In Brief

- The annual Monitoring Report reveals the early impact of the recession on monitored employment, with the total number of monitored employees falling for the first time in a decade to 517,000 in 2009.
- The drop of 12,500 employees (2.4%) was driven almost entirely by falls in private sector employment. Not only did the private sector decline for the first time since 2002, but the fall in 2009 was three times that observed across the public sector in the last four years combined.
- A decline in employment levels was recorded for all major elements of the workforce, i.e. Protestants, Roman Catholics, women and men.
- The Roman Catholic share of the monitored workforce marginally increased to [45.4%] in 2009. This increase continues the upward trend in Catholic representation seen in recent years, though at a slower rate (Chart 1).

In 2009, the Roman Catholic proportion of the public sector was [45.8%], a rise of [0.4] percentage points compared with 2008.

The Roman Catholic share of the private sector was [45.2%] in 2009, the same proportion as in 2008. This represents the first year since 2001 that the Catholic share has not increased over the previous year.

In 2009, the total number of male employees fell at more than twice the rate of their female counterparts. The female share of the monitored workforce is 52.4%, having increased in six of the last eight years, from 50.4% in 2001.

The total public sector workforce continues to have a higher proportion of Roman Catholics [45.8%] and females (63.4%) than in the private sector. In both sectors, the female proportion of part-time employment is substantially higher than in full-time employment.

Chart 1: Composition of the NI Workforce by Community Background, 2001 - 2009
Fair Employment Monitoring and Review

The Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order requires registered employers to collect ‘monitoring data’ each year on the community composition and gender of their workforce. At least once every three years registered employers must use that information to evaluate ‘fair participation’ within their workforce (and if required, identify any affirmative action that may be appropriate to achieve same).

Alongside this, on an annual basis, each registered employer must also provide a summary of that monitoring data to the Equality Commission via an ‘annual monitoring return’. The Commission, although not required by statute, aggregates and publishes this information in an Annual Summary of Monitoring Returns.

Monitoring Returns

This Research Update presents a summary analysis of the monitoring returns submitted to the Commission by 122 public bodies and 3,981 private sector concerns during 2009. Monitoring Report No. 20, the full report upon which this update is based, can be accessed at www.equalityni.org/research.

The Update sets out a broad picture of composition across the monitored Northern Ireland workforce as a whole, and of the private and public sectors. This is shown graphically in Chart 2. The Update also considers full-time and part-time employees, and the six components of the public sector. It concludes by examining the composition of applicants and appointees.

Monitored Northern Ireland Workforce

The impact of the recession can be seen in monitoring data for 2009. The total number of monitored employees fell for the first time in a decade to 517,272, representing a decrease of more than 12,500 employees (2.4%). The composition in 2009 was 54.6% Protestant and 45.4% Roman Catholic.

Prior to 2009, the total number of monitored employees had been on an upward trajectory. In 2001, total employment stood at 479,517. It peaked in 2008 (529,857) before falling back in 2009 to its 2005 level.

![Chart 2: Profile of the Monitored Northern Ireland Workforce, 2009](image)

Notes: The 'Total' is always greater than the sum of Protestant and Roman Catholic employees as it includes the Non-determined. Gender data includes Protestant, Roman Catholic and the Non-determined.
The private sector was most affected by the recession in 2009. In terms of raw counts, 93% of the 12,585 net job losses during the year occurred in that sector.

A decline in employment levels was recorded for all major elements of the workforce, i.e. Protestants, Roman Catholics, women and men. However, the observed drop in employee counts was steeper for Protestants and for men. As a result of the larger fall in Protestant employment (Chart 3), the Roman Catholic share of monitored employment continued the trend of recent years and showed an increase, from [45.2%] in 2008 to [45.4%] in 2009. However, this was a marginal rise compared with previous years.

In 2009, men were more affected by the downturn than women (Chart 4). The total number of male employees fell at more than twice the rate of their female counterparts (8,700 –v– 4,000).

The gradual upward trend in the female share of employment, particularly for Roman Catholics, which has been evident since 2001, continued in 2009. There was a marginal rise in the female share of the workforce. Women now account for more than half (52.4%) of all monitored employees. Chart 5 illustrates how the gender composition of the monitored workforce varies by sector, and by full-time / part-time status.

**Full-time and Part-time Employees**

In the monitored full-time workforce the total number of employees fell by 10,100 (2.2%) in 2009, halting the trend of annual rises observed since 2002. The composition was [55.1%] Protestant and [44.9%] Roman Catholic.

As noted above, the recession has particularly affected men. This is particularly marked in full-time employment. In 2009, the net fall in male full-time employment was almost eight times greater than the drop in the female count (8,900 –v– 1,200).

The upward trend in Catholic female full-time representation, observed since 2001, continued again in 2009. Over the period 2001 – 2009, Catholic female full-time employment increased by a quarter (25.3% or 19,099 employees), compared with a rise of 4.0% (4,079) for their Protestant female counterparts. Consequently, the Catholic female share of the monitored full-time workforce rose by [4.6] percentage points over the eight-year period, from [42.3%] in 2001.
The effects of the recession were also evident in the part-time workforce, with a net fall of 2,500 employees (3.1%). As a proportion, this is slightly higher than in the full-time workforce. Seventy percent of net part-time job losses occurred in the public sector.

Although the overall part-time workforce is still predominately female (73%), there has been a discernible upward trend in male representation since 2001. Indeed, male part-time working continued to expand in 2009. Overall, the male part-time count rose by almost a quarter (23%) during the 2001 - 2009 period, compared with an increase of 1.5% for women.

**The Private Sector**

The monitored private sector in 2009 accounted for nearly two-thirds (63%) of the total monitored workforce. There was a drop of almost 12,000 employees (3.5%) in 2009, with men accounting for nearly 70% of net job losses. The sector, which had grown in size every year since 2002, peaked in 2008 and has now fallen back to its 2006 level (328,000).

Both Protestant and Roman Catholic counts fell by a similar proportion during 2009 (3.5% and 3.2% respectively). The Catholic proportion of the total monitored private sector, which stood at [40.4%] in 2001, rose in each consecutive year up to 2008, then paused in 2009 at the 2008 level [45.2%]. In numerical terms, the total Catholic count increased by around 18,500 during the 2001 – 2009 period, while the number of Protestant employees fell by just over 8,700.

During 2009, the total male private sector count decreased at twice the rate of their female counterparts (4% versus 2%), broadly mirroring the pattern in the monitored workforce as a whole. Males now account for 54% of private sector workers, a similar proportion to 2001.
Full-time and Part-time Employees

Overall, the lack of change in community composition observed in the total private sector workforce during 2009 was mirrored in both the full- and part-time components.

The Roman Catholic proportion of the private sector full-time workforce, which was [39.3%] in 2001, increased every year up to 2008 [44.5%], and remained at this level in 2009. There was an overall rise of more than 14,800 Catholic employees during the 2001 – 2009 period, compared with a fall of nearly 10,600 in the Protestant count.

The Roman Catholic share of the private sector part-time workforce increased marginally by [0.1] of a percentage point during 2009. Between 2001 and 2009, the Catholic proportion rose by [2.2] percentage points.

In 2009, women accounted for 46% of all private sector employees, 42% of full-time and 68% of part-time employees. The full-time figure (42%) is considerably less than the comparable figure for the public sector (61%). Although the private sector part-time workforce is still predominately female, their share has fallen gradually from a peak of 71.8% in 2001.

Public Sector

The public sector accounted for 37% of all monitored employees in Northern Ireland in 2009. The sector contracted for the fourth year in succession, with the total count falling from 189,853 in 2008 to 189,123 in 2009, a drop of (0.4%). The public sector enjoyed steady growth during the period 2001 – 2005, when it peaked at 194,077 employees, but has declined in size thereafter.

In 2009, a fall in Protestant employment levels (0.9%), coupled with a rise in the Catholic count (0.8%), resulted in an increase in the Catholic share of the total public sector, from [45.4%] in 2008 to [45.8%] in 2009. In 2001, the Catholic proportion stood at [40.2%].

In relation to the six components which comprise the public sector, total Protestant employment counts rose in two sectors, namely health (2.3%) and the district councils (1.8%), while falling in four sectors, namely: the civil service (6.2%), education (1.5%), ‘other’ public authorities (7%) and security-related employment (4.2%). The total number of Catholic employees rose in all sectors except ‘other’ public authorities, where a drop of 6.1% was recorded.

The security-related component of the public sector has contracted every year since 2001, and continued to do so in 2009. Employment levels dropped from 13,746 in 2008 to 13,451 in 2009, a fall of 2.1%. Since 2001, the size of the security-related sector has fallen by over a third (36.9%), from 21,329 in 2001. The Roman Catholic share has increased from [8.4%] in 2001 to [20.7%] in 2009, with commensurate falls in the Protestant proportion.

There was a marginal increase (0.1%) in the female proportion of the public sector. Women now account for almost two-thirds (63.4%) of the total public sector workforce. In 2001, women comprised 59.1% of all public sector employees.

Full-time and Part-time Employees

The reduction in the size of the public sector in 2009 (0.4%) was wholly accounted for by a fall in the part-time count (6.9% or 2,000 employees). In contrast, to the general downward trend, the number of full-time employees actually increased by (0.8% or 1,200 employees).

The Roman Catholic proportion of public sector full-time employees marginally increased in 2009 to [45.5%], from [45.3%] the previous year. This is a continuation of a long-established upward trend in Catholic representation. Similarly, the Catholic share of the part-time workforce rose in 2009 to [47.4%], from [45.8%] the previous year.

In 2009, women comprised 61.3% of full-time and 75.5% of part-time public sector employees. While the female share of the public sector full-time workforce increased by 6.1 percentage points during 2001 - 2009, their share of the part-time workforce fell by 2.3 percentage points during the same period.

While the private sector largely accounted for the overall fall in employment during 2009, 80% (2,000) of net part-time job losses occurred in the public sector. The decline in public sector part-time employment mainly affected women, with a fall of 9%, compared with 2% for their male counterparts.
Applicants and Appointees

The Roman Catholic proportion of all monitored applicants has been rising steadily since 2001, when it stood at [44.8%]. In 2009, the Catholic share of applicants was [51.0%] compared with [49.0%] for their Protestant counterparts.

A similar picture has emerged in relation to appointees. Again, the Catholic proportion has shown a distinct upward trend since 2001, when it stood at [44.8%]. In 2009, the Catholic share of appointees was [50.9%] compared with [49.1%] for their Protestant counterparts.

Copies of the full report can be obtained from the Equality Commission (see address below) or from our web site: www.equalityni.org/research.

End Notes

1. The fair employment legislation requires certain employers to register with the Equality Commission and to complete an annual monitoring return detailing the community background, employment status, occupation and sex of their workforce. All public sector employers are deemed to be automatically registered with the Commission. All private sector concerns with 11 or more employees are required to register.

2. In addition to monitoring the composition (or ‘stock’) of those currently in employment, employers are also required to monitor the composition of those joining, progressing through, or leaving employment (termed ‘flows’).

3. The monitored Northern Ireland workforce is comprised of both full-time and part-time employees in all specified public bodies and registered private sector concerns in Northern Ireland. Monitoring covers around 70%-72% of those in employment, and does not include employees in private sector concerns with less than 11 employees, school teachers, the self-employed, the unemployed, nor those on government training schemes.

4. In this summary, figures and percentages relating to community composition are based on Protestants and Roman Catholics only, with the Non-Determined excluded. They are presented in a square bracket format, e.g. [54.6%]. The full monitoring report presents data for all three categories. Please note that ‘Count’ refers to the number of employees, while ‘Share’ relates to the relative proportions of Protestants and Roman Catholics in the relevant workforce.

5. According to a recent LFS estimate (2008) the Roman Catholic share of those available for work (the economically active of working age) lies somewhere between 43.6% - 47.2%.