



Country Report Northern Ireland

2010

Research
Centre

Fact Sheet

- Northern Ireland is the smallest UK region in terms of population but has grown more than 4% from 2003 to 2008.
- The region has the highest proportion of under 16s in the UK at just under 22%.
- Northern Ireland has a lower proportion of people either in work, or actively seeking work, than any other region.
- At £15,854, GVA per head is 22% lower than the UK average.
- Exports from the region amounted to £5.1bn in 2009, which is equivalent to only 2% of all UK exports.

Northern Ireland covers an area of 13,576 sq km, stretching from Coleraine and Moyle in the north to Newry and Morne in the south and to Fermanagh and Strabane in the west and to Ards and North Down in the east. The region covers just under 6% of the land mass of the UK.

Population trends

Northern Ireland's population increased by more than 4% from 2003 to 2008, while the UK's population increased only 3% over the same period. In 2008, Northern Ireland had a population of almost 1.8 million, which is equivalent to just under 3% of the total UK population. The region is the smallest of all 12 UK regions in terms of population.

Within Northern Ireland, the population of Belfast has decreased the most at just over 1%, while Dungannon's population has increased 14% and Craigavon's population has grown by almost 11%. The region has a population density of 131 people per sq km which is the second lowest of all regions in the UK. Belfast is the most densely populated city in the region, with 2,448 people per sq km.

Age profiles

In 2008, almost 17% of the population was of pensionable age, the second lowest of the 12 UK regions. The region

has a higher proportion of under 5s than the UK average at almost 7%, compared to a UK average of 6%. North Down has the 'oldest' population, with almost 21% being of pensionable age, while Newry and Mourne has the largest percentage of under 5s at almost 8%. Across the region, 62% of the population is of working age, in line with the UK average, while almost 22% of residents in Northern Ireland are under 16, the highest share of any region in the UK.

Households

There are 688,700 households in Northern Ireland. Of these households, 73% are owner occupied, compared to a UK average of 70%, while 14% are rented from the local authority, above the UK average of 10%. Average weekly earnings were £441 in the period up to April 2009, compared to a UK average of £489. This is the second lowest average earnings recorded across the whole of the UK. Average weekly household spending is estimated at £480, which is more than the UK average of £460. The Department for Communities and Local Government estimates that the average house price in the region was £175,170 at the end of 2009, implying that Northern Ireland is the fifth most expensive region in the UK. The average house price for the UK as a whole was £200,307.

Contact

Shona Dobbie

Head of Research Centre

Alliance Trust PLC
8 West Marketgait, Dundee DD1 1QN

Tel +44 (0)1382 321000

Fax +44 (0)1382 321185

Email contact@alliancetrust.co.uk

Web www.alliancetrust.co.uk

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Regional Income

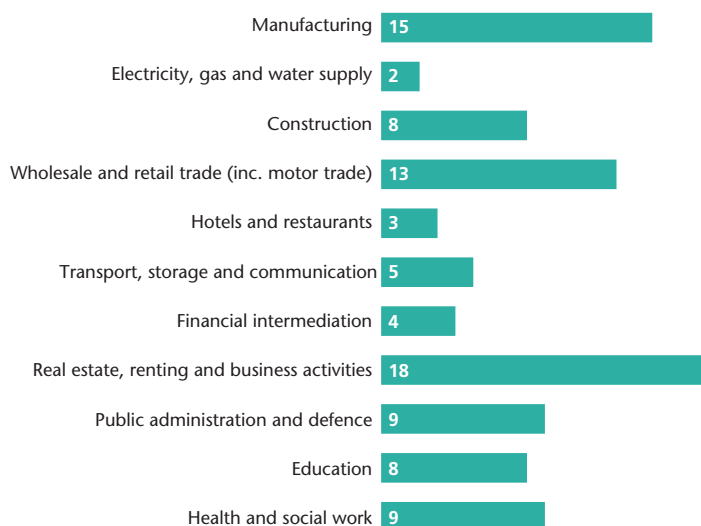
Regional output is commonly measured in terms of gross value added (GVA). Total GVA for the UK increased by 6% in 2007 to £1,246bn. Northern Ireland produced output worth £27.9bn, which is equivalent to just 2% of national output, ranking it bottom of the 12 UK regions. However, the region's output has increased by 70% from 1997 to 2007, above the national average of 69%, and the fifth largest increase among the 12 regions. Within the region, West and South of Northern Ireland has grown fastest, rising 84%, while the North of Northern Ireland reported the smallest gain, at 57%. Belfast and Outer Belfast is responsible for 46% of the region's total output.

Regional output can be compared on a per head basis by dividing GVA by the region's population. In 2007 the national average for GVA per head was £20,430, while that for Northern Ireland was £15,854 which is 78% of the UK average. The region's GVA per head has increased 62% from 1997 to 2007, which is faster than the UK's average growth in GVA per head of 61%. Across the region, GVA per head ranges from just £12,604 in the North of Northern Ireland to £30,172 in Belfast. Over the last 10 years the largest increase in GVA per head was recorded in Belfast, at 84%, while East of Northern Ireland recorded the lowest growth, at just 48%.

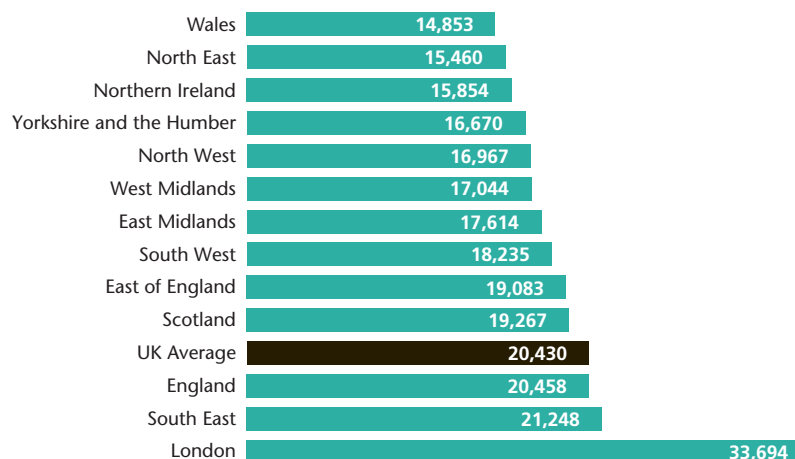
Major Industries

The largest contributor to the area's output is real estate, renting and business

Major Regional Industries (% of output)



Regional output per head in 2007 (£)



activities which produce 18% of output. This is followed by manufacturing, which produces 15% of output, and wholesale and retail, which accounts for a further 13%. These three industries produce just under half of the region's total output. Manufacturing and construction are more important to the region than the national average while the region's output is less influenced by finance and real estate sectors. Education and health & social work rank higher in terms of regional importance than the UK average.

Exports

Exports from Northern Ireland amounted to £5.1bn in 2009, which is equivalent to 2% of all UK exports. Machinery and transport exports accounted for 41% of the region's total. Food and live animals is the other main export

sector, accounting for a further 14%. At present 61% of the region's exports go to Europe, 20% to North America and 9% to Asia.

Workforce

Northern Ireland has the least active population in terms of economic activity which measures the number of people either in work or actively seeking work. The economic activity ratio for the region currently stands at just under 71%, much lower than the national average of 79%.

Across the region 0.8 million people were in employment at the end of 2009. 82% of these people are employed within the service sector. Manufacturing jobs account for 10% of the workforce which is above the national average, whilst construction jobs account for slightly less than the national average at 5%.

At the end of 2009, Northern Ireland had an unemployment rate of 6%, less than the UK average of 7.8%. In Northern Ireland, over 3% of all employees have a second job to supplement income which is less than the UK average of 4%. While women are most likely to have a second job in every other region of the UK, in Northern Ireland just over 3% of both sexes have a second job.

Sources: ONS Regional Trends 2010 Edition, ONS Labour Market Statistics, Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the Northern Ireland Executive.