



Administrative, Entertainment & Other Services in the Western Region

This *WDC Insights* summarises the key findings of 'Administrative, Entertainment & Other Services in the Western Region: Regional Sectoral Profile'.¹ This sector includes three sub-sectors: 'Administrative & Support' largely providing 'outsourced' services to businesses (property management, call centres, recruitment); 'Arts, Entertainment & Recreation' (artists, cinemas, gyms, gambling); and 'Other Services' (hairdressing, repair, funeral services) both mainly providing services to individuals. The diversity of the sector means it is particularly important to consider patterns for individual sub-sectors.

Employment in Administrative, Entertainment & Other Services in the Western Region

According to Census 2016, 21,789 people worked in Administrative, Entertainment & Other Services in the Western Region. It plays a smaller role in the region's labour market than nationally (Table 1); 6.5% of total employment compared with 7.5%. In the region it is most important in Galway City (7.5%), Clare (7.1%) and Sligo (6.8%) with large urban centres and international business services activity around Shannon influencing the pattern.

At town level the pattern is different, at 11.2% of all employment Bundoran has the highest share working in this sector of Ireland's 200 towns and cities (1,500+ population), largely due to 'Arts, Entertainment & Recreation'. Carndonagh (10.4%) and Ballyshannon (10.2%) are also in the top 10 towns in Ireland. Shannon meanwhile has the second highest share working in 'Administrative & Support' in the state.

There was 8.9% jobs growth between 2011 and 2016, lower than the 13.6% increase nationally. As these activities rely on derived demand, the fact that economic recovery in the region lagged that occurring nationally² influenced its weaker performance. Galway City and Clare experienced the strongest growth, while Leitrim and Roscommon both saw a fall in numbers.³

Table 1: Selected employment indicators for Administrative, Entertainment & Other Services (AEOS) in the Western Region and state, 2016

County	No. Employed	% Change 2011-2016	AEOS as % of Total Employment	% of AEOS that is Female	% of AEOS that is Self-employment
Clare	3,515	12.3%	7.1%	56.0%	25.5%
Donegal	3,883	10.5%	6.7%	55.1%	29.0%
Galway City	2,605	12.4%	7.5%	53.9%	21.5%
Galway County	4,303	9.5%	5.7%	53.8%	29.9%
Leitrim	817	-12.1%	6.4%	53.4%	30.2%
Mayo	3,329	11.7%	6.5%	56.2%	27.2%
Roscommon	1,577	-1.2%	6.1%	52.6%	29.3%
Sligo	1,760	9.2%	6.8%	53.1%	29.5%
Western Region	21,789	8.9%	6.5%	54.6%	27.6%
State	151,401	13.6%	7.5%	53.5%	21.5%

Source: CSO, Census 2016: Summary Results Part 2, Table EZ011.

1. Download from <https://www.wdc.ie/publications/reports-and-papers/>

2. WDC (2018), *WDC Insights: What's happening in our regional economies? Growth and Change in Regional GVA*

3. This was entirely due to a fall in 'Administrative & Support'. The scaling back of a large call centre facility in Carrick-on-Shannon would be a key factor.



At 54.6%, women account for a majority of the workforce, but there is variation across sub-sectors. There is a male majority in both 'Administrative & Support' (56.9% male) and 'Arts, Entertainment & Recreation' (55.7% male) while 'Other Services' is highly female dominated (73.5% female).

Of those working in the sector, 27.6% are self-employed (employer or own account worker) and it has among the highest rates of self-employment.⁴ Self-employment is considerably more common in the region compared to nationally, indicating smaller scale operations and a greater incidence of sole traders or owner/family-run businesses. It is particularly evident in 'Other Services' (38.1% self-employed).

At a detailed activity level, 'Hairdressing & beauty' is the largest employer, followed by 'Services to buildings & landscape' and 'Sports, amusement & recreation'. Generally, locally provided personal and leisure activities tend to be more important to employment in the region than nationally, whereas business services are less so.

Key Policy Issues

'Administrative & Support' less developed in the region but has growth potential. The region's lower level of activity is due to more limited local business demand and fewer internationally trading enterprises. It is important that the Western Region is well positioned to take advantage of growth in business process outsourcing and global business services, through high quality communications infrastructure, improved accessibility and the availability of suitable talent.

The Shannon Free Zone (SFZ) area is a key regional asset. The history of attracting FDI to the SFZ, initially through tax free status and latterly by offering high quality property solutions, international accessibility and proximity to a cluster of international firms, means the SFZ is now a nationally significant location for global business services (e.g. aircraft leasing, e-commerce outsourcing). Strengthening the capacity of this cluster to adapt to changing global trends must be a key regional priority.

Local 'Other Services' more important in the Western Region, particularly for rural counties. As these services are often consumed at the same location as they are supplied (e.g. hairdressing, dry-cleaning, repairs), they are widely dispersed, play an important role in local economies and rely on local spending. However as these activities can be quite low paid,⁵ their greater role in the region reduces the overall economic benefit of Administrative, Entertainment & Other Services to the regional economy.

Role of 'Arts, Entertainment & Recreation' in the regional economy is growing. The Western Region is recognised as having a strong creative and cultural industries sector, as well as tourism industry. The WDC has supported the creative sector's development through a range of initiatives⁶ and the recent Regional Enterprise Plan for the West region⁷ included the sector among its strategic objectives. Adopting a coordinated approach is critical to help realise its growth potential.

Contribution to town centre renewal. As online retailing grows, accessing services is increasingly important as a reason for people to visit their local city or town centre. The availability and choice of local personal and leisure services is central to attracting people to visit and remain in town centre locations. Facilitating the establishment and sustainability of such services is important to the viability of towns and should be incorporated in plans for town centre renewal.

The sector is characterised by high and growing self-employment with 19.4% growth (2011-2016) in the number of self-employed in this sector (the highest across all sectors) as individuals responded to growing demand by setting up small-scale service businesses (e.g. gyms, barbers, HR services, garden services). Continuation of existing, and development of new initiatives and soft supports for self-employment is important particularly for smaller urban centres and rural areas. The quality and long-term viability of some self-employment in this sector however is also an issue that needs to be addressed.

For more detailed analysis see **'Administrative, Entertainment & Other Services in the Western Region: Regional Sectoral Profile'** <http://www.wdc.ie/publications/reports-and-papers/>

4. After agriculture, construction and professional services.

5. At €17.13 per hour, 'Other Services' has the second lowest average hourly earnings of all economic sectors. CSO, Earnings, Hours and Employment Costs Survey Q4 2018, Table EHQ03

6. See <https://www.wdc.ie/regional-development/creative-economy/>

7. Department of Business, Enterprise & Innovation (2019), [Regional Enterprise Plan to 2020: West Region](#)