

Autumn Skills Bulletin 2020

Profile of Part-Time Workers in Ireland,
Quarter 1 2020



PROFILE OF PART-TIME WORKERS IN IRELAND

Introduction

The introduction of COVID-19 restrictions in March 2020 led to a significant fall in employment in Ireland. Between quarter 1 and quarter 2 2020, employment numbers fell by 131,000; this fall was particularly pronounced for those working part-time, with a fall of almost 80,000 persons employed (or 16%, compared to a 3% decline for full-time workers).

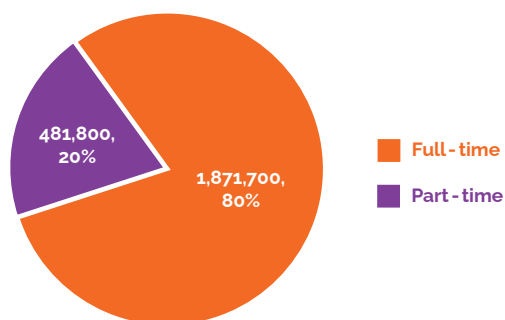
The primary aim of this paper is to establish a profile of those who were working part-time in Ireland prior to the onset of COVID-19 (in this case quarter 1 2020) so as to establish who, within this cohort, may most require labour market interventions, in light of the fall in employment that has occurred since. We examine how part-time working has evolved since the recession, who is most likely to work part-time in terms of age, gender and educational background and how part-time working patterns vary according to the sector and occupation of employment.

Those part-time workers who became unemployed as a result of COVID-19 may be at particular risk of becoming detached from the labour force if the duration of unemployment is prolonged. Many were employed in sectors such as wholesale and retail and accommodation and food which have yet to see a significant recovery in employment. Maintaining proximity to the labour market and the ability to up-skill and re-skill is fundamental to ensure that no one is left behind in the current economic situation.

Overview

In quarter 1 2020, there were 2.35 million people in employment in Ireland. Of all those in employment, 80% worked full-time while the remaining 20% worked part-time.

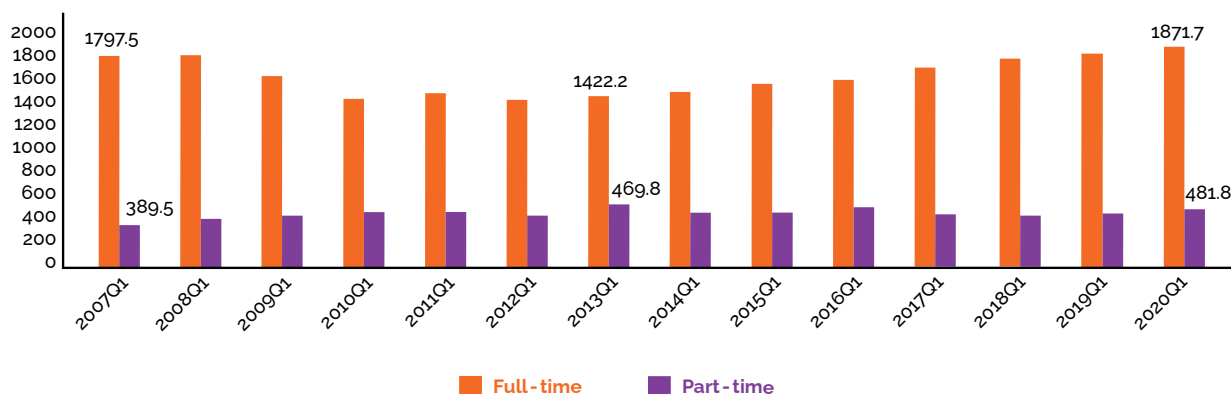
Figure 1. Full-time/part-time employment aged 15 years & over, quarter 1 2020



Source: SOLAS (SLMRU) analysis of Eurostat (LFS) data

The previous economic downturn saw a decline in those employed full-time, with numbers falling to 1,422,200 persons employed full-time by quarter 1 2013. The numbers employed full-time have been rising steadily since then, while part-time employment numbers have remained relatively stable (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Full-time/part-time employment aged 15 years & over (000s), quarter 1 2007 – quarter 1 2020



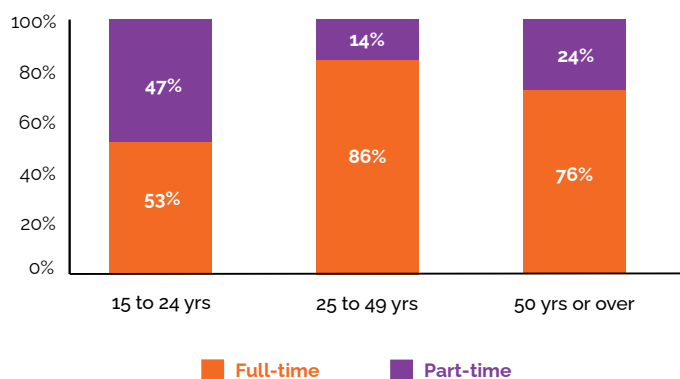
SOLAS (SLMRU) analysis of Eurostat (LFS) data

Profile of full-time and part-time workers: Age, gender & education

Those aged 25-49 years accounted for the largest number of persons working part-time in quarter 1 2020 (with 195,200 persons), although they accounted for 14% of all persons employed in this age cohort. Across all age groups, full-time and part-time workers were most evenly distributed in the youngest age cohort.

Across all age groups, full-time and part-time workers were most evenly distributed in the youngest age cohort where 47% of all persons aged 15-24 years in employment worked part-time, representing 122,200 persons. Almost a quarter (164,400 persons) of those aged 50 years and older in employment were working part-time.

Figure 3. Full-time/part-time employment by age group (%), quarter 1 2020

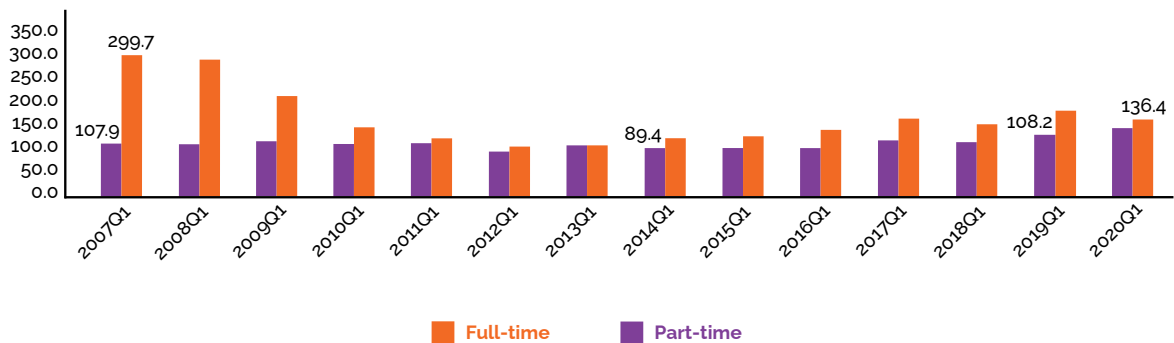


Source: SOLAS (SLMRU) analysis of Eurostat (LFS) data

The share of employed persons aged 15-24 years working part-time increased from 26% in quarter 1 2007 to 47% in quarter 1 2020.

Between quarter 1 2007 and quarter 1 2020, the number of young people (15-24 years) in employment declined by 148,900 persons. The change in the overall number of young people in employment is due to several factors such as demographics (i.e. a decline in the number of persons in the relevant age cohort) and an increase in young people engaging in education. The decline largely related to a fall in the number of persons employed full-time, with part-time employment numbers increasing from 2014 onwards (Figure 4). This resulted in an increase in the share of part-time workers amongst young people in employment from 26% to 47%.

Figure 4. Full-time/part-time employment by age group 15-24 years (000s), quarter 1 2020



Source: SOLAS (SLMRU) analysis of Eurostat (LFS) data

In contrast, the number of those aged 25 years and over who were employed full-time has been increasing in recent years. Between quarter 1 2007 and quarter 1 2020, persons aged 25 years and over in employment increased by 315,500 persons (Figure 5). The share of persons working part-time in the same age category has observed a one percentage point increase (16% part-time in Q1 2007 and 17% in Q1 2020), with an additional 78,000 persons employed part-time.

Figure 5. Full-time/part-time employment by age group, 25 years and over (000s), quarter 1 2007 – quarter 1 2020

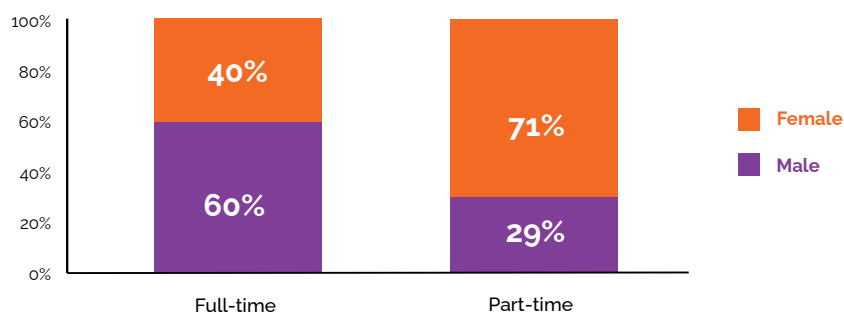


Source: SOLAS (SLMRU) analysis of Eurostat (LFS) data

Females accounted for over two thirds of all those working part-time

In quarter 1 2020, of those employed full-time, males accounted for the larger share at 60%. In contrast, females accounted for over two thirds of all persons in employment working part-time (71%) (Figure 6). There were 141,200 males employed part-time and 340,600 females employed part-time in quarter 1 2020 (Table 1).

Figure 6. Full-time/part-time employment aged 15 years and over by gender (%), quarter 1 2020



Source: SOLAS (SLMRU) analysis of Eurostat (LFS) data

Table 1. Full-time/part-time employment aged 15 years and over, quarter 1 2020

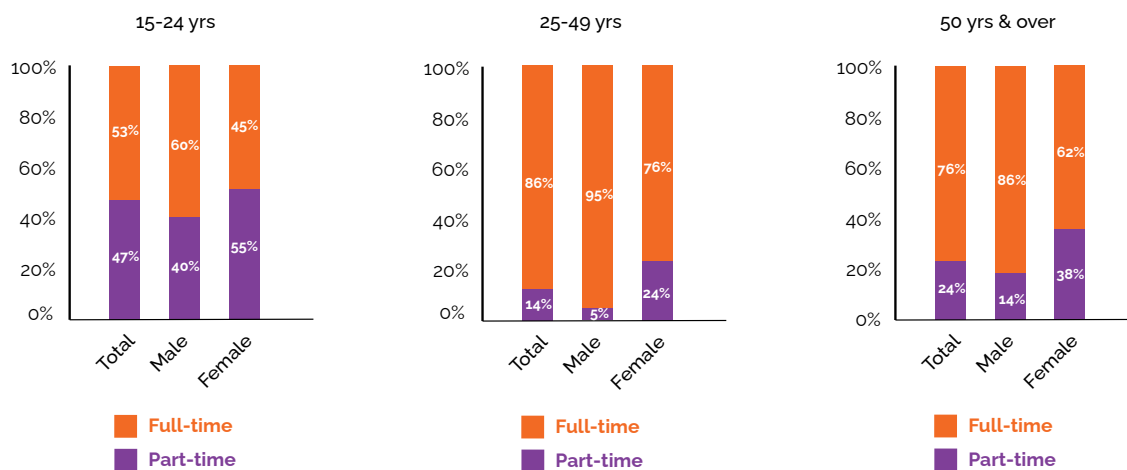
Full-time		Part-time	
Male	Female	Male	Female
1,129,500	742,200	141,200	340,600

Source: SOLAS (SLMRU) analysis of Eurostat (LFS) data

Across all age groups, females had a higher share employed part-time compared to males.

Full-time and part-time workers by gender and age is presented in Figure 7. Of those employed females aged 25-49 years in quarter 1 2020, 24% were in part-time roles, compared to 5% of males in this age cohort. The share rose to 38% in part-time employment for females aged 50 years and older; while the share of males in part-time roles in this age cohort was higher than for males aged 25-49 years, at 14%, it was still considerably below the share for females. Over half (55%) of employed females aged 15-24 years were in part-time roles, compared to 40% of males; this reflects the fact that many in this age cohort were also in full-time education.

Figure 7. Full-time/part-time employment by age group and gender (%), quarter 1 2020

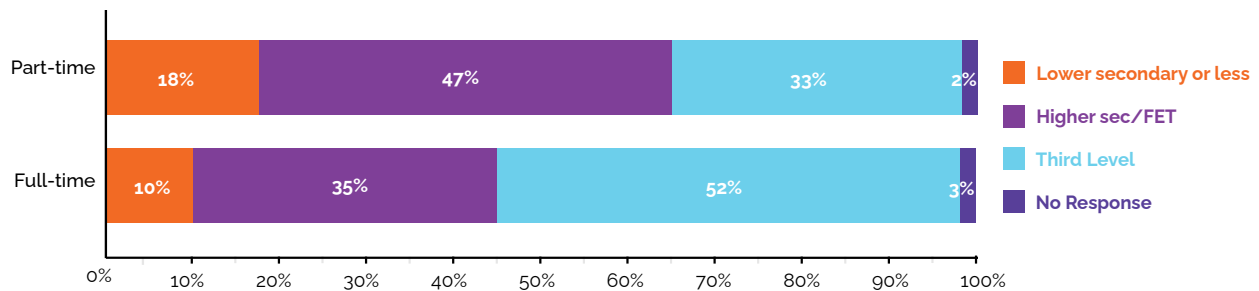


Source: SOLAS (SLMRU) analysis of Eurostat (LFS) data

Overall, persons working part-time had a lower level of education than those employed full-time.

Figure 8 presents the level of education (ISCED) for persons working full-time and part-time in quarter 1 2020. At 52%, just over half of all persons working full-time had a tertiary level of education in comparison to one third of those working part-time. Persons with a lower secondary or less level of education accounted for 18% of all persons working part-time in comparison to just 10% of those working full-time.

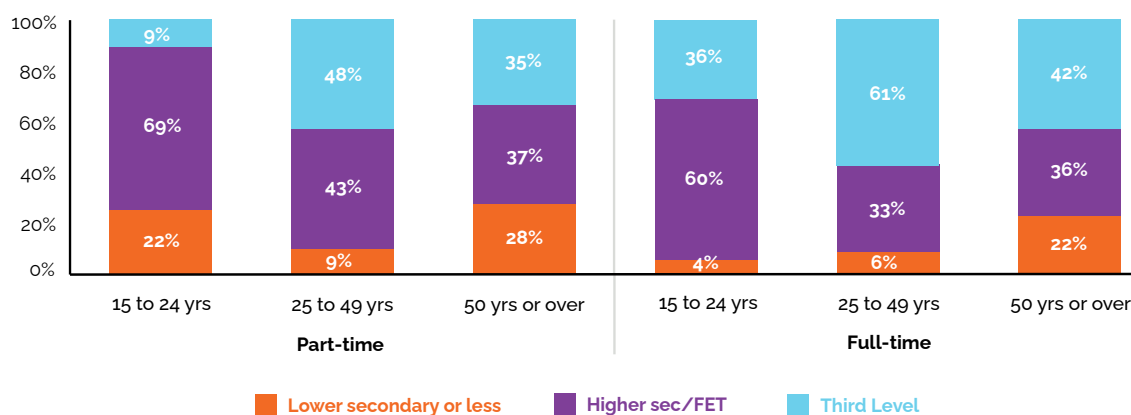
Figure 8 Full-time/part-time employment by ISCED level (15-74 years) (%), quarter 1 2020



Source: SOLAS (SLMRU) analysis of Eurostat (LFS) data

Across all age groups, those working part-time had a lower share of persons with third level education and a higher share with lower secondary education or less when compared to those employed full-time (Figure 9). For those aged 25-49 years when full-time education is likely, for the most part, to have ceased, there is still a large gap in educational attainment between those working part and full-time; while 61% of those employed full-time held third level qualifications, the share was 48% for those employed part-time. Part-time workers in this age group and persons aged 50-74 years had a higher share of persons with lower secondary education or less than their full-time counterparts. For the younger cohort, the very large shares with at most lower secondary educational attainment most likely relates to the fact that many young persons are still engaged in education.

Figure 9 Full-time/part-time employment by age group and ISCED¹ level (%), quarter 1 2020



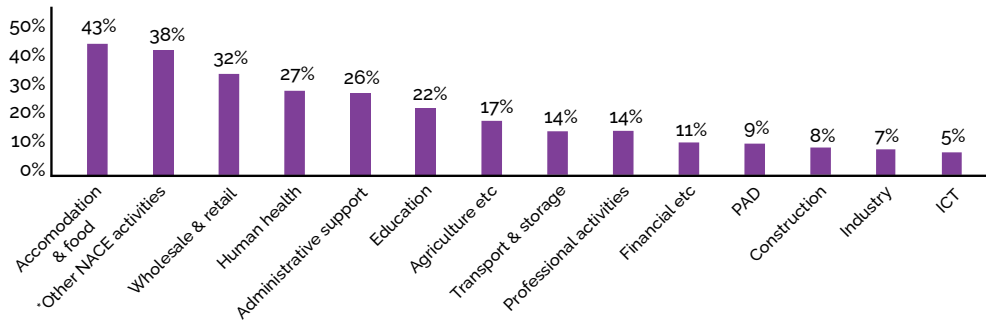
Source: SOLAS (SLMRU) analysis of Eurostat (LFS) data

1 ISCED 2011 International Standard Classification of Education

Sectoral analysis of part-time workers

The accommodation and food sector had the largest share of persons working part time (43%) followed by the other NACE activities sector (38%) and wholesale and retail (32%). In contrast, ICT (5%) had the lowest share of part-time workers followed by industry (7%) and construction (8%).

Figure 10. Part-time employment by economic sector (NACE Rev. 2)², (%) quarter 1 2020



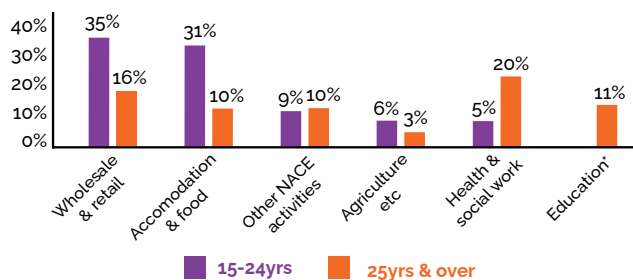
Source: SOLAS (SLMRU) analysis of CSO (LFS) data

* Other NACE activities includes arts entertainment & recreation; other service activities; activities of household & extra-territorial organizations and bodies

Part-time workers: Sector and age

In quarter 1 2020, of the 122,000 persons aged 15–24 years working part-time, two thirds worked in the wholesale and retail (35%) and accommodation and food (31%) sectors. While young people were largely concentrated in these two sectors, part-time workers aged 25 years and over (representing 359,600 persons) were spread across several sectors, with the highest share in the health and social work sector (20%).

Figure 11. Part-time workers by age group and selected economic sector (NACE Rev.2) (%), quarter 1 2020



Source: SOLAS (SLMRU) analysis of Eurostat (LFS) data

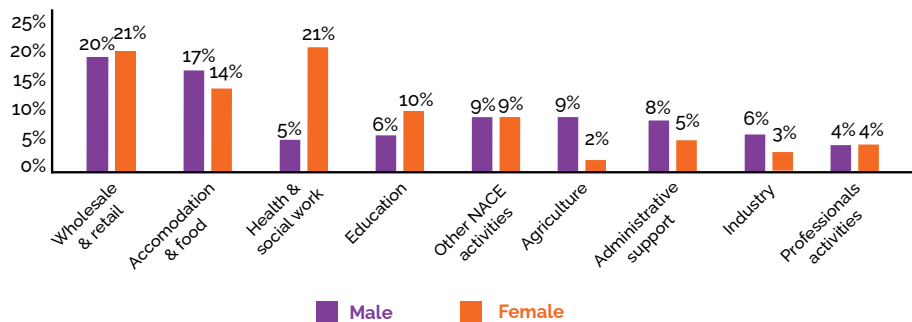
*Numbers for education were too small to report for persons aged 15-24 years

Part-time workers: Sector and gender

Just over half (56%) of all females aged 15 years and over working part-time were concentrated in three sectors; wholesale and retail, health and social work, and accommodation and food in quarter 1 2020.

Only 42% of males working part-time were employed in these three sectors. In contrast, males had a higher share employed part-time in agriculture, administrative support and industry.

Figure 12. Part-time workers aged 15 years and over by gender and selected economic sector (NACE Rev.2) (%), quarter 1 2020

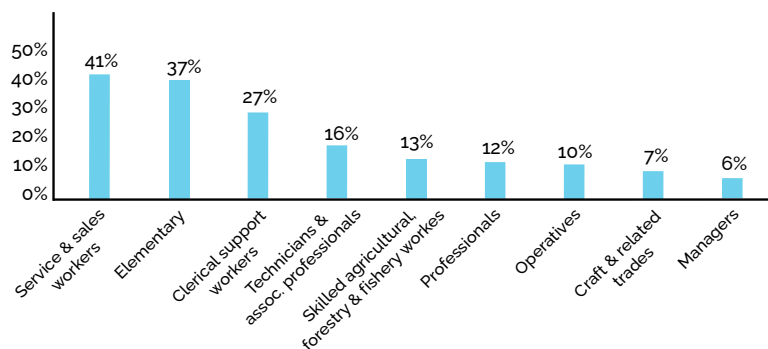


Source: SOLAS (SLMRU) analysis of Eurostat (LFS) data

Occupational analysis of part-time workers

In quarter 1 2020, service and sales occupations³ had the highest share of part-time workers (41%) followed by elementary (37%) and clerical support workers (27%) occupations (Figure 13).

Figure 13. Part-time workers by occupation (ISCO⁴) (%), quarter 1 2020



Source: SOLAS (SLMRU) analysis of Eurostat (LFS) data

In quarter 1 2020, almost two thirds of all persons aged 15-24 years employed part-time worked in services and sales occupations in comparison to just under one third of those aged 25 years and over. Over one quarter of all those working part-time aged 25 years and over (29%) worked in the professional and technical and associated professional occupations.

3 Sales and services occupations can include persons working as sales assistants, childcare workers, care workers, hairdressers etc.

4 ISCO – International Standard Classification of Occupations, ISCO-08 used for the purpose of occupational analysis in this report.

Table 2. Part-time workers by age group and occupation (ISCO), quarter 1 2020

Age	15 - 24 yrs	25 yrs and over
Part-time q1 2020	122,000	359,600
Managers	**	3%
Professionals	**	19%
Technicians & assoc. professionals	5%	10%
Clerical support workers	6%	14%
Service & sales workers	62%	31%
Skilled agricultural, forestry & fishery workers.	**	2%
Craft & related trades workers	**	4%
Operatives	**	3%
Elementary	19%	14%

Source: SOLAS (SLMRU) analysis of Eurostat (LFS) data

** Numbers too small to report

In quarter 1 2020, services and sales occupations had the highest share of part-time workers for both females and males; 42% of all females employed part-time worked in this occupation with 30% of all males employed part-time working in this occupation; 17% of all females working part-time were employed in professional roles compared to 11% for males.

Table 3. Part-time workers aged 15 years & over by gender and occupation (ISCO) quarter 1 2020

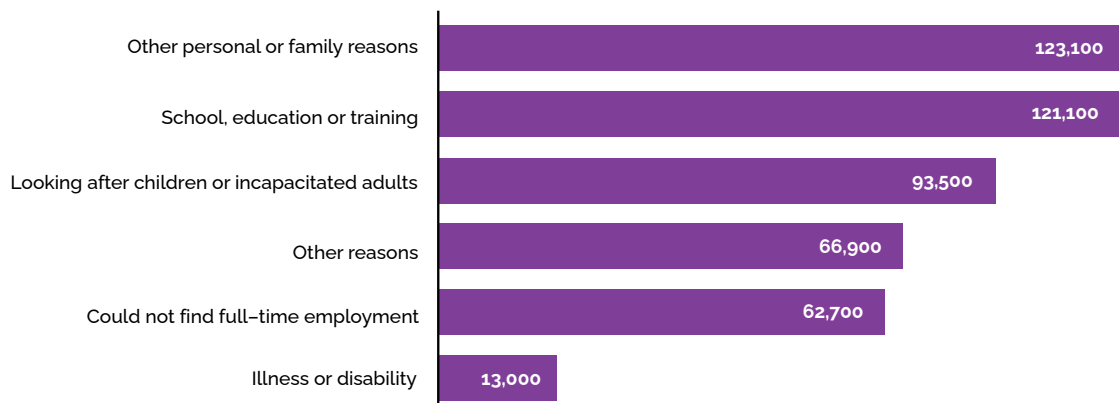
	Total	Males	Females
Totals	481,800	141,200	340,600
Managers	3%	**	2%
Professionals	15%	11%	17%
Technicians & assoc. professionals	8%	6%	9%
Clerical support workers	12%	6%	14%
Service & sales workers	39%	30%	42%
Skilled agricultural, forestry & fishery workers.	2%	6%	**
Craft & related trades workers	3%	9%	**
Operatives	3%	8%	**
Elementary	15%	21%	13%

Source: SOLAS (SLMRU) analysis of Eurostat (LFS) data
 **Numbers too small to report

Why do people work part-time?

Of all those working part-time, 123,100 stated that the reason was due to other personal or family reasons, and a further 93,500 stated it was due to looking after children/incapacitated adults; combined these account for 45% of those in part-time employment. A further quarter stated school, education or training as the reason for working part-time.

Figure 14. Reasons for part-time employment, (000s) quarter 1 2020



Source: SOLAS (SLMRU) analysis of CSO (LFS) data Impact of COVID-19 on persons working part-time

Impact of COVID-19 on persons working part-time

As stated at the outset, COVID-19 has had a particular impact on part-time employment numbers, with a fall of almost 80,000 persons employed. Below are some of the key labour market changes relating to part-time workers that have occurred since COVID-19 restrictions were introduced.

Between quarter 1 and quarter 2 2020:

- **77,600** — decline in those employed part-time, exceeding the fall in those employed full-time (53,400)
- **Not underemployed** — the fall in part-time employment was largest for those classified as “not underemployed” at 73,200
- **31%** — the percentage fall in the number of persons aged 15-24 years who had been working part-time
- **40,300** — the fall in the number of persons employed part-time aged 25 years and older (a fall of 11%)
- A fall of **43,000** persons working part-time due to school, education or training, a further decline of **28,000** for those looking after children, adults or other personal or family reasons
- **Sectors** — part-time employment in the wholesale & retail sector combined with the accommodation & food sector fell by 45,000 persons, accounting for almost 60% of the decline.
- **Occupations** — part-time employment in service and sales occupations observed a decrease of **44,000** persons, accounting for 57% of the decline.

Conclusion

Part-time workers are concentrated in the sectors which have been most adversely affected by COVID-19, particularly the wholesale/retail and accommodation and food sectors. Although young people have been undoubtedly affected in terms of loss of employment, many of these young people were working part-time while also engaged in the education and training system.

It is those aged 25 years and over working part-time who are more likely to require immediate interventions in order to ensure they remain attached to the labour market. This cohort are more likely to have lower levels of education than their full-time counterparts, are primarily female, and employed in the sectors most impacted by COVID-19.

In order to ensure these part-time workers remain aligned to the labour market, interventions such as upskilling and reskilling, along with the removal of disincentives to work, will be paramount in strengthening their ability to re-engage with the labour market.

SOLAS

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