

# International Perceptions of Northern Ireland: People

## Six Dimensions of the Nation Brands Index<sup>SM</sup> 2017

Bulletin 3, May 2018

### Introduction

In order to assess and monitor its international reputation, Northern Ireland was included on the Anholt GfK-Roper Nation Brands Index<sup>SM</sup> (NBI<sup>SM</sup>) for the first time in 2016 and then again in 2017.

The NBI<sup>SM</sup> is an analytical tool which attempts to measure and rank the broad international reputation of 50 nations, across six dimensions of national competence: Exports; Governance; Culture; People; Tourism; and Immigration and Investment.

The 2017 NBI<sup>SM</sup> involved the completion of over 20,000 online surveys, across 20 major developed and developing panel countries, with at least 1,000 surveys per panel country.

This bulletin examines how Northern Ireland is viewed in relation to the **People** dimension. The score for this dimension was calculated using scores from three questions (attributes): Welcoming; Close Friend; and Employability\*. For each attribute, respondents were presented with a statement and asked to state to what extent they agreed or disagreed on a seven point Likert scale, where one is strongly disagree, four is neither agree nor disagree, and seven is strongly agree. These statements are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Attribute statements, People dimension**

Attribute	Statement
<b>Welcoming</b>	'If I visited this country, the people would make me feel very welcome.'
<b>Close Friend</b>	'I would like to have a person from this country as a close friend.'
<b>Employability*</b>	'Imagine you are a manager needing to fill an important position in your organisation. How willing would you be to consider a well-qualified person from the following countries?'

\*In relation to the Employability attribute, anchor words were as follows: 7 meant respondents would be 'Very Willing' to consider employing a well-qualified person from Northern Ireland; 1 meant that respondents would be 'Very Unwilling'; and 4 meant that respondents would be 'Neither Willing nor Unwilling.'

All rankings presented in the report are out of 50. The overall score for the People dimension is out of 100, while the score for each of the attributes is an average of respondents' scores, based on a scale from one to seven (with seven being the highest and best, and one being the lowest and worst).

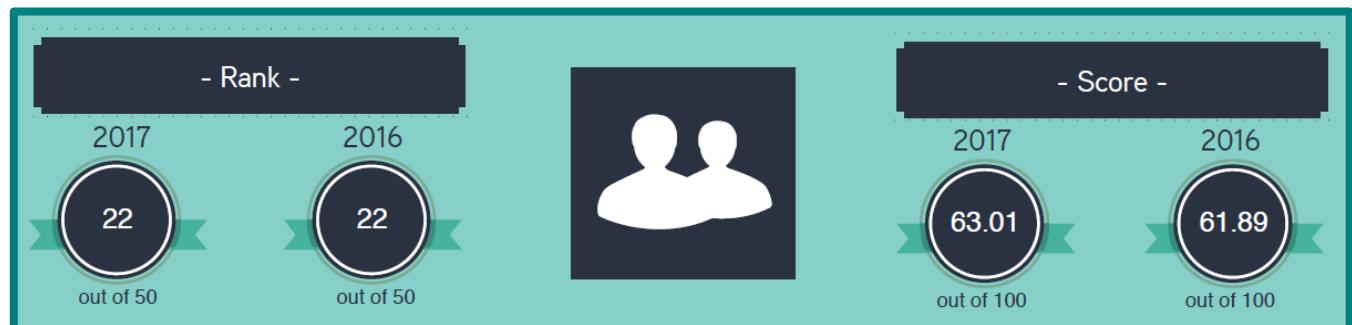
This bulletin is the third in a series on the six dimensions of the NBI<sup>SM</sup>. The other five bulletins, associated data tables and infographics are available from: <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/publications/six-dimensions-nation-brands-index-2017>.

The overall NBI<sup>SM</sup> report (published in February 2018), associated data tables and accompanying methodological documents are available from: <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/publications/anholt-gfk-roper-nation-brands-index-2017-report-northern-ireland>.

### Northern Ireland's NBI<sup>SM</sup> score and ranking for the People dimension

Northern Ireland received an overall score of 63.01 on the People dimension (up from 61.89 in 2016). This means that Northern Ireland was ranked 22<sup>nd</sup> out of the 50 participating nations in 2017 (no change since 2016). This dimension was one of Northern Ireland's strongest performing dimensions in terms of both overall ranking and score in 2016 and 2017.

**Figure 1: Northern Ireland's ranking and score on the People dimension of the NBI<sup>SM</sup>**



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## Rankings and scores on the People dimension from around the world

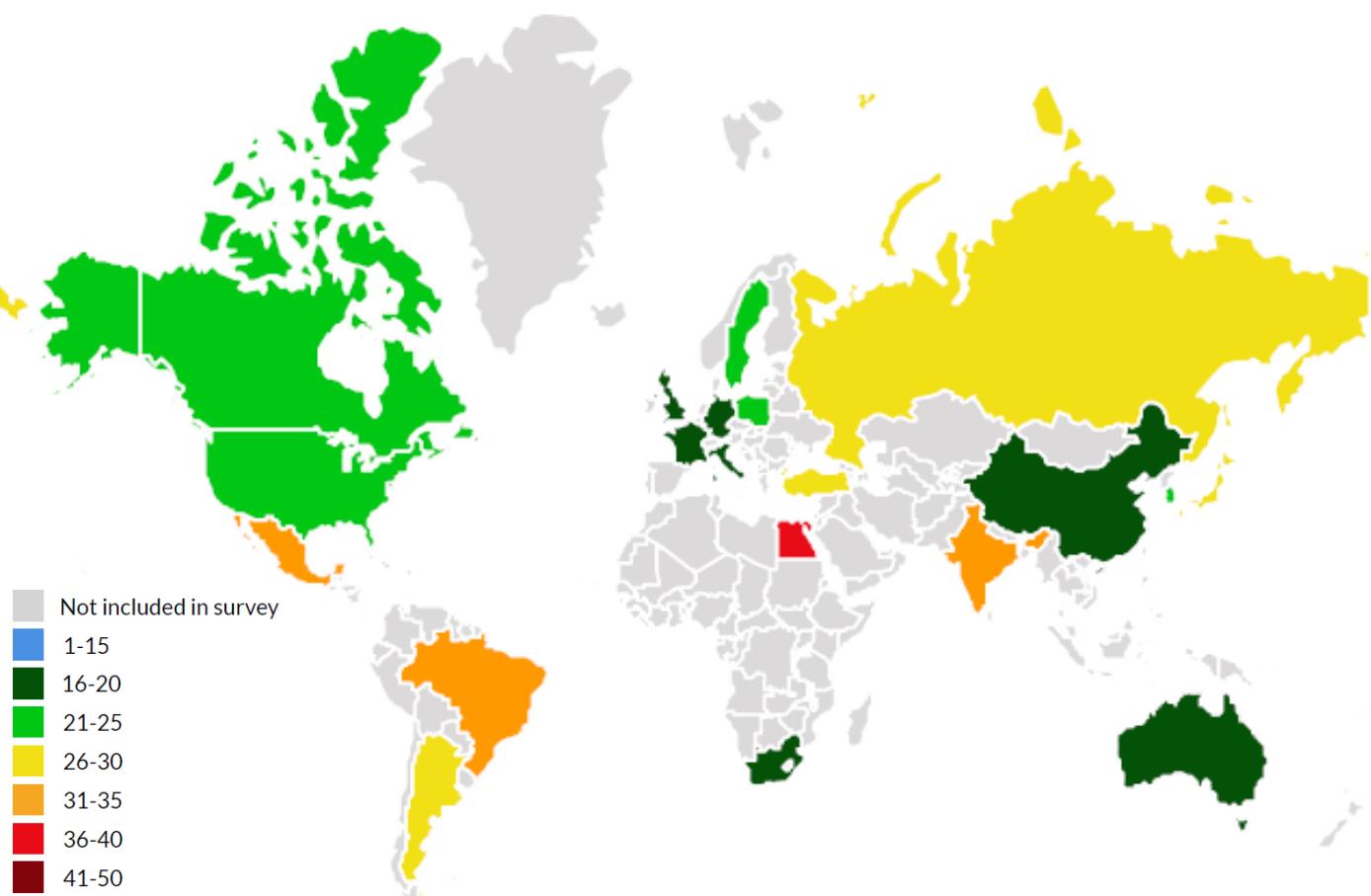
Northern Ireland's People dimension was ranked reasonably highly overall, with most of the highest rankings received from traditionally Western nations (Figure 2). The highest rankings were received from the United Kingdom (18<sup>th</sup>), France, Germany and Italy, (19<sup>th</sup> respectively). Northern Ireland's lowest rankings were received from Egypt (39<sup>th</sup>), Brazil (35<sup>th</sup>), India and Mexico (31<sup>st</sup> respectively). Northern Ireland was also ranked relatively highly on the People dimension in 2016.

While rankings provide an insight into how Northern Ireland is viewed by panel countries relative to the other participating nations, they can be impacted year on year due to the inclusion of new countries in the survey. The dimension score provides a more absolute understanding of how Northern Ireland is viewed, both overall and by each of the individual panel countries. In this sense, it is useful to consider both rankings and scores.

Northern Ireland's highest score was received from the United States (68.26) with relatively high scores also received from Mexico (67.30) and Germany (66.69) in 2017. Northern Ireland's lowest scores were received from Japan (54.54), South Korea (55.59) and Turkey (58.59) in 2017.

Northern Ireland received a relatively high rank (25<sup>th</sup>) and low score (55.59) from South Korea, which contrasts with the relatively low rank (31<sup>st</sup>) and high score (67.30) received from Mexico. This suggests that the distribution of scores varies across different panel countries.

**Figure 2: Northern Ireland's rankings on the People dimension from around the world**



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## Attribute scores and rankings

The score for each attribute is an average of respondents' scores, on a scale from one (lowest and worst) to seven (highest and best) with four being neither positive nor negative.

Northern Ireland's score for each attribute on the People dimension was noted to be positive (i.e. above the neutral value of 4) and ranged from 4.70 (Welcoming) to 4.86 (Employability) in 2017 (Figure 3). These were also the highest and lowest scoring People attributes in 2016.

When attribute scores were compared with the other participating nations, Northern Ireland was ranked relatively highly (between 21<sup>st</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> out of the 50 nations examined). All three attributes fell one place in ranking compared with 2016.

**Figure 3: Rankings and scores for Northern Ireland's People attributes**



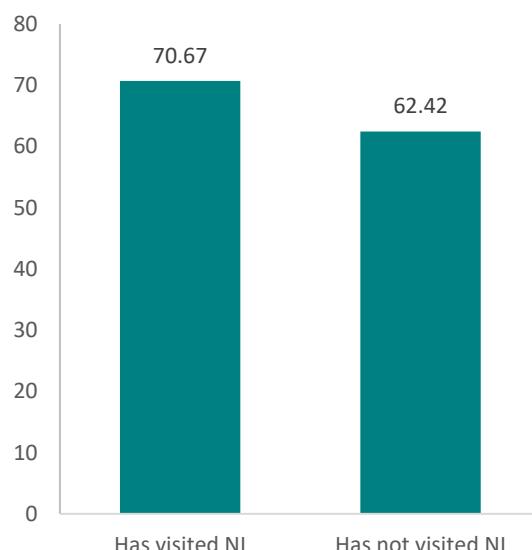
Note: Attribute scores range from 1 to 7 and all rankings are out of 50.

## Attribute scores in relation to previous visits to Northern Ireland

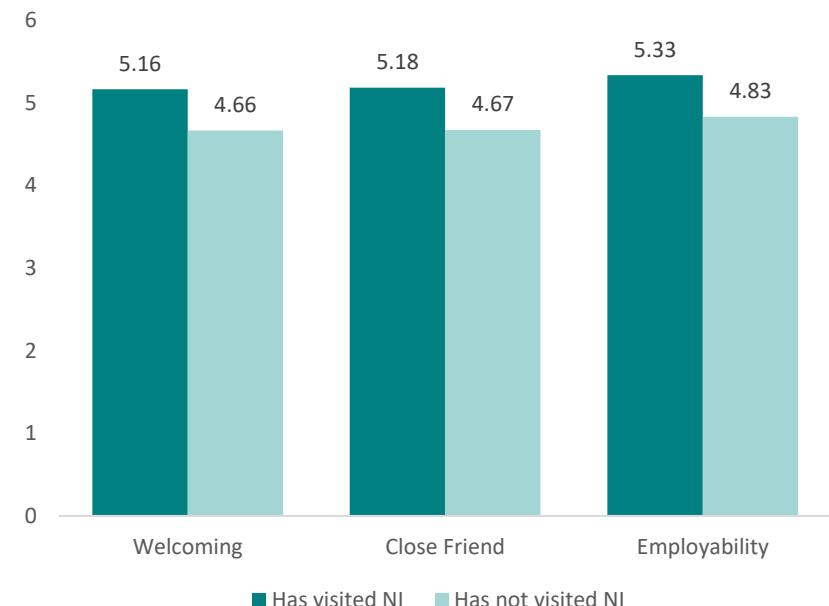
In 2017, nine per cent of NBI<sup>SM</sup> respondents reported that they had previously visited Northern Ireland.

Respondents who had previously visited the region, scored Northern Ireland significantly higher on the People dimension, as well as on each of the composite attributes, than those who had not visited. (Figures 4 and 5). This pattern was also evident in 2016.

**Figure 4: Difference in People dimension scores between those who have visited Northern Ireland and those who have not**



**Figure 5: Difference in attribute scores between those who have visited Northern Ireland and those who have not – People dimension**



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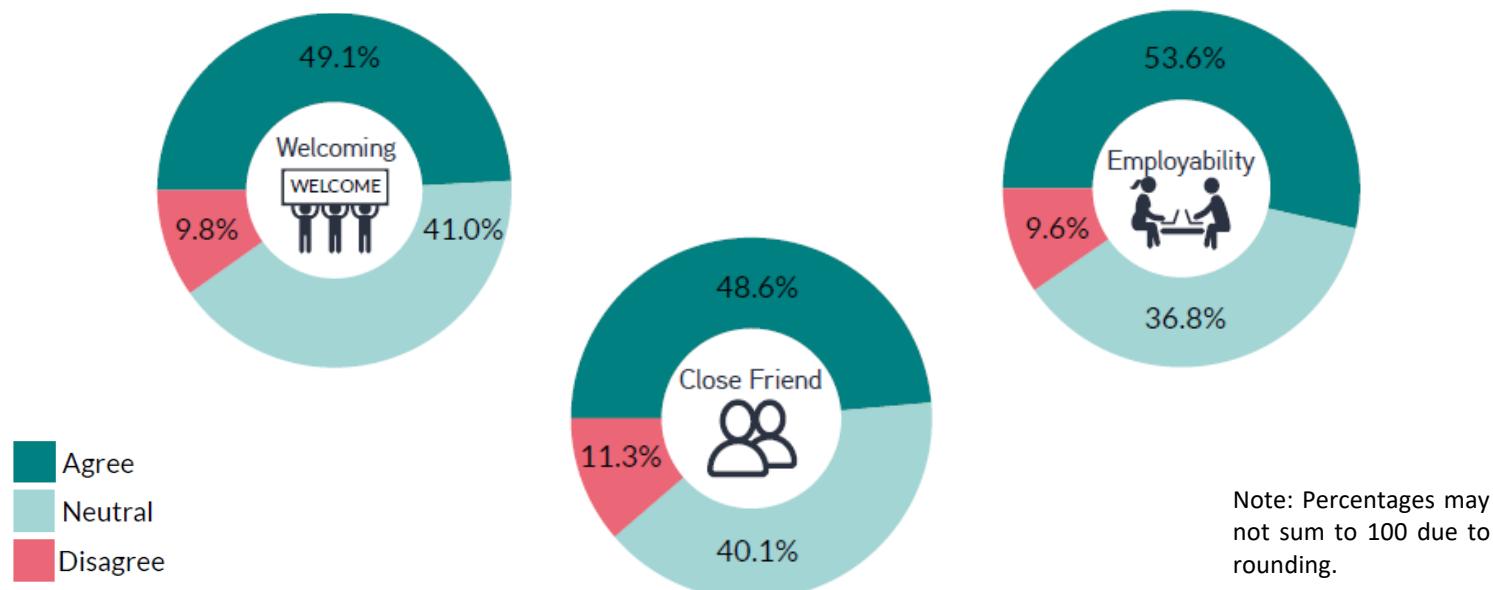
**Attributes of the People dimension: Proportion of respondents who agreed or disagreed with each attribute statement**

As well as examining scores and rankings, it is also useful to consider the proportion of respondents who either agreed or disagreed with each attribute statement\* (see Figure 6).

Over half of respondents (54 per cent) said that they would be willing to employ a person from Northern Ireland. Just less than half of respondents agreed that the people of NI would be welcoming if they visited (49 per cent) and that they would like to have a person from NI as a close friend (49 per cent).

A large proportion of respondents provided a neutral response to each of the People attributes (ranging from 37 per cent to 41 per cent) while a smaller proportion disagreed with each attribute statement (ranging from 10 to 11 per cent).

**Figure 6: Proportion of respondents who agreed or disagreed with each attribute statement within the People dimension**



## **Words associated with the people of Northern Ireland**

Respondents were asked to select, from a predetermined list, the adjectives they thought most accurately described the people of Northern Ireland (respondents could choose as many responses as they liked). The most common response was 'none of these' (32 percent of respondents). Figure 7 presents a word cloud of the adjectives that were chosen by remaining respondents.

The words most commonly associated with Northern Ireland's people were 'Hard working' (25 per cent), 'Honest' (19 per cent), 'Skilful' (19 per cent), 'Fun' (15 per cent) and 'Tolerant' (13 per cent).

A smaller proportion of respondents associated the words 'Aggressive', 'Unreliable' and 'Rich' (six per cent respectively), 'Ignorant' and 'Lazy' (four per cent respectively) with the people of Northern Ireland.

These proportions were all similar to those observed in 2016.

**Figure 7: Words associated with the people of Northern Ireland**



\*For each attribute statement, respondents reported to what extent they agreed or disagreed on a seven point Likert scale, where one is strongly disagree, four is neither agree nor disagree, and seven is strongly agree. Respondents who provided scores between one and three were categorised as disagreeing with the statement, scores between five and seven were categorised as agreeing, while scores of four were categorised as neutral.