

# Men in Northern Ireland: Report 2 November 2004

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ARK is a joint project between Queen's University Belfast and the University of Ulster. Its aim is to make material on the social and political life of Northern Ireland available to the widest audience.

[www.ark.ac.uk](http://www.ark.ac.uk)

The Men's Project within Parents Advice Centre aims to increase awareness of the issues facing local men and boys and to promote their social inclusion.

[www.mensproject.org](http://www.mensproject.org)

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**All reports are available online on the ARK and Men's Project websites.**

## Men and work

### Key facts

- Men constitute 55% of those in employment.
- Men aged 16-64 work a total of 15.6 million hours per week.
- In 2004, men in full-time employment worked an average of 40.2 hours per week.
- One quarter of men work in skilled trades occupations.
- 5.2% of the male workforce claim unemployment-related benefits.
- The average gross hourly earning for men is £10.73.

### Economic activity

Data from the Labour Force Survey (June-August 2004) estimate that the total number of people in employment in Northern Ireland is 722,000. Of this total, 55% are men and 45% are women. The estimates also show a decrease in both male (-0.7%) and female (-1.4%) unemployment since June-August 2003. (These figures are not seasonally adjusted.)

Figures from the 2001 Census of Population show that seven out of ten (70.8%) men aged 16-74 years are economically active, that is, they work full- or part-time, or are unemployed and looking for work. Table 1 shows that over half of men (58.7%) work full-time, while only 4.5% work part-time. In the Census, part-time is defined as working 30 hours or less a week. Full-time is defined as working 31 or more hours a week. Approximately one half of men were employees, while a much smaller proportion (13.6%) were self-employed. Nearly one in ten men (9.2%) were retired, and a similar proportion (9.7%) were permanently sick or disabled. More men than women were economically active, and were more likely to work full-time. However, 13.2% of women were looking after home or family, compared with only 1.4% of men.

**Table 1: Economic activity**

	% aged 16-74 years	
	Male	Female
<b>Economically active</b>	70.8	54.0
Work full-time	58.7	30.8
Work part-time	4.5	17.8
Unemployed	5.7	2.7
Full-time student	2.0	2.7
<b>Economically inactive</b>	29.1	46.0
Retired	9.2	12.7
Student	5.3	6.1
Looking after home or family	1.4	13.2
Permanently sick or disabled	9.7	9.0
Other	3.5	5.1
<b>Total number aged 16-74 years</b>	581,234	605,848

Source: 2001 Census of Population

As might be expected, there were obvious patterns depending on age. While nine out of ten (89.7%) men aged 25-34 years were economically active, only 13.3% of men aged 65 years or over were. Of this older age group, three quarters (74.2%) were retired. One quarter (25.1%) of men aged 55-65 years were permanently sick or disabled, compared with only 1.9% of men in the youngest age group (16-24 years).

## Hours worked

Data on actual weekly hours of work are available from the Labour Force Survey (June-August 2004). Nine out of ten men aged 16-64 years who were in employment said that they worked full-time, compared with 61.1% of women. The total number of weekly hours worked by men aged 16-64 is 15.6 million. The total average number of hours worked is 38.9 for men and 26.2 for women. This differential can be partly explained by the fact that women constitute 80.3% of part-time workers. The average actual weekly hours of work for men working full-time in their main job is 40.2, compared with 32.8 for women. For those working part-time in their main job, the weekly average is 16.2 hours for men and 15.4 hours for women.

Half of respondents to the 2000 Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey said that they would prefer to work full-time, and one quarter (27%) said that they would like to work part-time. However, two thirds of men (68%) would like to work full-time, compared with 37% of women.

## Occupations

Occupations can be classified in several ways, including the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC). Table 2 shows the SOC of men and women aged 16-74 in employment the week before the 2001 Census of Population. There are major differences in the occupational distribution of men and women. While one quarter (25.7%) of men worked in skilled trades occupations, including skilled metal and electrical trades and skilled construction and building trades, only 3.2% of women did so. The next most frequent occupational group for men was process, plant and machine operatives (15.5%). In contrast, only 1.8% of men worked within personal service occupations, including caring personal service occupations, and leisure and other personal service occupations. For women, the most common occupational group was administrative and secretarial occupations (23.6%), followed by associate professional and technical occupations (13.4%).

**Table 2: Occupation (SOC 2000)**

	% aged 16-74 years in employment	
	Male	Female
<b>1. Managers and senior officials</b>	12.6	8.1
<b>2. Professional occupations</b>	10.1	11.1
<b>3. Associate professional and technical occupations</b>	11.8	13.4
<b>4. Administrative and secretarial occupations</b>	7.2	23.6
<b>5. Skilled trades occupations</b>	25.7	3.2
<b>6. Personal service occupations</b>	1.8	12.7
<b>7. Sales and customer service occupations</b>	3.7	11.7
<b>8. Process, plant and machine operatives</b>	15.5	4.1
<b>9. Elementary occupations</b>	11.6	12.0
<b>Total number aged 16-74 in employment</b>	377,389	309,254

*Source: 2001 Census of Population*

However, even within SOC groups, there can be differences between the distribution of men and women. The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety Workforce Survey undertaken in September 2003 indicates that there were 19,435 nursing staff in Northern

Ireland. Out of these, 8% were male, the vast majority of whom (91%) worked full-time. Within nursing, different specialisms have different gender distributions. For example, no district nurses, health visitors or school nurses were male. However, 31% of the 264 community psychiatric nurses were male.

## Industry and sector

Figures on the industrial classification of employee jobs are available from the Quarterly Employment Survey, based on the UK Standard Industrial Classifications of Economic Activities 2003 (SIC 03). Table 3 shows that manufacturing is the largest category for male employees (20.5%), compared with only 6.0% of women. The largest category for female employees is health and social work (25.7%), which accounts for only one in twenty (5.4%) male employees. While nine out of ten women (92.2%) are involved in service industries (classifications G – O), a smaller proportion of men are (64.4%). Public Sector jobs account for 23.6% of male employee jobs, and 39.5% of female employee jobs in Northern Ireland.

**Table 3: Industrial Classification (SIC 03)**

	% of employee jobs	
	Male	Female
<b>A/B. Agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing</b>	3.9	0.6
<b>C. Mining and quarrying</b>	0.6	0.1
<b>D. Manufacturing</b>	20.5	6.0
<b>E. Electricity, gas and water supply</b>	0.8	0.1
<b>F. Construction</b>	9.9	1.1
<b>G. Wholesale and retail trade, repairs</b>	16.4	18.0
<b>H. Hotels and restaurants</b>	5.1	6.6
<b>I. Transport, storage and communications</b>	6.1	2.0
<b>J. Financial intermediaries</b>	1.8	3.1
<b>K. Real estate, renting and business activities</b>	9.3	8.6
<b>L. Public administration and defence, social security</b>	10.3	8.5
<b>M. Education</b>	5.4	15.0
<b>N. Health and social work</b>	5.4	25.7
<b>O,P,Q. Other service activities</b>	4.6	4.6
<b>Total number of employee jobs</b>	330,230	351,140

Source: June 2004 Quarterly Employment Survey

## Unemployment

Claimant count data is a main source of information relating to unemployment. The figures are derived from records of claimants at Social Security Offices, and is a count of the number of people claiming Jobseekers' Allowance and National Insurance Credits. The figures include severely disabled claimants, but exclude students seeking vacation work and people whose benefits have been temporarily stopped.

In September 2004, there were 22,857 men claiming unemployment-related benefits. This represents 5.2% of the male workforce, and 4.3% of men of working age (16-64 years). More than one quarter of all male claimants (28.7% or 6,569 people) were aged under 25 years. This is considerably lower than the 41.2% of female claimants who were aged under 25 years.

More than one quarter of all male claimants (28.0% or 6,411 people) were regarded as being long-term claimants, that is, they have claimed unemployment-related benefits for one year or more. This represents 1.5% of the total male workforce. For women, the proportion of long-term claimants was 16.8%.

## Earnings

As highlighted by the data so far presented in this fact sheet, employment characteristics vary enormously both within and among men and women. Thus, analysing earnings data is very complicated, and the figures presented here do not take the full range of contributing factors into account, nor their interaction.

Based on data from the 2003 New Earnings Survey, the average gross weekly earnings for men working full-time was £437.70, with a gross hourly earning of £10.73. Table 4 shows that earnings differ depending on the skill level necessary for a job, the sector, and whether the job is full- or part-time. The table also shows that earnings for women are lower than men for all measures, while the average number of hours worked is less.

**Table 4: Earnings**

	Male	Female
<b>Average total weekly hours (full-time workers)</b>	40.8	37.2
<b>Average weekly overtime hours (full-time workers)</b>	2.4	0.7
<b>Average gross weekly earnings (full-time workers)</b>	£437.70	£355.20
<b>Skill level - general</b>	£378.90	£226.00
<b>Skill level - degree or similar</b>	£658.20	£532.40
<b>Public sector</b>	£517.90	£414.10
<b>Private sector</b>	£405.10	£300.4
<b>Hourly earnings: full-time workers</b>	£10.73	£9.54
<b>Hourly earnings: part-time workers</b>	£7.60	£7.50

Source: April 2003 New Earnings Survey

### Glossary

*Seasonally adjusted data* involves removing the seasonal influences from the data, thus allowing for a better analysis of the more important underlying reasons for month-to-month changes in joblessness.

*Claimant count* is the number of people claiming Jobseekers' Allowance and National Insurance credits, and is derived from records of claimants at Social Security Offices.

### Useful sources of information

**[www.ark.ac.uk/nilt](http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt)** The 2000 Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey contained a module of questions on attitudes to work.

**[www.detini.gov.uk](http://www.detini.gov.uk)** Labour market statistics and claimant count statistics are available from the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment.

**[www.equality.nisra.gov.uk](http://www.equality.nisra.gov.uk)** The Equality Research and Information website produced by NISRA was designed with the aim of collating and disseminating statistics and research relevant to equality of opportunity and its promotion within the public sector. Data are disaggregated by all Section 75 equality groups, including gender.

**[www.nisra.gov.uk](http://www.nisra.gov.uk)** The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) is Northern Ireland's official statistics organisation. The NISRA website contains a comprehensive range of official Northern Ireland statistics and survey information.

**[www.nisra.gov.uk/census/start.html](http://www.nisra.gov.uk/census/start.html)** Background information, as well as data, are available online for the 2001 Census of Population.