

VAT and PAYE Registered Businesses in Northern Ireland

Facts and Figures from the Inter Departmental Business Register, 2015



Date: 27/01/2016

Geographical Area: Northern Ireland and United Kingdom

Theme: Business and enterprise

Frequency: Annual

Key Points

- The number of VAT and/or PAYE registered businesses in Northern Ireland increased in 2015 for the first time since 2008. The number is estimated to have risen by 375 (0.6%) between 2014 and 2015 (from 67,710 to 68,085). This was the lowest business growth rate of the UK regions in 2015.
- The increase in the number of businesses in Northern Ireland over the year (0.6%) was lower than that of the UK (3.8%).
- The largest industry group in Northern Ireland is Agriculture, forestry and fishing, accounting for over one quarter (25.3%) of all VAT and/or PAYE registered businesses.
- The largest increases in the number of businesses since 2014 were in the Agriculture, forestry and fishing (+300) and Professional, scientific and technical (+170) sectors; whilst the largest decreases were in the Construction (-195) and Retail (-65) sectors.
- Both the Construction and Retail sectors have experienced large declines since 2009. The Construction sector has experienced the largest decreases of all industries since 2009 both in terms of absolute numbers of businesses (-3,295) and percentage change (-26.9%). The Retail sector is now 10.0% (680 businesses) smaller than in 2009.
- The largest increases since 2009 have been in the Agriculture, forestry and fishing (+890 businesses or 5.4%); Professional, scientific and technical (+340 businesses or 7.0%) and Information and Communication (+285 businesses or 21.4%) sectors.
- Northern Ireland has the lowest birth rate (8.7%) and death rate (8.3%) of all UK regions in 2015; however Northern Ireland was the only region to have no change in its birth rate from 2013 (with all other UK regions experiencing a decrease in comparison with 2013). NI also experienced the largest decrease in death rates since 2013 (-0.6 percentage points).
- Of the 68,085 businesses operating in Northern Ireland in March 2015, 2.4% were non-Northern Ireland owned. However, these businesses accounted for almost one quarter (24.4%) of Northern Ireland employees.

National Statistics

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods, and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

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This bulletin provides an overview of the number and characteristics of VAT and/or PAYE registered businesses in Northern Ireland at March 2015 from the Inter Departmental Business Register (IDBR) - a central register of all businesses in the UK.

This bulletin has been designed to supplement a set of tables which provide a comprehensive breakdown of businesses by geographical and industrial detail. Following a [consultation](#), users expressed a preference for online tables rather than a detailed bulletin; consequently this publication is more condensed than previous versions.

Three sets of Excel tables are published alongside this bulletin - 'VAT and/or PAYE tables', 'Business Demography tables' and 'Foreign Ownership tables'. These tables are available via the [IDBR webpage](#).

Inter Departmental Business Register (IDBR)

The IDBR contains information on all businesses in the United Kingdom which are either VAT registered or operating a PAYE scheme. The register is located in the Office for National Statistics (ONS), Newport but the Northern Ireland element of the register is updated and maintained by the Economic and Labour Market Statistics Branch (ELMSB) within the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), an agency of the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP).

The IDBR covers most of the economy including the Agriculture, Production and Service sectors in Northern Ireland. It does not, however, include very small businesses which fall below the VAT threshold (£81,000 in 2014/2015) or do not operate a PAYE scheme.

The register holds information on the characteristics, structure and location of Northern Ireland businesses. This information includes, amongst other things, legal registration status, country of ownership, turnover, employment, employees and industrial classification (SIC 07).

The IDBR enables Government to conduct efficient and cost effective surveys/inquiries whilst minimising the burden on businesses. It is used for national accounts and labour market statistics, as well as providing basic information on the structure of the economy. It is used in four main ways:-

- to select businesses to be included in official statistics surveys/inquiries;
- to mail forms;
- to enable estimates to be made for businesses who do not respond or those not asked to participate in any particular inquiry; and
- to produce analyses of business activity.

Further information on the IDBR is included within the Background Notes of this publication (section 6) and via the [IDBR webpage](#).

The definition of a 'Northern Ireland business' in this publication is an enterprise that operates in Northern Ireland: distinct from an enterprise that has its registered address in Northern Ireland. Please see Background Notes (Section 6) for further definitions.

Northern Ireland Business Population versus the United Kingdom

- In March 2015 there were 68,085 businesses operating in Northern Ireland registered for VAT and/or PAYE compared with 67,710 in March 2014, the first increase (375 businesses or 0.6%) since 2008.
- As of March 2015, Northern Ireland accounted for 2.7% of total UK businesses. In the UK there were 2.45 million businesses registered for VAT and/or PAYE in March 2015, compared with 2.36 million in March 2014, a rise of around 89,000 (3.8%). All UK regions experienced increases since 2014; however Northern Ireland experienced the lowest increase of all regions.

Structure of Industry in Northern Ireland in 2015

- Agriculture, forestry and fishing is the largest single industry group in Northern Ireland representing over one quarter (25.3%) of all businesses operating in Northern Ireland that are registered for VAT and/or PAYE.
- The Construction sector remains the second largest industry group and accounts for 13.2% of businesses operating in Northern Ireland; whilst Retail is the third largest industry group, accounting for 9.0% of businesses.
- Together, these three industries represent nearly half (47.5%) of all VAT and/or PAYE registered businesses in Northern Ireland.

Sectoral Change over the Year

- The largest increases since 2014 were in the Agriculture, forestry and fishing (+300 businesses) and Professional, scientific and technical (+170 businesses) sectors; whilst the largest decreases since 2014 were in the Construction (-195 businesses) and Retail (-65 businesses) sectors.

Sectoral Change over the Past Five Years

- The industry composition of businesses operating in Northern Ireland has remained relatively unchanged since 2009 with almost half (47.5%) of all businesses falling into the three largest industry groups; Agriculture, forestry and fishing; Construction and Retail.
- However, both the Construction and Retail sectors have experienced large declines since 2009. The Construction sector has experienced the largest decreases of all industries since 2009 both in terms of absolute numbers of businesses (-3,295) and percentage change (-26.9%). The Retail sector is now 10.0% (680 businesses) smaller than at the start of the time period.

- The largest increases since 2009 have been in the Agriculture, forestry and fishing (+890 businesses or 5.4%); Professional, scientific and technical (+340 businesses or 7.0%) and Information and Communication (+285 businesses or 21.4%) sectors.

Businesses in Northern Ireland Local Government Districts

- Belfast Local Government District accounted for the largest proportion (13.2%) of VAT and/or PAYE registered businesses operating in Northern Ireland in 2015 followed by Mid Ulster (11.7%). Antrim and Newtownabbey had the lowest proportion, accounting for 5.4% of all VAT and/or PAYE registered businesses in Northern Ireland.

Business Demography

- In 2014 the business birth rate in Northern Ireland as a proportion of active enterprises was 8.7% (also 8.7% in 2013). This birth rate was lower than the rest of the UK which had an overall birth rate of 13.7% (14.1% in 2013). However, Northern Ireland was the only region to have no change in its birth rate from 2013, with all other UK regions experiencing a decrease in birth rates in 2014 in comparison with 2013.
- The death rate in Northern Ireland was also the lowest in the UK, at 8.3% (9.6% for the UK). Northern Ireland experienced the largest decrease in death rates since 2013 (-0.6 percentage points).
- In Northern Ireland the net change between the number of births and deaths was growth of 190 businesses (4,795 births and 4,605 deaths).

Foreign Ownership

- Only a small proportion (1,605 or 2.4%) of businesses operating in Northern Ireland had a non-Northern Ireland Country of Ownership. However, these businesses accounted for a significant proportion (24.4%) of Northern Ireland employees.
- The majority of non-Northern Ireland owned firms had a Country of Ownership of Great Britain (1.1%), Republic of Ireland (0.4%) or the United States of America (0.3%) with over 40 other countries accounting for the remaining 0.5%.

Business Structure

- The majority of businesses in Northern Ireland in March 2015 were registered as Sole Proprietors (43.2% or 29,390) or Companies (34.1% or 23,215).
- Northern Ireland has seen an increase in incorporation in recent years. There are now 6,560 more companies than in 2006. This trend to incorporation has been at the cost of sole proprietors and partnerships; both of which have been on a steady decline since 2006. The proportions of non profit bodies and local authorities in Northern Ireland have remained relatively unchanged over recent years.

Comparison with UK Regions¹

- Between 2014 and 2015, all regions in the UK saw an increase in the number of VAT and/or PAYE businesses. However, Northern Ireland experienced the smallest growth (0.6% or 400 businesses) between 2014 and 2015. This compares to an increase of 3.8% (88,890 businesses) in the UK.
- London experienced the largest growth (6.9% or 29,535 businesses) between 2014 and 2015. The growth of businesses in London accounts for 32.1% of the total growth in the UK between 2014 and 2015.
- Northern Ireland businesses account for 2.7% of the total businesses in the UK.

Commentary

- The [NICEI](#) has shown that there was a return to growth from Q3 2012 but that output was essentially flat in real terms over the year to 2013. However, the growth rate increased to 1.1% between 2013 and 2014 in real terms. The increase in the number of registered businesses over the year is therefore likely to reflect a strengthening economy.
- A potential driver of business creation and growth is the availability of finance, and a recent survey on [Business Access to Finance](#) has shown that while demand remains low, there has been an improvement in the proportion of businesses whose loan applications have been successful. Approved bank loans to SMEs totalled £387 million in Q4 2014, an 8% rise on the same quarter of 2013. Government has also been supporting the expansion of local businesses.
- In the year ending April 2015, there was a decrease of 10% in the number of redundancies reported. However, there were 330 local firms declared insolvent over the past year to Q1 2015, a 4.1% increase on the previous year.

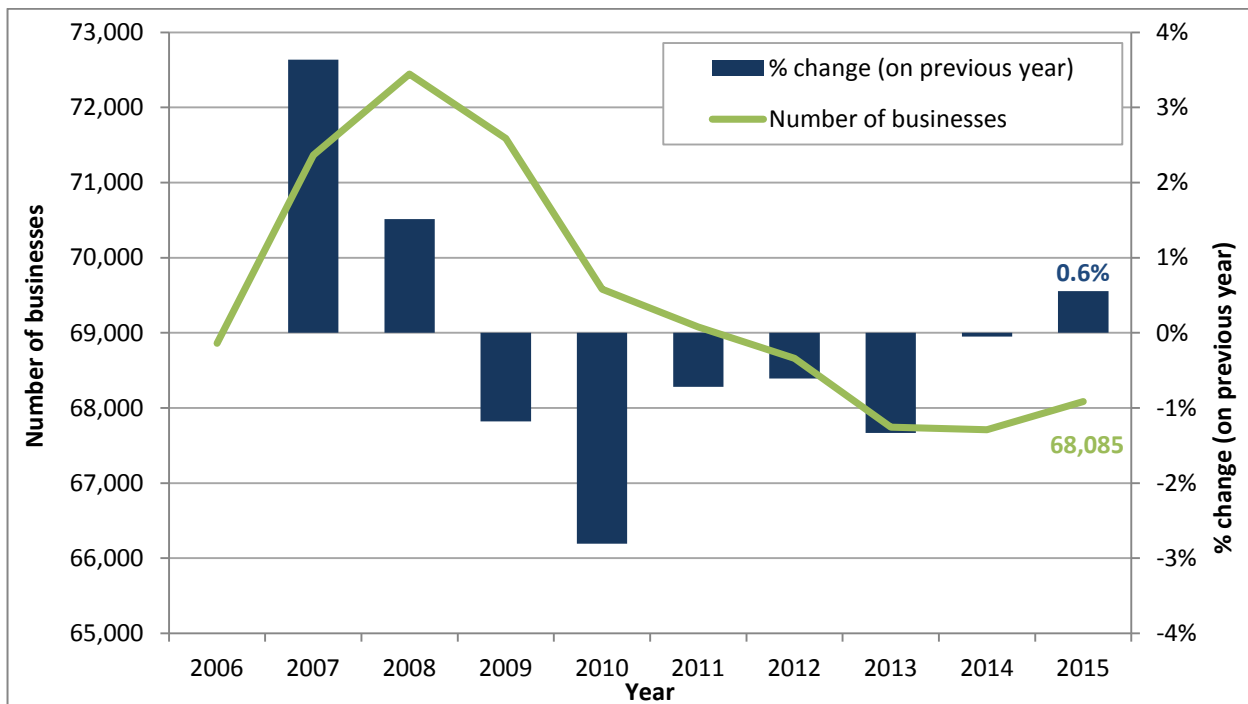
¹ Comparisons between NI and UK regions are defined on the basis of those businesses both operating and registered in a given region. The NI results may therefore differ from those quoted elsewhere in the publication; which are based on businesses operating in NI.

VAT and/or PAYE Businesses in Northern Ireland

There were 68,085 businesses operating in Northern Ireland registered for VAT and/or PAYE in March 2015, compared with 67,710 in March 2014 which represents an increase of 0.6%. This marks the first increase in the number of businesses in Northern Ireland since 2008.

- As shown in Figure 1, the number of VAT and/or PAYE registered businesses in Northern Ireland is estimated to have risen by 0.6% (375 businesses) between 2014 and 2015. This is the first rise in the number of registered businesses since 2008.

Figure 1: Number and Annual Percentage Change of VAT and/or PAYE Registered Businesses Operating in Northern Ireland, 2006 to 2015



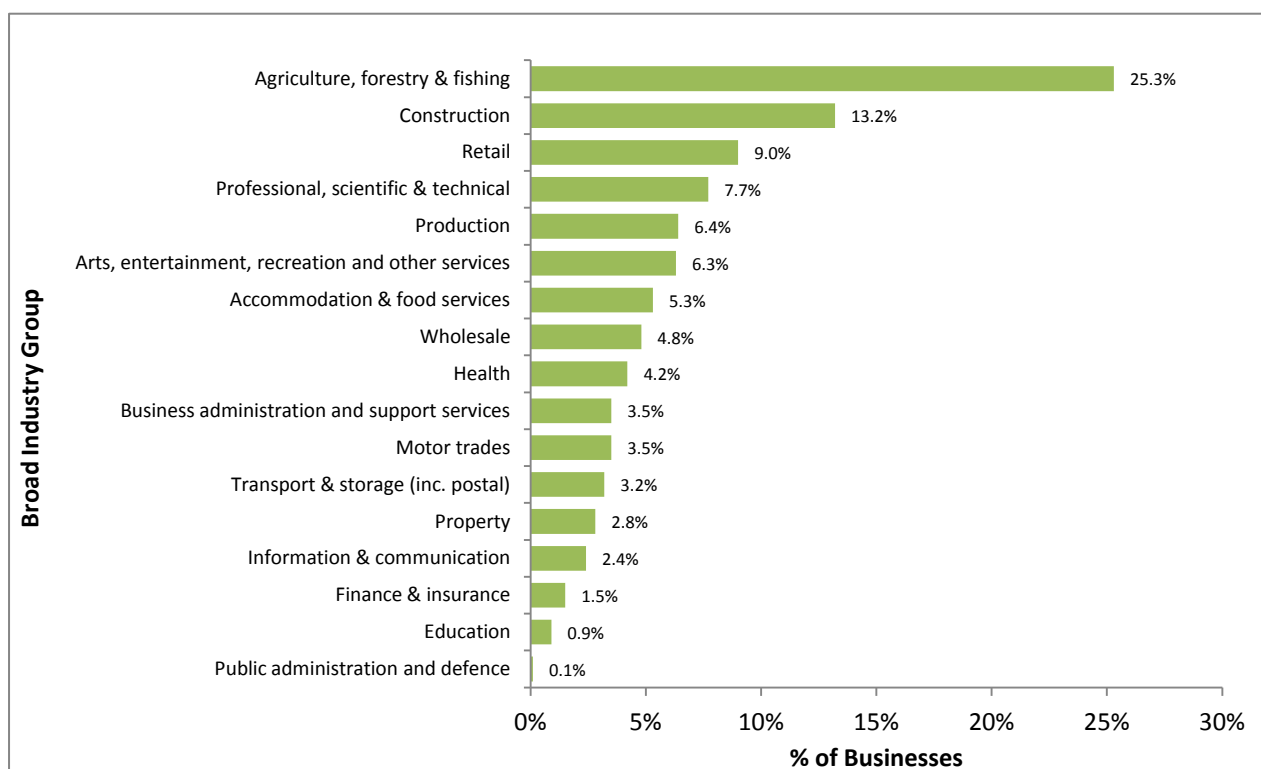
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These figures cover businesses in most of the economy, including the agriculture, production, service and public sectors in Northern Ireland. However they do not include very small businesses that fall below the VAT and PAYE thresholds. Latest figures published by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), which include an estimate of the number of unregistered businesses in the private¹ sector, indicate that at the start of 2015 the number of unregistered businesses in Northern Ireland was 53,445 (55,655 in 2014). Further information on the characteristics of these businesses can be found on the BIS website via the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/business-population-estimates-2015>

¹ In this publication the private sector includes a small number of public corporations and nationalised bodies. This is different from the definition used in the remainder of this publication. However, this figure still provides a good indication of the number of unregistered businesses.

Businesses by Broad Industry Groups

Figure 2: Percentage of VAT and/or PAYE Registered Businesses Operating in Northern Ireland by Broad Industry Group, 2015

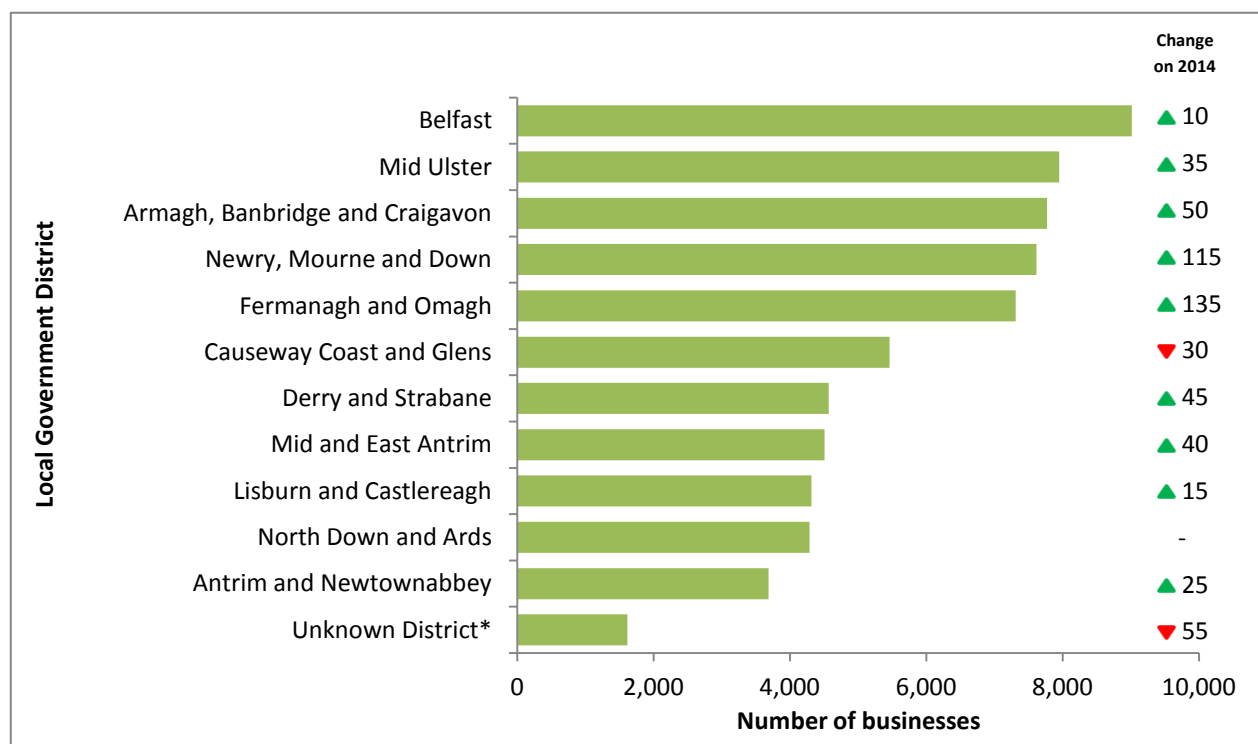


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- Figure 2 illustrates that the largest industry group in Northern Ireland is Agriculture, forestry and fishing, accounting for over one quarter (25.3%) of all VAT and/or PAYE registered businesses in Northern Ireland in 2015.
- The second largest industry group is Construction and the third largest is Retail; accounting for 13.2% and 9.0% of all businesses respectively.
- Together, these three industries represent nearly half (47.5%) of all VAT and/or PAYE registered businesses in Northern Ireland.
- The smallest industry groups in Northern Ireland are Education and Public administration and defence; representing only 0.9% and 0.1% of all businesses respectively.
- The largest increases since 2014 were in the Agriculture, forestry and fishing (+300 businesses) and Professional, scientific and technical (+170 businesses) sectors. The largest decreases were in the Construction (-195 businesses) and Retail (-65 businesses) sectors over the same period.

Businesses by Local Government District

Figure 3: Number of VAT and/or PAYE Registered Businesses Operating in Northern Ireland by Local Government District, 2015



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- Figure 3 illustrates that Belfast Local Government District accounts for the largest number of businesses (9,015 businesses or 13.2%) operating in Northern Ireland in 2015.
- The Mid Ulster Local Government District accounted for the second largest number of businesses operating in Northern Ireland (7,950 businesses or 11.7%).
- Apart from the 'Unknown district' category, Causeway Coast and Glens was the only Local Government District to have experienced a decrease in the number of registered businesses from 2014 to 2015.
- The largest increases were in Fermanagh and Omagh (+135 businesses) and Newry, Mourne and Down (+115). These were mainly driven by growth in the Agriculture, forestry and fishing sector (+85 businesses in Fermanagh and Omagh; +90 businesses in Newry, Mourne and Down). There was also growth in the Professional, scientific and technical sector in Newry, Mourne and Down (+30 businesses); and in the Administrative and support services sector in Fermanagh and Omagh (+20 businesses).
- Agriculture, forestry and fishing was the largest industry group in all Local Government Districts in 2015 with the exception of Belfast, where Professional, scientific and technical was the largest industry group (17.7% of all businesses in Belfast).

*A small number of companies could not be traced to a Local Government District. These businesses have been included in the Northern Ireland figure.

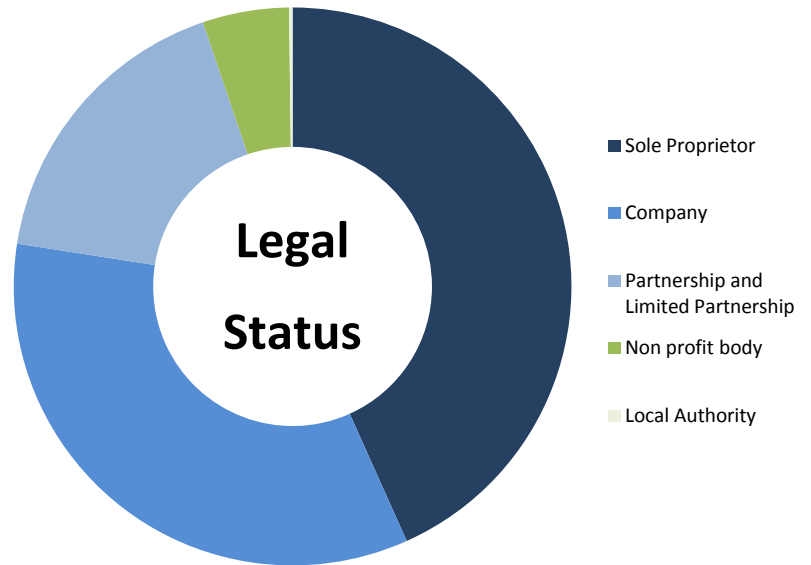
Businesses by Legal Status

Figure 4: Percentage of VAT and/or PAYE Registered Businesses Operating in Northern Ireland by Legal Status, 2015

Figure 4 shows that the majority of businesses in Northern Ireland in March 2015 were registered as Sole Proprietors (43.2% or 29,390) or Companies (34.1% or 23,215).

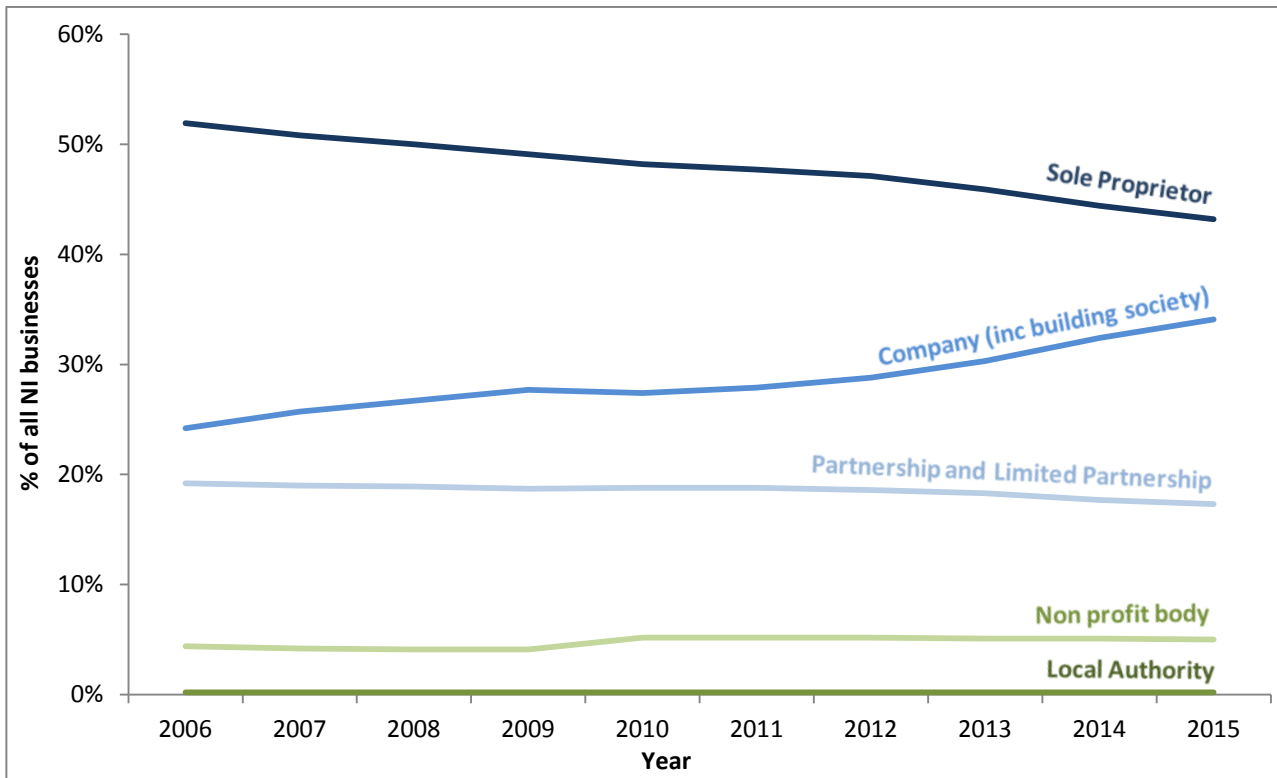
Partnerships and Limited Partnerships account for 17.3% (11,810) of total businesses in Northern Ireland, and Non profit bodies account for 5.0% (3,420 businesses).

Only 0.2% of total businesses were registered as Local Authorities; and only 0.1% as Central Government.



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Figure 5: Percentage of VAT and/or PAYE Registered Businesses Operating in Northern Ireland by Legal Status, 2006 - 2015

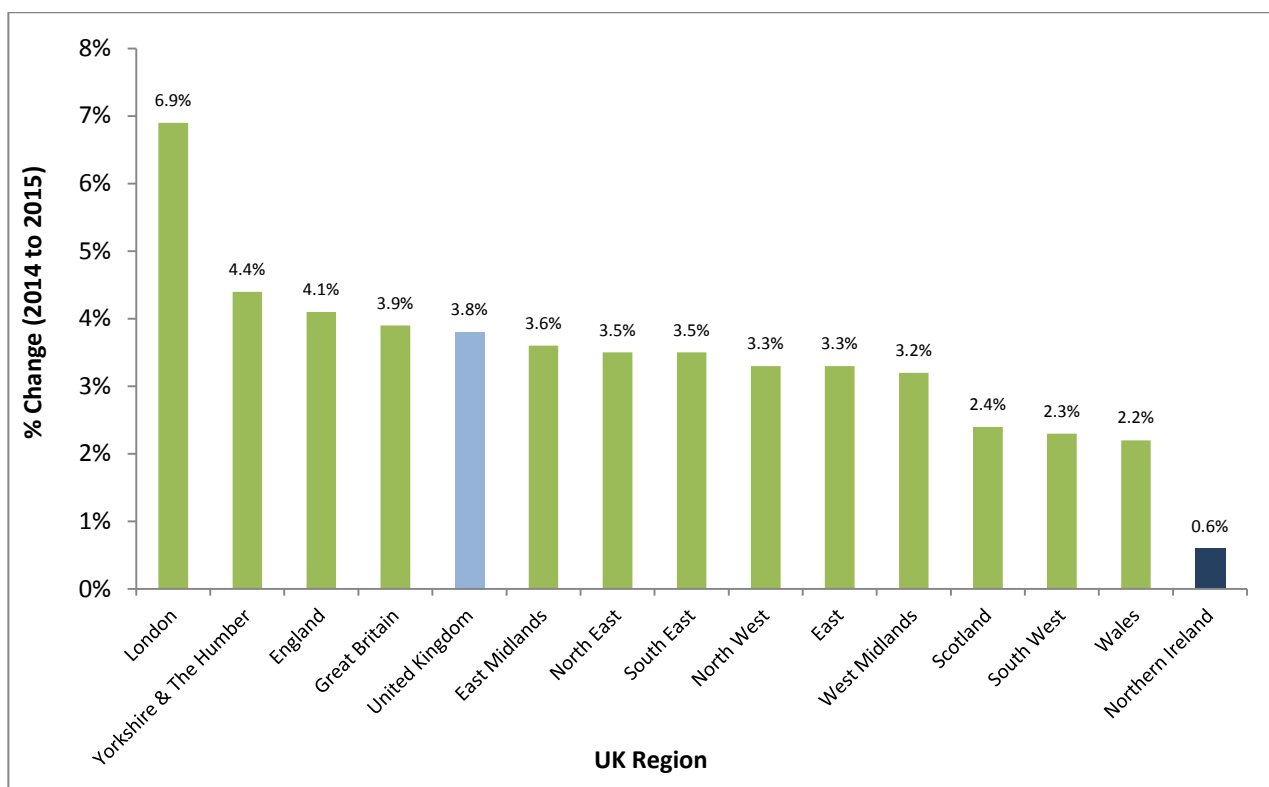


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- Figure 5 illustrates the increase in incorporation and the decline in sole proprietors and partnerships in recent years. The proportions of non profit bodies and local authorities have remained relatively unchanged over recent years.

Businesses by UK Regions

Figure 6: Percentage Change of VAT and/or PAYE Registered Businesses in UK Regions, 2014 to 2015



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- Figure 6 illustrates that between 2014 and 2015, all regions in the UK saw an increase in the number of VAT and/or PAYE businesses. However, Northern Ireland experienced the smallest growth of 0.6% (400 businesses) between 2014 and 2015. This compares to a rise of 3.8% (88,890 businesses) in the UK.
- London experienced the largest growth of 6.9% (29,535 businesses) between 2014 and 2015. The growth of businesses in London accounts for 32.1% of the total growth in the UK between 2014 and 2015.
- Northern Ireland businesses account for 2.7% of the total businesses in the UK.

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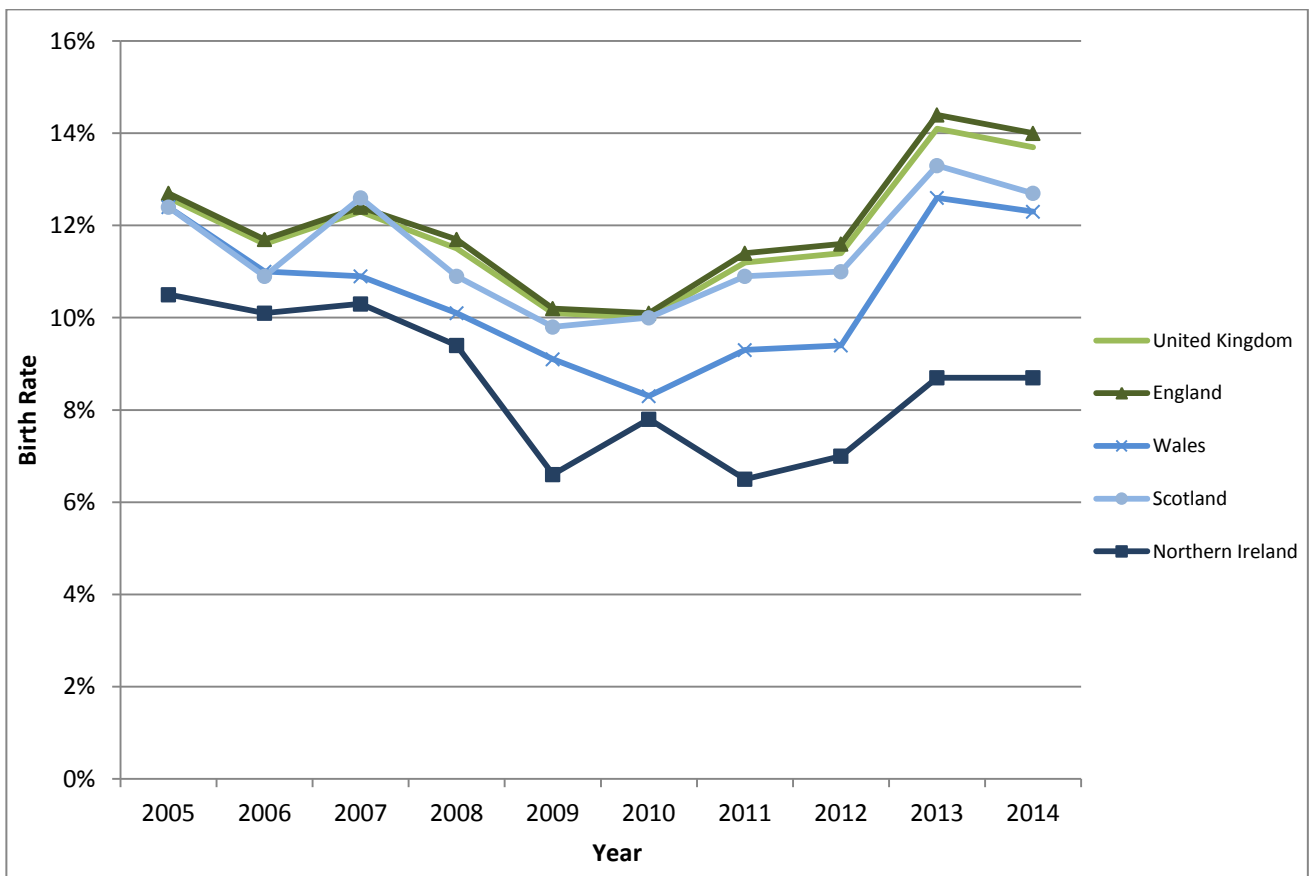
Business Demography

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has responsibility for the publication of official business births, deaths and survival rates. In these figures the standard Enterprise definition is used; businesses are only included in the Northern Ireland figures if their main (or registered) UK address is also in Northern Ireland.

- In the 2014 calendar year, a total of 4,805 enterprises were born in Northern Ireland, a decrease of 50 enterprises in comparison with 2013. In the same year, there were 4,605 deaths of enterprises, a decrease of 375 enterprises in comparison with 2013.

Business Births

Figure 7: Birth Rate of Businesses Registered for VAT and/or PAYE in UK Regions, 2005 – 2014

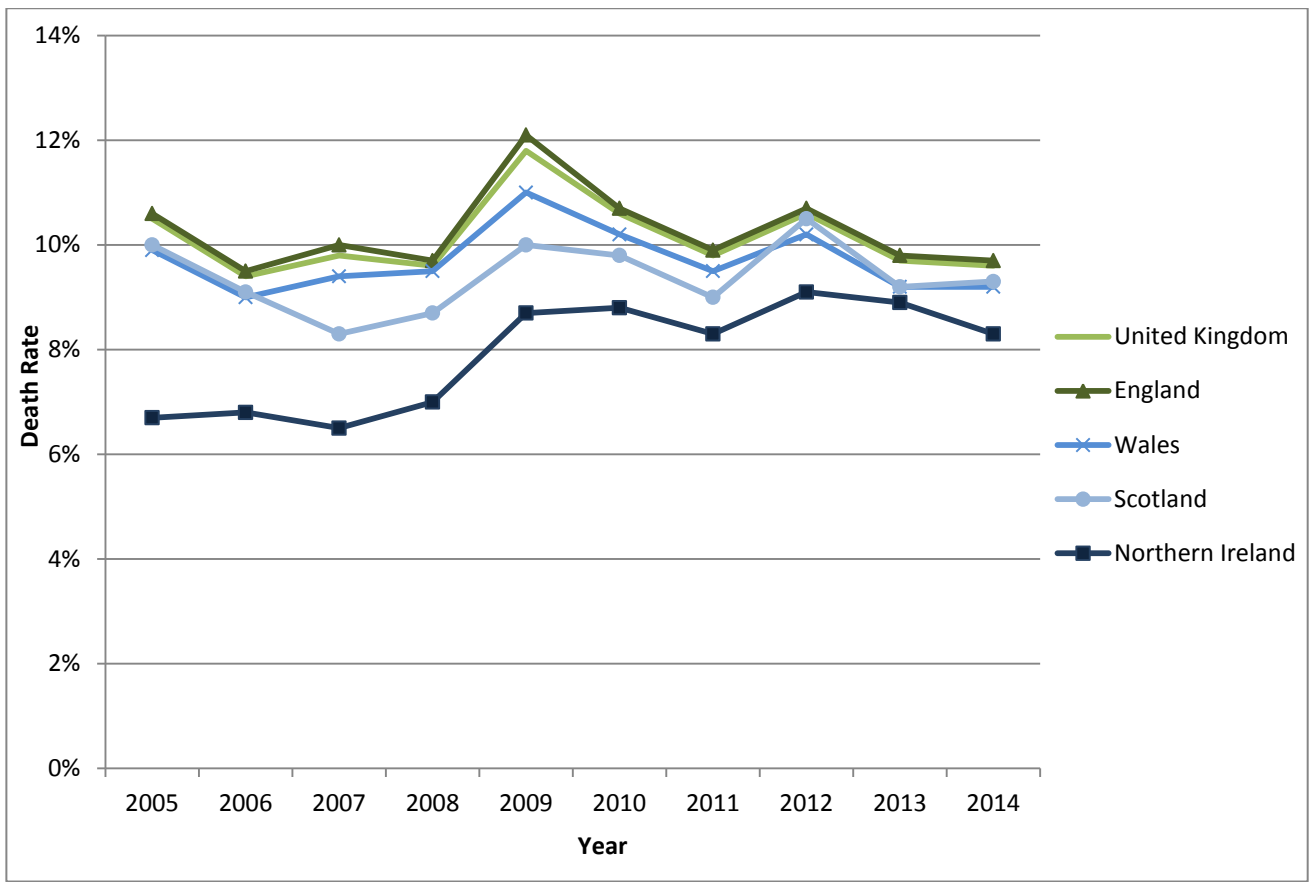


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- The birth rate for businesses in Northern Ireland in 2014 (as a proportion of active enterprises) was 8.7%, which was the lowest of the UK regions. However, Northern Ireland was the only region to have maintained the same birth rate as 2013, with all other UK regions experiencing a decrease in birth rates in 2014 in comparison with 2013. The overall birth rate for the UK in 2014 was 13.7% (14.1% in 2013).

Business Deaths

Figure 8: Death Rate of Businesses Registered for VAT and/or PAYE in UK Regions, 2005 – 2014

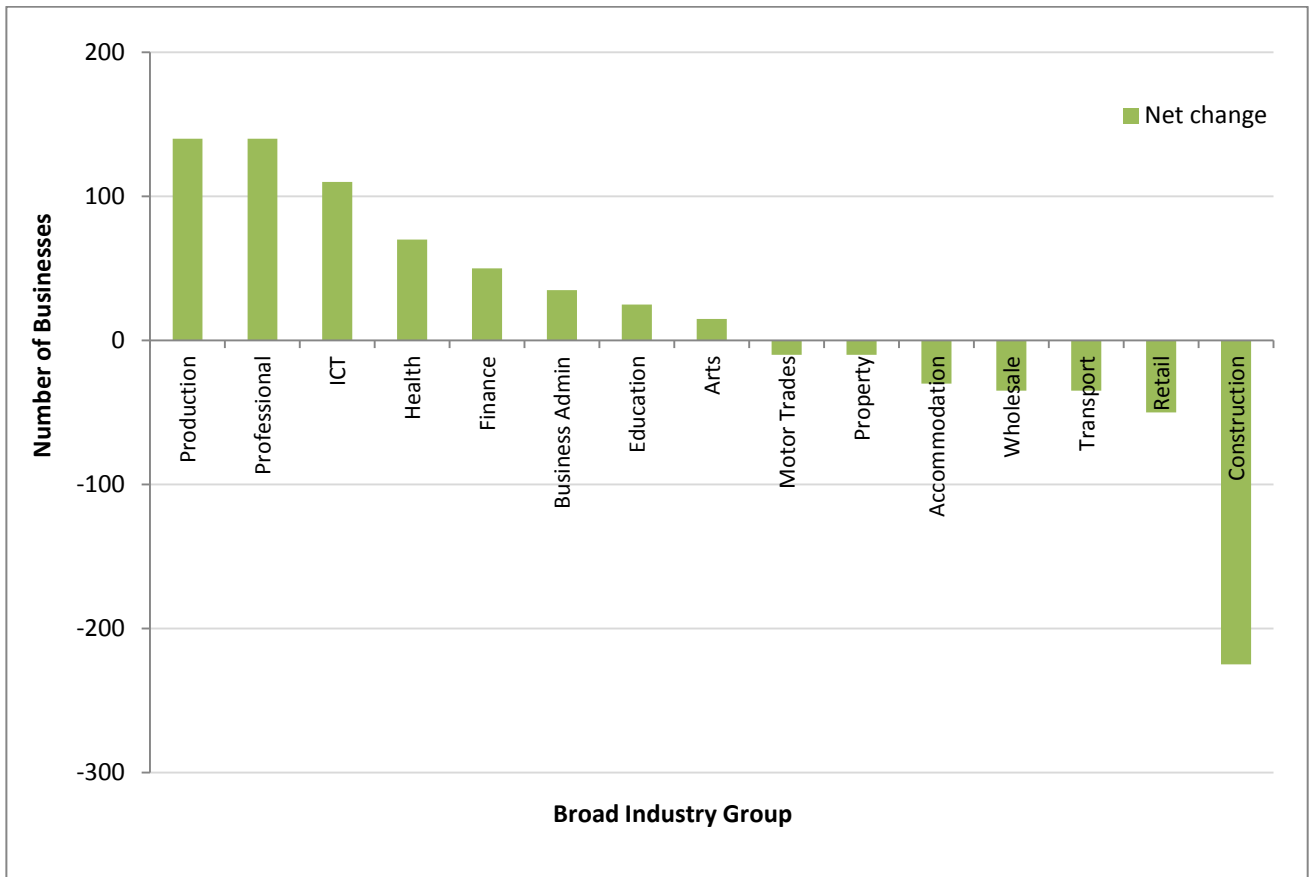


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- The Northern Ireland death rate was 8.3% in 2014. This was the lowest of the UK regions. For comparison, the death rate was 9.2% in Wales; 9.3% in Scotland and 9.7% in England (9.6% for the UK). Northern Ireland experienced the largest decrease in death rates in the UK since 2013 (-0.6 percentage points).

Net Change in Births and Deaths

Figure 9: Net Business Births/Deaths of Northern Ireland Businesses Registered for VAT and/or PAYE by Broad Industry Group, 2014

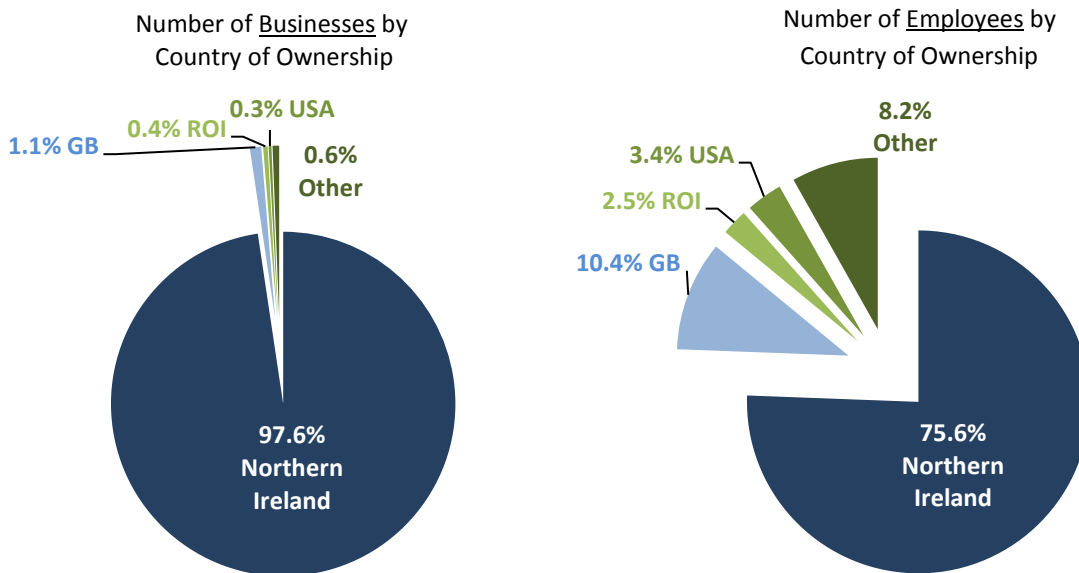


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- Figure 9 offers a comparison of business births and deaths by Broad Industry Group in Northern Ireland. The largest net increases were in the Production (+140 businesses); Professional, scientific and technical (+140 businesses); and Information and Communication sectors (+110 businesses).
- The largest net decrease was in the Construction sector, with a net loss of 225 businesses.
- In Northern Ireland the net change was growth of 190 businesses (4,795 births and 4,605 deaths).

- Of the 68,085 businesses operating in Northern Ireland in March 2015, 1,605 (2.4%) were non-NI owned. This small proportion of businesses accounted for almost one quarter (24.4%) of Northern Ireland employees.

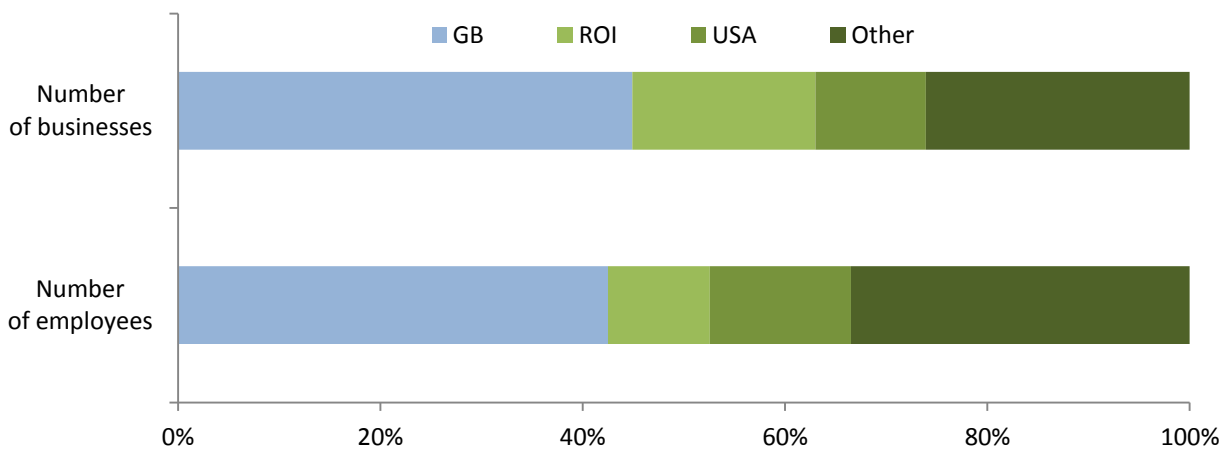
Figure 10: Businesses Operating in Northern Ireland and Number of Employees by Country of Ownership, 2015



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- Figure 10 illustrates that of the 1,605 non-NI owned businesses, Great Britain accounts for 720 (44.9%) of these businesses. Republic of Ireland owned businesses account for 290 businesses (18.1%); while the USA accounts for over one tenth (175 businesses or 10.9%). In relation to the number of employees in non-NI owned business, broadly similar proportions can be seen (Figure 11).

Figure 11: Non-NI Owned Businesses Operating in Northern Ireland and Employees by Country of Ownership, 2015



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¹The market information company Dun and Bradstreet, annually supply the Office for National Statistics (ONS) with information on foreign owned businesses operating in the United Kingdom. This information is then loaded onto the IDBR. It should be noted that this is not an exhaustive list of foreign owned businesses in Northern Ireland, only those for which we have received information from the above sources. Information on the status of foreign owned businesses is continually updated on the IDBR and, as a result, variability in figures may reflect the availability of more up-to-date information rather than a change of ownership.

Details of the methodology and definitions used in each set of tables, along with information on the coverage of the statistics, known quality issues, disclosure control methods and any planned revisions to the figures is included in the 'Notes' sheet accompanying the tables.

(i) Data sources and coverage

The majority of tables are based on a snapshot of the Inter Departmental Business Register (IDBR) taken on **20 March 2015**. This is the source used for the VAT and/or PAYE tables and the Foreign Ownership tables. The Business Demography tables discussed also draw their data from the IDBR, but they use information from throughout the calendar year. For example, the number of business births includes all births during the calendar year. These data are taken from the Business Demography 2014 publication. This is a UK-wide publication produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). The UK Context figures in the VAT and/or PAYE tables are taken from UK Business: Activity, Size and Location 2015. This is a UK-wide publication produced by the Office for National Statistics.

Any businesses which are solely VAT based or solely PAYE based where the employment is estimated to be 20 or more have been excluded from this analysis as these businesses are thought to be duplicates of existing businesses (pending a return from the Business Survey Inquiry or other information). The IDBR figures will inevitably also include some enterprises that were no longer VAT and/or PAYE registered or had actually ceased trading at the time the results were extracted. Similarly, some new business start-ups will be excluded because of the delays in notification.

For further information about the IDBR and its usage please follow the link below:

<https://www.detini.gov.uk/node/1687>

Information produced by ONS regarding the UK IDBR is available via the following link:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/specific/business-and-energy/business-population/further-information-about-idbr-sources.pdf>

(ii) Definitions

A Northern Ireland business can either be defined as an ***enterprise which has its registered address in Northern Ireland*** or as an ***enterprise which operates in Northern Ireland***. The former definition assigns each business or enterprise to a single location within the UK. However, this definition excludes part of the Northern Ireland business population, namely those companies which have a presence in Northern Ireland but have their registered UK address (or head office) elsewhere in the UK. For this reason the alternative definition of enterprises operating in Northern Ireland definition has been used in all Northern Ireland and Local Government tables. In the UK-wide tables produced by the Office for National Statistics and the UK comparison figures, the former definition is used. This is necessary so that each UK business or enterprise is assigned to a single location within the UK.

(iii) Revisions

The VAT and/or PAYE tables and Foreign Ownership tables are produced from snapshots of the Inter Departmental Business Register (IDBR) and are not subject to revision. In the Business Demography tables the latest two years' estimates on births, deaths and survivals are subject to revision. Revisions would normally be made in the following year's publication.

(iv) Historic data

Previous editions of this publication are available from the Inter Departmental Business Register webpage:

<https://www.detini.gov.uk/publications/archive-publications-idbr>

The UK Context VAT and/or PAYE tables (Tables 1.1 to 1.9) are directly comparable with tables contained in previous editions back to December 2009. Prior to this edition the Enterprise based tables did not include PAYE operating businesses not registered for VAT. The NI and LGD VAT and/or PAYE tables (Tables 1.10 to 1.22a) are not directly comparable with tables contained in previous editions prior to edition 16 (published 13 February 2014). This is due to the change from the standard Enterprise based definition (and the alternative Reporting Unit definition used in some tables) to an Enterprise operating in Northern Ireland definition. This publication also contains a number of new tables. In several tables a comparable time series covering earlier years is included.

The Foreign Ownership tables (Tables 3) are not directly comparable with the foreign ownership tables contained in previous editions prior to edition 16 (published 13 February 2014). This is due to the change from the Reporting Unit based definition, where every Reporting Unit is counted as a separate business to the Enterprise operating in Northern Ireland based definition, where multiple Reporting Units for the same enterprise are combined. All these tables include a comparable time series covering earlier years where this is available. The NI/non-NI split is not available prior to 2013.

(v) Comparability with other Northern Ireland Economic and Labour Market Statistics publications

This publication provides information on the number, characteristics and geographical location of Northern Ireland businesses and local sites within Northern Ireland. The Inter Departmental Business Register (IDBR) is the preferred source for this information. Counts of businesses and local sites are available split by industrial classification, size based on employees, size based on employment, size based on turnover, country of ownership including both foreign (non-UK) owned and non-NI owned, private/public sector split and legal status.

The IDBR is not the preferred source for employment/employees estimates. For employee estimates, the Census of Employment or the Business Register Employment Survey (BRES) should be used. These surveys are carried out in alternate years and provide robust estimates of employee jobs in all industries except agriculture. The employee estimates from these surveys are broken down by industry, gender, working pattern, public/private sector split and job location. The Quarterly Employment Survey (QES) provides more timely (but less robust) estimates of employee jobs at the Northern Ireland level. Employment, Unemployment and Economic Inactivity estimates are available from the Labour Force Survey. Although the IDBR is

not the preferred source for employee/employment and turnover estimates, it is the only source for Country of Ownership. As a result employee estimates by foreign (non-UK) ownership, non-NI ownership and country of ownership are produced from the IDBR.

For turnover estimates, the NI Annual Business Inquiry (ABI) is the preferred source. The ABI includes the Production, Construction, Distribution and Service industries in Northern Ireland but excludes the Public Sector. Information on Turnover (along with a range of other financial information) is available by industry sector or geographical location based on both Reporting Units and Local Units.

(vi) Users

IDBR data is widely used by anyone who has an interest in the Northern Ireland economy. The figures are used by economists and economic commentators both within and outside Government in assessments of the state of the economy e.g. the Ulster Bank in their Economic Commentary. In addition, significant non-governmental users of the data include District Councils, consultants, research organisations, universities, academic researchers both home and abroad, the media and the general public, e.g. Ulster Bank and Oxford Economics. The data is used by policy staff and economists within the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to better inform their decision making. Staff from InvestNI use the data to guide decisions in identifying investment opportunities and to monitor the effect of those investments on the economy. The Private Office and the Press office use the data for responding to media queries as well as input to Assembly Questions, speeches, Ministerial correspondence, etc.

This IDBR publication is generally used by academics, consultants, independent researchers and other government departments to provide information relating to NI and as a starting point for analysis. In some cases the figures are used directly to inform decision making. The figures are also used to provide input into Assembly Questions and answer queries from the public.

(vii) Disclosure control

Statistical disclosure control methodology is applied to IDBR data. In the tables produced by Economic and Labour Market Statistics Branch business counts are rounded to the nearest five and counts below five are suppressed; thus figures in these tables may not sum to their totals. Employee estimates are also adjusted to ensure that small numbers and numbers dominated by a small number of businesses are suppressed; figures for less than five businesses have also been removed.

These controls ensure that information attributable to an individual or individual organisation is not identifiable in any published outputs. The Code of Practice for Official Statistics, and specifically the Principle on Confidentiality (P.C) set out practices for how NISRA protects data from being disclosed. The P.C includes the statement that outputs should 'ensure that official statistics do not reveal the identity of an individual or organisation, or any private information relating to them, taking into account other relevant sources of information'.

If you require further information about the figures contained in this publication or the accompanying tables; or you require an alternative classification or more detailed information, please contact the Inter Departmental Business Register Analysis section by: -

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Information regarding the IDBR is also available via the following link:

<https://www.detini.gov.uk/topics/statistics-and-economic-research/inter-departmental-business-register>