

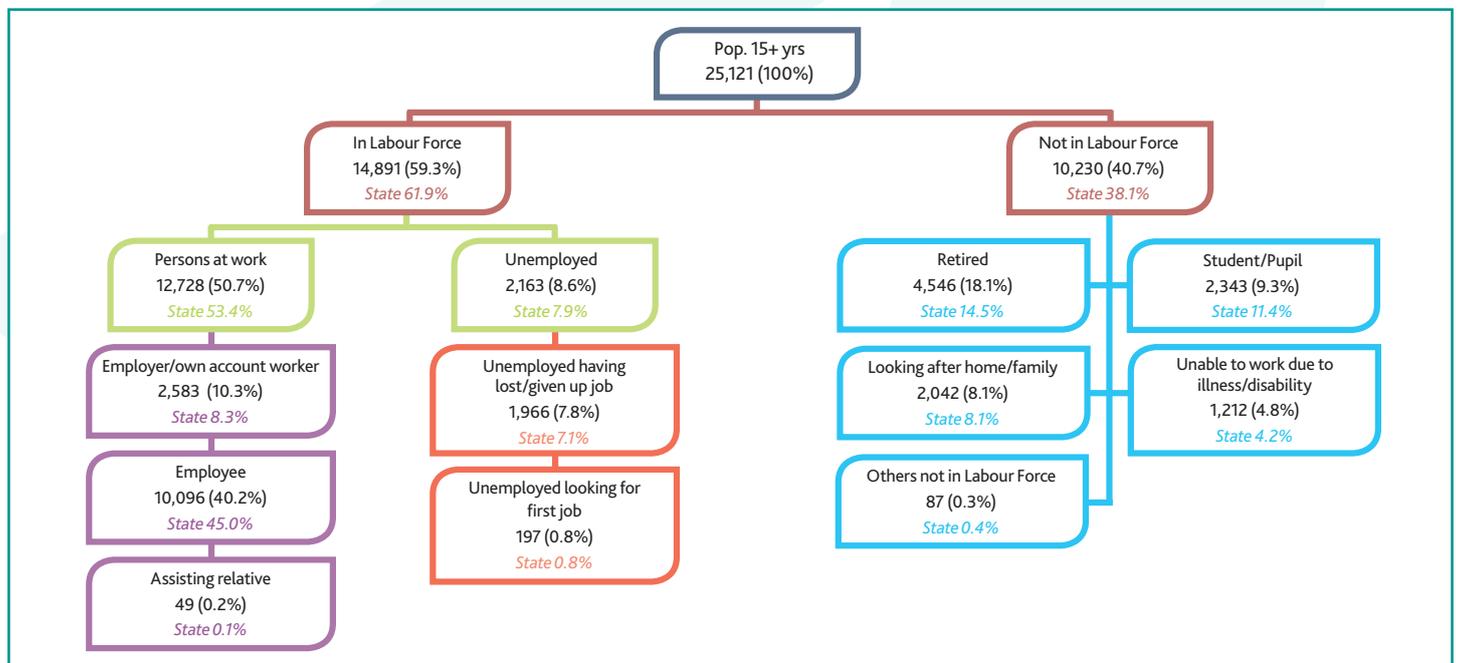
## County Leitrim's Labour Market – Census 2016

In this *WDC Insights* we provide an overview of the labour market in county Leitrim based on data from the Census of Population 2016.<sup>1</sup> The county had a total population of 32,044 in 2016; a 0.8% increase since the last Census (2011) and 10.7% higher than a decade earlier (2006). Total employment in Leitrim grew by 6.3% between 2011 and 2016; significantly below the 11% national growth.

### Principal Economic Status of Leitrim's population

Principal Economic Status (PES) measures the economic status e.g. at work, student, of the population aged 15 years and over. This status is self-assigned and is different from the definition used in the Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS) and official employment and unemployment figures.<sup>2</sup> Fig. 1 shows Leitrim's adult population by principal economic status compared with the State average.

Fig. 1: Population of county Leitrim aged 15 years and over by principal and labour force status, 2016



Around 60% of the county's adults are in the labour force, either working or looking for work, slightly below the national average. The 14,891 people who are in the county's labour force is 0.9% below the 2011 figure (compared with 3.2% growth nationally); Leitrim is one of only six counties where the labour force shrank. Half (50.7%) of the county's adults are 'at work', below the 53.4% national average; the share unemployed is notably higher than average. The county's labour force differs most strongly from the national pattern in self-employment (employer/own account worker) with Leitrim having a far higher share; 10.3% compared with 8.3%.

For the 40% of adults outside the labour force, 'retired' was the largest group accounting for a considerably higher than average share (18.1% compared with 14.5%), reflecting the county's older age profile. Leitrim also has a higher share unable to work due to disability/illness but a lower share of students/pupils, influenced by the absence of a third level institution in the county.

1. CSO, Census 2016 Summary Results – Part 2. Table EZ011

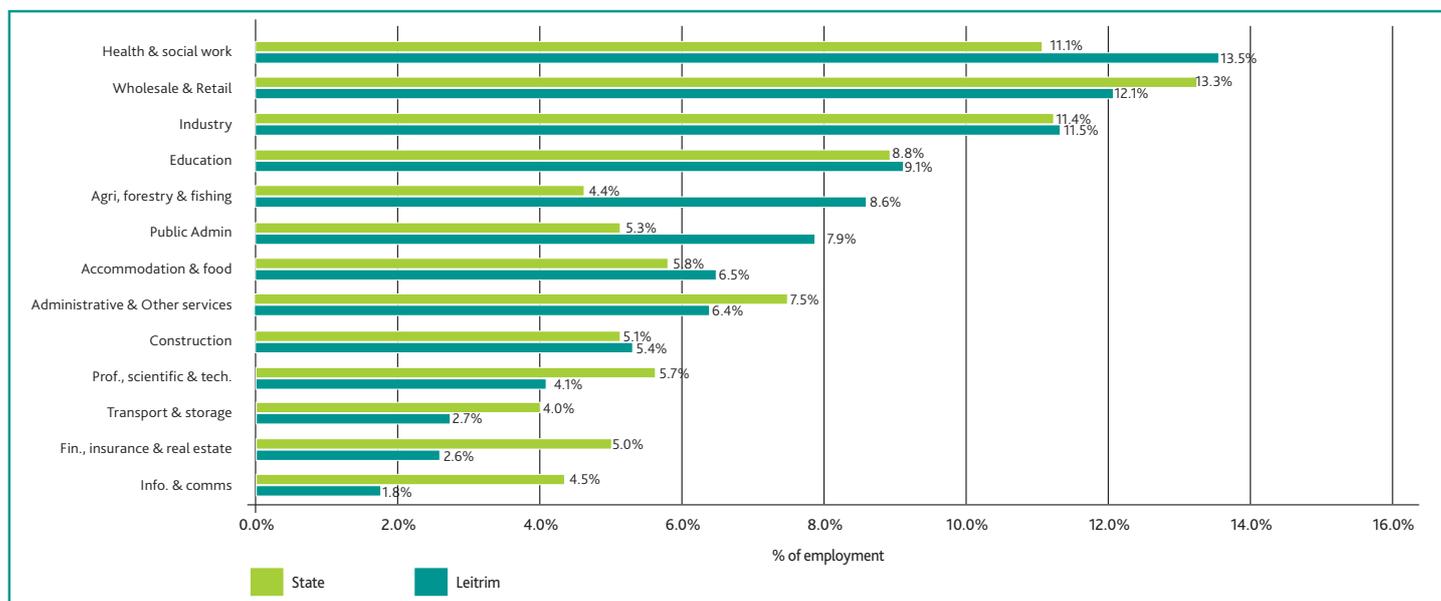
2. The ILO definition, used in the QNHS and official employment statistics, is that if a person has worked for payment or profit for 1 hour or more in the previous fortnight they are counted as employed. This results in a higher number being counted as employed than when people are asked to select their own economic status, as in the Census.



## Sectoral pattern & recent changes in employment

Fig. 2 shows the sectors where the 12,728 Leitrim residents who are 'at work' are employed. Commuting is an important factor and the 4,210 people living in county Leitrim who travel outside of the county for work are counted here, but the 2,184 people living outside the county who travel into it for work are not.<sup>3</sup>

**Fig. 2: Percentage of total employment in each broad sector in county Leitrim and State, 2016**



Leitrim's largest employers are Health, Wholesale & Retail and Industry. Health is notably more important to the county than elsewhere; partly influenced by commuting to health sector employers in county Sligo. Health employment grew 10.6% since 2011, below the national average of 13.4%. The county's next largest sector, Wholesale & Retail, is less important to the county than elsewhere and only grew slightly (0.6%) since 2011 and below average (1.7%). Industry however enjoyed the strongest employment growth of any sector in Leitrim, increasing 21.1%, over double the national average (9.4%).

Agriculture's share of employment in Leitrim is double the national average, contributing to the county's higher self-employment. It was one of four sectors that experienced employment decline in the county since 2011; down 8.6% compared with a State average decline of 2.7%. Public Administration is also a significantly more important employer for the county; it declined 1.8% since 2011, better than the national decline of 6.3%.

Construction in Leitrim experienced significantly lower than average growth (7.2% v 16.6%) but remains a slightly more important employer in the county, as is Accommodation & Food Service. Leitrim performed similarly to the national average in this sector since 2011 and Accommodation & Food Service enjoyed the county's second highest growth, up 12.4%.

Administrative & Other Services, which include call centres, are a less important employer for the county than elsewhere and experienced Leitrim's largest employment decline, down 12.1% compared with 13.6% growth nationally. Knowledge intensive services (Professional, Scientific & Technical activities, Financial, Insurance & Real Estate and Information & Communications) are among the smallest employers in the county and less important than nationally. While both grew, Information & Communications (4.2%) and Professional services (17.8%) performed below the State average (31.4% and 22.2% respectively). Financial services experienced a large fall, linked to closures of local bank and insurance branches, down 10% in Leitrim compared with a 1.3% decline nationally.

It is important that we more fully understand why some of the sectoral changes in employment are taking place in county Leitrim, and its wider region, and the impact that these are having on the county's economy and its residents.

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All data from CSO, Census 2016 Summary Results – Part 2. Table EZ011

3. Detailed analysis of commuting patterns in the Western Region will be published by the WDC in future.