

Quarterly Skills Bulletin Q2 2019

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Older Workers



LABOUR MARKET FOCUS – OLDER WORKERS

The main focus of this report is on the 50 to 59 cohort in employment with a view to examining several labour market indicators within this group.

International labour market definitions vary when categorizing different cohorts of workers. The starting point for the cohort often labelled as older workers ranges from 40 years and over, through to 55 years and over. This report uses the starting point for this cohort being those aged 50 years or over. The report divides persons aged 50 or over into two groups: those aged between 50 and 59, and those aged 60 or more.

The provision of supports for 50 to 59 year old workers will facilitate increased participation in older workers in future years.

Over the ten-year period since 2008 there has been an increase of 330,000 people aged 50 years or over resident in the state, to reach 1.53 million in quarter 4 2018. Since 2008 the labour force participation rate¹ for those aged 50 plus has increased, driven by an increase in female participation, whereas the total participation rate as measured in terms of persons aged 15 or over has decreased slightly over the same period.

Labour force participation rates

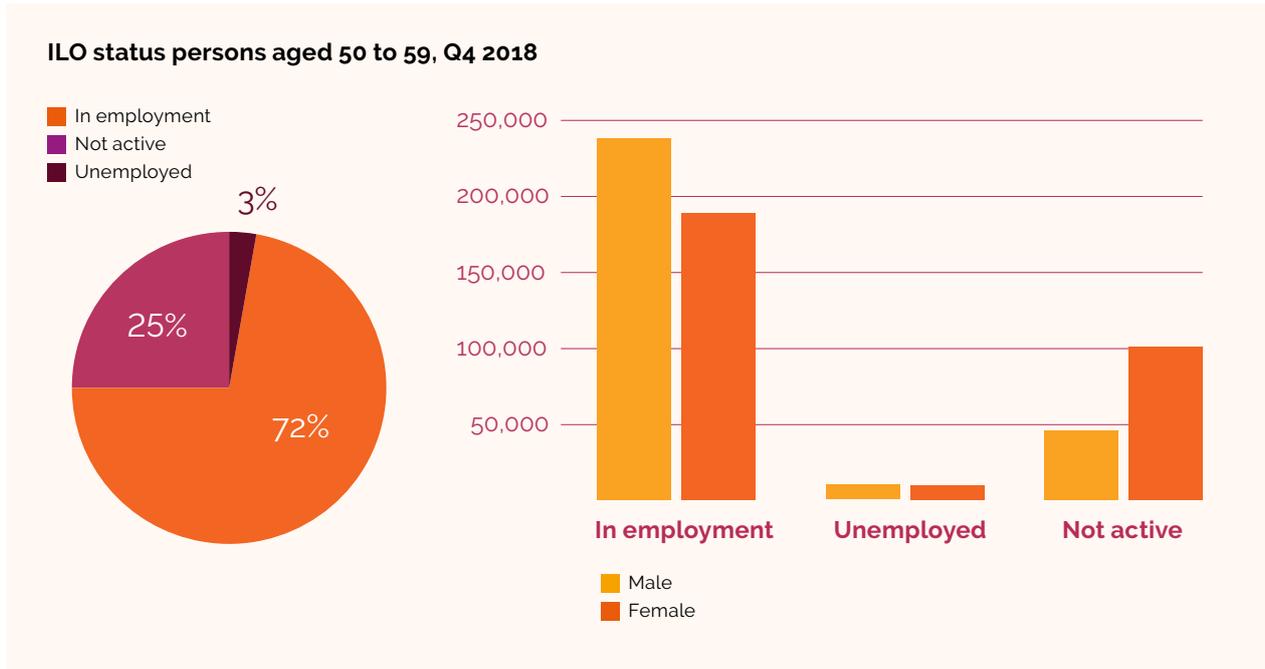
	Total		Aged 50 plus	
	Q4 2008	Q4 2018	Q4 2008	Q4 2018
Overall	65.1%	62.2%	41.1%	43.1%
Male	74.1%	68.3%	52.4%	51.1%
Female	56.3%	56.2%	30.5%	35.6%

Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO LFS data

1. The labour force participation rate refers to the share of persons in the relevant cohort who are either at work or seeking work.

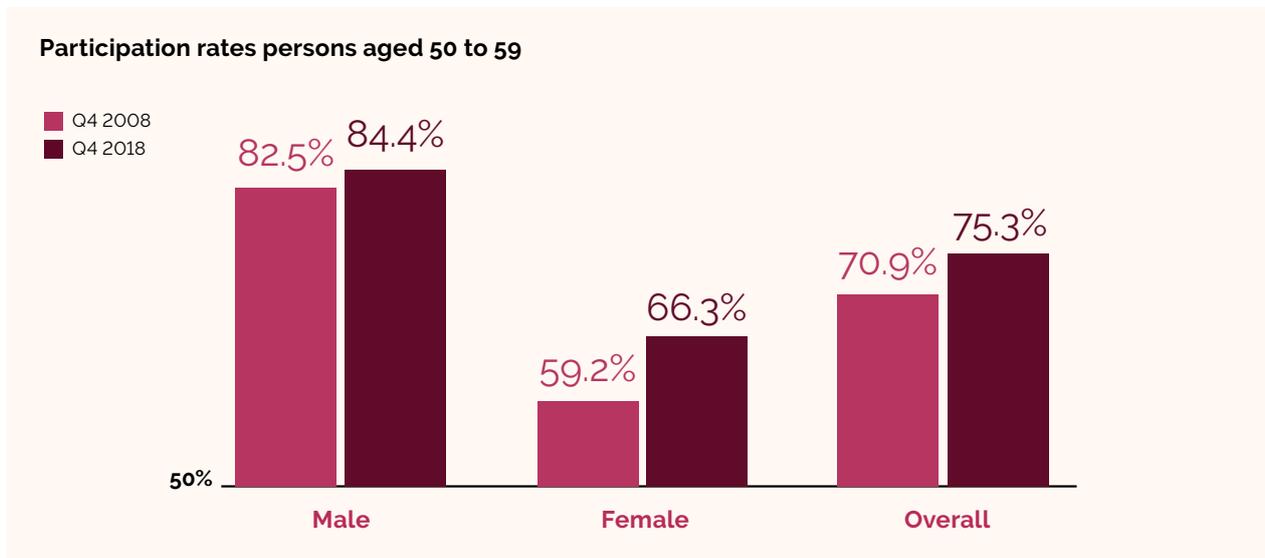
Persons aged 50 to 59

In quarter 4 2018 there were 591,000 persons aged between 50 and 59 resident in the state. The assumption made is that the majority of people within this age cohort have not reached mandatory retirement age. While research shows that there are some people who avail of both early and mandatory retirement within this group, the numbers are low. **There were 425,800 persons between the ages of 50 and 59 in employment**, of which, 56% were male.



Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO LFS data

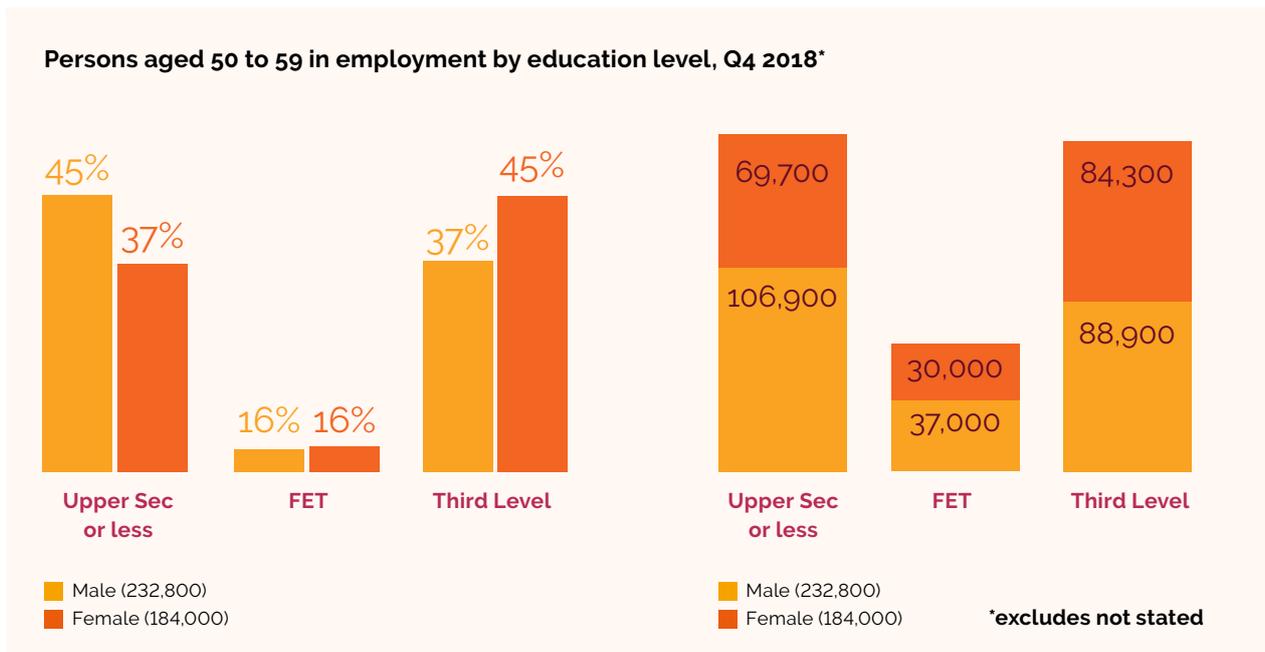
The overall participation rate for the 50 to 59 cohort has increased to 75.3% from 70.9% in 2008. Over the ten-year period, the female participation rate has increased much more significantly than the rate for males.



Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO LFS data

Education level of persons in employment

In terms of educational attainment, 45% (84,300) of females in employment had a third level qualification compared to 37% (88,900) of males. The share of persons with a further education & training (FET) qualification was 16% for both males and females, while there was a higher portion of males than females with an upper secondary qualification or less. The remaining 2% was not stated. Over 176,000 persons in employment had a highest educational attainment of upper secondary or less, with this group being potentially most in need of up skilling, to adapt to the changing world of work. Engagement with lifelong learning declines with age and those with lower levels of education are less likely to take part.²



Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO LFS data

More than half of those employed with a third level qualification aged between 50 and 59 graduated with their highest level of education between the years of 1980 and 1994, with just over 54% (94,200) graduating during this period. Almost two thirds of persons graduated before 2000.



Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO LFS data

2. Lifelong Learning in Ireland, Quarter 4 2018 (SOLAS 2019). www.solas.ie/SolasPdfLibrary/LifelongLearning2019.pdf

Economic sector, occupation, future automation and full-time/part-time distinction

Economic sector

Health accounted for the largest number of persons aged 50 to 59 employed at just under 62,000, followed by industry (51,300), wholesale & retail (48,400) and education (44,500). ICT had the lowest number of persons employed at 13,000. Of those employed in the health sector, professionals (e.g. nurses) and caring service occupations combined accounted for two thirds of workers.



Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO LFS data

Occupation

In terms of occupational profile, high skilled occupations (managers, professionals and associate professionals) made up over 40% (171,000) of those employed in the 50 to 59 cohort, while skilled trades accounted for 16% (68,200) of the group.



Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO LFS data

Breaking down the occupational groups further, half of the professionals were comprised of teachers, nurses & midwives, and accounting, business & financial professionals combined. Government administration accounted for 27% of all administration occupations, while farmers made up 30% and construction trades 15% of the skilled trades group. Care workers accounted for almost one third of those working in caring services occupations, while just over 60% of sales occupations were sales assistants. Drivers made up 53% of operatives and 29% of elementary occupations were cleaners.

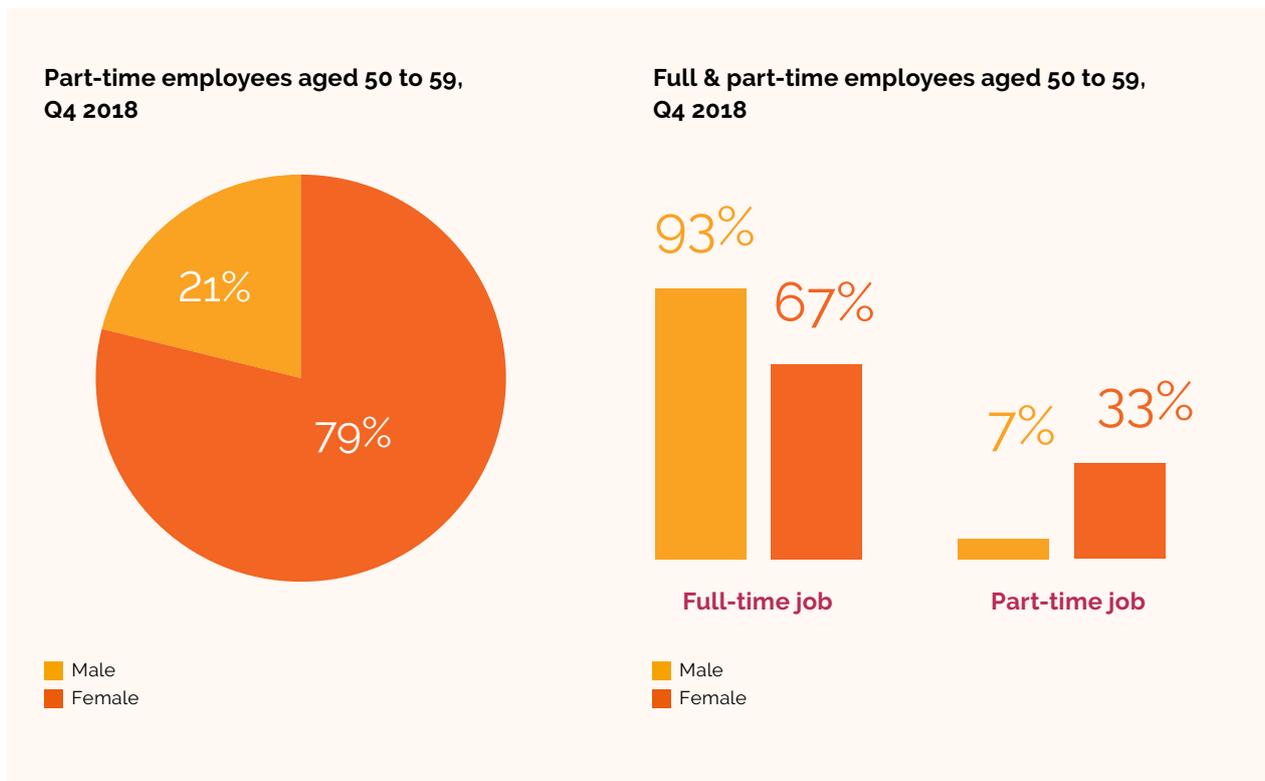
Impact of technological change

Technological change is expected to particularly impact those employed in elementary, administrative, sales and operative roles. There were 146,300 people aged 50 to 59 employed in these occupations, representing just over one third of this cohort. Furthermore, there were 50,000 employed in industry which is among the fastest changing sectors.

Full-time/part-time

The full-time/part-time distinction for this age cohort shows that 82% (347,600) of the employed worked on a full-time basis; this is considerably higher than the 60 plus cohort (66%). The remaining 78,200 were employed on a part-time basis; however a further analysis shows that within this group, 79% of the total number of persons were female. This is well above the 70% share of females in the comparable part-time group for the overall population.

When comparing full-time and part-time employment by gender, 93% of males worked on a full-time basis, compared to two thirds of females.

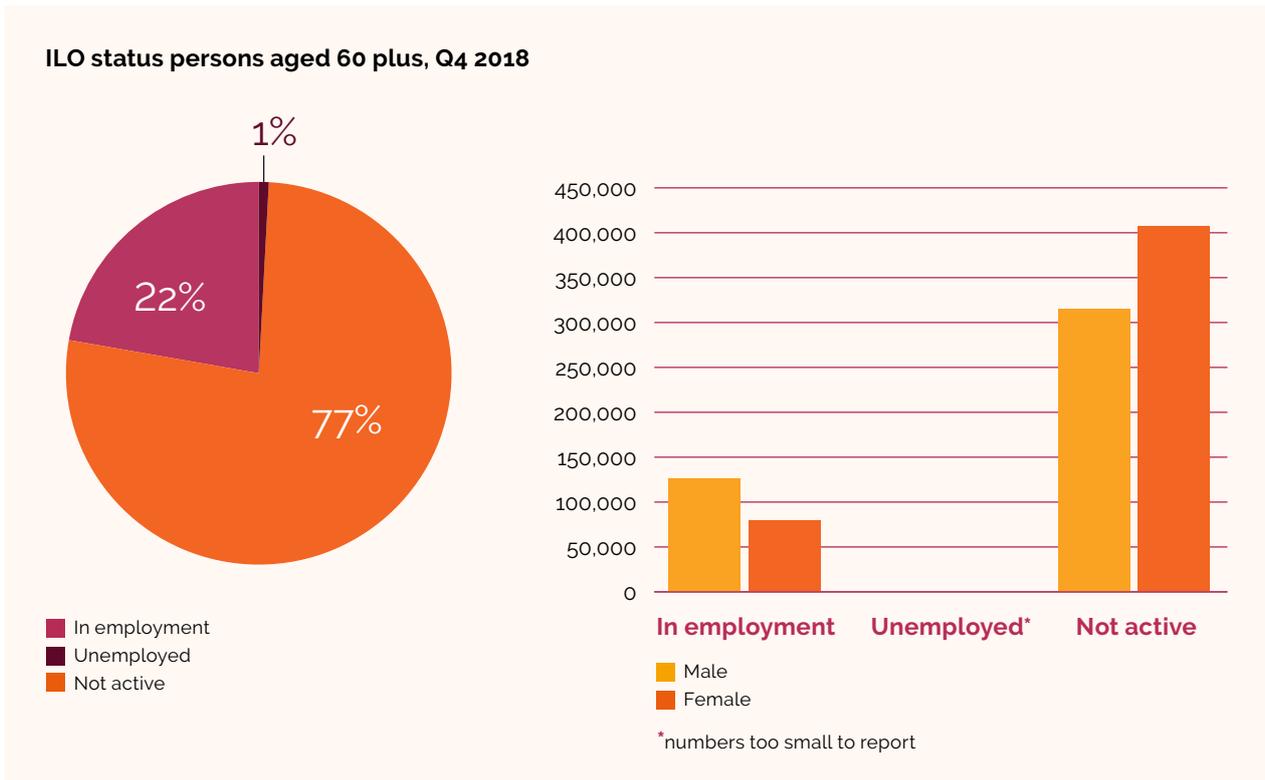


Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO LFS data

Persons aged 60 plus

ILO Status

In quarter 4 2018 there were 935,000 persons aged 60 years or more resident in the state. Only 22% (205,000 persons) of those aged 60 plus were in employment.



Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO LFS data

Employment & Education

Of the 205,500 persons in employment aged 60 plus:

- 61% were male
- one third (68,200) were employed on a part-time basis
- 17% were employed in agriculture (predominantly males), 13% were employed in health (predominantly females) while 12% were employed in wholesale and retail
- almost 38% of those in employment were self-employed, with over 82% of these being male

In terms of educational attainment of persons in employment aged 60 plus, 56% had an upper secondary qualification or less, 29% had a third level qualification, while 12% had a FET qualification. 35% of females in employment had a third level qualification compared to 25% of males.

SOLAS

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