

Job Application and Job Application Outcome: A brief description

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Whilst a great deal is known about the labour force within Northern Ireland and the impacts of individual social and economic characteristics on labour market participation and labour market connectivity, relatively less is known about the relationship of these characteristics to job application and job application outcome at a Northern Ireland level.

To attempt to address this issue, a discrete suite of questions relating to job application and job application outcome were developed and included within the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency's Continuous Household Survey. Results are derived from interviews with a representative sample of the adult population during 2007/08 and 2008/09.

Analyses were conducted on a range of social and economic characteristics on a *ceteris paribus*, that is, an all other things being equal, basis. These analyses included comparing the composition of all adults aged 16 to 74 to the composition of those applying for at least one job within the previous 12 months of interview. In turn, the composition of those applying for a job was compared to the composition of those who were successful in being made a job offer.

Differences between job applicants and the population as a whole

A range of characteristics appear related to increased incidence of job application in comparison to the

prevalence of those characteristics within the overall adult population.

Characteristics associated with increased incidence of job application

Younger (16-44) age group
Males
Dependents/sons/daughters
No long standing or limiting illness
Single
Living in a home where the householder(s) is not in receipt of housing benefit
Employed or unemployed
Degree, or GCE A' Level or equivalent, as highest qualification
Left school aged 18
Not receiving any state benefit
Living in a home being bought with a mortgage or loan
Living in private rented accommodation
No dependent children in household

In turn, a range of characteristics appear related to a lower incidence of job applications compared to their respective composition within the population.

Characteristics associated with lower job application incidence

Spouses
Older (45-64 and 65-74) age groups
Females
Having a long standing or limiting illness
Economically inactive
Left school age 14 or 15
Not in school or further education
In receipt of a state benefit
Living in a home owned outright
Living in the West of NI

So, for example, job applicants were comprised of a higher proportion of 16 to 44 years olds compared to their composition within the population as a whole. On the other hand, economically inactive people comprised a lower proportion of job applicants in comparison to their population composition.

Changing the population comparator for job applicants from all adults to only economically active adults, results in some notable differences. Illness, both long standing and limiting, ceases to be a significant differentiating factor as does housing benefit receipt, and sex. That is, the characteristics of job applicants appear to conform, as might be expected, more closely to the characteristics of the economically active as a comparator group rather than to all adults aged 16 to 74.

Differences between job applicants and those applicants made a job offer

In contrast to the previous comparative analyses, fewer significant differences existed between the characteristics of job applicants and the characteristics of those who were made a job offer.

Some differences which appeared related to increased job application 'success' included, already being in employment at job application; not receiving any state benefit; and not living in a home where the householder(s) is in receipt of housing benefit. Those characteristics associated with reduced job application 'success' included, being the head of the family unit or the household reference person; being unemployed at point of application; having no qualifications; receiving a state benefit; and living in a home where the householder(s) is in receipt of housing benefit.

On that basis, the composition of adults who were made a job offer

conforms more closely to the characteristics of those making a job application in contrast to the number of differences seen in the comparisons of all job applicants to the adult population aged 16 to 74.

These initial descriptive analyses have highlighted a number of issues which will be explored further when the third year (2009/10) of Continuous Household Survey data is available and combined with the existing two years of data. The resulting greater sample size may allow a greater degree of disaggregation of the data, potentially allowing the examination of, for example, the extent to which age group or employment status as factors vary within other socio-economic characteristics. Finally, given the current developmental status of these survey questions, analyses of the dataset combining three years' data will enable an assessment of their continuing utility and need.

1. INTRODUCTION

A wealth of information is available on the nature and characteristics of the Northern Ireland labour force through administrative data and cross-sectional household surveys such as the Labour Force Survey. On that basis, a statistical picture of the labour force 'stock' in terms of employment, unemployment and inactivity can be generated and changes to these measured over time.

One aspect of the labour force which has not received much empirical focus through household survey research has been the individual characteristics associated with those making a job application and those successful in receiving a job offer. Administrative data such as the statutory monitoring of job applications by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland¹, for example, is limited (by legislation) in terms of both the breadth of coverage and the level of detail collected. The Labour Force Survey², which is the flagship source for labour market data, does not enable the issue of job application and job offer to be examined with the specific detail required.

There are arguably two quite distinct steps within the job application and appointment process. Firstly, the individual decision to apply for a job and secondly, the processes and outcome of that application process. The first step of an individual deciding to make an

application is driven by a wide range of individual characteristics and circumstances including the individual's assessment of their 'odds' of success. The second step of the job application process relates to the processes and procedures utilised by employers within a competitive labour market seeking to appoint the most suitable candidate from a range of applicants.

The first step in the job application process could be broadly summarised as individual whilst the second step, arguably, can be a combination of both organisational and individual factors.

There has been specific interest within Northern Ireland on the issue of equitable treatment within the labour market for some time. Fair Employment legislation in relation to religious community background has, over the 30 or so years of existence, been argued as amongst the most comprehensive of its kind³. The Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 (as amended) in turn provides for the equitable treatment of men and women in recruitment and in employment. NI legislation in relation to employment, recruitment and the treatment of employees covers a broad range of issues including age, disability, gender, race, religion/politics and sexual orientation. The statutory equality duties outlined in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998), requiring public authorities "to have due regard" to the need to promote equality of opportunity and "to have

¹ See:

www.equalityni.org/archive/pdf/MonRpt18FReportony.pdf

² See: www.detini.gov.uk/cgi-bin/moreutil?utilid=211&site=4&util=2&fold=&parent=

³ *Fair Employment in Northern Ireland: a generation on (2004)* Blackstaff Press, Belfast, and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. ISBN 0-85640-752-6

regard" to the desirability of promoting good relations, has broadened the perspective on equality of opportunity within the public sector.

Equality legislation of whatever hue impacting on recruitment and employment is traditionally framed in terms of equality of opportunity and is inevitably driven, and operationalised, by the various processes, procedures and policies implemented by employers in the recruitment and subsequent treatment of their employees.

Statistical outcome measures comparing the characteristics of those who are successful in job application to the characteristics of the population as a whole can be limited in the extent to which they can shed light on the two distinct steps underpinning the outcome of job application. That limitation underpinned the development of a suite of survey questions designed to explore the individual characteristics associated with the outcomes of the two distinct stages of job application and job appointment in more detail.

1.1. Methodology

A discrete module of job application questions were developed (Annex A) and subsequently incorporated into the Continuous Household Survey (CHS).

The CHS is one of the largest continuous surveys carried out in Northern Ireland. The survey is designed, conducted and analysed by the Central Survey Unit of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA). It is based on a sample of the general

population resident in private households and has been running since 1983. The Survey is designed to provide a regular source of information on a wide range of social and economic issues relevant to Northern Ireland.

It was recognised from the outset that the number of CHS respondents interviewed in any one year who had made a job application, would be unlikely to be sufficiently large to enable detailed analyses. On that basis, it was accepted that it would be necessary to combine a number of years data to enable analyses at the level desired. On that basis the questions were incorporated into the CHS in the 2007/08 survey and onwards.

Whilst these questions were designed to be asked of all adults aged between 16 and 74, survey space and time constraints meant that detailed questions could only be asked of the most recent job application if applicants had made more than one.

In relation to the data derived from each year's survey, it was expected that for each year it would be possible to:

- Year 1 (2007/08): superficially examine the data to confirm the questions were functioning appropriately and to confirm that at least two years' worth of data would be required before any analyses would be possible;
- Year 2 (2007/08 and 2008/09 combined): Limited (at most bivariate) descriptive analyses and reporting;

- Year 3 (2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10 combined): Greater disaggregation of data exploring themes emerging in relation to the analyses produced in Year 2.

The broad objectives for the current Year 2 data were to:

- Estimate the proportion of adults (aged 16-74) making at least one job application in the 12 months prior to interview;
- Estimate the number of applications made in total;
- Explore the social and economic characteristics of those making a job application within the constraints of sample size;
- Explore the social and economic characteristics of those successful in job application within the constraints of sample size.

The analyses reported below are based upon 571 individuals interviewed throughout 2007/08 and 2008/09 who said that they had made at least one application in the 12 months prior to interview.

Given the continuous nature of the Continuous Household Survey, it would be expected that there would be no seasonality bias in the results, although it should be borne in mind that the global and local economic context changed somewhat during this period.

2. RESULTS

2.1 Job application and outcome

Number of applications

Just less than one in ten adults (8.6%) aged between 16 and 74, reported making at least one job application in the 12 months prior to interview. The total number of job applications reported produced an average of 3.9 applications for each adult who reported making a job application. The number of individual applications made in the last 12 months by those having made an application, ranged from between 1 and 20.

Applying mid-year population estimates⁴, these survey estimates would translate to around 110,000 adults throughout NI aged between 16 and 74 making at least one job application annually. The total number of applications made would amount to around 433,000 individual applications throughout NI in a 12 month period.

Job application offer

Just under half (46.6%) of applicants were offered the last job they applied for with 37.7% of applicants unsuccessful and a further 15.8% whose job application was still underway at the point of interview.

The majority of those who had been successful in their job application had accepted the job offer (93.2%).

At the point of interview, the majority of those who had been

successful in their job application and who had accepted the job offer were still employed in that job (86.7%).

Source of awareness of job

The most frequently mentioned source of awareness of the job applied for were advertisements or situation vacant notices in newspapers (26.6%), jobcentres or jobs and benefit offices (17.3%), and friends and relatives (13.7%). Just under one in ten (8.8%) had become aware of the job through direct application to an employer. Some 6.8% said that they had advertised their availability for jobs in newspapers whilst 6.3% first heard of the job through current or previous work colleagues. Some 14% of job applicants referred to 'other sources' and many of these related to the internet as the first source of job awareness.

Nature of job applied for

Most applications related to an employee position (81%) whilst 12.8% of applications were for a managerial job with 6.1% of applications for a foreman or supervisory role.

Almost three quarters (73.4%) of applications were for a full-time job whilst 26.6% of applications were for a part-time job.

The majority of jobs applied for (82.1%) were permanent posts with 17.9% being temporary posts.

Just over three quarters of applications (76.8%) were to employer organisations with 11 or more employees whilst 23.2% of applications were to employer

⁴ See:

www.nisra.gov.uk/demography/default.asp20.htm

organisations with between 1 and 10 employees.

Almost two-thirds (63.2%) of job applications were to a private firm or business with around one-third (32.6%) of applications to a public sector organisation. The remaining applications (4.7%) were to a charitable, voluntary organisation or trust.

Almost two-thirds of adults applying for a job (63.2%) were already in employment when they made their application. Just over one-fifth (22.1%) were unemployed at the time of application, with 14.7% of people economically inactive when the job application was made.

Job application requirements

In relation to the job application process itself, the range of application procedures included: an application form (73.2%); interview (61.3%); references from previous employers (38%); a *curriculum vitae* (31.5%); a written letter of application (13.7%); personal recommendations from family or friends (8.9%); or an aptitude or written test (8.4%).

Job applicants were asked about any other specific requirements for the job. Whilst 20.9% of job applications did not stipulate any specific requirement, 59.8% stipulated particular skills for the job, 59.3% stipulated a history or experience of work in a similar job and 57.7% asked for particular qualifications.

In terms of the highest qualification required in the job application, 20.8% of job applications required a University first degree whilst

18.6% stipulated a GCSE grade A*-C qualification.

In terms of those job applications which did specify a qualification, over one-third (37.3%) related to a science, technology, engineering or maths (STEM) qualification.

An error in the computer-based Continuous Household Survey questionnaire meant that industrial and occupational details of the applied for job were only asked of an incomplete subset of interviewees. On that basis, it is not possible to provide occupational and industrial sector analyses.

Interim summary

The above details of the job applications made by a representative sample of adults aged 16 to 74 during 2007/08 and 2008/09 are broadly reflective of the known characteristics of the labour market in NI.

For example, the proportion of full-time and part-time posts applied for; the public or private basis of the employing organisation; and the finding that almost two-thirds of job applicants were already in employment, concur well with what is known of the labour market through existing labour force survey and administrative data. On that basis it could be concluded that the data represents a valid reflection of the job application process within NI.

2.2 Comparing job applicant characteristics to the population

The tables in Annexes B and C compare a range of selected social and economic characteristics of

those applying for a job in the last 12 months, to those of all adults aged 16 to 74, sampled within the Continuous Household Survey.

The Tables in Annexes D and E compare the social and economic characteristics of those applying for a job to all economically active 16 to 74 year olds sampled within the Continuous Household Survey.

The basis of the comparisons is to identify any characteristics reflecting greater or lower incidence of job application in comparison to their respective population composition on a *ceteris paribus* (all other things being equal) basis.

On a *ceteris paribus* basis, for example, we might expect that a group's composition of job applications would be more or less equivalent to their population composition – whether all aged 16 to 74 or the economically active aged 16 to 74.

As a benchmark, a difference of 5 percentage points or more between the social and economic characteristics of the adult population as a whole, and those applying for a job, indicates a statistically significant difference at the 95% confidence level and these are highlighted in red within the tables at Annexes B, C, D and E.

2.3 Comparing job applicants to all those aged 16 to 74

This comparison enables a perspective to be taken on the extent to which, the characteristics of those applying for a job in the last 12 months differ to the characteristics of the entire sampled population aged between 16 and 74. The selected characteristics examined below relate both to indicators of relative disadvantage in labour market participation, and also as broader indicators of relative social need.

Position in family unit

Spouses or partners of the head of the family unit had a lower composition of job applications (24%) compared to their composition of the adult population aged 16 to 74 (33%). Dependent children (aged 16 or over) in contrast, had a higher composition of job applications (18%) compared to their composition of the adult population (7%).

Relationship to household reference person

The household reference person had a lower composition of job applications (52%) in comparison to their composition of the population (58%) as did spouses or partners of the household reference person. Sons or daughters of the household reference person had a higher composition of job applications (19%) compared to their population composition (7%).

Economic activity

Those adults in employment at the time of application had a higher composition of job applications (63%) in comparison with the composition of employed 16 to 74 year olds within the adult population (57%). Unemployed adults at the time of application had a much higher composition of job applications (22%) in comparison to their population composition (2%). Those economically inactive adults at the time of application had a significantly lower composition of job applications (15%) compared to their population composition (41%).

Highest qualification held

People with no qualifications had a lower composition of job applications (10%) in comparison to their composition of the adult population (25%). In terms of highest qualification held, those with a University degree had a higher composition of job applications (27%) compared to their composition of the population (15%), as did adults with a GCE A level or equivalent qualification (21% had applied for a job compared to 12% of the population for whom this was their highest qualification).

Current educational status

Current educational status was asked only of those aged 16 to 70. Within this group, those who had left school and were not in further education had a lower composition of job applications (87%) compared to their population composition (95%).

Age on leaving school

Adults who said that they had left school at ages 14 or 15, had a lower composition of job applications (1% and 6% respectively) compared to their population composition (6% and 14%). Those adults who had left school at 18 had a higher composition of job applications (38%) in comparison to their composition of the adult population (26%).

Receipt of any state benefit

People in receipt of a state benefit had a lower composition of job applications (36%) in comparison to their composition of the population (52%). Conversely, those adults not in receipt of a state benefit had a higher composition of job applications (64%) in comparison to their population composition (48%).

Socio-Economic Group (SEG) (based on current or previous occupation)

There were little significant differences amongst the 8 individual SEG groups. The one exception was amongst adults classified as 'junior non-manual' who comprised 23% of those applying for a job compared to their 18% composition of the population.

Social Class (based on current or previous occupation)

No statistically significant social class differences were observed.

Housing tenure

Those adults who lived within a home owned outright had a lower composition of job applications (12%) compared to their composition of the adult population (33%). Conversely, those living within a home being bought with a mortgage or loan had a greater composition of job applications (51%) in comparison to their population composition (40%). Those adults in private rented households similarly had a higher composition of job applications (24%) in comparison to their population composition (13%).

Receipt of housing benefit

There were no statistically significant differences observed.

Residential area of Northern Ireland

A three-way geographic split of NI based on Belfast District Council, the East of Northern Ireland (broadly East of the river Bann) and West of Northern Ireland (broadly West of the river Bann) indicated that those in Belfast had a higher composition of job applications (26%) in comparison to their population composition (16%). Those living in the West of Northern Ireland had a lower composition of job applications (31%) in comparison to their population composition (37%).

A range of equality-focused variables were further examined comprising those from the Continuous Household Survey which appeared to best reflect the categories specified under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act

(1998). For a variety of reasons, it was not possible to have variables from the CHS that adequately reflected race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, or political opinion.

As a benchmark, a difference of 5 percentage points or more between the specific equality characteristics of the adult population as a whole and those applying for a job indicates a statistically significant difference at the 95% level and these are highlighted in red within the table at Annex C.

Sex

Males comprised a higher proportion of job applicants (50%) in comparison to their population composition (42%). Conversely therefore, females had a lower composition of job applications (50%) compared to their population composition (58%).

Age group

On a three-way age classification (groups of 16-44, 45-64, and 65-74), those aged 16 to 44 comprised a much higher composition of job applications (80%) compared to their population composition (49%).

Those in the 45 to 64 and 65 to 74 age groups comprised a lower composition of job applications (19% and 0% respectively) in comparison to their population composition (36% and 15% respectively).

Long standing limiting illness

There are two measures available within the Continuous Household Survey that provides rough proxy estimations for the impact of disability as defined within the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). Whilst these measures are an imperfect reflection of DDA-defined disability, they nevertheless may provide an indication of impact.

Adults with a long standing illness which limits their daily activity had a lower composition of job applications (9%) in comparison to their composition of the population (23%). People without a long standing limiting illness comprised a higher composition of job applications (91%) compared to their population composition (76%).

Long standing illness

On a separate measure of long standing illness which may or may not limit daily activity, those reporting such an illness comprised a lower composition of job applications (20%) compared to their population composition (34%). As expected, those without a long standing illness comprised a higher proportion of job applications (80%) in comparison to their population composition (66%).

Religion

There were no statistically significant differences observed.

Marital status

Single adults comprised a higher composition of job applicants (43%) in comparison to their population composition (22%). Married adults

comprised a lower proportion of job applications (37%) compared to their population composition (57%). Those classified variously as a cohabiting or civil partner/same sex couple had a higher composition of job applications (13%) compared to their population composition (6%). Widowers exhibited a lower proportion of job applications (0%) compared to their population composition (5%).

Number of dependent children in household

There were no statistically significant differences observed.

2.4 Comparing job applicants to economically active 16 to 74 year olds

This comparison enables a perspective to be taken on the extent to which the characteristics of those applying for a job in the 12 months prior to interview differ to the characteristics of the economically active population aged between 16 and 74. Economically active people are a subset of all those aged 16 to 74 and are those in employment or who are unemployed, looking for work, and available to start work (Annex D).

Those who were economically active and working at the time of application comprised a lower proportion of those making job applications (74%) compared to the proportion of economically active aged 16 to 74 who were working (96%). The converse effect was true for the unemployed within the economically active (26% of those making an application compared to

4% of all those aged 16 to 74 and economically active).

There was no difference between the composition of job applicants in terms of receipt of state benefit compared to their composition of the economically active aged 16 to 74. That is, the composition of job applicants in terms of receipt and non-receipt of any state benefit was no different to their composition within the economically active population.

In terms of the composition of socio-economic group amongst those applying for a job, those classified as skilled manual workers, had a lower composition of job applications (14%) compared to their composition within the economically active (20%).

In terms of social class, those classified as Managerial and Technical comprised a lower composition of job applicants (26%) compared to their composition of the economically active population (34%).

Those living in a house where the householder(s) is in receipt of housing benefit comprised a larger composition of those applying for a job (16%) compared to their composition of the economically active (5%). The reverse effect was true for people not in receipt of housing benefit (84% of those applying for a job compared to 95% of those economically active).

In contrast to the previous comparisons with all adults aged 16 to 74, there was no difference in the sex composition of those applying for a job and the sex

composition of the economically active.

In contrast to the previous comparisons with all those aged 16 to 74, there were no differences in the composition of those with and those without a long standing or limiting illness in respect of job applicants.

Finally, job applicants living in a home without dependent children (64%) comprised a higher proportion of job applicants compared to their composition of the economically active (59%).

2.5 Comparing successful job applicants to all job applicants

The previous sections had analysed the characteristic of job applicants and the extent to which they differed, more or less than might be expected on an all other things being equal basis, to overall population characteristics of those aged 16 to 74 and to the economically active aged 16 to 74.

This section examines the extent to which the social and economic characteristics of those who were successful in their job application differed, on an all other things being equal basis, to the respective characteristics of all those making a job application.

The measure of job application success utilised here is whether the job was offered to the applicant and not whether the job offer was accepted by the applicant.

As a benchmark, a difference of 6 percentage points or more between the specific social and economic characteristics of those making an

application and the characteristics of those offered the job indicates a statistically significant difference. Differences discussed below are those which are statistically significant at the 95% level and these are highlighted in red within the table at Annex F.

No statistically significant differences between the characteristics of job applicants to those applicants made a job offer were found in respect of: current educational status; age on leaving school; socio-economic group; social class; housing tenure or area of residence within NI.

Position in family unit

The head of the family unit comprised a lower proportion of those offered the applied for job (51%) in comparison to their composition of job applicants (58%).

Relationship to household reference person

People who were the household reference person had a lower composition of job offers (44%) in comparison to their composition of those applying for jobs (52%).

Economic activity

Those who were unemployed at the time of job application comprised a lower proportion of job offers (15%) in comparison to their composition of those making an application (22%).

Highest qualification held

People without a qualification comprised a lower proportion of job

offers (4%) in comparison to their composition of all those making a job application (10%).

Receipt of any state benefit

Adults in receipt of a state benefit comprised a lower proportion of those receiving job offers (29%) in comparison to their composition of those making an application (36%). This finding was mirrored by those people not in receipt of any state benefit whose proportion of job offers (71%) was higher compared to their composition of those making an application (64%).

Receipt of housing benefit

Those adults living in a home where the householder(s) was in receipt of housing benefit comprised a lower proportion of those made a job offer (7%) in comparison to their composition of all those applying for a job (16%). Conversely, those living in a home where the householder(s) was not in receipt of housing benefit comprised a higher proportion of those receiving job offers (93%) compared to their composition of those applying for jobs (84%).

Comparisons of equality-relevant characteristics of those applying for a job to those applicants who were made a job offer yielded no significant differences in relation to: sex; age group; limiting long standing illness; long standing illness; religion; or dependent children (Annex G).

The one exception was in relation to marital status with married adults comprising a higher proportion of those made job offers (43%)

compared to their composition of those making a job application (37%).

3. CONCLUSION

The analyses reported here and the differences highlighted are, as indicated, on a *ceteris paribus* basis. That is, on the basis that all other things are equal. In considering these findings, it must be remembered that all other things are not usually equal and that there are a wide range of interwoven characteristics and factors which determine observed outcomes.

Several characteristics are immediately apparent as being related to increased incidence of job application.

Characteristics associated with increased job application composition

Younger (16-44) age group
Males
Dependent/son/daughter
No long standing or limiting illness
Single
Living in a home where the householder(s) is not in receipt of housing benefit
Employed or unemployed
Degree, or GCE A' Level or equivalent, as highest qualification
Left school aged 18
Not receiving any state benefit
Living in a home being bought with a mortgage or loan
Living in private rented accommodation
No dependent children in household

In turn, there are a range of characteristics which appear to relate to lower incidence of job applications than might be expected on a simple comparative basis with the population as a whole.

Characteristics associated with lower job application composition

Spouse
Older (45-64 and 65-74) age groups
Females
Having a long standing or limiting illness
Economically inactive
Left school age 14 or 15
Not in school or further education
In receipt of a state benefit
Living in a home owned outright
Living in the West of NI

Changing the population comparator for job applicants from all adults aged 16 to 74 to only economically active adults aged 16 to 74, results in some notable differences. Self-reported illness, both long standing and limiting, ceases to be a significant difference. Those with a long standing illness who do make a job application therefore broadly reflect their composition of the economically active. Similarly, housing benefit receipt and sex ceased to be sources of significant difference. That is, the characteristics of job applicants appear to conform, as might be expected, more closely to the characteristics of the economically active as a comparator group rather than to those of all adults aged 16 to 74.

Of note is the reduced number of characteristics which differ significantly between those making a job application and those successful in their job application.

Those differences that do exist in relation to 'success' in receiving a job offer include, not being in receipt of a state benefit; not living in a home where the householder(s) is in receipt of housing benefit; and being married.

Those characteristics associated with lowered 'success' in job offer include, being the head of the family unit or the household reference person; being unemployed; not having any qualifications; being in receipt of a state benefit; and living in a home where the householder(s) is in receipt of housing benefit.

On that basis, the characteristics of adults who are 'successful' in being made a job offer conform more closely to the characteristics of those making a job application, in contrast to the number of differences seen in comparing job applicants to the adult population.

Many of the differences highlighted in these comparative analyses relate to social and economic characteristics which are known to act as barriers to labour market engagement and to reduce labour market connectivity.

The analyses reported here underline the potential dangers with outcome-focused analyses of labour force data. For example, basic outcome analyses comparing the characteristics of those who are offered a job to those of the population, inevitably combines and collapses the outcomes of the two distinct steps involved – the decision of the individual to apply and the outcome of the processes and procedures utilised by the employing organisations in recruitment.

Next steps

These initial descriptive analyses have highlighted a number of issues which will be explored further when the third year

(2009/10) of Continuous Household Survey data is available and combined with the existing two years of data. The greater sample size may allow a greater degree of disaggregation of the data to examine, for example, the extent to which age group or educational qualification status as factors vary within other socio-economic characteristics.

Finally, given the current developmental status of these survey questions, analyses of the dataset combining three years' data will enable an assessment of their continuing utility and need.

Annex A

Job Application Questionnaire

Questions to be asked of everyone aged 16 to 74

[APP12] In the last 12 months had you applied for a job or for a change of job?

NOTE: EXCLUDES IN-WORK PROMOTION OR IN-WORK LEVEL TRANSFERS (that's from yesterday back to):

1. Yes -> [NUMJBS]
2. No -> {end of section}

[NUMJBS] How many jobs in total had you applied for in the last 12 months? Enter number (that's from yesterday back to ..): 1..20

[LSTSUCC] Thinking now about the most recent application, were you offered the job?

1. Yes -> [ACCEPT]
2. No
3. No-Application is still ongoing

[ACCEPT] Did you accept the job offer?

1. Yes -> [EMSTL]
2. No -> [ADJOB]

[EMSTL] Are you still employed in this job?

1. Yes -> [ADJOB]
2. No -> [ADJOB]
3. No, did not take up job offer -> [ADJOB]

[ADJOB] How did you first find out about the job\ the last job?

1. Jobcentre/Jobs & Benefit Office
2. Jobclub
3. Private employment agency
4. Advertisement/situations vacant in newspaper or journal
5. Advertised availability for jobs in newspaper or journal
6. Applied directly to employer
7. Friends or relatives
8. Current or previous work colleagues
9. Other

[SPECAD] Please specify the other way : STRING [100] ;

[OCCJB] What was the occupation of the job you applied for? : STRING [60] ;

[TLEJB] What was the job title of the job you applied for?" : STRING [60] ;

[FULJB] Please describe fully what you would do in the job you applied for?
CHECK SPECIAL QUALIFICATIONS/TRAINING NEEDED TO DO THE JOB :
STRING [60] ;

[INDJB] In which industry was the job you applied for?
DESCRIBE FULLY - PROBE TYPE OF MANUFACTURING, PROCESSING,
DISTRIBUTING, ETC.
MAIN GOODS PRODUCED, MATERIALS USED, WHOLESALE OR RETAIL
ETC.
STRING [60] ;

[POSLST] Was the job you applied for as a...
READ OUT

1. Manager
2. Foreman / Supervisor
3. Employee

[FTLST] Was the job you applied for...
READ OUT

1. full time, or
2. part-time

[HRSWK] How many hours per week was the job you applied for? :1..99;

[TEMPER] Was the job you applied for...
READ OUT :

1. Temporary, or
2. Permanent

[NUMEMP] How many employees work(ed) in the establishment that you
(last) applied to?

1. 1 - 10 employees
2. 11 or more

[TYPORG] Was the organisation you (last) applied for a job to...

1. A private firm, business or public limited company
2. A public sector organisation, or
3. A charity, voluntary organisation or trust

[STATAPP] When you applied for the job were you...
READ OUT -CODE ONE ONLY :

1. In employment
2. Unemployed
3. Not working, because of illness or disability
4. Not working, you were looking after the family or home
5. Not working, you were at School
6. Not working, you were at University/College
7. Not working – Other

[SPSTAT] Please specify : STRING [200] ;

[TYPAPP] Did the job application process consist of...
READ OUT - CODE ALL THAT APPLY:
SET [8] OF

1. Application form
2. Curriculum Vitae
3. Written letter of application
4. Aptitude or written test
5. Interview
6. References from previous employer
7. Other

[SPAPP] Please specify the other process: STRING [100] ;

[REQAPP] Did the job application include specific requirements such as...
READ OUT - CODE ALL THAT APPLY :
SET [3] OF

1. Qualifications -> [QUALAPP]
2. Particular skills for the job
3. History or experience of work in a similar job
4. None of the above

[QUALAPP] SHOWCARD 15 (QUALIFICATIONS)
What was the highest qualification required for the job you applied for?

1. CSE - Grade 1
2. CSE - Grade 2-5
3. CSE - ungraded\DK grade
4. Junior Certificate
5. GCSE - Grades A*-C\GNVQ Intermediate
6. GCSE - Grades D-G\GNVQ Foundation
7. GCE O-level 1-6 (pre-1975)
8. GCE O-level Grades A-C (1975 or after)
9. GCE\VCE AS - level
10. GCE\VCE A-level\ GNVQ Advanced or equivalent
11. Senior Certificate

12. Recognised trade apprenticeship completed
13. Clerical and commercial qualifications
14. NVQ award
15. City and Guilds Certificate Part I
16. City and Guilds Certificate Part II
17. City and Guilds Certificate Part III
18. ONC or OND, BEC\TEC general certificate
19. HNC or HND, BEC\TEC higher certificate
20. Nursing qualifications eg SEN, SRN, SCM
21. Nursing degree
22. Teaching qualifications
23. University\Polytechnic diploma
24. University or CNAA First Degree (eg BA BSc)
25. University or CNAA Higher Degree (eg MSc PhD)
26. First other qualification (inc other school exams and membership of professional institutions)
27. Second other qualification
28. Third other qualification
29. None of these

[TECHQUL] Did the job you applied for require a maths, science, technology or engineering qualification?

1. Yes
2. No

Annex B

Socio-economic characteristics of all aged 16 to 74 compared to those applying for a job within the 12 months prior to interview

		Characteristics of surveyed population aged 16-74	Characteristics of those applying for a job [APP12]	Differences between population and application characteristics
		%	%	
Position in family unit	Head of family unit	61	58	-3
	Spouse	33	24	-9
	Dependent	7	18	11
Relationship to household reference person	Household reference person	58	52	-6
	Spouse/partner	33	24	-9
	Son/Daughter	7	19	12
	Other	2	6	4
Economic activity status	Working	57	63	6
	Unemployed	2	22	20
	Economically inactive	41	15	-26
Highest educational qualification	No qualifications	25	10	-15
	Degree	15	27	12
	Higher education	12	11	-1
	GCE A level or equiv	12	21	9
	GCSE A-C or equiv	20	23	3
	GCSE D_G or equiv	10	9	-1
Current educational status*	Other	7	1	-6
	Still at school	3	7	4
	College/Further education	2	6	4
	Left school	95	87	-8
Age on leaving school	Never went to school	0	0	0
	12	0	0	0
	13	0	0	0
	14	6	1	-5
	15	14	6	-8
	16	39	40	1
	17	12	12	0
	18	26	38	12
19+	3	4	1	
In receipt of any state benefit	Yes	52	36	-16
	No	48	64	16

Socio-economic group based on current or previous occupation	Professional	4	5	1
	Employer/Manager	9	8	-1
	Intermediate non-manual	18	19	1
	Junior non-manual	18	23	5
	Skilled manual	18	14	-4
	Semi-skilled manual	18	17	-1
	Unskilled manual	5	5	0
	No SEG	10	10	0
Social class based on current or previous occupation	I Professional	4	5	1
	II Managerial & Technical	28	26	-2
	IIIN Skilled occupations, non-manual	23	25	2
	IIIM Skilled occupations, manual	12	11	-1
	IV Partly skilled	18	17	-1
	V Unskilled	5	5	0
	Unknown	10	10	0
Housing tenure	Own outright	33	12	-21
	Being bought with a mortgage or loan (inc co-ownership)	40	51	11
	Rented NIHE/HA	14	12	-2
	Rented privately	13	24	11
	Rent free	1	0	-1
In receipt of housing benefit	Yes	17	16	-1
	No	83	84	1
Residential area of NI	Belfast	16	26	10
	East	47	44	-3
	West	37	31	-6
BASE=100%	5907	571		

Note: Statistical significance at the 95% level is derived from z-test statistics comparing two percentages on a two-tail basis. Significant differences between population characteristics and the characteristics of those making an application are highlighted in red.

* Base = 5,534 as the educational status question is asked only of those aged 16 to 70

Annex C

Equality characteristics of all aged 16 to 74 compared to those applying for a job within the 12 months prior to interview

		Characteristics of surveyed population aged 16-74	Characteristics of those applying for a job [APP12]	Differences between population and application characteristics
		%	%	
Sex	Male	42	50	8
	Female	58	50	-8
Age group	16-44	49	80	31
	45-64	36	19	-17
	65-74	15	0	-15
Limiting long standing illness	Yes	23	9	-14
	No	76	91	15
Long standing illness	Yes	34	20	-14
	No	66	80	14
Religion	Roman Catholic	42	39	-3
	Protestant	52	50	-2
	Other/none	6	10	4
	Unknown	1	0	-1
Marital status	Single	22	43	21
	Married	57	37	-20
	Cohabiting/civil partner/same sex couple	6	13	7
	Separated	4	3	-1
	Divorced	6	4	-2
	Widowed	5	0	-5
Number of children in household	0	66	64	-2
	1	15	18	3
	2	13	12	-1
	3	5	4	-1
	4+	2	1	-1
	BASE=100%	5907	571	

Note: Statistical significance at the 95% level is derived from z-test statistics comparing two percentages on a two-tail basis. Significant differences between population characteristics and the characteristics of those making an application are highlighted in red.

Annex D

Socio-economic characteristics of all economically active aged 16 to 74 compared to those applying for a job within the 12 months prior to interview

		Characteristics of surveyed population economically active aged 16-74	Characteristics of those applying for a job [APP12]	Differences between population and application characteristics
		%	%	
Position in family unit	Head of family unit	63	58	-5
	Spouse	31	24	-7
	Dependent	6	18	12
Relationship to household reference person	Household reference person	60	52	-8
	Spouse/partner	31	24	-7
	Son/Daughter	6	19	13
	Other	3	6	3
Economic activity status	Working	96	74	-22
	Unemployed	4	26	22
	Economically inactive	-	-	-
Highest educational qualification	No qualifications	16	10	-6
	Degree	22	27	5
	Higher education	15	11	-4
	GCE A level or equiv	15	21	6
	GCSE A-C or equiv	22	23	2
	GCSE D_G or equiv	9	9	0
	Other	1	1	0
Current educational status*	Still at school	-	7	7
	College/Further education	2	6	4
	Left school	98	87	-11
	Never went to school	0	0	0
Age on leaving school	12	0	0	0
	13	0	0	0
	14	2	1	-1
	15	10	6	-4
	16	39	40	1
	17	14	12	-2
	18	33	38	5
	19+	3	4	1
In receipt of any state benefit	Yes	32	36	4
	No	68	64	-4

Socio-economic group based on current or previous occupation	Professional	6	5	-1
	Employer/Manager	11	8	-3
	Intermediate non-manual	21	19	-2
	Junior non-manual	20	23	3
	Skilled manual	20	14	-6
	Semi-skilled manual	15	17	2
	Unskilled manual	4	5	1
	No SEG	3	10	7
Social class based on current or previous occupation	I Professional	6	5	-1
	II Managerial & Technical	34	26	-8
	IIIN Skilled occupations, non-manual	26	25	-1
	IIIM Skilled occupations, manual	1	11	-1
	IV Partly skilled	15	17	2
	V Unskilled	4	5	1
	Unknown	3	10	7
Housing tenure	Own outright	24	12	-12
	Being bought with a mortgage or loan (inc co-ownership)	54	51	-3
	Rented NIHE/HA	7	12	5
	Rented privately	13	24	11
	Rent free	1	0	-1
In receipt of housing benefit	Yes	5	16	11
	No	95	84	-11
Residential area of NI	Belfast	16	26	10
	East	49	44	-5
	West	35	31	-4
BASE=100%		3480	571	

Note: Statistical significance at the 95% level is derived from z-test statistics comparing two percentages on a two-tail basis. Significant differences between population characteristics and the characteristics of those making an application are highlighted in red.

* Base = 3,468 as the educational status question is asked only of those aged 16 to 70

Annex E

Equality characteristics of all economically active aged 16 to 74 compared to those applying for a job within the 12 months prior to interview

		Characteristics of surveyed population economically active aged 16-74	Characteristics of those applying for a job [APP12]	Differences between population and application characteristics
		%	%	
Sex	Male	48	50	2
	Female	52	50	-2
Age group	16-44	61	80	19
	45-64	36	19	-17
	65-74	2	0	-2
Limiting long standing illness	Yes	9	9	0
	No	91	91	0
Long standing illness	Yes	20	20	0
	No	80	80	0
Religion	Roman Catholic	41	39	-2
	Protestant	52	50	-2
	Other/none	7	10	3
	Unknown	1	0	-1
Marital status	Single	22	43	21
	Married	59	37	-22
	Cohabiting/civil partner/same sex couple	9	13	4
	Separated	4	3	-1
	Divorced	5	4	-1
	Widowed	2	0	-2
Number of children in household	0	59	64	5
	1	18	18	0
	2	16	12	-4
	3	5	4	-1
	4+	2	1	-1
BASE=100%		3480	571	

Note: Statistical significance at the 95% level is derived from z-test statistics comparing two percentages on a two-tail basis. Significant differences between population characteristics and the characteristics of those making an application are highlighted in red.

Annex F

Socio-economic characteristics of all those applying for a job compared to all those offered the job

		Characteristics of those applying for jobs [APP12]	Characteristics of those offered the job [LSTSUCC]	Differences between job application and offer characteristics
		%	%	
Position in family unit	Head of family unit	58	51	-7
	Spouse	24	29	5
	Dependent	18	20	2
Relationship to household reference person	Household reference person	52	44	-8
	Spouse/partner	24	29	5
	Son/Daughter	19	20	1
	Other	6	6	0
Economic activity status	Working	63	68	5
	Unemployed	22	15	-7
	Economically inactive	15	17	-2
Highest educational qualification	No qualifications	10	4	-6
	Degree	27	27	0
	Higher education	11	14	3
	GCE A level or equiv	21	21	0
	GCSE A-C or equiv	23	25	2
	GCSE D_G or equiv	9	7	-2
	Other	1	1	0
Current educational status	Still at school	7	8	1
	College/Further education	6	8	2
	Left school	87	85	-2
	Never went to school	0	0	0
Age on leaving school	12	0	0	0
	13	0	0	0
	14	1	1	0
	15	6	3	-3
	16	40	39	-1
	17	12	12	0
	18	38	39	1
	19+	4	5	1
In receipt of any state benefit	Yes	36	29	-7
	No	64	71	7

Socio-economic group based on current or previous occupation	Professional	5	6	1
	Employer/Manager	8	8	0
	Intermediate non-manual	19	19	0
	Junior non-manual	23	22	-1
	Skilled manual	14	12	-2
	Semi-skilled manual	17	20	3
	Unskilled manual	5	4	-1
	No SEG	10	9	-1
Social class based on current or previous occupation	I Professional	5	6	1
	II Managerial & Technical	26	27	0
	IIIN Skilled occupations, non-manual	25	24	-1
	IIIM Skilled occupations, manual	11	10	-2
	IV Partly skilled	17	20	3
	V Unskilled	5	4	-1
	Unknown	10	9	-1
Housing tenure	Own outright	12	15	3
	Being bought with a mortgage or loan (inc co-ownership)	51	56	5
	Rented NIHE/HA	12	8	-4
	Rented privately	24	21	-3
	Rent free	0	0	0
In receipt of housing benefit	Yes	16	7	-9
	No	84	93	9
Residential area of NI	Belfast	26	22	-4
	East	44	47	3
	West	31	31	0
BASE=100%		571	266	

Note: Statistical significance at the 95% level is derived from z-test statistics comparing two percentages on a two-tail basis. Significant differences between job applicant characteristics and the characteristics of those made a job offer are highlighted in red.

Annex G

Equality characteristics of all those applying for a job compared to all those offered the job

		Characteristics of those applying for jobs [APP12]	Characteristics of those offered the job [LSTSUCC]	Differences between job application and offer characteristics
		%	%	
Sex	Male	50	45	-5
	Female	50	55	5
Age group	16-44	80	84	4
	45-64	19	16	-3
	65-74	0	0	0
Limiting long standing illness	Yes	9	9	0
	No	91	91	0
Long standing illness	Yes	20	20	0
	No	80	80	0
Religion	Roman Catholic	39	41	2
	Protestant	50	50	0
	Other/none	10	8	-2
	Unknown	0	1	1
Marital status	Single	43	40	-3
	Married	37	43	6
	Cohabiting/civil partner/same sex couple	13	11	-2
	Separated	3	3	0
	Divorced	4	3	-1
	Widowed	0	0	0
Number of children in household	0	64	61	-3
	1	18	21	3
	2	12	12	0
	3	4	4	0
	4+	1	2	1
BASE=100%		571	266	

Note: Statistical significance at the 95% level is derived from z-test statistics comparing two percentages on a two-tail basis. Significant differences between job applicant characteristics and the characteristics of those made a job offer are highlighted in red.