to one of the new departments.

4

Part-time Working

Figure 6: Proportion of Staff (Headcount) Working Part-Time, 2013 to 2021



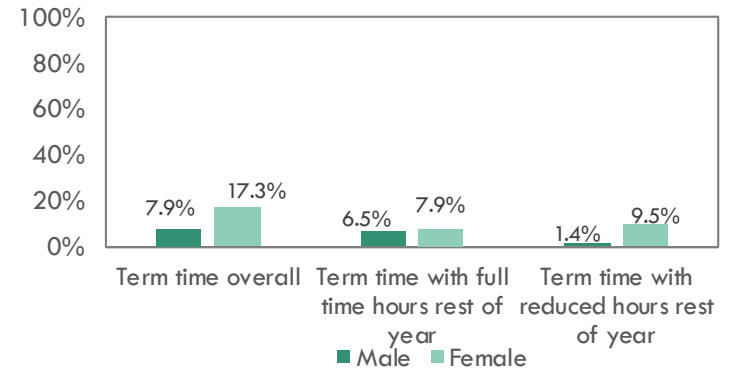
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Overall

The proportion of staff working on a part-time basis has generally increased over the last eight years, however it decreased in 2021. Since 2013 the proportion of males and females working part-time has increased by 3.3 and 3.9 percentage points respectively (Figure 6).

Approximately 8% of male and over 17% of female part-time staff had a term time work pattern. Almost 55% of women working on a term time basis worked reduced hours during the rest of the year. The remaining 45% worked full time hours for the rest of the year. The comparative figures for males were approximately 18% and 82% respectively.

Figure 7: Term Time Working
Percentage of All Part-Time Staff (Headcount)
1st April 2021



[Download Data](#)

4 | Part-time Working

Figure 8: Percentage of Part-time Female Staff (Headcount) at each Grade Level, 2013 to 2020



[Download Data](#)

Grade Profile for Part-Time Female Staff

An analysis by grade was undertaken for female staff only as they accounted for the vast majority (80%) of part-time workers. The analysis showed that the proportion varied markedly by grade, ranging from around 9% at Grade 5 and above to 53% at AA level.

The proportion of females working part-time increased at all grades from 2013 with the exception of Industrial staff, G6/G7 and G5+. Female staff at AA level had the biggest increase (23.1 percentage points). This was followed by staff at AO level (9.6 percentage points) and Prison Grades (8.5 percentage points). However in 2021 contrary to the trend, most grades saw a reduction. Overall the proportion fell by 3.3 percentage points.

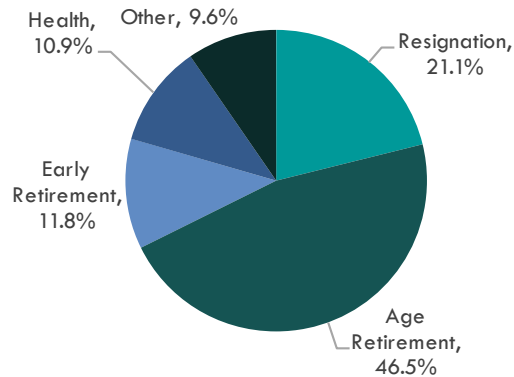
5

Leavers

Reasons for leaving

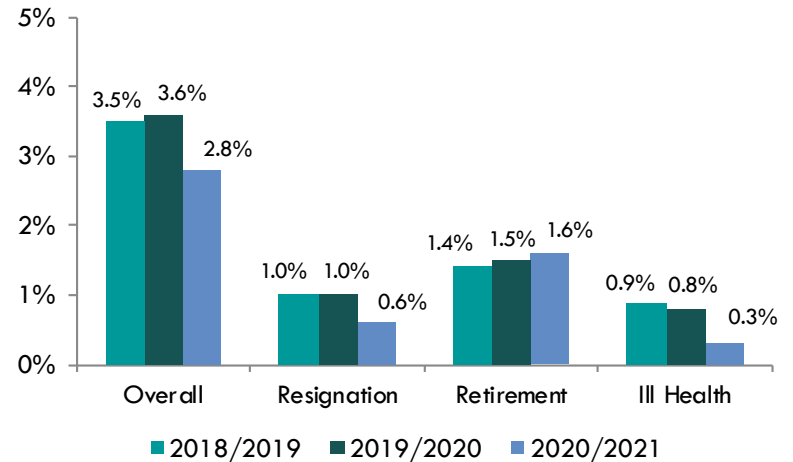
Age retirement (46.5%) and resignations (21.1%) accounted for the majority of all leavers in 2020/21. The 2020/2021 leaving rate¹ (2.8%) was lower than the rate during the previous financial year (3.6%).²

**Figure 9: Reasons for Leaving
All Staff (Headcount) 2020/2021**



[Download Data](#)

**Figure 10: Leaving Rates¹ by Reason for Leaving
All Staff (Headcount)
2018/2019, 2019/2020 and 2020/2021**



[Download Data](#)

¹ Leaving rates are calculated by dividing the number of staff who left during the financial year by the number of staff in post at the start of the financial year, then multiplying by 100.

² GB comparators are due to be published in August 2021: [Civil Service Statistics 2021 \(Opens a new window\)](#)

Appendix 1 – Counting Civil Servants

Two methods of counting Civil Servants are used in this report:

Headcount

Each civil servant is counted as one member of staff, regardless of whether he or she works full-time or part-time. This is appropriate, for example, when recording the numbers leaving the service.

Full-time Equivalent (FTE)

Each full-time civil servant is counted as one member of staff and each part-time civil servant is counted as a proportion (based on hours worked) of a full-time member of staff. Thus, for example, someone working 18.5 hours per week counts as 0.5 staff, since a full-time employee works 37 hours per week. This is appropriate, for example, when recording the number of staff required to perform Civil Service functions.

Appendix 2 – Analogous Grade Level

Table 1: NICS Grading Structure in Descending Order of Seniority (Excludes Industrial and Prison Grade Staff)

Abbreviation	Analogous grade
G5	Grade 5 (Assistant Secretary)
G6/7	Grade 6 (Senior Principal) and Grade 7 (Principal)
DP	Deputy Principal
SO	Staff Officer
EOI/EOII	Executive Officer I and Executive Officer II
AO	Administrative Officer
AA	Administrative Assistant

Appendix 3 – Occupations

Table 2: Occupations of Staff (Headcount) 1st April 2021

Occupation ¹	No. of Staff	Occupation ¹	No. of Staff
Agricultural Inspectors (Grade)	313	Mapping and Charting	178
Agricultural Inspectors (Group)	355	Meat Inspectors	118
Architects	97	Planning Office Staff	46
Careers Officers	108	Prison Grades	1,321
Civil Engineers	706	Quantity Surveyors	40
Computing	627	Science Grades	553
Curatorial Grade	54	Statisticians	315
DE Inspectorate	52	Strangford Ferry	20
Drawing Office Staff	114	Support Grades	115
Economists	88	Trading Standards	23
Fisheries	43	Typing	207
Forestry	38	Valuation	151
General Service	15,142	Vehicle and Driving Examiners	446
Health and Safety Inspectors	63	Veterinary Officers	167
Industrial Grades	806	YJA Specialisms	150
Information Officers	64	-	-
Legal Grades (Solicitors)	341	-	-
M&E Engineers	106	ALL²	22,967

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¹Occupations with fewer than 20 staff have not been listed in the table.

²Including occupations not listed in the table.

Appendix 4 – Composition of NICS overall

Table 3: Staff (FTE) by Grade Level in Each Department, 1st April 2021

Department	Grade 5 and above	Grade 6/7	DP	SO	EOI/EOII	AO	AA	Industrial	Prison Grades	All Grades
DAERA	26	299	488	698	958	404	36	180	0	3,089
DfC	24	156	327	519	2,843	2,270	99	29	0	6,267
DfE	22	135	238	203	338	148	28	0	0	1,113
DE	19	101	86	71	114	93	20	0	0	504
DoF	48	378	581	587	883	696	79	9	0	3,260
DoH	23	92	129	108	84	49	10	0	0	496
DfI	19	124	297	316	695	776	76	559	0	2,861
DoJ	21	149	247	233	578	598	44	20	1,291	3,182
PPS	8	71	97	17	76	118	25	0	0	412
TEO	22	50	68	61	59	34	4	0	0	298
Other	4	20	34	8	24	13	3	0	0	106
Total	235	1,577	2,591	2,823	6,651	5,200	424	796	1,291	21,588

[Download Data](#)

Appendix 5 – Quality Assessment

This section provides information about the quality of the data used to produce this publication, and any statistics derived from these data.

Dimension	Assessment by the author
<p>Introduction:-</p>	<p>This report provides an overview of the human resource profile of the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) in 2021 and how it has changed over time. Information is broken down by analogous grade, department, work-pattern, job location and reason for leaving.</p> <p>The primary data source, with the exception in part of the NIPS, was HRConnect, the Human Resource Service for the NICS. Data for NIPS staff not on HRConnect was obtained from NIPS's own personnel data systems. Figures are based on actual staff in post at 1st April each year; analyses of leavers are on a financial year basis.</p>
<p>Relevance:- <i>The degree to which the statistical product meets user needs in both coverage and content.</i></p>	<p>Covers a breakdown of NICS staff at 1st April 2021 by analogous grade, department and work pattern. Comparative figures and trend data have been included where possible.</p>
<p>Accuracy and reliability:- <i>The proximity between an estimate and the unknown true value.</i></p>	<p>Coverage of staff is 100%. The main computer system from which the data are extracted is also used to pay staff.</p>
<p>Timeliness and punctuality:- <i>Timeliness refers to the time gap between publication and the reference period. Punctuality refers to the gap between planned and actual publication dates.</i></p>	<p>The report relates to 1st April 2021, and is published as pre-announced on 29th July 2021.</p> <p>Some data for GB comparators were not available in time for publication of the 2021 report.</p>

Appendix 5 – Quality Assessment

Dimension	Assessment by the author
<p>Accessibility and clarity:- <i>Accessibility is the ease with which users are able to access the data, also reflecting the format in which the data are available and the availability of supporting information. Clarity refers to the quality and sufficiency of metadata, illustrations and accompanying advice.</i></p>	<p>The report contains a description of the staff covered, and definitions of the terms used.</p> <p>It is available on the NISRA website and contains contact details for further information.</p> <p>The full release is made available in a PDF format, which includes all commentaries, notes, tables and charts. This can be viewed using free software. Data from the tables and charts are also made available separately in open data source format.</p>
<p>Coherence and comparability:- <i>Coherence is the degree to which data that are derived from different sources or methods, but refer to the same topic, are similar. Comparability is the degree to which data can be compared over time and domain.</i></p>	<p>Counts of staff depend on the reference date, whether staff are permanent or casual, whether those on a career break are included, and whether secondees are included.</p> <p>There have been various changes in the scope of the NICS over the past decade as a result of the transfer of functions (and the associated staff) to new bodies outside the NICS, or from outside bodies to the NICS.</p> <p>The headcount figures are on the same basis as those in the 'Employment in the Northern Ireland Civil Service', the 'Equality Statistics for the Northern Ireland Civil Service' and 'Pay Statistics for the Northern Ireland Civil Service' publications.</p> <p>Where appropriate comparisons are made with GB figures. However, some data for GB comparators were not available in time for publication of the 2021 report.</p>
<p>Trade-offs between output and quality components:-</p>	<p>Coverage of staff is 100%. The main computer system from which the data are extracted is also used to pay staff.</p>

Appendix 5 – Quality Assessment

Dimension	Assessment by the author
<p>Assessment of user needs and perceptions:- <i>The process for finding out about users and uses, and their views on the statistical products.</i></p>	<p>The report contains contact details in case users wish to provide feedback, comments or queries on the publication.</p> <p>Key stakeholders, notably NICS HR, regularly communicate their personnel statistics requirements to NISRA. In addition an annual customer satisfaction survey is undertaken to review the publication by gathering feedback on the statistics produced, how well they meet user needs and whether there are any suggested improvements. Where specific changes have been suggested, these have been incorporated as far as possible.</p>
<p>Performance, cost and respondent burden:- <i>The effectiveness, efficiency and economy of the statistical output.</i></p>	<p>The annual operational cost (staff time) of producing this publication is approximately £2,000.</p> <p>There is no respondent burden, since the data are held on an administrative system.</p>
<p>Confidentiality, transparency and security:- <i>The procedures and policy used to ensure sound confidentiality, security and transparent practices.</i></p>	<p>Data are held on a network that is only accessible to the few statisticians who need access. Printouts containing individual records or small cell sizes are locked away, and shredded as soon as possible.</p>