



# WDC Insights

providing insights on key issues for  
the Western Region of Ireland

## Profile of Enterprise in Leitrim 2017

Indicator	Leitrim	State*
<b>Total Enterprises<sup>1</sup></b>		
Total No. of Enterprises	2,478 0.7% of State	338,729
Total Persons Engaged (owners + employees) in Enterprises	8,148 0.4% of State	2,045,843
<b>% Change in No. of Enterprises<sup>2</sup></b>		
2008-2012	-3.3%	0.1%
2012-2017	7.9%	11.0%
2015-2017	8.1%	9.0%
<b>Micro-Enterprises<sup>2</sup></b>		
% of all Enterprises	94.7%	92.1%
% of all Persons Engaged in Enterprises	48.3%	26.5%
<b>Enterprises<sup>2</sup> with 10+ Employees</b>		
% of all Enterprises	5.3%	7.9%
% of all Persons Engaged in Enterprises	51.7%	73.5%
<b>Top 3 Sectors 2017<sup>1</sup></b>		
By No. of Enterprises	1. Construction (21.2%) 2. Wholesale & Retail (16.0%) 3. Professional, Scientific & Technical (9.2%)	1. Construction (16.9%) 2. Wholesale & Retail (14.3%) 3. Professional, Scientific & Technical (12.9%)
By No. of Persons Engaged	1. Wholesale & Retail (18.9%) 2. Accommodation & Food Service (14.3%) 3. Industry (12.1%)	1. Wholesale & Retail (18.0%) 2. Industry (11.9%) 3. Health & Care (11.0%)

Source: CSO, Business Demography 2017, Table BRA08 and Table BRA18

Each enterprise is counted where it is registered for Revenue purposes. All employees are included in the county where the 'head office' of the business is registered, even if many work elsewhere.

\* Business Demography data provides a figure for 'All Counties' which here is called State. This excludes enterprises whose location is classified as 'Unknown'.

<sup>1</sup> 'Total Enterprises' includes all economic sectors except Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing, Public Administration & Defence, Households as Employers and Extraterritorial Organisations (that is NACE Rev 2 sectors B to N(-642) and P-S).

<sup>2</sup> This data only refers to 'Business Economy' sectors which is all economic sectors except Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing, Public Administration & Defence, Households as Employers, Extraterritorial Organisations, Education, Human Health & Social Work, Arts, Entertainment & Recreation and Other Services (that is NACE Rev 2 sectors B to N(-642)).

## 1.0 Introduction

The CSO recently published Business Demography data for 2017.<sup>1</sup> This is the most comprehensive source of data on enterprises in Ireland at a county level. The data covers all active enterprises in Ireland that are registered with Revenue.<sup>2</sup> This Western Development Commission (WDC) report provides an overview of Business Demography data for county Leitrim in 2017, as well as examining recent trends.

### 1.1 Note on Data

It is important to note that Business Demography data assigns each enterprise based on its address as registered with Revenue. This means that a company with multiple locations e.g. a bank, is only counted once where its head office is registered e.g. Dublin, and individual branches in other areas are not included. All employees are assigned to the county where an enterprise's head office is located, even if many are working in other areas. In the case of a franchise model however, as the individual branches are independent they would likely be registered in the county where they are located.

Therefore the geographic breakdown of Business Demography data is an approximation and it is important to use caution when interpreting this data. It should be taken as indicative of the general pattern within the county. Nonetheless this is the most comprehensive source of data on enterprises at a county level in Ireland and, as these enterprises are registered within the county, they may be more strongly embedded in the local economy.

## 2.0 Total Enterprises in Leitrim

In 2017 in County Leitrim there were:

- 2,478 total active enterprises
- 8,148 persons engaged in these enterprises (owners, relatives, employees)
  - 6,389 of these were employees
  - Employees accounted for 78.4% of all persons engaged (national average<sup>3</sup> is 90%)

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<sup>1</sup> CSO (2019), [Business Demography 2017](#). Note that county data is only available in the Statbank data files, Tables BRA08 and BRA18.

<sup>2</sup> It does not include the Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing or Public Administration and Defence sectors, however public sector entities in Education and Health & Care are included.

<sup>3</sup> In Business Demography county data, a figure is given for 'All Counties' which we will refer to here as the national or State figure. However it should be noted that this excludes enterprises whose location is classified as 'Unknown', these generally have Revenue registered addresses outside of the Republic of Ireland. However, the employees registered with these addresses are working in the Republic of Ireland. In 2017, there were 3,575 'Unknown' enterprises in the state compared with 338,729 enterprises in 'All Counties'.

### 3.0 Enterprise Trends in Leitrim 2008-2017: Active Enterprises and Persons Engaged

When looking at trends over time, we can only examine 'business economy' enterprises<sup>4</sup> as data for some sectors is only available from 2015 onwards. 'Business economy' enterprises accounted for 79.3% of total enterprises in Leitrim in 2017, so trends in these enterprises can be considered to be quite representative of total enterprises.

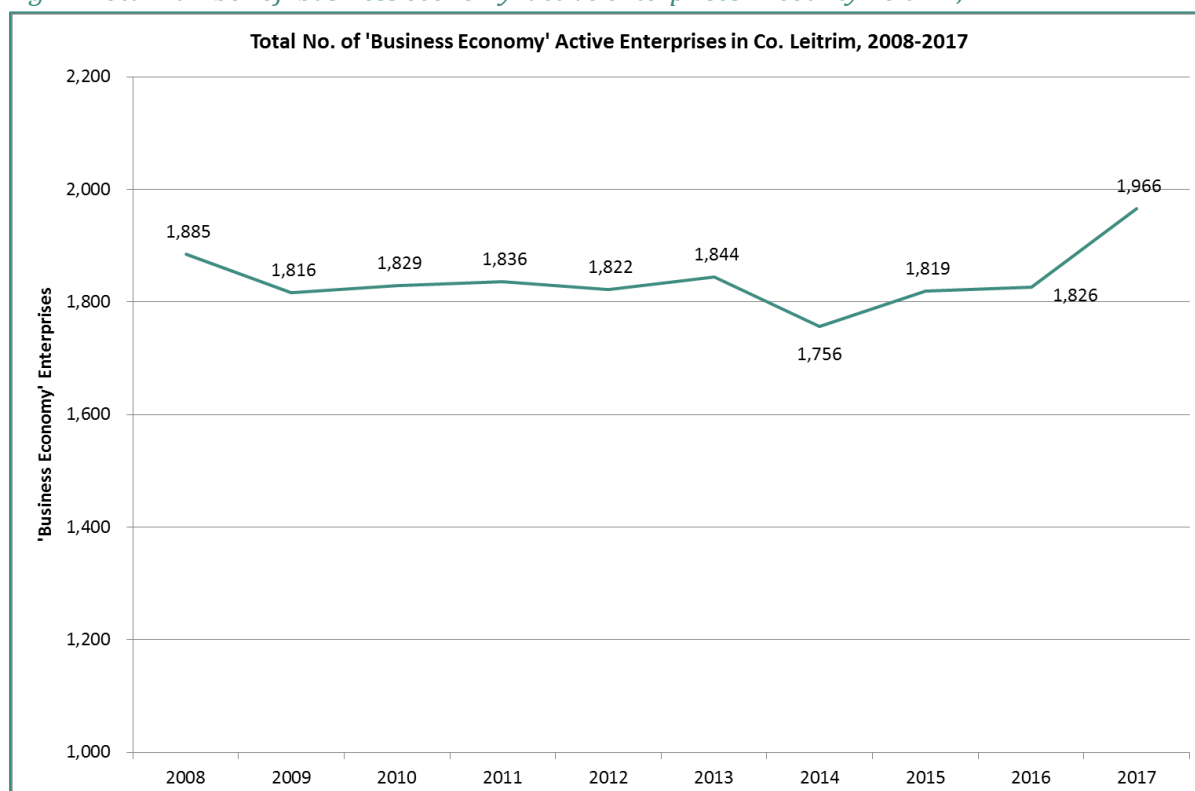
#### 3.1 Active Enterprises in Leitrim 2008-2017

Fig. 1 shows the total number of 'business economy' enterprises registered in county Leitrim in the ten years 2008 to 2017.

As would be expected, numbers declined from the onset of the recession in 2008. They reached a low point in 2014 that was 6.8% lower than 2008 (nationally enterprise numbers in 2014 were 2.4% lower than 2008).

Since 2014, there has been strong recovery and this was particularly the case in the most recent year with a 7.7% increase between 2016 and 2017 (national average increase was 8.5%).

*Fig. 1: Total number of 'business economy' active enterprises in county Leitrim, 2008-2017*



Source: CSO, *Business Demography 2017*, Table BRA08

To ease interpretation, the vertical axis begins at 1,000.

<sup>4</sup> 'Business economy' enterprises cover NACE Rev 2 sectors B to N(-642). That is every economic sector except Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing, Education, Public Administration & Defence, Health & Social Work, Arts/Entertainment/Recreation and Other Services, as well as the activities of holding companies.

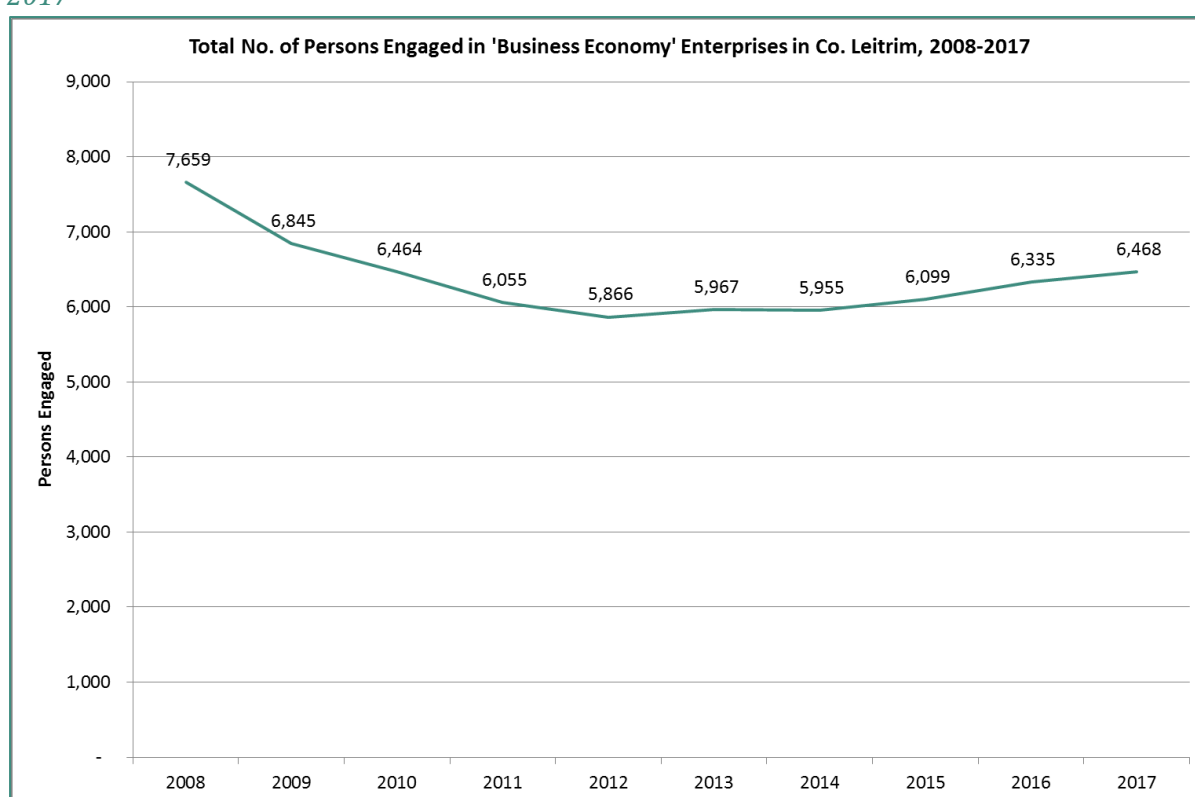
### 3.2 Persons Engaged in Enterprises in Leitrim 2008-2017

Fig. 2 shows the total number of persons engaged (owners and employees) in 'business economy' enterprises registered in county Leitrim in the ten years 2008 to 2017.<sup>5</sup>

The number of persons engaged in enterprises registered in Leitrim declined very sharply at the beginning of the period. There were large job losses during 2008 and 2009 (10.6% decline 2008-2009, 11% decline nationally) and the decline continued until 2012. It remained quite stable until 2015 when it began to recover.

During the most recent year (2016-2017) there was 2.1% growth in the number of persons engaged, considerably lower than growth in enterprise numbers (7.7%, see Fig. 1). This may be due to many of the new enterprises being very small (1-2 persons). Growth in the number of persons engaged in Leitrim 2016-2017 was lower than in the state (2.1% v 5.2%).

*Fig. 2: Total number of persons engaged in 'business economy' enterprises in county Leitrim, 2008-2017*



Source: CSO, *Business Demography 2017*, Table BRA08

<sup>5</sup> Note that this includes all those working for enterprises registered in county Leitrim. It does not include people working in Leitrim but for a business registered elsewhere e.g. branch of a fast food chain, but does include people working in another county for a company which is registered in county Leitrim.

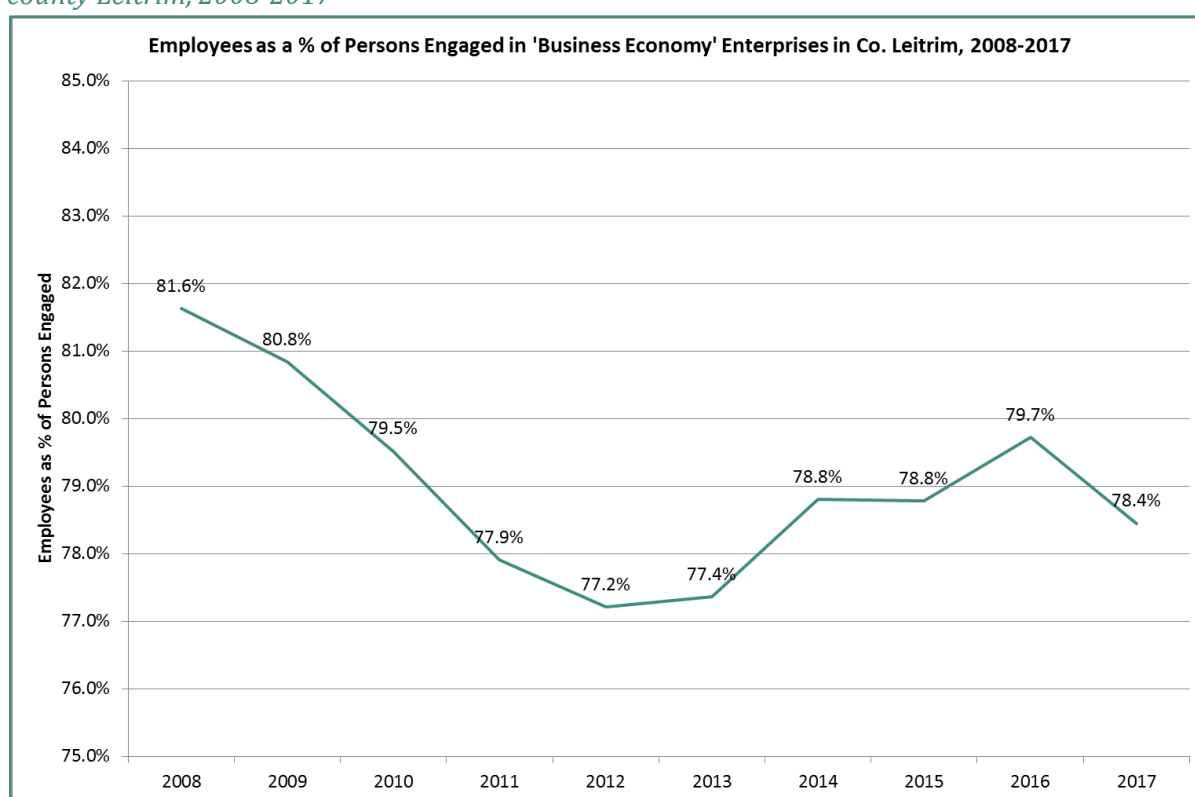
### 3.3 Employees as a % of Persons Engaged in Leitrim 2008-2017

Fig. 3 shows the percentage of all persons engaged in 'business economy' enterprises registered in county Leitrim who are employees, between 2008 and 2017.

Employees as a share of all persons engaged in Leitrim fell from 81.6% in 2008 to a low point of 77.2% in 2012. This was because of greater job losses among employees than among owners which increased the share of owners in the total workforce.

From 2013 the share of employees began to grow as expansion and recruitment of employees increased. The share rose from 77.2% in 2012 to 79.7% by 2016, falling back somewhat in 2017. This decline in 2017 may point to an increasing number of people setting up new businesses (as owner-managers) as economic conditions improve.

*Fig. 3: Employees as a percentage of total persons engaged in 'business economy' enterprises in county Leitrim, 2008-2017*



Source: CSO, *Business Demography 2017*, Table BRA08

To ease interpretation, the vertical axis begins at 75%.

## 4.0 Enterprises by Size in Leitrim

Data on the number of enterprises by size is also based on 'business economy' enterprises, rather than total enterprises. The size categories are based on the number of persons engaged.

Table 1 gives the number of 'business economy' active enterprises, persons engaged and employees in each enterprise size category in county Leitrim in 2017.

In 2017 there were 1,966 'business economy' enterprises registered in Leitrim, of these 1,862 (94.7%) were micro-enterprises (fewer than 10 people). Nationally 92.1% are micro-enterprises and Leitrim has the joint highest (with Roscommon) share of micro-enterprises in Ireland. Small, medium and large enterprises combined only account for 5.3% of all enterprises registered in Leitrim.

3,121 people worked in micro-enterprises registered in the county. As micro-enterprises employ fewer people each, their share of all persons engaged (48.3%) is considerably smaller than their share of enterprises (94.7%). Micro-enterprises share of all persons engaged in enterprises in Leitrim (48.3%) is the highest in Ireland.

As many micro-enterprises are run by an owner/manager, owners account for a larger share of the total workforce of micro-enterprises. Employees account for 55.9% of total persons engaged in micro-enterprises which means 44.1% are owners. This results in micro-enterprises accounting for only 34.4% of all employees in 'business economy' enterprises. In total, 65.6% of all employees work in the 104 enterprises with 10 or more staff.

*Table 1: Number of 'business economy' active enterprises, persons engaged and employees in each enterprise size category in county Leitrim, 2017*

Enterprise Size category	Active Enterprises	Persons Engaged	Employees	Employees as % Persons Engaged
Under 10	1,862	3,121	1,746	55.9%
10 - 19	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
20 - 49	33	988	985	99.7%
50 - 249	11	1,129	1,129	100.0%
250 and over	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,966</b>	<b>6,468</b>	<b>5,074</b>	<b>78.4%</b>
% in Micro-Enterprises	94.7%	48.3%	34.4%	
% in Enterprises 10+	5.3%	51.7%	65.6%	

Source: CSO, Business Demography 2017, Table BRA08

For confidentiality reasons, data for enterprises in the 10-19 and 250+ size categories is not available for Leitrim in 2017. Calculations for 'Enterprises 10+' are based on the total figure minus the number Under 10, so enterprises in these size categories are included.

#### 4.1 Change in Enterprises by Size in Leitrim 2008-2017

Table 2 shows the percentage change in the number of active enterprises and the number of persons engaged in each enterprise size category during a number of periods.

The total number of 'business economy' enterprises registered in Leitrim declined by 3.3% between 2008 and 2012 (recession) and grew by 7.9% between 2012 and 2017 (recovery). The most recent year for the data (2016-2017) saw strong growth (7.7%). In each period, the performance in Leitrim was weaker than nationally, especially during 2008-2012.

When considering the performance of the different size categories it must be remembered that there are very low numbers involved in some of the larger categories (see Table 1) so even a small change (1 or 2 enterprises) would show as a large percentage change.

During 2008-2012, small and medium sized enterprises (10-49 persons) showed particularly large declines. Medium-sized firms showed strong recovery during 2012-2017, though the number of businesses with 50-249 people actually declined during 2016-2017.

The number of micro-enterprises registered in Leitrim fell by 1.8% between 2008 and 2012 before growing by 7.1% between then and 2017. Much of this growth has occurred in the 2016-2017 period which may indicate that recovery among this group began later than among larger firms.

*Table 2: Percentage change in 'business economy' active enterprises and persons engaged in each enterprise size category in county Leitrim*

Enterprise Size category	Active Enterprises			Persons Engaged		
	% Change 2008-2012	% Change 2012-2017	% Change 2016-2017	% Change 2008-2012	% Change 2012-2017	% Change 2016-2017
Under 10	-1.8%	7.1%	8.1%	-13.6%	11.5%	8.4%
10 - 19	-28.1%	N/A	N/A	-26.5%	N/A	N/A
20 - 49	-31.6%	26.9%	10.0%	-37.9%	33.9%	5.3%
50 - 249	-10.0%	22.2%	-8.3%	-15.4%	20.6%	-16.0%
250 and over	0.0%	N/A	N/A	-39.6%	N/A	N/A
Total of 10+	-27.0%	23.8%	1.0%	-30.6%	9.1%	-3.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>-3.3%</b>	<b>7.9%</b>	<b>7.7%</b>	<b>-23.4%</b>	<b>10.3%</b>	<b>2.1%</b>
Total (State)	0.1%	11.0%	8.5%	-16.3%	23.0%	5.2%

Source: CSO, Business Demography 2017, Table BRA08

For confidentiality reasons, data for enterprises in the 10-19 and 250+ size categories is not available for Leitrim for all years. Calculations for 'Enterprises 10+' are based on the total figure minus the number Under 10, so enterprises in these size categories are included.

The total number of persons engaged in 'business economy' enterprises in Leitrim fell by 23.4% between 2008 and 2012 and increased by 10.3% between 2012 and 2017. As the growth in the most recent year (2016-2017) was relatively low (2.1%), the recovery in employment began earlier. This was likely influenced by larger firms, which have a greater employment impact, recovering earlier. The decline in persons engaged in Leitrim in 2008-2012 was considerably greater than nationally however the growth since 2012 was less than half that in the state.

All size categories experienced large declines in persons engaged during 2008-2012, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises. Micro-enterprises had lower growth during 2012-2017 than other sizes showing employment recovery in micro-enterprises may have lagged larger firms. Micro-enterprises had the strongest growth during 2016-2017 however as jobs growth increased.

## 5.0 Enterprises by Sector in Leitrim 2017: Active Enterprises and Persons Engaged

When examining enterprises by sector in 2017 we use 'total enterprises'.

### 5.1 Active Enterprises by Sector in Leitrim 2017

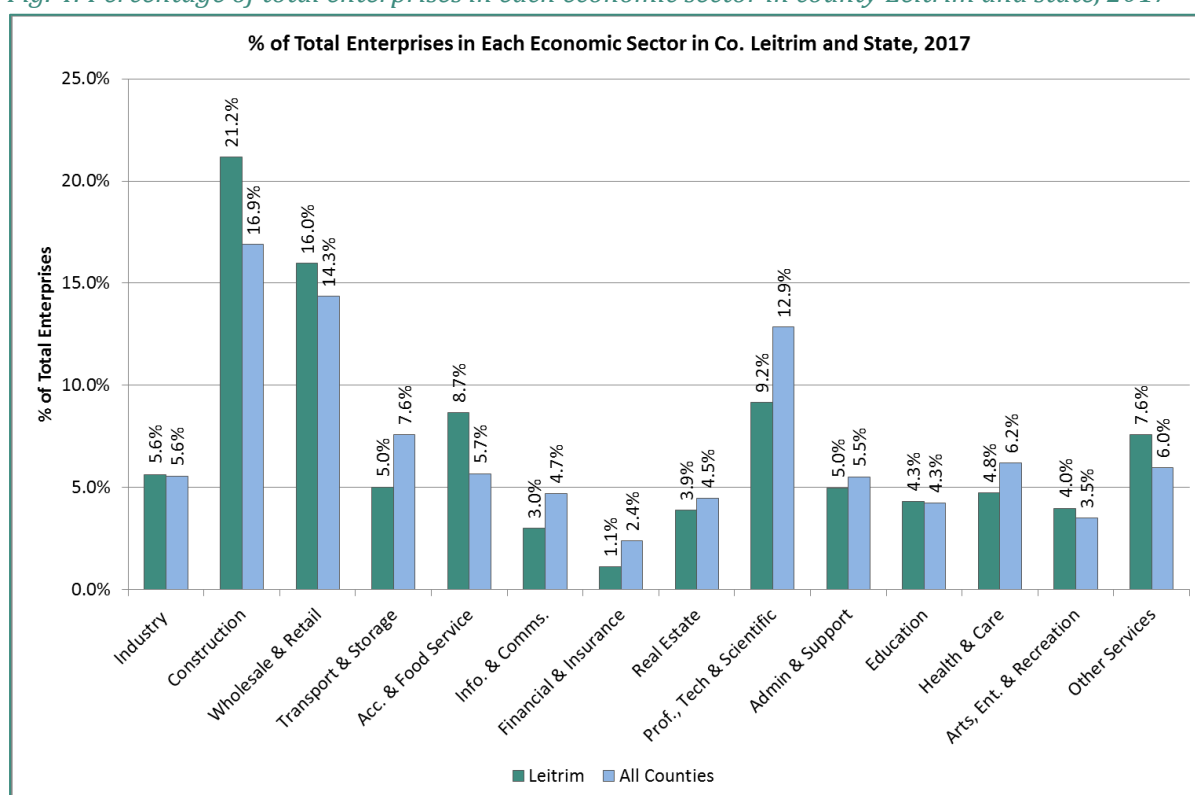
Fig. 4 shows the percentage of total enterprises that are in each economic sector in county Leitrim and the state in 2017.

In Leitrim, Construction (21.2%) is the sector which accounts for the largest share of total enterprises, followed by Wholesale & Retail (16.0%), Professional, Technical & Scientific (9.2%) and Accommodation & Food Service (8.7%). While data is not provided on enterprise size by sector, it is known that these sectors are characterised by a large number of small operations in comparison with, say, Industry which has a small number of larger enterprises.

There are a number of notable differences between Leitrim's enterprise profile and the national enterprise profile:

- Construction dominates the enterprise profile in Leitrim to a greater extent than nationally (21.2% v 16.9%).
- Considerably higher share of enterprises in Accommodation & Food Service (8.7% v 5.7%) reflecting the role of the tourism and hospitality sector.
- The knowledge intensive services sectors (Professional, ICT and Financial) all account for a lower share of Leitrim's total enterprises than nationally.

*Fig. 4: Percentage of total enterprises in each economic sector in county Leitrim and state, 2017*



Source: CSO, Business Demography 2017, Table BRA18

### 5.1.1 Change in Active Enterprises by Sector in Leitrim 2015-2017

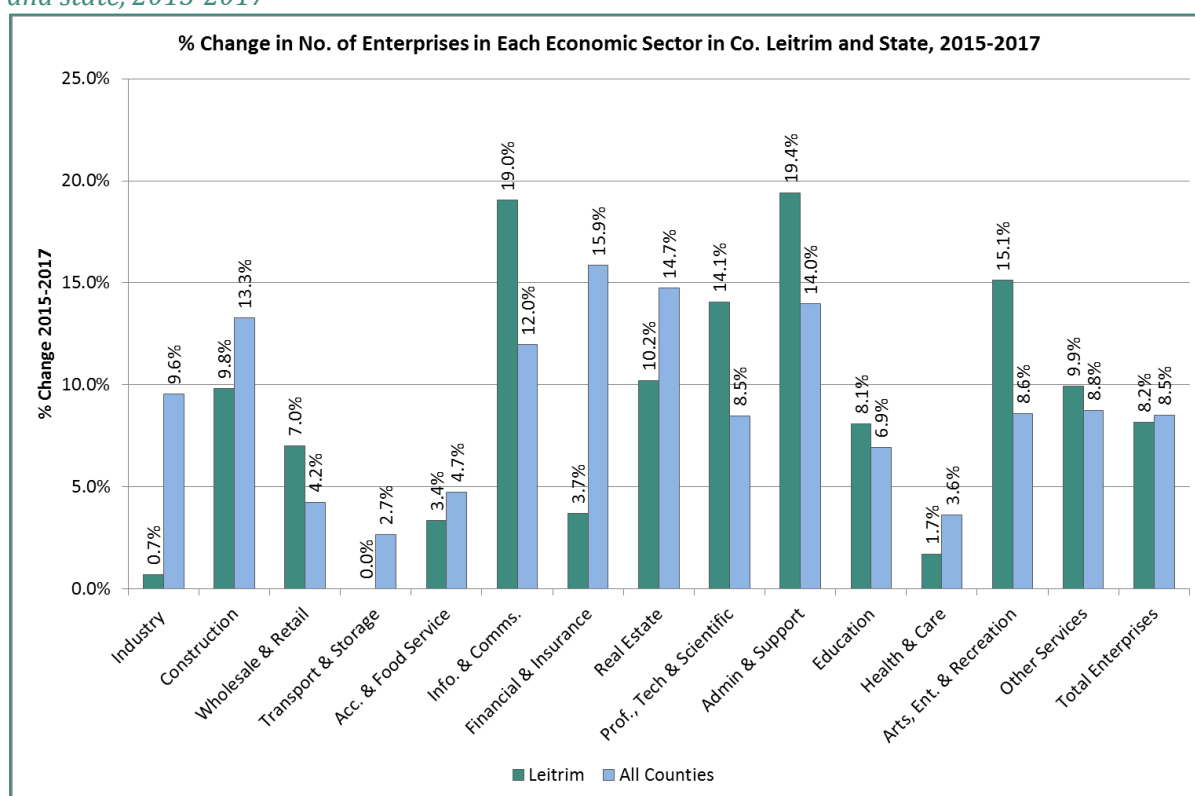
As noted above, data for some economic sectors is only available from 2015. Because of this and the fact that considering change over two years is more meaningful than change in a single year, we will consider the percentage change in enterprises between 2015 and 2017.

Fig. 5 shows the percentage change in the number of active enterprises registered in county Leitrim and in the state in each economic sector between 2015 and 2017.

The largest growth in enterprise numbers in Leitrim was in Administrative & Support (19.4%) and Information & Communications (19%). Strong growth in these sectors was a key driver of overall enterprise growth and shows the development of the technology services sector in the county. Other areas with strong growth were Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (15.1%) and Professional Services (14.1%). Leitrim had much stronger growth than nationally in both, showing the importance of the creative and hospitality sectors in the county, as well as strengthening business and economic activity driving demand for professional services.

Transport & Storage had no growth in enterprise numbers in the county, with Industry (0.7%), and Health & Care (1.7%) only growing marginally.

*Fig. 5: Percentage change in the number of active enterprises in economic sectors in county Leitrim and state, 2015-2017*



Source: CSO, Business Demography 2017, Table BRA18

## 5.2 Persons Engaged by Sector in Leitrim 2017

Fig. 6 shows the percentage of total persons engaged who are working in each economic sector in county Leitrim and the state in 2017.

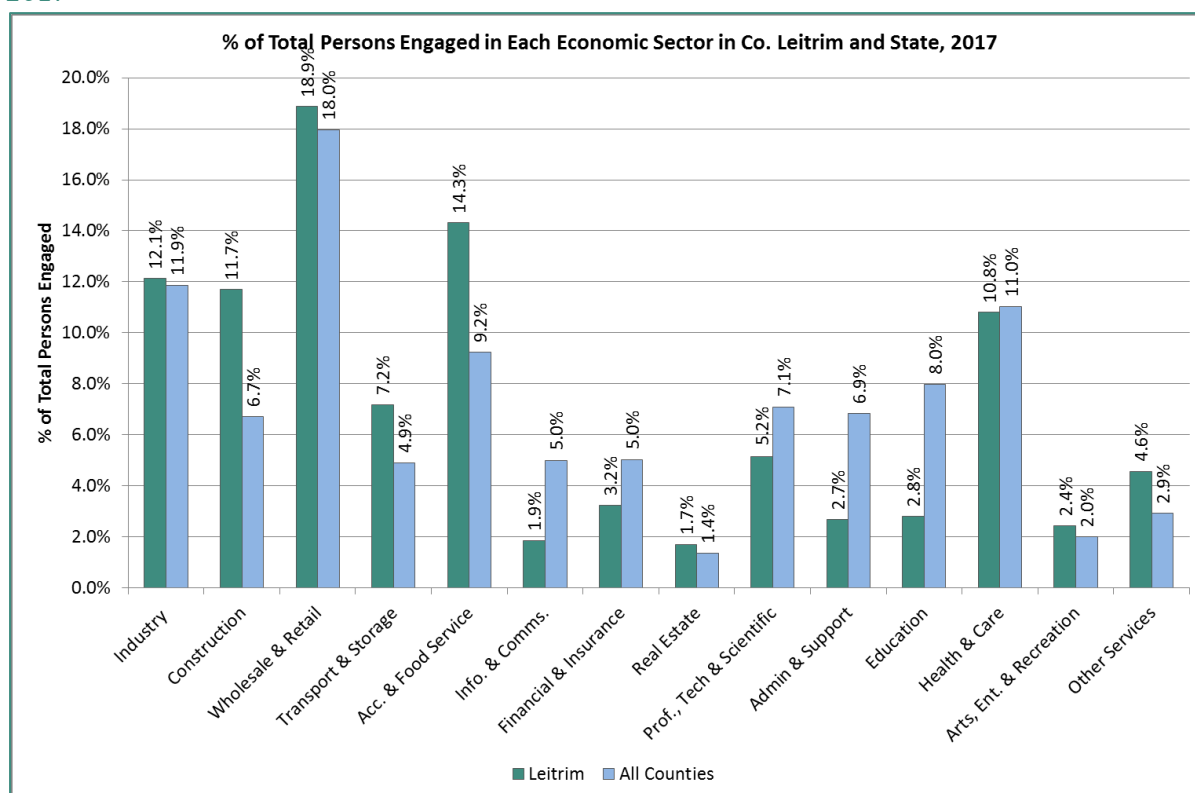
In Leitrim, Wholesale & Retail (18.9%) is the sector which accounts for the largest share of persons engaged in enterprises. It also accounts for a high share of enterprises (16%, see Fig. 4) indicating many small and medium sized firms.

Accommodation & Food Service is next largest accounting for a higher share of persons engaged (14.3%) than enterprises (8.7%, see Fig. 4) as it is quite labour intensive and includes some larger operations e.g. hotels. This is also the case for Industry; 12.1% of persons engaged but only 5.6% of enterprises. In contrast, Construction only accounts for 11.7% of all persons engaged, whereas it was the largest sector in terms of enterprise numbers as many businesses are sole traders or micro-enterprises.

There are a number of notable differences between the profile of persons engaged in Leitrim and nationally:

- Accommodation & Food Service (14.3% v 9.2%) accounts for a very considerably higher share of persons engaged in enterprises in Leitrim than nationally. The tourism and hospitality sector clearly plays a strong role in the county's economy.
- As with enterprises, Financial, Professional and ICT Services account for a lower share of persons engaged in Leitrim. Leitrim also has a lower share engaged in Education enterprises.

*Fig. 6: Percentage of total persons engaged in each economic sector in county Leitrim and state, 2017*



Source: CSO, Business Demography 2017, Table BRA18

### 5.2.1 Change in Persons Engaged by Sector in Leitrim 2015-2017

Fig. 7 shows the percentage change in the number of persons engaged in enterprises registered in county Leitrim and in the state in each economic sector between 2015 and 2017.

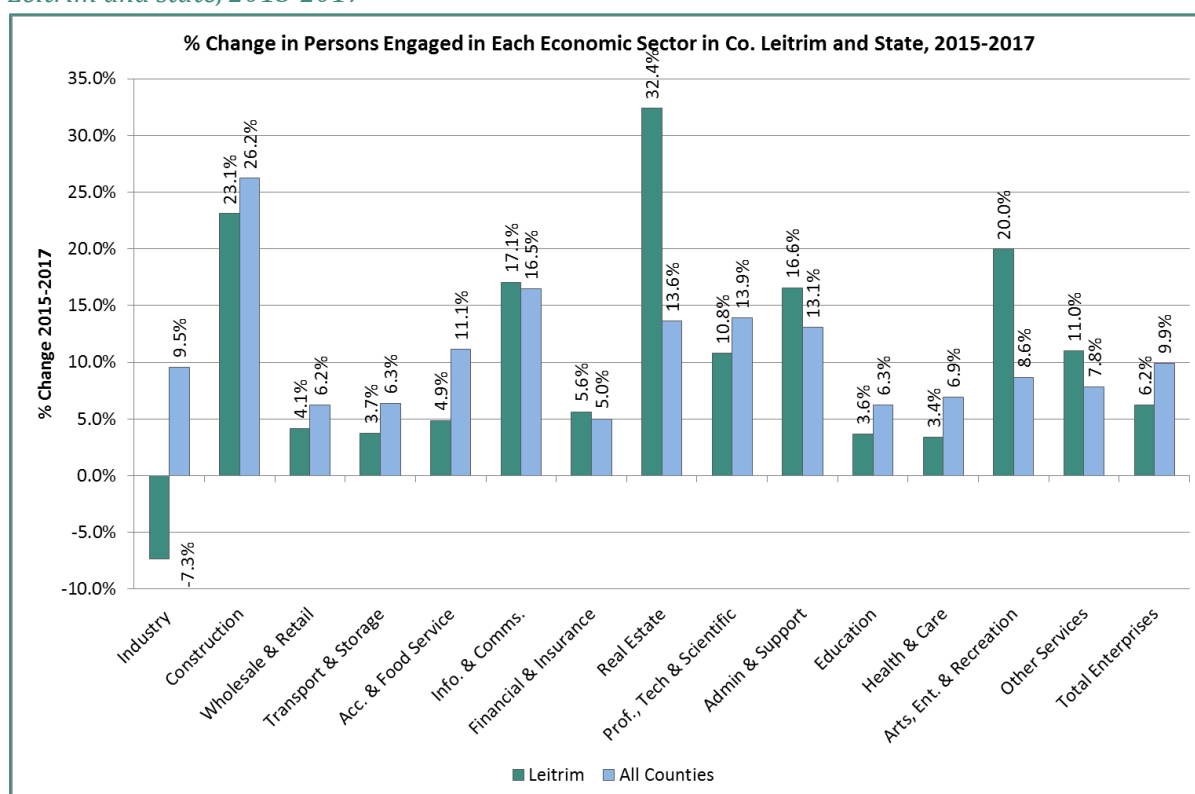
The number of persons engaged in enterprises registered in Leitrim grew by 6.2% between 2015 and 2017. This compared with 8.2% growth in the number of enterprises (see Fig. 5) as many of the new firms are likely to be very small. The increase in persons engaged in Leitrim (6.2%) was lower than the growth nationally (9.9%).

The sector with the largest growth in the number of persons engaged in Leitrim was Real Estate<sup>6</sup> (32.4%) followed by Construction (23.1%) clearly reflecting growing activity in the building industry.

Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (20%) and Information & Communications (17.1%) had the next highest growth in persons engaged in Leitrim again showing the role of the creative and technology sectors in the county.

Industry (-7.3%) was the only sector to see a decline in the number of persons engaged, though there was a small increase in the number of Industry enterprises (see Fig. 5) showing some scaling back of employment.

*Fig. 7: Percentage change in the number of persons engaged in each economic sector in county Leitrim and state, 2015-2017*



Source: CSO, Business Demography 2017, Table BRA18

<sup>6</sup> Caution is required with this sector as it not only includes estate agents/auctioneers but also the letting and management of property (either your own property or on behalf of the owners). A feature of the recession was that many construction firms (property development) were re-designated as Real Estate companies as they were managing their property on behalf of e.g. a bank, NAMA. The Real Estate sector would also include property investment companies which may register a number of separate companies to manage different properties.

### 5.3 Employees as a % of Persons Engaged by Sector in Leitrim 2017

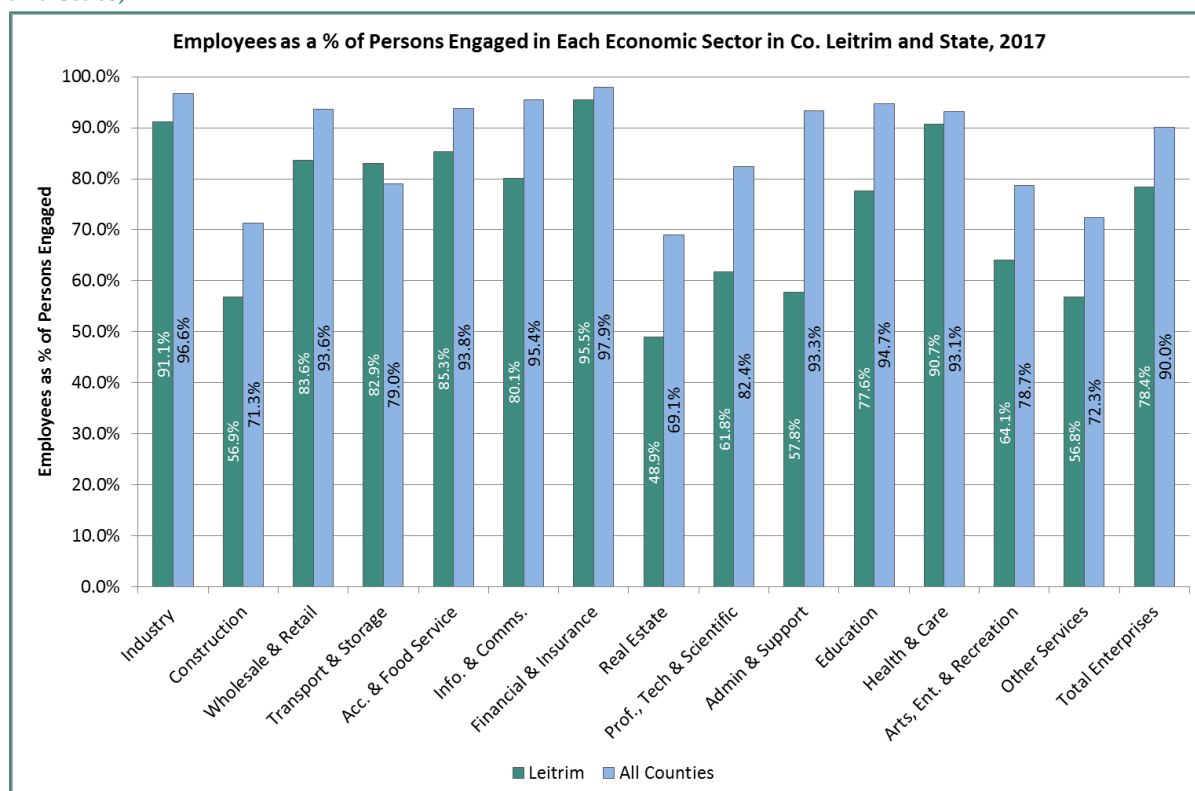
Fig. 8 shows the percentage of all persons engaged in each economic sector who are employees in Leitrim and in the state in 2017.

For total enterprises in Leitrim, 78.4% of all persons engaged are employees.<sup>7</sup> This was considerably lower than the 90% share nationally, again showing the greater involvement of owners in enterprises registered in Leitrim and the high share of micro-enterprises. It should be remembered that the national figure is influenced by all employees of companies with multiple locations being assigned to the county where their head office is registered, often Dublin.

In Financial & Insurance, Industry and Health & Care over 90% of persons engaged are employees as these are characterised by some large operations. In contrast, Real Estate (48.9%), Construction (56.9%), and Other Services (56.8%) have a high share of business owners, indicating these sectors have smaller operations.

The share of persons engaged who are employees in Leitrim is lower than the national average in every sector except Transport & Storage.

*Fig. 8: Employees as a percentage of persons engaged in each economic sector in county Leitrim and state, 2017*



Source: CSO, Business Demography 2017, Table BRA18

Western Development Commission  
August 2019

<sup>7</sup> Note, the share given for Leitrim in Fig. 3 (78.4%) only referred to 'business economy' enterprises (as it was showing the trend over time), whereas Fig. 8 refers to total enterprises.