

Six Dimensions of the Nation Brands IndexSM 2020

International Perceptions of Northern Ireland: People

11 March 2021

This bulletin is part of a series of six. The others are available on [the TEO website](#).

Key findings

- In 2020, Northern Ireland ranked 22nd of 50 for the People dimension, which is unchanged from 2019.
- Northern Ireland's score for People decreased to 63.29 in 2020 (-0.16 since 2019).
- People was Northern Ireland's 2nd highest scoring dimension and 3rd highest rank in 2019 – this continues the trend of strong performance in score and rank observed since 2016.
- People received significantly higher scores from those who had visited Northern Ireland compared to those who had not.
- In 2020, the largest changes in rank were from China, who ranked Northern Ireland 16 places higher, and Egypt, who ranked Northern Ireland seven places lower than in 2019.

Introduction

In order to assess and monitor its international reputation, Northern Ireland has been included on the Nation Brands IndexSM (NBISM) since 2016. The NBI measures and ranks the reputations of 50 nations across Six Dimensions: Exports; Governance; Culture; People; Tourism; and Immigration and Investment.

This bulletin examines Northern Ireland's reputation in relation to **People**. The score for the People dimension is calculated using scores from three attributes. For each attribute, survey participants were presented with a statement and asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed on a seven point Likert scale. As seen below, "employability" was presented slightly differently, with respondents asked to rate their 'willingness' on a seven point scale.

| Attribute | Statement |
|---------------|--|
| Welcoming | 'If I visited this country, the people would make me feel very welcome.' |
| Close Friend | 'I would like to have a person from this country as a close friend.' |
| Employability | '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?' |

The score for the People dimension is out of 100, while the score for each of the attributes is based on a scale from one to seven (with seven being the highest and best, and one being the lowest and worst). 50 countries are included in the NBI; rankings presented in the report show Northern Ireland's position among these 50 countries.

Northern Ireland's score for People (63.29) was lower in 2020 than in 2019. Its rank (22nd) was unchanged.

Figure 1: Northern Ireland's ranking and score on the People dimension of the NBI



Rankings and scores on the People dimension from around the world

People was Northern Ireland's 3rd highest ranked dimension in 2020, as was the case in the previous years.

Northern Ireland's People dimension received reasonable ranks globally (Figure 2). Northern Ireland received top half rankings (25th or higher) from 11 of the 20 panel nations. This is fairly consistent with previous years.

The highest rankings were received from the United Kingdom (10th), China (13th) and Germany (14th). The ranking from the United Kingdom (10th) was the highest received from any panel country for any dimension. Northern Ireland's lowest rankings were received from Egypt (41st), Mexico (31st) and Turkey (30th). Northern Ireland received the widest range of rankings globally on the People dimension compared with the other five dimensions of the NBI.

The largest changes in rank were from China, who ranked Northern Ireland 16 places higher, and Egypt, who ranked Northern Ireland seven places lower than in 2019.

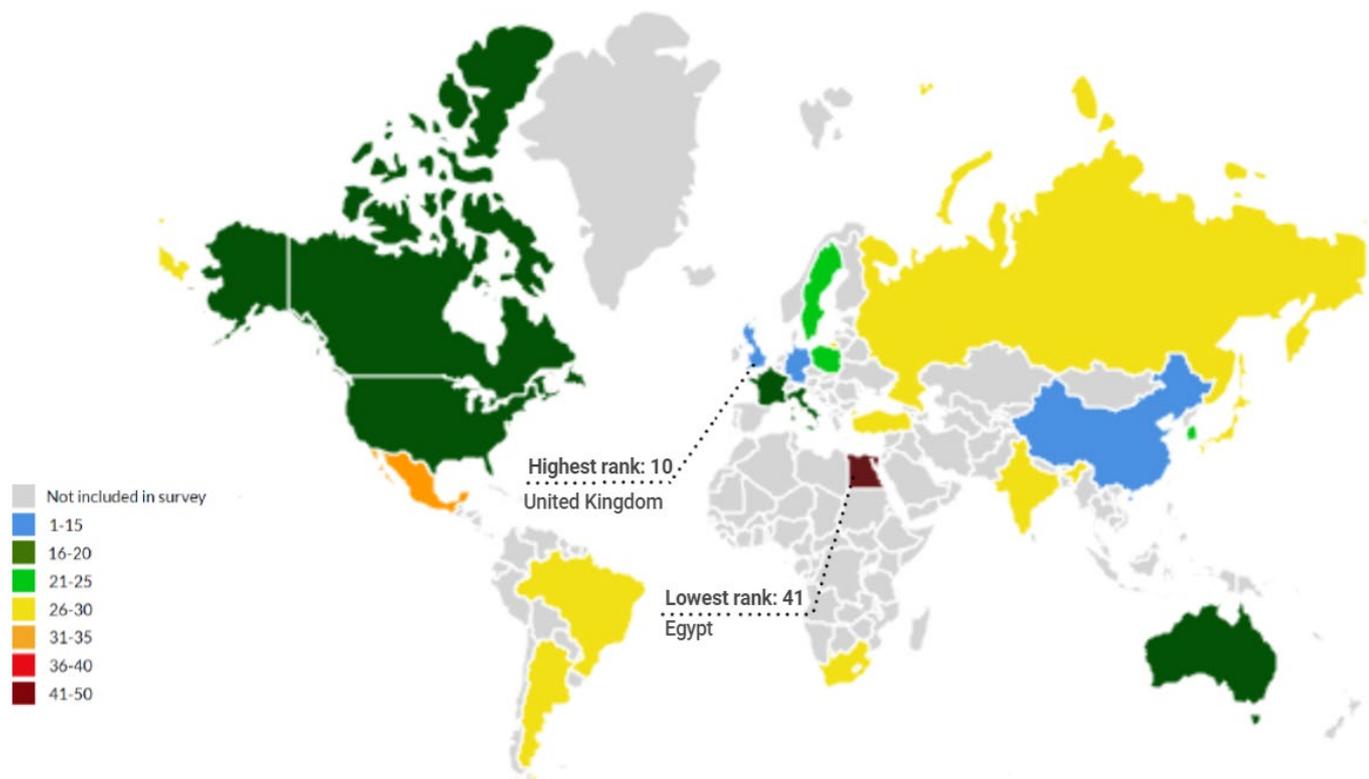
While rankings provide an insight into how Northern Ireland is viewed by panel countries relative to the other participating nations, they can be impacted year on year due to the inclusion of new countries in the survey. The dimension score provides a more absolute understanding of how Northern Ireland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

Overall, People was Northern Ireland's 2nd highest scoring dimension in 2020, as it has been in all previous years.

Northern Ireland's highest scores were received from India (70.99) and China (70.69). Relatively high scores were also received from the United Kingdom (67.84), Australia (67.17) and Mexico (66.85) in 2020. Northern Ireland's lowest scores were received from South Korea (53.38), Japan (54.55) and Turkey (54.91).

Northern Ireland received a relatively high rank (24th) and low score (53.38) from South Korea, which contrasts with the relatively low rank (31st) and high score (66.85) received from Mexico. This suggests that scores from different panel countries are not necessarily comparable, again, highlighting the importance of considering both score and rank when evaluating responses from other countries.

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



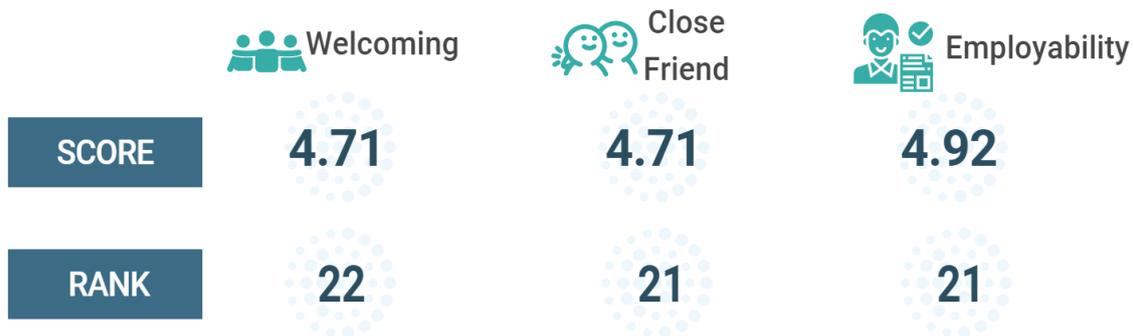
Attribute scores and rankings

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

Northern Ireland's attribute scores on the People dimension have been positive (i.e. above the neutral value of 4) each year since Northern Ireland was included in 2016. The highest scoring People attribute in 2020, as in previous survey years, was "employability" (4.92). As in previous years, this was one of the highest scoring attributes in any dimension.

When attribute scores were compared with the other participating nations, Northern Ireland was ranked relatively highly (21st or 22nd out of the 50 nations examined) for all three attributes. The "welcoming" and "close friend" attributes ranked slightly higher in 2020 than in all previous years.

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.

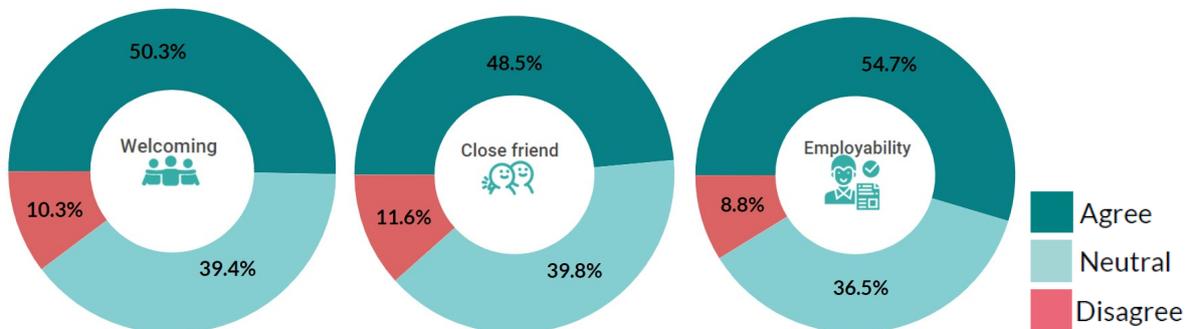
Proportion of participants who agreed or disagreed with each People attribute statement

It is also useful to consider the proportion of participants who either agreed or disagreed with each attribute statement¹ (see Figure 4).

Over half of participants (55 per cent) said that they would be willing to employ a person from Northern Ireland. Half of participants agreed that the people of Northern Ireland would be welcoming if they visited (50 per cent) and just under half agreed that they would like to have a person from Northern Ireland as a close friend (49 per cent). A large proportion of participants provided a neutral response to each of the People attributes (ranging from 37 per cent to 40 per cent), which could suggest a lack of awareness or strong views on the reputation of the People of Northern Ireland.

These proportions were all similar to those observed in 2019. The agreement rate for "welcoming" (50.3%) is slightly higher than in all previous years.

Figure 4: Proportion of participants who agreed or disagreed with each attribute statement in the People dimension



Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

¹ For each attribute statement, survey participants reported to what extent they agreed or disagreed on a seven point Likert scale. These are converted to scores, where one to three were categorised as 'disagree', four as 'neutral', and five to seven as 'agree'.

Words associated with the people of Northern Ireland

Participants were asked to select, from a predetermined list, the adjectives they thought most accurately described the people of Northern Ireland (participants could choose more than one response). The most common response was 'none of these' (32 per cent of participants). Figure 5 presents adjectives chosen by remaining participants. The words most commonly associated with Northern Ireland's people were 'Hard working' (26 per cent), 'Honest' (21 per cent) and 'Skilful' (19 per cent).

These proportions were all similar to those observed in 2019.

Figure 5: Words associated with the people of Northern Ireland

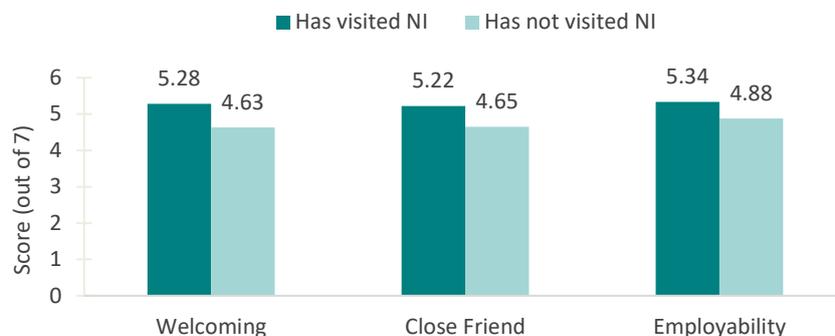


Visitors to Northern Ireland

In 2020, 12 per cent of NBI participants reported that they had previously visited Northern Ireland.

Participants who had previously visited the region scored Northern Ireland statistically significantly² higher on the People dimension (71.60) than those who had not visited (62.37). This was also the case for each of the composite attributes (Figure 6). This pattern was also evident in all previous survey years.

Figure 6: Attribute scores (those who have visited Northern Ireland and those who have not)



Further Information and Feedback

Further information can be found in the [overall report](#) (published February 2021) which includes data tables and methodological documents.

Feedback on these publications is gratefully received, and can be provided through our [User Feedback Survey](#) or by contacting: Emma Morgan, pfganalytics@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk.

² *Statistically significant differences are at the 95% confidence level. This means that we can be 95% confident that the differences between groups are actual differences and have not just arisen by chance.