

Continuous Household Survey 2008/09 Bulletin

Bulletin 8

July 2009

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Please note:

Increases, Decreases and Comparisons where noted can be read as statistically significant

The Continuous Household Survey (CHS) provides a regular source of information on a wide range of social and economic issues in Northern Ireland, and has been running since 1983.

The survey is based on a random sample of 4,500 domestic addresses drawn from the Land and Property Services Agency list of addresses. Interviews are sought with all adults aged 16 and over in the selected households.

Renewable Energy

A new section on renewable energy was included in the CHS for 2008/09.

Northern Ireland Electricity's (NIE) Eco tariff
NIE provide a Green Tariff to customers which means that for every unit of electricity a household buys, NIE buys an equivalent amount of power from a local renewable source. 13% of households had heard of this eco tariff however only 1% were actually buying their electricity this way. 8% were seriously considering moving to this tariff.

Renewable Energy Appliances

The majority of households (98%) did not have any renewable energy appliances. 2% had solar panels, 1% had a wood chip burner.

Households were then asked if they currently had or were seriously considering installing a number of renewable energy sources. Just less than one in ten (8%) were seriously considering installing solar panels for electricity, 7% were considering using solar water heating and 3% considered using a wind turbine to generate electricity.

Energy Saving Measures

Almost all households (97%) had at least one form of energy saving measure; with the most common being double glazing (84%), loft insulation (83%) and hot water cylinder insulation (77%).

One in ten (9%) households reported having a form of 'super-efficient' boiler known as a condensing boiler.

The nature and aims of the CHS are similar to those of the General Household Survey (GHS-L) carried out by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in Great Britain.

In addition to this bulletin, a wide range of additional results and technical details are available on-line. Information on how to access these is provided at the end of this bulletin.

Energy efficiency grants

A minority (13%) of households had received energy efficiency grants; 4% received Warm homes grant, 3% Cavity wall cash back, and 3% Loft insulation cash back, with 6% receiving some other type of grant.

Energy wasting activities

Respondents were asked how often various energy wasting activities occurred on an average day in their home. One third (33%) stated that leaving an appliance on standby occurred often or always, while a quarter (23%) often boiled more hot water in the kettle than needed. One in ten often left on unnecessary lights (11%) or used a washing appliance with less than a full load (9%).

Table 1: Energy wasting activities

	2008/09
Leaving an appliance on standby	33%
Boiling more hot water in the kettle than needed	23%
Leaving on unnecessary lights	11%
Using a washing appliance with less than a full load	9%
All Households	2,472

Help to become more energy efficient

The factors considered most effective at making people more energy efficient were educating children in school (88%), clearer information on running costs when buying appliances (85%) and better labelling on appliances (83%).



Environmental Issues

Important Environmental Problems

82% of households were very or fairly concerned about the environment, a level which has remained similar since 2003-04 (76%). The environmental problems cited as being the most important were climate change (37%), pollution in rivers (34%), household waste disposal (31%), traffic exhaust fumes and urban smog (31%) and traffic congestion (28%).

Household Recycling

The majority of households (92%) regularly recycled at least one of the following: glass, paper and cans, a similar level to the previous year (91%). The proportion of households regularly recycling paper (91%) and cans (85%) has increased significantly every year since 2003-04.

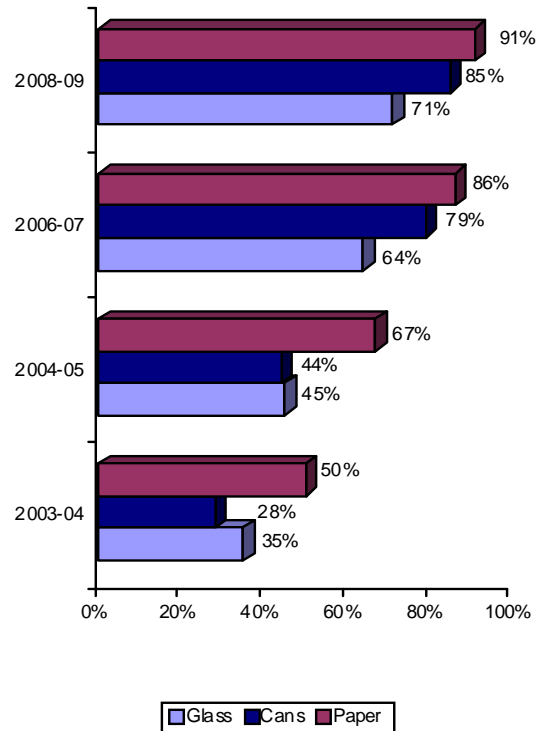
Reasons for not regularly recycling

The most common reason for not regularly recycling either paper, glass or cans was "having little glass, paper or cans" (43%), "having no kerbside collection" (28%) and "recycling facilities being too far away" (17%).

Environmentally friendly actions

Over half (55%) of households used energy saving light bulbs an increase from 51% the previous year. 41% had reduced the amount of energy used in the home.

Fig 1: Types of waste regularly recycled



Internet Access

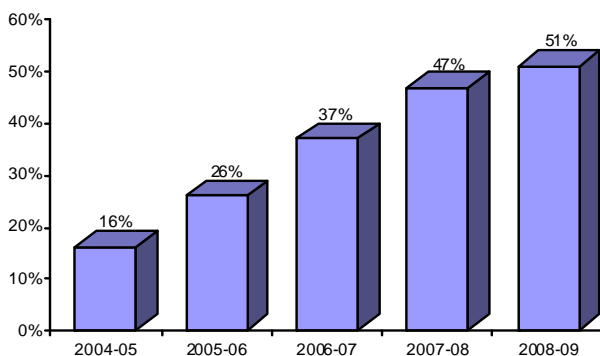
Household Internet Access

Three in five (61%) households in Northern Ireland had a home computer in 2008-09. Over half (54%) accessed the internet via their home computer.

Broadband Internet Connection

Half of all households (51%) had broadband internet access an increase from 47% the previous year. Nine out of ten (91%) households with internet access had a broadband connection.

Fig 2: Households with Broadband Internet Connection



Individual Internet Access

61% of individuals reported accessing the internet. Just over half (54%) of those who access the internet did so at least once a day, while 29% used the internet several times a week.

Methods of accessing the internet

Of those who use the internet a third (36%) use more than one method. The most common method of accessing the internet was a home computer (92%) followed by a work computer (34%) and mobile phones (5%).

Individuals reasons for accessing the internet

The most common reasons for accessing the internet were using email (54%), finding information about goods and services (47%), general browsing (47%), buying or ordering tickets (44%) and for work-related reasons (28%). These have been the five most common reasons since 2003-04.

Individual reasons for not accessing the internet

A lack of interest (43%), and not having a computer (37%) were the most frequently cited reasons for not accessing the internet.

Health

Self-reported General Health

83% of adults reported their health to be good or fairly good in the previous 12 months.

Long-standing Illness

Just over a third (36%) of adults reported having a long-standing illness; with males and females reporting a similar level (36% and 37% respectively). The prevalence of long-standing illness has remained relatively unchanged since 1998-99 when it was 35%.

Limiting Long-Standing Illness

A quarter (24%) had a long standing illness which limited their activities; this proportion has remained relatively unchanged since 1997-98 (25%).

Consultations with an NHS GP

15% reported visiting an NHS GP in the two weeks prior to being interviewed, with more females reporting to have done so than males (17% compared to 13%). The proportion of females visiting a GP has been consistently higher than males since 1983 (11% compared to 17%).

Consultations with a Practice Nurse

7% had seen a practice nurse at their GPs surgery in the previous 2 weeks, the same figure as for 2007-08.

Missed Outpatient Appointments

A small minority (2%) of respondents reported not attending an outpatient appointment in the last 12 months.

Reasons for not attending

The most commonly cited reasons for not attending were forgetting about the appointment (29%), being too ill to attend (21%), the appointment being at an inconvenient time (18%) and no longer needing the appointment (16%).

Why appointment was not cancelled

58% of those who did not attend did not cancel the appointment. 61% of those who didn't cancel their appointment stated that they forgot to do so, 16% felt embarrassed about cancelling, 13% did not think it was important, while 10% tried to cancel and could not get through.

Methods of reducing number of missed outpatient appointments

All respondents were asked to indicate which methods they thought were acceptable in reducing the number of missed outpatient appointment. The most popular methods were charging patients for missed appointments (43%) and sending letters to those who missed appointments (42%).

Table 2: Methods of reducing the number of missed outpatient appointments

	2008/09
Charges for missed appointments	43%
Send letters to those who miss appointments	42%
Prevent booking a long time in advance	37%
Raising the issue with the patient at the next attended appointment	35%
Providing patients with aide-memoires	33%
Displaying notices in waiting areas of the number of missed appointments	32%
Improved facilities for making & cancelling appointments	28%
Threaten/removal from outpatient waiting list	28%
All Persons (100%)	3,085

Child Health

Child Long-Standing Illness

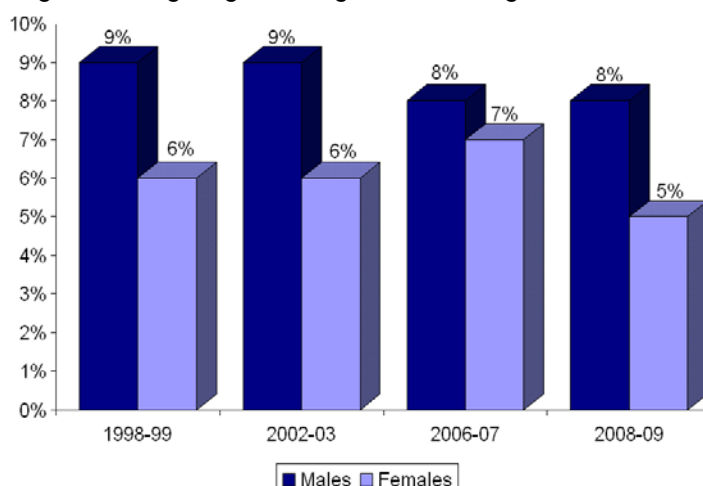
Just over one in ten children (12%) were reported to have a long standing illness in 2008-09. The proportion of children with a long-standing illness which limited their activities (7%) has remained relatively unchanged since 1997-98 (8%). A higher proportion of males had a limiting long-standing illness, 8% compared to 5% of females.

Consultations with an NHS GP and Hospital Visits

7% of children had visited an NHS GP in the previous two weeks and 6% had attended a hospital out-patient department in the previous three months.

A small proportion of children had been day patients (4%) or in-patients (4%) in hospital in the previous year.

Fig 3: Limiting long-standing illness among children



Smoking

A quarter (24%) of individuals were smokers in 2008-09, a similar proportion as in 2007-08 (23%).

Illnesses caused by passive smoking

Respondents were asked to indicate what illnesses they believed were caused by passive smoking. The most frequently mentioned were cancer (57%), damaged lungs (45%) and respiratory problems (32%). A small minority (2%) thought it posed no risk to health.

Attitudes to passive smoking

79% believed that children were more at risk from passive smoking than adults, while two-thirds (65%) believed that babies exposed to passive smoking were more at risk of cot death.

Rules smoking in home

Almost three-quarters (64%) of respondents reported that smoking was not allowed in their home, 20% allowed smoking in certain parts of their home or on certain occasions. 62% did not allow smoking in any of their family cars.

Attempts to quit smoking

66% of smokers had tried to quit smoking at least once. Of those who had tried unsuccessfully to quit smoking 80% had suddenly stopped smoking while the rest (20%) had gradually cut down the number of cigarettes smoked. Three-quarters smokers stated that the price of cigarettes (74%) and concern for their health (73%) would encourage them to quit smoking.

Table 3: Factors that would encourage smokers to quit

	2008/09
The price of cigarettes	74%
Concern for personal health	73%
Setting an example for children	63%
Concern for effects of your smoke on non-smokers	53%
Advice from doctor or health professional	47%
Free/lower cost stop-smoking medication	43%
All Persons (100%)	753

Nicotine Replacement Therapies

The majority (92%) of smokers and those who had quit in the last six months were aware of nicotine replacement therapies, with 45% using them in previous quit attempts.

Of those who had used nicotine replacement therapies 71% used nicotine patches, 22% had used nicotine gum and 15% had used a nicotine inhaler.

Two-thirds (65%) obtained their nicotine replacement therapy by prescription, a third (35%) over the counter, and a minority from a friend (3%) or a smoking cessation clinic (2%).

Dental Health

Frequency of check ups

63% of adults visited their dentist for regular checkups, a similar proportion as in 2006-07 (62%). Significantly more females have reported having regular check-ups since 1999-00 (69% compared to 55%).

Just under three-quarters (71%) had visited a dentist in the last 12 months, again with more females having visited than males (76% compared to 65%).

Registered with a dentist

The majority of adults (83%) in Northern Ireland were registered with a dentist, this figure has remained relatively unchanged since 1999-00 (83%).

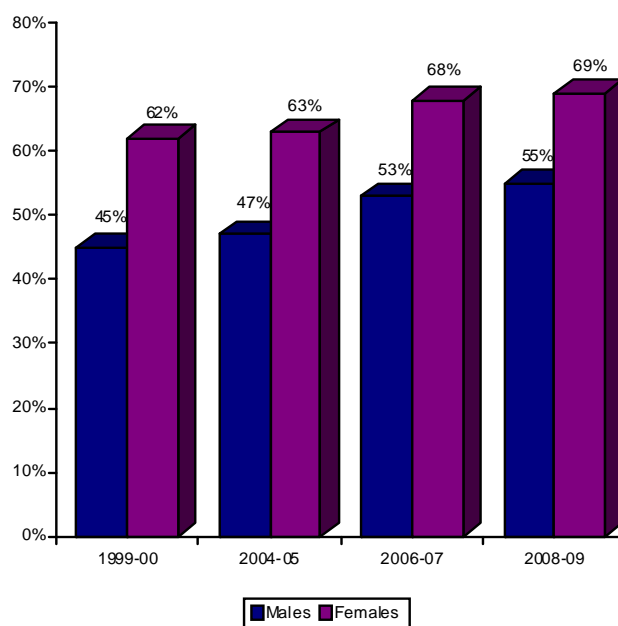
NHS or Private Patients

Three-quarters (73%) visited their dentist as an NHS patient. This figure has continued to decline from 2002-03 when 86% were NHS patients.

Difficulty accessing a dentist in last 12 months

Only a small minority (5%) reported having trouble accessing a dentist in the previous 12 months.

Fig 4: Visits the dentist for regular check ups



Drinking

Three-quarters (74%) of adults aged 18 years or more drank alcohol in 2008-09, with more male drinkers than female ones (79% and 70% respectively).

Level of consumption

16% reported regularly drinking in excess of sensible levels (defined as 21 units per week for males and 14 units per week for females), a decrease from 18% in 2006-07. A quarter (26%) of males drank above sensible levels compared to one in ten (10%) females.

Expenditure on alcohol

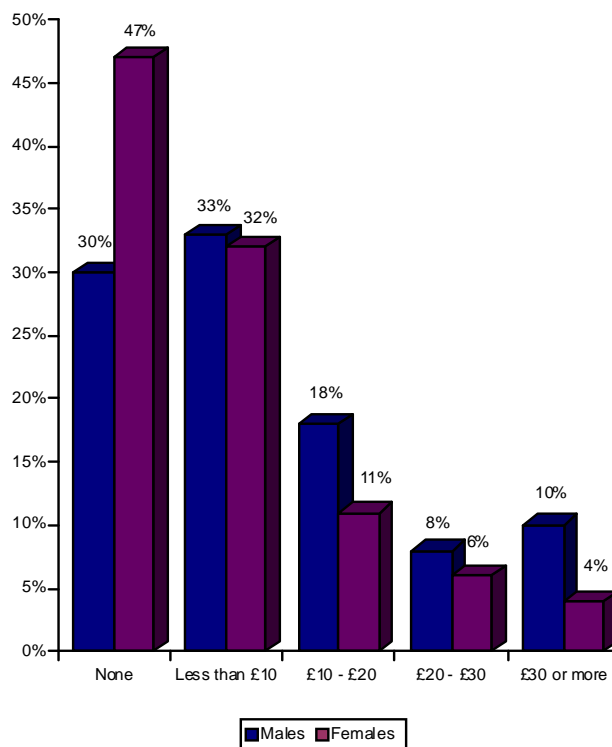
Respondents were asked to indicate how much they usually spend each week on alcohol for themselves and others from an off-sales. 30% usually did not buy anything at off sales, 44% spent less than £10, 19% between £10 and £20 and 8% more than £20. Males spent more on alcohol than females, 12% spent £20 or more compared to 5% of females.

70% of males and 53% of females reported usually buying alcohol in public houses or licensed restaurants. Males reported spending more on alcohol; 10% spent £30 or more compared to 4% of females.

Driving while under the influence of alcohol

A minority (3%) of people who drank and had a driving license reported driving on at least one occasion in the last year when they were sure they had consumed more than the legal limit.

Fig 5: Weekly expenditure on alcohol in pubs and licensed restaurants



Voluntary Work

Unpaid work through an organisation

A quarter of individuals (23%) had carried out unpaid work with an organisation that was not solely for their own benefit or that of their family in the last 12 months. A quarter of males (25%) had been involved in voluntary work compared to one fifth of females (19%).

Types of unpaid work carried out

Among those who did voluntary work in the last 12 months the most common types of work were raising money (52%), visiting people (49%), organising an activity or an event (42%), helping in church (31%), membership of a committee (25%) and selling tickets (24%).

Individual voluntary work in the community

24% reported doing voluntary work as an individual in their neighbourhood.

Keeping in touch with someone who has difficulty getting out and about (34%), looking after a property or a pet for someone who is away (30%), babysitting (26%) and transporting or escorting someone (20%) were the most common activities carried out by people on a voluntary basis

Table 4: Voluntary work carried out by individuals who volunteer in their neighbourhood

	2008/09
Keeping in touch with someone who has difficulty getting out and about	34%
Looking after a property or a pet for someone who is away	30%
Babysitting	26%
Transporting or escorting someone	20%
Giving advice	18%
Writing letters or filling in forms	17%
Doing shopping, collecting pension or paying bills	17%
Improving the environment (e.g. picking up litter or sweeping pavement)	13%
All Persons (100%)	688

Care Workers

Respondents were asked to indicate from a list of activities which, if any, they would find difficult to carry out without help. 13% stated they would have difficulty with at least one of these activities. 29% of those aged 60 or over reported needing assistance; with more females in this age group reporting having difficulty than males (41% compared to 23%)

Among those who needed assistance the activities which most people needed help with were doing housework (61%), getting up and down stairs (61%) and doing the household shopping (55%).

Whether Individuals Needs were assessed by Social Services

Individuals who indicated they had difficulties with at least one activity were then asked about whether or not they receive help.

42% of those with difficulties had been assessed by social services. Of those who had never been assessed just over half (54%) stated that their reason was not needing or wanting an assessment.

Table 5: Reasons for not having needs assessed by Social Services

	2008/09
Do not need or want assessment	54%
Have never thought about it	17%
Organising own care privately	9%
Do not know how to go about getting assessed	8%
All Persons (100%)	297

Home Care Workers

Three– quarters (76%) of individuals who needed assistance had a relative, friend or neighbour who helped them; 15% had a care worker provided by social services or a voluntary or private sector.

Direct Payments

Just one in ten (12%) of those receiving care either from a social services worker or a private carer were aware of Social Services direct payments as a means of paying for their care.

Individuals' involvement in their care plan

Respondents who had been assessed by social services and who were provided with a care worker were asked whether they or their family or friend had been involved in decisions about their care; 44% were involved as much as they wanted, 14% were involved but not as much as they wanted. Only 3% were not involved and would have wanted to be.

Ways Home Care Could be Improved

Only a quarter (25%) of those receiving a social services care worker had been asked for their views on the quality of their home care.

A third (32%) of individuals with a home care worker felt that having more hours of home care would improve their care while a fifth (20%) thought having more tasks carried out by the worker would do so.

When asked to rate the care they received 87% rated it 'very good' or 'good'.

Reasons for not having a care worker provided by Social Services

The most common reason for not having a care worker provided by social services was that the individual had a friend or relative who helped them (63%) .

Child Dental Health

Three– quarters (75%) of children had visited a dentist on at least one occasion. The proportion of males and females visiting the dentist was similar (76% and 74% respectively).

Nine out of ten (92%) 8-11 years olds and 12-15 year olds had been to a dentist compared to 83% of 4-7 year olds and 38% of children under four years.

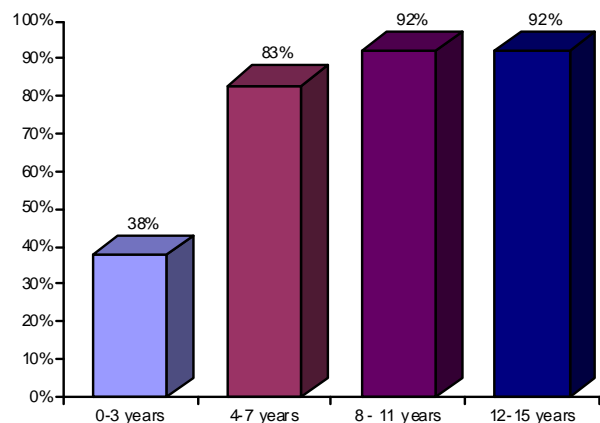
Last visit to the dentist

The majority (95%) of children who had been to a dentist last attended during the previous 12 months.

NHS Patients

Of those children who had visited a dentist almost all (97%) did so as an NHS patient.

Fig 6: Children who have visited a dentist



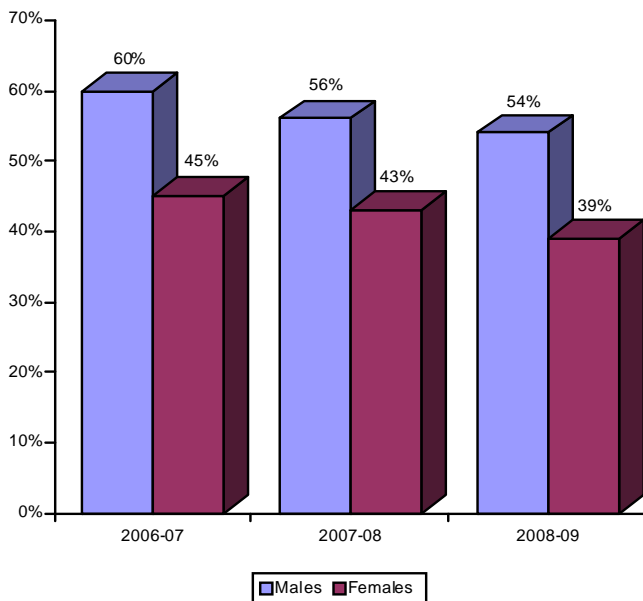
Sport and Leisure

Participation in sport

45% of individuals reported participating in sport in the previous 12 months, a decrease from 49% the previous year. A smaller proportion of females have consistently reported participating in sport (39% compared to 54%).

Of those who had played sport in the last year a quarter (26%) played on average one day a week and 17% played two days a week.

Fig 7: Participated in Sport in the last 12 months



Reasons for not enjoying sport or physical activity

40% stated that they did not enjoy playing sport at all. The most commonly cited reasons for not enjoying sport were not having enough time (26%), being unfit (21%), having no interest (20%) and feeling too old (19%).

Attendance at sporting events

29% had attended a sporting event in Northern Ireland as a spectator in the last 12 months while 14% had attended a sport event outside Northern Ireland in the same period. A higher proportion of males attended sporting events than females with 41% attending events in Northern Ireland and 25% outside of Northern Ireland compared to 21% and 6% of females.

Satisfaction with Sports Provision in Northern Ireland

Just over half (53%) were very or fairly satisfied with sports provision in Northern Ireland.

Participation in the 'Arts'

Half of adults (51%) in Northern Ireland had participated in the 'Arts' in the previous 12 months. The majority (77%) of those who reported participating in the Arts had read for pleasure and just over half (54%) had bought or been given a novel, book of stories, plays or poetry.

Reasons for participating in the 'Arts'

Nine out of ten (89%) participated in the arts for their pleasure, while just over a quarter (28%) did so to reduce stress. The most common reasons for not participating in the Arts were not being interested (33%) and not having enough time (22%).

Attendance at the 'Arts'

Half (49%) had been to see a film in the last year, a fifth (20%) had seen a play or drama, while 16% had been to another type of theatre performance or a rock or pop music concert.

Table 6: Arts Events attended in the last 12 months

	2008/09
Film at a cinema or other venue	49%
Play or drama	20%
Another type of theatre performance	16%
Rock or pop music performance	16%
All Persons (100%)	3,135

Barriers to attendance at the 'Arts'

One-third (32%) of individuals when asked to indicate if certain factors prevented them from attending the 'Arts' stated that none of them did, 19% cited the cost of attending, 18% were not really interested in attending and 18% found it difficult to find the time.

Use of public libraries

69% reported never using Public Libraries in Northern Ireland. Of those who used public libraries over three-quarters (78%) did so to borrow books, 16% to look up information, 10% to borrow other material and 9% to browse books or newspapers.

Factors encourage use libraries more often

The majority of individuals (69%) stated that nothing would encourage them to use public libraries more often; one in ten (11%) thought having more free time or libraries having a better selection of books (10%) would encourage them to use the service.

Visits to museums in Northern

70% had visited a museum in Northern Ireland at least once, however only 27% had been to a museum in the last year.

What encourage visit museums more often

Less than half (44%) stated that nothing would encourage them to visit museums more often; a quarter (28%) said that exhibitions of a subject they were interested in would do so while a fifth (21%) said more information about events and exhibitions.

Parental Involvement in Children's Education

Read to children

Over three-quarters (77%) of pre-school aged children have parents who read to them several times a week or more. 90% of school aged children had parents who read to them several times a week or more prior to starting school.

Place for children to do homework

Nine out of ten (89%) school aged children had a place set aside in their home for them to do homework.

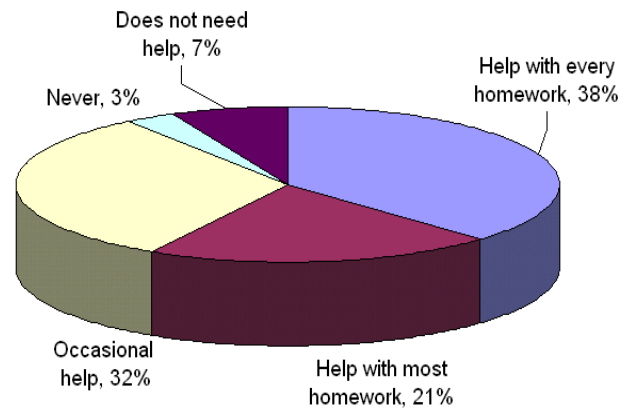
Help with homework

38% of children were helped by their parents with every single homework, 21% received help with most homework while 32% occasionally received help. Only 3% never received help. 90% of children had parents who checked if their homework was done.

Involvement in school activities

Parents were asked to indicate how often if at all they were involved in activities organised by their children's school. 77% attended parent evenings, 25% helped with fundraising and 14% were involved in parent teacher associations whenever there was an opportunity.

Table 8: How often children get help with their homework



Job Applications

8% of adults aged between 16 and 74 had applied for at least one job in the previous 12 months, a similar proportion to the previous year (9%). 45% of those who applied were successful in their application and nine out of ten (91%) accepted the job offer.

Where applicant heard about job vacancy

Just over a quarter of applicants (26%) had found out about the job vacancy from an advertisement in a newspaper or journal, while, a fifth (22%) had found out through a job centre.

Table 7: Where applicants heard about job vacancy

	2008/09
Advertisement in newspaper or journal	26%
Jobcentre/Jobs & Benefit Office	22%
Other	15%
Friends or relatives	12%
Applied directly to employer	9%
All Persons (100%)	243

Type of jobs applied for

Among those who had applied for a job, 77% were for full-time positions. Looking at the type of employer, 63% were in the private sector and 33% in the public sector. Almost three-quarters (64%) of applicants were in employment at the time of the application while 24% were unemployed.

Application Process

As part of the application process three-quarters (76%) completed an application form, 62% were interviewed and 39% provided references from a previous employer.

Requirements for the job

Two-thirds (65%) of applicants applied for jobs which required them to have particular skills, 60% needed experience of work in a similar area, while 58% were required to have specific qualifications.

One third (34%) of applicants had applied for a job which required maths, science, technology or engineering qualifications.

For additional copies of this bulletin or for more detailed tables and technical report, please contact

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Additional Trend tables and Update tables are available on the website