

October 2025

## Employment

**898,000**

**people employed in NI** (aged 16+)  
(May-July 2025)

**71.8% employment rate**

-0.9pps over year (16-64 year olds)

**Third lowest employment rate across the UK**



**66.9%**

female employment rate



**76.8%**

male employment rate

## Unemployment

**20,000**

**people unemployed in NI** (aged 16+) (May-July 2025)

**2.2% unemployment rate, 2.5**

**pps below the UK average** (aged 16+)

## Skills for Life & Work

**1,900 enrolments in**

**2024/25, 55% higher than 3 years ago.**

**40% of enrolments are women.**

There is a near even split in enrolments by those with a disability and those without.

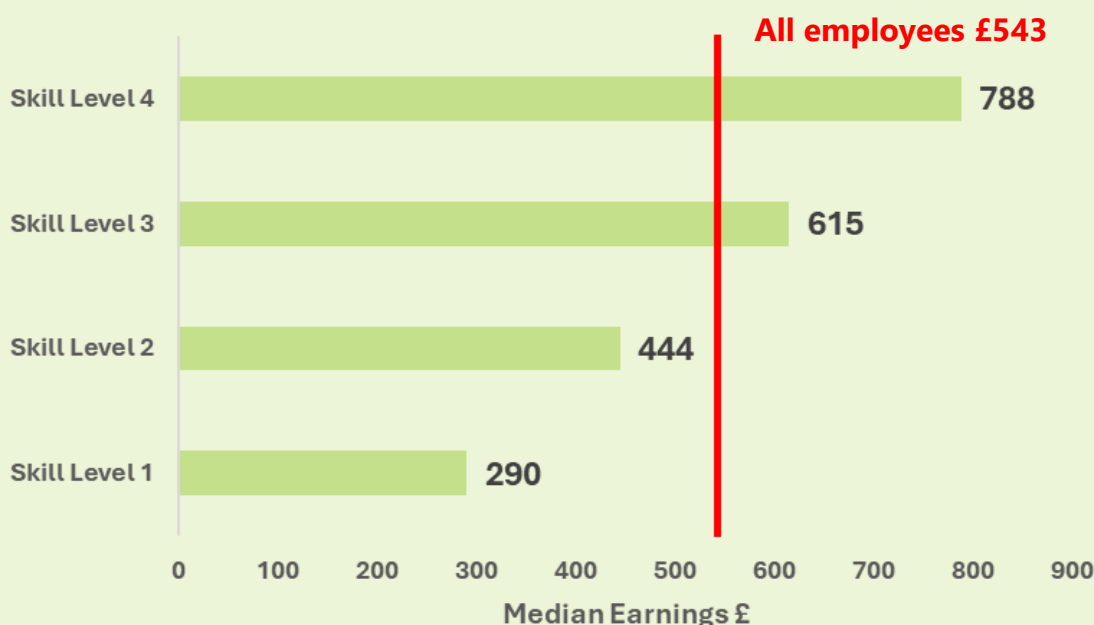
**£34,400** median average earnings for full time employees, **£3,000** lower than UK median. (April 2024)

**Highest 10% of earners earn at least £60,000.**

**Earnings increase with skill level.**

**Employees with skill level 4 earn almost £500 more than employees with skill level 1.**

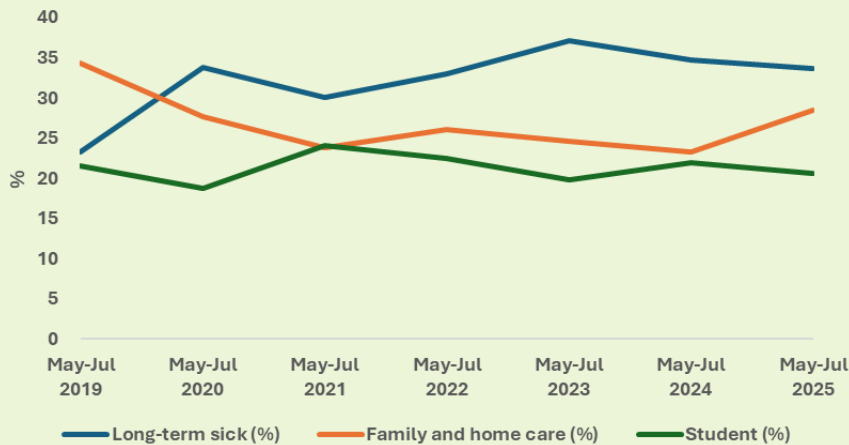
## Earnings



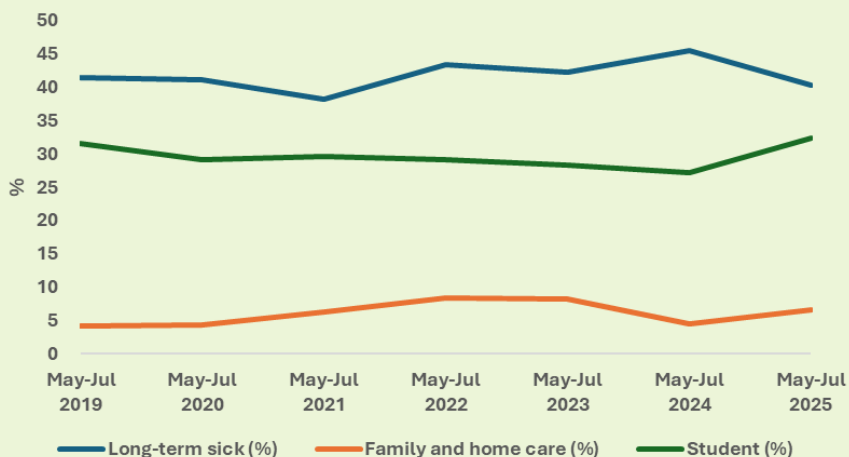
# 26.5% economic inactivity rate (316,000) (aged 16-64) (May-July 2025)

The second highest rate of the twelve UK regions.

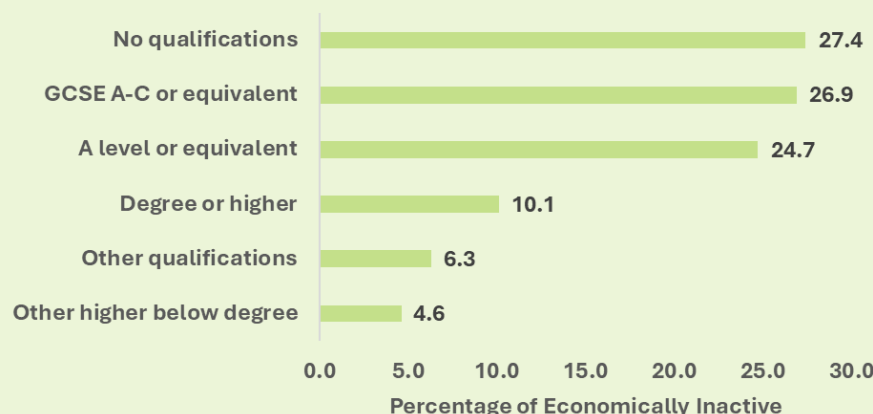
## Reasons for inactivity differ by gender



Reasons for economic inactivity for females have changed since pre pandemic levels – in 2025 (May-July) long-term sickness accounts for over 33% of economic inactivity, an increase of 10 pps since 2019.

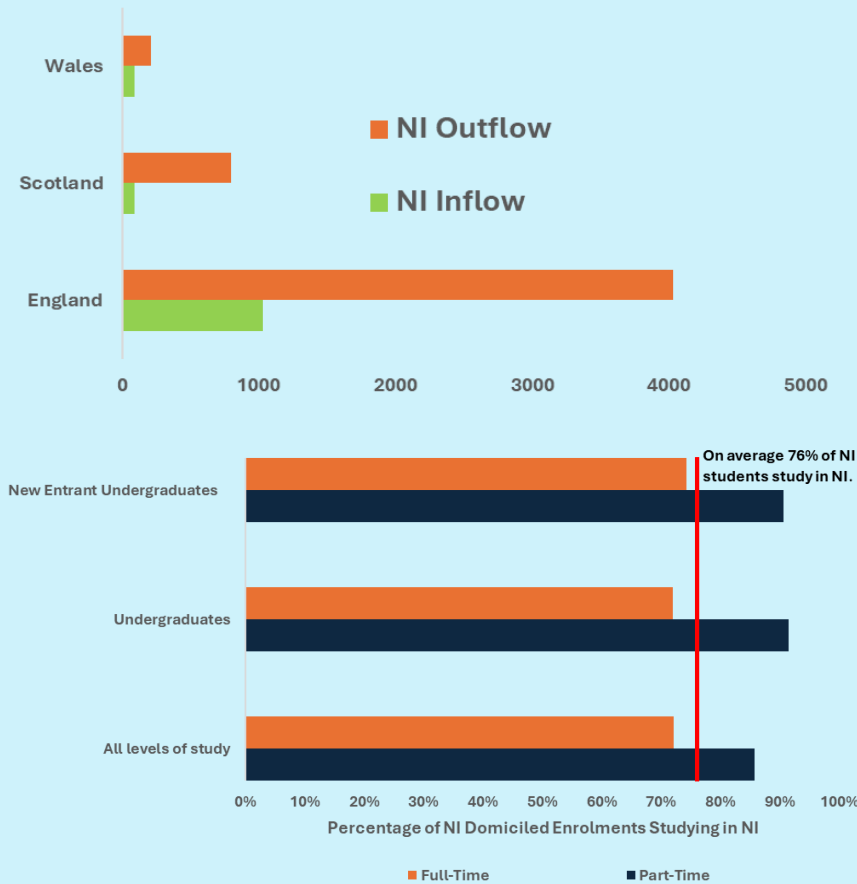


Males consistently report long-term sickness as the main reason for economic inactivity.



The economically inactive is largely made up of those with lower level qualifications, with over 27% having no qualifications, and only 1-in-10 holding a degree or higher.

## Higher Education

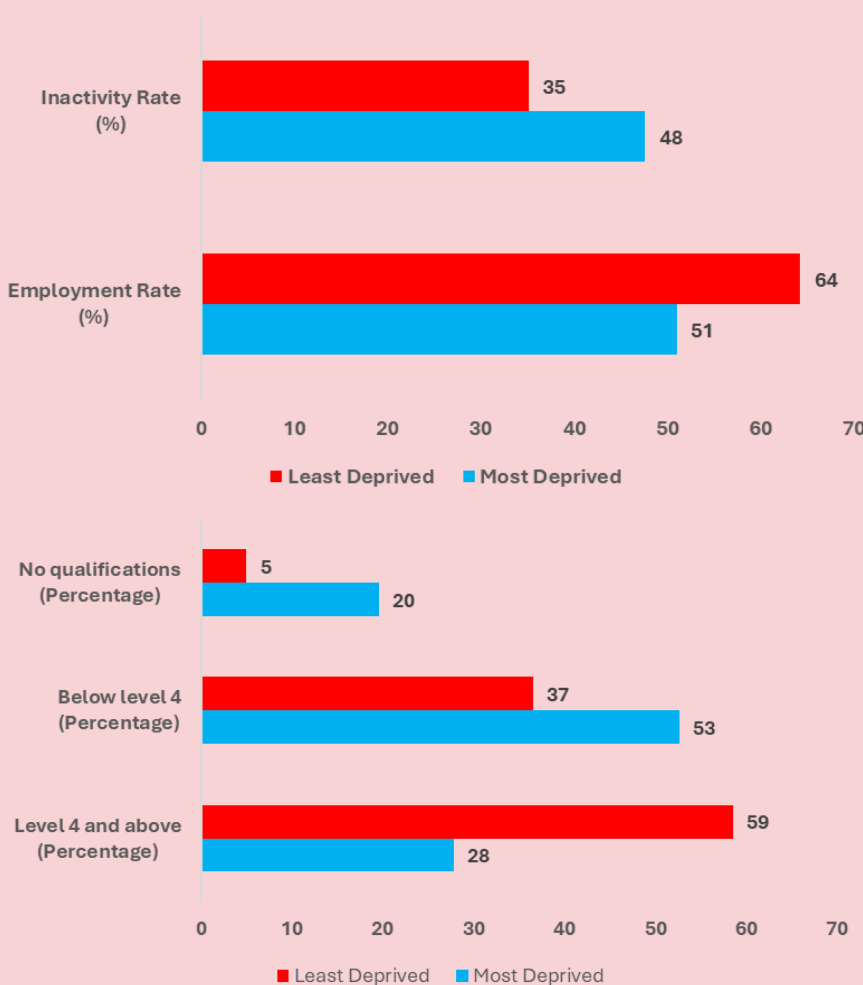


**5,000 students entered GB higher education institutions in 2023/24; an annual fall of 11%.**

**1,200 from GB entered NI HEIs** (undergraduate & postgraduate).

**Part-time undergraduates are most likely to study in NI - 91% study locally compared with 72% who study full-time.**

## Deprivation



**Those in the most deprived areas have lower labour market outcomes than those in the least deprived area.**

**Economic inactivity rate 13pps higher**

**Employment rate 13 pps lower.**

**Those in the most deprived area half as likely to have level 4 and above qualifications**

**AND**

**Four times as likely to have no qualifications.**

## Skills Shortage Vacancies by Industry



### Business Services

**1000 SSV** (2024)

-200 from 2022



### Wholesale and Retail

**1000 SSV** (2024)

-700 from 2022



### Construction

**400 SSV** (2024)

-1100 from 2022



### Health and Social Work

**800 SSV** (2024)

-500 from 2022



### Hotels and Restaurants

**800 SSV** (2024)

-500 from 2022



### Manufacturing

**700 SSV** (2024)

-2000 from 2022

## Investment in Training per Employee



### Construction

**£3090** (2024)

+80% from 2022



### Arts & Other Services

**£2670** (2024)

+22% from 2022



### Manufacturing

**£2040** (2024)

-22% from 2022



### Business Services

**£1970** (2024)

+2% from 2022



### Education

**£1950** (2024)

-15% from 2022



### Hotels and Restaurants

**£1310** (2024)

-34% from 2022



### Health and Social Work

**£1260** (2024)

-28% from 2022



### Wholesale and Retail

**£1120** (2024)

-32% from 2022

## Recent Publications

- ⇒ **UUEPC, Economies with a highly skilled and qualified labour force are more productive and wealthier**  
[https://www.ulster.ac.uk/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0020/1720343/Economies-with-a-highly-skilled-and-qualified-labour-force-are-more-productive-and-wealthier.pdf](https://www.ulster.ac.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0020/1720343/Economies-with-a-highly-skilled-and-qualified-labour-force-are-more-productive-and-wealthier.pdf)
- ⇒ **All island labour market**  
<https://crossborder.ie/reports/all-island-labour-market/>
- ⇒ **Further Education Skills Programmes delivered in FE Colleges 2023/24**  
<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/further-education-skills-programmes-delivered-fe-colleges-202324>
- ⇒ **Work Quality Additional Indicators**  
<https://datavis.nisra.gov.uk/economy-and-labour-market/work-quality-northern-ireland-additional-indicators-2024.html>
- ⇒ **Economic and Skills Research Digests, Q2 2025**  
<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/q2-2025-research-digests>

## SOURCES

Page Number	Sources
1	Employment—Labour Force Survey (monthly), NISRA Unemployment—Labour Force Survey (monthly), NISRA Skills for Life and Work—Skills for Life and Work statistics from August 2022 to April 2025 Earnings—ASHE, NISRA
2	Economic Inactivity—Labour Force Survey, NISRA
3	Higher Education—Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Deprivation—Labour Force Survey, NISRA
4	Skills Shortage Vacancies—Employer Skills Survey Investment in Training per employee adjusted for 2024 prices—Employer Skills Survey