

Is any job better than no job?

Job Quality & Well-being in Northern Ireland

Annual Workshop Centre for Health Research at the Management School,
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Lisa Wilson
NERI (Nevin Economic Research Institute)
Belfast

www.NERInstitute.Net



lisa.wilson@NERinstitute.net



[lisawilsonNERI](https://twitter.com/lisawilsonNERI)



Research for new economic policies

Impetus for international concern with job quality

- Growing concern about the spread of 'bad jobs'.
 - Debate centred around questions such as:
 - Is work becoming more precarious?
 - Is work not being rewarded in the same way/to the same extent that it used to be?
 - Is work becoming increasingly polarised between 'good' and 'bad' jobs?
 - Are 'bad' jobs getting increasingly 'bad'?
- Growing concern given the potentially profound influence which job quality has for:
 - Overall health wellbeing of the worker.
 - Business performance and outcomes.
 - Broader economic and societal wellbeing/progress.

The latest draft NI Executive Programme for Government 2016-2021 included as 1 of its 14 strategic outcomes:

‘we have more people working in better jobs’.



**DRAFT PROGRAMME
FOR GOVERNMENT
FRAMEWORK**
2016-21

Recognition of Quantity & Quality of Jobs

3 **INTRODUCTION**

5 **OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK**

8 **OUTCOME 1**

We prosper through a strong, competitive, regionally balanced economy

14 **OUTCOME 2**

We live and work sustainably – protecting the environment

21 **OUTCOME 3**

We have a more equal society

28 **OUTCOME 4**

We enjoy long, healthy, active lives

35 **OUTCOME 5**

We are an innovative, creative society, where people can fulfill their potential

42 **OUTCOME 6**

We have more people working in better jobs

49 **OUTCOME 7**

We have a safe community where we respect the law, and each other

57 **OUTCOME 8**

We care for others and we help those in need

66 **OUTCOME 9**

We are a shared, welcoming and confident society that respects diversity

73 **OUTCOME 10**

We have created a place where people want to live and work, to visit and invest

80 **OUTCOME 11**

We connect people and opportunities through our infrastructure

87 **OUTCOME 12**

We give our children and young people the best start in life

OUTCOMES DELIVERY PLAN 2018-19

Improving wellbeing for all -
by tackling disadvantage
and driving economic growth

JUNE 2018

Measurement covers *more* jobs..... but what about *better* jobs?



Why does work matter for health & well-being?

- Work itself is a major and defining part of most people's lives.
- It is by working that the majority earn an income *to live*.
- Work provides people with a chance to fulfil their own ambitions, to develop skills and abilities, to feel useful in society and to build self-esteem.
- Work provides a fundamental social connection between individuals and society and is crucial for social cohesion, common social goals and social integration.
- European Social Survey and the International Social Survey Programme has shown that workers consistently rank job security as the most important aspect of their job.

Why does poor quality jobs negatively affect worker health & well-being?

- The job itself.
- Spill-over to life outside the workplace.
 - Psychological impacts e.g. stress, sense of fulfilment, worthwhile, making a contribution.
 - Material/economic impacts e.g. standards of living, material well-being.
 - Structure of work/working arrangements e.g. working patterns.
 - Conditions of work/work environment e.g. autonomy, control, physical environment.

Conceptualising and operationalising job quality

OECD Multidimensional Conceptualisation	Operationalisation
Quality of earnings	Income poverty Deprivation poverty PSE poverty
Job security	Perceived job security
Quality of working environment	Satisfaction/sense of value; Stress; Control/flexibility; Quality of the physical environment.

Findings: Quality of earnings

	Poor	Not Poor
	%	%
Income poor	14.9	85.1
Deprivation poor	27.3	72.7
PSE poor	15.3	84.7

Findings: Job Security



Over **1** in **3** in *insecure* job.

Findings: Quality of the working environment

	Yes	No
	%	%
(High) Satisfaction/Sense of value	74.0	26.0
(Low) Stress	34.3	65.7
(High) Control or flexibility	51.1	48.9
(Good) Physical environment	54.6	45.4

Overlaps between the dimensions of job quality

- **35%** of working-age adults in paid employment have poor job quality on 1 of the 3 dimensions.
 - **13%** have poor job quality across 2 of the 3 dimensions.
 - **1%** are considered to have poor job quality across all 3 dimensions.
- The relatively small numbers who do badly on all 3 dimensions has important implications for the proposed '*Better Jobs Index*'.

Impact of poor earnings for workers health & wellbeing

	Low overall life satisfaction	Long-standing illness or disability	General health fair or bad
	%	%	%
	***	***	***
Employed	16.1	15.7	12.6
Unemployed	36.6	19.4	23.6
Economically inactive	39.2	51.3	49.1
	***	***	***
High earnings quality	18.8	14.1	11.3
Low earnings quality	47.4	26.9	22.4
	***	*	ns
Secure employment	20.3	15.3	11.7
Insecure employment	30.3	16.7	14.2
	ns	ns	ns
Good quality working environment	22.1	15.5	11.5
Poor quality working environment	26.7	16.2	14.2

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	ns	ns	ns
Good quality working environment	22.1	15.5	11.5
Poor quality working environment	26.7	16.2	14.2

Policy implications

To improve the quality of jobs in Northern Ireland policy needs focus at once on:

- Take seriously the need to focus on job quality - what we measure is what matters.
- Create more jobs in sectors where job quality is 'good' - a balancing act.
- Improving the standards in poor/bad quality jobs.
- Address the specific barriers which groups at higher risk of being in poor quality jobs have in obtaining good quality jobs.

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