

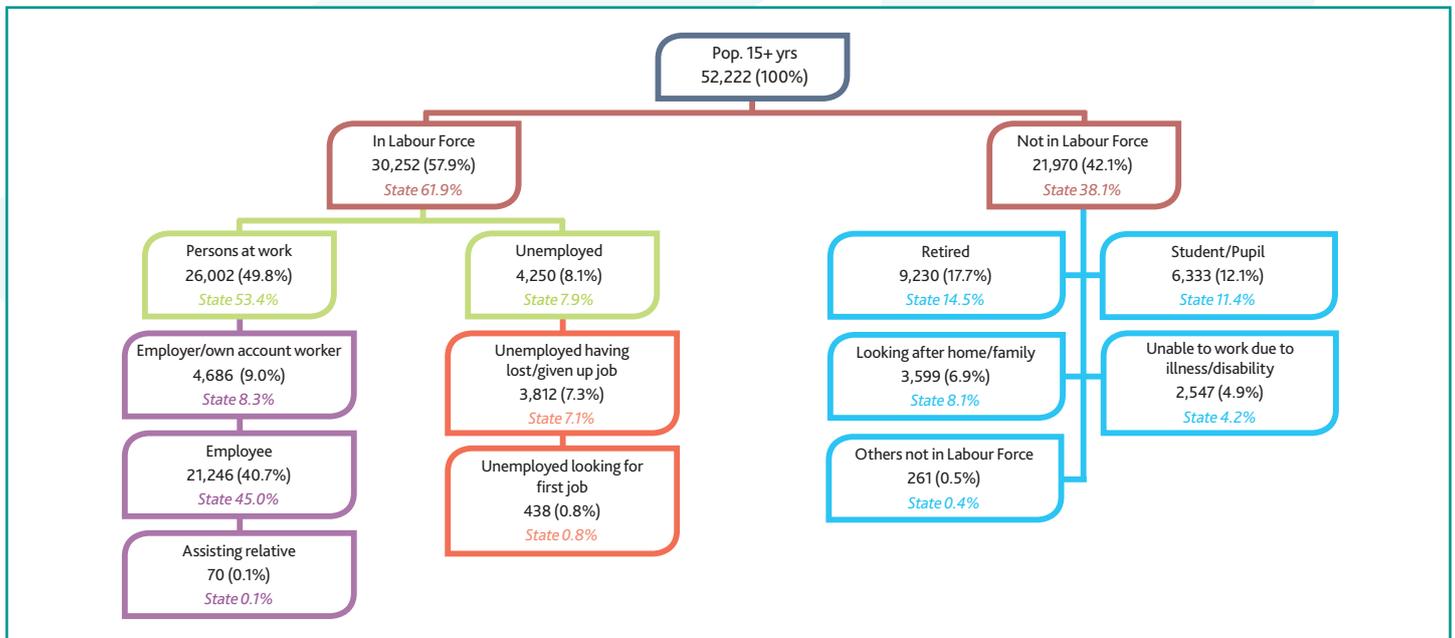
County Sligo's Labour Market – Census 2016

In this *WDC Insights* we provide an overview of the labour market in county Sligo based on data from the Census of Population 2016.¹ The county had a total population of 65,535 in 2016; a 0.2% increase since the last Census (2011) and 7.6% higher than a decade earlier (2006). Total employment in Sligo grew by 2.2% between 2011 and 2016; significantly below the 11% national growth and the lowest of any county in the State.

Principal Economic Status of Sligo'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.² Fig. 1 shows Sligo's adult population by principal economic status compared with the State average.

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



Some 57.9% of the county's adults are in the labour force, either working or looking for work, notably below the national average (61.9%). The 30,252 people who are in the county's labour force represents a 2.6% decline on the 2011 figure, compared with 3.2% growth nationally. Sligo is one of only six counties where the labour force shrank and experienced the largest decline nationally. Just under half (49.8%) of the county's adults are 'at work', below the 53.4% national average. The share unemployed is close to average. The county has a somewhat higher share of self-employment (employer/own account worker); 9% compared with 8.3%.

The share of Sligo's adults who are outside the labour force, 42.1%, is substantially above the national average (38.1%). 'Retired' is the largest group accounting for a considerably higher than average share (17.7% compared with 14.5%), reflecting the county's older age profile. Sligo also has a higher share unable to work due to disability/illness and a higher share of students/pupils, influenced by IT Sligo.

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

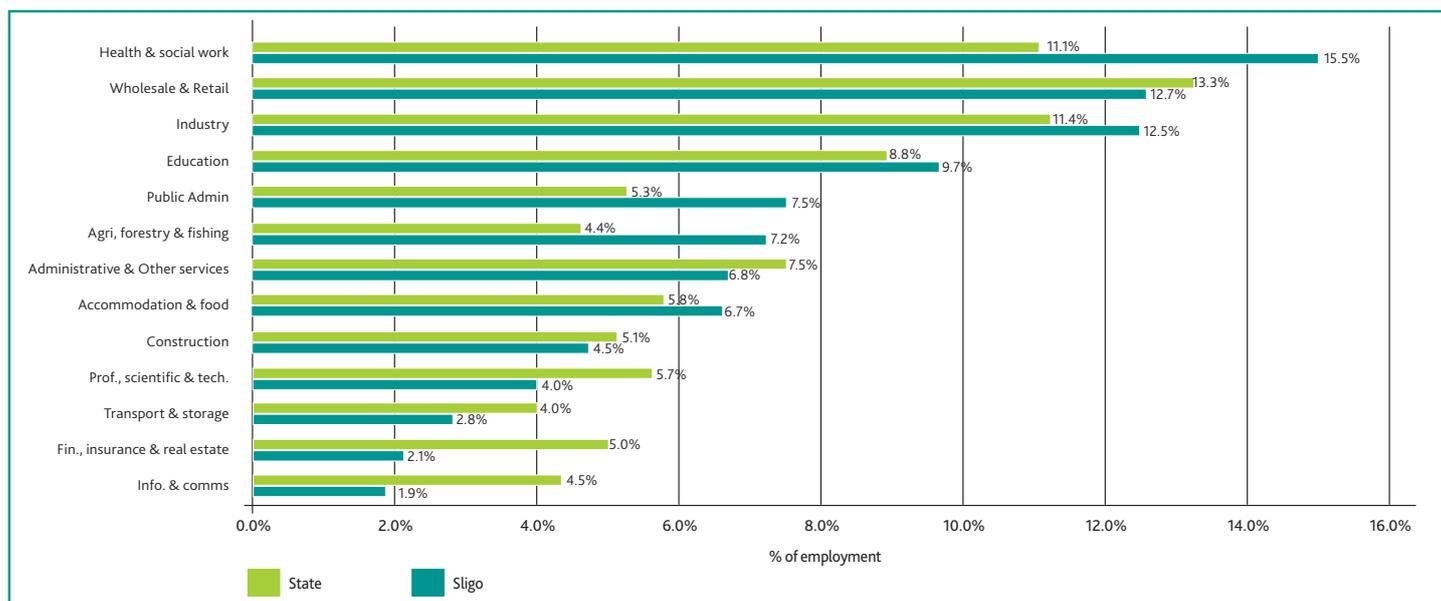
2. The ILO definition, used in the QNHS and official employment statistics, is that if a person has worked for payment or profit for 1 hour or more in the previous fortnight they are counted as employed. This results in a higher number being counted as employed than when people are asked to select their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



Sectoral pattern & recent changes in employment

Fig. 2 shows the sectors where the 26,002 Sligo residents who are 'at work' are employed. Commuting is an important factor and the 3,203 people living in county Sligo who travel outside of the county for work are counted here, but the 3,730 people living outside the county who travel into it for work are not.³

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



Sligo's largest employers are Health, Wholesale & Retail and Industry. Health is considerably more important to the county than elsewhere and Sligo has the highest share working in this sector in the State. As well as hospitals, it includes residential care. Health employment grew 7.3% since 2011, just over half the national average growth (13.4%). The county's next largest sector, Wholesale & Retail, has performed poorly. It is less important to the county than elsewhere and declined by 5.9% since 2011, compared with 1.7% growth nationally. Employment in Industry grew marginally (0.3%); significantly below national average growth (9.4%). It still accounts for a higher share of jobs in the county than elsewhere.

Agriculture, Education, Accommodation & Food Service and Public Administration are all more important to the county than elsewhere. Agriculture performed very strongly in Sligo, up 8.5% compared with 2.6% decline nationally. Education employment grew 4.7%; below the 5.7% growth nationally. Accommodation & Food Service grew 7.8% compared with 12.9% nationally. Employment in Public Administration however declined by 4.5% since 2011; although performing better than nationally, declining 6.3%.

Construction is less important in Sligo than elsewhere and it actually declined 0.3%, in contrast to strong national growth (16.6%), showing that the county has not benefitted from the national upswing in the sector. While Administrative & Other Services is also a less important employer in the county, it experienced the county's highest employment growth, up 9.2%, though below the national average (13.6%).

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. Though both grew, Information & Communications (7.4%) and Professional services (13.2%) performed well below the State average (31.4% and 22.2% respectively). Financial services experienced the county's largest employment decline, linked to closures of local bank and insurance branches, down 14.1% in Sligo 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 Sligo, 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.