



Census 2016: What do people in the seven western counties work at?

In this *WDC Insights* we examine the sectoral pattern of employment in the seven counties that make up the Western Region of Ireland – Donegal, Sligo, Roscommon, Leitrim, Mayo, Galway and Clare.¹ This is based on results from Census 2016² so refers to the county where a person lives, though they may work elsewhere.³

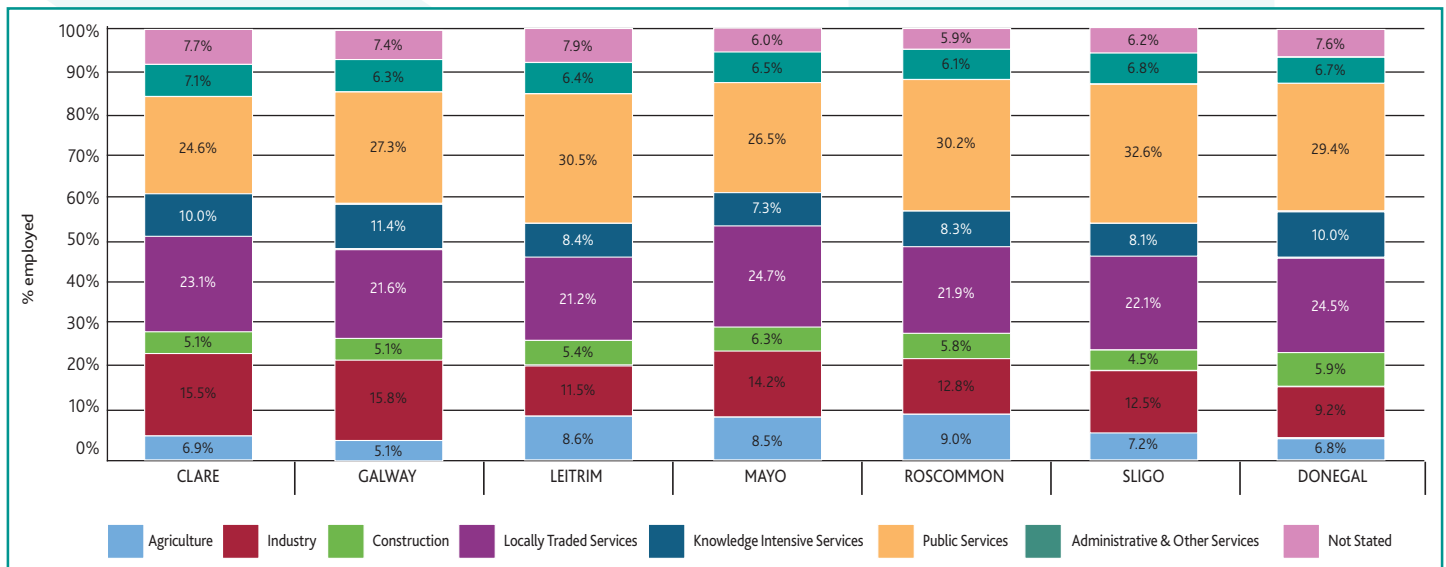
Sectoral profile of employment in western counties

Fig. 1 shows the sectoral profile of employment in the seven western counties. In order to make the chart easier to read, some sectors have been grouped together e.g. 'Locally Traded Services' includes the three sectors Wholesale & Retail, Accommodation & Food Service, and Transport & Storage.

Public Services is the largest source of employment in all western counties. It ranges from 32.6% of all jobs in Sligo to 24.6% in Clare. Public Services includes Health, Education, and Public Administration.⁴ **Counties Sligo, Leitrim, Roscommon and Donegal are the four counties in the State with the highest shares of their population employed in Public Services.** The next largest employment sector in all western counties is Locally Traded Services.

With the exception of Donegal, Industry (largely manufacturing) is the third largest employment sector. 15.8% of all jobs in Galway are in Industry, with Donegal having the lowest share (9.2%); the lowest share nationally except for Dublin. For Donegal, Industry is smaller than Knowledge Intensive Services (Professional, Scientific & Technical, Information & Communications, and Financial, Insurance & Real Estate) at 10%. Galway (11.4%) is the western county with the highest share working in Knowledge Intensive Services with Mayo (7.3%) lowest; third lowest nationally.

Fig. 1: Percentage of total employment by high level sector in seven western counties, 2016



1. The sectoral pattern of employment in the Western Region is examined in, WDC (2017), *WDC Insights Census 2016: What do people in the Western Region work at?*
2. CSO, *Census 2016 Summary Results – Part 2*. Table EZ011
3. The WDC has commissioned analysis of Travel to Work data from Census 2016 which will examine commuting flows.
4. The Health and Education sectors also include substantial private sector employment e.g. private nursing homes, childcare, training providers. It is not possible to separate this out however.



Roscommon has the highest share working in Agriculture (9%), followed by Leitrim (8.6%) and Mayo (8.5%); among the highest shares nationally. Construction employment ranges from 6.3% of all jobs in Mayo down to only 4.5% in Sligo.

Change in employment since 2011

Between 2011 and 2016 total employment in all western counties increased (Table 1). Growth was strongest in Donegal and Galway at over 9%, though even this was considerably below the 11% State average. Sligo had the weakest performance, growing by only 2.2%; lowest in the State. In fact, **five of the six counties with the lowest employment growth nationally are in the Western Region**. Sligo, Mayo, Roscommon, Leitrim and Clare are in the bottom 6 (with Tipperary).⁵

At sectoral level, Industry was the strongest growing sector in four counties (Leitrim, Galway, Roscommon and Mayo) while Administrative & Other Services was highest for Clare and Sligo, and Knowledge Intensive Services in Donegal. It should be noted that for relatively small sectors at county level, a high percentage growth may represent quite low numbers. Agriculture was the poorest performer in all counties except Sligo (Locally Traded Services) and Leitrim (Administrative & Other Services).

Roscommon had the strongest growth in Public Services, while Sligo, the county most dependent on the sector (see Fig. 1) had the weakest performance (3.2%). Sligo's highest growing sector, Administrative & Other Services, only grew by 9.2%, far lower than other counties' best performing sector. In particular, Sligo's marginal growth in Industry contrasts strongly with other western counties.

Table 1: Percentage change in employment by high level sector in seven western counties, 2011-2016

HIGH LEVEL SECTORS	Clare	Galway	Leitrim	Mayo	Roscommon	Sligo	Donegal
Agriculture	-8.7%	-6.7%	-8.6%	-17.9%	-3.9%	8.5%	0.8%
Industry	10.4%	19.1%	21.1%	14.0%	15.9%	0.3%	7.9%
Construction	5.7%	8.6%	7.2%	8.4%	11.1%	-0.3%	9.3%
Locally Traded Services	5.9%	3.8%	5.0%	2.5%	0.2%	-1.8%	6.9%
Knowledge Intensive Services	5.8%	8.9%	4.9%	-0.7%	5.0%	3.2%	14.0%
Public Services	7.4%	7.1%	5.1%	5.1%	8.2%	3.6%	4.2%
Administrative & Other Services	12.3%	10.6%	-12.1%	11.7%	-1.2%	9.2%	10.5%
Not Stated	48.8%	31.1%	43.0%	39.5%	17.8%	1.1%	59.2%
Total Employment	8.6%	9.2%	6.3%	4.8%	5.9%	2.2%	9.5%
No. in Employment	49,511	110,067	12,728	51,439	25,819	26,002	58,353

The substantial increase in the number of people who did not state what sector they worked in is notable. Between 6% and 8% of employed people in each county did not state their sector (see Fig. 1) and the number was substantially up on 2011, in some cases doubling. The changing nature of work and the trend of people gaining income from a mix of activities e.g. the 'gig' economy, may have influenced this.⁶

Conclusion

The seven western counties vary in terms of the relative importance of different sectors in their jobs profile, though Public and Locally Traded services are the two largest employers in all. The dominant role of Public Services in the counties of the northwest shows the relative weakness of private sector activity in the area. The fact that five of the six worst performing counties in Ireland in terms of employment growth are located in the Western Region vividly illustrates the job creation challenge still faced by the region. Future analysis will examine the labour markets of each individual county in more detail.

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

5. For this analysis we have combined Galway city and Galway county as 'Galway', however when separate, Galway county had jobs growth even lower than Clare.
6. WDC (2017), *WDC Insights 'New Work' – the Gig economy in the Western Region*