

# State of the Sector V Workforce



# 9. Workforce

**The data presented in this chapter illustrates the size and characteristics of the workforce in the voluntary and community sector in Northern Ireland. Where it is appropriate direct comparisons have been made with previous *State of the Sector* reports. The data presented in this section is based on information received from organisations in relation to this research and other research completed by NICVA over the past three years.**

**There has been a decrease in the number of staff employed in the voluntary and community sector in Northern Ireland.** The sector now employs an estimated 26,737 individuals (this represents 3.7% of the total Northern Ireland workforce) compared with 28,932 in 2005. This decrease could be attributed to the reduced levels of funding available to the sector (ie the reduction in Peace II funding). Nevertheless the sector still employs more individuals than in the financial intermediation sector, agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing sector and the electricity, gas and water supply sector.

**The predominance of females in the workforce continues to be a feature of the voluntary and community sector.** Seven out of ten employees are female (74.7%). This is slightly higher than the female composition in the public sector where 64.7% of employees are female, however it is significantly higher than the private sector where less than half of employees are female (45.2%). Although

females dominate the overall workforce, almost two out of every three chief executives in the Northern Ireland voluntary and community sector are male.

**Just over half of the entire voluntary and community sector's workforce (52.6%) is employed by organisations with an income of £1 million plus.**

However there has been a 16.9% decrease in the estimated number of employees who work for organisations in this income band since 2005.

**42.6% of employees work in organisations that fall either within the disability or young people and children sub-sectors (both sub-sectors have 21.3% of the overall workforce).** An estimated 12.9% of employees fall within the health and wellbeing sub-sector, while 10.2% of employees work in the community development sector.

**26.6% of organisations stated that they intend to increase their staff levels over the next 12 months.** Over half of respondents (55.0%) believe that staff numbers will remain static while 5.6% believe that staff numbers will decrease. Despite this positive assessment, many organisations in the sector report that they have often faced challenges in relation to recruiting new staff.

## 9.1 Workforce profile

The voluntary and community sector is an important employer in Northern Ireland. The latest estimate is that the sector employs 26,737 individuals. This figure represents 3.7% of the total Northern Ireland workforce<sup>17</sup>. This is a decrease of 7.6% since 2005 when it was estimated that 28,932 staff were employed in the sector.

**Table 9.1 - Breakdown of paid workforce in the sector**

	Full-time	%	Part-time	%	Total	%
Males	5,073	75.0	1,692	25.0	6,765	25.3
Females	11,124	55.7	8,848	44.3	19,972	74.7
<b>Overall</b>	<b>16,197</b>	<b>60.5</b>	<b>10,540</b>	<b>39.5</b>	<b>26,737</b>	<b>100</b>

As can be seen in Table 9.1 the workforce in the voluntary and community sector in Northern Ireland is predominantly female, with nearly three quarters of all employees being female (74.7%). Proportionally more males have full-time posts than females (75.0% of males work full time, whereas 55.7% of females work full-time).

**Table 9.2 - Breakdown of paid workforce by income band**

	2008	%	2005	%
<£1,000	-	-	-	-
£1,001- £10,000	97	0.4	203	0.7
£10,001-£100,000	2,945	11.0	1,591	5.5
£100,001-£250,000	3,313	12.4	2,054	7.1
£250,001-£500,000	3,665	13.7	2,893	10.0
£500,001-£1 million	2,635	9.9	5,237	18.1
£1 million plus	14,082	52.6	16,954	58.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>26,737</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>28,932</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 9.2 demonstrates that more than half of the sector's workforce (52.6%) continues to be employed in organisations with an income of more than £1 million. However there has been a 16.9% decrease in the estimated number of employees who work for organisations in this income bracket since 2005 (16,954 employees in 2005 compared with 14,082 in 2008). This decrease could be attributed to the end of funding streams such as Peace II which ran from 2000 to 2004.

Overall the distribution of paid staff is consistent with the distribution of income. However there have been some changes in the division of employees within the different income brackets. For example in 2005, 5.5% of employees worked in organisations with an income of between £10,001 and £100,000. In 2008 this increased to 11.0%. A similar trend can be seen when looking at the £100,001 to £250,000 and £250,001 to £500,000 income brackets where the percentage of overall employees has increased since 2005. These findings are consistent with the changes that were witnessed in the overall economic profile of the sector since the number of organisations in these income brackets also increased.

**Table 9.3 - Concentration of employees**

	<b>Count of organisations</b>	<b>%</b>
1-5 employees	664	56.2
6-10 employees	228	19.3
11-15 employees	99	8.4
16-20 employees	53	4.5
21-25 employees	28	2.3
26 or more employees	110	9.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,182</b>	<b>100</b>

Base: 1,182

Table 9.3 shows that the majority of voluntary and community sector organisations employ a relatively small number of people. This has obvious

implications in terms of employment policies and providing sufficient support and development opportunities for staff. At the other end of the scale are those organisations which employ 26 or more employees. These account for almost one in ten organisations in the voluntary and community sector (9.3%). Based on the results of the *State of the Sector V* survey the single largest employer in the voluntary and community sector has a workforce of 1,000 individuals. Obviously such large employers face a number of different challenges in terms of increased administration and human resource provision compared with small employers.

Table 9.4 looks at the breakdown of employees by different sub-sector. One fifth (21.3%) of employees work in the young people and children sub-sector which is an estimated 5,399 staff. A further 5,420 individuals are employed in the disability sub-sector. A significant number of individuals are also employed in the community development (2,597 individuals) and health and wellbeing (3,286 individuals) sub-sectors.

Examining the number of female and part-time workers in each of the sub-sectors reveals considerable variations. As perhaps would be expected the women's sub-sector is almost entirely made up of female employees (97.5%). The older people's sub-sector also displays a similar gender composition with 90.0% of employees being females. At the other end of the scale the environment/conservation sub-sector is approximately 50:50 in terms of male and

**Table 9.4 - Workforce profile by sub-sectors**

	<b>Paid workforce</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>% female</b>	<b>% part-time</b>
Advice and information	1,382	5.4	69.1	25.2
Arts/cultural/heritage	502	2.0	59.8	44.0
Community development	2,597	10.2	69.7	46.7
Disability	5,420	21.3	72.3	32.7
Education/training	2,085	8.2	72.2	32.9
Environment/conservation	1,196	4.7	49.1	44.0
Health and wellbeing	3,286	12.9	83.5	52.4
Housing/homelessness	1,139	4.5	61.4	15.3
Older people	1,514	6.0	90.0	54.3
Volunteer development	130	0.5	80.5	23.3
Women	752	3.0	97.5	44.4
Young people and children	5,399	21.3	77.4	46.3
<b>Total <sup>[*]</sup></b>	<b>25,402</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>74.7</b>	<b>39.5</b>

female employees (49.1% are females). Such differences can be attributed to the nature of the beneficiaries of these organisations and the type of work undertaken.

There are also variations in the number of part-time staff employed across each of the sub-sectors. The sub-sector with the highest proportion of part-time workers is the older people's sub-sector (54.3%) which also has a very high proportion of female staff. The health and wellbeing sub-sector also has a significant number of part-time staff with 52.4% of all employees being employed on a part-time basis. The

sub-sector with the fewest number of part-time staff is the housing/homelessness sub-sector which has only 15.3% of its workforce employed on a part-time basis.

## 9.2 Workforce composition

The voluntary and community sector is characterised by a largely female workforce and the results of the *State of the Sector V* survey and other research conducted by NICVA have consistently found that approximately 75% of the workforce is female. These results are similar to those found in NCVO's *UK Voluntary Sector Workforce Almanac 2007* which found that

[\*] Totals do not add up to 26,737 (overall workforce in the sector) as some organisations did not classify themselves under any of the sub-sectors in the *State of the Sector V* survey.

69.0% of employees in the voluntary sector workforce are female. This high proportion of females has implications for the sector's employment policies and practices, such as maternity leave, part-time working and flexible working practices. As new technologies have developed it has become easier for people to work more flexibly and from home. This presents many opportunities for voluntary and community sector organisations that are willing to think strategically about how these new working practices can benefit them and their workforce (*UK Voluntary Sector Workforce Almanac 2007*, NCVO).

The *NICVA Salary Survey 2006* examined the different job levels that exist within voluntary and community organisations and the gender of the individuals who fill these posts.

**Table 9.5 - Jobs levels by gender**

	Male %	Female %	Count <sup>[*]</sup>	Total %
Chief executive	62.9	37.1	70	2.1
Director	39.0	61.0	90	2.7
Senior function head	41.5	58.5	195	5.7
Functional manager	33.1	66.9	308	9.1
Specialist/professional	32.7	67.3	694	20.4
Clerical supervisor/training	15.8	84.2	367	10.8
Admin officers/care officers	15.0	85.0	1,256	37.1
PA/secretary	3.6	96.4	84	2.5
Junior/trainee staff	23.1	76.9	325	9.6
<b>Total employees</b>	<b>24.0</b>	<b>76.0</b>	<b>3,389</b>	<b>100</b>

Base: Males (814); Females (2,575); Overall (3,335)

The *NICVA Salary Survey 2006* found that the sector is numerically dominated by females but proportionally very few females are employed as chief executives, to the extent where almost two out of every three chief executives in the sector are male. However there are signs that this dominance of males in the most senior management positions is beginning to change. Previously males dominated the director position, however in the *NICVA Salary Survey 2006* 61% of directors are female.

Part-time employment is also a characteristic of the voluntary and community sector with 39.5% of employees working on a part-time basis (84% are female). This represents a slight increase from 2005 when part-time employees made up 36% of the sector's workforce.

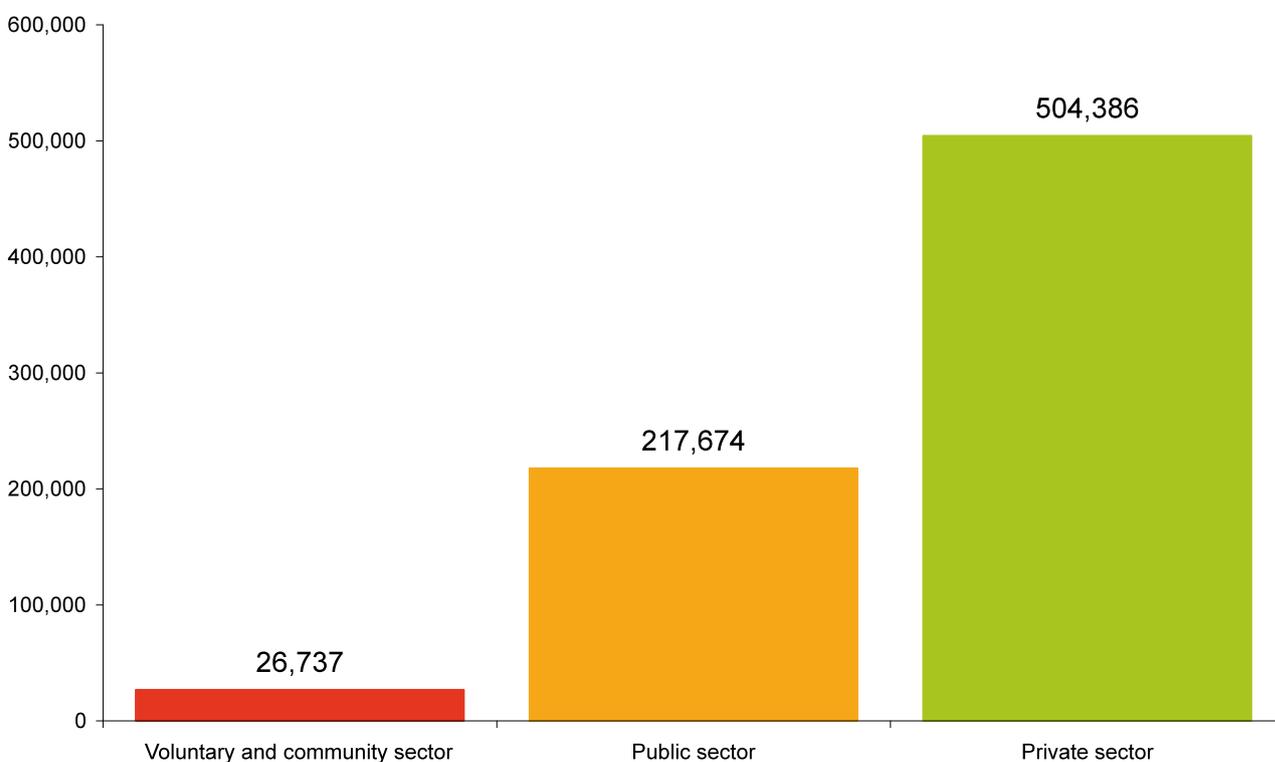
[\*] This column shows the number of individuals in each of the defined job levels based on the responses of 329 organisations (*NICVA Salary Survey 2006*).

### 9.3 Comparisons with the overall Northern Ireland workforce

Despite the decrease in the number of employees in the voluntary and community sector since 2005, the sector remains a significant employer in Northern Ireland. When compared with the rest of the Northern Ireland workforce the voluntary and community sector employs more individuals than in the financial intermediation sector (18,416 employee jobs), agriculture, hunting and forestry and the fishing sector (12,016 employee jobs) and the electricity, gas and water supply sector (2,805 employee jobs), (DETI, 2008).

The Northern Ireland voluntary and community sector employs 4.4% of the overall UK voluntary and community sector workforce. Latest figures estimate that 611,000 people work in the UK voluntary and community sector, which accounts for 2.2% of all UK employees (*UK Voluntary Sector Workforce Almanac 2007*, NCVO).

**Figure 9.1 - The voluntary and community sector workforce compared with the public and private sectors<sup>[1]</sup>**

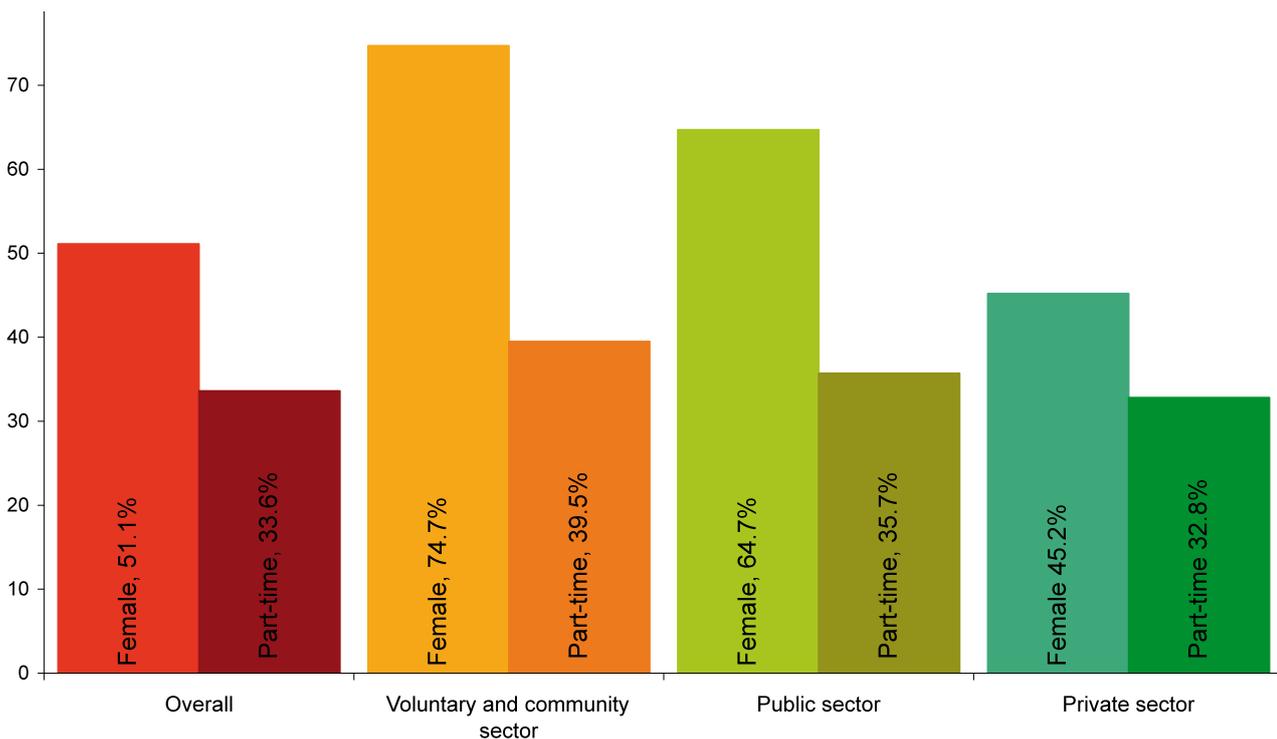


1 Northern Ireland Census of Employment, September 2007, DETI (19 December 2008)

As Figure 9.1 indicates the private sector employs a significant proportion of the workforce in Northern Ireland with a total of 504,386 employees (69.8%). The public sector employs 217,674 employees (30.1%), while the voluntary and community sector employs an estimated 26,737 staff. Although this figure is significantly smaller than the other two sectors, the Northern Ireland voluntary and community sector is a not insignificant employer in Northern Ireland with 3.7% of the total workforce working in the sector.

As Figure 9.2 illustrates females make up a higher proportion of the workforce in the voluntary and community sector (74.7%) compared with any other sector in Northern Ireland. This can be clearly seen in relation to the private sector where females make up less than half of the workforce (45.2%). The public sector is more comparable with the voluntary and community sector with females making up 64.7% of the workforce (DETI, 2008). The proportion of females employed in the voluntary and community sector is significantly higher than the overall figure for the Northern Ireland workforce which is 51.1%. A possible reason for this could be that females are attracted to working in a sector which has flexible working practices and good employment policies and practices, such as maternity leave and part-time working.

**Figure 9.2 - Female and part-time employees in the voluntary and community sector compared with the private and public sectors**



As Figure 9.2 illustrates 33.6% of the overall workforce in Northern Ireland works part-time. In the public sector, 35.7% of the workforce is part time, whereas 32.8% of the workforce in the private sector is part time. The composition of the workforce in the voluntary and community sector is similar to these other sectors. For instance, 39.5% of the workforce in the voluntary and community sector work part-time.

Looking at the composition of part-time employees for each of the sectors produces some interesting comparisons. For instance, in the overall Northern Ireland workforce 74.2% of part time posts are filled by a female. In the voluntary and community sector, 84.0% of part-time posts are filled by females. This is slightly lower than the public sector, where 85.3% of the part-time workforce are female. In the private sector females make up 68.9% of all part-time posts.

## 9.4 Challenges facing employers and employees

The figures presented in this section only paint part of the picture of the voluntary and community sector workforce in Northern Ireland. This section examines the difficulties that organisations have in relation to the recruitment and retention of employees and challenges faced in maintaining a skilled and motivated workforce.

### 9.4.1 Recruitment

Voluntary and community organisations face a range of challenges including funding, changes in clients' needs, heavy and complex administrative auditing processes and competition and collaborative working, to name a few. The funding for the sector is often short term or project specific in nature which can be a challenge when it comes to the recruitment and the development of staff and volunteers.

Based on the responses to the *State of the Sector V* questionnaire 26.6% of respondents stated that they hoped to increase staff numbers over the next 12 months. This suggests that the sector is in a position to expand its workforce. Over half of respondents (55.0%) believe that staff numbers will remain static while 5.6% believe that staff numbers will decrease. Despite this positive assessment, many organisations in the sector report that they have often faced challenges in relation to recruiting new staff. Recruitment of new staff appears to be a particularly pronounced problem in voluntary and community organisations. In the *Northern Ireland Voluntary and Community Sector Skills Survey 2008* (Skills for Justice, 2008), 48.2% of organisations with one or more vacancies stated that they have had difficulty filling them (overall 28.6% of organisations reported having at least one vacancy). Just over one third of organisations (34.5%) predict that the recruitment of fundraisers will become more difficult in the future. This is followed by perceived recruitment difficulties relating

to campaigners and individuals working in finance (27.6% and 27.4% respectively). Across all the other functions there is a general consensus among approximately a fifth of all organisations (21.7%) that they are going to find recruitment more difficult in the future.

### 9.4.2 Skills

The voluntary and community sector is a demanding, complicated and evolving sector with increasing challenges placed on the individuals who work and volunteer in it. As organisations develop new services and projects and apply for new funding, the skills required within organisations are likely to change. It is likely therefore that there are skills gaps among paid staff which may not currently be an issue but which may become an issue for organisations in the future. Investing in relevant training and increasing the experience of staff and volunteers can ensure that organisations are fit for purpose.

In the *Northern Ireland Voluntary and Community Sector Skills Survey 2008* it was found that skills gaps exist across the voluntary and community sector. Just over one in ten organisations (12%) reported that there was a skills gap in at least one function in their organisation. The report also examined the future skills needs of organisations.

As can be seen in Table 9.6, the most frequently cited future skills needs relate to legal knowledge, strategic planning and forward thinking, and fundraising (24.3%,

**Table 9.6 - Specific future skills needs<sup>[18]</sup>**

	%
Legal knowledge	24.3
Fundraising	20.4
Strategic planning/forward thinking	20.4
HR/Personnel	19.4
Strategic use of IT	19.4

20.4% and 20.4% respectively). It may be that these areas are indicative of increased regulation and higher levels of accountability within the sector, added to the uncertainty over future sources of funding and the direction of future service delivery mechanisms and processes.

### 9.4.3 Training

The *Northern Ireland Voluntary and Community Sector Skills Survey 2008* found that organisations take training and development seriously, as is proven by the fact that the policies and procedures to identify current and future training needs are common among voluntary and community organisations. However, the research found that the finances are not always in place to translate these policies into action. The average annual training budget is approximately £4,258. This equates to an average of £145 per employee. This figure is substantiated by the relatively low level of expenditure on training as identified in Chapter 7 of this report.

18 Table 9.6 lists the top five future skills needs as reported in the *Northern Ireland Voluntary and Community Sector Skills Survey 2008*.

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**Other sources of information on workforce issues:**

**NCVO** published the *UK Voluntary Sector Workforce Almanac 2007* in October 2007 and has a wider programme of research which looks into skills and workforce development for paid workers, volunteers and trustees and provides statistics and facts about the sector ([www.ncvo-vol.org.uk](http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk)).

*The Northern Ireland Voluntary and Community Sector Skills Survey 2008* (published June 2008) was managed by a group of nine **Sector Skills Councils (SSC)**, led by Skills for Justice, and prepared by the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action. The report enables the skills needs and workforce development issues of these organisations to be analysed, and to be broken down by SSC footprint, in a way that has not previously been possible ([www.skillsforjustice.com](http://www.skillsforjustice.com)).

**Communityskillsni.org** is a website that highlights skills development issues in the voluntary and community sector in Northern Ireland including: National Occupational Standards, Sector Skills Councils, management, leadership, training opportunities, best practice, and more.

*State of the Sector V* is the latest edition in the *State of the Sector* research programme. The previous *State of the Sector* reports have developed the only comprehensive picture of the scale and scope of the economic activities of the Northern Ireland voluntary and community sector. The publication of each *State of the Sector* report represents another step in the evolution of this type of statistical analysis and as such adds to the already broad and in depth knowledge of the sector, by examining many of the key issues currently affecting and shaping it.

*State of the Sector V* provides high level statistics on the various types of resources available to the sector and the relationship between voluntary and community organisations, government, funders and the general public.

*State of the Sector V* is invaluable to all those who need an up-to-date and reliable source of statistics and commentary on the voluntary and community sector in Northern Ireland. People working in the sector — academics, decision-makers, social science students and journalists — will all find this publication useful.



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